

DECEMBER 1999

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS

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**Flood of the
Century**

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**My Best Christmas
in Africa**

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Project Messiah

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**Don't Waste This
Trouble**



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DECEMBER 1999

VOLUME 46, NO. 12

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Timeless Truths

The approaching millennium causes some to predict disasters while others scoff and say there is no need to fear. The Y2K proponents insist that we can expect catastrophic problems with computers. Fear runs rampant in the commercial and church world. Some have given up hope.

But remember that the sovereign God who created the universe and all its inhabitants is still on the throne and directs the affairs of men. Nothing escapes His penetrating gaze. He knows completely all the past, present and potential events which will take place.

Prior to the birth of Jesus, many feared that there was no hope. The world was in chaos. But at just the right time, God intervened in human history and sent His Son.

Believers have the Lord's promise that He will come again. At just the right time, God will intervene in human history by sending His Son the second time. Our hope is not in this world but in the God who made all things.

This special time of the year provides an opportunity for believers to give glory to God for timeless truths.

God's Gospel

One timeless truth is the gospel, the good news. The gospel is a *revealed* message that came from God. Paul declared that he did not receive it from man but from God.

The gospel is a *redemptive* message. Those who believe the gospel become children of God.

The gospel is a *reconciling* message. Through the gospel sinful man can be reconciled to a holy God, and a holy God can be reconciled to sinful man.

God's Grace

Another timeless truth is God's grace. God's means of *saving* sinful human

beings is by grace through faith. Paul declares, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9).

God's means for *schooling* believers is grace. The development of believers is done by grace. Grace brings us into right relationship with God, then teaches and trains us to live soberly, righteously and godly and to look for that blessed hope.

God's means for *strengthening* believers is grace. Paul recognized this truth, "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (II Cor. 12:9a).

God's means for *sanctifying* believers is grace. This truth is affirmed by Paul to Titus, "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14).

God's means for effective *service* is grace. The grace of God is sufficient, enabling believers to do what the Lord asks them to do. Paul declares, "But by the grace of God I am what I am" (I Cor. 15:10a).

God's Gospelier

God uses human beings to accomplish His purpose. The Church has been give the responsibility to preach the gospel to every creature. This time-

less truth is affirmed in Acts 1:8. In order to accomplish His purpose on earth, God converts, calls and commissions men to do His bidding. We are to pray that the Lord of the harvest will thrust laborers into the harvest fields.

God's Guidelines

God's Word provides the necessary guidelines for believers. The Bible gives directives for life and labor for the believer. God's inspired handbook provides for every facet of the believer's life. To disregard or disobey God's Word brings serious consequences.

When there is no word from God, people cast off all restraint. The Bible provides guidelines which enable us to live holy, honest and healthy lives—lives that honor the Lord.

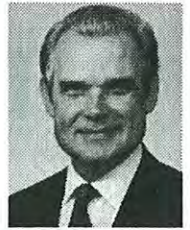
God's Guarantee

Another timeless truth is that nothing we do for the Lord will be forgotten. We give ourselves to Him and His service knowing that full compensation will come. Paul declared, "... forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (I Cor. 15:58b).

God's Gift

The final timeless truth is what we are reminded of each Christmas season—the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. As Lord He is our *Master*. As Jesus he is our *Mediator*. As Christ he is the *Messiah*. God's gift of His Son is an unspeakable, undeserved and unique gift.

John declares, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). ■



Melvin Worthington

The Secretary's Schedule

December 1999

6-7 Leadership Conference

8 Executive Committee Meeting

10-11 Educational Task Force Meeting

A pastor tells what it was like to experience the North Carolina flood of 1999.

The Flood of the Century

By Jeff Gaskins

Hurricane Dennis lingered off the coast of North Carolina for nearly two weeks in early September. Although the wind damage was slight, continual rains saturated the ground with 13 inches of water. On the heels of Dennis, Hurricane Floyd hit eastern North Carolina with high winds and a torrential downpour that dumped over 20 more inches of rain in less than 24 hours. Rain from the two hurricanes combined to trigger the worst flooding in recorded history in eastern North Carolina. A local television station referred to the disaster as "The Flood of the Century."

On the day after Hurricane Floyd, the enormity of the natural disaster that struck eastern North Carolina began to emerge. Flood waters washed out bridges and roads, divided counties, cut off cities and towns and hindered relief efforts. Water treatment plants flooded and for several weeks contaminated water had to be boiled.

Overwhelmed and desperate flood victims who thought, "I can't believe this is happening to me," filled Red Cross shelters needing food, water, shelter and clothing.

Because the flood water rose so quickly and in areas where it had never flooded before, many who chose to remain in their homes had to be rescued from their rooftops by helicopters. A family from our church was stranded in their home for nearly two weeks, surviving on stored food and water and using a generator.

Daily news reports of power outages, a rising death toll, closed roads, military-enforced curfews, contaminated water, crowded Red Cross centers, military vehicles on city streets and non-stop flights overhead by helicopters searching for victims and delivering relief supplies to stranded families, gave eastern North Carolina the feel of a war zone.

In Greenville, the Tar River rose to unprecedented heights, topping by



Parker's Chapel FWB Church in Greenville reported \$250,000 in damage.

five feet the 100-year flood mark set in 1919. Flood waters consumed houses and apartments along its banks, engulfed the city's electric substation and water treatment plant and swallowed the airport.

The swollen Neuse River and Contentnea Creek forced thousands from their homes in several counties. Flooding covered city sewage treatment plants and animal waste disposal lagoons. Millions of turkeys, chickens, cows and hogs drowned and floated in the flood waters.

Murky, foul-smelling, contaminated water buried 40,000 homes and businesses and over 50,000 vehicles. In addition, more than 50 people lost their lives in the flood waters, most of them drowning when their vehicles were swept off flooded roads.

Because eastern North Carolina is home to many Free Will Baptist churches, it was inevitable that Free Will Baptist families would be affected by the flood. A meeting of pastors from the flood ravaged areas revealed the grim details. Nearly 150 Free Will Baptist fami-

lies received major damage to their homes or businesses. Many of them lost everything they owned, leaving their homes during the night with only their lives and the clothes they wore.

The three hardest hit churches were Belvoir FWB Church in Greenville (Phil Ange, pastor), Grifton FWB Church in Grifton (Van Mitchell, pastor) and Mt. Calvary FWB Church in Hookerton (Fred Carraway, pastor). Sixty-eight families in those three churches received major damage or total destruction of their homes or businesses. Belvoir Church alone had 36 families with flood damage.

After the water receded, I got my first look at damage to the homes of members of Trinity FWB Church in Greenville where I pastor. One member, a widow, lived on the north side of Tar River where most of the flooding in Pitt County occurred. I walked into her house and was totally unprepared for the devastation. Everything in the house was ruined and the stench created by mildew and con-



Flood waters touched the bottom of the windows at Jeff Jasser's home in Greenville.

taminated water was overwhelming.

Floors buckled, furniture and appliances were beyond repair, and pictures and personal items were destroyed. The thought of lost family heirlooms, family pictures and items she had saved that were her husband's overwhelmed me. For the first time since the flood occurred two weeks earlier, my heart broke and I wept uncontrollably as I thought about what she and others would face in coming months.

In addition, an assessment of flooding to church properties revealed damage totaling over \$1 million. Parker's Chapel FWB Church in Greenville, pastored by Lorenza Stox, sustained over \$250,000 damage. Flood waters entered both the sanctuary and a newly-completed family life center. Because of the flooding, the Parker's Chapel congregation shared the facilities of two other Free Will Baptist churches for several weeks.

Tabernacle FWB Church in Kinston, pastored by Jim Maddox, received damage that totally destroyed the building. Preliminary estimates set the bill at \$600,000 to replace what was lost. Three other churches, Community FWB Church in Chinquapin, Faith FWB Church in Goldsboro and Mt. Calvary FWB Church in Hookerton all suffered flood damage with combined damage estimates that totaled nearly \$200,000.

As news of the disaster spread

across the nation and to the rest of the Free Will Baptist family, relief efforts were organized to help sister churches suffering from the flood. Water, clothing, food, cleaning supplies and furniture poured into eastern North Carolina. Daily, I received calls from Free Will Baptist pastors asking what could they do and what could they send.

Our church and others served as clearing houses for supplies for needy Free Will Baptist families. Money also began to flow into the North Carolina promotional office as Jim Marcum, our promotional director, led efforts to

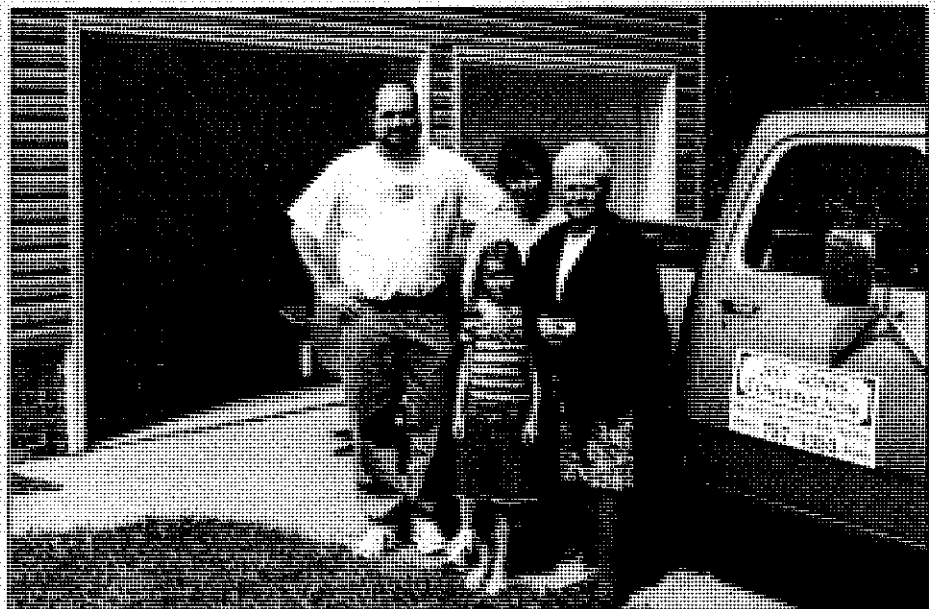
inform Free Will Baptists about the needs of hurting families.

Speaking for all the churches affected by the flood, we say thank you to all who generously contributed to the disaster relief fund and brought much-needed relief items. Most Free Will Baptist families and churches did not have flood insurance and those that did still incurred significant financial losses. Free Will Baptist families depended upon their local church, state and denominational family for help since very few were helped by governmental assistance.

Please continue to pray for the pastors, churches and Free Will Baptist families recovering from the flood. Free Will Baptist pastors and members have displayed great courage, determination and fortitude during a difficult time. By the time this article is published, many families will still not have returned to their homes.

Finally, continue to pray for a spiritual awakening to occur in eastern North Carolina. Several Free Will Baptist churches, although hit hard by the flood, saw people saved as a result of the disaster. Because of the disaster, many people have been open to the gospel. Opportunities for witnessing and ministry are numerous. ■

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Dr. Jeff Cochran pastors Trinity Free Will Baptist Church in Greenville, North Carolina.

