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# Tools

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

## **YARD SALE - Grate Guy's Stuff Cheep!**

The large, hand painted sign caught my eye as I whizzed down the highway toward home one blazing summer afternoon. What yard sale buff in his right mind could pass up a fantastic offering like that? Not this guy.

After a quick glance in the mirror, I made a sharp U-turn toward the promised sale. I pulled up at an unpainted farmhouse. Boxes and crates of all shapes and sizes lined the drive, along with farm tools, pots and plates, and worn and broken furniture.

A sleepy group slouched in the shade of a sprawling oak, and as I opened my car door, the fragrance of sweet pipe tobacco settled gently on my senses.

"Gotcha some good stuff here," one of the shadowy figures called lazily in my direction. "And I need it gone."

With a friendly wave, I turned my attention to the "grate guy's stuff." To my surprise, the boxes and crates indeed held a nice collection of vintage high-quality tools—everything from mallets, planers, and rasps to ratchets, bits, and wrenches. The hodgepodge reminded me of my grandfather's shed.

Since the shade sitters didn't appear to have much business, I decided it

wouldn't hurt to wrangle a bargain. "How much for *all* the tools?"

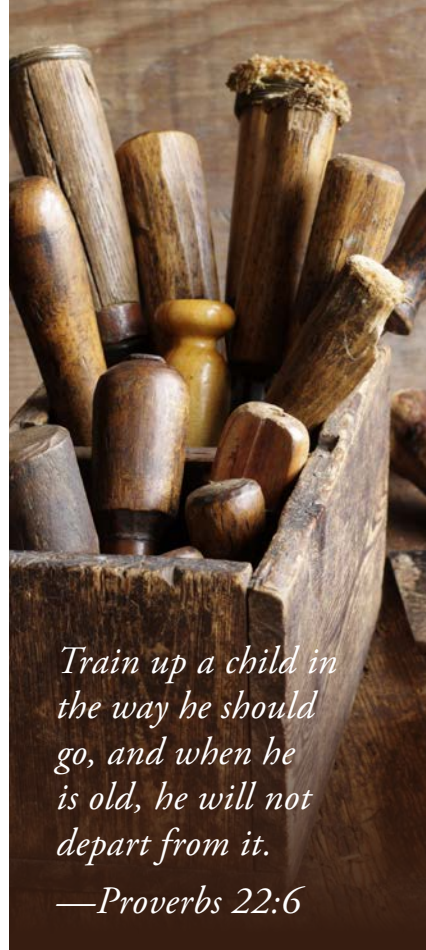
"Aww, I don't know," replied the voice from the shade. "How about 30 bucks?"

My heart leaped. What a fantastic deal! But the experienced "picker" in me replied casually, "How about \$25?"

Crates soon filled every nook and cranny of my tiny sedan, even with the back seats down and the passenger side filled. An hour later, at a family cookout, I proudly popped open my hatchback to show off the "new" tools to my dad and father-in-law. They responded like kids in a candy store, incredulous over the great deal, happily poking through the piles of worn tools to point out the ones they owned themselves. In moments, we were swapping stories about our favorite tools and the best way to use them.

In years to come, I'm sure that conversation at the back of my car will become a treasured memory. If I had paid \$100 for the tools, those moments would have been worth every penny.

Tools are important. I'm thankful for my dad and other (extraordinarily) patient men who taught me to use them well, from refinishing furniture or repairing a toilet to changing the oil.



*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.*

—Proverbs 22:6

Good tools are also crucial for life, especially our faith. Deuteronomy 6 makes it clear parents are to equip their children with tools to build a strong and growing faith. This requires more than an hour or two on Sundays. It must be part of everyday life—every waking moment. I pray those important conversations about the faith will someday become treasured memories—not only for us but for our children and their children as well.

Today, I am thankful for my parents and many other patient influences who equipped me to build a living faith. Tools...for life. **ONE**

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

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Thank you for spotlighting some of our Free Will Baptist “heroes” in your latest First Glimpse column. The list is endless, I am sure, but thank you for singling out my husband Sandy Goodfellow. Sandy has been MY hero for over 53 years. He is one of the most uniquely wonderful men I know—not very talkative, but if you pick a subject he enjoys, he finds his voice and his knowledge is astounding. And, he can do just about anything! From personal experience, if he loves you, he loves you DEEPLY. And, if you are blessed enough

to have him for a good friend, he “sticketh closer than a brother.” Because he is so intelligent about so many things, you might think he would be arrogant. But he is the most humble man I know and never wants the spotlight. In his usual way, when I read what you wrote, his response was “Mmm.” He is simply not impressed with himself. As you can tell, I think he is mighty special. Thank you again for recognizing what I have known for so long.

—*Dari Goodfellow, Phoenix, AZ*



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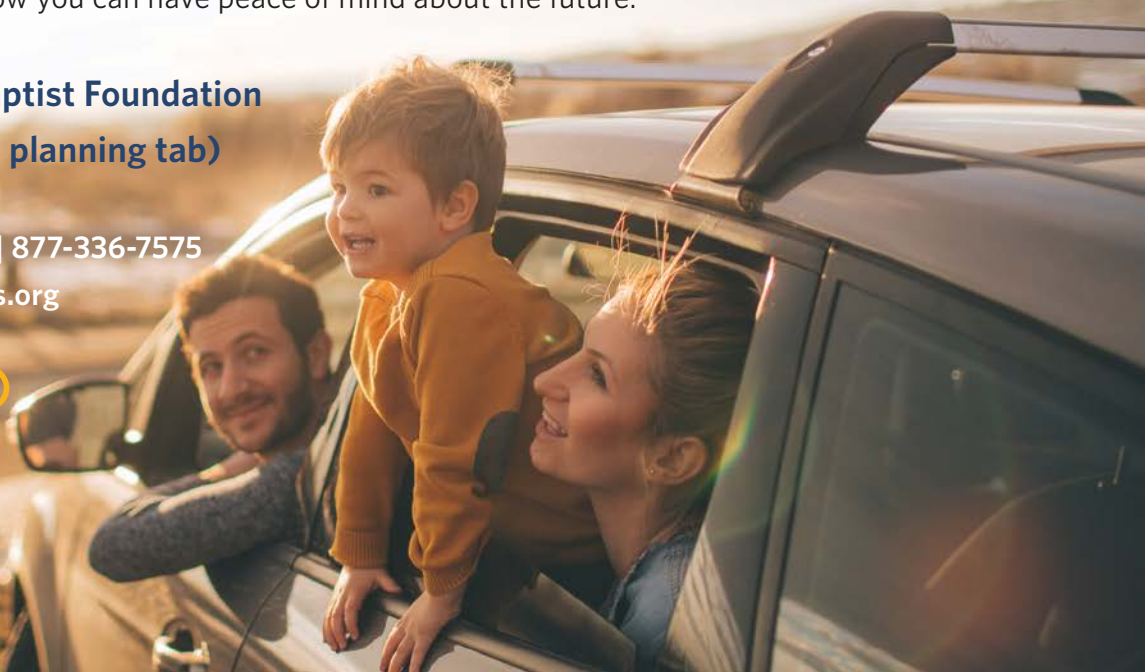
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**WHO'S**  
*Minding*  
*the*  
**KIDS?**

BY JUDY COMBS PUCKETT



*So, what's the big deal?* I'm concerned about the interaction (or the lack of it) between children and their parents. The popularity and convenience of phones, iPads™, iPods™, headphones, gaming, and other technology has increased steadily over the past few years, resulting in an explosion of information at our fingertips. Information overload is stealing precious minutes, even hours, of “face time” from parents and their children.

If you are reading this article in a hard copy magazine, you're probably not the person who needs it most. You are likely a reader who does not receive 90% of news and information through email, social media, online blogs, and cell phone alerts.

You may not have young children, but you may be a concerned grandparent or relative who sees this trend developing in your own family. Perhaps you have the ability to influence parents of young children, or perhaps you need to avoid finding yourself in the same trap.

The human isolation factor is growing exponentially because all of us—parents, grandparents, friends, and children alike—are becoming more accustomed to a constant barrage of ideas, pictures, information, entertainment, and news on screen. Screen time, as opposed to “face” time, has reached an all-time high, and relationships are suffering as a result.

A 2015 study by the journal *Pediatrics* on the impact of cell phone usage researched the interaction between family members in restaurants and found children of parents constantly engrossed in their phones were most likely to act out. Even more troubling, other children seemed to accept this lack of attention and quietly entertained themselves, suggesting this had become the normal practice of their family. Observations recorded in 55 situations where children ages ten and under were eating with parents in fast-food restaurants showed 73% of adults used a mobile device during the meal, and most were absorbed or preoccupied by gadgets rather than their kids.

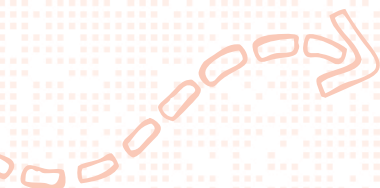
In the analysis of the study, Dr. Jenny Radesky, who specializes in developmental behavioral pediatrics at Boston

Medical Center, observed that caregivers highly absorbed in their devices had more negative and less engaged interactions with children. A third of adults observed were on their phones continuously during their meals. When interrupted by their children, they tended to react with anger or irritation—ignoring, scolding, even getting physical with the children. One mother even kicked her child beneath the table.

But parents are not the only ones guilty of excessive screen time. Many children cannot sit still for more than a few moments without access to games and entertainment on their mobile devices. We have trained children to be constantly engaged and/or entertained by technology rather than training them to observe people, activities, and the world around them.

Dr. Manny Alvarez, medical consultant for Fox News, notes, “Humans are really getting addicted to all this technology, and it is destroying the fabric of the family, whether we like it or not.” Dr. Alvarez observed a child's vocabulary suffers without regular conversation with parents. They learn much, especially during the first year of life, by watching and listening to parents speak to them in complete sentences, teaching, training, explaining, directing, and helping them to observe voice inflections, emotions, facial expressions, and meaning. If they are not connected verbally and visually while hearing parents speak, they do not bond as well emotionally. They hear words but are socially disengaged with the speaker.

We don't have to wait for the future to observe the negative impact technology has on the family. The effects of social disengagement are not limited to the parent-child relationship. It has become a common problem in marriage as well. Look around the next time you are at



## *Is it possible we are replacing people with phones? Replacing serious relationships with Siri? Replacing scriptures with a screen? Replacing God with gaming?*

a restaurant, park, mall, ballgame, or some other public space. Observe how many people are engaged with a device rather than other people.

In addition to checking email, talking, and texting, many people feel they must post on social media outlets to let “friends” know where they are and what they are doing, sharing pictures of what they are eating, a concert or play they are enjoying, or even the church service they are attending. When they experience something wonderful, they must “share” that experience immediately. Restaurants, stores, event venues, and even some churches encourage this, and have learned to use it as a free promotional tool. Sadly, that same experience may not be shared with others enjoying the event in person.

It is understandable we have become addicted to our phones since this single device has become a virtual library and more. The smart phone has transformed American culture. It has replaced maps, phone books, dictionaries, and encyclopedias and provides instant games, music, movies, literature—even GPS mapping. It has become so much a part of our culture that 66% of adults surveyed are afraid to be separated from their cell phones.

If you think you are not guilty, ask yourself a few questions:

- How long can I go without turning on my cell phone?
- How much time do I spend in screen time versus face time?
- How much screen time is actually productive?
- How much do I depend on my screen time to enhance my social standing or to make me appear hip, popular, and tech savvy?

Is it possible we are replacing people with phones?  
Replacing serious relationships with Siri? Replacing scrip-

tures with a screen? Replacing God with gaming?

No one can determine these things for you, but we should confront ourselves with an honest evaluation of our own patterns. These steps may be helpful for those who need to cut screen time:

1. Set ground rules about using cell phones in family settings, such as mealtimes, travel time, and holidays.
2. Eliminate cell phones while eating out with the family, on dates, and with friends.
3. Take a regular “vacation” from screens for a few hours, a day, or even longer periods to help gauge the personal level of addiction.
4. Log, compare, and discuss the number of texts, posts, videos, etc. each family member accesses daily. (We will probably be appalled by the number.)
5. Plan (purposefully) family events that require everyone to participate without devices: board games, hiking, picnics, bike rides, outdoor sports (horseshoes, corn hole, croquet, etc.).
6. Spend deliberate time discussing issues, events, or activities with your children, spouse, or parents.

With so many activities available to most families, face time is already limited, so even a little time carved out for those you love most is meaningful. We demonstrate lack of respect for others when we put our phone or other technology first. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Judith Puckett is a happily married freelance writer with kids and grandkids. She loves writing, surfing the Web, reading, photography, antiques, genealogy, and spending time with friends. Find her book *Living by Faith* on Amazon.com.

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# There's a Story in All of Us

## WILL YOU TELL YOURS?

Imagine finding the journal of a famous person. How would you feel thumbing through the journals of George Washington, Thomas Aquinas, or Sacagawea? I had the privilege to see and read a few pages from the original journals of Winston Churchill, William Carey, and some original pages from A. A. Milne's *Winnie the Pooh*. While I cherish those memories, I would trade all those for a few pages written by my grandfather or parents. I interviewed my grandfather several years before he died, but now I have more important questions to ask, yet will never know the answers. I wish I had asked, and I wish he had journaled.

Journaling provides parents (and grandparents) with a method to capture the attention of their kids. As adult children inherit or receive a journal written by their parents, they will pore over the pages. Famed baseball player Daryl Strawberry found his mother's journal under her mattress after her death. He read prayers she had written—not about his baseball career—but that he would find Christ. Daryl did find Christ. While his mom did not see this occur in her lifetime, her journal was a catalyst to his change. Regardless of your relationship now, a journal can bridge hearts and mend wounds.

Most children have a built-in desire to know more about their parents. Use that emotional attraction to tell a story that also speaks into their lives. Claim the old adage, "There's a story in all of us." While we may not be Churchill, Parks, or Carey, one audience desperately needs to read your story: your kids and grandkids. Regardless of their age or how much they feign disinterest, they are eager to hear more details. The older they get, the more they care.

So, how do you go about telling your story? Suppose you sit down behind the computer screen. In that case, writer's block becomes your best friend or his cousin, verbosity, the enemy of readability. And buying a thick, blank journal intimidates the writer as much as the blinking computer cursor.

What should you do? Consider buying a journal with question prompts to help tell your story. Great journals arrange questions intentionally and creatively to help you frame what you should say and prompt critical details to make it enjoyable to read. Your kids want to read the trivial and the serious, as the curiosity of the frivolous takes them to the powerful words of wisdom you get to impart. Recently, Randall House and D6 Family ministries released a unique journal that tells your story alongside the story of your child (or grandchild). The left side pages provide questions to help your story come to life, and on the right, to share similar insights from your memories about your child.

Through the skinned knees, broken glasses, and broken hearts, your written words will mend more wounds than you can imagine. Many kids come to find Christ or discover a more serious relationship with Him after Mom and Dad are gone. Journals often contribute to their transformation. Historians all regret that Martha Washington burned all the letters she and George exchanged throughout their lives. How much history did we lose in that one act? How much will your kids lose if you don't write? Leave them an heirloom that speaks beyond your earthly life in a way they will listen.

**About You, About Me: Generational Legacy Journal** provides five sections from curiosities to milestones, drawing readers in as they learn from your memories, insights, and encouragement. Along the way, they intentionally bump into Scripture and your faith values in non-threatening ways. Your kids and grandkids will revisit these pages often, creating a legacy of faith.

To see a sample, go to [store.randallhouse.com/product/about-you-about-me](https://store.randallhouse.com/product/about-you-about-me).





# The PRO-LIFE *Ethic* of ORPHAN CARE

BY MATTHEW STEVEN BRACEY

Free Will Baptists subscribe to the *Faith and Practices of Free Will Baptists*. As the name implies, our treatise follows the traditional dual concern for *orthodoxy* (right doctrine or belief) and *orthopraxy* (right practice). The latter sometimes goes by the name *ethics*. Often, when we hear the word *ethics*, we think of hot-button issues: abortion, biotechnology, capital punishment, sexuality, and war, among others. Our *Treatise* and annual resolutions have addressed some of these topics and others like them ([nafwb.org/treatise](http://nafwb.org/treatise)).

However, *ethics* goes beyond controversial issues to include personal sanctification. For that reason, Carl F. H. Henry authored the superb volume *Christian Personal Ethics* and Leroy Forlines penned the excellent *Biblical Ethics*. Ethics covers everything from the individual Christian life to the biggest questions of our day.

Orphan care and adoption is one area of ethics where Free Will Baptists could and should increasingly invest. We already take this matter seriously (as we will see), and thank God for that! But, I believe we could do even more in our denominational subculture, especially given how firm a grip the culture of death (abortion) has on our country.



## A PRO-LIFE ETHIC

Christian commitment to an ethic of life is based, ultimately, in allegiance to the God of life. In the beginning, God created life from the void—plant life, animal life, and human life—to flourish (Genesis 1:28), and He called it very good (Genesis 1:31). Thus, an ethic of life does not refer simply to the *absence* of death but more specifically, the *presence* of human flourishing. However, man, by his sin, introduced death into the created order (Genesis 3:19). That was never God’s will.

God redeemed man from death to life (Ephesians 2:1, 5; Colossians 2:12-13). Because life is more than mere existence, redemption also concerns a flourishing life. Additionally, Jesus founded the Church, comprised of the redeemed, to bear witness to the hope of God’s redemption. Consequently, the redeemed—the Church—testify to an ethic of flourishing life, because God is a God of flourishing life.

Orphan care arises from this ethic of life based in the doctrines of creation and redemption. Yet, often when we hear *pro-life*, we think only about abortion. Undoubtedly, abortion is an important issue in itself. But a pro-life ethic is broader than abortion. (As an aside, we certainly could gracefully counter by opening our arms and receiving orphaned children into our homes.)

## THEOLOGICAL PRINCIPLES FOR ORPHAN CARE

An *orphan*, meaning “bereaved,” refers to someone deprived of parents. From the beginning, God’s plan included children, as He directed humanity to multiply and fill the earth (Genesis 1:28), but it did not include orphans. Instead, man introduced orphanhood through sin. What is more, orphanhood does not refer simply to a domestic reality but also to a spiritual reality. Because all men sin (2 Chronicles 6:36; Romans 5:12), all people are orphans, since sin separates them from their Creator, their Father. Consequently, orphanhood is the fundamental human condition.

But God loved us orphans and offered to adopt us, in Christ by the Holy Spirit, into His family. The Scriptures testify to this rich theology of adoption, indicating God

predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:5). Because Christians have received a spirit of adoption as sons we cry out, “Abba! Father!” or more literally, “Daddy!” or “Papa!” (Romans 8:15b). Thus, adoption is the divine solution to the orphanhood of man.

