

ONE LORD ONE VOICE ONE VISION

# ONE

MAGAZINE

A Free Will Baptist Magazine

## STUMBLING INTO A REFUGEE CRISIS

...

**20 by 2020**

Seven Lessons  
From Skydiving

**PANAMA: ONE  
YEAR LATER**

Bucking the  
Benedict Option

...

# Outreach Without Borders

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# ONE

## MAGAZINE

TO COMMUNICATE TO  
FREE WILL BAPTISTS A  
UNIFYING VISION OF OUR  
ROLE IN THE EXTENSION  
OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

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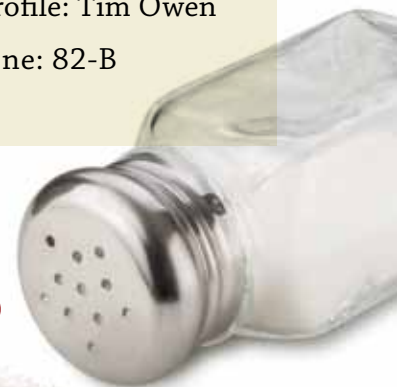
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## First Glimpse >>

# Hairball

He shuffled slowly into the youth room, eyes fixed on the floor. Pale skin contrasted starkly with black, baggy clothes and straight, shoulder length black hair. A heavy metal keychain looped from waist to back pocket and clanked with each step of his too large, black combat boots. Black leather straps with metal spikes encircled his wrists and neck, and he wore multiple earrings in a variety of styles from skulls to pentagrams.

Although taken aback by his dark appearance, I quickly welcomed him to the meeting. And when his bashful eyes met mine, I was surprised to find no rebellion in them, no anger—just deep sadness and pain.

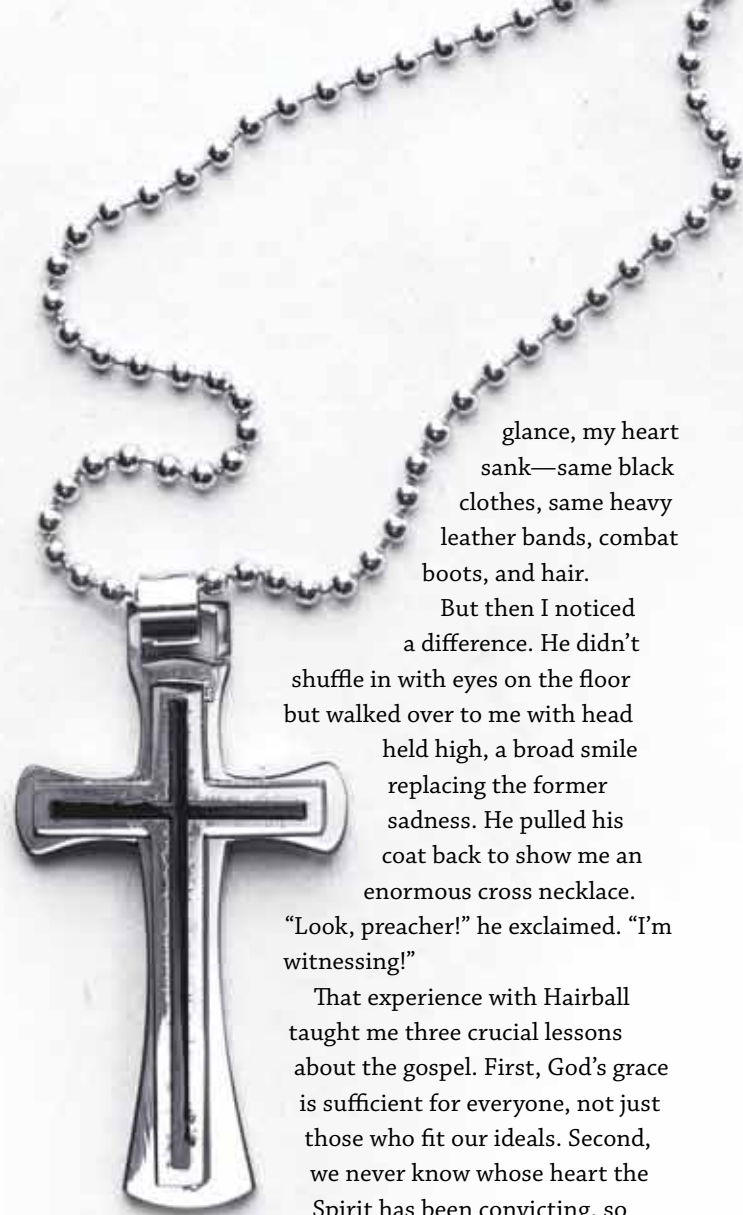
I didn't have to introduce him to the group. Most knew him from school and were shocked to see him at church. His nickname was Hairball, and he was a popular figure in the local Goth subculture. His presence left the youth group buzzing. What was a notorious Goth doing at our little country church? Who invited him? Why had he come?

When the time came to speak, I shared a simple, straightforward presentation of the gospel. As I told the story of the God who loved us enough to send His Son to die for our sins, Hairball's eyes were riveted on my face. At the close of the lesson, I was shocked to see his hand slip quickly into the air when I asked if anyone needed to know more about Jesus.

A few minutes later, with tears streaming down his face, Hairball accepted Christ.

I gave him a Bible inscribed with the date of his conversion and suggested passages to read during the coming week. I encouraged him to share with others what God had done for him, then I floated home on Cloud Nine.

Throughout the week, I wondered if the decision would stick. The following Wednesday, I watched the door anxiously as kids streamed into the room. Finally, moments before starting time, the door opened and Hairball slipped into the room. At first



glance, my heart sank—same black clothes, same heavy leather bands, combat boots, and hair.

But then I noticed a difference. He didn't

shuffle in with eyes on the floor but walked over to me with head held high, a broad smile replacing the former sadness. He pulled his coat back to show me an enormous cross necklace.

"Look, preacher!" he exclaimed. "I'm witnessing!"

That experience with Hairball taught me three crucial lessons about the gospel. First, God's grace is sufficient for everyone, not just those who fit our ideals. Second, we never know whose heart the Spirit has been convicting, so we need to present the gospel

clearly and faithfully when prompted. Finally, we need to be patient with new converts, allowing the Holy Spirit to change them from the inside out on His timetable. I am convinced their early attempts to share Christ are just as effective as the long-practiced techniques of "veteran" Christians.

Hairball only attended my Tennessee youth group for six months before his parents followed a job to Wisconsin. But during that time, he brought six other students to church...all Goths and all hungry for the hope of the gospel. **ONE**

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## letters:

**Have something to say? Say it!**

The editors of *ONE Magazine* look forward to hearing from readers. Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are necessary and appreciated.

**Email** [editor@nafwb.org](mailto:editor@nafwb.org)  
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*ONE Magazine* reserves the right to edit published letters for length and content.

**Dr. Danny Baer's article on feet washing was really top drawer.** It brought to mind Mary Ruth Wisheart's song, "The Basin and the Towel." I dare say the majority of our people have never seen it or sung it. Most Free Will Baptists are probably not aware of the contributions some of our people have made to our denomination with their song writing abilities and other musical talents.—*Bryan Edwards, Greenville, NC*

**I applaud the undertaking of the survey and publishing partial results in the December-January article, "Snapshots of Student Spirituality."**

It provides valuable evidence to suggest a sense of genuine concern regarding students' understandings of biblical truth. A necessary supplement to the study is follow up to discover the primary influencers (who and what) on development of student worldviews. I submit that the study also provides strong evidence that a much greater emphasis on an expositional approach to scriptural teaching and preaching both in the home and church is imperative if students are to become qualified church leaders and competent Christian parents.—*Milton Fields (via email)*

**Thank you for the article by Brad Ransom called "Stuck!"** (December-January, pages 36-38) We are in need of more helpful ways to grow our churches that have become stuck. I am a deacon in a small, rural church that was referred to as a single cell church in the article. Many of our rural churches are in dire need of help. In our case, the youth were not encouraged and left, and now that those who held the reins so tightly have passed away we are without many options. Many rural churches are without ministers, and none can be found it seems. We will continue to work and pray for God's guidance, but all the information and resources you can provide will be appreciated.—*Rocky Barlow, Scipio Oklahoma*

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# PANAMA...

## One Year Later

*By Steve and Judy Lytle*

**One year. Three hundred sixty-five days. Twelve months.** It can seem like an eternity when enduring a major illness, treading the deep waters of grief, or struggling with separation from those you love.

**Or, it can seem to fly by quickly if you are busy, or enjoying what you do, or getting older.**

It was just over a year ago, January 11, 2015, when Free Will Baptist International Missions took an historic, incredible step—turning over the work in Panama to the national church after 53 years of missionary involvement and presence. “Passing the baton” it was called. How has it gone?

The president of the Panamanian Association of Free Will Baptist Churches, Carlos Denis, stated, “In general, the work has remained steady, and in some cases is growing.” First FWB Church in Panama City had been without a pastor since June 2014, when Rolando and Keila Delgado and their children immigrated to the United States. But this past fall, the church called 2013 Chame seminary graduate Edwin Escudero as their pastor. Edwin and his wife Jenifer now lead the oldest Free Will Baptist church in the country.

The Las Tablas and Parita congregations are in the section of Panama most resistant to the gospel. Las Tablas called Efrain Gonzalez as pastor. Efrain graduated from the Bible institute in 2013, and the church is experiencing growth, conversions, and baptisms. Cirilo Mendoza, pastor of the Good News Church in Chitré, has been helping at Parita to provide some stability. While it has added



## When God is at work, Satan does his best to destroy by creating church conflicts, mistrust, sin in the lives of believers, and other problems.

significantly to his responsibilities, he does it gladly to help this struggling congregation.

Other churches and missions continually reach out to their communities in many different ways. Some teach a Bible class in a neighborhood public school. Others hold regular services in nursing homes. Summer months are filled with vacation Bible schools and camps. God is proclaimed throughout the year through special services, mission conferences, musical events, and many other things.

The Chame seminary (Bible institute) had ten students in 2015. Two graduated in November. One is due to graduate in 2016, and seven will graduate in 2017. Six new students have enrolled for 2016, yielding a student body of 14—the largest class ever!

The Bible institute continues to train pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers. The first year under Panamanian leadership has gone well, though not without challenges. The school has a strong enrollment, and a group of students, faculty, and staff committed to the task. Academic dean and acting president Myrna Ortiz, retired from the Panama Department of Education after more than 30 years' experience. She recently sent a list of more than 16 projects the school is hoping to tackle during the next few years. She

also shared these thoughts:

*“Several years ago, the idea of having our own seminary to train, develop, and prepare Christian leaders seemed to be distant and impossible to accomplish. Nevertheless, God made it possible and in 2008, after many struggles and difficulties, the school opened with three students. Today, after seven years of operation, a total of 33 students from around the country have enrolled in the school. To that, we may add the extension courses that meet in three separate locations: Chitré, Bethania, and Chame. May the Lord add to that number those who will prepare to serve Him!*

*In the formation and growth process, God has used brothers of different nationalities (North Americans, Cubans), which has allowed the transition of the seminary to Panamanian hands. Today, the running of the school remains a challenge that goes far beyond just taking care of business and keeping it operational. If 2015 was a time of learning, of trials, of crying out to God for wisdom and guidance, it has served to enable us to visualize the seminary as a cross-cultural training center for Christian workers, so that the redemptive work of our Lord Jesus Christ might be preached in Panama and the rest of the world. To achieve this, we hope to open a webpage to present the activities of the seminary (conferences, reflections, study of specific topics, videos, etc.), and to organize and carry out workshops, evangelistic outreaches, social work, among other objectives.”*

Those of us who have been associated with the work in Panama for many years feel confident about the future. Why is this so?



**First, we have a shared history—in some cases almost 40 years—and have “fought the battle” together.** We have real confidence in our brothers and sisters.

**The Church in Panama is outwardly focused.** It is in their DNA to plant new churches. Reaching adjacent neighborhoods, nearby towns, and even distant provinces remains their passion. Carlos Urbina, recently retired from a long career with the Smithsonian Institute in Panama, became a new church planter about four years ago. Every week he drives six hours to Tolé to preach and help start a church. “Our seminary students have been involved in some of the mission works, such as Parita, Tolé, and Penonomé,” according to Carlos Denis.

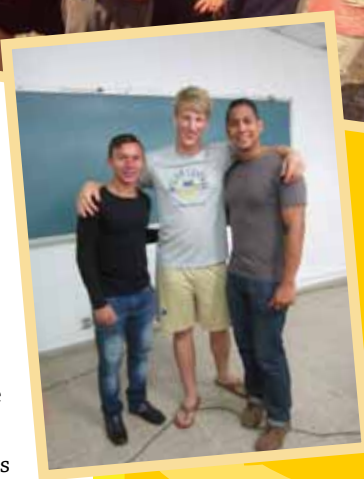
**An internal legacy is at work.** They, too, are “passing the baton,” from older to younger leadership. This year, Gabriel Pérez retired. He is the oldest pastor in Panama and approaching age 70. But God is raising up younger men.

Is it all perfect? Of course not! When God is at work, Satan does his best to destroy by creating church

conflicts, mistrust, sin in the lives of believers, and other problems. But through difficulties, the Panamanian Church has remained sound and faithful. A test of maturity is how one handles problems and conflicts. In 2015, the Panamanian Association of Free Will Baptists passed the test.

We here in the U.S. will continue to partner with the Panamanian Church. International Missions established the “Panama Ministry Fund” to enable financial partnership with Panama. The seminary and church planters benefit from this fund. Each year, an E-TEAM travels to Panama to serve. Pastors and church groups take trips to preach, build, paint, repair, and teach. A number of us are on call to teach modular courses at the Bible institute once or twice a year.

The work is in their hands—good hands. Above all, it’s in God’s hand. **ONE**



*About the Writer:* Judy Lytle and her husband Steve served as missionaries to Panama from 1977-2015. Learn more about ministry in Panama at [www.fwbgo.com](http://www.fwbgo.com).

# Legacy of Courage...

**In 1951, a young business college student** from North Carolina left her family, friends, and a predictable future to join Laura Belle Barnard in her work in India. With God, passion, and youth on her side, Volena Wilson traveled from hut to hut and village to village sharing the incredible news of salvation through Christ alone. Together, she and Ms. Barnard started churches and schools, and worked to provide the gospel in the Tamil language. After Ms. Barnard returned to the States in 1960, Volena led the work in South India. Before she left the country in 1968, she rejoiced to see three strong Free Will Baptist churches established and growing. After her death in 1991, a Bible institute dedicated to teaching Indians the truth of the Scripture was established in her name.

**Why not create your own legacy** with an endowment to support the ongoing work of Free Will Baptist International Missions?

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## STUMBLING ON A

# REFUGEE CRISIS

By Kenneth  
Eagleton

When we worked in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa, my wife Rejane and I received a letter from a lady in one of our churches in Brazil. "Kathy" (name changed for security reasons) identified herself as the missions representative of her newly planted church. She wanted information about our work so she could share it with her church and pray for us.

The Lord began dealing with Kathy's heart about going herself as a missionary. Without knowing exactly what the Lord had in store for her, she enrolled in a two-year Bible certificate program offered by one of our Bible colleges. Kathy couldn't get her mind off a certain Middle Eastern country. The Lord gave her a burden for the millions of Muslims from a particular ethnic group, and she became passionate about going where they live to witness.

After finishing her Bible studies, she enrolled in a one-year missions program where she learned much about cross-cultural ministries. Having completed it, her church sent her to Bolivia for a year of internship in cross-cultural ministries. While there, she learned Spanish and began a ministry among Native (South) American children.

Before reaching her desired destination, the Lord prepared one more necessary stop along the way. She spent nearly two years in South Africa where she learned English and lived in a majority Muslim neighborhood in Cape Town. She visited a nearby daycare and asked to volunteer once a week





and tell stories to the children. The lady who ran the daycare accepted. Kathy began teaching the children Bible stories while the daycare lady listened intently. Kathy did not know she was Muslim. Several children made decisions for Christ and, on the last day Kathy was in the country, the daycare lady also prayed to become a believer.

In 2013, after years of preparation, Kathy departed for the Muslim country her heart yearned to serve—sent by two Free Will Baptist churches in Brazil. She arrived without a husband (a major drawback in that culture) and without knowing the local language. She enrolled in a language course at a local university. The oldest student, Kathy was also the only one who spoke a Western language. She found language study grueling, much harder than learning Spanish and English. Determining how to reach her target ethnic group—given her societal limitations—

*About the Writer:* Kenneth Eagleton, M.D., served as a medical missionary in Côte d'Ivoire for 18 years. He and his wife Rejane currently serve in Campinas, Brazil. Learn more about the exciting things God is doing through Free Will Baptist International Missions at [www.fwbgo.com](http://www.fwbgo.com).

presented another challenge.

The refugee crisis in that part of the world soon opened doors for her to minister. Her city is now home to 170,000 refugees. She visits the refugees, taking what little supplies she has to them, and simply prays with them.

Kathy recently described one of these visits she made with two other believers. They came to a tent where four brothers were staying with their families—a total of about 25 people. The day before, the brothers learned ISIS had killed their parents. Before praying, Kathy felt

led to say something to them, so she said, “God loves you.”

They did not receive her comment well. “How can you say God loves us if He permitted us to lose all we have back home, being forced to flee, and now our parents have been killed?” In her broken, local language she explained this is not God’s doing, but the consequences of sin. She proceeded to give a gospel presentation to hurting people hungry for words of hope. A few days later, during a follow-up visit, the adults in that extended household became Christ followers.

