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ONE

MAGAZINE

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OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

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First Glimpse >>>

Crossing the Redemptive Bridge

“That’s an interesting tattoo.”

I expected the same familiar response from the stone-faced young barista at my frequent coffee stop I had received for nearly two years—a grunt and a receipt.

To my surprise, she froze, glanced down at the tiny bluish-green footprints on her wrist, and then looked up at me, eyes brimming with tears.

“I got this to remind me of my baby who died,” she said, her broken voice little more than a whisper. “I miss her so much; I just wish I could see her again.”

I didn’t hesitate: “You can.”

Twenty minutes and a cup of coffee later, I had shared the gospel with her, offering hope for the future available through the Savior who sacrificed His life for ours. While my barista did not accept Christ that day, I no longer struggle to start conversations. She has questions waiting for every latté order, and I trust that, in time, she will follow the quiet leading of the Holy Spirit and place her trust in the One who cares most about her grief.

Missiologist Don Richardson describes moments like these as *redemptive analogies* or *redemptive bridges*—times when a story, practice, tradition, common interest, or shared life event can be used to illustrate and apply the gospel message. While only God can bring such moments to fruition, you and I can do several simple things to make them more frequent:

Start the conversation. Find places to encounter new people. Be willing to go beyond the “Bible bubble” to build new relationships with people who don’t know Christ. Then simply start talking—honestly and with a compassionate heart—and let God lead the way into redemptive conversations.

Be a learner. Listen first. Talk later. Follow the example of missionaries who spend years studying the “heart language” and culture to become more effective in sharing the gospel. Identify



likes, loves, and grieves. Then, like Jesus and the woman at the well, meet others at the point of their need.

Look past the stereotypes. At times, we hesitate to share our faith because someone is too different, too angry, too confrontational, too radical, too alternative, too...lost. And that is the point. In God’s eyes, we are all sinners. Yet He loved us enough to send His Son to provide healing for our sin-sick souls. No one is beyond His mercy, even if his appearance or lifestyle is offensive, even repulsive, to us.

Be patient. For me, it took two years of coffee just to start the conversation. Don’t give up. Even when it seems hopeless, remember, God never gave up on you.

I’ll be the first to admit I don’t have all the answers when it comes to sharing the gospel. But I have made up my mind, when God leads me to a redemptive bridge, I am going to cross it, trusting Him to help me reach the other side. **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 or send correspondence to:

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Letters to the Editor,
PO Box 5002,
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

ONE Magazine reserves the right to edit published letters for length and content.

To **ONE Magazine** readers: Convention Prayer Chairman Tim Hall has coordinated an opportunity to receive prayer updates for the 2017 Convention. Those interested in receiving updates can sign up via email or text message. This will serve as a great way to stay up-to-date with the happenings of the 2017 Convention and to pray for all those involved.

—Ryan Lewis, Convention Manager, National Association of Free Will Baptists

Join the 2017 Prayer Team for the National Association in Louisville

To join via computer, go to:
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IMPACT

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THE NONES

A man in a light blue button-down shirt and tan trousers is captured in a dynamic, mid-stride running pose. He is wearing dark brown sneakers. The background is a plain, light grey.

BY COREY MINTER

Many feared what the shocking results of the May 2015 Pew Research Center's "America's Changing Religious

Landscape" confirmed. The percentage of adults in America who identify as Christian dropped from 78.4% in 2007 to 70.6% in 2014. Additionally, this study of 35,000 Americans showed the percentage of those who claim no religion (affectionately nicknamed "The Nones") leaped from 16.1% to 22.8%.

The seven-point loss of those in the church hurt, but the six-point increase of “The Nones” sent some Christians into a frenzy. “The Rise of the Nones” and other such titles—more suited for a Roman Catholic Sci-Fi movie than ministry-related articles—ruled the headlines. While I never ran across an article or sermon titled, “The End of Christianity as We Know It,” it seemed to sum up what a lot of people were thinking.

Since then, Christians have responded with books, articles, and conferences. Questions like: “Where has the Church gone wrong?” “How can we stem the tide of people leaving the Church?” and “What can I do to keep my kids from becoming Nones?” are asked more today than ever before.

I have benefited personally from some of the resources spawned as a result of the data. They offer keen insight into our culture and churches. However, I have never appreciated the “sky is falling” philosophy prevalent among many Christians who act as though we are living in *A Brave New World* of evangelism. America, as many have known it, may be changing; but sincere “Take up your cross and follow Me” Christianity has never been in the majority. If it had, Jesus spoke incorrectly when He said of eternal life, “strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:14).

In one of his articles concerning the aforementioned Pew Research study, interim pastor of Moody Bible Church in Chicago, Ed Stetzer wrote, “Christianity is not dying; nominal Christianity is.” Stetzer, who has a background as a research director, is faithful to remind us that many have called themselves Christian over the last few centuries merely because it was an accepted, even popular, religion. As Christianity’s popularity wanes, so will the number of those who casually identify as Christian.

Still, the question remains, “How do we (the Church) engage with the Nones?” While I do not consider myself an author-

ity on any matter, especially evangelism, I suggest we adapt a few principles to help us navigate the changing landscape.

1 Thank God. While I truly grieve over those who have walked away from the faith, I refuse to mourn the statistics and percentage points lost. I believe this may give new opportunities for genuine believers who long to share their faith. The mask of faux faith is being peeled away, allowing us to engage the culture in a more honest and real way.

Nominal Christianity has never been good for anyone. It creates a dangerous subculture of cheap grace. It distracts churches with record numbers. It has lulled many church attenders into Hell. If Stetzer and others like him are right in their analyses of this research, we should celebrate authentic faith and “double-down” on our mission to reach the world for Christ.

2 Speak to the person, not the statistic. Facts, figures, statistics, and trends are invaluable tools to aid in modern ministry. A church with accurate, up-to-date records usually has its finger on the pulse of the culture within its community. Records and facts help us plan events and “Big Days.” They aid in building budgets and help focus our church’s giving potential to other ministries. Records and research studies are excellent tools, but they should never become more than that.

I fear the modern Church puts too much stock in statistics. When presented with numbers, we tend to look for a wholesale, one-size-fits-all strategy to reach a certain demographic. I am convinced Christ did not work that way, nor has He designed His Church to operate in that manner.

I understand that for statistical research to be accomplished, people must be categorized, sub-categorized, and given titles within each subset. However, no one

likes to be a number. Nobody enjoys fitting a stereotype, especially in the culture of individualism long fostered in America.

For example, during a recent conversation with several older pastoral friends, the topic of the apparent differences among the generations—Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Millennials—was brought up. Certainly, no one in the dialogue meant any disrespect to a particular person or generation, but as statistics were referenced and generalizations made about my own Millennial generation, I heard my old, inner junior high, squeaky voice speak up, “Don’t label me!”

Ironically, the one thing the Nones have in common is they choose no label or affiliation. They do not want to be categorized. They represent a mixed bag of atheists, agnostics, spiritualists, and a thousand other systems of thought and belief. Each has a story—a reason for being unaffiliated with a religion. Perhaps she has never experienced a conversation with a genuine believer where the gospel was presented as reasonable. Maybe he deeply struggles with rectifying faith and science. Some may have been hurt deeply by a religious person and so reject all religious thought and practice. Many suffer from their own self-righteousness, thinking they do not need faith.

But here is the beauty: the gospel speaks to them all, individually. The woman at the well found the Water she did not know she had been seeking all those years. Nicodemus got hung up on the science of being “born again,” but Jesus walked him through it. The Philippian fortune teller mocked the mission of Paul and Silas until she learned they cared enough to confront her. The rich, young ruler came to Jesus filled with his own righteousness, but he left knowing his life would lead him to becoming a poor, old nobody unless he confessed Christ. To each individual, Jesus and His followers offered a sincere, tailor-made plea to accept the gospel.

One of the worst mistakes we can make in sharing our faith is to speak to someone through our own preconceived

idea of his situation. Though someone may be categorized as a None, it is still possible she might also be a seeker, earnestly looking for the Answer.

3 Reaffirm your call to the Great Commission.

Reports on the changing religious landscape of our country should revive believers' calling to be "fishers of men." With all of our tactics and strategies, programs and classes on evangelism, nothing will ever compare to one person simply sharing his heart and faith with another.

Second Kings 6 and 7 chronicles the account of Israel's most dire situation. Syria had besieged the walls of Samaria, and God's people were starving. When no one

could afford even the smallest morsel of food, they turned to cannibalism. As bad as it was inside the city, the leper commune just outside the gates suffered even more. Four lepers decided to surrender to the Syrians in hopes they would gain mercy. They trekked to the outskirts of the Syrian camp, and to their surprise, they found the outpost abandoned yet intact.

They entered one tent after the other eating their fill, changing into new clothes, and hiding some of the gold for later. After the euphoria died down, they said to each other, "We are not doing right. This day is a day of good news, and we remain silent." They returned to Samaria and reported their findings to the gatekeeper, who told the king, which resulted in all of Samaria

eating their fill the next day.

The lepers in 2 Kings lived out one of my favorite anonymous quotes about sharing our faith with others. "Evangelism is one beggar telling another beggar where he found the bread."

The greatest threat to the church is not the changing landscape of our nation, but our own silence. Perhaps we feel intimidated by statistics or inadequate in knowing how to engage our culture, but remaining silent while the world starves spiritually is not an option. Whether dealing with Nones or nominal Christians, skeptics or spiritualists, objective thinkers or post-modernists, I hope we do not fall into the trap of talking so much about evangelism that we forget to share our faith. 

About the Writer: Corey Minter became lead pastor of New Hope FWB Church in Joelton, Tennessee, in 2014. He is a graduate of Gateway FWB College in his hometown of Virginia Beach, Virginia. He and his wife Rachel have two daughters, Claire and Naomi.

¹ Allan Cooperman, Director of Religion Research. America's Changing Religious Landscape: Christians Decline Sharply as Share of Population; Unaffiliated and Other Faiths Continue to Grow. <http://assets.pewresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/11/2015/05/RLS-08-26-full-report.pdf>. (accessed December 19, 2016)

² Ed Stetzer. "Nominals to Nones: 3 Key Takeaways from Pew's Religious Landscape Survey." <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/may/nominals-to-nones-3-key-takeaways-from-pews-religious-lands.html>. (accessed December 19, 2016)

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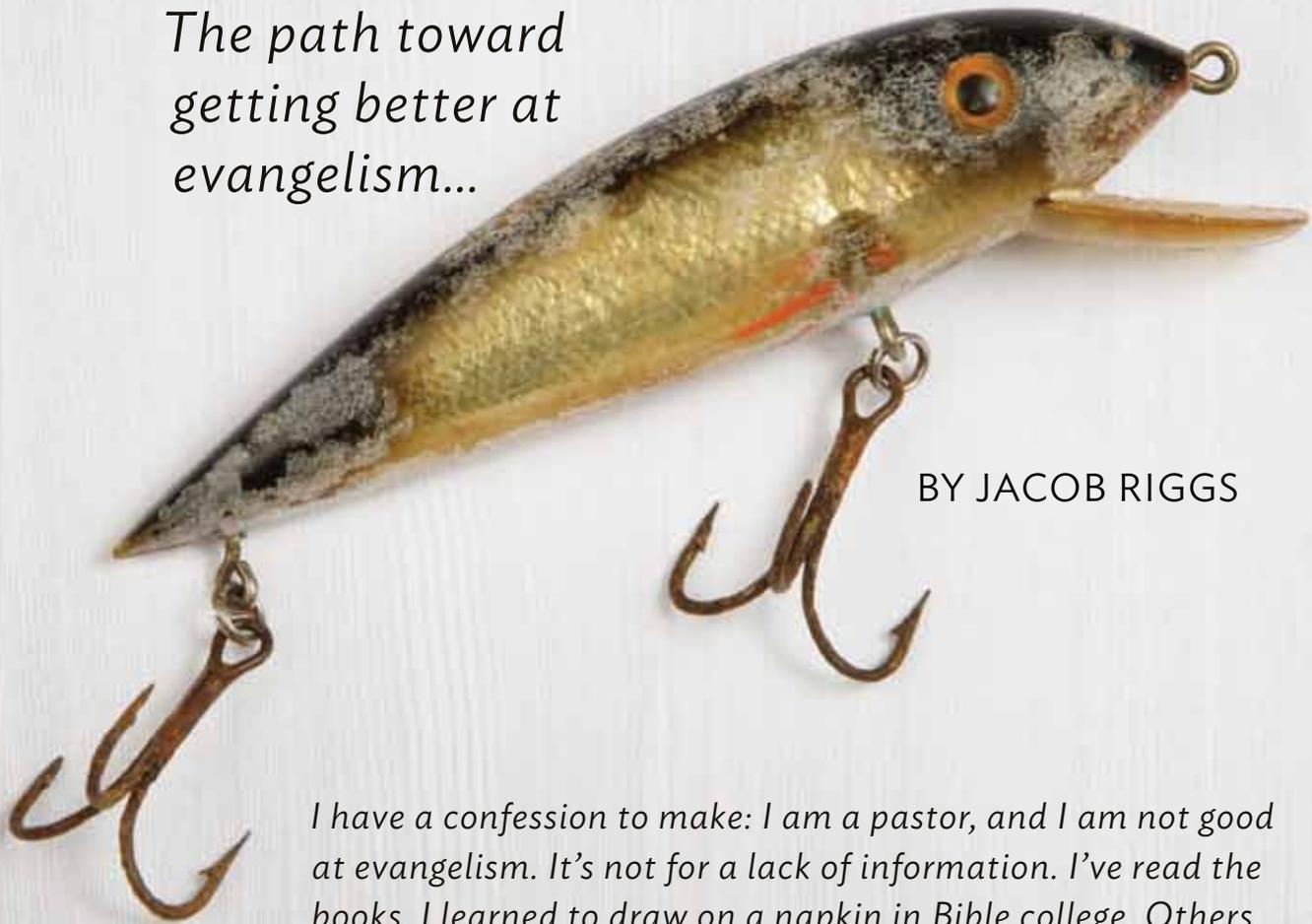


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Becoming a
FISHER
of MEN

*The path toward
getting better at
evangelism...*



BY JACOB RIGGS

I have a confession to make: I am a pastor, and I am not good at evangelism. It's not for a lack of information. I've read the books. I learned to draw on a napkin in Bible college. Others, who seem to win someone to Christ every day, have challenged me. I've been convicted about my apathy for the lost by sermons. But I've never been good at it.

IF SATAN CAN'T PARALYZE US FROM FEAR, HE'LL DO SO BY MAKING US FEEL INADEQUATE FOR SUCH AN INCREDIBLE TASK.



If you're like me, it can be discouraging not to be good at something so central to what it means to follow Jesus. After all, He said, "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men" (Mark 1:17).

Many Christians are like me. We have sufficient information *about* Christ. We have a serious relationship *with* Christ. But we don't make significant impact *for* Christ in the area of evangelism. Often we feel guilty and ashamed about how bad we are at evangelism. In my opinion, the accuser of the Brethren has a foothold in the Church because of this.

FINDING HOPE

Let me drive a stake in the heart of the condemnation you may feel right now and remind you of two simple truths: first, in Christ, you're not guilty anymore (Romans 8:1). Second, Jesus' call for us to fish for men was not a demand to "be D.L. Moody or fail to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." Consider Mark 1:17 again: "Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men." When it comes to evangelism, it's not about where we are but about what we are becoming. Are you taking steps to get better at evangelism? Then you're likely following Jesus.

Personally, I've gone through several steps where the Lord has developed me into a fisher of men. I'll never forget one step when Bert Tippett challenged me as a student at Welch College. Wow, do I miss Bert Tippett! We met once a week or so and talked about my relationship with the Lord, and what steps I needed to take to grow in godliness. During one of those meetings, I told him I had never led someone to the Lord.

