



contact

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From Bitterness to Blessing

By Shirley Thomas

A Free Will Baptist pastor's wife shares with Contact readers how God healed her bitterness after the birth of their mongoloid baby.

Dr. Formby's question jackhammered its way into a secret part of my mind that I had never, until then, allowed to take the form of conscious fear. In the face of my stunned silence, he gently asked the question again.

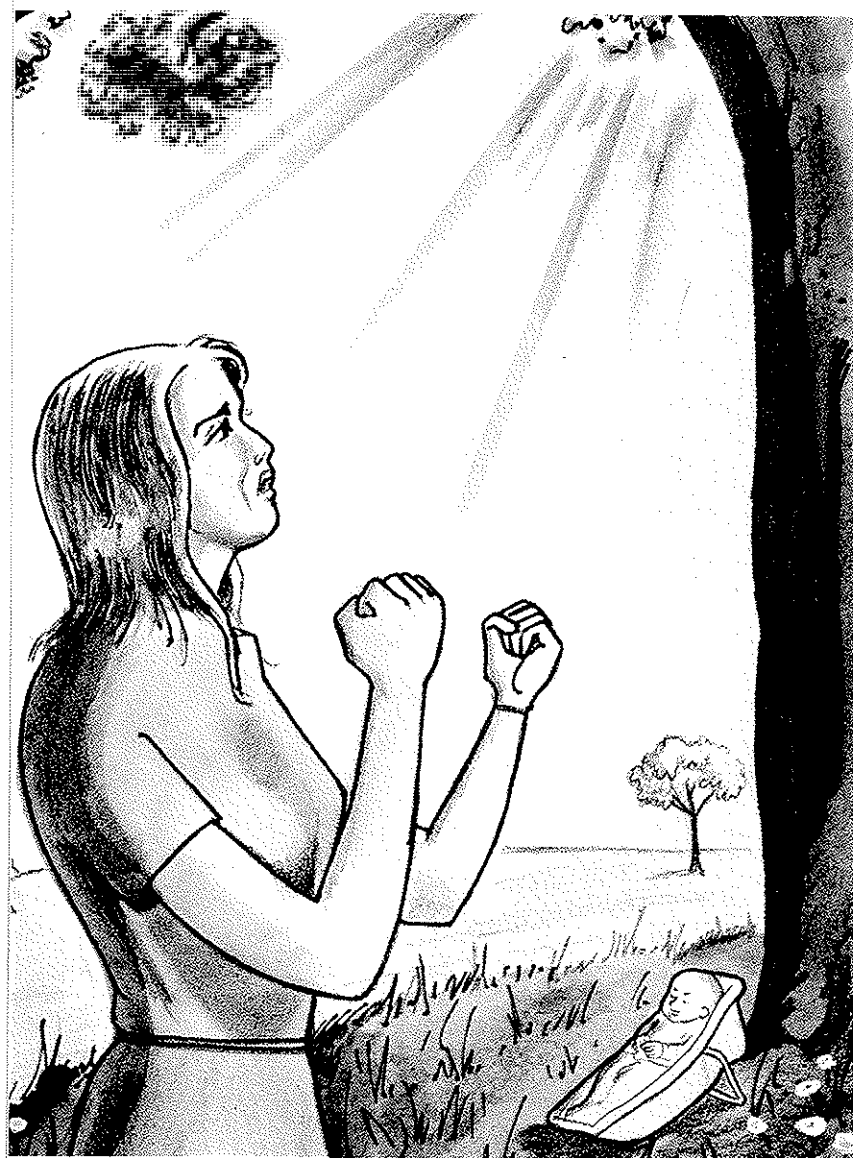
"Mrs. Thomas, have you noticed your baby's tongue sticking out more than is normal for a six-weeks-old baby?"

At that moment, I knew what my husband had already known for six weeks (he and the doctor had decided to give me time to recover physically from the birth itself) — that our beloved little black-eyed Jonathan had the condition commonly known as "mongolism."¹ Now, as I look back at that time in the doctor's office, almost twelve years ago, although I can vividly remember the surge of despair that seemed an actual physical force, I can smile with tolerance at the frightened, imaginative twenty-two year old that I was, conjuring up horrors that have proven to be, thank God, absolutely groundless. In talking to parents of other retarded children and through arriving at my own present state of mind, I have found several things in particular that seem important in adjusting to a retarded child. There are others, of course, but usually the others can be handled easily enough if the parents deal with these problems first. Furthermore, although the adjustment of other family members and friends is important I am going to devote most of this article to the adjustment of the parents, for they are the key to how other people will react to the retarded child.

After the immediate shocked numbness has worn off, about the first thing the parent must come to grips with (especially if he is a Christian) is that he has not really known himself well and that absolute honesty with himself and God is necessary before his wounds can heal. Recognizing that it is a normal human reaction to feel anger, despair, or even guilt, or a combination of these in the face of such a circumstance is usually difficult and recognizing and coping with one's own character weaknesses is, to say the least, a painful, ego-shattering experience. However, if one believes in an omniscient but loving God, he must believe that God knows that he harbors these feelings and understands; therefore, the quicker he can get these feelings out in the open the better off he is.

Loyd, less volatile than I, took care of his anguish in quiet, soul-searching talks with God. Four year old Jeffrey, after a rather penetrating question or two, accepted things as a matter of course, and went about his four-year-old business. I played the part of the preacher's wife bearing up with fortitude in the face of adversity, praying stereotyped little Thy-will-be-done prayers that meant nothing, but somewhere within me an anger was building that threatened to destroy some essential balance.

Finally, one day when Jonathan and I were alone, I could not bear my anger any longer. Taking Jon with me in an infant seat, I walked to a knoll near our house. As I sat for a long while looking at my baby's innocent sleeping face and at the sun shining so brightly as though nothing had happened,



¹A congenital type of retardation in which the child characteristically has slanting eyes, a large tongue, and a broad short skull among other physical traits. However, often such characteristics are not obvious in the newborn baby.

I tried to pray for acceptance of this inexorable fact. But the irony of the sunshine, contrasted with the blackness that I felt, defeated me.

I started with a calm enough statement. "I don't see how you could let this happen," I said to God.

But I did not remain calm. Even now it is difficult for me to believe that I said some of the things that I did, and I tell this only in the hope that it might help someone else in a similar circumstance. I screamed, I cursed, I stood up on that hill and defied God. Among other things, I told God (and anybody else within about a mile radius) that I, who had been the ugly duckling in a family of beautiful sisters, had intended (by what miracle I do not know!) someday to be beautiful and glamorous and that a mindless "thing" shuffling along behind me did not fit the picture. I ended my "prayer" by informing God that I could do a better job of running the universe than He could. Fortunately, however, He did not choose to turn things over to me that day.

"... I laughed aloud with joy and praise at the realization that Jon's retardation was no longer the first thing I thought of in the morning."

At last exhausted and realizing that there was absolutely nothing that I could do to change things, I cried as I had never cried before. Shocking as my actions were and although I only vaguely realized what was happening at the time, from that moment of honesty my healing began.

In the days immediately following, I was so emotionally drained that I could not think of the future; I was forced to live just one day at a time — a blessing in itself. At last the day arrived when I woke up thinking of something funny that my father had said. As I fed Jon, I laughed aloud with joy and praise at the realization that Jon's retardation was no longer the first thing that I thought of in the morning.

And this experience is closely related to another important step in the parents' adjustment to the retarded child: that of perspective, of recognizing that this so-called "tragedy" is just a part of life, not the whole of it. This recognition will help one to avoid one of the worst pitfalls common to parents of retarded children — making the child the undisputed center of family life, the child actually becoming the parents' reason for living. Our family has nicknamed this "The Noble-Burden-Bearer Syndrome." Mothers seem to be especially vulnerable to this error, sometimes turning themselves into veritable barracudas, guarding the child against danger real and imagined, pretending that no one else can take care of the child even

for a short time, and in the process, becoming intolerable self-made martyrs.

The best antidotes for the NBBS are an active, interesting life spent for the glory of God and the benefit of mankind, a sense of proportion that includes a sense of humor that enables one to laugh at himself, a realization that the human heart is incapable of sustained grief unless one is really working to keep it alive (in other words, that whatever becomes a part of a person's everyday life becomes "normal" to him), and a recognition that the child is an individual with a name — e.g., Jon Thomas — rather than an abstraction — "our retarded child."

