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ONE magazine

Stewardship
Lessons

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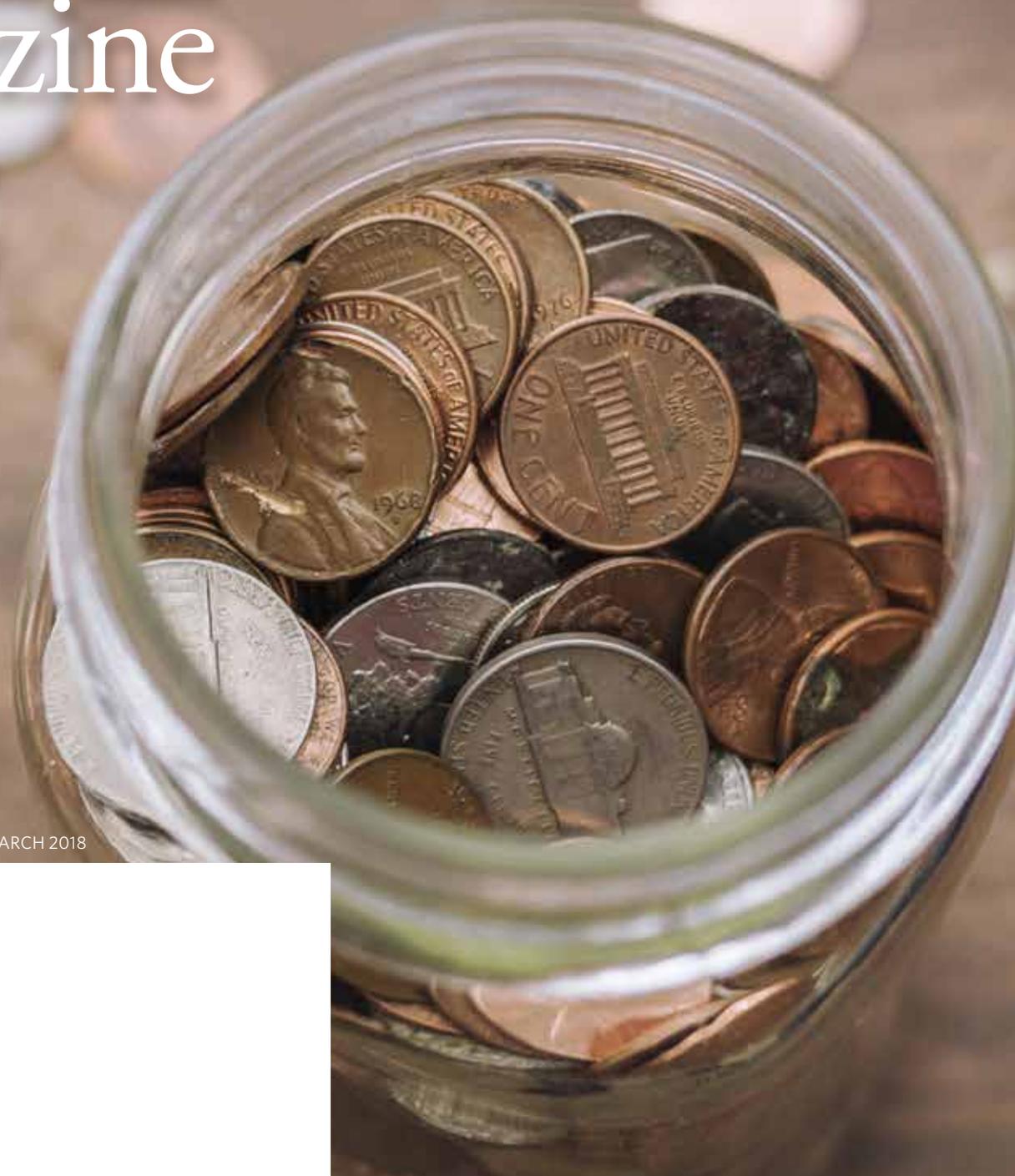
For Such a
Time as This

Ad Fontes!

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The Only
Constant
is Change

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Before representatives from across the nation met at Cofer's Chapel in November 1935 to form the National Association, Free Will Baptists already had a rich heritage. From abolition and missions work to publishing, education, and standing strong against heresy, our movement had been "making history" for centuries. Men and women who quietly lived out their faith influenced the future of this denomination.

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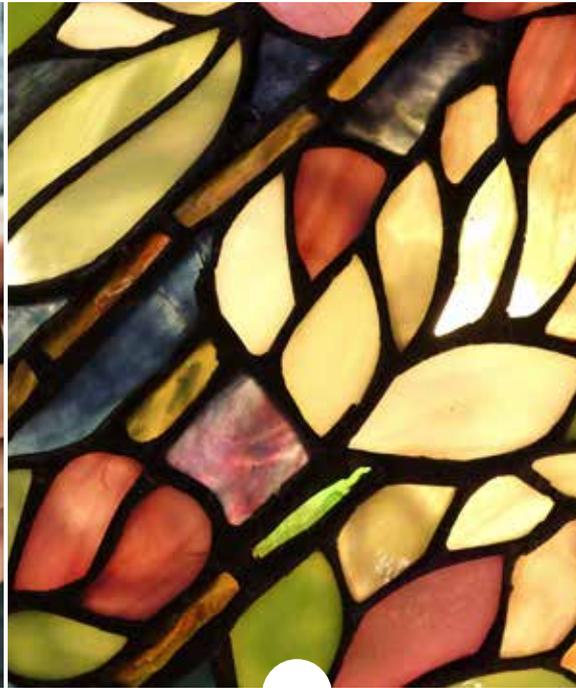
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Washing Plastic Plates

BY ERIC THOMSEN

My grandmother, my dad's mother, never wasted anything. On special occasions and holidays, she often washed the colorful plastic plates and utensils and tucked them away for future use. When we protested, she just smiled and kept rinsing her plastic prizes. Once, when I pressed her, she responded simply, "If you had lived through the Depression, you would understand."

A polite grandson, I nodded and returned her smile, but she was right; I certainly didn't understand. Why leave the Limoges on the shelf or hide the Homer Laughlin dinnerware in the closet in favor of secondhand plastic? I chalked it up to 40 years on a side hill farm in the Ozark Mountains of northwest Arkansas.

It wasn't until grandma passed, while helping my parents sort (seemingly endless) boxes of paperwork, that I ran across a story that gave me insight into her waste-not, want-not approach to life. Written (appropriately) in a journal made of Raisin Bran cereal boxes, I found the following account in her scratchy writing:

After the stock market crashed in 1929, the Great Depression fell across the country, reaching all the way to our little community near Denver. During those days, many went to bed hungry. Dad began to buy day-old bread from a large bakery, supposedly to feed the animals on the farm. He paid one cent per loaf for the bread. While he could not resell the bread, he left many bags and boxes on porch steps. It was my privilege to place the containers and dash back to the truck before Dad would drive on to the next location. That old cattle truck served many purposes.

The bakery soon figured out what Dad was doing, and they began to pack a stick of hard candy into the groove in the top of each day-old loaf. It was a great treat for children who had little else to enjoy. For some, those loaves were the only food on the table. But the best part was that Dad trusted me with his secret, and it was a big one. I knew it was a big sacrifice on his part. We didn't have much money ourselves, and a penny was worth a lot in those days.



It was moments like these that shaped my grandmother (pictured above, left, in front of her dad's truck) into a conscientious steward of what God put into her care. While grandma never shared a "financial philosophy" with me—and I doubt she would have thought of it that way—her actions spoke it clearly. She loved God, served people, and used things...even recycled plastic plates. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of **ONE Magazine** and president of the Evangelical Press Association. Email: eric@nafwb.org.

I did not like the article by Brenda Evans at all ["All Looks Yellow to a Jaundiced Eye," December-January, page 40], but I am glad you included it for those who needed it, especially me. As always, Mrs. Evans challenged my thinking. Keep up the good work.

—Larry Hampton, Nashville, Tennessee

When I get *ONE Magazine*, I usually sit down and read through most of it in a day or two. The latest issue (October-November 2017) has taken more time but was no less interesting. There were so many good articles it would be hard to choose my favorite, but I must say Paul Harrison's article

about Martin Luther helped me see him as a person, not just an icon of Protestant theology. And Brenda Steedley's article about the life of a chaplain's family was very informative. I also loved the article about Molly, the guidance counselor who talked down a student with a gun. Keep up the good work!

—Judy Puckett, Norman, Oklahoma

From the editor:

We goofed! In the December-January issue, the May 4-6 date for the Deep South Golf Tournament is incorrect. The correct dates are April 4-6. Please make note of this change in

your calendar. We extend our apologies to the Master's Men department.

—Eric Thomsen, managing editor



Have something to say? Say it!

Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are appreciated.

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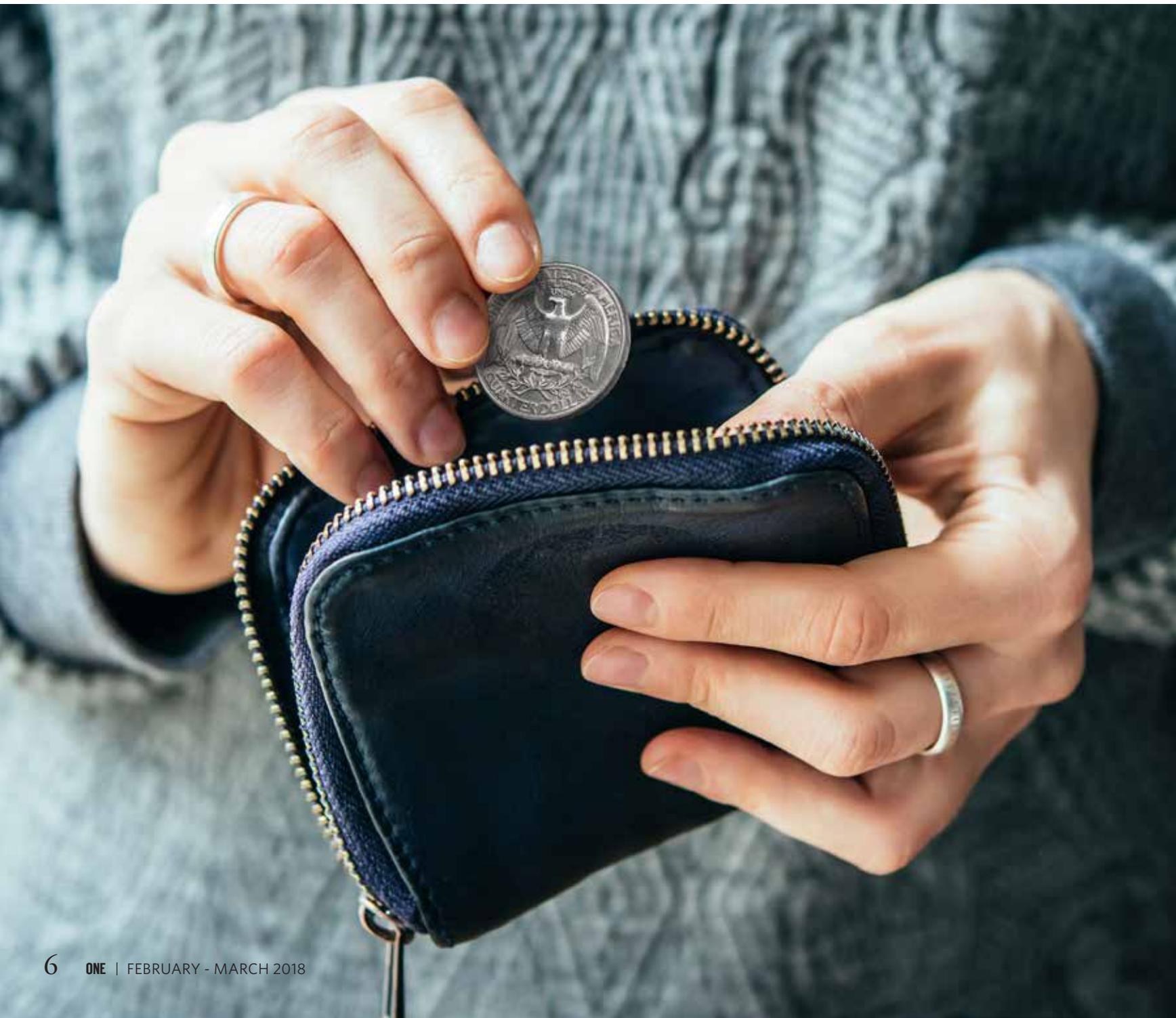
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STEWARDSHIP *Lessons*

BY CLINT MORGAN



FROM THE WORD

The late C.S. Lewis stated, “Every faculty you have, your power of thinking or of moving your limbs from moment to moment, is given you by God. If you devoted every moment of your whole life exclusively to His service, you could not give Him anything that was not in a sense His own already.” This statement is a clear summation of the primary truth revealed in Psalm 24:1, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.”

The word *stewardship* comes from the Greek word *oikonomos*, which refers to one who manages a household but does not own it. Managing a household implies being responsible for the house itself and the well being of those in that dwelling. Everything belongs to God. We are simply called to be stewards of what He has entrusted to us. At this point, our possessions and our faith intersect.

FROM MY PARENTS’ EXAMPLE

One aspect of good stewardship is tithing on all that has been entrusted to us. I recall with convicting clarity my parents’ commitment to practicing good stewardship by always setting aside their tithe before they spent any of their paycheck.

Mom had a little slot in her coin purse where she put tithe money after getting paid. I assure you, I don’t know of anything that would cause her to take that money and use it for any purpose other than the offering at church. Dad did not make a show of it, but every Sunday he was the first to drop his tithe and offering envelope in the collection plate. I saw it and it marked me in a very positive way.

Our family was far from wealthy. If we weren’t poor, we could see it from where we lived. My parents were involved in a church-planting project, and the salary was incredibly small. Dad picked up odd carpentry jobs to provide for us. Mom took on babysitting jobs to add a bit more to the family funds.

On one occasion, we absolutely did not have enough food in our house to prepare a meal. I asked Mom to take some of the money from that “little slot in her coin purse” to buy some groceries. It seemed reasonable to me. Surely God would not be angry if we took just a little of the tithe money to feed the family.

