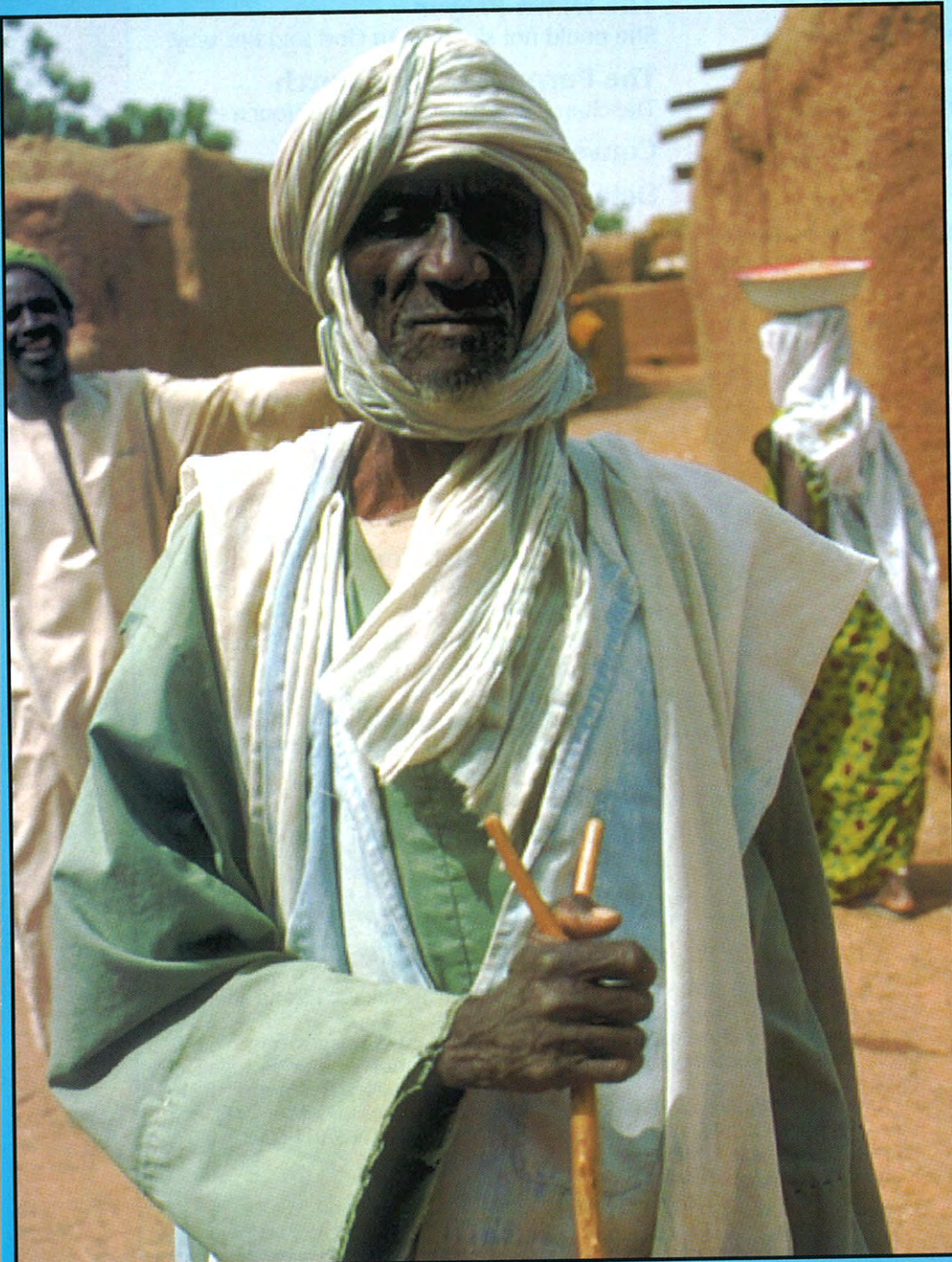


APRIL 1999

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS



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**ILLOGICAL
FAITH**
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**Out of My
Comfort Zone**
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Dawn Prayer
.....

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**The Problem
with Jesus**

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APRIL 1999

VOLUME 46, NO. 4

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Melvin Worthington

Greatest in the Group

Volumes of information have been produced in recent years on leadership. One noted researcher says that the greatest need in church today is leadership. We often hear that nothing rises above leadership, that everything rises or falls on leadership.

While reading the Gospels, it occurred to me that we need a precise biblical definition of leadership. What a surprise when I checked the concordance and could not find the term *leadership*. What I discovered was that the terms *leader* and *leaders* are found just three times each in the Bible.

How strange that the church is obsessed with conferences and seminars on leadership when the term is not mentioned in the Bible. We have lost the biblical focus while being enamored with the world's focus on leadership. In order to make the emphasis on leadership palatable to the church, we have prefaced leadership teaching with "servant"—thus calling biblical leadership servant leadership.

The terms *servant* and *servants* occur over 900 times in the Bible, about 450 times each. These terms describe those who labor for the Lord.

The Concept

On one occasion Christ's disciples discussed among themselves which one of them should be the greatest. They wanted to know who would be the most important. Jesus confronted the disciples' concept of greatness and challenged their *secular concept* about greatness.

Lenski argues, "Then with all calmness he gives the explanation they all

need. They are misconceiving his kingdom entirely and following a wrong principle in regard to greatness in his kingdom. They are degrading it to the level of a pagan kingdom."

Christ confirms the *scriptural concept*. He declares, "... but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant," (Matt. 20:26-27).

The Contrast

God's kingdom is not like any other. Jesus contrasts the Gentiles' concept of greatness with His own when He says, "... Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you ..." (Matt. 20:25-26).

Lenski says, "He points out what we all know, that heathen rulers of all kinds come down on their subjects with their lordship and thus maintain their high positions; come down on them with authority and

thus maintain their superiority The point is that only in this way, by coming down heavily on others, are they able to achieve the height of lordship and greatness in the world."

Jesus emphasizes that the chief and great among God's people are those who serve. This standard for greatness is different from the world. It also seems to be incompatible, inconsistent, impossible, implausible and just plain contradictory. The world's concept of greatness has to do with money, land, servants, rank and earthly power. Christ's concept of greatness focuses on giving, not receiving.

The Christ

Jesus reminds us that just as He came not to be ministered unto but to minister and give His life a ransom for others, so His servants ought to serve one another. He admonishes us to walk in His steps, following His model.

Ryle, quoting Quesnel, says, "The greatest prelate in the Church is he who is most conformable to the example of Christ, by humility, charity, and continual attendance on his flock, and who looks on himself as a servant to the children of God."

We need to reject the secular concept of greatness and refocus on the biblical concept. This will bring about a renewed emphasis on servanthood. Rather than talking about leadership or a great leader, we will communicate the biblical principle of servanthood. Throughout the pages of the scriptures, those who labored for the Lord were addressed as "servants of God." We are not church bosses; we are church servants. That's God's way. ■

The Secretary's Schedule

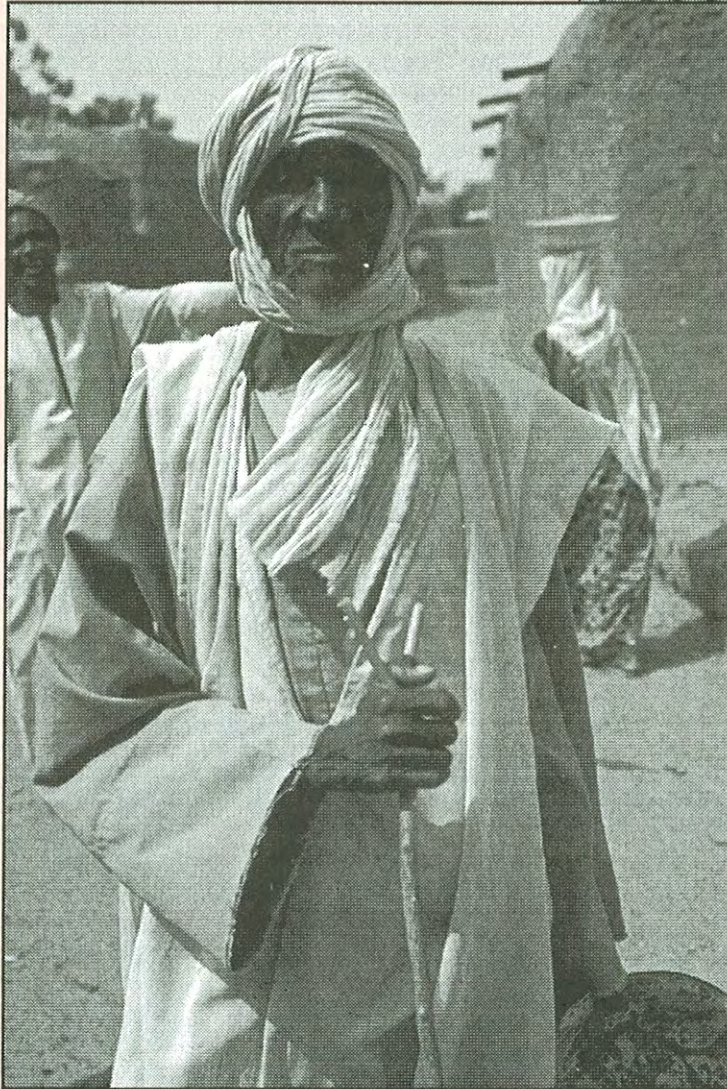
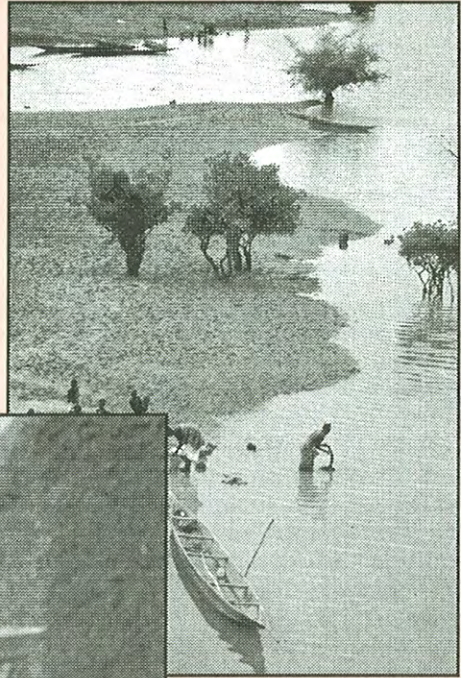
April 1999

- 9-10 Evangelism Conference
Northport, AL
- 11-14 Southwest FWB Church
Southern Oaks FWB Church
Oklahoma City, OK
- 25 High Point FWB Church
Lancaster, SC (a.m.)
First FWB Church
Gastonia, NC (p.m.)

Illogical Faith

By Roy Merritt

**"Ha-ha-ha!" the locals mocked.
"What a Christian you are! You
pray for people and they die!"**



Botias dropped out of school after sixth grade. The years rolled over. Winters followed the rains. Summers returned. There was no church in Botias' village, but preachers visited the village and he pondered their messages.

"I want to learn how to preach," he told his wife. He walked 20 miles to the best preacher he could think of—Bicycle Sianjina. "Teach me to preach!" he demanded.

"Hey, fellow," Bicycle said, "this is planting season. Wait until after harvest."

"I'll help you plow. Teach me as we walk behind the oxen."

Botias stayed three months in Bicycle's village. He turned the fields, planted, fertilized and weeded. And listened! When the holy fire kindled,

then blazed, he knew the time had come to return home.

When he reached his village, he gathered the people. A new congregation began under a central tree in his village. Some folk liked Botias' devotion and fervor. Most did not. He refused to honor the ancestral spirits. This angered

traditional tribesmen. When two of Botias' children died, animists found an opening to challenge his careless ways, and they pounced on him.

"You see? Your forefathers have punished you! Honor them before they bring bad luck to us as well!"

"I trust Jesus," Botias said. "You need to trust Him too."

"Who stays in that new hut?" Botias asked as he cycled through a nearby village one morning.

"Just one of Father's distant cousins. He lived at Chikankata Leper Colony for years. Now he's come home to die."

Botias pushed his bicycle toward the hut.

"Hey!"

Botias stopped and looked back over his shoulder.

"Don't go there. He has leprosy!"

