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ONE

MAGAZINE

The Magazine for Free Will Baptists

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2008

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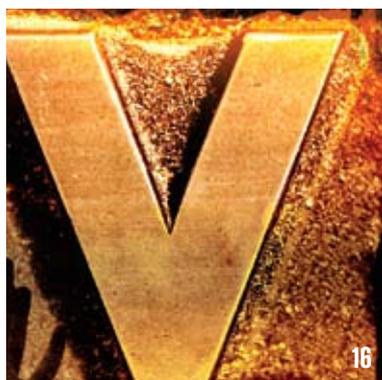
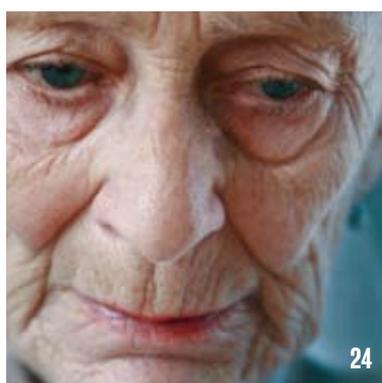
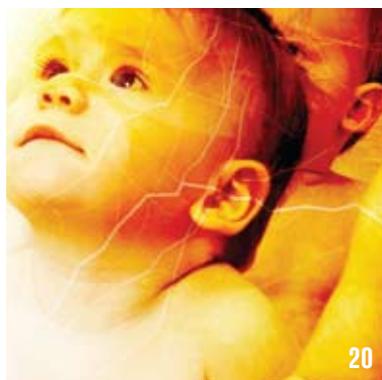


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ONE MAGAZINE

**TO COMMUNICATE TO FREE WILL BAPTISTS
A UNIFYING VISION OF OUR ROLE IN THE EXTENSION OF GOD'S KINGDOM.**

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ERIC THOMSEN
MANAGING EDITOR

FIRST GLIMPSE

FROM THE EDITOR: PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON A HISTORIC DECISION

It was a tight squeeze as 6,000 people crowded into the narrow river valley that meanders along the banks of central West Virginia's Kanawha River. Free Will Baptists filled every available nook and cranny—hotels, bed and breakfasts, RV parks, even campgrounds—in a 20-mile radius surrounding the city of Charleston.

"Bringing the convention to Charleston is like squeezing a size 12 foot into a size nine shoe," quipped Convention Manager Keith Burden. "We took all of the space that was available and could have used more... but the city bent over backwards to make things work for us."

This year's convention, however, won't be remembered for cramped meeting space, beautiful scenery, fierce competition, or even exhilarating worship services. This year, the convention "buzz" revolved around funding changes proposed by the International Missions department. The proposal was not taken lightly, and a lively debate stretched for well over an hour during the Wednesday business session.

As I listened to passionate delegates pour out their hearts about this issue, I was reminded of three things.

God answers prayer. In 1991, when the convention last visited Charleston, Foreign Missions Director Eugene Waddell closed his annual report by voicing a heart-felt concern to delegates. He said the greatest challenge facing the Mission was finding new

personnel. He noted that 25 missionaries would be eligible for retirement in the 90's, and others would surely be lost due to illness, resignations, or other causes. Coupled with the requests from field council chairmen for 85 new missionaries to fill urgent needs, the situation seemed grave indeed. Director Waddell just didn't know where the missionaries would come from. God did.

Seventeen years later, the funding debate is simple proof that God answered our prayers. Not only did missionaries come, they came in waves. Today, the challenge facing International Missions is not finding personnel but getting an army of dedicated men and women to the field more quickly and efficiently.

Free Will Baptists care. It's true that not everyone agreed on the course of action proposed in the funding change. Some delegates expressed concerns about how the proposed changes would impact church autonomy. Others were concerned that the move would adversely affect missionaries they had supported for years. Yet at the base of every viewpoint expressed was the common sentiment: "I want what is best for missionaries and Free Will Baptists."

I can't find words to express my pride to be part of a denomination that cares—and cares deeply—about doing the right thing. I hope we will always care enough to speak out about the issues that really matter.

Debate does not equal dissension.

As the final business session grew near, more than one convention attendee expressed his or her concern that the afternoon would devolve into a series of personal attacks. Specters of previous business session casualties loomed over the meeting in a dark cloud. To be blunt, you could have cut the tension with a knife.

Yet the heated personal exchanges never began. Sure, concerns were expressed—sometimes bluntly. But in almost every case, those who did not favor the proposed changes couched their opposing arguments between affirmations of brotherhood and statements of respect for those in leadership. The words of Hal Jones, director of missions for Virginia, will echo loudly through the years. "While we [the state of Virginia] disagree with this proposal, if the body chooses to proceed with this course of action, you can be sure we will stand behind it." I could almost feel the gates of Hell tremble beneath his words.

I left Charleston a proud Free Will Baptist. Did we solve all of our problems? Certainly not. Have we approved a more effective funding system for International Missions? Only time will tell. But in the wake of the convention, one thing is certain. Our denomination made a significant stride forward in the way we handled an issue that had the potential to divide us. □



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How many Randall House

Employees

HOW MANY RANDALL HOUSE team members does it take to move a table? No, this is not a joke, and we have the sore muscles to prove it. In everyone's home there is always one piece of furniture you avoid moving at all costs. In fact, that may be the only place in your house the carpet has retained its original color and cleanliness.

DOES It Take to

The table started upstairs, where the editors needed more room and our conference room needed a serious update. The editorial department of Randall House has more than three workstations and team members working out of storage closets. Producing more products and more materials for teachers to use requires more hands-on planning and directing by editors. Where do we put them? With no more closets left on the third floor of our building, we needed that sacred conference room space.

ing a quarter of a ton of tabletop. Many had “better” ideas about how to move the table and quickly offered advice.

Eventually, the tabletop arrived in its new home and rejoined its legs. I have a new respect for the monstrous weight they shoulder. Now the table is all we have of our old conference room. Its new location feels like a new zip code.

The new conference room was built around that table with all the media accessories necessary for 21st century conferences. Now our guests do not have to negotiate stairs, hallways, and cafeteria to reach a meeting room with 1970s décor.

Why? Because we live in a changing world! Tables are not the only weighty items that need to be relocated and moved for effectiveness. We did not move the table for fun, to irritate that hulking piece of wood, or for the benefit of bystanders who gawked and doubted the need for change.

We moved that table to give us a full multi-media conference room for our guests and Randall House team members.

In the same way, Randall House wants to move the families and churches in our

consistency in their own lives—not just at church. It will partner with pastors to demonstrate small groups and Sunday Schools as the best investment of time and resources a church can make—an investment that will return better members because it will produce better parents.

A new generation of kids will come up through the D6 system, taking them to where the table will be, and not where it was. This generation wants multi-media, relevance, boundaries, and instruction that fit where they live. Churches that provide for them will still be in business 20 years from now.

Randall House also moves tables to move products. We move products because we listen to our pastors, teachers, and teens. Many congregations are graying; they cannot understand why their children and grandchildren are not serving the Lord. Perhaps it is because they are not willing to “move the table.” Is it worth a change to keep your kids in church?

Yes, moving creates a new routine and a gauntlet that stretches all of us. Many have different opinions of where this move should take us, and few will shoul-

Table on the Move

But what about that table? The table is 16 feet long, four feet wide and weighs—well, they say about 500 pounds, but I am sure that was just the end I was helping to lift! And this was just the tabletop without legs.

It took 10 men to hoist this monster piece of wood, and two were guests in the building who took pity on us as we grunted and groaned. Others stared in disbelief, doubtful that the table was going to make it (or curious to see what got broken). Several fingers were mashed and egos hurt when none of us could throw it on our shoulders and walk downstairs.

Move a Table?

By Ron Hunter Jr.

Going Down?

Did I mention stairs? And how do you get a one-piece tabletop that is 16 feet long through doors and hallways? Larry Perry, building maintenance guru, had a plan. After dreaming of putting wheels on the table and riding it down like a giant skateboard, we woke to the crack of Larry’s whip as he guided us through the maze to the top of the stairs where we drew straws for who got to be on the bottom, caught between gravity and a 500-pound table. Rank and titles have their privilege until you begin mov-

denomination. We want to take our churches back to the day when we met the needs of families rather than the church. This move shows parents how to teach their kids diligently the values of Scripture in the home during everyday events.

Path to Progress

Like the table, the path is not easy, and we hear the grunts and groans. Yet this difficult move will show families how to talk to their kids about biblical topics and help each family member make everyday decisions. It will remind parents of the need for

der the load. But when we get there, many will want to sit at the table. Our kids are worth it!

Will you help us move this table to serve this generation and the next? Like moving a heavy table, working together will lift our denomination, churches, and families to a whole new level. □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Ron Hunter Jr. is the executive director/CEO of Randall House. He and his wife Pam live in Nashville, TN, where they attend Donelson Free Will Baptist Church.



1 / 168

It's not enough.

Each week is comprised of 168 hours. Within those 168 hours, most kids spend barely an hour with their Sunday School teacher, pastor, or youth pastor. Is this an adequate amount of time for the spiritual training of our children? I think most parents would agree it's not enough.

If we are going to live out D6, as God commands, dads and moms need to regularly engage spiritually with their kids. We do this by sharing life experiences with our children, talking regularly with them, and allowing them to see how we (mom and dad) have grown in Christ through past successes and failures.

D6 stands for Deuteronomy 6:5-7 where Moses tells the children of Israel that dads and moms are responsible for shaping the spiritual lives of their children.

If this is the case, then why do more parents not get involved? At Randall House, we have narrowed down two primary reasons: not knowing where to begin, and out of balance priorities.

Many parents want to be involved; they just don't know where to start. They need resources to help get them going, motivated, and plugged into the lives of their kids. Without helpful resources, many parents simply give up and decide it's too much work to engage with their kids about spiritual or biblical matters.

Often dads and moms spend much of their adult life pursuing personal significance in their career or other ex-

tracurricular interests. Parents may forget their primary job is not the one they get paid for, but rather raising a spiritual champion for Christ.

Granted, there is a substantial amount of pressure to provide for our children—putting food on the table, a roof over their heads, clothing, education, and the list goes on. In this mad dash to provide for children, many parents struggle to find ways to connect spiritually at the end of the day.

Learn more about this in George Barna's book *Revolutionary Parenting*. Check it out at D6family.com/store

Once we identified what prevented some parents from being D6 parents, we asked ourselves, "What can we do to help?"

Randall House now provides three key D6 resources to help reshape the Christian family according to the commandment given by God in Deuteronomy 6.

D6family.com Free resources to connect parents to kids!

D6 Church Family Emphasis Campaign Kit

The D6 Conference September 23 – 25, 2009

D6family.com

This new resource for parents is dedicated to connecting parents to kids. It's loaded with resources that will provide information and inspiration to be the D6 dad or mom you want to be. At D6family.com you'll find tools like:



Splink – Simple Ways to Link Your Family Together! Splink is a FREE weekly email packed with ideas to help connect your family. Splink provides creative ways to interact with your kids by passing along spiritual truths, teachable moments, ways to make memories, and just having fun together. To connect your family today, register at D6family.com and receive your free weekly Splink!

D6 Stories – Deuteronomy 6:5-7 talks about dads and moms taking the opportunity to impress God's Word upon the hearts of their children. We call these teachable moments, D6 Stories. They can happen anywhere: in the car, after soccer practice, over pancakes, while riding bikes, you name it! The point is, we all face teachable moments with our children, but what do we do with them? Watch these funny, touching, and moving stories and you are sure to be inspired. You can even upload your own! We'll show you how at D6family.com.

D6 Store & Resources – D6 provides some of the most innovative products available to the family today, but we can't do this alone. That's why we have partnered together with a select group of authors and ministries to bring you the best in parenting and family resources.

The D6 Church Family Emphasis Kit

Pastors and leaders from across the country agree that changing a family can change a community. There is no better resource to help transform the family than *The D6 Church Family Emphasis Kit*. The purpose of this three-week family emphasis program is to inform and mobilize the families in your church to apply the powerful message found in D6, which will

change their family dynamics. This kit will help families:

Connect with each other on a deeper level.

Strengthen their personal relationship with God.

Appreciate their divinely designed differences.

Share laughter and special moments with one another.

Realize their God-given responsibility as spiritual leaders in the home.



The D6 Church Family Emphasis Kit includes:

Three complete sermons for the pastor.

DVD (3 five-minute sessions) to be shown in service or small groups.

Church-wide registration to Splink.

Poster and Flyers for promotion.

T-Shirt to give away for promotion.

This resource is available for only \$9.99. That's a \$39.99 value for a fraction of the price!

The D6 Conference

D6 has gained national attention among many of the leading influencers on the family, and the movement is gaining momentum. Why is this? Simply stated, the need for parents to engage spiritually is overwhelming. Parents are often involved in sports, music programs, and schoolwork, but when it comes to passing along their faith and spiritual values, they may drop the ball and choose not to engage. Pastors all around the country are telling us that one of their greatest

needs is getting parents plugged into the lives of their kids spiritually.

For this reason, Randall House will launch The D6 Conference. This nation-wide event, September 23–25, 2009, is for leaders and influencers on the family and family ministry (pastors, youth pastors, Sunday School teachers, lay leaders, and parents who want to make a difference in the lives of their kids).

The vision of The D6 Conference is to champion a movement of parents connecting with their kids spiritually in order to transfer their faith and life values. This is the one event for leaders that brings together today's top influencers in family ministry.

Leaders who attend The D6 Conference will be challenged to take a different look at the way they minister to children, students, and families in light of the message of Deuteronomy 6:5-7. Research shows that the kids who grow up to be spiritual champions most often have a parent in the home who makes a considerable contribution to their spiritual development. The D6 Conference will equip leaders with the tools and ideas they need to influence parents to become D6 Families.

Pastors, bring your volunteer leaders! Leaders, bring your pastor! Parents, bring your friends! This event will reshape the way we view our parenting priorities.

What *Catalyst* has been for leadership, and *Women of Faith* has been for women, *The D6 Conference* will be for Christian parenting. Don't miss it! □

Featured Speakers:

- Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family
- George Barna, president of the Barna Group
- Fred Stoeker, best-selling author of *Every Man's Battle*
- John Trent, best-selling author and president of Strong Families

TheD6Conference.com
(800) 877-7030

ABOUT THE WRITER: Matt Markins is the director of Sales and Marketing at Randall House. Contact him at matt.markins@randallhouse.com.



a typical family

“YOUR FAMILY IS SO SPECIAL.”

“What great faith you have!”

“I could never do what your family is doing!”

“You are so brave.”

From the moment we announced our decision to cross the ocean to share God’s Word with unreached peoples, we have heard such comments from hundreds of voices. From our favorite waitress at the local restaurant to our children’s baseball coaches; from distant relatives to scores of people we met during our deputation travels; from the gothic young lady at the Tennessee drug store who took our passport photos to the lady I met this week while buying fresh eggs in an open-air market in our Central Asian city—everyone we have encountered along this journey has looked on our family with amazement.

People who know us well, however—parents, close friends, and church members—are not surprised at all. They know the ins and outs, ups and downs of this rag-tag family. Those who know us might use the word *crazy* rather than *brave*. Rather than *special*, they’d probably say *quirky*. Folks close to our family know we love people, we love God, and we are committed to doing what He asks of us.

Before we were a family of seven, we were a family of two. On our wedding day, we looked into the other’s eyes and said, “I do.” We knelt on the prayer bench in front of our friends and family and gave God our lives to do with as He pleased. In that moment, we said, “We do.” Our parents looked on with smiles and tears as we were introduced as a couple. Three years later, on that same stage, with our parents beside us, we knelt

to pray as we dedicated our first-born son. Our family of two had become three. The pastor questioned, “Do you promise to raise your son in the nurture and admonition of God, teaching him to follow the ways of God all his life?” Together we said again, “We do.” Our answer did not change as our family of three became four, then five, six, and now, finally, seven.

our family, our life

We are a typical family—kids, toys, clutter, and noise. We love Oreos and pizza, TV and baseball. Our kids love dogs and horses, riding bikes and having sleepovers.

Just two years ago our family of seven was living “happily ever after” in the hills of Tennessee. After accepting the pastoral call early in life and preparing for years in seminary, David thrived in his pastoral role—preaching to the people, discipling new believers, and mentoring young pastors. Our days were spent balancing ministry and family. Our weeks were filled with prayer meetings and gymnastics, hospital visits and homeschooling.

Each day our activities were a little different, but our purpose was the same—to bring glory to God. Sometimes the world saw God’s love through good works when we picked up a stranded motorist or gave refuge to a victim of domestic violence. At other times the world saw His grace as we asked forgiveness for losing our tempers and being selfish. Our life was not perfect, but it was our life; and we loved it.

Our church provided a great place for us to learn to serve God together as a family. It was the place our kids practiced the many things they learned in Sunday School and family worship. In the evenings we gathered around our parsonage living room, and prayed for our family and for families around the world. Don’t be deceived; these were not perfect little prayer meetings. Kids crawled all over Dad while he was trying to read Scripture. A little one snuggled in each of Mom’s arms as we sang hymns and prayed. We’d often read letters from missionaries and flip through their prayer cards as fuel for our prayers. The children loved missionaries. They even had a photo album filled with pictures and memoirs of themselves with “real” missionaries who had visited our church. Some even talked of being missionaries themselves someday.

everything changes

Someday came much sooner than anyone imagined. What started with a conversation in the kid’s playroom one day led to a phone call to Free Will Baptist International Missions the next day. God began making His plans for our family clear. After hours of prayer, a huge stack of applications, and a couple of meetings over the period of a week, it became clear God was asking us to trade in our pastorate for an overseas missions assignment.

The decision might seem quick, as if it came out of nowhere; but, truthfully, God had been preparing us for this moment our whole lives. Everything came together. It made sense. When people asked us, “Why are you going?” we responded with “Why not?” Oh, if it were only that simple.

We tried to keep things simple that memorable night when we told our kids. We carried on with our normal devotions that evening, all cuddled up on the sofa as usual. But this family worship session ended a little differently than all the others. We reminded the kids how we promised God our family would do whatever He asked us to do. We told them God would keep His promise “not to harm us, but to give us a hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11). Then we shared our news with our missions-minded children.

They responded with...weeping and wailing. This wasn’t excitement over reaching the lost souls of Central Asia, but total distress over leaving behind our home, our friends, our grandparents, and baseball!

You can’t imagine the roller coaster of emotions that followed. One day would be filled with exciting questions, the next day mournful complaining. On one occasion the three oldest children were playing in the floor and lamenting, “Why do we have to be missionaries across the ocean anyway?” The youngest one replied, “Because God told us to, DUH!”

Was it really that simple? In some ways. Same family. Same God. Same purpose. Just a different country. In other ways it was quite complex. It meant everything would change. We’d give up life as we knew it—church, friends, grandparents, even Wal-Mart. We’d trade the familiar for a new land, a new culture, a new language, a new life. We discovered it is possible to be completely devastated and absolutely elated at the same time!

**GOD
HAD BEEN
PREPARING
US FOR
THIS MOMENT
OUR WHOLE
LIVES.**

The transition began immediately. God slowly weaned us away from our old life. We said goodbye to our church family—the group who showed us more love and support than we could have ever imagined. We vacated our little parsonage on the hill and moved in with Grandma and Grandpa. We gave away belongings and put keepsakes in storage. We traveled thousands of miles to over 125 churches to share the vision. We gave a whole new definition to the word “transition.”

Each week our children transitioned to a new hotel room, a new Sunday School class, a new set of missionary partners. At times, the process almost killed us. We had said “I do” to sharing Christ in other lands, but it seemed all we were doing was riding in a car and completing expense reports. About halfway through the deputation process, we made some adjustments. Mom and kids stayed home more. Dad traveled alone. Despite the changes, discouragement and doubt set in. We missed being together as a family. We were lonely with no stable church home. We wondered if we’d ever raise enough money to get us to the field.

The logistics of moving a family with five small children to another country were sometimes overwhelming. Passports, visas, pledges, suitcases, weight limits, snow boots, training, sorting, and packing. Not only did we have to plan how to enter our new country, we had to plan how to leave the old one. We planned final visits to family, last days of school, and the going away party of the century. As the time of departure drew nearer, discouragement gave way to true excitement. Finally, the moment arrived.

In some ways the airport was as surreal and romantic as we had imagined. Friends and family were there to send us off with gifts and hugs. In other ways it was as insane as we had feared, with documents for seven people, 28 suitcases, and the anxiety of what lay ahead. We handled it the way any living, breathing, feeling, human family would have handled it—with smiles and tears. It was perfect.

a new beginning

We survived: the 25-hour plane trip, the arrival, the first days in a strange land, the freezing winter, a pitiful choice in vehicles, and several cultural faux pas. We have moved beyond surviving to thriving. Every day we practice the number one rule for missionaries—be flexible!

We constantly assess how each family member is adjusting to the culture. One day this week our five-year-old son was playing hide-and-go-seek in our flower garden, laughing and speaking Russian with his friends. The very next day, he packed his suitcase and “ran away from home.” He said, “This country is garbage, and I’m going back to America.” Adjustment is an ongoing process!

