

MARCH 1999

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

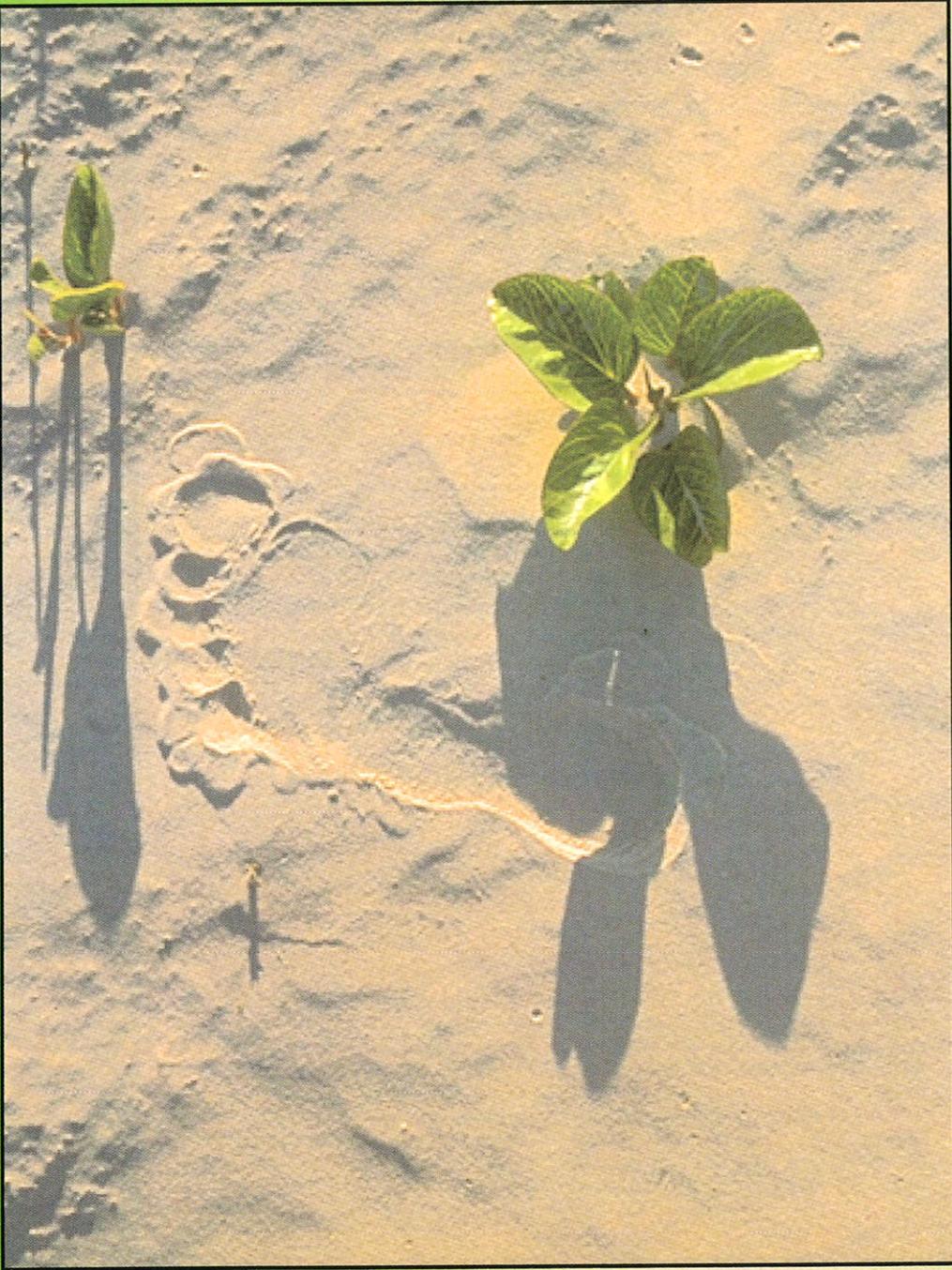
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Editor-in-chief: Dr. Melvin Worthington
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Circulation: Dari Goodfellow
Printed by: Randall House Publications

Contact (ISSN 0573-7796), published monthly by the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 5233 Mt. View

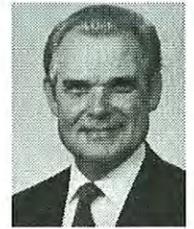
Road, Antioch, TN 37013-2306. Address all correspondence and subscriptions to Post Office Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Phone 615/731-6812.

Annual subscription rates: Individual—\$12 per year, Church Family Plan—\$12 per year, Church Bundle Plan—\$12 per year. Periodical post-

age paid at Antioch, TN and additional offices.

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USPS 130-660



Melvin Worthington

Opportunity, Obligation, Obedience

The National Association of Free Will Baptists approaches the 21st century poised and prepared to achieve the purpose for which it came into existence—to extend the witness of Christ and to build His Church throughout the world. This vision statement has been in place since our organization in 1935.

The denomination has never deviated from that purpose. This is evidenced in the fact that 84 cents of every dollar given to national agencies goes to the foreign (50%) and home missions (34%). An additional 10% goes to Free Will Baptist Bible College to train Christian workers for service at home and abroad. Ninety-four percent of denominational giving on the national level goes to education and missions. That's phenomenal!

Our Opportunity

We must *see our opportunity*. There has never been a better time for *evangelism*. Multitudes from every corner of the globe have immigrated to American cities. The door stands open to start cross-cultural churches. Our Home and Foreign Missions Departments are working together to evangelize at home and abroad.

There has never been a better time for *education*. Biblical knowledge is at a low ebb in America, even in the Christian community. Education is a vital part of the commission Christ gave to the Church.

We must *seize our opportunity*. The fields are white to harvest and we dare not stand by with no compassion, concern or contribution. We must seize every opportunity to evangelize, educate and edify at home and abroad. We need to ask three questions, "What place does the Lord have for me personally in the areas of evangelism, education and edification? How do I fit into God's redemptive plan for

this world? What is God's will for me?"

We must *seek our opportunity*. The tasks of evangelism, education and edification can not be accomplished alone. We need the help of all believers. It seems to me that this principle is established in Acts 1:8 when Jesus reminded the disciples that they were to be witnesses both in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the uttermost part of the earth at the same time.

Our Obligation

We must *sense our obligation*. The disciples sensed their obligation. One of the basic issues which every Free Will Baptist must address is personal obligation in light of the church covenant.

We must *shoulder our obligation*. Each of us is individually responsible for living in light of the guidelines all Free Will Baptists agree to accept: the Composition—Word of God, the Free Will Baptist Church Covenant, and the Constitution of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. These documents provide guidelines for a holy, healthy, helpful and harmonious Free Will Baptist family.

We must *simplify our obligation*. This means that we embrace the following statement from our church covenant: "Having given ourselves to God, by faith in Christ, and adopted

the Word of God as our rule of faith and practice, we now give ourselves to one another by the will of God in this solemn covenant." Our obligation is simple—we must do what we covenanted to do—nothing more, nothing else and nothing less.

Our Obedience

We must *show our obedience*. Jesus declared that those who loved him demonstrated that love by obedience. How can Free Will Baptists show obedience in the next century? We can honor the *Christ*. We must give Him the preeminent place in our lives.

We can honor the *covenant*. Each Free Will Baptist voluntarily makes a covenant with other Free Will Baptists. We can honor the *constitution*. Free Will Baptists have distinctive doctrines which should be preached and preserved. We also have a distinctive organizational structure which is found in the *Constitution of the National Association of Free Will Baptists*.

We must *share our obedience*. We are team players. We believe that together—obediently fulfilling our obligations as we have opportunities—we can reach the potential for which we as a movement came into existence in 1935.

We must *submit our obedience*. The final test of our obedience will be when we face the Father and give an account for how we lived in the light of our opportunities, obligations and obedience. Free Will Baptists can make a significant difference in the next century. New leadership is emerging. New laborers are enlisting. The brightest and best days are ahead for us as we reach out to every opportunity and respond in individual and institutional obedience.



The Secretary's Schedule

March 1999

- Feb. 28- Lebanon FWB Church
- Mar. 5 Effingham, SC
- 8-11 IFOWBC Exec. Committee Meeting
Miami, FL
- 14 Central FWB Church
Royal Oak, MI
- 19-20 Illinois State Association
- 25-27 CMP Board Meeting

The man with no legs walked tall in his community as a father and leader.

A Leg Up

By Darrell Strain



At Dad's funeral, my brother told the packed funeral home that, although Dad had no legs, he gave his children "a leg up" in life. As I waited to preach the funeral message, my mind wandered back to the day Dad lost his lower legs in a tragic accident.

Dad was a farmer who barely scraped out a living in the 1940s and early 50s from the Ozark hills in southern Missouri. In 1954, he sold the farm and bought a trucking operation in the small town of Alton, Missouri. Dad worked night and day to develop the truck line and then, a few years later, sold the operation to

a larger firm in a neighboring town and devoted his attention to his feed store. Dad had opened the feed store in conjunction with the trucking operation a few years earlier.

By this time, my brother and I were in college at the University of Missouri. Dad and Mom both worked to help us pay school expenses. I was a junior and my brother a sophomore pre-dental major.

Feed Mill Accident

The year was 1964. I answered the ringing telephone. I was not prepared for the message I heard. My youngest sister hurriedly told me that

Dad had been involved in a feed mill accident and that, if I wanted to see him alive, I had better rush to Springfield, Missouri, to St. John's Hospital. With no further explanation, she hung up the phone.

I called my brother before my wife and I loaded into the old Mercury car and made the four-hour drive to Springfield, not knowing if Dad were dead or alive. When I arrived at the hospital, I found my mother and two sisters in the surgery waiting room. Mother was in tears and could hardly talk. Dad had been in surgery several hours. Finally, they were able to tell me the story of the accident.

Dad, as usual, was in a hurry to

complete an order for a customer. One of the hired hands had gone to lunch so Dad was helping operate the feed grinder. The grinder was a huge machine with tons of moving parts. One of the inlet hoses, which allowed molasses to be mixed with the ground feed, was stopped up. Dad left the diesel engine, which supplied power to the grinder, running while he climbed into the mixer bin to unstop the hose.

The hired hand, who had been at lunch, came back to work while Dad was in the mixer. Not knowing anyone was in the mixer, he engaged the power to the grinder. The tons of iron and steel began to turn and two augers caught Dad's feet and pulled him further into the feed mixer.

Dad's screams were heard above the diesel engine; the helper shut off the power, but it was too late. The centrifugal force of the tons of metal prevented an immediate stop of the moving parts.

When Dad was pulled from the machine, they said he was mangled from the waist down, bleeding badly, bones broken and protruding from the skin. The ambulance was called and Dad was rushed to the local doctor's office, then the ambulance driver sped him 150 miles to the nearest trauma hospital.

Never Give Up

Mother told me that when they arrived at the emergency room and the nurse asked my mom to sign the necessary papers, Dad look up from the stretcher and said, "Give me the papers and I'll sign them." That's the kind of man he was: gritty, strong in body and mind, though he stood only 5 feet, 10 inches tall and weighed 160 pounds.

After what seemed like days of waiting, the doctor finally came out of the surgery. He told us that he had amputated both Dad's legs below the knees. His upper leg was broken and would have to be pinned, later, if Dad survived. The doctor said his chances of survival were about 15 percent. They placed Dad in the intensive care recovery room and gave him round-the-clock nursing.

The first time I got to see Dad in the recovery room, nurses had him covered with chips of ice from his

neck to what was left of his legs. They explained that his body temperature was so high (from infection caused by contamination from the feed in the mixer) that he would suffer brain damage if they could not control the body temperature.

For three days, Dad lay covered with ice in front of a northern-exposed open window. On the fourth day I went in to see him; he was awake and the first words out of his mouth were, "What are you doing out of school?"

When I tried to explain to him that I would quit college and operate the feed store, he told me that he would whittle a pair of legs and be out of the hospital in a few days. The "few days" turned into 30 days before he came home in a wheelchair. He would face many days confined to the wheelchair before his stumps would heal enough to be fitted with prostheses.

Before this hospital confinement, Dad had never been in a hospital in all his 48 years. He had never really been very sick, that I could remember. He had always worked to make a living.

The social security representative came by to see him and offered him total disability. Dad said, "You give that to someone who is not able to work. I have always made a living and I am going to make a living now."

The Right Attitude

That's the attitude I remembered as I sat there that day while my brother read the obituary and made a few comments. That attitude caused him to go back to work while confined to the wheelchair. That attitude caused him to work in pain, even on those days when the pain was almost unbearable. That attitude motivated him to successfully run for the office of County Collector of Revenue.

While serving as County Collector of Revenue, Dad suffered a heart attack. Examination indicated that bypass surgery would be necessary to correct the problem. Dad consented to the surgery, which proved successful. Again he was offered permanent disability and again he refused.

He operated the feed store until he was ready to retire and then turned the operation over to his youngest daughter and her husband.

Dad devoted his last years to travel and to his church as a dedicated dea-

con. The heart bypasses would finally become clogged and Dad would face another hospital stay to allow doctors to try to correct the problem. While in surgery, Dad suffered another heart attack. Within a few weeks, he would be dead . . . not from the heart attack but from a blood vessel that would rupture in his brain.

Just a few minutes before the ambulance came to take him to the hospital for the last time, Dad called me into his bedroom. As I sat on the bed with him, he said, "Son, I'll not come back this time, and I want you to preach my funeral." He also told me who his pallbearers should be and whom he wanted to sing.

