

DECEMBER 1995

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS



.....
**Days Were
Accomplished**

.....
Music of Christmas

.....
God Wore Shoes

.....
**Have We Outgrown
Christmas?**

.....
Honor Him

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DECEMBER 1995

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Editor: Jack Williams
Editorial Assistant: Marilyn Pritchard
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SECRETARY SPEAKS

Honor Him

Christmas brings into focus, historically, the birth of Jesus Christ. While festivities often distort the real meaning of Christmas with commercial or shortsighted attitudes, believers can honor Christ with their lips and in their hearts.

Christians, as at no other time of the year, can make a difference by observing this season with reverence and rejoicing. We celebrate the fact that God sent His only begotten Son into this world to purchase eternal redemption for mankind.

Thoughts

We honor Him in our thoughts. In Philippians 4:8, Paul calls believers to a more noble thought life. We honor Christ by giving special attention to what we think. We must carefully guard our thoughts.

Talents

We honor Christ by the consistent use of our talents. God has gifted each of us for His work. While there is one body of believers, there are many members in that body, each gifted by the sovereign God for a particular ministry. We honor Christ by finding our place in His vineyard and using our talents for His glory.

Paul summarizes this truth in Romans 12:4-8. All individuals do not have the same amount of talent, but all have been given a measure of talent to be used for God's glory.

Tithe

We honor Christ by systematically and sacrificially giving our tithes. The best tangible way to measure the spiritual development of a Christian is to observe his giving pattern.

Proverbs implores readers to,

"Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine" (3:9-10).

Tithes and offerings remain the biblical way to support the work of God on this earth. While some may choose to use other methods which, over the long haul will not last or produce biblical stewardship, Free Will Baptists adhere to the biblical practice of tithes and offerings. The New Testament affirms the principles of giving (II Cor. 8-9).

Time

We honor Christ by the careful use of our time. We are admonished by Paul, "And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than we believed" (Romans 13:11).

In Ephesians 5:16, Paul tells his readers to redeem the time. We honor Christ by recognizing, redeeming and responding to the times.

Task

We honor Christ by faithfulness to our task. Each of us has an individual work to do. We must find, follow and finish the will of God. Paul declared that he had fought a good fight, kept the faith and finished his course. Honoring Christ means that we faithfully fulfill the task He has given us.

The Secretary's Schedule

- December 1-2** Convention Liaison Council
Las Vegas, Nevada
- December 4-5** Leadership Conference
Nashville, Tennessee
- December 7-8** Executive Committee Meeting



Melvin Worthington

Testimony

We honor the Lord by having a humble, honest and holy testimony. The only Bible some people ever read is the life of Christians in their midst. Paul challenged his readers on several occasions to remember his manner of living.

The testimony of every Christian should be blameless. Holiness, humility, honesty and helpfulness should be the hallmark of Christians, not just at Christmas but all the time.

Treasures

We honor the Lord by the way we use our treasures. When we give tithes and offerings to the Lord, we still have money left. The use of our remaining money should reflect our relationship to our heavenly Father. We should use it for His glory. The right use of our financial resources, our treasures, will bring honor to the Lord.

Trust

We honor the Lord by faithfulness to our trust. We have been given the responsibility of honoring and glorifying the Lord. We should be faithful to that trust. We have been entrusted with the Gospel. We should be faithful stewards of the Gospel and the grace of God.

During this Christmas season, we should hear, heed, hold, herald and honor Him. We should rejoice and give thanksgiving to God for His unspeakable gift, His only begotten son, the Lord Jesus Christ. That's the best gift we can give God. It's time for us all to wrap ourselves in humility and place ourselves at His feet for service to Him and others. ■

How three great civilizations blended at the crossroads of time.

The Days Were Accomplished

By L.C. Johnson

Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem where they had come with many others to pay taxes to the Roman government. The days were fulfilled and Mary became a mother as she and Joseph found lodging among the cattle and other animals of the barn. Little did the world realize this to be the crowning event of history and that all other events were important only as they contributed to the preparation of this one.

The past centuries of war and strife, the rise and fall of kings and empires, the prophecies of the prophets, the philosophies of the philosophers all added their part to the fact that "the days were accomplished."

The words of the title taken from Luke 2:6 refer to the laws which governed the birth of Mary's first son—Jesus. But as we look at the condition of the world at the time, we realize that not only were the days accomplished in which Mary should be delivered of her child, but the days were also fully accomplished from a political, cultural and religious standpoint.

God's great plan for the ages was fully accomplished up to this point.

Jesus must be born; the laws of nature working in Mary must not fail; the days must be accomplished lest

God's economy fail in its purpose.

The process of preparation has been long in making. Since the day God said to the serpent in Genesis 3:15 that He would "put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head and thou shalt bruise his head," He had been working out through human instrumentalities the preparation for the advent of His Son.

Look at some of the immediate events that had much to do with making this the day of "the fulness of time" (Gal. 4:4).

The events might be listed under the names of three great civilizations of that day—the Roman, the Grecian and the Jewish. We mostly think of Rome as being the one-world power of that day.

It is true that Roman armies had conquered on every battle field. Her word was final authority in all matters. Yet, there were elements of her

civilization

that were so distinctly Greek and Jewish that they might be considered world powers in their respective fields.

Hence the three worlds: the political world in which Rome was supreme, the world of culture and philosophy in which Greece ruled, and the religious world in which the Jews came first.

The Political World

Rome had conquered and her iron hand was resting upon the peoples of the world when Jesus was born. The Jews, like all other nations around the Mediterranean, were under her rule. Rome did not interfere with local customs and allowed the high priest and Sanhedrin large powers in local government. Still, the Roman procurator maintained his supremacy.

Rome gathered heavy taxes from the subdued peoples. It was a Roman census order that brought Jesus to be born at Bethlehem. It was a Roman ruler who sentenced Him to death, and Roman soldiers nailed Him to the cross.



While treasures flowed to Rome, the poor in these lands suffered unmercifully. The Gospel records show us many of these poverty-stricken, sickly, needy people on every hand asking mercy from the great Teacher and Healer.

World Unity

Yet Rome also brought her gifts to the world. The first of these was world unity. Rome had completed the work begun by Alexander; she made one world of all the nations of the West. She broke down all barriers and opened wide the doors so that the life and thought of all the peoples might mingle around this inland sea.

The Jews were extremely nationalistic and could see or think of no blessing except as it applied to their nation. With the world living so close together and all living under the same rule and law, and in a great degree speaking the same language, it was natural that their interest in other peoples might grow. It was necessary for the Jews to have this world-vision if they were to be propagators of Christianity.

It is significant that the outstanding leader who stood for this world-view of the Gospel was himself a free-born Roman citizen and proud of this distinction. Paul's Roman citizenship helped him to his imperial view of Christianity.

World Peace

The second gift that Rome gave to the world at this time was world peace. In 30 B.C., just thirty years before Christ, Octavian with his armies had subdued the last of Rome's enemies.

Under Pompey, her galleys had cleared the Mediterranean of pirates and made possible free and unmo- lested travel on the seas. Her roads ran everywhere to carry her legions and her trade. She had brought in a new day of traffic and travel. We can hardly imagine the extension of Christianity throughout the empire without this contribution of Rome.

Culture and Philosophy

If Rome made the political contri-

bution of world unity and world peace, it is equally true that Greece made her contribution toward a universal language and culture.

Rome had opened the way to travel on land and sea. Greece had opened the way for the human mind, and one was as important as the other.

Alexander had carried the Greek language and culture everywhere. It was his ambition to hellenize the world. Rome had conquered Greece and in great measure had been conquered by her culture, philosophy and language. Greek had become a universal language. It is hard to estimate the value of this contribution of Greece to the spread of Christianity.

When we think of the time missionaries must spend in learning a language, we catch some idea of what it meant to Paul to be able to sit down and write a letter to Christians in Galatia or Corinth or distant Rome. Or when he moved through Syria, Cilicia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia, Italy, to be able to speak the one language that could be understood in all these places.

Greek philosophy as developed by men like Plato and Aristotle had caused men to turn their attention to the unseen realities of life. Even though they did not know the nature of these unseen realities and did not give personality to them, yet it paved the way for Jesus to manifest the reality of the divine with His personality.

The Apostle John could declare "in the beginning was the Word—and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . ." (John 1:1,14).

Historians tell us that Greek philosophy made its nearest approach to Christianity in these philosophers. Newman in his *A Manual for Church History* says, "The possibilities of uninspired human mind in speculative reasoning were well-nigh exhausted by such thinkers as Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Zeno."

All this had a part in preparing the world for the Logos who came when the "days were accomplished."

The Religious World

As we think of the Jews and their religion, we are apt to think of the

bigotry and selfishness of the people and all the defects of their religious system. It is true that that which should have been a blessed fellowship between Jehovah and His people had deteriorated into a system of rules and regulations which robbed it of its spirit.

However, these were the people who had maintained faith on the earth. Their long night of persecution had led them to cry out for deliverance which they expected with the coming of their Messiah.

Their cry had been, "Watchman, what of the night?" In anticipation of the coming King, Zechariah sounded what might be termed the central note of their hope when he said, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion, shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation: lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."

They were a scattered people without a home, without a leader, but not without hope. There were among the people of Israel those who "heard Him gladly." The time had come; the days were accomplished; Jesus came.

In Jesus of Nazareth was fulfilled "the hopes and fears of all the year" to all who had been looking for Him. It was only after the world had been made ready for the reception and propagation of His Gospel that the Divine-human Redeemer appeared.



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. L. C. Johnson is a retired Free Will Baptist minister who resides in Nashville, Tennessee. He served 34 years as president of Free Will Baptist Bible College.



The Music of Christmas

By Sue Patton



Think with me for awhile. You are alone, sitting in your most comfortable chair, eyes closed. The time is winter . . . cold . . . December . . . a few days left before Christmas. Just a little present to yourself, take a few moments and relax . . . catch your breath . . . so you can get up and go again.

As you close your eyes, your ears pick up the sound of bells. It's a commercial from a television down the hall in your son's room. Bells . . . bells . . . bells . . .



"I heard the bells on Christmas day their old familiar carols play, and wild and sweet the words repeat of peace on earth, good-will to men."

More bells peal out . . . *"Ring, O ring the bells, The merry bells of Christmas time, Toll, O toll the theme, So full of love and grace sublime."*

Pay attention closely as you . . .
"Listen to the bells, Listen to the bells, Driving care and sadness all away, Merry Christmas bells."