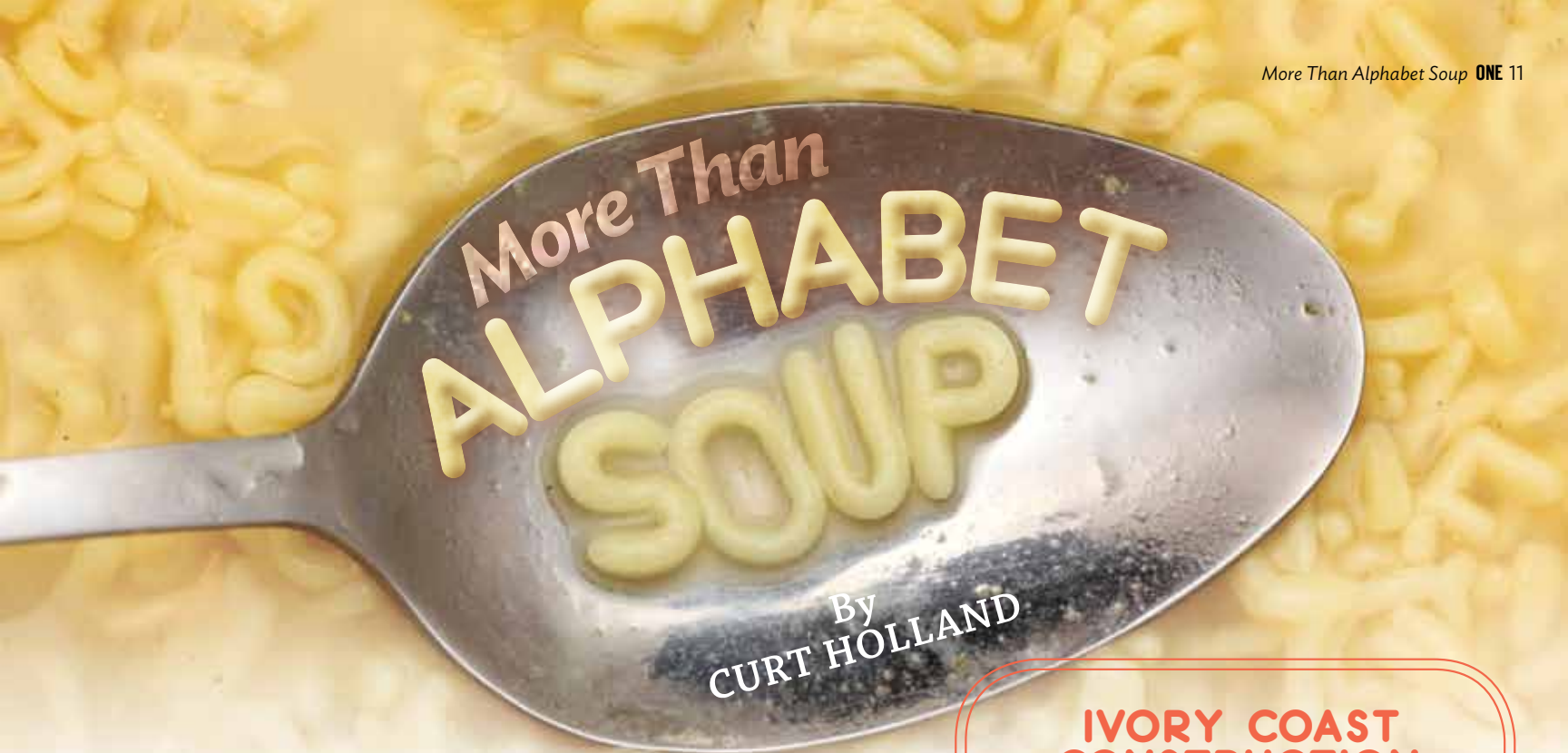
Kathy says many who are fleeing from ISIS are giving up their Muslim faith, saying if that is what their religion is like, they don’t want any part of it. She says the door is open wide for evangelism to these suffering people. Many more people are needed to reach the hundreds of thousands of refugees. Who will give so Kathy can stay and minister to them? **ONE**

*Kathy is currently supported by a couple of Free Will Baptist churches in Brazil.*

Her home church is small and has been in a building project for two years.

A recent devaluation of Brazilian currency has increased the cost of maintaining Kathy overseas. She is also facing difficulties with visa renewal. The best way for her to obtain a resident visa will be to purchase a house (at a cost of at least \$50,000) to establish residency.

*If you want to help, contribute to IM by designating a gift to Brazil Ministries: [www.fwbgo.com/give](http://www.fwbgo.com/give)*



More Than  
**ALPHABET**  
SOUP  
By  
CURT HOLLAND

*“We exist to labor together with the body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission.”*

THP...FWB...IM...NGO...CMP...  
E-TEAM...RD...OA...IMLT...BERACA.  
These acronyms may not mean a thing to you. However, the people with whom I work and communicate on a daily basis can rattle them off without giving their meanings a second thought. Acronyms allow us to remember big things in a shorter, more concise way. They also serve a purpose, because the letters stand for something important to us.

Last September, The Hanna Project began a construction endeavor at the Free Will Baptist hospital in Doropo. Our first day, God began a project! We will call him baby “G” (*garçon* is French for boy).

This little boy began his life at the hospital in Doropo. Births, deaths, healings, and help take place every day of the year at the hospital because of the leadership of BERACA.

The Hanna Project is an NGO, as is BERACA in the Ivory Coast. The

Hanna Project partners with BERACA to serve the people of the Ivory Coast and especially the hospital in Doropo where baby “G” was born. The Doropo hospital is fully managed by BERACA and their leadership team. BERACA has also initiated a micro-loan program to help Ivoirians begin their own small businesses.

An NGO is a non-governmental-organization. The United Nations says NGOs “are often the most effective voices for the concerns of ordinary people in the international arena.”

The Hanna Project is blessed to have a partnership with BERACA. They are our ears and eyes in the Ivory Coast. Because of their direction and guidance, we are able to multiply our efforts of bringing help, hope, and healing to our Ivoirian medical staff, pastors, and leaders. We look forward to many years of ministry because of this partnership. **ONE**

## IVORY COAST CONSTRUCTION PROJECT 2016

*The Hanna Project will continue the renovation of the hospital in Doropo.*

After more than 50 years in existence, the hospital continues to provide much needed help, hope, and healing to the farthest corner of the country. Skilled laborers, plumbers, carpenters, tile and masonry workers, roofers, and electricians are needed to make this project a success.

**Please consider donating to cover the cost of materials: [www.HannaProject.com](http://www.HannaProject.com).**

**Application deadline:** March 15, 2016

**Cost Per Team Member:** \$3,000

**Project dates:** July/August 2016

**Total Project Cost:** \$20,000

### For those who want to know:

**THP** — The Hanna Project

**FWB** — Free Will Baptist

**IM** — International Missions

**NGO** — Non-governmental organization

**CMP** — College Missions Program

**E-TEAM** — Eagleton-Teens Equipped and Active in Missions

**RD** — Regional Director

**OA** — Overseas Apprentice

**IMLT** — International Missions Leadership Team

**BERACA** — Transliteration of Hebrew “berakha” meaning “valley of blessings”

## Around the World >>

### Chitré Church Celebrates 10 Years

**Panama**—The Good News Free Will Baptist Church in Chitré, Panama, celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2015. Stan Bunch, David Beltz, Derek Terry, and Zach Williams (all of Missouri) attended the four-day celebration. Representatives from churches around the country joined in the celebration, some traveling as much as four hours to participate.

Stan Bunch and his wife Brenda were appointed as career missionaries to Panama in 1983. They began the Good News Church during their final years as missionaries to Panama. They initiated English classes, a hospital ministry, and a ministry to university students to start the new church. Stan also mentored several local pastors and their families. After 28 years, the Bunches resigned from the Mission to begin serving Free Will Baptists in Missouri, where Stan is promotional director for the Missouri State Association.

The Bunches began a history of replication in Panama that continues. Good News has mothered several other churches and is still planting new churches. Stan and Brenda instilled the principle of Philippians 3:17 into the DNA of the church: “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.”

Trip participant Zach Williams stated, “The example set by Stan and Brenda and the Good News Church is an example for all our Free Will Baptist churches to follow.” ■



### Panama Convention News

The annual convention of the National Association of Free Will Baptist Churches in Panama met January 9-10, 2016, on the campus of the seminary in Chame, Panama.

#### Convention highlights include:

- A Friday evening preconvention seminar for pastors by Pastor Gabriel Pérez.
- Three simultaneous seminars (workshops) supporting the convention theme “My Family, My Responsibility.”
- Separate activities for the children.
- Former missionary Steve Lytle’s sermon from Deuteronomy 6 (D6) yielded a number of people committing to disciple their families.
- Panamanian men initiated the creation of a men’s organization, much like Master’s Men, and elected three men to oversee the effort.
- Regional Director Kenneth Eagleton met with the executive committee establishing International Missions’ primary partnership role in 2016 as training leaders at the seminary. ■



## Snapshots Around the World



**Bulgaria:** Twenty-five ladies attended the first women's conference sponsored by New Life Church in Svishtov, Bulgaria, January 22-23. About half of these women do not know Christ. The women enjoyed making crafts, fun time laughter, and hearing Bible lessons emphasizing how they can have peace in stressful times.

**Bulgaria:** Jonathan and Amy Postlewaite and daughters, Anna and Jonna, left Svishtov, Bulgaria, February 9, for a six-month stateside assignment. They plan to begin a new work in Pleven, less than 50 miles southwest of Svishtov, upon their return to Bulgaria in the fall.

**France:** Steve Riggs returned to France in February after almost a year of stateside assignment. The Riggs work with a church plant in Châteaubriant, a town with no other evangelical witness.

**Bulgaria:** Tim and Lydia Awtrey concluded a 12-week Bible study for seekers in January. Of the five women attending, all want to continue studying the Bible. One woman said she was ready to accept Christ as Savior.

**Japan:** Dale and Sandra Bishop arrived in the States in March for a six-month stateside assignment. The Bishops, working as missionaries to Japan for more than 40 years, serve primarily in Hokkaido. As regional director for Asia, Dale also oversees the work in South Korea and India.



**Côte d'Ivoire:** In December, at least 17 people were baptized in Free Will Baptist churches in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. Eight believers were baptized in Angaye (Doropo). Pastor George Tah baptized three young ladies in Bouaké. Pastor Samuel Kaibio of the Shalom FWB Church (Angré) in Abidjan baptized six people.

**Uruguay:** Saturday, December 12, the Melo Church celebrated its 25th anniversary. The church began in a home and eventually moved to its present location. Pastor Julio Figueroa and his family have served the congregation for seven years. A full house and 95-degree temperatures provided a "warm" reception. Free Will Baptist churches from Rivera and Montevideo were represented as well as several local congregations. The service was a celebration of the work done in the past as well as anticipation for the future.

## Two Former Missionaries With the Lord



**Antioch, TN**—Two women who ministered in France and have long battled health issues died recently. **Mrs. Billie Sexton**, 81 years old, was released from her earthly struggles December 20, 2015. She and her husband Don (deceased December 1997) served in France 1971-1979. Due to health problems, the Sextons did not return to France after their second term. Instead, they became avid and active missionary representatives traveling throughout the States to raise awareness and funds for missions. Their efforts live on in Tennessee through the Don and Billie Sexton Walk-a-Thon that raises thousands of dollars annually.



After years of declining health and battles with Parkinson's disease, fibromyalgia, cancer, and other ailments, **Miss Dawn Sweeney** passed away on January 5, 2016. The 57-year-old served in France from 1983-1991. After being diagnosed with osteoarthritis, she resigned to pursue treatment. Although her health continued to decline, Dawn sought to serve others and share the gospel in a variety of ways over the years. ■



By Clint Morgan

**Many of you are familiar with the work of Free Will Baptist International Missions (FWBIM).**

For those less familiar, let me explain what we do and why we do it, paint a few broad strokes of how we minister, and ultimately, share our major goals for the next five years.

First and foremost, Free Will Baptist International Missions exists to labor with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission. Our mission statement drives everything we do. It has been the focal point of our efforts from the first missionary sent in 1935 to those sent in 2015. This mission statement is not limited by location, ethnicity, race, language, or any other criteria. The gospel is for all people.

We are focused! We do “labor with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission,” and we are more passionate about it now than ever before.

*Five major objectives flow from this passion and guide every missionary and every ministry. These objectives (non-measurable achievements) are:*

***Bring a message of compassion and hope to people in need by helping to alleviate suffering through spiritual, social, economic, and physical change.***

We must demonstrate God’s love for all people through our actions.

***Build relationships, evangelize, and disciple in culturally sensitive ways.***

The gospel is shared with those with whom we build relationships. Those who embrace the gospel are disciplined.

***Plant churches and equip believers among some of the most resistant and least reached peoples of the world.***

Our missionaries are ready and willing to go to the hard places to reach the unreached.

***Train leaders who train others.*** Without strong biblical leadership, works cannot grow and are not sustainable.

***Partner with maturing national churches and others who share our passion to fulfill the Great Commission.*** This is a defining point of laboring with the Body of Christ.

As we seek to do our part in fulfilling the Great Commission, the strategic objectives cited above guide us. In addition to these objectives, we also established strategic goals, or measurable accomplishments.

At International Missions, the leadership team prayerfully and carefully sets strategic goals. Each year, we meet off-site for several days to focus our time and energy on strategic talks. We affectionately call these days Labor Camp. Since we spend hours and hours discussing, analyzing, and establishing major goals and objectives for International Missions, the name fits.

September 21-23 was reserved for Labor Camp 2015. The leadership team spent each morning looking back at

the Mission's history and the influencing trends and actions along the way. This helped us take a realistic glance at the present and an anticipatory look at the future. Interestingly enough, we walked away from the three days sensing we had simply set the stage for laser-focused talks about our strategic goals—those measurable accomplishments.

Goals set too low do not stimulate enthusiasm nor produce growth. Unreasonably elevated goals can lead to discouragement and a sense of failure. The challenge was to set realistic, futuristic, and faith-based goals. The hurdle was finding the balance and emerging with goals that met this three-tier challenge.

After much prayer and discussion, we locked in on five major goals. The leadership team committed to seeing these specific goals accomplished in the next five years. We designated these the 20 by 2020 goals. Perhaps a brief explanation of these goals will help you engage with IM to see them accomplished.

**1** *Increase reserves to 20%: it is commonly considered wise practice for non-profit organizations to have three to six months of cash reserves.*

**Having 20% in reserves will mean:**

- We can honor donors' designations without reservation.
- We will be prepared for adverse potentialities (e.g. war, economic upheaval, loss of tax exemption status, currency fluctuations, extraordinary risks to field staff, etc.).
- We will be prepared financially to bring our field personnel stateside if circumstances demand we do so.

The goal is to increase our cash reserves from the present goal of 10% of our approved operational budget to 20% by the year 2020.

**2** *Increase the number of monthly donors giving to IM by 20%: in this context, donors refers to those who give to IM on a regular basis. This is defined as churches or individuals who give at least eight out of 12 months to the Mission, and/or churches or individuals who give at least \$1,200 a year to IM.*

**In 2015:**

- 1,010 churches gave nothing to IM.
- 609 churches gave \$1,200 or more (averaging at least \$100 a month).
- 507 churches gave less than \$1,200.

The goal is to increase the number of churches giving to IM from 1,116 to 1,339 by 2020.

**3** *Increase the number of cross-cultural missionaries (IM/partners) by 20%. An increase in field personnel is necessary since IM is committed to leading the way for Free Will Baptists as we fulfill our role in reaching the unreached.*

The goal is to increase the number of missionaries internationally by 20%, or from the current 74 to 89 by 2020.

**4** *Increase the numbers of believers (FWB/partners) internationally by 20%: a stated objective of IM is to share a message of compassion and hope with the lost. Such an objective demands an unwavering, unified commitment to see unbelievers know of Christ and accept Him as their personal Savior.*

The goal is to increase the number of believers internationally by 20%, or from 27,371 to 32,845 international believers by 2020.

**5** *Increase the number of churches (FWB/partners) internationally by 20%: a major objective of IM is to plant churches. We expect and anticipate a steady increase in the number of church plants.*

The goal is to increase the number of churches outside the continental U.S. from 867 to 1,040 by 2020.

Each of these goals is built upon the foundation of our mission statement and intertwined with our objectives. If Free Will Baptists do our part in fulfilling the Great Commission, it will take proper funding (goals 1-2), which will allow us to send more missionaries (goal 3). As missionaries are faithful in ministering and witnessing, the number of believers will increase (goal 4), and churches will emerge (goal 5).

Free Will Baptist International Missions is fully committed to our mission statement, five major objectives, and 20 by 2020 goals. However, we cannot effectively move forward without support, participation, and partnership from our fellow Free Will Baptists. The time has come for a renewed commitment by Free Will Baptists to "labor together with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission." **ONE**

*About the Writer:* Clint Morgan has been general director of International Missions since 2011. Learn more: [www.fwbgo.com](http://www.fwbgo.com).

# OUTREACH:

## “The Monkey on My Back”

By Jeff Goodman



*It was a gorgeous day, and everything was set and ready for Easter Extravaganza 2013. We were a new church plant desiring to see souls come to know Jesus, and we had placed a lot of literal (and metaphorical) eggs into this basket. As the day began, I could not have been happier. The place was packed, and over 450 people heard the gospel. They all enjoyed a huge egg hunt, free food, and tons of free prizes. Then I heard these words: “We have called an ambulance because someone (a first-time guest) has passed out.”*

My head started spinning as I ran to see what was going on. I got a wet washcloth and wiped the lady’s forehead. I was concerned for her, and honestly, I was really worried she might sue us. Thankfully, she was fine, and surprisingly, they were one of the only families that began attending church on a regular basis. Needless to say, I left that day exhausted and proud that our little congregation had pulled off a highly successful event.

Now, let’s consider this story again from behind the scenes and with a little hindsight. At the time of this event we were averaging around 65 people. We had everything well planned and laid out. Every effort was made for this to be a great day; however, it was highly stressful for our new church and put even more strain on young converts still in the infancy stages of their relationships with Christ.

Our heart that day was to tell people about Jesus, and we had a really great service. The next week, about 20 guests came back, but 20 of our regular attenders were out, presumably resting from their huge efforts the weekend before. The guests were shocked because we had been a church of 450 a week earlier, and now we had only 60 in attendance. Our



church folks got stressed out, and sadly, most guests (and some regulars) never came back. We gained about eight people from the event and lost 15 to 20. Needless to say, the pride and excitement over the great outreach event quickly turned to sadness when I realized I had planned the event well, but did not prepare our congregation properly. The day was filled with distractions, logistical problems, and an immense amount of stress. I vowed never to make that mistake again.

