

AUGUST 1999

CONTACT

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE WILL BAPTISTS



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**Pastor
Appreciation**
.....

Run for Your Life!
.....

**Bi-Vocational
Pastors**
.....

Best Job in Town
.....

Satchmo Principle

INSIDE

AUGUST 1999

VOLUME 46, NO. 8

ARTICLES

4 Preacher, Run for Your Life!

He strikes out. He can't shoot. He double faults. But one pastor learned early to value regular exercise.

6 The Challenge of a Bi-Vocational Pastorate

They don't get much publicity. Still half the Free Will Baptist pastors punch a clock Monday through Friday. They work two jobs.

8 The Best Job in Town

A pastor takes a long look at the ministry and what it means to shepherd a flock.

10 Six Times to Call the Pastor

A handy guide for members who need the pastor and wonder when to call.

12 What I Wish I'd Known Before I Quit

Nine hard-learned lessons that may change your life.

14 A Small Church with a Big Heart

When their pastor died, a congregation told his widow to stay in the parsonage.

15 Profile of a Pastor

A church member interviews her pastor.

COLUMNS

3 The Secretary Speaks

Making a Minister

23 The Department Pages

26 Green Tree Bible Study

The "News" is Good

27 Especially for Young Preachers

Ministerial Ethics

28 Youth Update

30 Top Shelf

31 Briefcase

The Satchmo Principle

NEWS

16 Free Will Baptist Newsfront

Florida State Association
New Mexico District Association
Wendell Walley Named CCC President
FWBBC Graduates 64
College Honors Picirillis
New FWBBC Student Officers
Oklahoma Church Dedication
Marberry to Lead Seminary
California State Association
Michigan State Association

21 Currently

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Melvin Worthington

Making a Minister

The shortage of ministerial and missionary candidates in Free Will Baptist colleges poses a serious problem. In order to have pastors for existing churches and for new churches to be planted, we need more personnel. We might begin by heeding the Lord's command, "Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth laborers into his harvest" (Matt. 9:38).

Statistical data for 1997 indicates that ordained Free Will Baptist ministers number 4,244, while licensed ministers total 560. That's 4,804 ordained and licensed ministers. Yet, some churches can not find pastors. Perhaps the reason this shortage exists is that we have neglected to emphasize the value of pastoral ministry. Perhaps we have forgotten that the work of the pastor is a holy and honorable work.

Only God can call, commission and charge those who would assume pastoral work. Paul acknowledged that God had made him a minister (Col. 1:23, 25). God placed Paul in the ministry, having prepared him for it. The Lord is still placing prepared pastors in the ministry. Paul did not have in mind becoming a minister. He was made a minister.

Paul serves as a model for all ministers. He clearly understood the position, process and product of pastoral ministry. Effective, efficient and enthusiastic pastoral ministry commences with the proper concept of the pastoral office, obligation and opportunities.

Pastoral Office

The pastoral office is a noble and

needed office. Paul reminds Timothy that those who desire the office of a bishop desire a good work. The pastoral office is a *divine office*. God ordered this office for the good of the Church. One of the offices in the Church is that of pastor-teacher: the pastoral office.

The pastoral office is a *distinct office*. This office is like none other. God established it as a distinct office and provided the criteria and credentials for those individuals who would man it.

The pastoral office is a *designed office*. Pastors do not determine the work of the office; God has given implicit instructions for its operation.

Pastoral Obligation

The pastoral obligation includes *preaching the truth*. Barnes notes, "It is their privilege to make known to men the most glorious truths that can come before the human mind; truths which were hid from ages and generations, but which are now revealed by the gospel. These great truths are intrusted to the ministry to explain and defend, and are by them to be

carried around the world."

The pastoral obligation also includes *practicing the truth*. This obligation can not be shirked or shunned. When pastors do not practice the truth, they bring reproach and rebuke on the Christian community.

The pastoral obligation includes *preserving the truth*. Paul reminds Timothy that in the last days many would depart from the faith and follow fables and doctrines of devils. In the midst of such perilous times, Timothy was charged, "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:2).

Pastoral Opportunities

The pastor has unique opportunities for evangelism, education, edification and encouragement while in the process of perfecting the saints for the work of the ministry. Barnes says, "In such a work it is a privilege to exhaust our strength; in the performance of the duties of such an office it is an honor to be permitted to wear out life itself. Doing this, a man when he comes to die will feel that he has not lived in vain; and whatever self-denial he may practice in it; however much comfort, or however many friends he may forsake, all these things will give him no pang of regret when from a bed of death he looks out on the eternal world."

Pastors who are called and commissioned by God will sense the call, submit to the commission, honor the charge and stay the course. May this be true of Free Will Baptist pastors. ■

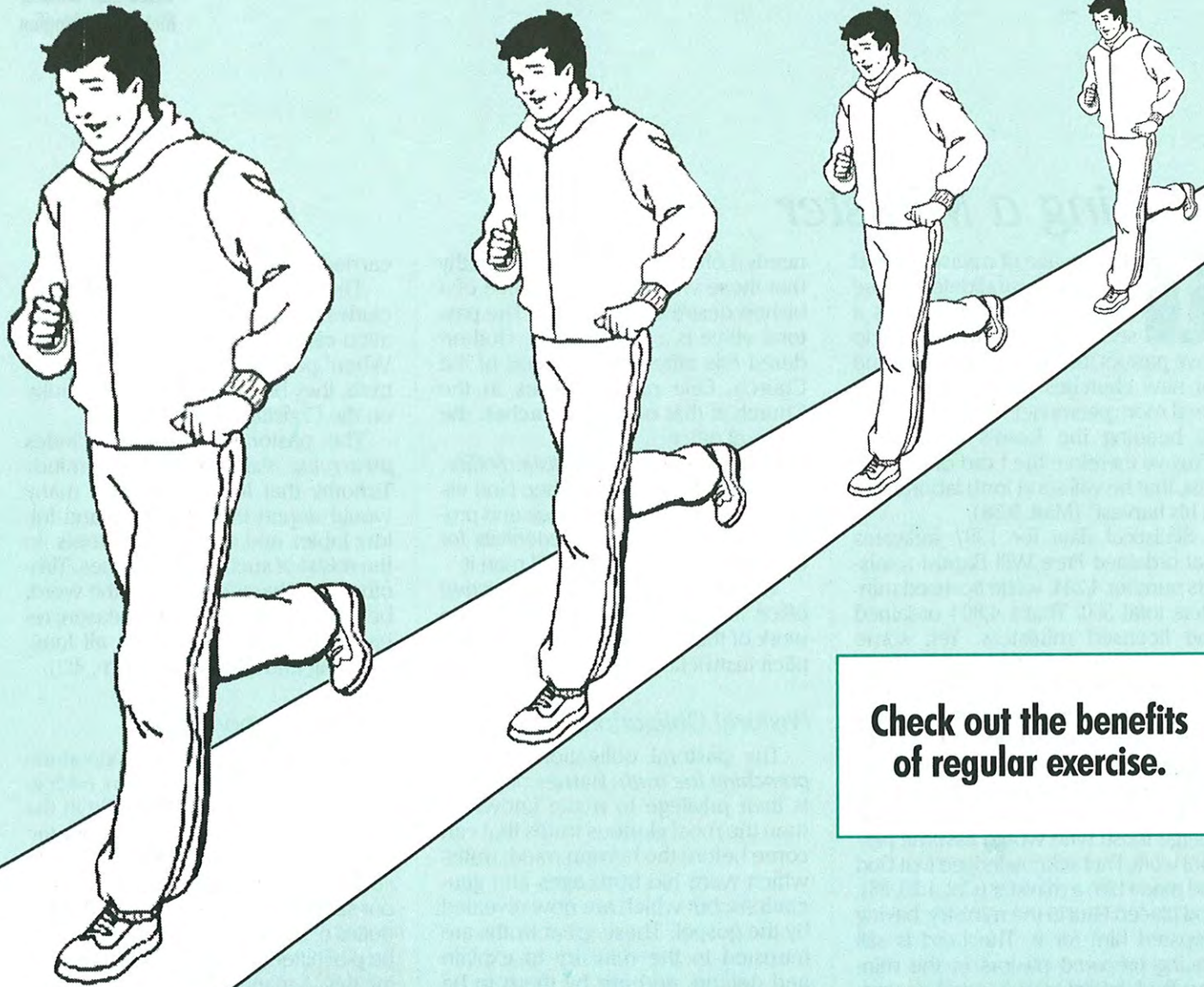
The Secretary's Schedule

August 1999

- 4-5 Arkansas State Association
- 6-8 Mexican National Association
- 12-14 CMP Board Meeting/
Writing Conclave
Toronto, Canada

Preacher, Run for Your Life!

By Robert J. Morgan



Check out the benefits of regular exercise.

What would you think of a pastor who allowed his church buildings to crumble? Shattered windows. Peeling paint. Leaking roof. Broken sidewalk. Lawn gone to seed.

Well, then, what of a preacher who lets the temple of the Holy Spirit deteriorate? His body? Paul wrote that our greatest pursuit is the exercise of godliness, but "bodily exer-

cise" also has its place.

The biblical heroes were fit. Consider Elijah's running, Jonathan's archery, Samson's body-building, Jacob's wrestling and Daniel's healthy diet. Apparently Christ Himself had a strong physique, able to walk long distances, work long hours and bear great pain. Paul, too, was fit enough to tread water a day and a night in the deep.

Not that we all have to be athletes.

Take me, for example. I can't shoot, sprint, skate or ski. I'm a terrible dribbler, and I can't hit one basket out of 10 from the free throw line. I can't pitch, punt, hit or catch. I'm even hopeless at ping-pong and putt-putt.

I've tried hard, but I just strike out. Fumble the ball. Take the count. Foul out. Finish last. Double fault. Don't make it to first base. When I went

skiing last year in the Rockies, I had to be rescued by the snow patrol.

But, having learned how to walk and run as a child, I can still stay in shape. We don't have to be Michael Jordans to keep physically toned. Most of us can take the stairs, mow the lawn or pedal away on the stationary bike.

Bobby Bowers, South Carolina pastor, faithfully visits a gym near his house, lifting weights one day and swimming the next. He has a lot of stamina under his thatch of gray hair.

Ministry, after all, involves much sedentary activity—reading, studying, counseling, attending meetings, doing office work. Much of it is stressful.

"To sit long in one posture, pouring over a book or pushing a quill," Charles Spurgeon wrote, "is in itself a taxing of nature; but add to this a badly ventilated chamber, a body which has long been without muscular exercise, and a heart burdened with many cares, and we have all the elements for a seething cauldron of despair."

Spurgeon was right. I have a cardiac specialist in my church who recently warned me that clergymen are among the highest-risk groups he sees, ranking just below fire fighters.

Dr. Paul Gentuso said that as he traveled around our denomination on missionary deputation, staying in homes of many pastors, he found most of them suffering various ills. "I hardly saw a healthy pastor," he said.

Perhaps they were neglecting their exercise.

Why Exercise?

