

THE

ECHO Uniting Volunteers for Christ

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THE RIGGS MEDICAL FUND HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED



Free Will Baptists in Tennessee have established the "Riggs Medical Fund" to assist **Brother and Sister Raymond Riggs** in this time of need. Mrs. Riggs' health has deteriorated greatly in recent months and she needs constant care. Brother Riggs—or someone—has to be with her at all times. Also, she is on very expensive medication. It is now necessary to have someone come in at nights to relieve Brother Raymond. Sister Riggs is afflicted with a combination of Alzheimer's-Parkinson's disease, known medically as "Lewy-Body."

Three people have been named to a committee to direct the Riggs Medical Fund: **Brother Paul Taylor**, Smithville; **Brother Sterl Paramore**, Cookeville; and **Brother Jack Taylor**, Cookeville. The person who has agreed to serve as treasurer for the Riggs Medical Fund is:

Brother Harold Bilbrey
1629 Apple Valley Drive
Cookeville, TN 38501

This fund will cover all medical expenses that are not covered otherwise by Medicare or other insurance, all sitters and personnel needed to assist the Riggs' in any way.

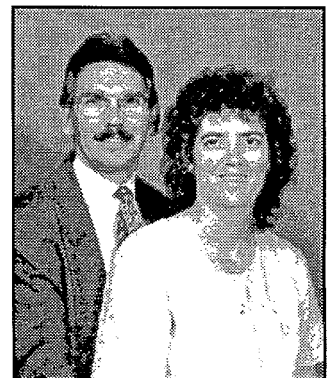
Please, pastors, take an offering immediately, as the need is pressing, and put this very worthy financial item in your church budget. We ask you to send help every month to the Riggs Medical Fund.

No couple among us has done more for the entire denomination than Brother and Sister Riggs. They have spent their entire lives laboring for the Lord and for Free Will Baptists. And now in this time of need, all of us should stand with them. They need and deserve our help.

Make checks out to **Liberty Association**, earmarked "Riggs Medical Fund" and send to Brother Bilbrey.

THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT Sam & June McVay, missionaries to Spain

After recently receiving our end-of-the-year report of gifts received to our missions account, we just had to write to tell you **THANK YOU** for such generous support from Tennessee. Since this is June's home state and where Sam worked for 20+ years, it is very encouraging to us to have your support for the ministry here in Spain.



We are very excited to tell you that Tennesseans gave over 50 percent total giving to our account in 1998! Tennessee churches and individuals gave **\$41,553.79**, the largest contributor we have! In fact, you have been the largest contributor to our account for both of the years we have been in Spain. Total contributions for both years are listed below:

1998 Contributions	\$41,453.79
1997 Contributions	<u>\$40,135.91</u>
Total Contributions	\$81,589.70

Thank you so much for your continued prayer and financial support for the ministry in Spain. God is blessing and we are truly thankful to be an extension of your ministry, serving God here among the Spanish people.

NEW CHURCH BUILDING AT KINGSPORT

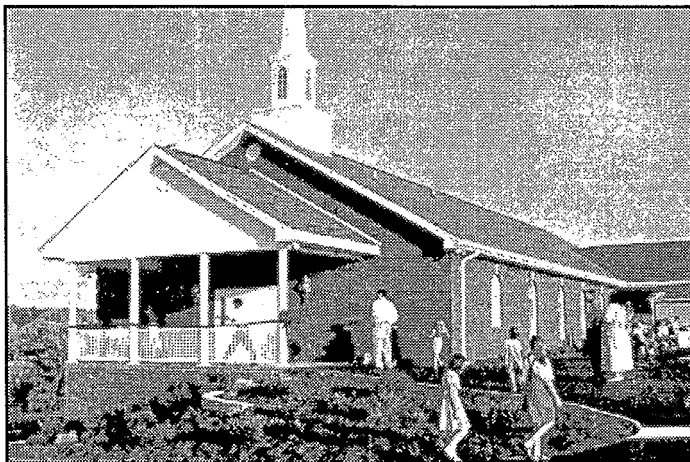
by Rodger C. Castle, Sr.

Groundbreaking ceremonies took place in October 1997 on a 19-acre plot of land at 2444 Rock Springs Road, Kingsport, for a new church. The men and women of the church pooled their talents and resources and built **New Life Free Will Baptist Church**. All the carpentry, electrical, painting and decorating, both interior and exterior, were performed by the members of the church. Many hours of hard work were donated, just to get the church under roof. The bitter cold of winter was felt while the work continued.

