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ONE magazine

JUNE • JULY • 2022

Prayer as Ministry

*Whatever Happened to Soul Winning?
The Conversation Continues*

Called to Support Missions

Don't Curdle the Custard!

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contents

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

ARTICLES

- 06 **Who Made the Trees?**
- 08 **Summer School: 13 Ways Moms Can Prepare Their Daughters for the Next School Year**
- 10 **Prayer as Ministry**
- 12 **The WNAC Giving Tree**
- 13 **Whatever Happened to Soul Winning? The Conversation Continues...**
- 16 **Uncle Bob**
- 18 **Called to Support Missions: An Interview with Sam and Jane Johnson**
- 24 **Winter Creeper of the Soul**
- 26 **Don't Curdle the Custard!**
- 30 **Ready for Disaster**
- 31 **A Celebration 200 Years in the Making**
- 35 **Chaplain With Clarity**
- 40 **No Regrets!**
- 42 **Finding God's Will**
- 47 **The Sufficiency of Scripture and Christian Worship**
- 52 **Reset: The 2022 D6 Conference**
- 59 **Back to Birmingham**
- 60 **NAFWB 2022 Preliminary Program**

COLUMNS

- 04 **First Glimpse:** Flying Under a Different Banner
- 21 **Primary Source:** Samuel Johnson: Born Almost Dead
- 29 **Brown on Green:** And He Died
- 38 **Refresh:** Avoiding Roadblocks to Church Growth
- 44 **Intersect:** Becoming a Model Church
- 50 **Leadership Whiteboard:** The Role of Critics
- 64 **Better Together:** Answer the Call to Go the Extra Mile

NEWS

- 22 **Around the World**
- 32 **Across the Nation**
- 37 **From the Foundation**
- 46 **At Welch College**
- 56 **About the Denomination**



06



18

47



Flying Under a Different Banner

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

The property catches my attention every morning on the way to work. A simple, country cottage with white shiplap siding framed against a grove of trees. Nothing remarkable there. I pass a dozen similar places during my commute.

What grabs my attention are the signs. Banners, flags, and streamers fill every available space. Hanging from the trees, lining the porch, and fluttering in the breeze down the length of the split-rail fence.

Each sign screams to be noticed. Angry political slogans. Expressions of dissatisfaction with the state of the country. An old van parked out front bearing a hand-lettered, profanity-laced rant on each side. And to top it off, a larger-than-life Uncle Sam sits perched on an old toilet in the middle of the yard. Every *inch* of the property communicates simmering rage.

The homeowner is not alone, though more uninhibited than most. The country is angry. And Christians are not immune.

Last week, my wife and I had lunch with a career missionary who recently returned to the U.S. She expressed her struggle to readjust to American culture this visit. When I asked what had changed, she responded immediately, "Everybody is so concerned about defending their own point of view. They are just so angry. This is a different country than the one I left."

I get it. A pandemic stretching into three years. A nation split right down the middle on political and social issues. Centuries of unresolved racial tension at a tipping point. Inflation at a 40-year high. And the current price of gas! It's the perfect, anger-producing storm.

But the storm shouldn't come from us. Christians, that is. Don't get me wrong. Anger has its place. Jesus Himself

made that clear. Anger at sin. Anger at injustice. Anger at the abuse of the helpless and marginalized. Anger at religious hypocrisy. All are acceptable objects of anger.

But we must be careful not to cross the line to *selfish* anger. Anger that feeds the sin-beast within. Anger that puts self at the center of the universe. Anger that places our own needs, preferences, and wants before others. That type of anger is simply not biblical.

Instead, our lives should offer a contrast. And the raging world around us presents a perfect opportunity. In John 13:35, Jesus told his disciples they would fly under a *different* banner. "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have *love* one to another."

"But that was then," someone protests.

True. Roman occupation and oppression. Taxes far beyond anything Americans have ever experienced. Poverty. Violence. Racial and socio-economic division. Thoroughly corrupt religious and political institutions. First century Judea was no picnic either.

So how do we move from anger to love? Truthfully, it types easier than it lives. Recall the simple acronym many of us learned as kids at church camp or VBS: J-O-Y. Jesus first, others second, and our own needs last. Simple, yes. But sometimes so hard. Yet, this simple formula squashes explosive anger.

I wish I could say I always live the J-O-Y way. I don't. But I should. And you should, too. Let's work together to change the angry face of the church to reflect the loving face of our Savior. That's the face the world needs to see. **ONE**

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

FROM THE EDITOR

Readers, in the current and upcoming issues, you may notice inconsistencies in the type of paper used to print the magazine. As you might guess, these changes are the result of ongoing paper shortages making it difficult to use a single brand and weight of paper. Thank you for your patience and understanding, and for being faithful readers of the magazine.

—Eric K. Thomsen, *Managing Editor*

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Who Made the Trees?

BY CLAIRE RYAN

“Who made the trees? Did you make all the trees?”

He smiled gently, having answered the young girl’s question many times already. “No, child. Remember, I merely planted the seeds I was given. God did the rest.”

The little girl nodded. “God did the rest. God made the trees.”

The man squeezed his granddaughter’s hand gently, “And each one of them has a name. Just like me and you.”

She turned her wide eyes upward, smiling broadly, “All of them?”

The two walked together, hand in hand, through the vast grove of trees as the grandfather discussed the name of each.

The tallest was named *Upright* for her honorable nature and the way she unfailingly pointed to the heavens.

One tree looked burdened, beaten down with withered branches and aged wood. Yet, he still stood, enduring all of life’s battles. For this, he was called *Resilient*.

Another tree had incredible, overarching branches, thick with leaves and moss. Any who sought *Safe Haven*, need only rest under her protective arms.

Then there was *Longevity*, a seemingly ageless tree with deep roots and a strong foundation.

The largest was called *Life Giving*, for within his mighty roots and throughout his vast wood flowed a multitude of pure, plentiful oxygen.

One tree was filled with an abundance of oranges, their lively color standing out against the stark green of leaves. Her name was *Bears Fruit*.

There were other smaller trees, still growing and changing, in the early years of their life. The ever-growing glade, the grandfather called them.

These smaller trees leaned on a bigger tree: *Support*. She helped the smaller ones stay in line as they grew. Her long branches extended across the grove, providing a motherly embrace.

On the edge of the grove stood lonely trees, susceptible to drought or the terrors of a storm. This was home to trees called *Grounded* and *Firmly Planted*, whose roots were so thick and widespread no amount of wind could uproot them, or sun could parch them.

Nearby, were *Stability* and *Sturdy*, whose growth were disrupted by an earthquake long ago. They perched precariously on a steep edge, but instead of giving way, their roots grew down the steep wall and into the ground below, safely securing their trunks.

After a while, they reached the end of the grove. The grandfather stopped. He knelt until he was eye level with the girl, took her gently by the shoulders, and held her gaze. "You see, child, each of these trees represent our lives in this world as children of God." He pointed to her chest, "You and me? We are the seeds God has planted into this world."

She stared at his face, listening intently.

*You and me?
We are the seeds
God has planted
into this world.*

"You are to be *Upright*: honest, honorable, and always *Pointing to Christ*. This life will bring you trials and tribulation; you must be *Resilient* against its temptations; you must *Endure* its painful arrows. You are called to be a *Safe Haven*, a wall of

Protection and filled with love for the poor, the needy, and the lost. Your life must exhibit *Longevity*; a life *Firmly Planted*, *Deeply Rooted*, and *Grounded in Truth*."

The girl nodded; her brow furrowed in innocent concern.

"Oh, child," he continued softly, "Your words and your actions must be *Life Giving*; every breath must magnify your

Maker so you are one who *Bears Fruit*. Through Christ working in you, others may receive His pure, plentiful, grace. Like the young trees, you must be *Ever Growing* in your knowledge of Christ, your love for Him, and your drive to be more like Him every day. You are to *Support* those around you—but not just those around you. Your support must *Extend* to the ends of the Earth, for He has called you higher and He is worthy of that calling. You are to have *Stability* when the snares of evil try to destroy your foundation, your faith. You are to be *Sturdy* when confronted by mockery and deceit or when you are told your faith is a lie."

Tears began to well in the little girl's eyes. A nervous hand rested across her lips, as if to stifle a sob.

"Oh, but child," The grandfather whispered. "You are not alone. Remember who made the trees?"

The girl sniffled, blinking away the tears. Her hand dropped. "God made the trees."

"God made the trees," he repeated, "and He has created them with everything necessary to stand firmly in this life. He strengthens them to withstand what could weaken them." He kissed her forehead. "And He has created you in the same way. In your weakness, He is strong."

The grandfather stood. The girl's eyes followed him all the way up. She raised her hands, and he lifted her into his arms. Together, they stared back at the trees, swaying softly in the afternoon breeze.

"I pray these trees over you every day." The grandfather said. "In your waking. In your sleeping. In your coming. In your going. In your present and in your future."

"When I'm playing?" She asked quietly.

He chuckled. "Yes, even when you're playing." With her in his arms, he turned from the grove and began walking down the hill.

The girl looked back in deep thought. Then she looked up at her grandfather. "Who made the playground?" She asked.

His laughter echoed through the beautiful grove behind them. **ONE**

About the Author: A 2017 graduate of Welch College, Claire Ryan teaches at Cheatham County Central High School in Ashland City, Tennessee. Read more articles like this at ShineFWB.com.

Summer SCHOOL

13 WAYS MOMS
CAN PREPARE
THEIR DAUGHTERS
FOR THE NEXT
SCHOOL YEAR

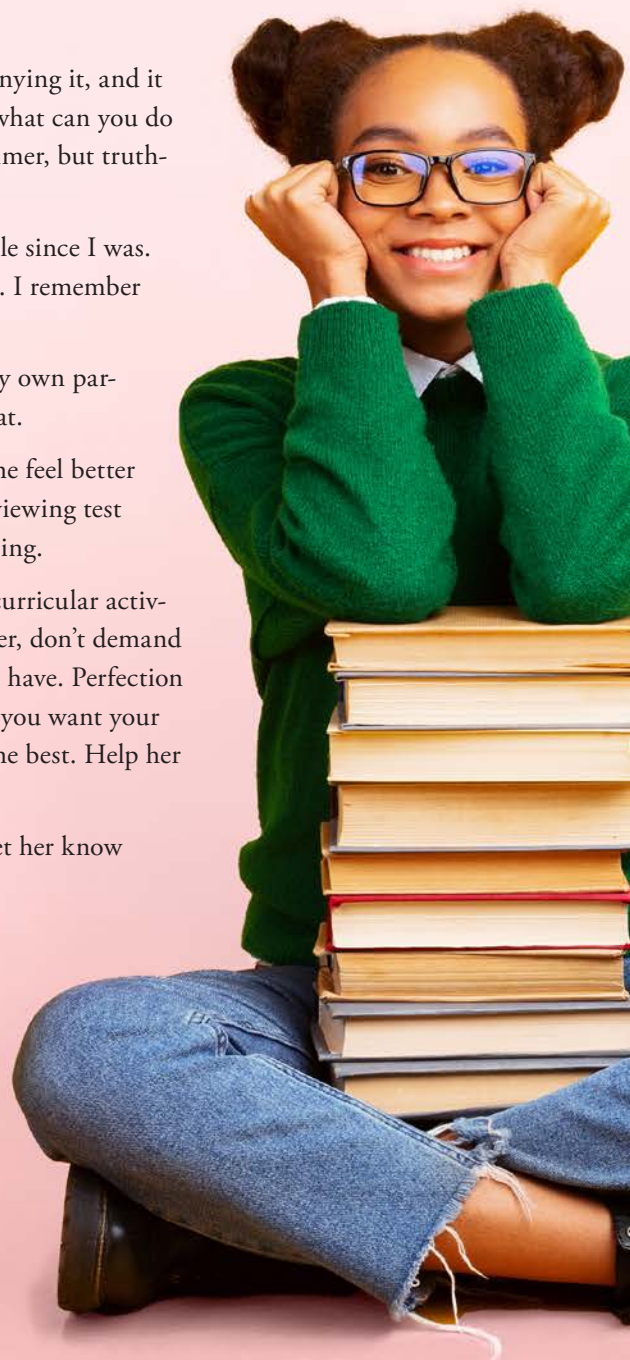
BY ELIZABETH HILL

Being a preteen or a teen is tough. Add in school, with all the ups and downs accompanying it, and it becomes even tougher. You know it, I know it, and your daughter *really* knows it. So, what can you do to help your daughter thrive in school? No one wants to think about school in the summer, but truthfully, the months off are the best time to prepare for the coming year.

It pains me to say I'm not a teenager anymore, and I hate to admit it's been a good while since I was. Thankfully, my school years are not such ancient history that I've forgotten everything. I remember both the pain and excitement of surviving middle school and high school.

With that in mind, here are 13 suggestions to help your daughter. Many come from my own parents. And, yes, I called my mom to talk these over with her. I'll never be too old for that.

- 1. Help your daughter study.** Mom would quiz me for tests, and it always made me feel better prepared. Of course, your daughter needs to develop individual studying skills, but reviewing test material together is a great way to bond and to help you keep up with what she is learning.
- 2. Encourage excellence and effort, not perfection.** From schoolwork to extracurricular activities, or leadership roles, teach your daughter to put in the work to do her best. However, don't demand perfection. Excellence is giving your best effort with the time, resources, and skills you have. Perfection is pushing beyond reasonable limits to attain the highest possible outcome. Of course, you want your daughter to do her best, but you don't want her to burn out in an endless quest to be the best. Help her find a proper balance.
- 3. Support extracurricular activities.** Go to games and recitals. Cheer her on. Let her know you're proud of her.
- 4. Share your own stories.** While your experiences won't necessarily be the same as your daughter's, she will benefit from your tales of success, failure, excitement, heartbreak, and embarrassment. Your stories will help your daughter relate to you and give her reassurance someone else understands what she's feeling.
- 5. Let your daughter know she can talk to you about anything,** including the hard and embarrassing stuff. I can only imagine what girls face in school right now, with so much change over the last few years. Your daughter needs someone in her corner to tell her the truth. Be approachable, not condemning. Cultivate a



relationship where she feels safer coming to you with questions rather than going to the Internet, friends, magazines, or teachers.

6. Be willing to talk about relationships. Your daughter has a natural desire for relationship; it's part of every girl's DNA. Whether friendships, sibling relationships, crushes, or boyfriends, she is searching for love and acceptance. Walk beside her as relationships change. Share godly wisdom and personal experience. She needs someone to talk to, and the best person is you.

7. Teach your daughter to present herself well. She wants to make a good impression, and you can help her do that. Learning practical things like good hygiene, makeup techniques, and flattering hair styles will build her self-confidence tremendously. Help your daughter find clothes that both make her feel confident and demonstrate her self-respect.

8. Eat together as a family. I do not remember many meals at home I didn't share with my family. You may not get much out of her at breakfast (especially if your daughter is anything like me). But consistent, shared mealtimes provide her daily opportunities to share what's going on in her life.

9. Don't treat her like she's still a little kid. Grant a measure of freedom. Let her take the car to school or to get coffee with friends. As much as you want (and need) to be a part of your daughter's life, she also needs time on her own to develop independence. And that's a good thing! You don't want her living with you forever, do you? She needs to be prepared for the quickly approaching, after-high-school years.

10. Provide stability and set expectations. Sure, I just encouraged you to give your daughter freedom, but she also needs to know someone is in charge. While she may gripe and complain about your rules, she can't deny the safety and protection that comes with knowing her godly, consistent parents are leading the family with integrity. Your daughter needs to know the boundaries. Within those boundaries, she will find greater freedom to live, grow, and mature.

11. Don't teach your daughter middle/high school is the "high point" of life. Let her know every stage of life comes with joy, excitement, fears, and challenges. Yes, encourage your daughter

to soak it all in, but don't create added stress by urging her to "make the most of high school." She can enjoy these years while also looking forward to good things to come.

12. Help her as she plans her future. If your daughter wants to go to college, help her think through her plans, and then find and apply for scholarships. However, there's no need to push college as the only option. She may have other goals or dreams that don't require college, and that's okay. The most important thing is she follows a God-honoring path that complements the skills and abilities He has given her.

13. Let your daughter fight some hard battles. Don't always clean up her messes (literally or metaphorically). Always be there to love and guide her through difficulties. She should not face major problems on her own, but you should not always jump in and take care of everything. Let her figure out things on her own. If she never has to learn new and challenging things, or if she never faces consequences for her actions, she will be stuck in a rut, waiting for someone to fix it for her. Kids with helicopter parents are in for a brutal awakening when they finally encounter difficulty on their own. Don't set your daughter up for that kind of failure.

Of course, this is not an exhaustive list. Your daughter is unique, and so are her challenges. As a mom, you have a God-given place of influence in your daughter's life. The things you share now will stay with her forever. Don't forget you're human, too. You won't always have the right answers or the past experiences to help her with what she's going through. When you're not sure what to do or how to help, model and share the truths of God's Word. His Word never changes, and His truths will always apply.

Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but another school year is only weeks away. Pray and prepare now, and with God's grace and your loving guidance, your daughter can face another school year with joy and anticipation, confident God is using each experience for His glory and her good. **ONE**

About the Author: Elizabeth Hill graduated from Welch College in 2015 with a degree in elementary education. As the daughter of both a former principal and guidance counselor, she has witnessed firsthand the benefits of parental support through a child's school years. She is a member of Sylvan Park FWB Church where she is active in student ministry. She is a member of the Free Will Baptist Executive Office team.



PRAYER AS *Ministry*

BY LYNETTE MORGAN

Prayer. Thousands of books have been written on the subject. But follow prayer with the word “ministry,” and you add another dimension. One definition of *ministry* is “the spiritual work or service of any Christian.” This article is about Christians giving themselves to the spiritual work of prayer for missions and evangelism.

Let me start by saying I did not seek this ministry. To be honest, I didn’t want it. I wanted to be on the field “working” for the Lord: doing, teaching, evangelizing, treating the sick—hands-on ministry. But in 2011, I became sick, and our ministry overseas came to a halt.

As months turned into years, we knew our return to the field was not to be. I became rather Job-like, asking God what in the world He was thinking to bring us back from the field. Missionaries were needed. We wanted to go. But, whether here or there, I had committed my life to serve Him, so after accepting this roadblock, I asked Him what ministry He had for me here, with my health limitations.

In 2018, I was invited into a discussion at IM concerning an upcoming project, and was asked to head up the needed prayer effort. This became an ongoing prayer ministry for IM, its missionaries, and ministries. Thus, Gideon’s Army was born. Clint kept me up to date regarding things happening on the different fields, and what God was doing around the world. As I began gathering daily requests and needs from each field and missionary, my love and burden for these countries and peoples grew. I felt called

to each one. As I prayed and shared the needs with a group of praying people, my understanding of prayer as ministry evolved. **In praying for someone in ministry, I join them in ministry.**

S.D. Gordon explained it this way:

Today a half hour is spent in China for its missionaries, its native Christians, its millions... Tomorrow’s bit of time is largely spent in India perhaps. And, so, this man with the narrow outer horizon and the broad inner horizon pushes his spirit-way around the world. The tide of prayer sweeps quietly, relentlessly day by day. This is the true Christian life. This man is winning souls and refreshing lives in these far-off lands and in nearby places as truly as though he were in each place. This is the Master’s plan. The true follower of Jesus has as broad a horizon as his Master. Jesus thought in continents and seas. His follower prays in continents and seas.

THE CALL TO PRAY

Having been raised in a missionary home and having served on the field, I knew the importance of prayer and people praying for us.