We are still the same family. We just have our Oreos sent from the States, make our pizza from scratch, and watch movies in another language. We give commands to our dogs in Russian, and a neighborhood donkey has replaced our horse. And, of course, playing baseball is a whole different game when you have to scratch baselines into the dirt and show your friends how to hold the bat before beginning your game.

We take taxis and ride the bus. We shop in open-air markets, not the superstore. We talk to our grandparents by phone. Our household speaks three different languages. Our neighbors have a different skin color. And we live to show the glory of God to people who have *never* heard, who don’t even have the whole Bible translated into their own native language. And to whatever He asks us to do next, we will answer, “I do.” □

The writer is a missionary wife and mom to a restricted access country.



**SAME FAMILY.
SAME GOD.
SAME PURPOSE.**

RIDING THE ROLLER COASTER:

THE ADVENTURES OF FAMILY AND MINISTRY

By Howard Gwartney



TWENTY-ONE YEARS AGO, our family moved from Grandview, Missouri, to Mesa, Arizona, to start a new Free Will Baptist church as part of Home Mission's Target City Project. For us, the move was like riding one of the giant roller coasters at an amusement park...exciting but terrifying!

We faced a barrage of well-intended "encouragement" from people who asked, "Why in the world do you want to move to Arizona? You have it good here in Missouri. What about those girls of yours? Why would you do that to them?" Our girls were only five and seven at the time.

We had enjoyed a tremendous ministry in Missouri. The people in our church, district, and state organizations were wonderful to us. I had a great secretary and a part-time associate in a new church facility with plenty of room to grow.

Perhaps you're thinking, "Why would anybody leave?"

It all goes back to a moment early in my ministry. Roy Thomas came to my home church, and he brought with him a map with pins indicating the locations of Free Will Baptist churches. The image of the many places on the map without churches haunted me. I told the Lord that with His help, someday I would go to one of those large cities without a Free Will Baptist church and start one.

Even before Roy Thomas' daughter Patsy and I were married, we talked about planting a church. It was an easy thing for her to envision because she had done it before with her parents. But truthfully, we had no idea what we were getting ourselves into, and we did not feel fully equipped to do the job.

I'm grateful to God for my Bible training at Hillsdale FWB College, but back then, there were no courses on church planting, and I knew of fewer than five books on the subject.



The pressures were great (from board, donors, new church family, and the fear of failure) and the obstacles were greater (exorbitant land and building costs, complications from the Mormon-dominated community, and the attacks of the enemy). By the grace of God, however, and through years of hard work and prayer, we were able to plant a strong church in Mesa, Arizona.

We have always felt that our daughters were special gifts from God. We involved them in our ministry from the start. At the ages of six and four, they helped us make musical recordings to assist with raising funds. When we started the church, the girls went with us to visit potential members. I would take one of the girls and walk from house to house on one side of the street, while Patsy would take the other down the opposite side of the street.

On Sundays, Patsy would say, "Girls, you better be friendly to people at church today! Talk to everyone!" On Mondays, she would say, "Girls, we're going to Wal-Mart. Don't talk to strangers!" As the girls grew older, they worked in the nursery and children's church, with the puppet ministry, prayed with people at the altar, and loved our church family.

In time, the church began to pray and save money toward building. After one service in rented facilities, Patsy could not



locate the girls. Before long, she noticed that everyone in the church was going into one of the Sunday School rooms before they exited the building.

Following a mother's instinct, she investigated and found our "little darlings." The girls had "set up shop" in a Sunday School room and were selling handmade bookmarks to supplement the building fund. We were thrilled about their concern for the church, but reluctantly had to close the shop! During the building process, the girls painted, laid tile, pre-



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pared food, and (most important) kept everyone laughing. They always used their musical talents in our church and helped our young people learn to sing.

Recently, at 51-years-old, Patsy and I started itinerate again! Our plans were to move to Pinal County, Arizona, the second-fastest growing county in America. Once again, we find ourselves at the beginning of the roller coaster ride of starting a church! However, this time, as a veteran church planter, I know it is the Lord who builds His Church!

The pressures and obstacles are still great! Already the new “ride” has been exciting and terrifying for our family. We have learned some important lessons along the way:

- 1. STAY IN THE WORD AND PRAYER.** While it may sound simplistic and trite, it is absolutely vital to any Christian endeavor.
- 2. PREPARE FOR HOME TO BECOME “GRAND CENTRAL STATION.”** Using your home as a tool for evangelism can be both tremendous and taxing. Your wife and children begin to feel as if they “always” have church family around. Some people will latch onto your family because they have no one else. Be prepared.
- 3. BE SURE BOTH LOVE AND LAUGHTER REMAIN PART OF YOUR DAILY EXPERIENCE.** Don’t take yourself too seriously. Learn to laugh at yourself. Have fun with your family. Cherish your wife. As one comedian often said, “Treat her like a thoroughbred, and she’ll never be an old nag!”
- 4. DON’T COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS OR OTHER MINISTRIES.** Remember, Paul said that those who compare themselves are not wise!
- 5. TRUST GOD FOR THE RESULTS.** Our church is what I call “high-tech traditional.” Yes, we sing off the wall (hymnals get beat up moving them in and out each week). I use both video and Power Point slides in my sermon. Yet, we sing hymns and value a traditional style of church service. However, without the blessing of God on our lives and ministry, our best efforts are worth nothing. It’s His Church! Work hard, but trust Him for the results!

Our daughters were married adults when we moved to Florence. Pat Thomas, Patsy’s mother, came with us and has been a tremendous blessing to our lives and the life of our church. We were grateful when Nathan and Brooke Cowan (our eldest daughter and son-in-law) moved to Arizona to help us.

Nathan sets up the building for service each Sunday and is an outstanding usher and greeter. Brooke sings each Sunday, is a witness for Christ, and a tremendous encouragement to our church family. Ben and Fawn Gibson (our youngest daughter and her husband) are pastoring the Immanuel FWB Church in Winterville, North Carolina. Fawn surprised us by flying out to attend our first service. What a joy it was for our whole family to sing together that day!

As I look back over the roller coaster ride of life and ministry, I’m so glad we followed God’s leading and moved our family to Arizona. Along the way, our daughters learned to lean on the Lord, love people, laugh every day, and keep a song in their hearts. What more could a father ask! □

ABOUT THE WRITER: A veteran home missionary and former college professor, Howard Gwartney and his wife Patsy are Home Missions church planters in Arizona. Learn more about Christ’s Church FWB Church at www.christschurchfwb.org.



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THE POWER OF THE

VOTE

By John Carter

We the People of the
insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence
our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution

Article I.
Members chosen every second Year by the People of the several States, in
Branch of the State Legislature.
To five Years, and been seven Years a Citizen of
in this Union, according
of Years, a

“IF MEN WERE ANGELS there would be no need for government,” wrote James Madison. He continued, “But men are not angels!”

An age-old adage insists that conversation about religion and politics be avoided in social settings. Yet what could be more important for a Christian to discuss than his standing before God and his deep concern for promoting a peaceful and just society? While Christians may differ on the best choice of political candidate, we would all agree that the political decisions we make have long-term repercussions.

Government is a sacred or divine institution, according to Romans 13. A good government will subdue evil and protect and defend the good. Scripture even refers to public officials as ministers of God. In contrast, the Old Testament pronounces grave woes on those who make unjust laws. Bad governments (like bad marriages) are not from God, yet both marriage and government work well when carried out according to God’s plan.

The American system of government is unique. In the U.S. Constitution, our leaders wisely established a strong system of checks and balances for a mixture of reasons, ranging from their clear understanding of human depravity to the fear of a future King George.

Our founding fathers deeply feared the ability of any individual or oligarchy to control the political system and took aggressive measures to keep this from happening. The founders dealt with their own contemporary dilemmas while shaping the future. Their knowledge of history was remarkable, and they knew what they wanted, but they could not guarantee the future any more than we can today.

PROTECTING the FUTURE

The framers of the Constitution understood clearly the corrupt nature of humanity. Theologians call it depravity or sinfulness. Men who are selfish by nature and protective of personal interests can only live together, respect one another, and avoid harming one another by adhering to a system of social laws and government. Exploitation for personal gain is obvious in some and latent in the rest of us, even Christians.

In a letter to her husband John, Abigail Adams quoted Daniel Defoe who said, “Remember that all men would be tyrants if they could.” The ability of our founding fathers to create a political structure that limits the legal rise of a demagogue or self-styled, charismatic leader borders on the miraculous.

Yet the formation of a political system aware of human corruption and structured to suppress selfishness is only part of the equation. Any good government must exalt the noble qualities that establish a higher level of human community. Citizen virtue and leadership virtue, according to our founders, were considered necessary (even when violated) for the best human government. Cicero stated, “The

people’s good is the highest law.”

John Adams reinforced this idea when he wrote, “the happiness of the people was the purpose of government.”

He continued, “And since all sober inquirers after truth agreed that happiness derived from virtue, that form of government with virtue as its foundation was more likely than any other to promote the general happiness.”

To put it most simply, bad people cannot produce good government. Good people can create good government and dilute or soften the effects of bad government.

George Washington, with his hand on a Bible, swore a public oath to “preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution of the United States,” and added, “So help me God.” Immediately, he kissed the Bible. His respect for the Bible and a widespread commitment to the Constitution by both ordinary citizens and the founders of our nation gave this country sound footing.

by the PEOPLE

The American political system was designed for citizen participation. An informed, virtuous citizenry combined with a system of law that respects God results in ideal conditions for human government. The Constitution made provisions for considerable freedom, but such freedom comes only with a great deal of individual responsibility.

Citizens elect one of their own to lead. When necessary, they appeal to elected officials to impeach those who have exploited their positions. This direct democracy applies at the local and state levels, but is limited in the federal system (except in the House of Representatives where citizens choose peers from their individual districts to “represent” them).

for the PEOPLE

A republican form of government with democratic elements comprises the national or federal system of government. No single person or body controls the entire political body. Senators are chosen by state legislatures. Citizens elect members of the House of Representatives. Supreme Court justices are recommended by the President and approved by the Senate, while the President is selected by the electoral college.

a CHRISTIAN duty

Some believers today think Christians should stay out of politics, turning their attention instead to promoting the gospel. They write off the governmental system as corrupt to the core. Their mindset is, “You don’t polish the brass of a sinking ship.” Instead, they direct their abilities

The American political system was designed for citizen participation.

and talents to the church and its ministries.

On the other hand, many conscientious Christians are well versed in the world of politics and government and even participate at times. They follow the salt and light effect of Jesus' direct command to His followers (Matthew 5:13; Mark 9:50; Luke 14:34). Edmund Burke's advice, "For evil to triumph, good men need do nothing," remains timely.

Daniel and Nehemiah, under great duress, remained loyal to God in distant and pagan courts and captured the attention of the highest political leaders because of their biblical character, wisdom, and obvious leadership skills. Jesus and Paul both dealt with Jewish and Roman leaders, confronting them with their personal and professional wrongs. John the Baptist pronounced an unwanted condemnation of Herod's incestuous relationship, and it cost him his life.

His actions obviously met Jesus' approval when He said no one in the kingdom was greater than John.

How, then, can a conscientious Christian take an active role in today's American politics? More appropriately, how can today's Christian best fulfill his or her responsibilities as an American citizen? Consider the following suggestions:

1. Keep a healthy skepticism of those in the political arena. Some naively vote on the basis of dimples, smiles, speeches, geography, Ivy League degrees, or other superficial characteristics. Looks and social status are of minimal value. In his play *Hamlet*, Shakespeare said, "One may smile and smile and be a villain." Politics changes rapidly, often producing strange bedfellows.

2. Know the voting record of candidates. What one says and how one votes are often at odds. History reveals the correlation between what one has done and what he will do. Lenin wrote, "A lie told often enough becomes truth." Understanding truth often takes hard work. Take your citizenship to the next level by becoming an educated voter.

3. Know that every vote matters. Remember Florida 2000? Hanging chads. Confused voters. The presidential race decided by a handful of votes. Many races are decided by small margins.

4. Be aware that dual citizenship by its nature creates tension. The world of God and Caesar often compete and collide. The standards of Christ's kingdom must win, even when those standards don't have the flare, the charisma, or the money.

5. VOTE. □

ABOUT THE WRITER: John Carter chairs the History Department at Free Will Baptist Bible College. He is a member of Cross Timbers FWB Church in Nashville, TN.



THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

TODAY'S COLLEGE STUDENTS FACE A NEW AND confusing world in American politics. As the lines blur, and the world around them insists that right and wrong are simply words on a page, how do Christian college students respond?

"Voting is not only our right as Americans, but as Christians, it is our duty. We are not to be immersed solely in political parties or individual candidates, but rather we are to take a biblical stance on real issues." *Jesse Owens, Sophomore*

"Failing to let your voice be heard is essentially throwing your voice behind the popular movement of the day." *Jeremy Buhro, Sophomore*

"It is our obligation as Christians to be a positive influence on a vastly unbelieving nation." *Christopher Talbot, Sophomore*

"Voting determines our future not just for eight years, but for our children's children." *Kevin Murray, Sophomore*

"In a society that is seemingly becoming anti-Christian, we need to be active so our cause will not be weakened." *Ben Wheeler, recent graduate*

"While many Christians consider their individual voices and votes to have very little impact in the political arena, those same Christians must remember that they have been entrusted with the responsibility of promoting God's Truth in all areas of life, even in their local and national governments.

Therefore, we must assume the task of *actively* promoting the development and implementation of moral laws and honorable leaders in the United States government. "
Audra Bridgeman, Senior

"It is important for Christians to vote, because our participation in the U. S. political forum represents the voice of truth and light in a dark and fallen world. Just as many small stars make up the universe and grains of sand make the beach, each vote matters in the overall scheme of the future of U. S. democracy."
Mary Kathryn Driggers, Junior



Photo: Mark Cowart

THE GREATEST PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH

Question: What's the shortest book published in the last 30 years?

Answer: The one on memorable speeches by U. S. presidents.

The Spin Cycle

That's not a great joke, but it does make a point. Presidential speeches today seem to give us the "same old, same old" we've come to expect. And why shouldn't they? The president doesn't even write most of these addresses. Speechwriters and spin doctors craft the phrases; the chief executive just gives his approval.

What's more, the media get a draft of the speech before it's even delivered so they can tell us what the commander-in-chief will say. Then they tell us whether we should like it or not (usually not, they suggest). They especially frown on one topic that should be off limits: religion.

That wasn't the case with the greatest presidential speech in American history, however.

Behind It All

Next year marks the 200th anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's birth. The nation's 16th president was at his best on a wet, dreary Saturday, March 4, 1865, when he took the oath of office for the second time. Forty-one days later he was dead.

What he said in those 703 words, though, lives for all time as a testimony to the sweeping impact of a biblical worldview on a leader and a nation in a time of crisis.

During the previous four years, the nation had faced the very real possibility of splitting into two countries. Now, in the war's twilight, Lincoln sought to examine what lay ahead for the reunited country he envisioned. His astonishing premise was that God Himself was behind the war!

Four Texts

The president proceeded to look at the conflict through biblical lenses. This should not surprise us because mid-

18th century American life was saturated with the Bible. In fact, the Great Emancipator had steeped himself in the Scriptures. He had read and memorized its passages all his life.

Standing on the Capitol steps for the final time, he reminded his listeners that both sides in the conflict "read the same Bible, and pray to the same God; and each invokes His aid against the other...The prayers of both could not be answered; that of neither has been answered fully. The Almighty has His own purposes."

He goes on to allude to four specific Bible references. "It may seem strange that any men should dare to ask a just God's assistance in wringing their bread from the sweat of other men's faces" (see Genesis 3:19); "but let us judge not that we be not judged" (see Matthew 7:1).

Referring to slavery, Lincoln cited Matthew 18:7: "Woe unto the world because of offenses! For it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh!" Whatever God's will, "the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether," the president concluded (see Psalm 19:9).

How Sweet the Words

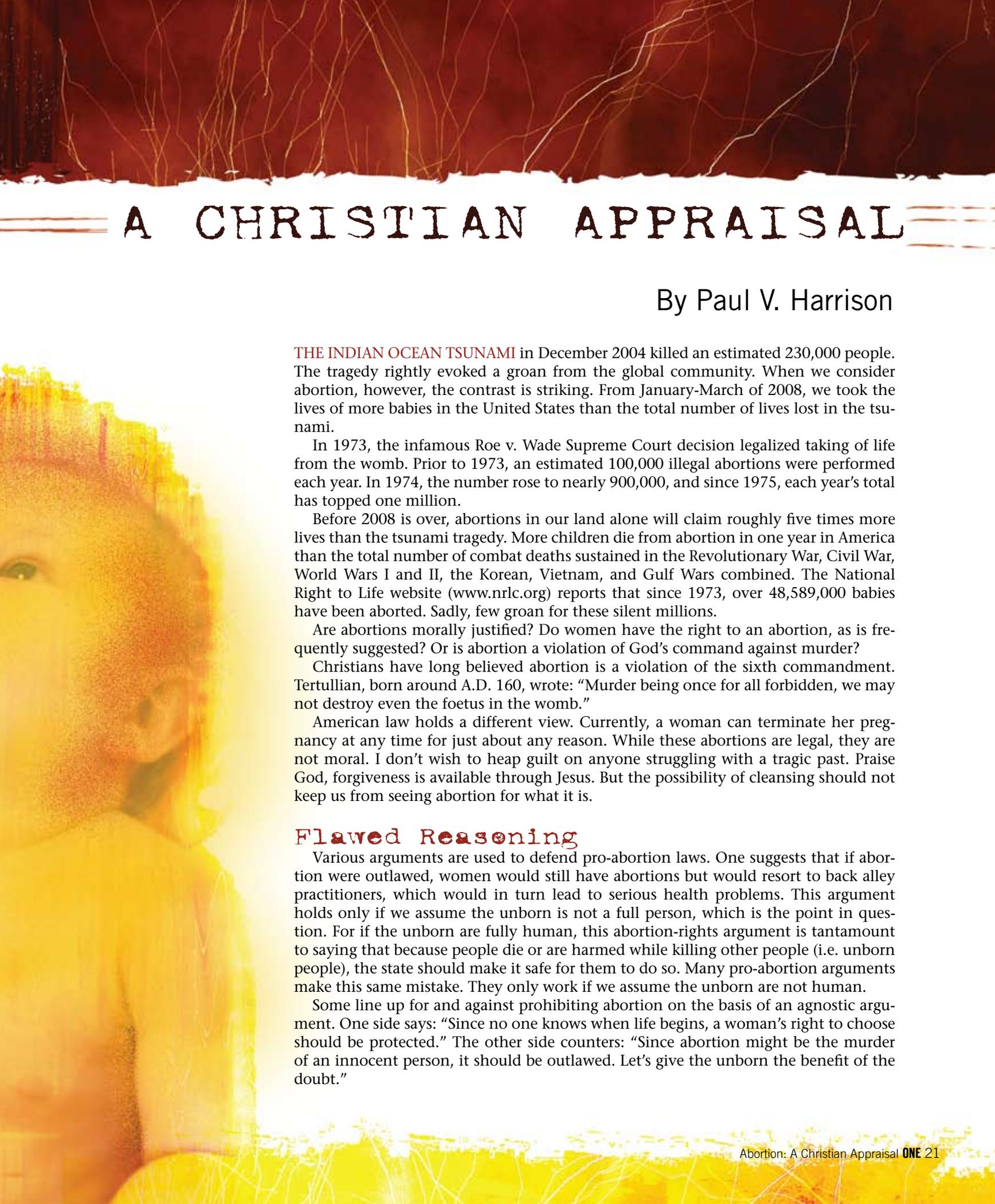
When he had read the 25 sentences in a little over five minutes, the lanky Midwestern plowman leaned over toward his wife Mary who held a Bible and kissed the words of Isaiah 5:27-28 opened on the page. In so doing he left us a legacy of "malice toward none" and "charity for all," the heritage of a leader emboldened to see the world through the eyes of faith. May God raise up such leaders in our day of crisis. □

Dr. Garnett Reid is a member of the Bible faculty at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

Read the entire text of Lincoln's Second Inaugural Address at: www.bartleby.com/124/pres32.html.

ABORTION:





A CHRISTIAN APPRAISAL

By Paul V. Harrison

THE INDIAN OCEAN TSUNAMI in December 2004 killed an estimated 230,000 people. The tragedy rightly evoked a groan from the global community. When we consider abortion, however, the contrast is striking. From January-March of 2008, we took the lives of more babies in the United States than the total number of lives lost in the tsunami.

In 1973, the infamous *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision legalized taking of life from the womb. Prior to 1973, an estimated 100,000 illegal abortions were performed each year. In 1974, the number rose to nearly 900,000, and since 1975, each year's total has topped one million.

