

**A SHORT HISTORY OF
FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE:
1942 - 1972**

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A SHORT HISTORY OF FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE:

1942 - 1972

An Abstract

Presented to

the Graduate Council of

Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in Education

by

Lonnie Ray Skiles

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ABSTRACT

The founding of Free Will Baptist Bible College, in 1942, marked a "new beginning" for the Free Will Baptist denomination. A merger with the Northern Baptists, in 1910, had brought an end to any cohesive, national efforts by Free Will Baptists. Only a few scattered groups remained, primarily in the Southeastern and Mid-Western sections of the country. Formal educational efforts among these scattered groups were weak and ineffective because of a lack of unified effort and support. This condition prevailed until 1935, when a new Free Will Baptist denomination was formed. Thus, for the first time since 1910, Free Will Baptists were unified nationally.

The establishment of a formal educational institution was of foremost importance to the leaders of this newly formed denomination. Because of its central location, Nashville, Tennessee was chosen as the site of the new college, and in the fall of 1942 the dream became a reality. It was a small beginning to be sure, with only one building, four staff members, and nine students. However, this proved to be not only the beginning for the Bible College, but, as stated above, actually a new beginning for the whole denomination.

The Bible College experienced a steady growth throughout the 1940's. It was started as a two-year school, but by 1950 it had

developed into a four-year program, offering a B. A. degree in Biblical Instruction. This growth continued throughout the 1950's and 1960's, and at present the school is enjoying its greatest success. The student body has increased to almost five hundred, the faculty and staff number over forty, and the physical plant is valued in the millions of dollars. All of this has been a work of faith, and the denomination has reaped the harvest of lives that have been the product of this institution.

A SHORT HISTORY OF FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE:

1942 - 1972

This thesis was written by Lonnie Ray Skiles, a student of the Free Will Baptist Bible College, Austin Peay State University. It was presented to the Graduate Council of Austin Peay State University for the degree of Master of Arts in Education.

A Thesis

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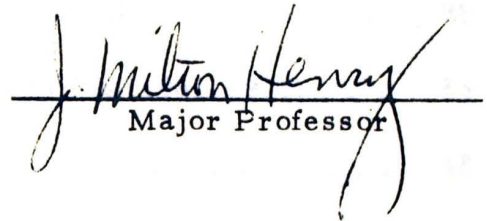
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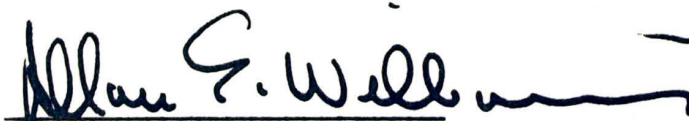
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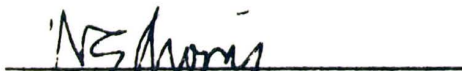
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a Thesis written by Lonnie Ray Skiles entitled "A Short History of Free Will Baptist Bible College: 1942-1972." I recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education, with a major in History.


Major Professor

We have read this thesis and
recommend its acceptance:


Minor Professor


Third Committee Member

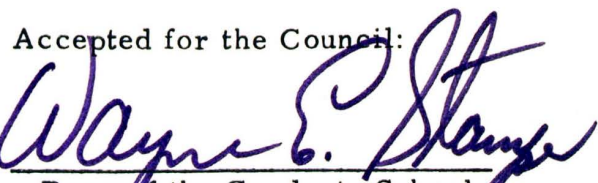
Accepted for the Council:

Dean of the Graduate School

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Chapter I

THE FOUNDING OF FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

The founding of Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee, in 1942, marked the initiation of a new era in Free Will Baptist history. It was really a "new beginning," although few, if any, at that time realized this. The significance of this single event is rooted in the years of struggle and frustration that preceded it. These were the years of "wilderness wanderings" for Free Will Baptists.

The merger, in 1910, of the Northern Free Will Baptists with the Northern Baptists was a near mortal blow to Free Will Baptist efforts in the United States. The most devastating effect of this merger was the loss of all educational institutions to this newly formed group. Damon Dodd states, concerning this merger: "One fact is outstanding. After 1917, the date of the last meeting of General Conference, not a single college or Bible institute remained for Free Will Baptists."¹

In the years that followed, until the forming of the National Association of Free Will Baptists in 1935, the denomination was plagued

¹Damon C. Dodd, The Free Will Baptist Story, p. 146.

with two serious deficiencies - lack of organization and lack of education. Like Siamese twins, these illnesses clung together, each refusing to be cured without the other, and both of them together sapping the very strength out of the denomination. This became more and more apparent in the stilted efforts among Free Will Baptists during the ensuing years.

Following the merger, the majority of Free Will Baptists were located in the Southern and Midwestern sections of the country. These two sections formed loose-jointed conferences of their own, and each made separate abortive attempts to establish educational institutions for higher learning. The first of these schools was attempted by the General Conference of Free Will Baptists, which represented, roughly, the Southeastern section of the country. This school was the Free Will Baptist Seminary, located in Ayden, North Carolina. The school had actually been established in 1898, and operated as a seminary until 1920. It was then closed for two years to allow for some improvements. It reopened in 1922, as a seminary, and operated until 1925, when freshman college courses were added to the curriculum and the school became designated as a college. Thereupon, it was given the name of Eureka College.²

During the 1920's, Eureka College was hampered by a lack of financial support. The General Conference was loosely organized,

²Eureka College Catalog, 1925-1926, pp. 7-9.

and there was no specific plan of support for the school. There was, however, a relatively high interest in education among the leaders of the conference. This is reflected in the following report of the Education Committee at the 1928 meeting of the General Conference:

We endorse the educational work being carried on at Eureka College at the present time, and solicit every Free Will Baptist to make some contribution to this institution between now and January 1, 1929.

We wish to urge that every conscientious Free Will Baptist solicit students for the college, especially prospective ministerial students.³

The zeal of the leaders was obviously not matched by enough "conscientious" Free Will Baptists, and as a result the college was forced to close. William Henry Oliver, one of the instructors at Eureka College, and presently a professor of education at Free Will Baptist Bible College, states:

I did not realize as I began my second year at Eureka that the stream of Free Will Baptist education was about to go underground. Such was the case, however, for in December, 1928, the school was closed for lack of sufficient funds. Its closing made it necessary for me to return to public education.⁴

There was a feeble effort made to revive the operations of the college, but in 1932 the college building burned and was never rebuilt.

³Minutes of the General Conference of the Original Free Will Baptists of the United States, 1928, p. 15. (Hereafter called General Conference.)

⁴William Henry Oliver, "Flowing and Growing," Free Will Baptist Bible College Bulletin, March/April, 1971, p. 1.

Another significant attempt at higher education was made by the Cooperative General Association. This conference represented, roughly, the states west of the Mississippi River, with Missouri and Oklahoma the most active. In 1917, this conference opened Tecumseh College, in Tecumseh, Oklahoma.⁵ Reverend John H. Wolfe was the first dean and president of this school, and he served in this dual position until 1922. Reverend Wolfe was a graduate of Hillsdale College (one of the Northern Free Will Baptist colleges before the merger). In 1922, he resigned as president of Tecumseh College, and Reverend B. F. Brown replaced him.⁶ Reverend Brown then served as president until the school burned, in 1927.

It appears that Tecumseh College was beset with the same problems as Eureka - lack of organized interest and support. Reverend Dodd states, quite plainly: "From its outset, Tecumseh College was beset with enemies and problems."⁷ An early report of the school, in the minutes of the Cooperative Association, does show some promise.⁸ In this report, a "School of Music" is mentioned, as well as plans for a Business Department. These were obviously in addition to the

⁵Damon C. Dodd, loc. cit.

⁶Minutes of the Cooperative General Association of Free Will Baptists, 1923, pp. 13-14. (Hereafter called Cooperative Association.)

⁷Damon C. Dodd, loc. cit.

⁸Minutes of the Cooperative Association, 1918, pp. 9-11.

regular curriculum of the college, concerned with the training of ministers and other Christian workers. The college had a total staff and faculty of ten persons at this time, including Reverend Wolfe. The report also contains a rather disheartening note, however, for it mentions that the faculty members were receiving a total salary of \$70.00 annually.

The Tecumseh College fared no better, financially, in the years that were ahead. A note in the 1923 minutes of the Cooperative Association bears mute testimony to this sad fact:

At the close of the service Sister McAdams took an offering for the college teachers amounting to \$13.79, and Brother W. G. Fields sold a quilt for \$16.10, which went into the general fund for college use.⁹

With such minimal support as this, the fate of the college was sealed. In these same minutes, the new president of the college, Reverend B. F. Brown, voiced this appeal:

One of the main things needed to make Tecumseh College a real school is finance. With sufficient finance to pay expenses and make the needed repairs and improvements, Tecumseh College could be made an attractive place; and there would be no lack of students. All the students enrolled last year were residents of Tecumseh.¹⁰

Reverend Brown reported a total of 21 students from January to June, 1923.

⁹ Minutes of the Cooperative Association, 1923, p. 9.

¹⁰ Ibid., pp. 13-14.