Botias ignored the warning and marched toward the hut.

"You gonna die, man!"

Botias kept walking. Already he could smell a problem. The hovel stank like an overflowing latrine.

"Don't be a fool. You think Jesus will protect you from leprosy?"

"He does whatever He wishes," Botias said. "If Jesus walked here, He would visit this *mudaala*—this old man."

The grass wall made a good place to lean his bike. Botias took a deep breath and held it as he ducked under the low thatch. He peered through the door and retched when he saw the old man's condition. Nobody had helped the leper to the bush to relieve himself. Feces smeared the withered body. Urine soaked his shabby clothing and tattered blanket.

What a vile way to die, Botias thought. *I need a hoe and plenty of soap.*

He scraped the hut clean and buried the filth. While he heated water to bathe the old man, he walked to the river, a sliver of soap in his pocket. He knelt on a stone at the water's edge and began to scrub the old man's rags.

Then he walked back to bathe the old man. There wasn't much to wash. His skin stretched tight over his frame. Veins stood out on his arms and scalp. He was just a black skeleton. As Botias rubbed soap over the fingerless hands, he felt scales and scabs beneath his fingers. He scrubbed the toeless feet and worked Vaseline into the cracked heels.

Children chattered. Botias looked up from his work. A nervous group toted a food bowl toward the hut. The youngsters crouched at the door and scooted a dented enamel dish across the sandy floor into the hut. The children scampered away, giggling.

Those kids are the only company the old fellow has all day, Botias realized.

He lifted the old man's head and helped him sip warm gruel. "Jesus loves you!" he said. "You are not too old or sick to pray." He began to sing. "*Izuba talibbili*"—"Night never comes to heaven," he crooned and rocked the frail body in his arms.

Supper over, he opened his Bible and read aloud—page after page, until the aged man slept.

Botias served the old man every day after that. Every day they prayed, and Botias read and sang.

One afternoon the old leper's fingerless paw scraped at Botias' arm. "Baptize me," he said. "Baptize me now, little brother. I want to be with Jesus."

"Of course, *mudaala*. You honor me."

Botias rose to his knees. He shoved his sturdy arms under the slight body and lifted. The burden was not great. He carried the old man to the stream, well below the pool where people drew their water. *People do not like washed-off sins in their drinking water*, Botias knew. He wanted no criticism about that.

He waded into the chilly pool, the leper in his arms. There he knelt, easing the old man into the water until all but his trembly head lay beneath the lily pads. Botias pronounced the sacred blessing, then dipped the old man's head. As he gasped from the water, still in Botias' arms, the newborn ancient grinned up at the young man, exposing all three of his snaggly teeth.

"Thank you, young brother," he quavered. "Now I am ready."

Back at the hut, Botias towed the scrawny body. He covered the leper with a blanket, and rose to go.

"Pray for me, young man. Pray for me," the quavering voice wheezed. Was that the sparkle of tears in his eyes?

"What would you have me say?"

"I am ready to die now," the old man whispered. "I don't want to

wait. Pray that Jesus will take me home. Pray that He will take me home—*right now*."

Botias just stood there a moment, speechless. He choked, then cleared his throat. Kneeling beside his friend, he spoke the request the old man coveted. After a quiet moment he rose, stooped under the low doorpost and mounted his bicycle.

Next morning, Botias found the old man dead.

"Ha-ha-ha!" the locals mocked. "What a Christian you are! You pray for people and they die! Ha-ha-ha! You will soon die of the same disease, you silly fool."

Botias hefted his hoe—the same hoe he had used to clean the floor. Perhaps those who taunted him thought he might strike at them. Instead he turned his back on them, found a decent grave site, and began to hammer the earth. The same strong arms that had buried the old man in water the day before now laid him in God's earth. The same embers that once boiled the old man's soup served now to incinerate his shack.

Job done, Botias dusted his hands and swung a leg over the saddle of his cycle. As he cranked the pedals toward home, he began to sing, "*Izuba talibbili* . . ."

Forty years have passed since then. On his deathbed, Botias gave instructions for his own funeral. "Weep if you wish," he said. "But don't wail like people who have no hope. When you put my body in the ground, I want you to sing '*Izuba talibbili*.' When you start to sing that hymn, I will leave you and enter the gates of heaven." ■

ABOUT THE WRITER: Roy Merritt was born of American missionary parents in Zambia. Educated in the United States, he returned to Zambia, where he has taught in a mission secondary school for the past 25 years. He preaches regularly in village churches in the area.

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Knocked Out of My Comfort Zone

By Stanley K. Konopinski

Comfort Comfort Comfort
Zone Zone Zone
Comfort Comfort Comfort
Zone Zone Zone
Comfort Comfort Comfort

The day was November 2. I had just arrived home from a day of working as Explosives Inspector for the United States Air Force when I noticed that my wife had left me a message instructing me to call the director of the Oklahoma City Rescue Mission. After contacting Mrs. Dallas, she asked if I would begin a children's ministry and also preach the chapel services for the women's and men's homeless shelters.

My first instinct was to say, "I can't do that. I am just a bi-vocational pastor. I don't really have the time. I'm very comfortable pastoring my sheepfold; why would I want to begin working with other people that I do not know? Our situations are different." My list of excuses could have gone on and on.

Wow! I had just been asked to leave my comfort zone, and for a moment it scared me. A decision had to be made—Mrs. Dallas was waiting. The decision was made, and my wife and I now enjoy working with these believers.

In reality there never should have been any hesitation, since I have been previously involved in jail ministries (which made this ministry extremely difficult, because I was once a police officer) and nursing home ministries. In our modern church society there are several reasons why God's people are reluctant to leave

their comfort zones. I want to focus on two—fear and unconcern.

Fear

It has been stated that, "Courage is the absence of fear," but that may not be an accurate statement. I believe that courage is the willingness to act, even if unsure what the outcome will be.

I recently read a statement by the founder and chairman of one of America's largest airlines. His business philosophy is this: "I love doing things that scare me. There's no courage without fear."

You see, the logical thing to do is never step out of our comfort zones and just continue doing what we safely and comfortably feel like doing. Fear of the unknown and the unfamiliar can be devastating.

In II Timothy 1:7, the Apostle Paul was instructing a young preacher named Timothy, and apparently there was some element of fear involved. Paul said, "God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

Paul urged Timothy to take a stand for Christ, to be bold in the faith, even if it meant suffering or doing the unfamiliar. God's people have always been called upon to openly demonstrate that they are believers, even if it requires suffering or doing unfamiliar

things. God's Holy Spirit gives us power to do just that and much more.

The church of today needs that spirit of courage. The church that I pastor needs that spirit of courage. It is a must for this day and time. In our society, church members are reluctant to openly identify with Jesus because of fear.

The Sunday service is acceptably comfortable and safe, and they respond favorably to it, but to openly identify with Jesus in the workplace, in the community, in our families, and with individuals they come in contact with is a different subject. Believers can conquer their fears. We can step out of our comfort zones. We can accomplish the task of winning individuals to Christ, and we can build strong churches.

Unconcern

This is the area that troubles pastors most. Many of our churches go without key ministries because of a lack of concern for the gospel ministry. The latest statistics state that 10 percent of the church does most of the work. If that statistic holds true, it means that a handful of individuals are carrying the church on their shoulders.

Sometimes that 10 percent can become so burdened down that ministries have to be dropped or there is the possibility that the members can

burn out completely and leave the church. Every church has problems finding key workers to fill positions, positions of importance, which churches need just to continue. It seems that people have *ability* but not *availability*.

Think about this. Those who claim to love the Lord will not make themselves available for the Holy Spirit to use their spiritual gifts nor their natural talents for furthering the kingdom. God help us. In Matthew 25:14-30, the scriptures inform us that we can either "use" or "lose" those gifts and talents which God has given us.

The key to faithful service is to first give ourselves completely to God. The Apostle Paul said in II Corinthians 8:5, speaking about the Macedonians, "And this they did, not as we had hoped, but first gave their own selves to the Lord, and unto us by the will of God." Once that is accomplished, all else falls into place.

What is happening to us today? Do we love God? Have we given ourselves to God completely? Do we care about the church? Do we care about the kingdom of God advancing? Have we become so worldly that we cannot see the need for Christian stewardship?

One thing is certain, the Holy Scriptures have cautioned us concerning our lack of stewardship. In I Peter 4:10, the writer says, "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same, one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God."

God help our pastors to remain strong and not be discouraged in the face of disobedient acts to God. God help people to be more concerned about their stewardship to God. The Apostle Paul when writing to the church in Rome, gave this admonition, "So then everyone of us shall give account of himself to God."

God will hold us accountable for the use or abuse of our natural talents and our spiritual gifts. I pray that believers everywhere will realize that these talents and gifts were given to us for a purpose, and that purpose is to serve God, to step out of our comfort zones, and get on with the business of God. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Stanley P. Konopinski pastors Trinity Free Will Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

THE TOGETHER WAY

January 1999

Receipts:						
State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 363.74	\$.00	\$ 363.74	\$ 363.74	\$.00	\$ 363.74
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Arkansas	14,339.89	13,350.50	27,690.39	14,339.89	13,350.50	27,690.39
California	.00	1,444.40	1,444.40	.00	1,444.40	1,444.40
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	98.93	.00	98.93	98.93	.00	98.93
Georgia	23,249.08	2,535.36	25,784.44	23,249.08	2,535.36	25,784.44
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	7,748.20	2,013.26	9,761.46	7,748.20	2,013.26	9,761.46
Indiana	1,987.83	206.71	2,194.54	1,987.83	206.71	2,194.54
Iowa	90.00	633.61	723.61	90.00	633.61	723.61
Kansas	.00	105.07	105.07	.00	105.07	105.07
Kentucky	835.00	813.89	1,648.89	835.00	813.89	1,648.89
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Maryland	.00	6,006.43	6,006.43	.00	6,006.43	6,006.43
Michigan	11,328.23	2,284.72	13,612.95	11,328.23	2,284.72	13,612.95
Mississippi	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Missouri	55,732.97	13,893.18	69,626.15	55,732.97	13,893.18	69,626.15
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	782.76	31.38	814.14	782.76	31.38	814.14
North Carolina	817.38	7,937.10	8,754.48	817.38	7,937.10	8,754.48
Ohio	9,846.58	4,055.58	13,902.16	9,846.58	4,055.58	13,902.16
Oklahoma	65,074.37	10,568.67	75,643.04	65,074.37	10,568.67	75,643.04
South Carolina	52,638.33	.00	52,638.33	52,638.33	.00	52,638.33
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	16,405.93	1,056.50	17,462.43	16,405.93	1,056.50	17,462.43
Texas	8,143.22	75.58	8,218.80	8,143.22	75.58	8,218.80
Virginia	820.57	.00	820.57	820.57	.00	820.57
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	107.80	.00	107.80	107.80	.00	107.80
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	385.06	15.33	400.39	385.06	15.33	400.39
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.11	.11	.00	.11	.11
Totals	\$ 270,795.87	\$ 67,027.38	\$ 337,823.25	\$ 270,795.87	\$ 67,027.38	\$ 337,823.25

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 2,131.03	\$ 30,162.27	\$ 32,293.30	\$ 2,131.03	\$ 30,162.27	\$ 32,293.30
Foreign Missions	157,460.25	8,478.96	165,939.21	157,460.25	8,478.96	165,939.21
FWBBC	14,437.14	8,478.96	22,916.10	14,437.14	8,478.96	22,916.10
Home Missions	79,473.48	6,635.71	86,109.19	79,473.48	6,635.71	86,109.19
Retirement & Insurance	533.53	5,161.12	5,694.65	533.53	5,161.12	5,694.65
Master's Men	489.93	5,161.12	5,651.05	489.93	5,161.12	5,651.05
Com. for Theo. Integrity	59.39	184.33	243.72	59.39	184.33	243.72
FWB Foundation	611.79	2,211.92	2,823.71	611.79	2,211.92	2,823.71
Historical Commission	38.73	184.33	223.06	38.73	184.33	223.06
Music Commission	22.47	184.33	206.80	22.47	184.33	206.80
Media Commission	35.50	184.33	219.83	35.50	184.33	219.83
Hillsdale FWB College	1,769.75	.00	1,769.75	1,769.75	.00	1,769.75
Other	13,732.88	.00	13,732.88	13,732.88	.00	13,732.88
Totals	\$ 270,795.87	\$ 67,027.38	\$ 337,823.25	\$ 270,795.87	\$ 67,027.38	\$ 337,823.25

What did "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani" really mean?