Before 2008 is over, abortions in our land alone will claim roughly five times more lives than the tsunami tragedy. More children die from abortion in one year in America than the total number of combat deaths sustained in the Revolutionary War, Civil War, World Wars I and II, the Korean, Vietnam, and Gulf Wars combined. The National Right to Life website (www.nrlc.org) reports that since 1973, over 48,589,000 babies have been aborted. Sadly, few groan for these silent millions.

Are abortions morally justified? Do women have the right to an abortion, as is frequently suggested? Or is abortion a violation of God's command against murder?

Christians have long believed abortion is a violation of the sixth commandment. Tertullian, born around A.D. 160, wrote: "Murder being once for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the foetus in the womb."

American law holds a different view. Currently, a woman can terminate her pregnancy at any time for just about any reason. While these abortions are legal, they are not moral. I don't wish to heap guilt on anyone struggling with a tragic past. Praise God, forgiveness is available through Jesus. But the possibility of cleansing should not keep us from seeing abortion for what it is.

Flawed Reasoning

Various arguments are used to defend pro-abortion laws. One suggests that if abortion were outlawed, women would still have abortions but would resort to back alley practitioners, which would in turn lead to serious health problems. This argument holds only if we assume the unborn is not a full person, which is the point in question. For if the unborn are fully human, this abortion-rights argument is tantamount to saying that because people die or are harmed while killing other people (i.e. unborn people), the state should make it safe for them to do so. Many pro-abortion arguments make this same mistake. They only work if we assume the unborn are not human.

Some line up for and against prohibiting abortion on the basis of an agnostic argument. One side says: "Since no one knows when life begins, a woman's right to choose should be protected." The other side counters: "Since abortion might be the murder of an innocent person, it should be outlawed. Let's give the unborn the benefit of the doubt."



Robert Wennberg of Westmont College uses this approach to argue for a pro-choice position. He envisions a woman, raising four children and living in poverty, who finds herself pregnant again. Her income is needed to keep the family afloat. Concerned about whether abortion is justifiable, she consults two moralists, a conservative and a liberal. Both appeal to the “benefit of the doubt argument.”

One says abortion might be the unjustifiable taking of a human life, so she should not have one. The other argues that avoiding a birth that would mean certain suffering for her and her family is more important than to avoid what is uncertain regarding the status of the fetus. Wennberg concludes: “It seems to me that both pieces of advice are reasonable and that neither is clearly superior to the other.” With this reasoning, he maintains that abortion is a viable and moral option.

The professor’s story, however, doesn’t take into account the seriousness of taking human life. Consider Francis Beckwith’s revision of his story. The same woman, in the same terrible plight, finds herself pregnant. A wealthy benefactor gives her this option: “If you detonate the building across the street, which I own, I will pay you \$25,000 a year for the next 20 years. However, there is one catch. There is a one in 10 chance that a perfectly healthy and innocent eight-year-old child is playing in the basement of the building. Thus, you run the risk of killing another human being. Is your personal well-being worth the risk?”

Confronting Double Standards

In America, product safety reigns supreme. Toy manufacturing giant Mattel has been on the hot seat recently as a result of selling unsafe toys. The media has been all astir. We are careful when there’s even a remote chance that a product may negatively impact the health of our children. However, this caution does not extend to abortion. The double standard is hard to miss.

More sophisticated pro-choice supporters attack the question of the humanness of the unborn. They suggest abortion is permissible because the unborn are not fully human.

A number of problems exist in such reasoning. Foremost is the fact that a separate unique human being forms at conception with its own genetic code. Though the life is small, it constitutes an individual. Within it, from the moment of conception, is all that is needed to define every aspect of its complex makeup. To live, this tiny life only needs food, water, and oxygen.

Matthews-Roth of Harvard Medical School argued, “It is scientifically correct to say that an individual human life begins at conception, when egg and sperm join to form the zygote, and this developing human always is a member of our species in all stages of its life.”

When all is said and done regarding the study of the developing unborn, “there is no decisive break in the continuous development of the human entity from conception until death that would make this entity a different individual before birth. This is why it makes perfect sense for any one of us to say, ‘When I was conceived . . .’”

This point of identity has basically been surrendered by abortionists. For example, David Boonin in his highly reasoned arguments for the pro-choice position wrote very personally of his son Eli. “In the top drawer of my desk, I keep another picture of Eli. This picture was taken on September 7, 1993, 24 weeks before he was born. The sonogram image is murky, but it reveals clearly enough a small head tilted back slightly, and an arm raised up and bent, with the hand pointing back toward the face and the thumb extended out toward the mouth. There is no doubt in my mind that this picture, too, shows the same little boy at a very early stage in his physical development. And there is no question that the position I defend in this book entails that it would have been morally permissible to end his life at this point.”

THE DOUBLE STANDARD IS HARD TO MISS.

The book *Why I Am an Abortion Doctor* by Suzanne T. Poppema illustrates further the conflicted thinking of abortion proponents. The doctor-author herself had an abortion some years ago. She wrote, “I recall vividly how I dealt with mine [her abortion]. Since my fetus was at 20 weeks, I could actually feel the fetal convulsions not long after I was given the saline injection. The embryo dies, and then I was supposed to deliver, presumably the next day, though in my case it was two days later. A friend drove me to the clinic for the saline injection and later we returned for the delivery, but I never saw the embryo. It happened on my mother’s birthday, which I’ve always found odd. I remember having a special kind of conversation with the embryo at the time: ‘I’m very sorry that this is happening to you, but there’s

just no way that you can come into existence right now.' It was so clear to me that I was doing the right thing."

This is a most striking conversation between a mother and her "embryo." If the statement about not coming into existence had any meaning, there would be no "you" to address.

A Question of Rights

Perhaps the most well known argument used to protect a woman's right to choose has come from Judith Jarvis Thomson in her now famous article "A Defense of Abortion." She wrote: "But now let me ask you to imagine this. You wake up in the morning and find yourself back to back in bed with an unconscious violinist, a famous unconscious violinist. He has been found to have a fatal kidney ailment, and the Society of Music Lovers has canvassed all the available medical records and found that you alone have the right blood type to help. They have therefore kidnapped you, and last night the violinist's circulatory system was plugged into yours, so that your kidneys can be used to extract poisons from his blood as well as your own. The director of the hospital now tells you, 'Look, we're sorry the Society of Music Lovers did this to you—we would never have permitted it if we had known. But still, they did it, and the violinist now is plugged into you. To unplug you would kill him. But never mind, it's only for nine months. By then he will have recovered from his ailment, and can safely be unplugged from you.' Is it morally incumbent on you to accede to this situation?"

Thomson argues that to unplug the violinist would be morally acceptable, and she, of course, draws a connection between this right and a pregnant woman's right to "unplug" her fetus. This is a much more brazen argument than what we've seen so far, for Thomson grants the personhood of the fetus while maintaining that it is morally acceptable to abort it. She suggests that though the fetus is a person with rights, these rights do not sweep aside those of the mother, and, therefore, abortion is permissible.

The length of this article does not allow a full-scale refutation of Thomson's argument. For that I would refer you to Patrick Lee's book *Abortion & Unborn Human Life*. I will offer, however, the following objections to the violinist analogy.

First, abortion is not a mere "unplugging" of the fetus but a violent act of aggression against him. The child does not die of some other disease but of the abortion itself.

Second, abortion is perpetrated against one's own child for whom a mother has an inherent responsibility. If mothers can dispose of their children merely on the basis of a nine-month inconvenience, why can't a mother dispose of her six-year-old on a similar basis?

Third, abortion is an act of violence against a baby whose dependence on its mother, in the vast majority of cases, is the result of the woman's voluntary sexual choices. She chose to run the risk of putting another person in a depen-

dent relationship upon herself. This was not thrust upon her. She was not kidnapped or coerced. She voluntarily embraced both the possibility of having a child and the inherent responsibilities that would ensue should the possibility become a reality.

Finally, one must ask, what are the consequences of shedding the inconvenience of being plugged to the violinist? In other words, in making such a decision to rid oneself of the difficult circumstances involved in pregnancy, these inconveniences must be weighed against the consequences of a decision to abort. The consequences, of course, entail the death of the baby.

The congregation I serve is blessed with babies. I watch with delight as parents and grandparents and church family dote on the new additions to their families. Surely, when we hold these precious newborns, we hold the same tiny individuals who were residents of their mothers' wombs a short time earlier. Our obligation to care for them began long before they were born. Thus, I can only reach one conclusion. Abortion is a violation of nature's law and is an utter violation of God's commandment. □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Paul V. Harrison is pastor of Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, TN, and adjunct professor of church history at Free Will Baptist Bible College.



To read an extended and annotated version of this article, along with many articles dealing with the Christian and popular culture, purchase *Integrity: A Theological Journal*. The volume is coming soon from Randall House: www.randallhouse.com. An annotated version of this article is available at www.onemag.org.

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ALONE AGAIN

By
Bert Tippet

The needs of a quickly expanding population of seniors have created many challenges for American society and government. Veteran editor Bert Tippet tackles the issue head-on with practical advice on how the local church can minister to widows.

IT ALL STARTED WHEN A PASTOR FRIEND asked if I had read “The Widow’s Might” in the January 2008 issue of *Christianity Today*.

I had not read the article, so he brought it by. In it, Miriam Neff described the plight of widows, including her. She called widows “the invisible among you.” Among her observations:

- Approximately 800,000 women per year join their sisterhood.
- 60% experience serious health issues the first year. One-third of widows meet the criteria for clinical depression a year later.
- Most experience financial decline.
- Many drift from the choir, to the congregation, and, eventually, all the way to the back.

“We move from serving and singing in the choir to solitude and silent sobbing, then on to find a place where we belong,” she says.

She had my attention.

Face to Face with Widows

My pastor friend told me he had not considered the special needs of widows in his congregation. Neither had I, but I felt compelled to learn more.

My wife Dianne and I were scheduled to speak at a retreat for senior adults in March, so I included time in the program to recognize widows. I cited some of what Mrs. Neff had said, then invited the widows attending the retreat to stand. We gave them an ovation for their courage.

After the session, a couple of ladies stopped me and said how much they appreciated the recognition. Then they began to share their stories. One had lost two husbands and two children. No sooner had they finished than an attending pastor came to me and said, “I have several widows in my church, but I have not thought about how to minister to them. May I have a copy of that article?”

Since then, there has scarcely been a day I have not considered the subject of ministering to widows.

I did a biblical word search on “widow” and learned that:

- God commands people to protect widows (Ex. 22:22, Deut. 24:21).
- God provides His own protection for widows (Jer. 49:11).
- Special blessings accrue to those who provide for widows (Deut. 10:18; 14:29).
- Neglect of widows is a sign of spiritual poverty and invites God’s judgment (Isa. 1:23, Deut. 24:17, Mal. 3:5).

Widows Can Minister

Widows have been a source of blessing to the Church and to God’s people. Both Elijah and Elisha benefited from the care of widows. Jesus pointed to a widow as an example of generosity.

A widow was also a source of great blessing to me and to my family. Early in my ministry, Dianne sent me to the store to buy groceries. Only she and I knew that the money I took with me was all we had left to meet our needs and those of our infant son.

The store we frequented was owned and run by a widow in our church. The income from that store provided for her and her five children. It may not have been more than barely adequate to meet their needs.

After I bought our groceries and returned home, I was unpacking the bags when I found four \$10-bills in the bottom of one bag. I immediately phoned the store to report what I had found, but our friend cut me off in mid-sentence, saying, “Anything you take out of my store is yours.”

I knew then that, somehow, when no one else knew of our needs, God had spoken to her, and she had responded.

Recently, I interviewed several widows, asking them, “How did it feel to lose your husband?”, “Did your church meet your needs?”, and “What advice do you have for ways we can help?”

Loss of Contact

The ladies we talked to confirmed what Mrs. Neff said: “Studies show that widows lose 75 percent of their friendship network when they lose a spouse.” One told me that her greatest sense of loss was the loss of contact with her husband’s family and their mutual friends. She was surprised to find that it was almost as if she had died as well.

However, widows often find great understanding, encouragement, and support from others within their “sisterhood of sorrow.” Grief counseling groups are helpful to some. Others just enjoy the company of Christian friends.

One lady said, “Don’t treat me like I’m single, because I don’t feel single.” She added, “Don’t ask my children how I am doing; ask me.”

Awkward Situations

“I don’t know where to sit when I go to church,” a widow said. It wasn’t that she didn’t have friends there, but she felt she might be imposing to sit with a family without being invited.

In contrast, another widow told me, “I never sat alone at church. Someone always came and sat beside me. I can name them today.”

The point is that we need to reach out to widows, rather than waiting for them to reach out to us. They need us to be open and inviting as they adjust to one of life’s greatest quantum shifts.

Inappropriate Comments

Some of us can be thoughtless in things we say. One widow related that statements like, “It’s time to move on” or “You need to get past this” don’t help (even if they are true). Grief takes time, more for some than for others.

Even worse are the attempts at humor. “Don’t say ‘It’s a good day if I’m above ground,’ to someone who just buried a spouse!” Questions like, “Do you plan to remarry?” should be thought through before being asked.

On the other hand, several told me, “Keep talking about my husband.” They treasured the memories of his life, both their own and those of others. We need to be sensitive, but widows often want us to recall their husbands, even though we may have to understand the awkward tears those memories may evoke.

Opportunities for Service

Several said that being able to serve others was a great help to them in healing their own grief. One volunteers at the hospice care facility. Another said that the death of her own husband has caused her to pray more fervently for the needs of others. Still another teaches and supervises K-5 at a local Christian school.

Perhaps our churches could find ways to plug widows into places of service.

Patience, Please!

Coping with the loss of a husband is an individual endeavor—different for each widow. Some wanted to be included in group activities; others wanted to be left alone for a time. “For five or six months, I did not want to visit or be visited,” one told me. “I learned I couldn’t attend funerals.”

Another had been very active with her husband. They had been socially oriented, enjoying activities with other couples. After her husband died, she did not feel complete without the fun, food, and games they had enjoyed together. She found a church where she was accepted and embraced—made to feel like part of the group.

Knowing there is no “one size fits all” solution to the loss of a mate should spur us to be patient to learn what best meets the needs of each of those we are attempting to help.

I want to thank those whose candor helped me better understand the circumstances of widowhood: Barbara Foster, Brenda Griggs, Peggy Hampton, Glenda May, Lorene Miley, and Helen Wall. I suggest that you pray for them and for other widows and widowers who live daily with the greatest loss of all. □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Bert Tippett is director of church relations at Free Will Baptist Bible College.

WHAT CAN YOUR CHURCH DO FOR WIDOWS?

- **RECOGNIZE THEM.** Mention them and their special status publicly.
- **USE THEM.** Utilize their gifts in the church and community. Invite them to share their experience.
- **MINISTER TO THEM.** Change the oil in their car. Have the youth group rake their leaves.
- **ADVISE THEM.** Help them manage their finances. Pay someone to prepare their tax returns.
- **COMFORT THEM.** Sit with them in church. Send cards. Make phone calls.
- **TALK TO THEM.** Ask how they are doing. Recall memories of the husband they lost.

RACHEL DENNIS NAMED FWBBC ENROLLMENT COUNSELOR



Rachel Dennis, an international business graduate from Free Will Baptist Bible College, has been named enrollment counselor at FWBBC, according to Jeff Caudill, director of enrollment services. The 22-year-old Arkansas native began her duties March 22.

Mr. Caudill said, “Rachel has a real love for FWBBC. She will be involved in numerous student initiatives as well as recruiting. We look forward to Rachel’s energy and creativity in EMT.”

As a student, Miss Dennis was active in student organizations. She served as president of the Sonnet society, president of the sophomore class, and vice president of the freshman class. Rachel worked one summer with the college’s Institutional Advancement Department. She was also a member of the New Mercy ministry team.

“I appreciate the opportunity God gave me to be a student at FWBBC,” Rachel said. “I want to give back a portion of what has been provided for me through professors, mentors, and relationships these past four years.”

FWBBC TEAM ATTENDS NEW ORLEANS FORUM

NEW ORLEANS, LA—President Matt Pinson spearheaded a team of 12 Free Will Baptist Bible College faculty, staff, and students who traveled to New Orleans, Louisiana, April 3-5 for the Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS), according to Provost Greg Kettman. The FWBBC contingency was among 700 people present for the three-day conference.

The 2008 Forum featured 11 events, including the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry’s conference with a guest presentation by Dr. Ed Stetzer, director of research at LifeWay Christian Resources, titled “The Emergent Church, the Emerging Church, and the Faith Once Delivered to the Saints.”

President Pinson and two other educators were invited to interact with Dr. Stetzer after his presentation during a 90-minute roundtable panel discussion. The other panelists included NOBTS faculty members Jack Allen (associate professor of church planting and director of the Cecil B. Day Center for Church Planting) and Paige Brooks (instructor in theology and Islamic studies).

Pinson said, “We were delighted with the invitation to attend the Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum. This was an excellent opportunity for professional development for our faculty members and intellectual growth for our students. There’s a lot going on in the theological world, and we as Free Will Baptists need to stay current with trends and issues.”

The invitation for FWBBC faculty and students to attend the Forum came from Dr. Steve Lemke, provost at NOBTS, who spoke in chapel at FWBBC this spring. During the team members’ visit to New Orleans, Dr. Lemke gave them a personal tour of NOBTS’ collection of historical biblical documents.



FWBBC STALWARTS, RALPH AND MARGARET HAMPTON, RETIRE



Reverend Ralph Hampton, chairman of the Biblical and Ministry Studies Department at Free Will Baptist Bible College, retired in May after 50 years of service (48 years of classroom instruction in Bible and pastoral ministries, and a two-year paid sabbatical while in graduate school). His wife Margaret also retired from her position as library manager at FWBBC's Welch Library where she served 37 years.

President Matt Pinson said, "Ralph Hampton was a rock of stability on campus for five decades—a man of prayer, a scholar with a warm heart, and a teacher who challenged students to give their best. He demonstrated spiritual and intellectual leadership as a faculty member, and faithfulness in his local church. Thank God for the influence of this good man. We will miss him and his quiet strength."

Reverend Hampton's ministry to the broader denomination included six pastorates in Tennessee and Missouri, writing articles for *Contact*, *ONE Magazine*, and Randall House Publications, and his signature role with the National Association of Free Will Baptists where he served nine years as moderator (1987-1996) and six years as assistant moderator (1981-1987).

Librarian Carol Reid, who worked 20 years with Margaret Hampton, said, "I have been blessed by her godly example as a wife, mother, preacher's wife, and friend. Her work ethic, attention to detail, and willingness to do difficult things made her an excellent library manager. Margaret managed student workers, kept library statistics, maintained periodical subscriptions, processed book orders, typed letters, gave tours, and more. She did it all with a servant's heart. I learned from her as we worked together."

The Hamptons were honored during 2008 commencement exercises at FWBBC in recognition of their outstanding service to the college.



FWBBC ATHLETE NAMED 'PLAYER OF THE YEAR'

NASHVILLE, TN—Jerod McNeal, a Free Will Baptist Bible College graduating senior from Lake Butler, Florida, and member of the Flames baseball team, has been named the 2008 NCAA Mid-East Region Player of the Year, according to Athletic Director Mike Phillips.

McNeal finished the season ranked number one in batting average (.571), slugging percentage (1.21), on-base percentage (.641), runs batted in per game (1.73), and almost every other offensive category.

McNeal's teammates praised his knowledge of the game as well as his leadership ability. A banner recognizing McNeal's accomplishments will be placed in the Picirilli Activities Building on the FWBBC campus.

Jerod McNeal graduated May 9 with a B.S. degree in business administration.

PHOTO: Jerod McNeal (L) and Mike Phillips display banner.



EAGLETONS, MCDONALDS, MCVAYS TO SHARE M.I.R. DUTIES AT FWBBC

Three veteran international missionary couples will share Missionary-in-Residence responsibilities at Free Will Baptist Bible College during the 2008-2009 academic year, according to Provost Greg Ketterman. Kenneth and Rejane Eagleton (Brazil), Don and Ruth McDonald (Japan), and Sam and June McVay (Spain) will help FWBBC launch a new modular approach to the campus M.I.R. program this fall.

Dr. Ketterman said, "We may be looking at the face of the future if this mix of traditional and modular M.I.R. outreach is as effective as we hope. The modular concept allows students to benefit from the contributions of more missionaries, since it will not require them to leave the field for an entire year."

The M.I.R. program is a joint effort by FWBBC and FWB International Missions to promote missions among students. The goal is for students to develop a vision for and accept the challenge of global evangelism.

Dr. Ketterman said, "We're conceptualizing a mix of traditional and modular M.I.R. arrangements for the future. This will allow FWBBC and FWBIM to maximize the possibilities for students to be impacted by the lives of missionaries fresh from the field."

Plans for the 2009-2010 academic year call for the M.I.R. program to cycle back to a more traditional format with one missionary family in residence—Clint Morgan (regional director for Africa and creative access areas) and his wife Lynette.

FWBBC FLAMES ANNOUNCE 2008-2009 MEN'S BASKETBALL SCHEDULE

The Free Will Baptist Bible College Flames basketball team will play more than 30 games during the 2008-2009 season, according to Dr. Mike Phillips, athletic director. The team will travel to seven states for games and tournament play.

