

NOVEMBER 1998

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

.....
I Believe in
Home
Missions

.....
Hill of Beans

.....
God Pays Big
Dividends

.....
Where is
John 3:16?



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NOVEMBER 1998

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Melvin Worthington

The Spectrum of Stewardship (XI)

This study focuses on the stewardship of the temple, tongue, tribe and territory (turf). Fulfilling stewardship responsibilities in these practical areas calls for vision. Overlooking these stewardship areas profoundly affects all other facets of stewardship.

The Temple

God illustrates this dimension of stewardship by resting on the seventh day following His work of creation. He incorporated this principle in the ten commandments when He instructed us to "remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy." The principle remains in effect as we observe the first day of the week.

Paul calls our attention to this stewardship responsibility, "What! Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's," (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

Paul further emphasizes our relationship; we belong to God. We are His property. Finally, Paul emphasizes our responsibility; we must behave like we belong to God. We are obligated to glorify God through our practice.

Stewardship of the temple means we give our body to God. Paul admonishes, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service," (Rom. 12:1).

Stewardship of the temple means we guard our body. Paul described it this way, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway," (1 Cor. 9:27).

The Tongue

One of the most difficult areas of stewardship may well be the ability to control the tongue. James says, "If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain," (James 1:26).

The Bible cautions our articulation. Paul admonishes, "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: . . . Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers," (Eph. 4:25, 29).

The Bible confirms our accountability. All individuals will give an account for the way they use their tongue. This is a sobering and serious thought.

Matthew says, "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgement. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned," (Matt. 12:34-37).

The Secretary's Schedule

November 1998

- 5-6 Alabama State Association
- 6-7 Northeast District Association
Houlton, Maine
- 9-11 Tennessee State Association
- 12-14 Georgia State Association
- 15-18 Mt. Elon FWB Church
Pamplico, SC

The Tribe

God established the family. Children are a heritage from the Lord. Parents have a responsibility to exercise stewardship over the tribe God has blessed them with. This includes training. Proverbs says, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it," (Prov. 22:6).

This stewardship also includes teaching. Paul urges, "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," (Eph. 6:4).

Parents have been entrusted with children and are responsible for their social, spiritual and secular education. When parents neglect the stewardship of their tribe, it results in chaos in the church, community and country.

The Turf (Territory)

God holds individuals (Christians) responsible for the territory where they reside. When the Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost and filled the believers, there were representatives from every nation present. They returned to their own countries and shared the gospel. Churches were planted and by Acts 8, churches were established in Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria.

How fitting in light of Jesus' statement, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth," (Acts 1:8).

Individual Christians, filled with the Spirit of the living God, shared the gospel. Stewardship of our territory means that we share the gospel in the location where God has placed us. ■

A veteran home missionary opens his heart.

Why I Believe in Home Missions

By Robert Trimble

The second Monday night in July 1955 I was saved in a revival meeting at Woodstock FWB Church in Ohio. Rev. Andrew Workman, an old-fashioned revival preacher from West Virginia, was preaching. Not long after that my wife, Nancy, who was also saved at Woodstock, and I went to Urbana, Ohio, to help start Urbana FWB Church under the leadership of Rev. Elda Mingus.

After the church organized, I was asked to be a deacon. I was only 20 years old and knew nothing about being a deacon, but I was willing to do my best for the church and the Lord. I served in that capacity for nine years and gained valuable experience in church work and dealing with people. It was a joy to be involved in starting the church and knowing today that Urbana FWB Church is alive and well under the leadership of Pastor Roger Childers.

The Youngstown Experience

In the early 1960s, I started attending missions conferences at Free Will Baptist Bible College. There I was challenged with more involvement in missions, both home and foreign. At the 1965 conference, I became acquainted with Thurmon Murphy who was going to plant a new church in Youngstown, Ohio.

When Thurmon was on itinerant raising funds and praying for someone to help him in the work, God spoke to my heart. I drove back and forth from Urbana to Youngstown, a



200-mile trip one way, for nearly six months. I finally got a job in Youngstown and moved in the summer of 1966. For several weeks, the only people in the church were Thurmon, his wife Karen and my family. After many weeks of door knocking and earnest prayer, a few people began coming to church. Some of them got saved. That first year was difficult, but toward the end, the year of hard work began paying off.

One Sunday Thurmon was preaching on the calling of God upon our lives and challenged us to listen to God's call and surrender to it. He said if God has called you to preach, you ought to preach. I was the only man in the audience, and God was calling me. I answered the call to preach in that mission church in Youngstown.

What a joy to be part of that Youngstown work. Today there is a strong Free Will Baptist church in the city. The church is located on five

acres under the leadership of Pastor Bruce Beal, a product of the Youngstown Church ministry. Was all the hard work worth it? No doubt about it!

Bible College and Beyond

From Youngstown, after answering the call to preach, I felt God leading me to Free Will Baptist Bible College. I headed for Nashville with my family, without money or a job, and only the assurance that God had called me there. The first week after arriving, I got a job on campus as a carpenter (maintenance) and worked there my entire tenure at school.

The last three years of my five years at college, I pastored two churches in the Nashville area—Madison and Oakland FWB Churches. After graduation, I was called to Detroit, Michigan, to pastor Philadelphia FWB Church. I have pastored four other churches, all of them deeply involved in missions. I have supported home and foreign missionaries all these years, served on state mission boards as well as 15 years on the Foreign Missions Board.

I am convinced that God wants us to send and support, both with our prayers and finances. It is the heartbeat of God. More of God's people need to get involved in the greatest work in the world, reaching souls for Christ and building them up in the faith.

Building in Battle Creek

My heart has always been in mission work, but I did not know that God would someday call me to plant

a church in Battle Creek, Michigan. The last seven years before coming to Battle Creek, I served the Mt. Calvary FWB Church in Perryman, Maryland.

My plans were to pastor there 10 years and then think about semi-retiring from the pastorate. I would just fill in for pastors and serve wherever I was needed, but God had other plans. He called me to start a church in my later years and now the church in Battle Creek is one year old.

We have several families attending. Our first convert, Cathy Wagner, and two of her children, were saved and baptized in the Holiday Inn Express swimming pool. We have purchased a church building and a fellowship hall fully furnished on two acres of ground. We have several good prospects. Our future looks bright, and some will be in Heaven because a Free Will Baptist church was started in Battle Creek.

We are now supporting both home and foreign missions. We have already had missionaries, youth groups, Bible College students and the church is totally involved in the work of the Lord.

Toward Tomorrow

We must continue to build new churches that preach the gospel and get people saved. While some churches have forsaken the truth and have become complacent and cold, people are still searching for the truth. It is only the truth that will set them free.

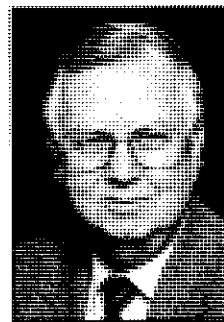
If we are to continue to send foreign missionaries to the regions beyond, we must have a strong home base. It is my desire to build a strong, Bible-believing, gospel-preaching and teaching, missions-minded, Free Will Baptist church for His glory.

Yes, I believe in home missions. What I am today, I owe to these home mission churches where I have been involved. I am trusting God to call workers from my church to serve Him wherever He leads.

May God give us a vision and a burden for planting new churches, for where there is no vision, people perish. I am thankful to be part of the home missions team of Free Will Baptists. I am praying that God will raise up many young men to plant new churches and that some of our strong churches will sponsor a new

church in their state or needy area. Jesus is coming soon. We need to be about our Father's business.

Thirty years have passed since I answered the call to preach in Youngstown, Ohio. How thankful I am for God's blessings and direction in my life. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER:
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The craziest idea ever used to raise money for missions.

A Hill of Beans

By Berton Perry



It was not unusual for Bennie to call. We became very close in 1959 during my first pastorate in the small community of Mason, Oklahoma. Bennie was a deacon there and one of the most faithful and godly men I have ever known.

Bennie and Murlene Stiles have always been special Christian friends to my wife Sue and me. Bennie and I have shared a special relationship like I have never had with any other person. If I needed prayer, I asked Bennie to pray for me. I often referred to his effectiveness in prayer in sermons and stated many times that if I could only ask one person to pray for me, I would want that person to be Bennie. He got answers to prayer.

Every few months after I pastored at Mason, he would call and we would discuss things that had happened since we last visited and share what the Lord was doing in our lives. That day, however, the call was different.

He said, "Berton, I need to talk to you."

"Okay, go ahead," I said

"No, I need to talk to you face to face," he responded. We set a time when he would come to my house for the visit.

The day of his arrival, Bennie got to the house in early afternoon. He said, "Berton, I've done some funny things in my life, but something has come up that is really odd." He began to weep. I could only imagine how serious his problem was.

"Berton, a couple of months ago, Buddy Drake and his family came to our church to raise support for a new church in Cheyenne, Wyoming. Our people made some monthly pledges of support for him and we received an offering. But ever since they were there, I have been bothered about doing something more to help them in their work."

As Bennie shared his story, he paused often to weep over his burden. He continued, "When I asked the Lord what He wanted me to do about helping support this work or raise money for them, the thought kept coming to me: 'Bennie, what you've got don't amount to a hill of beans.' I couldn't understand that. Every time I prayed about it, the same thought came to me again."

"After days of wrestling over this, it finally got through to me that the Lord wanted me to buy a 100-pound sack of beans, put them in one-pound bags, sell them and send the money to Buddy Drake. I said, 'God, that's the crazy

est thing I ever heard. You're not really expecting me to do that, are You?"

"After a lot of miserable days, I finally agreed to do it. What I planned was to secretly buy them, sell them, and give the money without telling people why I was doing it. I made the mistake of praying about it again and God talked to me pretty strong that time."

"I finally told God, 'Well, I'll do it, but I'll do it in secret. I'll just buy 'em, sack 'em and sell 'em without telling anyone why I'm selling 'em, then send the money to Buddy.'"

"The Lord said, 'No, Bennie, I want you to bring it before your church and get them involved too.'"

"I said, 'No, God, I won't do it! The people there already think I'm crazy for some other things I've told them about and asked them to do. Lord, I'll do it my way, but not Your way!' Berton, God really worked me over for that!"

It took a few more days of miserable disobedience before Bennie was willing to tell the church about the beans. He was the Sunday School superintendent at the First FWB Church in Bristow, Oklahoma, at the time. He shared the story with his pastor, Gene Jackson, and received permission to bring it before the Sunday School assembly Sunday morning.

Bennie wasn't sure what their reaction would be. He expected that some would frown on the idea, others would laugh, and a few might reluctantly help. To his surprise, the church seemed seriously interested in this proposal.

When the Sunday School assembly was dismissed, one man handed him a check for \$50 and said, "Put this in on the bean deal, Bennie." Another person handed him \$10.

That night at church, a member came to him and said, "Bennie, how much can you buy 100 pounds of beans for?"

"Thirty-two dollars and fifty-five cents," Bennie replied.

"Let me see if I can beat that price through my restaurant business," the man said. "I'll call you Tuesday night and let you know."

Tuesday night, he called and told Bennie to come by the restaurant and pick up the beans. When Bennie got there, the brother presented the beans to him and 100 bags to sack them in.

"How much do I owe you?" Bennie asked.

"Well, my wife and I talked it over, and we want to donate the beans and bags," he answered. Bennie couldn't believe what was happening. He had \$60, the beans, the bags to sack them, and the beans were paid for.

Church members took beans and shared the story with relatives, business people and strangers. Many people donated from \$1 to \$50 without taking any beans. One day as Ronnie, Bennie's grandson, was riding along with his grandpa, he asked, "Grandpa, how much is a bag of them beans?"

"There's no charge, son. Each person gives however much they feel like giving," Bennie answered.

"I want a bag, Grandpa, but I've only got 25 cents." Bennie took his money and gave him a bag of beans.

Bennie shared the story with a business acquaintance over lunch one day. That man contributed \$10. A stranger sitting at another table overheard the conversation and handed him \$5. Neither man wanted a sack of beans.

