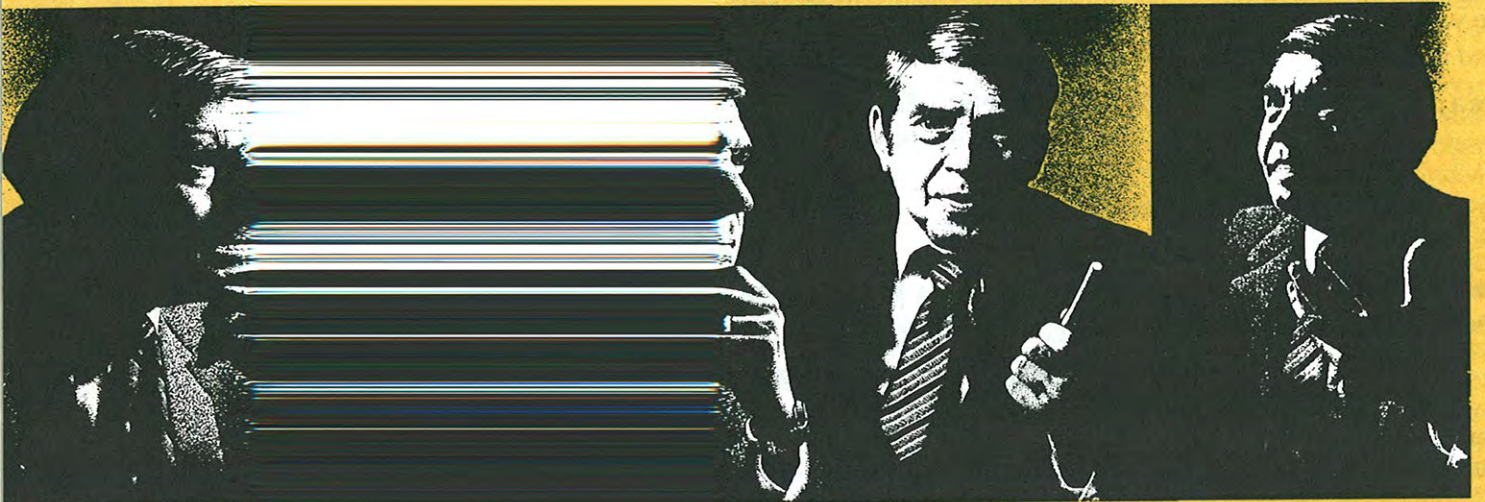


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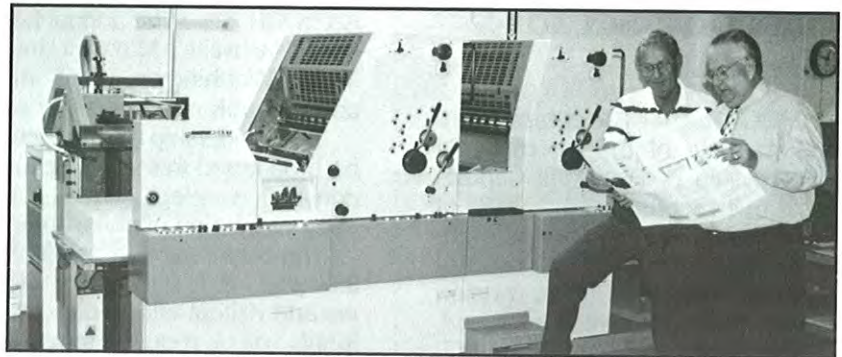
## Randall House Upgrades Equipment

NASHVILLE, TN—After two weeks of intensive staff training and a week-long installation by technicians, Randall House Publications began printing on their new \$180,000 two-color Omni-Adast Perfecto press.

The 10-foot long press weighs eight tons and stands 5 ½ feet tall.



Angela Duke and Alton Loveless approve layout for new cover.



Printing productions manager Delbert Wood (L) and general director Alton Loveless examine Omni-Adast Perfecto press.

"The press will double our impression time," said Delbert Wood, manager of the printing production department.

The press has the ability to print two colors on one side or one color simultaneously on both sides. "This will improve printing productivity and allow us to add additional color to our products," said Alton Loveless, general director.

