

FEBRUARY 1999

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

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The Two Family

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Homosexuality

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ABCs and Christ's Love

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Why Preachers Don't Trust Laymen



INSIDE

FEBRUARY 1999

VOLUME 46, NO. 2

ARTICLES

4 The "Two" Family

How one Free Will Baptist family juggles his job, her job, their children, church responsibilities and the rest of life.

6 Homosexuality and the Church

A Christian psychologist takes a closer look at the homosexual issue and the role of the local church in offering solutions.

8 ABCs and Christ's Love

An Oklahoma church reached out to the community with a new idea.

10 Understanding Life's Lessons

The doctor said, "cancer." A young mother struggles with her faith, her family, her future.

13 The Mean, the Sorry, the Good

The problem when we label people.

14 "I Was a Stranger"

A hurricane blew him north. A bumper sticker drew him to church.

COLUMNS

3 The Secretary Speaks

When We Worship

21 The Department Pages

25 Green Tree Bible Study

Semper Fi—"Always Faithful"

26 Especially for Young Preachers

Loving Your Valentine

27 Youth Update

28 Top Shelf

29 Our Readers Comment

31 Briefcase

Why Preachers Don't Trust Laymen

NEWS

15 Free Will Baptist Newsfront

Georgia State Association
Tennessee State Association
Mississippi State Association
Church Votes to Relocate
FWBBC Welcome Days
Arkansas Pastor at FWBBC
Alabama State Association
Leadership Conference

20 Currently

30 Religious Community News

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When We Worship

Worship is not a new practice. While it has been neglected and disregarded, this biblical practice has united God's people throughout history. When we worship we give reverence and respect to the God of the Bible.

Worship means to fall prostrate in homage, adoration, reverence and respect to God. Christians are to worship none other but the God of the Bible. We must worship in the beauty of holiness and in spirit and truth.

The Implications

John 4 records Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman, an unexpected moment in one woman's life that forever changed both the woman and everyone she knew. It started with a discussion about well water and ended with Living Water and a new life.

Jesus gave a compassionate correction regarding worship. He gently reminded the woman that the time was coming when people would neither worship in Jerusalem or the mountain where her fathers worshiped. He informed her that true worshipers would worship the Father in spirit and truth.

The woman and her fathers practiced worship. In spite of the fact that they worshiped ignorantly, they did participate in worship. Jesus did not have to tell her that she ought to worship. He did remind her that she worshiped in ignorance not knowing who she worshiped.

Jesus gave a clear change regarding worship. Worship would henceforth be different. Some of the changes regarding worship which surface in this account include the practice, place, perception, period and prerequisites of worship. This is the kind of worship which pleases the Lord. God is a Spirit and those who would worship God must worship Him in spirit and truth.

The style and substance of worship must meet this criteria.

The Imperatives

One essential to worship is understanding the majesty of the Sovereign. The Bible reveals that He is a God of light, love, law, life, longsuffering and liberty.

Another worship essential is understanding the magnitude of our sin. God hates sin but loves the sinner. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Because of Adam's transgressions, plunging the entire human race into sin, God sent His Son, the second Adam, to purchase redemption for all mankind.

Romans 5 contrasts the disobedience of Adam with the obedience of Christ. By Adam's disobedience all were made sinful; by Christ's obedience, all can be made righteous.

A third essential to worship is understanding the mandate of service. Every believer is an ambassador, good or bad, for the Lord Jesus Christ. Each has a particular service to render. Gifted by God, each Christian must determine how and where he fits into the Lord's commission to evangelize the world.

The Instructions

The *hour* of worship is important. One of the Ten Commandments provides for one day out of seven for rest and worship. God's economy in both

The Secretary's Schedule

February 1999

2-5 RCMA
Columbus, OH

20 Colorado District Association
Denver, Colorado

25-26 South Carolina State Association



Melvin Worthington

the Old and New Testaments provides a specific time for individual and institutional worship. While it is possible to worship God at any time, God saw fit to provide a specific day for worship.

The *how* of worship is also important. The Israelites were given specific instructions on how to worship the Lord in Leviticus. Jesus gives specific instructions on how to worship God when He declares that true worshipers must worship in spirit and truth. True worship is intelligent, informed, intimate and internal.

Holiness is another important facet in worship. Those who worship must be people of integrity. Dishonesty and deceit must be put away. When we approach God in worship, we must do so boldly with a spirit of holiness, honesty and humility rather than one of hostility, hatred and haughtiness.

The *helps* of worship are important, also. There are a number of helps to enhance our worship. They include the scriptures, the Spirit, Sunday, special services, singing and supplication.

The *hope* we have strengthens our worship. While we wait for the Lord Jesus Christ to return, we engage in meaningful worship. As we worship we are reminded of the Lord's promise to return. This hope is a compelling, comforting and cleansing hope.

Worship is brightened by the *hallelujah* in worship. True worship is a moving experience. Intensely personal, it brings peace and perspective to those who participate. Worship is actively respecting, reverencing and responding to the Lord with adoration, affection and allegiance.

When we worship in spirit and truth, we sense the very presence and power of the living God. He manifests Himself and meets our needs. We rejoice in His presence, provision, power, purpose and peace. When we worship, we are in touch with our Heavenly Father. ■

Juggling the realities of a two-job family demands creative solutions.

The "Two" Family

By Rebecca Deel



Noah's idea of things coming in twos isn't out-dated. Two kids, two cars, two jobs, two adult schedules, two computers, two alarm clocks, two sets of bills and two sets of responsibilities at work and church all contribute to a two-ring circus in my home just like it may in yours.

How can you survive hectic schedules and heavy responsibilities and still enjoy life? Here's the answer: Learn your ABCs.

The ABCs

Accept that it can be God's will for a mother to work outside the home. One model of womanhood in Proverbs 31 ran her own business making, selling and delivering clothing.

Being a stay-at-home mom is not an option for many fine Christian women. Feeling guilty about working eats away at the peace God gives us, and affects our relationships with family, co-workers, our church and the Lord.

Be happy in your job. If you must work outside the home, invest your time in a job you enjoy. Contentment at work leads into contentment at

home. The home atmosphere reflects how a woman feels about herself, her job and her family.

Control frustration by organization. Learn to do more than one thing at a time. Run a load of laundry while getting ready in the morning. Put dishes away while waiting for water to boil. Organize errand runs to include all the places you need to go in one area. Take a book or correspondence to the kids' sports practices.

Put all the doctors' appointments, ball games, school plays and other commitments on a central calendar. Check it every night to form a game plan for the next day's activities.

Lay out clothes the night before. Iron, sew buttons and polish before going to sleep. Pack those backpacks and briefcases, and place them at the front door as part of the bedtime routine.

Give Everybody a Job

Divide responsibilities in your

home. If Mom makes dinner, Dad can do the dishes. Grocery buying may fall to whoever is closest to the store. Learn to put away, not put down.

Enlist the help of your children. They can learn to pick up their toys and clothes, even put dishes in the sink. My one-year-old son recently began pushing his spoons and forks into the sink after watching his four-year-old brother cleaning up dinner dishes.

Mountains of laundry can become a learning tool for kids. Separating clothes teaches them colors. And preschoolers love testing their dunking abilities against clothes baskets.

Put Family First

Force yourself to leave unfinished work at work. The family deserves 100% of your attention after you get home. Use the commuting time to change employee gears to wife and mother gears. Spend some time exchanging hugs, the day's adventures, a snack, a book or two, and occasionally a roll on the floor to chase balls or tickle feet.

Guard your family time against unnecessary intrusions. Social events

that do not include children or that separate parents and kids are on the bottom of my priority list. Plan one family night a week. Try a picnic on the living room floor. If you're brave enough, challenge your children to a board game or a round of *Go Fish*.

Push the Practical

Household cleaning is easier if it's divided into 15-minute jobs each day. My preschoolers know what day it is by whether I'm dusting or mopping floors. Don't expect a spotless house. Perfect houses are museums that no one lives in. Your weekends are committed to Sunday preparations and worship, errands, the kids' ball games and other time eaters.

Invest in a crock pot. Leave the gourmet cooking to Martha Stewart. Meals which take careful preparation have to wait for days with less hectic schedules.

After your children are in bed, let all the unfinished tasks lay undone. Take at least 30 minutes to unwind, whether reading, needlework or a hot bath. Spend some quiet time with yourself and the Lord. Watch a ball game with your husband. All the other hats you wear during the day must be hung at the door until tomorrow.

Juggling all the work, church and home responsibilities is a balancing act. Taking on too much reduces your effectiveness in all areas. Know your limitations and work within those boundaries.

Prioritize your life. The family's well-being comes second only to your relationship with the Lord. Everything else can wait. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Rebecca Deel teaches on the business faculty at Free Will Baptist Bible College. She also serves as pianist at Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in Antioch, Tennessee.

THE TOGETHER WAY

November 1998

Receipts: State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 475.73	\$.00	\$ 475.73	\$ 5,531.85	\$.00	\$ 5,531.85
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	2,841.29	594.30	3,435.59
Arkansas	16,220.80	21,598.27	37,819.07	144,089.91	168,552.18	312,642.09
California	.00	1,433.61	1,433.61	.00	12,608.27	12,608.27
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	275.21	14,999.98	15,275.19
Georgia	24,962.13	1,648.25	26,610.38	218,038.89	21,756.23	239,795.12
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	7,287.80	1,919.76	9,207.56	93,725.61	24,021.44	117,747.05
Indiana	.00	96.79	96.79	10,612.80	2,721.40	13,334.20
Iowa	174.00	488.56	662.56	624.00	2,896.81	3,520.81
Kansas	.00	14.49	14.49	200.00	74.63	274.63
Kentucky	1,399.40	414.00	1,813.40	11,095.33	5,625.23	16,720.56
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	90.00	10.00	100.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	2,979.75	2,979.75
Michigan	98,713.41	3,533.59	102,247.00	226,065.01	30,279.23	256,344.24
Mississippi	104,199.79	1,225.17	105,424.96	170,771.01	6,055.77	176,826.78
Missouri	32,110.37	9,414.80	41,525.17	429,994.20	92,767.28	522,761.48
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	100.00	100.00	.00	100.00	100.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	822.92	28.96	851.88	10,262.59	485.31	10,747.90
North Carolina	2,266.55	350.00	2,616.55	17,336.39	13,597.39	30,933.78
Ohio	18,618.82	2,607.47	21,226.29	107,879.30	28,931.00	136,810.30
Oklahoma	37,680.37	9,275.16	46,955.53	550,314.42	101,767.11	652,081.53
South Carolina	32,188.95	20.00	32,208.95	466,251.57	1,005.89	467,257.46
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	9,669.03	1,104.38	10,773.41	132,069.02	18,048.76	150,117.78
Texas	4,278.56	471.09	4,749.65	71,925.19	4,801.67	76,726.86
Virginia	779.50	.00	779.50	7,872.85	175.00	8,047.85
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	107.80	.00	107.80	30,638.42	1,037.38	31,675.80
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Africa	.00	.00	.00	12,960.00	.00	12,960.00
Canada	723.59	17.01	740.60	2,434.16	91.44	2,525.60
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	80.75	264.13	344.88
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	10	10	180.00	67	180.67
Totals	\$ 392,679.52	\$ 55,761.46	\$ 448,440.98	\$ 2,724,159.77	\$ 556,248.25	\$ 3,280,408.02

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,464.49	\$ 25,092.60	\$ 26,557.09	\$ 35,211.97	\$ 250,311.43	\$ 285,523.40
Foreign Missions	181,103.54	7,053.79	188,157.33	1,587,642.00	70,365.34	1,658,007.34
FWBBC	82,310.15	7,053.79	89,363.94	232,117.14	70,365.34	302,482.48
Home Missions	107,540.19	5,520.38	113,060.57	739,589.40	55,068.56	794,657.96
Retirement & Insurance	442.14	4,293.65	4,735.79	6,383.15	42,831.13	49,214.28
Master's Men	260.81	4,293.65	4,554.46	7,828.23	42,831.13	50,659.36
Com. for Theo. Integrity	20.12	153.37	173.49	559.56	1,529.76	2,089.32
FWB Foundation	201.47	1,840.12	2,041.59	5,077.62	18,356.28	23,433.90
Historical Commission	3.82	153.37	157.19	319.65	1,529.76	1,849.41
Music Commission	3.82	153.37	157.19	344.09	1,529.76	1,873.85
Media Commission	20.12	153.37	173.49	3,026.49	1,529.76	4,556.25
Hillsdale FWB College	1,203.13	.00	1,203.13	16,110.04	.00	16,110.04
Other	18,105.72	.00	18,105.72	89,950.43	.00	89,950.43
Totals	\$ 392,679.52	\$ 55,761.46	\$ 448,440.98	\$ 2,724,159.77	\$ 556,248.25	\$ 3,280,408.02

Free Will Baptists face a new challenge.

