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magazine

God Is Up to Something

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*Hurricane Maria:
One Year Later*

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To communicate to Free Will Baptists a unifying vision of our role in the extension of God's Kingdom



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Smarter, Not Harder

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

“Hand me that piece of crown.”

“That what?”

“That piece of crown molding.” At my blank look, Tim chuckled and pointed. “That one, right there—the funny looking, angled board.”

Two days into a summer construction job with my carpenter cousins Tim and John, I was just beginning to learn how much I *didn't* know about carpentry...or hard work. The South Carolina low country sun broiled my already sunburned neck and shoulders as Tim patiently reviewed the types of molding and trim we would use for the beautiful, new home on the jobsite. Then, he shared five simple words that permanently changed the way I think: “We work *smarter*, not harder.”

As the crew's new gopher (go-for), Tim explained, it was my job to stay one step ahead of everyone else. After learning the different types of tools and materials, I needed to be aware constantly of what was coming next, to have tools and materials ready-at-hand for the skilled carpenters. If I did my job right, their work would continue uninterrupted—quickly, smoothly, efficiently—smarter, not harder.

I wish I could say I tripled production for Tim and John that summer, but my patient cousins often found themselves waiting for the new kid. I got lost on the way to pick up supplies, cut boards too long or short, “trimmed” a power cord in my haste, and ruined the finish on two sets of (expensive) retractable pocket doors by nailing them into the wall. That humbling summer taught me several valuable lessons: 1) learning a new skill is never easy; 2) good construction is measured in results and inspections, not sweat; and 3) the carpentry skills in my family skipped a generation.

Over the decades, I have come to value the living analogy of stewardship I experienced with Tim and John. And, while I still strive to work smarter, not harder, I have come to understand that working biblically sometimes flies in the face of norms and expectations. After all, we...

Take Sabbath Rest (Mark 2:27)

Write off one workday a week? Seems impossible, especially for those serving bi-vocational ministry roles. Yet, when we honor God's command, He stretches working hours, helps us identify priorities, and refreshes our spirits for each new challenge.



Plan First

(Luke 14:28)

It is biblical to pause to plan. I wish I had a dollar for every time Tim and John told me to “measure twice; cut once.” Smart work thinks ahead, identifies possible outcomes and consequences, and plots an efficient course to completion. This is the essence of stewardship.

Don't Worry About Results

(Matthew 16:17-18; Philippians 1:6)

The best part of joining God's construction crew is that He accepts full responsibility for building His Kingdom. Unlike a jobsite, where results are measured in quick, quality structures, God simply calls His workers to faithfulness. He has promised to complete His work—in us, through us, and for eternity.

Now that's smarter, not harder!

ONE

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

I want to let you know your article in the December-January issue titled "How to Bring the Denomination to an End" [pages 24-27] is one of the most urgent and compelling pieces I have read in a long time. You have told us exactly the problems in some of the modern-day churches in all denominations. Sincerely trying different things that don't work to reach out to youth and adults. All organizations would do well to get back to the basics with patience. As a 73-year-old Christian with 45 years as a Free Will Baptist, I admit there have been times I have wondered whether our denomination will falter with present-day modernism. If all our denominational leaders adhere to the path you have spoken about, I feel confident in my heart we are on the right path. Your article has instilled confidence with

me in our national Free Will Baptist leaders. A must-read for all Free Will Baptist preachers.

—Doug Spillman, Flatwoods, KY

Thank the Lord for Matt Pinson's article. My fear is that we have reared a generation that does not believe our denominational distinctions are significant enough to justify our existence.

—Bobby Jackson, NC

Thank you, Dr. Pic, for speaking up for pastors ["Caring for the pastor," October-November 2018, 14-16]. So often we praise our churches for funding all types of ministries and programs—and we should—but we say next to nothing about paying and supporting pastors well. A church member ought

to ask if he or she would want to exchange his pay for the pastor's. Thank you for shining the light of Scripture on an extremely important subject. Your comments were truth.

—Bill Evans, Ashland, KY



Have something to say? Say it!

Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are appreciated.

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or **send** correspondence to:
ONE Magazine, Letters to the Editor,
PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002

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

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Keith Burden MANAGING EDITOR: Eric Thomsen
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LAYOUT & DESIGN: Randall House Publications DESIGN MANAGER: Andrea Young DESIGN: Marianne Stewart PRINTING: Randall House Publications

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.

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Clinkers, Carpet Tacks,
and Other Words
My Father Taught Me

BY BRENDA EVANS

My husband Bill was brushing his teeth and foaming at the mouth when I asked him to remind me what a nanosecond is. “The time between when the light changes and the guy behind you honks his horn,” he sputtered. White foam spewed out, and a little dribbled down his chin. He sucked up the foam, grinned, and said, “But ask Google.” So I did: one billionth of a second.

That’s when I remembered the way I learned many words and phrases I know and use. Call it the drip-drip method, a trickle of words my father, Guy Hampton, taught me. Words I needed to know in Neptune, Tennessee, where we lived in a roomy and weary two-story, tin-roofed house that might have stayed whiter if we had painted it every year. Ours was a home where useful words counted more than annual paint jobs.

Some of my father’s words were from the practical arts, like building a fire in a coal-burning Warm Morning stove—like *kindling* and *wood fire*. Wood fire was the one you built first, so you could then start a coal-burning fire.

Others were only a little more technical. *Damper*: a movable metal disk in a stovepipe to open up or close off airflow in order to rev up or slow down the fire. *Grate*: the metal frame inside the stove to hold the wood.

Clinker: the stony residue of burned coal that clogs up the stove’s grate; also the black chunky substitute for gravel used on red clay roads in Neptune. *Soot* (pronounced *sut*—rhymes with *hut*): a black oily residue of burned coal or wood that collects in chimneys and can cause dangerous chimney fires. *Jag*: a small amount of coal or wood; also a small acreage or a load of corn or tobacco. *Coal oil*: a light oil distilled from petroleum to burn in lamps, start wood fires, dissolve grease, treat cuts and burns, and kill head lice. Also called kerosene. *Hosepipe* was Daddy’s term for a garden hose. I’m still teased by my husband for saying it. But recently, I felt vindicated. My Appalachian friend with a doctorate says hosepipe, too. We like redundancy.

Daddy also taught me to look at more than one side of a thing. *Six of one and half a dozen of the other* was

often his way to assess a squabble or disagreement among friends or relatives. There were usually two sides or more, he said. Each could have an element of truth. Take sides cautiously; only when it is a matter of right or wrong.

What’s his daddy’s name? was the first question when I asked to go on a date with a fellow he didn’t know. If I didn’t know the answer, he would probably say no. If I knew the father’s name, and he didn’t know the father to be good and decent, he definitely would say no. Apples don’t fall far from the tree. Though he never said that about apples or people, he believed it.

Daddy was plainspoken and wasn’t much for delicacy or nuance. He rarely clouded his meaning. His *yes* meant yes and his *no* meant no. Once he said no, it did no good to quibble or beg. Besides, quibbling could get mighty close to sass, and he wanted nothing that smelled like sass.

Socially, Daddy expected me to show respect. *Mr.* or *Mrs.* preceded all adult neighbors or friends’ names, unless we substituted *Aunt* or *Uncle*, as we did for our neighbors Uncle Charlie and Aunt Sally, Uncle Bud and Uncle Buck. None were kin. No adult was addressed without a title.

Daddy saw both the comic and tragic in life. He loved to laugh. He had a *curious* friend (pronounced *cure-us*)—an odd guy, a strange duck. But he’d tease the man with amusement, not judgment. *Tight*, on the other hand, was tragic. It meant drunk. He wouldn’t say *drunkard* for his friend who was one. It was too harsh. “He’s tight,” Daddy would say with grief in his voice. Daddy was not a softhearted man in my raising days, but he showed me how to know and feel tragedy: you do some-

thing. He spent many late nights sitting in his friend's car in our driveway, talking him into soberness.

Some words you have to see to believe. The first time I visually and audibly experienced *deadening felt* was in our living room in the 1950s. If you don't know, deadening felt was a thick, weighty gray paper used to insulate walls and ceilings in old houses. It also made a fairly smooth surface for wallpaper. It came in fat rolls a yard or more wide and was at least an eighth inch thick. Heavy stuff.

As I said, *heavy*. That night, Daddy and his helper, Uncle Gentle, cut it into long sections to keep it smooth with few seams. To make matters worse, they needed to tack it to our ceiling. Walls were tricky enough, but tacking deadening felt to ceilings would make you cuss if you were a cussing man. Uncle Gentle didn't cuss, but his *By Crackies* and *Guy, it's killing me*, reverberated through our high-ceiling living room for an hour or more that night. Mother and I watched with awe and grins, handing up sharp, black three quarter-inch carpet tacks. We pretended sympathy while wanting to belly laugh.

Finally, Uncle Gentle, then Daddy, dropped his arms, hammer, his end of the deadening felt, and climbed down off the make-shift scaffold of planks and saw horses in exhaustion. *By Crackies, Guy, I'm dying up there*, he said. Daddy climbed down, too. We let go and roared.

Mother poured coffee and milk, and I served teacakes. Afterwards, we females watched from our turquoise sofa while the two men nailed together a dead-man brace out of scrap two-by-fours. The brace helped. By midnight, the deadening felt was tacked up, smooth and warm,

to our living room ceiling. The deadening felt, like life, had needed us all.

Daddy taught me moral lessons, too. Don't *yarn*, he warned, a verb that meant don't lie. He's *crooked* meant the person would chisel, cheat, and deal underhandedly. Make no deals with him. *I gave him \$50*, Daddy sometimes said to Mother. She knew Daddy had lent \$50 to a friend or relative but accepted the fact he might not be repaid. He did not lend what he was unwilling to give. He's *no 'count* meant good-for-nothing, immoral, lazy, or mean. Be warned.

We don't believe in that always began with we. *We* meant our family. Daddy was not leaving it up to my sister Grace and me to fumble our ways toward Christian behavior, consideration, respect. Common humanity and Christian values were our *family* beliefs.

My father also taught me joy. He liked *peppy* songs that made him tap his toe, laugh, and get happy in his soul. "Let's sing," he'd say after supper when the dishes were done. We'd get out church songbooks. Anybody could choose. I'd play the black upright piano and do soprano. He and my sister would read the shaped notes and make tenor and alto harmony. Afterwards, he'd sometimes stand on his head to make us cheer or destroy us at Chinese Checkers. He never sent me to the porch or bedroom when adult visitors came. I could listen, even ask questions if I didn't butt in. Talking and listening were pleasures. He showed me how to relish conversation, to love the give-and-take of words.

Daddy never said, but I think he knew words were Edenic gifts of God. Language was one way our Lord, our Creator made us in His image and after His likeness. The ability to think, say, and tell blessed Daddy. I'm glad he shared that blessing with me. **ONE**

DADDY NEVER SAID, BUT I THINK HE KNEW THAT WORDS WERE EDENIC GIFTS OF GOD, THAT LANGUAGE WAS ONE WAY OUR LORD, OUR CREATOR MADE US IN HIS IMAGE AND AFTER HIS LIKENESS.

About the Writer: Brenda Evans is a reader, writer, wife, mother, and grandmother living in Ashland, Kentucky.

Sears: Timing Is Everything

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Until the last 20 years, Sears was the dominant name in retailing. You literally could buy anything needed from Sears. For generations, the annual Christmas catalog was one piece of mail children could not wait to see. Sears named it *The Wish Book*, which is exactly what we all did. We dog-eared pages and circled items we wanted for Christmas. Sears Automotive was the best place for tires and car repairs. Craftsmen tools were the highest quality you could buy and guaranteed for life. The appliance brand Kenmore was of highest quality and very durable. Many parents shopped at Sears for “back to school” clothes and shoes.

Now, Sears is gone. What happened? What brought this retail giant to its knees?

Timing was everything when Sears and Roebuck got its start. The Industrial Revolution that dominated the last half of the 19th century led to automated manufacturing and the development of a vast nationwide rail system. Before the revolution, everyone made the things they needed themselves or had it made locally. After the revolution, large factories could produce goods faster and cheaper than they could be made one at a time.

Railroads made it possible to

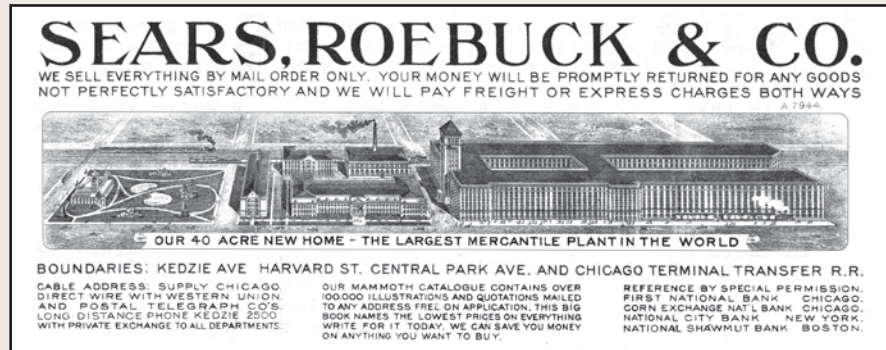


Photo: Wikipedia Commons

send these mass-produced goods quickly to any location in the country. In 1893, Richard W. Sears and Alvah C. Roebuck established Sears, Roebuck & Company and began to publish and distribute catalogs. The following year, the catalog had grown to 322 pages with a wide variety of items available. This entrepreneurial company was the Amazon of the day. You could get anything you needed from Sears reliably shipped by rail to your hometown.

