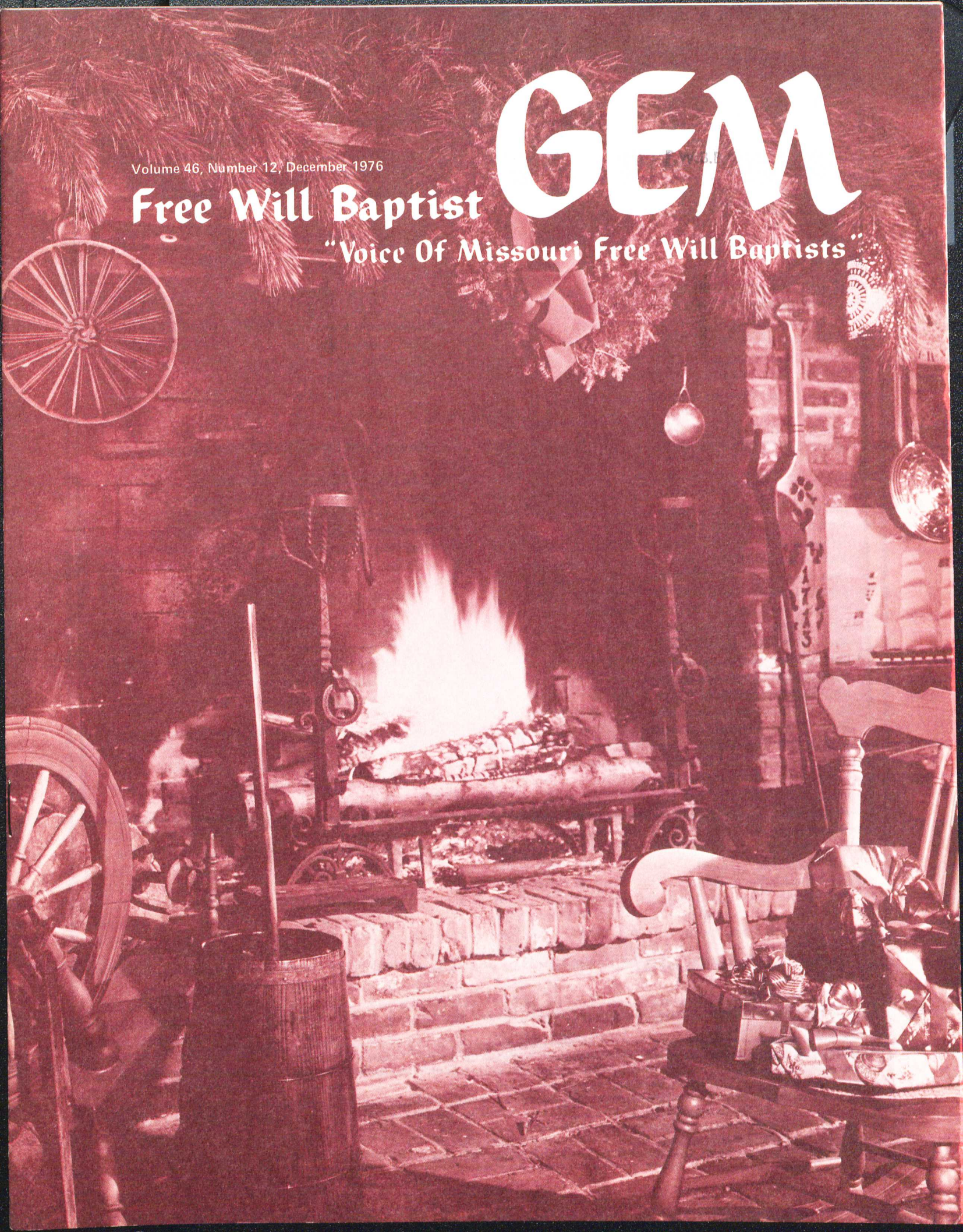


Volume 46, Number 12, December 1976

Free Will Baptist

GEM

"Voice Of Missouri Free Will Baptists"



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Clarence Burton, editor

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Unwrapping God's Christmas Present

by Max Courtney

In just a few weeks we will be cleaning up the wrappings from the presents from under the Christmas tree. I personally get a kick out of the guessing and wondering before time to open the presents. We can guess, we can be all but sure . . . but until we hold that present in our hands, with all the wrappings removed, we cannot fully appreciate the gift. Then we can try it, put it to use, forget the descriptions, and see it for ourselves. This same thing has been true of God's great Christmas Present. It has been surrounded by wrappings and disguised. Men have guessed, described, looked forward; yet, until all wrappings were removed and He was ours to have and hold in our hearts, we couldn't realize what the Present really was.