In addition to the new press, the graphic arts department purchased the latest PC PowerMac which will assist in producing better student and teacher manuals.

Dr. Loveless said, "The equip-

ment upgrades our graphics, layout and art capability, and will allow us to bring some print jobs back in-house."

Loveless continued, "I want our literature to be biblically sound with as much color and teacher helps as any other publisher. This is why we need these equipment changes. All publishers have a theological agenda and so do we! Ours is to promote Free Will Baptist doctrine. It will take some time for our material to arrive at where I want it to be. So, please pray for us."

## New Hymn Book Off the Press

NASHVILLE, TN—The newly-revised *Rejoice: The Free Will Baptist Hymn Book* is off the press and ready for shipping, according to Alton Loveless, general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department. The hymn book is exactly like the original 1988 version (page numbers and songs did not change), but with numerous corrections in the new printing.

The new printing will be easier to handle and will fit better in pew racks, Loveless said. It is one-quarter inch thinner and weighs less.

The pew edition sells for \$12.98 and is available in sky blue, spring green and cardinal red. All colors are available in round or shape notes. The loose-leaf edition, available in each of the three colors and in round or shape

notes, sells for \$24.98.

Already hundreds of these hymnals have been shipped, and Randall House advises that the interest in this book has been greater than many of the previous books they have sold. The hymnal contains more than 600

songs.

Call or write Randall House at P. O. Box 17306, Nashville, Tennessee 37217, 1-800-877-7030 to place an order. Church names can be imprinted on the hymn book for \$2.50 for first book and .75 cents for each book thereafter.



Dr. Alton Loveless leans on skids of the new Free Will Baptist hymn book.

## Fry Celebrates 40 Years in Ministry



Alton Loveless (L) presents plaque to Dr. Fry.

NASHVILLE, TN—Dr. Malcolm C. Fry, editor-in-chief at Randall House Publications, marked 40 years as an ordained Free Will Baptist minister on July 30. His extensive career includes 22 years of pastoral ministry in five states as well as being an oft-published author, musician and recording artist.

Before the 1978 merger with the Sunday School Department, Dr. Fry served as general director of the Church Training Department. He has given 18 years to the denomination with the Sunday School and Church Training Departments.

He currently pastors Goodlettsville FWB Church near Nashville. Dr. Fry is a veteran who served seven years in the United States Armed Forces.

He and his late wife, Mae, were home missionaries in Tucson, Arizona, for seven years.

Dr. Alton Loveless, general director of the Sunday School and Church Training Department, presented a plaque of appreciation to Brother Fry during a luncheon in his honor.

# THE TOGETHER WAY

July 1995

### RECEIPTS:

State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	July '94	Yr. To Date
Alabama	\$ 6,216.65	\$ .00	\$ 6,216.65	\$ 7,372.94	\$ 68,818.83
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	973.71	2,937.53
Arkansas	20,343.41	15,905.63	36,249.04	36,391.52	207,816.35
California	.00	907.59	907.59	1,886.83	4,854.73
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	50.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	10.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	3,281.43	18,096.12
Georgia	12,341.25	1,082.92	13,424.17	10,773.92	102,500.90
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	13,719.96	2,698.57	16,418.53	10,955.70	87,419.81
Indiana	574.88	279.28	854.16	1,458.38	6,222.68
Iowa	40.00	.00	40.00	.00	40.00
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	292.30	359.95
Kentucky	757.00	286.87	1,043.87	1,225.08	4,949.69
Louisiana	.00	10.00	10.00	515.00	70.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	1,007.13	2,102.87
Michigan	8,426.36	2,200.15	10,626.51	7,523.63	93,466.13
Mississippi	270.36	203.29	473.65	876.35	3,614.39
Missouri	10,561.38	.00	10,561.38	11,845.17	83,581.77
Montana	.00	.00	.00	50.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	249.48	19.74	269.22	41.88	2,946.70
North Carolina	479.98	1,777.94	2,257.92	2,883.95	13,667.40
Ohio	3,333.44	1,911.72	5,245.16	5,803.76	59,033.29
Oklahoma	50,435.37	.00	50,435.37	53,579.46	372,655.31
South Carolina	18,167.85	129.90	18,297.75	17,252.63	165,430.20
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	175.00	.00
Tennessee	994.40	2,702.31	3,696.71	16,612.70	62,560.15
Texas	6,231.28	410.93	6,642.21	338.00	64,986.35
Virginia	.00	.00	.00	3,413.86	8,738.68
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	3,145.53	34.36	3,179.89	5,885.36	36,537.52
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	6.00	.00
Canada	.00	.00	.00	47.00	.00
Northwest Association	.00	.00	.00	.00	114.29
Northeast Association	.00	.00	.00	225.00	.00
Other	.00	.06	.06	.08	.08
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$156,288.58</b>	<b>\$30,561.26</b>	<b>\$186,849.84</b>	<b>\$202,753.77</b>	<b>\$1,473,521.72</b>