Mr. Tippett shared a simple step for me to take. He said, "Start by telling someone you're a Christian." That sounded simple enough to me, but even that step was nearly paralyzing.

One of Satan's tactics to discourage us from sharing our faith (and especially the gospel) is fear. He is hell-bent on crippling us through the unknown. For me, that unknown has always been, "What will people think of me if I share the gospel?" That's what the Bible calls the "fear of man." As a result, Satan had victory over my life for a long time when it came to evangelism.

The fear of disappointing Mr. Tippett outweighed the fear of a stranger's perception, however. So, after work one day, I saw my opportunity in a hitchhiker. We made small talk on the way

to his house while I sweated. "How far away do you live?" I asked. It was code for, "How long can I put it off before I actually go through with this and tell you I'm a Christian?"

After procrastinating until the last possible second, as he opened the passenger-side door and stepped out onto his driveway, I rolled the window down, leaned over the center console, and semi-shouted, "Oh, by the way I'm a Christian!" He looked halfway "weirded out" and all the way confused and, after that dreaded awkward pause replied, "Ssso am I . . ."

As uncomfortable as that encounter was, I took a step of faith that day. I learned that talking to people about my faith isn't scary. Most of the time people don't really care anyway. That gave me freedom.

Another step happened recently after talking with Joe in my office. A member of Central Oaks (the church where I pastor) brought him to me because he heard Joe wanted to know the Lord. Joe saw a baptism at our church and knew he needed to be saved from his lifestyle of alcohol and partying. As I walked through the gospel with him, it became apparent that God had been working in his life. All I did in that moment was help Joe confirm what was already true in his heart and life.

If Satan can't paralyze us from fear, he'll do so by making us feel inadequate for such an incredible task. These crippling feelings of inadequacy are completely wrong and completely right at the same time. It's right because, of course, we are inadequate for such a task. I can't save anyone, and neither can you. We can't even convince people they're lost. But this tactic of Satan is also completely wrong. The question is not whether or not we can save people, but whether or not God can. God is powerful enough to save anyone—and wants to—even when using inadequate people like you or me.

The step I took that day gave me confidence. It made me realize evangelism isn't about me saving people; it's about God giving me a small role with those He is saving. The humbling thing about evangelism is that we are too weak to make an impact. In that, Satan is right. But the emboldening truth that left scales on Jesus' heel is God uses the weak things of the world to confound the wise (1 Corinthians 1:18-31).

YOUR STEPS

All of us in Christ are equally loved and chosen by the Father, but we are all on different levels in our growth toward godliness. (Although I don't expect any of us are as far along as we put on.) Don't expect to lead 20 people to Christ this year if you've never shared the gospel, but don't let the enemy condemn you for it. Ask the Lord, "What step do you want me to take to get on the path of fishing for men?"

Perhaps you simply need to start by telling someone outside church or your Christian circle that you're following Jesus. Maybe you need to make a goal of initiating five spiritual conversations a day. And, it's okay to start with Christians, because it's alarming how little we actually talk about the Lord outside of the "designated" times for doing so, in preaching and Bible studies. Join some kind of class or club or league where unbelievers are likely present. Take a step of some kind, remembering that opportunities and boldness are available for those who seek them.

IMAGINE

What would it look like if you and I lived in freedom from the condemnation we often feel for seeing small fruit from evangelism? What if we saw fishing for men as a step down a path

rather than an enormous, unattainable goal? What if we lived with otherworldly confidence—not in our own abilities but in God's desire and power to save people while using us to do it?

I'm currently praying for friends from India who work at a local coffee shop. I study there several times a week and try to learn their language (Gujarati) and answer their questions about the Bible when they ask. They call me "Pujari," which is a Hindu temple priest. I also play softball with some guys in a very non-church league. They know I'm a pastor and some call me "Father Jake," which makes me laugh every time. I'm prayerful that the Father will use me to lead someone from the team to Christ.

I'm not the most fruitful evangelist you have ever met, but by God's grace, I have had the opportunity to lead a few people to Christ over the past several years. I'm thankful Jesus is leading me down the path to fishing for men without guilt and with confidence in the Father's work of saving sinners. I don't intend to boast; many are much more faithful and fruitful. I simply want to encourage you, whoever you are: there's more room on the "fishing path" if you'll take the first step. **ONE**

About the Writer: Jacob Riggs is pastor of Central Oaks Community Church in Royal Oak, Michigan. He and his wife Lynsey have two daughters: Caroline and Meredith.

Play an instrument? We need you!

The Music Commission invites musicians (age 15+) to participate in the convention choir and orchestra in Louisville, Kentucky, this July. Those with at least third-year skill level will enjoy playing with musicians from all over the nation. If you'd like to be involved, or if you have questions, contact the Music Commission: music@nafwb.org.

**We look forward to worshipping with you
this summer...**

For more information about the National Association of Free Will Baptists, visit: www.nafwb.org



PARTNERS

in the GOSPEL *By Sam McVay*

For more than 80 years, Free Will Baptists have been sending missionaries to unreached people groups around the world. We have seen, and continue to see, a great harvest. As those who have been reached with the gospel mature in their walk with Christ, they come to realize the Great Commission was not just given to the American Church. It has been given to every believer. This realization has led international believers to step forward and answer God's call on their lives to become pastors, church planters, and missionaries to take the gospel not only to the people near them, but to those around the world.

HOW SHOULD WE, THE SENDING CHURCH FOR SO LONG, RESPOND TO THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR MINISTRY?

We can choose various responses.

- *We can say we have fulfilled our obligation, and now it is time to let others carry the charge.*
- *We can say we will let them do their thing, and we will do our thing, keeping everything separate.*
- *Or, we can look to "labor together with the body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission."*

Clearly, we should be working together to do all we can to ensure every person hears a clear presentation of who Jesus is and has the opportunity to accept or reject His work on the cross.



International Missions rejoices in how God is moving to make His name known among the nations. Free Will Baptists have many opportunities to partner with those God is calling to be His messengers to those yet to hear of Jesus. Many who have come to Christ through the work of IM can enter countries where Americans cannot go. Because of political or historical relations, some places will not permit American missionaries to work in their countries. Often, people from other nations can enter those countries and share their faith. We want to partner with these believers to help fulfill the Great Commission. We have Free Will Baptist believers from Brazil, Cuba, India, and other places with whom we partner to answer the call to go and be witnesses of the gospel.

International Missions partners with people in countries where Free Will Baptists have invested heavily through personnel, finances, or other means but today have few or no missionary personnel on site. We partner with our brothers and sisters in Cuba, Panama, India, Brazil, and Côte d'Ivoire, focusing on seminary training and church planting. In these locations where Free Will Baptist missionaries labored in the past, a maturing national church now leads, and they just need assistance to fulfill the task of the Great Commission.

If you still doubt the value of supporting missions partnerships, perhaps you should talk with the young Cuban church planters and missionaries who received their theological training at Cedars of Lebanon seminary. They are now planting churches, going as missionaries, and reaching people with the gospel in every province of Cuba *and* around the world. **Your support of partnerships through the World Missions Offering helps make that training available and helps fund these new church planting efforts.**

Perhaps you should share a cup of café con leche in southern Spain with Manuel and Noemí and hear their heartbeat for reaching North African immigrants who have never heard the gospel. **IM partnership funds make it possible for them to live and work among one of the largest concentrations of immigrants in all of Spain**, building relationships, meeting needs, and looking for opportunities to speak truth into the lives of those they encounter in their ministry.

The pastors in Côte d'Ivoire would thank you for your support. It helps make the Bible institute training possible, preparing these men to effectively take the message of Jesus into villages across their country that have no evangelical witness. During the last ten years, the number of churches in Côte d'Ivoire has more than doubled as these pastors have faithfully proclaimed the message of salvation. **Hundreds have come to saving faith through their ministries, and your support of the WMO helps make that possible.**

If you had a few minutes to visit with Trif and Vanya and hear their stories of life and ministry in Bulgaria, they would thank

you for supporting IM partnerships. They came to know Christ as university students and have dedicated their lives to reaching their fellow countrymen with the gospel. IM partnership funds make it possible for them to serve as Free Will Baptist missionaries planting a church in Varna and sharing their faith with all who will listen.

Just the other day, Trif had an opportunity to share the gospel with a man while waiting in line to register his car. The man recently lost a child and, as a result, became embittered against God. Trif was able to share hope with him (and others in the line who listened attentively to the conversation). **Your WMO support makes it possible for the Bulgarian people to hear a message of hope in what often seems like hopeless situations.**

Through IM partnership funds, Free Will Baptist doctrine and theology is shared around the world through our website, Global Training Resources (www.globaltrainingresources.net). Articles, sermons, videos, books, and other training materials are made available in multiple languages for anyone interested in growing in their understanding of Arminian theology. **People worldwide are signing up for this free resource made possible by your support of WMO.**

Our partnership with International Training Alliance (ITA) has helped make it possible to train almost 25,000 leaders from around the world. The Leadership Matters Course (LMC) is now being taught in Spanish, French, and English with some elements of the course offered in the Khmer language. We are thankful **Free Will Baptists have the opportunity to impact Christian leaders around the world through the work of ITA.**

It is exciting to see the growth of seminary training in Panama. This past year saw the highest number of students in the history of the seminary. These pastors and church leaders are training to serve churches without pastors and to start new churches in areas with no evangelical witness. The goal is to start churches in every province of Panama. Your support of the WMO and partnership ministries makes this training possible.

Partnership funds in Brazil allow us to help with a church planting effort in an area with no evangelical church and to support a Brazilian missionary working among Turks and Syrian refugees in Turkey. Praise the Lord for the way He is calling out workers from around the world to go into the harvest.

Russian pastors and church planters are trained each year at the Bible institute to become more effective in their ministry in Russia. **Partnership funds make it possible to provide biblical training that would not be available otherwise.** A new generation of Russian Christian leaders are answering God's call on their lives, and Free Will Baptists have the privilege of providing them with training to lead the evangelical church in Russia and impact that country for the cause of Christ.

Our partnership in Central Asia makes it possible not only to train pastors and church leaders to carry the gospel to the countries in that region, but provides hope to many helpless individuals caught up in the clutches of sin. It is rewarding to work with the Hope Centers to provide basic needs for people who could easily be snared again by the drug and human trafficking trade. **Hundreds of lives have been saved and changed as a result of this partnership.**

Free Will Baptists have served longer in India than any other country. Today, partnership funds help make it possible for hundreds of pastors to plant and lead churches across that needy area of the world. Many faithful pastors labor despite the peril of losing their lives, as the enemy would love to destroy and discourage. Praise the Lord, the work continues and is growing through their faithful witness. **Pray the funds will be sufficient to continue to provide these church planters with what they need to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.**

As you can see, God is blessing everywhere we partner with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission. People are being saved, trained, and sent out into the harvest, many times, across borders and cultures. **Your investment in the WMO and these partnerships is reaping eternal dividends.** Only

eternity will reveal all that has been accomplished as a result of our partnerships with God's people to reach the lost with the message of salvation.

Our missionaries are laboring faithfully to share the gospel with those who have never heard. We are blessed and thankful to have such dedicated and committed workers. God is building His Church, and He is using Free Will Baptists to do it. Many of our missionaries labor under the strain of underfunded accounts. **Your gifts to the WMO help strengthen these accounts and relieve the stress of not having sufficient funds.** Please demonstrate your support for our missionaries and their efforts as you obediently and generously give so they can stay focused on reaching the lost and discipling new believers. Once our partnership budgets are funded, all additional funds will be divided with 60% going to deficit and underfunded missionary accounts and 40% into the general fund.

I trust you rejoice with me in all that God is doing around the world. What a privilege He gives us to be a part of His work! Would you commit to pray for our partnership ministries? Then, would you please ask God to help you give generously to International Missions to support this year's WMO? I know God will bless your obedience and faithful support. **ONE**

About the Writer: Sam McVay is director of church relations for Free Will Baptist International Missions. Learn more: www.FWBGO.com.

The 2017 WMO will fund: **Partnership budgets** – approximately \$400,000



60¢ to underfunded missionary accounts **40¢** to general fund

A vital part of our financial plan, **the WMO impacts every country where IM ministers**, whether directly or indirectly. Partnership funding primarily supports seminary and Bible institute training to provide leaders for the future and sponsors evangelistic efforts through overseas church planters.



Learn more: FWBGO.com/wmo

A

Missions-First

POLICY

By
Clint
Morgan

Just outside Greenville, North Carolina, where Mills Road and Ivy Road intersect, a small white building sits alone. At first glance, you might think this is a country store, and it was at one time. But a closer look reveals this store has a steeple. The sign out front reads Cedar Chapel Free Will Baptist Church.

Reverend Mike Brown and his wife Peggy have ministered to this congregation for 20 years. Cedar Chapel was founded in 1992. Two pastors served before the Browns arrived in 1995. The small country church is unique in many ways, but three factors stand out. First, the congregation is largely made up of people from challenging economic situations. No wealthy members attend the church. Second, the church has never grown above 55 members due to the transient nature of many of the congregants. And third, one that touches us at International Missions, is this church averages around \$400 a month in giving to world outreach.

This third element is due primarily to the leadership of Mike and Peggy. When Mike accepted the role of pastor at Cedar Chapel, he told the church he would only accept the call if they “pledged to give 10% of all income to missions.” He went on to say the priority in church spending would be “pay our bills, give to missions, and then pay the pastor’s salary.” The church has kept that pledge for 20 years and will continue to do so as long as Mike remains.

We would probably be humbled if we knew how often the pastor has not received his salary, in part or whole, because no money was left after paying the bills and giving to missions. This is certainly an example of sacrificial giving on behalf of this pastor and his wife.

The members of the church have limited income potential, but they have clear stewardship priorities. In addition to giving 10% to missions, they also support several other ministries like Gideon’s International, Samaritan’s Purse, an orphanage, and others.

Mrs. Hilda, a charter member of Cedar Chapel, says, “Our pastor encourages us to give. Most of the members have not been in church most of their lives like I have, but he teaches them and they give. I am the treasurer of the church, and I can tell you Pastor Mike insists I send the money to missions before he gets his salary. He truly has a heart for missions.”

It is nothing short of inspiring that this small congregation does what it does for missions. The answer lies in the leadership of the pastor. Mike and Peggy have set the example and led the church to give to world outreach, even out of their limited resources. They are to be sincerely thanked and honored for their unwavering commitment to fulfilling the Great Commission, both in Jerusalem and the uttermost parts of the world. **ONE**

**About the Writer:**

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

Around the World >>

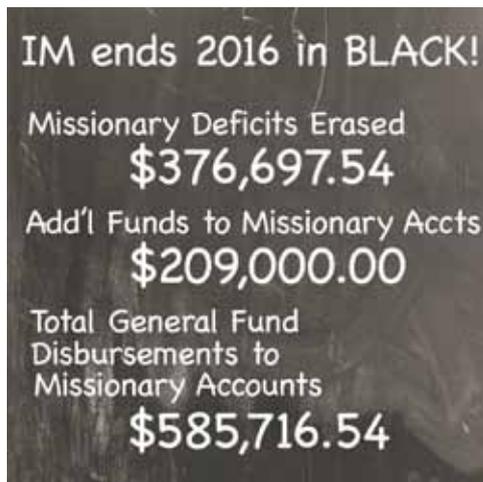
IM Finishes Year In Black, Erases Missionary Account Deficits

Antioch, TN—“I closed the books on 2016 with great joy,” IM’s CFO Rob Conley stated with a smile. “Not only were general fund needs met; they were exceeded. It was downright fun to sit with Clint Morgan and, one-by-one, erase missionary account deficits and seed those accounts with a balance for 2017.”

At the 2016 National Association of Free Will Baptists in Kansas City, Missouri, General Director Clint Morgan promised if general fund giving exceeded general fund needs, missionary accounts would reap the benefits. “We know the transition from generalized giving to designated giving will take time to implement,” Morgan said. “We want our missionaries to succeed, and we will do all we can to help them.”