At times I felt so needy, I wondered if anyone was praying. Now, living on the sending side, I want to fill that gap, to

“Through prayer you can accompany any missionary to remote reaches of the earth.”

—Wesley Duwell,
*Touch the World
Through Prayer*

meet the need, to labor interceding through prayer. **Answering the call to pray requires as much obedience as answering the call to go.** Missionaries cannot go and accomplish what they do without the faithful and fervent prayers of committed praying partners. Yet, praying for God's work is not just limited to a few. Wesley Duwell stated: "God...planned for ordinary Christians like you and me to become mighty in prayer...for the reaping of God's harvest among the nations today."

Eight times, the Apostle Paul asked—rather told—churches to pray for him. He knew he needed their interceding to God. He also understood the young church needed to see intercession as their responsibility.

Jim Elliott said, "I have felt the impact of your prayer in these past weeks. I am certain now that nothing has had a more powerful influence on this life of mine than your prayers."

PARTNERSHIP WITH GOD

Philip Yancey, in his book *Prayer*, said Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a German Lutheran pastor, imprisoned by Hitler, "grasped the nature of prayer as partnership with God's activities on earth."

As all-powerful as God is, for some reason, He has chosen to make His activity on earth contingent on us. Before Jesus left, He made it clear *we*, His followers, are to be His witnesses on the earth. He left it to *us* to build His Church. And for Him to move, *we* are to pray. We are to pray for His will to be done, for the laborers to go, for the gospel to be proclaimed boldly. Prayer as ministry is powerful, effective, and necessary.

In *The Kneeling Christian*, an unknown author implored, "Let us never forget that the greatest thing we can do for God or for man is to pray. For we can accomplish far more by our prayers than by our work. Prayer is omnipotent; it can do anything that God can do! When we pray, God works."

NOT AN EASY TASK

Praying is not easy. It takes personal time, energy, and determination. No other personal commitment has been as hard to carry out. I truly believe the enemy, who knows the

power of prayer—maybe better than we do—and fears its results, tries every way he can to derail our prayer times.

I find Elizabeth Elliot's statement greatly challenging: "One way of laying down our lives is by praying for somebody. In prayer I am saying, in effect, 'my life for yours.' My time, my energy, my thought, my concern, my concentration, my faith—here they are, for you. So it is that I participate in the work of Christ."

I believe Jesus' command to go into all the world and preach the gospel is for each one of us. We may be called to literally go, yes. But we must *always* go through prayer.

According to S. D. Gordon, "Intercession is service... unlike all other forms of service and superior to them in this: it has fewer limitations. In all other service we are constantly limited by space, bodily strength, equipment, material obstacles, and difficulties involved with differences of personality. Prayer knows no such limits. It goes directly into men's hearts, quietly passes through walls, and comes into most direct touch with the inner heart and will."

Let's valiantly attack the strongholds of spiritism in Africa, atheism in France, and Buddhism in Japan through conscientious prayer. Join me in holding up the arms of our missionaries—their ministries, their spiritual strength, their families and marriages. Let's unleash God's power by diligently praying for our missionaries, other overseas workers, pastors, church leaders, and church members in countries around the world. **ONE**

About the Author: Lynette Miley Morgan spent decades serving in Côte d'Ivoire, Africa, both as a missionary kid and a missionary nurse. She and her husband Clint also served in Central Asia and France through IM, Inc. She has three sons, two daughters-in-law, a daughter, a son-in-law and eight grandchildren scattered around the U.S. and in Colombia, South America.

"The greatest need is prayer. Without increasing the number of Christian workers or their financial support, we could see multiplied results if we would only multiply prayer."
—Wesley Duwell

"Prayer is the mighty engine that is to move the missionary work."

—A.B. Simpson



WNAC

The Giving Tree

For 88 years, WNAC has been “bearing fruit” as one of the most effective supporters of Free Will Baptist missions and church planting. In the last decade alone, the ministry gave over \$2 million to home and international missions. And this does not include the hundreds of thousands of dollars in supplies given to missionaries and church planters from the Steward Provision Closet. It does not include gifts to children’s homes, annual national and international college scholarships, or local missions projects and objectives. To the glory of God, WNAC has produced a bountiful harvest of fruit.

It is time to take care of the tree.

While Free Will Baptists have faithfully given to missions through WNAC, supporting special projects, and donating to the Provision Closet, we have not given enough attention to the WNAC office itself—the tree bearing the fruit.

As a result, the WNAC office is currently understaffed and faces severe funding challenges. The budget has been pruned to the breaking point, and if something doesn’t change soon, the office could experience lasting damage.

The Giving Tree

To meet these financial needs, the WNAC Board established the WNAC Giving Tree, a fundraising campaign to increase annual income to the office by \$35,000, relieving financial pressure and making future growth possible. Join the Giving Tree by partnering with WNAC in one of the following categories of monthly giving:

White leaf: \$10 per month

Bronze leaf: \$25 per month

Silver leaf: \$50 per month

Gold leaf: \$100 per month

How many monthly givers will it take to meet the \$35,000 per year goal?

30 individuals, groups, or churches giving **\$10** per month

25 individuals, groups, or churches giving **\$25** per month

20 individuals, groups, or churches giving **\$50** per month

10 individuals, groups, or churches giving **\$100** per month

Working together in Christ, WNAC can continue to bear much fruit. Will you help us? **ONE**

To join the WNAC Giving Tree, visit WNAC.org/giving



Whatever Happened to *Soul Winning?*

THE CONVERSATION CONTINUES...

ONE Magazine readers reacted with a flood of response to Robert E. Picirilli's article, "Whatever Happened to Soul-Winning?" in the February-March issue. The following responses are only a sampling of the ways Free Will Baptists shared their heart regarding this vital issue.

When I read Dr. Picirilli's article on soul winning, it sent chills and sadness through me. It was as if he had been reading my thoughts. This part of being a Christian has bothered me for several years. I, too, am in the category of "ripe old age" at 81. Dr. Picirilli and I share the same view regarding soul winning. If our older methods of soul winning (witnessing) have become obsolete, why don't we cure the problem by coming up with some new methods? Some suggestions:

1. Since no one can be saved without the Holy Spirit, try asking Him to lay on your heart someone who needs Jesus. Then pray for that person daily and make it a point to contact him or her by visiting, telephoning, etc.
2. Public records will give you house numbers of every house in your neighborhood. Make a list of the

addresses and send your neighbors an invitation to visit your church (use the word *Neighbor*) as your salutation. Introduce yourself and provide information where they can contact you if they have questions.

3. Use your phone and social media as a means of witnessing.

Always remember, while people can ignore our words and correspondence, they have no control over our prayers. For 25 years, I prayed for a young lady who had strayed from the faith. I prayed someone would cross her path and invite her to go to church with them. More than two decades went by before it happened just as I had prayed. A neighbor invited her to church, and she went. She realized her need for Jesus, went forward during the invitation, and rededicated her life to God. Today, she and her husband attend a Bible-believing church and hold positions in the

Be alert. Pray for opportunities. People still need Jesus.

church. God still answers prayer in His own time. Yes, I became weary and discouraged during those years of prayer, but God knew the right time.

Note: Every house within a mile radius of my church will get a letter from me soon. Before mailing each letter, I will pray the Holy Spirit will go before each letter to prepare the hearts of those who receive it.

Gladys Gragg - Nashville, Tennessee

Thank you for the article by Dr. Robert Picirilli. It was much needed! He provided for us an eye witness account of the drift from an atmosphere of soul-winning in our churches to one where the term soul-winning is rarely mentioned. I pastored for many years, and I have witnessed exactly what Dr. Picirilli described. Due to the lack of soul-winning in our churches, we are experiencing low attendance, stagnation, and church services with little expectation and excitement. We must return to vibrant soul-winning churches where pastors lead the way as an example to their congregations. The Great Commission is still a command of Jesus, and every Christian must be involved. We cannot carry out His command by proxy. We all must be involved.

Glenn Hill, via Email

Questioning Evangelism

BY SANDY ATWOOD

This article is in response to Dr. Robert Picirilli's article, "Whatever Happened to Evangelism?" As I read the article (February-March 2022 issue), I felt many of the same emotions expressed. Yes, I have missed my share of opportunities and have often felt like a failure as a "soulwinner," but many years ago, the book, *Questioning Evangelism* helped me discover new ways to share the gospel.

The premise of the book is not to question whether we *should* evangelize, but that questions are a great way to share the good news about Jesus. This contrasted with my training in evangelism, which felt to me like a download of information: "Please sit still and listen to some wonderful news about Jesus."

I had no idea if they even believed in Jesus. In this book, Randy Newman encouraged Christians to start with *questions*. Over the years, I've found people are usually glad to offer their opinions. Through their answers, I gain valuable insight into their thinking. In this way, sharing the gospel becomes a dialogue rather than a monologue where I do most of the talking.

As Dr. Picirilli pointed out in his article, times have changed. In the 60s and 70s, most Americans believed in God. Even if they weren't Christians, they were brought up with a worldview that held the following fundamental truths:

- There is a God.
- Jesus came to earth and died for our sin.
- We are all sinners.
- God wants to have a relationship with you.

Today, people don't necessarily believe those shared truths. I recently asked a boy in my neighborhood if he knew who Jesus was, and he did not. When I shared the Christmas story with my six-year-old neighbor, she had never heard it before. Finding out what people believe (by asking questions) helps share truth that fits their understanding. Unless I ask questions first, my method of sharing may not be relevant. I will use a different approach for a person who doesn't even believe in God than one raised in church who has heard the gospel.

Jesus often engaged people through questions. According to Matt Tebbe, Jesus asked 307 questions in the Gospels. Some examples:

- Why do you call me good? (Luke 18:19)
- What do you want me to do for you? (Luke 18:35-41)

- Will you give me a drink? (John 4:7)
- Do you want to get well? (John 5:6)
- Who do the crowds say I am? (Luke 9:18)

Jesus often started with a question about their “felt needs” and then moved the conversation to their real need. Jesus not only revealed who He was, but He also revealed who they were through questions.

Asking people questions reveals their needs or highlights their misunderstanding of truth. When people say, “I don’t believe in God” ask, “*Why* don’t you believe in God?” before launching into an apologetic of who God is. You may find they need more information. You may find they have been deeply hurt by a church or Christian, or they blame God for some misfortune they’ve experienced. You would talk to these individuals differently. Listen with curiosity and compassion; people can always spot insincerity.

Start with general questions and move to more serious ones (and not always in one sitting). Often, we ask, “How are you?” as a greeting. Engage people a little deeper by really listening to their response. If they sense you really care, they may share about trouble they are having in their marriage or with their children or parents.

Here are some questions/prompting statements to start conversations or to transition conversations toward the gospel:

- How did you spend your weekend?
- How is work going for you?
- What do you think about _____? (Insert whatever you want.)
- Tell me about your spiritual background. (My daughter often uses this statement, and no one has been offended or refused to answer.)
- When did you first learn about Jesus? Who do you believe Jesus is?

Be alert. Pray for opportunities. People still need Jesus. People are searching for something to satisfy their need for love and forgiveness. Maybe your questions can shine a light into their darkness and provide them with the answer they really need.

Simple Ways to Share the Gospel:

Pray.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict and bring salvation. We cannot evangelize without the power of the Holy Spirit. Pray to be filled with love and power. Pray regularly for people you know who are unsaved. Pray for opportunities to share God’s love and truth.

Volunteer.

We must go beyond the church walls to reach non-believers. A small group of women from our church volunteered at a shelter for women who had been victims of sex-trafficking. We were not allowed (per their request) to talk about Jesus unless the women brought it up, which they did. We had many opportunities to share God’s truth with them. Volunteer at schools, jails, homeless shelters, etc.

Partner with organizations actively evangelizing people.

Child Evangelism Fellowship will train and guide a team from your church to start a Good News Club in local schools. (Yes, it is legal, and we were able to give an invitation for kids to receive Christ.) Everyone on our team was 60 years or older. You don’t have to be young! For more information, visit CEFOne.com.

Samaritan’s Purse is another organization actively evangelizing children. Every November, we collect shoe boxes filled with gifts to send through Operation Christmas Child to kids all over the world. These shoe boxes are a simple and fun way to introduce kids and their families to the gospel: SamaritansPurse.org.

Find a need and meet it.

Acts 10:38 says Jesus went about doing good. Look for ways to help people. Share a meal when someone has a baby. Help a neighbor with a project he/she is working on. Offer a ride to the doctor. Invite your neighbors over for pizza. Meet a struggling friend for coffee. Kindness opens hearts and leads to deeper conversations. **ONE**

Uncle Bob

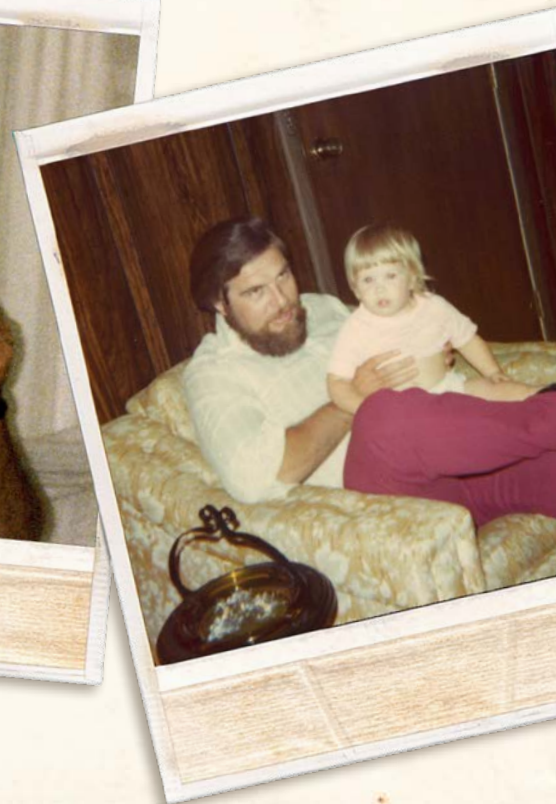
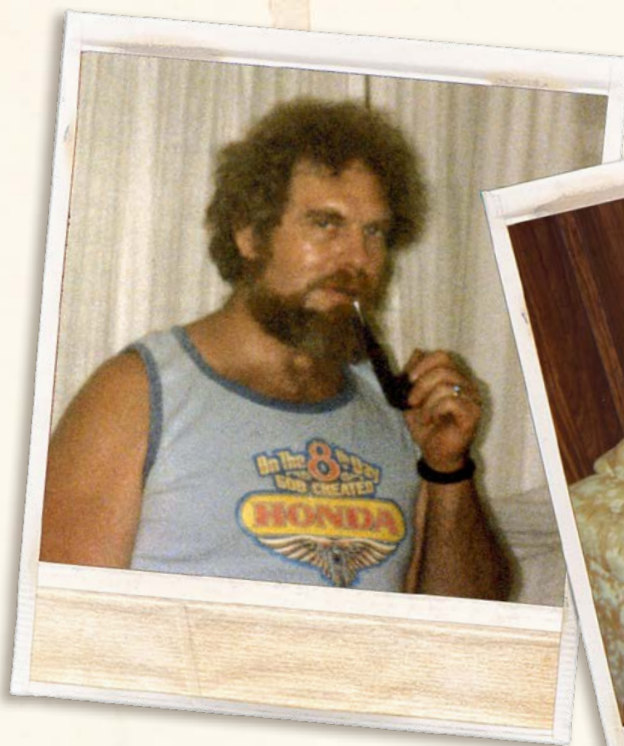
BY JENNIFER THOMSEN

Have you ever known someone who was bigger than life? To me, it was Uncle Bob. To the rest of the world, he was Robert Badder. He was full of life, funny, caring, mischievous, a motorcycle rider, fashion conscious, and always very kind. Whenever Uncle Bob was around, I felt safe. He even made sure my dad didn't "mistreat" me or do anything Uncle Bob didn't like. (For the record, my dad did *not* mistreat me. His big brother just had to remind him who was the baby.)

Some of my earliest memories are of my uncle. He gave the best birthday presents. Who wouldn't want a stuffed monkey that sucked its thumb and wore an apron? Every Saturday, when we visited my grandparents, he was there. He took time for all his nieces and nephews, but in my eyes, I was his favorite.

At age five, we moved several states away. Just before we left, he handed me a note that said, "When you are in need of protection, just call Uncle Bob." That tiny piece of paper gave me such comfort. It hung on my closet door, and I always knew if I needed *anything*, he was a phone call away.

As I got older, I realized there was something wrong about Uncle Bob. He did not have a relationship with Jesus. I



prayed for him every night, sometimes even setting aside certain days to ask God to help him realize how much he needed Jesus. "God, just make him love You!" I begged.

At age 13, we moved back to Michigan. I vividly remember a Sunday night service when my pastor, George Johnson, spoke on telling others about Jesus and their need for salvation. When the invitation began, I grabbed my dad and asked him to pray with me for Uncle Bob. After the service, we dropped my mom and sister off at home and drove to my uncle's house.

That was the hardest conversation I have ever had with *anyone* to this day. With my dad's help, we shared with Uncle Bob his need for salvation. It's safe to say the conversation did not go as I had hoped and imagined. I just *knew* if I really asked Uncle Bob to do something, he would do it. I left his house in tears. Not only had he not done what I wanted him to, he said some things that hurt me deeply.

After that conversation, things were off in our relationship for years. I still knew my uncle loved me, but he had hurt me, and for a while, he kept me at arm's length. I felt the tension, and it was painful. But it didn't keep me from praying for him. I remember kneeling at an altar and

telling God, "I don't care what it takes; help him come to know you." I said those words through tears, giving God permission to use me, to do whatever it took to make Uncle Bob come to a saving relationship with Him.

When God worked, it was not how I imagined. Several years had passed. I was married and had a newborn daughter. (By the way, Uncle Bob still gave good gifts. Before my daughter was born, he gave her a Detroit Red Wings warm-up outfit. I dressed her in it every time I had a chance.)

Then the call came. My mom told me Uncle Bob had cancer. The prognosis was terminal, and he wouldn't be with us much longer. I always heard God could use prayers that were only tears and groanings, but I had never experienced that. Before I knew it, I was face down on the living room floor, begging God to save Uncle Bob. For the next day, I prayed for Uncle Bob—no words, my heart simply crying out to God.

And then another call came. I can't even remember who was on the line, but I heard the best news ever. I immediately called Uncle Bob in the hospital. While he no longer had the booming, robust voice I knew, it was still him. He said, "Tell me happy birthday!"

Through tears, I said, "Happy Birthday, Uncle Bob."

It wasn't the day he was born into this world but the day of his spiritual birth. Both of us began to cry. He told me that every day since that late evening visit to his house years before, those words had remained with him. Not a day went by he didn't remember the conversation.

He went on to describe things he had been seeing in his hospital room. I'm not sure if it was his condition, the medication, or

truly spiritual beings at war. But there in that hospital bed, Uncle Bob decided he needed a relationship with God. He apologized and thanked me. Neither was necessary. I was so happy, and any hurt had been forgiven years earlier. I was just thankful.

Before long, we found ourselves walking to Uncle Bob's crypt. His ashes were there, but he was with the Lord.

I was sad, but I was also happy. It took 15 years after the late-night conversation, but God answered my prayer. And I look forward to seeing Uncle Bob again someday.