The Day the Father Stood by the Son

By Jeff Crabtree

The logic seems strong enough. Jesus cried on the cross, "Why have you forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46, Mark 15:34). Jesus became sin for us (II Cor. 5:21) and a curse (Gal. 3:13). Since the Father is too holy to "behold evil" and cannot "look on iniquity" (Hab. 1:13), He turned His back on His Son during those hours Jesus hung on the cross bearing the sin and curse of the entire human race. For 3½ hours Jesus was for the first and only time in eternity—separated from His Father.

As appealing as this development is, it does not square with all of scripture. The following teachings show that not only did the Father not turn His back on His Son, but in fact, for Him to do so is not even possible.

Trinity Indivisible

The Trinity is indivisible. This is the most obvious argument. In what way or in what dimension could the Father turn His back on the Son? Surely not physically since "God is spirit" (John 4:24), and not in spirit or purpose since "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30; 17:11, 21).

Isaiah and Habakkuk

The Father did look on the Son while He hung on the cross. Isaiah prophesied that the Father would see the travail of the Son and be pleased (Isa. 53:11). Isaiah was talking about the cross experience. Habakkuk (1:13) was not.

Habakkuk was concerned that the sin of the Chaldeans could be overlooked when the sin of Israel could not. Habakkuk did not mean that God could not see sin but that He could not, because of His holiness, look at sin without judging it.

Isaiah plainly states that the Father would watch while the Suffering Ser-

vant gave His life as "an offering for sin" (Isa. 53:10). He would see and be satisfied.

Jesus did not say, "The Father has forsaken me." What He did do was to quote Psalm 22:1, without explanation. This has given occasion for some to miss the point of Jesus' quotation.

Re-visit Psalm 22

In Psalm 22 the *psalmist* cried out as one who felt forsaken. He had prayed earnestly for some time for deliverance but to no avail.

Feeling forsaken because God had not yet delivered him from his distress, the psalmist concluded that God must have forsaken him (v. 1) in spite of his persistence in prayer (v. 2) and praise (v. 3), and in spite of God's past faithfulness (vv. 4,5). The result was that the psalmist felt himself to be insignificant and despised (v. 6).

In the next verses the psalmist describes in graphic terms why he needed deliverance. He was suffering terribly at the hands of his enemies.

Experienced by the writer first, these words of pain find their ultimate fulfillment in the suffering of the Messiah. In fact, this is why Jesus quoted the part He did.

Those looking on at His crucifixion did not believe God would have anything to do with Jesus. They said, "He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him" (Matt. 27:43).

It is almost as if they were quoting Psalm 22:8, "He trusted on the Lord that he would deliver him, let him deliver him, seeing he delighteth in him," words that came from the lips of mockers (Ps. 22:7).

Hearing the words of His mockers, Jesus was reminded of Psalm 22. He responded to their taunts by referring them to the first verse of that Psalm. Why? Because Jesus is identifying with the psalmist.

At first glance, it appears the psalmist is forsaken. But was he? No. Listen to his testimony.

He writes, "I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise him; . . . for he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; *neither hath he hid his face from him*; but when he cried unto him, he heard" (vv. 22-24) (emphasis added).

To the mockers it appeared that the psalmist was forsaken, but he knew better. He was confident that the Lord would deliver him. In referring those who looked on at the cross to Psalm 22, Jesus was saying, "You may think I am forsaken, and in fact, I may feel forsaken (Heb. 5:7-9), but I have not been forsaken. Read the rest of the Psalm!"

In conclusion, then, during the dark hours of the cross experience, the Father did not turn His back on His Son. While the character of holiness was being satisfied (propitiated), the Father, whose character this was, stayed with the Suffering Servant. On that day, as in every other day, the Father stood by His Son—even when it looked like He was all alone (John 16:32). ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jeff Crabtree serves as a home missionary in Canada. He leads West Frederick Free Will Baptist Church in New Brunswick.

No one knew. No one understood. Then came the dawn.

The Dawn Prayer

By Yvonne W. Hampton

Lord, I've discovered why my sleep is being disturbed at 4:30 or 5:00 a.m. these days. I've allowed my circumstances, daily cares and other people to crowd out my time with you. Once we talked often during the day. I included You in my plans and asked You to guide me on the path. I shared my joys and sorrows with You. You spoke to me through Your love letters.

We were such close friends. You laughed with me when I took myself too seriously and wept with me in my grief and disappointment. I spent time thanking You for Your goodness and the peace that only You can give. I wrote letters to You and told others what a good friend You are.

In the quiet of early morning hours, You may be trying to renew our friendship. At that time of the day, You don't have to compete for my attention. There's no one calling me on the phone to make plans that exclude You.

There are no friends telling me what's right or wrong for me. There's no one shouting at me, "Why did you let that happen? When will you ever learn?"

There's no one else whispering, "I love you most and I can make you happy."

There's no work I must do at 4:00 a.m. that pulls me out of bed and away from You. So I lie here thinking of You and listening as You fill me with Your love. You don't have to wait

until I'm finished with an all-consuming task so that You can put Your arms around me and say, "My yoke is easy and My burden is light."

I think You're trying to tell me, "I see your tears, I know the hurt you feel, and I care. Let me share your burdens and carry the load until you're stronger."

Maybe You're trying to reach me before the daily clamor begins. You want to tell me that no matter what I've done or how far away I go, You will always be there waiting for me.

Could it be that you're trying to tell me, "Don't listen to those who say 'it doesn't matter how you live'? It matters to Me."

You want me to know that Your grace is greater than all my sin. But it requires quiet, undisturbed thought for You to get that message across. What better time than in the darkness just before dawn breaks through and other people, other things claim my time and my thoughts.

In the still of the morning, if I listen closely, I can hear You say, "I love you. Remember, I gave My life to prove it. I have a plan for you . . . far better than your plans or those of others."

There will be things that demand my time and crowd out Your plans once my day begins. And in the daylight Your plans may sometimes seem

impossible. Perhaps I'm so busy I don't have time to hear You whispering my name.

The next time I wake up early, I'll know it's You nudging me, trying to get my attention before others do. I'll listen closely when You tell me that this day may hold grief or joy, success or failure, but no matter what happens, You will be right here beside me.

You'll be waiting, listening, caring, loving me more than any parent, brother or friend could. None is as patient as You. Help me remember that You're my best friend. And help me make time for You in the middle of my day or evening. Help me listen to Your voice and include You in my plans.

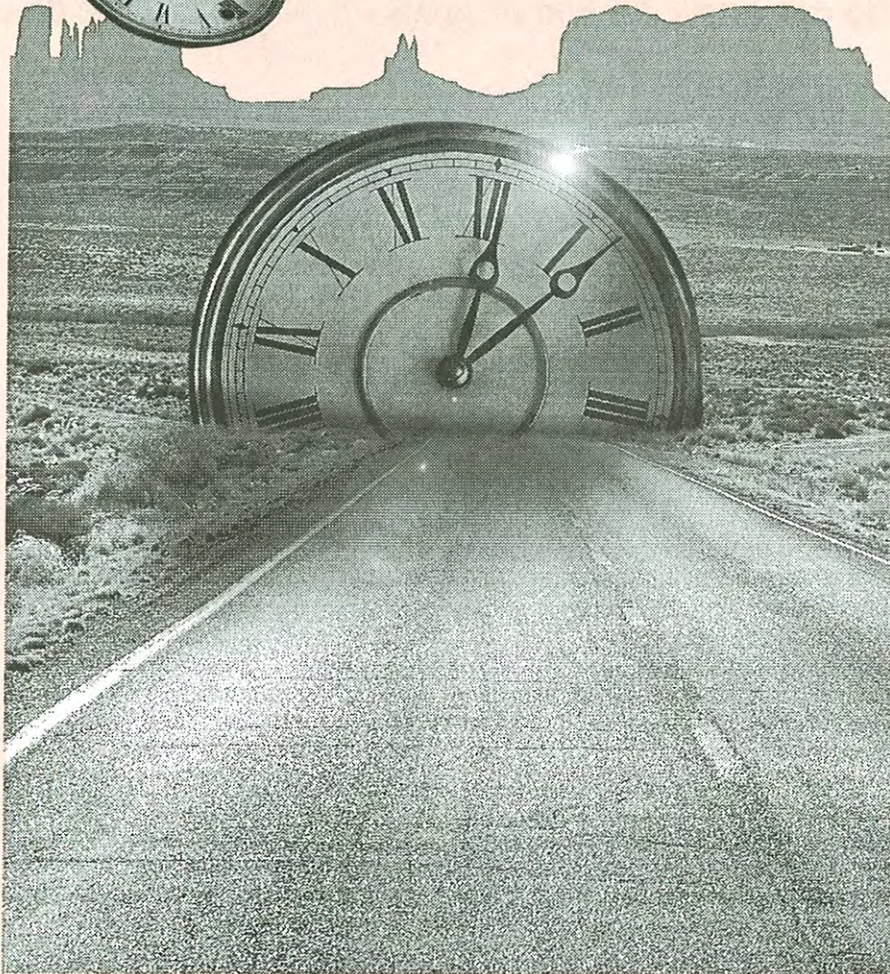
Then perhaps You won't have to wake me at 4:30 a.m. to remind me that You are *truly* my friend. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Yvonne W. Hampton serves as executive assistant for the Women Nationally Active for Christ. She wrote "The Dawn Prayer" in August 1995.

Purpose of the Church

By Wade Jernigan



From its inception, the Church has declared unashamedly that she exists for the expressed fourfold purpose of:

1. Proclaiming God's Word.
2. Practicing God's Will.
3. Performing God's Work.
4. Praising God in Worship.

Though other activities attach themselves to the agenda of the congregation, nothing can claim priority above the four. Everything entertained by the Church must be consistent with the goals of purpose.

Social action, benevolence, political emphasis, community activities and such will clamor for attention. Though they cannot be ignored, if the Church is to carry out her mission, these cannot claim, change or clutter up the calendar.

No argument is set forth here to disparage the merit of other worthy projects by the church. However, at the same time, no lessening of effort can be allowed in the four areas of absolute priority.

Where there is apparent conflict, first things must be first. Christ's statement, "But seek ye first the kingdom," must always be the marching order.

The Church has a ministry, a mission and a message. These three may be seen in our Lord's Words,

"Go out into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in, that my house may be full."

"Go" is certainly suggestive of the mission. "Out into the highways and hedges," the ministry. "And compel them to come in," the message. When His house is full, then the purpose has been satisfied.

In order to make this a bit more concrete, consider the following:

One essential ministry of the Church is, therefore, the ministry of her Lord and Savior—"Seek and to save that which was lost."

Concurrent with that ministry is the mission—"into all the world."

Also in conjunction is the message—"The whole counsel of God."

Nothing less. Nothing more. Ex-

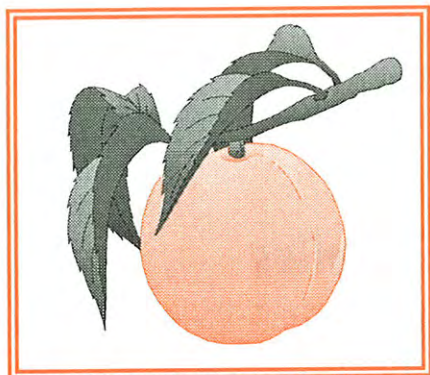
actly that.

Christ is the hub around which the whole purpose of the Church revolves. Public worship is one's encounter with the risen Lord. Evangelism is calling men and women to salvation in the Savior. Publishing the law of God is proclaiming His Lordship. Christian nurture, then, is feeding His flock, disciplining His sheep, ministering to the needs of men, and obeying the Words of the Great Physician, our Lord.

To this all Christians ascribe. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Wade Jernigan is a Free Will Baptist evangelist who resides in Lexington, Oklahoma.