In a few weeks, the enthusiasm and interest in beans dwindled and Bennie began wondering what to do with the rest of them. His first thought was to have a bean supper at church and charge for each plate. As he was sharing this *good idea* with the Lord, God's message came, "Bennie, don't eat the beans!"

It seemed the best way to raise money for the remaining beans. Once again Bennie struggled with what the Lord wanted. Finally, one

day during a time of earnest praying, the Lord said, "Bennie, talk to Berton Perry; he'll know what to do with the rest of the beans!"

When Bennie told me that, I almost fell out of my chair. I didn't know whether to groan, cry or laugh. Bennie continued, "Berton, you're supposed to know what to do with them!"

My mind raced for an answer. As director of missions in Oklahoma, I wasn't pastoring and had no congregation in which to peddle beans. My good friend Lonny Burks pastored about three miles away, so I could dump them off on him. That was my best option. I went immediately to the phone and called him.

"Lonny, could you come to my house and listen to a story straight from God?" I knew that would get him to come. Sure enough, he was there in a few minutes. Once again, Bennie shared the story while choking back sobs and tears.

After he finished, I said, "Lonny, I believe the Lord wants you to take the beans."

"Well, Brother Berton, if you think so, okay."

I asked, "Bennie, how many sacks do you have left?"

"Fifty-eight," he replied.

"Unload them in Lonny's automobile," I said.

He responded, "I didn't bring them with me."

I teased, "You don't have much faith, do you, Bennie?"

Very seriously he mumbled, "I wasn't sure how you would react to this, Berton." He went home, got the beans and brought them to Lonny.

"Whew, I got that off my back," I thought.

About three weeks later, Lonny called and said, "Berton, what do you want me to do with the rest of the beans?"

"How much did you make, Lonny?" I asked.

"Two hundred and eighty-five dollars," he responded.

"How many sacks to you have left?" I questioned.

"Forty-six. Not many people will take them," he said.

I thought, "Well, Berton! Things didn't work out on this deal like you figured, did they?"

Then to Lonny I replied reluctantly,

"Okay, I'll take them, Lonny." All the time I was wondering what to do with them. My first thought was to dump them on some of my other preacher friends, one person at a time, until they were all gone. I made the mistake of praying about it. The Lord prompted me to sell the rest myself.

In my position as missions director, I traveled to district associations two or three times and preached in 8-10 churches each month. I put the sacks of beans in cardboard boxes, loaded them in my vehicle and hauled them everywhere I went. The "Hill of Beans" story was told all over Oklahoma. I carried a box of beans into churches and associational meetings everywhere I went. There was never a time this story was shared that failed to produce money for the beans.

However, I have never seen anything so hard to get rid of as they were. People contributed amounts from one to 50 dollars in every service. I got tired of carrying the beans.

One Sunday evening, a pastor asked how many sacks were left. There were 12. He wanted to purchase them for a bean supper at his church. So, finally, at the end of three months, they were all gone.

When all totals were tallied, almost \$1,800 had been raised from nothing but a "Hill of Beans."

Bennie died in July 1997. I shared part of this story at his funeral, using the subject, "The Characteristics of a Man of God." He truly was a godly man who was willing to exercise faith in unusual ways. The Lord often works mysteriously through those who listen to and obey Him even if it "don't amount to a hill of beans!" ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Berton Perry pastors Phillips Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Springdale, Arkansas.

Sudden Encounter Evangelism

By Evangelist Van Dale Hudson

As we entered the dimly-lighted Chinese restaurant, I noticed a large Buddha statue sitting near the check-out counter. I had met a new convert for lunch and this was the place he chose to dine. The food was delicious, enhanced in my mind, at least, by the fact that all the employees were Oriental in appearance and language.

As we stepped to the counter to pay, I asked the young man about the statue. He told me, in awkward and broken English, that the object was indeed a Buddha. I proceeded to ask him if he believed in Buddha. He said that he did. I then stepped over to the heavy-set image and asked the young man if Buddha could see with his eyes, hear with his ears, speak with his lips or walk with his legs.

He quickly told me that Buddha could neither see, hear, speak nor move unless someone moved him. I further asked the young man if he followed the teachings of Buddha. He said he did.

At this point I told him about Jesus Christ, the only true God, who has seeing eyes, hearing ears, speaking lips and legs that walk so well He could walk on water and when put in a tomb, walked out alive on Sunday morning to never die again. For a few moments I went over the plan of salvation with the young man and encouraged him to consider the claims of Christ.

A Witness' Role

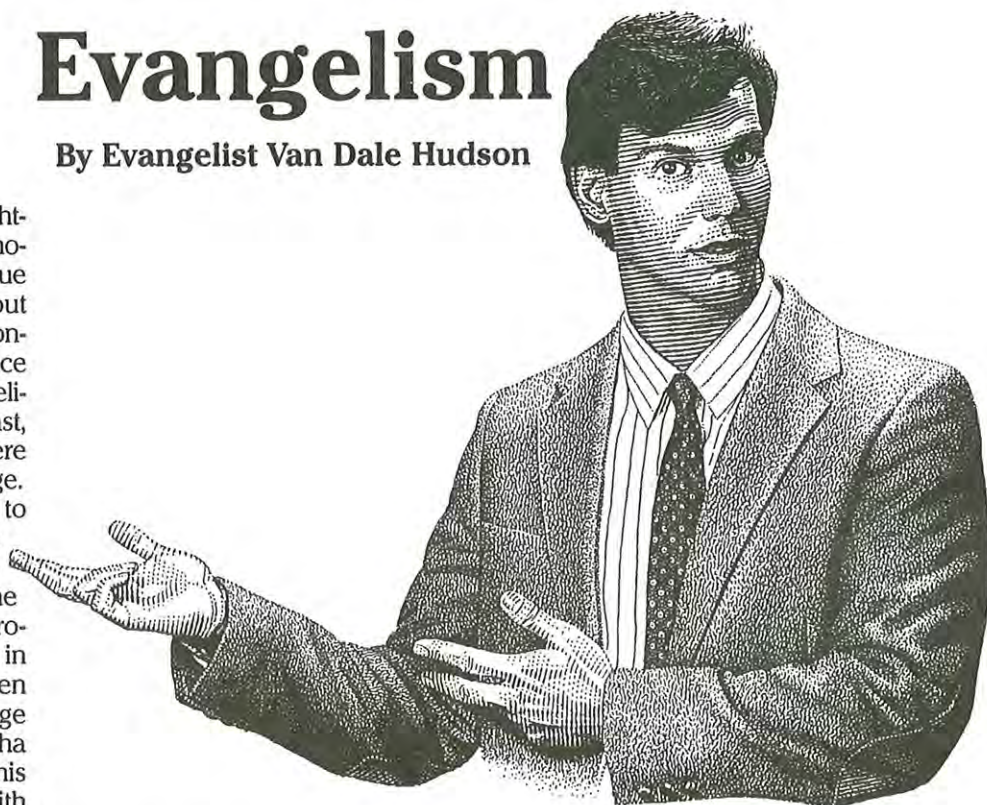
When Jesus left earth to take His place at His Father's right hand, He told us to preach the gospel to every creature. We refer to this as the Great Commission. He said, also, that we are to be His witnesses, which means we as believers are left here for a purpose. That purpose is primarily to tell others about Jesus, to tell them who

He is and what He is able to do.

In a courtroom setting, a witness must meet certain qualifications. He must be called to do what he is about to do. He must separate himself from others. He must take the stand before those present. He must be credible if he is to be effective. And, certainly, he must be willing to speak, to tell what he knows to be true.

A witness is not the judge. He is not the jury. He is not the lawyer. He is not a spectator. He is the person who is called to tell what he knows to be true about the case involved. It is his responsibility to speak and leave the results in the hands of those responsible for the outcome of the trial.

How applicable this is in the Christian witness' experience. We are called by God to separate ourselves from the world, to live lives of blamelessness and credibility, to take our stand for Christ and to open our mouths in His behalf. The Holy Spirit is our heavenly Lawyer who will deal with the hearts of the hearers. Jesus is the Judge who will act righteously in every man's case.



A Prayer for Courage

It is not always easy to say what we ought to say. Even the courageous Apostle Paul felt this same struggle. After describing the spiritual warfare and the necessary armor for moral combat, he asked the Ephesian believers to pray for him.

Listen to his prayer request: "Praying always . . . for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel . . . that therein I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak," (Eph. 6:18-20).

If the greatest Christian in the history of the Church needed prayer support and divine empowerment to speak for Christ, we as believers today certainly need and must have that spiritual resource. And the encouraging part is this—in the Great Commission He has told us that He will be with us as we testify. He says if we go with the gospel, ". . . lo, I am with you alway," (Matt. 28:20). Tell others about Jesus, and His Spirit will give you courage and boldness.

Our witnessing for Christ is the natural overflow of a full heart and changed life. We have Jesus on our minds constantly. As we meet people in all walks of life, it is the witness' desire to tell what he knows about the Savior.

A Parking Lot Example

I had been away from home in several meetings in the eastern states and was driving back to Mississippi. I made it through Atlanta without any delays and was cruising on I-20 headed toward Birmingham, Alabama. At the Bremen, Georgia, exit, I pulled into a Wendy's hamburger place for a bite of lunch.

I was singing some tune of praise to God as I walked across the parking lot toward my van with the combo I'd purchased. Unexpectedly, the man next to me at his vehicle interrupted my song by asking, "What is it that you are so happy about today that you are singing?"

As I put my combo in the van, I said, "If you will wait right there for a moment, I will be glad to come over and tell you!"

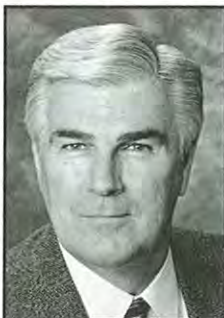
The man was retired, a widower, on a trip to visit his children and grandchildren. He listened openly as I told him the reason I was singing.

"I was not singing because I am a singer as such, as you could well recognize. I was singing because I was thinking . . . If I get back on the interstate heading home and don't make it because I am killed in a wreck today . . . if I don't get to see my wife, my children, my grandchildren any more in this world . . . if I have to die today, I am going to Heaven instead of going to Hell and that makes me so happy that I can't help singing about it!"

The man dropped his head and said, "I wish I could know that was true of myself." I proceeded to show him the plan of salvation and asked him to pray with me to be saved. He said he needed more time to think about it. I prayed for him before we parted company, as we stood in Wendy's parking lot.

Not everyone to whom we speak about Christ will get saved, but some will. God just wants us to have hearts full of love for Him. He wants to fill

our beings to overflowing. Let's talk it up for Jesus wherever we go. Let's tell our generation Who He is, what He has done in our lives and what He will do in their lives if they will come to Him. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Van Dale Hudson is a full-time Free Will Baptist evangelist who resides in Amory, Mississippi. He has been in evangelism 28 years and preached more than 1,100 revivals. He began preaching at age 15 and pastored his first church as a high school senior.

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Roger Bennett to Eldridge Church, Eldridge

ARKANSAS

David Taylor to Lake Hills Church, Hot Springs from First Church, Tucson, AZ

TEXAS

Billy Decker to Lifegate Church, Tyler
 Leroy Blankenship to First Church, Carthage from First Church, Henderson
 John High to First Church, Henderson from Hatfield Church, Hatfield, AR
 Jarvis Reed to First Church, Weatherford

OTHER PERSONNEL

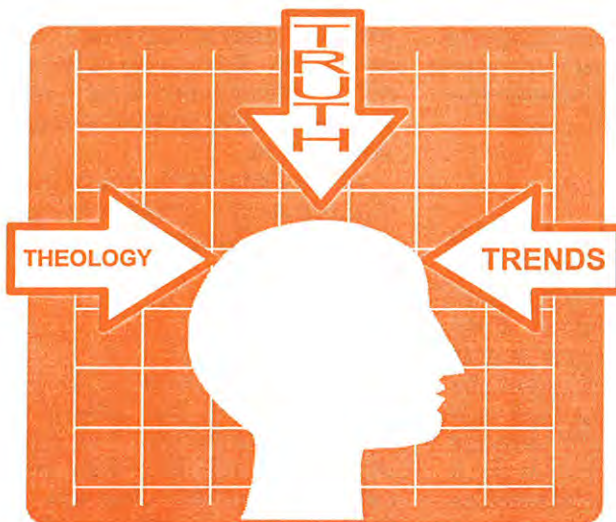
Roger Bennett to Children's Village U.S.A., Eldridge, AL, as superintendent
 Kris Shoemaker to Children's Village, U.S.A., Eldridge, AL

Mark Your Calendars!