Final Legacy

I snapped to reality as I heard my brother say that Dad taught his kids to have courage and to exercise character: to face the hard things in life, to make a stand on the moral issues of the day even if it cost them business and friends.

I heard him say that Dad, even though he was physically handicapped and suffered great pain, was never defeated by life. He helped put two sons through college, provided help to his two girls, and was now helping his grandchildren. Yes, he gave us a leg up on life.

I looked at the packed house as I stood to read the scripture for the message. I remembered that, shortly before his death, Dad had said to one of his nurses, "You know, when you get to this place in life, only one thing matters . . . what you have done with Jesus Christ."

I then read the text ". . . and Jesus said, Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden and I will give you rest . . ."

Dad was at rest. ■

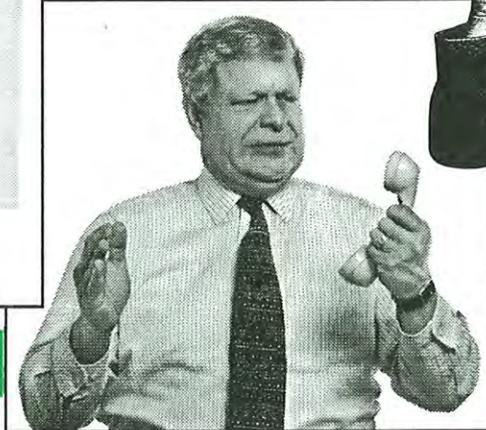
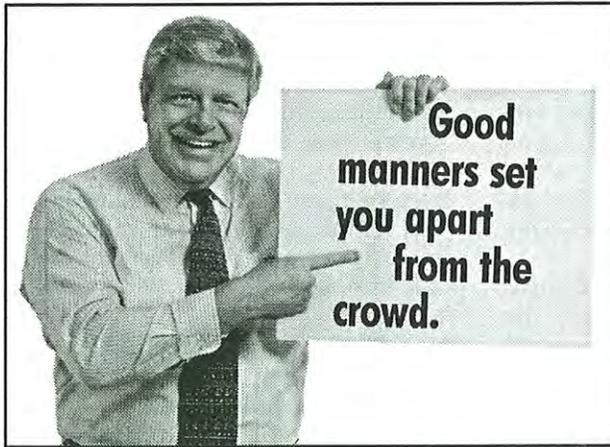
ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Darrell Strain pastors Bailey Chapel Free Will Baptist Church in Alton, Missouri.

Reprinted by permission from *The Gem*, official publication of the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists, June 1997 issue.

This article is a tribute to Wallace Strain (1916-1989). At the time of his death, Mr. Strain was a deacon at Royal Oak Free Will Baptist Church near Alton, Missouri, where his son, Darrell, pastored.

Manners Matter

By Carol Reid



Emily Post or Amy Vanderbilt or Miss Manners simply cannot improve on God's Word for explaining the basis for good manners. Manners are a very Christian phenomenon. Christians are ladies and gentlemen, if they are obedient to the Word. The character traits of kindness, brotherly love, hospitality and diligent concern should characterize every believer. "In honor, preferring one another," as Romans 12:10 commands, is the basis of etiquette in polite society.

Begin At Home

Good manners begin at home. Your home is both the classroom for proper etiquette and the practice field. Children, are you nicer to your friends' parents than your own? Are you kinder to your friends than to your brother or sister?

Parents, when you answer the phone does your tone of voice change? Are you kinder to co-workers than to your spouse and children? Do you show the same appreciation for her cooking or typing or sacrifice that you would if you were a guest of someone else?

When you get ready for the shower or adjust the thermostat, do you prefer others in your home or are you only concerned about yourself? Good manners include your housekeeping, your grooming, leaving the bathroom as clean or cleaner than you found it.

Good manners, for everyone, begin at home. Decide right now that your home will be a place where you prefer one another and treat one another with kindness, thoughtfulness and courtesy.

Thank You

Part of good manners is remembering to say thank you. Jesus noted this when He healed the 10 lepers. Only one came back to thank Him. Probably the same odds are at work today. Whether you know it or not, people think that the 10 cents you spend on a thank-you note and the 33 cents you spend to mail it to them is very significant. The "thank you" spoken at the moment is important, but the "thank you" phoned the next day or mailed the next week means even more.

Public Conduct

Elizabeth Post says in her book, *The Complete Guide to Etiquette*, "Do not attract attention to yourself in public" is one of the cardinal principles of etiquette. Many . . . specific rules and suggestions . . . are simple applications of this all-important rule. By keeping this one injunction in mind, you can save yourself and others much embarrassment in many situations."

Talking or laughing too loudly, behaving childishly, wildly gesturing or

acting out, all these quests for attention are inappropriate. Honking your horn unnecessarily is poor etiquette. Publicly displaying affection is poor etiquette, even if you are married.

Do the right thing about waiting in line, about clearing your table, about throwing away your trash and all sorts of public behavior. Do them because you are an adult and because you represent Jesus Christ to others. His reputation is at stake as well as your own.

Church Conduct

This rule is especially true at church. Loud talking is not appropriate. Enter the sanctuary to worship and begin even at that point to prepare your heart for worship. Believe it or not, the prelude is not played to "cover up" the crowd noise and signal that it's time to get to your seat. You could sit down and quietly listen to the music.

This is not the time for visiting and telling jokes and rushing about. Don't be late. Don't pass notes, don't whisper back and forth, don't sleep, don't get tickled. During church, don't clip your nails, don't smack your gum or blow bubbles, don't sort your coupons, don't play footsie with your girlfriend or peek-a-boo with the baby in front of you.

Once you have taken your seat, don't go out. If your bladder cannot last through a one-hour church service, you need to get medical help.

Prepare ahead, and if you're a parent, prepare ahead for your children as well. The reason you are attending church is to hear from the Lord. Inappropriate behavior makes it impossible for you to hear Him and probably impossible for those sitting around you to hear from Him as well.

When you are in the choir or a part of the program, these admonitions become even more important. Doing the necessary planning and preparation in advance in order to honor Him can set the tone for the behavior and worship of others. This is more than just good manners. The scripture cites several examples of those who worshiped God inappropriately and paid for it with their lives. Read about Uzzah and Nadab and Abihu.

Polite Conversation

Another part of good manners is polite conversation. Your words mark you. First, work hard to remove the slang from your vocabulary. Some have modified unacceptable four-letter words and substitute them routinely in their speech. These words are not acceptable either. Ask friends and family to be your watchdogs if you have a problem with slang. You can have victory in this area.

Include others in your conversation. It's fine to talk about yourself, but demonstrate your concern for others by talking about them too. Shyness shouldn't be an excuse for not getting to know others. At its root, shyness is selfishness. It's being more concerned about your own feelings than you are about the feelings of others.

Ask questions about their hobbies and interests and favorite books and childhood aspirations and future plans. Get to know others by making them feel comfortable in your company. Take genuine interest in their lives and your life will be richer because of what you learn. Make it a point to talk to others around you, even if only briefly.

Be positive and upbeat, even if it requires extraordinary effort. Sometimes if you act as if you are happy and feeling good, before you know it, you will be.

Good Humor

Be careful about your humor. *Saturday Night Live* has marked the last

generation and provides the model for humor. Bad choice! Bedroom humor and bathroom humor have assigned places. And they do not belong in polite company. Don't insult anyone's ethnic group, vocation or gender in your humor. You show your own poor taste when you do. "Whatever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, think on these things," Philippians 4:8 instructs.

Common Sense

Try not to interrupt others in conversation. Patiently wait for their conversation to pause before you horn in on them.

The telephone offers you another opportunity to converse with people. Please try to be polite on the phone as well, thanking people for their assistance, remembering to promptly deliver messages, speaking clearly, introducing yourself when appropriate.

Handling Introductions

Many times, you will be introduced to someone new. Usually, you should practice the Earnest T. Bass response. Remember on *The Andy Griffith Show* when Barney and Andy went to work to teach Earnest T. some manners? His response when introduced was to be, "How do you do, Mrs. Wiley?" That's all you need to know.

Stand up and shake that person's hand, say "how do you do" and do your best to remember the new name. Your hand shake should be firm—not wimpy, but not so forceful as to hurt someone's ring fingers. You don't have to stand up if the person to whom you are introduced is younger than you and of the same gender.

Women, you don't have to stand up when introduced to a man, no matter what his age is, but you should stand when introduced to or when greeting a woman who is older than you. Men, you show respect both for gender and age by standing. Some little old lady will take note if you fail to do so.

Show polite respect to those who speak to you, to those who visit in your church or at your family reunion or wherever you are. That person might put you in his will! Those older friends you make can be your best

ones—they will pray for you and care about you and advise you and invest in you. Learn to appreciate them.

Smile

Use your smile. Keep it polished and available and quick and sincere. Demonstrate your joy on your face. Those who can relate to others outside their own "group" can have the most effectiveness for Christ. If you spot a friend that "never meets a stranger," try to learn his or her secrets and practice them.

Manners Models

The best way to learn good manners is from a model. You should thank the Lord for parents and teachers and friends who modeled polite behavior for you, who intentionally attempted to teach etiquette and manners. You can learn much from observing others.

In fact, you know Someone Who always thought of others first, who practiced the law of kindness with tenderheartedness and brotherly love. He's our model. Oh, you can memorize the etiquette books and dot every "i" and cross every "t" just as they instruct you to, but there is an easier way.

WWJD? Just ask yourself, "how can I live the law of Christ?" How can I prefer others in brotherly love and honor? How can I be sure things are done decently and in order so as to please my Heavenly Father? How can whatever I do or say be done in His name? Ask the Lord to make you conscious and conscientious in this area of your life in order to bring glory and honor to Him. ■



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

Why is there so much misunderstanding about this ordinance?

Feet Washing— Some Do, Some Don't

By Larry Hampton



I am a PK—a preacher's kid. As the youngest of four sons of a Free Will Baptist minister, I grew up in the church. Early on, I discovered that Free Will Baptists believe there are three gospel ordinances—baptism, communion and feet washing. It didn't take me long to figure out that made us a part of a faithful minority.

Long ago, I heard the story of the first feet washing service. Mary Wise-

hart captured that event in the words of her hymn, "Emblems of Thy Condescension."

Once the gracious Lord of glory
Laid His earthly robes aside,
Took a basin filled with water,
On His form a towel tied;
Knelt in tenderness before them,
His humility complete,
And with gentle, kind, compassion
Bathed His own disciples' feet.

The Way Things Are

Although I knew that many denominations did not wash feet, it was not until I was an adult that I realized some Free Will Baptists fail to follow the Lord's example in the Upper Room. This deeply troubled me.

That was 25 years ago. What's the situation today? Do Free Will Baptists believe in feet washing? Officially, yes, we do. Practically, however . . . some

do, some don't. Do Free Will Baptists practice feet washing? Officially, yes, we do. Again, practically . . . some do, some don't.

The fact is, some Free Will Baptists who believe in feet washing doctrinally don't practice feet washing. That is, they believe in the gospel ordinance, but they don't embody the lesson it teaches in their life.

I used to think if Free Will Baptists don't believe in feet washing, they should take it out of the *Treatise*. That is, if they don't believe it is a gospel ordinance to be observed regularly, it should be deleted from our doctrinal statement.

The Obedience Factor

I've even said if Free Will Baptists aren't going to practice feet washing, the ordinance, we should be honest and drop it from our list of denominational distinctives. In other words, put up or shut up.

I've since learned that feet washing is both an ordinance and a way of life. Now I'm more concerned about our failure to follow Christ's selfless example of humble service.

Perhaps you're wondering whether or not I believe in and practice feet washing. Fair question. The answer to both parts of the question is "Yes." Let me explain.

I believe Free Will Baptists are biblically correct in asserting that this is an ordinance. I truly believe that Jesus meant for His followers to perpetuate the practice of washing one another's feet. Very few Christian bodies have done so.

Incidentally, I have friends who don't enjoy washing feet but they do it anyway. That's obedience. All of us are expected to obey the Lord even when we don't want to wash feet.

Yes, I have washed my brothers' feet. I can only remember missing one opportunity to observe this ordinance during my Christian life. Frankly, I have no idea how many pairs of feet I have washed in the nearly four decades I have been a Christian.

I am confident, however, that it is nowhere near the number of people I have criticized for not following the Lord's command or living up to their commitment. (In case you've forgotten, the Free Will Baptist Church

Covenant says, "We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together for . . . the observances of the ordinances of the gospel.")

When We Serve Others

We have also been called to serve our fellowman. Jesus clearly intended for His followers to emulate His example of humble service so graphically depicted in the act of washing His disciples' feet. The Lord of glory filled the role of a common slave that night as He washed the feet of the Twelve.

The funny thing is I kept the ordinance (the letter of the law), but I did not follow its spirit. That is, I washed feet but I didn't wash feet. Alas, I have often missed an opportunity to serve my brothers and sisters. I have failed to wash their feet. I have roamed the roads of life carrying a basin and towel saying, "Here, wash my feet."

All feet washers are not created equal. Interestingly enough, everyone who washes feet doesn't wash feet. Some never observe the ordinance, yet faithfully serve their fellowman. Others never miss an opportunity to wash feet but seek to be served instead of serving others.

I have friends who quietly slip out the back door of the church the first Sunday of every quarter. Although they never take part in feet washing, they regularly wash their brothers' feet. They seize every opportunity to do good to all men. I also know people (besides me) who never miss a feet washing service but who seldom, if ever, render humble service to others.

Who's right? They both are. Who's wrong? They both are.

Just Do It!