### DISBURSEMENTS:

Executive Office	\$ 8,266.40	\$18,336.71	\$ 26,603.11	\$ 27,201.72	\$ 195,037.18
Foreign Missions	89,283.56	2,811.63	92,095.19	90,537.98	761,778.66
FWBBC	10,078.18	2,811.63	12,889.81	8,975.98	109,761.26
Home Missions	40,385.15	2,200.42	42,585.57	30,214.86	322,137.37
Retirement & Insurance	717.81	1,711.44	2,429.25	1,761.79	17,722.37
Master's Men	3,344.17	1,711.44	5,055.61	2,581.98	25,308.04
Commission for Theo. Integrity	93.54	61.13	154.67	149.79	1,186.68
FWB Foundation	718.68	733.47	1,452.15	1,094.61	10,900.05
Historical Commission	83.09	61.13	144.22	127.30	1,108.90
Music Commission	68.97	61.13	130.10	104.14	994.48
Radio & TV Commission	79.45	61.13	140.58	124.16	1,067.62
Hillsdale FWB College	1,170.53	.00	1,170.53	1,017.75	9,058.29
Other	1,999.05	.00	1,999.05	38,861.71	17,460.82
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$156,288.58</b>	<b>\$30,561.26</b>	<b>\$186,849.84</b>	<b>\$202,753.77</b>	<b>\$1,473,521.72</b>

The **Oklahoma** Christian Education Board reported 628 participants in their summer camping program. Camp administrator **Junior Phillips** said that 23 salvation decisions, 16 rededications and 32 other decisions punctuated the camping experiences.

The Fall Pastors' Retreat in **Alabama** meets October 16-18 and features two speakers: **William Evans**, director of the Board of Retirement, and **Dan Ireland**, executive director of Alabama's Citizens Action Program. Promotional Secretary **Richard Cordell** said the retreat will meet at Trinity FWB Camp near Guin.

**Rick Cash** became the first full-time director at **Trinity FWB Camp** (Alabama) on August 15. Camp programs will be extended year-round to accommodate growing needs for churches, ministers and other groups.

Pastor **Loy Counts** reports six conversions, eight baptisms and nine new members at **Rogers FWB Church** in **Rogers, AR**.

The congregation at **Ebenezer FWB Church** in **Glennville, GA**, broke attendance records with 157 present, according to Pastor **Larry Powell**.

Home missionary **George Harvey, Jr.** said that attendance increased after the **North Valley FWB Church** in **Phoenix, AZ**, began a building program. That increase includes the baptism of **Bill and Judy Stuart**. Bill was an alcoholic, but Pastor Harvey said, "God changed that."

There's good news from **Calvary FWB Church** in **Springdale, AR**, according to Pastor **Clark Snow**. The church reports five conversions, seven baptisms and 34 new members.

The congregation at **Farmer FWB Church** in **Hindsville, AR**, celebrated 50 years of service in their community, according to Pastor **Roy Haffelder**. The church's first pastor, Reverend **Cecil Garrison**, returned to preach during the morning service.

**Michigan's Fellowship Association** forwarded a request from Kirby FWB Church in Ypsilanti that the following statement be printed in *Contact*: "We regret to inform you that Michael Dwayne Aldridge is no longer recognized

as an ordained minister of the gospel at Kirby Free Will Baptist Church or in our Free Will Baptist denomination, due to moral sin in his life. We have revoked his ordination credentials, with all the rights and privileges thereof."

Members of **North Memphis FWB Church** in **Memphis, TN**, think they may have done a first. The West Tennessee congregation gave Pastor **David Burgess** a notepad computer for his birthday. They're happy. He's all smiles.