Third Annual Theological Symposium

Sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity

November 6-7, 1998



**On the Campus of
 Free Will Baptist Bible College
 3606 West End Avenue
 Nashville, TN 37205**

The Missing Thrust

in Today's Evangelism

By Richard T. Hendrix

Through the years, Free Will Baptist churches have practiced evangelism. Even though some of our evangelistic efforts have been successful, questions should be asked periodically. First, what can be done to increase our effectiveness in evangelism? What changes would be most advantageous in our efforts to obey the Great Commission? Are there certain elements in any successful program of evangelism which need more emphasis? Do major adjustments in the basic concepts need to be made?

Basic Evangelistic Thrusts

For a majority of modern Free Will Baptist history, the two basic thrusts in our evangelism have been educational evangelism and revival evangelism. Educational evangelism gets the good news of Jesus to people by enrolling them in a component of a church program, usually Sunday School. Revival evangelism uses a set period of time for special services of evangelistic emphasis.

Statistics tell us that as much as 85% of all professions of faith come directly through the Sunday School! Educational evangelism is the most effective evangelism method employed in the 20th century. This fact is

substantiated by the relationship between the number of people enrolled in Sunday Schools and the number of people who make public decisions for Christ.

Failure to enroll people in Sunday Schools noticeably reduces the number of people reached for Christ. For instance, during a 15-year period among a certain group in Texas, with the exception of two years, the number of baptisms increased or decreased in direct proportion to the net enrollment in Sunday School. This would also be true among Free Will Baptists.

At the same time, revival evangelism constitutes an effective method in the Free Will Baptist program of evangelism.

Limitations of Basic Thrusts

The basic limitations of these two approaches are, first, only a small percentage of people in an average church field will hear the Christian message; second, churches have shifted the responsibility of delivering the Great Commission.

Revival evangelism will not reach most prospects not already enlisted in Sunday School, and you can't enroll all the prospects in your field in Sunday School. In recent years the

lament is often heard, "We just can't get lost people to our services any more!" Our evangelistic thrust is limited due to the kind of religion it represents: a "come and hear" religion.

People often say, "Come and hear our evangelist preach the gospel." This "come and hear" kind of religion constitutes a reversal of the Great Commission of Jesus.

His instructions were not to invite people to "come and hear," but for believers to "go and tell." The main responsibility is not to bring the lost to the gospel but to take the gospel to the lost. We have taken it to mean "Go and invite people to church."

Why the Missing Thrust?

The great and almost unlimited lay potential has not been properly trained for witnessing. At present, only a small number of Free Will Baptist churches use any systematic method of training believers for the work of personal evangelism.

More, the evangelistic training given by most churches is so general and scattershot that the percentage of effective lay witnesses trained is smaller every year. Free Will Baptist churches need a revival of strong emphasis on training lay people to be personal witnesses.

Neglecting this kind of training constitutes careless disobedience to a vital part of our Lord's commission. The inevitable results are a declining number of converts and spiritually weak churches. Free Will Baptists have been busily engaged in making professed disciples and leading them to the baptismal waters. This is a vital part of the Great Commission.

However, there has been an embarrassing neglect of "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples. He then instructed them to teach those who had become disciples to obey His commands. Their obedience would lead them to make other disciples. Jesus also commands believers today to make disciples who will in turn witness to others.

Free Will Baptists have blundered in considering evangelism as essential and the training of new Christians to be witnesses as optional. This neglect is a major factor in our present dilemma. If converts desire training to a limited degree, they can obtain it. If they do not have spiritual vision enough to see the need of training, or if they do not have spiritual hunger enough to desire it, we simply let them drift into spiritual uselessness.

Witnessing and training are immovable parts of the plan our Lord has for reaching the world with the gospel. Training Christians to be witnesses no longer can be an optional matter among Free Will Baptists. The witness itself is seriously impaired when the newly won disciple is not trained to witness to others.

Supplying the Missing Thrust

The key to a successful program of training is the pastor. According to Ephesians 4:11-12, training Christians is the primary purpose of a pastor's ministry. "And these were his gifts: . . . some pastors and teachers, to equip God's people for work in his service, to the building up of the body of Christ."

This passage proves that responsibility for Christian service belongs to the members of the body while the pastor's responsibility is to equip the body for service. The best method for building up the church is witnessing for Christ. If that is true, then the

main business of the pastor is not the preparation and delivery of sermons so much as the development, whether by sermon or by any other method, of every member in his church into a soul-winner.

Establishing an adequate program for training effective witnesses will be new for most Free Will Baptist pastors and churches. The successfulness of the programs will be only gradual. The initial effort of training people may be numerically small and discouraging. Remember that Jesus spent most of His earthly ministry training 12 men. After they were adequately trained, the world felt the impact of their ministry.

A pastor should select a very few at first and train them well. They must be trained so thoroughly that they can lead and train others. When this is done, a perpetual training program will be in place and an increasing number of adequately trained witnesses will be produced.

A leading evangelist was asked, "If you were a pastor of a large church in a principal city, what would be your plan of action?"

He answered:

I think one of the first things I would do would be to get a small group of eight or 10 or 12 men around me that would meet a few hours a week and pay the price! It would cost them something in time and effort. I would share with them everything I have, over a period of a couple of years. Then I would actually have 12 ministers among the laymen who in turn could take eight or 10 or 12 more and teach them.

I know one or two churches that are doing that, and it is revolutionizing the church. Christ, I think, set the pattern. He spent most

of His time with 12 men. He didn't spend it with great crowds. In fact, it seems to me that every time He had a great crowd, there were not too many results. The great results, it seems to me, came in His personal interviews and in the time He spent with His 12.

Until there is a willingness to incorporate a thorough training program in Free Will Baptist churches, the overall effectiveness of our denomination will likely decline. Is it too late for Free Will Baptists to initiate this kind of training in every church by every pastor? This depends on our willingness to obey the risen Christ's commission.

In a day of numerical and spiritual decline, it is heartening to hear some leaders boldly predict that we are standing on the threshold of the greatest era. If Free Will Baptists will move according to God's plan now, there is a guarantee of greatness and success in the future. An integral part of His plan is "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded." ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Richard T. Hendrix pastors Madison Free Will Baptist Church in Madison, Alabama. He plans to pursue the Doctor of Ministry degree at Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham.



God Pays Big Dividends

By Charles Harris



Charles Harris (c) with Altamira Pastor and his family (1968)



The pastor's house in Altamira (1968) and the concrete slab on which the church would be built



A snack of fried pork rinds in process.

If you have any money on deposit anywhere, you probably know exactly how much interest you are receiving. But the return on investments in God's work are harder to compute. Let me illustrate.

In the summer of 1968 while the hippie craze raged across San Francisco Bay from my church, and I was still a young enough pastor to have all the answers, the Mexican Quartet came from Monterrey on a California tour where they sang and preached. We had them for a service at Sherwood Forest FWB Church in El Sobrante. Although neither nationality understood the other, the Spirit of God was the only interpreter we needed to insure that all present were tremendously blessed.

The group spent the night in our home and were gone the next day. Soon after they returned to Mexico, correspondence with their American guide generated the idea that a visit to the Mexican work, taking along four young men from my church was

God's will. While some in the church attributed the idea to everyone involved except God, no one actually opposed the plan.

So it did not take long for me and the boys to get our gear together, load it into my '67 Caprice Classic station wagon, and get on our way.

It would take more than a few grouchy church members, a budget-busting lack of hard cash, credit cards that were all but maxed out, and a serious health problem two days before we left (for which my doctor advised immediate emergency surgery) to derail this train.

After all, this did seem like the will of God, even if my own wife was not always a true believer in the idea, and even if hard evidence was hard to come by.

But we pointed the nose of the Caprice south, set the cruise control, turned on the air conditioner, and two bleary-eyed, sleepless days and nights later, we found the border town of Laredo, Texas, right where

Rand McNally said it would be, and a Free Will Baptist guide waiting to lead us into the Promised Land.

Not too long or too many payoffs later, our group and the Caprice loaded with food and medicine for Mexico rolled past the last check point and unloaded at the Institute of Gold in Monterrey.

After a good night's sleep, we cranked up the Caprice again, climbed on board and steered a course for Altamira with our Free Will Baptist guide at the wheel driving as if the devil himself were in hot pursuit. Once there, we visited the pastor and were shown a concrete slab where we were told the building-less congregation could erect a church building if the money were available. That night we had a big service with only a small congregation, went to Tampico the next day and ate a wonderful meal of monster shrimp in a beach-front restaurant, and headed home.

The Caprice had lost its air conditioner compressor, the boys had lost

their energy, the credit cards were about to redline, and the pastor was losing his enthusiasm. Once home, however, we showed some slides, raised some offerings and sent the money to build the church in Altamira.

As time has unraveled, two of those four boys who made the trip have become full-time pastors, one is a full-time music director, and the fourth is not in church. (three out of four ain't bad!). And it is now three churches later as the pages have continued to turn in the life of this pastor.

But only now, 28 years later, have I had the unexpected opportunity to authenticate God's leadership in that trip half a lifetime ago.

During the March 1997 Home Missions Benjamin Randall trip to Reynosa, I discovered this: five of our 12 full-time Mexican pastors came out of the Altamira church. Twelve students now studying at the Seminary in Reynosa are from Altamira, and the same pastor is there for whom we built the church building. He has a congregation of over 200. So much interest for only a few thousand dollars!

What conclusions might come to mind in pondering this story?

1. God's will cannot always be clearly proven up front.
2. You always know the interest rate at the world's banks, but that is never true with God's investment programs.
3. Invest all you can in God's plan to reach the world with the gospel, and your blessings are sure to outweigh your effort. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Charles Harris pastors Harmony Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in Wheatridge, Colorado.

**Leadership
Conference**
Regal Maxwell House
Nashville, TN
December 7-8, 1998

THE TOGETHER WAY

August 1998

Receipts:						
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 280.86	\$.00	\$ 280.86	\$ 3,852.65	\$.00	\$ 3,852.65
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	2,692.17	403.20	3,095.37
Arkansas	14,084.54	16,288.65	30,373.19	110,112.17	122,015.98	232,128.15
California	.00	1,162.26	1,162.26	.00	8,929.12	8,929.12
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	157.21	9,999.98	10,157.19
Georgia	14,025.96	1,687.06	15,713.02	150,188.06	15,731.50	165,919.56
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	6,342.63	1,708.34	8,050.97	70,322.85	17,613.18	87,936.03
Indiana	.00	.00	.00	8,745.37	1,974.48	10,719.85
Iowa	90.00	778.60	868.60	360.00	1,841.15	2,201.15
Kansas	.00	15.85	15.85	200.00	60.14	260.14
Kentucky	1,950.16	499.73	2,449.89	7,979.22	4,165.64	12,144.86
Louisiana	10.00	.00	10.00	70.00	10.00	80.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,327.80	2,327.80
Michigan	4,775.00	2,867.30	7,642.30	96,654.46	19,733.22	116,387.68
Mississippi	9,521.88	474.75	9,996.63	52,062.65	3,608.20	55,670.85
Missouri	36,534.50	10,183.64	46,718.14	321,404.98	58,351.79	379,756.77
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	808.88	39.44	848.32	7,508.06	387.04	7,895.10
North Carolina	2,634.42	1,655.42	4,289.84	12,954.20	11,109.08	24,063.28
Ohio	16,606.07	6,366.73	22,972.80	63,700.49	21,502.08	85,202.57
Oklahoma	53,624.25	8,714.34	62,338.59	373,847.47	73,582.24	447,429.71
South Carolina	53,388.53	.00	53,388.53	333,731.65	880.88	334,612.53
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	17,714.48	2,498.18	20,212.66	102,113.74	14,044.28	116,158.02
Texas	10,139.50	1,074.88	11,214.38	62,234.25	4,262.85	66,497.10
Virginia	702.73	.00	702.73	5,841.72	175.00	6,016.72
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	3,302.36	117.10	3,419.46	22,241.72	780.78	23,022.50
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	152.44	7.49	159.93	1,267.05	56.89	1,323.94
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	264.13	264.13
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.04	.04	180.00	.35	180.35
Totals	\$246,689.19	\$56,139.80	\$302,828.99	\$1,810,422.14	\$393,810.98	\$2,204,233.12

