

# Texas Baptist Forum: Bill Reynolds

May 1, 2009

## Rare blessing

Bill Reynolds was a churchman with outstanding gifts. He wrote songs that were elegant expressions of his faith and touched the lives of thousands—if not millions—of Christians with his work.

My life also was affected in a profound, personal way as he led the Church Music Department at a time that seemed like a Golden Age at the former Baptist Sunday School Board. He encouraged me as a young believer-artist by using materials I had written for the Church Training Department.

His invitations for me to attend Church Music Week at Glorieta and Ridgecrest helped shape my life and my ministry. He would conduct those packed auditoriums filled with church musicians as they sang with such abandonment out of sheer delight of being together in such a holy place that one could not help but be thrilled!

Without him being aware of it, he brought me and my wife, Cynthia Clawson, together as we did a premier performance of “Celebrate Life!”—the musical that Buryl Red and I wrote so long ago during one of those weeks.

The likes of that kind of musician is a rare blessing to us all. I feel sure he feels at home singing with the heavenly host because he had a taste of it in New Mexico and North Carolina.

Ragan Courtney

Austin

## **School textbooks**

I was so happy to read that the Texas Board of Education sided with academic freedom instead of academic censorship.

I can't imagine why some folks would be afraid to allow students to learn how to think through critiquing, analyzing and debating ideas. What is scary is when the powers-that-be in a bureaucracy enshrine certain ideas like evolution and try to silence anyone who would ask reasonable questions and expect intellectual discourse, but instead get "poo-pooed."

I have personal experience of being ridiculed for having a dissenting opinion.

I would recommend Ben Stein's *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*. It exposes the hypocrisy of the scientific establishment in this country. It is a scary movie, but quite entertaining.

Jean Whitmore

Okinawa, Japan

## **Tweener interpretation**

You never know what you'll face when teaching tweeners.

Teetering precariously between childhood and teenagers, they can be precocious one minute and shocking the next.

I was talking to the kids in my sixth grade Sunday school class about how God wants them to resist negative peer pressure. And he expects them to exert positive pressure on their peers by doing the right thing and showing

Jesus' love.

We discussed Noah and Pilate. Then, one of the girls started reading the account of Samson and Delilah (Judges 16:4-19):

"Some time later, he fell in love with a woman in the Valley of Sorek whose name was Delilah.

"The rulers of the Philistines went to her and said, 'See if you can lure him into showing you the secret of his great strength and how we can overpower him so we may tie him up and subdue him. Each one of us will give you eleven hundred shekels of silver.'

"So Delilah said to Samson, 'Tell me the secret of your great strength and how you can be tied up and subdued.'

"Samson answered her, 'If anyone ties me with seven fresh thongs that have not been dried, I'll become as weak as any other man.'"

At the word "thongs," a great "ewwww" rose up from the group.

I don't think Bible translators were prepared for 21st century tweeners' interpretation.

We quickly went on to the next example without much discussion.

David Alvey

Richardson

*What do you think? Because we affirm the Baptist principle of the priesthood of all believers, we value hearing from our readers. Send letters to Editor Marv Knox by mail: P.O. Box 660267, Dallas 75266-0267; or by e-mail: [marvknox@baptiststandard.com](mailto:marvknox@baptiststandard.com). Due to space considerations, limit*

*letters to 250 words, and only one letter per writer per quarter.*