With regard to Tecumseh College, just as in the case of Eureka College, there was obviously an interest in higher education among the leaders of the conference, but a lack of real organization overcame this zeal. The laity of the conference, whether hostile to higher education or just apathetic and discouraged, were not stirred to any level of real support. The result was that this effort, too, was choked and broken. As mentioned before, the college burned in 1927, and was never sufficiently rebuilt to function as a school again.

The 1918 minutes of the Cooperative Association mention a Correspondence School at Tecumseh College.¹¹ This school offered to Free Will Baptist constituents, by correspondence, courses in Pastoral and Practical Theology, Systematic Theology, History of the Bible, Church History, and Evidence of Christianity. The total cost was \$10.00 for books. Reverend Wolfe was the head of this Correspondence School, and after leaving Tecumseh in 1922, he continued to provide this educational service to Free Will Baptists. Operating out of Pawnee, Nebraska, this school became known as "The School of the Bible," and was advertised and recommended in the Free Will Baptist Gem (official newspaper of the Cooperative Association) as late as 1936. It was also recommended in the 1931 minutes of the Union Free Will Baptist Association of Tennessee, showing that it was accepted

¹¹ Minutes of the Cooperative Association, 1918, pp. 13-14.

in the General Conference as well.¹² How extensively it was used is impossible to ascertain, but at least it was an effort toward education during these trying years.

As Professor Oliver stated, Free Will Baptist education went "underground" throughout the 1930's. There was a school opened in Blakely, Georgia, in 1930, known as the Zion Bible School. A note is made of this in the 1933 minutes of the General Conference. Reverend J. L. Welch, the educational secretary for the General Conference at that time, reports:

I will call your attention to the fact that at present we have no denominational school work within our connection except Zion Bible School at Blakely, Georgia, which is doing a splendid work among a limited number of students under the faithful leadership of Rev. T. B. Mellette.¹³

The efforts of this school were certainly limited; even more so than Tecumseh and Eureka. It was the same old story of very little active interest among the laity, and consequently, extremely poor support. The support of this school was even more limited from the outset, as reflected in the following report of the Resolutions Committee in the 1930 minutes of the General Conference:

Resolved (1) that inasmuch as a Bible School has been established at Sowatchee, Georgia (P. O. Blakely, Georgia), and to begin September 9, 1930,

¹²Minutes of the Union Free Will Baptist Association, Tennessee, 1931, p. 10.

¹³J. L. Welch, Minutes of the General Conference, 1933, p. 15.

and insisting especially that Georgia, Alabama, and Florida stand for the support of the school.
 (2) That the General Conference indorse this movement.¹⁴

If two other schools had failed under the support of an entire conference, it was hardly likely that this one could make much progress under the auspices of only three states. Nevertheless, Zion Bible College did "operate" until 1942, at which time it closed in deference to the new Bible College at Nashville.¹⁵

As stated before, the main reason for the failure of Free Will Baptist educational efforts, from 1910 to 1942, was a lack of organization and support. However, there was another contributing cause. In considering the location of the three schools mentioned above, it is noted that none of them were centrally located for Free Will Baptists. Thus, by 1932, it was becoming apparent that if Free Will Baptists were to have a successful school of higher learning, it must be contingent upon accessibility, as well as organization and unified support. This idea is reflected in the following report of the Educational Board in the minutes of the General Conference, 1932:

We the Board of Education, after considering the handicaps of said Board, do hereby recommend:
 First that the Board of Education be discontinued,
 and a Secretary of Education be elected instead,

¹⁴ Minutes of the General Conference, 1930, pp. 13-14.

¹⁵ Damon C. Dodd, op. cit., p. 147.

whose duty it shall be to promote the cause of education in every way possible among our people. Second, inasmuch as we are badly in need of a school for the training of our Christian workers, we recommend that we take steps toward establishing a school at some central point, the location to be decided upon later. We further recommend that said school be owned and controlled by the General Conference.¹⁶

This was a giant step in the right direction, but it still lacked that all-important ingredient - unification. This was not long in coming, however, for at the 1933 meeting, a joint committee of the General Conference and Cooperative Association agreed to a merger of the two bodies.¹⁷ This meant that for the first time since 1910, Free Will Baptists were to be actually united on a national level. Right in step with this was the momentous, indeed, even prophetic recommendations of the new educational secretary, Reverend J. L. Welch of Nashville. Reverend Welch had become one of the leading pioneers for education among Free Will Baptists, and his foresight and wisdom are justly represented in his recommendations, as follows:

First - That the question of a centralized educational institution be made contingent upon the merging of the Cooperative General Association and the General Conference into one national body. I am convinced that we must have the support of all our people in order to build and maintain a college. The school would then belong to all.

¹⁶ Minutes of the General Conference, 1932, pp. 15-16.

¹⁷ Minutes of the General Conference, 1933, p. 12.

Second - That the location of the school, if we should decide to build one, should be chosen not only for convenience but to make it as satisfactory as possible to all concerned. While in this city, I ask that you look over the situation here and decide whether you think Nashville offers a satisfactory place for such a school.¹⁸

As stated before, these recommendations proved to be exceedingly wise and prophetic.

In November, 1935, a historic meeting of Free Will Baptists took place in Coopers Chapel Church, Nashville, Tennessee. At this meeting, the present National Association of Free Will Baptists was formed, providing for the unification of Free Will Baptist efforts throughout the country. At this same meeting, Reverend J. L. Welch was elected national secretary of education, and plans were made for locating property and establishing a national Free Will Baptist college.¹⁹ There were many problems ahead, and it was to be a full seven years before such a school was ever established. Now, however, there was at least a unified foundation on which to build.

The two main problems encountered in establishing the proposed school were finances and location. At its 1935 meeting, the General Conference recommended Nashville as the location for the new school.²⁰

¹⁸J. L. Welch, loc. cit.

¹⁹Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1935, p. 6.

²⁰Minutes of the General Conference, 1935, p. 8.

This, however, did not meet the immediate approval of all Free Will Baptists across the country. In 1936, the Board of Education of the National Association submitted a proposed budgetary plan for the new school. This plan set a goal of \$250,000 to be raised by 1941. Of this amount, \$150,000 was to be raised by the Eastern General Association (former General Conference) and \$100,000 by the Western General Association (former Cooperative Association).²¹ Although this plan was approved and adopted by both these bodies, it obviously failed at the local church level, as can be seen by the further developments. The primary "monkey-wrench" in the machinery appears to have been differences of opinion as to the location of the school. Coupled with this was the fact of continued apathy, and even some outright hostility toward education. This feeling of hostility is reflected in the following comment from the 1932 minutes of the Union Association of Tennessee: "We observe with sadness that there yet remains among our people those who would discourage education, but we believe their influence is waning."²² Dr. L. C. Johnson, the first and present president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, describes the general educational temperature among Free Will Baptists during these years as mostly "apathetic or hostile."²³ From this, it can easily be seen that those

²¹Minutes of the Eastern General Association, 1936, p. 12.

²²Minutes of the Union Free Will Baptist Association, Tennessee, 1932, p. 11.

²³Dr. L. C. Johnson, Personal Interview, 1971.

interested in establishing a new school still had some tremendous obstacles to overcome. It became rather discouraging, even to the point of "dividing the action." The Cumberland Association of Tennessee reflected this attitude in the following report of the Education Committee in 1937:

Inasmuch as there has been created within our people a desire for a school in which our boys and girls may be trained for future usefulness, and because of the uncertain state of our national education program, we would recommend that we look forward to establishing a school within our own state.²⁴

The National Association of Free Will Baptists met in its second session in 1938. At this meeting, it was decided that this body should convene on an annual basis instead of every three years, as originally planned. Another important action of this body was the election of a new National Board of Education, with Reverend J. R. Davidson as Chairman.²⁵ Reverend Davidson proved to be a real workhorse in the educational endeavor, and was very instrumental in creating interest and raising funds for the proposed college.

The efforts and accomplishments of the new Board of Education, until the eventual establishment of the school at Nashville, are adequately covered in Reverend Dodd's book.²⁶ The end results were that in 1941 the National Association gave approval for the Board of Education to

²⁴Minutes of the Cumberland Association of Free Will Baptists, Tennessee, 1937, p. 11.

²⁵Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1938, p. 5.

²⁶Damon C. Dodd, op. cit., pp. 147-148.

"purchase, hold, and control suitable real property for a Bible School in Nashville, Tennessee." The Board was authorized to spend \$15,000 outright for this property, with annual payments on the unpaid balance of not more than \$3,000.²⁷ This was quite a reduction from the original plan submitted in 1936, but it was at least a definite step in a definite direction, and it proved to be all that was necessary.

In the fall of 1941, the Board of Education located suitable property at 3609 Richland Avenue, Nashville, Tennessee, and purchase arrangements were made. The owner of the property, Mr. W. O. Tirrill, agreed to accept a down payment of \$5,000, with a balance of \$10,000 to be paid later. Thus the original "campus" of Free Will Baptist Bible College was secured. The purchase was verified by the National Association in 1942. A quotation from the minutes of this session provides a fitting finale to this account of the establishment of Free Will Baptist Bible College:

Motion was made and carried that the Board of Education be authorized to proceed with the completion of all plans to open the Bible school in Nashville on September 15, 1942.