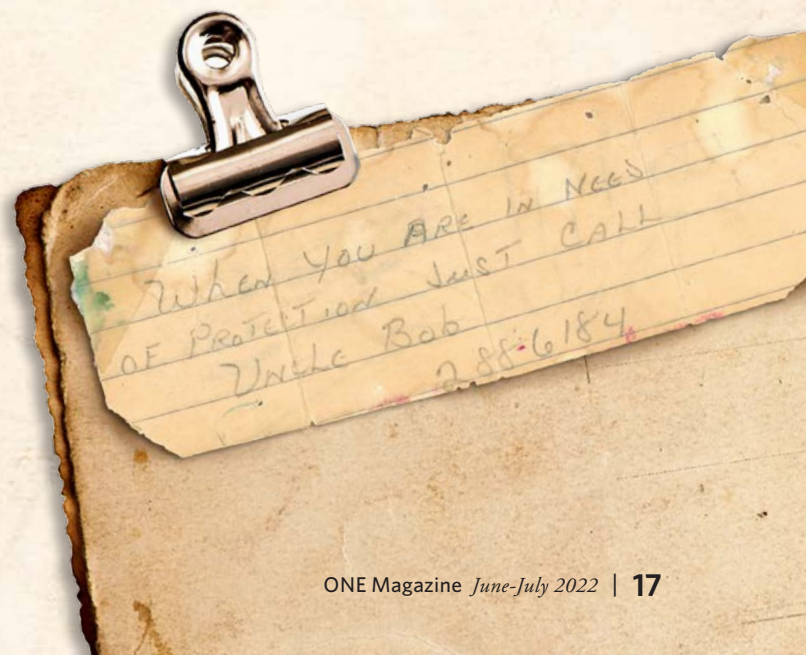
This experience taught me some important lessons. Never underestimate the power of prayer and the gospel. Be willing to have the hard conversations with those you love, or even complete strangers. You never know how or when the seeds of hope and salvation may grow and bear fruit in someone's life. Finally, *never stop praying*. No one is beyond God's reach, and His timing is always perfect.

Several years after Uncle Bob died, my husband let me in on a secret. He was a little scared of Uncle Bob. He knew that if he ever hurt me—not that he would—my uncle and my dad would set him straight. Over time, I learned others didn't see my uncle as I saw him. He was a little rough around the edges, a tough guy, and not anyone to mess with. In fact, after his death, we learned during his military career he once "borrowed" a tank and took it for a joy ride—just because he had always wanted to drive one.

I never once considered he was anything other than a great uncle, the kindest person, and my own personal bodyguard. I still miss him, and I mourn that my daughter never knew him. They would have loved each other. I wish he had an opportunity to give her a note to tell her, "When you are in need of protection just call Uncle Bob." **ONE**

About the Author: Jennifer Thomsen is assistant to the general director and director of field ministry personnel for IM, Inc.

No one is beyond God's reach, and His timing is always perfect.





CALLED TO Support Missions

AN INTERVIEW WITH SAM and JANE JOHNSON

For decades, Sam and Jane Johnson have supported IM, Inc. prayerfully and financially. Their depth of knowledge of the day-to-day operations of IM is impressive. Clint Morgan, IM's general director, recently visited with the Johnsons to discuss how they stay so connected.

Clint: Seeing your level of awareness in missions, I can't help but think something triggered your interest.

Sam: Nothing stands out. It just seems like we have been involved in missions from the very beginning. The first missionaries I got to know were Dan and Trula Cronk. I think I was around 12. The Cronks spent a week with us in VBS. I attended Grace Church in North Carolina, and the pastor was very missions-minded, so we had missionaries, I'm sure. Later, we moved to Nashville, and the pastors here have always been involved in missions and led us to be involved.

I can't remember a time when we didn't support missions. The first time we supported a missionary, it was for \$5 a month. Of course, that was a long time ago, so it was a lot more money then than it is now. We do a little better than that now. (Laughter in the room.)

Another thing that helps is we keep up with IM. We pray

through Hotline [IM's weekly prayer update] every day. Lynette [Morgan] helps us keep up as well.

Jane: My experience was about the same. I grew up on the coast of Carolina in a very old but active church. We had missionaries come all the time. I don't remember all the missionaries. That was too many years ago, but they came periodically. The church I attended was called St. Mary's. It's not with the denomination anymore, but it was very involved in missions in those days.

Clint: You talked about meeting Dan Cronk. Can you remember your impressions of him at all?

Sam: I remember more about Trula because she was more involved with the kids. Dan preached at night and Trula did the VBS. Dan wasn't as involved with the VBS. Dan was a tall, straightforward, "lay-it-on-the-line" kind of person. He was the same even at the college. He was punctual. He had things well in mind, organized, and so forth.

If you're not called to go the field, your calling is to support the mission. It's our job to make sure those who go have the resources to do what they need to do.

Clint: Do other missionaries come to mind?

Sam: We had a few missionaries who visited Hillmont Camp [the camp the Johnsons started and led for many years]. Eddie Payne came around often. Sam Wilkerson visited the camp for about a week. Fred Hersey visited much later. We've just known mission people and been involved over the years.

And that's another thing. Do you remember *Heartbeat* magazine the mission used to put out? We would read the *Heartbeat* as soon as it came out, cover to cover.

Clint: It is unbelievable how connected you still are with IM. What is happening right now, that excites you?

Sam: There is so much going on. It's everywhere you look; every story is more exciting than the one before. The news from Bulgaria, Spain, France, and Japan is very exciting. I'm excited to see what is going to happen in Pakistan. It was mentioned that a family evacuated from Afghanistan to Pakistan and that Pakistani churches are helping them. And it was said that Bangladesh is opening. I wondered how in the world are we going to open those areas. It will be exciting to see what happens. I was surprised by how many churches are in Pakistan.

Clint: Yes, those were planted by our Korean brothers. You said you haven't been to a mission field. If you could visit one, where would you go?

Sam: I studied French in high school, and we know Steve and Becky Riggs well. Perhaps we would visit France.

Clint: I recently read that only about 17% of church-attending evangelical Christians have read and understand the Great Commission. Why do you think that is?

Sam: I suppose it is like many other things; they don't read and understand the Bible. When it is taught and preached at church, it just passes over their heads. They don't take time to understand it. Perhaps the church leaders don't bring that to the forefront. Honestly, if it isn't preached and taught very often, it will not stick. I heard a preacher say one time, "Why should anyone hear the gospel a second time before everyone has heard it the first time?" That stuck in my mind.

Clint: You mentioned you stay informed about missions day by day. How do you do that?

Sam: We go through the IM Hotline every day, and we have the IM directory. We pray for all the supporting staff, starting with the directors. They're very important to the overall mission. Then we pray for the missionaries one by one. Then we go to the computer and connect. We see stories and prayer needs every day, and we include those in our prayers. And, if I get the chance to speak to mission people, I ask a lot of questions.

Clint: If you could say something to encourage our people to be more involved in missions, what would it be?

Sam: There are three things I live by concerning missions: be informed, pray, and give generously. I don't know what else. Be informed, pray, and give generously.

Jane: If we don't give, people around the world might not get saved. We need a burden for people around the world who need the Savior. And we need to support missionaries so they can go.

Sam: If you're not called to go the field, your calling is to support the mission. It's our job to make sure those who go have the resources to do what they need to do. **ONE**

Be Informed

Visit the IM, Inc. website (iminc.org) or call toll-free (877-767-7736) to:

- Sign up for Hotline (weekly prayer update).
- Read news updates.
- Read missionary information.
- Sign up for missionary newsletters.
- Download resources for prayer.
- Order a directory or missionary map.
- Discover additional printed resources.

Samuel Johnson: Born Almost Dead

BY PAUL V. HARRISON

"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).

Samuel Johnson's diary opens: "I was born almost dead." He was so slow to cry, they called the preacher to baptize him. That was September 7, 1709. Johnson couldn't see well, especially out of his left eye. As a toddler, he developed scrofula, swelling of the lymph nodes around the neck and face. People thought a touch from royalty could cure it, but the hand of Queen Anne herself effected no change. Throughout his life he suffered from tics, probably Tourette's Syndrome. His appearance and mannerisms, at best, were odd.

What he lacked in looks, however, he made up for in learning. Just after learning to read, his mother asked him to memorize a prayer of about 75 words. She headed upstairs, but upon reaching the second floor little Samuel caught up with her.

"What's wrong?" she asked.

"I can say it," he answered, and indeed he could—word perfect.

Words became Johnson's life. He mastered several languages and said his schoolmaster "beat" Latin into him. He read and wrote voraciously, penning hundreds of essays. He poured poetry like prose. He compiled the first popular English dictionary, including over 42,000 entries.

Johnson, layman though he was, also penned about two dozen sermons. Each one carries the stamp of a master craftsman, combining insight with eloquence. He said of God: "As he cannot be mistaken, because he is omniscient, so he cannot be defeated, because he is almighty." In another sermon, he wrote, "Gratitude is a species of justice." In another, "Idleness produces necessity, necessity incites to wickedness, and wickedness again supplies the means of living in idleness."

Some ministerial acquaintances learned of these sermons and purchased them to preach to their congregations, not informing them of their authorship. Friends of Johnson, hearing at church what seemed to exceed their preacher's abilities, said to him, "I think I heard you preach today."

Johnson took his celebrity status in stride. Once asked why he had wrongly defined *pastern* as the knee of a horse, he



answered: "Ignorance, madam, pure ignorance."

In a January 1 prayer, he called himself "the wretched miser of another year."

Why did Johnson accomplish so much? In a word: *drive*. He realized life came with an expiration date. In his diary, he resolved repeatedly to push harder, to do better, to be miserly with his minutes. In *The Need for Enterprise*, he wrote: "It is the duty of every man to endeavour that something may be added by his industry to the hereditary aggregate of knowledge and happiness. To add much can indeed be the lot of few, but to add something, however little, every one may hope."

This attitude made its way onto the dial-plate of his pocket watch. It carried a Greek inscription from John 9:4: *Nux gar archetai* or *For night is coming*. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Paul V. Harrison has pastored Madison FWB Church in Madison, Alabama since 2015. Previously, he pastored Cross Timbers FWB church in Nashville, Tennessee, for 22 years. He was an adjunct professor at Welch College for 17 years, teaching church history and Greek. Paul is the creator of Classic Sermon Index, a subscription-based online index of over 66,000 sermons, with clients including Harvard, Baylor, and Vanderbilt, among others: classicsermonindex.com.

Former Missionaries Finish the Race

Antioch, TN—“IM rests on the shoulders of pioneers who forged our Free Will Baptist footprint in the regions beyond. Two of those early giants, Joe Haas (France) and Fred Hersey (Japan) recently breathed their first breath of celestial air as they stepped through the portals of heaven,” stated Neil Gilliland, director of member care. “We grieve our loss, but rejoice in their reward. I am confident a party of family and friends and believers from France and Japan embraced them. Thank you, Joe and Fred. We rest on your shoulders, and we promise to continue to take the gospel to the least reached.”

Joe Haas

March 25, 2022, 91-year-old Joe Haas moved from this life to Heaven from his beloved country of France. Joe and his wife Barbara were appointed as career missionaries to France in 1967 and served there until 1983. The Haas family began their missionary appointment alongside Dan Merkh and immersed themselves in student ministry, literature distribution, Bible clubs, and church activities. They planted a church in Rennes. Joe once said of his ministry in France, “It was a wonderful privilege to give them the gospel, and the Lord gave me great liberty in preaching His Word. Many people heard it for the first time in their lives.”

Laid to rest in the French countryside on March 27, IM missionaries Dennis and Carol Teague, Matt Price, Jerry and Barb Gibbs, and Steve Riggs attended the funeral. Jonathan Merkh (son of former missionary Dan Merkh), Jerry Gibbs, and Steve Riggs spoke briefly of Reverend Haas’s influence on their lives.

The family encouraged those wishing to honor Joe’s memory to donate to Gideon Memorial Bibles to continue to spread the gospel in hotels, prisons, hospitals, schools, etc.

Fred Hersey

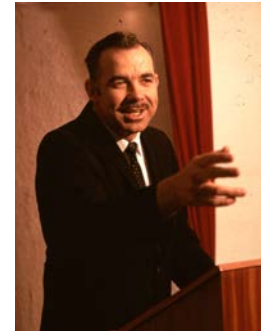
Fred Hersey entered life eternal March 28, 2022. The 91-year-old lived in Troy, Missouri. Appointed as career missionaries in 1955, Fred and Evelyn Hersey served together in Japan until Evelyn’s passing in 1993. Fred continued to minister to the Japanese. In 1995, he married June Wilkinson, a widowed former missionary to Brazil. Together, the couple worked in Japan for two years before retiring in 1998.

Fred went on to pastor in Blakely, Georgia, for 12 years.

Fred Hersey was a husband, father, missionary, pastor, English teacher to the Japanese people, and church planter. He dedicated himself to raising national leaders and laborers in Japan.

A memorial service was held Saturday, April 2, at Stonebridge FWB Church in Troy, Missouri, followed by burial at Zion Cemetery in Ozark, Illinois, Sunday, April 3.

Those expressing sympathy may contribute to the parking lot fund at Stonebridge FWB Church (10 Sunrise Acres, Troy, MO 63379) or IM, Inc. (notate Japan Missions, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011). **ONE**



Joe Haas



Fred Hersey

Spain CMP 2022

Gallatin, TN—After Tim and Kristi Johnson led CMP Spain, Kristi enthused, “It’s evident the Lord worked in *many* ways in the lives of these students—and their leaders!”

Three Welch College students—Jacob Edgmon, Lauren Strickland, and Heather Thomas—packed nine days with ministry at the Alpedrete Church and other locations, learning Spanish culture and the Free Will Baptist strategy for reaching Spain with the gospel, talking about Welch College life at a local school, touring potential church plant areas, and participating in a social outreach program.

The trip coincided with Welch College’s spring break, March 9-20. **ONE**



McDonalds Change Roles

Antioch, TN—After 38 years as IM missionaries in Japan, Don and Ruth McDonald will transition to stateside ministry November 1, 2022. Donnie, continuing as an IM missionary, will promote missions education in the States, visit churches, develop a teaching curriculum, and assist with Go Global events. (See WNAC’s announcement concerning Ruth’s ministry on page 56.)

During their time in Japan, the McDonalds served as church planters, teachers, and evangelists in both Hokkaido and the greater Tokyo area. Currently, they provide leadership in the Good News Chapel in the greater Tokyo area. Donnie also serves as field leader for the Japan missionary team.

IM’s Director of Development Don Matchett states, “I am excited about this move for several reasons. Donnie will play a strategic role in encouraging and educating churches from a Free Will Baptist missions perspective.”



Don & Ruth McDonald

The McDonalds will move to Nashville, Tennessee, in October to begin their new roles. **ONE**

Reminder: WMO Moved to August

Antioch, TN—IM’s annual World Missions Offering, held in April for decades, officially moved to August after a vote by delegates at the 2021 national convention. The 2022 offering is scheduled for August 28. “We anticipate the change in date allowing more churches to participate,” stated Director of Church Relations Don Matchett. “This

year’s theme, *Everyone Together Makes an Impact*, stresses the importance of all Free Will Baptists working together to share the gospel globally by sharing the load with our partners.”

Contact IM, Inc. at 877-767-7736 or visit iminc.org/wmo to order supplies and watch videos about the offering. **ONE**

WMO
World Missions Offering

The load is lighter when many people carry it.

8-28

Are you?
all in?

iminc.org/wmo

Winter Creeper of the Soul

BY STEVEN SIMPKINS

James 1:14-15 | 2 Corinthians 10:3-5

“There is a silver lining in every cloud.”

Recent circumstances have reminded me of that old saying. When COVID shut businesses down and caused layoffs, I suddenly found myself out of work, with lots of free time. My father had numerous projects he wanted to finish, so I offered to help. While cleaning weeds from fence line, I found an unfamiliar vine, sprawling across the ground, and with heavy growth on the black walnut trees.

I took pictures of the vine and emailed them to a local garden supplier. He soon let me know the plant was named winter creeper. After some research, I learned the plant is an invasive species introduced into the U.S. as a ground covering in the early 1900s because of its aggressive growth and resilience. Left unchecked, it soon overwhelms other vegetation.

In its early stages, thin green vines sprawl across the ground and entangle your feet. The vine grows and attaches to shrubs and trees. When allowed to climb and remain, creeper bonds itself to the tree and grows inches thick with a gray furry exterior. It robs trees of moisture and nutrients, weakening and even smothering them. The vines had a vice grip on dad’s trees. The innocent-appearing vine threatened any plant in its area.

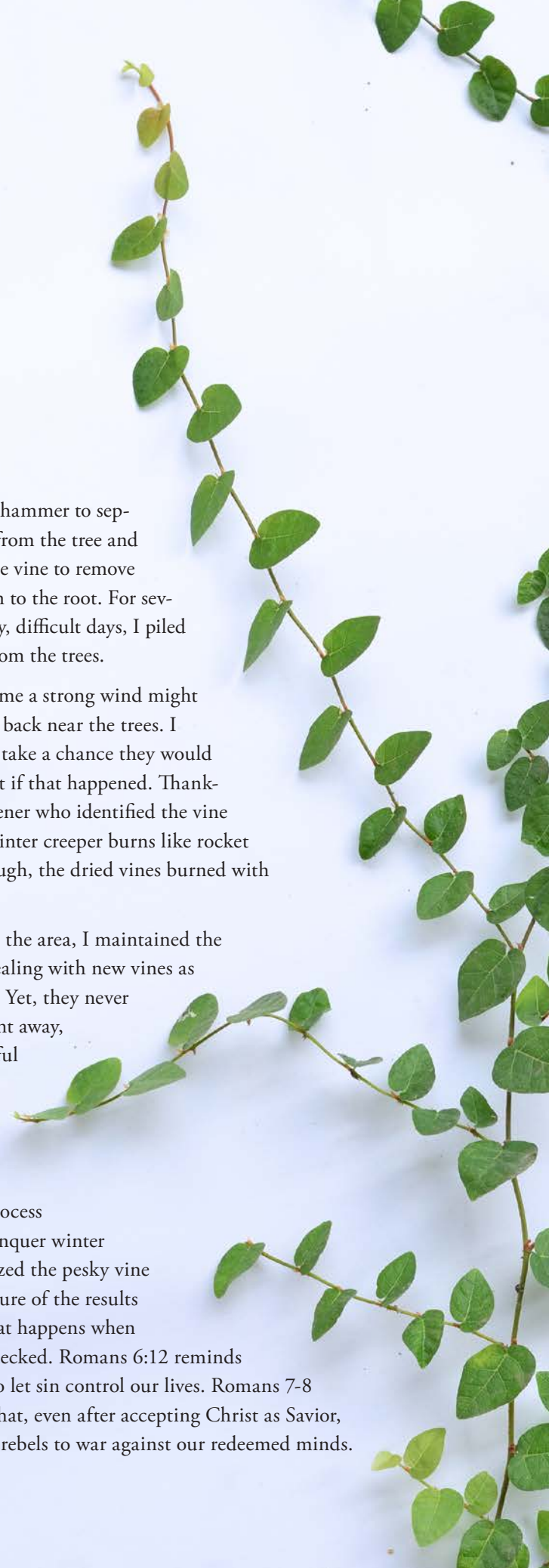
In the weeks that followed, it became my mission to stop winter creeper from destroying Dad’s trees. I declared war on the creeper! I soon learned the best way to get rid of the vines was to pull new tendrils up by the roots and pile them to dry out. I learned it is easier to pull these vines from the ground after a rain when the ground was soft. The heavy, imbedded vines were far more difficult to remove. Using a hand saw, I cut the vine near the ground, taking great care not to cut into the tree itself. I used a

crowbar and a hammer to separate the vine from the tree and ripped away the vine to remove any connection to the root. For several hot, sweaty, difficult days, I piled the vines far from the trees.

