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CULTURE

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*Coaching Parents to Get Involved
in Generational Discipleship*

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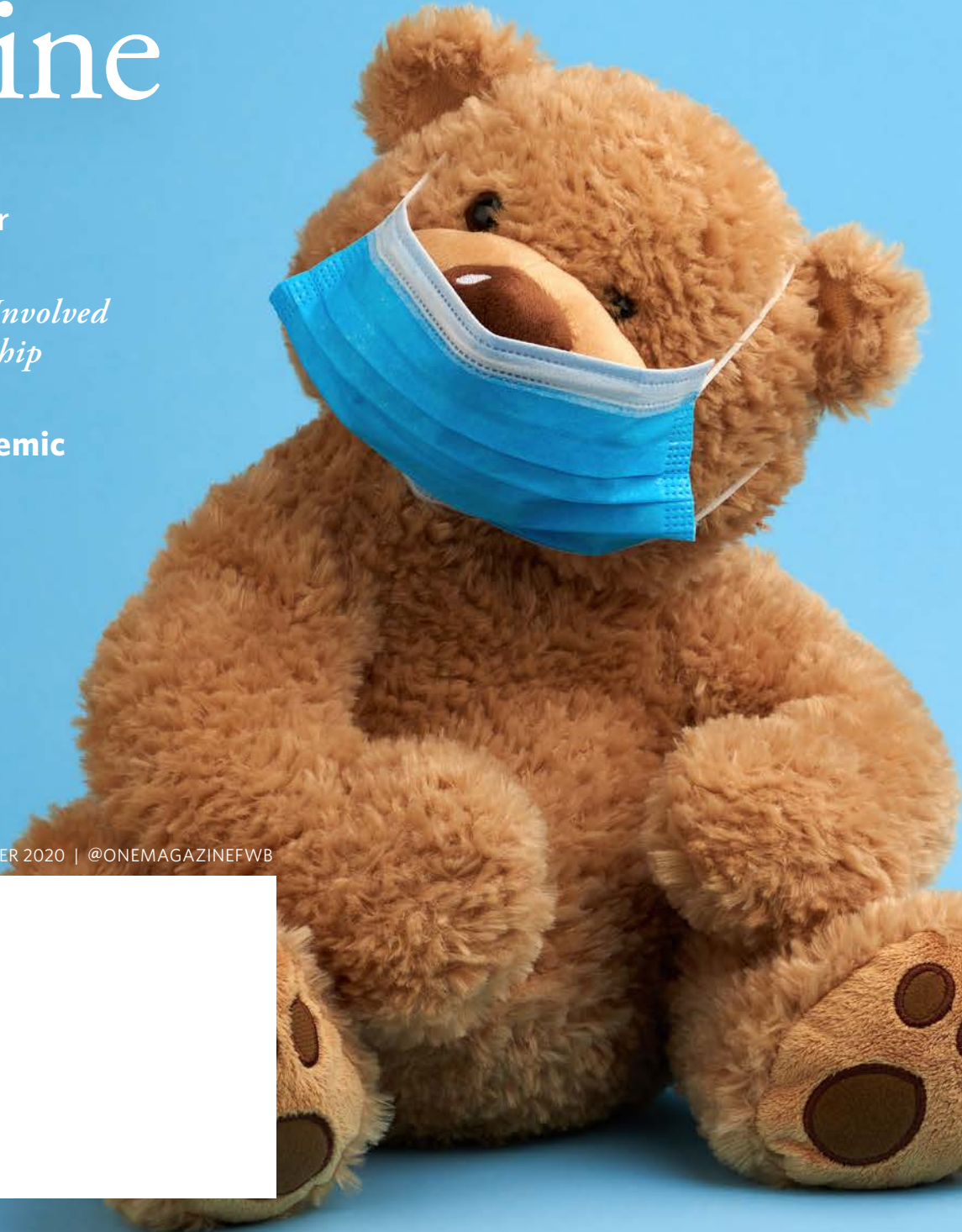
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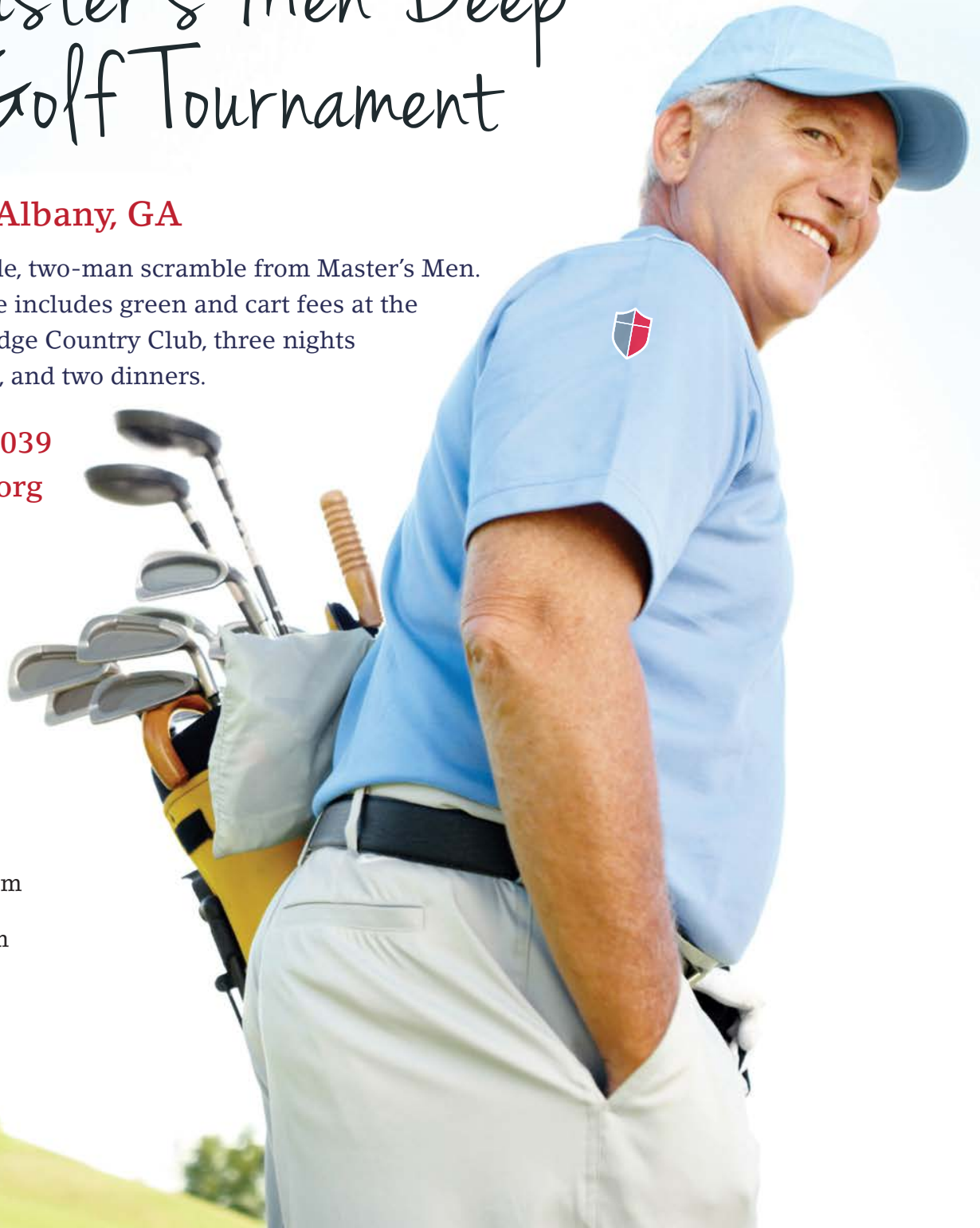
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Adult Parenting

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

“You gonna make it through this?”

The question, often accompanied by a smile, a wink, or a slap on the back, became routine in the weeks leading up to my daughter’s wedding. I always responded simply, “I think I’m going to make it.” I knew the askers meant well and appreciated their support for the changes coming for our family. Yet, each time the quirky dialogue played out, it left me shaking my head. *Of course, I would make it!* My daughter’s marriage wasn’t a punishment or a reason to grieve; it was an answered prayer to celebrate.

I recalled the early April morning when I lifted my daughter Victoria from the hospital incubator and carried her to my wife’s bedside. Together, we held her and prayed over her, giving her young life back to God. That morning—and every morning of her growing up years—I prayed three things for her: 1) that she would love God; 2) that God would send a young man who would love her but who would love Him more; and 3) that she would find fulfillment in her faith and life’s work for God.

Why would I ever question God’s answer to prayer?

I’m afraid today’s parents, even Christian parents, have bought into the misconception parenting stops on the wedding day. Too many parents think their children walk down

the aisle and out of their lives. Not true—or at least it shouldn’t be.

I’ll be the first to admit I choked back some tears on Victoria’s wedding day during the short walk down the aisle that suddenly seemed a mile long. And, sure, my parenting role changed dramatically the moment she said *I do*...but it didn’t end.

In the months following her wedding, though a novice at parenting adults, I am learning to follow a handful of simple principles:

Give them space to grow and to fail (Psalm 119:71). Avoid the phrases “That will never work” and “I told you so.” Some things can only be learned through experience, and strength grows most quickly through failure and adversity.

Encourage them to carve out their own traditions (Genesis 2:24). Don’t expect them to be an extension of either birth family.

Be available when needed (Philippians 2:4). From taxes and car insurance to leaky faucets and purchasing a first home, your life experience is invaluable to your kids. But don’t offer. They will reach out when they need you.

Set a good example (1 Corinthians 11:1). Continue pursuing God. Stay (or get) involved in your church family. Be consistent in life behavior. Love and honor your own spouse.



Be transparent about failures and struggles. Apologize when necessary.

Keep praying (1 Thessalonians 5:17). When my daughter lived at home, I prayed (at least) three things for her every day. Now that she is a married, responsible, bill-paying adult, the list has grown and includes my son-in-law. Prayer is serious business and never should be underestimated.

Do I really know what I’m doing as a parent to adults? Not really. But one thing I do know: I’m not going to stop my God-given dad duties until the day He calls me home. **ONE**

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

Let me start by saying I am grateful for the material that comes out in *ONE Magazine*. As an associate pastor at a Free Will Baptist church, I look forward to each issue. My question is this: as a new writer, do you accept and publish content from outside sources?

—William, Via Email

From the Editor:

Great question, William, and I am glad to hear you are writing. While *ONE Magazine* accepts article submissions, most content comes directly from the national departments that fund the magazine. This greatly reduces the number of submitted articles we can accept. Still, I am always glad to review articles, offer feedback, and publish when the article subject and need for content intersect.

The other day I read my pastor's copy of *PULPIT* magazine. I noticed it is published by *ONE Magazine*, but I couldn't find a way to subscribe to *PULPIT* online. How do I get my own copy?

—Robert, Via Email

From the Editor:

Robert, *PULPIT* is a special edition of *ONE Magazine* produced specifically for pastors and published periodically as funding allows. The publication is sent to pastors, missionaries, denominational leaders, and ministry students. However, we would be like to send a copy to anyone who might find the ministry-related content beneficial. You can subscribe by sending name, address, email, and phone number to editor@nafwb.org.

I appreciated the recent articles on Harrold Harrison. My late wife JoAnn was his secretary from 1966-1970 while I was a student at Free Will Baptist Bible College [now Welch College]. One of his statements has stuck with me through years of ministry and caused me to explore my work many times: "The teacher has not taught until the student has learned."

Thanks for honoring this great servant of our Lord.

—Randy, Burnsville, Minnesota

Have something to say? Say it!

Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are appreciated.

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Coaching Parents to Get Involved in *Generational Discipleship*

BY DAVID WOMACK

I will never forget the overwhelming emotion I experienced the first time I saw and held my firstborn daughter. It brought a fresh experience of love, both familiar and brand new. It also brought a real sense of how unprepared and ill-equipped I was for the challenges of being a father. It is amazing how we love our children and grandchildren instinctively. We don't have to be taught to love them, but we do have to learn how to express our love and how to love them well in ways that nurture the best in them. There was no doubt how much I loved each of my girls, and there was no doubt how much I needed help to be the father they needed. Like a young, inexperienced athlete who wants to play the game but doesn't have the skill or experience, I needed a coach to help me learn and develop the abilities to play well.

Many of us have or had coaching to some degree from our own parents and grandparents. Maybe you were blessed with parenting mentors who disciplined you. Wouldn't it be great if every new parent had a coach to help them do their best at parenting?

The church has a wonderful opportunity to step into its corporate responsibility and develop the ministry of coaching parents. I use the analogy of coaching because it fits well with the ministry of helping parents, as well as discipleship. I enjoy college football and try to watch my favorite team play. As my love of the game has grown, so has my appreciation for coaches and what a good coach brings to the game. While a coach has numerous responsibilities, his primary focus can be distilled to four primary areas:

1. Develop young athletes to play the best they can in the position for which they are best suited.
2. Develop athletes to play as a team and create a team culture.

3. Develop a game plan to leverage the talents and abilities of athletes individually and collectively.
4. Develop the process for accomplishing all of this; every successful coach has his own unique way to get it done.

These same points are applicable to the church and mirror what ministry leaders are called to do.

- Disciple people—each believer (develop the individual player).
- Disciple the church—a community of believers (develop the team).
- Promote discipleship—create the culture of discipleship (develop the game plan).
- Develop the process to keep it all going (manage the ongoing priority and process).

Four questions ministry leaders should be asking:

Am I developing the players—the parents?

Am I helping the parents in my church become better disciples and better parents? Most parents want help, even if they don't ask for it. It's awkward to ask for help because that is an admission of inadequacy; it is uncomfortably vulnerable. Ministry leaders can leverage coachable moments when a parent is open to coaching, such as at the birth of a child, or when they are facing problems. There are opportunities to coach through relationships. Our job in ministry is leveraging every opportunity to help people grow in Christ.

Parents are entrusted to our care, so we should take an active interest in them and in their role as parents. Think through every ministry, every ministry leader, and every activity of your church—how can it be used to connect with and help parents? Train your teachers and ministry leaders to be proactive in getting to know the parents in your ministries, both the parents who come to church and the ones who don't. (They require different strategies.) There should never be a disconnect between the

leaders and teachers of your church and parents in your church. We put a great deal of thought and effort into how we greet and connect with guests. How can we apply the same thought process to parents and families?

Encourage them and love on them. Talk up parents in your church. Do things specifically to show parents they are important: special service, events, meet and greets, etc. Share success stories from other parents and families to inspire. Brainstorm with your team how you can love on the parents in your care

Equip them with resources. Find good resources parents can easily use to help them build relationships and lead their families in discipleship. Don't just put resources in their hands; put them in their heads and their hearts. Show them *how* to use the resources and *why* it matters. Build training into things you're already doing. Teach the leaders of your adult classes and groups how to take the last five minutes to discuss what they've learned with their children and grandchildren; this is application.

Teaching older generations how to engage with younger generations is a big win for any church.

Empower them. Coaches train and develop game plans for a reason—game day. For parents, the stakes are higher. Teach parents to seize the teachable moments. Give them conversation starters and talking points. They also need conversation closers; coach parents how to pray with their children for specific needs. Prayer should be the natural closer to most conversations. Coach parents to get over the awkwardness of talking and praying with their children.

A key part of empowering is accountability—as an encouragement, not an expectation. Don't forget them; follow-up and continue to mentor. Some parents only need a little encouragement; they only need to be shown how and coached a little. Other parents need ongoing hands-on coaching; they may be missing the fundamentals or carry baggage from their past. Commit to the task of coaching, mentoring, and shepherding parents. As they grow and mature, involve them in helping other parents. Intentionally invest in parents, and don't forget the unique challenges of single parents and grandparents raising their grandchildren. Develop your players!

Am I developing the team—the culture of the church?

Am I developing a pro-family church culture where families can flourish? To stay with the coaching metaphor, if parents are the players, the rest of the church is on their team. Do you have a culture of team pride and ownership of the families in your church? Family should be a big deal in every church. After all, family is God's idea. Parents and grandparents should be heroes in every church. We must create a community mindset rather than an individual mindset. *Does my church have a culture of church and homes engaging together in discipleship?* Do everything you can to create a family culture in your church, not to the exclusion of other groups, but intentionally ensuring family is an important part of your ministry and church culture. Develop the team.

Am I developing the game plan—do I know what success looks like?

Do I have a plan or vision for how parents can be helped? What should a family be, and what should a family of families be? Teach the biblical model of family

Coaching Parents to Get Involved in *Generational Discipleship*

Four questions every ministry leader
should be asking:

1. Am I developing **parents** in my church?
2. Am I developing the **team spirit** and **family culture** of my church?
3. Am I developing the **plan**—do the church and the parents and families know what success looks like?
4. Am I developing the **process**—how are we making it happen?

and discipleship (generational discipleship). The Bible has much to say about families so preach it, teach it, and model it. We find real families in the Bible. One of the greatest ways to showcase God's redemptive love is by demonstrating how He has worked in families. Everyone benefits from what the Bible says about family, because everyone is connected to a family. If someone is estranged from their family, he needs to know how to be reconciled. If another has come out of a dysfunctional family, she needs to know what God intended the family to be and given the grace to grow toward that picture. If someone experienced abuse, he or she needs to know there is healing in God's love and goodness.

We need to understand how dear families are to God's heart and see family as the gift God intended it to be. We learn this best when we understand the biblical view of fatherhood, motherhood, marriage, home, and family, and learn to work through dysfunction in a home as a family. It would be more productive if we would share this with our people *before* they were married, became parents, began growing their families, and experienced problems.

Our game plan should also include what the Bible says about discipleship. Teach the church a biblical view of salvation and discipleship. Teach basic skills and disci-

plines for discipleship: how to study the Bible, how to pray, and how to serve. Teach how parenting, family, and discipleship should work together. Exegete key passages such as Deuteronomy 4:9; 6:4-9, Ephesians 5:22-6:4, Colossians 3:18-21, and 1 Peter 3:1-7. These go-to passages for family and marriage (and many others like them) all have a discipleship component. Develop the game plan and show your team what success looks like.

Am I developing the process—how are we making it happen? How do we know if we’re making it happen?

Do I have a process to keep discipleship moving? Am I *hoping* it happens or *making* it happen? We all agree the church nursery is important, so we create policies to protect children and workers, we staff the nursery adequately, we sanitize surfaces and toys carefully, and we provide oversight to ensure everything is in order. Why would we do any less with any ministry of the church?

