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ONE

MAGAZINE

A Free Will Baptist Magazine

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Family in **FOCUS**



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GOING VIRAL
Forgiveness

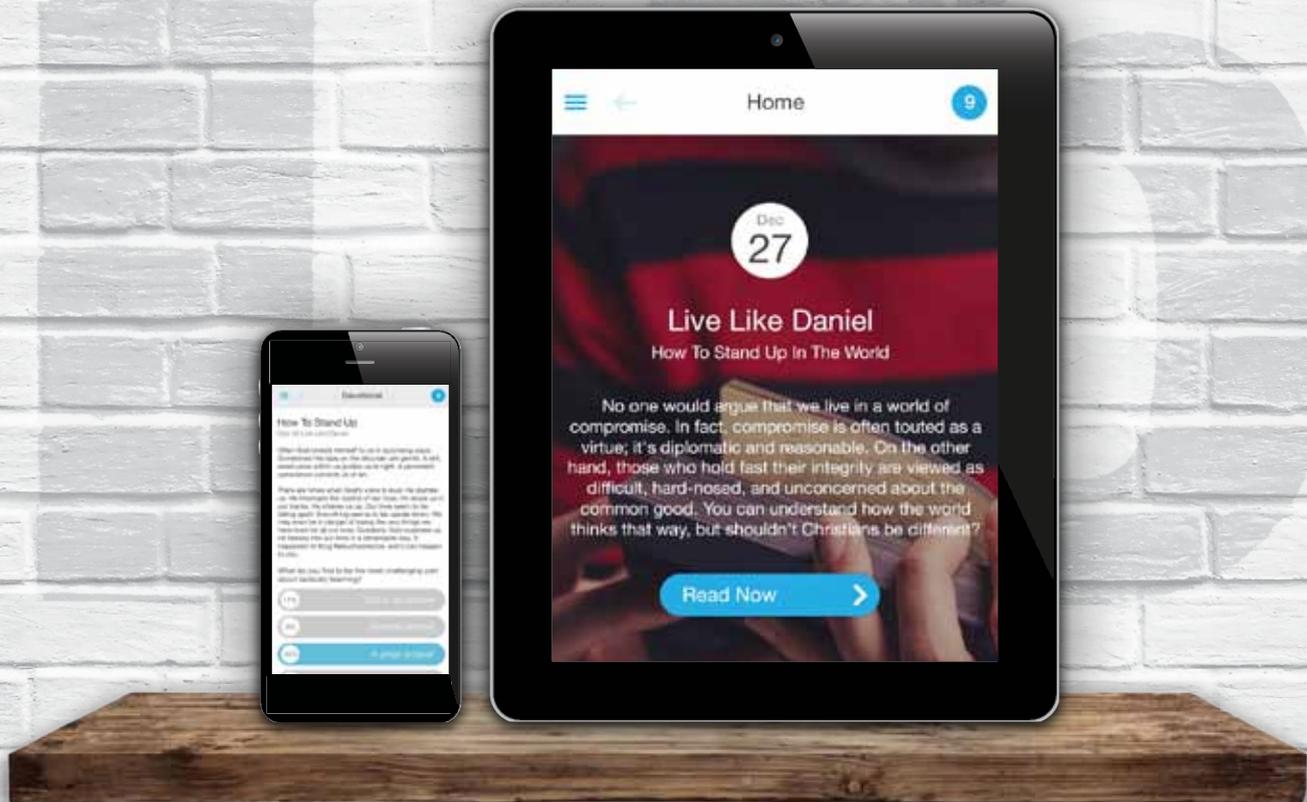
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...

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MAGAZINE

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

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First Glimpse >>

PRAYING

With One Eye Open



“Zip it! And I’m not going to tell you again!”

The exasperated words exploded from my lips as I called down the mouthy middle schooler for at least the tenth time. An uneasy silence settled over the room as 15 other students turned startled stares in his direction. Mischievous blue eyes sparkled in return, and his broad smirk spoke volumes: “Just wait until your back is turned!”

This particular scalawag had been a thorn in my side since the night he simply vanished during the opening prayer. After a panicky, muttering-under-my-breath search, I found him hiding, curled up under a table. After that escapade, I acquired the skill of praying with one eye open.

As a new Christian, he had little concept of how to act in church...and he didn’t seem to be overly concerned about learning. He cheated during Bible games, got into shoving matches with other boys, cut line during kickball, and left a nest of handouts and paper wads around his chair every week. His rowdy behavior seemed to spread to other students, and to be honest, I began to dread seeing his freckled face on the front row every week.

I’ll never forget the night we made Scripture posters. The passage was about God’s love; his poster was a gory masterpiece depicting sharks and swimmers. I’m sure it got some strange looks when I posted it in the hallway along with the others.

As we neared the end of the school year, I couldn’t help but wonder if he had gained anything from our long months together. Discouraged, I began to count the days until summer break arrived. Because the Bible club is built around Scripture memorization, on the final night we held a competition to see which student could recite the most verses learned throughout the year. To my surprise, he made it past the first round then sailed through the second...and he was just warming up. Eight rounds later, he rattled off a 29-word passage to claim the championship. I was more excited than he was!

That night, I thanked God for reminding me that no one—not even an obnoxious pre-teen or his impatient teacher—is beyond help. We are all unfinished works of grace, molding slowly into His image by exposure to His Word, the work of the Spirit, and the influence of other believers. He reminded me that His Word never “returns void,” even in the chaos of a middle school Bible club.

But when next year rolls around, you can be sure I will still be praying with one eye open! **ONE**



Letters:

Have something to say? Say it!

The editors of *ONE Magazine* look forward to hearing from readers. Your feedback, comments, and suggestions are necessary and appreciated.

Email editor@nafwb.org or send correspondence to:

ONE Magazine
Letters to the Editor
 PO Box 5002
 Antioch, TN 37011-5002

ONE Magazine reserves the right to edit published letters for length and content.

So enjoyed the article “People of the People” (June-July 2015) by Bill and Brenda Evans.

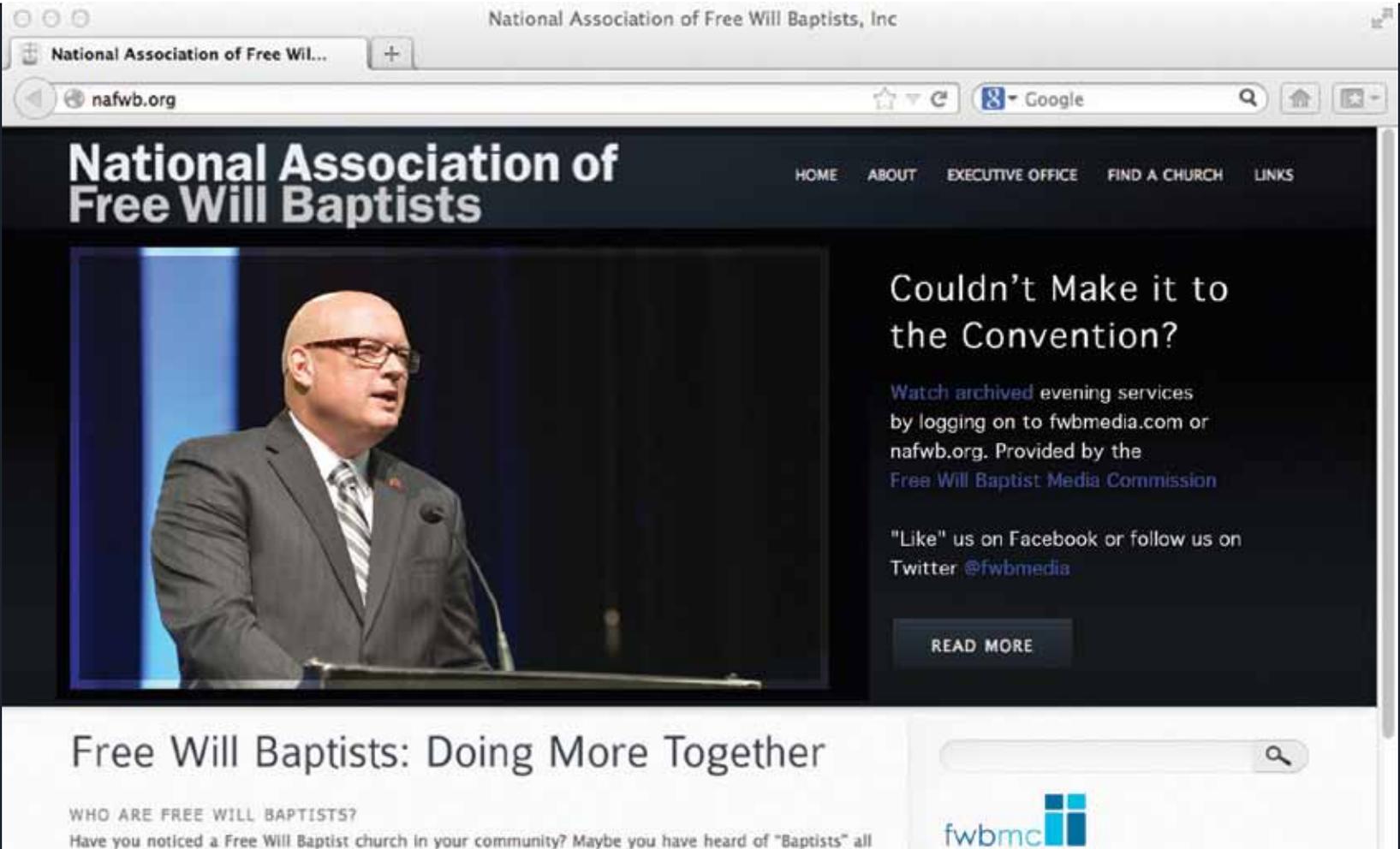
The day I graduated from Bible College, I caught a ride with friends to work at the children’s home in Greeneville, Tennessee. Ray and Lissie Turnage took me in and treated me like family. They are one of the most humble, godly couples I’ve ever known. The years I spent there are some of the most precious memories I have. They are an awesome couple, and I’m not surprised they’re still actively serving the Lord.—*Delma Wright Gunnels, Jackson, Missouri*

The West Tennessee Association met Friday and decided to send all of our historical records, dating from 1957-2012.

In consideration of this, the West Tennessee Association requests an electronic copy of what you produce in return, and you may keep the original records for archival purposes. I also am sending along a box of old ministers cards dating back to when Dr. Miley and Brother Louis Coscia were members of the Bluff City Association.—*Keith Walkley, Millington, TN*

From the editor: On behalf of the Historical Commission, thanks to Mr. Walkley and the West Tennessee Association for their contribution to the Free Will Baptist Historical Collection. If you would also like to contribute to the growing collection, please send minutes, books, records, and other historical materials to: FWB Historical Collection, 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, TN 37013 or contact Chairman Robert E. Picirilli at repicirilli@comcast.net.

We goofed! Page 27 of the June-July issue indicated that Jerry and Barbara Gibbs retired in 2014. This is not the case. The Gibbs are currently on Stateside assignment. Our apologies to the Gibbs for this error.



Introducing

D6[®]
2GEN

A GAME
CHANGER
FOR FAMILY MINISTRY

by Ryan Frank

“Family” has been the buzzword in children’s ministry for the past ten years. Ministry leaders have wrestled with what family ministry looks like in their churches and communities.

At the heart of family ministry is this question: How can the church and the home work together? How can a partnership be formed so that, by God’s grace, children become lifelong disciples of Jesus Christ?

An organization that has been leading the way for this church/parent partnership is a publishing organization called Randall House. Best known for the D6 Conference and D6 Curriculum, Randall House is deeply committed and trusted to help lead the family ministry conversation.

The name D6 comes from Deuteronomy 6:5-7, which commands us to love God with all our heart, soul, and might; keep His Word on our hearts; and diligently teach to impress our faith on our children as we live out our daily lives.

D6 is an intentional movement to empower churches to help parents, homes, marriages, and leaders live out the story of Deuteronomy 6. This Scripture paints a beautiful picture for the family and of God's heart for discipleship at home. You could say that the family is God's original small group. D6 provides resources to align the church and home to accomplish God's design of generational discipleship.