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 2,307.81	\$25,262.91	\$ 27,570.72	\$ 30,528.81	\$177,214.81	\$ 207,743.62
Foreign Missions	138,700.02	7,101.68	145,801.70	1,087,587.62	49,817.06	1,137,404.68
FWBBC	15,078.06	7,101.68	22,179.74	109,596.81	49,817.06	159,413.87
Home Missions	84,672.71	5,557.83	90,230.54	491,787.42	38,987.28	530,774.70
Retirement & Insurance	334.84	4,322.77	4,657.61	5,209.81	30,323.42	35,533.23
Master's Men	388.22	4,322.77	4,710.99	6,323.33	30,323.42	36,646.75
Com. for Theo. Integrity	22.52	154.39	176.91	440.66	1,083.02	1,523.68
FWB Foundation	305.74	1,852.60	2,158.34	4,156.18	12,995.85	17,152.03
Historical Commission	4.42	154.39	158.81	271.21	1,083.02	1,354.23
Music Commission	14.25	154.39	168.64	287.63	1,083.02	1,370.65
Media Commission	27.77	154.39	182.16	2,924.82	1,083.02	4,007.84
Hillsdale FWB College	1,301.02	.00	1,301.02	11,701.28	.00	11,701.28
Other	3,531.81	.00	3,531.81	59,606.56	.00	59,606.56
Totals	\$246,689.19	\$56,139.80	\$302,828.99	\$1,810,422.14	\$393,810.98	\$2,204,233.12

A Grandmother's Example

By Richard Merrill

I shouldn't have been embarrassed by what my grandma did, but I couldn't help it. It was just that I had never before heard anyone talk about faith in Jesus Christ outside of church. Consequently, the whole situation made me uneasy.

My eyes darted around the grocery store where I was helping my grandma shop. I wanted to see if a friend or acquaintance might happen to be witnessing this event. Luckily, no one I was acquainted with was there to see my strawberry-colored face in the checkout line with Grandma.

The shopping trip had started innocently enough, as I'd wandered throughout the store with Grandma. She had slowly walked each aisle looking for the various items scribbled on her tiny notepad. To save time, I retrieved the items on Grandma's list that were located many aisles away. As usual, it took over an hour before Grandma finally drew a crooked line through the last item on her list.

A few minutes later, as we were standing in the checkout line, it happened. Grandma dipped two crooked fingers into her purse to search for her grocery money. However, to my surprise, she retrieved a small white pamphlet along with the money. The cashier, too, was surprised to be accepting something other than money, but before she could say anything, Grandma spoke.

"Here's something for you to read when you get the chance. I don't know if you know this or not, but there is a God who loves you so much that He sent His son, Jesus, to die on the cross for your sins."

The words, "The Only Way to Heaven," which were embossed on the cover of the pamphlet, along with Grandma's little speech, made it clear to the cashier that she had just received a gospel tract. She flashed Grandma a nervous smile and quickly stuck the pamphlet into her pocket.

Then, as we were about to leave, Grandma turned and said to the cashier, "I hope that you accept the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. I did, and it was the best decision I ever made."

I couldn't believe what I was hearing. What was my grandma thinking? This wasn't church. We weren't at a Bible study or even with people we knew. We were standing in a grocery store in

the middle of town.

That's when I felt my face turning red. It was the first time I had heard anyone share a personal testimony with a stranger.

It has been several years since that trip to the grocery store with my grandma, and I had all but forgotten it until just recently. A friend asked me to share my testimony with a group of inner-city high school kids he was working with.

My initial reaction was to say, "Thanks, but no thanks. Talking about my faith just isn't my thing. Besides it would be embarrassing up in front of all those kids and they would probably laugh at me."

However, as I was reading through Romans one night, I read a verse that made me think of that day at the store with grandma.

The verse read, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes . . ." (Rom. 1:16, NKJV).

Immediately, I thought of my grandma's boldness to proclaim the love of Christ. I was moved by her readiness to share her faith with anyone who would listen. I felt ashamed when I remembered how I had been embarrassed when Grandma had shown boldness. I also felt thankful that God had given me my grandma as a model of boldness for Christ.

So, I decided to share my testimony with those high school students. I prayed that the Lord would give me the same boldness he had given my grandma years earlier—boldness to proudly proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. After that prayer, God strengthened me and took away all doubt, fear and embarrassment . . . even my red face.

Since my initial testimony with those high schoolers, I have shared my faith with a number of other groups. How odd to think that in witnessing to that cashier, my grandmother changed another life at the same time. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Richard Merrill is a senior public relations major at Taylor University in Fort Wayne, Indiana, where he is co-editor of the campus newspaper *The Express*.

Who Determines These Things?

By Norman G. Wilson

Have you noticed that no matter which television network you watch, the news stories are all the same? I love the TV remote control. With the awesome power of my thumb, I can flip constantly from ABC to NBC, CBS and CNN without missing more than a word or two of any report. But it does not matter which network you watch.

With thousands of newsworthy events happening in our world on any given day, all channels report the same stories. What's more, they often report them in the same sequence. What I want to know is, who determines what will be on the news? Is there, as some suggest, a liberal, trilateral, one-world order, left-wing conspiracy in control of the flow of information available to the American public? Does any news director in any newsroom exercise any independent thinking, ever?

Frankly, I wonder the same thing about churches. Have you tried to visit a church lately? It isn't easy. Take getting to church on time, as an example. Do you remember the old days when Sunday School always began at 10:00 a.m., followed by worship at 11:00 a.m.? Sunday night, the evangelistic hour was 7:30?

It has never been verified to my satisfaction, but I've heard that those times were established by the cows. That's right, the cows! It seems church had to be held late enough to allow farmers to complete the milking before they could attend. Well I guess, thanks to the cows, one always knew the right time to go to church.

Not anymore. These days, services start at odd times: 8:05, 9:30, 10:40, 11:15. And Sunday night? For-

get it. Is there a night service? Will it be in the sanctuary? Arriving a few minutes late for the evening service at one church, I discovered the pews empty and the entire congregation sitting on the platform, watching my attempt to sneak in unnoticed.

What I can't figure out is who determines these trends that all of the churches follow?

For example, who decided congregational songs should be read off the wall rather than out of the hymnal? I miss the hymnal. I like reading all the verses of a song, not just the one or two chosen by the worship leader. And I enjoy singing parts. Since I quit playing the trombone, the only opportunity I have to read music is during the song service. Besides, as a teenager, I discovered sharing a hymnal is a good cover for holding hands.

While I'm on the subject of singing, whose decision was it to do away with hymns? Choruses are fine. Singing choruses is nothing new. We sang choruses way back when I was a boy. But not exclusively. We also sang hymns and gospel songs. Have you looked at some of the words of the old hymns? Many of them are rich, full of doctrine.

There is enough gospel in a good hymnal to lead a sinner to repentance. Hymns offer praise to God, exalt Jesus Christ, encourage obedience to the Holy Spirit and cheer the saints. Isn't that what worship is supposed to do?

Another thing—whose decision was it to replace the choir with a praise team? If you have three or four good singers in your church and it is safe to put a microphone in their hands, fine! But I've heard some praise team members who couldn't carry a tune in

a bushel basket. No microphone should be within six feet of them, let alone six inches. The nice thing about a choir is, there are enough people to drown out those who sing off-key.

One more question—who determined that the preacher should not sit on the platform until time to preach? Sitting on the platform allows an opportunity to connect with the people, look them in the eye, and get acquainted. One noted preacher said he liked to look over the crowd during the song service. He would pick out someone who reminded him of his mother, his father, a neighbor. By the time he got up to preach, he felt he was talking to friends. You can't do that sitting with your back to the people.

Now please don't misunderstand me. If God told you, in your church, to hold worship services at odd times, sing choruses from an overhead projector, led by a worship team armed with high-powered microphones, while the pastor sits hidden in the pews, I have no objection. All I'm asking is, do you think God told all the churches to do the same thing? Are we following the Holy Spirit, or are we playing a childish game of "follow the mega-church leader"? Maybe, like the networks, there is some covert conspiracy at work within our ranks.

Then again, it is probably nothing more sinister than accommodating the cows. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Norman G. Wilson serves as general editor of *The Wesleyan Advocate*.

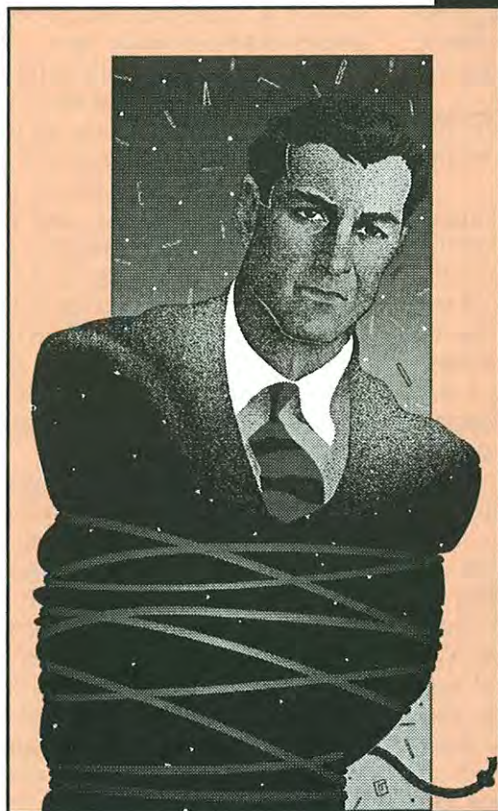
This article published in the June 1998 issue of *The Wesleyan Advocate*, official publication of The Wesleyan Church, is reprinted by permission.

Part 10 of an 11-part series on aberrant-Christian groups in America.

The Counterfeit Jesus of Mormonism

(Part I)

By Tom Forehand, Jr.



The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS or The Mormons) has had an explosive growth since it started in 1830. Today's membership is 10 million worldwide.

Joseph Smith, Jr., its founder, was born on December 23, 1805, in Sharon, Vermont. His family soon moved to upstate New York, a crossroads for religious experiences. Young Smith immersed himself in some of these experiences, including those of the occult.¹ By 1830, this backwoods preach-

er had his own church that could be described in today's terms as an extremely pentecostal Church of Christ.

Yet, the LDS quickly became an aberrant-Christian sect. Mormonism is the quintessential American example of what happens when a church depends more on continuing revelation and less on the Bible. Sad to say, even though the word "Jesus" is part of the Mormon Church's name, today's Latter-day Saint "Jesus" is but another counterfeit.

Book of Mormon—New Scripture

Smith's *Book of Mormon* presents a fictional story of pre-Columbian Christianity practiced in the early Americas by Jews whose descendants became the "Indians." The book's origin, according to Mormonism, is replete with inscribed golden plates, an angel and supernatural help to translate the book's message. But according to B. H. Roberts, a late LDS leader and historian, Smith had plenty of imagination and resources to have written the

book himself.²

Yet, if you are interested in studying current LDS doctrine, do not waste your time reading the *Book of Mormon* (much less praying about it!). Why? Surprisingly, this book contains few if any of today's bizarre LDS doctrines. Also, the "Jesus" presented in the *Book of Mormon* is far different from the Jesus of current Mormon theology.³

Revelations—More New Scripture

As Smith led his flock from New York into Ohio, Missouri and finally Illinois, he claimed to have had new revelations, soon accepted by his followers as "scripture." Though the Bible teaches that God is "spirit" (John 4:24), Smith "revealed" that God the Father had a body of flesh and bones.⁴

During the 1830s, a gigantic meteorite shower, coupled with the return of a brilliantly-lit Halley's Comet, surely fueled LDS end-time fervor. More and more Latter-day Saints streamed west to establish God's Kingdom in Missouri.⁵

However, their ever-increasing numbers, spiritual elitism and common goals brought them into direct economic and political conflict with local non-Mormons. Threats and isolated acts of violence by both Mormons and Missourians finally escalated into a prairie war. After bloodshed, mostly Mormon blood, the Latter-day Saints were driven from the state.