It occurred to me a strong wind might blow the vines back near the trees. I didn’t want to take a chance they would try to take root if that happened. Thankfully, the gardener who identified the vine also told me winter creeper burns like rocket fuel. True enough, the dried vines burned with a hardy flame.

Once I cleared the area, I maintained the situation by dealing with new vines as they appeared. Yet, they never completely went away, so I am watchful and keep my guard up against new growth.

During this process of trying to conquer winter creeper, I realized the pesky vine provides a picture of the results of sin, and what happens when sin is left unchecked. Romans 6:12 reminds believers not to let sin control our lives. Romans 7-8 remind of us that, even after accepting Christ as Savior, the old nature rebels to war against our redeemed minds.





Yet, the Apostle Paul also reminded us we can walk in the Spirit and daily defeat the sin that seeks to bring us into submission.

James 1:14-15 teaches believers about sin's progression. Like the invasive winter creeper, sin is easier to deal with in its early stages. Unchecked sin grows into a stronghold. Second Corinthians 10:3-5 uses interesting language to describe these strongholds of sin. Paul described warfare, armor, and the weapons used in a military expedition or campaign. As believers, we are not fighting with fleshly means, but with divine power. In verses 4-5, the words for *pulling down* and *casting down* are the same Greek word for *destroy*. When sin has a stronghold, we should work to demolish or tear away those strongholds with deep root in our hearts and minds. We should demolish the arguments and conceit that rebel against God and bring our thoughts into obedience to Christ. This is strong language, but it reminds us, with God's power, we can conquer those sins with which we struggle.

Being laid off gave me time to see what was happening to my father's trees. Jesus told Peter (Matthew 26:41) to *watch and pray* to avoid falling into temptation. Paul told Corinthian believers to *watch, stand firm, to be brave and*

strong in 1 Corinthians 16:13-14. We must be on guard against sin—new and old alike.

Believers can be guilty of drifting along without direction, oblivious to developing sin. Unless we are vigilant, negative concepts, values, and sin quietly creep into our lives and take root—the result of taking our relationship with God for granted and not following Him intentionally. If we are not careful, we can drift along with the world until sin takes firm root in our lives.

In contrast, we need to look to God and His Word to find His will for us. We need to be watchful and wary to keep sin from gaining a foothold in our lives. We need to root out strongholds and demolish them with divine power. We should purposely follow God and live out our faith with grace, mercy, forgiveness, and compassion—healthy believers growing in Christ without the entangling vines of sin.

It's time for Christians to take a closer look at God's trees and root out the winter creeper of the soul. **ONE**

About the Author: Steven Simpkins lives in Ashland City, Tennessee. He has served as a volunteer and bi-vocational youth minister for 20 years. He enjoys walking, stargazing, and discovering local places to eat.



Certainty for Difficult Days

Since 2013, **Free Will Baptist Foundation** and **Cornerstone Estate Planning** have helped more than **2,200 families** create estate plans for nearly **\$1 billion in assets**, of which **\$42 million** has been left to ministry causes. You can trust these reliable ministries to help you prepare your estate to benefit your family and the ministries you love after you are gone, without the pain and frustration of probate court.

Find peace of mind and security before the difficult days. You will never regret it!

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Don't Curdle THE Custard!

BY BRENDA EVANS

A writer friend (he's old like me) said that in his lifetime, he couldn't remember his mother ever burning the icing or curdling the custard. I understood.

My mother never did either.

Take for instance the caramel icing for her jam cakes. She was patient, went the long route: pour white sugar into an iron skillet, heat to caramelize, and go from there with milk, butter, salt. *Take your time, do it well* was her unspoken and unwritten precept. Nor did she curdle custards, and puddings, also made in an iron skillet. Her secrets were close attention, well-beaten egg yolks, low heat, and appropriate stirring—little or much as each concoction required. Same thing with meringue—or “calf slobber” as my cousin Bubba called it.

When I asked Mother for her custard and pudding recipes after I married, she said, “I don't have recipes. You'll have to watch.”

So, I did, and wrote as she spooned, poured, pinched, and stirred. Sixty years later, I still have a yellowed and splotched 3 by 5 card titled *Mama's Chocolate Pie*.

Mother modeled how to avoid curdling the custard and burning the icing. Her unwritten recipes included patience and precision. Don't rush. Keep heat low. Stir often. Beat egg yolks until pale yellow. Measure carefully—pinch of salt, two palms of flour, two big spoons cocoa, one teacup milk, a hen-egg size hunk of butter. Bake at 350°—her go-to temperature for everything that went into the oven—pies, cakes, casseroles, cornbread dressing, sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes. Always 350°. If different, like for cornbread and biscuits, she told me, and I noted it.

I liked watching Mother create her amazing desserts. She was a master of the art and of the art of living as well. Now that I think about it, she didn't burn or curdle her long life either (almost 92 years). There were plenty of

hard times, complexities, confusions, and time-consuming processes, but she paid attention and faithfully followed the Lord's rules.

I thought of Solomon the other day when I pulled out Mother's 60-year-old splotched up chocolate pie recipe. I had recently finished a study of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Maybe that's why. Then our life group studied Solomon's coronation and reign from 1 Kings. Solomon's life and writings bore down on me.

From his death bed, David gave his son Solomon a clear recipe for his kingly life. Give heed, Solomon. Be strong. Show yourself a man. Walk in the Lord's way with all your heart and soul. He might have added, “Stir up your fine brain and warm heart. Turn up the flame for the Lord your God. Mix the Lord's five ingredients: his charge, statutes, commandments, rules, and testimonies. They will add robust flavor to your life, my son” (2:2-4).

Occasionally as I wrote the recipes, Mother would look me in the eye and say, “Be careful here. Keep the heat low. Pudding is easy to scorch. You don't want burnt pudding in your pie.” I imagine David adding, “Take care, my son. Don't swerve from the recipe—keep on The Way Everlasting.”

Solomon began well. His kingdom was firmly established. He asked the Lord for wisdom to rule his people, and the Lord gave wisdom, plus honor and wealth. Solomon set up a governmental order, with officials over every area of his kingdom. He ruled in peace and safety from the Euphrates River to the Mediterranean Sea. He built the Lord's Temple and dedicated it, then built his own house.





He brought the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem. He commissioned storehouses for his goods and cities for his chariots. The word is “whatever Solomon desired,” he built or bought or acquired (1Kings 3-8).

But all’s *not* well unless it ends well, to misquote Shakespeare. In 1 Kings 9, the Lord revisited Solomon and warned him not to swerve from The Way Everlasting, nor to forget the five crucial ingredients for life. If you walk before me, as David your father walked...I will establish your royal throne over Israel forever...But if you turn aside...Israel will become a proverb and a byword...a heap of ruins. Everyone passing by will be astonished and hiss (9:4-9).

My pecan pie recipe makes the best pecan pie I’ve ever eaten when I do it right. (Guess whose recipe.) I always begin well: measure carefully, dump all the ingredients into a big mixing bowl, turn on the beaters. The directions say, *mix well, but don’t whip into a froth*. When I ignore or miscalculate, or linger too long with the beaters, a foamy froth swells into a bubbly lather. Even before it’s baked at 305°, I know that what might have been great pie will be ordinary pie. *Ignore the recipe; curdle the custard*.

By the end of his life, Solomon had ignored David’s long-ago recipe and the Lord’s mandated directions. He burnt and curdled much of his life (1 Kings 11 and 2 Chronicles 9). Consider Ecclesiastes, Solomon’s very personal book that graphically tells the story. (Yes, I say Solomon’s book despite the naysayers.)

Solomon uses “I” seven times in the first chapter and dozens of times thereafter, because Ecclesiastics is a record of his life experiences and his assessment of them. What he did and what he learned—the good, the bad, and sometimes when burnt and curdled, ugly.

For example, who spoke more aptly about money than Solomon (5:10-17), about pleasure, our mouths and hearts, death, reputations, work, fame, and folly. Often, Ecclesiastes is hard to read. It’s a mirror that reflects what I really look like, what I am, or how I’ve failed and strayed from God’s trustworthy recipe for life. How I’ve been

foolish or arrogant: experimented, dabbled, grabbed for everything “under the sun.” Things fleshly and enticing and frothy and empty. “Whatever my eyes desired,” as Solomon said (2:10). Who would know more than Solomon about burning the icing and curdling the custard of our lives? Our self-life, our flagrant violation of God’s laws—His rules, His “recipes” for a good and godly life?

Solomon was wise beyond measure and had knowledge like the “sand on the seashore” (1 Kings 4:29). But he also recognized the vanity, the emptiness of mere human wisdom because he experienced it, according to Ecclesiastes 1:12-18. Solomon forced labor among his own Jewish people and enslaved foreigners to build, store up, and tear down. He took many wives and concubines to his downfall. He gathered beasts, birds, reptiles, and fish; collected 3,000 proverbs; and wrote 1,005 songs (1 Kings 4 and 11). His vast curiosity and acquisitiveness sometimes turned for good, sometimes for evil. And too often, I believe, turned to doing things his way and not God’s.

Ecclesiastes reminds me of the self-focus and “tyranny of things” A. W. Tozer called a “monstrous substitution” for the real and true things of God. Tozer described the self-life of hyphenated sins in *The Pursuit of God*: self-righteousness, self-sufficiency, self-pity, self-admiration, self-love, on and on. These are demonstrated by our egotism, exhibitionism, and self-promotion. Solomon knew that, said that in his book.

The end of Solomon’s life in 1 Kings and 2 Chronicles is tragic. I hope Solomon repented and turned around. The end of Ecclesiastes says he knew *what* to do (12:1-8). But did he follow through? Did he come to his senses about whose “life recipe” to follow: remember your Creator, your Maker, your Sustainer, from youth to old age. Abandon the self-life, he says. Did he? I don’t know.

I do know I want to follow the “recipe” in God’s Word, and not curdle the custard of my own life. **ONE**

Who would know more than Solomon about burning the icing and curdling the custard of our lives?

About the Author: Brenda Evans lives and writes in Ashland, Kentucky. You may contact her at beejayevans@windstream.net.

...And He Died

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

In Genesis 3, we find the fall of man as the devil, in the guise of a serpent, tempted Eve. Satan questioned Eve about whether God forbade them from eating of certain trees in the garden. Eve quickly confirmed God's command not to eat from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil; if they did, they would die. Contradicting God, the devil told Eve she wouldn't die, but that her eyes would be opened, and she would be wise. Not to mention—the fruit was both beautiful and desirable. Unfortunately, Eve believed his lie, ate from the tree, and shared with Adam, who also ate the forbidden fruit.

Only two chapters later in chapter 5, we see the results of their action. The chapter lists and briefly describes the lives of Adam and his descendants from Adam to Noah. Except for Enoch, each short inscription ends with the same phrase: "...and he died."

It appears to me that Moses, under the inspiration of God, was driving home a point. In chapter 3, the devil says you won't die, but God said they would die. It's a powerful contrast between characters. The devil is the father of lies, and God never lies. God promised if they ate the forbidden fruit, they would die. And they did!

This list of Adam and his descendants (again with the exception of Enoch) all died just as God said. It should drive a point home to all of us as well. Unless the Lord returns, we too, will all die.

We must be prepared for death. Most importantly, we must be prepared spiritually by accepting Jesus as our personal Savior. However, we also need to be prepared for death legally and morally. We need to take care of those we leave behind, and we need to honor our Lord with our estates. Around 60-70% of Americans do not have an estate plan. Fortunately for Free Will Baptists, you can plan your estate

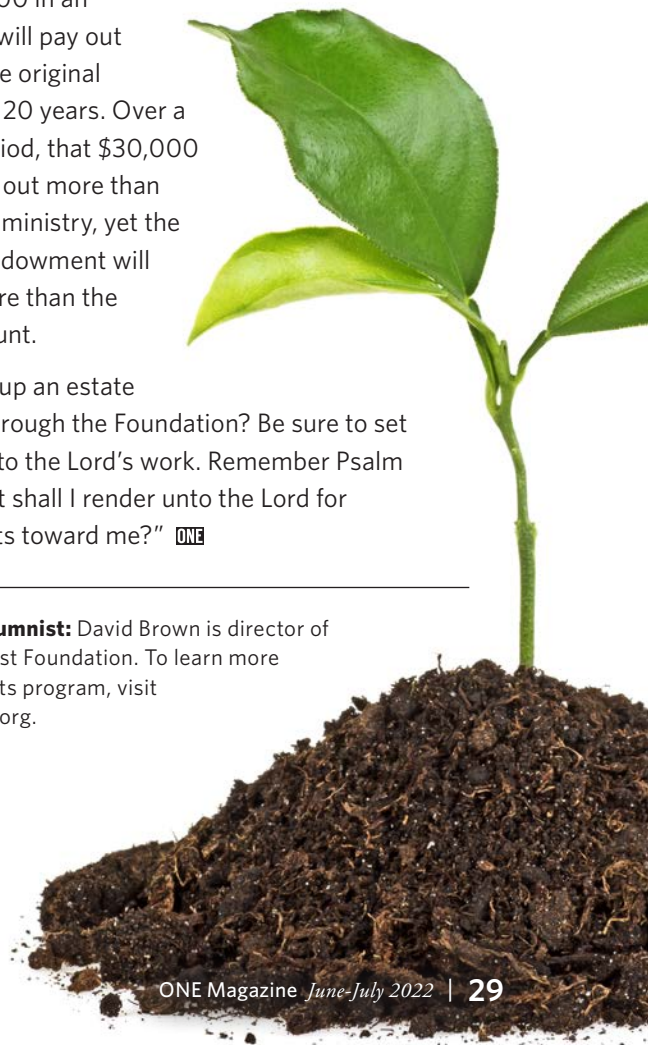
through the Foundation Estate Planning Program. More than 2,200 families have allowed us to help plan their estates. The total value of all these estates is nearing \$1 billion, with almost \$42 million left to benefit Free Will Baptist ministries so far.

We have a big job to reach the world for Christ, and it is going to take the gifts of the living and the dead to accomplish the goal. If every family tithed on their estate, it would go a long way toward reaching the world, especially if everyone left their gift as an endowment. The Foundation's endowment program makes it possible to give that estate tithe over and over until Jesus returns.

Our endowments pay out 5% annually, but we try to earn 8-10% annually, so the endowments grow. This means a \$300,000 estate that tithed \$30,000 in an endowment will pay out more than the original amount over 20 years. Over a 100-year period, that \$30,000 tithe will pay out more than \$150,000 to ministry, yet the remaining endowment will be worth more than the original amount.

Why not set up an estate plan today through the Foundation? Be sure to set aside a tithe to the Lord's work. Remember Psalm 116:12: "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?" **ONE**

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





Ready for Disaster



DISASTER RESPONSE TEAM CELEBRATES NEW EQUIPMENT

The Master's Men Disaster Response Team (DRT) is happy to announce the purchase of several items of much-needed heavy equipment. One of the most valuable tools for disaster relief is a skid steer, commonly referred to as a Bobcat. Thanks to a grant from Free Will Baptist Foundation, the DRT was able to purchase a Bobcat™ skid steer.

With the heavy machinery, DRT will be able to move large trees and brush blown down during a hurricane or tornado. After crews cut trees into smaller, manageable pieces, the skid steer can move in a few hours what might take several men days to do. In addition to the Bobcat, the team purchased a tandem trailer to haul it, and using additional generous gifts, a Ford F-350 truck to pull it.

Director Ken Akers expressed his gratitude: “We are so grateful to all who have supported DRT through going and giving. We are better equipped to serve our denomination and our Lord during times of disaster through what Free Will Baptists have done to support this ministry.”

When Hurricane Katrina ravaged the Gulf Coast in August 2005, Free Will Baptists responded by giving hundreds of thousands of dollars to help those devastated by the storm. Churches across the nation sent many volunteers to repair, rebuild, and relieve storm victims along the Gulf Coast.

Though Master's Men was already involved in disaster relief, the response to the storm made it clear Free Will Baptists needed an organized national plan for relief efforts. The following year, delegates to the 2006 National Convention in Birmingham, Alabama, approved a Disaster Response Plan, and tapped Master's Men to head up relief efforts for the denomination.

With the high number of natural disasters over the past decade, Master's Men expanded the DRT to include regional directors who guide more localized disaster response efforts. Currently, the DRT has fully equipped teams and trailers in Florida, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kentucky, and Tennessee. Master's Men additionally partners with leaders in Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Illinois—states with their own trailers and equipment.

“The best time to prepare for disaster is *before* a disaster,” Director Akers said with a smile. “Thanks to the Foundation and the generosity of individual Free Will Baptists and churches, this year we have taken a significant step in our ability to respond when people need us most.”

To learn more about becoming a part of Free Will Baptist disaster response, visit www.MastersMen.org or email Ken Akers: ken@nafwb.org. **ONE**



A Celebration 200 Years in the Making

BY KEN AKERS, DIRECTOR, MASTER'S MEN

In 1818, the people in the church in New Durham, New Hampshire (started by Elder Benjamin Randall in 1780), decided it was time to have their own building. Up to this point, the church had met in several locations, starting in the home of a church member named Deacon Boodey and later moving to the town meeting hall, the New Durham Meeting House.

The congregation purchased land and began construction on the building we now call the Ridge Church. The church was constructed using large, hand-cut beams joined by wooden pegs. After construction was completed in 1819, the church quickly began enjoying their own place to meet. In the early years, hundreds of people gathered in and around the church to participate in the services. Sadly, Randall himself, who died in 1808, never saw the beautiful building. However, his family attended services, with their own pew (rented yearly).

Over the decades (centuries, even) the church has undergone multiple changes. Chimneys were added. A bell tower was constructed to house a bell cast in Paul Revere's forge. At one time, the congregation even turned the church from its original foundation to face another direction. Decorative metal sheets were added to the walls and ceiling, and electricity eventually replaced the chandelier lamps in the sanctuary. The structure is listed on the National Registry of Historic Places and is such a vital part of the town history it appears in the town seal.


Over the years, even after the congregation moved to a new building closer to the town center, the First Church in New Durham did a great job maintaining the building. But as the church aged, more extensive (and expensive) repairs were required. In 2006, after a study by a national committee, it was agreed Master's Men would accept the challenge of restoring and maintaining the historic structure.

After more than a decade of hard work, volunteers from across the denomination completed the renovation, and today, the church is structurally and aesthetically sound. After many conversations, and with great excitement, the First Church voted to transfer ownership of the Ridge Church to North American Ministries, along with the cemetery where the Randall family is buried, not far from the church. In December 2016, David Crowe and Ken Akers met with Pastor Nason and the leaders of First Church to complete the ownership transfer.

In celebration of the 200-year anniversary of the completion of the Ridge Church, North American Ministries will hold a special weekend in partnership with the First Church of New Durham. (Normally, the church holds their Homecoming service in June to mark this celebration.)

Attendees will meet Saturday, June 11, at 10:00 a.m. Speakers will present the history of the church and of Free Will Baptists and walk attendees through the renovation process. Later, we will travel a short distance to the Randall Family Cemetery for prayer and reflection. On Sunday morning, we will return to the church for Sunday worship at 10:00 a.m.

Anyone interested in Free Will Baptist history is welcome to attend these services.

For more information, contact North American Ministries or visit www.fwbnam.com. 