Pastor **Dale McCoy** preached the dedication sermon at **Canaan FWB Church** in **Lancaster, SC**, when members moved into their new 263-seat sanctuary. The \$280,000 facility was completed in six months. While they were in a building mood, members also installed a new public address system, steeple and erected a sign. They also paved 67 parking spaces and purchased a 15-passenger Dodge van.

The **Laurens FWB Church** in South Carolina not only relocated into a new building, they also changed their name. The congregation bought 15 acres south of Laurens, built a 200-seat sanctuary, eight classrooms and a social hall. They're now known as **New Horizon FWB Church** with an **Enoree, SC**, address. Pastor **Jack Elders** preaches over a \$9,000 public address system.

Seven years after **Cornerstone FWB Church** in **Whiteville, NC**, organized with 43 people, members burned the mortgage. Pastor **Steward Norris** said that 125 regularly attend now.

**Maranatha Christian School** principal **Dale Edwards** said that the school's faculty, staff and students raised more than \$1,300 for Free Will Baptist missions. The four- and five-year-old kindergarten classes recently gave \$150 to purchase Tupperware items for the WNAC Provision Closet. The school is a ministry of **First FWB Church** in **Florence, SC**. **Mike Creech**, pastors.

If you've ever wondered if a Free Will Baptist church could give an offering so heavy a preacher could not lift it, the answer is "yes." It happened at **Mt. Elon FWB Church** in **Pamplico, SC**, during VBS. The boys and girls raised nearly \$325

in coins. The trash bags containing the money were so heavy that Promotional Director **Norwood Gibson** could not carry them because of health conditions. Missionary **Mark Barber** got the money. **Robert Rose** pastors the heavy givers.

Oops! The reason some *Contact* readers can no longer locate **Evangelist John Gibbs** at the address listed in the *1995 FWB Yearbook* is because he moved. At press time, Brother Gibbs reported his new address as: P.O. Box 2527, Hendersonville, TN 37077-2527. Phone 615-264-7111.

Fifty people attended the 36th meeting of the **Northeast Association** of Free Will Baptists, June 30-July 1. The group met at Linneus FWB Church in Houlton, ME. Moderator **Jim Nason** presided. The gathering included four ministers and five deacons.

Did you know that some Free Will Baptists observe Christmas in June? Members of **Cross Roads FWB Church** in **Billings, MT**, set a \$100 goal for their "Christmas in June" missions service. Pastor **Ron Palmer** said the group raised \$185 for the Home and Foreign Missions Departments.

Members of **First FWB Church** in **Weatherford, TX**, threw a surprise birthday party for their octogenarian pastor, **Owen Barger**. But the party was not the surprise. That came when members told Brother Barger that he could stay on as pastor as long as he wanted to. Must be nice to be the kind of preacher that people trust and love that much.

**Buncombe FWB Church** near **Carthage, TX**, had eight members when **Ken Austin** was called as pastor. They now average 30 in attendance and have remodeled their fellowship hall.

Missionaries **Ernest and Elaine Holland** report that 61 people observed the Lord's Supper and feet washing on Sunday night, May 7, at the Free Will Baptist Church in **Bondoukou, Cote d'Ivoire, West Africa**. Twenty-five participated for the first time. ■

WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST



## Woman's Window on the World

By Mary R. Wisehart

### From My Window

She shocked us. As far as we knew she had no big problems, no serious illness, no complaints. Yet she went to bed Thursday evening and didn't awaken Friday.

My friend Frances. Warm memories. Cornbread and beans and crocheted gifts. Place mats designed especially for me. And roses. She could take a rose from a bouquet, plant it and make it grow and bloom. I see her smile, I hear her laugh. (She loved to laugh.) Her presence in Sunday School class. A hug, a word of encouragement. I'll miss her.

What would she have done Thursday if she knew that she would not awaken Friday? What would I have said when I saw her Sunday if I had known?

The shock of her death reminds us.

Life is so fragile. In one minute, one second, the silver cord may break. And death seems so final for those of us remaining. All the things we intended to say, to do, all the moments we intended to share, the things we wanted to give—too late.