The first service in the new building was on Sunday, September 13, 1998. The pastor, **Rev. Hal Calhoun**, was overwhelmed trying to relate the experiences of the past year and what the church had endured to get where it was. He encouraged the members to continue to grow spiritually. Since the first service, there have been many individuals and families making this their regular place of worship. There have been at least fifteen souls saved or rededicated. To God be the glory!

As a commercial contractor, the pastor was the overseer of the building project. The vote from the beginning was to build, and every vote since has been unanimous. Although the church relocated about five miles from

the original location, not a single member was lost. The Lord has been gracious to honor the work at New Life Free Will Baptist Church. All of this loudly proclaims that "miracles can still happen."



THE NORTHERN QUARTERLY OF THE CUMBERLAND REACH FOR A GOAL

In 1983, just 17 years ago, the churches of the Northern Quarterly of the Cumberland Association started an annual financial drive for Free Will Baptist Bible College. Since then, on the last Sunday in February, this special drive has been carried out. The various churches usually have a representative from the college speak in the morning service—then all of them go together for the rally which meets on Sunday evening at Pleasant View Christian School.

This drive was begun under the leadership of **Brother Terry Boyd** who was the Northern Quarterly Moderator at that time. The goal for 1999 is \$28,000. When this goal is met—and all signs indicate that it will be—the 23 churches of the Northern Quarterly will have given a grand total of \$300,000 to the college in these annual drives.

This special drive is in addition to the regular support given to the college by almost every church of the Northern Quarterly. We salute these churches and their pastors for this outstanding achievement.

NEWS FROM FREE WILL BAPTIST FAMILY MINISTRIES

Free Will Baptist Family Ministries in Greeneville announces the opening of a brand new emergency shelter for boys, known as a P.A.T.H. Shelter (Protecting Adolescents and Teaching Hope). This home has been under construction since May 1998. With the help of literally dozens of volunteers, under the direction of **Buddy Arnold** (Plant & Operations Manager), the construction has been completed. There is not room to thank all the churches, individuals and women's groups who helped build and furnish this home.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on February 11 with over 130 people in attendance. Visitors included pastors, lay leaders, social workers and local judicial leaders.

This new facility is the product of a successful five-year Capital Campaign which ended in 1998. It comprises 4,000 square feet, which breaks down into six bedrooms for twelve young men (including one which is handicap accessible). The staff area consists of two bedrooms, private bath and living room and an office. The large main room will provide ample space for both the living and dining room.

This new shelter was a dream that started five years ago. With God's help and blessings, FWBFM hopes to see this facility serve hundreds of children in the years to come. A recent report on national television announced that child abuse has doubled in the last decade! It's sad that a ministry like this must exist, but FWBFM is glad for the opportunity to serve the Lord in this mission field.

Please remember also that Mother's Day, May 9, is when every church is asked to receive a special offering for the ministry of FWBFM. Do your best!



Sister Winona Riggs Called Home

After this present issue of *Echo* was printed, news reached us on Tuesday, March 23, 1999, that at noon on this day, Sister Riggs passed away. This past week, Mrs. Riggs was admitted to the hospital in Cookeville where it was determined that she was critically ill. At times her body temperature would go as high as 106 degrees. Medical personnel, family and friends did all that could be done for her. All of the Riggs' children, except for their son Stephen—missionary to France—had been at the hospital before she passed away.

The Riggs' have six children, all of whom attended Free Will Baptist Bible College. All four sons are ordained. Charles Riggs is an ordained deacon and minister of music. Dr. Kenneth Riggs pastors West Meade Fellowship of Nashville. (He was formerly Chairman of the Teacher Education Department at Free Will Baptist Bible College.) Randall Riggs has pastored several Free Will Baptist churches but is now between churches. (The last church he pastored was Harper Road Free Will Baptist Church at Joelton, Tennessee.) The youngest son, Stephen, is serving the Foreign Missions Department as a missionary to France. Both daughters are active in local churches. Ramona lives in Virginia and Patsy lives in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. The Riggs' have twenty grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren. One grandson is a pastor and one is a medical doctor.

