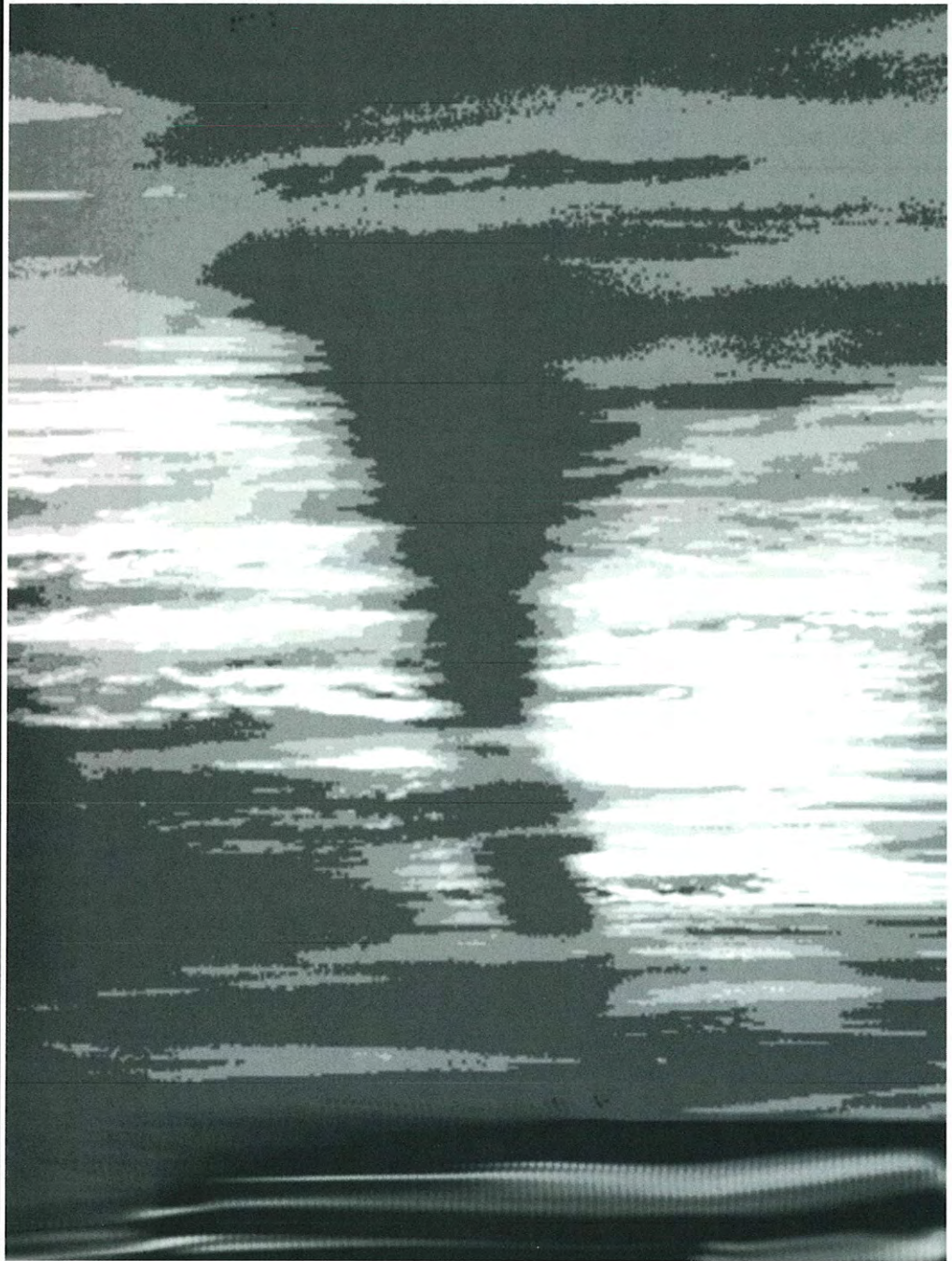


JULY 1999

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS



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Tornado!

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Lessons from
Littleton

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The Next Level

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All in Accord

One of the distinctive marks which defined the Church was harmony. The writer of Acts describes the Church with the phrase *with one accord*. The concept is that of one mind and harmonious in views and feelings. There were no schisms, no divided interests, no discordant purposes. The church congregated with one accord for prayer, praise and preaching.

Presence of Unity

It is clear that unity was present in the early Church. They did not strive to achieve unity. When the Church met it was with one accord. The writer of Acts gives the following description of the Church, "These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women, and Mary the mother of Jesus and with his brethren" (Acts 1:14).

In Acts 2:1 we read, "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place."

Portrait of Unity

What does biblical unity look like? How does unity manifest itself? What characterizes churches, district/state associations or national associations which meet with one accord?

They *recognize oneness*. They are keenly aware of their union with Christ. They remember that all believers are members of the body of Christ. Each remembers that he is a part of one body which has many members.

They *respect organization*. In Acts 1 the first item of business was the election of Matthias to fill the vacancy created by the fall of Judas. The election process implies that they believed someone needed to take part of the ministry and apostleship forfeited by Judas.

This concept is further illustrated by action taken in Acts 15 when the Church met in Jerusalem to make

some hard decisions regarding Gentile converts. The facts were discussed and the decisions made during the business meeting. Following the business meeting, the writer of Acts catalogued the decision in 15:25, 28-29.

Business meetings need not be disruptive, divisive or destructive when the church meets with one accord.

They *reflect obedience*. Those who met in the Acts upper room were meeting in obedience to the command of Christ to tarry in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit came. The church or association which assembles with one accord manifests that same spirit of obedience.

They *remember outreach*. Those who met in one accord in Acts had an outward focus. They were keenly aware of the final commission Christ gave the Church to preach the gospel to every creature in every part of the world. Any portrait of unity which does not have a focus on outreach is defective.

Power of Unity

Unity is a powerful ingredient. Unity enhances the worship, work, witness and walk of individual Christians as well as churches, associations and agencies. United we are strong. Divided we struggle. Free Will Baptists need to refocus on the power that unity can bring to the movement as a



Melvin Worthington

whole. We have neglected to take advantage of this important principle—the power of a united group.

Preservation of Unity

Paul beseeches the Christians in Ephesus to *endeavor to keep* the unity of the Spirit. Two things are essential if we are to keep the unity of the Spirit. One essential is *understanding*. For too long Free Will Baptists have endured misunderstanding, misinformation and misinterpretation of issues and incidents in our midst.

One reason we tend to have strife and schisms is lack of understanding. In order to preserve unity in our movement, we must seek complete information and come to an adequate and accurate understanding of the issues and incidents which confront us as a movement.

Another essential is *unselfishness*. One source of division, debate and discord in our movement is selfishness. Pride and arrogance contribute in a large measure to strife and schisms. We tend to marry arrogance and ignorance and call it spirituality. Often we reflect a selfish, stubborn and shortsighted view of reality.

Promoters of Unity

All in accord need not be an elusive dream for Free Will Baptists. We can meet at every level of our organizational structure *with one accord* without compromise, confusion and contrariness. We can communicate and cooperate with each other for the good of the whole movement.

The question which we each need to ask is, "How will I be remembered—as a promoter of unity or a promoter of discord in the Free Will Baptist denomination?" ■

The Secretary's Schedule

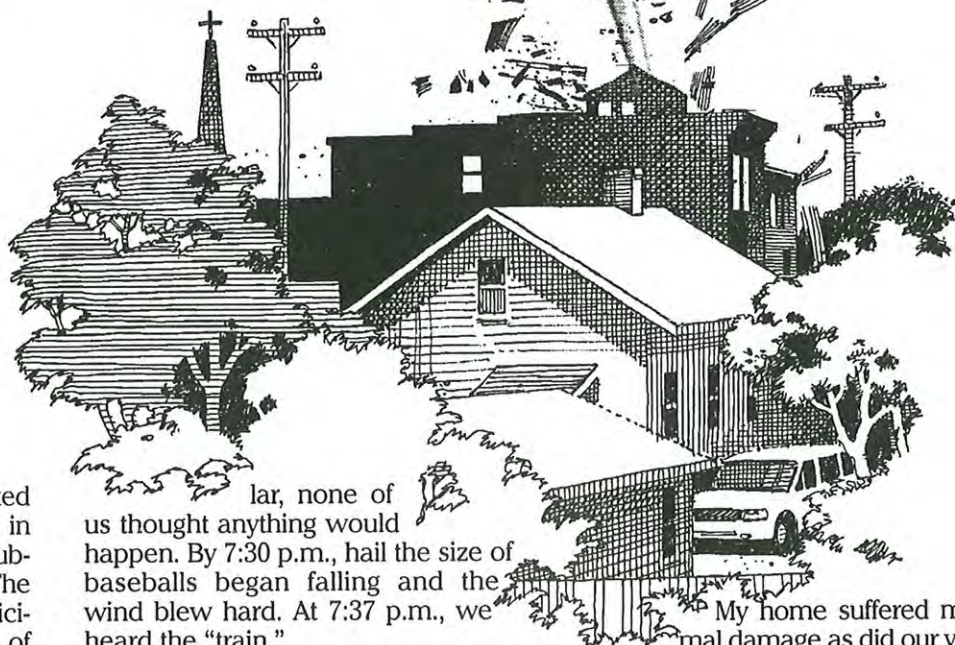
July 1999

- 13-16 Pre-Convention Meetings
Atlanta, Georgia
- 17 Executive Committee Meeting
Atlanta, Georgia
- 18-22 Free Will Baptist National Convention
Atlanta, Georgia
- 23 Post-Convention Meetings
Atlanta, Georgia

The killer tornado
roared outside her
door in Del City,
Oklahoma.

We Survived the F-5!

By Tami Caldwell



Monday, May 3, 1999, started out like any other day in Del City, Oklahoma, a suburb of Oklahoma City. The sky darkened as we anticipated a rain storm in our town of 24,000 people. By 6:30 p.m., weather reports had issued a tornado warning. My parents Frank and Linda Wiley; brother Todd and his wife Angela; sister and niece, Tina and Jordyn McAfee, had all joined my three children and me to wait out the storm.

By 7:00 p.m. reports showed major destruction, and Del City was in its path. As we proceeded to the cel-

lar, none of us thought anything would happen. By 7:30 p.m., hail the size of baseballs began falling and the wind blew hard. At 7:37 p.m., we heard the "train."

We were huddled in the cellar amazed by the sounds we heard outside. We would later discover that the "train" outside was a deadly F-5 tornado packing winds over 318 m.p.h., the highest ever recorded. Minutes later, the noise faded.

As we left the cellar, we could see the tornado and debris in the air, headed toward Tulsa and Kansas.

My home suffered minimal damage as did our vehicles. At the time, we were upset by the dents and dings on the cars. We all talked about the noises and the size of the hail. My father, brother and I decided to leave and check on their homes. As we drove through the neighborhood, the level of destruction increased alarmingly.

My cousin Toby and his family live a few blocks away, and as we neared

his street, the destruction was unbelievable. Two streets from his home, we were unable to go any further. Cars, parts of cars, roofs, trees and other debris blocked the road.

The neighborhood was unrecognizable. Dad continued saying that this wasn't the right street, that Toby didn't live around here. Just then a man, looking confused and dazed walked by. Dad asked him where we were. The man said, "Angela Lane."

That was Toby's street. There was no street, no homes, nothing but piles and piles of bricks and wood. We started running and screaming out Toby and Sheila's names.

Dad prayed, "Please God, not them, please no, no, no." As we neared the place where their home should have been, we stopped. Again Dad said, "This isn't it, this isn't their home."

I grabbed his arm and shouted, "This is their house. There is a pool. Toby has a pool. No one else around does. This is Toby's house."

But there was no house. Just a pile of trash, rubble, trees and a pool filled with bricks.

We called Toby's name looking around the pile to see if we could find them. People began emerging—some bloody, most in shock. My heart seemed to stop. I had to remember to breathe. I was screaming and crying and couldn't stop. Dad wanted to crawl into the wreckage to look for Toby and his family.

It was obvious to me that no one inside that house could have survived. My brother had been running around what was left of the house. He stopped Dad from crawling inside. We continued to call Toby's name. The front of the house was caved in, the garage gone. Their furniture was in the yard, the kids' toys in the street. I have never felt such utter fear and helplessness.

A neighbor came running toward us. The neighbor thought that Toby and his family had left earlier. No one could be certain. As more people began to show up, most of them thought Toby had left earlier.

We decided that, yes, Toby had to be gone. Three men approached us, asking if we were okay. We went with them down the street searching for survivors. As the group passed a pile of rubble, Dad heard something. One

of the guys told him it was just a cat. Dad decided to go back and check.

As he and my brother approached the pile, they yelled and listened. Dad heard a voice! Daddy and Todd began throwing things—a three-wheeler, a microwave and other items—trying to find this person. Within minutes they had pulled a woman out.

A horrible smell pervaded the air. The natural gas lines had burst.

Dad checked the woman. We knew her. She worked at the bank that we all use. She kept saying, "Frankie, I heard your voice. Frankie, Frankie." Dad and Toby had saved her life. They carried her to the street where someone offered to get her to a hospital.

About that time, Sheila's mother came running down the street. I grabbed her and screamed, "Where's Toby? Sheila? the babies?" She said they were safe. They had gone to Toby's dad's house for shelter. I grabbed Dad and Todd and told them. The relief was unbearable. My heart was beating so fast, Dad was crying. Todd hugged Dad and went to look for people to help.

Strangers would grab us, needing someone to hold on to. The whole neighborhood was gone. There was nothing. No houses, cars, trees. Nothing. A young man ran toward us. He was looking for his grandmother—the same woman my dad and brother had saved. They told him she was safe and that they had found her. He began to cry and hug Dad and Toby.

The police and EMSA had arrived. I wanted to get back to my kids. I wanted to see Mom. My husband was out of town, and I wanted to talk to him. We left the area and went back to my house. There was no electricity, water or phones—and we wanted to contact all our family. We split up into groups and left in cars to find out if everyone was all right.