Unfortunately, a century later, in 1993, company leaders made a fatal mistake. Again, timing was everything. During the 1920s, Sears began opening retail stores as people began to move into cities and suburbs. The retail side of the business began to outpace the catalog business, so in 1993, the company decided to discontinue catalogs. The Internet was just appearing, and Sears failed to recognize the potential. For more than a century, consumers knew

they could get almost anything at Sears. Had the company continued its pioneering mindset and shifted their catalog to the Internet, it is likely they would have continued to dominate retail. There might never have been an Amazon if Sears only had recognized what was about to happen.

Sadly, Sears recently filed for bankruptcy and, on the date of this writing, it is uncertain if the corporation will reorganize or liquidate. Many things in life have a timing element to them. The older you get, the more you realize some of the answers to your prayers were not necessarily a *no*, but a *not yet*. Only when you look back, do you see God's timing for your life was always perfect. His timing is everything. **ONE**

About the Columnist: David Brown is director of Free Will Baptist Foundation. To learn more about the grants program, visit www.fwbgifts.org.

Beyond the Parsonage

BY CHRIS COMPTON

Does your church provide a parsonage for your pastor and his family? A church-owned parsonage offers many advantages for both church and pastor. A church-owned parsonage can help a church attract the pastoral candidate of its choice, assist him with a better compensation package, and create a smoother transition. As for the pastor, a parsonage can be a great benefit. It also can free the pastor from time-consuming worries and expenses related to repairs and maintenance. I applaud churches that take care of the pastor!

Churches may not be aware of one disadvantage to parsonage life, however. The pastor does not have an opportunity to build equity in a home over the course of many years. This can be a problem for the minister but could be one for the church as well. A pastor with no housing prospects after retirement might stay longer at a church than he wants or should, which may not be good for him or for the church.

Churches that provide a parsonage can avoid this potential hardship by establishing a Minister's Equity Fund. This fund provides the equivalent of equity in a home in addition to the minister's regular compensation. The church sets aside money in a tax-advantaged account for the benefit of the minister. The fund accumulates according to the specific agreement during the pastor's ministry. When the pastor retires or resigns, the balance of the fund is paid to the pastor. Since this is a deferred compensation payment, it is not subject to federal income taxes until withdrawn.

A church should consider two alternatives when establishing a Minister's Equity Fund. The first is to open an Institutional Investing Account in the church's name but for the benefit of the pastor. Since the investment account is in the church's name, contributions to the account and its




earnings are not taxable to the minister until they are withdrawn and paid to him. This allows the church to maintain control of the account for its intended purpose.

A DISADVANTAGE TO PARSONAGE LIFE IS THE PASTOR DOES NOT HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO BUILD EQUITY IN A HOME OVER THE COURSE OF MANY YEARS.

A second alternative is to make contributions to the minister's 403(b)(9) retirement account. These contributions remain and grow in the tax-deferred account until withdrawn by the minister. In this scenario, the minister is the owner of the account and has control over how the money is used. These additional contributions

also may limit the amount of retirement contributions a minister can make.

For churches whose pastor lives in the parsonage, a Minister's Equity Fund is an excellent way to provide

security for their pastor. The provision of a parsonage, when combined with an equity fund, can meet the pastor's housing needs both now and in the future. The Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement is here to help churches go beyond the parsonage and establish a Minister's Equity Fund. If you have questions or want more information about setting up institutional investing or making contributions to the pastor's retirement account, call 877-767-7738 or send an email to boardofretirement@nafwb.org. 

About the Writer: Chris Compton is communications officer for the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. He graduated in 2007 with an M.A. in Bible exposition from Columbia International University. A 1998 graduate of East Tennessee State University, he has over 13 years of administrative/financial experience in varied fields as well as seven years of pastoral ministry experience.



Beyond the Parsonage

How can a church help its pastor build equity while they live in a parsonage? Churches can establish a **Minister's Equity Fund**. This fund allows a church to put money in a tax-advantaged account for the benefit of the pastor.

A Minister's Equity Fund can be set up with a Board of Retirement **Institutional Investing Account**. To learn more, contact the Board of Retirement today.

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"Preparing For Your Future Ministry"



The Word on Work

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

One of my favorite times of year will arrive in a few weeks when the NCAA Tournament—better known as *March Madness*—brings together 64 of the best college basketball teams in the country to compete for a national title. Like many other sports fans across the country, our family fills out tournament brackets predicting which teams will win. (I admit I usually come in last at the Thomsen house because I fill out my brackets with my heart rather than my head.)

As much as I love March Madness and good basketball, over the last few years, the tournament has employers across the country shaking their heads in frustration. According to CNBC, because of online streaming—with nearly 11 million viewers watching each game in 2017—the NCAA tournament cost American businesses \$6.3 billion in productivity.

That staggering figure makes me pause to consider workplace ethics. As Christians, what kind of employees are we? After all, Christians not only work for our human supervisors, ultimately we work for God. In the second chapter of his short letter to Titus, a young pastor from the island of Crete, the Apostle Paul shared several practical guidelines for life, work, and ministry.

GOOD WORKERS SHOW SELF-CONTROL

In verse six, Paul made it clear to Titus our lives and work should be characterized by self-control. He included four ways Titus could demonstrate self-control to his congregation:

- **Follow a pattern of good works (7a).** The Greek word *typos* meant, “to make an impression” and is the origin of the English word *type*. Our work ethic should speak for itself or *make an impression* on employers and fellow workers day in and day out. We should be consistent, not up and down or productive one minute and lazy the next. We should strive for a steady, exemplary pattern of behavior.
- **Be ruled by integrity (7b).** Integrity describes who we are when nobody is watching. We should be employees who do our jobs *without* a supervisor hovering over our shoulder. When Burke Marketing Research asked executives in 100 of the nation’s largest companies to name the employee trait they disliked most, *dishonesty* topped the list. According to Marc Silbert, director of marketing for a large corporation: “If a company believes an employee lacks integrity, all positive qualities—ranging from skill and experience to productivity and intelligence—become meaningless.”¹
- **Get serious about work (7c).** The Greek word translated *gravity* in the King James Version literally means *reverence*. As a magazine editor, I’ll be the first to admit it is difficult to be “reverent” about hitting deadlines, addressing envelopes, or reading articles from the occasional writer who can’t spell c-a-t. But we must keep the bigger picture in mind: our jobs are bigger than the routine tasks we perform. I am incredibly privileged to have my position. I am convinced many older, wiser individuals could edit *ONE Magazine*. However, God has placed me in this position, and I thank Him every day for the opportunity. I take my work seriously because His work is serious business.
- **Watch your mouth (8a).** Loose lips can tear a workplace apart quickly. Paul reminded Titus that *what* we say and *how* we say it is crucial to our

¹ John Johnson. *Moral Makeover*. Xulon Press: Maitland, Florida 2008. 89.

testimony. How do we guard our mouths in the workplace? A few simple suggestions:

- Listen before talking.
- Don't question the boss publicly, even when he or she is wrong.
- Avoid gossip.
- Tell the truth, even when it is difficult or painful.
- Don't exaggerate.
- Avoid talking out of turn.
- Learn to say *I'm sorry*.

Paul made it clear if we control our tongues, even our enemies will have nothing bad to say about us.

GOOD WORKERS HAVE A SERVING ATTITUDE


Paul shifted his focus from “young men” to slaves in verse 9. While you may sometimes feel like a slave to your work, few Americans today have experienced the slavery common in Paul's day. Yet, the simple guidelines Paul shared with slaves speak directly to our own behavior in the workplace. Good workers...

- **Follow instructions (9a).** They listen. They produce high-quality, “well-pleasing” work that honors their boss and ultimately the Lord. Few things are more frustrating than an employee who must be reminded constantly to complete tasks.
- **Don't argue or talk back (9b).** Perhaps you remember as a kid, when your parents gave you a job you really didn't want, you experienced a sudden case of “poochie” lip. This should never be true of employees. It might seem obvious your boss “just doesn't understand your job,” but it is not your place to “set him straight” or tell others she doesn't know what she's talking about. Scripture calls us to respect those in authority, even when their instructions don't make sense. In Romans 13:1-3, Paul reminded us that authorities speak on God's behalf. While he was referring specifically to government authorities in this passage, the principle remains: “Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.” No question. God takes our attitude toward authority seriously.

- **Don't steal (10a.)** While I doubt anyone reading this article will sneak out of the workplace with an office chair tucked under his coat, the truth is, workers steal from employers in various ways *without* snitching the hand towels. According to *Success Magazine*, the average employee spends 14.9 minutes a day making personal phone calls. Over a year, that adds up to 62 hours or a workweek and a half. Browsing the Internet; scrolling through Facebook; or shopping on Craigslist, EBay, Etsy, and Amazon has become a workplace epidemic. Not to mention personal use of paper, printouts, stationary, and envelopes. Of all people, employers should be able to trust Christian workers with their time, money, and reputation.
- **Provide a living witness (10b.)** From church to classroom to factory to boardroom, what do your work habits say about you? What does your attitude toward work tell others about God and your relationship to Him?

World-renowned architect Christopher Wren designed some of the most magnificent churches in the world, including St. Paul's Cathedral in London. During a tour of the worksite, he encountered an old man mixing cement and asked, “What are you doing, my good man?”

The old worker, failing to recognize the famous architect, looked up with an enormous, toothless grin spreading slowly across his leathery face. Proudly, he said, “I'm building the most beautiful cathedral in the world.”

I wish we all could have that attitude toward work. That lowly cement mixer understood he was part of a bigger plan that gave his humble labor significance. Next time you ease into your office chair, decorate your classroom, blow the whistle at practice, help a patient out of bed (again), or open your Bible and turn on your laptop—*whatever* God has given you to do—understand you are completing the blueprints of the great Architect of the Universe. Ultimately, He is the One who gives our work significance. 

About the Writer: Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of *ONE Magazine* and president of the Evangelical Press Association.

Stewardship: Hearing the Right Voice

BY BARRY RAPER, WELCH COLLEGE

1 Corinthians 4:1-5

A pastor named Paul Tripp recounts a story from early in his ministry when a critical man from his congregation expressed dissatisfaction with his preaching. He handed him a set of cassette tapes and encouraged him to mimic the preachers on the tapes. Frustrated, disheartened, and determined to show the man up, within a few weeks Paul found himself preaching directly to that individual. Thankfully, an older lady in the congregation identified the situation and confronted Paul for preaching to please a person. She told him, "Monday, you get up, forget that person, and study God's Word. Then you preach what God gives you with confidence and joy, or we're all in trouble."

This is an example of what can happen when other people dominate and control our lives through their judgments and opinions. The old lady gave that young man some great advice by reminding him to listen to the *right* voice. As Christian stewards, we are accountable to God for our lives; we should listen to His voice and thereby live with a different *perspective* and *purpose*:

Perspective: success is defined by faithfulness to the Master.

The basic definition of stewardship is management. A *steward* is someone entrusted with resources belonging to another. A steward recognizes what he is managing is not his own and takes his management responsibility seriously.

When it comes to stewardship, *faithfulness* is crucial. Scripture makes it clear people can and often live as poor stewards. Each person in God's Kingdom has been given a unique set of talents, abilities, and experiences to be used in expanding the church in the world. How should we manage those resources?

Consider two simple principles from Jesus' Parable of the Talents in Matthew 25:14-30:

- **Be faithful in the small things.** When a person is faithful in a little, it means he or she will be faithful in much. Conversely, when a person is unfaithful in small things, he or she will be unfaithful when tasked with greater things or responsibilities.
- **Be faithful for the long term.** You can only prove

your faithfulness over time. This is why, for example, the Bible indicates church leaders shouldn't be chosen hastily: "Lay hands quickly on no man." Stewards undergo proving or testing. A good steward remains faithful to his master's wishes over a long period of time.

When it comes to stewardship, consider three important areas of your life:

Time. You and I have limited time on earth. We don't know how long our lives will be. Scripture tells us life "is but a few days and full of trouble." Life is a vapor, a wisp of smoke. Even if we live 70 or 80 years, life vanishes quickly.

Talents. God creates each person uniquely; you are gifted and possess particular talents. Ultimately, these talents should not draw attention to you but glorify God. Using your talents wisely is the essence of stewardship.

Treasure. We often use the phrases *my money*, *my house*, or *my car*, without a second thought. While you may hold title to these possessions, ultimately, everything Christians have belongs to the Lord. He simply allows us to

use it for a time, for His purposes.

One author posed this question: “After your death, if a biographer were to scan your canceled checks for insight into the kind of Christian you were, what conclusion would he or she reach?” Remember, the primary ingredient of good stewardship is faithfulness. Are you being a good steward of time, talents, and treasure?

Purpose: commendation from God is your motivation for service.

At least six times in 1 Corinthians 4:1-5, Paul made references to judgment:

- “That I should be *judged* by you or any human court”
- “I do not even *judge* myself”
- “I am not thereby *acquitted*”
- “It is the Lord who *judges* me.”
- “Do not pronounce *judgment* before the time”
- “But with me it is *a very small thing that I should be judged* by you or any human court.”