There, now. Don't you feel better already? You begin to relax and unwind as you start humming those songs that hold so many memories for you.

One of my memories of Christmas time is singing *"O Holy Night"* with my mother. This is still a tradition today. However, my mother is the listener and I am the singer. She has been diagnosed with a disease similar to Parkinson's. Mother has not spoken a word for months, but I know that one day she will walk through the gates of pearl singing praises to our Lord.

Another fond memory of mine is

listening to Christmas music during Thanksgiving holidays when we are on the road traveling to Grandmother's house (my husband's mother) in Texas. Although the drive is long, it has those good moments when we listen to all types of Christmas music.



One song in particular we make a point to listen to is a narration by Red Skelton titled *"The Littlest Christmas Tree."* It tells about Christmas behind the Iron Curtain and how people were not able to worship freely.

Isn't it amazing what God can do—for us to see that iron wall torn down and for Free Will Baptists to send Leroy and Fay Forlines as short-term missionaries to the Commonwealth of Independent States (formerly known as the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics). The Foreign

Missions Board has also approved sponsoring up to 15 other church planters in Russia and Ukraine.



As you recline a little more in that comfortable chair, stretch your muscles, yawn real big . . . pull the afghan closer to you . . . there's that music again. It's a commercial advertising Christmas CDs and cassettes. You hear a familiar voice singing the refrain of "I'll Be Home For Christmas."

There's something about *this song* that really touches me. It's a great feeling if you are where you want to be at Christmas. However, the Christmas that we had ice and were not home with my parents, hearing that song made me cry even more. I was singing, "I'll **not** be home for Christmas," between sobs and tears.

Coping with this type situation is hard for many people. In my case, I was blessed to be with my husband and son and not alone. However, many do not have families or close friends with whom to share the holiday season.



Music really does affect people in different ways. We should be more sensitive to the needs of others. Speaking of sensitivity or emotions, did you realize that Christmas music affects our worship services at church?

I was so proud of our church song director this year. For every service, Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday evening, he selected Christmas songs. And of course, the organist and I, as pianist, played Christmas music for preludes, offertories and postludes. Our church people were saturated with Christmas music.

I honestly believe it made a difference in our services. Hearts were sensitive to the Holy Spirit after singing, "Silent Night, Holy Night," preceding the message about the Most Holy One.

There are those bells again . . . ringing, ringing, ringing. Suddenly, it dawns on you . . .



"Ring the bells, ring the bells, Let the whole world know Christ the Savior lives today as He did so long ago!"

One of the best things about Christmas is the music. "Go, tell it on the mountains, over the hills and everywhere, Go tell it on the mountains that Jesus Christ is born!" You just realized that Christmas music tells a story, recalls memories, intensifies emotions and affects actions.

The door slams shut. The recliner folds back to the floor. Your husband just arrived home from work. "Hi, honey."

Your son comes out of the bedroom, "Hey, Mom."

Together they ask, "What's for supper?"

You answer quickly, "How about chestnuts roasting on a open fire . . . a turkey and . . . some mistletoe!" ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Sue Patton is office manager for Arkansas Free Will Baptists in Conway, Arkansas. She graduated from the University of Central Arkansas with a B.S.E. in business and music education. She is married and has one son. Sue is a member of Mt. Calvary Free Will Baptist Church.

Capital Stewardship/Victory Campaign September 1995 Update

| State | Goal | Gifts | Balance |
|------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Alabama | \$76,397.63 | \$4,981.15 | \$71,416.48 |
| Arizona | 1,228.93 | 2,883.71 | (1,654.78) |
| Arkansas | 76,860.94 | 42,672.13 | 34,188.81 |
| Atlantic Canada | 1,570.51 | 897.00 | 673.51 |
| California | 17,216.76 | 1,444.20 | 15,772.56 |
| Colorado | 789.18 | 1,165.00 | (375.82) |
| Florida | 20,703.30 | 6,347.42 | 14,355.88 |
| Georgia | 38,179.19 | 28,573.88 | 9,605.31 |
| Hawaii | 184.54 | 727.26 | (542.72) |
| Idaho | 353.37 | 25.00 | 328.37 |
| Illinois | 16,176.29 | 4,949.47 | 11,226.82 |
| Indiana | 7,868.27 | 1,846.75 | 6,021.52 |
| Iowa | 266.99 | .00 | 266.99 |
| Kansas | 1,287.82 | 280.00 | 1,007.82 |
| Kentucky | 35,454.34 | 5,409.29 | 30,045.05 |
| Louisiana | 94.23 | 1,925.00 | (1,830.77) |
| Maryland | 6,812.10 | 1,539.38 | 5,272.72 |
| Michigan | 15,116.19 | 16,004.22 | (888.03) |
| Mississippi | 15,559.86 | 3,843.23 | 11,716.63 |
| Missouri | 60,484.40 | 33,789.91 | 26,694.49 |
| Montana | 27.48 | 100.00 | (72.52) |
| Nebraska | 102.08 | 119.00 | (16.92) |
| New Mexico | 596.80 | 630.55 | (33.75) |
| North Carolina | 59,118.06 | 7,131.40 | 51,986.66 |
| Northeast Assoc. | 883.41 | 270.00 | 613.41 |
| Northwest Assoc. | 1,087.58 | 201.00 | 886.58 |
| Ohio | 40,923.66 | 19,563.10 | 21,360.56 |
| Oklahoma | 92,271.60 | 10,259.08 | 82,012.52 |
| South Carolina | 18,335.75 | 2,102.00 | 16,233.75 |
| South Dakota | | 175.00 | (175.00) |
| Tennessee | 78,557.09 | 56,664.83 | 21,892.26 |
| Texas | 11,547.20 | 6,973.52 | 4,573.68 |
| Virginia | 24,323.33 | 2,027.93 | 22,295.40 |
| Virgin Islands | | 200.00 | (200.00) |
| West Virginia | 46,204.51 | 998.00 | 45,206.51 |
| Wisconsin | | 61.00 | (61.00) |
| Other | | 2,978.85 | (2,978.85) |
| Totals | \$766,583.39 | \$269,759.26 | \$496,824.13 |

What
are you
giving
the Lord
for His
Birthday?

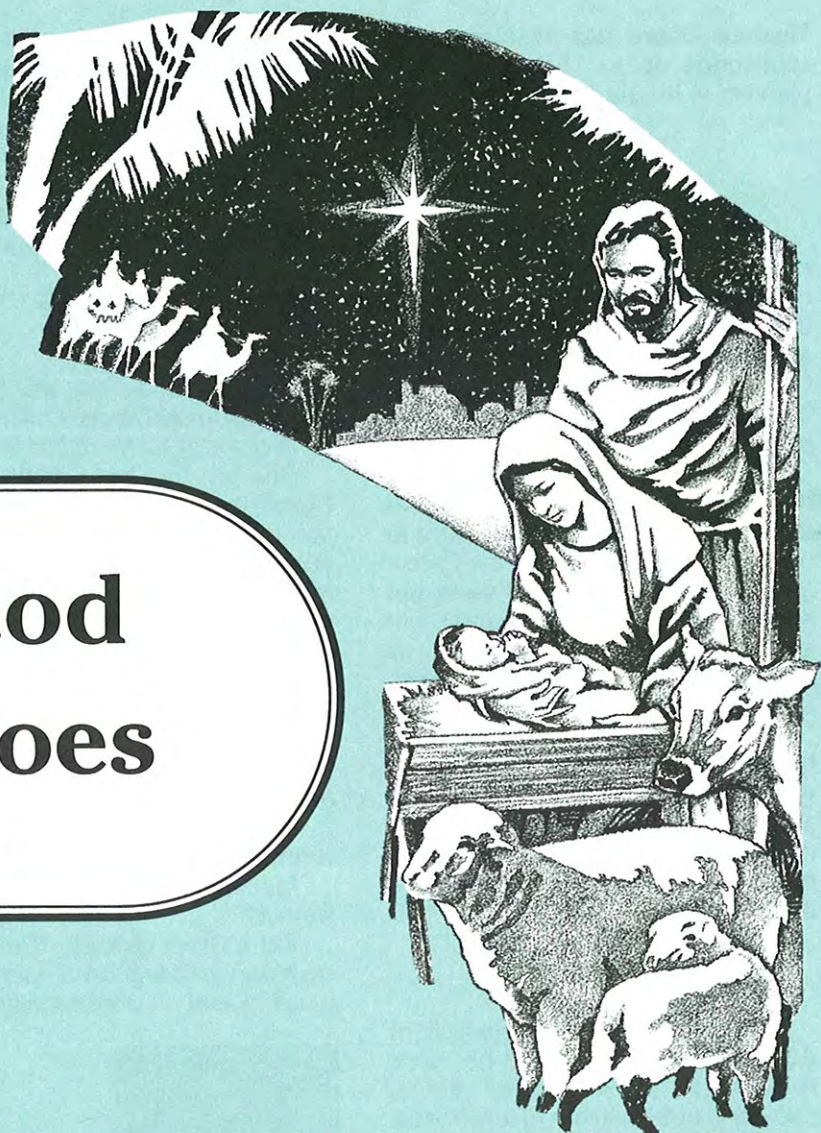


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When God Wore Shoes

By Randy Hill



The incarnation of Jesus Christ presents a great opportunity to the church. At Christmas we can address the emptiness in people by communicating the Source of our identity, satisfaction and hope.

C.S. Lewis wrote that "God . . . Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way. God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there" (*Mere Christianity*, quoted in *Servant*, July 1994).

Our self-centered sin-nature robs us of meaning and satisfaction in life, but Jesus Christ is different from the rest of us.

Different Nature

All human life finds its existence at conception, however, the Bible teaches that Jesus Christ is different from other human beings. He is by nature God. Prior to His birth in Bethlehem, the Bible says that Christ eternally "existed in the form of God" (Phil. 2:6, NASB).

The Bible describes Christ as "the image of the invisible God" (Col. 1:15, NASB) who is "the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature" (Heb. 1:3, NASB). This description is not given to anyone else in the Bible.

At Christ's birth in Bethlehem, His nature was not changed. He did not cease to be God, neither did He surrender His attributes as God. He took on our human nature but not our sin.

He was more than a man. He was the God-man.

What this means is that Christ provides a positive alternative to a world obsessed with self-gratification. Jesus exhibits the missing quality of selflessness. He came to us, not to get something from us but to give us abundant life.