My first experience at a D6 Conference was in 2009, when I was invited to speak. From the moment I received my invitation throughout the entire event, one word surfaced over and over again—excellence. Everything about their conference was done with excellence, as unto the Lord. I quickly felt a kindred spirit with the leaders of this ministry. The team at Randall House is simply amazing. They are humble people who have a huge heart for ministry.

I visited their offices recently in Nashville. It's cool to see! They're a stone's throw away from the airport. In fact, their headquarters is an old airplane hanger transformed into a state of the art facility. They are led by CEO and Publisher Ron Hunter (@ronhunter). Ron is forward thinking and deeply committed to the local church and Scripture.

What the folks at D6 have done in a short time is incredible. They are leading and shaping conversations that ministry leaders are having about the church-parent partnership. In just a few years, they created one of the premier conferences and curriculum that exists today.

Yes, what D6 has done in a short time is incredible. But, what they have coming is a game changer!



This fall, Randall House will release the D6 2nd Generation Curriculum. I'm excited to share this with you, because I believe you owe it to yourself and your church to check it out. You can visit www.d6family.com or their intro page D62gen.com to learn more about this in greater detail, but let me help you by sharing some amazing features that really captured my attention.

CLEAR Learning System®

This is something I have always appreciated about the D6 Curriculum. CLEAR stands for Connect, Learn, Explore, Apply, Respond. CLEAR is an effective way to teach the Bible, because it's built around the natural learning process of students. This has always been the bedrock of their curriculum and will continue to be part of the new D6 2nd Generation. However, these features will repeat more often in teen and adult lessons. For example, the application will appear several times throughout each lesson, and so on.

Three distinct studies in each quarter

This is unique and worth noting. Each quarter will include one month in the New Testament, one month in the Old Testament, and one in a special topic. I like that!

Special Topics

As I mentioned previously, each quarter will include one month in a special topic. I love what Randall House is planning with this. These special topics will prepare students for life issues and cultural challenges, including:

Apologetics (teaching all ages how to defend their faith)

Cultural issues from a biblical perspective (sexuality, gender, marriage, etc.)

Key theological concepts (character of God, origins, inspiration, etc.)

Biblical worldview shown to students in every lesson

This means the child connects what is studied to everyday life. How important is this to family ministry?

Emphasis on grace relationship over performance

When I first heard Ron Hunter talk about this, it resonated big time. This is so important. In other words, the philosophy behind D6 2nd Generation is that it teaches for life transformation, not just head knowledge. Really, that's what we're all about, right?

Available in either printed or digital platform (or both)

This is definitely worth noting. The team at Randall House has done it again. The D6 2nd Generation Curriculum is positively going to be a game changer. Please check it out for yourself. It could be the solution you've been looking for to connect the church and home. **ONE**

About the Writer: Ryan Frank is CEO of KidzMatter, a children's ministry curriculum and training provider to churches and a subsidiary of Awana. Ryan is also vice president of innovative ministries for Awana. He is on the board of directors for the International Network of Children's Ministry and author of *Nine Things They Didn't Teach Me in College About Children's Ministry* (Standard Publishing).

What is D6?

D6 is a movement intentional about empowering parents, homes, marriages, leaders, and churches to live out the story of **Deuteronomy 6**.

The family is God's original small group. **D6** provides resources to align the church and home to accomplish God's design of generational discipleship.

FOR THE CHURCH

D6 Curriculum—Sunday School/Small group curriculum that intersects the influence of both the church and home to create a discipleship journey for the whole family.

Elements Kids Worship—Large group experience for children's ministry.

Books—Resources include small group studies, church leadership, theology, Christian living and family ministry.



FOR THE HOME

Devo Study Guides—a tool to equip the entire family to apply the same biblical principle throughout the whole week.

Home Connection—This downloadable printable guide connects home and families to one another

Splink—FREE weekly email packed with ideas for parents to find teachable moments with their kids.

Books—Resources on marriage, family, parenting, teens, young adults.



Connecting CHURCH & HOME

These must work together!



Deuteronomy 6:5-7 reminds us of the generational influence of parents and grandparents. God tells us that our kids should see us love Him, see us in His Word, and as a result of daily interactions and teachable moments they will catch our passionate pursuit of Him. The church equips the parents to spiritually coach their kids.

FOR YOUR TEAM

D6 Conference—A family ministry conference for your entire team. Packed with ideas, resources, and speakers that will inspire you. It is a place where church leaders, parents, and resource providers come together to focus on the home as the primary vehicle through which we impart faith to the next generation.

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www.d6family.com

What's Your *Discipleship* Plan?

STRATEGY FOR DISCIPLESHIP

BY DAVID WOMACK AND DANNY CONN

strat·e·gy | 'stratəjē |

a plan of action or policy designed to achieve a major or overall aim.

In Luke 14:25-35, Jesus explained that true discipleship requires full commitment. Verses 28-32 explains this commitment involves evaluating the situation and establishing a plan of action to succeed. Consider how:

- *Planning to build a tower involves counting the cost to make sure enough resources are available to complete it.*
- *Facing an opponent in battle, one must consider whether enough troops are available to win.*

A major element of most accomplishments is an intentional and executable strategy. We use blueprints and schematics to construct buildings. We employ strategies for military engagements. In everyday life we make plans and develop goals for more than we realize. We have plans for everything from grocery lists to vacations to date night to retirement. Some plans come easy, with little thought; others are more important and demand more thought and time. Much of our planning is just that, a simple plan of just a few bullet points. The big things in life require planning at a higher level, an intentional strategy.

If we wrote a list of things that require higher planning, more of a true intentional, executable strategy, it would be a short list. Education, career path, child rearing, and retirement; health care might make the list. Most other plans would fall under one of these headings. All are necessary and important.

What about discipleship? In light of Jesus' words in Luke 14, commitment to discipleship requires a strategy. Discipleship should be the first objective on our short list of major accomplishments. Like other major objectives in life, discipleship doesn't just happen. So again, what is your discipleship strategy?

We should answer that question on two levels: personal strategy and church strategy. Our personal strategy includes a Bible reading and study plan, how we pursue and grow our prayer life, how we engage with other believers, and other disciplines. Our church strategy for discipleship is a little more involved, because it is a collective endeavor. The church leadership of your local congregation should develop a church strategy. Most churches have programs in place to facilitate discipleship: Sunday School, life groups, and various age-specific ministries among others. These are all great vehicles to help us pursue discipleship.

The real question on the church level is, "Are we intentional about a discipleship strategy or do we just have a program?" It may be a little uncomfortable to acknowledge, but sometimes we're just working a program without any real, measurable objective or strategy for achievement. By the way, although you may not be making decisions about your church's discipleship strategy you are responsible for deciding how you will be involved. Just like the other major endeavors of life...discipleship is too important not to have an intentional, executable strategy.

We have endeavored to develop a multi-layered discipleship





strategy in D6 2nd Generation curriculum. The first layer addresses biblical literacy as we cover the story of the Bible. Defining and instilling a biblical worldview through the D6 Doorposts is another layer. We intentionally identify how students can *apply* and *respond* to the principles of Scripture so as to bring about hand, head, and heart transformation. Each of these layers begins in the Sunday School, small group, or life group. But one hour a week is not enough.

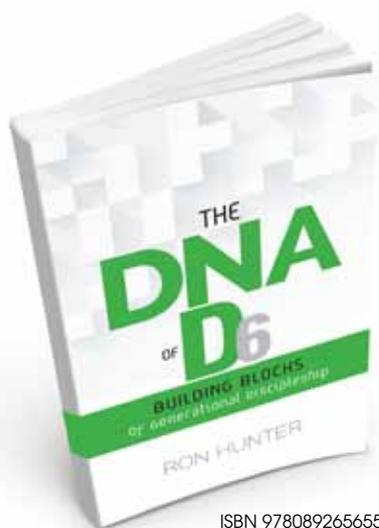
We add more layers by providing study guides for the entire family to reinforce the principles of the lesson all week. We supply parents with resources such as Home Connection and Splink to help them be

actively involved in the discipleship of their children. Elements Kids Worship is another layer to reinforce and even go deeper in teaching biblical principles and doctrine.

Some of the newer layers offered in 2nd Generation curriculum include additional links and recommended resources that a teacher, parent, or mentor could use to pursue even deeper study on topics and questions one-on-one as needed. We also provide a planning calendar poster the church staff can use to coordinate the entire discipleship and training schedule.

Some have lamented that there is more in the lessons than can be covered in one class. That is by design. The once-a-week class is not the only time for discipleship. The lesson can be introduced in class, but should extend to home, with friends, and throughout the week. That is the discipleship plan of D6 2nd Generation curriculum and it can be part of your discipleship strategy. **ONE**

About the Writer: David Womack is customer service director at Randall House. Danny Conn, Ed.D. is editorial director at Randall House. Learn more about D6 2nd Generation Curriculum at www.d62gen.com.



ISBN 9780892656554
price 14.99

The DNA of D6

By Ron Hunter

randall house

Available at randallhouse.com

1-800-877-7030

How did Adam Smith and Henry Ford alter how ministry is done in church? How does Mickey Mouse help you understand it? It all started with a famous Scottish economist, Adam Smith, in 1776 who wrote *Wealth of Nations* . . .

It took a few decades for the business savvy to carry over into the church, but many can remember when the first hire made by a growing church shifted from associate pastor hires to youth pastor hires. The church started looking at the specialization of the ministry leaders. Seminaries were producing well-trained youth ministers, wise churches were hiring them, and youth groups became the focal point for attracting families. Adults were excited to have a leader who could communicate with their teenagers. The youth minister was given a large room with great liberty to paint it any way desired, bring in couches, their own music, and later video games. Youth groups were never more cool!

The adults wanted the youth group to be a part of the church, but sort of on the periphery, which created a ministry just on the fringe of the rest of the congregation. If you graphed the look of the youth ministry as part of the larger church, it would be a circle on the perimeter of the larger circle barely touching. Stuart Cumming Bond described this as the “one-eared Mickey Mouse.”



Reaching the World by REACHING FAMILIES

BY JOSH BENNETT

As we all know, families are under constant attack in our culture. We believe it is key for churches to reach and minister to families. When we reach a family with the gospel, the potential for generational discipleship is unlimited. Here are a few ways we minister to families at The Springs Church in Marana, Arizona.

Safe and Fun Programs for Kids

We know ministering to families begins with quality programming. Families will not continue to bring their kids to churches where they feel the kids' program is not safe and organized.

We do several things to overcome the fears a first-time parent might have: 1) We have a computerized check-in system that allows parents to get a contact number, input allergies, and receive a matching check-in tag for their kids. They also receive a key card that allows them to check in quickly

every time they return. 2) We give every parent a postcard of our kids' ministry policies and procedures. This way, they know on their first visit what is important to us as a church. 3) We run a background check on all volunteers and have security come by the classes several times each Sunday.

These simple things combine to create a safe and well-communicated kids' program.

Family-Focused Life Groups

Another important outreach is Life Groups that focus on marriage, families, and faith. Our latest life group is called *Faith in the Family*. We place a major emphasis on family discipleship in the home. Each week, couples study the Bible together and grow closer to God as a family.



The Springs Church has meant a great deal to our family. Not only has it been a wonderful place for genuine fellowship and personal growth, but it was also a place that God provided for us to heal from a previously difficult church experience. We are so grateful that God provided a place where His Word is taught without dilution, and the love He calls us to is freely given. The pastors and their families genuinely care for and minister to the people that God brings through those doors. It's a blessing to see and an honor to be a part of it.

—MARCOS AND JENNY SALAZAR

This past week, 80% of the couples in our group spent at least an hour together in couple Bible Study in addition to family devotions (with kids) and prayer times. When the group started eight weeks ago, not one couple in the group was spending time studying the Bible together. The most important thing families need to do is spend quality time together in God's Word. Praise God, we are seeing that happening!