I see God's great Christmas Present wrapped in Old Testament prophecy. "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel. Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good. For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings" (Isaiah 7:14-16). He was a Present wrapped in a wrapper of prophecy and mystery. How the prophet must have turned this Present over and over in his mind, he must have guessed and wondered as he looked at the wrapping and guessed at what might be inside.

This Present was tied securely in the ribbon of promise. Israel was steeped in their backsliding. The Assyrian armies were moving in with a threat of captivity. The Present was wrapped so securely in these prophecies that it was hard for them to realize what was inside and what it would mean to their storm-tossed nation. This same Gift lies wrapped in thousands of homes today. The storms of life are beating down. Evil is surrounding them, threatening to take them captive. The wrappings are still in place, the ribbons unmolested, keeping God's great Present from being used.

I see God's great Christmas Present wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger of a borrowed stable: "And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them" (Luke 2:16-20). Notice the wrappings of swaddling clothes. The garment of peasants covered that Present from the eyes of those who looked for a king. No purple robe; just swaddling clothes. No golden crown on His head, no ivory throne overlaid with gold; just a borrowed manger. No beautiful palace; just a stable. No legion of

soldiers standing at attention; just humble shepherds looking over the manger. No bowing servants to bring Him His bidding; just the animals lowing and bleating in the stillness of the winter night. Wrapped securely in humble surroundings until even those who came and looked on didn't realize the importance of this great Christmas Present.

To thousands today He still lies in His swaddling clothes in His borrowed manger, a Present unwrapped. He is picked up once a year and fondled and studied and laid carefully away again until next Christmas season with the wrappings still in place.

I see God's great Christmas Present wrapped in the blindness of religious form and ritual and rejection. The Bible states, "And rose up, and thrust him out of the city, and led him unto the brow of the hill whereon their city was built, that they might cast him down headlong. But he passing through the midst of them went his way" (Luke 4:29, 30). They refused to remove the wrappings of religious form and ritual and unwrap God's Christmas Present. Miracle after miracle, good works after good works, and they didn't see. They even had to buy false testimony to convict Him, yet they refused to believe their eyes and to unwrap the Gift from God.

I see God's great Christmas Present today wrapped in unbelief and unconcern. "For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption to wit, the redemption of our body. For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it" (Romans 8:22-25). It is faith that unties the ribbon on God's great Christmas Present. It is hope that takes off the wrapper. It is our spirit that receives the Present and makes it work for us. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Romans 10:9-13).

The Present lies there before you. You can guess; you can wonder; you can look at the description others have given; you can speculate as to how it will affect your life; but until you unwrap it and put it to use in your own life, God's great Christmas Present can never be real to you.

About the writer: Rev. Max Courtney is pastor of the New Life Church at Licking, Missouri. He is active in denominational work. He is a member of the General Board of the Missouri State Association and is on the Executive Committee.



O How I Love Jesus

by Marynne Gower

Brother Burton asked me to write an article, so I would like to share with you how the Lord made me a happier person when I let Him have control of my life. I love Him for His love for me and for all the many blessings He has given to me.

About a year ago Mr. and Mrs. Howard Gage, who were doing missionary itinerant work at that time, came to our community and stayed at our house one night. Mrs. Gage and I discussed Proverbs 3:5, 6. It was then I began to understand what these verses meant. I realized that if I would trust in the Lord with all my heart and lean not to mine own understanding and in all my ways acknowledge Him that He would direct my paths. I became aware that something was lacking in my life. I realized that I did not have the same peace and direction in my life that Mrs. Gage had. I felt that I did not want to meet the Lord in my condition for I had not acknowledged Him in all my ways. I knew that I was not living according to the commitment I had made with the Lord.

Now that I have looked at the situation more honestly, I know that I can have the peace and love in my heart that should be there, as I depend upon Christ to help me.

