

ONE LORD ONE VOICE ONE VISION

ONE

magazine

All the Difference

ONEMAGAZINE.COM | JUNE - JULY 2018



***Surrendering
My Places***

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Caffeine

BY ERIC THOMSEN

“Beans for Your Garden”

The colorful sign and catchy caption caught my eye when I walked into my afternoon coffee stop. Curious, I stepped over to read the fine print, which explained the burlap bags leaning against the reclaimed-wood counter held used coffee grounds. Bleached out beans would make beautiful and aromatic mulch for flowerbeds and backyard gardens, the placard boasted, and would give plants a real “boost” in growth and beauty. But it was the last line that really grabbed me: “Free to our customers as long as they last.”

Free mulch that didn't smell like... well...mulch. “Sign me up,” I exclaimed.

I left the shop with three 30-pound bags. By the time I pulled into my driveway an hour later, my Camry smelled like Heaven (though I can't prove that biblically). I spent the rest of the afternoon spreading grounds along the walkway flowerbeds.

The dark beans

contrasted sharply with the vivid flowers and bright green perennials. I proudly gave my wife a tour, bragging about the money I saved and stopping occasionally for a deep breath of coffee-scented breeze. Mission accomplished.

I heard the barking when I turned the corner onto our street the next afternoon. A comical sight greeted me as I approached our house. Ginger the Bassett Hound—whose idea of exercise is ambling slowly from sunny spot to food dish and back—was dashing at top speed around the perimeter of the yard. Ears flailing, tongue lolling, eyes wild, she ran around and around, as fast as her stubby, little legs would carry her, barking wildly at the top of her lungs.

“Uh-oh,” I thought. “Ginger likes caffeine.”

Sure enough, for the next 48 hours, without pausing to sleep (or even to eat), Ginger ran and barked, barked and ran, and barked some more, much to the chagrin of our neighbors. I spent the rest of the evening removing the coffee mulch and hauling it deep into the woods, far from Ginger's new addiction. When our crazy canine finally outran

the caffeine, she

crashed, sleeping for 24 hours and awaking thoroughly disoriented. But that didn't stop her from heading straight for the flowerbeds.

As I chuckled over the incident, I couldn't help but ponder that Ginger's caffeine craziness paints a vivid picture of what happens when we allow busyness to overtake our lives and ministries. Too often, we get “caffeinated” by the next big thing, the latest trends and methods, or some new program guaranteed to solve everything. Before we know it, we find ourselves running at top speed, exhausted, working hard and giving it our all, but ultimately going in circles.

It's time to break the cycle, to return to Jesus' simple offer: “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28-29).

One last note: although Ginger rebounded quickly from her experience, the squirrels in the woods behind our house acted strange for months! **ONE**

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



What a thrill it was to see Lino Pascacio's article (Soccer and the Gospel, April-May, page 18). Lino's story is one that brings joy to the heart of any missionary. Lino is my spiritual grandson. You see, Cañita was the first community where we took the gospel witness in Panama in 1962. In 1975, when we left Panama, I left two teenagers in charge of the rustic, thatch-roofed mission: Daniel Dorati and Nicolas Valdéz. At that time they were being disciplined by Mom Willey and Steve Lytle.

At first, Danny got a motorbike and the two would go on weekends to lead the little congregation. As the years went by, Danny took over the church. A family of one of the five indigenous tribes moved into the community and began attending the church, the Pascacio family. As Lino says, Valdéz "me vio nacer" (saw me from birth, or watched me grow up). This little Indian boy grew up and went to school

in Cañita then felt the hand of God on his life. He attended the newly-opened FWB seminario to prepare to take the gospel to his own people.

Thus, Lino became my spiritual grandson! I had the privilege of seeing him graduate from seminario in 2012. The next year, this "hometown boy" became the pastor of Cañita and claimed all of Eastern Panama as his field. It is interesting that after all these years, an indigenous messenger of the gospel is claiming the same area "Pop" Willey claimed for the Lord in 1936.

Pray for Lino Pascacio, that holy fire will spread throughout Eastern Panama. To God be the glory!

—Tom Willey, Jr., Bronson, Florida

P.S. If you want the whole story of Free Will Baptists in Panama, contact me for the book: **I Will Build My Church**: 10290 NE 60th Street,

Bronson, FL 32621. Home: 352-486-6012; Cell: 305-490-3979.

Correction: The April-May issue (*Introducing 2018 Nominees*, page 50) incorrectly identifies **Theron Scott** as director of the South Carolina State Youth Camp and as a member of the South Carolina Conference presbytery board. While Rev. Scott previously served in both capacities, he is not doing so at present. We apologize for this error.



Have something to say? Say it!

Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are appreciated.

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All the DIFFERENCE

BY ASHLEY BAINES MCNEESE

In 1934 and 1935, just ten months apart, two baby boys were born at Cincinnati General Hospital. While their individual circumstances were not identical, both boys were dealt a nearly unplayable hand in life. Despite the lackluster beginnings, each achieved notoriety as adults, though in wildly opposite ways. The paths that nearly crossed in Ohio eventually intersected at a reform school in Indiana. From there, both tried to become something more than what life seemed to dictate, but only one truly overcame his “demons”; the other embraced them.

The first boy, Charlie, channeled every ounce of rejection and inferiority into creating an environment in which he had complete control. The cruel, manipulative spirit that appeared in his childhood manifested first in small crimes and then escalated in unthinkable ways. Young Charlie became Charles Milles Manson, leader of “The Family” and one of the most notorious mass murderers of the 20th century.

The other boy, in some ways, faced even darker days than Charlie. His childhood was an emotional roller coaster, with little love and strict discipline on the best of days, neglect and abuse on the worst. He experienced a violent trauma firsthand. In one night, childhood ended. On his own by age 12, he too began to dabble in small-time crime. But from reform school, Richard Ray Cordell went on to become a man that would have been incomprehensible to him as a boy on the streets: successful pastor, dedicated family man, evangelist, educator...and my grandfather.

As a little girl, I knew “Papaw” was an extraordinary person. It never occurred to me his past resembled an unfinished puzzle to the family, and he rarely volunteered the missing pieces. I was fascinated to learn he had crossed paths with Charles Manson, and research revealed some astonishing parallels. Poet Robert Frost famously described two roads, the choices they offer, and “the difference” made by taking “the road less traveled.” Although Charles Manson and Richard Cordell began in similar ways, their personalities, choices, and ultimately faith in Christ for my grandfather made all the difference.

Charlie

Charlie was born Charles Milles Maddox on November 12, 1934. His mother Kathleen was only 16 years old. His biological father, Colonel Scott, never claimed him as a son, and Kathleen’s later marriage to William Manson lasted less than three years. Charlie received his stepfather’s last name, but not the father he desperately needed. Kathleen, despite the needs of her young son and the protests of her devoutly Christian mother, preferred partying to parenting. By 1939, before Charlie was five, Kathleen was arrested and sentenced to five years in jail following a robbery attempt with her brother Luther.

Charlie stayed with Bill and Glenna Thomas, Kathleen’s brother-in-law and sister. By all accounts, they treated him like a son. Strict disciplinarians, they instructed their eight-year-old Jo Ann to watch out for Charlie like an older sister. At age five, Charlie was already a handful. His cousin recalls, “There was never anything happy about him. He never did anything that was good.” Sadly, Charlie would be described in similar terms throughout his youth.

After his mother’s release, the Thomas family was relieved to see Charlie go. Kathleen’s plans to settle down and provide a stable life for him were soon derailed by her return to “nightlife” and the fact that nine-year-old Charlie was completely beyond her control. While Kathleen attempted to earn an honest living and restore order to her only son’s life, the efforts were too little, too late. Marriage to an alcoholic with no patience for Charlie’s antics did not help.

By 1947, Kathleen had come to fear her “crazy-eyed” son. She enrolled him in the Gibault School for Boys in Terra Haute, Indiana, after being denied a request to place him in foster care. He ran away from Gibault after less than a year and began a string of petty crimes that soon escalated. After joining in two armed robberies, 13-year-old Charlie qualified for a harsher punishment. He was sentenced to the Indiana Boys’ School in Plainfield for three years. With each new choice life offered, Manson invariably opted for the wrong one. He seemed to have a propensity for deception, manipulation, and cruelty.

At 13, Charlie was small for his age, which made him an easy target for abuse. He later claimed he was sexually assaulted soon after arriving in Plainfield, allegedly at the encouragement of a staff member. Rather than choosing to stop the cycle of abuse, he abused others in turn. By age 17, he had been charged with eight serious disciplinary offenses, three involving homosexual acts. Charlie made six attempts to escape Plainfield, and he and other boys claimed they were beaten almost daily, with little provocation. Those were hard times in a hard world. Manson was not interested in reform but survival.

Despite the atrocities he later committed, Charlie’s story is heartbreaking. A report written when he was 16 describes “an extremely sensitive boy who has not yet given up in terms of securing some kind of love and affection from the world.” His mother only belatedly tried to repair the damage her early neglect caused. While his extended family fulfilled their duty to care for him and disciplined his actions, they never reached his heart. By the time he reached Plainfield, he viewed life through a lens of injustice and entitlement fostered by a childhood of rejection and want.

Richard

Richard Ray Cordell was born on August 28, 1935, in Cincinnati, Ohio, to Robert and Myrtle “Mae” Cordell. He had four older half siblings, but Richard was the first child born to Robert and Mae. Two more boys were added to the family: David just 15 months after Richard, and Clarence nearly eight years later.

After a naval career, Robert ran a successful business as a typewriter and adding machine mechanic. He sometimes took Richard, known as “Corkey” to the family, to work and once even as far as a trip to the Great Lakes Naval Base in Illinois, where he had been stationed previously. Richard picked up many of the skills of his father’s trade, including typing. As a kid tagging along with his dad, he had no way of knowing how useful those skills would become a few years later.

Robert expected his children to be respectful, to use good manners, and to work hard, modeling this lesson by working hard himself. He was tough, especially on the boys, but most men were in those days. On the surface, it seemed Robert treated his children well, taught them right from wrong, and provided for the family. Alcohol changed all that. When drinking, he transformed, becoming malicious, violent, and, worst of all, uninhibited. Robert sexually assaulted his stepdaughter on multiple occasions. Over 70 years later, she recalled, “He treated me well, like his own daughter, when he was sober. But when he drank he became a different person.” It is impossible to know how long or how often this abuse continued.

Mae’s drinking was worse than Robert’s. While Robert indulged infrequently and, fortunately for his children, rarely stayed drunk long, Mae’s binges lasted weeks at a time. By the time her youngest brother Butch was born, Nan “mothered” all three of the younger boys. By age ten, she shouldered much of the responsibility of running the household while her mother was incapacitated. Mae had a mean streak. Rather than protecting Nan from Robert or seeking help for her alcoholism, she neglected the children and expressed more jealousy than sympathy of Robert’s abuse of Nan. Her selfishness came to the forefront at a time when her family needed her most.

While the household was dysfunctional, it did function in a rhythm of sorts. A drunken binge would end, life would return to “normal,” with both parents around, and then the cycle would repeat. This life, while hardly stable, suddenly screeched to a halt and destroyed any semblance of the “family” that remained.

Clarence Ethridge, Mae's brother, was a 20-year Marine veteran who spent the year before his discharge being treated for mental illness. After his release, he ended up in the Cordell home, but he and Robert fought often. One day their arguing grew heated, and Robert kicked Clarence out of the house, locking the door and telling him he was no longer welcome.

That night, July 19, 1947, Clarence returned with a gun. According to the police report and newspaper articles, Clarence "kicked in the kitchen door and entered the house, brandishing a .32-caliber blue steel automatic." He gathered the family, forced them to lie across the bed, and yelled and cursed at Robert for a time before allowing Mae to put two-year-old Butch to bed. After they left the room, Clarence fired several times at his brother-in-law, striking him twice in the chest and once in the face. The shots killed Robert instantly. Mae, carrying Butch, broke through a plate-glass window and ran through the yard with Clarence on her heels. She made no attempt to get the rest of the family to safety—not surprising, perhaps, but almost incomprehensible. She ran off into the night, leaving three of her children behind with a crazed gunman and the bleeding body of their murdered father.

Clarence shot at her and missed, eventually turning back after promising to return and kill the whole family. Fortunately, he never followed through on his threat and fled the state. Police apprehended him a month later in Clinton, Tennessee. Escorted back to Indiana for trial, he was eventually convicted of second-degree murder.

For decades, no one knew exactly what Clarence and Robert were arguing about. Clarence told police that killing Robert was "the climax of a family feud of long standing," that he would not hesitate to repeat his actions if given the chance. Court records indicate Clarence had confronted Robert about his relationship with his stepdaughter. To their horror, however, the family eventually learned *both* men had been sexually abusing 14-year-old Nan, and their fight somehow centered upon that abuse.

The effects on the children, particularly Richard, are

incalculable. When asked about this night throughout his life, he would sometimes answer briefly. Often, he would simply begin to cry and say, "I can't talk about it." One can only imagine the terror that gripped the 11-year-old little boy experiencing this shocking taste of violence, in which both victim and perpetrator were family.

Sometime after his father's murder and perhaps during the upheaval of the trial, Mae told Richard he was on his own. After the trial, she left Indiana for Arkansas, where her mother lived, and she made it clear "Corkey" would not make the move.

Alone on the streets at age 12, he slept in doorways and on park benches. Eventually, he got a job at a laundry shop and apparently attempted to forge a check and was sent to the Indiana Boys' School. Since boys were sent to Plainfield only for serious infractions, the forged check was probably not his first encounter with the law. Unlike Charlie's crimes, which he treated like a game, Richard's survival tactics were born from desperation.

UNLIKE CHARLIE'S CRIMES, WHICH HE TREATED LIKE A GAME, RICHARD'S SURVIVAL TACTICS WERE BORN FROM DESPERATION.

Plainfield

The school functioned much like its own small town, with gardens, orchards, and animals, as well as wood-working, machine repair, and more. The boys were expected to fulfill these duties and learn a trade in the process, preparing them for adulthood outside the home. Charlie and Richard met when both were assigned to kitchen chores. Richard later recalled that Charlie, "a scrawny kid that everyone picked on," seemed to look up to him. While Charlie had an awkward, almost backward way with people, Richard was, by all accounts, a well-liked young man who interacted easily with both adults and peers. He was athletic, intelligent, and possessed an impressive skill with typewriters and other equipment his father had taught him to repair.