More Productive

Exercise makes us more productive in Christian service. Some people think exercise tires them out, but our fatigue is more often caused by nervous strain than by physical exertion. Exercise provides a way of relieving our bodies of that daily stress and improving their ability to deliver and utilize oxygen. By strengthening the heart, circulatory and respiratory systems, we can perform more work with less effort.

Cardiologist James Rippe, in a survey of top executives, found that two out of three exercise regularly. "For most," he wrote, "regular exercise is taken as seriously as any other appointment on their calendar. The link

between a high level of fitness and increased energy, stamina and productivity is critical to them."

Critics said that Italian opera tenor, Luciano Pavarotti, 63, was past his prime, his voice cracking, his legs buckling, his lungs faltering. But Pavarotti began a daily regimen of swimming, weight training and walking, plus a new low-fat diet. He shed over 50 pounds, and his magnificent voice is returning full force.

"If you are not healthy," he said, "you are not a good singer."

I wonder if the same holds true for preachers?

More Years

Exercise also gives us more years to serve the Lord. Dr. William J. Evans of Tufts University, who spent years documenting the health benefits in well-rounded exercise programs, claims that such programs can postpone—even reverse—many of the declines once considered an inevitable part of aging, like shriveled muscles, frail bones and clogged arteries.

Better Testimony

Exercise gives us a better testimony. In two national studies, sociologist Kenneth Ferraro of Purdue University found that religious people in America are fatter than those who aren't. He was surprised by that, for he had expected to find Christians more moderate in their habits since the Bible portrays gluttony as a moral weakness.

But he concluded that, alas, "... many firm believers do not have firm bodies."

Plus . . . Plus . . .

Exercise also helps us sleep better at night, worry less by day, and it reduces doctor's bills. When California pastor Francis Boyle was in his 50s, he was so ill with hypertension that his doctors advised him to retire. He had a rapid heart rate, high blood-pressure and other stress-related problems.

Boyle decided to start exercising instead. "Now I get up before daylight three days a week and walk for an hour at a pace that makes everything work in my body. I swing my arms so that the blood circulates all over. Then

I do my old army calisthenics, some yard work and come in to start my day. I feel better at 75 than I ever did at 55."

Why Not Begin Now?

Start with something easy, make a schedule for yourself and stick with it—walking a quarter-mile, jogging around the block, doing a half-dozen push-ups on the bedroom floor. Slowly increase till you've established a half-hour routine three or four times a week.

Pastor Eddie Hopkins started walking around the block with his wife. He graduated to jogging, then to running, up to four miles a day. Today he still covers four miles, but he's back to a walking pace. "When you get into the routine," he said, "it just becomes part of you."

Running and walking are easy for me because they require only a good pair of shoes. But some days I mow the lawn, visit the health club or go hiking. I'd like to buy a good bicycle, and I'm thinking about roller-blading, having been inspired by MK Kevin Bishop in Japan.

I've even considered golf, but I'm suspicious of the health benefits of chasing little white balls in motorized carts.

But enough of me. What about you? Why not put this article down right now . . .

. . . and take a good, brisk walk. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Robert J. Morgan pastors Donelson Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

The Challenge of a Bi-Vocational Pastorate

By Randy Bryant



Challenge! That word describes any ministry, but 40 to 50 percent of our pastors know a special challenge. These men face the unique demands of the bi-vocational pastorate.

Challenge in Concept

The bi-vocational pastor faces a challenge with the concept itself. Does "bi-vocational" really mean "part-time"? No! "Part-time" means that you

are a church's pastor part of the time. That term originated when pastors served a given church only on certain Sundays, maybe the first and third, or second and fourth.

A bi-vocational pastor is a full-time

pastor who holds down another job to support his family. I am a full-time pastor who works an additional job 40 hours a week while fulfilling my God-given call to the ministry—a pastor who works another job on the side, not a businessman who pastors on the side.

The average church member has no idea what is required to be a “full-time” pastor and hold down an outside job. What they do know is that they want their pastor available in times of crisis, illness and times of sorrow. They deserve no less than this and the bi-vocational pastor’s challenge is to be there when needed.

The pastor must be creative in his scheduling—available to his people while dependable and honest with his secular employer.

Fellow pastors schedule many of their activities, meetings and programs during the day when bi-vocational men can not attend. This, many times, is just a matter of not being aware of the bi-vocational pastor’s schedule. In truth, the pastor working a second job probably needs the fellowship and “feeding” available at many retreats and conferences more than anyone since his schedule rarely includes free days for this type of event.

Sometimes, the bi-vocational pastor is not viewed as a “real” pastor and it takes special explanations to work with others such as hospital chaplains, funeral directors and local ministerial associations.

Does our denomination grasp the concept? Our reporting forms ask whether the pastor is “full-time” or “part-time.” Some church clerks mark “full-time” because their pastor is there every Sunday even though he works another job. The numbers may be higher than we realize.

Challenge of the Clock

Every pastor struggles to find enough time to accomplish all that needs doing. When you add a 40-hour week to the schedule of the average pastor, you can see how the challenge to attend the children’s school functions and ball games, take your wife out to dinner, participate in local ministry efforts like Crisis Pregnancy Centers or nursing homes, and serve in denominational positions be-

comes nearly impossible.

However, if God has called you into the ministry, blessed you with certain gifts and also directed that you should pastor a church that requires you to work a second job, you have to find a way to do it.

Obviously, some things have to be sacrificed. Can it be your family? No. Can it be your church members? No. Can it be people in your town that need ministering to? Probably not. Can it be that you will not be able to serve your denomination at the district, state or national levels? Perhaps, perhaps not.

The bi-vocational pastor must become a master of prioritizing. There are some things only he can do. No one else can prepare his sermons, no one else can prepare his Sunday School lessons, and no one else can be his members’ pastor in times of crisis or illness.

However, some visits can be made by others in the church. Sometimes phone calls will have to suffice instead of home visits. Day time visits with shut-ins or activities with seniors groups in the church may not happen. This may not be the ideal, and it may not be the way he would choose to function, but it is reality.

There may need to be trade-offs with a secular boss in order to be at the hospital for Mrs. Church Member’s middle-of-the-week, middle-of-the-day surgery. Sometimes it’s tough to balance giving the secular boss your best and giving your members the time they need. It’s not a good testimony to shortchange the boss, and doing church work on his time is not fair to him. God is faithful, however, and will provide a way to accomplish what He has called you to do.

Compromises may need to be made with your family. Vacations may have to be an activity at the beginning or end of the trip to the national convention. You may have to get creative in finding time with your wife.

You may not be able to serve on local boards or attend those interesting seminars for pastors held on weekdays. Going to dinner with a family in your church on a weeknight may mean less sleep that night because you still have a sermon to prepare.

Benefits for the Bi-Vocational Pastor

It’s not a sacrifice though. One positive aspect is the opportunity to minister to people where you work. There will be occasions to minister to co-workers and bosses who attend other churches but need encouragement or advice. They see you every day, reacting in various situations, and after gaining their confidence, you will have opportunities to minister. They may never attend your church, but you can influence them positively for the Lord.

Sermon ideas and illustrations abound. Sometimes pastors are accused of not living in the real world, being disconnected from real people and their struggles. By being out there where they are every day, you experience and understand what they are facing. You see their struggles firsthand, and can speak to them.

Finally, the bi-vocational pastor will probably be able to make enough money to care for his family. He may have health insurance or retirement plans provided by his secular job. Some smaller churches would not have a pastor if he could not supplement his earnings with a secular job.

The bi-vocational pastorate is unique and challenging. It’s neither glamorous nor ideal, and many young ministers will be open only to “full-time” works. However, smaller churches must have pastors, too. God wants them to have a shepherd, to be cared for and taught just like larger churches. The bi-vocational pastor is essential to the existence of our denomination. It is a challenge that our men must rise to meet, accept and perform by the grace of God. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Randy Bryant pastors Ryanwood Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in Vero Beach, Florida. He is a bi-vocational minister and serves as clerk of the Florida State Association.

Who has the best job in town? The answer may surprise you.

The Best Job in Town

By Mike Mounts



Before you is a message you have thoroughly prepared. You have prayed and wept over it—knowing this is the message that will make a difference. You mount the pulpit with conviction—and with pastoral passion, you pour into the lives of your people the things God has poured into you—and your people just sit there, as if to say, “So what?”

You pastor a congregation with a good cross section of members. You

are seeking a balance in worship style and ministry methods—contemporary enough to move your congregation into the 21st century, yet traditional enough to interest those of a more traditional and conservative background.

The younger generation says you aren't moving fast enough, while the older ones are saying, “Things aren't like they used to be.”

You are either in the middle of or have just concluded a series on stewardship. Instead of going up, the offer-

ings go down! Folks are upset, because all you do is talk about money (so they say).

You are pastor, teacher, preacher, equipper, counselor, motivator, administrator, moderator, visionary, peace maker and diplomat. The pastor wears so many hats, yet in many churches, is so underpaid.

You live in a fishbowl. You and your family are regularly under the microscope. You and your motives are often misunderstood.

If you are a pastor, you have experienced many or all these situations. If you are just entering the ministry, sooner or later you too will encounter them. This is not pastoral pessimism, but reality.

Any man entering the ministry, viewing it through rose-colored glasses, is destined for major disappointment. The man who thinks it will bring him prestige, popularity, power and possessions certainly has a warped view of the ministry.

So with such challenges, criticism and circumstances, how can the pastor honestly be the best job in town?

Call of God

The call of God on a man's life makes it the best job in town. There is no higher or holier calling than to be an official herald of the King of kings. According to Ephesians 4:11, God has sovereignly given specially-gifted men as leaders in the Church, and among those is the pastor.

The call to the ministry is a grace gift, completely undeserved. The call to the ministry is also a victory gift, reminding us of the decisive victory Christ has won. Every called man of God should be reminded that a great price was paid making his ministry possible: Christ's death on the cross.

In I Timothy 3:1-13, Paul gives the qualifications for Church leaders, and describes the call to the ministry in verse one. The first word for "desire" suggests an external desire. A man called to the ministry will have an intense desire to be a student of God's Word, continually seeking to sharpen his preaching and teaching skills in preparation as well as presentation.

The second word for "desireth" suggests an internal drive or desire. Both are descriptive of the called man of God.

This desire is described through the words of Jeremiah when he said, "... But His word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" (Jer. 20:9b).

No wonder Paul describes this calling as a "good work" (I Tim. 3:1), and no wonder Charles Spurgeon said, "If God calls you to the ministry, don't stoop to be a king." It is a noble, excellent and honorable work.

Contents of God's Word

The contents of God's Word assure the called man of God that his message is of divine origin. The Word of God, apart from any proclamation, is in itself constantly and actively alive—it is powerful, energizing and operative (Heb. 4:12a).

Therefore, the man of God, through careful and prayerful preparation, can mount the pulpit, and with great clarity and conviction proclaim the inerrant and inspired Word of God. Without apology, the man of God can use Bible-centered counseling to "strengthen the weak, encourage the afflicted (and) admonish the erring." The very nature of God's Word guarantees a productive and prosperous return (Isa. 55:10-11).

