

OCTOBER 1998

# CONTACT

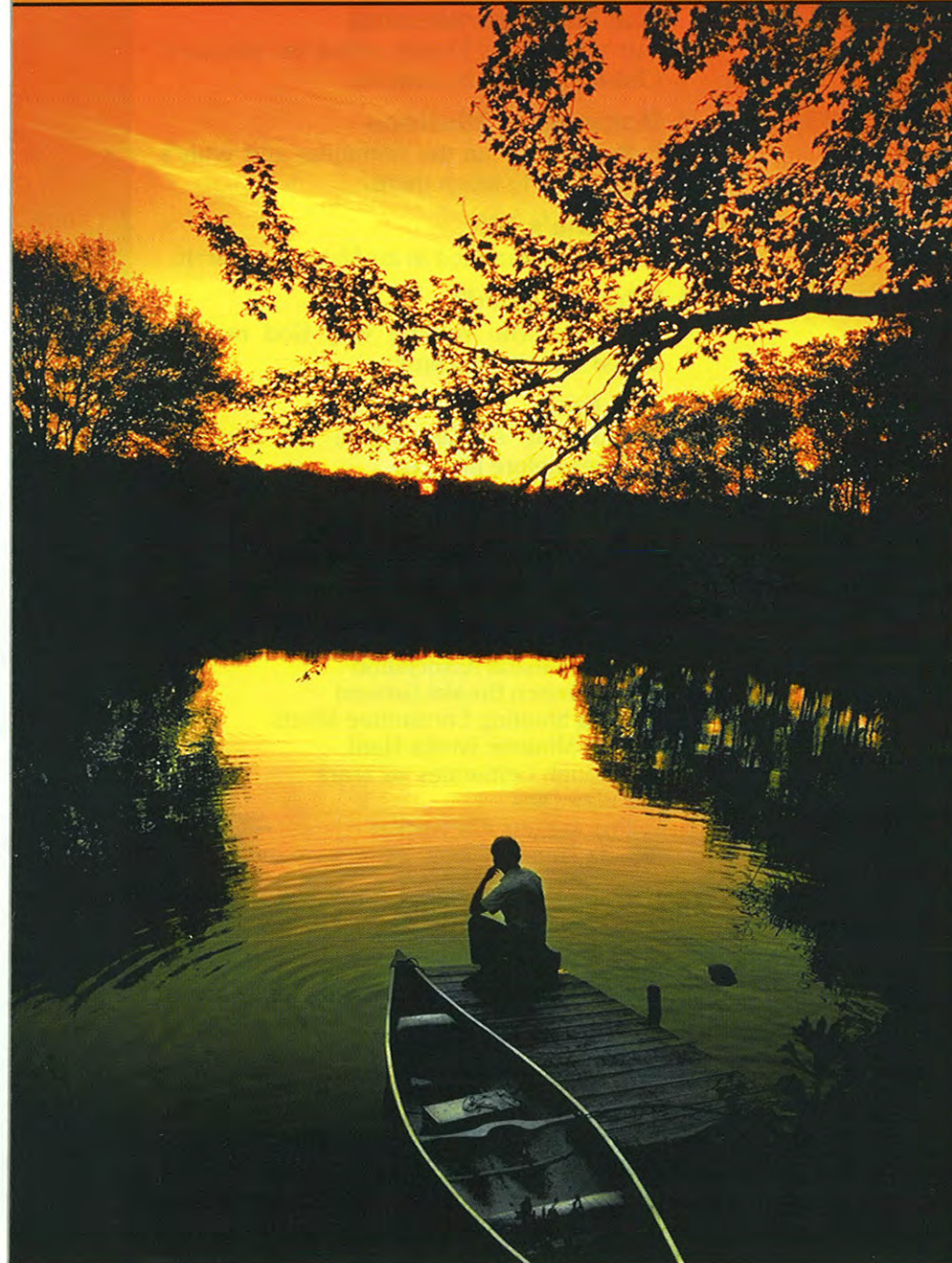
OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF  
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

.....  
**They've  
Taken Pastor!**

.....  
**Hot, Hungry and  
Thirsty**

.....  
**I Stepped into  
Their Shoes**

.....  
**Sunday Night Live!**



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Melvin Worthington

## The Spectrum of Stewardship (X)

**O**ne of the fundamental facets of stewardship is the *Stewardship of Thoughts*. What we think is very important. All of us need to cultivate thoughts that are acceptable to God in light of the day we will give an account to God for every thought.

### Christ Discerns Our Thoughts

Consider *Christ's Declaration*. Thoughts produce actions. Jesus said, "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: these are the things which defile a man . . ." (Matt. 15:19-20).

The writer of Proverbs declares, "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he . . ." (Prov. 23:7). The stewardship of our thoughts plays a vital role in the way we act.

Consider *Christ's Discernment*. Jesus knows all our thoughts, for He is omniscient as well as omnipresent. Throughout the letters to the seven churches in Revelation 2-3, Christ reminds the churches that He knows their works. He has full knowledge of what they were thinking as well as doing.

"And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?" (Matt. 9:4).

"And again, the Lord knoweth the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain," (I Cor. 3:20).

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart," (Heb. 4:12).

### Christ Directs Our Thoughts

Christ directs our thoughts through the *Manuscript*. The Psalmist declared, "But his delight is in the

law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night," (Ps. 1:2).

Psalm 119 reminds us of the importance of the Word of God in the believer's life. The entire psalm is devoted to the nature of the Word, need for the Word and the nourishment one gets from the Word.

Paul reminds Timothy of the importance of the Bible in the Christian life, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works," (II Tim. 3:15-17).

Christ directs our thoughts through our *Mind*. Paul urges the Philippian believers, "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things," (Phil. 4:8).

The things we read, hear and observe have a definite impact on our spiritual lives. We must separate ourselves from worldly influences by thinking on things that are pure and

virtuous. By planting seeds of virtue, purity and holiness in your mind, you can reap a harvest of godly actions. Planting seeds of profanity, vulgar talk and ungodly lifestyles in your heart will reap a deadly harvest of sin. Whatever we allow to be planted in our hearts through our mind will eventually manifest itself in our actions.

Christ directs our thoughts through *Meditation*. Meditation is the act of contemplating spiritual truths. Perusing, pondering and practicing the scriptures holds the key to righteous and right thinking. Righteous thinking leads to righteous living.

Christ directs our thoughts through *Modeling*. The perfect model to imitate is the Lord Jesus Christ. He left us an example of how to live. He is our perfect pattern. Throughout the pages of the Bible, we find many positive examples of how to live the Christian life.

### Christ Discloses Our Thoughts

Consider our *Accountability*. Every Christian is accountable and answerable to God for his thoughts. Because our thoughts have a direct impact on our behavior, we must not allow even one thought that does not honor God.

Consider our *Ability*. God's grace gives us the ability to maintain the right kind of thought life.

Consider our *Anointing*. The Holy Spirit which indwells, infills, instructs and illuminates is available to enable and empower our thinking process.

Consider our *Acceptability*. Stewardship of our thoughts means we want to think those things which are acceptable and pleasing in God's sight. We should pray with the Psalmist, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer," (Ps. 19:14). ■

### The Secretary's Schedule

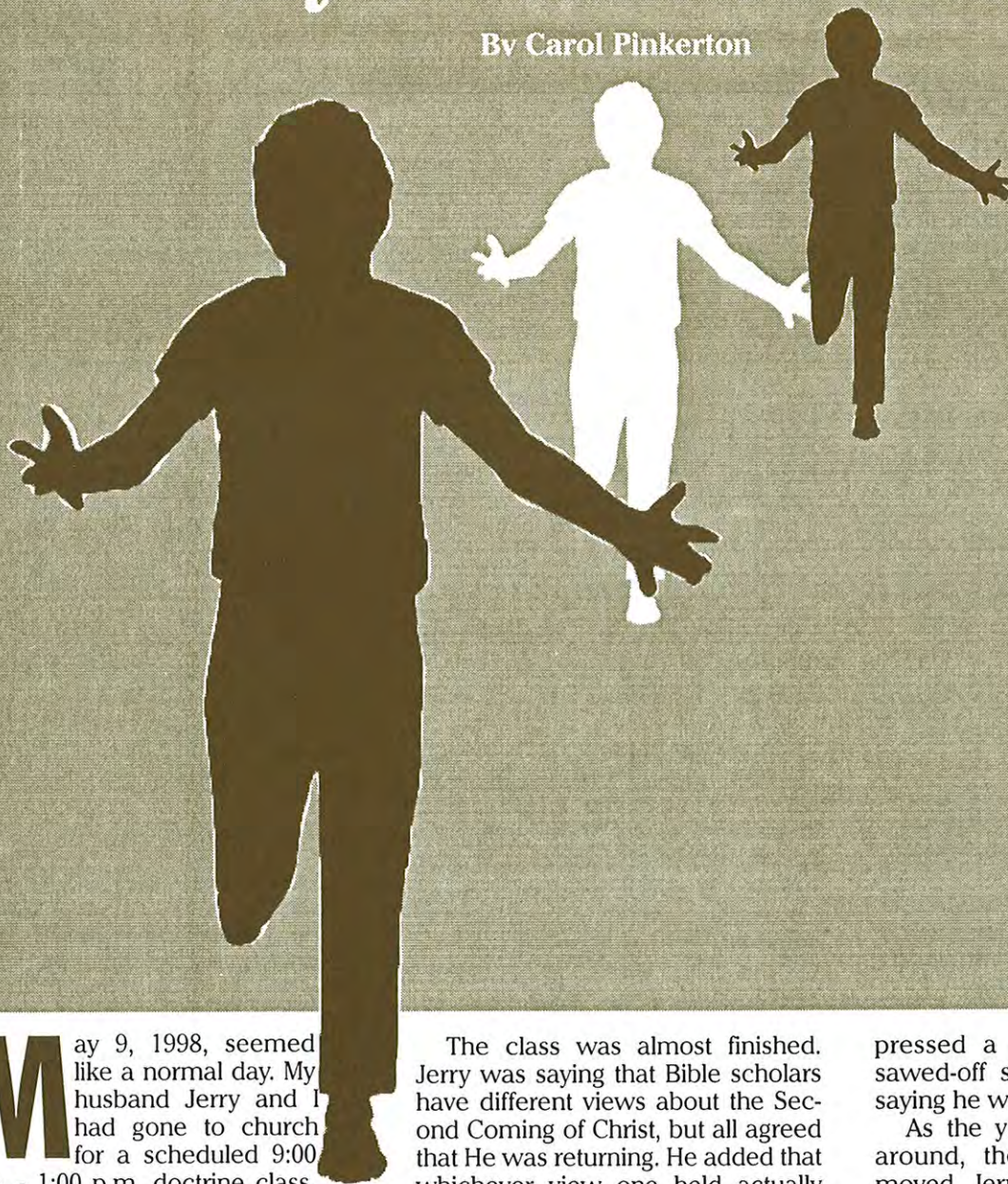
#### October 1998

- 8-9 IFOFWBC Exec. Committee Mtg. Uruguay
- 12-16 IFOFWBC General Assembly Uruguay
- 24 Midway District Association Leary, Georgia
- 30-31 Mississippi State Association

A Free Will Baptist missionary kidnapped at gunpoint.

# “They’ve Taken Pastor!”

By Carol Pinkerton



**M**ay 9, 1998, seemed like a normal day. My husband Jerry and I had gone to church for a scheduled 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. doctrine class. Eleven students showed up. The morning's teaching by Jerry and N'Guettia Silas was going well. However, it was a bit long for Silas' two-year-old girl, Love, so I took her outside. We talked to people standing around, sat on the front steps eating cookies and made a visit to a sick lady who lives nearby . . . all with my purse (keys and money) left inside the church.

The class was almost finished. Jerry was saying that Bible scholars have different views about the Second Coming of Christ, but all agreed that He was returning. He added that whichever view one held actually wasn't so important as the fact that we be ready for His return and be found being occupied with the final command of our Lord.

We had closing prayer, small talk and preparations for all to leave. Jerry took his Bible, my video camera and 35 mm camera to place in our truck parked in front of the "church" (rented room). He had just unlocked the driver's door when a young man

pressed a pistol made out of a sawed-off shotgun to Jerry's head saying he was taking the truck.

As the young man kept looking around, the position of the gun moved. Jerry gained control of the situation by grabbing the man's wrist and forcing the gun away. Immediately two other young men, both with sawed-off shotgun pistols appeared. The street was filled with people, including many children, all watching in disbelief.

Inside the church, my ears heard a cry, "They've taken Pastor!" My eyes saw the guns and the three strangers pushing Jerry into our truck. They

# Oil Change Christianity

By Mirchael Jones

**C**hristianity is not just about what you believe; it is about how you behave. Every doctrine in the Bible comes with a duty to be performed. If your worship place does not affect your work place, then you are not learning what you should at church.

I went to get the oil changed in my car recently. The place was busy so I went inside to drink a cup of coffee and wait. While I was waiting, a lady came up and asked to speak with the manager. As I listened, she explained that she had left her lights on while she was shopping in the stores beside the oil change location and now her car wouldn't crank.

In spite of the fact that the manager was almost overwhelmed with all the paying customers in his establishment, he told his men to continue working while he

took his personal truck and went to start the lady's car. To further complicate matters, the manager found when he got in his truck that he did not have any jumper cables. He offered to go back to his home and get his personal set, but I had a set in my car that I loaned him.