We must establish an ongoing process to ensure everything gets done to the standard of the organization. Then we must evaluate according to that standard. It all

converges in everyone being their best. Invest the time, energy, personnel, and budget to ensure you have the right process in place. Ask yourself, am I making it happen? Develop the process.

The future of the families of your church will, in part, determine the future of your church.

It is hard work to reach and disciple families. We can neglect the work, fail our families, and then expend more energy trying to reach new families. Or, we can do the hard work of discipling the families we have, so they can help reach and disciple new families. Our D6 team would love to help. Check us out at d6family.com. **D6**

About the Writer: David Womack is the husband of Teresa; father to Tera, Tayla, and Tana (not a great naming strategy); and "gandaddy" to Trevor, Samuel, Kimber, Ezra, and #5 on the way. David helps churches and families with practical solutions for discipleship, and currently serves as the director of customer service and sales at Randall House in Nashville, Tennessee.

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Week 12 - When It All Falls Apart

Week 13 - When Life Really Hurts



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Reflections on My Father

BY MATTHEW STEVEN BRACEY

This time of year we find ourselves between the cold of winter and the warmth of spring and summer. I appreciate the holiday season and how it directs our hearts—from Reformation Day to Thanksgiving to Christmas—but I also anticipate getting beyond it. The holidays bring to mind any number of things for different people. For me, they remind me of my late father. Shortly after celebrating his 68th birthday in December 2013, we learned he had cancer, which claimed his life the following October.

Consequently, the holidays bring a complex assortment of emotions: sorrow, pain, even anger, but also gratitude. Time has a way of maturing our thoughts. As I remember my father, two reflections come to mind: one of grief and one of celebration. My hope for this article is that it will encourage others through the trials they are experiencing or equip them for the trials they will experience one day.

GRIEF

God is a sure rock amid the storms of life. From the beginning, God did not intend for affliction and tears to characterize the world. Yet they do (no) thanks to man's sin. Suffering is not the fault of God but rather of the race of man. Thankfully, God has elected not to leave us in our pits of despair but to offer us rescue from our dependency. He uses different means to comfort different people. For me, God impressed upon my mind one single proposition, over and again: *He is good.*

Comfort of the heart results from conviction of the mind. God is all-knowing and all-powerful, yet also all-benevolent, demonstrating goodness and kindness to

those who find refuge in Him. "The LORD is near to the brokenhearted, and saves those who are crushed in spirit...God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble...He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds" (Psalms 34:18; 46:1; 147:3). I don't know what solace the unbeliever finds during the deep cavities of life. But for me, the comfort of God gave me the courage to keep on keeping on. *God is good.*

During this period, I also learned timing makes a difference between words that help and words that hurt, words that build up and words that tear down. Yes, God causes all things to work together for good to those who love Him, to those He has called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28). But the morning of a man's funeral is not the best time to quote these words to his son, who is in the midst of great emotional pain. The person who speaks true words at the wrong time, even sincere or biblical words, is like the person who plants a garden in the dead of winter (Matthew 13:1-23; Proverbs 27:14).

Timing is everything. What *should* you say to those in the throes of anguish? My experience suggests less is

more. Most meaningful were those who shared in my sorrow without attempting to fix it but struggling with me through it: certain family members, friends, and (most of all) my wife.

I took comfort in the numerous hymns that testify to God's consolation. The Apostle Paul explains one of the purposes of songs, hymns, and spiritual songs is for God's children to teach one another the Word of Christ (Colossians 3:16). Yes, the truth of God is a word of redemption and hope and celebration and thanksgiving, but it's also a word of comfort and encouragement and forgiveness amid grief and sadness, doubt and struggle.

More than any other song, God used "Be Still, My Soul" (Katharina von Schlegel) to minister to my broken spirit. Consider these comforting words:

*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on thy side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to thy God to order and provide;
In ev'ry change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul: Thy best, thy heav'nly friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.
Be still, my soul: When dearest friends depart,
And all is darkened in the vale of tears,
Then shalt thou better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe thy sorrow and thy fears.
Be still, my soul: Thy Jesus can repay
From His own fullness all He takes away.¹*

When I think of the aftermath of my father's death, I think first of the deep sense of loss that followed and the great comfort that God provided—by His Word, by people, and by songs.

CELEBRATION

A second reflection concerns food (perhaps unsurprising to those who know me well). Prior to one of our last holiday gatherings, my father said to me, "Rather than the typical ham or turkey, I want us to try something different this year."

"Oh?! So what are we having?" I asked, eyebrows raised.

¹ Two other excellent hymns include "Jesus, Lover of My Soul" (Charles Wesley) and "Jesus Friend of Sinners" (Chalres I. Junkin).

"Prime rib," he exclaimed, with a wide smile stretched across his worn face. I was somewhat skeptical because, to my memory, he had never prepared prime rib. Still, I was looking forward to it. (I typically get excited about food!)

Perhaps he tried a practice run or two. To this day, I don't know whether that meal was his first attempt or a practiced one. Whatever the case, he prepared everything: prime rib, horseradish sauce, *au jus*, and the sundry sides of beans, bread, corn, potatoes, and other country fixings. And I must say, as my two sisters and I, and our families, gathered around my father for what would be one of our last holiday gatherings, we ate one of the best meals I've ever eaten. And I mean that quite literally: succulent, delicious—glorious!

Today, when I think back to the house where I grew up, on a hill above the valley the old-timers called "Possum Trot," I remember that meal. We visited, we ate, we laughed, and it was a wonderful, memorable occasion. I later thought I would eat prime rib on the anniversary of his death in subsequent years to remember him and his kindness. I relented after a couple of years, partly because I found restaurant prime rib pales in comparison to my father's.

Although that occasion was one of our last meals, it was not our final one. I think of the Marriage Supper of the Lamb when the Church across space and time will gather around their Redeemer (Revelation 19:7-10; Matthew 22:1-14). Celebration, not sorrow, will characterize that day, for the new Heaven and new earth will know nothing of mourning or crying or pain (Revelation 21:4). I look forward to the day when my father and I will share in that meal.

As good as that prime rib was—and truly it was marvelous—it was but sawdust compared to what God has in store. C. S. Lewis captured this truth beautifully in *The Last Battle*:

Compared with those fruits, the freshest grapefruit you've ever eaten was dull, and the juiciest orange was dry, and the most melting pear was hard and woody, and the sweetest wild strawberry was sour.


And there were no seeds or stones, and no wasps. If you had once eaten that fruit, all the nicest things in this world would taste like medicines after it.²

When I think of my father, I think of the grief that followed his parting, but I also anticipate the celebration of our reunion. Again, consider the words of the hymn:

*Be still, my soul: The hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul: When change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.*

As creatures in a fallen world, we will experience the bitter cold and death of winter; and without God's grace, it is, as Lewis described, "always winter but never Christmas." But in the hands of the Lord of rescue, winter

2 C. S. Lewis, *The Last Battle*, *The Chronicles of Narnia* (New York: Harper Collins, 1984), 156-57.

can become spring, and death can become life. "I am the resurrection and the life," explained Jesus. "He who believes in Me will live even if he dies, and everyone who lives and believes in Me will never die" (John 11:25-26). Or as author George MacDonald once put it, "Death...is only more life."³ 

About the Writer: Matthew Bracey and his wife Sarah live in Mount Juliet, Tennessee. They attend Sylvan Park FWB Church. Matthew serves as vice provost and as a faculty member at Welch College, teaching courses in history, law, theology, and interdisciplinary studies. He holds degrees from Cumberland School of Law (J.D.), Beeson Divinity School (M.T.S.), and Welch College (B.A., History, Biblical Studies). He is currently pursuing a Ph.D. in Christian Ethics Public Policy at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

3 George MacDonald, "The Golden Key" (1867), in *The Complete Fairy Tales* (New York: Penguin, 1999), 142.



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Faithful Friends in a Facebook World

BY KRISTI JOHNSON

In today's society, the word *friend* is often used as a verb. Facebook has taught us that, right? We often say, "Can you *friend* me?" or "I was *friend*ed by three people this week." Maybe we should also be using the word *friend* as a verb in our non-virtual lives.

So, what does it mean to truly *friend* someone? And how can we make these friendships last longer than some of our Facebook friendships that appear out of nowhere and get hidden soon after. We need to build friendships that will endure not only for a Facebook minute but for a lifetime. Let's look to the Scriptures for some examples of friends who were faithful.

Moses and Aaron

Click on Moses' profile to see how he and Aaron showed us a good example of a partnership with their friendship. In Exodus 4, after Moses identified inadequate speech as his greatest weakness, God sent Aaron to assist him with leading the Hebrew slaves to freedom.

Have you ever felt inadequate when asked to speak? Maybe it was a devotion shared with a ladies' group. Or maybe it was teaching a Sunday School class with energetic eight-year-olds. Or possibly it was just sharing your faith in a

spontaneous conversation with a friend over coffee. Do you remember how you felt? Maybe you didn't know which words to use, or how to put them together to say what your heart was feeling.

God has often used friends to give me the words I needed to speak when unsure of myself or feeling like Moses:

"not eloquent." While Facebook posts offer a lot of help, God has used my real-life friends over the years to be that mouth. Many times, I have found wisdom in talking to a friend such as my missionary teammate in Spain, Lea Edgmon. Time and time again her wisdom has helped me think through situations and gain insight into what I needed to say. God used her to fill my mouth with the words I needed to share. She's been my *Aaron*, taking over in my weakness and showing the true partnership of a friend.

Can you think of a friend (or friends) who have partnered with you when you felt inadequate? Spend some time thanking God for them, and



then take a moment to send them a quick note, email, or Facebook message to let them know how much you appreciate them.

David and Jonathan

What if we could *friend* David or Jonathan? In 1 Samuel 18:3-4, we learn they modeled a friendship rarely seen in today's society. David and Jonathan had a sacrificial friendship. When someone loves *as his own soul*, he or she commits to doing the very best for that person. Looking out for them. Thinking of them before self. In the Facebook world, we try to make ourselves look good. What can I post that will get more "likes"? Rarely do we look out for someone else. But Jonathan defied the Facebook frenzy when he made friends with an unlikely person—

OUR GREATEST
EXAMPLE OF
FRIENDSHIP IS
JESUS CHRIST.
HE LOVED US
SO MUCH HE
GAVE HIS LIFE
FOR US.

the man God had appointed to take Jonathan's seat on the throne of Israel.

As the rest of the story unwinds throughout the books of Samuel, we learn Jonathan and David's friendship was forged even deeper, often by troubled times. And, in the end, that friendship lasted beyond Jonathan's death, when David went out of his

way to be kind to Mephibosheth, one of Jonathan's heirs.

Many things could have kept these two men from being friends. Jonathan was a prince, David a shepherd. Jonathan was probably around 50 years old, while David was likely in his 20s. But they found a common bond in their love for God and their faith in Him. They remained faithful to each other, despite many obstacles that could have separated them.

Jesus and You (and Me)

"Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39). This is probably a familiar verse to you but take a few moments to read it out loud. Ponder each phrase. Read it again. Let each word wash over your soul. *Nothing* can separate us from

the love of God in Christ Jesus. *Nothing*. We can go nowhere He won't be with us—not even in the darkest places in our own minds where we sometimes allow ourselves to fall. Even there, He is our Friend.

Our greatest example of friendship is Jesus Christ. He loved us so much He gave His life for us. How many of us can say this of our earthly friendships? How many of us are willing to give up our own comfort, our free time, our desires, our resources for a friend in need?

Do you have a friend in your life who could use your help right now? Why not stop reading this article and spend some time in prayer asking God to show you how you can help him or her in a way that is meaningful. And follow up with your friend this week. John 15:13 reminds us, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (John 15:13). What are you willing to *lay down* for a friend this week?



Five Ways to Have Faithful Friendships

1. Walk with friends through the good and bad times.

When I was in my 20s, my husband Tim and I lived in Nashville, Tennessee, and rented a duplex apartment from Bert and Dianne Tippett. We were newlyweds. They were grandparents. Many mornings, Mrs. Tippett and I walked together. We both had busy schedules, so it had to happen *very* early. We braved the cold temperatures and dark streets to get in our exercise. I found the old Hebrew saying to be true: "Walking with a friend in the dark is better than walking alone in the light." Mrs. Tippett was not only a good companion during our dark morning walks, she was also a friend faithful to listen, give advice, and mentor me as a young wife in the early days of marriage and ministry. Two ladies. Two different generations. One friendship that has impacted me deeply over the years.

2. Use the "like" button whenever possible.

Encourage! Encourage! Encourage! Our words of affirmation can change lives. One small *I love you* or *I appreciate you* goes a long way.

3. Take the time to build deep relationships, even if it requires sacrifice.

Jonathan loved David, even with the knowledge that David would take his place as the next king of Israel. Swallowing his own pride and ambitions, he loved David with a sacrificial love.

4. When “memories” pop up from the past, take time to look through them.

Don't you love seeing photos from three, four, or five years ago come up in your Facebook feed? It reminds you of that wonderful meal at Christmastime, how much your kids or grandkids have changed, or the special moment you shared with a friend. These memories are a part of what make friendships so special. We all need to take time to look back at God's goodness to us through the years and be thankful for the friends He has given us.

5. Don't let the “urgent” get in the way of the “important.”

If you have Facebook Messenger, you probably receive notices on your phone when someone sends you a message. It's tempting to pick up the phone each time

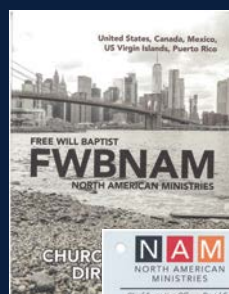
it dings, but sometimes, we are with friends who need us to stay focused on them. Let the “important” people in front of you take precedence over the posts or messages that can wait.

The next time you log in to Facebook, remember these simple principles and use them in both your virtual and real-life friendships. *Friending* someone isn't a click of a button on your phone, tablet, or laptop, but a continual daily commitment to being a friend like Jonathan or Aaron or even Jesus himself. **ONE**

About the Writer: Kristi Johnson and her husband, Tim, have spent 20 years in Spain serving as church planters with IM. Kristi enjoys coffee with friends, great bargains on sale racks, and capturing the world through the lens of her camera. But her all-time favorite pastime is being with Tim, Alejandro, and Ana while they explore new cities and exciting foods.

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Being a Friendly Church in a Post-COVID Culture

BY CHARITY SEXTON

As I look back on my childhood, I recall something intimate about the traditional handshake many of us experienced growing up in church. As we approach the close of a pandemic and the reopening of places of worship, we are faced with the question, “Did the coronavirus eliminate the traditional church handshake forever?”

Fear of the virus has flooded across the country, even into our churches. Public health officials have concluded that COVID-19 is highly infectious and poses a risk not only to the elderly, but to all people. The Center for Disease Control warns we “can become infected by coming into close contact (about 6 feet) with a person who has COVID-19.” You may also be infected by touching a surface or object with the virus on it, and that includes handshakes.

Current evidence suggests the virus may remain viable for hours and even days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. With no vaccine to protect against coronavirus, the best protection is to avoid exposure. As a registered nurse, I can testify I have seen and experienced the severity of COVID-19 firsthand. I am still working today alongside many nurses and healthcare providers who continue to battle COVID-19.

As pastors consider opening their doors, concerns will be elevated about a possible relapse or the spread of COVID-19. It is important to educate church members about the importance of not practicing the traditional handshake we all have grown to know and love.

While social distancing is still encouraged, even required in many places, we have other means of greeting one another. Greetings can come in the form of a pleasant smile accompanied by a slight nod. You may simply use a verbal hello followed by the question “How have you been?” implying interest in a conversation. A cheery wave towards an individual can be offered from a safe distance. A loose salute can also be implemented into a greeting, or even a tap of the foot.

With COVID-19 transmitting easily from person to person, we must consider alternatives to our typical physical handshakes and hugs. By choosing an alternative greeting, we can reduce the way people come in close contact with one another as churches resume worship. Continued practice of social distancing is crucial in reducing the

possible spread of the disease. While choosing an alternative method of greeting may be an inconvenience, it can prove to be the best option to protect our church members from possible exposure.

Friendliness is vital to our worship and by no means can or should we eliminate the practice. However, safety is of vital concern. Consider a smile and verbal greeting to be an act of kindness and friendliness that can transition from the traditional handshake into new practices in a post COVID-19 culture. The alternative smiles and verbal greetings we share with others as we resume our church gatherings will leave a lasting impression.

Ultimately, eliminating the handshake will not only reduce risk of exposure, it may save a life! **ONE**

About the Writer: Charity Sexton and her husband David started CrossPointe FWB Church in Suffolk, Virginia, where they still minister.

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YOUR FINANCIAL PARTNER

BY JOSHUA EIDSON

**“AND THE LORD GOD SAID, IT IS NOT GOOD THAT THE MAN SHOULD BE ALONE; I WILL MAKE HIM AN HELP MEET FOR HIM. THEREFORE SHALL A MAN LEAVE HIS FATHER AND HIS MOTHER, AND SHALL CLEAVE UNTO HIS WIFE”
(GENESIS 2:18, 24A).**

As often as we have heard these familiar verses regarding marriage, have we ever considered their implications on how we handle money in marriage? As the first God-ordained institution, marriage is meant to be a source of strength or help to both men and women. Since money, as we use it today, has become integral to living in today's world, it stands to reason God means for each marriage to be strengthened by our understanding and use of money.

Understand Your Spouse

Each marriage partner was raised and taught differently regarding how to handle money. Each may come from different socioeconomic statuses. But each has something valuable to bring to their collective understanding and use of money. The husband and wife must first understand each other's view of money.

Once you know and understand each other's background, use that knowledge to capitalize strengths and mitigate weaknesses of understanding and handling money.

God knows we each have our blind spots in all areas of life, including money, but by helping one another, He helps us avoid the pitfalls of those blind spots. As Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 teaches us, we are stronger when we journey together and rely on one another.

Pray Together

While this may seem basic, those who excel at *anything* do the basics well. As husbands and wives pray together, they should make money concerns and priorities a regular topic of prayer. If the marriage comes regularly before God in prayer concerning this topic, then they will be more gracious towards one another as they both seek to steward God's blessings upon their life. Praying over small



daily money habits as well as big decisions like changing jobs or a potential home purchase will help the couple get on the same page. Praying together brings unity of mind and purpose.