Book of Abraham—Even More New Scripture

Mormons so quickly settled Nauvoo, Illinois, during the early 1840s, that this Mississippi River village soon grew to rival Chicago in population. Not only had LDS poured in from Missouri, but also their missionary efforts in Great Britain had finally begun to pay off. Many, fleeing the squalor of England's industrial revolution, converted to Mormonism and booked passage to Nauvoo, dubbed "The City of Joseph."

As Smith's flock swelled, so did his confidence. During the 1830s, his family had acquired several Egyptian papyri which no one could successfully translate. Yet the relatively uneducated Mormon Prophet claimed that he could; his "translation" be-

came known as the *Book of Abraham*. Though the Bible teaches there is but one true God, Smith's new Egyptian translation taught that there were many gods.⁶

The *Book of Abraham* set the stage for Smith's most dramatic public doctrine, one out-pacing a famous contemporary, Charles Darwin. The imaginative Mormon Prophet soared passed Darwin by claiming that *men could evolve into gods!*⁷

A renegade newspaper, the *Nauvoo Expositor*, caused a stir when it exposed Smith's doctrine of polytheism along with his secret doctrine of polygamy.⁸ To quell public tension, the Mormon-dominated Nauvoo city council had the *Expositor* destroyed.

Smith had not only clearly rejected the Christian view of God, but he had also gathered a harem of several dozen wives;⁹ to boot, he had secretly given a revelation requiring Mormons to practice polygamy if they were to become gods!¹⁰ Smith finally and publicly denounced the God of the Christian trinity:

Many men say there is one God: the Father; the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God! . . . three in one, and one in three! . . . All are to be crammed into one God, according to sectarianism. It would make the biggest God in all the world. He would be a wonderfully big God—he would be a giant or a monster.¹¹

A few days later, due to the destruction of the *Expositor*, Smith was forced to surrender to county officials in nearby Cartage. There, while in jail, he was murdered by a mob.

"Another Jesus"

The "Jesus" of the Bible is the Creator God (John 1:1-3; Col. 1:16). The Mormon "Jesus" is but one of a pantheon of gods who were once men. Even today, Mormonism teaches that men may become "gods" just like God the Father.¹² [To be continued] ■

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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.

Endnotes

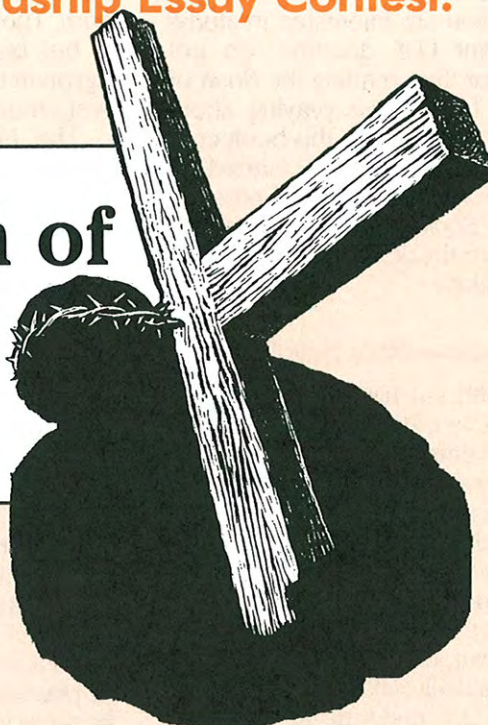
(Recommended reading materials in **boldface**)

1. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), pp. 38ff.
2. Brigham D. Madsen, *B. H. Roberts Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1985), p. 250.
3. The *Book of Mormon* confuses the person of the Father with the Son (See Mosiah 15:1-5). Smith seems to have held a modalistic view of God in the early 1830s (See Sandra Tanner, *Mormonism Shadow or Reality?* Enlarged Ed.—Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm, 1972), p. 167. Modalism teaches that God is only one person (who acts like the Father at times, at other times like the Son, and at other times like the Holy Spirit). However, the Christian trinity teaches that God exists simultaneously as three distinct Persons.
4. See *Doctrine and Covenants* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1979), verse 130:22. The 1835-1921 editions of the *Doctrine and Covenants* also contained the *Lectures on Faith* which taught that God the Father is "spirit"—See Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*. 2nd Ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), p. 439 and *Doctrine and Covenants* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams, 1835), p. 53. The Bible teaches that God the Father is a spirit who does not have a body of flesh and bones (compare John 4:24 with Luke 24:39).
5. Late Mormon Apostle Bruce R. McConkie stated the LDS belief that the Garden of Eden is located in western Missouri (where Jesus is to return to earth at His second coming)—*Mormon Doctrine*, pp. 20, 500.
6. See *Book of Abraham* 4:3-5:16. The *Book of Mormon* teaches that there is but one God (See Alma 11:26-31).
7. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*. V. 6 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1978), pp. 305-306.
8. The belief in many gods is generally called "polytheism." "Polygamy" is used here to mean the marriage of one man to more than one woman at the same time.
9. See Sandra Tanner, *The Changing World of Mormonism* (Moody Press: Chicago, 1980), pp. 231-234. The Mormon Church published a list of some of these women last century.
10. See *Doctrine and Covenants* 132:20. Currently, the Mormon Church does not permit the practice of having more than one living wife at a time. Yet this revelation is still an essential part of Mormon doctrine. Apostle McConkie claimed that the practice of polygamy will start again after the second coming of Christ (See *Mormon Doctrine*, p. 578).
11. *History of the Church*. V. 6, p. 476.
12. *Gospel Principles* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1992), p. 302.

First place entry in the 1998 Stewardship Essay Contest.

The Foundation of Stewardship

By Aaron Fletcher



When we think of Christian stewardship, many things may come to mind. Good management of money, tithing, supporting our churches and using our abilities for God are all examples of stewardship. But what lies at the heart of stewardship is much deeper than spending money wisely.

The foundation of Christian stewardship is shown in Jesus' words: "If any man would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

This is the entire point of Christian stewardship, as well as the main point of the Christian life. Stewardship is not just serving Christ with what God has given us. It is submitting to God, forsaking all our selfish ambitions, becoming slaves to righteousness and following Christ with all of ourselves, not just our possessions. It is a mental, physical and spiritual aspect of our lives.

Stewardship means submission. We must deny all of self and submit to God. This area of life is often overlooked, because many times when we feel the Holy Spirit's calling we do not humble ourselves until there is no self left. We can not become slaves to Christ if we are still slaves to sin.

It is daily submission that helps us

become stewards for Christ. Without submission, we are not serving Christ, we are serving ourselves. We need an attitude of servanthood, for without this we can never serve Christ with our whole selves.

Stewardship means taking up our cross. For the rich young ruler, taking up his cross meant giving up all he had to follow Christ. It means submission that allows God to humble us to the status of servanthood; taking up our cross is acceptance of that status. When we take up our cross, we allow God to work in our broken lives. And on this cross we nail up any of our selfish ambitions, so that God can use us in His work.

Stewardship means following Christ. It does not matter how much of our time, money and abilities we give to the kingdom of God if we are not following Christ. Our own works are nothing; they are "filthy rags." Good deeds are not examples of stewardship, unless we are Spirit-led to do them.

When we are Spirit-led, we do not glorify ourselves by the things we do, we glorify God. A servant does not do what he thinks would be best for his master; he follows the master and does whatever he says.

By listening to God's voice and do-

ing what He says, God is accomplishing so much more through us than we could ever do on our own. But we must listen, and we must serve. True stewards are people who serve Christ with all they do. We give everything to Christ when we accept Him as Savior, and by following Christ we allow God to manage all that He has given us.

These things are the foundation of stewardship. Without denying ourselves or taking up our cross and following Him, we can never be stewards of what God has given us. Everything in the earth belongs to God; we are simply managing it while we are on earth. And we cannot be true stewards if we are without Christ. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Fifteen-year-old Aaron Fletcher is a member of Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a sophomore at Antioch High School.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Leadership Conference Set for December

ANTIOCH, TN—The annual Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference will meet December 7-8 at Regal Maxwell House Hotel in Nashville, according to executive secretary Melvin Worthington. Some 150 state leaders are expected to participate in the two-day conference.

Conference registration begins Monday, December 7, at 2:00 p.m. After an opening dinner at 5:30 p.m., attendees will gather for a two-hour session in the hotel's Grande Ballroom.

The 1998 conference theme will be "Our Chief Business."

Five sessions will be planned around the theme.

Bob Sjogren with Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment (ACMC) will be featured Tuesday morning in a special two-hour presentation.

Executive secretary Melvin Worthington will deliver Monday evening's keynote address. This will be followed by a time of group prayer directed by Glen Johnson.

National agencies and commissions will share their vision for the denomination in a 90-minute session Tuesday morning. A two-hour Director's Forum will conclude the conference Tuesday evening.

National Association modera-

tor Carl Cheshier and assistant moderator Tim York will preside at all sessions. Reverend Cheshier will also chair a Tuesday afternoon meeting for the chairmen of all national boards.

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

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

Huckaby Marks 60 Years in Ministry

PHENIX CITY, AL—Friends and relatives gathered at White Rock FWB Church in Phenix City, AL, on August 15 to honor Reverend Chester A. Huckaby who celebrated 60 years as a Free Will Baptist preacher. The 3:00 p.m. reception in the church fellowship hall was hosted by Pastor Burt Hall.

Reverend Huckaby (80) pastored 28 churches in Alabama, Georgia and Florida during his six-decade-long career. He was ordained to preach January 7, 1939.

Brother Huckaby organized five churches in Florida and served six years as moderator of



West Florida's Liberty Association. He served on the Georgia State Association Board of Mis-

sions, as well as camp director in Florida and Georgia.

His ministry reached beyond local, district and state levels. He served 19 years on the National Association's Board of Retirement.

White Rock pastor Burt Hall presented Reverend Huckaby with a plaque in recognition of his fruitful ministry. Huckaby, now retired, lives in Columbus, Georgia. He teaches the Senior Adult Sunday School Class at the White Rock Church. He also does supply preaching when needed.

Free Will Baptist Bible College Enrolls 333

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 333 students from 28 states and nine foreign countries for the fall semester of the 1998-99 school year, according to Dr. Charles Hampton, registrar.

By classes, the number breaks down to 82 seniors, 57 juniors, 81 sophomores, 111 freshmen and two special students. Ninety-six new students joined 237 returnees for the new year.

Opening services were crowned with many decisions by students. One young man was saved and another answered God's call to preach.

State breakdowns are as follows:



Many decisions at opening services.

Alabama	24
Arkansas	23
Arizona	2
California	1
Colorado	2
Delaware	1
Florida	14
Georgia	14
Illinois	37

Indiana	4
Kansas	1
Kentucky	7
Louisiana	1
Michigan	13
Mississippi	6
Missouri	19
Nebraska	1
New Mexico	1

North Carolina	24
Ohio	7
Oklahoma	6
Pennsylvania	1
South Carolina	16
South Dakota	1
Tennessee	87
Texas	3
Virginia	7
West Virginia	6
*Foreign	24

*Students (24) came from the following foreign countries:

Albania	1
Bahamas	9
Canada	6
Côte d'Ivoire	2
France	1
Korea	1
Panama	1
Russia	1
Spain	2

Oklahoma Pastor Celebrates 50 Years

BLANCHARD, OK—Members of Blanchard FWB Church in Blanchard set aside Sunday, August 23 to honor their pastor, Reverend J. R. Hall, for 50 years in the ministry. He has led the Blanchard Church 14 years.

Friends and colleagues met with the church to salute the 70-year-old pastor with words of praise and appreciation, and a reception.