I have begun reading my Bible regularly and I spend some time in prayer in my bedroom each morning before I begin my day. I ask the Lord to lead me and help me to live a life that others may see there is a joy in serving the Lord. Some days are perfect. It is truly a wonderful day when everything goes well at school—good grades, friends treat you well, and you get along well with your parents. But there are some days that I do not live on the mountain. Sometimes I feel that I am in the valley.

But in the valley experiences I talk to the Lord more and I become stronger. I realize that in His love He is helping me to get closer to Him. I also find it is easier to sympathize with others and a smile comes more naturally as I meet and talk with others. It is such a joy to know and serve Jesus. The joy that is in me and the love that He has given me for others, I just can't describe. It is so wonderful!

I once had a brother to whom I was very close. I dearly loved him. When he died and the Lord took him to be with Him in Heaven, I knew that it was a much better place than this earth, but it hurt to lose my brother. However, I could accept this because I felt the love and presence of God very near and, as I prayed, the Lord helped with the sorrow.

I love my parents very much and I try to respect their decisions. So, when they tell me that I should go to a church service rather than a ball game, I know they feel this is best for me. I feel the Lord has helped me to have the proper kind of wants and desires. If Satan tempts me to go to a drive-in movie or to listen to sinful rock and roll music, I can tell him no!

It is a blessing to know that I am living for Jesus and that He is leading my life. I hope that you will let Him lead yours. It is really wonderful to love the Lord!

About the writer: Marynne Gower is a member of the Walnut Grove Church. Her father Rev. Charles Gower is the pastor. She is a student at the Thayer High School, is very active in school and church activities, and is a very talented musician.

CHURCHES PEOPLE AND EVENTS

Thanksgiving Letter From the Hortons

"Yes! Yes! Yes! we reached our goal of over one hundred for the morning worship. In fact the count was one hundred seven," writes the Horton Family. The pastor ate his dinner on the roof of the church as was agreed. The news media of a local station, channel 8, carried this on the ten o'clock evening news.

The church reports a wonderful revival with Rev. Roy Thomas as the evangelist. Pastor Horton writes, "Thank you for your faithful support. Pray that the Lord will continue to bless."



A Praise Report From the Riverview Church

Pastor Owen Ganey writes, "Praise the Lord for a great month in October. We broke the old record of one hundred fifty-nine three times. The new record is two hundred forty-one. The church also paid off the church mortgage, built a new two-door garage, put a new roof on the parsonage, built a new utility house, and painted and put a bus on a new route."

Shown in the picture are the pastor, Rev. Lawrence Thompson (former pastor), Gary Stephens (Sunday school superintendent), and Glen Harlinger.

Statewide Sunday School Rally Planned

On Saturday evening, January 8, the Missouri State Sunday School and CTS Board is planning a statewide Sunday school rally. The rallies will be held in the following churches: Fourth Church, St. Louis; First Church, Mountain Grove; First Church, Springfield; Central Church, Kansas City, and First Church, Farmington.

The statewide rally will begin at seven o'clock, and the same program will be used at each location. The board is using this as a kickoff for the Spring

Enlargement Campaign that will be sponsored along with the National Sunday School Enlargement Campaign. Included in the program will be a film and a time for personal and church goal setting.

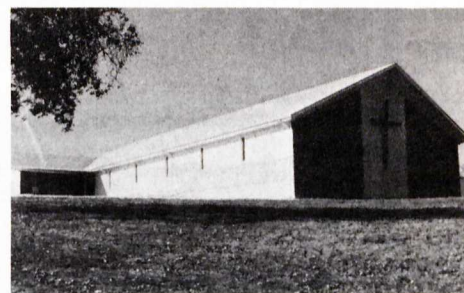
The Sunday School and CTS Board would like to encourage all Free Will Baptists across the state of Missouri to attend one of these rallies and to make this a tremendous night.

Pastor Kent Tallent, member of the board, writes that if anyone desires additional information to please contact him at this address: 3316 Rock Quarry Road, Columbia, Missouri, 65201.

Wonderful Revival At Cape Girardeau

Pastor Ronnie Graham reports that the Lord blessed with a great revival at the First Church in Cape Girardeau. Nine people made professions of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and there was one rededication. Rev. Guy Leonard, pastor of the Parkview Church, was the evangelist.

Brother Graham also writes, "The Sunday school is doing well and the Lord is opening doors that have never been available before. Remember this work in prayer that we might build a church for the Lord."