Submit to One Another

As married couples learn about the other's financial backgrounds and prays together for wisdom regarding their stewardship of the family's—or rather God's—money, they must also learn to submit to one another. This practice takes discernment and time to perfect. But as iron sharpens iron (Proverbs 27:17), if they will be humble and gracious with one another, each will bring out the wisdom of the other as they handle God's money together.

Money disagreements are often cited as the reason for divorce; most research suggests it the central cause of divorce in America. Money is often a divisive topic, whether in marriage or not, because it remains taboo to discuss openly. Our finances are hard to separate from

our individual identities because of where we may land on a socioeconomic scale.

In marriage, we must learn to put aside our unease over money talk and learn to embrace the issues surrounding it. The more openly we communicate and pray with our spouses about money, the easier it becomes to manage our resources, and the stronger our marriages become. God brought the husband and wife together to be “help meet,” even in their handling of money.

Don't let money make your marriage another bad statistic. Embrace the opportunity money brings to be a source of strength and unity in your marriage. **ONE**

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



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Untold Consequences

BY PAUL V. HARRISON

Consequences refer to sequential things, one coming after another, perhaps caused by another. As a boy, I formed an “S” shape of dominoes standing on end in close ranks, and then carefully pushed over the first one. I smiled to watch the consequences, the chain reaction of a single act. A little nudge of one made them all lie down. My chain reaction had built-in limitations, but many of life’s seemingly isolated acts set in motion events stretching farther than the mind can fathom. In life, the domino effect is powerful and far-reaching.

For example, a boy spends his evening with video games instead of books, which leads to his cheating on his test, which leads to his lying to cover his tracks, which leads to...

A girl hangs with the wrong crowd, which leads to her dating a boy with loose morals, which contributes to their sin, which leads to...

Of course, this is not to say the chain reaction involving humans, once started, is inevitable. People are not dominoes. Thankfully, we can interrupt the logical succession of events, and yet the natural sequencing of one act springing from another is not hard to find in every life. For as churning cream produces butter, and twisting the nose produces blood, so stirring up anger produces strife (Proverbs 30:33). One thing leads to another.

Principle Applied

So, let’s apply this principle to abortion. What consequences logically follow from intentionally taking the life of an innocent child? I’m afraid they are incalculable. As when a stone is thrown into a pond, the ripples spread

far and wide. Consider the consequences when a mother makes the decision to abort. What happens? A giver of life becomes a taker of life. The wonderful joys of motherhood are exchanged for the bitter sorrows of killing one’s own offspring.

Philosopher J. Budziszewski reminds us everybody knows mother and baby are supposed to be allies. Just what a mother’s changing from ally to enemy of her own baby does to her soul no one can precisely say, but surely it carries far-reaching consequences, especially in the spiritual and emotional realms. Every year after the abortion, as long as life lasts, marks a birthday or birth-month where there never was a birth.

In our day, abortions rarely involve only the mother. Doctors and nurses are complicit. They provide necessary assistance in the life-taking procedure. How does one measure the impact on medical personnel intentionally violating the Hippocratic oath to *do no harm*? Many insist relieving a mother of an unwanted child doesn’t break their oath, but they know better.

Beneath the multiplied layers of mental shellac they’ve applied to soothe their conscience lies the piercing truth: they have taken innocent life. They have killed a helpless baby. Soldiers often suffer terribly from PTSD after justifiably taking life in war. Often, decades later, they tremble from those experiences. What happens in the souls of men and women who, without provocation, make themselves the instruments of the deaths of little babies? What consequences flow from such acts?



What happens to a man who impregnates his illicit lover and then pressures her to kill the baby because he can't cope with being a father? His sexual sin, though sad, falls far short of the magnitude of pushing a mother to end the life of her God-given child. I expect women suffer the greater trauma, but guilty fathers cannot escape the law of reaping what they sow, even if they successfully terminate the pregnancy. What other dominoes in life fall when a man destroys his own child?

Sometimes, parents, and even grandparents bloody their hands and souls by insisting a daughter or granddaughter "take care of" an "unfortunate" situation. They dodge shame but at what cost! Whether complicit or not, when an abortion is performed, the family forever misses the joy of another person around the table, another life with whom to share their own.

Or think broadly of society and the world. How can one calculate the impact of aborting over 60 million babies, and that's just in America since 1973? How many brilliant minds have we destroyed? How many powerful men and women of integrity have we snuffed out?

Beyond the loss to moms and dads, extended families, and society at large, think of the loss of life for each aborted baby. Life is an amazing gift. The joys of everyday life, the childhood moments of playing with a puppy, the teenage excitement of the first date, the thrill of reading a great story, the bliss of married life, the pleasures of knowing and serving God through Christ—these and a million other experiences are stolen from the innocent child. What selfishness it is to rob the unborn of these opportunities simply to avoid the inconveniences of raising a child.

The Greatest Pandemic

I write these words in the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. We as a society have turned our lives upside down and wrecked our economy to avoid a disease that has the potential to threaten our lives. Oh, that we might recognize the pandemic stealing the lives of future generations. May we grasp the value of unborn little boys and girls and do all it takes as a society to care for them.

In a sense, our abortion problem has sprung from previous decisions. As a culture, we have wickedly focused on

self and pushed to make all else conform to our wishes. We have sought sexual gratification without consequences. We have desired certain standards of living that don't allow for many children, so we have resorted to contraceptives. When they don't work, we have simply taken the next step down the same path. We will do about anything to get what we want.

So, what can we do to help in the battle against abortion?

- **We can pray.** God does what we can't when we ask. "The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective" (James 5:16).
- **We can vote.** Elections matter. Laws are written and passed by officials we put in office. The outcome of every election cycle could be swayed by Christians going to the ballot box.
- **We can work to influence those in our sphere of influence.** Hearts and minds are swayed one at a time.
- **We can teach that human laws don't override God's.** Our Supreme Court can make something legal. It cannot make it right.
- **We can show grace and mercy to those who have sinned.** Sometimes "holier than thou" attitudes contribute to the shame of non-marital births, pushing people to cover their sin at all costs. We must remember Jesus' blood washes away sexual sin, abortion sin, and all other sin, otherwise we would all be damned.

When the slavery battle was fought in nineteenth-century England, one man, William Wilberforce, with Christ in his heart, turned the tide. He labored incessantly and suffered many setbacks in his life's work to end slavery. When all seemed lost, he battled on until victory was won. Only Heaven will reveal the consequences of his tireless efforts. Let us learn from his example and fight on! **ONE**

About the Writer: Dr. Paul Harrison has pastored Madison FWB Church (AL) since 2015. He is creator of the Classical Sermon Index: www.classicalsermonindex.com.

POLITICS

and the ART *of* NOT

“Throwing Shade” *on the* GOSPEL

By Sean Warren

“And they call themselves a ‘Christian’ school!” my friend Carl muttered under his breath with a heaping dose of disdain and contempt, shaking his head as we exited the gym.

We had just traveled across Phoenix to watch our high schoolers play against the Christian school in the area. For context, it’s important to note Carl (not his real name) is not a believer, and our kids go to a public school, not a Christian one.

The basketball game had an unusual start. One of their players prayed before tip-off, something about honoring God and protecting everyone. I remember thinking about the unbelieving players on our team during the prayer, including a Hindu, atheist, and Mormon. I was sitting front and center in the visitor’s section as usual. It is my daughter’s senior year, and I love watching her play. (Have I mentioned she has been captain for the last three years?)

It wasn’t long until our collection of magnet-school nerds was dominated by the other stronger, quicker team. They pressed us, ran up the score, and played superior basketball. Their team has some real talent. To this point, all was good. Our girls know how to lose; it’s not the first time, to be sure. It was what happened during the second half of the game that created, what I would call, an unfortunate moment. The coach kept his starters in, pressed the entire game, didn’t rotate in bench players, ran up the

score to a 40-point lead, didn’t run out the clock at the end of the game, and even tried to score on the last play. For a bit of extra spice, a group of eight students sitting behind our bench taunted our players on every missed shot or foul.

This was the context of Carl’s comment: “And they call themselves a ‘Christian’ school.”

Over the next couple of weeks, Carl’s words rattled around in my head. And God, in His curious ways, had us playing that team again, this time at our place. Once again, I took up residence on the front row and wondered if I would watch a sequel. Indeed, the sequel took place. This bothered me. I guess I had been trying to make excuses for their previous behavior, that maybe it was a “one off” game. Surely, this wasn’t the team’s DNA. I was wrong.

After the game was over, while waiting for the next to start, the winning coach walked over and sat down in the visitors’ section. As warm-ups began for the next game, I felt compelled to talk to him, Carl’s words still fresh in my mind.

I asked if I could talk for just a moment; he obliged. I sat down, introduced myself, and told him I was a pastor at a

church in our community. I asked if he was a Christian. Upon confirmation, I told him my daughter played for our team, and that I wanted to tell him how his team was being “interpreted” by the (largely unbelieving) fans and players of our school. I expressed concern about pressing, keeping starters in, running up the score, not running out the clock, and taunting.

To his credit, he listened. To my credit, I did not become condemning or preachy. I simply said, “You may not be intending to communicate something through those actions, but those actions are being interpreted regardless, and it’s not good.”

I pointed toward the home section where my friend Carl sat and told the coach I had been witnessing to Carl for years, building that relationship. Then I shared Carl’s gut-level reaction: “And they call themselves a ‘Christian’ school.”

The coach humbly extended a sincere apology, multiple times.

In retrospect, I guess I wasn’t looking for an apology. I was looking for understanding and hopefully a change in heart reflected in behavior modification, namely, a coach running a team like Jesus would if He were drawing up the plays. A team that seemed out of context in a world of “crush your opponents,” “it’s all about me,” or “win at any cost.” I don’t know if anything will change, but I felt compelled to follow through with what the still, small voice of the Holy Spirit was telling me to do.

COURTSIDE ANALOGY

I believe these courtside moments to be analogous to how the unbelieving world looks upon believers when we become too aggressive in our political playbook, relentlessly pressing in on all the issues, outwardly praying for God’s involvement in the hearts of the men and women of our nation, while inwardly or even outwardly taunting from the sidelines the people on the “other” team.

So, how do we guard ourselves from becoming an inadvertent tool in the hands of the evil one during this contentious, partisan, and polarized time in our nation? Colossians 4:2-6 shares some valuable guidance: “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving; withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us

a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man.”

Be Prayerful (verse 2). Paul tells us to be steadfast in this. It’s hard to demonize someone when you are praying for them. Question: When is the last time you prayed for the politician you like the least? Have you lifted up Donald Trump or Nancy Pelosi, Adam Schiff or Mitch McConnell before the throne of God in all of their brokenness and yours? If you are doing this consistently, you will not speak in a cutting way toward them. You are serving them by praying for them, and this can only happen when you are thinking sincerely about things of eternal worth and value. Remember, God has allowed them to be where they are (Romans 13:1), He created them, and we would be smart to remember God himself has created them in His image. Let’s not mock His handwork.

Seek Opportunities for the Gospel (verse 3). Paul was seeking an opportunity, an open door to declare the mystery of Christ. Last year, my church asked me to go to Capitol Hill and lobby on behalf of Africa’s poor, as it relates to foreign aid allocations in our national budget. I met with congressional staff, congressmen, and even a senator. The senator I met with is liberal by anyone’s standards.

The week before I was to go to D.C., a friend of mine (who didn’t know about the trip) posted something offensive about the senator on my Facebook page and asked me a question about her. I remember thinking, “If I engage in useless banter or belittle her, what would I do if she saw the exchange and read the comments.” The very thought of being face-to-face with her changed my behavior. If a door for the gospel is presented, I don’t want to walk through the door with muddy shoes and “dirty up the carpet.”

QUESTION:
When is the last
time you prayed for
the politician you
like the least?

Think of the “Outsiders” and Be Gracious (verses 5-6). Paul instructed the church to “walk in wisdom toward outsiders” and “let your speech be always gracious.” This is a game changer! If you and I could master this one, oh the things that would change around us, the doors that would open, the conversations we would have, the honor it would bring to God. The unbelieving world, the “outsiders,” expect something different from us, and we are charged by God to provide something different to them. Just. Be. Gracious.

One of my fellow pastors, Jeremy Olimb, has political views that differ from mine. Our dialogue has shaped me and made me a more compassionate person. He recently listed five important guidelines for this politically charged season. (Thanks, Jeremy!)

1. All of life is all for Jesus, even my political life.
2. The right thing is always worth fighting for but never with the wrong weapons.
3. Feel free to disagree but never to dehumanize.
4. My team is rarely as virtuous as I want, and their team is rarely as monstrous as I claim.
5. There is no King but Jesus, and he hasn't endorsed my candidate.

A few weeks later, I added the following to Jeremy's list:

1. Our politics should never cast shade on the Cross we attempt to hold high. If people see us as political first, Jesus is in the wrong position—at least in that moment—in our lives.
2. We have a growing need for Christians to be peacemakers in a polarized culture of partisanship. I believe this can be done without capitulating on my own political positions.
3. Not every policy position that differs from mine is a moral difference to be vilified (although some are). Good people can think differently on complex and nuanced matters. It's also important to listen to people who think differently.
4. For the Christian, metered responses, with a heaping spoonful of humility, will always serve us well. In fact, boldness in our beliefs combined with humility in our responses is a powerful combination that

reflects biblically-based convictions without stepping on the gospel. **ONE**

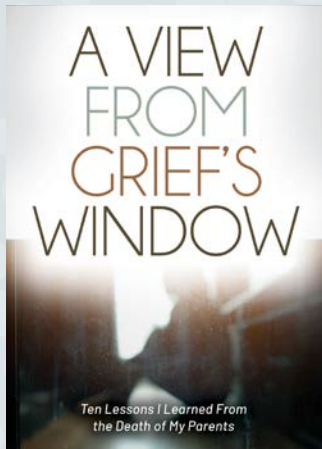
About the Writer: Sean Warren is communities pastor at Redemption Church in Gilbert, Arizona. An award-winning photographer and storyteller, Sean has served as international missions director for General Baptist Ministries and as a missionary to France with IM, Inc. Sean and his family live in Phoenix, Arizona. Visit www.seanjwarren.com.

One of the places believers are most likely to send mixed messages is social media. A few years ago, I established some simple guidelines and questions for interacting with others online:

1. How does the unbelieving world view and interpret any post I make?
2. The power comes in asking the questions, not in the answers you provide. By asking questions, you frame the dialogue and help people think.
3. Intentionally develop a diverse group of friends and occasionally ask directly how to interpret or understand an issue, especially if their view counters most of your church friends.
4. Ask questions out of a desire to understand. Be teachable.
5. Compliment sincerity, even when you don't agree with a response.
6. Never argue. If people respond critically, gently reaffirm that you appreciate honest dialogue with civility.
7. Don't always swim in the deep end of the pool. Remember to balance the heavy with the light.
8. My personal slogan: “I'm not telling you what to think, but that you need to think.”
9. Limit opinion. It is better for someone to say, “Hey, Sean, what do you think?” than for everyone to know my opinion already.
10. Keep the gospel clearly in sight and be willing to be misunderstood. Don't respond in anger; be willing to send private messages to clarify your statements if needed.
11. Be quick to admit you are wrong or learn something new. You can never go wrong with humility.



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Robert E. Picirilli

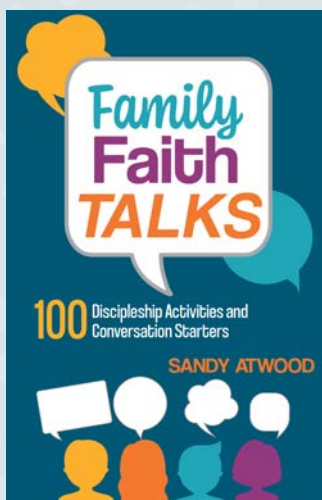
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A Ticket for Fishin'

BY KATIE GREENWOOD



Teaching preschoolers provides a unique perspective that God often uses to get me thinking about His Word. One particular week while teaching about Peter, Andrew, James, and John, I received a needed reminder.

“They were some of Jesus’ first disciples,” I said. “Do you remember what a disciple is?”

I had spent a good bit of time talking about the disciples’ choice to follow Jesus and learn from Him about God and His Word. It was encouraging to see several kids eager to share an answer. I chose Luke because he was about to explode with pride over knowing the answer.

“They’re the guys who had a ticket to go fishin’ with Jesus on His boat.”

Not wanting to discourage future attempts to answer, I quickly processed how to respond diplomatically and correct his theology. Ultimately, I realized Luke wasn’t too far off base.

Knowing the Lord and choosing Him as Savior certainly provides the connection (ticket) needed to hang out with Him on His “boat.” Fishing represented typical daily activities for the men of that town during that particular time in history. Being a disciple of Jesus and choosing to follow Him definitely requires doing normal daily activities with Him.

As the day progressed, long

after the kids were picked up from class, I found myself thinking about Luke’s response. I was struck by the many times I had “missed the boat” because I mistakenly assumed it was best to wait until Sunday, a certain conference, or a lifegroup gathering to focus on discipleship.

When our Lord encouraged men to follow Him that day, He was not referring to a short jaunt across the lake or even a full day of casting nets. Jesus was calling them to a life-long, everyday commitment to Him.



When asked to describe disciples, little Luke could have said:

“They are the workers at the bank who count the money—with Jesus.”

“They are the farmers who grow vegetables—with Jesus.”

“They are the mommies who take kids to soccer practice—with Jesus.”

“They are the teenagers who play in the band—with Jesus.”

“They are the neighbors who help pick up trash—with Jesus.”

“They are the dads who read the same book a million times—with Jesus.”

“They are the kids who choose to be kind at the park—with Jesus.”

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About the Writer: Katie Greenwood is the senior editor of children’s resources at Randall House. She has been married to her best friend, Steve, for 29 years, and they have three daughters. Having served in the local church since her teen years, Katie has a passion for inspiring others to love the Lord and His Word. She also looks for opportunities to champion godly marriages and encourage parents as the spiritual leaders in their homes.

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Ministry During a Pandemic

BY LAUREN BIGGS

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, fear and panic spread quickly throughout the world. Christians, including IM missionaries, responded with a different voice—one of hope and peace during this crisis.

All around the world, people search for answers and the light at the end of the tunnel. They seek real peace and the hope which only comes from the truth of the gospel. Conveying peace and hope is the daily passion of IM missionaries. The men, women, and children who lead on every field around the world share this good news with those who have not heard. God did not disappear during this pandemic. He is at work in many ways throughout this crisis.