This last phrase, especially, is packed with spiritual freedom. If we are honest, most of us would write it this way, “But with me it is *a very big deal that I should be judged* by you or any human court.” We place too much weight on the opinions of other people. Peer pressure is not just for children and teens; it exists in the lives of adults as well. When the opinion of others controls us, we do not live in spiritual freedom

but in bondage. Paul was able to say the judgments of others didn’t get under his skin or control his life. He brushed them off and kept going about the Lord’s work.

I am a professor. At the end of every semester, students are required to submit an online evaluation of my class. They answer tough questions about whether test questions were fair and appropriate, if I was prepared, whether class interaction was beneficial, and so on. Our academic dean reviews these evaluations every year. He also encourages me to review them as well—with humility and an ounce of take-them-for-what-they’re-worth. I admit sometimes human nature takes over, and I catch myself dwelling on negative comments, latching on to the criticism and brooding over it. It’s a good reminder that if we are not careful, we can allow another person’s judgment to dominate our thinking.

Maybe this is happening in your life right now. Don’t misunderstand me; you don’t want to ignore completely what other people think, especially trusted friends, parents, your spouse, and children. However, you should not let another person’s judgment control your life. Who is that person for you? If you view your life through the lens of stewardship, you will be able to absorb these judgments and keep going. Why? Because these people ultimately cannot judge you—only God.

“In fact, I do not even judge myself. For I am not aware of anything against myself, but I am not thereby acquitted.” Paul declared that nothing stood against him in terms of evidence. He was unaware of anything against him in the court of public opinion. To his best knowledge, his life was God-honoring. So much, that he drew attention to his lifestyle in verses 16-17, urging readers to “be *imitators* of me. That is why I sent Timothy, my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, to remind you of *my ways* in Christ.”

No thoughtful reader can suppose Paul sought to abolish all functions of judgment in the church. If we roam more broadly through Scripture, it is easy to find passages that prohibit judging while other passages command it. For example, on one hand Jesus said not to judge, or you also will be judged according to the standard you use (Matthew 7:1-2). On the other hand, He said to stop judging on appearance and make a right or sound judgment (John 7:24). This tension runs strong throughout the New Testament.¹

The point is this: the human verdict on our lives isn’t what matters ultimately. It is God’s place—His alone—to be the final and authoritative judge of my life and yours. Stewards need to be reminded often to listen for the right voice and live by it. **ONE**

¹ D.A. Carson, *The Cross and Christian Ministry*, 99.

Steps of Faith

A MISSIONARY LOOKS BACK AT MINISTRY IN PANAMA AND FORWARD TO THE CHURCH'S PROMISING FUTURE

BY STAN BUNCH

“Missionaries are the only people in the world who should strive from day one to work themselves out of a job.”

As a new missionary arriving in Panama in 1986, that statement was challenging. I now understand that while the intent is great, the overall premise is flawed. We never become “jobless.” However, our tasks, challenges, and roles may change considerably over time.

The Free Will Baptist Association of Panama has been blessed in many areas. First, historically, missionaries themselves always had positive working relationships. In turn, this created a positive working relationship with and among national leadership. Since 2014, when the Torrison and Collins transitioned into different ministries, IM has not had a continual missionary presence in Panama. Yet the growing ministry continues—training leaders, planting churches, and even evangelizing surrounding countries.

BABY STEPS

In the late 1980s and early '90s, Panamanian church leaders began to determine, or express, who they were theologically and doctrinally. In particular, because of the unavoidable impact of the much larger Pentecostal movement (roughly 90% of all evangelicals), they recognized a need to clarify who they were as Free Will Baptists regarding spiritual gifts and worship expression. As a relatively new missionary at the time, I watched more experienced missionaries—Steve and Judy Lytle and Ron and Linda Calloway—join with national leaders to lead wisely and patiently through what could have been turbulent waters. Over two to three years, mission-

aries and Panamanian leaders dialogued, prayed, studied, and sought to understand the various thoughts and convictions expressed. Eventually, rather than dividing and retreating to respective cultural and doctrinal corners, we came away with an appreciation and respect for our differences, which, in reality, proved minimal and non-essential. Working together through difficult, but essential, discussions strengthened the overall ministry.

At one time, marathon business sessions during the annual convention in Panama were frustrating and, quite honestly, boring. As Panamanian leaders gained experience and confidence and learned to organize the meetings better, attendance and participation grew. Today, during the business sessions, delegates and attendees rejoice to hear what God is doing throughout the country.

Missionary Larry Inscoc desired to develop a local association of churches in the Azuero Peninsula of Panama. The Inscocs, along with our family, worked in the cities of Las Tablas, Parita, and Chitré. The congregations of these churches celebrated occasional times of fellowship. After our transition to the States in 2012, the pastors of the Azuero-area churches, as well as their various mission works, began meeting monthly for the purpose of training, encouragement, and outreach. Their goal is not to perpetuate meetings but to help fellow leaders and congregations in prayer, outreach, and evangelism, encouragement, and accountability. When visiting, I may hear, “Hey, Jorge, you haven’t baptized anyone in five months. How can we help you?” I think we in the United States can learn something from these Panamanian leaders.

God allowed Free Will Baptist missionaries to participate in establishing numerous churches and various mission outreaches. The Willeys, Fulchers, Inscoes, Lytles, Bunches, Torrison, Collins, and Bowermans were all involved in the Panamanian Bible Institute, started as a training ministry for leaders. Under the leadership of the Bowermans, the institute became a full-time seminary with facilities in Chame. The campus also serves as a location for youth camps, retreats, seminars, the annual convention, and a boarding house for visiting groups.

Many times, during our 29 years of service with IM, we were asked, “Was it hard to leave your family, home, language, and culture and go to another country?” The answer is obvious. However, since things have come full circle, and we have left our adopted country of Panama we can answer the question better. The response to the same question is now, “Yes, it was difficult to take three small children to a different culture where we really didn’t know anyone. However, it was much *more* difficult to leave that place than it was to go in the first place.”

STEPS OF FAITH

Why is that the case? It took a step of faith for faithful believers to pray, send, and financially support missionaries. It is a step of faith for the missionary to launch out into the unknown. After more than 25 years, that “unknown” became our “known.” Panama was home. Panamanians were our adopted family. (We had the same neighbors for over 20 years.) We were quite comfortable with the language and culture. Transitioning out of a ministry, particularly international missions church planting, required another huge step of faith. It meant taking a step back and trusting God to lead our dear Panamanian brothers and sisters to take what had been our lives—not just a ministry—forward to accomplish even greater things for God’s glory.

STEPS FORWARD

What is happening? Since missionaries transitioned away from Panama, the number of congregations has nearly doubled. Every organized church is starting at least one other church, and in some cases, two or three.



The church in Chitré is supporting a young Venezuelan believer sent back to his country to establish a Free Will Baptist church in that country. The seminary is under Panamanian leadership and is well on the way to becoming nationally accredited. Second and third generation believers are stepping up to lead churches and ministries. Seminary graduates are initiating outreach ministries into remote areas of neighboring Colombia, while aware of the physical risks involved.

Each year, Brenda and I are blessed to return to Panama at least once to teach, train, and encourage those to whom we ministered for almost three decades. Our hair is gray, just like the leaders we met in 1986 when we first arrived. The ministry in Panama is in the capable hands of those leaders. A younger generation is doing an outstanding job of allowing the Holy Spirit to fill, empower, and lead them as they lead the churches. To be quite honest, when we visit, and I see what our precious brothers and sisters are accomplishing for the glory of God with far fewer resources, many times I feel like I am now the disciple and they are the leaders.

You still have many opportunities to be involved in Panama. The Chame Seminary is a great ministry to support. Over half the pastors in Panama are graduates of the seminary. The Chame FWB Church was born out of the seminary. The congregation is in the process of purchasing a beautiful parcel of land with buildings as a strategic location for their church activities. For more information on investment and ministry opportunities in Panama contact the IM office. [IMB](#)

Note: Giving to the World Missions Offering supports ministry in Panama.

About the Writer: Stan Bunch and his wife Brenda were appointed to overseas missionary service in Panama, Central America, in 1983. While in Panama, the couple and their three children Jonathan, Alicia, and Amanda helped start three churches. The most recent officially organized August 27, 2011. Today, the ministry in Panama is under the leadership of Panamanian Free Will Baptists. Learn more: IMINC.org.



2019 SPRING CHOIR TOUR



Wednesday, March 13

Thursday, March 14

Friday, March 15

Sunday, March 17 (AM)

Sunday, March 17 (PM)

Monday, March 18 (AM)

Monday, March 18 (PM)

Tuesday, March 19 (AM)

Tuesday, March 19 (PM)

First FWB Church

Evergreen FWB Church

First FWB Church

Great Bridge FWB Church

Gateway FWB Church

Gateway Christian School

Bethel FWB Church

Bethel Christian Academy

Rocky Pass FWB Church

Bristol, VA

Erwin, TN

Washington, NC

Great Bridge, VA

Virginia Beach, VA

Virginia Beach, VA

Kinston, NC

Kinston, NC

Nebo, NC



One Stone at a Time

BY BRENDA BUNCH

I wasn't expecting to see my friend Nerieda on my recent trip to Panama. My heart began to race as I saw her walk into the new church plant in Chame. I jumped up to give her a hug. What joy filled our hearts as we embraced. Tears ran down our faces. We rejoiced, thankful the Lord allowed us to see each other again.

She wanted me to hear her testimony. She had shared it just a few months earlier with the ladies at a meeting in her hometown. Previously, she had been unable to give her testimony because she became so emotional she couldn't speak clearly. This time, the Lord gave her strength and the opportunity to share what God had done in her life.

NERIEDA'S TESTIMONY

Nerieda didn't attend church with her husband and four daughters when they began attending the church Stan and I were starting in Parita. She had other, more pressing things she thought she needed to do. She was among those in the town who felt we were trying to destroy their traditions. They wanted Stan and I to leave. Along with others, she threw rocks at our building during the services.

Nerieda helped develop and motivate an antagonist group. They marched around the town chanting "*Ni un bloque más!*" (*Not one more block!*) while we tried

to build cinderblock walls on the church. They also planned to vandalize the property. A Free Will Baptist pastor's wife whose husband was from Parita heard about the plans and prayed the protestors would not cause damage. At the same time, an E-TEAM was in Panama. The students intended to help construct concrete pillars for the fence around the property. The police stopped the protestors that day, just as the E-TEAM arrived. We found our chairs had been cut up and the pillars destroyed the night before.

Only God could change Nerieda's heart. And He did! She eventually began attending services. Through Bible teaching and the ministry of the Holy Spirit she became a new creature in Christ. She now teaches Sunday School at the new Chame church.* Her daughter, who was in my class as a preschooler in Parita, also teaches Sunday School. God's Word is so powerful, and it blesses me to know I had a small part in their growth. Presently, a young couple from the Parita FWB Church are students in the Chame FWB Seminary.



What joy to hear her testimony while we worked side-by-side pulling weeds at the seminary. She told me her husband wanted to attend the seminary, and she was not the least bit interested. He didn't mention it again. Instead, he prayed for God's will to be done. He asked God to change her heart if it was the right thing for them to do. When it was time to register, she was ready to go. Her family wasn't supportive of them attending a Protestant Bible seminary. They reminded the young couple they wouldn't have a salary during the three years of seminary preparation. What in the world were they thinking?

THIS COUPLE, SCHEDULED TO GRADUATE IN DECEMBER 2019, HAS A POWERFUL VISION FOR THEIR HOME CHURCH TO GROW.

This couple (pictured at top left), scheduled to graduate in December 2019, has a powerful vision for their home church to grow. While seminary classes are in session, they travel every Friday from the seminary to Parita to minister throughout the weekend. Parita, population 4,500, has no other evangelical church. I am so thankful God gave Stan the vision and wisdom to establish a church and purchase property there. I pray those who lead the congregation always will remember they plant the seeds, but God brings the growth. **ONE**

** FWB International Missions has approved an Impact Panama Chame Church project, which is helping this newly formed congregation purchase a property previously owned by New Tribes Mission.*



About the Writer: Brenda Bunch and her husband Stan were appointed to overseas missionary service in Panama, Central America, in 1983. While in Panama, the couple and their three children Jonathan, Alicia, and Amanda helped to start three churches. The most recent officially organized August 27, 2011. Today, the ministry in Panama is under the leadership of Panamanian Free Will Baptists. Learn more: IMINC.org.

Snapshots Around the World

Côte d'Ivoire: The week of November 11, at least 139 people were baptized in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa. People testified to accepting Jesus as Lord in Bouna, Nassian, the Doropo area, and several other locations.



Brazil: On Sunday, November 25, Pastor Paulo César baptized five people at Nova América FWB Church in Campinas. The same day, Pastor Jeancarolo Achê of the Jaboticabal FWB Church baptized nine individuals.

Japan: Daniel and Shelby Culwell and their sons departed for Tokyo,

Japan, November 20. Jack and Ashley Kettman and their three children followed November 29. Both couples will work with Heath and Joni Hubbard to launch and stabilize the Hope Alive church plant in Tokorozawa City. The Hubbards hosted their first Hope Alive Bible study in their new location November 24. They launched the Hope Alive bilingual church January 13.