The biblical authors describe the gospel in many ways: economic analogies (redemption), familial analogies (adoption), legal analogies (justification), religious analogies (propitiation), and many more. While each picture testifies to different aspects of salvation, adoption brings to mind images of God as Father, the Church as family and household, and Christians as brothers and sisters. Such imagery offers great hope and encouragement amid a discouraging world.

Just as orphanhood is a sad spiritual reality, it is also a sad domestic reality. Just as God cares for the spiritually disenfranchised, He cares for physical orphans: “Thou art the helper of the fatherless” (Psalm 10:14b); “Leave thy fatherless children, and I will preserve them alive” (Jeremiah 49:11a); and “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction” (James 1:27). Additionally, the practice of adoption even figures into the earthly life of Jesus Himself, as Joseph, the husband of Mary, cared for Jesus as his own (Matthew 1:18–25).

## PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ORPHAN CARE

What do these truths mean for Christians, both individually and as Free Will Baptists? They mean we take orphan care seriously, because we take God seriously. As we have seen, this pro-life ethic arises from the gospel itself. Yet it remains unfamiliar to many of us, perhaps because it is outside our common experience. Nevertheless, God pursues the care of those caught in spiritual and familial destitution. Consequently, so should we.

Challenges may arise. For example, those who consider adoption sometimes express concern they might not love an adopted child as much as they would love a biological child. Undoubtedly, some will show an ungodly favoritism, but that is not limited to adopted children (biblically, consider Isaac’s favoritism toward Esau and

Rebekah toward Jacob). Favoritism is not the Christian way. God's family includes Hebrews *and* Gentiles, and He does not love one any less than the other.

Instead, God "grafted" Gentiles into the family, giving them the same inheritance as Hebrews (Romans 11:17–24; Galatians 3:26–4:7; Ephesians 1:11, 14). All Christians are Abraham's children by faith in God's promises (Romans 4:16; Galatians 3:7). As a result, as we consider our ethic of life, the Spirit of Christ must animate how we view adoption, and orphan care more generally, rather than the spirit of this present evil age (Galatians 1:4).

Undoubtedly, many other challenges arise—personal, logistical, financial, etc. While space does not permit exploring all the barriers to adoption, many helpful resources exist to address them. Consider Russell Moore's *Adopted for Life* or consult resources from helpful organizations, such as Franklin, Tennessee-based Show Hope, which exists to "care for orphans by engaging the Church and reducing barriers to adoption."

A number of Free Will Baptist ministries give attention to the pro-life ethic of orphan care. FWB Family Ministries (fwbm.com), with facilities in Tennessee, Virginia, and Arkansas, works not only with orphans but also with pregnant teens and young women, infants, toddlers, adolescents, teens, senior citizens, and families. Alabama FWB Children's Home (fwbhome.org) strives to "provide a loving, Christian home to children hurting or struggling with life's challenges or troubled domestic situations." Harvest Child Care Ministries (harvestccm.org) in Virginia provides "abused, neglected, abandoned, or troubled children with a healthy home environment, caring parents, and a wholesome family life."

I am deeply grateful for the work Free Will Baptists are doing in orphan care. However, I believe we can do more. Orphan care occurs in all kinds of ways: prayer, volunteering, financial support of individuals and or-

## *Adoption* BRINGS TO MIND IMAGES OF GOD AS FATHER, THE CHURCH AS FAMILY AND HOUSEHOLD, AND CHRISTIANS AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS.

ganizations, spiritual witness, fostering, adoption, and more. I believe God calls some to volunteer, calls others to support an organization or family engaged in this work financially, and calls still others to adopt or foster (obviously a big decision).

These important opportunities are not limited to the infertile. Scripture offers this ethic to the whole church. Numerous families have gone down these roads, even after bearing biological children. And, every Christian can pray for people whom God has called to walk these paths.

I am grateful to be the beneficiary of this pro-life ethic. Although my biological mother raised me, my biological father did not; in fact, I have never met him. Instead, the person

I affectionately called "Daddy" was my adoptive father. *Bracey* is my adopted name. In life, and even in death, he treated me as his own, just as he did my two sisters (his biological daughters). He may not have realized it, but my father exemplified this rich, pro-life ethic throughout his life, and my life has become a testament to the power of this ethic.

Indeed, orphan care is a beautiful picture of the gospel, and I recommend it to all who, through grace, are the adopted sons and daughters of God (2 Corinthians 6:18). **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Matthew Bracey 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.

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# WHAT IS DISCIPLESHIP?

BY MIKE TRIMBLE

Settling on an item's definition is one thing, understanding its value is truly another. Take something as simple as a biscuit. It has several definitions, ranging from “a small, typically round cake of bread leavened with baking powder, baking soda, or sometimes yeast” to “any of various hard or crisp dry baked products.” Yet, when my grandma made them, I defined biscuits as “pure joy.” I put great value on her “round cake of bread leavened with baking powder.” When we experience the value of something it becomes much more than its definition.

Trying to settle on a definition of discipleship is like trying to settle on a definition for a biscuit. Discipleship can be defined as “spreading the doctrines of a teacher,” being a “dedicated follower of Jesus Christ,” “learning from Jesus to do the will of God,” or simply, “following Jesus.” These are all ingredients of discipleship and may suffice, but they do not speak to the *value* of discipleship.

Matthew 28:19 gives every follower of Christ the command to “go and make disciples.” We have heard this preached often, read about it over and over again, invoking an understanding of it, yet with little more emotion than the earlier definitions of a biscuit. The problem is, we know it, but we do not value it enough to experience it. A vast difference exists between a definition and a value. Practically, a *definition* is how culture commonly describes a thing. *Value* deals with the importance and priority you give it.

The value of discipleship is revealed when someone comes alongside others to help them find and increase their faith in Christ for the purpose of helping them build a strong biblical foundation, so they grow in maturity, understanding, and wisdom in their faith, so they can then disciple and lead others to Christ. Admittedly, this long definition would not make a good tweet. However, the value is huge for the person who discipled the new believer and for the new believer to learn to disciple others.

We must place importance and priority on discipleship. Dietrich Bonhoeffer stated, “Christianity without discipleship is always Christianity without Christ.” The value we place on discipleship must be reflected in many places, but it certainly must be demonstrated in the home. The home is the best and most effective place to start. When we intentionally start with discipleship at home, it has the power to change a life and a culture.

The greatest gift a church can receive is to have a group of families who take their responsibilities with such Christian seriousness that they are willing to completely alter their lifestyle to raise up disciples for Jesus Christ.

—Abraham Kuyper

Abraham Kuyper isn't a household name. He lived in the Netherlands in the late 1800s and early 1900s. He was a pastor, journalist, newspaper founder, professor, university founder, parliament member, and Prime Minister. He once wrote, "The greatest gift a church can receive is to

have a group of families who take their responsibilities with such Christian seriousness that they are willing to completely alter their lifestyle to raise up disciples for Jesus Christ."

Family discipleship should be both casual and intentional between husband and wife, and when children come into the home, there is a Christian and non-Christian dynamic which enters the home. In *Family Shepherds: Calling and Equipping Men to Lead Their Home*, Voddie Bau-

cham, Jr., clarifies family discipleship: "Discipling our children is not about teaching them to behave in a way that won't embarrass us. We're working toward something much more important than that. We're actually raising our children with a view toward leading them to trust and to follow Christ."

Deuteronomy 6:1-2 indicates the *intentional* aspect of family discipleship. *D6 Everyday At-Home Bundles* from Randall House are a great tool to assist with intentionally discipling your children in your own home. For about the cost of a Chick-fil-A™ meal, you can resource discipleship needs for your family. Our church provides these bundles for every interested family

in the church. We have it addressed and sent directly to the children. They look forward to it, love it, and it gives them ownership of it. It is a wonderful tool to help with family discipleship.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 indicates a *casual* component to family discipleship, looking for and embracing teachable faith moments so your kids will embrace and live out their faith. So, as you talk to your spouse, do household chores, handle stress, go to the store, have family conversations, play, serve one another, make biscuits...as parents you are looking to capture these moments to help disciple the next generation. This will, in turn, affect the next generation for Christ.

Bruner and Stroope wrote about what constitutes parenting success in *It Starts at Home*: "Those blessed with the gift of children and grandchildren are called to inspire and nurture Christian faith and godly character in the next generation as life's highest calling" (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Psalm 78:1-8). This is truly valuing discipleship.

Just like a biscuit, discipleship has many ingredients. When it starts with a spiritually loving and Christ-committed family it will fill the home with the unforgettable aroma of God's grace. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Mike Trimble pastors Kirby FWB Church in Flat Rock, Michigan, and serves as chair of the Randall House board.

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# A Tribute to Dad

BY KEN RIGGS

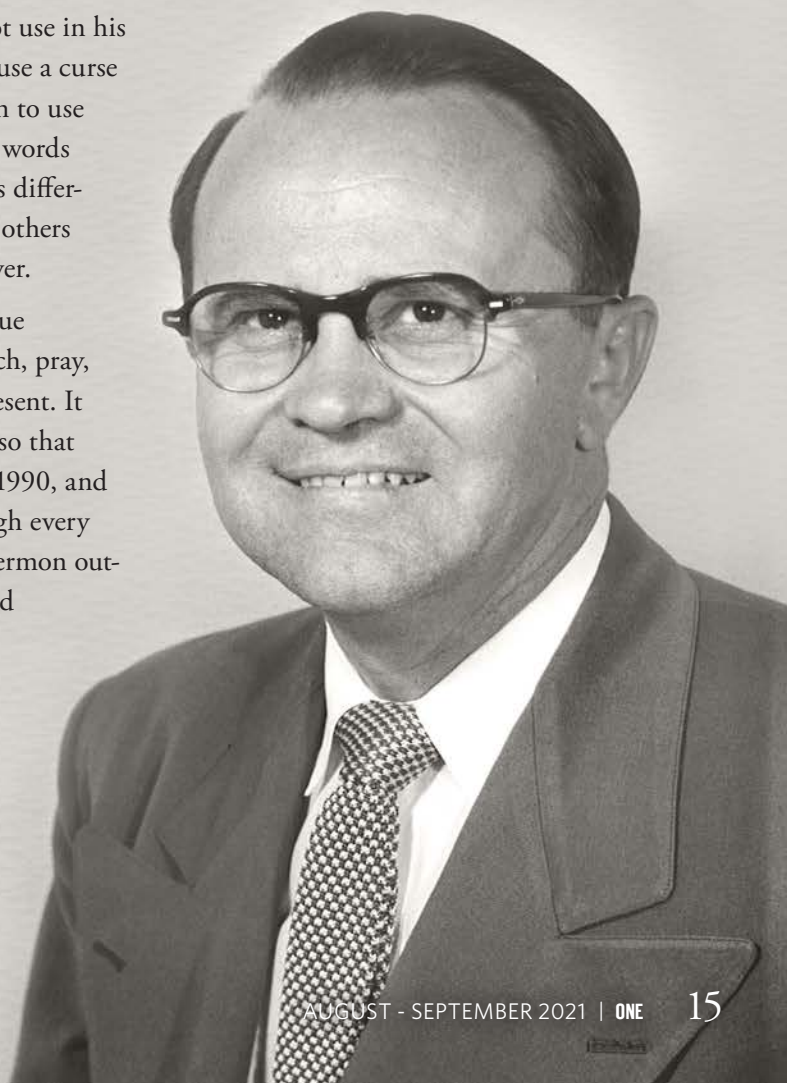
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When my mother, Winona Riggs, died in March of 1999, my dad Raymond asked me to preach her funeral. In that message, I stated she had enjoyed a full life, exhibited a faithful love, and extended a fruitful legacy. I easily can say the same three things about my dad. However, something else needs to be said. My dad is one of five men who had a profound influence—and continues to have influence—on my life. I am not telling the names of the other four, but I do want to tell you the characteristics they shared with my father.

The first influenced me by his character of godliness and dignity. He was always godly. He carried himself in such a way you knew by looking at him that he was a man of God. You knew there were certain words, jokes, or gestures you dared not use in his presence. Dad was the same. I cannot remember ever hearing him use a curse word. In fact, when I was a boy, he did not even permit his children to use the words *gosh*, *gee-whiz*, *golly*, or *darn*. By today's standards, those words may seem mild, but they were not permitted. You knew Daddy was different by the way he carried himself, not different in a way that made others uncomfortable, but in a way that demonstrated he was a true believer.

The second man influenced me by his conviction the Bible is the true Word of God. This man used to say, "You need to be ready to preach, pray, or die at a moment's notice." He gave me a Bible as a Christmas present. It was a copy of the *One-Year Bible* arranged to read on a daily basis, so that in one year, you have read the entire Bible. I received that Bible in 1990, and from that time until now, I have continued to read the Bible through every year. Dad was a man of the Bible as well. I have seen many of his sermon outlines and even shared mine with him, and he with me. I never heard him preach a sermon that wasn't based on the truth of Scripture. While faithful to read commentaries and other helps, Dad's main source for preaching and teaching was the Bible itself.

The third man influenced me by his refusal to retaliate against those who did him wrong. He was a denominational leader who was unafraid to think for himself. I worked for him for a time and heard the criticism he received from fellow





I soon discovered his secret: he had a genuine *love* for people.



brothers. While he was not an ordained minister, he was a spiritual giant in my eyes.

For a time, I served as a board member for this leader, and I saw firsthand his refusal to criticize others. On one occasion, I wanted to retaliate for him. He calmly admonished, “Ken, don’t stoop to that level.” Dad was the same. He did not like religious politics or denominational manipulation. His attitude was, “You can trust Free Will Baptists to do the right thing.” I questioned that at times but always discovered Daddy was right. Carrying a grudge was too heavy a burden for him. Getting even was not his style.

The fourth man who influenced me was not a Free Will Baptist. (I’m not even sure he was a believer.) Still, he taught me a valuable lesson. I was a student in a doctoral program and had to take a course in statistics. Because I had a weak mathematical background, I waited to the very end of the program to take this class.

To my surprise, on the first day of statistics, this professor made the class simple. He showed me a method of teaching I soon adopted as my own. He taught me to

make difficult things simple. Daddy was the same way. He could take a difficult passage of Scripture or complex theological concept and make it understandable. Perhaps he is most famous for his message on the relationship between faith and knowledge. He said faith and knowledge are so intertwined they cannot be separated. To illustrate his point, he said, “*Knowledge* is my wife knowing she has six children. *Faith* is me believing they’re all mine.”

After the congregation got over its shock, he followed up with, “That’s a good illustration because I have faith in my wife that I am the father of all our children.”

Evidently my mother wasn’t too happy with the illustration. Later that night, when they retired for the evening, Dad hugged my mother and said, “Goodnight, mother of six.” My ever-witty mother replied, “Goodnight, father of five.”

Godly dignity, dedication to the truth of Scripture, refusing to retaliate, and making difficult things simple are four characteristics every preacher should possess. The four men I described had these qualities. Dad had all of these and one more I believe topped them all. In 1966,



Daddy asked me to move to Norfolk, Virginia, to work with him as he began the first Christian school in the Free Will Baptist movement. With my deep interest in education, I told him I would come. What I did not tell him was I had another motive. I wanted to know what attracted others to him. What made him such a powerful influence in the denomination? Why was he invited to preach so many revivals? I thought working with him would reveal the answer.

I was not disappointed. I soon discovered his secret: he had a genuine love for people. That was it. And people *knew* he loved them. It made no difference their status in life, color of skin, political party, which side of the Free Will Baptist “fence” you straddled, or on which side of the Mississippi River you lived, Daddy knew how to love. During tense moments on the floor of the National Association, I watched him calm the crowd with words of wisdom. I saw him give an invitation after another’s mediocre message, where people responded. A dear friend told me on several occasions if he ever backslid, he wanted Daddy to give the invitation because he was sure to

come back to the Lord.

Daddy’s love for people cannot be learned in a classroom. It comes from being in the closet with God. It comes from not being afraid to get your hands dirty, from the cotton field to the factory. It comes from getting in the grease pit in a gas station or a hog pen with a farmer. It comes from sitting with someone in the hospital or watching someone die. It comes from experiencing life with all kinds of people.

During his funeral, someone noted his death was the end of an era. While I believe that may be true, I honestly pray it is wrong. Please God, give us people who have godly dignity, commitment to the truth of the Bible, a refusal to retaliate, the ability to make hard things simple, and above all, people who truly know how to love others. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Dr. Ken Riggs has served as pastor, educator, and denominational leader. His dad Raymond was the first full-time director of IM, Inc. (Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions).

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- Sept. 19** Enduring With Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:1-17)
- Sept. 26** Living With Integrity (2 Thessalonians 3:1-18)
- Oct. 3** Everyday Discipleship (Deuteronomy 6:1-25)
- Oct. 10** Generational Discipleship (Deuteronomy 6:5-9; Ephesians 4:11-13; Galatians 5:22-23)
- Oct. 17** David and Goliath (1 Samuel 17:1-58)
- Oct. 24** Ark Returns/Covenant (2 Samuel 6:1-15; 7:1-29)
- Oct. 31** Bathsheba/Repentance (2 Samuel 11:1-12:25)
- Nov. 7** Curse of Sin (Romans 1)
- Nov. 14** How Can I Know God Exists? (Romans 1:20; 2:12-15; 2 Timothy 3:16-17)
- Nov. 21** Why Is Jesus the Only Way? (Romans 3:10-26; John 14:6; Galatians 2:16)
- Nov. 28** Justified by Faith (Romans 5:1-21)



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# Learned by Example

BY JOSHUA EIDSON

Children are curious. They want to understand how things work, what makes Mom and Dad aggravated or happy. As parents, we need to remind ourselves our little people are watching us constantly. That constant observation can, and should, provide deeper motivation for us to put our best efforts forward in all we do. We are teaching them, by example, every aspect of life, even our financial lives.

While we should be intentional about teaching them the important things of life, they often learn as much, if not more, from their daily observation. What are we teaching them in the little, unconscious moments of our daily lives? Do they see us being generous to those who work to prepare and serve a meal we did not have to prepare? Do they witness us being patient and understanding with those same workers when things aren't as we expected with our order? Do they see us treat cash purchases differently than credit? Do they see us frustrated with maintaining our material blessings or working joyfully because we have been blessed with these items?

Often, as parents, we think, “I must capitalize on every learning opportunity with my children.” Yes! We should be mindful of those opportunities and be intentional about making the most of them. But many financial lessons we teach come—not through overt efforts—but a passing remark, daily financial habits, hushed conversations with our spouse, and emotions expressed while engaging with our finances. Several of these examples may have produced a negative reaction when you read the list. However, these learning times are not all bad, or at least they do not have to be. We must live with the constant awareness that we are our children's financial role models, for better or worse. That is the most basic way we teach





them, and it is a lifelong endeavor.

As children age, we can explain why we handle our money the way we choose. Why we go to work each day. Why we cannot (or do not) buy anything and everything they want. Why we give faithfully to our local church and other ministries.