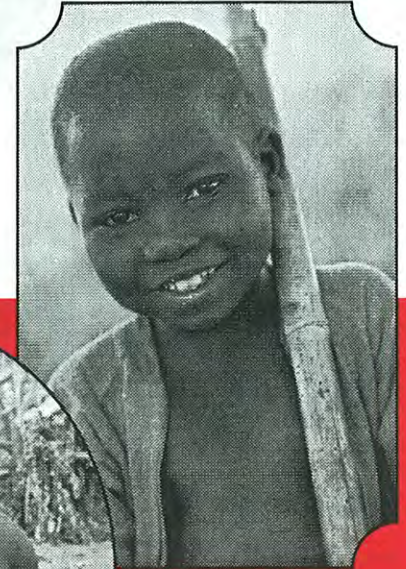
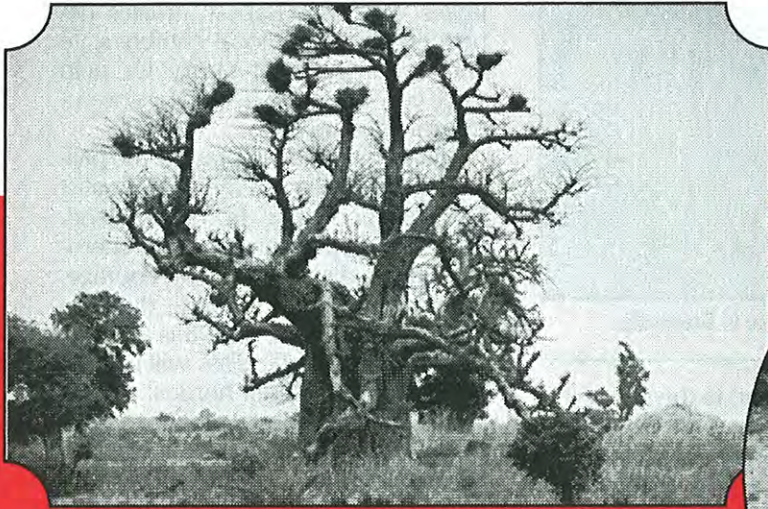


Hurricane Floyd destroyed the homes of Jeff, Shari and Erin Windom, and Dot Windom, his mother.

A home missionary looks back at his first Christmas as a foreign missionary.

My Best Christmas in Africa

By Norman Richards



Each Christmas season my family celebrated in Côte d'Ivoire left its special memories in my heart, but in reminiscing over those years of missionary service, I think our first Christmas in Africa wins the prize.

The calendar said it was Christmas, yet nothing around me resembled the previous Christmases in my life. Instead of winter's chilly blasts and a much dreamed of white Christmas, thick clouds of dust had blown in from

the Sahel Desert, making breathing and seeing difficult.

The thermometer hovered at 100 or so degrees in the daytime. Thanks to a brief spell of harmattan weather, the temperature cooled to the mid-50s at night.

No brightly colored decorations adorned the huts and simple mud brick homes of the Agni people among whom we'd settled nine months earlier. The villagers were not rushing to the local boutique to do last minute gift

shopping.

No, they would be happy if family finances were sufficient to buy cloth in the market for a tailor-made outfit or to buy

meat for the Christmas Day meal.

My family and a Lebanese family (merchants) were the only foreigners

living among the African tribes in our region. In the short time that we'd been in Côte d'Ivoire, we'd learned quickly that our every action was of public interest.

In spite of this, Bessie and I decided to maintain some American culture and customs in our home, for our own emotional needs and for our children's benefit.

So, this was our first Christmas in Africa, and we wanted a Christmas tree. Unfortunately, there were no evergreen trees, and we had brought few Christmas decorations from the States. What could we possibly use for a tree?

Bessie rummaged through boxes left by other missionaries and found a small artificial tree and ornaments. Maybe it wouldn't have been impressive by American standards, but it sure looked good to us when we finished decorating and putting our few gifts from the States under it.

As Christmas drew near, I realized how few people really understood the true meaning of Christmas. It was just one of many holidays celebrated in Côte d'Ivoire.

A truck driver told me when I questioned him, "Pastor, I don't know why we celebrate Christmas. I just know it is a time to eat, drink, dance and have a good time."

My heart was challenged anew to the mission for which God had called us here. Whatever sacrifices we had made in leaving our families and homeland and in struggling to learn new languages, customs and cultures

would be worth it if we could win and disciple the African people for Jesus.

On Christmas Eve day several young men from the church went into the forest and cut palm branches. They braided these into neat arches and placed them around the doors and windows of our church. Then they searched around the mission station and village for fresh flowers to add to the arches.

I was impressed! Not only were the decorations pretty and added a festive air to the church, but they were also typically African.

Shortly before nine o'clock, above the noisy clamor of the village night life, the church bell gonged several times. This was the understood signal that church services would soon begin. Thirty minutes or more later, church members and others filled the pews and crowded around the back of the church.

I glanced around me, fascinated by the scene before me. Two kerosene lanterns dimly lit the interior of the building, and it seemed that I was looking out into a sea of eyes.

I do not recall every detail of that Christmas Eve service. We spent a lot of time singing familiar carols which had been translated into French and Agni, as well as other favorite songs. The young people presented a play acted out with all their natural acting skills.

For me the highlight of the night came about midnight when we all left the church and marched through the village carrying lanterns and caroling in several different languages. God's presence was very real as we

carried the message of His love outside the church doors.

Early Christmas morning we gathered back at church for more sharing, singing and hearing the Christmas story from God's Word. Afterwards, we gathered at old Peter's house for a continental breakfast consisting of hot chocolate, strong black coffee tamed by adding lots of sugar and milk, French bread, butter and jelly.

Yes, that first Christmas in Africa was special to me. It reminded me that Christmas is not necessarily gift giving and fancy decorations, American style. It is staying focused on Jesus, the One who left His heavenly throne to be born in a lowly manger on earth, who suffered and died to redeem us from our sins. It is the joy of sharing Him, the true meaning of Christmas, with those who have never heard. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Norman Richards pastors New Hope Free Will Baptist Mission in Slidell, Louisiana. He and his wife Bessie served 28 years in West Africa before health problems required that they return to the United States.

BEYOND BELIEF



What the Christmas story would be if a public relations firm had evaluated the original plans.

Good morning, Sir. I'm from the Hoople, Brewer, Stoner, Bradley and Wannamaker Agency. I'm here about your Project Messiah which we've been asked to critique.

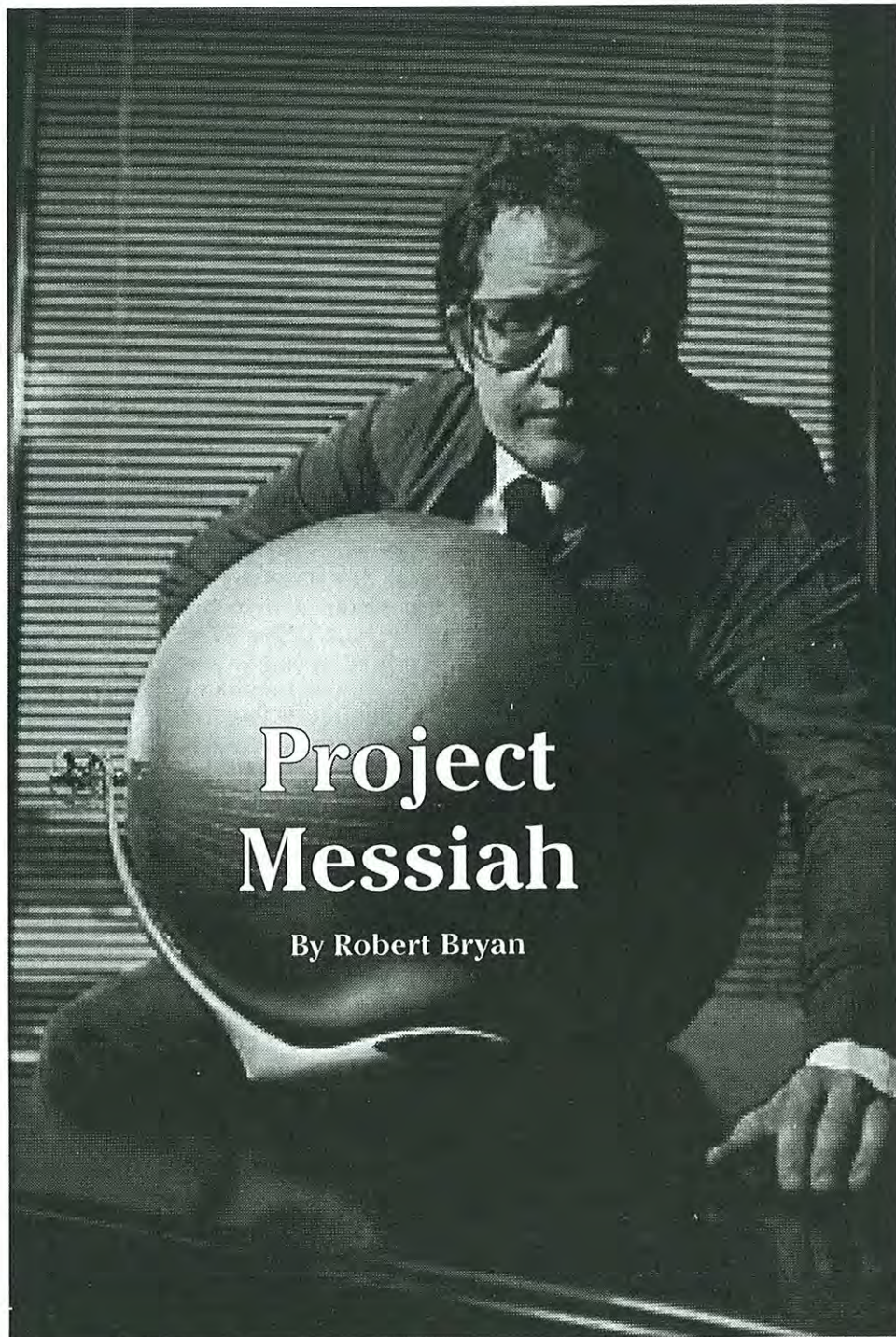
Let me make sure I understand what you plan to do in Project Messiah. You intend to send a Savior, as you call him, to a relatively unknown group of people who have a reputation for being unruly, rebellious and chauvinistic. The Assyrians, the Medes and Persians, the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans all had trouble keeping that group down.

They have been looking for a Messiah—an anointed one—to deliver them from their most recent conquerer for centuries, I gather.

You propose sending this Messiah as a baby into a pitifully poor family with a shady reputation because of a too-soon pregnancy. You propose to announce the birth of this deliverer to dirt-poor shepherds out in the boonies. Then you want to send in some stargazing foreigners from somewhere to the East who don't worship the same way the Jews do.

After that, there's nothing for nearly 30 years. He grows up in a hick town, learning how to cut wood and peg it together. Then this Messiah leaves home and starts teaching in all the backwater towns of northern Israel.