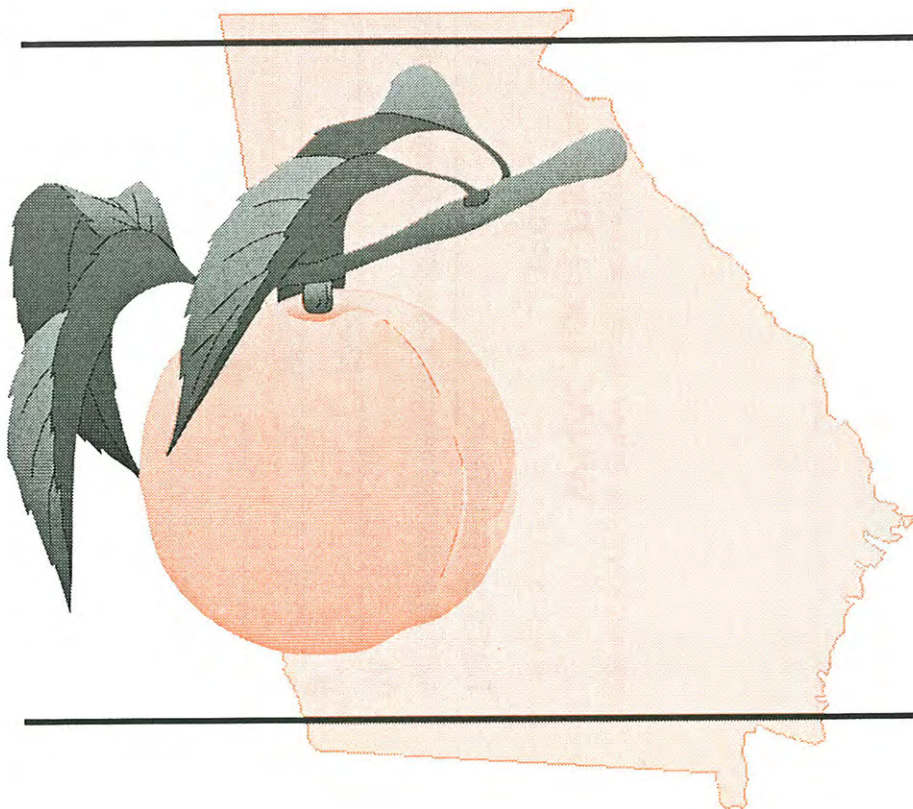


63rd Annual Session

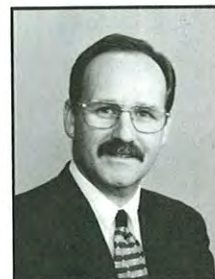
National Association of Free Will Baptists

Atlanta, Georgia
July 18-22, 1999

Theme:
"All in Accord"



Cliff Donoho
Iowa



Danny Williams
Alabama



Kent Barwick
Tennessee



Roger Hogan
Missouri



Robert Morgan
Tennessee



LOCAL CHURCH DELEGATE CARD —1999—

THIS CERTIFIES THAT _____
is a duly authorized delegate to the National Association of Free Will Baptists
from _____ FWB Church,
_____, _____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (District Association)
_____, _____ or _____
(Pastor) (Church Clerk)

IMPORTANT: This card properly signed and accompanied by a \$25 registration fee entitles a local church delegate to register for voting privileges.

WNAC LOCAL DELEGATE CARD —1999—

THIS CERTIFIES THAT _____
is a duly authorized delegate to the WNAC Convention of Free Will Baptists from
the _____ women's group
of _____ (Group Name)
_____ Free Will Baptist Church
_____ (Church Name)
_____ (Church Address)
Signed _____ or _____
(Local Coordinator) (Local Secretary)

IMPORTANT: This card properly signed and accompanied by a \$5 registration fee entitles a local delegate to register for voting privileges in the WNAC convention. Only one delegate allowed per church.

FREE

**This coupon entitles bearer to one
FREE GIFT — redeemable at the Executive
Office booth, FWB Convention, Atlanta.**

FREE



Expiration date: July 22, 1999

One coupon per person.

FREE

Valid only at Executive Office booth.

Pre-Register by June 18 and Pick up Your Convention Packet on Saturday!

*Early pick-up available at
Atlanta Marriott Marquis
for those who pre-register.*

*Saturday, July 17
3:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.*

*Sunday, July 18
1:00 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.*

Pre-Registration ends June 18, 1999.

News Flash!

— Step onto the Information Super Highway —

Check our web page at www.nafwb.org

for a pre-registration form, housing form and
delegate cards that can be printed from your computer.
Fill them out and send them in.

While you're there, check out links to
other denominational agencies.
You might be surprised at what you find.

Check out the changes. It's as easy
as A-B-C:

- A ltered pre-registration form.
- B adges that are attractive.
- C onfirmation letter.

See Page 14 for the new pre-registra-
tion form. Check out the new badge
on this page.

(The real badge will be prettier, since
we can use only two colors in the magazine!)

National Association of Free Will Baptists

Atlanta, Georgia

July 18-22, 1999

Johnny

John Doe

Anytown, ST

Ord. Min./WNAC/Visitor

Pre-Registration Form

for
National Association of Free Will Baptists
Women Nationally Active for Christ
National Youth Conference
Atlanta, Georgia / July 18-22, 1999

DEADLINE:
Must be **postmarked**
on or before
June 18, 1999

Please Print: (Only one person per form—make copies if needed.)

Name: _____
First or Name desired on badge _____ Last _____

Home Address: _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone #: (____) _____ - _____ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Church Name: _____ City _____ State _____

Pastor's Name: _____

Note: You may register for all three conventions on this form.

National Association Registration

Voting Delegates:

All voting delegates must be members in good standing of a Free Will Baptist church.

- ☐ National Officer
- ☐ National Board Member
- ☐ State Delegate
- ☐ Local Church Delegate (\$25)
- ☐ Foreign Missionary
- ☐ Home Missionary
- ☐ Ordained Deacon
- ☐ Ordained Minister

Non-Voting Attendees:

- ☐ Licensed Minister
- ☐ Visitor

WNAC Registration

Voting Delegates:

- ☐ National Officer
- ☐ State President
- ☐ State Field Worker
- ☐ State Delegate
- ☐ Local WAC Delegate (\$5)

Non-Voting Attendees:

- ☐ Visitor

National Youth Conference Registration

Pre-Registration Fee: \$20*

♦ Grades 1-12 *must* register to attend NYC events.

♦ Ages 2-6 *must* register if attending Pre-school Worship.

Birthdate: ____/____/____ Age: ____

Grade completed Spring 1999: ____

Parent/Guardian name: _____

Youth Leader's name: _____

Payment must accompany this form for:

Tickets:

Youth Workers Reception (\$15)

Quantity _____ x \$15\$ _____

WNAC Fellowship Dinner (\$28)

Quantity _____ x \$28\$ _____

Delegate Fees:

Local Church Delegate (\$25)

(Must enclose a signed delegate card; see *Contact*, page 12.)**\$ _____

Local WAC Delegate (\$5)

(Must enclose a signed WNAC delegate card; see *Contact*, page 12.)**\$ _____

Youth Registration Fee:

Pre-Registration Fee (\$20)

.....\$ _____

*On-Site Registration Fee: \$25

Total\$ _____

Send one check for total amount — payable to FWB Convention.

**Delegate cards available on website: www.nafwb.org

Mail to:

Convention Registration
P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002
14 *Contact*, April 1999

Confirmation letter will be mailed to
all those pre-registering.

For Office Use Only

Date Rcv'd _____

Clk/MO# _____ Amt _____

From _____

Housing Form

National Association of Free Will Baptists / National Convention

Atlanta, Georgia • July 18-22, 1999

Print or type all information requested and phone, mail or FAX form to the hotel of your choice by **June 18, 1999**. If form is faxed, keep your transaction report as proof of transmittal. You will receive acknowledgment of your hotel assignment by mail within two weeks of the time the form is received by the hotel. All reservations, changes and cancellations should be made directly with the hotels.

DEPOSIT REQUIRED: An advance deposit of **\$135 per room** is required. Your deposit will be charged to your credit card by providing the information requested below. Deposits being made by check should be for **\$135 per room** payable to the hotel of your choice and mailed to the address below. Forms received without credit card information or a check for the deposit will be returned and reservations will not be processed. Hotel refund policies vary. The hotels *prefer* credit cards rather than checks.

Changes or cancellations should be made directly with the hotel. Check your hotel confirmation for instructions regarding cancellation policies and check-in times. Reservations received after June 18, 1999, (or once block is full) will be on a space and rate available basis.

If you mail or FAX the housing form, number hotels in numerical order of preference. If your preferred hotel is sold out, your form will be sent to the other hotel listed on this form.

◆ ◆ CIRCLE ROOM TYPE REQUESTED BELOW ◆ ◆

(Rooms with two beds are limited. Please utilize rooms with one bed whenever possible.)

Number Hotel choices in order of preference ↓	HOTELS	SINGLE 1 bed / 1 person	DOUBLE 1 bed / 2 persons	DBL/DBL 2 beds / 2 persons	TRIPLE 2 beds / 3 persons	QUAD 2 beds / 4 persons	PARKING
	Marriott Marquis (Headquarters)	\$109	\$109	\$109	\$119	\$119	\$10/day valet
	Hilton Atlanta & Towers (Overflow)	N/A	N/A	\$119	\$119	\$119	\$12/day valet

Rates do not include tax which is currently 14% in Georgia.

Indicate Special Requests:

- ☐ Wheelchair Accessible ☐ Non-Smoking ☐ Crib Other _____
☐ Rollaway (Upon availability at an additional charge.)
 [By Fire Marshall Law, a rollaway cannot be placed in a room with 2 beds.]

Three ways to make hotel reservations:	By Phone	By FAX	By Mail
Marriott Marquis: (Headquarters)	404/521-0000	404/586-6247	Attn: Reservations 265 Peachtree Center Ave. Atlanta, GA 30303
Hilton Atlanta and Towers (Overflow)	404/221-6300	404/221-6301	Attn: Reservations 255 Courtland Street N.E. Atlanta, GA 30303

ARRIVAL DATE / / TIME DEPARTURE DATE / /

APPLY DEPOSIT TO: MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> DISCOVER <input type="checkbox"/> AMEx <input type="checkbox"/>
CARD NUMBER _____ EXP. DATE _____
NAME ON CARD: _____ SIGNATURE _____

☐ CHECK ENCLOSED. CHECK # _____

ROOMMATES: (LIST ALL OCCUPANTS OF ROOM)