The manager could have claimed his busy schedule or the absence of jumper cables would not allow him to help this lady. Instead, he treated her the way he thought a Christian should treat her. And I am thankful, for that man is a trustee at my church. ■

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

backed out and were gone . . . so fast! It all had happened so quickly, like in the twinkling of an eye. People were everywhere dumb-struck.

One Christian jumped into a taxi and followed the truck. He lost it a few blocks away in a traffic jam. Another Christian ran north to a public phone to alert the police. Two Christians and I went to another public phone. The crowd grew by the minute.

The remaining Christians gathered inside the church to pray. Another call was made to Robert Bryan's home. Robert was not there, so his wife Judy called Dr. Paul Gentuso at the Guest House. He and Dr. Mark Paschall went to find Robert. Judy called Christians asking them to pray for Jerry's safety.

After making the police call, we hailed a taxi and went to the local police station. The one piece of information that I was not able to give them was the one they needed the most: the truck's license number. (Of course, Jerry knew it, but he wasn't available.)

From the police station, we returned to the church. The taxi stopped out on the main street. The entire neighborhood was on red-alert status. The street in front of the church was filled with people. The steps going into the church were people-filled.

In the Lord's mercy, He allowed me to see Jerry. He was surrounded

with human arms. The noise level was neither calm nor quiet. I gently shoved my way through the throng to Jerry. There was no blood, no cuts or scratches on him. His pants and the Tennessee Walk-A-Thon t-shirt were not dirty. All I saw was just a huge smile and semi-wet eyes!

Later, we learned that the three men had been loitering near the church since 9:00 a.m. I wonder how much Free Will Baptist doctrine they learned. While in the truck, Jerry witnessed to them, telling them that the truck belongs to the Lord, that one day they would give account to God, not only for taking the truck, but for their lives!

They took him to an out-of-the-way place, emptied the money in his billfold (but allowed him to keep his Côte d'Ivoire ID card and driver's license), and let him out after giving him taxi money. He walked two miles before finding a taxi, and returned to church, finding the Christians just as he'd told the robbers he would: Praying!

So, the plain Nissan 4x4 truck we bought four months before is gone, plus a box of new Bibles to be sold, my cameras, a heavy-duty jack—even a steering "club" to prevent theft. All gone.

Church services the following day were filled with prayers of praise, testimonies and voiced thanksgivings to our loving Father for His care and pro-

tection. It was noted that Jerry's last teaching words before being "truck-napped" had been . . . "Regardless of how our Lord returns, we need to be busy sharing Christ," . . . as he did with the robbers.

What an impression this has made for the Christians and the entire neighborhood. He will come, as He has said, in the twinkling of an eye. Will He find us busy about our Father's business?

What a powerful privilege we have in prayer. Thank you for every time you take your fellow missionary (I believe every Christian is a missionary) to the Lord in prayer. ■



.....  
ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Carol Pinkerton and her husband, Jerry, serve as Free Will Baptist missionaries to Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. Carol says that one of her regrets in the theft of the truck is that the thieves also got away with her video camera containing classic footage of Foreign Missions director R. Eugene Waddell in a hammock singing, "Oh, My Darling, Clementine."

Did the Good Samaritan have this much trouble?

# Hot, Hungry and Thirsty

By Joe Seay



It was summertime in West Texas. The temperature was 105° outside. Inside, the temperature registered “cool and comfortable.”

My wife Sue and I were enjoying a lazy Saturday afternoon at home when the telephone rang.

The voice on the other end said, “This is Don. I’m in your Sunday School class.”

Of course, I knew Don, a new Christian in the adult Sunday School class I teach. He continued, “A few weeks ago when you were teaching, you said we should help people who are in need. Right?”

“That’s right, Don,” I agreed.

“Well,” he said, “I found some people who need help. I’m bringing them to you for help.”

Hmmm, he had the general idea. Maybe the two of us working together could provide whatever help was needed. We met in the parking lot of a local restaurant, and he introduced me to a man and woman and their four children. They were hot, hungry, tired and out of money. Don was right. They needed help.

We took them into the restaurant and told them to order all the burgers, fries and soft drinks they wanted.

They did and, as they ate, they told us their story.

They had left Green Bay, Wisconsin, in search of work. Driving south, they had searched in vain all the way to West Texas. Now, their car was broken down and their money was gone. They had found shade under an overpass and were trying to formulate a plan when Don found them.

As they talked and ate, I looked them over. The father was tall and slim. He was showing signs of strain, worry and exhaustion. The mother was shorter, overweight and appeared very depressed. The children were ages

five, four, three and the little one was about ten months old. All of them were hot, sunburned and ill at ease.

After they had eaten their fill, Don and I bought them groceries for supper and breakfast. Then we rented them a motel room with a good air conditioner. As we helped them settle in, we urged them to go to church with us the following day, and they agreed.

Sue and I stopped by the motel the following morning to pick up our guests. They were all still wearing the same tattered, wrinkled clothes they'd worn the previous day. I couldn't help smiling as we entered the church with this ragged crew and watched our church family greet them warmly and make them welcome.

The next morning the first item of business was to find a job for the father. I went with him to check out several possibilities, but no one would hire him. At first, I couldn't understand why we kept striking out, and then I noticed his hands.

He had a disease of the hands that caused all his fingernails to come off. Therefore, his hands looked unclean and ragged. Even with better clothes and improved grooming, we were unable to locate a job for him.

About this time, Don had to return to work, so I inherited the family and their problems. We did finally find the wife a position in a restaurant, but the father remained unemployed.

Next, our Sunday School class and our church came through with help. The church paid the first month's rent on a house and the Sunday School class paid the utilities deposits. Sue and I bought some inexpensive, used furniture.

Things were looking up! They were settled in a place of their own and the wife was working. It looked like their fortunes were finally turning.

The next day at work I received an emergency phone call from the mother's employer. "We called you because you were the one listed as reference for our new employee," the voice said. "She just passed out and the ambulance is here now."

I rushed to the restaurant to find that she had revived. She explained that she had a medical problem that sometimes caused her to "pass out." Her medical problem also caused her to be unemployed again.

The job search resumed for both the husband and the wife. Weeks passed and we were unable to find a job for either of them.

I was beginning to read and reread Jesus' parable about the Good Samaritan. It always read the same. The Samaritan found a man in need, took him to a motel and paid for *all* his needs to be met. It sounded pretty much like what Don and I had done and who knows how long that half-dead man required assistance or how much his therapy cost?

Sue and I continued to pray and seek God's help as we pondered what to do. By the second month, we were supporting this family by ourselves. The church was helping other needy families and our small Sunday School class was also involved in helping others.

The father developed the habit of coming to my office in the middle of my workday and talking about his problems and his feelings of helplessness. He always brought the four children with him.

I was beginning to feel frustrated and disappointed. The parents had made commitments to live for God and serve Him. They were likeable, appreciative, honest people, who simply could not find work.

But I didn't know how long Sue and I could afford to support our family and his as well. At the same time, we couldn't let them go hungry. As Christians we couldn't turn our backs on them.

We intensified our prayer efforts on their behalf.

Shortly after we had paid the third month's rent, paid the utilities and bought groceries, the father and his little troupe came to my office again. The father led the way. Next came his four children, stair-step fashion from oldest to youngest, with the baby who was just able to toddle, bringing up the rear.

As I watched them file in, I noticed that the littlest guy, barely a year old now, had filled his diaper and was dripping its contents all the way across my carpet, right up to my desk.

I prayed silently, "Lord, please give me love, patience and wisdom."

God answered my prayer. I felt nothing but love and compassion for this family and was able to gently say to

the father, "We need to really pray concerning God's plan for your future."

After we prayed, the Lord sent the first clue to the answer. As we were talking, he mentioned having an uncle who still lived in Green Bay, Wisconsin.

An uncle in Green Bay, Wisconsin! The words were a light bulb turned on in my mind.

I called the uncle and told him about the problems his nephew's family was having. The uncle responded, "I have a large farm here and, if he can get back up here, I'll give him a job on the farm. There is also a big farmhouse for his family to live in with plenty of room for the kids to run and play."

The family was overjoyed. I almost had a shouting spell myself! Then reality set in.

Their car was broken down.

They didn't have money for bus fare and food.

They had no way to get back to Wisconsin.

I assured them we would work it out so they could get home.

And we did.

We sold the furniture and used the money to repair their car. We stocked the car with groceries for the trip, filled the gas tank and gave them money for additional gasoline and minor emergencies. As they prepared to leave, we told them to contact us if they broke down on the road and we would find a way to get them help no matter where they were.

They said they would write when they arrived safe and sound. Then we waved goodbye to our friends.

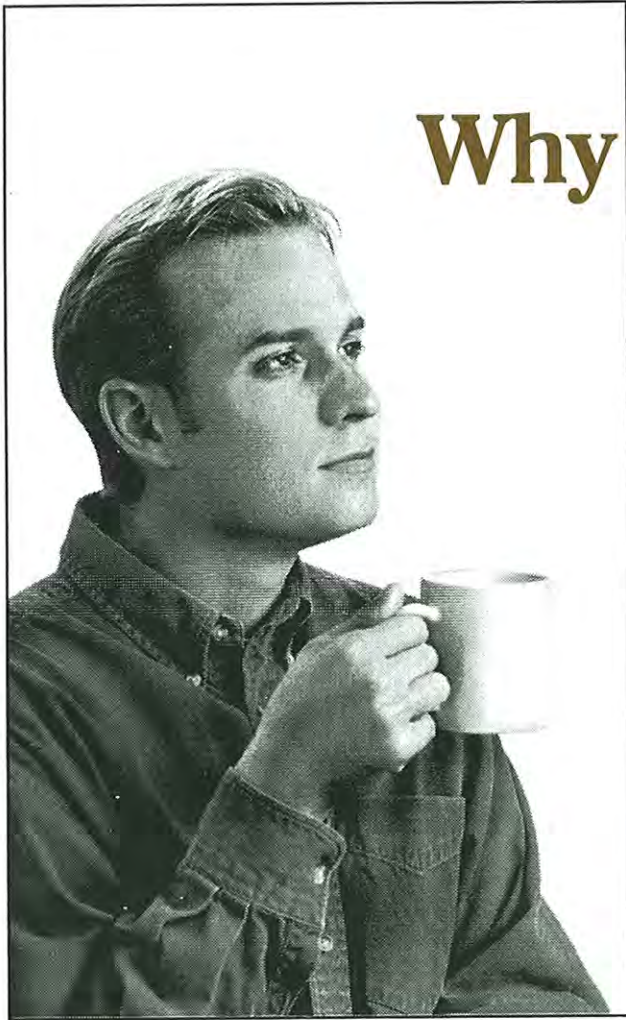
Time passed without any communication from "our" family. Then at Christmas a letter came. They had gotten safely home, were doing well in their work and loved the farm. They thanked us over and over again for our help.

I know Don and Sue and I will never forget this experience as "good Samaritans." Sometimes it was messy and frustrating and wearisome.

But now I think I know how that good Samaritan felt.

It's a good feeling! ■

.....  
ABOUT THE WRITER: Joe Seay is a free lance writer who lives in Greenbrier, Arkansas.



# Why Do You Believe That?

By Jim Nason

## Biblical Authority

The authority of Scripture versus tradition has been a conflict throughout church history. One's position on the authority of the

Bible shapes all other doctrine and practices held. We Free Will Baptists have made our position abundantly clear in our *Treatise of Faith and Practices*.

"Free Will Baptists believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration of the Bible. We believe the Scriptures are infallible and inerrant. Being the very word of God, it is God's final revelation and our absolute authority."

Every doctrinal position held by Free Will Baptists proceeds from this fundamental truth. The monument to the life and ministry of Elder Benjamin Randall has the following inscription, "The Scriptures our rule of faith and practice." In the final analysis, it is indeed true that Free Will Baptists have always been a people of the Book.

## Impact of Tradition

The impact of tradition has effectively influenced today's church. During the "Dark Ages," the Bible, available only in Latin, was kept under the control

of an ecclesiastical hierarchy. Then God raised up men such as Wycliffe, Tyndale, Coverdale and Luther. They translated the scriptures in the language of the common man, producing new movements protesting against Romanism and the state churches.

This protest consisted of Separatists, Non-conformists, Protestants, Puritans, Baptists and others. Flourishing in the 16th century, they shared basic tenets that define present biblical Christianity. John Bunyan's question, "How can I be saved?" (Ryken, p. 11) was the fundamental question to these people. Driven by a strong moral consciousness, the question of right and wrong made their daily lives subject to constant review.

The Bible was central to everything. Cardinal doctrines under this broad umbrella of Puritanism were the doctrines of grace, personal regeneration, holy living and the Scripture as the sole, final authority for belief and practice. They rejected the trappings of tradition and ritualism in Romanism and the state churches. Consequently, their buildings were simple in design and their services focused on the preaching of the Word.

A typical service began with the congregation at worship in singing, expressing their understanding of the

**H**ow often does the question, "Why do you believe that?" arise? This is a common question due to the diversity of religious views, and the believer must be able to give an intelligent defense of his faith and practice. Why do people who are genuinely sincere and who desire to know truth arrive at different conclusions on the same subject? Do we hold certain beliefs merely because they are taught by our pastor and church? Where did their views originate?