New Auditorium at Kingsway

The picture shows the new auditorium at the Kingsway Church in Springfield. The church is located on a five-acre tract at 2615 North Park.

The new facility is furnished with red padded pews, red carpet, and drapes. The building has central heat and air-conditioning. It also has a new sound system with twenty-four stereo speakers.

The area previously used for auditorium space has been converted into classrooms and a fellowship hall.

The church is thankful for the progress the Lord has given in the four years since its organization. The prayer of the church is that it might be a true witness for the Lord. Rev. Gene Terry is the pastor.

Autumn Activities At South Side

Sue Winchester, church reporter, writes that the church has been involved in many activities. A combination skating and Halloween party was held at Ron's Roller Rink. A sports banquet was held for the softball superstars. Team Captain Tommy Barr made these remarks at the affair, "For the third year the South Side Church team has won the men's fastpitch championship. We had our best record this year 14-0. Good Christian fellowship was enjoyed by everyone and we are looking forward to next year."

Rev. Robert Francis is the pastor.

Old-Fashioned Sunday At Poplar Bluff

A weekend revival culminating with old-fashioned Sunday was held at the Poplar Bluff Mission, writes church reporter, Mrs. Waynelle Scott.

She writes further that the Lord blessed with wonderful messages delivered by the evangelist, Rev. Danny Phillips, of Nashville, Tennessee. The average attendance for the revival was forty-two. Sunday was a great day with a record attendance. Dinner was enjoyed at the church with good singing in the afternoon.

The mission would like to express thanks to everyone who has helped with the ministry in Poplar Bluff. A special thanks is expressed to the First Church in Sikeston for donating a duplicator.

Pastor Scott and the congregation extend a cordial invitation to everyone to visit with them and labor with them for the Lord.



Surprise Anniversary Party For Rev. and Mrs. Reeves

On Saturday evening, November 13, Rev. and Mrs. Lavelle Reeves were honored with a surprise twenty-fifth anniversary party.* This was held at the new church in Stockton where the Reeves are serving as missionary-pastor. Those attending were relatives and friends from the church and the Central Western Association.

A renewing of the vows by the anniversary couple was held in the beautiful auditorium. Rev. Clarence Burton officiated at the ceremony.

A reception was held in the fellowship hall. The Reeves opened their gifts and expressed their gratitude for the love shown to them in the giving of gifts, the money tree, and the warm response of friends and family.

The mission at Stockton is doing well. The people of Stockton and the Central Western Association are to be commended for that which has been accomplished for the Lord in that area. Anyone visiting in the area should visit the church and encourage this missionary family in their endeavor for the Lord.

*This was planned and prepared by the Reeves children and members of the Stockton Mission.

MISSOURI STATE HOME MISSION GIVING OCTOBER 5 THROUGH NOVEMBER 5, 1976

Kingsway	\$50.00
Hannon	120.00
Hurryville	30.00
Sedalia	35.17
Grace	50.00
Houston	20.00
South Fremont	97.00
Salem	20.00
Berkeley	50.00
Verdella	110.00
Rock Chapel	20.00
The Jones Family	51.78
O'Fallon	50.00
West Plains	200.00
DeSoto	100.00
Myrtle	71.11
Berean	23.00
Central	20.00
Oak Hill	25.00
Columbia	5.00
Faith Chapel	53.00
Olivet	225.00
St. Francois Co. Qtly. Mtg.	150.00
Fellowship	25.00
Viburnum Ladies Auxiliary	51.79
Cape Girardeau	14.77
Cooperative Receipts	2,121.21
Total	\$3,788.83

Secretary-Treasurer
Rev. Lawrence Thompson
3416 N. Bellefontaine
Kansas City, Mo. 64117

COOPERATIVE DISBURSEMENTS October 1976

20.00% Missouri State Home Missions	\$2,121.21
16.25% Promotional Department	1,723.48
4.00% General Fund	424.24
5.50% Youth Camp	583.34
2.50% Gem	265.15
1.75% Sunday School & CTS	185.61
2.00% MBI	212.12
52% Seven State Departments	5,515.15
7.00% Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College	742.43
13.00% Foreign Missions	1,378.79
9.00% Free Will Baptist Bible College	954.55
7.00% Executive Department	742.42
6.50% National Home Missions	689.39
2.50% CTS	265.15
2.50% Retirement & Insurance	265.15
.25% Laymen's Board	26.51
.25% Theological Commission	26.51
41% Eight National Departments	4,348.47
Total Disbursements	\$10,606.05