I have purposely left until last the adjustment of other children in the family and of people outside the family, for their adjustment depends very much on that of the parents. It is a cliché, but true nonetheless, that children adapt easier than adults. Personally, Loyd and I prefer a frank approach. Our oldest son, Jeff, was not quite four years old when Jon was born, and we, like everybody else, wondered what his reaction would be. We told him that Jon was retarded and that *retarded* meant that Jon would always be a little child, although his body would grow.

"Oh fine," he said. "I'll always have somebody to play with!" With that he went out to play, and he has remained that matter-of-fact about Jon ever since. In fact, he has helped us keep a good perspective occasionally. Last year when I was growling over the fact that I had not yet been able to toilet train Jon, Jeff pointed out that practically anybody can be toilet trained, but not many people can play "Just As I Am" by ear as Jon can!

In the past year, we have watched with pride and thanksgiving as Jeff, at the age of 15, has worked in day camps with retarded children from the very fine Washington County School for Trainable Children, moving among the handicapped with easy familiarity and confidence.

As with any other child, the retarded child needs people, other than just the immediate family to help him develop. Keeping the child away from people at church, at school, and so on is to do a disservice to both the child and others. We have found that Jon, a natural-born ham, loves people and people love him back. For example, Loyd's cousin, Don McGuire, who had never been around retarded children, tells people that when we were coming to visit his family for the first time, he was afraid that he would be repulsed by Jon and afraid that the feeling would show in his face, so he steeled himself to hide his true feelings. However, according to Don, the realization that we regarded Jon specifically as Jon Thomas and not as an abstraction, along with Jon's own enthusiastic hugs and kisses, helped him to accept Jon without further problem.

As I look back over this article, I realize that because I have tried to be very practical, I have omitted much — God's grace itself that has been so marvelous, all of the wonderful people who have helped us on our interesting journey with Jon (our families, Jon's fine schools, the people at the Mt. Bethel, Conway, and Fayetteville Free Will Baptist churches, just to mention a few), and Jon's own funny personality that makes him a joy to have around whether he be gleefully rubbing the Afro-hairdo of one of my students or belting out "How Great Thou Art" at Youth Camp for his proud father — but I *must* close, for like any proud mother I could go on and on. ▲

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Thomas is the wife of the Reverend Loyd Thomas, pastor of Fayetteville Free Will Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Arkansas. She is an assistant professor of English at John Brown University, Siloam Springs, Arkansas.



Many churches have drawn a circle and left the handicapped outside . . . and in failing to provide spiritual instruction for these members of God's creation we have fragmented many Christian families.

THE INCOMPLETE CHURCH CIRCLE

By Richard and Lurlie Howard

I brought him home dirty, poorly dressed, hair unkempt, altogether, not a very presentable picture. After giving him a bath, a shampoo and dressing him in new clothing I took him to the full-length mirror in the bedroom. His chest swelled with pride, his stooped shoulders began to straighten as he turned from side to side admiring his image in the mirror. It was almost with unbelief that he gazed at his reflected image. Looking up to me with grateful admiration, he said, "You know what I look like, Mrs. Howard?"

I thought he looked like an angel, but I replied, "No, Steve, what do you look like?"

With his faulty speech he said, "I look like a Tristian gentleman."

My expenditures in time, money and effort were repaid a hundred-fold and I quickly drew him to my breast lest he see my tears of joy. With very little effort I had brought this child into a circle he had never known before.

Almost miraculously he had a new self image. He saw within himself potential that he had not known was there. As Special Educators, my husband and I have had this thrill of bringing children into the light of new knowledge many times. Will you share these thrills with us?

Steve was an educable retardate who also had accompanying exceptionalities of defective speech, social maladjustment, behavior disorders, and, to a slight degree, emotional disturbance. Yet, he knew that a Christian was clean and neat in deed and appearance, a gentleman in his behavior. He had garnered enough by association and observation to know that Christians are different, and what is more, that this difference was something to be desired.

There is within all God's creation a part of Himself and He will never be satisfied until that part is worshiping the whole. More tragic is the fact that the part will never be satisfied until it is joined with its larger self.

The Exceptional Child Defined

There are in excess of seven million exceptional children in the United States. In 1968 the U.S. Bureau of Education for the Handicapped estimated 7,083,500 handicapped under 19 years of age. The "gifted" are also listed in the classification of exceptional children but not with the "handicapped," although many of them do bear a handicap within the learning situation. There are about 7% of the gifted if we use the IQ of 125 and up as a criterion. Not counting them within this article we have 10.035% of our children and youth in the various categories of exceptionality.

By definition, simply stated, the exceptional child is one who is deviant or limited in his capacity to learn. If he must have an adaptation of the learning materials, the instructional methods, the physical setting, or the teaching techniques used with the "normal" child, he is exceptional. He may be speech impaired, emotionally disturbed, mentally retarded, learning disabled, orthopedically handicapped or other health impaired (crippled, rheumatic heart, etc.), visually handicapped, auditorially handicapped, or multihandicapped.

The Exceptional Child Ignored

What percentage of *your* Sunday school, or for that matter, your public school, or *your* church membership is composed of these people? If your answer is near one-third, consider your situation average. Approximately 62% of these children are not being cared for in our public schools. The church record is far more deplorable. Why does this appalling record exist? Why have we drawn a circle and left them out? Why are they not seen in the church circles or other social settings in proper proportion?

The answer is not easy and neither do you look to the present to find it. The history of the world has been said to be "man's inhumanity to man." Certainly the treatment of the handicapped in world history is a story of inhumaneness. We read that the early

senses, affections, passions? If you prick us, do we not bleed? If you poison us, do we not die? If you tickle us, do we not laugh?" This same lament could well be heard from the heart of the handicapped.

What we have failed to recognize is

"By definition, simply stated, the exceptional child is one who is deviant or limited in his capacity to learn."

Greeks took handicapped babies to the hills and left them to be devoured by wild animals or to die slowly of starvation, and we cringe in horror. Yet, today, in many American homes children are dying from spiritual starvation. The church has a sordid history in this respect.

Martin Luther called them "children of the devil." John Calvin referred to the mentally retarded as "evil spirits, filled with the devil." He advised parents in his congregation to "throw him in the river." There can be little doubt that the false teachings that attribute these children's birth to works of the devil have had an immense impact on many. One family, fairly close to us, insists this is true with their emotionally disturbed daughter.

The major reason for our great *sins of omission* (as relates to our neglect of these children) is lack of understanding. We have thought many of these people void of normal emotions. Shakespeare has Shylock, in *The Merchant of Venice*, lament, "I am a Jew; Hath not a Jew eyes, hands, organs, dimensions,

that the handicapped are more *like* "normal" people than *different*. Wherever and whenever this fact is accepted, programs designed to bring the exceptional into the circle of reality spring into action.

President Kennedy remarked that he thought civilizations would be judged by the treatment they afforded the less fortunate in their midst. Jesus certainly said as much in Matthew 18:5 and 25:40. In His parable of the talents in which the talents were distributed "according to their several ability" (Matt. 25:15), there is the definite implication that we should assist every child of God in the task of increasing his talents. Surely, if we deny these "little ones" the opportunity to participate in the unfolding process of the soul we will answer to our Father.

The Great Commission so often cited as an incentive to missionary activity in far flung corners of the world has failed to be used to the same degree as it relates to the handicapped. Does "every creature" in Mark 16:15 include the deaf, blind, crippled and retarded? Do we not send missionaries to Africa to tribes that are little better advanced than our retarded? Do they not devise written languages and then translate the scriptures into those languages and proceed to instruct in the art of reading, primarily for the purpose of scriptural

CONTACT

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“Knowing that inspiration without instruction leads to frustration, we need to be well informed before attempting to instruct the handicapped child.”

enlightenment? Darkness in the tri-level on 14th Street in Nashville is just as black as darkness in the heart of a jungle. The Light of the World is eager to penetrate all darkness. Accepting this fact, let us realize anew that we are our brother's keeper, whether he be dark or fair, illiterate or brilliant, lame or whole, blind or sighted.

The Exceptional Child Instructed

Assuming readiness to shoulder responsibility in this area, how can desire be translated into action? Knowing that inspiration without instruction leads to frustration we need to be well informed before attempting to instruct the handicapped child.

