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ONE

MAGAZINE

REDEFINING DISCIPLESHIP

The Magazine for Free Will Baptists

DECEMBER 2009-JANUARY 2010

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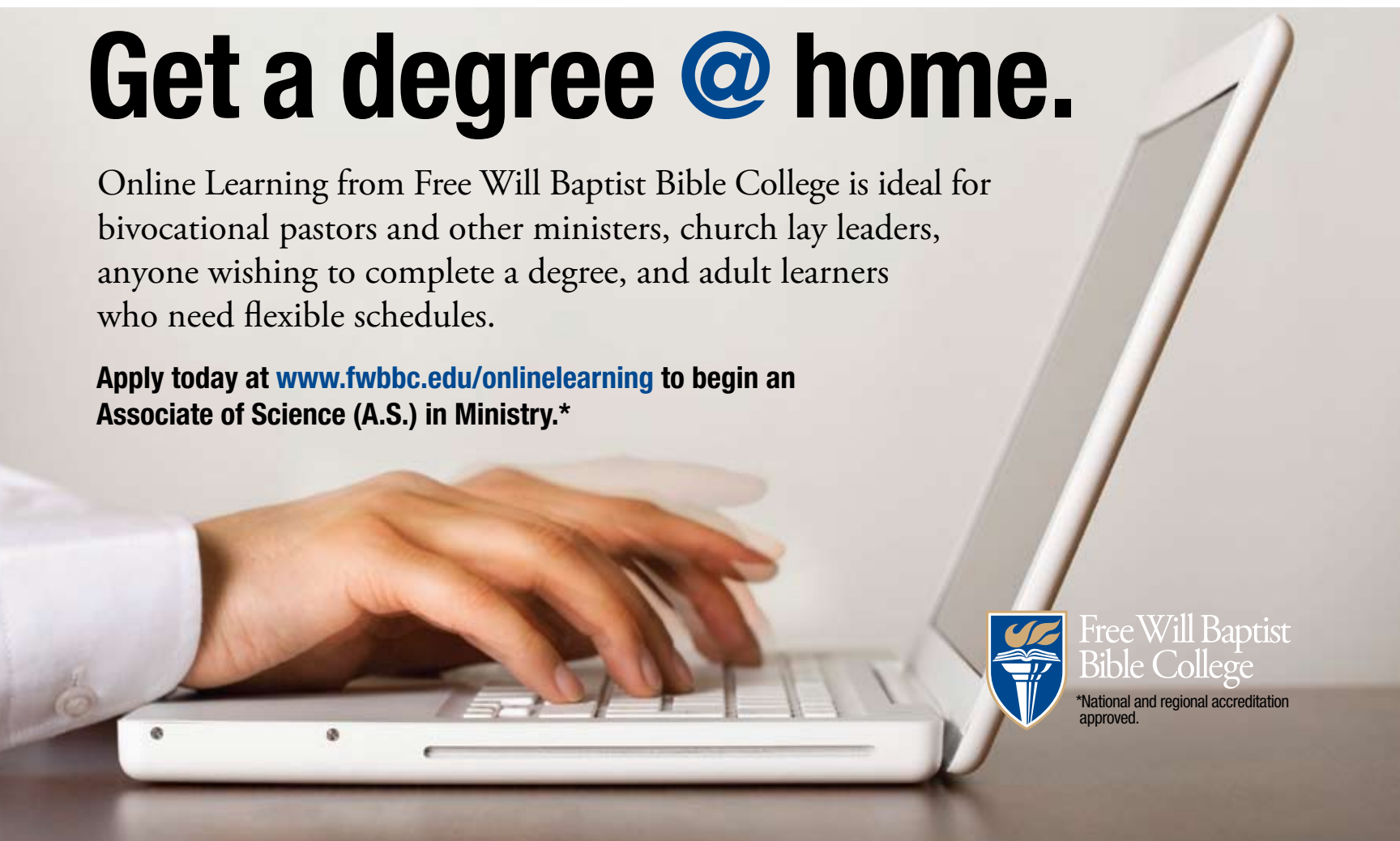
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TO COMMUNICATE TO
FREE WILL BAPTISTS A
UNIFYING VISION OF OUR
ROLE IN THE EXTENSION
OF GOD'S KINGDOM.



50



22

ONE MAGAZINE
ISSN 1554-3323
VOLUME 6
ISSUE 1



30

Published bi-monthly by the
National Association of
Free Will Baptists, Inc.,
5233 Mt. View Road,
Antioch, TN 37013-2306.

Non-profit periodical postage rate
paid at Antioch, TN 37011 and
additional offices.

POSTMASTER,
SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:
ONE Magazine
PO Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

ARTICLES

- 06 Redefining Discipleship
- 09 Forum10
- 10 Psychology of Discipleship
- 12 Full Circle
- 14 Home Missions Legacy
- 16 The High Cost of Making Disciples
- 18 The Jesus Difference
- 20 The Changing Face of Christian Education
- 22 Christian Service Makes the Difference
- 28 Sailing Through Rough Economic Times
- 30 Thank You
- 32 Looking for the Right Answer
- 38 The Letter
- 41 A Significant Moment in the History of the Church
- 42 How Do I Teach It All?
- 45 A New York Direction
- 46 A Day in the Life of a Home Missionary
- 48 Appropriations
- 49 He Still Answers Prayers
- 50 Who Are Your Neighbors?

COLUMNS

- 04 First Glimpse
- 37 Brown on Green
- 27 Intersect
- 44 Leader Profile
- 54 One to One

NEWS

- 24 News at FWBCC
- 39 News Around the World
- 53 News Across the Denomination



45

FIRST GLIMPSE

Defining Discipleship



Photo: Mark Cowart

ERIC THOMSEN
MANAGING EDITOR

I LIKE CAVE DIVING, PROWLING ANCIENT RUINS, AND exploring dusty back roads to nowhere. She enjoys sitting in the sunshine with a good book. I crave action, adventure—new challenges that push me to my limits. She enjoys shopping in quaint villages or sipping cream soda in quiet, side-street cafés. I hike and camp. She gets her nails done and thinks “roughing it” is staying at a hotel that doesn’t serve breakfast. Perish the thought!

She is witty, with quick answers that leave me speechless. I am methodical and plodding. She packs only what she needs for a trip. I double up on everything. I’m large (six-one, 225 pounds). She is small at five feet even and...um...well...much less than half my size.

During a recent anniversary trip to the Yucatan Peninsula, we found ourselves chuckling about the creative ways we have learned to overcome our differences. I’ve learned to pack light(er) and to appreciate quiet corner cafés, although I order strong, black coffee rather than cream soda. She has learned to enjoy new challenges like snorkeling or following some unmarked jungle path to a deserted beach. I doubt she will ever become an avid hiker, nor will I suddenly become an enthusiastic shopper, but we find common ground in watching Monday Night Football, sharing good books, and traveling to new destinations.

In short, over 15 years of marriage, we have gradually assumed the likes and characteristics of the other. I’m sure you sometimes observe the eventual results of this process in older couples who inspire you to blurt out, “Wow! They look just like each other.” Chances are this has little to do with physical appearance and more to do with a lifetime of becoming one.

This marital phenomenon is a beautiful illustration of the disciple’s relationship with Christ—the lifelong process of becoming more like Him. In *The Imitation of Christ*, Thomas à Kempis stated it this way, “Let this be thy whole endeavor, this thy prayer, this thy desire, that thou mayest be stripped of all selfishness, and with entire simplicity follow Jesus only.” Like marriage, discipleship is best when shared, and the cycle of discipleship is never complete without replication. To be a disciple is to make disciples.

With this in mind, the December-January 2010 issue of *ONE Magazine* delves deeper into discipleship, from the disciple-making mandate of the Great Commission in “Redefining Discipleship” to the challenges facing modern disciples in “The Changing Face of Christian Education.”

As you read, remember A.W. Tozer’s advice for the disciples of Christ: “Let no one imagine that he will lose anything of human dignity by this voluntary sell-out of his all to his God. He does not by this degrade himself as a man; rather he finds his right place of high honor as one made in the image of his Creator.” **ONE**

ONE Magazine Online

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While *ONE Magazine* is provided to the reader free of charge, tax-deductible donations are both accepted and appreciated. To make a donation, simply send check or money order to *ONE Magazine*, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002.

ART CREDIT: Mark Cowart, Eric Thomsen, Kenn Fleming, Istockphoto.com, Stockxpert.com, Designpics.com.

LETTERS

Have something to say?

Say it! The editors of *ONE Magazine* look forward to hearing from our readers. Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are necessary and appreciated. Email editor@nafwb.org or send correspondence to:

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PO Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

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

I am a former "Suffolkian," so the recent article "More Than Peanuts" sparked my interest right away. However, as I read the story I became increasingly disappointed. Phrases like "How will they come to know Christ if the gospel never reaches their ears?" and "Will you help us build God's church?" imply that the churches already in Suffolk are not God's church, do not preach the gospel, and only through a Free Will Baptist church will the community hear the message of salvation. I think this is offensive to other God-fearing, Bible-believing, truth-teaching churches in the area and could be detrimental to the unsaved.

I understand the magazine is published in an effort to keep folks informed about their denomination. However, I have family members who are so turned off by denominational flag waving that they refuse to see that it's really about a relationship with Christ, and not what "club" you're a member of. This goes on in all denominations, not just the Free Will Baptists. Articles like this just remind me that we need to be very careful as denominational "cheerleaders" not to develop an unhealthy allegiance to denomination.

—Marilyn Soto, Sebastian, FL

I was delighted to read "Dynamic Duo," which celebrated the life and ministry of Bert and Dianne Manning Tippett. While a student at Free Will Baptist Bible College for a few months in the early 1960s, I was privileged to know Bert and Dianne. In a matter of a very few days, I became impressed with their outstanding dedication to the cause of our Lord. They were humble, loving, kind, and at the same time very confident in conviction and devotion.

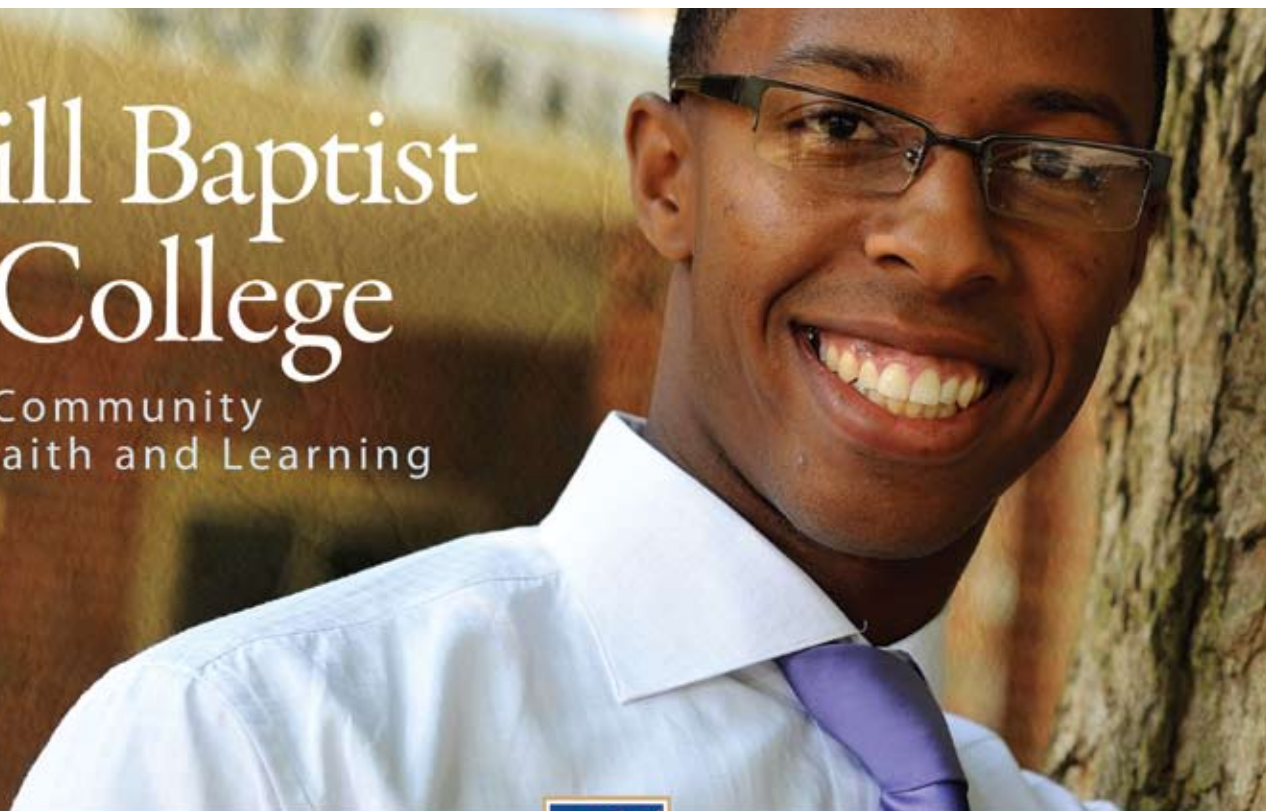
Although our interaction was short-lived, I have never forgotten them or their example. I thank God for allowing me to know and to love them, and to be enriched through their witness. Your article about the Tippetts brought back many favorable memories, and I must confess that a tear fell as I reflected upon that time decades ago when we prayed and worshiped together in one accord.

Noel Thomas "Tommy" Manning, San Antonio, TX

FROM THE EDITOR: Thanks to all of the readers who wrote, called, and emailed to comment on the faithful service of Bert and Dianne Tippett.

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A call for Great Commission discipleship **beyond** entry-level Christianity.



re—
DEFINING
Discipleship
BY MATT PINSON

Not Just “Sheer Believers”
RECENTLY I HEARD CHRISTIAN cultural analyst Ken Myers say something that shocked and saddened me: When many evangelicals talk about the Great Commission, what they really mean is not the Great Commission in Matthew 28, but getting people to make an initial salvation decision. Myers said that nowhere does the Bible command us to make “sheer believers” or “mere Christians.”

Kingdom Disciples

He's right. The Great Commission is so much more! In it, Christ commands us to extend the reign of God (God's kingdom) over people's lives, making them disciples and teaching them to live as Christ the King commands. The aim of the gospel is God's creation of a people for His name—a Holy Priesthood and a Royal Nation composed of people from every tribe, tongue, and nation. God's way of raising up a kingdom of priests who will name His name and call others to repentance and faith and kingdom living is summed up in Christ's Great Commission.

That Great Commission is a commission from Christ the King, whose desire is to extend His rule over people's lives. That's why, as Myers points out, just before the "Go therefore" in the Great Commission, Jesus says, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." This is the basis for the Great Commission. It is rooted in the purposes of Christ's kingdom, His rule. And the way He extends His rule is to make people who were once aliens from the commonwealth of Israel into kings and priests who are living out their lives in churches that are outposts of His kingdom here on earth.

Baptized Christ-Followers

This kingdom focus is about evangelizing people to make *disciples* of Jesus Christ—a people for His name—*followers* of His who live their lives in accord with His kingship. These gospel disciples are to be made members of the visible body of Christ through baptism—a public identification with Christ symbolizing the reality of death to sin in Christ and miraculous resurrection to a new, cross-bearing

life in Christ.

Then the church is charged by Christ to take these Christ-followers who have publicly abandoned a life of sin and have been baptized into Christ to go one giant step further: to fulfill the Great Commission. The church is to engage in a teaching and learning process in which Christ's followers come to practice His full-orbed teachings. The Church is to engage in a process of "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you." This involves Christian education—teaching and learning. And it is thorough and holistic—"all things that I have commanded you." It involves teaching Christ's baptized disciples the Christian world-and-life-view. And it results in a transformed life—"observe."

Younger Pastors and Leaders

It is disheartening to speak with so many young pastors and church leaders in our denomination who feel that much popular evangelicalism and fundamentalism has truncated the Great Commission. It is not just the emergent church that believes the seeker-sensitive movement has failed the church and failed the Great Commission. It is also vibrant, young, conservative pastors and church leaders who see a glaring disconnect between the full-orbed Great Commission of Christ and the easy, niche-marketing techniques of contemporary evangelicalism.

Younger evangelical Tullian Tchividjian gives voice to this growing segment of younger evangelicals in his book *Unfashionable*. He argues persuasively that we have been trying too hard to be like the world to win the world, and this has gutted the evangelical church of its faithfulness and effectiveness in fulfilling the

Great Commission. No longer can the Church simply baptize pop culture, he argues. Younger people are quick to see through that.

Failing to Produce Disciples

In their recent "Reveal" study, Bill Hybels and Willow Creek Community Church acknowledged that the seeker-sensitive model, while it had succeeded in getting numbers of new members, had failed in producing true disciples (though what they seem to be doing with this realization is moving in a more emergent direction). What this means is that, *even though many evangelical churches are getting more people on the membership roster, they are failing to fulfill the Great Commission.*

Of course, God desires higher numbers of disciples. But increasing numbers on the roll is not the end. It's only a means to the end of fulfilling the Great Commission. The problem with much current evangelical practice is that it short-circuits Great Commission fulfillment in its efforts to reach larger numbers.

This creates a short-term feeling of success. We can pat ourselves on the back because we have used shallow marketing and entertainment techniques to manipulate people into accepting a Christ that is remade in the image of consumer culture, a Christ that is accepted only because religious customers who are in the market for religious goods and services believe He can meet their felt needs, which are often very similar to their consumer tastes and desires.