Since Richard spoke so rarely about Plainfield, it is likely he experienced some degree of the (apparently commonplace) abuse. One couple who lived on campus and functioned as “house parents” took a liking to Richard, allowed him to spend time with their family and even babysit their young children. It speaks volumes that an institution filled with delinquent young men identified something in Richard that earned their trust. Their interest not only made his time at the school more bearable, but it also introduced him to Christ. Their love for the Lord, each other, and even for him, was unlike anything Richard had ever seen. Although he did not trust Christ at the time, the seeds of the gospel were planted. He often thought, “If I ever have a family, I want what they have.”

It seems unlikely anyone ever extended the same warm welcome to Charlie. His unpleasantness was off-putting, even to his own family, and the environment at Plainfield, where allegations of sexual assault and promiscuity were rampant, apparently did little to discourage that culture. Allegations of excessive physical force by staff members persisted years later, lending credibility to the claims made by Charlie and others.

Choices and Consequences

By 1969, Charles Manson and Richard Cordell had made decisions that forever ended the similarities they might have shared at Plainfield two decades before. Richard Cordell had a wife and four children and was a successful pastor in Nashville, Tennessee. He graduated from a Bible college with a degree in pastoral theology. His church, Woodbine FWB Church, averaged over 400 people in attendance, and he preached the Word of God, shared the gospel, and poured himself into the Nashville community.

Charles Manson, on the other hand, had dedicated his life to spreading a drastically different “gospel,” pro-

moting himself as a perversion of the Christ Richard Cordell preached about every Sunday. He was briefly married in 1954 but quickly left any attempts at normalcy. Manson’s attraction to criminal activity seemed nearly magnetic. His first wife left him after he was imprisoned early in their marriage. Upon his release, he devoted himself to the persona for which he would become famous. The 1960s culture of rampant drugs, sex, and outrageous philosophies all combined to create a perfect breeding ground for Manson’s cult following.

Charlie used drugs and sex to “instill philosophies, exploit weaknesses and fears, and extract promises and agreements from his followers.” He inspired murders through years of control and brainwashing that manifested in following Charlie’s orders to kill.

From their time in Plainfield, what changed for Charlie and Richard? Both lived childhoods filled with upheaval, both turned to crime early, and both spent time in a harsh juvenile delinquent facility. Clearly, Charles Manson’s personality—his feelings of inferiority, entitlement, and downright meanness—stood in stark contrast to Richard Cordell’s warmth, humor, extroversion, and gentleness. Furthermore, positive mentors never materialized for Charlie as they did for Richard. If a relative or adult had connected with Charlie or had taken more than disciplinary interest in him, would history have been altered?

The greatest difference between Charlie and Richard, however, was the redemptive power of Jesus Christ. Several years after leaving Plainfield, Richard was working for Delco Remy, a division of General Motors. He attracted the attention of another employee, Marie Phillips, who agreed to go on a date with him, with the stipulation he first attend church with her. (He also told her he was 21, when he was only 18 at the time.)

Richard went to church just to get a date with a pretty girl, but that decision changed his life. He became a Christian in 1953, and the change in him was instant. His new relationship with the Lord helped break the chains of sin that had bound his family for decades. Rather than perpetuating the abuse and neglect of his childhood, he loved his own family with the type of

HIS NEW
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DECADES.



Richard Cordell & Ashley McNeese

love he never received. Only God could make this possible. As an instrument of his Savior, Richard influenced thousands of people. Over five decades in Christian

ministry, he took countless opportunities to touch lives with the gospel. Thanks to his own transformation, he did not see people for what they were, but for what they could be.

Unlike Charles Manson, who never trusted Christ and devoted his life ultimately to his own pleasures, power, and cruelty, Richard Cordell had a higher purpose: helping rescue people from their own darkness and

pointing them to the One who offers true hope. His life embodied 2 Corinthians 5:17: “Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” He truly became a new creature in Christ. Although he had every reason for bitterness, anger, and self-pity, he reflected Christ’s love in compassionate care for others.

Many times through the years, I heard Papaw pray, “Lord, help our lives to count for you.” His did, and does, in more ways than we could measure. **ONE**

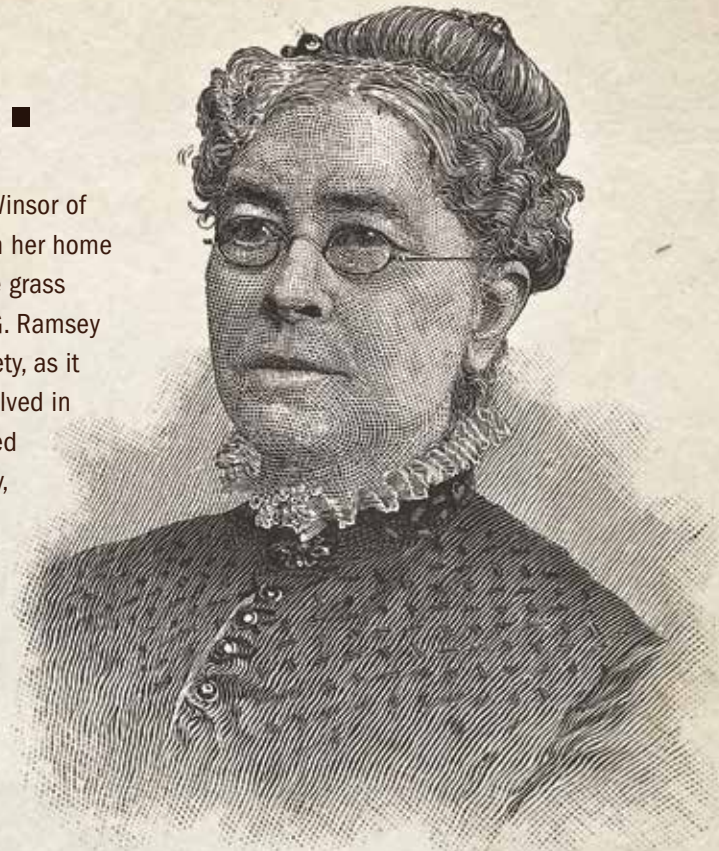
For a full list of works consulted, visit onemag.org/all_difference.htm

About the Writer: Ashley McNeese and her husband Jonathan are church planters helping Heath Ferguson plant the Woodforest FWB Church in Magnolia, TX.

Legacy of ministry...

Free Will Baptist women’s ministry can be traced to the early 1840s, when Ann Winsor of Providence, Rhode Island, formed the Freewill Baptist Female Missionary Society in her home after hearing missionary Eli Noyes tell about desperate spiritual needs in India. The grass roots movement organized formally in 1847, under the leadership of poet Vienna G. Ramsey and Marilla Marks (wife of evangelist David Marks). The Women’s Missionary Society, as it came to be known, united with Free-will Baptists in 1873 and became heavily involved in denominational efforts. Women helped underwrite missions efforts in India; provided funding and teachers for Storer College, a school for former slaves in Harper’s Ferry, West Virginia; and published *The Missionary Helper*, a missionary news magazine distributed from 1878-1919. Though the society eventually lost its identity when the Randall movement merged with Northern Baptists, their efforts set the stage for women’s ministry in the modern era.

Why not start your own legacy of ministry with an endowment through FWB Foundation to benefit the work of Free Will Baptist women today.



Mrs. Vienna G. Ramsey.
First Corresponding Secretary.



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Surrendering My Places

BY MARIE DRAKULIC

WHEN YOU MOVE, I'LL MOVE.

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

In the fall of 2011, the familiar worship song “I Will Follow” became my theme song. For months, I felt the Lord’s tug on my heart. He was calling my family to move to Erie, Pennsylvania, to begin a ministry there. Fervently seeking clarity, I waited for His direction. When we finally made the decision and announced it publicly, I felt peace and eager anticipation. But it hasn’t always been that way when responding to God’s call on my life.

WHERE YOU GO, I'LL GO.

“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes: but the Lord pondereth the hearts” (Proverbs 21:2).

As a senior in high school, I had big, exciting decisions to make. Mainly, where would I attend college? Almost right away, I *knew* I would *not* be a student at the big campus just 30 minutes from my home. Ohio State University was *not* an option. (It’s funny how I thought I could tell God where *He* wanted me to go.)

When I heard representatives from a nearby Christian university speak, I just *knew* it was the school I should attend. So, I skipped off that fall thinking all would be grand. Wrong. I *hated* it. There wasn’t anything really *wrong* with the university. It simply wasn’t the place I was meant to be. Before long, I walked onto the Ohio State University campus...and fell in *love*. The classes challenged me and grew my passions in ways I could

not have foreseen. I enjoyed opportunities to share the gospel with a confused, and sometimes angry, world.

When my two oldest boys were just babies, I tried to tell God no again, albeit in a much less forceful way. I was reading a book at the time that told of courageous, influential girls and women willing to sacrifice everything for the cause of Christ. I heard a small voice whisper for the first time, but I didn’t want to hear it. *Oh Lord, please don’t send me to Erie*, I prayed. I was terrified and tried to ignore the quiet whisper. I didn’t know then how I would fall in love with this place and the people here. I couldn’t see ahead to the joy of serving Him or marvel at the wonders He would do in our lives.

I WILL FOLLOW YOU.

“Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the valley of Achor for a door of hope: and she shall sing there, as in the days of her youth” (Hosea 2:14-15).

In 2008, God once again called me out of my comfort zone. Our growing family left the church where I had grown up and began attending a church on the other side of town. *Oh Lord, I love it so much here. Please don’t ever ask me to leave*, I pleaded. By now, you would think I had learned His ways are higher than my own (Isaiah 55:9). Instead, I went through a wilderness journey with the Lord. During the last full year there, He removed all my distractions and lured me away. I experienced one of the loneliest times of my life, but God used that time to prune and prepare me for the places *He* had for my future and for the future glory He would reveal in all our lives.

ALL YOUR WAYS ARE GOOD; ALL YOUR WAYS ARE SURE; I WILL TRUST IN YOU ALONE.

“And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night” (Exodus 13:21).

Many of us have heard the story of Moses and the Children of Israel crossing the Red Sea, but did you ever stop to think God led them there? He led them to a place with a wall of water before them and the enemy closing in behind them. “And they said unto Moses, because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness?” (Exodus 14:11) Would we have said anything different? Would I?

As I type these words, I am in the pre-op room waiting for my son Austin to be taken back for surgery to have a medical device removed from his chest. This month, I have done a lot of reflecting on the past year. When we pulled into the hospital’s parking garage this morning, I felt that sinking feeling in the pit of my stomach. I know this is one of my places now, but I still have a hard time believing it. And, like the Children of Israel with their backs to the Red Sea, I rebelled and fought this place at first.

WHERE YOU STAY, I’LL STAY.

“And, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20).

The night before we received Austin’s official diagnosis, I knew what was coming and I *hated* this place. I still remember where I was standing when I called my best girlfriend with angry tears. My head swam, and my eyes blurred. I didn’t want to look into other hurting faces or hear their stories. I didn’t want to stay in *this* place.

WHO YOU LOVE, I’LL LOVE; HOW YOU SERVE, I’LL SERVE

“And he must needs go through Samaria” (John 4:4).

Jesus didn’t shy away from the hard places. He went to the broken, the shamed, and the dying. He traveled through Samaria, a town most Jewish people avoided, to meet with a woman outcast by society, drowning in her own pain. He came to heal the places she kept hidden and to show her redemptive love. He regularly went to the sick—those no one dared go near. He came to bring

healing and the promise of a better future. And Jesus hurt *for them* (Matthew 9:36, Luke 19:41, John 11:35).

This place—this hospital with its hallways and waiting rooms, doctors and nurses and child care specialists, patients and families—this is the place I have surrendered to the Lord, and it has become *my* place. I smile at the person behind the desk, laugh with the staff, hug the nurses, and grieve with the broken.

Like Paul, I have seen glimpses of His glory in suffering (Romans 8:17). Sometimes, it hurts. There is weariness from days lived in hospital rooms and anxious nights spent waiting and wondering. There is pain in death and grief so terrible you forget to breathe. But I don’t *want* to be numb. Maybe God has placed me here for such a time as this (Esther 4:14). I love these people in this place, and I don’t want to forget what it felt like to be in their shoes. For as long as these hands are able, I want to serve them with a compassion that says I understand.

I don’t want to forget those who work long hours at something far more than a job. It is a calling, and they take it home with them. They grieve. They have shared our tears and our laughter (Romans 12:15). I pray they will see glimpses of God’s glory shining through us. During our regular check-ups and all the bends and turns in the road, may they be *glad* to see us because we bring joy to this place. And for those suffering, may they see hope in our story surpassing anything this world offers.

Lord, help me always say yes to the places You lead me. I know Your ways and thoughts are higher than my own. So, in this place, at this time, and for Your purpose, I surrender.

“To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some” (1 Corinthians 9:22). **ONE**

About the Writer: Marie Drakulic and her husband Tony are team members with Darryl Grimes, planting Flagship FWB Church in Erie, Pennsylvania: www.flagshipchurch.com. Marie still calls Children’s Hospital one of her places. This past spring, her son’s cancer relapsed. The family would appreciate your prayers, that they might be used to show God’s glory in such a scary place. “For He is able, and He is *always* good.”



Cobwebs on the Soul

BY BRENDA EVANS

In the middle of thinking about prosperity, I decided to invite dinner guests. My kind husband Bill agreed and said, “You cook; I’ll clean.” He plugged up the vacuum and got out the yellow-handled Swiffer duster—two good implements we use when people who might notice cobwebs are coming. “Remember the dining room light,” I yelled while chopping red bell pepper for the casserole.

House spiders love light fixtures, especially over dining room tables, the ones you don’t notice until your persnickety dinner guest looks up to admire your intricate fixture, drops her jaw, and loses her noodles. Dangling from the light’s prettiest curlicue are strands of abandoned cobwebs. Obviously, when his webs lost their stickiness because of my house dust, Mister Spider picked up his eight jointed legs, walked out, slammed the door, and left his cobwebs to me. I’m glad he went. He embarrassed me. I hope he sashayed across the street to somebody else’s dining room.

Despite the embarrassment, I like the word *cobweb*. It’s a true-blue 14th century English word, a strapping word. Maybe it was born when some British Isles charwoman gouged gauzy stuff out of nooks and crannies with a twig broom. Company was a-coming. Maybe she hissed and groused at the spiders who had left them there, but with a poetic wink and nod, she put together *coppe* (spider) and *web* to make a new-fangled English word: cobweb. I like it.

In the middle of the red pepper chop-chops on the cutting board, I thought about another poet’s cobwebs. My mind tumbled the words over and over, *cobwebs and prosperity*, *cobwebs and prosperity*, while I stirred up the casserole.