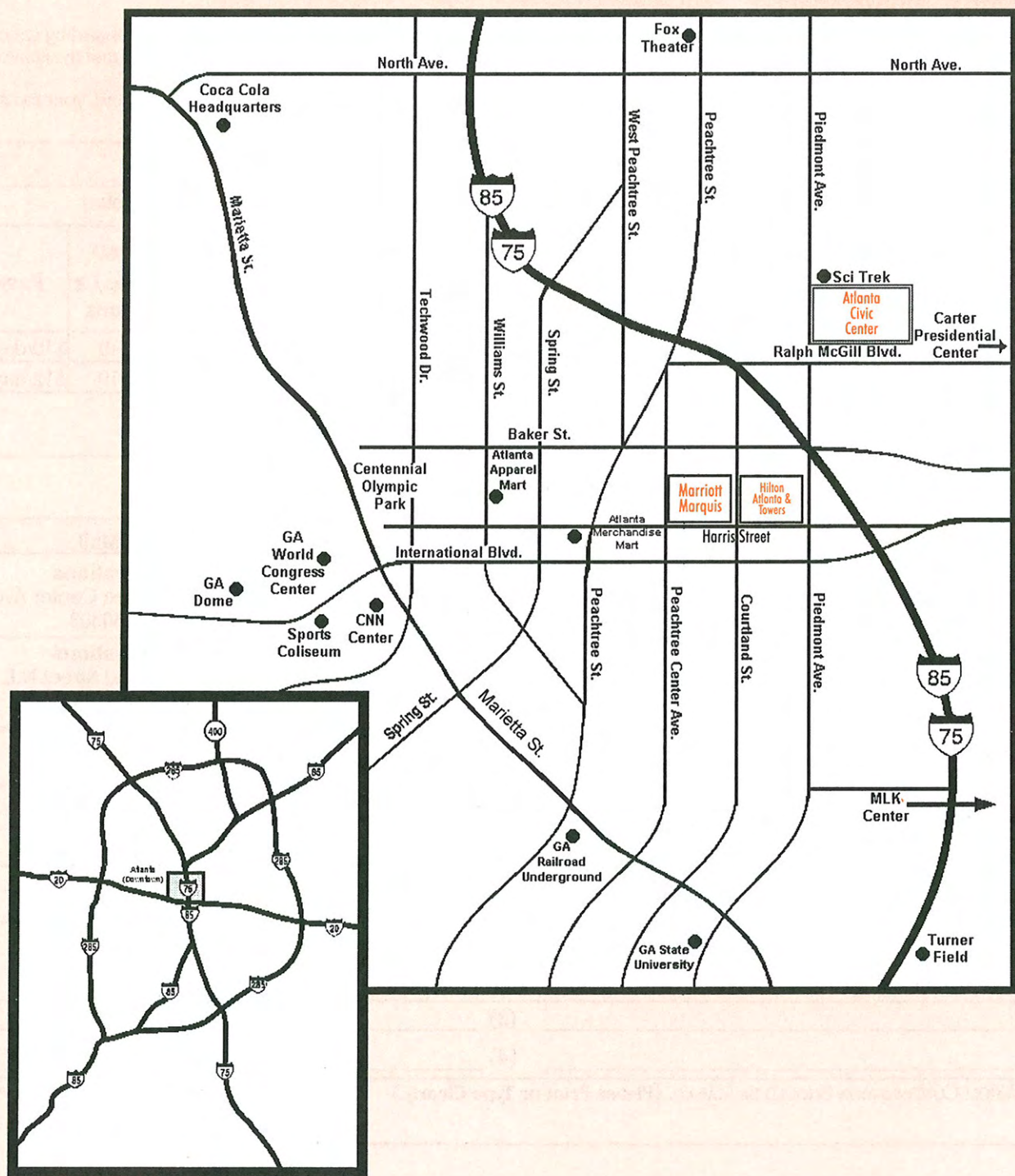
(1) _____	(3) _____
(2) _____	(4) _____

PERSON TO WHOM CONFIRMATION SHOULD BE MAILED. (Please Print or Type Clearly.)

NAME _____
 ADDRESS _____
 CITY/STATE/ZIP _____
 PHONE (____) _____ FAX (____) _____

Send only
 one (1)
 form per room.

Atlanta Accommodations



(SHADED AREA ENLARGED TO SHOW DETAIL)

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Rev. Robert L. Hidde, Retired Minister, Dies

TULSA, OK—Long time Tulsa Free Will Baptist minister, pastor and Bible teacher, Robert Luther Hidde died January 25. Reverend Hidde was 88 years old. He had served as pastor of Tulsa's Madison Avenue FWB Church and was retired from the Tulsa Public Schools. In addition to his ministry at Madison Avenue Church, he was a well known Bible teacher in area Free Will Baptist churches, and had served on various denominational boards at the area level.

Born in Ratcliff, Arkansas, on June 22, 1910, Reverend Hidde was ordained September 3, 1933. During a ministry that spanned six decades, he pastored four churches in Arkansas: Mulberry FWB Church, Brooklyn FWB Church, Upper Spring Creek FWB Church, and Harmony FWB Church in Waldron. In addition to Madison Avenue FWB Church in Tulsa, Reverend Hid-

de's Oklahoma pastoral ministry included Muldrow FWB Church and Mineral Springs FWB Church.

He is survived by his wife of 60 years, Nadine; his son Dr. Robert Dean Hidde (Pastor of Christ Fellowship FWB Church, Tulsa); one brother, Charlie Hidde of Fort Smith, Arkansas; and four sisters, Pauline Harrower and Delice Heinrichs of Charleston, Arkansas, Anita Greb of Fort Smith, Arkansas, and Mildred Gibson of California.

Funeral services were conducted January 27. Oklahoma executive director Earnest Harrison, Jr., preached the message.

While in the hospital a few days before his death, Brother Hidde witnessed to a young woman. The following Sunday she returned to church for the first time in 15 years and rededicated her life.

Discount Air Fares to National Convention Available

ANTIOCH, TN—The National Association of Free Will Baptists has made special travel arrangements for attendees and their families who will be flying to the national convention in Atlanta, Georgia, July 18-22, according to Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington.

Artists Travel Corporation in Nashville has been selected as the agency of record to provide members attending the convention with discount travel services.

Discounts for air travel to Atlanta have been secured on Delta Air Lines. The airline offers a 5% discount on excursion rates and 10% discount on full coach fares. These fares cannot be purchased through another travel agency or directly with the airlines. These are contracted group air fares. First class tickets may also be booked if desired.

Artists Travel Corporation has contracted for travel dates July 15 through July 24 for the convention.

To book airspace at the offered discounted rates, call Artists Travel Corporation toll free at 1-800/489-2009. Ask for **Janice Jakobik** and identify yourself with the Free Will Baptist national convention. The agent will need the following:

- ✧ your name
- ✧ number of passengers
- ✧ home phone number
- ✧ correct mailing address
- ✧ city of flight origin
- ✧ business phone number

For easy billing, have a **current credit card** ready at the time of booking. Artists Travel will process and mail the tickets to you.

Mass Choir Recording Set for Atlanta

Mass Choir

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone (____) _____

Vocal Part ☐ S ☐ A ☐ T ☐ B
 Song with Mass Choir Last Year or in the past: ☐ Yes ☐ No
 Indicate Your Intentions to Sing: (check one)
☐ During the Recording Only
☐ During the Convention Only
☐ During both Recording and Convention

Send all information by May 15 to the following:
 Music Commission
 c/o Lange Patrick
 Faith Free Will Baptist Church
 1200 W. Grantham Street
 Goldsboro, NC 27530

ANTIOCH, TN—The Free Will Baptist Music Commission plans a Mass Choir recording project in Atlanta, Georgia, at the national convention, according to Randy Sawyer, chairman. The project is scheduled for July 15-17, the Thursday, Friday and Saturday preceding the convention.

"We have formally invited five church choirs from our ranks to join us for recording," Sawyer said. "However, we are counting on many who sang with us in Tulsa last year as well as first-timers to be part of the 1999 choir."

Recording Schedule

Thursday Evening, July 15	Rehearsal and Prayer
Friday Morning, July 16	Recording solos, duets, trios and praise teams
Friday Evening, July 16	Recording entire choir
Saturday Morning/Afternoon, July 17	Recording entire choir

The Mass Choir, accompanied by a live instrumental ensemble, will then perform all the songs that were recorded during convention worship services at the Atlanta Civic Center.

Those who plan to participate in the Mass Choir recording project must complete and mail the accompanying form. After receiving the completed forms, the Music Commission will send packets of information with further details and instructions.

Instrumental Ensemble to Perform at Convention

1999 Instrumental Ensemble

Name _____
 Address _____
 Phone (____) _____
 Work Phone (____) _____
 E-mail address _____
 Instrument(s) _____
 Years' Experience _____
 Have you played in this ensemble before? When? _____
 Church Name: _____
 Church City _____

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 accompanying form 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.

FWB Foundation Delivers Endowment Gifts

ANTIOCH, TN—The Free Will Baptist Foundation delivered more than \$69,000 in endowment gifts to various Free Will Baptist ministries in 1998, according to William Evans, director. The gifts came from endowment funds managed by the Foundation.

For the entire year of 1998, these gifts were delivered to the following ministries:

Foreign Missions	\$9,961.61
Master's Men	\$3,925.24
The Together Way	\$1,709.22
Free Will Baptist Bible College	\$15,859.20
Home Missions	\$2,516.76
Board of Retirement	\$3,514.32
Free Will Baptist Foundation	\$194.72
Contact	\$270.30
Woman Nationally Active for Christ	\$407.55
Hillsdale FWB College	\$483.96
Free Will Baptist Family Ministries	\$5,173.95
State and Local Ministries	<u>\$24,992.64</u>
Total	<u>\$69,009.47</u>

Endowments are permanent gifts invested so that income is available for ministry. These gifts continue to give year after year. The Foundation manages gifts for every national agency and will accept gifts to these endowments in any amount. For information about endowments, please contact the Foundation.

Pastor, Missions Executive to Challenge FWBCC Graduates

NASHVILLE, TN—Rev. Dennis Haygood and Rev. R. Eugene Waddell will give the final charges to Free Will Baptist Bible College's 1999 graduates in May.

Rev. Haygood, pastor of Southpark FWB Church, Huntsville, Alabama, will bring the baccalaureate message on Sunday night, May 9. The 1973 FWBCC graduate has pastored 26 years in Texas and Alabama.

Rev. Waddell, who retired in December as general director of the Foreign Missions Department, graduated from the college in 1954. He pastored in South Carolina, Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee before accepting the leadership of the missions department in 1986. He will bring the final charge to graduates on Thursday morning, May 13.

Bible College To Offer Information Technology Track

NASHVILLE, TN—Beginning this fall, Free Will Baptist Bible College will begin offering an Information Technology track as part of its program in Business Administration. It will prepare graduates to qualify as Microsoft Certified Professionals (MCP).

Information Technology (IT) is the study of the design, support and management of computer-based information systems vital to any enterprise—from businesses to Christian ministries—that uses computers.

Jeff Runion, FWBCC's Computer Science instructor says, "Not many schools can offer what FWBCC can: A solid foundational business degree that can prepare you for graduate studies, technology training and the experience that will allow you to enter the IT profession immediately following graduation, as well as a quality Christian education where each subject is presented within the framework of a biblical worldview."

For more information on the new IT track, call Mr. Runion at 615/383-1340, ext. 5269.

Moving?

Don't forget to take Contact with you . . .

Please send us your new address and a current mailing label.

Contact
P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

E-mail: dari@nafwb.org

615/731-6812

Please allow 4-6 weeks for an address change.



Thank You!

A new grand piano was donated to **First FWB Church** in **Amory, MS**, in honor of the late **Millie Wright** who served many years as choir director. The piano was given by her husband, **Henry Grady Wright**. **Scott Wright** pastors.

Contact welcomes **Fellowship Facts**, publication of **Fellowship FWB Church** in **Bryan, TX**. **Levan Hubbard** pastors.

Before his death in January 1998, the late **Don Guthrie** led **Lake Hills FWB Church** in **Hot Springs, AR**, to raise \$1,000 for a Russian pastor. Don's untimely death put all plans on hold. This past December, missionary to Russia **Mike Corley** went to the Lake Hills church for a service. The congregation not only gave Brother Corley the promised \$1,000 but also gave Corley a \$1,500 love offering for his account. The ladies gave Corley a copy of their cookbook, *To Russia With Love*. **David Taylor** pastors.

Reverend **James Franklin** completed 68 years in the ministry in 1998. The 88-year-old preacher pastored churches in Oklahoma, California, Arkansas and Missouri. He is still active at **Non FWB Church** in **Calvin, OK**, where he conducts services each Wednesday night. Pastor **Gary Dodson** presented a plaque of recognition to Brother Franklin at the close of a revival meeting in which Franklin's son was guest evangelist.

Members of **Liberty FWB Church** in **Millington, TN**, celebrated 20 years of existence and dedicated a new fellowship hall/educational wing on the same day. Pastor **Gwyn Pugh** has led the congregation for 12 years. The church began two decades ago as a mission project of the national Home Missions Board and the Tennessee State Association.

The teens from **Bethel FWB Church** in **South Roxana, IL**, presented a \$1,000 check to the New Beginnings Pregnancy Care Center. The teens

earned the money to purchase needed equipment at the center. Staffer **Kathy Sparks** was on hand to accept the check. **Bill Crank** pastors.

More than 400 homeless and needy people showed up for a special Thanksgiving dinner sponsored by **Columbus First FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**. **Delmar Sparks** serves as interim pastor.

Pastor **Brian Phillips** reports that for the second consecutive year **Wyandotte FWB Church** in **Mansfield, OH**, witnessed more than 30 conversions and baptisms. The church averages about 200 in attendance.

South Charleston FWB Church in **South Charleston, OH**, reports six conversions, four baptisms and four new members. **Homer Brooks** pastors.

Pastor **Robert Prichard** is all smiles at the 46 percent increase in attendance at **Cleveland FWB Church** in **Cleveland, OH**. The church witnessed 20 conversions and 16 baptisms, and welcomed 19 new members in 1998. Sunday attendance averages above the 150 mark.