The first step is for one or two, possibly the Sunday school superintendent and CTS director, to gather materials and read them so they are thoroughly acquainted with the problems they'll encounter. This project must be viewed as just one more opportunity for outreach. Many families of the handicapped are now fragmented. Someone stays home, usually all the time. Parents and children usually share this role. When you offer a chance for the family to enter into the church community as a whole, you'll find many new people beating a path to your church door.

If you're in a fairly large metropolitan area you may wish to approach this project through the local Ministerial Association. In this manner one church can establish a class for the retarded and another for the emotionally disturbed, etc.

Another reason for inter-denominational or inter-church lines is expense.

These classes cost at least twice the amount of others. They are small, for two to ten. Architectural changes may be required (doors widened for

wheelchairs). Plumbing may need to be altered. Instructional materials are more expensive per pupil. Audiovisuals are essential. Use of filmstrips, movies, overhead transparencies and such are helpful in entering the mind more ways than the traditional verbal. If space is a problem you may have to hold these classes on a different day of the week, although this tends to perpetuate fragmentation.

The important thing is to get started. Don't look back once you start. Let nothing stop you. All rewards are commensurate with effort; therefore, you can expect to reap great blessings. We unequivocally guarantee much larger receipts than expenditures. All of our children are now enjoying huge benefits because of research and development with exceptional children.

Sources are numerous. Denominational publishing houses and independent religious publishing firms have materials that are adaptable to your use. The Catholic Church has done a great deal in this area. Don't overlook their parochial schools either as a valuable ally.

Public school teachers in Special Education and state schools and hospitals have materials you can use. These educators are always happy to assist church personnel in their efforts

for the handicapped. They are keenly aware that this problem must be attacked from every side. We suggest that during the teacher-training phase of this work several visits be made to educational institutions. Most institutions have chaplains who conduct religious worship services. Their experience is invaluable.

Teachers of the handicapped may be found in many places, but mostly in your church pews. Parents and relatives of the handicapped are prime prospects and they are very understanding.

The U.S. Office of Education, in an extensive study of public school teachers, found the following characteristics most often mentioned as desirable: extra patience, mental alertness, flexibility, resourcefulness, enthusiasm, emotional stability, personal warmth, friendliness, understanding, sympathy, objectivity and sensitivity. Teachers in certain areas emphasized other traits; for example, teachers of the *blind* mentioned the need for a pleasant voice, while teachers of the *gifted* mentioned humility and teachers of the *socially maladjusted* felt that an unusual sense of humor was helpful.

Lord and Kirk, in *Education of Teachers of Special Classes*, suggests five major characteristics these teachers should possess. (1) Capacity for self direction. The teacher will be the most knowledgeable person and will not have professional resource people to back her up. (2) Patience and perseverance. Try, try again and again, maybe a thousand times. (3) Experimentally minded (ingenious). More so if funds are short. The teacher will have to improvise, adapt, beg and borrow. (4) Strong physical stamina. If the class requires lifting of pupils, recruit an aide from the high school football team. (5) Personal adjustment. Be able to objectively assess

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a child's difficulty without getting too emotionally involved. People who go home and cry can't get the job done. Those who have compassion and not pity, who will work and not worry, and who have faith to believe that God is interested in the work will get the job done.

The Exceptional Child Encouraged

Teacher training, materials, methods, and curriculum development are too important to be left to the local personnel for very long. Exceptional children must be a concern of the total denominational structure. College presidents and academic deans should prepare the student body for the arrival

into the face of a Mongoloid baby, or take in their arms a paraplegic baby, without previous thought or warning, can be a shattering experience that can have far reaching ramifications for other children, relatives and friends.

In addition to providing knowledge of the exceptional there is an equally important responsibility to the exceptional young men and women of the church who happen to be resourceful enough to want to go to college. There should be a place for them on our campuses. Furthermore, our able bodied youth need to give every consideration to the possibility of serving God in one of the many fields open to them in services to the

Specific Suggestions

1. Determine Needs. Get religious census information. Request names through church bulletins and newsletters. Check with the state and local units of the associations listed below. Go to the public schools for data. Visit pediatricians, psychologists and your Public Health Department.
2. Get a personal questionnaire filled in on each prospect.
3. Inform the total membership through class discussions, workshops, articles in the church bulletin, special study groups, series of sermons.
4. Set goals or objectives.
5. Recruit and train teachers and aides.
6. Devise a curriculum.
7. Prepare room(s).
8. Purchase materials (educational and arts & crafts).

Sources

State Department of Education, Division of Special Education – Your state capitol.

Alexander Graham Bell Ass'n for the Deaf, Inc. 1537 35th Street; N.W. Washington, D.C. 20007.

United Cerebral Palsy Ass'ns, Inc. 66 E. 34th St.; New York, N.Y. 10016.

American Ass'n for Health, Physical Education & Recreation; 1201 16th St.; N.W. Washington, D.C. 20036.

American Ass'n of Workers for the Blind, Inc.; 1151 K St. N.W. Suite 637; Washington, D.C. 20005.

American Ass'n on Mental Deficiency; 5201 Connecticut Ave.; N.W. Washington, D.C. 20015.

The American Speech and Hearing Ass'n; 9030 Old Georgetown Rd.; Washington, D.C. 20014.

Ass'n for Children with Learning Disabilities; 2200 Brownsville Rd.; Pittsburgh, Pa. 15210.

Ass'n for Education of the Visually Handicapped; 711 14th St. N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005.

Boy Scouts of America; US Rts. 1 and 130; New Brunswick, N.J. 08903.

The Council of Exceptional Children; 1411 S. Jefferson Davis Highway; Arlington, Va. 22202. (This is the best source for all exceptionalities. They have professional divisions for most of the handicaps.)

President's Committee on Mental Retardation; Washington, D.C. 20201.

U.S. Office of Education, Bureau of Education for the Handicapped; 7th and D Streets; Washington, D.C. 20202. ▲

"Teachers of the handicapped may be found in many places, but mostly in your church pews."

of exceptional students. Counseling with parents regarding some of these very complex issues should not be the lot of a new, young, minister who is seeing the problem for the first time. By the same token, for new parents to look

handicapped. Teachers, aides, physical and recreational therapists, technologists, and numerous other vocational opportunities await those who are willing to answer the call. Unless our educational institutions make this knowledge known to our youth they will not enter some doors of effective witness. To this picture add the need for volunteers to assist the full time workers and you begin to sense the magnitude of opportunity for service.

This article has dealt with those under nineteen. There are many adult handicapped in our midst who are in need of the same services. It would be well to consider them in the planning phase. Many of these many not be capable of adjustment now, but could benefit from the services of the Extension Department with a one-to-one learning situation.

The following specifics are given for Sunday schools. It is our sincere hope that CTS, summer camps, Woman's Auxiliary and Master's Men, district, state and national programs will find a place for the exceptional. Many people don't have to wait to get to heaven to find the circle already unbroken.

ABOUT THE WRITERS: The Howards, who have been active in Free Will Baptist circles both in Ohio and Kentucky, represent a vast resource of active knowledge of the exceptional child. Mrs. Howard has been involved for the past eight years in the education of the mentally retarded and is currently teaching the Intermediate Educable Retarded in Winchester, Kentucky. She is a graduate of East Kentucky University.

Mr. Howard is the author of UNEMPLOYED UGLIES and several papers dealing with mental retardation. He has served as Assistant Professor at Pikeville College and Eastern Kentucky University at Richmond during the past four years. Prior to this time, he taught in Ohio at Miami University, University of Dayton and Wittenberg University. Mr. Howard is presently completing requirements for a Doctorate in Education from the University of Alabama.

Christine Leichner tells how her sister came to be regarded as the "special child" in the singing Ledbetter family.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE TWILA MAKES!

Eleven years ago God blessed the Jack Ledbetters with their eighth child. Little Twila was greeted by seven happy brothers and sisters. It was not until three days later that our joy was



EVEN AS A TODDLER, reaching out to others has been a characteristic of Twila's endearing personality.

somewhat dampened as we learned that Twila would never be like other children. She was diagnosed as a mentally retarded child. We children experienced some difficulty in accepting Twila.

During their later years in life, Dad and Mom needed all their time and energy in the Lord's work, I thought. So why should God give them an afflicted child to care for?

But we were taught that Twila was a "special child."

Prayer has always been stressed in our home. After Twila's birth, we gave ourselves to prayer: "Lord, help us to know that You are working out a plan."

Twila was never a well child. Three times she had bronchial pneumonia. Her heart and spleen were enlarged. Her fever soared to 107°. During these illnesses we thought we would not be able to keep her, but each time God spared Twila's life.

