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ONE

magazine

The
UNFINISHED
TASK

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That Way Before!”**

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Reaching Our Community

.....

Essentials for Evangelism

.....

100 Friday Nights

.....

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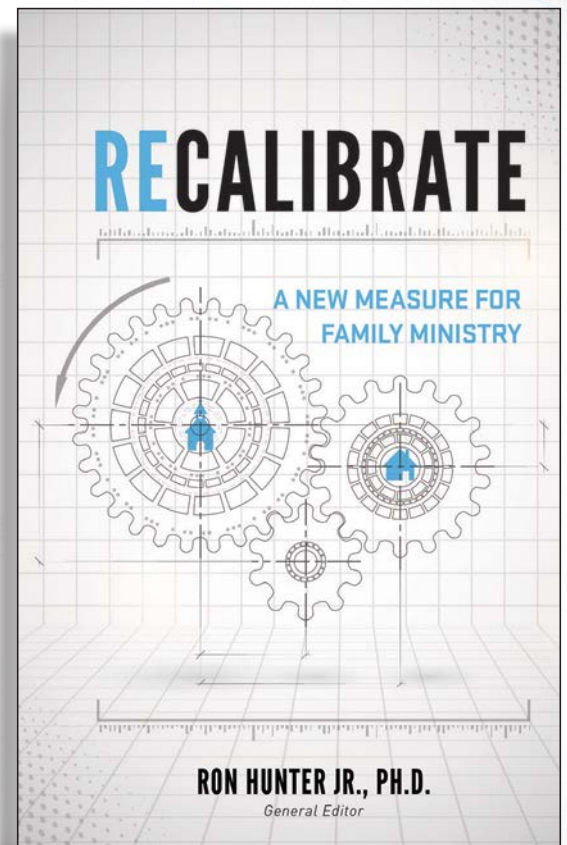
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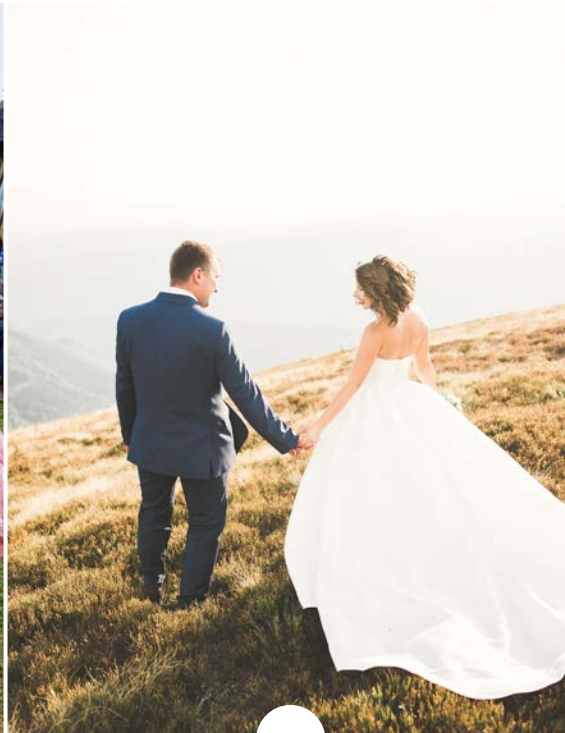
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Moved by Compassion

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

What do you remember about the important people in your life? Does one memory stand out more than any others? I remember my grandmother's prayers. They always started the same way: *Our gracious Heavenly Father, as we come to you, we come in Jesus' name. We come thanking you for the day...* Those simple words are burned into my memory. They were part of her, and they have become part of me.

One of the best things about Scripture is the "inside look" it gives us into the most intimate moments of our Savior's life, revealing the things by which we should "remember Him." For instance, Matthew 9:36-38 shares the Savior's reaction as He gazed over the crowds following Him, the people He had come to earth to save.

He was moved by their need (36).

When Jesus looked at the throng, He was *moved* by what He saw. This Greek word describes the strong emotion He experienced when He looked beyond the faces and saw searching, hungering souls. His compassion saw their hearts, and it broke His.

I'm sure it hurt Him to look into their faces, knowing many would reject Him, the answer to their deepest need.

I'm glad we serve a Savior who is moved by our need, a God who understands our pain and knows what is missing from our lives. We are no different from that throng: people who *fainted*, harassed by cares, doubts, guilt, and fear; people *scattered abroad*, lost, and searching blindly for light in a dark world; *sheep without a shepherd* longing for direction, purpose, and meaning. They were confused, trapped, and headed for destruction. When He looked out at the crowd stretching across the Judean hillside, I wonder if Jesus saw the flow of humanity throughout history—untold millions of people in the same lost condition. Without true life, without meaning, without hope. And, Jesus was moved by their need.

He was motivated by the urgency (37). Jesus described the multitude as a field of ripe fruit, ready for harvest. One thing every backyard farmer knows about ripe fruit: if left unharvested, it will wither and rot on the vine. The harvest time of men's lives is very short: the average 72 years is only a moment compared to eternity. And, if Jesus saw a great harvest then, what does He see today as the world's population nears 8 billion, and the vast majority of people will live without hearing the name of Jesus? Workers

continue to be in short supply, and men and women are still dying without Christ. The time is short. The number of lost souls is staggering. And Jesus knew it.

With the multitudes in mind, Christ turned to His disciples and, with one sentence, gave Christians a mandate for the ages: **pray for workers**. No matter who you are or where you live, no matter your age or physical condition, you can *always* pray for God's work around the world.

Remember my grandmother's prayers? In her final years, when her mind was confused and she became completely dependent on others for care, she never stopped praying. And, if she were still here today, I would choose her prayers for me over all the money in the world. Why? Because God answers prayer.

What do you think when you look at people around you today? Are you aware of their needs or simply irritated because they don't have it all together? Let's **pray together for eyes like Jesus**, eyes that see eternal souls made in the image of God. And, let's **pray for a heart like His**, willing to give all to make an eternal difference. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of **ONE Magazine**.
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Missing Macedonia

Due to a file output problem in the February-March issue, a portion of the text is missing from "Macedonia Is Still Calling" by Don Matchett (pages 12-13). Enjoy reading the full text of the article at onemag.org/macedonia.htm or at the *ONE Magazine* Facebook page: @onemagazinefbw.

Clarification

The *ONE Magazine* staff would like to offer the following clarification

regarding an ad published by Free Will Baptist Foundation on page 13 of the December-January issue. The ad stated that Free Will Baptist missionaries translated the "Word of God" into the Samburu language. This statement should be clarified. The grant funding supported the translation efforts of BTL and The Seed Company to translate *100 key Old Testament passages* into the Samburu language. We offer our sincere apologies for any confusion created by the ad.



Have something to say? Say it!

Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are appreciated.

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THE UNFINISHED TASK

BY CLINT MORGAN

“We may not be finished, but I’m done.”

Realities to Ponder

If someone told you 41.6% of the people in your town would die in the next 30 days, how would you react? Perhaps the question makes you shudder. Or maybe you’d just shrug it off, declaring with assurance and well-covered hesitation, “Oh, that’s not going to happen!”

So, let’s talk about something that really could happen—today. If you believe the Lord’s return is imminent, then He certainly could come at any moment. The latest statistics indicate 41.6% of people are still unreached with the gospel. If Christ returned today, their eternal destiny is suffering and separation from God.

Yet, the figure of 41.6% doesn’t touch the totality of the lost condition of the earth’s population. An estimated 1.2 billion professing Christians populate earth. Approximately 800 million are classified as evangelical. If every person who fits into the category of “professing Christian” is truly born again, 6.4 billion of the 7.6 billion men, women, and children filling planet Earth are without a saving knowledge of Christ. **That means a staggering 84% of Earth’s inhabitants are in need of the Savior.**

With these facts stirring our hearts, we must face a stark reality. The task is **unfinished!** This being true, we must consider how to move toward finishing the task.

Three Great Factors to Consider...And One More

The main premise serving as our impetus to action is understanding and believing God desires all people to come to know Him and accept His Son as their personal Savior. Building on this premise, we can address three aspects of His plan: 1) the Great Commandment; 2) the Great Commitment; and 3) the Great Commission. If we leave out any of these, we will not accomplish His desire for the nations.

The Great Commandment—Love

In Mark 12:28-31, the scribes addressed Christ with a question intended to trap Him. At first glimpse, it appears a rather benign question. Asked which commandment is the most important, Christ responded we are to love God wholeheartedly and love our neighbor as ourselves. He left His questioners with no way to refute Him.

I believe if professing believers grasped the full magnitude of this statement and lived it out, a major step in accomplishing the task He has assigned us would be taken. As we consider the unfinished task of reaching the nations with the Good News, our understanding and life application of the Great Commandment absolutely comes into play.

The Great Commitment—Function as One

The second element playing a major role in our pursuit of finishing the task is what is sometimes referred to as the Great Commitment. Located in John 17:11-25, this passage is sometimes labeled “the priestly prayer.” In His prayer, Christ poured out His heart to His Father. He expressed His desire for His disciples to understand that the credibility of Christianity often rests on functioning as one unit, one body.

We absolutely must be unified in accordance with Jesus’ prayer in John 17:21: “That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: **that the world may believe that thou hast sent me.**” If we are to finish the task of reaching the nations with the gospel, we must glorify God through our message, methods, and manner of living, leaving no doubt we represent a holy God.

The Great Commission—The Task

First, we must understand the impetus for the task springs from the compassionate heart of God. Those embracing this task must be disciples of Christ. He sends out His disciples to make more disciples.

Second, being a true disciple implies dedicated service to Him. This includes fulfilling the Great Commission. However, in 2018, research revealed only 64% of evangelical Christians believe they have a personal responsibility to share their faith.

Third, we must understand the time frame in which this task is to be pursued. Christ made it exceedingly clear we are to be about making disciples “to the very end of the age” (Matthew 28:20). We do not know when that will be, but we can be about the task until He calls us home.

The Great Omission

In 2018, the IM staff took a mission trip to Panama. One of our tasks was painting a dorm on the Bible institute campus in the town of Chame. The temperature neared

100°, and high humidity rode its coattails. A team member who doesn’t tolerate heat well perspired profusely all day. About 5:00 p.m., he made a profound announcement: “We may not be finished, but I’m done.” And he was. The rest of us did not want to admit we were in the same place, but it didn’t take long for us to wrap up our work for the day.

I wonder if his statement doesn’t express the attitude many believers have about the unfinished task of the Great Commission: “It may not be finished, but I’m done.” We have allowed the Great Commission to become the Great Omission.

We must not allow ourselves to get stuck in this mode. We must ask His Spirit to examine our hearts and move us to finish the task.

The WMO Theme—Unfinished

This year, IM has chosen the theme *Unfinished* for the annual World Missions Offering (WMO). On Sunday, April 26, 2020, we ask every Free Will Baptist church member to give a designated offering to the WMO.

A gift to the WMO provides funding for our partnership ministries with national churches and other ministries, deficit or underfunded missionary accounts, and the general fund. This is an amazing means of supporting strategic aspects of IM’s ministries and programs. We pray our churches will make this year’s WMO a record breaker. Together, we can soar into 2020 and the years ahead with a renewed passion to reach the 6.4 billion still without Christ.

Your prayers, special offerings, and other efforts will ensure that we as Free Will Baptists do our part to *finish* the task. **ONE**


About the Writer: Clint Morgan has been director of IM, Inc. since 2011. Learn more: IMInc.org.



Unfinished

BY KENNETH EAGLETON, M.D.





When it comes to getting things done, I am a list person. I know that is not for everyone, but when I have multiple tasks to accomplish, I sit down and make a list. At the end of the day or week, it helps me to review the list as a reminder of what I accomplished and of the things still left **unfinished** and needing my attention. We can use this analogy for the missions endeavor.

To achieve the goal of having a spiritually mature, self-sustaining association of churches capable of reproducing themselves on any given field, a large “list” of tasks needs to be accomplished. This list is not completed in a short span of time. It takes decades and the cooperation of many to see this achieved. It is thrilling to say I have been privileged to see this become a reality on many IM fields.

As we look at the “list” of tasks accomplished over the years, we can stop and praise the Lord for the many things He has done and celebrate the accomplishments of God’s people. Over the decades, Free Will Baptists from the United States have sent out missionaries who dedicated themselves to evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. As Christians in these new churches matured, leaders were trained for various leadership roles, including pastor. Churches were turned over to local leadership, and associations of churches were organized. After several decades, on certain fields, the difficult decision was made for North American missionaries to withdraw strategically and leave the work to local leadership. IM has done this in Brazil, Panama, Cuba, Ivory Coast, South Korea, and India.

It would be easy to jump to the conclusion that the task is *finished*, and our “list” is complete in those countries. However, much is still **unfinished**, and this necessitates partnership to carry on the good work begun. Let’s look at some of those **unfinished** tasks and see why our partnerships with these associations of Free Will Baptist churches is so important.

THE UNREACHED. Though scores and even hundreds of Free Will Baptist churches faithfully preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in these countries, the need of the lost is still overwhelming. Millions of people have not heard the name of Christ. In the case of India, more than a billion people still do not know Jesus. Thousands of people groups (ethnic groups) are still without a gospel witness.

To make a dent in this need, we must continue to partner with Free Will Baptists in these countries to facilitate reaching a greater number of people, cities, and states.

Besides the pastors and church-planters supported by our overseas churches, in strategically important situations, IM comes alongside co-laborers and contributes so other church planters can be sent. In Brazil, we sponsor a couple starting a Free Will Baptist church in another state, in a poor community where no church of any type exists. We participate in associational initiatives. Currently, Panama has a program to start three new churches, Cuba plans to establish 50 churches over a five-year period, and Côte d’Ivoire set a goal of starting 100 new churches! In India, we partner with a network of Indian churches sending church-planters to unreached people groups.

During one of my recent trips, I met one of the church-planters we help sponsor. We will call him Sugra. Despite his small stature and frail-looking body, he works as a bike rickshaw driver. As he pedals, he finds a way to witness to his passengers. His boldness, even in the face of open opposition, has paid off. Several people have become Christ-followers. Sugra is now the leader of several house-churches.

Sending short-term teams, such as E-TEAM, to serve alongside local believers in evangelistic opportunities, is also an effective way of cooperating with brothers and sisters in other countries. E-TEAMS, composed of high school students, deploy around the globe each summer. About four years ago, a team traveled to Araras, Brazil. They were invited to visit a language school that teaches English, providing an excellent opportunity for the local students to practice with native English speakers. An invitation was extended for the students to attend church to see a presentation the American teens would give. Several attended. As a result, a teacher and a student became Christ-followers and are still in church today.

MUTUALITY. Christians have a biblical mandate to live in fellowship, community, and mutuality (see the “one another” commandments). Interdependence is the biblical principle we are to follow, not independence. We are to work *together* in the Body of Christ, each using his or her gifts and resources for Kingdom work, not local fiefdoms or personal kingdoms.