Consequences of Ministry

The consequences of the ministry raise the ministry to a much higher level than a vocation or career. The man of God is dealing with eternal souls with an eternal destiny: Heaven or Hell. What joyous celebration when a sinner is saved! What intense sorrow when a sinner resists and rejects the Savior.

It is especially encouraging to the pastor when he sees the flock of God assimilating and applying the Word of God to their lives—growing, maturing and conforming to the image of Christ.

Paul understood the sense of urgency in preaching the gospel, and the consequences of "not" preaching the gospel. He said, "Woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel" (I Cor. 9:16b).

The called man of God must never forget the call of God on his life. If he trifles with the gifts and calling of God, the consequences are severe, not only affecting himself, but others also. That's why it is extremely important for the man of God to continually "rekindle" or "stir up the gift of God" (II Tim. 1:6).

Consummation of All Things

The consummation of all things enables the minister to view his ministry with eternity in mind. If anyone should know that God works from-and-for eternity, it would be the called man of God. All the challenges, criticism and circumstances will never compare

with the eternal treasures laid up in Heaven through faithful ministry.

Just as the farmer sows seed and patiently waits for the harvest of precious fruit, so the called man of God faithfully sows the incorruptible seed of God's Word, and patiently awaits the harvest of precious souls. The truth of the matter is, the full harvest is yet to be revealed. One day the Father will commend the faithful and called man of God with these words: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." Yes, it is the best job in town! ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Mike Mounts pastors Westerville Free Will Baptist Church in Westerville, Ohio.

What to Get the Pastor?

- Life-time subscription to *Contact*
- New suit
- Car allowance
- Extra week of vacation
- Full-time salary
- Put cash in his retirement fund
- National Convention Trip



A handy guide for members who need the pastor.

Six Times to Call the Pastor

By Ronnie Adkins

A good pastor wants to be available to the flock that God has given him. He accepts the fact that he is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A sense of satisfaction comes from being used of God to minister in times of need.

It is never a burden to be called by a member who has a problem. A pastor appreciates those who guard against wasting his time, but is never too busy for ministry. That is what God has called him to do.

The members of the flock sometime hesitate or neglect to call on their shepherd in time of need. Some think they are a bother and do not call. Others assume the pastor should just know, as if by divine revelation.

Others use their situations as popularity tests to see how quickly word spreads on its own. If a pastor fails to minister during these times, he is often criticized and condemned, even though he was not aware of the need.

The truth is, in order for a pastor to know where and when he is (and is not) needed, someone must tell him. *He can't go if he doesn't know.* You could be a great help to your pastor by making a phone call. Here are some times you should call your pastor:

Times of Sickness

If you want a visit from your pastor during times of sickness, call him. Don't assume someone else will tell him. If you are too sick to make the call, request a family member to do it for you. Also, don't feel bad for not calling if you don't like to be bothered when you are sick. Your pastor will understand. He wants to be a pastor, not a "pester."

By the way, don't forget to call the pastor when you go home from the hospital. Hundreds of miles are put on a pastor's car going to visit church members who have been released and didn't let him know.

Times of Struggle

All of us fight battles from time to time. We have personal, spiritual, marital, financial, emotional and parental struggles. During those difficult times, it is often a help to receive

confidential counseling, prayer and support from the pastor.

The devil seeks to isolate us from those who can help and strengthen us during times of trial. Don't let him talk you out of calling your pastor. Don't let him cause you to postpone calling until it's too late to help. The pastor is a valuable resource. Remember, he is the shepherd God gave you for times of struggle.

Times of Surgery

If you want your pastor with you throughout surgery, let him know. Give him exact dates and times as soon as you can so he can plan ahead. Give him the information at a time when he can write it down.

It's best to call him at home or at the church office. It may slip from his memory if you hastily tell him at the end of a church service. Let him know if your surgery has been canceled or rescheduled.

Maybe you would like him to be there before surgery and have a word of prayer, then leave so he can

take care of other responsibilities. If you'd rather have your privacy, that's all right, too. Don't make your pastor have to guess which option you prefer. He might guess wrong.

Times of Study

If you run across something in your study of the scriptures that you don't understand or is confusing, call the pastor. He has given his life to the Word. Take advantage of his many hours of study and put them to work for you. He will be glad to help. Your questions may cause him to have to dig a little deeper.

Times of Sorrow

Whenever death or some other sorrow of life comes your way, call the pastor. Let him know as soon as possible. He is there for you.

Times of Success

Don't just call the pastor during bad, bitter or burdensome times. Call him in times of blessing. He hears so

many bad things, it is refreshing to hear good things. Share with your pastor the good things God is doing in your life. He will rejoice with you. A burden shared is halved. A blessing shared is doubled.

You can be a real help and blessing to your pastor just by taking the time to make a simple call. It may not seem like much, but it's very important. What will you do: criticize, condemn or call? It's your call! ■

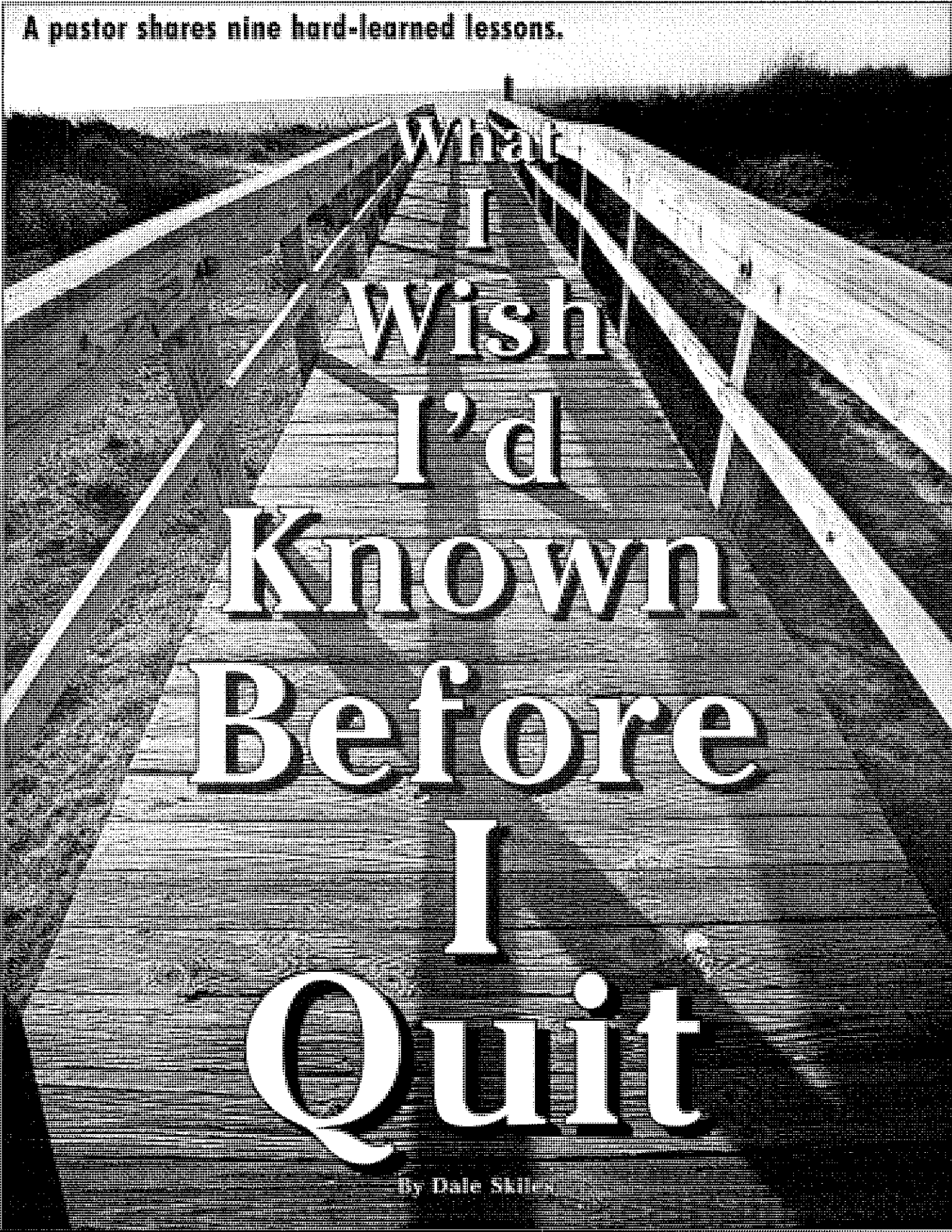


ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Ronnie Adkins pastors First Free Will Baptist Church in Erwin, Tennessee.

BEYOND BELIEF



A pastor shares nine hard-learned lessons.



What
I
Wish
I'd
Known
Before
I
Quit

By Dale Skiles

In 1962, I moved to this promising community to start a church. The first setback came immediately. I expected 40 people for the inaugural worship service; only 14 showed up. Not until I decided to leave did our church constantly average 40 in attendance.

I dreamed of reaching the masses; we reached only a few. I dreamed of being sought as an expert in church growth; I was sought only by my wife for a ride home from work.

I dreamed of initiating creative ministries; I had cerebral lock-up soon after I took the position.

I imagined nice, respectable families joining my church; our first addition was a young woman who had recently completed a tour of duty as an exotic dancer. I wanted to need no one; I grew deeply infected with need.

So I quit. I walked into the morning service and said, "I can't do this anymore." Since then, I've learned some powerful lessons—lessons I wish I had known before I quit.

1 I wish I had known how much people loved me. In my hurt I didn't realize I was about to hurt others by quitting. Out of mutual pain over my resignation, I finally realized how much my flock loved me. It astounded me. The day I resigned I began to learn how much people loved me for who I was, not what I did.

2 I wish I'd known how much I loved them. After my resignation, the congregation met in our home to decide how it would carry on. That night, I couldn't believe how much I loved those people.

The same folks I'd been frustrated with, and blamed for my lack of success, I now grieved over losing. It was like a weird divorce. I thought I would be free. Instead I discovered unbreakable chains of love for my people. The bonds of affection had been there all along; I detected them only when I tried to break free from them.

3 I wish I'd known how much good was happening. People I thought were unwilling to step up to ministry did so as soon as I got out of their way. Folks I thought would never come into a relationship with God did because of seeds planted during my ministry. People I thought didn't like me, who left the church before I quit, called and wrote letters expressing how much they had benefitted from my ministry.

4 I wish I had known there were alternatives to quitting. One smart thing I did was share my decisions with three men in my church a week before I quit. What I didn't do was listen to them. They tried to tell me there were other ways to handle my frustrations besides quitting.

Take a leave of absence. What I didn't know was that because most churches really do love their pastors, they would much prefer to work out a time of absence for healing, rather than go through the divorce-and-remarriage process.

Talk with other pastors. Others have been through the same frustrations. I should have talked with them.

Work maintenance into the weekly routine. Many resignations trace to a lack of exercise and rest. I should have given more attention to personal maintenance.

5 I wish I'd known the importance of keeping sharp. For years I thought I couldn't afford conferences and books. I know now that I cannot afford to go without

them.