Twila was included in all the normal activities of our family, the biggest of these being the church and God's work. She took some of her first steps (between two and three years of age) walking down the church aisle. As she grew stronger she was able to maintain regular attendance in Sunday school. And O, how we praise the Lord for Twila's learning experiences in the Starkey School for the Retarded!

Everyone who has been touched by Twila's life has learned the meaning of "special child." To know her is to love her. Twila is filled with love. She is not afraid to show it. She is a trusting and happy child.



TWILA
1972-73
SCHOOL YEAR

Mother once said, "Twila may never be able to sing with my other children, but through her life many a beautiful message has been brought."

Twila continues to brighten the life of every person she meets — thus the nickname "Twinkle Little Star." Her shining life has touched many hard hearts. My brother Glenn wandered in sin for many years. He now testifies how Twila's life humbled him and brought him to Jesus Christ.

Should you ever visit West Side Free Will Baptist Church, Wichita, Kansas, where my father, "Reverend Jack," preaches, one of the voices you will likely hear above the others is Twila's.

Our family has never been "ashamed" of Twila. Instead, we are thankful that God chose our home for this "special child."

What seemed tragic 11 years ago has turned out to be one of God's greatest blessings. He always knows best.

What a difference Twila makes in our home and church! ▲

I Have a Child in My Keeping

I have a child in my keeping
 His legs are twisted and thin,
 His hands cannot hold a pencil,
 At games he seldom can win;
 But within this little body
 A living spirit dwells;
 He's an individuality,
 And in his heart there swells
 The desire to do what others do
 And claim his rightful place.
 My aim is with this little child
 To help him find that place.

I have a child in my keeping
 He does not hear the sounds
 In all the world about him
 Where music sweet abounds,
 Where voices hush their singing
 To hear the robin's song,
 Where babbling brook goes skipping
 Unceasing all day long,
 He does not hear the gentle breeze
 A whispering as it plays
 Through grasses tall and tops of trees
 Throughout the summer days.
 May I be shown the right way
 To help him see and feel
 All nature's realm about him,
 That in his soul there'll steal
 The magnitude of beauty
 Through eyes that will behold
 And feel the things he cannot hear —
 God's world to him unfold.

By Evelyn Keller

I have a child in my keeping.
 His eyes are clouded and dim,
 They can discern the sunshine
 But the beauties of nature elude him.
 Oh, let my eyes be his eyes
 That he might know of the hues
 Of all the little flowers —
 The pinks, the yellows, the blues —
 That he might know how the rainbow
 Bends across the sky
 That he might thrill to the rush of wings
 As the cardinal red flies by.

I have a child in my keeping —
 He's slow to speak, to learn,
 He's hesitant to answer,
 He's urged to take his turn,
 Sometimes he draws within himself
 He doesn't want to play;
 Sometimes the tears flow freely
 When he wants to have his way.
 Oh, give me wisdom, make me wise,
 That I may guide aright
 This little child to find his place
 And make his world more bright.

Pastor, May I Speak to You a Moment...



Churches that give liberal offerings to WNAC during August each year make possible our ever-expanding ministries.

WNAC is not subsidized in any way and is almost totally dependent upon WNAC EMPHASIS MONTH offerings from our churches. Here is a marvelous opportunity to support a ministry which is designed to involve all women of the church in an effective program of *Mission Action, Mission Study* and *Mission Prayer*.

I hope your church will be among the many churches which will devote a service during August to the observance of WNAC EMPHASIS. A free packet of program materials and visuals is being sent to all auxiliaries for this purpose. The packet will be sent to you free upon request.

Rising costs have put us in a difficult position. Your help is needed now so this vital ministry will not be curtailed.

Thank you for helping this department continue its services to the state, district and local Woman's Auxiliary and to far-reaching world-wide ministries.

Cleo Pursell, Executive Secretary
 Woman's National Auxiliary Convention
 National Association of Free Will Baptists

PAUL PURSELL, 67, PASSES AFTER EXTENDED ILLNESS

NASHVILLE, TENN. — On May 27, 1973, the Reverend Paul Pursell, former evangelist and pastor, went to be with his Lord.

Active in Oklahoma's outreach to youth from its very beginning, Mr. Pursell served as state president, sponsor, and chairman of the youth board. He pastored in Kansas, Oklahoma, and California. On several occasions, Mr. Pursell ministered as assistant chaplain to the Oklahoma House of Representatives. He was the first superintendent of Free Will Baptists Children's Home in Oklahoma. His extensive evangelistic work in Oklahoma, Texas, Arkansas, Missouri and Kansas is reflected today in the lives of hundreds of Christian workers across our denomination — young people whose lives are touching others just as Paul Pursell touched theirs.

Mr. Pursell is survived by his wife Cleo, Executive Secretary of Woman's National Auxiliary Convention.

IDAHO ASSOCIATION RECEIVES SIXTH CHURCH

RUPERT, IDAHO — Highlighting the annual session of the Idaho Association was the reception of the Burley Church into the association. This is the sixth church in the association.

Executive Secretary Rufus Coffey was present from the National Offices in Nashville, Tennessee and presented the work of the various national departments. He reports that each church in the association supports the Cooperative Program.



IDAHO ASSOCIATION OFFICERS . . . Serving as officers of the Idaho Association of Free Will Baptists for the ensuing year are, left to right: Jesse Dunn, moderator; Delmar Hopkins, Assistant Moderator; Joyce Dunn, clerk; and Jo Ann Bennett, Assistant Clerk.



NORTHWEST ASSOCIATION MEETS IN 10th SESSION

VANCOUVER, WASH. — Celebrating ten years of progress, the Northwest Association met May 18, 19 at Vancouver Free Will Baptist Church, where it was organized January 12, 1963. With the reception of Victory Church in East Wenatchee, Washington, where Lewis Perry is pastor, the

association has grown from the original four churches to a total of nine churches and one mission. In addition to the State of Washington, the Northwest Association encompasses churches in Alaska and Portland, Oregon.

Among items of business adopted was a reallocation of cooperative funds in order to provide support for the expanding associational ministry. The association voted to work in conjunction with the National Home Missions and Church Extension Board to organize another church in the State of Washington. In addition to paying the expense of General Board member Milan Ruble to the National Convention in Macon, Georgia, the association voted to send the newly elected moderator, Lewis Perry, to the annual Promotional Meeting in Nashville, Tennessee, January 2-4, 1974.

Approximately 100 delegates and visitors attended this session of the association. Rufus Coffey, Executive Secretary of the National Association, represented the national ministries.

TEXAS ELECTS LAYMAN EXECUTIVE SECRETARY



DALLAS, TEXAS — During the June, 1973 session of the Texas State Association, Jim L. Williams was named Executive Secretary for the more than 4,000 Free Will Baptists in the Long Horn State. Williams, 34, graduated from Free Will Baptist Bible College in May of this year with a major in Bible.

Prior to his enrollment in Free Will Baptist Bible College, Mr. Williams' ministries in Texas reached into many areas of Christian Education. He served as youth director and religious instructor on several occasions.

Appointing this qualified layman to this newly created post is a noteworthy mark of progress for which Texas Free Will Baptists are grateful to God.

Mr. Williams will maintain his state office at Bryan, which is a central location for Free Will Baptists in Texas. Both he and his wife, the former Barbara Baker, are natives of Bryan.

ANNIVERSARY ISSUE SLATED FOR NOVEMBER

Have you been a subscriber to CONTACT since its initial appearance, November, 1953? If so, I would like to hear from you. Just send a note to me stating you have subscribed to CONTACT since November, 1953.

Thank you.

Eugene Workman
Administrative Editor

C.T.S. ANNOUNCES FALL PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN

NASHVILLE, TENN. — "Train For Christ" has been chosen as the theme for the 1973 National CTS Promotional Campaign, according to Malcolm Fry, Director.

Two national trains are to be built during the campaign which begins on the first Sunday of September and continues for the five Sundays of that month. The passenger train will be composed of the top ten churches who have the best percentage of attendance increase. The freight train will include the top ten churches who have the best per capita contribution to the National CTS work. The percentages will be based on the statistics of April, May and June, 1973.

NEW CHURCH ORGANIZED IN ARIZONA

GLOBE, ARIZONA — Under the direction of the Reverend Edward Endicott, a Free Will Baptist church was organized here in April. The former Ohio pastor reports average attendance for the last two Sundays in April was 50.