Motion that this body give a rising vote of thanks to Rev. J. R. Davidson for his untiring and sacrificial service as chairman and treasurer of the national board, and that he be asked to lead us in a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God for this victory.

²⁷ Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1941,
p. 24.

Bro. Davidson requested the other members of the board to assemble around the altar with him while the prayer of thanksgiving was being offered.²⁸

²⁸Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1942,
p. 10.

Chapter II

THE FORMATIVE YEARS (1942-1950)

In connection with the establishment of Free Will Baptist Bible College was another significant educational endeavor called the Christian Worker's Institute. This was instituted in 1941, and proved to be extremely instrumental in the promotion of the college at Nashville. The Institute was a portable school which conducted sessions in various towns and cities throughout the country. The main purpose of this traveling school was to provide educational opportunities to Free Will Baptists where they were, and to promote the cause of formal education among Free Will Baptist churches. It must be remembered that this was still one of the urgent needs in this infant but growing denomination.

The administration of the Christian Worker's Institute was placed in the hands of Rev. L. R. Ennis, then the executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Rev. Ennis promoted this work with a zeal unsurpassed in Free Will Baptist circles. He utilized the services of some of the most capable personnel available in order to make these sessions both interesting and beneficial. Some of the

personnel employed by this school were Miss Laura Belle Barnard, Mrs. Agnes Frazier, Mrs. Fannie Polston, Rev. J. R. Davidson, Rev. and Mrs. Chester Pelt, and Rev. Ennis.¹

The Christian Worker's Institute is mentioned here primarily because of its value in promoting the Bible College and education in general. In 1942, the year of the Bible College's inauguration, Rev. Ennis gave this testimony concerning the Institute:

Immediately following the 1941 session of the Association a new institution was inaugurated for the advancement of our great cause - the Christian Worker's Institute. During the year 4 sessions have been conducted at strategic points; namely, Monett, Missouri; Erwin, Tennessee; Flat River, Missouri; and Tulsa, Oklahoma. There have been 163 students from 9 states enrolled in these sessions, and 91 certificates awarded. Gifts from the faculty, students, and visitors of the Institute to our national work amounted to \$576.18 for the year, and the salaries and expenses paid by the National Board of Education totaled \$783.15. It should be understood, however, that the salaries of the executive secretary and our missionary, Miss Barnard, are not included in this gross expense account. Undoubtedly, the Christian Worker's Institute is one of the greatest unifying agencies among us. We need it. Let us keep it running.²

In these same minutes, the report of the National Educational Board contained the following statement about the Institute:

We feel definitely that the greatest accomplishment educationally among our people for a period of many years has been realized in this endeavor. We have

¹ Laura Belle Barnard, Personal Interview, April 7, 1971.

² Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1942, p. 21.

realized maximum results with minimum expenditures. The revival spirit which has prevailed in each session has served to stimulate support to our cause in general, and the vision of our people has been wonderfully broadened.³

The Christian Worker's Institute has a long and rich history all its own, which cannot be incorporated in this work. Suffice it to say that it served as a valuable auxiliary to the Free Will Baptist Bible College throughout the critical early years of its development. The Institute was eventually incorporated into the Bible College curriculum as an extension school.⁴ In 1958, it was included as an integral part of the college program, offering a Christian Worker's Bible Diploma, especially designed for those who could not obtain a B.A. degree because they lacked a high school diploma.⁵

The inauguration of Free Will Baptist Bible College, while insignificant to the world in general, was a milestone of untold consequence in Free Will Baptist history. The college was opened for classes on September 15, 1942, and was dedicated, debt free, on October 13, 1942, with representatives present from six states.⁶ As president of the new school, the Board of Education chose Rev. L. C. Johnson, a graduate

³Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1942, p. 28.

⁴Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1952, p. 27.

⁵Free Will Baptist Bible College Catalog, 1958-59, pp. 39-43.

⁶Free Will Baptist Gem, November, 1942, p. 4.

of Bob Jones University and at that time the pastor of the Free Will Baptist church in Glennville, Georgia. This proved to be a highly significant selection, for aside from an interlude of three years (1944-1947) Rev. Johnson has remained at that position until the present time, and no one has been more influential in shaping the policies and course of the school. Since that time, he has received an honorary doctorate degree from Bob Jones University in recognition of his splendid leadership at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

In addition to Rev. Johnson, the faculty and staff of the new college was comprised of three other persons, namely: Rev. J. R. Davidson, business manager; Miss Laura Belle Barnard, secretary and teacher; and Rev. Henry Melvin, teacher. The college was organized as a two-year school, with a reasonably good curriculum (see Appendix C).

What the Bible College lacked in prestige and size, it made up in love and spirit. This is reflected in the following report contained in the Free Will Baptist Gem in 1942:

The Free Will Baptist Bible School, which is entering the fourth week of operation, has already proven to be a very definite blessing to every student enrolled. There are students here from four states, representing North, South, East, and West. Following is a list of the students and their home addresses:

James Hagin	Glennville, Georgia
Sam Kennedy	Beaulaville, North Carolina
Rashie Kennedy	Kanapolis, North Carolina
Robert Woodard	Kanapolis, North Carolina
Paul Kettelman	Macedonia, Illinois
George Waggoner	Macedonia, Illinois

Sylvia Dodd	Flat River, Missouri
Damon Dodd	Flat River, Missouri
Marie Thomas	Monett, Missouri

Although our number is small, we enjoy the sweetest and most Godly fellowship one with the other. Our association has drawn us together as though we were one big family.

One of the most pleasant things of all is our student life. We have an organized student's chorus and a mixed quartette. Usually on Friday evenings we have a special entertainment or event of some kind in which each student and teacher participates.

On Monday, October 12, immediately following our morning devotions, the class met for the purpose of organizing. The officers who were elected were:

President	Damon Dodd
Vice President	George Waggoner
Secretary-Treasurer	Marie Thomas
Pianist	Sylvia Dodd
Sponsor	Mrs. L. C. Johnson

Our regular meeting time was set for the first and third Friday of each month. We chose as our class song, "Sweeter Than the Day Before." For our class colors we chose blue and white; blue for truth and white for purity.

We have adopted the "annual endowment plan" as a class and plan to fill one of the check books.

We, as a student body, have come here through the leadership of God. Our desire is to prepare our lives in a way to better carry on His great service. Do remember us as you pray.⁷

With the growth and expansion of the school, some of this intimate fellowship has unavoidably been lost. However, the love and unity of

⁷Ibid., p. 5.

purpose has thankfully remained as a trademark throughout the history of the school.

This initial year of operation was significant in other ways as well. For one thing, the Missionary Prayer Band was organized in the waning days of this school year. This was the result of a missionary class taught by Miss Barnard.⁸ The Prayer Band is still an important part of the school activity schedule, and meets daily to pray for Christian missions all over the world. In addition to this, the first yearbook was published (in 1943) and was given the name "Lumen." This name was suggested by Mrs. L. C. Johnson, wife of the president. The year book still bears this name today.

Since the school was established as a two-year course of study, the second year of operation produced the first graduates. These were four in number, namely: Damon C. Dodd; Syliva Dodd; George Waggoner; and Marie (Thomas) Hyatt.⁹ This year also saw an increase in enrollment to thirty-four (see Appendix A). This growth was especially significant since these were war years and a good many of the young men of the country were engaged in military service. This was merely the beginning, however, for this trend was to continue throughout the years to come. The following report from the business manager,

⁸Damon C. Dodd, The Free Will Baptist Story, p. 155.

⁹Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1944, p. 27.

Rev. J. R. Davidson, in the 1943 minutes of the National Association, reflects the impact of this growth:

It seems that we are in line for some very serious emergencies with our present facilities. There is a need of increased facilities for male and married students by September 8, 1943. I feel that wisdom will justify the purchase of another piece of property near the college for the meeting of at least a few of our acute needs.¹⁰

The growing pains were certainly acute, but these needs were not to be met for some time to come.

The 1944 National Association minutes contain an important policy statement concerning the Bible College. This statement was included in the report of the General Board:

It shall be the policy of the Free Will Baptist Bible College, Nashville, Tennessee, to employ on its faculty those who are members of Free Will Baptist churches that are affiliated with the National Association. Emergencies, however, arising from the resignations, illness, death, or approved leave of absence of faculty members may be relieved by the temporary employment of instructors who are affiliated with any evangelical church. Part-time or short-term instructors deemed essential to the successful prosecution of a consistent educational program may be employed at the discretion of the president and the Board of Trustees without respect to denominational affiliation.¹¹

This policy has been adhered to rather closely throughout the history of the college, and as liberalism and heresy have increased and abounded

¹⁰ Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1943,
p. 28.

¹¹ Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1944,
p. 17.

in the church world it has become an increasingly important and safeguarding policy.