I wish I had known what a difference sharpening my mental ax could have made. Good conferences and books are ways God might have chosen to meet my needs.

6 I wish I'd known what God had accomplished through me. What I labeled as failure was not that at all. Success is being obedient to God; failure is the opposite.

I became prouder of that first work as the years go by. I am amazed that God used me to draw together some precious people when there was absolutely no reason for them to gather with me in the first place.

7 I wish I'd known how much inappropriate pride was involved. I have to say it: Much of my motive for resigning issued from pride. Pride prevented me from talking to others, from considering options, from taking time off, from exercising or from just falling apart in the arms of a brother who might have cared what was happening to me.

8 I wish I'd known how hard ministry really is. It took me many years to cut through the cliches that ministry is one big joy.

A few years back I re-read Paul's letters to Timothy. I circled the verbs in those letters, "endure, persevere, work hard, train, study, take pains." These words of commitment and sacrifice frequently produced joy as a by-product. But often ministry is simply hard. That is normal. My experience was normal.

9 I wish I'd known there is no perfect place. What we see is never what we get when considering a new ministry. If that other church were perfect, it wouldn't be pastor-less.

Many problems in the ministry are common to every church, because people are basically the same wherever you go. If I'd known then what I know now, I most likely would have fertilized and cultivated where I was, rather than uprooting and replanting somewhere else. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Reverend Dale Skiles pastors South Fremont Free Will Baptist Church in Springfield, Missouri, where he has served since 1980.

Reprinted by permission from *The Free Will Baptist Gem*, September 1998 issue.

What one church did when
the pastor died.

A Small Church with a Big Heart

By Elaine Mantooth Parker

There is a little country church in southeast Oklahoma called Watermill Free Will Baptist Church. It is a small church with the biggest heart I have ever known. God must have big blessings for this church and its pastor.

My father, Reverend Bob Mantooth, pastored the church until Sunday morning, September 28, 1997, when the Lord called him home. My mother is Mrs. Edna Mantooth, a true servant and longtime friend of Jesus Christ. The church rallied to her side beginning that day.

The members have been there for her ever since, as they were for both Dad and Mom while he was living.

This wonderful church furnishes a house for Mom to live in, takes care of her financially by giving her \$100 per week and they help her in other ways. They have been so good to her since Dad died.

There is always someone to take her wherever she needs to go. They never leave her alone on her birthday, the anniversary of Dad's death, or the painful day of the anniversary of her wedding. They are so thoughtful. I am so grateful.

The church now has a new pastor, Reverend Bob Thornburg, who has encouraged them in this endeavor. He has taken the church to new heights, and I know that God will bless him and his family because of his faithfulness and dedication.

I thank the Lord continually for the pastor and church members. It makes me realize that we all should be more considerate. There are many widowed pastors' wives and maybe a few retired preachers who are possibly in great need.

The older generation has given their all, and

now many of them have nothing. I know that our God will supply their needs, but maybe we should realize it is time for us to come to the aid of the older people around us.

Maybe your church has widows and widowers who are in need. Medicine for these people is so expensive that some must decide whether to buy food or pay for their medication. Take a look around and pick out someone to help.

That is what we are doing in our church here in Shreveport, and we have Watermill Free Will Baptist Church to thank for being an example to us.

Also, ministers, please think about getting a life insurance policy for your wife and children. Be prepared. Our families suffer so much pain at the loss of a loved one, and then the financial pressures come. It can be devastating. Prepare your family while you can.

I wish every Free Will Baptist church had the loving attitude of Watermill Free Will Baptist Church in Valliant, Oklahoma. Thanks to them, Mom is surrounded by caring friends. ■



ABOUT THE WRITER: Mrs. Elaine Parker is the wife of home missionary Ron Parker. The Parkers lead Heritage Free Will Baptist Mission in Shreveport, Louisiana.

A church member interviews her pastor.

Profile of a Pastor

By Joanne Less

The supreme responsibility of the pastor is to preach the Word. This was Paul's admonition to young Timothy (II Tim. 4:2). He also has a sacred obligation to shepherd the flock he is given (John 10:11-14).

In a recent interview with the Rev. Milton Worthington, pastor of Central FWB Church in Royal Oak, Michigan, I asked what he enjoyed most about his ministry. He replied, "Preaching—the preparation and proclamation of Bible truth."

The demands upon a pastor's time require a tremendous reservoir of energy. "God supplies the energy," came his response. Adding "temperament, the honing of physical skills in farming, sports, eating properly and rest." About rest he emphasized, "I rest in the work, not away from the work; I enjoy the work."

What about peaks and valleys in your efforts to counsel parishioners? "Limited success," he replied. "Usually, people don't want the truth, they want a treatment. The valleys in counseling are marked by people's expectations which lead to a valley. However, counseling is rewarding because I get to know the people. But success in counseling is ultimately determined by their decision."

Rev. Worthington believes "... all things work together for good to them that love God (Rom. 8:28). Everything is for His glory and our good." Thus, when asked if he ever felt discouraged enough during his career to think about leaving the ministry, he resolutely stated, "The call to preach is irreversible."

Each move made by this pastor when he took the call to other churches before coming to Central 23 years ago were opportunities, open doors to advance God's ministry. To amplify, Worthington compared pastoring a

church to the parts of a puzzle. The parts, he suggests, are seldom pleasant, but ultimately they are meaningful to the divine purpose of the ministry. "Good times far outweigh the bad."

When asked about a specific goal he would like to accomplish in the future, Worthington articulated, "My immediate goal is to conclude my ministry in the local church with consistency and consecration."

Enlarging upon his ultimate goal, he outlined these: To do writing in regard to Bible study, i.e. a survey of the scriptures, that is briefing the Bible by books in conjunction with his brother, Dr. Melvin Worthington.

With his usual positive demeanor, he added, "I want to remain involved and interested in local, state, national as well as international Free Will Baptist work—the ministry at large."

When speaking of young pastors, his assertion came again of the necessity of God's calling into the ministry.

What guideline would you impart to young men starting out as church pastors today?

First, he said, "Make sure as to your call to the ministry by a full exploration. There should be an intelligent understanding of God's call because it is irrevocable and irreversible. To the measure a young man understands that, he will stay the course."

Second, he directed his attention to preparation. "The quality of preparation will determine the duration and quality of service. Both the formal—that is, schooling, degrees and the informal preparation are vitally important." Here Worthington outlined carefully the role of informal preparation to mean insight provided by God, reading the Word, the deacons of the local church, lay leadership, also raising a family.

The pastor's parting commentary came with this analogy between pastoring and farming, wisdom learned

from his father.

"He taught me that farming is seasonal. You plant in the spring, cultivate in the summer and harvest in the fall. Whether or not you get a good crop depends on the circumstances of the weather. The key element here is patience. As Paul admonished, 'God always gives the increase' (I Cor. 3:7b). The final outcome rests in the delicate balance of God's sovereign work and human responsibility."

Geoffrey Chaucer, 14th century English writer of the classic *Canterbury Tales*, described the ideal parson of a local church. From his Prologue the bard portrays a man of integrity, faithfully teaching the gospel:

... a humble parson of a town,
But rich was he in holy thought and work.
He also was a learned man, a cleric (scholar).
That would Christ's holy gospel truly preach;
His parish-folk devoutly would he teach.
He was benign, and wondrously diligent,
And in adversity full patient,
And such he proved himself each day anew.

This fine example to his sheep he made—
That first he wrought and afterwards he taught;
These words from out the gospel he had caught
And to this precept he would add a new:
That if gold tarnish, what shall iron do?

Discreet was all his teaching, sweet and plain,
To draw men by his fairness heavenward
By good example;

How fortunate we are at Central to have such an example!

(The above text was translated into modern English by Robert C. Pooley. Passages were taken from *Literature in Life in England*, by Dudley Miles and Robert C. Pooley, Scott, Foresman, and Company.)

ABOUT THE WRITER: Joanne Less is a member of Central Free Will Baptist Church in Royal Oak, Michigan.

FREE WILL BAPTIST NEWSFRONT

Bible College Honors Dr. and Mrs. Picirilli

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College paid tribute to Dr. and Mrs. Robert Picirilli on May 5 with a chapel program and a reception in their honor. The Picirillis retired at the end of the 1998-99 school year.

The chapel program included some surprises. Most of the members of the Gospeliers Quartet were present for a reunion song. June McVay, missionary to Spain, came home to join her four Picirilli sisters in a moving tribute to their parents.

Other speakers included John Murray, James Earl Raper and Mary Ruth Wisheart. In closing, FWBBC President Tom Malone summarized the devoted ministries of Dr. and Mrs. Picirilli.

FWBBC public relations director Bert Tippett presided at a Picirilli roast following the reception. Speakers included two sons-in-law (Clarence Lewis and Allen Pointer), Violet Cox, Eloise Brown, Eugene Waddell and Charles Thigpen.

Dr. and Mrs. Picirilli have given more than 70 years to FWBBC and the Free Will Baptist denomination. During his 44 years at the college, Dr. Picirilli served as teacher, registrar and academic dean.

Clara, for some 27 years, served as dining hall hostess, worked in the treasurer's office and assisted the Christian service director. She also served 12 years as president of the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention (now Women Nationally Active for Christ).

The Picirillis will continue their association with the college. Next year, Dr. Picirilli will teach on a part-time basis. Mrs. Picirilli will do volunteer work for the college wherever she is needed.



Tippett, McArthur Keynote New Mexico Meeting

HOBBS, NM—Two visiting ministers from Texas and Tennessee delivered major addresses at New Mexico's 31st annual district association, according to clerk, Doris Heard. Reverends Jerry McArthur (Bryan, TX) and Bert Tippett (Nashville, TN) spoke Friday morning and evening at the April 8-10 meeting.

Moderator Jim Pollock led business sessions at First United FWB Church in Hobbs. Thirty people registered, including nine minis-

ters.

Clerk Doris Heard said, "New Mexico rejoices that for the first time in many years all four of our churches have pastors."

Delegates paid tribute to the leadership of the late Buck Gilcrease with testimonials and a plaque of appreciation to his widow, Louise Gilcrease.

In other action, delegates voted to give \$200 monthly support to Pastor Tim Byers in Artesia, and

\$100 monthly support to Pastor Waid Schlagel in Albuquerque.

Texas minister Thurmon Murphy addressed the Friday evening New Mexico Woman Active for Christ meeting and meal.

Delegates elected Leslie Skeens as moderator to succeed Jim Pollock.

The 2000 meeting of the New Mexico District Association will meet April 6-8 at Carlsbad FWB Church in Carlsbad.

Bible College Students Elect Officers

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College students elected Darin Miles, a junior from Florence, South Carolina, who is majoring in missions, as their 1999-2000 student body president.

Others chosen to serve with Darin are:

- Vice President: Jonathan Turnbough, a senior, majoring in pastoral training, from Batesville, Arkansas,
- Secretary-Treasurer: Anna Beck, a senior, majoring in business, from Norfolk, Virginia,
- Chaplain: David Dodson, a senior, majoring in pastoral training, from Park Hills, Missouri,
- Worship Leader: Jeremy Thomas, a senior, majoring in music, from Albany, Georgia.