Local CTS groups who wish to participate in this campaign must register by August 15. Registration must include the name and address of the church, the name of the CTS director and the average CTS attendance for April, May, and June.

National awards will be given the winners in each division and the winners will be announced in denominational publications.

FREE WILL BAPTIST CHAPLAIN TRANSFERS TO KOREA

NASHVILLE, TENN. — Chaplain (Capt.) Larry Cusick, United States Air Force, stationed at Wurtsmith Air Force Base, Michigan, has been transferred to Talqu, Korea, according to information received in the National Home Missions Department. Transfer date is set for September, 1973.

Chaplain Cusick is a member of Hazel Park Free Will Baptist Church, Hazel Park, Michigan. The Free Will Baptist Bible College alumnus entered the chaplaincy two years ago.

OUR READERS COMMENT

Dear Mrs. Boyle:

I believe this Church Family Plan of getting CONTACT into every home is helping the people of the Bessemer City Church to get better acquainted with Free Will Baptists. Some are interested in sending their children to the National Association and I believe it is because they have been reading about it in CONTACT.

Yours In Christ,
D. L. Whaley, pastor
Bessemer City, North Carolina

Dear Mr. Workman,

We surely are enjoying the CONTACT. It is just that, a contact with Free Will Baptists all over the nation.

Your new format and select articles are most interesting and timely, and we look forward to receiving it each month.

Sincerely,
Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Crispin
Putnam, Oklahoma

Dear Gene:

I think that CONTACT has reached a height of excellence never before achieved. The thematic approach and willingness to entertain differing viewpoints on some controversial topics has made it a much more interesting publication. Congratulations on a job well done. May God bless you as you seek new directions.

Your Friend in Christ,
Bonnie Shellnut
Hazel Park, Michigan

CHURCH PERSONNEL CHANGES

These changes in Free Will Baptist pastoral and other church personnel are provided by CONTACT Magazine as a service to its readers. No personnel will be listed as having left a place of service until he is called officially to serve with another congregation.

PASTORATES

ALABAMA

Dean Dobbs to First Church, Dothan, from Shady Grove, Durham, North Carolina

J. M. Goode to First Church, Montgomery, from First Church, Carthage, Texas

Bobby Greene to Shady Grove Church, Adamsville, from First Church, Cookeville, Tennessee

FLORIDA

Jack Stallings to First Church, Hialeah from First Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

Jesse Webb to St. Johns Church, Perry, from Olivet Church, Guthrie, Kentucky

GEORGIA

Billy Hanna to First Church, Savannah, from Calvary Church, Nashville, Tennessee

IDAHO

Dan Parker to Twin Falls Church, Twin Falls

MISSISSIPPI

Ronald Niebruegge to Tupelo Church, Tupelo, from Unity Church, Smithfield, North Carolina

MISSOURI

Rolla Smith to Grant Avenue Church, Springfield, from First Church, Savannah, Georgia

NORTH CAROLINA

Dennis Lowery to Garner Church, Garner, from Grace Church, Lake City, South Carolina

Joe Dan Underwood to Immanuel Church, Durham, from Ebenezer Church, Glennville, Georgia

OKLAHOMA

David Sutton to Jenks Mission, Jenks, from Northside Church, Shawnee

Orville Romine to First Church, Sulphur, from Stonewall Church, Stonewall

Joe Blair to First Church, Chickasha, from Noble Church, Noble
Teddy Davis to Southeast Church, Tulsa

OREGON

Max Morris to Community Church in Portland

TENNESSEE

A. J. Looper to First Church, Cookeville, from Cedar Creek Church, Hartselle, Alabama

WASHINGTON

Holt Seawell, Jr. to First Church, East Wenatchee

I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES

By Hughes Ellis

Never shall I forget the joy that flooded my soul the day God lifted my life out of the depths of sin. At age 26, during a revival at Heads Free Will Baptist Church, Cedar Hill, Tennessee, Jesus Christ came into my life. God used the poignant preaching of Jack Paramore to bring me to an awareness of my need for salvation.

The peace that filled my life during my spiritual infancy went beyond my understanding, but the unrest that crept into my soul haunted me day and night. I asked Pastor Bill Robinson for counsel and he explained that God has a will for every person's life. He thought perhaps God might be trying to show me His will for my life. "Pray and be patient," Pastor Robinson advised, "and be willing to do whatever God wants you to do. He will reveal His will to you in due time."

Then there came to my heart the conviction that God wanted me to preach. Preach? Why, that's one thing I could never do, I thought, because from a child I had been deaf. For 13 years I had worn a hearing aid with only mediocre results. Because of my loss of hearing it was impossible for me to take part in normal conversation or talk on the telephone. Thus I felt it would be utterly impossible for me to even think of preaching.

So I bargained with the Lord. I agreed to do anything except preach. First, I taught the Senior Sunday School class. Still unrest gnawed at my soul. I

preached in neighboring churches and thought surely God was leading me to be a lay speaker. But sleepless nights followed and unrest continued.

Finally, one afternoon behind a briar patch I settled in my heart that God called me to preach and in spite of any difficulties I was ready and willing to do His will. Six months later I was called to pastor Shady Grove Free Will Baptist Church near Clarksville, Tennessee.

After accepting the Clarksville Church the promise in Ephesians 3:20 leaped into my soul — a promise that was to have a profound affect on my life: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us." I discussed the vast potential in this verse with my wife Laura. We agreed that night that if God was able to do "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," then He was able to restore my hearing. On our knees before God we asked Him to give us the faith to trust Him to perform a miracle in my life and restore hearing to me.

At the time I knew little about God or the power of prayer. But I felt confident that God had heard our prayer and I fully expected a miracle to be performed immediately. But to my disappointment no miracle took place. Finally, my disappointment gave way to despair when instead of getting better my hearing steadily grew worse. For two years we prayed for a miracle. There were many times when I doubted God, but Laura insisted that God was

able to do whether He chose to do or not.

In April, 1964 I received a letter from Dr. John J. Shea who was with the Memphis Otologic Clinic in Memphis, Tennessee. He suggested I write the clinic for an appointment and undergo an examination. I had heard of Dr. Shea and I knew the hearing of many people had been restored following his skillful surgery. But I had also heard that he charged \$1,000 per ear for each operation. Married and the father of four children, I was making only \$55.00 weekly as pastor of a small rural church. I knew that one million dollars for an operation would be no more out of my reach than one thousand. But I decided to write for an appointment as I had nothing to lose.

The day came for my examination. Following several tests I learned that 90% of the hearing in my left ear was gone, and about 85% in my right ear. Late in the day I was ushered into the doctor's office to hear the result of the test. "You have the type of deafness that we can correct," Dr. Shea said confidently. He explained the procedure for operating. "Go ask my secretary to give you an appointment for an operation," he continued.

"Wait a minute," I interrupted. "Let's discuss the cost." As the doctor started out of the room, he handed me my chart and said, "My secretary will take care of that." The disappointment I felt at that moment was indescribable. I thought, "So close and yet so far, and he won't even talk to me about the

cost." But as I was leaving the room I opened the cover of my chart and across the cover were written two letters — "N.C." Now I know that when you see those letters in a doctor's office they don't stand for "North Carolina" — but "No Charge."

Before leaving the doctor's office I was scheduled for surgery the following April, one year later. As I stepped into the elevator that afternoon I flipped off the switch and on my knees I praised God from Whom all blessings flow.

The following year I entered Baptist Hospital in Memphis for my first operation. My hospital bill was \$144.00, but because I was a "Baptist" preacher, they cut the bill in half, leaving \$72.00 to be paid. The Sunday before I left for the hospital a deacon in my home church sent me a check for \$75.00. God not only opened the way for the operation, but He paid the hospital bill and gave me \$3.00 for gas money.

I was told it would be from four to eight weeks before we would know if the first operation was successful. With anxious anticipation and prayerful hearts we waited.

On Sunday morning, May 3, 1964, while sitting in the bedroom of the parsonage tying my shoes I heard Laura in the kitchen at the far end of the house: "Go ask your Daddy what time it is." I came bounding out of the bedroom shouting, "It's time to praise the Lord for I can hear!" They were the first words spoken at a distance that I ever remember hearing. God had heard and answered prayer. Indeed He *is* able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.