He teaches about humility, love, about being transformed inside, about re-establishing community with others. But not once does he badmouth the Romans or try to make contact



with the underground opposition or try to organize an army to overthrow the occupying power. Then finally he's killed on trumped up charges and buried in a borrowed tomb.

Problems With . . .

Frankly, Sir, we've found a few things that you may want to look at carefully. As the plan now stands, you've got maybe a five percent chance of success. Please let me explain.

The Parents

First, the girl you propose as the Messiah's mother. She's too young, too poor and has no education. She'll never do . . . I beg your pardon?

Oh, I'm sure she has a good heart, but this girl will be responsible for training the future leader, the future deliverer of his people. How can anyone so poor and so badly educated prepare him?

We need an older woman to give an aura of dignity to the man. This girl

will live under the cloud of pregnancy outside marriage. It will be a miracle if she is not stoned to death before the baby is born. Do you realize the danger you'd be putting her in?

The Messiah will need the best education he can get, so he'll need a rich family that can provide his needs.

Yes, I understand that this Mary is a devoted, spiritual teenager, but you know how teenagers are—up one day, down the next. Are you sure it's wise to entrust the future deliverer to someone like that? Who's to say she won't give up on religion by the time she's 20?

Then there's the man who is to be his earthly father. (I won't mention all the potential difficulties you can expect with this heavenly father-earthly father business.) We think the man—Joseph is the name, I believe—is a poor choice. Like the girl, he's uneducated. He comes from a no-where village and works as a carpenter.

I don't think this is the image you want to project. Who ever heard of a conquering leader from a carpenter's family? How can a carpenter instill in his "son" the spirit of accomplishing great deeds, the spirit of excellence, the spirit of leadership?

This Joseph is a hick. The Messiah must be a man of action, a man who takes charge, not a humble craftsman. Can this man give him the role model to lead a nation?

Here's a very strict man who discovers that his wife-to-be is pregnant. Now you'll talk to him in a dream, and expect him to go against everything he's ever thought of as right just because of that dream, and marry his fiancé even though she's pregnant and not by him.

You expect him to swallow the idea that she hasn't been unfaithful and that she became pregnant supernaturally. Doesn't that make him just a bit unstable psychologically? I mean, if he's that susceptible to suggestions, what kind of nonsense might he lead the boy into later? I'll be honest, it looks to us like you've picked a couple of losers.

The Birth

Now, about the birth: You want the mother-to-be in her ninth month of pregnancy to travel several days on a donkey, sleep on the ground, eat what she can find or buy (and that can't be much because they're so poor). Then

she and this Joseph arrive in a town where they know no one, during a time when there are more visitors than since the whole Roman army marched through, so they'll have no place to stay.

And the Messiah—the most important person in the Jewish prayers for deliverance, the one everybody pins their hopes on—is to be born in a cave that serves as a stable for animals in the winter? His parents are alone and scared. No midwife in attendance. It's cold, and they have only the thin blankets they put on the donkey's back to cushion Mary's ride. This is no way to present a savior to the people.

You'll kill this Messiah's chances before he starts. Here's the greatest leader the Jews will have ever known being born in the dirt and filth and stench of a stable. No one will believe he's who he's proclaimed to be.

The Announcement

And that's another thing: The announcement will be made to some shepherds watching their sheep at night out on the plains. You're sending the biggest choir of angels since creation to serenade shepherds and entrust them with the announcement that the Messiah is born. I'll have to say the P.R. department really talked to me about this little exercise.

Has no one ever explained the gatekeeper theory to you?

Well, it goes like this: There are certain people who determine whether other people accept or reject an idea. Because of their position, the respect people have for them, their money, whatever, if they accept something, other people are free to accept it. If they reject it, no one else in their community can accept it, either.

Now, Sir, these shepherds are not the community gatekeepers. Nobody looks up to them as people with superior knowledge or as someone to imitate. My word, these fellows probably don't even own the sheep. They're hired laborers. No one who owned that many sheep would sleep out in the cold.

So you're entrusting this extremely important announcement to people who aren't influential and have no friends in high places. Frankly, it's a waste of angels. Nothing long-term will come of it.

The Foreigners

Then after informing the shepherds, you plan to send foreigners to confirm the story, for pity's sake. The Messiah is sent to save *his* people, but the first people of any consequence who recognize him are *foreigners*. That's a sure way to create problems with the locals, Sir, especially with local religious leaders. Bring in outsiders who don't worship the same way as the Jews and have them worship the Messiah? It's the kiss of death from a P.R. standpoint.

The 30-Year Wait

Now, as I understand it, except for one brief episode when the child is 12, you plan to wait another 30 years before the Messiah bursts on the scene . . . well, bursts is a little strong. Let's say, meanders on the scene. And when he does, he's mild, gentle, kind. He talks about being a servant, about giving to others, about forgiving one another.

Let me tell you, Sir, you don't establish kingdoms by serving people. You do it by knocking a few heads together. This Messiah just shows himself weak, pitifully weak.

The Support Base

Another problem we see is that he's got to have support. He needs connections with the right kind of people for money to hire an army and defeat the Romans. He needs a network of informants so he can strike effectively. If I understand your plan correctly, it looks like he will choose some riff-raff to travel with him.

You plan to bring into his intimate group uneducated fishermen, a zealot, a turncoat tax collector, along with other assorted nobodies. Sure, some of them can mend a net, but they can't carry on a conversation in proper Hebrew, much less lead a fight for freedom from oppressors. If they don't kill one another within a year, I'll be surprised.

Suggested Changes

We think you should consider changing your plan significantly. We propose that the Messiah be born into a well-known family with parents who have the education necessary to bring him up right. A family which could intro-

duce him to important people and help him develop political contacts.

At his birth, there's no need to waste the angelic choir on hired shepherds. We suggest that you send the choir to the Temple in Jerusalem where you'd reach more people and get some of the religious leaders as well. We think you should send angels to inform the important people of the region about the birth.

Naturally, we'll want to put a big announcement in all the underground newspapers to make sure the message gets out.

Instead of having foreign religious dignitaries worship him, we suggest a delegation headed by the High Priest, or at the very least a group from the local synagogue. This would permit us to begin work through the established religious organization to get him recognized and respected.

He should have the best education possible. He'll also need training in horsemanship, fencing, self-defense and military strategy and planning. If he's to deliver his people, he can't do it walking around in sandals, teaching in synagogues.

He'll need to start early developing his network of contacts with opposition political leaders and religious leaders. He'll need to work on finding people to help finance his activities and build an army.

All this information is contained in our folder, "Project Messiah, Plan B."

Designer's Response

Thank you for your work. But you see, My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts.

You consider My plan foolishness, but you need to understand that My foolishness is wiser than your greatest wisdom, and My weakness is stronger than your greatest strength. In fact, I will destroy the "wisdom" of the wise and will frustrate the "intelligence" of the intelligent.

So, when the fulness of time will have come, I'll send the Messiah. That is, I Myself will take on human form and become a man in every way except for sin.

I will come so that men and wom-

en from every nation can have life, eternal life, abundant life. I will destroy the works of Satan who has held them in bondage to sin and has caused their loss.

Political conquerors will come and go. Today it's the Romans, next it will be someone else. Being conquered by a political power doesn't cause eternal loss; being a slave to sin does. Messiah's life will be poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Forgiveness of sins will be preached in His name among all nations.

He will indeed deliver His people . . . not from the Romans, but from sin . . . redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of My grace which I will lavish on those who trust Me.

The Rebuttal

But, Sir, the people are expecting a physical kingdom; you're talking about a spiritual kingdom. They expect a deliverer to rid them of the Romans, while you talk about getting rid of sin and its power in their lives. They want prosperity, but you're preaching commitment and faith. They want to see a new flag flying over the walls of Jerusalem, and you talk about faith in a heavenly reward, paying no attention to present political and physical conditions.

Sir, please remember that the first rule of successful politics is to give the people what they want. Help them reach their expectations. The program you propose doesn't meet the people's expectations at all. In fact, it goes against what they want.

It won't fly, Sir. You're not responding to their expressed desires and felt needs. They want a kingdom of their own right here and right now. You can't succeed if you follow your original plan.

Final Response

My kingdom is not of this world. Were it of this world, My followers would fight with physical weapons. No, the combat is not between flesh and blood, but between spiritual forces in heavenly realms.

And I shall conquer. Messiah, Jesus, shall destroy the works of Satan and shall be exalted to the highest place and receive a name that is above every

name. At His name every knee will bow, in Heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to My glory.

The Reconsideration

That sounds very much like something I read in the conclusion of the original plan. Oh, yes, here it is:

"Messiah will be in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world will not recognize him. He will come to that which was his own, but his own will not receive him. Yet to all who do receive him, to those who believe in his name, he will give the right to become children of God . . ."

"The Word will become flesh and make his dwelling among men. They will see his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who comes from the Father full of grace and truth. For I love the world so much that I am giving my one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

So it is true, then. It is more important that people get forgiveness for their sins than that they achieve political freedom. Messiah will come, and in the act of dying—which everybody will interpret as losing—he will make that pardon possible. You are going to do it, aren't you? You know, it's crazy, but it just might work. In fact, I'm beginning to think you may succeed.

Listen, uh, I want to be a part of that. Count me in, would you? ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Robert Bryan is a Free Will Baptist foreign missionary to Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. This article was adapted from a sermon he preached in 1995 and 1996.

A story finished 27 years later.

The Christmas Singer

By David Reece

On a trip to Nashville for a Leadership Conference, I passed through my hometown in East Tennessee to visit with my 76-year-old mother. I had a church member with me, and we spent the night with Mom.

During the evening conversation as Mom showed him around the home, she began telling about the 22-month-old child Marian and I lost to a virtually unknown heart disease. Her death was difficult for the entire family, and, as you would expect, extremely hard on my wife and me. That was 27 years ago.

As the story unfolded, I realized that part of the event was being told in my hearing for the first time. Mom told of the child who sang and went through the motions of each little childhood song several times during her painful night of death. That wasn't new to me, and for years I had cherished precious memory of my little singer.

Although it is still hard to believe, at 22 months she sang song after song and talked as a child would who was much older. Nevertheless, I listened, and Mom began to describe events that took place after the death that my wife and I were never told.

I was in the hospital for minor surgery when the baby developed pneumonia and began to seriously dehydrate. Her body, already weakened by the difficult heart problem, began to lose ground, and soon death became

a real possibility. I was quickly checked out of the hospital and brought to the side of my young wife, expecting doctors to somehow bring us good news of improvement and possible recovery. Instead, we were informed that several injections of water were necessary for her survival.

The danger was that the heart could not take the trauma. I remember the walk to the end of the hall and the prayer from my heart that God's will would be done, only to be pulled back to this world by the doctor announcing he needed to talk to both parents.

Mom remembered these details and communicated them well. The next day we viewed the tiny body as a family and broken-heartedly turned and walked out to the car to return home.

Mom and Dad went back for one more moment with their grandchild. Here was the part that my wife and I never knew. As they returned to the casket, two nurses were found waiting and weeping over our little baby. They apologized for intruding but explained that they just had to come and see this child. Mom asked them why, and the answer was God's gift to Marian and me for this Christmas.