Ungodly men, as well as genuine believers, question why we hold views which do not fit their perceptions of doctrine and lifestyle. These questions should be approached with a desire, not only to defend, but to inform and convince. The authority of the Bible, church tradition and 20th century fundamentalism are three factors which have influenced the development of doctrine and practice in the body of Christ.



priesthood of the believer and the importance of lay participation. The sermon began with the reading of the scriptures followed by the explanation and application of the doctrinal and moral principles from that text.

John Owen believed that "the first and principal duty of a pastor is to feed the flock by diligent preaching of the Word," (Ryken, p. 93).

William Cartwright wrote, "Let there be, if it may be every Sabbath-day, two sermons, and let them that preach always endeavor to keep themselves within one hour, especially on the weekdays," (Ryken, p. 97).

From the Word of God and these early believers, Free Will Baptists find the foundation for our methodology in worship services.

Baptists went further than many in their separation from the state and its church defined their doctrinal positions with increasing fervor. The Calvinistic Baptists became a strong force, but those who rejected Calvin's view of the sovereignty of God became known as General Baptists. Free Will Baptists descended from this movement, founding their doctrine and practice on the Word of God and the example of these forefathers.

## Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism has been described "ideally, as a movement that desires to reach out in love and compassion to people, believes and defends the whole Bible as the absolute, inerrant, and authoritative Word of God, and stands committed to the doctrines and practice of holiness," (Beale, p. 6).

Fundamentalism has battled for biblical purity throughout its history. Crossing denominational lines, the battle, prior to 1930, was fought within the mainline denominations. Following 1930, there was an increasing number of withdrawals from the denominations perceived to have compromised God's truth. Fundamentalism has always been characterized by a commitment to the doctrine and practice of holiness both in personal and ecclesiastical aspects.

So the loyalty of Free Will Baptists to the Word of God has made the doctrine of holiness an important influence in applying the doctrine of

separation. Ecclesiastically, they have demonstrated a willingness to separate from other movements when to remain a part of those groups would compromise the holiness that God's Word demands. In areas of personal separation, the doctrine of holiness has been a deep concern to all. Though not always agreeing on application, Free Will Baptists have recognized the principle of holiness and seek to apply this principle in every area of life.

The authority of the Bible, tradition and fundamentalism have played a significant role in shaping our present day doctrines, practices, worship and music style. The charges of "legalism" vs. "license" aside, our traditions, standards, cultural norms and personal desires must always be subject to the infallible and inerrant Word of God. Purity is necessary for holiness to have meaning. To fundamentalist roots, we owe our emphasis on the absolute necessity of holiness in the Free Will Baptist movement as a whole, in the individual church, and in each believer. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend James M. (Jim) Nason pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in New Durham, New Hampshire. The church was established by Benjamin Randall in 1780. Brother Nason serves as moderator of the Northeast Association.

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## Media Commission

Presents

# Radio



# Commercials

The Free Will Baptist radio commercial package includes:



"Simon Says" (60 sec)



"You've Got Mail" (30 sec)



"Time" (30 sec)

(each personally tagged with your church name\*)

Plus you will get the fourth radio spot



"Decisions" (30 sec)

(not personally tagged)

## All for an introductory price of \$60

(that includes shipping and handling)

Price good till December 31, 1998  
after that, \$75

We need to know the format the radio station needs.

(DAT, Mini Disk, Reel to Reel, or Cassette)

\*Name must not exceed time limit of commercial. If you have questions about this or if you want assistance negotiating your buy with the radio station or help with type of buy needed, call Ron Hunter 941/967-4736.

## All 4 spots are \$60



To place order call:

**Dari Goodfellow**  
at the National Offices

**615/731-6812**

When terminal illness comes home.

# I've Stepped Into Their Shoes

By Darwin E. Kelton



One of the most challenging aspects of pastoring involves ministering to people with terminal illnesses. Like many pastors, I have sat with church members and their families as the doctor relayed the diagnosis . . . terminal illness. I would console them as best I could and assure them the Lord was with them.

I've gone every night to homes and had prayer with terminally ill individuals so that they could be encouraged to make it through the next day. I've encouraged them to trust the Lord now more than ever before. Medicine had failed; doctors were helpless; there wasn't anything their family could do but be by their side.

I've then sat at the bedside as those saints took their last breaths. I've been with them from the time they were told of their illnesses until I preached their funerals.

Then one day I stepped into their shoes.

## Death Sentence

In my early 50s, I had a heart attack that required a quadruple bypass. For three years I did well. Then

I started having cardiac arrests and congestive heart failure.

I told my doctor that I thought the hot weather was causing my heart problem. He has always been straightforward with me. He said it was not the heat nor the weather.

Dr. Barton said my heart was slowly giving out, and I was slowly dying. Because of my age and my diabetes, a transplant was not an option.

Dr. Barton then asked me my feelings at hearing this news. I told him I felt as if "I stepped into the shoes" of many people I've counseled and tried to help over the years.

"If you think I'm going to have a pity-party and say, 'Lord, look at all I've done for You, all the people who have been saved and rededicated under my ministry; and now look what You've done to me—look at me now!' Not me, Doc. I'll preach, sing, play my guitar and witness 'til the Lord calls me home.

"I won't give up. I may give out, but I won't give up. This is what I've been preaching all these years; this is

the reason we become Christians. Now I must depend on the Lord more than ever before."

## New Priorities

That was three years ago. I've had to retire from pastoring, but I still preach, sing and play my guitar every chance I get. I am currently the minister of music at Union Grove FWB Church in Atkins, Arkansas.

One of the things that disturbs me is that often when people find out they have a terminal illness, they stop going to church. This is the time they need the church the most. I need to hear God's Word. I need Wednesday night to charge up my spiritual battery. I need Sunday School. I need the morning worship hour and the Sunday night service.

The Union Grove Church really helps me. The members encourage

me and let me know I am still needed. My pastor, David Bishop, lets me preach for him when he is gone. We go on visitation together. I help him every way I can. When I am sick, he is there to help and encourage me.

### Facing Reality

The other day my cardiologist told me that the only reason I am still alive is due to prayer and my attitude. He said, "By all rights, you should have died a long time ago." He smiled at me and said, "The Lord must have other things for you to do."

Yes, I've stepped into their shoes. And I have found that there is no place to give up and quit. The Lord is still leading, guiding and directing my life. I place my life in His hands every day. My favorite scripture verse is Philippians 4:19: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Do I still have heart problems? Yes. Am I still slowly dying? Yes. Every Monday I go to the hospital to be fed intravenously for eight hours with a new medicine to make my heart pump stronger.

Every morning when I get up, I say, "Thank You, Lord, for the new day. What do You have in store for me today?"

Since I've stepped into these shoes, I've had more opportunities to witness than ever before. People seem more willing to listen to someone in these shoes than to someone in good health.

Yes, I've stepped into their shoes, but praise the Lord, the next step I take will be on Higher Ground! ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Dr. Darwin E. Kelton serves as minister of music at Union Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Atkins, Arkansas. He formerly chaired the music department at California Christian College in Fresno.

# THE TOGETHER WAY

## July 1998

Receipts:	July 1998					
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 177.64	\$ .00	\$ 177.64	\$ 177.64	\$ 177.64	\$ 177.64
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Arkansas	17,293.68	23,874.01	41,167.69	17,293.68	65,041.70	41,167.69
California	.00	987.81	987.81	.00	1,975.62	987.81
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Georgia	26,708.54	3,104.23	29,812.77	26,708.54	32,917.00	29,812.77
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	5,978.84	2,106.01	8,084.85	5,978.84	10,190.86	8,084.85
Indiana	1,973.18	203.58	2,176.76	1,973.18	2,380.34	2,176.76
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Kentucky	691.00	335.62	1,026.62	691.00	1,362.24	1,026.62
Louisiana	20.00	.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Maryland	.00	728.00	728.00	.00	1,456.00	728.00
Michigan	30,697.13	3,562.94	34,260.07	30,697.13	37,823.01	34,260.07
Mississippi	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Missouri	42,509.11	13,123.01	55,632.12	42,509.11	68,755.13	55,632.12
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	485.89	30.45	516.34	485.89	546.79	516.34
North Carolina	417.83	960.00	1,377.83	417.83	2,337.83	1,377.83
Ohio	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Oklahoma	41,164.01	8,325.04	49,489.05	41,164.01	57,814.09	49,489.05
South Carolina	32,804.41	125.05	32,929.46	32,804.41	33,054.51	32,929.46
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	7,877.22	2,027.48	9,904.70	7,877.22	11,932.18	9,904.70
Texas	6,323.89	376.56	6,700.45	6,323.89	7,077.01	6,700.45
Virginia	581.57	.00	581.57	581.57	581.57	581.57
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	2,916.20	83.35	2,999.55	2,916.20	3,082.90	2,999.55
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	159.42	7.95	167.37	159.42	175.32	167.37
Northwest Assoc.	.00	264.13	264.13	.00	528.26	264.13
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	180.00	.10	180.10	180.00	180.20	180.10
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 218,959.56</b>	<b>\$ 60,225.32</b>	<b>\$ 279,184.88</b>	<b>\$ 1,563,732.95</b>	<b>\$337,671.18</b>	<b>\$ 1,901,404.13</b>
<b>Disbursements:</b>						
Executive Office	\$ 1,040.66	\$ 27,101.33	\$ 28,141.99	\$ 1,040.66	\$ 55,243.32	\$ 28,141.99
Foreign Missions	136,323.65	7,618.50	143,942.15	136,323.65	151,560.65	143,942.15
FWBBC	11,413.74	7,618.50	19,032.24	11,413.74	26,650.74	19,032.24
Home Missions	62,117.60	5,962.31	68,079.91	62,117.60	74,042.22	68,079.91
Retirement & Insurance	298.97	4,637.37	4,936.34	298.97	9,573.71	4,936.34
Master's Men	552.74	4,637.37	5,190.11	552.74	9,827.48	5,190.11
Com. for Theo. Integrity	69.74	165.62	235.36	69.74	400.98	235.36
FWB Foundation	420.37	1,987.46	2,407.83	420.37	4,395.29	2,407.83
Historical Commission	41.24	165.62	206.86	41.24	372.48	206.86
Music Commission	20.41	165.62	186.03	20.41	351.65	186.03
Media Commission	33.63	165.62	199.25	33.63	364.87	199.25
Hillsdale FWB College	1,695.84	.00	1,695.84	1,695.84	1,695.84	1,695.84
Other	4,930.97	.00	4,930.97	4,930.97	4,930.97	4,930.97
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 218,959.56</b>	<b>\$ 60,225.32</b>	<b>\$ 279,184.88</b>	<b>\$ 1,563,732.95</b>	<b>\$337,671.18</b>	<b>\$ 1,901,404.13</b>

Part nine of an 11-part series on aberrant-Christian groups in America

# The Counterfeit Jesus of The Way International

By Tom Forehand, Jr.



**“Be a Winner . . . . [be]  
Delivered  
from poverty, sickness and  
poor health . . . .  
Have Whatever You Want.”**

This advertisement from Victor Paul Wierwille’s *The Way* is appealing, isn’t it? Yet, how can one trust his promises of health when he died of melanoma, a type of cancer?<sup>1</sup> How can one trust his promises of biblical correctness when he taught a counterfeit Jesus?