During his half-century min-

istry, Reverend Hall has pastored eight churches in Oklahoma and one in California. He organized two of those Oklahoma pastorates—Sunnylane FWB Church in Oklahoma City and Lakeside FWB Church near Norman.

Members of the Blanchard Church wrote in the specially-prepared bulletin: "Brother J. R. came to Blanchard 14 years ago at a very bleak time. Our church had just split which left few mem-

bers and was very much in debt. Through his leadership, we now have a strong, debt-free church."

Six men spoke in tribute to Pastor J. R. Hall's ministry—Ronald Riedel, Bailey Thompson, Gene Russell, David Sutton, Ron Martin and Wade Jernigan.

John Robert Hall was born December 8, 1927, in Wayne, Oklahoma. He was converted at Spring Hill FWB Church in 1947 and began preaching in 1948.

Hillsdale College Expects Record Enrollment

MOORE, OK—Officials at Hillsdale FWB College were watching enrollment statistics closely at press time, according to Timothy Eaton, vice-president of academic affairs. The initial numbers indicated that 1998-99 could be a record year for enrollment.

By early September, the college

had enrolled 180 students, not including external studies or the new degree completion program.

Timothy Eaton said, "When the seminar course enrollments are added to the external studies and the degree completion program, Hillsdale will exceed the old enrollment record of 193."

The new degree completion program is called ABLE (Adult Bible and Leadership Education). The program enables adults with 60 semester hours of college to complete a bachelor's degree in 21 months. Students must be at least 25 years old and be able to attend class one night each week.

Southeastern College Enrolls 135

WENDELL, NC—When classes began September 2, officials at Southeastern FWB College reported 135 students enrolled for the fall semester, including 99 dormitory students. Numerous students are preparing for full-time Christian service in churches, Christian schools and on the mission field.

Fall Get-Acquainted Days are scheduled November 19-21 for high school students.

The college's October 14-16 Missions Conference featured four speakers: Hemant Patel, Mark Riggs, Clarence Sexton and Johnny Pike.

Three Generations Meet for Unique Service

LOVELAND, CO—Three generations of preachers in one Free Will Baptist family met at Emmanuel FWB Church in Loveland, CO, August 16 to preach and praise. The occasion was a special day to promote Hillsdale FWB College, according to Wade Jernigan, staffer at the college in the area of church relations.

Pastor Bob Thomas began his third Colorado church in Loveland this past May. By August 15, some 36 people gather in a basement for services. Mission pastor Bob Thomas invited his son, Bob L. Thomas, who pastors in Oklahoma and his grandson, Joshua Thomas, a freshman ministerial

student at Hillsdale College, to head up the special day's activities.

Three sermons and a Hillsdale College offering highlighted the morning services. Grandson Joshua preached on sin; son Bob L. Thomas preached on "The Big Question." Long-time friend Wade Jernigan preached on building the church.

When the preaching services ended, the small congregation presented a \$1,250 check to Joshua Thomas for Hillsdale College.

Wade Jernigan said, "There was a bit of shouting, crying and laughing. For the church, it was victory. For the college it was value. For the cause, it was vision."

Kentucky Honors Tim York

ASHLAND, KY—Delegates to Kentucky's 59th annual state association recognized Dr. Tim York for his 11 years of service as promotional secretary. York, who now pastors Heritage Temple FWB Church in Ashland, preached Friday of the June 19-20 meeting.

Ohio minister Lucian Baker preached Saturday morning as delegates took a break from the business session. Moderator Tim Hall led all business sessions. He was elected to his fifth term.

Hoods Creek FWB Church hosted the two-day event as some 225 delegates, ministers and visitors gathered in the northeast corner of Kentucky. Promotional Secretary Jim Patton reported a successful Christian Workers Conference under the direction of Jerry Whitworth.

The 1999 state association will meet at Betsy Layne FWB Church in Betsy Layne. The dates had not been determined at press time.

CCC Enrolls 182 Students

FRESNO, CA—Student enrollment hit the 182 mark as fall enrollment got underway at California Christian College, according to Greg McAllister, academic dean.

Acting registrar, Jennifer Barron, said, "Because of our non-traditional educational program, we have a continuous enrollment. We will not know our total enrollment until the semester ends."

The breakdown for enrollment includes the following:

Traditional Students	50
Non-Traditional Students	78
(Slavic Program, ESL)	
Chaplain Class (Expected Enrollment)	46
Preaching Seminar (Expected)	5
Audit Students	3
Total Students	182

Total Full-Time Students	124
Total Part-Time Students	58

Total Free Will Baptist Students27

FWBBC Seeks Teachers

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College is looking for a teacher of English as a second language. Five years experience and a master's degree in education are required. The opening for the emerging program position is effective January 1999.

The college is also seeking a chairman for their Department of Teacher Education. A doctorate in education is required; ten years experience in teaching and administration is preferred. This position is open immediately.

Any person interested should send a resume to:

Dr. Milton Fields
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205

Phone: 615/383-1340
FAX: 615/269-6128
E-mail: mfields@fwbbc.edu

Fifteen years ago **Neva Moser** volunteered to type the bulletin at **First FWB Church** in **Batesville, AR**. More jobs found their way into her hands until the church decided they couldn't do without her services and put her on salary as a secretary and bookkeeper. The church honored Neva as she retired this summer. Pastor **Bobby Shepherd** said the congregation gave her a plaque and cash gift.

Members of **Shiloh FWB Church** in **Bristol, VA**, celebrated 100 years of service this summer, according to Pastor **Walter Statzer** who has led the church for 26 years. The church organized with 11 charter members in 1898 and was called "Free Will Baptist Church of Christ." At least 17 ministers have pastored the church, beginning with **R. P. Moore**.

Wakefield FWB Church in **Wakefield, OH**, reports eight baptisms. **Lowell King** pastors.

Father's Day at **New Life FWB Church** in **Licking, MO**, has been declared **Harold Price** Day, and the church will annually honor one of its leaders. The first recipient was **Harold Price**, a charter member and Sunday School teacher since 1971. He helped secure property on which to build in 1972. The church gave Mr. Price a plaque, a money tree and a radio. Missouri executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** presented a certificate of appreciation. **Max Courtney** pastors.

Contact welcomes **Heritage Highlights**, publication of **Heritage Temple FWB Church** in **Ashland, KY**. **Tim York** pastors.

Pastor **Allen Hall** reports one conversion and four rededications during VBS at **Five Points FWB Church** in **Wilmington, NC**. Hall said that church attendance averages in the 70s and members were delighted when 50 people daily came to VBS with a high Wednesday of 64. The children brought pennies for missions each day. By week's end, they had \$500 to send to missionary **Cliff Donoho** in Iowa.

The last 18 months kept everybody busy at **Kingsley Avenue FWB Church** in **Greeneville, TN**. During that time members built and paid for a \$30,000 addition to their fellowship hall. They also purchased a three-bedroom parsonage for their first full-time pastor, **Doyle Pruett**.

Calvary FWB Church in **Fort Myers, FL**, borrowed a swimming pool for a baptism and baptized three converts. One was 16, the other two in their 70s and 80s. The congregation meets in the living room of **Dennis Matthews** three times weekly for services. Florida executive secretary **Millard Sasser** drives to Fort Myers frequently to visit them.

Retired minister **Willis T. Jones** has stepped in at a critical hour to assist **Christian Home FWB Church** in **Bartow, FL**. Pastor **Danny Williamson** required a bone marrow transplant at Moffitt Cancer Center in Tampa. The Community National Bank of Bartow receives contributions toward Williamson's medical expenses.

Southeastern FWB College set November 19-21 as "Get Acquainted Days" at the **Wendell, NC**, campus. Students in grades 10, 11 and 12 may attend at a cost of \$20 each. Officials request that registrations be received by November 13. The college's toll-free number is 1-888-847-3922.

First FWB Church in **Johnston City, IL**, baptized three converts, received three new families into membership and purchased two 15-passenger vans. **Mark Shores** pastors.

Thieves burglarized the administration building at **California Christian College** in **Fresno** this summer. They stole four computers.

Harmony FWB Church in **Fresno, CA**, dedicated their new auditorium June 28, according to Pastor **James McAllister**. California executive secretary **Nuel Brown**, Mayor **Jim Patterson** and Councilman **Sal Quintero** participated in the ribbon cutting ceremonies and dedication. The new auditorium was filled for the special occasion.

Clovis FWB Church in **Clovis, CA**, dedicated their new addition with a full-house attendance. Former pastor **Millard Sasser** preached the dedication message. **Dan Felts** pastors.

After a successful VBS with 13 converts, Pastor **Daryl Grimes** baptized 14 people at **Hope FWB Church** in **Plymouth, NC**.

Members of **Trinity FWB Church** in **Mauk, GA**, purchased a parsonage for Pastor **Henry Shellman**. The parsonage is located three miles from the church.

Groundbreaking ceremonies kicked off construction for a new fellowship hall at **Hosanna FWB Church** in **Charleston, AR**. The congregation organized five years ago and called **Randy Moore** as pastor. **Wade Jernigan** was guest speaker for the celebration.

After meeting three years in a store front, **Prattville FWB Church** in **Prattville, AL**, dedicated their new building. Land and construction costs were \$350,000, according to Pastor **Fred Jones**. Some 164 people gathered for the celebration.

Free Will Baptist Family Ministries in **Greeneville, TN**, purchased a log home and 17 acres which allows the home to care for eight more children. The house is located 1.7 miles from the main campus.

Members of **Amity FWB Church** in **Niangua, MO**, dedicated their new church building, according to pastor **J.W. O'Neal** who has led the congregation 23 years. The original building (102 years old) was destroyed in 1996 when arsonists set fire to the structure.

First FWB Church in **Rolla, MO**, burned the mortgage on their property, according to Pastor **James Parker**. Founding pastor **Dan Booth** and former pastor **Doc Cochran** brought greetings. Missouri executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** preached the morning message.

Three conversions, three baptisms, five new members and 10 rededications brought a big smile to Pastor **Glenn Murray** at **United FWB Church** in **West Plains, MO**. ■



FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

End of Year Tax Planning

By Frank Giunta

We often joke about April 15, but it's really not a joking matter. It's the day we must pay our taxes or be subject to a penalty; the option is to file an extension. I have found that the anxiety level of this day is closely connected to our preparedness or lack of it.

For instance, because Tom wanted to deal with his need in the most efficient manner possible, he created one of his many lists. He settled on five of his highest priorities. Here they are:

- ♦ Tax Deductions
- ♦ Retirement Income
- ♦ Providing Support for His Favorite Ministries
- ♦ Avoidance of Unnecessary Probate Costs
- ♦ Best Value for His Dollar

In an attempt to address Tom's priority list, we shared this information about a Deferred Gift Annuity. This type of annuity isn't for everyone. It has some excellent benefits for those who aren't quite ready to retire, but who will need some additional income when the time does come.

If Tom will contribute \$5,000 a year for five years to a Deferred Gift Annuity for a grand total of \$25,000, he will enjoy some very impressive benefits. Let's look at them.

How It Will Affect Tax Needs

Tom is a man who has been diligent in business, consequently he has been successful and now he is solidly in the 28% tax bracket. He's going to need a little help at tax time.

Of the \$5,000 that Tom will be contributing each year for five years, an average of \$2,923 will serve as a charitable deduction on his tax return for that year. Over the five-year period he will contribute \$25,000, of which approximately \$14,500 will be deductible.

How It Will Affect Retirement Income

Tom had taken advantage of the \$2,000 a year IRA and had been paying into social security all of his working life, but that didn't seem adequate for his future needs. For a \$10,500 net cost, Tom will receive a return of approximately \$400 a month for the rest of his life. And if he chooses to increase his contribution he could increase his income substantially.

How It Will Support Favorite Ministries

Tom already has a warm heart for the Lord's work. In fact, he gives on a regular basis. Since Tom doesn't need to be motivated to give, the next question is how should he give? While he is living he will give gifts of cash as he has done in the past, but this Deferred Gift Annuity gives him an opportunity to do something special for these ministries after he has gone to be with the Lord.

The ongoing need of these ministries after his death hadn't even entered his mind, but now after carefully considering the matter he sees how beneficial a gift of this size would be to take up the slack created by his death.