Mom refused to take “what belonged to God” for any purpose other than that for which it was consecrated. That moment left me a bit angry with my mom, and in all truthfulness, at God also. I walked away perplexed and frustrated. But God saw the dilemma we faced and chose to respond to our need. That very day, a check from a supporter arrived in the mailbox, and we were able to buy much-needed groceries.

EVERYTHING
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I walked away from that experience with a solid lesson: whatever has been set aside for God is His; don’t use it for any other purpose. To me, Mom and Dad demonstrated a great example of biblical stewardship.

FROM AN AFRICAN PROVERB

I heard the following parable in a message in Côte d’Ivoire, Africa: Doumote and his family had experienced a very good year. Life in Africa is always full of challenges, but this year had been one of great blessings. If a man can feed his family, it is a noble accomplishment. This particular year, the harvest was plenteous, no serious illness plagued the family, the livestock was healthy and multiplied, and he and his wife sold many things at the market.

The king ruling over the area was a good man. Doumote had much respect for the king because he had brought peace and prosperity to the area. In his mind, the king’s power caused the spirits to show favor to the

people. To express his appreciation, Doumote decided to give the king a gift.

He pondered the matter for a while. Eventually, he chose a large, red rooster. Confident his gift was an adequate expression of honor and appreciation, he entered the king's courtyard. He announced his presence in the customary manner—clapping his hands and saying *ko-ko* (the equivalent of our knock-knock).

The king and his small entourage of village elders warmly received Doumote. The elders spent most of their time with the king, advising him when problems or questions arose from the villagers, or even from strangers visiting the village.

GOOD STEWARDSHIP IS NOT ONLY ABOUT WHAT WE GIVE, BUT ALSO WHY AND HOW.

As custom dictated, Doumote went through traditional greetings before stating the purpose of his visit. When the chief asked, “Did you come in peace?” Doumote recognized the signal he could now express his thanks to the king. Doumote stood proudly and addressed

the king. His son Hon-kpere stood beside him, dangling the rooster upside down by its feet. Doumote declared, “Honorable king, I come in peace today. I have come to express my thanks for all you have done for my village and my family, in particular. This has been a wonderful year for us. The crops were bountiful; the livestock multiplied; the family health was very good; we sold many things in the market and were able to buy things we desired. I want to sincerely thank you for being such a wonderful king. You are loved, respected, and appreciated by all. To express my appreciation, I offer you this beautiful, red rooster.” At this point, Hon-kpere humbly offered this most-prized rooster to the king.

A moment of silence fell over the crowd that had slowly gathered. When the king spoke, his words sent chills through the listeners. He sternly declared to Doumote, his elders, and all listening, “So, Doumote, you have

had a prosperous year and you decided to bring me, the king, a gift of appreciation. Your crops were bountiful; your livestock multiplied; your family health was very good; you sold many things in the market and were able to buy things you desired. For all this you bring me a rooster? You bring the king a *rooster* as a gesture of thanksgiving for all I have done for you?”

Everyone knew the king was not pleased. He continued, “Elders, take this man and have him flogged! I want you to beat him severely. How dare he come to the king with such a gift? A rooster to express all I supposedly have done for him! He recognizes the good I have done, and then brings me one rooster to say thank you? Is this really acceptable? Is this really a gift for a king?”

Why was the king insulted by the gift? Was this really an inappropriate gift to express appreciation for all the king had done for Doumote?

A question for our reflection: are we offering a “rooster” to the King of Kings as an expression of our appreciation for all He has done for us? Are we victims of the fallacy of ownership? Do we give, from our prosperity, gifts worthy of a King? Or, are we like Doumote—greatly blessed, yet failing to properly express thanks for our blessings?

Good stewardship is not only about what we give, but also why and how. If we are to bring honor and glory to God through good stewardship, our motivation for giving must be addressed. According to 2 Corinthians 9:7, “Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

So, let's practice good stewardship by presenting our tithes and offerings to Him willingly and with joyful hearts. This is God's means to provide the resources to achieve His plan, through His people, on His earth. **ONE**

About the Writer: Clint Morgan has been general director of International Missions since 2011. Learn more: www.fwbgo.com.

The Cowlick

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

My great-grandfather, James Franklin Brown, was born in 1854 and died in 1922. My grandfather, Thomas Harvey Brown, was one of his youngest children. My Dad, Donald Theo Brown was one of my grandpa's youngest born in 1931. He never met his grandpa James Franklin, but we have two photos and one painting of him. All reveal an obvious cowlick in his hair. My grandpa, my dad, and I also have this cowlick, which I have passed along to my son Reese. It is the cowlick that will not die. That little piece of James Franklin Brown lives on in me.

My Mom was a Richardson. The Richardsons are tall folks. My Mom was five-eleven, and she had five sisters ranging from five-ten to six feet. Her only brother was six-two, and my grandpa Richardson was six-four, pretty tall for someone born in 1908. The fact that I'm six-two (and a half) tells me the Richardsons live on in me.

We are happy to have children and grandchildren because little parts of us continue to live on in them. We leave a physical legacy on earth. My great-grandfather and grandpa are long gone, and

my dad is 86, but little pieces of them are still present in me. I am a living legacy.

It's even more important to leave a spiritual legacy for children and grandchildren. Great-grandpa Brown was a Free Will Baptist pastor and one of the founders of the Saline Association in southern Arkansas in 1897. Both Browns and Richardsons passed down a spiritual legacy to me.

I want to encourage you to leave a financial legacy as well—a legacy to Free Will Baptists that will continue to bless our ministries until Jesus returns. You can do this in a number of ways, but perhaps the easiest is simply to tithe on your estate. The Foundation, through our partners Cornerstone Estate Planning, can help with this. We offer church seminars to explain the best ways to settle estates and leave a ministry legacy. But if you are interested in setting up an estate plan, don't wait to hear the seminar. A representative will be glad to call, go over the plan, and offer needed assistance.

Another way to endow a ministry is through a planned gift, where you receive lifetime income.



When you die, the gift goes to ministry. We also offer Money Management Trusts, like savings accounts, though which you can make a provisional gift to ministry while earning at least 2.75% on your money. The capital gains from this Money Management Trust program produce grants to be distributed to FWB ministries—\$500,000 in 2017 alone!

We all enjoy seeing the little pieces of ourselves in our grandchildren, but let's leave a piece of our estates, as well, to help continue the ministry of Free Will Baptists for generations to come. **ONE**

About the Columnist: David Brown is a Certified Public Accountant and serves as director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation.



BEST-LAID PLANS



BY JOSHUA EIDSON

In Luke 14, as Christ instructs His followers about the costs of following Him, He gives the example of a man who set out to build a tower but was unable to finish because he did not properly plan and budget for the project. His goal was never completed, and the unfinished tower stood as a visual reminder of the importance of planning for and monitoring progress towards an intended goal.

Much has been written about the value of goal-setting, making detailed action plans, and monitoring benchmarks throughout those plans. Goal-setting theory is one of the most researched fields of motivation in organizational psychology. Correctly implemented, goal-setting and planning works.

Goal-setting has proven a great motivational tool for accomplishing desired outcomes. It follows a specific process that starts with the desired outcome (dream).

In the example from Luke 14, the dream was the man's tower. It has been said an unwritten goal is just a dream. In the results of a study by Dr. Gail Matthews, those who record their dreams or goals are 43% more likely to accomplish those goals than those who did not. Written goals must be structured in a way to enable and motivate follow through. The most common acronym for properly stated goals is SMART. Specific. Measurable. Attainable. Relevant. Time-based. A properly-stated

goal might say: "I will save \$5,000 by December of this year." Structuring the goal this way defines specific targets that can be broken down into action steps, which help outline an "attack plan," and allow for progress measurement.

When a SMART goal has been written, it provides details on how to structure an attack plan to accomplish the goal. We can break down the \$5,000 goal into monthly, weekly, or daily amounts to create more attainable "bite-sized chunks." The smaller and more specific we make those goals, the easier it is to convince ourselves we can accomplish the task. As time passes, we can easily measure our progress against the daily, weekly, and monthly goal amounts to see if we are still on track to meet the goal by the deadline.

As goal-setting theory developed, researchers found the more we monitor our progress, the more motivated we are to continue striving for the goal, and therefore we are more likely to accomplish the goal. Our SMART

goals create natural benchmarks against which we can measure our progress. In a similar fashion, health and fitness apps on smartphones help users monitor health goals by tracking progress. This visual data keeps us motivated to stick to it the next day and the next.

Let us not be like the bad example Christ provided in Luke 14. Rather, let us be people who set out to build towers with the funds and plans to complete them. Set SMART goals. Implement a reasonable plan to accomplish those goals. Monitor your progress along the way so you stay on track and stay motivated to finish the goal. **ONE**

About the Writer: Joshua Eidson is accounting administrator for the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. He graduated in 2007 with a B.S. in business administration from Welch College. He has over 13 years of experience in finance and accounting.

Legacy of Encouragement...

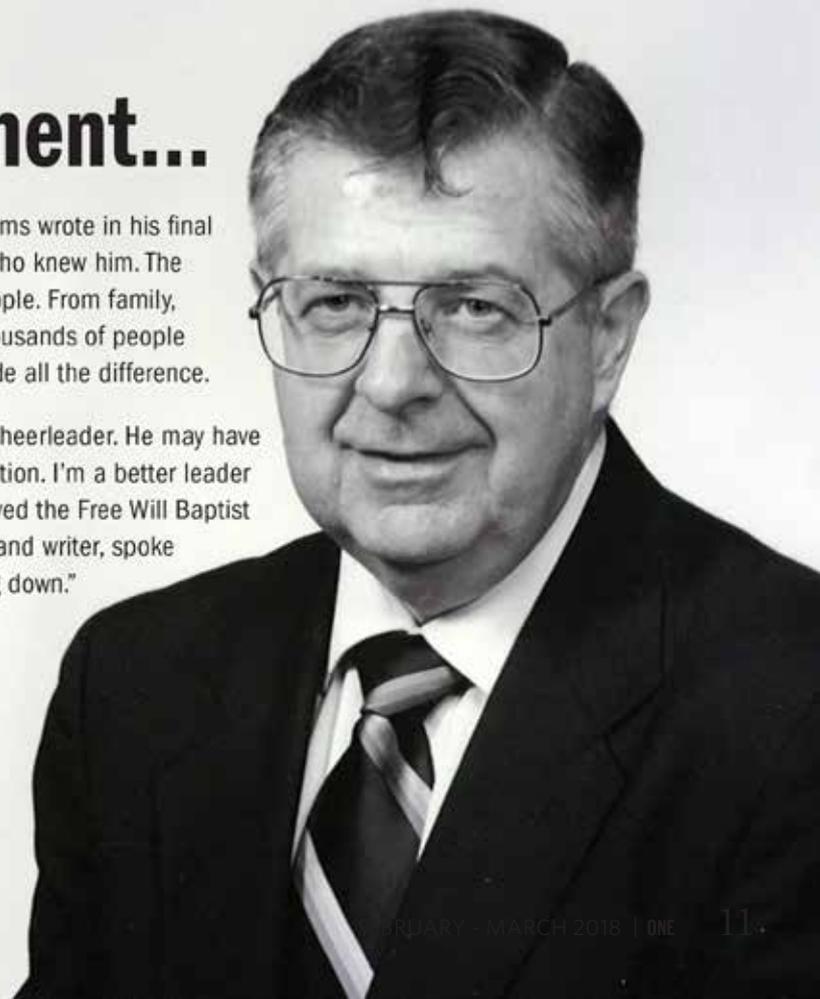
"What I feared most was that I would be unfair in print," Jack Williams wrote in his final editorial for *Contact* magazine. The statement didn't surprise anyone who knew him. The long-time denominational editor had a reputation for caring about people. From family, coworkers, and missionaries to college students and young writers, thousands of people around the world experienced his encouraging words. For some, it made all the difference.

Executive Secretary Keith Burden recalls, "Jack was an encourager, a cheerleader. He may have been short in stature, but he cast a long shadow across our denomination. I'm a better leader and writer because of Brother Jack." Robert Picirilli muses, "Nobody loved the Free Will Baptist denomination and its ministries any better. Jack was a gifted speaker and writer, spoke positively about others, and believed in building up rather than tearing down."

Why not create your own legacy with an endowment through the FWB Foundation to benefit the denomination Jack loved so deeply.



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Tick-Tock!

BY KRISTI JOHNSON

We have exactly 39 clocks in our house. Each is tick, tick, ticking away every day. Every hour. Every minute. Every second. Some clocks are worn on our wrists. Some are on our smartphones. One rests on our nightstand, one on the microwave, and others are scattered throughout our home.

Unfortunately, none of these clocks can actually GIVE us more time than God has already assigned us. As much as we would love to have more hours in the day, it's impossible. Even the writer of Ecclesiastes recognized this, long before Fit Bits™ and microwave clocks made their way into our lives. Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us there is a time for everything. To live. To die. To laugh. To cry. To get. To lose. A time for every purpose and every work. How can we use this time we have been given to its fullest, glorifying God with each passing tick of the clock?

1. Ask God to show us what activities take priority.

The ladies in our church in Alpedrete are currently studying *The Best Yes* by Lysa TerKeurst. We've been learning to say no to certain things so we will have the energy to say yes to what God truly wants for us. Interestingly, sometimes we must say no to something good to say yes to something better. It's all about identifying priority.

2. Decide to make a change. Albert Einstein famously stated, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results." How many times have I insanely tried to keep a full schedule with overlapping events, just to find myself feeling rushed, never fully completing tasks? I need to make a change. While some things will inevitably be on my calendar, I have identified margins of time each day to set aside for moments when someone has a need or a friend wants to share coffee and discuss pressing issues in her life. Making this

change has helped me rid myself of the constant insanity.

3. Follow a plan. What are we doing with the 168 hours in each week? Fellow missionary in France, Cristina Price, recently introduced me to the concept of a "bullet journal," which has helped me focus on completing each day's tasks without being distracted by things that cannot possibly be accomplished in just one day. You probably know exactly what I mean if you're an avid maker of to-do lists. When your list includes not only daily tasks, but also things that cannot possibly be finished in a day, you are left feeling frustrated. While staying focused on what is ahead of me, I've been able to follow a plan for how I will spend the hours God has given me in each day.