The beautiful part is that Frances was ready. The coroner says she died without a struggle. Her hands were open, resting on the pillow as though she slept. She fell asleep and awakened in the presence of her Lord.

### WNAC Observes Week of Prayer

WNAC participates in the Together Way Plan in November with a week of prayer and a special offering for Home Missions.

Women may check the November/December issue of *Co-Laborer* for a prayer guide, a program and a list of materials available from the Home Missions office.

Through the years women have given to Home Missions in honor of Mrs. Lizzie McAdams, one of the first officers of WNAC and one of Free Will Baptists' first home missionaries.

In 1994 women gave \$82,184.68 to Home Missions. A survey of reports from 1936 to 1994 shows that women have given \$1,199,347.65 to Home Missions. They also gave goods to the Provision Closet, which home missionaries share, valued at \$506,288.24 from 1968 to 1994.

The first priority is prayer for the missionaries, national office workers, and for Free Will Baptists to catch the vision, support and work to spread the light in the USA.

### Co-Laborer Price Increases

For the first time since the *Co-Laborer* magazine was redesigned in 1987, the subscription price goes up in 1996.

*Co-Laborer* is the Free Will Baptist magazine for women. The magazine has suggestions for programs, helpful articles, book reviews, news of WNAC, news from missionaries and news from women's groups across the country. Columns include "Words for Women" and a page for teens.

The 1996 prices are \$6.75 for the six annual issues to single subscribers and \$6 each for bundles of five or more to the same address. The magazine is still a bargain.

Requests for sample copies or subscriptions may be sent to WNAC, P. O. Box 5002, Antioch, Tennessee 37011-5002. ■

*Women Nationally Active for Christ*  
**Western Retreat**  
 Glorieta, New Mexico  
 October 20-22, 1995



**Theme:**  
 On the Trail with Him  
**Scripture:**  
 Psalm 37:23



## *The Elderly in The Church*

By D. Ray Lewis

Many of us believe the myth that one day a little switch will be thrown and suddenly there will be nothing for us to do, no place in the church to serve. At a certain age we will step aside and let someone else teach that class, serve on that board or committee, let the younger, better-trained voices sing in the choir.

The church affirms this misconception, smoothing it over by assuring aging adults that they deserve a rest.

In a sense, the term "benchwarmers" describes older adults in our churches. Benchwarmer is a sportsman's term for players who do not participate in the game but sit on the bench and wait to substitute for the better players. The benchwarmer plays a lonely role, watching the game, excluded from an active part.

The church often forces aging adults into such a role. Church leaders inadvertently exclude older persons from places of active service, accepting the mythical assumption that older adults would rather watch than work. Younger people assume positions of leadership in the church and older adults move to the sidelines.

At times retirees feel cut off from God's people. Churches offer youth programs, VBS for neighborhood children, and a nursery for babies. But the elderly are largely ignored by the growth-minded congregations; yet they make up the fastest growing age group in America.

Is old age a wasteland for the Christian? Is it a time to stagnate while waiting to die? Is it years of idleness, a time for playing games, watching TV, dutifully but unenthusiastically attending church, passing the time in boredom?

God sees old age differently. The Bible presents several beautiful pictures of older persons who lived productive lives of faith. In the promised land, Caleb asked for a well-fortified mountain. At 85 he was as strong for battle as he had been 45 years earlier when he helped spy out the promised land (Joshua 14:6-12).

Moses died at 120, but "his eye was not dim nor his natural force abated" (Deut. 34:7). At about 90, John, banned to the isle of Patmos, recorded the great book of Revelation.

It's evident from the way God used older saints in the past that He sees them as special,

capable people. His Word teaches the principle that older persons deserve honor, respect and recognition. "You shall rise before the grey headed and honor the presence of an old man, and fear your God: I am the Lord" (Lev. 19:32).

If God makes older people special, what should churches do with and for aging adults? The church cannot meet its obligation by taking food baskets to a few older saints at Thanksgiving or by singing Christmas carols at a nursing home.

In talking with several aging adults, I discovered one thing they all felt their churches could do—honor older members by putting them to work.

Older adults do not want to be put on a shelf. They want to be useful. A person's abilities do not automatically diminish as he grows older. An individual does not become someone else when growing older. That individual is the same gifted, resourceful person as before and can be among the most effective workers in our churches.