This process is a great learning experience for parents as well when they see their kids begin to interact with their own money. Often, their behav-

ior mirrors the example of the adults in their lives. We should engage with them at every age level in appropriate ways to help them understand healthy money habits. They are developing money habits, like many other traits, much earlier than we often realize.

- Be aware of their constant observation.
- Be intentional when teachable moments do come up.
- Be willing to learn together as they age. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Joshua Eidson served as accounting administrator for the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement from 2016 to 2021. He graduated in 2007 with a B.S. in business administration from Welch College and has over 13 years of experience in finance and accounting. Learn more about the Board of Retirement at [boardofretirement.com](http://boardofretirement.com).

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# Facing the Facts:

## THE HARD TRUTH ABOUT FUNDING A COLLEGE EDUCATION



BY JOHN BRUMMITT

A great deal of research has been done regarding college debt. Politicians have much to say about how student debt should be canceled or forgiven, pointing to the detrimental effects of debt on starting a career.

However, a recent study revealed students are more affected by *when* they graduate from college than the weight of *debt* they carry from college. Those who graduate during a recession are more negatively affected by student debt load and slow career advancement than those graduating during a strong economy. Starting your career in a sluggish economy can hinder earning potential up to 20 years, along with stunted career growth potential. Yet, students can't control what the economy will be doing when they graduate from college, and most cannot hit pause when the time comes to enter the workforce. So, what are college graduates to do?

One of the most significant handicaps to your working career is debt. Whether the economy is good or bad, debt is quite limiting. While more options to relieve debt exist in a good economy, students and parents must remember there is no guarantee the economy will be good on graduation day. In 2008, the graduating class had no warning the record bull market was about to crash down

around them. Many went from expecting high-paying first jobs to living with parents for a year or more while they searched for any available employment. Many never found jobs in their fields of study, so they switched fields and never went back. We all know individuals with degrees in fields they have never worked. So, how do you protect yourself from the traps of a down economy?

**First, remember you are the one responsible for your debt obligation.** Look for all the ways to stay out of debt. As Benjamin Franklin famously warned, "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure." Apply for every available scholarship and work and pay for your education as you go. Billions of dollars in scholarship money are available for students willing to put in the work to find the scholarships and qualify for them. If the current government chooses to relieve student debt, view it as a bonus. But don't count on it, because it may never happen.



**Second, start a career search early.** Start looking for employment before you graduate. Get your name out by participating in summer internships or by volunteering. Many employers are interested in meeting potential employees about to enter the workforce. If nothing else, interacting with companies within your field of study trains you to interview and communicate with potential employers. You will find it is easier to get a job when you already have a job. Being in school gives you time to look around, gain some experience, and weigh your options. Make the most of the time.

We are always responsible for our actions and the decisions we make. Preparing for those decisions (or helping our kids prepare for those decisions) can protect us from the unexpected, those things we cannot control. College isn't for everyone, and debt shouldn't be either. Do your research and carefully create a plan to help you reach the best position to start your working life. **ONE**

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**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 spring 2006.

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# Seeds

BY STEVE RIGGS

**“Don’t judge each day by the harvest you reap, but by the seeds you plant.”  
—Robert Louis Stevenson**

My wife Becky displays this quote in a prominent place in our living room. As we live our daily lives, praying and longing to see French people come to Christ, this quote reminds us the little things we do and say are important. God can use a tiny seed planted in someone’s life. The seed may be something as simple as baking cookies for a neighbor, sending a card to a friend, or giving a needed hug. Sometimes, just listening demonstrates you really care. Other times, a spoken word plants a seed. I don’t imagine Stevenson penned the quote with this intent, but it reminds me of the Apostle Paul’s Spirit-guided words: “I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase” (1 Corinthians 3:6).

I confess, often when I hear about a pastor or church reaping a great harvest, I feel a little jealous. Well, truthfully, I feel a *lot* jealous. I know I shouldn’t, but I do. I once heard Joseph Stowell (former president of Moody College) say, “I sometimes wonder what it would be like to minis-

ter in a place where there is little harvest. Would I still be willing to serve?”

I recall thinking, “I wonder what it would be like to minister in a place where there is a great harvest!” I suppose both situations have their own risks. One could lead to jealousy, the other to pride. When asking his question, Stowell sought to remind us, whether we reap a great harvest or plow hard soil, we are all called to obey Christ and serve others. The results are in His hands. Wherever we live, everything we do and say plants a seed in someone’s life. One day, in God’s perfect time, those seeds will produce a harvest. When it does, God alone will receive the glory.

Not long ago, I had a unique opportunity to plant a seed. I love to play golf, and the Lord has allowed me to make many friends on the fairways of the little nine-hole course in Châteaubriant. One friend has a Protestant background. However, saying you are Protestant in France is often the same as saying you are Catholic. For many people, these are just cultural labels. Only an estimated 10% of French Catholics attend church. Likewise, of the roughly 2% of the French population who call themselves Protestant, many never attend church or even claim a personal





relationship with Christ. That is true for my friend. Recently, his mother passed away, and he asked if I would officiate the funeral. Grateful he had the confidence to entrust me with that ministry, I began to pray the Lord would give me the right words to share.

At the beginning of the service, one person in particular grabbed my attention. She was the companion of the deceased woman's grandson. When introduced, I immediately sensed she was not pleased by my presence. The masks we wore because of COVID did nothing to hide her suspicion bordering on hostility. Frankly, this is frequently the way French people look at Evangelicals.

During the service, I noticed the young woman sat alone (perhaps a COVID precaution) and rarely looked up, yet she seemed to listen closely. Afterward, the family and friends gathered in front of the stone church and silently watched the attendants load the casket into the hearse. I stood to one side to give the family privacy. Unexpectedly, the young girl walked up to me. She politely thanked me for the "homily." Then, lowering her mask as if she wanted to ensure I would not misunderstand her, she somewhat forcefully stated, "But I want you to know I am *not* a believer!"


Her energetic delivery made me smile as I responded, "Well, that is certainly your right."

Her next comments expressed the views I have heard many times in France. She voiced her belief that religion, *all* religions, only generate violence and war. Though a false assumption, it's one we often hear, especially given France's history. However, she went on to say she thought Jesus was a really neat guy. She considered Him an anarchist who tried to show people a better way, but it didn't work. She said His way doesn't work because "It's like there's just something inside of everybody that makes us mess up."

I listened intently as she spoke, then hazarded a response. I agreed religious people, even Christians, too often have committed terrible acts in the "name of God." I added, "But I think you're overlooking the fact Christians have also done a whole lot of good in our world. Think about the first hospitals, schools, orphanages, feeding the hungry, caring for the homeless, etc." I told her what struck me most from her comments, was that she actually

affirmed what the Bible tells us about sin. She was right. Something in all of us makes us mess up. I, too, have to fight against sin every day of my life. And, while I also agree Jesus was a "really neat guy," to me He is much more. He is my only hope to keep from "messing up."

The brief conversation ended, and I accompanied the family to the cemetery. As on so many occasions like this, my heart broke. Broke to see a family at the graveside of their departed mother, wife, grandmother, and great-grandmother. Broke with the sad realization this young lady's thoughts reflect what most of them believe, that Jesus is a "really neat guy" but nothing more. Broke because religion has such a bad name, they won't even consider giving Him a try.

It is unlikely I will see this young lady again. I don't know if she will ever become a follower of Christ. I am praying she may one day see her need of Him and how He can help her, like me, keep from "messing up." I hope someday to hear her say, somewhat forcefully, "I want you to know I *am* a believer!" If I never hear she has given her heart to Christ, I believe a tiny seed was planted. And I firmly believe it will result in a great harvest one day. Much greater than any of us can even imagine. On that day, none of us will be jealous or proud, but each of us will give praise and thanksgiving to God. Praise for what He has done. And thanksgiving He used us to simply plant some seeds. 

**Wherever we live,  
everything we do  
and say plants a  
seed in someone's  
life. One day, in  
God's perfect time,  
those seeds will  
produce a harvest.  
When it does, God  
alone will receive  
the glory.**

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**About the Writer:** Steve Riggs and his wife Becky have served in France for more than three decades. They are parents of four adult children, two of whom live in the States and two in Europe. Steve brags they have the "two best grandkids in the world, hands down!"

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# GREAT COMMISSION DREAM

BY NEIL GILLILAND

Ken and Marvis Eagleton were visionaries. Following many years of service in Brazil, they retired and returned to the States. Ken didn't stop though; he worked at the IM, Inc. headquarters (then Free Will Baptist Foreign Missions). In the fall of 1991, Ken called me. "Neil," he said, "we are waiting until students get to college to challenge them for missions. We need to start earlier. We need to give them an experience while they are still in high school. Will you help me?"

I don't remember what took place between that call and June of 1992, but I do remember what happened that June. Ken, Marvis, their son Terry, and I welcomed a handful of high school students to the campus of Free Will Baptist Bible College (now Welch College). We called it TEAM—Teens Equipped and Active in Missions. We spent the next several days teaching and training this small group from around the denomination. As students moved from dorm rooms to classrooms, from the dining hall to the auditorium, they lugged their suitcases everywhere they went. (This was before suitcases came with wheels, and whoever invented those needs to be awarded a Nobel prize!)

At the end of the training, we gave them an opportunity to repack...lightly. After those days of learning the biblical foundation of missions, how to interact within a cross-cultural context, and a variety of other topics, that first TEAM boarded a plane and flew to Brazil with Ken and Marvis. The next year, we added a Panama team, doubling the number of teens experiencing cross-cultural missions.

I don't think those pioneer dreamers could have foreseen nearly 2,000 young people fanning out across the globe to share the Good News of a risen Savior over the next three decades. Many current missionaries began their

passionate journey to the nations with ETEAM. (Following Ken Eagleton's death, the E was added to honor him.)

Today's ETEAM program looks far different than it did in 1992. The training has morphed into a program that educates, inspires, and engages students in God's plan for the peoples of the world. Yet the goal—to provide students with a challenge to personal involvement in the Great Commission—remains unchanged. Twenty-nine years later, we still meet on the campus of Welch College.

One of my jobs during training week is to "get rid of parents" on opening night. I encourage them to say goodbye well, explaining they won't get the same child back. These students will not be able to un-see what they have seen, un-taste what they have tasted, or un-experience what they have experienced. I am not so naive that I don't realize, for some teens, ETEAM is just another activity on the summer calendar; but for the majority of those who go, it is a life-changing adventure.

Each team has leaders who act as much more than adult chaperones. These leaders serve as counselors, teachers, mentors, "parents," coaches, encouragers, nurses, etc. Leaders sacrifice almost a month of their summer for the privilege of investing in young people.



Typically, the leaders are impacted as profoundly as the students. Some leaders have gone on to serve overseas because the Holy Spirit spoke to them about their deeper involvement in the Great Commission. Several leaders have remarked, “Even if we had to leave after the week of training this would have been well worth it.” One leader explained, “My daughter went on ETEAM, and I don’t know what happened, but we want to be part of it because of the change we saw in her.”

Our field hosts deserve a standing ovation for their sacrificial commitment. They take a chunk from their summer schedule to host our students. They spend immeasurable hours preparing to provide students with a rich cultural experience and opportunities to share the gospel. I don’t have enough words to adequately thank our missionaries for investing in the youth of our denomination. (In case some of you missionaries are reading this, thank you so very much).

From those early days until the present, ETEAM has grown enormously. One team has expanded to as many as 12 teams annually trained and sent out to encourage

overseas workers and share the good news of the gospel. Foot on the accelerator, we sped forward with excitement at what God was accomplishing. Then, for ETEAM and the rest of the world, the foot was violently jerked from the accelerator to slam on the brakes. Only a few months before ETEAM 2020, the world began to shut down. IM was forced to make the heart-breaking decision to cancel ETEAM 2020.

Sadness enveloped all of those involved.

We cinched up our belts and began planning for 2021. Regardless of what prognosticators said, we kept moving forward. Plans were put in place, teams selected, and leaders secured. As 2021 approached, hope flourished. The pandemic slowed in the U.S. We prayed borders would open by June, and the ETEAM ship could once again unfurl her flags and sail to the ends of the earth. But as each month led into another, the global pandemic did not slow. In some places, the situation only worsened. Little by little, international borders closed. Once again, we were forced to apply the brakes.

All international trips were canceled. Then, a ray of hope broke through. Pastor David Potete called and offered to host his team. He even offered to receive more students than usual. David and the Northwest FWB Church have proven major supporters, hosts, and cheerleaders for ETEAM. For many years now, we have had an ETEAM Chicago. The church always provides students with an amazing cross-cultural experience while ministering in the city of Chicago. This partnership remains a vital part of our ETEAM program.

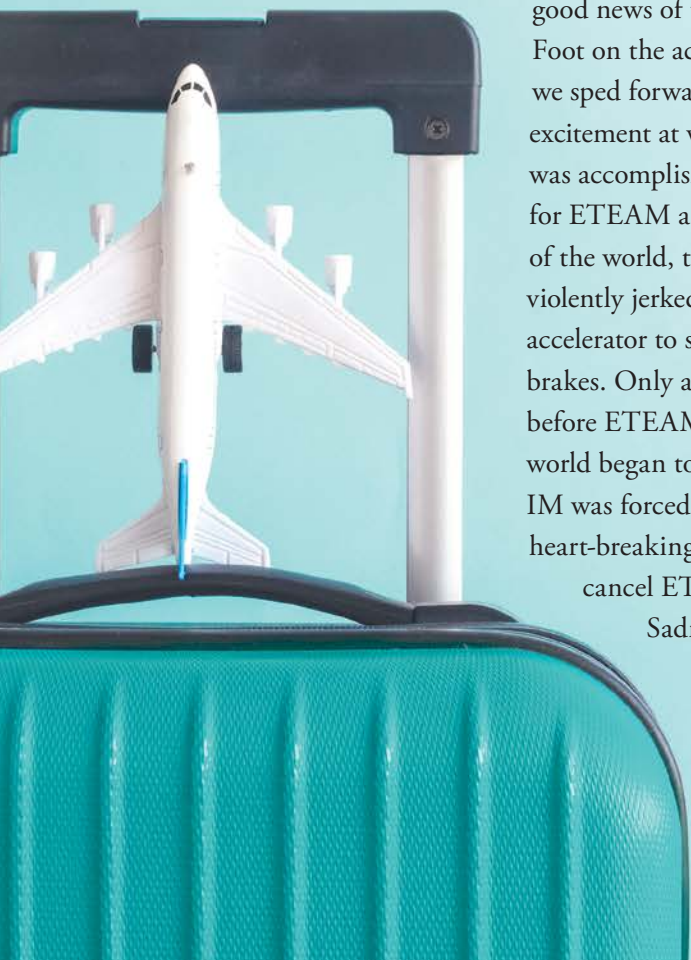
Once again, the program is back to one team. Instead of going to Brazil with Ken and Marvis, students boarded a plane to Chicago. No, it is not what we envisioned or wanted, but we are deeply grateful and indebted to David and his congregation.

Across the years, it has been a joy to watch the program expand and develop. From the visionary Eagletons to the present coordinator, Hanna Mott, ETEAM shines a beacon of light for our denomination and her youth. What do we plan for 2022? Once again, we will move forward. We will plan like COVID doesn’t exist. Join us in praying next year will once again offer this unique opportunity for our teens and their leaders as we labor with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Director of mobilization and member care for IM, Neil fills his spare time as a professor, counselor, writer, fisherman, and avid bluegrass fan. His most cherished role is “papa” to his grandson Jagger.

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# Friends of India Takes Lead in Oversight of India Work

**Antioch, TN**—After 70 years of service, Carlisle Hanna retired from overseas missionary work in March 2021. His health no longer allows him to travel extensively or endure the hardships of life in his beloved India. As a result, the IM leadership team met multiple times throughout April and May 2021 with the Friends of India (FOI), a 501c3 non-profit organization based in South Carolina, to discuss how to best continue the established Free Will Baptist works in India. After much prayer, discussions, meetings, emails, and exchanges of ideas, the two organizations agreed FOI will oversee the works established by Brother Hanna, his former missionary colleagues, and national believers.

The FOI board, comprised of pastors with a strong commitment to the ministries God has developed through FWBs in India, and IM have partnered for nearly 15 years.

Throughout that time, FOI clearly demonstrated its devotion to our Free Will Baptist works in India sponsoring building projects, purchasing motor-bikes and bicycles for pastors and evangelists, providing support for pastors and evangelists, aiding believers, praying consistently, visiting India regularly, and more.

Dr. Don Hanna, son of Brother Carlisle and raised in India, serves as the President of the FOI board. His grasp of the language, understanding of

the culture, relationship with national believers and leaders, understanding of the ministries, servant's heart, and other factors make him the perfect person to oversee the ongoing works in India.

Don commented on the transition, saying, "I am grateful for the opportunity to partner with IM. I have had the Lord's call on my life for many years to help lead this work forward. There are many, and great, challenges. I have very large shoes to fill, so we covet your prayers and support as we move forward. I am grateful to each one of the Friends of India board for their commitment to our work. I am grateful for the opportunity to work with Brother Clint, as we work together to reach the lost souls in India."

General Director Clint Morgan stated, "IM's commitment to India is un-

deniable. It was our first field and is now by far the largest in number of churches and believers. We rejoice that our long-term investment of personnel and resources has produced much fruit. At this historic juncture, we are convinced FOI is well placed to ensure the continuity and stability of the established ministries. I look forward to working with Dr. Don and FOI to continue our Free Will Baptist efforts to reach the 1.2 billion lost people in India."

Funding for the ministries in India is greatly needed. FOI will set the budget, send funds to India, and provide accountability. You can contribute directly to FOI or through IM. One hundred percent of funds sent to IM earmarked "Hanna, Rev. Carlisle—Friends of India" will be sent to FOI.

**ONE**

## Schorsack Departs IM

**Antioch, TN**—On March 22, 2021, IM announced the end of Walt Schorsack's journey with IM. Approved for a two-year internship in Japan in December 2019, Walt was unable to secure the necessary funding to serve.

Don Matchett, director of development, noted, "This decision has no reflection on Walt or his desire to go to Japan. We are honored he came

through our doors and pray he will find a means to serve in Japan."

General Director Clint Morgan concurred, "God's delay is not God's denial. Please join us in praying for Walt's transition and future Kingdom plans." **ONE**







# Teague Selected President of French FWB Association

**France**—Recently elected as the new president of the French Free Will Baptist Association, Joel Teague stated, “I hope to encourage the churches, but also help strengthen and grow our denomination in France.”

He sees training, resources, communication, fellowship, and ordination as major needs of established congregations. Joel said, “We are creating an online training platform, with many different classes, to give each person in our churches the opportunity to grow in their knowledge of God and the Bible and be better equipped.”