I don’t agree with the poet Emily Dickinson on theology, but I think she’s right about cobwebs: “Crumbling is not an instant’s act, tis first a cobweb on the soul, a cuticle of dust, an elemental rust—devil’s work, consecutive and slow.”

Dickinson’s not specifically talking about prosperity. Her poem is about any number of things that collect cobwebs in our souls. I thought of biblical principles we haven’t dusted off recently. Values that gradually rust and crumble. It happens “consecutive and slow.” We notice a little “slipping,” as she says later in the poem. It seems minor, a little loss of grip, or a tiny slide. We don’t pay attention until crumbling and cobwebs lead on to “crash’s law.”

A little slip-slide here, a little there, is how the “devil’s work” has eased into our lives on the subject of prosperity. And so the good word *prosperity* is dusted over and obscured. Only rarely do we hear prosperity apart from expressions of wealth, assets, property, or money. Even *flourish* and *thrive* bow their knees to making a bundle and cover up prosperity’s biblical meaning: making a good and wise and godly life. We have dollar signs in our eyes, and prosperity is about multiplying those dollar signs.

I Shop Therefore I Am, a 1987 work of art by Barbara Kruger, currently hangs in the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden alongside the National Mall in Washington. It will be there for several months. It’s a 30-year-old pictorial satire of American life. Kruger must have been asking in 1987 if shopping, buying, getting, spending, having, and owning had become our national pastimes. Thirty years later, they aren’t just a pastime; they are an obsession.

In Deuteronomy, when Moses talked about *prospering* (just before Joshua led God’s people into the land), he made his meaning clear. It’s as if he said, push forward, progress in all ways—spiritually, economically, socially—but always deal wisely while you do it. Handle prosperity; don’t let it handle you. Take it on cautiously, graciously. Tackle it, go with it, thrive, advance, but oversee your success wisely. Rule it, so it doesn’t rule you. Use it compassionately and with gratitude. Go forward with God. Wow! How we American believers have slipped in our understanding of prosperity. Kruger’s art has become our mantra: *I shop, therefore I am*.

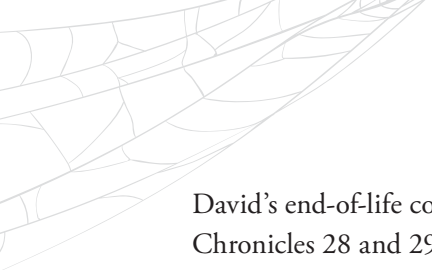
For several weeks now, I’ve read surveys, indexes, and essays on the current concept of prosperity. One index uses nine “pillars” for measuring prosperity. Another focuses on 12 “quantitative and qualitative factors” for assessing an individual or nation’s economic health. Both make relevant assessments of how governmental policies hinder or bolster economic prosperity, but neither mentions anything close to biblical precepts. Many seem to agree with the “I deserve” commercials rampant in the media.

I read an essay on happiness economics that explores the “joy center” of the brain. Some scientists say this part of the brain scans and measures a person’s happiness. Money lights up the joy center, it suggests, so money lights up a person’s life. Another study published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* concluded that a person’s happiness or emotional wellbeing is not a simple function of income. Nevertheless, we still measure the good life, the prosperous life, by wealth.

“If Money Doesn’t Make You Happy Then You Probably Aren’t Spending It Right” is a 46-page discussion of economic prosperity and its relation to happiness. Early on, the authors say, “The relationship between money and happiness is surprisingly weak...Most people don’t know the basic scientific facts about happiness—about what brings it and what sustains it—and so they don’t know how to use their money to acquire it.” They follow that up with eight principles on how to “buy” happiness. Only three of their principles touch on the concept that moving outside ourselves to consider the needs of others is a way to use our money well and be happy and prosper, a concept quite clear in the Bible, from Moses on through the New Testament. None of the eight principles even hint that God has a better idea on prosperity than they do or that He and Scripture are credible guides to authentic thriving.

Money is a human invention, but Heaven forbid that our concept of prosperity becomes a human invention as well. God has spoken often and well on the subject. Deuteronomy is one of those places. Moses repeatedly linked prosperity not only to milk and honey, real estate and agriculture, weapons of harm and instruments of peace, but to spiritual purity, obedience, generosity, and gratitude. I won’t look at these passages today, but dive into Deuteronomy chapters 8 and 30. Let God’s view shape our own views.


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David's end-of-life comments about prosperity in 1 Chronicles 28 and 29 are even more thorough. Death was upon him, and he was ready to pass along to Solomon the plans and materials he had gathered for building and embellishing the temple. He called a grand assembly of Israel's leaders: officials, commanders, stewards, priests, officers, mighty men, warriors, along with his son Solomon who was about to be installed as Israel's king.

Prosperity is about possibilities, David told them. It is conditional, contingent on attitudes and actions. In one brief spurt of about a hundred words, David used the word *if* three times. *If you do this, God will do that.* In the rest of his speech, David emphasized that prosperity is contingent on obedience, willingness to use skills, giving attitudes and actions, devotion to God and to work, praise, and gratitude—acknowledgement that all in heaven and on earth is God's. After David's death, "Solomon sat on the throne of the Lord as king in place of David his father. And he prospered..." (29:23).

We know the rest of the story. As long as Solomon kept the conditions for prosperity that God laid out through David, he thrived. When he thumbed his nose at those principles, cobwebs gathered, and "consecutive and slow" Solomon crumbled and fell.

Maybe it wasn't a British Isles half-poet, half-charwoman who invented the word *cobweb*, I don't know. The point is, if, like a charwoman, we sweep out our cobwebs and let the spiders start over, they will. We need to clean the cobwebs from our souls and start over about this thing called prosperity. It's time we believers think about prosperity the way God thinks about it. 

About the Writer: Brenda Evans is a freelance writer living on the edge of Appalachia in Ashland, Kentucky. You may contact her at beejayevans@windstream.net.



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Women Minister

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Please note the title does *not* say or even imply women can or should be ordained as ministers or deacons. However, everyone who knows anything about how churches operate would agree women do *minister* in the church. Most children's Sunday School classes are taught by women. Many instrumentalists are women. Women are trained to counsel during the altar call. We all readily acknowledge these valid roles for women, but could their ministry be broader? Many churches have trustee boards, general boards, and committees. Can and should women be permitted to serve in these roles? Can a woman serve as a full-time staff member in one of the many areas of ministry that does not require ordination?

Much research has been done by both secular and Christian organizations regarding the differences in how men and women think. Speaking in generalities (and acknowledging obvious exceptions), evidence suggests several differences. Men use specific parts of one brain hemisphere or the other to accomplish specific tasks. The female brain is more diffused, using significant

portions of both hemispheres to carry out a variety of tasks, often at the same time. Men focus on narrow issues and block out unrelated information and distractions. Women see everyday things from a broader, "big-picture" vantage point.

These differences in how men and women think could be useful on boards and committees within our churches. Further, the boards of our national departments or regional ministries could benefit from a woman's point of view. Currently, two national departments, Free Will Baptist Foundation and International Missions, have women on their boards (for which there is clear historic precedent).

While the differences between the way men and women think is evidenced by what they study in college, *both* choose business as the most popular college major today. Boards focusing on financial matters (the Board of Retirement and the Foundation) will benefit from women who are professionals in accounting, banking, and legal fields.

Almost twice as many women major in English, literature, and



writing as their male counterparts. Randall House publications, with a primary focus on curriculum and books, could benefit from the perspective of a woman who majored in these fields.

The ratio of women to men on college campuses is 1.35 women to every man. Wouldn't Welch and other Free Will Baptist college boards benefit from a woman's point of view when it comes to recruiting women? Wouldn't the ability of women to read nonverbal cues better than men (sometimes described as women's intuition), be an asset for boards such as North American Ministries and International Missions when evaluating candidates?

Women have the ability to minister in much broader ways than often thought. Perhaps it is time to consider electing women to serve in these areas. **ONE**

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

Luis Felipe Brias:

A Life Transformed

TRANSLATED BY KENNETH EAGLETON

Blessings, brothers! The Lord bless you. My name is Luis Felipe Brias. I currently congregate at the Good News Free Will Baptist Church of Chitré, Panama. This is a testimony of my life. I hope it is a blessing for all who hear.

Two years ago, I had the opportunity to meet the pastor of the Good News Church, Pastor Cirilo Mendoza. The meeting may not have been so pleasant, since I was in bad shape. I was going down a bad path. I had known the Lord, but as a result of separation and divorce from my wife, I took my eyes off the Lord Jesus Christ. This distraction made my life sink into vices, into drugs.

As a result of drugs, I lost everything: home, friends, work, car, and family. I started living in the streets. The drugs caused many side effects to my mind—paranoia, schizophrenia. I felt people wanted to hurt me, felt persecuted. I did not have peace. I suffered much because of this. I would go three or four days without eating or sleeping. I developed contempt for society, for the state in which I was. Until one day, I had the opportunity to meet Pastor Cirilo, who invited me, with all the love of God, to a new opportunity. He wanted to help me, to take me to a place where I could receive treatment for my problem and in the future, when I left treatment, I could congregate in his church.

At first, I took it as a joke. I did not believe him because of the lifestyle I was living. I was even disrespectful to the pastor and started using drugs in front of him and

in front of the brothers from the church. With much love and patience, he spent hours talking to me. But I had a very rebellious attitude. God touched my life, and I began to feel convicted so I accompanied them. They took me by car to another province of my country that same day, to a center. I remember the pastor gave me a Bible and pointed me to Philippians 1:8 that speaks of God being a witness to the love He feels for me. And he did not only love in words. I saw in the life of the pastor and the brothers a genuine love. They showed a love of God and gave me an opportunity to change, to be transformed.

I entered the treatment center. The pastor said they would not forget me; they would visit me and bring personal hygiene supplies and food. Not only the pastor but also other members of the congregation came weekly to this place, to this treatment center where I was confined. They loved God so much they not only visited me but all the people there. That place held the world's discards. Many destitute people, people with mental disorders, gang members, and delinquents were in that place. They were the worst of the worst. I saw the heart and attitude of the brothers from the church. They offered their

attention, cleaned wounds, brought medicine, Bibles, food for everyone there, and always shared the teaching of the Word.

I said, "I want what these brothers have. I want this love. I want to live the Christian life as they live it." I began to lift my spirits, hope, faith, and started believing in God. After two years in the rehabilitation center, I had the opportunity to go to a training seminar.

As a result of the lifestyle I had led, I had a warrant for my arrest. They detained me six months in prison. The same day I came to Chitré for training, they captured me. In that prison, where there is so much evil, so much violence, I began to apply what I learned from my brothers and won souls for the Lord Jesus Christ. They are converts, still deprived of freedom but free in spirit. They are bearing witness to what God has done. Right now three brothers are persevering. They are giving testimony, and they are helping other people.

After prison, I immediately came to visit the pastor, to greet him and sincerely tell him it was still not time to congregate in the church. I had to work on some weaknesses I knew I had. I looked for another rehabilitation center in another province and began treatment.

A door of employment opened to me. By the grace of God, I had an opportunity to work at a well-known restaurant. I earned the confidence of my boss. I managed money, and I was socializing. I worked for seven months in that restaurant. Every so often, Pastor Cirilo visited me, and we always talked on the phone. He was patient, just waiting. I also waited until God's timing came. The director of the center where I was being treated told me I had fulfilled my time satisfactorily.

Now, I am home and have started working in Chitré. Thank God I have a job. Two years ago, I did not have one. This congregation, this church, has been a great blessing to my life. I am very grateful for the opportunity Pastor Cirilo has given me to serve. I am already serving in what I can, helping the pastor. This is part of what the Lord has done in my life. I know He will continue to do many other things in the lives of other men like me. **ONE**



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Snapshots Around the World

Partner: Jeff and Susan Turnbough led a Leadership Matters Course in Germany March 8-24. Thirty leaders working in 19 nations received training. Sam McVay (IM office) and Kristi Johnson (Spain) both served as members of the training team.

India: Indian Free Will Baptists held their national convention in Sonapur, March 8-11, with well over 5,000 attending the opening service. By the closing service, more than 10,000 people swarmed the Sonapur compound. Forty-nine believers professed their faith through baptism. The conference theme, expressed in Psalm 50:15 (“Call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee.”), proved timely as persecution of Christians increases throughout India.



Bulgaria: About 30 women from Svishtov, Pleven, and Varna gathered for a retreat March 16-18. Several unsaved women joined those from FWB churches.



Brazil: Pastor Tiago de Oliveira baptized eight people on Sunday, March 25, at the Campo Alegre FWB Church in Conselheiro Lafaiete, Brazil.

Uruguay: In March, two men were ordained as deacons in Uruguay. On March 10, the Melo Church ordained Mauricio Leites. The following week, on March 17, the Cristo es el Camino Church in Rivera ordained Ismael Olivera.

Côte d’Ivoire: Pastor Yao Gboko Kobena baptized nine young people on March 31 in Gouméré, Côte d’Ivoire.

Brazil: Pastor Rafael do Santos baptized seven adults on March 11 at the Buritis FWB Church in Belo Horizonte, Brazil.

Côte d’Ivoire: The Schilo FWB Church in Bouna, Ivory Coast (Africa), celebrated Easter in their new building. The Schilo Church, led by Pastor Silas Noufé, is the second FWB church in Bouna.

Panama: Lázaro and Ariadna Riesgo, who serve in leadership training, traveled to Panama on March 2 to teach at the Chame

seminary. Lázaro taught apologetics classes; Ari trained in CEF (Child Evangelism Fellowship). After three weeks of teaching and weekends ministering in churches, the couple returned to the States on March 23.

Côte d’Ivoire: Thirteen bush churches gathered 538 people to celebrate Easter in a three-day weekend conference. Pastor Alex Hien leads these congregations in the Bougou area of Ivory Coast.



Japan: Thirty-seven people attended a charity concert at Good News Chapel in Tokyo on Saturday, March 31. Attendees contributed \$200 for ongoing relief work in the tsunami/earthquake stricken area of northeast Japan. Ruth McDonald, one of the featured artists, shared her testimony as well as singing. Professional philharmonic flautist and harpist also performed. The annual concert highlights the church’s community ministry and expands the contact base as new people enter its doors.