Later that night we gathered at my grandmother's house. All accounted for, all safe. During the next 24 hours, the magnitude of destruction became overwhelming. The number of destroyed homes grew. Twenty-four church families, four day care families, one day care worker, four youth members, four bus children had all become homeless.

The number of homes destroyed around us reached 700. One young girl who attends our youth services had

been hospitalized. She had been home with her father when the tornado lifted them into the air. Her father didn't survive. Her mother had died four years earlier. This young girl lost everything in a blink—her family, her home, and now she was in the hospital.

I spent three days with her at the hospital. The halls were filled with battered and broken bodies. I have never experienced such a frightening scene. Total strangers would begin talking to me, telling of their experience, of their loss. I have never hugged so many people in so short a time. At night it was difficult to sleep: all the faces, the stories kept running through my mind.

During the hours following the tornado, my father began coordinating aid for those in need. Food and clothing were collected, beds for those without a place to sleep. Over 500 meals a day are being delivered by our church to people working in the community, people looking for anything that isn't ruined.

My brother-in-law is a fireman. He was on duty when the tornado hit. The things he saw were unbelievable. Everyone has a story. Everyone has a different experience. We all share the pain and shock. So many people have helped. The firemen along with the police have worked double and triple shifts. Everyone wants to help. After seeing the destruction, you just want to ease the burden of those hurt.

Del City has united as a family. We are all helping one another. Cleaning up, looking for anything salvageable, listening and caring. As I write, it has been only four days since the tornado. It seems like four years. My 14-year-old daughter, Lindse, has been preparing meals; Bethanie, 12, has stayed at the hospital caring for two of her classmates. Matthew, 10, helped search for salvageable items.

So many need so much: families without homes, without clothes or food, some with no insurance. We need your prayers. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Tami Caldwell is a member of Sunnyside Free Will Baptist Church in Del City, Oklahoma, where her father, Reverend Frank Wiley, pastors.

The secret to church growth is not a secret after all.

How to Take a Church to the Next Level

By Dann Patrick

Brother Steve Roberson, co-pastor of Gospel Light Baptist Church in Walkertown, North Carolina, told me an interesting story about a service at their church. The guest preacher's sermon topic was "Vision."

In the course of his message, the preacher kept saying that "this church would not be running over 3,000 without vision—you've got to see it. And this church would not be doing the great things it is doing without a great vision—you've got to see it."

He concluded "A man like Dr. Bobby Roberson, the pastor, had a vision. He saw it."

After the service Steve and his father, Dr. Bobby Roberson, were talking about the service when Dr. Roberson looked at his son, Steve, and said, "Son, you know something?"

"No, what's that, Dad?" he asked.

Dr. Roberson looked at him seriously and said, "I never saw anything."

Steve said, "What do you mean, Dad?"

Dr. Roberson said, "I mean, I never saw us running over 3,000 in attendance. I never saw all these great buildings and the great and effective soul-winning ministry God has given us."

Dr. Roberson went on, "I guess I am as surprised as anyone about it. I just set out to do right—to preach the Bible, to win souls and to train soul winners and God has done the rest."

Do What's Right

I think that's a most interesting and humorous story, and it describes our church and my own philosophy. My personal philosophy about church growth has never been, "Will it cause us to grow?" but rather, "Is it right?" If I do right, if I am obedient to

God and can lead my church in that direction, then I am successful.

But if I employ methods or use programs that are not pleasing to God, then I am not successful because I am not obedient. That is why numbers do not always tell the true spiritual temperature of a church.

Many of our churches started bus ministries in the 70s in order to grow. A few began bus ministries who probably should not have. They were playing a pseudo-spiritual "keep up with the Joneses" game. Some used questionable, even carnal methods, to get kids to ride the bus.

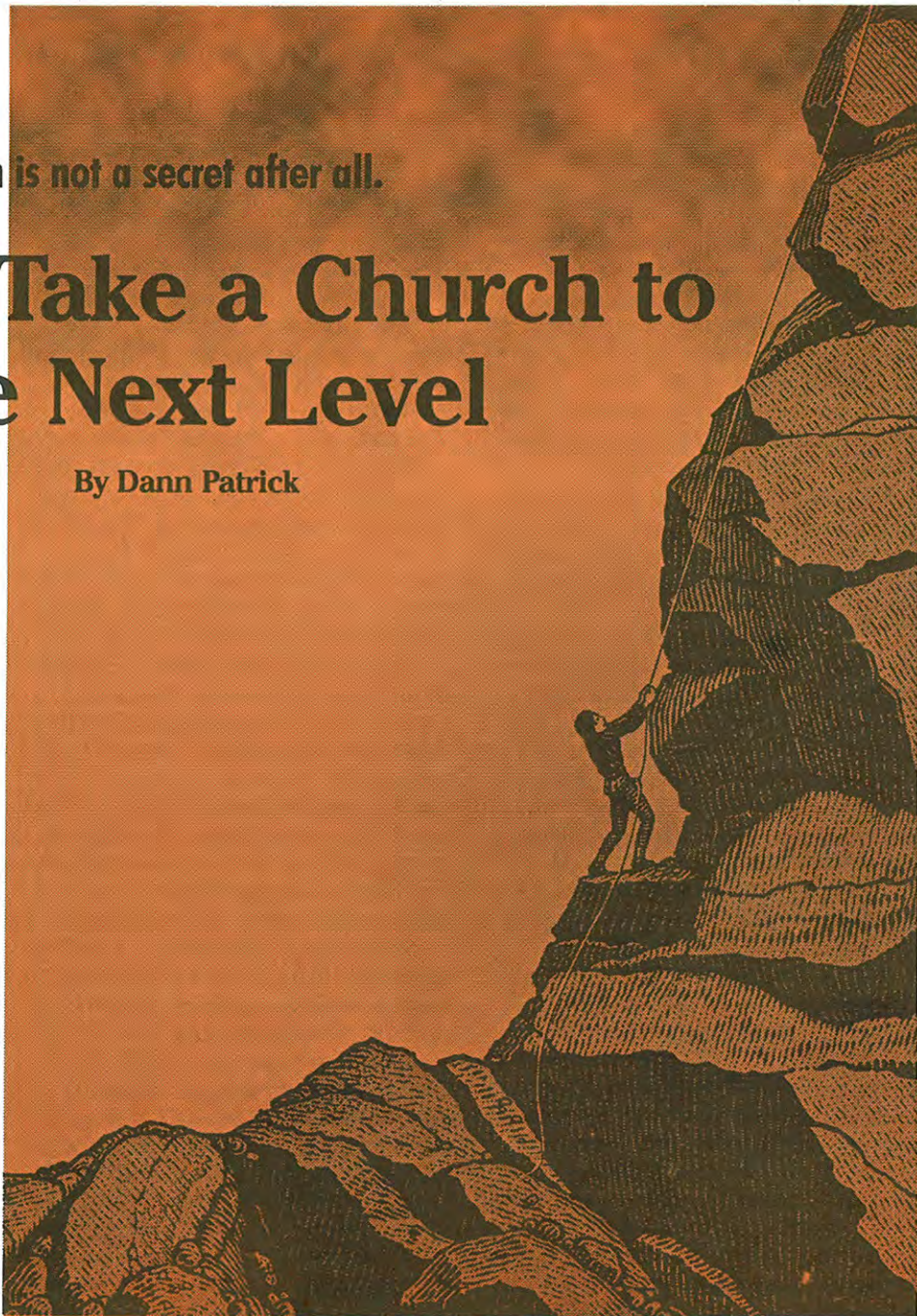
Bus ministries consequently took it on the chin. Today, I hear a lot about user-friendly churches and have learned

on investigation that many bus ministry critics from years ago use worldly and carnal methods to get a crowd.

As one writer said, "It doesn't matter who it is that is using fleshly, worldly methods in church. Whether it is the fundamentalist crowd or the neo-evangelical crowd. Flesh is still flesh and even though numbers may increase, God is not pleased."

Bible-Friendly Church

I like to say that instead of user-friendly our church is Bible-friendly. The reason is that I want to please God as an individual and as a church. Some things that are called user-friendly are often no more than sanc-



tified common sense. Things like a well-staffed and brightly-decorated nursery, signs leading to the church, friendly ushers and greeters, the concern of the people, and more.

That is not user-friendly; that is common sense. We were doing some of those things before Bill Gates made his first billion or George Barna conducted his first survey.

If one means by user-friendly, however, doing away with the pulpit because it is too authoritarian or removing the crosses because they are offensive or ceasing visitation efforts because they are too aggressive or stopping public invitations because they are too intrusive or going to dialogue and dramas instead of preaching, then count me out. That may fit the definition of user-friendly in our world, and it may attract a crowd, but it is not Bible-friendly and it is not pleasing to God.

I suppose that our church is a dinosaur of sorts. From what period does our dinosaur date? All the way back to the first century. Back to New Testament days. Back to Acts chapter two days.

I like what Dr. Jerry Vines said about church growth. "The idea is going around that you cannot reach the lost by prayer, preaching and personal soul winning anymore. The rush is on for some church method that is easier and faster. We are always looking for a quick fix . . . We have turned to marketing moguls and the entertainment media to get a crowd." He's right!

Five Growth Elements

We made the determination to stick by "what was right" instead of "what will work." As a result, God has blessed us to reach a new level.

Yes, we have a vision. In 1998 we averaged 721 on Sunday mornings. That's a new average attendance record for us. We also set a new record in 1997. It has not been mushroom growth, but steady year-by-year growth. Here are five elements that have produced that growth.

Work

We are like the Smith-Barney crowd—we do it the old-fashioned way. We work. Our paid staff and volunteer staff put in major hours every week knocking on doors and work-

ing for the Lord.

I smile when I hear about some pastor who goes to the hospital in a distant city, sometimes an hour or two away. Many pastors make a full day out of that one visit. They leave home about 8:30, visit awhile, look around the city, find someone to eat lunch with, get back about mid-afternoon and go straight home saying that they are just "worn out."

Without saying anything else, I can tell you that a schedule like that will not take you to the next level.

Preaching

Preaching is a second element. Sound, strong, Bible preaching. I do my best to feed the flock every time they come. Also, I have tried to expose my people to America's best preachers and pastors by bringing them to the Faith Church pulpit. None of big days, themes or special services are built on dramas, singings or entertainment. They are solidly anchored to preaching.

Help

I get help anywhere I can. We do not do a lot of big days, but I like the Roll Call Sunday each year. It helps us to get bonafide prospects. Our folks are encouraged not to invite other church members but to invite the unsaved and unchurched. After a big day we have hundreds of good prospects.

One of our best, untapped big day people is Dr. Curtis Linton in Oklahoma. He has had more success in this area than anyone else I know (certainly in our ranks). He and his church have been written up in *Liberity Journal* by church growth expert, Elmer Towns. Brother Curtis is one of us. He knows Free Will Baptists.

I have picked his brain and borrowed from him. I constantly try to learn what Bible-friendly churches like Curtis Linton's Cornerstone FWB Church are doing to reach folks.

Excellence

We try to do a good job of what we do. Early in my ministry here at Faith, we took an in-church survey and narrowed a list down to 10 main reasons why folks attend Faith. We went to work improving those areas and expanding

those ministries. Since we know they are already working, we try our best in areas that are tried and tested.

Youth

We have invested literally countless hours and thousands of dollars in our youth ministry. We not only pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers, we put feet on our prayers. I tell our people that we are trying to train an army of young people who will make a difference in our world.

Consequently, God has blessed us to send out missionaries, pastors, Christian school teachers and other full-time workers. We have teens who can give devotions, preach, tell Bible stories, help on bus routes and effectively lead people to Jesus Christ. As a result, we have 22 young people enrolled in Christian colleges. We have seen over 30 go into full-time service in 10 years.

We found, as Dr. Oswald Smith observed years ago, that the farther our light shines, the brighter it is at home.

While these are not all the ingredients that helped our church reach another level, they emphasize the important ones. We continue to do as we should, realizing that we have not arrived. We pray for God's blessings and for Holy Spirit endowment knowing that without them we are never "on the level" spiritually, no matter what level we are on.

Like Dr. Bobby Roberson, I guess I did not see it. We have tried to do what is right and God has chosen to bless us and move us to another level. We plan to maintain that same approach and believe that God will move us to other levels. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Dann Patrick pastors Faith Free Will Baptist Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina.

A Christian counselor responds to the Colorado massacre.

Lessons from Littleton

By Lewis Campbell



When word first came that snipers had taken hostages at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, I purposely tried to avoid the news as much as possible. However, there was something hauntingly different about boys 17 and 18 years old from a “stable” middle-class suburban school shooting their classmates.

Apparently months of research and planning went into the shooting. This can not be passed off as a “crime of passion” or the “pitiful cry” for help from a deranged youngster. It was an act of cold-blooded planned violence.

The blame game will accomplish nothing. People will talk for years wondering what could have been

done differently. No amount of accusing can bring back the precious youngsters killed or maimed. It seems, however, that the Christian world needs to analyze the situation in terms of what our mission is. There are things we need to learn from this situation.

The first lesson we need to learn is that we are living in a different world than most of us grew up in. A well-known advertisement says, “This is not your father’s Oldsmobile.” That could be said of the communities where most of us live, worship and minister.

While the Internet has been a powerful force for good, as any missionary can tell you, it has made all sorts of information, much of which is undesir-

able, available in millions of homes across America. Since youngsters are usually more computer literate than their parents, the average parent would not have the foggiest notion what information is accessible to youngsters “in good Christian homes.”

One report said that the boys could take \$200 and get enough material at the hardware store to make 30 bombs in one weekend. The accessibility of money and information is new to people of the older generation. This money to a teenager represents less than two weekends’ work at McDonald’s. Any teenager committed to a task could save \$200 in a short time, which gives them flexibility for either good or evil that the older generation did not have.