Brazil: Brazilian missionaries to the unreached area of Boa Esperança, Alagoas, Brazil, recently rejoiced in the conversion of Mônica. Clóvis and Cristina Leandro are planting a church in this village.

India: Pastor Philip Das, age 65, died in India November 30 after being hospitalized since November 6 following a motorcycle accident. He was responsible for more than 40 churches.



Uruguay: Cuban Pastor Yosvanys, his wife Anita, and their two children arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay, on November 25. The family will work at the Malvin Norte church, which has not had a pastor for over a year.

Alliance of Free Will Baptists Grows

The Alliance of Free Will Baptist Churches of Brazil met just outside of Conselheiro Lafaiete, Brazil, for a leadership retreat, November 1-3. Twenty-eight leaders participated in all or part of the retreat. The group discussed various ministry-related subjects, heard reports from several of the

works, planned mission projects, and prayed for church leaders.

During the business session, four new churches joined the Alliance, bringing the total to 12 churches and mission churches, half of the Free Will Baptist works in Brazil. Participants elected José Assunção as the new executive secretary.

Dr. Kenneth Eagleton, director of field partnerships for IM, noted, "There was a good spirit of unity. The group manifested a strong desire to work together to further the Kingdom. At the end of the three days, many expressed how much encouragement the encounter was to them." **ONE**

IM Board Holds Year-end Meeting

Antioch, TN—The Board of IM, Inc. met December 5-6, 2018, in Antioch, Tennessee. General Director Clint Morgan reflected, “The December board meeting is over and, once again, I am reminded the National Association has elected an amazing group of people to oversee IM. The diversity of personalities and perspectives provide an amazingly clear view of the issues, opportunities, and options as we discuss matters of importance concerning Free Will Baptist ministries around the world.”

The board heard reports from the leadership team, reviewed financial reports and budgets, considered and acted on proposals, approved handbook changes, and set April 29-May 1 as dates for the annual meeting in 2019.

The board regretfully accepted the resignation of **Lázaro and Ariadna Riesgo**. In a November letter, the Riesgos wrote, “We have much enjoyed and appreciated the opportunities...to meet a growing need for training Hispanics...God has blessed...with ministry opportunities in the United States, Mexico, Cuba, Panama, El Salvador, Peru, Uruguay, and several connections in other countries. IM provided the training, resources, encouragement, and occasion we needed to follow God with full and joyful hearts.”


The couple extended a 90-day notice effective November 1, stating they would encourage supporters to continue donations to their account through January 2019. (Read more about the Riesgos’ resignation at www.iminc.org/news)

General Director Clint Morgan stated, “True servants of God rise above the norm no matter where they are nor what the task. Lázaro and Ariadna fit in this group of committed believers.”

The board approved an operational budget of \$6.4 million for 2019. Projected self-funded programs carry the total budget to \$9.7 million. IMpact projects, The Hanna Project trips and projects, student missions, etc. require fundraising separate from the operational budget.

Board chairman Jeff Manning summarized the two-day meeting, saying, “Sometimes, we use the expression ‘Christmas came early this year.’ Well, when hearing of souls being saved, disciples being made, and churches being planted around the world during our December board meeting, it feels like Christmas came early! I praise the Lord for the work of our missionaries and our partners as they advance God’s Kingdom globally.”

All board members (Jeff Manning, chairman, North Carolina;

Jeff Nichols, vice-chairman, Tennessee; Mark Price, secretary, Ohio; Janice Banks, Texas; Danny Gasperson, North Carolina; Will Harmon, Arkansas; Cameron Lane, Arkansas; Robert Posner, Texas; Rodney Yerby, Alabama) participated in the meeting, although Jan Banks attended remotely. 

Missionary Balances

Antioch, TN—The following missionaries had deficit accounts as of November 30, 2018: India Ministries, Carlisle Hanna; Lázaro and Ariadna Riesgo; Robert and Judy Bryan; Jerry and Barbara Gibbs; Dennis and Carol Teague; Don and Ruth McDonald; and Steve and Lori Torrison.

The following missionaries had accounts with dangerously low balances: Tyler and Kellie Penn; Ken and Judy Bailey; and Nathan and Linda Snow.

For the latest account balances, visit IMinc.org/news.

Individuals and groups may donate to deficit accounts online (IMinc.org/give) or mail a check to IM, Inc, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37013.



WORLD MISSIONS OFFERING 2019



National Youth Camps



Cross-Cultural Ministries



Pastoral Training

w m

Partner | Empower | Advance | IMINC.ORG/WMO



Bible Training



Church Planting

2019 GOALS

**PARTICIPATING
CHURCHES: 450**

**TOTAL OFFERING:
\$650,000**

169

BY AMOS DILLARD



Tara and Lisa

Want to guess what this number stands for? No, it's not our average attendance at Grace City Church. No, it is not how many people have been baptized (even though those are great things, of course). This number is something we celebrate just as much because it points to the depth and the direction of the people at Grace City. This number represents how many NEW disciple-making relationships started this year by someone who considers Grace City his or her home church.

Let that sink in for a minute.

One hundred and sixty-nine opportunities for disciples to be intentional about helping others trust and follow Jesus. Building relationships with those who would be considered far from God and those who are taking the next step of faith as they follow Jesus in their lives. Can you imagine the ripple effect this will have over the next decade or two? Thousands of lives will be touched.

It gives 169 greater meaning.

To be honest, it is easy to overlook simple initiatives like this that do not produce immediate results, or that are not considered praiseworthy in the church-planting world. However, I wouldn't trade these new relationships, these new opportunities, for any amount of money or recognition. Someday, the seeds being planted today will help reach our city, state, and places around the world. They will influence the next generation and bring lives into God's Kingdom. They will enable us to be the disciples God told us to be and multiply exponen-

tially as disciples continue to make disciples.

I wouldn't trade this number for anything, and our prayer is that the number continues to grow in the years to come.

Please pray with us.

Tara (pictured above, left) would ask you to do so. Her sister Lisa (above, right) is a disciple at Grace City Church. Lisa was challenged to start a new disciple-making relationship with her sister, who was far from God. After a year of questions, Bible studies, and prayer, Tara also became a disciple by trusting and following Jesus. Today, we celebrate the miracle God performed in Tara's life and rejoice with Lisa who was intentional and courageous about sharing the gospel with her sister.

Help us reach more Taras. Help us take the gospel to people like Mahsa, whose incredible conversion testimony you can read on the next page. Join us in starting more disciple-making relationships where we live, work, and play.

Let's make 169 even more significant! ONE

About the Writer: Amos Dillard and Stephen Kimbrell are North American Ministries church planters starting Grace City Church in Irvine, California. For more information, visit GraceCityIrvine.com.



The Dillard Family

A Muslim Comes to Christ: Mahsa's Testimony

My name is Mahsa. I am from Iran. I want to tell my story about how I became a believer. Everybody born in Iran is a Muslim. You don't have any choice not to be Muslim...to be a Christian or some other thing. I saw so many people killed, innocent people being killed in my country—the educated people, the people the age of me. I was thinking, “How could God be like this? So much hatred, so much brutality.” They were saying the name of God, but they were killing people.

When I came here, I wasn't a believer. Before I became a believer, something bad happened to my family. My brother-in-law got cancer. I was worried about my family, my sister. When he [my brother-in-law] found out, he was crying, and it was a bad moment for me.

Maybe I said to people, “I don't believe in God” but in my heart, I felt *something* about God. After that, maybe three months later, one of my friends explained and introduced Jesus to me. It was the first time I had heard the story about who Jesus was and what His message

was. I read John 3:16, that God sent His beloved Son to us. If we believe in Him, we have eternal life. At the moment I believed that, God came after me and called me. He wanted to say, “I am here. I love you, and I care about you.”

When Islam came to my country, it killed so many people. The brutality and anger—nothing about love and kindness, the things I see in Christianity, in Jesus, and in His message. I came to Grace City Church, and it was a miracle for me.

Mahsa has continued to grow in her relationship with Jesus Christ, declaring her faith in Him by expressing an outward act of baptism on May 6, 2018.





Altar of prayer at D6 Singapore praying with families with needs



Dr. Hunter speaking at D6 Malaysia 2018



Special Family Emphasis service in East Malaysia (Sabah). Multiple churches in attendance.

God Is Up to Something

BY RON HUNTER



Dr. Hunter counseling and encouraging parents of prodigals



D6 Korea 2018



Staff of D6 Malaysia 2018



Dr. Hunter teaching family ministry growth principles to pastors and ministry leaders in Singapore

Two regular-looking guys, dressed in European styles, stand in the hallway of the Dallas convention center in 2009. One remarks, “God is doing something, and we need it.”

Runar and Gunar flew from Norway to experience what God might be up to at the D6 Conference. These European visitors caught the D6 vision and asked if they could take the principles, approach, name, and even the D6 Conference back to churches across northern Europe. Little did we know God would bring many others to ask the same question.

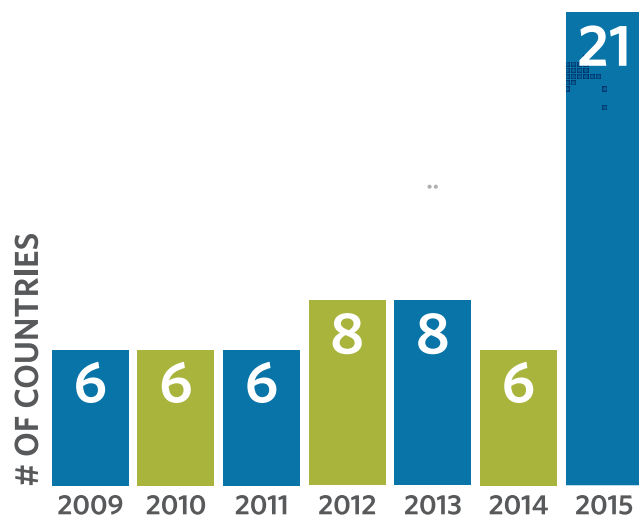
Randall House helped design a logo for Norway, which oddly enough was sM6 (which references the “Fifth book of Moses” as it is named in the Norwegian Bible). In complete transparency, we were not prepared for what God was doing during the first two or three years of the conference. Each year, God assembled strategic thinkers and leaders from all over the world and used the sacred *Shema* passage from Deuteronomy 6 to

convict hearts and help them rediscover what God has always intended—generational discipleship in church and home.

Through friends in the academic and family ministry world, I was asked to join an international think tank designed to coach leaders in Southeast Asia regarding discipleship. The goal was not to emulate growing churches in the western world but to follow biblical principles of generational discipleship without repeating the mistakes of the American church. In April 2014, ten leaders gathered at Concordia Seminary over two days and discussed ways we could assist and mentor leaders from Southeast Asia. Ben Freudenberg facilitated and hosted this meeting where I met Matthew Ling, a gifted Malaysian leader in family ministry. While many future

goals came from this meeting, representatives also decided to push for an international meeting at the 2015 D6 Conference.

The D6 Conference has attracted international leaders from year one. When people discover God's heartbeat in His commands in Deuteronomy 6 then discern how to live out those commands relationally, passing along passionate worship of Christ to all generations in all places becomes vital. Beginning in 2009, people heard about ministry leaders gathering in Dallas because they care about the healthy revitalization of the church through family ministry. Randall House promoted this event in the States but the message also spread globally. From 2009 to 2015 the number of attendees from other countries continued to grow:



Randall House does not map out strategic geographical places to launch an international event. We wait for God to send a champion to inquire about hosting a D6 event in his or her country. While many have requested, not all have passed the vetting process or have done the work required to earn the D6 branding.

When a leader inquires about hosting a D6 event, that leader usually has attended at least two D6 Conferences in the States. We use this time to assist in an 18-month ramp-up to launch in any new country. The global leader receives access to all D6 themes, graphics, programs, promotional videos, and even speaker videos. The Randall House design department shares cloud

storage conference files for their use. I spend 20-plus hours on video conference calls with these international leaders, preparing them for the event to launch. More than one international event has used our speaker videos of people like Phil Vischer, Richard Ross, Lydia Randall, Josh Griffin, Doug Fields, and David Platt, among others. The videos, if not in an English-speaking country are translated with subtitles. Thanks to our gracious speakers, 99% of our speaker videos are available for international use.

Randall House has been instrumental in launching D6 into five countries. The brand, and even the D6 logo, has been extremely popular since its release in 2007, and hundreds of churches use it with permission. Randall House mapped out a similar way to license the D6 brand with the D6 Conference to be used by global leaders who champion the principles of generational discipleship through church and home. **The relationship is straightforward; we grant usage of the brand, the conference, and provide support. But the global leader assumes all financial responsibility.** We also request (but do not require) the international host to pay-it-forward by sending Randall House 10% of the total income from the conference to support other countries launching D6. The Randall House board of directors has set aside \$10,000 to help pay for travel to these international events and asked me to attend as many as feasible. Attending three events in 2018, travel expenses totaled \$7,500, as some travel was underwritten by the events.

Reflecting on D6 Norway, our first international event, as I said earlier we were not prepared for what was happening. We gave our blessing, offered video support, but did not attend. Another evangelical organization did attend the meeting and reshaped the Norway event. If we see the need for all generations to be discipled, and for these efforts to be sustained, we must look at the long-term strategy and be present to support them.