Outlaws Resign From Mission



David & Angie Outlaw

Antioch, TN—The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions voted to accept the resignation of David and Angie Outlaw from missionary service March 12, 2018. The Outlaws submitted an official letter of resignation, explaining, "David desires to resume a constant pulpit ministry that involves the continual exposition of Scripture and leadership in a local church. The One who sovereignly led us from the pastorate to the foot of the Tien Shan Mountains now leads us toward our next task...Though we do not yet have a church to pastor, we are issuing a 90-day notice to resign our positions at FWBIM effective March 1."

Appointed to missionary service in April 2006, David and Angie served five years sharing the gospel and teaching national leaders in Central Asia. Angie taught English courses, led outreach events, and served alongside IM partners at a humanitarian aid organization. David worked to equip national be-

lievers and church leaders, teaching the necessary theology and leadership principles to build generations of Central Asian Christians.

When living in Central Asia was no longer feasible, David and Angie traveled to Central Asia several times a year while expanding their teaching and training ministry to Russia, Panama, Cuba, and South Korea. David and Angie also worked to raise awareness for missions through conferences, events, and services.

"David and Angie are gifted people

who played an amazingly strategic role in opening ministry possibilities for IM in Central Asia. They have served honorably over the last 12 years and leave with our blessings and prayers," stated General Director Clint Morgan.

David and Angie plan to continue training pastors in Central Asia with IM (taking about four weeks throughout the year), as a church allows. "We encourage our supporters to continue supporting the partnership in Central Asia or designate that money to the WMO."

Bulgarian Team Member Dies

Svishtov, Bulgaria—Radostin Tsvetkov, an integral part of Josh and Lydia Provows' plans for working in Shumen, died suddenly on April 4. The 30-year-old collapsed while playing basketball with a group of boys.

Radi filled multiple roles in the Svishtov work, connecting well with teens and older adults alike. Tim and Lydia Awtrey sought several people to come forward and fill his shoes.

Josh Provow describe Radi as "one of my closest friends...loving, hard-working, humble...faithful." Other



Radostin Tsvetkov

members of the Bulgaria team agree. A Christian for 12 years, Radi joined the Svishtov church in 2016 and immediately began contributing to the church. Lydia Awtrey requested prayer for "our devastated church family."

What D^o You D^o, Exactly?

BY SHANE AND JOY

People often ask, “What do you do, exactly?” The short answer is we do everything we can to meet people and build relationships, so we can share the good news of Jesus.

WE ARE MISSIONARIES.

We are working to plant a church among the North African immigrants living in France. However, the word *missionary* often conjures up images of the Crusades when Christians and Muslims fought against one another centuries ago. So, while we do not hide the fact we are Christians (although different from those who attend mass and confess to a priest, as many assume), we introduce ourselves as teachers who work for an NGO. The Hanna Project exists to bring help, hope, and healing to hard to reach places.

The Hanna Project works in many places to meet physical needs, but the need here is education. We both hold education degrees and find one of the best ways for us to meet people is teaching English. English has become the language of the world. Does the North African community in France need English to survive? No, but they know speaking English will help them get better jobs. It will give their children an advantage in school, and will make travel around the world easier.

Teaching English provides an opportunity for us to meet many people while satisfying their desire to improve their language skills. More than that, it offers an opening to build friendships that could lead to conversations about Jesus—the true reason we are here. We want to share the good news that Jesus loves them. He created them. He came to the world and died for them, to save them. But we cannot tell them if we do not know them. We cannot know them unless we meet them.

The first year, we started with two English classes in a borrowed space but were told we could not openly

advertise in North African neighborhoods. The second year, we rented a small room in a community center in a North African neighborhood for our four adult English classes. We stayed for a few years, adding English classes as interest increased and more rooms to rent became available. In the fall of 2011, God led us to the building we rent now. The ministry center is near a bus stop in a North African neighborhood next to a hair salon and a pizza place.

As we met people in this neighborhood and built relationships, we discovered basic computer skills were needed. We added basic computer information classes, increasing their knowledge and, potentially, helping them in the job market.

We have taught French literacy classes for older North African women who never went to school. What an incredible privilege it is to help someone learn to read and write—to see the joy on her face when she reads a sentence for the first time! How proud we are when she says she filled out her own customs form when traveling to visit family in her home country. We demonstrate they are valued and loved by their Creator.

We also offer French classes for those who moved to France and need to learn to speak the language. People may move to France because they couldn't find a job in Spain, they are students from Ukraine, or Brazilian families on work transfer.

When people learned Shane plays guitar, they requested guitar lessons for children and adults. Some literacy class ladies learned Joy loved to cook, leading to a class on baking snickerdoodle cookies. Many friends and contacts asked for English tutoring lessons for their children. This provided a unique opportunity to visit the homes of North African families, allowing us to further the relationships beyond the classroom.

As our opportunities for teaching increased, so did our network of relationships in the North African com-





munity. We met Ray* and Jay* through a mutual friend. Ray owns and operates a Tunisian sandwich shop. Jay worked for him. Ray was interested in learning English. Our city is quite international and many English speakers stop by his shop. Shane began frequenting Ray's shop not only for English lessons and an occasional meal, but to simply hang out, drink tea, and spend quality time with Ray and Jay.

Conversations with Ray and Jay have gone beyond English grammar lessons to Jesus, His love, and His self-sacrifice to save the world. Both have read the Scriptures for themselves and discussed spiritual matters pertaining to life on earth and life after death. They have heard a clear presentation of the gospel and how Jesus gave His life for them. Ray and his wife agreed to participate in a regular Bible study that has been underway for several months. Teaching is a vehicle allowing us to travel to our destination of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the nations.

Larry* was the first person to call and sign up for an English class when we began offering them in his neighborhood community building. The retired 78-year-old simply enjoys studying languages. Shane and Larry have spent many conversations over coffee talking about history, politics, and religion. Larry agreed to a weekly Bible study. Because of an English class offered in a North African neighborhood, Larry has been exposed to the truth about Jesus Christ.

In Joy's highest-level English class, she assigned each student a five-to ten-minute presentation in English on any subject. One student chose to speak about astronomy. He concluded all the planets, stars, human beings, animals, all of creation, are made up of the same substance. Everything that exists is composed of the same elements. This prompted questions from the class about the origin of mankind.

While it is illegal to teach Jesus and the Bible in our English classes, we are free to share our beliefs when asked our point of view. The class listened as Joy outlined her belief in one Creator who designed everything. This moment of truth occurred in an English class. That is why we are here. That is why we do what we do.

Other activities over the years have provided opportunities to share the gospel in unique ways. One example is the annual English Christmas Carol service in our town. Sponsored by an English-speaking church in the city, the service is a tradition more than 35 years old and attracts an attendance of around a thousand people each year. When asked to direct the choir in some traditional English Carols like "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night," Shane agreed and, 12 years later, he not only directs the Christmas Carol Choir, but also helps lead and plan the event. He has an opportunity to ensure the gospel is shared and the name of Jesus proclaimed.

By meeting people, we build relationships with them. We pray for open doors to share truth. Over the years, the relationships have deepened. We have helped our friends move furniture, given rides to or from the airport or train station, shared meals, prepared a résumé or a presentation for work, watched movies together, and helped their children prepare for school English exams.

We cannot tell them about the One who died to save them if we do not know them. We cannot know them if we do not meet them. **ONE**

**Not their real names.*

About the Writer: Shane and Joy work in a creative access ministry in France. Learn more about The Hanna Project by visiting www.hannaproject.com.



WE NEED NEW SONGS!

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

Why would a theologian write about music, one might ask. But a conversation about theology is the ideal place to talk about the church's song. The New Testament lists theology as the primary reason for singing in church.

As Colossians 3:16 tells us (and as Dr. Jeff Crabtree explored in a recent issue of *Integrity*), the primary reason we sing to each other in church is to let Christ's teaching and the teaching of Holy Scripture dwell richly, deeply, and copiously in the people of God. The primary reason for worship songs is to teach the congregation biblical theology and to admonish (encourage or exhort) them to live their lives in accord with that theology. This is done as we "make melody in our hearts to the Lord" (from the parallel passage, Ephesians 5:19).

I've been emphasizing this principle recently to students in my Christian Worship class at Welch College. The *content* of our worship music should carefully fulfill this apostolic purpose for singing in church. Of course, the *form* of our worship music supports this as well. The way we sing ensures people's voices are heard (the "speaking to one another" from Ephesians 5:19). It ensures the teaching and admonishing function of the song is front and center. It ensures edification of the body—not the entertainment or private worship experience of individuals—is paramount. Thus, it also ensures the musical form unites and doesn't divide the body. This is all part of what it means to think theologically about the ultimate purpose of New Testament worship, specifically New Testament singing.

If we desire an apostolically-shaped worship service (one that relies on the pattern of Christ and His inspired Apostles, and seeks to let the ordinary means of grace found in His all-sufficient Word guide and structure our worship), we will carefully structure every aspect of our worship music. That will guide us, rather than the whims of a handful of people in the music industry who earn millions of dollars from ever-changing worship fads and musical trends.


The key is choosing worship songs with theologically-rich texts. It's wonderful we can "sing a new song to the Lord" and still do this. An abundance of material presents freshly-written songs with theologically-rich lyrics or traditional hymns (now unfamiliar to many) set to new melodies. My son Matthew reminded me of this recently, when he reintroduced me to a song by my friend Nathan

Clark George. When Matthew played the song, "Calm Content," I said, "I've heard this before. Nathan led this song during Welch College chapel a few years ago."

If you are a pastor or music minister interested in new music with theologically-rich lyrics, I encourage you to check out Nathan's work. Much of his church music consists of older hymn texts reset to freshly-written music compositions. Often, he adds a new chorus or additional verse to accompany the older hymn text. Sometimes, he writes the text himself.

In "Calm Content," he takes a wonderful text from 18th century hymn writer William Cowper (most famous for "There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood") and adds a chorus and additional verse to it. Like most classic hymnody, Cowper's text is replete with biblical and theological substance. It teaches and admonishes at the same time. The subject matter is not only doctrinal but practical: learning from the school of Christ to be calmly content in life's most difficult circumstances.

Nathan and his friend Gregory Wilbur are among a growing band of "new hymnodists" bringing theologically-rich, gospel-drenched songs back into the worship life of the evangelical church. Others include Getty Music, Ligonier Ministries, RUF Music, Bifrost Arts, Sovereign Grace Music, and Stuart Townend Music. These ministries are not making money hand-over-fist like the labels atop the CCLI charts. Many provide their music free of charge or for a nominal fee. They're in it for the ministry, and they need your support!

I thank God for this recent explosion of theologically-rich songs for the 21st century church. I pray it will help evangelical churches recapture the historic desire to use the church's song for its biblical intent: teaching and admonishing the people of God as they make melody in their hearts to the Lord! 

About the Writer: J. Matthew Pinson is president of Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee: www.Welch.edu.



College Listed Among Best Christian Workplaces

Welch College received notification it has been certified as a *2018 Best Christian Workplace* in the United States, according to Dr. Kevin Hester, vice president for institutional effectiveness. This is the fourth time the college has participated in the survey.

"This is the most widely used assessment instrument for gauging the health of workplace culture," Hester said. "Welch regularly uses it as one of several means whereby we judge the health of the overall organization and constantly strive for improvement. We're excited to learn that once again our results have qualified us as a Best Christian Workplace. The survey results indicate that not only is Welch College a great place to study and learn, but it has a flourishing culture and engaged staff committed to our mission of educating leaders to serve Christ, His Church, and His world. I love going to work at Welch College, and I am grateful to have such a Christ-like, committed group of fellow believers as coworkers."

To be certified as a Best Christian Workplace, organizations must complete the BCWI employee engagement survey and meet predetermined standards of excellence. The survey covers such issues as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, Christian witness, supervisory effectiveness, work

satisfaction, personal growth and development, management effectiveness, supporter satisfaction, teamwork, communications, and pay and benefits.

The anonymous survey of full-time employees at Welch College had a 97% response rate. The survey posed 60 questions to employees, grouped in nine major areas: fantastic teams, life-giving work, outstanding talent, uplifting growth, rewarding compensation, inspirational leadership, sustainable strategy, healthy communication, and engagement overall. Welch

scored above average in all nine.

Welch Provost Dr. Matthew McAfee said, "One of the top marks of effective organizations is that a lot of people want to work there, and when they come to work there, they don't want to leave. We're grateful we have this at Welch, and it's gratifying to see it evidenced in this national survey."

For more information on Welch College, visit Welch.edu. To give a gift to fund the construction of the new Welch campus, visit BuildingontheLegacy.com.

Mahler Named Business Officer of the Year

The Association of Business Administrators of Christian Colleges (ABACC) recognized Welch College Vice President for Financial Affairs Craig Mahler as the 2018 H. G. Faulkner Distinguished Business Officer of the Year, according to President Matt Pinson. ABACC, a professional society of 183 Christian colleges in the United States and Canada, recognizes outstanding individuals in the field of Chris-

tian higher education business and financial management. Mahler was presented the award February 15 during ABACC's annual conference in Orlando, Florida.

"It is clear from Craig's staff's nomination of him for this award that he goes above and beyond his job description to serve his institution and that his colleagues hold him in great respect," said Bruce Hoeker,



Craig Mahler

executive director of ABACC.

Mahler was named vice president for financial affairs at Welch College in January

2012. He previously served six years as comptroller (2006-2012). Mahler additionally oversees the business office, financial aid office, and plant operations. He has been

an essential part of the campus relocation, serving on the transition planning committee and relocation task force. The Welch student body recognized Mahler as the 2017 recipient of the Bert and Dianne Tippet Award in honor of his diligent work.

Pinson stated, "We could not have faced the challenges of relocation without Craig Mahler's integrity, work ethic, and expertise. He is wholeheartedly committed to the ministry of Welch College, and we are so proud of him for receiving this singular honor."

Mahler graduated with honors from Tennessee Technological University, receiving a B.S. in business administration in 2004. He earned the MBA from Trevecca Nazarene University in 2016. Mahler spent several years in Trevecca's internal audit division while a student at the university and was involved in specialized management training at DeKalb Community Bank, now Wilson Bank & Trust, in Smithville, Tennessee.

Craig and his wife Sabrina have two daughters, Lily and Madeline, and live in Carthage, Tennessee.

Summer School Introduced With Money-Back Transfer Guarantee

Welch College recently announced a new expanded summer school program for 2018, according to Dr. Charles Lea, special assistant to the president.

"College students who are home for the summer from both public and private colleges and universities or new students waiting to begin in the fall can attend Welch and improve their chances of completing a bachelor's degree in only four years," Lea said. "Welch College is expanding offerings, simplifying the admission process, and reducing tuition for new students, as well as transient students from other colleges or universities

while home in Sumner County for summer break."