The remainder of the 1940's was marked by a steady growth in finances and enrollment. Each year also saw a changing and expanding curriculum designed to meet the needs of the increased enrollment (see Appendixes). These were the important years, as the denomination watched closely to see whether this educational endeavor could long endure. This era was the "proving ground" for the college, and prove itself the school certainly did.

There were some events worthy of note during these years. In July, 1944, Rev. Johnson resigned as president of the college and was succeeded by Rev. L. R. Ennis, the man who had been so instrumental in the success of the Christian Worker's Institute. Rev. Ennis served as president until 1947, when Rev. Johnson was rehired. As stated before, Rev. Johnson (now Dr. Johnson) has never left that post again until this day.

The first annual Bible Conference was held at the college in 1944. This event continued and developed throughout the 1940's, until by the end of the decade it was one of the highlights of the school year. This is a time when pastors and other visitors from Free Will Baptist churches across the nation gather at the college for a series of services centered in and around the Bible. Featured speakers bring lectures and messages during the morning and evening hours, and the

afternoons are given to fellowship and individual activities. It is a time of great spiritual renewal for visitors, student body, and faculty alike. The Bible Conference is still one of the most publicized events on the school calendar.

In July, 1945, the Department of Education of Tennessee approved the Bible College for veteran's training under the G.I. Bill. This was very important to this young college, and has been instrumental in bringing untold numbers of students to its campus who otherwise could not or would not have come. The G.I. Bill was first listed in the 1946-47 Catalog.¹²

A charter of incorporation for the Bible College was presented by the Board of Education at the 1945 session of the National Association. Also, the supervision of the college was shifted to a duly elected Board of Trustees, consisting of nine members. This board was given the power to create its own by-laws. The incorporators and first Board of Trustees were: R. B. Spencer, J. L. Welch, Floyd B. Cherry, Ralph Lightsey, Henry Melvin, K. V. Shutes, Melvin Bingham, James F. Miller, and J. R. Davidson.¹³ These were all leaders whose names were well known and respected throughout the ranks

¹² Free Will Baptist Bible College Catalog, 1946-47, p. 14.

¹³ Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1945, p. 30.

of Free Will Baptists. This board was further given the authority to launch an expansion campaign for the college. The original goal was \$100,000 to be raised by 1948. This goal was never realized, but it did reflect a new interest and faith in the future of Free Will Baptist education in general and the Bible College in particular. As a result of this action, an additional building, called the Sword Building, was purchased for the cash price of \$10,000 in October of 1945. This brought the campus facilities to a grand total of two buildings, plus various and sundry lesser items.

The Bible College was approved by the Evangelical Teacher Training Association for awarding of their diplomas in 1946. This addition to the program was first listed in the 1946-47 Catalog, and marked another step in the development of this institution.¹⁴ The E. T. T. A. diploma is still offered by the college to those who take the prescribed qualifying courses. This program is supplemental to the regular degree or Bible diploma course of study.

Another significant event of this first decade was the establishment of the Alumni Association. This occurred at the Bible Conference in the spring of 1949. The Alumni Association has been one of the leading organizations in the promotion of the Bible College ever since this date. This was just another indication that the college was truly coming into its own.

¹⁴Free Will Baptist Bible College Catalog, 1946-47, p. 20.

The close of the 1940's marked a satisfying and gratifying end to the first decade of the Bible College's existence. The steady growth, as reflected in the Appendixes, was indicative of the success of the college. She had proven herself to the Free Will Baptist constituency. The groundwork had been laid for the future development of a full-fledged college. A third year was added to the curriculum for the school year 1949-50, and at the National Association, in 1950, the Board of Trustees was given approval to expand the curriculum to a four-year program offering a B. A. degree in Biblical education.¹⁵ The stage was set for the fifties, and little did anyone realize what a fantastic future was in store for this one and only Free Will Baptist educational institution. A fitting capstone to this success story was the report by the Bible College, in 1950, that five graduates from the school were now serving on the mission field in foreign countries. The proof of success is in doing, and this proved that the school was doing exactly what it was established to do--prepare men and women for God's service throughout the world. This was then, and still is, the main purpose and thrust of the school, and hopefully this shall remain its primary reason for existing.

¹⁵ Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1950,
p. 36.

Chapter III

THE FABULOUS FIFTIES (1951-1960)

A bright new dawn of history broke for Free Will Baptist Bible College with the beginning of the 1950's. Not only was the curriculum expanded to a four-year course of study, but, as reflected in Appendix A, the enrollment reached the century mark (104) for the first time. The total number on the faculty and staff for the school year 1950-51 was ten (seven faculty and three staff),¹ and the total assets of the school had climbed from \$15,000, in 1942, to \$60,522.56 (see Appendix B). This was nothing great, as most men count greatness, but it was more than great to Free Will Baptists of that day--it was fantastic.

The year 1951 saw other major achievements, as reflected in the following statement from the National Association minutes:

Free Will Baptist Bible College closed its ninth year on May 25, 1951. Three significant events marked the year as outstanding; viz: an all-time high in enrollment--104 from 17 states--and the graduation of the first four-year class composed of four men and one woman upon which was conferred the B.A. degree with a major in Bible. The third event was

¹Free Will Baptist Bible College Bulletin, 1950-51, p. 7.

the erection of Memorial Auditorium in which these sessions of our National Meetings are being held. The total cost of the building as it now stands was \$27,852.39.²

In addition to this, a home was purchased for the college president, at the cost of \$15,000, in January of 1951.³ All these things together were a source of great encouragement and joy to educationally concerned Free Will Baptists all over the world. As a matter of interest, the names of the first four-year graduates of the school are as follows: Wesley Calvary, Mrs. D. C. Hanna, Walter Reynolds, Adam Scott, and T. O. Terry. These were the first to receive a purely "Free Will Baptist degree" in many, many years.

The college continued to develop and grow throughout the fifties. As reflected in Appendixes A and B, the growth in attendance and graduates, as well as financial receipts, was steady throughout this decade. The physical plant also increased, in line with these growing demands. In 1953, for instance, an additional dormitory building, formerly called the Richland Apartments, was purchased at the cost of \$65,000.⁴ This property was conveniently located on Richland Avenue, very near the new auditorium. The final payment on this

²Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1951, p. 47.

³Damon C. Dodd, The Free Will Baptist Story, p. 158.

⁴Ibid., p. 159.

building was made in 1954. An additional building, called the Dunbar property, was purchased in 1956 for \$15,000.⁵ Final payment was made on this in 1957. These transactions were indicative preludes to the outstanding future development of the physical plant of the school.

An important resolution, concerning this future development, appeared in the 1956 report of the Bible College to the National Association. It was as follows:

Resolved: 1. That the Board of Trustees now in session this July 10, 1956, does hereby authorize and direct the administrative officers of the college and the executive committee of the board to launch and prosecute a consistent improvement program that shall answer the universally accepted need of Free Will Baptists in that of a greater Bible College.

2. That the immediate goal shall be the erection of two essential buildings providing for a library, dining hall, classrooms, and offices, thus releasing present buildings for readaptation to dormitory use.⁶

This resolution was adopted by the national body, and a direct result was the acquisition of the Dunbar property mentioned above.

The 1956-57 edition of the College Catalog contained the following resume of the physical plant, which provides insight into its growth as well as its needs:

Richland Hall, the latest addition to the college property, houses the administrative offices, library, and parlor on the first floor. The second and third stories of the building comprise the women's dormitory. The basement of Richland Hall contains

⁵Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1957, p. 30.

⁶Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1956, p. 26.

a classroom, an office, a laboratory, laundry room, and a bookstore and snack shop combination. Besides being the refreshment center, this is also the location of students' mail boxes.

Davidson Hall is another men's dormitory. The first floor of the building houses the dining hall, the capacity of which is approximately one hundred.

Music Building contains two large studios and two offices. It is located at the rear of Davidson Hall.

Ennis Hall is another men's dormitory. The first floor of the building affords classroom space, and also houses several faculty offices.

Memorial Auditorium is located on the lot adjoining Davidson Hall. Its seating capacity is approximately five hundred. It is used for daily chapel services and for many special services that are sponsored by the college throughout the year.

The President's Home is situated across the street from Davidson Hall.⁷

Add to these buildings the Dunbar property, and the physical plant at the end of 1957 is complete. However, the development program during the fifties was not finished, for in 1958 yet another building was erected. This structure is described in the 1959-60 catalog, as follows:

Student Lounge and Dining Hall Building is the latest addition to the college plant. This building was completed near the close of the 1957-1958 school year. It has a spacious room which is a lounge for the students, faculty and school guests. The dining hall will seat up to 250 persons for each meal.⁸

⁷Free Will Baptist Bible College Catalog, 1956-57, P. 11.

⁸Free Will Baptist Bible College Catalog, 1959-60, p. 11.