Secular Christmas with its frantic shopping and over-spending is a monument to society's empty pursuit of happiness. We give our gifts but want to get gifts in return.

With the Christmas cards read, the packages opened and the meals consumed, that overwhelming emptiness returns to haunt us—life is larger than our shoes.

This overwhelming emptiness is described by a woman who was in Paris on a business trip. One day she

and a co-worker were walking along the Seine River near the Notre Dame when the conversation turned to spiritual matters.

They discussed the idea "that we all carry around with us a God-shaped vacuum and try unceasingly to fill it with other things" (*Time*, 4-5-93, p.46). This woman realized that she was hopelessly trying to fill the emptiness in her life with other things. Three months after returning to the States, she surrendered to the Lord.

Only the God of eternity can fill our shoes. The resounding truth heralded at Christmas is that the eternal God left His heavenly home and came to live among us. Jesus Christ is different from the rest of Humanity, because He is the eternal God wrapped in human flesh who is able to fill the God-shaped vacuum in each of our lives.

Different Birth

From the outset of the New Testament, the Bible tells us that Jesus is not like any other human being. The Bible says, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Jesus left His heavenly home and willingly tried us on for size.

What happened on the first Christmas was not an ordinary event. God came to our world. The Bible says that Jesus, the Son of God, "passed through the heavens" (Heb. 4:14) and was conceived by a virgin (Luke 1:34). The Holy Spirit was the agent of conception, and Jesus Christ took on our humanity through His mother, Mary.

One might ask, "Why would God go to such extremes to have a human birth?" The Bible tells us that Christ came for one reason—to "save His people from their sins" (Matt 1:21).

You see, Christ had to take on humanity so that He could identify with our struggles, griefs, pains and sorrows (Heb. 2:18; 4:15).

The circumstances surrounding the birth of Christ are anything but ordinary. The Bible tells us that while Mary is giving birth to Jesus the angel of the Lord is announcing the birth of God's Son to a band of shepherds in the nearby fields of Bethlehem (Luke 2:8-16).

These simple shepherds are

stunned by the angel's presence and his announcement. They broke every speed limit law on their way into Bethlehem. When they found the Baby, they were transformed into evangelists and began announcing everywhere the unique message given to them about this Child (Luke 2:17).

This is no ordinary Baby in the manger. This is the Eternal God whom the Bible says created all things, existed before all things and holds all things together (Col 1:16f). Jesus Christ is "God with us."

Conclusion

You can not look into the eyes of Jesus or touch His hand and come away unchanged. In a generation absorbed with itself, Jesus offers forgiveness of sin, peace and hope. What humanity endlessly pursues can only be found in the God of peace Who proclaimed Himself to us when He put on our shoes.

Jesus did not shout hope from the safe portals of glory. He climbed in with us, walked among us and experienced the suffering and shame of our sin. The life of Christ declares to all that God cares about His creation.

No wonder the angels praised God for the extraordinary birth. No wonder the shepherds proclaimed their experience to the people in Bethlehem. No wonder Mary pondered these things in her heart. The living Word slipped on humanity's shoes. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Randy Hill pastors Piney Grove Free Will Baptist Church in Chipley, Florida.

Directory Update

GEORGIA

Charles Hardeman to First Church, Eastman
David Fite to Macedonia Church, Colquitt

ILLINOIS

Mark Shores to Nason Church, Bonnie

OHIO

Larry Sparks to Columbus First Church, Columbus from
Bradley Gap Church, Louisa, KY

OKLAHOMA

Randy Bishop to Felker Church, Valliant
Jerry Pilgrim to Woodcrest Church, Catoosa
Billy Walker to First Church, Wilburton
Bill Holder to Lone Grove Church, Lone Grove

TENNESSEE

Larry Montgomery to Cofer's Chapel Church, Nashville
from Calvary Chapel Church, Hollywood, FL

Pray
for the
1995
Leadership
Conference
December 4-6
Maxwell House Hotel
Nashville, Tennessee



Yesterday's Christmas

By William H. Preston

The Christmas season is one of those special times of year. Christians set aside time to celebrate and emphasize the birth of Jesus Christ. It is also a time when we observe various traditions that have become associated with the Christmas season.

Local church sanctuaries are beautifully decorated. We sing familiar songs that focus on the birth of Christ. Sunday School classes schedule times of fellowship; benevolent ministries shift into high gear.

And during this season our feelings of generosity, hospitality and compassion for others seem to take on an added degree of urgency. Perhaps we should celebrate the Christmas season all year long.

Christmas season is a somewhat nostalgic time also. One of my favorite pastimes is to reflect on yesterday's Christmas. I drift back to my childhood

and enjoy Christmases long past.

I vividly remember the excitement and activities, both at church and in my childhood home. I remember the chaos and disarray when I, my brother and all our cousins gathered in the living room with parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles to exchange gifts, laugh and play.

It always brings a smile to my face and a little ache in my heart. Those memories help make Christmas special even today as I celebrate with my children.

Recognize Others

But in spite of the joy associated with the Christmas season, we must never forget that for many, Christmas is one of the most depressing times of the year. Depressing because all they have is yesterday's Christmas.

Who are these folks? They are all around us. They sit in our pews and Sunday School classes; they are on our visitation lists. Some are elderly, on fixed incomes, physically disabled. They are somebody's parent or grandparent.

Maybe they are somebody's friend who got misplaced over the years. Some live alone. Others live in health-care facilities. Some are just forgotten. Disheartening, isn't it?

As we celebrate Christmas, these dear people hanging on to yesterday's Christmases present to us an opportunity to share the love of Christ and make this Christmas one that they will remember all year. Christmas need not be a depressing or lonely time for them. Let's consider some practical ways we can minister to them.

Remember Others

For years, my parents have invited an elderly widow to spend Christmas at their home. She has no immediate family, yet for many years she has been included in our Christmas observance. She comes to our house on Christmas Eve to spend a couple of days.

She is included in all our activities. We make sure there are gifts for her and include her in preparations for a Christmas meal and in family worship time. Christmas is not a lonely time for her. So, consider adopting a lonely person during the Christmas season.

Respond to Others

As your church makes plans for the busy holiday season, be sure to include those who will potentially be alone during Christmas. Make them an integral part of planning in church activities. Let them know that they are significant.

Nursing homes, convalescent centers and homeless shelters provide opportunities for ministry in this area. A Sunday School class could plan a Christmas celebration at such a location or adopt one or more residents during Christmas. A choir could present a cantata or other musical program for residents.

Your church could plan a special evening for those who will spend Christmas alone. A dinner/banquet during which they are honored guests could provide an opportunity to give each person attending a gift.

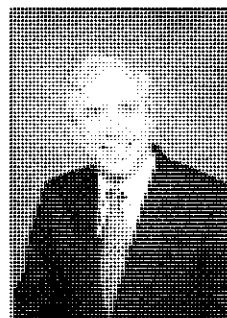
The youth or young adults could serve this special meal. A children's choir or the adult choir could provide music. There are many possibilities in such a setting to ease the ache of loneliness.

Following these practical suggestions will not only enrich others' lives but yours as well. Witness the glow on their faces, the twinkle or the tear in their eyes as they celebrate with others rather than alone.

No longer will they find it necessary to focus their attention on yesterday's Christmas. They can enjoy today's Christmas as they realize that they are loved and appreciated.

Yes, they are everywhere. They're

old. They're on fixed incomes. They're somebody's mother, forgotten grandparent, somebody's misplaced friend. Yet, they need not spend Christmas alone nor should they. We can make this Christmas one they will always remember because we remembered them. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER:
Reverend William H. Preston pastors Richland Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

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Outgrown

Have We Christmas?

By Billy Sharpston

A young couple proudly brought home their first-born child from the hospital. They placed their son in a beautiful wooden cradle. Over the months the baby grew. The cradle that had once swallowed him could no longer hold him. He began to look like a giant in a baby bed. The parents kept the cradle as a reminder of their baby's infancy, but the boy could not stay in the cradle forever. He naturally outgrew it.

We cannot have Christmas without the cradle. But just as Jesus did not stay in the manger for very long, we must outgrow the cradle.

We spend most of our lives outside the cradle. The growth of Jesus was natural and normal. The child grew in wisdom and stature.

The Bible does not indicate that Jesus had any adult capacities as an infant or as a child. He could have had, but we have no such biblical authentication. Apparently, He went through the natural growth stages of child development.

Like Jesus, we must be willing to grow. We should allow the church to nurture us. The Bible gives us the voice of God as a correcting and stabilizing force. The Lordship of Christ encourages us to focus our attention on Jesus. Knowing Christ allows us to come into a closer relationship with Him.

Yes, one spends most of life outside the cradle. Survival outside the cradle requires strength. When Luke recorded that Jesus became strong, he suggested that such strength was given to Him. In the same way we must receive faith, courage and strength from God. Look at the strength demonstrated by Christ.

Jesus exercised the power of His will and self-restraint. He measured the strength of a man by the power of the feelings He subdues, not by the power of those who subdued Him. Jesus' strength was not unbridled. It was directed and controlled by the will of God.

In the same fashion, our lives should be controlled by God's hand. We must achieve a balance.

Strength must be complemented with wisdom. Jesus grew in wisdom. The New Testament teaches us that Christ was fully God and fully man. He grew in wisdom as a man. He did not simply acquire facts or obtain information.

Paul warned young Timothy not to substitute mere facts for wisdom, "ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (II Timothy 3:7).

The student who only studies the night before an exam to earn a grade may pass, but he does not learn. In a world where random data passes for wisdom, we must learn that Jesus came to apply knowledge. People desperately need His wisdom today.

"To get wisdom is better than

gold; to get understanding is to be chosen rather than silver" (Proverbs 16:16). The world needs wisdom, not just information!

We need a sound wisdom for lives, wisdom built on the Judeo-Christian idea that God, not man, is the center of our universe.

God's grace extends beyond the cradle. God's gift came to Bethlehem nearly 2,000 years ago. God's grace comes to our community also. We must grow beyond the simple views of life.

The late George Buttrick shared a story about his grandmother who was visiting the United States from Czechoslovakia. She tried to cross against a traffic light in New York City. Someone pulled her away from the path of an oncoming bus. After he composed himself, Buttrick rebuked her, "Do not walk against the light!" She responded, "But this is a free country!"

That is the problem with most people today. People feel they can do anything they want and get away with it. They cannot.