Born in 1916, Victor Paul Wierwille (VPW) received his Master of Theology from Princeton Theological Seminary in 1941. Soon, he initiated a radio ministry and became the pastor of an Evangelical and Reformed Church.<sup>2</sup> In

1942, Wierwille claimed that God “spoke to me audibly . . . . [God] said He would teach me the Word as it has not been known since the first century if I would teach it to others.”<sup>3</sup>

Filling the next few years with Bible study emphasizing the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, Wierwille left his denomination in 1957. By that year, he had spoken in tongues, started his “Power for Abundant Living” classes, studied Lamsa’s Aramaic view of the Bible, and taken control of the family farm near New Knoxville, Ohio. The farm soon became the center for his biblical research organization called The Way International.<sup>4</sup>

During the late 1960’s, The Way exploded with an influx of Haight-Ashbury hippie types mesmerized by

Wierwille, “a dazzler, a showman who . . . [understood] the techniques of audience manipulation . . . .”<sup>5</sup>

By 1974, The Way, bulging with young, highly-trained, self-disciplined converts, purchased a defunct college in Emporia, Kansas. Before Wierwille died in 1985, he was travelling in a \$750,000 turbo prop.<sup>6</sup> After Wierwille died, he was replaced by a new leader, L. Craig Martindale, who had joined The Way while at the University of Kansas where he “played football and was president of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes.”<sup>7</sup>

According to Christian researcher James Bjornstad, Wierwille’s scholarship is “an abomination.”<sup>8</sup> Wierwille, an ultradispensationalist, denies the personality of the Holy Spirit

and claims that one must speak in tongues to worship God "in spirit."<sup>9</sup> Thoroughly dedicated to their leaders, Way's disciples are equally dedicated to Bible study. One ex-Way member recently claimed, "I spent 20 minutes to one hour every day studying the Bible for two years. I only missed two days, one when my daughter was born, the other when my child had strep."<sup>10</sup>

### Honest?

Did Wierwille steal other men's writings? John Juedes claims that Wierwille "succumbed" to plagiarizing the works of J. E. Stiles and E. W. Bullinger. According to Juedes, Wierwille copied some sections of Bullinger's *The Giver and His Gifts* "almost word for word."<sup>11</sup>

### Reliable?

Was Wierwille's memory dependable? He claims that on December 12, 1951, while stranded by a blizzard in Tulsa, Oklahoma, he received the Holy Spirit. Yet, Personal Freedom Outreach (PFO), a Christian research organization, reveals that weather "records show no snow falling" in Tulsa on that date and "no blizzards for that entire month."<sup>12</sup>

Wierwille recalls that he "took everything" he "could take at the Moody Bible Institute [MBI] through correspondence courses"; yet, PFO claims Moody records indicate that "if he took any courses, he never completed one."<sup>13</sup>

The Way claims that "Doctor" Wierwille "completed his work for the Doctor of Theology degree at Pike's Peak Bible Seminary and Burton College . . ." <sup>14</sup> According to PFO: "The Colorado Commission on Higher Education [stated] that [Pike's] Peak Seminary . . . had no resident instruction, no published list of faculty, no accreditation and no supervision by any government agency."<sup>15</sup>

### "Another Jesus"

1. Denial of the Trinity—Wierwille: "There was no formal, established doctrine of the trinity until the fourth century."<sup>16</sup> Yet, according to Christian writer Cal Beisner, "[this] does not mean that the Church did not believe [the trinity] . . ."<sup>17</sup>

Second-century Theophilus, "one of the earliest commentators upon the Gospels," uses the expression ". . . types of the Trinity, of God, and His Word, and His Wisdom."<sup>18</sup>

Matthew's baptismal formula states: "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). Wierwille believes that this verse was probably "tampered" with, yet, he offers no proof from the ancient manuscripts of his accusation.<sup>19</sup>

The well-known, second-century Christian Justin Martyr wrote in connection with water baptism: "in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit . . ."<sup>20</sup>

*The Didache: Teaching Of The Twelve Apostles*, an anonymous text possibly of the first century, states: "Baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit . . ."<sup>21</sup>

2. Denial of Christ's Deity—One of Wierwille's books is titled *Jesus Christ Is Not God*.

a. Adding to God's Word—John 1:1 emphatically declares that the Word (the preincarnate Jesus) is the creator and is fully "God." Yet, Wierwille claims that before Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, the Word only existed as a forethought in the mind of God the Father.<sup>22</sup>

According to John Juedes, "While the Greek text of John [1:1-3] has only 36 words and the KJV uses 42, Wierwille's 'literal translation according to usage contains 91."<sup>23</sup>

b. Taking away from God's Word—The orthodox understanding of Colossians 1:15-17 is that the Word created all things before His virgin birth as Jesus. Yet, Wierwille claims that verses 16-17 form a "parenthesis" that refers not to Jesus but to the Father ("the invisible God" of verse 15).<sup>24</sup>

Concerning Christ's pre-existence, Christian writer Robert Sumner cogently analyzes II Corinthians 8:9. "The obvious question to ask . . . all . . . who deny the existence for Christ before Bethlehem is **When was He rich?** If He was rich, yet *became* poor for our sakes, He obviously had those riches before He ever came to this earth, was born in a stable, raised in poverty, ministered without a place to lay His head, owned only the clothes on His back when He died, then was buried in a borrowed tomb."<sup>25</sup>

To boot, the prophet Micah declared that the "goings forth" of Jesus have been "from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).

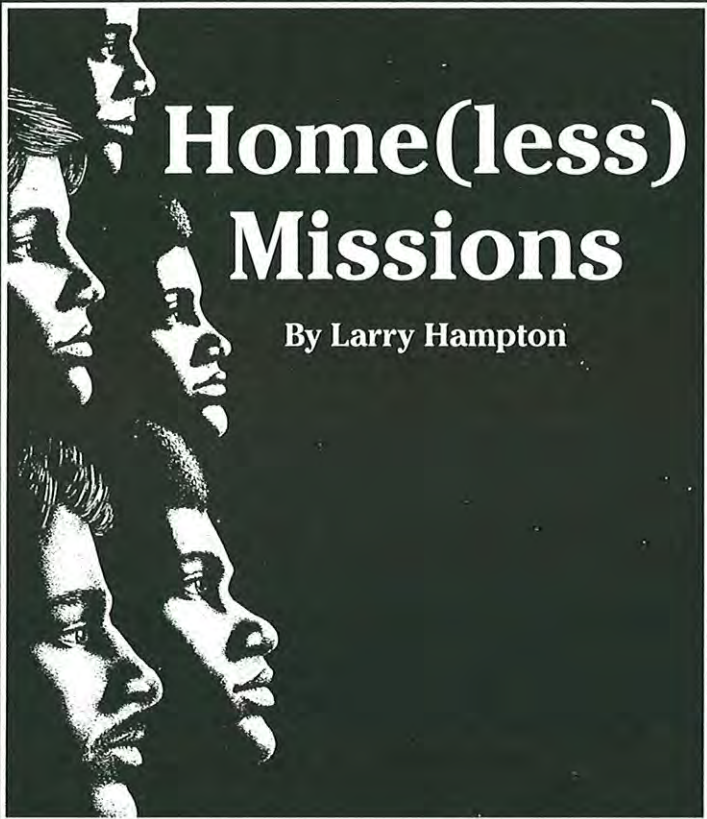
3. Denial of the Virgin Birth—Wierwille accepts the virgin conception of Jesus. Yet in spite of Matthew 1:23, he believes that Mary and Joseph had normal husband-and-wife relations *before* Jesus was born.<sup>26</sup>

## Endnotes

(Recommended reading materials in **boldface**)

1. See "CERTIFICATE OF DEATH" for "Victor Paul Wierwille" (Sidney-Shelby County Board of Health, Ohio).
2. J. Gordon Melton, *Encyclopedic Handbook of Cults In America*. Rev. Ed. (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), pp. 315-16.
3. Robert L. Sumner, *Jesus Christ Is God* (Murfreesboro, Tn.: Biblical Evangelism Press, 1983), p. 33.
4. Melton, pp. 315-16.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 316; Sumner, pp. 25-26, 29, footnote 18.
6. Sumner, pp. 25, 40; and author's 1997 e-mail communication with an ex-Way member concerning this plane.
7. Melton, p. 316.
8. Sumner, p. 32.
9. Melton, p. 318; Victor Paul Wierwille, *The New, Dynamic Church* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1986), pp. 176-177.
10. Author's 1997 telephone conversation with an ex-Way member.
11. John P. Juedes and Jay Valusek, *Will The Real Author Please Stand Up?* (St. Louis: A Personal Freedom Outreach, 1987), p. 3.
12. "The Way's Word . . . Mathematical Accuracy and Scientific Precision" (St. Louis: Personal Freedom Outreach, n.d.), p. 2.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
14. Victor Paul Wierwille, *The Word's Way* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1988), p. 287.
15. "The Way's Word . . . Mathematical Accuracy and Scientific Precision," p. 3.
16. Victor Paul Wierwille, *Jesus Christ Is Not God* (New Knoxville, Ohio: American Christian Press, 1986), p. 13.
17. E. Calvin Beisner, *God In Three Persons* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1987), p. 47.
18. The Rev. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, Eds. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. V. II (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Reprint 1994), pp. 87, 101.
19. *Jesus Christ Is Not God*, pp. 19ff.; also see Sumner, p. 62ff.
20. *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*. V. I, pp. 159, 183.
21. *The Apostolic Fathers* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1981), pp. 168, 177; (also see Beisner, pp. 49-50).
22. *Jesus Christ Is Not God*, p. 87.
23. Sumner, p. 69, footnote 53.
24. *Jesus Christ Is Not God*, pp. 120-121.
25. Sumner, pp. 75-77.
26. *The Word's Way*, pp. 169, 174.

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



# Home(less) Missions

By Larry Hampton

**A**merica's streets comprise a vast mission field—and a very needy one at that. Let me tell you a little about those who live there.

- 36.4 million Americans live in poverty.
- On any given night an estimated 650,000 people are homeless in our nation.
- Of that number,
  - 79% are men, 21% women.
  - 1% are Asian
  - 5% are Native American
  - 11% are Hispanic
  - 38% are African American
  - 45% are Caucasian
  - 100% of them will spend eternity in Heaven or Hell.
- 34% of the homeless are veterans of the U. S. armed services.
- Families with children represent approximately 38% of the homeless population and have become the fastest growing segment.
- Of the total homeless population, at least 160,000, or 27%, are children.
- The average age of a homeless person is 27.

The words of Fanny Crosby describe these people well:

Down in the human heart, crushed by the tempter,  
 Feelings are buried that grace can restore;  
 Touched by a loving heart, wakened by kindness,  
 Cords that are broken will vibrate once more.

The land of the homeless is a desperately needy mission field.

But there is no addiction so strong, no need so deep, no situation so hopeless that it cannot be turned around by God's love.

A missionary asked a native who was assisting him with the language, "How do you say, 'It doesn't matter,' in your language?"

The native replied, "Not me."

It's the same in every language, isn't it?

It doesn't matter if there are 36.4 million poor people in our country as long as I'm not one of them.

"Not me."

It doesn't matter if there are 650,000 homeless people in America if I'm not one of them.

"Not me."

Would it surprise you to learn that a Nashville businessman, on learning of the death of a homeless man, said, "Well, that's one less problem we have to deal with"?

Yes, the native tongue of the human heart is selfishness. Rescue mission workers, and all Christians for that matter, must master a foreign language, the language of love.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon said,

"Some men look for tall steeples and big bells;  
 Give me a rescue mission one yard from Hell."

The ministry of rescue is a mission endeavor that you can take part in *right now*. Your help is always needed—and welcomed—at a rescue mission.

If God calls you to a foreign country, go there as soon as possible and stay as long as you can.

If you do not feel called to leave your homeland, I urge you to weigh the possibility of serving the Lord in the city at a rescue mission. If God does not want you to work full-time at a mission, at least consider becoming a part of a mission's volunteer staff.

Come help us, "rescue the perishing, care for the dying." Together we will "snatch them in pity from sin and the grave." Join us as we "weep o'er the erring one, and lift up the fallen." Experience the joy as you "tell them of Jesus the mighty to save."

Let me warn you, you'll not find many "respectable sinners" at a rescue mission, but you will find many lost sheep who need to know the Good Shepherd.

You will not add to your prestige by serving at a mission. Like Jesus, you may be chided for wasting your time on "publicans and sinners." But one day you will hear our Heavenly Father say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." ■



**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Reverend Larry Hampton serves as director of financial development at the Union Mission in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a member of Cofer's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church.



# Momma's Gift

By Wendy Burt

**T**he first time I saw a white man, I was sitting in church. It was the middle of August and the humidity hovered in our Alabama county like grits in a cast iron kettle. I sat quietly, wedged between Momma and my Aunt Fancy, catching bits of breezes as they fanned themselves with their hard straw fans.

The preacher rambled on, his "fire and brimstone" sermon seasoned with the occasional "Hallelujah" and "Praise the Lord" from our sweaty congregation. I stared out the church window and wandered into a daydream, picturing the Sunday dinner we would have later that day. A Sunday feast was typical for all the families and I reckoned it was God's reward to all of us for sitting through two hours of preaching.

But that one summer Sunday everything changed for me. In the middle of this Bible-thumping, fist-clenched exuberance, the preacher stopped. The silence caught me by surprise, and at first I thought maybe he knew I wasn't listening—like God had allowed him to read my mind. I looked at the pulpit to see him standing there with an expression of disgust, staring at the back of the church as if the Devil himself had just entered. With the rest of the congregation, I turned to see the interruption.

There, leaning against the front doors of *our* church—our pure, *black* church—was a drifter. A skinny, disheveled, *white* drifter.

This man, this invader of our sacred space, stood before us in all his unholiness. His raggedy clothes seemed to hang on him and his face looked pasty and sunken, like a man waiting for death. Worst of all, he had entered our church barefoot, his blistered, bloody feet staining our holy wood floor.

We were still. He walked down the center aisle with slow deliberate steps. His legs looked fragile and weak and his hunched back made him look as though he carried the world on his shoulders.

"Pardon me, Reverend," he said, as he removed his hat and seated himself in the front pew.

The preacher looked around the congregation, and then at Mr. Jackson, our layman, who barely acknowledged the man before turning away. Looking down at the bloody floor, the preacher shook his head. He glanced at the drifter for just a second, and

with a roll of his eyes, picked up where he left off.

The man glanced at the stained floor and bowed his head, ashamed.

I couldn't take my eyes off him. His skin seemed to drip off him like wet laundry. I was confused by the preacher's reaction. I had never really listened to any of the Sunday sermons, but the bits and pieces I had picked up had taught me that God wanted us to be kind to others. And yet here, in the place that the preacher called, "God's House," I was witness to a stranger in need being passed over.

Then, to my right, Momma rose. Clutching her good Sunday kerchief, she walked straight to a bowl that sat on the communion table. The preacher stopped speaking. Taking the pitcher of water that the preacher himself had been drinking from during his sermons, she stepped down to the front pew.