The end result of this growth and development was that at the end of the decade (1960) the student body had grown to 210, or over twice that of 1950; the total dollar receipts for the year were more than \$200,000, or over four times that of 1950; and the total assets had risen to \$384,826.64, or over six times that of 1950. (See Appendixes A and B for these figures.) In addition, the curriculum had been widely expanded (see Appendix C), the total number of faculty and staff members had risen to twenty-two (fifteen faculty and seven general staff), and the number of volumes in the library had grown to 9,250. The real value, however, was in the lives of those who were leaving this school for service in the Free Will Baptist denomination and for God. By this time, it was becoming more and more evident to everyone involved that the Bible College was not only important but absolutely essential to the further expansion and development of Free Will Baptist endeavors of any kind. Considering the educational status of this denomination twenty years prior to this, this attitude itself was a momentous and far-reaching achievement.

Two other events worthy of mention occurred during the decade of the fifties. The first was in May, 1953, when a charter of Student Foreign Missions Fellowship of Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship was issued to Free Will Baptist Bible College. Tommy Willey (son of pioneer missionary "Pop" Willey, and now serving on the mission

field in Panama) was chosen as first president of this mission society. Membership in this organization is described as "those who feel a definite call to the mission field." Associate members are "those who are interested in the missionary work."⁹ This institution of Foreign Missions Fellowship into the college program was highly significant, because the missions emphasis has been the very heart and core of the college's aim and purpose from the outset. Foreign Missions Fellowship has merely furnished a workable channel through which this emphasis can be "pushed." This organization, from its inception, has taken the lead in missions promotion at the college and throughout the denomination. Through this organization, the mission zeal and support has been intensified in the local churches, which is a must for a really effective missions program. From this organization, also, have come people who have committed themselves to spreading the Christian Gospel worldwide. This is one of the primary reasons that the number of Free Will Baptist foreign missionaries on the field has now reached a total of 72, with a promise of many more in the future. This missionary emphasis at the Bible College is also partly responsible for a tremendous increase in the Foreign Missions' budget over the years (total receipts for 1970 were \$662,334.40, and the budget

⁹Free Will Baptist Bible College Foreign Missions Fellowship Constitution and By-Laws, p. 2.

for 1972 is \$844,460.42).¹⁰ Certainly, the establishment of Foreign Missions Fellowship was a milestone in the history of Free Will Baptist Bible College.

The second important event was the acceptance of the Bible College into the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. This occurred in October, 1958, and opened the door for future acceptance by other "secular" colleges and universities in the years to come. This was indeed a fitting finale to the "fabulous fifties."

¹⁰Digest of Reports of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1971, pp. 44-49.

Chapter IV

A MIRACLE ON RICHLAND AVENUE (1961-1971)

Some people reject the whole idea of miracles. However, to Free Will Baptists, and especially to those closely associated with the Bible College, a miracle is precisely what occurred during the 1960's and early 1970's. By 1960, the present "front office" administration of the college had been established. This consists of Dr. L. C. Johnson, president; Rev. Charles Thigpen, dean; Dr. Robert Picirilli, registrar; and Rev. Bayless McDonald, business manager.¹ These four men have provided efficient and effective leadership for the college during these all-important years since 1960. In addition, a host of other fine men and women have made invaluable contributions to the development and success of this institution, as members of the faculty and staff. For instance, Miss Laura Belle Barnard, who was with the college at the very beginning, is still serving on the faculty as head of the Missions Department, having left the school in 1943 for further service on the mission field (India) and returned in 1960. Miss Barnard has instilled

¹Free Will Baptist Bible College Catalog, 1960-61, p. 6.

in the hearts of the college family a missionary zeal and compassion that is probably unexcelled on any other campus in the country, or even the world. She, along with all the other members of the faculty and staff, has worked untiringly and unselfishly toward the success of this school. (By 1960, many of the present faculty members, including Rev. and Mrs. Charles Thigpen, Rev. Leroy Forlines, Mrs. Geraldine K. Hall, Dr. Robert Picirilli, Miss Mary Ruth Wisheart, and Rev. Ralph C. Hampton, had also been employed.) But the final and primary credit for all that has been accomplished belongs to God, and to this Free Will Baptists agree universally.

It is significant to note that in 1960, on the very eve of a great period of growth and development, the Board of Trustees of the Bible College, in their report to the National Association convened at Fresno, California, reaffirmed the doctrinal position of the school. This was important because the very course of this school depended then, and still depends, on a strict adherence to this position. The report was as follows:

Free Will Baptist Bible College now, as always, is committed to the support, maintenance, and propagation of principles, practices, and doctrines as set forth in the Free Will Baptist Treatise.

In various times, however, it becomes insufficient simply to parrot this general declaration. When certain areas of sound doctrine are in danger, it then becomes

necessary to give special affirmation to our stand. In the light of various trends that are manifested at different times, it is often needful to single out certain specific areas for emphasis. Such a situation calls for the following resolution.

Whereas, the church world is in a period of great theological turmoil and uncertainty caused by liberalism; and

Whereas, there are intense efforts to erase the lines of distinction between Bible-believing Christians and unorthodox professors; and

Whereas, when denominations have been infiltrated by such philosophies it has generally been through their educational institutions; and

Whereas, Free Will Baptists are immune from these trends only as we take positive steps of prevention; therefore

Be it resolved, (1) that we emphatically re-affirm our belief in basic Christian doctrines, including: the plenary-verbal inspiration and infallibility of Scriptures; the creation of the universe and man by the special and supernatural activity of God—as literally recorded in Genesis, and as opposed to various forms of the theory of evolution, whether atheistic or theistic; the fall and universal sinfulness of man with the necessity of divine intervention for redemption; the incarnation, virgin birth, sinless life, penal atonement, and resurrection of the God-man, Jesus Christ, for the purpose of providing that redemption; and the necessity of a new birth by the Holy Spirit for the application of that redemption.

(2) That we, according to the Biblical commands to defend the faith, affirm our opposition to any compromise with, affiliation with, or recognition as Christian of those who deny the Biblical teaching about Jesus Christ.

(3) That we emphatically state our opposition to encouraging the attendance of ministerial students for Bible training at schools where the doctrines affirmed above are denied.

(4) That we re-state our intention to continue to provide, in Free Will Baptist Bible College, a school that is aggressively true to God and His Word, and which all our young people who are interested in such a Bible-centered and spiritual emphasis may attend.²

Without this doctrinal position, the Bible College would not differ from many other like institutions. It is this position that makes this school, and thus its history, unique and unusual.

By 1964, plans were developing in the minds of the administration for a development program that was unheard of in modern Free Will Baptist history. In 1965, these plans had crystallized to the point that the Board of Trustees, after much prayer and meditation, approved a staggering multi-million dollar expansion program, to be launched immediately. This program developed rapidly, and by the summer of 1966, the Bible College was able to make the following report to the National Association:

The expansion program which has been recently launched is very encouraging to this point. By the time you read this report, plans should be finalized for the beginning of the first new building in our development program. This is to be a classroom building with 17 classrooms,

²Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1960,
p. 55.

including a science laboratory and approximately 10 teachers' offices. Nothing of this magnitude has ever been attempted by Free Will Baptist Bible College. I believe that our people are ready for this challenge and that we will move on to some of the greatest accomplishments that we have ever known. In a day of moral let-down, and much of this attributable to a godless system of education, Free Will Baptist Bible College is seeking to give to every Christian young man and woman in our Free Will Baptist churches an opportunity to study in an institution where God and His Word are honored and old-fashioned Christian standards maintained. To assure this goal, we invite you to join with us in the march of progress for a greater denomination through an expanded Free Will Baptist Bible College.³

As stated later on, the growth of this denomination has indeed been parallel with the growth of the Bible College.

To spearhead this "impossible" project, the college secured the services of Rev. Jack Paramore, an outstanding young Free Will Baptist evangelist and alumnus of the college. Rev. Paramore began immediately to promote this program among Free Will Baptists throughout the country. This was accomplished by a massive advertisement campaign. Rev. Paramore, along with other members of the college staff and student body, travelled extensively, visiting churches and bringing the need to the people firsthand. Appeals were made to individuals, as well as to Sunday School classes, church

³Dr. L. C. Johnson, Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1966, pp. 49-50.

auxiliaries, and the churches in general. As reflected in Appendix B, the response was more than gratifying as building fund receipts increased significantly from 1966 to the present. This was the miracle that God was working in the hearts of Free Will Baptists everywhere, and although the intimate details cannot all be related here, they only serve to illustrate the magnitude of the miracle even more. Heart-touching stories of sacrificial giving have been testified again and again, by those involved, during the progress of this tremendous program.

Actually, the classroom building was not the first step in this expansion program. In 1965, the Grizzard property on West End Boulevard was acquired at the purchase price of \$75,000. This consisted of a stately mansion, plus servants' quarters and a huge yard and garden area. The servants' quarters were converted into a music building, and the main building into a library. Thus the college, for the first time in its history, had adequate library space. By 1971, a total of 19,316 books were catalogued in the library. This represented a significant gain in the scholastic appeal and prestige of the college. This development of the library is a testimony to the dedicated work of Mrs. Anna Barrow, who served as librarian from 1964 to 1970.