## You do not need a huge budget to reach people with the love of Jesus.

Sometimes, we must evaluate with an open mind and conclude that everything we do to reach people for Christ is not as effective as we had hoped. In the past, I measured effective outreach by one standard—how many warm bodies showed up. I believe many of us use numbers as our standard of measurement. While I am not writing a "right and wrong list" for church outreach, I advocate a proper assessment as outreach opportunities are planned. Here are several things we have learned by our own mistakes during outreach opportunities:

### DOING SOMETHING IS BETTER THAN NOTHING.

I make many mistakes when it comes to outreach. I learn from them. I grow. I ask questions. I try again. We live in a community that is 90% unchurched, so anything I do to let people see Jesus is a valued effort; however, we want to do things as effectively as possible and be good stewards of our time and finances. We must stay teachable.

### BIGGER IS NOT ALWAYS BETTER.

Sometimes, sheer numbers can be helpful. In our early days of planting, we did several large events that got our name out in the community. I have read it takes five to six "touches" (instances where an individual comes in contact with you or hears your name) before someone will attend your church. As we plan outreach events, we should take this into account.

When we participate in local festivals here in Marana, Arizona, our goal is to do something kind or fun. We just want to share the love of Jesus with our community and give them an opportunity to meet us. We usually give away a small, inexpensive gift and have fun games for children. We encounter throngs of people, but have little personal contact.

We also do small outreaches in our local parks during recreational ball seasons. We give away free coffee and doughnuts. It only costs about \$150, and I love these events! We usually only meet a few hundred people, but we get to speak to each of them, share information about our church, and give them a personal invitation.

Several people have visited the church as a result of these small acts of kindness. Just remember, bigger is not always better. You do not need a huge budget to reach people with the love of Jesus. Be creative and look for opportunities already in place in your community.

### BE WHO YOU ARE.

At our Easter Extravaganza, we looked like a church of 450, when in reality we were a church of 65. We did not represent ourselves accurately, and after people came back the following Sunday, they did not return. Be who you are. If you're traditional, be traditional. If you are more contemporary, be contemporary. If you're a country church, be a country church. Make sure everything you do in outreach paints a clear picture of who you are as a church.

I have seen churches hang banners featuring pictures with young couples, when in reality none of those people actually attend that church, and the congregation is aging. Wanting young couples to begin attending your church is a great thing, and is probably necessary, but "tricking them" will never work.

I know of a church plant that is a cowboy church. Their goal is to reach cowboys. Their website clearly sticks to the cowboy niche...but the pastor has never been a cowboy, and doesn't even own a horse. While the church has a clear demographic of those they want to reach, it has struggled because the pastor is not being himself. Be who you are. Be genuine.

### PERSONAL INVITATIONS ARE ALWAYS THE BEST.

The Springs Church no longer sends mass mailings. I am not saying they are wrong. They had a place in the early days of our church when we knew few people, but they are costly and have a small return on the investment. We also discovered few people would return after their first visit when they attended as a result of a mailer brochure.

After our huge Easter service, we reevaluated how we would do outreach for "big day" services such as Easter, Father's Day,

Mother's Day, Christmas Eve, etc. We print special invitations and put them into the hands of our church people. When they invite someone, they have a personal connection. We have found when people visit, and they already have a connection with someone in the church, they are more likely to return.

On the Easter Sunday following the 2013 extravaganza, 250 people attended our service, all invited by our church folks. The congregation "took ownership" of their church, and they were proud people they had invited came. They said it was the best Easter ever, and Christ was magnified!

### **LISTEN TO GOD'S CALLING AND DIRECTION.**

Always seek God's calling about every outreach you intend to do. Follow His lead, look for where He is already working, and join Him. Find needs in your city and community and get involved. Work with others, collaborate, and partner with other churches. We cannot reach everybody by ourselves.

I have often directed people to churches that are a better fit for them. It can be difficult to be Kingdom-minded in this

competitive world in which we live. Don't let everything you do just be about you or your church. It has been difficult at times to let go of the competitive mentality, but it is pleasing to God when we do.

### **PRAY.**

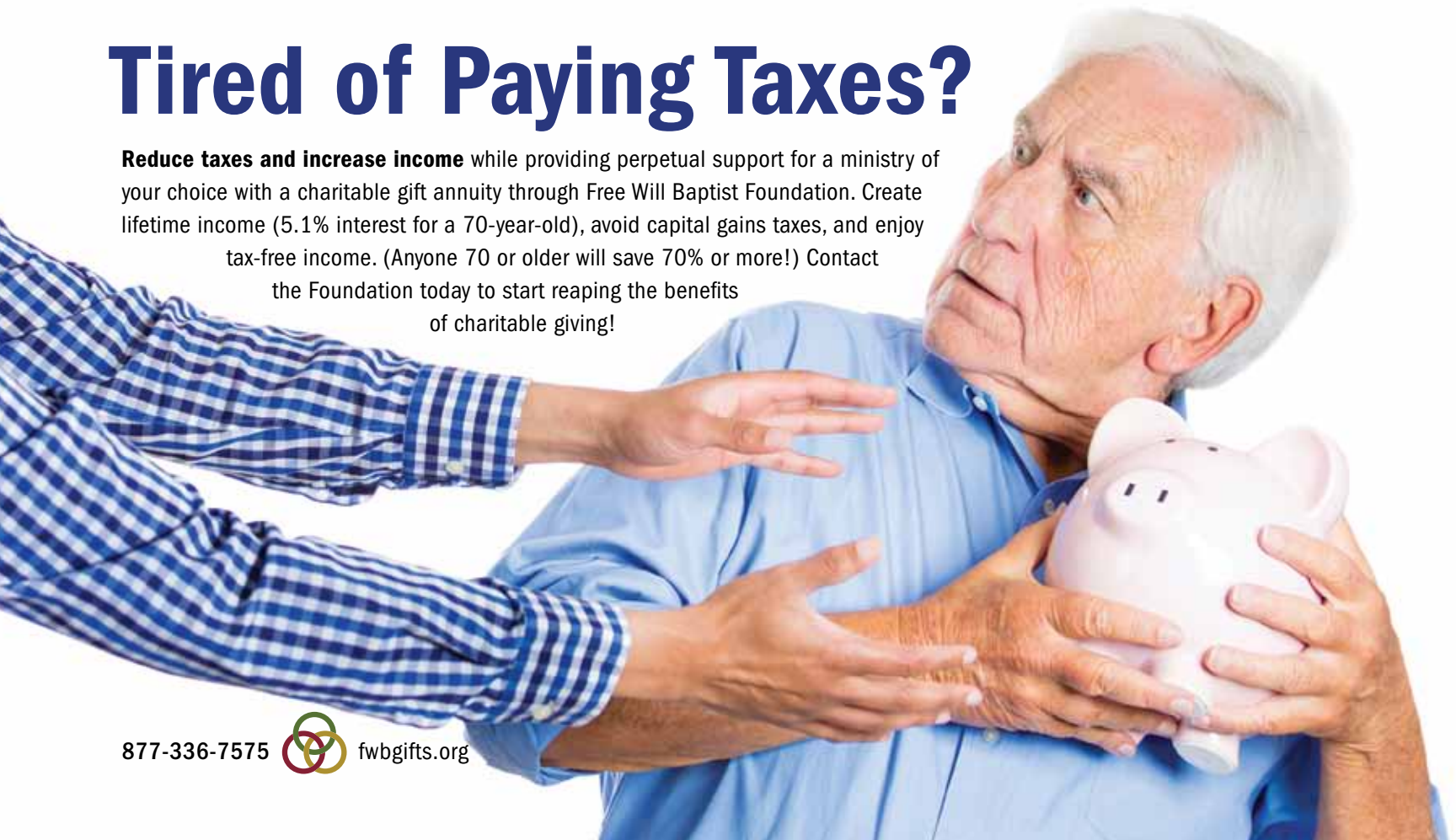
Pray over the invite cards. Pray over the event. Pray over your people. Pray for God to speak and draw people into a relationship with Him. Pray for God to cover your mistakes, your missteps. Most of all...trust in the Lord. We have made many mistakes doing all kinds of outreach here in Marana, but God can cover our mistakes and messes and work through our efforts to draw people unto Himself.

Time is short, and the older I get, the more urgent this feeling inside me grows. It won't go away. Outreach has become the "monkey on my back." People need to know Jesus, and we have to reach out to them and share Him. May others see the love of Jesus through you on a daily basis. **ONE**

**About the Writer:** Jeff Goodman, Josh Bennett, and their families are planting The Springs FWB Church in Marana, Arizona. The rapidly growing city is located 15 miles north of Tucson, and 90% of the people in the area are unchurched. Pray for Jeff, Heather, and daughter Ava as they share Christ with the people of Marana. Learn more: [www.fwbnam.com](http://www.fwbnam.com).

# Tired of Paying Taxes?

**Reduce taxes and increase income** while providing perpetual support for a ministry of your choice with a charitable gift annuity through Free Will Baptist Foundation. Create lifetime income (5.1% interest for a 70-year-old), avoid capital gains taxes, and enjoy tax-free income. (Anyone 70 or older will save 70% or more!) Contact the Foundation today to start reaping the benefits of charitable giving!



# A WORD

## Fitly Spoken

By Clint Morgan



*My years in Africa gave me an appreciation for many elements of African culture. By far, African proverbs impacted me most. The simple but profound truths hidden in these word nuggets provided counsel, warning, humor, and much more.*

I recollect many times my African brothers and sisters dropped a proverb into a situation and instantly a good word of advice was given, a tense moment turned to laughter, or an argument averted.

On one occasion, our national church leaders were gathered to settle a misunderstanding between several believers. It didn't take long for emotions to get charged and the air tense. The words came quickly, sharply, and menacingly. Accusations of hard-headedness, close-mindedness, and purely unscriptural actions were launched from both parties. Tempers flared. Accusations turned to threats. Declarations to withdraw from the regional association of churches issued.

Suddenly, one of the leaders stood and sternly delivered an African proverb, "It is obvious we aren't warming ourselves by the same fire." He turned and walked away from the group gathered under the mango tree. The heated exchange turned to stone-cold silence. One-by-one, each person walked away. The African proverb clearly summed up the situation.

We cannot eliminate all misunderstandings in the world or even those in the smaller, personal arena. Sometimes, we just aren't "warming ourselves by the same fire." But does it not stand to reason that Christians should be able to find some common ground on all issues?

Ephesians 4:1-6 teaches, "There is one body and one Spirit." If this is true, and I certainly believe it is, then we should be able to find common "fire" to warm ourselves.

God has made us one in the Spirit, so not even a remote possibility exists that He would sow division among His people. Sure, at times His Word is clearly violated, even by other professing believers, and we must separate ourselves from

those actions. In some cases, however, the "fire" by which we are standing is of our own making and not of the Spirit. We may have to put out our own fire to warm ourselves by God's fire. How many times do we confuse the two?

These verses from Ephesians state we are one based on the most foundational of truths. We as believers have "one Lord...one faith...one baptism...one God and Father of all." Now that is a fire we all need to warm ourselves by. I am pretty sure this would lead to more civil discourse—even when we disagree.

Oh, by the way, I haven't been in any arguments lately with brothers in Christ. These are just thoughts that give me hope when I do find myself in disagreement with others within the Body. **ONE**

**About the Writer:** Clint Morgan has been director of Free Will Baptist International Missions since 2011. He and his wife served 30 years in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, before transferring to Europe to work with Muslims in France. Order his book, *African Proverbs: Wisdom Without Borders* [www.Randall-House.com](http://www.Randall-House.com).

# TEAMWORK

## Without Borders

BY JEFF TURNBOUGH

**At the beginning of the 20th century, 90% of the world's Christians lived in the Western and Northern Hemispheres. As the 21st century began, 75% of Christians live in the Eastern and Southern Hemispheres, or the "global south."<sup>1</sup>**

With this huge shift in the Christian population, we rightly ask ourselves questions such as: where does missions begin? Where does it end? Who are the senders? Who are the recipients? Today, the work of missions consists of believers everywhere working together to reach least reached peoples everywhere. They may be located on the other side of the world, or they may be next door.

The Great Commission is too big for anyone to accomplish alone, and too important for all of us not to work together to fulfill. That means small churches to mega-churches, small denominations to large ones, and Christians around the world must be intentional about finding ways to work together.

In 2005, Free Will Baptist International Missions (FWBIM) joined the

International Training Alliance—a group of evangelical mission agencies working together to offer practical leadership training for missionary and national leaders around the world. In addition to the unique training ITA offers, a core principle insists on demographic diversity for trainer teams and participants. Coming from different groups and nations, the courses reflect a Kingdom picture of redeemed people from every nation, race, and language.

Leaders in Free Will Baptist International Missions have embraced these 21st century realities by working with others (like ITA) and forming international missionary teams.

In Bulgaria, local believers Trif and Vanya Trifonov joined our FWBIM team. They had already been involved in Chris-

tian ministry for two decades, and came to us with much life and ministry experience. Our work in Bulgaria began with an international couple—Tim Awtrey from the States and Lydia from Bulgaria. We added another couple from the U.S., then added a couple from Bulgaria, and recently a fourth couple from the States joined the team. The international missionary team works together in a joint effort to plant churches in Bulgaria. The Trifonovs are completely bilingual, which facilitates working relationships within the team and communications with supporters in the States. (They visited churches in the States during the summer of 2015.)

In Spain, International Missions is collaborating with the national federation of Free Will Baptist churches to sup-

## ITA BY THE NUMBERS

82 courses

2,449 missionary participants in over 200 nations

100 different mission agencies.

Eight courses for 2016: Cambodia, Cameroon, Germany, Zambia, Peru, Philippines, China, and Thailand, with Free Will Baptists involved in each session.

[www.weTRAINleaders.org](http://www.weTRAINleaders.org)

port Manuel and Noemi Garcia, a young couple working with our missionary team in Malaga. Noemi is the daughter of local Free Will Baptist pastor and leader, José Manuel Parrón. From childhood, Noemi sensed God calling her to be a missionary. After completing her studies, she met and married Manuel, an immigrant from Venezuela, and an active believer in her church. The Free Will Baptist work in Spain is too small to support a missionary alone. Collaborating to send this couple brings our churches in Spain together to participate with U.S. efforts to extend God's Kingdom in this part of the world. This is a beautiful picture of international missions in today's global context.

The biblical value of interdependence compels us to look beyond nationality, language, and finances to do Kingdom work. Working together internationally allows believers to focus a variety of resources on common tasks. All believers possess unique, God-given gifts to contribute to His work. IM is committed to enhance and multiply our efforts to work together with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission, internationally. **ONE**

**About the Writer:** Dr. Jeff Turnbough, regional director for Europe at Free Will Baptist International Missions, also serves as CEO of International Training Alliance (ITA).

1 *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*, Philip Jenkins

## TRULY INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

Of 76 missionaries at FWBIM, 10 have a non-U.S. passport:

Rejane Eagleton, Lydia Awtrey, Lydie Teague, Trif and Vanya Trifonov, Lázaro Riesgo and Ariadna Riesgo (Iglesias), Manuel and Noemi Garcia (Parrón), and Myriam Le Louarn.

We also celebrate that five MKs (who are internationals in the truest sense) currently serves with IM:

Kenneth Eagleton, Matthew Turnbough, Joel Teague, Doug Bishop, and Katie Speer.



# Blessed

## BEYOND MEASURE

By Rhonda Whitley

**BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE**—I really have no other way to describe the amazing men who have been part of the history of Martin Hill Free Will Baptist Church, our “home church.” We have seen men of great integrity, men of great calling, men who have pursued the heart of God—each with a huge impact on our lives and the lives of our church family.

None had as great an impact on our family as Rick Bowling when he arrived in 1990. Something was different about him. Charismatic? No. Great etiquette? No. Great wisdom? Surely! But most of all, he was a man after the heart of God. During his ministry, my husband Jack came to know Jesus as Savior and surrendered to the ministry himself.



To say previous pastors of Martin Hill were passionate about evangelism would be an understatement. However, this man's passion for the souls of the people of Uruguay (the field from which he had just returned) was evident in every aspect of his ministry at Martin Hill. He often reminisced about the times he was able to preach the Word to people who had a "jaw-dropping" experience as they heard the salvation message for the first time. His passion for missions was woven into every fiber of his life and evident in each sermon and lesson. Looking back, perhaps God called him to our church as a training ground for pastoring and mentoring—a task he performed well.

Jack and I moved on to our own work, but it came as no surprise when we learned the Lord had led Rick into a new work involving Hispanic missions. Since that time, passionately proclaiming the love of Jesus to this fast-growing people group has paved the way for thousands to come to know Jesus as Lord and Savior in the United States.

The Lord didn't stop there. Over the past 15 years, Hispanic mission work, with the U.S. at its hub, has spread across the globe. Many men have come to the U.S. to learn and understand the Word of God in their own language. Some take it back to their native lands, while others remain in America to share the Good News with their people here. Whether here or abroad, they are lighting the way for Spanish-speaking people everywhere to come to salvation through Jesus Christ.

Today, God's work among Hispanic Free Will Baptists is evident across America, with church plants in Arkansas; Kentucky (3); Tennessee (6); Virginia (3); West Virginia (2); Georgia (4); California (4); Oklahoma (4); Puerto Rico; North Carolina (2); Indiana (2); and Kansas. Somewhere, in a church close to you, God's hand has been moving.

**ARKANSAS: Pastor Micael Gonzalez** is a graduate of the Bible institute. He is making friends and hosting home Bible studies.

**KENTUCKY: Dr. Rufo Gomez** leads two works in Lexington, three works in Georgia, and two works in Florida and Mexico.

**TENNESSEE: Pastor Hector Perez** recently started a work in Bristol and purchased a building to renovate for that ministry. He also heads up works in North Carolina and Tennessee, and has taken responsibility for the work in Cordele, Georgia.

**WEST VIRGINIA: Pastor Josue Rivera** is starting the second work in West Virginia in Huntington, with the help of Rev. Carl Lily, who is assisting in support and ministry.

**GEORGIA:** Currently, four churches have begun in Georgia. The work in Cordele, Georgia, has been underway for several years, but it is only now becoming a healthy, growing ministry.

**SOUTH CAROLINA: Pastor Fernando Bustamante** is working in five areas across the state. The Charleston work will begin meeting in a new building soon. Pastor Bustamante also oversees a number of works in Mexico.