Without doubt, Free Will Baptists should preach and practice feet washing. I believe that Jesus meant for us to regularly observe this ordinance. Quarterly? Annually? Take your pick. Just do it!

Free Will Baptists should preach and practice feet washing. The Lord commanded us to serve one another. But we dare not postpone helping others. We must not relegate serving our fellowman to one or two times a year.

You've probably heard the saying, "The one who has the most toys when he dies wins." According to Je-

sus, "The one who has the dirtiest towel when he dies wins."

If I had to choose between the two, I would prefer for Free Will Baptists to care for others and never wash feet as to piously wash each other's feet and ignore the unlimited opportunities for humble service to mankind that surround us.

But that choice need not be made. We must preach and practice feet washing—the ordinance and the way of life. If necessary, hold your nose and close your eyes, but don't stop washing your brother's feet. ■



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

Directory Update

TENNESSEE

Kent Barwick to Loyal Chapel Church, Columbia from Homerville Church, Homerville, GA

WEST VIRGINIA

Tom Blake to Heritage Church, Inwood from Thomas Memorial Church, Huntington

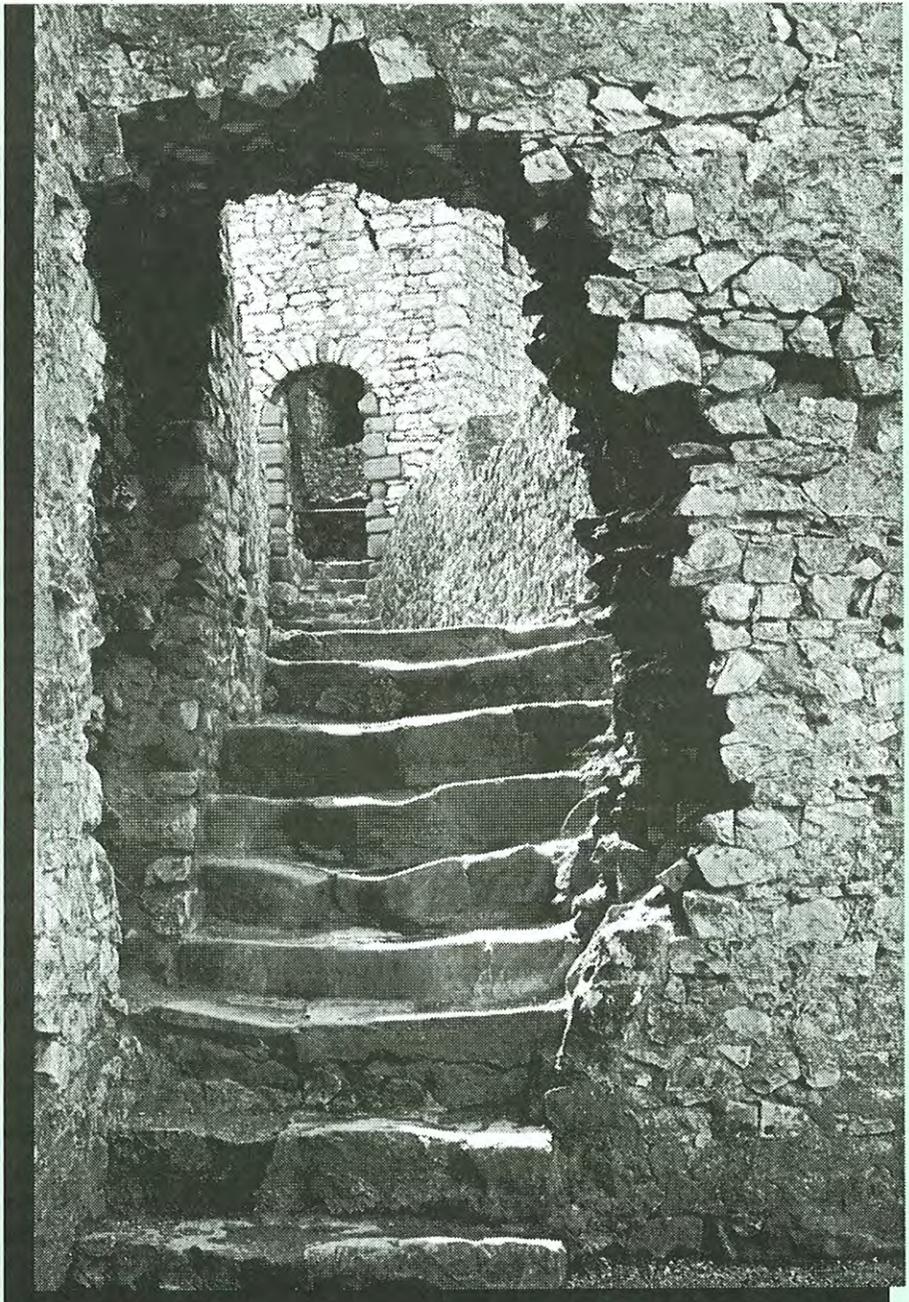
OTHER PERSONNEL

Doug Dickie to Fellowship Church, Bryan, TX, as associate pastor for youth and education
Lange Patrick to Faith Church, Goldsboro, NC, as minister of music from First Church, Gastonia, NC, as minister of music

For almost 2,000 years, one Book has changed people and nations.

The Bible and Church History

By Paul Harrison



Every Sunday we all attend various church services during which Holy Scriptures are opened and presented to us for God's glory and our benefit. Sunday after Sunday, year after year and century after century this has been the case. In fact, this practice is attested to by a second-century church attender named Justin.

We know him as Justin Martyr, for about the year 165, because of his faith in Christ, he was scourged and beheaded. About 15 years before his martyrdom, Justin wrote a letter defending the Christian faith to the Roman Emperor. In this letter he described the church services of his day.

He wrote: "And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place,

and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things" (First Apology, ANF 1:186).

Now I ask you: Why is it that a book should hold such a place of reverence among so many people over so many years? The answer is that this book, the Bible, has been recognized to be a special book, unlike any other. It has been recognized as a message from God.

Amazing Unity

The Bible is special in its unity, its oneness. Now this is an interesting assertion, for the Bible is a compilation

of 66 segments of the most amazing diversity. Its first five sections were penned by Moses around 1450 BC. Its final section was written by the Apostle John, probably around AD 90.

Many Writers

This makes the Bible a document composed over the course of approximately a millennium and a half. Over the centuries some 40 individuals contributed to the collection. Some writers were schooled in the world's great educational institutions, some were humble shepherds. Some held positions in the royal palace, and some were fishermen, considered "unlearned."

Farmers, businessmen, soldiers, kings, a physician, a rabbi—all these

and more contributed to what we call the Bible. This document truly was given to us over "many times and various ways" as Hebrews 1:1 puts it. So you see that when the Bible is referred to as a unified whole, this is a bold assertion.

One Doctrine

But a unified whole it is. It teaches one triune God, one way to Heaven, one standard of holiness, one body of Christ. It is many books and yet one book. Recall that the Books of Moses were dubbed "the Law." Remember that when Jesus gathered the multitudes, He taught them "the word." And this unity has been consistently recognized by the church.

After the various segments of scripture were collected, the fourth-century church father Jerome referred to them as "the divine library." And eventually, the plural term *biblia*, books, came to be viewed as a singular, the Bible, the book.

The great scholar B. F. Westcott noted in 1885 that it is amazing that "annals and prophecies and letters, thus (apparently) casual in their origin, should combine into a whole marvelously complete and symmetrical in its spiritual teaching . . . (p.5).

But I most like the way J. Gresham Machen, this century's renowned Presbyterian theologian referred to the Bible's unity and harmony.

He wrote: "I am tempted to think of the writers of these 66 books as though they were a great orchestra, not composed of poor mechanical strummers but of true musicians, carefully chosen, carefully trained, individual, different, yet contributing by their very differences to the unity of some glorious symphony under a great Director's wand. In that marvelous harmony of Holy Scripture even the least considered parts of the Bible have their place. None could be lacking without offending the great Musician's ear" (*The Christian Faith*, p. 53).

Enduring Relevance

The Bible also displays an enduring practicality. It is important to note this for we might admit to the unity of the scriptures, but think of them as merely addressing unimportant, ir-

relevant themes. Or we might think of it as being of value in the olden days, but no longer relevant to today.

The church over the centuries, however, has recognized the enduring, practical relevance of the Bible. Generation after generation the Bible addresses the important issues of life.

The scriptures have something for everyone. They provide complexities for deep theological investigations and simple truth that children can grasp. Augustine said it this way: The scriptures are deep enough for an elephant to swim in and shallow enough for a lamb to wade.

Salvation Message

The scriptures have shown themselves relevant in that they provide the message that leads to salvation. Paul told young Timothy that the scriptures are "able to make you wise unto salvation."

Every person who has ever been converted has been saved through the message of the Bible. Chapter and verse may not have been cited, but it is only the truth of the scriptures that saves sinners. As has been stated: "The only Jesus we know is the Jesus clothed in words of scripture."

Origen of Alexandria who lived from 185-254 spoke of the scripture's converting power: "As in the case of the fishes that fall into the net, some are found in one part of the net and some in another part, and each at the part at which it was caught, so in the case of those who have come into the net of the Scriptures you would find some caught in the prophetic net; for example, of Isaiah, . . . or of Jeremiah or of Daniel; and others in the net of the law, and others in the gospel net, and some in the apostolic net; for when one is first captured by the Word or seems to be captured, he is taken from some part of the whole net" (ANF 9:420).

Strength for Difficulties

The Bible has shown itself relevant in that it provides strength to endure the difficulties of life. In Constantinople in the fifth century, when a theological fuss sprang up, the sentence of banishment was passed upon Chrysostom, that city's bishop and preacher. It was

agreed to by the Empress Eudoxia, who was the power behind the throne.

The great preacher was forcibly escorted from the city to a waiting boat which took him away. He wrote to a friend of this occasion and revealed what it was that sustained and encouraged him:

"When I was driven from the city, I felt no anxiety, but said to myself: If the empress wishes to banish me, let her do so; 'the earth is the Lord's.' If she wants to have me sawn asunder, I have Isaiah for an example. If she wants me to be drowned in the ocean, I think of Jonah. If I am to be thrown into the fire, the three men in the furnace suffered the same.

"If cast before wild beasts, I remember Daniel in the lion's den. If she wants me to be stoned, I have before me Stephen, the first martyr. If she demands my head, let her do so; John the Baptist shines before me. Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked shall I leave this world."

Behavior Guide

The Bible is relevant in that it offers guidance on appropriate and inappropriate behavior. Is it OK to go to movies and if so, which ones? Is it OK to listen to rock music? And the list goes on and changes with the changing times. These questions are to be answered, not by our family or denominational tradition, but by scripture.

But how can scripture answer such questions when movies didn't even exist in Bible days? We've probably all bumped into the argument that goes like this: "But smoking isn't specifically mentioned in the Bible."

I was amused to find in a document written around the year 200, a reference to this "it's not mentioned in scripture" argument. Tertullian, a kind of second-century ultra-fundamentalist, wrote a Latin piece titled *De Spectaculis* which translates into English as *About the Shows*. It addressed the question of Christians attending the plays, circuses and gladiatorial combats.

Tertullian wrote: ". . . the faith of some . . . demands direct authority from scripture for giving up the shows, and holds out that the matter is a doubtful one, because such ab-



stinence is not clearly and in words imposed upon God's servants. Well, we never find it expressed with the same precision, 'Thou shalt not enter circus or theatre, thou shalt not look on combat or show;' as it is plainly laid down, 'Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery or fraud.'

"But we find that that first word of David bears on this very sort of thing: 'Blessed,' he says, 'is the man who has not gone into the assembly of the impious, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of scorners,'" (ANF 3:80-81).

Life Principles

The church has also found that the Bible is relevant for life in general. It teaches us how to live: How to date, how to marry and how to conduct a marriage. How to earn money, how to spend money and how to give money. How to be friendly, how to make friends and how to keep friends.

The Bible addresses the whole of life with principles which work. The founding fathers of our land knew this, and that's one of the reasons they established thoroughly Christian institutions such as Harvard, William and Mary, Yale, Princeton and Dartmouth.

Remember, John Harvard was a minister. Remember, Jonathan Edwards, America's greatest theologian, was an early student at Yale and later president of Princeton. Remember, upon the seal of Dartmouth are the words "*Vox Clamantis in Deserto*," "The voice of one crying in the wilderness." Our founding fathers knew that the Bible teaches every generation how to live.

Absolute Reliability

The Christian church has honored the Bible because of its unity, its practicality or relevance to life, and because of its reliability. The church over the centuries has recognized that the Bible is "God-breathed," to use Paul's term. To honor the Bible is to honor the God of the Bible. Conversely, to dishonor the Bible is to dishonor God.

In the last couple of centuries, it has become common for the reliability of the scriptures to be assailed.

"The scripture-writers," some say, "were trapped in their respective ages. They were ill-informed, living in prescientific days. Their errors are therefore to be excused, and we are to dig through and behind their deficiencies and find the ethical kernels of truth which they espoused."

Such thinking may have become popular in some circles, but it represents a radical departure from Christian teaching over the centuries. Listen to these testimonies of trust in the scriptures:

Confidence in Scripture

Clement of Rome, writing to Christians in Corinth at the close of the first century, urged them to "Look carefully into the scriptures, which are the true utterances of the Holy Spirit."

Polycarp, the disciple of the Apostle John and second-century martyr, wrote a letter around AD 150 to the church at Philippi. In this letter he made several statements revealing his attitude toward the scriptures. "For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul."