KidZone

We have a growing number of stay-at-home parents in our

area. We see this as an awesome opportunity to minister to young families. Our church hosts KidZone (a program similar to a short VBS) every Tuesday morning. It has helped us connect with families on another level and has been beneficial in connecting families in the church.

Everyone can reach families in different ways. Some of our ideas may work in your context; others may not. I encourage you to find what does work and do everything you can to reach families with the gospel. The best way to reach the next generation is to reach this one and teach them generational discipleship. **ONE**

About the Writer: Josh and Ashley Bennett are part of the Marana Team along with Jeff and Heather Goodman.

Hay!

What are you going to do with the family farm?

Death is inevitable. Have you prepared your property to benefit family and the ministries you have supported throughout your lifetime? **Free Will Baptist Foundation** has partnered with **Cornerstone Estate Planning** to help in this crucial area. More than 850 Free Will Baptist families have already secured peace of mind about their estates. Contact Cornerstone and the Foundation to learn more.

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REACHING THE COMMUNITY: A FAMILY AFFAIR

BY SCOTT WARREN



Our kids were born into church planting. When we started CrossPoint Church in Salt Lake City, Utah, it was just the two of us. But, shortly after, God added Mia, a beautiful baby girl, to our team. Almost two years later, her brother Jude came along. Our church planting family of two became a church planting family of four. We often tell people our kids are a big part of our ministry team, and it's true. Reaching the community truly is a family affair.

When we bought and remodeled our current facilities a little over two years ago, our kids spent long, hot days and tiring, late nights working right alongside us. At the time, they were just five and three, but they pulled carpet, swept floors, painted walls, and made more trips to the building supply store than you can count. And, they never complained! In fact, they loved it. They loved showing people which classroom was theirs, where momma would sing, and where daddy would preach. They were proud of "their" church, of the part they played in remodeling it, and they couldn't wait to see it full of new friends for the grand opening.

Not only were our kids working with us on the church facilities, but also some of our greatest opportunities to witness to people have come because of them. Through their involvement in sports, school groups, and even play times at the park, we've met other parents and had the opportunity to share Christ with them. Our kids love to share their knowledge and love for the Bible with the kids they meet.

As our kids have grown, they've become more involved in community outreach efforts. Each year, our church organizes and sponsors a massive Easter egg hunt held the Saturday before Easter. We hold the Eggstravaganza on



the lawn at City Hall, right across the street from our church property. A couple of weeks before the hunt, volunteers from our church stuff more than 20,000 plastic Easter eggs, and on the day of the event, we arrive early to set up the field, the information tent, and the sound system, and hide the eggs. Our kids have also worked in our booth at the annual three-day city festival, and they help serve an appreciation meal twice a year to our city's elected officials and staff, police officers, and firefighters. Reaching the community really is a family affair.

Our family is much larger now than just the four of us. Hundreds of people have supported us in reaching this community through faithful prayer and financial partnership. Over the years, dozens of people have traveled to Utah to stand with us, shoulder-to-shoulder, sharing the love of Jesus in practical ways in this spiritually dark place. Most recently, a group of young adults traveled to Utah from the Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee, and helped with the Easter Eggstravaganza. We were so happy to have these young people use their time and talents to help us here with the work. Everyone who gives, prays, or visits is a part of our church-planting family, and it takes all of us working together to do the job.

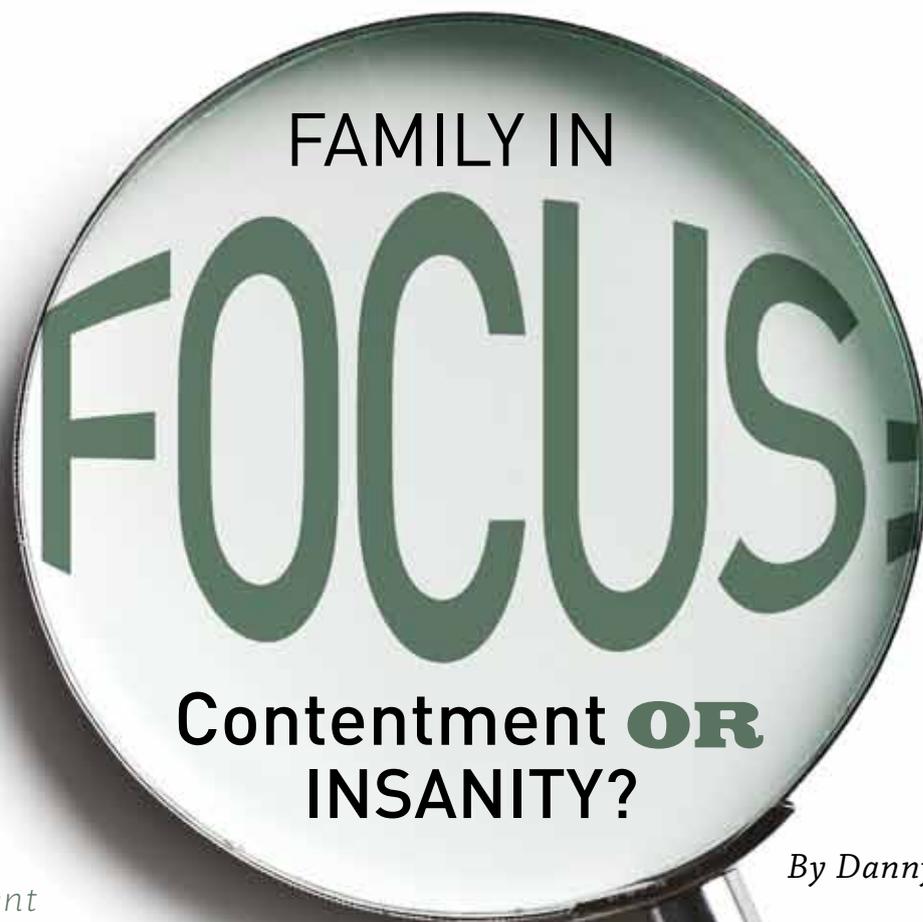
Maybe God hasn't called your family to pick up, move across the country (or even across the globe) to plant a church, but there's a community right outside your door waiting to be reached. From the youngest to the oldest, there's work to be done. Reaching the community is a family affair. **ONE**

About the Writer: Scott and Stacy Warren are church planters with North America Ministries. Learn more about CrossPoint Church at www.crosspointslc.org.



Building on the Legacy

The New
Welch College
Campus
(coming fall 2016)



We live in a small house with five children, all schooled at home.

We live in a different country surrounded by others who speak a different language. I work from home. This sounds like the beginning of a made-for-television movie, doesn't it? But this is our reality. It is the type of situation that would make most people want to run away screaming.

By Danny Elliott

Please don't think I am suggesting we are somehow stronger or better than other people. We are not. So, how do we do it and maintain sanity? (I really need to know.) In all seriousness, we choose to be content with our situation. In Philippians 4:11, Paul set the example for his readers, "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." Even though Paul was referring to his financial situation, the principle applies to every life situation.

To be content means one is satisfied and happy with the way things are, no matter how things are. Yes, it is a result of trusting God, but it is also a choice. How do we make that choice? It boils down to having the right family focus.

1. Focus on Christ. Without a focus on Christ, nothing else makes sense (or even matters). As a Christian family, we make every effort to make Christ the focus of everything we say and do. Since our lives should bring glory and honor to Him, we want to reflect Him to others.

Does this mean we never argue? Or never do or say anything without thinking, “What would Jesus do?” Of course not! We are a real family with real life problems. We don’t always focus on Christ together as we should, but this is a goal we revisit regularly. By making an effort to keep our focus on Christ, we are able to deal with real life problems in a much better way, which helps us to be content with our life situation. We constantly remind ourselves that it is all about Him.

2. Focus on our purpose. We are in a unique situation as church planters with Free Will Baptist North American Ministries. We firmly believe God has called us to live in Québec, Canada, to tell others about Jesus and to plant a Free Will Baptist church. As we consider our living situation, we can be content, because we know we are doing what God wants us to do.

We prayed extensively about where we needed to live, how we should educate our children, and how to go about the work of planting a church here. God has directed us in each of these matters, so we can be content with our life situation when we focus on our God-given purpose.

3. Focus on each other. This might sound unspiritual, but it is an important element that leads to contentedness. In Philippians 2:3-4, Paul instructed the Philippian believers, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”

Yes, we have an authority structure in place; and no, the children are not at the top of it. We strive as a family to look at each other as special creations in the eyes of God. We try hard to be selfless. Of course, we are all selfish by nature, but that is no excuse. We need to keep selfishness in check with the power and help of the Holy Spirit. It all goes back to the first focus on Christ.

Whatever your family situation might be, by keeping the right focus you can choose contentedness. The alternative is not so attractive. After all, no family wants to be labeled as, “That crazy family that lives down the street.” **ONE**

About the Writer: Danny and Dawn Elliott and their five children are planting a Free Will Baptist church in Quebec, Canada.

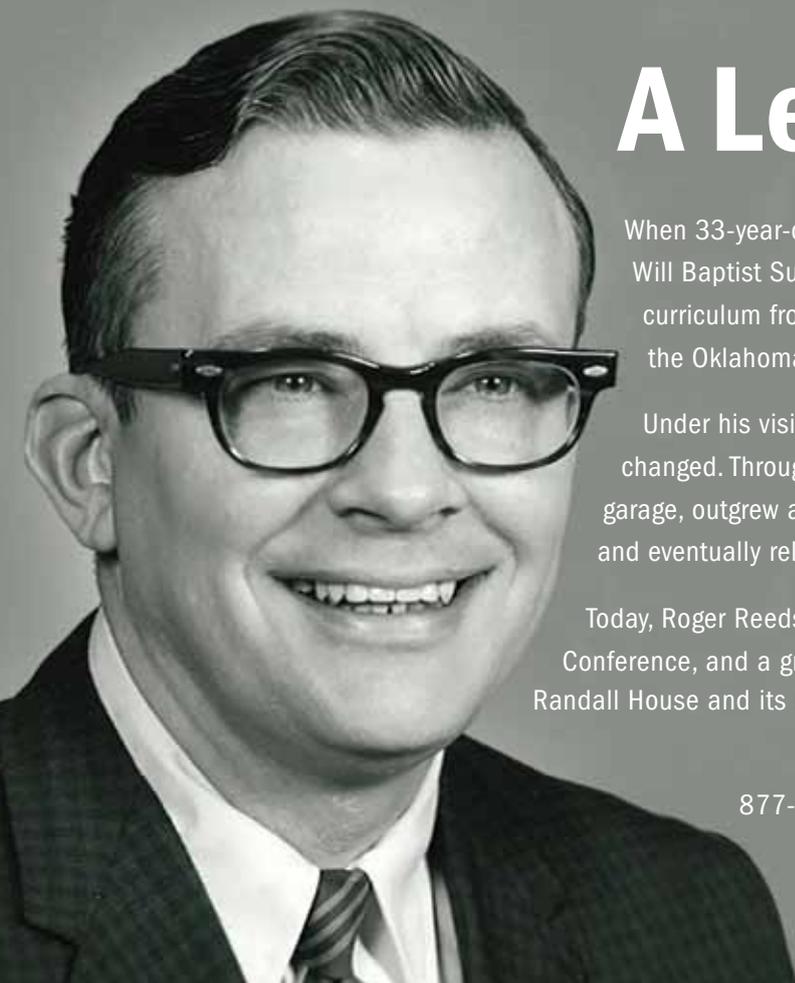
A Legacy of Vision...

When 33-year-old Roger Reeds arrived in Nashville to become the director of the Free Will Baptist Sunday School Department, the denomination was shipping curriculum from a garage on Richland Avenue and using literature borrowed from the Oklahoma State Association.

Under his visionary leadership, by the time he retired in 1993, the landscape had changed. Through good times and bad, the department outgrew the West Nashville garage, outgrew a new building across town, outgrew a 10,000-square-foot warehouse, and eventually relocated to a 50,000-square-foot facility.