The Flames are scheduled to play 15 home games in the Picirilli Activity Center on the FWBBC campus. For a complete schedule, visit www.fwbcc.edu.

FWBBC GRADUATES 69 IN COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

Free Will Baptist Bible College graduated 69 students from 15 states in commencement exercises on campus Friday, May 9, according to President Matt Pinson. Students completed degrees in six programs ranging from two-year associate's degrees to four-year bachelor's degrees. Thirty-eight percent of the class graduated with honors.

Dr. C. Thomas Malone, former FWBBC president and chancellor, brought the 19-minute commencement address from Luke 9:57-62, challenging students to deny self, say Yes to God, realize the urgency of the task, and keep their eyes on Jesus. Dr. Malone served 12 years as FWBBC president, three years as chancellor, and 16 years on the Board of Trustees, in addition to pastoring 35 years in three states.

Tennessee pastor Mike Gladson, whose daughter Ashley is a student at the college, delivered the baccalaureate message Thursday evening. He focused on the need for Christians to confront and engage the culture where they are. Gladson pastors Cofer's Chapel FWB Church in Nashville.

Ralph and Margaret Hampton, who retired after the 2007-2008 academic year, were honored with matching plaques during commencement exercises. Old Testament professor Garnett Reid was recognized for 25 years of service.

The college commends to you and to the work of the Lord the members of the 2008 graduating class.

Associate of Science in Business Degrees

Benjamin Thomas Selph
Bumpus Mills, TN
Jessica Nicole Selph
Black Mountain, NC

Associate of Science in Early Childhood Degrees

Aubrey Lin Strobel
Nashville, TN

Associate of Arts Degrees

Kevin Ilagan Hulgwin
Norfolk, VA

Associate of Christian Ministries Degrees

Michael Christopher Kernodle
Newport News, VA

Bachelor of Science Degrees

Christopher John Adams
Louisville, KY
***Matthew Ryan Akers
Monterey, TN
Crystal Brooke Barbour
Wilson, NC
*Sarah Elizabeth Bequette
Marquand, MO
**Christopher Shawn Birmingham
Tupelo, MS
**Ashley Marie Boshers
Columbia, TN
***Audra Darlene Bridgeman
Geff, IL
**Gary L. Bridgeman
Guin, AL
Jared Heath Brummitt
Elizabethton, TN
Jeremy Bill Craft
Columbus, GA
Jeremy David Crittenden
Arnold, MO
Joseph Scott Curtis
Paintsville, KY
Timothy Charles Dederick
Wabash, IN
Casey Lauren Deel
Hermitage, TN
Rachel Christine Dennis
Vilonia, AR
**Jennifer Megan Detherage
Fairfield, IL
*Katie Grob Douglas
Macon, GA

Stewart Logan Douglas
Macon, GA
Christopher Michael Edwards
Jesup, GA
*Rachel Lynette Eidson
Joelton, TN
Daniel Lee Fisher
Morehead City, NC
**Nicole Patterson Fisher
Beaufort, NC
Jacob Alexander Frady
Pikeville, TN
***Grace Anne Gaskins
Royal Palm Beach, FL
*Bradley Eric Gentry
Limestone, TN
Lauren Nichole Helms
Allen Park, MI
Leslie Renee Hull
Baxter, TN
Natalie Jo Ison
Dayton, OH
*Daniel Warren Landers
Batesville, AR
**Heidi Nichole Lane
Marysville, OH
Sharon A. Langston
Saugatuck, MI
Amanda Michelle Lemons
Mt. Vernon, IL
James Jerod McNeal
Lake Butler, FL
Sean Allen Mercer
Albany, GA
Amanda Jo Mitchell
Houstonia, MO
Phillip Travis Morgan
Cedar Hill, TN
Joshua Robert Owens
Franklin, TN
Robert E. Pirtle
Nashville, TN
Michael Raylon Raybon
Smyrna, TN
*Jacob Douglas Riggs
Joelton, TN
Merilee Martin Reagan
Greenbrier, TN
Lindsey McAdams Runion
Goodlettsville, TN

Shelby Wayne Spradlin
Walnut Ridge, AR
*BreeAnna Hope Stegall
New Windsor, IL
***Lynsey Marie Stripling
North Little Rock, AR
*Laura Ashley Stutts
Lawrenceburg, TN
Ashley Nicole Vandivort
Nashville, TN
***Benjamin Wayne Wheeler
Wilson, NC
Nathan Thomas Willhite
Pleasant View, TN
George Michael Williams
Memphis, TN
Lance Arnett Williams
Pocahontas, AR
Marlena Ann Williams
Kingston, TN

Bachelor of Arts Degrees

***Jared Wade Austin
LaVergne, TN
**Jennifer Dawn Bishop
Tifton, GA
***Matthew Steven Bracey
Ashland City, TN
***Mark Arden Brandenburg
Nashville, TN
Caleb Burton Dement
Wendzville, MO
*Kenneth Edward Gossar
Bowling Green, KY
James Blake Hawkins
Nashville, TN
**Mark Anthony Headrick
O'Fallon, MO
***Mary Elizabeth Hovies
Lebanon, TN
Janet Lamb McReynolds
Nashville, TN
Anthony D. Warden, Jr.
Bonner Springs, KS
Katie Marie Williams
Mt. Vernon, IL

****summa cum laude*
***magna cum laude*
**cum laude*

Peace in the Storm

By Charity Sexton



On Monday, April 28, around 4:00 p.m., the weather alert on our local TV stations began to issue tornado warnings for our viewing area. Cailey (our youngest daughter) and I waited anxiously for David and the other three children to return home from school.

Peace in the Storm

When I glanced out the back double-sliding doors, it only took a moment for me to realize something terrible was about to happen. I saw an enormous, dark, funnel-shaped cloud spreading three-quarters of a mile wide over our neighborhood and the nearby downtown area of Suffolk, Virginia. Less than 200 yards away, I watched pieces of my neighbors' homes breaking apart in the grasp of 160 mph winds.

It was in those frantic moments that David and the children pulled up in our minivan. We quickly hurried into our downstairs bathroom where all six of us stuffed ourselves into a one-man shower. Terrified, we began to pray, calling on the one true living God. Our children began to cry as they pleaded for God's protection and safety.

It takes only a few seconds for this type of F-3 tornado to demolish a two story brick home. God, however, had His own plans that day. As we crouched in the shower praying, we could hear the tornado's force pulling at the roof over our heads. The storm sounded much like a constant train whistle as it ripped along its path. The 15-20 seconds when the storm passed overhead seemed like an eternity, but what a Great God we serve. God heard our cries and placed His all-powerful Hand of protection upon us. At that moment, we realized we had experienced peace in the midst of the storm.

When the Storm Passes By

The tornado leveled 13 homes, caused 145 others to be condemned, and damaged 1,200. Yet by God's grace no one died, and only 120 were injured. Two of the neighborhoods that sustained the most damage were Hillpoint Farms (our neighborhood) and Burnett's Mill (the neighborhood of another church family). What an incredible effect this disaster is having upon the hearts of so many in our area!

In the weeks following the storm, thanks to so many of you, we were able to purchase food and gift cards to help many needy families. We also delivered over 1,200 meals to victims, neighbors, firefighters, police officers, and city workers. We have ministered to many families and young couples who literally lost everything.

In addition, we also gave out over 1,000 pieces of church literature. As a result of the efforts of many people connected to CrossPointe FWB Church, we have received many positive and grateful comments and many have expressed interest in our church. We believe the Lord is going to use this tornado to help build His church in Suffolk.

We deeply believe God has a wonderful purpose and plan for CrossPointe. Before the storm, 64% of the people in Suffolk, Virginia, claimed no religious affiliation. We believe God gained their attention in a mighty way.

We are praying that, because of the tornado, we can point them to the God who can save them and give them peace during their personal storms. Please continue to pray for CrossPointe FWB Church as we minister to the hearts of people in Suffolk, Virginia. □

ABOUT THE WRITERS: David and Charity Sexton are home missionary church planters to Suffolk, VA. Read more about CrossPointe FWB Church at www.homemissions.net.



INGOMING

A Personal Account of an Attack in Iraq

By Chaplain (Major) David Trogdon

One Friday night in April, our location was hit by a rocket attack. Here is an account of what happened and how God protected us.

- 1.** At approximately 20:15, I was sitting at my office desk, talking to my wife Connie on the phone when we received the warning, "Incoming!"
- 2.** Roughly 10 seconds later, I heard a rocket go over my little building and explode. The 3'x3' window, which was about two feet from my head, shattered from the force of the blast. The explosion also blew my unit patch off of my left ACU sleeve. I discovered later that the rocket had detonated only 25 feet away.
- 3.** About a minute later, I was able to clear my head, dust myself off, and climb up off the floor. As far as I could tell, my only injury was a small cut on my right hand.
- 4.** I immediately went to the door, and seeing dust and smoke I went out to see if our headquarters building had been hit or if anyone had been hurt. To my great relief, no one had been injured or killed. I immediately called Connie to reassure her that I was fine and discovered she had heard the explosion and the window shatter. She was relieved to hear I was okay. I told her she had just missed getting rich and was appropriately "disciplined."
- 5.** Because we are Task Force Troy, our EOD members (emergency personnel) were immediately at my location. I was asked repeatedly if I was okay and if I needed to go to the TMC (Troop Medical Clinic). I responded that I was fine.
- 6.** At about 21:30, the MPs (military police) arrived on the scene and informed me that they needed my ID card and information for their investigation. They asked if I was okay, and I responded that I was fine. They informed me that I didn't have a choice, that I had to go to the clinic to be checked out.
- 7.** I arrived at the TMC at about 21:45 and was checked. My only symptoms were a headache and some ringing in my ears, which I figured was totally normal. The only other indication that something was a little off was that I had trouble remembering my rank, and I failed a memory test. I was told that I won the prize for being the closest to a rocket detonation and surviving. I was later diagnosed with a concussion.



I want to take this opportunity to thank you all for your prayers. God surely answered those prayers on Friday night as evidenced by the following: God protected us and no one was seriously injured or killed. The glass, even though it shattered two feet from my head/face, all went outward. If the glass had come in on me due to the blast, things would have turned out differently.

I was not hurt by any frag, even though fragmentation from the rocket penetrated the sign and signpost across the street from me on impact. Finally, this has provided me with numerous ministry opportunities as word spread quickly that I had been close to the explosion, and I was able to give God the glory for His protection. Again, thank you for your prayers!"

EOD Psalm

"Keep me, O Lord, from the hands of the wicked; preserve me from the violent man; who have purposed to overthrow my goings. The proud have hid a snare for me, and cords; they have spread a net by the wayside; they have set gins for me. Selah. (Psalm 140: 4, 5). □

In early May 2008, Chaplain David Trogdon received his promotion in rank from Captain to Major. Congratulations to Chaplain Trogdon.



Who Is Your Pilot?

By Chaplain (Major) David Trogdon



Recently, I was blessed to be able to spend a few days with our Task Force Troy soldiers, sailors, and airmen at Camp Speicher, Iraq. We flew by helicopter (Blackhawk) on the way up and flew back on a C-130.

I noticed something about both flights. At no point did the pilot ask for my help or advice about how to fly the aircraft. Why not? Did the pilots know that even though I had flown many times, I wasn't a pilot and had no clue how to fly a helicopter or airplane? Did they know that I had no idea how to get where we were going? Do you think they had made this trip numerous times before and knew they didn't need my help?

The good news for all of us was that both pilots were fully qualified and capable and did, in fact, get us safely to our destination, without any help, advice, guidance, or assistance from me.

While it may seem silly, foolish, even crazy for someone who has never flown before to try to fly a helicopter or airplane all by themselves, we do it all the time in life.

Rather than trusting God to guide us and carry us through life, we take control of our lives and take the lives of our loved ones into our own hands."

Even though God wrote "the Book" (Bible) on how to live, be happy, have a good marriage, raise a family, have a meaningful life, and even more importantly, how to make it to Heaven, somehow we think we can do better than the God who created and runs the universe. Even though God is omniscient and omnipotent, we think we are smarter and know more about our lives than He does. Even though God is omnipresent, we are afraid of being alone, and even though God loves us enough to give His own Son for us, we don't trust Him to take care of us and provide for all our needs. It all really comes down to this; we just like to be in control and think that we know what we are doing. That really isn't the case. This is why so many lives and homes "crash and burn," and why so many lives are devastated and left in shambles.

Take it from a chaplain who has seen it and learned it over and over again (and is still learning it).

"The ONLY way for us to be truly happy, successful, and to make it safely to our heavenly home is to surrender control of our lives to God."

By the way, He isn't interested in being your "co-pilot" (sorry if you have the bumper sticker on your car back home). God knows what He is doing, loves you a billion times more than anyone else loves you, knows where He is going, and He is the only way for you to find true joy, peace, happiness, love, meaning, and eternal life. He is your pilot, and He doesn't need your help.

So, when it comes to your life and your eternal life, let God be the Lord of your life. To do otherwise would be silly, foolish, or even crazy. If you trust God, I promise your trip will go far more smoothly, and you are guaranteed to make it safely to your final destination (Heaven). □



MISSION: NORTH AMERICA

*"I have set thee
to be a light of the
Gentiles ... for
salvation unto the
ends of the earth."
Acts 13:47b*

F W B H M

Same Mission...New Name

By David Crowe

THE MISSION OF THE HOME MISSIONS DEPARTMENT has always been to plant Free Will Baptist churches across North America. Of all the things we do, this is the top priority! Many programs have been established over the years to help accomplish this enormous task. The *Church Extension Loan Fund* was established so Free Will Baptist people could invest their money at a good rate of interest (as high as 5.5% presently). That money then could be loaned to Home Mission churches and established Free Will Baptist churches to buy property and build buildings. *C.E.L.F.* is one of the strongest aspects of Home Missions today.

Over the years, Home Missions has sponsored *Roll Call Sunday*, to encourage evangelism and growth in our local churches. Materials for evangelism and church planting have been developed for this area of ministry. The Home Missions Department also has worked with the Master's Men Department to sponsor *Operation Saturation*, and many have gone out to help in the mission churches. We remain the endorsing agency for Free Will Baptist military chaplains in all branches of service.

Hundreds of churches have been planted and taken to self-supporting status. Richard Atwood is presently training missionary couples in *Boot Camps* at our offices and around the country. Larry Powell is following in the footsteps of some of the greatest men I know, as general director of Home Missions. His leadership and vision have led the department to record numbers of missionaries being approved and placed on the field. He has led Home Missions to record lows in missionary deficits and record highs in giving to Home Missions. God has blessed the ministry of Home Missions over the years and is continuing to do so.

For many years now we have sponsored the *Benjamin Randall Offering* each year on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. Home Missions participates in The Together Way Plan

sponsored by the National Association of Free Will Baptists through this offering. This year we are changing the name of our yearly offering. You will hear us talk and preach about *Mission: North America*. This is the new name of the offering and will be the focus of everything we do at Home Missions. Our official name will remain Free Will Baptist Home Missions, but our focus will be on the mission given to our department when it was established by the denomination over 50 years ago. That mission is to plant Free Will Baptist churches across North America (including all 50 states, Canada, Mexico and the U.S. territories).

By giving to the *Mission: North America Offering* in November, you can help the entire program of Home Missions. We will continue to emphasize our heritage and history, including not only Benjamin Randall and the Northern Free Will Baptists but Paul Palmer and the Southern Free Will Baptists, the Free Communion Baptists of New York, the Six-Principle Baptists of New England, and the General Free Will Baptists of Europe. □

Please join us as we sharpen
our focus
and fulfill our mission.

ABOUT THE WRITER: David Crowe is the director of development for the Home Missions Department. Read more about the vision and work of Home Missions at www.homemissions.net.



Your Dollars at Work

By Larry A. Powell

DID YOU EVER WONDER how the money you send to Home Missions is spent? I am sure the thought has crossed your mind at some point. Let me explain how we are spending your money.

Missionary Accounts

Most of the funds we receive from you and your church go directly into missionary accounts. Because you have been so faithful to support North American church planting efforts, your missionaries have little or no deficit accounts at this time. Thank you from my heart for your continued support for all of our Home Missions church planters. On behalf of all Home Missions church planters, we thank you!

Missionary Support

Thank you for trusting Home Missions to spend your money carefully. When you send your financial gift to us, we use it for missionary training and support. What is missionary support? Each year, our office team sends out thousands of missionary newsletters, missionary prayer cards, directories and maps, and maintains a website.

Additional information and supplemental evangelistic materials are printed and made available to the public at no charge each year. News from the field about soul winning and mission church activities is also published in *ONE Magazine*.

These funds also help church planters with “start up” costs such as television/radio advertising, printing, and renting facilities.

Missionary support dollars fund regional training, annual sessions, and missionary “boot camps” filled with intensive training and a comprehensive plan to help missionaries connect with the 500 hundred ethnic groups and 638 language groups now in American communities. Church planters receive special training to reach out to the 40 million Hispanics in America, 13 million Asians in towns and cities, and a host of various other nationalities. Your money helps cross-cultural church planters secure proper papers that enable them to work in our country.

You support seminaries in Mexico and share Jesus with Native Americans at White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. God has sent the world to our doorstep, and you are partnering with Home Missions to reach them with the message that Jesus saves. Many of you support the Build My Church Endowment that helps provide funds to help church planters buy land and build facilities.

Administrative Support

Free Will Baptists also send money designated for administrative operations. We end each year with no deficits in our administrative office. Recently, we downsized our administrative staff. We now have three directors and four assistants. Our team efficiently cares for the needs of 65 missionary teams, endorses the ministry of Free Will Baptist chaplains around the world, and directs cross-cultural efforts in North America.

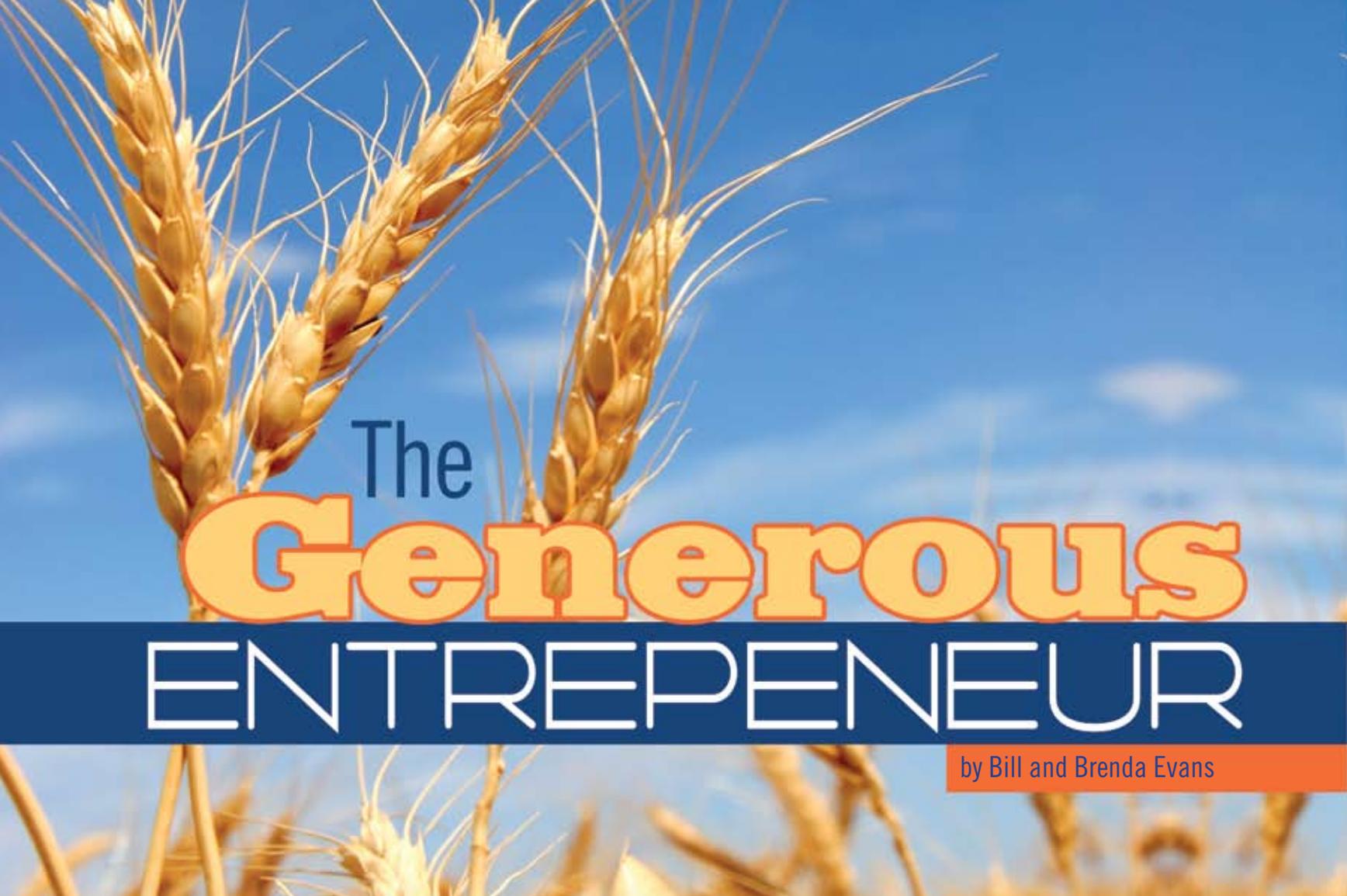
Administrative costs include salaries, health needs, and office equipment. The most mind-boggling of administrative costs fall in the areas of auto, travel, and postage. It is our constant aim to spend less of your money on administrative costs and more funds taking care of missionaries.