National convention prayer chairman **Charles Barnard** reports that 33 people attended the inaugural Prayer Committee Banquet held January 16 at **White Oaks FWB Church** in **Macon, GA**, where Barnard pastors. The two-hour event included dinner and a concert of prayer for speakers, officials and planners at the convention scheduled for July in Atlanta.

Reverend **Virgil Onecy (Pete) Price** died November 19, 1998, at age 73. The Tennessee minister pastored 40 years and served seven churches in the state during his four-decade-long career. He was ordained to preach in 1949.

For 66 of his 90 years, Reverend **Herman Christian** was a Free Will Baptist preacher in Tennessee. He conducted 1,349 funerals and 1,368 weddings. He died in October 1998. He was a mentor to many ministers through the years.

Members of **Zion Hill FWB Church** in **Millwood, GA**, dedicated their new building in November 1998. The 93-

year-old church called its first full-time pastor less than four years ago, Rev. **Keith Lloyd**. They also built and paid for a new parsonage. The church averages about 85 for Sunday services.

Yes, they're happy at **First FWB Church** in **Famington, MO**. Pastor **Roger Hogan** and members burned the mortgage and kept looking toward the future. The 47-year-old church heard Missouri's executive secretary **Nathan Ruble** preach the dedication sermon. Reverend Hogan is the church's eighth pastor. The congregation which began in a 1952 tent revival now averages more than 300 in attendance and is served by a staff of three pastors.

First FWB Church in **Hutchinson, KS**, reports five baptisms. **Larry Collins** pastors.

Pastor **Leonard Pirtle** reports 37 new members and 18 baptisms at **First FWB Church** in **Owasso, OK**.

Members of **Black Oak FWB Church** in **Marshfield, MO**, sent a chauffeured limousine to bring Pastor **Jack Day** to afternoon services. That's because Pastor Day was celebrating 30 years of leadership at the church. He was called to preach in 1968 and accepted the Black Oak pastorate in August 1968. He began with 12 people. The congregation of 100 people has stayed together through three building programs and continues to grow.

First FWB Church in **Mt. Vernon, IL**, purchased a new van to use in youth, adult and bus ministry. **Ronnie Mitchell** pastors. ■



















Do You Enjoy Contact?

If the answer is, "Yes!" then why not share *Contact* with a friend?

By completing the form below, you can order a **FREE 3-month** subscription to *Contact* for any of your friends. Allow them the opportunity to read for themselves the magazine that keeps Free Will Baptists involved and in touch. *Contact* is worth sharing.



Please send a **FREE 3-month** subscription to the friends I've listed below:

<p>My name is:</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>	<p>My Friend:</p> <p> Name _____</p> <p> Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>
<p>My Friend:</p> <p> Name _____</p> <p> Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>	<p>My Friend:</p> <p> Name _____</p> <p> Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>
<p>My Friend:</p> <p> Name _____</p> <p> Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>	<p>My Friend:</p> <p> Name _____</p> <p> Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>
<p>My Friend:</p> <p> Name _____</p> <p> Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>	<p>My Friend:</p> <p> Name _____</p> <p> Address _____</p> <p>City/State/Zip _____</p>
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WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

Woman's Window on the World

By Marjorie Workman

It's the Right Time

There's not a better time. It will be well worth your time. There's no time to delay. Plan your time. You'll have the time of your life. Now is the time. It's time to begin. What is the time? Do you have the time? It's the opportune time. A time of peace. For the fifth time . . . I don't have time.

Did you know Webster's dictionary gives 14 definitions for the word "time?" With 14 definitions, you'd think we'd have more of it. Solomon in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 mentions the word "time" 29 times. He tells us there is "a time to every purpose under the heaven." Do you wonder where time goes? Have you tried to make up for lost time?

The Bible talks about different kinds of time. There is an acceptable time (Isa. 49:8; II Cor. 6:2), a time of trouble (Dan. 12:1), a changing of times and seasons (Dan. 2:21), sundry times (Heb. 1:1). Jesus said, "My time is not yet come: but your time is always ready" (Jn. 7:6). In Revelation 10 we learn that a time is coming when there will be no more time. Can you imagine never being late? What an encouragement to fathers who have spent hours waiting for daughters to get ready to go somewhere.

Time is given for people. It is a measurement for the created universe. It helps us understand beginnings and endings: keeps God beyond our comprehension as we meditate on the fact that He has no beginning or end; shapes our priorities as we attempt to understand that we will live for eternity; sobers a Christian to be a laborer in God's vineyard while the harvest is ripe.

It's the right time to pray (I Thes. 5:17), to make intercession for others. It's the right time to share our faith with a friend, family member, neighbor, co-worker or stranger. The time is right to be an example before others in purity, holiness and integrity. There will never be a better time than now. According to A. A. Baker, president of A. A. Baker Communications, the greatest success principle in time management is found in a simple command containing three one syllable words, Do It Now!

It's the Right Time to:

- *Talk less and listen more.*
- *Say "I love you and I'm sorry."*

- *Pay attention to the kids and less time to television.*
- *Encourage someone in ministry and criticize less.*
- *Give to others rather than spending selfishly.*
- *Trust and not worry.*
- *Support rather than tear down.*

Time to Give to the Endowment Fund

Recently, in the city of Nashville, the news broke that Vanderbilt University had been the recipient of a \$340-million endowment gift. One lady gave the money. I have to admit, I was envious. I tried to reason that if WNAC had that much endowment, we wouldn't depend on God to provide. My imagination went wild thinking how much such a gift would mean to all our Free Will Baptist ministries. It didn't take much calculating to figure the interest WNAC receives annually from our \$11,000 endowment.

Thinking about it also makes me dream. Have you ever made a snowman? You start with a handful of snow, then you roll that handful and the ball gets larger and larger until you can't roll it anymore. Our endowment works that way. In 1990, a \$300 gift began the WNAC Endowment Fund. It has grown slowly, but it has grown. Together, we can make it grow more.

Did you know your endowment gift to WNAC will last for the lifetime of the organization? That it will live on and on after your death? It will never be spent but will always provide income to be spent?

The Endowment Fund is maintained in the Free Will Baptist Foundation. The Foundation sends to the WNAC general fund the interest accrued on the endowment. The principal will never be spent.

A good way to honor a friend or relative is give an endowment gift. Give it in honor of an anniversary, birthday or any special event.

Give a gift in memory of a person. Leave part of your estate to WNAC's Endowment Fund. Now is the time to plan continual support of WNAC. ■



Why Adopt a Housing/Parsonage Exclusion?

By D. Ray Lewis

One real tax advantage for the minister, is the housing/parsonage allowance, even for those living in a church-provided parsonage. Ministers can exclude from their federal income taxes the portion of their ministerial income designated by their employer as a housing allowance, as long as the allowance is used to pay for housing-related expenses and does not exceed fair rental value.

Section 107 of the Internal Revenue Code says that "in the case of a minister of the gospel, gross income does not include . . . (an) allowance paid to him as part of his compensation, to the extent used by him to rent or provide a home."

This restricts the exclusion to the actual expenses incurred by the minister in owning or renting a home, up to but not exceeding the amount of the church-designated allowance. The IRS recognizes a "minister of the gospel" as a person who is ordained, commissioned or licensed with respect to service performed in the exercise of ministry.

Regulations define "provide a home" as including the purchase of a home or any expense directly related to owning or maintaining a home. Whether a minister owns or rents a home, or lives in a parsonage, his church/employer should designate such an allowance. Many churches fail to do this, thus denying their pastor an important tax benefit.

Parsonage and housing "allowances" should be (1) adopted by the church board or congregation, (2) in writing and (3) in advance of the calendar year. The declaration is effective from the date of its enactment. Under no circumstances can a minister exclude any portion of an allowance retroactively designated by a church.

Churches can amend an allowance during the year if the original allowance proves to be too low. However, the amended allowance cannot be retroactive.

There is no requirement that the expenses be "business" related. All that is required is that the expenses be incurred to rent or provide a home.

Many ministers think that the housing/parsonage allowance only pertains to rent or house payments and utilities. Others don't think they can exclude a housing allowance because they own their homes and have no house payments. Ministers who own their homes should take the following expenses into account in computing

their housing allowance exclusion:

- (1) down payment on a home; (2) mortgage payments on a loan to purchase or improve your home (include both interest and principal); (3) real estate taxes; (4) property insurance; (5) utilities (electricity, gas, water, trash pickup, local telephone charges and basic cable fees); (6) furnishings and appliances (purchase and repair); (7) structural repairs and remodeling; (8) yard maintenance and improvements; (9) maintenance items (household cleansers, light bulbs, pest control, etc.); and (10) homeowners association dues.

Ministers who live in a parsonage can exclude from their federal income taxes "the portion of their ministerial compensation designated by their employer as a parsonage allowance"—to the extent that it in fact is used to pay for parsonage-related expenses such as utilities, repairs and furnishings.

For ministers who rent their homes, actual expenses may include rental payments, furnishing and utilities.

If actual expenses exceed the church designated allowance, the minister can only exclude the allowance. This illustrates why churches should always be liberal in designated housing allowances. If the actual housing allowance exclusion is less than the church-designated allowance, then the minister will need to report the difference as additional income on his federal tax return.

The parsonage or rental allowance must be reasonable in amount. The exclusion of the fair rental value of the parsonage or the rental allowance provided is for income tax purposes only. The actual housing allowance exclusion must be reported as "self-employment earnings" on a minister's Schedule SE (Form 1040) in computing social security taxes, assuming the minister has not applied for and received an approved exemption from social security coverage.

The IRS has stated that there are no limitations on how much of a minister's compensation can be designated by his or her employing church as a housing allowance.

The housing/parsonage allowance exclusion is an important benefit for ministers. If your church has not voted for this exclusion, it is not too late to do so. Just remember the exclusion will be effective only for the remainder of the current year in which it is adopted. ■



FOREIGN MISSIONS

Building in Côte d'Ivoire

By Darrel Nichols

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay stubble; Every man's work shall be made manifest . . ." 1 Corinthians 3:11-13a.

As Free Will Baptist missionaries in Côte d'Ivoire, we are striving to build a church that will endure to the coming of our Lord. Building on the foundation of Jesus as the Christ the Son of God, we proclaim salvation is found in no other name. We seek to make disciples who will withstand the fires of persecution and temptation and come out pure.

The work begun by Free Will Baptist missionaries in 1960 has endured the test of time. People are being converted, churches are growing, and existing church buildings are becoming too small. Burgeoning congregations in this third world country need church buildings of maximal size at minimal cost.

I was born into a Free Will Baptist family and raised in a country church. When I surrendered to the call to preach at age 15, I anticipated being a carpenter and country preacher like my uncle, Paul Griggs. I had always liked building. On my fifth birthday I received a tool kit which I promptly used to build a boat to sail on the creek. I took every technical course I could in high school: drafting, vocational carpentry and welding. In my senior year, I surrendered to the call of foreign missions and switched to more academic studies.

*Agnibilekrou Church**Building in Agnibilekrou*

After I arrived in Africa, while working with Norman and Bessie Richards in Agnibilekrou, the church needed a building. The Free Will Baptist youth of Arkansas provided the funds as part of the Norman Invasion project. Economy was essential but we had to allow for future growth. With my technical background I designed a struc-

ture of maximum floor space at minimal cost. I designed it as a diamond-shaped structure since it will seat more people than a rectangular building. It has seven classrooms, four of them opening into the sanctuary to provide a

total seating capacity of 500 in a 4,300 square foot building. The single pitch roof added to the economy factor.

Building in Côte d'Ivoire is more tedious than in the United States. Everything must be done by hand, using picks and shovels, a manual adobe brick press, and materials laboriously mixed by hand. Sand, gravel, and cement were mixed with shovels on a bare spot on the ground. Construction took one year.

Plans for Goumère

Now we are serving at Goumère and our present sanctuary is far too small. Sunday mornings find worshipers pushed out onto the back porch for lack of space in the sanctuary. They need to build! A portion of the mission grounds situated on the major highway has been designated as the site for building the new church. Again I am preparing to use my building skills.

I plan to use the same basic diamond shaped design, but on a smaller scale. Funds for the Goumère church are being raised in the form of an interest-free loan. It's to be repaid to a revolving building fund for the construction of other churches in Côte d'Ivoire. The smaller building will be designed for easy expansion in the future.