We do not intend to totally break away from the works in which we have invested for many decades. We want to stay connected, encouraging them to be part of the global Free Will Baptist family, and sharing mutual encouragement, growth, and work.

Last year, I spoke at a retreat for Christian medical personnel in Cuba. As I shared biblical principles that apply to their profession and from my own experiences as a physician, they were encouraged. These medical professionals left better equipped to live and witness as Christians in their workplace.

MISSIONS. The Great Commission is not meant only for North American Christians. It is for *all* Christians, including those who live in places traditionally called the mission field. Our churches on many of these fields understand they have a responsibility in world evangelism. God has called many of them to join in sharing the gospel globally.

Free Will Baptists in Brazil have sent missionaries to Ireland, Côte d’Ivoire, Bolivia, Uruguay, China, Turkey, and other countries. Panama is starting a church in Venezuela. Cuba currently has missionaries in Uruguay and Côte d’Ivoire. India has planted churches in Nepal. Côte d’Ivoire is extending the Kingdom in Ghana and Burkina Faso. South Korea has started Free Will Baptist churches in Pakistan.

Sending cross-cultural missionaries is a new endeavor for many of these countries. They turn to us for advice, consultation, and financial help. Our mission department has 85 years of cross-cultural experience. We can share that experience and walk with them as they take their first steps. Many stateside constituents are also eager to be part of this exciting reproduction of mission efforts.

One of our newest missionaries from another field is Jonas Kambou and his family. Until recently, Jonas was

a student at the FWB Bible institute in Côte d’Ivoire, preparing for the ministry. He has a real burden for the neighboring country of Ghana. When it came time for his pastoral internship, he asked to do it in Ghana. This had never been done. Jonas was assigned to work under a Ghanaian pastor attempting to plant a church on the eastern side of the country.

Soon after Jonas arrived with his family in November 2018, the Ghanaian pastor gave up and left. Jonas was left by himself. Instead of returning to Ivory Coast, he stayed and dedicated himself to the hard work of starting a church from scratch among people who spoke a different language and had different customs. He told me the first months were very hard. His family had to learn the language and start developing relationships. After nine months in-country, ten people are believers and a small congregation meets weekly.

TRAINING. Free Will Baptists have organized leadership training programs in all the countries previously mentioned. Most of these, begun by missionaries, are now administered by local leaders, under the auspices of the various associations of Free Will Baptist churches. Nearly all of them still need financial help from IM to continue to train pastors, lay preachers, youth leaders, Sunday School teachers, small group leaders, etc. Besides the financial help, we also send teachers to train in specific areas.

Our partnership also has helped many Free Will Baptist leaders benefit from the Leadership Matters Course (LMC), provided by our partner organization, International Training Alliance (ITA), of which we are a member. Each year we sponsor or contribute to many camps, retreats, and workshops on different fields.

We recently mediated a partnership between our Bible institute in Panama and Welch College to upgrade the training of the Panamanian teachers so they will be better prepared for training their leaders. In Ivory Coast, we worked alongside the local national association to expand the availability of training programs for the various educational levels of the candidates. The new Bible College training has mobilized approximately 60 new students.

Efrain was trained as an economist, but God called him to preach. Fortunately, our churches in Panama have a

seminary for training leaders for the ministry. Efrain attended the seminary and upon completion of his studies, accepted the pastorate of the Free Will Baptist church in Las Tablas. But the Parita church was also without a pastor, so he assumed the leadership of both churches. Being a gifted teacher, he has been recruited by the seminary as a part-time teacher as well. His training at the seminary and at LMC equipped him to become a leader in our denomination in Panama.

Leadership training is essential to guarantee sustainability of the works and ensure the doctrinal fidelity of future generations.

OUTREACH PROJECTS. Alongside the preaching of the gospel, we partner with national churches to meet the needs of people in their communities. Many projects are aimed at helping the needy and vulnerable to better take control of their lives and become productive in society. Examples of these projects include adult literacy classes, health and hygiene awareness, income-generating projects, helping children get the necessary documentation to attend school, subsidizing healthcare clinics, nursing homes, schools, and more.

A recent project provided sewing machines to believers in India. They set up a sewing class to teach women how to make clothes, not only for their families, but as a source of income.

In many cases, outreach projects give Christians a legitimate platform to build relationships that earn local believers the right to speak spiritual truth into the lives of people. This is especially important in areas where the dominant religion persecutes Christians or makes it hard for them to share their faith.

PROPERTIES. As a general policy, each local church must purchase property for its congregation or buy land and build a church building. However, some churches are located in poor communities that cannot afford the total cost for their own place of worship. In these cases, we provide financial help. For instance, in Côte d'Ivoire, along with the Ivorian national association, we may pay to put a roof on a new church building if the congregation builds the walls. The association determines which churches need assistance.



In many metropolitan areas, property values have skyrocketed, making it almost impossible for congregations to purchase land. However, these cities house the greatest concentration of lost people. Many times, we find it strategic to help a local church buy property, so we can have a strong witness in highly populated communities.

In Cuba, churches are not allowed to buy land and construct a building. However, they are permitted to buy houses and use them as places of worship. We help them take advantage of this opportunity. More than 20 house churches do not yet have a permanent place of worship.

We currently have nearly 800 churches and approximately 33,500 believers in the six countries mentioned in this article. The more we expand, the more we can praise the Lord for the items we have finished on our "list." However, like my personal lists, the list seems to keep expanding, with *unfinished tasks* as new opportunities and challenges arise. The opportunities to get involved and make a difference in the world in which we live have never been so varied and accessible to stateside Free Will Baptists who can partner with their counterparts in other parts of the globe. The World Missions Offering (WMO) is one of the best opportunities to impact many different people and ministries around the world in a one-stop fashion. **ONE**

About the Writer: As director of field partnerships for IM, Kenneth Eagleton works directly with leaders in partner countries. He and his wife Rejane have served with IM as missionaries since 1984, first in Côte d'Ivoire and currently in Brazil. Learn more: www.IMInc.org.

“We’ve Never Done It That Way Before!”

BY JOEL FRANKS



How many times have you heard someone utter that phrase? Sometimes, I’ve wondered if it is not our denominational motto. Truthfully, whether you consider yourself a traditionalist, a progressive, or anything else, you must battle that thought. When it comes to outreach, we must all overcome the idea that something we have never done is something we must never do.

For our church plant in Athens, Alabama, it is essential to make outreach a priority. When you start with six people, you *must* reach out, or you never have a church! As a result, we have done many things to promote the name “Cultivate Church” to the people of Athens. We have had some original ideas, borrowed some ideas, and ditched some ideas, but we are constantly looking for ways to build relationships in the community. Most of these are things we have never done.

Most everything we do to reach out involves the church giving to the community. This is different from what most unchurched people expect. Because of church scandals and televangelists, many people expect the church to take rather than give. So, when the church offers a free oil change to single moms, widows, and the wives of deployed military members, the community takes note. When the church delivers a free lunch to everyone at a business, the employees pay attention. When the church hosts a community carnival to give children a great time (and some candy), they begin to see we care about the people around us.

This really is the key. We must care about and for the

people in our communities. Jesus commanded us to love our neighbors as ourselves. All of us agree with this commanding principle, yet somehow, we often limit its practice. We share meals with our neighbors in the pews. But this does nothing to show love to the neighbor who doesn’t attend church. Too many Free Will Baptists think outreach is a fellowship with church friends that we invite non-attenders to join. But in our experience, true outreach provides nothing to us save tired bodies and the satisfaction of knowing we obeyed God by loving our neighbors.

We also have learned we cannot be afraid to try something just because we haven’t done it before. Our resources are limited, as they are in most of our churches. But we cannot be afraid to use them to do what God has called us to do—go and make disciples.

TRUE OUTREACH PROVIDES NOTHING TO US SAVE TIRED BODIES AND THE SATISFACTION OF KNOWING WE OBEYED GOD BY LOVING OUR NEIGHBORS.

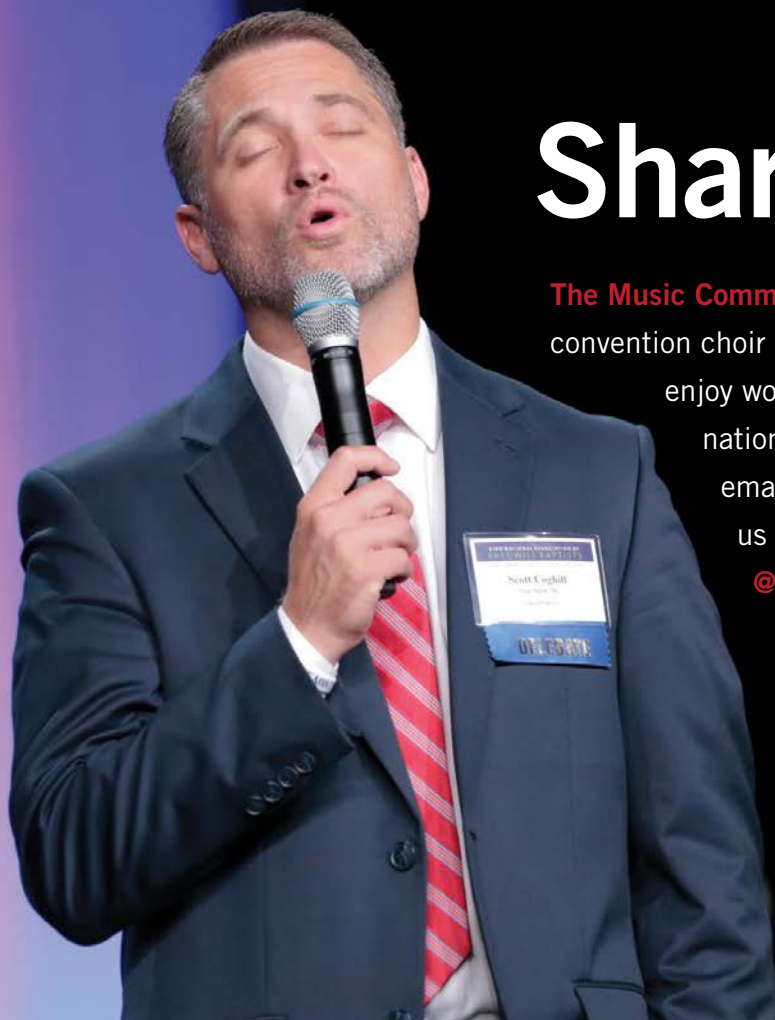
Sometimes, we fail to make the connections we desire. Some outreach ideas were unsuccessful. To be honest, they stunk! But that has not discouraged us from obeying the Lord who commanded us to make disciples. We cannot make disciples without building relationships. When something doesn't work, we mark it off the list and don't do it anymore. But we don't give up, and we don't allow our failures to prevent us from taking a risk to try to make a difference in the future.

This becomes the culture of the church. Granted, it is easier to create that culture in a brand-new church. But as we push our churches to make disciples, and as they see people coming to Jesus, the excitement becomes contagious, and the culture of the church changes. Then, the body begins to initiate discipleship opportunities. The church begins to think creatively about how to reach their neighbors.

We have seen this first-hand recently. We have struggled to reach out to teens in creative ways, but we reached

a family with two teens still at home through a providential encounter at the gas station. After a few months of hearing us teach about making disciples, one of the girls, 15-year-old Kenzie, came to us with her own idea for an event for teen girls. A student-led Friday night Q&A is something we would not have attempted. But our ladies look forward to ministering to those young people in a few weeks, and because Kenzie is reaching out, several have promised to come already. We've never done it that way before! But what a great blessing when something different results in the church doing what it is called to do. **ONE**

About the Writer: Joel Franks is planting Cultivate FWB Church in Athens, Alabama, as a joint project with North American Ministries and the Alabama State Mission Board. Learn more: www.fwbnam.com.



Share your voice!

The Music Commission invites anyone age 15+ to participate in the convention choir and orchestra in Oklahoma City this July. You will enjoy worshiping with Free Will Baptists from across the nation! If you'd like to be involved, or have questions, email us: music@nafwb.org. You can also connect with us on Facebook to hear previews of this year's music: [@fwbmusiccommission](https://www.facebook.com/fwbmusiccommission).

We look forward to **worshiping together this summer.**

Find more convention information:

www.nafwb.org/convention

Creating Margin for PERSONAL MINISTRY

BY JOSHUA EIDSON

Is evangelism, outreach, and discipleship a priority for you? For your ministry? And, more importantly, as a believer? I'm confident for most churches and Christian organizations, evangelism occupies a prominent aspect of the ministry plan. As Christ followers, it is an important individual principle as well. But what do our finances and budgeting say about the importance of these activities?

Perhaps you've heard the familiar saying, "Show me your checkbook (modern translation: banking app), and I'll show you your priorities." I'm not trying to be "that guy." But it is true, for both organizations and individuals, we don't [typically] accomplish what we haven't planned.

Most churches have budget lines for outreach, evangelism, and discipleship activities. While those same specific budget lines don't normally appear in a personal budget, we certainly could make room for outreach activities. I'm not suggesting we need a formalized spending plan for personal evangelism, but we can all work towards building margin in our budgets allowing for outreach opportunities.

LET'S MAKE
OUR BUDGETS
A TOOL FOR
OUTREACH,
RATHER THAN
A BARRIER.

Often, personal evangelism doesn't require money, but sometimes it can help. With margin in our budget, we can take someone we're discipling for coffee or a meal and spend some intentional time investing in the relationship. Or, we can say *yes* without hesitation to supporting a missions cause or taking a missions trip ourselves.

Many people feel restricted by a budget rather than enabled. But enabling is exactly what our budgets become when we reframe our perspective. Budgets help us stay focused on what's important to us and help us align our spending with our life's priorities. Outreach is not only a high priority; for the Christian, fulfilling God's mandate is the *highest* priority.

Viewing our budget in this light, why wouldn't we want to plan carefully for evangelistic or discipleship opportunities? It is important to ensure a pool of discretionary funds is available when these opportunities arise. Let's





make our budgets a tool for outreach, rather than a barrier.

As we go about our lives, engaging with our neighbors and culture-at-large, we have numerous opportunities to become lights in a dark world. It starts with simple things—a smile, a kind word to a store clerk, or assisting with a home project for your neighbor. These small things take little time. But small things, shared from a full heart of joy, eventually add up. Over time, people recognize a difference in us from what they see in the culture around us.

No, it doesn't take money to evangelize or disciple others. But available funds can enhance opportunities to minister. How we choose to spend our money,

and how we engage with those around us reveals our priorities. Let's be measured by what matters and start measuring money matters in light of eternity.

When seeking to live a life marked by evangelism and discipleship, it is crucial to remember three simple principles for staying focused on what is really important:

1. You don't accomplish what you don't plan.
2. Budgeting can be a tool for outreach.
3. Measure what matters. ONE

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.