But this approach will fail in the long-run, because it is not Great-Commission-driven. This leads Michael Horton, in his recent book *A Better Way*, to say that, *in their attempt to reach the lost, market-driven*

WE HAVE BEEN TRYING TOO HARD TO BE LIKE THE WORLD TO WIN THE WORLD, and this has gutted the evangelical church of its faithfulness and effectiveness in fulfilling the Great Commission.

evangelicals are ending up losing the reached! But this is the consequence of subtly manipulating people into an emotional decision for Christ based on shallow marketing and entertainment techniques rather than practicing Jesus' own Great Commission.

Only when we make true disciples who can disciple others will we have a Great Commission movement in our churches and culture—the sort we saw in the awakenings and great missions movements of history. *These movements occurred only at the times when the Church was the most set-apart from the world, consecrated to Christ, and deep in the faith.* Yet the shallow evangelism, worship, preaching, and teaching of a worldly, customer-friendly evangelicalism produces “sheer believers,” “mere Christians” who are spiritually anemic and cannot reproduce themselves.



Deep Disciples Produce New Disciples

Surveys show that only 19 percent of people claiming to be born again have a Christian worldview. And not

more than 25 percent tithe, attend church, read the Bible and pray on a regular basis, and witness and invite people to church. Yet 85 percent of unchurched people who join churches do so because of the influence of a Christian friend or family member. *What this means is that 25 percent of Christians are winning 85 percent of new believers!*

The math suggests that the best way to increase the number of new believers is to increase the number of deep, core church members. Eighty-five percent of the new believers are joining because of the witness of 25 percent of existing believers.

Discipleship Beyond Entry-Level Christianity

Yet too often pastors feel pressured to dumb down the worship and teaching of their congregations to placate people who are in the 25 percent *furthest* from the core, whom the pastors are worried might leave for a church that will better cater to their consumer tastes.

So we are less likely to be singing the Bible, reading the Bible, praying the Bible, and preaching the Bible with depth and substance, as Ligon Duncan has said. Many Sunday Schools are becoming superficial and devoid of biblical doctrine and theology. Many youth programs are increasingly lacking in serious scriptural teaching and preaching. We are amusing ourselves to death. As Leroy Forlines is fond of reminding us, the Church can get by on “entry-level

Christianity” only so long.

Yet depth and substance are just what the 25 percent core are longing for! They're spiritually atrophying on the milk diet of entry-level Christianity that we're giving them in Sunday School, in our singing, in our praying, and in our preaching. We should be doing everything we can to increase the percentage of these people in our congregations, because, if the statistics are accurate, the more core believers we have in our churches, the more people will receive Christ. In other words, *the deeper disciples we produce, the more new disciples will be made!*

Conclusion

We don't have to have statistics to find this out. It's in the Great Commission. That is God's plan for multiplying His church. He wants to replicate His kingdom of priests by extending His rule over more and more people, as they become ardent followers of Him, renouncing their former lives, being baptized as a testimony to their death to a life of sin and the radical re-orienting of their lives in Christ, and being taught to live out their lives in obedience to all Christ's commands.

These disciples will be reproducing disciples, disciple-making disciples, evangelistic disciples. This is Jesus's way of spreading His gospel. This is His way of evangelizing the world. It is His way of building His Church. Let's recommit ourselves to practicing the Great Commission! **ONE**

Why are young people leaving the church?

How can we reach postmoderns with the gospel?

Join the conversation at **FORUM10**, a fast-paced, two-day conference for youth workers, students, and church leaders. The meeting is designed to stimulate clear, biblical thinking about why young people are leaving the church after high school. This also involves asking the question why many young people *aren't* leaving the church—what successful churches are doing to keep students faithful throughout their young adult years.

The conversation will be framed in the context of family ministry and the need to question older paradigms of youth ministry in order to move toward intergenerational biblical faithfulness. The conversation arises out of a larger discussion about how we can reach a postmodern generation with the gospel in a way that is faithful to the gospel.

FORUM10 will meet concurrently with the college's annual Bible Conference (March 7-10, 2010), with some sessions geared exclusively to **FORUM10** and others over-

lapping with the Bible Conference. Speakers are ministry practitioners and scholars whose focus is youth and family ministry, intergenerational ministry, and engaging post-modern culture with the gospel.

Mark Dever will talk about how to engage people in a postmodern culture with the gospel. **Allen Pointer** will discuss the moral formation of high school students. **Thom Rainer** will share the results of his research on why young people are (and aren't) leaving the church after high school, and what churches can do to keep them. **Barry Raper** will discuss ministering to students in the context of contemporary youth culture. **Joey Stewart** will talk about new paradigms in youth and young adult ministry. **Brian Williams** will discuss how to engage parents in student ministry.

Join the conversation **FORUM10**

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The PSYCHOLOGY of DISCIPLESHIP

BY JACQUELINE RASAR

There is more to discipleship than the salvation experience and membership in a local church.

WHEN JESUS GAVE THE COMMAND TO “GO AND MAKE DISCIPLES”

(Matthew 28:19), He was speaking to a process of transformation that involves the whole person, including all aspects of a person’s life, which is why the discipline of psychology brings an interesting perspective to the command of discipleship. Psychology may be defined as the study of mental processes and behaviors. Mental processes include thoughts and feelings. Various elements of discipleship speak to these facets of the human experience.

STIMULATES THE MIND

First, discipleship should stimulate the mind. This can be done through reading, memorizing, contemplating, meditating, and talking about the things of God. Romans 12:2 states, “And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the *renewing of your mind*, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.”

Thinking is a challenge for some people today, because our culture emphasizes instant gratification and being satisfied with quick sound bites. I enjoy having a cell phone and using the internet, but these technological advances create a desire for instant gratification. Examples of quick sound bites include commercials and news headlines in which the main thrust of a product or story is presented, and people do not take the next step and delve further.

In contrast, the best process of discipleship leads to change in the way one thinks. This change requires depth, time, and hard work. In my experience, memorizing scripture is one of the biggest challenges, but when I engage in this activity, I am certain my mind is being transformed and renewed. Accept the challenge to love God with your mind.

IMPACTS THE EMOTIONS

Second, discipleship should impact

one’s emotions. Everyone is emotional, but people vary in their ability to talk about, express, and manage emotions. As a psychology professor, I put much effort into encouraging emotional education in my classes. This is done through learning how to name emotions, discussing acceptable emotional expressions, and talking about circumstances that negatively impact one’s emotional state.

These examples of emotional education can also be implemented in your family and in the local church. Being in a relationship with God and a process of discipleship should make you *feel*. Peace, joy, and contentment are examples of such feelings, but sadly, it is also common for Christians to feel fearful, depressed, and worried. It is impossible for all negative emotions to be removed from one’s experience, but growth in this area is God-honoring. Emphasizing the Fruits of the Spirit—such as love, joy, and peace (Galatians 5:22)—in discipleship is one way to

mature in the faith and experience transformed emotions.

The Fruits of the Spirit can be cultivated through selflessly serving others in love, engaging in activities that bring joy to the self and others, and forgiveness, mainly by forgiving people who have caused hurt. This important element of forgiveness brings peace and emotional healing. I encourage you to enter into a process of counseling with a Christian counselor or qualified pastor in order to deal with painful, unhealthy, and deep-seated emotions.

Processing emotions, especially unhealthy ones, is hard work and a life-long endeavor. Don't give up in this important pursuit because developing healthier emotional responses aids in Christian maturity.

TRANSFORMS THE BEHAVIOR

Third, a discipleship process should transform what you do. The expression “actions speak louder than words” is true in many ways. The way disciples live should reflect Christ and His purposes. When someone is being disciplined, he will change his actions in some way or another. The spiritual

disciplines—including Bible intake, prayer, worship, serving, evangelism, and stewardship—speak to the actions of a Christian. Donald Whitney wrote a wonderful book titled *Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life*. I highly recommend the book as a discipleship tool. A caution flag should go up about this aspect of discipleship. Don't fall prey to the unbiblical belief, “I have to work my way to Heaven.” Living a holy life is the appropriate response to the gospel, but salvation comes through faith alone.

James 1:22-25 states, “But *be ye doers of the word*, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.”

The blessing that comes from living out the Christian life makes the effort required worth it. The mature Chris-

tian may battle burn-out, but practicing the Christian life is of primary importance.

ENRICHES THE RELATIONSHIPS

In addition to thinking, feeling, and doing, another key aspect of discipleship is relationships. The gospel is relational in its nature because God reached down in love to mankind through the sacrifice and resurrection of His Son to bring us into a right *relationship* with Himself. Since the gospel is relational, it makes sense that God would use other people to help us grow in that relationship.

This means that attending church once a week, relying on a TV evangelist or some other at-arm's-length exposure to the truth of God will *not* turn you into a disciple of Christ. It takes interactions with other mature believers. Who has influenced you to grow in God? How has God used you to impact the life of a growing disciple? Make a commitment today to start or continue your transformation as a disciple of Christ. **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jacqueline Rasar is the Psychology program coordinator at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Read more about the college at www.fwbbc.edu.

“ATTENDING CHURCH ONCE A WEEK OR RELYING ON A TV EVANGELIST OR SOME OTHER AT-ARM'S-LENGTH EXPOSURE TO THE TRUTH OF GOD WILL NOT TURN YOU INTO A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST.”

In the book, *Essentials of Discipleship*, Cosgrove provides a biblical profile of a disciple. You can use this profile as a guide to self-assess your level of discipleship.

- ❖ A disciple is an open and teachable learner.
- ❖ A disciple puts Christ first in all areas of life.
- ❖ A disciple is committed to a life of purity and is taking steps to separate from sin.
- ❖ A disciple has a daily devotional time and is developing his prayer life.
- ❖ A disciple demonstrates faithfulness and a desire to learn and apply the Word of God.
- ❖ A disciple has a heart for witnessing.
- ❖ A disciple attends church regularly.
- ❖ A disciple fellowships regularly with other believers.
- ❖ A disciple demonstrates a servant heart by helping others in practical ways.
- ❖ A disciple gives regularly and honors God with his finances.
- ❖ A disciple demonstrates the fruit of the Spirit.

Full Circle

By Susan Fulcher Burke

“We were commissioned at a special service

at the Missionary Conference at Free Will Baptist Bible College in Nashville, Tennessee, on October 5, 1960. Twelve former students of FWBBC were commissioned during that service. After raising our required cash amount and faith promises for the support of our work, it was decided that we would go to The Spanish Language Institute in San José, Costa Rica, Central America, to study Spanish. We went to Missouri to say our goodbyes to my family. At that time, my mother’s mother was in the hospital at Poplar Bluff. So, we said our goodbyes to her there on the parking lot of the hospital. It was a very difficult time. We were taking their only grandchild far away for five years. It was the first time I had ever seen Bill really cry. We went to Nashville to finish up our packing, then went to North Carolina to say goodbye to Bill’s family.

Then we returned to Nashville, where

we were joined by Jerry Ballard of the Foreign Missions office, who would accompany us to New Orleans. It was a joyous occasion, because we were finally on our way to the mission field. But it was a sad, hard experience to tell our loved ones goodbye, knowing it would be five years before we would see them again. We left the states on April 25, 1961. Billy was 16 months old. When we arrived in San José, we were met by John and Barbara Moehlman, who were there studying Spanish, before going to Panama. They were a great help to us. We rented a one-bedroom apartment, not far from where they lived in Barrio San Pedro. We spent the next year studying Spanish....”

These are the words of my mother, Glenda Fulcher, taken from her memoirs.

Fast Forward...

On April 21, 2009, Donnie and I met with the Free Will Baptist Home Missions Board in Nashville, Tennessee, and were approved to be home missionaries to Colorado.

Things have come full circle!


You see, I am a missionary kid. My parents, Bill and Glenda Fulcher, were missionaries to Uruguay, Panama, and home missionaries to the Hispanics in Houston, Texas. I am only a few years younger now than my mother was when she became a home missionary. I have great memories of being a missionary kid. I was able to experience living in a different culture and learning a different language. Now, my children will be missionary kids! They will

learn about something they have never experienced called SNOW! They will also learn to say “pop” instead of “soda.” And to be sure, they will be the only local kids using the term “y’all!”

I hope that one day they will look back and have the same great memories that I have. I hope they always see the big picture and are willing to go to the area of greatest need, even if it means leaving family and what is familiar. I also hope that I will be able to let them go, just as my grandparents let my parents go nearly 50 years ago.

My family and I presently live with my mother in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, while we raise our support. It is interesting to me that we will say goodbye to my mom in the same town where she said goodbye to her family over 48 years ago.

By the time this article is in print, we will be visiting your churches and presenting a vision for planting a Free Will Baptist church in Castle Rock, Colorado. We definitely are going to need your help to get us there! We will be bringing second generation missionary kids with us. My hope is that as we travel we will come in contact with people who supported my parents. I wonder if it is possible to find any second generation supporters out there.

As Christians, we are all commanded to share the gospel with others. Sometimes that means right in the area where you grew up. Sometimes it means going to South America. Sometimes it means going to Colorado or maybe to some tropical island. Don't be afraid to go or stay wherever God calls you. Fulfilling the Great Commission is a plan that is at its best when it does come full circle! 

Donnie, Susan, and children – Tyler, Brandon, and Katie will be planting a FWB church in Castle Rock, Colorado.



Home Missions LEGACY

BY MRS. PAT THOMAS

Having “portable church” is extremely hard work!

“PAT, THE WAY YOU AND ROY DRAG YOUR TWO kids from town to town starting churches will cause them to hate going to church when they are grown up!” These angry words spoken by my mother could have discouraged me, but I felt that my husband and I were doing what God had called us to do.

We were so burdened for the many western states with huge cities that had no Free Will Baptist churches. For almost 18 years, we “dragged them from town to town” starting churches. However, I guess my mother was wrong, for both of my adult children and their spouses have been involved in church planting as home missionaries for over 20 years.

My daughter and her husband, Patsy and Howard Gwartney, are on their second project, working to establish a church in San Tan Valley, Arizona. Their first project was the East Valley FWB Church in Mesa, Arizona.

My son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Donna Thomas, are also on their second project with the Home Missions Department, working to establish a church in Pueblo, Colorado. Their first project was the First FWB Church in Greeley, Colorado.

My husband’s parents were actually the first generation of the Thomas clan to become involved in church planting. Rue and Mary Thomas helped form the nucleus of the Buhl, Idaho, church, and helped in the formation of other churches in Idaho at Jerome, Twin Falls, and Boise. Rue pastored the only Free Will Baptist church that has ever been in existence in the



Rue & Mary Thomas



Donna & Mark Thomas



Howard & Patsy Gwartney



Roy & Pat Thomas

**WHAT A
TREMENDOUS
WAY TO SPEND
A LIFETIME—**

IN THE NEVER ENDING,
STIMULATING,
INSPIRING
LABOR OF
LOVE CALLED
HOME
MISSIONS.

state of Nevada, at Hawthorne. He also pastored in Midland and San Angelo, Texas, and in Artesia, New Mexico.

Grandpa Rue Thomas was called on many times by the Home Missions Department for special assignments to serve as interim pastor in isolated mission churches where the missionary had resigned and left the field.

His children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren pay special tribute to him for giving them a legacy of love for their Savior, their denomination, and for home missions in isolated areas.

The legacy of home missions!

Those words have always held a fascination for me. I have never failed to be challenged, thrilled, burdened, and excited when I think of home missions. What a tremendous way to spend a lifetime—in the never-ending, stimulating, inspiring labor of love called home missions.

Through the years my husband Roy served as a “tentmaker” (bi-vocational pastor), a home missionary, a Home Missions Board member, seven years as associate director of the department, and then 18 years as the general director. How exciting it was to watch the work grow, see new missionaries added, see the Home Missions Department expand into evangelism and church growth ministries, and see added staff members employed to help carry the work load.

My husband passed away six years ago, and since then I have moved to Arizona to assist the Gwartneys in establishing the new church here in the San Tan Valley. I do computer accounting of the church finances, assist

SMALL GROUP BIBLE STUDIES ARE BEING HELD IN THE HOMES OF OUR PEOPLE, AND THE CONVERTS ARE BAPTIZED IN A SWIMMING POOL.

with printing and publications, help set up for worship services, teach in children’s church, and play the clarinet in the church band. What an exciting adventure this has been!

We rent a middle school for Sunday morning services, and have “portable church.” The church purchased a used U-Haul truck and had it repainted with the church logo, web address, and telephone numbers. We store our sound system, 150 chairs, tables, children’s church supplies, literature, and all other equipment and supplies in the truck, and keep it parked in the backyard of one of our members.

Every Sunday morning we leave the house at 6:30, get the truck, and arrive at the middle school at 7:00. About a dozen other people from our congregation meet us there to help. (We call them “Levites” because they assist in setting up for worship services.) It takes about an hour to complete setting up, and then we have band practice, choir practice, and prayer time before worship services start at 10:00.

After church is over at 11:15, we have 45 minutes to take everything down and load it onto the truck. Some of our men have built three large carts mounted on wheels and called them “arks.” The tables, curtains, storage tubs, and supplies are stored in and on these arks. After the 150 chairs are loaded on the truck, the arks are rolled into place in just a matter of a few minutes.

Because the Arizona heat reaches 105 to 117 degrees in the summer, most of the men are sopping wet when they are finished loading the truck. We realize the heat is not good for the sound system and other things stored in the truck. With the extreme heat, it feels like an oven inside the truck.

Having “portable church” is extremely hard work! Therefore we are looking forward eagerly to getting our own church facilities someday. The congregation is making payments on almost five acres of land, and is looking forward to the day when the land is paid off and the building can begin. The architect is already working on the drawings for our first unit building. In the meantime, we are seeing people saved and growing in the Lord. Small group Bible studies are being held in the homes of our people, and the converts are baptized in a swimming pool. Will you pray for us as we labor in this needy area to build a strong, soul-winning church?