About the Author: Ken Akers has been director of Free Will Baptist Master's Men since 2002. Master's Men is responsible for Free Will Baptist Disaster Response, IMPACT outreach, and the Ridge Church Restoration. The organization also works to reach men through retreats and sports fellowship. Learn more: fwbmastersmen.org

Introducing Church Planters Ed and Rachel Goode

Champaign, IL—Ed and Rachel Goode are the newest members of the North American Ministries church planting team. They will join the leadership team at The Bridge Church, a joint church plant project between the Illinois Mission Board and NAM in Champaign, Illinois. Ed will take on the role of lead pastor supported by the Garretts, NAM associate planters, and the Penns, IM missionaries to the University of Illinois.

The Goodes spent the last five years in ministry at First FWB Church in Richmond, Virginia, where Ed served as lead pastor for the last three and half years. Rachel, a Christian education graduate of Southeastern FWB College, is the daughter of Ken and Jayne Cash, IM missionaries serving in Bulgaria.

Champaign is Illinois's fastest-growing city, located just outside of Chicago. Besides the booming population of over 200,000, Champaign is home to 50,000 college students from the University of Illinois, which includes the largest proportion of international students of any college in the United States.



Ed and Rachel Goode

Join us in praying for the Goodes and the team at The Bridge as this church continues to minister to their diverse and growing community. Specifically, ask God to provide them with wisdom and vision as they seek a new location that is a good fit for the work in Champaign. **ONE**

Hilltop Church Hosts Biennial Church Planter Summit

Fuquay-Varina, NC—February 21-23, 2022, North American Ministries (NAM) held a biennial Church Planter Summit at Hilltop FWB Church in Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina. Pastor and Board Chairman Jeff Jones and his staff, along with a host of church volunteers, made the event special for everyone in attendance.

The Summit is held every other year to bring the entire NAM team together for training and encouragement, according to Brad Ransom, director of church planting and chief training officer for NAM. Ransom noted, "In addition to serious times of worship and training, we also set aside time for fun, games, and prizes. We wanted to allow our office team, church planters, associates, and wives time to fellowship, network, and simply enjoy being together."

The Summit has become a highlight for the NAM family, and the host church made this meeting especially memorable. "We extend special thanks to Jeff Jones and the



entire Hilltop team for making this a memorable and meaningful meeting," Ransom said. "We look forward to 2024 when we do it all again!"

For more information about North American Ministries or to learn what is involved in becoming a church planter, visit www.fwbnam.com. **ONE**

Master's Men Returns to Dothan for Deep South Tournament

Dothan, AL—Free Will Baptist Master's Men returned to the Dothan National Hotel and Golf Club for the second time, March 30-April 1, for the annual Deep South Golf Tournament. Despite several last-second cancellations, the event hosted 24 teams, a great turnout. "It was another successful event," notes Ken Akers, Master's Men director. "Everyone enjoyed the familiar three: fun, food, and fellowship!"

The tournament began Wednesday with a very windy day. Despite the heavy winds, several teams shot under par. Overnight rains ended just in time for Thursday rounds to start on time at 8:00 a.m., and the tournament finished Friday with brilliant sunshine. Several teams ended up well

under par for the tournament.

On Wednesday evening, after players enjoyed a great meal together, Florida pastor Randy Bryant shared about God's faithfulness through his recent life-threatening illness. Master's Men thanks Genta Grow and Moby Dick restaurant for catering tournament meals for a second year.

"I especially thank all the tournament sponsors and golfers who participated in the Deep South," Akers adds. "This event not only brings people together for fellowship, it helps support and promote the important work of Master's Men. I hope everyone will join us again next year."

For updated information regarding the 2023 Deep South Tournament, visit www.fwbmastersmen.org.

The following are the winning teams and their scores:


Championship Flight

- 1st Place (199)
Rodney Stidham & Phillip Pugh
- 2nd Place (203)
Don Dease & Tim Baumgarten
- 3rd Place (206)
Tommy Ellis & Tom Toombs

First Flight

- 1st Place (214)
Riley Young & Todd Tilley
- 2nd Place (223)
Lenny West & Daniel West

Second Flight

- 1st Place (237)
Neil Gilliland & Clint Morgan
- 2nd Place (241)
Mike Rapp & Tom Dooley 



*Rodney Stidham
and Phillip Pugh*



*Don Dease and
Tim Baumgarten*



*Tommy Ellis
and Tom Toombs*



*Riley Young
and Todd Tilley*



*Lenny West
and Daniel West*



*Neil Gilliland
and Clint Morgan*



*Mike Rapp
and Tom Dooley*



Defining the Target

Master's Men partners with pastors and churches to help men become men of:

Priority, who bring glory to God, understanding their first priority is their relationship to Jesus.

Prayer, who stand best by staying on their knees (James 5:16).

Purity, who do not conform to the world but become and remain men of purity.

Passion, who are committed to their families and fulfill biblical responsibilities at home.

Purpose. Master's Men exists for **five purposes**:

1. **Fellowship** through example, encouragement, and friendship with other men.
2. **Discipleship**, resulting in a deeper relationship with God, purity, prayer, leadership at home, faithful worship, mentoring, deeper commitment to church and denomination, and a burden for the gospel.
3. **Stewardship**, teaching men to give their finances and lives to advance the Kingdom.
4. **Soul-winning** men who impact families, communities, and workplaces with the gospel.
5. **Edification**, equipping men to serve the Lord by leading their churches and helping the pastor.

Join Master's Men in Making a Difference!

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★ CHAPLAIN ★

WITH

Clarity

BY AMIR ASHOORI

Today, many people live in confusion and doubt. They no longer have confidence in leaders, friends, even parents. Young people were once taught important values and truths to anchor them and carry them through life with confidence and conviction. However, truth and loyalty are no longer considered necessary life choices. The culture of this day is simple: *live for yourself and follow the loudest voices.*

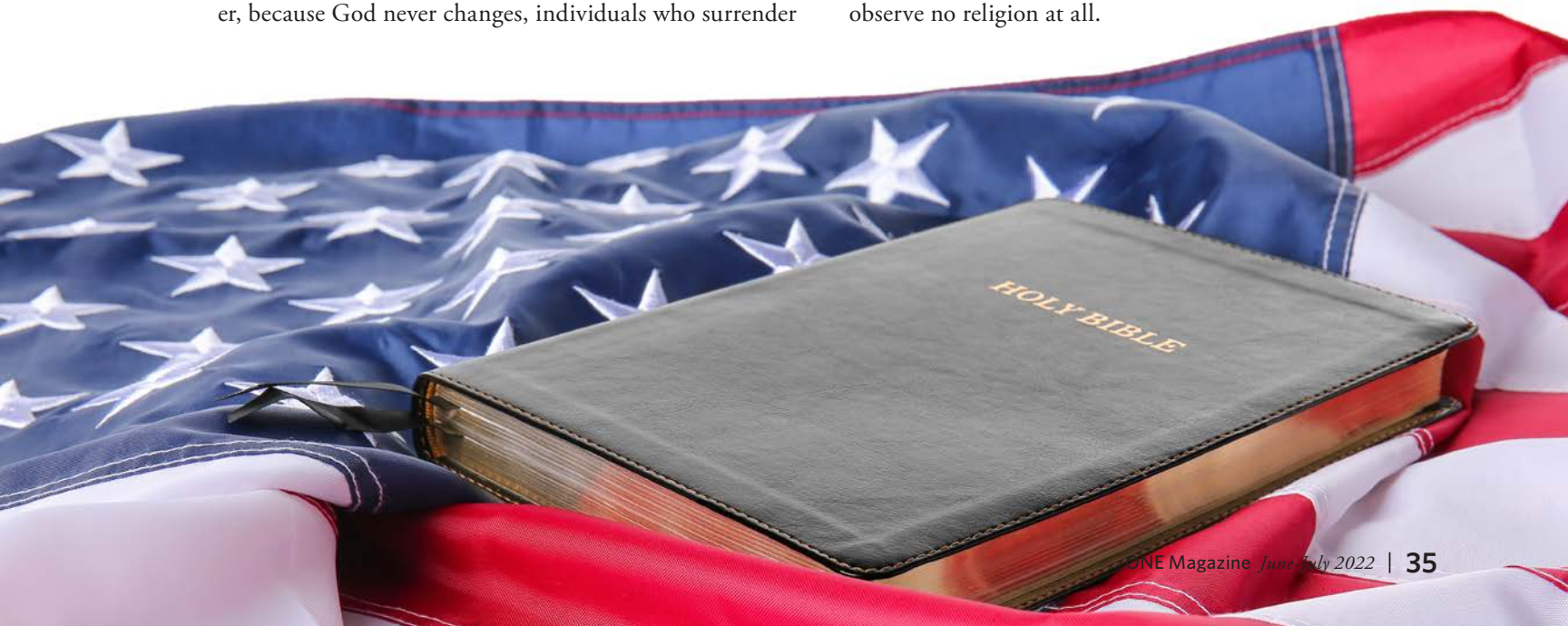
The culture of the world dictates what we do: how to dress, what and whom we listen to, what to wear, what to eat, and what to believe. The problem is there is no longer a clear standard of morality and righteousness instilled in young people. So, they change with the ever-changing culture, and a life of disappointment and confusion becomes the “new normal.”

Simple, righteous living is no longer desirable because the unbelieving world sees serving and loving God as a difficult and restrictive life—not worth the effort. However, because God never changes, individuals who surrender

themselves to Him find peace and joy for a lifetime, and confidence that when their lives on this earth are over, they will continue to live in Heaven, forever. He brings clarity to this changing world, a simple life lived serving and loving God because He never changes. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

The United States military has its own culture. It dictates how soldiers live, whether officer or enlisted. Starting with bootcamp, the individual is broken down in every regard, and rebuilt into what the military has determined he or she should be. Upon completion, that soldier has become the person the military says is acceptable. The military is unforgiving and unrelenting, and—in its own way—just as confusing as our culture.

The United States military is made up of 221 religions and/or denominations, and the freedom of religion clause (2020) says service members have the right to observe the tenets of their own religion, or to observe no religion at all.




As a chaplain, I often ask myself how I can help soldiers from different faiths without compromising my own faith and becoming as confused as the world. I am reminded of the Scripture in 1 Corinthians 14:33, “For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.”

I keep it simple. From the beginning of time, God set a standard for how we must live, and man has tried to get around it. God does not bring confusion into the life of His children. Confusion comes into our lives when we compromise the Word of God. That is why we see so many different religions and denominations in the military. Man has always rebelled against God, changing God’s Word to mean something other than what God originally intended. Man has rewritten God’s Word to live a counterfeit version of Christianity, one of his own making.

Jesus said in Matthew 7:14 “Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.” If we walk this narrow way as God has instructed, we will walk through that narrow gate. This path is narrow, but it is wide enough for us to walk side by side with God. Walking with God allows Him to teach us how to live, to love what He loves and hate the thing He hates.

And the only thing God hates is sin. Sin brings the wrath of God upon us. We find the ultimate example of God’s wrath when Jesus cried out from the cross: “My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46) On the cross, Jesus took upon Himself the sins of every person who has ever lived or will live. In His death, He took the full weight of God’s hatred of sin, so you and I don’t have to face that wrath. Sadly, many choose to live in selfishness and refuse to repent for the sinful state of their souls. As a result, they will experience God’s wrath.

With these things in mind, my path as a chaplain is clear:

- **Continue to read and meditate on God’s Word.**
- **Pray without ceasing, asking God for His wisdom.**
- **Look to God who is the Author and finisher of my faith, knowing my faith will someday lead me home to Heaven to be with the Lord my God.**
- **Continue to share the message of salvation, so others can experience a life of peace, joy, and clarity. **

About the Author: Chaplain (CPT) Amir Ashoori is in the U.S. Army Reserve in California. Learn more about the chaplaincy: www.fwbnam.com.

Lightning strikes quickly...

And, sometimes, so does death. In this uncertain world, it is good to know you can prepare your estate to benefit your children and the ministries you love. **Free Will Baptist Foundation** and **Cornerstone Estate Planning** help you prepare before the storms of life come.

Watch an important video explaining how you can have peace of mind about the future.

- + **On Facebook:** Free Will Baptist Foundation
- + **On the web:** fwbgifts.org (estate planning tab)

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Free Will Baptist Foundation Awards 2022 Grants



Antioch, TN—Over the last six years, the Foundation has awarded grants to Free Will Baptist ministries across the world. The Foundation is happy to announce the continuation of the grants program this year. During the April 2022 board meeting, the Foundation board voted to award \$750,000 in 23 grants to ministries. The following are the 2022 grant recipients:

1. IM, Inc. - Japan; purchase building for Hope Alive Church	\$150,000
2. IM, Inc. - Bangladesh conference center	\$100,000
3. IM, Inc. - Pop Willey Scholarship	\$50,000
4. OH State Association - Renovation to office	\$50,000
5. NorthPoint Free Will Baptist Church - Develop deaf ministry	\$45,000
6. Randall House - D6 for At-Home Bundles	\$45,000
7. Whitney FWB Church - Food truck	\$45,000
8. Free Will Baptist Media Commission - Upgrade equipment	\$39,600
9. IM, Inc. - Bulgaria; Façade renovation	\$36,000
10. SC State Association - Build churches in South India	\$25,000
11. SC Friends of India - Build a school	\$25,000
12. Vertical Church - School Kindness Program	\$25,000
13. NAM - Translate <i>The Quest for Truth</i> into Spanish	\$18,000
14. ONE Magazine - New computer	\$15,000
15. Faith in Action Church - Roots of Faith building project	\$13,500
16. Arms of Compassion - Food trailer and storage	\$13,500
17. IM, Inc. - Village of Hope; Library construction	\$10,500
18. Theological Commission - Bulletins for FWB pastors	\$10,000
19. BOR - Re:Invest Conference 2023	\$9,000
20. WV State Association - WV church revitalization	\$7,500
21. Faith Mission - Church in Barbacena, Brazil	\$7,500
22. Ozark FWB Church - Food pantry and distribution	\$5,400
23. Harmony FWB Church - Distribution of Bibles	\$4,500
Total Grants	\$750,000 ONE

Avoiding Roadblocks to Church Growth

BY BRAD RANSOM

An interview with Gordon Penfold: Co-founder of Turnaround Pastor and author of *Re:Vision, the Key to Transforming Your Church*; *Pastor Unique—Becoming a Turnaround Leader*; and *Restart Churches—A Proven Strategy to Restore Vibrant Ministry in Your Church*.

Ransom: What do you consider the most significant hindrances for churches and pastors/leaders from seeing growth come to their local church?

Penfold: We see three primary bottlenecks hindering church growth and turnaround:

- Often, pastors are the bottleneck stifling church growth and vitality. Pastors must take the lead in directing revitalization efforts. Unfortunately, pastors receive little training on how to lead a church, and much less on how to lead a church through revitalization. Consequently, they often flounder in their efforts to lead church renewal.
- A second bottleneck can be a controlling board or leadership team. We see this frequently in "stuck" churches. Controlling boards often frustrate any efforts to move a church toward revitalization. They do everything they can to maintain control over the church.
- The third major bottleneck is often the congregation itself. People, in general, resist change, and this is undoubtedly true in many congregations. The church body desires to maintain the status quo and will go to great lengths to do so.

Ransom: What do you believe is the first step for a church to begin to see a turnaround?

Penfold: Identify the primary bottlenecks and address them. A church can take these simple steps to initiate revitalization:

1. Train pastors in the essentials of church revitalization. We offer this training through our Turnaround Pastor Boot Camps.
2. Deal with stubborn, recalcitrant boards. This can often be a daunting task. Yet, failure to do so will mean the church will remain stagnant or declining. Board members must be removed or replaced for the church to move forward.
3. Complete a church assessment process to identify bottlenecks that create an environment of no growth.

If churches fail to address these issues, a church "funeral" will likely follow. It is imperative for churches to face the realities creating stagnation and address them.

Ransom: In your mind, what does momentum look like in a healthy church?

Penfold: Momentum occurs when churches move from one victory to the next. When



**Turning around
a church is one
of the most
daunting tasks
a pastor can
undertake.**

individuals come to Christ. When families find restoration. When God mends broken relationships and communities experience gospel impact, the church celebrates. Mo-

mentum builds one victory upon another. Churches celebrate every victory, no matter how small, to develop a culture of winning.

Ransom: How important would you say momentum is, and how do you think a church with no momentum can get the ball rolling?

Penfold: Momentum is key! However, as I mentioned above, as the church begins

to move forward, the church body must celebrate every triumph. As a church builds momentum, the hill to be climbed seems less steep and the roadblocks less daunt-

ing. Nay-sayers and doubters grow silent as the mighty power of God becomes manifest through the body. Why? People begin to see God-given possibilities, and they start to walk by faith and not by sight!

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

Penfold: Find a mentor, preferably a seasoned veteran, who can train and equip you to lead church revitalization. Turning around a church is one of the most daunting tasks a pastor can undertake. Find someone to guide you through the minefields you will encounter. **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.

small
moment



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NO REGRETS!

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

What do you think when you hear the phrase *no regrets*? The first thing that comes to my mind is the commercial where the tattoo artist is eating a Milky Way™ candy bar and misspells *no regrets* to *no regerts*. But when I stop and think about it, most regrettable situations make it clear hindsight is 20/20. My “in-the-moment” sight is foggy at best.

Live your best life and *no regrets* are phrases that show up often on social media. Some posts are genuine; others are not. The idea behind both axioms is you choose to live life the way you choose. Is there a gap between what you *want* from life and how you *live* your life?

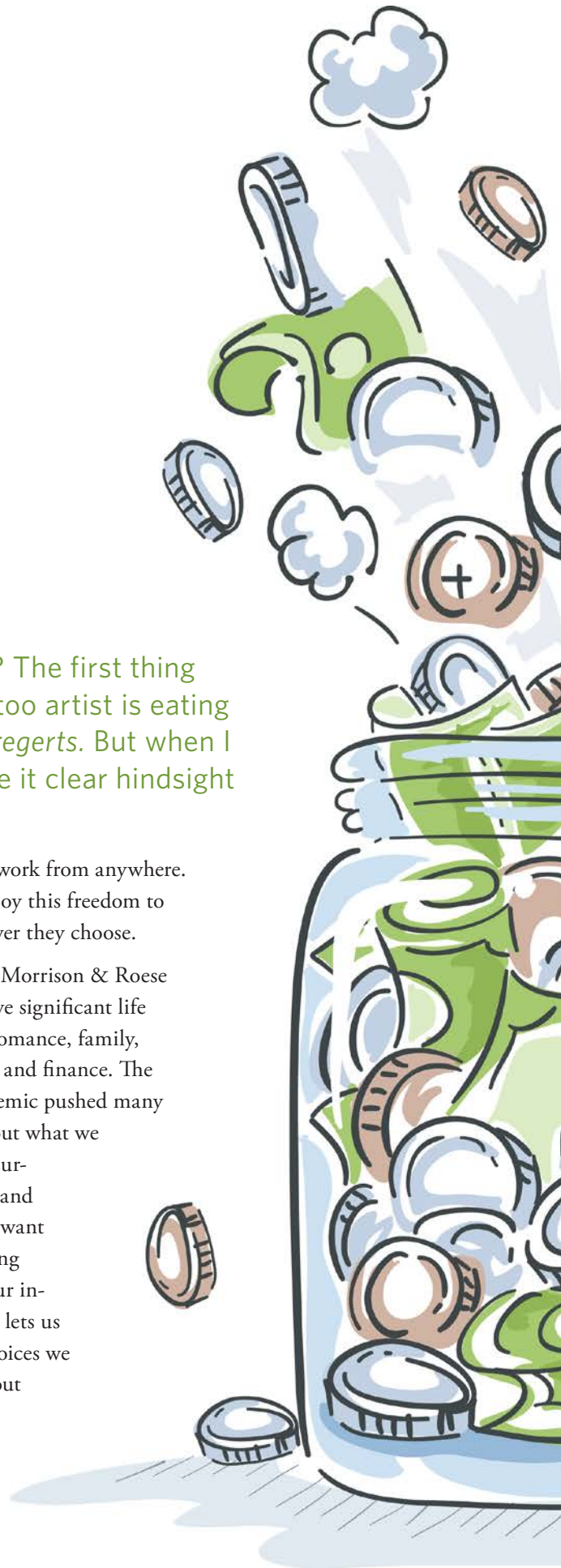
This was a tagline in a recent article by a young millennial writer in NYC. In the article, he talks about many friends and colleagues stepping out of their existing lives to search for what is next in life. Then he reflects on the current situation, taking a step back to look at the “great resignation,” the way many (especially millennials) are changing careers in search of higher wages and untethered lifestyles, free to live and work wherever they please.