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Hosea

and God's Redeeming Love

BY EMILY FAISON



(Hosea 11:3-4; 8-9)

The book of Hosea is one I read often. I'm drawn to the vivid metaphors describing God and His people, along with the perfect parallel between God's unfaithful people and Hosea's unfaithful wife. Although the story of Hosea and his wife is fascinating, the glimpses of God's character are what make Hosea a truly compelling book. In case you haven't visited Hosea in awhile, here's a quick refresher:

Hosea, instructed by God, marries Gomer, a prostitute, in a real-life metaphor of God's covenantal relationship with His unfaithful people (1:2-3; 3:1). Two of Hosea and Gomer's children are named *No Mercy* (Loruhamah) and *Not My People* (Loammi) (1:6-8). Ouch! God's message is pretty strong. Yet, even early in Hosea, the beginning of chapter 2 gives us a peek into the future: *Say to your brothers, 'You are my people,' and to your sisters, 'You have received mercy.'* God uses name changes throughout His Word to indicate a change in character or an encounter with God. This particular name change foreshadows the rest of the book, leaving us with a powerful vision of God's condemnation coupled with a promise of His compassion.

A Familiar Story

In the book of Hosea, we return to the familiar Old Testament tale of God's people getting caught up in the drama of neighboring nations (7:8, 11) and ultimately turning to foreign gods. The early chapters of Hosea are devoted to the ways God's people have "acted shamefully" (2:5) by offering sacrifices to other gods, drinking wine with abandon, and indulging in prostitution and adultery. We've read this sad story before, throughout the Old Testament. Time and time again, people turn from the blessings of God to their idols: "For she did not know that I gave her corn, and wine, and oil, and multiplied her silver and gold, which they prepared for Baal" (Hosea 2:8).

Despite the blessings from the true God, the Israelites in Hosea blatantly served false gods. Hosea didn't even attempt to soften the harsh reality of the Israelites' actions: "My people ask counsel at their stocks, and their staff declareth unto them: for the spirit of whoredoms hath caused them to err, and they have gone a whoring from under their God" (Hosea 4:12).

In other words, instead of turning to God, the Israelites sought counsel from wooden idols, which Hosea not only compared to adultery, but to "whoring." *Whoa*. It can be easy to read this passage and think highly of ourselves. Come on...when was the last time you compared yourself to a prostitute?

Bringing Hosea Home

Sadly, this unfaithfulness strikes closer to home than we like to admit. Sure, we don't keep wooden idols in our kitchen cabinets or engage in the drunken partying the Israelites did. We wouldn't suddenly start practicing another religion. And, surely, we aren't the equivalent of Hosea's unfaithful wife. But think for a moment about the ordinary aspects of daily life that gradually take over, coloring every thought and action. For me, I find it easy to be consumed by my work. It can slowly, insidiously become my top priority. It's easy for my job and the promise of my future career to become the basis for all my decisions, the "wooden idol" from whom I seek counsel, and the central "relationship" I nurture.

Other idols quietly creep into our lives, seeking control. Consider insidious addictions to technologies like cell phones, social media, and constant entertainment. Or what about the growing fascination with sports culture? Although these activities and others like them aren't inherently bad, addiction is a relationship that gets in the way of our relationship with God.

These "other relationships" keep us from spending time with God. They aren't always visible on the outside. We try (not always successfully!) to keep bursts of jealousy and pride, insecurities and doubts, hidden from sight. Sometimes, we are discontented and dissatisfied, longing for things we feel God is keeping from us. It's enough to make us want to give God the cold shoulder, stop an-

swering His calls, sneak around, and lie. Do these classic signs of a broken relationship sound familiar? Perhaps you hear the echo of the haunting words of Hosea 6:4: “What shall I do with you, O Ephraim? What shall I do with you, O Judah? Your love is like a morning cloud, like the dew that goes early away” (Hosea 6:4).

Changing Metaphor

By the time we come to Hosea 11 and the climax of the book, we have witnessed a long list of “charges” brought against Israel, accompanied by a long list of dire punishments. In chapters 8-10, God seems set on destroying His people. In chapter 9, God promises hunger and death to the children of Israel, telling them to “rejoice not” (9:1) because they, “shall bear no fruit: yea, though they bring forth, yet will I slay even the beloved fruit of their womb. My God will cast them away, because they did not hearken unto him: and they shall be wanderers among the nations” (9:16-17).

Yet suddenly, in chapter 11, God seems to relent. One translation says, “My heart churns within me; My sympathy is stirred.” Another says, “My heart recoils within me,” and the *Message* paraphrases, “I can’t bear to even think such thoughts. My insides churn in protest.” Our steadfast, solid, sturdy, unchanging God...having second thoughts? How can this be?

As our reading shifts to God’s perspective, we are given an “inside look” at God’s tender, parental nature, and it suddenly feels like we’re sitting in the Father’s lap, His arms around us. “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt. As they called them, so they went from them: they sacrificed unto Baalim, and burned incense to graven images. I taught Ephraim also to go, taking them by their arms; but they knew not that I healed them. I drew them with cords of a man, with bands of love: and I was to them as they that take off the yoke on their jaws, and I laid meat unto them” (Hosea 11:1-4).

Reread that last verse. *I led them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love. To them, I was like one who lifts a little child to the cheek, and I bent down to feed them.*

This is a God who, like a loving parent, scoops us up to kiss our forehead. Keep in mind the vivid descriptions Hosea painted of the Israelites’ sinful activities, followed

by lists of appropriate punishments. So why the change in attitude?

Within this shift from Hosea’s description of God’s anger to God’s compassion, we catch sight of the dizzyingly mysterious nature of God: a tension between love and justice. We know God is love, but we also understand He is holy.

- He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love (1 John 4:8).
- For I am the Lord that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy (Leviticus 11:45).
- And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory (Isaiah 6:3).

By definition, God is love. He is also the very definition of holiness. We don’t get to invent our own definitions of love and holiness and apply those labels to God. Because God is holy, whatever He does is holy. Because God is love, whatever He does is love.

So, what happens when love and holiness seem at odds?

Does one weigh heavier than the other? What happens when God’s holiness clashes with the unholiness of His beloved? We find the answer nestled in Hosea chapter 11: “I will not execute the fierceness of mine anger...I am God, and not man; the Holy One in the midst of thee. They shall walk after the Lord: he shall roar like a lion: when he shall roar, then the children shall tremble from the west (Hosea 11:9-10).

Hallelujah! God is not like us. The tension still exists: God’s fierce, holy anger still burns, and he roars like a lion. But also *because* He is the Holy One in our midst, He chooses not to execute His anger. God’s love and holiness complement one another in a decision that doesn’t make any sense to human reasoning. The closest earthly thing Hosea can compare to God is a roaring lion. His holiness is too big for us to understand, and we trem-

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ble. Yet, He also wants us to know Him: “For I desired mercy, and not sacrifice; and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6).

The Hero of the Story

From the depth of Israel’s sin to the emotional pangs of the Father—anxious, angry, and compassionate for His children—we’ve placed ourselves in this story. We’ve reflected on the deepest, darkest places of our own hearts, darkness that doesn’t always match the goodness for which we strive. But let’s pause for a minute to remember: *the story isn’t about us.*

It’s not about me. It’s not about you. Dark as my sin may be, that’s not the point of Hosea’s story. If our sin takes center stage, God is relegated to a secondary character, only in the story to make the “leading lady” look good. The rescue becomes little more than a get-out-of-jail-free card each time I turn away. But we aren’t the center of our own story. God is. God’s unrelenting love, unwavering passion, and ultimate holiness. His true character is the star.

God uses our sins to highlight Himself at the center, so we see Him more clearly and know Him even more. God wants His people to know Him. He promises He will rescue us, have mercy on us, chase after us, bend down and scoop us into His arms because He wants us to know Him. “And I will betroth thee unto me for ever; yea, I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness, and in judgment, and in lovingkindness, and in mercies. I will even betroth thee unto me in faithfulness: and thou shalt know the Lord” (Hosea 2:19-20).

Within the incredible story of Hosea and his wayward wife, we are reminded God promises us grace because He loves us. His unrelenting love chases after us each time we stray because He wants to draw us close so we can know Him—the Holy One in our midst who acts with redeeming love. **ONE**

About the Writer: A Florida native, Emily Faison currently lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma, where she is an editor at Brief Media. She is also the associate editor for *IMages*, published by IM, Inc.



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What Do the Unchurched Want?

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

Ultimately the question of what unchurched people want in a church is very unimportant compared to what the Bible says people *need* in a church. But over 25 years ago, some church growth experts began telling pastors the main impediment to growth was their lack of consumer orientation or cultural relevance or, for lack of a better word, “coolness.” This advice was associated with what was known as the seeker-sensitive or attractional movement.

Many pastors began an “extreme makeover” of their churches to rid them of any vestige of Christian tradition. While a small minority of these churches experienced growth, most did not. And recent data reveals most of the growth occurring in churches of all sizes is transfer growth, not conversion of the unchurched through evangelism.

From Attractional to Missional

This phenomenon led many ministry practitioners to question the received wisdom of the church growth movement and refocus the emphasis on church health. Some have labeled this as a shift from an attractional church model (How can we best attract customers?) to a missional model (How can we best embody the mission of God?). It has also coincided with the preferences of the Millennial generation and Generation Z for the authenticity of a community boutique shop or locally owned restaurant over Walmart and Red Robin.

This growing dissatisfaction with the answers of the church growth movement, which many pastors of typical churches have tried to no avail, surfaced in several things I encountered recently. This included a book by Jared C. Wilson, *The Gospel-Driven Church: Uniting Church-Growth Dreams With the Metrics of Grace*. Wilson started his ministry in the seeker-sensitive megachurch world but quickly burned out. Since then, he has written several books presenting a gospel-driven approach (characteristic of Mark Dever’s 9Marks and other increasingly popular church health ministries) to other church leaders who have grown weary of the seeker-sensitive or market-driven approach to church life.

My reading coincided with seminars presented at the recent Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference by Gordon Penfold, an expert in turnarounds and revitalizations of

what he describes as “the typical neighborhood church.” It is interesting that Dr. Penfold, while (rightly) stressing the need to avoid “business as usual” in dysfunctional churches that have lost their desire to evangelize and grow, did not outline the same, worn-out “seven steps to achieve quick growth in your church by stylistic tinkering” we have grown accustomed to hearing.

He focused more on church leaders understanding themselves and the dysfunctional systems causing churches to stagnate and decline. He suggested the need for a more holistic, church health model rather than the corporate and consumer-driven models often heralded as the “silver-bullet” solution for the plateaued church: “If you just make your church more appealing to your customer base and their consumer tastes, more people will come and the church will explode.”

In his own way, Dr. Penfold was echoing what we’ve been hearing more and more from church health advocates such as Mark Dever, Harry Reeder, Mike McKinley, Jared Wilson, Colin Marshall, Tony Payne, and Brian Croft, who are experiencing growth in various demographic settings while utilizing the ordinary means of grace found in the Bible.

Studies Show...

Reading and hearing these things caused me to think back over some of the studies over the last two decades regarding the unchurched and what they look for in a church. It has always puzzled me that *actual* studies of the unchurched almost always reveal the style of a church or the way a church appeals to its “consumers” is *not* what is important to them.

Despite these studies, over and over again, I hear pastors in our denomination express discouragement because

their churches are not relevant, cool, or entertaining enough, and worrying that these characteristics are needed to bring about growth. In contrast, studies consistently revealed that, while these characteristics are important for transfer members from other evangelical churches, they are *not* generally important to the unchurched.

Unfortunately, people were in such panic because of our rapidly changing, secularizing culture, they were willing to take whatever trendy method they could find and “throw it against the wall” to see if it might stick. Yet they never really knew (and still don’t know) the long-term consequences of using these tactics that had never been tried in the 2,000-year history of the Church.

In view of this ongoing problem, I was prompted to reflect on several related studies from the last couple of decades:

Barna

In the late 1990s, the Barna Group studied what was most important to unchurched people when visiting a church. Of the 22 most important things that attracted people to a church, the study found the top five were:

1. Theological beliefs or doctrine of the church
2. How much the people seem to care about each other
3. Quality of the sermons preached
4. Friendliness of the people in the church to visitors
5. How much the church is involved in helping poor and disadvantaged people.

Pastors need to compare themselves to the New Testament, not to contemporary trends more concerned about consumer marketing than solid biblical teaching, zealous evangelism, and rich community and *koinonia* we see in Scripture.

Things related to worship, style, and music ranked only 12, 13, and 15. (Source: “Americans Describe Their Ideal Church,” Barna Research Online, October 1998.)

Rainer, *Surprising Insights From the Unchurched*

Thom Rainer and Lifeway have studied this question repeatedly, always with the same results: substantive things are what attract people to church rather than cultural trends and consumer preferences. This is summed up in Rainer’s book *Surprising Insights From the Unchurched*, which revealed the top ten reasons the previously unchurched joined:

1. The pastor and his preaching (90%)
2. The church’s doctrines (88%)
3. Friendliness of the members (49%)
4. Other Issues (42%)
5. Someone from the church witnessed to the individual (41%)
6. A family member attended the church (38%)
7. Sensed God’s presence/atmosphere of the church (37%)
8. Relationship with someone in the church who wasn’t family (25%)
9. Sunday School class (25%)
10. Children’s or youth ministry (25%)

Worship style, music, and other stylistic or consumer-oriented factors were named by only 11% of the respondents as having anything to do with why they joined a church. Also interesting, Rainer describes the “myth” that the unchurched are turned off by denominational church names. Only 4% indicated a denominational name had a negative influence on their search for a church home. (Thom Rainer, *Surprising Insights from the Unchurched*, 21, 38).

Rainer, Ham, and Kinnaman on Why Young People Are Leaving the Church

The same basic insights hold true for the question of why young people leave the church, as seen in Thom Rainer’s *Essential Church*, Ken Ham’s *Already Gone*, and David Kinnaman’s *You Lost Me*. Young people are leaving all

sorts of churches at the same rates—large and small, urban and rural, contemporary and traditional, charismatic and liturgical. The studies listed above show the reason young people are leaving the church has nothing to do with stylistic factors and everything to do with the lack of solid teaching, the lack of intergenerational relationships and mentoring across the generations, the lack of love and community, and perceived hypocrisy in the church. Church style is far down the list and usually not listed as a factor. These studies are undergirded by more serious sociological studies by scholars such as Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton, whose results undergird Barna Group CEO David Kinnaman’s conclusion that “After countless interviews and conversations, I am convinced that historic and traditional practices, and orthodox and wisdom-laden ways of believing, are what the next generation really needs.”