Have you outgrown the cradle? You should have by now. Move beyond the ABC's of Christianity. Do not neglect the cradle, but let it become a beginning point for a new year to grow, become strong, be filled with wisdom and accept God's grace. Outgrow the cradle. Jesus did. You can too. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Dr. Billy Sharpston pastors Heritage Temple Free Will Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio.

Reprinted from *Heritage Highlights*, December 1993 issue.

THE TOGETHER WAY

September 1995

Receipts:

| State | Design. | CO-OP | Total | September '94 | Yr. To Date |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Alabama | \$ 827.48 | \$.00 | \$ 827.48 | \$ 8,050.73 | \$ 76,691.91 |
| Arizona | .00 | .00 | .00 | 449.36 | 2,937.53 |
| Arkansas | 20,079.19 | 11,513.89 | 31,593.08 | 30,513.11 | 262,297.13 |
| California | .00 | 1,031.12 | 1,031.12 | 774.88 | 6,847.93 |
| Colorado | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Delaware | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Florida | 181.84 | 3,348.53 | 3,530.37 | 1,158.03 | 22,827.28 |
| Georgia | 9,558.71 | 2,856.23 | 12,414.94 | 10,567.11 | 134,218.31 |
| Hawaii | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Idaho | .00 | .00 | .00 | 125.00 | .00 |
| Illinois | 7,396.78 | 1,427.15 | 8,823.93 | 10,193.04 | 106,019.32 |
| Indiana | 1,154.45 | 169.81 | 1,324.26 | 584.10 | 7,546.94 |
| Iowa | 40.00 | .00 | 40.00 | 90.00 | 80.00 |
| Kansas | .00 | .00 | .00 | 56.69 | 359.95 |
| Kentucky | 235.00 | 260.74 | 495.74 | 1,058.72 | 6,214.83 |
| Louisiana | .00 | .00 | .00 | 50.00 | 90.00 |
| Maryland | .00 | 877.59 | 877.59 | 1,023.61 | 2,980.46 |
| Michigan | 18,450.98 | 9,382.92 | 27,833.90 | 9,116.32 | 141,127.67 |
| Mississippi | 230.48 | 180.64 | 411.12 | 837.14 | 4,550.85 |
| Missouri | 11,473.16 | .00 | 11,473.16 | 10,782.78 | 107,408.51 |
| Montana | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Nebraska | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| New Jersey | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| New Mexico | 258.76 | 24.38 | 283.14 | 546.37 | 3,531.64 |
| North Carolina | 646.87 | 525.74 | 1,172.61 | 962.00 | 15,550.15 |
| Ohio | 321.87 | .00 | 321.87 | 7,804.43 | 69,872.58 |
| Oklahoma | 49,737.73 | 22.87 | 49,760.60 | 50,075.14 | 466,419.27 |
| South Carolina | 26,244.60 | 118.93 | 26,363.53 | 16,283.34 | 214,463.77 |
| South Dakota | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Tennessee | 4,748.82 | 867.67 | 5,616.49 | 5,280.59 | 74,175.56 |
| Texas | .00 | .00 | .00 | 8,248.15 | 71,738.71 |
| Virginia | 2,483.32 | 50.00 | 2,533.32 | 1,828.99 | 12,142.41 |
| Virgin Islands | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| West Virginia | 7,541.65 | 96.09 | 7,637.74 | 5,843.38 | 48,554.87 |
| Wisconsin | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Canada | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 |
| Northwest Association | .00 | .00 | .00 | .00 | 114.29 |
| Northeast Association | .00 | .00 | .00 | 30.00 | .00 |
| Other | .00 | .04 | .04 | .06 | .09 |
| Totals | \$161,611.69 | \$32,754.34 | \$194,366.03 | \$182,333.07 | \$1,858,761.96 |

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|--------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| Executive Office | \$ 10,331.65 | \$19,652.56 | \$ 29,984.21 | \$ 27,201.71 | \$ 251,872.19 |
| Foreign Missions | 82,278.05 | 3,013.39 | 85,291.44 | 92,581.84 | 943,039.59 |
| FWBBC | 16,468.80 | 3,013.39 | 19,482.19 | 10,448.82 | 144,557.04 |
| Home Missions | 43,590.05 | 2,358.31 | 45,948.36 | 38,180.60 | 409,828.09 |
| Retirement & Insurance | 801.99 | 1,834.25 | 2,636.24 | 1,850.95 | 22,768.81 |
| Master's Men | 2,260.09 | 1,834.25 | 4,094.34 | 2,778.10 | 32,980.22 |
| Commission for Theological Integrity | 117.74 | 65.52 | 183.26 | 128.43 | 1,520.48 |
| FWB Foundation | 820.38 | 786.11 | 1,606.49 | 1,145.54 | 13,998.45 |
| Historical Commission | 107.28 | 65.52 | 172.80 | 122.92 | 1,421.79 |
| Music Commission | 80.48 | 65.52 | 146.00 | 112.99 | 1,280.57 |
| Radio & TV Commission | 90.92 | 65.52 | 156.44 | 118.00 | 1,374.59 |
| Hillsdale FWB College | 1,267.65 | .00 | 1,267.65 | 1,054.48 | 11,712.01 |
| Other | 3,396.61 | .00 | 3,396.61 | 6,608.69 | 22,408.13 |
| Totals | \$161,611.69 | \$32,754.34 | \$194,366.03 | \$182,333.07 | \$1,858,761.96 |

When declining health demands a change in ministry.

Please Enlist

By Ronnie Floyd



While pastoring, my wife and I had the joy and excitement of being part of an active ministry. We labored together, fought the battles, enjoyed the victories and experienced the agony of defeat.

We've known what it's like to live in light of His love and draw from the strength of His power. We sat at His feet in worship and praise, then drew from His grace to serve—until a flaw in our health surfaced. We tried to pass it off, but circumstances worsened.

All the while we tried to deny that this was really happening. We found ourselves having to lessen our activities and finally resign our place of service. Our case is not unique. Others face similar ministry-changing health problems.

The moment the first health flaw surfaces begins the long and painful road to becoming disabled. A great deal of our time is spent caged within four walls. Feelings of helplessness and fear creep in unwanted. Financial difficulties add to our frustrations, and we find ourselves on this long, dark and abandoned road.

But during this time, God teaches us some of the greatest lessons in life, lessons that can never be gleaned from a textbook. We learn to deal with our handicaps. Surpris-

ingly, our desire to be used of God grows. Although some of our limbs are not functioning properly, our hearts and minds have been unaffected.

God has allowed us to glean insight and knowledge through our experience. We seem bottled up because of no available outlet. Yet, we do not believe that God taught us these lessons to remain caged inside our hearts.

We could minister in the lives of others if only we could break from tradition. For instance, tradition says a preacher stands when he preaches. Which is most important—a man who stands and preaches and has very little content, or a man who sits on a stool and delivers an expository message?

Our relationship with God has experienced greater depth and our desire to be used of Him has more fervency. There may be folks in your church or community who are similarly handicapped.

Open your doors of service to them and us. The insight and knowledge we have can be a blessing to you. In return, you will be an en-

couragement to us.

Life has hit us with some unexpected changes, but by God's grace we have stood firm. God has stood beside us and never wavered. He continues to minister to us, and we believe He wants to minister through us to others.

So, please don't abandon us. Enlist us as often as you can. We are still ready to serve. And there are many others just like us. Some of them live in your town and attend your church. ■

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ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Ronnie Floyd, an ordained Free Will Baptist minister, retired after 26 years in the ministry because of ill health. He resides in Church Hill, Tennessee.



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FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Community Honors Howard Gages

ADAIR, OK—Reverend and Mrs. Howard Gage were honored by the Greenbrier FWB Church and community on September 24 for their years of faithful service. "Howard and Willie Gage Day" included a framed citation from the Oklahoma House of Representatives, letters and greetings from friends around the world and a written review of family history by their daughter, Ruth Bivens.

Long-time friend, Rev. Ray Gwartney preached the morning message to conclude two hours of non-stop honors and salutes to the Gages. After lunch at the church, the Gages received family and friends. Some 175 people signed the guest register book.

Reverend Gage, son of the late Rev. Jake Gage, was the first pastor of Greenbrier FWB Church. He and his wife labored there for 12 years while supporting the family with a small dairy farm. He pastored the Checotah FWB Church for eight years before going to Ivory Coast, West Africa as a missionary builder for the Foreign Missions Board.

The Gages made three trips to West Africa, spending a total of 48 months in the country. He ministered to the people there

by building a hospital in the remote, interior village of Doropo, homes for several missionaries, a church and a large dormitory at the mission boarding school.

After returning to the states in 1973, they traveled for three years raising funds for other missionaries.

Gage worked as a young man in the defense plant south of Pryor. He was transferred to the Hanford Defense Plant in Washington

state where he worked on the construction of a component to some highly classified military project which he later learned was the atomic bomb.

When World War II escalated in Europe, Gage enlisted in the army and reached the rank of staff sergeant. His platoon was among those that secured the Island of Okinawa. It was in a fox hole on Okinawa that Gage made a promise to the Lord. "If I can just get back home to my little family," he prayed, "I will preach the Word."

As soon as he returned home, Brother Gage picked up his Bible and started preaching. He has not laid it down since that day.



Willie (L) and Howard Gage

Arkansas Church Unveils Sign

BATESVILLE, AR—The highly visible sign outside Quail Valley FWB Church in Batesville preaches its own sermon, says Pastor Tim Richardson. The message this week was, "God intervenes in the affairs of men by invitation only."

After Evangelist Wade Jernigan branded the congregation "Home of the Covey" because of their colorful name, the group began using the nickname in their advertising.

The Quail Valley FWB Church is a member of Arkansas' Polk Bayou Association.



Ed (Tiny) Dunnem, chairman of the Board of Trustees, leans on flag pole.

Reverend Wayne Smith With the Lord



BLACK MOUNTAIN, NC—The Reverend Wayne W. Smith, a Free Will Baptist pastor for 50 years, died September 8 in Asheville during an angiogram procedure. The 82-year-old minister developed chest pains on September 7 after parking his car and walking to Memorial Mission Hospital where his wife, Mildred, had just been taken.

Reverend Smith had been a leader in the Free Will Baptist

denomination since the 1940's. He served as assistant moderator of the National Association and preached several times at the national convention.

Smith served as moderator of North Carolina's Coastal Association. He organized the Blue Ridge Association in Western North Carolina and moderated the association several years. He was also elected as the first moderator of the North Carolina State Association.

During his ministry, Brother Smith pastored nine churches in North Carolina and two churches in South Carolina. His first pastorate was in Canton, NC, his final pastorate in Black Mountain.