It seems that as the last moments of our child's life escaped, she was singing. As the life itself left the little frame of a body, her voice was ushering out the song upon her heart. In the

words of the nurse who spoke to my mother, "The song died in her throat."

The doctor was overwhelmed by this witness as were his nurses. The song dying in her throat must have been completed in the presence of the Lord. God's gift to me and my family this Christmas is a reminder that in life and in death there is a responsibility to glorify and worship and praise our Father and his dear Son. May I, as well, praise Him to the end, to the very last breath.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend David Reece pastors Heritage Free Will Baptist Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. He is moderator of the Maryland State Association of Free Will Baptists.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Mexican Association Meets in Monterrey

MONTERREY, MX—The Mexico National Association met July 30-August 1 in El Uro campground near Monterrey, Mexico. Approximately 400 ministers, delegates and visitors were present. Dr. Melvin and Anne Worthington represented the FWB National Association. Trymon Messer and Richard Adams represented the Home Missions Department. Jimmy and Janie Aldridge represented Foreign Missions.

At a luncheon meeting hosted by Home Missions director Trymon Messer, Dr. Thomas Marberry was presented as the president

of the Seminary of the Cross. Dr. Marberry spoke to the group, asking their continued support in the work of the Seminary.

Messer also presented James Munsey with a plaque for 12 years of service as coordinator. He emphasized that Munsey would still be active in Mexico in his new role as Representative for Hispanic Development.

In the business session moderated by Javier Gallegos, delegates elected a new slate of officers:

President: Gonzalo Medina
Secretary: Fermin Sanchez
Treasurer: Jose Rendon

Lazaro de la Rosa remained as Executive Secretary.

Delegates also approved a recommendation by the Executive Committee that properties in Sabinas Hidalgo, Pueblo Nuevo, El Canelito, Cavazos in Reynosa and San Gregorio be turned over to the Mexican government, since they are presently abandoned with no regular services. A proposal to host the International Fellowship of FWB Churches was rejected, citing lack of sufficient funds.

The 40th session of the association will be held in Altamira, Tamaulipas, July 28-30, 2000.

Oklahoma Church Celebrates 50 Years

TWIN OAKS, OK—Fifty years after Lowery FWB Church organized in 1949 with 26 charter members, some 300 people gathered on September 5 as the congregation celebrated a half-century of service. Pastor Doug Carey led the day-long activities.

The special day honored six former pastors: E. B. Condit, Berneil Rogers, Ronnie Smallen, Francis Berka, Robert Sharry and Troy McClary. The church also honored three charter members still active in the congregation: Russell Ferguson, Clifford Baker and Sharon Eagleton.



Pastor Doug Carey (L) and former pastors Robert Sharry, Berneil Rogers, Francis Berka, E.B. Condit.

Governor Frank Keating issued a special proclamation commemorating the 50th anniversary. A special citation from the Oklahoma legislature was delivered personally by Senator Rick Littlefield and Representative Larry Adair.

Oklahoma executive director Ernest Harrison, Jr., brought greetings from the Oklahoma State Association of Free Will Baptists.

The keynote message was preached by Dr. Wayne McDaniel, pastor of First FWB Church in Sylacauga, Alabama.

After special music and a buffet lunch, a multi-media presentation detailed the church's first 50 years with pictures, slides and stories.

The church conducts two Sunday morning services, averages 225 for worship and 165 for Sunday School. Operating on a \$150,000 annual budget, the congregation gives 10 percent of its income to the state Cooperative Plan, in addition to supporting missions and Hillsdale FWB College.

Pastor Carey said that he attributes the church's growth to the fact that members love one another, reach out to witness for Christ, are friendly to visitors and emphasize attracting young people and families.

Georgia Minister, Lewis Williams, Dies

COLQUITT, GA—Reverend James Lewis Williams, a Free Will Baptist minister for 39 years, died August 14. He was 65. Rev. Williams was a bivocational pastor for most of his ministry, working as a butcher, a milkman, a bookkeeper and other jobs to undergird his pastoral income.

Williams spent his entire ministry in Georgia, his first pastorates at Macedonia FWB Church in Miller County and Cedar Springs FWB Church in Early County.

After a pastorate at New Salem FWB Church in Miller County, he worked full-time as promotional secretary for the Georgia State FWB Mission Board. From there, he accepted his first full-time pastorate at Mount Gilead FWB Church in Brinson where he labored 17 years until deteriorating health forced him from full-time work.

He continued to serve as interim pastor for several churches in Southeast Georgia.

Georgia pastor Matthew Pinson said, "Brother Lewis was a peacemaker. He knew how to help people resolve conflict."

Williams was converted at age 10, and soon had to quit school to work and help his family after his father died.

Organist Ministers From Wheelchair



ERWIN, TN—For more than 30 years, the organist at Canah Chapel FWB Church in Erwin has served from a wheelchair, according to Pastor Tommy Street. Diagnosed

with Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy at an early age, Stanley Sneed was not expected to live long.

After surprising the medical community with his will to live, Stanley was converted at age 12. He was confined to a wheelchair by age 14.

Pastor Street said, "God gave Stanley a wonderful gift for music. Playing the organ was natural for him, and for over 30 years he has been an inspiration to all."

In order for Stanley to get to Canah Chapel for services, his father must make eight lifts before rolling Stanley into the church sanctuary.

Pastor Street said, "Stanley is very faithful and can play any song that is requested. He never complains and has a wonderful outlook on life. Through prayers and loving support from family and friends, God has blessed and used Stanley throughout his life."

Street concluded, "If you come to Canah Chapel, you will see Stanley on the left as you come into the church. He is truly a profile in courage."

Pastor Receives Son's Diploma Posthumously



Bible College president Tom Malone presents diploma to I. Bennie Turner.

NASHVILLE, TN—During graduation exercises at Free Will Baptist Bible College last May, South Carolina pastor, Reverend I. Bennie Turner received his son's diploma posthumously. Twenty-six-year-old Jason Turner died April 5, 1998, after a two-year battle with cancer.

Jason had completed all academic requirements for the Bachelor of Science degree and marched with his graduating class in 1996, but he did not receive his diploma because he lacked 10 hours of summer internship.

Before he was able to complete his internship, Jason was diagnosed with cancer. Converted at age six and ordained to preach at 21, he served as minister of youth and music at Fellowship FWB Church in Manning, South Carolina, where his father pastored.

In April 1999, Reverend Turner was notified by President Tom Malone that the FWBBC Board of Trustees and faculty had voted to present Jason's diploma posthumously.

Reverend Turner is a Tentmaker home missionary who retired from his insurance job in 1998.

Kentucky Re-Elects Tim Hall

BETSY LAYNE, KY—Delegates to Kentucky's 60th annual state association elected Moderator Tim Hall to his fifth term, according to Promotional Secretary Jim Patton. Reverend Hall pastors First FWB Church in Owensboro.

The June 18-19 state association met at Betsy Layne FWB Church. Some 200 people registered for the event, including 40 ministers and 18 deacons.

Pastor Jimmy Price of Katy Friend FWB Church in Prestonsburg and Foreign Missions Department director James Forlines preached during worship services.

Delegates passed a resolution opposing gambling in the state.

The 2000 state association will meet at First FWB Church in Glasgow at a time to be determined.

Hurricane Damages North Carolina Churches and Homes

GOLDSBORO, NC—Surging flood waters from Hurricane Floyd damaged six Free Will Baptist churches in eastern North Carolina this past September, and destroyed the homes of more than 100 Free Will Baptist families, according to Promotional Director Jim Marcum. At press time, local pastors expected more reports of damaged churches and homes as rivers crested and flood waters receded.

A group of 12 North Carolina pastors met with Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington and Jim Marcum in Goldsboro on September 29 to assess the extent of flood damage and devise a strategy to assist families and churches caught in the hurricane's path.

Reverend Marcum said, "The damage is not limited to our churches and the homes of our people, which is bad enough. Many of our people lost their vehicles as well, some their businesses, others their jobs."

The committee of pastors that met with Marcum recommended a three-dimensional focus to equitably distribute funds given to the North Carolina FWB Disaster Relief Fund. First, all funds will be distributed on a percentage basis—75% for families, 25% for churches.

Second, the local pastor, with the aid of his board or committee, will be responsible for distribution among his people.

Third, the committee targeted the three greatest need areas: Money for homeless and jobless families, items for personal hygiene and cleaning supplies because of the extensive contamination.

The six churches affected reported damage ranging from \$50,000 to the day care center at Faith FWB Church in Goldsboro to \$250,000 damage at Parker's Chapel FWB Church in Greenville. Tabernacle FWB Church in Kinston experienced more than \$700,000 damage after flood waters shifted the building from its foundation. Only one church had flood insurance, First FWB Church in Washington.

Community FWB Church in Chinquapin reported \$90,000 damage, and Mt. Calvary FWB Church in Hookerton reported \$75,000 damage.

Sixteen churches reported families with homes destroyed. The most deeply affected were Belvoir FWB Church with 36 families displaced, Grifton FWB Church—18 families, Parker's Chapel FWB Church—19 families, Mt. Calvary FWB Church—14 families.

Promotional Director Jim Marcum said, "At least \$126,000 came in by October 15 from Free Will Baptists across the country to assist the stricken churches."

Marcum prepared a two-page news release detailing the extent of flood damage to churches and homes.



Pastors meet to assess hurricane damage: (L) Lorenza Stox, Jim Marcum, Fred Carraway, Gerald Fowler, Van Mitchell, Melvin Worthington, Glenwood Kennedy, Jim Maddox, Archie Ratliff, Dann Patrick, Jeff Gaskins, Phil Ange.

The release, along with a cover letter from Executive Secretary Melvin Worthington, was mailed denomination-wide on October 7 to all pastors and state leaders requesting assistance for the North Carolina churches.

Early in the clean up process, Pastor Mike Gladson of First FWB Church in Washington, told the *Contact* staff, "The insurance adjustor was here on Monday regarding the damage from Hurricane Dennis. On Wednesday, Hurricane Floyd hit town."

By September 23, Reverend Marcum had arranged for four churches to serve as drop-off points for food, water, clothing and toiletries. Trinity FWB Church in Greenville, Bethel FWB Church in Kinston, Sherwood Forest FWB Church in New Bern and Union Chapel FWB Church in Chocowinity opened their doors to stockpile emergency supplies for the relief effort.

Through Marcum's untiring efforts, every North Carolina pastor was contacted and asked to take a special disaster relief fund offering on October 3.

Local and state officials expect the rebuilding process to be years in duration. North Carolina's secretary of health and human services said, "Nothing since the Civil War has been as destructive to families here."

Those who wish to assist in the hurricane relief may send funds to:

**Reverend Jim Marcum, Promotional Director
The North Carolina FWB Promotional Office
P. O. Box 67
Goldsboro, NC 27533-0067**

Make checks payable to: **North Carolina FWB Disaster Relief Fund.**

Jim Marcum may be contacted via e-mail at nfcwb@esn.net or by phone at 919-734-4010.