Finding the Money

Home Missions wants to be good stewards of the money you send. Home Missions North America is accountable to you, our supporters, and the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Most of all we must give account of our stewardship to God.

We must, along with stewardship, have a vision for reaching communities with the gospel of salvation. We must ever push to reach the masses. Let me stimulate your thinking about giving. Let me motivate you to invest in soul winning and discipleship efforts. When you send your money, I assure you we will spend it wisely. □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Larry A. Powell is the general director of the Free Will Baptist Home Missions Department.



The **Generous** ENTREPRENEUR

by Bill and Brenda Evans

IT IS HOT, HARD, AND MONOTONOUS. You sweat, itch, sting, and then you sweat some more. If you are paid just 20 cents an hour for shocking hay, the work seems even harder, especially if the man next to you is leaning on his pitchfork, smoking a hand-rolled cigarette, and getting paid three times as much.

At age 13, Howard Price and his cousin hired out to a neighbor but chafed all morning under the inequity of the labor and the fierce Virginia sun. At home for lunch, Howard complained to his father, "It's not right."

"I'll tell you what's right," his father said. "You agreed to shock hay for 20 cents an hour, and so you go back and finish the day like you promised. And work as hard this afternoon as you did this morning. That's what's right!"

Entrepreneur Howard Price has learned many lessons in his 71 years, but his father's instruction about being a man of your word started it all. By 1970, when Howard opened his first business, he had also learned from his father the importance of taking responsibility for your mistakes.

Although he was the youngest son of 12 children, Howard was never babied on the family's dairy farm. When he

chased his nephew with the tractor, ran into a ditch, broke the steering, and flipped the tractor, his father made him sell his prized 4-H hog to pay for repairs.

In addition to those childhood lessons, Howard gained wisdom from adult mentors and business partners. While finishing college at FWBCC in the 1960's, he developed management skills at a rental store in Nashville. Through that learn-as-you-go training, Howard became adept in electronics, welding, carpentry, small engine repair, more management skills, and being able to spot a good deal. So in 1970, he and a successful Georgia businessman began a tool rental business. "When you don't have a lot to give people, you beat your competition with service," Howard says, "and that's what I did."

In addition to learning that lesson during his first partnership, Howard committed all his resources, including both time and money, back into the business to make it grow. Three years later he bought out his partner.

Over the years, Howard has started and managed more than half a dozen businesses, from building and construction to auto parts and janitorial services, rentals for lawns,

gardens, contractors, weddings, and parties. Among the principles he has learned is the concept of forming partnerships cautiously.

“One of my partners claimed to be a Christian, but didn’t live like one. He also was lazy. I’ve never considered myself just a businessman: I’m a steward. Everything I have belongs to the Lord, and I work for Him. So I dissolved that partnership.”

Among Howard’s philosophy of business and life in general is the view that “you don’t complain or talk about others. If you look hard enough, you find some good. And just as important is doing the job right the first time.”

“I find it difficult to be hard-nosed,” Howard confesses. “I’ve tried to teach and train my employees to tend to the little things, give good service, and keep records. Doing the small things may take only 20-30 seconds, but they make a big difference. Not all people learn that.”

Perhaps Howard’s most important lessons have come from business experience itself. When planning the three-section building that now houses two rental businesses, Howard decided to do it like he always had—himself.

“Before I designed and drew the plans for Arrow and Occasions, the only thing I’d ever built was a doghouse, but I thought I could do it. And I did, but I cost myself a lot of extra money because of it,” Howard says with a grin and a shrug.

Still, Howard holds that entrepreneurs have to believe they can do what needs to be done. “Sometimes you’re naïve and fly by the seat of your pants, but you have to have the will to find a way to do whatever you need to do.” Howard believes that sweat equity is a large part of what has made his ventures thrive:

In fact, Howard’s wife Miriam says that even in retirement, Howard still

loves to work. “His mind is always going. He just got back from Virginia where he’s renovating a house that somebody else might say needed to be bulldozed down. But he’s made it really nice. Plus he’s doing it as a favor to help someone else.”

For several years now, Howard has not been involved in the day-to-

“The difference in me and my competitors has sometimes been that I’ve given a hard day’s work every day.”

day operation of his rental business. Instead, he buys, renovates, and turns houses into income properties. He has recently completed number 16. He says these properties have been among his best business ventures. One he had moved



to a new location. After a complete overhaul, the house was appraised for more than twice his total investment, plus it brings in monthly income.

How does Howard know a good deal when he sees it? “Use common sense. Know whether the price is right. Check the neighborhood, the house next door. Ask yourself if you can do the work and if you are willing to. Do you have the money?”

Another lesson Howard has learned is how to deal with debt. “It’s not a sin to borrow money, but I don’t like personal debt. In business, I’ve had bad years and good years, but I’ve never been insolvent. I’ve always known that you can’t borrow your way out. Right now I have 16 rental properties,

and all except two are paid for, and they soon will be.”

Howard also says from his years in business that you better live on what you make. “I’ve never taken equity out of my businesses to live a certain lifestyle. It’s done all the time, but I never have and never will do that.”

Above all, Howard focuses on stewardship rather than ownership. Miriam says of her husband, “He has a big heart. If renters don’t pay, he lets them stay and tries to help them work it out.” Howard sees that as part of his role as a steward over what God has given into his supervision.

Businessmen also have to plan for the future, Howard says. His role as steward has guided how his property and resources will be handled in his latter years and even after his death. In addition to the business and rental properties, Howard has invested in stock and mutual funds and has arranged a Unitrust at the Free Will Baptist Foundation.

“The Unitrust does what I want to do: gives us income now and goes to charity in the end. I’ve made arrangements for my children, but I’m not going to give everything to them.”

A long-time friend says of Howard, “When he sees a deal, he goes after it. And he knows the Foundation’s Unitrust is a good deal.”

Howard Price will finish life as he began. He will be big-hearted, a man of his word, and a steward of the Lord’s gifts to him. Miriam says with a smile: “If Howard dies before me, I’ll lay his hammer and saw beside him because he will never quit.” And perhaps that is the final lesson from this generous entrepreneur. □

About the Writers: Bill Evans, former director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation, lives in Catlettsburg, KY, with his wife Brenda, a retired English teacher. They are proud grandparents of six. To learn more about unitrusts and other planned-giving options offered by the Free Will Baptist Foundation, visit www.FWBgifts.org.

Are You a **Binger?**

By John Brummitt

ALMOST EVERY AMERICAN is familiar with the term binge. Defined as an act of excessive or compulsive consumption, a binge is a spree—unrestrained and often excessive. Usually associated with eating, drinking, and shopping, most everyone agrees that bingeing is not a good idea. Unrestrained lifestyles end up damaging both bodies and bank accounts.

However, many members of the “boomer” generation are guilty of bingeing in another, less familiar area—binge “saving.” Sadly, few think this type of bingeing is a problem.

“Did you know the average baby-boomer (born between the years of 1946 and 1964) has only \$50,000 upon reaching retirement age?”

Many soon-to-be retirees face the frightening prospect of not being prepared for their quickly approaching golden years.

As a result, they start loading up their retirement funds with all the money they can spare, preparing for the future. This type of binge is not necessarily a bad thing. After all, when you are ill prepared for retirement, every penny counts! But bingeing for retirement is not the best way.

Boomers now realize they will need more money than past generations as a result of better health care, longer life expectancy, and self-indulgent behavior.

Statisticians tell us that boomers, as a group, have done little in the way of planning for the future. The earliest boomers, who will reach retirement in 2008, are largely unprepared.

How can you keep from being a retirement binger? Start saving for retirement as soon as you start working. Financial planners often refer to a strategy called “early in, early out.” This simply means you invest early and then benefit early.

Not everyone wants to retire early, but wouldn't it be nice to have that option? Saving in moderation is the main objective when preparing for retirement. It is not wise to continue putting off your saving for retirement until you are forced to make great sacrifices towards the end of your career in order to survive your later years.

Social Security was never designed to take the place of retirement savings. Social Security should be viewed as “bonus” income to be used for visiting the grandkids. Yet many “binge savers” find themselves leaning heavily on Social Security.

If you need help to stop binge saving, get help. Create a plan of action.

“Determine how much you need to save to enjoy a reasonable income in retirement, and then stick to the plan you make.”

Too often we give in to the instant gratification promoted by our culture. If you have fallen prey to this mindset, there is no time to waste. Start today—no matter how much time you have left in your working career! Tell your spouse, children, and friends what you are doing, and get started! Granted, a “saving binge” will not hurt you, but it is certainly not the easiest and best way to do things.

The Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement is here to help keep participants from falling into the “binge saver” pattern. Let us help you develop a plan that will provide long-term financial security. The department was created to serve you as you serve the denomination, but the lifestyle you choose—to binge or not to binge—is up to you! □



Quick Facts About Today's Retirees:

- Since 1990, retirees have come to rely on Social Security as 38.6% of their retirement income.
- **In that same time, retirees have returned to the work force, depending on earned wages for more than 26% of their income.**
- In 2004, retirement funds and pensions represent only 19.7% of retirement income.
- **In 2004, 11.3% of American seniors in their 80s lived at or below the poverty level.**
- Today, Social Security provides at least half of total income for a majority of seniors. In 2004, Social Security was the major source of income (providing at least 50% of total income) for 54% of aged beneficiary couples and 74% of aged non-married beneficiaries.

Statistics from the *Income of the Aged Chartbook, 2004*, Social Security Administration, 2004. Visit www.ssa.gov/policy.

About the Writer: John Brummitt is the business manager for the Board of Retirement and Insurance. To learn more about retirement options, contact John at (877) 767-7738.



Planning for a Fruitful Retirement

No doubt you've given most of your thought and attention to the "big" questions of retirement like, "Will I have enough money? Should we downsize or continue living in our present home? Is our budget adequate to fit our income?" Being fruitful in retirement may well be at the bottom of your planning list! While there is no magic formula to guarantee a fruitful retirement, you can take some simple steps toward that goal.

TAKE A SPIRITUAL INVENTORY. As a believer committed to a Christ-honoring lifestyle, are you enjoying your time in God's word, in worship, and with God's family as never before? Are you engaged in ministries that give you joy, bless others, and express your skills, passions and spiritual gifts? The secret is to commit time for spiritual disciplines—make them your first priority. Most retirees stay so busy they wonder how they ever found time to work! Retirement offers fresh opportunities to experience the abundant life Jesus promised. If you couldn't answer these questions with a resounding "yes," ask God to show you how to live in light of "I am come that they might have life and that they might have it more abundantly."

TAKE A RELATIONSHIPS INVENTORY. The Ten Commandments give us real insight into the importance of relationships, and they illustrate how important it is to be positively related to others. Living peaceably and in respectful harmony with others produces both physical and mental wellbeing, reflecting a witness that backs up verbal testimonies. Don't waste energy harboring grudges, past disappointments, or unkind words that may have wounded you. Instead, begin each day with an awareness of God's incredible power to heal, restore, and forgive and then live out those same characteristics so that you become more and more like Him! Your work won't take care of you when you are sick, but your friends will. Stay in touch.

Retirement offers
fresh opportunities
to experience the
abundant life
Jesus promised.

By Norma Jackson Goldman

TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR PHYSICAL CONDITION. It's a real temptation to become a couch potato in retirement. Some of God's choicest servants did their best work well into their 80s and beyond! Choose some form of physical activity—walking with your spouse or a friend, exercising at the YMCA, or playing any sport that will keep you flexible and mobile. Adjust your eating to adapt to your slowing metabolism and lifestyle. "Eat breakfast like a king, lunch like a prince and dinner like a college kid with a maxed out charge card." Choose someone to be an accountability partner (not someone who will be too easy on you) and make a commitment to regularly evaluate exercise and eating habits. My accountability buddy is on vacation, but she called today to learn if I made it to the gym.

TAKE INVENTORY OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS. Get clutter out of your home, your car, your desk. Don't be a pack rat! Keep only what you need and what you are using. Someone else can benefit from your excess. Resolve to sell or give away seldom used clothing, furniture or household goods, working on one room at a time until you've completed the job. As I write, I am convicted that my own garage is an eyesore! Psychologists tell us that clutter in our surroundings creeps into our minds, distracting us from personal peace and productivity.

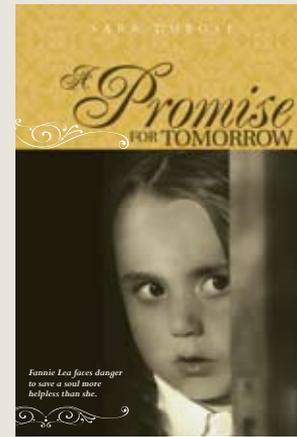
TAKE AN INVENTORY OF YOUR MENTAL ATTITUDE. How would your spouse or close friends describe your outlook on life? Exhibit an attitude of gratitude, one that refuses to dwell on past mistakes, looks forward to the future, and proclaims to the world that you've chosen to be happy and productive.

These areas—mind, body, spirit, relationships—are where we live. They are reliable indicators of what's really going on inside. Think of these steps as "pruning the vine" to allow a greater harvest for the Kingdom of God. □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Former magazine editor Norma J. Goldman enjoys a freelance writing career in her retirement. She lives in Nashville, TN.

In Review

FEATURES



A Promise for Tomorrow

by Sara DuBose

ISBN 9780892655632 Price \$12.99

This heartwarming novel is a nostalgic trip to Alabama in the 1950s. The engaging story recounts the experiences of the preacher's young daughter, Flea, who has a taste for adventure. As she meets new friends, she also discovers how little she knew about old acquaintances. When she and her brother trespass on Boyd's property, she finds herself with a knife to her throat facing threats from a stranger. The suspense continues as Flea follows the example of her father to minister in her own way to new friends as well as familiar folks.

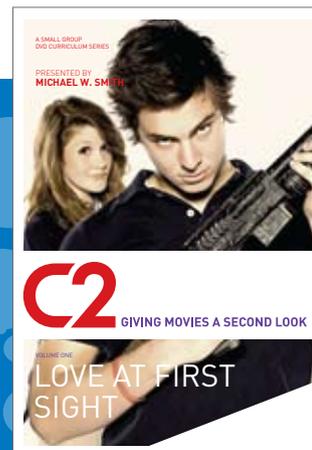
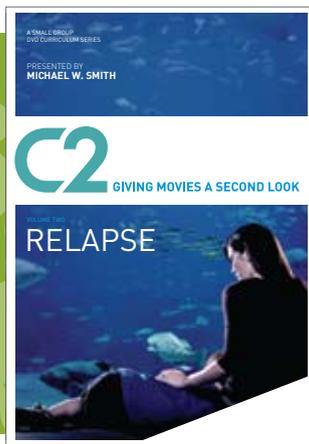
Seeking to solve the mystery behind Boyd's locked upstairs room, Flea eventually places herself in even more danger to save a soul more helpless than she. The door of discouragement and defeat is opened with the key of a promise for a better tomorrow.

The heartwarming story shows how Flea learns about genuine faith and what it means to have hope. Be sure to put this novel on your summer reading list. You may well recognize some of the characters who may resemble folks in your own town.

Order *Promise for Tomorrow* at (800) 877-7030 or www.randallhouse.com.

on the brink

NEW RELEASES FROM RANDALL HOUSE PUBLICATIONS



THE BRINK — NEW YOUNG ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL AND SMALL GROUP CURRICULUM

How many students have dropped out of your church after graduating from high school? Too many to count! That is why Randall House has developed *The Brink*, a young adult curriculum for 18-30 year olds.

The Brink is comprised of a devotional magazine, teacher's guide, and an off-campus discussion program. By using all these tools, *The Brink* gives your students what they need to stay connected not only on Sunday, but every day of the week.

The pilot materials for *The Brink* are an abbreviated version that will be available for use in the month of September. You can get your FREE copy* by calling Randall House at (800) 877-7030. All we ask from you is honest feedback on the products.

Provide young adults with new ways to connect with God and each other. Give us a call, and we will ship your free four-week pilot today!

*Minimum shipping charges do apply.

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It's no secret that movies today are extremely influential. Everyone watches movies, whether in the living room at home, the theater, on their iPods, or online. According to the Barna Group, "nearly one-third of adults (29%) contend that movies have had a substantial impact on the development of their personal morals, values, and religious beliefs." Yet many Christians do not stop to evaluate how the movies they watch line up with the Bible.

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SIMPLE: LA VIDA CRISTIANA NO TIENE QUE SER COMPLICADA

Robert J. Morgan

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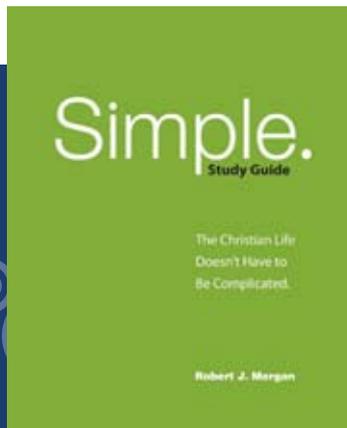
By Robert J. Morgan

ISBN: 9780892655588

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Simple Study Guide is a companion piece to be used in a group setting or on an individual basis. The reader will explore the truths presented in *Simple* and gain a deeper understanding of basic Christian teachings. The ultimate goal of each lesson is to encourage the reader to apply the truths of God's Word to the events of everyday life.

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LAUGHING IN THE MIDST OF MOTHERING

Linda Ann Crosby

ISBN: 9780892655571

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Motherhood is a demanding job that can easily become drudgery if a mom's focus is not on the ultimate goal of raising a godly family. There is always another mess to clean, crisis to resolve, and mound of laundry to wash. Laughing in the midst of such daily challenges is a skill every mother needs to learn. *Laughing in the Midst of Mothering* contains 52 devotional pieces that equip mothers to place their focus on God with an extra infusion in their funny bone.

Mothers will benefit from taking a moment from the daily routine to have personal time and read a short, relevant devotional.

Laughing in the Midst of Mothering provides moms with:

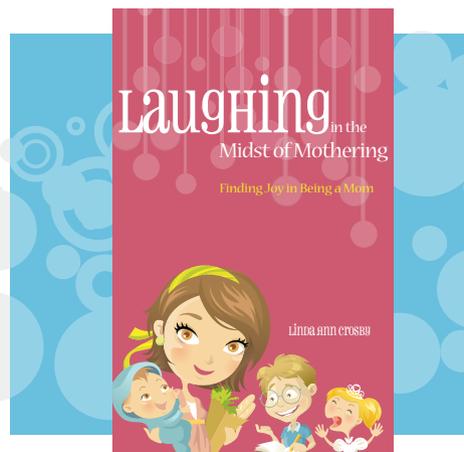
- A wide range of practical tips with biblical applications.
- Understanding that her attitude is crucial to the happiness of the home.
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Buy this book today for yourself or the moms at your church!

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FIRST AID FOR EMOTIONAL HURTS

Edward E. Moody Jr., Ph.D

ISBN: 9780892655649

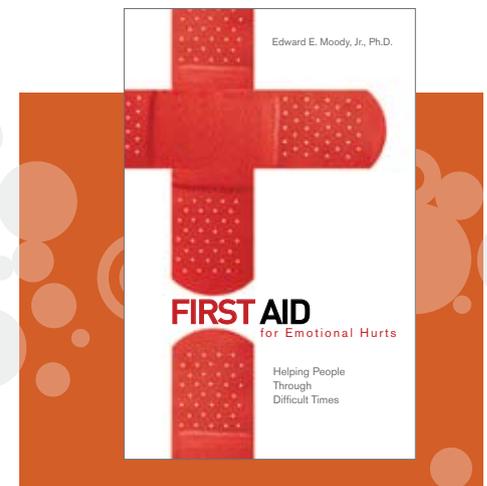
\$12.99 or \$10.99 for 10 or more

"I don't know what to say." You have heard that statement many times from well-meaning people when a friend or family member is going through difficult times. *First Aid for Emotional Hurts* will help pastors and laypeople understand how to help the hurting through significant issues of life. This book provides a biblical model of helping others as well as an overview of situations one may face when dealing with emotional and mental illnesses.

Dr. Moody explains basic medical terminology and medication often necessary in treatment. He also gives appropriate resources for problems requiring professional help and contact information for many sources providing such help.

The author speaks with a qualified voice to the spiritual and physical needs in various situations faced in today's society.