After retiring, he continued serving as interim pastor, conducting revivals and maintaining other ministerial duties.

Reverend Smith was a church builder. During most of his pastorate, he not only led in numerical congregational growth but also spearheaded building pro-

grams to construct parsonages, sanctuaries and educational expansions.

He led by example. After drawing church blue prints, he frequently supervised the construction crew and labored long hours to erect buildings.

Failing health in his last five years resulted in by-pass heart surgery. He developed diabetes and received radiation treatment for prostate cancer.

Funeral services were conducted September 10 with his nephews, Reverends Steve, G.W. and Roger Smith, officiating.

Brother Smith is survived by his wife of 61 years, Mildred; daughters, Betty Lou Blackburn of Kingston, TN, and Waynette Bridges of Los Cruces, NM; one brother, Guy Smith of Canton; sisters, Clara Herron of Candler and Ruby Smith of Virginia; step-mother, Annie Smith of Candler and a number of grandchildren.

Tennessee Church Celebrates 40 Years

NASHVILLE, TN—Donelson FWB Church celebrated 40 years of ministry on Sunday, October 8, according to Mark McPeak, minister of adults at the church. The special celebration service was held in a large tent on the church's front lawn and attended by a record 700 people including numerous special friends from the present and the past.

The church grew out of a ladies' Bible study begun in the early 1950's by Oleda Rudy Lundquist who is still an active attendee and worker in the church.

Five former pastors shared greetings and memories of their years with the church: Robert Owen (the first elected pastor from 1955-57), Francis Boyle (1961-62), Rolla Smith (the first full-time pastor from 1961-67), George Lee (1967-73) and Edward Cook (1976-79).

Pastor Toshikazu Kawasaki from Japan also shared greetings. He was in town en route to Brazil for the organizational meeting of the FWB International Fellowship.

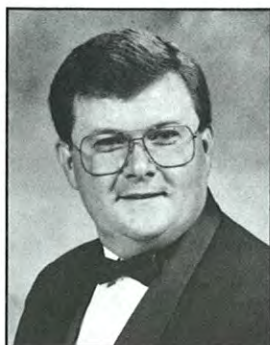
Current pastor, Robert Morgan, preached a message titled, "The Next Forty Years," a vision-

ary challenge that included a plan for extending the effectiveness of the church in reaching the next generation. The day was capped off with a dinner on the grounds. Attendees enjoyed a display of photographs and memorabilia highlighting memories from the past 40 years.



Pastor Robert Morgan (L); former pastors Edward Cook, George Lee, Rolla Smith, Francis Boyle, Robert Owen.

New Workers Enhance Bible College Faculty-Staff



Campbell

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College added several new teachers and staff personnel this year, according to Dr. Robert Picirilli, academic dean. All are Christians, as the college requires, and all are well qualified to fill their respective roles.

Tim Campbell, a FWBBC alumnus, moved from his pastorate in Monticello, Arkansas, to become the college's new alumni affairs director. He served as a dormitory supervisor while a student. His new role will put him in close touch with FWBBC's alumni in the U.S. and abroad.

Dr. James Cox moved to Nashville from West Virginia to become FWBBC's first director of institutional effectiveness. In addition to pastoring, Dr. Cox has served as executive dean at Greenbrier Community College in Lewisburg, WV, and as academic dean at California Christian College in Fresno. He will guide the Bible College's efforts in formal planning, evaluation and in-



Cox

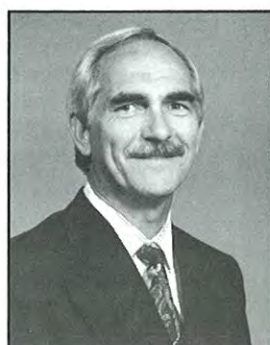
stitutional research.

Allen Jinnette moved from part- to full-time on the faculty. His duties have been enlarged from teaching accounting to teaching computer courses now required of all incoming freshmen. He is a certified public accountant and his home is Pleasant View, Tennessee.

Michael Karounos is the newest addition to the English Department faculty at FWBBC. He has moved to Nashville from Chicago, where he was director of information management at The School of The Art Institute of Chicago. He is a graduate of Miami University and Roosevelt University.

Clint Morgan is a graduate of the Bible College and a veteran missionary to Ivory Coast. He returned to FWBBC where he will teach missions, taking the place of Eddie Payne on the faculty.

Glen Wegge, who is completing his Ph.D. in Music at Indiana University, has come to serve as



Morgan

chairman of the music department at the Bible College. He has served as both music minister and interim pastor at Bloomington FWB Church, Bloomington, Illinois. He graduated magna cum laude from Western Connecticut State University and earned his Master's at Ithaca College.

Neil Gilliland left the staff to join the FWBBC faculty where he will teach psychology. Mr. Gilliland served as the college's recruitment director while doing graduate studies in psychology.

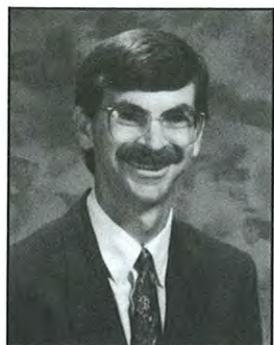
Free Will Baptist Bible College also made other additions and changes to its faculty and staff:

—Steve Faison joined the staff part-time to schedule student tour groups.

—Kenny Simpson has been appointed recruitment director. He served as assistant director in the department under Mr. Gilliland.



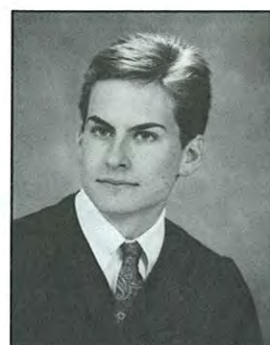
Wegge



Gilliland



Karounos



Jinnette



Simpson

Pastors Praise Preaching Conference

NASHVILLE, TN—Attendees at Free Will Baptist Bible College's 1995 Pastors' Conference, held on campus September 25-27, hailed it as one of the best they have attended. Dr. Stephen Olford and his son, Dr. David Olford, were the featured speakers.

Dr. Robert Woodard, who directed the conference, counted approximately 110 registered guests from 18 states and many other visitors.

Dr. David Olford directed workshops on expository preaching, while his father demonstrated the power of the preached Word. In the evening, Dr. Stephen Olford preached on the theme, "The Centrality of Christ." On Monday, his message

was "The Reality of Christ." He followed on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings with "The Authority of Christ" and "The Sufficiency of Christ."



Dr. Stephen Olford preaches at FWBBC.

FWBBC president, Dr. Tom Malone, said:

The conference was not only challenging and encouraging, it was packed full of practical

helps for the preacher. I appreciated Dr. Olford's continual emphasis on "preach the Word." The Tuesday night message is still challenging me concerning the Lordship of Christ. Many pastors shared with me how they were helped and encouraged, and thanked the college for sponsoring the conference.

Dr. Woodard was also gratified with the outcome of the conference. He said:

Time will tell, but I honestly believe this conference will prove to be one of the finest we've ever hosted. Both Olfords did a commendable job instructing and inspiring our fellows regarding expository preaching. Dr. Stephen Olford's messages were truly refreshing and convicting. I do not remember when we have ever seen such an emphasis on the

Lordship of Christ—the missing ingredient in much of today's preaching.

Merry Christmas
and a
Blessed New Year
from all of us on
the *Contact* staff.

CURRENTLY . . .

Students at **Faith Christian Academy** in **Goldsboro, NC**, received a special note of encouragement from an unusual source. **Mrs. Douglas MacArthur**, widow of the late General Douglas MacArthur, wrote to Pastor **Dann Patrick** wishing students at the academy success during their school year. The academy is an outreach of **Faith FWB Church**. Officials dedicated a 6,000-square-foot kindergarten building in October.

The **Dibble FWB Church** in **Dibble, OK**, celebrated its 90th anniversary this year. Former pastor **J. R. Hall** brought the anniversary sermon. **Lewis Cox** pastors.

Pastor **Tom Drake** is now a landowner. Members of **Midwest FWB Church** in **Midwest City, OK**, deeded one acre to him as a pastor appreciation gift. The land is adjacent to property where the church plans to relocate in Oklahoma City.

Contact welcomes **Word!**, monthly publication of **Lifegate FWB Church** in **Tyler, TX**. **Robert Posner, Jr.**, pastors.

You wouldn't recognize the place. That's the news out of **First FWB Church** in **Hahira, GA**, after a major remodeling effort. New roof. New doors. New lighting. New carpet. New paint. Refurbished pews. New piano. And more. **Charles Parrish** pastors.

Homecoming activities hit a new high at **Cool Springs FWB Church** in **Norman Park, GA**. The church recognized **Mrs. Maxie Branan** who has been a member since 1914. They also gave a plaque to **C. M. Chafin, Jr.** for 51 years of service as treasurer and clerk. More than \$40,000 was received toward the building fund. And members gave Pastor **Steve Hughes** \$200 to purchase books for his library. Executive Secretary **Herbert Waid** brought the message.

Reverend **Earl Sutton** sends word that he is establishing a new church in **Chesapeake, VA**. The new work will be known as **Unity FWB Church**.

Covenant FWB Church in **Soddy Daisy, TN**, organized on May 21, 1995, with 26 charter members. The group, averaging 37 in attendance, meets in rented facilities. Pastor **Marcus Clagg** began the work in April 1994. Members are raising funds to purchase land and build.

Myrtle FWB Church in **Myrtle, MO**, paved their parking lot this summer. In the past 18 months, members installed a new water line and sewer system, purchased a copier and upgraded their public address equipment. **Bob Epperson** pastors.

Building programs are old hat to **Way of the Cross FWB Church** in **Salisaw, OK**. The 14-year-old church has been through four expansions and now plans to build a parsonage. During homecoming activities in September, three former pastors preached—founding pastor **Wade Jernigan**, **Stanley Smith** and **J. C. Holderfield**. **Jerry Copeland** pastors.

Contact welcomes **The Voice**, publication of **Red Bay FWB Church** in **Red Bay, AL**. Pastor **Tom Scott** reports two conversions and two rededications. Members also burned the mortgage making the church debt-free. Some 350 people attended the church's homecoming celebration.

Here's a VBS project with worldwide impact. Children at **Canah Chapel FWB Church** in **Erwin, TN**, brought in enough coins to purchase 474 New Testaments for Russia. Pastor **Doyle Pruett** said that the church gives 11% of its total income to outreach beyond the local church.