Today, Roger Reeds’ legacy continues through Randall House, the National Youth Conference, and a growing book division. Why not **create your own Legacy** by funding Randall House and its ministries with an endowment through Free Will Baptist Foundation:

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



Here Comes the Bride

Traditions, rituals, customs, and norms distinguish cultures. Even in our modern, shrinking world, courtship and marriage often remain tightly ensconced in the traditions and rituals of the past. Several overseas missionaries provide a glimpse into courtship and marriage in their host countries.

Japan by Sandra Bishop

Traditionally, Japanese weddings are Shinto.

Immediate family and a select number of guests attend the ceremony held at the Shinto shrine. In a traditional Shinto wedding, the bride is painted white and wears a white wedding kimono. The groom wears a formal black and grey kimono. The groom, bride, and both sets of parents drink sake (rice wine) in three sips to represent the unity of the couple and their families. This takes the place of vows.

Recently, the wedding scene has changed. Modern couples combine Western, Christian, and sometimes Buddhist wedding traditions in their ceremonies. Usually, the weddings are both civil and religious. At the least, a marriage must be registered to be legal.

In the last 20 years, the trend is to have a church or chapel wedding, in spite of the fact that less than 1% of the popula-



tion is Christian. Some pastors and missionaries use this opportunity to minister to couples and counsel them on a biblical understanding of marriage. Wedding chapels, often connected with large hotels, are a booming business, especially since many towns and villages don't have even one church. To save money, some young couples have private ceremonies with only family present. Wedding gifts are monetary, if given at

all. Instead, gifts are given to the guests who pay to attend the reception.

A white wedding gown is more the norm these days. In a tradition dating back to the 14th century, the bride changes clothes several times during the reception. At some weddings, a wedding gown is followed by one or two different evening gowns, sometimes a kimono, and ends with a nice going away outfit. This signifies the bride is ready to return to everyday life—now as a wife.

Until the 1970s, 40% of weddings were arranged marriages. A third party acted as a go-between for *Omiai* (introductory meeting) between a man and woman. The *Omiai* involved the two parties meeting at a neutral location after viewing the profiles of several individuals and deciding one person might be compatible and, possibly, a good match. Sometimes, it took several meetings with different individuals before a match was found. Finances, temperament, family history, and personal appearance, among other things, were considered.

According to church friends and English students with whom I talked, arranged marriages are no longer the norm. Most people meet at school, university, on the job, or through introductions by a friend. They had to think really hard to come up with a friend whose marriage had been arranged, and some couldn't

think of anyone who fell into that category.

Family relationships are also changing. In the past, the oldest son continued to reside at home after marriage, taking care of his parents and, finally, inheriting everything. This still happens, though more often the son and his wife live apart from the parents and take care of them from a distance. The wife becomes a member of the husband's family after marriage. This often results in her feeling controlled, watched, criticized, and demeaned by the in-laws. Though better these days, this still occurs.

Changes are taking place on the domestic front as well. In the past, men worked and did little at home, leaving domestic responsibilities to the wife. Today, however, husbands help with different chores: cooking, cleaning, laundry, minor repairs, yard work, etc.

Christian weddings are usually held in a church and look more like what Americans know. I was surprised the first time I attended a church wedding here in Japan and heard a sermon. I like it, because unsaved family members and friends often attend. This offers a chance for the gospel to be presented, as well as the biblical view of marriage. Some of the traditions, like changing clothes during the reception, carry over into Christian weddings. Most other traditions don't because they are connected with the Shinto religion.

Lobi, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa,

by Clint and Lynette Morgan

Growing up with the western style of dating, engagement, and marriage, I was intrigued by the practices of the Lobi people when we arrived for ministry in Côte d'Ivoire.

The Lobi are a farming, hunting, warring people who live in the northeast corner of Côte d'Ivoire and bordering countries. They have no real homeland because they are semi-nomadic, moving when grazing land becomes scarce or soil no longer produces good crops.

As it relates to marriage, the Lobi have retained the traditional practice of arranged marriages. Fundamentally, marriage occurs in one of two ways. In one, a young man and woman are attracted to each other and the parents are brought into the process.

Often, the young man will work for his future in-laws before marriage. He may experience sexual relations with his bride-to-be during this time. In fact, it is acceptable, even expected, for the woman to become pregnant and have children before the marriage is finalized. Eventually, a bride price is set—generally two to five cows and perhaps some money. Once the bride price is agreed upon, the two come together as man and woman (words for husband and wife do not exist in the Lobi language). The bride price may not be paid in full yet, but it must be agreed on and payment promised.

The Lobi bride and groom have no elaborate ceremony to celebrate their marriage. The bride may be accompanied by some of her friends when she goes to take up permanent residence with her husband. Their home is in his father's courtyard where they will stay until his father liberates him to go out on his own.

The second means of obtaining a wife is a strange custom known as "wife stealing." This occurs when a man and woman develop an interest in one another, and both are already married. They set a rendezvous point to meet at night. He takes her home with him and, when her husband comes looking for her, a bad fight may ensue...or, he may be happy to get rid of her and agree to be reimbursed the bride price he paid.

The Lobi have one particular taboo in choosing a mate: a man does not choose a woman from his mother's side of the family. It

is extremely rare for this to happen, and the bride price becomes incredibly complex in such cases.

After the marriage is official, a clear division of labor occurs in the home. The work of clearing and planting a field is generally reserved for the man. He is also charged with hunting, caring for the livestock, and protecting his family. Women also have many roles: helping with planting and harvesting; keeping the courtyard clean; taking care of the children; gathering edible leaves, fruits, and vegetables; grinding grain; fetching water; and cutting firewood to prepare meals. Obviously, the Lobi wife/mother carries a great deal of responsibility for the family.

Inheritance rights are complex and difficult for people to obey and even more difficult to explain. Basically, the Lobi have a matrilineal culture—passing goods from one generation to the next through the women. However, the religious aspects of Lobi life are under the charge of the father.

After conversion, in contrast to the culture, premarital sex is forbidden and marital fidelity is demanded. Some cultural norms are also addressed. For example, In Lobi culture, it is totally acceptable for a man to beat his wife by slapping her shoulders. This, of course, is not acceptable among believers. Also, the couple is encouraged to legalize their marital commitment; although this is not always practical if neither has a birth certificate or other legal forms of identification.

Brazil

by Rejane Eagleton

Generally, there is no typical “how to” for selecting a spouse in Brazil. Couples meet much like they do in the United States. They live in the same city, have known each other since childhood, or attend the same school. Other times, they meet at college or at work. Some people find each other at a party or are introduced by a common friend. Others meet through the Internet.

People usually select a spouse first by their attractiveness, then by social position and ability to support a family, etc. They get to know each other to see if they have things in common and if this could become a serious relationship. Men usually want to meet other women just for fun. Many women do that, too. Most of the time, if they like each other and feel they are compatible, they start living together before thinking about getting married. Sometimes, after dating for a while or living together, the girl becomes pregnant and the couple marries, though that is not the norm. Many girls become single mothers. As things become “modern,” we see more single mothers and divorced couples.

The selection of a spouse is a totally individual decision after they become 18 or over. Years ago, parents chose a spouse for their daughters, but no longer. Some young adults still seek approval from parents; others do not.

The marriage ceremony varies, depending on the financial situation. Some ceremonies are very simple; others are elaborate. That is true for both Christian and non-Christian weddings.

Something that is almost extinct is the period between dating and marriage, called *noivado* in Portuguese. During *noivado*, the groom-to-be buys wedding bands, and the couple wears them on their right hands. Some couples have a special ceremony and reception party for their parents and a few friends and family

members for their engagement. On the wedding day, they transfer the bands to their left hands. The bride-to-be does not receive an engagement ring like in the States. During the engagement period, the couple prepares themselves for married life—finding a place to live, buying furniture. The young woman works on her *enxoval de noiva* (bridal goods similar to a hope chest) that includes linens, towels, tablecloth and napkins, etc. In the past, many young women embroidered these linens. Those days are long gone. Now, everything is purchased.

Due to American media influence, Brazilian weddings are more and more Americanized. Years ago, it was our custom to have just a couple of witnesses (*padrinhos*) for the bride and a couple for the groom. Today, even though they do not have groomsmen and bridesmaids, the couple will have several *padrinhos* couples. Sometimes eight to ten couples stand on each side of the bride and groom during the ceremony. It gets very crowded. They usually have several photographers as well.

Marriage can bring a lot of stress on family relationships. It almost seems as if the parents compete for the attention of the married couple. They have to decide which family to celebrate Christmas with—her family or his? Many young couples end up celebrating Christmas Eve with one family and Christmas dinner with the



other, if they live fairly close. If not, they will visit families on alternating years.

Most couples have their own place to live, although in some cases, due to finances or an unexpected pregnancy, they live with her family. Some in-laws are nicer than others, but stress or conflict often erupts. In general, parents like their married children to live close by so they can visit and see each other frequently.

Things are changing. In the not too distant past, you never heard about a man doing dishes or changing a child's diaper. Now, with more and more couples working outside the home, couples share responsibilities. Usually, Brazilian men are the "macho type." They do not like to do "women's" chores, and many of them will not. In the past, the man was the sole breadwinner, but more and more both spouses work outside the home to meet financial obligations. In addition,

many women want a career of their own. If they do not have children, it works fine. The man is still in charge of the more expensive payments; the woman may help, or she may spend her salary on personal expenses and "lighter bills." It depends on their agreement.

When the wife has a better paying job, it often becomes a source of conflict and problems, and one couple I know divorced as a result. Very sad.

I would like to say being a Christ follower changes things. Unfortunately, this is not always true. Many so-called Christians in Brazil today do not live very differently than non-believers. We know what the Bible says about purity before marriage. However, we also know it is rare for both bride and groom to be virgins on their wedding day. One significant difference is that alcoholic beverages are not served at the reception of a Christian wedding.

Scripture calls the Church (and thereby individual Christians) the Bride of Christ. Our cultural norms are outlined for us in Scripture: love God with all our beings and love our neighbors as ourselves (Matthew 22:36-40). Paul's letters further define the culture of the Church, His Bride, instructing us (among other things) to be virtuous in our thoughts (Philippians 4:8), to live worthy of being called His Bride (Ephesians 4:1-3, Colossians 1:10-14), and to be expectant of our Bridegroom's arrival (Titus 2:13). We are given guidelines for dress: we are to clothe ourselves in the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17) and in love, kindness, forgiveness, humility, mercy, and patience (Colossians 3:12-14).