**FLORIDA: Pastor Oscar Portillo** and his congregation in Fort Meyers will start another work in the Fort Meyers area this year.

**CALIFORNIA: Pastor Alfredo Botello** (Oklahoma) recently guided two churches into our movement. These churches have four additional works in Mexico and California.

**OKLAHOMA: Pastor Botello** has been struggling through expensive renovations to bring the building up to codes. The church has spent \$80,000 and the Bible institute added \$22,000. Remember this work especially in prayer.

**PUERTO RICO: Pastor Jose Correa** now has two works in Puerto Rico and one in Jacksonville, Florida. While meeting in Jacksonville one Sunday, through Skype, we had services with the church in Puerto Rico. The congregations do this on a regular basis.

**NORTH CAROLINA: Pastor Hector Perez** has begun two churches and is exploring opportunities to start other works in the state.

**INDIANA: Pastor Jaime Hernandez** shepherds two churches in addition to his hard work in correspondence for the institute.

**KANSAS: Pastor Alfredo Botello** (Oklahoma) has begun a ministry near Bartlesville.

What a continued blessing the Earl and Gwen Hendrix Hispanic Bible Institute has been! Seven students recently graduated from the institute, and the school has received 19 applications for next semester.

God's blessings do not stop there. Did you know we have a chaplain coming from Free Will Baptist work among the Spanish-speaking population? Rafael is working hard to become the first Hispanic Navy chaplain. Former chaplain Kerry Steedley has been instrumental in this process.

We continue to produce literature. Pastor Rickey Evans recently printed "The Romans Road" tract in Spanish and is giving it free to all our Hispanic churches. This will be a great help.

What does the future hold for Free Will Baptist work among Hispanics? We will open several new works this year: O'Fallon, Missouri; Jacksonville, Florida; Richmond, Virginia; Selmer, North Carolina; and Fort Meyers, Florida. Missionaries are on the move and working toward four common goals: preaching the gospel, baptizing converts, discipling saints, and opening new churches. This year holds much promise for the work of our Lord.

The excitement of this ministry is contagious! Get involved. What part would you like to play? Prayer warriors are in high demand. Will you bow before the throne of God on behalf of these missionaries? The fields truly are white unto harvest. Is God working? Absolutely. We are blessed beyond measure. God is good all the time...and all the time, God is good. **ONE**

**About the Writer:** Rhonda Whitley and her husband Jack minister at the New Lebanon FWB church in Tishomingo, Mississippi. She is an active member of her local WAC.

# A Heart for All PEOPLE:

*The WNAC Scholarship Program Expands*

BY ELIZABETH HODGES



*With the changing landscape of missions, the ease of travel, and the increase in technology, international students often study in the United States or enroll in online classes in the U.S.*

In an effort to be wise stewards of the money given by Free Will Baptist women and to meet the changing needs of our international students, WNAC has adopted the following guidelines for the International Student Scholarship:

- *Recipient must be from a Free Will Baptist church or mission outside the U.S.*
- *Recipient must be enrolled in a Free Will Baptist college.*
- *Recipient's application will be processed through the WNAC office.*
  - *Recipient will receive a \$1,000 scholarship.*
  - *Missionary personnel will submit a recommendation.*
  - *\$3,000 per year will be available for these scholarships.*
- *The WNAC board will approve the distribution of these funds.*

To respect International Missions protocols, and ensure the integrity of this program, we ask that all requests coming from international fields for a student to receive this international student scholarship pass through the regional director directly to the WNAC Director and copy the IM General Director.





**Keren Delgado**, a freshman at Welch College, daughter of Keila and Rolando Delgado, is the first recipient of this scholarship. Keren was born in Cuba and grew up in a pastor's home. When she was about nine years old, her parents sensed the Lord's missionary call upon their lives. They left Cuba and went to Panama, where her father assumed responsibilities as pastor of First FWB Church in Panama City. Rolando not only pastored the church, but he also ignited a missionary flame in other Free Will Baptists churches that still burns brightly today.

Judy Lytle, retired missionary to Panama, watched Keren grow in the Lord and says, "She shares the missionary heart and passion of her parents. She is a humble, willing servant. Her growing, personal relationship with the Lord is evident, and her walk with the Lord is genuine."

In 2012, Panamanian immigration refused to renew visas for the Delgado family when Cuba all but denounced their citizenship, and Panamanian immigration laws became particularly harsh towards Cubans. In 2013, the Arkansas State Association of Free Will Baptists began the process of bringing the Delgados to Arkansas to plant Hispanic churches. These were hard, stressful years. The Delgados are people of great faith, but Keren's mother told Judy, "It was Keren who motivated the family to keep trusting God's timing, that it would be perfect." The family arrived in Arkansas in July 2014.

Don Matchett, missions director in Arkansas, wrote, "Keren



PHOTO (left to right): Clint Morgan, director, International Missions; Matt Pinson, president, Welch College; Keren Delgado; Elizabeth Hodges, director, WNAC.

moved here as a senior in high school. Because of the differences in classes, the local public school told Keren she would probably have to start in the 10th grade. The only way she could start classes with her own age group was to pass all entry tests. They told the family not to get their hopes up because it was very difficult, and she probably could not pass. They underestimated Keren's aptitude and resilience. She passed all the tests with flying colors. She is a gifted student and a special young lady who has a big heart for all people. She is bilingual and makes friends easily."

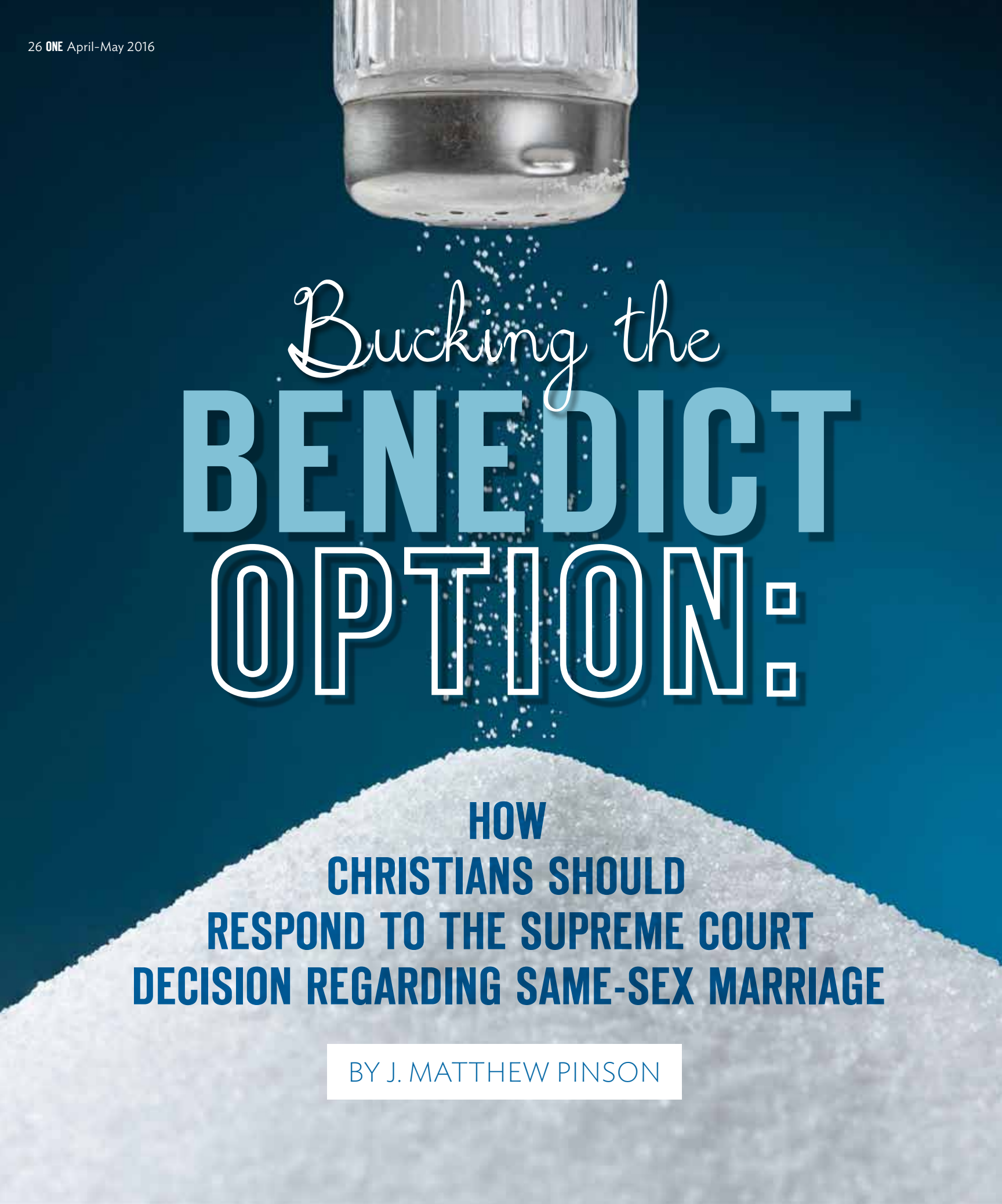
An example of Keren's heart is evident in the recommendation from Don Matchett. "A few weeks after Keren started high school, I asked her how many new friends she had. She said, 'Just one.' I was a little panicked and said, 'Just one? What happened?' She said, 'Oh, nothing has happened really. A Guatemalan student started about the same time I did, and no one will talk to her because she looks different than everyone else. She's rather small and looks more native than the other Hispanics. Not even the other Hispanic students will associate with her, so I've been spending most of my breaks with her.'"

Keren served on *E-TEAM* Chicago 2015. She has been accepted to the College Missions Program in July 2016, and she will teach Syrian refugee children.

Clint Morgan, general director for Free Will Baptist International Missions, shares that, "Keren has a heart for the world, but especially India. She is an excellent choice as the first recipient for this scholarship." **ONE**

**Keren, thank you for allowing God to use you to touch those in your world and beyond. We are thankful He has chosen you to be the first recipient of this scholarship.**

**About the Writer:** Elizabeth Hodges is director of Women Nationally Active for Christ. Learn more about WNAC scholarships: [www.wnac.org](http://www.wnac.org).



*Bucking the*  
**BENEDICT**  
**OPTION:**

**HOW  
CHRISTIANS SHOULD  
RESPOND TO THE SUPREME COURT  
DECISION REGARDING SAME-SEX MARRIAGE**

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

**First, we must not panic and withdraw from public life and culture.** Many people are discussing the “Benedict Option” inspired by the ancient monk Benedict of Nursia and his withdrawal from society into a monastic life. Others are discussing the “Buckley Option,” based on modern-day conservative thinker William F. Buckley and the way he engaged culture with conservative ideas and ideals.

I agree with my colleague Darrell Holley, who recently suggested the “Kuyper Option,” based on the thought of Abraham Kuyper, Christian prime minister of the Netherlands in the early 20th century. While Kuyper believed in the separation of church and state, believing church and government are distinct spheres with different ends and purposes, he did not believe in the separation of Christianity and culture.

Kuyper believed that, wherever it finds itself flourishing, Christianity is making changes to the world around it, transforming the culture. Thus, Christians should fulfill vocational callings—Christian scholar, sculptor, scientist, plumber, or politician to homemaker and horticulturalist—salt and light in the world, transforming the culture around them. This sort of cultural impact makes society more conducive to the work of pastors, evangelists, missionaries, and Christian laypeople engaged in evangelism.

I think Dr. Holley is right. We need the “Kuyper Option.” The last thing we need to do is to panic and worry. We need to rest secure in Jesus’ promise: “I will build my church, and the gates of Hell will not prevail against it.” This is not—especially not—just a promise for the good times when we have a Christian cultural consensus.

The early Christians, a small minority in the midst of a radically pagan culture, were emboldened by this promise, even as they were persecuted and martyred for their faith in Christ. We must resolve to be like those early Christians—strong in our faith, especially since we are in the midst of an increasingly post-Christian culture. Let us be winsome and loving, caring for the poor and downcast, showing what it means to live lives of faith, hope, love, and joy in a decadent culture that punishes us for holding to what makes our lives worth living.

Let us be ourselves—authentic Christian families and churches confident in the Kingdom values our Lord has given us, with attitudes and priorities and ways of life alien to the kingdoms of this world, but that break in on this world even now and transform it.

There is some truth to a need that advocates of the “Benedict Option” stress—the need to get serious about our own internal biblical and church resources for rediscovering who we really are as the Church of Jesus Christ. This will mean rediscovering what

it means to go against the grain of prevailing cultural winds rather than coveting cultural approval of secular society. Yet this desire to get serious about who we are as the Church, which is called out from the world for the sake of the world, does not need to take us out of the world—to make us withdraw from culture and public life.

**Second, we must re-emphasize scriptural teaching on maleness, femaleness, Christian marriage, and the divine design for human sexuality if we are to have a coherent message.**

We must get serious about divorce and not turn a blind eye to it in our congregations. Our tradition, like the entire Christian tradition, was historically very serious about divorce. We need to think carefully about ways we can return to the traditional Protestant position on divorce, which was simply a straightforward reading of Holy Scripture. We can never hope to be seen as consistent when arguing for the sanctity of marriage against homosexual marriage when Christian church members are divorcing in such high numbers, and we seem to be looking the other way. This seems inconsistent and hypocritical to the watching world,

## THE DESIRE TO GET SERIOUS ABOUT WHO WE ARE AS THE CHURCH DOES NOT NEED TO TAKE US OUT OF THE WORLD.

and indeed, it is inconsistent and hypocritical. It’s time Christians do their part in rebuilding the marriage culture by having strong marriages and exhibiting a stunning difference from the world in our divorce rate.

We also need to think more seriously about how churches, and associations of churches, can provide marriage and family counseling and support to our people who are struggling in their marriages.

We must emphasize, teach, and model before our children, maleness and femaleness and the biblical meaning and beauty of

sexual love in marriage. This starts by not allowing popular culture, secular education, and the secular media to win the hearts and minds of our children. We must break with our increasing desire to remake the Church in the guise of pop culture.

We must continue, strongly as ever, to emphasize sexual abstinence outside heterosexual marriage. But we must not simply say what *not* to do. Instead, we must emphasize that violations of God's vision for sexuality within the bond of marriage are detrimental and keep us from living the good life God has for us.

We need to reinvest sexuality with the beauty and mystery so essential to it. We need to make sexuality special again. Thus, we must explain to our children not just the “what” of sexual abstinence, but the “why” of human sexuality according to God's good design. This is more necessary now than in generations past. Someone is going to give our children a worldview, and it needs to be the church and its Scriptures and its tradition, not this present evil age, which is passing away with its lusts.

This also means we must teach and show and model for our children what it means to be male and female—that maleness and femaleness are not just about body parts. They are about God's unique and purposeful design, the delicate balance He designed for the home and family.

We don't need to be afraid of masculinity and femininity. We need to re-learn biblical models of masculinity and femininity in opposition to our world's macho models of false masculinity and sexualized models of false femininity. It's vitally important not to take these things for granted. We must be intentional and find ways to cultivate biblical femininity and masculinity in our daughters and sons. We musn't forget that without feminism and the flattening of the distinction between the sexes, homosexuality could never have gained such a foothold in our society.

It's vitally important that we teach and model, not only before our children, but before a watching world, what Christian manhood and womanhood look like in the context of the loving, self-sacrificing servant-leadership of Christian men and the loving, nurturing, supportiveness of godly women who follow their husband's leadership.

We must recapture what the Christian tradition believed about being a gentleman and a lady. This will be difficult, because it's thought to be quaint and outdated in our current cultural milieu. But we must be confident in our biblical, Christian heritage.

**Last, we must show the world that Christians are the people who will be most honest about sin and its consequences, but most loving and compassionate to sinners.** When you read what the writers of Scripture and authors in the Christian tradition said about sexual sin, includ-



## WE LOVINGLY NEED TO TELL SINNERS THE GOOD NEWS

ing the sin of homosexuality, you discover they were very serious. They never laughed or made light of sexual sin, including homosexual sin. They always approached it with deep sadness and tears. These tears kept them from being hateful toward the sinner.

Brothers and sisters, we desperately need to recapture this. We need to look back to our past, to our forebears' efforts at what they called reaching drunkards and harlots and making them reformed drunkards and reformed harlots. This manifested itself in homes to help people recover from alcohol addiction, for troubled youth deep in sin, for prostitutes ready to turn their backs on their former ways. If these same people were alive today, they would demonstrate the same love and compassion for homosexuals as they had for alcoholics and prostitutes. They would love them, care for them, and share the gospel of Christ with them.

We lovingly need to tell sinners the good news Paul gave his readers in 1 Corinthians 6. Paul shared this news with those who had been fornicators, adulterers, idolaters, homosexuals, drunkards, greedy people, thieves, revilers, or extortioners before their conversion. He reminded them they had been washed from their sin; set apart for God's special, pure, and holy use; and justified by Christ.

As John J. Butler said in his 1871 *Commentary on 1 Corinthians*, these people were “raised from the depths of heathenism...cleansed from sin...set apart to God,” with all “powers consecrated to his service.” They were “accepted as holy, through the merits of Christ.”

This is the good news we have to share! We must share it, in love and compassion, with those involved in same-sex relationships. And this love and compassion is the only way people will know we believe what we say we believe. **ONE**

# At Welch College >>

## Welch Obtains Regional Accreditation for M.A. Degree in Theology and Ministry

Both of Welch College's accreditors have approved its Master of Arts (M.A.) degree in Theology and Ministry, according to Kevin Hester, Dean, School of Theology at Welch College.

The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), the regional accrediting body for the southern states, reviewed Welch College's Application for Level Change in December. Later that month, Dr. Larry Earvin, Vice President of SACSCOC, contacted Welch president Matt Pinson with notification of SACSCOC approval.

The Association for Biblical Higher Education had previously contacted Welch College with news of its approval in November. In his congratulatory letter, Dr. Ron Kroll, director of the Commission on Accreditation said, "May God bless your continued engagement in biblical higher education!"

With these approvals Welch College has reached a milestone by becoming the first Free Will Baptist college to offer a regionally accredited credential on the graduate level.

The first cohort in the M.A. in Theology and Ministry has begun. For general questions, or for enrollment information, please email M.A. Program Coordinator Dr. Jeff Cockrell at [jcockrell@welch.edu](mailto:jcockrell@welch.edu).