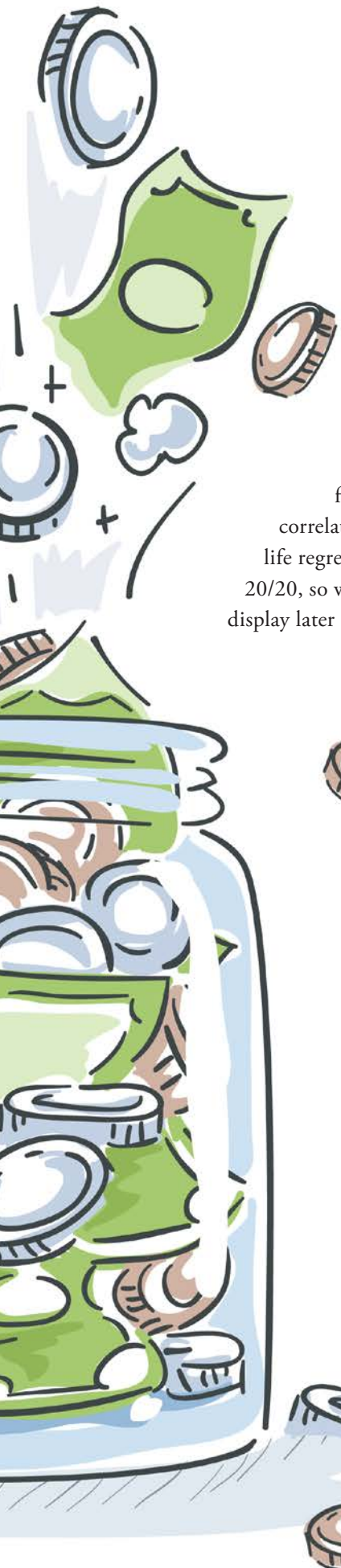
As a millennial, it is exciting to think the pandemic has changed how we all work and interact. While the “great resignation” has caused many people to change careers, we have also seen an increase in remote workers. Pandemic-fueled technology enabled companies to allow employ-

ees the option to work from anywhere. Many workers enjoy this freedom to work from wherever they choose.

A 2011 survey by Morrison & Roesse showed the top five significant life regrets included romance, family, education, career, and finance. The COVID-19 pandemic pushed many of us to think about what we regret about our current life situation and consider what we want to do better moving forward. Often our in-the-moment sight lets us down, and the choices we make don't turn out as intended.

Most of





us want close, loving relationships with our families, to be great parents, to be fulfilled in our careers, and to have lots of money in the bank. For those things to happen, it takes work on our part—a lot of work! The problem with the notion of *living your best life* and *no regrets* is many people associate these ideals with an easy life.

Most life decisions come within the first five years of being on our own. The correlation between that period and significant life regrets is extremely high. Again, hindsight is 20/20, so we often see our youthful mistakes on full display later in life.

So, how do we live a life with no regrets?

We don't. In the Garden of Eden, we probably could have, but since the Fall, regrets are an intrinsic part of our lives. However, we can *minimize* the regrets in our lives. But it takes *work* on our part. Work to have loving relationships with our spouse, kids, and parents. Realize *our* best life might not be *their* best life, and some compromise will be needed. We must communicate clearly with one another to find a good balance. Also, understand we are all a little selfish, so we won't always agree on everything.

Sometimes, we are limited to our skill-set or employment opportunities in our careers, but how we feel about our jobs may depend on what the job enables us to do.

If your job needs to fulfill a passion or desire in your life, apply and search for the position of your dreams. In the meantime, work a job that pays the bills, feeds your family, and makes it possible to live.

Dream job opportunities may not come around often, but you won't know if you are not looking and working towards that end goal. Also, don't discount what the Lord has provided for you. Sometimes your job or career isn't what you dreamed (or want), but it is the work to which the Lord has called you. Remember the Prophet Jeremiah? I'm sure it was never his dream to be the "weeping prophet" who knew the sins of Israel and foretold the coming destruction and exile. But he faithfully completed the job the Lord gave him.

We will always experience regrets in finances because we are influenced by outside forces more than we think. The sole purpose of marketing is to convince *you* that you *need* something, that what you have is not enough. While we increase our income by requesting raises, taking second or third jobs, or starting a side business, the key to financial success is to make wise decisions with our current income first. Debt is a major regret for many because of the opportunities it robs from them later in life.

Not saving for the future also causes major regrets and keeps us from ever living our best lives. Find a moment of clarity in your foggy, in-the-moment vision, and start setting aside savings and paying down debt. No one gets to retirement and regrets saving too much money!

Living without regrets requires hard work and a constant struggle for balance. But satisfaction comes with gaining something you put effort into. Talk to your family and friends, enjoy the time the Lord has blessed you with here on this earth, and work to make the opportunities He has provided the best they can be. **ONE**

About the Author: John Brummitt became director of the Board of Retirement in January 2016. He graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since spring 2006. Find more tools to help you live your best life at BoardofRetirement.com.

Finding GOD'S WILL

BY ZACH MALONEY

How many of us know what we will face in the future? If anything, the last two years have reminded us of the uncertainty of life and the importance of daily decisions. Some of these decisions alter the course of our lives significantly. The decision might be whether to relocate to another city. Some might make a significant financial decision. It might be a decision on dating and marriage. Processing these decisions can be paralyzing. The question we should consider is whether the Bible speaks to the direction we should take.

The phrase “finding God’s will” often comes up when people are trying to make difficult decisions. God certainly gives us help in finding His will for our lives. He does not want us to be in the dark, wandering about with no purpose. Scripture tells us He has given us everything required for life and godliness through the knowledge of Him (2 Peter 1:3).

In processing a particular decision, it helps to think through God’s revealed will and His concealed will. His *revealed will* tells us how He wants us to live, according to the Scriptures. We do not have to pray about it or walk around looking for it. His revealed will is contained in the 66 books He has given us.

God’s *concealed will*, which lies outside of Scripture, is where decision-making can become overwhelming. At times, God’s will exists beyond our awareness, since His ways are not our ways (Isaiah 55:8–9).

Consider how this framework applies to a specific decision related to work. God’s revealed will offers much help. Scripture tells us not to be lazy (Proverbs 20:4; 2 Thessalonians 3:10–11). We should desire to provide for our families and to work hard. But the specific career path we choose and how we prepare for it falls under God’s concealed will.

Start With God's *Revealed* Will in Scripture

Often, our tendency is to focus on God's concealed will when we face a difficult decision. However, it is always best to start with the things you know. And we *know* what God has told us in His Word. First, we must trust the Scriptures as authoritative in our lives. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." We must align our lives and decisions under the authority of the Scriptures.

We can see the testimony of Jesus resting in the sufficiency and authority of Scripture. Jesus emphasized the importance of every word in the Scriptures (Mark 12:24–27). Jesus also saw God as the ultimate source of Scripture and the Holy Spirit as the ultimate author (Matthew 15:4; 22:43).

After resting in the inspired Word as our foundation, we must let God's Word guide our lives. We find an example of this in Acts 1, after Jesus ascended into heaven. The disciples were left waiting and praying while needing to decide how to fill the office of an apostle. Judas had betrayed Jesus and died, and the disciples needed someone to replace him. During this decision-making process, Peter referenced Psalm 69:25 and Psalm 109:8 as a guide for their thinking. Furthermore, Jesus placed Himself under the authority of the Old Testament when He obeyed it as God's Word (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; Luke 24:25–26).

We are prone to bend our interpretation of Scripture to fit our circumstances rather than the other way around. A believer cannot accept the authority of Scripture without accepting the Word as God's authoritative revelation.

Next, Look for God's *Concealed* Will in Scriptures.

While Scripture serves as our foundation in the decision-making process, questions not directly addressed by God's revealed will may remain. In these situations, we should work to gather information about the decision at hand. Going back to the previous example, when the disciples needed to find another apostle, they introduced two candidates to fill the office. They presented two people and prayed. In this model, think about the decision you are facing and pray. Seek counsel from others you trust who have made similar decisions.

Prayer is *essential* for finding the concealed will of God. Prayer is not necessarily a means of getting extra communication from God but rather a means to draw us closer

to Him. Prayer should not be used to bend God to fit our will. Those who think God can be coerced through prayer, whether for material or financial gain, seem to assume He is reluctant to bless us or completely unaware of our needs. Neither assumption is true.

With Scripture as the foundation, prayer changes our internal perspective on God's will.

As David Jones writes, "Such fellowship in prayer, accompanied by personal reflection, can lead to a deeper knowledge of Scripture, the eyes of one's heart being enlightened (see Ephesians 1:18), greater confidence in God's Word, as well as a better overall understanding of how biblical truth applies to one's life."¹

Prayer is intrinsically good, even apart from the answers we receive in our decision-making. Having a correct posture towards prayer allows us to rest in the promise God is willing, aware, and able to guide our decision-making.

Remember, God is still at work.

God did not just wind up the world like a clock and leave it to run itself. He is still active in the world. He still sustains and preserves life. He still rules and directs all things in service to His redemptive plan. And He delights in using those He made in His image to take part in this redemptive plan.

He loves His creation to the point He revealed Himself through the written Word. There, in His revealed will, believers are instructed to avoid worry or fret over the secret will of God. Instead, Jesus encouraged His followers to seek God's Kingdom and righteousness first, understanding the details and decisions of life will then become clear (Matthew 6:33).

The best way to "find God's will" regarding your decisions is to make those decisions based on Scripture. You can be confident Scripture leads to human flourishing in *every* area of life. **ONE**

About the Author: Zach Maloney lives in Dayton, Ohio, where he serves as a Hospice Chaplain. He holds degrees from Welch College (B.A., Pastoral Ministry) and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div., Christian Ethics). Zach also completed a CPE internship at WakeMed in Raleigh, NC (2018) and completed a CPE residency at UK HealthCare in Lexington, KY (2020). His interests include the ethics of life and death, systematic theology, and pastoral care to suicide-prone persons.

1 David W. Jones, *Knowing and Doing the Will of God* (Wake Forest: Veritas, 2017), 69.

Becoming a Model Church

BY BARRY RAPER

1 THESSALONIANS 1

Across the United States, young athletes have posters of famous athletes hanging on their bedroom walls. They look up to people they have never met, and, whether they consider it or not, those athletes function as role models. A *role model* is someone who provides a picture of what we want to become. While a superstar athlete may or may not provide a good moral example, young people identify those individuals as someone they want to emulate—at least on the court or field.

More broadly, we encounter and identify role models at work, school, and even at home. The best and most influential role models are not famous athletes or actors but people in our lives daily—up close and personal. I'm sure you had role models growing up, and, to some degree, we continue to have role models as adults. This speaks to the tremendous power of imitation for human beings. We see an example, and we try to emulate it.

What if an entire congregation served as a model church?

What if a local church was doing so well others pointed to their church as the model to imitate? While the church of the Thessalonians wasn't perfect, the Apostle Paul went out of his way to brag on the church and to hold it up as a pattern to follow. Consider three characteristics that made the church in Thessalonica a model church and ask yourself if you and your church reflect these characteristics.

A model practices Christian imitation (verses 6-7).

The biblical meaning of *imitation* is not the same as the common use of the word today. We often use the word imitation to describe a cheap knock-off, something that looks like the real thing without the quality.

However, the Bible stresses the *necessity* of imitation, patterning your life after other mature believers. Since Jesus is no longer here physically, we have no perfect models to imitate, but we have genuine and growing examples of the faith in men and women dedicated to becoming more like Christ. This was true in Thessalonica. Paul indicates

they had become followers “of us and of the Lord.” Paul and his companions not only shared the gospel with the Thessalonians verbally, they also demonstrated it through their lifestyle.

Verse 7 says they became a “pattern” for others to follow. As they followed Paul, who was following Christ, they too became examples for others to imitate. The word translated *example* originally carried the meaning of an impression left by a strike or blow. Picture an old-fashioned typewriter. When you punched the letter down, the letter arm struck the ribbon and ink with force, leaving an impression, a letter, on the page.

What kind of impression do we leave on others? Does our example provide a reliable Christ-like role model?

A model possesses Christian reputation (verse 8). What a powerful statement that the Thessalonian church had “sounded out” or sounded forth the Word of the Lord *everywhere*. The word translated *sounded out* communicates the gospel reverberated through this church to their entire region and beyond. Their “sound” carried.

On certain days, when the weather is right, I can hear the band practicing at the local high school, several miles from our home. It seems the band is closer than they really are. This is the picture we find in this passage. The Thessalonians heard the Word of the Lord, accepted it, and then sounded it forward. The gospel reverberated and echoed from them to others, perhaps reaching farther than they realized.

News spreading far and wide is no big deal these days, because it spreads instantly across the Web. Obviously, this wasn't the case in the first century. News traveled by word of mouth. However, Thessalonica was a good launching point for the gospel, situated for travel and commerce, and made up of people and businesses from all over the Roman Empire.



*What if a local church was doing so well
that others pointed to their church
as the model to imitate?*

Paul wasn't saying the church at Thessalonica sent missionaries everywhere (though they might have sent some). Their reputation simply spread from person to person, as people saw firsthand what had happened in the congregation and the way they lived. Their faith spread through their own province of Macedonia, including Philippi, and to the south province of Achaia, including Corinth—cities hundreds of miles apart. For their faith to be known in all these areas was remarkable. Everywhere Paul went, he heard more about what was happening at Thessalonica. John Stott described this phenomenon as "holy gossip," when others marvel together at what the Lord has done in our lives.

A model church experiences true conversion (verses 9-10). Christian imitation and reputation spring from true conversion, as seen in these verses. The Thessalonians had turned from their idols to serve the true and living God, anticipating Christ's return.

Prior to conversion, the Thessalonians were pagans, worshiping pagan gods. It is likely on clear days, the Thessalonians could see Mount Olympus, only 50 miles from their city and supposedly the home to the gods of the Greco-Roman world.

Paul painted a sharp contrast when he said the Thessalonians had begun serving the *living* and *true* God. His statement implies they previously served *dead* and *untrue* gods—idols. It is hard for us to imagine just how deeply entrenched these idols were in their culture and world. It was a matter of religious, social, and economic importance. But when these people heard the gospel, they made a clean break from their idols.

By the way, we must never forget an idol can be *anything* that takes God's rightful place. Not all idols are wood, stone, and superstition. We all have made sin our idol at some point in our lives (Isaiah 53:6). The Thessalonians had turned *away* from their idols and *toward* God. Their lives had been transformed, characterized by serving Him and awaiting the Second Coming of Christ. This is the turnaround everyone was talking about. This was their turning point. When was yours? Have you experienced this type of turning point in your life?

The Model Church

A model church lives together in genuine imitation of Christ, sounding forth its faith in Christ, having experienced a life-changing conversion to Christ. Churches don't automatically continue as role models. Every church must continue to cultivate its growing relationship with Christ, actively living out and sounding forth their faith. This doesn't require perfection but consistency as we grow in our true faith in the living God together.

Every day, people watch a billion hours of video content on YouTube and "how to..." searches are among the fastest growing requests to search engines. The conclusion? When users need to learn something today, they rely on video. May I suggest, when it comes to the faith, we cannot rely on video to learn how to live out the Christian life. We need a role model—an in-the-flesh, up-close-and-personal example. Can you and your church provide that model for someone today? **ONE**

About the Columnist: Dr. Barry Raper pastors Bethel FWB Church near Ashland City, TN. He is associate dean of Welch Divinity School.

Welch Features Six Speakers at Forum22

Guests gathered from across the country at the Forum22 conference at Welch College, March 6–8, according to Welch President Matt Pinson. “We were so pleased with this year’s conference, the first Forum Conference held in two years,” Pinson said. “As always, it was a blessing to enjoy the Ministry of the Word and to visit with old friends.”

Attendees lifted their voices in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; heard from Welch College students in the *Rejoice!* Ministry Team, the College Choir, the *Evangels*, and the Instrumental Ensemble; prayed and read Scripture together; and listened to sermons and seminars from six speakers.

Forum22 featured Dr. Harry Reeder, pastor-teacher of Briarwood Presbyterian Church (PCA) in Birmingham, Alabama, and his wife Cindy. New to the Forum conference was Jerry Nunes, bivocational pastor at Iglesia Cristiana Bautista of New York in Yonkers, New York, and senior vice president of MasterCard. Those gathered also heard sermons and seminars by Welch College regulars



Dr. Robert E. Picirilli, Dr. Paul Harrison, and Dr. Jesse Owens.

Diverse topics for the conference included progressive Christianity vs. biblical Christianity (H. Reeder), the Ten Commandments (C. Reeder), lessons for church leaders from Paul’s address to the Ephesian elders (Picirilli), navigating the digital life biblically (Nunes), what we can learn from Jonathan Edwards (Harrison) and “Rest for the Weary” from Matthew 11:25–30 (Owens).

Sermons can be found at facebook.com/WelchCollege. **ONE**

Welch Athletics Honored

Welch College Athletic Director Greg Fawbush recently announced several awards from the 2021-2022 basketball season.