Bottom Line Lesson 1

Never in the history of adolescence has a generation of youngsters had access to as much information, free time and financial resources as the teens of the 21st century. These resources will be used for either good or evil depending on the role models they have and the structure they live in. The person who is innovative enough to channel the resources would have a virtually unlimited power or energy source at his disposal.

This incident also serves as a graphic illustration of Jeremiah 17:9, "The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, who can know it?" *Time* magazine states that Klebold and Harris had been convicted in January 1998 for breaking into a van and stealing \$400 worth of electronic equipment. Last February 3, both were allowed to finish the rehabilitation program early, having been such "model participants."

The simplistic analyses would say that these young men were what we commonly call "sociopaths" and knew how to take advantage of the system for their own evil intentions. While this is possibly legitimate, it is just as possible that these young men were in a state of denial over anger and/or hurt to the point that they themselves did not realize it was there.

Almost any pastor can tell of "model Christians" whose hearts seethe with unresolved guilt, anger, bitterness or hurt. Is this what Jesus meant when He talked about the Pharisees cleaning the outside of the cup?

Bottom Line Lesson 2

The Christian who understands man's sinful nature has a real advantage in understanding what occurred in Colorado. This understanding will help us avoid unnecessary hand-wringing or social guilt-tripping. At the same time, the Christian youth worker should be sensitive to what Bill Gothard calls the "underlying root cause of rebellion."

Then there is the issue of the insiders and outsiders, or what the media prefers to call "the problem of cliques." It would be easy to ignore this issue since the secular media has blown it out of proportion. However, anyone who has worked with youth in a

church with an aggressive outreach ministry knows that he has, in fact, two youth groups. One is the insiders, i.e. the offspring of the pillars of the church; and the other, the outsiders, brought in on buses or lured in by activities.

Bottom Line Lesson 3

The youth worker, of course, will have as his goal discipling the teenagers. He will be aware not only of needs, but of resources that can be used to make the isolated youngster part of the group. He must also, by helping him find his spiritual gifts, give him a legitimate reason for self-worth.

To carry this a step further, the doctrine of grace is a critical issue here since many of these children rightly or wrongly feel estranged from their parents. The concept of a God who is a father who shows unconditional love or, as John says, "grace and truth" will blow the kids' minds.

The worker who can impress this concept on a teenager has made a friend for life and maybe created a world-changer. (Moody's biographer could describe him as such an alienated youth, and product of a one-parent home with limited resources until he met William Kendall).

The most bittersweet lesson to be learned from the Colorado shooting surfaced a week and a half later when the parents of one of the felons refused to cooperate with investigators because they could not be granted immunity. If you are like me, at first glance this seemed unreasonable. But these families had already been tried and convicted in the court of public opinion.

This is a day when a parent is powerless to stop a child's temper tantrum at the grocery store for fear of being reported to the Child Protection Agency, and teachers expect parents to support the schools but make no secrets of their rights to point out the "archaic beliefs" of the parents to their children.

Add to the fact that if *All in the Family* and *Bart Simpson* are typical of society's view of the family, parental figures are expected to be idiots and the real heroes are the smart-mouthed, undisciplined kids. In this environment, it is quite normal for parents to feel paranoid. Parents

need an advocate somewhere.

Bottom Line Lesson 4

A largely untapped opportunity, in my opinion, is the multitude of frustrated parents who, on one hand, are doing the best job they can, but on the other hand, realize that their best is not good enough. Whatever the reason for this, they need hope instead of castigation. This is a wide open mission field, the surface of which has not been scratched.

In the May 3, 1999, issue of *Time* magazine on page 25, there was a picture I found particularly haunting. It was a photo of three teens fleeing from the shooters. These were nice-looking, neat, clean-cut young men with "fundamentalist haircuts" in blue jeans and t-shirts. It struck me that these kids could have been in my Sunday School class or youth group on a given Sunday.

These are ordinary kids like any youth worker sees on Sunday. These are all-American kids. It happened in Littleton; it could have happened in Neosho or New Bern; it could have happened in Monet or Mobile, Conway or Corpus Christi or any town in America.

Most people who read this article will never be called on to counsel in a situation like Littleton or Paducah or Jonesboro or other places where atrocities occur. To say that it couldn't happen is unrealistic. To say that we don't live in the same world and face the same kind of people and the same problems and needs, is naiveté of the worst sort.

On the other hand, to see the situation is the first step to victory. The Bible tells us to seek wisdom, to pray for understanding and to expect victory. The first step of the process is being aware of the problem. May God grant that no youngster ever experiences tragedy because we were too busy to be aware of the problem, learn about it and prayerfully seek for realistic solutions. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Lewis Campbell is a professional counselor who is in private practice in Little Rock, Arkansas. He is a charter member of the American Association of Christian Counselors. He was appointed by the governor to Arkansas' Rehabilitation Advisory Commission.

New ideas from the Free Will Baptist Media Commission.

Climb Aboard!

By Steve Faison

Most of us have heard a variation of the story about the man crossing Niagara Falls on a tight rope while pushing a wheelbarrow. He asked the crowd if they believed he could push the wheelbarrow across with a man inside it, the crowd cheered approval. The crowd suddenly quieted when he asked for volunteers.

That describes what the Media Commission has felt the last few years. The denomination has welcomed our projects, for which we are thankful. However, when we ask churches and associations to help finance projects, no one seems willing to "climb in the wheelbarrow" and fund them.

Limited Success

During the last three years, the Media Commission has produced \$10,000 worth of useful materials on a combined three-year Together Way budget of \$3,800. For this degree of success, we point to the cooperation of Florida and Tennessee Free Will Baptists. Otherwise, we would have been unable to complete what we feel our denomination needs in the area of media.

However, we must have more revenue to continue producing products that the denomination has endorsed. We want to continue creating materials to use, but it takes "up front" money. The four Commissions authorized by the National Association each receive one-half of one percent of undesignated monies given to The Together Way Plan.

This means that after funds are allocated to the Executive Office, the Commissions receive 27½ cents out of every \$100 from Together Way



funds that arrive undesignated at the National Offices. We are thankful for the support through The Together Way Plan. The Media Commission believes it is the ideal way to support the total Free Will Baptist work. Still, we cannot continue to provide materials given our budgetary restraints.

Producing radio and television commercials for Free Will Baptists has been a joy for members of the Media Commission. The associations that have utilized the commercials have been excited with the responses they received.

We want to get the gospel message into as many homes as possible. One way to achieve that goal is through media. Media plays an important role in our society, and we believe in utilizing the media to influence our world for Christ.

Unlimited Possibilities

The tasks of continuing to produce quality media resources and finding the funding to make them possible loom large. We feel compelled to produce a wide variety of material for our denomination, but financially we cannot do so at the present time. In order to accomplish both these tasks, we have devised a three-tiered plan of support in addition to The Together Way Plan.

For the church or association that sends a monthly gift of \$50 or an annual gift of \$600 to the Media Commission, we will provide them with a custom web-site.

The church or association that provides the Media Commission with a monthly gift of \$25 or a one-time gift of \$300 will receive the package of radio spots released last year.

New print slicks will be available this year. We will make available approximately six print slicks suitable for newspaper, magazine or yellow pages ads. They will be given to all our national home missionaries, and made available to any church or association for a monthly gift of \$10 or a one-time annual gift of \$120.

Each year the gifts are given, updates on the products will be provided. This will give the denomination an opportunity to utilize the products being made available as well as help fund future products. It will also allow The Together Way offerings received to fund administrative and meeting costs.

Get on Board

This May, the Home Missions Department allocated funds for production of a church video. The concept is

to provide churches with a video approximately 4-6 minutes in length to use in visitation and outreach ministries. The first portion of the video will be centered on who Free Will Baptists are and what we believe, and will be generic in nature. The last portion of the project will be a one- to two-minute personal word from the pastor and congregation to give a more local, personal flavor to the video.

Camera equipment will be set up this July in the exhibit hall at the national convention to film pastors whose churches are interested in this form of outreach. Pastors who wish to participate in the project are encouraged to prepare their personal messages in advance.

Churches can utilize this ministry tool in a number of ways. For instance, give a copy of the video to guests who come to your church. Then schedule a time to make a home visit and pick up the video, answering any questions the guests may have. This is especially helpful in areas where Free Will Baptists are not well-known. Some churches may wish to assist home missionaries in securing the video to reach their cities for Christ.

The Media Commission conducted a survey at the 1998 national convention. An overwhelming majority of surveys returned suggested support of such a project. We are praying that this will be another tool for our denomination to use for the glory of the Lord. We thank the Home Missions Department for sharing this vision with us.

We are making our wheelbarrow available. Will you step out on faith, as the Home Missions Department has, and get in the wheelbarrow with us? Will you make the commitment to get on board to see that the gospel is taken world-wide through means of media?

Do you have questions regarding this project or how the Media Commission can assist you? You can reach us via telephone: 912/372-4949; by U.S. Mail at P. O. Box 295, Cedar Springs, GA 31732; or by e-mail at media@nafwb.org. We're standing by to assist you today! ■

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 ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Steve Faison chairs the Media Commission. He pastors Cedar Springs Free Will Baptist Church in Blakely, Georgia.