The third year of D6 (2011) introduced us to Romain Denis, the leader of the second international D6. This businessman felt convicted to host the D6 Conference in his home country of France and underwrite the expense himself since he did not have a larger Christian

ministry to cover the expenses. Multiple ministries participated in the process. I connected Romain with Clint Morgan, who connected him with Robert Bryan, Matt Price, Joel and Lydia Teague, and one of their friends. Nothing is more special than being part of God orchestrating events to grow His Kingdom.

As planned, we hosted 21 countries at D6 in Louisville in 2015. Matthew Ling and Ben Freudenberg arranged for leaders to meet for two days, one before and one after the conference. Again, God raised up at least three more leaders to host global events. One leader, Fung Fong Chea, told me that she wanted to launch in Singapore the following July. Without showing any skepticism, I explained it would take 18 months to prepare. She countered by listing relationships and support coming from the Bible Society of Singapore. After numerous Skype sessions, with a 13-hour time difference, we agreed her team was ready and in 2016, the first annual D6 Singapore met with 320 in attendance followed by 550 attendees in 2017 and 780 attendees in July 2018.

This year, Singapore should surpass 1,000 attendees.

Herbert Tan from Malaysia also attended the 2015 meeting. He now serves as D6 Conference director and successfully attracted 590 attendees to the first annual D6 Malaysia. Fung Fong and Herbert Tan have agreed to host back-to-back weeks in order to share any featured speaker who travels to Southeast Asia from the States. Both are English-speaking countries, and speaker videos work well, although Singapore also translates videos into Mandarin Chinese. I had the privilege of speaking at both conferences in 2018 and to help launch both Singapore and France in their inaugural years.

Paul Kim, a pastor from South Korea, traveled to Nashville with his family to discuss hosting D6 in Korea and also publishing Randall House books and curriculum. Pastor Kim wanted to duplicate the entire concept in his home country, with a website offering family ministry resources focused on church, home, and school. Fast-forward to September 2018 when 450 people gathered for the first D6 Korea. It is fascinating to see

While we have your attention...

No one wants to think about death. But death is inevitable. Have you prepared your estate in a way it will benefit your children and the ministries you love? **Free Will Baptist Foundation** recently partnered with **Cornerstone Estate Planning** to provide help in this crucial area of life. Contact the Foundation today for more information:

family | peace of mind | security



877-336-7575 | foundation@nafwb.org

every international event also has multiple countries attending.

Our global partners run their own events. Randall House does not micro-manage or dictate the details, but rather models principles while they focus on contextual implementation. Most international events look similar but all have unique features, like tea served morning and afternoon in Singapore and kimchi at every meal in Korea.

Why do we do international events? First, we did not initiate but responded as God created opportunities. Everyone who has attended D6 in the States can attest to the unique way God is using D6 within the greater Body of Christ. Randall House and Free Will Baptists have been chosen to lead and steward this movement. We understand “discipleship is not an event, it is a way of life,” and therefore, our goal is not just to help global leaders “do” another event. We also help find a publisher to support the effort as each D6 Conference launches with several of our core book titles translated and ready to sell. We see these events as an inspirational training catalyst to

move people in the correct direction and provide books to train leaders within the church and ultimately provide curriculum to facilitate daily discipleship. D6 Curriculum has been available in Singapore since the second event as it will be for Malaysia and Korea.

Our publishing partner, Bible Society of Singapore, has translated ten Randall House family titles and curriculum. CEO Ezekiel Tan and I have met multiple times along with Fung Fong, and we are discussing, at Ezekiel’s request, the possibility of a D6 Conference in China. We will explore the possibilities during a summit held in China in 2019 after D6 Singapore. God is up to something, and we are grateful to be part of what He wants to do. ☩

About the Writer: Ron Hunter Jr., Ph.D., has served as CEO of Randall House Publications since 2002. He coaches the international D6 Conference directors.

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BASED ON DEUTERONOMY 6

Traditional Versus Roth:

THE OTHER DIVERSIFICATION DISCUSSION

BY JOSHUA EIDSON

Once someone begins retirement planning, one of the first decisions he or she must make is whether to use a traditional (pre-tax) account or a Roth account. Both options have pros and cons or best-use cases. I'd like to share a brief overview of both options and make a case for why both can be a part of your retirement readiness plan.

First, let's take a look at the key differences between the two options.

Traditional (Pre-Tax) accounts

- Anyone with earned income can contribute.
- Contributions are tax deductible.
- Distributions are taxable.
- Required minimum distribution begins after age 70 ½.

Roth accounts

- Tax filing status income limits restrict who is eligible for Roth IRAs (does not apply to employer-sponsored Roth accounts).
- Contributions are not tax deductible.
- Qualified distributions are tax-free on both the contribution and the earnings.

- Roth IRAs have no required minimum distributions. (Employer-sponsored Roth accounts do have RMDs.)
- Contributions can be withdrawn any time prior to age 59 ½, tax and penalty free.

As you see, a variety of differences exist between traditional and Roth accounts. Depending on your current and future tax situation, one type may be more beneficial than the other at different points in life. Generally, workers early in their careers benefit more from Roth accounts because they are (typically) in a lower tax bracket than they will be in retirement. As a person matures throughout the working years, the tax benefit shifts to favor pre-tax contributions, as wages tend to reach a higher tax bracket currently than expected in retirement. This is the primary deciding factor regarding the type of contributions to make or the type of account to open: "When do I want to be taxed on my contributions?"

Since both types have competing tax benefits, this is a great way to diversify your retirement savings. Not only should you look at diversification in investment



types, but also regarding your tax situation. The biggest concern is to contribute regularly to your retirement savings. However, with the tax implications of pre-tax and Roth contributions, you can better prepare for whatever your future tax situation is by having *both* types of accounts. Each person's tax and financial situation is unique. Special rules or exceptions may apply, but seeking out opportunities for tax diversification should be considered for everyone's retirement plan.

If you would like more information on how these types of accounts work and what options are available for you, please contact the Board of Retirement and allow us the

SEEKING OUT
OPPORTUNITIES
FOR TAX
DIVERSIFICATION
SHOULD BE
CONSIDERED
FOR EVERYONE'S
RETIREMENT PLAN.

opportunity to assist you in your retirement planning.

ONE

See IRS Publication 590-A for more details on Individual Retirement Arrangements.

The Board of Retirement does not provide tax, legal, or accounting advice. This material has been prepared for informational purposes only, and is not intended to provide, and should not be relied on for, tax, legal, or accounting advice.

You should consult your own tax, legal, and accounting advisors before engaging in any transaction.

About the Writer: Joshua Eidson is accounting administrator for Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. A native of Middle Tennessee, Joshua graduated from Welch College in 2007, where he earned a B.S. in business administration. He and his wife Rachel have four children.



Legacy of sacrifice ...

In 1955, the Superannuation Board hired K.V. Shutes as its first (and only) promotional secretary. Shutes moved his family to Nashville and shared an office with C. F. Bowen, director of the FWB League. The new director gave himself completely to developing the program. From September to December 1955, he traveled 10,023 miles and spoke in five state and three local associations. He visited 35 churches, urging them to purchase an annuity for their pastor. It soon became evident the office had insufficient funds, and in the fall of 1956, Shutes resigned and returned to the pastorate. In spite of his hard work, only 63 ministers had policies, and assets were a meager \$2,728.21. Yet, **Shutes planted a seed.** Today, those paltry numbers have grown to more than 1,600 participants in the FWB Retirement Plan and nearly \$70 million in assets.

We encourage you to make gifts to the legacy endowment established by the Board of Retirement at FWB Foundation to benefit retired ministers.



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Free Will Baptist Foundation Grants Program



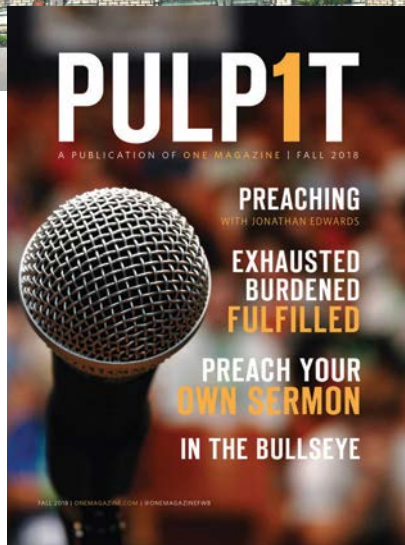
The Free Will Baptist Foundation Grants Program started in 2015 with \$75,000 in pilot grants given to national departments and commissions. The program expanded in 2017 when Free Will Baptist ministries received \$500,000. Each year, any ministry connected to the National Association of Free Will Baptists (NAFWB) is eligible to apply.

Until 2016, Free Will Baptist Foundation largely provided a channel for individuals to direct endowments and planned gifts to help fund ministries perpetually. The recent addition of an estate-plan ministry, which has helped over 1,600 families with end of life planning has resulted in over \$17 million for ministries through bequests.

The grant program, however, allows the Foundation to fund the needs of ministries directly. These pages share just a few of the ministries made possible through the grants. Learn more by contacting the Foundation office at 877-336-7575 or by emailing foundation@nafwb.org.



Photo: The Hope Center Maternity Home, a ministry of Free Will Baptist Family Ministries, will help unwed mothers.



PULP1T Magazine (left) is a special edition of *ONE Magazine* created especially for preachers. A 2017 grant covered the expenses of producing and distributing the premier issue. A second grant will produce two issues in 2018 and 2019.



A grant to **WNAC** made it possible to underwrite the costs of regional *Shine!* conferences for teen girls, parents, and youth leaders.

Camp Hope renovated its girls' dorm and caretaker's home. The new bath house is pictured left, top to bottom: girls' dorm before; plumbing the new facility; framing the new bath house.



Welch College received \$100,000 toward the *Building on the Legacy* campaign for construction of the new campus in Gallatin, Tennessee (pictured above and left).

God's Open Doors

BY DANIELLE MCCRANEY

When we began this new chapter in our lives of military chaplaincy, I thought it might be difficult for me to continue partnering in ministry with my husband Mark. Little did I know what God had planned! During our first Sunday at the base chapel where Mark preaches regularly, I noticed no one played the piano. On the second Sunday, the worship leader came to me and said,

"I understand you play the piano." The following week I was playing the piano at chapel, my first step toward participating in the ministry in Rota. This has blossomed into playing for other chapel events as well.

I also began attending Protestant Women of the Chapel, a weekly Bible study group, as a way to meet people. Initially, it was not all I had hoped it would be, but God worked on my heart, encouraging me to step up and help make the group more effective by leading women to learn God's Word. He opened the door for me to serve as a spiritual coordinator for the group, and it has been amazing to see women become excited about growing in their walk with the Lord.

This group has also given me an opportunity to mentor younger women in their marriages and parenting. Believe it or not, I am one of the older women in the group. How did I get so old so fast? It has been a wonderful privilege and blessing to mentor these young wives. Many days are filled with lunch or *café con leche* (coffee with cream) meetings to encourage ladies as their husbands are deployed, to help them adjust to life in a different country, or simply to build relationships that point them to Christ.

I'm sure God just smiled when I foolishly thought my ministry opportunities would be limited in the military. He was just waiting for me to walk through His open doors. **ONE**

About the Writer: Danielle McCraney and her husband Mark are currently stationed in Rota, Spain, with their two sons. To learn more about the chaplain ministry, visit www.fwbnam.com. Reprinted with permission from *Treasure* magazine: www.wnac.org.



What is it like to be a CK (chaplain's kid)?

Have you ever wondered what it's like to be a chaplain's kid? *ONE Magazine* recently asked Lucas McCraney, age 12, and his brother Ethan, age 17, that question.

Lucas and Ethan enjoy being able to do ministry with different kinds of people. They love the opportunity to meet people from all parts of the world, including other military families who moved to Spain from several different countries. The various cultures and church backgrounds have allowed them to experience worship in new ways and gain a unique perspective on the importance of worship.

"Being a chaplain's kid has definitely expanded our worldview," says Ethan. "It has given our family the opportunity to live overseas."

Lucas said his favorite things about living outside the U.S. are being able to see things he only used to dream

about and enjoying free USO and Armed Forces entertainment tours.

Both boys agree food has been one of the most amazing parts of living abroad. Their favorites? German schnitzel and authentic Neapolitan pizza. Ethan's favorite memories are traveling and seeing history come to life.

What would the boys tell others about being a chaplain's kid?

Moving often (about every three years) can be scary, and being away from your family is hard sometimes. However, Ethan says, "it will ultimately shape the rest of your life."

Lucas loves his new youth group, friends, and opportunities to serve. Ethan concludes, "This is an amazing opportunity! If your dad becomes a chaplain, you shouldn't take it for granted. Enjoy it!" **ONE**

Rates are rising!

With a gift annuity through **Free Will Baptist Foundation**, you can continue to support Free Will Baptist ministries long after you have gone to your eternal reward. In the meantime, enjoy lifetime income, great rates, and a partial charitable deduction.

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Single Table		Joint Table	
Age	Rate	Ages	Rate
65	4.7%	65/65	4.2%
70	5.1%	70/70	4.6%
75	5.8%	75/75	5.0%
80	6.8%	80/80	5.7%
85	7.8%	85/85	6.7%
90	9.0%	90/90	8.2%



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Hurricane Maria: One Year Later

BY JOSÉ CORREA

September 20, 2017, is a date Puerto Ricans will never forget. We still see on our streets the damage from that day. Streetlights still do not work, companies have not reopened, and neighborhoods are deserted. That day we lost everything—cars, homes, families, churches—everything! Today, a year later, we understand the potential to rise from destruction was within us, even though we were told it was impossible.