- A Call to Action for First Responders.
- Equips laypeople with resources to help the hurting.
- Perfect reference tool for all ministers.
- Packed with follow-up resources including website addresses.





The ^{New} COLD WAR

By Ken Akers

When I was a child growing up in the hills of eastern Kentucky, we didn't worry about much. True, money was scarce, but we didn't worry about what we didn't have. The one threat looming large on people's minds was Russia.

In those days, the military stalemate between the Soviet Republic and the United States had become known as the Cold War. Both had developed a powerful, nuclear arsenal. The public assumed that special agents from both nations sat beside a glowing button 24 hours a day, just waiting for the order to launch the globe into nuclear war.

In time, the threat grew less and less. Finally, on a memorable day in 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved, and Soviet president, Mikhail Gorbachev, uttered these memorable words, "The end of the Cold War is our common victory." The Iron Curtain lifted, and the Cold War came to an end.

"Today, however, Russia finds herself in another Cold War—the coldness of her people to the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

My first visit to Russia came in 1995 when I traveled to Moscow on a mission trip. On that trip, I learned that the Russians were really no different than Americans. Though we speak different languages, we both share ideas and dreams, and we all need a Savior. During the first trip, I was deeply touched by the sadness of the people. Their freedom was very new, and many Russians were unsure of how to handle it.

Although many flocked to the church when restrictions were lifted, many more stood resolute against anything of a religious nature. While many people were saved through street preaching and other forms of evangelism, the overall reception to the Gospel was cold.

In April 2008, I was privileged to return to Russia. This time, the trip was organized by the Master's Men Department. We worked at the youth camp in Tikhoretsk. Five men from five states, with five unique backgrounds, came together to reach people through hard work. A pastor from Georgia, a retired state worker from Illinois, a former postal worker from Arkansas, a preacher-promotional director from Alabama, and a hillbilly from Kentucky worked, preached, sang, and shared their testimonies for the cause of Christ.



I was surprised to see the significant changes since my visit to Russia 13 years earlier. Commerce has exploded. Malls and shopping centers, fast food restaurants, and other small businesses have popped up everywhere. Life seems much easier for the average person. Yet one thing has not changed—the cold reception to the Gospel.

While not everyone is against Christianity, and Russian Christians are seeing fruit for their labors, they face many battles. Russian Baptists are regarded as a cult. They face persecution from the government and even other religious groups like the Russian Orthodox Church.

During our visit, we encountered several obstacles. But nothing we experienced in our 12-day visit compares to the lifelong battles Russian Christians fight because of their faith.

Please pray for Mikhail Penchuk, Stanaslov, Nikolaj Sobolev, and Constantin Rubinskiy as they labor tirelessly for souls in Russia. Pray for women like Anna Rubinsky and her sister Valentin as they direct youth camps—three camps lasting 11 days each, which are attended by mostly unsaved young people.

For the moment, at least, Americans don't have to worry about the threat of Russia's nuclear weapons. Today, both Russians and Americans face the challenge of reaching cold hearts of men, women, and children who refuse to be warmed by the Gospel. □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Ken Akers is the general director of the Master's Men Department. To learn more about the ministry of Master's Men, visit the website at www.fwbmastersmen.org.



Meet the CLEAR Teacher of the Year Tim Hall



The nominations are in, and the *2008 CLEAR Teacher of the Year* has been announced. This year's honor goes to Tim Hall from the First FWB Church in Lexington, Kentucky.

Tim teaches an adult Sunday School class at his church, and he is considered a very gifted teacher and communicator. Assistant Pastor Chris Sturgill described Hall as "a faithful student of the Bible" who "desires to discover and apply God's Word personally." He seeks opportunities to improve his teaching skills, as demonstrated by his consistent attendance to every Kentucky Team Church event.

Hall's passion for Sunday School and for the cause of Christ is not overlooked by his students either. He genuinely cares for his students and sees it as his duty to help them grow spiritually. He does this through careful instruction and by setting a Christian example they can follow.

As *CLEAR Teacher of the Year*, Hall receives a three-day, two-night stay at the 2008 national convention. This prize includes food, lodging, and a transportation allotment. He has also won a \$200 decorating allowance for his classroom and a \$100 gift card to the Randall House online bookstore.

Randall House sponsors this annual award. To place a nomination for the *2009 CLEAR Teacher of the Year*, visit www.CLEARcurriculum.com/teacher. You can also write or call Randall House, 114 Bush Road, Nashville, TN 37217, (800) 877-7030, to request an entry form. The deadline for nominations is April 30, 2009.

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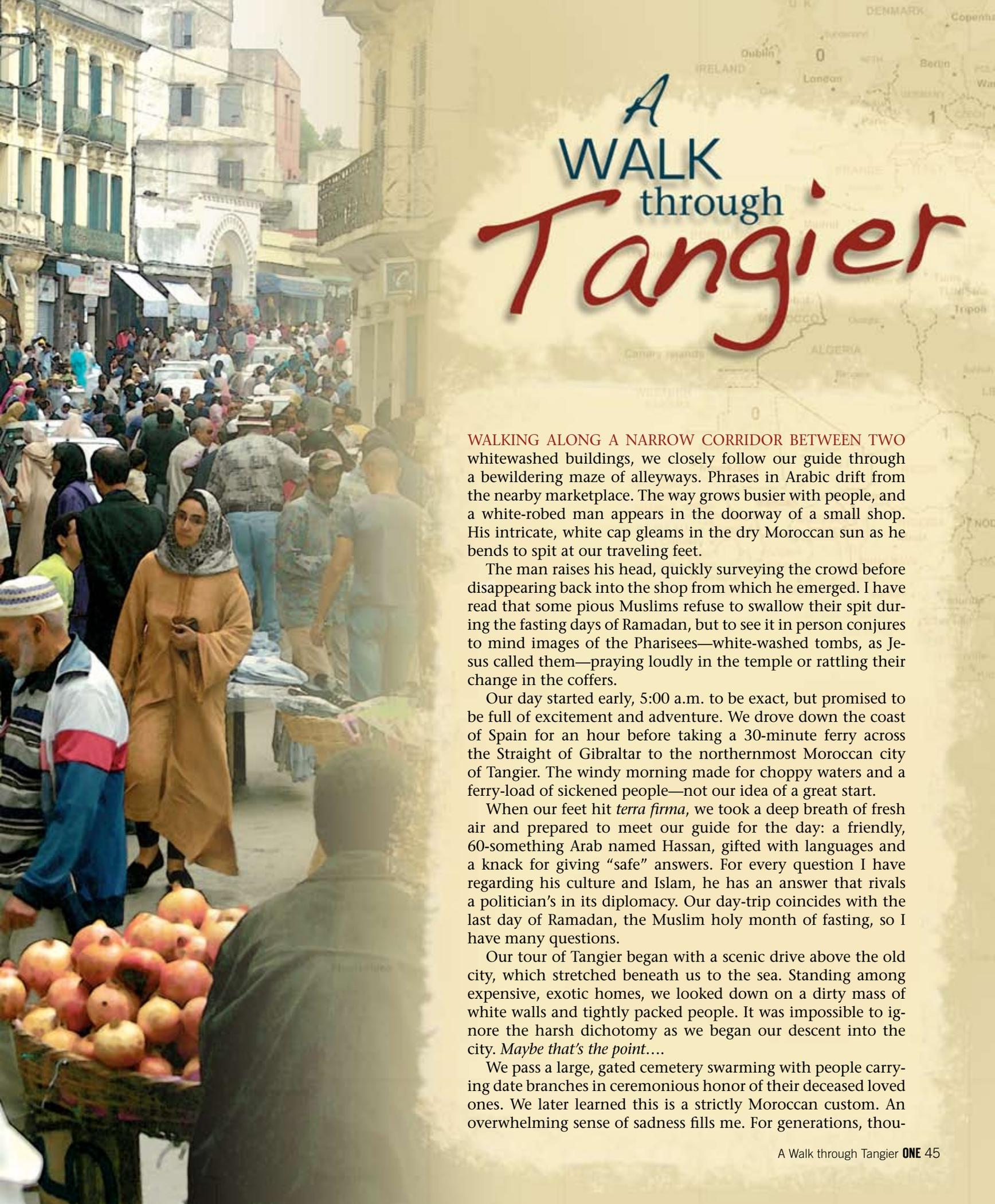
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Please contact Ian Hawkins at ihawkins@FWBBC.edu for important details related to these programs of studies.

The image features a vibrant, busy street scene in Tangier, Morocco, on the left side. The street is filled with people, including a woman in a brown dress and headscarf, and a man in a white and blue jacket. In the foreground, there is a large basket of pomegranates. The background shows a map of the region, highlighting Morocco and its neighbors like Algeria and Tunisia. The title 'A WALK through Tangier' is prominently displayed in the upper right, with 'A' in blue, 'WALK' in blue, 'through' in blue, and 'Tangier' in a large, red, cursive font.

A WALK through Tangier

WALKING ALONG A NARROW CORRIDOR BETWEEN TWO whitewashed buildings, we closely follow our guide through a bewildering maze of alleyways. Phrases in Arabic drift from the nearby marketplace. The way grows busier with people, and a white-robed man appears in the doorway of a small shop. His intricate, white cap gleams in the dry Moroccan sun as he bends to spit at our traveling feet.

The man raises his head, quickly surveying the crowd before disappearing back into the shop from which he emerged. I have read that some pious Muslims refuse to swallow their spit during the fasting days of Ramadan, but to see it in person conjures to mind images of the Pharisees—white-washed tombs, as Jesus called them—praying loudly in the temple or rattling their change in the coffers.

Our day started early, 5:00 a.m. to be exact, but promised to be full of excitement and adventure. We drove down the coast of Spain for an hour before taking a 30-minute ferry across the Strait of Gibraltar to the northernmost Moroccan city of Tangier. The windy morning made for choppy waters and a ferry-load of sickened people—not our idea of a great start.

When our feet hit *terra firma*, we took a deep breath of fresh air and prepared to meet our guide for the day: a friendly, 60-something Arab named Hassan, gifted with languages and a knack for giving “safe” answers. For every question I have regarding his culture and Islam, he has an answer that rivals a politician’s in its diplomacy. Our day-trip coincides with the last day of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting, so I have many questions.

Our tour of Tangier began with a scenic drive above the old city, which stretched beneath us to the sea. Standing among expensive, exotic homes, we looked down on a dirty mass of white walls and tightly packed people. It was impossible to ignore the harsh dichotomy as we began our descent into the city. *Maybe that’s the point....*

We pass a large, gated cemetery swarming with people carrying date branches in ceremonious honor of their deceased loved ones. We later learned this is a strictly Moroccan custom. An overwhelming sense of sadness fills me. For generations, thou-



sands of people (including those buried here now) have visited this place in religious devotion with not the slightest chance of hearing of the assured hope of life in Jesus Christ. The vicious cycle of death without life and life without hope is starkly clear to me in this moment. My heart is deeply stirred for the multitude before me.

Our drive ends in the heart of the weathered city and we set off on foot through a dizzying labyrinth of streets, alleys, and courtyards. Our group stops briefly at a tiny bakery to taste the tempting date cookies the old baker pulls from his oven (a large opening in the side of a pit below street level). The odor is pleasant, but the taste is slightly disappointing—nothing here is as sweet as it looks.

Standing at the back of the group as various members descend into the bakery, I observe a couple of women washing their laundry at a small well in a nearby courtyard. Their hands are covered in orange dye—henna. Intricate tattoos on the hands of women are considered beautiful. Young girls and teenagers pass the time dying each other's hands with ornate designs, but after many years of working with henna, the hands of the women before me are a solid hue. As they twist and wring the pile of clothing, I become immensely grateful for the washer and dryer that await us back home. Home. It seems so far away at the moment.

We move on quickly, stepping aside for the occasional moped as we work our way through passages and around corners. Apparently we have an appointment to make: an obligatory time-share presentation of sorts. "These rugs are exquisite, and cheap, very cheap... You want a magic carpet? We have those, too." "These herbs will cure most anything. Do you snore? Have sinus trouble? Here is the solution to your problems. Take a whiff of this..."

I am amused at some of my companions who really buy into this stuff, even though it's painfully obvious our "hosts" are just trying to take advantage of the "rich" tourists. *If they only knew....*

This is not where I want to spend my precious time on Moroccan soil, so I am quite relieved to finally exit the small shop.

Foot traffic has picked up, and in the busy street the scent of food fills my nostrils. I suddenly realize how hungry I am. I've hardly noticed the pangs in the midst of so many new sights and sounds, but as we draw near a restaurant my salivary glands kick into overdrive. Grateful to be entering the aromatic building, we find our places in the vacant room. My stomach growls. At the same time, it dawns on me that our guide won't partake with us today. He must be starving. I, of course, cannot withhold my curiosity, so I ask him how he feels about our eating lunch when he cannot because of the fast. "Religion is free," he says. Safe answer.

**IN A MUSLIM
COUNTRY, ONE IS
BORN INTO HIS
FAITH, AND IT IS
AGAINST THE LAW
TO CONVERT.**

I probe a little further, making sure he is aware that I am familiar with the strict tenets of Islam.

"No, it is not offensive. We choose our faith, just as you choose yours."

I admire his diplomacy, but I know better. In a Muslim country, one is born into his faith, and it is against the law to convert. What about that makes religion free? Of course there *are* liberal Muslims who argue that theirs is a religion of peace, acceptance, and choice, but I am keenly aware that I am not among such believers. Not in North Africa. No, Islamic law governs the day here, which makes the fact that our trip coincides with the last day of Ramadan so interesting.

After feasting on chicken, kebabs, couscous, pastries, and mint tea, we embark both satisfied and curious to

10 WAYS TO WITNESS TO MUSLIMS

1. Pray for them, for barriers to be broken down, and for hearts to be open to Truth.
2. Live a godly life.
3. Show them love, kindness, and hospitality.
4. If you are praying for them, tell them.
5. Give your testimony when the door opens.
6. Build up Christ, rather than tearing down Mohammad.
7. Give them a Bible; they will usually read it.
8. Study their religion.
9. Invite them to your home, gatherings, and church functions.
10. Don't underestimate God.



see what the afternoon holds. Reentering the marketplace, we are bombarded by street merchants peddling everything from jewelry to clothing to children's toys. I make the mistake of eyeing something one of the men near me is holding out. He catches me looking and begins to negotiate in his thick accent. "Thirty euros."

I tell him I'm not interested, although I haven't quite made up my mind yet. He sees my hesitation and persists. "For you, 25. Good price." I shake my head and begin to walk away. He follows and says, "Okay, Okay, 22 euros. Is steal." I avoid him, growing annoyed at his persistence. It's a principle thing now. I reply, "No, so leave me alone."

The man continues to follow us, intercepting our group at various stops along the way, and before we leave, his precious merchandise is worth a mere euro. I wonder how much we've overpaid for our other trifles.

As we weave our way back through the long white passages, we encounter snake handlers, women giving henna tattoos, and more street merchants. We walk past an ornate tile mosaic that graces an old ritual bath no longer in use. We smell, and then see, a small cart with today's fresh fish. On a door nearby, we notice a knocker with the now-familiar shape: the hand of Fatimah (Mohammad's daughter), believed to ward off the evil eye. We catch the last echoes of a call to prayer, pass a gleaming white mosque with its towering minaret, and glimpse a courtyard full of small children at play while

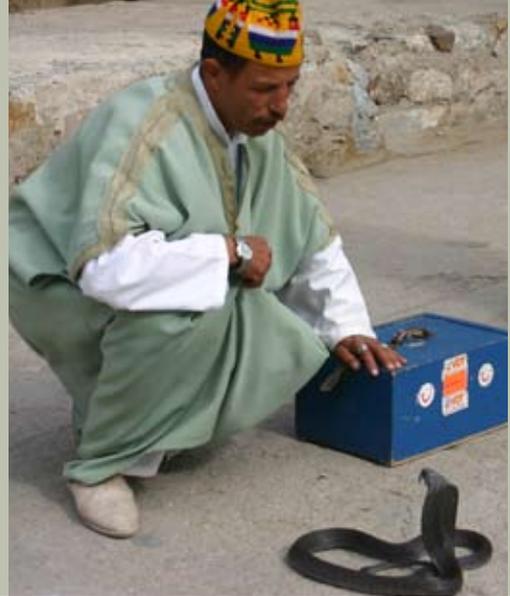
veiled mothers chat nearby. My senses are filled as I breathe and try to soak in every drop of this culture. Our adventure is coming to a close and I don't want to soon forget it.

As dusk settles over the city, we return to port. We're tired, hungry, and ready to get back to Spain. Expecting to leave in 30 minutes, we settle down to wait for the ferry with the other passengers. As time passes, and the crowd grows, we wonder if something has happened to our boat.

Suddenly, I realize the cause of our delay. After the sun goes down, the fast is over. Families, friends, and neighbors gather to eat. The month of Ramadan is a festive time in Morocco, with evening celebrations in the streets, and it appears the men who operate our ferry have decided to join in. I don't blame them. They haven't eaten all day. If they're like the pious man we saw, they haven't even swallowed their spit.

Rather than begrudging their negligent tardiness, I take a moment to pray that one day they'll hear the Truth. Two hours later, we finally depart for home and the familiar. It's well past midnight by the time we reach bed, but I still find it hard to sleep after my first taste of Morocco. Mine is a first impression with a lasting impact, and I pray it has changed me forever. □

Written by a woman following her visit to the North African country.



Why are Free Will Baptists reaching out to Muslims in Europe?

It is basically illegal to be a missionary in the Middle East and North Africa. In fact, it is even illegal to own a Bible in those places.

More than 1.5 million Muslims moved into Europe last year alone. They come from countries where Christians have much difficulty witnessing to them, and they immigrate to more prosperous countries, many with freedom of religion.

God has opened a door of opportunity to those willing to think creatively to reach this people group. He is working among Muslims.

If you would like to know more about this ministry, contact Free Will Baptist International Missions at (877) 767-7736 or visit www.fwbgo.com.



Europe Needs the Gospel

BULGARIA: population 7,262,675; 12% Muslim; 0% Protestant; 83% Bulgarian Orthodox

FRANCE: pop. 64,057,790; 5-10% Muslim; 2% Protestant; 83-88% Roman Catholic

GERMANY: pop. 82,369,548; 4% Muslim; 34% Protestant; 34% Roman Catholic

ITALY: pop. 58,145,321; 3% Muslim; 3% Protestant; 90% Roman Catholic

PORTUGAL: pop. 10,676,910; 0% Muslim; 0% Protestant; 85% Roman Catholic

SPAIN: pop. 40,491,051; 0% Muslim; 0% Protestant; 94% Roman Catholic

SWITZERLAND: pop. 7,581,520; 4% Muslim; 35% Protestant; 42% Roman Catholic

UK: pop. 60,943,912; 3% Muslim; 72% Anglican, Reformed, etc.

* Stats from CIA World Factbook

MISSIONS SNAPSHOTS



TOKYO, JAPAN—The Good News Chapel in Tokyo added five adults to the church membership roll on Sunday, May 25. These converts accepted Christ some time ago, but recently decided it was time to commit themselves to serving and supporting the outreach of the church.

CAMPINAS, BRAZIL—

Approximately 100 people attended a church retreat sponsored by the São José FWB Church in Campinas on May 21. Josete, pastor Elizeu's wife, from Araras spoke on the Christian family. The day ended with various activities, a barbeque, and great fellowship.

KARAKO, CÔTE D'IVOIRE—The Gouméré Community Health Evangelism (CHE) team evaluated 100 boys and 100 girls in Karako March 11-12. Several children were found to be malnourished, and most were diagnosed with malaria. On May 22, the Muslim chief invited Verlin Anderson to openly share the medical findings in the context of God's desire to change them by obedience to His Word.

SVISHTOV, BULGARIA—The Good News FWB Church in Svishtov held a men's retreat May 16-18. Seven men attended; four were not yet believers. Tim Awtrey led a seminar on "You, Your Wife, and Other Women," to help the men learn how to relate to women. As a follow-up to the retreat, a movie night was held Friday, May 30, for all the men in the community.

TOKYO, JAPAN—The Iriso Christ Church, Good News Chapel, and Kamifukuoka Christ Church in Tokyo participated in the third annual Friendship Festival, Sunday, April 27. This festival is a great opportunity for the three churches to come together for fellowship and outreach to the community. Several people from the neighborhood stopped by—some for the first time—to join in the fun.

CAMPINAS, BRAZIL—A new district association of Free Will Baptist churches was born, Saturday, April 17. The cities of Campinas and Araras are only 50 miles apart and have eight Free Will Baptists churches. The new association unites these churches in fellowship and cooperation. Plans are being made to start another church plant in Campinas through the support of these churches.



LEADERSHIP MATTERS COURSE

SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA—Jeff and Susan Turnbough taught a Leadership Matters Course May 4-18 in Costa Rica. For the first time, Jeff served as lead trainer and Susan led the relationships building track. The venue was smaller, permitting 21 leaders and nine trainers to attend. Participants represented six mission organizations with workers from Bangladesh, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Panama, Paraguay, Spain, St. Vincent, and Uruguay.