Elections were held on campus in early May. These will serve as FWBCC student leaders for the coming school year.



(L) Darin Miles, Jon Turnbough, Anna Beck, David Dodson, Jeremy Thomas.

Michigan Adopts Missions Support Plan

CLINTON TOWNSHIP, MI—One of three resolutions at Michigan's 43rd annual state association called for the adoption of the Michigan Support Plan, according to Gene Norris, promotional secretary. The resolution focused on financial support for both home and foreign missionaries.

Seventy-seven people registered for the May 14-15 meeting at Philadelphia FWB Church in Clinton Township. Twenty-six ministers as well as 24 lay delegates and six deacons were in that number.

Moderator J. B. Varney was re-elected. Delegates voted that the General Board be responsible for planning future sessions of the state association. Delegates also gave a \$1,000 love offering for Reverend Charles Cooper, a former Michigan pastor and promotional secretary who was paralyzed in an accident this spring.

Pastor Ron Helms (Southgate FWB Church) and Foreign Missions staffer Eddie Payne preached during worship services. Aaron Baughman (youth pastor at Southgate FWB Church) and David Ervin (licensed minister from Woodhaven FWB Church) led devotional services.

The 2000 state association will meet May 19-20 at a site to be determined by the General Board.

Pastor
Appreciation
Sunday

September
12

Don't Forget!

California Christian College Names Walley President

FRESNO, CA—Reverend Wendell Walley, 56-year-old Mississippi native, has been named president of California Christian College. Reverend Walley will begin his new responsibilities in August. He succeeds Reverend James McAllister.

For the past 25 years, Walley has pastored in Florida, Mississippi, Tennessee and North Carolina. He began pastoring at Piney Grove FWB Church in Chipley, Florida (1965-69), during which time the church's outside giving increased 39 percent.

He organized and pastored First FWB Church in Greenville, Mississippi (1969-79), as a home missionary. The church went self-supporting in less than five years.

Walley pastored eight years at East Nashville FWB Church in Tennessee (1979-87). Under his leadership, the congregation retired their bond debt, made improvements on the grounds and facilities, and "gave" 35 people to start another church in a neighboring city.

He moved to Asheville, North Carolina, in 1987 to pastor Zephyr Hills FWB Church. During his 12-year pastorate there, the church remodeled, purchased 2.3 acres and tripled their giving.

In addition to pastoral duties, Reverend Walley has been widely used on state and national levels. He served 12 years on the national Home Missions Board (1987-99) as a member, clerk and vice-chairman.

A skilled writer, Walley wrote *The Adult Teacher* Sunday School curriculum for Randall House Publications (1991-95). He also wrote the adult CTS literature,



Focus, for 18 months. He has been published in *Contact* on several occasions.

Brother Walley served two years on the national Executive Committee and four years as Mississippi's General Board member. He preached at the 1993 national Pastor's Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

Wherever he pastored, Walley was elected to leadership roles. He served two years as North Carolina's assistant state moderator, three years on the state's Executive Board, and moderator of the Blue Ridge Association.

While in Tennessee, he chaired the state Home Missions Board six years. In Florida, he moderated the North Florida Yearly Meeting and served as clerk of Liberty Association.

Converted at age five, Walley answered the call to preach during his sophomore year at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He graduated in 1964 with a bachelor's degree, and returned to earn the Master of Arts in Pastoral Service degree in 1984.

Wendell and Anna Jean Walley have two children. Daughter Tamara is a physical therapist in Asheville. Son Trent serves as minister of music and youth at Central FWB Church in Royal Oak, Michigan.

During his introduction to California Free Will Baptists at the May state association, Walley told delegates, "California Christian College is your school. I came with no agenda. You determine what you want to do, and I will help you do it."

Florida Adopts \$362,000 Budget

DELAND, FL—The 55th annual session of the Florida State Association saw delegates approve outreach budgets topping \$362,000, according to state clerk Randy Bryant. That amount included \$139,000 in Together Way allocations and \$190,000 for missions.

Moderator Tim Owen led the May 5-8 gathering in Deland at the Holiday Inn Convention Center. He was elected to his third term.

More than 350 people registered for the combined state association and youth convention. Forty-four ministers and 30 lay delegates attended.

Three speakers developed the theme, "Touch A Life—Change The World." Pastor Ontoniel Bermudez of Cedars of Lebanon FWB Church in Hialeah preached through an interpreter. He was joined in pulpit duties by Foreign Missions Department director James Forlines and Evangelical Training Association staffer Keith Kenemer.

A constitutional change now requires the moder-

ator to appoint the Budget Committee one year in advance. The committee will consist of three Executive Committee members and the state treasurer.

Assistant moderator Randy Jackson was cited for 11 years of service on the State Youth Board. Home missionaries Curtis and Laverne Alligood received a plaque for leading the Bayshore FWB Church in St. Petersburg from mission status to self-supporting.

The Florida Women Active for Christ (FWAC) registered 60 women for their meeting. They contributed \$2,200 worth of linens, towels and small kitchen appliances to the WNAC Provision Closet.

WNAC Executive Secretary Marjorie Workman addressed the FWAC luncheon on Thursday. Keith Kenemer spoke at the Fellowship Banquet.

The State Youth Convention reported 93 entries for CTS competition on Friday.

The 2000 Florida State Association will meet May 10-13 in Deland.

Thomas Marberry to Lead Seminary

REYNOSA, TAMPS., MEXICO—Dr. Thomas Marberry, professor of New Testament at Hillsdale FWB College for 24 years, has been named president of the Biblical Seminary of the Cross in Reynosa. The 50-year-old Texas native has been active in cross-cultural Hispanic ministry for two decades.

Marberry completed his work at Hillsdale College on June 30 and became an employee of the Home Missions Department on July 5. He will relocate to Reynosa in time for the fall semester.

Dr. Marberry said, "I plan to teach on a limited basis, do fund raising as necessary and help chart the course for the seminary."

He expects about 30 students for the fall semester. Mrs. Wilma Marberry (Dr. Marberry's wife) will



teach English.

Marberry completed his Ph.D. at Baylor in 1982. He has been professor of New Testament and director of external studies for most of his 24 years at Hillsdale. He served six years as vice-president of academic affairs at the college.

Converted at age 17 and ordained to preach at age 22, Marberry pastored two years in Texas, and pastored 20 years in Oklahoma.

He currently chairs the Free Will Baptist Historical Commission. He also writes a monthly book review column in *Contact*, called "Top Shelf." He serves as press officer at the annual national convention. He wrote the Randall House Commentary volume on Galatians.

Oklahoma Church Dedicates New Building

NORMAN, OK—Members of First FWB Church in Norman gathered for day-long activities on May 2 to dedicate their \$2.7 million sanctuary and class room facility. Pastor Joe Grizzle said the new structure includes a 600-seat sanctuary which can be expanded to seat 1,000 people.

The wrap-around worship space gives a small church feeling to the large, 30,000-square-foot building. Half the space includes a gymnasium, educational rooms and administrative offices. Computerized lighting and rear projection screens provide a

wide range of sanctuary options.

The steeple towers 93 feet above the ground and looks down on a 200-car paved parking lot. A 50-space expansion is planned.

The congregation raised \$1.4 million of the \$2.7 million total cost. Pastor Grizzle said, "It was amazing, the volume of volunteer work we had."

Founding pastor Wade Jernigan gave testimony of the church's earliest days. The church began with tent revivals in 1950. Forty-four charter members launched the work in Carpenter Hall, then relocated to Frank Street for 48 years.

The church now sits on a 19-acre site at 24th Avenue and Highway 9.

Numerous testimonies and special music filled the dedication celebration, along with guided tours of the building. The day's events culminated with the dedication of the Memorial Prayer Chapel, a place for quiet prayer which Pastor Grizzle calls "the capstone of the church."

Charter member Bonnie Argo gave the final testimony, "The church has been my life. We're so grateful for this beautiful building."

California Adds International Flavor

FRESNO, CA—Four sermons at the California State Association had the marks of an international community. Meeting under the general theme of "Our Harvest—California," preachers from four nationalities preached during the May 13-15 meeting which met on the California Christian College campus in Fresno.

Korean missionary Dr. Paul Park, preached the keynote message Thursday evening. Other speakers included Ukrainian pastor Vitaly Rozhko, Cuban pastor Simon Reyes and Foreign Missions staffer Don Robirds.

Fifty-one ministers were among the 129 who registered, according to state clerk, Dr. Ed Hyatt. They were joined by 42 lay delegates, 12 deacons and 24 visitors.

Two men received special plaques in recognition

of service: James McAllister as president of California Christian College and Nuel Brown as state executive secretary.

Delegates elected Stockton pastor Matt Upton to his sixth term as moderator. The CCC Alumni Association sponsored a banquet on campus for attendees.

State Cooperative Plan funds will be divided: California Christian College (34%), State Administration (30%), State Mission Board (18%), National Ministries (11%), State Auditorium (4%) and State Youth Board (3%).

The 2000 state association will meet May 18-20 in Fresno at California Christian College.

Free Will Baptist Bible College Graduates 64

NASHVILLE, TN— Free Will Baptist Bible College graduated 64 students in five degree programs at commencement exercises held on campus May 13. The class of 1999 includes students from 18 states and three foreign countries.

While all graduates major in Bible, other majors included missions (16), pastoral training (7), education (8) and youth ministry (11).

The following students graduated:

Associate of Arts

Jessica Kylee Payne
Bonnie, Illinois

Associate of Christian Ministries

Donna Pennington Harrison
Grayson, Kentucky
Cleveland D. X. Wells
Nassau, Bahamas

Bachelor of Music Education

Thomas Shane Davison
Springdale, Arkansas

Bachelor of Science

Jeffrey Lynn Caudill
Ypsilanti, Michigan
Brian Daniel Claire
Norfolk, Virginia
Melinda René Clark
Blakely, Georgia
Wendy Jo Cockrum
Sesser, Illinois
Martin D. Crain
Bath, New Brunswick, Canada

Mitchell Earl Crain
Bath, New Brunswick, Canada

Amy Michele Day
Grove City, Ohio

Chad Duane Donoho
Silvis, Illinois

Jaime Duncan Gay
Batesville, Arkansas

Rusty Nathaniel Hall
Knoxville, Tennessee

Robin Suzanne Harrison
Red Bay, Alabama

Christopher Paul Haygood
Huntsville, Alabama

Tera L. Higgs
Chandler, Indiana

Amy Lisette Howard
Wilson, North Carolina

Melissa Rose Jones
Greenbriar, Tennessee

Timothy L. Keener
Westerville, Ohio

Robert Jason King
Birmingham, Alabama

Steven David Koester
Park Hills, Missouri

Lori Reena McCraney
Decatur, Alabama

Willis Monte McKenzie
Lake City, South Carolina

David A. Mizelle
Chesapeake, Virginia

Heather Leigh Moody
Charlotte, Tennessee

John Paul Olsen
Smithfield, North Carolina

Anna Linn Panduku
Foydland, Missouri

William Kenneth Panduku
Flat Rock, Michigan

Jerrold Lee Pilgrim
Catoosa, Oklahoma

Barry Raper
Red Bay, Alabama

Mark Jason Taylor
Glasgow, Kentucky

William Alan Thomas
Russellville, Arkansas

Michelle LeAnn Wallace
Park Hills, Missouri
Christopher S. Willhite
Pleasant View, Tennessee