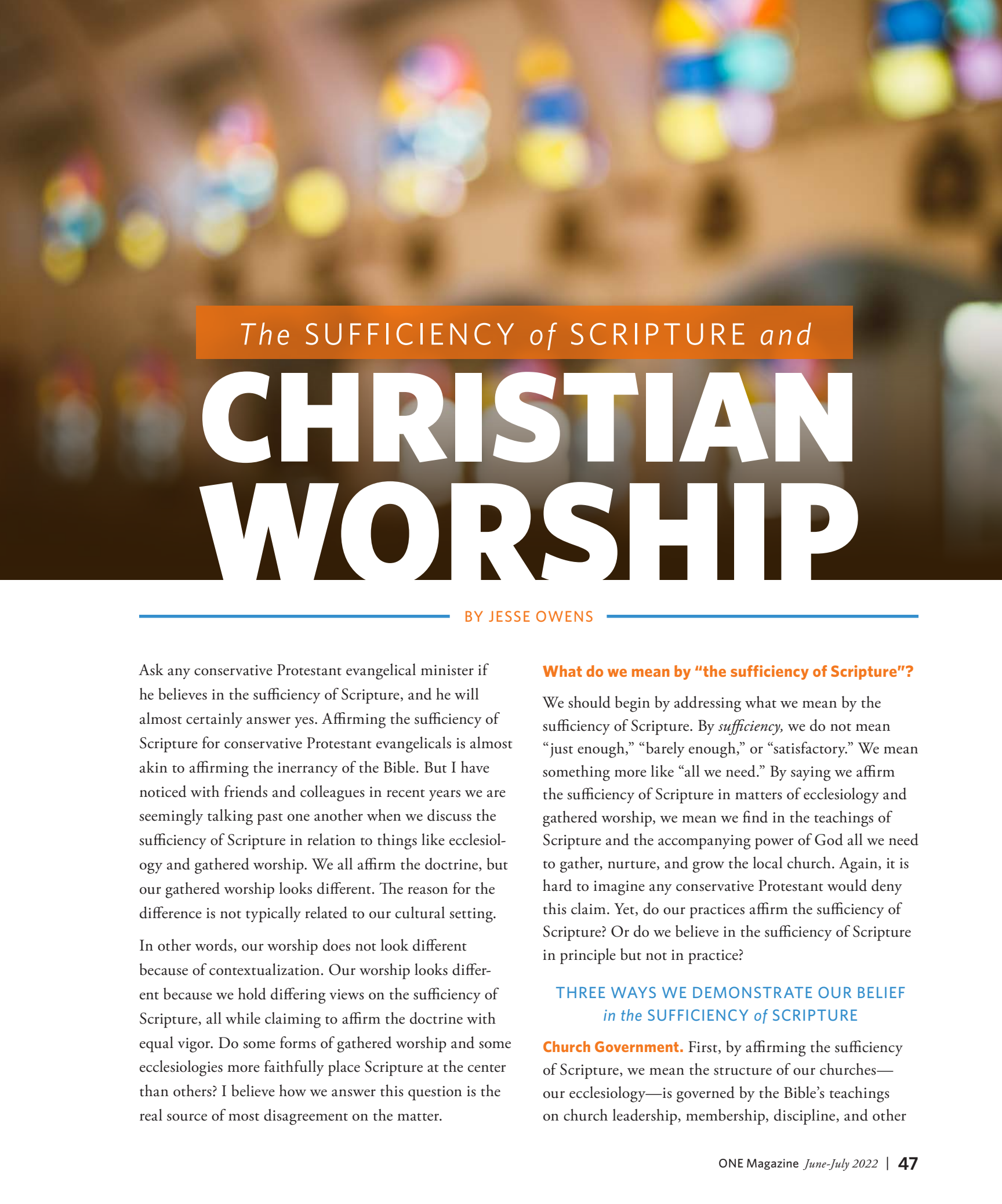
Lady Flames basketball coach *Katie Bryan* was named “Coach of the Year” for the Mid-East region.

Abby Bragg was named to the All-American team and “Player of the Year” for the Mid-East region. Abby averaged 20 points per game with a game high of 26 points.

Abby Bragg and *Spencer Smith* were named “Players of the Week” for the NCCAA DII during the season, while *Maci Bowman*, *Emma Wall*, *Madison Carnes*, *Spencer Smith*, *Marlon Mitchell*, and *J.C. Chapman* also received all-region honors. **ONE**



Coach Katie Bryan



The SUFFICIENCY of SCRIPTURE and

CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

BY JESSE OWENS

Ask any conservative Protestant evangelical minister if he believes in the sufficiency of Scripture, and he will almost certainly answer yes. Affirming the sufficiency of Scripture for conservative Protestant evangelicals is almost akin to affirming the inerrancy of the Bible. But I have noticed with friends and colleagues in recent years we are seemingly talking past one another when we discuss the sufficiency of Scripture in relation to things like ecclesiology and gathered worship. We all affirm the doctrine, but our gathered worship looks different. The reason for the difference is not typically related to our cultural setting.

In other words, our worship does not look different because of contextualization. Our worship looks different because we hold differing views on the sufficiency of Scripture, all while claiming to affirm the doctrine with equal vigor. Do some forms of gathered worship and some ecclesiologies more faithfully place Scripture at the center than others? I believe how we answer this question is the real source of most disagreement on the matter.

What do we mean by “the sufficiency of Scripture”?

We should begin by addressing what we mean by the sufficiency of Scripture. By *sufficiency*, we do not mean “just enough,” “barely enough,” or “satisfactory.” We mean something more like “all we need.” By saying we affirm the sufficiency of Scripture in matters of ecclesiology and gathered worship, we mean we find in the teachings of Scripture and the accompanying power of God all we need to gather, nurture, and grow the local church. Again, it is hard to imagine any conservative Protestant would deny this claim. Yet, do our practices affirm the sufficiency of Scripture? Or do we believe in the sufficiency of Scripture in principle but not in practice?

THREE WAYS WE DEMONSTRATE OUR BELIEF *in the SUFFICIENCY of SCRIPTURE*

Church Government. First, by affirming the sufficiency of Scripture, we mean the structure of our churches—our ecclesiology—is governed by the Bible’s teachings on church leadership, membership, discipline, and other

ecclesiological matters. Many Bible-believing friends and pastors might disagree with our views on congregational church government, believing instead the Bible teaches something more like a Presbyterian or Episcopal form of government, but we are all attempting to model our ecclesiology after Scripture.

Whatever our differences, we do not believe the Bible says nothing about church structure or government and opt for more efficient models from the business world (as some unfortunately do). We believe the Bible says something about ecclesiology, and we attempt to model the structure of our churches after Scripture. We believe what God has given us in Scripture is sufficient for our ecclesiology.

Forms of Worship. Second, in relation to worship, we believe Scripture lays out clear, essential elements of worship that ought to be present in gathered worship services. For example, we physically *gather* for worship (Hebrews 10:24–25), we carefully *preach* the Word (Acts 2:42; 2 Timothy 4:2), we *confess* our sins (James 5:16; 1 John 1:9), we publicly *read Scripture* (1 Timothy 4:13), we *give* of our finances (Galatians 6:6; 2 Timothy 2:6), we partake of the *ordinances* (Matthew 28:18–20; Luke 22:19; John 13:1–18), we *pray* (Acts 1:14; 1 Timothy 2:8), and we *sing* songs, hymns, and spiritual songs (Colossians 3:16). We do all these things because we believe Scripture teaches they should present as part of our worship. We might say, in sum, we attempt to worship God on God’s terms as He has prescribed in the Bible, which is our best attempt at demonstrating the sufficiency of Scripture in the structure of our worship (Heb. 12:28–29).

Content of Worship. Third, we attempt to convey the sufficiency of Scripture in the content of our worship. I love the way Ligon Duncan expresses this: “Read the Bible, preach the Bible, pray that Bible, sing the Bible, and [through the ordinances] see the Bible.” Not only is the structure of our worship informed by the Bible, but the content of our worship as well. This practice demonstrates a firm belief in the sufficiency of Scripture for our worship.

UNDERMINING *the* SUFFICIENCY of SCRIPTURE

Church Leadership, Membership, and Discipline. However, we also can undermine our affirmation of the sufficiency of Scripture in our ecclesiology and worship. Con-

sider first ecclesiology and church structure. This tendency could occur in many ways. One way would be allowing someone to serve as the pastor of a church who has charisma or is a gifted teacher but does not meet the biblical qualifications for an elder laid out in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 or Titus 1:5–9. Permitting someone to serve as a pastor who does not meet biblical qualifications for the office based on their other gifts undermines any affirmation of the sufficiency of Scripture, because it implies the ability to entertain or increase weekly attendance is what is truly important.

Other examples include when we neglect the biblical injunction to practice church membership and discipline (Matthew 18:15–18; 1 Corinthians 5). We might be tempted to neglect these practices because they seem too exclusive or outdated, not conducive to numerical growth, or, frankly, difficult and awkward. The Bible clearly teaches these practices, yet our lack of faith in the sufficiency of Scripture leads us to think they would harm the local church rather than sustain it. When we choose this route, we undermine our affirmation of the sufficiency of Scripture.

Worship. We can also undermine our affirmation of the sufficiency of Scripture through the structure and elements of our worship. We communicate our belief in the sufficiency of Scripture in the structure of our worship by ensuring Scripture regularly appears in our services. We should not reserve Scripture solely for preaching. Scripture should be present in public reading of God’s Word, it should be woven into our prayers, it should be present in our songs, and it should be the foundation for our sermons.

Should sermons be “practical” in the sense our hearers know what to do with what they have heard? Absolutely. Should our sermons and sermon series be loosely connected to a given text of Scripture and primarily focused on a felt need? Probably not.

Something quite similar could be said about the music we sing when the Body of Christ meets each week. The songs we select for gathered worship should not merely convey general truth about God but should be deeply informed by

When we talk about the sufficiency of Scripture related to ecclesiology and gathered worship, we need to be more holistic in how we understand and apply the doctrine.

the teachings of Scripture. This principle could extend into how a given song is sung. It might be a song is filled with rich, biblical teaching but a poorly played pipe organ or a loud band drowns out its theology. Our preaching and our singing, as well as the rest of our gathered worship, should convey the rich theology of Scripture.

When the elements of our worship are rooted and founded upon not only the teachings of Scripture but also the very words of Scripture, we affirm Scripture is sufficient for gathering, nurturing, and growing the local church. We are saying we do not depend upon our ability to create the perfect environment for worship borrowed from entertainment culture or feel the need to adopt modern business management practices in lieu of Scripture's teachings on church leadership to sustain Christ's Church. Instead, we affirm the Bible informs the structure of our church, the elements in our worship, and the content of our preaching, praying, and singing.

When we talk about the sufficiency of Scripture related to ecclesiology and gathered worship, we need to be more

holistic in how we understand and apply the doctrine. I have attempted to share a few examples of how we can practice this important doctrine. There are ways to organize churches that are more faithful to Scripture and demonstrate reliance upon the Bible for church governance rather than the business world. There are ways to structure our gathered worship that highlight Scripture and our belief in its sufficiency, with the Spirit's accompanying power, to save unbelievers and bring about spiritual maturity. There are songs that more adequately convey the truths of Scripture—even specific texts—which, in turn, allows the Word of Christ to dwell richly within us (Colossians 3:16). Everything we do should demonstrate we really believe God's Word is more than enough for the church. Like Peter, we confess in our worship we can turn nowhere but to the One who has the words of eternal life (John 6:68). **ONE**

About the Author: Jesse Owens is program coordinator for the M.A. in theology and ministry program at Welch College. He also pastors Immanuel Church in Gallatin, Tennessee. Read more: Welch.edu.



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The Role of Critics

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.



An effective method of leading discussion regarding a volatile topic is something called *flip the room*. When the group is divided on what path to take or decision to make, have each side argue their perspective for 10-15 minutes. Then flip the room and ask each side to adopt and argue the opposing view, even if a devil's advocate view. For this to work effectively, the participants must argue with the same level of passion and points as if they believed the contrarian view. But what about the one critic?

While leaders may demonize a person who disagrees, criticizes, or asks tough questions, ironically we never view ourselves negatively when we ask others tough questions. Let me challenge all of us, especially myself, to remember the real value of the critic's role. Biblically, to guard the reputation of another, first offer criticism privately. Setting aside the etiquette of the *how*, let's examine the *why* of our critics.

True constructive criticism comes from a place of concern. Therefore, before we criticize our critics, let's take time to hear why they feel strongly about the issue. Talk with critics when possible to ask clarifying questions about the heart of the issue. Understand criticism provides accountability. We are never above having ideas,

methods, and beliefs called into question. Like discipleship, when our faith is tested, if what we believe is solid enough, we can defend it. Misplaced criticism often reinforces others' belief in your approach when providing a heartfelt reply. Critics keep us humble and prepared.

I've had my share of criticism, and it provides tension at best, irritation at worst. But, true leaders can handle good and bad criticism. I don't detest the role when I am the critic, because I believe I am right. In contrast, I must extend others the same courtesy when they challenge me. Even when we think the critics are wrong, please know their role is helpful, especially when done in the right way. Be cautious how you handle your critics, because, at other times, we are the critics. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Ron Hunter Jr. has a Ph.D. in leadership and is CEO of Randall House & D6 Family Ministry. You may contact him at ron.hunter@randallhouse.com.



BIBLE VERSES

Proverbs 15:1 & 31
Proverbs 27:6 & 17
Proverbs 12:18
Ecclesiastes 5:2-3
Galatians 6:1

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

"Criticism is something we can avoid easily by saying nothing, doing nothing, and being nothing."

—Aristotle

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- Jun. 19** Walk by the Spirit (Galatians 5:16-26)
- Jun. 26** Do Good to Everyone (Galatians 6:1-10)
- Jul. 3** God Blesses the Righteous (Psalm 1:1-6)
- Jul. 10** Seeking God in Suffering (Psalm 22:1-31)
- Jul. 17** Praising God for His Goodness (Psalm 103:1-22)
- Jul. 24** Delighting in God's Word (Psalm 119)
- Jul. 31** Blessings in Christ (Ephesians 1:3-23)
- Aug. 7** Saved by Grace (Ephesians 2:1-22)
- Aug. 14** Walk in Love (Ephesians 5:1-21)
- Aug. 21** Faith and Family (Ephesians 5:21-6:4)
- Aug. 28** The Whole Armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-20)



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RESET



D6 CONFERENCE 2022

BY LAUREN BIGGS, D6 MEDIA CONNECTIONS COORDINATOR

After a storm knocks out the electricity, you must reset your clocks. But first, you have to find the correct time—an accurate point of reference. Recent world events have disrupted ministries, households, and churches. The 2022 D6 Conference offered over 1,000 parents, volunteers, pastors, and leaders a chance to RESET. While looking back on foundational principles and holding true to Scripture (point of reference), speakers equipped and encouraged attendees to RESET with generational discipleship in both church and home settings.

MAIN STAGE MOMENTS:

A video portraying the original writing of the Shema passage in Deuteronomy 6 introduced the conference. Flashing back to Moses and forward to modern-day discipleship moments, the video illustrated the dramatic picture of what God intends for discipleship at home and at church. Emcees **Jon Forrest**, **Marianne Howard**, and **Dr. Kevin Jones** set the stage with Dr. Ron Hunter to unpack the theme and greet the 1,055 attendees.

Dr. Richard Ross reminded parents to reset by restoring their first love found only in Jesus, or their hearts will remain lukewarm. When parents' hearts change, they embrace biblically sound goals for themselves and their children.

Robby Gallaty challenged everyone to ask two questions. First, ask, "What's more important to you, the approval of God or the applause of man?" He shared the story of how God reset his own heart through the daily spiritual disciplines of silence and solitude. In quiet moments, God will reveal what needs to be revived within you. If you don't slow down in your walk with the Lord, from marriage and

home to ministry, you will burn out. Gallaty cautioned, "Believers, don't fall for the trap of doing ministry *for* Jesus when you should be doing ministry *with* Jesus." Robby concluded with a final question: "Are you the blood clot stopping the flow of healthy discipleship in your church?"

Dr. Ron Hunter and **Matt Markins** took turns exploring how ministry leaders get to the heart and mission of their ministry and discipleship strategies by focusing on the *why*. Matt warned against using old maps to lead in children's and family ministry, to find new maps. Ron questioned, "What if we shifted thinking from 'tactics, methodologies, and programs' to 'guiding objectives.' Most people see the *how* of your ministry but the *why* drives your ministry. Your *how* is informed by your *why*." Matt and Ron recommended four key objectives to inform the *why*: 1) Bible engagement (daily reading not just church reading), 2) Sharing the faith (creates growth and accountability), 3) Volunteering in the church (*belong* not just *attend*), and 4)

"One of the greatest tragedies in ministry is that we get so busy trying to build our own kingdom that we miss out on God's Kingdom."
—Marianne Howard

Involving an involved, nurturing adult. Ron reminded attendees, “It takes a generation to see significant results of discipleship. If we want to redeem our families, it takes time.”

Jonathan Sawyer and his band from Cleveland, Tennessee, led worship with songs that reminded attendees to reset by shifting their focus to God’s sovereignty and love. With arms lifted and hearts postured, worshipers sang the lyrics, *I’m coming back to the heart of worship, it’s all about You, Jesus.*

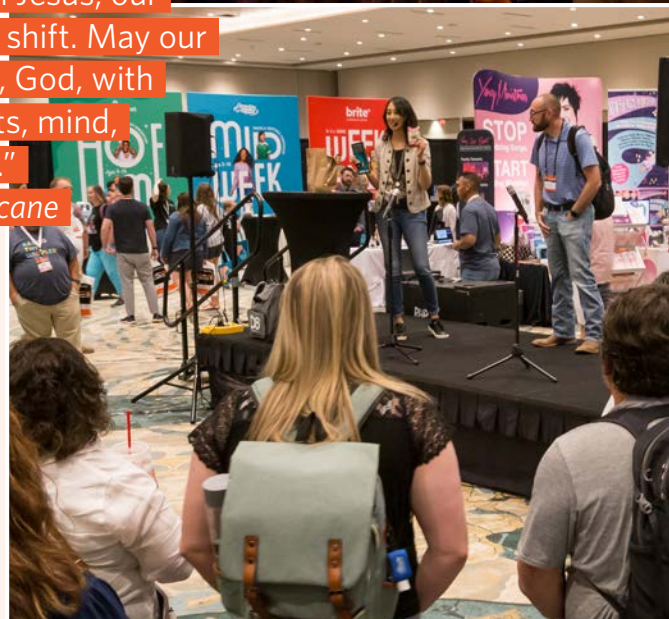
For respite between the main stage talks **Pastor Alex Kennedy** coached ministry leaders, parents, and volunteers in soul care to further facilitate reset. Pastor Alex asked each person probing questions about finance, purity, sin, arrogance, marriage, etc. He shepherded attendees to look inward, evaluate their hearts, and linger in the presence of Jesus. The goal was conviction, not condemnation, through the Holy Spirit in repentance. Conference attendees raved about these moments of silence, questions, and encouraging Scripture that led to spiritual healing.

The D6 team was honored to have twelve Korean delegates visit the conference. D6 Korea director, **Paul Kim** joined Dr. Hunter on the main stage to talk briefly about D6 in Korea and how many families and churches are actively engaged in generational discipleship, specifically through D6 curriculum. Each year, seven international locations host D6 Conferences and encourage churches and homes to partner in disciple-making. D6 heroes can contribute financially to continue making an impact on D6 Family Ministry around the world at d6hero.com

On day two, **Denise Pass** and **Michelle Nietert** opened the general session. Drawing from their new book, *Make Up Your Mind*, Denise and Michelle walked attendees through Scripture and reminders of Truth to reset negative mindsets. Romans 8:5 and Isaiah 55:8-9 teach us our thoughts are *not* God’s thoughts. Resetting the mind is not about thinking *positively* but thinking *righteously*. Denise and Michelle encouraged fellow ministry leaders and parents to take on the mind of Christ by refocusing our minds to gratitude, mindfulness, and surrender.

Holley Gerth tackled the question, “How do we help the next generation of introverts become who God created them to be at home and at church?” She reminded each personality type, “You were made on purpose, for a purpose. Being an introvert or extrovert is not your identity, nor is it your destiny, they are just descriptions.”

“As we go back to our first love with Jesus, our priorities will shift. May our kids love you, God, with all their hearts, mind, and strength.”
—Arlene Pellicane





Yancy Wideman Richmond began D6 minis (brief, ten-minute talks) on the main stage. She inspired ministry leaders to “Stop just doing songs and start leading kids, students, and families in worship.” **Sam Luce** helped attendees “Measure Success in Youth Ministry” by realizing churches need to repent of the idols of programs and relevance. Sam referred to Matthew 28 and the Great Commission as the key to measuring success: to be a disciple that makes disciples. **Britney Dent** explained the 260 Concept. (From age 13 until age 18 years, you have 260 Saturdays with your teen). She encouraged parents to evaluate how they will spend their Saturdays and to create positive family traditions that allow relationships to build throughout these impressionable years. Concluding the D6 minis, **John McGee** affirmed the key to family ministry begins with a godly marriage. Once you focus on the key, family ministry will begin to take place. “If you want to fix your marriage,” he concluded, “draw a circle around yourself, and then fix everything inside the circle.”