Millennial Preferences in Church Architecture

A few years ago the Barna Group conducted a study for one of the largest church architectural firms in the country regarding the style of church architecture Millennials preferred. Two-thirds of Millennials preferred traditional structures over modern ones. This is not to argue, of course, for a “sanctified” architecture; it simply illustrates that assumptions about what “young people” prefer have been overturned by Millennials and the even more secularized Generation Z. This confirms earlier studies by the Cornerstone Knowledge Network and *Christianity Today* and Lifeway Research revealing that new church buildings most evangelical pastors desired were the exact opposite of the more traditional structures with which two-thirds of the unchurched were most comfortable.

Fuller Youth Institute, *Growing Young*

These responses continue to be borne out by research. For example, Fuller Youth Institute’s latest study, *Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church*, lists the top ten qualities churches don’t need to “grow young”:

1. A certain size
2. A trendy location or region

3. An exact age (old or newly planted)
4. A popular denomination or lack of denomination
5. A high “cool” quotient (Relational warmth is the new cool.)
6. A big, modern building
7. A big budget
8. A contemporary worship service
9. A watered-down teaching style
10. A hyper-entertaining ministry program

Conclusion

We have many dysfunctional churches. Many have lost interest in evangelism and are more about internal dynamics than reaching out with the gospel. They need the sort of revitalization being promoted by Eddie Moody, Danny Dwyer, and David Crowe in the Refresh church revitalization program through the National Association Executive Office and North American Ministries. This program is built on rich, biblical church revitalization strategies.

I also talk with many Free Will Baptist pastors seeing steady, if modest, evangelistic fruit and gospel growth in their churches. Yet, so many of these decent, faithful men are utterly discouraged because they compare themselves to celebrity pastors and consumer church growth methods that don’t and can’t work for most churches and most pastors. These pastors need to compare themselves to the New Testament, not to contemporary trends more concerned about consumer marketing than solid biblical teaching, zealous evangelism, and rich community and *koinonia* we see in Scripture. According to the studies examined within this article, *these* are the things the unchurched really want when they get serious about finding a church. **ONE**

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



Reaching Our COMMUNITY

BY TRAVIS MCKENZIE

Have you ever thought about what it means to reach the community? At one time, I thought if people wanted to know about Christ, all they needed to do was watch someone live a Christian life. Over time, I have learned while it is true a well-lived Christian life is a great way to pique someone's curiosity about salvation, there is more to reaching a person's heart than *lifestyle evangelism*.

I learned the importance of sharing the gospel in everyday situations through gospel tracts and evangelistic conversations. But, again, while *presentation evangelism* may motivate someone to decide one way or the other concerning faith in Christ, it doesn't always demonstrate the true gift of salvation to a prospective Christ follower.

It wasn't until we began planting Compassion Church that I fully began to understand a third type of evangelism—*community outreach*. In 2017, my family and I were commissioned by North American Ministries to plant a Free Will Baptist church in Ashland, Ohio. Prior to starting Compassion Church, I helped lead other Free Will Baptist congregations. These churches all had been established for at least 20 years prior to my arrival, and I thought all we needed to do regarding community outreach was to continue doing what had already been done.

Some churches I helped lead were better at community

outreach than others. But my mentality was always the same: adapt to what the church does and do it *that way*, because that's how it's always been done. When we began planting Compassion Church, I began asking myself: "Who do we want in our church, and why do we want them here?" As I began taking this question to the Lord, I really had to examine the outreach efforts I had led in the past. I pondered, "Do we just want numbers? How about membership transfers? After all, isn't a warm body better than nobody?"

Community outreach should not merely be an event aimed at self-promotion. It must be a culture, a mindset. We can host all kinds of events to reach our community, but if an outreach mentality is not a core value of the congregation, it will never take hold in the minds of our people. The effectiveness of any outreach culture hinges on pastoral involvement. If the pastor doesn't support this mentality 100%, and if he isn't actively involved in reach-



ing the community, success will be very limited.

Outreach was important to Jesus. Not only did He command the New Testament church to go and reach the

world, but Jesus set the example for His disciples—and ultimately us—to follow. Let me get back to Compassion Church. I knew that if the church plant in Ashland were to reach people for Christ, I had to be the example. And as I searched for ways to help people see their need for Christ, I concluded I would have to change some things about myself, including my approach to fulfilling the Great Commission. This was when I discovered servant evangelism, defined by author Steven Sjogren as “a practical way of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in everyday situations.”

I’ve learned three simple ways to reach our community:

Pastoral Involvement. The first involves me, the lead pastor, becoming part of our community. That’s why I have involved myself intentionally in as many community organizations in Ashland as I can. By involving myself with these organizations, I have been able to meet many community leaders and stay informed about the happenings in our city. And, when I became active in the community, the needs became abundantly clear.

In his book, *The Good to Great Pastor*, author Jim Collins asks, “How do you define the greatness of a church? A great church has a distinctive impact on its community. If it disappeared, it would leave a serious hole in that community.” I’m afraid that if we surveyed many people who live near many of our churches, they either wouldn’t know we were there, or worse yet, would have a negative

response to the church name. When you know the needs of a community, stepping up to meet those needs is simply a matter of doing what you and your church can do.

Community Awareness. The next area of outreach requires letting the people of our community know we are here. It can be something as simple as a friendly conversation with a restaurant server or talking to a cashier at Walmart, while wearing a shirt embroidered with the church name and web address. Or setting up a booth for a mass giveaway at a local festival or county fair.

When we began planting Compassion Church, I quickly realized we can’t expect anyone to show up on Sunday if no one knows we’re here. In short, go where the people are. When your community sees your logo and hears your church name, they’ll associate it with the group of friendly people involved in the community. I know this sounds simple, but you’ll never reach them unless they know you’re there.

Overwhelming Kindness. Finally, the community needs to know we care. The biggest part of reaching our community involves letting people know we care for their needs. After all, isn’t this how Jesus reached people? He performed many miracles to reach people in their need and show them He cared for them. At Compassion Church, it is our goal to meet needs, from washing someone’s car (for free) and raking leaves (without charging) to sharing a steaming cup of coffee on a cold February morning. When you meet needs in your community, you are reaching hearts! And *that* is what community outreach is all about. **ONE**

About the Writer: Travis McKenzie is planting Compassion Church in Ashland, Ohio, as a joint project with North American Ministries and the Ohio State Mission Board. Learn more: www.FWBNAM.com.

100 FRIDAY NIGHTS

LONELY, BUT NEVER ALONE

BY VICTORIA LITTLE

One hundred (well, 102 really)—the number of Friday nights I spent in Kenya. A few were in town on a supply run, but most were spent in my little 12- by 15-foot house, either seated on the floor or lying in my hammock.

Friday nights have always been special to me. Growing up, they were “family night,” the only night of the week we were allowed to watch a movie and eat in the living room. Our Friday night meal was hamburgers, fries, and ice cream. As we grew older, Friday nights looked a little different. We spent more time hanging out with friends. After graduating from nursing school and getting a job in a hospital near my hometown, many of my Friday nights were spent working. When not working, though, I gathered with a close group of friends and did the “normal” young people stuff: eat, hang out, and stay up way too late talking and laughing. I treasured those times, as well as the Saturday nights when we gathered to study Scripture together.

Then I moved to the bush of Kenya where it was dark by 6:30 p.m., and the entire world around me shut down shortly thereafter. This night-shift girl had some serious struggles. In my mind, Friday nights were for hanging out, staying up late, and having fun. This was no longer an option for me. I was unsure what to do with myself. I felt extremely lonely and isolated. I had no community, family, or friends around me. The time difference only increased the difficulty in communicating with those in the States.

It felt like I had been given an unexpected gift—the gift of loneliness. I had not asked for it, and it was certainly unwanted; yet there I was, sitting alone on Friday nights.

I had a choice of what to do with my loneliness. I could hold tightly to it, feel sorry for myself, and reminisce about former Friday nights. Or, I could make use of the time I had. Don't get me wrong. I loved my Samburu people and tried to spend as much time as possible with them during the day, but that really was impossible after dark. Hyenas, elephants, snakes, and other predators are most active after sunset, which only adds to the dangers of venturing out at night in the bush. So, I had a choice: wrap myself tightly in the blanket of loneliness or give it back to God. I decided to choose the latter, and in giving it back to God, I learned.


I learned more about my Savior. Leading up to His death, everyone left Him. Even the Father turned His back on the Son. He was utterly and completely alone. I have never been that alone. The Father has never turned His back on me. He is always—*always*—there. He was with me when no one else was. I began to run to Him, cling to Him more than I ever had. Often, it felt as if He were the only person I had, and I learned He was all I needed. I was *lonely* but never *alone*. I still struggled more than I care to admit. The rawness of the words in my journal take me back to those difficult nights. Yet, they also remind me how Christ became enough:

You and me, Lord. It always goes back to just You and me. People come and go. And always, it goes back to You and me. On these lonely nights, that's hard.



When all I want is someone to talk to and be with, it's hard. But You. You are my One Thing, my Treasured Possession, my Constant Companion, and Present Peace. I pray this longing in my heart for community... would not be taken away, but turned into a deeper longing for You, Jesus. You are the better longing and desire. The only One who satisfies and fills me with joy. Your glory, Your Name. Make me holy as You are holy. You are the One for whom I long above all. So, 'just You and me' is enough.

He is here. He is present, even when I can't feel it. He is here when it feels like no one else is. But His promise still stands: great is His faithfulness. He has met me in the hardest places. In the loneliness, He has given His presence. The tears—He has placed them in a bottle and not forgotten them. On the dark nights, in the middle of the night, He has knelt beside me



on my floor as I pray. In the early mornings, He hears as I run along the dirt road and cry out to Him. In the evenings, He goes to war for me as I fight and pray in His Name. And His is the victory. There is always hope. Hope of what He will do, of what is to come, but also hope in the silence and loneliness. Hope because I can look at what He's already done and who He is. I look back and see how far He's brought me, how far I've come, and I realize I wouldn't be here, know Him this well, if it weren't for the loneliness and waiting.

The time alone is when I studied Scripture deeply for truth. I had sought God before, but never like I had on those lonely, silent nights. How real His presence became and how I understood the depths of Christ more. Little did I know how this path would wind and twist and often feel as if it had just dropped off the side of a cliff. But even at the bottom of the cliff, when I was tired and lonely and wondering where God was, I found Him there. And He took me to walk the heights with Him. He has shown me Himself on a deep level that only makes me want Him more. He is my One Thing. He is my Everything.

As my two years in Kenya progressed, I continued to grow. I was so grateful for those who reached out and sent encouraging messages, even people I had never met! I looked forward to visitors coming and treasured the community they provided. I sought out friendships when we went to town every few weeks. I enjoyed the after-dinner discussions on life and theology I had with my missionary partners Eddy and Amanda Simmons. I loved the countless afternoons my Samburu teammate Eunice and I spent visiting various women in the community (and having incredible adventures while doing so, I might add).

I will never forget the lessons loneliness taught me. I have learned one does not have to be out in the bush and hours away from “civilization” to feel lonely. Far too many in America and even in the church feel the same way, even while surrounded by people. They are hurting,

THE TIME ALONE IS WHEN
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broken, lonely people in need of the only One who could ever mend their wounds and be enough for their brokenness and loneliness. I know and understand better now than I used to, and I want those in that same lonely place to know Christ as I have come to know Him. When we are at the end of ourselves, we find Him there. As we seek, we find, and we see that He is enough. Even when we find ourselves lonely, we are never truly alone.

Romans 11:33-36, “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor? Or who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory forever.” **ONE**

About the Writer: Appointed as a short-term intern to Kenya in April 2017, Victoria Little worked for two years with Eddy and Amanda Simmons among the Samburu people. She used her nursing skills to minister to the physical needs of the semi-nomadic people group and worked with Eunice, a Samburu woman, to add discipleship and Bible storying during weekly teaching sessions.

Snapshots Around the World



The Hanna Project: Four women formed a THP team to serve in and around Shumen, Bulgaria, December 27 to January 7. They worked with Josh and Lydia Provov, assisting in providing 12 Operation Christmas Child parties in 11 towns and villages.



Panama: A lady in the church in Colón was baptized Sunday, January 12.

Côte d'Ivoire: A Christmas Day outreach event in the village of Seidja led to the salvation of three people December 29.

Cuba: IM's General Director Clint Morgan, NAFWB Executive Secretary Dr. Eddie Moody, Southeastern FWB College Dean Dr. Danny Baer, Pastor Josh Baer, and Pavel Clipa spoke during a pastors' conference in Cuba January 27-31. Each man spoke multiple times.

France: A JPense event, held February 15, had 130 in attendance. Joel Teague explored the theme, "Who Is Jesus, Really?" Christians had extensive conversations with not-yet-believers afterward.



Côte d'Ivoire: Pastor Jérôme Kambou baptized five people from the mission church in Saye, Sunday, January 12.



Panama: Pastor Cirilo Mendoza baptized two people on Christmas day at the Good News FWB Church in Chitré.

IM Erases Missionary Deficits, Adds 21 Missionaries in 2019

Antioch, TN—According to CFO Rob Conley, IM finished 2019 more than \$600,000 in the black. Thanks to generous gifts to the general fund, "Where Needed Most," and undesignated gifts to the World Missions Offering all missionary

deficit accounts were erased. General Director Clint Morgan stated, "We're looking forward to the day when we have absolutely no deficits to erase and can use these funds to launch new initiatives and send new missionaries to the field."

During 2019, the IM board approved 21 people as either two-year interns or career missionaries. Donations may be made online at iminc.org/give or via mail (IM, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002). **ONE**

Eagleton Serves in Panama, Ivory Coast, and Cuba

Antioch, TN—During January and February, Director of Field Partnerships Kenneth Eagleton preached, participated in meetings, taught, and ministered in three countries. Leaving Brazil January 3, he spent a little over a week in Panama. He preached Sunday, January 5, at the Free Will Baptist church in Colón and spoke at the San Vicente church on Wednesday evening. The Panamanian national convention was held January 11-12. Eagleton represented IM during the business session and met with the executive committee to plan how IM can best support the work of the Panamanian churches.

Arriving in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on January 16, he prepared for a trip to Tanda in the interior of the country. The remote area was the site of a week of teaching for the new undergraduate-level Bible and ministry training. After preaching in the Tanda church on Sunday morning, Kenneth met with students who planned to participate in the Bible college program. Two women and ten men completed the intensive course of study (three-hour classes each evening for five days) January 23.

The official opening ceremony for the new Bible college was held at one of the churches in Abidjan on January 25. During that ceremony, leaders announced at least 60 applicants with high school diplomas wanted to better prepare for some



form of ministry. Kenneth stated, "When we started planning this, we estimated we might have 30 students. We doubled that number. There was definitely a repressed demand for this level of teaching. There is a thirst to learn and a desire to serve the Lord. This is bound to give our churches in Côte d'Ivoire a boost. Teaching will be done in at least four centers, three of them in the huge city of Abidjan and one up country."



Following his four weeks of teaching, Eagleton journeyed to Cuba for their FWB national convention, February 28-March 1 on the Pinar del Rio campus of Cedars of Lebanon seminary. Friday evening, the seminary celebrated the graduation of 12 students. Five received B.A. degrees. The other seven graduated with an A.A.