Bachelor of Arts

Dennis Earl Atchenson
Tuscaloosa, Alabama

Aaron Michael Baker
Nashville, Tennessee

Jennifer Erin Bowen
Nashville, Tennessee

Eric Levern Brown
Darlington, South Carolina

Carmen Lynn Claire
Hollywood, Florida

Mary Elisabeth Cook
Cookeville, Tennessee

Timothy Allan Crowson
Nashville, Tennessee

Diana Marie Frye
Brooklyn, Ohio

Katrina Diane Gailey
Greeneville, Tennessee

Marc H. Gibbs
St. Nazaire, France

Jennifer Erin Harter
Nashville, Tennessee

Roger Kyle Hood
Russellville, Arkansas

Karen R. Hook
Blue Springs, Missouri

Melanie Charae Jones
Florence, Alabama

Darla Ray Kirby
Timmonsville, South Carolina

Kristopher C. Kohn
Decatur, Illinois

Brian Paul Lewis
Grand Junction, Colorado

James O'Neal Mann
Buckeye, Arizona

Julie Elizabeth Massengill
Goldsboro, North Carolina

Matthew James McAfee
Woodstock, New Brunswick,
Canada

Richard C. Patterson, Jr.
Beaufort, North Carolina

Stephen L. Phillips
Lavinia, Tennessee

Cristina Joy McClary Price
Omaha, Nebraska

Phoebe A. Ragland
Roanoke, Virginia

Dianne Sargent
Nashville, Tennessee

Wendy Kay Skelley
Oakley, Illinois

Tonya Kay Stephenson
Decatur, Illinois

Heather Dawn Thomas
Waterford, Michigan

William Gibbs Thomas, Jr.
Mineral, Virginia



Bethel FWB Church in Richton, MS, reports six baptisms. **Roy Pearson** pastors.

Several churches in **Mississippi's** Little Brown Association purchased 495 Gideon Bibles to place in hotels around the world. The Bibles were purchased in memory of the late **Hollis Southerland** who pastored 20 years at **Mt. Pisgah FWB Church in Booneville**.

The **Missouri State Association** purchased 20 acres near Cape Fair on which to build a future conference center.

New Life FWB Church in Kingsport, TN relocated one year ago on a 19-acre site five miles from their original location. Pastor **Hal Calhoun** said that members did all the carpentry and electrical work and painting.

The **Mississippi Association of Christian Schools** elected **Scott Wright** as president of their 18-school association. Brother Wright pastors **First FWB Church in Amory** and serves as administrator at Amory Christian Academy.

Two **Alabama** pastors marked high points this year. Pastor **Jack Rollins** completed 35 years at **Forestdale FWB Church in Birmingham**, while Pastor **Maxwell Harper** completed 50 years at **Mt. Pleasant FWB Church in Centreville**.

Tennessee's **Thurman Pate, Sr.**, completed 60 years in the ministry, the last 30 years as bi-vocational pastor at **Faith FWB Church in Knoxville**. The Union Association (TN) presented a plaque to Brother Pate in honor of his service.

New Prospect FWB Church in Reynolds, GA, will celebrate 152 years of service this year. The church began in 1847 with six charter members. **A. P. Wainright** pastors.

Forest Hill FWB Church in Adel, GA, reports 15 conversions and 17 new members. **Mitchell Deems** pastors.

Pastor **Ron Parker** reports six conversions and five baptisms at **Heritage FWB Mission in Shreveport, LA**.

Pastor **Omar Alfaro** welcomed nine new members to **Encuentro Con Dios FWB Church in Miami, FL**.

Evangelist **Wade Jernigan** preached seven times during the June 16-20 **Lena-pah Cowboy Camp Meeting in Oklahoma**. Several hundred people attended the five-day event which served guests three meals a day chuck wagon style.

Free Will Baptists around the world responded generously to the Riggs Medical Fund which was established by the Tennessee State Association to assist **Raymond Riggs** during the months his wife, **Winona**, required 24-hour care. Sister Winona died in March. Brother Riggs expressed deep appreciation for the gifts, the prayers and the cards.

Cross Roads FWB Church in Wentzville, MO, organized on March 6 with 102 members. **Wes Rider** pastors. The church began in 1986 under the leadership of **Jim Mertz**.

First FWB Church in Ozark, MO, organized on April 11 with 101 charter members. **Gary Mitchner** pastors. The new church publicly thanked Pastor **Cody Freeman** and members of **Thayer FWB Church** for the gift on an organ.

Members of **First FWB Church in DeSoto, MO**, redesigned their sanctuary and children's church. Members did the work to refurbish the building, according to Pastor **Bob Thebeau**.

Reverend **Charles Moyers** died March 9 in Springfield, MO, at age 81. Called to preach at age 17, Brother Moyers served 64 years in Missouri, Alabama and Oklahoma. He helped organize three Missouri churches in Farmington, Hurryville and DeSoto.

Reverend **John Hiltibidal**, a bi-vocational Free Will Baptist minister in southern **Illinois** for more than 50 years, died March 9. Known for his wit and humor, the 82-year-old minister was self-taught but championed Christian education to young people, especially to younger ministers.

Members of **Peace FWB Church in Granite City, IL**, scheduled a special "I Love My Church" offering to raise \$10,000, according to Pastor **David Malone**. They reached the cash goal,

and also received an additional \$2,500 in pledges.

A new 300-seat sanctuary will be completed this summer at **First FWB Church in Bowie, TX**. Pastor **Larry Cox** said the new facility will also include overflow seating for 100. The old sanctuary will be used as educational space as well as a fellowship area.

Collin Creek FWB Church in Plano, TX, has filled all available class room space and plans to construct a 5,000-square-foot building at a cost of \$375,000. Pastor **Robert Posner** said the nine-year-old church averages 120 in attendance.

Members of **Philadelphia FWB Church in Folkston, GA**, broke ground in April for a 4,000-square-foot fellowship building. The new facility will include a dining area, kitchen, stage and classrooms. Sunday School attendance broke a record with 121, according to Pastor **Conrad Williford**.

Pastor **Roger Dempsey** welcomed 16 new members to **Harvest Time FWB Church in Columbus, OH**.

Woodland Chapel FWB Church in Ironton, OH, reports nine conversions, eight baptisms and three rededications. **David Schug** pastors.

Pastor **Jim Blankenship** reports 17 conversions at **Antioch Community FWB Church in Mt. Sterling, OH**. ■

Directory Update

ALABAMA

Glenn Poston to First Church, Dothan

GEORGIA

Herbert Waid to Fellowship Church, Albany

MISSISSIPPI

John Ward to Lee's Chapel, Waynesboro

OHIO

Richard Cozad to Petrea Church, Jackson
Eugene Crouch to United Church, Cleveland

OTHER PERSONNEL

Mark Davidson to First Church, Henderson, TX, as youth minister ■



May 1999

Receipts: State	Designated	CO-OP	Total	Year To Date Designated	Year To Date CO-OP	Year To Date Total
Alabama	\$ 871.45	\$.00	\$ 871.45	\$ 2,860.48	\$.00	\$ 2,860.48
Arizona	.00	.00	.00	988.61	214.40	1,203.01
Arkansas	17,083.58	21,593.30	38,676.88	74,693.57	77,020.11	151,713.68
California	.00	1,079.04	1,079.04	.00	5,809.51	5,809.51
Colorado	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Delaware	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Florida	.00	.00	.00	218.93	6,000.00	6,218.93
Georgia	24,595.78	1,457.29	26,053.07	110,862.74	9,013.83	119,876.57
Hawaii	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Idaho	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Illinois	8,463.91	2,155.49	10,619.40	41,043.92	9,863.82	50,907.74
Indiana	1,037.20	113.40	1,150.60	5,023.81	1,210.45	6,234.26
Iowa	90.00	544.20	634.20	270.00	1,741.81	2,011.81
Kansas	.00	.00	.00	.00	221.58	221.58
Kentucky	332.00	573.01	905.01	4,204.90	3,166.53	7,371.43
Louisiana	.00	.00	.00	140.00	.00	140.00
Maryland	.00	.00	.00	.00	8,160.46	8,160.46
Michigan	8,798.20	2,046.36	10,844.56	69,186.04	13,173.42	82,359.46
Mississippi	5,928.92	500.56	6,429.48	38,056.09	2,355.18	40,411.27
Missouri	38,760.94	10,783.90	49,544.84	208,501.22	59,615.57	268,116.79
Montana	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Nebraska	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Jersey	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
New Mexico	576.29	28.15	604.44	3,401.41	190.71	3,592.12
North Carolina	2,822.11	1,092.15	3,914.26	7,496.47	11,523.81	19,020.28
Ohio	12,905.41	2,509.23	15,414.64	47,706.35	15,186.12	62,892.47
Oklahoma	50,363.97	.00	50,363.97	271,637.95	41,603.22	313,241.17
South Carolina	42,545.18	.00	42,545.18	225,527.88	.00	225,527.88
South Dakota	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Tennessee	1,479.17	1,294.20	2,773.37	48,800.37	6,311.62	55,111.99
Texas	.00	.00	.00	42,866.23	1,736.40	44,602.63
Virginia	704.70	.00	704.70	3,971.43	.00	3,971.43
Virgin Islands	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
West Virginia	5,530.12	116.65	5,646.77	13,552.34	421.41	13,973.75
Wisconsin	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Canada	382.75	11.63	394.38	1,470.80	60.90	1,531.70
Northwest Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Northeast Assoc.	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00	.00
Other	.00	.11	.11	.00	.28	.28
Totals	\$ 223,271.68	\$ 45,898.67	\$ 269,170.35	\$ 1,222,481.54	\$274,601.14	\$ 1,497,082.68

Disbursements:

Executive Office	\$ 1,108.51	\$ 20,654.35	\$ 21,762.86	\$ 9,142.08	\$123,570.40	\$ 132,712.48
Foreign Missions	140,269.03	5,806.19	146,075.22	752,638.44	34,737.05	787,375.49
FWBBC	20,057.35	5,806.19	25,863.54	85,922.44	34,737.05	120,659.49
Home Missions	54,948.46	4,543.97	59,492.43	324,201.25	27,185.55	351,386.80
Retirement & Insurance	612.00	3,534.18	4,146.18	2,217.84	21,144.28	23,362.12
Master's Men	280.72	3,534.18	3,814.90	1,970.20	21,144.28	23,114.48
Com. for Theo. Integrity	40.24	126.24	166.48	229.32	755.17	984.49
FWB Foundation	166.42	1,514.65	1,681.07	1,747.73	9,061.85	10,809.58
Historical Commission	23.94	126.24	150.18	118.02	755.17	873.19
Music Commission	6.04	126.24	132.28	119.71	755.17	874.88
Media Commission	22.34	126.24	148.58	175.87	755.17	931.04
Hillsdale FWB College	1,375.57	.00	1,375.57	7,757.99	.00	7,757.99
Other	4,361.06	.00	4,361.06	36,240.65	.00	36,240.65
Totals	\$ 223,271.68	\$ 45,898.67	\$ 269,170.35	\$ 1,222,481.54	\$274,601.14	\$ 1,497,082.68

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the
Pastor's Wife*

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- *Send her to the 1999 WNAO retreat in Glorieta*



FOREIGN MISSIONS

Winners to Losers, Losers to Winners

By Amber Holland, *MK in Brazil*

In 1994 Brazil won their fourth World Cup soccer championship against Italy, making Brazil the first country to win the World Cup four times. Last year the World Cup was held in France. The Brazilian team was said to be the best soccer team in the world, and everyone in Brazil was sure that the team would win its fifth championship.

