

## **Billy Cline**

### **Side 1:**

We discussed his announcement (April 9) that he would retire. I attended 4 church services (tapes enclosed) and a fellowship evening with Terrell (see his file). [Bob Terrell]

[9] He was born in Valdese, NC, a small city founded by the makers of Sunbeam Bread. [Waldensian family]

[15] His grandfather had the first movie house in the city and ran a restaurant. His father had a grocery store and Billy wanted to start a chain of supermarkets - a "grocerteria."

[24] He was in the 2nd airborne group during WWII and performed 24 jumps. He returned to Valdese.

[28] For 24 months he attended the Clevenger Business College taking advanced accounting and took an advanced course in Toledo, Ohio studying meats.

[33] When he returned to Valdese he borrowed money and went into business partnerships with his father who had a grocery store in West Asheville and in Hickory. The store sold hay and chickens as well as groceries.

[41] At 18 he married a Jehovah's Witness. He was baptized in the Baptist church but had not attended more than a dozen times.

[50] He saw the possibilities of a chain of supermarkets but, when he was 24, someone came to explain what it meant to be a Christian (John Ch. 3, verse 16: "for God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life"). He received Christ into his life. He and his wife were baptized and studied the Bible.

[66] One night he laughed out loud in bed and told his wife that he had the strange feeling that God was calling him to be a preacher. Two years later he sold the business and enrolled in Gardner-Webb College (now Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC).

[71] He was called to a small rural church to be a pastor every other week for \$35. He then transferred to and attended Lenoir-Rhyne, a Lutheran College in Hickory, NC. After one year a committee from Valdese came and asked him to be pastor. He agreed if they would allow him to finish the last year of college. He also preached in Casar (an unincorporated place which got its name when the people thought the railroad would come in and make the place famous. They wanted to give it an impressive name but spelled "Caesar" wrong).

[96] His pay increased, his wife went to work and he had to drop his health insurance for 4 years, but he graduated with a major in History and a minor in Psychology and Philosophy.

[103] He enrolled in Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC - 200 miles from Valdese - staying in the dorm during the week. He received his Master of Ministry degree.

[124] In 1965 he was asked by a group from Asheville to become pastor [that is real thunder in the background]. He refused but said to his wife that, should the group return, he would go - they did come back and he took the job.

[140] He was unhappy with the Asheville church, which he considered cold, and felt he had made a mistake. The church was smaller than the one he left (420 in Sunday school and 150 here). He would preach and go home and cry. He applied for job as personnel manager at the Holiday Inn on Tunnel Road but didn't go in.

[167] The church is now involved in many ministries - Deaf (with a person signing during services), Blind (Braille machines, training, resources, etc.), Christian School (K-8, 125 students with 1 1/2 grades higher than public schools. Parents are charged about \$200 a month.), Single Adults, Special Education (retarded of all ages, meeting once a week and putting on a program once a year), Hispanics (40-50 families). There is a Buncombe Baptist Resource Center (93 churches) which sponsored the Emanuel Baptist Fellowship and the Pathway Community Church (40 members) which meets in the YWCA. [Bob Terrell]

[256] In 1992 a mission was started in the Weaverville Community Center with 50-70 people. This was a satellite until a church was formed - the Woodland Hills Baptist Church. (50 Woodland Hill Road) which became autonomous.

[273] ince 1971, two worship services are held every Sunday at Merrimon Avenue (called "Central"). For a number of years he preached 3 services - Central at 8:30, North Woodland Hills) at 9:45, and 11:00 in Central.

[290] Members "witness" by going from door-to-door to lead people to faith in the Lord. He tells of a man "Tommy" who became a new man and led 104 people to faith in Christ. He brought firewood for 15 years and his wife cooked a meal for the Cline family every Tuesday night.

[320] He announced his retirement in time for the congregation to search for a new pastor (tape from service). This will take place the last Sunday in April 1995. He will have served 30 years and be 67 years and 4 months.

[329] He will make himself available to churches for revivals, seminars on the family, spiritual gifts and prayers.

[333] He has taken over 1,400 people to the Holy Lands and has visited 16 times. The church decided to send his family in 1969 and Bob put a story on the front page. [Bob Terrell]

[363] Because of the growth of the church and need for more parking space, plans were made to move north. But, because of the high crime rate in Montford, it was decided that the church was needed where it is.

[376] His is a regional church - which means that it serves members from Mars Hill, Black Mountain, Hendersonville, and Canton as well as locally.

[396] Each Baptist church is independent and autonomous. There is, however, a local Baptist Association (227 Hazel Mill Rd.) which helps coordinate activities. A weekly meeting is held by the ministers (70 associations), but each church decides on its own activities.

[452] The Baptists make up the largest protestant denomination -16 million members in 36,000 churches. Some pastors are bi-vocational, some work full time, some have only an 8th grade education. Leading national figures are Baptists. [Harry Truman, Billy Carter, Bill Clinton, Al Gore]

[473] The Mud Creek Baptist Association is run by the Blacks but in the Southern Baptist convention there are more ethnic groups than any other denomination. A president is elected every year. This year a Chinese was elected 1st vice president and a Black 2nd vice president.

