

NCFWB NEWS

October/November 2009

From Billy's Desk

This article for NCFWB News is without a doubt the hardest thus far to put on paper. I have gone over this in my mind dozens of times. Because of the seriousness of the situation and the need for extra prayer, I am mailing this issue of the newsletter; hoping pastors will copy it and get their church members involved in prayer too. I know God has the solution. I do not want to rush Him; however, my prayer is that answers will come by the end of the year.

I want to share with you my thoughts concerning Shepherds and Hirelings. This has been on my mind for several months. Part of the ministry of the Promotional Office is to assist churches that are looking for a pastor (shepherd). I have spent a great deal of time in meetings and on the phone in 2009 doing just that. My heart breaks when I must tell a committee there are not many shepherds who want a small flock. It also breaks my heart when I hear a shepherd tell me that a flock is too small to meet the needs of his family. I try not to be critical, but I wonder in my mind where God is in all of this. I thought he was the one who provided for both the small and the great. He sure has come through for Sheila and me for almost 40 years. It meant part time work for me sometimes and two jobs for her sometimes. God provided for every need we had. My prayer is that God will call some Shepherds who depend on him and not on 'them'. I talk with our older shepherds who have come through hard times. They drove old cars and lived in old houses. They did not do it for their glory, but for God's Glory. And He took care of them because of their faithfulness.

We have between eight and twelve churches right now that need a shepherd. Hirelings are keeping the work going; however, every flock needs a shepherd. I believe God calls Hirelings but they can never take the permanent place of a shepherd. In John chapter 10, Jesus discusses the shepherd, the hireling, and the Good Shepherd. Verse twelve says the hireling will leave the sheep unprotected because he "careth not for the sheep". In my opinion, that means he does not have the heart of a shepherd. The hireling is needed to help the shepherd. Pastors need time off. Pastors get sick, too. Churches need a hireling when there is no shepherd. Only a shepherd has the heart of a shepherd. As a youth pastor and

Christian School Principal, I cared for the sheep, however, I gained a shepherd's heart when I said "Yes, Lord. I will answer the call to pastor."

I believe our state has some of the best shepherds and best hirelings within our denomination. Our churches are blessed with good youth pastors, music directors, school principals, licensed ministers and deacons. My prayer is that some of them will answer the call to move up from hireling to shepherd.

The other side of this situation is that churches must be willing to give a new shepherd the chance to prove himself. I am so thankful Oak Grove Church in Durham, my first pastorate, was patient with me as I matured in the ministry. God richly blessed their faith and my fumbles. We might even have to go back to one shepherd for two small flocks. Other denominations seem to make this work. We could even let God work a miracle and two churches in one community join together as one. That would truly be something different.

My prayer is that in the next few months every flock in North Carolina has its own shepherd. I believe God has the shepherds out there. What a joy it is to me when a deacon calls the office to say, "We now have a Pastor".

On a different note, yet related, I would like to be able to provide the names of licensed or ordained men who will fill-in when a pastor needs time off. A new site will be added to NCFWB.org for Hirelings. No name will be placed on the list without their Pastor's recommendation. I must trust the judgment of a shepherd before other pastor's call a man to their pulpit. I hope this will help pastors feel comfortable in using some of our men who need a little more experience. A form for the pastor to fill-out will be added to the web-site in about two weeks.

Bits & Pieces

Our 2009 Ministers Retreat registered 19. This was down from the previous year. Those who attended gave good reports of God's Blessings. Our first golf tournament had two teams. The 2010 Retreat will be September 9-11

Our Western Christian Educator's Workshop registered 53. This was held in Lexington and was a great success. Our next workshop will be in the eastern part of N.C. in the spring. Oak Grove Church in Elm City will be our host.

Our state meeting for 2010 will be held at Meadowbrook Church in Black Mountain. The dates are June 7 & 8.