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Marriage, Spain Style

BY KRISTI JOHNSON

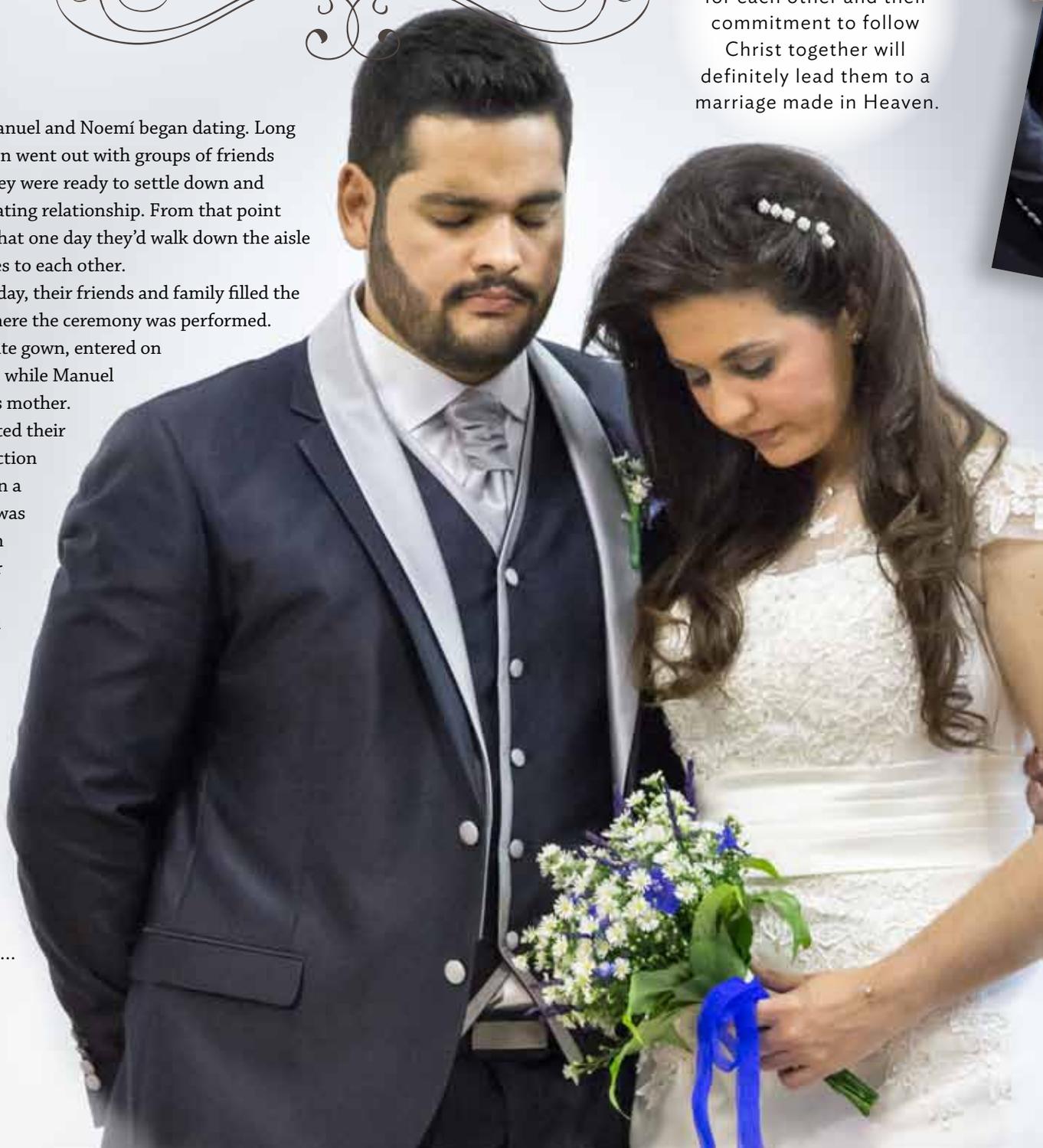


While they may not do everything considered traditional, their love for each other and their commitment to follow Christ together will definitely lead them to a marriage made in Heaven.

Four years ago, Manuel and Noemí began dating. Long before that, they often went out with groups of friends until they realized they were ready to settle down and get serious in their dating relationship. From that point forward, they knew that one day they'd walk down the aisle and commit their lives to each other.

On their wedding day, their friends and family filled the evangelical church where the ceremony was performed. Noemí, wearing a white gown, entered on the arm of her father, while Manuel was escorted in by his mother. Afterwards, they invited their guests to enjoy a selection of appetizers and then a full banquet meal. It was a beautiful expression of their love and their Christian union.

While Manuel and Noemí's wedding was beautiful, they decided not to include many Spanish wedding customs. For example, typically Spaniards use *las arras* (13 gold coins), which the groom places into the bride's hand, and then she reciprocates... symbolizing they are





entrusting all they have to one another. Noemí chose not to wear a traditional headpiece called the mantilla, a long lace veil with a tall, comb-like piece, dating to 16th century Spain. Traditionally, it was part of every bride's attire, but most modern-day Spanish brides have abandoned this custom.

During a typical wedding reception—an elaborate meal with several courses—the bride and groom visit each table, greeting their guests and giving them a small gift, or *detalle*. Each guest responds with an envelope, which usually includes enough money to cover the cost of their meal, along with a gift for the new couple. (Sometimes, on the wedding invitation, a bank account number is given so guests can give their gifts directly by bank transfer.)

Throughout the reception, guests often call out various chants to the couple like “¡Qué se

besen!” (Kiss! Kiss!) or “¡Vivan los novios!” (Long live the bride and groom!) A Spanish wedding reception usually lasts long into the night, and is truly a celebration of not only the love between the couple, but also their unending connection with their family and friends.

Because Manuel and Noemí are believers, their journey from friendship to marriage has not been typical. Most people of the Catholic Church are married by a priest, but since Noemí's father is a pastor, he was privileged to perform the ceremony and watch his daughter say “I do.” Soon after their wedding, Manuel and Noemí will break the Spanish tradition of living close to their families and embark on a new ministry, which will take them several hundred miles from home. While they may not do everything considered traditional, their love for each other and their commitment to follow Christ together will definitely lead them to a marriage made in Heaven. **ONE**

About the Writer: Kristi Johnson and her husband Tim have been missionaries to Alpedrete, Spain, since 1998.



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Around the World >>

Board Appoints Six in April

Antioch, TN—The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions met in annual session in Antioch, Tennessee, April 27-28, 2015.

The board approved Anna Forlines for a one-year, short-term internship with Matt and Cristina Price in Nantes, France. Anna, completing her sophomore year at Welch College (Nashville, Tennessee), will attend the University of Nantes to study French and to learn about the culture.

The board approved Myriam (Mimi) Le Louarn for a two-year internship in France. Myriam, sister of Lydie Teague, attended Hillsdale FWB College (Moore, Oklahoma) for the 2014-2105 academic year and toured with the college's New Life Singers. She will work with the J'Pense team—Dennis, Carol, Joel, and Lydie Teague—in their outreach ministries.

The board approved Eddy and Amanda Simmons (Faith Fellowship FWB Church, Matthews, North Carolina) as career missionaries to the Samburu people group of Kenya. The Simmons will serve in an isolated region among the unreached Samburu people.

"This is a historic appointment," stated Jeff Turnbough. "We are not opening a country (Kenya), yet opening a work exclusively with an unreached people group who reside primarily within the borders of a particular nation."

The board approved Tyler and Kellie Penn (Champaign, Illinois) as career missionaries to international students at the University of Illinois Urbana. In 2014, the board voted to partner with the Home



Anna Forlines



Myriam (Mimi) Le Louarn



Eddy and Amanda Simmons



Tyler and Kellie Penn



Steve and Judy Lytle

Missions Board for the purpose of cross-cultural ministry projects in North America. "I hope this significant appointment," Jeff Turnbough said, "is the first of many such joint ministry ventures with North American Ministries." The Penns, originally appointed as career missionaries with North American Ministries in 2011, will partner with a church-planting home missionary.

The board accepted the retirement of Steve and Judy Lytle (Panama) effective June 30, 2015. "Steve and Judy have served selflessly for 40 years," stated Board Chairman Danny Williams. "We commend them for their dedicated service in Panama, in the Mission office, and wherever their services were requested. They have been outstanding examples of God-called missionaries."

Blankenship CPA Group provided an unqualified approval of the 2014 audit. The board approved a \$6.9 million framework budget for 2016 to be presented at the July 2015 meeting of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

All board members (Danny Williams, chairman, AL; Janice Banks, OK; Nelson Henderson, AR; Jeff Manning, NC; Greg McAllister, CA; Tom McCullough, MI; Jeff Nichols, TN; Robert Posner, TX; Mark Price, OH) were in attendance. ■

Earthquakes in India and Nepal

Antioch, TN—On April 25, 2015, a 7.8M (some reports say as high as 8.1M) earthquake rocked Nepal and north India. Strong aftershocks, continuing for days, yielded more damage and devastation. Another earthquake shook Nepal and North India, Tuesday, May 12. Seismologists expected aftershocks and quakes to continue for weeks.

Carlisle Hanna, missionary in North India, felt many of these and watched as buildings on the Sonapur compound sustained damage from the recurring quakes. Brother Carlisle wrote, "The suffering is beyond description."

Churches in both India and Nepal incurred damage. Several churches are no longer safe. Hundreds of thousands of individuals lost their homes, many Christians among them. Thousands lost their lives. Afraid to be inside or sometimes with dwellings too damaged to house them, families live in tents and makeshift accommodations. Parents kept children home, fearful of them being trapped in school buildings.

Even though the events fade from news headlines, people need physical and spiritual aid. You can help:

Pray for emotional stability in overwhelming loss and devastation. Pray those most in need of help will receive aid. Pray God's peace and joy will emanate through Christians, despite the horrific conditions. Pray for wisdom for Brother Carlisle and our pastors as they assess the situation and seek to help. Pray for safety for families as traffickers and others seek to take advantage of the situation.

Give to help rebuild churches and provide for people through our partners Friends of India (2434 Allen Road, Effingham, SC 29541)

Morgans Transfer to Spain

Antioch, TN—The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions approved Neil and Mandi Morgan’s reassignment to Spain from Uruguay via email ballot on May 19, 2015.

Neil and Mandi, scheduled to return to Uruguay May 31, struggled with excessive education costs in Uruguay. After much conversation with multiple options considered, the couple agreed a transfer to Spain was both practical and God directed. “It was not an easy decision to leave Uruguay. Our brothers and sisters there are dear to us,” Neil and Mandi wrote. “However, after much prayerful consideration, we feel this is God’s leading and we are excited about the opportunities He has for us in Spain.”

Initially, the Morgans will work in the Madrid area with an existing church plant. “The transfer just makes sense,” General Director Clint Morgan stated. “The Morgans are a passionate, talented couple, and the Mission wanted to see them continue to serve.”

Neil and Mandi were appointed as career missionaries to Uruguay in April 2008. Following deputation ministry and a year of language study in Costa Rica, the Morgans arrived in Montevideo, Uruguay, September 2011. They returned to the States in December 2013 for stateside assignment.

The Morgans will begin the process of applying for visas for Spain and continue to hold services as they reorient and prepare for this change in ministry. “We ask that you re-

member our family in prayer during this transition,” Mandi said. Neil and Mandi have three daughters: Emma Catherine, Aubrey, and Sofia.



“The Spain team is excited about gaining these reinforcements,” Clint Morgan added. “The Morgans need the ongoing support of all those who have stood by them in the past.”

Those wishing to support Neil and Mandi Morgan may give online at www.fwbgo.com/give or send donations to 5233 Mt. View Road, Antioch, TN 37013.

Snapshots Around the World



Brazil—The First FWB Church of Campinas— first Free Will Baptist church in Brazil—celebrated its 57th anniversary, Sunday, April 26.



Bulgaria—Twenty people attended a lecture on depression, sponsored by the New Life FWB Church in Varna. The session addressed both physiological and spiritual issues.



Côte d'Ivoire—A pastors’ retreat was held in Doropo, Côte d’Ivoire, April 6-10.



Cuba—The Cedars of Lebanon Seminary in Pinar del Rio, Cuba, graduated its first class with master’s degrees in ministry.



India—Pastors’ and leaders’ wives were encouraged and strengthened by a conference April 19-23.



Japan—The first adult English class held at the Bihoro church had 10 attendees. Doug Bishop and Rusty Carney teach this class. Additionally, 52 children attended the Easter party.



Panama—More than 30 children from the Los Sauces community attended a breakfast followed by Bible classes on April 18. The mission work is sponsored by the Chitré church and led by Benjamin and Stephanie Acevedo.



France—Robert Bryan and Dennis Teague began a seven-week training course on apologetics at the St. Sébastien and St. Nazaire churches Monday, May 4.

France—The St. Sébastien church sponsored an outreach event Sunday, April 26, in a neutral location. The event featured singing, a play, and a presentation of evidence of Christ’s resurrection.

France—Three young people— Nathaniel, Mélanie, and Saraly—from the St. Sébastien church were baptized Sunday, May 17.



Spain—The Executive Committee of the Federation of Free Will Baptists met in Spain April 18 to develop a strategy for strengthening churches and establishing new works.

GOING VIRAL

By Crystal Hodges

Collapsing on my bed after a long day of classes, I kicked my shoes off and opened my computer. Once my screen lit up, I signed onto Facebook for a short, mental break. I had my usual 15 notifications, but one from a friend really caught my eye: “I saw your picture in my newsfeed today.”

My picture was in her newsfeed? Confused, I clicked on the attached link...and there I was... along with a stranger’s logo and three simple words: “one like = beautiful,” I was going viral.