Teague indicated the organization has

no ordination system in place and is working to implement one. He cited books on Free Will Baptist doctrine as a pressing need. An IMpact Project, IMpact France—Discipleship and Training Program, has been established to support translating and printing important Free Will Baptist doctrinal works.

Acknowledging the last few difficult years, he specified the importance of the churches supporting and encouraging one another. He proposes joint church services and designated people to update each congregation on news and prayer needs of the other churches should foster better

community among the established churches. Teague plans to address communication by sharing information about the worldwide efforts of Free Will Baptists. He also wants to use social media and create a website for the French FWB Association to convey “who we are and what we believe.” He also hopes to plant more churches in France.

Joel concluded, “I could sum it all up with encourage, strengthen, and grow. I know it’s a big task and may be too optimistic; but I choose to put my faith in God, not in my own abilities. We serve a great God and nothing is too big for Him or His kingdom.” **ONE**

## April 2021 IM Board Meeting

**Antioch, TN**—The IM board met April 19-20, 2021, for its annual board meeting.

Each director delivered reports from their respective areas of responsibilities. CFO Rob Conley reported a solid financial situation. Auditor Tom Wooten of Blankenship CPA Group passed IM, Inc. with a clean bill of health and complimented the finance team on a job well done. A motion carried to adopt the 2022 framework budget.

Other reports included: future plans, educational initiatives and leadership training, desire to open new fields, new and revised partnerships, the

missionary process from application to field, approval of missionaries to return to their fields, and the approval of a national missionary internship/partnership with Connect FWB Church in Russellville, Arkansas.

The board reflected on the retirement of Brother Carlisle Hanna who gave 70 years of faithful service to mission work in India. Director of Field Personnel Curt Holland commented, “On April 1, 2021, for the first time in 70 years, Brother Carlisle Hanna awoke without the responsibility of being a missionary with IM. Yet he will always be part of the IM family.”

Chairman Jeff Nichols stated, “It is amazing to see how God continued to bless IM ministries during COVID. To Him be the glory.”

Chairman Jeff Nichols, Vice Chairman Rodney Yerby, Secretary Mark Price, Casey Cariker, Rick Cason, Will Harmon, Darren Walker, and Cameron Lane attended. Janice Banks joined via Zoom.

General Director Clint Morgan, CFO Rob Conley, and directors Curt Holland, Danny Gasperson, Neil Gilliland, and Don Matchett participated. Director Kenneth Eagleton also attended via Zoom. **ONE**

# WILL YOU JOIN THE RANKS?

## D6

BY DEREK ALTOM

ONE OF MY FONDEST MEMORIES GROWING UP WAS THE TIME I SPENT AT MY GRANDPARENTS' HOUSE. MY SISTER, BROTHER, AND I SPENT MANY AFTERNOONS AT THEIR HOUSE AFTER SCHOOL WHILE MY MOM WORKED. I ENJOYED WATCHING TELEVISION WITH MY GRANDPA. HE INTRODUCED ME TO THE CLASSIC TV SHOWS. ONE OF OUR FAVORITES WAS *BATMAN*, THE CLASSIC VERSION FROM THE 1960S STARRING ADAM WEST. I CAN SEE THE WORDS "ZOOM," "POW," AND "SMACK" FLASHING ACROSS THE SCREEN OF MY MIND NOW.

Whether it was the Penguin, the Joker, Mister Freeze, or the Riddler, there was no doubt who Commissioner Gordon and Chief O'Hara would turn to in their time of distress. There was no questioning the hero of Gotham City. It was Batman and his trusty sidekick, Robin.

Whenever one of these dangerous criminals hit the streets, the first course of action for Gotham city officials was to put out the call to Batman. They did this using the "Bat Phone" in Commissioner Gordon's office. On occasion, if these dastardly criminals struck at night, Commissioner Gordon or Chief O'Hara would race to the top of city hall and flash the "Bat Signal" into the sky hoping their hero would see it and help them. Without fail, Batman responded.







Randall House and D6 Family Ministry is blessed to have its own heroes. For over 80 years, Free Will Baptist people have seen and responded to the “signal in the sky.” They have come to the aid of men and women across the globe to help them in their time of need.

Heroes responded by providing D6 curriculum free of charge for Free Will Baptist church planters during the first two years of their church plant and at a 50% discount the two years after that. Heroes provided Bible study resources to military chaplains to aid them in teaching and training soldiers on the frontlines, protecting our freedoms. They are heroes helping heroes.

Heroes answered the call and enabled D6 curriculum to be translated into various languages and distributed across the globe, including restricted-access countries for use in the underground church.

Additionally, heroes have provided resources for families to help them grow in their faith, practice generational discipleship, and carry the principles of Deuteronomy 6 into the future. These tools include the *D6 App*, the *D6 Family Podcast*, *At-Home Bundles*, and *Splink*, to name a few.

Another way Randall House and D6 Family Ministry heroes save the day is through investing in leadership development.

They courageously invest financial resources in helping the next generation prepare for service in their communities and in the local church. This is achieved through the national Youth Evangelistic Team (YET), CTS Ministry Expo, and Truth and Peace Student Leadership Conference.

They also help by providing a weekly resource, *Top Reads for Busy Leaders*. This

free resource is provided weekly to leaders around the world, sending them the top articles in the fields of leadership, church life, family, cultural trends, etc.

One of the most significant ways Randall House & D6 Family Ministry heroes impact the Kingdom of God is by supporting D6 International. In countries like Singapore, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and France, the principles of Deuteronomy 6 are being planted in the hearts of church leaders.


Thanks to Randall House & D6 Family Ministry heroes, believers are being built both in the church and in the home. Their faithful commitment to the principles of Deuteronomy 6 is seen through various ministries far and wide. They saw the need. They answered the call. They have become heroes.

I often hear the question, “Does my giving really make a difference?” As you can see, the answer is a resounding “Yes!”

Heroes come in all shapes and sizes. They come from different backgrounds, levels of education, and various passions. Their faithfulness to be a Randall House & D6 Family Ministry hero makes all the difference.

Here is the question: “Will YOU be a HERO who makes these ministries possible?”

Randall House & D6 Family Ministry is looking for men and women, boys and girls to invest their financial resources to ensure the principles of Deuteronomy 6 continue to be championed for generations to come. We are looking for heroes to support leadership development and to invest in resources for the church and home. To become a Randall House & D6 Family Ministry hero, visit [D6Hero.com](http://D6Hero.com) to sign up or to get more information.

**Will you join the ranks?** Stay tuned to find out what happens next. Same Bat time. Same Bat channel. 

**About the Writer:** Derek Altom serves as director of events for Randall House.



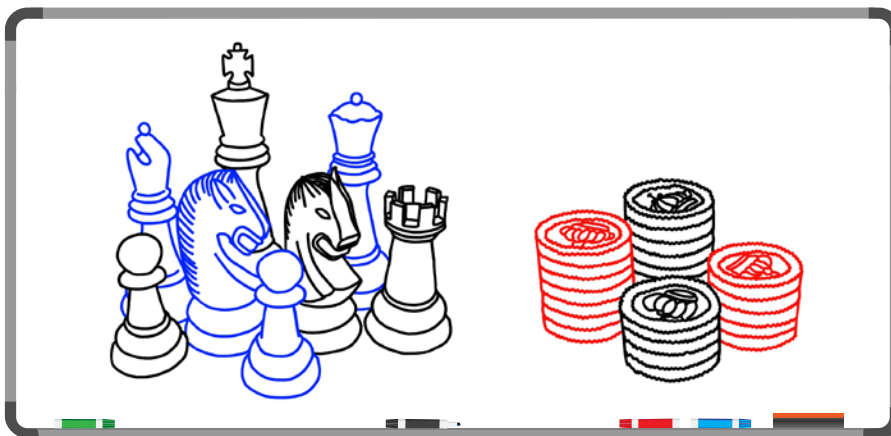
**GO TO [RANDALLHOUSE.COM/DONATE](http://RANDALLHOUSE.COM/DONATE) TO WATCH “LOOKING FOR HEROES,” A VIDEO THAT CAN BE SHOWN IN CHURCHES.**

# Chess or Checkers

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.

Around first grade, my grandfather pulled out his checkerboard and taught me to play. As a great player, he even taught me to run his king out of the double corners. At age 12, a friend introduced me to chess. Totally different games, each takes a different mindset and approach. Pawn to e4. These two games represent two leadership styles. Which one are you, chess or checkers?

Checkers is fun, but you play with a series of actions and reactions. Every move reacts to a recent move. Inevitably, you will swap plays and pieces, and a couple of power moves will determine your game. **Checkers leadership demonstrates a tactical style of being great at the immediate, quick thinking, winning the moments, but hoping each independent move leads to an overall win in the end.** Let's apply this to your church world. Youth ministry wants to do its own thing, and while the kids may love it, they never want to rejoin big church. Seniors distance themselves from all other ages for various reasons. Each move is strong on its own but lacks big-picture thinking. Chess, on the other hand, requires attention to the long game. Rook to a7. The mindset shifts from the immediate to several moves ahead.



While checkers play is practical and tactical, chess is strategic and philosophical. Unlike checkers, chess pieces move in distinct and diverse ways, creating endless possibilities, much like the various ministries of your church. Chess leadership wants every ministry to work toward the same objective. Knight to c5, "check." **Chess leadership understands reaching and teaching work in tandem.** You can create chess-like thinking in discipleship when all ministries create heart connections with all generations and help it work both at church and home. Children's ministry compliments and connects to teen ministry. Teens work to produce amazing adults who also work to connect with all younger ages. Chess always applies the principles to your strategy.

In the words of that great chess player (no, not Bobby Fischer or Beth Harmon) Jeb Bartlett (of *West Wing* fame), "See the board—the whole board." You can't be effective with one big play or even multiple isolated plays around the board. You strategize each move to complement the others, knowing one move leads to the next. Remember, tactics can generate short-term wins, but only strategy leads to effective leadership in ministry. Queen to h5, "Checkmate!" Which leadership style do you lead with, chess or checkers? **ONE**

**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](mailto:ron.hunter@randallhouse.com).

## LEADERSHIP QUOTE

*"When it comes to discipleship and evangelism, every day is more important than Sunday."*

—Carey Nieuwhof



## RECOMMENDED BOOK

***The DNA of D6: Building Blocks of Generational Discipleship***

By Ron Hunter, Jr., Ph.D.





from  randall house



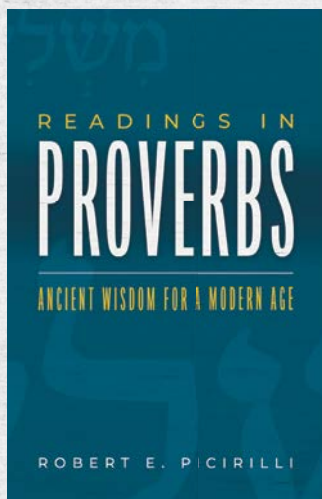
CTS MINISTRY EXPO  
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## 2022 CTS MINISTRY EXPO GUIDELINES

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This book contains information related to rules, categories, and guidelines used in the CTS Ministry Expo from regional to national levels. Rules are important for any event, so we've put together this handy guide to help you navigate all the details of a CTS (Church Training Service) event. This book lists the many opportunities for students to participate in activities that increase biblical knowledge, refine their God-given abilities, and practice for future church ministry.



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# Thin, Gray Lines

BY BRENDA EVANS

A map is "a testimony of man's faith in other men... A map says to you, 'Read me carefully... without me, you are alone and lost'"—a few of Beryl Markham's words in her memoir *West With the Night*. As a bush pilot from 1931-1936, Markham ought to know about maps. Flying a mostly wood and fabric airplane, she banked on maps while ferrying mail, supplies, and people into Kenya, Sudan, and Tanzania.

I won't quibble with Beryl that maps are essential, nor disagree we are putting our faith in men and their technology. My husband Bill and I set great store in maps. We like them—both our iPhone maps and huge two by three feet paper ones with crazy lines and numbers everywhere, those annoying ones that defy my attempt to neatly refold.

I do quibble with Markham's assumption that if you read a map carefully, you won't get lost. Maps can fail you miserably. Just last month, the blue line on my iPhone led us every way except the right way. We stopped three times. (Who says a man won't stop and ask?) Finally, a young mechanic with greasy hair and hands

rolled out from under his car and gave us good directions. We made the wedding on time.

Another failure was more miserable. The map was paper. We left a meeting in the mountains at 11:00 a.m. to take a scenic route home. According to the map, the usual five-hour trip would become a six-hour jaunt. We'd still be home long before dark. Our paper map showed a red interstate for a while, then a narrower red U. S. highway, followed by a black state road, several thin gray lines of numbered county roads, and finally another red line to take us home. Since I was driving the first leg, Bill plotted the route on a notepad, laid the pad next to me, and reclined his seat to take a quick nap.



I whizzed along. Two red roads, the black, and finally the first thin gray line. No problem, though the gray line certainly was curvier than the map showed, with steep hills and cracked asphalt here and there. On the second gray line, I drove deeper into a dull brown and sunless woods. Not surprising. It was early March, no greening yet. But only a rare house was a surprise. Third gray line—I stopped, undecided. Bill’s note indicated a right turn onto 699. There was a right turn, but no numbered sign. He roused. We checked, stayed straight, and watched for 699. Miles later, we still found no 699 sign and only left turns. Our thin gray line had become gravel, with deep potholes and patches of broken asphalt. Cracked and dried mud and scrubby grass edged the road, which soon narrowed from two lanes to one. No cell service, no vehicles, no utility lines, no houses. Several times I hit a bad pothole with a heavy thump.

“You’re going to knock off a wheel,” Bill warned.

“I can’t see them ‘til I hit them,” I muttered back. “Why don’t you drive?”

“You’re okay. Keep going.”

“Where are we?” I whined.

Bill checked the paper map again and didn’t answer.

A shadow of fear began to grow. Our map had failed us, and the same for our cell service. When we left at 11:00 a.m., we planned to go mostly north and slightly east for five or six hours and be home. Three devices still worked: gas gauge, wristwatch, and the car’s compass. Our gauge showed half full (good); my watch said 4:00 p.m. (we should have been almost home); but our compass was swinging every direction except steadily north. *Lord, show us a path.*

About 5:00 p.m., we saw a slim thread of blue smoke above the trees, then a tin roof and one-story house set back 50 feet from the dirt road. An attached garage held a bold warning sign in red and black: *DANGER BEWARE.* A yellow rope tied to slender stakes looped around the yard. On the left side a large black dog waited.

“Blow the horn,” Bill said, eyeing the dog and the open front door. Finally, a man appeared, standing mostly inside. Bill eased closer to the yellow rope. The dog lay still but ready.

“Sir, I think we’re lost,” Bill said.

“Imagine you are,” the man answered without a smile, keeping his right arm inside the house—on a shotgun, I assumed.

“We’re looking for Highway 699.”

“Never heard of it.”

“What about a main road that goes north?”

“Down there about five miles,” the man bobbed in the direction we were headed. “Cross a bridge; turn left. Stay on that.”

“Thank you, sir.”

Back in the car, Bill stated the obvious: “He didn’t want company.”

“You see a shotgun?” I asked.

“Nope! Let’s go.”

Fifteen miles later, still no bridge, no house, no left turn, no main road—but a green creek joined us on our left, tumbling over rocks in the direction we were driving, like a trickle of hope. Bill disagreed.

“No, Babe, this is a *Deliverance* movie. Wild woods, green creek, no human beings. Meanness. The bad guys are coming. Just haven’t shown up yet.”

Finally, we came to an elbow junction. Our choices? Go back (unthinkable) or bear left with the creek. We followed the creek. Our compass lit up: SW. Southwest! The direction we didn’t want to go. Home is north and a little east, I reminded the compass. The road improved slightly, less gravel. Across the creek, scattered remnants of a railroad track lay rusting in undergrowth, then a broken-down coal or gravel tippie, vine-swathed and long unused. *Lord, show us a path.*

Twilight, 6:30 p.m. The road straightened for a hundred yards, and we saw a building—white with a red roof, two pick-up trucks, and four human beings: men working on a third truck in a red-roofed garage. A small home set against the hillside 50 yards up. One of the men called off three growling dogs and met Bill halfway with directions: *Straight ahead, then right, then left, and in the small town do a hard right.* That would lead us to a red line on our map so we could find our way home.

*Thank you, Lord, for human beings who smiled, held no shotguns, read "lost" in our eyes, and told us a way.*

We plunged on. The creek turned away from us, but the wild woods remained. Gradually, here a house, there a house. Then the little town's four-way junction and our hard right turn. Dusk was closing in. Twenty miles further, orange cones and a barricade appeared without warning: **Flood water. Road closed.** I gave the wheel to Bill. He backed, spun in mud, maneuvered more, and pointed our nose back to the four-way junction and due north on our compass. In pitch-black night, we took whatever turns we could to stay mostly north, and finally bumped into a red numbered road. At the hotel, my watch rolled to 9:30 p.m. Finally, after ten hours, we were "unlost."

These days, we laugh about those long hours on the thin gray lines, but not at what we learned. We are wiser about whose map we follow. Thin gray lines aren't always what they seem to be, whether in the Appalachians, the

Rockies, or in life. Roadblocks and spinning in the mud? Turn around; do a 180°. Spiritually, it means repent and start over.

As for compasses, a good one has at least 32 points, but all have four: N, E, S, W. On most, four ordinals fall halfway between: NE, SE, SW, NW. Along with more refined points. True north may point to the geographic North Pole, but not all roads run true north. You can count on that.

My true True North is not found on a compass. It is a fixed point in the wild woods and spinning world: my faith, values, prayers, scriptural principles, and God's precious promises. And when I'm lost on life's thin gray lines, True North is always my guide home. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** When she finds her way home, Brenda Evans lives in Ashland, Kentucky. Contact her: [beejayevas@windstream.net](mailto:beejayevas@windstream.net).

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## A legacy of integrity...