Only those who live in the silent world of the deaf can fully appreciate God's marvelous gift of hearing. My heart was overjoyed then with little things that today escape my notice — the ticking of a clock, a passing car, and the crowing of a rooster. One of the greatest wonders that I remember was the sound made while taking a bath. I didn't know that rubbing a soapy cloth across the body made a noise.

The following April I had successful surgery on my left ear. Layman Turner Lee of Oaklawn Free Will Baptist Church had the same operation performed by Dr. Shea. He had told the doctor about my financial situation, and God used this dear man to touch the heart of Dr. Shea. I give Brother Lee and Dr. Shea the credit, but I give God

the glory.

God performed the miracle of the new birth in my life 14 years ago. He performed the miracle of hearing nine years ago. He's the God of miracles. "I believe in miracles for I believe in God."

ABOUT THE WRITER: After ministering in the state of Alabama for several years, Mr. Ellis returned to his native Tennessee in the fall of 1972 to assume his present pastorate of the Bethlehem Free Will Baptist Church near Ashland City. He is an alumnus of Free Will Baptist Bible College. ▲

Thank You for Your Gifts to the . . .

COOPERATIVE PLAN OF SUPPORT

May 1973

RECEIPTS:

State	May '73		May '72	Yr. to Date
	Coop	Design.		
Alabama	\$. . .	\$. . .	\$. . .	\$ 2,100.87
Arizona	. . .	. . .	779.89	167.03
Arkansas	1,496.90	. . .	1,561.27	4,552.18
California	450.43	. . .	627.75	3,075.46
Colorado	. . .	. . .	25.12	. . .
Florida	25.00	. . .	565.53	3,363.36
Georgia	604.14	. . .	555.98	3,278.70
Idaho	82.57	. . .	. . .	376.90
Illinois	1,095.68	. . .	1,837.16	5,913.27
Indiana	. . .	. . .	. . .	81.92
Kansas	. . .	. . .	183.00	. . .
Kentucky	. . .	. . .	. . .	863.17
Maryland	5.00	. . .	45.00	279.49
Michigan	47.28	. . .	58.00	92.48
Minnesota	43.80	. . .	48.90	177.91
Mississippi	142.58	. . .	98.40	373.04
Missouri	3,344.48	(3,344.48)	2,864.31	14,064.99
New Mexico	. . .	. . .	34.48	29.24
North Carolina	75.00	. . .	40.00	555.00
Northwest Assoc.	. . .	. . .	214.84	37.50
Ohio	147.60	(5.00)	24.00	4,333.14
Oklahoma	310.17	(310.17)	2,176.00	4,540.95
Tennessee	134.50	. . .	310.39	1,124.73
Texas	. . .	. . .	186.80	751.34
Virginia	79.95	. . .	36.00	400.45
West Virginia	. . .	. . .	. . .	25.00
Wyoming	. . .	. . .	15.71	. . .
Totals	\$ 8,085.08		\$ 12,288.53	\$ 50,558.12

DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Dept.	\$ 4,232.27	(985.80)	\$ 3,195.65	\$ 20,471.31
Foreign Missions	1,320.63	(982.56)	2,917.28	9,847.93
Bible College	1,089.04	(755.81)	2,485.59	8,304.22
Home Missions	784.87	(571.86)	1,728.25	6,124.95
Church Training Ser.	304.88	(188.95)	945.22	2,577.46
Retirement & Ins.	212.32	(113.37)	603.92	1,909.27
Layman's Board	83.06	(18.90)	322.61	977.12
Commission on Theological Liberalism	53.41	(37.80)	90.01	341.26
Miscellaneous	4.60	(4.60)	. . .	4.60
Totals	\$ 8,085.08		\$ 12,288.53	\$ 50,558.12

PRESENTING THE GOSPEL TO CHILDREN

By Leroy Forlines
(Part 2)

Risk factors that often cause children to make shallow, superficial professions are being continued in this month's column. In no way does the writer intend to discourage evangelism among children. Rather, his concern is that we exercise *caution* in our outreach to children.

The third type of soil is that which has *thorns* in it. The seed that sprouts in this soil has no real chance. The thorns tend to shade the young plant from the sun which it needs and the roots of the thorns which are already developed drain off the moisture and food value so that the root system of the young plant cannot feed the plant. It is doomed to defeat before it ever sprouts.

The soil with thorns in it represents the person who was attracted by the gospel, but did not make a decision that would put him on the right path in life with regard to the cares, riches, and pleasures of life. He wanted to become a Christian without changing his convictions. He wanted to become a

Christian without putting God first in his life. These matters were never settled in his life. It is important to observe that the problem of cares, riches, and pleasures did not arise later. They were there from the start. Given enough time he fades out of the picture. It should be obvious that a person cannot become a Christian and his convictions and priorities in life not change. These people never had a conversion experience.

The people represented by the soil with thorns in it would represent teenagers and adults more so than small children.

The fourth type of soil is called *good ground*. Here there is a well prepared soil with depth of earth and cleared from thorns. This is the type of soil that gives the harvest. Luke speaks of these as having "a good and honest heart." Matthew says that these are the ones "who hear the word and understand it."

The ones represented by the good soil are represented by a wise buyer who understands his need and knows the product he is buying. The person who is properly prepared for conversion has a good grasp of sin and judgment. He

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

understands the changes needed in his life and wants these changes. He understands his need of a Saviour and wants a Saviour. Children from the ages of 5 or 6 and up can fit into this category.

Those who deal with young children must keep into account the high risk factors that could cause a child to have a shallow and superficial experience. Such experiences must be avoided. They may keep the child from a real conversion experience later in life. When pressure is exerted upon children, they will be sure targets for superficial experiences. Anyone can get a child to say he will accept Christ as his Saviour.

The gospel must be presented to children with the greatest care and concern. There must be patience while the soil is being prepared. When the child manifests his concern without undue pressure, with wisdom and loving concern he should be guided to a meaningful experience with Jesus Christ. ▲

Notes from a Rare Volume

By Dr. Robert Picirilli

Last month's column referred to a very old and rare volume. This month's column deals with another: *The Life of Elder Abel Thornton*, published in 1828. Thus the volume is quite old and rare. This volume, too, is in the Free Will Baptist Historical Collection.

The introduction to the book, entitled "Preliminary Remarks" (written, I think, by one Z. Tobey), is especially interesting in that it contains a lengthy recitation of the articles of the faith of Free Will Baptists at that time (which was but 50 years after the northern beginning). I quote some of those articles here.

HISTORY CORNER

4. That no human being, since the fall, either has or can have *merit* or *worthiness* of or by himself; and therefore has nothing to *claim* from God, but in the way of his mercy through Christ . . .

5. That these blessings are received by *faith*, because not of works nor of sufferings.

6. That the *power to believe*, or grace of faith, is the free gift of God; without which none can believe: but that the *act of faith*, or actually *believing*, is an act of the soul, under the influence of that power . . .

8. That unless a believer live and walk in the spirit of obedience, he will fall from the grace of God, and forfeit all his Christian privileges and rights: in which state of backsliding he may persevere; and, if so, perish everlastingly.

9. That the whole period of human life is a *state of probation*; in every part of which a sinner may repent and turn to God; and in every part of it a believer may give way to sin and fall from grace: and that this possibility of rising, and liability to falling, are essential to a state of trial or probation.

10. That all the promises and threatenings of the word of God are conditional, as they regard man in reference to his being here and hereafter: and that on this ground alone the Sacred Writings can be consistently interpreted, or rightly understood. ▲



WORDS FOR WOMEN

When God Pushes You into a Corner

By Kathleen Perry

In the jet propelled age of today, the trend seemingly is to put a premium on speed and efficiency to the extent that we find it difficult to spend time on anything that does not bring immediate action. Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! seems to be the motto of the typical American home. Because of our "way of life" we sometimes miss the blessings of God that come with stillness and quietness. Isaiah 30:15 says, "In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."

God sometimes places us in positions where we are forced to live a quiet and unhurried life. Some of the examples we

find in the Bible are people like Moses, who spent forty years on the backside of the desert for God to prepare him for the responsible task of leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt. Who could forget Job during the days he spent alone after his family and friends had been taken from him; and yet his latter days were greater than his first. Elijah spent time in hiding as commanded by God, and even the ravens provided food for him while God prepared his heart for His ministry.

God's work is often done through a person who has been forced to inactivity and solitude. Sometimes illness comes and we have to remove ourselves from distracting influences

and spend time in Bible study and meditation. There are times when crises in our lives force us to look at our lives with a new perspective and re-examine our goals. Sometimes the death of a loved one encourages us to turn to God in quiet meditation.