The first new structure, the classroom building mentioned above, was completed in time for the first semester of the school year 1966-67. The cost of this building was approximately \$450,000 (furnishings

and other fringe expenditures are not included in this figure). In the same year, 1966, a beautiful, badly-needed men's dormitory was erected at the approximate cost of \$400,000.⁴ The expansion program was well under way, and people were able to observe and enjoy the bountiful results. The Bible College was experiencing a similar growth in nearly every other area as well, as reflected in the following report to the National Association, in 1969:

This is a report of the 27th year of operation of the Free Will Baptist Bible College. It is felt by administration and faculty that this was one of the smoothest years of operation that Free Will Baptist Bible College has known. Student life on campus seemed to have been almost ideal throughout the year. Student problems were at a minimum. The spirit of co-operation on the part of the students was in sharp contrast to the student unrest and rioting which is becoming commonplace on college and university campuses across the country. Jesus Christ in the hearts and lives of students does make a difference.

The statistical part of this report will reveal that there was growth in almost every area of the college.

I would call your attention to the enrollment of ministerial and missionary students. I am sure it is encouraging to Free Will Baptists to know that when you support Free Will Baptist College you are helping train 200 men and women who are going into some type of full-time Christian ministry. We could add to this number of ministerial and missionary students those who will teach in

⁴Dr. Robert Picirilli, Personal Interview, 1971.

Christian day schools and become directors of Christian Education in local churches. We must remember that this is the primary function of the Free Will Baptist Bible College, and it pleases us to know that we have such a host of committed men and women in our denomination preparing to preach the Gospel at home and abroad. Let us not overlook the more than 200 students in our enrollment who, no doubt, are just as dedicated in their Christian commitments but who have not been called into so-called full-time Christian service. These will serve the Lord as Christian businessmen, housewives, and in other areas of secular employment. You will notice that this year's graduating class was the largest to ever graduate. Prospects of next year's graduating class is even larger. We feel a sense of accomplishment when a good percentage of our students earn their degrees here. We should remember, however, that since a heavy percentage of the women students are going into the teaching profession, we may expect a heavy transfer rate as long as we do not offer a degree in this area.

You will be interested to know the number of students employed by Free Will Baptist Bible College. More than \$50,000.00 was paid in student wages during the year. Sixty-two student loans were processed. More than \$17,000 was loaned to these students during the year. Since Free Will Baptist Bible College does not receive Federal loans, it is necessary for more funds to be made available to assist worthy students. We believe there are many of the Lord's people throughout our denomination who would like to make a designated contribution to the College loan fund. In the financial section of this report you will note that we received slightly more than \$145,000 of the gift budget of \$175,000. It was the plan of the college to take 10% of the \$175,000 gifts and set it aside for a student loan fund. Since we fell short of the requested budget by approximately \$30,000, we were unable to set this money aside as planned. During the coming year it is still proposed to take 10% of general fund money for this purpose.

The Expansion Program continues to be active and the indebtedness is consistently being reduced. The current development program will involve the construction of at least seven units: an academic building, a gymnasium-auditorium, a library, and four dormitories. The total cost is expected to exceed \$3,000,000. Phase I, launched February 18, 1966, has included the purchase of three pieces of property and the construction of two buildings. Progress on this phase is encouraging. Total cost of Phase I was \$700,000. Through May, 1969, we have received more than one-half million dollars in cash and have promises of approximately \$150,000 from our people. Since commitments have been fulfilled at about 90%, we expect good revenue from this source over the next several months. We are now looking toward the second phase of the program which is expected to include the purchase of one or two pieces of property and the construction of two buildings. One of the most encouraging things in regard to the Development Program is that many churches and individuals are raising the second and third special gifts to this fund. With this spirit prevailing, it is hoped that the coming year will see the retirement of the indebtedness of the first phase of the program. The plans for other buildings are moving along satisfactorily. The tight money market is the biggest problem facing us at the present time. A new piece of property was recently purchased on Richland Avenue for future development. Cash was paid for this \$23,000 property.

Free Will Baptist College is enjoying a wholesome physical growth as well as internal growth. The prospects for fall enrollment are bright. The number of applications on hand compared to this time last year are considerably more.

An investment in the youth of our denomination is an investment in its future.⁵

⁵ Dr. L. C. Johnson, Minutes of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1969, pp. 49-50.

The expansion program continued into 1971, and in this year a new combination women's dormitory and cafeteria, costing approximately \$650,000, was completed in time for the fall semester. This building was completely financed, and at present the cost of most of the furnishings has been underwritten by individuals, churches, and church conferences throughout the denomination. The cafeteria was named the "Cumberland Cafeteria" in recognition of the fact that the Tennessee Cumberland Association of Free Will Baptists adopted the project to furnish the cafeteria at a cost of \$36,000. This, as well as the other countless contributions, speaks well of the confidence and concern that exists among Free Will Baptists in regard to their college.

As indicated above, the future plans for the expansion program call for a gymnasium-auditorium complex and a wing on the library. Ultimately, two more dormitories (one for men and one for women) will be added. This will complete the present program, but as the college continues to grow--and grow it surely will--only God knows what will develop. The impossible has already been accomplished, and hardly any knowing Free Will Baptist doubts that it can and will continue to be accomplished as the need is presented.

The story of Free Will Baptist Bible College is not told in buildings, but in lives. From this school has come literally hundreds of dedicated men and women who have taken the leadership of this small but growing

denomination. Nearly all the missionaries now on the field (both Home Missionaries and Foreign Missionaries) received most of their training at the Bible College. A good percentage of the pastors and other denominational leaders did the same. The true value of the school can never be measured, but it is best seen in the lives that have been transformed by God in the midst of an environment and campus spirit dominated by and centered in the Word of God. The growth in the student body and the physical plant is only a testimony to the fantastic benefits derived from these transformed lives. The outstanding expansion in the curriculum (see Appendix C) merely reflects the expanded needs emerging from this growth. The college, in 1971, offered the following programs of study to meet these needs:

B. A. Degree

B. S. Degree (combination major in Christian Education and Music)

Bible Diploma (three-year program)

Certificate of Business (two-year program)

E. T. T. A. Diploma⁶

There are, of course, numerous variations of course arrangements (majors and minors) within these basic study programs.

In line with this growth was an increase in the faculty and staff. This number totaled forty-one (twenty-three faculty and eighteen

⁶Free Will Baptist Bible College Catalog, 1970-71, pp. 40-42.

general staff) in 1971, each one dedicated to the task of preparing more young people for God's service in the Free Will Baptist denomination. The academic level of the faculty has risen significantly also, since most of them now have at least a Master's Degree, and many are working on their Doctorate. Dr. Picirilli, of course, has had his Doctor's Degree for several years.

What makes Free Will Baptist Bible College outstanding? It is not the academic standards of the school, although these are probably as high as any other college in the country. It is not the buildings, because many other schools surpass these in quantity and quality. It is not the worldly prestige, although the college is being recognized and accepted by more and more "secular" educational institutions every year. For example, among those universities that have accepted transcripts from the Bible College at the graduate level are Austin Peay State, Middle Tennessee State, Peabody, Western Kentucky, Eastern Michigan, Western Michigan, Old Dominion, Syracuse, Oklahoma City, Troy State, State University of New York, and the University of Oklahoma. These are in addition to the scores of other colleges and universities, other than religious schools, that have accepted transcripts at the undergraduate level. Furthermore, future recognition by many more universities was virtually assured when Dr. Picirilli was notified, on January 18, 1972, that the University of Tennessee had granted the Bible College an "A" rating in the 1972 edition of the

Report of Credit Given, published by the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Offices.⁷ Before this date, the Bible College had been rated "BC," which meant that only two years credit would be accepted from the college on the undergraduate level, and then only on the provision of validation by satisfactory residence. The new "A" rating removes all restrictions and provisions, and allows a university to accept any number of years credit with no provisions whatsoever. This is an exceedingly high rating for a non-accredited college such as the Bible College. None of these things, however, important as they may be, comprise the outstanding element of the Bible College. The outstanding element of this school is found in its people--the faculty, staff, and student body. This unique quality is partially explained in the following Bible College report to the 1971 National Association:

In evaluating the past school year, the thing that stands out most as a contributing factor to a wonderful year is the student body of Free Will Baptist Bible College. We have one of the most refined, contented, clean-living student bodies to be found on any campus in America.

The thing that makes the difference between our students and what is generally found on the average college campus is that our students know Jesus Christ as a personal saviour and have submitted themselves to Divine authority, and are not only

⁷ Dr. Robert Picirilli, Personal Interview, 1972.

at peace with God, but at peace with themselves. The rebellion that we see and hear about in our colleges and universities is a rebellion against the depravity of the human heart which is at war with God. Instead of Free Will Baptist Bible College lowering its standards to accommodate the low morals of our day, we are seeking rather to raise our standards of Christian living because we believe that the more nearly we are living according to Bible standards, the happier we are as Christians. Free Will Baptist Bible College feels that this is no day to seek relevance with those who are not willing to live separated, consecrated Christian lives.