Homosexuality and the Church

By Shawn K. Hartzog

Living in the 90s can be difficult. The "new morality" of acceptance abounds in our society. Among the universities of our nation, intolerance has become intolerable.

Indeed, the attitude that something could be wrong has become the chief among sins. Newspaper and magazine articles decry the injustice of "prejudice" against homosexuals by "right wing fundamentalists."

In the midst of it all, I am proud of our Free Will Baptist denomination for continuing its hermeneutical integrity. While others have found ways to interpret scripture as condoning same-sex marriages, we have continued to value the Word of God as the standard of morality over political science (pun intended).

However, the church has not been historically remembered for its stance on issues of the day so much as for what it did about them. Such a timely issue is homosexuality, but most local churches have denied or ignored the opportunities for outreach to those who struggle with this sin.

They are present and often struggle silently in the pews of our churches. To think otherwise is to be naive. They are in need of love, and they are, very often, afraid. Therefore, we must go beyond the development of a doctrinal

stance on homosexuality. We must also provide a way out of homosexuality.

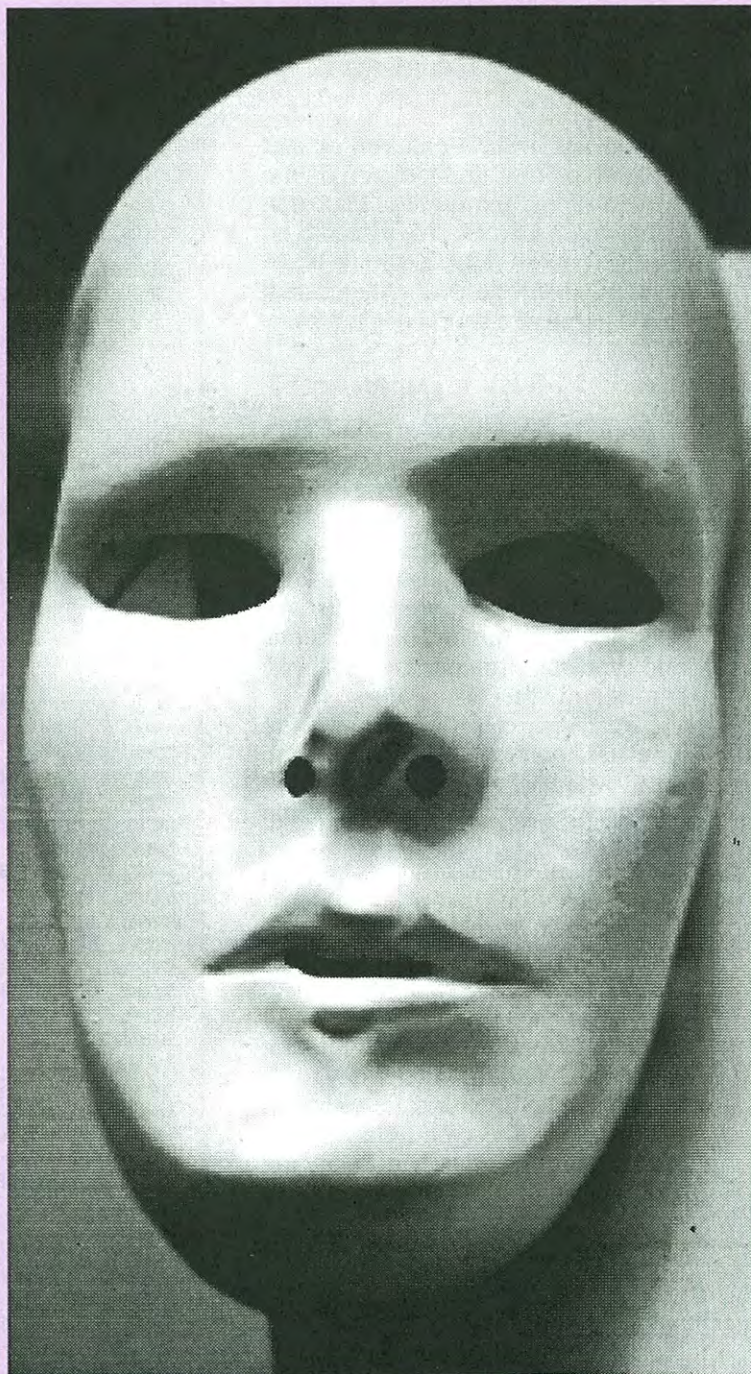
Biblical Focus

In Luke 12, Jesus tells us that to whom much is given, much will be required. In light of our present society where children turn up every day who have been abused, neglected or used in perverse ways, there is a mandate for those who have the truth to reach out to those who do not.

This is a sobering thought. It condemns us for mediocrity when we are called to go and share the light with those in darkness. If the Body of Christ is alive, then it must be active. Else we will suffer the pains of apathy.

In I Corinthians 6:11, Paul lists homosexual offenders among others qualified by the words, "... of which some of you once were." This implies that there were some in the Corinthian church who had been identified in the past with homosexual sin.

This dispels theories of an im-



mutable homosexual condition. The power of God's salvation through Christ offers real hope for change.

What can the church do to reach those who practice homosexuality in our communities? What can we do to help the Christian who struggles with homosexual temptation or sin? The answer to these questions is the same: love the sinner but hate the sin.

Understand the Problem

Homosexuality can best be understood as an outpouring of the sinful nature of man apart from God. Man attempts to meet his needs by self-employed means instead of relying

on God. This is the idolatry of self-reliance, and it is a perversion of what God intended. His plan for our joy and fulfillment is in a relationship with Him and in Christian marriage.

However, this is not different from the young woman who gives in to the sexual pleas of her boyfriend or the pastor who criticizes his wife to establish respect among his peers.

Homosexuality is primarily a relationship problem, not simply a sexual one. There is no single cause for the development of homosexual tendencies, nor is there one particular trait that can describe all who practice homosexuality.

Many who struggle with homosexuality did not learn how to develop friendships with others of the same gender without the complication of romantic or sexual feelings. If you know someone who struggles with homosexuality, you know someone who knows what pain, rejection, fear and loneliness are all about.

They have definite needs, are generally concerned about eternity, and are highly susceptible to the answers, love and forgiveness which the gospel of Christ has to offer. While salvation may not magically erase all their temptations, a relationship with God is the necessary component for overcoming sin in any form.

One of the mistakes often made by family and friends of the person who is struggling with this sin is to expect them to develop a romantic interest in the opposite sex. While this is possible, we must understand that they may never do so. Such a litmus test for the change in a person's heart serves only our interest in what is socially acceptable, not Christlikeness.

If they choose to dedicate themselves to God and live in celibacy, the Church should be the first to accept their effort to follow Christ. As long as homosexuality is not practiced physically or in the way of lust, the scriptures do not condemn it as sin, for it is not temptation that is sin.

Although struggling with sin and how to relate to others is not ideal, it cannot be sinfulness without acting upon the temptation. This is where the Church can minister to the person recovering from homosexuality. We can help as they grow in Christ, try to live a holy life and develop ap-

propriate relationships.

The Jesus Solution

Homosexuality is a sin. But it is not one that Christ did not die for. Are we concerned about what type of people will be part of our churches? What is the Church made of anyway? Are we more than redeemed sinners? I dare say that the forces of sanctification have not zapped any of us into perfect Christians.

There are many young men and women in our churches (yes, even Free Will Baptist churches) who struggle with homosexual temptations or gender identity. There is a way out of it. Now is the time that the Church must stand up and claim the lives of these people for God.

If we do not, rest assured the gay community will embrace them. When that person taken in by it becomes your son, daughter, sister, brother or friend, will you say, "We don't want to deal with that in our church"?

You Can Help

What can the local church do? How can we get involved? For starters, learn all you can. Pray for them and their families.

Pastors can express the hope for change which the Holy Spirit provides for those struggling with secret sin. Teachers might consider using the Old Testament account of Jonah as the impetus for a study of God's call to reach out to those who might have been considered socially reprehensible.

It would also be helpful to contact an organization like Exodus International. This is a Christian organization set up specifically for ministering to those who wish to recover or are recovering from homosexuality. They can tell you where the closest counseling center or church is that offers their programs.

If circumstances allow, your church could consider starting a small group for family and friends of homosexuals (they greatly need the support and encouragement). This may blossom into an opportunity for helping people come out of homosexuality.

Another suggestion is to have a youth minister or counselor within the church serve as a confidential contact person to help guide those

who struggle with secret sins to Christian counseling.

The potential fruits of this labor are worth the risks. Whatever you do, remember that God loves all mankind, and His grace is sufficient to meet their needs. Likewise, we are to love the sinner and hate the sin. Here is a golden opportunity.

Resources

The following is a list of Christian organizations from which you may request more information and/or resources:

Exodus International

P. O. Box 77652

Seattle, WA 98177

Phone: 206/784-7799

E-mail: BobExodus@aol.com

Spatula Ministries

(support and resources for parents and family of homosexuals)

P. O. Box 444

La Habra, CA 90631

Phone: 310/691-7369

Love In Action

P. O. Box 753307

Memphis, TN 38175

Phone: 901/542-0250

Regeneration Books

P. O. Box 9830

Baltimore, MD 21284-9830

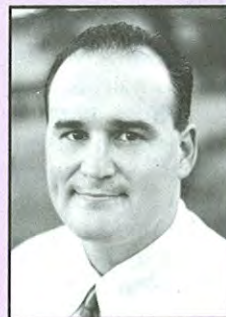
Phone: 410/661-0284

Homosexual Anonymous

P. O. Box 7881

Reading, PA 19603

Phone: 800/253-3000 ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Shawn K. Hartzog is a psychologist with the Metropolitan Nashville public school systems. He is a member of Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

Tutoring program touches broader community.

ABCs and Christ's Love

By Daniel Phillips



Amber ran into the room and shouted, "I made a hundred on my spelling test." Sherrie smiled and replied, "That's great." That scene didn't take place at home or at school but in a church fellowship hall.

Too many children today go home to an empty house or a home where parents may be there physically but not emotionally. Sometimes parents want to help their children with their schoolwork but just do not know how. The Airport FWB Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, saw the need to give these children help with schoolwork, while at the same time, share Christ's love with them.

My wife teaches at a school in the community where the church is located. In 1993, when she was teaching second grade, I volunteered one day a week in her classroom to help read

with some children who were struggling. I saw a need to help the children and wondered how the church could help. I spent some time praying about the need and asking God for help.

The next year after school began I asked our members if anyone would be interested in tutoring elementary children during the Wednesday evening service. We also wanted to feed the children as well as provide transportation. Several people volunteered.

The next step was to contact the school principal to assist with paperwork involved in getting parental permission. We developed a rapport with the volunteer coordinator at the administration building who guided us through the process. We decided to limit tutoring to the students in first, second and third grades.

We asked the teachers of those grades for names of students who

needed extra help in math or reading. Letters were given to the teachers to send home with those students. We included in the letter a permission slip that informed the parents we would be singing Bible songs and giving a Bible lesson.

We collected those permission slips that were returned. Personal phone calls were made prior to home visits, to schedule bus routes and times. At each visit we were welcomed and invited into the home. This gave an opportunity to share about the church and our commitment to their child. We were never turned away.

The big evening finally arrived and I do not know who was more excited—our volunteers or the children. Two teachers in our congregation let us use some of their materials. We also used some old reading books as well as library books. Some students brought

homework or spelling words to study.