### When businessman Clarence Lewis joined Randall House Publications

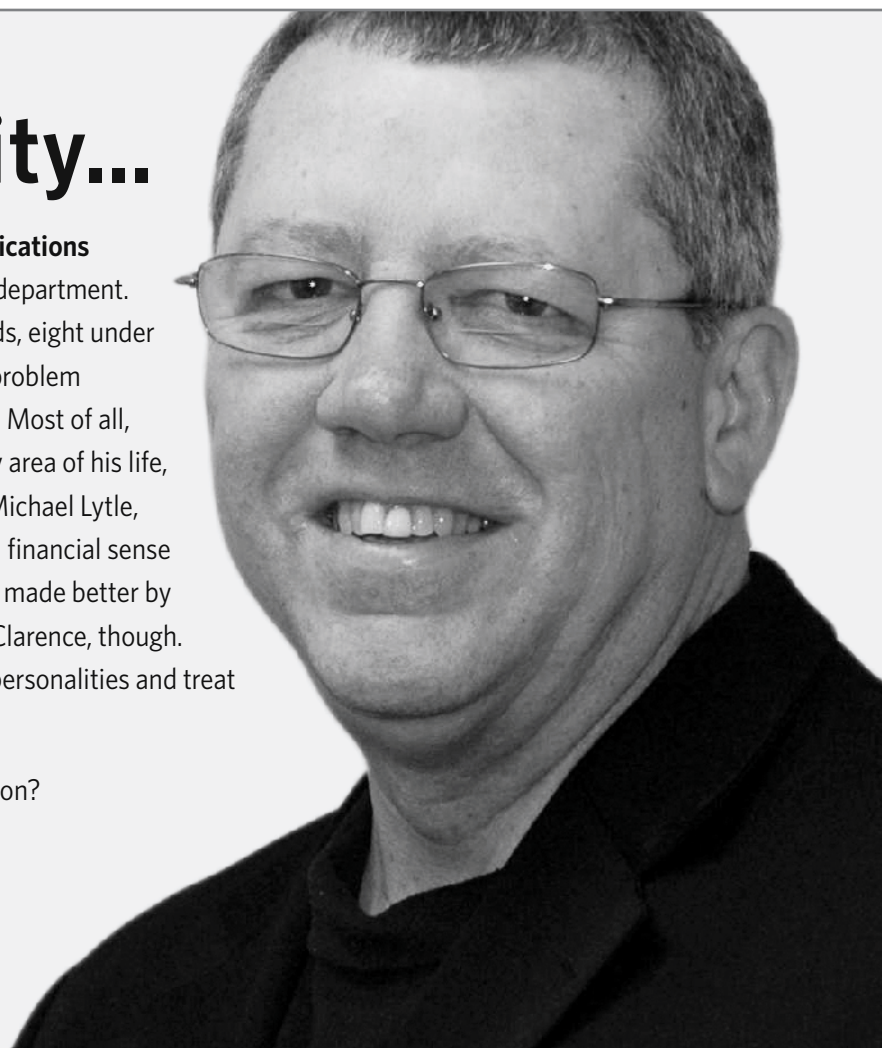
as chief operating officer in 2002, it wasn't his first time with the department. In all, he served 17 years at the publisher—nine under Roger Reeds, eight under Ron Hunter. Clarence brought a unique blend of administration, problem solving, time management, and financial strategy to the ministry. Most of all, Clarence brought integrity. It was a trait that marked him in every area of his life, from home and work to sports and the deacon board at church. Michael Lytle, who followed him at Randall House, recalls, "Clarence had a keen financial sense and just knew how to run a business...Every place he worked was made better by his knowledge and wisdom. It was not all dollars and cents with Clarence, though. He truly cared about people and knew how to manage different personalities and treat everyone with respect while doing so."

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# The Impact of Grants

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Over the last five years, Free Will Baptist Foundation has created a tremendous impact on denominational ministries through the grant program. Many seemingly impossible projects have been completed, and the donor bases of several ministries have been inspired and motivated to support the projects receiving grants. Grants helped stabilize three struggling ministries during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. Since 2017, the Foundation has made grants totaling \$2.6 million. The 2021 grants are listed below, along with a summary of how all grants have been distributed over the life of the program.

## 2021 Grants

1. IM, Inc. — Bulgaria Church (Purchase Building) . . \$100,000
2. Randall House (Book Binder) . . . . . 75,000
3. IM, Inc. — Tanda School (Computer Lab) . . . . . 56,250
4. IM, Inc. — Bondoukou School (School Roof) . . . . . 20,750
5. Camp Hope, IL (Renovations) . . . . . 20,000
6. Cumberland Camp, TN (New Cabins) . . . . . 20,000
7. Morganwood Camp, MS (Renovations) . . . . . 20,000
8. Camp Jacob, VA (Repair Dam) . . . . . 15,500
9. NAM — Reflection Ministries, HI  
(Mobile Church Equipment) . . . . . 15,400
10. BOR (Reinvest Conference) . . . . . 15,000
11. TN State Association (Summer Intern for  
State Director) . . . . . 13,500
12. NAM — Awaken Church, GA  
(Commercial Playground) . . . . . 13,000
13. NAM — Puerto Rico (Christian School Scholarships) . 12,250
14. NAM — Restore Church, VA (Facility Expansion) . . . . 12,075
15. IM, Inc. — Japan (Social Media Project) . . . . . 12,000
16. NW Association, OR (Intern Project) . . . . . 11,880
17. Family Ministries (Maternity Apartments) . . . . . 10,000
18. Harmony Church, OK (Bible Distribution) . . . . . 10,000
19. Camp Niangua, MO (Renovations) . . . . . 9,590


20. NAM — Summit Church, MT  
(Portable Sound System) . . . . . 7,500
21. NAM — Flagship FWB Church, PA  
(Building Renovations) . . . . . 7,000
22. NAM — Grace City, CA  
(Special Needs Children Easter Egg Hunt) . . . . . 6,500
23. IM, Inc. — Ecuador (Equipment to Process  
Tea Leaves Harvest) . . . . . 5,600
24. Texas Mission Board (Hispanic Association) . . . . . 5,000
25. IM, Inc. — Spain (Nerf Ministry) . . . . . 3,755
26. IM, Inc. — Ecuador (Solar Power) . . . . . 2,450

**Total \$500,000**

Since 2017, 41 ministries have received grants. The following is a summary of the ministries blessed by these grants (not exhaustive):

- Welch College . . . . . \$600,000
- IM, Inc. . . . . 530,805
- Randall House . . . . . 315,000
- Camps . . . . . 292,440
- Other Colleges . . . . . 154,500
- NAM . . . . . 138,225
- WNAC . . . . . 122,000
- State Ministries . . . . . 102,880
- Children’s Home . . . . . 81,500
- Local Churches . . . . . 78,000
- BOR . . . . . 62,650
- ONE Magazine . . . . . 36,500
- Rekindle . . . . . 35,000

**About the Columnist:** David Brown is director of Free Will Baptist Foundation. To learn more about the grants program, visit [www.fwbgifts.org](http://www.fwbgifts.org).



# What We *Learned* About *Free Will Baptists* and **Ordination**

A REPORT FROM  
THE COMMITTEE ON  
DENOMINATIONAL RESEARCH

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

In fall 2020, the Committee on Denominational Research (CDR) sought information regarding ordination practices across the denomination. The survey received responses from 18 states and one Canadian province, representing 66 local (district or quarterly) and state associations. Of the respondents to the survey, 95% currently serve or previously served as part of the official ordination process for their local association or quarterly.

According to responses, these groups charged with ordination go by a variety of names: ordaining or ordination council, presbytery board, ordaining committee, examining committee, or credentials board, among others. For simplicity, this article simply refers to these various groups as “ordaining bodies” and those recommended for ordination as “candidates.”



## Difficult Questions

The vast majority (83.3%) of ordaining bodies use a standard questionnaire to assess candidates for ordination. However, 56% of these ordaining bodies do not conduct criminal background checks, and another 21% indicated they are unlikely to do so. The same is true when it comes to finances, with 48% indicating no financial status check and another 27% indicating they are unlikely to do so.

Interestingly, a majority (54.2%) of ordaining bodies do not meet (or are unlikely to meet) the candidate's wife during the ordination process. And only 10.6% of ordaining bodies have a policy that requires meeting the candidate's wife. Yet, a strong majority (76%) will not ordain someone who has been divorced, and 44.7% will not ordain anyone whose spouse has been divorced.

While some respondents indicate a preference for pastoral candidates to have a certain level of education, a wide majority of ordaining bodies (80.3%) place no educational requirements on ordination. At least one ordaining body requires candidates to complete required reading and training seminars during licensure.

## Assessing Pastoral Qualifications (According to 1 Timothy 3)

Most ordaining bodies assess each candidate's knowledge of and commitment to Free Will Baptist doctrine through a series of questions administered through written applications or verbal interview (and both in many cases). They lean heavily upon the testimony of the recommending church or previous association when it comes to assessing whether a candidate meets biblical qualifications.

Most indicate no "formal" assessment to gauge the candidate's ability to preach and teach. Others make opportunity for the candidate to preach at an associational meeting (often corresponding to the meeting where the candidate is examined for ordination). A handful of ordaining bodies require the candidate to submit written or recorded messages for members to review prior to in-person examination.

The same reliance on the testimony of the recommending church or previous association is also true when it comes to the candidate's general leadership abilities, sober-mindedness, and ability to minister to the needs of others. Some boards require answers to questions regarding ministry and life philosophy or present on-the-spot ministry scenarios to which the candidate must respond during written and oral interviews. Many respondents openly admit the need to "do a better job assessing these biblical qualifications" as an ordaining body.

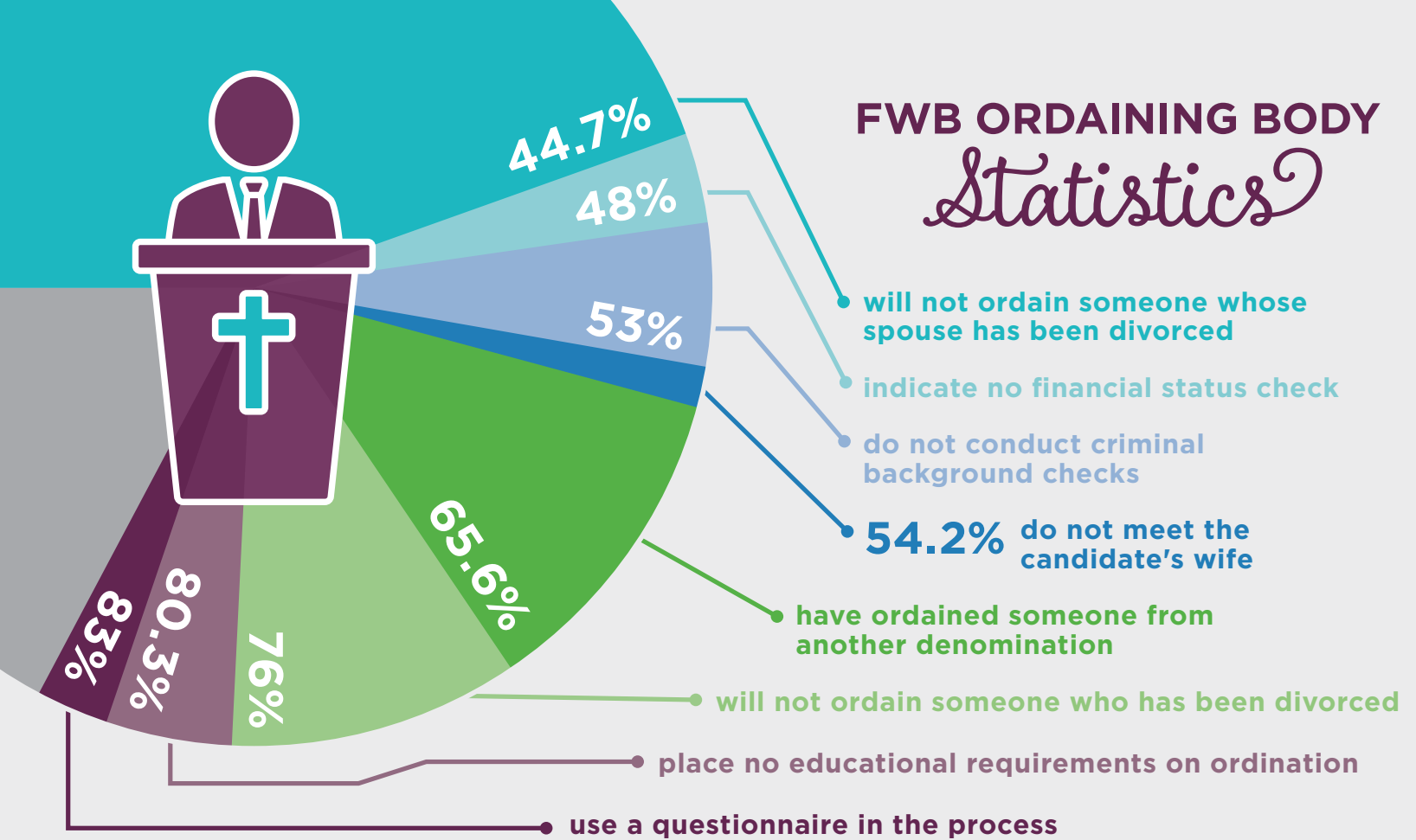
One association pairs each candidate with a "seasoned pastor for mentoring" over a set period of time, and then relies upon the recommendation of that minister regarding ordination.

## Transfers of Ordination

When a church or candidate requests transfer of ordination from another Free Will Baptist association, most ordaining bodies simply require a letter of good standing from that body. Others, however, contact the previous ordaining body to make inquiries regarding the candidate. Several associations require those transferring ordination to follow the same rigorous process as new candidates.

When a pastor (or ordaining body) requests transfer of ordination to another Free Will Baptist association, most ordaining bodies provide a letter of good standing, unless some known behavior or troubling church polity would prohibit good standing. Some associations take this a step further, interviewing the pastor's most recent church before meeting as a board to take a formal vote on whether to recommend the candidate for transfer of ordination. One respondent noted about this process, "We don't just rubber stamp them and send them on their merry way!"

The majority (65.6%) of ordaining bodies have ordained someone from another denomination by simply requiring these individuals to go through the steps required for ordination (although some do not include licensure due to experience). As noted earlier, most ordaining bodies lean heavily on questionnaires that include questions regarding Free Will Baptist doctrine. In the case of someone from another denomination, extra attention is given to



denominational distinctives. In addition, some ordaining bodies require a probationary year, extra vetting regarding doctrine, ongoing supervision and reporting by local church leaders, or required reading in Free Will Baptist doctrine.

### Discipline and Restoration

Discipline of ordained individuals is largely handled on a case-by-case basis. However, most ordaining bodies indicate the following general process for discipline: when an accusation is received, the accused has opportunity to respond (usually by a personal phone call or a visit by a member of the ordaining body or associational leadership). If the response is unsatisfactory, or if the seriousness of the accusation warrants, a second interview is conducted by a small group, committee, or board. Ultimately, the matter is presented to the larger association to determine officially whether ordination credentials will be revoked. One respondent notes the serious nature of this process, stating, “We have to act on accurate information and not hearsay.”

A limited number of ordaining bodies have an established plan of restoration for those who have been stripped of ordination for disciplinary reasons. Often taken on a case-by-case basis, these restoration procedures are varied. However, most seem to include the following: obvious repentance, willingness to submit to restoration guidelines, ongoing counseling where warranted, regular accountability, and a probationary period.

### A Serious Process

While those surveyed openly admitted to room for improvement in the ordination process, their serious answers also make it clear ordination is something Free Will Baptists take seriously.

To learn more about the CDR, or to read more survey results, visit [www.nafwb.org/research](http://www.nafwb.org/research).

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**About the Writer:** Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of *ONE Magazine*. Email: [eric@nafwb.org](mailto:eric@nafwb.org).

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# NORTH AMERICAN MINISTRIES Launches **5-YEAR** Strategic Plan



Having a plan is an important step to getting things accomplished. In the summer of 2020, the NAM directors and board chairman met for a three-day staff retreat where we spent time in prayer and strategic planning. We developed a five-year plan involving all areas of NAM ministry. We gained so much momentum coming out of the retreat that **many of the goals we set are already being accomplished.** This strategic plan was officially released during the 2021 National Convention in Memphis, Tennessee.

## The goals include:

- Increase total number of **English-speaking church planters** to 55
- Increase total numbers of **Spanish-speaking church planters** to 100
- Launch on-site **church planter assessment center** (*Accomplished!*)
- Translate ten Master's Men **Bible studies into Spanish**
- Create and launch a national **Master's Men Retreat**
- Develop and launch a **youth training program** for teen boys through Master's Men
- CELF to exceed **\$100 million** in investments (*Currently over \$90M!*)
- Increase number of **chaplains** (*active and in process*) to 20
- Double the number of **churches giving to NAM**
- Increase general fund contingency to **\$1 million**

As we move into the fall of 2021, we are on our way to accomplishing many of these goals. We are thankful to God and to our entire department for their hard work, dedication, and passion to see NAM become the best it can be. We are also thankful for our partnering churches and individuals. We can't do what we do without you. Please continue to pray for us as we move into the future and work to accomplish these goals.

Someone from our department would love to come to your church or district/state association to share the mission, vision, and updates for North American Ministries. If we can assist you in any way, please let us know. Call us at **877-767-7674**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT **FWBNAM**, VISIT **FWBNAM.COM**

# SOLDIER

## For Life

BY JOHN CAREY



“For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end” (Jeremiah 29:11).

The place is Murray-Calloway County Hospital (MCCH), in Murray, Kentucky. I am sitting in a hospital room this midweek morning visiting with a patient. I have the privilege of visiting 90-120 hospital patients from the community of Murray every week. I am honored to represent the Lord Jesus Christ to all patients and visiting families, many who allow me to stay beyond an introduction and business card. Around 80-90% will allow a visit, share their hearts and concerns, and most are open to a word of prayer upon departure.

This late winter morning, I am not visiting just another patient. This patient is a U.S. Marine Corps veteran. By the way, marines no longer serving on active duty still consider themselves marines. In fact, I must confess I've rarely met a veteran unwilling to serve this nation again, if called upon, regardless of physical condition. Thus, I might be a retired U.S. Army Chaplain (Major), but I also have various lapel pins and shirts that identify me as a soldier for life. I couldn't agree more. "I used to be a soldier" is NOT a part of my vocabulary.

This soldier has now served more than two years in hospital ministry as a chaplain on the pastoral care team at MCCH. I thank the Lord I received the required training in hospital chaplaincy through my clinical pastoral education course (CPE) at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., during 2010-11.

For those unfamiliar with hospital ministry, it is not for the faint of heart. I have served, prayed with, and become friends with thousands of patients, many whose funerals I later attended or helped officiate. I often become too attached to patients who regularly invite me back to their hospital room for visits and prayer, especially as their lives on this Earth begin to wind down. Losing patients who become friends here at MCCH is hard, but I am

**“I USED TO BE A  
SOLDIER” IS NOT  
A PART OF MY  
VOCABULARY.**





thankful for the opportunity to share Jesus with many, and even more thankful to see some accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Additionally, I have seen many other patients draw closer to the Lord as their time of death draws near.

Can this soldier for life make a quick suggestion? Please take time to support the veterans and chaplains in your church through prayers and your gratitude, checking often to make sure they are okay. A simple thank you or

a cup of coffee can work wonders. The same is true for retired missionaries and pastors as well. Their service may have diminished somewhat with time and age, but their desire to serve never ends until God calls them home. They are soldiers for life in God's army.