As the books closed, Clint rejoiced: “After six years of struggling financially, we celebrate the generosity of Free Will Baptists! These undesignated gifts allowed us to allocate funds to deficit missionary accounts.” Deficit missionary accounts received a total of \$376,697.54 across 17 accounts.

After receiving news from Rob Conley concerning the benefit to their account, Ruth McDonald wrote, “This miracle occurred because of the sacrificial gifts of God’s people throughout the year...It was also because of the one-time generous ‘bailout’... to bring us out of the deficit...God is great. His people are still listening to and obeying



His Spirit’s call. We are blessed.”

Erasing missionary account deficits allowed missionaries to begin 2017 with a clean slate. However, these accounts were in deficit because they had been underfunded. An additional \$209,000 was pulled from the general fund and distributed across missionary accounts, providing missionaries with a cash balance to begin 2017. “As you hear about missionaries needing additional support, please prayerfully consider who you can support monthly, consistently,” pled General Director Morgan. “We can prevent future deficits. I have no doubt Free Will Baptists can fully fund the general fund and missionary accounts. Ask God what He would have you do, and do it.”

Morgan stressed the importance of the

general fund saying, “One of the strategic challenges we presented in Kansas City dealt with the need for our cash reserves to rise above 20% of our budget. These funds are set aside to offset potential challenges demanding a quick, immediate financial outflow over a short period of time.” Analysts recommend non-profits have three to six months of budgeted expenses in cash reserves. The 20% cash reserves for IM only cover 73 days, or two and a half months, of expenses.

“Even as we rejoice over ending the year in the black, I’m reminded that during the last six years we cut ministry expenses just to keep missionaries in their countries. Some missionaries probably felt like they were laboring with one arm tied behind their backs,” Conley acknowledged. “We hope 2017 funding allows us to restore those mission-critical ministries to missionary budgets. God is doing great things in the lives of people all over the world. How many more lives can be impacted with the truths of the gospel when ministry budgets enable effective outreach? We need people to pray, work, and give to restore mission-critical ministries.”

Faithful monthly support to all accounts, general and missionary, will allow the Mission to function properly. As the Mission functions properly, the gospel is shared, men and women accept Christ as Savior, families are changed, believers are disciplined, churches multiply, and God is glorified.

International Missions | Deficit Accounts | February 2017

Antioch, TN—The following missionary accounts remain underfunded and in need of additional monthly support. Give to one or more of these accounts today at fwbgo.com/give.

Balances as of February 28, 2017, reveal the following deficit accounts:

Anthony & Lea Edgmon..... \$(3,835.03)
Nathan & Linda Snow \$(2.28)

Though not deficit, the following account balances are extremely low and in need of additional support:

Don & Ruth McDonald.....	\$313.18	David & Angie Outlaw	\$6,726.85
Rusty & Brenda Carney.....	\$2,592.60	Dennis & Carol Teague	\$7,430.90
Tyler & Kellie Penn.....	\$3,235.13	Jerry & Barbara Gibbs.....	\$8,110.38
Kenneth & Rejane Eagleton.....	\$4,447.77	Tim & Lydia Awtrey.....	\$9,784.33
Dale & Sandra Bishop.....	\$4,769.73	Matt & Cristina Price	\$12,824.65
Neil & Mandi Morgan.....	\$6,448.37	India Ministries/Carlisle Hanna.....	\$23,821.06

Snapshots Around the World

Spain—During the Christmas holidays, the Alpedrete Church sang Christmas carols in five nursing homes and senior citizen centers in the community. “Each time we sang together,” wrote Kristi Johnson, “we not only felt inspired by good will, but we knew we were sharing the good news of Jesus’ birth with many people who needed to hear it.”

Panama—The Panamanian National Association of FWB Churches held their annual Convention on the Chame Bible institute campus January 7- 8. Regional Director Kenneth Eagleton attended and met with the Executive Committee and the Ordination Council to discuss the partnership between International Missions and the Association. As the IM representative, Kenneth confirmed IM’s 2017 partnership through sending an E-TEAM, sending teachers to help with the seminary, and helping with the expenses of maintaining the seminary and some of the church-planting projects. Photo: Kenneth Eagleton



Côte d’Ivoire—Eight people were baptized at the FWB Church in Tiassalé, Côte d’Ivoire (Ivory Coast), Africa, on Christmas Eve. Emmanuel Tamignon, pastor of the church, is a recent graduate of the Bible institute. The church began a few years ago when Dibé Emmanuel, a FWB nurse who works for the government, was transferred to the city. He began witnessing in the city, won a few people to the Lord, and started a church in his home. The work has grown and they have now called a pastor to lead the church. Photo: Pastor Paul Amiezi



Brazil— The Jaraguá FWB Church, in Uberlândia, Brazil, sponsored a pre-teen camp in December. According to Pastor Sérgio Lira, 20 campers participated and five adults helped out. Three of the youth made salvation decisions. Photo: Sérgio Lira



Japan— Moms and children connected to Good News Chapel (Tokyo) participated in the Christmas party for the Good News Kids ministry on Wednesday, December 21. A host of kids (17) and their moms made a craft about the Nativity scene, sang Christmas songs (with Katie Speer), participated in games, and interacted with the Christmas story with Ruth McDonald. “It was a wonderful opportunity to plant the gospel story in the hearts of both moms and their children,” stated Ruth. Photo: Ruth McDonald



Panama— The Free Will Baptist Bible institute in Chame, Panama, graduated five students in December. One student graduated from the three-year program and four students completed the one-year program. Photo: Alfredo Beach



COMING **FULL** CIRCLE

*By
Elizabeth
Hodges*

WNAC began in 1935 with a burden and a passion for reaching the lost.

This passion continues today. The prayer and financial support of Free Will Baptist women is crucial for our missionaries, and Free Will Baptist women do their part well. Often, we hear “full-circle stories” in relation to Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes. These excite and thrill us, when we have opportunity to see the “other side” of our contribution.

How much more exciting to hear one such story from Free Will Baptist missions!

In 1966, Free Will Baptist missionaries went to France to share the gospel in a country where little evangelical work existed. For more than 50 years, Free Will Baptists have been faithful to pray, give, and go to this hard place where harvests do not come quickly, but God's timing is always perfect. Let me explain.

During their time in France, missionaries Jerry and Barb Gibbs were able to reach the LeLouarn family. Today, two of their five children—Lydie (now Teague) and Myriam—serve with Free Will Baptist International Missions as missionaries to their own country. Several months ago, I received a Facebook message from Lydie. She serves in France in the JPense ministry, along with her second-generation missionary husband Joel (son of Dennis and Carol Teague). Their ministry is geared to 18- to 25-year-olds searching for...something. They answer their hard questions, first individually, and then more in-depth in small group discussions. Lydie has been very involved in the translation of the discipleship materials used for this small group ministry. Imagine my excitement as I read the following message from Lydie, and a full-circle story unfolded before my eyes.

Hi Elizabeth,

How are you? I'm writing to you concerning our brothers and sisters in Ivory Coast. Why would a French girl need to talk about Ivory Coast?

About nine months ago, I met a Free Will Baptist man from Ivory Coast at Robert Bryan's house in France. I gave him some of the discussion books we use in the JPense ministry that have been translated into French. And a week ago, I met this man's pastor at a missionary retreat. He told me they were excited to start a new ministry among college students in Abidjan who have many questions about Christianity. He told me they needed ten books of each of the seven books we have translated, along with ten leader's guides. This represents 80 books in total, so a cost of \$742.

Our new French believers and JPense team would love to help pay for them to have the books. But I don't think it will be enough. So, I was wondering if WNAC would want to be a part of launching this new ministry in Abidjan, or if you knew someone who would. I'm very excited about that, because I've never seen people coming to the Lord as much as when I used those discussion books in France!

Thank you already for reading me. Here is a picture of one of the books. Don't hesitate to ask any questions.

God bless you, Lydie



Yes...Yes...and YES! WNAC is thrilled to partner in this effort. We are so appreciative to be part of this opportunity. I am grateful Lydie asked, and my heart rejoiced on many levels.

I am thankful for the many faithful servants who answered God's call to carry His gospel to Ivory Coast and France. Today, long after those missionaries left Africa, the work continues to thrive under national leadership. Deep friendships were forged and continue to bear fruit, while former missionaries to Africa continue serving faithfully in France. Only God could orchestrate the events that followed:

FIRST, an Ivorian believer visits those former missionaries to Africa—Robert and Judy Bryan—and learns of the Teagues' discipleship materials for college-age students who have questions concerning Christianity. He understands how effective those materials could be in Abidjan among the many university students there.

SECOND, the man's pastor and the Teagues are in the U.S. at the same time, attending an International Missions retreat. Another connection is made in this story. Pastor Silas is excited about starting a JPense-styled ministry in Abidjan.

THIRD, God burdens Lydie's heart for the new believers in France to help jumpstart this ministry among Ivorian seekers. They just need a little help. So, she turns to WNAC.

FOURTH? Due to the faithfulness of the women of WNAC, the funds were available, and the books have been purchased. It will be thrilling to watch this ministry develop among the Ivorian young people. Will you pray for those leading this effort? Will you pray for Lydie and Joel as they mentor and encourage Ivorians through their ministry. Will you pray for souls of the Ivorian students whose eternity may be changed? Will you help us continue to bring this story full circle?

Thank You, Father, for the opportunity to help encourage French believers in France and Côte d'Ivoire. Thank you for faithful women who give sacrificially so needs can be met. May the ministry in Abidjan yield eternal results in such a way that only You can receive the honor and glory. Amen ONE

About the Writer: Elizabeth Hodges is director of Women Nationally Active for Christ. Read more: www.WNAC.org.

"COME OVER AND HELP US!"

By Elizabeth Hodges



In mid-September, I listened as Regional Director Kenneth and Rejane Eagleton shared about God's work during their most recent term of service. My heart rejoiced at the various ministry opportunities around the world. Having recently been in Côte d'Ivoire, my ears perked up when he announced a Cuban medical team was prepared to go and serve at the hospital in Doropo. However, this team of four—a medical doctor, his lab-tech wife, their teenage son, and an X-ray/ultrasound technician—did not have the funds to purchase airline tickets.

The hospital in Doropo has been understaffed since the civil war in Côte d'Ivoire stretched from 2002-2007. The need for medical care among the Lobi people is great. Having seen the small clinic staff try to meet the vast needs firsthand, I felt as though it was another "Macedonian call."

During a break, I asked Kenneth for an estimate of the cost for the travel. After research, he told me the tickets would cost \$10,000. Fast-forward several weeks. During our annual meeting, I shared this need with the WNAC Board. Tracy Payne, president of Oklahoma WAC, said she would present the need as a project for the coming year at her state meeting the very next week.

God had orchestrated the schedules of two Ivorian pastors, who also attended the Oklahoma state meeting during their visit to the States. Pastor Samuel brought greetings to the Oklahoma ladies and thanked them for helping provide a national retreat for the Ivorian women. International guests cannot attend every state meeting, and it was such a blessing for the Oklahoma women to meet these two Ivorian pastors, hear their report about the Ivorian retreat and the Camp for Women of the Good News, and to partner in sending the Cuban medical team to the Doropo clinic.

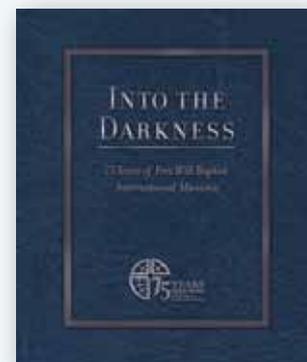
Once again, God has brought Free Will Baptist missions full circle. In 1941, Tom and Ma-

bel Willey went to Cuba. "The field seemed so ripe. Churches were planted. Missions started. The gospel spread, and missionaries were excited. The first Cuban Association of Free Will Baptists was formed. God was certainly working there. But evil lurked around the corner" (*Into the Darkness*, page 44). In the early 1960s, in the onslaught of Fidel Castro's overthrow of the island nation, the missionaries had to leave. Still, the church flourished. More than 13,000 Free Will Baptists now gather each week to worship in Free Will Baptist churches. And the Cuban Association, once a mission field, is now sending missionaries into the uttermost parts of the world.

An ocean away, in 1956, Free Will Baptist missionaries ventured into The Dark Continent. Free Will Baptist medical missions work began in January 1962 when Dr. LaVerne Miley and his family arrived in Doropo. God performed miracle after miracle, providing facilities and medicine and, ultimately, thousands of lives were changed by the good news of Christ (*Into the Darkness*, pages 73-79). The medical ministry thrived under the leadership of doctors Paul Gentuso, Mark Paschall, and Kenneth Eagleton. Then, in 1998, national workers took full responsibility for the ministry and staffing of the clinic. After the devastation of the civil war, however, the hospital needs to be refurbished and restaffed. God has prepared and called His servants in Cuba.

Another Macedonian call has been uttered. "Will you help the Cuban medical team get to Africa?" Absolutely!

Oklahoma women jumpstarted the efforts of WNAC, and as women in other states have learned of this need, they too are responding. The goal is to reach \$10,000 by September 2017. To partner with what God is doing around the world, send your gift earmarked "Cuban Medical Team" to WNAC, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011. **ONE**



To order a copy of
Into the Darkness,
visit www.FWBGO.com
or email
Deborah@fwbgo.com.

About the writer: Elizabeth Hodges is director of Women Nationally Active for Christ. Learn more: www.WNAC.org.



To Serve Is Our Desire

*By Manu and Noemí **

Our names are Manuel and Noemí, and we have been in Málaga, Spain, for about a year and a half serving with The Hanna Project and working in a local church. We both grew up in Christian families, learning the knowledge of the Bible and God.

Noemí's Story

My father has been a pastor for as long as I can remember, and I have not known any other lifestyle than serving in the church every weekend. When I was six years old, I accepted Christ as my Savior. I understood I was a sinner, and God didn't have grandchildren. I would not inherit the Christian life simply because my parents were Christians. I had to make a decision to follow Christ myself.

At age 11, at a Christian summer camp, I felt the call of God on my life to be a missionary as I studied the life of David Livingstone. That same year I was baptized.

I continued to grow spiritually, although sometimes I drifted in my walk with Christ. I was committed and involved in the activities of the church. I sang in the choir and played the guitar for youth meetings and on Sunday nights.

When I was 16, I decided I needed to go to a Bible institute to study. I had my life planned, but God had a different plan for me. At 18 years of age, I left Spain to study in a Word of Life Bible Institute in Argentina. I planned to stay for one year, but ended up staying for three years, completing my theology degree.

Afterward, I returned to Spain and my parents' house and began to serve in our local church again. I worked with the youth group, with the children, taught in the Sunday School, and had a discipleship ministry with the young girls. I also began to study social medicine to work with physically-challenged individuals, the elderly, and others with special needs. I worked on these studies for two years.

In 2011, I began to date Manu. We had known each other for four years. Our desire was simply to serve the Lord, as we were already working with the youth, helping out in the church, and some other ministries. But we wanted to do more.

Manuel's Story

I was born into a Christian home with parents who tried to live a dedicated life. When I was 11, I believed I had all the answers from the Bible and how to live a good Christian life. That is, until a Sunday School teacher challenged me and told me I wasn't even saved. At first, I thought she was playing a joke on me, but after Sunday School she asked an important question

* Full names withheld for security reasons.

that changed my life: “Why do you think you are saved?”

I answered that I read the Bible, tried to respect and obey my parents, I wasn’t that bad, and so I deserved to be saved. My teacher told me if I had sinned even one time I deserved the judgment of God and would go to Hell, which scared me because I wanted to go to Heaven.