Courses will also be available for high school juniors and seniors who wish to obtain dual enrollment credit. General education, Bible, and selected science courses will be offered in two five-week and two two-week summer sessions.

"In addition to the expanded offering, Welch will introduce a new instructional delivery option, which allows students to attend class five days a week for two weeks and complete the remainder of the course through an independent study option during either five-week term," said Welch Provost Matthew

McAfee. "Most importantly, transferability is guaranteed."

The lower tuition structure will make Welch the most cost-efficient Christian college in the mid-state. "This summer, students can have it all: lower cost, highest quality, guaranteed transferability, innovative instructional delivery, and a Christian environment," Lea said. "Don't waste the summer break. Experience a summer at Welch and see the difference!"

Those interested in applying can visit the Welch College website at welch.edu/summerschool or call 615-675-5336. Classes begin on May 21.

Peacemakers and Pacesetters

BY BARRY RAPER

Have you ever seen conflict erupt at church? At one church in my hometown, conflict became so intense chairs were thrown during a business meeting. The local church should be the one place in the entire community people learn to deal effectively and graciously with conflict. Sadly, many times they see *only* the conflict.

We also may have experienced different forms of conflict in our homes. How did your parents deal with conflict? A person may tend to follow those same patterns of conflict resolution. If parents scream and yell, their children conclude conflicts are only hashed out through screaming and yelling. On the other hand, if parents bottle everything up and ignore problems, their children often do the same during relationship problems.

Conflict is a reality of human experience. It is not a question of *if* we will have conflict. It is a question of *when* we will have conflict. Conflict can be traced to the Fall of Adam and Eve, and it will



continue to be part of the human experience until the return of Christ. The question we must answer is: How will we deal with conflict? Jesus wants us to learn to be peacemakers. Making peace with others doesn't mean we ignore relational problems or gloss over them. However, in this passage

from the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus teaches us as His followers to *practice peacemaking*.

- Kingdom Characteristic.** This verse is one of the Beatitudes Jesus shared with His disciples and to those listening in the crowd. We must remember these

pronouncements of Jesus are not entry requirements into the Kingdom of God, but they are *characteristics* of those already in His Kingdom. Peacemaking is (or should be) characteristic of those who follow Jesus.

- **Peacemaking Blessings.** Each one of the beatitudes begins with the word *blessed* or *happy*. When we follow God's Kingdom plan, we discover His ways are blessed. Our happiness and joy are tied to living as Kingdom citizens. If we desire God's blessing, then it comes as we

are faithful to be peacemakers.

- **Peacemaking God.** We are to be peacemakers because this is the nature of God Himself. He has taken the initiative to reach out to us—to those at odds with Him. He has offered peace through the blood of His own Son. Those who believe are no longer in conflict with God but have been brought into a relationship with Him through Christ.

Personal Application: Of course, making peace with others isn't easy. It forces us to ask questions

like, "Am I in conflict with anyone? If so, what is preventing reconciliation?" While we cannot control how the other party will respond, we certainly can control our own attitude, words, and actions. We can exert leadership in our local church by taking the lead and setting the pace when it comes to conflict resolution and peace. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Barry Raper is program coordinator for ministry studies at Welch College and pastor of Bethel FWB Church near Ashland City, Tennessee.

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Trip to the Art Museum

BY CHRISTA HILL

Together, the man and woman ascend the granite steps to the art museum. It's early in their dating relationship, and though they are new to one another, they share old ideas. They also know they are in for something quite interesting, to put it mildly. The exhibit focuses on American art produced during and following the year 2000.

Together, they walk through galleries filled with paintings and sculptures; machines and contraptions; and videos projected on walls, ceilings, and floors. They are both fascinated and horrified, though not radically so. They knew what to expect. They maintain their composure, but each can sense what the other is thinking. Quick glances say as much as many words would.

"Art? Really?"

"I should change careers," she quips in a low voice. "I could do this. I could make money at this."

He wisely reminds her that such an endeavor would be soul-damaging, that her principles ultimately would not allow her to maintain such a farce.

Sometimes, to their surprise, they encounter truly thought-provoking pieces. One in particular captures the woman's attention. In a series of looping videos, a mother films her small child as he wanders in a field. As he gets further away, to the point of almost vanishing, viewers suddenly witness the mother running after him. The display of maternal instinct and care speaks to the woman. Perhaps truth is there. Still, the man and woman wonder if this is art. Does it take skill? Does it both

delight and instruct, as all good art should? Or is it just a visual think piece?

Not all of the exhibitions are so restrained. Some, frankly, are outright disgusting, divulging the artists' desire to shock and provoke their audience. Often, intentionally or not, the artists mock what they purportedly revere. One exhibit in particular is meant to celebrate womanhood, but its use of violent reds, torn fabric, and, shockingly, bodily fluids belie this intent. The woman feels nausea creeping upon her as she looks at the assault; the gloominess stays with her.

Throughout each room of the exhibit, with each new piece and in each description, beauty is absent. Chaos and confusion rule. Colors and shapes are mixed incoherently; balance and proportion are abolished.

In the midst of this confusion, the howl of dogma is clear. The man recognizes that each piece "invites" the viewer to ponder some message, typically of a neo-socialist sort.

"Can't you see how terrible capitalism is?" one demands.

"Who are you to question my self-constructed identity?" another snaps.

The description placards add to the chorus and are somehow worse than the pieces they explain. The viewers can hear the sanctimonious questioning, the sneering invitation to cast off the shackles of traditional thinking regarding humanity and society.

Art has never needed so much explanation for the audience to “get it.” It teaches, but it fails to delight, and, in actuality, it is a poor instructor, requiring the preaching of the placards to get the point across.

Absolute egalitarianism is the incontestable lesson of the sermon. The pieces insist the viewer be totally aware of his privileged status, feel guilty for it, and be converted to hate the society in which he lives because of it.

The man recognizes that, in many ways, these artists have become the Victorians of the day, believing that anyone or any concept in disagreement with their assumptions is inherently immoral. They blush at what is truly good and beautiful and replace it with the shocking and ugly for the sake of their own moral superiority.

Perhaps, though, some of these artists aren't so concerned with “message.” In some instances, pure self-expression is the sole motivation for art. These libertines care even less about what their audiences think or value. Being true to their own primal instincts and desires is all that matters.

The man and woman know that each work displays the artist's worldview, with or without a clear or discernable statement. Often, the form renders their content indecipherable and obscures their intent. No wonder the didactic description placards are necessary.

Ultimately, these artists reflect what they have come to believe about the nature of reality:

There is **no** truth.

There is **no** meaning.

There is **no** real reason for human life.

There is **no** beauty beyond the eye of the beholder.

There is **no** unified purpose, only struggle.

Reflection

Despite everything, the day hasn't been wasted. The man and woman take what they have witnessed seriously. They do not callously disregard the artists' statements. Instead, they know they must respond carefully and compassionately to the culture around them.

As they reflect over a good cup of coffee, they conclude, regardless of the shock, chaos, and struggle on display, their first and strongest emotional response is sadness—sadness for people who don't know the truth or who actively combat it, sadness for people who truly deny meaning in life, sadness for people who ignorantly or pretentiously praise these works as products of genius.

Together, the man and woman dissent. They dissent from the ideas the art communicates. They dissent from the form used to present those ideas. They return full circle to their original question:

“Art? Really?”

“Where was the beauty?” she ponders aloud.

“Where was the delight?” he responds.

Failure on both fronts, they conclude. What they have seen is, really, not true art but false art, the art of ideological tyranny, art that holds one at the tip of a sword and demands complete reverence. True art requires no such brutal force. Its inherent delight winsomely convinces its audience of the truth it teaches. Its beauty needs no smug explanation or strong-armed demands.

Together, the man and woman react. They know what they believe about the nature of reality:

There **is** truth.

There **is** meaning.

There **is** a reason for human existence.

There **is** a universal ideal of beauty.

There **is** purpose in hopeful struggle.

They know the whole story. They recognize that the West did not suddenly accept this cultural farce. They understand the perpetual struggle between renaissance and decay, between the rediscovery of absolute truths

and rejection of them. They've read Francis Schaeffer, H. R. Rookmaaker, and Roger Scruton:

"What is the solution, then?"

"Laud truth; love beauty; pursue goodness. Critique with the grace of a well-informed mind. Produce excellent culture that, by its nature, gently but powerfully challenges the status quo."

"Question the idea that Christians must adopt contemporary artistic mores to reach the world around them. If the form of false art can't convey false ideas well, it certainly cannot communicate truth."

"Question the idea that Christians should form their own micro-culture; one separated from the culture at large; one that affixes crosses or fishes or Christian slogans to paintings, songs, or t-shirts and calls them good; one that produces culture for the faithful only."

"Realize that art and culture matter. As beings made in the image of God, humans have been tasked to be 'sub-creators,' to make paintings, sculptures, poetry,

music, and books that reflect the beauty of the world God has created, of the eternal truths found in Scripture, and of the order He has given to the universe."

Together, and most importantly, the man and the woman know the end of the story. Christ, the Redeemer who gives life and establishes truth, is renewing all things. Through Him, His people can take part in transforming culture by understanding art and by creating excellent art that faithfully represents lives and views transformed by the Holy Spirit to be like Christ. **ONE**

About the Writer: Christa Hill is librarian at Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee. She completed the MLIS at University of Alabama and holds a B.A. in English and Biblical Studies from Welch College (2011). She taught high school and middle school English for three years before returning to Welch. She attends Sylvan Park FWB Church where she helps with children's ministry. Christa is a regular contributor to the Helwys Society Forum, where this article first appeared: HelwysSocietyForum.com.



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Mission, Vision, Goals, and Tactics

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.

Leaders and managers are frequently compared to one another in this column. By now, you understand leaders deal with change and direction while managers deal with the complexity of the day-to-day. Like an airplane, where the fuselage determines the direction and the wings keep it flying, both leaders *and* managers are vital. Leadership decisions determine direction, and managers—like the wings—create the lift needed for success.

While churches do not have managers in the business sense, the roles and functions described here can apply to the church. The pastor should naturally fit the role of the leader. This role also describes specific age group leaders—children’s pastors or youth directors because they lead within their departments. However, these positions would be considered managers in relation to the pastor, who leads overall. A



pastor sets the direction, mission, and vision of the entire church. Ministry leaders (managers) from each area (youth, children, worship, men, women, seniors, and others) all follow the big picture direction of their leader.

Without mission or vision, there is no aim, direction, or discipline for growth. However, vision without follow-through is only an idea. Don’t be a daydreamer with no action. The second part of vision or mission is the tactics for accomplishing the mission

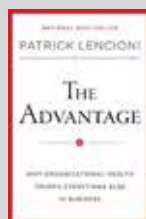
of the church or organization.

To find your tactics, break down the mission into incremental, achievable, measurable steps. These incremental steps provide the tactics for achieving the mission. Tactics “keep the plane flying.” Do not confuse tactics with busyness; *everyone* is busy. Measurable steps become the goals for managers to help their teams accomplish the mission. Pastor, you are but one person, and while capable of much, your capacity will increase when you inspire direction and set goals. A church, school, or denomination all need vision (mission) and goals (tactics), because without both we sit like the proverbial frog in a pot while the temperature slowly rises.

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”

—Warren G. Bennis



RECOMMENDED BOOK

The Advantage

By Patrick Lencioni

Time Is Money



BY AUDREY HOLLIFIELD



Growing up, I always had this idea in my head about retirement. I thought it was something you didn't have to worry about until your 30s or 40s. It was an "out-of-sight, out-of-mind" concept for me, especially when I first graduated college and started working my first full-time job as a bank teller. I remember the bank offered to put money away each month for my retirement. I shrugged it off because I thought I didn't need to worry about it.

It wasn't until I began working for the Board of Retirement last September that I learned my perspective was entirely incorrect. Not only is it incredibly beneficial to start putting money away for retirement in your 20s, it is also recommended. When you start early, you actually end up with more. Who knew?

Professionals recommend starting early because of a concept called "compounding." *Investopedia* defines *compounding* as, "the process where the value of an investment increases because the earnings on an investment, both capital gains and interest, earn interest as time passes." It goes like this: you invest a lump of funds; it gains interest; the amount of your original investment plus the interest gained then earns interest; and the process repeats.

Imagine having 40-plus years for this concept to work in your favor. This is why people start saving early. You have more time for investments and interest to build upon itself. Visualize a snowball. If you roll that snowball down a snow-covered hill, it picks up snow as it goes and turns into a huge snow boulder. It's the same with retirement.

While starting early gives you a head start on saving and earning as much as possible toward your retirement, contributing regularly is also a factor of growth. It's a simple concept! The more you save, the more you have. Go back to the snowball analogy: it's like putting even more snow on the ground for the snowball to acquire as it rolls. You increase the amount in your account every time you put more money in, allowing more funds to benefit from compounding.

How does all of this fit into our lives with Christ? What does the Bible have to say? I think the perfect example of saving and investing in one's future can be found in Genesis, when God speaks through Joseph to the

IT'S A SIMPLE
CONCEPT! THE
MORE YOU
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MORE YOU
HAVE.


King and saves Egypt from drought. Through Joseph, God laid out a specific plan to set aside a portion of food during the fruitful season to save them during the season of drought:

"Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine" (Genesis 41:34-36).

Here, God illustrates and emphasizes the importance of taking portions from your season of fruitfulness and

putting them aside for the time you'll need it.

Start saving as early as possible and keep saving to be prepared for the seasons of life ahead. God has blessed our futures with the blessings He is providing for us now. May we be good stewards of these blessings and wise in the way we save.

The Board of Retirement offers a retirement plan to employees of any Free Will Baptist church, school, or agency. Contact our office at 877-767-7738, or visit our website www.boardofretirement.com to learn more. 

About the Writer: Audrey Hollifield has been administrative assistant for the Board of Retirement since September 2017. She graduated from Lee University in 2014 with a B.S. degree in Human Development with an emphasis in Business.

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First Things First

BY JOSHUA EIDSON



“But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content” (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

What is the first rule in gaining wealth? Live on less than you make. You do that by keeping *first things first*. When it comes to finances and wealth building, we make it more complicated than it is. We chase after formulas, strategies, and schemes to turn a quick profit. We convince ourselves we have to continually outsmart the next person to ever get ahead.

I'm sure you've heard the statement: “Keep it Simple, _____.” I'll keep it polite and just shorten it to *keep it simple*. You will find no better place to put that sentiment into practice than in the area of finances. This area is much simpler than we make it. Keeping it simple can be much more rewarding.