TIMELINE

Like most people who venture into the world of social media, I post an occasional “selfie” on my Facebook page or blog, but my face doesn’t look like everyone else. Along with millions of other people, I have a birthmark...mine just happens to cover a large portion of my face.

Until my early 20s, I did not realize just how different I look from others. It was then I began to notice the stares and comments. It’s rare to spend a day out in public without people reacting to my unique appearance.

As a child, I suppose I rarely noticed these reactions. I was too busy enjoying the latest episode of Barney or play dates with my cousin. My mom protected me from these reactions like a mother bear, often physically shielding me from a stranger’s unkind gaze. As an adult, however, my mother can no longer protect me, and I have come to understand how cruel the world can be.

I constantly “swim upstream” against a world that tells me I am not beautiful enough. I’m not beautiful enough to walk into a restaurant without disgust-filled, wide-eyed stares. I’m not beautiful enough to walk into a store without degrading marks from strangers who act as if I cannot hear their hurtful words

that sometimes cause me to feel as though I am only half a person because of the appearance of half of my face.

I have been told I have skin cancer, that something is seriously wrong with me, that it's not really a birthmark. Complete strangers have persisted that I should have surgery to "fix" my face, even after I explained that I'm happy the way I am. Others have told me that if they were me, they would never leave their house.

MORE THAN A BIRTHMARK

I'm more than a girl with a facial difference. I'm more than a birthmark. My name is Crystal. I love to travel, capturing beautiful moments with my camera, pen, and journal. I'm a baker, a Jamba Juice™ addict, and a college student who is passionate about learning American Sign Language.

I've lived overseas by myself, journeyed to a dozen countries, even swam with dolphins. I have also experienced the loss of a niece and watched my mother care for my father in poor health. I've experienced tremendous joys and gut-wrenching sorrows. I am more than a mark on my skin.

My birthmark is called a Port Wine Stain and is caused by extra blood vessels that extend deeper than the skin. In my case, the birthmark covers the majority of the left side of my face with

Disbelief and confusion engulfed me, and I began to pay more attention to the details of what was happening. Within eight hours, the photo had received over 14,000 "likes" and more than a thousand comments.

a purplish hue and travels all the way to my brain. Some people think my birthmark is shaped like Australia, while my friend's 10-year-old son recently asked her about her friend "with the heart on her face."

Because the extra blood vessels go all the way to my brain, many aspects of my health are affected. Some are obvious. The birthmark itself is hard to miss, and my lip is lopsided and swollen. Other areas aren't as noticeable. Due to increased pressure in my eye, I have Glaucoma. Usually, this disease affects older generations, but since age eight, I've lived with the fact that my left eye could go blind at any time. MRIs are a regular part of my life as doctors check to see if the extra blood vessels have

expanded to the point where I am in danger of brain damage or epilepsy. I'm a regular at my dentist's office, as the teeth on my left side are prone to cavities and disease.

Little can be done for this type of birthmark, but to avoid future health problems, I undergo laser treatments every two to three months that stop my birthmark from growing. During each treatment, laser pulses are sent through my skin, bursting up to 300 individual blood vessels. This leaves my face swollen and a darker purple than normal for several weeks. The medicated salve only makes it look worse. I stopped these treatments temporarily at age 11, but started again at age 20 after researching the long-term health benefits.

SHOCKED AND CONFUSED

At age 23, I've had 47 of these surgeries. I have become accustomed to the effects of these treatments, and I forget that others don't understand the trauma to my face. I didn't think twice about posting Facebook photos after returning to my treatments, but I quickly learned many people were confused about what I was doing...and why. One friend from afar asked, "Why are you having these treatments? Don't you know you're beautiful just the way you are?"

To eliminate the confusion, and to help my friends and supporters understand my reasoning, I shared my story publicly on my blog. I had always been extra cautious of what I posted online and paid close attention to social media settings. But in spite of my attempts to be safe, on that warm August afternoon, I suddenly found myself in the middle of a Facebook Fiasco.

GOING VIRAL

I grabbed my computer and ran to the kitchen to show my mom. "Look, Mom! I'm going viral."

Ever practical, she responded, "What does that mean?"

After looking at the image that was spreading across the Internet, with a dose of humor she responded, "Well...I don't have a face that could go viral."

Then she left for an appointment, leaving me alone with my thoughts. Disbelief and confusion engulfed me, and I began to pay more attention to the details of what was happening. Within eight hours, the photo had received over 14,000 "likes" and more than a thousand comments.

I began to research the page that had posted the picture. I quickly learned they had over 3 million followers, claimed the Christian religion, and expressed they "want to reach others for Christ."

Continuing a staring contest with my non-blinking selfie, a

thousand questions swirled in my brain: “Who did this? Why did they do this? How did they get my image? Should I be alarmed, offended, or flattered? Why do they automatically assume I don’t feel beautiful without their help? And what does taking a person’s image, adding the text ‘one like = beautiful’ have to do with reaching others for Christ?” I continued my mental venting: “I believe in God and follow the faith they supposedly promote...but I don’t believe in this!”

After five minutes of researching their site, I hit the limit of what I could take. I was overwhelmed with questions and emotions so I quickly spaced myself from this unexpected twist in my life. I turned my computer off.

WORLD TRAVELER

In the coming days, I tried to process my feelings. I wondered what I was supposed to feel. Was it dramatic to feel angry? Violated? Judged? Misunderstood? Though the shock of the situation faded, confusion remained and intensified. Sharing my images and my story on my blog and on Facebook was never a ploy to gain attention, and I never intended to become a nameless, spotlight Internet attraction. And while I have always known I was a little different, I never realized I was so different that I would become a sympathetic symbol for millions because of one man’s perception.

Weeks went by, and I learned that five other Facebook pages had begun using my image. The picture traveled around the world, posted a minimum of 16 times, with over 256,000 likes, 13,000 comments, and thousands of shares.

Many friends expressed their outrage. Others chided me: “Whatever you put online will be used somewhere else.” “Once you post it, anybody can use it.” (This is not true; laws exist to protect people from these situations.)

Others encouraged me: “I know God can and will do some amazing things with your story...Just let Him use you if the door opens!”

APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

It took six days to determine a public reply. I really wanted to run from the situation, but I knew I had to respond. I took time to think, pray, and seek counsel before responding through a blog entry and a picture of my own.

Taking the original photo, I added my own logo and the text: “Like and share this if you agree that women (and men) don’t need the Internet and thousands of strangers to validate them and their beauty.”

People often ask me, “When did you become comfortable with who you are? When did you finally learn to feel beautiful?” Thankfully, this never has been a major part of my story. Sure, I have had weak moments about my physical appearance, and that is normal. Most people struggle with their appearance from time to time. But for the most part, I have simply accepted myself as I am. Sadly, in the months following the



VIRAL VACCINATION

To avoid my painful experience, consider a few social media safety tips:

- Only add people you know.
- Arrange settings for maximum privacy.
- Understand that everything you post is at risk of being shared—no matter your settings. And once something is online, it’s hard, almost impossible, to remove.
- Add logos and copyright information to your photos (and articles), especially when blogging.
- If you do “go viral,” know you have rights. If your image is ever used without your consent, refer to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act of 1998. Most social media outlets have procedures to remove inappropriate posts.
- Understand that removing a post is an uphill battle. Of 16 image shares that I found, only eight of them were removed.



Although social media is instant, you don’t have to respond immediately. Take time to consider how this moment will define you. You will notice I have been careful not to share the Facebook groups involved or the names of those who run them. Six months after my picture went viral, I contacted the man behind the post. I shared my story, and I listened to him as well. As a result, we are considering ways we might be able to work together in the future. We never know what God may do next!

Facebook Fiasco, I found myself wondering, “Am I really as different as they made me out in their stupid-but-very-successful post?”

For the first time, I saw myself through the eyes of thousands of people who freely shared their opinions about my looks from the safety of their home computers. It was excruciating. For the first time in my life, I truly felt uncomfortable in my own skin, catching myself looking down towards the ground more than I care to admit in response to my temporarily depleted source of confidence.

Yet, I was also reminded daily that God created me just how He wanted me. I was raised in a family that reminds me constantly that I have a God who knit me together in my mother’s womb (Psalm 139:13). For the first time, the meaning of that verse hit me. God is a “knitter.” He stitched me together Himself. Had God not wanted me to have a purple patch on my face, He wouldn’t have switched colors. God color-coordinated me to the plans He has for my life—plans that included sharing my story, speaking at camps, schools, and hospitals...and maybe even going viral.

God is a “knitter.” He stitched me together Himself. Had God not wanted me to have a purple patch on my face, He wouldn’t have switched colors.



BEYOND THE STAIN

A month later, I found myself struggling to speak to 70 women in an old, wooden retreat center surrounded by lake and forest. I nearly canceled the speaking engagement after the Facebook Fiasco, but I couldn’t let a temporary, discouragement stop me from sharing deep truths of true worth and beauty. When I finished, my friend Denise Nicholes walked to a keyboard and began to play and sing an unfamiliar melody:

*I wear no disguise; please see me through my Father’s eyes.
I didn’t ask for this door; I was made for this and so much more.*

What do you see, when you look at me?

The hurt will one day fade; in His image I am made.

I’m more than what you see; I give Him all praise and glory

What do you see, when you look at me?

The hurt will one day fade, in His image I am made.

Oh I can take the rain, please try to see this girl beyond the stain

Beyond the stain, I am strong, and I am free.

Beyond the stain, this is who I’m meant to be.

I will worship Him through joy and through the pain.

I hope you see I am so much more beyond the stain.

It was my life put to song in the most beautiful way. For the first time in weeks, I saw beyond my stain. I tearfully began to see myself in my Father’s eyes, and while the stain on my face remains, the stain on my heart has begun to heal.

As I write this, I realize that most people don’t have a birthmark like mine, and their pictures haven’t gone viral. However, I’ve also come to realize that most people have their own stains they feel other people can’t see past...even if their stains don’t show physically like mine.

As you read this, you may feel stained by a decision or mistake you’ve made in the past, by the way someone has treated you, by difficult experiences in life, or perhaps even a physical feature. I’m here to tell you that you are beautiful, and you have so much to offer the world. I’m also here to tell you that God “knitted” you, color-coordinating His plans for your life. He will never leave nor forsake you, and He sees beyond these earthly stains to His child, His incredible, perfect creation—a beautiful person with a story to tell that just might change the world. Beyond your stain, God sees you! **ONE**

About the Writer: Crystal Hodges was born and raised in California. She is pursuing mass communications, and has been published in a number of online and print magazines. She loves traveling, snorkeling, and her dog, Miss Ruby Ann.

iPhones, P. F. Chang's, and Texas

BY
BRENDA
EVANS



It started when Bill's iPhone would not charge and fell to 10% battery power. I called Apple's 800-number because our town doesn't have an Apple Store. Plus, I'm a little more tech savvy than Bill, which means that added together we're about three-fourths illiterate about electronic devices.

My new friend Sheila at Apple said I'd have to drive 250 miles round trip for an appointment in Lexington, Kentucky (horse country and a lovely city). I must confess when she mentioned Lexington, I wasn't thinking lovely, just that the day would be blown to bits, traveling 250 miles and spending unknown hours and money for a repair job on an iPhone that wasn't even mine. Of course, the phone might be beyond repair, which meant I'd need to purchase Bill an iPhone 6 for who-knows-what price to replace his perfectly good iPhone 5 that just needed a new battery. I didn't want to do that either.

But I still made the appointment: 10:40 on a Saturday morning, Kentucky Derby Day. Sounded good to me. Less traffic. Everybody would be in Louisville, not Lexington. Besides, I needed to do it for Bill, because he was busy making his new office bookcases for the house we were buying on the other side of town, (downsizing, relocating...all that stuff), and he wanted to spend all day Saturday sawing and planing his red oak.

Also, I just happened to notice while searching Google maps that P. F. Chang's, with its amazing chicken lettuce wraps, was around the corner from the Apple Store (less than a 100 steps), Macy's was a few hundred yards beyond Chang's in the other direction, and DSW Shoe Warehouse was a mere five miles to the southeast. Our town didn't have those places either. You get the drift.