4. Use time wisely. Just this morning, as I walked by the local grocery store near our apartment, I saw a sign announcing the death of an employee. A 40-year-old man, he has worked in the poultry department since we moved to Alpedrete. People all over town were shocked. Who would have thought this young father would step into eternity overnight after a motorcycle accident? Many people in Alpedrete still need to hear the gospel before they face eternity. May we use our time wisely as we share our faith with those around us who still need to know God.

According to Ecclesiastes 3:11, God has placed eternity in our hearts: *A time to live; a time to die.* How will we glorify Him with the time in between? 

About the Writer: Kristi Johnson and her family are missionaries to Alpedrete, Spain. Learn more: www.fwbgo.com.



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Student Loan Debt: A Future Problem

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

In the United States, student loan debt has reached an all-time high of \$2.3 trillion dollars. Borrowers owe 70% more upon graduation than graduates did only a decade ago. This has lifted the loan delinquency rate higher than any other type of household debt in the U.S. What is the cause of this debt escalation? **Higher education costs.**

Education costs have risen 420% since 1990, outpacing medical care expenses by over 100% and doubling the pace of all other consumer prices. The value of a college degree has not kept up with that pace, nor does having a college degree provide any protection to the holders from stagnant wage growth.

In a recent study, the National Association of Colleges and Employers found starting salaries for new college graduates have risen by just 0.1% per year after adjusting for inflation. Despite these alarming statistics, the New York Federal Reserve found young people have not been deterred from going to college. They simply increased borrowing to pay for college. This creates a heavy debt load for the millennial generation and will weigh heavily on the economy moving forward.

From 2003 to the present, student loan growth has increased 550%, according to the New York Fed Consumer Panel/Equifax. This translates into 70% of college graduates leaving school with over \$37,000 in student loan debt, creating an average monthly payment of \$351 per month. If you were to invest that same amount at an earnings rate of 5%, you would have over \$50,000

in just ten years. Starting a career with a monthly debt payment of \$351 can be a huge handicap for recent graduates and will limit their ability to purchase homes and move out of their parent's homes. This, in turn, will slow down home expansion in the U.S., a large driver of the economy. The National Association of Realtors reports that 71% of non-homebuyers cite student loan debt as their primary factor in delaying the purchase of a home. The delay in purchasing homes will also affect the economic benefits that accompany young people setting up new homes.

The increase in the number of young adults delaying household creation has jumped to 32% for those aged 18 to 34, up from 21% in 2006, according to FactSet. This creates missed opportunities for the U.S. economy. The increased number of delayed purchases cut 1.5 million home sales, reducing the need for new and existing home sales.

Student loan debt also reduces discretionary spending by new graduates. Student loan debt reduces ability to purchase vehicles and limits personal spending. It also retards business creation, limiting borrowers in their

(continued on page 17)



The End Zone

BY DAVID BROWN AND MIKE WOOTTON

Free Will Baptist Foundation partners with Cornerstone Estate Planning to offer end-of-life planning services to Free Will Baptists. David Brown, director of the Foundation, and Mike Wootton, president of Cornerstone, talk about the importance of making plans for the “end zone” of life.

DAVID: It’s awfully easy for us Christians to put off making a comprehensive end-of-life plan, isn’t it, Mike?

MIKE: It is, and sometimes it takes a catastrophe to jolt us awake. I’ll give you an example. On April 10, 2005, on her last day of spring break, our 17-year-old daughter was thrown from a friend’s boat at the lake. The boat’s propeller slashed through her body creating horrific injuries. She was airlifted to Grady Hospital in Atlanta and rushed into surgery. My wife and I were in shock.

While she was in surgery, lawyers we didn’t even know showed up, wanting to take on Katie’s case. An attorney friend from our church rescued us, so to speak, and sent them away. He explained it was good Katie was 17, because if she had been 18, she would have been considered a legal adult, and we would have needed her prior written consent to make decisions about her care.

DAVID: So, that was also a jolt.

MIKE: It was, but it got worse. If either my wife or I had been the one injured or incapacitated, he said, the other could have had trouble because neither of us had advanced medical directives. At that point, a judge could have become involved. It scared me to think about the power the state can have in medical decision-making. When the emergency was over, my wife and I created a comprehensive estate plan that included medical directives.

DAVID: At least one good thing came out of Katie’s horrible injuries.

MIKE: Yes, and she’s fine now. She made a full recovery, though surgeons were unable to reattach her arm. She went on to graduate from college and is now happily married. We thank God for her every day. We came so close to losing her.

DAVID: You have reminded me that when bad things happen, they can get worse without proper legal preparation.

MIKE: That’s true. Planning is really important. Unfortunately, too many people think a will is enough, but that may not be the best plan. A will must be probated (verified) by a probate court before it can be enforced. And probate takes time, sometimes lots of it.

In addition, a will only goes into effect after death, so it provides no protection when incapacitated. In those cases, the court can, if it chooses, take control of your assets before you die.

DAVID: Go back to probate for a minute, Mike. People should know more about that.

MIKE: Probate is the legal process where the court pays your debts and distributes your assets to heirs after your death. Probate takes time—months, sometimes years. Plus, if you own property in other states, your family could face multiple probates. Many assets controlled by



Free Will Baptist Foundation staff

a will cannot be sold or distributed without court approval. Also, probate is a public process, so your family has no privacy. Anyone can see what you owned or who your creditors are, and wills can be contested. Probate also determines how much it will cost, how long it will take, and what information is made public.

DAVID: You mentioned incapacitation. Why does the court get involved if someone is deemed incapacitated?

MIKE: Christians need to remember a comprehensive estate plan is not just about the end of our lives. It's also about the here and now. What if we can no longer conduct our own business due to mental or physical incapacities—accidents, Alzheimer's, heart attack, or stroke for example? Only a court appointee can sign for you, even if you have a will. Once the court gets involved, it usually stays involved until you recover or die. In those cases, the court—not your family—oversees how your assets are used to care for you. And your family could endure the probate system again after your death.

DAVID: Let's say a person is thinking about an end-of-life plan. They have options—wills, powers of attorney, powers of appointment, advance directives, and beneficiary assignments—but a revocable living trust is the centerpiece of a good plan, isn't it?

MIKE: A revocable living trust is a legal document that, like a will, contains instructions for your assets when you die. Unlike a will, a properly written and funded revocable living trust avoids probate at death, controls

your assets, and prevents the court from controlling your assets if you become incapacitated.

DAVID: But do you lose control of the assets when you place them in the revocable living trust?

MIKE: No, absolutely not! When you set up the trust, you transfer assets from your name into the name of your trust. But it all remains in your hands, though everything now belongs to the trust. You control the trust, so you keep control. The best part is you leave nothing for the courts to control when you die or become incapacitated.

DAVID: In your opinion, who should make a comprehensive end-of-life plan with a revocable living trust?

MIKE: Anyone who owns any titled assets and wants loved ones—spouse, children, or parents—to avoid court interference at death or incapacity should consider a revocable living trust. Age, marital status, and wealth really do not matter. You may also want to encourage other family members to do the same, so that you won't have to deal with probate courts at their incapacity or death.

DAVID: Planning ahead is taking care of what God has put in our hands, and that is part of our stewardship, isn't it? It's being a faithful servant-manager like those Jesus called blessed in his parables.

MIKE: It is. That reminds me of a faithful couple named John and Mary from one of our churches. We helped plan their estate in 2013. John died two years later, and I went to help Mary and her daughter with the estate.

As I went through their paperwork, I found everything in order except one deed, which had not been properly recorded. I quickly contacted a local attorney to take care of that. Had I not been there to help, the deed issue could have made the settling of the estate incredibly difficult. At Cornerstone, it's our job to help people during their most difficult moments.

DAVID: Your service is why the Foundation partners with you folks at Cornerstone. I was just thinking about the first time I met you at the 2012 national convention in Memphis. Remember? You had a booth about estate planning.

MIKE: I remember people just kept walking by. I couldn't get anybody interested. Terry Pierce, who had once been my pastor, stopped by to talk. During our conversation, I looked up and saw you coming, not that

I knew you. You were just a tall man with an agitated, maybe even a little angry look. I wasn't sure.

DAVID: I guess I was. I remember asking you what you were doing.

MIKE: That's right. But within five minutes we had decided to get together and talk about how to partner in helping Free Will Baptists with estate planning.

DAVID: Because of that partnership, now more than 1,500 Free Will Baptist families have an end-of-life plan in place. Plus, approximately \$17 million dollars has been left to ministries across our denomination. I say amen to that!

MIKE: Me, too...amen! **ONE**

(continued from page 14)

efforts to create new enterprises. Again, this will reduce the benefits of college graduates on the overall economy. As the percentage of students taking out student loans to pay for college continues to increase, we will see a greater uptick in the loan default rate. Currently, one in ten student borrowers is at least 90 days behind on loan payments. More than 50% of 2009 college grads have defaulted, missed more than four months of required payments, or face higher loan balances than they had five years ago.

Why does all of this matter to the individual without college debt or with college plans on the horizon? From a micro investment standpoint, a growing opportunity in student loan asset-backed securities could make for a profitable alternative investment. With the number of loans increasing, these asset-backed securities will be readily available to diversify individual and group portfolios. On a macro level, rising student debt and its consequences will prolong the slow growth environment we have experienced in the United States for the last decade. While student loan debt is not an imminent risk to our economy, it will curb our potential for economic

growth. Without changes to policies or consumer education, the student debt problem will continue to be a drag on the economy.

If you or your child is headed to college or currently in college, consider the total cost of education and weigh it against the potential income value it will produce in career choice. Factor in scenarios to help prepare for the debt load and challenges that may arise during the college years. Make preparations in advance to ensure you or your child finish college in a better financial position than most students.

Minimizing loans and debt load during these years will increase the potential of a successful career and long-term financial stability. **ONE**

About the Writer: John Brummitt became director of the Board of Retirement in January 2016. He graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since the spring of 2006. Learn more about retirement options: www.BoardofRetirement.com.



RETIREMENT PLANNING

DOESN'T END AT RETIREMENT

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

It is a common belief that the hardest part of retirement is getting there—putting in your hours, days, and years building the nest egg you will live on for 25 to 30 years. Yet after the heavy lifting of funding your nest egg is done, you can't simply put retirement planning in autopilot. The key to a successful retirement is to make sure you are maintaining and tweaking your plan as you go along.

Throughout your working career, you make adjustments to your spending and saving habits; retirement is no different. This stage of life is not an extended vacation. You will fare better with a purpose and a ministry pushing you forward: “Commit thy works unto the Lord, and thy thoughts shall be established” (Proverbs 16:3).

Adjustments to your retirement plan are critical to ensure funds will last and you are satisfied with your quality of life. Work through a yearly checklist to affirm your financial situation is on track with your current lifestyle and needs.

Check your Medicare yearly. Currently, open enrollment for Medicare runs from October 15 to December 7. During this time, you can make changes to plans and coverage to make sure you are receiving full benefits. Health plan or prescription drug coverages change annually, and adjustments may prove advantageous moving forward. Healthcare costs are the greatest retirement expense, averaging around \$220,000 per retired couple according to research by Fidelity Investments.

Tax changes also affect your nest egg and decisions in retirement. Income from pensions, qualified retirement plans, and IRAs, whether 401(k) or 403(b), contribute to the retiree's annual net income. A higher income amount from these sources can make your social security benefits taxable in retirement. Currently, married couples making over \$44,000 per year in retirement income are subject to a tax on 85% of Social Security benefits. Delaying the start of your Social Security benefits could be to your advantage if you know funds will deplete over time, dropping you under the tax limit.

Plus, you gain bonus percentage on your Social Security benefit by waiting past full retirement age before drawing.

Finally, make it a yearly habit to review beneficiaries on accounts and do basic maintenance on wills and estate plans. These are not documents you can set aside and forget. They need to be updated annually, or anytime you have a major life change such as a new grandchild or the death of spouse. Making sure your documents are up to date will save you and your family time and make the grieving process less stressful. Also, discuss with your family plans for your estate once you and your spouse pass. Giving them a head's up regarding who will inherit or how much of the estate should go to each child or entity will go a long way toward ensuring your close-knit family stays that way after you are gone.

“And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith” (Galatians 6:9-10). **ONE**

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About the Writer: John Brummitt is director of the Board of Retirement. Learn more: www.boardofretirement.com.



Why Be Involved Denominationally?

BY CHRIS TODD

**“Till we all come in the unity of the faith,
and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man,
unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.”**

Ephesians 4:13

In my travels across this denomination, I have met some great people, visited some wonderful churches, and experienced firsthand the diversity of our movement. I believe Free Will Baptists have some of the best pastors, leaders, and lay people anywhere.

Yet, I remember a time as a younger pastor, as I struggled to juggle the demands of shepherding a congregation, that I could not see the benefit of denominational affiliation. The requirement to attend quarterly conference meetings seemed an unnecessary and all-too-often-useless venture. I felt my time could be better spent “knocking doors” rather than sitting through a business meeting listening to older preachers argue about things that weren’t an issue for me.

Fourteen years into the ministry, I realize I had a lot to learn. Don’t take that personally. I am speaking about me, not anyone else. This is not the first time an older (and hopefully wiser) version of myself has come to the realization the younger me *thought* he knew more than he actually did. Allow me to explain why being

part of a conference, and on a larger scale, being part of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, is more important than most realize.

- **MORAL INTEGRITY.** Sadly, I have witnessed the fall or fanaticism of more preachers than I can count. Whether he fell into gross moral sin or proclaimed all other ministers false prophets, it nearly always began with isolation. Every ordained minister is accountable in some way to the board that holds his licensure. When that minister fails to appear or participate in the local conference, he sets himself apart from the flock and makes himself vulnerable to the enemy who walks about seeking whom he may devour.
- **GOSPEL IMPACT.** The command is clear in Mark 16:15: “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” I cannot name a single local church going into “all the world.” And truthfully, many aren’t even going across the street to share the gospel. Many of us have become satisfied with our

few, and have lost sight of Jesus' command. We may not all be able to go across the globe, but we can *all* send. Currently, Free Will Baptist International Missions has 76 missionaries in eight countries, all sharing the gospel in unreached territory. The sending power of IM is directly related to the churches that give collectively to this cause. What is your church doing to complete the Great Commission?