A teacher from our church met with our volunteers to give them some ideas about teaching, since we wanted it to be fun as well as educational. We used games and activities to involve them with hands-on learning as well as reading with them.

The students arrived at the church and were fed by some wonderful ladies—everything from homemade potato soup to hot dogs. Some ladies baked homemade goodies for dessert. Their husbands helped with the trash detail. It usually took about 30 minutes to eat and then children were paired with their tutors.

We made sure that more than one adult was always present with the children. The tutoring took place in a large room with tables so everyone was together. Our teens were great to help watch the children, cleaning up and taking them to the restrooms. Later, some teens volunteered to do tutoring.

About 30 minutes were spent tutoring the children. After that, some other adults took them into the sanctuary to sing and hear Bible stories. Some of these students asked Jesus into their hearts.

After a mini-service of about 20 minutes, the students were loaded back on the church bus for the ride home. By that time, their tutors had written two copies of a short summary of what they had accomplished during the tutoring program that evening. One went home with the students for the parents and the other was sent back to their teachers at the school.

The program usually lasted five to six weeks. We knew this was not enough time to make a big difference, but our main goal was to allow the children to see that someone cared for them. Most importantly, they learned Jesus loved them. The parents were grateful for the extra help and, as you can see from the opening paragraph, sometimes children were given the extra boost they needed to see that they could succeed.

We maintain good public relations for our church in the community and the school. We have had people visit our church who knew about the tutoring program.

On the last day of tutoring, each parent received an invitation to attend a graduation ceremony the following

Sunday. The children sang the songs they had learned and then were presented with a diploma stating they had completed a tutoring program.

This also allowed us to reach several parents. We would usually have between 20 and 30 parents, most of whom had never attended our services. Parents too were exposed to the gospel. This has been an effective way to reach into the community and share Christ with them. We have noticed a growth in our church since beginning this program.

Jesus has said to let the little children come, and that a cup of water given in His name would not be forgotten. We give these children our time, love, a good meal and some help with schoolwork. I think Jesus is pleased. We are now in the sixth year of our program and have helped another school in our community.

Reba Luton, the volunteer specialist for Tulsa Public Schools, was asked, "How do you see this program benefitting the children?"

She replied, "You can't define all the ways a program like this helps, but it builds confidence in the young people. They see that others care. The community receives the benefits of congregational involvement from those who have a mission to help children. The goal: better kids."

Is it a lot of work? You bet! Are the children sometimes unruly? You bet! Are the tutors and workers sometimes tired and ready for the program to end? You bet! Does it cost some time and money? You bet! Is it worth it! You bet! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Daniel Phillips has pastored Airport Free Will Baptist Church in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for 12 years. He chaired the Prayer Committee during the 1998 national convention. He is president of Lions' Den Ministries, a prayer ministry.

Directory Update

CALIFORNIA

Mike Schultz to Greenfield Church, Greenfield, from St. Luke's Hospital, Kansas City, MO, as chaplain

GEORGIA

Dwight Smith to Spring Hill Church, Mank

NORTH CAROLINA

Jeff Gaskins to Trinity Church, Greenville

OKLAHOMA

Dale Smith to Folsom Church, Coleman, from Lawnwood Church, Tulsa

Roger McDougal to Okemah Church, Okemah

Bob Duncan to Faith Church, Holdenville, from View of the Cross, Prague

Keith Hatton to Christ's Chapel, Blanchard

Brian Gilbert to First Church, Bixby, from Clarksville Church, Porter

SOUTH CAROLINA

Tim Larimore to Lynches River Church, Coward

Glenn Manning to New Life Church, Conway

Kevin Smith to Arcadia Church, Arcadia

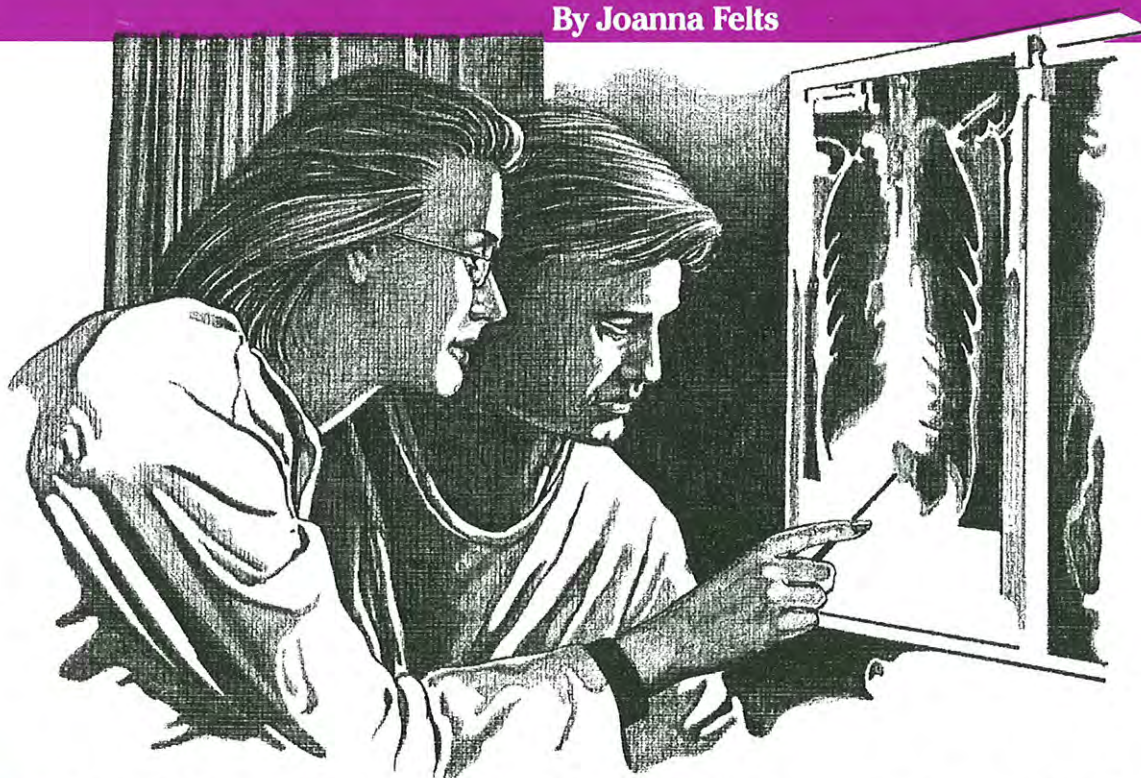
VIRGINIA

Vergel Maness to Glen Allen Church, Richmond from First Church, Philadelphia, PA

She's 37, a pastor's wife and mother. The doctor said 'cancer.'

Understanding Life's Lessons

By Joanna Felts



At the end of January 1998, my husband was finishing a series of messages on the book of James when he came to the part about patience in suffering. He said that we had been through some rough times in our lives and with God's help we had survived even though we are still unsure of their purposes. He also said that he felt sure we would go through some other times of suffering but it was what we did with the suffering that was important; how we allowed God to work with us through the suffering.

What he didn't know when he made that statement was that just a few days earlier, I had discovered a lump in my right breast. Knowing that sometimes these things come and go with hormone fluctuations, I waited until the following week to call the doctor. I was sent for a mammogram that no one seemed to be in a hurry to perform.

Three weeks after the mammogram, I received a phone call. "There are two suspicious lumps. Can you come in for an ultrasound?"

Following the ultrasound, I was booked to see a surgeon and her words were, "We need to do a biopsy. If you hadn't had minor surgery earlier, I would be very suspicious of these lumps. However, due to your age and your past surgery, it could just be scar tissue."

I had not felt all that young for the seven years I have been in my 30s, but I can tell you that everyone I talked with during that time was convinced that I was young.

Cancer is one of the worst fears known to mankind. I came to realize that I could learn some things from this time in my life. Some things I'm guessing at; some I already knew, they were simply reaffirmed in my mind; some things I learned; and some things you just know you know as a result of something big—you don't know how you came to know

them or how long they've been known to you, you just understand that you know them.

Guessing

One thing I'm guessing at is that the "Quiet Room" at Kaiser Hospital in Fresno, California, will never be the same after Monday, May 18. That day (my surgery day), the Quiet Room filled with some of the loveliest folks I know, and they, I understand, had a great party for me—I just didn't get to be there. Some came and went as their needs dictated during the day, some came and stayed a little while, and others came and stayed all day. It was another demonstration of love for us. Kaiser may never let me or my family back into their surgery.

Reaffirmed

Reaffirmed in my mind is the fact that you can't sleep in hospitals. I

was also reminded of the creativity of my family. Until you've spent five days in the hospital, unable to have a decent shower much less get your hair washed, you'll not understand the need to get that done.

Most wouldn't realize that in spite of his quiet demeanor, my husband is an authoritarian on a few issues. He absolutely refused to let me climb up on the kitchen counter after my surgery and lay my head back to have my hair washed. My sister Rhonda came up with a system for washing my hair that included an old plastic tablecloth spread across my bed, a wedge-shaped pillow, an ice chest and a small bucket.

My mother got in on the act and then my husband offered the use of the fish tank hose stretched from the bathroom sink. My son then took a picture of this contraption. It was quite inventive on the whole.

More seriously, my husband reaffirmed his place in my mind as an Ephesians 5 husband. Ephesians 5:25 states, "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her." He not only understands what he preached from Ephesians, he also practices it.

He stayed with me every night I was in the hospital, only leaving when Mom or Dad arrived the next morning so he could go to work. He brought me countless cups of ice chips. After I was home from the hospital, he spent the next 10 days as a nurse and nurse's aide. Since I could not lie down or get up on my own, he followed me from the bed to the recliner to the couch and back again to make sure I could be comfortable.

My husband was literally the "lifter of my head" during those first few weeks after my surgery. It is easy to be submissive to someone who practices Ephesians 5:25. I don't always obey as easily, though, because he did get a bit bossy for a couple of weeks. "You can't pick that up." "Did your doctor tell you that you could do that?" "You wouldn't make a very good invalid, you know."

Between my church, my family and many friends around the United States, we relearned the power of prayer—corporate, private, soul-searching, get-hold-of-God kind of prayer. I have never felt the power of God so much in my life as when my church family gath-

ered around to pray.

Learning

Some of the learning process was freeing, some funny and some not so enjoyable. I learned the difference between intraductal cancer and infiltrating ductal cancer. I learned how big a cancer has to be to be considered stage one or stage two or stage three.

I learned that lymph nodes are the filters of the body and sometimes that's good and sometimes that's bad.

I've learned that my sister, Rhonda, not only still knows how to tattle but that she taught the trait to my sister, Felicia. They somehow thought that everytime I was upset about my situation, Dad and Mom needed to know about it.

I've learned that my mother, previously considered unflappable, can get rattled. Three thousand miles from Florida to California and two weeks to make a decision about how to handle this crisis rendered my mother incapable of making a decision about when to pack or what to pack or whether to pack at all or just buy all new "stuff" after she got to California to check on me.

I've learned that my strong dad sometimes needs me to be the strong one. You see, I always cry when he cries and he always cries when I cry so if we weren't really careful, we could have set up a vicious crying circle. What fun to be around.

I've learned that closed in places such as hospital rooms are not good for a duo of rambunctious 13- and 7-year-olds.

I've learned that you can find your plates, pots and pans and your silverware after your mother, your mother-in-law and your sister-in-law have each spent at least a week or so in charge of your kitchen. However, you may never find the dirt cup for your electric broom.

I've learned that the man from whom my husband and sons inherited the inability to sit still can do a whirlwind of work in 10 days or so. My father-in-law whipped my yard into shape, learned the art of sprinkler repair, and planted and re-planted bushes, all while my mother-in-law waited on me hand and foot. What a wonderful family to marry into.

I learned that laughter isn't always the best medicine—especially when your stomach muscles get moved around. Try sneezing or coughing—OW!

Knowing

As I mentioned earlier, there are some things you just know. You don't remember learning them before but somehow, when you look at them, you just know you've learned it somewhere. Mom told us before they returned to Florida that when I was five we made it through a tornado, and when I was nine or 10, we made it through a hurricane.