Amazingly, the quietness and promises of the Word cause our worries and frustrations of "getting everything done" to disappear.

If the Lord pushes you into a corner, away from those you love or from doing what you *think* ought to be done, don't fret. Instead, take the opportunity to let the Word of God and the peace and contentment of God penetrate your heart.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. *He restoreth my soul.*"

ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Perry is the wife of Lewis Perry, pastor of the Victory Free Will Baptist Church in East Wenatchee, Washington. ▲

what's your problem?



By R. Eugene Waddell

QUESTION: *I would like to ask you what you think of a Christian playing cards? I was taught as a child that it was wrong to play cards. So all my life I have thought it a sin.*

ANSWER: I assume that you refer to the deck of cards which has hearts, diamonds, clubs and spades. I, too, was taught that a Christian should not play cards. I would not have a set in my house. My objection certainly is not that I think that a piece of cardboard as such is harmful. It is a matter of use and association. Everyone knows that cards are very often used in gambling. And gambling is wrong. The dedicated Christian should "abstain from all appearance of

evil" (I Thess. 5:22). I want to live above the suspicion that I might gamble.

Every Christian is responsible for others. So even if I played cards without gambling I would have to consider the effect of my action on others. A weaker Christian might follow my example and give in to a former weakness toward gambling. The vice of gambling can be as addicting as alcohol. We all need the self-denying attitude of Paul: "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend" (I Cor. 8:13).

Furthermore, I could not play cards with the assurance that I was doing right. Therefore, I must not play "for whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).

On the other hand, I must be slow to judge that person who feels he can play cards as long as he doesn't gamble. He may always take care to explain the dangers of gambling to the younger Christian. "To his own master he standeth or falleth" (Rom. 14:4).

Readers may address their questions to Mr. Waddell at P.O. Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202 Please limit each question to one specific topic. There will be no personal correspondence regarding those questions which are not used in the magazine. The column will not necessarily be considered the official voice of the denomination relative to the problems involved. ▲

When Lay Evangelism Becomes Explosive

By Ken Lane

Lay evangelism is often misinterpreted as meaning lay preaching. This idea should be far removed from our thinking if we are to understand the real meaning conveyed in lay evangelism.

Lay evangelism has farther reaching goals and achievements than just preaching from the pulpit. It is reaching the lost with the Gospel through the personal witness of laymen. My thoughts on lay evangelism were inspired from reading Chandler's THE KENNEDY EXPLOSION. This is a book of *tried facts* – not fiction.

OBSERVATION SHOULD PRECEDE VISITATION

As you listen to the many sermons on soul-winning and the layman's duty to witness, and the pleadings of the visitation chairman, there are times when you might detect the sound of futility. This does not necessarily mean these messages and pleadings fall on deaf ears, but it appears that too many laymen have the idea that "Evangelism George" should do it. Many laymen do not know how to present the Gospel "unto salvation." Many are shy when it comes to asking a person about the condition of his soul and then leading him to Christ for salvation.

No instructor would dare heap hours upon hours of classroom instruction upon a pilot and then tell him to go fly a plane. In addition to the instruction, the new pilot needs hours of *observing*, on-the-job training. He must have hours of instructional flying before having the courage and ability to fly alone.

This is also true in other fields of learning. It is particularly true in soul-winning. A laymen can have weeks and weeks of classroom instruction on soul-winning and still lack the know-how of leading a person to Christ

for salvation. To be really effective he must *see* how a person is led to Christ. There is no greater joy than seeing a person commit his life to Jesus for cleansing and eternal life.

Teaching laymen "the book know-how" of witnessing and then giving them on-the-job training is scriptural. Jesus had the disciples with Him. They *observed* the things He did and the way He conducted Himself. They listened as people from all walks of life were told about the way of eternal life. Many potential soul-winners would be outstanding witnesses if only someone would take time to let them observe.

"Would you like to be a soul-winner for the Lord?", no doubt the response would be overwhelming. It's not that people do not want to witness "unto salvation", but many are shy and lack courage when they think about failure or being turned down. Yet, it's not the soul-winner being turned down, but Jesus.

Of the many proven ways of winning souls, none of them stresses on-the-job training as emphatically as "Evangelism Explosion." Notice an example of its effectiveness: a church in Fort Lauderdale, Florida grew from 17 members to 2500 in just ten years. Proven! Effective! Accepted! We have to admit success in light of these figures.



The commission given in Matthew 28:19, 20 says, "Teaching them to *observe* all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . ." I don't think this scripture would be out of context if we took it also to mean that those who are being taught should not only *observe* the commandments of Jesus but also *observe* how others are taught the teachings of faith "unto salvation."

If a survey were taken in every Free Will Baptist church and laymen were asked, "How many souls have you won to the Lord in your life-time?", there would be very few who could respond that they had won one. But, on the other hand, if the question were asked,

MUSHROOMS INTO EXPLOSION

Where does "explosion" enter the picture?

If one person who has had the thrilling experience of winning souls were to train two more, and then each of them were to train two more, and on and on and on, it would mushroom into a vast explosion which could rock our churches to their foundations. They would come alive and prosper in the sight of God.

Visitation is a wonderful tool and can be very effective. But even this vital ministry presents a problem for some laymen. The same general rule applies here: let "Evangelism George" do it. When we visit and ask people to attend church, the percentage of results is relatively small. But if people were out winning people to the Lord in their homes, on the street corners, or wherever, then the number of visitors would increase because the joy of salvation would bring many to Sunday school and church. It should not be misunderstood that you would win everyone whom you present the Gospel to by this method. Someone has said that to win two souls, regardless of the

method, you will have to make twenty contacts.

COMMANDED AND WARNED

If you were to die tonight and stand before God and He asked, "Why should I let you into My heaven?", what would you answer? Remember the words of Jesus in Matthew 7: 21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven . . . many will say . . . have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?"

The potent warning in Ezekiel 33:7-9 needs to pierce our hearts too: if we do not warn the lost, we shall answer for it, but if we do and he still resists, we have delivered our own soul.

The command is for *all* to go – not just the pastors or "Evangelism George." Every man, woman, and child is required to witness to the lost.

Someone has said that it is as important to train laymen to witness as it is to win a soul. In times like these, it is most important that the lost be warned of the forthcoming judgment and how to get right with God.

There still may be some skepticism about lay evangelism and evangelism explosion. We recently read in the newspapers and heard on television about an explosion in a little town in Iowa. In just a short time everyone heard about it and took notice of the explosion. If there were an evangelism explosion in our churches, people would start wondering what it was all about. They would begin to take notice and start investigating the cause and effects of it. Unsaved visitors would increase and the Holy Spirit would move in their lives. Many would respond to His conviction.

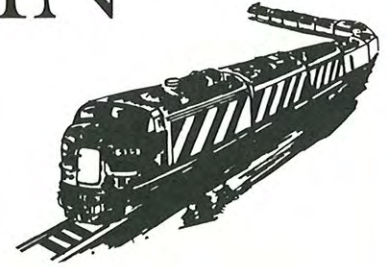
The Lord of the Harvest wants to give the increase, but He is waiting for us to sow the seed.

We Free Will Baptist laymen should unite today in sharing the good news that Jesus Christ saves. What a thrill to live in the day of evangelism explosion!

If you have information about your local Master's Men chapter that you wish to share or if you need additional information about the Master's Men organization, please write: Master's Men, P. O. Box 1088, Nashville, Tennessee 37202. ▲

September Promotional Campaign

TRAIN FOR CHRIST



TWO NATIONAL TRAINS TO BE BUILT



Passenger Train

Best Attendance Increase



Freight Train

Most Per Capita Contribution



CHURCH TRAINING SERVICE

OFFERING A PROGRAM OF TRAINING DESIGNED
TO EQUIP CHRISTIANS FOR MORE EFFECTIVE SERVICE
IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

P.O. Box 1088 / Nashville, Tennessee 37202

Additional Promotional Details on Page 11

Foreign Languages in the New Testament

By Dr. Robert Picirilli

In last month's column I pointed out some factors about Acts 2 that make it clear the original "tongues" at Pentecost were foreign languages. In this column I want to show why I think the same thing is true of the "tongues" referred to in 1 Corinthians 12-14.