- **DOCTRINAL PURITY.** Over the years, Free Will Baptists have raised up some great leaders... of other denominations. Far too often, the most passionate, capable, and effective among us are lost to other groups because they are not taught Free Will Baptist doctrine from their youth. As a collective body, whether through Randall House Sunday School curriculum or by attending one of our Bible colleges, it is crucial to teach Free Will Baptist doctrine to people of all ages. Effective leaders in churches, hospitals, corporations, and government agencies are all trained in some fashion. This is something

almost impossible for a single church to do alone.

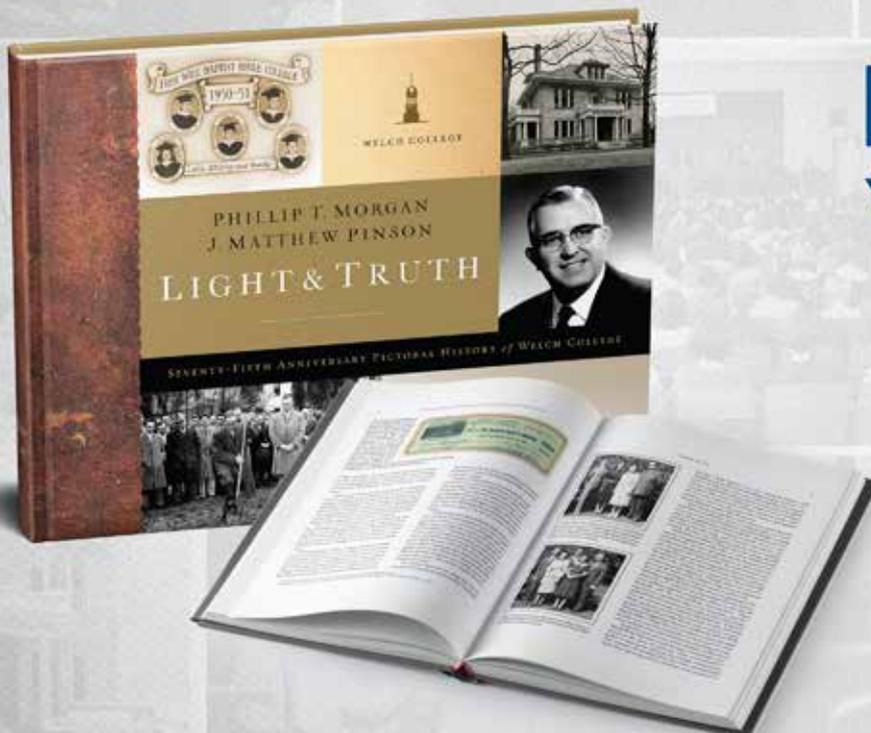
Other denominational benefits not of a spiritual nature include (but are not limited to): tax exemption under the Federal IRS code and greater representation in that tax code, as well as representation to our national government.

The bottom line is the benefits of involvement in the denomination far outweigh any drawbacks. When we are involved, united, and laboring together for the cause of Christ, we get more accomplished. Why run the risk of finding ourselves isolated on an island of ministry without the benefits of a collective impact. **ONE**

About the Writer: Chris Todd is executive secretary of the South Carolina State Association of Free Will Baptists: www.scfwb.org.

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Snapshots Around the World

Bulgaria: Jonathan and Amy hosted their first monthly “gathering” in their apartment Sunday, October 22. People from various English clubs, Bible studies, and other relationships they have formed attended. Their November meeting drew 10 people.

Panama: Five people were baptized at Camino de Santidad FWB Church, in Las Tablas, Sunday, October 1.

Côte d’Ivoire: Pastor Edmond baptized eight people in Nassian, Côte d’Ivoire, October 22.

Panama: On November 28, a national Panamanian holiday, the Free Will Baptist seminary in Chame set up a display in the town square near the parade route. Students met and talked with people, then offered them a free cold drink and a free Bible.



Côte d’Ivoire: Pastor Silas Noufé baptized 12 believers from the Panzarani area of Côte d’Ivoire on Friday, October 27.



Brazil: Campo Alegre FWB Church in Conselheiro Lafaiete, Minas Gerais, Brazil, hosted a retreat November 24-25, 2017, for single women. Twenty-seven women, ages 14-30, from three churches participated. “The Secret of the Rose” theme addressed biblical sexuality and encouraged the young women to live pure lives.

Côte d’Ivoire: Alexis Hien pastors 13 growing congregations in northern Ivory Coast. The Bougou congregation reaches into nearby villages, sharing the gospel with people who have never seen white-skinned people, opened a Bible, or heard the name of Jesus. Though villagers erect buildings for church services, several congregations have outgrown their buildings. Some congregations are constructing new buildings. In November, the Kopolodjan

Church began meeting outside under a shade tree.

Bulgaria: On October 19, the Varna New Life Church hosted a community event about a new community center. According to Trif Trifonov, 31 of the 37 people present had never been in the church before. One lady asked to meet later to discuss questions she has about faith. Some took Bibles from a shelf and read during the meeting. Many took church flyers home with them.

Brazil: Pastor Lucas Lima baptized three young people, including his daughter, at the First FWB Church in Campinas, Brazil, Sunday evening, October 29. Across town, Pastor Paulo César baptized three people at Nova América FWB Church on November 26. One of those was a young man who testified of God freeing him from drug addiction and crime.

IM Board Holds Year-End Meeting

Antioch, TN—The FWBIM Board met December 6-7, 2017, in the Antioch, Tennessee, office. Jeff Manning, board chairman, said, “This year’s meeting brought tears to our eyes...because of stories about the undeniable, providential hand of the Lord working.” Staff reorganization necessitated changes in the Mission’s *Official Handbook of Operational Policies and Procedures*. The board reviewed and accepted the proposed changes.

Missionaries who retire or resign under designated giving often have a balance left in their accounts. The board voted to funnel any remaining funds into a “restricted reserves” account. Missionaries resigning or retiring with a deficit account will have their deficit “erased” through the account. At the end of each calendar year, any balance over \$50,000 will be dispersed among missionary accounts.

General Director Clint Morgan stated, “While the Mission continues to encourage candidates to make every effort to graduate without student debt, we also desire to provide a student debt relief system for those pursuing service with IM.” The board voted to allow (within parameters) mis-

sionaries to include a budgetary line item to offset student debt.

The board approved two couples as two-year interns to work with Heath and Joni Hubbard in Tokyo, Japan. They plan to begin a bilingual (English/Japanese) church plant in the Tokorozawa City area of greater Tokyo. Daniel and Shelby (Blake) Culwell and their two sons live in both Tennessee and Arkansas. The couple, both employed by a family business Daniel helped start, works with youth in Ashland City, Tennessee, and Rose Bud, Arkansas. Jack and Ashley (Carter) Kettelman, and their three children, live in Bristol, Virginia. Jack serves as family pastor of the First FWB Church in Bristol.

The board approved Daniel and Katie Speer for a second two-year internship in Tokyo, Japan. Their first internship period ended in August 2017. However, their daughter Audrey’s battle with bacterial meningitis and other critical health issues, as well as Katie’s health struggles, complicated the last eight months of their internship. The couple will work with Don and Ruth McDonald.

The board regretfully accepted Dale and Sandra Bishop’s request to retire. Dale and Sandra, in a let-



ter dated October 1, 2017, reflected on 44 years of service with IM saying, “It has been our privilege to minister with you these many years.” The couple will live in Georgia and care for Sandra’s mother. They requested their retirement be effective December 31, 2017.

The board approved an operational budget of \$6.35 million for 2018. Projected self-funded programs carry the total budget to \$9.9 million. IMPact projects, The Hanna Project trips and projects, student missions, etc. require fundraising separate from the operational budget.

All board members (Jeff Manning, chairman, NC; Jeff Nichols, vice-chairman, TN; Mark Price, secretary, OH; Janice Banks, OK; Nelson Henderson, AR; Robert Posner, TX; Will Harmon, AR; Cameron Lane, AR; Rodney Yerby, AL) participated.

The Aftermath

FREE WILL BAPTISTS OFFER DISASTER RELIEF IN THE WAKE OF HURRICANES HARVEY, IRMA, AND MARIA

BY KENNETH AKERS

This year will always be remembered for its active hurricane season. By the time the United States was heavily impacted, named storms had already reached the letter H. Hurricane Harvey devastated the Texas Gulf Coast, and nearby metropolitan Houston. While victims and relief workers struggled to cope with the historic disaster, another devastating storm named Hurricane Irma ravaged the Caribbean islands before making landfall in Florida and Georgia.

Then came Maria, the most terrifying of all the storms. All eyes were riveted on the massive cyclone as it rocketed across the Atlantic toward the Caribbean. With winds over 180 miles per hour, Maria promised unprecedented destruction. The only bright spot in the tropical forecast was the time Maria's path gave for preparation and taking cover. As Maria continued to race across the Atlantic, the people of the Caribbean islands boarded up windows, found safe places to ride out the storm, and stocked up on the necessities of life.

Free Will Baptist ministries in St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico found themselves directly in the path of Maria. Anxious Free Will Baptists on the mainland prayed fervently for our brothers and sisters in the islands. Once Maria churned past, both islands lay devastated. While the church and schools in St. Croix received minimal damage to their physical structures, Puerto Rico experienced destruction. The Puerto Rican church, with its recent addition to house a school had significant damage. The metal roof was completely torn off, and most of the interior of the building was destroyed.

On October 23, I joined a team of Free Will Baptist volunteers who traveled to St. Croix to help with clean-up and recovery efforts. A week later, on October 30, I traveled with Rick Bowling, director of Hispanic works for North American Ministries, to evaluate the situation in Puerto Rico. What we saw was as bad or worse than we thought. Roads, though passable, remained littered with downed trees, power poles, and debris from the storm. The only electricity came from generators or solar panels. In spite of the damage, however, I found people rebuilding and restoring their homes and lives. Life is tough, but the Puerto Rican people are tougher.

One thing I heard again and again was how the Puerto Ricans appreciated the prayers and support from Free Will Baptist people and churches back on the mainland. Financial support streamed in from all areas of North America to help. To date, Master's Men has received over \$150,000 for hurricane response and sent over \$50,000 to the Houston area. I joined a group of volunteers for relief work in Florida, headed by regional disaster response director Allen Austin. We were able to help there also, with additional projects forthcoming.





After an appeal was made to help buy a 40-foot container filled with relief supplies for St. Croix, the response was overwhelming. Not only were we able to purchase and fill the container, we also purchased two large generators in St. Croix and purchased and sent six generators in the container, which was delivered Saturday, November 11.

Puerto Rico has proven to be a different story. During our visit, we determined the best course of action would be to replace the church roof with a concrete structure that would hold up better in future storms. Money donated for Puerto Rico has been used to clean and remove damaged materials from the church property. The next step is to obtain bids from builders to estimate costs and formulate a plan of action for replacing the roof.

Although the building is not usable, the church has continued to meet. Small groups meet in homes on vari-

ous nights of the week and Sunday morning services are being held on a covered basketball court.

Relief and reconstruction efforts on these islands will continue for months and possibly years before electricity is returned and life resumes as they once knew it. What can you do to help? Pray, give, or go...or all three! Funding, especially for the church in Puerto Rico, will be an ongoing need. Future relief trips will be available as we work with leaders in each location support their efforts.

What will *you* do in the aftermath of the storms? **ONE**

About the Writer: Kenneth Akers is director of Master's Men and coordinator of Free Will Baptist Disaster Response. For updates on relief efforts, visit www.fwbmastersmen.org.

Photo credit: JEAN-FRANCOIS Manuel / Shutterstock.com

DRT Personal Hygiene Kits Needed

After the devastating natural disasters of 2017, the Free Will Baptist Disaster Response Team needs to restock kits to distribute to victims of a natural disaster. Kits should include the following items placed in a small plastic tote or heavy, freezer-grade Ziploc™ bag. Contact Master's Men for shipping information.

- Bible or New Testament
- Soap
- Toothpaste / toothbrush
- Kleenex™
- Deodorant
- Feminine products
- Chapstick
- Lotion
- Hand sanitizer
- Shampoo
- Floss
- Baby wipes
- Personal first-aid kit

- Toilet paper
- Wash cloths
- Razor / shaving cream



Free Will Baptist
+ Disaster Response

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In the Eye of the Storm

BY BETHANY DOUGLAS

On September 6, 2017, I posted on social media: “We are so incredibly thankful to have been spared from the worst of Hurricane Irma. But even if all had been destroyed, God would still be good and gracious.”

We had just experienced our first hurricane since making the island of St. Croix our home. As a literature teacher, I often point out examples of foreshadowing to my students. If the events of the past several months were a work of fiction, I certainly would have highlighted this post as an instance of foreshadowing. I’ve learned God often uses these moments to prepare us for a deeper trial to come, and that’s certainly what was happening in my life.

When we learned our island had been spared from being fully devastated by Irma by a mere 20 miles, we were overwhelmingly humbled by God’s goodness and protection. In shock, we pored over news reports describing the damage Irma left in her wake. Our sister islands of St. Thomas and St. John were destroyed and many of our fellow islanders lost everything. St. Croix quickly became the hub for disaster relief in the Caribbean.

Since it was still hurricane season, we weren’t surprised to learn several more storms were forming off of the coast of Africa, but we were concerned by how quickly they strengthened. Unbelievably, only two weeks after Irma, we were under a hurricane advisory yet again. The advisories quickly turned into warnings as newly named Hurricane Maria accelerated from category 3 to category 5 in 24 hours.

As Maria intensified and weather projections showed St. Croix in the cone of impact, my anxiety grew and grew. Our team decided to seek shelter in the church and in one of the homes on campus, as we had during Hurricane Irma. The buildings were lower in the valley and thus better protected from the imminent hurricane force winds.

Shortly after settling in and claiming our air mattresses, the island’s power grid shut down. The remaining hours before Maria’s landfall passed very slowly. Late in the night, the winds intensified. Rain started to fall in sheets, and a constant roar began that continued throughout the night. We tried to sleep, but the roar of the storm and the sounds of debris hitting the building made sleep impossible.

Suddenly, we heard a loud cracking sound. It was the church steeple! The wind toppled it and pushed it to the side. It crashed onto the roof and eventually rolled into the churchyard below. As the storm intensified, the winds ripped the protective boards from the windows above us. Without power and light, it was impossible to know what was happening outside our walls.