An added blessing of the course was the opportunity to network with leaders of other evangelical mission organizations working in Central and South America. In an unexpected move, participants invited the LMC team to return to South America and set the following training dates: Panama City, Panama, June 2009 and Quito, Ecuador, August 2009.





INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP MISSIONS COMMITTEE MEETS

Miami, Florida—During the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptists (IFOFWB) in October 2007, a committee was formed to discuss proposals on how Free Will Baptists outside North America can serve as missionaries. The committee met at the Ebenezer Free Will Baptist Church in Miami May 1-3.

Committee members include: José Manuel Parrón (Europe), Steve Lytle (North America), Elizeu Ardeli Cantelmo (South America), Nathan Snow (Asia), and Omar Alfaro (proxy for Ramón Sanchez, Central America).

The following mission statement was adopted: *This Missions Committee exists to serve Free Will Baptist entities across the world that are in fellowship with the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptists and who desire to carry the gospel to the uttermost parts of the earth.*

The committee set April 20-26, 2009, as a time for Free Will Baptists internationally to focus on prayer and fasting concerning this matter.

Various organizational models were discussed, and a decision was made for committee members to present their initial findings in 2010 at the next IFOFWB meeting and seek input from Free Will Baptists around the world.



MISSION OFFICE REORGANIZES



Mark McPeak



Jeff Turnbough

ANTIOCH, TN—Free Will Baptist International Missions recently announced a management reorganization. “As we move toward 2010 and the launch of a new funding system, the Mission needs to operate with more efficiency,” stated James Forlines, general director. “To achieve this end, we are significantly changing the reporting structure and

reallocating human and financial resources by appointing two deputy directors.”

In its April meeting, the Board of International Missions approved the naming of two deputy directors who will oversee the Mission’s operations. Mark McPeak has assumed the role of Deputy Director of Stateside Operations. Jeff Turnbough has been named Deputy Director for Field Operations.

Current Director of Field Operations Steve Lytle will leave his post at the Mission office on July 31. His wife Judy will continue in the office as recruitment coordinator until the end of the year.

Steve and Judy anticipate a move to the field in 2009. Utilizing Panama as a base of operations they will assist the Latin America missionary force through preaching, teaching, discipleship ministries, and leadership training. “Steve and Judy have proven to be faithful and productive servants in their 33-year career with IM,” said James Forlines. “I really expect their ministry to enhance the current work in Cuba, Brazil, Panama, and Uruguay.”

In addition to their work as missionaries, Steve will tackle a special assignment with the Missions Committee of the International Fellowship of Free Will Baptists.

Dr. Jeff Turnbough has served as a missionary in Spain for 27 years. In 2006, he assumed the role of Regional Director for Europe and Russia. “Jeff’s contribution to International Missions as a church planter, regional director, and leader of the team in Spain has been invaluable. He will provide us with solid experience and strong strategic leadership as we move into a promising future,” Forlines said. All field operations and personnel will report to Turnbough. Jeff and his wife Susan will continue to reside in the Madrid area of Spain.

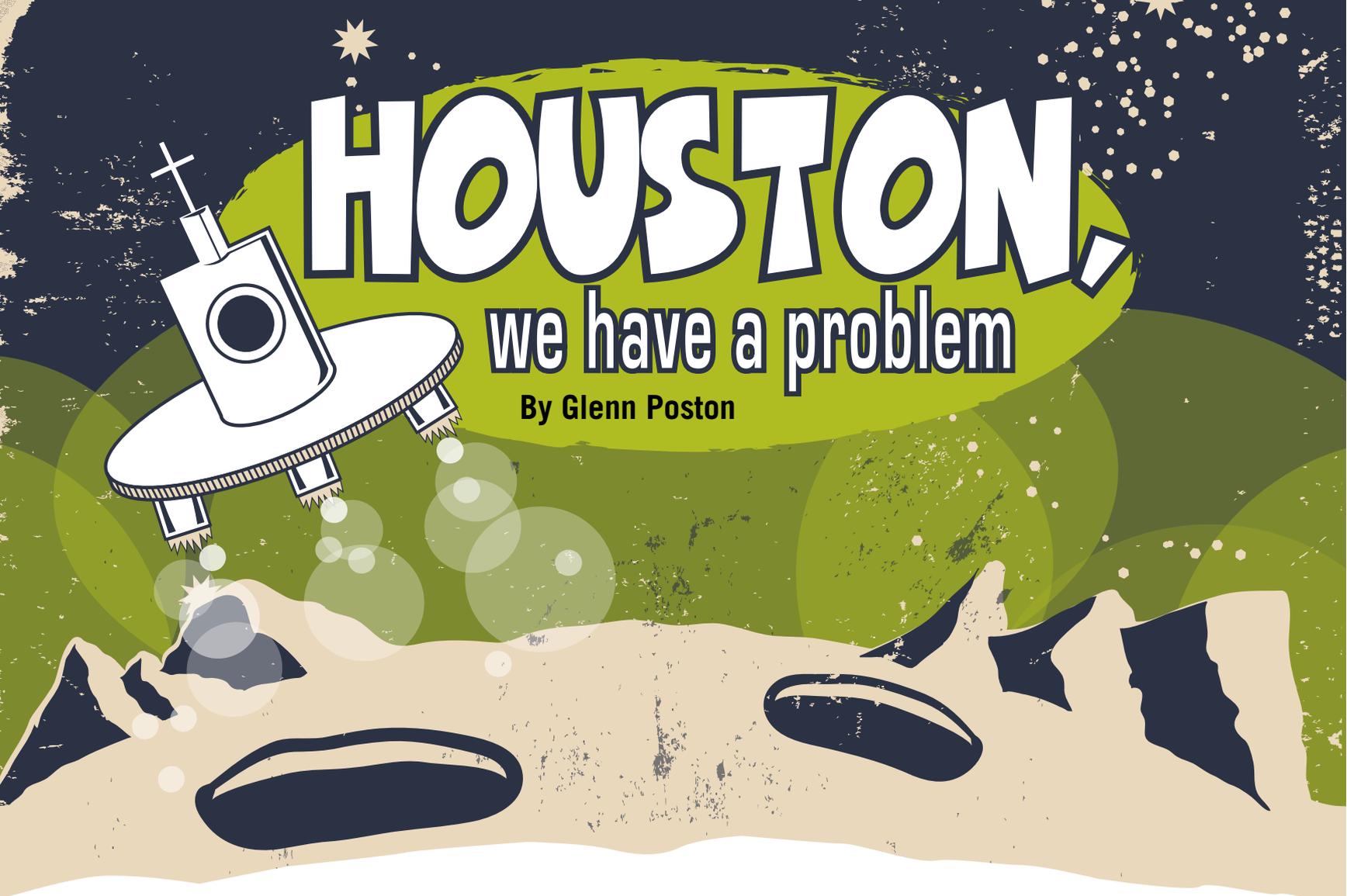
McPeak joined International Missions in May 2005. “In his role as director of communications, Mark has shown strong leadership and has contributed significantly to the overall strategy and success of the Mission,” said Forlines.

“I believe he will help us improve what we are doing stateside, so we operate with professionalism as we continue to grow.”

The deputy director of stateside operations will be responsible for all operations and personnel related to communications, member care, mobilization, recruiting, and development.



Steve and Judy Lytle



HOUSTON, we have a problem

By Glenn Poston

DO YOU REMEMBER THE FAMOUS tagline in the 1995 thriller, *Apollo 13*? “Houston, we have a problem.” That little phrase spoken by Tom Hanks has become synonymous with admitting we need to change some things if we are to survive.

Since becoming promotional director for the Tennessee State Association, I have worked hard getting a handle on my duties. I’ve tried to analyze the needs of our state and have come to realize more than ever how imperative it is for all of us to work together in a spirit of cooperation for the sake of the kingdom of Christ.

Simply put, we need each other.

When it comes to cooperating on a district and state level, too many of us are deciding to go it alone. We have consciously or unconsciously decided we really don’t need each other.

Perhaps because of our diversity, we just don’t want the hassle of trying to get along. We’d rather do our own

thing. It’s not that we want to offend each other; it’s just so much easier this way.

The results are that we go to meetings that interest us, we plan things for our own congregations, and we stay away from events we don’t personally plan or find interesting. Whether we want to admit it or not, we are a product of the Me Generation and the consumer culture that defines it. If it’s not about me, then we figure we don’t need it.

I’ve been guilty of thinking like this myself at times. But you know, sometimes we need to do what’s best for the family. And we are a family. The Free Will Baptist family is worth preserving. Our local and state associations are worth preserving. They are the backbone of our structure.

In a day of the generic church and generic doctrine, we still hold dear some distinctives. Our doctrine is worth preserving. It’s biblical. How

do we preserve our heritage? By staying involved at all levels of our work.

Houston, do we have a problem?

Yes, we do. But if we want to thrive as a strong unit and preserve our heritage and our doctrine, due diligence is required. We must fix what is wrong and strive to make our meetings and our programs relevant, interesting, and even enjoyable.

Remember, we can do more collectively than we could ever do alone. Will I see you at your next associational meeting? □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Glenn Poston is promotional director for the Tennessee State Association of Free Will Baptists.

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OPERATION EGG DROP

The Largest Event Since the Beach Boys Came to Yuma
By Jason Taylor

“Now unto him that is able to do exceedingly abundantly above that all we ask or imagine, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20-21).



In Yuma, we often pray the words above. This Easter, we lived them out...

Six months before Easter, we began to plan ways to get our church name and God's message out to the entire city, creating a buzz that would never be forgotten. In our wildest dreams, we never imagined what would happen on March 22.

I had heard about an event called "Egg Drop" that a church in North Carolina had done two years previously. When I shared the idea with Assistant Pastor Danny Wells, he took the ball and ran with it. We hoped at least 2,000 people would attend.

Danny said, "I want to see 6,000 people there, or it's not worth it!" God answered his prayer when near-

ly 7,000 people came to the school where we meet for the first Eggs Over Yuma Egg Drop. Our congregation spent three Saturdays stuffing 40,000 Easter Eggs with candy and taping each one. Two days before the event, we purchased an additional 20,000 pieces of candy.

Our goal was to pre-register 500 children for the event. By Good Friday, more than 4,000 kids had registered. The local radio station told us the egg drop was the largest event in Yuma since the Beach Boys came! On the night of the drop, we were featured on local news reports of two TV stations, and the next morning we made the front page of the newspaper.

Best of all, the following day, the son of the deejay from the number one radio station in Yuma gave his heart to Christ. On Monday morning following Easter, the deejay broadcast live from our church. He proclaimed to the entire city that he came to our church on Easter Sunday, and our church "Rocks!" He interviewed me, and during the interview I quoted Ephesians 3:20-22, telling all of Yuma that God did more than we ever could have imagined!

We wanted to create a "buzz" about our church. A buzz is different than marketing. Buzz is when everybody in town is talking about your church. After this event, people all over town knew who we were and where we met.

Jesus often created a buzz when He went into cities by performing miracles and meeting people's practical needs. When He was done, the town was buzzing about Jesus.

That is our goal in Yuma, to make the town buzz about Jesus! As I stood on stage that day and saw thousands of eggs drop from a helicopter and saw literally thousands of people at our location, my first thought was, "To God Be the Glory!" □

ABOUT THE WRITER: Jason Taylor and his wife Melissa are home missionaries to Yuma, AZ. They have two children, Hudson and Haley.



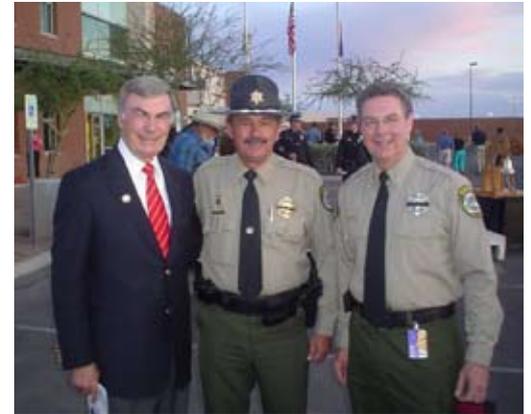


FLORIDA STATE ASSOCIATION RAISES \$70,000 FOR VILLALBA

LAKE MARY, FL—During their annual meeting, April 30-March 3, delegates to the 64th Florida State Association presented a check for \$68,659.30 to Sam and June McVay, missionaries to Spain.

Calling the effort *Project Villalba*, the Florida State Association began raising funds in early 2008 for the church building currently being constructed in the growing suburb near Madrid.

During the presentation, Executive Director Randy Bryant expressed thanks to Florida Free Will Baptists for their generosity. After setting a lofty goal of \$50,000, the association rejoiced when funds exceeded \$69,000 before the meeting. Bryant expects the total will surpass \$70,000.



MISSIONS CHURCH CELEBRATES LAW ENFORCEMENT SUNDAY

FLORENCE, AZ—During a recent celebration, Christ's Church Free Will Baptist Church honored local law enforcement officials. Police Chief Robert Ingulli and Pinal County Sheriff Chris Vasquez were on-hand for the service that was attended by 113. Many visited for the first time including well-known ABC news anchor, Sam Donaldson. He interviewed pastor Howard Gwartney, who serves as the chaplain for the area police department.

When asked about his role in law enforcement, Gwartney replied, "It is my privilege to serve as a chaplain for the area police department."

WWII VETERAN DEAD AT 86



SEARCY, AR—Once called, "the most decorated Free Will Baptist," World War II veteran Rev. Lawnie Coffman died Tuesday, June 3. Coffman received numerous awards and honors for his action with the 35th infantry during the war, including two bronze stars, two silver stars, four battle stars, and two Purple Hearts for being wounded in action.

When asked about his heroic service, Lawnie once replied, "I did not mean to be a hero, I just did what had to be done."

In 2004, Coffman was invited by public officials in France to return for a hero's welcome. During the trip, three different French towns honored him for his role in their liberation.

After being struck in the shoulder by a large-caliber 37mm bullet intended for a tank during a battle in the Rual Valley of Germany, Coffman promised God that if He would spare his life, He would spend the rest of it doing the Lord's work. Lawnie kept his promise, pastoring for more than 45 years, and serving the Free Will Baptist denomination on the local, state, and national level. He is especially remembered for his role in establishing Camp Beaverfork, state youth camp in Arkansas. In his book, *My Leg of the Race*, Coffman said, "This I believe to be the greatest achievement of my church work."

Rev. Coffman leaves behind his wife Alene, daughters Nina and Shirley, seven grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, and three great-great grandchildren.

HILLSDALE ANNOUNCES NEW DEGREE PROGRAM

MOORE, OK—Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College recently announced the development of a new degree program in the health and exercise science fields. The program, called Health, Promotion, and Exercise Science (HPES), will prepare students for diet programming, exercise testing and prescription, human growth and development, the study of human movement, and much more.

The program is designed to prepare students to enter professional degree programs such as physical therapy and exercise physiology. Although the projected start date for the program is Fall 2009, the college has begun to offer coursework immediately, making it possible for current students to begin working toward this major.

FOUNDATION RESETS MONEY MANAGEMENT TRUST RATE

Antioch, TN—The Money Management Trust rate is set at 4.25% for July 1-December 31, 2008, by the Free Will Baptist Foundation. The rate is set for the six-month period to reflect the market interest rate. These trusts are available to Free Will Baptist churches, organizations and individuals. Individual trusts require certain restrictions. More information can be obtained by calling toll-free (877) 336-7575 or by emailing foundation@nafwb.org.



Russell Cooper and the McCorkle FWB Church Choir lead the convention congregation in worship.

A Meeting in the Mountains

SEVENTEEN YEARS AFTER what many consider “the greatest national convention,” Free Will Baptists returned to Charleston, West Virginia, to see if God would do it again. The same genuine warmth and enthusiasm met Free Will Baptists at the door as nearly 6,000 delegates ignored \$4 per gallon gas prices to meet deep in the Appalachian Mountains.

While the holy fire still glowed during worship services like it did in 1991, times had changed in other areas. The five-day convention now crowded into four; the \$11 million 1991 convention budget zoomed to almost \$26 million; and the convention filled every available space in the city beside the river.

EARLY IMPACT

The 2008 convention started with a bang as volunteers from Alabama, Ohio, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia, Indiana, Alabama, and West Virginia arrived in the Greater Charleston area a day early to participate in Impact West Virginia. The annual outreach event gives convention attendees an oppor-

tunity to give back to the host city.

In spite of sizzling temperatures, excited volunteers participated in door-to-door evangelism, hosted a children’s festival, renovated a church, and shared their enthusiasm with churches across the area. “I can’t tell you how excited we are that you have come to help us today,” host Dan Kelly told volunteers at the Chesapeake FWB Church, located 20 minutes south of Charleston. “I can’t wait to see what God does!”

ENTHUSIASTIC WORSHIP

The excitement carried over into convention worship services where soul-stirring congregational singing, powerful preaching, and rousing special numbers left their mark on attendees.

Sunday morning, after a Sunday School lesson taught by Jim Hutchinson (WV), Ivan Asbury, former home missionary and West Virginia pastor, spoke from 1 Corinthians on “Walking by Faith.”

Following a cordial welcome from

Charleston Mayor Danny Jones, the evening service was punctuated by spirited music featuring the McCorkle FWB Church Choir (WV). Their music brought the congregation to its feet. West Virginia native and Assistant Moderator of the National Association William Smith spoke on, “Preparing the Way.”

Monday evening, West Virginia native Jim Christian (currently pastoring in Florida) examined the topic, “Walking in the Truth.” The sermon was preceded by a song service that featured the old hymn favorite, “Amazing Grace,” and other traditional songs of faith. As one attendee remarked, “The music selections seemed tailored for Jim’s message.”

Dr. Stanley Outlaw reminded the congregation to “Walk Carefully and Circumspectly” during his sermon Tuesday evening following special music by the Temple Quartet.

The exciting services reached their climax during Wednesday evening’s annual missions service. Missionaries, both home and international, were introduced during a flag-studded walk

“I can’t tell you how excited we are that you have come to help us today. I can’t wait to see what God does.” —Dan Kelly, Impact WV host

across the convention stage. New missionaries from both agencies shared in a commissioning service before Moderator Tim York (TN) addressed the theme, “Walking as Children of Light.”

Throughout the week, Chris Truett, convention music coordinator, produced an inspiring program that featured a mass choir with more than 100 voices, an orchestral ensemble, and a vocal accompaniment group. Every service featured rousing specials and enthusiastic congregational singing.

EXCITING EXTRAS

Dr. Troy Bush addressed the 2008 Missions Rally on Monday. According to International Missions Director James Forlines, “Bush presents a compelling and practical message to motivate attendees to lead their local churches in reaching their neighbors with the love of Christ.”

The director of church starting for *Embrace Baltimore*, Dr. Bush has taught in seminaries and colleges across the United States as well as Eastern Europe.

Well-known pastor and author Dr. Bobby Welch spoke at Tuesday morning’s Pastors/Laymen Conference. A veteran of nearly 40 years in ministry, Dr. Welch co-founded F.A.I.T.H. Evangelism, a Sunday School-based outreach program that now extends to 14 countries, with materials published in four languages.

ALL BUSINESS

Monday morning, the focus of the convention turned to business as the General Board set a record by blazing through eight department reports, two commission reports, and a final greeting from retiring WNAC Executive Secretary Treasurer Majorie Workman in just under five hours.

In addition to recommending agency budgets to convention delegates,

the General Board recommended Little Rock, Arkansas, for the 2018 convention, recommended a proposed funding plan by the International Missions Department, and recommended that an overhaul of the “Election of Officers” section of the *Free Will Baptist Treatise* be tabled until 2009.

Business continued Tuesday afternoon when Moderator Tim York kicked off the 2008 convention business session with a brief devotional on the mind of Christ, the method of Christ, and the ministry of Christ.

Two and a half hours later, delegates had elected 20 board and commission members, adopted a *Treatise*



Photo: Milton and Melvin Worthington

change clarifying the meaning of marriage, tabled another *Treatise* change recommending that the nominating process be revisited in 2009, voted to meet in Little Rock (Arkansas) for the 2018 convention, and heard reports from four national agencies and two commissions.

Executive Office

Executive Secretary Keith Burden announced the hiring of Ryan Lewis, 25-year-old FWBBC graduate, who will join the Executive Office staff August 4, as executive administrator. Initially, Lewis will serve as a convention planner. Later, he will assume duties with the annual Leadership Conference,

manage www.fwbpastor.com, assist with Disaster Response Team efforts, work with the Palmer Leadership Institute, and represent the Executive Office at denominational events.

The Executive Office is debt-free after “an incredible turnaround financially.” *ONE Magazine*, the denomination’s official publication added 6,100 subscribers in the past year, surpassing 60,000 readers.

Beginning this fall, the Executive Office plans to initiate the Palmer Leadership Institute, a program to provide resources for pastors and state leaders.

Gene Norris, General Board member from Michigan, was honored for serving four consecutive terms on the Executive Committee.