It's no secret, planting a church takes intentional relationship-building with people in the community. Depending on your view, community can be face-to-face or online. It can be at the grocery store or a video drop-in. The global pandemic offered IM missionaries perfect opportunities to intentionally reach out to those around them, evangelize non-believers, and cultivate new relationships.

Requirements for social distancing led missionaries to adapt their ministry. Incredibly, technology maximized efforts to reach people who normally do not hear the gospel. Individuals and families unlikely to personally attend a weekly service or Bible study, joined biblical conversations by accessing a shared church service link from their friends, exposing them to truth. Many missionaries share experiences of speaking with individuals, hearing their needs, and stopping—right then and there—to ask

if they can pray for that person. Missionaries report 99% of people allow them to pray, which becomes a great way to build a relationship, witness, and share burdens. Crisis creates opportunities when we are willing to adapt.

Missionaries use social media, live streaming services, video calls, and texts to continue Bible studies and English classes for those in their local churches and communities. Taking the time to personally reach out to parents, believers in the local church, or others in the community cultivates rich relationships. Spending more time at home allows individual missionary families, singles, and couples to be still and present in prayer and time in the Word. Not only do individual relationships with God grow, but relationships with fellow believers deepen.

Church members bond from a distance through virtual choirs, partaking in the Lord's Supper, and synchronized daily prayer times. With schools canceled and families together at home, our missionaries provided at-home resources to encourage families to engage in discipleship while providing meaningful ways to entertain their kids. Missionaries are also translating and distributing the D6 Curriculum's at-home discipleship materials to both Christian and non-Christian families, igniting spiritual conversations in these families' homes. Trust is building, accountability is taking place, and spiritual awakenings

are occurring in people's lives. The Church is growing stronger even in the midst of this pandemic!

Ministry within the COVID-19 climate expands beyond online means. People everywhere dread empty grocery store shelves. While the world says hoard, Christ says help. Missionaries used their resources to deliver supplies, gift bags, Bibles, and food to those in need. Our missionaries help meet the physical and spiritual needs of individuals in their communities, sharing the love of Christ. They send encouraging videos to nearby nursing homes. They share the gospel with those on the street. Conversations connect them with neighbors from the balcony or at a distance, changing fear into hope. Our missionaries, like our pastors here in the States, show tremendous flexibility with their regular ministries. Missionaries not only stepped into their virtual roles for preaching and evangelizing, they also adapted to show true pastoral care and love. Vanya Trifonov, missionary in Bulgaria, shared, "Many people are looking for God, groping in the dark to find the way to the truth. The times we are living in are rough but unique for sharing the good news. The ministry is different, but the Lord is the same and He needs witnesses. I trust we will come out of this crisis better and stronger as Christians."

While COVID-19 closed church buildings, the Church remained open and active. You can't quarantine the gospel! The Church left the building. Instead of inviting people to *come*, our missionaries are *going* in unique ways! Churches and ministers around the world are finding new, creative, and innovative ways to continue sharing the gospel and discipling believers. Missionaries have the perfect opportunities to reach out intentionally to those around them: evangelizing non-believers and cultivating new relationships. The shelter-in-place lifestyle provided an opportune time to focus more on individual discipleship of fellow believers through a variety of means. The Church stepped up to serve the physical needs of the local body and reached out to communities of non-believers in this difficult time. Our missionaries' faithfulness to the Great Commission has not wavered!

We ask you to continue to lift up your local church and our IM missionaries through prayer and financial sup-

(continued on page 30)

We asked our missionaries, "How are you ministering creatively during social distancing?" Below are some of the ways they continue to reach people in their communities in the midst of quarantine:

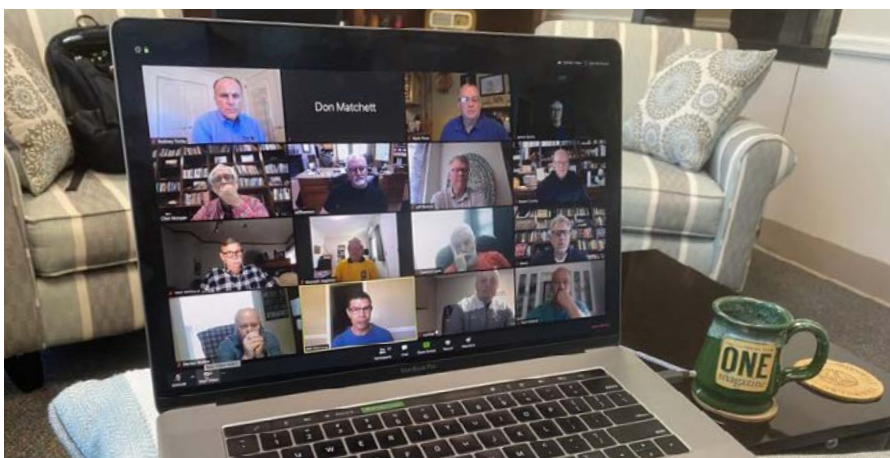
- LINE (a popular app in other countries, similar to Facebook Messenger or WhatsApp) communications with families, individuals, and small groups
- Writing thank you cards, old fashioned telephone calls, and text messages
- Video Bible studies and kids' lessons
- Facebook Live or Facebook Watch Party
- Conversations at a distance with neighbors
- English lessons and discipleship courses via Zoom
- Translation of D6 Family at-home discipleship materials to provide to families
- Virtual choirs created by WhatsApp groups who share and then combine individual videos
- Video Zoom calls, FaceTime, WhatsApp
- Using Bible study apps amongst a small group
- Pre-recorded video sermons and lessons to share to websites, Facebook pages, and YouTube
- Delivering essentials to the elderly in their neighborhoods
- Sending supplies to nursing homes through Amazon
- Sending encouraging videos to nursing homes
- Hanging banners on balconies with verses on them for people to read when they drive down the street
- Sewing parties to make masks for police officers and other individuals
- Stateside missionaries participating in video interviews with pastors
- Use social media to provide updates, build relationships, and connect with family or friends through posts and conversations

April IM Board Meeting

Antioch, TN—Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, IM, Inc.'s board held their annual meeting April 20-21, via Zoom video conferencing. Chairman Jeff Manning commented, "Conducting our April board meeting virtually was certainly different, but our mission remains the same: getting the gospel of Christ to a lost and dying world. Not everyone will contract the coronavirus, but *everyone* needs to hear about Jesus and, ultimately, that was our board meeting focus."

The board conducted business as usual. Policy changes and a framework budget were adopted. The board heard and accepted the results of a very favorable audit. Auditor Tommy Wooten, from Blankenship CPA Group, congratulated the board and the IM team for a good year. No new missionary candidates came before the board during the meeting.

Chairman Jeff Manning led his last meeting as a board member and was honored by special delivery gifts and words of encouragement. General Director Clint Morgan said,



"We cannot express our appreciation enough for Jeff Manning's 15 years of service and dedication. His leadership, organizational skills, and attention to detail will be greatly missed." Other board members and directors also offered encouraging comments.

Manning stated, "My time on the board has been full of privileges: meeting new missionary candidates, hearing breaking news about the advancement of God's Kingdom, working in partnership with some of the finest servants both on the field and in the office. I wouldn't trade it for anything."

The board elected former vice-chairman Jeff Nichols as chairman. The board also voted to keep Mark Price as secretary and to install Rodney Yerby as vice-chairman.

All board members attended the virtual meeting: Jeff Manning (NC), Jeff Nichols (TN), Janice Banks (TX), Casey Cariker (OK), Will Harmon (AR), Cameron Lane (AR), Mark Price (OH), Darren Walker (NC), and Rodney Yerby (AL). General Director Clint Morgan, and directors Rob Conley, Kenneth Eagleton, Jr., Neil Gilliland, Curt Holland, Danny Gasperson, and Don Matchett also participated. **ONE**

(continued from page 29)

port. The IM mission statement reads, "We exist to labor with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission." You are our partners in the Body of Christ, and we are in this together. We must reach the unreached people across the globe with the gospel.

Your continued support enables many IM ministries. Bible and pastoral training, church planting, national

youth camps, and missionary efforts around the world are able to continue in the Great Commission because of your prayers and giving. **ONE**

About the Writer: Lauren Biggs, IM's media connections coordinator, is a 2016 graduate of Lee University in Cleveland, Tennessee. She and her husband Austin married in 2017.

Snapshots Around the World



Bulgaria: Brenton and Debbie Driscoll departed for Shumen, Bulgaria, June 5. Following government guidelines, they remained quarantined for two weeks before joining the Provows in ministry. The couple's first child, James Clinton, was born July 3, and they rejoice in God's provision of his birth in Bulgaria.

Côte d'Ivoire: Pastor Germain Hien reports two people became Christ-followers on Easter Sunday in Kalamon, Ivory Coast.



Côte d'Ivoire: In May, Pastor Jérôme, from the First Church in Bouna, Ivory Coast, baptized ten people in Buoko—a village between Bouna and Doropo.

Brazil: Easter Eve, Josiane decided to follow Jesus. She is the teen daughter of José and Maria, who were baptized in December by Pastor Clóvis at the church plant in Alagoas, Brazil.




Côte d'Ivoire: Even in a pandemic, outreach continues. The First FWB Church in Bouna, Ivory Coast, is evangelizing in Tessodouo. They held the first service May 24 with four women and several children attending under the shelter built for this new preaching point.

WMO Postponed until August 30

Antioch, TN—In response to the coronavirus pandemic, churches, missionaries, and organizations have found it necessary to adjust their activities to accommodate social distancing, quarantine, and other government mandates or guidelines.

IM postponed the World Missions

Offering, scheduled for April 26, to August 30. Instead, churches and individuals were encouraged to use April 26 as a day of prayer for worldwide needs during the pandemic.

Resources to promote the WMO can be found on IM's website: iminc.org/wmo. 



World Missions Offering



How Did You Get to



BY ADAM AND CAROL DUNCAN

“How did you get to Ecuador?”

We have answered this question frequently over the course of the last year. In one sense, the answer is simple—we flew! Yet, the real question is “How did two kids from rural Missouri realize the ministry God prepared for them lies in a place they had difficulty finding on a map three years ago?”

God’s guiding hand has been on us every step of the winding path. How did we get from the childhood understanding missions is important, but not personal,

to answering the call to Ecuador? It started in Columbia, Missouri.

We moved to Columbia in 2002 for Carol to attend nursing school. Once settled, God

led us to Rejoice Free Will Baptist Church. Rejoice is a Missouri missions plant started by Steve Reeves. We had the pleasure (and pain) of being on staff as the church became self-supporting. We saw the mortgage paid by the cooperative work of God and Free Will Baptists. Along

the way, Adam was both licensed and ordained. The opportunity to be discipled by someone with a heart for missions (in this case a former international missionary) is perhaps the most important feature of this first step, and one for which we will always be grateful. At this point, Ecuador wasn’t even on our horizon, but God knew what was coming next.

In 2016, we had a life-changing encounter with God at Camp Niangua. Our preteen camp evangelist was Myriam Le Louarn (now Reeves). As she talked about the influence of Jerry and Barbara Gibbs on her family and her call as a missionary to France; our daughter Moriah (eight at the time) walked to the altar and answered the call to missions. We still had no idea God was preparing a path to the jungles of Ecuador.

While at the Missouri State Meeting in 2017, Steve Reeves introduced Adam to Sam McVay, former missionary to Spain. Sam talked about a group he was leading to the Ivory Coast. Adam gave his standard deflection:



God's not leading us to Africa or China, but we're happy to support those who are going. Adding, "If a group is going to Mexico or Central or South America, we might



consider it." Sam immediately told Adam about The Hanna Project trip to Ecuador. Fairly caught, Carol and I signed up and went in 2018.

Until this trip, we thought short-term missions involved painting a building or leading VBS. While those are valid

tasks, they are not suited to either our skills or season of life. This trip changed our view radically. The medical team, including Carol, worked with the local health department, setting up mobile clinics in rural villages. They treated various illnesses and injuries, prayed with those suffering, and even held a couple of semi-spontaneous worship services.

This was helped dramatically because the local church planter was one of their interpreters. They formed a bridge of love between the church and the communities they wanted to reach. The construction team built a porch over the sidewalk at the middle school building at Antioch Christian Academy. We interacted with students, teachers, and volunteers, sharing the love of Christ in a tangible way. Having a professional carpenter helped immensely, too. (Thanks, John Heitz!)

When we left Ecuador, we had a clear sense God was leading us to return. We immediately began planning a trip with THP in 2019. This time, Carol coordinated the medical team, and Adam's dad and sister joined the team. The pace of this trip was a little different. The medical team did not travel as far as the previous year, but intentionally visited villages where gospel outreach was occurring. Adam traveled with the medical team one day. In addition to treating a variety of illnesses (and witnessing the life-giving effects of clean water through a sand filtration system), we caught a glimpse of Heaven as we sang "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" in English, Spanish, and Kichwa simultaneously. Wow! does not

begin to describe the feeling.

While debriefing midweek, Roberto and Charmai Davalos, founders of Antioch Christian Academy, explained two of their greatest needs were expanding the counseling program and adding a school nurse. Carol and I looked at each other in awe, thinking, "This is us." When we returned, we prayed about our next steps. God soon made it clear He was leading us away from Columbia, Missouri.

Our dilemma was not what is good and what is bad, rather what is

good and what is best. This is a dilemma all Christians face. The "what" of the Great Commission is clear, the "where" is much more individual. We believe meeting physical and social needs while failing to address spiritual needs defeats the purpose of any mission outreach. The method and context must change, but a quote from Clint Morgan reminds, "Through ministry we earn the privilege of witnessing."


We also recalled Paul's words in Roman's 15:20, "and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation." In fact, this became our deciding factor. We believe God uniquely equipped each of us for the ministry He laid before us. Finding the point where your great passion and the world's great need meet (Frederick Buechner) is the answer to "where."

Please indulge us in a case study for the sake of illustration. In our family, three different answers were found to this *where* question. The Hanna Project was vital in providing the answer to our *where*. Our answer is international missions. It was also vital for Adam's dad. His role is short-term trips and mobilization. He uses his experience to encourage others to be more intentional in their daily walk. He started a discipleship group and reached out to heal damaged relationships. His *where* doesn't require a passport or a plane ticket, it requires



The Hanna Project (THP), ETEAM, and College Missions Program (CMP) provide short-term mission trips for Free Will Baptists. ETEAM gives students in grades 10-12 short-term missions experience. CMP allows college students to serve overseas for ten days to five weeks. THP encourages adults to use their skills for one to two weeks to take help, hope, and healing to those in need around the world. With its unique focus on ministry as missions, THP schedules several construction and medical teams each year as well as distributing boxes with Operation Christmas Child.

fulfilling his role at home, at work, and in the local church. For Adam's sister, The Hanna Project answered more of a *where not*. She found, while she grew from the experience, manual labor in a tropical climate is not the best use of her skills and abilities. She has not found her exact *where* yet, but believes it involves using her bookkeeping and auditing skills to assist groups in improving their efficiency in sending those who go. So, we see the impact of a trip in three ways: some go, some stay and help prepare and mobilize those who go, some work to enable the sending agencies to lengthen and strengthen their reach. All need to learn to pray, go, send, welcome, and mobilize.

If you are considering a short-term trip through The Hanna Project, ETEAM, or College Missions Program, we say without hesitation, "Do it!" The experience will change how you see your world and your ministry. Who knows? You might find your Ecuador. 

About the Writer: Adam and Carol Duncan were appointed to a two-year IM internship in partnership with Jungle Kids for Christ. Adam, a trained counselor, will provide services for children from challenging backgrounds. Carol, a registered nurse, will supply year-round medical needs. Learn more about the couple's plans at www.iminc.org/missionaries/aduncan

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A Coaching

HOW INVITING ANOTHER LEADER INTO YOUR "SPACE" IS USEFUL AND HEALTHY

BY BRAD RANSOM

More than a dozen years ago, I "happened" into a seminar at a conference I was attending. It was a pre-conference session scheduled to last eight hours over two days. I paid the extra money, so I was determined to find a seminar to attend. The first one I tried was standing room only, and I quickly decided I could not sit shoulder to shoulder for eight hours!

I decided to choose a different one. I found an open door with more than ample seating and went in and settled down for the two-day teaching. Little did I know that session would have a huge impact on my ministry. I didn't know the presenter. I had never heard of him. I didn't even know the content of the material until he began.

Coaching. That was the topic. If you know me, you know that's not in my wheelhouse. I'm not much of a sports fan and certainly not a coach. I quickly learned that "coaching" in this context was not what I was thinking. I was relieved. The word *coach* is derived from the stagecoach. A stagecoach was used to move passengers and packages from point A to point B. Coaching

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in Christian discipleship helps move people from where they are currently to where they need to be.

I believe every pastor and Christian leader needs a coach. A coach doesn't give answers. In fact, their main job is to ask questions. By asking good questions, a coach can help someone think through a problem within the context of the situation.

Here are five good question asking techniques: 1) Explore the problem. Talk it through; 2) Consider the options you have; 3) Determine necessary decisions. What decisions must be made to move forward? 4)

Set goals. Determine specific goals and how to be accountable for meeting those goals; 5) Anticipate the outcome you can expect and actions to get there.

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Asking and answering questions is a powerful tool in ministry. A coach asks questions about where we are and helps us figure out how to get to where we need to be. Questions force us to rethink where we are and think in new ways to reach new destinations.

In church revitalization, a coach is invaluable. If your church is stuck, then you will be stuck as a leader. Coaching may be just what you

need. It isn't complicated. Find a trusted person. Share your dilemma or the issue holding you back and encourage him or her to ask questions to get you thinking. For example, you aren't seeing any new first-time guests come through the church door. Talk it through. Possible discovery questions: What are you doing specifically to let the community know about your church? What does outreach look like in your church? If you are hosting events, what are you doing to move people from the fall festival in your church parking lot into the sanctuary on Sunday morning? After asking the initial exploration questions, look for options. Talk through those options until some decisions are made and so on.

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Coaching is a powerful ministry tool. I hope you will consider finding a trusted friend to coach you through ministry from point A to point B. **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.

B



THE TEN HATS OF A PASTOR

BY DR. GARY MCINTOSH

Pastors can, do, and must wear many different hats in their work. Each hat represents a role. Pastors shift roles in a matter of a few minutes. One moment they are directors, the next counselors, and the next managers.

Most experienced pastors realize the demands of ministry require fruitful pastors to wear several hats. In this study, I introduce and define ten hats pastors commonly wear. Then I compare the amount of time each hat is worn by pastors of growing churches and declining churches.

Pastors commonly wear ten different hats.