When members of **Tecumseh FWB Church** in **Tecumseh, MI**, called **E. David Mingus** as pastor, they got a double-barreled, second generation Free Will Baptist couple. Both David and **LaDonna Mingus** hail from FWB preachers' homes. David's father, the late **Elda Mingus**, founded **Urbana FWB Church** in Ohio and co-founded the Central Ohio Conference. **LaDonna's** father, the late **Melvin Sanford**, organized 17 FWB Churches in his 54-year ministry.

That big fire at **Southeast FWB Church** in **Tulsa, OK**, capped a victory day celebration. Pastor **Perry Brake** got some help from trustee board chairman **Paul Hammon** and deacon board chairman **Mike Wheels** in burning a \$100,000 mortgage on the church sanctuary. Executive Secretary **Jack Richey** preached the morning message; a teen was saved.

Woodland Chapel FWB Church in **Ironton, OH**, reports five new members. **David Schug** pastors.

Pastor **Homer Brooks** reports seven new members at **South Charleston FWB Church** in **South Charleston, OH**.

The biggest VBS in the church's history registered 212 students at **Bloom FWB Church** in **South Webster, OH**. Pastor **Roger Lavender** reports three baptisms, three new members and a 137 Sunday School attendance.

Seventy people attended groundbreaking ceremonies for a new sanctuary at **First Austintown FWB Church** in **Youngstown, OH**. Local television stations carried news of the event. **Bruce Beal** pastors.

Pastor **Roger Childers** reports 17 baptisms at **Urbana FWB Church** in **Urbana, OH**. An 84-year-old man was baptized in August.

Attendance has surged at **First FWB Church** in **Chillicothe, OH**. Pastor **Lawrence Barnes** says that Sunday School increased from 28 to 50, while Sunday evening attendance jumped from 18 to 40.

Members of **Bay FWB Church** in **Hartsfield, GA**, gave Pastor **Teddy Burch** a new suit in a surprise appreciation gesture. Then the group gave a dinner in his honor.

Pastor **David Harper** was honored at a fellowship dinner and program by members of **Patmos FWB Church** in **Leary, GA**. The church Woman's Auxiliary presented a skit adapted from the article, "How Much Is That Preacher in the Window?" The day then moved to a food shower and monetary gifts for the pastor's family.

Reverend **Robert Trimble** has agreed to relocate to **Battle Creek, MI**, where he will work with the Michigan Missions Board to start a new church. He left his Maryland pastorate November 1 to begin itinerate. ■



FOREIGN MISSIONS

Russian Beachhead for Free Will Baptists

By Don Robirds



Professor Leroy and Fay Forlines

They will be vanguard troops moving ahead of an army of evangelistic ministers and lay persons!

Professor Leroy Forlines and his wife, Fay, have accepted the invitation to be short-term missionaries to Russia. Their task is to teach theology and English in seminaries in Russia during the second semester of the 1995-96 school year.

After 70 years of official communism and atheism in Russia, new doors of opportunity have opened for the proclamation of the gospel and for theological training. Mr. and Mrs. Forlines plan to go through these doors.

Although Russia had accepted Christianity at the command of Vladimir I in A.D. 988, the people were adherents of the Greek Orthodox faith. Out of this they formed the Russian Orthodox Church. It was closely aligned with the government and the Czars. Between 300 and 400 Russian Baptist preachers were imprisoned during Khrushchev's tenure in office. Religious freedom was granted to Russian Baptists in 1991.

Russian Baptists Are Arminian

Since Russian Baptists are Arminian in theology, they have requested theology professors to teach seminars in seminaries and Bible institutes in Russia and Ukraine. Brother Forlines will be teaching Free Will Baptist theology so the Russian Baptist stu-

dents may engage in a comparative study of that and their own views of what the Bible teaches.

Scheduled to leave the United States near the end of January and return around the first of July, the Forlines will be paving the way for a special church-planting mission during the last two weeks of June. A witnessing team will be going house-to-house in the area of Novosibirsk.

Places under consideration for the Forlines' ministry include Odessa, Kiev, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk and other points in Siberia.

Fay, who holds a Ph.D. from George Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, is retired after teaching five years at FWB Bible College and more than 25 years in public schools in Alabama, Illinois and Metro-Nashville. She will be teaching English in the areas where the need arises. Since most of the books and publications in the libraries of the institutes and seminaries are written in English, instruction in English is important.

Although Leroy has retired from his teaching position at FWBBC, he has continued to teach some classes at the college. He will take a semester's leave to fulfill the Russian assignment.

God's Call

The Forlines testify, "The Russian leaders say they want us. The foreign missions staff and the board say they want us. When we were singled out by these two groups of men of God, we interpreted that as being the clearest discernible call of God on our lives that we have ever had."

To get these two special short-term missionaries to the field, \$31,000 must be raised. Many people know them personally and have been touched by their lives and ministry. Others are familiar with their years of dedicated service to the Lord and Free Will Baptists. Those who want to help them can send gifts to Foreign Missions, Forlines Russian Beachhead for FWB, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. ■

Don Robirds is director of communications for FWB Foreign Missions.

BOARD OF RETIREMENT

Making Plans for Your Pastor

By William Evans

My first church was a long way from everywhere, or so it seemed at the time. But it was, and continues to be, very special to me. What created that feeling? Why do I still feel that way?

It was my first pastorate. They paid me more than I ever expected. Before you ask for a reference, I started for \$30 a month plus an upstairs apartment with a Sunday School class in the living room. Five years later it was one of the largest fundamental churches in the area (but only 60-70 attendance) and I was up to \$125 monthly and the same apartment.

Why was I happy? It certainly wasn't the pay, even in 1962. Economic realities required an outside job, sometimes two.

They did speak English, with a strange sound; they were Free Will Baptist, but not long timers; they were new believers, but not childish. They got no bargain as their pastor (fresh out of college with no pastoral experience), but they cared . . . about me and my new bride, about the church building and witness and their responsibilities.

Because of my other work, I was not dependent on the church pay—but they felt a strong responsibility to care for me to the limit of their ability. During budget discussions when a raise was suggested, in youthful enthusiasm, I recommended it be given to missions. They always responded that their mission included providing for the pastor. They also gave more than 10% every year to outside causes.

It wasn't the amount of pay, it was their desire to pay.

If you want to revitalize your pastor and church, maybe you should try that attitude. Five areas to consider:

- 1. Earnings:** What is a living wage in your area? What do you earn? (This is not just your take home pay.)
- 2. Transportation:** Do you expect the pastor to provide transportation for business purposes? Pastoral visits, sick/shut-in/hospital calls, church functions? Cars and gasoline are major expenses today.
- 3. Housing:** Do you provide a parsonage? If so, consider giving him at least 1/30th of

the value of the parsonage for each year of service when he moves: e.g. for a parsonage with a market value of \$30,000-\$1,000 per year: for one worth \$60,000-\$2,000 per year.

But don't just give him cash, put it in a vehicle to deliver value at retirement when housing needs must be met. Remember, the pastor and spouse will need a place to live after retirement.

- 4. Clothing:** Suits, ties, dress shirts and shoes are expensive. Do you want him to look nice?
- 5. Insurance:** Do you help with health insurance, disability, death insurance?
- 6. Retirement:** If a man has 40-50 working years, every year he serves you equals 1/40 or 1/50 of his entire career. Enroll him in the Free Will Baptist Retirement Plan and begin at the entry level of \$10 monthly or more.

This will not enable him to retire, but a contribution of \$10 each month earning 8% for 42 years will be more than \$41,000. A single contribution of \$10 earning 8% for the next 42 years equals \$284.70, but only \$128.26 in 32 years. A little today is better than a lot years later.

Starting early for retirement planning is important. Give your pastor a gift today for all his (and his family's) tomorrows. Enroll him in the Free Will Baptist Retirement Plan today! ■



WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

Woman's Window on the World

By Mary Ruth Wischart

From My Window

Beautiful! Many things in the winter and Christmas season are beautiful. Snowflakes, ice crystals catching the sunlight, dark lines of bare branches against a gray sky, lights and ornaments and children's excited faces. Christmas carols and lighted churches.

But what can be more beautiful than the thought of God coming as a tiny babe to identify Himself with us? The wonder of a baby, the wonder of a heavenly light and the angels' song. The wonder of a message: "Unto you is born this day . . . a Savior."

I was basking in the loveliness of a sunset from the plane, when I heard a woman say, "Oh, I've flown so much that nothing is exciting to me anymore." I wanted to say, "But, lady, you have never seen a sunset like this before and you will never see a sunset like this again."

And what about Christmas? Have we experienced so many that the season no longer offers us any wonder and excitement?

When someone called to wish John L. Welch happy 82nd birthday, he said, "You know, this is the most unusual birthday I have ever had."

"How is that?" the caller asked, expecting a report of some unusual gift or happening. "Why," he answered, "I have never been 82 before."

Christmas 1995. You have never experienced it before and you will never experience it again. May the wonder and the beauty of Christmas fill your heart and your home.

WNAC Theme For 1996

"Hold the Light High" is the WNAC theme for 1996. The emphasis is on personal witnessing, using Acts 13:47, "I have set thee to be a light to the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth."

Programs for the year emphasize being a light for Christ in the home, the workplace and around the world. Check out the programs in *Co-Laborer* magazine and the suggestions for programs in the 1996 *Yearbook*.

These helps are available from the WNAC office. The *Yearbook* is \$5, plus \$1.50 postage

and handling. The *Manual* is \$10, plus \$3 postage and handling.

January Is Enlistment Month for WNAC

According to the 1995 reports from Free Will Baptist churches, we have 213,716 members. WNAC reports show 7,423 members. Granted that these figures may not be entirely accurate, we still question where are the women?

January is enlistment month for WNAC. At the beginning of a year it's a good time to invite women to join the organization.

Check out the program "All Dressed Up With Some Place to Go" in the January/February issue of *Co-Laborer* magazine and the program suggestions in the 1996 *Yearbook*. Check the *Manual* for enlistment suggestions throughout the year.

WNAC is a service organization. Its priority is to help Free Will Baptist women serve. WNAC wants to enlist more women for God's service. Members now serve in their local churches and in their communities. They also serve home and foreign missions department in praying, giving funds, encouragement to missionaries and with the Provision Closet.

You can be a part of this service. Join your local group. If it is not a member of the district and state, then encourage the women to join. Local and district groups belonging to state conventions are also members of the WNAC.