“You cannot please God and promote self at the same time.”
—Robby Gallaty

John Weaver challenged attendees to abide in Christ, allowing pruning to take place to bear fruit and reproduce disciples. **Dr. Scott Turansky** completed main stage sessions with the inspirational message: “A Heart-Based Approach to Parenting Changes Everything.” Comparing and contrasting reward/punishment behaviors versus correction/instruction allows parents to connect with a child’s heart and lean into repentance for desired behavioral outcomes.



ALL ABOUT ATTENDEES:

Hallways and social media buzzed with conversations as attendees shared their conference experiences. Kristi Johnson, D6 photographer, captured attendees’ excitement and interests as they absorbed wisdom throughout the week. Testimonies shared, relationships formed and re-connected, prayers answered, stories told—the energy throughout the week was palpable. Read what a few attendees had to say,

“The overconsumption of the church on relevance and pragmatism has left the church full, but unsatisfied.”
—Sam Luce

- “I’ll be mulling over what I learned and experienced for months.” —Michelle Nietert
- “D6 conference has been a sweet time of rest and rejuvenation through prayer to and worship of our King, as



well as Scripture-filled sharpening in how to pursue a biblical model of family ministry and discipleship.”

—Sarah Ashley

- “This has been a life and ministry game changer. D6 is the best conference on the planet.” —Allan Austin
- “Every year, D6 is one of those reminders to keep you on track for the long haul!” —Corey Jones

“No matter if you are an introvert or an extrovert you are made by God and gifted to advance God's Kingdom in unique ways.”

—Holley Gerth


With over **40 ministry providers** in the resource center, attendees found solutions to their ministry challenges and connected with organizations from all over the country.

From curriculum and books to new system implementation,

ministry philosophies, and other resources, attendees spent time in conversation and learning. From free ice cream and free conference T-shirts to learning from speakers on the D6 small stage, attendees enjoyed the resource center. Short talks from **Arlene Pellicane** and **Dr. Timothy Paul Jones** presented attendees with practical tips about topics

like parenting, technology, and how to encourage your teens when they have questions about their faith.

Deuteronomy 6 commands us to love God and engage His Word with *all* our heart, *all* our soul, and *all* our strength. By doing so, every generation shares your consistent passion because they know you're ALL IN. We invite you and your ministry team to join us for the 2023 D6 Conference, April 10-12 at the Orlando World Center Marriott to explore the theme “All In.” Join this important conversation about taking your church and home to an *all-in* approach to discipleship. Bring your team to share the wealth of content shared by conference speakers and resource providers. Teams can “divide and conquer” to get the most from the conference. Register or learn more at d6conference.com.

You can enjoy every moment of the D6 Conference, from breakouts to the main stage, by purchasing a pass to the D6 Media Vault. Watch with your church staff and volunteers or listen to your favorite sessions again and again. This includes nearly 100 audio MP3s from breakouts and all main session videos! <https://bit.ly/3xHJoEK> 



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SCAN ME

McDonald Accepts Position as WNAC Director

Antioch, TN—WNAC is pleased to announce Ruth McDonald as the new WNAC Director. Ruth's husband Donnie will continue to serve as an IM missionary and strategically promote missions education in the U.S. by visiting churches, developing a teaching curriculum, and assisting with Go Global events.

The McDonalds ministered as missionaries in Japan for 38 years. They served as church planters, teachers, evangelists, and recently provided leadership in the Good News Chapel in the greater Tokyo area. Ruth shares, "WNAC had a huge part to play in our ministry in Japan all these years. I am excited about giving back by serving our wonderful Free Will Baptist women."

Amy Johnson, WNAC Board Chair, noted, "We have seen God's hand guide through the process of hiring a new director. We are beyond thankful and excited to welcome Ruth. With a rich Free Will Baptist heritage and a love for this denomination, Ruth has a passion for women's ministry

and sharing through the written and spoken word. We are confident her values, goals, and passions will help expand new ministry opportunities while holding tight to the heritage of our Free Will Baptist women's ministry organization,"

The McDonalds will move to Nashville in October to begin their new roles November 1.

Phyllis York, interim director, said, "November can't get here fast enough! I look forward to assisting Ruth with the everyday tasks of the office while she adjusts to a new culture and position."

Please join IM and WNAC in praying for the McDonalds as they enter this new season of ministry. Also, pray for the Good News Chapel in Japan as they look confidently towards the future and transition to Japanese leadership.

Learn more: IMinc.org | wnac.org **ONE**



Ruth McDonald

Foundation Delivers \$1.1 Million to Denominational Work

Antioch, TN—Following its April board meeting, Free Will Baptist Foundation announced gifts of \$1.1 million to denominational work, in addition to the \$750,000 disbursed through its grants program. Director David Brown noted, "The Foundation was hugely blessed over the last year with more than \$1.1 million in income. We have been blessed to be a blessing, and we are sharing our income with Free Will Baptist ministries. We encourage others to give as well."

While the bulk of the gift (\$1 million) went to The Together Way Trust, WNAC also received \$50,000, along with \$50,000 to Vertical 3, a ministry of Randall House.

The Together Way Trust is an endowment established in 1982. Funds held in the endowment are never used, remaining permanently as principal. However, interest funds are disbursed annually to Free Will Baptist national ministries.

Executive Secretary Eddie Moody noted, "We are thankful to the Foundation for this generous gift to The Together Way Trust. This unique endowment benefits all national ministries, and in turn, benefits all Free Will Baptists. We

hope others also give—both big and small gifts—to the trust to help us reach our \$5 million goal. We can reach this goal together, and this endowment truly will help us be better together."

Phyllis York, WNAC interim director, expressed her thankfulness: "This gift from the Foundation was totally unexpected but greatly appreciated. It will enable WNAC to continue providing opportunities for Free Will Baptist women to be encouraged, strengthened, and equipped for Kingdom work."

Randall House Director Ron Hunter shared, "When Vertical 3 provides services and CTS competition for the national convention, expenses remain the same, regardless of the number of participants. This unexpected grant from the Foundation helps us to continue offering young people a chance to participate in experiences that build a faith that continues into adulthood."

To learn more about the work of Free Will Baptist Foundation, or to contribute to The Together Way Trust or other Free Will Baptist ministries, visit www.FWBGifts.org. **ONE**

WNAC Celebrates In-Person Flourish Event

Huntington, WV—Ladies (and men) from ten states gathered at Central Free Will Baptist Church in Huntington, West Virginia, March 26, for the 2022 Flourish Conference. Excitement filled the sanctuary as old friends hugged and new friendships were formed. After two years of virtual conferences and online meetings, attendees enjoyed the live event.

Keynote speakers Alicia Crowe (OH), Jody Sullivan (WV), and Judy DeLong (KY) encouraged those present with stories of brokenness, loss, and grief, and how God redeemed each one. Sarah Sargent (OH), Ashley Alphin (WV), and Elizabeth Hodges (TN) presented the importance of generational mentoring, while a panel consisting of Jonda Patton (KY), Sarah Sargent (OH), Derena Coleman (KY), Linda Hutchinson (WV), and Elizabeth Hodges (TN) tackled the importance of grace in all areas of life.

Attendees also were challenged to flood FaceBook for the next ten days with positivity, using the hashtag #flourish-gratitudechallenge, listing three things for which they are thankful.

Former WNAC Director Elizabeth Hodges reflected on the conference: “I am thankful for the encouragement and challenge from each speaker. Every hour of preparation, every delay, every detour was all in God’s perfect plan.”

To learn more about upcoming WNAC events, visit wnac.org. 

Flourish



VIII CONFERENCE

John

14:6

the
WAY
TRUTH
LIFE

JULY 24-26, 2022 • BIRMINGHAM, AL

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY AM:

Kristi Johnson (TN)
and *Caleb* Milling (OK)

SUNDAY PM:

Tommy Franks (AL)

MONDAY PM:

Chris Edwards (SC)

TUESDAY PM:

Jeffrey Dean Smith (TN)



**BYRON
TRIMBLE**

Tuesday 9:00 pm

Tickets are \$13 during
pre-registration and \$15 onsite.

*Byron Trimble is a critically
acclaimed comedian, speaker, and
internet personality whose playful
humor, quick wit, and musical
chops have helped him create a
following of fans around the world.*

verticalthree.com



B A C K T O

BIRMINGHAM

BY RYAN LEWIS, CONVENTION DIRECTOR

When 3,000-plus Free Will Baptists gathered in Memphis last summer, things felt back to normal. Attendees greeted each other with handshakes, hugs, and warm fellowship. Business, seminars, and competition went on as planned, and everyone enjoyed the return to corporate worship. But a few things were still a bit “off.”

The convention center, hotels, and nearby restaurants were desperate for workers and convention attendees waited patiently for service. Decisions made early in the planning process meant there was no choir or orchestra leading in worship. Seminars, competition, and registration numbers were down as people continued to take a “wait and see” approach following the pandemic.

Yet, as uncertainty lingered, one thing remained constant: Free Will Baptists made a positive impression on the city. As you probably read in *ONE Magazine*, or in the 2021 Convention Recap news release, numerous staffers and employees from Memphis hotels and venues spoke openly about the positive impact our attendees had on the city, both economic and emotional. One executive at the convention center noted (emotionally), “Watching the young people this week gave me hope for our future.”

The 2022 convention in Birmingham promises attendees even greater opportunities for encouragement, edification, and impact. Worship services will feature singing and preaching in both English and Spanish, and the choir and orchestra are back (find more information at fwbworship.com). Multiple seminars will be offered throughout the day

by national departments and commissions, the exhibit hall will be full of ministries and vendors, and the Vertical 3 Conference will host the CTS Ministry Expo and nightly worship for all ages.

Saturday’s IMPACT Birmingham event will look a little different this year. Rather than partnering with local Free Will Baptist churches to help with outreach, volunteers will assemble and distribute care kits to those in need throughout downtown Birmingham. Serve the City activities from Vertical 3 will offer youth groups an opportunity to work with volunteer service organizations in the Birmingham area.

Many people look forward to the annual convention as a “family reunion,” a time to gather with friends they haven’t seen in a year. Some come to participate in the business of the denomination, further their education in seminars and workshops, or worship with fellow believers in a setting unlike any their local church could replicate. Others make it a family vacation to participate in Vertical 3 and CTS expo activities and find local tourist attractions.

Whatever your motivation in attending the 2022 National Convention, let’s all share the same goal: leave the event as a better and stronger denomination, and leave the city better than when we arrived. See you in Birmingham! **ONE**

About the Author: Ryan Lewis serves as executive administrator for the National Association of Free Will Baptists. He and his wife Ashlee live in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, with their four children.

NAFWB

The Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (BJCC) will serve as the host location for convention events and activities. Further information regarding events will be posted at nafwb.org/convention as it becomes available. You can also find a floor plan of the BJCC there.

SATURDAY, JULY 23

Impact Birmingham

9:00 am
(fwbmastersmen.org for more details)

Registration Open

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
BJCC Main Level Lobby
Pre-Registration closes June 18:
nafwb.org/convention.

SUNDAY, JULY 24

Registration (Open Daily)

8:00 am – 7:00 pm
BJCC Main Level Lobby

Sunday School*

9:30 am
Note the new starting time

Morning Worship Services*

10:30 am
Note the new starting time

Feet Washing

3:00 pm

Usher Orientation

5:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3
Sign up at fwbworship.com/choir

Evening Worship Services*

(Communion will be observed in the adult worship service)
7:00 pm

GO THE **MILE**
extra **m1**le

*Worship services offered nightly for the following ages:

Adult Worship BJCC East Hall 2-3
Teen Worship (Grades 7-12) Sheraton Birmingham Ballroom
456 Worship (Grades 4-6) BJCC East M
Kids Worship (Grades 1-3) BJCC East N
Preschool Worship (Age 3-5) BJCC East D-E

2022 NATIONAL CONVENTION Preliminary Program

MONDAY, JULY 25

General Board Meeting

8:00 am
BJCC Forum E

Serve the City Opportunities (V3)

8:00 am

CTS Ministry Expo

8:30 am - 4:30 pm
Visit <http://verticalthree.com> for the full schedule.

Convention Seminars

9:00 am - 5:00 pm
BJCC North Meeting Rooms

Exhibit Hall Open

3:00 pm - 10:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 1

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3
Sign up at fwbworship.com/choir

Evening Worship Services*

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm

WNAC Laughter & Latte

(Ticketed Event)**
8:30 pm
BJCC Ballroom B

TUESDAY, JULY 26

Serve the City Opportunities (V3)

8:00 am

V3 CTS Ministry Expo

8:30 am - 4:30 pm

Convention Seminars

9:00 am - 5:00 pm
BJCC North Meeting Rooms

WNAC Celebration Service

10:00 am
BJCC East Hall 2-3
Speaker: Shannon Little (Japan)

Exhibit Hall Open

10:00 am - 10:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 1

Convention Business Session

1:30 pm - 4:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3
Sign up at fwbworship.com/choir

Evening Worship Services*

7:00 pm

V3 Event: Byron Trimble

Comedian, Speaker, Mammal
(Ticketed Event)**
9:00 pm
Sheraton Birmingham Ballroom

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27

Serve the City Opportunities (V3)

8:00 am

CTS Bible Finals

8:00 am
BJCC East M

Convention Seminars

9:00 am - 4:00 pm
BJCC North Meeting Rooms

Convention Business Session

9:00 am - 4:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3

GPS Experience

A Missions Experience for Every Age
9:00 am - 11:00 am

Serve the City Blood Drive

9:00 am - 3:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Open

10:00 am - 6:30 pm
BJCC East Hall 1

Welch College Alumni and Friends Luncheon (Ticketed Event)**

12:00 noon
BJCC Ballroom B

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3
Sign up at fwbworship.com/choir

Evening Worship Service

(Combined)
7:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3

V3 Awards Ceremony

9:00 pm
BJCC East Hall 2-3

Find information in participating in the choir, orchestra, or praise team at fwbworship.com under the NAFWB tab.

**Tickets for events can be purchased through convention pre-registration.

Answer the Call to Go the Extra Mile

BY EDDIE MOODY

Last year Nike introduced a tennis shoe named *The Extra Mile* with an ad campaign that said, “We take the extra steps to chase something bigger. Even better...we go the extra mile.” I love it!

Of course, we know where this slogan originated. These words came from Jesus during the Sermon on the Mount, when He challenged us to chase something bigger. But *what* did He want us to chase, and *how* did He want us to chase it?

The King James Version phrased it this way: “Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain” (Matthew 5:41). Immediately, our eyes are drawn to the word *compel*. We find this word again when Simon of Cyrene was *compelled* to carry Jesus’ cross (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21). Jesus challenged us not to respond in kind when others mistreat us. This becomes even more clear as Jesus continued with His sermon (Matthew 5:42-48). Jesus wanted us to respond in humility, not demanding our rights, not retaliating (Proverbs 25:21-22). But how do we do this? How do we go the extra mile?

Practice forgiveness. This picture is never clearer than in the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32).


The harmed father did not harbor ill will or seek retribution against his rebellious son. He willingly forgave him. Our willingness to forgive—really forgive—a family member, ex-spouse, co-worker, or fellow student requires us to go the extra mile.

We also go the extra mile by **protecting our brother** (Romans 14), stepping in when others seek to harm or discredit a brother. We must be alert to the impact our actions will have upon brothers and sisters in Christ.

Our world is filled with hurting people. We go the extra mile by **reaching the hurting**. This requires us to stop what we are doing, go out of our way, find those in need, and take time to help them. We see one example when Jesus stopped everything to help a hurting woman (Luke 8:40-46) during an extremely busy, inconvenient time.

Our world is also filled with people entangled in terrible sins. We go the extra mile by **reaching the hard to reach**. Jesus did this with the Samaritan woman (John 4) entangled in sexual sin. Rather than go *around* Sychar (like everyone else), he put Himself in a place where He could interact with the Samaritan woman, reach out to her, and meet her deepest need for a Savior.

The world is coming to our doorstep. We go the extra mile by **reaching all the world**. Look to the example of Peter, who was called to take the gospel to a Gentile named Cornelius (Acts 10-11:18). When we learn about another culture, bring an international student into our home, offer aid to struggling refugees, or try to learn a language to better communicate with someone, we are going the extra mile.

Going the extra mile can be uncomfortable, but we really are chasing something bigger and better. Let’s all answer the call to go the extra mile. 



Eddie Moody
Executive Secretary,
National Association of
Free Will Baptists



LAUGHTER & LATTE



With a relaxed atmosphere, wonderful refreshments, and shared memories, Laughter & Latte is the perfect opportunity to catch up with old friends...or make new ones.

Monday, July 25 | Birmingham, Alabama | WNAC.ORG

Legacy of Leadership

Cleo Wilburn Dalton Pursell was born in Ft. Worth, Texas, February 16, 1918. Converted at age 15 during a revival led by Rev. E.C. Morris of Georgia, she dedicated her life to "special service" a year later. She began preaching at age 16, was ordained at age 21, and assisted her pastor/evangelist husband Paul at churches in Oklahoma and California. A prominent figure in district, state, and national youth work, Cleo was instrumental in starting the Oklahoma State Women's Auxiliary Convention and served as its first president. She served as an officer for WNAC for 11 years then became executive secretary in September 1963. For 22 years, she guided WNAC through growth and expansion, leaving behind a strong legacy of leadership. **Why not leave your own legacy to WNAC with an Free Will Baptist Foundation endowment?**



Free Will Baptist Foundation
877-336-7575 | www.fwbgifts.org



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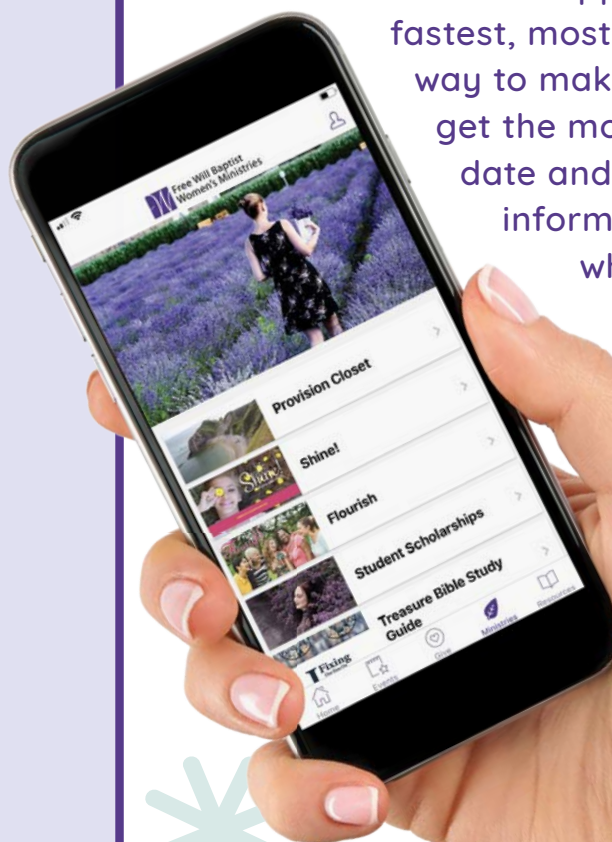
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