

For Immediate Release

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Bert Tippett, FWBBC Leader, Dies at age 70

NASHVILLE, TN—Reverend Bert Tippett, long-time publications editor and director of church relations at Free Will Baptist Bible College, died Wednesday, January 5, after a nearly three-year struggle with prostate cancer. He was 70. He and his wife Dianne joined the FWBBC staff in 1965 and served in numerous roles until his retirement in August 2009.

Best known for his skills as a journalist, editor, and photographer, Reverend Tippett enjoyed an extraordinary pulpit ministry, first as a pastor in New Hampshire (1963-1965) and then as an interim pastor in Middle Tennessee, and 10 years as campus pastor at FWBBC. He delivered the opening address at the 2010 Free Will Baptist national convention in Oklahoma City.

Former FWBBC president Dr. Charles Thigpen said, “When Bert was campus pastor, I don’t know how many times I heard students say, ‘I just can’t wait until Wednesday night to hear Mr. Tippett.’ One thing stands out to me, when students had hospital stays and doctors were reluctant for them to return to dormitories, the Tippetts opened their home to them. I know of no other family who performed such a ministry.”

Tippett answered the call to preach in 1961 as a 20-year-old English major at FWBBC. He was ordained to the ministry in 1964. Following a brief New England pastorate, he returned to his alma mater where he invested almost five decades in the students and educational mission of the college.

Between 1965 and 2005, he published 230 issues of *Free Will Baptist Bible College Bulletin*, the college’s official publication. He served 15 years (1970-1985) as advisor of the college yearbook, the *Lumen*, and launched *Alumni News* in 1975. He was one of the architects of *ONE Magazine*, official publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

“Bert was an All-Pro news hound,” said Jack Williams, FWBBC’s director of communications. “He got the facts straight and squeezed them into a bang-bang format. He became the voice of reason that FWBBC students heard every Wednesday night, the eye behind the camera that captured history, and the face of journalism that was trusted by editors across the denomination.”

Mr. Tippett’s expertise as a photographer eventually resulted in Secret Service clearance to “shoot” the President of the United States. He had a stage pass to photograph performers at the Grand Ole Opry. He served 20 years as official photographer for the Free Will Baptist national convention.

President Matt Pinson said, “We thank God for Brother Tippett and his faithful ministry at FWBBC. He was a true friend, an example of Christian maturity, and a trusted colleague in the Lord’s work. I know of no person more loved and respected than Bert Tippett. He demanded the best from himself and encouraged the best from others.”

During his senior year at FWBBC, Bert served as Student Body president, sang bass in the college quartet, performed with the College Choir, and was named Most Outstanding Student. He graduated in 1962 with a B.A. degree.

The college honored Bert and Dianne Tippett on June 4, 2009, when more than 250 people gathered on campus for an event called *The Celebration!*

At that time, Dr. Robert Picirilli, retired academic dean, said: “Bert and Dianne began to rise above the crowd even when they were students. Both of them offered up, on the altar of this ministry we call Free Will Baptist Bible College, the sweet-savor sacrifice of excellence. They exemplified how to love God and submit to His bidding.”