May God bless you! It has always been my honor to represent and support my Free Will Baptist denomination, my soldiers, and now, my hospital patients, staff, and fellow veterans. [ONE](#)

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**About the Writer:** Former military chaplain John C. Carey serves as staff chaplain at the Murray-Calloway County Hospital. Learn more about Free Will Baptist chaplain ministry: [fwbnam.com](http://fwbnam.com).

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## MISSION NORTH AMERICA OFFERING

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# Essential Systems

BY BRAD RANSOM

Church health is dependent on the blessing of the Holy Spirit, but the church also must establish a long-term plan. Every church must have eight essential systems in order to ensure everything gets done. Below is a bullet point outline of the eight systems. Each is a massive undertaking to develop, flesh out, and execute. Each system should be clearly defined, developed, and distributed so every leader and church member knows how it works.

## System #1 - Outreach

This includes everything your church does to introduce your church to the community, including web services (website, social media), marketing and advertising, printing, events, and more.

## System #2 - Assimilation

Assimilation begins with first impressions and includes follow up with guests (phone calls, emails, texting, mail pieces, etc.) How does your church encourage first time guests to become second and third time guests to regular attenders? How does your church intentionally make this process happen? This is where discipleship begins and continues in system #3.

## System #3 - Teaching

Teaching includes small group Bible study (Sunday School, life groups, etc.), pulpit ministry, children and youth ministry, special events (VBS, conferences, seminars, etc.), new believer's classes, personal discipleship, and all other areas of teaching.

## System #4 - Worship Planning

This includes stage décor, order of service, sermon topics or series, sermon research and preparation.

## System #5 - Stewardship (Financial Policies)

Important financial policies include budgeting, reporting to donors, setting up financial accountability, creating multiple ways for people to give (cash, check, online, app, etc.), policies regarding raising money and giving towards special events, capital giving, missions, Christian education, local community projects and services, etc.

## System #6 - Member Care

Member care includes caring for the flock—sick, shut-ins, widows/



orphans, needy and hurting (counseling). Does all of this fall to the pastor? Deacons? Other leaders, group leaders, etc.?

## System #7 - Leadership

Think of this in terms of ALL people involved in ministry. Do you have a hiring policy for paid staff? Does your church have a policies and procedures handbook? How do you recruit volunteers? What is expected? How does the church relieve people of duties? Who has authority? How are leaders trained and evaluated?

## System #8 - Evaluation

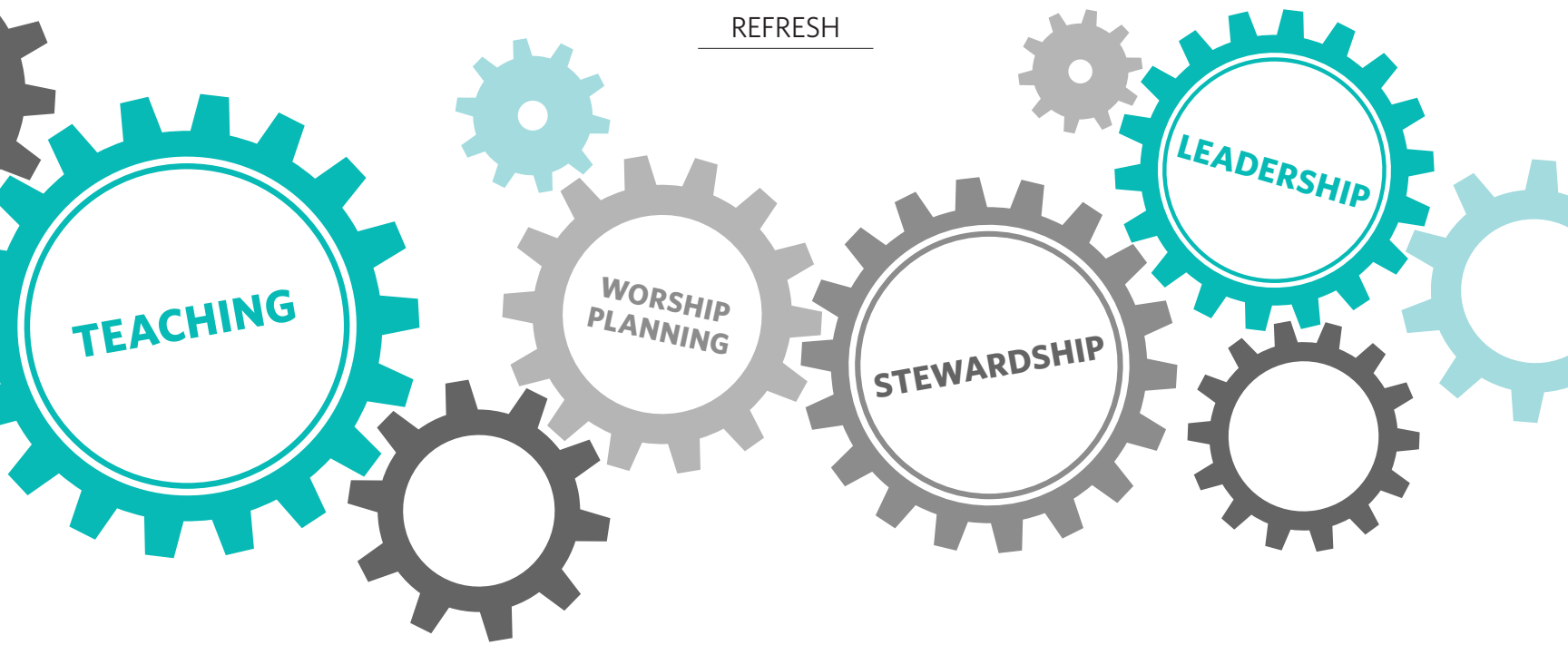
What is the evaluation process for everything that happens in your church? What is the process for change? What "power" does the pastor have? Deacons? Who can make changes?

All of these systems must be determined and carried out for the





REFRESH



church to be healthy. If your church does not have a well-thought-out plan and a way to execute the plan, it cannot be carried out. Having well-established systems eliminates

the guess work about getting things done.

For more information, watch a video seminar on this important subject:

<https://vimeo.com/531463420>

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

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# Taste and See, That the Lord Is Good, Part Two

BY MATTHEW MCAFFEE

## PSALM 34:6-9

As we learned in the previous issue, Psalm 34 is a beautifully written psalm of thanksgiving, a Hebrew poem and acrostic of the Hebrew alphabet. Verses 6 and 7 reminded us the Lord helps the humble. Just as He helped the hapless Hebrews through the Exodus, He helps us through His presence and salvation: “The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him.”

**Taste and see (verses 8-9).** With the truth of God’s presence in mind, verse 8 urges the reader to *taste and see that the LORD is good*. This is a matter of experience. Experience is not the only means of verifying the presence of God in our lives, but it is a valid test. The psalmist invokes food imagery here, comparing the delights of the LORD with tasty delicacies that enliven the taste buds.

Keep in mind, this statement does not deny the reality of lament, since the psalmist likely experienced the difficulty of waiting on the Lord in adversity. Indeed, he did experience adversity, because he cried out to the Lord. We must not separate the statement, “Taste and see that the Lord is good,” from the difficult circumstances from which these words were uttered. We often fail

to understand the goodness of the Lord until we experience the distress of waiting on Him in trouble.

*Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.* Why would we need refuge if the follower of God experienced no trouble? Obviously, the godly suffer distress many times while seeking to live godly lives. The latter verses of this psalm remind us, “Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him from them all” (verse 20). We must define *blessing* in a biblical way, not a modern, materialistic, success-oriented way. *Blessing* comes from the LORD’s presence. This is why David could say when facing the valley of the shadow of death, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies” (Psalm 23:5). The table represents the paradox of eating a wonderful meal in the LORD’s presence while enemies press in on all sides. This is what God’s presence does in our lives.

Taste and see that the Lord is good! Even when life is bad.

**Fear the Lord (verse 9).** As Solomon clarified at the beginning of his proverbs, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction” (Proverbs 1:7). What should

I do when distress comes against me? *Fear the Lord*. What does it mean to fear the LORD? The fear of the LORD is the first step down the road of obedience to God’s commands. The psalmist anticipates the: “Who is the man who delights in life, who loves days to see good?” (verse 12). Here is what that person does:

- Guards the tongue from evil and falsehood (verse 13).
- Turns from evil to do good (verse 14a).
- Pursues peace (verse 14b).

When distress comes against you, it is time to fear the Lord. It is time to guard your tongue from evil and falsehood. It is time to turn from evil and practice the good, noble, and excellent. It is time to avoid strife and pursue peace with your whole heart. This is how we should respond to trouble. And trouble will come.

Where are you today? Are you troubled and downcast? You are not alone. Keep waiting on the LORD. Cry out to Him, and He will hear you. There is an inexorable link between the fear of the LORD and the presence of the LORD in our lives. Often, we struggle with knowing the *presence* of the Lord because we





do not faithfully practice the *fear* the Lord. The only way to experience the bountiful banquet in the presence of the Lord is by fearing the Lord. It is the beginning of all knowledge and understanding.

Some reading this article may need to recommit to a life of obedience in the presence of the Lord. *Your obedience is not the means of God accepting you; it is your response to God accepting you in Christ.* Others may be staring into the valley of the shadow of death. You are living in the fear of the Lord, yet troubles have surrounded you. Be encouraged. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers them from them all. Hold on. Taste and see the goodness of the Lord, even in adversity. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him.

The world is in disarray: political unrest, pandemic, economic uncertainty, emotional distress, and

anxiety. Recent days are unlike any others in most of our lifetimes. It often feels the bottom of everything is about to fall out. But we know from Scripture, that is not the way the Lord works. He is Lord of history. Even in the midst of distress and utter chaos, He is working, often quietly in the background. Note the comforting words of Psalm 93:1-2: "Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Your throne is established from of old; you are from everlasting."

God is never surprised by our circumstances. He is not caught off guard by our distress. Today is a time to draw near to our loving Lord in humility, to taste of His goodness, and to live lives of fear and devotion to Him. We must not place our confidence in the false narratives of the world or listen to the lies of a sinful heart in despair and discouragement. It is time for

truth, anchoring our soul in His peace that alone can calm our troubled souls.

It is good to know that in times of difficulty and discouragement, we can rest assured one day we will look back on this moment and say with the psalmist:

*This poor man cried out and the LORD heard;*

*And from all his distresses he rescued him.*

*Taste and see that the LORD is good;*

*Blessed is the man who trusts in him. **ONE***

---

**About the Columnist:** Dr. Matthew McAfee is provost and professor of biblical studies at Welch College: [mjmcafee@welch.edu](mailto:mjmcafee@welch.edu).

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# *Fighting* FOR THE First Amendment

*Slowing the Momentum of the Secular Left Against the  
First Amendment Rights of Traditional Religious Colleges*

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

A recent lawsuit filed by the Religious Exemption Accountability Project against the U.S. Department of Education took aim at the funding of colleges and universities with policies that prohibit LGBT conduct.

The class action lawsuit named 25 conservative religious colleges including Baylor, Bob Jones, Westmont, Fuller, Union, Liberty, and Lipscomb. Specifically, the suit holds that the Department of Education should not allow such schools to claim religious exemptions to orders and statutes prohibiting discrimination against LGBT individuals.

The timing of the suit is obvious in light of the recent passage of the Equality Act by the U.S. House and the introduction of the Bill in the U.S. Senate. It reveals the careful strategy of the LGBT lobby to silence traditional religious groups and their institutions from the public square, when their sincerely-held religious beliefs limit homosexual and transgender identification or behavior.

Free Will Baptists need to understand the seriousness of this assault on First Amendment freedoms. Students from most Evangelical, Catholic, Orthodox, Mormon, Jewish, and Muslim colleges, universities, and K-12 schools with traditional views on sexuality and gender receive funding from the federal government. Many of these schools would be





## Amendment I ★

*Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.*

RATIFIED INTO THE CONSTITUTION OF THE  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA ON DECEMBER 15, 1791

forced to close their doors if students were deprived of these funds, since many of these students could no longer afford to attend these institutions.

This situation represents the first in what is sure to be a long line of attempts by the secular left to drive these institutions out of operation. LGBT rights groups have openly declared their intentions to go beyond removal of Title IV funding from the U.S. Department of Education and continue toward the removal of tax exemption, the removal of all forms of federally recognized accreditation, and more.

In short, this powerful lobby believes that policies precluding LGBT conduct are the same as excluding people on the basis of racial or ethnic identity. If this approach takes hold in the wider political culture, soon all non-profit institutions with traditional beliefs regarding sexual morality and gender identity will be deprived of their historic First Amendment rights to the free exercise of their religion.

### What Can I Do?

What can an ordinary Free Will Baptist do to countermand this situation?

**Educate yourself.** I recommend that you familiarize yourself with the current conversation on these issues. One helpful resource is *The Briefing* by Dr. Albert Mohler, a daily update on this and other critical matters

concerning Christians and culture. Also helpful is the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), the legal organization that has successfully argued so many religious liberty cases before the U.S. Supreme Court. This organization provided legal counsel for Welch College in 2019 when the college came under fire for its traditional Christian stance on sexuality and gender. I strongly recommend ADF.

Other good organizations defending religious liberty and providing helpful resources include Dr. David Black and the Religious Liberty Coalition and David Gibbs III and the National Center for Life and Liberty.

**Exercise your rights as a citizen in a representative democracy.** Exercise your influence as a citizen by *kindly* and *humbly* communicating with your U.S. representatives and senators and state legislators. Keep them informed of the impact of the Equality Act and similar initiatives on the existence of traditional religious nonprofits. This includes colleges, universities, K-12 schools, and thousands of other religious nonprofits that save the state billions of dollars each year in costly educational and social services.

Political engagement exists in the context of broader cultural engagement and does not function in a vacuum. Yet we have the ability to exercise the rights of our citizenship in a democratic republic that governs through representative democracy.

Unfortunately, the religious liberty community does not have as loud a voice as many other liberal or even conservative interest groups. Consider, for example, the LGBT lobby, the environmental lobby, and even the



gun rights or pro-life lobbies. Elected representatives are kept apprised of what those groups deem important. It is incumbent for us as Christians to communicate concerns about religious liberty to our elected representatives on the federal and state levels.

Particularly, traditional religious people need to make their elected representatives aware of the effect the Equality Act would have on religious liberty. It would be the most sweeping legislation threatening religious freedom in the history of the U.S. If the act passes, most traditional colleges, schools, social service agencies, and other non-profits sponsored by traditional churches, denominations, synagogues, and mosques simply could not survive.

For example, the accreditation of traditional religious colleges, schools, and seminaries, whose deeply held religious beliefs prohibit their hiring of LGBT individuals and admitting of LGBT students, would be endangered. Furthermore, student access to Title IV funds would be eliminated. Thus, such institutions, which have saved the states billions of dollars and have educated citizens and community leaders for decades—even centuries—would immediately be forced out of business.

This is because the Equality Act explicitly states organizations will not be protected by the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) of 1993. RFRA was introduced by Congressman Chuck Schumer of New York. Passed unanimously in the U.S. House, with only three dissenting votes in the U.S. Senate, it was eagerly signed by President Bill Clinton. This act guarantees the freedom of conscience for traditional religious people promised in the First Amendment. Yet the Equality Act would do away with these protections.

Even elected representatives who do not share our deeply held religious beliefs need to be made aware of the valuable role traditional religious colleges, schools, adoption and other social services agencies, and religious non-profits have long played in our society. They need to understand clearly the existential threat this entire sector faces should the Equality Act pass.

**Financial support.** Concerned churches and individuals also can increase charitable giving to institutions like Welch College. Christian colleges and universities stand to lose the most the fastest as a result of the momentum

the LGBT lobby is gaining.


Quite simply, if the Equality Act passes, the only thing that will ultimately sustain Welch is the financial support of its denominational, church, alumni, and donor base. This financial support has never been so important. Its increase is the greatest bulwark against the loss of Title IV funds and tax exemption.

**Speak the truth in love.** Love is the final apologetic, as Francis Schaeffer used to say. If we are not careful to love individuals whose human flourishing and spiritual lives are being harmed by LGBT ideology, and show that love observably, we will not have the right, spiritually, to speak the truth we say we believe.

In this regard, I highly recommend the writings of Rosaria Butterfield, an evangelical pastor's wife who used to be a lesbian critical theory professor. Dr. Butterfield came to faith as a result of the humble, hospitable witness of a conservative evangelical pastor and his wife in a small congregation.

This pastor, his wife, and their church bore witness to the truth of Holy Scripture regarding what kind of sexual identities and relationships honor God and His creative design and foster human flourishing. They were loving and kind and hospitable to Butterfield and her friends, who were at the vanguard of the LGBT movement.

**Pray.** Ask God to provide wisdom for people in leadership. Ask Him to help legislators on the federal and state levels to understand what is at stake with the Equality Act and other initiatives that jeopardize the First Amendment rights of every citizen.

And pray for God to renew faithful churches that confidently teach and model the doctrine and practice the Spirit gives us in His Word, speak the truth in love, and spread the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes. 

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**About the Writer:** J. Matthew Pinson is president of Welch College and chairman of the Free Will Baptist Commission for Theological Integrity. Learn more: [www.Welch.edu](http://www.Welch.edu).

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# Welch College Graduates 68 During May 7 Commencement

Welch College conferred degrees on 68 graduates for the class of 2021 and recognized 26 recipients of degrees from the class of 2020 on Friday, May 7, according to Provost Matthew McAfee.

The college held two commencement ceremonies in the Student Activities Center. Attendees for both ceremonies were scaled back due to COVID-19 social distancing protocols. Both ceremonies accommodated additional guests with overflow seating for livestream coverage in Celorio Auditorium.

During the 10:00 a.m. ceremony, the institution awarded all bachelor's degrees to the Class of 2021. In the 2:00 p.m. ceremony, the college granted associate's and master's degrees for graduates of 2021 and recognized participants from the graduating Class of 2020.

Dr. Steve Lemke, Vice President of Institutional Effectiveness and Provost Emeritus at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, delivered the commencement address for both ceremonies. He challenged graduates to pursue their vocational aspirations as a spiritual calling. All graduates, regardless of major, he said, are being sent out on mission to make a difference in the world for the kingdom of Christ.

President Matt Pinson recognized Dr. Ron Callaway on his retirement

from the faculty, the longest-serving Missions/Intercultural Studies professor in Welch history. The president also recognized Dr. Thurman Pate, former chair of the Teacher Education Department, for his retirement from the faculty in May 2020.

Other retiree recognitions included long-time Christian Service Director John Murray, who served three decades in this post after missionary service; former Director of Online Studies Allan Crowson, former Director of Cleaning Operations Ernie Thomson; and Special Assistant to the President Dr. Charles Lea.

The college commends to you and to the work of the Lord the members of the 2021 and 2020 graduating classes.