I truly wish I could say I felt peace during that night. Despite the danger and uncertainty of those hours, many of my friends were able to rest and felt God’s presence around them. Though I know He was present

during the storm, I cannot say I truly felt His peace until I finally redirected my focus from the chaos around me to the unwavering promises in His Word.

As the storm reached its height, flooding began. I soon became too busy working to waste energy worrying. We took turns mopping, moving from one end of the building to the other. We worked for hours in a constant circle, fighting a losing battle. We sopped up water with towels and mops, swept out water with brooms, and filled bucket after bucket. After a few risky trips into the hurricane to move boards and create barriers, the flooding finally slowed and most of the water receded.

By morning, the storm had calmed enough for us to view the destruction. Though our campus was flooded, trees were down everywhere, and anything green had been blown away, the church and school buildings escaped with little damage. We soon learned this was not true for many of our fellow islanders. Later that day, my husband Thad and I made our way up the difficult road to our home. Though I could see we still had a roof, I was shocked by the extent of the damages in our neighborhood. We had the remnants of two roofs in our driveway, the road was blocked by major debris, and it appeared our house was one of only two in the area that still had a roof. Witnessing the destruction around us while knowing our home was intact was incredibly humbling. As it did after Irma, the feeling of undeserved grace overwhelmed me, and I was struck by God's graciousness as He protected us through the storm.

Unable to access our home due to major debris, my husband and I lived in the church for almost a week, while we all worked on clearing the campuses. Every morning, our team met and prayed together. After prayer, we discussed what needed to be taken care of that morning. Teams were assigned to wait in long lines for necessities like MREs (Meals Ready to Eat), fuel, and groceries. Each evening we would eat and gather to hear the governor's radio address—our only source of news for weeks. It wasn't until my first afternoon off campus that I truly grasped the reality of what happened to the island. Scenes of absolute destruction overwhelmed me.

It seemed as if every power pole had been toppled. Massive piles of debris and the remains of roofs and walls surrounded countless homes.

In the weeks following, we began to see slow progress in the recovery efforts on the island. The campus was cleaned, and students, parents, and community volunteers helped us prepare to reopen the school. Though we still did not have electricity, we resumed classes using generator power.

We praise God that though many families were forced to move off island, we didn't see a major drop in enrollment. Many organizations and individuals donated financially, sent care packages, and filled trailers of supplies to assist our ministry. As we distributed these supplies in the community, we built new relationships with those around us. During this recovery period, we experienced a renewed sense of unity and saw examples of astonishing resiliency each day.

Though our tasks are now planned around available sunlight and generator power, the normal rhythms of life on island are returning again. As I reflect on this incredibly difficult time, I can still say with confidence God is good and gracious. I see His hand at work in the shelter of newly tarped roofs, the green life sprouting around us, and the joy of fellowship with those we love through the most difficult of circumstances. While we were surprised and shaken by Maria, God was not. He placed people within our lives to support us and encourage us through this trial. No words can adequately describe the gratitude we feel toward those who reached out to us in love and support during these difficult days. Though we are still in the midst of recovery, we can rest in the knowledge God has gone before us and makes all things new and whole again. **ONE**

About the Writer: Bethany Douglas and her husband Thad are teachers at the Free Will Baptist School on St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. To help with ongoing relief efforts on the island, visit www.fwbmastersmen.org.



Beginning Again

BY SUHEY CORREA

Seven and a half years ago, Free Will Baptists in Puerto Rico started beneath a shade tree with a confession of faith. A repentant sinner arose and said: “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Since that moment, many have made their confession of faith and joined the church.

After four years, we were able to obtain seven acres of land, with a vision towards the growth of the church. We also wanted to construct a school to expand the Kingdom to children and youth and sustain missionaries from our church and others. In our fifth year, the church was constructed and missionaries began building a church in a nearby town. In our sixth year, after receiving a generous donation, we began to build Genesis Academy Preschool. This would be the beginning of the school. The church was really happy and only needed a few things for the permits to be approved.

Then the trial arrived with the winds of Hurricane Maria. No one expected it, but we prepared the best we could. In the two days before the storm arrived, we secured everything and waited in a safe place. The day after Hurricane Maria, we weren't able to leave our home. Another day went by, and we were only able to get close to the church property. We had to leave our car and walk among fallen trees and downed power lines to reach it. Along the way, neighbors would stop us to say “take a deep breath; this won't be easy.” When we arrived at the church property, we couldn't believe what we saw. All of our work, time, and donations—it was all gone.

Beginning Again

Sadness was evident in the faces of our brothers and sisters who were able to

reach the church. We all experienced feelings of frustration and pain. And though we had no idea how, we knew we had to begin again. Without water, electricity, communication, or food, we began to gather again. We wrote letters and brought them to the homes of church members so they knew we would keep working. We gathered two Sundays at a car dealer and now are gathering at a covered basketball court. The hurricane might have taken our building but not our church! Now, we understand 1 Peter 2:4-5. We are more alive than ever. Nothing will prevail against the Church. We can make a church home anywhere.

We are living stones; we are the Church. We are thankful for your prayers and donations. As we write this, we have survived 40 days without electricity. Our communication is not good, drinkable water is hard to find, and food is expensive. Yet, there is still an island in need of Christ, and we ask for your prayers and help. **ONE**



SUHEY & JOSE CORREA

About the Writer: Suhey Correa and her husband Jose are church planters in Puerto Rico. For more information on how you can help with recovery efforts, please contact North America Ministries: www.fwbnam.com.

Living the Mission of God

MY EXPERIENCE IN PUERTO RICO DURING HURRICANE MARIA

BY ARIADNA IGLESIAS



On September 19, while in Puerto Rico for nursing studies, threatening skies and howling gusts eclipsed my plans. Hurricane Maria was bearing down upon the island with winds exceeding 150 miles per hour. Quickly, the situation became desperate. With 80 other students at Sacred Heart University in San Juan, I fearfully waited out a storm unlike any in the last 89 years. That night seemed endless as the screaming fury of the winds lashed out constantly.

The next morning, I witnessed the devastation we feared, and we realized the island had lost all electrical power. As nursing students, it was time for action. The only student from the “volunteer state,” I insisted to the student manager that we wanted to serve. He nicknamed me “Miss Tennessee.” In coordination with the mayor of San Juan, the students visited a shelter to offer aid and encouragement to people who had lost everything. I remember asking an evacuee if I could pray for her. She led me into a room with other women. I encouraged them and prayed fervently. When I finished, the women were kneeling...arms extended toward heaven. I can tell you God's grace filled that room.

Over the coming days, I continued serving in various communities. On one occasion, I visited a Haitian woman suffering greatly as a result of breast cancer. She only had one analgesic pill to alleviate her pain. I reported the situation and prayed for her. Though she only spoke English, and I am still learning it, the Lord opened my mouth and English flowed perfectly.

God also gave me the opportunity to influence the other students. In every difficult situation, they asked me to pray. I was able to demonstrate what a valuable treasure it is to be a follower of Jesus. Finally, after 20 long days in hurricane-ravaged Puerto Rico, I was able to get a flight and return to Tennessee. I will never forget when my roommate told me, “Ari, thank you for teaching me how to pray.”

God always has a purpose in our lives. We are instruments of His grace wherever we are, in whatever situation. I had not planned a mission trip to Puerto Rico; I was simply pursuing my educational goals. But God's mission is not about plans; it is a way of life. We are privileged to fulfill God's mission every day, no matter where we are in the world. 

About the Writer: Ariadna Iglesias and her husband Lázaro are educational specialists for Free Will Baptist International Missions: www.fwbgo.com.



Call Him Storyteller

BY BILL AND BRENDA EVANS

Unlike the narrator of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* who famously said, "Call me Ishmael," Dr. Robert E. Picirilli prefers to be called storyteller. Ishmael spun out yarns about his life aboard the whaling vessel *Pequod* and the mad Captain Ahab's pursuit of a rogue white whale. Dr. Picirilli, on the other hand, tells the Free Will Baptist story by spinning out true accounts of people and events that have made us who we are.

Dr. Pic, as he is affectionately known, is a retired dean, registrar, and professor of Greek, philosophy, and Pauline writings at Welch College. He is author of a dozen books, along with numerous articles for academic journals. For more than four decades, he has served as volunteer collector, archivist, and curator of multiplied thousands of documents and artifacts for the Free Will Baptist Historical Collection at Welch College. Currently, he also chairs the five-member Free Will Baptist Historical Commission that oversees the collection.

Historical storytellers tell stories. Archivists assess and organize documents and artifacts. Curators guard and exhibit them. Each of these, especially a writer of history, is an adventurer of sorts, involved in search-and-rescue schemes. He begins with the will to know, the curiosity and persistence to ferret out information, the chutzpah to nose into and uncover facts, "warts and all," as Dr. Pic says.

Dr. Pic's first venture into historical search-and-rescue, if we may call it that, began when he was barely a teen. "A boy I knew sold me his stamp collection my first or second year in high school. I eventually put together and exhibited a well-received collection of early Ivory Coast stamps. But the pleasure was never just about finding

and accumulating. The real pleasure was organizing, analyzing, and exhibiting them," he says.

"Thrilling" and "seized" are words Dr. Pic uses to describe his first excursion into Free Will Baptist history in the early 1950s. "I was a student at Welch and discovered the *Free Baptist Cyclopaedia* in the library," he recalls. "I was immediately *seized* with the idea that this was, indeed, the history of Free Will Baptist people. It was *thrilling* to read about Benjamin Randall and the New England movement that lit a fire that burned a place in history."

Later that year, this captivating encyclopedia article, as Dr. Pic describes it, led to his first writing on our history. "I still have that paper I wrote for a class," he says. But it took a while, he admits, to sort out that history. "Baptist churches of the 'free will' variety" like ours are not as simple as he first thought. That complexity intrigued and goaded him to press on. That first captivating historical discovery in the early 1950s flared into a hot search-and-rescue by the early 1970s, and he began a systematic effort to find, preserve, and write about our history. "I traveled two weekends a month for the college, speaking, encouraging enrollment and giving, and pursuing things for the historical collection." He

appealed for district, association, and state minutes and records; for denominational publications of any kind, including pamphlets, booklets, magazines, newspapers; for books by or about our pastors, missionaries, and laymen; for letters and diaries giving accounts of our FWB work.

He also appealed for *realia* or artifacts from our history, and some eventually landed in the historical collection, including a Jehoiada Chest. In 1942, Mrs. Lizzie McAdams, a home missionary, evangelist, and promotional worker placed 108 hinged wooden boxes with slots in the lids around the denomination to raise funds for missionary work. She called the boxes Jehoiada Chests, based on the High Priest Jehoiada's plan in 2 Kings 12. The next year, she reported that \$765.45 had been raised.

Dr. Pic's thrill of discovery has not died. Two books on our history and many articles and blogs later, he is, at age 85, still seized by the urge to find, write, and preserve the stories of our history and our heroes. In 2015 Randall House published *Little Known Chapters in Free Will Baptist History*. Later this year, a biography entitled *Footprints: The Story of John L. and Mary Ann Weaver Welch* is due out from Welch College Press. In addition, largely under his guidance and passion, the historical collection housed at Welch Library has grown to tens of thousands of items.

Dr. Picirilli continues to solicit records of our history and heritage. "We depend on donations of materials because we buy very few documents," he says. "I tell people to contact us and ask if we are interested in an item. We have too many gaps in our history. Clerks and



Dr. Picirilli with his daughters

moderators of associations can help. I've written to every association in the denomination to appeal for historical documents and never heard from 75% of them. Women usually respond; men less so. Churches and individuals can help us, too."

Dr. Pic becomes quieter, more reflective. "What if there was a diary from, say, Paul Palmer, founder of the Free Will Baptists in Eastern North Carolina in 1727? As far as we know, there is no diary. But there are other important documents. It's a tragedy to clean out an attic and burn everything. The Historical Commission wants them. People need to contact us and tell us what they have."

One fortuitous find came after a call from Mrs. Pinkie Hudgens Christian. It seems she owned a "little record book" once in the possession of her long-deceased father, Reverend J. E. Hudgens, a leading pastor in Middle Tennessee. "Miss Pinkie, as we called her, didn't know what significance, if any, the book had, and neither did I." As it turned out, Miss Pinkie's little book was the handwritten ministerial record of Robert Heaton, who began the diary on August 22, 1809, at age 44, the day he preached his first sermon. Dr. Pic quotes Mr. Heaton in *Little Known Chapters*: "I stood on the stage to endeavour to preach the gospel and spread the tidings of salvation." Heaton's ministerial record continued 34 years, until shortly before his death, July 23, 1843.

Heaton's "little record book" spurred Dr. Pic to additional research. He learned that Heaton's Separate Baptists of Middle Tennessee were one of the many "tributaries" to the Free Will Baptist denomination that eventually formed in 1935. *Tributaries* is an often repeated term when talking to Dr. Picirilli about our history. "We have many," he says. Most of us claim the Randall and Palmer tributaries, rightly or wrongly, but know little or nothing about other important non-predestinarian "free-willers" who have flowed into this stream we now call ours. Dr. Pic writes often about those other tributaries.

For 15 years after his first appeals for help in 1970, boxes of historical documents accumulated. Three Welch College librarians guided him in cataloguing the archive.

“Eventually,” he says, “I asked Carol Reid to teach me library science. I learned a lot. The cataloging process made sense to me. Everything that’s catalogued I’ve catalogued.”

The Historical Commission’s current goal, Dr. Pic says, is to make all the minutes of all the associations in our denomination available online. Dubbed The Minutes Project, these scanned documents will be available in text-searchable format on the commission website: fwb-history.com. Two grants from FWB Foundation have helped to facilitate the project.

Dr. Pic has trained a replacement—Phillip Morgan, history professor at Welch College—for his position as volunteer cataloguer and curator of the historical collection. “I’ve trained Phillip. I’ve taught him everything I

know, and he thinks like me. He’s now managing the collection as unofficial curator, a volunteer, of course. I’d love to see curator become a paid position.”

Dr. Pic ends our interview simply: “My goal as a writer is to tell an interesting story, correct wrong impressions, help us understand who we are, and draw out lessons we can learn from those who’ve come before us.”

We can call Dr. Robert E. Picirilli a storyteller...with motives. 