THE TOGETHER WAY

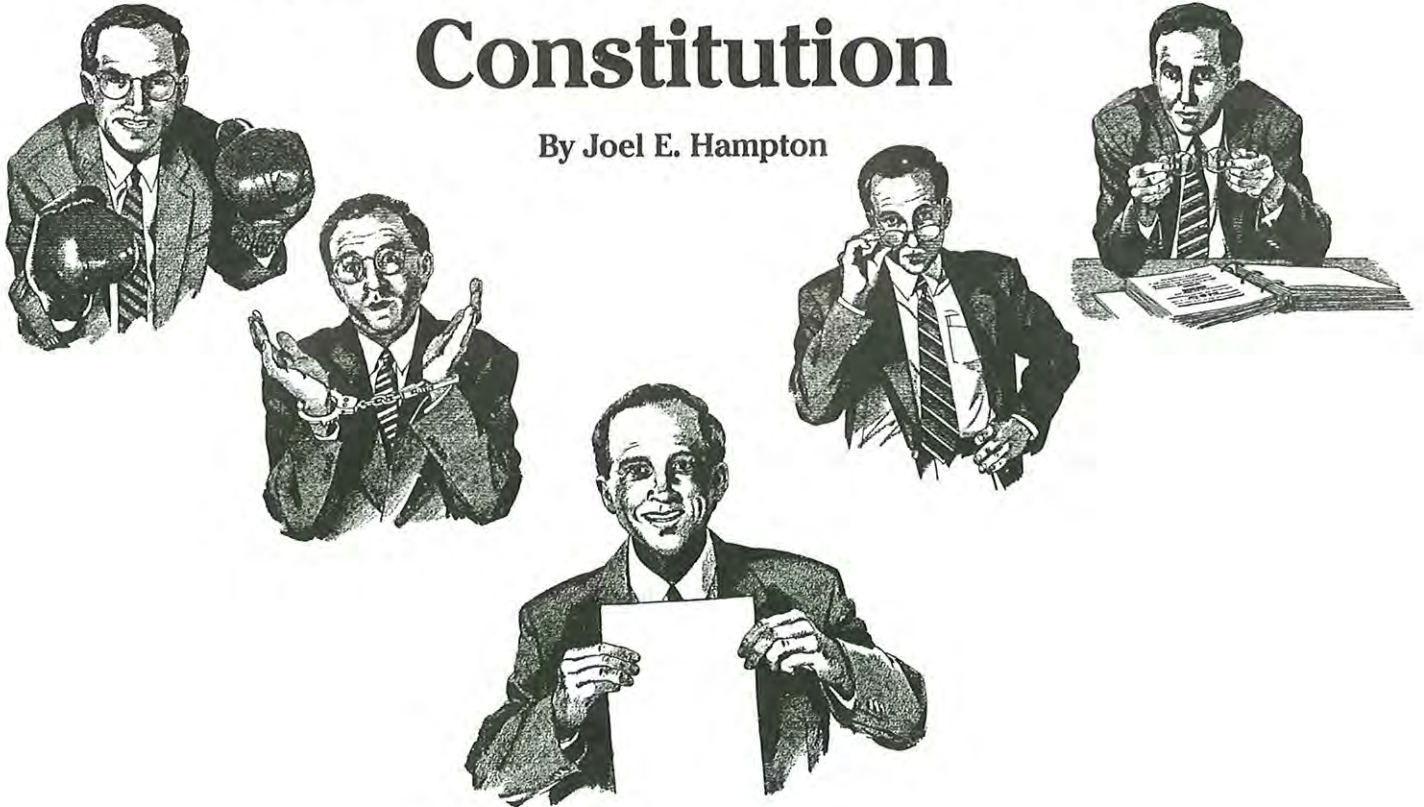
April 1999

Receipts:	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 577.14	\$.00	\$ 577.14	\$ 1,989.03	\$.00	\$ 1,989.03
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	988.61	214.40	1,203.01
Arkansas	15,842.81	13,524.93	29,367.74	57,609.99	55,426.81	113,036.80
California	.00	1,041.92	1,041.92	.00	4,730.47	4,730.47
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	218.93	6,000.00	6,218.93
Georgia	23,319.67	1,832.92	25,152.59	86,266.96	7,556.54	93,823.50
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	8,959.56	1,638.73	10,598.29	32,580.01	7,708.33	40,288.34
Indiana	926.38	93.62	1,020.00	3,986.61	1,097.05	5,083.66
Iowa	.00	.00	.00	180.00	1,197.61	1,377.61
Kansas	.00	73.69	73.69	.00	221.58	221.58
Kentucky	1,472.00	443.03	1,915.03	3,872.90	2,593.52	6,466.42
Louisiana	140.00	.00	140.00	140.00	.00	140.00
Maryland	.00	2,022.78	2,022.78	.00	8,160.46	8,160.46
Michigan	33,660.61	4,967.61	38,628.22	60,387.84	11,127.06	71,514.90
Mississippi	12,846.50	978.47	13,824.97	32,127.17	1,854.62	33,981.79
Missouri	35,511.31	12,647.66	48,158.97	169,740.28	48,831.67	218,571.95
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	1,300.81	80.41	1,381.22	2,825.12	162.56	2,987.68
North Carolina	473.98	378.72	852.70	4,674.36	10,431.66	15,106.02
Ohio	9,243.23	2,985.88	12,229.11	34,800.94	12,676.89	47,477.83
Oklahoma	51,932.67	8,151.59	60,084.26	221,273.98	41,603.22	262,877.20
South Carolina	48,320.93	.00	48,320.93	182,982.70	.00	182,982.70
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	21,300.63	1,631.92	22,932.55	47,321.20	5,017.42	52,338.62
Texas	17,857.41	840.17	18,697.58	42,866.23	1,736.40	44,602.63
Virginia	1,448.54	.00	1,448.54	3,266.73	.00	3,266.73
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	2,213.31	41.14	2,254.45	8,022.22	304.76	8,326.98
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	309.64	10.49	320.13	1,088.05	49.27	1,137.32
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(.05)	(.05)	.00	.17	.17
Totals	\$ 287,657.13	\$ 53,385.63	\$ 341,042.76	\$ 999,209.86	\$ 228,702.47	\$ 1,227,912.33
Disbursements:						
Executive Office	\$ 2,141.28	\$ 24,023.54	\$ 26,164.82	\$ 8,033.57	\$102,916.05	\$ 110,949.62
Foreign Missions	178,425.73	6,753.28	185,179.01	612,369.41	28,930.86	641,300.27
FWBBC	20,486.46	6,753.28	27,239.74	65,865.09	28,930.86	94,795.95
Home Missions	79,525.83	5,285.19	84,811.02	269,252.79	22,641.58	291,894.37
Retirement & Ins.	526.30	4,110.69	4,636.99	1,605.84	17,610.10	19,215.94
Master's Men	562.61	4,110.69	4,673.30	1,689.48	17,610.10	19,299.58
Com. for Theo. Integrity	64.36	146.81	211.17	189.08	628.93	818.01
FWB Foundation	399.56	1,761.72	2,161.28	1,581.31	7,547.20	9,128.51
Historical Commission	30.04	146.81	176.85	94.08	628.93	723.01
Music Commission	55.73	146.81	202.54	113.67	628.93	742.60
Media Commission	56.03	146.81	202.84	153.53	628.93	782.46
Hillsdale FWB College	1,707.00	.00	1,707.00	6,382.42	.00	6,382.42
Other	3,676.20	.00	3,676.20	31,879.59	.00	31,879.59
Totals	\$ 287,657.13	\$ 53,385.63	\$ 341,042.76	\$ 999,209.86	\$ 228,702.47	\$ 1,227,912.33

Taking a closer look at an oft-neglected document.

Your Church Needs a Constitution

By Joel E. Hampton



You're in a church business meeting and the question arises, "Should Mrs. Hornblower be allowed to serve a 53rd consecutive year on the finance committee?" The congregation is evenly divided. Exactly half the folks feel that perhaps Mrs. Hornblower has accumulated a little too much power over the past half-century and that it's time to give someone else a chance to serve.

The remaining 50 percent feel that wisdom and experience are exactly the qualities required to serve in such an important position. How does a church resolve such an issue? Do you leave the seat open, and in so doing offend everyone in an attempt to offend no one? Do you call in a lawyer, a judge, the police, the National Guard?

Such situations, though common, are unnecessary. All that's needed in such a case is a constitution, which is simply a written document that sets forth the rules by which the church is

to be governed or operated. Such a constitution would spell out who is eligible to serve on what boards and committees and for how long.

With a constitution in place, such disputes are easily resolved and a church is not cast upon the often-troubled waters of personal feelings. If it's that easy, why doesn't every church have a constitution and by-laws? What follows is an attempt to answer commonly held objections to a church having a constitution and by-laws.

The Bible doesn't command us to have constitutions.

This common objection is raised to oppose many things that we don't like or don't understand. Many churches have never had a constitution and don't understand why they need one now. This objection is not without merit. As Protestants, especially as Baptists, we take seriously the need to find

scriptural warrant for all our practices.

While there is no express command in the Bible that we have church constitutions, there is a scriptural principle that supports their use: Order. In I Corinthians 14:40, Paul urges the church to "let all things be done decently and in order."

While the context concerns propriety in worship, the principle has a broader application. Everything we do in the church should be decent and orderly, for God is not the author of confusion (I Cor. 14:33).

We must recognize that much of what we do in the church is an application of this scriptural principle and not obedience to a direct commandment. Specific times for beginning worship, age-graded Sunday School classes, and preaching *before* or *after* and not *during* singing are all examples of ways we apply the scriptural principle of order. Constitutions are yet another application of the same principle.

Constitutions don't serve any purpose.

The basic belief behind this objection is that there is no benefit to constitutions. As bad as things are in our nation at present (and things are admittedly bad), imagine how much worse things would be if there were no United States Constitution. Every mayor, governor, congressman and president could propose laws without any checks or balances on their whims and fancies. None of us would want to live in such a country.

Yet, many of us willingly tolerate such situations in our churches. With no guiding purpose, no framework, we are left to the fortunes of ever-changing popular opinion.

A constitution in a church, as in a nation, provides a framework which encourages stability, continuity and strength. There is great benefit in having a document which encourages those things in a church.

There is no harm in not having a constitution.

This objection is based on precedent. "Flat Head Free Will Baptist Church has existed for 137 years without a constitution, and by the grace of God, she'll exist another 137 years without one." As we all know, past success is no guarantee of future success. (Remember the Packers in the 1998 Super Bowl?)

There are at least three problems associated with not having a constitution.

First, there's the obvious problem of instability caused by the swirling, shifting winds of what's currently popular. Stability is difficult to maintain when there is nothing but tradition and the memories of the way things were.

Second, there's the less obvious problem of discontinuity. When each new pastor has nothing to go on but oral tradition and current feelings, there will be discontinuity in the life and ministry of the church.

Third, and most serious, is the weakness created by not having a constitution. When a church member is excommunicated or removed from office, for instance, the church is in a weak position if there are no written procedures for excommunication or removal from office.

The church will be open to charges of favoritism and discrimination. If the disciplined member decides to sue (which happens frequently anymore), the church may be in a weak position *legally*.

Constitutions are ignored or used selectively.

This final objection is based on reality in many churches. Many churches have constitutions and never refer to or abide by them. Other churches (and individuals) use their constitutions when it suits their purposes. To many people, this sounds like the best objection.

However, the abuse or misuse of something is never an argument against its proper use. Few would argue against the police officer's right

to search for and seize evidence, even though rogue officers often abuse this right. The answer to the problem of ignored or misused constitutions is not to throw them out, but to use them properly.

Conclusion

If the church in the first paragraph had a constitution, it may have stated that Mrs. Hornblower had the right to serve another 53 years, should she continue to be elected by majority vote. On the other hand, it may have stated that she could serve a maximum of two consecutive years. Either way, the church would have had a guide and there would have been little chance for confusion or hurt feelings.

To summarize, your church needs a constitution. Better to write one now than to learn the hard way later on that you needed one. ■



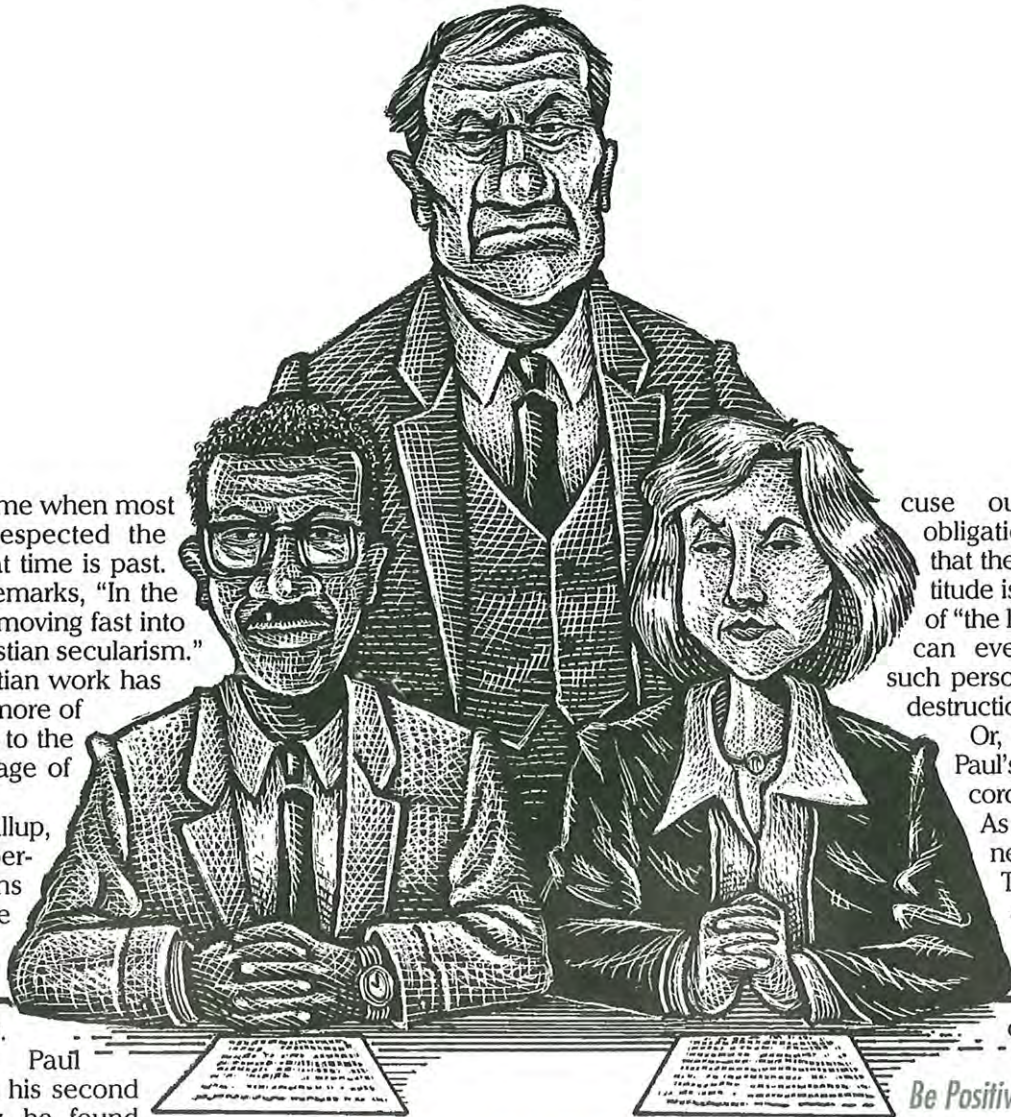
ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Joel E. Hampton pastors Glennville Free Will Baptist Church in Glennville, Georgia.



Five evidences of God's existence from Acts 17.

How to Reach Those Who Ridicule the Bible

By Jeffrey L. Cockrell



There was a time when most Americans respected the Bible, but that time is past. J. I. Packer remarks, "In the west we are moving fast into the era of post-Christian secularism." As anyone in Christian work has observed, there is more of a negative reaction to the Bible and its message of salvation.

According to Gallup, in 1963 some 65 percent of Americans believed the Bible was literally true. Today, the number is only 32 percent. Likewise, when Paul reached Athens on his second missionary journey, he found that the people didn't receive the Word or merely resist the Word, they ridiculed the Word. As it was in Paul's day, so it seems to be in our day.

People are not as eager to receive the Word of God as previous generations have been. The attitude of a defiant resistance has come to prevail, especially in the United States.

cuse our Christian obligation by citing that the ridiculing attitude is an evidence of "the last days." We can even condemn such persons to eternal destruction.

Or, we can take Paul's approach recorded in Acts 17. As Paul journeyed through Thessalonica and Berea preaching the gospel, he came to Athens.

Be Positive

Confronting Unbelief

How do we who believe that the message of the gospel is the only hope of mankind confront this resistant attitude? Our options are many.

We can ignore those who have a ridiculing attitude. We can give up on the hope of their salvation. We can ex-

In addressing the Athenians, Paul took for his point of contact an altar he had seen in the city with the inscription, "To the unknown God." Paul started where the people were in their religious understanding and bridged that knowledge to Jesus. To establish a link with the philosophers, he cited two of

their own poets. Moreover, Paul's approach was in a positive manner.

He complimented his listeners: "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are too superstitious" (vs. 22). Paul did not dialogue by discussing the variations in different religious beliefs. Neither did he debate with the various individuals. Paul introduced his talk by focusing on the positiveness of the Athenians' belief system.

Be Specific

After the ice was broken, Paul proceeded to share four basic truths about God—the greatness of God: He is creator (v. 24), the goodness of God: He is provider (v. 25), the government of God: He is ruler (v. 26-29), and the grace of God: He is Savior (v. 30-34).

Be Honest

Paul then concluded his discussion by declaring that all have a responsibility to respond to the call of God. Paul stated, "[God] now commandeth all men every where to repent" (v. 30).

Paul's Five Evidences

Furthermore, one notices that Paul understood the importance of giving several arguments for God's existence. The person who ridicules God and His Word usually does not believe in the existence or the exclusiveness of God. Therefore, the unbeliever must see certain logical arguments for God.

Cosmological Argument

Like a defense attorney making a case for God's existence, Paul presented several witnesses to support his case. First, he appealed to the witness of creation when he referred to God in verse 24 as making the world. Philosophers refer to this as the cosmological argument.

Stated simply, the cosmological argument says, "Everything that we know is caused by something else." With this argument, one concludes by saying, "There must be an uncaused cause."

This idea is seen in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his

handiwork."