I have so much for which to be thankful. God has been so good to me. How blessed I am to have had the privilege to serve my Lord and my denomination through home missions. God saved me in an isolated church in Hobbs, New Mexico, gave me a wonderful husband and children, led us into an exciting, fulfilling life in home missions, and blessed us with more blessings than I can count. Yes, home missions is a wonderful legacy! **ONE**



THE HIGH COST OF MAKING DISCIPLES

BY MARTHA ANDERSON

IT IS NOT OFTEN THAT YOU KNOW YOU have experienced a historic event. Today, I witnessed a truly momentous occasion. Will you read about it in *USA Today* or see it on CNN? Hardly. The world took no note of what happened. But I did, and all Free Will Baptists should.

Today, I witnessed the departure of Josh, Alicia, and Ruby Crowe, career missionaries to Japan. Why was I there, you might wonder? My daughter Caroline left with them, flying to Sapporo to begin eight weeks of missionary internship.

The scene was typical. We arrived three hours early at Raleigh-Durham airport for the overseas flight. After checking eight large suitcases, all that remained was the walk through security.

Saying goodbye in an airport is almost anti-climatic in this post 9/11 world. You can no longer pass through security to sit with your loved ones right up to the moment of departure. You never even see the plane in which they will depart. Instead, you find yourself standing in the middle of

the large terminal, straining to catch one last glimpse as they pass through metal detectors and baggage scanners. Your last snapshot view is the wave of an arm or the top of their heads as they move toward their gate.

On this particular morning (3:00 a.m., May 25th, Memorial Day 2009), Josh, Alicia, six-month-old Ruby, Alicia's parents—Al and Carol Hart—and our family found ourselves in the terminal awaiting the time for departure. We sat in a secluded corner of Terminal Two, sleepy-eyed and groggy. The conversation centered on Ruby, who enjoyed being held by her grandmother and playing with a new toy. During a quiet lull in the conversation, Josh said succinctly yet profoundly, "Today is the culmination of 10 years' effort. I have been working for 10 years to get to this day."

We sat in silence for a moment as we absorbed the enormity of his statement. Ten years—what a long time! College, graduate school, marriage, fatherhood, raising support—I guess it *would* take 10 years. But you know, on the way home from the airport, I

mulled over his statement again, and it hit me. Ten years is a blink of an eye to God. His timing is perfect, and if it took 10 years to prepare for the mission field, then so be it.

After Alicia finished feeding Ruby, as if on cue, Josh stood up and said it was time to go through security. One could sense he had choreographed this long goodbye in a way that would be the least painful for all. He was calm, collected, and confident, checking one last time to be sure all visas, passports, and boarding passes were ready. After forming a small circle, we prayed. Alicia's father prayed for the travelers; then Josh prayed for those staying behind. After the final amen, we walked slowly toward security.

Obviously, we had said our intimate goodbyes long before the security checkpoint, but the final goodbye is the most stressful—a grandfather's last kiss, taking in the sweet smell of a beautiful baby girl, the final family group picture, lingering hugs, thank-yous and goodbyes, the tears that threaten to overflow, and the final "I love you."



The image that will stay with me forever, however, was not this final embrace. A moment far more profound has played over in my head a thousand times since. The scene: Alicia, with her sweet baby asleep in her arms, walks slowly toward security, and then about 30 feet away, turns back one last time to look into the faces of her mom and

THE CAUSE IS MUCH BIGGER THAN THE PAIN OF BEING SEPARATED FROM THEIR FAMILY. IT HOLDS ETERNAL SIGNIFICANCE.

dad—immense pain, overflowing love, and strong determination to do God’s will in Japan combined in one poignant expression. Oh, how it hurt to see such a maelstrom of emotions but how glorious. What a testimony to the grace of God!

Over the years, I have been privileged to meet many international missionaries. Some have been on the field for 50 years or more. Until that moment, I never truly understood the emotional sacrifice of leaving family,

friends, home churches, and familiar cultures to take the hope of the gospel to a foreign country. This heartbreaking goodbye was just one of thousands.

You may be thinking, “Well, what about your daughter? Did you not watch her last goodbye?” Oh, yes, I did. My heart hurt to think she would be gone for eight weeks, flying around the globe to Japan. Yes, I was teary-eyed, and my heart was breaking. But how could I even begin to compare my heartache with that of the family who watched their daughter, granddaughter, and son-in-law leave for a four-year term in Japan? No comparison.

Josh and Alicia are uniquely equipped to do the work in Japan—graduate degrees, previous internships, E-TEAM leaders, and Alicia’s stint as an English teacher in Japan. They are young, attractive, and connect well with all age groups. They serve as approachable role models for the thousands of children, pre-teens, and teenagers who know them affectionately as “Mr. Josh and Miss Alicia.” How many young people will accept the call to full-time Christian service because of the influence of this young couple? My own daughter has certain-

ly profited from their example. Only eternity knows.

You may wonder, “What is so historic about these events? People leave their family and fly to foreign countries every day. What’s the big deal?”

History makers are willing to sacrifice everything for a cause bigger than themselves. Josh, Alicia, and Ruby are history makers because God is using them to reach souls for His Kingdom who otherwise would not be reached. The cause is much bigger than the pain of being separated from their family. It holds eternal significance. One day, when I get to Heaven, I look forward to meeting countless men and women because Josh, Alicia, and a host of other missionaries left all to serve God, to go and make disciples.

In Josh’s words: “I sit here at Debbie Griffin’s table on our first morning in Japan, and I weep as I read this article. Maybe it’s the emotional roller coaster or lack of sleep, but I think it’s the Holy Spirit using your words to softly, gently remind of us *why* we are here.” **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: Martha Anderson teaches English at Ruth’s Chapel Christian School in New Bern, NC. A member of Sherwood Forest FWB Church, Martha is the church pianist and teaches Sunday School.



The **Jesus** Difference

BY GENEVA POOLE

SOME YEARS AGO, I WENT TO A dentist for treatment of an abscessed tooth requiring a root canal. During all the sessions, Bobby and I thought him cold, and found it hard to strike up a conversation with him. When my treatment was finished, we presented both the dentist and his assistant with a Bible, telling them about Jesus, and how He has proven His love to us.

When my regular dentist recently asked me to set up an appointment with this same specialty dentist, a dread came over me. During the intervening days, I prayed for God to open the door for us to be a blessing to him.

Even though our paths had not crossed for several years, everything seemed the same when we entered the

office. The same receptionist was present. The waiting room décor and types of magazines seemed unchanged. I wondered about the dentist.

The door opened, and he entered. He stopped to greet us and then went on to his office. He seemed so much friendlier this time. I was impressed.

After He evaluated my tooth problem, he wasted no time in changing the subject. He asked, "Do you remember giving me a Bible?" He then filled us in on a little of what had happened to him since we had last seen each other. The very week he received the Bible, his son invited him to a Bible study. He said he proudly took his new Bible and went with his son. As he read the Word, he recognized his spiritual needs and accepted the Lord as

his Savior. Now he hosts a Bible study group in his own home with some 25 people in attendance. He is a changed person and constantly speaks of God's goodness to him. More than once he affirmed, "Jesus makes a difference in my life."

The story does not stop there. We have taken my regular dentist to this Bible study. What a blessing to have her sit beside me and read a verse, and watch as she listens intently to the words of the leader. Pray with us that we will soon see her allow Jesus to make a difference in her life, too. **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: Geneva Poole ministers with her husband Bobby in the Ribeirão Preto area of São Paulo, Brazil. The couple has served in Brazil since 1960.



The Journey Is Not Ended

“The Journey is not ended, and when it is, the work is not yet begun.”
from *Touching the Untouchables*, by Laura Belle Barnard, page 51.

Lives changed for Christ—Laura Belle Barnard committed her life to that purpose 75 years ago. In honor of her faithful witness, International Missions wants to introduce a new generation of Free Will Baptist young people to her story and God’s call on our lives.

Most of us can’t envision the commitment required to leave family, friends, and the comfort of home to follow the Lord’s guidance to a distant land. A land with strange customs, unknown language, and no friends. It is practically impossible for us to comprehend the thoughts and feelings of a single lady in 1935 as her ship, the *S.S. Potter*, left New York City, headed through the Suez Canal, and 40 days later dropped anchor in Bombay (Mumbai) Harbor, India.

It was a life-changing event, one she recalled some 50 years later. FWBIM wants to host an event that will impact lives around the world. An event the youth of today will remember for a lifetime. Just think about it. We have all experienced life-changing moments. You can probably remember where you were when it happened, the time of the year, the sounds, the smells, the faces of the people around you. It may have been that moment at summer camp when you gave your life to Christ. Or it may have been the moment you achieved a personal milestone.

I doubt Laura Belle Barnard expected the impact made on our denomination, or this world, through her life. But those fortunate enough decades later to have her as a professor at Free Will Baptist Bible College realized quickly that she was a wealth of knowledge, led by an unseen Master, with a burning desire to share Christ.

We are planning an event that promises to do the same,

one that years from 2010, we will recall. We will remember where and when we walked—what we felt as we joined hundreds of others to work together to send the gospel to unreached peoples. The 40-day preparation and prayer throughout the walk will set the tone with each step taken.

Walking a total of 2,500 miles is meant to challenge people to be a part of something huge, to understand commitment, achievement, teamwork, the power of prayer, and His call on each of our lives to Go. We believe the impact of this event will be both immediate and long-term for the cause of Christ. Information regarding the Go10 walk, with details about donations, route, and other Go10 events, is available on the website (www.go10walk.com).

The walk begins Monday, April 5, 2009, in Glennville, Georgia. Events to commemorate the 75th anniversary of International Missions are planned along the route.

Go to the website. Sign up. Lace up your shoes and prepare to have your life changed as together we seek to continue what Laura Belle started 75 years ago.



Register today:
Go10walk.com

Touching the Untouchables by Laura Belle Barnard can be purchased from International Missions for only \$4. Visit www.fwbgo.com.

The hour has come for Christian education to make a U-turn and refocus on family-oriented ministry.

IT IS INCREDIBLY SCARY HOW quickly children grow up and change. If parents spend any length of time away from their children, changes seem to happen overnight—even in appearance! Even though Christian education has been around for centuries, both Christian education and youth ministry as vocational ministries are relatively new—children—in the unfolding history of the church. And this child (Christian Education/Youth Ministry) is changing appearance quickly.

PHILOSOPHICAL SHIFTS

Family-Based Ministry. For example, some encouraging shifts are taking place in youth ministry. One major shift is the move to a more family-based ap-

proach. The current pattern of segregating youth from the life of the broader church body as a whole has proven to be unhealthy, and the Church is taking note.

Mark DeVries spoke out in 1993 when he published *Family-Based Youth Ministry*. Voddie Baucham Jr. recently hit the same note in *Family-Driven Faith*.

Local Church Focus. People are also seeing that the local church really does matter. Spiritual disciplines such as Bible study, memorization, prayer, fasting, silence, etc., have always been a means of equipping people to grow on their own in the Lord. However, these disciplines were never meant to be isolated from others.

This is clearly seen in James Wilhoit's *Spiritual Formation as if the Church Mattered: Growing in Christ through Community*. Donald Whitney underscored the same principle in his 1996 book *Spiritual Disciplines Within the Church*. These books champion the importance of interpersonal spiritual formation in and through the Body of Christ, as expressed through the local church.

CULTURAL FORCES

Philosophical shifts in ministry are not the only changes happening. Several cultural forces are at work causing Christian educators to look hard at how cultural developments and habits are shaping us. Con-

THE CHANGING FACE OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

BY BARRY RAPER



Photo: Tim Tebow displays a life-changing message in "eye-black."

sider media intake as an example.

Media Immersion. Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, cites a report in his blog indicating “the average child in America now spends 45 hours a week immersed in media—a multiple of the hours spent with parents or in the classroom.¹ Parents and educators must stop to consider not only what their children and teens are exposed to in terms of content, but also how this immersion is shaping their sensibilities.

Media in-and-of-itself is not the problem. However, it is not uncommon to encounter people of all ages not just using media, but primarily being used by media. And one of the main ways people, especially youth, are being used by media is the way we receive, process, and apply information.

Our day-to-day experience is filled with juxtapositions that are mentally jarring and most often unrelated. We move from information to information without thinking things through or considering how they are related. In short, we live in an increasingly fragmented society. This touches on every aspect of the Christian life. However, it particularly impacts the area of reading and interpreting the Bible.

Slide Toward Pagan Culture. This cultural development must be viewed in context of an increasingly pagan culture. Numerous studies reveal that American culture in general is more illiterate when

What is his basis for such a claim? Not a new Barna update, but an update of the top five Google searches for January 9 after the BCS championship game between Florida and Oklahoma when Tim Tebow displayed John 3:16 written under his eyes in black. Lowery’s point is that in decades past most Americans would have known what John 3:16 was without having to look it up on a Google search.

Disappearing Biblical Knowledge. The article argues that the base line of biblical knowledge in America has moved back even further—showing that we have to start back further in our teaching of the Bible.² We cannot assume a certain base level knowledge of the Bible. This is not only true of non-believers, but even proves to be the case for the evangelical church in America.

In prior decades there was a wider base of biblical knowledge, not only for Christians, but also for the wider American culture. As Bible knowledge goes down, we must take great pains to help people “put together” the whole picture of the history of redemption. We have to work harder to do this inside the church. We not only live in an increasingly biblically illiterate society, but we are all part of a way of life that presents and receives information in fragments.

These fragments are sometimes never related or connected. Over time, people come to view the world and reality this way. If we are not careful, we

BIBLICAL CONTEXT

Paul told Timothy to “think over what I say for the Lord will give you understanding in everything.” This instruction from 2 Timothy 2:7 to “think over” God’s revelation is nearly impossible to carry out in an electronically charged and plugged-in culture. It is not my contention that media automatically makes thinking about the words of God impossible, because that would clearly not be the case.

Harness the Media. In fact, we communicate to others by email or by phone or by posts, and in many of these we both send and receive messages that either allude to or contain Scriptures. Once again, it (media) is a tool, technology we can and should use for the glory of God.

I can be exhorted or encouraged in some way, in my ordinary routine, through an email or call on my cell phone. I can, however, quickly move on to the next piece of information as it comes my way. I can click the button and move to the next thing in an email, which does not allow time for the truth of God to sink in.

Discipline the Mind. Notice in Paul’s instruction that understanding will come as a gift, but only through the hard work of disciplined thinking (which obviously depends upon God through prayer). My point is that the type of thinking Paul has in mind and the type of thinking the Bible describes as meditation surely has suffered in this techno-age.

Change is all around us. Some of it is wonderful; some of it is scary. But it’s here, and so are we. Let’s embrace those changes that enable us to build stronger families, build stronger local churches, and sharpen the cutting edge of Christian education. **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: Barry Raper is program coordinator for Christian Education and Youth Ministry at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Learn more about the college at www.fwbbc.edu.

“FLORIDA QUARTERBACK TIM TEBOW CREATED ONE OF THE TOP GOOGLE SEARCHES WHEN HE DISPLAYED JOHN 3:16 WRITTEN UNDER HIS EYES DURING THE 2009 BCS CHAMPIONSHIP GAME.”

it comes to rudimentary knowledge of the Bible. In a recent article from *Christianity Today*, Brian Lowery claims, “Biblical literacy has reached a new low.”

will teach our people, especially our children and teens, in a way that hinders their ability to develop a biblical worldview.

¹ Al Mohler, “A Generation Immersed in Media,” accessed February 26, 2009; available at www.albertmohler.com. Internet. Reprinted in *ONE Magazine* (August-September 2009).

² Brian Lowery, “Biblical Literacy Rate Reaches New Low: Why ‘John 3:16’ being the top Google search isn’t something to celebrate,” accessed March 5, 2009; available at <http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives>



Christian Service *makes* the difference

BY JOHN MURRAY

WHEN I WAS IN SEMINARY, I worked at Choretime Brock where we manufactured chicken feeders. One day, a factory engineer came to help us solve a problem with one of the plastic extruders. He told us he had worked throughout his college experience, putting into practice what he studied in the classroom. Each summer he took jobs where he could use what he had learned. After graduation, he and a classmate were hired by the same company. Six months later, their supervisor asked him, “Are you sure you both went to the same college? He doesn’t know how to do anything.”

The same principle is true at Free Will Baptist Bible College. We believe students need to practice what they learn in class. That’s why we use Christian service to launch them into the broader community beyond the

classroom, giving them the opportunity to become experienced Christian workers.

Christian service is the practical arm of the classroom. For 18 years, I have seen students “practice what we preach” (teach) in the classroom. Every student has a specific assignment. The Christian Service staff keeps a list of opportunities available, and each student chooses a place to serve for the year. Students participate in a different outreach each year. Five words describe Christian service outreach at FWBBC: anticipation, appreciation, ability, affinity, and opportunity.

ANTICIPATION

Each year, I call or visit all the places where students perform Christian service. At Knowles Nursing Home, for instance, the activities director

invariably says, “The residents constantly ask, ‘When are the students from Free Will Baptist Bible College coming back?’” The point is our students make a definite impression on the people they serve. Every Thursday night of the school year, you can be assured that many Knowles residents are waiting in the chapel when our students arrive.

APPRECIATION

At the end of last semester, a children’s Sunday School teacher commented about one of our college students. “He has been so consistent. He is always available to do anything, and he does everything so well.” This is nothing new. I constantly hear about our students and the fine jobs they are doing.

ABILITY

The Apostle John wrote, “He who does will know.” Wouldn’t it be great if “He who knows would do?” It is a proven fact that one retains more when he puts what he knows into practice. When students reach their junior and senior years, we direct their Christian service so they are ministering in the area of their studies. (We like to do the same all four years.)