About the Writer: Brenda Evans is a retired English teacher. She and her husband Bill live in Ashland, Kentucky. They are proud grandparents of seven.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION AND COLLECTION

fwbhistory.com : Includes blogs, resources, and a link to Welch Libraries with FWB historical materials

welchlibrary.wordpress.com : select *Library Catalog* to begin search

Curators : **Phillip Morgan** at pmorgan@welch.edu and **Robert Picirilli** at repicirilli@comcast.net



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Shame on You

PART TWO

BY MATTHEW MCAFFEE



Psalm 69:6

Psalm 69 ties the concept of shame to the context of suffering. The passage records the lament of the psalmist when he faced unspecified affliction. As we peer into the inner struggles of the psalmist in crisis, we identify three particular areas in his psalm. We examined the first, the *reality of suffering*, in the December-January issue. In this column, we turn our attention toward the final two: the need for lament and the concern for communal shame.

The Need for Lament

Lament is a necessary component of the Christian life. This does not mean the Christian life is unnecessarily morbid, but it does mean Christians must be realistic. In his book, *The Problem of Pain*, C.S. Lewis describes it this way: “We can ignore even pleasure. But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world.”

Most times, emotional pain and turmoil cannot be readily explained but inevitably draw us near to God. That is what lament is all about. It is what we find the psalmist

doing here, crying out to God for answers; he seeks the Lord for comfort; he desires rescue.

When we neglect lament in the Christian life, we are dishonest. When we ignore our own pain or the pains of others, we fail to live in the true light of God’s glorious redemption of our lives. God intends to redeem us in (not from) our pains and turmoil.

The Concern for Communal Shame

We must consider, however, a rightly directed lament, and a wrongly directed lament. The right kind of lament is exerted in humility. In one breath, the psalmist seems to state his innocence, but in the next he speaks of his own sinful shortcomings: “O God, you know my folly, and my wrongdoings cannot be hidden from you” (verse 5).

The psalmist is willing to acknowledge his sinfulness, even as he faces “those who hate me without cause” (verse 4). The right kind of lament always leads to greater humility and dependence upon God rather than self-vindication. True lament allows us to trust God’s justice and wait upon Him to deliver us according to His perfect will.

Our lament is not just an individual issue, even though our experience of suffering comes on the individual level. Suffering carries a corporate dimension as well, as the psalmist verbalizes in verse 6.

Our suffering has the potential to do one of two things: 1) bring shame to God and others, or 2) bring glory to God and others. This comes as a direct result of the psalmist’s acknowledgment of potential wrongdoing (verse 5). Again, C.S. Lewis describes these potential outcomes of suffering: “For you will certainly carry out God’s purpose, however you act, but it makes a difference to you whether you serve like Judas or like John.”

How will you choose to handle struggles, fears, and pains? Will stress and suffering bring shame on those who wait on the Lord, or will it bring honor? Will we bring shame on the Lord, or will we honor Him through our suffering? **ONE**

About the Columnist: Matthew McAfee is provost and professor of biblical studies at Welch College: mjmcafee@welch.edu.

Ad Fontes!

RETRIEVING THE SPIRIT OF THE REFORMATION

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON



Last year, we celebrated the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, which began October 1517. As we turn our attention to the next 500 years of church history, the temptation is to treat that distant event and the gospel-animated movement it spawned as ancient history, irrelevant to what it means to help churches grow in our environment of religious pluralism, consumerism, and amusement.

Yet we evangelical Protestants need, more than ever, to recover the *spirit* of the Reformation. As Timothy George often reminds us, we need to engage in “renewal through retrieval.” A retrieval of the gospel essence that stirred Reformation fires half a millennium ago will enliven and renew the church today. In short, we need, as David F. Wells has reminded us, “the courage to be Protestant.”

The spirit of the Reformation is encapsulated in the Latin phrase *ad fontes!* Emerging from the Northern Renaissance, with its desire to recover not only classical realism in the arts but also long-forgotten classical texts from the original Greek and Latin, the Reformation sought to go *ad fontes*, back to the fountains, back to the sources. Their sources were the Bible in its original languages and the Greek and Latin church fathers.

This *ad fontes* work caused the Reformers to see a stark contrast between the beauty of the primitive church and what medieval Catholic faith had become. This contrast compelled them to reform the church, retrieving the richness of biblical faith eclipsed during the Middle Ages.

In advancing this ancient-future vision of the gospel and the church, five emphases came to be associated with the Reformers, the five “solas”: *sola scriptura* (scripture alone), *solus Christus* (Christ alone), *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), and *solī deo gloria* (to God

alone be the glory). A return to these riches of the Reformation can breathe new life into a North American church that, like the Church of Rome in late medieval times, has become captive to the spirit of the age.

Scripture Alone

Against the medieval Roman Catholic Church, the Reformers preached the sufficiency of Scripture. This meant the church could not bind the consciences of God’s people with doctrines and practices not warranted in Scripture, the only sufficient rule for the Church’s faith and practice.

The Reformers saw the Church as having a special “DNA” of the Spirit and the gospel different from other organizations. When humans add to the faith and practice of the Church revealed in Holy Scripture, they inject what Harry Reeder calls “cultural steroids” into the church. These “steroids” initially seem to bring health but eventually produce weakness and death.

The Roman Church had invented so many new doctrines and practices not warranted in Scripture that it eventually drifted into something completely different from apostolic Christianity.

Yet the Reformers’ emphasis on *sola scriptura* did *not* mean they ignored the Christian tradition, as some

evangelicals are tempted to do today. The Reformers' whole point was to hearken back to a biblically faithful tradition in the apostles and the church fathers they believed had been eclipsed for hundreds of years. Yet their views on *sola scriptura* led them to reject that official church teaching is just as authoritative as the doctrine and practice of Holy Scripture.

Salvation by Grace Alone, Through Faith Alone, in Christ Alone

Another hallmark of the Reformers was salvation by *grace alone* through *faith alone* in *Christ alone*. When they went back to the sources and compared late medieval teaching with the New Testament and early Christianity, they saw a contrast between works-righteousness or merit theology in medieval scholastic theology and the emphasis on grace and faith in the New Testament. So they taught salvation doesn't come by a mixture of God's grace and man's yearning for God, or a mixture of faith and works/merit. Instead, they said, God's grace is the *only* thing that can enable totally depraved, spiritually dead people to see their need of Christ, who alone provides the remedy for sin.

This realization reoriented the Reformers' doctrine of justification. For them, the righteousness of Christ imputed to the sinner who has faith in Christ, is the only thing that can make a sinner righteous in God's estimation. Imputed righteousness, not inherent or infused righteousness, was the essence of the Reformers' doctrine of justification.

The emphasis on salvation by Christ alone also meant Christ was the only mediator between God and man (1 Timothy 2:5). It put an axe to the Roman Catholic penitential system of confession to a priest who granted absolution (forgiveness) and the believer's penance. Christ alone is our mediator and high priest, and we as believers are a royal priesthood and holy nation.

To God Alone Be the Glory

The final *sola* is *solī deo Gloria*—to God alone be the glory. Luther taught the “theology of the Cross.” He described late medieval Roman Catholic theology as a “theology of glory.” Instead of pomp and splendor, we are called to the humility and plainness of the Cross.

In the theology of glory, the medieval scholastic theologians aimed to see the face of God. In the cross, Luther averred, we see “God's backside.” We see humility. We see God humbling himself to death for the people He loves.

This mentality calls us to deflect all glory away from ourselves and toward God in our faith and in the life of the Church. The Reformed (Zwingli, Calvin) and Anabaptist (Hubmaier, Simons) wings of the Reformation took this idea even further, seeking to cut away all vestiges of the theology of glory—all the ways that the Church, in its worship and service and practices, sought to glorify man and not God.

Renewal Through Retrieval

Retrieving the spirit of the Reformation, with its five *solas*, can do so much to help evangelical churches bear witness to Christ in our increasingly fragmented age. Going *ad fontes*, back to the scripturally rich sources of our Reformation past, can help bring the renewal we desperately need in this era when we seem so bent on making Christianity palatable to its cultured despisers.

This will mean a fresh vision of how the apostolic doctrines and practices of Scripture shape the way we live out the gospel of the Kingdom in the week-in, week-out practices of the church. (For more, read Jonathan Leeman's wonderful book *Word Centered Church*). It will mean a move away from legalism, self-help, prosperity, and human-centered spirituality and worship toward the gospel of grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. It will take the focus from us—our own glory and the ways we can attract people to Christianity through human glory and self-gratification—and put our focus back on the Cross.

This sort of scriptural renewal through retrieval, this sort of *ad fontes*, is what made the Reformation happen and changed the world. It's the same sort of renewal that can bring fresh, God-centered, Word-driven, gospel-focused energy back into evangelical churches as they bear faithful witness to the gospel of the Kingdom. **ONE**

About the Writer: J. Matthew Pinson is president of Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee.

College Appoints Todd and Merinda Parrish to Advancement Roles

Reverend F. Todd Parrish has been named director of church relations and major gifts officer, and his wife Merinda has been named major gifts liaison at Welch College, according to David Williford, vice president for institutional advancement. The couple began their duties January 2. Parrish came to Welch from his position as senior pastor of First FWB Church, Washington, North Carolina, and Mrs. Parrish was a national board-certified English teacher at Bear Grass Charter School in Bear Grass, North Carolina.

"Todd and Merinda will bring their infectious excitement about the ministry of Welch to their

new roles here," said Williford. "Their church has sent 12 students to Welch College in the past four years, including both their daughters. The Parrishes have been active in fundraising, friend raising, and alumni work for Welch for years. Now, they will step into a role where they will do that professionally. I'm excited about what they'll add to our presence in the denomination and with donors."

A 1989 Welch graduate, Parrish obtained his M.A. in Mental Health Counseling from Webster University in 2010 and is currently completing the M.A. in Theology and Ministry from Welch. Parrish started as a youth and



Todd & Merinda Parrish

music minister and for the past two decades has pastored Free Will Baptist churches. A 1991 Welch graduate, Merinda holds an M.A. in Secondary Education/Literacy-Reading Specialist from University of Alabama.

College Adds Soccer

Welch College will field men and women's soccer teams starting in 2018-2019, according to Athletic Director Greg Fawbush, who announced the initiative following the first home basketball games in the newly constructed Student Activities Center.

The college currently has intercollegiate teams in women's volleyball, basketball, and cross-country, and men's cross-country, golf, and basketball. Welch College is a member of the National Christian College Athletic Association and competes in the Midwest region.

"It is an exciting time to be part of the Flames athletic department," Coach Fawbush said. "Soccer is the natural next addition to our sports programs. The sport of soccer has

grown in popularity, and we believe it complements our three goals of commitment, character, and courage. The addition of soccer teams gives the college a greater opportunity to invest in the lives of the youth of our denomination."

For more information on any of the athletic programs, or if you are a student athlete interested in playing soccer, or know of a potential participant, please contact Coach Fawbush: gfawbush@welch.edu.

College Opens Activities Center

The Welch College Student Activities Center opened Friday, November 10, according to President Matt Pinson. The center houses the gymnasium, coffee shop, student recreation area, fitness center, maintenance department, offices, and classrooms.

Friends and members of the college community celebrated with an evening of festivities including a grand opening ceremony followed by a tailgate party and cookout. The *Flames* basketball team then played its first game in the new gymnasium.

"The completion of the Student Activities Center marks the conclusion of Phase One of the construction of the new Welch campus," President Pinson said. "The students have been eagerly anticipating this

new facility that will be the hub of student life."

To see photographs of the new campus and for more information about funding this effort, visit www.buildingonthelegacy.com.



Welch Enrollment Highest in a Decade

Welch enrollment totaled 385 for the Fall 2017 semester, marking the highest enrollment in ten years, according to Provost Matthew McAfee. "We have not seen an enrollment number like this since the fall semester of 2006," said McAfee. "We are thrilled by this headcount and believe it shows we are gaining significant momentum in enrollment growth."

Registrar Sharon Rodgers completed final enrollment statistics for the fall 2017 semester, after registration for the third session for the Online and Enriched Adult Studies programs was complete. Statistics show the fall enrollment in all major areas was greater than at any point since before the Recession, which drove enrollment numbers down from 2008 to 2011, until they began to rebound in 2012.

The full-time equivalent enrollment for Fall 2017 was 280, the highest since 2007, when that number was 287. At 385, the fall 2017 number was the highest since 2006 when the number was 391. The dormitory enrollment was 196, the highest since 2007 when the number was 209.

"For the past five years, Welch has experienced a rebound in

enrollment from our difficult years back in the Recession,” said Welch President Matt Pinson. “Like many Christian colleges, enrollment dipped in the aftermath of the Recession, and we struggled as a result. We’re thankful to have seen enrollment gradually increase over

the past five years, and it’s great to see it reach pre-Recession levels.” Officials credit the college’s name change and relocation to the new campus in Gallatin, Tennessee, with much of the recent growth. “I wouldn’t be surprised if enrollment tops 500 in the next year or

two, and sets an all-time record in the year or two after that,” Pinson said.

For more information, visit Welch.edu. To give to the capital campaign to fund construction of the new campus, visit www.buildingonthelegacy.com.

2017 Theological Symposium Meets

Nashville, TN—The Free Will Baptist Theological Symposium, sponsored by the Commission for Theological Integrity, met October 23-24 on Welch College’s new campus in Gallatin, Tennessee. More than 250 people from four states attended one or more of the nine presentations. Many more attended the meeting digitally through the live stream, which may still be viewed at www.fwbtheology.com.

As an open forum, paper topics spanned a range of fields, including apologetics, Arminian theology, the documentary hypothesis, faith and scholarship, judgment, the Lord’s Supper, missions, and Pauline theology:

Matthew Steven Bracey - “Faith and Scholarship: A Christian Calling”

Jeff Cockrell - “Understanding Paul Since Luther: The New

Perspective and Its Effects”

Joshua Colson - “Calvin’s View of the Supper”

Adam Holloway - “Presuppositional Apologetics in a Postmodern Age”

Matthew McAfee - “Losing Favor With the Gods: Divine Judgment in the Old Testament World”

David Outlaw - “A Consideration of Christopher Wright’s Missional Hermeneutic”

Jesse Owens - “English General Baptists: The Arminian Antirationalists”

Matthew Pinson - “Individual Election in the Thought of Jacobus Arminius”

Raven Tuttobene - “I Love Lucy: Assumptions in Using Cultural Evolution as the Basis for the Documentary Hypothesis”

An implicit theme throughout the

papers was a Free Will Baptist defense of the issues at hand. Attendees consistently identified the Free Will Baptist position as appealing and persuasive.