This question caused me to have many doubts, and I spent the next week thinking about what she said. I deserved Hell. My teacher gave me some verses to read. The passage that impacted me most was Romans 3:10-18. I immediately identified myself with these verses and the next week, as soon as I got to church, I went to speak to my teacher. I told her I needed to be sure of my salvation, because I realized I was bad and told lies. She explained to me the great work of salvation through Christ, and I understood the love of God. I accepted Christ as my Lord and Savior, and I understood He loved me just as I was.

From that point, I began to love God more and more. At summer camp, when I was 14, the missionary speaker challenged us to give our lives to God, to live our lives and all that we are for His glory. In that moment, I decided when I was older I would dedicate my life to preaching Christ as others had done for me. It is the message that can transform lives and gives the most hope that I have ever heard. It is the most important message God has given to each believer to preach. This is powerful.

Manu and Noemí

In September 2014, Mick and Rachel Donahue invited us to Málaga to see their ministry firsthand. At the same time, we were praying that God, if it was His will, would open an opportunity for us to work with The Hanna Project team in Málaga. We spent four days in Málaga, and God confirmed each day that this was the place He wanted us to be. When a missionary friend in Cártama, a small pueblo (town) nearby, heard we were in Málaga, he invited us to his home. He said, “I have been praying you would come and help us here.” He knew nothing of our plans, but God did.

In May 2015, we married. In June, we moved to Málaga. We are working with The Hanna Project and helping in the local church. We are also collaborating in a social outreach center giving out food. Every Friday we serve 80 families. The majority are African (with some Gypsies) with various belief systems—Muslim, Catholic, Orthodox, atheists, agnostics, Spiritists, etc. We

have opportunities every Friday to talk with them and share a message of hope.

We also work in a local church as youth leaders with a group of 25 young people along with volunteer leaders. We help in the area of discipleship training as well. Once a week we have a Bible study and prayer time in the church, and once a week we host a

**EACH DAY I AM MORE
CONVINCED THAT EVERY
BELIEVER IN THE WORLD
MUST COMMIT HIMSELF
TO FULFILLING THE
GREAT COMMISSION.**

home Bible study for the ladies in the area. Once a quarter, we go into the streets to share the gospel through mimes, skits, surveys, and giving out Christian literature. We also go from time to time to the open-air markets to distribute tracts and share the gospel. We are hoping to begin an outreach to the Jewish community in the next year.

We can see how God is using us to share His name with those around us. Our church has great needs, both spiritually and economically, and many church members are without work and have large families.

Each day I am more convinced that every believer in the world must commit himself to fulfilling the Great Commission. This has been the call on our lives through the years; and now, more than ever, it is our responsibility to fulfill this call.

We trust God will continue to use us in the place He desires. To serve is our desire.

“The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). 

The WMO supports Manu and Noemí’s ministry, making it possible for them to live among and serve immigrants in Spain.

★ ★ ★ *Christ for* ★ ★ ★
PUERTO RICO

BY RICK BOWLING

God has blessed North American Ministries! Church planters are breaking records, and new churches are being built across the United States. Ministry to Hispanic people is also experiencing these blessings, especially the growing work in Puerto Rico. Free Will Baptists have worked for decades to establish churches on this beautiful island. Much prayer and a great deal of financial resources have gone into this work, and we rejoice to see what God is doing.



In 2009, the Puerto Rican church desperately needed to be revitalized. It had been several years since the previous church planter had returned to the States, and the church gradually had dwindled down. But God had a plan! That same year, Puerto Rican native José Correa and his wife, Suhey enrolled in the Hendrix Hispanic Bible Institute. During their studies, God gave them a heavy burden for the people of Puerto Rico.

In March 2010, the Correas went back to Puerto Rico to preach the gospel. They started under a palm tree and named the little congregation the First Free Will Baptist Church of Puerto Rico. After a year of hard work, with 25 people attending service regularly, they decided they needed a church with a roof and rented an abandoned house. The church continued to grow and soon began outreach ministries for young people and married couples and continued to evangelize the nearby area. By the following year, the congregation had outgrown their rented building.

That year, Pastor José and his family attended the National Convention. Pastor José had been asked to preach in the Hispanic service, and he preached on Caleb claiming the mountain. They returned to Puerto Rico after the meeting, and while waiting in the airport, José and Suhey realized the message was for them. God wanted them to claim Puerto Rico for Him. In faith, they decided they needed a much larger building for the ministry.

In the following months, the church grew to 80 people. God sent people to the church who were able to support the ministry with tithes and offerings. In 2014, God gave the First Church an opportunity to buy seven acres of land, and they constructed a permanent church building. The church sent a family back to the States to study at the Bible Institute. They returned to Puerto Rico and started a second church.

Pastor José and Suhey have a deep burden for the young people of Puerto Rico. They decided that an effective way to minister to young Puerto Ricans would be to offer a better opportunity for Christian education and began to make plans for a school called the Genesis Academy. After a couple visited the island and saw their work, they decided to make a donation to help construct the school building.



The couple donated \$25,000 rather than add a carport to their house. With construction well underway, and after much prayer and planning, the Genesis Academy will open in August 2017.

In seven years the First Church has grown in attendance and new converts have been discipled and grounded in biblical principles. The congregation has not only planted a second church; they now have three congregations and are planning to start another in the near future. With a strong church, a new school, and new churches opening, José and Suhey have decided the ministry in Puerto Rico is ready to go self-supporting.

Now, the members of the First Church have developed a burden for Puerto Ricans living beyond their beautiful island. Today, more Puerto Ricans live in New York than in Puerto Rico. The same is true of Orlando and New Jersey. This church has answered the call to go to these areas to reach their people for Christ. Several families are preparing in the Bible Institute in Puerto Rico to be effective workers in these fields.

North American Ministries Director David Crowe rejoices with the First Church on their victory. He understands the church will need help to send church planters to these centralized Puerto

Rican populations. And he wants to help them claim the mountain for which Pastor José and Suhey have prayed. With this in mind, David has opened an account at North American Ministries to benefit the Puerto Rico work. We are praying God will touch your heart and give you a burden for this vital ministry.



In seven short years, God made a way for the Puerto Rican ministry to “claim that mountain.” There is no limit to what God can do through this ministry. Would you like to be a partner in ministry? Find out more today about how you can help build churches in Puerto Rico: www.FWBNAM.com. 

DEEP AND WIDE:



REKINDLING EVANGELISTIC ZEAL
with WORD-DRIVEN MINISTRY

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

ONE INCH WIDE AND FIVE MILES DEEP

In his timely book *From Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church*, Harry Reeder talks about two kinds of churches. He describes the first as “one inch wide and five miles deep.” This church is “reactionary, critical, and cynical” against the church growth movement’s too-prevalent use of “cultural steroids” and emphasis on consumer tastes and desires and shallowness. So, it assumes a bunker mentality, priding itself on depth and theology. But it does so at the expense of evangelism. It values deep, rich preaching and a Word-driven ministry. *But it has lost a deep commitment to the zealous ministry of the gospel to the lost.*

FIVE MILES WIDE AND ONE INCH DEEP

The other kind of church Reeder describes is “five miles wide and one inch deep.” He says the mentality of the church growth movement has produced this kind of church. Reeder says the church growth movement has focused too much on pragmatism—a “what works” mentality—and pumps what he calls cultural steroids into the church. These bring *seeming* growth in programs and numbers. But they ultimately fail to bring sustainable life, health, and growth to a church. This has resulted in “a glamorized, marketed and culturally tamed church” that is shallow and places more emphasis on attracting people to the church via cultural tastes and preferences than through personal evangelism and gospel mission.

MAINTAINING THE BALANCE

We constantly emphasize to ministerial students at Welch College the vital importance of maintaining a balance between these two extremes in our culture. We must emphasize deep, rich, practical teaching and preaching of God’s Word through solid, textual, expositional pulpit ministry. And this emphasis on the Word is not limited to the pulpit. We must be expositing and teaching the Word, admonishing with the Word, and exhorting and encouraging with the Word not only in our sermons but also in songs, prayers, Bible studies, and evangelism.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE

We must emphasize the sufficiency of Scripture: that God has carefully and painstakingly given His Church, in His Word, *all* it needs for a thriving church. This is true at any time or place, from first-century Greco-Roman culture to 21st-century American culture. Allowing Scripture to set the agenda for the ministry of the church is what will allow the Holy Spirit to bring about gospel growth in the church.

This will help us not to drive too much of a wedge between the “message” and the “methods” of the church, just to defend using people’s consumer tastes and desires to “attract” them to church. The Apostles and their immediate successors in the early centuries of the Church had hundreds of very popular cultural

practices, tastes, desires, and “consumer methods” at their disposal. But they did not use them. Instead, they utilized the simple, New Testament, ordinary means of growth.

But a solid emphasis on allowing Scripture (as our forefathers used to say) to direct the “matter and manner” (the message and methods) of our churches will result in an evangelistically zealous church! The church an inch wide and five miles deep is not a biblically faithful church. It is not a deep church.

EVANGELISM AS THE HEART OF CHURCH GROWTH

In our complex cultural matrix, we must reemphasize evangelism as the heart of the church growth program. Many people who emphasize church health fear the words “church growth.” We must not stop working for the growth of the church because the church growth movement in America has been too attractive and not missional enough! A move back to a sufficiency-of-Scripture model of church health and growth will cause us to re-focus on *evangelism and mission* and move away from the attractional model of the seeker-sensitive movement.

THE MISSIO DEI

This missionary mindset is a lot of what Ron Callaway and Barry Raper talk about at Welch College—not just with the ministry and missions majors but with everyone: the *Missio Dei*, Latin for the “mission of God.” It’s the idea that the church in the post-Christian West is on a mission from God, just as churches going to non-Christian cultures in the past were on a mission. We no longer function in an environment where the church is ascendant in the larger culture. Instead, the church is going against the grain of the dominant culture. The church, as Jesus and the Apostles envisioned it, is “against the world for the world.” It’s taking a prophetic stance *against* the world so that it can be *for* the world as the Spirit works through the gospel to draw men and women to Christ.

This is why understanding cultural context is so vitally important. As Ken Myers says, contextualizing the gospel biblically is not really about seeing how much we can be like the world so we can attract people with what they like in the world. Instead, it’s

about understanding our culture so we can preach the gospel faithfully and prophetically in that culture. Often, this goes against the grain of people's comfortable cultural sensibilities.

This *Missio Dei* mentality dovetails with a mentality that the Bible is all we need for a healthy and growing church. It goes against the cultural steroids and consumerism and shallowness so popular in some quadrants of evangelicalism. But it does not go five miles deep while only being an inch wide. It goes five miles deep *and* five miles wide. It goes deep in the Word and the gospel in a practical, spiritually vibrant way that emphasizes theology is for life and truth transforms. But it goes wide in spreading the Word and gospel through personal evangelism.

THE REAL PROBLEM, THE REAL SOLUTION

Sometimes, when pastors talk in certain evangelical subcultures, it almost sounds as if the problem is that we are faithfully adhering to all the biblical, apostolic means of grace, and they're just not working. Maybe the culture is too resistant. So, the thinking goes, we must look to secular industries or CEO-leadership or marketing to find out how they break down cultural resistance and get people to buy what they're selling.

But here's the problem with that: all the studies show we aren't working the biblical, apostolic means of grace. *The problem is not the ineffectiveness of those biblical means and methods. The problem is we are doing a poor job working them.* The studies show we're not really pulling it off with God's people—prayer, fasting, biblical meditation, tithing, helping the poor, family devotions, basic Christian worldview, personal evangelism.

Personal evangelism offers a great example of this point. Studies from Thom Rainer, the Barna Group, and similar researchers have shown for 20 years that while the church is putting a lot of emphasis on numerical growth, it's not doing a good job of emphasizing evangelism and basic spiritual disciplines. For example, in a Barna Group survey, only 31% of survey respondents said they would invite someone to an Easter service.

Many other studies demonstrate that evangelical churches are failing at this first step in personal evangelism—inviting a friend, relative, neighbor, or co-worker to church. Yet, as Thom Rainer discovered in a recent survey, almost 90% of unchurched 20-somethings would listen to someone who wanted to talk with them about their faith, and around 60% of this age group would be willing to attend a small-group Bible study.

EVANGELISTIC SUCCESS WITHOUT ATTRACTIVE CHURCH GROWTH

The statistics above are why I think many younger, gospel-centered pastors across denominations who try to avoid older seeker-sensitive, consumer-attractual methods are experiencing sustainable gospel growth using evangelistic Bible studies such as "Christianity Explored" and one-to-one Bible studies. This is also in line with the long-established statistic that more than 80% of formerly unchurched people who join a church do so because of the witness of a friend, relative, neighbor, or co-worker. But LifeWay, Barna, and other groups have shown over and over again that the percentage of Christians engaged in personal evangelism is small and getting smaller. This correlates to the number of Christians who read their Bibles, engage in family devotions, pray, fast, tithe, have a basic Christian worldview, etc.

GO DEEP AND WIDE

So let's get back to God's means of grace, to the sufficiency of Scripture. But let's not use our aversion to attractual church growth methods as an excuse to do things shoddily, to be lazy, or put our heads in the sand. Instead, let's be people of excellence. Let's understand and be sensitive to our culture without simply mimicking it. Let's emphasize evangelism. And this is going to mean learning apologetics, because so many people know nothing about the gospel.

It's also going to mean cultivating in the hearts of our people a zealous burden for unbelieving friends, relatives, neighbors, and co-workers. Yes, different people have different skill sets

Studies demonstrate that evangelical churches are failing at this first step in personal evangelism—inviting a friend, relative, neighbor, or coworker to church.

when it comes to evangelism. Some are better at seed planting. Some are better at harvesting. But this emphasis on biblical evangelism as the core means of sustainable church growth goes hand-in-hand with the other biblical means of growth God has provided—Bible intake, prayer, fasting, tithing, helping the poor, hospitality, knowing God more deeply by going deeper in biblical truth, etc.

WHERE ARE YOU?

I don't know where you are, where your "temptations" in this area lie. I think few ordained or lay church leaders I know fall solidly into one of Harry Reeder's camps. And one thing is certain among Free Will Baptists: as we strive for unity, we need, more and more, to commit ourselves to charity and to praying for and learning from brothers we perceive as leaning too much toward one camp or the other. We must be careful not to judge our brothers' motives or spiritual commitment to the Word and the gospel.

Maybe you're more tempted to identify and meet consumer tastes, thinking that's what will do the job in growing the church. Perhaps you've been tempted to think, as I was at times when I

pastored, that the attractional model is the way to go. Or maybe you've given up completely on cultural steroids and consumerism and the uber-marketing mentality of too much church growth theory. Maybe you've outgrown the idea that we should niche-market the church to certain types of people with certain cultural tastes and preferences. But, in doing this, maybe you've also gotten into a mentality that emphasizes depth and substance, but you've lost your zeal for seeing people come to know Jesus.

Regardless of where you fall on this spectrum, let me encourage you to go deep *and* wide. Get back to God's means of gospel-growth. Prayerfully consider gospel-centered, Word-driven churches and ministries that are experiencing sustainable growth. Look at churches that emphasize the sufficiency of Scripture but are really having success in getting more members engaged in personal evangelism; seed-planting; mercy ministries; evangelistic Bible studies, or one-to-one Bible studies; and praying, fasting, and giving for evangelism. You don't have to choose between being five miles wide and one inch deep, or one inch wide and five miles deep.

Go deep *and* wide. **ONE**

About the Writer: J. Matthew Pinson is president of Welch College. Learn more about the college: www.Welch.edu or visit his blog: www.MatthewPinson.com.

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At Welch College >>

City of Gallatin Welcomes Welch College

The City of Gallatin and Mayor Paige Brown hosted a “Welcome to Gallatin” reception for Welch College on February 10, at Gallatin City Hall.

“From the very beginning, when the announcement was made that Welch College was coming to Sumner County and to Gallatin, there was a lot of excitement,” said Tennessee State Senator Ferrell Haile. “As the buildings have gone up, the excitement has certainly gone up also.”