Fellowship FWB Church in **Bryan, TX**, reports seven baptisms and 10 new members. Pastor **Levan Hubbard** preaches to 170 each Sunday.

Pastor **David Malone** baptized seven converts at **Peace FWB Church** in **Granite City, IL**.

There's a major remodeling project underway at **Harmony FWB Church** in **West Frankfort, IL**. The effort includes new pews, carpet and light fixtures in the sanctuary, plus work on the walls. **Kenneth Edwards** pastors.

A new ministry outreach at **Liberty FWB Church** in **Cottonwood, CA**, takes men out of the jail annex and brings them on property to work. Several men have been saved, and six joined the church. Pastor **Dan Steigman** says the congregation averages 55 in attendance.

Over the past 12 months, teens at **Faith FWB Church** in **Goldsboro, NC**, have led more than 250 people to Christ, according to **Christian Powell**, youth pastor. Pastor **Dann Patrick** said that 55 new students enrolled in the church's school, Faith Christian Academy.

What a wonderful problem arose at **Bakerville FWB Church** in **Bonnie, IL**. Because of growth, members had to move the choir seats to make room for more congregational seating. Pastor **Russell Wolfe** says that the Sunday School rooms are overcrowded also.

Attendance at **Buncombe FWB Church** in **Cathage, TX**, has jumped from 15 to 60 in the three years since Pastor **Allen Moore** arrived in town.

Twenty-seven teens attended a teen open-gym night at **Bethel FWB Church** in **South Roxana, IL**. Pastor **Bill Crank** reports three conversions and six rededications.

Evangelist **Bob Shockey** spent a month at **Ozark FWB Church** in **Ozark, AR**, to train an evangelistic team among the members. The 13-week training program sets out to train workers who then train others. Pastor **Rick Ketchum** says that the door-to-

door application of the lessons has already resulted in six conversions and two rededications.

Nobody believed it could be done except the 62 children who did it. The youngsters brought 17,434 pennies, plus offerings for a \$400 VBS gift for home missionary **Jon Cannon**. Pastor **Jim Boggs** declared the five-day VBS at **Oak Valley FWB Church** in **Geff, IL**, a success.

Members raised more than \$1,200 for the building program at **Rescue FWB Church** in **Whittington, IL**. Pastor **Randy Jones** said the group finished their new addition and will soon complete a fellowship hall.

The VBS Committee at **Tecumseh FWB Church** in **Tecumseh, MI**, decided to write their own material this year, according to Pastor **David Mingus**. The material focused on baptism, communion and feet washing. It worked. Pastor Mingus reports 11 conversions that week and five baptisms.

Twelve teens joined **Blue Point FWB Church** in **Cisne, IL**, one Sunday morning. **Ernie Lewis** pastors.

Ten Mile FWB Church in **Madison Heights, MI**, celebrated 50 years of service this fall. The church organized in 1949 with 22 charter members. **Steve Thrasher** pastors.

Pastor **Mark Stapleton** reports six baptisms and four new members at **Mount Hope FWB Church** in **Wheelersburg, OH**.

For the first time in its existence, **Coalton FWB Church** in **Coalton, OH**, has a full-time pastor. That title belongs to Pastor **Emil Cartee** who baptized nine converts.

Pastor **Bill Pitts** reports 15 conversions at **Greater Columbus FWB Church** in **Columbus, OH**.

Springfield FWB Church in **Springfield, OH**, reports three conversions, two rededications, two baptisms and four new members. **Vernal Fairchild** pastors.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Austintown, OH**, raised more than

\$17,000 to retire the mortgage in July, then burned the mortgage in August with 234 people watching. Pastor **Bruce Beal** reports four conversions and four new members. The summer VBS raised \$940 for Home Missionary Tom Jones' land fund. The children at VBS also brought 300 cans of food for the local rescue mission.

The 60-member congregation at **Beech Grove FWB Church** in **Wilmington, OH**, gave a \$10,000 gift to Home Missionary Chris Fannin's account. Fannin is a missionary to Puerto Rico. **John Blount** pastors.

Cornerstone FWB Church in **Asheville, OH**, paid off their 30-year mortgage in seven and one-half years. **Roger Tillis** pastors.

Members of **Samantha FWB Church** in **Leesburg, OH**, purchased 25 acres 13 months ago and paid off the mortgage in August. Pastor **Wiley Perkins** baptized six converts.

Pastor **Mike Nabors** reports five conversions, five baptisms and three new members at **First Dayton FWB Church** in **Dayton, OH**.

Bring your hard-hat to **Mansfield FWB Church** in **Mansfield, OH**. Pastor **Fred Crank** and the congregation completed four new Sunday School rooms, a new roof, two porches, and purchased new padded pews and carpet.

The largest Christian school in metropolitan Tulsa is operated by **Rejoice FWB Church**. The Rejoice Christian School enrolled 420 students. **Leonard Pirtle** pastors the **Owasso, OK**, congregation. ■

COMING NEXT MONTH

- ▶▶▶ 30-Year Man
- ▶▶▶ Sin of Laziness
- ▶▶▶ Nightmare on Okoloosa Street
- ▶▶▶ Farm Family of the Year

Know someone who deserves a journalism scholarship?

Each year the Evangelical Press Association awards several scholarships to deserving students. They must be 3rd or 4th year undergrads when they receive the grant and planning on a career in print journalism. Applications for the 2000-2001 academic year must be received by March 1, 2000. For an application write:

The Evangelical Press Association
314 Dover Road
Charlottesville, VA 22901
fax: 804 973 2710
74463.272@compuserve.com



THE TOGETHER WAY

September 1999

Receipts:	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 749.04	\$.00	\$ 749.04	\$ 4,910.09	\$.00	\$ 4,910.09
Arizona	0.00	.00	0.00	3,464.14	214.40	3,678.54
Arkansas	11,714.58	10,350.92	22,065.50	141,219.63	132,936.09	274,155.72
California	.00	1,252.07	1,252.07	.00	10,248.44	10,248.44
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	97.20	.00	97.20	396.33	12,000.00	12,396.33
Georgia	25,396.64	1,807.79	27,204.43	220,784.14	15,946.26	236,730.40
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	8,084.95	2,625.22	10,710.17	73,238.87	18,690.09	91,928.96
Indiana	1,271.77	119.47	1,391.24	9,906.28	1,999.76	11,906.04
Iowa	.00	0.00	.00	360.00	2,324.65	2,684.65
Kansas	.00	0.00	.00	0.00	252.92	252.92
Kentucky	1,190.66	516.19	1,706.85	11,749.32	4,988.16	16,737.48
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	180.00	.00	180.00
Maryland	150.00	131.25	281.25	150.00	9,003.98	9,153.98
Michigan	13,642.55	1,058.34	14,700.89	141,033.94	25,451.24	166,485.18
Mississippi	4,006.56	224.46	4,231.02	63,209.31	3,981.32	67,190.63
Missouri	45,730.23	14,611.24	60,341.47	364,765.19	111,449.61	476,214.80
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	570.49	25.23	595.72	5,214.99	317.49	5,532.48
North Carolina	1,952.78	1,334.57	3,287.35	10,967.81	18,852.66	29,820.47
Ohio	10,364.14	1,971.12	12,335.26	97,016.92	27,915.09	124,932.01
Oklahoma	59,599.14	10,216.40	69,815.54	465,963.35	91,342.83	557,306.18
South Carolina	367.43	.00	367.43	336,798.41	.00	336,798.41
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	7,278.65	1,154.42	8,433.07	102,354.87	16,105.47	118,460.34
Texas	11,466.84	252.63	11,719.47	81,361.29	2,761.91	84,123.20
Virginia	660.00	.00	660.00	6,871.88	.00	6,871.88
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	1,007.90	36.57	1,044.47	21,764.54	887.08	22,651.62
Wisconsin	0.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	287.73	14.26	301.99	2,403.83	109.46	2,513.29
Northwest Assoc.	34.60	.00	34.60	34.60	.00	34.60
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	(.03)	(.03)	.00	.32	.32
Totals	\$ 205,623.88	\$ 47,702.12	\$ 253,326.00	\$ 2,166,119.73	\$ 507,779.23	\$ 2,673,898.96

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 1,348.32	\$ 21,465.97	\$ 22,814.29	\$ 17,116.24	\$ 228,500.55	\$ 245,616.79
Foreign Missions	117,870.35	6,034.30	123,904.65	1,299,063.12	64,234.05	1,363,297.17
FWBBC	10,890.48	6,034.30	16,924.78	153,693.71	64,234.05	217,927.76
Home Missions	63,954.98	4,722.51	68,677.49	603,943.08	50,270.17	654,213.25
Retirement & Insurance	170.39	3,673.07	3,843.46	3,695.90	39,099.05	42,794.95
Master's Men	675.86	3,673.07	4,348.93	4,080.05	39,099.05	43,179.10
Com. for Theo. Integrity	68.85	131.18	200.03	429.48	1,396.40	1,825.88
FWB Foundation	150.23	1,574.18	1,724.41	3,197.80	16,756.71	19,954.51
Historical Commission	35.96	131.18	167.14	220.86	1,396.40	1,617.26
Music Commission	16.32	131.18	147.50	213.25	1,396.40	1,609.65
Media Commission	47.45	131.18	178.63	336.71	1,396.40	1,733.11
Hillsdale FWB College	1,857.34	0.00	1,857.34	14,473.17	0.00	14,473.17
Other	8,537.35	0.00	8,537.35	65,656.36	0.00	65,656.36
Totals	\$ 205,623.88	\$ 47,702.12	\$ 253,326.00	\$ 2,166,119.73	\$ 507,779.23	\$ 2,673,898.96

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WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