COOPERATIVE RECEIPTS October 1976

Fredericktown, First	\$623.83
Kirksville, First	25.00
Kirksville, First	60.00
South Side	284.75
Alton	53.75
Berkeley	315.49
Malden Mission	68.72
Cape Girardeau	146.13
Willow Springs	147.55
Faith	108.70
Number One	40.43
Monett, First	225.38
West Plains, First	254.20
Grant Avenue	291.96
Macedonia Sunday School	11.35
Lebanon, First	285.00
Houston	96.82
Cuba	47.22
First Mission, Kansas City	56.52
Freeman Chapel	94.33
Northeast Missouri Association	41.00
Pleasant Ridge	27.95
Byrd	19.04
Gateway	56.00
Hurryville	91.88
Salem	30.00
Bailey Chapel	31.00
Mill Creek	47.47
Mill Creek Sunday school	39.49
Bethel, Festus	198.40
Belton	267.00
Oskaloosa	24.12
Hannon	120.00
DeSoto	430.00
Grace	506.70
Purdy	81.00
Buffalo	99.85
Sedalia Mission	52.75
Merl's Chapel	47.18
New Prospect, Shell Knob	13.31
Pleasant Home	112.03
Rock Chapel	29.68
Hartville	32.29
Joplin, First	75.90
Mountain Grove, First	371.43
Community	31.32
Community	36.75
Verdella	97.76
Marshfield	82.60
Copper Mines	100.00
Carterville	31.65
Berean	107.00
Aulsbury Chapel	269.53
New Life, Licking	65.25
Union Grove	211.00
Hickory Grove	68.20
Evangel	99.06
Richwoods	107.71
O'Fallon	63.89
Olivet, Marshall	175.00
Waynesville, First	54.00
Thayer	149.78
Black Oak	10.00
New Rock Springs	40.00
Leadington	267.92
Calvary Fellowship	254.81
Mine La Motte	30.00
Central	150.00
Poplar Bluff	30.00
Happy Home	50.44
Fourth	332.00
Parkview	50.00
First Church, El Dorado Springs	10.00
Cabool	106.46
Lebanon, First	328.00
Monett	373.43
Waynesville, First	36.00

Fellowship	50.00
Myrtle	188.47
Pleasant Grove (Cope)	22.39
Columbia	258.67
Mountain Valley	184.36
Total Cooperative Receipts	\$10,606.05

MISSOURI DESIGNATED GIVING October 1976

FOREIGN MISSIONS

Fredericktown, First	\$100.00
General Fund	\$100.00
Kirksville, First	\$77.00
Howard Filkins	\$14.00
Jerry Pinkerton	63.00
South Side	\$115.00
Charlotte Tallent	\$10.00
Bill Fulcher	20.00
Lonnie Palmer	85.00
Gospel Light, Bonne Terre	\$19.33
Where needed	
West Plains, First	\$60.00
Filkins	\$10.00
General Fund	50.00
Gateway	\$25.00
Howard Filkins	\$25.00
Merl's Chapel	\$29.50
Sam Wilkinson	\$29.50
Mountain Grove, First	\$179.70
General Fund	\$125.00
Dennis Teague	9.70
Tom Willey	40.00
Jerry Pinkerton	5.00
Olivet, Marshall	\$80.00
Bobby Poole	\$20.00
Eddie Payne	5.00
Jim McLain	5.00
Jerry Pinkerton	25.00
Mabel Willey	20.00
Howard Filkins	5.00
Thayer	\$144.05
General Fund	\$17.50
Dale Bishop	26.55
Jerry Pinkerton	100.00
Black Oak	\$41.25
Carlisle Hanna	\$41.25
Walnut Grove	\$10.00
Lynn Miley	\$10.00
Lebanon, First	\$572.00
Clint Morgan	\$286.00
Jerry Pinkerton	286.00
Total	\$1,522.13

NATIONAL HOME MISSIONS

Fredericktown	\$100.00
General Fund	\$100.00
Gospel Light, Bonne Terre	\$19.33
General Fund	\$19.33
Mountain Grove, First	\$60.00
Vergel Maness	\$5.00
Leland Horton	50.00
Larry Powell	5.00
Olivet, Marshall	\$30.00
Leland Horton	\$30.00
Total	\$209.33