I recently came across an article about a family that lived on an irregular, freelance income. By necessity, they monitored their bank balances closely. When the balance became tight, and understanding their basic needs were satisfied (a key point), they committed not to spend a dime for a short while, not to spend *anything*. The article recounts the simple lessons they learned during this experiment. They made time for more meaningful endeavors rather than simply eating dinner out with friends or paying for some form of entertainment. They worked on projects they had been neglecting. They enjoyed the outdoors more. They ate leftovers (gasp!). They spent time being more creative.

Their story reminded me of what Paul wrote in his letter to the Philippians, “Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content” (Philippians 4:11). Obviously, this family faced much less dire circumstances than Paul, but truth is truth no matter the situation.

If we learn to keep it simple by keeping first things first, we can live a life of abundance. Not that we will all be millionaires—it comes down to the heart. First, give back to God a portion of what He has given you. Second, set some aside for your future, and third, learn to live on the rest.

Once we accept it is that simple—and don't misunderstand me to mean *easy* because it will be hard at times—we can make progress toward our financial futures. Keeping that focus will help us live more content lives. It is very freeing to tithe, save, and know you can spend 100% of the rest. **ONE**

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

The Heartbeat of Free Will Baptists

BY TRACY PAYNE



From earliest days, Free Will Baptist women have been involved in the ministry of the denomination. When Benjamin Randall formed the first church in the North at New Durham, New Hampshire, 13 of the 20 charter members were women. With those numbers, it is fairly safe to assume those 13 women were involved. Since that moment, women throughout the denomination's history have fulfilled crucial roles.

In the 1800s, the Freewill Baptist Female Missionary Society pioneers sent missionaries to India and supplied funding and teachers to Storer College, the first college for slaves freed after the Civil War. Today, the spiritual daughters of those pioneers continue to blaze new trails as WNAC, a denominational department specializing in global women's ministries, supporting ministry efforts around the world. While many things change, some things remain constant—women's ministries minister!

Just as families change over time, the same is true in ministry. Women navigate the sometimes difficult waters of change fairly well. We watch children become adults, see our parents age, and sometimes even lose our spouses. How do we encourage this wonderful gift of flexibility in our women's ministry? The answer is information partnered with encouragement.

We do not have the sole responsibility of placing missionaries on their fields of calling. Neither do the women of our movement have the task of securing teachers for colleges and universities. Yet we continue to fulfill our role as helpmeets and stewards who exist to *help each woman fulfill the Great Commission through her God-designed roles in the home, church, community and world.*

Before the 1935 merger brought the denomination to-

gether as the National Association of Free Will Baptists, women had organized for purposes of ministry. Local groups met in churches under names such as "Women's Home Mission," "Ladies Aid Society," "Women's Work," or "Women's Bible Club." Depending on the heartbeat of each group, they concentrated on ministry to various causes, such as missions, education, stewardship, the Temperance Movement, and social issues such as soup kitchens and orphanages.

Does this sound much different from current trends in women's ministry? Almost every local church has at least one group of women meeting with a shared point of interest. One group might share a Bible study each time they meet, while another meets to minister to women in the local jail or homeless shelter. A group is focused on an afternoon club for community children, while another group seeks out elderly women to become involved in Bible studies.

Whatever the "heartbeat" of your group, it means you are alive. Whatever you call yourself—Women's Worth, R.E.A.L., L.I.F.T., Heartbeats, Soul Seekers, Heart and Home, or Women Active for Christ, it means you are part of Free Will Baptist women's ministry, and we can still accomplish amazing things together. **ONE**

About the Writer: Tracy Payne earned a B.S. in Theology and Psychology from Randall University in 1983. She is worship coordinator for West Tulsa FWB Church (Oklahoma), a member of the WNAC board, and president of Oklahoma WAC. A pastor's wife and mother of five, Tracy is a frequent speaker at women's events.



Season of **SOLITUDE**

BY CHAPLAIN (MAJ) TRACY KERR

Have you ever looked around the room and thought, “Lord, following you takes me to some of the strangest places”? This morning, I find myself at my computer deep in the Middle East. My sinuses are on fire as my body acclimates to the dust bowl I now call home. Many of the comforts of home have been left thousands of miles away, and I am a year out from kissing the cook.



Still, there is something beautiful about these seasons in life that are hard to explain. Perhaps you find yourself in the same kind of place. The “normal” routines that fill our days and the rhythms that move us from one task to another have been replaced with familiar but strange sights, smells, and sounds. I catch myself mumbling, “Here we go again.”

Though this new season will bring challenges, I know it is exactly where God has called me for this time in my life. As I looked around the hanger just prior to deployment, I saw the uncertainty and fear on the solemn faces of troops and their family members. During this moment, and others like it, the Spirit reminds me of the importance of God’s calling.

I’ve always imagined the disciples toiling through the troubled waters in Mark 4, thinking their lives could not be more off course, or that perhaps they had misunderstood the directions from “command.” The fact that Jesus asked them to get into the boat and (literally) pushed them out to sea should make things easier for us to understand. But it doesn’t. The truth is troubled waters are often the result of God’s call upon our lives.

If this is where you are, relax. You’re in good company. Scripture is replete with examples of followers led into these seasons. David, Moses, Joseph, Paul, and even our Lord Himself were isolated from the normal routine of life to be prepared for God’s particular call. David was called away from his flocks to be anointed king of Israel. Joseph experienced dreams so vivid he simply had to share them. These young souls were at the outset of their spiritual experiences. In spite of their spiritual encounters and God-given enthusiasm, they were years from reaching their God-appointed stations in life. No one expects to read about David running for his life while King Saul hunted him like some wild prey. Nor did anyone expect to see Joseph, the favorite son, cast down, sold, imprisoned, and forgotten. Joseph and David stand as two of Scripture’s greatest examples of *real* men with *real* problems in a *real* world. They lived through extreme seasons of danger and isolation because God was training them for the extreme moments they would face in the future when David served as second king of Israel

and Joseph became the vizier, the agricultural director of the Egyptian empire.

To what mundane yet faithful task has God called you? Are you accomplishing that task? David demonstrates this truth vividly. God describes him as “a man after God’s own heart.” This is an amazing commendation. As we look into Scripture, we find David faithfully accomplishing his tasks long after the banquet is cleared and the prophet is gone. He is called to take food to his brothers on the battlefield as they confront the Philistines in battle. He is called to King Saul’s chambers to play music to soothe Saul’s troubled spirit. What is so amazing about David is that each time he is found in the same place, doing the same thing—tending his father’s sheep. Remember, David would be the next king. Yet, for the moment, as the youngest of his father’s household, he was happy to accept his role as the house shepherd. He served faithfully in isolation, learning to protect, serve, and lead the weak sheep of his father’s pasture. He had no entourage, applause, or gallery of visitors—just sheep, wilderness, and the close presence of God.

Today, I gaze across a horizon filled with dust so thick I cannot even see the nearby mountains. There is no large fellowship of believers or mass choir singing praise to God. What I do see are opportunities—opportunities to share life with soldiers and provide them with an example of what following Christ looks like in the season of war. I have hopeful expectation that God will use this season to set my priorities, focus my efforts, and turn my heart toward Heaven as I protect the sacred things He has placed in my life. I serve at His good pleasure. Life will be different, but I look forward to finding the faith of my Father along the journey, knowing I am isolated but *never* alone. **ONE**

About the Writer: Chaplain (MAJ) Tracy Kerr is currently deployed to Afghanistan. He and his wife Ginger have three children: Sarah, Grace, and Jonathan. His current home base is Hunter Army Air Field in Savannah, Georgia.



Answer the Call

BY EDWARD E. MOODY, JR.

On May 9, 2015, Jeng Yoong Tan went into cardiac arrest at a Lone Star restaurant in Clayton, North Carolina. Every year 350,000 people in the United States go into cardiac arrest outside of a hospital and 90% of them die. My friend's life was saved that day because someone knew first aid and was willing to take time to help him. It is important to know and administer physical first aid.

We also need to be capable of administering another type of first aid, and that is first aid for emotional needs. Emotional needs arise after someone experiences a loss or struggles with a mental illness or some type of substance.

You are much more likely to encounter someone who needs emotional first aid since one in four Americans will experience a mental health problem or abuse substances at some point in their lifetimes. In fact, 44 million Americans aged 12 and older have experienced a mental health problem. So, you are 125 times more likely to encounter someone depressed, addicted, or traumatized than you are someone who will go into cardiac arrest. Therefore, we would do well to become equipped in the techniques needed to help people with these difficulties.

Too often we think these problems are the domain of the helping professional. But that would be a bit like being in a restaurant when someone goes into cardiac arrest, and saying, "You know, I'd love to help but I am not a doctor or a nurse." That response would be ludicrous, since the person only needs first aid that any equipped person could have provided.

Similarly, those we encounter with emotional difficulties do not always need a psychologist, counselor, or even a pastor. They simply need a friend, family member, or fellow congregant to be equipped to provide aid to them. This is the point of the story Jesus told of the Good Samaritan where He described what a real neighbor (or friend or Christian) is really supposed to be like. After Jesus told the story, he commanded believers to go and do likewise (Luke 10:37). This willingness to serve was what Paul was getting at when he said Christians are called to be ambassadors for Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20). And remember, Jesus called the hurting to come to Him (Matthew 8:38) when they needed rest. But where are they to go? Well, they are to go to you (if you are a Christian). You are the hands and feet of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27), and you are called to render aid to hurting people (Matthew 25:35-40). But how can we do this?

I am glad you asked! For years, I have worked to prepare others to help people in need. In the revised version of *First Aid for Emotional Hurts*, we describe how any Christian can use the tools God has given them to help the hurting. Then we describe the techniques that

can be used. Helping other people can be complicated, and it involves being prepared and willing to do what God has called all of us to do. In the remainder of the book, we provide a brief overview of the problems people face while exploring how to use these tools and techniques to help with these issues.

YOU ARE 125
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ARREST.

I know everyone does not want to become an expert in grief, depression, or addictions, so the book provides the readers a simple overview of these problems so you will have a general idea of what to do should you encounter someone with these problems.

Many of us have a first aid kit in our car or homes, which contains bandages or medicine for specific physical problems one can

experience. Randall House has put together an *emotional* first aid kit with booklets and videos that provide more information about these issues. A brief description of each is provided here.

Getting Help is about how the helping process works and the way to find the particular helping professional needed.

Grief describes the physical, psychological, social, and spiritual impact of a loss. Myths that often haunt grieving Christians are dispelled and a biblical model for grieving is provided.

Depression describes the types and nature of depression, as well as what an individual can do to find their way out of the valley of depression.

Addiction describes the nature of entangling behaviors and a step-by-step biblical process out that ends with a plan for avoiding relapse.

Sexual Issues describes the range of sexual sins in

which one can become entangled and how to break the chain of sexual sin.

The booklet on **Veterans** was written with Lt. Col. David Trogon and can be used to help veterans and their families recover from the impact of war.

Helping Children with Emotional Problems

describes how parents and caretakers can intervene with their children and get at the root of emotional issues. Special attention is given to helping children who struggle with depression, anxiety, and eating disorders.

Helping Children with Learning Problems describes how parents and caretakers can help children who struggle with a learning disability and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

First Aid for Marriage provides practical instruction for marital difficulties including dealing with affairs and domestic violence.

Therapeutic Life Changes is an uplifting book describing how our faith can have a positive impact upon our health.

First Aid for Emotional Hurts provides you with the basic skills you need to help someone experiencing a particular difficulty. The booklets allow you to go into greater depth on an issue, and you can give the booklet to someone who is struggling with the particular problem.

Often, I look at my friend Jeng Yoong and marvel at how he is still with us simply because someone administered first aid to him. I pray you may be able to use these resources to administer emotional first aid to people who will later marvel at what they become by the grace of God. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dr. Eddie Moody is a pastor, professor, and parent. He is the author of the *First Aid for Your Emotional Hurts* booklet series. For more information visit RandallHouse.com.

Where Is God?

WHEN LIFE DOESN'T GO AS PLANNED...

BY JAN BANKS

Have you ever wished God would speak to you audibly? Especially in decision-making, wouldn't you like to hear the actual voice of God say, "Go do this" or "It is time to _____"?



As far as we know, Moses first heard God's voice from a burning bush (Exodus 3). After that life changing experience, God and Moses often carried on discussions, recorded throughout the Deuteronomy narrative. But in that first verbal encounter, Moses heard God say He would be present through the unknown future (Exodus 3:12). Later, when seeking some clarification about the great mission to which he had been called, Moses asked God to teach him His ways. God answered by saying "My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest" (Exodus 33:14).

I do not recall thinking specifically about God's presence in January 2005 when my husband Jerry died suddenly in an automobile accident. For the first several hours after the state troopers broke the news to us, all I could say was "What are we going to do?" I did not pray, I did not scream, I just felt stunned, hurt, wondering how we would get by without Jerry.

Then, three weeks after losing Jerry, my sweet mama also died. Although we had expected her to pass in the not-so-distant future, I was not ready for that phone call from my brother telling me she only had a few hours left to live. I rushed home from work (my first full day after losing Jerry), threw clothes in a bag, and caught myself thinking out loud, "Where is Jerry?" I needed Jerry, as I'd needed him all of our 37 and a half years together, to help me get through a horribly difficult time. But Jerry wasn't there.

When I think about unexpected and unwanted changes, I look back to that January when, within three short weeks, I lost both husband and mama. Shortly after that, I spoke with a minister about my feelings and questions related to life without these two, and this

friend helped me understand the difference between believing in Christ as Savior—trusting God while leaning on someone else—and completely trusting God alone with myself, my future, my everything. I had understood and taught about God's presence in the Old Testament, His presence in Jesus as Immanuel, the manifestation of His presence through His Church, His presence as the Holy Spirit, and His eternal presence, but I was being drawn to a deeper understanding and more complete trust.

The true *I Am* is always present, always strong, always guiding, always comforting, always, always present with me. Gradually, my heart began to understand what I already knew in my head, He would always be with me, and I would never be alone.

I began to spend more time simply reading my Bible, listening to His inaudible voice speaking through His written Word and the movement of His Spirit into my mind and heart. In the

quiet hours, I began to discover new meanings to His promises, improving clarity about His instructions, and more abiding peace in His presence. My quiet times took on new meaning in time. No longer did I read His Word primarily to prepare for a lesson or a speaking engagement. I no longer performed the "duty" of Bible reading that had compelled me since my youth. At last, His Word began to live for me, to me, and within me.