One area I supervise personally is preaching trips—taking student preachers on out-of-town excursions so they can preach. Why do we do this? Because the only way to learn is to preach! The classroom can give a preacher helpful principles and guidelines, but if they are never put into practice, they are of little use.

We schedule eight preaching trips a year. This gives student preachers opportunities to preach and allows pastors to share practical wisdom with the students. Our pastors have been very helpful sharing practical suggestions about ministry and preaching.

I wish you could ride in the van with me. I usually drive and listen to the men as they talk about a variety of subjects: preaching, dating, doctrine, pastoring, and more. I am amazed at the wisdom shared and the advice given by college juniors and seniors. I am privileged to see young men grow in the Lord and put into practice what they have studied.

AFFINITY

Disaster relief has been a uniting factor at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Each time I extend a plea for workers to help those devastated by a hurricane or tornado, a large number of students volunteer. When Hurricane Katrina hit Louisiana and Mississippi, 35 students volunteered for disaster relief.

They raised money to furnish their own food and rent a bus for the trip. We stayed at a camp in Mississippi where we cut trees and repaired roofs. There was even a tree-cutting contest where students used axes to cut a tree (five feet in circumference) that had fallen, and I got in on the chopping. We worked morning to night. Disaster relief groups have ministered in North Carolina, Florida, Mississippi, and Tennessee.

You ought to see leaders rise to the occasion. Leaders are revealed, but teamwork is exemplified. They clean out mud and crawl under churches to replace ductwork. They cut trees, lug limbs and debris, and enjoy working together. They work with *heart*, the heart of a servant. What a pleasure to work with our students.

OPPORTUNITY

I constantly receive calls from pastors looking for an assistant or youth minister. I usually have no one on my list. That’s because our students min-

ister during the summer. Some minister in churches, others in camps, and some on mission trips to other countries. While they minister, they make contacts, building a reputation, and endearing themselves to people in many areas. These times of service provide avenues for future ministry.

Almost all our students who graduate each May have solid job/ministry offers by the December preceding graduation. Believe me, Christian service doesn’t cost. It pays! Whether summer camp, summer ministry, or ministry during the school year, Christian service provides ways for students to link-up with people and places where they will work in the future.

Christian service is the centerpiece at Free Will Baptist Bible College. It provides students an opportunity to put into practice what they learn in the classroom. Send us your sons and daughters—let us show them how practical Christian service can change them and change their world. **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: John Murray, former missionary to France, serves as Christian Service director at Free Will Baptist Bible College. Learn more about the college at www.fwbcc.edu



**CHRISTIAN
SERVICE
DOESN'T
COST—
IT PAYS!**



NEWS at FWBBC

Free Will Baptist Bible College Enrolls 302 Students

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College enrolled 302 students from 23 states and five foreign countries for the 2009 fall semester, according to Provost Greg Kettelman. Enrollment statistics indicate a diverse student body with a wide range of academic interests.

Dr. Kettelman said, “We are thankful for every student who enrolls at FWBBC. Each fall as the students register, I realize that God has placed the future in our hands and sent us the next wave of pastors and church planters, future missionaries and Christian education leaders, as well as tomorrow’s psychologists, musicians, business entrepreneurs, and more. We’ve graduated almost 200 students in the past three years. Like their predecessors, this impressive group of young adults will soon take their places in the Kingdom work to change the world.”

The college reported 172 dormitory students, 73 commuter students, 23 Adult Degree Program students, and 34 Online/Lifetime Learning students. Officials set the fall semester 2009 full-time student equivalency at 264, an increase of 2.3% over the fall semester 2008. One hundred thirteen students are enrolled in ministry-related fields, an increase of 13.8%.

By classes, they include 56 seniors, 44 juniors, 84 sophomores, 98 freshmen, and 20 non-degree/part-time students. There are 134 women and 168 men in the student body.

“Enrollment for our Online Degree and Adult Degree Programs will continue through mid-semester,” Dr. Kettelman said. “We are still enrolling new students in both programs, since enrollment takes place throughout the fall term due to each program having multiple modules. We project a total enrollment of 315 students for the fall term.”

By states, students number:

Alabama _____	12		
Arkansas _____	15	Maryland _____	1
California _____	2	Michigan _____	19
Florida _____	5	Mississippi _____	8
Georgia _____	11	Missouri _____	13
Idaho _____	1	North Carolina _____	22
Illinois _____	8	Ohio _____	9
Indiana _____	14	Oklahoma _____	2
Kansas _____	1	Oregon _____	1
Kentucky _____	11	South Carolina _____	8
		Tennessee _____	109
		Texas _____	3
		Virginia _____	11
		West Virginia _____	2
		International _____	14
			(Dominica, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Panama, South Korea)

President Matt Pinson said, “This is a

special time of year for us at FWBBC as new students arrive to begin their collegiate studies and returning students bring their energy and high expectations back to campus. We’re also excited that things are coming together for the relocation of the college. In addition, our expanding academic programs in pre-nursing and science, plus a strong response to our growing Online/Lifetime Learning Programs, keep us in touch with the changing educational needs of our denominational constituency.”

Here are three ways to contact Free Will Baptist Bible College for more information: Call 800-76-FWBBC, email recruit@fwbbc.edu, or visit the college’s website at www.FWBBC.edu

Bert Tippet Announces Retirement



NASHVILLE, TN—Reverend Bert Tippet, long-time employee and campus leader at Free Will Baptist Bible College, announced his retirement effective August 31, 2009, according to President Matt Pinson. Mr. Tippet and his wife Dianne joined the college staff in 1965, both serving in numerous roles. His trademark responsibilities in journalism and church relations, plus 10 years as campus pastor, marked his FWBBC career. He has worked part-time since 2004 while Dianne volunteered as mailing list coordinator.

During an interview in his book-lined office on August 14, Mr. Tippet said he had come to the conclusion that it was time for him to step back from recurring deadlines and college duties, and spend more time with his family.

President Pinson said, “We thank God for Brother Tippet and his faithful ministry at FWBBC. He has given his life for this college. He’s a true friend, an example of Christian maturity, and a trusted colleague in the Lord’s work. I know of no person more loved and respected than Bert Tippet. He and Dianne were always there when needs arose. He never stopped learning, never stopped giving, never stopped growing in the Lord. I wish he could do it all over again.”

FWBBC honored the Tippetts on June 4 in a sweeping campus event called *The Celebration!* Hundreds of alumni and friends gathered to salute the beloved couple for 45 years of service. The October-November 2009 issue of *ONE Magazine* and the next issue of *Illumina* (alumni magazine) will include several of the celebration tributes.

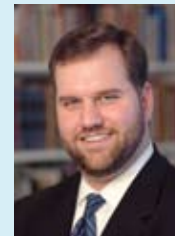
“I plan to be on campus frequently as a volunteer in a number of continuing projects, especially in areas of journalism and design, as my circumstances permit,” Mr. Tippet said. “God only knows how special I’ve felt working at FWBBC these four-plus decades. I’ve walked side-by-side with some of the noblest people in the Free Will Baptist denomination. They gave me a unique place to serve and challenged me to adapt and grow as ministry opportunities came my way. Looking back now, I wouldn’t change a thing.”

After graduating in 1962 with a B.A. degree in English, he pastored in New Hampshire before returning to FWBBC in 1965 as director of publications. He maintained a robust schedule that included *Lumen* advisor, journalism and Physical Education instructor, trusted friend to thousands of students, professional photographer, editor of the *FWBBC Bulletin*, and mentor to future Free Will Baptist leaders.

Diagnosed in May 2008 with a highly aggressive and invasive form of prostate cancer, Tippet underwent hormone therapy and chemotherapy, and began a new form of chemotherapy August 17. The cancer has metastasized to the bones, migrated to other areas of the body, and is widespread with PSA levels reaching 76.4 in August.

“I’m in God’s hands and in God’s will,” Bert said, “and that’s exactly where I want to be.” ■

FWBBC President on National Radio Program



NASHVILLE, TN—

Dr. Matt Pinson, the president of Free Will Baptist Bible College, was a guest July 10 on *The Albert Mohler Program*, a one-hour

talk show hosted every weekday by Dr. Albert R. Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. The show is devoted to engaging contemporary culture with biblical truth. The subject for the program on which Dr. Pinson appeared was the 500-year legacy of John Calvin.

Guest host Dr. Russell Moore invited President Pinson to discuss the benefits of Calvin’s legacy and his influence on Christian thinking from the Arminian point of view theologically, while Washington, D.C., pastor Dr. Mark Dever addressed the question from the mainline Calvinistic tradition.

Pinson said, “I was honored to be a guest on the program and comment about John Calvin, our differences with him as Arminians, and the extent of cooperation that Arminians and Calvinists can enjoy in the larger evangelical community. As a Free Will Baptist, I obviously disagree with Calvin’s well-known ‘five points.’ Yet I deeply appreciate the approach of many Calvinists on the gospel, doctrinal purity, and the sufficiency of Scripture for the life of the church.”

To hear the program, go to the following link, http://www.albertmohler.com/radio_list.php, and access the archive of the July 10 show. ■



AnnaGee Harris Named FWBBC Drama Director

NASHVILLE, TN—AnnaGee Harris, a 2006 Free Will Baptist Bible College graduate, has been named drama director at the college, according to President Matt Pinson. After graduating *magna cum laude*

with a B.S. degree at FWBBC, Miss Harris completed the M.A.T. degree (2008) with an emphasis in Theater at Trevecca Nazarene University. She succeeds David Payne who resigned after six years to pursue theater

Miss Harris said, “I’m excited about the opportunity to bring more types of theater to campus and provide students with options to participate in comedy, mystery, and musical productions, as well as traditional drama. FWBBC is a good fit for me—I grew up in a Free Will Baptist church, my mother (Dr. Suzann Harris) taught 12 years at FWBBC, and my grandfather

(Rev. Vernon Barker) has been a Free Will Baptist minister 47 years. Thanks to my FWBBC education and the excellent training I received from David Payne, I understand what the college is looking for.”

Payne joined the FWBBC team in 2003 with the long-term goal of finding someone who could succeed him and develop the college’s Drama Department. After Miss Harris auditioned as a student for various roles, he began to mentor her, eventually inviting her to become his assistant at FWBBC, then asking her to serve as drama co-director in 2008.

“AnnaGee is ready to serve as drama director,” Payne said. “I suggested to President Pinson that I resign now and offer the position to her. I know of no one better prepared and better suited for the task. She is competent on stage and off stage.”

President Pinson said, “We are delighted that Miss Harris has agreed to become drama director. She is well known and respected by our college family, and we look forward to great things from her. At the same time, however, we regret Mr. Payne’s departure. We thank God for his professional leadership in the Drama Department.” ■

FWBBC Ranked Among America’s Top Colleges by *U.S. News & World Report*

NASHVILLE, TN—Free Will Baptist Bible College received notification in mid-August that the institution is again ranked among “Best Baccalaureate Colleges” (South Region, Third Tier) in *U.S. News & World Report’s* 2010 edition of *America’s Best Colleges* guidebook, according to President Matt Pinson. Highlights of the college rankings were published in the August 24, 2009, issue of *U.S. News*.

President Pinson said, “We are delighted to be ranked again among America’s best colleges in this prestigious national study. It is gratifying to see our high academic quality, which our supporters have known about for a long time, recognized by those beyond the institution. This recognition helps our constituency—especially prospective students and their parents—know what we have known all along: that FWBBC is a high quality institution of higher learning.”

The “Best Baccalaureate Colleges” category where FWBBC is ranked includes 319 institutions that focus on undergraduate education and offer a range of degree programs in the liberal arts, and in professional fields such as business, nursing, and education. The colleges in this category are ranked within four geographic regions: North, South, Midwest, and West.

The *U.S. News* rankings offer the opportunity to judge the relative quality of institutions based on widely accepted indica-

tors of excellence: peer assessment, graduation and retention rates, faculty resources, student selectivity, financial resources, alumni giving, and more.

Mr. Wayne Spruill, director of institutional research at FWBBC, said, “Publications such as *U.S. News* let us show what a great school we have, plus this gives prospective students an opportunity to make sound decisions about enrolling here. I find it rewarding that one of the many surveys and questionnaires we prepare has once more placed the college in a highly regarded national publication.”

FWBBC received particularly high marks in four strategic areas—percent of classes with under 20 students (87%), student/faculty ratio (9/1), freshman retention rate (68%), and graduation rate (47%).

Provost Greg Kettelman said, “Our inclusion for the second time in *U.S. News’s* list of best baccalaureate colleges is a testimony to the hard work that our faculty and staff pour into this college. They rigorously prepare themselves to teach in a collegiate academic setting, or to sacrificially serve on campus in administrative or other vital support roles. Thank God for the FWBBC team—they are why I believe every Free Will Baptist student should look at FWBBC first when considering a college.”

More information is available about the rankings and methodology in the annual *America’s Best Colleges* guidebook at: www.usnews.com. ■

+ INTERSECT

where the BIBLE meets life

Under the Rabbi's Microscope: Part 4

*Don't grow wheat with your grapes!
Don't hitch your ox to plow with your donkey!
Don't wear that wool and linen blazer!
Be sure that tassels hang from your sweater!*

This rather loose rendering of Deuteronomy 22:9-12 points up precisely the kinds of issues involved when we wrestle with law in the Old Testament. Oh, sure, the Ten Commandments? Yeah, we get those—they're major deals! But it's these weird, picky precepts that cause us to just scratch our heads and move on.

Not so fast, though. Let's take these four curious canons I've mentioned through their paces in trying to make sense of Old Testament law.

Little Laws, Large Lessons

First, remember that detailed case laws such as these almost always reflect specific application of at least one of the Ten Commandments. The four listed above introduce a larger section in Deuteronomy that deals with sexual impurity—the seventh commandment (Deut. 22:9-23:19).

Of these, the first three statutes allude to improper combinations: a defiled crop mix, a clean animal yoked with an unclean one, and fabric mixes worn by prostitutes. Number four—the tassels command—relates to a fashion feature designed to foster faithfulness (see Num. 15:37-41). So all four edicts support the main lesson in this part of Deuteronomy, which happens to be the principle behind the seventh commandment: purity and loyalty in relationships.

Next, keep in mind that what these “little laws” do in effect is teach Israel how to respond properly to God's character and authority in all details of their lives. Covenant people are to show how loyalty to the Lord affects one's entire being. Clearly the same concern is still appropriate for the people of God today.

Different Culture, Different Covenant

Two factors point up the difference between Israel in the days of Moses and Christ's body today, though. First, the culture has changed. Ours is not a narrow, agrarian, pre-modern world, as was true of Israel in Old Testament times. That's why so many of those laws dealt with such things as sheep, carcasses, and boundary markers. No, we are God's people in a transglobal,

technological, transmodern culture. We must apply the law's principles to stem cell research, playing the lottery, and social networking on Facebook, just to name a few venues that impact decision-making in our culture.

Second, we live under a different covenant. Under Christ's new covenant, we have a new nature with the law in our hearts, the Spirit living in us, every believer a priest, the completed canon of Scripture, and a nurturing community of edification and accountability in the church.

Old Testament believers, with all the blessings they enjoyed as covenant partners with God, did not have these transformative assets to help them live out the life of God in their daily experience. We do—but seldom make the most of them.

Reverse the Process

What we must do, then, is find the timeless principle behind the temporary precept and apply it to ourselves in the 21st century. Specifically, in our four test case laws, what must I do and how must I live to demonstrate loyalty in my most cherished relationships? Exactly what steps should I take to maintain purity and ensure that I do not betray God's holiness in my life as a Christian? In essence, Christians simply reverse the process by going from the general to the specific instead of the other way around, as was true before Christ came.

Finally, keep in mind that Jesus, whose coming we celebrate, fulfills Old Testament ceremonial law in the new covenant He makes with His people (see Col. 2:16-23; Heb. 9:8-10; 10:19-25). He reveals the principle of the law and brings to the forefront its inner motive (Matt. 5:17, 21-22, 27-28).

The Law: “God's DNA”

I close our discussion of the law by borrowing a phrase from A. J. Jacobs' book *The Year of Living Biblically*, though not in the context he intends in his discussion. The law is very much “God's DNA.” It shows us His holiness in the way it displays His character, and it brings us His grace in the very fact that He gives it to us at all. What is left is for us to receive its instruction, repent at its rebuke, trust the One who fulfills it, and live for Him. **ONE**



DR. GARNETT REID
chairs the Bible Department at
Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Photo: Mark Cowart

++SAILING THROUGH ROUGH ECONOMIC TIMES

By Norma Jackson Goldman

AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN PROVIDES EXCELLENT MOTIVATION FOR EXAMINING BUYING/SPENDING HABITS AND FOR BEING WISE STEWARDS OF ALL THE RESOURCES GOD PROVIDES.

Successful cost trimming requires a willingness to change well-established habits and reset priorities. Setting a new course and charting progressive steps toward accomplishment can be a spiritual adventure as well as a practical exercise in self-discipline. Begin by examining major “budget busters.”

GIFT GIVING

For years now, Christians have complained that the real focus of Christmas has been lost in commercialism. Let this be the year you and your family agree to focus gift giving on young children and mission causes. Without a written budget, this won't happen, but half of what you spent the previous year would be a realistic goal.

EATING OUT/GROCERY SHOPPING

Eating out is a huge budget buster. Families of two or more

find it is definitely cheaper to eat at home. Limit eating out to special events and consider substituting a family potluck for a restaurant meal. Never order tea or a soft drink. Stick with water and don't order dessert. The extra sugar could result in an expensive diet! A 20% reduction in the monthly cost of food is easily achievable.