HILLSDALE COLLEGE

Fredericktown, First	\$100.00
Mountain Grove, First	115.00
Total	\$215.00

MISSOURI STATE HOME MISSIONS

New Home	\$20.00
Tom Owens	\$20.00

Thayer	\$153.00
General Fund	\$102.00
Tom Owens	15.00
Poplar Bluff	36.00
Total	\$183.00

FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Fredericktown, First	\$100.00
Total	\$100.00

CHILDREN'S HOME, GREENEVILLE, TENNESSEE

Gospel Light, Bonne Terre	\$38.66
Total	\$38.66

MISSOURI STATE YOUTH CAMP

Olivet	\$10.00
Thayer	\$10.00
Total	\$20.00

GENERAL FUND FOR MISSOURI STATE ASSOCIATION

Hazel Creek	\$10.00
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I Believe

God is the same yesterday, today and forever
 In my heart I know He is my Savior.
 There is no doubt in my soul
 That someday I will be made whole.
 I want to help someone today
 Please, God, lead me in the right way.

I know that all my friends can see
 All the blessings God has given me.
 I can walk, I can talk, I can hear, and I can run.
 It is a wonderful blessing to see the sun.
 Now why in this world should I complain
 For there is lots more sunshine than there is rain.

I know that tomorrow will be better than today
 For my faith in God will show me the way.
 In His Word He said, "Pray and believe."
 Now what else in this world do we need.
 And if each day I do a good deed,
 He will bless my heart and my soul He will feed.

I read the Bible every day,
 It gives me strength to go my way.
 It's full of miracles that I can read,
 And He knows exactly what I need.
 I am going to live one day at a time,
 And tomorrow will be better than the one behind.

And if it is not gloriously filled
 We know that it was not God's will.
 I know my soul is full of God's love,
 And I know I will live with Him above.
 So, in the end when He comes to call
 I know that it will be worth it all.

—Esther Sutton, member
 First Church, Lebanon, Missouri

On The National Front

FROM THE FULCHERS IN PANAMA

"We think of you often and remember you in our prayers. Thank you so much for your prayers for us here in Panama. We appreciate your interest in our family and in our work. It is always good to receive letters from you," the Fulchers write from Panama.

The letter continues, "We continue to have service in our home each Sunday night. (We help with the mission in Agua Buena on Sunday mornings.) A Bible Club is held for the children in the community on Friday afternoon. In the near future we plan to rent a hall or small house and use it for regular services. Please be praying for this need and, of course, it will mean extra money to come out of our account. Rent is so high in Panama. We are trusting the Lord to supply for this added expense."

They close by stating, "May the Lord richly bless you is our prayer. Thanks once again for your prayers and concern for us. Also, thank you for your financial gifts that make it possible for us to continue to preach the gospel here in Panama."

Bill, Glenda, and Children

FROM THE HASSES ON ITINERATE

"Our hearts have praised God together for His protection during over 18,000 miles we have been privileged to travel this summer with the family. The French family visiting with us was so impressed with such Christian love. Reports from Rennes, France, state that they returned to their country overjoyed by what they experienced in their hearts in America," write the Haases.

In closing they state, "Praise God our account is out of the red! Thank God for praying and giving friends like you."

The Joe Haas Family

REPORT FROM FWBBC

Twenty-one churches across the state of Missouri have given \$500 or more to the Missouri Project, the new wing on Welch Library. The total amount given for the project stands at just under \$50,000. The need is for \$125,000.

Missouri gifts to the general fund is up. Giving to the fund has increased approximately \$4,000 over last year's giving.

The Free Will Baptist Church of New Castle County of Delaware (the Wilmington area) was officially organized Friday, October 15. National Home Missionary—Joint Project worker, *Rev. Vergel Maness*, and men from the Maryland Association helped set the church in order and a \$57,000.00 bond program will finance the construction of the building. The bonds are for sale at nine percent interest, and those interested in purchasing bonds should contact *Rev. Vergel Maness*, 409 Moores Lane, Baldton, New Castle, Delaware 19720, or call 302/328-8430. This is the only Free Will Baptist church in the state of Delaware.