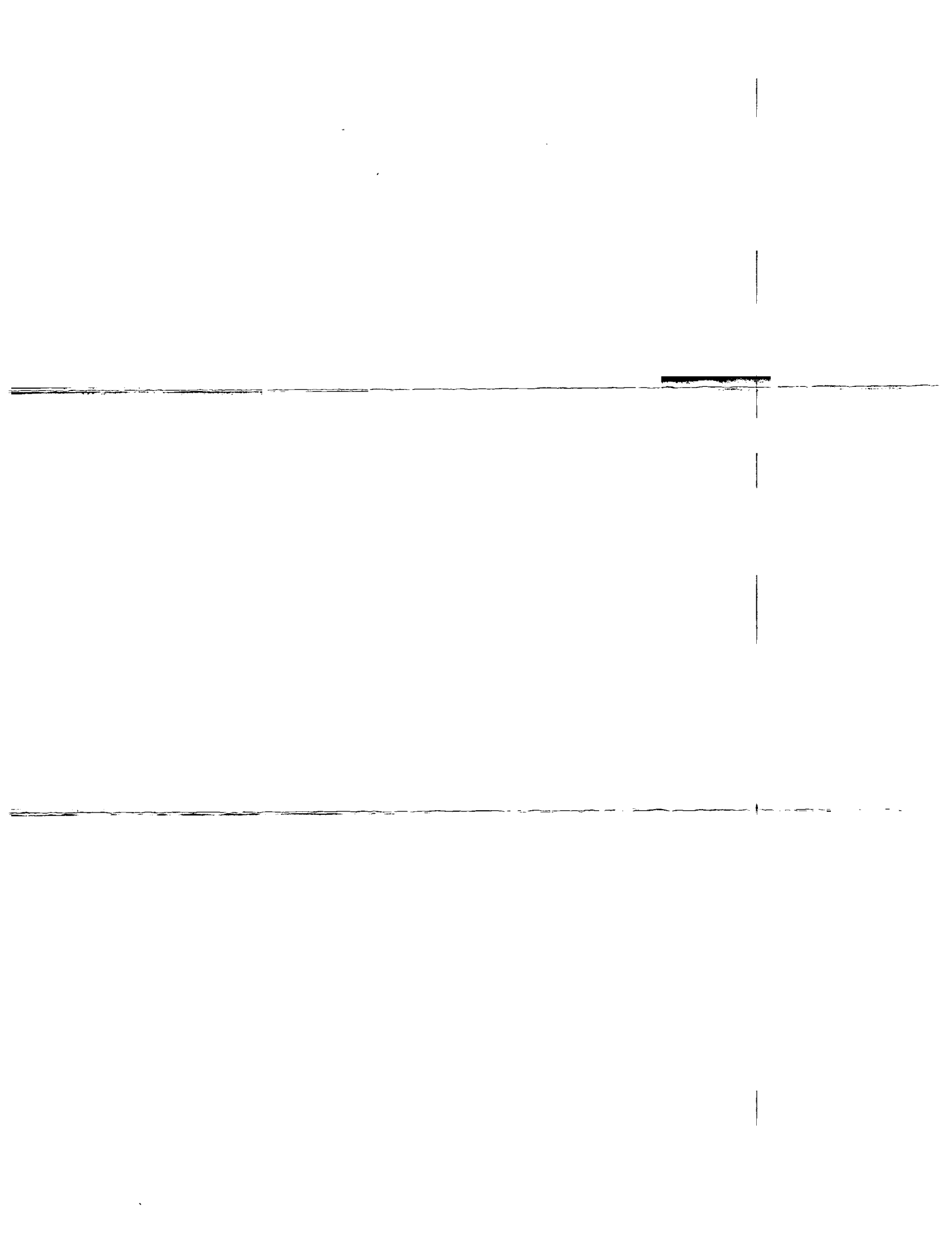
Sister Winona Riggs was a very gifted person. She was an outstanding organist and pianist. She was also a good singer and a unique writer. She wrote a book of humor entitled *Bologna From Winona*. Mrs. Riggs loved music and could play from memory almost any hymn that one could suggest.

Mrs. Riggs was the daughter of the late Reverend and Mrs. Newton P. Gates of Arkansas and Michigan. She has two brothers, both of whom live in Michigan, Graydon Gates and Lowell Gates.

The Riggs' have been a great ministry team. Brother Riggs' preaching, Mrs. Riggs' playing the organ or piano and both of them singing have blessed the hearts of multiplied thousands of people.

The Riggs' have been married for 62 years. They have contributed much to the cause of Christ and the Free Will Baptist denomination. Mrs. Riggs greatest contribution is that of the six outstanding children who are following them in the faith. She was admired and loved by all who knew her. There is no doubt that she was one of the most interesting and colorful personalities among Free Will Baptists.