IN THE
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AND MORE
ABIDING
PEACE IN HIS
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I think my faith before loss was real, but my faith and trust began to grow because of loss.

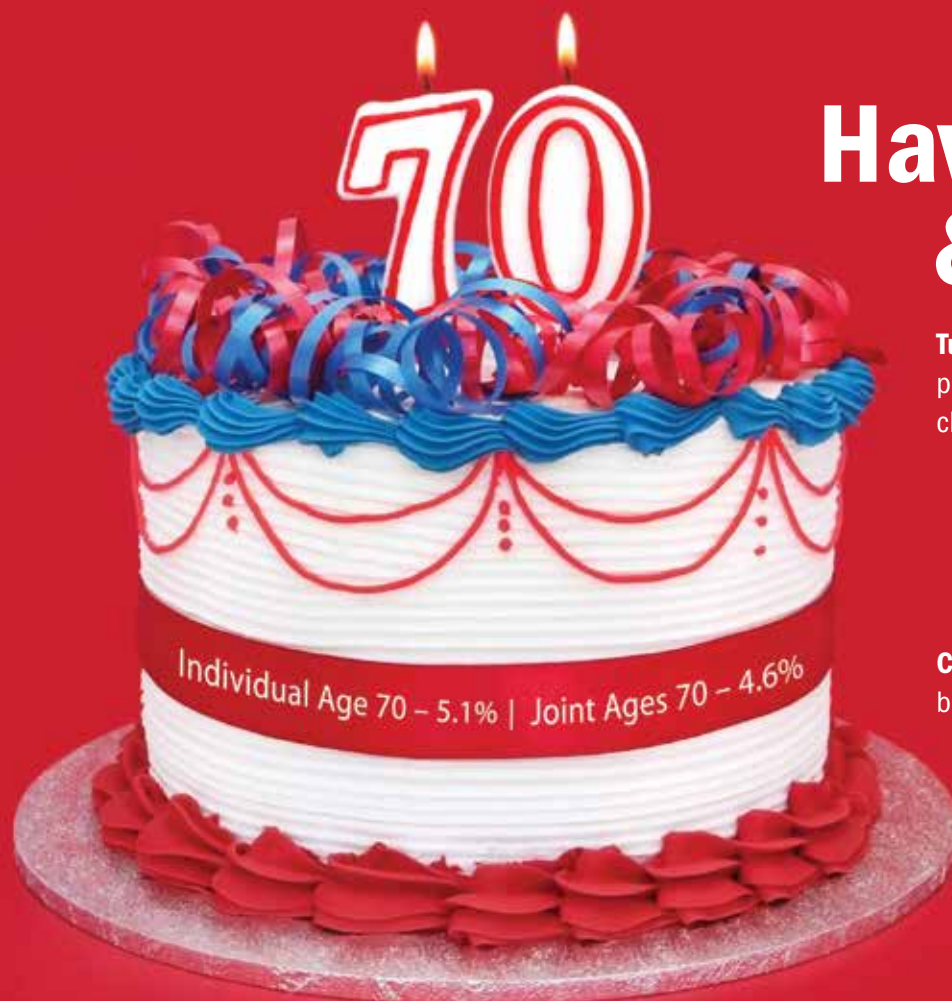
When Moses embarked upon a mission he did not choose and for which he doubted his abilities, he discovered the God he had heard about—the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob—was the eternal God who loved, provided for, and abided with His chosen ones. When I entered my unchosen life as a widow, the only parent of my adult children, the caregiver for in-laws, and the sole “breadwinner” of my home, I needed to rest in God’s presence. He manifested His presence through His people, His Word, and His Spirit, showing me the meaning of trustful rest.

Resting in His presence, I have been able to walk with confidence into an unknown future. I confess I’m not always so confident, and at times my trust wavers, but He does not change. Almost 12 years after losing Jerry and

Mama, I have retired and recently moved from Oklahoma to Texas, where I am starting again, new adventures into the unknown. Without assurance that God is always with me and always will keep His promises, I do not think I could live in peace and joy today.

A few months after Jerry’s death, someone asked how long it was after that loss until I regained my joy. I can’t remember how I responded then, but this I know: God is with me and He fills me with joy in His presence... always (Psalm 16:11). Wherever He leads, I can go, knowing I will never be alone. **ONE**

About the Writer: Retired missionary and educator, Dr. Janice Banks is a member of the board of Free Will Baptist International Missions. This article first appeared in *Treasure* devotional guide, available from wnac.org.



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(Psalms) More Songs From the Heart

- Week 1 - A Song of Wisdom
- Week 2 - A Song of Thanksgiving
- Week 3 - A Song of Distress
- Week 4 - A Song of God's Love
- Week 5 - Songs of Worship

August 2018 - Special Topic

(Truth) An Apologetic of Truth

- Week 1 - Absolute Truth
- Week 2 - Divine Truth
- Week 3 - Preserving the Truth
- Week 4 - Defending the Truth



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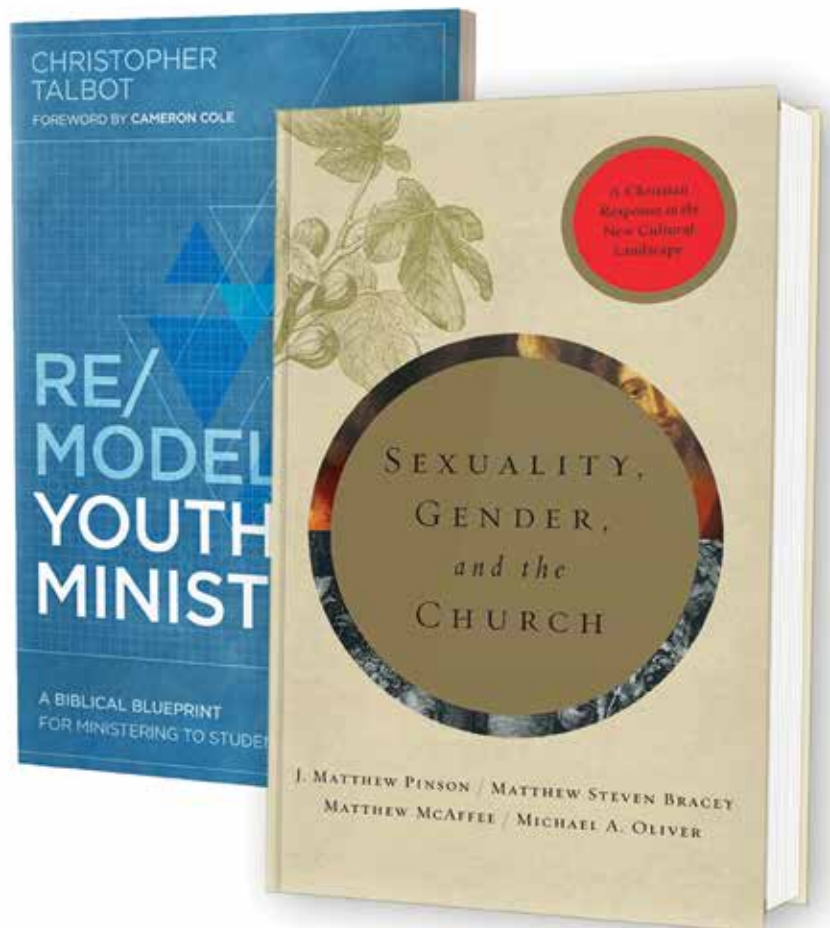
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What's Next?

BY KEN AKERS

Natural disasters have been part of human life since Noah's flood. Our world is constantly changing and in decline, the result of sin's curse. We experience earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods. While scientists debate the causes of these natural disasters—global warming, man-made global warming, or just natural occurrence—one thing is certain. They do happen.

In 2004, several hurricanes hit the East Coast. A pastor from North Carolina contacted me and asked if the National Association had any way to assist churches affected by natural disasters. Sadly, the answer was no. His question led me to do some serious thinking, wondering, "Why don't we have a disaster team?" and "Why aren't the men of the denomination doing this?"

I began to talk to others and pray, and then pray and talk to others. I knew establishing a disaster response plan would be a major undertaking. Slowly, things began falling into place. I knew we needed equipment and a vehicle to haul that equipment

where it was needed. On my way to the office one day, I noticed a truck with a work bed on it. I stopped to look at it, without any money to buy it. Another relocated Kentucky hillbilly greeted me. After a few minutes of comparing notes about folks we knew, I shared what I was doing and how the truck would help. He offered a deal I couldn't pass up.

Once we had a truck, we needed equipment. As the word spread, many tool owners donated items they were no longer using. At the 2005 national convention in Louisville, Kentucky, we revealed the outfitted truck. Less than a month later, when Hurricane Katrina slammed into the Gulf Coast, leaving behind utter devastation, we were ready. You can't tell me God doesn't have good timing.

We coordinated with churches across the country, and more than 50 volunteers showed up in Gulfport, Mississippi, to assist Gulf Coast FWB Church, where the roof on the back of the church had been blown off. We went door-to-door helping the people in the surrounding community. For the next two weeks many came





and went until the work had been completed. With amazing generosity, Free Will Baptists donated more than \$200,000 to this first major effort of the Master's Men Disaster Response Team.

Since that time, we have provided relief to victims of tornadoes in Kentucky, Georgia, Oklahoma, Alabama, Mississippi, and Tennessee; victims of floods in Louisiana, Tennessee, Kentucky, South Carolina, and Missouri; hurricane victims in Florida, Mississippi, Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. We have responded to the damage left behind by an ice storm in Tennessee and straight-line winds in Georgia.

We are a small denomination with a small pool of volunteers and funds from which to draw. So, over the years we have partnered with other organizations to maximize our efforts: Samaritan's Purse, General Baptists, North Carolina Original Free Will Baptists, and Citi Impact. We gladly partner with these groups for a number of reasons. We need them, and they need us. We are not in competition. We all work together to serve our Savior.


While we don't know when or where the next natural disaster will occur, unless time ends, it *will* happen. We pray it won't happen, but the curse of sin promises that it will.

A Year to Remember

Fall of 2017 delivered several of the worst disasters in years. Hurricane Harvey hit Texas; Irma struck Florida

and Georgia; and Maria devastated Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands, including St. Croix, where Free Will Baptists have a significant ministry. I am proud to tell you our people once again responded in a big way. Just through Master's Men, over \$200,000 has been donated to disaster response. I'm sure many more thousands were donated directly to churches affected by these storms.

What's next? We don't know what, and we don't know when, but we want to be ready. The Disaster Response Team desperately needs more volunteers—everyone from skilled laborers to “go-fors.” We need funds to replenish items during last year's record-setting disasters. We need you, and we need your help.

If you are interested in being added to the list of disaster response volunteers, sign up at FWBMastersmen.org. If you would like to make a donation or need more information, contact us at 877-767-8039 or masters@nafwb.org. Thank you for all you have done and continue to do to help those who are most vulnerable. 

About the Writer: Ken Akers is director of Free Will Baptist Master's Men. Contact Ken directly: ken@nafwb.org.

EXPLORE



GO AROUND **THE WORLD** IN LITTLE ROCK

This summer, travel the world without leaving Arkansas. Here are five great reasons to visit the International Missions convention exhibit:

5 **Visit with missionaries.** The following missionaries will be in Little Rock: Robert & Judy Bryan, Rusty & Brenda Carney, Daniel & Shelby Culwell, Jerry & Barb Gibbs, Tim & Kristi Johnson, Jack & Ashley Kettelman, Donnie & Ruth McDonald, Tyler & Kellie Penn, Matt & Cristina Price, Lazaro & Ariadna Riesgo, Chris & Tori Sargent, Nathan & Linda Snow, Daniel & Katie Speer, Steve & Lori Torrison

4 **Find out about an upcoming THP trip** and join the team.

3 **Get the latest news on E-TEAM and CMP.** Sign up for 2019.

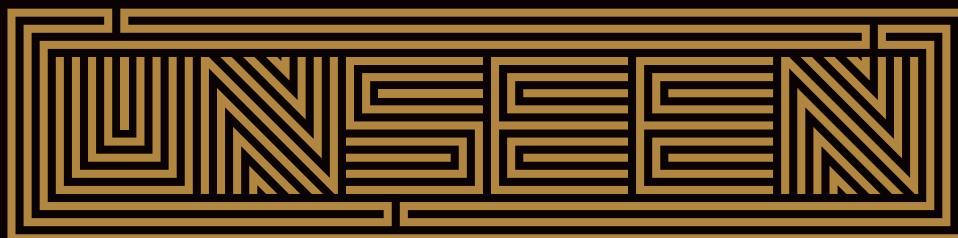
2 **Play IM Trivia.** Find out how much (or how little) you know about our missionaries. Then pick up the newest IM directory, map, and prayer card sets so you can learn more.

1 **See and visit IM Partners on IM Row.**

COME SEE US IN LITTLE ROCK! FOR MORE INFORMATION: WWW.FWBGO.COM



**JULY 22-25, 2018
LITTLE ROCK, AR**



HEBREWS 11:1

\$25
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PER STUDENT/
\$35 ONSITE*

*Does not include CTS Ministry Expo participation fee or Drew Worsham tickets.

DON'T MISS ALL THAT V/// HAS TO OFFER:

(Schedule subject to change)

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
8AM		CTS Ministry Expo	CTS Ministry Expo	CTS Bible Finals
10AM	Sunday School	Engage Seminar Series	Engage Seminar Series	Engage Seminars/ GPS Experience
11AM	Worship Service	Engage Seminar Series	Engage Seminar Series	GPS Experience
NOON	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
1PM	Registration/ Free Time	CTS Ministry Expo/ Serve the City	CTS Ministry Expo/ Serve the City	Engage Seminars/ Fun Time
2PM	Registration/ Free Time	CTS Ministry Expo/ Serve the City	CTS Ministry Expo/ Serve the City	Fun Time
3PM	Registration/ Free Time	CTS Ministry Expo/ Serve the City	CTS Ministry Expo/ Serve the City	Fun Time
4PM	Registration/ Free Time	KidMin Panel Discussion	StuMin Panel Discussion	Fun Time
5PM	Registration/ Free Time	Dinner Break	Dinner Break	Dinner Break
	5:30 Leader/ Sponsor Meeting			
6PM	Registration/ Free Time	Dinner Break	Dinner Break	Dinner Break
7PM	Worship Service	Worship Service	Worship Service	Multi-Generational Worship
9PM	Judges' Meeting	ENGAGE Leadership Panel	Drew Worsham \$12 presale and \$14 onsite	Closing Sessions/ Awards

SUN. AM



JACOB RIGGS

SUN. PM



KENDALL ROSS

MON. PM



JAKE MANNING

TUES. PM



FRANK TUREK

TUES. PM



DREW WORSHAM

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2 TIMOTHY 1:9

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82ND NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FREE WILL BAPTISTS
Little Rock, Arkansas | July 22-25, 2018

The Statehouse Convention Center (SHCC) and Little Rock Marriott Hotel will serve as the locations for registration, business sessions, exhibits, and adult, preschool, children's, and 456 worship services. The DoubleTree by Hilton Little Rock and Robinson Center will be the sites of the CTS Ministry Expo and V3 teen worship services.