Home Missionary, *Rev. Larry Powell*, began services in McAllan, Texas, on October 3 with thirty-three people present. Services are being held in the Jackson School Cafeteria until facilities can be built on three beautiful acres already owned by the church, located in a strategic area of this city in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.

Rev. Charles Harris, Home Missionary to Lakewood, Colorado, began services October 24 with 28 people present. He is being assisted in this work by *Rev. Bob L. Thomas* from Fresno, California.

Rev. John Hollis, Home Missionary to Kankakee, Illinois, reports the church there has purchased the property they have been renting for several months.

Roy Thomas
Associate Director

Reverend Bailey Thompson Enters Evangelistic Field

Reverend Bailey Thompson, a well-known minister throughout the Free Will Baptist denomination, has formed the Revival Time Association. Brother Thompson has pastored in three states: Oklahoma, Texas, and Arizona. He served as pastor of the Poteau Free Will Baptist Church for fifteen years. He has conducted more than one hundred fifty revivals from California to South Carolina. He believes in gospel preaching as a means of reaching men for Christ.

Brother Thompson may be contacted at this address: Evangelist Bailey Thompson, Box 272, Poteau, Oklahoma 74953, phone 647-4663.

Pastoral Changes

Roger Harwell, First Church in Berkeley to First Church, Haskell, Oklahoma
Bill Van Winkle, First Church, Murfreesboro, Tennessee to First Church, Berkeley

Promotional Secretary's Corner

by Clarence Burton

October is the month that usually brings to us the first touch of autumn. What a beautiful time of the year. It reminds us again of the wonderful things God has made for us to see and enjoy. Surely, we can say with the Psalmist, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handiwork."

The Lord has blessed with another fine month. As one can note from the total receipts, we are gradually getting closer to the budget. I believe that we will reach our goal for cooperative giving of \$120,000 by March 31. We trust the Lord for this and in anticipation we thank Him for what He will do. We are eternally grateful for His blessings.

Because of lack of space I will list, without comment, the places I have visited. Again, I want to thank everyone for the wonderful hospitality and kindness expressed in so many ways. May the Lord bless you.

Clifton Church	Sunday October 3
Koshkonong Church	Sunday, October 3
Madison County Qtly. Mtg.	Saturday, October 9
Olivet Church (Revival through week)	Sunday, October 10
First Church, Springfield	Sunday, October 17
St. Francois Qtly. Mtg.	Saturday, October 23
St. Louis Dist. Qtly. Mtg.	Saturday, October 23
Poplar Bluff Mission	Sunday, October 24
Harmony Qtly. Mtg.	Saturday, October 30
Central Western Meeting	Sunday, October 31

May the Lord bless your faithfulness in sharing in His work. Please make all checks payable to and mail to Missouri State Association, P.O. Box 991, Lebanon, Mo. 65536.



Merry Christmas And A Happy New Year

from the Gem Family, the Burtons

It's Christmas time again! This is a special time of the year. It is a time when, in a special way, we celebrate the birthday of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I am glad for Christmas because it is exciting to remember in Scripture, in song, in poetry, and in drama the birthday of the greatest Person who ever lived. Let's make this a memorable event this year and remember that we, as a result of God's grace, have been given the greatest Gift: "For God so loved the world, that *he gave his only begotten Son.*"

Let us share with you "A Christmas Prayer" by Helen Steiner Rice and may it be our prayer throughout the coming year.

O God, our help in ages past
Our Hope in years to be
Look down upon this present
And see our need of Thee.
For in this age of unrest,
With danger all around,
We need Thy hand to lead us
To higher and safer ground.
We need thy help and counsel
To make us more aware
That our safety and security
Lie solely in Thy care.
And so we pray for this Christmas
To feel Thy Presence near
And for Thy all-wise guidance
Throughout the coming year.
First, give us understanding
Enough to make us kind,
So we may judge all people
With our heart
and not our mind,
And help us when we falter
And renew our faith each day
And forgive our human errors
And hear us when we pray,
And keep us gently humble
In the greatness of Thy love
So some day we are fit to dwell
With Thee in peace above.

Woman's Page



Shirley Bowden, editor



Still Serving

by Betty Reeves

Mrs. Mildred Hildebrand of 207 Emerson Street, Flat River, Missouri, holds the distinction of being the oldest member in the Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church. But her age is not her only distinction as any one who has passed her way will gladly testify. Despite her advanced age, she still faithfully attends all the services of the church (including all revival services), teaches a ladies adult Sunday school class and is an active member of the Woman's Auxiliary.