The convention time was filled with youth competition, demographic-based seminars, worship and preaching, and fellowship. The time together concluded with a communion service on March 1.

Eagleton also met with the executive committee to review joint projects between the Cuban denomination and IM, Inc. **ONE**

In Their Own Words

Part 2

BY BILL AND BRENDA EVANS



Harrold Harrison grew up in Henryetta, Oklahoma, one of 11 children during the Great Depression. When Harrold was 28, God “got a hold of” him, as his son Paul said, and never let go. “Dad sold out, trusted God in a radical way.” By 28, Harrold had finished his time in the Navy after 12 major WWII battles. He married Lauretta and began a small wholesale candy business. For the next six and a half decades, he was pressed into the service of the Lord as husband, pastor, teacher, author, book editor, and father of four children. Here is more of his story as told by his children Marilyn, David, Paul, and Jeff.

EVANS: David, you mentioned one of your mom’s Bibles with an inscription dated 1955, two years after your dad’s commitment to the Lord.

DAVID: It was a Christmas present. It says, “Lari, my Loving Wife, December 25, 1955. Within these pages are the Words of Life—may you feast upon them and grow in the grace of God. I pray that as we grow, we might be drawn closer to God, to our fellowmen, and to one another.” He was a loving husband, and wrote Mom beautiful poetry and love letters.

PAUL: You know Dad proposed to Mom on their first date, and they had been married 71 years when she died.

MARILYN: They were opposites but adored each other. She was fun-loving, an only child with a big heart, the outgoing one. She never met a stranger.

JEFF: Mom was a good preacher’s wife, too. She loved to

wear hats and was the Candy Lady at church. She also knew how and when to hold her tongue, a good thing for a preacher’s wife.

MARILYN: Dad was quieter, disciplined, strict, and wrote poetry, often to her or about her. He gave her a recipe book in 2006 and wrote a rhymed poem in the front. Dad worked with his hands, too. He was a tinkerer, I guess you would say. He could fix anything: toasters, bicycles, change TV tubes. Never called a repair man. Loved jigsaw puzzles, board games, chess. Made us stilts, and a Chinese Checkerboard. He was known to take us gullible young ones “snipe hunting.” He loved to learn, read, and study. He was a word person, and we children are too. He was all man, but had a softer side, loved pretty things: flowers, poetry, a garden.

DAVID: Garden! When Dad pastored Bethlehem Church in Ashland City, Tennessee, we had a big garden,

took care of it with a push plow. No mule, no tractor. I remember that plow well. I used it a lot.

MARILYN: At first in Ashland City, we lived in a one-bedroom trailer. David and I slept on the sofa. Dad was pastoring but also going to Welch College. One time there was a flood. Somebody came to our door in a motorboat to pick him up, so he could go to class. He was not going to miss. I lost my favorite Beverly Gray book during that flood—dropped it out the front door into the muddy water. But I also learned 100 Bible verses in that trailer. Dad typed them on index cards to memorize for a class. I practiced with him—verse on front, reference on back—and memorized them, too. I still have those index cards.

EVANS: Jeff, you said your dad was serious about the Bible.

JEFF: Dad walked his talk. When I was young, Dad said the Bible was a special kind of book because whatever I dealt with, there was a principle in the Bible to address it.

PAUL: Dad's faith revolutionized his life. In the military in the 1940s, he had picked up the habit of smoking, so when he was newly converted, he went to church with a pack of cigarettes in his shirt pocket. He began to teach a class of young boys, and one Sunday the lesson material instructed him to tell those boys not to smoke. He thought, "I can't tell them not to smoke with a pack of cigarettes in my front pocket." At the time, he had a small wholesale candy business and made deliveries to various stores. He decided he would eat a Snickers™ bar whenever he felt the urge to smoke. The first day of his plan, he ate 24 Snickers but did not light one cigarette. He never smoked again.



EVANS: Sounds as if your dad was a practical man and a teacher with both his hands and his heart.

MARILYN: He was. He built things, fixed things, but he also taught me how to drive. He was good at it. Told me to think about how to keep safe. Later, when I was working—it was around 1966—I had my eye on a yellow Chevrolet Biscayne. Stick shift, three gears on steering column. He went with me to the Chevrolet place on Broadway in Nashville to negotiate. He and the salesman got it down to \$75 apart, but Dad wouldn't budge. He got up like we were going to walk out. I jumped in, "Daddy, I'll pay the \$75."

He told me later, "Marilyn, if you had just waited, I could have got him down."

EVANS: What about your dad's years at Randall House, both as a teacher and editor? Talk about those years.

DAVID: Dad went and went and went and went.

JEFF: He was gone a lot. I sometimes went with him.

MARILYN: Dad later told us that his only regret about those days was that he put his work for the Lord and the church before his family.

DAVID: I also went along sometimes. He taught ETTA courses (Evangelical Teacher Training Association) when he started with Randall House. Dad was a man of vision, so focused as an ambassador for the Lord and our denomination. "I've got to teach our people how to teach," he told me. He wanted to build up Randall House as well. He had started a Bible institute in Florida when he pastored in Chipley and caught the eye of people in Nashville. So, when he went to Randall House, he was able to play a pivotal role as teacher, writer, and editor. He was in the right time, the right place.

PAUL: In his earlier days at Welch from 1955-1959, Dad had done well. He was second in his class on the Bible

DAD WAS A MAN OF VISION, SO FOCUSED AS AN AMBASSADOR FOR THE LORD AND OUR DENOMINATION. "I'VE GOT TO TEACH OUR PEOPLE HOW TO TEACH," HE TOLD ME.

knowledge exit exam seniors had to take back then. Dad was a reader and learner. Later, he earned a master's degree at Middle Tennessee State University and Belmont, and would have liked to earn his doctorate. As a learner, I think Dad enjoyed "the hunt."

DAVID: He told me that one of his great joys was working as associate editor with Dr. Robert Picirilli on the *Randall House Commentary* series. It was a huge project.

PAUL: In fact, Dad retired from Randall House one day and the very next day went to work for Welch College. Dr. Picirilli hired him to oversee the college's Extension Program, as it was called in those days—earning college credit by long-distance learning.

EVANS: We visited your dad at Vanderbilt University Hospital three days before he died. He was about to be transferred to hospice. He seemed calm, so tranquil, a man of peace who was at peace.

PAUL: He was. Dad lived for some years with a "Triple A" as the doctors called it—an abdominal aortic aneurysm. It ruptured but caused limited bleeding at first. I asked him, "Dad, do you know what your condition is?" "No" he said. "Would you like for me to tell you?" "Yes," he said. I sat on his bed, held his hand, looked into his eyes, and told him it might be a few minutes or a few days, but this was going to take his life. He took in my words and calmly said, "I've faced death before."

EVANS: At peace to the end.

PAUL: Dad had trusted the Lord since he was 28. At age 94, he trusted the Lord in death. **ONE**

About the Writers: Bill and Brenda Evans live in Ashland, Kentucky. You may contact them at beejayevans@windstream.net.



Photo: Wikipedia Creative Commons, Wagon Master Johnson

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** has partnered with **Cornerstone Estate Planning** to provide help in this crucial area of life. Contact the Foundation today for more information:



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Give Your Pastor a Raise (Without Increasing the Budget)

BY CHRIS COMPTON

The greatest privilege of my life was to pastor a local church. When I was younger, I never dreamed I would become a preacher. After graduating high school, I entered college to prepare for a long career in healthcare. I pursued those plans and worked in various positions for 14 years. Yet, God had a different plan for me.

I embraced God's call. Although I thought I would never go back to college, I decided (with God's leading) the best way to prepare for ministry was to go to Bible college and seminary. Once the biblical educational pursuit was complete, I was excited to put my hands to the plow and fulfill God's calling on my life.

Even in the midst of the excitement and anticipation of preaching the gospel and shepherding God's people, I admit to some anxiety as well. The anxiety centered around finances. While I wasn't in it for the money, I knew adjustments to our budget would have to be made.

This transition proved easier and less stressful for my family because I was part of a church that took care of their pastor. The way the church structured my compensation package was a real blessing because it reduced my tax liability greatly.

With a little planning, churches can honor God and bless their pastors by allowing them to serve God and their church with less stress and more joy. The IRS code gives churches several opportunities to enhance a pastor's compensation package, reducing a pastor's tax liability and

lessening his financial stress. Although not an exhaustive list, the following are ways a church can give the pastor a raise without increasing the budget.

Approve a Housing Allowance

One of the greatest financial and tax benefits a church can provide for the pastor is a housing allowance. Under current law, churches can designate a portion of the pastor's salary as a parsonage or housing allowance, making it free from federal income taxes. While churches can request the pastor estimate housing expenses, the church must designate the amount of housing allowance it is going to provide in advance of payment and by official action of the church. (Find more information about the minister's housing allowance at boardofretirement.com)

Provide a Retirement Benefit

A key cornerstone for any compensation package is a retirement plan. Many pastors today are entering retirement unprepared. Churches can help alleviate the financial stress related to a pastor's financial future by contributing to a solid retirement plan. This will not only help the pastor's future financial prospects but their current one as well.

Through the Board of Retirement, Free Will Baptist churches can set up a retirement plan for the pastor and make tax-deferred contributions. Because employer contributions are tax-deferred, this does not increase the

pastor's taxable income or tax liability. Pastors also can make their own tax-deferred retirement contributions to further reduce their taxable income and tax liability.

When tax-deferred contributions are made to a denominational retirement plan like the one offered by the Board of Retirement, pastors can utilize the housing allowance provision for their retirement withdrawals, which makes those withdrawals tax-free.


Set Up an Accountable Reimbursement Plan

From time to time, pastors need to purchase books or commentaries, attend conferences, take people to lunch, visit people in the hospital, host ministry events in their home, and much more. Many times, pastors must pay for these expenses out of their own pockets. Now that the IRS does not allow these types of expenses to be tax deductions, the cost of these ministry-related expenses is even higher.

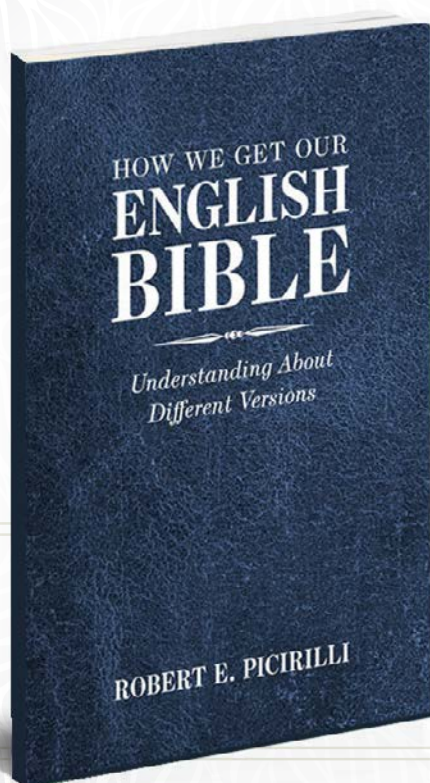
To off-set these ministry-related expenses, churches can (and should) set up an accountable reimbursement plan. An accountable reimbursement plan is established in the budget and allows the church to reimburse pastors for

ministry-related expenses (with proper receipts and documentation) up to the budgeted amount. Even better, this reimbursement is not taxable income for the pastor.

Pastors are God's servants. Their ministry is not about making money but making disciples. Churches can help their pastors focus better on the latter when they meet their physical and financial needs well. The small benefits mentioned above will go a long way toward blessing pastors and reducing their financial stress. This is a win-win for both the pastor *and* the church.

For more information about these benefits and other ways to structure a pastor's compensation package, contact the Board of Retirement at 877-767-7738 or by visiting boardofretirement.com. 

About the Writer: Chris Compton is communications officer for the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. He graduated in 2007 with a 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.



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The Future Is Now

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Free Will Baptist Foundation has been involved in helping families set up estate plans since 2013. So far, almost 1,900 estate plans have been delivered. Around 35% of these estate plans are leaving a gift to Free Will Baptist ministries. We have tracked information that tells us the average estate is around \$300,000, and families typically leave a tithe on their estates to ministries through the plan.

Therefore, our calculations indicate almost \$20 million will come in time from the estates that have been delivered. Some estates leave much more than a tithe as childless couples tend to leave their entire estates to ministry. Even families with children sometimes choose to leave half, or even more, of their estate to Free Will Baptist ministries. While many of these gifts will not come for ten, 20, or even 30 years, the financial success of our ministries requires we build a bequest pipeline today to generate these types of future gifts.

Many charitable organizations have emphasized estate gifts for hundreds of years. Harvard University has the largest academic endowment in the world, at almost \$41 billion. Just to be clear, that is billion with a “b” not million with an “m.” They have a 5% spending policy, which means more than \$2 billion a year is distributed to support the university. At least two reasons exist



for such a large endowment. Harvard has encouraged estate giving since their founding in 1636. And, as one of the most prestigious universities in the world, their alumni are among the richest in the world.

Every year, over \$30 billion is left to charitable causes. Free Will Baptists are a little late to embrace this type of giving. Our current Free Will Baptist membership and estimated net worth calculates to a potential of \$1.5 billion in estate gifts to ministries. That \$1.5 billion will never be realized if we do not start constructing a giving pipeline today. However, it is not just about what is coming,

because over \$300,000 has been realized by FWB ministries from the estate plans already in place. If we all commit to building this giving pipeline, the trickle we are receiving today will become a flood to benefit every Free Will Baptist ministry in the years, decades, and centuries to come. If we want a flood of future funding, the future is now. **ONE**

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

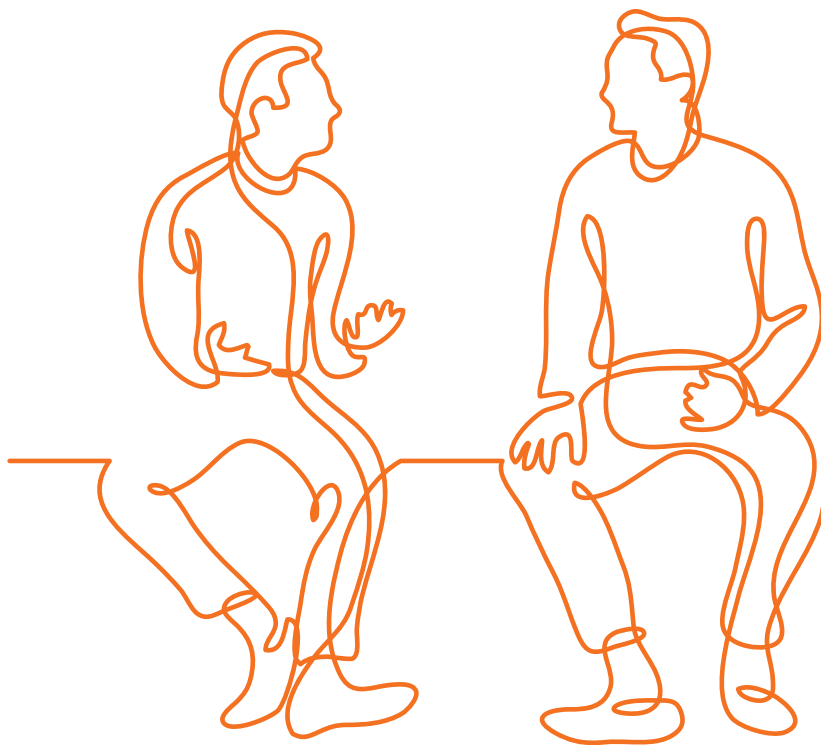
Essentials for Evangelism

BY BARRY RAPER

New Christians have an instinctive desire to share their faith. For example, immediately and without any training, after experiencing the living water found in Christ, the Samaritan woman (John 4) left her water jar and went back to those within her circle of influence and urged simply, “Come see a man who told me all the things I have ever done.” In the Gospel accounts, whenever someone experiences salvation in Christ, the immediate reflex is to go and tell others.