Both France and Brazil hoped to see their teams play in the final game for the championship. Finally, the BIG game came. Just as expected, France and Brazil were the contenders for the title. Brazil had lost a game of no importance to Norway, and France had not lost or tied any games. Brazil was nervous because their best player, Ronaldinho, had suffered a nervous breakdown before the game. The nervousness increased when France scored their first goal.

Sad Losers

Then, it happened. France continued to score and won their first Cup. Brazil had lost! It was a sad day for all of Brazil. Although they are still the only team to have won four World Cups, they went from winners to losers.

But you know, some losers become winners. For example, a children's home was started by Jim and Shirley Combs and their church in Araras, Brazil. They rented a small house and began caring for children the government sent to them. Many of the children had parents with AIDS or serious drinking problems. Some of the children had been left in the streets when they were very small. Others had run away from parents who had attempted to kill them. On the streets, these children were considered pests and losers.

Real Winners

But things began to change as children found themselves at the Children's Home.

The children began turning into winners in Jesus' heart as well as in the hearts of those who saved them from their ugly world.

Street kids aren't just in Araras. I live in Campinas, Brazil, an hour away from there. I see kids in the streets here all the time. Once I saw a boy (close to my age) who had air in his stomach and I could see his lungs perfectly. I also see children possibly as young as two years of age out on the streets.



Street kids learn to pray and be thankful for God's love and provision.

One day in the car, after seeing a child begging for food, my seven-year-old sister asked, "Mommy, why can't we get all the kids on the street and take them to the Children's Home in Araras?" My mom said, "We can't because the government has to give us permission before we can take them." Just like my sister, I sure wish we could! At least we know that children who go to the Children's Home can go from being losers on the street to being winners in Jesus.



Amber Holland is the 13-year-old daughter of missionaries Curt and Mary Holland in Campinas, Brazil.

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 by Shirley Combs

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MASTER'S MEN

What Master's Men Can Do For Your Church

By Tom Dooley, Director



Strengthen Your Families

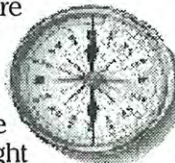
Families are in trouble today—a cultural climate of easy divorce, absentee fathers, workaholism, adultery and self-gratification has taken its toll. The result: marriages are failing and millions of children are growing up without the love, protection and guidance they need.

Most children in our society grow up without the influence of a godly man in their lives. The consequences are great. Children are killing children, committing suicide, joining gangs and engaging in drug and alcohol abuse, promiscuity and crime. Many young people are aimless and cynical, denying the existence of absolute truth, much less God.

Millions of boys and girls will go to bed tonight in homes with only one parent present. The scriptures remind us that Satan is like a “roaring lion seeking whom he may devour.” One of the devil’s primary targets is the home. Satan delights in dividing husbands from their wives and fathers from their children. The church must do all it can to fortify the homes represented in their congregations as well as in their communities. The Master’s Men ministry of the National Association of Free Will Baptists is committed to helping our pastors and churches strengthen their ministry to the family. Master’s Men Family Enrichment Conferences exist for that purpose.

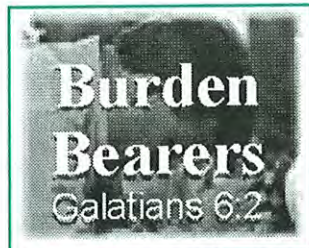
Learn From God’s Word

Men need to get back to the Bible if they are to be the men God would have them be. Psalm 1 teaches clearly that the man who “delights” in God’s Word will be blessed. The Master’s Men Department desires to help Free Will Baptist men learn from God’s Word. In light of that, Master’s Men has developed the Direction Bible Study Series and is pleased to announce the availability of the first study titled: “Become A Man Who Prays.” The Direction Bible Study Series is designed to help men discover what the Bible says, grow spiritually and gain direction for their life. “Become A Man Who Prays” contains six lessons that can be used for group or individual study and may be ordered from Master’s Men.



Direction Bible Study Series

Be the Pastor’s Prayer Partner



R. A. Torrey said in his book, *The Power of Prayer*, “Any church may have a mighty man of God for its pastor, if it is willing to pay the price, and that price is not a big salary, but great praying.” Every pastor needs the support of prayer. In I Thessalonians 5:25 and in II Thessalonians 3:1, Paul requested the prayers of the saints in order for the Word of God to have its greatest impact. The apostles emphasized the priority of prayer in Acts 6 when they gave instructions for others to be selected to take care of food distribution to the widows so they could give themselves “continually” to prayer and preaching the Word. Master’s Men is calling on all Free Will Baptist men to form “Burden Bearers Groups” in their local churches to partner with their pastors in prayer. Information about beginning a “Burden Bearers Prayer Ministry” can be obtained from Master’s Men. ■



WOMEN NATIONALLY ACTIVE FOR CHRIST

Woman's Window On The World

By Marjorie Workman

Never had one that I didn't like! Liked some better than others, and I've had many over the years. You see, I came from an area where four years was considered a normal length of service. I'm talking about pastors.

As a child and teenager, I hated those Sunday mornings when you sensed something was about to happen. You didn't know what, but you could see it on the faces of your parents. Usually it happened at the end of the sermon, after the invitation. They ask that you sit down. A hush comes over the crowd. You wonder what is wrong.

The preacher pulls a paper from his inside coat pocket. He begins to read. Oh, no, you think, he is leaving us. Tears well up in your eyes, you try to hold them back, especially if you don't hear any sniffles around you. You are innocent of any problems or struggles that may have led to the moment. By adulthood the innocence of youth is gone and you are more involved in the process of losing a pastor.

You feel the deep loss of a friend if you and the pastor's kids are the same age.

Again, I grew up in a time when there were few parsonages or full-time pastors. Having the preacher and family for dinner was a common occurrence. A pastor with children your age was a real benefit, particularly if they played ball. Or if they knew how to talk to you about getting saved or serving the Lord.

September is hailed as pastor appreciation month for Free Will Baptists. Honor your pastor. Some churches might choose a month other than September. The "when" is not important, the fact that you honor him is.

Recognizing and having genuine appreciation for your servant leader is biblical—I Thesalonians 5:12-13, ". . . know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake . . ." In fact, we are required to do more than normal respect; we are to give "double honor," according to I Timothy 5:17.

It is serious business not to honor the man of God. Forty-two children were torn to shreds while taunting the prophet Elisha about his bald head (II Kings 2:23-25). David understood the meaning of honoring God's anointed.

While running for his life to escape King Saul's sword, David came upon Saul asleep in a cave. The hunted had the opportunity to kill the hunter and be a free man. But David honored God's chosen above his own life. Instead of killing Saul, he cut a swatch from Saul's garment to prove to Saul that he could have been killed. David even felt guilty for doing this.

So, try some of the following to honor your pastor and his family.

- Pray for him daily and let him know you are praying.
- Call occasionally to encourage him and not mention one problem or complaint.
- Invite the family into your home for a meal or snacks or fellowship. Restaurants will work but inside your home is better.
- Decorate a basket. Fill it with appreciation notes from church people and present it to him one Sunday.
- Offer to do some care-giving if the parsonage family has children or an elderly person in their home.
- Subscribe to magazines, starting with *CoLaborer* and *Contact*.
- Volunteer to do some church detail that normally the pastor or some member of his family does.
- Refuse to listen to anything negative about the parsonage family.
- Take fresh flowers or fruits and vegetables from your yard or garden to the parsonage.
- Bake him his favorite pie, cake or cookies.
- Empower his authority—allow him to lead.
- Remember birthdays of the entire family. ■



Garnett Reid

The "News" Is Good

Mark Twain's comment that the word "new" is used to excess could well apply to our day. Marketing strategies suggest that if a product or service is not "new and improved" its value is suspect.

I must admit that I often like new things. Visiting a new place, for example, excites me; and there's some sort of undefinable male satisfaction that comes from tying a new tie for the first time. New books? Well, let's just say that a bookstore for me is what the sale rack in the Misses Dress Department is for my wife.

In saying all this, though, I also confess that I don't handle new *years* as well as I used to. What's more, the thought of a new millennium overwhelms me when I think about it. I really haven't come to grips with that reality yet—not just a new century, but a new *thousand years*.

As the millennial generation continues full-force in its spiraling defection from God, however, a word from David—an old word—tucked away in a corner of Psalm 31 renews my hope: "My times are in thy hand" (v. 15), he says. Whatever January 1, 2000, brings, it will be *His* day, created and designed under the sovereign purpose of His dominion.

Our next series of studies serves as a millennial countdown of sorts, focusing on this theme of "newness" from a biblical perspective. My prayer is that each of these "new" reminders from the book of God will compel us to greater trust in the plan of God, for the next day and the next thousand years.

Jeremiah 31:31-34 presents a *new covenant*, the first item in our study (read the parallel accounts in Jer. 32:37-41 and Eze. 36:26-28).

To understand the full significance of what God is doing through this covenant, we need to look at the redemptive story up to this point. God's

plan is to bring His fallen creation back into a right relationship with Himself. In the Old Testament, He reveals this plan through a series of covenants He makes. A covenant is simply a pledged relationship between God and people.

Prior to the new covenant, God had made a covenant with Abraham. In this relationship the Lord promised to bless the whole world as He blessed Abraham's family (Gen. 12:2-3; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 22:15-18; 26:2-5). This covenant presents, in summary form, the entire plan of salvation.

At Mt. Sinai following the deliverance of Israel from Egypt, God entered into another covenant with Israel. Beginning with chapter 19, most of the last half of Exodus, along with much of Leviticus and Deuteronomy, contain the Mosaic covenant (or law).

Note that God never intended this covenant to provide a way of entering into a relationship with Himself—a way to be saved, we would say. Instead, the Mosaic law furnished His people with a model for showing the world what God is like. By keeping the law, Israel would demonstrate

that God is holy (Lev. 19:2). The Lord willed that His people reflect His righteous character, not the wicked ways of their pagan neighbors.

Tragically, however, Israel's history after Sinai was generally one of failure, not success, in keeping the law. The historical books of the Old Testament reveal an ever-descending spiral of rebellion and covenant violation. In our state of fallenness, human beings—Jew and Gentile alike—simply cannot walk with God in mutual fellowship, as evidenced by our history.