Grocery buying habits are usually firmly entrenched, but consider these changes:

- Shop only once a week (or less), never when hungry, and always with a list.
- Take a little longer to comparison shop, be willing to switch brands, buy luxury items seldom, and only when on sale; always clip coupons;
- Take advantage of senior discount days when they are offered in your community, even if it means switching stores;
- Be careful about over-stocking



freezers, which results in throwing food away.

CUT AUTOMOBILE EXPENSE

If you developed the habit of consolidating errands when gas prices were skyrocketing, you know this practice makes sense, no matter what the cost of gasoline. Use discount coupons for oil changes and routine maintenance costs. Rotate tires often to lengthen the life of your tires and increase gas mileage.

AVOID CREDIT

It's convenient to hand over your card when making a purchase, but statistics confirm that you spend more when using a card. What you save on a sale item can be eaten up by interest charges. Develop a mind-set that dictates, "If I don't have the cash, I won't buy it right now."

DEFER NON-ESSENTIAL PURCHASES

It's much easier to live with "I'll buy this later, when our bank balance improves," rather than "We can't afford to buy anything." There is a positive psychological effect when we acknowledge that we are making good choices now that will pay future dividends rather than gloomily bemoaning the fact that we won't be going on vacation this year.

REVIEW INSURANCE COVERAGE

Examine all policies to determine if a higher deductible makes sense on auto and homeowner's insurance; be willing to change companies to get a better premium at renewal time. Expect at least a 10% discount when you place home and auto with the same agency.

CONSIDER DOWNSIZING

Carefully planned and managed downsizing could offer your greatest opportunity to reduce expenses. Listing all costs related to home ownership sometimes makes it difficult to justify a home purchased when raising a family.

Early in retirement, many experience erosion in investment income and Social Security. Make changes *before* these income reductions become a reality.

MAKE LEMONADE

While we would never invite an economic downturn (one of life's lemons), we can show family and friends that it need not be a calamity! By re-thinking our lifestyles and re-prioritizing spending and buying, we truly model what it means to "make lemonade out of lemons." **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: Former magazine editor Norma J. Goldman enjoys a successful freelance writing career in retirement. She lives in Nashville, TN.

Time Is Running Out!

Ensure a Charitable Tax Deduction Before Year-End

Make a gift of cash or appreciated property to Free Will Baptist Bible College before December 31, and enjoy a charitable tax deduction on your 2009 tax return.

Make Your End-of-Year Gift Today!

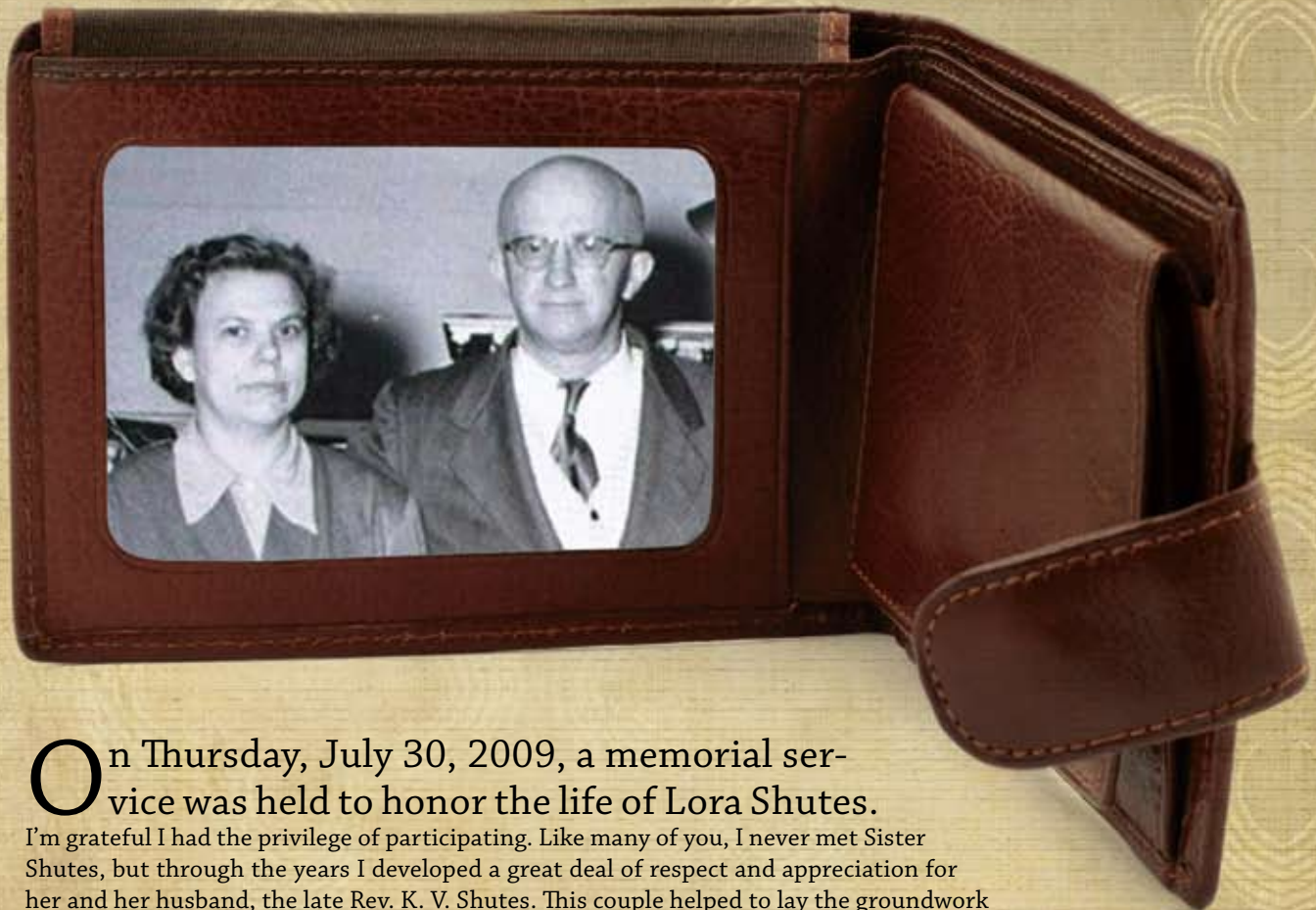


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thank you

BY D. RAY LEWIS



On Thursday, July 30, 2009, a memorial service was held to honor the life of Lora Shutes.

I'm grateful I had the privilege of participating. Like many of you, I never met Sister Shutes, but through the years I developed a great deal of respect and appreciation for her and her husband, the late Rev. K. V. Shutes. This couple helped to lay the groundwork for the present ministry of the Board of Retirement.

The Shutes first learned of the superannuation program (as it was called back then) while pastoring in Georgia in the late 1930s. The program provided an insurance annuity retirement benefit for pastors. After reading an article written by Joe Fort, they became burdened for the work. Mrs. Shutes said, "We were interested from the beginning and conscious of the need for a retirement plan for pastors."

A New Agency

During the 1955 national convention in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the Superannuation Board hired Brother Shutes as its first and only promotional secretary. After resigning his pastorate, he moved the family to Nashville, Tennessee, to set up the office. Due to insufficient funds, however, they were unable to set up an office in the headquarters building on Richland Avenue. C. F. Bowen, director of the League, was kind enough to share his office with the new struggling ministry.

Shutes gave himself completely to developing the program, while Mrs. Shutes served as secretary-treasurer. From September to December 31, 1955, Brother Shutes traveled 10,023 miles, speaking in five state associations and three local associations. He also visited 35 churches encouraging them to purchase an annuity policy for their pastor. At the time, the few full-time churches and congregations had not caught the vision of providing adequate care for their pastors.

A few months after opening the office, it became evident there were insufficient funds to operate an office. In the fall of 1956, Shutes resigned as the promotional secretary and went back into the pastorate. In spite of the couple's hard work, only 63 ministers had purchased annuity policies. Assets were a meager \$2,728.21. When he resigned, Shutes remarked, "It (superannuation) is still the most needy child of the National Association."

Due to the lack of funds, the board did not replace Brother Shutes. Instead, he continued to promote the work wherever he had opportunity. Sister Shutes continued as the secretary/treasurer of the board. The program was promoted in *Contact* magazine, state papers, and by board members. The small portable office in the Shutes' home moved with them as they changed pastorates.

After her husband went to be with the Lord in 1962, Mrs. Shutes continued as secretary-treasurer of the board.

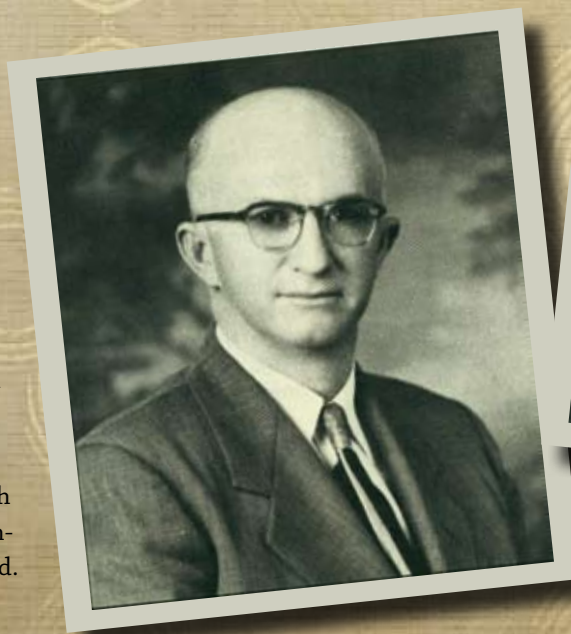
She remained in the position until 1969, when she packed up the records and files and shipped them to Garner, North Carolina, where Director Herman Hersey had set up a part-time office with a new name—The Board of Retirement and Insurance. She had served the board 14 years, from 1955 until 1969. At first, she did not receive any pay for her work. Later, the board paid her \$15 a week, then increased it to \$25 a week and finally raised it to \$125 per month.

We thank God for Brother and Sister Shutes' diligent efforts in paving the way for what we have today. They had abiding faith and conviction that the denomination would eventually care for "those who serve them." I'm sorry I never had an opportunity to sit down with Sister Shutes and share the fulfillment of their vision for Free Will Baptist pastors. I wish I could have told her that we have helped 2,415 Free Will Baptists save for retirement, that the \$2,728.21 in assets grew to more than \$43 million.

Most of all, I would like to have been able to say, "Thank you." ONE

*Excerpts taken by permission from a 1984 interview with Mrs. Shutes by Vernie Hersey.

ABOUT THE WRITER: D. Ray Lewis is director of the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. Visit www.boardofretirement.com.



Rev. K. V. Shutes & Lora Shutes



LOOKING FOR THE RIGHT ANSWER...

FOUR CHRISTIANS TALK ABOUT THE "ALMIGHTY" DOLLAR

BILL AND BRENDA EVANS

Recently we asked four of our friends—two men and two women—to talk about money. Their ages range from mid-30s to early 70s, but their life experiences have stretched between even greater extremes. Meet the four:

KIM SEXTON is a single, thirty-something health and physical education teacher.

LINDA HUMPHREY is owner/operator of a bookkeeping service.

WAYMON FIELDS, a retired bank president, is a small-town mayor and member of the Free Will Baptist Foundation Board.

ANDY LAY serves as a fundraiser for national and international ministries.

Three major concepts about money and its place in our lives emerged from the conversations.

Money generates moral struggles. All four said they have found themselves in moral dilemmas because of money. For Kim, the tension between waste and thriftiness is real, and working out a balance between the two is as sloppy as a "professional" wrestling match. Putting a headlock on excess is her current challenge. "Avoiding waste is the biggest money struggle I have right now. I'm on a plan that I hope will make me completely debt-free in five years, but it's not easy. My daughters (ages 6 and 9) and I eat out too often. If I ask them what they want to eat, they name a restaurant, not a food. So I'm working on that."

Debt definitely increases stress, Kim says. "You feel overwhelmed with thoughts about how you can pay this or that and become preoccupied with it. I'm not much of a planner and worrier, so I've been known to have to count change until the next payday. But one thing I've learned is that, for me, credit cards are evil. So I use only my debit card."

Plus there is tension between wants and needs. Kim says that a fancy home does not entice her, though big toys do—boat, jet-ski, nice pick-up. "If I had lots of money, that's what I would buy. But I don't, so I won't. I guess even adults are a little like one of my daughters was a few years ago when I told her we didn't have money to buy something. "Just go to Wal-mart," she told me. "You can get back cash there."

Waymon's earliest moral dilemma with money came at a grocery retailer. "I was bagging and carrying items that I didn't want to be associated with—specifically beer. I prayed that if the Lord would make a way, I'd leave. I got a call about a men's shop looking for an employee. And since that time the Lord has always opened doors for me to be able to do what is right in my profession and with my money."

Strategic to winning moral financial struggles is learning from your mistakes, Linda says. "When Jeff and I were first married, we both worked and so we kept separate bank accounts. He would pay some things; I would pay others. That was a huge mistake." When Linda left work to care for their children, living on one salary and working out of one account provoked more than a few attitude-adjustment moments between them. "It took work, but we learned that it is not *my* money and *your* money; it is *our* money."

Statistically, dealing with money is high on the list of marital conflicts. Waymon says he and his wife Gail avoid conflict by never making a major purchase unless both agree on it. "This is something we've practiced for a long time. If you overspend, any little emergency can put you in a strap. All those years as a banker, I observed too many people were poor simply because of spending and borrowing choices they made."

Good money management is actually good self-management. Money is neutral, Waymon says. It's how we deal with it that makes it either good or evil. In fact, in his opinion, it is not so much about money management as self-management. "Gail and I live lean. I grew up on a one-mule sharecropper's farm with hand-me-downs and no college funds. But a wise teacher once told me that hard times could make me pity myself or motivate me to do better. He was right."

Self-restraint and motivation are crucial, Waymon says. "It is more how you manage what you have than what you have to manage." At age 22 he accepted a bottom-rung banking job, and over the next 44 years held about every position in a bank, including teller, bookkeeper, chairman, and president/CEO.

Along the way, Waymon bought interest in the company, an enormous commitment for him and Gail. "Two brothers had controlling interest in the bank and wanted to sell. I put together a group of buyers, including myself, none of whom would have controlling interest. I wanted to achieve two things: buy a part interest in the bank myself, but assure that no one had a controlling interest. It is a good thing for your employees to have a working situation where no one can come in today and say, 'I'm selling, and I don't

Create a Lasting Legacy...

Free Will Baptist Bible College is working closely with Free Will Baptist Foundation to help you continue giving to the college long after you are gone.

These opportunities include unitrusts, gift annuities, and endowments. Contact the Foundation to learn how you can start a legacy of giving.



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need you anymore.”

In those early days, the monthly payment was almost half of Waymon’s salary. “It was the biggest leap of faith I have ever taken. But here was an open door, and the Lord had guided my employment paths. You have to be practical. You never let credit get the better of you; you never trust money; you never quit giving. And you have to have self-restraint. To me that’s the difference in Abraham and Solomon. Both were very well off, but Abraham handled it better than Solomon.”

Regarding self-management, Andy sees a similarity between money and drugs. “It occurred to me that money is like drugs. Under control and used in moderation, drugs do wonderful things for our bodies. But when used outside the limits of discretion, they destroy both our bodies and our minds. Money does good or evil depending up how we use it.”

All four emphasized the power of the word *no*. “We use *no* just fine around our house, both to ourselves and to our three daughters,” Linda says. “We don’t want our lives to revolve around things. In fact, we are savers more than spenders. We’ve only bought one new car in more than 20 years of marriage. Jeff likes to save and pay cash, so when we eat out, he pulls out his wallet to get what we call his ‘moldies’ to pay for the meal. We practice self-control.”

During the California housing boom with prices soaring to the stratosphere, Andy changed jobs and learned to say *no* firmly. He had been a fundraiser for the Los Angeles Rescue Mission, lived in an apartment at the mission, and gave close to half of his income to his church and various Gospel ministries.

His realtor suggested that he buy a condo in Pasadena because it was near his new job and had better investment

value. But high house payments would have jeopardized his giving plan. He said *no* and eventually purchased a condo 25 miles away, enabling him to remain generous to the Lord’s work.

Money pits the world’s values against kingdom values. “Jesus said more than once that it’s either God or money. One or the other will have our hearts, our love,” Andy says. “He didn’t give much wiggle room for other opinions on that.”

When he was a young pastor, Andy saw that concept demonstrated in two elderly widowed sisters. One was rich, the other modestly poor. One had the proverbial mansion on the hill, the other a trailer. One was deeply committed to her wealth, the other to her Lord. Both were shut-ins—one spent her last years worrying about financial decisions, investments, and losses, the other praying for unsaved neighbors and new church families.

“I learned such an important lesson from those dear women. It is about who or what has your heart. I see it in my work, too. Fundraising is similar to soul-winning, you know—in both, it is about a decision, a decision about who is Lord of my life.”

“I love studying Matthew because he was wealthy from his tax-collecting and made a crucial choice between God and money. I think he was the man who found a treasure in a field and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought the field.”

“He is the only gospel writer who records that short parable—and the companion one about the merchant who finds the great pearl. I think the parable was personal for Matthew. He had learned that the treasure, the pearl was Jesus, and so he “sold all” to have Him. Dealing with money is about deciding who our treasure is.” **ONE**

To Sum It Up

Linda: “I have found in my business that Christians are not always honest with money. One example is taxes.”

Waymon: “We can be too presumptuous. The town I’m mayor of was bankrupt when I got elected, so my theme became financial responsibility. We are to be stewards of all of it—everywhere.”

Kim: “I’ve been in FWB churches since I was a child and heard lots of teaching, but not much on money except for tithing. Why not?”