Sadly, as believers, we do not always follow through with this simple practice of sharing our faith. None of us can claim a perfect record of evangelism, and we all know what it is like to make excuses for our lack of evangelism. And, truthfully, sharing the gospel with others isn’t always as easy as preachers make it out to be. After all, we will encounter challenges, both culturally and personally, when we attempt to help others come to know Christ. The purpose of this brief article isn’t to detail these challenges but to remind you (and me) of basic principles for effective evangelism and outreach.

Be prayerful. A pastor who has been in ministry 40 years recently told me, “The people I have prayed for [to be saved] have all been saved.” The fact is, God works when we pray. It’s true our prayers don’t guarantee anyone salvation be-



cause every person has a free will. Additionally, we know God doesn’t “need” our prayers. However, the Bible is clear. God has chosen to unite His work in the world with the faithful prayers of His people. We need to be prayerful, so the Lord might open the heart of those who hear the gospel from us (consider Acts 16 and Lydia’s conversion). Many church prayer meetings and individual prayer closets could use more prayers for the salvation of those outside of Christ.

Be intentional. While we certainly want our lifestyle to bear witness to the gospel, at some point the “visible” gospel has to become the “verbal” gospel. If we aren’t careful, we can miss opportunities to share

the gospel because we aren’t looking for ways to swing conversations in a spiritual direction.

Donald Whitney suggests we use questions to move our conversations toward the gospel.¹ He states, “Much of the time, the biggest problem is simply moving a conversation from small talk to ‘big’ talk, the biggest subject of all—the gospel.”

Be conversational. Sometimes in marriages, disagreeing couples can appear to be listening to one another when, in reality, all they are doing is internally forming a “killer

¹ Donald S. Whitney, “Ten Questions to Ask to Turn a Conversation Toward the Gospel,” found at <https://biblicalspirituality.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/02/Ten-questions-to-ask.pdf>



comeback." This type of conflict resolution doesn't help matters at all, because the couple isn't really having a healthy conversation.

Conversation involves two persons having two-way communication. When it comes to our evangelistic

efforts, do we *listen* to the worldview of the person in front of us? Do we really understand where he or she is coming from? Are we actually hearing the longings and fears of their hearts? Yes, the person is a sinner and needs the Savior, but he is also made in the image of God. This reality demands you respect him as a person. Listening also helps us understand the specific and personal touch points of the gospel for each person's life.

Some may frown at the idea of memorizing an approach to sharing the gospel. They object to reciting the gospel message in a mechanical or "canned" fashion. But it doesn't have to be. Memorizing approaches—and more importantly memo-

rizing Scripture—is a fundamental practice of effective evangelism. Having an approach is better than not sharing the gospel at all. However, we want to make sure we approach every person with the flexibility necessary for real spiritual conversations. Rest assured. Most evangelistic encounters don't fit into neat and tidy boxes! **ONE**

About the Columnist: Dr. Barry Raper pastors Bethel FWB Church near Ashland City, Tennessee. He also serves as program coordinator for ministry studies at Welch College and is a member of the Tennessee Christian Education Board. Barry and his wife Amanda have five children.

Pioneer Legacy...

During the early days of Free Will Baptist Missions work in Ivory Coast, West Africa, the rural backgrounds and can-do attitude and abilities of the pioneer missionaries was a perfect fit for the new and difficult field. These "jacks of all trades" cleared land, hauled in supplies, built a missionary home, medical clinic, and hospital, where they treated as many as 30,000 patients in one year!

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Welch College Announces Nursing Scholarships


Welch College has announced new, \$1,000 incentive scholarships for eligible students desiring a career in nursing, according to Dr. Ian Hawkins, nursing program coordinator at Welch.

“Through the Welch Education Nursing Collaborative, the college offers a seamless four-year path to a bachelor’s degree in nursing,” Hawkins said. “New students who apply at Welch by May 15 and

meet minimum criteria will receive an additional incentive scholarship of \$1,000. Local, private-sector employers are providing funds to make the additional financial assistance possible.”

Welch College offers scholarships to both traditional and adult students. The Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges and the Commission on Accreditation of the Associa-

tion for Biblical Higher Education accredit Welch College both regionally and nationally. The college remains one of the most affordable private colleges in the mid-state and is ranked 16th by *U.S. News and World Report Best Colleges of regional colleges in the South.*

Learn more by contacting program coordinator, Dr. Ian Hawkins at ihawkins@welch.edu. 



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Where Do I Start?

A CONVERSATION ABOUT CHURCH HEALTH

BY BRAD RANSOM

Recently, Dr. Brad Ransom asked Dr. Danny Dwyer, coordinator of the Rekindle church revitalization program, the following questions about church health:

Ransom: When we talk about church revitalization, many different ideas pop into people's heads. Let's clarify some things and talk about church health. What do you believe the main characteristics are for a healthy church?

Dwyer: Scripture defines spiritual health for a church. A thorough study of texts such as Acts 2:44-47, the Pastoral Epistles, and others provides these characteristics. My point is spiritual health is not measured by methodologies resulting from marketing strategies or a desire for cultural relevance. While we may learn from those things, *spiritual health* must be uncompromisingly rooted in the Scriptures. And, it's possible to be theologically correct on paper but spiritually dying in practice, so I don't want to smugly overstate this point.

At the risk of summarizing too broadly, I believe the *main characteristics* in the biblical model of a healthy church fall under five headings:

1. Belief in and systematic proclamation of the Scriptures (inerrant and authoritative) for the truths of faith and practice;
2. Spirit-filled leadership that prayerfully invokes the favor of the Lord in His Church;
3. Fellowship among believers characterized by agape love, maturing faith practices, and servant hearts;
4. Folks being saved and baptized on a regular basis; and
5. A Great Commission mindset.

Each of these areas can and should be understood in how they are manifested in a local church. For example: intentional and focused ministries of prayer, outreach, discipleship, stewardship, leadership development, etc. This makes for an active, balanced ministry. It is possible to be busy without being spiritually healthy, but it is not possible to be spiritually healthy and not busy.

Ransom: Is there a difference between church growth and church health? Can you explain any differences?

Dwyer: When answering this question, I cannot avoid the assessment the Lord Jesus did of the churches in Revelation 2-3. In every case, the growth of the churches was measured against the spiritual health of the churches. Some were better or worse than others. So, it is clear from the scriptural church assessment model there is a difference between the two concepts.



(Perhaps, the main idea is that the Lord Jesus actively assesses His churches. This is a sobering truth for us today).

How do we define the differences? Again, at the risk of overstatement, consider three: first, it is possible to be strong in appearance but weak in substance (a mile wide; an inch deep). Some might leap at the chance to be a mile wide and an inch deep, as opposed to being "the few in the pew." But that isn't a biblically wise choice (Ephesians 4:11-16).

Second, perception is not always reality. One can perceive the numbers of the ministry and local church (whatever they are) indicate



spiritual health when, better assessment through biblical filters might reveal something entirely different.

Third, comparison indicators based on biblical principles are available.

For example, Dr. Harry Reeder (*Embers to a Flame*) lists seven characteristics of a sick church. Then he develops the contrasting characteristics of church health. Other good books and media resources do the same.

Ransom: Does numerical growth indicate church health? If not, what role do numbers play in church health?

Dwyer: Numerical growth *can* and *should* be an indicator of church health, but it depends on the basis for the numbers. For example, successful big events (with good attendance) should be intended for outreach ministry and the witness of the gospel, not just to have a church-sponsored event. There is a significant difference. Having said that, if the motives and efforts are right for big events, usually some fruit will result, including numerical growth.

One cannot dismiss Luke's repeated numerical references in Acts as merely incidental. He indicated

the number of those saved and baptized. Apparently, the intention of the gospel for the whole world (Matthew 28:18-20) was validated, to some extent, by recording how many were being saved. This is the Great Commission mindset that permeates the Book of Acts (see question #1). Nothing wrong with "big events," of course—but numerical growth needs to be evaluated in light of the Great Commission.

Numerical growth often results from intentional prayer, witnessing, ministry efforts, and loving relationships. In these cases, numerical growth is a good indicator of church health. On the other hand, a lack of numerical growth over a reasonable time period indicates an unhealthy church. It may indicate introspection and complacency. These are sins that grieve the Holy Spirit and stifle His favor.

Ransom: How important is it for churches to keep good records of attendance, finances, salvation decisions, baptisms, and other numbers? Why?

Dwyer: In itself, good records in these areas indicate some degree of spiritual health. We are to be good stewards of all the Lord has placed in our hands. Good record keeping shows mature stewardship responsibility.

In contrast, poor record keeping indicates sloth and organizational problems. It leaves a pastor and ministry open to potential abuse. Many stories of abuse could have been avoided with good record

keeping and accountability.

While discernment extends beyond the records (Revelation 3:17-18), good records provide some objective assessment, as well. Periodic evaluation not only makes good sense; it is necessary.

Ransom: If you had one word of advice for pastors who know their church is plateaued or declining, what would it be?

Dwyer: My one word would be *assessment*. This should be part and parcel of pastoral ministry anyway. It should begin with the pastor and his wife and extend to every area of the church. Success is not a snapshot but a moving picture. The "glory days" of the past (provided there were glory days) must not be used as laurels to rest upon, but motivations to refresh in the present.

One cannot overstate the value of enlisting the help of others in such assessment. Many written and media resources are directed at this need. But the insights of trusted counsel from godly men who can speak directly to the need is invaluable. Mentors and coaches can assess the needs and be like Paul to Timothy. Every pastor and church need this kind of assessment. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Dr. Brad Ransom is director of church planting and chief training officer for North American Ministries. Contact Brad: brad@nafwb.org.

Introducing the Newest Staff Member for North American Ministries

Chaplain Terry Austin, retired U.S. Army Colonel, is the new chaplain support officer for NAM. Chaplain Austin retired from active duty in July 2019. During his last assignment, he served as command chaplain for Joint Forces Command, Mil-

itary District Washington, D.C. He and his wife Mona live in Clarksville, Tennessee, and are members of the 180 FWB Church. Austin replaces Chaplain Kerry Steedley, who retired from the NAM staff in December 2019. Kerry and his wife Brenda

will continue to serve Free Will Baptist military chaplains and their families in a volunteer support role. **ONE**



NAM Church Plants Reach Self-supporting Status

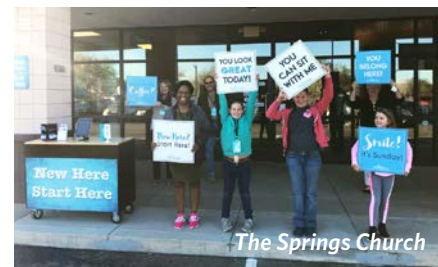
Antioch, TN—North American Ministries congratulates two more churches for reaching self-supporting status, January 1, 2020. **The Springs Church** in Marana, Arizona, was planted by Jeff Goodman and Josh Bennett in 2010. In 2018, the church sent Josh Bennett to Tifton, Georgia, to plant another church. Both churches are doing extremely well, and we are thankful for the progress and impact for the Kingdom.

Since its beginning, The Springs has had over 500 salvation decisions and 210 baptisms. They had 59 salvations in 2019, and 49 baptisms. They have three full-time staff members and one part-time employee. A Good News Club at a local elementary school averages 60 kids, and 15 have accepted Jesus as Savior. More than 150 people enroll in life groups each semester,



and the church averages 450 in weekly attendance. We are proud of The Springs and the team led by Jeff Goodman.

ReIGNITE Church, led by Marshall Bonéy, also reached self-supporting status in January, a year ahead of schedule. Marshall launched ReIGNITE in 2016, planting a culturally diverse church. The Bonéys planted the church with the desire



to see a multiethnic, multicultural church in the diverse area of Virginia Beach, Virginia. Since its inception, ReIGNITE has increased Heaven by 51 people! Because the church went self-supporting a year early, the NAM office will continue to channel money to the church through the end of 2020. We are proud of Marshall and Tiffany Bonéy and the team at ReIGNITE FWB Church!

Chaplain Updates

Chaplain (LTC) Brad Hanna is a resident student at the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. After he graduates in the summer of 2020, he will return to his duties as the state chaplain, U.S. Army National Guard in Oklahoma.

Chaplain (MAJ-P) Tracy Kerr, after multiple combat deployments, is currently serving on the garrison chaplain's staff at Fort Stewart, Georgia. Congratulations to Chaplain Kerr on his selection for promotion to lieutenant colonel.

Chaplain (MAJ) Kevin Trimble graduated from the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Chaplain Trimble currently serves as infantry brigade chaplain at Fort Stewart, Georgia.

Chaplain (MAJ) Lee Frye is assigned to Hunter Army Airfield, Savannah, Georgia, as a combat aviation brigade chaplain. Currently deployed to Germany, he travels throughout Germany and other countries in Europe to provide ministry to soldiers.

Chaplain (CPT) David Dodson is at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, during his initial assignment as an army chaplain. Dodson serves as chaplain for a battalion in the 82nd Airborne Division.

Chaplain (CPT) Michael Beatty, the newest Free Will Baptist military chaplain, serves in the U.S. Army Reserve in Springfield, Missouri. Beatty's future plans include the Chaplain Officer Basic Leadership

Course at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, and applying for active duty as an army chaplain.

(LT) Mark McCraney, CHC USN, completed his initial assignment as a Navy chaplain in Rota, Spain. He is now assigned as a chaplain for naval special warfare teams in Virginia Beach, Virginia. The McCraney's son Ethan, a student at Welch College, has expressed to Dr. David Crowe and Chaplain Kerry Steedley his desire to serve as a youth pastor to military families.

(LT) Hal Jones IV, CHC USN, served with the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Force in Okinawa, Japan, for his initial assignment as a navy chaplain. He is currently stationed with the U.S. Navy in San Diego, California.