How It Will Avoid Unnecessary Probate Costs

This Gift Annuity will not protect his entire estate—that kind of protection can be procured through a Revocable Trust and other types of estate planning instruments—but it certainly will protect the \$25,000 that he contributes through the Deferred Gift Annuity.

How Does This Arrangement Compare in Dollar Value?

Let's look at a summation of the facts:

The initial contribution is \$5,000 a year for five years, a total of \$25,000.

An income of approximately \$400 a month for the rest of his life.

An average charitable deduction of \$2,923 each of the five consecutive years he contributes \$5,000.

His \$25,000 Gift Annuity passes to his favorite ministry at his death.

The Gift Annuity circumvents the probate court and therefore avoids any unnecessary probate costs.

End-of-the-year tax planning really needs to begin early in the year to be properly orchestrated.

If you have begun thinking of the importance of proper tax planning and would like a little help with some of your special needs, contact us at the Free Will Baptist Foundation, or you may reach me directly at my home office by calling 573/335-6240. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Frank Giunta is field representative for the Free Will Baptist Foundation.



HOME MISSIONS

Benjamin Randall Day

By Rev. Joel Nason

At some point in my training for the ministry, I remember reading a phrase that I have never forgotten—"seek not to be great, but to be truly useful." This, more than any other statement, is perhaps the most thorough and concise description of the ministry of Elder Benjamin Randall.

Although he left few writings of his own, there is just enough available to see his heart for the work God gave him to do. Many Free Will Baptists have been thrilled as they read the biography written by John Buzzell in 1827 that recounts Randall's life from his conversion to his self-sacrificing labors to reach the lost. A few people have perused the minutes at the New Durham church written in his own hand for nearly 30 years describing church life and a shepherd's heart. Free Will Baptists honor this man in November for many reasons, but a few of the more outstanding characteristics of his life are suggested here that we might remember the stock from which our denomination arose.

Usefulness as a Man of God

Piety was not always a dirty word. Today, the word connotes someone who is *holier-than-thou* or even *too good* for normal people. However, piety in the 18th century referred to one who was genuinely godly and holy. Randall was a man of God in its most profound sense. He relished his relationship with the Lord and lived every day in the reality of the presence of God.

Usefulness as a Man of the Word

When reading his letters and sermons one is immediately struck with Randall's grasp of scripture. Although he was not seminary trained, he possessed a full background of general knowledge and a thorough understanding of God's Word. When forming the denomination itself in later years, he was emphatic about making the scriptures the standard of truth for all who would be a part.

Usefulness as a Soul Winner

Randall's ministry was a welcomed blessing to the hundreds of communities scattered through the hills of Maine and New Hampshire.

The doctrine of a general atonement (in contrast to Calvin's doctrine of election and limited atonement) was a great relief to the tormented souls who languished without the prospect of being saved.

Usefulness as a Church Planter

Randall's vision for establishing Christ-honoring, Bible-preaching churches has been noted by others. When citizens from New Durham approached Randall in 1777 about coming to be their pastor, he stipulated that he would do so on the condition that he be allowed to go about on church planting efforts preaching the gospel.

In 1807 he writes, "Here ends my journal for 1807. Having traveled only 2,593 miles, and having been so much ill, I have attended only 203 public meetings, besides weddings and funerals" (Journal).

Usefulness as a Champion of Truth

Randall's sound biblical judgment and commitment to scriptural truth gave him the unique ability to deal with the issues and movements of the day.

In 1794 he dealt with Shakerism and all of its attendant extremes, and two or three years later, it was the annihilation doctrine and Unitarianism of Elias Smith. In all, "the denomination was held to the truth of the Word of God largely through his good sense and earnest piety." It was always Randall's fear that the denomination would "grow popular and conform to the world as other denominations had done." He feared they would "fellowship with those who hold and preach doctrines inconsistent with the Word of God."

Why do we honor Benjamin Randall this month? We remember him in Christ because he chose to be useful to God. In a day when many in Christian circles are caught up in ostensibly having their needs met, it is refreshing to remember one who was not self-indulgent, but rather wholehearted in his pursuit of what really matters. He was useful to God because he gave his all so that all may hear! ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Joel Nason pastors Heritage Free Will Baptist Church in Laconia, New Hampshire.



RANDALL HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

Let's Reclaim Our Nation!

By Alton Loveless

I have been in favor of revival since I entered the ministry 43 years ago. My concern is greater today than it was then. I recently joined with Trymon Messer, director of the Home Missions Department, to make an effort to fight against the forces of this world.

Why is America sinking into a mire of sin, lawlessness and moral decay? Has the world gotten the upper hand and the church become so worldly that it has lost its power?

Violent crimes reported to the police in America are at an all-time high. This year close to six million Americans will become victims of violent crime. Many will also become victims of the judicial system as well. Isn't it time we balance the scales of justice, making the system more sensitive to the rights and needs of the victim?

Mace in our bags, guns in our glove compartments, car/home alarms, and we often look over our shoulders to see if someone is behind us. Sound familiar? Crime in America has become more than a problem. It affects our daily lives whether we are a victim or not. According to the FBI, a crime occurs every two seconds in America. This adds up to 40 million crimes yearly. This includes over 23,000 murders, 102,000 rapes, 620,000 robberies and 1.2 million aggravated assaults.

Gang violence is a pressing worry for Americans. Violence among juveniles has increased over 300% in the last 30 years. In 1990 juveniles committed more than a third of all murders. Many experts believe this next decade will experience an unprecedented surge in youth crime since the youth population will grow 23%.

Parental absence increases a child's likelihood of future criminal behavior. As out-of-wedlock births have risen, so has the crime rate. Forty-three percent of all inmates grew up in single-parent households. Nearly a third had a parent who abused either alcohol or drugs, and more than a third had at least one family member who was incarcerated sometime during the child's youth.

Drug use is highly correlated with delinquent behavior. The use of drugs is an increasing problem with our younger generation. Experts say there is an undeniable relationship between crime and drugs.

According to the Family Research Council's

1995 nationwide poll, more than nine of every 10 Americans believe the media affects violent crime.

Robert McAfee, president of the American Medical Association, agrees, "If you combine television, motion pictures, rap music and video games, there is a continuing influence of violence . . . (and) violence is indeed a learned behavior."

While our country continues to wring its hands, losing in crime prevention, and adds security officers to enforce safety, we as the church ought to get back to the job of anti-crime offense by reaching the individual before he becomes a statistic.

Even our crime experts say the crime wave is not due to impoverishment but to a poverty of values. The only true value system that can change society is the church doing what it should be doing.

There must be a rededication of our ministers, churches and communities to the values taught by Jesus Christ in the Word of God. The by-product will be a growth in morality, saved people, better government, safer streets and the satisfaction of knowing we did that which we ought to have done.

Let the campaign start with us. But let us know some important lessons as we start.

First, a country that lacks a serious religious foundation for ethical or moral behavior will be swept by family breakdowns, crime and corruption. These always come when social controls are relaxed.

Second, no major civilization can long survive if people do not believe in the values that traditionally guided and sustained it.

Third, recognize that the combination of Christian character and Christian belief is a deadly threat to tyranny and injustice.

Will we survive?

You may order free brochures entitled "Reclaim our Nation" to help you evangelize your community. These brochures cost us about 20¢ each so order only what you will use. ■

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

FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Spelling C-O-M-P-A-S-S-I-O-N

By Tim Campbell, Stewardship Development Director

In the mid-60s, in our small town school system in northeast Arkansas, there was no such thing as Special Education. Those who were severely retarded were sent to Little Rock or just stayed at home. Those who had a learning disability or were just a little slow, were integrated into the regular classes.

At that time, I was in the third grade. I was in Mrs. Hart's class. It was mid-October, during class, when we heard a knock on the door. In walked the principal, Mr. Bush. Behind him was a big man in dirty overalls, an oil soaked cap and brogan shoes. Beside him stood a little boy in tattered clothes. He, too, had brogan shoes. You couldn't see dirt on his face, but it still looked dirty. His reddish brown hair looked as if it had not been combed or washed in several days.

Mr. Bush said, "Mrs. Hart, I have a new student for you. His name is Sam."

Sam's daddy simply handed the necessary paper work to Mrs. Hart and, with not a word to Sam, walked out the door. It seemed to me that he was trying to appear proud, but, at the same time, was embarrassed. The thin-framed, dirty little boy stood at the front of the class with all eyes glued on him. Mrs. Hart led him over to the desk beside mine (we were in alphabetical order) and asked him to take his seat.

I cannot tell you how sickening this experience was. Sam smelled to high heaven. It seemed that each time he moved or shuffled the foul odor particles in the air would stir again and strike me in the nose. I knew by the look on the other students' faces, for at least a four-desk radius, that they were having the same experience.

Finally, recess bell rang and I ran out for some fresh air and, after a while, forgot the experience as I played on the monkey bars. But then I looked across the playground to see Sam standing by the library wall by himself, watching all the other kids play. There wasn't a soul around him and no hope of one approaching.

Please understand, I was neither then nor am now a great humanitarian, driven to noble causes. But I did like to sleep at night—and the scene of that lonesome, dirty little boy, scared and possibly about to cry, held the potential of being a heart-wrenching conviction about bedtime. So, I prepared my senses, walked over to Sam, and asked if he would like to play. Within a few minutes, I got used to the smell

and we were friends.

After recess, it was reading time. As was our custom, we went around the room and took turns in our readers. It came Sam's turn to read, but there was silence. "Sam, read paragraph four," said Mrs. Hart. Still nothing. Then Mrs. Hart walked over to the desk and looked at Sam. As she bent down to peer into his face, Sam burst into uncontrollable sobs. Sam could not read. I know now that Sam was slow.

I know that Mrs. Hart had a sense of smell too, but she put her arm around the little boy and assured him that everything was going to be okay. Sam calmed down and we continued reading.

Mrs. Hart skipped Sam for a long time in all of our subjects. From that day on, while we were having our personal study time, Mrs. Hart would take Sam to the back of the class and work on spelling and reading with him. I can still hear her muffled encouragements to Sam. Every day—until one day Mrs. Hart didn't skip Sam. It came his time to read (right before mine), he picked up his book, and with stunted words, actually read a few lines out of our book. I will never forget the smile on that little boy's face. I will never forget the good feeling I had deep in my soul.

Third grade was a memorable year for me. Sam never smelled any better, but we became good friends. Mrs. Hart became my favorite teacher. I especially excelled in spelling. I was third in our grade's spelling bee. And I learned to spell one of the biggest words that I have ever learned. By her actions with a dirty, little boy named Sam, Mrs. Clarabelle Hart taught me how to spell a very special word: C-O-M-P-A-S-S-I-O-N. ■

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ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PREACHERS

Let People Do What They Can

Several older ladies and one man gladly went to Sunday School early. They gathered on the front church pew for one main job—fold the bulletins. For years they'd assumed this responsibility. Probably an hour or more before anyone arrived, those faithful members neatly folded every bulletin. The vital means of communication were stacked, ready for the ushers to distribute before the morning service.

Mistakes that Hurt

Only once or twice did I get to the church early enough to observe this faithful crew eagerly performing their self-appointed responsibility. Very few of those who met for worship really knew who provided this personal care to the weekly pages of announcements.

Since we also produced a church newsletter, funds became available to purchase a paper folder. This piece of office equipment surely saved time. The office staff was excited. "Let's fold the bulletins, too," declared a secretary. *A good idea*, I thought.

So, the next Sunday the folded bulletins were placed on the usher's table. I told one of the dear saints that their services would no longer be needed. Case closed! Not a single one of those volunteers ever complained or criticized me. They could have. They should have!

You see, young preacher, I robbed those faithful few of performing the only job they did in that church. Later, I apologized. The wrongdoing was confessed to the Lord. But I also learned a lesson, I hope.

Use Senior Saints

Most seniors are just waiting to be asked. A wise young preacher will make a list of church jobs that need to be done. Determine which of those

jobs can be performed by a senior citizen or retiree. Then ask the older person to pray about the opportunity. You may be pleasantly surprised at how much work can be accomplished by "volunteers who were drafted."