"Be not ashamed, my brother," said Momma, kneeling in front of the man. I leaned forward and watched as she filled the bowl with water, and then, dunking her kerchief, she bathed the man's feet. I could see the man's face as he began to cry.

By the time Momma returned to her seat, I had forgotten about dinner, engrossed in the miracle that I had just witnessed. I saw Momma through different eyes that day. Like Rosa Parks walking to the front of the bus, Momma had challenged the racism that surrounded her. Like Susan B. Anthony taking charge when it was necessary, Momma had showed me the strength of a woman's actions. And, like the Good Samaritan helping a stranger in need, Momma had gone to the aid of another in need of kindness.

That hot Alabama Sunday, Momma showed me not only who she was, but who I was. In one day, she set a life-long example, paving a road for her only daughter to walk down proudly, as an African American, as a woman, as a Christian. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Wendy Burt is a free lance writer who lives in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

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# Why Me, Lord?

By Marilyn Pritchard

**B**ut, why me, Lord? I don't deserve this. I haven't done anything in my whole life to deserve any of this. Why doesn't she have this in her life? And what about him, why not him?

You've put so many things in my life, Lord, that I don't deserve. And I don't know how to . . . to thank You.

There's the love You've showered on me since birth. And the patience You've exercised again and again when I have fallen, when I have failed, when I have sinned. You've never stopped loving me and You're always there, time after time, to help me up.

The intricate way You've woven together the strands of my life are inconceivable to my finite mind. You know the beginning from the end. When something happens (bad or good), You know why even if I can't understand. You know how it will fit into the fabric of Your plan which is so much bigger than I and my one little life. You know what is happening when my whole life is chaos. You see through even the darkest darkness to watch over me with care.

You understand the events of my life and know their purpose. While they are occurring, I can't understand why. With some things, I've never understood. Yet, sometimes You share the reason with me, later, as the pattern of life unfolds. I don't deserve that, Lord . . . the touch of Your hand in my life, the understanding You provide, the intricate detail You work all through my being.

The times I feel so alone, You are aware of that forsaken feeling rattling around in my heart. You felt it when You were on earth. You endured loneliness on the cross that I cannot begin to un-

derstand. You are with me even when loneliness hides Your presence. Lord, I don't deserve that. But thank You. Thank You for being there in my darkness, always with me, always love.

And the fear, Lord, it is sometimes paralyzing. And dark. And ominous. And I'm frozen in time, unable to think or do anything. You're there. You wrap Your strong arms around me and go with me through the fear and that which causes it. You never forsake me, even when fear produces darkness so powerful that nothing penetrates the fog. No one can reach me, Lord . . . but You do. And I don't deserve that, Lord. Why me?

The times things go right in my life: I don't deserve them. Why me, Lord, and not someone else? Why work

blessings all through my life when I deserve so much less? I don't deserve Your blessings, Lord, but . . . thank You.

I don't deserve the salvation You provided for me through the death of Your Son on the cross. Lord, He was the one who *didn't* deserve death, I and all of mankind *did*. Yet He endured it so that I might live. We hated Him. Yet He loved us and made the ultimate sacrifice . . . with His life. And oh, God, I don't deserve that. But, Lord, . . . I thank You. ■

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**ABOUT THE WRITER:** Marilyn Pritchard has been on the staff of *Contact* since 1984 as editorial assistant. She is a member of Cofer's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.





When a child grows up before parents are ready.

# Too Fast

By Jeffrey G. Myers

I recently learned some new things about my baby girl, Mollie. Mollie is 15 months old (I am 313 months old) and she has been a daddy's girl since the day she was born. Her eyes never light up so bright as when she sees me. She laughs more when she is around me. Don't get me wrong, she has a great relationship with her mother, but Mollie is definitely Daddy's girl (the pride passages in Proverbs do not apply to one's children).

Being a big kid myself, I have always been able to pick good toys for Mollie. The ones that I like to play with are always the ones that she wants to play with—until last night. When my wife, Jamie, was at an Auxiliary meeting, I decided to take Mollie to a large toy store and treat her (and me) to something new.

We strolled down every aisle singing our favorite song, "My Dad's the Best." However, all was not well. Unbeknownst to me, Mollie had gone through a significant change in the last several weeks—she had become a little girl (I blame my wife)!

When we reached my favorite toy aisles, I began handing her items that I was positive she would want. When she seemed disinterested with the mini-basketball, I didn't worry much. It was when she pushed away the plastic golf clubs with a look of disgust that I realized something was horribly wrong.

I hurriedly pressed my wrist to her forehead—no fever. I began feeling for lumps around her neck and throat (I didn't know what it was I was looking for, but I'd seen Jamie do it)—nothing. I even did the unthinkable and checked the diaper—clean.

As we turned the corner to the next aisle, I was bewildered. *What could be wrong? She usually likes those things.* I was startled out of my thoughts when Mollie began to scream and point. She had found a toy she wanted. We then played her version of "hotter and colder" (which is much louder) until we had zeroed in on the desired toy and she snatched it off the shelf.

I stood there in disbelief as she sat in the cart holding a box of objects that I can't even allow myself to classify as toys. There was a pink blow dryer, a pink curling iron, little pink rollers, a mirror and some fake make-up. *What unholy thing was this and who was this little person in my shopping cart?*

She was ecstatic and let out a series of oohs and aahs that could have rivaled the audience of Wheel of Fortune. Her eyes quickly fixed on other things in this aisle and we ended up going home with a set of plastic dishes that she couldn't live without.

*She was growing up way too fast. Even worse than that, she was growing up to be a girl!* The rest of the evening Jamie and I were served imaginary foods and beverages. It was all very cute, but—well, too fast.

I wonder if our Heavenly Father ever sat back and sighed

those words as he watched you and me grow up—*too fast?* When we develop, grow and mature spiritually and physically, is God only reluctantly happy knowing of the trials and temptations that such growth brings? Is He saddened at the innocence lost due to our own sins and rebellion? Is He angered when we are mistreated and others shatter our dreams? Of course He is!

Isaiah 49:15 tells us that a mother will forget and lose compassion for the very child she is nursing before our Father in Heaven would forget us and cease to have compassion for us. It has been said that if you were to combine the love of a million mothers (or fathers), God's love for each of us would be much greater.

I believe God, my Abba, looks down on me, as He does you, and thinks to Himself, "He's growing too fast," (and maybe some days, "He's not growing fast enough."). Despite those feelings, though, He doesn't stop us from growing and making our own choices. He could.

My Abba could poke and prod me from field to field like a herd of cattle, keeping me from harm, protecting my spirit and emotions, and preventing all the mistakes I've made that He had to clean up after or bail me out of.

However, God knows that I will only love Him the way He wants me to love Him if He allows me to choose between the way He wants for me and the way that I want for myself. Turns out He's right and I have come to love Him out of my own free will.

I can take Mollie to a thousand doctors and get a thousand different opinions, but I can't keep her from growing up. I suppose if I'm honest I don't want to keep her from growing. I know the potential that lies within her (she's an advanced child) and I get excited about seeing that potential realized. I know she'll get herself into all kinds of trouble and I'll probably have to clean up after her (the dishes are already strewn across the floor), but that's the way it should be. I just hope she'll occasionally choose the toys I would like her to have.

Maybe you should check out the toys God is showing you, too. They're probably more fun than those old dishes. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Jeffrey G. Myers serves as minister of youth and outreach at Sherwood Forest Free Will Baptist Church in El Sobrante, California.

# FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

## Ohio Adopts \$377,000 Budget

COLUMBUS, OH—Delegates to Ohio's 60th annual state association adopted a \$377,000 budget, according to Executive Secretary Edwin Hayes. The cooperative funds will be allocated: State Office (52%), State Missions (15%), National Ministries (30%) and State Youth Conference (3%).

Among the nearly 500 attendees were 82 ministers, 39 lay delegates and eight deacons. The June 26-27 meeting gathered at Heritage Temple FWB Church in Columbus. Moderator Robert Prichard was elected to his fifth term.

Delegates approved two constitutional changes. One change requires state boards and agencies to present annual budgets for approval. The second forbids

state employees from serving on any standing boards.

Executive Secretary Edwin Hayes said that delegates authorized two new committees for the annual state association—Prayer Committee and Registration Committee. The Executive Committee will determine responsibilities for the new committees.

The annual State Ministry Offering set a record for the third consecutive year. This year's offering topped \$7,900 and will be distributed: State Missions (50%), State Office (40%), State Youth (10%).

Three Ohio ministers preached sermons developing the association theme, "Earnestly Contending for the Faith." The speakers: Pastor

Brian Phillips (Wyandotte FWB Church), Pastor Bill Hayes (Hillview FWB Church) and Evangelist Calvin Evans.

The state office and Ambassador Bookstore reported record combined incomes surpassing \$1.1 million for the first time.

Delegates instructed the Executive Committee to investigate the possibility of restoring David Marks' gravestone and report back in 1999. Marks, known as "the Boy Preacher," died in the 1840s.

Ohio home missions plans to put greater emphasis on "Tent-makers" in the state.

The 1999 state association will meet June 25-26 at Heritage Temple FWB Church in Columbus.

## Canadians Reaffirm Doctrinal Position

NEW BRUNSWICK, CANADA—Delegates to Atlantic Canada's 120th annual session voted to reaffirm the association's doctrinal position regarding the security of the believer, according to clerk Jeff Crabtree. The vote addressed the historic Free Will Baptist stance regarding the possibility of apostasy.

The meeting convened at Saint John Valley Bible Camp in Sommerville on June 27. Dwayne Broad moderated the session and was re-elected to his third term. Twenty-six people regis-

tered for the business session.

A much larger number heard Free Will Baptist executive secretary Melvin Worthington speak four times during the June 25-28 Bible Conference on "Ambassadors for Christ."

Delegates voted to update the doctrinal and governing documents of the association. They also adopted a constitutional change that allows ordained ministers from other denominations who are called to pastor associational churches to perform pastoral du-

ties, including officiating during ordinances. Several stipulations condition the privilege.

Two highlights included ordaining Stuart Clark to preach (Stuart graduated from FWBCC in May.) and granting a license to preach to Matthew McAfee.

The 1999 session will meet June 26 at Saint John Valley Bible Camp.

## House Parent Stung to Death



GREENEVILLE, TN—Mr. Donald Wayne Stewart (45), lead house parent in the Jane Brown Cottage, at Free Will Baptist Family Ministries (FWBFM) died July 27 after being swarmed by yellow jackets while working in his yard. Spokesman Kevin Trimble said that Mr. Stewart was pronounced dead at the Takoma Hospital in Greeneville after being rushed there by ambulance.

Stewart apparently disturbed a nest of ground yellow jackets that swarmed him Monday afternoon. Donald and Anna Stewart began working at FWBFM December 1, 1996, as parents for the P.A.T.H. Shelter. They assumed their lead house parents' role at Jane Brown Cottage in the fall of 1997.

Born and raised in Texas, Mr. Stewart worked at the Baptist Children's Home in Thomasville, North Carolina, before coming to FWBFM.

Kevin Trimble said, "The Stewarts showed a tremendous love for each child in their care. Each of our cottages function as a family—going on vacation, administering the financial budget, attending church and working through problem situations."

Mr. Trimble is survived by his wife, Anna; two daughters, Rebekah and Emily of Greeneville; two sons, Brian and Darren of Latexo, Texas; three sisters and three brothers, all of Texas; one granddaughter.

## Arkansas "Celebrates the Century"

CONWAY, AR—More than 1,000 Free Will Baptists crowded into Conway Public School Auditorium as the Arkansas State Association gathered to celebrate 100 years of service during its 101st annual session on August 5-7, according to promotional director David Joslin. Delegates met under the association theme, "Celebrate the Century," which featured sermons and devotionals focused on the century of progress.

In addition to receiving a specially prepared centennial program, registrants also had opportunity to purchase the just-published book, *History of Arkansas Free Will Baptists*. The 158-page book was written by David Joslin and chronicles state and district association efforts. (The paperback book sells for \$5.)

Wednesday evening, the state's mass choir, under the direction of Doug Little, sang a medley of songs composed by the late Luther G. Presley who was a prominent Arkansas Free Will Baptist leader during the early years.

Arkansas ministers Ben Scott, Rupert Pixley, David Joslin and David Copeland preached during the centennial session. Three other ministers—J. W. Blanks, Raymond Chronister, Keith Johnson—led devotionals. *Contact* editor Jack Williams spoke twice during the Wednesday Bible Conference.

Registration statistics for the meeting included 109 ordained ministers, 69 delegates, 18 missionaries, 49 deacons and 734 visitors. Many were unable to formally register in the time allotted.

The centennial reports indicated 20,718 members in 218 Arkansas churches and 15 district associations. The state reported 338 ordained ministers, 66 licensed ministers and 533 ordained deacons. The 218 churches added 1,600 members last year and baptized 822 converts.

Promotional director David Joslin said that Arkansas Free Will Baptists channeled \$2.2 million to state and national ministries in 1997.

In other action, delegates unanimously approved a resolution calling for a comprehensive plan for Christian higher education among Free Will Baptists. Delegates instructed that letters be sent to the presidents and board chairmen of the four Free Will Baptist colleges urging them to explore the possibility of such a unified educational system.

The same resolution requested that the National Association's Executive Committee and General Board initiate a study committee to develop such a long-range comprehensive plan.