Chaplain (CPT) Amir Ashoori serves in the U.S. Army Reserves and also as an associate pastor in Fresno, California.

FUTURE CHAPLAINS

Matthew Saunders, a graduate student at Welch College, is a chaplain candidate in the U.S. Army Reserve in Tennessee. **Shaun Hembree**, a seminary student at Oral Roberts University, is a chaplain candidate in the Oklahoma National Guard.

Rafael Barney, a master chief petty officer on active duty in the Navy, has completed all the requirements for endorsement and commissioning as a FWB Navy chaplain, except for pastoral experience. **Jonathan Truett**, a student at Welch College

majoring in pastoral training, is also enrolled in ROTC at Vanderbilt University, to prepare for military chaplaincy.

Please pray for our chaplains, those serving in the military, and their families.

—Kerry Steedley, Chaplain Support

Unidos Por Una Visión Para Los Hispanos

¡La conferencia es gratis!! Solo pre-regístrate con Tori Matlock (615) 760-6137 or tori@nafwb.org.

La conferencia será en el hotel Marriott: 600 Marriott Drive, Nashville, TN 37214. \$139 por noche mas impuestos. Y asegúrate de mencionar a la National Association of Free Will Baptist: 615-889-9300. [ONE](https://www.nafwb.org)



Power Conference 2020

Nashville, TN—North American Ministries encourages readers to attend a historical event for Free Will Baptists. May 25-26, at the Nashville Airport Marriott, North American Ministries will host the first Hispanic Free Will Baptist Power Conference. While the conference has been designed for Spanish speakers, it is planned so all Free Will Baptists are included. Translation will be provided for every service and seminar. Speakers include Dr. David Crowe, CEO of North American Ministries, and Dr. Noe Martinez, pastor of one of the largest churches in Mexico City

and president of over 300 churches (*Centro de la Fe, Esperanza, y Amor*) in Mexico.

Dr. Martinez shares his extensive knowledge of the Word of God, as well as years of experience in opening and sustaining churches. His wife, Rosseliea Villarreal, will share the Word with the ladies. Seminars will be taught by experienced pastors and leaders from various Hispanic works. Each has years of experience in pastoring, teaching, and building many churches.

Please make sure you do not miss this exciting event. Make hotel res-



ervations today by calling 615-889-9300 and telling them you are with the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Tell them you wish to register for the Power Conference. If you have any questions, contact North American Ministries at 615-760-6137. [ONE](#)

McVay Becomes Church Relations Officer

Antioch, TN—Sam McVay began serving as church relations officer for North American Ministries in February 2020, according to Director David Crowe.

Sam was born in Andalusia, Alabama, and grew up in the panhandle of Florida. He graduated from Welch College in 1978 with a degree in pastoral administration. Sam is married to June Picirilli McVay, and they have two daughters and three grandchildren.

From 1976 to 1997 Sam served Cofer's Chapel as pastor's assistant and youth pastor. During his time at Cofer's Chapel, he served in various areas of leadership on the local,

state, and national levels. He helped begin the Truth & Peace student leadership conference and directed the program from its inception in 1984 until 1997.

In 1996, Sam and June were commissioned as international missionaries to Spain. They served in Spain in the areas of leadership development, youth ministry, church planting, and discipleship until they were asked to return to the USA in 2013, when Sam became one of the IM directors. For the next six years, Sam served in various areas of leadership in IM, most recently as director of mobilization and The Hanna Project. Sam also has served

as a trainer for the Leadership Matters Course (LMC).

While with IM, Sam traveled from coast to coast sharing in churches and promoting missions among Free Will Baptists. He and June have led several E-TEAMS, and Sam has led mission teams to various locations around the world including Cuba, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Ecuador, and Bulgaria.

North American Ministries welcomes Sam to the leadership team and encourages churches and pastors to invite him to your church to receive the latest updates and news from our ministries. [ONE](#)

Canoeing the Mountains:

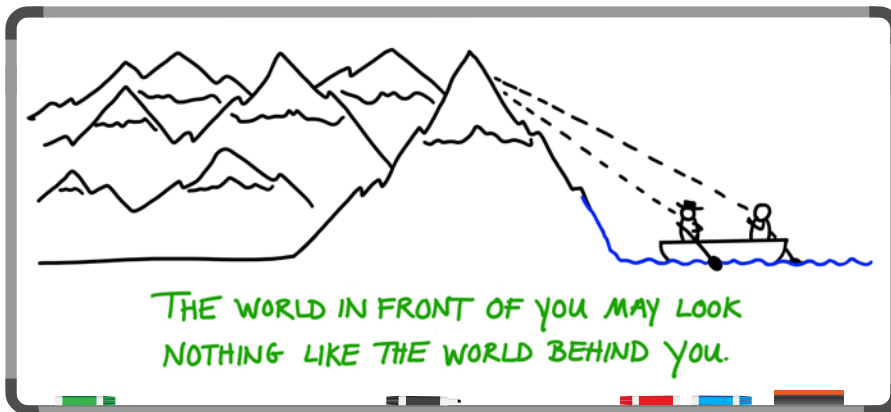
ADAPTIVE LEADERSHIP

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.

This column was inspired by Tod Bolsinger's book, *Canoeing the Mountains*, one of the top five Christian leadership books I have read. As with all books, none of us will agree on everything an author says, but this is a must-read for all pastors.

In 1803, when Thomas Jefferson completed the Louisiana Purchase, it doubled the size of the United States, adding much of what we now know as the Midwest and stretching into the Northwest. To discover what was in the territory, Merriwether Lewis and William Clark were commissioned to explore animal and plant life while exploring a passageway to the Pacific Ocean. Lewis, Clark, and their expedition party anticipated paddling upriver to the continental divide, hauling their canoes over the peaks, then coasting downhill to the ocean.

When they reached the high point of Lemhi Pass, they found neither the anticipated river nor a gently sloping plain toward their destination. Instead, they found rows of



cascading mountains, taller than any in the East. Bolsinger describes this eye-opening moment with a phrase that will resonate with puzzled pastors and surprised leaders: “The world in front of you may look nothing like the world behind you.”

The culture has shifted dramatically, affecting our churches. Pastoring today looks nothing like it did a few years back, much less two decades ago. In other words, solutions that worked yesterday might pose problems today. Such situations require *adaptive leadership*, where the leader helps communities of people navigate and solve the complex problems threatening the health of their future. Bolsinger reminded us we can learn from Lewis and Clark, as adaptive leadership “pays attention to the deep underlying causes that keep a group perilously perched in the state of inaction.”

For Lewis and Clark, the other side of the mountains did not offer an

easy float downstream. They had to hike, rappel, and traverse unexpectedly difficult terrain. Thankfully, their mission was not tied to a method. Like Lewis and Clark, we sometimes lead people “off the map” to places no one has been. Yet God’s call is more than a destination or method. It is built around His purpose for the journey: to pursue the heart of Christ while ministering in unexpected cultural terrain. **ONE**

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

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

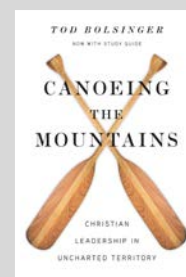
“It’s not going to do you any good to paddle harder. You have to make adaptations, and the key to adaptation begins with going back to your deepest core value.”

—Tod Bolsinger

RECOMMENDED BOOK

Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory

By Tod Bolsinger



RESOLVED

WWW.VERTICALTHREE.COM

VIII CONFERENCE
JULY 19-22, 2020
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK

DANIEL 1:8 STATES "BUT DANIEL
RESOLVED THAT HE WOULD NOT
DEFILE HIMSELF..."

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY A.M.: DAVID MIZELLE (VA)
SUNDAY P.M.: QUINN NORMAN (OK)
MONDAY MINIS: CAMERON LANE (AR)
AND VICTORIA LITTLE (NC)
TUESDAY: JON FORREST (TN)
V3 EVENT TUESDAY @ 9:00 P.M.:
JONNIE W - JOKE TELLER & MUSIC MAKER

ANNOUNCING A NEW CTS OPPORTUNITY:
SPECIAL NEEDS COMPETITION!



buck a week
missions offering

2020 MISSIONARIES

Dan and Kami Houghton :

Church Planters to Burlington, Vermont

Chris and Tori Sargent : The Hanna Project, Spain

For more information, go to

verticalthree.com/ministries/buck-a-week

\$HOW UP & GIVE

The Annual Buck-A-Week Missions Offering
Tuesday | July 21 | Oklahoma City, OK



Into the Harvest

Words by Doug Little

Music by Doug Little

1. In - to the har-vest Je - sus is send - ing ev - 'ry be - liev - er to -
2. In - to the har-vest Je - sus is lead - ing, His last com - mand we o -
3. In - to the har-vest Je - sus is call - ing, we will go forth while we

day; _____ On us, His wit - ness - es, He is de - pend - ing
bey; _____ Through us, His child - ren, His heart is plead - ing
may; _____ On us, His la - bor - ers, night - time is fall - ing;

to tell lost peo - ple the way. _____
for those who per - ish to - day. _____ In - to the har-vest the
there is no time for de - lay. _____

gos-pel we take so all the na-tions may know; _____ All for His

glo-ry and all for His sake, in - to the har-vest we go. _____



Saddle Up for the “Sooner State”

When the U.S. government opened Oklahoma Territory to settlers in the late 1800s, it created a large migration into the territory. The action came in response to “Boomers” or pioneers already settled on government land. To distribute the 640-acre parcels of land fairly, the government held a series of “land runs” between 1889 and 1895. Settlers literally raced one another to stake their claims to land. On April 22, 1889, more than 50,000 settlers gathered along the edge of the territory for the first run. What followed was bedlam.

Pioneers in large wagons (prairie schooners), cowboys on horseback, immigrants pulling handcarts, pedestrians, and even riders on velocipedes (primitive large-wheeled bicycles) raced off across the prairie to stake claims. Some, remembered today as “Sooners,” cheated the system and crossed the line early to claim prime location.

In a matter of hours, the sparsely populated region was teeming with people, and the area that eventually came to be Oklahoma City (OKC) was especially popular. Nearly 10,000 pioneers placed claims in the area, and by 1900, the number had doubled. Shortly after Oklahoma became the 46th state in 1907, OKC became the state’s capitol, replacing neighboring Guthrie.

After oil was discovered in Oklahoma, the city boomed as the center of the state’s commerce. Today, OKC numbers among the largest metropolitan areas in the Central Plains. The third-largest city in land area in the lower 48 states, according to Index Mundi, OKC ranks 27th in population, with 650,000 residents in the metropolitan area.

A FREE WILL BAPTIST RUSH

Free Will Baptists will have their own rush when they pour into OKC, July 19-22, for the 84th national convention. These travelers will soon discover much has changed since the association met in the city a decade ago. So much, in fact, that *National Geographic* magazine listed OKC as one of the world’s “must-see places” in 2015. The city features a revitalized downtown area that blends its western heritage with modern culture and commerce.

FINDING YOUR WAY

One thing hasn’t changed: OKC is easy to find and navigate. Located where Interstates 35, 40, and 44 come together, the city is convenient for drivers. For those flying, **Will Rogers International Airport** is a short shuttle ride from the city and offers non-stop flights from most major cities.

From city center, most popular destinations are only a brief walk away. Visitors also can ride the new **OKC Street Car system**, which opened in 2017 and offers unlimited rides for only \$3 per day. Download a trolley schedule and route map at okcstreetcar.com.

A DESTINATION TO ENJOY

With 250 museums, **Frontier City** (Six Flags theme park), great food, and a world-class zoo, OKC is a great place to take the family. The little buckaroos will enjoy the **National Cowboy and Western Heritage Museum** while the



215,000-square-foot **Oklahoma History Center** will bring the state's colorful history to life. Be prepared for kids to splash through the city's 16 "**Spraygrounds**," interactive water parks with assorted spray features. Be prepared to get wet!

SPORTS SCENE

Golfers will be delighted to learn the number of public courses in the greater Oklahoma City area has grown from 17 to 22. Baseball fans will want to take in a game at **Chickasaw Bricktown Ballpark**, known affectionately as "The Brick." The park is home to the Triple-A **Oklahoma City Dodgers**. OKC also boasts the **Lazy-E Arena**, long considered the world's premier rodeo facility, hosting more than 40 championship events each year.

If golf, baseball, and rodeo aren't enough, check out the **Jim Thorpe Museum** or the **National Softball Hall of Fame**—something for everyone!

BUDGET TRAVELER

Those traveling on a tight budget will enjoy the following free or low-cost activities scattered across the city:

- The **Centennial Land Run Monument**. Commemorating the chaos of the race for land, this monument is the largest series of sculptures in the world, consisting of 47 statues spread across a distance of 365 feet.
- Historic **Oklahoma City Stockyards** are just minutes from downtown. Visitors can see cowboys and craftsmen at work and browse a large variety of western shops.
- Just south of downtown, **Skydance Bridge** soars over Interstate 40. The 380-foot-long pedestrian walkway features

a 197-foot-tall sculpture inspired by Oklahoma's state bird, the scissor-tailed flycatcher.

- **Martin Park Nature Center** and wildlife sanctuary includes miles of hiking trails, a museum, library, and more. The park is open Wednesday through Sunday (9-6).
- At **Oklahoma Railway Museum**, kids can explore old passenger cars and a working steam engine. Admission is free; donations are welcome: oklahomarailwaymuseum.org.
- Love disc golf? Let it fly at one of the city's **three disc golf courses**: Dolese Youth Park, Will Rogers Park, and Woodson Park.
- The **Paseo Arts District** is home to over 20 galleries and 80 vibrant artists within walking distance. The curved, two-block street has maintained Spanish revival architecture with original stucco buildings and clay roof tiles: thepaseo.org.
- Enjoy a relaxing walk along more than 70 miles of trails winding throughout Oklahoma City from the shoreline of **Lake Hefner** to the banks of the Oklahoma River.

Find more great suggestions at visitokc.com.

MAKE TIME FOR THE MEMORIAL

The **OKC National Memorial and Museum** honors victims of the 1995 bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The large museum recalls the sights and sounds of that fateful day through voices, images, and artifacts. The free outdoor memorial is open seven days a week, and the museum is open Monday–Saturday (9-6) and Sunday (noon-6). Admission is \$15: memorialmuseum.com.



Centennial Land Run Monument



Skydance Bridge

Introducing 2020 Nominees for Standing Boards and Commissions

Antioch, TN—The 2019-20 Nominating Committee presented the following nominees to be considered for the 2020 convention election, according to Ron Helms (MI), committee chairman. Please note: FWB Foundation and North American Ministries do not elect board members in 2020.