They can open and close the church buildings, attach labels to mailings, make telephone calls to advertise special services, and cut off postage stamps for the WNAC project. Their schedules allow them to cut church grass, trim bushes, wash windows and even clean the building.

Set Special Days

The older members deserve to be recognized. Often, they have faithfully served in years past. Sponsor "Senior Sundays." Recognize everyone above a certain age with a small gift. Maybe the church could provide a special luncheon for this elect group.

Have an "eighty's club" or a "seventy's club" of those in the church family who are of that age and above. Let them select their favorite songs one Sunday. On their birthdays, give them the opportunity to testify or select the congregational songs or read the scripture. Make them feel important.

Harness Older Men

It was my honor to have two former pastors in one of my pastorates. The duet sat together on the second row. The "amens" from their feeble lips put fire in my sermons. To ask the one who could sing to render a solo on a Sunday evening, even though the hymn book almost shook out of his hands, put a sparkle in his eyes. Both loved to fill the pulpit in my absence or on special occasions. At times I would take them to revival meetings, church conferences or visiting in homes. What a blessing these veteran preachers proved to be to my ministry.



Dennis Wiggs

Young preacher, lean on the wisdom of an older man in your congregation. Find the man who displays trust and faith in the Lord, one who has been in the church many years. Go to him to discuss plans you have for the church. Seek his counsel when you are facing difficult people in the congregation. Request his prayer support. Pray with him.

The Praying Widow

Also, find a female saint in the congregation who prays regularly. One morning I went to the study, eagerly anticipating a fruitful day. But an annoying telephone call and a disgruntled employee got my day off to a terrible start.

About 9:00 a.m. I told the secretary that I was leaving and didn't know when I would return. Getting in my car and driving up and down several streets, I didn't know what to do. Praying for guidance, the Lord seemed to lead me to the home of a widow who lived alone. She hesitantly invited me in that early in the morning.

I sat in her presence and listened to her reveal how two of her children and husband had died. She did not shed a tear but rejoiced in the Lord's provisions. I found a precious saint. Before leaving her home, this dear believer prayed for her pastor. This older woman's prayer support was sought when I needed a special touch from heaven. It was so refreshing to hear her voice utter blessings upon her pastor.

Young preacher, some of the most valuable members of your congregation are those in pain, gripped by arthritis, covered with wrinkles and often feeling useless. Run with the teens, play with the juniors, meet with the church officers, but, by all means, seek the counsel of and pray with the senior saints. ■

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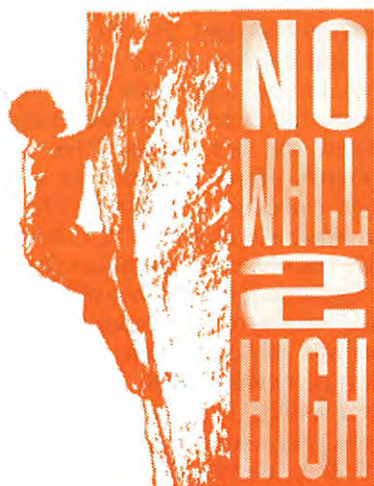
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History of Arkansas Free Will Baptists

David Joslin, editor

(Nashville: Randall House Publications, 1998, 158 pp., paperback, \$7.00).



Thomas Marberry

David Joslin has been involved in Free Will Baptist work for many years. He has long had an interest in preserving the history of our denomination. For several years, he served on the denomination's Historical Commission. Joslin also has deep roots in Arkansas. He pastored several churches in that state; since 1973 he has served as promotional director for Arkansas Free Will Baptists.

Chapter one gives a general introduction to the history of the state of Arkansas. It notes that Arkansas was an important destination for immigrants in the pre-Civil War era. Immigration naturally decreased during the war years, but after the war it resumed, and the population of the state grew rapidly.

The earliest known Free Will Baptist association in Arkansas is the Old Mt. Zion Association which was organized in 1842. The Union Association was organized shortly thereafter.

There is no evidence which indicates that these early Free Will Baptists were aided or assisted by Free Will Baptists in other states. It seems that early Arkansas Free Will Baptists were left to grow and develop on their own.

The Arkansas State Association

was organized in 1898 at Moreland FWB Church in Pope County. In 1916 Brother George W. Burris attended the meeting of the Western Co-operative Association in Pattensburg, Missouri, but he was not an official representative of Arkansas Free Will Baptists. In 1921 a committee of three was appointed to represent Arkansas Free Will Baptists at the Co-operative Association which convened at Tecumseh, Oklahoma. Arkansas Free Will Baptists did not, however, join the Co-operative Association.

Several representatives from Arkansas attended the organization of the National Association in Nashville in 1935, but Arkansas Free Will Baptists did not join at that time. They continued to send representatives, but these representatives were not officially seated as delegates until 1946.

The author has included a large amount of valuable historical informa-

tion in this book. He quotes extensively from early minutes of the Arkansas State Association and several district associations. He includes information about early Arkansas leaders. He provides an overview of how Arkansas Free Will Baptists have developed.

This book is not a comprehensive history of Arkansas Free Will Baptists. It does not include the amount of material necessary for a comprehensive history. Neither does it include the kind of interpretation and analysis which would be necessary. It is, rather, an excellent compilation of basic historical information about Arkansas Free Will Baptists.

The book contains the kind of facts which a historian uses to write history. By collecting, preserving and publishing this information, David Joslin has rendered an invaluable service to future students of Free Will Baptist history. ■

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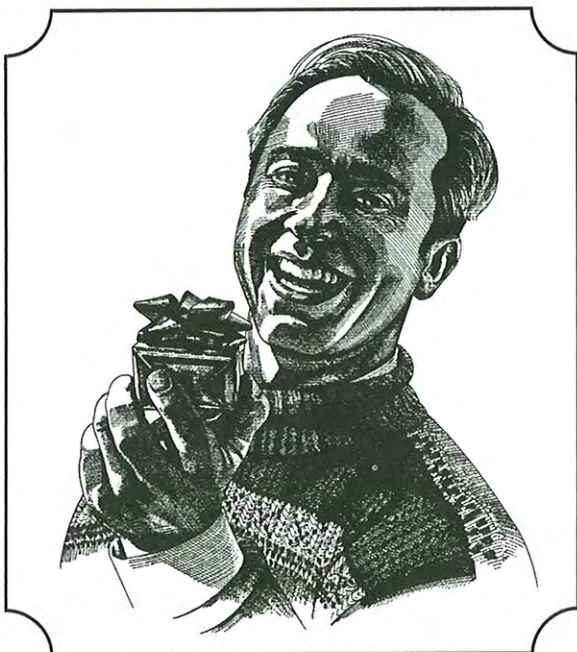
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Where is John 3:16?

One cold January morning I rounded the Tulsa Convention Center about 5:00 a.m. when a lightly clad man stepped from the shadows and asked, "Do you know the way to John 3:16?"

I'd been waiting 40 years for someone to ask that question. "Yes, Sir!" I chimed. "I know the way to John 3:16." And then I proceeded to explain it in detail across the street from the Doubletree Hotel Downtown.

Morning birds sang in the trees, and an occasional car whipped by catching us in their headlights. I was in my element, telling this stranger how to find his way to John 3:16 like someone told me in 1958 on a hot August night during a Free Will Baptist revival.

After I finished, the man looked at me like I'd lost an oar. He shook his head slowly and walked away. Nonplused, I continued my three-mile chug, huffing up Seventh Street in the 20° chill.

"Oh, well," I thought to myself, "at least the gospel seed was planted. Maybe someone else can water that seed, and God will make it grow until the man is converted." I was warmed by the early encounter all day.

Six months later during pre-convention meetings with Tulsa Convention Center officials, I mentioned the John 3:16 episode. They all burst into laughter. When they saw the confusion on my face, the senior event coordinator, a fine Christian gentleman named Ed Meyering, spoke up.

"Jack," he chuckled, "John 3:16 is a mission organization in Tulsa that provides clothing for people in need. That man who stopped you on the street wasn't asking how to be saved. He wanted directions to the mission so he could get a winter coat."

Ouch and double ouch. I felt that somebody had licked the red off my

sucker. My good deed in January, the good deed that warmed me six months turned out to be a misunderstanding instead of a miracle.

No wonder that man had looked at me so oddly in the January cold. He needed a coat, and all I'd done was jump to a conclusion before I heard his question clearly. I was belatedly embarrassed. At least, everybody at the pre-con meeting got a tension-relieving laugh from my blunder.

But I couldn't forget the January man. Every morning during our July national convention, I was up at 4:30 a.m. as usual, jogging the dark streets wondering if Brother John 3:16 would call my number again. He didn't. But somebody else did Sunday morning.

A heavy-set man with hair past his shoulders stumbled from the sidewalk a half-mile from the hotel and mumbled to me as I passed. I told him, "Good Morning," and kept moving. A quarter-mile later, I glanced up to find that he had crossed two parking lots and was zeroing in on me.

Just down the street from the Adam's Mark Hotel, he began cursing me in a loud voice, insisting that I stop. He was angry, so angry that he questioned my ancestry and called me names I hadn't used since that 1958 revival. He paced me for half a block crowding closer, yelling louder, belligerent and attracting street people from near the bus station.

He was an American Indian, he informed me. Finally, in frustration, he screamed, "Get off my land! Get off my land!" Of course, I was trying hard to do just that. He stood in the middle of Third Street shaking his fist and yelling until I was a quarter-mile away.

My first thought as I passed the post office was to contrast the angry Sunday man with the January John 3:16 man. Both wanted something from me. The first one I misunder-

stood; the second one I understood clearly and decided to obey the scriptural admonition to "make no friends with an angry man."

Monday morning, I was back on the street again when a tall, slender black man stepped out of a car near the bus station and yelled, "You! You! You!" He followed me across the same two parking lots that the angry Indian had crossed on Sunday yelling those three words, his voice echoing down the empty street.

A half-mile later, I circled passed the convention center at a walk and heard running footsteps ahead. "Oh, no," I thought, "here we go again."

I looked up and said a tight good morning. The jogger rushing by grinned and said, "Hello, Jack!" The grin belonged to a long-time friend, a pastor from Illinois, Daryl Ellis. What a relief. I was so glad to hear a friendly voice.

Later I realized that the cold January man, the angry Indian who warned me off his land and the loud black man all needed the same thing I did—to hear a friendly voice from someone who loved them.

That Illinois pastor was so welcome because he had been changed by John 3:16, the verse, not the mission. I'd been changed, too. I wonder what the January man might have been if he had met the real John 3:16. The Indian and black man both could have found the missing pieces to life there also.

The first man who searched for John 3:16 came to Jerusalem at night and found Jesus. A second man came to Tulsa at dawn and found me. The next man may come to your town at any time of the day or night and find you. Be ready. ■



Jack Williams

CONTACT

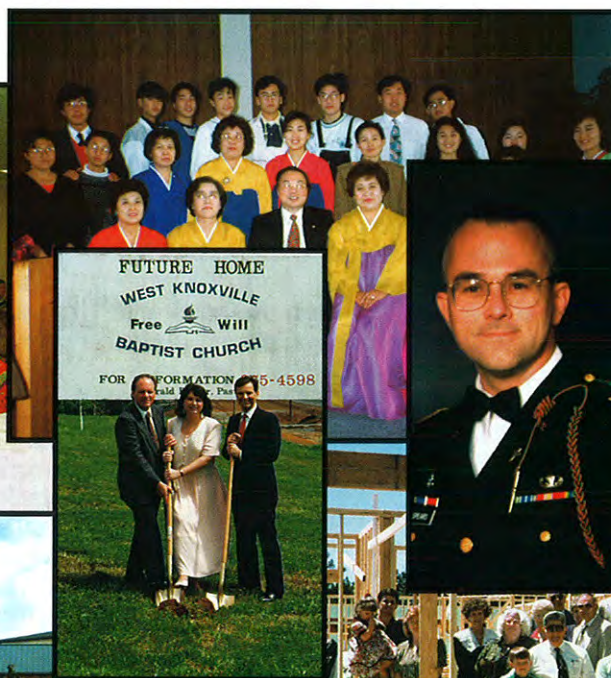
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