Recognition was given to district associations older than 100 years with special recognition given to Old Mt. Zion Association which was organized in 1842. Appreciation certificates were given to past moderators, clerks and promotional directors. Certificates of appreciation were given to 26 churches older than 100 years. Mt. Zion Church in the Old Mt. Zion Association was recognized as being the oldest at 132 years, organized in 1866.

Forty-one ministers were honored for being ordained 40 years or more. The three oldest ordained ministers were J. E. White of the Saline Association (ordained 69 years); Cecil Garrison of Old Mt. Zion Association (ordained 65 years); and Rupert Pixley of Zion Hope #2 Association (ordained 60 years).

Delegates named Atkins pastor David Bishop as moderator. He pastors Union Grove FWB Church and succeeds James Forlines who served six terms and was elected general director of the Foreign Missions Department.

The 1999 session will meet August 4-5 at Cavanaugh FWB Church in Fort Smith.

## Florida Fires Prayed Back

SCOTSMOOR, FL—The fires that raged unchecked across Florida in May, June and July ran into an unexpected wall of prayer at Scottsmoor, according to Reverend Edward Maynard, pastor of First FWB Church.

Maynard said, "On July 1, I saw the hand of God move in a mighty way about 11:15 p.m. when the fire jumped across I-95. People in the community had been told to evacuate and the wind continued blowing the fire toward our house and church. My son and I remained, determined to do all we could to save the home and church.

"As the fire approached, we were on the roof spraying water (and praying). Using a cordless phone, I called all I could think of asking them to pray. I knew that only God could save our house and church.

"The wind which had been blowing east all day gusting up to 30 mph, shifted just as the fire reached the street in front of our house and began blowing from the south. The trees in front and back of the house were scorched, but our house and church building were spared."

The wind shifted again and began blowing from the east again. The fire crossed the street and continued east three blocks south of First FWB Church.

Pastor Maynard said, "Not one of our church members lost their home even though they were in the line of fire."

However, one Free Will Baptist family in Scottsmoor did experience fire damage. The Carl Adkins home was damaged.

Florida executive secretary Millard Sasser said, "The Indian River Association established a fund to assist them and others who may have been affected by the fire."

## Texas Elects Keith Woody Moderator

DUNCANVILLE, TX—Delegates to Texas' 84th annual state association elected Austin pastor Keith Woody as moderator during their June 10-12 session. Woody pastors Lakehills FWB Church at Cedar Park, an Austin suburb. The 58-year-old minister was ordained in 1971 and has pastored in both Texas and Oklahoma.

Commenting on the 1998 association, the new moderator said, "This was the greatest state meeting in the history of Texas Free Will Baptists because of the progressive programs adopted by our state."

Delegates adopted the TEAM Plan of missions support and will implement it in January 1999. The plan (Texans Excited About Missions) came from a two-year-research program, and provides support for Texas-based foreign

missionaries and home missionaries (both national and state).

State clerk Thurmon Murphy said that delegates approved a \$157,000 state budget with cooperative funds from The Together Way Plan to be divided: State Office (40%), National Ministries (25%), State Missions (23%), Christian Education Board (12%).

Two ministers preached sermons developing the association theme, "Little is Much when God is in It." Donald Bailey (San Angelo) and Louis Nettleton (Fort Worth) spoke Wednesday and Thursday evenings.

In other activity, B. J. Worth of Worth Tax and Financial Services, conducted two workshops for preachers and church treasurers.

The 1999 state association will meet June 9-11 at Lakehills FWB Church in Cedar Park.

## Idaho Church Breaks Ground

NAMPA, ID—Members of Nampa FWB Church in Nampa, Idaho, broke ground on a 2.9-acre site for a new church, according to Tentmaker home missionary Delmar Hopkins. The June 7 ceremony culminated a five-year effort that began July 4, 1993, when Reverend Hopkins met with four people.

Evangelist Wade Jernigan helped set the church in order in 1994. Through Pastor Hopkins' leadership, the church now has

a membership of 42 and averages 60-plus in attendance.

Foreign Missions director R. Eugene Waddell was present for the June 7 ground breaking service. The new building will be erected adjacent to an 88-acre subdivision.

Pastor Hopkins said, "God has been good to us. The Home Missions Department helped us secure a loan to build. A church in Eagle, Idaho, gave us 17 padded pews."



Foreign Missions director Eugene Waddell (L), Joe Cluck, Steven Hopkins, Pastor Delmar Hopkins.

## Retired Minister Still Working Hard

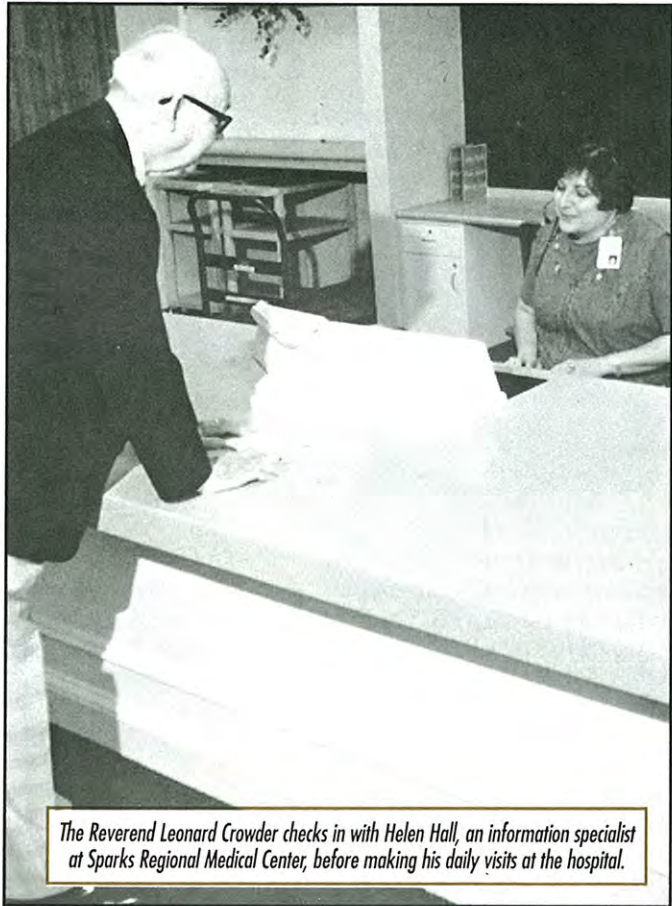
FORT SMITH, AR—Although he retired from pastoring in 1980, Reverend Leonard Crowder has spent an average of six hours per day visiting hospital patients for the past 18 years.

*Times Record* newspaper reporter Pam Smith (Fort Smith) said in a June 20 article, "... Rev. Leonard Crowder doesn't do his ministering in a church. He makes the rounds every day in local hospitals, offering prayers of healing and a comforting hand to patients he knows and some he's never met."

Born 81 years ago, the son of an Oklahoma sharecropper, Brother Crowder was converted in September 1933 in a Free Will Baptist revival meeting and baptized in a cotton gin pond along with 101 others, including his sister.

He began preaching in 1937 and pastored 43 years. His last two pastorates lasted 33 years. He pastored in Stigler, Oklahoma, from 1947-1953. Then he accepted the call to lead Walnut Street FWB Church in Fort Smith where he stayed 27 years until he retired in 1980.

Crowder has officiated at more than 4,000 funerals, baptized 1,500 converts and performed 350 marriages. He sings with the Waves of Faith Quartet and a men's quartet at Bethlehem FWB Church in Van Buren, where he serves as minister of visitation with his long-time pastor-friend, Rupert Pixley.



*The Reverend Leonard Crowder checks in with Helen Hall, an information specialist at Sparks Regional Medical Center, before making his daily visits at the hospital.*

James Mitchell/Times Record

## Pastor Celebrates 46 Years in Ministry

WAYNESVILLE, MO—Pastor Elmer Turnbough and his wife, Gladys, looked back on 46 years of Christian service and 50 years of marriage this year. Reverend Turnbough began his first pastorate in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1952.

During the past 46 years, the Turnboughs have pastored 18 churches in seven states—Missouri, Illinois, Tennessee, Alabama, Florida, Delaware and North Carolina. They have served as church planters and missionaries as well as pastoral roles. He currently pastors First FWB Church in Waynesville.

The three Turnbough children are also involved in the Lord's work. Eldest son, Jim, pastors Trinity FWB Church in Greenville, North Carolina.



*Gladys and Elmer Turnbough*

Daughter Judy (Bailey) is a Free Will Baptist missionary in Tokyo, Japan. Youngest son, Jeff, is a Free Will Baptist missionary to Madrid, Spain.

Two of the Turnboughs' grandchildren are students at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Two others serve music ministry roles in local churches.

Perhaps the greatest surprise in 50 years happened the week before the Turnboughs celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. Their children, grandchildren and a great-grandchild arrived from Japan, Spain, Tennessee, North Carolina and Washington to cheer Mom and Dad Turnbough.

## Reverend Joe Blair with the Lord



OKLAHOMA CITY, OK—The Reverend Joe Blair died July 25 at Southwest Medical Center in Oklahoma City. He was 65. The Oklahoma native was born November 26, 1934, near Purcell.

Brother Blair answered the call to preach at age 15 and began pastoring at age 16. He invested 50 years of ministry in Oklahoma and California Free Will Baptist churches. He organized one church in California and pastored four. He pastored seven Oklahoma churches.

His final pastorate at Southwest FWB Church in Oklahoma City lasted 20 years (1975-1995). The congregation voted him the Pastor Emeritus title. The church had planned an August 30 celebration to honor Brother Blair's 50 years in the ministry.

Joe stayed active in district, state and National Association work. He served 16 years as moderator of Oklahoma's First Oklahoma Association.

Funeral services were conducted July 28 at Southwest FWB Church. Reverends Wade Jernigan and Jack Richey officiated.

Reverend Blair is survived by his wife, Louise; two sons, David and Danny of Oklahoma City; one brother, Beryl Blair of Comanche, OK; one sister Nettie Jernigan of Lexington, OK, and three grandchildren.

## Georgia Steering Committee Meets

ATLANTA, GA—The Georgia Steering Committee met Friday, September 11, for a day-long orientation session at the Atlanta Marriott Marquis Hotel to expedite plans to host the 63rd annual national convention July 18-22, 1999. Plenary sessions of the National Association will convene in downtown Atlanta at the Atlanta Civic Center.

Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington said he blocked 1,400 rooms in one hotel to house delegates. The convention housing form will be printed in the April 1999 issue of *Contact*, and in Free Will Baptist state papers as space is available.

The Georgia contingency includes the Steering Committee, state moderator, state WAC president and NYC advisor.

Chairman: **William Smith**  
 Registration Committee: **Herbert Waid**  
 Hospitality Committee: **Terry Pierce**  
 Prayer Committee: **Charles Barnard**  
 Ushering Committee: **Jack Daniel**  
 State Moderator: **Paul Smith**  
 WAC President: **Gail Smith**  
 NYC Advisor: **Rodney Goodman**

The Steering Committee met 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. gathering information, reviewing committee assignments and discussing convention facilities. Committee members will meet twice in 1999 (January and May) to assess convention plans.

## Directory Update

### ALABAMA

Larry Colburn to Mt. Zion Church, Northport from Carolwood Church, Northport as youth pastor

### GEORGIA

Rodney Goodman to Pine Level Church, Alma from First Church, Albany as youth minister

### INDIANA

Tom Cross to Wabash Church, Wabash from Woodbine Church, Nashville, TN, as assistant pastor

### MICHIGAN

Danny Tackett to Garden City Church, Garden City

### NORTH CAROLINA

Brian Williams to Boger City Church, Boger City

### OHIO

Carl Miller to Dailyville Church, Waverly from Double Branch Church, Unadilla, GA

Bill Phipps to Fellowship Tabernacle Church, Xenia

Ishmael Smith to Poplar Ridge Church, Bidwell

### OKLAHOMA

David Sutton to Southern Oaks Church, Oklahoma City from First Church, Duncanville, TX

Jeffrey Conner to First Church, Wewoka from First Church, Carthage, TX

### TEXAS

Jerry McArthur to United Church, Bryan from First Church, Denison

### OTHER PERSONNEL

Todd Shelton to Southside Church, Paintsville, KY, as minister of music from Victory Church, Goldsboro, NC, as minister of music

George Lee to Victory Church, Goldsboro, NC, as minister of music

Randy Graham to Victory Church, Goldsboro, NC, as minister of Christian education and youth

## CURRENTLY . . .

Here's the good news from **First FWB Church** in **Smithville, MS**. Attendance finally topped 100 when 105 people showed up for morning worship. Now here's the bad news. Pastor **Dennis Kizzire** agreed to climb to the roof of the church and eat a banana sandwich if members persuaded 100 people to attend. They did. Then they made sure the preacher did what he promised. By the way, because of a special program for youth, more than 40 youth now attend on Wednesday nights.

It's free and you can get one. The Free Will Baptist **Stewardship Notebook** can be yours by writing: The Together Way Plan, P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011. The notebook will be sent to you complete with stewardship material inserts. When new materials are printed, you will automatically be sent the current insert.

Pastor **Doice McAlister** celebrated 50 years in the ministry August 22. He pastors **Turlock FWB Church** in **Turlock, CA**. Doice also serves as California's General Board member to the National Association.