Welch President Matt Pinson stated, “We saw Gallatin, not only as a warm and welcoming community, but also as a community on the move. Gallatin is one of the fastest growing areas in Tennessee, and we believe it is going to be great to partner with the city to move forward with the mission of our college.”



“Only 5% of Tennessee cities have a residential college,” said Mayor Paige Brown. “Welch College brings to our community, not only a four-year residential college, but also a student base which gives over 10,000 hours of community service each year.”

To view a video of the event published

by the Gallatin City Communications Office, visit: goo.gl/wncnDL. To read the newspaper article in The Tennessean, visit: goo.gl/tWsj6I.

For more information about Welch or to apply, call 615-844-5000 or visit www.welch.edu. ■

Bracey Named Cross-Country Coach

Welch College has named Matthew Steven Bracey as cross-country coach, according to Athletic Director Gary Turner. “Welch has taken a big step toward building a strong cross-country program with the hire of Matthew Bracey as coach,” Turner said. “An avid runner himself, Bracey has a heart for running and is excited about



the prospect of building a strong, vibrant program. He looks forward to working and running with students, as well as building personalized training programs for them.”

Bracey has run numerous marathons, including, most recently, the Mercedes-Benz Marathon and the Walt Disney World Marathon. He has also run several smaller races, winning his age category in a recent 5k.

“I’m honored to serve in this capacity as the coach for the Welch cross-country team,” Bracey remarked. “The opportunity to combine two things that I love—Welch and its students on the one hand, and running on the other—is an awesome blessing. I look forward to building a great cross country program and team. And I’m especially excited about working even

more with students.”

Bracey, a 2008 graduate of Welch College, received an M.T.S. from Beeson Divinity School and a J.D. from Cumberland School of Law at Samford University. He began working for Welch in 2013, where he serves as associate vice provost and teaches law, theology, and history. He has also co-edited and contributed to two books and written a number of scholarly and popular articles.

“I believe Coach Bracey will take our cross-country program to a whole new level,” said Turner. “With his love of Welch College and his passion for running, I think we’ll see the program flourish.”

Those interested in cross-country, or who know someone who is, contact Coach Bracey: mbracey@welch.edu. ■

President Featured at Christian Scholarship Conference

Welch College President Matt Pinson spoke at the Radical Christian Scholarship Conference at Houston Baptist University, Friday, February 24, according to Josh Owens, director of media and marketing. The president addressed the subject of mentoring young Christian scholars.

The conference is sponsored by The Transdisciplinary Group, an association of evangelical scholars convened by Dr. Eric Johnson; Lawrence and Charlotte Hoover, Professor of Pastoral Care at Southern

Baptist Theological Seminary; and Dr. Craig Bartholomew, H. Evan Runner Professor of philosophy at Redeemer University College, Ontario, Canada.

The Transdisciplinary Group and the Radical Christian Scholarship Conference emphasize the way in which academic disciplines (or fields of study) should be transformed by the Christian worldview. The group notes: “We are calling this project Radical Christian Scholarship because it goes to the root (*radix*) of each discipline

and also Transdisciplinary Christian Scholarship, because it requires the transformation of all the disciplines in accordance with Christian worldview assumptions.”

In addition to Johnson and Bartholomew, the conference featured noted evangelical scholars such as Leland Ryken, Andrew Pennington, C. Stephen Evans, Peter Leithart, Kevin Vanhoozer, and Mary Poplin. Read more about the conference: <http://www.transdisciplinarygroup.com>. ■

McAfee Selected as Fellow in TICUA Executive Leadership Institute

Vice Provost Matthew McAfee has been selected as a Fellow in the Executive Leadership Institute of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA), according to President Matt Pinson. The Executive Leadership Institute is a new initiative of TICUA president Dr. Claude Presnell to provide specialized training for up-and-coming leaders in Tennessee independent colleges and universities.

“I am excited that Dr. McAfee will be taking part in this new institute,” President Pinson said. “As a promising young leader at Welch and our new vice provost, he will benefit greatly from the interaction with some of the finest higher education leaders in the industry, and will be able to bring these experiences to bear in his leadership at Welch College.”

Faculty for the Institute have included distinguished higher education leaders such as Dr. Rich Morrill (chancellor of the University of Richmond), Dr. Bill Troutt

(president of Rhodes College), and Tim Fuller (senior VP/owner, CREDO). The Institute will gather at nine independent college and university campuses across Tennessee, once a month, over the 2016-17 academic year. The last meeting and

graduation from the Institute will be in May of 2017.

A native of New Brunswick, Canada, McAfee is a 1999 graduate of Welch College. An M.Div. graduate of Southern Seminary, he additionally received M.A. and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Chicago. He has served full-time at Welch College since 2010, as both a member of the faculty and campus pastor, a role he relinquished in August to serve as vice provost.

McAfee has written numerous articles in popular and scholarly periodicals such as *ONE Magazine*, the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, and the *Journal of Biblical Literature*. He recently jointly authored *Sexuality, Gender, and the Church: A Christian Response in the New Cultural Landscape*, published by Welch College Press. He and his wife, Anna, who serves as women’s resident director, live on-campus with their four children, Abigail, Lydia, Samuel, and Marianne. ■



Intersect >>

Good Works and the Christian Life: A Look at Titus, Part Two

In the February-March issue, we considered how the New Testament letter of Titus challenges us with the important theme of good works. While we maintain we are saved by faith in Christ's finished work—and not our own works—we can see clearly that good works are crucial for individuals who claim to follow Jesus. Several references to good works surface in this short exchange between Paul and this young church leader.

From these references, the following basic expectations emerge for the individual Christian and the local church. We will frame each as a “BE” statement:

Be a *MODEL* of good works.

Titus is urged to show “thymself a pattern of good works” (2:7). This word for pattern is translated in the ESV as *model* and in the NIV and NASB as *example*. The apostle Paul frequently employs this type of language to call his readers to the responsibility to live in a way that invites imitation. We are familiar with his words in 1 Corinthians 11:1: “Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.” However, this call to imitation is not limited to Paul. He indicates in several contexts that disciples of Jesus are summoned to follow Jesus and in doing so become “examples to all in Macedonia and Achaia who believe (1 Thessalonians 1:7).”

Disciples at every stage need models or examples to follow. This is precisely why Titus is exhorted to show himself as a reliable pattern to follow in a fallen world.

Be *ZEALOUS* for good works.

Later in chapter 2, we discover one of the purposes of Christ's redemptive work, to “purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works” (2:14). Those who experience the grace of Jesus should be motivated or stirred with zeal or godly passion to serve Jesus. Followers of Jesus understand good works cannot save them, but Christ's sacrifice for them makes their hearts all the more willing or eager to do good works. At some level, this word gets down to our hearts and forces us to check our desire for good works.



Be READY for good works.

Paul tasked Titus with reminding people “to be ready for every good work” (3:1). He included several essential aspects of living out the faith: being subject to rulers and authorities, not slandering others, pursuing peacefulness, and demonstrating gentleness toward all people. Paul then recalled their pre-converted state to help them remember “we were also foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.”

Life-changing grace appeared in history and in their lives personally (3:3-7). Yet, it was necessary and right for Paul to remind these believers of something they already knew—be ready for good works.

Be DEVOTED to good works.

Post-belief action is summarized by careful devotion or maintenance of good works: “They which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works” (3:8). After providing the Christians an opportunity to send Zenas and Apollos on their way (3:13), Paul’s letter closes with a call to keep it up when it comes to good works, “And let our people learn to devote

themselves to good works, so as to help in cases of urgent need, and not be unfruitful” (3:14). It is one thing to start a good work or ministry; it is even better to stick with it and have the patience and diligence required to maintain ministry.

Questions

The treatment of good works found here has caused me to ask myself some questions:

- *Are you consistently following Christ so others can safely follow your pattern?*
- *Is your zeal or passion for good works at a lower or higher level than it was last year? Ten years ago?*
- *Do you have a readiness or sense of preparing yourself for new works the Lord has in store for this year?*
- *Have you grown weary in the maintenance of good works?*

These are not comfortable questions. The answers require prayerful reflection and honesty before the Lord. As you read through this issue of *ONE* focused on the good work of outreach, I encourage you to ask the Lord to work in your heart and then through your hands to do good works for His glory. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dr. Barry Raper pastors Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland City, Tennessee, and directs the Pastoral Program at Welch College. Learn more about Welch College: www.welch.edu.



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It's a Dog's Life:

Chasing the Artificial



BY
BRENDA
EVANS

*You eat table scraps and scratch fleas.
Chase cars, harass cats, and sleep under the back porch.
You get in trouble for barking too much at friends
and too little at strangers. You own no jeweled collars
or knitted sweaters. That's a dog's life.*

But nowadays, if you are a dog, you may be more privileged. Pre-packaged doggy food. Shampoos, trims, and blow-drys at canine salons. Flavored rawhide bones to gnaw on or electric doggy toothbrushes, your choice. Trips to the beach, mountains, even Europe (Shut up in a dog carrier for the flight, of course, but so what! it's Europe.) Free-range on the sofa next to friends and kids and romps at the doggy park.

A good night's sleep on a king-size bed at the feet of master and mistress.

What got me to thinking about a dog's life was a little book about black-tailed prairie dogs I read last fall. It was called *It's a Dog's Life*. Of course, prairie dogs are no more canine than I am, but it seems they eat, sleep, work, socialize, watch for predators, and run around town like we do. (Also like us, their community of burrows is called a town.)

I identify with the fear of abandonment. I want God's presence, His attention. I want security and guidance. I want Someone alongside, in front, behind me.

Unlike us, however, they do not tote Aquafina™ bottles on their jaunts because they rarely drink water. Their diet of weeds, roots, seeds, and blossoms gives them all the moisture they need. That's why the little book warned me to resist the temptation to feed them because, though they like it, "artificial food" is bad for them, really bad. Human food, or artificial food as the author called it, is salty. If I feed a prairie dog my peanuts, popcorn, and chocolate, I may upset his salt and water balance and kill him.

I was struck by the author's use of the phrase "artificial food." To me, peanuts and popcorn are about as un-artificial as a snack ever gets, though they are salty. Chocolate, well, that's another thing altogether. Obviously, it is manufactured. Dried cacao beans are shelled, fermented, ground, mixed with myriad other ingredients including salt, then heated, poured into molds, and cooled. Chocolate bars, drops, squares, chunks are all human-made and bad for black-tailed prairie dogs and us, too, except in deliberate moderation.

At about that same time last fall, I read Exodus 32 and again ran into artificial. It's the passage about Aaron, a crowd of disgruntled Hebrews, and a human-manufactured god. These panic-stricken travelers asked for (demanded might be a better word) a fabricated god. They wanted a visible representation of Jehovah "to go before us," as they said. A thing to see and touch, so they could know that he (or it) was present with them. So Aaron hand-made it, a golden calf, probably first carved of wood, then overlaid with gold melted down from the earrings of wives, sons, and daughters.

These wanderers were anxious people, edgy, and panic-stricken. I understand panic. What appeared to be Moses' and God's absences hounded them. They felt deserted, and desertions break faith, feel like betrayals. "This Moses," as a few of the testier ones called him, had disappeared on the mountain, been gone for weeks, might be dead, burned by the fire of God that was up there with him, or swallowed alive by the cloud of God's presence. Who knew anything for certain except that Moses and God's presence had gone up the mountain together and now were nowhere to be seen. If not dead, maybe they simply were not interested anymore. That's usually what absence means, isn't it? People bolt because they no longer want to be bothered, or they simply don't care.

I identify with the fear of abandonment. I want God's presence, His attention. I want security and guidance. I want Someone alongside, in front, behind me. His invisibility can be hard. Sometimes, I think I'd like to see God's fire and cloud though I'd probably be scared witless. I tend to cover my eyes or bury my face in my husband Bill's shoulder on certain high-energy Disney World rides. I hold tight to guardrails overlooking precipitous cliffs. I skirt around deep water. What would I do before God's fiery holiness and cloud of glory?

In that little prairie dog book, I was also struck by the phrase, "resist the temptation." It sounded religious, although it wasn't, of course. The author simply meant combat the urge to feed the prairie dogs artificial food that might do them harm.

The lure to take in and give out the artificial is always at my shoulder. It is easy to lean on artificial resources rather than on God: money, work, influence, and even human relationships. That last is the one on which I know I rest most heavily. Not that I'm saying human relationships are artificial, thus harmful and should be avoided. Not at all. But I am saying they are in some sense a man-made construct, a synthetic of sorts. We stitch and patch our relationships together from blood connections, psychological likenesses, hobbies, church, work, common interests, or goals. Some relationships are held together by love; others, by simple likes or dislikes. In either case, we fabricate them, although that word sounds too harsh. What I mean to say is that we make them because we want and need them.

Like the disgruntled Hebrews, I am susceptible to man-made things, visible things. I like to see the route ahead: the way out or through or back, whatever that best track is. I want paper maps, not GPS, because I can see where I am going. And I like someone beside me to touch, lean on, link arms with, and stand beside. The truth is, I'm basically chicken, especially about the future. Or, to put it as the Hebrews did, about what's ahead. Going far

I'm wooed by the security of a safe home and reliable vehicle.

and long by myself is no more alluring to me than it was to them. So I can't point an accusing finger at these panic-stricken idol-fabricating Hebrews who, like me, wanted someone visible ahead of them for hope, security, and guidance. I can (and should) learn from them, however.

The truth is, I am not that different from the Hebrew wanderers. I'm tempted to choose gold over God. I'm wooed by the security of a safe home and reliable vehicle. More and more, I cling to steadfast human relationships: husband, family, brothers and sisters in the Lord, friends. These are visible things that give me the same thing those rank and file Hebrews wanted when they chose a golden calf—a visible somebody or something to show them the way ahead, to make sure things went well and kept them safe.

There is plenty of biblical praise for making wise choices about the visible things in our lives: our money, our work, and our human relationships. But there is no praise for substituting any of these visible things for our invisible Lord God. Artificial gods

always have, always will, give artificial hope. Substitute gods of whatever time or place are still no better than trifling carvings of wood overlaid with insubstantial sheets of gold.

How well I remember the Lord's promise my godly mother held in her heart and mind in 1980 when she first became a widow. She no longer had the visible partner to whom she had been married for 46 years. So, she memorized a special verse and repeated it to me many times over the next 32 years, as both a testimony about her real, though invisible God, and as a lesson to me when I fell into a tizzy:

"I will both lie down in peace, and sleep; For You alone, O Lord, make me dwell in safety" (Psalm 4:8).

When Mother was alone that first night, that first week, and all those long years that followed, she told me who was ahead, behind, and beside her. She rejected the temptation to look for something artificial. She wanted no substitute. She clung steadfastly to the real thing. **ONE**

About the Writer: Brenda Evans is a freelance writer who lives in Ashland, Kentucky. Learn more about finances and how you can get involved in planned giving: www.fwbgifts.org



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Brown on Green >>

Shooting Liberty Valance

In 1962, two of the biggest stars in Hollywood, John Wayne and Jimmy Stewart, teamed up for the first time in a movie called *The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance*. The plot is about a tinhorn lawyer (Ransom Stoddard, played by Jimmy Stewart) from back East who had come to the West to practice law in the town of Shinbone in an unnamed western state. Stoddard had no idea about how things worked in the West and quickly developed an enemy in Liberty Valance, an outlaw gunslinger.

The whole town admired Ransom Stoddard for his law and order ideals, especially Tom Doniphon (played by John Wayne). Ultimately, Stoddard faced and killed Liberty Valance in a shootout thanks to Tom Doniphon's help (unknown by Ransom). Ransom Stoddard went on to have a successful career as a lawyer, because he was known as "the man who shot Liberty Valance."