The first session will be completed April 15. The second session of two courses will begin online April 25 and go through June 24, with the on-campus intensive May 23-27. Courses for the second session include *Issues in Old Testament Studies* (taught by Dr. Matthew McAfee) and *Discovering and Communicating Biblical Truth* (taught by Dr. Jeff Cockrell).

"The 33-hour M.A. consists of hybrid courses, in which a portion of the coursework is completed online and the other portion in one-week, on-campus intensive sessions," Hester said. "Two courses will be offered at every week-long intensive. This means those wishing to complete the M.A. in 16 months can do so by taking two courses at a time. Those who take only one course at a time will take 32 months to complete the degree." Free campus lodging for students will be available during the intensives.

More information about the M.A. program in Theology and Ministry may be found at <http://www.welch.edu/masters> or by contacting Dr. Jeff Cockrell at [jcockrell@welch.edu](mailto:jcockrell@welch.edu). ■

## Stevens Wins Steinway Piano Composition Contest

**Dr. James M. Stevens** of Welch College was recently named winner in the 2015 Steinway Piano Composition Contest for his arrangement of the classic devotional hymn, "Near the Cross," written for the intermediate pianist. The contest was sponsored by SMP Press (Sheet Music Plus), Steinway Piano, and Composers Inc. Stevens also received an honorable mention for his original composition, "Silent Stars."



The cash prize includes an invitation to San Francisco, California, where his composition will be performed in concert by one of the Steinway artists. Dr. Stevens's piano compositions

and books have consistently been in the top ten best sellers at Sheet Music Plus, the world's largest sheet music dealer where over 350 of his works can be found listed with James M. Stevens Music ASCAP publishing company.

According to Welch College Provost, Dr. Greg Ketteman, "We are obviously very proud of Dr. Stevens. He is a highly-skilled, prolific composer and arranger who is viewed as world-

class by his professional peers. His continuing professional work provides an ideal context for Welch College students to be challenged as they develop their God-given talents."

Stevens is a graduate of Samford University, Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and the University of Kentucky where he received a Doctorate in Music Composition. He has served as the Music Department Chairman at Welch College since 2004. ■

## Intersect >>

# The Image of God and Why It Matters, Part One

**In Genesis 1:26, God said, “Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness.” Verse 27 states He did so: “So God created man in His image.” This is said of no other creature in the creation account but is unique to humanity. So what does this mean, and why does it matter?**

The image of God in man (sometimes called the *imago Dei*) has been a topic of interest to interpreters of Scripture for centuries, if not millennia. Over the history of interpretation, at least three basic ideas have developed about what this means. We will examine these views briefly, assess them, and draw out the significance the image of God holds for us today.

### What Is the Image of God?

Some interpreters have emphasized that the image of God has to do with humankind's essence or makeup. It is the essential aspect of what it means to be human. We might think of it in terms of man's ability to think, feel, and act, as F. Leroy Forlines has often put it. Man is a thinking (mind), feeling (emotion), and doing (will) creature. These particular aspects of human life are in some way a reflection of the nature of God Himself. He thinks, feels, and acts, and He has made us to do the same.

Others have drawn attention to the fact that Genesis 1:27 says we were made as male and female. They stress the connection between the divine image and the potential for relationship. Man has the capacity to relate to God and fellow humans in a way unique from all other creatures. In fact, such a reality is essentially a reflection of the perfect communion experienced by the Godhead. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit enjoy perfect and unbroken fellowship.

In more recent times, scholars have tried to define the *imago Dei* in terms of man's function in the earth. Two main reasons are responsible for this interpretation. On one hand, Scripture

seems to suggest a strong connection between the divine image and man's responsibility to exercise dominion over creation. Some interpreters even go so far as to say God's image and man's prerogative to rule over the earth are one and the same. Others simply suggest that man has been created in God's image for the purpose of serving as His representative on the earth.

Another aspect of this interpretation cites the ancient world as a parallel. This parallel is the relationship between ancient sovereigns and their vassals or political underlings. After conquering a city and its king, ancient superpowers often appointed their own ruler. These leaders, or vassals, represented the sovereign's rule over the conquered land. Their authority was derived from the sovereign. This situation has been applied to God's relationship with His own image bearers, who represent His rule upon the earth through devoted service.

So which view is correct? Each of these interpretations contributes to an understanding of the image of God in man. God created us distinctly so that, in some measure, we reflect His nature. This fact has to do with our very essence and is not simply a role we fill. Yet God has also created us as relational be-

ings. We are not islands unto ourselves; we have been created to serve God in community, both with Him and others. It is equally important to maintain that God's image enables us to fulfill the unique role He has given us to represent His rule over creation by subduing it to the Creator.

### **Why Is the Image of God Important?**

Answering this question takes us back to the fundamental question of human purpose: why am I here? Or, what have I been created for?

God made humans for the sole purpose of representing His rule upon the earth. This role is not something we embrace after becoming Christians. Rather, we are made for this purpose. The entrance of sin into the world means this purpose has become twisted and distorted. The root of all sin is a desire to usurp our subservient role in the economy of God's rule. We want to take His rule for ourselves. As the tower of Babel teaches us, we aim to make a name for ourselves, not for God (Genesis 11).

The story of redemption is therefore one of restoration and renewal. In one sense, it represents a movement forward toward our final salvation and deliverance from sin. But in another

sense, it represents a movement backward as a return to Eden. That move backward, however, is to a superior reality where the possibility of sin no longer exists.

With this perspective in mind, how extensive is our responsibility as image bearers of the Creator? There is no limit to its extent. Forlines outlines four basic relationships that encompass the whole of human purpose: (1) our relationship with God, (2) our relationship with others, (3) our relationship with self, and (4) our relationship with creation. We often think about the first two, but not so much about the third and fourth. God's plan is not so shortsighted, because it encompasses every aspect of these four relationships.

Redemption is God's plan for renewing our ability to exercise the responsibilities associated with His image in us. As stated in Genesis 1:27, our role as image bearers is directly tied to the following command: "Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it so that you might rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that creeps on the earth."

In the next issue, we will consider further the meaning of this command to subdue the earth. How can we do this in a fallen world? And how does this responsibility relate to the gospel? **ONE**

**About the Writer:** Matthew McAfee is program coordinator of Theological Studies at Welch College. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Welch College, Master's degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and University of Chicago, and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

# Go for two!

## **National Softball Tournament, August 4-5**

Join softball teams from across the nation to compete in the annual National Softball Tournament sponsored by Master's Men. Enjoy two full days—at least five games—of high-impact tournament play.

**Team Entry Fee: \$300 by July 29**

## **National Golf Challenge, August 3**

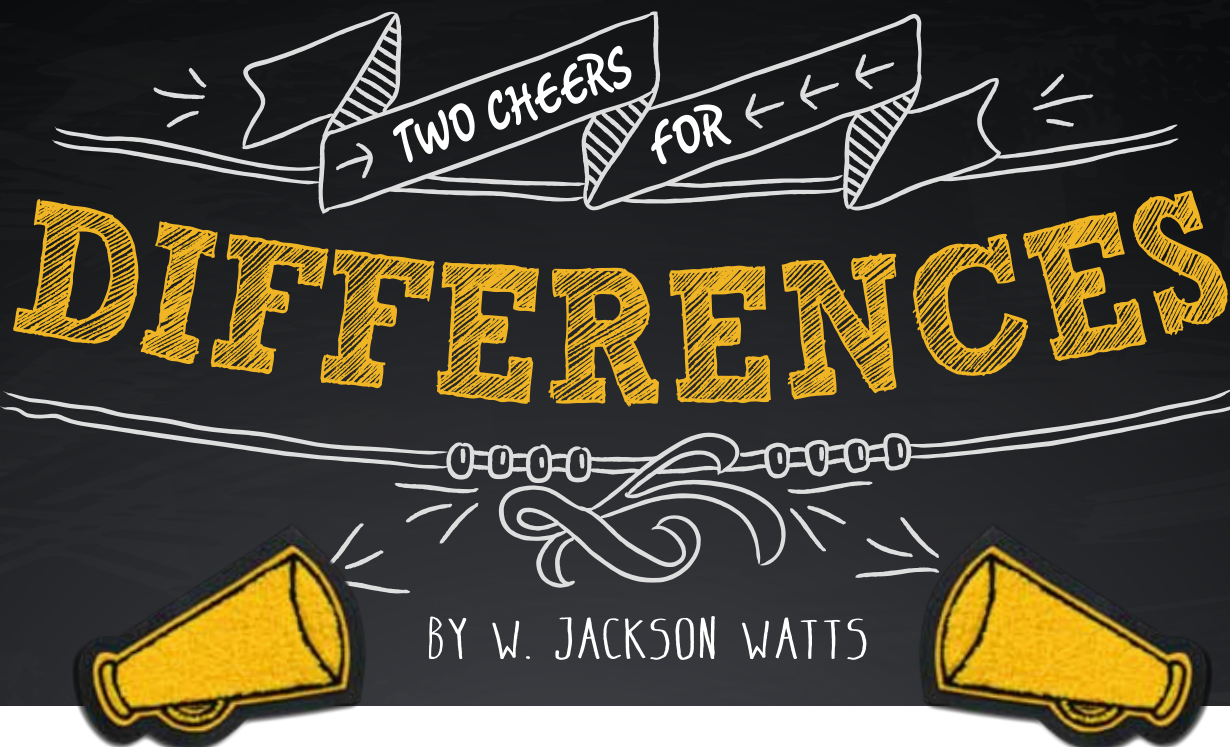
Arrive a day early and compete in the National Golf Challenge at Windtree Golf Course in Mt. Juliet, TN.

**Register Today! (877) 767-8039**

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## WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU THINK ABOUT LEARNING?

For some, classroom images come flowing in—textbooks, dry-erase boards, PowerPoint™ slides, etc. Others associate more on an emotional level. They consider the importance of compassion, patience, trust, and other qualities essential to understanding. Still others are more cognitive or concept-oriented. They ponder the complex intersection of how we acquire new beliefs, recover lost memories, and translate ideas into everyday life.

These are all reasonable associations to the topic of learning. But in such a polarized Western society these “connections” aren’t enough to help us grow disciples deeply rooted in God’s grace. In other words, it isn’t just our different associations with the word *learning* that make learning itself difficult. It is the features of mainstream American culture that make it a demanding task.

We are increasingly told, for instance, that anything is true (if it works for you). It is thought that meaningful truth can be communicated in 3.2-second sound bites. People assume an issue is framed fairly if they hear it on their preferred news network. Needless to say, numerous forces have and continue to hinder us from truly learning or thinking constructively about learning.

## WHY WE OUGHT TO CARE

Despite these challenges, the Church has a vested interest in the matter because learning is presupposed in our discipleship efforts. The word *disciple* means learner or follower. Thus, it’s no

surprise that Jesus’ Great Commission connected the task of “making disciples” to “teaching them all things I have commanded you.” Teaching and learning are at the heart of the Church’s mission and ministry. The word *teaching* assumes that someone has first learned something in order to share with others.

In many respects, evangelicals have taken admirable steps to obey this command. I regularly hear complimentary words from Methodist, Lutheran, even Catholic friends regarding how Baptists emphasize learning the Bible. This anecdotal claim is supported by the success of many Baptist-affiliated educational institutions, the volume of theological literature available, and other measurable data. Yet no single church (or denomination) can coast on perceived success. In the local church, teaching and learning can never be assumed, but must be woven intentionally into the fabric of congregational life.

One aspect of learning in the church often has led to other problems that plague us. It is the value of difference in the task of learning.



## DIFFERENCE ≠ PROBLEM

When someone says, “So-and-so and I had a difference of opinion,” usually this carries a negative connotation. The “difference” didn’t just signal opposite conclusions, but likely marked the beginning of a conflict in the relationship. People of faith are not immune to this experience, because church life includes people (with differing opinions) who make numerous decisions. Service times must be established, small group sizes determined, song selections made, and vacation Bible school dates set, just to name a few. Such decisions may be guided by scriptural principles, but without specific instructions from God’s Word, people will disagree.

Given the 1) countless decisions to be made about the church’s ministry, 2) deceitfulness of sin, and 3) sheer diversity of people who comprise our congregations, we experience difference as a feature of life in the body. And because differences often lead to conflict, we come to think of difference itself as a problem.

I would argue for a way to view difference that eliminates frustration—that the useful and critical link between learning and difference can help the Church navigate often-choppy waters.

## DIFFERENCE = BEING A STUDENT

Explorers have a sense of adventure, optimism, and hope in to do what they do. But they also believe in “something out there,” which they don’t already know or haven’t yet experienced.

Christians could learn a lot from explorers. Too often, after a preliminary assessment of the people around us concludes they’re different—whether by age, personality, or background—we move on to find more “sameness.” We want our opinions affirmed and not challenged. We do not wish to learn a new perspective. The problem comes when this assumes our existing views and opinions are correct. By definition, no one who already knows everything can learn anything. Talk about an obstacle to learning!

Difference is a powerful, seldom-explored opportunity for the Church. First Corinthians 12 tells us that all of the body’s parts are essential to its function, though they are all different. It is precisely other people’s differences—not their sameness—that should drive us into deeper community. Differences promote broader conversation, elicit new questions, and eventually create non-threatening situations in which members of the body discover how they fit together, and how that fit leads to greater fruitfulness for Christ.

Some have mused that if we were all the same, the world would be a boring place. True enough. But if the Church were all the same, we would be ineffective, unable to mirror the transformative, unifying power of God’s grace.

## DIFFERENCE = A FREE EDUCATION

Difference provides a potentially fruitful opportunity to learn because of how we grow. We not only grow by listening to intelligent people, we grow by listening to people who use different words and metaphors, who have had different experiences, and who emphasize some things over others. Listening teaches us not only about others, but also about the world in which we minister. We can discern people’s values, gifts, problems, and patterns of reasoning. In essence, the more we listen, the less expensive our education becomes.

When people are trying to make a decision, it isn’t uncommon to hear them say, “I don’t know what I’m going to do, but I know I’m not going to do *that*.” Absent a solution, there is still progress because a false solution has been eliminated. Learning isn’t just about the acquisition of facts but the cultivation of character. It is God’s truth—whether from the natural world or the Scriptures—informing the mind and hammering away at the old self that creeps back onto the throne sometimes.

People’s differences confront us with new possibilities to consider, even if the most we may gain from some encounters is determining what we’re not going to think or do. Yet this is part of spiritual growth: paring old branches so new ones can grow as nurtured by God’s Word, His Spirit, and the saints.

## DIFFERENCE = GOSPEL-REALIZATION

One of my best friends is a gentleman in his late 70s. We are not only separated by generations, but by health, preferred meal times, preferred Bible translations, and a host of other qualities. Somehow, we have still become quite close. The somehow is, in reality, just the truth of the gospel, which has the power not only to save individuals, but to bring together those separated by distinctions. Even the natural barriers of age, gender, and ethnicity are no match for the power of God’s love.

Indeed, love is the final apologetic, as Francis Schaeffer once said. Authentic love is not only what the Church needs to reach the lost, but to build true community in churches where differences are a fact of life. If we truly are going to learn in order to teach the faith, we must see difference as an opportunity for dialogue and discovery, not drama and division. **ONE**

# ...SEVEN... **LESSONS** From Skydiving

By  
Brad Ransom

**In June 2015, I fulfilled a bucket-list dream and went skydiving.**

*I don't know that I would consider myself an adrenaline junkie, but I've always had the dream of skydiving. I am the father of three boys, and my oldest son has always wanted to skydive too. My two younger sons share their mother's opinion: "Why jump out of a perfectly good airplane?"*

*During a visit to my oldest son's house in Nebraska this past summer, his wife found a "deal" on skydiving, and we scheduled our once-in-a-lifetime experience.*

*The day was absolutely perfect—clear blue skies, no wind, and warm temperatures. We had an amazing time, and I learned some valuable lessons that, ironically, have great spiritual application.*



**First, many things in life don't happen according to our timing.** My oldest son Brad and I have planned to go skydiving since his 18th birthday, but due to circumstances, it didn't happen until just a few months ago... in his 30s. About a year ago, while Brad was visiting us in Nashville, we decided to "go for it" and scheduled a jump at a skydiving school an hour away. On the day before the jump, the skydiving school called to let me know their airplane had mechanical problems. Once again, our skydiving dream was put on hold. We were disappointed, but it was out of our control. Even though we scheduled the jump and made all the plans, things didn't work out the way we expected.

Spiritually speaking, we must remember that our timing isn't always God's timing. We make all kinds of plans, but things aren't always under our control. God sees the big picture, and His plans are greater than our plans (Jeremiah 29:11-13). Don't get me wrong; planning ahead is great. I believe we should plan and be responsible stewards, but we also need to remember things don't always work out according to our plans, and God usually has a good reason when they don't.

**Second, I learned fear can keep us from doing really great things.** Our wives and my other sons all declined to jump with us. I think they missed a lot of fun. I realize not everyone has the desire to skydive, and that's fine. My point is that sometimes fear keeps us from doing things we need to do. God may have great plans for us, but if we are unwilling to leave our comfort zone because we are afraid, we may never experience all God has for us. Often, we fear the unknown, how people will react, or countless other excuses. Don't let fear stand in the way of experiencing the great things God has for you.

**Third lesson learned: when the pressure is on, you can do more than you think.** Many people have asked, "Wasn't it

scary when you were about to jump out of an airplane at 12,000 feet?" To tell you the truth, I made up my mind long before I got to the door of the plane. At that moment, I felt more anticipation and excitement than fear.

What is the spiritual application? We all reach points in our lives when we simply have to let go and let it happen. Ultimately, God is in control of our lives. Why go "kicking and screaming" when we can let go and let God lead?