**Southwest FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**, reports nine new members and four converts. The congregation turned 27 years old in August. They scheduled dinner on the grounds and special morning services. **John Meade** pastors.

Six conversions, eight baptisms and nine new members brought smiles all around at **Heritage Temple FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**. Pastor **Billy Sharpston** leads the busy congregation.

Ohio evangelist **Clovis Vanover** witnessed 46 conversions in six revivals and 13 appointments.

Pastor **Lowell King** leads the **Wakefield FWB Church** in **Wakefield, OH**. Leaders reported six baptisms and 14 new members.

Three young men have answered the call to preach at **Hillview FWB Church** in **Reynoldsburg, OH**. They are **Jon Emory**, **Brady Hall** and **Tony Goett**. Pastor **Bill Hayes** chaired the Registration Committee in 1997 when the National

Association met in Cincinnati.

**First FWB Church** in **Park Hills, MO**, dedicated 5,400-square-foot of new ministry space in a two-story structure, according to Pastor **Ken Dodson**. Mayor **Jess Martin** and Missouri executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** brought greetings. Former associate pastor **Gene Howell** preached the morning message which resulted in two conversions and one rededication. The church was founded in 1880.

Some 98 students and 40 workers teamed for a successful VBS at **Blue Point FWB Church** in **Cisne, IL**. Pastor **Ernie Lewis** said they raised more than \$300 for missionaries Dennis and Carol Teague. The church also purchased a 15-passenger van for ministry outreach.

Thanks to **Bob** and **Pat Hastings**, there's a new Kimball organ in **Arnold View FWB Church** in **Creal Springs, IL**. **Ivan Ryan** pastors.

Vacation Bible School averaged 80 students nightly at **First FWB Church** in **Decatur, IL**. The VBS also raised \$247 for missions, according to Pastor **Larry Monday**.

Members of **Pittsburgh FWB Church** in **Pittsburgh, IL**, dedicated the property on which they plan to build a new church. Every member got to take part in the ground-breaking ceremony, says Pastor **Danny Gray**.

They're off! Members of **Cavanaugh FWB Church** in **Fort Smith, AR**, voted on a three-phase building program, according to Pastor **Will Harmon**. Phase 1 calls for a two-story, 10,000-square-foot classroom and office complex. Phase 2 will boost seating capacity in the worship center by 135 seats. Phase 3 will add 30 new parking spaces.

Home missionary **Mark Vandivort** completed 38 years of continuous ministry that took him from New Hampshire to Arizona planting churches. He also served as field secretary for the Home Missions Department, assistant to the director, and as editor of *Mission Grams*. Mark's versatility made him effective as

a pastor, church planter and journalist.

Pastor **Cliff Donoho** reports 22 conversions and eight baptisms at **Heritage FWB Church** in **Davenport, IA**.

Members of **Donelson FWB Church** in **Nashville, TN**, dedicated an 800-seat, multi-purpose celebration center. The center includes a commercial kitchen, suite of music offices as well as 16,000 square feet for future educational space. When not set for worship, the center becomes a recreational gymnasium. Pastor **Rob Morgan** said the structure is the first of its kind, utilizing a large stage which can be winched up against the wall when the area is needed for other events. The new facility allows the church to move from three morning worship services to one.

The **Wellington FWB Church** in **Wellington, KS**, sustained several thousand dollars storm damage from wind, water and hail. The church is without a pastor.

Members of **Bellview FWB Church** in **Colquitt, GA**, dedicated their remodeled auditorium. The six-month remodeling effort produced a cathedral ceiling, new baptistry and pulpit area, enlarged vestibule, new carpet, stained glass windows and steeple. Pastor **J. M. Creech** said that a ramp for the handicapped was added. Guest speaker for the occasion was **Damon Dodd**.

**Marietta FWB Church** in **Lyons, GA**, dedicated a new steeple which had been donated by **Ken** and **Ann Murphy** in memory of **J. E. Wood**, Mrs. Murphy's father. **C. Irvin Murphy** pastors.

Members of **Horse Branch FWB Church** in **Turbeville, SC**, dedicated two buildings in honor of those who contributed so greatly to the church ministry. The 2,800-square-foot educational wing was dedicated as "The Beasley Educational Wing: in honor of former pastor **Wilburn Beasley**. A 1,680-square-foot music building was dedicated as "The Coker Music Building in memory of **Willie** and **Gladys Coker** and their son, **Lenich**. **Charley Carmack** pastors. ■



## BOARD OF RETIREMENT

### *Should I Choose an Annuity?*

Under our Free Will Baptist Retirement Trust, a retiring participant may receive up to 100 percent of his funds in cash. However, many do not find the cash settlement their best option.

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) considers lump sum distributions of tax-deferred funds as taxable income the year one receives the funds. Generally, such a settlement will force the participant into a higher tax bracket.

An annuity settlement prorates the tax-deferred liability over the annuitant and spouse's lifetime. Most retirees move into a lower tax bracket at retirement since income decreases. Annuity payments are not included as income for social security limits.

An annuity may alleviate a major part of the tax liability for ministers. Our plan designates annuity payments as housing allowance up to the limit in each individual's case. IRS recognizes annuity payments as tax-free housing allowance only from denominational plans.

Participants find another advantage in the annuity settlement. Once they place funds in an annuity pool, no one can invade them for any reason. Should an annuitant or spouse require nursing home care, the providers can seize cash, stocks, bonds, savings and sometimes even real estate to meet expenses. They may take part of the annuity payment, but they can never invade the principal. In the event of one's death, annuity payments continue to the surviving spouse.

An annuity provides for the retiree and spouse's lifetime needs without dissipation or loss of funds. Aging parents who loan money to children find them sometimes unable or unwilling to repay the loan. Others fall prey to scam artists.

Physical or mental illnesses may become a real threat in old age. A man or woman quite capable of handling finances and investments now may lose that ability later in life.

Our annuity plan has a special advantage. It guarantees that all earnings of the fund benefit the participants. Our annuity tables assume five percent earnings. Any earnings above five percent provide permanent increases in annuity payments.

Most other annuity programs do not offer an increase in payments. For example, insurance companies guarantee a set annuity payment.

But regardless of their earnings experience, annuity payments remain the same.

When participants choose an annuity option, the Board separates their funds in an annuity pool. Each year an actuary evaluates the annuity fund and determines the amount of increase in annuity payments as of January 1. Any increase continues for the life of the agreement. Every year the fund's earnings exceed five percent the annuitants will receive further increases. Annuity payments for 1998 are 26.6% greater than those of 1991. This increase is the result of small increases each year exceeding the inflation rate.

In our retirement plan, annuitants share in extra benefits since they remain in the program for life. The purpose of our retirement plan—any retirement plan, including the Individual Retirement Account (IRA)—is primarily to provide a monthly income for retirees and their spouses. That's why all plans emphasize the annuity options and why some plans make provision only for annuities.

Several years ago a woman in Oklahoma left a cash bequest to our Board to benefit our retirees. Another woman from Virginia left property designated the same. These Board-placed gifts are held in a Memorial Endowment fund. Earnings from this fund presently provide a birthday and Christmas gift to each annuitant each year.

It is often said there is safety in numbers. Our payments are guaranteed by the entire annuity pool. Any one of our annuity options (we have five different ones) provides assurance that you, and a beneficiary when included, can never outlive your income. For those who fear an early death we offer options with guaranteed minimum payment periods of 10 or 15 years.

Participants may choose freely any option the trust provides for, whether cash, a customized settlement or annuity. But we do ask each one to pray and consider the advantages of the annuity program for themselves and especially for their spouses. ■





**FOREIGN MISSIONS**

*TEAM Cuba '98*

By Leah Chamberlin



*TEAM Cuba '98 gathers with leaders Ronald and Linda Callaway and coordinator Ken Eagleton.*

Ninety miles from the United States an island sits locked in time. The promises of common equality and shared benefits have created a land of little. It is Cuba, and it is struggling to survive. Somehow, once you step foot on the island, you soon learn to look past the obvious struggles right to the heart of a people who have more hope and happiness than most Americans. I discovered this place and its people this summer when I traveled to Cuba with TEAM (*Teens Equipped and Active in Missions*) Cuba '98.

*Painting, Shoveling, Scrubbing*

I spent 15 incredible days seeing the mighty work of God on the island. TEAM members spent the days painting walls, shoveling sand, scrubbing tile, and distributing goods to the people. We spent the evenings in churches sharing our faith and joy in Jesus Christ. We fell in love with all the smiles and hugs and kisses and the great effort they put into praising the Lord.

The voices of the people and the children rang out loud and clear as they sang songs to our Savior. I will never forget the clapping hands and jingling tambourines, but more than that, I will never forget how they clung to the power of God and trusted so fully in His faithfulness.

*People on Fire*

People gathered in crowded shacks with rotten roofs and sat on little wooden benches. They met outdoors with the pigs



*TEAM members help restore the house recently acquired for the FWB Retirement Home.*

and the chickens, and they gathered in driveways on old bus seats to worship God. These were the churches of a people on fire for Jesus. They had so little materialistically but so very much inside their hearts.

*Amazing Grace*

When we sit in the padded pews of our churches and sing "Amazing Grace," we should realize that at the very same moment in Cuba people are gathering, probably for the fifth time that week. Only, they sit on their wooden benches under the stars to worship our God and to sing of His amazing grace.

Every quarter and dollar we place in the offering for foreign missions is important! Those gifts just might be used to buy another bus seat so one more person can sit, instead of stand, to hear God's Word. We should pray earnestly for God to bless and watch over the people who are making such an earnest effort to serve Him in a land where believers in Christ face opposition. We should be very honored to have these Cubans as brothers and sisters in Christ.



*Leah Chamberlin, from Greeneville, Tenn., was one of 10 dedicated teens who went to Cuba in the summer of 1998.*

**Teens Are Needed for Two TEAM '99 Trips Abroad**

Send for application by December 1:

**TEAM**  
P.O. Box 5002  
Antioch, TN 37011-5002



## MASTER'S MEN

# Start a Men's Ministry, Charlie Brown!

By Tom Dooley, General Director

Charlie Brown was sitting in a deck chair near the front of a large boat when his philosopher friend Lucy walked up and commented, "Some people go through life with their deck chairs facing forward, gazing out where they are going." She continued, "Others go through life with their deck chairs facing backwards, looking at where they've been." After a slight pause she fired a question at Charlie Brown. "Charlie Brown, which way is your deck chair facing?"

Charlie Brown responded simply, "I really don't know. I spend most of my time trying to get my deck chair unfolded!"

In the pastorate there were many times when I felt like Charlie Brown. Pastors are busy, overworked and often under-appreciated. Most are not entrenched in the past, but because of all the demands upon their time they can become preoccupied with trying to unfold the deck chair.

The urgent and necessary must be tended to cautiously. If church leaders lose sight of the horizon, their churches will drift aimlessly along settling for nothing more than self-perpetuating programs. Adjust your deck chair for a moment, face it forward and take a look at what you may be missing.

Jesus challenges us to get a vision of the fields that are ready for harvest (John 4:35). One opportunity that many are not seeing is the potential of and need for men's ministry in our local congregations. Of the adults in attendance at the average Sunday congregation, men are clearly outnumbered. Failure of our churches to make evangelism of men a priority will inevitably lead to severe problems in both our churches and society.

Where will men come from to fill our pulpits? Some denominations are at the point of desperation as they attempt to supply churches with pastors. How will we plant churches here in the U.S. and around the world without man-power? If trends continue in our society, millions of children will grow up without having the influence of a father in the home. And even more tragic is the fact that most children in our country are being raised without the influence of a godly man.

Unfortunately, many men in our communities go unapproached and unreached with the

message of salvation. As we strategically consider how we might best impact our points of ministry, I urge you to make winning men to Jesus a priority.

Are the fields truly ready for harvest? Despite the popular notion that American churches are enjoying a spiritual revival, recent surveys tell a different story. According to George Barna's "Index of Leading Spiritual Indicators" . . .

- ♦ 70-80% of all church growth in America is not growth at all; it is people moving from one church to another.
- ♦ 95% of Americans only believe in a god of some sort.
- ♦ Only two out of three define God as "an all-powerful, all-knowing creator who still rules the universe today."
- ♦ Nearly three Americans in four believe there is no such thing as absolute truth.
- ♦ Less than 40% of Americans attend church.
- ♦ Only 20% of American adults attend Sunday School.
- ♦ Only 60% of American adults gave money to a church in the past year.
- ♦ A majority of people who make professions of faith drop out of church within six to eight weeks!

Those statistics should awaken us to the fact that there is a tremendous need in our culture for churches to begin producing disciples of Jesus Christ. We especially need to target reaching men. According to the Barna survey, only 20% of American adults attend Sunday School. Men no doubt would make up only a minority of that number. There are countless men who could be won.

One of the most effective ways of reaching men is through a men's ministry. Every church needs a men's ministry that focuses on equipping and encouraging Christian men. This ministry should also provide a door of evangelism to men who are their co-workers, neighbors, friends and family members. The *Master's Men Ministry* can help you establish such a ministry in your church. Contact us and let us give you a hand with that deck chair! ■



## WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

### *Woman's Window on the World*

By Mary R. Wischart

#### *A Woman for Such a Time: Marjorie Workman*

Teacher, pastor's wife, dean of women, bookkeeper, assistant to the purchasing agent, mother, wife, counselor. What does all that prepare one for? To be executive secretary of WNAC, of course.