Now, in Jeremiah's day at the turn of the seventh century B.C., Israel's disloyalty incurred God's penalty: exile and captivity in Babylon (Jer. 16:10-13; 18:13-23).

You say, so far there's nothing new in all this; it's the same old story of sin and judgment. What is new and fresh, though, each time we bump into it is God's grace. By His gracious act of renewal through a new covenant, He reverses the downward spiral and restores our relationship with Himself.

That's *always* good news, Mr. Twain!

Next month: a closer look inside the new covenant. ■

COMING NEXT MONTH

- NATIONAL CONVENTION COVERAGE
- CONVENTION ELECTION RESULTS
- CONVENTION PICTURES
- THEOLOGY OF MIDNIGHT



Dennis Wiggs

Ministerial Ethics

The young preacher may minister in a church where he serves as the second man, an associate or on the church staff in some capacity. This position provides an opportunity to learn how to pastor under the tutelage of a senior minister. But there are some rules that must be followed.

Respect the Pastor

You may not always agree with him, but respect him as your leader. The minute you refuse to respect his position, you should resign and move. Most likely he played a vital role in calling you to your present responsibility. You are serving because of his confidence in you. Therefore, always treat the pastor with utmost respect.

Refuse to Criticize the Pastor

Once when Donnie Miles ministered with me, a church member entered Donnie's office. He stated, "I want to talk with you about the pastor. But don't tell him what I said."

Donnie stood up and declared, "He is the first one I will tell!" The church member left abruptly.

A young preacher serving with a senior pastor will hear criticism, even plots against the shepherd of the flock. Never, never should the young preacher listen, encourage or endorse such criticism.

Uphold the Pastor in Public

Music director Danny Thomas spoke in my absence occasionally. My wife remarked that he always promoted me from the pulpit. She said, "You can tell that Danny is devoted to ministering with you." Members latch on to comments by an associate that cast a reflection upon the pastor. Young preacher, uplift the man of God.

Pray for the Pastor

Call your leader's name before the Lord in prayer daily. He faces problems, challenges and decisions that you never know about. "The buck stops at his desk," as President Truman once declared. If you fail in your responsibilities, the congregation holds the pastor responsible.

Let him know you are praying for him. Leave a note on the pulpit to that effect. Write a few words of encouragement and slide under his study door. Let him know that there is at least one church member "soaking" him in regular prayer support. Music director Phil Long's post cards promising to pray for me always provided encouragement.

Do Your Job Well

Most pastors are overextended, if they perform their ministries well. Young preacher, don't drop the ball! Give 100 percent of your time and effort toward the ministry. Get to work early. Stay late, if necessary.

Associate Ricky Ham would come by my study late in the afternoon and say, "Mr. Wiggs. I'm going home, but is there anything I can do to help you?" I never responded in the affirmative, but that servant's attitude encouraged me.

Listen to the Pastor Preach

Give your shepherd complete attention when he preaches. Look at him! Don't write down what you plan to do next week. Don't whisper to your wife. Keep your children under control. (Learn to do that with a look of the eye.) Remember that your leader is looking to you for moral support.

Once it was my privilege to have in the congregation two former pastors, W. E. Rolison and W. A. Hales. Those older men sat together on the second

pew and provided a hearty "amen" from time to time. What a blessing! Treat your pastor when he is preaching as you would like to be treated by him when you are preaching

Ask, Don't Tell

"May I have tomorrow off?" "Do you think the church board would consider a raise in my salary?" "I feel sick. May I go home early today?" Ask, don't tell, the pastor. Take your pocket calendar book to his study. Plan with your leader a vacation or family plans.

Share with him your needs, but don't expect or demand an immediate response. Your attitude of submission will go a long way in assuring that the two of you can work together harmoniously.

Resign Without Fanfare

Let's suppose that you just can't work with the pastor or the responsibilities seem too heavy or some in the congregation want you to leave, and you feel compelled to resign. Then, resign! But don't write a letter of resignation criticizing the pastor or judging the church program or trying to set the deacons straight. That will not accomplish anything. Just resign. And leave as quickly as possible.

Don't try to draw a crowd to your "pity party" and turn them against the pastor or the deacons or the program. Young preacher, you may need a reference some day. Leave on good terms. ■

YOUTH UPDATE

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Thomas Marberry

The Paul Quest: The Renewed Search For The Jew Of Tarsus

By Ben Witherington III

(Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998, 347 pp., hardback, \$22.99).

Ben Witherington III is the author of numerous books, articles and monographs on a variety of New Testament subjects. He currently serves as professor of New Testament at Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky.

This book is a perceptive analysis of the current status of Pauline studies. The author names the most outstanding scholars who are writing today and summarizes their contributions to the field. He points out those aspects of Paul's life and thought which are being debated today and those areas that are largely neglected.

For example, the author notes that early in this century much attention was devoted to Paul's apostleship and little attention was paid to his prophetic ministry. In recent years this has changed. Several important books and monographs have examined different aspects of Paul's prophetic ministry.

Paul only rarely spoke of himself in prophetic terms, but his ministry was in many ways similar to the Old Testament prophets. Paul spoke with authority as the Old Testament prophets did. He presented a message that was new and fresh. He also predicted future events.

Contrary to the opinions of some scholars, Paul did not teach that Christ would return in his own lifetime. He taught that "he was living in the eschatological age and considered it possible that the Lord might return during his lifetime."

One significant contribution of this book is its insistence on understanding Paul in light of the first-century world and not in light of the modern world. Paul was not a 20th century person with the emphasis on individualism, psychological analysis and freedom that dominates our contemporary Western culture.

He was a first-century man. He lived in a world where "people did not strive to be individuals but rather derived their sense of identity from the group of which they were a part."

As the author notes, "Paul lived in a culture that valued honor over life, and boasting rather than humility was seen as proper." Preachers and teachers today make a serious mistake when they automatically ascribe modern ideas and thought patterns to Paul. His life was transformed by the Holy Spirit, but it was a transformed life in the first century not in the 20th century.

Witherington stresses that Paul lived in an oral society in which only about two of every 10 people could read and write. Rhetoric was one of the most important subjects studied in the schools, and "oratorical skills were the keys to advancement . . ."

Letters were an important part of Paul's communication strategy, but his letters should not be understood as strictly private correspondence. They were written to be read publicly before the congregation. They were designed to persuade; they made use of many of the standard literary devices

used in first-century literature. A careful comparison between the letters of Paul and other ancient literature indicates that Paul was a well-educated man who knew how to persuade people using the most powerful arguments available to him.

According to Witherington, we may have interpreted some passages in Paul's letters incorrectly because of our lack of knowledge about the first century. Ancient speakers and writers were storytellers. In Romans 7:7-23, for example, Paul is not telling his own story. As the author explains,

"For dramatic purposes, Paul has chosen to retell the tale of Adam in the first person and has chosen to read the snake as a personification of sin." In his view, Romans 7:14-25 does not describe Paul's experience either before or after conversion. It describes "the person under conviction of sin and crying out for redemption . . ."

This volume is a significant contribution to the field of New Testament studies. The author does much more than just summarize the research of other scholars. He often gives his own analysis of a particular problem. He is not afraid to suggest a different interpretation of a familiar passage when he believes the traditional interpretation is incorrect. Throughout his book, the author reveals the highest respect for Paul and for his writings. In his view, our goal is not to rewrite what Paul wrote; it is to interpret it and apply it correctly. ■

The Satchmo Principle

The late Louis Armstrong, known to millions as Satchmo, said, "I got a simple rule about everybody. If you don't treat me right—shame on you!" That's how I feel about churches and their pastors: If you don't treat the pastor right, shame on you.

Unfortunately pastors don't get the benefit of the doubt with most people. If there's a chance to believe a bad thing about a preacher, the average person buys a ticket and stands in line.

Take the woman who called our office a few weeks ago disgusted with her pastor because she was being evicted and he refused to help. My radar immediately went on full alert, because that didn't sound like any pastor I knew.

The woman called back later asking what I planned to do about the uncaring pastor and her need. Two interesting facts surfaced. First, she had not lived in the community for four years and no longer attended any church. Second, she had moved two states and 600 miles away. Still, she felt that the pastor was responsible to provide funds for her.

Perhaps in frustration, she said firmly that her "pastor" just didn't care what happened to her and that she had no place to go. After which she proceeded to tell me where I could go in precise language which I had not heard since my last pastorate.

For the record, it's not the money that keeps pastors in the pulpit. Consider the conversation that took place one night as a member left the church following a difficult business meeting where some normally nice people made angry, loud comments. Pausing to shake the pastor's hand, the member said "Preacher, you couldn't pay me enough to pastor this church."

The tired minister looked into his

eyes and replied, "George, you couldn't pay me enough to pastor this church either."

Startled, George said, "What do you mean? You are the pastor."

"That's true," the pastor said, "but I'm here because God called me to preach and called me to this congregation. It's not the money, George, it's the calling. I could make more money driving a truck like you do."

George had an odd expression on his face as he drove off in a green Oldsmobile. The pastor winked at his wife who had heard the exchange, "Do you think I got his attention?" She laughed for the first time that night.

Sometimes, it's a toss up which brand of pastor is considered the laziest. You know—the part-time preacher who gets two salaries by holding down a regular job like you and me, and then makes an extra \$200 weekly on top of that for working one hour on Sunday.

Or the full-time pastor who sleeps in till 8:30 every morning except Sunday, drives around in a church-furnished car and lives rent-free in the parsonage. Besides, real men don't place more value on commentaries and computers than they do on season tickets to see the Braves.

The ministerial stereotype is locked in the genes of TV script writers and know-it-all's down at the local tavern. "Everybody knows" that preachers are a little weird and a lot money crazy. Just ask the guys at the Friday night poker game. They don't tithe and they don't go to church, but they've got the facts on preachers.

The average pastor spends more time at weddings and funerals than Jesus did. He probably can't raise the dead. And he sure can't turn water into wine, which he wouldn't dare do even if he could. He could



Jack Williams

never explain it to the credentials committee, to say nothing of the boys down at Joe's Place.

Pastors come in all volumes. Some speak in barely-heard whispers. Others cloud up and thunder all over the church. The rest find their niche on the decibel scale.

You'd think with every God-called pastor required to meet the same qualifications in I Timothy 3:1-7, that there'd be more uniformity in the way they dress and speak and act. After all, U.S. Marines look and sound alike after Parris Island.

But no, the unique men who fill our pulpits range from the articulate doctor of theology who quotes the ancients and parses Greek verbs, to the mountain thunder who rolls through a sermon like an avalanche. God called them all and has a special place for each to fill.

Heaven takes note every time a pastor proclaims the gospel. The Lord knows each person who heard the sermon, what he thought when he heard it, what he did about it, and what he said about God's messenger who delivered it.

Satchmo may not be the best theologian, but he wasn't far off with his simple rule, "... If you don't treat me right, shame on you!"

God put it even more succinctly when He said twice, "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm" (Ps. 105:15; I Chr. 16:22). That's Satchmo simple. Now, go do something nice for your pastor. ■

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