WNAC : 2026 Term

Jessica Edwards (TN), replacing Janie Campbell

Tracy Payne (OK), replacing herself

Katie Postlewaite (SC), replacing Diana Bryant

Jessica Edwards has been a home maker and home educator for her three children since 2008. Prior to this role, she worked for SunTrust Bank five years as a bank teller, financial service representative, and mortgage processor. She graduated from Welch College in 2003, with a B.S. in Biblical Studies and minors in Missions and History. She has been active in WAC activities for more than 15 years, serving as treasurer of Tennessee WAC four years, and as co-president, secretary, and Missions Committee chairman of her local WAC group. Jessica and her husband Bob are active members of Cross Timbers FWB Church in Nashville, Tennessee.

Katie Postlewaite has worked four years as the receptionist and runner for a law firm in Johnsonville, South Carolina. She is an active member of Westside FWB Church, where her husband Joey has pastored more

than seven years. She teaches Sunday School and AWANA, sings in the choir, directs VBS, and organizes the church's annual missions 5K race fundraiser. Katie is president of her church WAC, vice president of the district WAC, and vice president of South Carolina WAC. She also has been active in Vertical Three CTS Expo activities. Katie and Joey are in the process of adopting two little girls.

Welch College : 2026 Term

Jeff Crabtree (ATL-CAN), replacing himself

Shiloh Hackett (TN), replacing himself

Chris Truett (NC), replacing himself

Randall House : 2026 Term

Paul Bryant (MS), replacing himself

Ryan Giles (OK), replacing Randy Scott

Rick Taylor (AL), replacing Steve Lindsay

Ryan Giles has been pastor of Kingsview FWB Church in Oklahoma City since 2010. Prior to accepting his current pastorate, he served as admissions director for Randall University, where he continues as an adjunct professor, teaching courses on Free Will Baptist history and doctrine and practical ministry. After attending Randall University in 1997, Ryan earned a B.A. in Hotel Restaurant Administration from Oklahoma State University in 2001, and a M.A. in Religious Studies from Randall University in 2010. He is a member of the Oklahoma State Missions Board and

additionally served on the Mission Board of the First Oklahoma Association from 2012-2017.

Rick Taylor has pastored Sulphur Springs FWB Church in Northport, Alabama, since 2003. Rick earned a B.S. in Business Management from University of Alabama (1998) and a M.A. in Theology and Ministry from Welch College (2019). He has served as chairman of the Christian Education Board for the Alabama State Association and as a member of the Alabama Home Missions Board. Rick and his wife Amanda have three children: Aiden, Alle, and Evan.

IM, Inc. : 2026 Term

Janice Banks (TX), replacing herself

Rick Cason (GA), replacing Jeff Manning

Jeff Nichols (TN), replacing himself

Rick Cason has pastored churches in Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina during 36 years in gospel ministry. He currently pastors Ebenezer FWB Church in Glennville, Georgia, where he has been since 2007. After attending Welch College briefly, Cason earned bachelor, master, and doctoral degrees in Ministry from Bethany Divinity College and Seminary. Rick has been active in denominational work, including the FWB Board of Retirement; Georgia State Missions Board; assistant moderator of the North Carolina State Association; director of the Georgia State Youth Conference; and numerous

Pre-Registration

2020 National Association of Free Will Baptists

NAFWB | V3 | OKLAHOMA CITY, OK | JULY 19-22

One Form Per Person | Register Online: www.nafwb.org | Name Badges Required for All Convention Events

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

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

Voting Delegates

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

Non-Voting

- Attendee (All Ages, Including Infants and Toddlers)

Tickets

WNAC Laughter and Latté.....Qty _____ x \$20 = _____
Tuesday, July 21, 8:30 p.m. (\$25 onsite; limited quantity available)

Welch Alumni & Friends Luncheon..... Qty _____ x \$40 = _____
Wednesday, July 22, noon (\$50 onsite; no tickets will be sold between
pre-registration closing and convention; limited availability onsite)

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

Vertical Three Conference

Preschool

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

Students: \$25

Any student or competitor* attending any CTS competition or event
MUST pay \$25 V3 conference fee (\$35 onsite).

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

*Competitors must pay this V3 conference fee **in addition to**
CTS competition fees already paid.

College Age | Adults: \$20

Adults attending any competition or event MUST pay \$20.

- Adult Attendee

Tickets:

Student Ministry LuncheonQty _____ x \$30 = _____
Monday, July 20, noon (Featuring a Southern Kitchen Buffet)

V3 Event Qty _____ x \$13 = _____
(Featuring Jonnie W. | Joke Teller and Music Maker)
Tuesday, July 21, 9:00 pm (\$15 onsite/at the door)

V3 Information: 800-877-7030 | www.verticalthree.com

Register April 1 - June 19 | No Refunds After June 19

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

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

Card # _____

Card Holder _____ Exp ____/____

Signature _____

RETURN TO:

Convention Registration

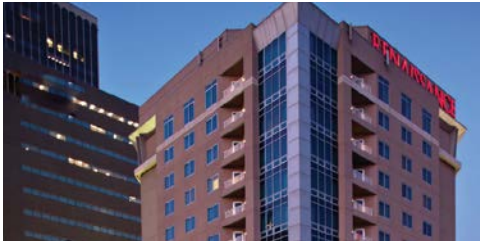
PO Box 5002

Antioch, TN 37011 / FAX: 615-731-0771

Convention Questions: 877-767-7659 | convention@nafwb.org

OVERCOME
EVIL WITH GOOD

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



Renaissance OKC Convention Center Hotel
 10 N Broadway, Oklahoma City, OK 73102
 800-468-3571
 Rate: **\$145** King or Double/Double Room
\$155 King or Double/Double Suite
\$155 for Club Level King
 Valet Parking: **\$27** per day
 No self parking onsite



Sheraton OKC Downtown Hotel
 1 N Broadway, Oklahoma City, OK 73102
 800-325-3535
 Rate: **\$159**
 Valet Parking: **\$25** per day
 Self Parking: **\$10** per day
 (Self-parking purchased through the hotel front desk)



Courtyard by Marriott Downtown OKC
 2 W Reno Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73102
 405-232-2290
 Rate: **\$159**
 Valet Parking: **\$24** per day
 Self Parking: **\$5** per day



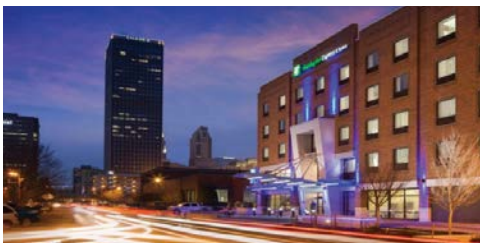
Skirvin Hilton Hotel
 One Park Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73102
 405-702-8546
 Rate: **\$159**
 Valet Parking: **\$28** per day
 No self parking onsite



Colcord Hotel
 15 N Robinson Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73102
 405-601-4300
 Rate: **\$169**
 Valet Parking: **\$25** per day
 No self parking onsite



Residence Inn by Marriott Bricktown
 400 E Reno Ave, Oklahoma City, OK 73104
 405-607-1700
 Rate: **\$169**
 No Valet Parking
 Self Parking: **\$5** per day



Holiday Inn Express & Suites Bricktown
 101 E Main St, Oklahoma City, OK 73104
 405-778-8100
 Rate: **\$149**
 Self Parking: **\$15** per day
 Bus/Van Parking: **\$50** per day

**Reservation cut-off date:
 Friday, June 19, 2020**
 Visit www.nafwb.org for more info.

2020 Convention Housing Information

1. Prepare Personal Information.

You will need the following:

- + Name(s), address, city, state, zip
- + Phone/email
- + Credit card information
- + Special requests: accessibility, rollaway, or crib

2. Contact the Hotel.

- + **Online reservations open Monday, May 11, 9:00 a.m. CDT.** Links to make reservations will be available at nafwb.org. No phone reservations will be accepted on this day.
- + **Phone reservations open Tuesday, May 12, 9:00 a.m. CDT.** Online reservations are encouraged to avoid long waits.

3. Things to Remember:

- + Hotels have been instructed **NOT TO ACCEPT** reservations before opening day.
- + Hotel rates do not include 14.13% tax.

NOTE: The first night's room and tax will be charged for canceled reservations.

The charge is non-refundable, but reservations are transferable. Available rooms may be posted at nafwb.org for transfer. **Note:** Convention policy supercedes hotel policy.

Groups making ten or more reservations can contact Ryan Lewis at ryan@nafwb.org or **877-767-7659** before **April 30** for more information.

other district and regional positions. Rick is a long-time law enforcement chaplain and the chaplain of the local middle school. He and his wife Debbie have one adult son.

Board of Retirement : 2023 Term

Mike Gladson (OH), replacing Jack Daniel, deceased

Mike Gladson has pastored churches in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Ohio over three decades. He began his current pastorate at Canaan FWB Church in Creston, Ohio, in 2014. Ordained in 1981, Gladson holds a B.A. in Pastoral Training from Welch College and an M.A. in Pastoral Ministry from Trinity Theological Seminary. Mike has served in various capacities on the denominational level, including the Board of Retirement. He is also chairman of the Ohio State Mission Board. Mike and his wife Linda have three children: Nathan (Stacey), Ashley, and Amy (Brock), and one granddaughter, Eddy.

Commission for Theological Integrity : 2025

Rodney Holloman (TN), replacing himself

Historical Commission : 2025

Eric Thomsen (TN), replacing himself

Music Commission : 2025

Daniel Webster (TN), replacing Bryan Hughes

Daniel Webster is director of enrollment and adjunct instructor of Music and Bible at Welch College. He has been involved in music ministry for 18 years, serving four Free Will Baptist churches in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Daniel earned a bachelor's degree in Sacred Music from Gateway Christian College

(2005), a Master of Biblical Studies from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary (2013), a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies (2016) and Master of Arts in Church Music (2018) from Maranatha Baptist University. Currently, he is pursuing a Ph.D. in Church Music from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. Webster is moderator of the Northern Quarterly of the Cumberland Association (TN), served as clerk of the North Carolina State Association from 2015-2017, writes curriculum for Randall House, and has numerous articles and papers in print. Daniel and his wife Kimberly have three children.

Media Commission : 2025

Jeremy Smith (NC), replacing himself

Executive Committee : 2023 Term

Stan Bunch (MO), replacing himself

Wayne Hale (MID-ATL), replacing himself

Daniel Edwards (IN), replacing himself

2021 Term

Chris Todd (SC), replacing Glenn Poston

Chris Todd has been executive secretary of the South Carolina State Association of Free Will Baptists since 2014. He and his wife Misty additionally operate the Free Will Baptist Bookstore and Coffee Shop in Turbeville, South Carolina. Chris is a graduate of Andersonville Theological Seminary and Horry-Georgetown Technical College. Prior to accepting his role at the state office, Chris served as pastor of First FWB Church in Greenwood, South Carolina, for almost nine years. During that time, he led the church on multiple disaster relief-oriented mission trips. Chris is also founder and organizer of the

South Carolina Disaster Relief Board, which has enlisted over 150 volunteers. The organization has ministered in Hurricanes Matthew, Florence, and Michael and provided relief after South Carolina's record flooding in 2015. Chris has been a member of the General Board of the National Association since 2014.

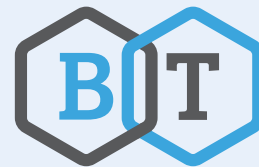
General Officers

Moderator: Tim York (TN)

Assistant Moderator: William Smith (GA)

Clerk: Randy Bryant (FL)

Assistant Clerk: Ernie Lewis (IL)



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The podcast consists of short, practical, and informative interviews in which people share what they have learned from their ministry. These men and women speak to us from the "trenches" about what has and hasn't worked for them in ministry.

Access and subscribe to the Better Together podcast, published weekly, through www.nafwb.org as well as our various social media outlets (Facebook and Twitter) and via iTunes.

Do We Welcome People to Church?

BY EDDIE MOODY

In an increasingly post-Christian culture, people no longer attend church just because they are “supposed to.”¹ In this environment, it is critical to be an inviting, welcoming church, so we have the opportunity to expose people to the gospel. Here are a few suggestions for drawing visitors to our churches (and bringing them back):

Use Directional Signs. Make it easy for people to find your church. Even if every person in your community knows where your church is located, a directional sign says to everyone who see it, “Visitors are welcome!”

Use a Website and Facebook. A website or Facebook site with accurate information about your services and activities, as well as your physical address, sends a message that visitors are welcome and expected. Today, most people look online to determine if they will give your church a try. Let them know what to expect. At the church I pastored over the last two decades, the nursery director recorded a video to demonstrate nursery check-in procedures and to show the nursery to prospective visitors. Potential visitors are asking, “Will my child be safe at this church?”

¹ The Great Decline: 60 years of religion in one graph. Accessed at <https://religion-news.com/2014/01/27/great-decline-religion-united-states-one-graph/> on January 10, 2020.



Use your website and Facebook site to answer a confident yes! Put people at ease about visiting your church for the first time.

Be Ready for Visitors. Surprisingly, more visitors are repelled by our sloppiness than our message (controversial to the secular mind). When we don’t do things well, people question whether we really believe the message. For example, if our message is true, Easter Services should have the excitement and preparation like an athlete has for the Super Bowl. If we are late to staff a nursery or unprepared to sing or preach, it detracts from our message.

Act like you have visitors in your service, even when you don’t. Consider whether your activities are inviting or off-putting. As you share announcements, think how they sound to visitors. Do you use “inside language?” Do you communicate well-organized, exciting events? Understand your congregation is also listening. Do they wonder, “Could I bring my friend to this service?” They have to feel comfortable enough to invite their friends and relatives.

Seize Opportunities. Identify every activity that draws a large number of visitors (Christmas Eve, Easter, VBS). Then consider three suggestions: first, during these events, don’t overemphasize the number of visitors. Sometimes, we make it sound as though most people attending are visitors. Second, use these events as promotional launchpads. Promote an upcoming sermon series, Bible study on apologetics, or any other exciting church activity. Use a program, bulletin, or announcement slideshow before and after the service to draw people back to your activities. Offer something for kids, ladies, men—as many groups as you can. You want visitors to think, “I want to come back for that.”

Being a welcoming church helps us fulfill the charge given to us in the Parable of the Great Banquet (Luke 14:23) to fill the Lord’s house. Let us do all we can to welcome those who need to know Him. **ONE**



Eddie Moody


Executive Secretary,
National Association of
Free Will Baptists

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Curriculum Discipleship Plan 2020 Scope and Sequence



May 2020

Special Topic: Complicated Questions

Recognizing Scripture as the Highest Authority

- Week 1 - Does the Big Bang Fit With the Bible?
- Week 2 - How Old Is the Earth?
- Week 3 - Who Was Cain's Wife?
- Week 4 - Where Did Different Races Come From?
- Week 5 - What Does the Bible Say About Dinosaurs?

June 2020

New Testament: Philippians

The Joy of Living in Christ

- Week 1 - To Live Is Christ
- Week 2 - The Example of Christ
- Week 3 - To Know Christ
- Week 4 - Rejoice in Christ



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