THE SPEAKER HAT. This may be the most visible hat put on by all pastors. The speaker's hat is worn every time a pastor preaches, speaks at events, or in some way addresses people. For many people, perhaps most, this is the only hat they ever see the pastor wearing. Because they primarily see pastors in this hat, they tend to judge them by their ability to communicate.

THE CAPTAIN HAT. Pastors wear the captain's hat when pointing the church in the right direction. Casting vision for the future cannot be delegated to any other person. Others are invited to sit at the captain's table to give input and advice.

THE COACH HAT. In almost any endeavor the responsibility of the coach is to get others to play the game as

well as possible. The pastor's role is not to play the game as much as to get others to play and to play well! When wearing the coach's hat, a pastor observes, corrects, explains, questions, encourages, and inspires others to be the best they can be in ministry.

THE EXECUTIVE HAT. As chief executive, the pastor evaluates people, programs, and expenditures. The pastor judges whether the church is reaching its goals and makes the hard calls regarding where to invest or withhold resources. The buck truly stops at the pastor's desk, and decision-making is a primary role.

THE DIRECTOR HAT. The pastor wears the director's hat when teaching others to follow Christ and serve Him with their gifts. He discipled others through his own example, teaching, and personal mentoring. It is an essential hat for developing future leaders and might also be called the discipler's hat.

THE COUNSELOR HAT. The counselor's hat is often the most exhausting to wear. It is worn each time a pastor meets with people seeking help with personal problems and issues. Meetings can be positive, such as premarital counseling, or negative, such as advising a couple seeking divorce.



PASTORS OF GROWING VS. DECLINING CHURCHES

	Growing Churches	Declining Churches
Speaker Hat	10 hours (13.7%)	5 hours (10.4%)
Captain Hat	9 hours (12.3%)	5 hours (10.4%)
Coach Hat	9 hours (12.3%)	6 hours (12.5%)
Executive Hat	8 hours (11%)	6 hours (12.5%)
Director Hat	7 hours (9.6%)	6 hours (12.5%)
Student Hat	7 hours (9.6%)	5 hours (10.4%)
Counselor Hat	7 hours (9.6%)	5 hours (10.4%)
Pioneer Hat	6 hours (8.2%)	3 hours (6.3%)
Conductor Hat	6 hours (8.2%)	4 hours (8.3%)
Reporter Hat	4 hours (5.5%)	3 hours (6.3%)
TOTAL HOURS	73 hours (100%)	48 hours (100%)

Note: The totals above are inflated because many ministry roles overlap and ministers multi-task, making accurate estimation difficult.

Summary

Pastors of growing churches report working 52% longer each week than pastors of declining churches. The pastor's priority in growing churches is on wearing the speaker's hat, the captain's hat and the coach's hat. In addition, pastors of growing churches report spending twice as much time wearing the pioneer's hat than do those in declining churches. **ONE**

*Adapted by permission from a paper presented by Dr. McIntosh at the Great Commission Research Network meeting in Orlando, FL, March 2020. For more on this topic, read Dr. McIntosh's book *The Ten Hats of a Pastor* from Baker Publishing, expected to release in March 2021.*

THE STUDENT HAT. The truly successful pastor never graduates but is a perpetual student. By wearing the student's hat, pastors illustrate leaders are learners. They know they must continually upgrade their knowledge, skills, and abilities.

THE PIONEER HAT. The fur cap worn by America's early pioneers declared a desire to conquer the wilderness. Like pastors who went into the frontier to preach the gospel and plant churches, leading others to share their faith with family, friends, and associates is a key aspect of this hat. The pioneer's hat demonstrates a willingness to move into new territory through innovation.

THE CONDUCTOR HAT. The conductor's hat is worn by a pastor when he works with people of numerous talents, abilities, and skills so they work together in unity, bringing out the best in the church. The pastor orchestrates the body so harmony flows out of action and pitches in to help complete a task or project at key points in time.

THE REPORTER HAT. Pastors put on the reporter's hat when they represent the church in the larger community. As churches partner more and more with other churches and non-religious agencies, they become the face of the congregation to the community.

About the Writer: Dr. Gary L. McIntosh is professor of Christian Ministry and Leadership at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, where he teaches courses in the field of pastoral theology. He has authored more than a dozen books including *Growing God's Church* (2016) and *Taking Your Church to the Next Level* (2009). For more information, visit The Church Growth Network: www.churchgrowthnetwork.com.

GOD BROUGHT ME THIS FAR

BY CHAPLAIN MICHAEL BEATTY



I love God's Word. I especially enjoy reading about a biblical character and finding something that relates to me. These moments allow me to make deep, personal connection to the Scriptures, reminding me the men and women in the Bible were people just like us. God used ordinary people for great purposes. One biblical character I relate to is King David. In 2 Samuel 7:18-22 it says, "Then King David went in and sat before the Lord; and he said: Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have **brought me this far?**"

David started from humble beginnings as a shepherd boy but eventually became the King of Israel. David was amazed at what God did when He took the impossible and made it possible. I can relate to this. Growing up, I was not athletic or near the top of my class. I stammered, so articulating words was very difficult. Strangely enough, I was good at preaching and public speaking. When I preached at our church, interestingly, I never stammered. It felt completely natural, and it was evident I was born and called to do this.

I realized this calling at age 14, but I never knew the extent to which I would serve in the ministry. Years went by. I met and married Stephanie and became a school-teacher. I enjoyed the job, but deep inside, I knew I was called to more. In 2008, the state of California laid off more than 30,000 teachers—mostly new teachers like me. My wife and I began praying for God's guidance and direction, and He led us to the Army.

I entered military service July 1, 2008, and underwent basic training at Fort Benning, Georgia. While there, many members of my platoon noticed. I prayed regularly with fellow soldiers, counseling, encouraging, and listening to them. Like preaching, this felt natural, and I loved it. I was soon given the nickname "platoon chaplain." Shortly after basic training, I went to OCS (Officer Candidate School). Once again, I found myself gravitating to those around me and ministering to them. I was given a slightly different nickname: "company chaplain." During this time I began to sense God's leading into the chaplaincy.

After Basic Officer Leadership Course, I became an officer in the Adjutant General Corp, or army human resources. During my first duty station at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, home of the 101st Airborne Division, I did very well as a human resources officer, but once again, I found myself ministering to soldiers. I recall one captain telling me, "Lieutenant Beatty, I believe you've missed your calling." I spent three years in the 101st, before being reassigned to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, for the Captain's Career Course. This training teaches Army captains to command within their own military skill sets. I caught the attention of the course manager, Major Aaron Lummer. He called me into his office and told me, "Captain Beatty, you act like a chaplain naturally. I often see you praying and ministering to your fellow classmates. You are a capable HR officer, which is fine, but you would be stellar as a chaplain. I'm giving you

permission to skip certain classes and go next door to the chaplain school to learn.”

I took him up on the offer and soon learned the chaplaincy was for me. Even more, I knew it was God’s will.

After being assigned to my next duty station at Fort Hood, Texas, I was deployed to Afghanistan. I served as HR officer for an infantry unit, and once again, I instinctively began doing the “chaplain thing.” Some soldiers even confused me for a battalion chaplain.

Toward the end of my deployment, I was sent to Bagram Airfield. While there, I made an appointment to speak to my brigade chaplain, CH (MAJ) Haggray. He told me, “Captain Beatty, I was wondering when you were going to come to my office. Have a seat, and we’ll discuss your future as a chaplain in the Army.”

We talked for a long time, and he helped devise a plan of action to become a chaplain. I resigned my active commission, and on August 14, 2014, I accepted a commission as an HR captain in the reserves. My family and I moved to Springfield, Missouri, where I attended seminary, served as youth pastor at a small church, and followed the military protocol to become a chaplain. In early March 2018, I received some bad news, just as I was completing the final steps in the chaplain process. I received a call from the chief of chaplains’ office. I was informed I had no chance of becoming a chaplain, primarily since the Army wanted captains, and I was on the verge of being considered for major. The chaplain went on to say I *might* have a chance to become a navy chaplain, but the army was out. My wife and I were devastated, and we began to pray for God to intervene.

WELL, GOD INTERVENED!

I called the Navy and began the process of becoming a naval chaplain. A few months later, I underwent military training at Fort Snelling, Minnesota. By divine appointment, while there I met Chaplain (MAJ) Amy Noble. We talked about the chaplaincy, and she asked if I ever wanted to become one. I told her my situation, and why I was working with the Navy. She was flabbergasted!

Chaplain Noble explained what I had been told by the chief of chaplains’ office was only partially true, and

policies were changing. Even more, she worked as a chaplain recruiter! God placed her directly in my path, I know, because she put me in touch with the individuals who helped me become a chaplain. I couldn’t help but loudly praise God, and wonder who was I that He would want to help me.

On June 24, 2019, I received orders transferring me to the Chaplain Corps. I was finally a chaplain, and I was transferred to a unit in Little Rock, Arkansas. I recall that first drill weekend with my new unit. I got to minister to scores of soldiers, and even more, it was my job! I returned home and told my wife I had to become a full-time chaplain rather than a reservist.

Through a series of events, God led me to the National Association of Free Will Baptists and Kerry Steedley. I remember our first conversation when we must have talked for more than an hour. I knew this was where God wanted me and my family to be.

As I look back, it is clear God was leading us. Today, my family and I attend Eastern Gate FWB Church in Springfield, Missouri. We are part of a great church willing to help and support us in the chaplaincy, an association willing to ordain me, and a denomination willing to give me an active duty endorsement.

I am amazed and humbled to see God at work. I recently graduated from the U.S. Army Chaplain Basic Officer Leadership Course (CHBOLC), required for all Army chaplains. When I arrived at Fort Jackson to begin studies, I paused at the sign that read “U.S. Army Chaplain Center and School.” I began to cry and praise God. Like King David, I said, “Praise be to the LORD, the God who has **brought me this far!** Oh LORD my God, please, take me farther.”

He has truly brought me and my family this far, and I simply cannot wait for what He has in store. **ONE**

About the Writer: CH (CPT) Michael Beatty is a Free Will Baptist Chaplain in the U.S. Army Reserve with plans to soon go on active duty. Learn more about the chaplaincy at www.fwbnam.com.

NAM Adds New Associate Church Planters



Brooks & Jennifer Phillips

Antioch, TN—North American Ministries welcomes associate church planters Brooks and Jennifer Phillips to our team. Brooks and Jennifer are joining Dan and Kami Houghton in planting a Free Will Baptist church in Burlington, Vermont, one of the least churched areas in the nation. The Phillips are

from North Carolina where they served as staffers and volunteers in various churches. We are excited to welcome the Phillips and look forward to their work on the field. Currently, they are raising funds and are available for services. Reach them through the NAM website at www.fwbnam.com/phillips.

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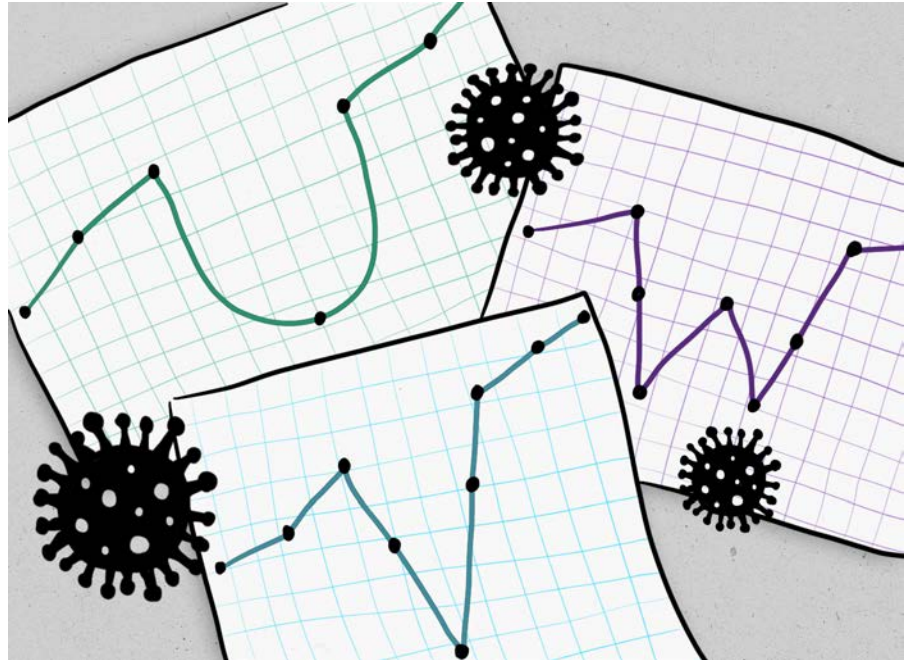
V... U... W?

BY DAVID BROWN

Economists debate about when the economy will recover from the COVID-19 crisis. Will the recovery be V-shaped, U-shaped, or perhaps W-shaped? Some expect a quick (V-shaped) recovery because the economy was fine before the pandemic began. Others say it will be slower (U-shaped because lost jobs will return slowly). Still others think the economy will have starts and stops (W-shaped) with some recovery before another fall, followed by a second recovery. Only the Lord knows, but we will recover from the economic impact of this crisis.

In the middle of an economic downturn, it is difficult to see an end in sight. However, when you take the long view you can see, historically, we have recovered from every downturn. Unemployment will reach the highest level in U.S. history before it turns around. We must remember this downturn was self-imposed as we closed our economy to slow the spread of the pandemic. This is something never done before in United States history. We are in uncharted waters.

How many will not have jobs to return to because the business they worked for no longer exists? Will new industries emerge from this crisis? Will they be able to employ those who have lost jobs? Will new jobs be created fast enough to offset



the job losses? Around 70% of the U.S. economy is consumer-driven, and if a large number do not have jobs, they cannot consume goods.

How about the stock market recovery? The good news is the amount of money injected into our economy both by the Federal Reserve and congress is unprecedented. While we remember the Fed acted to save banks in the 2008-09 financial crisis, you may not be aware most of that stimulus was limited to the banking system itself. This time, money is flowing to individuals and small businesses to help stabilize them. The idea is to give individuals and businesses enough money to survive and recover. Interest

rates are basically at zero, and the likelihood is they will stay this low for some time. This could be good news for the stock market much like it was in 2008-09. If you want to make a return on your investment, you have no choice but to invest in stocks. Let's do our best to get the economy moving when it is safe to do so and we can look back later to see if it was a V, a U, a W or even another letter of the alphabet. **ONE**

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

Just Call Me Old!

BY BRENDA EVANS



Call me fusty—I don’t care. Fusty works because I am old-fashioned about some things. And most mornings, I feel stiff and dried out as day-old bread. I am sometimes closed up, unreceptive to certain new ideas or gadgets. So go ahead, call me fusty.

Just don’t call me elderly—not yet anyway. But when? If you google that question, you’ll find “most of the developed world accept the chronological age of 65 as elderly.” Who cares what most of the developed world says?

Part of my resistance is about labels in general. *Elderly* labels you, assigns you to a box, seals the lid, and warns people about the contents: *Handle with Care*. It’s like that tag inside a garment that tells you what the garment is and what it is not: size, brand name, and instructions for care. Labels don’t work as well for us human beings made in the image of God. Sure, I’m *old*. Sure, I’m *retired*. No problems there, yet those two labels only fit a small part of me. What about the rest of who I am?

Another part of my resistance is ego. Plain old pride. Harsh images rattle around in my brain when I’m called elderly: *weak, unsteady, vulnerable*. In comparison to forty years ago, I’m all of those. I’m also more cautious. I’m not invincible. I can’t do everything I did back then. I’ve thought about what I should rightly call myself, and I’ve collected 35 options. Here are some of them.

Old. I call myself old, and so does the Bible. At 77, I can’t deny it. I’m gray, have that “hoary head,” Solomon mentions in Proverbs 16:32. Gray, silver, white—no problem. Plus, Leviticus 19:32 says “honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God.” So I accept gray hair, wrinkles, dry skin, liver spots, arthritic knobs, and spidery veins. My old age can be a testimony, may be honored, if I live Christianly before God and man.

I have hand-written Isaiah 46:3-4 in my promise notebook. I’ll paraphrase: the Lord made me and saved me.

He’s borne me and carried me. He will continue to carry me even to my old age and gray hairs. I’m old, I’m gray, and I’m carried by my Lord. Hallelujah!

Septuagenarian. The term comes from a Latin word, and, again, I can’t deny it. Anyone in her 70s is a septuagenarian. Maybe I will become an octogenarian (80s), even a nonagenarian (90s). I hope so. Both Psalms and Deuteronomy remind me long life and prolonged days are a blessing from the Lord.

Pre-boomer. Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964 or there about. Since I’m older than that, I accept Michael Medved’s label of pre-boomer, though I’m not fond of it. Of course, pre-boomer isn’t the same as pre-historic, which I would give two thumbs down.

Grizzled geezer. Here I will quibble with Medved. In a political column back in March, he referred to several 2020 presidential candidates—both male and female in their 70s—as grizzled geezers. *Grizzled*, I’m okay with. I do have gray hair, but *geezers* are old men. I reject geezer. I am not one.

Second childhood. In *Mere Christianity*, C. S. Lewis describes what he calls “a fully Christian society.” A society, among other things, with “no passengers or parasites.” Certainly, Lewis is not referring to us oldies there, but I thought of us anyway as I read that passage again this week. We older people are concerned (and sometimes worried) about going into a second childhood that turns us into passengers who can no longer drive (both literally and metaphorically). A new stage of life where we just go along for the ride like little children do. We want to

stay a “participant” as Lewis says, not a passenger, not an infant in a carseat. Nor do we want to be parasites, dependent on others.

But the time will come when we are. Some call it second childhood. We will quit driving, give up the keys, those small pieces of metal that are symbolic of so much: adulthood, independence, proficiency, freedom. Without keys, we become passengers, not drivers. We feel like takers (parasites), not givers. Hard words. In the meantime, I wait and trust, and stay a participant as long as I can. And when I can't, I will hand over the keys and lean on that Isaiah promise: “I will carry you.”

The Temperate Zone. My favorite book about an old person is Wendell Berry's *The Memory of Old Jack*. One day, Old Jack seems to be dozing, though he isn't. He is “deeply and quietly awake...in the temperate zone,” a zone of life that has come to him “unasked.” He sees it as “a blessing, and he will stay in it as long as he can.” Yet, Old Jack resists the passivity that is part of that zone, “the sense of having nothing to do, no intention.” He is not pleased that the afternoon “will fill itself with what he will let happen, not what he will make happen.”