Teleological Argument

Second, Paul spoke of the witness of design evident in the universe in verse 26, called the teleological argument: "[God] hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation." As design is evident in a watch or other mechanical instruments, so there is design in God's world. Design gives evidence to a designer.

Ontological Argument

Third, Paul called on the witness of logic in verse 29 when he referred to the Athenians' mental reasoning of the nature of God. The technical term is ontological. The ontological argument "is an argument to prove the existence of God from man's idea of a perfect being."

The argument in summary states that the fact that all men everywhere believe in the existence of God suggests the fact of God's existence.

Anselm said that "man has the idea of a perfect being. Since a more perfect or greater being cannot be conceived, there must be a perfect being to correspond to the idea."

Anthropological Argument

Fourth, Paul summoned the witness of mankind by making his point of contact "the unknown God" (v. 23) and by citing their own poets to reaffirm a belief in God's existence (v. 29). This is the anthropological argument. The anthropological argument refers to the physical capacities of man to affirm God's existence.

As the Bible states that man was made in the image of God, therefore, man himself can be used as an evidence of God's existence.

Also, there is the moral argument which is usually seen as a part of the anthropological argument. The moral argument directs its attention to the moral impulse of mankind.

For example, there exists within mankind a desire to do good even when it does not seem to be beneficial. In other words, our conscience tells on us.

Resurrection Argument

Fifth, as a final point of argument, Paul referred to the fact of Christ's resurrection as proof of God's coming judgment on the world (v. 31). Moreover, there is the witness from religious experience.

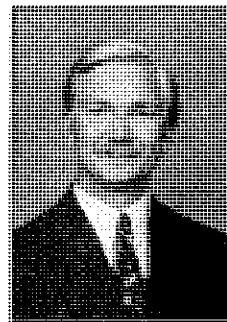
Paul did not use this argument with the Athenians but the argument is indicated when he referred to the Corinthians as "our epistle written in our hearts, known and read by all men; clearly you are an epistle of Christ" (II Cor. 3:2-3). Since the Athenians had no prior knowledge of Paul or of his changed life, this argument would not carry much weight.

Paul had many options as he faced the challenge to witness to the Athenians. He chose to use reason, for they were philosophers. Paul used the various witnesses to show the reasonableness of God's existence.

Of course, God invites all who are seeking Him, "Come now, let us reason together" (Isa. 1:18). In his presentation, Paul sought to begin at some common ground as he presented his case for God.

Also, Paul was clear in his presentation of the gospel message. He began where his listeners were in their spiritual understanding. Paul was positive in his attitude toward his audience.

Finally, Paul pointed out that each individual is accountable in his response to God. In an attempt to convince unbelievers of the gospel message, one would do well to follow the example of Paul in Acts 17. These are witnessing principles worth remembering and putting into practice. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Jeffrey Cockrell pastors Satilla Free Will Baptist Church in Hazlehurst, Georgia.

Their common heartaches brought three men together.

A Grief Shared

By Richard Kennedy



I just returned from an interesting lunch meeting. I say interesting . . . really, it was encouraging. Two friends have been after me to get together for fellowship over lunch. As I drove to meet them, it dawned on me what the three of us had in common. We had all shared times of deep sorrow together.

I am more familiar with Paul's exhortation to *rejoice with those who rejoice* than I am with the part about suffering. To me, suffering has always been something to avoid, only coming near enough to whisper encouraging words to other people who were suffering and then to retreat to safer, more comfortable, territory.

Dave's Story

I met Dave three years ago through a horrible tragedy. His 16-year old son,

DJ, had committed suicide the night before. Needless to say, Dave and his wife, Lynette, were crushed.

I don't remember taking a class in seminary that would help me for such a visit to the family. Still, it was my responsibility to reach out to this family in need. It was awkward at best, but I attempted to share their grief.

Two months to the day following DJ's death, Dave and Lynette stood before our congregation as Dave shared a gripping 12-minute testimony he called, "The Consequences of Church Defection."

He began by saying, "The Bible is right—you reap what you sow, forgiveness notwithstanding."

With courage like I have rarely seen, Dave told the tale of seven years of business prowess followed by bankruptcy, marital problems and a

son's growing bitterness toward his father. On the evening of August 15, 1995, while sitting in his recliner reading the newspaper, Dave heard his daughter's blood-curdling scream.

With terror, he raced up the stairs to find his son hanging by the neck from the loft in his bedroom. "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, breathe, wait, listen, watch; 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, breathe, wait, listen, watch. Please Lord Jesus, not my boy, not my boy." We all listened as Dave poured out his heart.

DJ was gone. Dave and Lynette lost a son but found a caring body of believers who would mourn with them. Dave closed his testimony with these words: "This tragedy has taught me how important it is to be part of a body of believers, to be a godly leader in my home, to serve, to give, to worship and to pray."

It's hard to grasp the importance of being part of a caring body of Chris-

tians until a crisis comes your way.

For the next year, Dave and I met almost every Wednesday for lunch and to take inventory of our lives. Looking back, I think how shallow my counsel must have seemed. I discovered that you could *weep with those who weep* even if you have not had the same experience as those suffering. And weep we did.

At the time, my son was 11 and the thought of losing him—especially in that manner—was more than my mind could entertain.

Fred's Story

But today's lunch meeting had a different tone.

I met Fred one Sunday after church as my wife and I were greeting church guests in a reception area over coffee. Fred and his wife, Nina, were waiting patiently for their turn to speak with us. It was the first time they had attended the church. You could see the grief in their eyes and, as we listened, the sorrow gushed out from freshly crushed hearts.

Nina was told she had cancer and only a few months to live. Again, what do you say that will help? We decided it was best to join hands right on the spot and pour our grief out to God. We wept together. In their grief, Jesus met them and assured them of His everlasting presence and made a deposit of hope that would sustain them in the days ahead.

Instantly, it seemed as though we had been long-time friends. Suffering has a way of forging us together.

In a few short months, Nina was gone—gone to be at home with Jesus. With his brand-new faith, Fred bid his bride farewell with these words:

*It will be but a moment,
A twinkling of an eye,
Until we are together again.*

I can still hear the sweet refrain of *Amazing Grace* from the bagpipe on the distant hillside as we left the grave. But the journey was just beginning for Fred.

He felt left behind . . . left out. Without children of their own, Fred turned to his new family of brothers and sisters in Christ. Fred and I would enjoy an occasional Saturday morning breakfast and talk about what it meant to be fully devoted followers

of Jesus. Soon after the initial shock of Fred's loss, Dave knew that he and Fred had something in common.

They began meeting to encourage one another and to do ministry together. Dave and Lynette directed the tape ministry at our church and took Fred under their wing and began to train him to share the ministry. It was a beautiful thing to watch as they wept together . . . prayed together . . . served together.

My Story

But today's meeting was different again.

Today, Dave and Fred met to weep with me. It's my turn in the crucible. After seeking medical help for nearly three years, I was recently given a diagnosis that speaks of a deteriorating lifestyle with no hope of change. Today, they wept *with me and for me*.

I confessed that it was a struggle for me to be on the receiving end of tender care. They assured me it was simply my pride. Once you suffer together, you develop the art of speaking the truth in love. They listened while I talked about my fears and anxieties. They offered no shallow advice. They assured me that God loved me and so did they, and that I could count on their continued friendship and prayers.

I left encouraged. Not because a cure for my illness had been found, but because brothers took the time to weep with me. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Richard Kennedy is a member of Rejoice Free Will Baptist Church in Owasso, Oklahoma. He has pastored in California and North Carolina. Dr. Kennedy can be reached at his website address www.heavenwords.com.



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Thank You!

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PASTOR APPRECIATION ISSUE

➤ BI-VOCATIONAL
PASTORS

➤ BEST JOB IN TOWN

➤ PREACHER,
RUN FOR YOUR LIFE

The hand of God and a husband collide on a Nashville street.

Sometimes Angels Dress Like . . .

By Carol Reid

October 30 passed again. I cleaned out the laundry basket full of orphaned socks once more and found the undershirt, cut down the middle. And my eyes filled with tears again as I remembered the accident. Again, I thanked the Lord that my husband was alive and breathing and that *sometimes, angels dress like airbags.*



That Wednesday afternoon, Garnett was on his way to pick up our son at school. An elderly lady turned her car into the path of our mini-van without warning. She wasn't wearing a seat belt; both she and her husband were injured seriously. She died that night on the operating table at a nearby hospital.

Garnett had severe chest pain, even though the airbag in the damaged van had deployed. An ambulance transported him to the hospital to check for injuries to his sternum.

The nurse from the emergency room was calm and reassuring when she called. But I prayed all the way to the hospital. He was in x-ray when I arrived, so I asked for a phone and began to call. We were having cottage prayer meetings that night; I called our group and asked them to pray. I called my mother and Garnett's mother and asked them to pray.

I sang myself the Michael Kelly Blanchard song I had just heard, "Jesus, to the West Wing, won't You hurry please." And I waited.

You know how emergency rooms can be. I waited a long time. I paced the little room. I opened the door and looked around the nursing station. I sat down and tried not to get worked up. A policeman came to check on the situation and give me the accident report numbers. He gave me more details about the accident. When he left, I checked the nursing station again.



"The force of the airbag may be what caused the injury," the nurse told me. "They just want to be sure that the breastbone isn't cracked and the pericardium is uninjured. He'll be back in a minute." She impulsively gave me a little hug. I needed it. *Sometimes, angels dress like nurses.*

At last, they wheeled him in. My extra-large-sized husband barely fit on the hospital gurney and was in obvious pain. Seat-belt shaped bruises were already appearing on his chest and abdomen. His knees and hands were bruised as well from impact.

One little finger was bent crookedly out of shape. Deep breaths and coughs were painful. But nothing major was broken. They were waiting for lab work to come back, though, before they dismissed him.

"If you hadn't had the airbag," the emergency room doctor told us, "we would be talking major surgery or worse right now instead of bumps and bruises."

Sometimes, angels dress like airbags. They come and protect our loved ones from danger and harm. Most of the time we take them for granted, not even realizing when we have escaped difficult situations. But on some occasions, we actually glimpse how they have snatched us or our loved ones from certain injury.

We waited for lab work and instructions about activities. My mother decided that hospital visitation was more important than prayer meeting. She and Rolla, my stepfather, walked into the little room in the emergency area. We filled her in on details and made a round of phone calls again to update the people praying for us. I was fortified by her arrival and grateful for their help. *Some-*



times, angels dress like mothers.

I couldn't hold Garnett's hand because he had an i.v. in one and that broken finger on the other. He sure didn't want any bear hugs! I stroked his hair and tried to help him relax as we waited. Finally, word came that he would not have to stay overnight at the hospital; we were free to go. Sitting up was difficult, putting clothes back on was slow and painful for Garnett.

Several days passed before he got relief from the pain. Weeks passed before the crash quit making appearances in his dreams. Months passed before the van was repaired and the details from the accident were settled.

But I count my blessings often. And I thank our Heavenly Father for the reminder of His watchcare over us, even in times of difficulty. I thank Him for the ministering spirits—that *sometimes, angels dress like airbags.* ■



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

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

South Carolina Leader, Norwood Gibson, Dies

FLORENCE, SC—The Reverend Norwood A. Gibson, Sr., who championed Free Will Baptist foreign missions in South Carolina died April 22 at age 71. He served 12 years on the denomination's Foreign Missions Board and kept the vision for world missions before South Carolina churches.

Brother Gibson was elected promotional director for South Carolina Free Will Baptists in 1980. For 18 years he directed the state office, published *The Informer* (state paper), coordinated state activities and preached in churches across the state.

A South Carolina native, Gibson was ordained to preach in 1964.



He pastored First FWB Church in McCall (1961-63). He organized Free Will Baptist Bible Church (Florence) in 1964 and pastored there until he accepted the state

promotional post in 1980.

Gibson served as president of Florence Bible Institute and Bethel Bible Institute. He moderated the South Carolina State Association 10 years, served six years as South Carolina's General Board member, founded Palmetta Christian Academy and co-founded Maranatha Christian School.

Funeral services were conducted April 25 at First FWB Church in Florence. Reverends Guy Owens and Earl Hendrix officiated.

He is survived by his wife Molly; one son, Norwood A. Gibson, Jr.; and one daughter, Mrs. Debra Scott of Pocahontas, Arkansas.

220 Attend Bible College's Welcome Days

NASHVILLE, TN—Welcome Days at Free Will Baptist Bible College drew 220 visitors from 20 states and Canada when the college opened its doors to prospective students March 23-25, according to Stewart-Allen Clark, assistant director of recruitment. Fifty-seven seniors were among the guests.

The highest state representations were 22 from Illinois and 19 from Tennessee. Cleveland FWB Church in Cleveland, Ohio, had the most from one church with seven.

In addition to visiting classes and learning about programs, financial aid and other college-related top-

ics, the visitors were treated to special activities. A Block Party quickly became a Lounge Party when the weather turned unfavorable. Guests also enjoyed racing go-carts, rollerblading and playing miniature golf.

The chapel message by Florida pastor Michael Waddell was a highlight.

Mr. Clark said, "This was a great time for everyone. I am especially thankful for every pastor and sponsor who made the effort to bring their teens to FWBCC."

The college's next Welcome Days is scheduled for November 11-13.

Attention Pastors: 1999 Yearbooks Mailed

ANTIOCH, TN—The 1999 *Free Will Baptist Yearbooks* were mailed to district clerks this spring. The *Yearbook* includes the church directory, minutes of the national convention and other denominational listings.

Contact your district clerk to get your free copy of the 1999 *Yearbook*.

Oklahoma Tornado Destroys 38 Homes

MOORE, OK—The killer tornado that roared through Oklahoma and Kansas on May 3 destroyed the homes of at least 38 Free Will Baptist families and heavily damaged numerous others. Oklahoma executive director Ernest Harrison, Jr., began coordinating efforts to get much-needed financial aid to the hard-hit Oklahoma City area.