Since that time, I've been in minor accidents, had two children, watched as my children accidentally hurt themselves and felt afraid during each of those times. But on Tuesday, April 26, following a biopsy on Wednesday, April 22, I heard the words, "Both of the tumors are malignant. You have what is called infiltrating ductal cancer."

At that moment, I looked into the face of fear and I knew without anyone telling me that it was fear—stark, paralyzing fear. As I listened to the doctor, I knew that all along I had been right and was afraid. You see, as people tried to comfort me, they said, "It's just scar tissue" or "My sister (cousin, mother, aunt, etc.) had a lump and it turned out to be nothing." Although I knew they were scared for me and they were trying to comfort me and help me not to worry, I knew inside that it was more than that.

Because I had been right, I was even more fearful. Even as "perfect love drives out fear," so the opposite is true—true fear can make you forget the perfect love that is most needed during the time of your worst fear. It was only after the prayers of God's people began going up for me that my fears subsided. The fears didn't completely go away until I heard "cancer-free" and really, as cancer patients know, the fear is never completely gone, but God's peace goes a long way in controlling those fears.

New Insight

For me, the most important thing is knowing how sin compares to can-

cer. If you looked at me, even up until the day of my surgery, you would never have been able to tell that I was carrying around a killer. This killer was hidden to the outside world, yet it would kill me given the chance.

No one knew until I told them that I was carrying this killer around. I didn't look sick, act sick or feel sick. Yet, it was there, threatening my very existence. It could separate me from my family on this earth until God called them home also.

Sin is exactly like my cancer. It's there, it grows, it can kill you. When you are a sinner, you don't look sick, act sick or feel sick, but it's there, threatening your eternal existence. If you die in that condition, you would be forever separated from God. And the solution to the sin killer is much simpler than the solution to my cancer problem.

I had to undergo a six-hour surgery, be taken apart and put back together in a way that's not altogether without problems and special care. I would possibly be subjected to a medicine that can for sure make you sick, possibly make your hair fall out and that has many other possible side effects.

But sin is extracted without pain on

your part by Someone who already bore your pain willingly. There's no recovery period, and you immediately begin life as a child of the King with the full rights of an heir to Heaven.

Sometimes, even Christians allow those things back into their lives that would spread as insidiously as cancer, things that put a breach between them and God. We fail to take time to find out that it's there. I encourage you to open yourself to God's Word continually so that you and God can keep those cancers out of your life.

The healing process for me was not immediate. God didn't reach down and touch me and take away the lump as soon as it was known that I had it. He didn't cause it to be a benign lump between the time for the mammogram and the time for the ultrasound, or between the ultrasound and the biopsy, or between the biopsy and the surgery. It remained a cancerous lump from beginning to end.

But God worked through the doctors to remove the lump. He added His special blessing in that it had not spread to the lymph nodes, and He stopped the spread of what could have been my death sentence.

Sometimes, God chooses to heal

our physical bodies miraculously. Sometimes, He uses people in the form of doctors with scalpels. Sometimes, He chooses to let us go through the physical suffering for a while and gradually heals through bitter and painful medication. Sometimes, He chooses not to heal physically in this life. But He always chooses to heal spiritually, always easily and always miraculously through the blood of Jesus Christ. Is your spiritual healing complete? ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Joanna Felts is a member of Clovis Free Will Baptist Church in Clovis, California, where her husband Dan pastors. Her strong dad who sometimes cries when his daughter hurts is Millard Sasser, executive secretary for the Florida State Association of Free Will Baptists.

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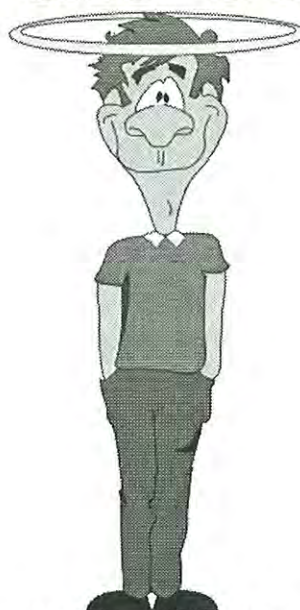
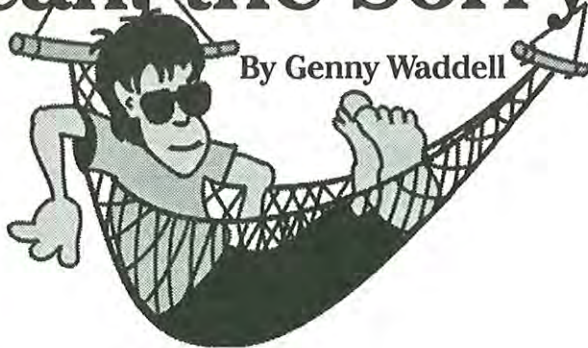
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The Mean, the Sorry, the Good

By Genny Waddell



"God made three kinds of folks: the mean, the sorry and the good." I've heard that attitude a lot. And it's despicable, theological hogwash.

The mean are the obvious ones—Hitler, murderers, rapists. The sorry and the good aren't so easy to identify. "Sorry" is not a synonym for apology; it means, "no account."

The sorry person just doesn't care; grass grows up around his mailbox; he has to borrow money to buy kids' school clothes; and his car won't run half the time—all his own fault because he doesn't take care of his own. His porch swing hangs sideways because it's rotting off the chain and all his faucets leak; he's just too sorry to fix things. His kids won't ever turn out to be anything. He doesn't have a pre-paid burial plan and he thinks a 401K is an engine size, although he may be educated to the hilt.

On the other hand, the good person takes care of things; he's the first at your house if you have an illness or death; he can lend you the extra \$100 because his rainy days are covered with IRAs. His house is all in excellent repair because he is organized enough not to let odd jobs get ahead of him.

If a preacher, his socks are never mismatched. If a teacher, his papers are always graded. If a writer, his assignments are turned in ahead of

time. As a parent, his kids all pass Success 400 with A's, then marry and produce 2.5 kids right on schedule, after completing postgraduate degrees. Their holiday turkeys never burn. Their bathrooms don't mildew.

Somehow, God hates the mean (evil) person, of course. He hates or dislikes the sorry (good-for-nothing) person. But, oh, how He loves the good (morally upright) person! Or so we say.

I'll be the first to admit that I have a variegated bouquet of a family—and even some friends—who obviously fit into all three categories. And the interesting point is that God loves all of them, even the evil ones. And being what we call "good" in no way qualifies a soul for the kingdom of God. It actually may hinder someone's getting there!

That is not condemnation of organization or moral integrity or neighborly kindness at all. Rather, it is a reminder that there is none good—not even one. Our righteousness is through the blood of Christ or not at all, no matter how evil or sorry or good we appear in the eyes of the world.

Generalizations are always uncalled for and dangerous, but I've met some so-called "sorry" folks who are connoisseurs of gift giving and forgiving because they know the reconciling grace of Jesus Christ. And they will not only help you in time of

need, even if they are a little late, but they will share everything out of their own poverty.

And I've met some "good" people whose grudges would make Three Mile Island look innocent. They think that reconciliation is an analgesic to be used in the odd moment of recalling a past mistake.

And I even know of some "evil" people who plan to enjoy the presence of God for eternity with us "others." Moses, the murderer, comes to mind. And King David. And Saul the Christian killer.

Are you depending on a cubby-hole label for your salvation? Or the righteousness of Christ? Certainly, we should be the best we can be as human beings, but God forbid that we ever forget what we are without Jesus Christ. And speaking as a former bus-kid type, God forbid that we should ever label someone in such a manner that he feels beyond the love and grace of God. None of us are "good enough" on our own merit. And God help anyone who places the goodness of man on a pedestal above the grace of God! ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Genny Waddell is a free lance writer who lives in Nashville, Tennessee. She is a member of Cofer's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church.

"I Was a Stranger"

By Gordon Sebastian



Can you imagine? On a Sunday morning this past September, a man from Key West who was running from a hurricane followed a bumper sticker to our church, Peace FWB Church. To a soul running from both a hurricane and God, this bumper sticker truly had a message. What did it say? "JESUS, DON'T LEAVE HOME WITHOUT HIM!"

After following the van with a message on its bumper, he found himself on the parking lot of Peace Church. A greeter who was truly performing her duty noticed the stranger and befriended him. Learning that he was a first-time visitor, she personally escorted him to her own Sunday School class, a singles class.

During the Sunday School hour the greeter's class took a personal interest in this stranger from Florida. They soon learned that he lived alone in the back of his truck with his dog, and that he had both physical and spiritual needs. They were to learn that God was going to use them to help meet both needs.

When class was over, our special visitor was escorted to the main auditorium for the morning service. Because his appearance clearly reflected his poverty, members of the class sat with him so that he would feel he

was among friends.

Interestingly enough, the service seemed tailor-made for this man who was running from a hurricane. The pastor's message was titled, "How to Survive the Apostasy." When the invitation was given, he was the first to go to the altar to make things right with God.

As soon as service was over, several members of the Sunday School class invited him out to eat lunch. After lunch he accepted an invitation by one of the members to spend the afternoon at his home where he was able to do his laundry, and feed and water his dog. Then, that evening he accepted another invitation, this time to attend a revival service in another town where he once again did business with God at the invitation.

Arriving back in Wilson, one of the members, knowing that he had no place to stay, insisted that he spend the night at his home. The next morning after breakfast the stranger was given money for gas and told to keep in touch. After getting in his truck to leave, this stranger told his

host that he had never experienced such love by a church anywhere. In fact, he said that some of the churches he had visited shunned him.

"Just another beggar looking for a hand-out," you say. Perhaps! But he never asked anyone for anything. He just showed up in his poverty.

But wait a minute! Didn't Jesus give us another possibility. Didn't He say that one day some will ask the King, "When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in?"

And wasn't the answer, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."? ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Gordon Sebastian pastors Peace Free Will Baptist Church in Wilson, North Carolina.

Reprinted by permission from *The Peace Promoter*, November 1998 issue.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Alabama Elects Bowers Moderator

MADISON, AL—When the gavel fell at Alabama's 79th annual state association, delegates had elected Richard Bowers, pastor of First FWB Church in Northport, as moderator. The 54-year-old pastor succeeds Jim McNeil who completed his duties as moderator during the November 5-6, 1998, meeting at Madison FWB Church.

Reverend Richard Bowers has been preaching 45 years. He graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in 1967. Bowers has pastored four churches in two states. He served 10 years on the Arkansas Executive Board. He also serves on the Free Will Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees.

Alabama promotional director Rick Cash said that 269 people registered for the state meeting. He commended Moderator Jim McNeil for conducting smoothly-run business sessions.

Officials brought home missionary Roger Raper back from



Colorado and gave him a \$12,395 check for the Fort Collins mission work.

Delegates passed a resolution voicing opposition to gambling in the state. Governor-elect Don Siegleman won election promising a state lottery. Churches were urged to voice their opposition to the lot-

tery on the local level as well.

Six ministers preached sermons during the two-day meeting: Roger Hood (Falkville), Lonnie Skiles (Newton), Jim McNeil (Dothan), Danny Dwyer (Florence), Richard Hendrix (Madison) and Roger Raper (Colorado).

Friday evening, retiring Foreign Missions director Eugene Waddell joined attendees to commission five Alabama foreign missionaries.

The 1999 state association will meet November 11-12 at Lighthouse FWB Church in Montgomery.

Church Votes to Relocate

FRANKLIN, TN—Even though they don't have a new church built or a new site located, members of Franklin FWB Church voted to sell their present facility and build a 1,000-seat auditorium at a site to be determined later. Pastor Kevin Riggs said the church's 12,000-square-foot facility and two acres were placed on the market November 20. Asking price is just under \$700,000.

The church hopes to use proceeds from the property sale to purchase 15 acres in the Franklin city limits on which to relocate. They also plan to build a Christian school for preschool through high school.