This classic movie reminds us we often get more credit for our accomplishments than we should because many people have invested in our lives. Friends, family, mentors, advisors, and encouragers spur us on to more than we

thought possible. They all deserve credit for helping us become the men and women we are. They are "people investors."

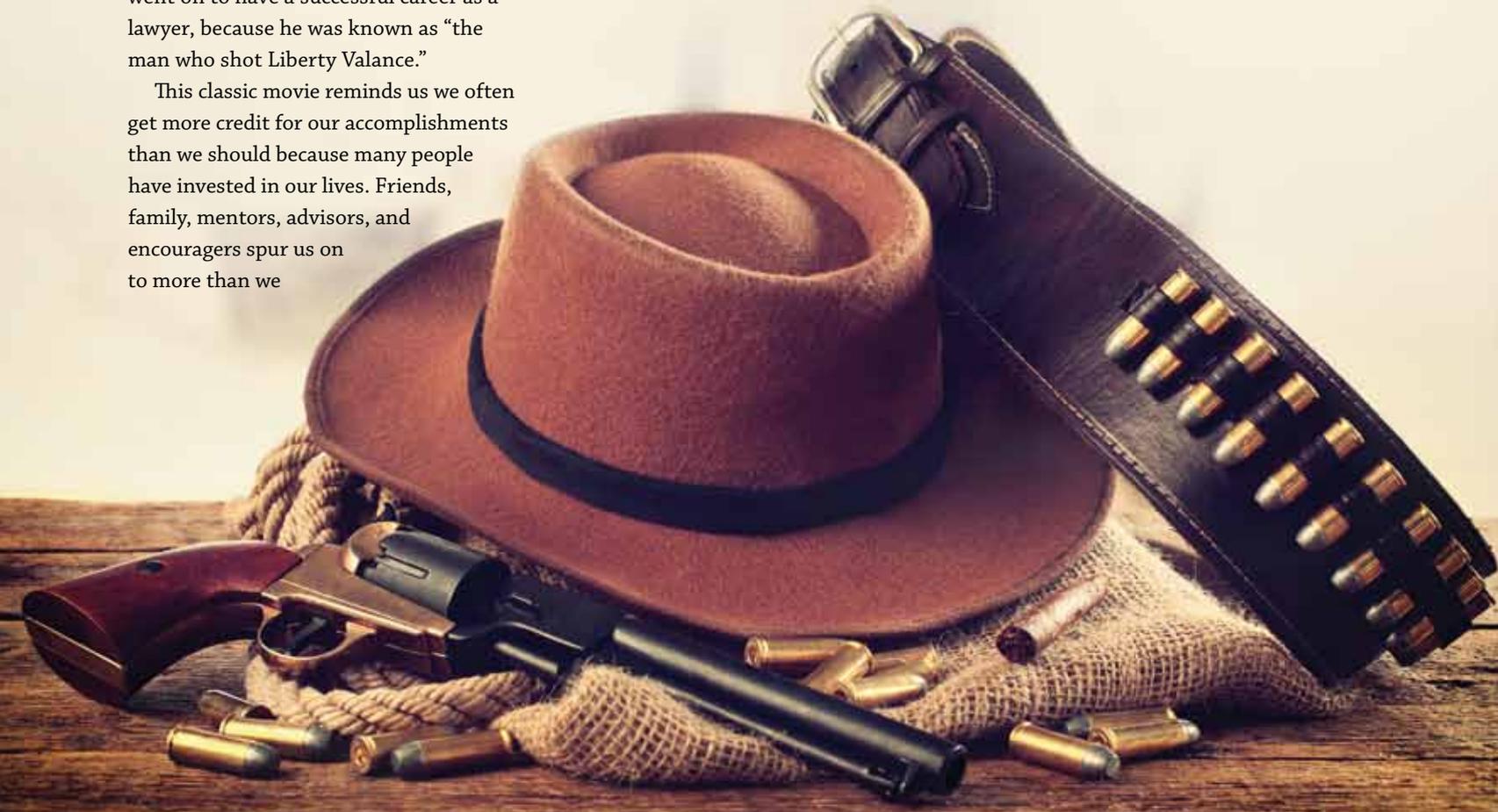
We need more people investors willing to invest in lives—to change people's lives by helping them "shoot the Liberty Valances" of discouragement and lack of confidence, and to help remove obstacles in their lives that prevent them from being all they can be for the Kingdom. Sometimes, all it takes is an encouraging word. Proverbs 25 reminds us: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." Many times, the right word of encouragement at the right time makes all the difference in someone's life.

We should all strive to mentor our

younger peers, sharing knowledge that has taken us decades to discover. Helping someone through a difficult situation you have already faced can be a priceless investment in his or her life. Schoolteachers, and even Sunday School teachers, can challenge students to expand their horizons and consider areas of service that suit their talents. Many times, unless we are challenged to explore these areas, we will never get on the path God has for us.

Let's invest in people. We need more people willing to help shoot the "Liberty Valances" that prevent others from becoming the servants that God desires. **ONE**

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. To learn how the Foundation can help you become a more effective giver, call 877-336-7575.



Preparing for
FUTURE
MINISTRY

by
Chris Compton



What is your dream for retirement? *Vacations? Traveling to see grandkids? Business venture? Rest and relaxation? All of us probably have aspirations for most, if not all, of those things. But for believers, retirement should be much more. We should ask what God wants us to do in our future to impact His Kingdom. It may be leading a missions trip, a volunteer staff position, starting a new ministry, etc. We may not know what that ministry will look like, but if we do not prepare now for our future, it may never come to fruition. That is why it is important to prepare for your financial future.*

Everyone dreams of a secure retirement. Yet, nearly half of American families have no retirement savings at all. Of those who do have retirement savings, most are not saving enough—and they know it. Retirement planning is one of the most important financial goals you can undertake, and it doesn't have to be difficult. Just remember two important parts: 1) having a retirement plan and 2) making sure you are saving enough.

If you have not started saving for retirement, start now! If you do nothing now, you will have nothing then. Most people put off saving for retirement because they mistakenly believe they have plenty of time down the road once they make more money, put the kids through college, pay off the house note, and so on. Yet, the longer you wait, the harder it will be to build the nest egg for the retirement you dream of. The earlier you start, the easier it will be, and it will never be easier than today.

For example, if you start at age 20 and contribute \$100 each month consistently for 46 years, by the time you retire at 65 you will have accumulated over \$540,000 (assuming an 8% average return). If you wait until you are 40, you would have to contribute \$500/month for 26 years to reach \$518,000. The lesson is simple...time and compounding interest are your friends. Don't let anything stand in your way. You may have to start saving small amounts at first and work your way up. The key is to start now!

If you are saving for retirement, then the question becomes "Are you saving enough?" Most experts suggest you have six to ten times your annual salary saved for retirement. No one wants to be told to save more, but the reality is you are either saving for retirement today

or you are consuming your retirement today. If you know you are not saving enough for retirement, why not start increasing the size of your nest egg today?

The good news is, it's not complicated. It can be as simple as increasing the percentage you put toward retirement every month. If you are contributing 3% of your income to retirement, bump it to 5%. If you are contributing 7%, increase it to 9%. Some people may think they can't afford to increase their retirement contributions, but most can. You may be surprised at how little of an impact retirement contributions have on your paycheck.

Take this scenario for example. Fred is 30 years old and earns \$3,000 a month (\$36,000 a year). He contributes 2% of his salary to his retirement account. He is on track to have \$145,000 by age 65 when he plans to retire (assuming an 8% average return). After looking over his current financial savings, he realizes he is not saving enough and decides to increase his contribution by 3%. Due to tax savings, Fred's contribution increase of 3% (\$45 per paycheck, twice a month) will reduce his paycheck by only \$41 and potentially improves his savings balance at retirement to \$363,000. That is an increase of over \$200,000!

Just think, by bringing your lunch to work every day rather than eating out, you can increase your retirement nest egg by an estimated \$200,000. A little can go a long way. Your retirement dreams can become a reality.

Imagine the impact you can have on the Kingdom and in the lives of others through some simple retirement planning. Start saving now and be sure you are saving enough. **ONE**

About the Writer: Chris Compton is communications officer for the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement.

Learn more: www.BoardofRetirement.com.

Become a Church Philanthropist

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

What does it mean to be a philanthropist?

Do you have to be rich and give hundreds of thousands of dollars away each year? Absolutely not. Philanthropy is defined simply as goodwill to fellow members of the human race; especially, active effort to promote human welfare.



In today's world, most of us view philanthropists as those rich individuals who dip into their vast amounts of wealth to help save the whales or keep the polar bears from getting warm. But with the Greek word *anthrop* contained within the word, *philanthropy* literally means "love of mankind," something at which Christians should "top the charts."

Philanthropy is simply giving money for a purpose or cause that benefits people you don't know personally. Many people separate their tithe from an act of philanthropy, but when considering this definition, that is exactly what tithing is meant to do. I would argue it is something else as well. It is more than simply giving money. Even secular philanthropists don't simply give money to causes or organizations. They give to causes about which they are passionate and long to help.

Christians are much more geared to the love of mankind than the secular world (although to look at some struggling church budgets it might be a stretch to prove).

While you may not be as rich as Bill Gates or Warren Buffet, all of us who love mankind can be philanthropists. We don't simply give with our money in serving the Lord, but with everything we are. Money is simply a bi-product of the way Christians are to live. The Lord has blessed us with our current situation and expects us to use those resources to provide for others. Not only in material goods, but in their spiritual needs. Being a philanthropist requires you to have a vested interest in the causes you support through time and finances.

So, how do we, the church, become better philanthropists? It starts with a simple commitment to your local congregation. Every member of the local congregation is a philanthropist to the com-

munity in which it is located. The purpose of the church is to reach out into the community and share the gospel. This requires time and resources. Everything from Sunday morning services to community theater nights offers something to the community and demonstrates a love for mankind to the world. Volunteering to help at high school games or feeding the homeless are wonderful ways to benefit the community in which you live.

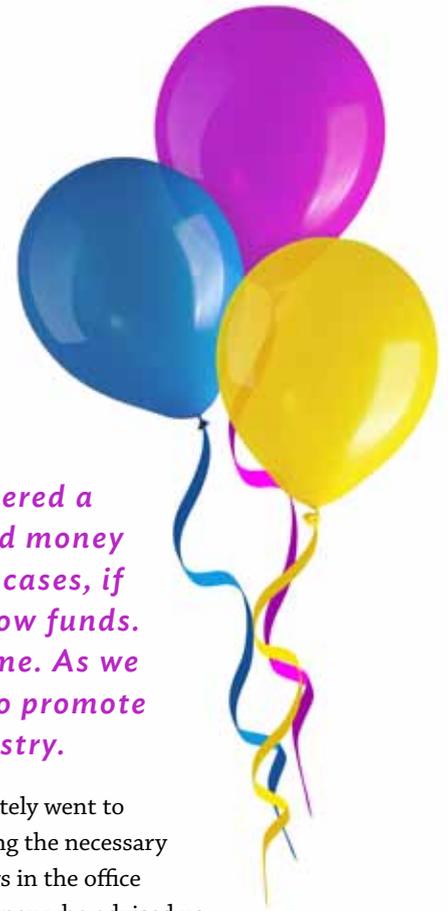
Next, philanthropy extends to causes beyond the local congregation. As Christians, this often comes by way of missionaries, but it doesn't need to stop there. We are surrounded by needs on all sides in this world. If the Lord has given you a passion for a cause, and you feel you should get involved, then do more research and go for it! Earlier, I joked about saving whales and polar bears, but God has given us dominion over creation, and we are responsible for its stewardship.

Christians have a biblical call on our lives to give. As far back as Adam and Eve, the Lord built it into our human nature to give. Scientific research has confirmed we are all hardwired to give, and the act of giving provides us with great joy. Providing money to fund a cause or need is good, but is only a small part of what God has called Christians to do. We are to give all of ourselves in the service of the Kingdom. Money is just a small part if we are to be real church philanthropists. **ONE**

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

to CELF!

By John Gibbs



Thirty-five years ago, Free Will Baptist Home Missions encountered a pressing problem that had to be addressed. Mission churches needed money to construct a building or purchase much-needed property. In most cases, if they located a property, they had no money to buy or equity to borrow funds. Director Roy Thomas shared this burden with Trymon Messer and me. As we crisscrossed the country in our van, traveling thousands of miles to promote Home Missions, we discussed plans and visions for the ministry.

Roy asked me to research other ministries to see how they dealt with the challenge. During my research, I discovered a sister denomination in Missouri that had established a very successful plan for their home missions projects. During one of our trips through southern Missouri, we stopped in Poplar Bluff at the General Baptist national office. I made the necessary appointments with their leadership, and we enjoyed a great time of fellowship as we shared ideas and discussed needs. They assured us we were welcome to take their plan and adapt it to our particular needs.

The plan was simple: create a loan fund with investors from within the denomination that would lend money to mission churches at an affordable rate of interest while providing investors a fair return. I must say, we continued on our way with a fresh excitement in the van.

Once home, I immediately went to work writing and designing the necessary brochures. We spent hours in the office with an experienced attorney who advised us how the new plan should be written and presented. From the beginning, we were intent on making sure the plan would be legal and safe, both for Home Missions and for investors.

The new loan fund was a fresh approach to the existing CELF—Church Extension Loan Fund. The staff and Board of Home Missions were pleased with the concept, and we all trusted God to bless our efforts and vision. He did, and the rest is history.

Today, the loan fund has grown to an amazing amount and continues to help church planters construct buildings, purchase property, or remodel existing facilities across the country.

As Brother Trymon used to say...God did it! **ONE**

About the Writer: John Gibbs was the first director of development for the Home Missions Department. He currently resides in Gastonia, North Carolina.

More About CELF

The Church Extension Loan Fund is a fund from which Free Will Baptist churches can borrow money to build a church or buy land.

The investment program is an important way to provide the financial base. You can invest any amount over \$500. In return, you will receive a good rate of interest on your investment.

The money is then loaned to Free Will Baptist churches. The church repays the loan at a fair market rate of interest. The repaid principal is never spent but loaned to another new church.

The CELF investment program affords you an opportunity to help a church get a much-needed loan while earning interest on your investment.

For more information, visit www.fwbnam.com and click on the CELF icon.

You may also call the North American Ministries office: 615-760-6137.

At a CROSS+ROADS

By John Carey,
CH MAJ (RETIRED)

“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).

17 September 1986: I signed my name on the dotted line...countless lines, in fact. I needed money to attend college, and the army commercials assured me I could do that and more. “Be all that you can be” the army advertisement claimed, and I bought it completely. Upon raising my right hand before that beautiful American flag and reciting the Enlisted Oath of Office, I officially joined the United States Army. I reported to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for basic training. I was one of 50 trainees in my platoon, and I received my first incredibly short haircut, several sets of BDUs (Battle Duty Uniforms), boots, and my first taste of army chow.

Like many of my fellow trainees, I was “chewed out” several times regarding my appearance, my marching capabilities (or lack thereof), and one instance of being late for a formation. All of these one-way discussions resulted in numerous opportunities to hone my skills in pushups, a much-needed exercise to pass

my APFT (Army Physical Fitness Test).

Only four days into training, I attended my first army chapel service. Amazingly, I knew the hymns, and even recognized Bible verses and the comforting words of a preacher, an army chaplain. God was active among soldiers in the U.S. Army, too. From that point forward, I attended chapel services every Sunday. I enjoyed hearing God’s Word and a few minutes of relaxed company and encouragement. I received spiritual as well as physical nourishment that encouraged me to stay the course during those eight demanding weeks of training.

I graduated from basic training November 21,



PHOTO - April Kroenke:
www.AprilKroenke.com

1986—one of the proudest days of my life as I marched proudly with my platoon. I later enjoyed fellowship (and restaurant food) with my uncle and brother, Wayne McDaniel and Doug Carey, who had come to celebrate the big day with me. It was a day I will always remember as I earned the rank of Private First Class, and the title of “army soldier.”