Harrison said that no Free Will Baptist churches were destroyed, and that Hillsdale FWB College, which is located in Moore, was undamaged.

Local pastors and members worked around the clock to pro-

vide shelter, food and clothing for the survivors. The F-5 tornado left thousands without electricity, food and other essential services. Officials estimated that more than 10,500 homes had been destroyed in Oklahoma and 1,500 in Kansas. Forty-six people were killed.

At press time, 13 Free Will Baptist churches reported members with homes destroyed or damaged, numerous injuries and two fatalities. The hardest hit was Sunnyslane FWB Church in Del City where the tornado ripped the community apart. Thirteen families in the church lost their homes.

Pastor Frank Wiley said that his congregation of 300 people served 500 meals daily to members and community residents whose homes had been destroyed.

"Our greatest need is money to simply get the people through the day," Wiley said. "The Free Will Baptist denomination has responded in love and generosity."

Executive director Ernest Harrison, Jr., said, "By May 14, more than \$22,000 had poured in from Free Will Baptists, and it's still coming in! Believe me, we can use it and will put it right where the need is."

Homes Destroyed

Calvary FWB Church

Norman, Oklahoma

Pastor: Mike Wade

Homes Destroyed:

Brett and Sherry McKay

Cliff and Norma Dodson

(Three other homes damaged)

Charity FWB Church

Midwest City, Oklahoma

Pastor: Lonnie Davout

Homes Destroyed:

Jerry and Brenda Trueblood

First FWB Church

Moore, Oklahoma

Pastor: Dan Farmer

Homes Destroyed:

James and Bonnie Driscoll

(Two other homes damaged)

Harrah FWB Church

Choctaw, Oklahoma

Pastor: Jim Puckett

Homes Destroyed:

Chuck and Tracy Louviere

Heartland FWB Mission

Norman, Oklahoma

Pastor: Dennis Cariker

Homes Destroyed:

Hope Barker/son Jerod

Kingsview FWB Church

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Pastor: Kevin Daniels

Homes Destroyed:

Leon and Beth Fuller

Howze Family

(Several others damaged)

Newcastle FWB Church

Newcastle, Oklahoma

Pastor: Frank Giles

Homes Destroyed:

Mike and Toni Frenencich

Mark and Judy Lippard

Kyle and Connie Sauners

Chris and Page Miller

Southern Oaks FWB Church

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Pastor: David Sutton

Homes Destroyed:

Will and Lois Beshers

Robert and Joann Bishop

Bill Scott Family

James and Neva Wells

(Six other homes heavily damaged)

Southwest FWB Church

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Pastor: Richard Terry

Homes Destroyed:

Norma Kelley

Eric Keisling

Karen Leonard

Spencer Road FWB Church

Spencer, Oklahoma

Pastor: Craig Shaw

Homes Destroyed:

Hugh Neighbors

Mike and Adella Dinwiddle

Charlotte Neighbors

Sunnyslane FWB Church

Del City, Oklahoma

Pastor: Frank Wiley

Homes Destroyed:

Mary Ann Brackett

Edward and Robin Bryant

George and Norma Creech

Hershal and Carolyn Eason

The Hicks Family

Ron and Carol Lester

Tommy and Donna Hughes

Marcellis Flowers Family

Robin Nolen Family

Ron and Pam Thompson

Eddie and Norma Turner

Dick and Judi Uptegrove

Toby and Sheila Youngblood

(Six other homes damaged)

Trinity FWB Church

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Pastor: Stan Konopinski

Homes Destroyed:

Todd and Jennifer Warlick

Windwood FWB Church

Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Pastor: Tom Drake

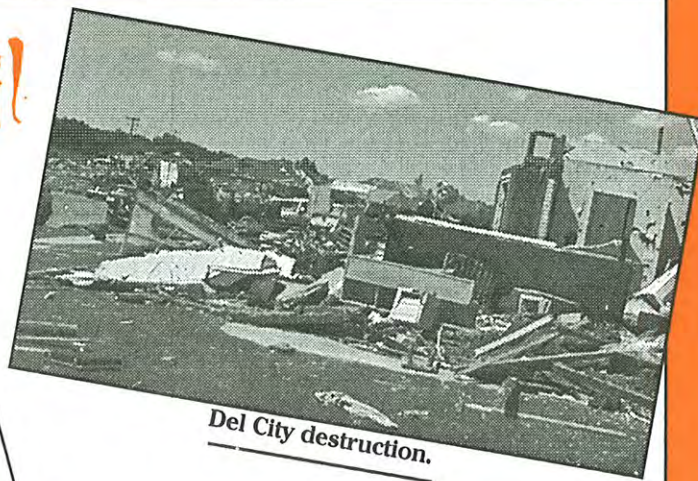
Homes Destroyed:

Jimmy Howell

The Tornado's Trail



Pastor Frank Wiley (c), son Todd Wiley (l) and the son of the woman Pastor Wiley rescued from destroyed house.



Del City destruction.

How You Can Help

• Pray for the pastors and churches as they minister to their communities.

• Send funds to:

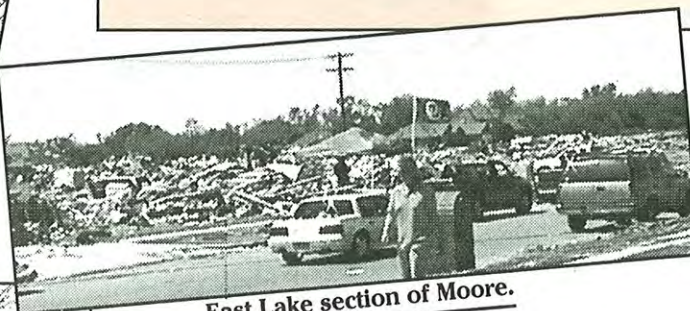
Tornado Relief
c/o Oklahoma State Association of Free Will Baptists
Ernest Harrison, Jr., Executive Director
P. O. Box 7527
Moore, OK 73453

Phone: 405/912-9400

FAX: 405/912-9200



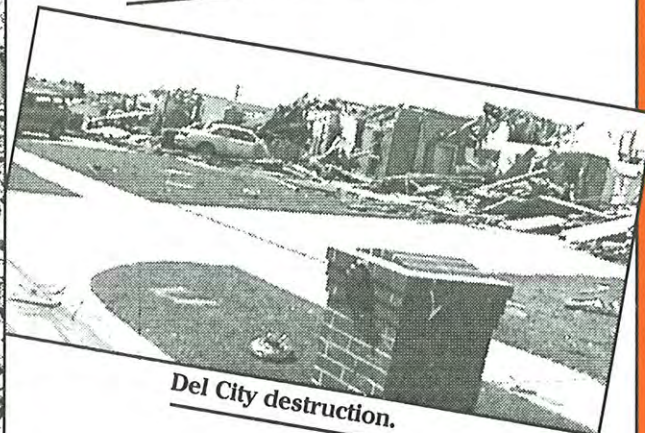
Toby and Sheila Youngblood stand in front of their Del City home.



East Lake section of Moore.



Hillsdale College staff member Toby Youngblood locates his truck two blocks from home.



Del City destruction.

Texas Church Burns Mortgage

HALTOM CITY, TX—Members of Friendship FWB Church in Haltom City celebrated homecoming on March 28 by burning their \$150,000 mortgage, according to Pastor Jack Bankhead. The ceremonial mortgage burning concluded nine years of sacrificial giving.

In September 1989, the church voted to relocate from Fort Worth to nearby Haltom City. They purchased a new church with several buildings for \$150,000 and proceeded with monthly payments.

Meanwhile, they sold their Fort Worth property for \$19,000 to a group who wanted to start a Spanish-speaking church.

When a couple stepped forward and gave \$6,000

toward the Haltom City mortgage, members rallied to pay the entire mortgage early. Then the Friendship Church told the Spanish church that they could have their Fort Worth property for \$5,000 instead of \$19,000. Everybody was happy.

Pastor Jack Bankhead commended the Friendship congregation, "Many people in our church gave sacrificially each week for nine years so that we could reach this milestone."

Bankhead continued, "God also impressed two of our sister churches to help us financially when we thought we were defeated—Calvary FWB Church in Fort Worth and First FWB Church in Weatherford."



Member Gene Todd (L), Deacon Billy Bunch and Deacon Harley Copeland look on as Pastor Jack Bankhead burns mortgage.

Need to make a quick call to the National Offices?

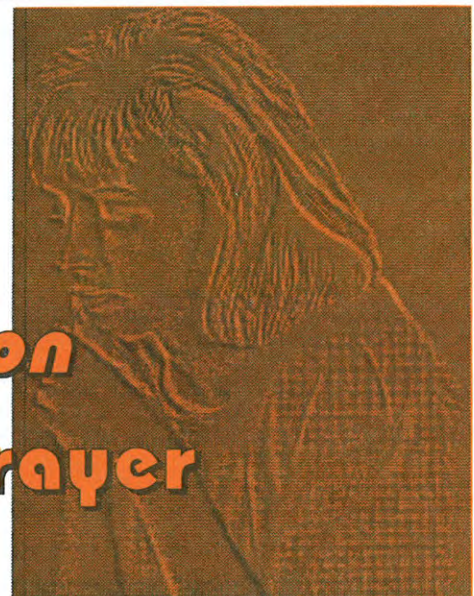
For immediate connection, dial **615/731-4950**, then the extension number of the agency you need.

Executive Office	200
Foreign Missions	243
Home Missions	221
Master's Men	281
Retirement & Ins.	260
WNAC	211

July 11

National Convention

Day of Prayer



Loyalty Day at **Bethel FWB Church** in **Ashland City, TN**, brought more than 300 people to the day-long celebration and dinner-on-the-grounds. Pastor **Charles Powell** announced that members and former members gave over \$17,000 that day which went toward indebtedness on the church's 4,000-square-foot educational building. The two-story structure was built for about \$250,000; the church borrowed \$180,000 and has steadily reduced the bank note.

Some time ago, members of **Trinity FWB Church** in **Lakeland, FL**, purchased a carpenters' hall and five acres on which to relocate. The congregation renovated the hall into a sanctuary, fellowship hall and classrooms. Pastor **Cecil Williamson** said that 96 people gathered to dedicate the refurbished property. Florida executive secretary **Millard Sasser** preached the dedication message.

Florida youth helped raise more than \$5,000 last year for missions. The on-going "Faith Walks" project expects to raise \$50,000 by the year 2003.

Pastor **Jerry Norris** reports six baptisms at **Calvary Fellowship FWB Church** in **Fenton, MO**. One Sunday School class taught by **Bob Einertson** distributed 2,215 flyers in the church's "Spread the Word" campaign. Members canvassed more than 6,000 homes during the campaign.

Reverend **Samuel Lewis Gober** died in **Tulsa, OK**. He was 88. His ministry began at North Heights FWB Church in Sapulpa where he pastored 35 years. Several men answered the call to preach from the congregation.

The Temple-2000 plan at **Temple FWB Church** in **Darlington, SC**, targets future growth for the congregation. Pastor **Todd Parrish** said the first project is to retire the church's \$35,000 debt by the end of 1999.

New sign. New church name. New pastor. The first order of business after Pastor **Jon Cannon** hit town was to change the church's name to **Victory FWB Church** (formerly **Mascoutah**

FWB Church in **Mascoutah, IL**). The second order of business was a new sign. Members also changed mid-week prayer meeting from Wednesday to Tuesday so that Pastor Cannon could travel to other churches and raise support for the mission work.

Pastor **Clifford Donoho** said that **Heritage FWB Church** in **Davenport, IA**, had its best month. The church went self-supporting, averages 156 in morning worship, with offerings \$900 over budget each week. Seventeen new members joined the church. The new parking lot is full, and plans call for a 4,000-square-foot expansion.

Pastor **Sam Henderson** reports 22 baptisms and a new deacon ordained at **Green Rock FWB Church** in **Colona, IL**. The congregation voted to become a designated community disaster relief center. They will lay in stores to provide food, shelter and water in times of community crisis. The church is on the lookout for a youth pastor.

The **Kansas Men's Retreat** met March 12-13 and featured Evangelist **Bob Shockey**. Men and teenage boys from across Kansas met for the two-day event sponsored by the Christian Education Board, according to spokesman **James O. Brewer**. "With snow falling outside, the spirit was warm inside," Brewer reported.

Valley FWB Church in **West Jordan, UT**, continues to face not-so-subtle harassment deep in the heart of Mormon country. Pastor **Bill Phillips** said that 17 complaints have been filed against the church. The church operates a daycare with 10 children enrolled. Plans call for an enrollment of 16 if a conditional use permit can be secured.

More than 2,900 people attended the seventh annual passion play at **Allen Chapel FWB Church** in **Batesville, AR**. The play was performed March 15-21. Pastor **Jim Turnbough** reported that 100 attendees received Christ as Savior. Some 220 people participated in the annual event. **Becky Watkins** directs the 185-member stage

cast, while **Robin Richardson** directs the 85-member stage crew. All cast and crew are members of the church.

The **Rebecca Stewart Scholarship Fund** at Free Will Baptist Bible College honors a lifelong Free Will Baptist. Pastor **Mike Gillock** said that members of **Ashland City FWB Church** in **Ashland City** gave \$1,700 to start the scholarship after a surprise "This is Your Life" 80th birthday party for Rebecca Stewart. She has been an active and generous participant in denominational life. The church invites other friends to join them in the newly-established scholarship.

Twenty years after starting a new building program, members of **Forestdale FWB Church** in **Birmingham, AL**, burned the mortgage on their 27,000-square-foot building. Pastor **Jack Rollins** said the property, valued at \$2 million, includes an 800-seat sanctuary and balcony, 25 classrooms, four nurseries, three offices, a library, kitchen and fellowship hall. Begun in 1979, the project was completed in 1982.

Pastor **Darren Pollard** reports 10 baptisms at **New Liberty FWB Church** in **Bankston, AL**. The church witnessed 22 conversions. Attendance averages 115.