Sister Trula Cronk, former missionary to India, said of Mrs. Riggs: "The greatest compliment that I could pay Winona was to tell her how much I love and appreciate all of her children. My fondest memory is her music. My, I wish she could have willed that gift of hers to me! But there will be wonderful music for all of us when we join her in heaven with the Lord."



A LETTER TO PASTORS AND CHURCHES OF TENNESSEE



from Frank Bratcher,
Missionary to Carthage,
Tennessee

I enjoyed the state association with the wonderful messages from the pulpit and the fellowship. I know that the state of Tennessee lives up to its name when there is a need...not only in military volunteers but also in spiritual warfare.

That is why I am writing this letter. God most definitely has placed in my heart the burden to plant a Bible-believing Free Will Baptist church in Carthage, Tennessee. There is not a Free Will Baptist church in this area. The Tennessee State Missions Board and the National Home Missions Board have given me a chance. I thank God for these men of God who have a burden to see a Free Will Baptist church in cities where there is not one.

They encouraged me, prayed with and for me, and sent me out. Nevertheless, the burden God gave to plant this church is mine. God gave it to me. He and I know that it's too big a task for me alone. I am asking you and your church to pray about this mission and seek God's guidance in helping to bear this burden.

I was the first full-time pastor of my most recent pastorate. To be full-time as many of you are, I sacrificed health insurance, wages, vacations, and retirement. However, I never asked for more than they could give.

I share this with you so that you might see how difficult it is for me to ask, but I do not know what else to do. I know without a doubt that God wants a Free Will Baptist church in Carthage, Tennessee.

God had laid this on my heart, and I ask you to pray about it. If God leads you to help me with financial support, I am sure that you will. If you cannot help financially, please help with much prayer that we will succeed in what God has led us to do.

(Send support for the Carthage work to FWB Home Missions, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Pastors, please do what you can. Brother Bratcher is Tennessee's newest home missionary!)

WORLD MISSIONS OFFERING

The World Missions Offering is the first of four annual offerings under *The Together Way* plan of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. This year, **Foreign Missions Sunday falls on April 25.** Churches are encouraged to participate with a sacrificial offering on that day to undergird the Foreign Missions program.

In 1998, Free Will Baptists gave nearly \$79,000 to the World Missions Offering. If every church would do something for Foreign Missions on April 25, many of the needs would be met on behalf of world outreach.

Churches are asked to designate their offering to "World Missions Offering" and send it to Foreign Missions, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002. Offerings can also be sent through the district or state association but should clearly be designated for the World Missions Offering.

NORTH AMERICAN STRATEGY FORUM REPORT

From across the denomination, 109 pastors, state moderators, promotional directors, college presidents, and businessmen from 27 states met in Nashville, January 6-8, 1999, for a North American Strategy Forum to discuss how Free Will Baptists can more effectively promote the cause of Christ until Jesus returns. This was sponsored by the National Home Missions Department.

Seven priorities were identified: **Prayer** for our churches, pastors, leaders, one another, and for God's blessing and leading; **passion** to reach the lost for Christ and to encourage believers to remain faithful; **preaching** the Word of God with the power of God to meet the needs of the people; **positiveness** in our attitude about our service to God and His control over the future; **peace** among ourselves, our members, and our preachers as we promote the work of God; **purity** of heart, soul, and daily life so that God may hear our prayers and bless our service; and **purpose**, a firm commitment and focus on extending the witness of Christ and the building of His Church throughout the world.



GIVE HONOR TO YOUR HEROES

Guest editorial by Jonathan N. Thigpen, President, Evangelical Training Association

Heroes! That's what millions of baseball fans call Mark McGwire of the St. Louis Cardinals and Sammy Sosa of the Chicago Cubs. During the 1998 baseball season, these two men sought to overtake one of the sport's long-standing records, the most home runs in a season. Grown men cried when Mark McGwire hit his 62nd home run to break Roger Maris' record set in 1961. And who was not moved when his rival, Sammy Sosa, ran in from the outfield to give McGwire a hug of congratulations. By the end of the season, McGwire had hit a total of 70 home runs with Sosa not far behind at 66.

But let me tell you about some of my heroes. These are people who will never hit a home run and will never appear on the cover of *Time*, *Newsweek* or *Sports Illustrated*. But these people are heroes nonetheless. And one day, I believe, the population of heaven will know who they are and what they have accomplished.

The men and women I am thinking about are those who have faithfully served Christ "in the trenches." These are the folks who have taught Sunday

School, served as ushers, directed the Vacation Bible School, worked in the nursery or served as youth group leaders. Many of them never attended a Bible college or seminary, but they all attended the school of Christ. I am thankful to have had the privilege of being served by and of serving with such brothers and sisters. I constantly praise the Lord for the impact these people have had on my life and the lives of others. They are all true heroes!