Master’s Men

Master’s Men announced a new website at www.FWBMastersmen.org and a new logo. Director Ken Akers thanked delegates for a record Father’s Day offering. The department added 10 chapters this year as it celebrated 51 years of operation.

The department sponsored three work projects this year. They assisted a Home Missions church with landscaping (AK), roofed and shored up the historic Ridge Church (NH), and constructed a storage barn for a mission church (AR).

Board of Retirement

Director Ray Lewis paid tribute to Herman Hersey who founded the Board of Retirement in 1969 (and the FWB Foundation in 1980), calling him a visionary, a preacher, and a musician. Reverend Hersey died January 24, 2008.

The agency added 116 enrollees this year. The retirement plan now has 1,543 participants, including 1,054 ordained ministers. Twenty-four percent of Free Will Baptist churches now contribute to their pastor’s retirement, up from 13% just two years ago. The department reported assets of \$43 mil-



Clockwise From Top Left: Chad Donoho leads worship; rapt attention in children's NYC services; The Cherry family walks toward the Charleston Civic Center; General Board gets serious; strumming during the evening service; WNAC leaders pray for newly elected Executive-Secretary Treasurer Danita High; exhibit-goers enjoy an impromptu concert by members of bluegrass gospel group Appointed.



lion with an expense ratio below 1%.

Lewis explained that the 18.75% reported loss in returns for the first six months of 2008 resulted from a combination of current economic declines. He encouraged members to stick with their investments and ride out the dip in earnings.

FWB Foundation

Director David Brown also saluted the ministry of Herman Hersey who launched the department in 1980.

The department reported assets up \$5.3 million to almost \$40 million, citing large increases in permanent assets such as endowments (up \$1.7 million) and planned gifts (up \$500,000). More than \$400,000 was generated for various Free Will Baptist ministries in 2007, and the agency is in contact with six families who have made commitments of \$7 million in planned gifts.

Theological Commission

The commission and Randall House are collaborating on a book project. Matt Pinson serves as project editor. The book will address current issues: postmodernism, terrorism, pop-culture theology, homosexuality/gay marriage, pornography, authority of the Scripture, and more.

This fourth volume of *Integrity: A Journal of Christian Thought* will be available later this year. The commission sponsored a seminar in Charleston titled, "The Problem With the Big Bang Theory." Bob Hill, a Free Will Baptist who teaches at Ball State University led the seminar. According to James Forlines, "He is one of only three creationist astronomers in the United States."

Historical Commission

The Historical Commission presented the third in a series of historical pamphlets, *Free Will Baptists and Church Government*. The 16-page booklet was written by Matt Pinson.

Plans were announced to present the fourth historical pamphlet to delegates during the 2009 convention—*Free Will Baptists and the Priesthood of the Believer*.

Delegates were informed of a 2008

publication on the history of Free Baptists in Nova Scotia, *The Early Years of Barrington's Free Baptists*. The book includes materials from several authors and presents the story of the rise of Free Baptists in Southwestern Nova Scotia in the late 1700s, to the formation of the Nova Scotia Free Baptist Conference in 1866. To order the volume, contact Michael Christie at: thechristies1956@ns.sympatico.ca or (902) 885-2691.

WEDNESDAY TO REMEMBER

Delegates by the hundreds showed up Wednesday morning, filling the Civic Center floor seating section. By noon, they had heard and approved three department reports, given two standing ovations, elected six board members, and settled in for an expected long debate—then the lunch gavel fell.

Home Missions

Director Larry Powell reported that home missionaries made more than 300,000 contacts last year. Six mission projects were launched in 2007 (New York, Michigan, Alabama, Virginia, Colorado, and Hawaii), and five new church planters were appointed. Cross-cultural outreach among Hispanics, Korean, Russian, and Native American groups flourish in North America

Free Will Baptists have invested \$28 million with CELF, a loan fund to assist Home Mission churches. From 58 Hispanic graduates at the Gwen Hendrix Seminary in South Carolina to military chaplains in the armed forces, the department continues to impact the world. Three Home Missions churches became self-supporting this year.

Free Will Baptist Bible College

President Matt Pinson announced that FWBBC expects to close on a contract by mid-August to purchase a 66-acre site for a new campus in the Middle Tennessee area. The land is located 25 miles from the college's current campus.

After a downturn in enrollment for the first time in six years, officials re-

at a glance

REGISTRATION

Board members.....	41
Licensed ministers.....	34
Local church delegates.....	15
Ordained deacons.....	143
Ordained ministers.....	652
State Delegates.....	71
NAFWB Attendees.....	2,336
WNAC.....	892
NYC.....	3,970
Total Registered.....	8,186

Actual Count.....5,741*

*Many attendees register for more than one convention.

2009 BUDGETS

Executive Office.....	\$735,674
FWB Bible College.....	\$6,432,800
FWB Foundation.....	\$463,198
Home Missions.....	\$5,000,000
Int'l Missions.....	\$8,184,538
Master's Men.....	\$155,400
Retirement.....	\$545,000
Randall House.....	\$4,446,900
Theological Comm.....	\$4,120
Historical Comm.....	\$4,100
Media Comm.....	\$3,600
Music Comm.....	\$5,615
Total.....	\$25,980,945

SPEAKERS

Sunday Morning, July 20
Sunday School: Jim Hutchison (WV)

Sunday Morning, July 20
Ivan Asbury (WV)

Sunday Evening, July 20
William Smith (GA)

Monday Evening, July 21
Jim Christian (FL)

Tuesday Morning, July 22
Pastors/Laymen Conference
Bobby Welch (FL)

Tuesday Evening, July 22
Stanley Outlaw (TN)

Wednesday Evening, July 23
Tim York (TN)



at a glance

ELECTED IN 2008

FWB Bible College Board of Trustees

2014 Bob Bass (TN)
Rusty Russell (NC)
Richard Hendrix (AL)

International Missions Board

2014 Jeff Manning, (NC)
Paul Creech (GA)
Robert Morgan (TN)

Randall House Publications Board

2014 Steve Lindsay (TN)
Danny Dwyer (NC)
Randy Scott (AR)

Commission for Theological Integrity

2013 Matt Pinson (TN)

Historical Commission

2013 David Crowe (TN)

Media Commission

2010 Travis Penn (IL)
2013 Mark Ousley (TN)

Music Commission

2013 James Stevens (TN)

GENERAL BOARD

2009 Brent Nix (NW District)
2010 George Harvey (AZ)
2011 Chris Clay (IN)
Jim Martin (IA)
Zane Brooks (KS)
Chris Sturgill (KY)
Bud Bivens (Mexico Assoc.)

ported a 25% increase in student applications for the fall 2008 semester. The college will roll out a fully accredited online A.S. degree in Ministry this fall. An expanding academic program now includes degrees in biology education and pre-law studies to assist students who plan to enter the field of law.

Retired FWBBC employees Ralph and Margaret Hampton received a standing ovation for their service at the college. Ralph taught 50 years in the Biblical and Ministry Studies Department, and Margaret served 37 years as library manager.

Board members Gene Outland (IL) and Archie Ratliff (NC) received plaques in recognition of 12 years on the Board of Trustees.

Randall House

Randall House plans to spend \$500,000 in the next two years to promote D6—a program to involve parents in the spiritual growth and development of their children. A D6 conference in 2009 will feature a list of nationally acclaimed speakers. Director Ron Hunter said he expects 3,000-4,000 attendees at the conference.

Randall House won eight awards for excellence in the printing industry this year. The agency reported curriculum sales up 155% since 2001 and wants to develop a stronger relationship with state bookstores. Plans to upgrade product lines are underway. The department gave back more than \$72,000 to the denomination.

Board members Nuel Brown (CA) and David Reece (TN) received plaques for 12 years of service.

International Missions

“The Mission’s highest priority is to change the funding system,” reported General Director James Forlines to 2008 delegates, and asked the convention to endorse a sweeping financial plan to restructure agency funding.

Delegates debated the merits of the new plan of support for more than an hour, as 20 individuals stepped to the microphone expressing support or opposition. The spirit of the debate was brotherly and refreshing. Sharp dissension registered alongside ringing endorsements.

James Forlines and board chairman Danny Williams fielded questions from the floor as the 80-minute debate unfolded. When debate ceased, delegates approved the new funding system by a vote of 375 to 58.

The vote was the culmination of 25 regional meetings between mission personnel and 600 pastors and leaders over the past two years. The program will go into effect January 1, 2010. The centerpiece of the new system will be a Global Evangelism Fund that pays all costs for keeping missionaries on their fields.

The agency report included a series of personal recognitions. Board members David Williford and Bill Van Winkle received plaques for 12 years of service. Retiring missionaries Jerry and Carol Pinkerton received a thunderous standing ovation as the longest-serving missionaries in Ivory Coast.

Former director Eugene Waddell, who died in 2007, was honored; his widow was presented an engraved

Bible and a folded Christian flag, and learned that the "Eugene and Genevieve Scholarship Fund" will provide educational funds for all missionary children beginning in 2010.

FINAL THINGS

Delegates heard brief reports from the Music and Media Commissions

before giving a standing vote of appreciation to West Virginia for hosting the 2008 convention. The business meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m. to meet in 2009 in Cincinnati, Ohio.

To read extended coverage of the 2008 Free Will Baptist convention, visit www.onemag.org. □

It's Not About Me

2008 National Youth Conference

IT'S NOT ABOUT ME proved to be a theme taken to heart by National Youth Conference participants.

In three days, over 350 individuals logged 2,763 hours of community service in the Charleston area and gave 86 units of blood to the Red Cross through Reach That Guy projects.

Students contributed a record \$8,821.71 to support global missions through the Buck-A-Week offering. The layout of the convention center required doors to remain open during competition, yet traffic flowed quietly through competition rooms, careful to not distract contestants on stage. Nearly 100 adults served as judges, MCs, and quizmasters for the 908 entries.

The story of one participant illustrates the dedication of those who participated in the National Youth Conference.

Andrew Lowe, of Emmons FWB Church (WV) served as a Bible Memorization judge this year. Andrew is well qualified to judge this event. He participated 12 years in Bible competition: nine years in Bible memorization and three years in Sword Drill. He attributes

the study habits and routine learned through Bible Memorization as a factor that helps him study in college.

He explains, "It's a challenge to start out not knowing the verses, but it gives a sense of accomplishment when you memorize it. If I can do all this, college material isn't as bad." By the way, Andrew made the Dean's List both semesters of his pre-pharmacy study at the University of Charleston.

Andrew is also an alumnus of Truth & Peace Leadership Conference. He confessed he almost felt out of place this year since he didn't have any responsibilities at the NYC, so he was eager to be a judge. He was recently elected to the West Virginia State Christian Education Board in June.

Andrew's story is only one account from the 25-year history of Truth & Peace and the 41-year history of the National Youth Conference. We will see what God accomplishes in the lives of the 1,820 students and 2,138 adults who were challenged to declare, "He must increase, I must decrease." □



2009 National YET Team

Erin Bandle (TN)	Kendal McGrew (IL)
Matt Berry (FL)	Hunter Pardue (NC)
Maggie Driggers (SC)	Christen Pointer (AR)
Audrey Hollifield (TN)	Will Reeves (AR)
Jake Hunter (AL)	Kenyon Savage (AR)
Darci McCoy (OK)	Thomas Yerby (AL)

at a glance

ELECTED IN 2008 (continued) GENERAL BOARD

2011 Gene Norris (MI)
Wayne Hale (Mid-Atlantic)
J.L. Gore (MS)
Gary Fry (MO)
William Brown (NJ)
Mark Shores (NM)
Chad Kivette (CO)

General Officers

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

Thanks to members of the 2008 convention coverage team:

Business Jack Williams
Worship Ida Lewis
Exhibits Debbie Burden
NYC Danny Conn
WNAC Sarah Fletcher
Photographer Travis Penn
Videographer Dustin Stokes

NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE

Theme: It's Not About Me
Registrants: 3,970

Reach That Guy
464 volunteers
2,763 hours of labor
86 units of blood donated to the Red Cross Blood Drive

Speakers
Children: Katie Greenwood; Johnny and Gail Miller, Joe Tolbert

Teens: Kelly Bowman (WV); R.D. Tolliver (WV); Stewart Allen Clark (GA), Todd Tennant (VA), Sam McVay (Spain)

Youth[s] of the Year
Justin Johnson (TN), David Snow (TN)

Youth Group of the Year
Sherwood Forest FWB Church (NC)

Youth Worker of the Year
Jason Janus (NC)



WNAC 2008

BACK TO the Basics, Building for THE FUTURE STORIES OF AMAZING GRACE

“You are young, but may I remind you as Paul did Timothy: ‘Let no man despise thy youth...’ Finally, I charge you to remember—remember all the commands of the Lord and do them... Remember those faithful women who served before you.

—Marjorie Workman, in her charge to incoming Executive Secretary-Treasurer
Danita High

THE 2008 WNAC CONVENTION offered a mix of past and future, younger and older, known and unknown. “Taught by the Bible, Led by the Spirit” (TBLS), the 2008-2009 theme unveiled at the two-day event, encourages a back to the basics approach, challenging women to reexamine the foundational truths of Revelation, Redemption, and Relationship.

Stories From the Past

Monday’s afternoon tea provided a glance into the lives of four FWB pioneer missionary women. Mothers, daughters, and granddaughters listened together as Laura Thigpen, Mary Ruth Wisheart, Amanda Kilgore, and Lorene Miley shared the following stories of amazing grace:

- The disappointment of a delayed departure for Laura Belle Barnard that provided a 1935 divine appointment at BlackJack FWB Church, when an infant denomination pledged to support her as their missionary.
- The strong yet submissive spirit of Mabel Willey, who chose to see stars above the roof of her mud hut.
- The overcoming power of Christ displayed in a motherless and abandoned child named Trula Cronk, who today encourages others to rise above their circumstances.
- The richness of the intimate relationship between Lorene Miley and Jesus Christ whom she ascribes as protector, personal physician, best friend and lover—“my past, my present, and my future.”

Tuesday’s early morning session showcased both past and present. “Postcards from the Journey,” a tribute to Marjorie Workman, WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer for the past 10 years, highlighted her many years and multiple avenues of ministry. Narration and video testimonies from friends and coworkers gave attendees an inside (and sometimes humorous) look into the life of this

dynamic leader. Daughters Regena Sizemore and Jennifer Beauchamp, both present for the event, recounted her godly example and affirmed her indelible stamp on their lives as mothers and pastors' wives. WNAC's Executive Committee presented Marjorie with a symbolic banner and a cash gift for future travels.

In an abbreviated business session, delegates to the 73rd annual session turned to current matters as they passed the following resolutions:

1. We recommend that scholarships be given from the Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship Fund as follows:
 - a. International Mission Scholarship (\$2,100) to help students at Semario Bautiste Libre de Panama in Chame, Panama.
 - b. Home Missions Scholarship (\$1,200) to help students(s) in training for ministry at our two Mexico Bible Institutes: Altimira Bible Institute and the Seminary of the Cross in Reynosa, at \$600 to each institute.
2. We recommend the Missionary Provision Closet be named the "Steward Provision Closet" in memory of Wendell and Lucille Steward from Michigan for their many years of labor for the Provision Closet.
3. We recommend that the WNAC Endowment Fund be named the "Marjorie Workman Endowment Fund."
4. We resolve as Free Will Baptist women that we reaffirm our stand against same-sex marriage and support an amendment to the U.S. Constitution designating marriage as being the union between one man and one woman. We encourage groups and individuals to send letters to legislators, state and national, to affirm our position.

A New Chapter

Unanimous ayes ushered in a new era for WNAC as Danita High, a 28-year-old pastor's wife from Arkansas received approval as the new WNAC Executive Secretary-Treasurer. Acknowledging the gravity of the position and her many nights of toiling in prayer concerning this appointment, Mrs. High pledged her commitment and loyalty.

"As humbly as I know how, but with a love for this organization, I want to serve you, to love you, to get to know you as personally as I can."

A TBLS PowerPoint presentation gave women a fast-forward look at future Bible studies in *Together With God* magazine and promoted WNAC's current two-year national project, Building for the Future: 20/20/20. A goal of \$60,000 will help fund building/ amortization costs for mission efforts in Panama and Spain as well as build endowment funds for continued WNAC ministries.

We must balance our back to the basics with forward advances and future plans.

Stories in the Making

"Bless the Lord O, my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."

Tears were plentiful, dry eyes were few during Tuesday morning's worship service as missionary Becky Derby recalled her story of God's goodness and grace through her diagnosis and treatment of breast cancer. Quoting Psalm 103:1-5, a passage she claimed and clung to during dark days, this mother of toddler twin boys triumphantly proclaimed God's praise. "We don't know what our future holds," she acknowledged but continued, "I choose to trust my Father."

Kristi Johnson, missionary to Alpedrete, Spain, shared the story of a decade of ministry to hearts of stone in hard places to a crowd of over 400 at the Tuesday WNAC Luncheon. She sadly commented that the number of shoes most women brought to the

convention outnumbered believers in many cities in Spain and noted the importance of establishing relationships for sharing the gospel. The sold-out event featured take-home treasures from various mission fields around the world. Hostesses and missionaries at each table shared requests and blessings from these designated places.

Stories Yet Unwritten

I believe the greatest days for WNAC still lie ahead of us.

The greater story is still unwritten, New leadership, new enthusiasm, and the anticipation of God's work around the world will undoubtedly generate more stories of grace as women turn back to the basics and build for the future. □

About the Writer: Sarah Fletcher is managing editor of *Together With God* magazine, the official publication of Women Nationally Active for Christ.



Becky Derby addresses WNAC participants during the Tuesday morning missionary service.



KEITH BURDEN, CMP
Executive Secretary
National Association
of Free Will Baptists

THY STAFF...THEY COMFORT ME

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, the 2008 national convention will be history. Based on past experience, it will probably go down as another successful associational meeting. However, this convention was not without its challenges. Here are a few examples that made preparations for our annual gathering in Charleston, West Virginia, more interesting than usual—

- CVB changes—The entire staff of the Convention and Visitors Bureau in Charleston changed...completely.
- Family crises—My wife and I lost our five-day-old granddaughter in September. Our bookkeeper's husband had heart by-pass surgery in December. The registration coordinator's father passed away in May after an extended illness. In June, *ONE Magazine's* managing editor (and my assistant convention manager for this year) ruptured his Achilles tendon in a sporting accident and required surgery.

- Space shortages—There were too few hotel rooms. The Civic Center was undersized.
- Registration difficulties—The new online registration program had “bugs” in it and created numerous problems. The credit card function was out of service for extended periods.
- Too many irons in the fire—This year I attempted to perform the jobs of both the executive secretary and convention manager. I was reminded why we normally have two men in these positions.

These were the *major* challenges. We encountered countless other minor set-backs and roadblocks along the way. Mr. Murphy must have been thinking about us when he came up with his law—*if anything can go wrong it will, and at the worst possible time!*

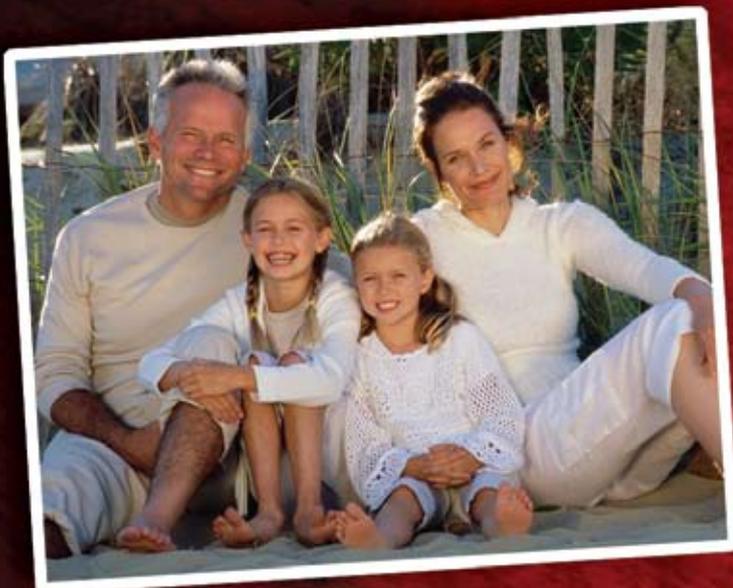
What is the point in telling you this? It is not to play on your sympathy or fish for a compliment. We simply did our jobs. Problem solving goes with the territory. All Christian leaders face similar dif-

ficulties from time to time.

Instead, these experiences afforded two unique opportunities. First, they allowed us to extol the faithfulness of God. Were there some anxious moments? Sure! But, the Lord came through every single time. In the words of Dr. Stan Toler, “God has never failed me, but He sure has scared me to death a few times!”

Second, these events reaffirmed the faith and confidence I have in my staff. They are unquestionably some of God's most dedicated servants. They didn't grumble. They didn't complain. They rolled up their sleeves and helped “get 'er done.” Free Will Baptists owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

The Psalmist David was right. During those periods when I walk through the valley of the shadow, I can do so without fear. Why? Because the Good Shepherd is with me; and my staff...they comfort me too. □



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