Andy: “We are most like God when we give. Before Magda and I were married, she was laid off from a Christian ministry because of budget cuts, yet continued to work without pay for nine months. Although she was the provider for her parents, she told her boss, ‘If you can’t pay me, you can’t pay me, but I am responsible to the Lord for these seekers who want Bibles and study guides.’ Magda and I believe he has put us in charge of our money and will call us to account for it all.”

BROWN on green

BY DAVID BROWN

Automobiles are the second largest expense in most household budgets next to housing.

Purchasing a car is a very important decision that should merit much research and attention. It can be an emotional decision for Americans have been in love with the car for over a hundred years.

Obviously, the main purpose of a car is to get you from point A to point B. In theory then, the cheapest way to accomplish this purpose is the best choice. A Hyundai Accent at a list price of \$10,690 can provide just as adequate transportation as a \$151,325 Mercedes Benz S Class. Which car is right for you? Likely it falls somewhere in between these two extremes.

Other factors impact your decision, such as how many people you transport. An automobile for a 250-pound man will likely be a different choice than that for a 98-pound

woman. These are legitimate factors in your choice. However, buying an automobile based on the image you wish to project rather than the appropriate size and type can cause automobile expenses to be higher than necessary.

Most financial advisors believe that leasing or trading cars every two or three years is not a good option as these choices will drive up the cost of your transportation expense. Keeping a car until it is worn out is the best choice. Most regularly maintained cars can be kept in service for 150,000 miles or more.

To keep costs lower, consider buying used rather than new. Savings of 35% are likely by purchasing a two-year-old used car. Often these automobiles can be obtained with less than 30,000 miles. This means you will receive 80% of its useful life, but it will only cost 65%. Remember: a car is an expense, so try to keep the cost as low as possible. Don't allow emotion to overrule logic as you consider your purchase. **ONE**

5 CHEAPEST CARS TO OWN

01. HYUNDAI ACCENT GS

Starting price: \$10,690 • 5-year total cost: \$25,958 • Cost per mile: 35 cents

02. NISSAN VERSA BASE

Starting price: \$10,710 • 5-year total cost: \$27,196 • Cost per mile: 36 cents

03. CHEVROLET AVEO5 LS

Starting price: \$12,685 • 5-year total cost: \$28,360 • Cost per mile: 38 cents

04. SUZUKI SX4 SEDAN

Starting price: \$13,994 • 5-year total cost: \$28,965 • Cost per mile: 39 cents

05. PONTIAC G3

Starting price: \$15,055 • 5-year total cost: \$29,049 • Cost per mile: 39 cents



According to Russ Heaps, www.bankrate.com

Legacy of Ministry

Since 1942, Free Will Baptist Bible College has equipped thousands of students for Christian service.

They, in turn, have impacted hundreds of thousands around the globe, making a difference for eternity. By establishing an endowment to benefit the college through Free Will Baptist Foundation, you can continue this Legacy of Ministry and

- + enjoy 100% charitable tax deduction.
- + provide a perpetual income stream for Free Will Baptist Bible College.
- + create your own Legacy of Ministry.

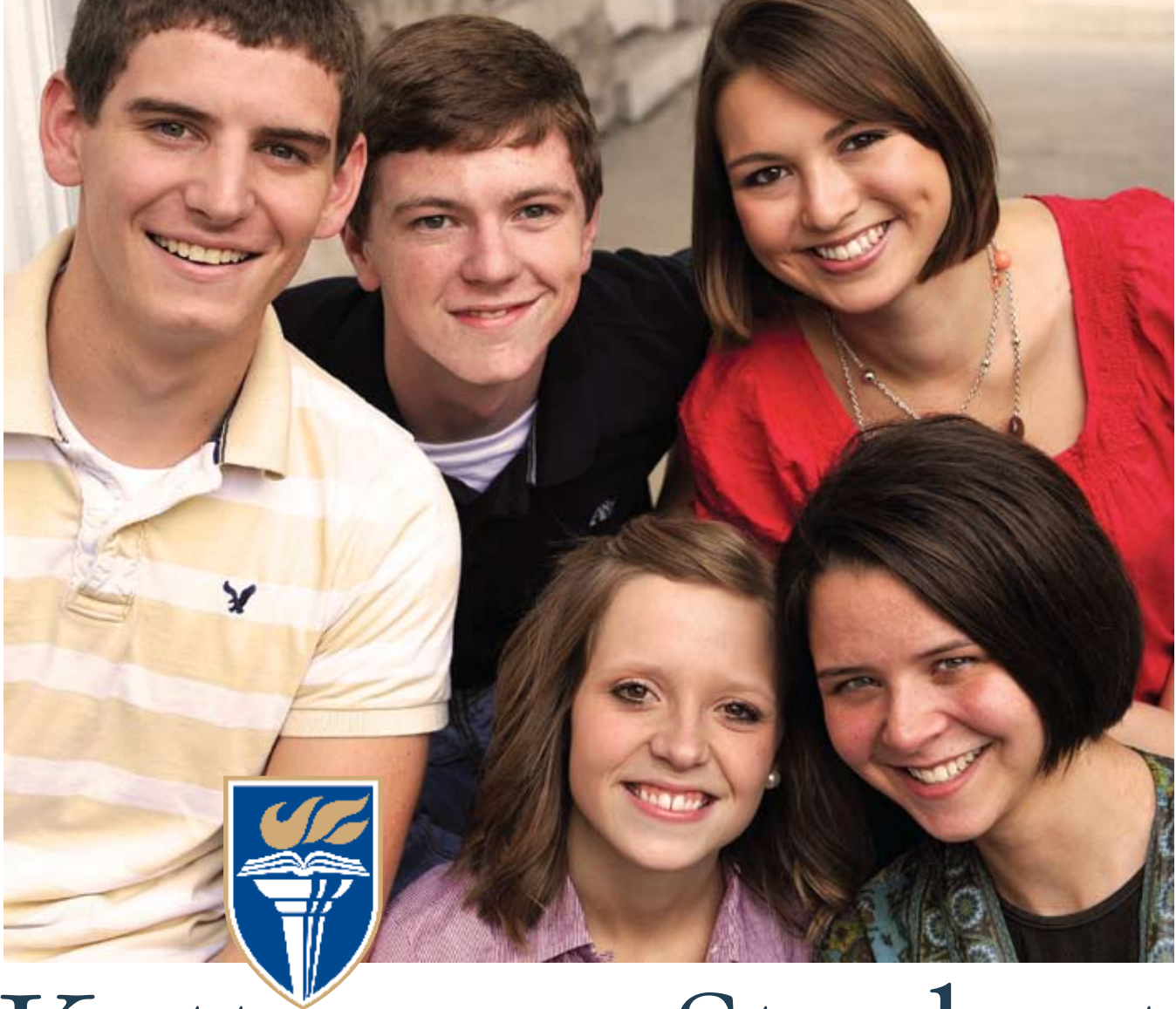
For more information, contact the Free Will Baptist Foundation:



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Free Will Baptist
Bible College



Ketteman Student Scholarship Drive

Each December, the Ketteman Student Scholarship Drive raises funds for scholarships provided by Free Will Baptist Bible College to deserving students.

Who benefits from the scholarship drive?

Numerous groups of students benefit. The college provides scholarships for children of Free Will Baptist pastors and students with high academic standing. International students and students with financial need also receive funds from monies raised by the Ketteman Student Scholarship Drive.

How much scholarship money does the school provide?

Scholarships awarded to students in 2008 totaled more than \$700,000!

Must a student have a particular major to qualify?

Recipients of scholarship funds pursue a variety of majors. Any student who qualifies, regardless of major, receives scholarship assistance.



Will my gift really make a difference?

The scholarships given to FWBBC students are often the difference between whether or not they are able to attend the college. Every gift is significant.

How can I give?

Use the enclosed envelope to mail your gift. You may also give through the college website: www.fwbcc.edu/Giving. In addition, you may give through electronic fund transfer (EFT), sometimes referred to as a bank draft.

Contact the college today!

THE LETTER

EDITOR'S NOTE: Gerardo Acevedo pastors Emanuel FWB Church in Montevideo, Uruguay. He also serves as president of the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptist Churches. He sent this letter to other leaders in Free Will Baptist works around the world earlier this year.

Dear Free Will Baptist Brother:

AS THOSE AFFILIATED WITH THE POWERS

of darkness close ranks around the world, and the mystery of iniquity works (2 Thessalonians 2:7) more and more:

In this scene, the Church of Jesus Christ neither sleeps nor remains static; we hear news of growth in India, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, and Mexico. New mission fields are opened in Bulgaria and in Central Asia. Moreover, the IFOFWBC Missions Committee is structured to help move us toward an organization that will help to carry the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Imagine! In the near future we hope to see missionaries go out from other parts of the world where brothers and sisters full of compassion await the opportunity to serve on fields where today there are no missionaries, or where there is a need to strengthen the missionary presence where a work already exists.

The fascinating panorama of missions is wide open today, glory to God! If you have the call and are considering leaving family, home, culture, and language to work cross-culturally, I encourage you to prepare yourself by taking missions courses and begin to familiarize yourself with the new language you'll need to learn. Think about the privilege of serving to the ends of the earth, from the morning to the evening.

How do we read the Free Will Baptist panorama in regards to cross-cultural missions?

If we are even moderately optimistic, we will not be surprised if, in this generation, we see the greatest harvest of souls ever around the world. We will see the glory of God, as an anticipation that His coming is very, very near.

The first missionary to India (for Free Will Baptists in the modern era) was sent out 74 years ago. But it was only after patiently sowing and watering the seed with prayer and with tears, and we clearly see the great harvest of souls that now number in the thousands. Praise God!

In the last 11 years, the number of congregants outside the United States has tripled. This means that both missionaries and nationals have gone out to whiten harvest fields to reap the harvest. I ask you, according to the influence you can have, and taking advantage of the opportunities God gives, that you be a valiant witness, generous, loyal, proactive, making history, and winning souls for the glory of God.

The hour has come to renew our commitment, looking forward with our hand on the plow, as our Master taught us in Luke 9:62. If God has called you to preach, preach! If you have compassion for the lost, go after them. If you have a burden for other nations, pray, become a missionary, or be a facilitator so that others can go through your prayers and offerings. And pray that the Lord of Harvest would send forth laborers into His harvest.

This is a chorus we sing in Uruguay. "From every tribe, people, and race, many will come to praise. From many cultures, languages, and nations, they will come to worship in time and space."

Finally, I would like to make an appeal to the member countries, very much aware of the global financial crisis. Let's put forth our best effort to send in our dues to the International Fellowship. Trust in God, who owns it all. Make it your privilege to give; do not be discouraged. Our prayer goes up for those who have lost jobs, houses, and are concerned about their future. Be strong and of good courage; the Lord will repay your faithfulness and will provide for your needs.

God is self-sufficient, but He prefers to count on you. ☒

God bless you!

Gerardo Acevedo, Uruguay

NEWS

around the world



Campinas, Brazil—The São José Church hosted a joint baptismal service in Campinas on Sunday, October 3. Those baptized were from the Nova América Mission Church (6), Ouro Verde Mission Church (7), São José FWB Church (4), and the First Church (2). Three more people were received as members who transferred from other churches. The Sunday evening service at the São José Church was also a blessed time. As Pastor Nilvio gave the invitation, 10 people came forward to accept Christ as Savior. ■



Côte d'Ivoire—Eight men and one woman received their diplomas from the Bible Institute in Bouna during the August 2009 General Assembly of FWB Churches in Côte d'Ivoire, marking the fourth graduating class. These students began their studies with missionary instructors Jerry Pinkerton and Kenneth Eagleton six years ago. They studied and worked through a period of economic and personal hardship as a result of the 2002 civil conflict. They finished their courses under Paul Amiézi and Robert Houéssou. Two of the graduates recently left established works to either begin a new work, or become pastor of a church begun by lay leaders. The fifth class of students began their second year in Bouna on October 12. ■



Tokyo, Japan—The Japan FWB Association met October 11-12. The two days were filled with celebrations as the Iriso Church celebrated their 40th anniversary and the Japanese association celebrated its 55th. Sunday included music by MK and accomplished concert pianist Paul Hersey and a message by veteran missionary and former Iriso Church pastor Fred Hersey. Several others performed, including former church members and Pastor Hirabuki from the Hokkaido Koinonia Church. The association met on Monday at the Kamifukuoka Christ Church. Members from the Hokkaido churches and three churches in the Kanto (Tokyo) area were represented. Pastor Hirabuki sang and Fred Hersey spoke on the history of FWB in Japan. ■



IMpulse and Other Videos Available to Share

ANTIOCH, TN—International Missions has completed digitizing and uploading all previous issues of *IMpulse* onto the Mission's website—fwbgo.com. Each segment is categorized according to its original issue volume. However, when the issue date is unknown, videos may be found by using keywords (such as a country or a missionary name) to locate the desired segment. This will make it easier to choose the “just right” video for Sunday School, women's or men's groups, or missions emphasis services.

A wide variety of other inspirational, educational, and historical videos are also available on the new video page. Users may watch videos online, download a high-quality version to watch in groups, or share videos with others via a new media player. The media player allows viewers to include a video in an email or upload it to another website (such as a church site or Facebook).

For those who prefer DVDs, volumes one through four may be purchased on the site as well. ■

IM Ambassadors Set 2010 WMO Goal



ANTIOCH, TN—Free Will Baptist International Missions' Ambassadors gathered September 21-22, 2009, to discuss the success of the 2009 World Missions Offering (WMO) and to plan WMO initiatives for 2010. During the meeting, the Ambassadors voted to set the 2010 WMO goal at \$600,000.

The Ambassador program was established in the fall of 2006. Since then, WMO church participation has increased by 48%, and monetary growth has skyrocketed by 83.5%.

Development Director Barry Simpson stated, "The Ambassador team is essential to the success of the WMO. These men and their wives have done an outstanding job with their assignments. I look forward to promoting the WMO and the Change the World coin banks with them in 2010."

The 2010 Ambassador team (and the states in which they will promote the WMO) is:

Jimmy and Janie Aldridge (Alabama, Florida); Earnie and Jean Deeds (Oklahoma); Galen and Barbara Dunbar (South Carolina); Fred and June Hersey (Alabama, Georgia); Tom and Nancy Hughes (Arizona, Idaho, California, Colorado, New Mexico, Northwest District); Jerry and Carol Pinkerton (Missouri); Mark and Deanna Price (Kentucky, Ohio); Norman and Bessie Richards (Arkansas, Kentucky); David and Pat Shores (Illinois); Henry and Virginia VanKluyve (Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee); Fred and Rachel Warner (Arkansas, Oklahoma); Earl and Debbie White (West Virginia); and Rodney and Mary Yerby (Alabama). ■

Jones Resigns, Seeks Direction



ANTIOCH, TN—The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions accepted the resignation of Casey Jones effective September 30, 2009. Casey experienced several seizures while working in Central Asia. The Mission flew him to Germany for treatment and diagnosis. Subsequently, he

returned to the States for further treatment and medical recommendations. In his letter of resignation Casey stated, "This is probably the hardest thing I ever had to do...I thought, prayed, and fasted for guidance on this issue."

"Casey has served well and, while we are sad to see him leave, we understand and support his decision to suspend his involvement in Central Asia for the time being," stated Jeff Turnbough, deputy director of field operations. "We pray that he will be able to return soon."

"Casey served with honor and excellence in Central Asia," affirmed Regional Director Clint Morgan. "The Central Asia Team, our ministry partners in Kazakhstan, and I are saddened by Casey's decision, but we understand it and embrace it with him. We know he will continue to serve God and anticipate what God has in store for him in the future."

Jones served as an intern in Central Asia, teaching English and building relationships. Appointed in April 2008, he began on-the-ground activity on January 13, 2009. "My heart will always be with the people of Central Asia," Casey wrote. "I will never forget what God taught me during this period of my life." Casey hopes doors will reopen at some point in the future.

General Director James Forlines, emphasized, "The team in Central Asia has been faced with particularly difficult situations in the past months. I urge everyone to pray for those still hard at work there, as well as those who've resigned for various reasons." ■

Richards Receive Six-month Assignment

ANTIOCH, TN—Norman and Bessie Richards received Free Will Baptist International Missions Board approval on October 21, 2009, for a short-term assignment to France. Norman and Bessie will serve as *Specialized English Ministry Assistants* from January-June, 2010.

The Richards' served in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, for 28 years. Norman's health needs predicated their resignation from the Mission. However, once those needs were resolved, the

couple took an assignment in Louisiana with the Free Will Baptist Home Missions Board. Norman and Bessie currently live in Nashville, Tennessee, and are active members of the Donelson FWB Church, including heading an English as a Second Language (ESL) ministry to immigrants. The couple's knowledge of the French language, as well as their ESL and cross-cultural experience, make them a perfect fit for this six-month assignment with Free Will Baptist International Missions. ■

A **SIGNIFICANT** Moment in the History of the Church

TRY GETTING A DRINK OF

water from a fire hose—that's how many attendees described the D6 Conference. Thirty-seven speakers all brought their "A Game" to a packed house of ministers, parents, and church leaders with the message of connecting church and home. The powerful opening video set the tone showing 1,600 attendees the impact Deuteronomy six can have on families around the world. Too optimistic? People traveled from Canada, Puerto Rico, Australia, Norway, the Philippines, and 41 different states to hear the speakers, swap ideas, and take resources back to their ministries. D6 is even being exported to Norway! Randall House has already designed the logo for the Norwegian concept of D6. Dr. Richard Ross, international spokesperson for True Love Waits said, "This [D6 conference] is a significant moment in the history of the church."