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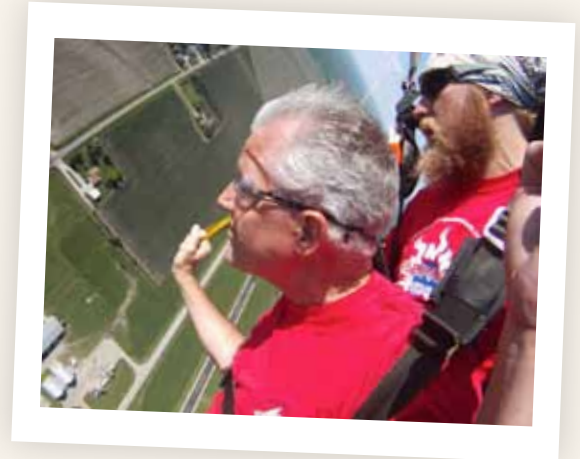
**We all face challenges in life, but God is faithful, and He will never leave you.**

.....

**Fourth, I learned that sometimes you have to put total trust in someone else.**

My skydiving experience was a tandem jump. This simply means I had an experienced skydiver strapped to my back to navigate the jump, pull the ripcord, and execute the landing. I didn't know this guy. I'd never met him before we were strapped together in our harnesses. I only knew he had a wooly beard, and he had done this hundreds of times. Obviously, he was still alive...a great thing for a jump partner!

We received surprisingly few instructions before we boarded the small plane. They told us not to hold on to the airplane door, to keep our heads up and our legs bent backward. The training lasted about 15 seconds. The best





## Don't let fear stand in the way of experiencing the great things God has for you.



option for success in this experience was to trust the guy with the big beard...and the knowledge and experience.

I'm sure you already see the spiritual parallel. God wants us to trust Him completely. He doesn't always give us the details beforehand. He shares what we need to know and asks us to trust Him with the rest. It's great advice, whether it comes from a burly, bearded skydiver or God.

### ***Fifth, I learned the ride can be sickening.***

After the parachute was deployed, the instructor gave me the steering controls and told me to pull down on the right one. I did, and we glided right. Then, he told me to let up on the right side and pull the left one. I did, and we gently glided left. When he yelled in my ear, "Pull harder," I did. Obviously, I didn't pull hard enough, because he reached up and yanked the left cord. We immediately went into a hard left spin. My stomach tightened, and I became incredibly dizzy. Just when I thought I might lose my lunch, he released the cord, and we returned to a pleasurable glide with an incredible view.

I didn't enjoy the sickening part of the experience. I could have done without that tight left spin. It is a good reminder. We have many experiences in life that aren't fun—things we would rather not face again, things that are difficult. Often, these experiences are necessary for us to become the person we need to be.

### ***Sixth, I learned that most of the ride is amazing!***

I've flown many times, and the view from an airplane window is remarkable. But let me tell you, it doesn't compare to the unobstructed view when flying through the air with


nothing under you but wind! The brief, sickening moment was well worth the whole experience.

We all face challenges in life, but God is faithful, and He will never leave you. Sure, we experience trials and hard times, but in the big picture, any discomfort in this life is minor when compared to the amazing things God has in store for our future.

### ***The last lesson I learned from skydiving is that the landing isn't so bad...once you get over the fear of breaking your legs.***

This may sound strange, but one of my biggest fears about skydiving was breaking my legs on the landing. I had seen videos of skydivers landing, and it looked rough. I received no instruction about the landing until the moment before we hit the ground. As we sailed in for the landing, the instructor suddenly yelled in my ear, "Lift your knees to your chin!" I did, and he landed in a run. I slid along on my backside until he unbuckled our tether, and before I realized it, the jump was over, except for memories. In short, the landing was no big deal.

Many times, we chicken out of doing things because we're "afraid of the landing." If we just go ahead and jump, trusting God with the outcome, things work out for our good. Romans 8:28 reminds us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose."

Skydiving may not be for everyone, but the lessons I learned during the adventure of a lifetime were pretty relevant to everyday life. For those who have always wanted to do something crazy—like jump out of a perfectly good airplane—I suggest going for it. Just don't hold me liable if your outcome is different than mine. 



# BACK IN BOOTS:

## Reaching Out to Military Service Members as a Chaplain

BY MARK MCCRANEY

### LOOKING AHEAD, I HAD NO IDEA I WOULD END UP HERE NOW...BUT I AM SO THANKFUL I HAVE!

Growing up, I always wanted to serve in our nation's military, and after graduating from the U.S. Air Force Academy I was blessed to serve as an Air Force civil engineer for almost eight years in several duty locations. During my time in service, I sensed God's clear call to pastoral ministry and began to prepare myself to separate from the military and enter the pastorate.

After much prayer and seeing God's unmistakable providence in our lives, my wife Danielle and I were certain that the time was right to begin that separation process in mid-2002. Shortly after returning from deployment to Afghanistan, I took off my uniform, packed away my boots, and moved to Fayette, Alabama, where I began pastoring First FWB Church. While thankful for the privilege to serve, and for the character it forged within me, I was sure my military days were behind me. I settled my focus on pastoring, but God had other plans for our family.

More than 12 years later, God has brought us full circle, leading us from the military to pastoring to church planting, and finally back to military chaplaincy. Along the way, my uniform changed as I returned to active duty as a Free Will Baptist Naval Chaplain serving in Spain. It might be a different uniform, but my passion for military ministry remains the same.

Looking back, I see God's hand at work keeping us connected to our military roots and leading us toward this wonderful ministry. I had opportunities to speak to National Guard units deploying for service in the Middle East. There were extensive conversations (and maybe a little spiritual arm twisting) with other Free Will Baptist chaplains at our annual conventions and subsequent events. We enjoyed special relationships with veterans in each congregation we served. God's providence helped me complete the necessary education at minimal costs and fulfill the requirements necessary for service as a chaplain. Most recently, as we served on the church planting team at Truth Church



in Castle Rock, Colorado, God brought several young men into our lives from the Air Force Academy and allowed us to minister to them over the last four years. Our time with these cadets clarified our burden for military ministry and showed us our abilities and gifts in that area. We look forward to what God has for us as we serve in Spain.

Even with our family's return to service among sailors and marines, there remains a need for others in our denomination to pursue this unique ministry opportunity. All together, approximately 2.3 million members of the armed forces are on active and reserve duty...with only about 4,200 chaplains serving among them. Within Free Will Baptists, we currently have only eight chaplains—with seven in the Army (Active, Guard and Reserve), one in the Navy, and none in the Air Force. The need is obvious.

As Free Will Baptist pastors on loan to the military, we are expected to remain faithful to the practices and teachings of our denomination. In return, we receive the wonderful privilege of representing Christ within the military by providing spiritual leadership for those of our faith group, by facilitating others in their faith practices, and by caring for all those God brings into our lives. **ONE**

**About the Writer:** Before returning to military service, Mark and Danielle McCraney worked with Donnie and Susan Burke in a team effort to plant a new Free Will Baptist church in Castle Rock, Colorado. Learn more about Free Will Baptist chaplain ministry at [www.fwbam.com](http://www.fwbam.com).



# Significant Ministry

BY RANDALL WRIGHT

*Success often can be hard to gauge or even recognize, especially as it pertains to outreach. Successful outreach in ministry often brings to mind images of large events and measurable results—record attendance at our services, stadiums filled to capacity, altars filled with people making decisions to follow Christ. Certainly, all these things are great, and we want to experience them in ministry. When these characteristics are lacking, a pastor can often question whether his ministry is successful or significant.*

As a church planter; we do many types of outreach and spend a great deal of time trying to measure the effectiveness of each type. We ask questions and make comments that reveal our desire to be effective. Questions such as:

- *How many bottles of water did we give away today?*
- *How many people registered at the block party yesterday?*
- *The couple on the back row is visiting as a result of the mailer we sent out at Easter.*
- *We hung 2,000 door hangers last week.*
- *That one lady seemed really interested.*
- *Two families told me they might visit our service tomorrow.*
- *We had 11 first-time visitors as a result of connecting with the city event.*

The list could go on and on. We are continually gauging the effectiveness and importance of our outreach. Always trying to see if we are making an impact. Determining which efforts have significance and which do not.

Recently, I was reminded of the reality that success in ministry and outreach is not always measurable...or even recognizable. In Matthew 24:31-46, Jesus described the end of the age for His listeners, the moment when all of mankind will stand before God to account for their lives, and will be rewarded or punished. Everyone will be divided into two categories—saved and lost, sheep and goats; those who did something significant for Christ, and those who did not; those who were glad they did and those who wished they had.

One of the fascinating things in the story is that both groups

were surprised at what Jesus pointed out. He revealed several truths every Christian needs to realize, truths that provide encouragement and perspective to those who seek significance for Christ. In his description of the judgment, Jesus revealed several little secrets that help us see the big picture of significant ministry:

**Secret #1** — *There is more to significance than meets the eye.* I would contend that when Jesus commends us for doing something, it becomes significant, regardless of what it is. In this passage, it is fascinating why Jesus commended these people. It wasn't a powerful sermon, a compelling article, argument, or book they had formulated. He didn't remind them of a large financial contribution or hint at an exhaustive list of verses they memorized. Nor does He mention the many years they taught a class, or the attendance awards they had received. Surprisingly, although everyone in history is gathered in this group, He does not mention a "significant" discovery or invention that revolutionized humanity's plight. While all of these things are commendable, they are not the things Jesus commended here. Sadly, the things commended here often are seen as insignificant in some people's eyes.

**Secret #2** — *Significance comes from helping people.* Surprisingly, every scenario Jesus described involved one person connecting with another person. Interaction! To go a step further, Jesus commended the sacrifice of personal resources to help other people. He commended those who gave their food, home, clothing, time, and effort. Their actions certainly required financial resources but went beyond a simple donation. They got involved personally. And Jesus makes it clear that it was more than busy work. Those He commended had transitioned from sympathy to empathy as caregivers.

I recently heard the story of a Jew named Yankel, who survived the Nazi concentration camps. He said:

"You know why I'm alive today? I was a kid, just a teenager at the time. We were on the train, in a boxcar, being taken to Auschwitz. Night came, and it was freezing—deathly cold—in that boxcar. Sitting next to me was a beloved elderly Jew from my hometown. He was shivering from head to toe and looked terrible. So, I wrapped my arms around him and began rubbing him to warm him up. I rubbed his arms, his legs, his face, and his neck. I begged him to hang on. All night long, I kept the man warm this way. I was tired; I was cold myself. My fingers were numb, but I didn't stop rubbing heat to this man's body. Hours and hours went by this way. Finally, night passed, morning came, and the sun began to shine. Nobody else in the cabin made it through the night. They died from the frost. Only two people survived—the old man and me. The old man survived because

somebody kept him warm; I survived because I was warming somebody else."

**Secret #3** — *We all have the same opportunities to do something significant.* Variety. That would be the word to describe the two groups of people in this passage. After all, Jesus was referring to all of humanity through all of time. They were divided into two groups, saved and lost. This likely means they were different from one another in many areas of their lives. Sure, they were different in height, age, weight, and looks. But what about the way they lived? Different morals. Different beliefs. Different priorities. Different goals. Different use of time and talent. Different financial resources. But all of them had one thing in common. They all had an opportunity to help someone, to make a difference. It appears they all met the same people in the same situations. They all had the same opportunity to do something significant.

**Secret #4** — *We won't know the significance of our ministry and outreach until eternity.* The irony in this story is that neither group realized what they had done. They were surprised when Jesus described the kindness directed toward Him, or not. "When did we do all of these things?" they asked. The point is clear. We never know how our lives and actions affect people... and not just people, but how our actions add to the Kingdom of God and minister to Christ personally. It is nice to be reminded from time to time how our lives or actions accomplish something positive. But we won't really know the significance of our lives until we stand on the "right side" of eternity.

**Secret #5** — *Our most insignificant actions may be our most significant ministry.* This story and truth should not surprise us. It seems the Bible often highlights the importance of the little things. From Paul's teaching that a little yeast effects the whole batch (Galatians 5:9) to Jesus pointing out the widow who gave more than anyone else with her mites (Mark 12:43). Once again, Jesus commended actions that were not large or noticeable. But Jesus noticed!

In the Matthew 24 account, the significant ministry these people offered Christ was a small act of kindness, likely unplanned and unnoticed. So it is with us; our most significant ministry usually takes place in the mundane moments of life, and our most insignificant act may, in reality, become our most significant.

I can't help but recall the words of Kittie Suffield from her familiar gospel song, *Little Is Much When God Is in It*: "When the conflict here is ended, and our race on earth is run, He will say, if we are faithful, 'Welcome home, my child—well done!'"

Now THAT is significant! **ONE**

# FINANCIAL WISDOM

From Ecclesiastes BY BRENDA  
EVANS

*I purposely stumbled into Ecclesiastes late last fall because I like irony and paradox, and Ecclesiastes is good for both. The book gets into money, too, and money is always an interesting subject.*

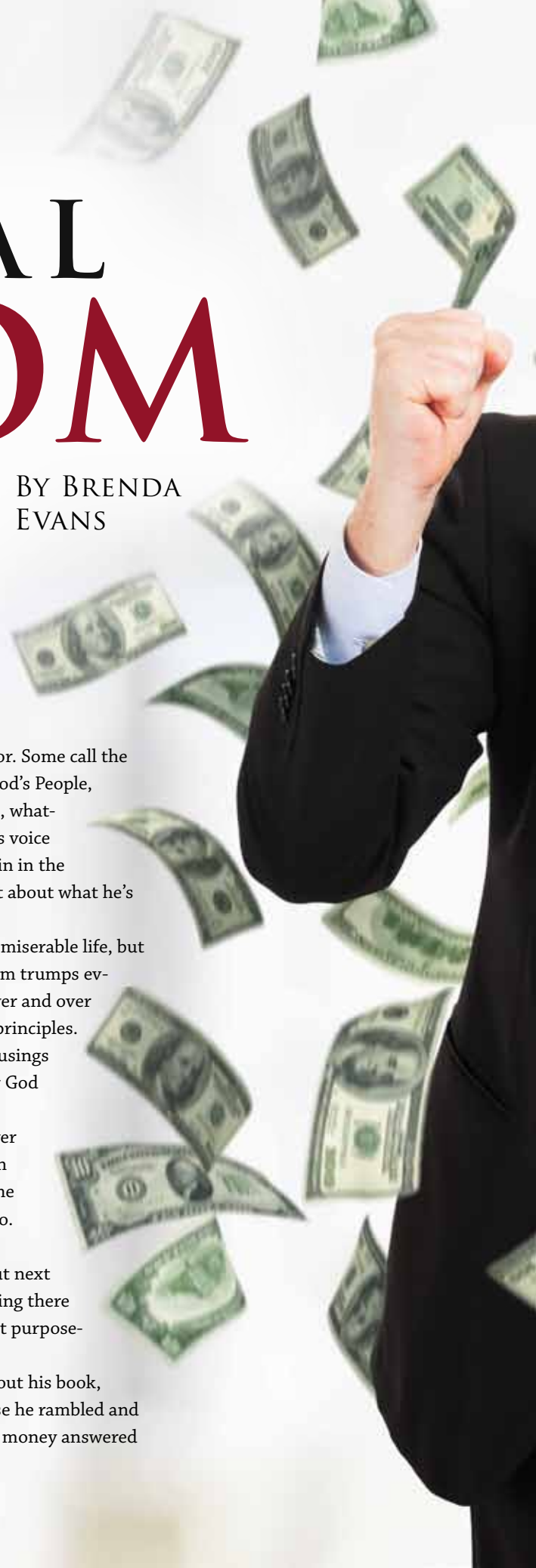
But Ecclesiastes is not easy. I'll not debate whether Solomon really was the author. Some call the author The Preacher or Koheleth. Others label him Speaker, Debater, Gatherer of God's People, but I prefer Solomon, probably because I'm used to it. But I also would suggest that, whatever his actual name, this writer rightly could be called The Experiencer, because his voice is not that of a disinterested observer or a reporter outside the action. He's had "skin in the game" of life. He's been there, done that. Plus, he's often as personal as a memoirist about what he's discovered. I like that.

Solomon's perspective is all over the place. One moment death is preferable to a miserable life, but the next, living is always better than dying. Money trumps wisdom, but later wisdom trumps everything. It would be hard to live in Solomon's brain. He turned a thing over and over and over again, especially examining its underside where he found seemingly contradictory principles. He started skeptical about life with its confusions and vanities. But he ended his musings with his feet planted firmly in eternal truth. Our duty, he said at the end, is to "fear God and keep His commandments" (12:13).

The in-between passages are relevant, too, where he mused and even brooded over the twists and tangles and knots of our human lives. He was up-front about his own knots as well, that the strands of his life did not always lie neat and untangled on the straight and narrow. Ours don't either, of course, though, like him, we want them to.

As I read the book, I thought about the old gold and silver necklace I wear every month or so. When I take the necklace off, I carefully lay it in a felt-lined drawer, but next month when I want to wear it again, it's a tangled mess. All knotted up just from lying there in the drawer. Something weird happens in that drawer, just as it does in life. I don't purposely bother it; I want it to stay untangled, but it knots up anyway.

Solomon knew about these kinds of vexations. In snatches of narrative throughout his book, he related his quest for answers. It seems like a personal human experiment because he rambled and roiled, tried this, tried that, especially material pleasures. One moment he thought money answered







everything. The next, he admitted that when he got it, he still wasn't satisfied. His eye never had enough, he said (1:8, 5:10, 10:19).

The narrative of his quest that picks up in chapter 2 is especially private, even confessional. He sold himself, he said, to self-indulgence in order to test and see "what was good for the children of man to do under heaven during the few days of their life" (2:3). He drove himself into a pursuit of wealth. His verbs tell the story: "I built...planted...bought...amassed...acquired...whatever my eyes desired" (2:4-10). But his collection of houses, vineyards, land, herds, treasures, slaves, and lovers left him disillusioned and empty. He called the experiment a senseless "striving after wind," his favorite metaphor for futility (2:11).

His intellectual pursuits fared only slightly better. He found wisdom is better than either folly or wealth. At least a wise man "has eyes in his head," he said. But even wisdom can't shield man from death, an event that happens to us all (2:14). And after death, he wrote, we are forgotten—an even greater vanity.

Later, he dug into the troubles that begin when our wealth increases. As I write this, a lottery drawing is pending. In a ticket-buying frenzy, Americans have pushed the take to over \$1.6 billion, the largest ever. The media, of course, consider both the frenzy and the take to be top news. One network looked back at five of the top previous winners. Of the five, one still remains anonymous. But three of the other four have been done in by their winnings. Big bucks brought big troubles. Lottery winners declare bankruptcy at twice the rate of the rest of us. But bankruptcy isn't the worst of it.