He charged these Philippian Christians: "Wherefore, forsaking the vanity of many, and their false doctrines, let us return to the word which has been handed down to us from the beginning."

Again he writes: "For I trust that ye are well versed in the Sacred Scriptures."

Theophilus, the sixth bishop of Antioch, wrote the following around 170: "But men of God carrying in them a holy spirit and becoming prophets, being inspired and made wise by God, became God-taught, and holy, and righteous" (ANF 2:97).

Also about the year 170 Athenagoras, in his *A Plea for the Christians* written to the Roman Emperor Marcus Aurelius, asserted that the pagan poets and philosophers, sought "each one by his own soul, to try whether he could find out and apprehend the truth But we have . . . prophets, men . . . guided by the Spirit of God."

Athenagoras maintained that God "moved the mouths of the prophets like musical instruments." Continuing his musical analogy, a favorite of his, he explained that the prophets

were "lifted in ecstasy above the natural operations of their minds by the impulses of the Divine Spirit," and they "uttered the things with which they were inspired, the Spirit making use of them as a flute player breathes into a flute" (ANF 2: 132-33).

Beyond the Struggles

From this consistent, steadfast belief in the scriptures which the Fathers maintained, we are not to conclude that they were without their struggles. Augustine illustrates this point. He lived from 354-430 and was perhaps the greatest post-biblical thinker Christianity has known. Yet he wrestled with apparent inconsistencies in the scriptures.

But listen to the conclusion to which years of study led him: "I have learned to yield such respect and honor only to the canonical books of scripture; of these do I most firmly believe that the authors were completely free from error. And if in these writings I am perplexed by anything which appears to me opposed to truth, I do not hesitate to suppose that either the *manuscript is faulty*, or the translator has not caught the meaning of what was said, or I myself have failed to understand it" (quoted in *The Proceedings of the Conference on Biblical Inerrancy: 1987*, p. 33).

Now don't think that I'm merely selecting quotations which prove my point and avoiding those which don't. In surveying church history, one struggles to find those within the church who speak disparagingly of the scriptures. Those who from an alleged Christian position reject the inspiration of the Bible are the new kids on the block. That point is well made by Kirsop Lake, noted Harvard professor.

Fundamental Facts

Lake is no friend to conservative theology, but listen to his admission: "It is a mistake often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology to suppose that fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind; it is a partial and uneducated survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians. How many were there, for instance, in Christian churches in

the 18th century, who doubted the infallible inspiration of all scripture? A few perhaps, but very few.

"No, the fundamentalist may be wrong; I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the *corpus theologicum* of the Church is on the fundamentalist side" (quoted in *Conf. On Bib. Inerrancy*, pp. 33-34).

Mark Noll put it succinctly: "Most Christians in most churches since the founding of Christianity have believed in the inerrancy of the Bible" (in *Conf. On Bib. Inerrancy*, p. 9).

And I should add that an emphasis upon the reliability of the scripture is critical for the Christian enterprise. To undermine God's Word is to undermine His work.

Listen to Mark Noll once again: "It simply is beyond dispute that denom-

inations or other Christian institutions which have denied the full truthfulness of the Bible also have become less concerned about spreading the gospel to the lost, have wavered on the application of God's law to contemporary life, and have temporized on the nature of God, the nature of Christ, and the nature of salvation" (*Conf. On Bib. Inerrancy*, p. 22).

As Christians we must be careful to honor God through our honoring of His Word. We must teach others to do the same. We must not allow anything to supplant the authority of God's Word. We must not make it our goal to preserve our tradition nor to engender loyalty to our tradition, for to do so is to undermine the foundation upon which we seek to build.

We must rather allow the unified, relevant and reliable message of the Bible to sit in judgment upon our tradition. We must do as the theolo-

gians who attended the Council of Nicea in 325 did. As they wrestled with difficult issues, "a copy of the Gospels was placed at the front of the room as a symbol that God speaking through the written Word was to be the final arbiter" (Volz, *Faith and Practice*, p. 23). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Paul Harrison pastors Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee. He is a member of the Commission for Theological Integrity.

Somewhere In Between

By Vern Gunnels

Some years ago while pastoring in California, I spoke to a wealthy business man about his need of the Savior. He replied, "I'm not so sure that I need your God. I have everything I need."

On the other side of that town lived a lady on welfare. She shared her small cluttered apartment with boxes of damaged food containers that she salvaged from dumpsters. One day our talk drifted over into I Timothy 6 concerning contentment and wealth.

She chuckled and remarked, "I'll never have to worry about drowning in foolish and hurtful lusts like the rich folks do, but I sure would like to see what it's like."

Outwardly, I laughed with her, but inwardly I was hurting with the Psalmist who also had a problem with envy (Ps. 73:3). Most pastors can identify with the prophetic words of my unsaved father. He was heartbroken when I dropped accounting and law studies to answer the call to preach, "Son, you're giving up a guaranteed salary of \$100,000 a year. You'll be fortunate to make

\$10,000 as a Baptist preacher."

The Wise Man of Proverbs 30:7-9 implies that the ideal situation is somewhere between riches and poverty. Does that mean the rich man can't serve the Lord? No, unless you care to exclude Abraham, Joseph, David, Solomon and others.

I read in a Birmingham newspaper a few years ago that treasure hunters near New Delhi, India sacrificed a four-year-old boy in their quest for hidden loot. Money won't solve our problems, either.

Take the Wells Fargo guard who walked into the Salt Lake City FBI office with \$50,000 of \$2.5 million stolen from an armored car, confessed and told authorities where the remainder was hidden. Remember, it was the Lord Who said that life was full of purpose in Him—not in things (Luke 12:15; John 10:10).

Jack Eckerd was successful in the retail pharmacy business, ventured into politics, had all a man could want, but in his own words remarked, "I'm still not happy."

After giving his life to Christ, Eckerd

reversed himself with these words, "I have a deep peace that I never had before. That empty feeling has left."

Whenever I think about having a pity party, I'm gently reminded by the Holy Spirit that Jesus had no place to lay His head. I do. He had to borrow a donkey to ride into town. I don't. Hopefully, I will someday learn with Paul what contentment is (Phil. 4:11). Meanwhile, I'm trying to live somewhere in between prosperity and poverty and be thankful (1 Thess. 5:18). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Vernon Gunnels, Jr., pastors Fawn Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Mantachie, Mississippi.

GO AHEAD . . . PLAN AHEAD!

By Jack Williams

"Everyone wants to win on Saturday afternoon, but the guys who do are the ones who practice the other six days of the week," says Harvey McKay quoting his favorite football coach in *Beware the Naked Man Who Offers You His Shirt*. That's why Lou Holtz' football teams usually won; Lou planned ahead.

Some time ago a friend told me about a sermon he wanted to preach titled, "10 Reasons Why I Never Plan Ahead." Here are his top five tongue-in-cheek reasons:

5. I do my best work under pressure.
4. I don't want to give God's work my best efforts.
3. I don't want to appear professional.
2. I enjoy being embarrassed when things go wrong.
1. I want to fail.

What the Bible Says

People who don't plan ahead may develop a guilt complex when they read the Bible. Its pages catalog success stories about those who prepared, and tragedies about those who did not.

Amos warned Israel, "Prepare to meet thy God" (4:12). Jesus told His disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you" (John 14:2).

The 22nd chapter of I Chronicles details David's preparations for the Temple. He planned ahead half a lifetime for a Temple he would never see.

Genesis 41 records Joseph's two seven-year planning cycles in Egypt. Because Joseph planned ahead,

Egypt fed the world (41:57). One of history's greatest long-range planning stories is Noah's 120-year building project in Genesis 6 that saved the world.

Sometimes the Bible contrasts those who plan ahead with those who do not. For instance, the 10 virgins—five wise and five foolish—in Matthew 25. Or the man who built his house on a rock and the man who built on the sand with terrible consequences (Matt. 7:24-27).

Not even Jesus considered launching the New Testament Church without an intensive three and one-half year planning session with His disciples. The Bible champions planning ahead.

The rewards for planning ahead sparkle like crown jewels while the penalties for procrastination stifle dreams. Every preacher dreads stepping into the pulpit Sunday morning with a Saturday Night Special in his Bible.

Sir Arthur Sullivan, composer of the Gilbert and Sullivan operas, oratorios and other music, said: "One day work is hard and another day it is easy, but if I waited for inspiration I should have done nothing."

Why Plan Ahead?

Makes Life Easier

Not planning ahead may seem easy, but it isn't. The inward struggle between "do it now" and "do it later" uses up more energy. He who does

not plan ahead loses his poise rushing to catch up, and is always off balance.

Planning ahead makes life easier for us and for those who work with us. We become a nuisance to family, friends and co-workers if our lack of planning causes them to push harder to take up the slack.

Forms Good Habits

Habits have the reputation of being bad, but they don't have to be. We can form good habits. It was said of Jesus that He went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day "as His custom was" (Luke 4:16). That was a habit, a good one.

Of course habits don't start off as habits. They begin by doing something once. Then twice. Then it becomes a pattern. And finally it's a habit. If you want to start the good habit of planning ahead, do it one time. Then try it again. Before long, it's a comfortable way of approaching life.

A salesman with the habit of making 10 calls a day usually finds himself in position to pick up unexpected business, probably from his rivals who put off approaching difficult prospects.

The Royal Bank of Canada *Monthly Letter* encourages facing life as it comes: "None of us escapes his quota of difficult or disagreeable tasks, and it would be well to learn from the experience of others rather than from our own that they do not fade away by being ignored. Eventually, we have to roll up our sleeves and wade into them."

Remember, it's the vote you don't cast that puts the wrong men in office. The appointment you don't keep that angers the boss. The anniversary you forget that causes war on the home front. It's a good habit to be in the habit of doing what you should when you should.

How to Plan Ahead

Start Small

Don't try to organize the rest of your life today. Try handling the mail in a systematic manner. Lay aside only those letters that need further thought. Handle each piece only once if possible. Toss all you can.

Do you know what made John Havlicek a champion when he played with the Boston Celtics? He did the small things well. He played one game at a time and gave it his best. For 16 seasons Havlicek, known as Mr. Perpetual Motion, never stopped running.

Packed house or empty arena, crucial game or merely finishing out the season, Havlicek gave 100 cents on the dollar. To his hustle he added production, leadership and a performance under pressure that was always steady and sometimes brilliant. John Havlicek became the standard by which other basketball players were measured.

Guard Your Time

Denis Waitley, in his article, "The Joy of Working," makes a telling point: "Time is an equal opportunity employer. Each human being has exactly the same number of hours and minutes every day. Rich people can't buy more hours. Scientists can't invent new minutes. And you can't save time to spend it on another day.

"Even so, time is amazingly fair and forgiving. No matter how much time you've wasted in the past, you still have an entire tomorrow. Success depends upon using it wisely—by planning and setting priorities. The fact is, time is worth more than money, and by killing time, we are killing our own chances for success."

Control your time. If you don't, somebody else will. Schedule your time. Jot down the jobs you must do or would like to do. Estimate the time needed for each. Number them in or-

der of importance to you. Then start with number one.

The only way to avoid the feeling of marking time, of beating with frustration at an unseen barrier, is to schedule your time. Concentrate on one job until it's done. Do the little things when you should and the big things won't seem nearly so threatening.

Face Your Fears

James Kouzes said, "The real struggle for leadership is internal."

Consider Jim Whittaker, the first American to climb Mt. Everest. Whittaker said, "You never conquer a mountain. Mountains can't be conquered. You conquer yourself—your hopes, your fears."

Most of us fail to plan ahead because we're afraid of something inside ourselves. Some are afraid of success. Others fear they'll fail. But there's a world of difference in failing 10 times and considering yourself a failure. Go ahead; give yourself permission to fail. Get that monkey off your back. Then learn from the failure.

Control Yourself

Napoleon Hill said in his book, *Think and Grow Rich*, that self-control is an important part of leadership. "The man who cannot control himself, can never control others."

This is a critical principle in planning ahead. Everything rises or falls right here. The Bible is clear that "he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty and he who rules his spirit than he who takes a city" (Prov. 16:32).

Self-leadership, giving direction and control to one's own actions, is the most fundamental sort of planning. The Bible tells us: "Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls" (Prov. 25:28).

Focus on the Future

It's an old saw, but a good one, "If you don't care where you're going, any road will take you there." Fuzzy goals usually produce fuzzy results.

The *Christian Leadership Letter* said that planning is trying to write future history. We are future-oriented beings. We plan on the basis of what we have perceived in the past, but we

try to project this understanding into the future.

The unexpected and the unpredictable will always throw us off balance. Planning ahead wipes some of the mist off the window of the future and reduces the number and the impact of the surprises.

Planning ahead is an arrow pointing to what we hope to do, be and accomplish. Planning is a process that must be re-evaluated and changed. Planning allows us to drive on one road, and still keep an eye on the road map and the bigger picture. Planning ahead takes time. But not as much time as *not* planning ahead!

Conclusion

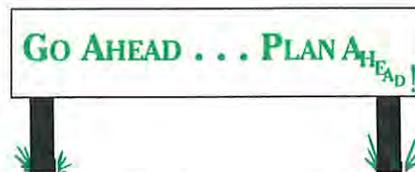
One of my favorite stories comes from *Aesop's Fables*, titled "The Horse and His Rider." A young man who fancied himself something of a horseman mounted a horse which had not been properly broken in, and was difficult to control. No sooner did the horse feel his weight on the saddle than he bolted, and nothing would stop him.

A friend of the rider's met him in the road in his headlong career and called out, "Where are you off to in such a hurry?"