The task at Goumère will be more difficult since Goumère has no sawmill or custom planing facilities. Consequently, on returning from my upcoming stateside assignment, I would like to bring back a portable cement mixer, a 10-inch table saw with v-belt drive and a 14-inch or larger plane. However, if God gives us the strength, the church will be built even if we have to plane all those rough boards by hand. ■



Darrel Nichols has served in Côte d'Ivoire since 1985. He and his family currently reside in Goumère.



MASTER'S MEN

Do You Have A Furnace Room?

By Tom Dooley, General Director

An American couple visiting England a number of years ago decided to tour one of the most famous churches in London, Charles Haddon Spurgeon's Baptist Tabernacle. The couple arrived at the church an hour before the service was to begin. A bearded gentleman discovered them and inquired if he might help them.

They explained that they were visiting from America and asked if they could tour the church before service. The man told them that he was a member of the church and would be happy to show them around.

To their surprise however, he began by saying, "The first thing I want to show you is our furnace room." That was not exactly what the visiting couple had in mind, but they politely followed the man down the winding stairs. Down they went. To the basement, then to the sub-basement, the sub-sub-basement. Deeper and deeper into the darkness they descended until they finally protested, "You don't need to take us any farther, we know what a furnace room looks like."

The man's resolve did not waver. He insisted, "It is very important when you come to our church that you see our furnace room." They continued to the final sub-basement, into the coal storage room, which brought them to a huge oak door. Pointing to the door the man said, "This is our furnace room."

"Well, thank you very much. Now, may we see the rest of the church?"

"No, you haven't been in the furnace room yet!"

"Well, we don't really want to go into the furnace room."

The gentleman again insisted, "But you must."

The couple conceded and entered the massive room that housed the boilers and furnaces. To their amazement, that is not all the furnace room contained. Hundreds of people were gathered there, on their knees in prayer.

At this point the gentleman tour guide introduced himself as Pastor Charles Spurgeon. He told the couple, "People come from all over the world to see this church and what God is doing. He is doing incredible things, but they think it's because of me that God is doing all of this. I'm not the reason. The reason things are happening here is that hundreds gather here in

the furnace room and pray for the services, for my sermon, for my ministry. They pray for conversions, for Christians to be fully committed to Christ. That is why God does the ministry He does here. It isn't because of me."

Every church needs a "furnace room." Every church needs men who are committed to praying for their pastor, the services, the congregation, the lost and the advancement of the gospel around the world. If our churches are going to bear lasting fruit, we must get back to our knees.

In the January-February 1999 issue of *ATTACK* (Master's Men Newsletter), the Master's Men Department announced the beginning of a new program that we hope to see hundreds of our churches and men adopt. The program is called "Burden Bearers."

Burden Bearers is designed to get our men involved in prayer on three levels. First, we hope to see our men cultivate a strong personal prayer life. Second, men will make a commitment to involve themselves in impacting their church in prayer, in three ways. 1) Praying for the pastor. 2) Praying for the church. 3) Praying for the lost. Third, men will participate in advancing the cause of Christ throughout the world by praying for our denominational leaders, Bible colleges and missionaries.

I challenge you to get involved. Our department has prepared information that we would be happy to send you to help you organize a "Burden Bearers" prayer ministry. Men, let's take a stand where we can stand tallest, on our knees. ■

Blown Away by His Faithfulness

How could a good God let this happen? Why doesn't He do something to help?" Our Sunday School class was sharing testimonies about hard times when one member told of her family's recent adversity. "We were really hurting," she explained, "and these questions only seemed appropriate at the time."

How and why—How can this be part of God's plan for me? Why is this happening to us? No Christian is exempt from the bumps and bruises of life. In fact, God's Word anticipates our asking why and provides soothing counsel as we grapple with them.

One Old Testament book even begins with "how" and ends with "why." The Hebrew title for this book, Lamentations, comes from its first word—"how." Walter Kaiser refers to the book as "an orphan," one of the most neglected portions of the Old Testament.

Some might wonder, "Why write or preach on Lamentations, for crying out loud?" (Pardon the pun.) Such an attitude is surprising when we consider two outstanding features of this remarkable work: *its careful artistry* and *its compelling message*.

Lamentations is a literary masterpiece: five poems, all with 22 verses, except the central poem; as the axis of the book, this third chapter contains 66 verses. The first four poems are acrostics—poems whose lines or stanzas move consecutively through the Hebrew alphabet from "A" to "Z" (*aleph* to *tau*). Since the book portrays Jeremiah's mournful response to Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians in 586 B.C., he uses a poetic meter often chosen to convey grief and sorrow.

Another design feature of Lamentations is the prophet's generous use of vivid images or word pictures. He likens Judah to a lonely, weeping wid-

ow; an enslaved laborer; a betrayed lover; a captured fugitive; a hunted animal; an abandoned orphan; and a hungry, ragged beggar. Her heart melts and her tears flow like a river.

She is surrounded, walled in, chained, lost on a winding path, and entombed with the dead. Jeremiah depicts God, in His judgment, as a consuming fire, a lurking bear, a crouching lion ready to pounce on its prey, and an expert archer poised to shoot his arrow.

These literary features blend to support the most important facet of the book's appeal, however: its relentless testimony to God's faithfulness. Strange as it seems, this divine loyalty is the reason for Judah's present anguish. As the Lord's covenant partner, the nation faced the threat of chastening should she violate His holy demands (Lev. 26; Deut. 27, 28). Judah had indeed sinned and was now finding out the hard way that God keeps His word (Lam. 1:5, 12, 18, 22; 2:17; 4:6, 11).

Yet a glimmer of hope survives. God has not "forsaken" or "forgotten forever" His compassion toward His people (Lam. 5:20). The heart of the central poem, chapter three, resolves Judah's frustrated "how" and perplexed "why" by assuring her of God's loyal love:

This I recall to mind, therefore I have hope. It is of the LORD's mercies (*hesed*—loyal love) that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him, (Lam. 3:21-24).

Instead of calamity, God sends "good" upon those who will repent and return to Him (Lam. 3:25, 26, 27, 39-41). In times of apparent tragedy, our first response should be one of spiritual self-inventory: Is God, in His

faithfulness, using pain to get my attention and awaken repentance (see Amos 4:6-12)?

One year ago this month, tornadoes devastated my home neighborhood of East Nashville. My mother's property suffered extensive damage. With many other victims, we also were asking the "hows" and "whys." Unknown to us at the time, however, that apparent tragedy housed soon-emerging sense of renewed confidence in the faithful ways of a loving, sovereign God. Why did we ever doubt Him? How great is His faithfulness! ■



Garnett Reid

COMING NEXT MONTH

- **Convention Preview**
- **The God of Surprises**
- **Closet Concerns**
- **Dear Mom...**

Should You Conduct a Radio Broadcast?



Dennis Wiggs

Radio is still an effective method of communicating the gospel. Radio not only allows for the presentation of biblical truths, but the programs inform the community of the pastor's personality and the church's programs.

Seek the Wisdom of Others

George Lee in Goldsboro, NC, and Guy Owens, in Fountain, NC, could give you valuable information on the value, methods, problems, challenges and support of a radio ministry. Both men have been effective in radio broadcasting over a long period of time.

Contact the Station

In conjunction with the radio station manager, you must determine the program length, days and time. Programs that are presented when people are traveling to and from work are ideal. Securing a slot just before or after the news could be most effective. Sign a contract. Be clear about the cost and the method of payment.

Determine Program Length

Five-minute programs will demand more preparation time. Ten- or 15-minute programs would be easier to present since a preacher could use material he has previously preached. Will music be part of the program? Music demands much more preparation time and equipment.

What About Finances?

Sometimes the church will include this ministry in the budget. Preachers sometimes take this on as a personal project. Occasionally, advertising can pay for the time. But don't depend on listeners to support the program financially in most cases. The radio station must be paid on time. If a bill gets over

two months behind and you are responsible, borrow the money, pay the station and discontinue the ministry.

Prepare Well

Radio preachers shouldn't stutter or repeat themselves when radio time is costing a dollar or two every minute. Heart and mind preparation are essential when the preacher sits behind a microphone and preaches to an unseen audience.

Radio programs should not include information that dates the broadcast. Prepare each tape with the intention of using it again. Evangelist Oliver Green and Pastor Vernon McGee, who have been with the Lord many years, continue to be heard over many radio stations. They preached for the present but prepared for the future.

Offer Literature?

Booklets can be purchased in bulk quantities and offered on the radio programs. Usually literature on the family will be requested more than any other subject. However, don't depend upon this to pay the radio bill. Postage will often cost more than the literature. Many people who write will not send any money.

Count the cost before you get involved in offering literature. Most listeners never write. I read that one in a thousand listeners will write. I believe that figure is fairly accurate. If the literature and postage are paid for, you could offer the materials to listeners who request by a telephone call. More men will call; more women will write.

Is This Ministry Fruitful?

A lady in our town, parked her vehicle on the shoulder of the road and prayed the sinner's prayer to trust Christ as personal Savior after hearing

Sigbee Dilda preach on a radio program. A family from Puerto Rico, visiting in the Williamsburg, Virginia, area, heard my Saturday morning broadcast and accepted the invitation to attend our Sunday morning church service. Former pastor Bob Lewis preached. The man and woman accepted Christ as Savior at the church altar.

Thank the Lord for the decisions; however, the radio preacher can present the gospel for months, even years, and hear of only a few decisions.

Benefit the Church?

Sometimes people will visit the church of a radio preacher. Often, they attend just one service. Maybe they want to see if he is tall, short, fat or thin! In some areas, the radio program will attract a few prospects for salvation or church membership.

But radio also attracts some peculiar people, like the man who wants to tell you what to preach (and it takes him two hours to explain), or the people who send you anonymous letters, cassette tapes and booklets to set you straight on some doctrine. If the young preacher thinks he can build a strong church through his radio broadcast, think again. Radio is really a missionary ministry. The seed is planted and the radio preacher trusts the Lord to bear spiritual fruit.

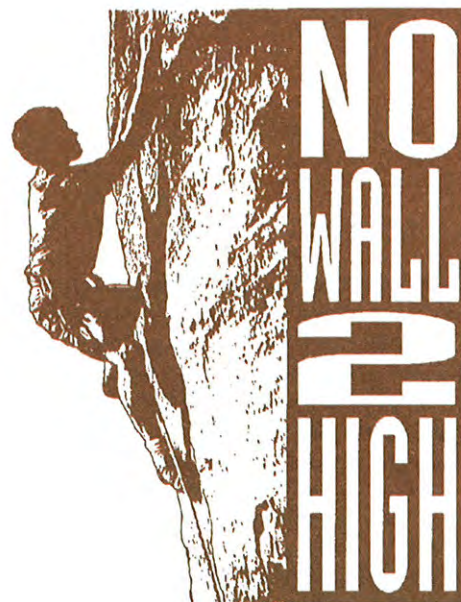
Still Convinced?

Purchase a quality recorder after discussing it with the radio station manager. Purchase the tapes or discs. Pray. Study. Prepare. Take the recorded material to the radio station. Trust God for the results. May you experience spiritual fruit from this ministry. I would be interested in hearing from you. ■

YOUTH UPDATE

National Youth Conference

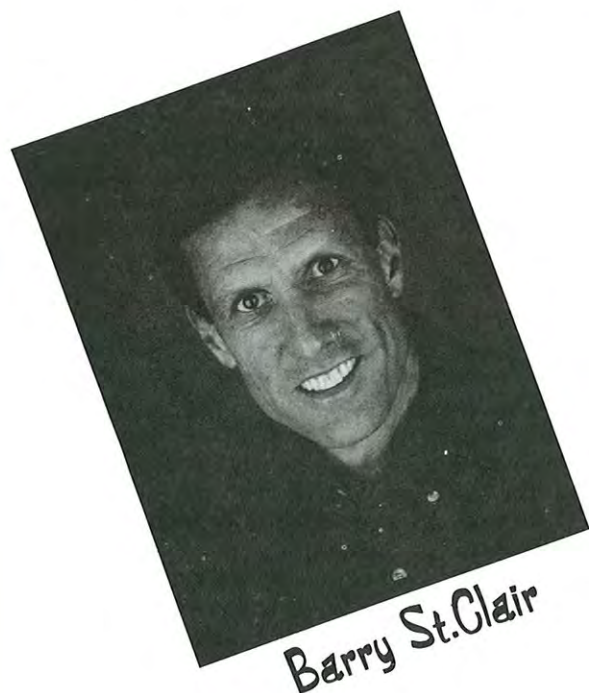
July 18-22, 1999
Marriott Marquis
Atlanta, Georgia



Sunday - Wednesday

Teen Worship Service

Speaker



Barry St.Clair

Author & Founder
of Reach Out Ministries

Witnessing to Unchurched Family Members

By Lyle D. Muller

(St. Louis: Concordia Publishing House, 1998, 63 pp., paperback, \$12.99).