Meanwhile, if their property sells, the church will have to rent a place for services. Pastor Riggs said, "It's a real step into faith. The point is to do something so major that if God doesn't intervene, we'll fail. Succeeding would be obvious to everyone that God did it and not us."

The Franklin Church has been at the same location for 30 years.

Pastor Riggs said, "Our church slogan is 'A real church with real people living out real faith in a real world.' We are trying to be authentic and real in our relationship with Christ."

Georgia Calls for Education Task Force

ALBANY, GA—Georgia became the second state association to call for a comprehensive plan of higher education among Free Will Baptists when delegates to the 62nd annual session voted to ask the denomination to initiate a long-range education task force/study committee.

Delegates at the November 12-14, 1998, meeting passed a resolution requesting that a broad-based committee be appointed and that it include representatives from the four Free Will Baptist colleges. The resolution will be forwarded to the National Association's Executive Committee and General Board.

Georgia executive secretary, William Smith said that 244 people registered for the state association, including 49 ministers. Moderator Paul Smith led all business sessions at First FWB

Church in Albany.

Delegates voted to change the state meeting time from November to March, effective in the year 2000. The \$190,000 cooperative budget was adopted, along with a \$278,000 state Acts 1:8 budget.

The White Oaks FWB Church in Macon gave a one-acre gift of land on which to relocate the state office from Macon. State officials presented the sketch of a proposed 2,100-square-foot office building.

Four sermons highlighted worship services. The speakers included: Pastor Keith Lloyd (Millwood), Pastor Chuck Walker (Morgan), Gene Waddell (retiring Foreign Missions director) and James Kilgore (director of FWB Family Ministries, Tenn.).

The 1999 state association will meet November 18-20 at First FWB Church in Metter.

Arkansas Pastor to Speak at FWBBC

NASHVILLE, TN—Rev. Douglas Little, pastor of First FWB Church, Russellville, Arkansas, will be guest speaker at Free Will Baptist Bible College's "Visiting Pastor Seminars" on campus February 16-17, according to Dr. Robert Woodard, who teaches in the pastoral training department.

Rev. Little is a 1977 graduate of the college and has served as chairman of its trustee board. He has a record of pastoral success and will have a great deal to share with students who are preparing to pastor. The "Visiting Pastor Seminars" are intended to expose young preachers to the practical issues of the ministry.

Mississippi to Begin Bible Institute

AMORY, MS—Delegates to Mississippi's 34th annual state association voted to begin a Bible training program to be known as the Mississippi Bible Institute, according to Benny McKinney, clerk. The vote stipulated that the state association would have no direct financial obligation, that participation would be voluntary and that the Christian Education Commission be responsible for operational details.

The October 30-31, 1998, gathering met at First FWB Church in Amory. Moderator Charles Walden was re-elected. Ninety-five people registered, including 31 ministers and 36 lay delegates/deacons.

In other action, the Executive Board proposed the creation of a four-member State Youth Ministries Board. The motion was tabled until the 1999 meeting.

Three Mississippi pastors preached sermons during worship services: Pastor Jackie Whiteley, Jr. (Bethlehem FWB Church), Pastor Rick Bowling (Martin Hill FWB Church) and Dickie Dees (First FWB Church, Pearl). Tim Campbell, FWBBC staffer, also preached.

Master's Men Director Tom Dooley addressed the Master's Men Breakfast on Saturday.

The 1999 state association will meet November 5-6 at First FWB Church in Pearl.

Tennessee Welcomes 14 New Churches

ELIZABETHTON, TN—Fourteen churches comprising the Tennessee River Association joined the Tennessee State Association during its November 9-11, 1998, meeting, according to Dr. Charles Thigpen, promotional director. The 61st annual state association met at First FWB Church in Elizabethton.

More than 150 people registered for the three-day gathering, including 96 ministers and deacons. Moderator Terry Eagleton was elected to his second term.

Officials reported that Tennessee churches gave more than \$1.4 million to national ministries in 1998. Dr. Charles Thigpen said, "All business was carried out in a very harmonious manner."

Five Tennessee pastors preached sermons during worship services. They included: Randy Corn (Bethlehem FWB Church, Ashland City), Terry Mosley (First FWB Church, Oak Ridge), Howard Messer (Eastside FWB Church, Elizabethton), Hal Calhoun (New Hope FWB Church, Kingsport) and Norman Heath (Valley View FWB Church, Loudon).

The Tennessee Women Active for Christ noon luncheon on Tuesday featured Mrs. Trula Cronk, retired missionary to India.

The 1999 state association will meet November 8-10 at Oak Grove FWB Church in Greeneville.

Leadership Conference Focuses on Vision

NASHVILLE, TN—Meeting under the general theme of, "Our Chief Business," some 140 Free Will Baptist state and national leaders geared up for the future with vision statements from denominational agencies and lengthy discussions on how to implement that vision in the 21st century. The December 7-8 Leadership Conference made prayer a high priority, including an hour-long prayer session Monday evening led by Virginia General Board member Glen Johnson.

Executive secretary Melvin Worthington said the conference "tells the entire denomination that the national agencies are on the same page, with common goals and a sense of destiny that we're poised for what may well be our finest hour as a movement."

Dr. Worthington delivered Monday's keynote address at Nashville's Regal Maxwell House Hotel reminding attendees, "We are so mission-focused that 94¢ of every denominational dollar goes directly to winning the lost, building new churches and training Christian workers. Our focus has not changed since 1935."

Worthington also challenged leaders to fully implement The Together Way financial plan, to publish one national magazine that carries news and articles about the entire movement, and to consider a centralized treasury for national agencies.

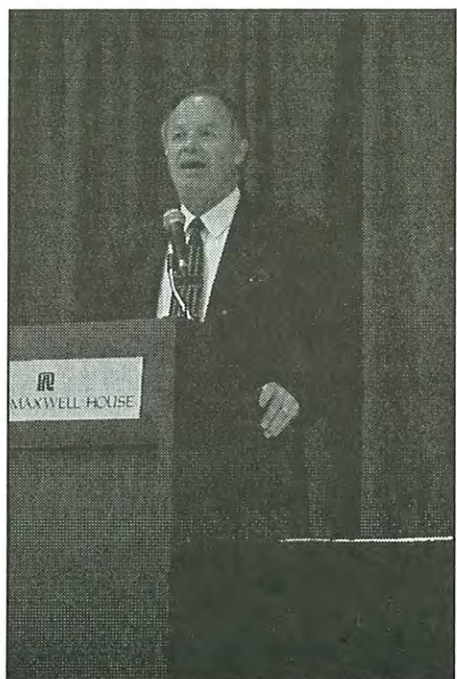
Tuesday morning guest speaker Bob Sjogren turned the eyes of the conference to the unreached peoples around the world. Sjogren, speaker-at-large for Advancing Churches in Missions Commitment



Attendees wait for evening session to begin.



Randall House Editor Keith Fletcher (l) and FWBBC academic dean, Milton Fields.



National Association moderator Carl Cheshier.



Assistant Moderator Tim York (standing), WNAC executive secretary Marjorie Workman, Board of Retirement director William Evans, Bible College president Tom Malone and Master's Men director Tom Dooley.

and field missionary to Muslims, gave a whirling two-hour power-point presentation targeting the larger world beyond the USA.

Perhaps the most crucial aspect of the 1998 conference involved two sessions with the national agency directors. For 90 minutes Tuesday morning, the directors shared their visions with attendees. Tuesday evening during a two-hour Directors' Forum, agency leaders answered questions from attendees about their goals and how to implement them.

A 36-page handout from the directors Tuesday evening capsuled their earlier vision statements for attendees.

Tuesday afternoon, the conference focus shifted to the National Offices for a two-hour reception honoring retiring Foreign Missions director Eugene Waddell.

In addition to the regular conference agenda, the National Association's Nominating Committee met three times to consider nominees for board and com-



Guest speaker Bob Sjogren signs one of his books Tuesday morning.



South Carolina's Bobby Bowers (L) and Sherwood Lee.



Tennessee's Robert Morgan (L), Bill Jones (OK) and Foreign Missions overseas secretary Jimmy Aldridge.

mission vacancies during the 1999 national convention. Jack Richey chairs the committee.

Monday afternoon, Dr. Melvin Worthington chaired a fellowship meeting with the Free Will Baptist college presidents.

National Association moderator Carl Cheshier chaired a Monday afternoon meeting with the chairmen of all national boards.

Attendees paid \$125 each to participate in the annual event. The fee included all meals, refreshment breaks, conference notebook and materials, as well as a book written by speaker Bob Sjogren.

The 1999 Leadership Conference is scheduled December 6-7 at the Regal Maxwell House.



Sunday School Board member Dennis Wiggs (NC) and Free Will Baptist Family Ministries staffer Dawn Sweeney (TN).



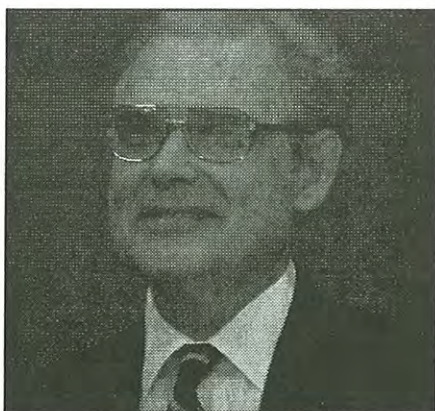
WNAC president Everyl Getz (L) and Executive Committee member Debe Taylor (AR).

305 at FWBBC Welcome Days

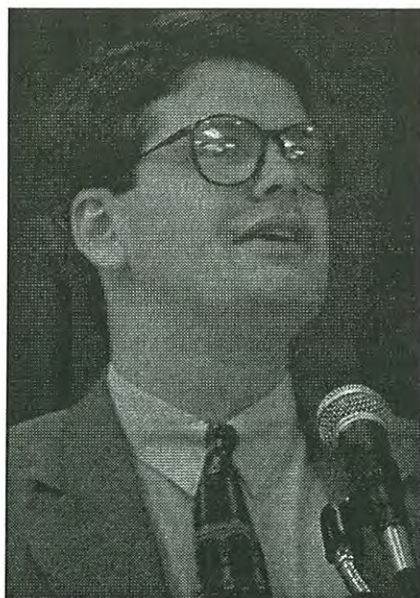
NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College registered 305 visitors from 75 churches in 20 states for its fall Welcome Days, November 12-14, according to the college's Recruitment Office. The total was comprised of 222 prospective students and 83 sponsors.

The largest state representations were North Carolina (41), Illinois (24) and Michigan (21). The largest church group was 26 from Peace FWB Church in Wilson, North Carolina. The second largest was from Seffner FWB Church, Seffner, Florida. One visitor, it was reported, was saved on the final night of the visit.

FWBBC president, Dr. Tom Malone, noted, "This fall's student prospects appeared more focused on their plans and excited about the college. All indications, from the music and drama presentations to the chapel service, were that this was not only one of our largest fall Welcome Days, but also one of our best."



Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington.



Foreign Missions director James Forlines.

Tape Order Form Leadership Conference December 7-8, 1998



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Theme: Our Chief Business

Quantity	Speaker	Session
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_____	Agencies/Commissions Share their Vision	Tuesday Morning
_____	Bob Sjogren	Tuesday Morning
_____	Directors' Forum	Tuesday Evening

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Nashville, TN 37209

Pastor **Roger Childers** celebrated 20 years at **Urbana FWB Church** in **Urbana, OH**. Although he began preaching at age 13, he pastored part-time until coming to Urbana in 1978. The church, which was built in 1962, has completed several expansions and now averages 115 each Sunday. Childers and the congregation are active in Right to Life and the local Crisis Pregnancy Center.

The first annual "Harvest for Harvest" Day at **Harvest FWB Child Care Ministries** in **Duffield, VA**, resulted in more than \$5,700 worth of groceries and supplies from churches, according to **Martha Stone**, advancement director. A youth group from the Maryland State Association helped the staff sort and count the merchandise. The youth also papered a bedroom, hung doors and assisted with general maintenance.

Eighty-seven people attended dedication services for the new building at **Charity FWB Church** in **Wendell, NC**. Pastor **Jerry Johnson** said the church organized in August 1997. First services in the new building were conducted on September 20, 1998. Church members did most of the work on the new structure.