To which the rider, pointing to the horse, replied, "I've no idea: ask him."

That's exactly what happens to us when we don't plan ahead. We step aboard the crisis of the moment and soon find ourselves whisked away at great speed we know not where.

The final word is that we either make plans or we make excuses. And as Benjamin Franklin said, "I never knew a man who was good at making excuses who was good at anything else." ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Jack Williams is editor of *Contact* magazine. When Jack plans ahead like he should, *Contact* gets published 12 times a year.

What a teenage girl taught a Texas boy about race.

Racial Preference

By Kerry Gandy

The other day I was talking to a minister who had been chastised by a member of his church because racial preference was being ignored. I was saddened that so many in our society and even within the ranks of Free Will Baptists are not only prejudiced but somewhat proud of it.

As a young boy, I grew up in an area that was widely segregated. On one side of town you had one race of people, and on the other side you had another. My town had three sections—Black, Spanish and White. I grew up with all types of slangs or names to pin on a certain type people that I felt did not fit into my way of thinking. I never considered myself prejudiced and thought everyone was this way until a girl named Janet Farr started attending our school.

From day one Janet was popular, pretty and nice. I don't mean the typical nice, but she was sincerely nice to everyone—black, brown, yellow or white—it did not matter to her. Later, I started dating Janet and really liked her except for one thing.

I could not understand why she talked with those of a different race or class of people. I mean really talk, not just the niceties such as "Hi, bye or excuse me." I found out that racial preference meant nothing to her, which blew this young West Texas boy's mind.

As I thought back about this young girl and her willingness to treat everyone with honor, respect and dignity, I wondered why as a society we can not do the same, especially if we call ourselves Christians. After all to be a Christian is to be Christlike. And Christ was far from prejudiced. Time and time again, one can see Christ breaking the preference barriers that society had set up as a norm.

In the Gospel according to Matthew, He started a relationship with a



tax collector. People didn't like tax collectors. Most religious people wanted to have nothing to do with them.

Certainly the Pharisees would have nothing to do with him. In a way you can understand that, for they were the guardians of the faith so to speak. If it hadn't been for the Pharisees, faith might have been destroyed (or so they thought). The Pharisees studied the Law. They preserved the Law. Even more importantly, they kept the Law to the best of their ability.

Therefore, they kept their distance from Matthew. In their eyes, he was the worst kind of person. Now the Pharisees weren't bad people. They just lacked compassion like so many religious people.

Matthew was just one of those individuals who did not fit into the preference society had deemed acceptable. But he was not the only one.

There was Mary Magdalene. You know what was said about her. Then there were Simon and Andrew and James and John. They were definitely common (*unpolished, unsophisticated, coarse, countrified, crude, boorish, loutish*) type folk.

Then there was Nathaniel or sometimes called Bartholomew. He made the unpleasant remark about Jesus' home town: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

And, of course, there was Thomas. We know him as "the doubter." What about Simon the Zealot? Most of us would have a hard time with this man, but not Jesus.

Then there was Judas Iscariot. What is sad is that most of us would probably have considered Judas the most promising of the group.

Jesus forgot the preferences and looked for something of value in everyone He met. Because of that, He gave people hope, and with His help they were able to change.

Perhaps we need to look at ourselves as a denomination and examine our preferences. For there may be some people who may feel shut out and unwelcome in our churches. Maybe because of their economic status or their skin color. We may need to ask ourselves a question, "Who are we here for anyway?"

There are people all around us that we need to reach, forgetting our preferences, remembering who we really are, "sinners saved by grace," not race.

One more word about that young girl named Janet who sent our school into culture shock by her acts of kindness. I never completely figured her out, but I did learn something from her. I learned that people are people regardless of what they look like on the outside. That was more than 20 years ago, and I am still thankful for the lesson Janet taught me . . . especially since she is now my wife.

And, yes, I am still trying to figure her out! ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Kerry R. Gandy pastors Rolling Oaks Free Will Baptist Church in Maumelle, Arkansas.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Hillsdale Launches Adult Degree Program

MOORE, OK—In November 1998, Hillsdale FWB College started a new degree program that allows adults to complete a bachelor's degree in Adult Bible and Leadership Education in as little as 22 months. The ABLE degree completion program is designed for adults who have completed their first two years of college but who have not completed their bachelor's degree, according to Carl Cheshier, president of the college.

"The ABLE Program is a non-traditional program. Students attend classes one night per week, four hours each night," according to President Cheshier. "A typical three semester hour course will last five weeks. This is possible because the classes are designed for the student who learns the material through independent study and preparation of assignments for class. The class follows a seminar approach with students actively participating in discussion."

The degree offered through this new program is a Bachelor of Arts in Leadership and Ministry. Presi-

dent Cheshier said that Hillsdale FWB College selected this major "because it fits best with the mission of the college. Students finishing this degree will grow significantly in their Christian lives, be further prepared for ministry in local churches and develop leadership skills that enhance employment opportunities."

Dr. Kenneth Oosting, a nationally recognized authority on adult education and degree completion programs, is working with the college to establish the program. According to Dr. Oosting, "Adults have a clearer focus on what they need, a higher desire to attain what they want and are more likely to see how a college degree will directly benefit them. Adults are also more disciplined and the subjects they are studying have immediate value and application to their lives, churches and work. Many are feeling pressure from employers to gain greater knowledge, to achieve deeper understanding, and to have a college degree as well."

In this program, students will be enrolled in small groups, usually 15 to 20 people. These groups will stay together throughout the entire 22-month period.

"This group process results in strong bonding between students, enhancing the desire to learn with others in the group. Students draw upon the work, travel and personal experiences of each other as much as from the course material in many cases," Dr. Oosting stated. "As a result, nearly 90 percent will complete their degrees, compared with only about 40 to 45 percent of college students in traditional programs."

The first cohort of students began their ABLE studies in November. A second group began in February, another will begin in April, and others will be announced at a later date.

For more information about the ABLE Degree Completion Program, contact the ABLE Office at Hillsdale FWB College: phone (405) 912-9020, fax (405) 912-9044, or e-mail at ABLE@hc.edu.

Southeastern Sets Get Acquainted Days

WENDELL, NC—The spring Get Acquainted Days at Southeastern FWB College get under way April 1-3, according to school officials. The event is open to students in grades 10, 11 and 12.

Registrations should be received at the college by March 25. The cost is \$20 per student.

For additional information, call the college's toll-free number: 1-888-847-3922.

New Church Purchases Five Acres

GLEN ALLEN, VA—Members of newly-organized Glen Allen FWB Church in Virginia's Tidewater Association completed their first two years of existence by purchasing five acres adjacent to I-295 and a proposed housing development, according to founding pastor Dan Merkh. The group plans to build a 98-seat auditorium with six classrooms and nursery by this summer.

Since October 1996, the budding congregation met in local homes, then rented the historic Glen Allen Elementary School. They celebrated homecoming in September 1998 with 54 people attending.

During their first year, members gave \$97,000 to the church and paid cash for two acres. They budgeted \$70,000 for their second year.

Members secured an architect

to draw a three-phase building program. The \$125,000 first phase with the 98-seat auditorium began this spring. The second phase will include a 250-seat auditorium, paved parking and more. The third phase, planned for later, may include a fellowship hall.

Retiring pastor Dan Merkh praised the blue-collar congrega-

tion for its unity and spirit of cooperation. Sixty-one people attended services on November 29, Reverend Merkh's final service.

The congregation has called former home missionary Vergel Maness as pastor. After Reverend Maness agreed to lead the church, he put his Philadelphia (PA) home up for sale. It sold in one hour.



Sixty-one people attend services at Glen Allen FWB Church on November 29, 1998.

Instrumental Ensemble to Perform at Convention

ANTIOCH, TN—The all-volunteer instrumental ensemble will perform in July at the 63rd annual Free Will Baptist National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, according to instrumental director Chris Truett.

The ensemble will accompany congregational singing each night (except Sunday) at the Atlanta Civic Center, Mr. Truett said. Ensemble participants will practice Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at 7:00 a.m. The rehearsals will be conducted on stage in the civic center.

Truett said, "We are inviting anyone from ninth grade up to participate in the instrumental ensemble. We would like to have more adults in the group. Last year was a success, and we want to expand the group this year."

Those who wish to participate in the ensemble must notify Mr. Truett by June 1. Musicians should complete the form below and mail to:

**Bethel FWB Church
Attention: Chris Truett
1936 Banks School Road
Kinston, NC 28504
252/522-2451**

Music will be mailed by Mr. Truett to each instrumentalist who responds by June 1.

1999 Instrumental Ensemble

Name _____

Address _____

Phone (____) _____

Work Phone (____) _____

E-mail address _____

Instrument(s) _____

Years' Experience _____

Have you played in this ensemble before? When? _____

Name of your church and the city in which the church is located: _____

Preaching To Highlight Southeastern's Camp Meeting '99

WENDELL, NC—The annual spring Camp Meeting at Southeastern FWB College will feature 10 sermons by ten preachers, plus two presentations by Dr. David Gibbs of the Christian Law Associates. President Billy Bevan said, "This is not a how-to-do-it conference. It is a time of challenge and encouragement."

The April 12-14 Camp Meeting '99 will also feature extensive special music, including guest musicians, the Reggie Saddler Family. The college choir will give a mini-concert Tuesday evening which will be followed by a dedication service for the new building.

In addition to Dr. Gibbs, other speakers for the meeting include: Dann Patrick (Faith FWB Church, Goldsboro, NC), Randy Cox (former president of Southeastern College), Steve Byrd (Berean Baptist Church, Fayetteville, NC), Ronnie Adkins (First FWB Church, Erwin, TN), Clyde Perry (Fellowship Tabernacle FWB Church, Cincinnati, OH), Greg Floors (Crossroads FWB Church, White Lake, MI), Johnny Pike (vice-president of Southeastern), and three preacher boys enrolled at the college.

THE TOGETHER WAY

May 1998

Receipts:

State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 700.99	\$.00	\$ 700.99	\$ 6,232.84	\$.00	\$ 6,232.84
Arizona	1,323.14	216.30	1,539.44	4,164.43	810.60	4,975.03
Arkansas	57,553.75	12,416.11	69,969.86	201,643.66	180,968.29	382,611.95
California	.00	1,233.08	1,233.08	.00	13,841.35	13,841.35
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	393.51	5,000.00	5,393.51	668.72	19,999.98	20,668.70
Georgia	23,963.78	2,567.16	26,530.94	242,002.67	24,323.39	266,326.06
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	7,789.40	2,515.02	10,304.42	101,515.01	26,536.46	128,051.47
Indiana	2,066.52	236.36	2,302.88	12,679.32	2,957.76	15,637.08
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	624.00	2,896.81	3,520.81
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	200.00	74.63	274.63
Kentucky	1,926.76	473.38	2,400.14	13,022.09	6,098.61	19,120.70
Louisiana	20.00	.00	20.00	110.00	10.00	120.00
Maryland	.00	112.50	112.50	.00	3,092.25	3,092.25
Michigan	25,580.90	2,779.81	28,360.71	251,645.91	33,059.04	284,704.95
Mississippi	9,185.78	512.02	9,697.80	179,956.79	6,567.79	186,524.58
Missouri	44,833.51	11,063.13	55,896.64	474,827.71	103,830.41	578,658.12
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	100.00	100.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	97.00	18.50	115.50	10,359.59	503.81	10,863.40
North Carolina	299.52	628.29	927.81	17,635.91	14,225.68	31,861.59
Ohio	19,171.90	2,701.35	21,873.25	127,051.20	31,632.35	158,683.55
Oklahoma	40,826.74	7,732.24	48,558.98	591,141.16	109,499.35	700,640.51
South Carolina	31,749.83	.00	31,749.83	498,001.40	1,005.89	499,007.29
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	2,597.86	1,321.37	3,919.23	134,666.88	19,370.13	154,037.01
Texas	5,989.10	443.96	6,433.06	77,914.29	5,245.63	83,159.92
Virginia	687.44	.00	687.44	8,560.29	175.00	8,735.29
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	3,719.23	78.72	3,797.95	34,357.65	1,116.10	35,473.75
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Africa	.00	.00	.00	12,960.00	.00	12,960.00
Canada	.00	.00	.00	2,434.16	91.44	2,525.60
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	80.75	264.13	344.88
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(0.06)	(0.06)	180.00	.61	180.61
Totals	\$280,476.66	\$52,049.24	\$332,525.90	\$3,004,636.43	\$608,297.49	\$3,612,933.92

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,468.08	\$ 23,422.20	\$ 24,890.28	\$ 36,680.05	\$273,733.63	\$ 310,413.68
Foreign Missions	170,947.14	6,584.24	177,531.38	1,758,589.14	76,949.58	1,835,538.72
FWBBC	13,823.75	6,584.24	20,407.99	245,940.89	76,949.58	322,890.47
Home Missions	84,484.75	5,152.86	89,637.61	824,074.15	60,221.42	884,295.57
Retirement & Insurance	270.99	4,007.80	4,278.79	6,654.14	46,838.93	53,493.07
Master's Men	906.16	4,007.80	4,913.96	8,734.39	46,838.93	55,573.32
Com. for Theo. Integrity	75.88	143.12	219.00	635.44	1,672.88	2,308.32
FWB Foundation	176.62	1,717.62	1,894.24	5,254.24	20,073.90	25,328.14
Historical Commission	55.30	143.12	198.42	374.95	1,672.88	2,047.83
Music Commission	33.98	143.12	177.10	378.07	1,672.88	2,050.95
Media Commission	47.08	143.12	190.20	3,073.57	1,672.88	4,746.45
Hillsdale FWB College	1,517.00	.00	1,517.00	17,627.04	.00	17,627.04
Other	6,669.93	.00	6,669.93	96,620.36	.00	96,620.36
Totals	\$280,476.66	\$52,049.24	\$332,525.90	\$3,004,636.43	\$608,297.49	\$3,612,933.92