Perhaps the most touching moment of the symposium came when commission members phoned Randy Corn to tell him how much they missed him. Randy began serving on the Commission in 2013 but recently resigned due to health concerns. His presence will be missed.

To purchase the digest of papers, or the newly released volume of *Integrity*, email fwbtheology@gmail.com, call 636-222-2784, or visit the commission’s website listed above. The 2018 Symposium will be held at Randall University in Moore, Oklahoma, October 22-23. The Commission encourages all prospective presenters to submit paper ideas to fwbtheology@gmail.com.

The Painful Side of Leadership

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.

Loneliness, hurt, and disappointment are not usually considered synonyms of leadership. Because leadership is different from managing, leaders swim upstream, and their leadership is often misunderstood. Making difficult decisions, leading people who have different (even conflicting) ideas, communicating strategy, and moving people to see what should be rather than what is can create a pervasive feeling of isolation.

Leaders wrestle with far more information regarding their decisions than others not sitting in their seats. Many play Monday morning quarterback regarding pastoral sermons, direction, and announcements of new vision. Few followers attempt to understand the *what* and *why* behind the pastor's leadership decision. Let's examine a few ways to mit-



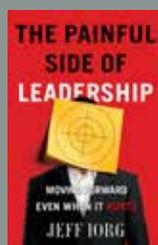
igate the pain of leading a complex ministry and diverse groups of people. Stay in the Word and saturate decisions with prayer. Ask what is right then what is best for the whole. Remove personal bias and seek *what* is right over *being* right. Value the long-term more than immediacy in solutions. Take a courageous stand, even when others don't see it yet. After communicating,

explaining, and over-communicating, expect people not to hear or read the details of your messaging. Understand that, even when communicating well, people still assign motives, hear false information, or believe inaccurate direction. Expect criticism and do not lash back.

Leading requires a tough skin but a compassionate heart. Pain is inevitable; suffering is optional. Expect pain but maintain health, both for yourself and others.

Leadership Quote

"The thing that's hurting today will only hurt worse tomorrow if you don't change something."



Recommended Book

The Painful Side of Leadership

By Jeff Iorg

About the Columnist: Ron Hunter Jr., Ph.D., is CEO of Randall House Publications.



BEYOND THE GAMES...

Reaching the Quiet Student

BY JON FORREST

I realize I am the author of a game book, but I want you to get your money's worth in a solid resource. So, in the book I included a section that could be titled "Ramblings of a Gray-Bearded Youth Pastor." Actually, I address a few common problems I see in ministry that have almost done me in over the years. Here is one example:

HELP! I Can't Get This Quiet Girl Engaged in Conversation

I'm not a betting man, but I'll bet you have them. Picture this: class has begun, and you are dividing up for discussion time. You say, "This worked great. We have an even number. Our groups work out perfectly. Oh...oops...sorry Jen, I didn't see you come in. You're so quiet you just kind of blended in with your chair there. You can just go...um, wherever."

Jen, like human molasses, oozes toward a group. If the chairs are in a circle, her chair doesn't quite make it into the "O," turning it into more of a "Q." She seems satisfied there. The other kids don't mind her there. And you have run out of creative questions you were sure couldn't be answered with a shrug, although she has proven you wrong many times.

When this person was younger, it was enough to sit in silence. However, as these types reach middle and high school, often they turn to fashion and music as far from mainstream as they can get. That is their goal—to stay out of the stream.

Often, these kids are highly intelligent. In some cases, this is what led to their silence and isolation. When they speak up, they are singled out immediately for their intellect. I think we underestimate the power of their need to fit in. Even people who work hard to stand out in the crowd through their clothes or tastes work hard to fit into the "stand-out group," if that makes sense. But it's even more powerful for the student we are talking about. She wants to disappear completely. It seems this girl is saying to herself: "I am so insignificant that I can sit here and become nonexistent to this group." Sadly, we let it happen.

What can we do to engage these students?

1. Start the process with body language and a whisper. The best posture for a conversation with this student is shoulder-to-shoulder, not face-to-face. Even a face-to-face smile is threatening to this student. Take a seat beside him or her (a chair on either side is usually available) and say, "I love it when you're here. You're important to this group." (This is true, by the way.) This is a good start. The problem is this student is smart

and will over-think your kindness and conclude, "The church pays him to say that." But it is the first step in this marathon.

2. The breakthrough will be made by that "killer" student you have. The student who is voted least likely to be a hypocrite is the one to help the king or queen of solitude. Help your student leader realize this is a process. By the way, if a "Michael Jordan of student leaders" is not coming to mind, give this next idea a try.

3. Maybe tonight it's "Hey, Jen, glad you're here!" And next week it's "Hey, Jen, I'm trying to broaden my musical tastes. I trust your opinion. Who do you like?" Then the next week, "Wow, Jen! I had to read those lyrics eight times to understand them, but it was cool. I have a seat I saved for you right here."

Think about how many times in the Bible we see Satan using loneliness to defeat good people (1 Kings 19:10). Loners often fail; we desperately need one another. These quiet students will run from God if we don't reach them.

The good news is this type of student becomes an incredible young adult. Often, we don't see the effect of our efforts on this person until they reach college. But more often than not they are smart, mature, and sincere in their young adult lives and come to appreciate what you have done for them.

By the way, this is what you've done for them: sincerely cared. **ONE**

About the Writer: Jon Forrest has been working with students at Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland City, Tennessee, for 25 years. He earned his degree from Welch College, is an avid Nerf™ gun collector, and Chick-Fil-A™ sauce connoisseur.

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For Such a Time as This

BY JIM MCCOMAS



I've been in church all my life and been part of many great conferences. As director of church revitalization for North American Ministries, I've been a part of the Acts 1:8 Power Conference since its inception in 2015. I can honestly say I have *never* been as excited about an event as I am about the one that will take place in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, this May.

The fourth annual Power Conference will be held May 28-29, 2018, at Music Road Resort and Convention Center. While we are bringing back many familiar facets that make the meeting one of the most anticipated annual events for Free Will Baptists, we are also adding several new ingredients we believe will take it over the top this year. Allow me to share just a few of the reasons it is hard for me to contain my excitement about the 2018 Power Conference:

#1 : RANDY JOHNSON is the long-time pastor of Valley Forge FWB Church in Elizabethton, Tennessee. I often refer to Valley Forge and Pastor Randy as the best kept secrets in our denomination. Valley Forge is one of the fastest growing churches in our movement, with high days reaching well over a thousand in attendance. Brother Randy is a humble, down to earth, compassionate pastor of a great church. We are thrilled to have him preach during our Monday evening service at the Power Conference this year.

#2 : THE VALLEY FORGE PRAISE CHOIR. One of the most unique aspects of the Valley Forge Church is its music program. The focal point of that music program is the large, enthusiastic choir. Hearing this choir live will

be one of the most powerful and inspirational moments you will ever experience, and you can hear them during the Monday evening service.

#3 : PANEL DISCUSSIONS. Rather than a keynote seminar speaker this year, we have added another new and exciting dynamic to the Tuesday teaching sessions. We will begin and end the day with everyone gathered for two panel discussion/Q&A sessions. During the morning session, a panel of seasoned, successful pastors will share from their years of experience. In the afternoon, a group of up and coming pastors who are already making a powerful difference for the Kingdom will discuss their ministries. We believe this will be a one of a kind experience (from the pulpit to the pew) to glean wisdom from the shared wisdom of those getting it done.

#4 : BREAKOUT SEMINARS. Along with NAM Directors Kenneth Akers, Brad Ransom, and myself, this year we have added informative seminars from NAM Director of Hispanic Ministries Rick Bowling and Director of Chaplain Support Kerry Steedley. We also welcome Elizabeth Hodges, director of Women Nationally Active for Christ, who will share with the ladies. Virginia Promotional Secretary Bruce Barnes completes an impressive lineup of information-packed sessions on Tuesday. The biggest problem will be trying to choose which ones to attend!

#5 : AARON WILBURN AND SOUTHERN RAISED. While many things about the Power Conference will be new this year, some familiar faces will return. Christian comedian and songwriter Aaron Wilburn has delighted

audiences at of our previous conferences, and this year will be no different. The award-winning musical group *Southern Raised*, a family group that offers “bluegrass with class,” will bless us with their musical talents on both nights of the conference this year.

#6 : A FAMILY AFFAIR. Once again this year, we offer something for everyone at the conference. While the adults take in all the great teaching, preaching, and singing, we will provide children’s church for young people up to 12 years old. This has been a great hit over the past few years, both for parents and kids alike. Load up the car, and bring the whole family.

#7 : DR. DAVID CROWE. If you are looking for an inspirational speaker to close out a great conference, I can’t think of a better choice than the NAM boss, David Crowe. With his love and knowledge of Free Will Baptist history, along with a successful evangelistic ministry that has put him in hundreds of our churches over the years, no other preacher in the denomination is better qualified to cast a vision and deliver a timely

message on the conference theme: “For Such a Time as This.” You will not want to miss the special word that Brother David will deliver to wrap up the conference.

With all of this planned (along with some other very special surprises), I’m sure you understand now why I’m so excited about the fourth annual power conference.

Remember, the conference is free, but you must pre-register to receive all materials and to guarantee seating for this special event. For hotel information, to register, or to receive a brochure with more information about the conference, contact Teresa Womack at 615-760-6132 or teresa@nafwb.org.

I’ll see you in Pigeon Forge! 

About the Writer: Jim McComas is director of church revitalization for Free Will Baptist North American ministries. Learn more: www.fwbnam.com

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- Week 2 - Justified by Faith
- Week 3 - Heirs of God
- Week 4 - Household of Faith

Apr 2018 - Old Testament

(Psalms) Songs From the Heart

- Week 1 - A Song for Suffering
- Week 2 - A Song for the King
- Week 3 - A Song of Enduring Love
- Week 4 - A Song of Praise
- Week 5 - A Song for Justice



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“I Do Not Think So!”

BY ALLISON HALL



Ten years ago, I was only four years old. I never would have thought I would be sitting here writing this article a day before the tenth anniversary of our church. If you don't mind, I'm going to take you on a ten-year journey through the eyes of a church planter's kid. Let's start from the beginning.

As you can imagine, I was perfectly happy living in North Carolina; I mean, why wouldn't I be? I might be a little biased, but I'm pretty sure North Carolina is one of the best states in the world. I was living in a perfect house, going to a perfect church, had close friends, and could see my family whenever I wanted.

Then one day, my dad told us he believed the Lord wanted us to move to Pennsylvania to start a church. What? I thought, "I do not think so!" I mean, I didn't even know where Pennsylvania was, and it didn't make any sense to move to a strange place where we knew absolutely no one. But I didn't have much of a choice, considering I was four.

So, we moved. Even though I was little, I could still tell it was hard for my parents. My dad had lived in North Carolina all his life; my mom had lived there most of her life. North Carolina was where they grew up, met, fell in love, married, and adopted me. They had been through so much in this little place, yet they were

leaving it to go somewhere unfamiliar. It just shows how obedient my parents are to the Lord, and how much they love Him.

It was a struggle at first, even for me. At preschool, I was such a shy kid that on the first day of school, when my teacher raised her voice at one of the boys I started bawling. I was such a tenderhearted person it would bother me badly if someone else in school got into trouble. Well, my teachers and the other students discovered that very quickly. For the rest of the year, people really didn't get into much trouble because they didn't want to make the little shy girl cry again.

You can imagine their faces when they asked me what church I went to, and I told them the name of a hotel. As a little kid, having church in a hotel was the coolest thing in the world! When we would bring the keyboard and music equipment into the hotel each week, I would ride on the hotel luggage dolly. It was the highlight of my Sundays!

Not only did we meet in a hotel on Sundays during our early years, we also had company at our house every Thursday night for Bible study. Really, I thought it was the best thing in the world for our house to smell like chocolate chip cookies each week. Sometimes, we would meet in the living room, sometimes in the basement, and on special occasions we would meet in our backyard. Truthfully, when I found out we were going to start meeting in a normal church building, I was a little disappointed.

I remember the first time we went into the “new” church building. I was not impressed. The ceiling paint was so ugly, the furniture was all wrong, and on top of everything else, I found a dead mouse in a bucket in the back of the church. I tried to talk Dad out of it by simply telling him that people loved going to hotels and coming to our house. I don’t think I did a very good job because we still made the move.

After a while, the new church building started to grow on me. The fact that people were doing construction all over the place created some great spots to play hide and seek. Since I was homeschooling for second grade, I was there every day all day, so I had to come up with *something* to do. We had a huge whiteboard, and it was there all of my babies were getting the education of a lifetime. What now is a handicap bathroom used to be my office and grocery store. I cannot tell you how many times I watched the same videos over and over again. Believe it or not, I never grew tired of it, because I felt as though I was contributing to what we were doing there for the Lord. It didn’t matter how many times I fell asleep on the nursery floor or had McDonalds for lunch—I loved it!

The day finally arrived; everything was finished, and we had our first service in an actual building. It was an answer to prayer. And although we didn’t know it at the time, the Lord had been working to answer another one of my prayers. Ever since I could speak, I had been praying for a little brother or sister. By this time, I was being homeschooled again, so the only friends I had were at church. I wanted a sibling so badly. One day, as I was taking a spelling test, my mom came in with phone in hand and tears in her eyes. A little boy had just been

born and needed a family. Lucky for us, we qualified! Within a week, we welcomed Joshua into our family.

Well, the Lord must have really wanted me to be satisfied, because two years later the same birth mom had a baby girl and wanted us to adopt her as well. This was a complete surprise. We only had a short time to prepare, but I was ecstatic. Not only did I get a little brother, but I also received a little sister named Abigail. We have since all made it very clear to the Lord that we are good now; please no more kiddos!

Well, you are all caught up, except to tell you I am a freshman this year and being homeschooled again. It can be stressful at times with my siblings all day, but it actually is working out really well. I am starting to teach AWANA Puggles, a toddler class at church, and I have my first “real” job tutoring a student. Being homeschooled is opening up many opportunities for me, and I hope to enjoy many more. As for our church, well, it has made it this far. Attendance is growing, people are being saved, and we hope to go self-supporting soon. We are so close.