Born in 1880 in Illinois, she was one of 12 children. She reminisces of her close relationship with her father. She recalls the times she would sit on the arm of his chair as he taught her songs, some of the same songs that are sung today. Today she rarely has to use a songbook. Her parents were Methodists and her father was the Sunday school superintendent and song director of the church they attended. One Sunday night, the weather was extremely bad and her father decided it was too bad to get the horses out, so he was going to walk to church. She pleaded to go with him, so off they went. When the snow became too deep for her to walk, her father lifted her into his arms and carried her the rest of the way to God's House.

Later as a young woman, she met and married Pearl Bennett Hildebrand. She rejoices as she tells about the time when her Sunday school teacher, Mrs. Betty Craft, led her to the Lord shortly after the birth of her first child. The congregation was singing "Are you washed in the blood of the Lamb?" as she made her way to the altar to profess Christ as her Savior.

In the early 1920's, her husband moved the young family from their home in Jackson, Missouri, to the rough and tough Lead Belt. Her first impression of this area was far from favorable. She tells of the roads in Flat River that were not paved and how that after stepping out of the house you would mire up in the mud. She also recalls the livestock roaming in the Main Street of Flat River. Now that they were living in Flat River, she joined the General Baptist Church and settled down to raising 7 children. One night after starting out for church in the drizzling rain, they stopped at the First Free Will Baptist Church since it had begun to rain harder. She made a decision that she has stood by since. Going in to get out of the rain, she and the children received such a warm welcome from the people that she became a Free Will Baptist and has remained one ever since.

In 1928, she lost her husband and had the responsibility of rearing the 3 remaining children. She went to work, bought a home, and remained faithful to the Lord. Although times were hard, the Lord always provided her needs.

A charter member of the Fellowship Church, she has become a spiritual mother to all. Even though her husband and 3 of her children have preceded her on to "glory," she still has a large family of church children at Fellowship.

A serious gall bladder attack in 1974 hospitalized her; and, as she was going into surgery, she was reassuring everyone. She said "Well, children, I will either go home or come home, either way is all right with me."

Still living in the house that she bought after her husband's death, she does all her own housework, makes her own clothing, hand-quilts some masterpieces, and does beautiful embroidery work. When asked if she lives alone she says, "Well, no, me and the Lord live here." And from the contented smile on her face, you have no doubt that He does live there with her. She has lived a long and active life and the Lord has blessed. She is far along in her nineties and is "STILL SERVING."

TREASURER'S REPORT

by Blanche Wisheart

Missouri State Loan Fund	
Balance brought forward	\$44.53
Bethel (Festus)	\$2.63
Cuba	27.53
Farmington	10.75
Willow Springs	1.09
St. Louis District	12.50
O'Fallon	50.00
South Side	1.85
Hannon	83.00
Balance as of November 1	\$233.88
National Loan Fund	
Balance brought forward	\$44.53
Bethel (Festus)	\$2.63
Cuba	27.52
Farmington	10.75
Willow Springs	1.10
St. Louis District	12.50
O'Fallon	50.00
South Side	1.85
Hannon	83.00
Balance as of November 1, 1976	\$233.88
Hanna's Handy Helpers	
Balance brought forward	\$146.64
Bethel (Festus)	\$5.26
Farmington	96.15
Willow Springs	2.19
Bethel (West Plains)	30.00
St. Louis District	25.00
O'Fallon	100.00
South Side	3.70
Balance as of November 1, 1976	\$408.94

Note: Next month a letter from the Children's Home.

Loving Him Who First Loved Me

Saviour! teach me day by day,
Love's sweet lessons to obey;
Sweeter lessons cannot be,
Loving Him who first loved me.

With a childlike heart of love,
At Thy bidding may I move;
Prompt to serve and follow Thee,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Teach me all Thy steps to trace,
Strong to follow in Thy grace:
Learning how to love from Thee,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Love in loving finds employ—
In obedience all her joy;
Ever new that joy will be,
Loving Him who first loved me.

Thus may I rejoice to show
That I feel the love I owe;
Singing, till Thy face I see,
Of His love who first loved me.

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