Darren Whitehead kicked off the event telling the group how their church realized that the parents teaching the kids was Plan A and the church being solely responsible for that teaching is Plan B. "I gasp at the beauty of the church" is how he described families responding to the way the church touches their lives at home. Angela Thomas drove

this point even further when she walked us through how the church played a significant role in healing her broken family and giving her hope and encouragement.

Just when attendees thought they could not handle any more, out came comedian Tim Hawkins who had people laughing so hard they complained of their sides hurting the next day. The 45 minutes of roaring laughter flew by before the audience was re-engaged in the spiritual formation models of local churches. It was non-stop worshipful experience, concluding that church can no longer fit into a small window of people's lives. Rob Rienow brought the house to their knees with his challenge from God's Word showing, "The shortest distance between a child's heart and Christ is their parents."

Drinking from a fire hose? Yes. Digesting the message quickly? Impossible. This was more than an event—it was a life changer.

The D6 Conference provides a meeting place to talk about what God is doing within the body of Christ. Free Will Baptists are leading this conversation because Randall House stepped out on faith to be used by God to lead the church, pastors, and families in this pivotal time. Our churches are growing in responsibility, and we must step up and connect with the parents so they can connect with their kids. **ONE**

D6
conference

The future generations are counting on the church, and we cannot let them down. Mark your calendars and come talk with leaders from around the world about this movement.

The next D6 Conference will be September 15-17, 2010, in Dallas, TX.



HOW DO I TEACH *it all?*

BY
ALLEN
POINTER

If you could have one question answered to make this day profitable, what would it be?

EVERY ONE OF US HAS BENEFITED FROM A church volunteer who helped us grow in our faith and understanding of Christ. From nursery to senior saints, each Sunday these important volunteers lead classes, teach lessons, and love their students.

Training for these front-line volunteers should be a priority. Because I have been around long enough to become a youth pastor patriarch, I get asked to do teacher and youth worker training from time to time. Recently, I started a training session with the question above, and I heard the following question.

How do I fit everything in to my junior high girl's class on Sunday morning? I need to be involved in their lives, but I have important lessons to teach as well. How do I make it all fit?

What a great question! And it has such a great answer. You don't.

It is not one of the 10 Commandments that you have to finish the lesson each week. Some people think the success of each week's lesson is determined by how much of the lesson gets covered week in and week out. But that is not the best gauge of a good Sunday School lesson.

Our youth group uses D6 Curriculum from Randall House. It is tailor-made for what we want to accomplish on any given Sunday. Most Sundays, the


lesson is given by what we call our master teacher. This just means that instead of having six teachers for our department, we have one who gives all six groups the same lesson.

The Connect and the Learn sections of the CLEAR Learning System allow the master teacher—in our case Cameron Lane—to present the body of the lesson. We then split into six graded gender groups to finish the lesson, or the Explore, Apply, and Respond sections of CLEAR. The small groups allow for more personal interaction. Other adults lead each of these groups. We had been using this model before CLEAR became available, but it has been enhanced by using the curriculum.

But even we pick and choose what we use! Some weeks we add, subtract, and expand the lesson. The important thing is that the scope and sequence of D6 Curriculum provides a solid bibli-

cal foundation for teaching all of God's truth. It is just that we don't try to do it all at once.

For teachers who are by themselves in some isolated classroom, worried about doing it right, relax! Each week study the lesson. Each week pray about what God wants to say to your students. Then if you only cover one or two of the sections, but you have opportunity to speak into your students' lives, your lesson has been successful.

After all, most of us can't recall any specific lesson (or very few) from our junior high years. But we all remember the teachers who poured their lives into ours. And that is what matters most. 

ABOUT THE WRITER: Allen Pointer is student pastor at First FWB Church in Russellville, AR. Learn more about D6 Curriculum at www.randallhouse.com or www.d6family.com.



D6 Curriculum
provides a
SOLID
BIBLICAL
FOUNDATION
for teaching all of
God's truth.

FWB Youth Worker Gathering

There will be two opportunities for FWB youth worker Gathering events this spring. Some youth workers will be able to attend both, others will only be able to attend one. These events are designed to provide youth workers an opportunity to get away and get together for times of encouragement, networking, and refreshment.

The Youth Pastor Summit in Orlando is scheduled March 1-2. FWB Youth Worker Gathering meets in conjunction with the YPS on March 2-3. Basically, come to the YPS for two days of inspiring workshops, and stay another day to visit with other FWB youth workers. So, mark your calendar for March 1-3, 2010, for the YPS/Gathering. Registration will open in December at www.studentleadership.net/yps-registration.

Another FWB youth worker Gathering will be held in conjunction with FORUM10 at FWB-BC, March 7-10. This unique conference will provide an excellent opportunity for youth workers and young adult leaders to come together to address issues of vital importance. FORUM10 sessions are scheduled for Monday and Tuesday. There will be a Gathering dinner Tuesday evening at 5:00 for all who want to eat together at a local restaurant before returning at 7:00 for the closing session of FORUM10. Informal Gathering sessions will be planned for Wednesday. We will also have access to the gym.

Watch for more details on both events at www.OutpostX.net and on Facebook.

National Youth Conference 2010

In recognition of the 75th anniversary of FWB International Missions, the 2010 NYC theme is *Wherever*, drawn from the commission to be worldwide witnesses of Christ in Acts 1:8.

There will be a variety of special events this year, including the culmination of the Go10 Walk.

Teens and adults will also enjoy the hilarious comedy of Tim Hawkins after the Tuesday evening service.



LEADERPROFILE

by Ron Hunter Jr.

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



WILL HARMON

WILL HARMON IS A LEADER'S LEADER. Two hundred words cannot do justice to his accomplishments, many behind the scenes. Born in Midland Texas, the Texan in him shows up in his mannerisms, the vastness of his vision, and the enormity of his heart. Called to preach at age 12 under Carl Cheshier's ministry, Will never had any aspirations to another profession.

He and his wife Angie, who currently leads worship, sometimes send the kids to the grandparents and hop on his Harley for date night and a romantic dinner. Will describes their three daughters Whitney (20), Callie (12), and Zane (9) as the drama queen, intense, and the sports freak.

Will served as chairman of the Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College Board, served on the board of directors for Randall House, and has pastored Cavanaugh Free Will Baptist for more than 12 years. Will Harmon has led numerous organizations to new heights of success and yet remains balanced in his personal and family life. Will Harmon you are a great leader!

Quiet Time Routine

Will spends an hour a day reading his Bible and journaling of how God is speaking. He said, "It's not too tough to spend an hour when you desire and want it."

Biggest Success

Apart from serving his church and denomination, Will has "been faithful to his call and has not dishonored the Lord by messing up."

Favorite Books:

The Greatest Salesman in the World by Og Mandino
Simple Church by Thom Rainer
Such a Little Secret by J. Wilson Barrett

Currently Reading:

Horse Tradin', by Ben K. Green
Too Great a Temptation: The Seductive Power of America's Super Church by Dr. Joel Gregory

One Indulgence

Cowboy Shooting (*quick-fire single-action revolver, shotgun, and lever action*) for competition.

Paper or Plastic Questions:

Mountains or Ocean: Mountains
Music or talk radio: Music
Coke or Pepsi: Cherry Coke
Email or texting: Texting
Socks or house shoes: Flip Flops
Mac or PC: Mac

D6 TEACHER OF THE YEAR 2010

Do you have a Sunday School teacher in need of recognition? Why sit around and wish? Give your Sunday School teacher the acknowledgment he or she deserves by nominating him for the D6 Sunday School Teacher of the Year Award!

Here's what you have to do:

Go to www.d6curriculum.com/toty to access the nomination form. Complete the form. Include specific examples and testi-

monies concerning what makes the teacher worthy of being recognized. Encourage your pastor, Sunday School superintendent, or Christian education director to write a recommendation for the teacher.

Send it to Randall House by April 30, 2010.

Nominees must use D6 Sunday School curriculum in order to be considered. All age groups are eligible. The winner will receive a three-day, two-

night stay at the 2010 national convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The prize includes food, lodging, and a transportation allotment. The D6 Teacher of the Year also will receive a \$200 decorating allowance for his or her classroom and a \$100 gift card to Randall House. Randall House sponsors this award annually.

A ● NEW (York) Direction

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

And how shall they hear without a preacher?

These words from Romans 10 burned in my ears as I prayed and sought the Lord's direction for our lives and our ministry. At the time, I had served as pastor of Highland Drive Free Will Baptist Church in Lincolnton, North Carolina, for more than 11 years. The congregation was made up of some of the greatest people I knew, and the very thought of leaving was one that I tried not to entertain. God had other plans.

My wife Emily and I began to pray about where God would have us serve. After a number of doors closed, we decided to pray about a long-held desire and passion of ours—planting a Free Will Baptist church. A recent study revealed that for a denomination to continue to reach more people, the number of new churches it begins each year must equal at least three percent of the denomination's existing churches.¹ That means Free Will Baptists should plant about 71 churches per year in the United States alone. What a challenge!

Having determined that God wanted us to serve as church planters, the next question was where. After seeking the Lord's guidance and the counsel of others, our hearts were directed to Buffalo, New York. The state's population is 19.3 million, and we have one Free Will Baptist church. According to statistics, a mere 29 out of 1,000 New Yorkers would actually consider themselves Evangelical Christians. Couple those numbers with the fact that 70% of Erie County's population claims to be Roman Catholic, and the need speaks for itself.

My family and I have been on itinerate to raise support for our church planting efforts since the spring of 2009, and we are praying for an April 2010 move date. We are humbled and delighted that God has chosen to use us in this way. Leah, age 10, is thrilled about the challenge that lies ahead. She is actively involved in our ministry, singing and playing the guitar. Lauren, age 6, loves meeting new people and making new friends, and enjoys an active role in our ministry. Lucas, born in April 2009, could care less at this point as long as he gets fed on time and has a clean diaper!

As a family, we look forward to the day when a Free Will Baptist church thrives in Buffalo, reaching new people for Christ, and discipling them in God's Word. If three percent is an accurate goal, we have much work to do. Why don't you join the cause? **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: Brian Williams and his wife Emily are currently on itinerate and will soon be moving to Buffalo, New York, to plant a Free Will Baptist church. Read more about the Williams and other home missions efforts at www.homemissions.net.

¹ Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, B&H Publishing Group, Nashville, TN, 2006.





A Day in the Life of a **HOME MISSIONARY**

BY TOM JONES
GREENSBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

I will readily admit that my routine is not as regimented as that of some missionaries.

I maintain a “to-do” list to help me make sure I complete the necessary tasks, and there is always plenty to do.

My day usually begins at around 7:30 a.m. with a cup of coffee as I look into God’s Word for a time of devotion. This is followed by prayer as I get ready for the day. I try to stay abreast of the current news. My office is in my home, so I can have the television news on even if I can’t see it!

At this point, the to-do list takes over. Since we are currently in a renovation project, the list often includes

picking up supplies, contacting the architect, speaking to our electrician, or trying to get in touch with our building inspector. Some days, these can be quite a challenge. Until you actually have experienced the responsibility of going through a church building program, you have no idea of how challenging it can be.

The building we purchased had been a night club and banquet hall which we are renovating. All of the work is being done by volunteers. This means there are many days when my son-in-law and co-worker, Nate, and I are the volunteers. While neither of us are carpenters by trade, we hopefully know enough to keep the work going.

We try to meet at the building by 10:00 a.m. to begin the work scheduled for that day. This has involved electrical work, hanging drywall, and most anything else you can imagine. These jobs are relatively simple for

those who know what they are doing, but decidedly more difficult when you are novices. The Lord has provided us with an electrician and drywall installer who come when their regular jobs are completed. They assign tasks for us to complete, and we work to get them done.

Our regular schedule of telephone calls and hospital visits still need to be made. There also are contacts and follow-up visits, along with meetings with those who need our help and attention. These are most important and the reason we are here and working for the Lord in Greensburg.

While this is all going on, we try to coordinate and cooperate with missions groups that arrive to help us in our ministry and construction work. We recently had five groups that all proved to be very helpful. One group conducted a Vacation Bible School in the evening and worked on the build-

EACH TIME WE SEE A HEART GIVEN TO THE LORD WE ARE REMINDED WHAT A JOY THIS WORK IS FOR ALL OF US.

ing during the day. Others have helped canvas neighborhoods and distribute information about the church.

Nate and I prepare two weekly Bible studies. I teach one on Wednesday nights while he teaches one in his home on Thursday nights. We both attend both studies. Some days we are so tired from working on the building that we can hardly go, but it must done, and we are happy to be there.

The Sunday morning services must be prepared each week. I type and print the church bulletins and prepare the message. Nate usually preaches at least once a month, so he is busy working on messages as well. He prepares the announcement PowerPoint, the monthly memory verse and puts together our *missions moment*. We want to teach our congregation the importance of Scripture memory as well as introduce them to the work of both Home and International Missions.

The time we get home in the evenings varies. It depends on the day of the week (Bible study night or not). On days when our drywall guy or electrician is there, we stay later to take advantage of the times they can work. These range anywhere from 8:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. before we are finished for the day. On other days, we are able to call it a day around 5:00 or 6:00 p.m.

There are days we have dinner with our families and days that we do not. Both Pam and Jenna are very understanding of this and know that the work has to be done. There are days we go home utterly exhausted, but we are thankful for the opportunity to serve Him. Each time we see a heart given to the Lord, we are reminded what a joy this work is for all of us. It is all worth the work and time that it takes! Leading the lost to Christ is the most important task for everyone in the mission work. **ONE**

In the church where most of you worship, everything is in place.

There are staff members to help with anything that may arise. There is a church building in which to worship. All the details for a complete and successful time of worship and training are there for those who come in to renew and strengthen their walk with the Lord and for those who come in search of the Lord's grace for their lives.

Now, try to imagine what it would be like to take your family into an unfamiliar area to plant a church where there was nothing in place.

There was no staff, no property, no building, no funding, and no ready tools of the ministry. You need to look for a place for your family to live, schools for your children, and make new friends. This is what most missionaries face when they accept the call for missions and head out to work for the Lord. They are happy and excited at all the prospects of the work before them, and they know the Lord is by their side. Still...there is so much to be done.

The Marana Project

Jeff Goodman, wife, Heather, and daughter, Ava, will plant a new Free Will Baptist church in Marana, Arizona. They



come to Home Missions from a 10-year pastorate at Homerville FWB Church in Georgia. Jeff attended Free Will Baptist Bible College and Southeastern Free Will Baptist College earning a Bachelor's Degree in Biblical Studies. Heather earned an Associate of Arts Degree from Peace College and a Bachelor's Degree in Social Work at North Carolina State University, both located in Raleigh, NC.

Josh and Ashley Bennett, also come from the Homerville Church where Josh served as associate pastor. Josh obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Pastoral Ministry

and a Bible degree from Free Will Baptist Bible College. Ashley has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from FWBBC.

The Goodmans and Bennetts will plant a new Free Will Baptist church in Marana, Arizona. Marana is a fast growing city of 35,000 located about 15 miles north of Tucson. By 2025, the population is expected to reach more than 90,000. Ninety percent of the people in the area are unchurched, and the need is great.

Please pray for these families as they make their transition into the ministry at Marana. Read more about the Marana project at www.themaranaproject.com.

The Morning Star.

Volume XLVII.

DOVER, N. H., MAY 29, 1872.

Number 22

APPROPRIATIONS

BY DAVID CROWE

Recently, I came across an interesting article about Free Will Baptist Home Missions. The article was simply titled, *Home Mission Appropriations*. I found it while reading the May 29, 1872, edition of *The Morning Star* newspaper—the major publication of northern Free Will Baptists from 1826 to 1911. The paper came out weekly for a period of 85 years, and was a wealth of information about the denomination, current United States and world events, and many helps for sermons and Sunday School lessons. The article follows:

Home Mission Appropriations.

“The most difficult and responsible labor of the H.M. Board is to decide where the money entrusted to them can be the most wisely expended. From the east and the west, from the north and the south, from the country and from the cities, come earnest appeals for aid, to save an old church, or to commence a new interest. The several requests are made with the assurance that each is of the most vital importance to the welfare of the denomination, and it is not to be supposed that the Board will hesitate one moment to grant the request. But sometimes the Board is informed that if the appropriation is not granted, then the friends will withhold their contributions, and

be under the necessity of organizing a Home Mission Society in their own Quarterly Meeting.

It is impossible for the Board to grant aid to all the applications, or to all that are worthy and important, for the want of means. The work of the H.M. Society is at home, and if any failures are made, they are known and discussed in private and in public. Then to establish a church is of such slow progress that the Society scarcely gets any credit. Some brethren that fail to get an appropriation are certain that an injustice is done them, for the church at Ephesus received an appropriation and doesn't the whole Christian Church know that Ephesus is not one half as important as Jerusalem? Perhaps an appropriation was made

to a church in the city, and the minister in the country is astonished at the extravagance in aiding a minister that receives a thousand dollars a year salary, while he has but five hundred; or, not one dollar will he give the Society if that young Timothy goes to the city of Rome when Peter would be just the man to succeed there; or, there is a fine growing village on the railroad, with no Freewill Baptist church, and if the Society would give only three hundred dollars, he would consent to make the sacrifice to leave this country church and move to the village. But strange to say, the Board could not make the appropriation, and the good brother can never again feel any interest for the H.M. Society.”

—A. H. Chase, Corresponding Secretary

Does it seem to you that the more things change, the more they stay the same? Our denomination has struggled over the years to have adequate funds to accomplish the task of building God's Church. Every Free Will Baptist department faces this struggle on a daily basis. The greatest thing you can do for Home Missions and all the other departments is to pray that every decision that is made would be the right decision and a decision that honors God and His Word. **ONE**

ABOUT THE WRITER: An avid student of Free Will Baptist history, David Crowe is director of development for the Home Missions Department. Learn more about the mission of Free Will Baptist Home Missions at www.homemissions.net.