Marjorie Workman comes well prepared to serve in the office as executive secretary-treasurer of WNAC. Having served on the WNAC Executive Committee for five years, she is familiar with the duties of the office. She has also served as state president in Tennessee and held various offices in local women's groups. Obviously, she loves WNAC and Free Will Baptist women.

When Marjorie was born at home in Bailey, North Carolina, to Oscar and Sitha Hinton, they gave her the name of Marjorie Ray.

Her pastor's daughter talked with her one afternoon about joining the church. Marjorie was unsure about going forward since she was only eight years old, but her friend convinced her that she should. Later at home, her father talked with her about her decision, explaining that being a Christian meant asking and accepting forgiveness for sin and committing oneself to Christ. When Marjorie said that was what she wanted, they prayed together and she credits her father with leading her to Christ. She was the first person to be saved in her church under the age of twelve. She led the way for other young people to acknowledge Christ as Savior.

Marjorie graduated from Bailey High School in 1960 and headed to Free Will Baptist Bible College. There she met Eugene Workman, and they were married September 4, 1964. They have two daughters: Regena Raylene Sizemore and Jennifer Janeen Beauchamp. One thing Marjorie enjoys is grandparenting Andrew Alexander, three, and Abigail Alicia Sizemore, one and a half.

Traveling is another thing Marjorie enjoys. That's good because this office will give her plenty of opportunities to travel. She always en-

joyed sports. Maybe she will start a team at the National Offices!



If you need help with your shopping, call Marjorie. She loves to shop, except for her clothes. Her husband does that shopping for her, and she always looks great.

Marjorie earned a B.A. in Bible and Missions from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1964. In 1986 she earned the M.S. in Guidance and Counseling from Tennessee State University.

While Eugene served as pastor at Glasgow, Kentucky, Marjorie worked for the L. L. Morris Supply Company as bookkeeper, 1964-1966. From 1966-1970, she served at Oklahoma Bible College (now Hillsdale College), wearing many hats as dean of women, teacher, secretary and publications and promotional assistant.

From 1975-1978 Marjorie worked part time for Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions. She maintained the mailing list for *Heartbeat* and assisted the bookkeeper. She then served 20 years as dean of women at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Her wide and various experiences have prepared her for the many hats she must wear at WNAC. The delegates in July voted unanimously to accept her nomination from the WNAC Executive Committee. She assumed her responsibilities September 1.

#### *Change!*

Change is inevitable. It's coming to the WNAC office. Accept change. Welcome it.

Pray for Marjorie. Encourage her. Support her. Subscribe to *Co-Laborer*. Women, pay your dues and see that your organization is taken care of financially.

WNAC will continue to fulfill its purpose. It will continue to encourage women to fulfill the great commission wherever they are.

As we advance to the next century, WNAC will advance for the cause of Christ and Free Will Baptist women. ■

## Think, Brother, Think!

**A** young preacher may move too quickly. With a desire to please, make a good impression and accomplish everything thrust upon him, the young preacher may take action too quickly. Let me illustrate with some practical points.

### *Pulpit Lights*

The ceiling was low, the sanctuary lighting poor. A deacon suggested that a different type of lighting would improve the dimly lit pulpit area. With my encouragement he brought ceiling lights, charged the bill to the church and installed two lights.

Quite proud of his electrical ability, I quickly saw that the job was not adequate. So, he installed two more lights. That was also insufficient. By this time, the other deacons and treasurer were asking questions. The deacon who had installed the lights insisted that the church needed to revamp all sanctuary lighting. I had to call a meeting.

The other deacons kindly rebuked me about running ahead and installing lights without seeking their counsel. Young preacher, there is a good lesson here. Be careful about making changes without seeking the counsel and approval of a governing body, such as the deacons, a church board or the church body. Better to preach "in the dark" than to keep the church "in the dark" over building improvements.

### *Laughing Pews*

Think as you preach, too. I was preaching from the book of Jonah at a mission church. The hand-made pews sat on a cement floor and were not secured. My wife was expecting a child. On the same pew sat another church member, a rather plump member. Arms waving, voice raised, I was plowing through the excitement of Jonah

being swallowed by the large fish.

The congregation listened intently until I said, "Jonah was in a whale of a belly." My wife began to laugh, shaking all over. The large lady on the same row got in the act, laughing, shaking until the unbolted pew rumbled like a freight train. The rest of the congregation, who may not have heard my blunder about Jonah's predicament, began to stare at the two ladies who were now laughing uncontrollably.

Brother, you can't preach with an uproar like that. Best to close the message, pray and go home. Let me suggest, young preacher, think before you speak. We older ministers have an excuse. Our brains are tired!

### *"Where's Audra?"*

Count the children before you leave church. Dr. Robert Picirilli had preached excellent messages that week at our church. After the Sunday evening service, he was scheduled to catch a plane at the airport, about 20 minutes from the church. Rushing out after the final service, Dr. Picirilli, my wife and children loaded up the small vehicle and headed toward the airport.

We let our guest speaker off at the entrance, telling him we would park the auto and see him off on his flight. Just as I was driving away, one of the children asked, "Where's Audra?" She wasn't in the car!

I sped back to the church, praying that our fourth child had not been kidnaped, been left in the parking lot or run out in the road and gotten hit. That 20-minute drive seemed like an eternity. "Pray, kids, pray," was all I could cry out to my wife and children.

We arrived at the church. No vehicles in the parking lot. Church lights off. Where is our beautiful two-year-old blonde daughter?

I rushed into the church. There she



Dennis Wiggs

stood in the middle of the aisle, wiping her eyes. She had fallen asleep on the pew. "Thank You, Lord!"

We rushed back to the airport, parked the car and walked to the airport entrance. Dr. Picirilli had patiently waited, wondering where that preacher with all those kids had gone. Young preacher, count the children before you drive away.

### *Borrowed Baptistry*

Praise the Lord for those who trust Christ as Savior. Excitement permeated the services as we made plans to baptize several new converts. The church did not have a baptistry. No creek or river was available. I requested permission to use the baptistry of a church about 30 minutes away. The pastor consented, promising to turn on the water heater Sunday morning. He even said I could use his waders.

So in my baptismal instructions I had assured the candidates that the water would be warm.

That Sunday afternoon several cars traveled to the church whose pastor had promised warm water to baptize the excited converts. We prepared for the service. I stepped into the water. The water seemed cool to me, even through the waders.

The first lady came down the steps. You should have seen her eyes when her feet touched the waters of that unheated baptistry. The pastor had forgotten to turn on the heater.

"Pastor, if that was heated water, I would hate to feel unheated water," several remarked. Young preacher, call ahead, make sure the pastor has not forgotten his promise. Play it safe.

All these experiences may seem funny now. Let me assure you they were not comical as I traveled through those episodes. Better to think ahead. Save yourself a lot of difficult predicaments. ■

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Benny is the founder and president of First Priority of America, Inc., which provides materials and a strategy to reach secondary school students for Christ. Benny taught high school for eight years while serving as a bivocational youth pastor and has served in small, middle-sized, and large churches as a full-time youth pastor. He believes in the local church and has committed himself for the last thirty years to work through it to reach teenagers for Jesus Christ.

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# Rural Ministry: The Shape of the Renewal to Come

Shannon Jung, et. al.

(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1998, 250 pp., paperback, \$16.95.)



Thomas Marberry

Most Free Will Baptist churches are located in small towns and rural areas. It is only in recent years that our denomination has made significant strides in establishing congregations in larger cities. For this reason, ministry in rural areas is important to us today, and it will continue to be important for many years to come.

Until a few years ago, few books were available which specifically addressed ministry needs of rural America. That is changing. Research is being done at several colleges and seminaries. Well-written books and articles addressing different aspects of rural ministry are now available.

Colleges and seminaries offer courses designed to prepare pastors to minister in rural areas. Nine different authors contributed different sections of this book, all of them involved in rural ministry in some way.

This book's greatest contribution is its analysis of what is happening in the rural areas of our country today. Rural areas are changing economically, politically, socially and religiously. Many of these changes are making life more difficult for people who live in rural areas.

As the authors note, "Something over 600,000 farm families lost their land in the 1980s." Losing a farm that may have been in the family for generations is a bitter pill to swallow.

The authors cite many examples of churches of different denominations that are ministering effectively in rural areas. Not all rural churches are dying; many are adapting to ministry in the ever-changing environment of rural America and are doing quite well.

It is not easy to be a pastor of a rural church today. An effective pastor must understand his people; he must also understand something of the his-

tory, culture and customs of the area in which he ministers. Not all rural areas are alike. He must lead in developing worship services and other activities which can help bring people to Christ and nurture them in the faith.

The authors of this volume emphasize the role of the Bible, worship and prayer in meeting the needs of rural people. They stress the need for conversion.

There is much in this volume which can be helpful to Free Will Baptists. Many times our pastors and lay leaders see what is happening in their own communities but they may not see these events in the larger context of what is happening across the country.

The book is quite ecumenical in its approach. It would be even more valuable for our denomination if it dealt more specifically with what conservative churches are doing to minister in rural America. ■

## BEYOND BELIEF



## Sunday Night Live!



Jack Williams

**T**he three grandchildren and their parents came over after church Sunday night. My wife was worried because we had few toys in the house; she was afraid they'd be bored . . . the grandkids, that is.

"Not to worry," I assured her. "Those kids won't be here 15 minutes until they invent toys out of stuff you wouldn't imagine."

I've never been so right in all my life.

**The experts are wrong.** The people who say a child's attention span is only a few seconds, a few minutes tops, don't have a clue. That theory applies to toys that parents buy for \$58.95, but if a child creates a toy from a box or a piece of string, he can concentrate like a miniature Einstein.

The subjects in this experiment are ages 1, 3 and 4. Ten minutes after hitting the house, they had discarded two animated videos as unworthy of their collective attention, . . . and then they spotted the most amazing toy known to man—a three-foot-tall blue trash can.

**Who would have guessed** that an empty trash can could keep three children hilariously entertained for over an hour? They found at least five new uses for the plastic receptacle.

First, the 1-year old pushed the trash can over on the carpet and discovered a perfect hideout from his evil brother and cousin. He crawled right in, head first, disappearing up to his shoe laces with glee.

Several minutes later, he peeked out with sparkling brown eyes and a smile that announced he had filed claim to this treasure trove.

**No sooner did he exit** the blue mansion than his 4-year-old brother confiscated it for a basketball goal. For 10 yelling, laughter-filled minutes, the 3- and 4-year-olds slam-dunked

an orange nerf ball, howling in delight at near misses.

Nobody kept score. Best of all, nobody cared.

**The basketball game** ended abruptly when their blue goal tumbled over. Less than a minute elapsed before the 4-year-old decided that the basketball goal made a perfect soccer goal with a solid blue net.

The two older ones were off again, squealing at missed kicks and rolling on the carpet, pleased as pigs in clover. The youngest cousin, meanwhile, found a new toy in an unopened 5-pound bag of rice.

With no goalie defending the blue trash can, the young soccer enthusiasts scored at will from beneath the kitchen table. Their only problem was that they were laughing so hard they could hardly stand up.

**The soccer game ended** unexpectedly when the 4-year-old picked up the goal and, presto(!), the blue trash can became an attractive shirt. He slipped it over his head, giggles echoing across the room. The fact that the blue shirt came down to his shoe tops and had neither arm holes nor eye holes presented no problem. A chic fashion line emerged right beside the refrigerator.

The kitchen floor became a private runway to model his blue plastic shirt, cheered by a cousin who could hardly wait for her chance to slip into the water-proof frock. When she couldn't squeeze inside with her taller cousin, she promptly began pounding on the blue shirt with two wooden sticks, which produced immediate results—crossed eyes and the beginning of a drum culture.

**Escaping the blue drum**, the 4-year-old dumped the trash can in the floor and began pounding it also. The 1-year-old decided the blue drum of-

fered a better career track than the 5-pound bag of rice, so he joined the other two to form a drum trio.

You'd have thought those youngsters had found the key to Toys-Я-Us. For another 20 minutes, they pounded and laughed and finally fell on the carpet exhausted.

Which brings me back to the experts' theory that children's play time must be guided by adults. Those sad souls obviously have limited experience with blue trash cans on Sunday Night Live!

So what do we gain from all this? We learn four important lessons from the can-do world of kids.

**First**, attitude is more important than most folks realize. Others may say that yours is a trash can job. But what do they know? Touched by your hand, a dead-end job could become a blue basketball court, a plastic soccer field, a water-proof style show runway or a secret hideaway.

**Second**, be yourself! That 1-year-old wrestling with the 5-pound sack of rice never came to the table and helped with our conversation about Benchmade knives and Glock .40 caliber pistols. All he did was look up now and then and grin. And in his own way, he contributed more than anybody else to the evening.

**Third**, give yourself permission to enjoy life. Those three cousins did not caucus with their parents on what to do Sunday evening. They didn't need instructions on how to relax. What they did do was turn a humble trash can into a glittering field of dreams.

**Finally**, our creative best usually kicks in when God puts us in places where there are not many toys. Stretch out. Reach across the lines. You may find a bit of magic at your fingertips. ■

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