To begin with, we are still dealing with the same Greek word as is used in Acts 2. That word is *glossa*, the normal word for a "language" in passages like Revelation 7:9. I would suggest that it is very helpful to read through 1 Corinthians 12-14 and substitute "language(s)" every time "tongue(s)" occurs. Such a reading alone will go a long way toward convincing most people that real languages are meant.

Next, it is also helpful to realize that the Greek word for "interpret" and "interpretation" is one which literally refers to the "translation" of one language into another. (Note 1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 14:5, 13, 26, 27, 28, etc.) The word is *hermeneia*, a word often used in the New Testament in this sense. In Hebrews 9:2, for example, the Hebrew name "Melchisedek" is *translated* into our language to mean "King of Righteousness". This is not some mystical "interpretation," but a simple translation. Compare John 9:7; Acts 9:36, etc.

So when one reads through 1 Corinthians 12-14, I suggest that he substitute "language" for "tongue," and "translate" for "interpret." After doing so, the reader may wonder why anyone ever thought of anything except foreign languages in the first place!

Furthermore, one should realize that the mysterious words "the unknown tongue" do not occur at all. In the first place, "unknown" isn't even there! The italics used (14:2, 4, 13, 14, 19, 27,

etc.) show that this word is not justified by the Greek original. In the second place, there is no "the." Throughout this chapter, the phrase "an unknown tongue" should simply be read as "a language." I personally have no doubt the phrase means to speak in a language not understood either by the speaker or the hearers, some foreign language they cannot speak.

gems

from the
Greek New Testament

Next, it is also significant that the *plural* of this word occurs several times throughout these chapters. In 12:10, for example, it is not some mysterious "unknown tongue" that is mentioned, but *languages*. So too is 12:28, 30; 14:5, 6, 18, 21, 22, 23, etc. The plural is important because it makes it clear that more than one different language is involved, not a single "ecstatic tongue."

Finally, take special note of 1 Corinthians 14:21, 22, where Paul uses an Old Testament reference as a basis for a conclusion he states about the "tongues." There just is not any doubt that verse 21 speaks about people who spoke human languages foreign to the Jews; and Paul puts the gift of "tongues" in the same category in verse 22.

Taken all together, I am firmly convinced the gift of tongues given in the apostolic age was the sudden and miraculous ability to speak in some foreign language not already learned by the speaker. I also am personally convinced that the modern "pentecostals" are not speaking in foreign languages, and therefore are not manifesting the original, Biblical "gift of tongues." ▲



by
Executive Secretary
Rufus Coffey

Denominationalism means many things to various people. To some it means the narrow, dissenting beliefs of bigoted sectarians. To another it means the dictatorial rule of an ecclesiastical hierarchy which insists upon conformity. Others think of a denomination as an ill-conceived human organization which is operated by administrators who generally disregard the wishes of the people they serve.

To be sure, some church bodies have drifted from their originally conceived purpose. Consequently, some have reacted to being identified with some particular religious group. However, there is no need to throw the baby out with the bath water.

A denomination is the name or title which designates the beliefs or characteristics of a particular group. It denotes the devotion of a class or society of individuals to basic principles and common interests.

Oftentimes the name stems from an attempt to ridicule those individuals which embrace certain doctrines or practices. Such was the case with the Methodist which derived their name from those who were so "methodical" in their devotion to Christ. Likewise, "Free-willers" was a derogatory term used to describe our Free Will Baptist forefathers who taught free will, free grace and free salvation as opposed to Calvinistic teachings.

IS DENOMINATIONALISM A SIN?

Mark of Identification

In spite of certain castigations, a denomination serves a useful purpose. It readily identifies those who belong to a particular religious organization. While we could wish there were less diverse views, yet it is a great help to distinguish those who hold different doctrinal positions. For instance, it is advantageous to know that those Christians who profess to speak in tongues have been traditionally known as "Pentecostals." This identification specifies what the adherents believe.

As a denomination, the National Association of Free Will Baptists denotes that we are a fellowship of churches which hold to certain prescribed views of God's Word. Our churches have voluntarily affiliated with the national body in order to strengthen the bond of spiritual fellowship, render mutual service, develop a united testimony and unite our efforts to carry out the Great Commission.

Our denomination is bound together in mutual love, oneness of spirit and a unity of conviction and purpose. This unity is manifest in a working relationship on the district, state and national levels. Above all, our unity is based upon loyalty to Christ as the sovereign head of the church and devotion to His Word which is our rule of faith and practice.

Independent, Yet Interdependent

Each local congregation is an autonomous unit. It is free to determine its membership and government. No church has a right to interfere in the affairs of another. All decisions of a local church are final. No higher authority can reverse, alter or coerce a church to change its position. All

churches are equal because there are no varying levels of superiority or inferiority. The principle of autonomy places each church directly under the lordship of Christ, the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the teachings of the Scriptures.

While maintaining the conviction that each church is independent to conduct its affairs, we also recognize that as members of the body of Christ we are members one of the other. Because we are related to Christ we are linked to one another. We are members of one particular body. Each separate part constitutes a unity, but each member is an integral part which is knitted to the other. Thus all believers are interdependent and interrelated to one another through the fellowship of the church.

New Testament churches felt the need for mutual aid as they faced adversity and persecution. When doctrinal aberrations developed they met in conference at Jerusalem to clarify their differences. Also, it is evident that the early church felt a close kinship. They were drawn together with a sense of interdependency and cooperation. They exemplified their cooperative endeavors by combining their contributions to send relief to the Jerusalem churches and to support Paul's missionary labors. There is no indication that one church attempted to

dictate or control the other. We conclude, therefore, that churches of like faith and order ought to work together in a spirit of cooperation.

Framework for Cooperation

A denomination provides the framework for a concerted effort to know and do the will of God in a harmonious, orderly and efficient manner. The will of God can be discovered and followed in a corporate manner as we seek mutual counsel and correction. The National Association enables each church to do collectively what they could not do independently.

The shortcomings of those who adhere to a strictly independent philosophy is that they misunderstand true Biblical principles of separation and they fail to emphasize the community or family nature of the Church. The local church is not an island unto itself; it is an intercontinental entity with a universal mission. This mission can be accomplished best through cooperation with other churches.

Our denomination is in the strictest sense a voluntary association whereby our resources and energies are combined into a specific plan of outreach to the world. As such, it is not a sin for churches to work together and cooperate to extend its witness to the ends of the earth. It is noble and Christ-honoring. ▲

VIEWPOINT

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NOTES
from the Editor

Eugene Workman

What do you know about the exceptional child?

A lot, probably, if the Lord has in His divine providence given such a child to be a part of your family.

But the average person knows very little about the exceptional child. Most parents assume that the child who is unlike other children will not be born into their family but to the family down the street, across town or in some other state. The realization that their child could be abnormal usually does not hit a parent until he is faced with the situation.

What does a parent do when he comes to this realization?

In an effort to show that a family can continue to exist and function as a unit after the birth of an exceptional child, two contributors share personal experiences.

Shirley Thomas, in her touching story, relates the traumatic experience that occurred in her life after the birth of her Mongoloid son and how her family has adjusted to everyday living.

Christine Leichner affirms that her sister, Twila, continues to make a positive difference in the entire Jack Ledbetter family.

The third feature is authored by a husband-wife team who has acquired much knowledge about the child who is mentally handicapped — not only from the theoretical but also from the practical standpoint. Richard and Lurlie Howard share some personal insights in an effort to stir a concern in churches to reach the exceptional child where the existing programs do not include a ministry to this worthy group. The heartbeats of their article asks if the "every creature" of the Great Commission as given by Mark includes the deaf, blind, crippled and retarded.

Contents

JULY, 1973



Jon Thomas
 (Story on page 2)

From Bitterness to Blessing	2	Shirley Thomas
The Incomplete Church Circle	4	Lurlie and Richard Howard
What a Difference Twila Makes!	8	Christine Leichner
I Have a Child in My Keeping	9	Evelyn Keller
Free Will Baptist Newsfront	10	Staff
I Believe in Miracles	12	Hughes Ellis
Presenting the Gospel to Children — Part Two	14	Leroy Forlines
Notes from a Rare Volume	14	Dr. Robert Picirilli
When God Pushes You into a Corner	15	Kathleen Perry
What's Your Problem?	15	R. Eugene Waddell
When Lay Evangelism Becomes Explosive	16	Ken Lane
Foreign Languages in the New Testament	18	Dr. Robert Picirilli
Is Denominationalism A Sin?	19	Rufus Coffey
Notes from the Editor	20	Eugene Workman

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