Nearly 800 people gathered in Shasta, CA, to see Christian motorcyclist **Don Leedy** ordained as a Free Will Baptist minister. A member of **Liberty FWB Church** in **Anderson**, Leedy maintains an extensive ministry among the various motorcycle clubs. He also preaches in jails and prisons. State moderator **Matt Upton** and **Nuel Brown**, director of ministries, officiated. Cottonwood pastor **Dan Steigman** presented the Bible.

Western Hills FWB Church in **Fort Worth, TX**, made a big move. They relocated the church and changed its name. When the move is complete, Pastor **Louis Nettleton** said the church will be known as **City View Fellowship FWB Church**. Members were meeting at an elementary school during the transition. The new location is on the west side of Fort Worth in the city's fastest growing area.

Pastor **Steve Marcum** baptized 15

converts at **LaVergne FWB Church** in **LaVergne, TN**, as the congregation celebrated 30 years of service to the community. Members honored Deacon **Maccon Green** and his wife **Jean** in whose home the church began in 1968. Led by a contractor who is a member, the men installed a new baptistry, added two crosses and made general improvements in the sanctuary. The three-month project included working three evenings a week and several Saturdays.

A revival meeting with Evangelist **Bob Shockey** resulted in eight conversions and baptisms at **First FWB Church** in **Smithville, MS**. **Dennis Kizzire** pastors.

Georgia's Midway Association celebrated 100 years of service in 1998. The centennial gathering met October 24 at **Patmos FWB Church** in **Leary** with Moderator **Leron Clower** presiding. **Edith Shiver** gave a brief history of the association along with anecdotes about member churches. Delegates from the 15 churches heard FWB Executive Secretary **Melvin Worthington** preach.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Kermit, TX**, refurbished the sanctuary with new paint inside and out, added new pews, and plan to make more Sunday School rooms out of their fellowship hall. Pastor **Max Morris** (67) has led the congregation 11 years.

Pastor **Roger Dempsey** reports seven conversions and five baptisms at **Harvest Time FWB Church** in **Sunbury, OH**.

Twenty-two new members joined **Beech Grove FWB Church** in **Wilmington, OH**. **John Blount** pastors.

Ohio evangelist **Clovis Vanover** reports 25 conversions in seven revivals.

Six baptisms and seven new converts has Pastor **John Meade** smiling at **Southwest FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**.

Members of **New Hope FWB Church** in **Chillicothe, OH**, burned the bank note for the money to complete their new addition. Pastor **Wendell Combs** gathered the church at Campher's Pond where he baptized six people.

Pastor **Wiley Perkins** reports nine baptisms and nine new members at **Samantha FWB Church** in **Leesburg, OH**.

Gahanna FWB Church in **Gahanna, OH**, witnessed six conversions and five baptisms. **Curtis Booth** pastors.

They had to borrow a baptistry a few miles away, but members of **Harmony FWB Church** in **West Frankfort, IL**, were all smiles as Pastor **Kenneth Edwards** baptized 13 converts.

The 127th annual homecoming at **Bear Point FWB Church** in **Sesser, IL**, featured special music and guest speaker, **David Malone**. **Larry Cook** pastors.

Since 1990, the **First FWB Church** in **Warren, AR**, has paid off \$150,000 of indebtedness, according to Pastor **Billy Wilson**. To celebrate their debt-free state, members invited Arkansas Promotional Director **David Joslin** to share the day and preach. Trustees and deacons received letters of appreciation and certificates. The deacons then burned the mortgage note.

New Bethel FWB Church in **Melbourne, AR**, organized last fall with 70 people attending the organizational service. At press time, the group did not have a pastor, but did have several converts awaiting baptism. **Hoover Lewis** (pastor in Grubbs) moderated the service.

Members from nearby Free Will Baptist churches came to the rescue of **Mascoutah FWB Church** in **Mascoutah, IL**, and saved nearly \$12,000 in repair costs on a new roof. The church was only out about \$600, according to Pastor **Kent Dunford**.

Pastor **David Archer** reports 30 baptisms and 44 new members at **Faith FWB Church** in **Glenpool, OK**. The church recently expanded its classroom and nursery space with an extensive building program. With attendance nosing over 400, the congregation hopes to purchase a one-acre tract adjacent to their property. The church's weekly budget in 1998 exceeded \$6,600. ■



MASTER'S MEN

May We Serve You?

By Tom Dooley

Many believe that the decade of the '90s has been a time of tremendous spiritual revival among American men. Data gathered by the Barna Research Group tells a different story. Since 1991 their surveys indicate that church attendance, Bible reading, Sunday School attendance, volunteering at church and giving to the church have all decreased among men. Though some men within the church have made significant advances in their spiritual growth, current trends demonstrate that the majority of American men are in spiritual decline.

Future generations of Free Will Baptists will face serious shortfall of leadership unless men are evangelized and discipled. Who will pastor their churches? Who will go as missionaries 15 and 20 years from now? If current trends continue in our society, millions of children will grow up without having the influence of godly fathers in the homes or godly men in their lives. Who will disciple and mentor the new millennium's young men?

I believe it is imperative that we awaken to the fact that there is a tremendous need in our culture for churches to win men to the Savior and equip them for service to the kingdom. That is why Master's Men ministry is needed. The heartbeat of the Master's Men Department is to come alongside our pastors, churches and national departments to do all we can to reach men and their families with the gospel.

The Master's Men handbook states five specific purposes for the department. We exist to encourage discipleship, fellowship, soul winning, stewardship and edification among our men. For those purposes to be achieved, our department will seek to do the following things.

First, the Master's Men Department will endeavor to raise awareness of our leaders to the great need of developing local church ministries and strategies that will result in winning men to Christ.

Second, the Master's Men Department will provide opportunities for pastors and church leaders to become equipped to organize and implement effective men's ministries in their local churches.

Third, the Master's Men Department will

produce quality resources for local churches to use in the spiritual development of their men. Such resources that are currently available:

ATTACK Master's Men Newsletter is a bi-monthly publication of our department.

"Family Enrichment Conferences" are designed to be hosted by a local church or churches and focuses on challenging men to be godly in their roles as husbands and fathers.

The "Burden Bearers Prayer Ministry" calls men to make a commitment to support their homes, pastors, churches and our denomination's worldwide outreach in prayer.

"MMnet" is the Master's Men presence on the World Wide Web. MMnet seeks to link 500 churches and 5,000 men (via e-mail) working and studying together by the end of 2000.

The "Direction Bible Study Series" provides men's groups and individuals with study resources that encourage their spiritual growth.

Finally, Master's Men will continue to join hands with other departments as we labor to plant churches and win souls around the world. We are here to serve you and your churches. May we serve you?

Upcoming Events

Family Enrichment Conference, Glen Rock, Illinois, February 12-13

Deep South Golf Tournament, Dothan, Alabama, February 18-20

National Master's Men Conference, Camp Hope, Ewing, Illinois, April 29-May 1

If you are interested in knowing more about any of the above resources or events, please call our office at 615/731-6812. ■



WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

Woman's Window on the World

By Marjorie H. Workman

The final countdown is here. The 20th century is almost history. A few short months remain to accomplish whatever you want to do this century. So make your mark while there is time. If permitted, Father Time will slip through your fingers and leave you with regrets at midnight December 31, 1999.

To me, the ending of the century is like the ending of winter—knowing that spring is about to burst forth. Winter is cold. It makes teeth chatter and bones ache.

I have lived over half this century, long enough to hear people wish for those good old days. Not me! I don't want to return to pickin' cotton or cold bedrooms with linoleum on the floor, when the only way to get hot water was to heat it on the wood stove.

On the positive side, we didn't have to worry about frozen pipes—there weren't any. No one complained about the high cost of insurance since few folks had any. It is a lot more fun talking about the past than living it.

Is this not true of life? The past seemed so good. The future looks so bright. But what about today? It does not matter how good or bad the past or how bright the future, we have only today. "I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work," (John 9:4).

Living is often painful. Living is also wonderful, happy, joyful, exciting. Life has seasons just like a year. So does a century. The winter of this century is here, but the spring of a new century is only a few months away.

WNAC Theme for 1999

"Leadership: Passing the Torch" is WNAC's 1999 theme. Our scripture verse is II Timothy 2:2, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also." The song for the year is, "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee."

Make your publicity, program presentations, plans and work easier by purchasing your 1999 *Yearbook*. The *Yearbook* is a helpful tool to aid coordinators in planning meetings and programs. The book also contains the WNAC Yearly Calendar and a missionary birthday calendar. The cost is only \$6 plus shipping.

Organ for Bible College

Tennessee Women Active for Christ lead the way toward the purchase of a Wicks pipe electronic organ for Free Will Baptist Bible College by adopting the organ fund as their 1999 state project. The women set a goal to raise \$3,600 toward the national goal of \$32,000. For Tennesseans, the month of March has been designated as State Project month.

The organ fund was established at the 1998 WNAC National Convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in honor of retiring WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer, Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart. Dr. Mary served WNAC for 13 years, but she also served 30 years on the faculty at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Other groups and individuals are needed to reach the \$32,000 national goal. It takes only 320 individuals or groups giving \$100 each to reach the goal. Will you be one of those 320? Send contributions through WNAC channels or directly to WNAC, P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering

The annual Laura Belle Barnard World Missions Offering for Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions should be taken during the week of March 28-April 3 in conjunction with the pre-Easter week of prayer. Foreign Missions has set April 25 as World Missions Offering for churches. Women are encouraged to plan special times of prayer for world missions through the week prior to Easter. The offering was named to honor our pioneer missionary to India, Miss Laura Belle Barnard. Miss Barnard's book, *Touching the Untouchables*, gives insight to her ministry and work in India. It is available through WNAC.

Free Will Baptist women love to pray for and give to missions. Last year the women gave \$229,578 in offerings to Foreign Missions. In addition to the offerings given to various missionary accounts, you gave over \$44,000 in cash and non-cash gifts to the missionary provision closet. The provision closet, which is not a closet but a stockroom, is filled with linens, small household appliances, pots and pans, dishes and many other items—all waiting for a missionary to claim. ■



BOARD OF RETIREMENT

*What Determines the Dividends Paid?***By D. Ray Lewis**

A few years ago I received a phone call from a participant in our retirement program. This individual was interested in obtaining a loan for his church. At that time, all our funds were invested in our denomination, either in church loans or bonds.

After we discussed the requirements for a loan, I explained the rate of interest we charge on each loan. Immediately, the tone of the conversation changed. He could not understand why we charged interest on monies we loaned to churches. He was of the opinion that since we were a Free Will Baptist agency working for our denomination, we should make loans to our churches without interest.

I asked him if we did not pay him interest on his retirement funds, would he continue making deposits into his account. He quickly replied in the negative and seemed surprised that I would even ask such a question. I explained that the only way he could earn on his funds was if we invested them in such a way that we earned on them first.

Since that time, we have diversified our investments, but the same principle applies. If our participants are to earn on funds they invest with us, we must invest in a way that generates income on those funds. Today we still invest in loans to our churches, other Free Will Baptist agencies and to individuals. We also purchase CDs, stocks and U.S. Treasury notes and bills.

Our outside investments are handled through three different money management agencies: (1) Manning & Napier, (2) Rittenhouse and (3) Harris, Britall & Sullivan. Each money manager is instructed to make only investments that do not violate the standards contained in the Free Will Baptist *Treatise*. This means we do not invest in companies whose primary business is alcohol, tobacco, entertainment or gambling.

About 20% of our funds is invested in notes receivable, approximately 41% is invested in stocks, another 32% is invested in bonds and other fixed-rate income instruments. The remaining 7% is in cash and cash equivalents. Our investments are made with the hope of earning the best return for each participant. Because 73% of our investments are in either stocks or bonds, the rate of return participants receive will fluctuate with this market. This ex-

plains why we have paid as low as 1½% and as high as 21½% return.