My family and I have decided this hurricane will not bring a halt to God's purpose for the church in Puerto Rico. Instead, we will rise even stronger! The story of our church now has two lives: one before Maria and one after Maria.

The church in Puerto Rico began with a group of people gathering under a tree to worship and hear God's Word. God blessed our hard work with the ability to obtain seven acres of land where we built facilities with the capacity for 120 people. We added a school to help the ministry on our island and our church. After five years, our church had become self-supporting, which in itself was a great milestone. Growth continued, and everything was going well until the day Maria hit the island.

In just a few hours, everything we worked so hard for was destroyed. Today, while the scars left by the hurricane are still painful, they serve as reminders of how great God is. He is in control of our lives and ministry. Many people left Puerto Rico looking for better opportunities. Churches have fewer members, professionals left, and schools are closing. Security has changed; policemen also have left.

Everything is still unstable. After a year, thousands of people are still without secured roofs. Prices for building materials and food have gotten higher and higher. Every day, it has become more difficult to live in Puerto Rico, but our hearts beat for this island of 100 by 35 miles. Puerto Rico is not the same after a year, but the Bible



still says, “We know that all things work together for good to those who love God.”

The Free Will Baptist church in Puerto Rico is in the process of rising up, thanks to many churches that believe God is doing something big in Puerto Rico. Churches from multiple states—Arkansas, Alabama, South Carolina, Mississippi, Tennessee, Texas—and many others have supported us in this rebound. We also thank God for the people from North American Ministries, such as David Crowe and Rick Bowling who have been pivotal in this ministry.

Puerto Rico is different now, but we still have the strength to work and seek God’s favor for our island and ministry. For a year, we have met in homes and a 40-foot by 40-foot tent, preaching and teaching God’s Word wherever we are allowed. We meet six days a week in different homes, just like the churches in the book of Acts. We are starting from the beginning and putting into practice what we have learned. We don’t have many members like before, but the ones we do have are strong and eager to work to lift the church again.

Today, our economy is not great. Before Maria we were able to support ourselves.

Now we get \$600 to \$700 monthly, and our debts are \$3,000 to \$4,000 monthly, including the mortgage of \$2,200 per month. We believe and trust God has the control over our church and country. We are visiting the streets and houses to start once again. We are walking with the vision of the future, preparing for something big. Once again, we are in the process of obtaining the expensive permits to rebuild the church. Today, the house where we reside is almost finished. As soon as it is finished we will start keeping the nursery there. We gather in houses for discipleship and in the tent for God’s Word on Sundays. Our next project is to complete the other part of the roof, so we can accommodate more children. In the future, we would like to construct a stronger building where the entire church family can gather.

My family and I are ready to work together to restore the Free Will Baptist church in Puerto Rico. We believe that together we will rise and see what God does in our island. We believe this is God’s way to make us stronger and to see God’s glory. Thank you for your support and prayers for Puerto Rico and my family. **ONE**

WE BELIEVE AND TRUST THAT GOD HAS THE CONTROL OVER OUR CHURCH AND COUNTRY. . . WE ARE WALKING WITH THE VISION OF THE FUTURE, PREPARING FOR SOMETHING BIG.

About the Writer: José and Suey Correa have been planting First FWB Church in Puerto Rico since 2010.





In the Bullseye

DODGING DARTS OF DISCOURAGEMENT
TO DISCOVER THE BEST VERSION OF ME...

BY BECKY GWARTNEY

I love the study of personalities—learning about the various distinctions in others and realizing God created them that way...for a reason.

This realization has been life-changing and grace-giving for me. Before I studied personalities, I tended to judge others based on what I saw and how it compared to who I was or how I was. When I realized God made some people different from me, and that they hadn't chosen to be the way they are, it was freeing for me (and for them). I was able to let go of judgmental thoughts about what I perceived as failures.

As a pastor's wife, I meet all kinds of people, work with all personality types, and minister to people who are sometimes hard to love. Some are easier to work with than others, but don't think for a moment that means they are just like me. (Two choleric/lion/headstrong/dominant personalities working together do not make a good combination.) Ministry brings certain challenges. One of those challenges is when our personality clashes with another person in the church. If our relationship with Christ is where it should be, we won't be the one "throwing darts." But, when someone else hits the bullseye and pierces our spirit, it can be crushing and leave us feeling our ministry is over.

"Why would God create me like this to be a failure?"
"Why would He give me these personality traits if they are going to hurt my husband's ministry?"

Maybe you have asked yourself these questions. Recently, after a soul-crushing conversation, I found myself

asking them again and again. I also wondered, "Is this from Satan? Is he trying to destroy what God is doing in our church?" and "Is this from God, to let me know I have issues I need to deal with?" Finding the answers to these questions and others like them only comes through time spent on our knees. Asking the Holy Spirit to give us discernment in any situation is vital, especially when truth is on the line.

I don't know where you are when it comes to accepting yourself the way God made you, but I have never been satisfied with the way I am. (Hence, my second highest scoring personality trait, melancholy.) I have taken and studied many different personality tests. They all have the same problem. They all reveal the same thing—my true self. You see, every personality includes strengths and weaknesses. Most of us like to focus on our strengths. We may be organized or a natural leader. We may be a peacemaker, the one who can get everyone excited about an event, or the one who can be trusted with details and follow through without supervision. And yet, sometimes the weakest parts of our personality shine brighter than the strengths. When they do, they don't necessarily bring light or strength. When we become aware of the weaknesses associated with our personality type, or even worse, when someone else points them out to us, it can be overwhelming.

When that happens, what do we do? We have two options. We can become broken, bitter, and resentful. We can be angry with the one(s) who pointed out

the weaknesses or failures. We may even yell at God, griping about the way He created us. (I confess...guilty as charged.) We can shake off the negative comments or even the comments spoken to wake us up, and determine to remain the same way we've always been. Or, the second option: we can go to God in prayer, seeking truth. We can ask the Holy Spirit to reveal what—if anything—needs to change, and then make the changes.

I know from experience the first one is easier. Shaking our fists at God or placing blame on others is always the easiest solution. But is it right? Is it what God wants for us?

Believe me, being molded is painful! But being moldable is essential to growth. When a potter takes a lump of clay, if the clay has dried out and become hard, it cannot be shaped. I'm no potter, but I have worked with Play-Doh™ enough to know it is nearly impossible to work with it after it's been left on the table to dry. Try forming that crumbled-up mess into something; it's a waste of time and energy. I can't help but wonder if that's how God feels when we become hardened in our weaknesses rather than letting Him turn those weaknesses into strengths.

God created us as His workmanship, a masterpiece or poem, something usable for good and His glory (Ephesians 2:10). God knew what He was doing from the beginning. He decided how we would be shaped, and He intended our unique personalities to show others His likeness (Romans 8:29). So, if your life isn't displaying the true heart of God for the world to see (or at least *your* part of the world), what needs to be done?

I think we choose option two: go to the Creator. Ask Him to reveal what—if anything—needs to be different. Are you losing your temper with coworkers? Are you constantly late and causing others to wait? Are you demanding your way and refusing to listen to others? Are you procrastinating and not getting the job done?

ASKING THE
HOLY SPIRIT
TO GIVE US
DISCERNMENT
IN ANY
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Are you so set in your ways you're no longer flexible with anyone or anything? Seek the truth. Go beyond what others have said and your own feelings. (Remember, we can be harder on ourselves than God desires; don't be your own worst enemy.) Find Scriptures to aid you along this journey to spiritual health. Commit those passages to memory or post them on your wall.

Have the fiery darts of criticism left you deeply wounded? Give what others say about you to the Lord and let Him deal with their hearts. If you are really broken by their words, understand healing may take time. Forgive them. Ask God to help you love them. Be moldable, flexible, and pursue Christlikeness. Take the proper steps to be the best version of yourself with God's help.

God didn't create us to fail, nor to barely survive; He created us to thrive! He looked at you and me when we were in our mother's womb and handpicked a personality, emotions, abilities, and passions especially for us. Our task is to use those gifts to make this world a better place and point others to Christ.

In recent days, a painful dart found its way deep into my soul. It felt like a body blow, an 18-wheeler plowing through my heart, as words from a friend caused me great pain. I have done much soul-searching and truth-seeking. I have wept, crying out to God to show me what I need to do and be. This is what it takes, friends. The process can be raw and ugly—downright heart-wrenching—but I know the pain will be worth it. I don't know about you, but I want to be the best version of me I can possibly be. **ONE**

About the Writer: Becky (Fry) Gwartney loves being a pastor's wife (married to Curt, Pastor of Fellowship FWB Church, Park Hills, Missouri). She is a homemaker, researcher, writer, and mother of two adult children—son Darin, a physician in Pryor, Oklahoma; and daughter Casey, a youth pastor's wife in Nashville, Tennessee. Grammy to six "perfect" grandsons, Becky loves to write, decorate, organize, bake, teach, lead Bible studies, sing, play games, and spend time with her husband.



A View From Nowhere

THE OVERLOOKED PROBLEM OF ENTERTAINMENT CULTURE

BY FRANK AND CHRISTA THORNSBURY

All culture everywhere expresses thought—that is, all culture everywhere expresses a vision of what makes life worth living. Culture is an attempt at making collective aesthetic and moral judgments.

For instance, Homer’s *Iliad* expresses the ancient Greek sense of “the good life” by illustrating the virtues of courage and love of family and country. Shakespeare’s histories provide dramatic images of English heritage and identity that have captivated the English imagination for hundreds of years. And, for the most part, art—both high and low—has been as regional as these examples, meaning the best of human culture has come from a *place*. It has come from somewhere and has expressed the definition of the good life according to that somewhere.

Indeed, the subtle cultivation of a sense of belonging is always at work in our interactions with culture, and entertainment culture is no different. Entertainment offers us visions of what makes life worth living. We may hope these visions come from real people, artists genuinely answering inescapable questions. But artists’ imaginations are not the only source of the culture that fills our screens.

GENRE VERSUS TASTE

In reality, as goes the market so goes the culture. We often think the consumer controls entertainment’s vision of the good life, since the consumer dictates the market with his money. In truth, consumers have no real stake in the production of entertainment culture because pat-

terns of entertainment consumption often come down to genre rather than taste.

People cultivate taste by contemplating specific artistic traditions and universal values such as beauty, or at least they are guided by a coherent worldview. Genre, on the other hand, is a chain of multiple links that connect disparate consumer preferences. For younger people, this phenomenon often culminates in a genre-based archetype or label—hipster, gamer, active mom, or prep. For the more mature, it results in the growing sub-genres of the middle class and the expectations and aesthetics that accompany those sub-genres.

From the shoes we wear to the movies we see, the chain of preferences is vast but also personal, dictating our identity, genre, or label. What do shoes and movies and hairstyles and even food preferences have in common? Often nothing, other than the fact that magazine editors, advertising agencies, and Instagram curators have correlated them to market a product or create a particular aesthetic backdrop upon which advertisements can be framed. When we consume entertainment culture, we likely have these aesthetics in mind rather than a cultivated sense of what is good and excellent according to our worldviews.

If taste truly dictated the market, we could assume

democracy has prevailed, and the people have produced their culture. But because genre is the predominant animating force behind entertainment production and consumption, the consumer prefers what he or she has been manipulated into preferring. At the end of the process, the consumer hasn't dictated the vision of the good life, nor has he or she understood another person's perspective—person to person, artist to art lover. The result is a view from nowhere.

We needn't exclude entertainment completely from our lives, but we certainly shouldn't go into the cinema or log on to the Internet looking for examples to imitate. Yet, this is what we do, and what we are encouraged to do, by both the form and the content of entertainment culture.

Roger Scruton, in *Beauty: A Very Short Introduction*, argues that good art invites us to see another person's view of the universe and to think about it, while entertainment invites us only to experience the emotion of the action portrayed. He notes this is especially true of movies. I'll say this is also true of the culture found on the Internet. Here, the form—the quick shots and first-person camera angles of television and movies, the full immersion into video games, the diminished attention spans on the Internet—leads us to turn off our brains and initiates a process where we merely feel our way into taking the content of nowhere and making it our vision of the good life.

This is not a conspiracy; it is a business model. And who can fault marketers for doing their jobs? The root issue is not market capitalism, its functions, or even its abuses. The root issue is that, in most cases, we conceive of our selves and our culture according to our consumer preferences. We “purchase” our vision of the good life rather than deriving it from a place as humans have done for thousands of years.

ENTERTAINMENT FROM SOMEWHERE

We must establish ourselves as citizens of somewhere before we take on a view from nowhere.¹ The problem with entertainment culture is that it is inherently placeless. If

¹ This term is original to the Appalachian poet Jim Wayne Miller and first appeared in his commencement address to graduates of Berea College in 1981.

it does reflect a place, it does not reflect *our* place. Thus, the first step in resisting the genres of entertainment culture and in developing actual taste is to establish a rooted sense of identity, which produces worldview, which culminates in taste.