## *Class of 2021*

### **Associate of Science Degrees**

Laura Ann Boivin  
Gallatin, TN  
Early Childhood

Lee Ann Branch  
Darlington, SC  
Business

Katelynn Grace Chandler  
De Soto, MO  
Biology

Rebekah Elaine Ammini Chapman  
Hannibal, MO  
Biology

Julianna Celeste Foster  
Hendersonville, TN  
Biology

Kelli Savannah Kelly  
Fayette, Alabama  
Business

Halle Beth Lewis  
Norman, OK  
Biology

Shelby Louise Owens  
La Vergne, TN  
Biology

Ashleigh Marlene Sage  
Wilson, NC  
Biology

Lillian Claire Simpson  
Hendersonville, TN  
Biology

Kalena Elaine Taylor  
Dover, TN  
Teacher Education for Early  
Childhood

Naomi Duran Vazquez  
Bethpage, TN  
Biology

### **Associate of Arts Degrees**

Loren Danielle Craig  
Hermitage, TN  
Teaching

Joy Faith Green  
Pleasant Shade, TN  
Teaching

Abigail Lynn Myers  
Flat Rock, MI  
Teaching

**Bachelor of Science Degrees**

Emily Elizabeth Abel\*  
Hendersonville, TN  
Child Development and Learning

Justice J. Alameda  
Chattanooga, TN  
Psychology

Catherine Rose Blades\*\*\*  
Cedar Hill, TN  
Biology

Kenae Ashley Briggs  
Chesterfield, VA  
Psychology

Adam William Brown\*\*\*  
Eldorado, IL  
Theological Studies

Mikaela Deanna Bullard\*\*  
Virginia Beach, VA  
Psychology

Blake Christopher Chandler\*\*\*  
Westmoreland, TN  
Business Administration

Makenzie Grace Crain\*  
Portland, TN  
Psychology

Michaela Roshele Easley\*\*\*  
Dickson, TN  
Early Childhood

James Wilson Gates  
Pleasant View, TN  
Exercise Science

Hannah Katherine Gorrell\*\*  
Scott Depot, WV  
Biology Education

Allyson Kate Greenwood\*  
Nashville, TN  
Elementary Education

Stacey Young Haralson  
Nashville, TN  
Theological Studies

Rachel DeAnn Hastings  
Owasso, OK  
Business Administration

Kelsey Renee Horton\*\*  
Ashland City, TN  
Child Development and Learning

Bryan Thomas Houser\*\*\*  
Chesterfield, VA  
Music Performance

Jami Miranda Howell\*\*  
ChIPLEY, FL  
Psychology

Daniel Elmore Hunter\*  
Tuscaloosa, AL  
Biology

Margaret Grace Jackson  
Algood, TN  
Theological Studies

Tyler Jordan Justice  
Greenville, NC  
Business

Samuel Arden Lane\*  
Bluff City, TN  
Psychology

John Andrew McClure  
Pleasant View, TN  
Music Performance

Destinee Autumn Payne\*\*\*  
Box Elder, SD  
Child Development and Learning

Jonathan McGuire Payne\*\*\*  
Ina, IL  
Theological Studies

Ashlee Rose Presley\*  
Oak Ridge, TN  
Psychology

Laurel Madelyn Woodis Pruitt\*\*  
White House, TN  
Child Development and Learning

Elaine Taylor Park Pugh\*  
Gallatin, TN  
Psychology

Kendal Lee Ryan\*\*\*  
Ina, IL  
English, Secondary Education

Ashley Rae Sammons  
Westerville, OH  
Psychology

Jim Bryson Taylor  
Roan Mountain, TN  
Theological Studies

William Garry Walker\*  
Spruce Pine, AL  
Theological Studies

Rebecca Lynn Wall\*  
Belmont, NC  
Psychology

Kullen Reece Williams\*\*\*  
Antioch, TN  
Theological Studies

Emily Claire Wise\*  
Lebanon, TN  
Psychology

Andrew Bryant Yerby\*\*  
Fayette, AL  
Business Administration

Elizabeth Ann Yerby\*\*  
Madison, AL  
Child Development and Learning

**Bachelor of Arts Degrees**

Hailey Savannah Boyer\*  
Fredericktown, MO  
English

Hannah Katherine Goucher\*\*  
Hernando, MS  
Intercultural Studies

Taylor Melayne Pate\*\*  
Lake Butler, FL  
Intercultural Studies

Kasey L Perry  
Goldsboro, NC  
English

Mallie Scott Sharenberger\*\*\*  
Elmwood, TN  
History

Jonathan Brooks Truett\*  
Kinston, NC  
Pastoral Ministry



**Bachelor of Music Education**

Summer Dawn Walker\*\*  
Depew, NY  
Music Education

**Master of Arts Degrees**

Derek Allen Altom  
Old Hickory, TN  
Theology and Ministry

Russell Douglas Houske  
Gallatin, TN  
Theology and Ministry

Joshua Allen Hunter  
Pleasant View, TN  
Theology and Ministry

Lazaro Riesgo  
Miami, FL  
Theology and Ministry

Matthew Wayne Rose  
Coeburn, VA  
Theology and Ministry

Carl David Short  
Blue Springs, MO  
Theology and Ministry

**Master of Arts in Teaching Degrees**

Jennifer Trice Morrison  
Gallatin, TN  
Special Education

Carrigan Taylor Pate  
Hendersonville, TN  
Teaching

Hannah Elizabeth Postlewaite  
Christiansted, VI  
Teaching

Maredith Claire Ryan  
Hendersonville, TN  
Instructional Leadership

\*\*\* Summa Cum Laude - 3.75

\*\* Magna Cum Laude-3.50

\* Cum Laude-3.25

† Not Present

The graduates from the class of 2020 were listed in the October-November 2020 issue of *ONE Magazine*. [ONE](#)

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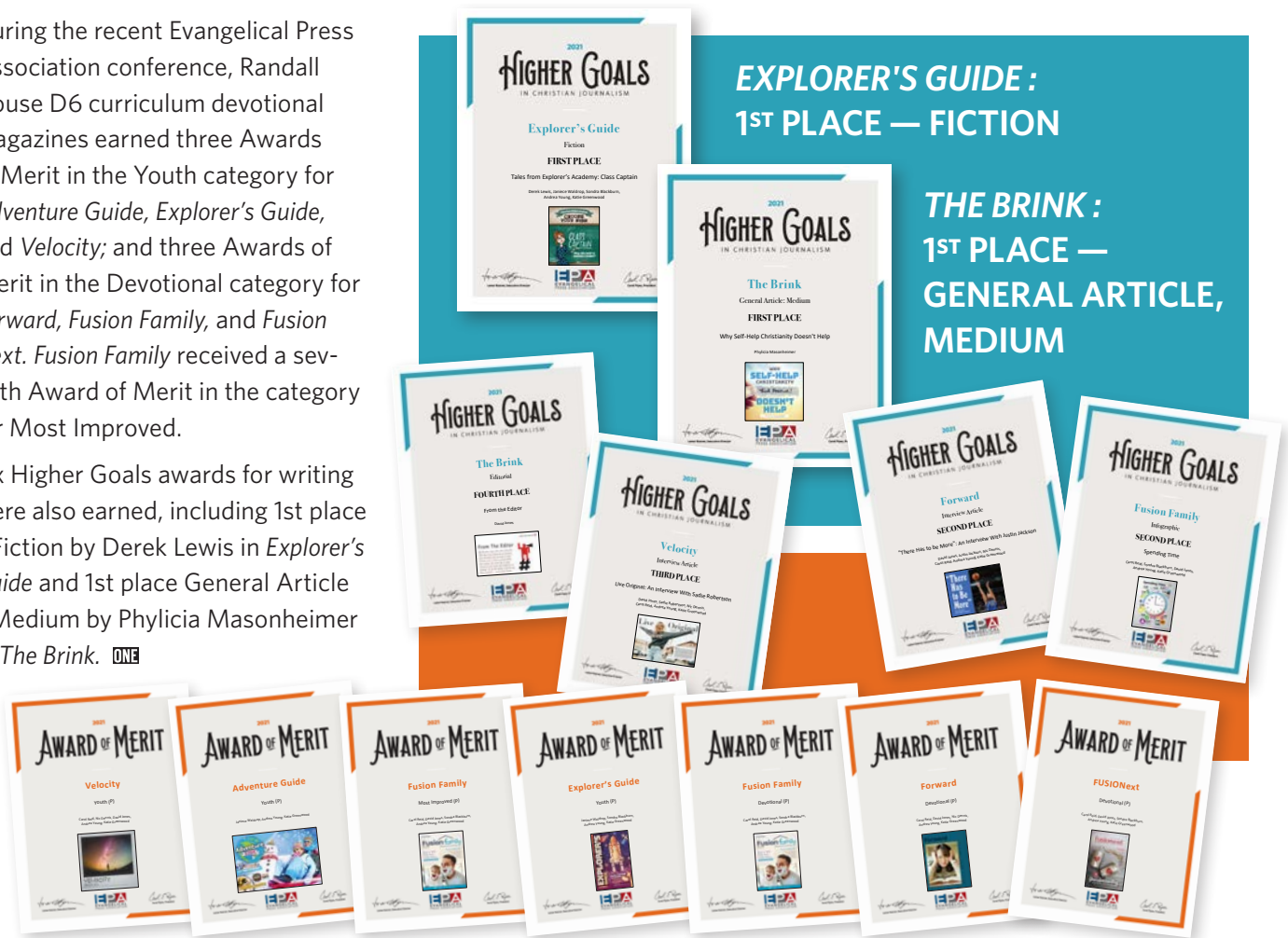
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# D6 Curriculum Receives 13 EPA Awards

During the recent Evangelical Press Association conference, Randall House D6 curriculum devotional magazines earned three Awards of Merit in the Youth category for *Adventure Guide*, *Explorer's Guide*, and *Velocity*; and three Awards of Merit in the Devotional category for *Forward*, *Fusion Family*, and *Fusion Next*. *Fusion Family* received a seventh Award of Merit in the category for Most Improved.

Six Higher Goals awards for writing were also earned, including 1st place - Fiction by Derek Lewis in *Explorer's Guide* and 1st place General Article - Medium by Phylicia Masonheimer in *The Brink*. **ONE**



# Randall House Purchases Binder Machine

Randall House purchased a new perfect binder machine with a grant received from the Free Will Baptist Foundation, enabling the publisher to bind books in-house. Because the full book publishing process—printing, binding, and shipping—can now be completed entirely within the walls of Randall House, the process is less expensive and more time-efficient. **ONE**





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# Overcome

## MEMORABLE MEETING ON THE MISSISSIPPI

85TH *nafwb* CONVENTION \* JULY 18-21, 2021 \* MEMPHIS, TN

Alternating sun and showers caused steam to rise from the muddy banks of the Mississippi when Free Will Baptists returned to Memphis, Tennessee, July 18-21, for the denomination's 85th National Convention. Yet no one complained about the heat, humidity, and rain. After two years apart due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Free Will Baptists were simply happy to be back together.

The excitement and gratitude carried over into worship services marked by enthusiastic congregational singing, powerful preaching, and special music that spontaneously brought the congregation to its feet on multiple occasions. Keynote speakers Danny Conn (TN), Melvin Moon (MO), Christian Powell (NC), Keith Burden (OK), Eddie Moody (TN), and John Weaver (OK) explored the obviously relevant theme "Overcome" from various Scripture passages, reminding attendees during difficult times they should sow seed (Matthew 13:1-23), follow the Good Shepherd (Matthew 18:10-14), work together (Matthew 18:15-35), be good stewards (Matthew 25:14-30), and reach out to everyone (Luke 14:15-24).

In addition to worship services, convention attendees participated in communion and the washing of the saints' feet on Sunday (the first time that ordinance has been observed at the National Convention). Throughout the week, conven-

tion-goers also took advantage of more than 70 seminars, workshops, and panel discussions exploring important subjects related to families, churches, ministry, theology, and more. Children and teens enjoyed age-appropriate activities, crafts, and worship.

### STARTING IMPACT

July 17, the Saturday preceding the convention, 91 volunteers took part in IMPACT, the annual one-day campaign of kindness and evangelism. Fifty-one workers assembled at Cross Creek FWB Church in Olive Branch, Mississippi, to host a free car wash and take a prayer walk through communities surrounding the church. They washed 34 cars and trucks, prayed over 621 houses, and prayed with 15 individuals during the event. Cross Creek pastor Paul Bryant said, "What a blessing to be part of IMPACT! Through a free car wash and neighborhood prayer walk, we connected with



our community and showed them a God who loves them and a church that cares for them. We are thankful for the many contacts we gained because of this ministry.”

On the other side of Memphis, in the Oakland community, a second team of 40 volunteers worked at Faith FWB Church with Pastor Jordan Osborn. Participating in “Operation Saturation,” they canvassed neighborhoods near the church. Volunteers distributed 2,000-plus cards, inviting community members to an “Open House” at the church in the coming weeks.

In 2022, IMPACT will return to Birmingham, the city where it started in 2006. Follow emerging details at [fwbmastersmen.org](http://fwbmastersmen.org).

## HONORED IN MEMPHIS

Two outstanding individuals were honored for lifetime achievements during the Memphis convention: Carlisle Hanna and Elizabeth Hodges. During his report to delegates, IM Director Clint Morgan celebrated the 70-year ministry of Carlisle Hanna, missionary to India, noting, “After a great deal of research, we cannot find another missionary in history who has served any missions organization for a longer period of time.” He honored the trailblazer for “serving unflinchingly through wars, pestilence, earthquakes, Bengal tigers, disease, severe spiritual attacks, and the loss of both a child and spouse.”

On Wednesday evening, during the annual missions service and following a video of Hanna’s amazing missions story, the congregation rose to their feet with thunderous applause, honoring the missionary’s lifetime of faithfulness. The 92-year-old lifted his hands in his familiar Hindi gesture of thanks, then encouraged Free Will Baptists to continue supporting the work in India, both financially and prayerfully.

Following her final report as director of WNAC, Elizabeth Hodges received a standing ovation when her board honored her faithful service. She was additionally honored during the annual Laughter and Latté reception and again during the Tuesday evening worship service when seven other departmental directors presented Hodges with flowers and a plaque. Phyllis York, assistant to Hodges, reflected on the director’s selfless work: “I have worked with Elizabeth for 11 years. She has worked tirelessly and sacrificed personally to build bridges enabling WNAC to be where it is today, and she is leaving the ministry poised for an exciting future.”

## DOWN TO BUSINESS

**General Board :** The General Board began its meeting Monday, July 19, with a brief message from outgoing Executive Board member Mike Wade (OK). The board heard reports from eight national agencies and four commissions as Moderator Tim York led board members through a one-hour, 55-minute meeting. The board approved a broad slate of recommendations from the Executive Committee: approving a 2022 denominational budget of \$30.1 million; recommending limiting denominational officers to two consecutive, four-year terms and commission members to two consecutive, five-year terms; integrating the Manual for Board Members into each national board’s operating procedures; updating the nominating procedures in the *Treatise*; and, from the Commission for Theological Integrity, updating the *Treatise* statement regarding marriage (Appendix to Chapter IV, Section 1).

All recommendations from the General Board were later approved by delegates during the convention business session.

The denomination additionally voted to adopt three resolutions. The first further defines Free Will Baptist doctrine regarding gender, marriage, and sexuality, including the commitment to: “teach and model a biblical understanding of sexuality and gender in their families and churches, seeking to equip church members and leaders to help them remain faithful to this teaching.”

The second resolution reaffirms the denomination’s stance against racism, further resolving that the denomination not “root its proclamation, witness, and efforts toward racial equality in language, thought forms, and understandings of justice that emerge from secular philosophical and sociological theory, such as critical race theory and intersectionality.”

The final resolution thanked Tennessee for hosting the memorable convention.

**Executive Office :** Executive Secretary Eddie Moody announced a \$1.25 million drop in giving to all national departments during the last year, a disturbing trend. Moody did not attribute this downward motion to COVID alone but pointed to unhealthy churches and the loss of churches (46 in the last year). He encouraged the denomination to take advantage of Refresh coaching and resources, to pray fervently for God to call new pastors and deacons into ministry, and to work together to improve ordaining boards. “We must focus on church health,” he challenged. “We must focus on the important things and do them together.”

# 2021 CONVENTION *at a glance*

## REGISTRATION

NAFWB Attendees - **2,791**

Vertical Three - **2,237**

Total Attendees - **3,345\***

\*Note: Many attendees register for both conventions.

## SPEAKERS

Sunday School, July 18

Danny Conn (TN)

Sunday Morning, July 18

Melvin Moon (MO)

Sunday Evening, July 18

Christian Powell (NC)

Monday Evening, July 19

Keith Burden (OK)

Tuesday Evening, July 20

Eddie Moody (TN)

Wednesday Evening, July 21

John Weaver (OK)

## LIVE STREAMING

Service Views - **44,000**

Total Views (including music, clips,  
and other media) - **59,000**

Comments, shares, and reactions - **10,000+**

**Contributors:** Eric Thomsen,  
Hannah Driggers, Elizabeth Hill,  
Deborah St. Lawrence, Phyllis York

**Vertical Three:** Derek Altom

**Photographers:** Rodney Yerby,  
Sydney Walker

**Download Photos:** [nafwb.yerbyphoto.com](http://nafwb.yerbyphoto.com)

He announced upcoming fall initiatives based on 3 for 30, the decade long plan for growth adopted in 2020.

Moody also encouraged the denomination to take full advantage of a broad variety of available resources from the Executive Office: the bi-weekly NAFWB News email, the Online Church Directory, social media graphics and posts, the Better Together Podcast, printed and digital training resources, church growth initiatives, and church revitalization tools (Refresh). All of these can be accessed through [nafwb.org](http://nafwb.org).

Following his report, Moody honored outgoing Executive Board members Edwin Hayes, Glenn Poston, and Mike Wade for their work on the board.

**Welch College:** President Matt Pinson indicated the greatest challenge facing Welch College today is ministerial students who go to community college, intending to attend Welch as upperclassmen. “They never come back,” Pinson acknowledged with regret. To offset this trend, he urged Free Will Baptists to encourage potential pastoral students to start at Welch as freshmen.

On a brighter note, the president indicated that pastoral ministry enrollment has doubled over the past two years, largely due to new scholarships for ministerial degrees. Although the college struggled in both enrollment and finances in 2020 due to COVID-19, projected losses were not as significant as first thought, \$98,000 rather than the expected \$765,000. He encouraged the denomination to continue faithful financial support, in anticipation of another tough financial year in the wake of the pandemic.

Pinson shared exciting news for the college—the launch of the M.Div. program, the first of its kind for the denomination. The three-year divinity degree is a residential program, with students studying on campus. As a result, the M.A. in Theology and Ministry will become available entirely online.