In February of 1994, I received the stunning news that my step-grandmother, Kathleen Thigpen, had died the day after she had suffered burns over most of her body in a horrible accident at her home. My family and I made arrangements to fly to South Carolina for the funeral. I'll never forget sitting with my extended family during her memorial service. Her pastor, Rev. Patrick Goodwin of Turbeville Southern Methodist Church, stood before a full congregation and said, "Kathleen Thigpen was my hero! Although she did not fit the world's description of a hero, she certainly was to me. You see, anytime there was a need in our community she could help meet, she was there to do her part. If someone needed a ride to the doctor, she was there. When there was a death in the family, she provided food. If some-

one was shut-in, she was there to visit or to take them a floral arrangement."

He went on to share with the congregation that she had taught the 4- and 5-year-old Sunday School class for 50 years! In addition, for 60 years (from the time she was 16 years old until shortly before her death) she had served as the communion stewardess at her church. Thus, she was the one who prepared the elements when the church celebrated the Lord's Table and then cleaned up afterwards—for 60 years!

Pastor Goodwin concluded his remarks by reading to us Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:58—"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." I agree with Pastor Goodwin's assessment—my step-grandmother, Kathleen Green Thigpen, was a true hero!

Do not wait until a funeral to honor those who are heroes in your life for the cause of Christ. Why not make a phone call, write a letter, or even pay a personal visit to say thanks to those persons who have made a positive difference in your life. Let them know that in your sight, and in God's, they are truly heroes!

(Used by permission)



WNAC NATIONAL RETREAT Glorieta Conference Center September 24-26, 1999



Special Speaker: Barbara Tompkins has taught the Mom's Class every Tuesday morning during the school year for 17 years. She has established a Titus Tutelage mentoring program based on Titus 2:2-4 where the older women guide the younger women. She co-hosts a weekly radio program "Woman to Woman" on KFLT. Barbara has the abilities to discern deep spiritual truth and to present them in encouraging and practical ways.

You may obtain a reservation form from WNAC, P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

Nominating Committee for 1999 Session of the Tennessee State Association

- Larry Laughlin, Chairman (*Union*)
- Dexter Brummitt (*Toe River*)
- David Burgess (*West Tennessee*)
- Roger Castle (*Northeast*)
- Vernon Gober (*Tennessee River*)
- Wallace Hayes (*Cumberland*)
- Sterl Paramore (*Liberty*)
- Mark Street (*Appalachian*)
- Wendell Trussell (*Central*)

NEWS FROM THE OSBORNS IN MEMPHIS



Tim & Robyn Osborn

Now that the Christmas rush is behind us, it is time to make some advances for the Savior. Please pray for us as we lay out plans for the rest of this calendar year that God will give us wisdom.

There are two families that have come into the church for whom I would ask that you pray. The Prescotts have been a tremendous blessing. They have a Free Will Baptist background and have already started making major contributions to the work. Larry and Polly Ratliff have also started attending and have been very faithful to the worship service. There are also two other families with whom we have been working. They have attended some but seem to be unwilling to commit themselves to follow Christ wholeheartedly.

Pray that the Holy Spirit will move in the lives of those who have been contacted, that they will be convicted and convinced of their need for the Lord and His Church. Pray that we would be able to find and use the most effective ways to reach our community.

Continue to remember in prayer the financial needs of this ministry. Our faith promise account still needs about \$400 a month in commitments to be completed. We praise the Lord for all of you who have been faithful in this respect. Please pray for the debt on the property which stands at about \$70,000. We know that God wants to remove this obstacle for His Glory.

We want you to know that we appreciate each one who is a partner in this ministry. You are such a blessing and an encouragement to us.

WALK-A-THON Saturday, September 18

The Don and Billie Sexton Walk-A-Thon is planned for Saturday, Sept. 18. This is the day that most of the churches, quarterly meetings, and associations will hold this annual event. Of course, there is no problem if you or your group choose another day. The theme this year comes from Psalm 126:6, "Bringing in the sheaves."

The total gifts for the Walk-A-Thon in 1996 were \$128,698 and in 1997 they were \$148,432. Gifts are still coming in for the 1998 Walk-A-Thon.

— Let us all unite and work hard to make this the biggest and best year yet for this special support for Tennessee Foreign Missionaries.