He Still Answers **PRAYER**

BY RUFO GOMEZ

WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO GOD FOR WHAT HE IS DOING IN KENTUCKY. Several months ago we started a time of prayer and praise on Sundays at 7:00 a.m. God started to answer our requests, members are being blessed, and as a result, we opened a new church in Winchester, Kentucky.

PATTY & ANTOLIANO SIGUERO

My life was submitted to drugs, alcohol, idolatry, and domestic violence. I was tired of not having a solution to all my problems. The pastor invited me to the church, telling me that my life could be different if I believed in God. I liked the idea and I decided to go to the church. Something happened within me while the pastor was preaching, and afterwards, he made a call to those that wanted to accept Christ. He said, "Leave all debts to Him and try Him for six months. If, in six months nothing happens, they can come and cut out my tongue for being a liar." I accepted the challenge, and gave my life to Christ in January 2008. My life changed.

In April, my husband, admiring the change in my life, decided to accompany me to church. That night, God spoke hard to his life, and he received Him into his heart. He told me, "Honey, today, I quit drugs and alcohol, and I quit abusing you." Exactly six months later, on June 31, 2008, we were both baptized. Now, we are laborers in the church, and we broadcast the church via the radio. God really has made a great change in our lives.



GERONIMO SOBERANO

I arrived at the church two years ago, and the pastor motivated me to go to the Gwen Hendrix Bible Institute. Today, I am pastoring a mission the church opened in Winchester. I love to be a soul-winner, and I am happy with God for all of His blessings in my life.

MARTHA SANCHEZ

One night I felt very bad and was hospitalized. They diagnosed me with cancer, and the pastor came to pray for me. I gave my life to Christ while I was in the intensive care unit. In the moment of prayer, I felt the presence of God over my whole body, and He healed me. Today, I am feeling fine and I thank God for His blessings in my life and that He laid a healing hand on me.



MARIA DE LOS ANGELES

I had an infection I had been trying to treat for a couple of years, but it hadn't gotten better. But when the pastor prayed for the sick, I went to the altar and I no longer have the infection. I know that the Lord has His hand on my life, and I praise Him for loving and caring for me.

THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE LORD IS IN THE HISPANIC MINISTRY HERE IN LEXINGTON.

Our times of worship together are so special, and that never seems to fade. It is amazing to see the hand of God move in the lives of believers. The transformation from lives destroyed by drugs and harmful living to the smiles on the faces when our people take God into their hearts is remarkable. It is a blessing to see how God is using His own here in Lexington.

—Rufo Gómez

Who are **your** NEIGHBORS?

BY MARTHA ANDERSON

IMAGINE THE SCENARIO: I AM IN bed sick with the flu. My husband returns home after attending a men's prayer breakfast at church and informs me that our new neighbors are moving in next door. We already know they are from Thailand, and their son and daughter-in-law have lived in this country for a while.

So I say to my husband, "Oh, I wish I were not sick. I would welcome them in person with cookies or something."

He responds, "But that's not all. There is a crowd of people over there with a Buddhist monk, and they are praying over the property. In fact, the monk is in their backyard right now."

I can't resist. I pull my aching body out of bed, find my camera with telephoto lens, and do what any nosy neighbor would do—I take his picture. Now tell me, who would imagine that in an average community in the middle of New Bern, North Carolina, geographically located on the eastern edge of the Bible Belt, you would find a Buddhist monk praying over a plot of land? Even more important, why would they move in next to us? I know the answer, and you know the answer. Although my family is not going to a foreign mission field, the field is coming to us.

The house next door has injected itself into our family life many times over the past 30 years. Our first neighbors were Christians who faithfully attended a Lutheran Church. Their two children were close in age with our son, and we have many happy videos of the kids playing together in the yard. I always watered their plants and collected their mail when they were away on vacation.

They were a bit odd at times, though. Late one night not long before they moved, we noticed a light in their backyard. Curious to see what was happening, my husband and I peeked from our garage to observe the wife holding a flashlight as the husband dug feverishly into the ground. Obviously, we have watched too much late-night TV because our first thought was, "They've killed someone, and they are going to bury the body." When no corpse appeared, we decided, "They've buried the family treasures and are digging them up before they move."

Eventually, however, the feverish digging produced a small container from the ground containing Bingo (no pun intended), the family dog that had died a few years before. They were taking his remains to be reburied at their new house.

Very odd!

Our next neighbors were just as interesting, but in a different way. They too professed to be Christians, but their church attendance was sporadic (to say the least). They attended a large local church on Christmas and Easter. Our consistent church attendance must have struck a nerve with them, because in conversation one day the wife said to me, "We are good people, even though we don't go to church every Sunday like you."

That statement, of course, opened the door for me to explain to her that "none is good but God," and that I too "am a sinner saved by grace."

Then came neighbor number three and their three-year-old daughter. Caroline, our pre-teen immediately fell in love with the toddler. In time, we all learned to love this family. They were friendly, helpful, dependable, attentive—everything you would want in a neighbor. The husband moved furniture for us one time and even helped my husband wrangle a snake that had invaded our garage. Now that's a true neighbor!

The mother was a professing Christian, but the husband, though gracious and friendly, wanted nothing to do with

Christianity or the church. We invited them to attend church with us, and occasionally the mother and daughter would attend. Years passed, and we continued to witness to this gentleman, but probably not to the extent Caroline did. Not only did she play with the daughter, she also witnessed to the parents on a consistent basis. She persuaded the couple to allow their daughter to attend the Wednesday night kid's program at our church. It wasn't long until she asked Jesus into her heart.

ter into the hands of elders and parents as a mark of respect, seeking the blessing of the older people. The writer stated that festival would be "a day of caring, love, and binding among family, community and religion."

One moment, we were sitting in our den, reading our paper, enjoying a quiet suburban life. In the blink of an eye, our lives changed. "How could these people possibly think the house next door was an appropriate site? Six hundred people! Where would they park? Surely a city cov-

er flags and bunting, the smell of Southeast Asian cuisine, and the otherworldly music one would expect from such a festival. In the center of the yard stood two large Buddhist statues bedecked with flowers. Nearby was a large vat of water with small tree branches used to sprinkle the water on the statues and other worshipers. It looked like an elaborate movie set. The only problem—this was no movie. It *was* reality.

We left for church. (If there was ever a day we needed to go to church, it was that

OUR PRIVATE RANTINGS SOON BECAME A HEARTFELT CRY TO GOD. WE PRAYED, AND WE FRETTE^d. "WHAT ARE YOU TRYING TO TEACH US, LORD?"

Caroline was elated, as we all were. Miraculously, the father agreed to attend one of her baptismal classes where our minister presented the simple plan of salvation. Did the father accept Christ? No, and sadly the family moved because of a job situation soon thereafter; but thanks to Caroline, the seed of the gospel was sown in the heart of this man.

And that brings us to neighbor number four, the couple from Thailand—at least that's what we thought. In the days and weeks that followed the monk's blessing, we saw no one in the home, no activity at all. With a vigilance that gives new meaning to the term "community watch," my husband and I kept a keen eye in that direction. Nothing.

The mystery of the missing neighbors was not solved until a feature article entitled "Buddhist Monks to Help Asian Immigrants Celebrate Festival Sunday in New Bern" appeared in the local paper. In utter disbelief, we read that on the following Sunday the house next door would host "Songkran," a Buddhist festival celebrating the new solar year, for as many as 600 Southeast Asians.

The festival is celebrated with water. Statues of Buddha are bathed during the ceremony. Young people pour scented wa-

ter or ordinance prohibited such an assembly. What about zoning? What would happen to our property value? How dare they move in next to us and flout their idolatry in our faces! Don't they know we are Christians, and we live in a Christian nation?"

Upon further investigation, we learned that a private individual had indeed purchased the house. His parents would move in after they arrived from Thailand. But the home would also serve as a weekend dwelling for monks who would periodically "minister" to the Buddhists in our town—the Buddhist version of a "prophet's chamber."

Our private rantings soon became a heartfelt cry to God. We prayed, and we fretted. "What are you trying to teach us, Lord?"

Festival day arrived. The scene was surreal. The activity next door was incongruous with the traditional neighborhood surroundings. A nondescript backyard had been transformed into a pagan ritual site with all the accompanying colors, smells, and sounds. It was hard to get ready for Sunday School and church that morning while watching the amazing sight from the window: Large marquees, chairs, tables, flowers, colorful

day.) When we returned, cars lined the entire street. Thankfully, none of them had parked in our yard. We ate a quick lunch then settled in to watch from our front row seats!

Two hundred people came to the festival rather than the 600-person throng described in the newspaper. The rituals made little sense. Two monks sat in a tent. People would approach, remove their shoes, and bow with their heads touching the ground. Then they would sit and listen as the monks spoke with them. Eventually, they would rise and make their way to another tent.

One tent covered the food tables. Another contained strange looking boxes. My husband and I concluded that these were offering boxes used to collect money. Children would run to the water vat, fill their cups, and then pour the water on the Buddha statues. Others took the tree branches and sprinkle the water on themselves and others.

While we understood that the festival is as much a part of the culture as it is religion, we were amazed to see several Westerners actively participating. One man of about 50, a young couple with two small children, and an elderly couple bowed before the monks and gave hom-

age to the statues. Sadly, people of all ethnic backgrounds are deceived by this counterfeit religion.

So, what have I learned from neighbors number four? I am still trying to understand. It does seem a bit ironic, however, that our daughter Caroline, who witnessed so well to neighbor number three, is majoring in missions at Gateway Christian College in Virginia Beach, Virginia, with hopes of becoming a career missionary.

She served as a missionary intern for eight weeks last summer in Japan, working closely with Shannon Little and Josh and Alicia Crowe. Maybe God allowed her to experience just a small taste of the paganism she encountered in Japan, preparing her for the future.

Perhaps God will give us an opportunity to connect with our neighbors, although it's hard to witness to a house rarely occupied...and how does one go about witnessing to Buddhist monks anyway? Yet as I reflect on the experience, I realize that our neighbors over

the decades have taught us some unforgettable lessons:

- + *As a Christian, I am in a minority.*
- + *Idolatry can appear in many forms.*
- + *I have to love my neighbors though I do not love their lifestyle.*
- + *I have a new appreciation for the culture shock missionaries experience.*
- + *My neighbors are not here by accident.*
- + *People are watching me.*
- + *Praying for my neighbors automatically gives me a burden for their souls.*
- + *I will give an account to God for how I witness to my neighbors.*
- + *Building relationships with people is the core of evangelism.*
- + *God is in control.*

Am I doing all I can do to witness to the people in my neighborhood? No. Do I want to do more? Yes. Am I open to creative ways to reach these souls? Yes. Will God give me wisdom as I seek to do His will? Yes.

Colossians 4:5-6 reminds me of the

urgency and responsibility to be a good neighbor, to tell those who live near me about the love of Christ. "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

How can I fulfill that verse with non-existent neighbors next door? The answer is simple. I need to have a 360-degree witness. Across the street, a single father is raising his daughter alone. Beside them, an elderly lady is caught in the deceptive web of a popular cult. On the other side of us lives a retired couple that faithfully practices a works-based religion.

You know those cookies that I wanted to bake for the neighbors when I was sick with the flu? I think it's time to start the oven. I'm going to be busy!

ABOUT THE WRITER: Martha Anderson teaches English at Ruth's Chapel Christian School in New Bern, NC. A member of Sherwood Forest FWB Church, Martha is the church pianist and teaches Sunday School.

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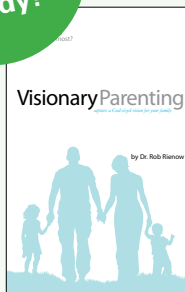


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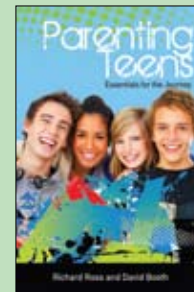
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NEWS

about the denomination

Ridge Church Renovation Continues

NEW DURHAM, NH—Phase three of the Ridge Church renovation project was completed August 17-21, 2009, according to Project Coordinator Ken Akers. “We had a great team. I couldn’t believe how much they accomplished in one week!”

The volunteers spent a week patching plaster, painting interior walls, repairing damaged lapboard siding, and painting the bell tower and shutters. The team consisted of Kenneth and Sandra Akers (TN), Larry Clyatt (FL), B.B. Rogers (FL), Mark McCarty (OH), Greg McCarty (IN), Tom and Jane Harmon (IL), and Denver McKay (AR).

During earlier phases of renovation, volunteers repaired the roof structure by replacing joists and worn shingles, removed and replaced peeling exterior paint, removed two deteriorating chimneys, reinforced the bell tower, and repaired drainage problems under the church.

The congregation, which began meeting in 1793, completed the current building in 1820, making it the oldest FWB church structure in existence. In light of the building’s historical significance, delegates to the 2007 national convention in Little Rock, AR, voted to help the New Durham congregation (which no longer meets in the Ridge Church) maintain the aging structure.

Volunteers who would like to participate in future phases of the Ridge Church Project should contact Ken Akers at ken@nafwb.org, call (877) 767-8039, or visit www.fwbmastersmen.org. ■

Nominating Process Changed

ANTIOCH, TN—Delegates to the 2009 convention in Cincinnati approved proposed changes to the nominating process. The changes go into effect at the 2010 convention in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The new procedures appear in the updated *Treatise*, available for download at www.nafwb.org. Following is a summary of the new process:

The nomination schedule for the upcoming convention will be published each year in the October-November issue of *ONE Magazine*. The name and contact information for the chairman of the Nominating Committee will appear with this schedule. Nominations accompanied by a brief résumé must be submitted in writing exclusively to the chairman on or before November 30.

A Nominating Committee member will not allow his name to be placed into nomination for any position. If he accepts a nomination, he will resign from the Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee functions only as a body. Outside discussions among committee members are to be avoided.

A list of the Nominating Committee’s recommendations will be published in the April-May issue of *ONE Magazine*.

Nominations may be submitted on the floor of the national convention. However, the nominations must be in writing, accompanied by a brief résumé, and read by the clerk. ■

WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Resigns

ANTIOCH, TN—The Executive Committee of Women Nationally active for Christ has accepted the resignation of Executive Secretary-Treasurer Danita High, effective December 31, 2009. The committee commends Danita for her outstanding work.

Danita and her husband believe God has directed them to take over his retiring father’s business. Danita feels the change will enable her to fulfill her primary responsibilities as a mother in their home. They plan to pursue pastoral ministry opportunities in Northwest Arkansas.

The committee is accepting any nominations or resumes for this position. Contact President Rebecca Pugh by email at rccpugh@yahoo.com, or by mail: 298 Andy Drive, Drummonds, TN 38023. The deadline for nominations/resumes is February 28, 2010. ■

ONETOONE

The Day After Christmas

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



Photo: Mark Cowart

IT WAS DECEMBER 26, 1990. THE COLD, WINTERY afternoon was tolerable only because of the brilliant sunshine. A few hours earlier, I conducted a funeral service for an elderly church member. Now, I stood at the graveside of a friend. I was joined by four family members and another minister—a friend of the family.

I struggled to find the appropriate words to comfort the small company of mourners. Practically every circumstance surrounding the scene was sad...the deceased was a young man in his early 30s who had experienced an excruciating death; only six people were at the committal service; and it was the day after Christmas.

Rather than dwell on the negative, I spoke of the providential events that caused our paths to intersect a few years earlier. Somehow he managed to survive the turbulent teenage years of his life in the mid-1970s. Drawn partly by the void in his life and the influence of his mother, this young man began attending the church where I ministered.

Over time, we developed a friendship and I eventually had the privilege of leading him to Christ. The transformation of his life was nothing short of incredible. His winsome personality, uniquely infectious laugh, and passion to grow in his faith endeared him to our church family.

In the months following his conversion, we faithfully met for breakfast once each week for Bible study and prayer. It was refreshing for me to watch this newborn babe in Christ grow in grace and knowledge by leaps and bounds.

Sometime later, I accepted the pastorate of a church in another community. I stayed in contact with my young friend. He remained faithful in his commitment to the Lord and in church attendance.

One Sunday evening he showed up unexpectedly for ser-

vice at our church. After the congregation left, we sat in my office and enjoyed a lengthy visit, reminiscing over old times. Finally, before saying goodbye, he asked if I would pray for him. Recently he had undergone a series of medical tests. He had an appointment with the doctor the next day to review the results.

Sensing his concern, I offered to meet him for breakfast the next morning and then accompany him to the doctor's office. He seemed thankful and relieved.

We met that Monday at a restaurant and enjoyed a lively discussion about the Bible over breakfast. Later, we made the short trip to the medical facility for his appointment. I had been sitting in the waiting area for only a few minutes when he emerged, ashen faced with a piece of paper in his hand. Without saying a word he walked out of the office into the hallway. I followed.

As I closed the door behind me, I saw him leaning against the wall, weeping. I placed my hand on his shoulder and softly asked, "What's wrong?" He handed me the piece of paper. In the physician's handwriting, I read the words—HIV positive. My friend had AIDS.

In the days and weeks that followed, he physically wasted away as the disease ravaged his body. Understandably, he struggled with guilt from his past and grappled over accepting God's unconditional forgiveness. By the grace of God, he held tenaciously to his faith.

He died on Christmas Eve. The next day I celebrated the birth of Christ with my family. But this celebration was different. I had a deeper appreciation for things I had taken for granted... like my wife, children, health, and ministry. I was reminded that God sent His Son to give us hope—not just on December 25th, but on the day after Christmas too.

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