Saturday morning, I made quick eggs and toast, not the usual Saturday breakfast works, and got to the Apple Store early, by 10:05. There were lines, two, in fact. One for customers waiting to get in, the other for the Apple tech crew, iPads in hand, ready to fix us. Amazingly, by 10:09, I was at a repair counter explaining Bill's dilemma to Susie, my tech gal.

Susie aimed her small LED flashlight into the battery port, moaned "Hmm," pulled out her paperclip pick and poked around in the port. Then she turned the phone upside down, tapped it lightly against the glass counter, and out fell a lint ball the size of a match head, three black coffee grounds (or that's what they looked like), and another fleck or two of something. I knew where the lint came from: Bill's left front jean pocket. The three coffee grounds were a mystery. After another paperclip pick and a diagnostic test to be certain the battery was okay, she plugged

it in, and within a few seconds the battery percentage edged up to 11, then 12, and then 14. We were fixed, owed no money, and after a thank you, I was on my way. It was 10:15.

Chang's opened at 11:00; I had checked. It was decision time. I could skip the lettuce wraps, return to my car, head east on I-64, and be home by 12:30. But I really wanted lettuce wraps, so I headed north to Macy's...just to look. Look and you shall find: a snazzy black \$39.50 top dappled with purple and white on sale for \$19.75 and a \$20 pair of dangly purple earrings for \$7.50. Since it was Derby Saturday I received another 25% off. So at the register I spent only \$21.67 counting taxes, and the checkout girl reminded me that I had saved \$39.06 just for looking.

At 11:05, I was at Chang's revolving door. I don't like eating alone, but the chicken lettuce wraps, spring rolls, and pot of peach green tea were delicious! My bill was \$17 plus tax and tip. At DSW, I found gold and gray snakeskin Teva™ sandals on clearance for under \$50 dollars. By 2:00 p.m. I was heading home. I'd done okay. Bill's iPhone repair hadn't cost me a cent, and I'd otherwise gotten out of the lovely horse country city of Lexington for less than \$100. Everything at a discount except the lettuce wraps!

I got home at 4:00 and told Bill my story of good fortune. He was glad it was only lint and no charge but mentioned in passing that it actually cost us almost \$100 to get his phone fixed: "Babe, you wouldn't have gone to Lexington or to Macy's or Chang's or DSW if it hadn't been for my iPhone." Later he also remembered gasoline, another \$25-30 because our 2010 Buick LaCrosse only gets about 25-27 miles per gallon on the road and that day gasoline was \$2.59 a gallon in northeast Kentucky. But Bill was in a good mood. The bookcases had gone well: sawed and planed to perfection. So he kept his blue accounting pen in his pocket and didn't pick a fight.

But he could have. What I did in Lexington (besides getting his iPhone fixed for free) is exactly the kind of thing that regularly causes couples to fight over money. I left home intending only to go to the Apple Store...and maybe P. F. Chang's, which I had told Bill was next door to the Apple Store. He encouraged me to have chicken lettuce wraps while I was so close because who knows when we would be back in Lexington. Besides, he

I cannot happily spend much money without our agreeing on it.

loves lettuce wraps, too. Perhaps I mentioned to him that I might go a little out of my way to see if DSW had a certain kind of cushiony Teva™ sandals that would help my bum hip not to hurt so bad. I don't remember about that.

Bill rarely fusses at me about money, although he might frown or sulk a little at times. The truth is I easily could have started a quarrel if he had been interested in quarreling. He knows I could learn to like shopping and—no question about it—he is definitely a saver. We acknowledge we're somewhat opposite in that. But ordinarily I don't like to shop—never have,

never will. It exhausted me when I was a young thing, and now that I'm not a young thing, it's almost torture. But occasionally I feel well, and I'm enticed as I was on Kentucky Derby Day in Lexington.

I learned another important truth during the second year of our marriage. I cannot happily spend much money without our agreeing on it. I'll omit the long version and just say this: it was 1963, the amount was a week's salary, and by the time I finally quit my miserable sobbing and admitted how much I had spent, he was so relieved it wasn't four times as much that he consoled me. He figured we both learned a lesson about money, and we had. It was a hard lesson I never forgot.

Marital disagreements over money is an important topic, a spiritual topic, and Bill and I have learned a little about it. There's no space here to jump in, so we plan to come back to the topic in a few months. Maybe we'll call it "How to Fight Over Money and Win." **ONE**

About the Writer: Brenda Evans is a freelance writer who lives in Ashland, Kentucky. Learn more at www.fwbgifts.org.



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Brown on **Green** >>

How Much Should I Save?

Many financial experts have developed formulas to determine how much someone should save. Some use the 50-30-20 rule, meaning 50% for necessities, 30% for luxuries (nice but not necessary), and 20% for financial goals such as emergency savings and retirement. Opinions vary on how much you should set aside in an emergency fund. Some suggest 20% of your annual income. Others prefer the idea of three months of your monthly expenses as a goal. Still others advise a healthy emergency fund of six to nine months of income.

Obviously, a Christian will adapt these rules to include tithing; perhaps a 70-10-10-10 rule would be in order. It would look like this: 10% to tithe, 70% for living expenses, 10% for retirement and 10% for an emergency fund.

Emergency funds are critical, and some experts encourage a fully funded emergency fund before saving. I think working on all financial goals at the same time makes the most sense. Although it will take longer to reach your emergency fund goal of 20% percent of your annual income or three to nine months of living expenses, saving for retirement is also critical. The most important factor in a good retirement is to start early.

How much you choose to put in an emergency fund depends on your situation. Someone in a secure job situation might put less in an emergency fund than others whose income is based on sales commissions. Life situations also play a factor in how much you set aside for emergency savings. A healthy single adult renting an apartment may not need as much as a family that owns a home with potential maintenance expenses.

Continue to put money into the fund until you reach the monetary goal you select. Some suggest you then stop saving for that category until you have to tap the emergency fund. I suggest continuing to build the fund, using the excess to purchase big ticket items like a car. This will help avoid financing expenses on these and other expensive items often purchased on credit.

While opinions vary about emergency funds, all Free Will Baptist families should

How much you choose to put in an emergency fund depends on your situation.

agree on one thing: the Money Management Trust (MMT) offered by FWB Foundation is the best place to put an emergency fund. MMTs offer easy access to your money and always earn a good rate of return (currently 2.75%) with a minimum balance of \$1,000.

Call, email, or visit our website for more information on how to start an emergency fund started through an MMT at the Foundation. 

About the Writer: David Brown, CPA, became director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation in 2007. Send your questions to David at david@nafwb.org. To learn how the Foundation can help you become a more effective giver, call 877-336-7575 or visit www.fwbgifts.org.

Words:

Matter of Life and Death

BY SARAH HODGES

Words have always held an intimate place in my heart.

I'm inexplicably moved by the letters fitted together to form life on the pages of books; a wonder passed down to me by my mother and grandmother. This lovely relationship began early.

My two-year-old eyes sparkled when my teacher announced the magical time of free play. My friends tripped over each other to arrive at blocks, babies, and toy kitchens, while my scrawny frame scrambled in the opposite direction to the teacher's table, where I waited impatiently while she settled the class. I watched as Mrs. Betty moved slowly, very slowly, to the "tall cabinets." She retrieved a stack of magazines and placed them between us after sitting down next to me.

I remember reaching out gingerly to what I knew was going to be an entrancing world. I slowly opened the pages, captivated. I was mesmerized by the words—their curves and lines, color and placement.

As I grew and began to put letters and sounds together, my affection for the written, as well as spoken word, soared. Nancy Drew and I became best friends, desperately seeking to solve the cases presented to us. Thanks to my fourth-grade teacher, I developed a remarkable fascination with *Oliver Twist*, spending my afternoons running the rooftops of London, begging for scraps and perfecting my British accent.

Part of maturity is learning to connect to the world around you. My search taught me the painful lesson that words had additional forms. The kinds you specifically encounter from the mouths of others. Words that often subtly and discreetly are meant to harm you.

As a little girl, I remember being confused as to why words that fit together so beautifully in books or art could be reformulated in another's mind and produced with such flippancy to wound the heart of a vulnerable soul.

It's hard for me to recall the compliments I've received over the last 27 years; yet, and without too much effort, I could catalog easily the words of death that have been spoken to and through me.

There's the distinction: words either bring life or death.

My personal experience, coupled with the stories of others I have the privilege to know, has led me to a conclusion—we, as humans, can often be judgmental. Judgment is the crux of all gossip, slander, and our favorite pastime of comparison.

Don't believe me? Walk into any middle or high school in the nation. Adolescence is a critical time in which we are trying to navigate our place in the world—who we are, likes and dislikes, gifts and talents. In an effort to separate ourselves, we often do so at the expense of another—desperate to make a distinction between "us" and "them." A lesson learned early that we carry with us into adulthood.

This played out in my own story. In my pursuit of acceptance and love, I've willingly sacrificed others on my altar of self-preservation. Sadly, this has happened more often than I'd care to admit to you. I wound others out of my own insecurities and fear—feel-

ings of inadequacy, inferiority, and self-doubt; fear of rejection, loss, and exposure.

Our hearts desperately cry out to be known, yet we are often immobilized at the thought of that being reality. We struggle to receive the truth that we are “beautifully and wonderfully made,” regardless of how many retreats or lunches we have attended where this message of grace has been championed on our behalf.

Our hearts have been wounded, and in an attempt to heal our pain, we wound others. The proverbial “eye for an eye.” Painfully, the people we target are usually completely disconnected from our real pain. They are simply easy marks.

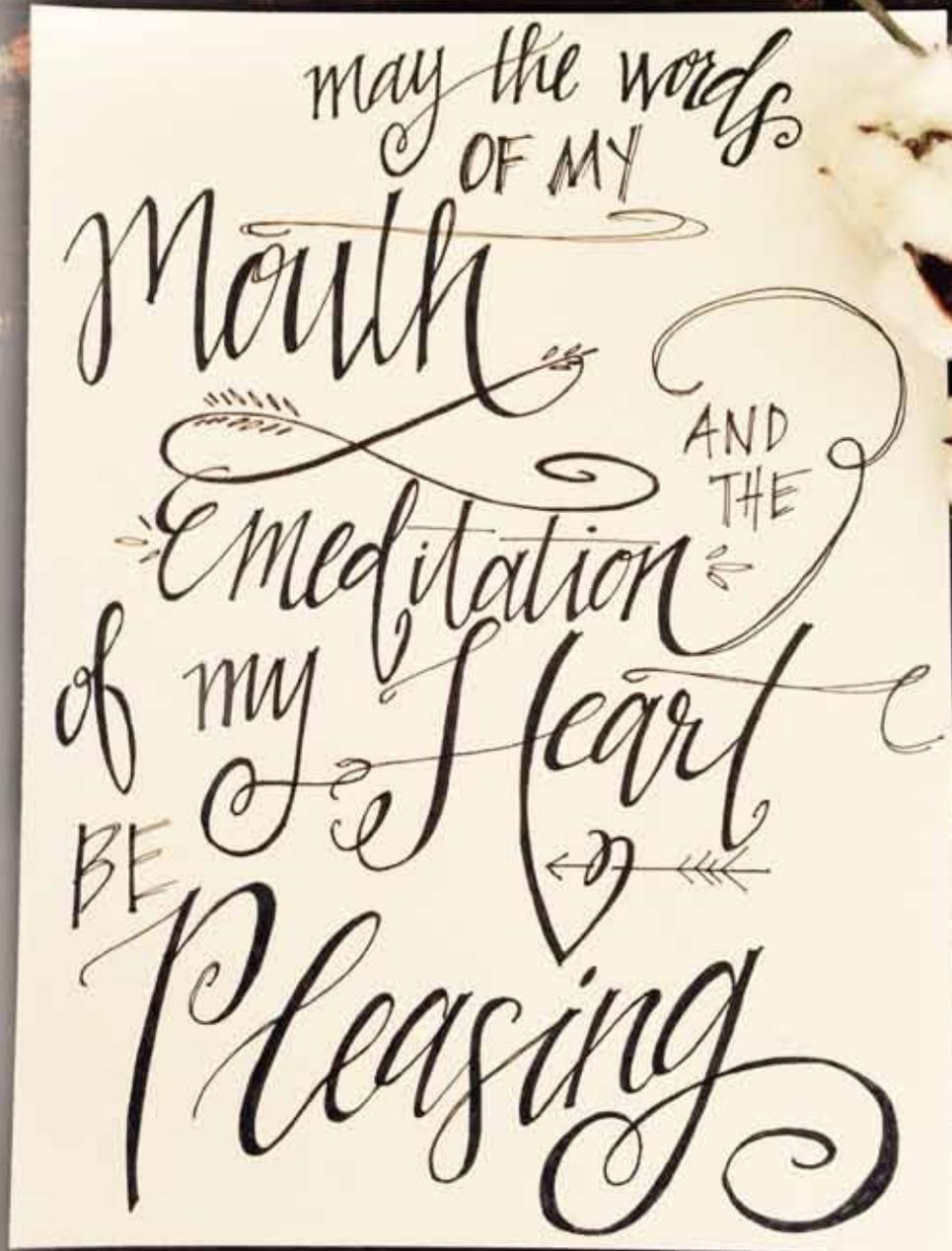
My prayer is that we would be more aware of our words and their lasting resonance in the lives of others.