For Christians, self-definition is found first and foremost in the gospel, in God's revelation to us, and in His communion of saints. We also gain a sense of place through God's common grace conveyed in the family, the community (town, state, and country), and broader traditions such as the Western tradition. From all of these, we obtain a universe of values and understandings of how to live well and how to understand the origin, purpose, and application of principles such as order, proportion, balance, and beauty. In other words, from these we obtain the tools needed to judge culture well—to have taste. One of the greatest gifts our most local places give us as we seek to redeem our free time and to develop taste is good culture in the form of folk culture.

Folk culture is an important alternative to the rootless, placeless entertainment culture. It comes from a place—usually regional, though sometimes national. It is deeply connected to specific local culture and heritage. Thus, it is also of a people and directly related to community identity. It is made up of skills, ideas, and values handed down from generation to generation. Created by humans for humans, folk culture creates honest solidarity. It offers truth, beauty, and goodness that shape our imaginations and preferences.

A personal example: we are from Appalachia (Eastern Kentucky and Southwestern Virginia, respectively). We are exceedingly thankful for the unique Appalachian identity we share, with its own heritage, music, folktales, and craftsmanship. Every fall, we go home for two important celebrations of Appalachian identity. One is the Apple Festival in Paintsville, Kentucky, featuring local music, artisans, and craftsmanship, and, of course, lots of apples and apple-related treats.

Another is the annual Old-fashioned Day at Central Free Will Baptist Church in Norton, Virginia. The day features cakewalks, mountain food (soup beans and cornbread and mixed pickles and fried potatoes), oppor-

tunities for children to make biscuits from scratch, and quilting. The highlight of the day, though, is a traditional apple butter stir-off. The apple butter is cooked in copper kettles over an open fire, with silver dollars in the bottom of every kettle. Each person takes turns in stirring the butter. Both the Apple Festival and Old-Fashioned day offer attendees a sense of heritage and home.

We were further reminded of the beauty of folk art at one of our wedding showers this past spring. Of all the gifts we received, among the most meaningful were the ones my aunts and mother gave us. My aunts had kept the last quilt sewn by my father's mother to give to her first grandchild who married. My mother had some of the last of her mother's completed quilt tops sewn into a quilt as well. These beautiful, colorful, skillfully wrought examples of folk art carried with them heritage, family, and love.

Of course, we consume more than just folk culture from Appalachia, and we see ourselves as more than just Appalachians. But folk culture roots us and shows us the truth and beauty found in the traditional, the local,

and the homegrown. It humanizes. It provides a sense of belonging, understanding what it is to belong when we explore the folk forms of other cultures.

The Bible doesn't call people to transcend local and national traditions but to redeem and transform them. Such is the vision of Isaiah the prophet and John the revelator, as the nations, with their local identities intact, fill the new earth. To paraphrase Edmund Burke, our most local tradition is our clause to maintain in the grander contract of culture. Thus we must guard folk art and resist the ever-homogenizing effect as entertainment culture produces a market-driven, bland, one-size-fits-most culture for everywhere, which ends up being a culture from nowhere. [ONE](#)

About the Writer: Frank Thornsby is English program coordinator at Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee. He and Christa (Hill) were married in June of 2018. They live in Gallatin, Tennessee, where they attend Immanuel Church.



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Hester Selected to TICUA Executive Leadership Institute

Dr. Kevin L. Hester, vice president for institutional effectiveness and dean of the School of Theology at Welch College, has been selected as a Presnell Fellow in the Executive Leadership Institute of the Tennessee Independent Colleges and Universities Association (TICUA), according to President Matt Pinson. The Executive Leadership Institute provides specialized training for up-and-coming leaders in the private higher education sector in Tennessee.

"I am so glad Dr. Hester will be taking part in this institute," President Pinson said. "As one of our senior leaders at Welch, he will benefit greatly from interaction with top leaders in higher education and will be able to use his training in his leadership at Welch College."

Faculty for the institute will include distinguished higher education leaders such as Dr. Nicholas Zeppos (chancellor of Vanderbilt University), Dr. John McCardell (president of Sewanee, The University of the South), and Emma Jones (Chief Brand Officer of CREDO Higher

Education). The institute also will provide opportunities to interact with numerous local, state, and federal officials who will speak on educational policy. The institute will gather at nine independent college and university campuses across Tennessee once a month, during the 2018-19 academic year. The last meeting and graduation will be in May of 2019. Last year's ELI graduation was held on the Welch campus in Gallatin.

A native of Russellville, Alabama, Hester is a 1993 graduate of Welch College's pastoral ministry program. An M.Div. graduate of Covenant Theological Seminary, he received a Ph.D. from Saint Louis University. He has served full-time at Welch since 2003, teaching as well as serving in a number of administrative roles.

Hester has represented Welch in the higher education community, serving as a team member on several accrediting teams for the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) and the Associ-



Dr. Kevin L. Hester

ation for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE). He serves as secretary of the Commission on Accreditation with ABHE and on the editorial board of the association's *Biblical Higher Education Journal*. Hester has written numerous articles for popular and scholarly periodicals and is author of *Eschatology and Pain in St. Gregory the Great* and *Free Will Baptists and the Priesthood of All Believers*. He and his wife, Leslie, a registered nurse, live in Gallatin, Tennessee. They have four sons, Spencer, Seth, Justin, and Jackson. Spencer and Justin are students at Welch.

College Provides Hurricane Relief

Welch College provided hurricane relief for victims of Hurricanes Florence and Michael, according

to David Williford, vice president for institutional advancement at Welch. "Welch's students, admin-

istration, faculty, and staff were quick to provide help and assistance to churches and individuals

following the devastating storms and flooding,” Williford said.

Students used their fall break to travel to flooded parts of North Carolina under the supervision of John Murray, director of Christian Service at Welch. Another group of students traveled to the Wilmington, North Carolina, area during the Christmas break in December, according to Murray. “The weather turned cold, and the labor was more difficult, but they said, ‘Let’s go.’ That’s the Welch spirit that characterizes our students.”

Shortly after Hurricane Florence hit North Carolina, Hurricane

Michael devastated much of the Florida Panhandle with 150 mph winds, causing damage deep into the Georgia countryside. Welch delivered supplies to aid in the relief effort after Hurricane Michael. Immanuel FWB Church, a Gallatin church plant, also contributed toward the project.

“Welch and Immanuel sent a trailer with food, water, cleaning supplies, roof tarps, and other supplies to the stricken area of Clarksville, Florida,” Williford said. “Pastor Allan Austin is coordinating relief efforts through Traveler’s Rest FWB Church. Bob Bass, alumnus and building and land consultant

for Welch, also made the trip from Gallatin to Florida, using a trailer provided by Master’s Men. Welch is also planning to send funds for hurricane relief for our people in Southwest Georgia.”

“These efforts add to a long history of Welch students, staff, and alumni stepping up to the plate when churches and people are hurting,” Williford continued. “Other trips like this have been made, not only to North Carolina but Florida, Alabama, and Tennessee. Students have even traveled as far as Haiti to help build a boys’ dormitory at an orphanage. We are grateful for the servant spirit in our students.”

College Athletics Joins the NCCAA Network

Welch College Athletics is proud to announce a new streaming partnership with the NCCAA (National Christian College Athletic Association) Network hosted by BlueFrame Technology, according to Josh Owens, Welch’s director of media and marketing.

“Over the last several years we’ve seen thousands of family members, friends, and fans of the Welch athletic teams enjoy viewing games on various streaming platforms such as Livestream and Facebook LIVE,” Owens said. “We’ve spent much time looking for the right platform and partner for our streaming, and we believe we have found the best with the NCCAA Network and BlueFrame Technology. This

partnership will provide a more reliable, stable, and quality viewing experience for each fan.”

Athletic Director Greg Fawbush said, “By adding the NCCAA Network, our loyal fan base will be able to stay connected with our student athletes. Also, with athletes from so many different areas of the country, the network will allow their families a greater opportunity to be a part of the excitement that is occurring on campus.”

Fans can now watch all Welch College home basketball games on the NCCAA Network. The network is available on desktop and mobile/tablet devices at thenccaa.org/network, as well as over-the-top (OTT) platforms, including Roku, Amazon

Fire TV, Android TV, and Apple TV.

In addition, the NCCAA Network is available on the NCCAA App for iOS in the App Store and Android on Google Play. Mobile devices including iPhone, iPad, and Android will work with the default web browser. Devices should be kept up-to-date and connected to a reliable data connection for optimal playback. Apple users and owners of an AppleTV device can simply “throw” the webcast from their iPhone or iPad using AirPlay. The Welch College channel on the NCCAA Network has been set up to stream all games at welch.edu/live.

To see a full schedule of Flames basketball games go to Welch.edu/athletics.

A Band of Sisters

EARLY YEARS OF THE CUMBERLAND DISTRICT LADIES' AID SOCIETY

BY PHILLIP MORGAN

The Women Nationally Active for Christ serves as the national organization for women's ministry among Free Will Baptists. The organization was formed in 1935, just prior to the founding of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. The diligent work of many women from many states culminated in the formation of this organization. But no group had a larger influence than the women of the Cumberland District Ladies Aid Society (CDLAS; now the Cumberland District Women Active for Christ) in Middle Tennessee.

Led by Fannie Polston (1881-1964), Mary Ann Welch (1890-1969), and Agnes Frazier (1897-1993), the CDLAS was one of the earliest organizations for women's work among modern Free Will Baptists. These women developed much of what eventually became the mission and purpose of the national women's organization. Their concern for spiritual development, stewardship, missions, and education spread far beyond their local district. For these reasons, the story of their founding and early development is important for understanding women's work among Free Will Baptists.

EARLY WOMEN'S MINISTRY IN THE CUMBERLAND ASSOCIATION

Earliest efforts toward a women's organization within churches now associated with the National Association began around 1900. A West Virginia pastor from the Randall Movement named Dell Upton came to Nashville in 1907 to pastor Cofer's Chapel. Even though Upton remained in Nashville only two years, he

introduced the idea of an independent women's ministry to support the church's mission. On December 17, 1907, he welcomed both married and single women to the first meeting of the Cofer's Chapel Ladies Aid Society in his home. He wanted to provide women new opportunities to use their talents to build the Kingdom.

Two founding members of the Cofer's Chapel society were especially influential in the later development of national women's work: Fannie Polston and Mary Ann Weaver (later Mary Ann Welch). Polston was from Cheatham County, Tennessee, but moved to Nashville and began attending Cofer's Chapel after marrying Fred Polston in 1902. In *Sparks Into Flame*, Mary Ruth Wisheart notes Polston's good business sense, intelligence, and courage. These qualities gave her an entrepreneurial character and uniquely suited her for leadership.

Mary Ann Weaver and her future husband John L. Welch (1889-1983) best grasped and communicated the broader vision of Upton. After the Welches married in 1912, they worked together to encourage the formation of a national denomination and a centrally located college. Their diligent efforts were instrumental in the development of the National Association and Free Will Baptist Bible College (now Welch College). However, the couple also was committed to growing women's organizations in local churches.



FOUNDING OF THE CUMBERLAND LADIES AID SOCIETIES

At Upton's encouragement, in 1908, the Cofer's Chapel society began publishing a newspaper, *The Free Will Baptist Record*. Polston and Weaver eventually served as the editors of the paper. *The Record* related the goals and activities of the society, hoping to encourage other churches to begin similar organizations.

Through *The Record* and the Welches' promotional work, the societies expanded into regional Free Will Baptist churches in the Cumberland Association. Heads FWB Church in Turnersville and Rock Springs FWB Church in Neptune both formed Ladies Aid Societies in 1916. Oaklawn FWB Church in Thomasville and additional churches established Ladies Aid Societies by the next year.

Until 1920, these societies remained individual entities, connected solely to the local church. They often sent reports to the annual meeting of the Cumberland Association but otherwise carried out their activities independent of one another. However, in 1920, they formed the Ladies Aid Societies of the Freewill Baptists of Tennessee. Despite their self-description as a state organization, the group did not include any societies beyond the Cumberland Association. Before long, other Tennessee churches developed women's organizations, leading to the formation of multiple district associations. Thus, in 1929, the Cumberland Association women renamed their organization the Cumberland District Ladies Aid Societies (CDLAS). The association boasted 25 societies in its membership. The faithful work of those earliest members had begun paying dividends.

MISSION OF THE CUMBERLAND LADIES AID SOCIETIES

In the early years, ladies groups had little cohesion to their mission or goals. As late as the early 1920s, many organizations thought of themselves as "little group[s] banded together to carry out [their] own separate programs." Most focused on local church needs such as new furnishings or paying the minister. But this attitude quickly changed. According to Polston, by the early 1930s, women's societies had become active in the broader mission of the church by encouraging spiritual development, stewardship, missions, and education.

Each society meeting included a Bible lesson meant to encourage further study. Polston also wanted to emphasize prayer. In 1930, she developed the annual week of prayer for the Cumberland societies to observe in November. The societies also studied books on Christian discipline. Stewardship became a special emphasis through the work of another early leader, Agnes Frazier. Frazier attended Bethlehem FWB Church in Ashland City during her childhood. After marrying in 1917, she moved to Alabama before returning to Nashville around 1925. She and her husband James joined East Nashville FWB Church, recently established through the work of Fannie Polston and the Welches.