Scripture nowhere relieves a believer of his duties as a disciple when he retires. We need to help seniors discover their unique gifts and abilities. The church, with a little nudging, can motivate them to serve. As the untapped reservoir of talent and gifts is used, the church benefits and older persons feel needed.

However, aging adults seldom serve unless wise leaders invite and encourage them. Christians must not wait for organizations to pressure them into doing the loving thing which their faith should motivate them to do gladly. The overall church program takes on renewed vigor when the young and the old work together.

Every few years the White House calls for a conference on aging. Maybe we need to call for a conference on aging in our denomination. We must see old age as an experience close to us, not far removed from us. Whatever we do for the aging today, we do for ourselves tomorrow and for our grandchildren in the future. ■



## *Giving Away the Word*

**Anne France Pocreau**

In May of 1991, Misha—a 13-year-old Russian boy—came to St. Nazaire, France. He was part of a choir from Dubna, his hometown, situated 60 miles from Moscow. He stayed with our family for one week. During his stay, I asked missionary Tom McCullough if he could procure a Russian Bible that I could offer to Misha before his return to Russia.

### *A Bible Ordered*

Tom ordered a Bible through the nearest Christian bookstore in the city of Rennes. I prayed, but before the Bible arrived Misha had left with his choir and returned to his homeland. I didn't understand! I had prayed much about this and had felt certain that God was directing me to offer this Bible to Misha. Nonetheless, I rested assured that the will of God would be accomplished.

Several months later a young Russian sailor named André was admitted to the St. Nazaire hospital with a severe stomach-ache. Unfortunately, the French doctors diagnosed his problem as Leukemia. When I heard this, I retrieved the Russian Bible from our church and took it to a Russian woman named Vera. She is 62 years of age and has lived in France for a number of years. She immediately took the Bible to André in the hospital.

### *Helping With Travel*

The community choir, of which I am a part, learned of André's condition and took up a collection to fly his sister, Svetlana, from Russia to be at his bedside. On several occasions André was allowed to leave the hospital to spend a day or two at Vera's home. He took his Bible on each visit. Actually, he took his Bible everywhere he went!

I was able to visit him in the hospital and always took his sister with me. One day we discovered André had contracted an infection in his lungs. His condition was deteriorating rapidly.

The last time I went to visit the seaman, he wasn't in his room. They had taken him

to another part of the hospital for tests. When he returned to his room we looked at each other, both of us knowing that the struggle would soon be over.

### *The Lord Took Him*

On June 9 of this year I learned that André had died. The Lord had taken the 23-year-old to be with Him. At his funeral Svetlana read a portion of Scripture from the Bible I had given to her brother. She later returned to her country and hometown. She took with her New Testaments for the entire family.

From what seemed like a missed opportunity, the Lord opened doors for a much larger ministry than I had ever envisioned. When I had thought only of giving a Bible to that one young singer, God had intended all along that it should go to a sick sailor on the threshold of eternity. I am persuaded he is now in the presence of his Savior. God knew all along of the marvelous door of opportunity that would be opened for the distribution of Scriptures to reach the souls of searching sailors.

### *Bibles Given Regularly*

Since that time, New Testaments and Bibles have been given on a regular basis to countless numbers of sailors making port in St. Nazaire. Word must travel well on the Russian naval grapevine because now they come seeking the Bibles when their merchant ships arrive in port.

So large is the demand for Bibles that I am no longer able to afford all that I could give away. My husband is not a Christian and he has restricted my spending in this regard. Whenever I am able to put aside some money from what I save on groceries or from when my children miss a music lesson, I purchase more Bibles. But I thank the Lord that my church has also seen the potential of this ministry. Because of the financial assistance of the Free Will Baptist Church in St. Nazaire, Bibles and New Testaments are being read today all over the former Soviet Union. ■

*Anne France Pocreau is a member of the St. Nazaire FWB Church in France.*

# Christian Scripture

By David S. Dockery

(Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995, 257 pp., paperback, \$19.99)

**D**avid Dockery is vice-president for academic administration and dean of the School of Theology at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is the author of several previous books.

The subtitle of the book, "An Evangelical Perspective on Inspiration, Authority and Interpretation," outlines both the subject matter the author plans to discuss and the approach he intends to take.