In the last two years the Lord has been pleased to visit our student body with a soul-moving revival that has changed the lives of many students. It is very evident that revival is as essential to a Christian college as it is to an individual Christian. Should the Lord not visit Free Will Baptist Bible College with these revival fires, it would be impossible for us to have more than a dead orthodoxy which would eventually give way to more serious spiritual problems.⁸

This quality, then, is a truly Christian spirit that prevails in the entire college family, and is characterized by oneness of spirit and purpose, peace with each other and with God, and contentment that comes only from this inward peace with God. These inward qualities are manifested in the outward appearance and actions of the personnel of the Bible College, as a visit to the campus will verify. This is what makes Free Will Baptist Bible College both outstanding and different.

⁸ Digest of Reports of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1971, p. 60.

Although many will never understand, Free Will Baptists in general view the growth of the Bible College as a symbol of God's blessings on the denomination as a whole. Some indeed reject the whole idea of miracles; but to Free Will Baptists this is a miracle story, and to God belongs all the credit and glory for it all.

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NOTE: All of the above sources are located at Free Will Baptist
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Appendix A

ENROLLMENT AND GRADUATE STATISTICS Free Will Baptist Bible College 1942-1971

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Graduates</u>			<u>Total</u>
		<u>Degrees</u>	<u>Diplomas</u>	<u>Certificates</u>	
1942-43	16				
1943-44	34				4
1944-45	31				12
1945-46	39				6
1946-47	69				10
1947-48	58				13
1948-49	80				22
1949-50	76				12
1950-51	104	5	5	3	13
1951-52	142	6	2	0	8
1952-53	169	12	7	0	19
1953-54	161	25	7	0	32
1954-55	185	13	4	0	17
1955-56	182	12	4	0	16
1956-57	189	17	4	0	21

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Enrollment</u>	<u>Graduates</u>			<u>Total</u>
		<u>Degrees</u>	<u>Diplomas</u>	<u>Certificates</u>	
1957-58	197	20	10	0	30
1958-59	221	22	2	2	26
1959-60	210	19	0	0	19
1960-61	247	19	3	3	25
1961-62	331	19	4	7	30
1962-63	309	18	2	0	20
1963-64	291	24	3	0	27
1964-65	343	28	1	0	29
1965-66	354	28	4	3	35
1966-67	430	31	6	2	39
1968-69	456	37	4	2	43
1969-70	480	41	7	3	51
1970-71	471	37	1	3	41

NOTE: The graduate totals from 1942 through 1950 represent those receiving two-year diplomas. The first four-year degrees were awarded in 1951. The certificates from 1951 through 1962 represent two-year Christian Worker Certificates, and from 1966 through 1971 they represent two-year Business Certificates. The diplomas represent three-year Bible Diplomas.

Appendix B

FINANCIAL RECORDS Free Will Baptist Bible College 1942-1971

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Receipts</u> (General Fund)	<u>Receipts</u> (Building Fund)	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Books</u> (In library)
1942-43	\$ 18,139.03		\$15,000.00	
1943-44	21,756.51			
1944-45	22,551.59			
1945-46	30,591.15			
1946-47	34,670.51			
1947-48	33,058.10			
1948-49	49,617.36			
1949-50	47,558.59			
1950-51	50,669.71		60,522.46	
1951-52	83,944.35			
1952-53	101,042.19	\$ 18,352.28		
1953-54	103,887.60	35,810.12		
1954-55	119,064.86			
1955-56	115,458.69			
1956-57	134,383.52	15,692.21		
1957-58	138,891.32	24,077.53		

<u>School Year</u>	<u>Receipts</u> (General Fund)	<u>Receipts</u> (Building Fund)	<u>Assets</u>	<u>Books</u> (In library)
1958-59	\$155,078.73	\$24,106.55		
1959-60	148,435.70	11,139.78		
1960-61	185,741.38	17,220.22	\$384,826.64	9,250
1961-62	210,850.70	11,223.16		
1962-63	227,434.16	19,014.23		
1963-64	239,738.61	9,365.39		
1964-65	288,199.89	6,580.57		
1965-66	328,310.47	60,636.37		
1966-67	419,372.53	132,385.98		
1967-68	470,491.06	146,677.22		
1968-69	548,494.05	103,430.41		
1969-70	627,021.30	127,743.54		
1970-71	687,586.69	135,810.26	2,525,692.38	19,316

NOTE: These figures represent total receipts (gifts and otherwise) as reported in the National Association Minutes for the respective years. Figures on library books were not available for the years 1943 and 1951.

Appendix C

CURRICULUM Free Will Baptist Bible College School Year 1943-1944

BIBLE

- 100 - Synthetic Study of the Old Testament
- 101 - Synthetic Study of the Old Testament (continued)
- 102 - Personal Evangelism
- 103 - Personal Evangelism (continued)
- 104 - Biblical Introduction
- 105 - Biblical Introduction (continued)
- 106 - History of Christian Missions
- 107 - History of Christian Missions (continued)
- 200 - Doctrine
- 201 - Doctrine (continued)
- 202 - Studies in the New Testament
- 203 - Studies in the New Testament (continued)
- 204 - Homiletics
- 205 - Homiletics (continued)
- 206 - Biblical Introduction (Advanced)
- 207 - Biblical Introduction (Advanced) (continued)

ENGLISH

- 001 - Preparatory English (for those not completing high school)
- 108 - Composition and Rhetoric
- 109 - Composition and Rhetoric (continued)
- 208 - English Literature
- 209 - English Literature (continued)

HISTORY

- 110 - Ancient Civilization
- 111 - Ancient Civilization (continued)
- 210 - History of Christianity
- 211 - History of Christianity (continued)

SPANISH

- 112 - Elementary Spanish
- 113 - Elementary Spanish (continued)

CHURCH MUSIC

- 114 - Rudiments of Music
- 115 - Rudiments of Music (continued)
- 212 - Hymnology
- 213 - Hymnology (continued)

PHYSICAL EDUCATION - 1 hour each semester

CURRICULUM
Free Will Baptist Bible College
School Year 1950-1951

BIBLE

- 100, 110 - Bible Synthesis and Geography
- 202 - Johannine Writings
- 212, 222 - Pauline Writings
- 241 - Prophecy
- 315 - Exegesis (Hebrews)
- 311 - Minor Prophets
- 320 - Daniel and Revelation
- 419 - Romans and Galatians
- 422 - Isaiah and Matthew
- 430 - Genesis and Exodus
- 215 - Missions
- 330 - Old Testament Introduction
- 340 - New Testament Introduction
- 103, 113 - Evangelism
- 304, 314 - Evangelism
- 118 - Child Psychology and Principles of Teaching
- 132 - History of Christian Education and Sunday School
Administration
- 306, 316 - Pastoral Theology

- 112 - Free Will Baptist Doctrine
- 312 - History of Modern Cults
- 108 - General Psychology
- 232, 242 - Rural Church
- 104 - Child Evangelism
- 203 - Daily Vacation Bible School

ENGLISH

- 105 - English Fundamentals
- 115 - English Fundamentals
- 106, 116 - College English
- 224, 234 - English Literature

SPEECH

- 114, 124 - Speech
- 216 - Homiletics
- 226 - Homiletics
- 317, 327 - Homiletics

HISTORY

- 119, 129 - Ancient History
- 313, 323 - Church History

SCIENCE

- 221, 231 - General Science

PHILOSOPHY

- 417 - Christian Philosophy

PHILOSOPHY (continued)

427 - Christian Evidences

433 - Modern Apologetics

THEOLOGY AND DOCTRINE

200, 210 - Doctrine

300 - Old Testament Theology

310 - New Testament Theology

400, 410 - Systematic Theology

ANCIENT LANGUAGE

401, 411 - New Testament Greek

MUSIC

121, 131 - Chorus

207, 217 - Chorus

120, 130 - Fundamentals of Music

204, 214 - Hymnology

145, 155 - Private Piano

148, 158 - Private Voice

CURRICULUM
Free Will Baptist Bible College
School Year 1960-1961

DEPARTMENT OF BIBLE

Bi 100, 101 - Bible Survey

Bi 102 - Biblical Backgrounds

Bi 200 - Pentateuch

Bi 201, 202 - Pauline Writings

Bi 404 - Law and Grace

Bi 405 - Exegesis of I Peter

Bi 300 - Daniel and Revelation

Bi 301 - Harmony of the Gospels

Bi 302 - General Epistles

Bi 303 - Lucan Writings

Bi 304 - John

Bi 400 - Hebrews

Bi 401 - Romans

Bi 402 - Minor Prophets

Bi 403 - Isaiah

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Th 305, 306 - Bible Doctrine

Th 309 - Systematic Theology I (Prolegomena and Bibliology)

DEPARTMENT OF THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY (continued)

- Th 310 - Systematic Theology II (Theology, Angelology, and Anthropology)
- Th 404 - Systematic Theology III (Christology, Pneumatology, and Soteriology)
- Th 405 - Systematic Theology IV (Ecclesiology and Eschatology)
- Th 406 - Introduction to Philosophy
- Th 407 - Philosophy of Religion

DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- CE 100 - Child Evangelism
- CE 101 - Daily Vacation Bible School
- CE 200 - Philosophy of Christian Education
- CE 201 - Organization and Administration of Christian Education
- CE 202 - Child Psychology
- CE 203 - Principles of Teaching
- CE 302 - History of Christian Education
- CE 303 - Introduction to Education
- CE 304 - Church Drama
- CE 401 - Camp Methods