Earnings are declared twice each year, June 30 and December 31. At these times, all earnings for the current six-month period from our investments are pooled together. Any expenses incurred, greater than our gift income, are paid from these earnings. At this point we take these net earnings and distribute them to each participant, according to the plan and status of his/her account. All these net earnings are distributed to the participants.

We are very thankful for the Lord's blessings on this ministry. Our historical rate of return now exceeds 9%. This includes all earnings periods since July 1969.

We count it a privilege to serve you who have and are serving us. We will continue working for you, investing your funds in a way that does not conflict with biblical standards, yet earning you a competitive rate of return. Working together we will make financial preparation for the years when we are no longer able to be in full-time ministry. ■



FOREIGN MISSIONS

Dead, Yet They Speak

By Genevieve Waddell

I see a lot of different, poignant sights traipsing over the world with my husband, but I was not prepared for the overwhelming emotions that crippled me when my husband said, "There it is—the John and Kay Metcalf Dorm," as we drove onto the "acampamento" at Jaboticabal, Brazil. In part paid for by family, it was constructed of red clay bricks by the Master's Men in 1984; it is the first building I saw at the camp. Then I saw the plaque in honor of this precious couple who went to be with the Lord in a fiery crash on I-40W in 1984. They were on a road, not just leading them back to Oklahoma, but straight to Brazil.

I cried. Then I cried some more. Actually, I knew little about the couple except that John had served as a summer missionary in Brazil, Kay had spent a summer working in Africa, and they were approved to go to Brazil.

I remember a few days before John and Kay died that my husband brought their brand new prayer card home. I taped it to the top of my desk.

Trip Cut Short

On February 28, an icy afternoon, John and Kay left the Foreign Missions office in Nashville, Tenn., rejoicing that they were one step closer to being full-time missionaries in Brazil. However, their trip was cut short. Early that evening I answered the telephone, only to be told that a truck had skidded across the median in Jackson, Tenn., instantly killing John and Kay. I met my husband at the door; we wept in shock, as did all of our people.

And all through these years, that same prayer card, just like the 8 X 10 photograph of the couple in the Foreign Missions office, has stayed where I put it. Now and then, looking at that beautiful couple, I have thought, "Lord, I know you don't make mistakes, but there are so many who never

*John and Kay Metcalf*

carry through with their commitments to go to the mission field. Having put their hands to the plow, they've looked back. John and Kay wanted to go. They were needed and they would be in their prime there right now. I don't understand."

Yet as I leaned my head against the colorful bricks of that dormitory, my soul rejoiced in one way. Not only are

John and Kay with the Lord, but "being dead," they are still speaking through the dormitory erected in their memory. At least 120 people had attended the most recent family camp. People of all ages are being saved there during every camp!

A Living Memorial

When I go back to my desk and reach over to turn on my computer, I will look at John and Kay's prayer card photograph and I will thank the Lord for their beautiful testimony and willing spirit. This building stands as a living memorial to these two who are already with the Lord.

There are so many "John and Kay Metcalf-types" all over our Free Will Baptist denomination! But what burdens me so much is that they don't care that the world is lost, that people are dying and going to hell. And so very, very few are stepping forward to say, "Lord, here am I; send me."

Where are they? Where are the young people, the middle-aged folks, even some retired people who could go if they were willing to leave their comfortable nests to follow the Lord wherever He leads them?

I thank the Lord for John and Kay Metcalf! I thank the Lord for the John and Kay Metcalf dormitory at our Free Will Baptist camp in Jaboticabal, Brazil. Not everyone will have the opportunity that I had to stand against the building and weep in remembrance, in sorrow, in joy, and in anticipation that someone will come forward, even years later, and "fill John and Kay's shoes." But anyone can say "send me." ■



Genevieve Waddell is the wife of R. Eugene Waddell, retiring general director of Foreign Missions.

Semper Fi—"Always Faithful"



Garnett Reid

This month we continue our look at the faithfulness of God. Sometimes the Bible reminds us of this truth through an incident, a character or a favorite verse. One particular *word* in the Old Testament, however, especially highlights God's character as a loving Lord who honors His commitments.

The Hebrew word *hesed*, variously translated as "mercy," "kindness" and "lovingkindness" has the basic idea of loyalty issuing from a pledged relationship—covenant loyalty. It speaks of keeping a promise, of honoring a commitment, not with grim resolution, but out of a loving concern to meet needs in the relationship.

This meaning of *hesed* is apparent in scripture, first on a purely human level whether in the context of a family (Gen. 47:29), friendships (I Sam. 20:8, 14, 15), contractual agreements (formal, Gen. 21:23; informal, Josh. 2:12, 14), or political alliances (II Sam. 3:8; 10:2).

Hesed, for instance, prompted David to inquire, "Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may shew him kindness (*hesed*) for Jonathan's sake?" (II Sam. 9:1) The king's resulting favor toward Jonathan's crippled son Mephibosheth flowed from David's continued covenant loyalty in the relationship even though his friend was now dead (II Sam. 9:7).

While these examples of human loyalty stand out in a world of broken promises, God's *hesed* elevates the character of loving faithfulness to a limitless, infinite level. His loyal love never falters toward His people (Psa. 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; Isa. 54:10; Jer. 31:3). The Lord keeps His pledged word to us whether our need is protection (Psa. 31:7, 21; 32:10; 57:3), forgiveness (Num. 14:18-19; Psa. 51:1; Mic. 7:18-20), guidance (Gen. 24:12, 14, 27), or renewal (Psa. 119:88, 149, 159). His *hesed* is the basis of Christ's kingdom reign (Psa. 89) and elicits praise from His people (I Chron. 16:34; II Chron. 5:13; Isa. 63:7).

God reveals His loyal love, though, especially to those who show covenant loyalty to Him in return (Gen. 39:21; Ex. 20:6; Deut. 7:12; Ruth 2:20; Jer. 9:24). His faithfulness should compel us to respond in turn with loyalty to Him (II Sam. 22:26; I Kings 8:23; Hos. 10:12).

No wonder Micah 6:8 lists *hesed* as a requirement for those who would walk with God. God is more interested in our loyal devotion to Him than in mere external worship rituals, according to Hosea 6:6. The virtuous woman of Proverbs 31:26 also exemplifies "the law of kindness (*hesed*)," pledged faithfulness, by her words and deeds. Even though she was a Moabite by birth, Ruth modeled loyalty to the God

of Israel and His people during the Judges era, a time noted for anything but covenant faithfulness (Ruth 3:10).

So keep in mind when you read words such as "mercy" and "kindness" in the Old Testament that you are likely reading about loyal, covenant love.

God's church cries out for believers committed to this loving faithfulness in their walk with Him before the world. To that end, we must pray for and seek:

Disciples who love the Lord with all their heart.

Pastors who refuse to abandon their calling.

Missionaries who commit long-term to the field.

Spouses whose loyal love reaches long into the years of marriage.

Young people who honor commitments in spite of prevalent culture.

Christians who keep promises, pay debts, settle obligations with integrity, honor committed relationships, stay true to God, their families, and their duties—in short, people who will not compromise where loyalty is at issue.

The wardrobe modeled by the Lord's church wears well when woven with the fabric of faithfulness. ■

Mark Your Calendar!
Free Will Baptist National Convention
July 18-22, 1999
Atlanta, Georgia

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PREACHERS

Loving Your Valentine

The young preacher's wife is not encouraged to read this article. However, the young preacher is greatly exhorted to study every word. February is the month of the valentine. More candy and flowers will be given this month than at any time of the year. Maybe the young preacher will purchase a box of candy or a few flowers for his mate.

However, the display of love should not be limited to one day in February. The young preacher should demonstrate his love and appreciation regularly. If any husband ought to prove his love for the wife, it ought to be the young preacher. The woman in the parsonage is a special person. She has followed her preacher-husband to a church where everyone is usually a stranger. The pastor's wife has set up housekeeping in a strange land and accepted her mate's ministry as her ministry.

Here are some suggestions to benefit the relationship between the preacher-husband and his wife.

Recognize Mate's Position

The young preacher's wife often has few close friends. Maybe her day is restricted to the home, rearing the children, counseling a distraught church member and keeping the house clean for those unexpected guests. "A woman's work is never done, from dawn to setting sun," my wife has reminded me many times.

While the preacher-husband is visiting church members or eating at a restaurant with a pastor friend, his wife is "holding the fort." The young preacher absolutely must appreciate the woman who guards, protects and sustains all that goes on in their home.

Love the Mate

Touch her tenderly every day. A wom-

an needs that husbandly affection. A neck massage after the evening meal or holding hands while watching the evening news will provide a greater sense of security.

Tell her "I love you." Those are magic words to a woman who has heard crying, demanding children all day. Take her out to eat once a week. Arrange for a baby sitter. Spend this profitable time together to reinforce the marital covenant. Trust your wife. Sharing your prayer requests and then praying together will develop a greater trust and devotion.

Turn your eyes away from other women. Adore the one God gave you. Purchase your mate a dress. Dress your queen like a queen!

Help the Mate

The young preacher's ministry would be enhanced if the wife could stay home. Everyone would benefit if mother cleaned the house, washed the clothes, prepared the meals, sent the children off to school and met them when they returned home, conducted personal devotions each day and sustained a peaceful atmosphere. In other words, be the full-time queen of the manse.

However, if the wife works outside the home, the husband is obligated to assist the wife. Most women want to wash the dishes, vacuum the floor, dust the furniture, etc. The home is her castle. However, the young preacher should occasionally take over the mop, grab the wash rag and plug in the vacuum cleaner to relieve the tired wife who has worked all day in the secular world.

Assist in Child Rearing

Yes, it is important to speak to the deacon who has a suggestion, shake hands with the visitors, meet with the



Dennis Wiggs

church board or pray at the altar with someone who just heard your message. But this should not be the time for the preacher's children to crawl under the pews, run around the parking lot, climb the tree, kick some adult or pick a fight with another kid. A wonderful sermon can be destroyed by the young preacher's children.

An understanding between the preacher, the wife and the children must be determined before entering the church sanctuary. Better to load up the vehicle and go home, leaving the deacon talking, rather than give church members something to talk about the rest of the week.

And, young preacher, hold that baby God gave you and your wife, even if the child does burp on your new suit. Calmly correct that child who is climbing over the church pew. Know what those kids of yours are doing. Remember, the young preacher's first responsibility is to his wife and children. The obligation to corral the kids is not just the wife's job.

Something Special on the Unspecial Day

Birthdays and anniversaries ought to be recognized, of course. However, a note on the mirror of the bathroom cabinet or on the coffee pot will provide a loving reminder for the new day. The young preacher would do well to call his wife at home once or twice a day just to say "I love you." Both husband and wife should work on new ways to express the growing love between life-long partners. Love church members as people who need you. But love your wife as someone who is part of your flesh, your ministry and your fruitfulness. Make her your valentine every day. ■

YOUTH UPDATE

COMING

December 31, 1999

The End Of The Millennium

Where Will You Be?

Come to Youth2K!

This exciting youth conference will begin on December 31st and proceed until the year 2000. Make plans now to attend this monumental event in Nashville, TN. For more information, call 1-800-877-7030.

Don't miss Youth2K or you'll have to wait
another 1000 years for the next one!!

"1 & 2 Thessalonians" in *The NIV Application Commentary*.

By Michael W. Holmes, edited by Terry Muck.

(Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998, 302 pp., hardback, \$21.99).



Thomas Marberry

Michael W. Holmes holds a Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary; he presently serves as professor of biblical studies and early Christianity at Bethel College in St. Paul, Minnesota. He has contributed the volume on Paul's two earliest epistles to a rather unique commentary series published by Zondervan. Most commentaries focus on determining the original meaning of the biblical text. That is certainly a worthwhile and necessary task for every Bible student.

Most commentary series, however, do not give the reader much help in applying that meaning to our contemporary situation. The biblical books were written many centuries ago in circumstances that were often far removed from the situations that modern Christians face today. This commentary series seeks to help the reader understand the timeless message of the scripture and how to apply that timeless message in a way that is meaningful to modern readers.

In many ways this is a quite traditional commentary on Paul's eschatological epistles. Holmes confronts the major issues which must be faced in the study of these epistles, but he advocates no radical theories and no novel solutions to long-standing difficulties.