I identify with Old Jack. Letting things happen and making things happen are far different. In that zone, Old Jack notes that another of the several “inexorable hinges of his life has turned.” We old people know about inexorable hinges. Sometimes, these hinges of life rust and squeak and squawk and scare us. Other times, they are oiled with grace and peace and gladness. So, we accept these zones and their inexorable hinges.

Perennial. Dr. Laura Carstensen, director of Stanford Center on Longevity, calls us old people perennials, as does former secretary of state Madeleine Albright. *Perennial* “implies reinvention,” Dr. Carstensen says. True, perennials like asters and day lilies, asparagus and rhubarb keep bursting through the soil year after year. I like perennials, but I don't want to be called one. Nor do I want to reinvent myself.

Then there are the more common labels: **the aged, senior citizen, mature adult, retiree, post-retiree.** I laugh at **long-in-the-tooth.** It suggests I might be a horse. I've also heard **sage.** Not the aromatic plant with grayish-green leaves used in cornbread dressing at

Thanksgiving, but a profoundly wise person from history or legend. I'm not legendary or profoundly wise, so mark that one off. One Gen-X guy labeled us **creaky elders from the olden days.** Which proves there are still impudent, young whippersnappers on our planet!

Christian author Richard Foster said that on a hike in the mountains, one of his grandchildren called him a **SOM** (Slow Old Man). He didn't say so, but I suppose that means we older females are **SOWs** (Slow Old Women). Don't even *consider* calling me that. My list includes 17 more, but I will just mention these last two.

Young-old and old-old. I like those, especially young-old, because I want to think I am. I tease my husband, Bill, that he must be old-old since he became an octogenarian last year. One woman my age told me, “I'm 25... plus shipping and handling.” She claimed she invented the saying. She didn't. She read it somewhere. Old people do sometimes lie. A recent survey asked *How old is old?* Eighty-five percent of respondents ranging between 40 and 90 said they were not old yet, and almost half believed they look younger than they were. Dave Barry quipped that we older Americans must have terrible eyesight.

I am mainly encouraged about being old. Luke, the physician and writer, believed old people weren't just along for the ride, but were still participants in this Christian life. Zachariah was old and Elizabeth advanced in years (1:18) when the Lord gave them John the Baptist. Anna, the prophetess was at least 84 but still worshiped and spoke out at the temple (2:37-38). The Lord is not finished with us old people yet, no matter what label people put on us.

Near the end of Wendell Berry's novel, one of Old Jack's friends says, “time will finally make mortals of us all.” Another friend chimes in, “if we don't die first.”

That is true, but until then... **ONE**

About the Writer: Brenda Evans lives and writes on the banks of Rockhouse Fork in Ashland, Kentucky. You may contact her at beejayevans@windstream.net.

When to Leave and When to Stay

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.

All leaders have struggled over a question with high stakes for them and their organizations. The dilemma leaders wrestle with, although they may not admit it, is knowing when to leave and when to stay. Whether the reader of this column is a pastor, line manager, director, supervisor, volunteer, or CEO, the first consideration is always to pursue the will of God. Arguably, the call of God was on Nehemiah (administrator/governor) as much as it was on the priest and religious leader Ezra. Regardless of your career, follow God's will and His timing.

Just because you believe God wants you in a certain position does not automatically mean the organization wants you there, or that you should stay. Such dilemmas remind you there is not one perfect choice, so recognize your God-given talents and calling and match your abilities with the right organization. When you have found that match and have been faithful to your role, how do you know when to leave? Let's break the code to help you know when you have stayed too long versus when to stick it out.

If one or more of the following applies, leaving might be a consideration:



- You see it as a toxic environment.
- You constantly experience undue mental or physical stress.
- You lost your passion for the work.
- You lost your vision for what could be.
- You find yourself going through the motions.
- Your ideas or direction are not valued.
- Your work is not up to standard.
- Your care for the people fades or ceases.
- You stay because you fear being unable to do anything else.
- You and the culture no longer match.
- Your relationship with your boss or board is not healthy.

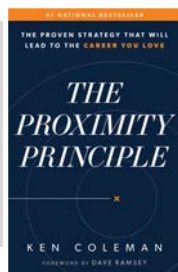
- May need to align with an organization where your ideas are attainable.

Sometimes, leaders wrestle with the question of staying or leaving during tough times. Hard times and vision are interrelated. Crucibles can crush or confirm. Vision points the way during difficult times, or at the very least, struggles against stagnation. But when you lose a sense of direction in both good and bad times, you need to pause and figure out why. While you will not find a clear-cut answer from this short list, combine prayer and conversations with your spouse, and you will reach a good conclusion. We have all wrestled with the question, but do not struggle alone. **ONE**

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

"To walk out of God's will is to step into nowhere."

—C. S. Lewis



RECOMMENDED BOOK

The Proximity Principle

By Ken Coleman

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

ONE magazine

2020 READER SURVEY

As the official publication of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, *ONE Magazine* continues to reach a wide spectrum of Free Will Baptists, delivered to just under 50,000 homes six times a year. It continues to be the goal of the editorial staff to provide a high-quality, encouraging, inspiring, and God-honoring publication to benefit Free Will Baptists and provide a unifying vision of denominational efforts.

With this goal in mind, from time to time, we ask *ONE Magazine* readers to share feedback about the magazine: what we are doing well, what could use improvement, what you read in each issue, and the content you would like to see in future issues, among other important questions.

The **2020 Reader Survey** gives you an opportunity to give input into the direction of the magazine. The survey was developed by the directors of denominational agencies and editors from each department. This is the largest survey conducted in the history of the magazine. We want to hear from you!

You can participate in the survey four ways:

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- + Scan the QR code at right
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Preparing for the Next Crisis

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

Remember what the world was like in 2019? Unemployment reached an all-time low, the economy was booming, businesses hadn't been shut down due to a worldwide pandemic, and no one needed to shelter in place. Sadly, in early 2020, all of that changed. Now, we are searching for a new normal as we emerge slowly from an international crisis. This "new normal" will affect all areas of our lives in ways we never before considered.

As I write this article, many questions remain unanswered about how businesses will protect customers in the future, helping them feel safe in crowds of people. The financial repercussions of the global economic shutdown will likely trickle down for years to come as the government stimulus is unwound from the economy. It also means changes to our financial plans moving forward, personally as well as for businesses and ministries. This pandemic has revealed the fragile financial picture of many Americans while stressing existing finances.

While the government stepped in at the onset of the pandemic and propped up the economy with stimulus money for individuals and businesses, unemployment still rose sharply, and companies that couldn't weather the shutdown were forced to close. Individuals were forced to tap savings accumulated over the years. Some wiped out emergency funds and withdrew retirement savings to make ends meet.

Many families went from two incomes to no income in a very brief period. For families living paycheck to paycheck (78% of U.S. workers, according to a survey

by CareerBuilder), this quick collapse of income resulted in high stress and worry. One in four workers had no funds set aside in savings. Thus, they had no safety net when they lost their jobs. Since many had no savings, they turned to credit card debt to sustain them until they received unemployment or stimulus money. As social restrictions ease and the economy gradually reopens, those who were unprepared face a mountain of debt on top of everything else. They learned the hard way how fragile the economy and their livelihoods could be.

This extraordinary year for the economy reminded us that even a few weeks of businesses being closed results in huge numbers of layoffs and complete disruption of normal, everyday life. As with any crisis, new knowledge is gained through the experience to help us prepare for the next major crisis.

This starts with resolving the issues accumulated during the most recent crisis. Find new or additional employment, set up and fund emergency savings to cover necessary expenses for three to six months, and reduce your debt load. Also, begin long-term savings at an ade-

4

SIMPLE STEPS TO PREPARE FOR THE NEXT CRISIS

1. Find new or additional employment.
2. Set up and fund emergency savings to cover three to six months of expenses.
3. Reduce debt load.
4. Begin long-term savings.

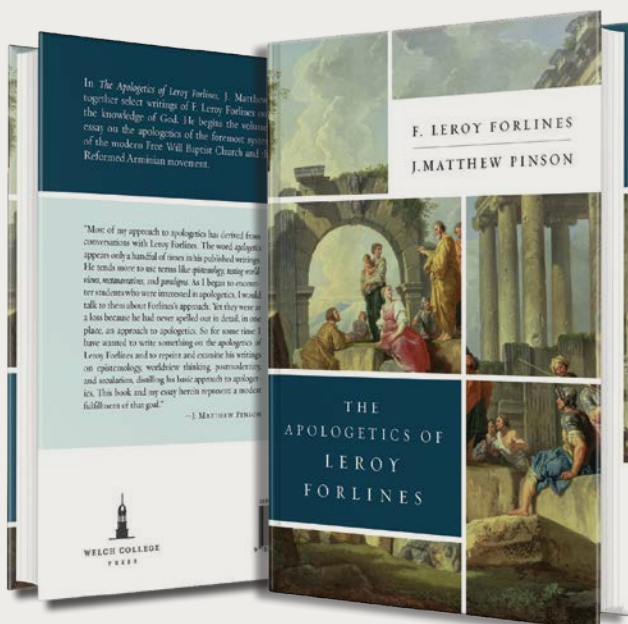
quate rate so as you age, your retirement years are not a stressful event. The better we prepare financially, the less stress we will feel the next time a crisis happens, whether a global pandemic or a personal crisis such as the loss of a job.

Rebuilding from COVID-19 will require deliberate savings and retirement goals and paying down credit card and other debt to a manageable level. It will be a long road to financial recovery, but the lessons learned from this crisis will help us be better prepared for the next big crisis. [ONE](#)

About the Writer: 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 the spring of 2006. Learn more about retirement options: www.BoardofRetirement.com.



THE APOLOGETICS OF LEROY FORLINES



In *The Apologetics of Leroy Forlines*, J. Matthew Pinson collates select writings of F. Leroy Forlines on apologetics, epistemology, and the knowledge of God. He begins the volume with a lengthy essay on the apologetics of Forlines, the foremost systematic theologian of the modern Free Will Baptist Church and the contemporary Reformed Arminian movement.

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What Governs Our Worship?

BY MATTHEW MCAFFEE AND BARRY RAPER

Several years ago, a local newspaper carried an advertisement for an upcoming special service at a local church. Among the many things taking place was “sumo wrestling.” This was likely some sort of youth-related game and not *real* sumo-wrestling. Nonetheless, this example raises an important question when it comes to corporate worship: what governs the various elements of our worship? In other words, what activities or practices should take place during corporate worship, and how do we decide?

In the last issue, we sought to answer the question: what is worship? Now, we turn our attention to what governs our worship. No one can escape this question. Every

local congregation has an answer or set of answers, whether consciously or not. Also, these answers may be shared congregation-wide or held by a smaller group such as the pastor or congregational leaders. To put it another way, what would you allow in a worship service if it were

up to you? And, on what grounds would you make those decisions?

Regulative Versus Normative

Theologians and church leaders have debated this issue much over the last few centuries. The two main philosophies or approaches to this question are the *regulative* and *normative* principles. In his book *The Deliberate Church*, Mark Dever offers a helpful summary of both philosophies.

The regulative principle states everything we do in corporate worship must be clearly warranted by Scripture—either an explicit biblical command or a good and necessary implication from a biblical text. This regulative principle historically has competed with the normative principle defined by Anglican minister Richard Hooker, who argued, along with Martin Luther before him, that as long as a practice is not biblically forbidden, a church is free to use it in corporate life and worship. In short, the regulative principle *forbids* anything not commanded by Scripture, whereas the normative principle *allows* anything not forbidden by Scripture.¹ In *The Deliberate Church*, Dever advocates for the regulative principle, asserting worship must be

1 Mark Dever, *The Deliberate Church: Building Your Ministry on the Gospel* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005), 77.

“regulated by revelation.”²

The Book of Acts records the birth and continued expansion of the early church. Luke chronicles Peter’s first sermon in Acts 2:14-40. After hearing the sermon, 3,000 souls were added to the Lord. Acts 2:42-47 provides a summary of what took place in the infancy of the new church. Believers devoted themselves to: 1) apostolic teaching; 2) breaking of bread; 3) prayer; 4) fellowship; 5) mutual sharing; and 6) praise of God. These basic beliefs and practices were the core elements when they assembled to celebrate the risen Lord Jesus.

A survey of the rest of the New Testament reveals widespread acceptance and practice of these elements in early church worship. For instance, Paul devoted much space in his letters to 1) reading and preaching the Scriptures; 2) prayers; 3) fellowship and responsibilities in the church; 4) giving; and 5) singing and praising God. The corporate gatherings of the early church likewise attest to the acceptance and practice of these basic elements of worship.

Circumstances and Qualities

It is important to insert a word here

2 Ibid, 78-79. Dever suggests worship can be boiled down to 1) reading the Word; 2) preaching the Word; 3) singing the Word; 4) praying the Word; and 5) seeing the Word (ordinances)

about the *circumstances* of worship. The elements of worship are the practices or activities of worship, such as preaching, singing, praying, giving, Scripture reading, etc. The *circumstances* of worship include such things as the time or length of the service, whether your church uses pews or chairs, how many songs you sing, and much more. People on both sides of the regulative/normative divide recognize the Bible doesn't specifically address every question about circumstances. Instead, each church and its leaders must make decisions about the circumstances of worship by using biblical wisdom in their own local cultural context.

With these principles in mind, Ligon Duncan suggests traditional evangelical worship aspires to the following *qualities* (related to, but not identical to elements) in congregational services of worship:

1. **Scriptural:** ordered by God's Word
2. **Simple:** unadorned; without elaborate ritual
3. **Spiritual:** Spirit-gathered; Spirit-empowered
4. **God-centered:** God as the object of our worship
5. **Historic:** learning from the Church through the ages
6. **Reverent and joyful:** combining both; holding both in tension
7. **Mediated:** through the person of Christ
8. **Corporate:** the covenant community engaging with God
9. **Evangelistic:** a by-product of

true worship; not the primary aim of worship

10. **Delightful:** delighting in God Himself
11. **Active and passive:** giving and receiving
12. **Lord's Day worship** to the living and true God—the importance of the Lord's day for worship.³

Conclusion

The regulative principle is a simple means whereby the church ensures its worship is scripturally warranted. This approach enables congregations to move beyond their own cultural moment in pursuit of scripturally-warranted worship. Congregations from different times and cultures have embraced these same basic elements of Christian worship for centuries. Although the circumstances of our corporate worship often change of necessity, the essential elements do not. The reason for such stability is simply they have been commanded in Scripture.

As we emphasized previously in the "what" of worship, the Bible points out certain practices are not permissible in worship. In every instance, the offense resulted from a violation of what God had already commanded in Scripture. In short, if we want to please God in our worship, we must allow the Scriptures to govern it.

One final thought arises from a focus on the biblical elements of worship. It is important to remem-

³ Ligon Duncan, "Traditional Evangelical Worship," in *Perspectives on Christian Worship*, ed. J. Matthew Pinson. (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2009), 114-123.

ber each element is of intrinsic value in its own right. We must be careful to protect the integrity of each individual element. We are commanded to *pray* corporately. We are commanded to *read Scripture* corporately. These activities are not simply segues to the next part of the service. Prayer and Scripture reading is much more than an opportunity for musicians to tune up for the next song, or for the preacher to make his way to the pulpit.

Neither do they *need* the aid of background music for them to be effective. Since we are commanded to observe *all* elements of worship, we must give our undivided attention to *each* element in our corporate assemblies. When we do so, we will discover the richness and spiritual nourishment God has invested in each element for the building up of the Body of Christ. **ONE**

About the Columnists: Dr. Matthew McAfee serves as provost and professor at Welch College. He has ministered in Free Will Baptist churches in Virginia, Tennessee, Illinois, and Canada.

Barry Raper serves as program coordinator for Ministry Studies at Welch College. He pastors Bethel FWB Church in Ashland City, Tennessee.



Why Welch for Non-Ministry Students?

BY IAN HAWKINS

Since the establishment of then Free Will Baptist Bible College, Welch College has been a college that trains students for the ministry. It has always been and continues to be a priority for the college. However, over the last 40 years, the college has expanded its degree offerings to provide quality education for other vocational endeavors.

As chairman of the Arts and Sciences department, I oversee many of these non-ministry related degrees. In many respects, I am reluctant to use the words *non-ministry related* degrees, even though it is the easiest way to communicate to people “non-theological degrees.” I am reluctant because *all* careers, when merged with the specific purpose of Scripture, become a “calling” of God.

The term *vocation* literally means “a calling.” When the first universities and colleges began in medieval Europe, they were established as Christian centers of learning. The term *vocation* grounded the meaning of what students were working towards: “a calling” to use their gifts and talents in whatever fields they studied to further the Kingdom of God within their spheres of influence. Hugh of Saint Victor wrote the *Didascalicon*, which became a defense for education of the arts from the ancient Greeks to a European Christian audience. He said, “the intention of all human actions is resolved in a common objective: either to restore in us the likeness of the divine image or to take thought for the necessity of this life, which, the more easily it can suffer harm from those things which work to its disadvantage, the more does it require to be cherished

and conserved.”¹ It is interesting that he related all human activity, whether theological or not, to the restoration of the image of God and living wages.

As a professor, I witness this firsthand in our graduates. I watch as nurses and health care workers give grace and healing, extending God’s hands and feet to those in need. Businessmen and women become successful, high-character examples to their coworkers while giving generously from the fruit of their success to support charities and Christian ministries. Schoolteachers, burdened by needs of their students, reach out to provide help and work—a conduit between the Body of Christ and local schools. Counselors help the hurting, not only offering sound clinical advice but also the love and grace of God that extends far beyond science. The list could go on and on.

Their examples remind me of the construction of the tabernacle and temple in the Old Testament when God *fashioned* certain individuals with extreme talents in wood and metalworking, music, and many other fields to be commissioned by God to build His house. Why should we assume today it only takes one kind of ministry to build God’s House?

It is not only the calling that extends beyond ministry at Welch, it is also the *quality of the education*. Currently, we offer degrees in biology, psychology, English, history, humanities, education, exercise science, business, music, and mathematics. This list will soon include computer science (once we get accreditor approval). Students in these areas

1 Hugh of St. Victor. *The Didascalicon of Hugh of Saint Victor: A Medieval Guide to the Arts*. New York, NY: Columbian University Press, 1130s reprint in English 1991.

are impacting local communities. They are accepted into graduate programs in dentistry, physical therapy, nursing, counseling, social work, psychology, English, history, business administration, engineering, law, music performance, education, and more.