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL TRAINING

- Pt 200 - Philosophy of Christian Education
- Pt 201 - Organization and Administration of Christian Education
- Pt 300, 301 - Homiletics

DEPARTMENT OF PASTORAL TRAINING (continued)

Pt 302, 303 - Pastoral Problems

Pt 304 - Pastoral Counseling

Pt 400 - Parliamentary Law

Pt 401 - Hermeneutics

Pt 402 - Church Music Administration

DEPARTMENT OF MISSIONS

Mi 100 - Personal Evangelism

Mi 200 - Introduction to Missions

Mi 201 - History of Missions

Mi 300 - Missionary Principles

Mi 307 - Survey of Non-Christian Religions

Mi 308 - Modern Cults

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

En 100, 101 - English Communication

En 202, 203 - Speech

En 200, 201 - English Literature

En 300, 301 - American Literature

En 302, 303 - Interpretive Speech

En 400 - Advanced Grammar

En 401 - Journalism

En 402 - Twentieth Century American Fiction

En 403 - English Romantic Writers

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

Mu 100, 101 - Fundamentals of Music

Mu 102, 103 - Chorus

Mu 104, 105 - Class Piano

Mu 106, 107 - Class Voice

Mu 200, 201

300, 301

400, 401 - Advanced Chorus

Mu 202, 203 - Choral Conducting

Mu 204 - Sight Singing and Ear Training

Mu 205 - Music Appreciation

Mu 302, 303 - Hymnology

Mu 402 - Church Music Administration

Mu 403, 404 - History of Music

Mu 210, 211 - Private Voice

Mu 310, 311 - Private Voice

Mu 410, 411 - Private Voice

Mu 208 - Private Piano

Mu 209 - Private Piano

Mu 308 - Private Piano

Mu 408 - Private Piano

Mu 409 - Private Piano

Mu 212 - Private Organ

Mu 213 - Private Organ

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC (continued)

Mu 312, 313
412, 413 - Private Organ

DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES

La 200, 201 - Beginning Greek Grammar

La 202, 203 - Beginning Spanish

La 300, 301 - Advanced Greek

La 302, 303 - Advanced Spanish

DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND SOCIAL STUDIES

SS 100, 101 - History of Ancient Civilizations

SS 206, 207 - History of the United States

SS 300, 301 - Medieval History

SS 400 - Renaissance and Reformation

SS 401 - Europe in the 18th and 19th Centuries

SS 304, 305 - History of the Church

SS 200 - General Psychology

SS 201 - Introduction to Sociology

SS 202 - Government

SS 102, 103 - Survey of Biological Science

SS 104, 105
204, 205 - Physical Education

DEPARTMENT OF BUSINESS EDUCATION

BE 100, 101 - Beginning Typing

BE 102, 103 - Advanced Typing

BE 104, 105 - Beginning Shorthand

BE 106, 107 - Advanced Shorthand

BE 108, 109 - Accounting

BE 110 - Office Procedure

BE 111 - Business Filing

CURRICULUM
Free Will Baptist Bible College
School Year 1970-1971

DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES

ENGLISH

Courses in Grammar and Writing

En 90 - Remedial English

En 100, 101 - Grammar and Composition

En 306 - Modern Grammar and Usage

En 342 - Editing Publications

En 340 - Newswriting

En 445 - Creative Writing

Courses in Literature

En 200, 201 - English Literature

En 203, 204 - Survey of World Literature

En 300, 301 - American Literature

En 403 - English Romantic Writers

En 410 - Shakespeare

En 413 - Milton

Courses in Speech and Dramatics

En 102, 103 - Fundamentals of Speech

En 302, 303 - Interpretive Speech

Courses in Speech and Dramatics (continued)

En 330 - Voice and Diction

En 412 - Representative Drama

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Courses in Linguistics

La 400 - Introduction to Linguistics

Courses in Greek

La 200, 201 - Beginning Koine Greek

La 300, 301 - Advanced Koine Greek

Courses in Spanish

La 202, 203 - Beginning Spanish

La 302, 303 - Advanced Spanish

PHILOSOPHY AND COMPARATIVE RELIGION

Courses in Philosophy

Pr 406 - Introduction to Philosophy

Pr 407 - Philosophy of Religion

Courses in Comparative Religion

Pr 307 - Survey of Non-Christian Religions

Pr 308 - Modern Cults

MUSIC

Courses in Theory

Mu 100 - Music Fundamentals

Mu 101, 102 - Music Theory I

Courses in Theory (continued)

Mu 204, 205 - Sight Singing and Ear Training

Mu 202, 203 - Music Theory II

Courses in Choir

Mu 302, 303 - Choral Conducting

Beginning Chorus

The College Choir

Choral Union

Courses in Materials and Administration

Mu 300 - Choral Techniques and Materials

Mu 301 - Hymnology

Mu 305 - Music Literature

Mu 402 - Church Music Administration

Mu 403, 404 - History of Music

Courses in Music Education

Mu 450 - The Teaching of Voice

Mu 451 - The Teaching of Piano

Courses in Applied Music

Class Voice

Private Voice

Class Piano

Private Piano

Service Playing

Courses in Applied Music (continued)

Private Organ

Class Brass, Woodwind, Percussion

Private Brass, Woodwind, Percussion

DIVISION OF THE SCIENCES

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Courses in Sociology and Anthropology

SS 201 - Introduction to Sociology

SS 401 - Introduction to Cultural Anthropology

SS 402 - Area Studies

Courses in History

SS 100, 101 - History of Ancient Civilization

SS 206, 207 - History of the United States

SS 300, 301 - Medieval History

SS 400 - Renaissance and Reformation

SS 401 - Europe in the 17th and 18th Centuries

SS 304, 305 - History of the Church

PURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

Courses in Pure Science

Sc 102, 103 - Survey of Biological Science

Courses in Physical Education

Physical Education

DIVISION OF BIBLICAL STUDIES

BIBLE

Courses in Bible (General)

Bi 100, 101 - Bible Survey

Bi 102 - Biblical Backgrounds

Bi 200 - Pentateuch

Bi 201, 202 - Pauline Writings

Bi 404 - Law and Grace

Bi 410, 411 - Bible Exegesis

Bi 450 - Old Testament Introduction

Bi 451 - New Testament Introduction

Courses in Biblical Analysis

Bi 210 - Old Testament Poetry

Bi 207 - Minor Prophets

Bi 300 - Daniel and Revelation

Bi 303 - Lucan Writings

Bi 304 - John

Bi 400 - Hebrews

Bi 401 - Romans

Bi 403 - Isaiah

Bi 405 - Bible Prophecy

THEOLOGY

- Th 205, 206 - Bible Doctrine
- Th 300, 301 - Systematic Theology
- Th 402, 403 - Biblical Theology

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

- CE 101 - Vacation Bible School
- CE 110 - Introduction to Christian Education
- CE 201 - Organization and Administration of Christian Education
- CE 304, 305 - Church Drama
- CE 401 - Camp Methods
- CE 400 - Christian Education of Adults
- CE 401 - Christian Education of Youth
- CE 402 - Christian Education of Children

PASTORAL TRAINING

- PT 210 - Parliamentary Law
- PT 302, 303 - Pastoral Problems
- PT 310, 311 - Homiletics
- PT 401 - Hermeneutics

MISSIONS

- Mi 100 - Personal Evangelism
- Mi 200 - Introduction to Missions
- Mi 201 - History of Missions

MISSIONS (continued)

- Mi 202 - Biblical Basis of Missions
- Mi 300 - Missionary Principles
- Mi 301 - Indigenous Ministry
- Mi 302 - Missionary Health and Hygiene
- Mi 403 - Missions Seminar: Contemporary Problems

COURSES IN BUSINESS

- Bu 100 - Beginning College Typewriting
- Bu 104 - Beginning Shorthand
- Bu 111 - Introduction to Business
- Bu 121 - Business Mathematics
- Bu 201 - Intermediate College Typewriting
- Bu 205 - Intermediate Shorthand
- Bu 208, 209 - Principles of Accounting
- Bu 213 - Principles of Economics
- Bu 221 - Business Machines
- Bu 300 - Advanced College Typewriting
- Bu 304 - Advanced Shorthand
- Bu 305 - Dictation and Transcription
- Bu 308, 309 - Intermediate Accounting
- Bu 313 - Introduction to Business Law
- Bu 322, 323
- 422, 423 - Work Experience and Seminar

COURSES IN BUSINESS (continued)

Bu 407 - Business Correspondence

Bu 410 - Office Procedures

Bu 421 - Administrative Office Management

COURSES IN EDUCATION AND PSYCHOLOGY

Ed 200 - General Psychology

Ed 203 - Principles of Teaching

Ed 110 - Introduction to Education

Ed 210 - Philosophy of Education

Ed 304 - Techniques of Counselling

Ed 201 - Educational Psychology

Ed 308 - Educational Sociology