**WNAC:** Despite the limitations and challenges created by COVID-19, in her final report as WNAC director, Elizabeth Hodges highlighted significant milestones for the department. Women gave \$412,000 to missions and ministry causes, in-person events were replaced by successful virtual events, many WNAC resources were translated into multiple languages, *Treasure* devotional guide moved online, and Young Women Active for Christ (YWAC) programs were reintroduced. Social media, blogs, and e-blasts expanded communication with participants. A new WNAC app opened communication and giving opportunities, and video devotions are now posted weekly to Facebook and YouTube.

Hodges announced the first in-person event in more than two years: the 2022 *Flourish* conference will be March 26, 2022, at Central FWB Church in Huntington, West Virginia. A *Shine!* Facebook Live event will be held October 2, 2021.

Director Hodges celebrated the completion of the Free Will Baptist Women’s Center in Côte d’Ivoire, Africa, made possible in part through the gifts of women, both in the U.S. and Côte d’Ivoire, and a grant from Free Will Baptist Foundation.

Hodges urged Free Will Baptist women to give faithfully to support the office so WNAC ministries can continue. “Over the years, Free Will Baptist ladies have



supported missions, projects, and many other things well through WNAC, but they have not always seen the need to support the WNAC office itself. While we have tackled the resulting financial challenges by streamlining the staff and operations, unless this mindset changes, the office is in trouble.”

Director Hodges concluded her report by honoring outgoing board members Diana Bryant and Janie Campbell for many years of service. She thanked her assistant Phyllis York and Free Will Baptist women: “It has been my privilege to serve you and to serve alongside you. I have been blessed. Together, we can accomplish more. We are truly better together.”

**Randall House :** Director and CEO Ron Hunter thanked the denomination for faithful support during the COVID-19 roller coaster. Although 75% of churches stopped meeting for a significant time, only 25% stopped ordering curriculum. “Churches continued ordering, knowing they would not use the material,” Hunter acknowledged. “We are grateful. Without you, we would have closed our doors.”

Despite the faithful ordering, careful spending, federal PPP loans, and a grant from FWB Foundation, the department still suffered a \$907,000 loss, the result of lost revenues from fewer orders and events totaling \$1.7 million. With this in mind, Randall House must shift from a sales-alone model to reliance on both sales and gift income, adopting a non-profit business model.

Hunter challenged Free Will Baptist churches and individuals to become “D6 Heroes” by continuing to order curriculum and by putting the department into their annual budget. Visit D6Hero.com for more information about supporting this important ministry. “This [funding change] is a paradigm shift for Randall House,” Hunter conceded, “but it is our greatest need moving forward.”

Hunter honored outgoing board members Randy Scott and Steve Lindsay for their work on the board.

**IM, Inc. :** Despite postponements, cancellations, and frustrations in 2020, or “the year that wasn’t” as missionary Kenneth Eagleton has described it, IM Director Clint Morgan rejoiced that the department continues to approve and send new missionaries to bring healing to this broken world. In spite of pandemic upheaval, Morgan reminded listeners “God did not step off of His throne; strong Christians did not succumb to the gloom and doom; the church did not cease to exist; His Word did not pass away; and the world has not come to an end.” He reaffirmed IM’s commitment to the Great Commission “because 6.7 billion of the earth’s 7.8 billion people are not yet followers of Christ.”

Morgan announced significant staffing changes for IM. Carlisle Hanna retired after 70 years in India; Financial Operations Manager Cheri Ham retired; two interns, Emily Petty and Abby Walker, were approved; and Tim and Kristi Johnson left Spain to serve as missionaries-in-residence at Welch College. Morgan thanked the Johnsons for 22 years of faithful service to the people of Spain.

Though COVID-19 hampered numerical reporting, Morgan reported overseas churches saw 1,076 conversions (126 more than 2019), 1,487 baptisms, and an average attendance of 34,870. He also shared highlights from various fields: the purchase of a church building in Bulgaria; great strides for Adam and Carol

## ELECTED IN 2021

### NAM

2027

Mike Cash (AZ)

Jose Rodriguez (TN)

Marshall Bonéy (VA)

2025 - Bob Brown (FL)

### Board of Retirement - 2027

Joel Franks (AL)

Brent Nix (Northwest)

Clayton Hampton (MT)

### FWB Foundation - 2027

Lee Allen (AR)

Gene Williams (NC)

Scott Coghill (NC)

### Media Commission - 2026

Adrian Holland (OK)

### Theological Commission

2026 - Jackson Watts (MO)

2024 - Cory Thompson (OK)

### Historical Commission - 2026

Jim McComas (TN)

### Music Commission - 2026

Joshua Riggs (OK)

### Executive Committee - 2024

Chris Dotson (TN)

Chris Todd (SC)

Reuben Cason (NC)

### General Board - 2024

Reuben Cason (NC)

Bill Reynolds (Northeast)

Brent Nix (Northwest)

Ben Crabtree (OH)

Dick Terry (OK)

Chris Todd (SC)

Chris Dotson (TN)

John Collier (TX)

Bruce Barnes (VA)

James Cox, Jr. (WV)

### Officers

Moderator: Tim York (TN)

Assistant Moderator: William Smith (GA)

Clerk: Randy Bryant (FL)

Assistant Clerk: Ernie Lewis (IL)

## 2021-22 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Johnny Miller (AR) – Chair  
Ben Crabtree (OH)  
Jonathan Locklear (MI)  
Shirley Jackson (MO)  
Todd Black (SC)  
Curtis Smith (IL)  
Kent Barwick (GA)

## 2022 BUDGETS

Executive Office - \$834,600  
Foundation - \$2,314,000  
NAM (includes Master's Men) - \$5,000,000  
IM, Inc. - \$8,450,000  
Retirement - \$717,543  
Randall House - \$4,566,890  
Welch College - \$8,013,520  
WNAC - \$229,700  
Theological Commission - \$6,800  
Historical Commission - \$5,830  
Media Commission - \$5,308  
Music Commission - \$8,820  
**Total - \$30,153,011**

### Wednesday Night Convention

Offering - \$14,980.32\*

\* Initial count may be adjusted

## 2021 VERTICAL THREE CONFERENCE

Registration - 2,237  
Truth & Peace - 141 participants  
Competitive Entries: 592  
Competitors: 1,085  
Buck-A-Week Offering: \$5,513



Duncan in Ecuador; and a new church in Chateaubriant, France, the first Protestant congregation in 500 years. Japan, the second largest unreached people group, now has 23 Free Will Baptist missionaries; the Simmons have resumed their work in Kenya; and in Spain, two new couples have nearly reached the funding necessary to join the team. IM is currently opening new fields in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The financial picture in 2020 was better for the department than anticipated. CFO Robert Conley reported the agency finished in the black by \$648,105.

Morgan emphasized the importance of partner relationships that expand the agency's ministry exponentially. IM now has 21 partners representing a broad range of ministries. The department also partners with international Free Will Baptist church organizations and ministries across North America. "That is what we are about at IM," Morgan concluded, "laboring with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission."

**North American Ministries (NAM) :** Director David Crowe introduced a five-year strategic plan for NAM. These goals include: increase English-speaking church planters to 55; increase Spanish-speaking church planters to 100; launch an on-site church planter assessment center; translate ten Master's Men *Direction Bible Studies* into Spanish; create and launch a national Master's Men retreat; develop and launch a youth training program for teen boys through Master's Men; grow the Church Extension Loan fund to exceed \$100 million; increase the number of chaplains (active and in-process) to 20; double the number of churches giving to NAM; and increase the general fund contingency to \$1 million. Crowe expressed gratitude that several of these goals already have been surpassed or nearly reached.

After a record financial year in 2019, the department continued its positive financial trend, finishing 2020 in the black by \$420,000. The department changed its official name from Home Missions to Free Will Baptist North American Ministries.

**Board of Retirement (BOR) :** Although COVID-19 created a financial seesaw, Director John Brummitt expressed thankfulness the agency recovered nicely by year's end, with good returns on all account options. He noted the extension of federal PPP loans to churches and ministry organizations during COVID-19 were directly related to lobbying work the board completed through Church Alliance in the week preceding the important decision. Brummitt announced the department's intent to continue Re:Invest training, including the addition of the Re:Invest Podcast.

He announced a new investment option, Set Rate Strategy, giving investors more stability and the potential for bonuses. In addition, the expansion of institutional investing in 2020 helped more churches invest wisely. "That's what we are all about at Board of Retirement," Brummitt concluded, "preparing for future ministry."





More information about these new initiatives can be found at [boardofretirement.com](http://boardofretirement.com).

**Free Will Baptist Foundation :** Director David Brown compared the Foundation to the offensive line of a football team. Perhaps not the most visible group on the team, the offensive line is still crucial to the overall success of the team. Brown celebrated the Foundation “crossing the line” to reach \$100 million. He also announced the benefits of the estate planning program, which have increased exponentially. The resulting financial impact is \$2.1 million to the denomination annually, with future impact projections of more than \$40 million.

The department finished the year \$90,000 in the black, despite COVID-19 challenges. Brown announced the restructuring of the Money Management Trust program to meet new governmental guidelines. The program will be split into two: a charitable investment pool (ChIP) for ministries and a Demand Note (DN) program for individual investors. Both pools are closed to new investors temporarily, while restructuring takes place. However, the Foundation will continue to receive deposits from existing MMT accounts.

The grant program continues to help Free Will Baptist ministries. The program offered COVID-19 relief to three struggling departments in 2020, a half million to 26 ministries in 2021, and is on track to deliver \$750,000 in gifts in 2022.

Brown honored retiring staff member June McVay, and outgoing board members Elizabeth Hodges and Phil Whitaker for their work.

**Commissions :** Marc Neppl noted the **Media Commission** changed the way it does live-streaming in 2021, and the numbers of online viewers reflects the improvements: 44,000 people viewed services, with more than 10,000 shares, comments, and reactions. He encouraged Free Will Baptists to take full advantage of the resources and training offered by the commission. “We help churches succeed by educating, equipping, and encouraging tech and church leaders through difficult situations. We are dedicated to

helping the local church reach its community through social media, websites, and audio/video production.” Churches can learn more at [fwbmedia.org](http://fwbmedia.org).

The **Commission for Theological Integrity** said goodbye to long-time commission member, Dr. Thomas Marberry, noting his many theological contributions to the denomination and the work of the commission. Commission Chairman Matt Pinson challenged Free Will Baptists to attend the 2021 Theological Symposium, October 4-5, on the campus of Welch College. Pinson also encouraged the denomination to use the many theological articles, reviews, and resources on [FWBTheology.com](http://FWBTheology.com).

Doug Little, chairman of the **Music Commission**, acknowledged the pandemic forced the Music Commission to change the way things are done, and the changes have been good ones, with more regular meetings via Zoom and greater efficiency. Little celebrated the successful launch and growth of [FWBWorship.com](http://FWBWorship.com) and a new program partnering Music and Media Commission members to coach local churches.

**Historical Commission** Secretary Eric Thomsen noted the passing of long-time commission member and chair Dr. Mary Ruth Wisehart. He urged Free Will Baptists churches and associations to make record-keeping a high priority, noting, “The commission has worked with the Executive Office to make the submission of minutes a vital part of the district and state reporting process.” The commission continues development of The Minutes Project (collecting, scanning, and posting online national, state, and district or quarterly minutes). Access this collection at [FWBHistory.com](http://FWBHistory.com). To donate historical materials, contact curator Phillip Morgan: [pmorgan@welch.edu](mailto:pmorgan@welch.edu).

## LOOKING AHEAD

Executive Secretary Eddie Moody invited Free Will Baptists to “Go the Extra Mile” and join the National Convention July 24-27, 2022, when the denomination returns to Birmingham, Alabama, for its 86th convention. **ONE**



## MOVING TOWARD NORMAL: THE 2021 VERTICAL THREE CONFERENCE

BY DEREK ALTOM

The 2,237 attendees of the Vertical Three Conference are a big reason Free Will Baptists are moving towards normal. One of the things I enjoyed most during my first convention as Vertical Three director was walking through the Renasant Center and simply watching people. I like to “people watch.”

Perhaps the most significant thing I observed was how normal everything seemed. In 2020, the global pandemic destroyed “normal.” The turn of the calendar to 2021 brought hope of returning to some sense of normalcy. From my perspective, the 2021 Vertical Three Conference was a significant step. To be clear, things are not back to where they were prior to COVID-19, but we are moving in the right direction. We are moving toward normal.

**CTS Ministry Expo :** A vital part of the Vertical Three Conference is the CTS Ministry Expo. Having to cancel the 2020 expo thwarted the hard work of students across the denomination. However, even though the 2021 CTS Ministry Expo saw a significant decrease from pre-pandemic levels, 1,085 participants competed throughout 592 entries. Things are moving toward normal.

**Truth and Peace Student Leadership Conference :** According to Truth and Peace Director Allen Pointer, it was 600 days from the selection of the students in the 2021 Truth and Peace Student Leadership Conference to the beginning of the conference. (Students selected in October of 2019 were automatically accepted for 2021 after the 2020 conference was canceled.) However, things began to look normal again as Truth and Peace students opened doors for competition, worked the Vertical Three store, and successfully completed many other tasks necessary for the success of the conference. All of this occurred after ten days of intense leadership training at Randall University. A huge thanks to the dedicated staff of Truth and Peace and to Allen Pointer, who just completed 24 years directing Truth and Peace.

**Worship :** Each year, the highlight of the Vertical Three

Conference is the nightly services. It was a joy to walk from room to room each night and see preschool students, elementary students, upper elementary students, middle school students, and high school students encountering Jesus in age-appropriate ways. I loved watching Katie Greenwood and her preschool team love children the way Jesus does. I loved seeing Johnny Miller and the whole team engage with students in first through third grade with fun activities and biblical truth that will help them encounter who God really is. I loved peeking in and observing Steve Greenwood and the 456 worship team impact students with the gospel in practical ways. The services all seemed very normal, and I could not help but smile.

Throughout the week, middle school and high school students were challenged by dynamic musical worship led by the National Youth Evangelistic Team. This group of talented students set the stage well for speakers David Mizelle, Quinn Norman, Trevor Holden, Victoria Paffile, and Jon Forrest. In each service, you could sense attendees were thrilled to be gathered once again, and things were getting back to normal. You could also sense students making decisions to be “Resolved” like Daniel, the theme of the 2021 conference.

The conference concluded with an evening of laughter as comedian Jonnie W. performed. He kept his audience on the edge of their seats wondering what hysterical thing he would say next.

**Conclusion :** As I stood in the back of the auditorium on Wednesday evening during the annual missionary service, my eyes filled with tears. It was not because I was sad. Instead, I was filled with joy. I was with family. I was with my Free Will Baptist brothers and sisters again. Things felt normal again.

If 2020 taught us nothing else, let it teach us we should never take things like gathering as a denomination for granted. We should thank the Lord we are moving toward “normal.” **ONE**



# Introducing the Websters, Church Planters to The Villages, Florida


New church planters Frank and Debbie Webster are going to start a unique Free Will Baptist church in The Villages, Florida. The Villages is a 55+ retirement community near Orlando with 130,000-plus residents. This will be the only NAM church plant specifically targeting older adults. The Websters feel a strong calling to reach older adults who have never committed their lives to Christ or have been out of church for other reasons. Frank recently commented, "Though this is statistically the most difficult

demographic to reach, we believe it may be the last chance for many older adults to receive the gospel."

Webster is only a few years from retirement himself and leaves a successful ministry as state mission director for Missouri Free Will Baptists. He brings many years of experience to this role, and we are excited to see how God uses the Websters in this new ministry. Please pray for Frank and Debbie as they build their team and enter the prelaunch phase of ministry. To learn more or support the Websters



*Frank & Debbie Webster*

financially visit [www.fwbnam.com/webster](http://www.fwbnam.com/webster). This is a joint project with the Florida State Mission board. 

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FOR HIS WORK

December 6-7

Nashville, Tennessee

[NAFWB.ORG/LEADER](http://NAFWB.ORG/LEADER)

FREE WILL BAPTIST  
LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

NAFWB

# Grace and Hope in Memphis

BY EDDIE MOODY

“Could you come back next week?” So began the post-convention meeting with city officials in Memphis Thursday morning after the convention. This was only my second such meeting; the first was in Cincinnati as an observer. During this meeting, we considered what went well and what didn’t. It involved discussions such as the reverb in the convention hall, used for the first time during our convention. Other meetings addressed hotel challenges, security issues, and outstanding bills. The overall feedback was “Your people were so kind,” and rather than celebrating our departure, they wished we could stick around.

## Why?

*People need grace.* The city was encouraged by the grace extended to them and their staff when things didn’t work so well. They were amazed by how patient and respectful our people were. One official noted how often we greeted workers—making it clear these workers mattered. You can learn much about a person’s character by how they treat people who serve them (food servers, housekeepers, security officers). Another official noted how Free Will Baptists threw away their own trash. Everyone was especially taken aback by the well-mannered, well-behaved youth. Truth and Peace stood out with their back-

packs and were often referenced.

*People are watching!* A hotel general manager described a “wonderful and graceful couple” he met. After waiting with them for their Uber™ driver to arrive early one morning, he observed how rudely the driver treated the couple, refusing to take them to the airport. Embarrassed and upset by this, he confessed, “I could not let them leave with this image of our city.” He took the couple to the airport himself, and though embarrassed by the situation, he felt blessed to spend more time with this “special couple.”

We heard similar comments throughout the week. One worker told Dr. Danny Baer the gracious way our people treated workers in the convention center was sadly different than their usual encounters.

During the last meeting with city officials, we discussed the many challenges. In a way, this was expected. The city filled more hotel rooms than any time prior to COVID-19. As the meeting ended, one of the officials shared she has a very ill loved one. She asked if we would pray with her. Ryan Lewis, convention manager, asked Derek Altom, Vertical Three director, to pray. Derek took the woman’s hand and prayed aloud for the situation. When he finished, she tearfully thanked him. I don’t think she’d have

asked us to pray if she had not seen the testimony of our people.

*There is hope.* As I drove away from Memphis, my mind went back to the first meeting of the day. One city leader described how difficult the last year and a half had been for him and his staff. He told us the convention had been refreshing to his workers. Then he teared up and confessed, “I have been very discouraged about the trajectory of our country, after all the unrest in our nation and our difficulty finding workers. I’m 60, and sometimes I wonder if people in this generation will take care of me in 20 years?” Then, he added, “I was especially encouraged by all the youth I have seen here. I tell you; it has given me hope.”

**Hope!** And the man did not attend a single service or seminar. Who could have known graciousness to food service workers, patience with bellhops, desk workers, and maintenance staff could have such an impact? But it did. It appears we left Memphis a little better than we found it.

**Well done, Free Will Baptists!** 



**Eddie Moody**

Executive Secretary,  
National Association  
of Free Will Baptists



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70	4.7%	70/70	4.2%
75	5.4%	75/75	4.6%
80	6.5%	80/80	5.4%
85	7.6%	85/85	6.5%
90	8.6%	90/90	8.2%



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