I am thankful for those who support our family and the work here. We could not do it without them. I hope you enjoyed reading about what God has been doing in York, Pennsylvania, from the perspective of a church planter’s kid. **ONE**



Allison Hall, age 4, and father Allen Hall

About the Writer: Allison Hall is daughter of Allen and Jenny Hall, church planters to York, Pennsylvania. Learn more: www.fwbnam.com.

The Only Constant Is Change

BY DANIELLE MCRANEY



Three years ago, our family started the adventure for which God had been preparing us: life as a military chaplain's family. Mark and I have loved the military since his time as an Air Force civil engineer at the beginning of our marriage. When he separated from the Air Force and was ordained as a Free Will Baptist pastor, we knew it was God's plan at the time. But we wondered how God might use our military experience later in our lives.

One way was through the kinship we felt with the many people in the churches we served who were former or active members of the armed forces. We found we were able to relate to people and minister to them in unique ways because of our shared experiences in uniform. Another way to minister to military personnel was through sponsoring cadets from the Air Force Academy (Mark's *alma mater*) when ministry led us back to Colorado. We were able to offer these young people a "home away from home."

When the time came for our ministry to change, entering the chaplaincy was a family decision. Though Ethan was only a year old when Mark began pastoring full time, and Lucas was born a few years later, we always tried to instill a great love for our country in our boys. As a result, they've always loved the military and were so proud their dad had served. Our family's love for military service members, love for serving others, and strong burden to be the hands and feet of Christ to this

sometimes-forgotten field made the decision to take on the new ministry an easy one.

A few years later, we asked our boys the difference between a pastor's family and a chaplain's family. They smiled and said, "It's really not that different. The main difference is that we know we will be moving every two-three years." In most pastorates, the length of a church stay is dependent upon the Lord's leading. In chaplaincy, the matter is still in God's hands, but He uses the military to move chaplains regularly, along with the people to whom you are ministering. As the old saying goes, "The only constant is change!" This definitely creates both opportunities and challenges to our ministry.

The congregation we serve is different from the typical church. The average age is much younger, families are always in transition, and people bring experiences from all over the world. Many of them have not lived near family since joining the military, so the military becomes their family. Because of the variety of jobs



represented, the diversity of prior assignments, and the ability to integrate quickly into new settings, a military congregation consists of an amazing group of people.

Though the congregation may be different, ministry is essentially the same. Our congregation is full of people who need Jesus and want to know Him more. The boys and I are known as “the chaplain’s wife and sons” on our small base in Rota, Spain. Most people know who the chaplains are, so we still experience the expectations of any pastor’s family. Spouses are not required (or expected) by the military to be involved in the ministry, but I’ve found the congregation enjoys spouses taking an active role.

Ministry has always been a family affair, and this hasn’t changed since joining the Navy. The boys are actively involved in the chapel, helping with VBS, setting up for events and participating in youth group. I am the pianist and serve on the board for the Protestant Women of the Chapel, which offers Bible studies for ladies during the week. Our family enjoys the opportunities the military offers, and we are grateful to minister to the men and women who serve our great nation. **ONE**

About the Writer: Danielle McCraney and sons Ethan and Lucas currently serve alongside their husband and dad Mark McCraney, a chaplain in the U.S. Navy. The family is stationed in Rota, Spain. Learn more about the chaplaincy: www.fwbnam.com.

POSSIBLE *Some things*

BY SARAH SARGENT



Lately, I've read many social media posts, devotionals, and blogs where Christians share their struggles, admitting to insecurity, frustration, and confusion. At times, I like this trend in honesty. Too often, Christians feel the need to put on a "happy face" and act as if we have it all together. In reality, we are hanging on by a fraying thread. When we step outside of ourselves and admit our weaknesses, we show others they are not alone in their struggles.

While you may not share my particular struggle, nearly everyone can relate to the sickening feeling when plans change. I don't think anyone lives exactly as planned. Circumstances and God's will often send us on unexpected detours. Sometimes, when those detours bring immediate relief to circumstances and situations, it is easy to be grateful and praise God. However, when God's plan leads to greater hardship and deeper valleys, thankfulness and praise do not come as easy.

Here's my ugly truth—singleness at 33. I have struggled with this for over 12 years. Sometimes, the pain of the struggle feels like a dull toothache, always lingering in my heart and mind but not necessarily demanding attention. Other times, desperation hits me out of nowhere. One moment I'm fine; the next, my heart feels as though it is in a vise grip. If the pressure isn't relieved soon, it will crush to dust.

Here's the part of this circumstance you can't understand unless you've lived it. It feels almost impossible to talk about my struggle with others. When I shared this struggle with a group of women, their comments did nothing but confirm my suspicions—this isn't something I should share. While I have no doubt the ladies meant to be encouraging, I was inundated with comments such as, "You are single so God can use you for WNAC." I serve in WNAC leadership with ten other women, and I am the only single. Therefore, God clearly uses married women to serve the needs of WNAC. "I was single until my 60s before God brought the right man into my life." While I am grateful He brought that man into her life, the thought of another 30 years of

feeling this way is anything but encouraging. With each comment, the wound rips open a little more.

In Scripture, Job's friends constantly connected his loss with some unnamed sin in his life. While my friends aren't making that comparison, it is something I wonder about every day. I feel as though God is punishing me. I have no doubt I deserve punishment; I'm aware of my past sins. In my head, I know God doesn't work like that, but in my heart, I constantly return to that conclusion. I know I'm not alone in this head versus heart fight. Still, I feel I am constantly at war, with my head knowledge facing off against my heart's feelings. Whether heart or mind wins, at the end of the day, I still find myself standing alone in a room full of people.

This is the part of the article where I should begin to weave in positive thoughts, share uplifting Scriptures, and pen a happy ending to this little story. Unfortunately, at the time of print this plan is still unfolding. All I can do is hold on to the hope that maybe tomorrow my circumstances will change—possible somethings. Maybe tomorrow God will say yes. **ONE**

About the Writer: Sarah Sargent graduated from Ohio State University in 2006. A third-generation member and leader in WNAC, she has been active at the local, district, and state levels since an early age. She has been a member of the WNAC Executive Committee since 2013, serves as president of Ohio Women Active for Christ, and has been WAC local president for nine years.

Owen Named Randall House Director of Events



Tim Owen

NASHVILLE, TN—Tim Owen, a well-respected Free Will Baptist pastor and leader, has been hired as director of the events department at Randall House. Having recently completed 14 years on the board of directors, eight as board chairman, Tim knows Randall House well and

helped support the changes during the 16 years Ron Hunter has been director at Randall House. His knowledge of Randall House, service on the General Board

of the National Association, 30 years of pastoring, state-level planning experience, 16 years as moderator of the Florida State Association, and many years of mentoring younger leaders have created the right mix of core competencies to lead in this role.

Tim and his wife Karen have four adult children, all serving Christ. Reflecting on the hire, Dr. Hunter said, “Tim brings high-level thinking, strong love for our movement, a logistical mindset, and a relational leadership capacity that will be felt on many levels.”

Learn more: www.RandallHouse.com. ONE



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National Association Info: 877-767-7659 | www.nafwb.org

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Leading With Integrity:

2017 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

NASHVILLE, TN—One hundred seventy-two pastors, denominational officials, and church leaders from 19 states and a Canadian province gathered December 4-5 at Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel for the 2017 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference. The two-day conference featured keynote speaker Clark Dickerson who explored the theme *Leading With Integrity*.

With 40 years fundraising experience (and more than three decades as a fund-raising consultant for Christian organizations), Dickerson has provided counsel for hundreds of organizations. For eight years, Clark served as vice president of TCM International, a mission organization serving Eastern Europe prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain, traveling extensively throughout the Communist world to provide Christians a variety of spiritual and relief programs.

Clark founded Dickerson and Associates in 1985 and later merged with a friend to form Dickerson, Bakker, and Associates. As capital campaigns team leader for the company, today he focuses almost exclusively on assisting ministries, providing guidance to other consulting team members, and sharing his knowledge and

experience through teaching, writing, and presenting.

Clark explored three important topics during his sessions: 1) the selection and training of board members; 2) effective governance by a board of directors; and 3) the importance of effective fundraising and public relations. The sessions were well received, sparking conversation and debate on these important topics.

In additional keynote sessions, Will Beauchamp, pastor of First FWB Church Tampa, Florida, shared two lessons a biblical servant must learn when facing discouraging situations: 1) when others try to distract you, stay focused; and 2) when others try to slander you, stay faithful. Gene Williams, pastor of Parkers Chapel FWB Church, Greenville, North Carolina, explored the importance of accountability in the life of a leader, sharing four "pillars" upon which this important characteristic are built—responsibility, answerability, dependability, and liability.

Attendees enjoyed music provided by The Welch College Choir and Rejoice! Ensemble directed by Dr. James Stevens. Excellent meals provided ample opportunity for casual conversation, and



Tuesday afternoon free time offered conference goers opportunity to renew friendships or enjoy the sights of Music City.

Eight national boards met in conjunction with the conference, including the Executive Committee, Board of Retirement, Free Will Baptist Foundation, Home Missions, International Missions, Randall House, WNAC, and Welch College, along with the 2017-2018 Nominating Committee.

"Iron sharpens iron," Tennessean Corey Minter observed as the conference drew to a close. "From sessions to services to fellowship, I left this year's leadership conference more encouraged and thankful for our movement."

The 2018 Leadership Conference will be held December 3-4 at the Nashville Airport Marriott. For updates, visit www.nafwb.org/leadershipconference.

Foundation Grants Continue in 2018

ANTIOCH, TN—Free Will Baptist Foundation announced it will once again award grants in 2018. The program, which started in 2015 with \$75,000 in pilot grants given to national departments and commissions, expanded in 2017 when Free Will Baptist ministries received \$500,000.

Any ministry connected to the National Association of Free Will Baptists (NAFWB) is eligible to apply. This means all state and district associations and state and district-owned ministries are eligible to apply, as they either report directly to the NAFWB or are members of FWB associations. Local churches may also apply if they belong to a district association that is a member of a state that belongs to the NAFWB.

Until 2016, the Foundation largely served as a channel for individuals to direct endowments and planned gifts to help fund ministries perpetually. The recent addition of an estate plan ministry, which has helped more than 1,700 families with end-of-life planning, has directed over \$17 million to ministries through bequests. However, the grant program allows the Foundation to fund the needs of ministries directly.

The purpose of the program is to fund capital needs of our minis-

tries. It is not designed to support the general fund or shore up the annual budget. Instead, grants should be invested in projects with long-lasting effects on the ministry and the denomination as a whole. All ministries awarded a grant must file follow-up report(s) with the Foundation to verify how their grant funding was used.

The Foundation will again award \$500,000 in 2018. The application deadline is March 15, 2018. Grants will be awarded during the Foundation board meeting in April 2018. Information regarding grant applications can be obtained by contacting the Foundation office at 877-336-7575 or by emailing foundation@nafwb.org.

Convention Housing Update

ANTIOCH, TN—The 2018 convention hotel room block will stand in sharp contrast to the 2017 block when the Galt House Hotel accommodated all of our hotel room needs. In Little Rock, blocking an adequate number of rooms for the convention required contracts with ten downtown hotel properties.

Because many of these hotels are not within walking distance of Statehouse Convention Center, shuttles will be provided to eight of the ten hotels, with stops at the convention center and the Robinson Center.

Little Rock Marriott will serve as

the headquarters hotel. It is connected to the Statehouse Convention Center. Doubletree by Hilton Little Rock sits a block and a half from the Marriott and is connected to the Robinson Center, where teen services will be held.

Rates range from \$84 to \$155 among the ten properties, with several outlying hotels offering complimentary breakfast and various other amenities to attendees. The Convention Housing form will be published in the April-May issue of *ONE Magazine*, with more comprehensive information about each hotel. Housing will open Monday, May 14, 9:00 a.m. CDT.

When Actions Speak Louder Than Words

BY KEITH BURDEN

No one knew much about the elderly gentleman. Without formal introduction or fanfare he began attending services at our church quite regularly. As a young teenage boy, his quiet, humble demeanor impressed me. He seldom spoke unless spoken to.

In time, I discovered he was a relatively new believer in spite of his advanced age. Always neatly groomed and well dressed, he usually sat alone near the mid-section of the sanctuary. I still recall the black, leather-bound, red-letter-edition Bible he carried. I respectfully called him by his first name—Brother Foster.

One particular occasion stands out in my memory. It was a Sunday evening. Our church commemorated the suffering and death of Christ by observing the Lord's Supper. Following communion, as was our practice, we participated in the gospel ordinance of washing the saints' feet. The ladies assembled in the auditorium. The men gathered in a separate area.

Deacons carried in porcelain pans of water and distributed long, white towels among the participants. I sat in the chair directly

across from Brother Foster. As I removed my shoes and socks, I noticed a look of uneasiness on his face. In short order, I discovered the reason for his expression; this was his first time to participate in a feet-washing service.

Sensing he was a little uncomfortable, I went first. Carefully positioning the basin in front of him, I girded the towel around my waist and proceeded to wash his feet. When finished, I sat down and waited for him to reciprocate. Slowly and humbly, the aged saint knelt and washed my feet. When he finished, without saying a word we both stood to our feet. His tear-filled eyes and strong embrace spoke volumes. In that moment I witnessed the fulfillment of Jesus' words in John 13:17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."

A few weeks later, during a Sunday service, I was stunned to learn my friend had suffered a massive stroke. He was unconscious and in critical condition at the local hospital. That evening, I and others from our church gathered in the hallway just outside the intensive care unit. We reminisced about our experiences with Brother Foster and prayed

for him. A few hours later, he slipped peacefully into the Lord's presence.

Brother Foster made an impression on me that has lasted almost 50 years. It wasn't because he said something profound or did something spectacular. It was his humble spirit that greatly impacted my life. Perhaps Germain Glidden said it best: "The older I grow, the more I listen to people who don't say much." In a day when we are bombarded by so many voices speaking so many words, isn't it refreshing to know someone whose positive actions speak louder than their words? **ONE**



Keith Burden, CMP

Executive Secretary
National Association of
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