Our evaluation by *U.S. News and World Report* ranks Welch 16th best among regional colleges in the South. This ranking has increased over the last five years, and we continue to see increases in faculty members with highest-level degrees, as well as a higher number of students pursuing graduate education. We have the credentials and the faculty to provide a top-quality education.

With all of these benefits, you still may be hard pressed to consider Welch because of distance or cost. You ask, “Why should I send my child across the country to a place where they will acquire debt and leave with similar job prospects than graduates from a (much cheaper) local community college or public university? What exactly is the difference between Welch and other colleges?”

Let me share three reasons why Welch is worth it: leadership training, service mindedness, and vocational living.

Leadership Training

As you may know, Welch College’s purpose statement is *to educate leaders to serve Christ, His Church, and His World through biblical thought and life*. Our students, I am sure, are tired of hearing this statement repeated regularly across the campus (and maybe some of the faculty and staff as well). However, it is crucial to understand students at Welch are constantly challenged to lives of leadership. This is noted by how many of our students become leaders in their home churches while home, and how many of them accept leadership roles in their local churches in the Nashville area.

Welch students are given opportunities for leadership in societies, class groups, vocational groups, Christian service, and the student body. This emphasis on leadership is not just to provide opportunities but to challenge the students to embrace their roles and to understand leadership accompanies their profession of faith in Christ. Leadership extends beyond our roles to our lives. Welch encourages students to live out their leadership even when their job title at work or church is not typical for leadership.

Many students are asked to mentor younger students, to become tutors in their respective fields, to lead Bible study small groups, or a host of other smaller roles. We want them to realize God places us in our circumstances to influence those around us.

When Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan, He emphasized leadership through service. The Levite and the Priest in the parable, who each held earthly leadership roles, were not sacrificial leaders in their actions. Our students not only have opportunities and are encouraged to become leaders, they are *trained* to be sacrificial leaders.

One way to test a good leader is to see how he or she handles adversity. No, I am not in favor of giving students unnecessary adversity, but they will experience challenges at Welch. For some, it is learning to accomplish tasks on their own. For others, it may be academics or the rules or their roommate or their finances (or however the Lord sees fit to challenge them during their college years). I assure you: at some point the challenge comes. And, when the challenge comes, Welch is the best place to work through the struggle because the faculty and staff will be there to lift that student up and walk alongside them through the difficulty.

One of my goals for my own boys is that they will learn to handle adversity well. I am often amazed by students who come to me for counsel early in their college career, and it is evident they have not faced struggle in their lives, or when they did, someone was there to take the burden away. What type of leaders would we produce if we did not teach students how to handle adversity? Show me a student who faced adversity early and learned to persevere, and I will show you a future leader. God teaches many of His greatest lessons through adversity.

Service Mindedness

Students at Welch are taught to recognize their call to serve. One of the most rewarding things as a professor is to see students volunteer for service opportunities to help those in need. Every year, students go out of their way to serve churches in the area, to serve the community, and to serve one another. This generation has a passion for service, and at Welch, they are encouraged to pursue service as a gift to God.

Every Welch student is required to spend time each week in a Christian service area. This may sound restrictive for busy students but serving often requires inconvenience or sacrifice. Each year, local charities and humanitarian groups needing help visit Welch. This allows students to choose service opportunities to fulfill their Christian service requirements. Students can choose from a variety of ways to serve others: local hospitals, after-school programs, mentoring and counseling services, assisted living facilities, local churches, women's health clinics, and many more. These service activities are in addition to the ways our students volunteer on their own. Recently, a devastating outbreak of tornadoes destroy many homes, churches, and businesses across the greater Nashville area. After a local church organized relief efforts in conjunction with Samaritan's Purse, many students got together to volunteer.

Not only do Welch students have opportunities to serve, they are also supplied with *examples* of service by their professors and the staff at Welch. Many times, students work alongside faculty and staff in local events, or watch these individuals as lifegroup leaders, deacons, Sunday School teachers, choir members, instrumentalists, and many other roles. Students receive clear teaching in their classes across every academic discipline regarding what Christian service looks like in their particular fields. I cannot count the times students have asked questions about how their Christian faith applies to their specific studies, and how their service can reflect their relationship to Christ. This is what we want the Body of Christ to look like: serving one another and our community to bring comfort and relief to the hurting. We want them to see our students serving and glorifying God for their service.

Vocational Living

Recently, I reviewed some surveys outlining the reasons some people seem happier than others. The main evidence for their happiness was *purpose*. If a person is working a seemingly meaningless task but feels purpose and accomplishment in that effort, he or she is much more likely to have a happier outlook and sense of accomplishment—no matter the pay. In recent years, the sense of purpose in our society has been lost. Why do we do

what we do? Is it just to earn a paycheck? Or is there a higher purpose?

At Welch College, students are challenged to live out their “calling” in whatever discipline they feel best suits God-given talents and abilities. This sense of purpose permeates all we do. I have the privilege of leading the vocational group for Biology, and I remind my students constantly their “calling” to be a nurse, researcher, physical therapist, or teacher, or any other profession is important because it gives them opportunities to *give back* to God. I want my students to see the Kingdom of God in their classroom or when they serve patients, as they practice business or provide counseling. No matter their vocation, every student is taught to identify his or her part in the great Kingdom Christ initiated on the Cross. This is the only purpose that will carry us even when times are hard.

I am writing this now from a COVID-19 quarantine. How does the Kingdom of God respond to such a crisis? We have well-trained nurses on the front lines providing care and emotional support. Business leaders work with local authorities to help the poor and unemployed. Christian counselors meet with the grieving over the phone to help them deal with the changes in their life and provide comfort. Christian writers inform the public about the truth of what is happening. Historians put this tragedy in perspective and remind Christians to follow in the footsteps of those long ago who gave themselves for their fellow man. The list could go on.

This is exactly what Hugh of Saint Victor meant when he wrote that our purpose for our education and career is more than a job. It is doing our part to extend God's Kingdom. Career training may help you get a job, but vocational living gives you a purpose for your work, no matter the career. Wouldn't you like to leave college with not only a career but a calling? Welch is the place for you. **ONE**

About the Writer: Ian Hawkins is biology program coordinator chairman of the department of arts and sciences at Welch College. Contact Ian: iHawkins@welch.edu.

Welch Marks Highest Enrollment in 36 Years

Welch College's annual enrollment totaled 489 for the 2019-20 academic year, marking the highest enrollment in 36 years, according to Provost Matthew McAfee. "We are thrilled by this number and believe it shows we're gaining significant momentum in enrollment growth," McAfee said.

Registrar Sharon Rodgers completed final enrollment statistics for the 2019-20 year, after registration for the third session for the Adult Studies programs was complete.

"The college's highest annual enrollment was in 1981, with a total of 648; I'm thrilled to say we have exceeded

our 1984 total enrollment of 467," said Daniel Webster, director of enrollment services, who has closely monitored the college's enrollment history. "Over the past four years, we have seen a 43% increase, from 341 in 2016 to this year's total of 489."

"We're so pleased to see this rebound in enrollment from our difficult years back in the Recession of 2008-09," President Matt Pinson noted. "With the dawn of this COVID-19 pandemic, our faculty and staff are rising up in amazing ways to meet this new challenge, and our students are responding wonderfully. While these are difficult times, we're

confident God will see us through the days ahead."

College officials credit the college's relocation to its new campus in Gallatin, Tennessee, with much of the recent growth. "While the name change and new campus have contributed to this growth, the dedication and hard work of every person who plays a part in marketing, recruitment, and admissions for Welch College continues to amaze me," added Webster.

For more information about Welch, visit welch.edu. To apply to be part of the fall 2020 class at Welch, email recruit@welch.edu. **ONE**

Welch Receives Coronavirus Relief

Welch College recently received an emergency relief grant of \$400,000 from the Free Will Baptist Foundation to cover impairment from COVID-19, according to President Matt Pinson.

"We are so thankful to the Free Will Baptist Foundation and its Board for this generous grant," Pinson said. "This will help us close the enormous gap between income and expenses caused by the coronavirus."

Economists predict higher education will be one of the economic sectors hardest hit by the pandemic. This is especially true of colleges and universities relying on in-residence dorm students for the bulk of their revenue.

"The entire fiscal year for most private, residential colleges is based

on how many students come during the fall semester," Craig Mahler, vice president for financial affairs said.

"Higher education experts are bracing for an extremely difficult year.

In addition to enrollment, industry projections are that gifts will be down drastically owing to job losses, the impairment of donors' investment portfolios, etc. Add to that all the money we've lost by sending students home for half the spring semester, and you have the perfect storm."

College officials predict the \$400,000 grant from the Foundation, as well as a Small Business Administration loan of over \$700,000 and CARES act grants of over \$300,000 will help make up a fraction of the shortfall.

But most will have to be done by budget cuts and additional appeals for funds from alumni, friends of the college, and denominational supporters.

"Our greatest challenge is going to be students unable to enroll because of parents' job losses and other economic harm to their families," Pinson said. "Some of our friends and supporters aren't going to be able to give for the same reasons. But we're praying that those who still can give will support these students who won't be able to attend Welch without that extra support."

For more information, or to give to support needy students, please visit welch.edu/give and click on Coronavirus Student Relief Fund. **ONE**

2020

NAFWB NATION CONVENTION

FOR SUCH A TIME AS THIS

Sporting 30 six-foot tables with a single General Board member seated at each, the 84th session of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, July 20-21, painted a far different picture than the usual one of thousands of people crowded into a convention center or arena. Yet, the COVID-19 pandemic that forced the cancelation of an in-person convention didn't prevent those thousands from coming together for online worship, business, training, and even fellowship from a distance.

During the Monday evening service, Moderator Tim York spoke on "The Foundation of Discipleship" (Matthew 7:24-29); Tuesday, Executive Secretary Edward E. Moody, Jr. challenged listeners to "Be These: Salt and Light" (Matthew 5-6). Under the guidance of Kevin Justice and the Music Commission, a team of musicians led worship for both services, highlighted by a virtual convention choir comprised of talented vocalists from across the denomination belting out "Say Amen!" The Tuesday evening missionary service included a video featuring Free Will Baptist church planters and missionaries. An online offering was divided between North American Ministries and IM, Inc.

In addition to worship services, the online convention offered nine seminars from national agencies and eight seminars for the Spanish-speaking audience. Vertical Three took events online with worship services and activities at vertical-three.com. The CTS Ministry Expo Showcase on Facebook gave participants an opportunity to post their Bible memorization, music, and art entries. Even the annual IMPACT outreach continued. Volunteers across the denomination participated in IMPACT Hometown during the weeks lead-

ing up to the convention, making a difference in their own cities and communities as local guidelines allowed.

UNUSUAL BUSINESS

On Monday, July 20, and Tuesday, July 21, in a special extended session, 29 members of the General Board gathered in Nashville, Tennessee, to do business for the National Association, while another five board members joined via Zoom. Executive Secretary Eddie Moody reflected on these unprecedented proceedings:

"For the first time in the 85-year history of the National Association, we were unable to meet in person. Thankfully, our forefathers anticipated the possibility of a situation like this when they crafted Section 13 of our denominational Constitution: 'Should necessity arise from war, or pestilence, or any cause which prevents a regular meeting of the National Association, whether such a condition is of a local or general condition, then the General Board shall be privileged to call and act with full authority in all matters pertaining to the general welfare of the National Association.'"

NATIONAL CONVENTION

Throughout the two-day session, the General Board heard reports from eight national agencies and four commissions, electing board and commission members where needed. They approved two recommendations from the Executive Committee: 1) adopt Kansas City, Missouri, as the site of the July 20-23, 2025, convention; and 2) approve a 2021 denominational budget of \$29.8 million.

The board also approved three resolutions: 1) affirming the National Association of Free Will Baptists' stance against racism; 2) adopting the 3 for 30 Plan for the denomination; and 3) thanking Donelson FWB Church for hosting the meeting during this unusual time.

Executive Office. In his first report as executive secretary, Dr. Edward E. Moody, Jr., highlighted the multi-faceted ministry of the Executive Office: *ONE Magazine*, online church directory, email-based *NAFWB News*, Better Together Podcast, digital and printed resources, graphics, training events, and church support. He encouraged listeners to help promote these resources by reading, sharing, and providing ongoing feedback.

Moody identified initiatives for the Executive Office based on data and research: equipping Free Will Baptists to be healthier and more effective in ministry (Better Together Podcast, webinars, written resources, and training meetings); expanding Hispanic ministry (Facebook, written resources, graphics); and providing training and revitalization for pastors, leaders, and churches (Refresh, Leadership Conference).

The Executive Office worked closely with North American Ministries to improve church and pastor revitalization efforts. The resulting program, Refresh, focuses on training regional coaches to work with pastors and churches as needed. Moody anticipates 46 coaches to be trained by year's end. "It is our belief," he asserted, "healthy and effective pastors and laypeople will lead to healthy and effective churches and a healthy and effective denomination."

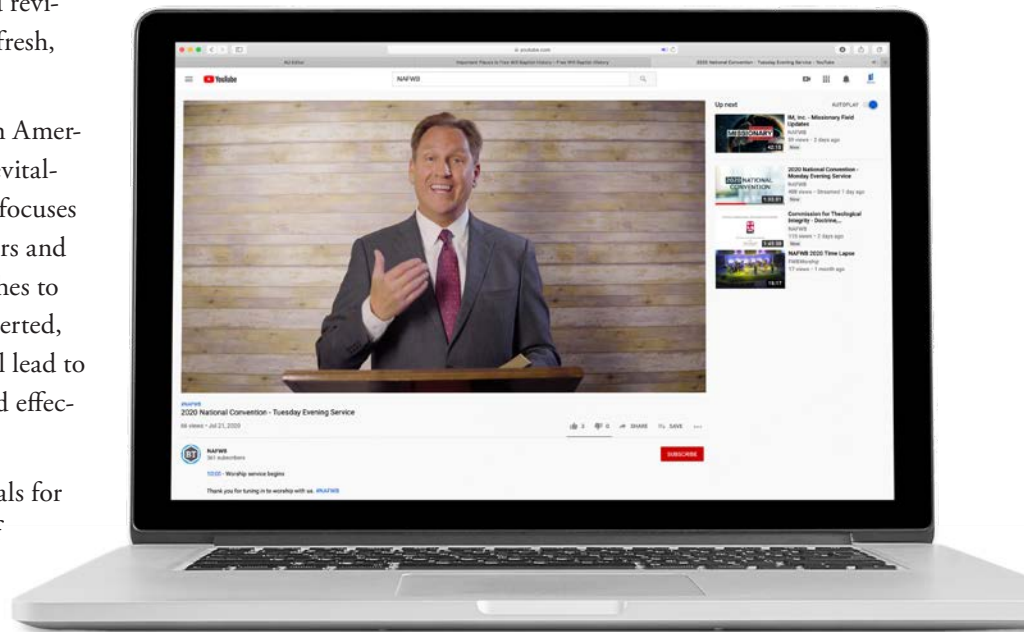
Moody emphasized a unified vision or set of goals for the denomination. After an in-depth analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and

threats (SWOT) for Free Will Baptists, denominational leaders developed the 3 by 30 Plan, focused on three over-arching goals: **Reach** (Acts 1:8); **Train** (Matthew 28:18-20); and **Give** (Luke 16:10; 2 Corinthians 9:6-8).

IM, Inc. Director of Member Care Neil Gilliland, pinch-hitting for General Director Clint Morgan, reminded listeners, according to the last census, 5.5 billion of the 7.8 billion people on earth are unbelievers, and 41.6% of the world's population is completely unreached with the gospel. "With these facts flashing in our minds and stirring our hearts, we must face the stark reality the task is unfinished," he stated. He urged every listener to find his or her place in *finishing* the task and taking the gospel to the ends of the earth.

Gilliland praised the denomination for faithful support in 2019, with near-record giving allowing all but three missionaries to end the year in the black. He celebrated the appointment of 21 new missionary candidates, taking the number of missionary personnel over 100 for the first time in more than two decades. Most important, 2019 saw 950 international professions of faith and 2,087 baptisms.

Gilliland celebrated that IM met all of the organization's 20 by 2020 goals set in 2015. Cash reserves grew to 30%, surpassing the goal of 20%. Monthly donors topped a thousand, surpassing the goal of 963. Missionary personnel grew to 103, beyond the 2015 goal of 94. International believers grew to 35,537, well beyond the goal of a 20% increase, while churches worldwide increased to 845, exploding past the desired 554.



Gilliland announced the following strategic goals for 2025: first, to **Reach** by increasing the number of missionaries from 108 to 125, expanding non-North American believers to 50,000, and increasing the number of international churches to 2,000. Second, to **Train** through short-term missions, involving 500 people annually in the GO GLOBAL program, increasing short-term team members from 200 to 350, and increasing field leadership training programs from eight to 12. Third, to raise **Giving** through increased stewardship training, with 75% of churches giving to IM, the WMO increasing to \$1 million, and national missionaries growing from seven to 20.

“The task may still be unfinished,” Gilliland concluded, “but we are still alive, and we must be about it.”

Free Will Baptist Foundation. Using a line from Charles Dickens’ *A Tale of Two Cities*, Director David Brown described the past year as “the best of times and the worst of times.” He pointed to a record \$11.5 million increase, taking assets to \$84.7 million by December 31, 2019. However, six months later, Foundation assets had fallen to \$79.6 million, a loss of more than \$5 million in the wake of the COVID-19 financial downturn. The pandemic also stopped the department’s successful estate planning ministry “in its tracks.” Based on these trends, Brown offered a projected loss ranging from \$90,000 to \$140,000, leading the department to cut the base earnings rate on Money Management Trusts from 2.9% to 2%.

Brown indicated the regular grant program was set aside due to the pandemic, and the board decided to award grants specifically for emergency operational income. They awarded Welch College \$400,000, Randall House \$100,000, and WNAC \$100,000. He also noted the Foundation extended a \$1.5 million line of credit to Randall House, again due to the impact of COVID-19.

Brown anticipates a return to the grant program once the financial crisis has passed, noting while the department’s budget reflects \$500,000 for grants in 2021, the money will only be awarded if market conditions allow.

North American Ministries (Home Missions).

North American Ministries (NAM) Director David Crowe celebrated 2019 as “the best financial year in our department’s 82-year history.” More than \$4 million in total gifts allowed the department to finish the year \$892,000 in the

black, with the positive financial trends continuing in 2020, despite the pandemic. Crowe recalled his first report to the National Convention included a \$1.4 million deficit and praised the Lord for the \$2.2 million turnaround over six years.