[499] The street beside the church became 95 % Black over the years and he reached out to the neighbors. A friend from Valdese called him a "nigger lover" but waved back when he saw him marching with Blacks and Whites during the march up Haywood Street to the Court House.

[506] The Chief of Police asked the preachers to help with a march when Martin Luther King was shot. He didn't like King at the time but then learned Hoover was "out for him." [Martin Luther King, J. Edgar Hoover]

[538] Some teenage girls "came forward" to be baptized. He took this before the Deacons and they all voted that he should do God's will.

[563] There are 10 bus routes for Blacks and the elderly. The church reaches a lot but doesn't hold them. He took a Black woman on a trip to New York.

[584] He has not attended a M. L. King breakfast - primarily because of the time (conflict with his service).

## **Side 2:**

Three TV cameras cover church services. Time is furnished free 4 times a week on the Religious Channel (channel 10 for Asheville, channel 6 for Woodland Hills).

[2/27] He describes the different kinds of Baptist churches. The Southern Baptists have the largest mission in the world with 4,000 full-time career missionaries in 130 countries. The whole idea is to "go out and get." "The church is like a filling station - you come and receive and then go out to serve." Every member is a minister every day.

[2/66] In 1987 he underwent a series of operations and when he retires, he will be able to reduce his schedule.

[2/93] Controversy over abortion has been a most divisive issue. The Roman Catholic church took a strong stand years ago. He hadn't preached a sermon along these lines until 15 years ago. He became convinced that life begins at conception. Once a month half a dozen people, some men, stand in front of Femcare (69 Orange Street - see photo and write-ups) There is also a clinic at 9 1/2 Reed Street. He went once but doesn't enjoy it.

[2/127] He discusses the press coverage. Ninety-six percent of the population is pro-abortion. He feels that GreenLine has tried to be fair but is New Age and biased. The Conservative Voice is not allowed distribution in the Pack Library. The "Radical Right" is depicted as mean, narrow and judgmental - the opposite of the "loony left." He feels that "Christian bashing will make them stronger." (enclosure)

[2/167] Regarding the acceptance of homosexuality, he regards himself as a conservative Christian - identical to Billy Graham. He has been a chaplain for Graham's radio station for 20 years. The Bible seems to single out "the sin of homosexuality." He showed video tapes to his parishioners - separating the men and the women - following the San Francisco Gay Pride parade. He then had a time for confession and cleansing of the mind. A packet, based on the Bible by a world-renowned Episcopalian, is available. Mr. Bailey went back and tried to interpret the Bible. He believes one should "hate the sin and love the sinner." [John R.W. Stock, Mr. Bailey]

[2/215] Three years ago there was a "Gay Pride" parade in Asheville. He and Sexton along with their staffs got a city permit for a "Family Values" parade. Over 4,500 people participated. Ninety-nine percent of the people did not carry signs. This was not a negative march, not against homosexuals, but for family values. [I mention the book Gay, Straight and In Between by John Money.] [Ralph Sexton]

[2/286] All Souls Episcopal Church receives homosexuals. "They will love them but not condone the practice."

[2/304] He mentions a Baptist pastor who is a homosexual helping other homosexuals. He refers to Romans in the Bible and said one must accommodate to the times or be true to one's belief.

[2/316] Baptism is not necessary for salvation, however it is an act of obedience and a doorway into the local church. One must still struggle with sin. The church has a pool for baptism. Parents dedicate their babies (like Episcopalian christening) and adults are baptized (like Episcopalian confirmation).

[2/366] He discusses the growth in the church - from a part-time secretary and custodian to 4 full-time associate pastors, a full time business manager, 3 full-time secretaries, 3 custodians and a Christian School.

[2/392] The Awana Club is for children (100-150) which meets for 2 hours every Wednesday night. "Awana" means "a work man that needs not be ashamed." We talk about the IXL company (I excel- a store run by the Michalove family ) (see Michalove tape). "Iwanna" is a sales paper.

[2/427] When he and his wife came to Asheville they enjoyed the S&W. There were few eating establishments. Bucks was here (see Buck interview) and now there are many eating places and more religious assemblies and meeting grounds than any place in the world.

[2/456] Asheville has changed from only being in the Bible Belt to being an educational center - UNCA, A-B Tech, Mars Hill, YMI Cultural Center, Pack Place, Asheville Community Theater, Thomas Wolfe Auditorium and the Civic Center. He may stay in Asheville after he retires.

[2/464] The recent attempt to recall four of the City Council following the discharge of the city manager, Doug Bean, and the counter recall, shows that politically the city is more active and independent. The city is no longer run by a "machine."

[2/497] The changes in the city all due to the educational institutions and people moving in with new ideas. He senses no conflict between the natives and newcomers. There is a general feeling of friendliness.

[2/518] He and his wife have been married 47 ½ years. When she met with the committee and was asked what she would do as a pastor's wife she said, "Take care of my husband." They have a daughter in Atlanta and son in Mars Hill. He sees a spiritual revival in the next 15 years. [Ruth Cline, Lynae married to Gordon, son (14) Tyler, David Cline married to Angie, son (5) Mitchel]