He argues that they were written near the middle of the first century to a group of new believers who had grown up in a Greek cultural envi-

ronment. For this reason, one of Paul's major tasks was resocialization. He wanted to help these new believers learn how to live as believers in a world that often did not understand or appreciate them.

Holmes points out that Paul was forced to leave Thessalonica after only a short time. He left a young, inexperienced congregation to face a hostile environment. He was, no doubt, concerned about the very survival of the church. He wanted to prepare them as best he could to face the opposition. He also wanted to clear up any misunderstandings about his teachings or conduct while in Thessalonica.

Although Paul mentions Silas and Timothy in the salutation of the letter, he is certainly "... the person who drafted or dictated the letters." Holmes notes that some scholars consider I Thessalonians 2:13-16 to be a later interpolation. He also notes that many scholars today consider II Thessalonians to be pseudonymous.

This author does not accept such theories; he considers Paul to be the author of all the contents found in these two epistles. He considers the order in which the epistles were written and concludes that I Thessalonians was probably written first.

This commentary presents a well-researched and balanced exegesis. The author reflects a solid understanding of the status of the Christian church in the first century. He al-

so reflects the limitations of our knowledge about the first century. He notes, quite correctly, that it is impossible to determine the exact nature of the questions to which Paul is responding in II Thessalonians.

The two most difficult and perplexing interpretive problems which these epistles present are the identification of the "man of lawlessness" and "that which restrains" which are presented in II Thessalonians 2. Holmes presents excellent brief summaries of the viewpoints of major scholars.

He then shares his own understanding of what these passages teach and what they do not teach. He suggests that this passage is often used as a basis for what is little more than idle speculation on the part of commentators. He argues that the "man of lawlessness" cannot be identified with certainty.

Modern Christians should focus their attention on Christ and not on the Antichrist. This commentary can help preachers understand more clearly the key ideas and concepts presented in these epistles. It contains many helpful ideas for preaching. It also contains the kind of background information, interpretation and analysis which can be useful to those who teach from these letters.

It is quite refreshing to read a commentary that clearly distinguishes between what we really know about a book and what is speculation. This is a book worth adding to your library. ■

OUR READERS COMMENT

Long-Time Reader Writes

I'm proud of *Contact*! I remember the first copy ever printed. It made me happy that at long last, our denomination had its own magazine.

You have taken it to higher heights! I'm proud of it and us as a denomination.

The last issue (November 1998) was especially good. I really liked John 3:16!

Reverend Ronald Creech
Nashville, Tennessee

Mission Official Finds John 3:16

Where is John 3:16? It certainly is in the Bible, in red letters no less, assuring us they are Jesus' own words. These are some of the words of life, the words which lead to eternal life. But John 3:16 can also be found in the coat the man was seeking (November 1998).

The *John 3:16 Mission* is located at 506 N.

Cheyenne, Tulsa, OK, and is one of the more than 260 rescue missions in America. When they give out a coat, the recipients are shown Jesus' love in action. The gift of a coat often leads to the gift of life—salvation of the soul, and this is the main reason rescue missions are in existence.

Union Rescue Missions across America and around the world consider themselves the evangelists to the "Least, Lost and Lonely." The Christian's gift to the local rescue mission assures the gospel will be presented to the homeless and less privileged in their area.

As you were comforted by Brother Ellis' voice, the American Indian and the black man can only be truly comforted by the voice of our Lord Jesus Christ. Anger is rampant on the streets of America. Men, women, girls and boys every day are seeking acceptance and love, quite often in all the wrong places. Many of these angry individuals have been banished to mere lives of existences on the streets of our great nation. Jesus can turn their anger into Christian love, but only if Christians tell them the story of Jesus' love.

I am so glad you got to meet these three men. Now

you have a better idea what it is like ministering to the "Least, Lost and Lonely." Believe me when I say, "The only real hope these men have is through Jesus."

Reverend Don Worrell
Director of Operations
Nashville Union Mission
Nashville, Tennessee

Missionary Writes from Africa

Thanks again for your great work on *Contact*. It is really getting better all the time. I have appreciated Tom Forehand's articles on the "Counterfeit Jesus."

One of the neat little ditties is Dennis Wiggs' column, "Especially for Young Preachers." He is a neat man with tons of character. His words of advice to young preachers are rich and accurate.

Reverend Clint Morgan
Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa

BEYOND BELIEF



RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

Group Burns Bibles

NAIROBI, KENYA (EP)—Members of a group called “End the Bible Era” in Kenya are soliciting Bibles from unsuspecting Christian organizations, then burning the Bibles, according to a report from Africa News Service. Christian leaders in Nairobi report that more than one million Bibles have been destroyed since last March. Some reports have said the Bibles are sprinkled with human blood before being burned in a satanic ritual.

No Conspiracy Behind Black Church Fires

WASHINGTON, DC (EP)—Two years after fires at black churches in the south attracted national headlines, a government task force says there is no evidence of a national conspiracy.

The National Task Force on Church Arson released its second report last fall. According to James Johnson, treasury undersecretary for enforcement, arrests were reported in about 34% of church fires—more than double the national arrest rate for all arson cases (16%). The task force has closed 243 investigations; 427 remain open.

“We have found no evidence of a national conspiracy,” said Bill Lann Lee, acting assistant attorney general for civil rights. However, Lee said that in some cases a number of churches were attacked in a single area, suggesting “local coordination” among arsonists.

In the 670 church attacks tracked by the task force since 1995, 308 people have been arrested. Of those, 254 are white, 46 are black and eight are His-

panic. Of the 670 attacks, 225 targeted black churches.

Churches Not Ready for Change

GEORGETOWN, KY (EP)—Most churches are not prepared to respond to the constantly changing needs of their communities, sociologist Nancy Ammerman told a group of Baptist pastors in Kentucky.

Ammerman, author of *Congregation and Community*, studied how congregations have reacted to changes in their communities during the last decade. “Because people move, congregations are constantly being reconstructed,” she said.

Increased mobility in our society has changed the nature of communities, and that in turn has changed the relationships between churches and communities, she added. “How we think about our relationship to a given . . . neighborhood will constantly have to be reconstructed.”

Ammerman and her fellow researchers predict that 60-75% of the congregations they studied won't exist 20 years from now. “Their soil was simply a little too-well trod,” she said, a reference to Jesus’ parable of the sower in which seed falling on hard ground was eaten by birds instead of producing fruit.

Organization Gives Up on Public Schools

COSTA MESA, CA (EP)—After 15 years of trying to reform the nation’s public schools, Dr. Bob Simonds, president of

the NACE/CEE (National Association of Christian Educators/Citizens for Excellence in Education), is giving up.

In a letter to national public school leaders, Simonds announced the repeal of his organization’s policy of pursuing reform, and described the official adoption of a policy endorsing home schools and private schools.

Receiving “nothing but lip service” in response to their “exceedingly modest and reasonable requests” for cooperation and consideration, the NACE/CEE has implemented “Rescue 2010,” wrote Simonds, an effort to encourage the estimated 20 million Christian students attending public schools into private or home schools.

Simonds presented a lengthy list of problems with most public systems, including a humanist world view, worldly values, the teaching of evolution as fact and the omission of creationism, loss of control by the parents, drug and alcohol use, peer pressure to become sexually active, physical safety and overall lower academic quality.

Simonds calls the public schools atheistic, and claims that 70% of Christians in the public system “leave with their faith destroyed.”

He said, “The problem is the church’s future . . . with so many kids being lost, this could equal an end to American churches.”

Simonds hopes enough students will move to the private system to cause financial strain on the public system, forcing education officials to listen to the concerns of Christian parents.

If 25% of the 20 million Christian kids in public education leave, the school system will collapse,” he said. ■

Why Preachers Don't Trust Laymen



Jack Williams

Last October I flew to Florida and discovered six reasons in three days why preachers don't trust laymen. The men's retreat met in a swamp 8,000 miles (give or take a few) out of town down a dirt road that was under water the day before we arrived. The nearest airport was somewhere in Alabama.

A retired missionary named Fred fetched me off the Dothan tarmac and drove to Camp Swampy. To my amazement, we saw buffalo beside the road a mile from the front gate. That's right, buffalo, big shaggy critters that the Southern Cheyenne skinned for winter robes.

Preachers and laymen maneuvered past the buffalo, and the conference kicked off with dinner and two services. A Tennessee layman named Jerry spoke first, then me.

The program planners didn't know that I was Jerry's pastor when he was a teenager 30 years ago. He was good at two things in those days—stealing his mother's fried pies and conning me into picking him up at midnight after he got off work 10 miles away. He paid off in fried pies.

Jerry spoke 45 minutes in a witty, articulate, enthusiastic style that was thoroughly bothersome. He got me distracted from what I was supposed to say after he finished. He also asked the defining question of the retreat: "Why don't preachers trust laymen?"

Right off, I had an answer which I kept to myself. *Preachers don't trust laymen who speak better and make more sense than we do.* I wisely waited for a better reason to come along. Three jumped up the next day.

The organizers slipped in an unexpected panel discussion on any subject that anybody wanted to bring up. Since I can't answer the phone without detailed notes, I knew I was in trouble. Fortunately, two laymen were also on

that panel—Jerry the former fried pie expert and Tall Tim the Auburn fan.

Both laymen fielded questions and ran with them. While I was glad they did, that's another reason preachers don't trust laymen. *Laymen think too well on their feet without notes.* My most coherent response was, "Uh, yeah, I agree with Tall Tim and Fried Jerry."

Lunch ended when somebody mentioned basketball. I said that I'd like a game of H-O-R-S-E on the concrete court beside the dormitory. Bad decision. The laymen trotted two ringers onto the court, and before I could explain to them how old I was, they snookered me into a full-contact game.

One ringer claimed he worked in a sawmill, the other mentioned a nearby college. Sure, sure. I recognize a semi-pro player when he leaves his sneaker tread on my face.

Van, a preacher with a good jump shot, helped me take on those two slippery laymen. I shot 12 times, missed 12 times and we lost by three. Which is one more reason preachers don't trust laymen. *They shoot better and stay in better shape than we do.*

Did I mention my half-gainer on the concrete? Knees, wrist, ego—all smashed. Four hours later, a kindly preacher drove me past the buffalo down 8,000 miles of dirt road to the nearest emergency room. My swollen left wrist refused to stop hurting. Broke it. That's what I told him.

Two nurses and a doctor asked embarrassing questions about why a man my age was playing basketball on a concrete court wearing jogging shoes. It was those evil laymen who provoked me into overriding my common sense. Which is another reason why . . . *Laymen are smarter than preachers.*

The nosey doctor wrote a prescription for my broken wrist which

he alleged was only sprained. He probably got his medical degree by correspondence from Baghdad. It hurt enough to be broken five times. He said the prescription would make me quite drowsy, which meant I couldn't take it because I still had to speak three times.

Laymen can spot a preacher dozing in the pulpit nearly every time. So I spoke one-handed (a not-so-easy-task, thank you) and medicine-less.

After the retreat ended Saturday, retired missionary Fred dropped me at the motel to wait for my Sunday flight. In great pain, I struggled to operate the TV remote one-handed and watch the Georgia-LSU football game.

Midway through the game, the phone rang and I found another reason preachers don't trust laymen. *They call you when LSU is losing to the Georgia Bulldogs and want to know why.* Tall Tim the Auburn fan, on the pretext of inquiring about my delicate condition, insinuated that LSU was about to get dog bit. Which they did.

I crawled out of Alabama and back to the office. You'd think the story ends here, but it doesn't. The rest of the story is called HMO. Because I didn't call first while driving down 8,000 miles of dirt road, the medical plan insisted that I see my primary care physician who must pre-authorize the emergency room visit.

Which is another reason preachers don't trust laymen. *They forced me to go to a doctor for the first time in years.* The Nashville "doctor" was a 12-year-old girl from South Dakota who drove a Toyota pickup. She wanted to know why a man my age was playing basketball on a concrete court wearing jogging shoes.

If I ever get where I can preach two-handed again, a couple of Florida laymen better fasten their seat belts. ■

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