PASTOR, MISSIONS EXECUTIVE TO CHALLENGE BIBLE COLLEGE SENIORS

Rev. Dennis Haygood and Rev. R. Eugene Waddell will give the final charges to Free Will Baptist Bible College's 1999 graduates in May.

Rev. Haygood, pastor of Southpark Free Will Baptist Church in Huntsville, Alabama, will bring the Baccalaureate message on Sunday night, May 9. The 1973 FWBBC graduate has pastored for 26 years in Texas and Alabama.

Rev. Waddell, who retired in December as general director of the Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions Department, graduated from the college in 1954. He pastored in South Carolina, Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee before accepting the leadership of the missions department in 1986. He will bring the final charge to graduates on Thursday morning, May 13.

Please pray for this year's graduation class as they go out to serve the Lord.

STARTLING STATISTICS ABOUT PRESENT-DAY CHURCH GROWTH

Three church growth experts, Chuck Arn, Winn Arn, and Donald McGavaran, made a study of over 10,000 people. The question they asked was this: "What was responsible for your coming to Christ and to this church?" Here are their responses (in percentages):

Special need	2%
Walk-in	3%
Pastor	6%
Visitation	1%
Sunday School	5%
Evangelistic crusades	1/2 of 1%
Programs	3%
Brought by friend or relative	79%

(This was presented in Echo in 1996. There have been many requests that we run it again. —Editor)

BIBLE COLLEGE TO HOST SUMMER CAMP '99

Attention, all teens: Free Will Baptist Bible College's 1999 Summer Camp will give you a choice. Enroll for Music Camp, Drama Camp, Missions Camp, or Basketball Camp and this will give you a week of top-notch training in the area you choose.

You will also enjoy making new friends and getting to know members of the Bible College faculty and student body. Several fun events are also planned.

The cost is just \$185. Get your name in early! Write or call:

Summer Camp '99
Free Will Baptist Bible College
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, TN 37205
1-800-76-FWBBC



**At Free Will Baptist
Bible College**

Make your summer count by spending a week in Nashville at one of Free Will Baptist Bible College's great summer camps!



The cost is just \$185. Write or call for a brochure:
Summer Camp '99
Free Will Baptist Bible College
3606 West End Avenue
Nashville, Tennessee 37205
1-800-76-FWBBC

TENNESSEE STATE ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS TREASURER'S REPORT December 1998 - February 1999

Income	
Appalachian Assn.	
Appalachian Assn.	\$ 69.74
Grace	206.00
Johnson City First	200.00
Keensburg	75.00
Wautauga Valley	165.00
Central Assn.	
Central Assn.	50.00
Crossville	100.00
Cumberland Assn.	
Ashland City	376.77
Bethel	174.05
Bethlehem	180.00
Brandon's Chapel	599.96
Calvary	254.33
Cross Timbers	65.00
Cumberland Assn.	274.23
Donelson	1,128.45
Dunbar Chapel	75.00
East Nashville	75.00
Friendship	45.00
Good Springs	200.23
Harper Road	70.00
Hendersonville	200.00
Horton Heights	300.00
New Hope	150.00
Oakwood	50.00
New Hope	150.00
Richland	61.38
Sylvan Park	150.00
Trinity	86.06
Waverly First	75.00
Woodbine	200.00
Liberty Assn.	
Cookeville	321.83
Liberty Assn.	62.96
Northeast Assn.	
Living Waters	50.00
Union Assn.	
Bethany	20.00
Fairview	20.00
First, Church Hill	1,200.00
First, Newport	350.00
First, Oak Ridge	193.58
Fellowship	150.00
Forest Grove	75.00
Harris Memorial	100.00
Limestone	75.00
Loudon	75.00
Shady Grove	100.00
Unicoi	75.00
Wooddale	181.59
West Greene	75.00
Toe River Assn.	
Berea	16.68
Individuals	185.00
Misc.	60.00
Total Income	\$9,042.84
Total Expenditures	\$8,666.45
Bank Balance, Checking - 2/28/99	\$1,989.17

Thank you for your gifts to the State Association work. All checks should be made payable to Tennessee State Association of Free Will Baptists and sent to E. B. McDonald, P.O. Box 685, Ashland City, TN 37015.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 23-24	CTS Competition, FWBBC
April 25	FWB World Missions Offering
May 9	Mother's Day Offering, FWB Family Ministries
May 13	Commencement, FWBBC
July 18-22	National Association of Free Will Baptists, Atlanta, GA
Sept. 18	Walk-A-Thon for Foreign Missions

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