The **Arkansas Ministers' Retreat** featured **David Gibbs**, founder and president of the Christian Law Association. More than 100 ministers attended the February meeting, according to spokesman **Jackie Brown**.

Contact welcomes **The Fountain**, publication of **Beulah FWB Church** in **Pensacola, FL**. **David Baker** pastors.

The history of **Welcome Home FWB Church** in **Bel Air, MD**, is available in a 50-page booklet written by **W. Melvin Childers**. The book contains minutes, a list of pastors and members, pictures, as well as other historical data. The writer is the son of church founder, **W. Calvin Childers**. The church celebrates its 50th anniversary on July 10. Books may be purchased for \$5 each from Melvin Childers at: 306 Fox Road, Havre de Grace, MD 21078, or call 410-734-6368. ■



FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

12% or 5½%, Which Is Best?

By William W. Evans

The Foundation now offers two revocable trust agreements, the standard "Triple A" agreement we have offered for years, earning 5½%, and the new Hi-Income Trust agreement. The Hi-Income Trust agreement earned 12% the last six months, although past earnings rate is not guaranteed in the future. Which one is best? The correct answer is *both!*

Several years ago I went to a suit outlet store which carried great name brands and had an amazing number of suits. They were discounted about 75% off the regular price. I saw several suits which I liked, in style and fabric. However, I did not buy even one of them. Why? Simple, none of them was my size. The waists were too big or the sleeves too short. Even though the price was certainly attractive, the fit was not right.

One important thing to remember in determining when or how to deposit or invest your money is to keep your eye on the three "R's" of investment: Risk, Reward and Return. These should be addressed every time you make a decision about money—whether buying a product or making an investment for the future.

Risk primarily involves the potential loss of principal.

Reward refers to the return provided by the risk taken over time.

Return, or liquidity of principal, simply refers to the provision of quickly converting the investment to cash without loss to your original investment.

Now, back to the two types of trusts and their returns. Which one delivers the best return?

The standard revocable trust paying 5.5% is best for short-term money such as savings, reserve funds projects of three to five years or less. It meets the requirements of safety of principal, reward (look for a similar return on funds that are immediately available with no penalty) and return or liquidity—(funds are available in 30 days by contract, seven (7) days by Board approved policy, but even sooner by practice.) This type agreement is suitable for church and ministry funds.

The Hi-Income agreement paid much higher returns last period but is more uncertain in the short term. In other words, it has a higher degree of risk. Over longer periods of time, we

are confident that it will reward depositors with a significantly higher return. However, the actual return each period will vary and there is no guarantee we will achieve our goal.

Funds in a Hi-Income agreement are available in 30 days (risk), still liquid (return) but not as quickly as the regular revocable agreement and at significantly higher return, 5½% last period, (reward). These Hi-Income type agreements are more suitable for individuals and limited portions of church or agency funds.

Which one is best for you? The one that best fits your situation.

What are you doing with your church or agency funds? Consider using your local bank for checking accounts and the Foundation for your savings needs. Together we can achieve your goals.

Frank Giunta Retires



Rev. Frank Giunta announced his retirement effective May 28, 1999.

Frank began working as field representative for the Foundation on January 1, 1996. "Brother Frank came on board to help with a multitude of tasks," according to Foundation director William Evans.

"Frank has always been energetic and full of spiritual drive. He developed a monthly financial advice column for various state publications. He is a personal friend and respected co-laborer," said Evans. "Our thanks go out to Frank and his wife Peggy for his fine work during these past years, and I wish him the very best in this new phase of life." ■

HOME MISSIONS



The Valley Church in Utah

By Bill Phillips

In December 1995, I shared with the Home Missions Board my dreams for Utah. My wife, Kay, and I were to be the first of many Free Will Baptist couples used of God to bring His true gospel to the wonderful people of Utah. At that time I had been driving from Rupert, Idaho, to Salt Lake City twice a month. On many of those trips I would pick part of this valley and search for gospel-preaching churches. It was often a fruitless search.

As just a plowboy preacher, there is much that I don't know, but I do know that it just isn't fair for the East to have so much of the gospel and for Utah to have so little of it. In time God opened the door for us to be the beginning of the change.

It has always been the plan for Valley FWB Church to be the mother church for other works. Now is the time for us to mother a church in Ogden, Utah. The Home Missions Board has just approved Rev. Tim Lewis to be a church planter for this area.

Brother Tim is the son of Bob and Brenda Lewis who have long been home missionaries working to plant Free Will Baptist churches in the state of Colorado. The Lord has placed Larry Bledsoe, one of the most faithful Free Will Baptist men I have ever known, in Ogden to assist Tim.

Larry has been a part of our ministry for four years. For more than a year he drove 140 miles one way to attend Rupert FWB church in Rupert, Idaho, and for two years he has driven 70 miles one way to attend Valley FWB Church. He lives in the Ogden area and is already making contacts for the new work. Tim could start with at least 15 people besides his own family.

Tim and I have had several conversations concerning the new work. I am pleased at his desire to discuss what has worked here and what has not, as well as seeking to learn about witnessing to Mormon people from my 20 years of experience. The Valley and Ogden churches will work together in family camps, youth camps and special contests as we reach souls for the kingdom. One day we will form the nucleus of the Western Slope Association of Free Will Baptists.

Ogden will be the beginning of the Free Will Baptist works in the northern part of Salt Lake Valley. They will be able to reach into Morgan county where, to the best of my knowledge,

there are no gospel-preaching churches in the entire county with a population of at least 100,000.

They can someday mother churches in Layton, Brigham City, Kaysville and throughout northern Utah. Valley Free Will Baptist Church will move on to plant churches in Provo, Fairfield, Orem, Cedar Fork, Saint George and throughout southern Utah. In the not-too-distant future, I will begin an outreach in the Fairfield area where homes for 40,000 people will be built within the next five years. At this time there are no gospel-preaching churches in this area. It is possible that within a five-year period, we can have at least four Free Will Baptist churches in the Salt Lake Basin.

The most difficult part of planting a new work is to understand that our God is able. It doesn't matter what the task is, God is able. In just two years, Valley FWB Church has gone from non-existence to having the fifth largest attendance in the department on Roll Call Sunday. That has happened here in the shadow of Satan's Temple. But we must understand that the light shines the brightest where it is the darkest. These wonderful Mormon people did not accept Joseph Smith over Jesus Christ. No one ever offered them the choice. In just two years, God has brought 62 souls into His kingdom through the work of this Free Will Baptist ministry, and it is but the smallest of beginnings. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Bill Phillips is the home missionary pastor at Valley Free Will Baptist Church in West Jordan, Utah.



RANDALL HOUSE PUBLICATIONS

Growing Churches Prepare for Harvest

By Alton Loveless

Image

Churches on the move have a concern about how they look and if they are easy to find. But their greatest concern is their image in the community, how they are perceived by their neighborhood or city. Are we known as a soul-winning Bible-believing church or a fighting church?

Some churches have relocated and changed their name to erase the poor image in their area. Researchers say it is not the name of the church nor the denominational name that matters as much as the vision of the pastor and its program. Great churches know the program gets people to the church, but the pastor and his outlook keeps them.

Convert/Membership Classes

Because most church members don't know the doctrine of the church or why the church exists, today's growing church teaches these subjects, because they know it is the glue that bonds the church fellowship.

Teacher Training Institutes

Most growing churches have Bible Institute Training programs going on at times other than Sunday services. Healthy growing churches know they can draw from at least 50% of their adult age for additional training. They have learned that informed and trained people are more excited and stay longer. Examples: teacher training, doctrine, Christian living, soul-winning and parenting are just a few a church can teach. Bible institutes can be held in the spring and the fall with at least 12 nights in each season for class study. Be sure to issue a certificate of completion, or require certain course completions before the larger or main diploma is issued.

Handicap

There are more than 35 million people who are deaf, mentally challenged, disabled, or shut-ins in the United States. Some of these will need people with extra training, but this portion of our society is twice the amount of teens in America. They need the gospel as do others and have not been overlooked by the growing church.

Ethnic Changes

In the area of birth increases during the decade of the 90s, there has been zero birth change in the Anglo-American community. The reason is that while in the last 100 years 83% of our country came from Europe, today 75% of our immigrants come from the Pacific Rim of Asian descent and Latin America. A difference this makes to the church and our society is that our newest citizens come from non-Christian countries with a non-biblical religion.

The black community is showing only a 2% birth increase. There are more blacks in America with 31 million than any place else other than Nigeria. Only about 30% of the black community has been touched by the church while 50% of black Africa knows Christ.

The Hispanic community has shown an 11% birth increase during this same time frame and represents about 35% of our present immigration. By the year 2000, they will become larger than the black society becoming the largest minority in the United States.

But fasten your seat belts! The Asian American community is growing at a faster pace than any race. Their birth increase stands at about 18% and they represent nearly 65% of the immigration quota which stands at 700,000 yearly. By the year 2005 they will pass the Hispanic people as the largest minority.

The Asian-Americans are better educated than any other society in this country. Forty-four percent of them have B.A. degrees as compared to the 25% of the rest of our population. Another difference is they bring religions that are not Bible-based: ancestor worship, Buddhism, Hinduism and other unfamiliar religions.

As the Asian community surfaces as the largest minority group, the Anglo-American community will become an official minority. We are becoming a society run by three minority groups. Has the church become so Anglo-American that it will not reach other kinds? ■

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

FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Heritage Scholarships: Remembering The Faithful

By Bert Tippett, Public Relations Director

Last year, FWBBC officials began a series of Heritage Scholarships. Ralph Hampton, chairman of the Biblical and Ministry Studies Department, gave three reasons:

1. To honor and memorialize the denomination's faithful preachers.
2. To build awareness, at the college and across the denomination, of their contributions.
3. To help young preachers who are the leaders of tomorrow.

What Are Heritage Scholarships?

God has given Free Will Baptists a rich heritage in faithful, godly preachers. Our debt to them is great. To fail to appreciate their loving, sacrificial labors would be ingratitude to the One who called them.

Heritage Scholarships are a means of honoring the Lord's faithful servants who have helped to build our denomination. At the same time, our gifts will provide scholarship funds for the equipping of the next generation of Free Will Baptist preachers. Every gift is both a praise offering for God's blessing in the past and an investment in tomorrow and in tomorrow's preachers.

We have elected, with their permission, to honor the preachers on the next page. (Others may be added later.) If you would like to contribute to a Heritage Scholarship, tear off the attached form and mail it with your check. You may select one or more of these preachers to be honored by your gift. Or, you may leave your gift undesignated.

Join us as we continue the great heritage of Free Will Baptist preachers: honoring those of the

past and present by investing in those of the future!

Honoring The Faithful Preachers of Today

Heritage Scholarships have been established to honor the following Free Will Baptist preachers:

- ✦ Rev. Robert Crawford
- ✦ Rev. Damon Dodd
- ✦ Rev. Bobby Jackson
- ✦ Rev. Wade Jernigan
- ✦ Rev. Wallace Malone
- ✦ Rev. Raymond Riggs
- ✦ Rev. Robert Shockey
- ✦ Dr. Charles Thigpen

It is likely that one or more of these men have been a personal blessing to you or to someone you love.

Your support, in the form of a Heritage Scholarship, will honor them and will help the college pass on their legacy to a new generation of Free Will Baptist preachers. The college's goal is to raise at least \$10,000 in honor of each. The principle will be kept in trust and the interest awarded to worthy pastoral students.

This is just the beginning! The list of Heritage Scholarships will grow as other preachers are added later.

Send your contribution to:

Heritage Scholarships
c/o Free Will Baptist Bible College
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205

Enclosed is my scholarship gift of \$ _____

I am making it in honor of:

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. Robert Crawford | <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. Wade Jernigan | <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. Robert Shockey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. Damon Dodd | <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. Wallace Malone | <input type="checkbox"/> Dr. Charles Thigpen |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. Bobby Jackson | <input type="checkbox"/> Rev. Raymond Riggs | <input type="checkbox"/> Undesignated |

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone ____ / ____ - ____

Church Membership _____



Garnett Reid

A Profile of Commitment (Part II)

People of commitment see what most people do not. Whether it's a big-time developer dedicated to seeing his real estate dream become reality or a weekend home gardener with grand visions of a lovingly landscaped lawn, each has an eye toward what *can* be. The likelihood is also that He is willing—even committed—to do what is necessary to bring the vision to life.

Seeing the unseen—this unique quality introduces the two remaining characteristics of committed Christians as profiled in Hebrews 10-13. Last month we examined what people of commitment are willing to *reject*. Consider now what they *receive as reward* for their faith and *the One who rewards them*. Both the reward and the Rewarder furnish incentive for faithfulness.

Commitment to God always looks ahead to *promises fulfilled*, knowing full well that receiving them depends on making hard choices. Abraham packed his bags, left Ur and lived in Canaan with his family because they were “heirs . . . of the same promise” (11:9). The Israelites carried Joseph’s bones out of Egypt back to Canaan because Joseph never gave up his hope in the land God had promised Abraham’s family (11:22; see Gen. 12:7; 13:14-17).

All the men and women of faith in Hebrews 11 looked ahead to the promises we now receive fulfilled in Christ (11:39-40). Lest we miss the principle, the writer spells it out clearly: “Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise” (10:35-36).

Noah’s decision to obey God in an enormous, and no doubt maligned, construction project brought this re-

ward: the inheritance of a *right standing with God* through his faith (11:7; see also 11:2).

Their faith commitment also provided these Old Testament characters with a *testimony that impacted their generation*. Abel’s offering of faith gave a witness that still speaks, according to 11:4. No doubt everyone around Enoch knew his testimony: “he pleased God” (11:5). Most amazing of all is the writer’s estimation of believers who encountered severe persecution and adversity. The world was not worthy of them, he contends (11:36-38). They were not victims but victors.