1999 State Association Meetings

State	Date & Time	Place & Address	State	Date & Time	Place & Address
Alabama	Starts: Nov. 11, 9:30 am Closes: Nov. 12, 7:00 pm	Lighthouse FWB Church 3560 Bell Road Montgomery, AL 36116	Mexico	Starts: August 6 Closes: August 8	El Uro Camp Monterrey, Mexico
Arizona District	Starts: March 13, 10:00 am Closes: March 13, 3:00 pm	First FWB Church 2565 East 18th Street Tucson, AZ 85716	Michigan	Starts: May 14, 7:00 pm Closes: May 15, 4:00 pm	Wolverine District (Church selected later)
Arkansas	Starts: August 4, 7:30 pm Closes: August 5, 9:00 pm	Cavanaugh FWB Church 2825 Grinnell Fort Smith, AR 72903	Mississippi	Starts: Nov. 5, 9:00 am Closes: Nov. 6, Noon	First FWB Church 2412 East Upper Drive Pearl, MS 39208
Atlantic Canada District	Starts: June 24, 7:30 pm Closes: June 26, 7:00 pm	Camp Jacob P. O. Box 855, Hartland N.B., Canada E7P 3K4	Missouri	Starts: June 7, 7:30 pm Closes: June 9, Evening	Kenneth E. Cowan Civic Center Lebanon, MO
California	Starts: May 13, 7:30 pm Closes: May 15, Noon	California Christian College 4881 East University Ave. Fresno, CA 93703	New Jersey District	Starts: March 19, 7:00 pm Closes: March 20, Noon	Centeron FWB Church 110 Dealtown Road Pittsgrove, NJ 08318
Colorado District	Starts: May 15 Closes: May 15	Harvest FWB Church 7465 Horseshoe Road Colorado Springs, CO 80922	New Mexico District	Starts: April 9, 1:30 pm Closes: April 10, 4:00 pm	First United FWB Church 601 East Skelly Hobbs, NM 88240
Florida	Starts: May 5 Closes: May 8	Holiday Inn Convention Center 350 International Speedway Blvd. Deland, FL 32724 904/738-5200	North Carolina	Starts: June 7, 10:00 am Closes: June 8, Noon	First Marion FWB Church 250 Baldwin Avenue Marion, NC 28752
Georgia	Starts: Nov. 18, 7:00 pm Closes: Nov. 20, noon	First FWB Church 88 Eldridge Street Metter, GA 30439	Northeast District	Starts: Nov. 12, 4:00 pm Closes: Nov. 13, Noon	Manomet FWB Mission Star Road, Box 741 Manomet, MA 02345
Idaho	Starts: May 15, 7:00 pm Closes: May 15	First FWB Church 3957 Pershing Drive Boise, ID 83705-2927	Northwest District	Starts: May 14, 7:30 pm Closes: May 15, Noon	First FWB Church 1390 45th Avenue Northeast Salem, OR 97301-2003
Illinois	Starts: March 19, 9:00 am Closes: March 20, 3:00 pm	Bethel FWB Church 1417 Herbert Street South Roxana, IL 62087	Ohio	Starts: June 25, 9:00 am Closes: June 26, Noon	Heritage Temple FWB Church 2295 South High Street Columbus, OH 43207
Indiana	Starts: June 18, 7:00 pm Closes: June 19, 3:00 pm	First Bible FWB Church 2302 Spring Street New Castle, IN 47362	Oklahoma	Starts: October 11, 7:30 pm Closes: October 14, Noon	First FWB Church 2601 24th Avenue Southeast Norman, OK 73071
Kansas	Starts: June 10, 7:30 pm Closes: June 12, Noon	First FWB Church 3900 Shunga Drive Topeka, KS 66614	South Carolina	Starts: February 25, 9:30 am Closes: February 26, 3:00 pm	New Life FWB Church 1622 Springdale Road Lancaster, SC 29720
Kentucky	Starts: June 18, 7:30 pm Closes: June 19, 4:00 pm	Betsy Lane FWB Church P. O. Box 410 Betsy Lane, KY 41605	Tennessee	Starts: November 8, 7:30 pm Closes: November 10, Noon	Oak Grove FWB Church 2400 Old Tusculum Road Greeneville, TN 37743
Louisiana District	Starts: January 16, 10:00 am Closes: January 16	New Hope FWB Mission 827 Frenaux Avenue Slidell, LA 70458	Texas	Starts: June 9, 7:00 pm Closes: June 11, Noon	Lakehills FWB Church 1590 Cypress Creek Road Cedar Park, TX 78613
Maryland	Starts: June 24, 7:00 pm Closes: June 26, Noon	Meadow Brook FWB Church P. O. Box 153 Middletown, VA 22645	Virginia	Starts: June 17, 7:00 pm Closes: June 18, 9:30 pm	Shiloh FWB Church 21503 Benhams Road Bristol, VA 24202
			West Virginia	Starts: June 11, 9:30 am Closes: June 12, 3:00 pm	Loudendale FWB Church Route 2, Box 275-B Charleston, WV 25314

CURRENTLY . . .

Retired Home Missions director **Roy Thomas** conducted 31 revivals and missionary conferences in 1998. In December he began serving as interim pastor at **Mile High FWB Church in Northglenn, CO.**

Two hundred members of **Bethany FWB Church in Broken Arrow, OK,** participated in six performances of the Living Christmas Tree. Officials estimate that more than 2,000 people attended the musical extravaganza with at least five conversions reported. **Scott Bullman** directed the musical. Pastor **Randy Wilson** reports that 37 family units joined the church in 1998.

After emergency surgery saved his life 10 months ago, Pastor **Robert Hilde** returned to the pulpit at **Christ Fellowship FWB Church in Tulsa, OK,** with a new problem to overcome. He had to learn to talk again after surgeons clipped the nerves that controlled his left vocal cord. He also suffered some memory loss and must be more restrained in his delivery.

Something's stirring at **Victory FWB Church in Goldsboro, NC.** After having been lived in for 20 years, members sold the church parsonage and made other arrangements for Pastor **Randy Graham.** The church purchased a new Ford van to replace their nine-year-old van. A special clergy appreciation day recognized five active and retired ministers who are members of the congregation.

Construction has been completed on a new fellowship hall at **Rescue FWB Church in Whittington, IL,** according to reporter **Deborah Kniffen.** That also includes sidewalks, landscaping and inside access to the church. At press time, the church was without a pastor.

Missionary pastor **David Potete** said that **Northwest FWB Church in Chicago, IL,** made a bid on two church buildings which are up for sale. The congregation has been meeting in rented facilities. Potete said that eight Lutheran church buildings in Northwest Chicago were for sale.

Members of **Lowery FWB Church in Twin Oaks, OK,** dedicated the 6,000-square-foot Brian Snell Building, according to Pastor **Doug Carey.** The new addition houses Sunday School classrooms, seating for 250 and a fully-equipped kitchen. The church, which averages 200 for worship, also paid off a 10-year mortgage in one year.

Valley FWB Church in West Jordan, Utah, has witnessed 49 conversions in two years, according to missionary pastor **Bill Phillips.** The church operates a daycare and has 40 members.

The new fellowship hall at **First FWB Church in Park Hills, MO,** includes a library, conference room, nursery and staff offices. **Ken Dodson** pastors.

Members of **Lyons FWB Church in Lyons, GA,** celebrated 30 years of service. Former pastor **Mance Cason** preached. A plaque recognizing the 43 charter members was unveiled by Pastor **Rick Wilson.** A new steeple was also erected. Seven ministers have answered the call to preach from the membership.

For the past 56 years, **L. S. Anthony** has been an ordained Free Will Baptist minister. He has pastored **Wilson Chapel FWB Church in Thomaston, GA,** for 33 years. The 80-year-old pastor reports eight converts at the church.

Pastor **Larry Williams** at **Peace FWB Church in Martinez, GA,** now has a renovated office with newly-installed bookshelves. He also has a new shirt and tie and gift certificate for dinner. Deacon **Jessie Bowman** said that was the church's way to honor their pastor.

Twenty-four local people joined with 16 guests for an attendance of 40 at the new mission work in **Monroe, LA,** according to member **Ricky Gross.** **Rue Dell Smith** leads the congregation.

Pastor **Jimmy Rozier** baptized 12 converts at **First FWB Church in Warner Robins, GA.** The congregation renovated the parsonage and secured a bus to assist in church growth outreach.

Pastor **Dwayne Broad** baptized nine converts at **Holmesville FWB**

Church in New Brunswick, Canada. A few weeks later, the church scheduled a revival with Evangelist **Bobby Jackson** to keep the spiritual momentum.

Pastor **Howard R. Pruitt,** 73, died last August. He was ordained to preach in 1956. The last six years of his ministry, he pastored **Harmony FWB Church in Mountain Home, AR.** He served in the U. S. Army during World War II. Arkansas promotional director **David Joslin** said, "Brother Howard was certainly a man of God, intensely loyal to Free Will Baptists."

Every conversion is special, and none more so than **Joseph Voldrich** who attends **New Hope FWB Mission in Slidell, LA.** Brother Voldrich is a Czech-Armenian concert pianist and free-lance writer. He is 87. **Norman Richards** pastors.

When **Ruth Wheeler** died a year ago, she still remembered **Heritage Temple FWB Church in Ashland, KY,** where she was a member. Pastor **Tim York** said that Sister Wheeler left \$125,000 to the church in her estate. Through her gift, the church was able to burn the mortgage and become debt-free.

Pastor **Tom Hunt** and members of **Tri-Cities FWB Church in Kennewick, WA,** hope to move into their 130-seat sanctuary by late spring. The mission work was looking for friends to help purchase new pews for the sanctuary. Cost: \$750 per pew.

Heritage Temple FWB Church in Columbus, OH, celebrated 45 years of service. The church has built and moved four times. Their present building hosts the Ohio State Association each June. **Billy Sharpston** pastors.

Members of **Piney Grove FWB Church in Guin, AL,** purchased a 1998 Dodge van for Home Missionary **Fred Jones.** **Randy Wright** pastors. The mission work in **Prattville** put the new van on the community streets immediately and reported nine riders the first Sunday. ■



RANDALL HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

What Growing Churches Have in Common

By Alton Loveless

Some programs always surface among growing churches. They have studied and know the demographics of their area and prepare for them.

Nursery

Much emphasis is placed on clean nurseries. One researcher said the Buster age group (which is the largest childbearing age group) would more likely return to a church because of the cleanliness of the nursery worker rather than denominational name or doctrine of the church.

Evangelistic

Growing churches have people who totally believe those without Christ are lost unless they reach them. They know they make a difference. They have learned these facts about assimilation and the changes over the last 40 years:

1. 60% of those visiting their church come with little or no understanding of the church doctrine. While 40 years ago some 90% rejoined a church of their denomination.
2. There are 50% less people coming in the car today than the 4.2 in a car 40 years ago.
3. Churches lose 10% of their worshipers each year compared to 5% four decades ago.
4. A church must keep 16% of its first-time guests to grow 5% yearly.
5. Growing churches keep 85% of first-time visitors—if they attend two Sundays consecutively. They are aware that friendliness and the potential for growth are the two key factors for the guest's return.
6. Those who become active in church do so within 12 months of their first attending.
7. Newcomers must have at least seven friends within six months of their first attendance.
8. To grow 50 new members means you will need to have 300 guests attend this year.
9. Visitors do not like to be called visitors because it alienates them. They prefer guest.
10. The guest will probably not fill out the visitor form. They are searching and would like to make up their own mind.
11. Growing churches know that a newcomer will have to have at least seven contacts within the first six months or they will not stay. Also, newcomers will not stay if they are not active between the seventh and twelfth months in the church.

Worship Style

Most growing churches have a simple, less formal style of worship. Their services are warm and friendly.

Enrollment

One of the greatest outreaches by churches

growing through Sunday School is enrolling area people to attend Bible studies in their church. Sunday School Bible studies can be one of the best ways to reach the unsaved. Most church growth researchers know that new people are hard to assimilate into classes that are over two years old. This indicates that classes of that age and beyond are closed to the outsider.

Therefore, churches that are growing with new people start new classes every two years which include 20% of their new people. At least one of every five classes should have been started in the past two years.

Relationships

These churches have learned that all needs are built around met needs. Therefore, they place a lot of importance on building new friendships. Newcomers enter a church looking for three key elements of life: Friends, a place to belong, and for ministry.

New classes generally develop loving friendships, group identity and a place for service. One research showed the value of friendship evangelism. It revealed that 85% of people led to the Lord by a friend stay in church, while 77% of those who drop out of church were led to the Lord by a stranger.

Family

Great churches are aware of changes in family units. They are aware that by the year 2000 half the American population will be single, that divorce is increasing yearly and that half of all adults under 30 will have lived with a partner before marriage. They are attempting to meet the multiple family that numbers more than 35 million step-parents. Ten percent of all under age 18 live with a step- or single parent.

Adults

Since there are 192 million adults in the U.S., programs are being created to reach the entire family by reaching the adults. One new frontier for the church is the 20-40 age group, the most unreached group in America.

Sixty-six percent of this age remains unmarried. Of the older church crowd, it is estimated that one of seven have multiple church homes and that loyalty is less than it was 40 years ago.



FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Reaffirming Our Accreditation

By James H. Cox, Jr. Ph. D.
Director of Institutional Effectiveness

Free Will Baptist Bible College has enjoyed regional accreditation since 1996 and Bible college accreditation since 1958. Since initial accreditation with SACS is for only five years, this year begins the reaffirmation process, again opening the college up to two external groups who will evaluate our programs, faculty and students.

It is not an easy thing to allow someone else to analyze and evaluate one's personnel, processes, and products. However, the people who will be looking at this institution are not just ordinary folks. They are people with a great deal of experience and expertise in higher education. They will not attempt to change our mission, but will evaluate us based on our own mission statement, just as some of us do when we serve on similar committees visiting other colleges. You see, we do not know everything there is to know about educating students. Their suggestions and recommendations will serve to strengthen the college and help us improve our educational programs.

This is the process.

We begin with a self-study that involves everyone at the college. Several internal committees are formed to examine and evaluate different areas of responsibility. We certainly analyze the educational programs, faculty preparation, and the quality of our graduates.

Once our own people analyze our programs and decide what improvements or changes we should make (if any), a report goes to the accrediting body. A committee appointed by the accrediting body, made up of seasoned veterans from similar colleges outside the State of Tennessee, will review the self-study report and other documents we provide. Next, they will visit our campus and see whether we are accurate in our assessment of the College. Their function is to determine whether our performance meets the criteria of the accrediting body.

I keep saying "accrediting body." Actually, two bodies accredit us: the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges (AABC) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS, the oldest regional accrediting association in the country). At present, we meet or exceed the standards of both. The Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges has extended our accreditation

until the year 2000 so that one self-study will suffice for both accrediting associations. Thus, AABC will visit us in the fall of 2000 and SACS will come in the spring of 2001.

The reaffirmation of accreditation should be in effect for 10 years before another cycle begins. Beyond the accrediting of FWBBC by these accrediting associations, we also will be visited by the Tennessee Department of Education. They approve our Teacher Education Program.

FWBBC is committed to excellence in education and in preparation for ministry and leadership.

What does all of this mean?

It means that our students (and their parents) can rest assured about the quality of the education at FWBBC. They can be sure that it is an institution of academic excellence.

- It means they can transfer credits received here to another institution, if they so desire.
- It means that they can get into graduate school more easily.
- It means that other states will recognize their teaching credentials.
- It means that the accrediting association puts its reputation behind our programs and that our programs meet demanding standards of academic excellence.
- It means that a degree earned here is worth more, in most situations, than a degree earned at an unaccredited institution.

The *primary beneficiaries* of all of this effort are our students. What a disappointment it would be to spend years at an institution, only to find that you could not get into graduate school or get a particular job because the degree was not acceptable! What a disappointment when a teacher certification department denies someone's credentials! And the list goes on. Graduates of FWBBC are assured that their work will be recognized!

We reaffirm our commitment to our mission to "prepare men and women, through Bible-based education, to serve Christ and His church." We are here as Free Will Baptists serving Free Will Baptists. We believe that we are serving the Lord by providing the best educational opportunities possible among Free Will Baptists for Christian students, 'til Jesus comes! ■



FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

Financial Dilemmas of a Spouse's Death

By Frank Giunta

When Mrs. Margaret's physician husband died, she experienced the dilemma of sorting through their finances.

Her husband left her with a number of excellent investments, but sorting out all the details was a difficult experience. She made several trips to the bank to check the papers in their safety deposit box and went through their desk for "official" papers.

She read for hours and frequently went to bed exhausted. If only her husband had taken the time to expose her to their business affairs. Instead, now she had to learn the hard way, and quickly at that.

After many days of checking and sorting, she was able to understand most of their current finances; then came the matter of how to handle it all in the future.

For the most part Mrs. Margaret decided to take a hands-on approach though she also sought legal counsel. Her investments would be handled by a professional financial management counselor, and she would receive quarterly income. She would pay her own bills, at least for the present time, and her attorney would draft her living trust and her pour-over will. She felt ready for a night of rest. But during that night she recalled how she and her husband had talked of doing something special for

the Lord's work.

She had talked to her attorney and investment counselor that very week about a building that her husband had purchased 30 years ago. It was presently used as a warehouse; managing it was more than she wanted to handle. Yet, if she sold it, capital gains taxes would consume a large portion of the sale.

She called me. I told her the benefits of a Charitable Remainder Trust. Through the Free Will Baptist Foundation, she could sell the building and circumvent capital gains taxes. This would preserve the entire value of the property, which would be placed in a Charitable Remainder Trust and provide a sizeable tax deduction for her that could be used over six tax periods. It would also provide her with income for life. At her death the entire principal would go to establish an endowment program in honor of her husband for two of their favorite Free Will Baptist charities.

Mrs. Margaret would sleep well that night. Her financial dilemma was under control now.

If you are searching for solutions to your special needs, it may well be that the Free Will Baptist Foundation can assist you.

You may contact us at P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, Tennessee 37011-5002 or you may call Mr. Frank Giunta direct at 573-335-6240. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



HOME MISSIONS



A Foretaste Of Heaven

By Ida Lewis, Publications Editor

We had one of those mountain top experiences in December when history was made in the Home Missions Board meeting at the national offices. Six Korean and two Russian ministers were approved as home missionaries.

The Home Missions Department is spearheading the Free Will Baptist Cross-Cultural Ministry, and the response has been phenomenal. The denomination is reaching out to the world at home as different groups come under the home missions umbrella in church planting. One year ago our first Korean Free Will Baptist minister, Dr. Paul Park, was approved to coordinate planting Korean Free Will Baptist churches throughout the United States. We are already seeing the fruits of his labor of love.

But back to that December mountain-top Wednesday mentioned in the opening paragraph. For several weeks excitement built as we anticipated a time of fellowship with newly-appointed missionaries, Home Missions Board members and staff, and members of the California State Home Missions Board. Some 40 people attended.

Cross-Cultural missionary, Carlos Rubio, pastor of an Hispanic Free Will Baptist church in Nashville, along with members of his church, agreed to cook an authentic Mexican meal. The ambiance was set with colorful Spanish deco-

rations and music.

At the appointed hour, board members and newly-appointed missionaries came into the room where the meal would be served. What a sight to see the shining faces of Korean and Russian pastors. Only one Russian pastor and two Korean pastors speak English.

A prayer was given to thank the Lord for how He had shown His love and guidance throughout the meetings, and for the meal. Then came the time for personal testimonies.

The new missionaries, with interpreters, shared their testimonies and their goals for planting Free Will Baptist churches and winning the lost to Christ. With an expanding Hispanic ministry already in place, we were now witnessing the beginning of Free Will Baptist ministries for the Russian and Korean people right here in the United States. In spite of the language barrier, it was clearly evident that these men truly loved the Lord.

And, then revival broke out! People began singing "How Great Thou Art," in their own language. The melody was the same, the words sounded different, but it was obvious that all knew the same Lord. Tears streamed down the faces of many who were present. Russia, Korea, Mexico and America (including one Native American) were all represented . . . all together praising the Lord.

The song, "Sweet, Sweet Spirit," expresses what happened on the ninth day of December in the year of our Lord, 1998. One verse reads, "There's a sweet, sweet Spirit in this place, And I know that it's the Spirit of the Lord. There are sweet expressions on each face, And I know they feel the presence of the Lord." Amens and shouts and tears of joy abounded, and then a hush fell over the room as each person worshiped in his own way.

The new missionaries have already begun their individual Free Will Baptist churches and their new ministries are well underway. There is a large Russian and Korean population in California, and seven missionaries are establishing Free Will Baptist churches there. One Korean pastor has started a church in the Tidewater Virginia, area where there are about 8,000 Koreans.

Please continue to pray as the Home Missions work moves forward all across our country. ■



Home Missions Board, California Home Missions Board,
Korean missionaries, Russian missionaries.



Garnett Reid

Great Is His Faithfulness

Faith flourishes where it is least expected," author Philip Yancey reminds us. Like Nathanael Hawthorne's wild rosebush blooming beside the doleful prison wall in *The Scarlet Letter*, seeds of faithfulness survive in the most unlikely of soils under the most adverse conditions.

This month we observe faithfulness on display during a time in Israel when unbelief and disloyalty plagued the nation. The Judges period, roughly 1350 to 1050 B. C., revealed God's people at their worst; they turned away from God to idolatry and immorality. The book of Judges closes with a familiar refrain typical of the day: "There was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

Despite the prevailing lack of loyalty, however, God kept His promise to bless people who were loyal to Him. His faithfulness resonated in the lives of three individuals—Ruth, Naomi and Boaz—who modeled covenant loyalty at a time when most Israelites did not. Four major scenes in the book of Ruth contribute to the development of its story line: God's loving faithfulness (*hesed*) finds its counterpart in the lives of those who submit to Him.

The first scene in chapter one finds Naomi, an Israelite, in a foreign country trying to cope with the deaths of her husband and her two sons. Who could blame her if she had questioned God's faithfulness because of her loss? Instead, Naomi affirmed God's constant care as she prayed for her daughters-in-law to experience God's *hesed* (1:8-9).

Even in her despair, Naomi recognized the "hand of the LORD" at work (1:13, 21). This testimony to divine loyalty found its complementary human expression in Ruth's pledge of loyalty to her mother-in-law. Remarkably, Ruth, a Moabite, went so far as

to confess her loyalty to Yahweh ("the LORD"), Israel's God (1:16-17).

In scene two, God faithfully provided for Ruth and Naomi back in Bethlehem through a wealthy kinsman named Boaz. This man graciously looked after the needs of the two women (2:8-9, 14-18), acknowledging that behind all of this favor was the rich blessing of the Lord Himself (2:12). Once again, the text notes Ruth's loyalty in seeking refuge under His wings (2:11-12).

The major dramatic question of the book remains unresolved, however, as the third scene opens. Naomi sought a permanent place of "rest" or security for Ruth found only in the bond of marriage. Ruth boldly carried out the unorthodox plan of her mother-in-law in chapter three by presenting herself to Boaz as a potential bride.

Ruth's risk found great reward as Boaz welcomed her proposal; God again showed Himself faithful by opening the heart of this "kinsman redeemer" (*goel*) to provide for Ruth and Naomi. Boaz commended Ruth for her loyal love (*hesed*) in selflessly seeking the best solution to her problem, a solution close at hand and in keeping with Mosaic law (3:10-11).

Scene four finds the final twist in the plot resolved when a nearer kinsman refused his option to marry Ruth, enabling Boaz to fulfill his role as "redeemer." God had answered Naomi's first prayer (1:8-9) by showing Himself to be her faithful provider. Indeed, "blessed be the LORD" (4:14) Who not only gave Ruth and Naomi a boy named Obed but also gave Obed a grandson named David and all of us a redeemer named Jesus.

A quick glance at history affirms the principle that God's faithfulness shows up just when it is most needed and least expected. During the bleak closing years of the Middle

Ages, God favored His church with shining lights of loyalty such as Wycliffe, Hus and Nicholas of Lyra.

One of the darkest chapters of United States history, the Civil War, witnessed an unprecedented spread of the gospel. Fanny Crosby wrote her first gospel hymn and D. L. Moody entered the ministry in the midst of those terrible war years. The tyranny of Hitler, Stalin and Mao could not extinguish the flame of God's faithfulness to bless His persecuted flock during the dark days of the Third Reich and the Cold War.

G. K. Chesterton remarks, "One sees great things from the valley, only small things from the peak." No wonder those valleys show us just how great God's faithfulness really is. ■

**COMING
NEXT
MONTH**

➤ **Convention
Housing Form**

➤ **Convention
Pre-Registration
Form**

➤ **The Dawn Prayer**

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PREACHERS



Dennis Wiggs

Taxes

The young preacher must learn early in the ministry how to satisfy the Internal Revenue Service. Specific rules apply to ministers and churches. Both should be careful to abide by the rules for testimony's sake and for obedience to the law.

When the pastor understands the financial aspects of the ministry, he can reduce the risk of an IRS audit. I recommend purchasing the *Ministers Tax Guide* from Worth Tax and Financial Service. Follow that guide exactly as presented. B. J. Worth also conducts seminars in several states each year. Contact this service at 219/267-4687 for information.

File Income Taxes Properly

The minister must establish proper procedures for filing his taxes. First, the pastor is considered by the Internal Revenue Service to be an employee of the church. The church treasurer is expected to provide the pastor with a Form W-2 at the end of each year of just the actual salary. Housing and auto allowances and most other allowances should not be included in this form. If the minister does not spend all of one or more of those allowances, he should report that as income in his personal income tax reporting.

The minister must report his salary in the quarterly Form 941. Also, the minister is responsible to pay the 15.3% FICA taxes. Calculate this on Schedule SE and pay this tax when the Form 1040 is filed.

Church Withhold Taxes

The church treasurer or bookkeeper may withhold a sufficient amount from the pastor's salary to cover federal and state income taxes, plus enough for the self-employment tax-

es. These amounts withheld must be reported to the proper agencies and on time. A young preacher may hesitate discussing these matters with a church treasurer, especially if he is the only church employee.

That is why it would be wise to purchase B. J. Worth's book every year, mark clearly the information that the church must do, and then share it with the treasurer or bookkeeper. The records are not as complicated as they may appear to a dedicated, volunteer church treasurer. The young preacher must explain the forms carefully and kindly.

Read Financial Guidelines

The young preacher would profit greatly by reading the material on his financial responsibilities to the government. You may want to call 1-800/328-6124 and ask for the October 1998 issue of *The Calling*, produced by Minnesota Life. The company will send this magazine quarterly to you. It contains valuable information for the minister and his finances.