As a result of Free Will Baptist generosity, Crowe noted church planters have the opportunity to be “faithful to the task and preaching repentance, faith, and obedience, winning hundreds of people to Christ.” The ministry currently has 53 church-planting families involved in 85 church plants. This includes six Hispanic families who oversee 54 Hispanic church plants.

Master’s Men continues to spearhead denominational disaster response efforts, along with producing Bible studies for men’s groups, sponsoring sports fellowship, and maintaining and repairing the Ridge Church in New Hampshire.

Free Will Baptist chaplain ministry continues to expand under the direction of former chaplains Terry Austin and Kerry Steedley. NAM currently endorses nine chaplains. The newest, Michael Beatty, recently transitioned from the Air National Guard to the U.S. Army.

Crowe expressed the department’s desire to change their official name from The Board of Home Missions of the National Association of Free Will Baptists, Inc. to Free Will Baptist North American Ministries. This begins the process that will culminate in a vote during the 2021 convention in Memphis.

WNAC. Director Elizabeth Hodges described 2019 as a “season of transition” for her department, as WNAC seeks to broaden the outreach of FWB women’s ministry. Hodges applauded Free Will Baptist women for giving \$493,518 through WNAC in 2019 to missions and ministry causes. She also expressed gratitude for a \$100,000 grant received from FWB Foundation, observing, “With the Foundation grant, our goal is to weather the COVID crisis well while strategically preparing for future ministry.”

These strategic changes include a complete revision of *wnac.org*, with international study resources available in Spanish, with French and Portuguese to follow. *Treasure* magazine has moved online completely, offering downloadable Bible studies for personal and group use. WNAC also created the WNAC app this year to help Free Will Baptist women connect, communicate, and give more easily.

Hodges emphasized the continued importance of the Steward Provision Closet, a \$30,000 ministry in 2019, that continues to meet the needs of church planters and international missionaries. In the past year, the closet met 110 specific missionary needs and provided gifts to the Women of Good News in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. This ongoing friendship between WNAC and the Women of Good News allowed WNAC to be an integral part of the fundraising and completion of the Women's Center, which was dedicated and opened in March.

In 2019, WNAC awarded \$6,000 in scholarships to Abby Hair, Emilee Davis, Debbie Driscoll, Daniel Delgado, and Uruguayan Bible institute students. Director Hodges noted while *Shine!* and *Flourish* conferences have been postponed until 2021 due to COVID-19, WNAC will host an online event August 15. All Free Will Baptist women are encouraged to attend at wnac.org.

"As I reflect on a decade in the office," Hodges concluded, "I stand amazed at all God is doing, has done, and will continue to do through Free Will Baptist women, both here at home and abroad...to Him and Him alone be the glory!"

Board of Retirement. The Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement celebrated 50 years in 2019, and, according to Director John Brummitt, the milestone year was "one for the record books." The board enjoyed 183 new enrollees, contributions totaling more than \$6 million, and significant growth in the institutional investment program, with \$1.8 million in contributions. The board also enjoyed a big year in investments as the continuing bull market pushed participant earnings into the double digits. Brummitt encouraged participants not to view the current downturn in the economy as something to fear, but as an opportunity for significant gains through long-term investing.

The department put greater emphasis on financial training in 2019, sponsoring the Re:invest Conference for ministers and their spouses. The conference was a cooperative effort with all national agencies partnering to provide speakers, resources, and meals.

Brummitt concluded by challenging all Free Will Baptists to begin their retirement savings journey immediately. "The sooner you start saving," he urged, "the easier the work of saving becomes. Our vision is for every Free Will Baptist employee, church, and agency to be prepared for the future ministry God has for them!"

Randall House. Director Ron Hunter enthusiastically showcased the new D6 EveryDay curriculum line, describing it as "the very best curriculum we have produced in our history." The new



SPEAKERS

Monday Evening, July 20
Tim York (TN)

Tuesday Evening, July 21
Eddie Moody (TN)

2021 BUDGETS

Executive Office -	\$834,616
FWB Foundation -	\$2,264,000
Home Missions (includes Master's Men) -	\$5,000,000
IM, Inc. -	\$8,000,000
Retirement -	\$673,700
Randall House -	\$4,637,450
Welch College -	\$8,117,284
WNAC -	\$235,190
Theological Commission -	\$5,200
Historical Commission -	\$5,885
Media Commission -	\$5,308
Music Commission -	\$6,300
Total -	\$29,784,933

Convention Coverage:

Eric Thomsen

Photographer:

Rodney Yerby

2020

CONVENTION AT A GLANCE



ELECTED IN 2020

IM, Inc. 2026

- Janice Banks (TX)
- Rick Cason (GA)
- Jeff Nichols (TN)

Randall House 2026

- Paul Bryant (MS)
- Ryan Giles (OK)
- Rick Taylor (AL)

Welch College 2026

- Jeff Crabtree (ATL-CAN)
- Shiloh Hackett (TN)
- Chris Truett (NC)

WNAC 2026

- Jessica Edwards (TN)
- Tracy Payne (OK)
- Katie Postlewaite (SC)

Retirement 2023

- Mike Gladson (OH),
replacing Jack Daniel, deceased

Theological Commission 2025

- Rodney Holloman (TN)

Historical Commission 2025

- Eric Thomsen (TN)

Music Commission 2025

- Bryan Hughes (NC)

Media Commission 2025

- Jeremy Smith (NC)

General Officers

- Moderator: Tim York (TN)
- Assistant Moderator: William Smith (GA)
- Clerk: Randy Bryant (FL)
- Assistant Clerk: Ernie Lewis (IL)

2020-21 Nominating Committee

- Jeff Blair (OK), Chairman
- Steve Lindsay (AL)
- Rufo Gomez (TN)
- Diana Bryant (FL)
- Wayne Hale (Mid-ATL)
- Terry Motte (OR)
- Terry Pierce (MS)



line continues the D6 emphasis on generational discipleship, combined with innovative methods and resources for pastors and teachers to help their people live out discipleship every day of the week. “Discipleship is not a Sunday event,” Hunter affirmed. “It is a daily commitment.” EveryDay curriculum will premiere the first Sunday in September and is available for purchase at randall-house.com.

Hunter conceded the COVID-19 pandemic created profound challenges for the department, especially the launch of the curriculum line, but also in the postponement of the D6 Conference until spring 2021 and the cancelation of the National Convention and Vertical Three conferences.

On the heels of an \$182,747 deficit in 2019, these continuing financial impacts from the pandemic have been significant. They include a \$200,000 loss during the summer curriculum cycle; a \$370,000 loss from the cancelation of Vertical Three and the National Convention (without adjusting for expenses); and a loss of \$30,000 in convention sales, for a total financial hit of \$600,000. Hunter expressed deep appreciation for a \$100,000 grant from Free Will Baptist Foundation that helped the department bridge these setbacks.

To address these financial challenges, Randall House reduced budgetary expenses by \$180,000, received a PPP (Payback Protection Program) loan from the federal Small Business Administration, and reduced staff. Hunter described these changes as “adaptive leadership,” not changing the mission of the organization but changing methods and reallocating resources to continue the mission effectively.

Welch College. After enjoying “a 36-year high enrollment, the largest budget in the college’s history, solid gains in mission fulfillment, and the addition of several new programs,” during the 2019-20 academic year, President Matt Pinson acknowledged the COVID-19 pandemic hit the college hard. Still, he offered a positive outlook regarding the future: “In the midst of this storm, we sense God’s blessing, and we are poised for survival and for greater growth than ever when the storm passes by.”



The college was especially hard-hit in finances, producing the worst deficit in the history of the institution. Pinson traced this deficit to three particular factors: refunding student room and board, decreased donations after the suspension of normal fundraising, and unbudgeted expenses related directly to COVID-19. He did point out a “silver lining”—most of the deficits relate directly to depreciation, thus creating non-cash expenses.

The president thanked FWB Foundation for a \$400,000 grant and expressed gratitude for receiving a (mostly forgivable) PPP loan of \$785,000. These, along with a \$1.5 million emergency line of credit from the CELF program at North American Ministries will help the college weather the financial crisis. Still, Pinson urged supporters of the school to continue giving faithfully during this difficult time. He reminded listeners a Coronavirus Student Relief Fund has been established to help students impacted financially by the virus.

The college anticipates a quick rebound coming out of the crisis, based on strong growth in enrollment at a time when most private higher education is plateaued or declining. “We came into this crisis strong,” Pinson affirmed, “and when this crisis is over, we will be able to come back stronger than ever.”

He challenged listeners to pray faithfully for the school, faculty, current students, prospective students, donors, and potential donors.

Historical Commission. The commission thanked a number of states and individuals for substantial donations to the Historical Collection in 2019 and early 2020. The organization continues its work on the Minutes Project, scanning and posting national, state, and regional association minutes to FWBHistory.com. Two recently published books from chairman Robert E. Picirilli are recommended: *Free Will Baptist History: Exploring Our Origins and Identity*

and *Little Known Chapters in Free Will Baptist History*. Both volumes are available for purchase at randallhouse.com.

Media Commission. Marc Neppl marked 2020 as the 11th year the Media Commission has produced live streaming for the National Convention. During the past decade, 109,000 viewers tuned in worldwide to join services. Since 2010, streaming has expanded to include business sessions and Spanish translation. Marc noted the COVID-19 pandemic pushed churches to embrace new technology, expanding the role for many individuals in Free Will Baptist congregations. With this in mind, the Media Commission created a private Facebook page that allows church technology teams to interact and share guidance with one another. At the conclusion of the Media Commission report, Moderator Tim York offered gratitude on behalf of the denomination for the ongoing efforts of the commission.

Music Commission. Chairman Doug Little celebrated the significant advances made on the new commission website (fwbworship.com), which launched in late July. He noted 94% of Free Will Baptist music leaders are either volunteers or part time, based on recent surveys by the Denominational Research Committee. This statistic drives everything the commission does, including the design and content of the new website. The site is designed to “help everyday people become better worship leaders,” offering practical resources, training, interaction, and inspiration.

Commission for Theological Integrity. Chairman Matt Pinson noted the 60-year history of the commission’s role in preserving the theological integrity of the denomination. He stressed the importance of “deeper conversations” with rising generations regarding the challenging questions of the Faith. With this in mind, he encouraged listeners to attend the annual Theological Symposium, October 5-6, at Welch College in Nashville, Tennessee, and invited listeners to watch the online panel discussion on denominational identity at nafwb.org/seminars.

As the business meeting drew to a close, with both humor and emotion, Moderator Tim York told the General Board: “We certainly introduced our new executive secretary in an unusual way! But then again...for such a time as this. He was uniquely qualified to direct us in this time when we desperately needed him. God has given us great grace.”

For such a time as this... **ONE**

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truth & peace

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THAT HE WOULD NOT
DEFILE HIMSELF...".

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Thom Rainer to Keynote 2020 Leadership Conference



Nashville, TN—The 2020 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference returns to Nashville Airport Marriott December 7-8. Pastors, church leaders, and denominational leaders from across the country will gather to explore the theme “Refresh,” with an emphasis on church health.

Monday and Tuesday evening keynote sessions will feature Dr. Thom S. Rainer, founder and CEO of Church Answers, an online community and resource for church leaders. Prior to founding Church Answers, Rainer served as president and CEO of Life-Way Christian Resources and was the founding dean of the Billy Gra-

ham School of Missions and Evangelism at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Rainer is a 1977 graduate of University of Alabama and earned M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has authored more than two dozen books, including *I Am a Church Member*, *Breakout Churches*, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, *Simple Church*, *Raising Dad*, *The Millennials*, *Simple Life*, *Essential Church*, and *Who Moved My Pulpit?*

“Dr. Rainer is regarded as one of the leading voices in church health and revitalization,” notes Executive Secretary Eddie Moody. “We are glad to

welcome him to the Leadership Conference, and we encourage all Free Will Baptists to take advantage of this opportunity to hear him speak.”

On Tuesday, a broad slate of training seminars will offer practical instruction on a number of topics important to building and maintaining a healthy church. Throughout the two-day conference, attendees will renew friendships during banquet-styled meals and enjoy their stay in the award-winning Marriott property.

Find regular updates on the conference at www.nafwb.org/leadershipconference.

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

MONDAY, DECEMBER 7

- 3:00 p.m. Registration
- 5:30 Supper
- 7:00 Evening Session
Speaker: Dr. Thom Rainer
- 8:30 Refreshments

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8

- 8:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 9:00 Workshop Block 1
- 10:00 Workshop Block 2
- 10:50 Refreshment Break
- 11:10 Workshop Block 3
- Noon Lunch
- 1:30 p.m. Workshop Block 4
- 2:00 Nominating Committee Meeting
- 2:30 Workshop Block 5
- 3:30 Workshop Block 6
- 5:30 Supper
- 7:00 Evening Session
Speaker: Dr. Thom Rainer
- 8:30 Refreshments

TUESDAY WORKSHOPS

Block One - 9:00 am

- Best Practices for Better Boards: Five Best Practices and Five Worst Habits (Ron Hunter)
- Gospel Unity in Cultural Diversity: A Biblical Approach for the 21st Century American Church (Jose L. Rodríguez)
- Can Churches Do Bible Clubs in Public Schools? (Jeff Nichols)

Block Two - 10:00 am

- Creating a Strong Social Media Strategy for Your Church (Lena Wooten and Lauren Biggs)
- Implementing Discipleship Groups (Jeff Jones)
- Our Skeptical New Generations: Revitalizing the Church as a Place for Wonder (Pedro García and Aaron Pontious)

Block Three - 11:00 am

- Revitalizing Associations (Matt Pinson)

- Changing Our Tone, Not Our Tune: Moving the Church Past the Rhetoric to Relevant Pro-Life Ministry (Jim McComas)
- Women in the Church: A Free Will Baptist Perspective (Christa Thornsbury)

Block Four - 1:30 pm

- How to Recruit Volunteers (Dr. Brad Ransom)
- Faith and Science: The Responsibility of the Church in the 21st Century (Dr. Ian Hawkins)

Block Five - 2:30 pm

- Creating a Wow! Factor for Your Church (Dr. Brad Ransom)
- Off the High Dive: Beyond the Basics of Church Promotion (Eric Thomsen)

Block Six - 3:30

- Generating Momentum (Dr. Brad Ransom)
- Three for Thirty (Dr. Eddie Moody)

Who Is My Neighbor?



BY EDDIE MOODY

As the November election draws closer, the U.S. is feeling a little less neighborly each day. It does not help to hear constantly: “This is the most important election in our nation’s history.” This division is not new. In 2018, one political analyst claimed the U.S. was more divided than at any time since the Civil War.¹ The Associated Press highlighted these divisions in 2016, noting the rifts go far deeper than politics.² What has emerged is a nation split over everything imaginable. We even heard strong disagreements about whether to wear masks during COVID-19.³ How should the Christian respond to this deep-set division?

Try to be a neighbor. I remember hearing my childhood pastor David Paramore say, “Find out what offends a person and tread lightly.” He encouraged people to avoid topics offensive to others. Some readers may regard this as compromise, but it sounds more like the practicality of Romans 12:18 to me. This mentality helped David Paramore become an effective soul winner.

1 *The Hill*. Analyst says U.S. most divided since the Civil War: <https://thehill.com/hilltv/what-americas-thinking/409718-analyst-says-the-us-is-the-most-divided-since-the-civil-war>

2 The Associated Press. *Divided America: The Fracturing of a Nation*, 2016.

3 *News Break*. Across nation, masks are the latest political, cultural divide: <https://www.newsbreak.com/news/00n1CKzp/across-nation-masks-are-the-latest-political-cultural-divide>

Today, this attitude might result in being careful about social media posts, or how we talk about politics from the pulpit. What is our goal when we speak or share or post? To promote the gospel! Do our words *propel* people to the gospel or *repel* them from the gospel? Sometimes, our statements may be popular with those culturally similar to us but push away those who differ.


We must look to the examples of good neighbors in Scripture. Consider Daniel and Nebuchadnezzar. Daniel had good reason to resent this king (2 Chronicles 36:6-21) but was clearly concerned for his well-being (Daniel 4:19). Jesus pointed to the example of the Good Samaritan, different in many ways from the wounded traveler. In the end, he proved to be more of a neighbor (Luke 10:36) than those with a similar background (Luke 10:31-32). If we are to fulfill the Great Commission, we must do likewise. What have we really accomplished if we only get along with people who look, act, and think like us (Matthew 5:43-48)?

Sometimes, we are not as neighborly as we think. For example, in *Becoming a Welcoming Church*, Thom Rainer’s research reveals many church visitors encounter an abundance of “holy huddles.”⁴ While churches thought they were friendly,

4 Thom Rainer. *Becoming a Welcoming Church*. Nashville: B&H Publishing, 2018.

in reality, they were friendly only to one another while leaving out those they did not know. We must be intentional about being neighborly.

Model neighborliness. The 2018 feature about Fred Rogers, *Won’t You Be My Neighbor?* brought in \$22.8 million. Not bad for a documentary. Last year, another film about Fred Rogers, *A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood*, starring Tom Hanks, brought in \$67.8 million. It sounds like our culture has a hunger for neighborliness!

In 2018, George Barna released a study indicating Americans are friendly but lonely. The majority (62%) of adults had two to five close friends, but one in five regularly feels lonely.⁵ The church can help fill this longing by modeling neighborliness. Jesus prayed Christians would be one, as He is one with the Trinity (John 17:21-22). When we reflect that unity—when we are good neighbors—we will point people to Him (John 17:23). 

Eddie Moody

Executive Secretary,
National
Association of
Free Will Baptists



5 George Barna. U.S. Adults Have Few Friends and They’re Mostly Alike: <https://www.barna.com/research/friends-loneliness/>



Legacy of Learning...

After pastoring for several years, Harrold Harrison answered the call to denominational service, serving the Sunday School department (later Randall House) for 27 years. He traveled constantly, promoting Sunday School, conducting workshops, and launching Bible institutes. Harrison still found time to write books and curriculum, edit, direct teacher training, and serve as assistant director. During an interview with *ONE Magazine*, Harrold pointed to three shelves of double-stacked books and said, "This is my most valuable contribution. When I came, we did not have a single book in print by Free Will Baptist authors. My most rewarding service has been encouraging Free Will Baptists to write."

Two landmark projects mark Harrison's career: the 1978 *Who's Who Among Free Will Baptists* and the *Randall House Bible Commentary* series, completed shortly before his death.

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