Solomon must have been prophetic, because in chapter 5 his findings about wealth sounded like that lottery newscast: sleeplessness, excess, discontent, fretting, fear, hoarding, bad investments, loss, and shame. Trouble, trouble, trouble! I'm not going to win the lottery because you know the saying, "You have to buy a ticket to win." But the truth is, Solomon said plenty of things that apply to me anyway—to all of us—not just to those of us whose "goods increase" suddenly because we have won the lottery or received a

big inheritance. He warned we must guard our hearts and minds whenever and however our “goods increase” (5:11).

Four of his comments on what happens “when goods increase,” as he called it, are just as relevant today as they were two millennia ago. **First, when goods increase, so do the number of hands reaching out to grasp and consume them—more money, more spending, more bills, more “friends” with their hands out.** I think Solomon had a sardonic grin on his face when he said that the only advantage to an increase is seeing a bigger number on the paycheck when it passes from our hand to the bank teller (5:11).

## WE WILL GIVE AN ACCOUNTING FOR WHAT WE HAVE AND WHAT WE DO WITH IT.

**Second, when goods increase, so does sleeplessness (5:12).** In *Ecclesiastes: Ancient Wisdom When All Else Fails*, T. M. Moore reminded readers that when wealth grows, worrying and fretting often grow as well over additional debts, how investments will turn out, or whether we’ll have enough money left “to get a little more.”

**Third, when goods increase, so does the opportunity to hoard (5:13).** Greed is sin. It is holding our goods close, not letting go (3:6). We American Christians buy or build closets, sheds, garages, carports, outbuildings, barns, and storage units to store all our stuff, much of which we never use or even remember we have. I know from experience. Last summer, we moved to downsize and downsized to move. Both. I felt reprovved and shamed at all I had hoarded for no reason except the pleasure of having it... another way of saying greed. Much of it could have been helping others, and now I’m working on that.

**Fourth, when goods increase, so does the opportunity to launch unwise ventures, hide money under the table away from Uncle Sam’s eyes and taxes, or bury it so we won’t lose it (5:14).** Anything to keep it and gain more!

Solomon held up a mirror to our hearts and our goods. He showed what money does and doesn’t do; how we earn it, view it, and use it. And when he came to his final word on his human experiment, his quest to test what was good for the children of man, he gave us a bottom-line warning: we will give an accounting for what we have and what we do with it. “For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil” (12:14). And that’s the bottom line. **ONE**

**About the Writer:** Brenda Evans is a freelance writer who lives in Ashland, Kentucky. Learn more at [www.fwbgifts.org](http://www.fwbgifts.org).

# Who will be with your family when you can't?

**Let's face it...** death is an inevitable part of life, and parents who really love their children will prepare their estates in such a way that it will benefit their families and the ministries they have loved and supported throughout their lifetime. After you are gone, one of our representatives will guide your spouse and your family as your estate is settled.

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# Brown on Green >>

## Just Hang On!

The stock market has experienced much volatility in early 2016. At the Foundation, people often ask what they should do. Many investment objectives of the funds managed by the Foundation are long term. We manage planned gifts with a 20-40 year horizon and an endowment fund that theoretically has no end (other than the return of Jesus) to its time horizon. With these horizons in mind, the Foundation has never jumped in and out of the market when there are downturns.

Consider a few events over the last 25 years. On October 27, 1997, a global stock market crash caused by an economic crisis in Asia sent the S&P 500 spiraling down 7% in one day. The market recovered quickly and was up 10% within two months. The September 11, 2001, attacks caused the market to sink 11.5%, but again, it rebounded within two months.

The stock market crash of 2002 was one of the worst market downturns in history. It was a slow fall, as the market declined almost 33% from the beginning of the year until it reached its low on October 9. This time, it took 18 months to recover. The 2007-2009 bear market will long be remembered. Another long drop took 17 months before reaching the bottom, and the market declined almost 57%. It took four years for the S&P 500 to recover from the downturn.

In each of these situations, the Foundation just waited for the market to recover. Many studies have demonstrated that jumping in and out of the market during downturns is a recipe for disaster. “Timing” the market requires investors get it “just right” twice. Market-timers first must sell when the market reaches its exact peak and then time the exact bottom of the market to reinvest. Most market-timers miss both the top and the bottom; they experience realized losses when they jump out and miss many of the big gains as the market recovers while trying to time the bottom.

One of the fundamental rules of investing is to buy low and sell high. Unfortunately, many market-timers will sell late in a panic and buy late after some of the biggest days of recovery are past. This defeats the goal of selling low and buying high.

How you invest depends on your time horizon. Those within five years of retirement should have a more conservative strategy than those with more time. People nearing retirement, with a time horizon of less than five years, should begin reducing exposure to stock because there is not have enough time to recover if the stock market declines severely.

In most instances, though, when the markets decline, and you are a long-term investor, follow the Foundation’s example and just hang on! **ONE**



**HOW YOU  
INVEST  
DEPENDS ON  
YOUR TIME  
HORIZON.**

**About the Writer:** David Brown, CPA, became director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation in 2007. Send your questions to David at [david@nafwb.org](mailto:david@nafwb.org). To learn how the Foundation can help you become a more effective giver, call 877-336-7575.

• **Meet the** •

# TEAM

Introducing the Board of Retirement Staff

BY JOHN BRUMMIT

**At the beginning of 2016, the Board of Retirement office underwent a transition of leadership.**

When Ray Lewis retired, and as I stepped into the role of Director/CEO, the office had to make staffing additions. Sara Poston, administrative assistant, has worked with me in the office for eight years and is an irreplaceable asset to this team, but the two of us could not manage the workload alone. So, we filled two positions: a new accountant to fill my former role at the office and a communication/recruitment officer, a position needed for several years. The board and I decided that this would be the right time to add that position to our staff.

I would like to use this article to introduce the new team members who will be serving you.

**Joshua Eidson** joined the Board of Retirement team as accounting administrator. Joshua is a native of Nashville, Tennessee. He graduated from Welch College in 2007, where he earned a B.S. in Business Administration. Joshua will oversee the Board's accounting/financial operations and will work with our team to make the Board of Retirement as financially efficient as possible to provide the best service to our participants. His work experience spans both the for-profit and non-profit sectors. His varied experiences have broadened his understanding of the accounting process, making him a valuable asset to our team. Before coming to the Board of Retirement Joshua worked as staff accountant for the General Commission on United Methodist Men (an agency of the UMC). He brings almost 12 years of bookkeeping and financial management experience.

Joshua married Rachel in 2006, and they have three children: Olivia (7), Kaitlyn (5), and Henry (1). They attend Cofer's Chapel in Nashville, Tennessee. He enjoys reading, spending time in nature, and obstacle course racing in his spare time.



**Chris Compton**, originally from Greeneville, Tennessee, will head up communication and outreach for the Board. Chris was saved at age eight, under the ministry of Liberty FWB Church in Chuckey, Tennessee. He received an A.A.S. Degree in Radiologic Technology and a B.S. degree in Health Care Administration from East Tennessee State University. He worked in healthcare for 12 years in the fields of cardiac catheterization lab management, radiology management, and nursing home administration. Chris answered the call to preach in 1999 and went on to pursue ministry education at Welch College, where he graduated in 2004 with a B.A. in pastoral ministry. He continued his ministry studies at Columbia International University, completing a M.A. in Bible Exposition in 2007. Chris served as senior pastor of First FWB Church in Florence, Alabama, from 2009 to 2015. He brings a vast amount of experience to our team. We are developing new outreaches within the denomination that are an excellent fit for Chris' background.

Chris married Stacie in 2002, and they have two beautiful girls: Hannah (8) and Kaylee (4). They attend the Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee. He enjoys hunting, golfing, reading, and spending time with his family.



I believe we have assembled a team that will take the Board of Retirement to the next level in financial services for our participants. We exist to serve the members of our denomination. While we can only provide retirement options for employees of Free Will Baptist churches and organizations, we can share many useful resources for the denomination-at-large. Moving forward, we plan to do just that. Feel free to contact our office if we can assist you or your organization. **ONE**

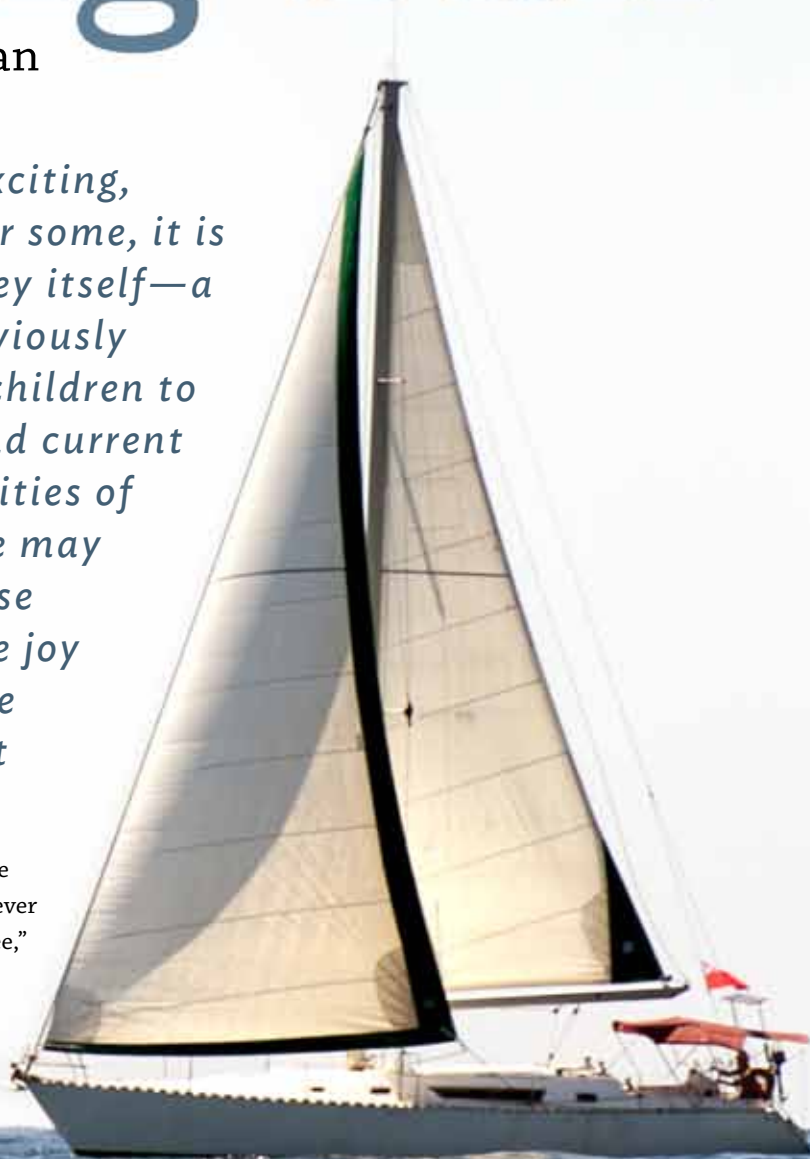
**About the Writer:** John Brummitt graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since the spring of 2006, becoming director in January 2016.

# Setting Sail

By Norma J. Goldman

*There is something special, exciting, about a ship ready to sail. For some, it is anticipation about the journey itself—a new place or country not previously visited. God hard-wired His children to be adventurers, to look beyond current circumstances to the possibilities of unexplored opportunities. We may be saddened to part with those left behind, but we anticipate joy when loved ones return. There is sometimes uncertainty, not knowing what lies ahead.*

In Scripture and in many gospel songs we find these images of a ship ready to sail or already at sea. I can never get far from the encouraging words of “I Will Pilot Thee,” an old gospel conversation between Jesus and someone navigating the treacherous waters of life. “Fear thou not, for I am with thee; I will still thy pilot be.



Never mind the tossing billows; take my hand and trust in me.”

For some, setting sail is a literal reality. Earthly goods and treasures are left behind as a family leaves their known world of comfort and security to begin a new chapter in a foreign land, under the direction of God’s Spirit. Such is the case with French-speaking missionaries Kurt and Julia, empty nesters who will soon begin a new work with college students in France.


For others, setting sail is a figure of speech. They may leave a settled place of work, led by the Lord into a new, much-anticipated chapter of life that will stretch them emotionally, mentally and spiritually. This is the case with my dear friends, Ray and Ida Lewis, who recently retired after faithfully serving Free Will Baptists for 32 amazing years. They’ve set sail on a new adventure of faith—retirement—which will surely lead them to a new place of service.

My own recent “voyage” involved moving from my home of many years in Nashville, Tennessee, where I enjoyed serving my wonderful church, interacting with a much-loved group in Bible study, and writing, my great love. It was a difficult voyage, and I confess I had little joy in setting sail. But here, on the other side, I

have seen God work in so many ways, I cannot doubt His plan and leadership in bringing me to a new place of abundant opportunity.

The point is this: setting sail (literally or metaphorically) is a natural, normal part of the Christian life. Sometimes, we meet our next journey (assignment) with stubborn resistance; other times with indescribable joy. Sometimes, we question our adequacy to meet the challenge; other times we are confused about God’s purposes for unexpected journeys.

John Sammis beautifully described the challenges of being obedient followers in his gospel song, “Trust and Obey.” How awesome is our God who always has our good at heart, who is able to see ahead—across waters, over mountains, and through deep valleys—wherever our travels take us! How generous He is to allow us to use our gifts and skills in new ways and new settings so we might anchor all we are and have in Him.


No matter the size of the ship, the purpose of the voyage, or its destination, if Jesus is at the helm, He promises safety and peace. That does not mean we won’t encounter storms, but it does mean He will be with us through the storms. Who is at the helm of your ship? Do you trust Him? What is your next port of call? Set Sail! 

**About the Writer:** Former magazine editor Norma J. Goldman enjoys a successful writing career in her retirement from her home near Houston, Texas.



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## Leader Profile >> BY RON HUNTER JR.

*Leadership comes in all forms and sizes, but the results are the same. Leaders influence behavior and make a difference in people's lives. Profiling leaders shows a diverse combination of traits, but impacting lives is always a common theme.* 

### Tim Owen

*Describing some leaders requires more than the 350 words found here. Tim Owen is among them.* Through the years, I have watched Tim help people navigate some tedious trails while pastoring, moderating in his state, and leading the Randall House Board. In the midst of discussions (and sometimes tension), Tim remains constant, not allowing emotions to chart the course but wrapping scriptural foundations in graceful responses. One of Tim's strengths is listening, keying in on what matters, and helping people reconcile their differences while finding the right course.



Tim and Karen have been married 35 years. When asked what keeps them connected, Tim replied, "Evening dates are difficult, so each morning our routine allows us to sit together and savor a cup of rich coffee and rewarding conversation. And once in a while, we get away for nice overnighter." Tim's parents provided solid spiritual role models. His dad was a Sunday School teacher, his mom a treasurer, and the whole family was involved in church. He grew up on his dad's peanut farm, learning from his dad and granddad. Tim's plan to carry on the work of the family farm changed abruptly during his sophomore year of youth camp. He felt the distinct calling of God into ministry. He has pastored since 1987, nearly 16 years at Piney Grove FWB Church in Chipley, Florida.

Some people mentor others intentionally, while others mentor through example. Tim has affected young leaders both ways, and our denomination may never know the full effect of his quiet wisdom. He has a calming spirit that leads diverse groups of people in visionary ways. He, like all leaders, knows life is a journey of learning. He admits his biggest failures occur when, "He tries to hurry God, run impatiently ahead, and cut God off because he wants to do it his way instead of God's."

**Tim, you are a great leader! ONE**

**Who's your favorite author?** A.W. Tozer

**What are your top three books of all time? (other than the Bible)**

*The Knowledge of the Holy* – A. W. Tozer

*The Valley of Vision: A Collection of Puritan Prayers* – Arthur Bennett

*Biblical Ethics* – F. Leroy Forlines

**What books are you reading right now?**

*The DNA of D6: Building Blocks of Generational Discipleship* – Ron Hunter Jr.

*20,000 Days And Counting: The Crash Course for Mastering Your Life Right Now* – Robert Smith

*American Institute of Parliamentarians*

*Spiritual Disciplines for a Christian Life* – Donald Whitney & J. I. Packer

**Where are your kids in life right now?**

**Jared**, age 30, is married to Jacquelyn and coaches the boys' basketball team at Poplar Springs High School.

**John**, age 28, is a personal fitness trainer.

**Joel**, age 20, is completing his business management degree

**Jessie**, age 19, has completed culinary school and is pursuing a position as a personal chef.

**What one decision would you like to re-do and why?**

Just one? (laughs) I would like to return to FWBCC (Welch) during 1977-78 and listen with a purpose to Dr. Johnson as he spoke in chapel instead of whatever else it was that I did.

**What do people misunderstand about you?** Just how inadequate I feel pastoring and preparing sermons.

**One Indulgence?** Escape to Mackinac Island, Michigan, which Karen and I do not do nearly enough.

**Paper or Plastic**

*Fiction or nonfiction?* Nonfiction

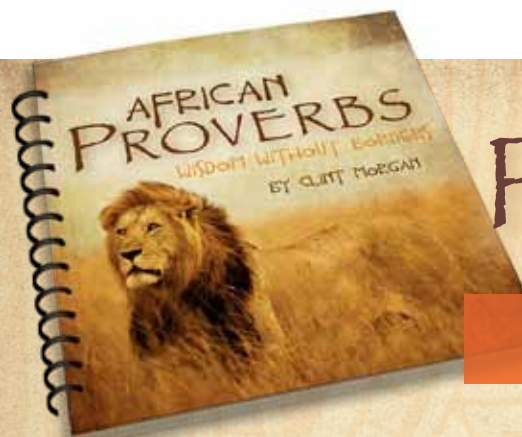
*Music or talk radio?* Music, soft jazz

*Sushi or burger?* Sushi

*Facebook, email, Pinterest, Twitter, or texting?* Texting

*Tie or no tie?* Tie

*Mac or PC?* PC



## AFRICAN PROVERBS

BY CLINT MORGAN

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ROMANS 12:2

BY VERTICAL THREE



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SUNDAY AM



**RYAN AKERS**  
 Minister to students at Calvary Fellowship FWB Church.

SUNDAY PM



**AARON PONTIOUS**  
 Student pastor at the Donelson Fellowship.

MONDAY PM



**AXIS**  
 Bridging the gap between generations and translating pop culture.

TUESDAY PM



**ALLEN POINTER**  
 Lead pastor at Cofer's Chapel FWB Church.

TUESDAY PM EVENT



**I AM THEY**

# About the Denomination >>

## Introducing the 2016 Nominations for Standing Boards and Commissions

### WELCH COLLEGE

2022 **Michael Armstrong** (OH)  
*replacing himself*

**Louis Hatcher** (GA)  
*replacing Billy Hanna (GA) who is ineligible for re-election*

**Wayne Miracle** (GA)  
*replacing Terry Pierce (MS) who is ineligible for re-election*

**Louis E. Hatcher** is a member of First FWB Church, Albany, Georgia, where he serves as Sunday School teacher, lay speaker, and usher. He has been a senior partner with the law firm of Watson, Spence, Lowe, and Chambless, L.L.P., since 1999. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from University of Florida in 1986, and Juris Doctorate from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University in 1990, graduating Magna Cum Laude. He served as a member of the Greater Orlando Aviation Authority in Orlando, Florida, as a legal advisor to management regarding business, labor, and personnel issues; is a member of the Cumberland School of Law Advisory Board, and has been an elected member of the Lee County Board of Education since 2002. He is significantly involved in the community as a public speaker, high school football coach, recreation league coach, member of school advisory councils, and judge of teen courts and school courts.