WNAC—A Century in Review

By Marjorie Workman

- 1900 Pastor's report from Glennville, Georgia, mentions he received \$5.95 from the sisters.
- 1901 *Via Christi*, the first study book published by the Freewill Baptist Female Missionary Society.
- 1904 Plan of work as outlined by the Woman's Missionary Society adopted by the General Conference.
- 1905 Horse Branch FWB Church, Turbeville, South Carolina, organizes first Ladies' Aid Society.
- 1906 General Conference assumes India work from Woman's Missionary Society.
- 1907 Cofer's Chapel in Nashville, Tennessee, organizes Ladies' Aid Society.
- 1911 General Conference foreign work united with the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society.
- 1912 Minutes from the Southwestern Convention of Free Will Baptists in Texas reports Mrs. Lizzie McAdams organizing Women's Missionary societies or Ladies' Aids.
- 1913 Mrs. Jewel Campbell reports Ladies' Aid Societies organized in North-east Missouri.
- 1918 Lizzie McAdams and her husband first Free Will Baptists to carry gospel outside United States after the 1911 merger.
- 1920 Free Baptist women responsible for five properties and buildings in India.
- 1921 Free Will Baptist women lose identity, come to agreement with the American Baptist Mission Society and transfer funds to American Baptist Women's Society.
- 1922 General Conference (East) minutes lists three names for women's groups: Woman's Home Mission, Woman's Work, and Ladies' Aid Societies.
- 1926 General Conference publishes a constitution and by-laws recommended by North Carolina women.
- 1927 The women publish 1,000 booklets with those constitutions and by-laws.
- 1928 Texas women use the name "Woman's Auxiliary" for their reports.
- 1929 Mrs. Agnes Frazier's booklet, *Stewardship and Missions*, begun.
- 1931 Mrs. Fannie Polston reports a book of programs arranged for opening devotionals.
- 1932 East Nashville Ladies' Aid sends a resolution to General Conference unanimously endorsing an education work in Nashville.
- 1935 Miss Laura Belle Barnard goes to India.
- 1939 The first national declamation contest held before the entire National Association.
- 1940 First WNAC manual approved at the WNAC meeting in Paintsville, Kentucky.
- 1941 Oklahoma Woman's Auxiliary State Convention organizes.
- 1944 Co-Laborer Fund originates idea of 50,000 people giving \$1 a month to WNAC.
- 1947 Mrs. Huey Gower elected as first Executive Secretary-Treasurer and works from her home.
- 1949 Votes to send offering to Mrs. Mabel Willey to buy sewing machine.
- 1950 Mrs. Agnes Frazier elected Executive Secretary-Treasurer and paid \$50/mo.
- 1951 Manuals developed for both GTA's and YPA's.
- 1952 WNAC gets its first central office—a room at Free Will Baptist Bible College.
- 1953 Mrs. Gladys Sloan steps in as Executive Secretary-Treasurer. WNAC purchases organ for Free Will Baptist Bible College.
- 1955 Votes to accept \$1,000 project to send equipment for mission work in India./Mrs. Helen Sanders becomes youth chairman.
- 1956 Mrs. Eunice Edwards becomes first full-time Executive Secretary-Treasurer.
- 1957 Memorial Student Loan Fund established.
- 1958 Adopts project of raising money to provide residences in Japan.
- 1959 Adopts resolution to raise \$12,000 to build a mission station in Mexico.
- 1960 Membership reaches its highest with 16,745 members.
- 1961 *Co-Laborer* magazine begins as a quarterly publication.
- 1962 Missionary Provision Closet established. Membership drops to 6,397 after withdrawal of North Carolina churches.
- 1963 Mrs. Cleo Pursell elected Executive Secretary-Treasurer.
- 1964 WNAC youth work moves to the National Association and Church Training Service.
- 1965 Emphasis month established to receive special offerings for support of national office.
- 1966 First Fellowship Dinner held at convention in Little Rock, Arkansas.
- 1967 Study committee appointed to study WNAC's entire plan of work.
- 1971 Convention adopts changes proposed by the 1967 study committee.
- 1972 Creative Writing Contest begins. WNAC loans historical collection to FWBCC's Welch Library.
- 1973 Dues increased from 75¢ to \$1.
- 1975 Evelyn Jones hired as first bookkeeper.
- 1977 Clara Picirilli elected president for the fourth consecutive term.
- 1979 Lorene Miley becomes editor of *Co-Laborer* magazine.
- 1980 First National Retreat meets at Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.
- 1981 National Student Fund established to help train young people in foreign work.
- 1982 Esmilda Damaris Gonzalez from Panama receives funds from National Student Fund.
- 1983 Cayo Raymond from Haiti receives \$1,000 to attend FWBCC.
- 1984 122 women submit 413 entries to Creative Writing Contest.
- 1985 WNAC celebrates 50 years. Dr. Mary R. Wisheart assumes Executive Secretary-Treasurer position.
- 1986 Eunice Edwards Loan Fund for Churches Abroad established with goal of \$50,000.
- 1987 *Co-Laborer* becomes bimonthly magazine.
- 1990 Study Committee appointed to evaluate Woman's Auxiliary.
- 1991 Moves into the new office building at 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, TN.
- 1992 The National Women's Auxiliary of Brazil hold first retreat with 74 women attending.
- 1993 Name changed to Women Nationally Active For Christ.
- 1994 Membership dues increase to \$10.
- 1995 First Western Retreat meets at Glorieta, New Mexico.
- 1996 Votes to publish materials for young girls (ages 9-12) and teen women.
- 1997 Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart announces retirement.
- 1998 Marjorie Workman elected Executive Secretary-Treasurer. Organ Fund established for FWBCC College in honor of Dr. Mary R. Wisheart.
- 1999 The Foreign Student Scholarship Fund and the Memorial Student Loan Fund become The Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship and The Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart Loan Fund. ■



BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Preparing for Retirement

By David Brown

We go through many transitions in our lifetime. The average person moves seven times in their lifetime. They change jobs perhaps as many as 10 times. One of the most momentous transitions we go through is making the transition to retirement. Perhaps it would be beneficial to review the timetable for making preparations for this transition.

Board of Retirement

You need to notify the Board of Retirement 90 days before you want your first settlement check. It is advisable to contact us six months before you plan to retire and ask for a projection of various settlement choices.

By law we must allow 30 days to elapse between the day we receive your completed settlement form and when the first check is issued. Apparently, this law allows someone to change their mind and make a different settlement decision. Settlement checks are always sent on the first of the month.

Social Security (www.ssa.gov)

The Social Security Administration advises you to contact them a minimum of 90 days before you plan to retire—earlier would be better. You should also ask for a Personal Earnings and Benefit Estimate Statement (PEBES) at least six months before you retire. Since ministers are self-employed for Social Security tax purposes, this statement should be checked carefully against your records for accuracy.

Your Social Security benefit will be based on your five best earning years. The form will list your earnings history. It also lists your full retirement age. Full retirement for anyone born after 1937 is not 65. See the chart below:

Year of Birth	Full Retirement
1937 and before	65 years
1938	65 years 2 months
1939	65 years 4 months
1940	65 years 6 months
1941	65 years 8 months
1942	65 years 10 months
1943-1954	66 years
1955	66 years 2 months

1956	66 years 4 months
1957	66 years 6 months
1958	66 years 8 months
1959	66 years 10 months
1960 and later	67 years

Your retirement benefit may be altered by when you choose to start receiving benefits. Retiring at age 62 will reduce your benefit to 70-80% of what you would have received at full retirement. You are also benefitted by delaying your retirement. Anyone who delays his retirement to age 70 can receive a bonus of 24-33% added to their full retirement benefit.

Starting in October 1999, the Social Security Administration will be mailing a PEBES statement to all workers over age 25 every year three months before your birthday.

Medicare (www.medicare.gov)

When and if you should contact Medicare depends on your Social Security retirement status. If you are already receiving Social Security benefits at age 65, you will automatically be enrolled in Medicare. Those who delay Social Security retirement but wish to enroll in Medicare should start the enrollment process six months before their 65th birthday.

You should also consider Medicare supplemental insurance. Medicare does not pay for all medical costs. You may also be limited as to which hospitals and doctors you use, since some hospitals and doctors do not accept Medicare limits.

Medicare supplemental insurance is offered by many insurance companies, and there are nine different levels. Each level of increased coverage is offered with higher premiums. Begin shopping for Medicare supplemental insurance six months to one year before your Medicare takes effect. Long-term care insurance should also be considered, although many may not be able to afford the premiums for this insurance. ■



FOREIGN MISSIONS

An Awesome God!

By Mambo Jean-Luc

As vice president of the National Youth organization in Côte d'Ivoire, it was my responsibility to arrive early in Bouna, where we were to have an evangelistic campaign. I had to check to see that the organization for the campaign was all in order.

Running Late

I was to leave Abidjan on the eight o'clock bus from Treichville. I was a few minutes late in arriving and found that the bus had already left. I grabbed a taxi hoping to catch the bus at another stop in town (Adjame) before heading upcountry. Just as the taxi arrived in Adjame, I saw the bus heading into the bus station. It was threatening rain with the wind blowing very strongly.

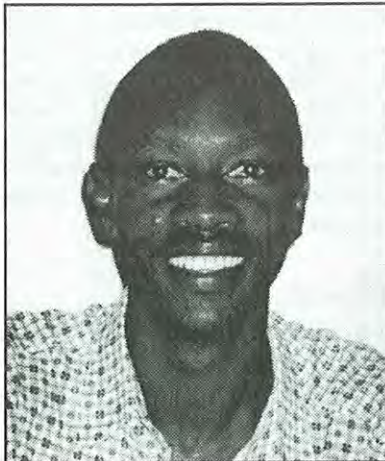
The taxi was forced to stop at a stoplight due to heavy traffic. We waited 15 minutes in the same spot, unable to move forward. I was afraid the bus would load all passengers present and leave without me, using an exit away from the taxi.

Insecurity Reigns

It started to rain very hard. Everything was in chaos with people running everywhere, horns honking and traffic at a standstill. It was getting dark. This area of town is known for having many groups of teen-age robbers. Insecurity reigned both inside and outside my taxi.

It was time to make a decision. Should I just give up and abandon this mission? Since others were counting on me and I had already paid for the bus ticket, should I get out of the taxi, in the rain, with the young robbers around and attempt to reach the bus? I decided to move ahead. I paid the taxi driver and got out.

My arms were loaded. In one hand I car-



Mambo Jean-Luc, youth leader in Côte d'Ivoire, experienced God's awesome power to protect His servants.

ried a package of gospel tracts, my ID card and money for the campaign (over \$275). My other hand held a very heavy suitcase.

I had barely left the taxi when some of the young robbers surrounded me. They said they wanted to "help" me get to the bus before it departed. I tried to thank them saying I already had my ticket, but they refused to leave me. They demanded that I give them money. The sidewalks were covered in water so we were locked between huge buses and cars stalled in traffic due to the

rain. Tension was mounting between me and the "helpers." They were going to use the chaos and rain to rob me!

I Cried Unto the Lord

I heard one of the young men say, "If you don't give us money, we'll stab you." I didn't want them to know where or how much money I had, fearing they'd take it all. What should I do? I thought, "I'm going to miss the bus, get drenched in the rain, and for all my efforts, get robbed and stabbed." I couldn't run. I couldn't even put my baggage down to defend myself. I cried unto the Lord!

One robber asked me what was inside the package. The Lord gave me a calm spirit as I explained: "I am a Christian. The package contains gospel tracts . . ." I intended to say more, but upon hearing the word "CHRISTIAN" the aggressors retreated as though someone had pushed them back, saying, "Let's get out of here." Suddenly they were gone and I was alone.

I managed to catch the bus and continue to the destination for the evangelistic campaign where the hand of the Lord was very evident. ■

Don't allow Y2K to frighten you out of obeying the Lord in giving to get the message to those who have not heard.



MASTER'S MEN

Gardening Tips for Christmas

By Tom Dooley, General Director

It was the day after Christmas in the middle of the afternoon, and all of the females in our family (Grandma, my wife Angela, my daughter Laura) had made their way to the after-Christmas sales. Bored and wanting something to do, I decided to take a sentimental journey of the homes that I had lived in as I grew up in Springfield, Ohio. Not wanting to go alone, I asked my two sons if they would be interested in going on a search for milkshakes.

After luring them into the car, we headed toward the dairy bar nearest my planned first stop. Our favorite flavors selected, I drove slowly toward Ashley Drive and to the house where I spent most of my junior high and high school days.