If there is no state convention, a district may belong directly to WNAC. If there is no state or district convention, a local group may join WNAC.

Let's see WNAC grow in 1996. ■

The Second Commandment

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them. (Exodus 20:4-5; cf. Deuteronomy 5:8-9)

In Protestant tradition, this is the second commandment. For the Catholics this is still part of the first; what we regard as the tenth they consider as the last two.

This commandment forbids all forms of idolatry. If the first commandment taught ancient Israel monotheism in the midst of a polytheistic world, the second taught them that God is spirit in the midst of a world that worshipped visible images, and it meant that not even Jehovah God Himself could be represented by an image.

As Moses expressed it, "Ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire" (Deuteronomy 4:15).

The point is that God Almighty insists on an *absolute* distinction between Himself, as Creator, and anything in His created order. He will not allow Himself to be represented by anything He has made. Thus we are prevented from any form of pantheism, and thus we are forbidden to confuse anything else with Him.

As Romans 1:23 shows, the Creator God is incorruptible and every thing in the created order is corruptible, and the difference between them is absolutely precious. Paul shows what happens when this commandment is ignored: men first liken God to themselves and afterward to birds and four-footed animals and even to creeping things—the very things that are in the heav-

ens, the earth, and the waters here in Exodus 20:4 (cf. Deut. 4:16-19).

How is this commandment violated? Certainly when anyone bows before any image to represent either the true God (as in Exod. 32:4) or a false god. In our modern world we can easily understand the foolish superstition of the heathen fetichers or the blind deception of those who bow before a buddha.

Some of the heathen idols are so gross that we are repulsed rather than drawn. But the commandment is equally violated by any so-called Christian tradition that prays to images, and the lovely ones are as reprobate as the ugly ones.

But is this commandment violated only when we bow before some visible representation of a god? Both our hearts and the Word tell us better. Paul equated covetousness with idolatry (Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5). Why? Because covetousness finds the meaning of life in possessing things, and whatever one finds the meaning of life in is his god.

As Martin Luther said, "In what thing soever thou hast thy mind's reliance and thine heart fixed, that is beyond doubt thy God." We are in constant danger of making gods of riches or power or recreation, and so of practicing 20th century idolatry. Indeed, anyone who loves anyone or anything more than God is thereby constituted an idolater.

This is the first commandment to which the Lord attaches warning of a penalty; no doubt it is meant to be applied to all ten. Simply put, what we see is that God is a jealous God, a God of punishment and reward, of justice and mercy.

On the one side, He visits iniquity on those who reject Him, even to the fourth generation of descendants. His jealousy and punishment are not

trifles. His jealousy refuses to allow any other to share His honor; He zealously seeks that people's devotion be to Him alone.

On the other side, He shows mercy to those who keep His commandments, even to the thousandth generation of descendants. "Mercy" here (Hebrew *chesed*) is that most blessed Old Testament term sometimes translated "covenant love."

Neither of these means that God punishes or blesses people solely for their ancestors' sins. The point is that both wickedness and righteousness, practiced in one generation, influence the generations to follow. The holy God punishes sin and manifests covenant love according to His law; but He so hates the one and loves the other that He is always at work to cultivate the fruits of the latter indefinitely and to cut off the former soon.

Furthermore, there is implicit within the pair the truth that "when the children forsake their fathers' evil ways, the warmth of the divine wrath is turned into the warmth of love . . . and this mercy endures . . . to the thousandth generation, though only in relation to those who love God and manifest this love by keeping His commandments" (Keil and Delitzsch).

If the warning creates a sense of horror, then, the blessing overwhelms it in magnitude: "If God continues for a long time His visitation of sin, He continues to all eternity His manifestation of mercy" (Schultz). ■



Robert E. Picirilli

YOUTH UPDATE

1996 Truth & Peace Youth Leadership Conference

Locations: Hillsdale FWB College & Ramada Plaza Hotel, Ft. Worth, Texas.

Dates: July 8 – 24, 1996

Would you like to join other Christian young people from across the county in an unforgettable experience of learning, laughing, leading, and loving together?

This is your chance to take the Gospel to the Streets!

The Truth & Peace Conference is three weeks of nonstop activities that combine seminars, workshops, local church involvement, fellowship, and group interaction into one very memorable experience! This is a conference for Free Will Baptist youth who are currently in the 10th, 11th & 12th grades.

The 1996 National Youth Conference in Ft. Worth, Texas will give you opportunities to put into practice many of the leadership skills that you learn during the first two weeks.

The Conference is a time where you can get away from your usual surroundings in order to spend quality time growing and learning about the Savior and His plan for you. You will return to those surroundings better equipped and ready to make a difference!

For more information about this exciting summer opportunity, please write to Truth & Peace • P.O. Box 17306 • Nashville, TN 37217.

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| A New Outreach Program for Master's Men, James Vallance | February, 24 |
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| \$89,582.20 in Unclaimed Funds; D. Ray Lewis | February, 26 |
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| Woman's Window on the World; Mary R. Wisehart | February, 25 |
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Newsfront

Churches

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|--------------------------------------|--------------|
| Arkansas | |
| Quail Valley FWB Church, Batesville | December, 16 |
| California | |
| First FWB Church, Kerman | May, 23 |
| Illinois | |
| Bethel FWB Church, South Roxana | February, 19 |
| Indiana | |
| Emmanuel FWB Church, Wabash | June, 23 |
| Mississippi | |
| Pearce Chapel FWB Church, Smithville | August, 23 |
| Missouri | |
| Fellowship FWB Church, Park Hills | July, 20 |
| Tennessee | |
| Donelson FWB Church, Nashville | December, 17 |
| New Hope FWB Church, Joelton | October, 23 |
| Texas | |
| First FWB Church, Duncanville | March, 22 |
| Virginia | |
| Fairwood FWB Church, Fairfax Station | February, 18 |

Ministers

| | |
|-----------------|---------------|
| Burden, Dale | September, 23 |
| Cobb, Malone | June, 21 |
| Fry, Malcolm C. | October, 25 |
| Gage, Howard | December, 16 |
| Gregory, Frank | September, 22 |
| Hersey, Herman | June, 22 |
| Hill, Harvey | April, 18 |
| Jernigan, Wade | August, 23 |
| Ledbetter, Jack | May, 23 |
| McCarty, Bill | January, 21 |
| Melvin, Billy | May, 21 |
| Pinson, L. V. | July, 19 |
| Shockey, Bob | January, 20 |
| Smith, Wayne | December, 17 |
| Vallance, Carl | August, 22 |

Lay People

| | |
|-----------------|------------|
| Curry, Steve | August, 21 |
| Deel, Byron | June, 22 |
| Hensley, Dewey | August, 23 |
| Meade, Cossie | May, 23 |
| Melvin, Darlene | May, 24 |
| Parker, Jerry | August, 21 |

States

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Alabama | February, 17 |
| Arkansas | October, 22 |
| Florida | August, 24 |
| Georgia | February, 19 |
| Idaho | August, 24 |
| Illinois | June, 21 |
| Indiana | September, 22 |
| Kentucky | September, 21 |
| Michigan | August, 24 |
| Mississippi | February, 19 |
| Missouri | September, 23 |
| New Mexico | July, 19 |
| North Carolina | August, 24 |
| Ohio | September, 23 |
| Oklahoma | January, 22 |
| South Carolina | May, 22 |
| Tennessee | January, 21; March, 21 |
| Texas | September, 22 |
| West Virginia | September, 22 |

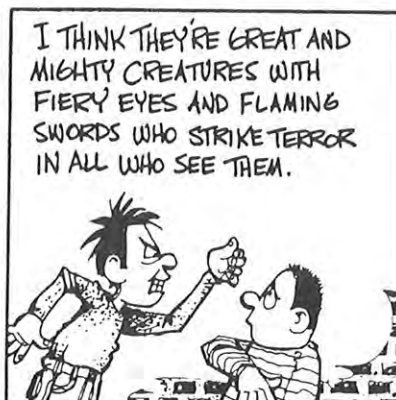
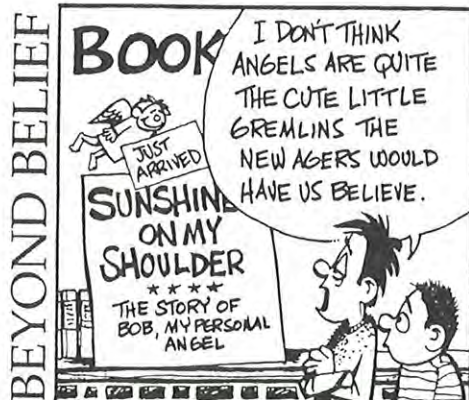
National Ministries

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 1995 State Association Meetings | February, 22 |
| 1995 Yearbook to be Mailed | March, 21 |
| 279 Attend FWBCC Welcome Days | July, 20 |
| Bible College Enrolls 334 for Spring Semester | March, 23 |
| Bible College Enrolls 346 for Fall Semester | November, 20 |
| Bible College Fall Welcome Days Tops 277 | February, 18 |
| Bible College Graduates 38 | July, 18 |
| Bible College Reports Success with Regional Accreditation | February, 18 |

| | |
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| Bible College Sets Spring Graduation | May, 22 |
| Board Statement Clarifies | |
| Convention Error | February, 19 |
| Corrections | June, 21 |
| Discount Air Fares to Convention Available | May, 21 |
| Fletcher Named to Editorial Post | November, 19 |
| FWB Foundation Delivers Gifts | November, 19 |
| FWBCC Scholarship Honors | |
| Deceased Minister | February, 17 |
| J. Reford Wilson, | |
| Former Missions Director, Dies | March, 20 |
| Leadership Conference Captures | |
| Unity/Diversity | February, 20 |
| Leadership Conference Set for December | October, 23 |
| Messer Named Home Missions Director | September, 21 |
| Missionary Glenna Leatherbury | |
| Dies in Africa | January, 20 |
| New Hymn Book Off the Press | October, 24 |
| New Workers Enhance | |
| Bible College Faculty-Staff | December, 18 |
| Olford to Speak at FWBCC | |
| Pastors' Conference | June, 23 |
| Pastors Praise Preaching Conference | December, 19 |
| Randall House Upgrades Equipment | October, 24 |
| Spring Bible Conference set at FWBCC | March, 22 |
| Texas Steering Committee Meets | October, 22 |
| Two Faculty Positions Available at FWBCC | June, 23 |
| Youth Workers Attend Retreats | May, 22 |

Other

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| Canada District Meeting | October, 23 |
| CCC Enrollment | November, 21 |
| Hillsdale Enrollment | November, 20 |
| Hillsdale Receives Gift | May, 24 |
| International Meeting Set for October | October, 23 |
| Mexican National Association Meets | November, 20 |
| Missouri Assoc. Supports Together Way | May, 24 |
| SE Enrollment | November, 21 |
| SE Fall Revival | July, 20 |
| SE Missionary Conference | July, 19 |
| SE Spring Conference | January, 22 |



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RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY NEWS

Bomb Attack Follows Release of Book

BANGLADESH, India (EP)—A publishing house in Dhaka, Bangladesh was bombed by fundamentalist Muslims in late September, after the company released a book that highlighted the persecution faced by Bangladesh Christians.