The author recognizes, quite correctly in my view, that the inspiration, authority and interpretation of the Bible are closely inter-related subjects. Because the Bible is inspired, it has authority; because it is the Word of God, it must be interpreted with great care.

Dockery notes that the church today is divided on several important issues relating to the Bible. Part of that division is due simply to a lack of understanding about how the church has viewed the Bible throughout its history. All Bible-believing Christians affirm the inspiration of the scriptures, but many modern Christians

have little understanding of the process of inspiration.

The author examines what the Bible says about itself, what the church has always maintained about the Bible and the implications which modern Christians should draw from these affirmations. He recognizes the various kinds of literature found in the Bible and the creativity of the human authors.

At the same time, he argues that inspiration is plenary (meaning that all the Bible is inspired) and verbal (meaning that the work of the Spirit influenced the authors' choice of words).

The most useful section of the book confronts the truthfulness and authority of Scripture. Dockery affirms that the Bible is normative in the sense that it speaks with authority to men and women of every age.

It is truthful in the sense that it is completely trustworthy and reliable; it teaches truth and not error. He is not afraid to use the term "inerrancy," but he recognizes that the term must be properly defined. He presents an excellent discussion of what

inerrancy means and what it doesn't mean.

The material on the transmission and canonicity of the Bible should be read carefully by all pastors. It includes a discussion of the most important English translations.

The author gives a brief summary of the history of hermeneutics. He discusses some of the ways (both bad and good) that the church has interpreted the scriptures through the centuries. Because most modern Christians have little understanding of this important subject, we tend to repeat the same mistakes made by earlier generations.

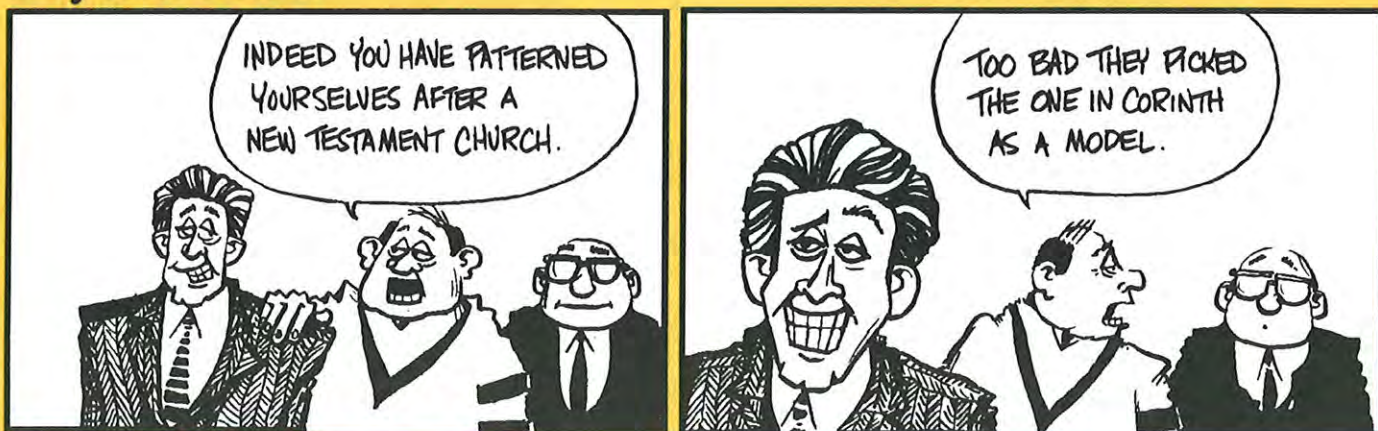
This book doesn't present much information that is new. Those who have read and studied the issues will find much that is familiar. It does, however, present a careful and thoughtful analysis of some of the most important subjects in modern Christianity.

Information is presented in a clear, concise and readable manner. It is an excellent book for the student or pastor who wishes to begin a serious study of the inspiration, authority and interpretation of the scriptures. ■



Thomas Marberry

## Beyond Belief







Jack Williams

## Tiger Jones and the Magic Wagon

**I**t happened north of Black Boar Canyon two days after lightning exploded a half-ton sandstone rock during the worst Arizona thunderstorm in 27 years. The lightning did more than break up the big rock; it also uncovered a four-inch wide vein of the purest gold west of Fort Knox. Before sundown Tiger Jones had parked his magic wagon under the only tree within 10 miles big enough to shade a man. By morning he had begun to create a legend that even P. T. Barnum would have admired.