The Welches strongly encouraged Frazier, a schoolteacher, to begin writing material for societies to use in their monthly meetings. In 1929, Frazier responded by writing her first pamphlet entitled *Stewardship and Missions*. Before meeting the Welches, Frazier did not remember ever hearing about tithing or stewardship. She was soon convinced that Christ has dominion over *more* than 10% of a person's income. As a result of the work of Frazier and the Welches, most Cumberland District societies started giving regularly above their tithe. They additionally participated in quilt sales, bake sales, and other public events. As a result, the societies soon began to raise significant amounts of money.

Much of this money went to missions. The Cumberland women began to advocate foreign missions work long before any modern missionary actually entered the field. Mrs. Miles Gower, who served as the chairwoman of missions in 1928, reported nine churches held missions services in the previous year. Welch, in a 1929 report as superintendent of stewardship and missions, called upon the women of the Cumberland to pray that people would understand stewardship was essential for supporting missions. Mrs. Welch then argued that, without missions, Christianity was a "hollow mockery."

Another important financial emphasis was education. A goal of each monthly meeting was to provide Bible education for women who otherwise had no access to it. The Cumberland women also were interested in a Free Will Baptist college. As far back as 1908 *The Record* stated the intent to raise support for an institution in Nash-

ville. Polston's interest eventually earned her a seat on the board of Eureka College, a Free Will Baptist school in Ayden, North Carolina. Before her death, Polston sold her home and donated proceeds to Free Will Baptist Bible College. When the college constructed a new women's dormitory in 1971, they named it Polston Hall in honor of this generous educational pioneer.

Both Frazier and the Welches' daughter Jean spoke persuasively about the cause of a Free Will Baptist college at the 1938 annual session of the Cumberland Association. These speeches led Frazier to publish an article on behalf of the Board of Education to the National Association of Free Will Baptists, urging the association to raise support for a denominational college. Jean Welch made a passionate plea to delegates at the 1939 National Association meeting. The women of the CDLAS also provided financial support to Eureka College, Zion Bible School in Blakely, Georgia, and eventually Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Through the work of these determined and faithful women, a strong women's work developed in the Cumberland Association. When WNAC was formed, much of the structure, purpose, and mission came from

the CDLAS. The emphases on spiritual development, stewardship, missions, and education appealed to other women's organizations. For these reasons, Polston, Welch, and Frazier all served important leadership roles during the early years of WNAC, giving it structure and direction for the future. Without their influence, Free Will Baptist women's ministry would look much different today. [ONE](#)

This article cites various historical notes and statistics from Sparks Into Flame: A History of the Woman's National Auxiliary Convention of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, 1935-1985, by Dr. Mary Ruth Wisehart, as well as various denominational records. Visit helwysocietyforum.com for the fully-annotated version.

About the Writer: Phillip T. Morgan is curator of the FWB Historical Collection housed at Welch College, where he additionally serves as History Program coordinator and professor. Phillip, His wife Megan, and two children Isaiah and Julia live on a small farm in Robertson County, Tennessee.



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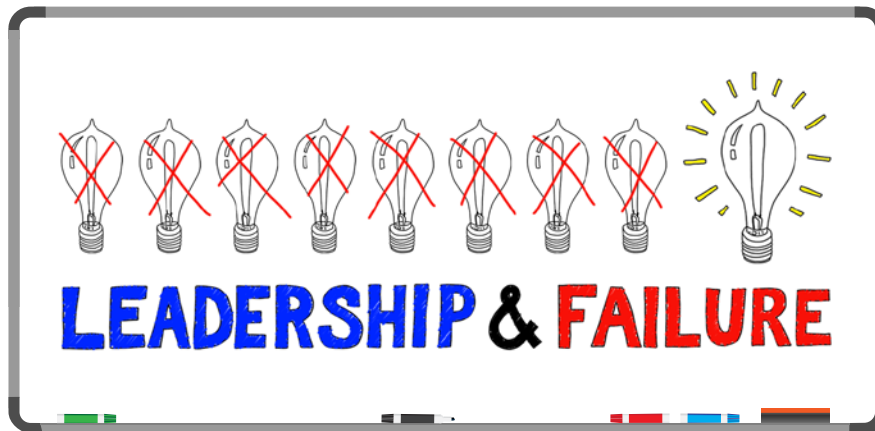
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Leadership and Failure

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.



No leader chooses failure, but studies have shown failures serve as incubators of leadership. John Kotter, a leadership scholar, suggested that behind every great leader is an early significant failure in his or her career. Leaders view failure as experiential learning. They own it, persist through it, and develop from it. Thomas Edison, the famous inventor who failed miserably before plugging into success, said, “I have found 10,000 ways that won’t work.”

You can easily read about leaders who failed early and overcame mistakes: Abraham Lincoln, Walt Disney, James Dyson, Steve Jobs, Fred Smith, Mark Cuban, Milton Hershey, and Henry Ford. Or consider Theodor Seuss Geisel, AKA Dr. Seuss. He was turned down 27 times by numerous publishers before his beloved children’s books

went on to sell more than 600 million copies. Leaders do not fear failing as much as never trying.

Just as unchecked fear can paralyze leaders, it also impairs the future of organizations. The emotion of fear can blind one with anticipated consequences. Risk aversion hinders leaders of organizations by defaulting to “the safe call” and preventing growth. Imagine parenting from only safe calls. The child would skip immunizations, never attend school, and certainly not be allowed to ride roller coasters. No one could imagine “living in a bubble” as a child, but some leaders keep their organizations in a safe bubble—one that never fully allows development. Organizations that grow experience failures along the way. Remember Apple’s Newton?

I have experienced my share of failure, and I am not suggesting any leader should foolishly or intentionally charge toward failure. Leaders plan, envision, and typically see further down the road than those around them. But, leaders earn the respect of followers by managing risk wisely, careful planning, and strategic stopgaps. Make attempts, determine not to stop trying, and learn from missteps. Failure is not a reason to reject someone when it can be the tuition to a wiser future.

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

“What matters in leadership formative experiences is the meaning leaders make of experiences rather than the experiences in and of themselves....”

—Annick Jason

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- Ordained Deacon
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2018 Leadership Conference Focuses on Effective Communication

Nashville, TN—The 2018 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference brought pastors and church leaders from 25 states, Canada, and Japan to Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel December 3-4, to explore effective communication from pulpit to print to digital. “Communication is changing, many times at a pace impossible to match,” said conference planner Ryan Lewis. “As a denomination, our churches, pastors, and laypeople must work together to communicate our message clearly. This year we emphasized key mediums and methods to ensure we are able to communicate our most critical message effectively—the message of the gospel.”

Robert J. Morgan, teaching pastor at The Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee, shared principles for preaching in perilous times (2 Timothy 3-4) and preaching in God's presence (Ezra and Haggai). Morgan has served the church for 35 years. A best-selling, Gold Medallion-winning writer, he has more than 35 books in print with more than 4 million copies in circulation. A writer for David Jeremiah and *Turning Points* magazine, Morgan has appeared on numerous national television and radio shows. He and his wife Katrina have



three daughters, 14 grandchildren, and one great-grandchild.

On Tuesday morning, during a slate of seminar-styled sessions, Eric Thomsen, editor of *ONE Magazine*, offered five steps to communicating effectively in print. Media Commission member Daniel Edwards explored principles behind communicating effectively through technology; and Dr. Neil Gilliland, director of member care for IM, shared five points regarding communicating across generational lines, reminding listeners, “More than anything else, we need to communicate grace.”

The two-day conference gave attendees time to renew friend-



ships during banquet-styled meals and extended breaks. Welch College provided special music for evening services, featuring the 40-voice College Choir and the *Rejoice!* ministry team.

Free time on Tuesday allowed for sightseeing in Nashville as well as time for several national boards to meet.

"This conference gives me the

best opportunity to connect with leaders all across the denomination in a single event," noted Chris Compton, director of communication for the Board of Retirement. "I always walk away with new connections and new ideas on how to better serve our denomination."

For more information regarding the 2019 Leadership Conference, visit www.nafwb.org. **ONE**



Theological Symposium Convenes at Randall University

Moore, OK—The Commission for Theological Integrity hosted the annual Theological Symposium October 22-23, 2018, at Randall University in Moore, Oklahoma. Approximately 350 church leaders and laymen attended the event, in addition to more than 500 online viewers. Paper topics included the subjects of creation, church ministry, education, hymnody, marriage, missions, perseverance, and wisdom. In order of appearance, presenters ranged from church pastors to college professors to seminary students:

- **Jeff Blair:** Cultivating a Culture of Wisdom in the Local Church
- **Christopher Talbot:** Practicing Theology in Youth Ministry
- **Cory Thompson:** The Lord's Supper as Meaningful and Open
- **Thomas Marberry:** The Lucan Concept of Perseverance
- **Matthew Steven Bracey:** The Institutional Good of Marriage, the Family, and Society
- **Phillip Morgan:** Thomism to Augustinianism: Free Will Baptist Bible College and the Hybrid Christian Education Model
- **Derek Cominskie:** Was This What Watts Would Have Wanted? An Analysis of Isaac Watts's Rationale and Method for Reforming English Metrical Psalmody with Application for Contemporary Trends
- **Matthew McAfee:** Creation and the Role of Wisdom in Proverbs 8: What Can We Learn?
- **Ronald Callaway:** *Post*

Tenebras Lux

Numerous attendees remarked on the quality of research and diversity of topics represented in the presentations. One remarked, "This is the highest caliber of papers I've heard at a symposium in a really long time—perhaps ever." Those interested may purchase a digest, as well as previous issues of *Integrity*, by visiting www.fwbtheology.com/shop. Other inquiries may be sent to fwbtheology@gmail.com.

Next year's symposium is scheduled for October 28-29, 2019, on the Welch College campus in Gallatin, Tennessee. The theme is "The Doctrine of the Church." Email ideas or questions to fwbtheology@gmail.com. **ONE**

Randall University Seeks New President

Moore, OK—Dr. Timothy Eaton, who is in his 30th year at Randall University and 15th year as president, has requested the Board of Trustees to seek a new president/CEO to assume day-to-day operations of Randall University. To plan for an orderly succession, the Trustees have appointed a Presidential Search Committee. The Randall University Trustees have established a secure email to allow persons to provide nominations and for applicants to submit a letter of interest with accompanying resumé. It is required that each applicant's



Dr. Timothy Eaton

letter of interest and resumé be saved in PDF format and sent to: presidentsearch@ru.edu. All applications received will

be acknowledged and persons selected for interviews contacted by university counsel in order to maintain confidentiality.

President Eaton has agreed to serve until a suitable successor is chosen. Furthermore, following the hiring of a president, Dr. Eaton has agreed to serve as the Randall University chancellor with focus on estate planning, public relations, and teaching. As an alumnus, he has further expressed his goal to write the history of Randall University. Professionally, Dr. Eaton will continue to serve in higher education accreditation as President of the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools (TRACS). **ONE**

Foundation Grants Program Update

Antioch, TN—Free Will Baptist Foundation is pleased to announce the grants program will continue in 2019.

“In spite of recent fluctuations in the market, the program will be available again this year,” said Director David Brown. “As always, availability of grant funding is dependent on strong market returns.”

Brown encouraged Free Will Baptist organizations to begin



FREE WILL BAPTIST
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preparing their grant requests in order to meet the March 15 deadline. See pages 32-33 for

more information regarding the grants program and who is eligible to apply.

The Foundation will again award \$500,000 in 2019. Grants will be awarded during the Foundation board meeting in April. For information regarding grant applications, contact the Foundation office at 877-336-7575, email foundation@nafwb.org, or visit fwbgifts.org. **ONE**

The Death Threat

BY KEITH BURDEN

She was elderly and lived alone in low-rent, government-assisted housing. I stopped by to visit her on numerous occasions and tried to minister to her any way I could. She was very lonely. She was also an alcoholic.

During one particular visit I found her more sober than at other times. I shared with her from the Scriptures, and we prayed together. Her heart seemed to soften. I asked if I could do anything for her. She said, "Yes! Get rid of that liquor in my kitchen."

Sensing her sincerity and desperation, I obliged. One by one, I uncorked the bottles and poured the contents down the drain until all were empty. She promised to attend church the next Sunday. I left encouraged and hopeful. It was a big step in the right direction.

Minutes before our morning worship service that Lord's Day, I was approached by one of the deacons in our church. He had a concerned, almost fearful look on his face. He pulled me aside and informed me someone had called the church office moments before and left a message for me. "You tell that preacher I'm going



to kill him if he steps in the pulpit today."

I asked if he got the caller's name or number. He didn't; however, he did remember one important detail. It was a woman with a coarse, raspy voice. Immediately, I knew who it was. She had been drinking again. Apparently I had overlooked a bottle.

After taking appropriate precautions, our morning service proceeded without incident. Shortly thereafter, my suspicion was confirmed. She was the anonymous caller who made the death threat.

I wish this story had a happy ending, but it doesn't. Sadly, she continued this destructive path and eventually died as a direct result of alcohol consumption. As it turned out, she was the person facing the *real* death threat, not me.

However, that morning, as I stood before the congregation aware of a potential threat to my safety, I developed a new appre-

ciation for the privilege and opportunity to minister without fear of physical harm. I was reminded of the courageous individuals around the world who regularly face the threat of violence and persecution for preaching the gospel. God help us follow their courageous example.

Pray for the persecuted church.

"And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death" (Revelation 12:11). **ONE**



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