**Rev. Wayne Miracle** has served 17 years as pastor of New Life Fellowship in Statesboro, Georgia. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies and Pastoral Ministry from Welch College in 1990. He has been both assistant moderator (2004-2011) and moderator (2011 to present) of the Georgia State Association, a member of the General Board since 2007, and a member of the Executive Committee since 2012. He has served as moderator of the South Georgia Association since 1994, and was a trustee of the Georgia State Association from 1991-2004 (chairman, 1998-2004). He has been active in promoting Welch College, serving as the co-host of Welch College *Ignite the Flame* dinners since 2011, and as a regional influencer since 2013. He was president of the Alma-Bacon County Ministerial Alliance from 1995-1996.

### INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

2022 **Greg McAllister** (CA)  
*replacing himself*

**Will Harmon** (AR)  
*replacing Tom McCullough (MI) who is ineligible for re-election*

**Rodney Yerby** (AL)  
*replacing Danny Williams (AL) who is ineligible for re-election*

**Rev. Will Harmon** has pastored churches in Texas and Arkansas. Currently, he is pastor of Cavanaugh FWB Church, Ft. Smith, Arkansas, where he has served since 1997. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Theology from Hillsdale College in 1983 and a Master of Divinity from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a former member and chairman of the Board of Trustees of Hillsdale FWB College and currently is a member of the Executive Board of the Arkansas State Association. He has served in many other leadership positions on the district and state levels.

**Rodney Yerby** is a deacon, minister of music, and Sunday School teacher at Madison FWB Church, Madison, Alabama. He worked 13 years for SPARTA, Inc. in engineering and management for the aerospace defense industry. Currently, he is an engineer/project manager at Kord Technologies. Rodney earned a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering from University of Alabama in 1982 and pursued graduate studies in Computer Science, University of Alabama at Huntsville. He serves as state clerk of the Alabama State Association, as chairman of the Alabama Free Will Baptist Children's Home Board of Directors, and is convention photographer for the National Association. He has also served the denomination as International Missions Ambassador, a member of an International Missions Advisory Council, and as an E-TEAM leader in 2003, 2005, and 2007.

### RANDALL HOUSE

2022 **Darin Gibbs** (NC)  
*replacing himself*

**Timothy York, Jr.** (NY)  
*replacing Tim Eaton (OK) who is ineligible for re-election*

**Toby Youngblood** (OK)  
*replacing Tim Owen (FL) who is ineligible for re-election*

**Timothy York** is a church planter working with North American Ministries to establish a church in Buffalo, New York. Prior to becoming a church planter, he pastored First FWB Church, Decatur, Alabama, four years and was youth pastor at United FWB Church, Dickson, Tennessee, for two years. He earned a B.A. in Pastoral Training from Welch College, and a Masters in Church Planting and Discipleship from Liberty University. He served as clerk of the Kentucky State Association in 2002, and has been clerk of the David Marks Heritage Association since 2014.

**Toby Youngblood** has been pastor of Faith FWB Church in Glenpool, Oklahoma, for 13 years. Prior to this pastorate, he served three years as youth pastor at Sunnyside FWB Church in Del City, Oklahoma, five years at Cavanaugh FWB Church in Ft. Smith, Arkansas, and three years as Vice President of Student Affairs for Hillsdale FWB College. Toby earned a B.A. in Theology from Hillsdale FWB College. He is a member of the Oklahoma Mission Board and former member of the Board of Trustees of Hillsdale FWB College.

### WNAC

2022 **Pam Hackett** (SC)  
*replacing herself*

**Jonda Patton** (KY)  
*replacing herself*

**Lee Ann Wilfong** (MO)  
*replacing herself*

### COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

2021 **W. Jackson Watts** (MO)  
*replacing himself*

# Pre-Registration

2016 National Association of Free Will Baptists

NAFWB | NYC | Kansas City, Missouri | July 17-20, 2016

**One Form Per Person | Register Online: [www.nafwb.org](http://www.nafwb.org) | Name Badges Required for All Convention Events**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Country (if outside USA) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
Church You Attend \_\_\_\_\_ Church City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_

**National Association** (All voting delegates must be members in good standing of a FWB church.)

**Voting Delegates**

- National Board/Commission Member
- Ordained Minister
- Ordained Deacon
- State Delegate (Authorization Required)
- Local Church Delegate (Delegate Card Required)

**Non-Voting**

- Attendee (All Ages, Including Infants and Toddlers)

**Tickets**

WNAC Laughter and Latté .....Qty \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Monday, July 18, 8:30 p.m.

Welch College Alumni & Friends Luncheon  
Qty \_\_\_\_\_ x \$30 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Wednesday, July 20, 12:00 noon (\$35 onsite)

**National Association Info: 877-767-7659 | [www.nafwb.org](http://www.nafwb.org)**

**National Youth Conference**

**Preschool**

- Ages 3-5, Attending Preschool Worship - \$25 (\$35 on-site)
- Ages 0-5, Not Attending Preschool Worship - NO FEE

**Students: \$25**

Any student or competitor\* attending any NYC competition or event MUST pay \$25 conference fee (\$35 on-site).

- Grades 1-3
- Grades 4-6
- Grades 7-12

\*Competitors must pay this \$25 NYC conference fee **in addition to** NYC competition fees already paid to Randall House.

**College Age | Adults: \$15**

Adults attending any NYC competition or event MUST pay \$15.  
 Adult Attendee

**Tickets:**

ENGAGE Student Ministry Luncheon  
Qty \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Monday, July 18, 12:00 Noon  
I Am They Concert.....Qty \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10 = \_\_\_\_\_  
Tuesday, July 19, 9:00 pm (\$12 onsite/at the door)

**NYC Information: 800-877-7030 | [www.verticalthree.com](http://www.verticalthree.com)**

**Register April 1 – June 17, 2016 (postmarked)  
No Refunds After June 17**

**PAYMENT OPTIONS:**

- + Check (Payable to FWB Convention)
- + Visa, Discover, or MasterCard only (both debit and credit cards accepted)

Card # \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder \_\_\_\_\_ Exp \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**RETURN TO:**

**Convention Registration**  
PO Box 5002  
Antioch, TN 37011 / FAX: 615-731-0771

**Convention Questions: 877-767-7659 | [convention@nafwb.org](mailto:convention@nafwb.org)**

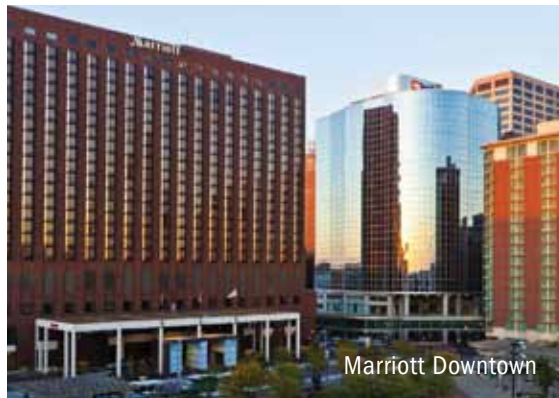
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# Convention Housing

2016 National Association of Free Will Baptists

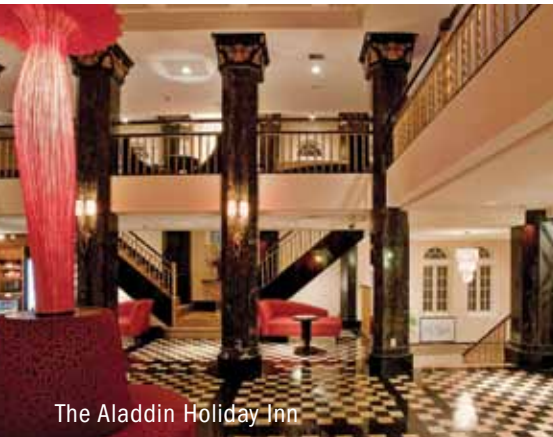
## Kansas City Marriott Downtown (HQ)

200 West 12th Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64105  
877-303-0104  
Rate: \$132\*  
Valet Parking: \$24 per night  
Self Parking: \$9 per night



## Crowne Plaza Kansas City Downtown

1301 Wyandotte Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64105  
888-233-9527  
Rate: \$122\*  
Valet Parking: \$20 per night  
Self Parking: \$17 per night



## The Aladdin Holiday Inn Hotel

1215 Wyandotte Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64105  
877-224-2870  
Rate: \$125\*  
Valet Parking: \$18 per night  
Self Parking not available through the hotel.

**\*Room rates do not include 16.85% tax and \$1.75 city occupancy fee.**



## 1. Prepare Personal Information

You will need the following:

- + Name(s)
- + Address, City, State, Zip
- + Phone/Email
- + Credit Card Information
- + Special Requests:
  - Wheelchair Accessibility
  - Rollaway Bed
  - Crib

## 2. Contact Your Hotel of Choice

- + **Online reservations** will open Monday, May 9, 9:00 a.m. CT (10:00 a.m. ET). No phone reservations will be accepted on this day. Links to online reservations will be at **www.nafwb.org**.
- + **Phone reservations** will open Tuesday, May 10, 9:00 a.m. CT (10:00 a.m. ET). Online reservations are highly encouraged to avoid long wait times.

- + **Group Reservations:** Groups making eight or more reservations should contact convention manager Ryan Lewis (877-767-7659) between February 1 and April 29 for more information regarding group reservations.

## 3. Things to Remember

- + Hotels have been instructed **NOT TO ACCEPT** reservations before opening day.
- + A non-refundable cancellation fee of the first night's room and tax will be charged for any cancelled reservation.
- + Hotel rates do not include 16.85% tax and \$1.75 city occupancy fee.
- + Available rooms may be posted at **www.nafwb.org** for transfer.

**Reservation Cut-off Date:  
Friday, June 17, 2016**

**Visit [www.NAFWB.org](http://www.NAFWB.org) for additional convention information.**

## HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2021 **Jeff Cockrell** (NC)  
replacing himself

## MUSIC COMMISSION

2021 **Donnie Burke** (CO)  
replacing himself

## MEDIA COMMISSION

2021 **Daniel Edwards** (IN)  
replacing himself

## GENERAL BOARD 2019

Alabama: **Danny Williams**  
replacing Rick Cash

Arizona: **George Harvey Jr.**  
replacing himself

Arkansas: **David Taylor**  
replacing Tim Campbell

Association of Mexico: **Luis Felipe Tijerina**  
replacing himself

Atlantic-Canada: **Oral McAfee**  
replacing himself

California: **Rick Scroggins**  
replacing himself

Colorado: **Mark Thomas**  
replacing himself

David Marks Heritage: **Tom Jones**  
replacing himself

Florida: **Jim Christian**  
replacing himself

Georgia: **Wayne Miracle**  
replacing himself

Idaho: **Gene Kissinger**  
replacing himself

Illinois: **David Shores**  
replacing himself

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2019 **David Taylor** (AR)  
replacing Tim Campbell (AR) who is  
ineligible for re-election

**Wayne Miracle** (GA)  
replacing himself

**David Shores** (IL)  
replacing himself

## GENERAL OFFICERS

Moderator: **Tim York** (TN)

Assistant Moderator: **William Smith** (GA)

Clerk: **Randy Bryant** (FL)

Assistant Clerk: **Ernie Lewis** (IL)



## Foundation Trains Free Will Baptist Leaders

**Antioch, TN**—The Free Will Baptist Foundation sponsored training for regional and national Free Will Baptist leaders for the 15th time, January 10-14, in Orlando, Florida. The week-long course prepares leaders for their roles in denominational planned giving, according to General Director David Brown. Participants included (pictured left to right) Mike Wootton (GA); David Brown (TN), Troy Sadowski (GA), Gene Williams (NC), and Barry Simpson (TN).

“We are pleased that more than 70 Free Will Baptist leaders have attended the training course since we began the program,” said Brown. “We continue to strive to elevate denominational awareness about the benefits of planned giving, endowments, and estate planning, and the Foundation has seen tremendous growth in all areas since the first course in January 2002.”



## 2016 Yearbook Now Available

**Antioch, TN**—The 2016 Free Will Baptist Yearbooks have been mailed to district association clerks for distribution of complimentary copies to local churches. If you wish to purchase a copy for personal use, contact Randall House Publications at 800-877-7030 or visit [www.RandallHouse.com](http://www.RandallHouse.com).

Photo: Mark Cowart



**KEITH BURDEN, CMP**  
Executive Secretary  
National Association  
of Free Will Baptists

## ONE to ONE >>

### EXIT 82-B

*It was a cold February afternoon in 1984. John and Kay Metcalf, recently appointed Free Will Baptist missionaries to Brazil, were returning to their home in Tulsa, Oklahoma. A few days earlier they had participated in missions conference services. Following the conference they were summoned to the Foreign Missions office in Nashville.*

While there, they received permission to depart for language school in December. Needless to say, they were very excited. The news was an answer to their prayers and the result of much hard work.

They left Nashville mid-afternoon and were traveling west on I-40 at 5:45 p.m. when an eastbound tractor-trailer rig jackknifed across the ice-coated interstate and collided with their car. Kay (25) and John (26) were ushered into the Lord's presence near Exit 82-B in Jackson, Tennessee. In a moment, my wife's sister and her husband were gone from this life.

That was 32 years ago. You would think during that period of time information might have surfaced that would make sense of what happened. It hasn't. While our family remains unalterably committed to the principle taught in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good to them that love God, we still scratch our heads and wonder why.

Perhaps God will answer our question one day. And then again, maybe He won't. Regardless, He is still God, and He "doeth all things well." So, rather than dwell on what we don't know, we choose to focus on what we do know.

We know God is faithful, and we can trust Him...even when bad things happen and life doesn't make sense. That conviction is what got Job through his crisis, and it sustained us during our time of loss.

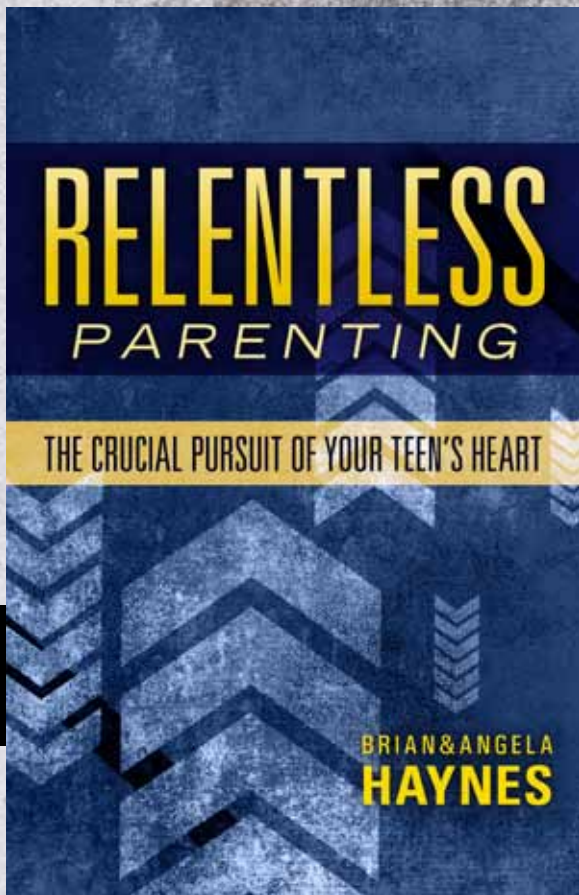
We know life is uncertain at best, and we dare not take it for granted. I'm not suggesting you live your life in fear and dread; however,



you never know when you are saying goodbye to someone for the last time. Therefore, don't miss a chance to share the Good News about Jesus. Take advantage of the opportunity to let others know you love and appreciate them.

We know the Great Commission is still at the very heart of why we exist as a denomination. That hasn't changed in the past 32 years. It is what compelled John and Kay to say, "Here am I; send me." Hopefully, it will compel some of us to consider God's call to go to the regions beyond.

"Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:38). **ONE**



# RELENTLESS PARENTING

THE CRUCIAL PURSUIT OF YOUR TEEN'S HEART

BY BRIAN AND ANGELA HAYNES

Many parents feel frustration and a real disconnect with their teens. Brian and Angela Haynes understand those feelings and provide great insight into loving and leading teens. While it may be tempting to step aside from parenting and avoid conflict, the authors encourage parents to do the hard things. The ultimate goal is to pass on a legacy of faith in God and strengthen the family relationship.

**NEW BOOK** BY BRIAN & ANGELA HAYNES



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**1-800-877-7030**

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- +safe investing
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FOUNDATION

[foundation@nafwb.org](mailto:foundation@nafwb.org) // 877-336-7575 // [fwbgifts.org](http://fwbgifts.org)

*How can she hear,*  
**EXCEPT  
THEY BE  
SENT?**

*Romans 10:13-15*



**APRIL 24, 2016**

FREE WILL BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS  
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