Thomas Marberry

The author of this interesting workbook is Dr. Lyle D. Muller who is affiliated with the Board for Congregational Services of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. This book is a study guide to be used by clergy and laity who have a special interest in ministering to mixed families and sharing the gospel with unsaved family members.

According to the author, "There are approximately 120 to 125 million unchurched adults in the United States." He notes that as many as 25% of those who are listed on church membership rolls today are in reality inactive. They play no meaningful role in the work and ministry of the church. He also points out that ten percent of the population of the United States now belongs to a non-Christian religion.

In some congregations today as many as 50% of the believers live in mixed families. They are sharing life with loved ones who have no religious commitment or who are mem-

bers of non-Christian religions. This is a situation which demands the attention of the church. These Christians need the help, guidance and strength which the church can give.

The church must also develop strategies to share the gospel with the unsaved relatives of its members.

It gives helpful advice on what to do and what not to do to mixed families.

Mixed families encounter special problems. Sometimes Christians are not able to witness effectively because they do not understand the special dynamics that are found in mixed families. One of the most valuable contributions of this workbook is that it encourages Christians to understand and appreciate their unsaved loved ones.

Friends and family are often the most effective witnesses. Muller notes that 80 percent of the people who join churches do so through the invitation and influence of a family member or friend. The author offers several practical suggestions to help Christians wit-

ness effectively to unsaved family members. It emphasizes the need for regular prayer and Bible study. It also reminds the believer to set a good example by attending church regularly and being involved in the Lord's work.

This workbook was written specifically for use in Lutheran churches, and Free Will Baptists may not be familiar with all of its terminology. It contains, however, the kind of information that Free Will Baptists need. Most if not all Free Will Baptists have unsaved friends and loved ones with whom they can share the faith.

Unfortunately, many are not sharing Christ with their family members on a regular basis. They may not know how to share their faith, or they may need encouragement to do so. Using materials like this, churches can provide training and encouragement to help Christians share their faith specifically with unsaved family members. ■

BEYOND BELIEF



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RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

Questions Children Ask

HAMBURG, GERMANY (EP)—The question most children and young people in Germany want to ask Jesus Christ is "Why do You let evil things happen?" A survey by the German magazine *Parents* interviewed 1,823 children ages 7-17 at 70 schools, asking them, "If Jesus were here today, what would you tell or ask Him?"

Questions about evil led the list (68.5 percent), followed by a question about why there are rich and poor people in the world (53.4 percent). Nearly half (45.4 percent) would ask Jesus to do something for the unemployed, one third would ask how the world was made (34.6 percent), and what God looks like (31.1 percent).

One 10-year-old pupil said, "I would ask Jesus if He wanted to be my friend."

Six Clergymen Murdered

MINDOULI, REPUBLIC OF CONGO (EP)—Six clergymen on a peace mediation mission to a rebel group in the Democratic Republic of Congo were killed, Radio France Internationale reported.

The six were members of a church committee established to try to end armed conflict. They were killed "in cold blood," according to witnesses quoted in the radio report.

The clergymen, all from the Pool region of Congo, had gone to speak to the rebel leaders without any armed escort to avoid any appearance of threat.

The Congolese government is blaming the attack on followers of exiled opposition leader Bernard Kolelas.

Hedders Open Doors for Gospel In Russia

MOSCOW, RUSSIA (EP)—Evangelicals in Russia often face harassment from the Orthodox Church, but it doesn't always turn out badly, according to Russell Kyzar, a South-

ern Baptist missionary in Moscow.

Speaking with Baptist Press, Kyzar recalled a volunteer team that traveled to Luhovitsi for an evangelistic outreach last August. A local pastor had arranged the required permits for the group to perform at the local "cultural house," Kyzar said, but a gang of hecklers met their minibus as it pulled up in front of the auditorium.

"These young people were carrying communist flags and placards in both English and Russian that said, 'Yankees, go home.' They were shouting their disdain for our presence," Kyzar recalled. "They were loud but not physically aggressive."

Later that week, a local television station broadcast interviews with the Americans and with the hecklers. "During the interview the young people first said they had acted on their own, but then later they admitted they had been paid by local Orthodox leaders," Kyzar said. "Apparently, they just did it for the money."

Kenya Bible Thefts Continue

NAIROBI, KENYA (EP)—Christian groups in Kenya have launched a campaign to stop the theft of Bibles after the books began disappearing from schools and churches in the East African nation. Since June 1998, some 1,000 Bibles have been taken under false pretenses from boarding schools and other Christian institutions, according to the Rev. Henry Kathii, general secretary of the Bible Society of Kenya.

It is not known who is stealing the Bibles. The Bible Society and partner Christian organizations, however, ran a notice in Nairobi daily newspapers last fall stating that "certain people, with the objective of destabilizing and destroying the church in Kenya, have organized themselves into a racket to withdraw Bibles from Christians."

Christian organizations in Kenya said the thieves have used false docu-

ments to borrow Bibles. For instance, an article in the *Sunday Times* said a forged letter from Nairobi Pentecostal Church had been used to "borrow" Bibles, which were never returned.

Claims that the stolen Bibles are being burned in satanic rituals can not be verified, Kathii said. "We have reason to believe that they are being destroyed," he said. Kathii called the theft of the Bibles "an affront to the Christian church (and) Christian faith."

Christian officials are doing "some very, very quiet checking" into who may be responsible for the loss of the Bibles. Kathii said an on-duty policeman had released the only person caught with a fake letter. The police officer has since been suspended, but there are no other suspects in custody.

"The government is taking (the issue) very seriously because it could trigger a religious fight between the people," he asserted.

Copycat Church Burning

REDDING, CA (EP)—Two men and a woman who were arrested for burning down a rural church in California's Shasta County told authorities that their actions were inspired by other church burnings and by anti-Christian heavy metal music. Steven Earl Deppe, 20, Mark Forrest Sanders, 18, and Dessie Zalesny, 18, were arrested in connection with a November 1998 fire which destroyed the 97-year-old St. Rose Catholic Church. ■

The Problem With Jesus

If Jesus walked the earth this spring, He wouldn't make it past Good Friday without the media branding Him as part of the lunatic fringe. Then He'd collide with charges of heresy from religious zealots who disagreed with Him, and questions about civil disorder from uneasy politicians.

The reason why is quite simple. Jesus refuses to be a philosopher; He insists on being God. He refuses to be a good man; He insists on being the God-Man. Critics want Him to be an example; He insists on being the Savior.

Islam identifies Jesus as one of 28 important prophets; He identifies Himself as Creator of the universe. Hinduism acknowledges that He is one more among the millions of gods. He acknowledges that He is God and there is none other.

Atheism thinks He's an evolutionary myth; He thinks He's the Alpha and Omega. Agnosticism calls Him a vague possibility; He calls Himself absolute Truth.

Marxists demand that He champion the downtrodden masses; He replies that "the poor ye have with you always." The militant right considers Him John Wayne with a halo . . . until He rides into town on a borrowed donkey and washes the feet of Judas Iscariot.

The wealthy want His approval to build bigger barns; He ignores new barns, talks about new birth and builds His Church. The angry poor wait for Him to redistribute the wealth; He advises "turn the other cheek" and "render unto Caesar."

The problem with Jesus is that He infuriates every generation. He can be criticized, criminalized and crucified, but He won't be Republican or Democrat, socialist or capital-

ist. His followers blossom in democracy's freedom; they thrive in spite of totalitarianism's oppression.

No wonder His words changed the course of history. The birth of this one boy child in Bethlehem created a first-century traffic jam with angels patrolling the fields, shepherds crowding into the manger scene and a camel caravan of intellectuals converging on the newborn and His parents.

Jesus had been on earth less than 48 hours when a nervous politician tried to kill Him. This deadly pattern of confrontation placed Him in harm's way for three decades until He was finally betrayed by a friend, rejected by His own people and crucified by men who never understood what they did.

When Jesus was 12, He rocked the Temple at Jerusalem because He didn't talk like a pre-teen but reasoned like a trained theologian. He amazed professional teachers and irritated His parents with His independent spirit.

By age 30 the public ministry of Jesus was one drum roll after another. He taught original material, made up His own illustrations and ignored rabbinical claptrap. He spoke as if He had final authority. Nobody could handle Him in open debate, even when they set carefully orchestrated traps. The common man loved Him while leaders fumed. He did not fit the mold and didn't care that He made the establishment shudder.

The problem with Jesus escalated as society's misfits sought Him out. Blind men called His name on the streets of Palestine. He gave them sight and left critics speechless to explain it. He created near riots by healing the sick on the Sabbath. After He fed thousands with a boy's lunch, worried leaders launched counter-measures to silence Him.



Jack Williams

He met the bereaved, wiped their tears and raised their dead—startling His detractors. But the biggest flap occurred when the sinful knelt before Him; He forgave them. And that was unforgivable!

Of course, the ultimate problem with Jesus was that He would not stay dead. He could be captured and was. He could be ridiculed, put on trial and condemned to death, and was. He could be crucified and was. He was just like everybody else, they said.

The trouble began when He died on Friday and the earth shook itself like a wet dog. Graves opened. Day became night. Then a few friends quietly buried Jesus in a borrowed tomb.

A huge stone secured the tomb's entrance to prevent His disciples from stealing the body. Roman soldiers stood guard to guarantee that the body stayed put. It worked. The disciples did not steal Jesus' body. They didn't try. They didn't have to. By Sunday morning, authorities had a bigger problem.

Three days after He was buried, Jesus walked out of the tomb and began telling people that He was alive. They believed Him. What could opponents do? Kill Him again? That didn't work the first time.

For 2,000 years, Jesus has changed the world one sinner at a time. The *Problem* from Nazareth heals the world's sick, loves society's unlovely, forgives the despicable, walks on the water of human history and preaches the Gospel of peace to men who prefer war.

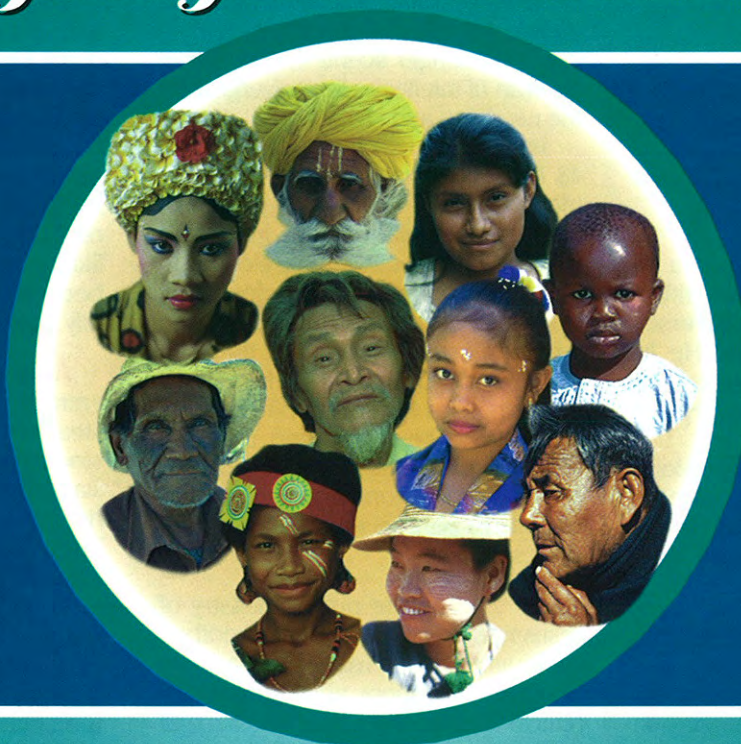
He brings the families of the earth together and makes us all brothers. The problem with Jesus is not Jesus. The problem is us. ■

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