When Arizona State Police asked why a painted carny wagon was parked on the Hopi Indian Reservation, the unflappable Mr. Jones promptly informed them that he was working with the tribal medicine man to assuage the offended spirit in the exploded sandstone rock. They believed him.

**At least they did** until Phoenix newspapers printed the story about a flim-flam man with a magic wagon. But that was five days later. Today, Tiger Jones was selling dreams.

His dream was two parts Bible, one part greed and the rest yellow corn meal. But in the dusk with gold fever high, even corn meal could pass as gold dust to men who'd never seen anything glitter except the morning sun.

**Tiger would have** gotten away with it, too, if Mingo Anderson had not stopped across the highway to buy gas. Mingo was a Free Will Baptist preacher with enough curiosity to kill most cats. The year was 1946. Tiger Jones was about to meet his match, for if there was one thing Mingo didn't like, it was slick-talking con artists wrapping some scheme in a Bible verse and trying to palm it off as a modern-day miracle.

That the four-inch wide gold vein belonged to the Hopi tribe concerned Tiger Jones not at all. Tiger had a way of assuming that anything not locked in a vault belonged to him if he could haul it off, sell it or cheat the rightful owners of it.

That preacher saw through Tiger's scheme in two heartbeats. Tiger was about to sell his 23rd sack of "gold dust" when an angry male voice boomed: "A fool and his money are soon parted."

Mingo's first words threw down the gauntlet, so to speak. Tiger reacted like a cornered animal—hissing loudly and baring his claws.

**He swung around** to face his accuser, eyes red and voice snapping like a bullwhip. "The last man who called me a cheat got carried away in an ambulance. Now just who are you, my belligerent friend?"

That was a mistake. Mingo Anderson had spent February and March of 1945 on Iwo Jima with the Fourth Marine Division. He lived through banzai charges, hand-to-hand combat and sniper fire. Tiger Jones found himself staring into a pair of cold eyes that knew death. Those dark eyes riveted him to the side of his painted wagon.

For a long half-minute nobody said a word. Something about those penetrating dark eyes set off alarm bells in Tiger's mind. He almost packed it in right there, but then he made his second mistake. He noticed the bronze cross on Mingo's lapel and sneered, "No dumb Bible thumper's gonna horn in on my business. Buzz off, you stupid jerk."

**A rough fist the size** of a cantaloupe closed around the startled con man's throat. Tiger had no idea that a man could move that fast. The next sound he heard came from a gravel-voiced preacher who told him

something he never forgot.

"I'm not a jerk. I'm not stupid. I'm not a Bible thumper. What I am is an American, a Christian and a gentleman. If I weren't the last two of those, you'd be dead right now. A year ago I hauled a flame thrower up Mt. Suribachi and killed a dozen men. I don't carry a flame thrower anymore, but I'd like to hang you over the fires of Hell until God burns the devil out of you."

Things got suddenly quiet in the hot Arizona sun. Nobody had ever explained the Bible to Tiger Jones just that way before. Tiger gulped. He gulped again and his Adam's apple bounced off that hard fist at his throat. Then the moment passed.

**The preacher turned** without another word and walked back to his car. Tiger Jones sold his magic wagon the next day. Two weeks later Mingo Anderson baptized seven converts in White River—an 8-year-old boy, a young married couple, three teenagers and a man who kept mumbling about a flame thrower.

**What you just read** is not all true. But it's not all fiction, either. After I heard the story, I agreed to change it enough so that some people would not recognize other people. I did my best.

Mingo Anderson (not his real name) retired after 47 years in the ministry. Tiger Jones (not his real name) died in 1989, a respected and wealthy businessman.

Some of you reading this know Mingo Anderson. He was your pastor. And over the years, a lot of folks bought cars from Tiger Jones. Most of his customers never understood why Tiger was so kind to preachers or why he'd tell about meeting one of God's prophets on a magic wagon in the Arizona desert. ■

## CONTACT

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