The atmosphere in our car was pulsating with enthusiasm, so I ventured out into the country to a little village called Tremont and showed the boys where I lived when I was in the first through third grades. That big old house means a lot to me. It was there that I prayed and asked Jesus to come into my heart when I was eight years old.

The next stop took us to Ballentine Pike. This was my favorite house. My parents had this house built when I was in the fourth grade. I don't think I was ever in the house until it was completed and we were moving in. I couldn't believe what I saw. It seemed so huge! I'll never forget thinking that we had to be rich now, because we had carpet in our kitchen and in our bathroom. I couldn't wait to see the place.

We finally arrived. I pulled into the driveway next door. I looked at the house that I thought was so magnificent and, frankly, I was disappointed. I had not lived there since I was in the eighth grade. It looked run down. It looked old. It looked like it hadn't been maintained very well. Deterioration was taking its toll.

The scene reminded me of a similar circumstance that Solomon speaks about in Proverbs 24:30-34.

"I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; And, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down. Then I saw, and considered it well; I looked upon it, and received instruction. Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth; and thy want as an

armed man."

Solomon looked upon this scene and "received instruction." The term "instruction" literally means "correction." The garden and vineyard taught him a lesson that was life changing.

When Solomon saw that garden, he saw his own spiritual life. He saw his soul. He recognized that his life was overgrown with weeds. He had become slothful in his relationship to God. He had stopped taking God seriously.

Why does Solomon share this with us?

Caution

Solomon wants us to take caution. Any one of us can end up like that garden. Spiritual deterioration comes when we are neglectful. We must not allow the weeds of sin to overrun our life.

Consequence

Solomon wants us to understand the consequence. We can become spiritual paupers. The Lord wants us to be rich in His love, His joy, His peace, His might and His promises. When we neglect our spiritual development, it always makes us weak. The walls of defense crumble, and we are an easy target for the devil.

Cure

Solomon wants us to see the cure. Avoiding spiritual deterioration will involve diligent action on our part. We should start by ridding ourselves of any weeds of disobedience that have grown in our hearts and lives. If we will confess and forsake our sin, we can be assured of the Lord's forgiveness and cleansing.

After we have properly prepared our hearts, we should concentrate on developing our relationship with the Lord. This means that we must spend time alone with God in prayer and in the study of God's Word. It also means being faithful to attend and participate in the church. As we consistently work the soil of our souls in prayer, and plant seed of God's Word in our hearts, we will begin to see the fruitful results of a changed life and a vibrant witness for our Savior. ■



Garnett Reid

A Profile of the Millennial Christian

I've never been here before; neither have you. This kind of transition has happened only one time since the ascension of Jesus and the birth of the Church: a calendar turn-over to a year containing *three zeros*. None of the church fathers, not Luther or Calvin, not even Paul himself witnessed that. Great leaders such as Napoleon and Washington never experienced a millennial change. Shakespeare, Da Vinci, Goethe, Newton—they were not around for such a shift, either.

To mark the occasion, the past months have witnessed an unprecedented issue of all sorts of lists: the greatest works of art, the greatest minds, the most significant events of the second millennium, and on and on. At the risk of sounding redundant on top of this bandwagon, here's *my* list.

Actually it comes from Paul, in the context of his second reference to the "new man" in Ephesians 4:24. He provides a profile of the Christian, listing and describing a dozen qualities of believers in the next or any other millennium. What will the child of God look like in the coming age? The answer is simple, Paul says; he or she will look the same as always, modeling these 12 traits.

The "new person in Christ"...

... thinks differently about the world (4:22-24)

Paul notes in 4:17-18 that the Gentiles live "in the dark." That is, unbelievers think and reason without knowledge of the truth. In contrast, the Christian disciple's mind is in tune with the life of God, "renewed" in that

he thinks in terms of what is right and holy (vv. 23-24; see also Rom. 12:2).

... speaks truthfully to others (4:25)

Though he lives in an age when lying and deceit are cultural norms, the believer is known for his honesty. He will not betray the truth which has changed his life (4:21).

... feels deeply about the right things (4:26)

I don't think this verse commands the new man to be angry so much as it gives him counsel about what to do when he is angry. Godly people do feel a sense of outrage when evil appears, though.

... reconciles quickly with those who disagree (4:26-27)

Harboring resentment gives the adversary a foot in the door.

... lives contentedly with what God provides (4:28a)

Paul reminds us in I Timothy 6:6 that true gain comes through godliness with contentment. A covetous lifestyle is detrimental, not profitable.

... works diligently to do good things (4:28b)

... gives freely to those with needs (4:28c)

The person renewed through Christ delights in giving to meet needs. He is an investor, not merely

a consumer.

... speaks graciously to those who listen (4:29)

In a day when crass, "rotten" (the idea behind the word "corrupt" here) talk is the norm, the Christian's words "edify" and "minister grace."

... yields willingly to the Holy Spirit

The book of Ephesians reveals Paul's special interest in the Holy Spirit (see 1:13-14; 2:18; 3:5, 16; 4:3; 5:9, 18; 6:18). Here he reminds us that when we act like the "old man" and live the way we did before our renewal in Christ, we "grieve" the Spirit. Conversely, we please Him when we "put on the new man" (v. 24).

... acts kindly toward fellow believers (4:31-32a)

Bitterness, rage, clamor (quarreling), slander and malice have no place in God's family. Instead, kindness should characterize our relationships with each other.

... forgives readily those who offend (4:32b)

This kind, "tenderhearted" spirit will prompt us to follow Christ's example of forgiveness.

... reflects godly character (5:1)

When "righteousness and true holiness" shape our personalities, we are "followers of God," His "dear children" walking with Him into the third millennium. ■

ESPECIALLY FOR YOUNG PREACHERS

Set Goals

Setting personal goals is essential for accomplishing anything worldwide. Goals give a sense of direction and purpose, promote daily enthusiasm, facilitate effective operation, reduce wasteful time and accomplish far more than would be achieved without goals. Goals act as a measuring stick to determine what we are accomplishing. Without goals we have activity but often little productivity. Just being busy is not necessarily rewarding at the end of the day.

Weekly Goals

On Sunday evening or Monday morning, make a list of everyone you want to call by telephone during the week. List those you want to visit. Record the names of those you want to write. Write down in your planner the sermons you must preach, the items for the bulletin and the church responsibilities.

Record everything in that planner that must be accomplished. Mark each item off as it is done. This will give you a sense of accomplishment and reveal what still must be done. If a goal is not achieved, shift it to the next day or week. Be determined to check it off just as soon as possible.

Yearly Goals

Include in this list the sermon plans. For example, you may want to preach through a certain book of the Bible on Sunday morning, another book or topic on Sunday evening, and yet another subject matter on Wednesday evening. By determining the direction of your preaching you will spend far less time "looking for sermons" and far more time in preparation.

Just because you have set preaching goals does not mean that you can't deviate a Sunday or two and

preach on another subject. Also, good yearly goals include listing the books you want to read, a Bible reading schedule, the article you want to write for a magazine, a vacation you want to enjoy, etc.

Financial goals are good—the amount of the tithe and the schedule for placing money in a savings account. Physical goals are excellent, such as the weight that needs to be lost or gained, the lowering or raising of the cholesterol—all these, plus more, should be written down at the beginning of the year. Set goals and accomplish more!

Five-Year Goals

Setting goals for the church is valuable for the productive pastor. Record those goals in your prayer book. Do not reveal them to the congregation. Pray. Work toward achieving those goals. Set monetary goals, such as new pews, a paved parking lot, a parsonage or housing allowance, landscaping of the church grounds, etc. Pray daily for five years and watch the Lord meet these needs during those 60 months.

Spiritual goals are appropriate, too. Record in your prayer book the names of those you want to make decisions for Christ. Beside church members' names, state a goal, such as "overcoming a temper," "stop smoking," "become a soul winner," "be willing to teach a Sunday School class." Put a check and a date beside the names of those who achieve spiritual growth. Again, do not share with the congregation your goals.

Life Goals

Where do you want to be spiritually by age 30? How many verses do you want to memorize? How much daily time do you want to spend in prayer? Visit a mission field? Write a book?



Dennis Wiggs

Outline the entire Bible? Hundreds of goals are out there, young preacher.

Be sure to write down these goals in your planning book or prayer journal. The faith-plans will be a daily reminder. You will never hit any of them unless you aim.

End-of-Life Goals

How much do you want to have in investments by age 65? Social Security may not provide an adequate life style. The best time to begin working on goals for the sunset years is now—today, young preacher!

Saving five dollars a week is better than nothing. Making even small contributions regularly to the Board of Retirement will be far more productive at the end of your ministry than if you neglect to participate in this excellent plan.

Goals Are Personal

No one will set the goals for us. The young preacher probably will not be accountable to anyone for his goal-setting and goal-achieving. All of this is a personal matter. Goals demand prayer. "Lord, what do you want me to do today? Tomorrow? This year? The next few years?" Surely the Lord has specific and productive plans for our lives. Discover His will. Make a plan. "Aim toward the mark for the prize . . ." You'll be glad you did. ■

You may reach Dennis Wiggs at denniswiggs@always-online.com or visit his church website at www.ruthschapel.com.

YOUTH UPDATE

Youth Day February 6, 2000



There are many races that Free Will Baptist students are expected to run everyday. But the most important one is that of following Christ. Youth Day is an opportunity to give our youth the encouragement they need to put their beliefs into practice. Take advantage of **Youth Day 2000** and let your church see the world-changing job your young people are doing.

Make plans now for **Youth Day 2000!** Use this opportunity to spotlight your young people and showcase their abilities and service to the Lord. There are numerous ways to involve them in your Sunday School, Worship Service, or some other church-related program.

Consider allowing your young people to speak, teach, share a testimony, pray, usher, sing, or act in your service on February 6th. Your participation in **Youth Day 2000** is just another step in training our young people for the race ahead of them - as they **Press Toward The Goal!**

Look for Youth Day ideas in the Winter issue of *Youth Ministry Direction!*

Why The Cross Can Do What Politics Can't

By Erwin W. Lutzer

(Eugene, OR: Harvest House Publishers, 1999, paperback, 188 pp., \$9.99).



Thomas Marberry

Since 1980 Dr. Erwin W. Lutzer has served as pastor of the Moody Church in Chicago. He is a nationally known author, pastor and radio preacher. He is also the author of several previous books.

The author's thesis is a simple one. He argues that Christians should certainly do what they can to improve society, but they should recognize that the gospel is a much more powerful force than any type of social or political activism.

Christians should, in his view, work to oppose abortion, pornography and other social evils. They should join with people of other faiths or with people of no religious faith to combat these moral evils.

Immediately after these comments, he writes, "But let us not replace the primary mission of the church with these kinds of political or moral pursuits. Gains brought about through legislation will always be minimal."

There is no doubt that Christians in the United States have become much more active in the political arena in recent years. Christians have formed organized political groups to lobby for legislation and support specific political candidates. Many have identified themselves with the Republican party and have supported Republican candidates for local, state and national offices.

The author questions whether

Christians have really benefitted from these political activities. He states, "If we were honest we would admit that the Republican Party has benefitted far more from the support of Christian coalitions than Christians have gained from the Republican Party."