Faithful people also receive *deliverance from and victory over the enemy*. As the writer notes, “we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul” (10:39). In this spirit, Moses led in keeping the Passover, “lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them” (11:28). Rahab, through her commitment to God, avoided perishing with the Canaanites when Jericho fell (11:31).

God rewarded the faith commitment of His people with other victories: at the Red Sea (11:29), over enemies, lions, fire, the sword and even death (11:32-35).

For the committed believer, though, the ultimate reward is *an eternal inheritance* with God Himself (11:8). The text calls it “a better and an enduring substance” (10:34), “a country” (11:14) and “a continuing city” (11:16; 13:14) with “foundations” (11:10).

Behind these rewards is the third and final characteristic of committed believers. They are willing to reject the world and to receive the promises *because they see God*. This feature of commitment is the most essential and the most paradoxical: it sees what cannot be seen (11:27).

People of faith make those hard

choices because they are “looking unto Jesus,” who saw beyond Calvary’s shame to the joy of His seat at the Father’s right hand (12:2).

In his work *Practical Religion*, Bishop John Charles Ryle describes the committed Christian as one who has . . .

a burning desire to please God, to do His will, and to advance His glory in the world in every possible way. [He is] a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thoroughgoing, whole-hearted, fervent in spirit. *He sees only one thing*, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing; and that one thing is to please God.

Whether he lives, or whether he dies—whether he has health or whether he has sickness—whether he is rich or whether he is poor—whether he pleases man or whether he gives offence—whether he is thought wise or whether he is thought foolish—whether he gets blame or whether he gets praise—for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing; and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God’s glory.

Open my eyes, Lord, that I may see. ■



Dennis Wiggs

The Seven Ws for a Young Preacher

Just like the first few chapters of Genesis, there are many “firsts” for the young preacher. The first years are learning times. Almost every opportunity is a challenge, and behind every challenge is a decision. Some preachers quit. Some change paths. Some stay in despair. But many others accept the challenges, grow and develop into productive preachers. Here are seven Ws to guide the young preacher in the foundational years.

Worship

First and foremost, worship the Lord every day. Call it devotions, quiet time or whatever, but spend time with the Lord every day: A consistent Bible reading program, a planned prayer time and a designated time for personal praise of God. This is the foundation for a satisfying, fruitful ministry.

Rise early. Schedule this daily event. Let no one or nothing detour you around these moments (or hours) of worshipping the Lord. Here is where spiritual strength is gathered to face the challenges of the day.

Work

Laymen often wonder what a preacher does. Some deliver critical comments about the pastor’s workload. So make up your mind to stay busy in the work of the Lord. The critics will eventually hush if you devote each day to an active ministry.

Get up early, dress and go to your study. (If the parsonage is next door to the church, drive your vehicle over to the church parking lot.) Preachers do not punch clocks, but it would be wise to serve as if you are placing a time card in a machine.

I read recently that the average preacher works 54 hours a week. That should be the minimum time spent

praying, reading, studying and ministering to the church family and community. Of course, the man of God is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Always be ready to serve those who need your spiritual assistance.

Be Wise

Pray for wisdom. Often the young preacher pastors a congregation that’s had plenty of experience in “handling a preacher.” Usually at least one individual feels led of the Lord to keep the preacher humble. Pray first. Speak second. (Don’t reverse that order!)

Ask the Lord for the ability and knowledge to handle every situation. Think through every statement made by a church member. Remember that your words and actions will usually be repeated. Don’t feel that you must give an answer to every accusation, suggestion or plan. Promise to pray about it. Seek God’s wisdom first.

Witness

The young preacher is called to preach, pray and present the gospel of Jesus Christ to sinners. Major on the major—winning sinners to Christ. Young preachers often major on the minor. The best method for building a church is to win the unconverted to Christ and train them in the ways of the Lord. Approach every day as an evangelistic opportunity. Distribute gospel tracts. Talk to people about Christ. Visit with the purpose of evangelism.

Wait

Practice Proverbs 3:5-6. Young preachers rush into ideas without waiting upon the Lord. How many programs have been established by an eager young preacher who failed to count the cost? God’s timing is best.

A good method for pastoring is to

write in your prayer book one-year plans, three-year plans and five-year plans. Soak the plans in prayer. Seek the Lord’s guidance. When you are convinced that the new program or building or idea is ordained by the Lord, take action. Seek the Lord’s blessing *before* the project is begun rather than rush ahead, get into trouble and then call upon the Lord.

Whistle

Or sing or pat your foot to the chorus, “This is the day that the Lord hath made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.” Don’t get so disturbed over church responsibilities. Never forget that this is the Lord’s work, not yours. It is His church, not yours.

Some young preachers think the work will fold up if they do not have their hands on everything. Nothing is further from the truth, young preacher. That congregation can replace you today and forget about you tomorrow. (That is a humbling statement, isn’t it?)

Go to work with a song in your heart. Whistle while you work. Go home singing. Developing an ulcer, dying of a heart attack or driving your wife crazy just isn’t worth it. The young preacher should be the Lord’s servant, accomplishing the Lord’s work by the power of the Holy Spirit. Life is just too short to burn the candle at both ends, die prematurely and be forgotten quickly.

Walk

Exercise the mind in the study, the soul in the prayer closet and the body on the pavement. Walk a mile or two a day. Park on the opposite side of the hospital. Walk the stairs. No one will take care of your body except you, young preacher. ■

YOUTH UPDATE

The 1999 Truth & Peace Student Leadership Conference

Paige Austry
Gastonia, NC

Andrea Douglas
Desloge, MO

Chris Johnson
Pittsburg, CA

Corey Lewis
Hampton, VA

Brent Newsom
Clyde, OH

Bethany Taylor
Fresno, CA

Josh Bacon
Albany, GA

Amy Finley
Chillicothe, OH

Jennifer Johnston
Benton, IL

Ryan Lewis
Cisne, IL

Brian Paramore
Cookeville, TN

Brian Taylor
Fresno, CA

Ti Barnhill
Leesburg, GA

Aaron Fletcher
Antioch, TN

Cori Justice
Clarksville, TN

Blake Martin
Russellville, AR

Ben Parker
Locust Grove, OK

Melissa Turnbough
C. Villalba, Spain

Lindsey Barrow
Plano, TX

Michael Foster
Owasso, OK

Kimberly Payne
Bonnie, IL

Stacie Turner
West Plains, MO

Katie Broderick
Sand Springs, OK

Lori Gaw
Cookeville, TN

Becky Pilgrim
Locust Grove, OK

Emily White
Van Buren, AR

Brandi Bryan
Tulsa, OK

Christy Gilbert
Newton, GA

Becky Potete
Chicago, IL

Hillarie Williams
Ada, OK

Paul Bryant
Vero Beach, FL

Susan Goforth
Locust Grove, OK

Joshua Riggs
Joelton, TN

Michael Williams
Memphis, TN

Lane Burrell
Russellville, AR

Darin Gwartney
Desloge, MO

Jarrod Roberts
Cookeville, TN

Stephanie Williford
Chipley, FL

Keely Caison
Moore, OK

Lori Hale
Mutual, OK

Rena Sagraves
Antioch, TN

Jennifer Wyckoff
Locust Grove, OK

Rebehak Caudill
Joelton, TN

Jessica Hall
Batesville, AR

Mandy Scovel
Tecumseh, OK

Tonya Yocom
Russellville, AL

Lindsay Combs
Moore, OK

Josh Harris
Rowlett, TX

Rachel Kern
Locust Grove, OK

Lee Martinez
Donna, TX

Mary Beth Sensing
Nashville, TN

Thomas Cook
Cookeville, TN

Travis Henderson
Pocahontas, AR

Russell Kern
Locust Grove, OK

Scott McNay
Brunswick, MD

Amanda Smith
Tulsa, OK

Mitch Cooper
Oklahoma City, OK

Jackie Hettel
Dardanelle, AR

Jeremy Lack
Tecumseh, OK

Suzanne McVay
C. Villalba, Spain

Heather Smith
Morehead, KY

Scott Cushman
Ada, OK

Bethany Holstein
Johnstown, OH

Tiffany Laughlin
Blackwell, OK

Morgan Minkler
Kansas City, MO

Carrie Stewart
Mt. Juliet, TN

Jonaktan Dooly
Greenwood, AR

Leann Ingram
Morehead, KY

Theresa Lennon
Bay Point, CA

Carabeth Muskrat
Tulsa, OK

Tommy Swindol
Tupelo, MS



Please uphold these 72 high school students in your prayers as they participate in the 16th annual student leadership conference, conducted by the Youth Ministries Division.

Miracle in Room 2205

A deacons' meeting at a Nashville church turned into a discussion about Room 2205. One deacon reported, "We decided that if a fellow needs encouragement, just send him by Room 2205."

Since March 18, a 69-year-old man paralyzed from his chest down has occupied a bed there. Smiling doctors, therapists and visitors stream from the second floor room at Vanderbilt Hospital's rehabilitation center.

The reason for all the smiles is a retired Free Will Baptist preacher named Charles Cooper who spent the last 50 years in Michigan. Before he checked into a rehab bed, he preached 40 years, the last 36 to the same Michigan congregation at Troy FWB Church.

Encourager 2205 left Tennessee as a teenager joining thousands of migrating workers headed for the promised land of northern factories. Ten years later, God asked him to preach; he said yes.

Charles grew a family and a church in Troy. For 14 years, Michigan Free Will Baptists named him their chief promotional officer and General Board member. The denomination elected him to six years on the Executive Committee. There was something about his flashing eyes and quick smile that marked him for leadership.

He moved with quiet dignity among the churches in good times and the not so good times. The years fell away, and the ex-Tennessee teenager found himself on the shady side of 68 facing retirement. With snowy hair glistening atop his tough, slender frame, Charles returned to his Smoky Mountain roots in the spring of 1998.

A man of a thousand stories and anecdotes, he found that retirement settled uneasily on his shoulders. Four decades in the gospel harness left him unaccustomed to the laid back lifestyle

of his golfing and fishing buddies. Then came 1999 and the Ides of March. That Monday at 4:00 a.m. Charles fell, hit his head and hyper-extended his neck. His wife thought he was dead.

For the first time in his life, he could not move, could not speak, could not care for himself. A lesser man might have gone down for the count.

Within 72 hours, he landed in Room 2205 at Vandy Rehab. Doctors were not sure to what degree, if any, the paralysis would release Charles. Appropriately enough, the first thing released was his voice—along with his sense of humor.

The paralysis grudgingly frees small muscle groups. One day he moves his arms. Another day he moves his feet. One delightful day, he wiggled one joint on one finger—and smiled big as sunrise. Charles (at this writing) still cannot use his hands, cannot stand, cannot walk, cannot do most of the things he did so easily for 68 years.

He told me, "I've not been sick in my life until now, but I've got no complaint against the good Lord." Then he paused, "However, I am surprised. I never expected to be here."

The miracle in Room 2205 is not what's happening to Charles Cooper. The miracle is what happens to those who visit the room, including rehab personnel and physicians.

A doctor saw the wall covered with get-well cards and commented, "What a testimony about a man that so many people care what happens to him."

A therapist, drawn to Charles' sunny disposition, discovered that her path had unknowingly crossed his at Hillsdale College in Michigan. He taught her about her alma mater's Free Will Baptist heritage and discussed a Hillsdale professor they both knew.

Using a voice-activated phone, Charles networks with a colorful collection of friends and former parish-

ioners. A Vandy graduate student researching Charles' life left the room chuckling, warmed by his laughter and open testimony of God's faithfulness.

Twice a day, six days a week, he rolls down the hall for 90 minutes of physical therapy. Some days he passes out because of low blood pressure. Most days he doesn't. Every day he conducts himself as a man of God in difficult circumstances. He brings hope and cheer and a sure confidence in the God who can do anything.

Charles says with a grin, "I know that God wants to teach me something through all this. Believe me, I'm paying attention and trying to be a good student. I don't want these lessons sent back a second time."

Last Tuesday I walked into Room 2205 just as he returned from therapy. His Bible was open and he was strapped in a wheel chair. His first words hit a high note: "I'm reading Philippians today where Brother Paul said he had learned to be content. He wrote that from a jail. If Paul could be content in a Roman jail, then I can learn to be content in Room 2205."

There's a chance that Charles Cooper will walk again. We hope he does. Meanwhile, every time the door opens or the phone rings, Pastor Cooper speaks from his new pulpit in Room 2205 to his new congregation. Drop by if you need an encouraging word. ■

Editor's note: At press time, Reverend Cooper was scheduled to be released from Vandy Rehab after more than 10 weeks in therapy. He will continue rehabilitation from his home near Cookeville, Tennessee.



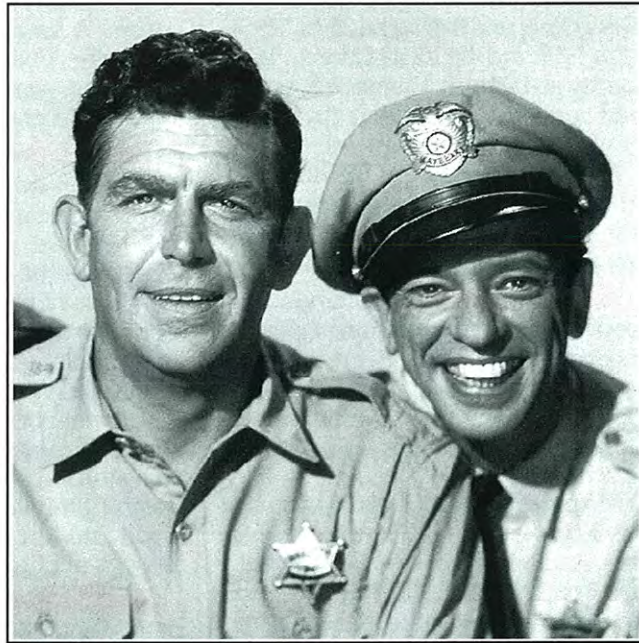
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