Understand Clergy Compensation

Besides the salary provided by the church, I trust that your pastorate provides other benefits, such as medical insurance, auto allowance, housing provision and ministry allowances. An accountable expense reimbursement plan would provide documented expenses. If documented correctly, reimbursed expenses do not have to be reported for tax purposes.

The preacher should write down auto expenses, hospitality expenses, depreciation on personally-owned office equipment, subscriptions, books, long-distance phone calls for the church or ministry, etc. The IRS provides reasonable methods for these

expenses to be documented that the young preacher should follow.

My Salary is Small!

Yes, most ministers that I know do not receive adequate pay. Nor are they reimbursed for the time and energy expended on behalf of the church. That is why the young preacher and his family must stretch every dollar as far as possible. A workable budget, a satisfactory bookkeeping system and an adequate plan of paying taxes are essential. I challenge you to start today. April 15 is just a few weeks away. ■

Moving?

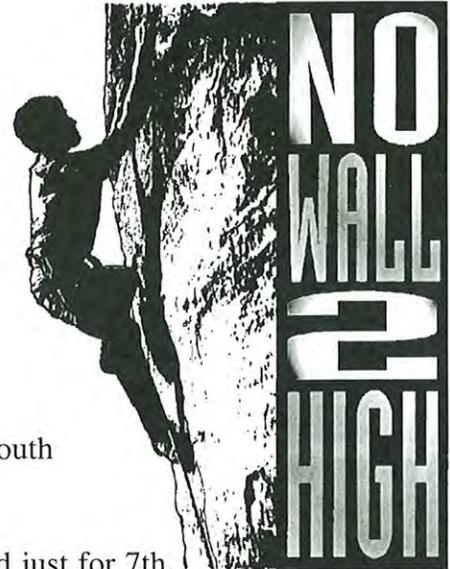
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E-mail: dari@nafwb.org

Thank You!

YOUTH UPDATE

T&P²



Perhaps you've heard of Truth & Peace or even the National Youth Conference, but what about T&P²?

T&P² is a junior-high student leadership conference, designed just for 7th, 8th and 9th grade Free Will Baptist students. The extended weekend program will challenge students to scale the walls which are placed in their way by Satan and our society.

First they'll be equipped with the proper climbing gear (Bible study, prayer, devotions, quiet time, etc.). The next step is identifying the walls of temptation, peer pressure, jealousy, and a host of others and finding the best way to use their gear to scale the walls.

Spread throughout the conference will be numerous opportunities to create new friendships, mold teams into fine-tuned machines, and laugh a lot.

Using powerful, intense speakers and challenging activities, we'll help your junior-higher to see that there is No Wall Too High!

March 18-21, 1999
Camp Beaverfork
Conway, Arkansas

March 25-28, 1999
Camp Hope
Ewing, Illinois

Conference Registration is only \$79. Call 1-800-877-7030 for a brochure.

Conducted by the Youth Ministries Division.

The Rich Single Life

By Andrew Farmer

(Gaithersburg MD: PDI Communications, 1998, 181 pp., paperback, \$8.99).

Single adults are an important part of the ministry of many churches today. One reason for this is that the number of single people is increasing. More men and women are waiting until later in life to marry; some never marry. The large number of divorces in our society has dramatically increased the number of singles.

Many single adults are seeking a relationship with God; they constitute a large body of potential believers. They also are a source of potential workers. Many single people have time and financial resources which they can devote to the Lord's work if they are encouraged to do so.

The church cannot, however, take single people for granted. Single people have special needs, and the church must be prepared to minister to them in an effective way. This book is one resource which churches can use in the development of a singles ministry.

The author is not single. He is a married pastor with four children. He does have many years of experience in ministering to singles in a local church context.

First and foremost, the message of this book is that singleness is something positive not something negative. Even though singles live in a society that emphasizes marriage, they can find happiness, contentment and a relationship with God. They

can make great contributions to society and to the church.

The first portion of the book examines some of the biblical materials on singleness. It devotes particular attention to Paul's teachings in I Corinthians. Apparently the Corinthian church was divided in its opinion of single people. Some viewed singles as weird or strange. Others suggested that serious believers should abandon their marriage relationships in order to devote all their time and energy to serving the Lord. As Farmer correctly notes, Paul rejected both positions.

According to the author, Paul wrote "That marriage is not the 'superior' state, nor is it a concession to those without the 'superior' gift of celibacy. Singleness is neither the highest form of spirituality nor the unfortunate status of the unmarried." Rather, Paul challenges both the married and the single to serve God in their present situations.

Singles have some advantages in the service of God. Since they often have fewer family responsibilities than married people, they can devote more of their time and energy to the work of God.

Farmer explains, "This 'undivided devotion to the Lord' is the essence of biblical identity for the single adult. It is rooted in the sovereignty of a God who places people in appropriate situations for the best possible reasons."



Thomas Marberry

Later portions of the book give single people a great deal of practical counsel and guidance about how to find meaning and purpose in life. The author devotes considerable attention to current trends in society and how these trends have affected single people.

The final section of the book confronts several important issues. One of these is holiness. All people, whether married or single, face sexual temptations. The author examines how single people can maintain their sexual purity in the midst of an impure world.

It also deals with the issue of preparing for marriage. The author recognizes that most single people will marry at some time in their lives. He gives sound practical advice on how singles should view marriage and how they should prepare for it.

This book is designed primarily to be read by single adults. It calls attention to important biblical passages and helps readers understand singleness from a biblical perspective. This work contains much valuable information for those who minister to singles and with singles in a local church situation. Many married Christians don't really understand what it means to be single. No book can help us understand everything about being single, but this book can help. I recommend it. ■

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Free Will Baptist National Convention

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

Muslims Burn Churches

LAGOS, NIGERIA (EP)—Some 70 Nigerian churches have been vandalized and burned during the last 12 months by the Muslim Igbirras, and conflict between Christian and Muslim ethnic groups continues to escalate, reports the Evangelical Church of West Africa (ECWA). The conflict between the Muslim Igbirras and the Christian Basas allegedly began as a result of government political policies that favored Muslims over Christians.

Muslim political leaders were appointed over predominately Christian areas, public funds were used to build mosques on government property, Christian religious instruction was prevented in schools but Islamic religious teaching was allowed, and Muslims dominated the media. Violent clashes that began in November 1997 have resulted in thousands of deaths.

Cult Admits Abuses

NEW YORK, NY (EP)—The Hare Krishna cult has admitted that emotional, physical and sexual abuse was once common in its boarding schools for children, the *New York Times* reported. The parents of the children were unaware of the abuse, which was often perpetrated while they were away raising funds for the cult, according to the report. A group of 10 former pupils first confronted the cult's leadership about the abuse in 1996.

Christian School Students Touch a King

FARMINGTON, MN (EP)—It's not unusual for students at a Christian school to learn about the King of Kings, Jesus Christ. But last September students at Christian Life School in rural Farmington, Minnesota, learned about another king—King Hussein of Jordan.

Hussein was receiving cancer treatments at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., not far from Farmington. A parent from the school called the principal and suggested that Hussein's presence created an opportunity for learning and for service. Teachers in the school shared some geography and history with the students, teaching them about Jordan, and suggested that students send an encouraging letter to the King during his rehabilitation.

"They really picked up on it," says Lori Frey, administrator at the school. "I was in a fifth grade class during prayer time, and each of the children was praying for him. There were some really touching letters and cards. Last year we had two families in our school who lost mothers through cancer—it really makes you conscious of it."

Hussein's wife is an American woman and a Christian, and Hussein has often met with Christian leaders. He has also turned a royal palace into an orphanage for children. "We know he's received the letters and cards," adds Frey. "We called the hotel to make sure they knew what was coming."

Survey Asks Americans to Describe Ideal Church

VENTURA, CA (EP)—A century ago there wasn't a lot of question about where Americans would attend church. Most people went to the same church as their parents, which was the same church their grandparents had attended. Church shopping was an unknown practice. People changed churches only when they moved, when the church went through a split, or when you entered a "mixed marriage"—meaning people from two different churches married and had to choose one or the other to attend.

Today America is a society of choice and competition, and church loyalty is a casualty. More than one out of seven adults change their church each year,

and another one out of six attend a carefully chosen handful of selected churches on a rotating basis rather than sticking with the same church week after week. While Americans are religious people and church remains an important aspect of life for tens of millions of people, there is less concern about "brand loyalty" to churches than there used to be.

In a new survey the Barna Research Group asked American churchgoers what qualities they would look for if they moved to a different community and were seeking a church to attend. Of the 22 factors tested, six proved to be of great importance to people, three others were of moderate importance, and the remaining 13 were of lesser importance.

The top three factors were the beliefs and doctrine of the church, how much the people in the church seem to care about each other, and the quality of the sermons. A majority of churchgoers listed each of these factors as "extremely important."

The other three items that are the highest priority for church shoppers are friendliness to visitors, involvement in serving the poor and disadvantaged, and the quality of programs and classes for children. Roughly 45 percent of adult churchgoers identified each of these elements as "extremely important."

How much the person liked the pastor, the denominational affiliation of the church, and the quality of the adult Sunday School classes were of only moderate importance. About one-third of the respondents deemed the first two of those factors to be "extremely important," while one-quarter ranked the quality of adult classes at that same level of importance.

Qualities deemed relatively unimportant in the survey include worship music, convenience, comfort, small groups and the identity of others who attend. ■

Computers Killed Here

A blood-curdling scream from my editorial assistant announced a death in the office. I rushed past the copier and coffee pot expecting to view the remains of her computer as Marilyn moaned, "It crashed. It crashed."

A quick glance confirmed nothing out of place, except Marilyn. Have mercy. I never saw a woman so out of sync and discombobulated. The look she gave her computer could peel paint off a John Deere tractor.

"They told me you couldn't crash Windows NT," she hissed. "They lied."

Trying my best to be sensitive, and having survived several car crashes and understanding the wreckage that occurs in such events, I cheerily counseled her, "Don't worry. Your computer hasn't crashed. It looks just fine to me."

No, she didn't say one bad word, other than, "Men!"

I've since learned that computer crashes differ from car crashes. One includes grinding, brake-squealing collisions that litter the interstate with skid marks and broken glass. The other occurs without a sound, except for operator screams as a month's work disappears down some electronic black hole.

Crash your car, and a policeman helps sort through the wreckage and assess blame. But crash your computer on the information highway, and the only guy who stops speaks in gigabytes and tells you what you already know, "Wow, Man! You've got a major problem here. I'd junk this puppy and buy a [mega-whatever model] with upgrade capability."

Computers enjoy a fast tion, but nobody really trusts them. They make you work twice as hard to accomplish the same task.

Take the much-ballyhooed desk-

top publishing revolution that promised to bring control over the entire print process into the office, bypassing professional typesetters, graphic artists and design experts. The revolution delivered what it promised. And more.

What the DTP (that's computer-ese for desktop publishing) revolutionaries neglected to say was that *somebody* still had to set type and design the art. Thanks to DTP, we now do all the work that outsource pros once did, in addition to editing and proofing and other stuff that gets magazines in the mail.

Do we have more control? Sure. Do we have the same quality level we got from paid experts? Let's put it this way: As good as Michael Jordan was, how do you think the Chicago Bulls would have fared against the New York Knicks if Jordan had played all five starting positions by himself? And what about all those out-of-work, homeless graphic artists?

Meanwhile, let me encourage you to rush right out and buy that top-of-the-line computer with overdrive and power windows. By the time you unpack this latest gizmo, it will be obsolete. And if not obsolete, certainly incompatible with those tricky upgrades that go on sale next week for \$499 a pop.

The Y2K scare is just another pothole on the information highway to computer wizards who understand that Y2K is nothing more than another expensive upgrade. The same wonderful folks who invented the Y2K nightmare also created the Mac vs. PC barrier. The tower of Babel is alive and well.

On the plus side, the internet opens new doors for us all. Where else can a 9-year-old researching turtles have the entire Library of Con-



Jack Williams

gress at his fingertips? Of course, the 9-year-old could care less about the Library of Congress. All he really wants to do is find 500 words he can pronounce that his teacher will like.

Truckloads of information do not equal knowledge. Until somebody organizes it all, it's just unbaled facts and theories warehoused on a hard drive.

And let's not confuse knowledge with wisdom. Knowledge means you have a zillion facts at your disposal. Wisdom means you know precisely which of these zillion facts presented with the right tone of voice can get you out the front door for a night of bowling with the guys.

I'm surrounded by computers. Six of them lurk within 30 feet of where I'm writing, and they're all sissies and cowards. Let thunder boom three counties away and every computer in South Nashville goes into cardiac arrest, flips channels and threatens to blue-screen.

I prefer books. They don't crash and can be operated with one hand. They also do not give you carpal tunnel syndrome, plus you can drop one on a spider and it will still work. Try that with your turbo-charged Pentium II.

Computers are like cats. They tolerate you as long as you cater to their every whim and let them sit on your lap. You *have* heard of laptop computers?

Do I use a computer? Of course. The YLP8.5x11 model is my favorite. For the computer illiterate, that's the standard-size yellow legal pad. Did I just hear another scream from Marilyn's office? ■

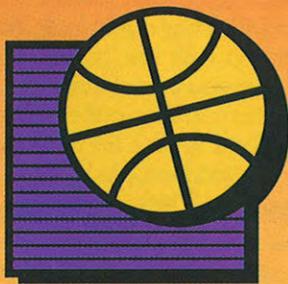
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