Many Christian activists have "... come away empty-handed after years of political promises that never were honored."

According to Dr. Lutzer, some believers have become so involved in political, social and economic causes that they have neglected to preach the gospel. He explains, "... for some Christians, lower taxes, a strong national defense, a rollback of government regulations, and a balanced budget amendment are more pressing issues than whether their neighbors and friends will spend eternity with God or be lost forever."

This author emphasizes that the basic responsibility of the church is to preach the gospel and lead men and women to personal faith in Christ. He argues that "We must bring the cross out of our churches and carry it to a hurting world. Our task is not to save America, but to save Americans by living the gospel."

American politics is ruled by the ballot box. A basic tenet of the American political system is that the majority rules. It is doubtful that Christians will

ever be able to produce a voting majority in this country.

Those who take the gospel of Jesus Christ seriously will always be a minority of the voting population. Christians must, then, join with others in order to have any hope of bringing about real political change. This may bring victory in some cases, but at what price?

Lutzer does not argue that Christians should abandon the political arena entirely. There are political and moral issues facing our society upon which the church must take a stand. The church should, however, recognize the limitations of political activism.

That which the world really needs from Christians is not political activism, but the message of the cross of Jesus Christ. Only the cross of Christ can transform the hearts and minds of men and women. No amount of political activism can make people believers.

I don't always agree with Lutzer on the details, but I agree totally with his basic approach. This book is a reality check for American Christians as we move into a new millennium. The church has only a limited amount of time, energy, money and influence. It should use them as wisely as possible. It should concentrate its efforts on bringing people to personal faith in Jesus Christ. It should become involved in political causes only when absolutely necessary. ■

*Leadership Conference
December 6-7
Regal Maxwell House Hotel
Nashville, Tennessee*

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January - December 1999

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- In part one, articles are listed in order of title, author, issue and number of the page on which they appear. The authors' division is alphabetized according to last names.
- Columns are listed in chronological order.
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Why Adopt a Housing/Parsonage Exclusion?, D. Ray Lewis	April, 23
Time to Change!, William W. Evans	June, 24
Actual Earnings vs. Net Earnings, David Brown	October, 23
Preparing for Retirement, David Brown	December, 19

Randall House

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What Growing Churches Have in Common, Alton Loveless	March, 22
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Woman's Window on the World, Marjorie Workman	February, 22
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Woman's Window on the World, Marjorie Workman	October, 22
WNAC—A Century in Review, Marjorie Workman	December, 18

Newsfront

National Ministries

Arkansas Pastor to Speak at FWBCC	February, 16	Leadership Conference Set for December	November, 20
Attention Pastors: 1999 Yearbooks Mailed	July, 19	Local Church Delegate Card	April, 12; May, 19; June, 9
Bible College Honors Dr. and Mrs. Picirilli	August, 16	Mass Choir Recording Set for Atlanta	April, 18; May, 18
Bible College Students Elect Officers	August, 17	Master's Men Miracle	June, 20
Bible College To Offer Information Technology Track	April, 19	Media Commission Launches Promotional Project	May, 15
Bible College Trustees Considering Name Change	September, 21	Missionary Ken Eagleton, Sr., Dies	November, 18
California Steering Committee Meets	October, 18	Need to make a quick call to the National Offices?	July, 22
Discount Air Fares to National Convention Available	April, 17; May, 19	Nominating Committee Requests Nominees	October, 16
51 Attend Theology Symposium	January, 18	Pastor, Missions Executive to Challenge FWBCC Graduates	April, 19
Free Will Baptist Bible College Graduates 64	August, 20	Randall House Awards Employee Service	January, 19
Free Will Baptist Bible College Enrolls 333	November, 20	Randall House to Provide Free Spanish Manuals	September, 19
FWB Foundation Delivers Endowment Gifts	April, 19	Symposium to Meet at Hillsdale	October, 15
International Fellowship Meets in Uruguay	January, 15	220 Attend Bible College Welcome Days	July, 19
Leadership Conference Focuses on Vision	February, 17	WNAC Local Delegate Card	April, 12; May, 19, June, 9

Ministers

Blair, Beryl May, 17
 Bowman, Jr., Victor Clifton November, 19
 Campbell, Cecil October, 15
 Cason, Mance January, 17
 Eagleton, Kenneth P. November, 18
 Edwards, John June, 20
 Erickson, Meryl May, 15

Gibson, Norwood July, 19
 Greenwood, Herman June, 19
 Hidde, Robert L. April, 17
 Parrish, Lamar June, 19
 Shockey, Bob January, 18
 Williams, Lewis December, 13

Laity

Butler, R. M. January, 19
 Frith, James January, 19
 Sneed, Stanley December, 13

Churches

California
 Bakersfield, First FWB Church May, 15
 Georgia
 Glennville, Glennville FWB Church May, 16
 Missouri
 Park Hills, First FWB Church November, 19

Oklahoma
 Twin Oaks, Lowery FWB Church December, 12
 Norman, First FWB Church August, 19
 Tennessee
 Franklin, Franklin FWB Church February, 15
 Nashville, Cross Timbers FWB Church January, 16

Texas
 Haltom City, Friendship FWB Church July, 22
 Virginia
 Glen Allen, Glen Allen FWB Church March, 18

States

Alabama February, 15
 Arizona June, 21
 Arkansas October, 16
 Atlantic Canada October, 17
 California August, 19
 Florida August, 18
 Georgia February, 16
 Illinois June, 21

Indiana October, 18
 Kansas September, 21
 Kentucky December, 13
 Louisiana June, 21
 Michigan August, 17
 Mississippi February, 16
 Missouri September, 20
 New Mexico August, 16

North Carolina September, 19
 Ohio September, 20
 Oklahoma January, 16
 South Carolina June, 22
 Tennessee February, 16
 Texas October, 17
 Virginia October, 17
 West Virginia September, 20

Other

California Christian College Names Walley President August, 18
 California Christian College President Resigns January, 17
 CCC Enrollment at 76 November, 19
 Christian School to Open In Kentucky June, 22
 Family Ministries Completes New Shelter May, 16
 Hillsdale College Enrolls a Record 298 November, 18
 Hillsdale Launches Adult Degree Program March, 17
 Hurricane Damages North Carolina Churches and Homes December, 14
 Instrumental Ensemble to Perform at Convention March, 18; April, 18; May, 18
 Mexican Association Meets in Monterrey December, 12
 1999 State Association Meetings March, 20

Oklahoma Tornado Destroys 38 Homes July, 20
 Pastor Receives Son's Diploma Posthumously December, 13
 Preaching to Highlight Southeastern's Camp Meeting '99 March, 19
 Roberson to Speak at Southeastern September, 21
 Ron Scott Named Southeastern Graduation Speaker May, 17
 Southeastern College Receives \$2.4 Million Gift September, 21
 Southeastern Enrolls 152 November, 20
 Southeastern Sets Get Acquainted Days March, 17
 Southeastern Sets Missions Conference October, 17
 Thomas Marberry to Lead Seminary August, 19



Remember

Free Will Baptist Bible College's

*Paul J. Kettelman Memorial
 Christmas Drive*

Goal: \$350,000

Give Generously



Jack Williams

Don't Waste This Trouble

Hurricane Floyd flooded 19,000 square miles of eastern North Carolina in mid-September. The deaths, the billions in property loss, the unrelieved misery from the big storm hammered the Old North State without mercy sweeping away irreplaceable pieces of history and the peace of mind that a generation had come to expect as their part of the American dream.

In Floyd's aftermath as polluted flood waters threatened to push through their front door, members of Peace FWB Church in Wilson met to pray. The Sunday service was packed with people whose homes floated in snake-infested waters, whose lives would never be the same again, but whose faith proved tougher than the largest hurricane to ever hit the U.S. mainland.

Music director Rusty Russell and his family had been without electricity for three days with no relief in sight when he asked for prayer requests from the worshipers. Their mutual sorrow and sense of loss brought the people close together.

One prayer request led to another until Rusty was heard to pray, "Oh, Lord, don't let us waste this trouble."

What he meant, of course, was for God's people to use the occasion of Hurricane Floyd's destruction to demonstrate Christian love and generosity amid the staggering material losses and inconveniences. A hungry, hurting world waited outside, overwhelmed by grief, adrift in the swirling waters.

God spoke of crises like this when He asked the prophet Jeremiah, "... how wilt thou do in the swelling of Jordan?" (Jer. 12:5). Times of personal and national uncertainty require our best. Every man must answer the question, "... how will I do when the flood of events washes away all that I hold dear and all I trust?"

When the first flood came, Noah

floated above it because he had made preparations. Some 2,500 years later when the Red Sea threatened to drown Israel's exodus to freedom, Moses parted the waters and made a dry road through it. That's how things always work in crises: Some rise above it, some make a way through it, others crumble.

Tough times call for resolve. The pressure of circumstances sweeps many aside in life, and they get lost somewhere in the undertow, never to surface again. Others take to trouble with the unerring instincts of a salmon headed home.

Orson Welles made a startling observation about men and their struggles: "In Italy for 30 years under the Borgias they had warfare, terror, murder, bloodshed—they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they had brotherly love, 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did they produce? The cuckoo clock!"

Life's troubles do teach us. Sometimes they position us to do a greater work. That happened to a young woman who found herself at the ultimate crossroad when to remain silent would condemn thousands to certain death, but to speak up would condemn herself.

She was advised by a trusted relative at her moment of decision, "... thou art come to the kingdom for such a time as this" (Esth. 4:14).

To Esther's credit, she fasted and prayed and made the hard choice with words that reverberate down through history. She would do what was right, and "... if I perish, I perish." For what it's worth, Esther did not perish. She changed her mind and then changed her world.

The difference between victims and victors is more one of attitude than

circumstances. For instance, when fire virtually destroyed Thomas Edison's New Jersey factory in 1914, much of his life's work went up in smoke and flames that December night. He was 67 years old.

But the next morning, Edison looked at the ruins and said, "There is great value in disaster. All our mistakes are burned up. Thank God we can start anew."

Three weeks after the fire, Edison delivered to the world the first phonograph.

Mary Walker handled her trouble in another time and in another way. She lived in a culture that made it illegal for her to learn to read. But Mary was a Christian and wanted to read her Bible.

She was born a slave in 1847 in Hamilton County, Tennessee. She worked in the fields as a child carrying water to other slaves and picked cotton when she was older. After the Civil War and emancipation, she started a family.

At age 98, Mary was troubled because she still did not know how to read her Bible. She began learning to read at 98, got her schooling certificate at 115 and died in 1969 at the remarkable age of 121 years. It took Mary nearly a lifetime, but she conquered illiteracy and prejudice. Before her death, she could read God's promises.

"Oh, Lord, don't let us waste this trouble." Today, it's North Carolina struggling in flood waters. Yesterday, it was Oklahoma digging out after a tornado ripped Oklahoma City. Tomorrow, it may be your town or mine.

Wherever the next problem hits, perhaps the Good Lord will send another Rusty Russell to remind us all that we dare not waste this trouble... this opportunity to start over again, to confront social wrongs, to build something better than spiritual cuckoo clocks. ■

CONTACT

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