SATURDAY, JULY 21

Impact Little Rock
9:00 a.m.
(fwbmastersmen.org for details)

Registration Open
3:00 pm - 6:00 pm
SHCC

SUNDAY, JULY 22

Registration (Open Daily)
8:00 am - 7:00 pm
SHCC

Sunday School*
10:00 am
SHCC Governor's Hall

Morning Worship*
11:00 am
SHCC Governor's Hall

Evening Worship*
7:00 pm
SHCC Governor's Hall

MONDAY, JULY 23

General Board Meeting
8:00 am
SHCC Ballroom D

CTS Ministry Expo
8:30 am - 4:30 pm
DoubleTree Hotel/Robinson Center

Convention Seminars
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Marriott Hotel

Theological Integrity Seminar
2:00 pm
Marriott Hotel

Exhibit Hall Open
3:00 pm - 10:00 pm
SHCC Governor's Hall IV

**North American Ministries
Appreciation Dinner**
5:15 pm
Marriott Hotel

Evening Worship
7:00 pm
SHCC Governor's Hall

WNAC Laughter & Latte (Ticketed)
8:30 pm
Marriott Hotel

ENGAGE Leadership Panel
9:00 pm
Marriott Hotel

TUESDAY, JULY 24

CTS Ministry Expo
8:30 am - 4:30 pm
DoubleTree Hotel/Robinson Center

Convention Seminars
9:00 am - 4:00 pm
Marriott Hotel

WNAC Celebration Service
10:00 am
SHCC Ballroom D

Exhibit Hall Open
10:00 am – 10:00 pm
SHCC Governor’s Hall IV

Convention Business Session
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
SHCC Governor’s Hall

Evening Worship
7:00 pm
SHCC Governor’s Hall

Drew Worsham (Ticketed)
9:00 pm
Robinson Center Performance Hall

WEDNESDAY, JULY 25

Serve the City Opportunities (V3)
8:00 am
Various Locations

CTS Bible Finals
9:00 am
Robinson Center

Convention Business Session
9:00 am – 4:00 pm
SHCC Governor’s Hall

Exhibit Hall Open
10:00 am – 9:30 pm
SHCC Governor’s Hall IV

Welch College Alumni and Friends
Luncheon (Ticketed)
12:00 noon
Marriott Hotel

Evening Worship
6:45 pm – 8:30 pm
SHCC Governor’s Hall

V3 Awards Ceremony
9:00 pm
SHCC Governor’s Hall

***Teen services will be held** in The Robinson Center Performance Hall. Preschool, Children’s, and 456 worship services will be in the Statehouse Convention Center.



Jeff Crabtree (CAN)
Sunday School



Josh Baer (NC)
Sunday Morning



Ben Gibson (AR)
Sunday Evening



Lázaro Riesgo (TN)
Monday Evening



Mike Cousineau (OK)
Tuesday Evening

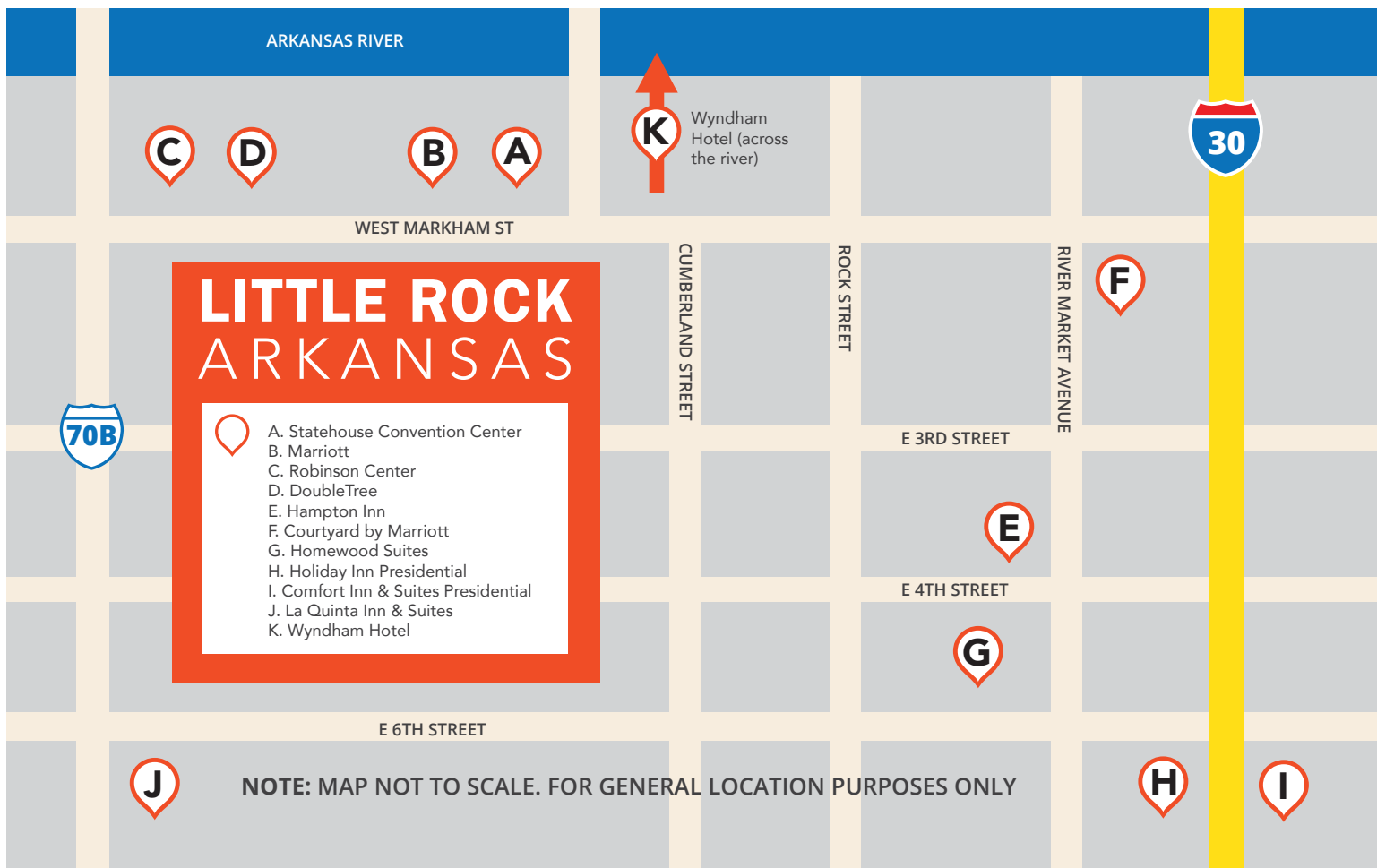


David Crowe (TN)
Wednesday Evening

Return to “The Natural State”

A decade has passed since Free Will Baptists met in Little Rock in 2007 for the 71st convention. At that meeting, the numbers told a story of positive turnarounds for Randall House, growing enrollment at Welch College, and a wave of church plants and missionary candidates. The theme “Helping One Another” ended with an exhortation in the Wednesday night missions service to “help reach the world.” With scores of new missionaries added to the field since that evening, it is clear Free Will Baptists have risen to this challenge. As we look toward another convention in Little Rock, we continue to seek ever-improving ways to answer God’s call to further His Kingdom.

This year, keynote speakers **Jeff Crabtree (Canada)**, **Josh Baer (NC)**, **Ben Gibson (AR)**, **Lázaro Riesgo (TN)**, **Mike Cousineau (OK)**, and **David Crowe (TN)** will explore the theme “Called” from 2 Timothy 1:9, challenging attendees to follow their calling to salvation, holiness, unity, suffering, and preaching the gospel. Convention services will be streamed online at nafwb.org, courtesy of the Media Commission. In addition to worship services, scores of seminars, workshops, and panel discussions will give attendees an opportunity to explore subjects vital to today’s congregation.



During Tuesday and Wednesday business sessions, delegates are expected to approve denominational budgets of nearly \$25 million. Moderator Tim York will guide delegates through the election of board members, general officers, and commission appointees. In addition, national agencies and commissions will submit annual reports.

Attendees are also encouraged to take part in **Impact Little Rock**, a one-day evangelistic campaign of service and outreach. This year, Saturday, July 21, participants will serve at a local foodbank, pre-packaging food for distribution. Others will share their time with the Florence Crittenden Home, owned by FWB Family Ministries. These volunteers will assist with landscaping and improving the home's facilities. More details will be made available at fwbmastersmen.org as plans are finalized.

Vertical Three Conference

While the business of the denomination is conducted, the

51st **Vertical Three Conference** will focus on the theme “**Unseen**” based on the Hebrews 11:1 definition of faith. Between CTS Expo events, Engage seminars, and worship, our young people are sure to grow in faith as they apply what they learn at the 2018 conference.

Planners expect nearly 3,000 registrants to participate in CTS Expo national competitive finals in Bible and fine arts, seminars, and services designed especially for youth. In addition, students from across the nation will participate in “Serve the City” projects, meeting needs in Little Rock with their time, volunteer labor, and kindness.

This year, on Tuesday evening, Vertical Three will feature special guest **Drew Worsham** (pictured opposite). A well-known illusionist and mentalist, Drew has performed on stages across the country and around the globe. However, the church planter and minister to young adults notes these skills help him deliver the gospel in an unusual way.

Convention Music

The 2018 Convention Choir and Orchestra, guided by the Free Will Baptist Music Commission, needs vocalists and instrumentalists (age 15+). You will enjoy worshipping with Free Will Baptists from all over the nation. If you'd like to be involved or need more information about convention music opportunities, email: music@nafwb.org. You also can connect with the commission on Facebook to hear previews of this year's music: facebook.com/fwbmusiccommission.



Around the Rock

Little Rock is a familiar destination for Free Will Baptists, who convened here in 2007, 1994, 1984, and 1966. The city's name stems from a small rock outcropping on the south bank of the Arkansas River. Early French explorer Benard de la Harpe, described the formation as *le petit rocher* or "the little rock." The familiar landmark soon became a well-known river crossing, and a settlement developed. Though the name is "little," no small number of activities await you and your family during the 2018 convention. On your way through Arkansas, you may want to stop for a picnic or hike the Natural State's beautiful scenery. Once in Little Rock, visit the Clinton Presidential Library and the Arkansas Old State House, both within walking distance

of the convention center. Kids will enjoy the Museum of Discovery while their moms might be fascinated by the Esse Purse Museum (pictured below).

During free time, be sure to wander through The River Market indoor shopping area with numerous vendors. Find lunch, live music, and a uniquely Arkansan souvenir. Shops like The Freckled Frog stock a variety of locally handcrafted, one-of-a-kind items. Only a few blocks from the convention center, the market provides an ideal lunch spot.

The 2018 convention hotel room block is a sharp contrast to the 2017 block when the Galt House Hotel was able to accommodate all hotel room needs. In Little Rock, blocking an adequate number of rooms required contracting with ten hotel properties in the downtown area.

Because many convention hotels are not within "walkable" distance to the convention center, shuttles will be provided to eight of the ten hotels, with stops at the Statehouse Convention Center and the Robinson Center. The Marriott and Doubletree hotels will not offer shuttle service due to their close proximity to meeting space.

Find more information regarding this year's convention at www.nafwb.org.

IMPACT

SATURDAY
JULY 21

LITTLE★ROCK

LEARN MORE: FWBMASTERSMEN.ORG

I Have a Confession to Make

BY KEITH BURDEN

Her parents were faithful members of the congregation I pastored. It was through their influence she initially began attending our church. Although she had been raised in a Christian home, she hadn't attended church regularly for some time.

When I made my usual pastoral call on this first-time guest, I was received warmly into her home. I met her husband who was a very nice man, but clearly not interested in spiritual matters. They had two adorable young children. In the course of our conversation she admitted there was a spiritual void in the life of her family. She did not want them to miss out on what she had enjoyed in her childhood.

The visit ended on a positive note. I prayed with them and left feeling confident this had been a divine appointment. In the weeks that followed, she and the children faithfully attended church services. Finally, one Sunday it happened. During the invitation she quietly made her way forward, knelt at the altar, and committed her heart to Christ.

The peace of God and the joy of the Lord immediately began radiating from her life. I stressed the importance of growing in her faith and offered to lead her through a

series of new convert lessons. She accepted the offer and we set a time to begin the 13-week study.

The first lesson dealt with the assurance of salvation. Lessons two and three addressed the subject of how to grow as a Christian. At the conclusion of one of the lessons, I asked if she had any questions. After a long period of silence, tears began to well up in her eyes. I wondered if I had said or done something to upset her.

Momentarily, she dried the tears and with a trembling voice said, "Pastor, I have a confession to make. When you offered to do these lessons, you hurt my feelings. I am a public school teacher and hold a master's degree in education. I thought I knew all I needed to know about the Bible. However, through these studies I have come to realize how little I actually know about the Word of God." In the weeks that followed, she became an avid student of the Scriptures and evidenced remarkable spiritual growth.

Unfortunately, many followers of Christ are like this woman. They have learned just enough about the Bible to convince themselves they no longer need to study it. Pride (and sometimes laziness)

keeps them from becoming serious students of God's Word.

I have a confession to make. Even though I've been a Christian for 52 years, cultivating this spiritual discipline still requires hard work and commitment. Biblical preaching and small group Bible studies are important components in our spiritual growth and development. However, there are no shortcuts or substitutes for studying the Scriptures yourself. So, get out your Bible, roll up your sleeves, and get serious about studying the Word.

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15).



Keith Burden, CMP

Executive Secretary
National Association of
Free Will Baptists

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877-336-7575 | fwbgifts.org | foundation@nafwb.org

Lend your voice...

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

We look forward to worshipping with YOU this summer...

For more information about the National Association of Free Will Baptists, visit: www.nafwb.org





**Disaster Response Team • IMPACT
Missions Trips • Operation Saturation
Convention Ushering • Sports Fellowship
Ridge Church Restoration**

www.fwbmastersmen.org