01 August 2000: The Carey family moved to Fort Hood, Texas. I earned a M.Div. from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary and reentered active duty as a battalion chaplain. I reported to my unit, 3rd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, from the 1st Cavalry Division. My son Will was eight years old at the time, and Bobby was only seven.

I was thankful God had given us this new ministry, and that gratitude extended to my wife Lynne for her unwavering hard work and support. Without her, we wouldn’t have made it back. After five years and nine months of active enlisted service, four years in the Tennessee National Guard, and a year in the reserves, I now had the opportunity to share the Lord with my soldiers as a new captain and chaplain. We enjoyed this ministry for many years, deployments, and challenges to come.

27 October 2016: It hardly seems possible that more than 30 years of military service have passed since I first donned an army dress uniform. Lynne and I attended an army retirement ceremony held by the Fort Campbell 101st Airborne Division, along with 25 other soldiers and their guests.

Several family members and guests were there to support us, including my in-laws, Mr. and Mrs. James Sturgill; my sisters-in-law Vera Eads and Valerie Ponder; Dr. David Crowe, director of North American Ministries; Chaplain Kerry Steedley (COL, Retired); and Steve Willis, former first-sergeant and friend; and his wife; Dr. and Mrs. McDaniel (Uncle Wayne and Aunt Cele); and my brother, Doug Carey.

Yes, Uncle Wayne and Doug were there for both my first and last ceremonies as a soldier. It was a full, busy, and blessed day, though the event itself took less than an hour. We celebrated with cake and refreshments at home afterwards, with all our guests in attendance.

Over 22 active service years passed quickly during my time as a soldier, 16 as a chaplain. The Carey family endured five major deployments—the first Gulf War (1990-91), two tours of Kuwait (2001-02), Operation Iraqi Freedom (2004-05), and Operation Enduring Freedom (2012).

I have had the opportunity to serve under several commanders and units, as hospital and post-counseling chaplain. Throughout this service, God has blessed our family greatly. Will, now 24, graduated from Army ROTC in May 2014, and married Kristin in May 2015. First Lieutenant and Mrs. Carey currently serve in Germany. Bobby, age 23, is a senior at Austin Peay University, in Clarksville, Tennessee, earning top marks in his studies. Lynne and I have been married 27 years, and to say I “married up” is a severe understatement.

As I write these words, I must admit mixed emotions. I am at a crossroads in serving the Lord, and I believe He has closed the door on army ministry. I have not taken the privilege of serving God as chaplain lightly over these 16 years, and the idea of learning something new has not been a pleasant thought. It is not easy to admit a personal struggle, but I am coming to terms with it, and I believe God has a purpose in the whole experience.

I want to remain obedient to His will, and I hope to apply the gifts I have received when ministering to soldiers on the battlefields, hospitals, and on the home front. I will always have a special affection for soldiers and veterans. They understand what serving and sacrificing for a cause greater than self is all about. That sacrifice is necessary for our country to continue, for freedom is never free.

As I leave the army, I leave with gratitude, for the same Lord and Savior who saved me—the same God who promised to never leave or forsake us—is still in charge, and He has a purpose in all of this. I am grateful He allowed me to serve soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines for so long. God has reminded me, through the contact, gratitude, and friendship with many I served that, in some small way, I was successful in sharing His Word, and I was faithful to His cause. Perhaps someone out there is reading this and wondering where God would have him serve. The military chaplaincy is a wonderful calling and a ministry that needs Christ-led pastors more than ever.

I leave the army claiming Jeremiah 29:11 among many other Bible passages: “For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end.” I leave the army family, and I join the many U.S. veterans of wars past and present. I look to the future, always trusting that God will use me to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others, both in Word and in deed. The timeless chaplain’s motto is *Pro Deo et Patria*: “For God and Country.” May it ever be my motto as well! **ONE**

RIDGE CHURCH

Ownership Transferred

BY KEN AKERS

In 2005, Master's Men Director Ken Akers was approached regarding the deteriorating condition of the Ridge Church in New Durham, New Hampshire. As a result of the conversation, a national committee was appointed to talk with Jim Nason, pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church in New Durham, (and owners of the Ridge Church), to see what might be done.

The committee included Executive Secretary Keith Burden; Moderator Tim York; Historical Commission and Home Missions representative David Crowe; Randy Riggs, representative from the Cumberland Association; and Ken Akers. That fall, the committee traveled to New Durham and visited the church with Pastor Jim Nason.

Construction on the Ridge Church began in 1818 and was completed in 1819. Though he died several years before it was built, this is the church started and attended by Benjamin Randall, founder of the northern movement of Free Will Baptists. Over the decades (not to mention centuries), the church has gone through multiple changes. Chimneys were added. A bell tower was built (to house a bell cast in Paul Revere's forge). At one time, the congregation even turned the church to face another direction. Decorative metal sheets were added to the walls and ceiling and electricity eventually replaced the lamps in the sanctuary chandelier. The structure is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and is such a vital part of the town history that it appears in the Town Seal.

After months of planning and fund raising, a group of volunteers from Arkansas, Illinois, Ohio, and Tennessee spent two

weeks working on the roof. Inside, the structures were reinforced, and outside the existing shingles were removed and replaced. Over the next several years, volunteers removed the old, flaking paint and repainted both interior and exterior, including the pews.

Structural work secured the weak foundation and new boards were installed to replace the flooring cut away when gas furnaces were added to the building. Windows were re-glazed and other smaller projects completed.

During these years of working on the church, Pastor Nason and I frequently discussed the need to secure the ownership of the building so it would remain a Free Will Baptist historical landmark. Following the 1911 merger, the First Church in New Durham joined the American Baptists for a time, and the Ridge Church was nearly lost to Free Will Baptists.

Over the years, First Church has done a great job maintaining the building, but as the church aged, more extensive (and expensive) repairs were required. After many conversations, and with great excitement, the First Church voted to transfer ownership of the Ridge Church to North American Ministries, along with the cemetery where the Randall family is buried, located not far from the church. In December 2016, David Crowe and I met with Pastor Nason and the trustees and deacons of First Church to sign the documents to begin the ownership transfer.

It was a historic day as Free Will Baptists secured ownership of this historic landmark. The denomination owes gratitude to

Jim Nason and the members of First Free Will Baptist Church for this selfless gesture that will allow future generations of Free Will Baptists to experience firsthand this important link to their past.

While the Ridge Church has undergone a great deal of renovation, thanks to volunteers from across the denomination, much remains to be done. In addition to ongoing, regular maintenance, the bell tower has sustained many years of water damage and needs to be repaired. Estimates range from \$67,000 to \$200,000. In 2017, Master's men will coordinate volunteers to repaint the outside of the building and deal with the bell tower. This project needs both volunteers and funding.

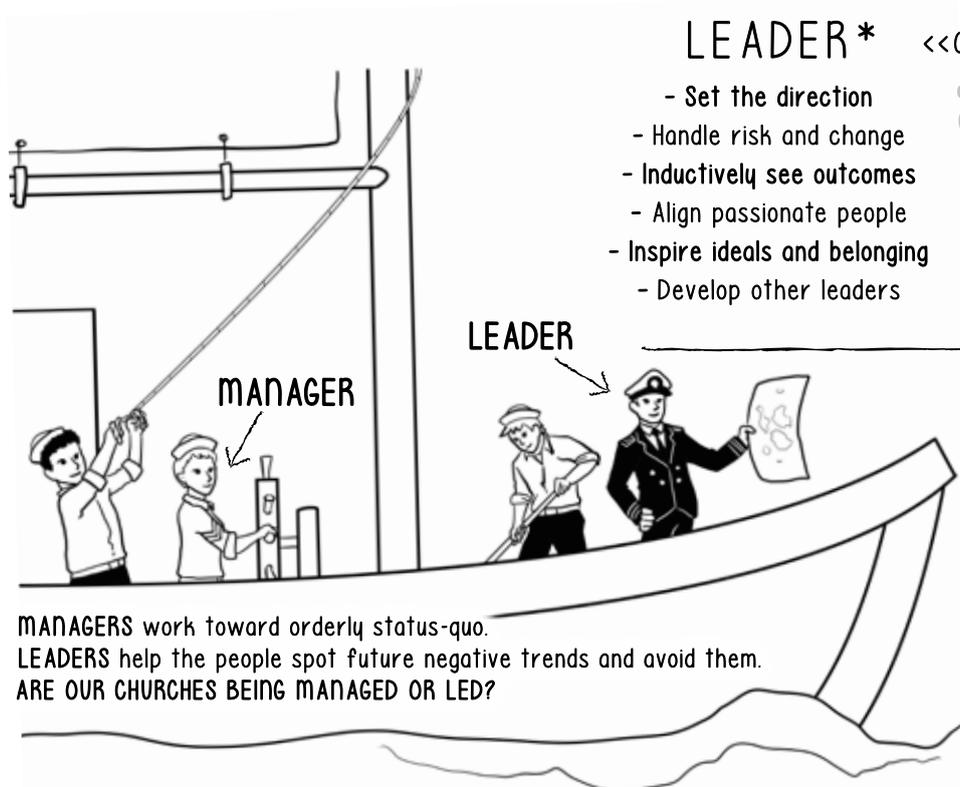
Learn more at www.fwbmastersmen.org or by calling 931-265-2333. 

About the Writer: Ken Akers is director of Free Will Baptist Master's Men. Learn more about Master's Men, Free Will Baptist Disaster Response, and other ministries of the organization at www.fwbmastersmen.org.



LEADERSHIP WHITEBOARD

Leader or Manager || BY RON HUNTER JR., Ph.D.



LEADER* <<OR>> MANAGER*

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Set the direction - Handle risk and change - Inductively see outcomes - Align passionate people - Inspire ideals and belonging - Develop other leaders | } | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Create orderly results - Prefer predictability - Deductively predict outcomes - Match people to tasks - Control activities - Organize processes |
|---|---|--|

MANAGERS work toward orderly status-quo.
 LEADERS help the people spot future negative trends and avoid them.
 ARE OUR CHURCHES BEING MANAGED OR LED?

Leadership is not better than management. The two function differently, but both are vital to an organization. People often confuse the roles of leaders and managers. Just like the illustration shows, leaders don't drive the ship; they plot the course. The one behind the wheel has a good view but cannot see everything the captain does who can glimpse the whole ship and observe where the ship is in relation to other ships and threats. The ship could be run by managers until a monsoon or change of mission occurs. You want a resilient leader who stays calm in the roughest seas and inspires others to steer in a healthy direction. Managing in the storms tends to lose crew members, because they stay on the same course. Why? They always have steered this way. The greatest catastrophe managers tend to miss is how the slow loss of crew or taking on water can eventually sink or capsize the organization because they are adverse to risk or change. Leaders attract and inspire crew who work hard, not passengers who enjoy the ride. **ONE**

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

BECAUSE MANAGEMENT DEALS MOSTLY WITH THE STATUS QUO AND LEADERSHIP DEALS MOSTLY WITH CHANGE, IN THE NEXT CENTURY WE ARE GOING TO HAVE TO TRY TO BECOME MUCH MORE SKILLED AT CREATING LEADERS.
 —JOHN KOTTER

RECOMMENDED BOOK:

LEADING CHANGE
 BY JOHN KOTTER



Imagine your leadership growth if you tackled the six books recommended each year.

*Principle of list adapted from Kotter, J (1990) *What Leaders Really Do*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business Review Press, pp. 103-111.

MORE THAN A Magazine

By David Jones and Randy Ledbetter

Stroll through your local bookstore and you'll see shelves lined with bestsellers. From fiction to sports to home decorating, you're sure to find a myriad of books on countless topics, and perhaps one or two that pique your interest. What almost all these books have in common is they're informational, meant to be read, enjoyed, and provide new knowledge and perspectives. Very rarely, though, will you find a book that goes beyond the level of information and becomes *transformational*.

When we study the Bible, our lives are transformed. Much more than just an informational book, the Word of God is alive and active and has the power to change lives (Hebrews 4:12). For many years, the church has served as the primary—sometimes the only—spiritual influence in the lives of families. However, when we examine Scripture, we see it is the family that should be the primary source of discipleship (Deuteronomy 6).

Engaging in Discipleship

One of the greatest desires of Christian parents is to help children come to know Christ and learn to walk with Him in a daily personal relationship. That means children must learn how to have their own devotional time with Christ in prayer and Bible reading. One or two hours at church on Sunday is simply not enough to help them grow and mature in their walk with Christ. They need to be spending time daily letting God speak to them through His Word, and talking with Him in prayer. Ideally, a child's parents have their own devotional time as well and discuss with the child what he or she is learning. But what tools are available to help the parent guide a child in this process, and help the child or teen dig into God's Word for him or herself?

That is where D6 devotional study guides come in. They are valuable and important tools for parents and their children, helping them develop the habit of studying God's Word on their own. The study guides provide brief daily devotions to help read-

ers dig deeper into God's Word throughout the week, reinforcing what they learned in Sunday School or small group meeting at church. But discipleship is not meant to happen in isolation. Since all age groups study the same theme, parents, and even grandparents, are able to discuss with their children what they are learning. Whether it is an in-depth discussion about Sunday's lesson or a casual conversation regarding a passage of Scripture, parents have the opportunity to use the devotional magazines to embrace teachable moments and disciple their children. What a wonderful tool to help parents fulfill their responsibility to live out God's Word themselves, and to teach their children to do the same. But the study guides go beyond devotions.

Changing Culture, Changing Needs

The culture around us is changing constantly, and whether we like to admit it or not, it's influencing our kids and us without our permission. With daily advancements in technology and a world that shifts faster than we can comprehend, we can no longer keep our families in a bubble and shelter them completely from culture's pull.

Despite this grim reality, the good news is that parents do get a say on the things that influence. Kids will spend far more time under your roof than they will at school, at church, or even hanging out with friends. Many parents want to use this time to talk to their kids about the issues they are facing and what's going on in their world, but feel inadequate and ill equipped to do so.

Through articles, columns, and insights, D6 devotional magazines help people understand how biblical truth intersects daily life. While the world wants to tell your family and you what to think about cultural topics, the magazines provide aid on how to think biblically on such issues. Everything is approached from a biblical worldview and perspective.

In many ways, this approach is another aspect of discipleship. By focusing on relevant topics and important cultural issues, the magazines seek to inform parents and students about these issues, provide a biblical response, and allow a platform so parents and children can engage in discussion. In no way are the magazines a replacement for the Bible. Rather, the magazines work hand-in-hand with Scripture as a supplement to daily Bible study.

“I Don’t Know How”

For many, the most difficult part of generational discipleship is knowing where to start. Even for the lifelong Christian, family devotions can feel awkward, overwhelming, and even pointless at times. Our hope is that D6 devotional magazines can remove the intimidation factor and provide conversation starters for the family. A family devotion time doesn’t have to look like a Sunday morning church service (and if it does, good luck taking up the offering). But sometimes, it’s as simple as discussing a passage of Scripture you and your child read in your devotions that day, or providing thoughts on an article that discussed absolute truth.

The culture around us is changing constantly, and whether we like to admit it or not, it’s influencing our kids and us without our permission.

Everyone is influenced by *something*. The best thing we can do for our families is to be intentional in making sure that “something” is founded in the Word of God. With D6 devotional magazines, parents can bridge the gap between church and home. We desire to see intergenerational discipleship take hold around the world, whether parents discipling children, a brother discipling a sister, grandparents discipling grandchildren, or spiritual mentors in the church discipling those who need it most.

With study guides that provide daily devotions, relevant articles, and biblical truth, we hope you will see our products as more than just magazines, but necessary tools to engage in discipleship at home and across the world. **ONE**



About the Writers: David Jones and Randy Ledbetter are members of the editorial team at Randall House Publications. For more information about D6 Curriculum, visit www.D6Family.com.