Islamic fundamentalists, who have been credited with the bombing, have called on authorities to ban the book, *Press Matters: Are the Christians in Bangladesh Oppressed?*, Ecumenical News International said.

Released Sept. 17, the book—which includes articles by Baptist, Anglican and Roman Catholic leaders—describes the sufferings of the Christian community in various parts of the country. It describes the 1971 killing of 5,700 Christians, and the rapes of 1,500 Christian women during the emergence of Bangladesh as a state.

The book also contains hundreds of stories from towns and villages in Bangladesh, where Christian churches and hospitals have been burned to the ground.

Reports of several rapes of Christian women are also included in the controversial book, which claims that the police didn't bother to investigate all of the reported cases.

Islamic terrorists are credited by the authors for a number of attacks and murders of Christians in Bangladesh. According to the book, a Roman Catholic priest was attacked and seriously wounded while he was praying in his church near Dhaka.

The Bangladesh government is also criticized for failing to give visas to foreign Christian missionaries. At the same time, the authorities are using laws applying to non-governmental organizations to control church services. Mosques, however, are not affected by the laws, the authors claim.

Library Group's 'Banned Books Week' a Sham

WASHINGTON, D.C. (EP)—Before the American Library Association (ALA) began this year's "Banned Books Week" Sept. 23-30, the Family Research Council and Focus on the Family launched a preemptive strike, calling the ALA's charges of censorship a "sham."

"ALA's so-called 'censorship' report is unreliable, its rhetoric irresponsible, its research methods questionable, its conclusions flat-out wrong," charged Mark Maddox, senior director of Focus on the Family's public policy division, in a September 18 press conference.

Focus on the Family analyzed the ALA's list of "Books Challenged or Banned in 1994-95" in its report "Book Burning or Just Blowing Smoke." Focus on the Family investigated each alleged incident and discovered that no books were literally "banned" from public libraries, no books were banned from bookstores, and the remainder of the incidents characterized as

"censorship" by the ALA involved parents expressing concerns about the selection of age-appropriate materials in schools.

The ALA report documents 214 separate incidents involving 164 different book titles. Of the 214 incidents listed, only one led to a book being banned from a public library. And in that case—where the book was a paperback about women's sexual fantasies including lesbianism, group sex, rape and bestiality—the book was not literally banned. Instead, the library simply never purchased a replacement copy after the young daughter of a library patron who had borrowed the book accidentally dropped the paperback in dishwater.

There are 17,000 public library outlets in the U.S.; of the 214 "banning" incidents in the report, only 35 took place at public libraries. Four of those incidents involved material being transferred to another shelf in the library where they would be less likely to be encountered by children. Three incidents involved a vandal at one library who whited out sexually explicit passages and profane words in borrowed books. One case involved a book that was checked out and not returned by a patron who objected to its presence in the library.

In the other 26 public library incidents cited in the report, no action was taken against the "challenged" books—a patron or library employee simply voiced an objection.

A report from the Family Research Council (FRC) suggests that librarians, not parents, are to blame for removing most books from libraries. FRC studied a representative sample of American libraries to determine what fundamental classics are disappearing from library shelves.

"One of the best places to buy rare and beautiful books these days is the public library," explained FRC Senior Policy Advisor Chuck Donovan. "This institution, which once saw itself as the conservator of letters, seems to have undertaken a vigorous housecleaning in recent decades, relieving us of much of the mustiness of the past. Browse in any large used-book store and note how many classics you come across are actually discards from local library shelves. Have these books merely been replaced by newer editions, or are they disappearing—being 'canned'—from the permanent collections of cities and towns?"

Donovan called on citizens across America to strengthen and maintain their local library collections, noting, "History teaches us that when books disappear, centuries may pass before a civilization recovers."

Christian Faith Encourages Doctor to Stop Doing Abortions

JACKSON, MS (EP)—When Dr. Beverly McMillan speaks against abortion, she's giving an expert

opinion. In the mid-1970s, McMillan was medical director of a Mississippi abortion clinic.

"I first ran into abortion in 1969 when I was working at Cook County Hospital in Chicago," says McMillan. "I spent six months there as part of my OB/GYN rotation from the Mayo Clinic, where I was trained. Six weeks of that rotation was spent on the 'infected OB' ward, and it turned out that what I was doing was taking care of incomplete abortions from back alley abortionists."

McMillan explains that illegal abortionists would begin the abortion process, breaking the woman's water and perhaps beginning to remove the unborn child. Then the woman would be told to report to the emergency room for care, and there the partial abortion would be completed. McMillan saw 15-20 such patients a night.

"They came in scared and ashamed, and I thought at the time there must be a better way to handle this," recalls McMillan, who was raised Catholic but had abandoned her faith. That experience made it easy for her to decide to work at an abortion clinic when one opened in her town in 1975.

"I didn't mind doing it until I got saved," she says. "In 1976 everything in my life seemed to be going well, but I was miserable. When I had tried everything else, I decided to try God again."

She continues, "I started reading my Bible, and as I was reading the Bible I started getting more uncomfortable doing abortions. I eventually started going to church. It was a Protestant church that didn't particularly talk against abortion, but I felt after a while that the Holy Spirit was saying 'Choose you this day whom you will serve.' I decided to serve the Lord, and resigned from the clinic in 1978."

McMillan continues to operate a private OB/GYN practice, and is now an occasional pro-life speaker. She recalls, "I just ignored the babies when I was doing abortions. I knew it was human but it didn't matter. But doing abortions the way I was taught to do them I had to reconstruct the pieces later to be sure I had done a complete abortion. I could always find all the parts. There would be two arms, two legs. These are human bodies. I can certainly affirm the humanity of the unborn baby."

Though abortion may sometimes seem like a way out of a bad situation, McMillan says, "Women who have abortions are trading in one problem for a much bigger one. I think abortions damage people. They damage the babies, obviously, but they also damage women and men. I think we're raising up a generation of children who are basically abortion survivors, and as such have a real difficult time being civilized. Why should they care about the greater community of mankind, when their own parents could have killed them?" ■

The Bureau of Control



Jack Williams

It finally happened. The day I got back from the July national convention there was a letter waiting for me from the Bureau of Control. You can not imagine the thoughts that whizzed through my mind when I saw that return address.

Horrors! There really was a place called the Bureau of Control. They had my name. They knew where I lived. They had information, *very personal information*, about me. And they wanted something.

The Bureau of Control had acted in my best interests, they said, and wanted to inform me so that I could now do what they expected of me. I was a bit irritated.

Maybe it was their name more than what they did that bothered me. Frankly, it seemed downright un-American that a group of men could get together, call themselves something so highfalutin' as "Bureau of Control" and expect me to acquiesce without a whimper to whatever they did. The idea I got was that they knew what was best for me better than I did.

All right, so they caught me on a bad day. And, yes, I was cranky and probably short-tempered. But it seems there's always a group jumping up to decide things for people who disagree with them. You see it every day. And the issue is the same—some want control over everybody else in a specific area.

The church is vulnerable to such tactics. You don't have to look far to find examples of the opinionated trying to snooker the liberated into giving up some of their liberty.

For instance, after the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas returned to Antioch and reported the miraculous spread of the Gos-

pel among the Gentiles. What an incredible story of God's grace delivering people from the chains and darkness of sin. There had never been anything like it.

But Paul and Barnabas had not been back in Antioch long before there was a knock at the door. It was the Bureau of Control (Acts 15:1). Don't laugh. Those fellows had taken a look at some of Paul's converts and decided that grace was not enough to keep the Gentiles saved. They spoke right up and said that God also required circumcision for salvation.

It didn't matter to them that the Gospel carried no such restriction. The Bureau of Control was sincere in their concerns. They quoted Moses as a proof-text and chipped away at salvation by faith.

They held so tenaciously to the idea that Gentile converts must be circumcised that they publicly debated the Apostle Paul. They were quite willing to split the New Testament Church over their opinions. They almost did.

The point being that like all Bureaus of Control, the one in Acts 15 caused a lot of grief over nothing. They had a narrowly-focused comfort zone. They were one-dimensional. They were threatened by change from law to grace. They were closed-minded. They tried to silence dissent. They created a problem where none existed.

This is serious business when any group seeks to force its viewpoint on others. The Church in Acts had a choice—acquiescence or confrontation. They chose confrontation. Paul refused to abandon salvation by grace and substitute just enough law keeping to satisfy the fears of the Judaizers.

Did Paul overreact? After all, the Judaizers only wanted to add circumcision as necessary for salvation. No, Paul saw it for what it was—another Gospel. He also knew that tomorrow they would be back with a longer list. There are always those who think the Holy Spirit needs their help ruling the lives of saved men.

Let the record speak. History clearly marks the Judaizers as wrong, wrong, wrong. Their ability to powerfully articulate, their eagerness to spark debate, their maneuverings at church conferences, their willingness to badger leaders, their hostility and loud, public chest beating—None of it made their cause the cause of God.

When we start drawing arbitrary lines in the theological sand, there is no end to it. Those who do the most to keep the Church pure are not necessarily the ones who build the highest fences around it. That's God's job. He built an invisible fence called grace in the heart of every believer, strung it on posts of liberty and declared it sufficient.

The problem with the Bureau of Control is that if you disagree with them, they don't have a sense of humor about it. They don't negotiate. They threaten to burn down the house. And sometimes they do. But when you destroy your own house, where do you live?

The Bureau of Control that wrote to me spoke for American Express. The one that accosted Paul and Barnabas thought they spoke for God. If a Bureau of Control operates in your area, offers to speak for you and pressures you to get in line, do what President Ronald Reagan suggested. Just say no. ■

CONTACT

P. O. Box 5002

Antioch, Tennessee 37011-5002

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