VIII conference

JULY 16-19, 2017 • *Louisville, Ky*

Training



ALL INDIVIDUAL ENTRIES AND STATE COMPETITION RESULTS must be sent to Randall House by June 1. The CTS event schedule will be posted online by June 15.



2 CORINTHIANS
3:12

Learning

ENGAGE
SEMINAR SERIES

DON'T MISS THE DOZENS OF LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES provided by the ENGAGE Leadership Network. Topics covered include leadership, student ministry, apologetics, and more. There's something for everyone.

Service

SERVE
THE CITY
SERVING CHRIST BY SERVING OTHERS

STC ORGANIZERS WORK WITH LOCAL CHURCHES AND NON-PROFITS to find areas of need so students help make a real impact in the city. Sign up in advance online or visit our on-site booth.

Worship

PRESCHOOL,
CHILDREN,
456, TEENS



SUNDAY AM



MICHAEL
SMITH

SUNDAY PM



BRANDON
ROYSDEN

MONDAY PM



SAM
MCVAY

TUESDAY PM



ZANE
BLACK

TUESDAY PM



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a ministry of  randall house

WEDNESDAY NIGHT MISSIONS OFFERING

• • By David Crowe • •

I remember as a young pastor how much I enjoyed going to the National Association every year.

I looked forward to the fellowship with other Free Will Baptist families and opportunities to spend some time with my heroes. I always enjoyed the music because it stirred something inside me to hear several thousand Free Will Baptists lifting their voices together in praise and worship. I enjoyed the messages because I always got something from them I could use in my ministry and church.

I enjoyed the men who served in denominational positions, and I talked with them and listened to their wisdom and encouragement. I realized they were sincere and humble servants of the Lord. I enjoyed every aspect of the National Association (except maybe a few business sessions), but of all the things I experienced as a young pastor, the part I enjoyed most and anticipated most every year was the Wednesday night missions service.

I sat in humble admiration and jubilation as missionaries, both home and international, walked across the stage

with their families and allowed us the wonderful privilege to admire and applaud them. It always moved me to experience that service, and it always motivated me to give and then give more to missionaries at home and around the world. It gave my wife Kathey and me a unique opportunity to show our love and support for families who had answered God's call to plant churches and preach the gospel to the ends of the earth.

I remember the anticipation building as the offering was received and then counted immediately during the service so an announcement could be made at the end of the service to let us know how much was received in that special offering. I remember youth groups from various churches across the denomination that worked to raise money all year and presented a substantial check the night of the offering. I remember men's and women's groups from churches of all sizes, small to large, presented checks on that night.

I also remember how Kathey and I would begin praying months ahead of the meeting, asking God what He would have us give in the offering. We always came prepared to give. I sometimes wondered if the amount we gave each year made any difference in missions. I finally realized that while our offering probably didn't make much difference by itself, when it was combined with

what every other Free Will Baptist had given, it could and did make a difference here and around the world.

Over the last several years, I have watched the amount of the Wednesday night missions offering decline as our attention has been diverted to many other things. I know the economy has been up and down. I know it costs more to live than it once did. I also know it costs more to attend the National Association these days, leading not only to a decline in the offering, but also to a decline in attendance. In spite of all these things, I still believe God can move upon our hearts and provide the means to give as never before. Kathey and I still pray and ask God what He would have us give each year, and each year we want to give more than we ever have before.

I'm asking you as an individual, a family, an organization, or a church, to pray and ask God what He wants you to give. Then, come to Louisville, Kentucky, prepared to give more than you ever have before. We are currently developing ideas that will make it easier to give, such as texting the amount of your offering.

Will you join Kathey and me in that prayer and join with the staff and church planters at North American Ministries along with Clint and Lynette Morgan and the staff and missionaries of International Missions? Let's pray, listen, respond, give... and then see what God will do. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dr. H. David Crowe is director of North American Ministries. Learn more about the work of Free Will Baptist church planters: www.fwbnam.com. Need more information about the National Association? Visit www.nafwb.org.



About the Denomination >>

Introducing the 2017 Nominations* for Standing Boards and Commissions

HOME MISSIONS / NORTH AMERICAN MINISTRIES

2023 **Bob Lewis** (TN) replacing himself

Josh Baer (NC) replacing Robert Thebeau (MO) who is ineligible for re-election

David Sexton (VA) replacing himself

Josh Baer has been lead pastor at Cramerton FWB Church (NC) since July 2015. Prior to becoming lead pastor, he had served as associate pastor and minister of music since 2005. He graduated from Southeastern FWB College in 1998 with a Bachelor's degree in sacred music. He earned a Master of Ministry from Bob Jones University in 2007, as well as a Specialist in Ministry in 2013. Currently, he is pursuing a Doctor of Ministry degree from Southeastern Baptist Seminary. Josh is a church planting coach for North American Ministries, a member of the Board of Directors for Southeastern FWB College, and vice-president of the Southeastern FWB College Alumni Association.

BOARD OF RETIREMENT AND INSURANCE

2023 **Danny Baer** (NC) replacing himself

James Beasley (SC) replacing himself

Jack Daniel (GA) replacing Tim Hall (KY) who is ineligible for re-election

Jack Daniel has been a member of First FWB Church in Albany, Georgia, for 52 years and has served on the deacon board for 22 years. He served previously as a member of the Board of Retirement for 28 years (1985-2001 and 2003-2015), six years as chairman.

BOARD OF FWB FOUNDATION

2023 **Bobby Edwards** (TN) replacing himself

Melissa Haralson (AR) replacing Waymon Fields (AL) who is ineligible for re-election

Bob Thompson (OK) replacing Melvin Worthington (NC) who is ineligible for re-election

Melissa Haralson has operated her own full-service CPA firm in Atkins, Arkansas, since 1999. Prior to opening her own office, Melissa was senior accountant for Joe DuVall and Associates, in Conway, Arkansas, and bookkeeper/accountant for Angeles, Conner, and Davis, in Ft. Smith, Arkansas. She earned a B.S. in accounting from Arkansas Tech University in 1989 and passed the CPA exam in 1991. She attends Union Grove FWB Church in Atkins, Arkansas, where she works with women and children.

Bob Thompson is vice president of Institutional Advancement at Randall University. A veteran pastor of nearly 25 years, Bob graduated from Hillsdale College with a B.A. in theology. From 1996-2001, he served as state youth and camp director for the Arkansas State Association. He also has served as both assistant moderator and moderator of the Oklahoma State Association and has held various district associational positions.

COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

2022 **Kevin Hester** (TN) replacing himself

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2022 **Willie Martin** (GA) replacing himself

MUSIC COMMISSION

2022 **Doug Little** (TN) replacing himself

MEDIA COMMISSION

2022 **Marc Nepl** (VA) replacing himself

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2020 **Stan Bunch** (MO) replacing himself

Wayne Hale (MID-ATL) replacing himself

Daniel Edwards (IN) replacing himself

GENERAL OFFICERS

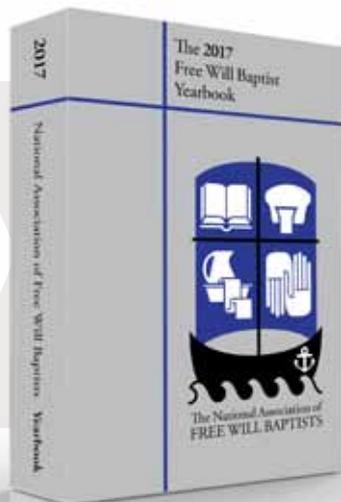
Moderator: **Tim York** (TN)

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

Clerk: **Randy Bryant** (FL)

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

*The following boards do not elect members in 2017: Welch College, International Missions, Randall House Publications, and Women Nationally Active for Christ



2017 YEARBOOK NOW AVAILABLE

Antioch, TN—The 2017 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.

Pre-Registration

2017 National Association of Free Will Baptists

NAFWB | VIII | LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY | JULY 16-19, 2017

One Form Per Person | Register Online: 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 LattéQty_____ x \$15 = _____
Monday, July 17, 8:30 p.m. (\$20 onsite; limited quantity available)
Welch Alumni & Friends LuncheonQty_____ x \$30 = _____
Wednesday, July 19, noon (\$35 onsite)

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

Vertical Three Conference (formerly NYC)

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 CTS competition or event MUST pay \$25 VIII conference fee (\$35 on-site).

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

*Competitors must pay this \$25 VIII conference fee **in addition to** CTS competition fees already paid.

College Age | Adults: \$15

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

- Adult Attendee

Tickets:

ENGAGE Student Ministry LuncheonQty_____ x \$15 = _____
Monday, July 17, noon

The Skit GuysQty_____ x \$12 = _____
Tuesday, July 18, 9:00 pm (\$14 onsite/at the door)

VIII Information: 800-877-7030 | www.verticalthree.com

**Register April 3 – June 16, 2017 (postmarked)
No Refunds After June 16**

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

Office Use Only: Date _____ CK# _____ Amt \$ _____ From _____

Convention Housing

GALT HOUSE HOTEL



Executive SUITE Living Room



Deluxe RIVUE Guestroom

GALT HOUSE HOTEL

Address: 140 N 4th Street, Louisville, KY 40202

Phone: 502-589-5200

(Identify as a part of the NAFWB)

Deluxe RIVUE Tower Guest Room: \$135

Executive SUITE Tower Guest Room: \$155

(Suites include sleeper sofa and living room.)

Valet: \$25/night | **Self Parking:** \$15/night

Amenities: Complimentary upgraded WiFi and use of Club 360 Fitness Center

Photos and hotel info: www.GaltHouse.com

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, or crib

2. Contact the Hotel.

- + **Online reservations** open on Monday, May 8, 9:00 a.m. CT (10:00 a.m. ET). Links to online reservations will be available at www.nafwb.org. No phone reservations will be accepted on this day.
- + **Phone reservations** will open Tuesday, May 9, 9:00 a.m. CT (10:00 a.m. ET). **Online reservations are encouraged to avoid long wait times.**
- + **Group Reservations:** Groups making ten 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.
- + Hotel rates do not include 16.07% tax.
- + **The first night's room and tax will be charged for any canceled reservations.** The charge is non-refundable, but reservations are transferable. Available rooms may be posted at www.nafwb.org for transfer.

Reservation Cut-off Date:

Friday, June 16, 2017

Visit www.NAFWB.org for additional information.

BATTER UP

in the Bluegrass State *By Emily Faison*

“I hope it won’t be 40 more years before you come back to Kentucky,” Ed Hutchinson, chairman of the 1981 Kentucky Steering Committee said at the close of the business session in Louisville. Free Will Baptists took his words to heart, returning in 1993, 2005, and now 2017.

Nestled along the banks of the Ohio River, Louisville is a central location for many Free Will Baptists and a familiar city for those who have attended D6 Conferences in Louisville the past few years. The 81st annual convention will take place at Kentucky International Convention Center, July 16-19.

One of the oldest cities west of the Appalachians, Louisville was founded in 1778 and named after France’s King Louis XVI. Known for a blend of high-class hats and down-home country fried anything, this unique “City of Parks” pays tribute to America’s diverse history and culture.

In Free Will Baptist history, past Louisville conventions mark the inclu-

sion of the Atlantic-Canada Association in 1981, the introduction of both the Together Way Plan and the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Churches in 1993, and the first shortened convention, ending on Wednesday night instead of Thursday in 2005. In addition to the introduction of the Impact outreach program, the 2005 Louisville meeting was also the first convention reported on by the newly-launched *ONE Magazine*.

Around Town

Sports lovers will be aching to get into the Louisville Slugger Museum, which houses the factory where Major League bats are made. (Pro tip: Your little slugger will receive a free mini bat with a tour.) But the bat museum is only one of ten museums in a four-block range—Museum Row on Main.

In addition to museums, those who appreciate history will want to try a famous “Hot Brown” at Louisville’s Brown Hotel and take a stroll through “Old



Louisville,” the largest Victorian neighborhood in the United States. Adventurous convention-goers may ride a camel at the Louisville Zoo or catch a coaster at Kentucky Kingdom. Those with a flair for the dramatic can attend a free performance in the park, courtesy of the Kentucky Shakespeare Festival.

Whatever your preferred pastime, there’s plenty for visitors to enjoy in the Bluegrass State...and don’t forget your hat!

About the Writer: Emily Faison graduated in 2016 from Florida State University with a M.A. in Literature. She is a member of the convention press team.





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

ONE to ONE >>

A POSITIVE ROLE MODEL

At approximately 5:00 p.m., Wednesday, March 1, 2017, Geneva Walker was quietly ushered into the Lord's presence.

Surrounded by her family, she passed from this life without a great deal of attention or fanfare. That's precisely the way she would have wanted it. It's the same way she lived her life and served her Savior—with a low profile and unassuming.

Early in her life, she learned the valuable lessons of hard work and taking responsibility for her actions. She developed a servant's heart from the years she spent in the parsonage as a pastor's wife and mother of three. She managed to achieve the rare balance between being firm yet kind. You always knew where she stood, and that she loved you unconditionally.

At one of our visits during her hospitalization I remarked to her family, "Geneva is a 'discontinued model.' They don't make them like her anymore." Her humble spirit and strong work ethic uniquely qualified and equipped her to serve as an employee of International Missions for many years. For her, it was more than a job. It was a ministry.

More recently, Geneva worked part-time in the Executive Office during the convention pre-registration process. With the patience of Job, she painstakingly checked and double-checked lists of registrant data, then stuffed envelopes with name badges, ribbons, tickets, and related materials. Once the process was complete, she made herself available to serve as a volunteer behind the registration counter during the convention. She cheerfully logged long hours without complaint.

Her outward attractiveness was matched only by her inward beauty. She always conducted herself with dignity and grace. Despite fac-

ing some physical challenges during her later years, Geneva had a strong constitution and displayed remarkable stamina. During a period of life when many choose to back away from commitment and involvement, she chose to remain engaged and active in the Lord's work.

Of all Geneva's admirable qualities, two in particular stand out to me. **One was her dependability. If she told you she would do something, she did it.** She was always on time (usually early) and a self-starter. She needed little or no supervision. Once given a task, you could depend on her to do it and do it right the first time.

She was also meticulous. Her attention to detail was extraordinary. She refused to be measured by the "good enough to get by" standard. She strove for perfection. Although she didn't always achieve her goal, it was never due to a lack of effort. In that regard she is a vanishing breed.

When Geneva Walker entered the portals of Glory late Wednesday afternoon, I'm convinced the guardians of heaven found her pre-registration documents all in order in the Lamb's Book of Life. She leaves behind the legacy of a life well lived. And while she may be a "discontinued model," she is still, nonetheless, a model...a positive role model.



Thank you, Geneva, for leaving us such clear example to follow. ONE

FIGHTING THE TIDE

THE FREE WILL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL COMMISSION



SINCE BEING ORGANIZED IN 1960, THE COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY HAS WORKED DILIGENTLY TO GUARD FREE WILL BAPTISTS FROM THEOLOGICAL TRENDS THAT WOULD THREATEN THE DOCTRINAL INTEGRITY OF THE DENOMINATION. TODAY, THE COMMISSION CONTINUES ITS WORK OF PROMOTING SOUND THEOLOGY THROUGH ANNUAL SYMPOSIUMS, EDUCATIONAL MATERIALS, AND ARTICLES ON ITS RAPIDLY-EXPANDING WEBSITE. LEARN MORE:

www.FWBTheology.com

Getting + Giving



When most people think about making a charitable gift, they think of giving cash from a checking or savings account. While gifts of any kind are appreciated, you also can give (and benefit) by making a gift of other assets to the ministry (or ministries) you choose:

- Avoid capital gains taxes.
- Receive a charitable deduction.
- Give today and still use your money.
- Establish lifetime income.
- Support these (and other) ministries.

For more info, contact
FWB Foundation:

foundation@nafwb.org
877-336-7575



wm 
April 30, 2017



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