“There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. Nations, cultures, arts, civilizations—these are mortal, and their life to ours as the life of a gnat. But it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit—immortal horrors or everlasting splendors” (C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*).

Jesus told us that the world would know us by our love for one another (John 13:35). May we be known as people whose speech flows with life, truth, grace, and love. That we are sought out for the acceptance and peace that surrounds us, rather than avoided for our sharp tongues and careless judgments. **ONE**

*“Let the words of my mouth,
and the meditation of my
heart, be acceptable in thy
sight, O Lord, my strength,
and my redeemer.”*
(Psalm 19:14)

ARTWORK: SARAH HODGES



About the Writer:

Sarah has a deep affection for coffee. Her love of words has led to freelancing in typography while working alongside a singer/songwriter duo in Nashville, Tennessee.

After the sale of the current campus, Welch College turns attention to the future...

Building on the LEGACY

BY MATT PINSON

MILESTONE REACHED

On Friday, June 19, just a few minutes after noon, Welch College passed a long-anticipated milestone. The college closed on the sale of its West End Avenue campus and immediately turned attention to the construction of a new campus site.

The West End Avenue campus was purchased by Mike Ford Custom Builders, LLC, a Middle Tennessee builder known for fine homes in upscale neighborhoods across Nashville. The firm plans to construct multi-family units on West End Avenue and single-family homes along Richland Avenue. Davidson Hall, the college's first building, will be restored to historic specifications and sold as a single-family home.

CEO Mike Ford said, "We are so excited about this project. We are very thankful to be able to play the major role in adding 50

wonderful homes to this community. It's already been rewarding to meet and work with folks at Welch College. We couldn't be happier to help the college realize its dream of a new campus."

The sale included all campus property except Welch Library. The buzz of new construction in the neighborhood will increase the price of that home, one of the most well-known and important historic homes in Nashville.

BEYOND EXPECTATIONS

In the long run, the transaction was more profitable than the contract the college had from Aquinas College two years ago. This is a blessing, because construction costs have risen since that time. Furthermore, the builder will increase the square footage of new residence halls to account for the 30% growth





in dormitory enrollment Welch experienced over the past two years. We are grateful to Dudley Smith of Land Innovations, and his team, as well as realtors, Rick French and Ellen Christianson, for their invaluable help in making this sale a reality.

TOWARD THE FUTURE

The new campus will be built on a 66-acre site in Gallatin, Tennessee, which the college acquired for \$3 million in 2008, and recently appraised at \$5.8 million. This property, a short 25-minute drive from Nashville, is situated in a fast-growing suburban community in Sumner County.

The site meets all the criteria the college set at the beginning of its land search. Like the current campus, the new property is close to a limited access freeway. It is near medical and educational resources and job opportunities for students, surrounded by new housing developments, and still in the Greater Nashville area.

Sumner County is experiencing rapid economic and population growth. A wide array of restaurants, shops, and malls are opening in retail developments such as the Streets of Indian Lake, located a few minutes from the campus. Healthcare facilities and housing developments are also being built at an impressive rate.

Bob Bass, campus relocation consultant, said, “The new campus site is excellent. Within a few minutes of the campus are both affordable homes for faculty and staff, as well as Fairvue Plantation and Foxland, high-end housing developments that provide job opportunities similar to what the college’s current Belle Meade surroundings have offered Welch students for decades.”

Sumner County’s vibrant economy, along with an inviting small-city atmosphere, means the college will enjoy the benefits of the larger Nashville community as well as the charm and convenience of the Gallatin and Hendersonville communities.

Gallatin Mayor Paige Brown said, “Gallatin is delighted to welcome Welch College to our community. We are honored that this highly respected institution has chosen to relocate its campus in

Gallatin, and we look forward to the day that Welch opens its doors and welcomes students to its new campus.”

The Gallatin property is more than seven times the size of the existing campus. The college will not have to cap enrollment or curtail academic programs planned for the future.

The new campus will have a traditional, residential college campus feel. The campus quadrangle and buildings will feature classic, Jeffersonian campus architecture with fresh, new, and technologically up-to-date interiors. It will have much more green space and

permit construction of outdoor sports facilities for students and provide adequate parking for students, faculty, staff, and guests.

The college has secured the services of Focus Design Builders, a Wake Forest, North Carolina-based firm, to construct the campus. They are working with Raleigh, North Carolina-based Design Development Architects and Brentwood, Tennessee-based Southland Constructors, which will handle construction management. September 2016 is the goal to complete construction on the new campus (January 2017 at the latest).

A NEW LEGACY

We are grateful God is bringing to fruition the vision for a new campus initiated by President Emeritus Dr. Tom Malone and his team more than two decades ago. A number of steadfast supporters have enabled the college to pay down debt on the new campus site as well as engage in planning and design for the campus.

The capital campaign to raise needed funds for construction is *Building on the Legacy*. In a silent phase, we have already raised \$2.1 million in pledges (\$1.6 million already received). We need to raise an additional \$5.4 million in cash and gifts-in-kind (\$3.4 million in five-year pledges and \$2 million in gifts-in-kind of materials, labor, fixtures, etc.).

These funds, together with those raised from the sale of the West End campus and cash reserves, will pay for the \$20 million-plus construction of the new campus. We are calling on friends of the college to invest in this campaign, a once-in-a-lifetime investment into Welch College and the future of Free Will Baptists. Learn more at www.buildingonthelegacy.org.

Please pray for Welch College during this most important transition in the life of our beloved institution. Ask God to provide the funds needed for this endeavor, and pray about your own involvement in this historic event—the relocation and construction of a new campus for Welch College, for the glory of God and the extension of His kingdom. **ONE**

At Welch College >>

Welch College Graduates 50 in Commencement Exercises

Welch College conferred degrees on 50 students from 15 states in commencement exercises at Memorial Auditorium on Friday, May 8, according to President Matt Pinson. Students completed degrees in multiple programs ranging from two-year associate's degrees to four-year bachelor's degrees. Forty-eight percent of the class graduated with honors.

Welch College Business Department Coordinator Dr. Rebecca Deel was named Academic Advisor of the Year. President Matt Pinson also recognized Dean of Women Susan Forlines for 25 years of faithful service to Welch College.

Dr. Bruce Barnes, former president of Gateway Christian College in Virginia Beach, Virginia, was included in the processional and led the prayer of consecration for the graduating class. Dr. Barnes worked closely with the administration of Welch College to aid in the enrollment of many former Gateway students after that school closed in 2013.

The college commends to you and to the work of the Lord the members of the 2015 graduating class.

ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE DEGREES

Camille René Driggers
Turbeville, SC
Nursing

Joslin Erin Ferguson
Hermitage, TN
Nursing

Celeste Anne Ford
Chapmansboro, TN
Nursing

Anna Carole Grimsley
Colquitt, GA
Nursing

Thomas Wesley Hoffmaster II
Inwood, WV
Ministry

Rae Ann Mahaney
Reynoldsburg, OH
Business

John Tyler Norris
Winfield, AL
Nursing

Hannah Elizabeth Skaggs
Ashland, KY
Nursing

Kelsey Brooke Turner
Tishomingo, MS
Nursing

ASSOCIATES OF ARTS DEGREES

Staci Anne Clarke
Columbus, OH

Tyler Brooke Fondren
Florence, MS

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREES

Loren Rae Alexander
Mountain Home, AR
Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Charity Shea Brown***
Nashville, TN
English
Licensure 7-12

Nathan Ray Colvin
Dickson, TN
Biology
Licensure 7-12

Derek John Cominskie***
Virginia Beach, VA
General Christian Ministries

Daniel Lee Culwell
Rose Bud, AR
Youth and Family Ministry and Business

David Anthony Dell***
Virginia Beach, VA
General Christian Ministries

Joel Alexander Forlines*
Nashville, TN
Music Performance

Priscilla Barnes Hawkins
Nashville, TN
Psychology and Learning

Dakota Vance Herren*
Asheville, NC
Biology

Elizabeth Marie Hill***
Norton, VA

Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Matthew Lee Jackson
Nashville, TN
Business Administration

Lesley Allison Jenkins**
Springfield, TN
Psychology

Audrey Kathleen Jordan***
Joelton, TN
Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Casey Leigh-Anne Lewis***
Washington, NC
Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Deandra Dawnae Lindsay*
Red Bay, AL
Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Amanda Leighann Mouser*
Nashville, TN
Business Administration

Matthew John Mouser
Nashville, TN
General Christian Ministries

Keegan Brent Murfin
Pleasant View, TN
Business Administration

Kelsey Brooke Nelson
New Bern, NC
Psychology

Melissa Lauren Nelson**
New Bern, NC

Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Courtney Renee Pennington
Tampa, FL
Exercise Science

Maria Lyn Petty**
Beecher City, IL
Psychology

Daniel Arthur Pugh*
Millington, TN
General Christian Ministry

Laura Chantal Riggs***
Nantes, France
Biology

Joshua Michael Simmons*
Virginia Beach, VA
General Christian Ministries

Elizabeth Gail Snow**
Old Hickory, TN
Exercise Science

Kevin Wayne Stox
Ayden, NC
Youth Ministry

Sean D. Taylor*
Richmond, VA
General Christian Ministries

Cody Lee Truett
Dover, FL
General Christian Ministries

Kristin Denise Trussell*
Seffner, FL
Psychology
Miles Reid Wilkerson**

Amory, MS
General Christian Ministries

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREES

Reese Richardson Brown***
Nashville, TN
History

Katherine Victoria Fry**
Mountain Grove, MO
English

Walter Hernandez, Jr.
Clinton, TN
Missions

Richie Gabriel Kyburz
Desoto, MO
Pastoral Ministry

Collin Michel Lane
Russellville, AR
History

Derreck Andrew Lute**
Wheetersburg, OH
Pastoral Ministry

Keri Dawn Simpson
Northport, AL
English

*** Summa Cum Laude

** Magna Cum Laude

* Cum Laude

Intersect >>

Trading Show for Substance:

AUTHENTIC SPIRITUALITY IN CHRIST, PART TWO

Colossians 2:6-15

In the June-July issue, we explored verses 6-10 of this passage. We were reminded that because fullness of deity dwells in the person of Jesus, we too are fulfilled in Him and lack nothing. In short, authentic spirituality is rooted in the person of Christ. As we turn our attention to verses 11-15, however, we are reminded of a second essential truth:

Authentic spirituality is secured by the work of Christ.

We who were spiritually dead in trespasses and sins experienced the work of Christ in regeneration (verses 11-13). We experienced “spiritual circumcision,” the sign of the Old Testament covenant now fulfilled spiritually by Christ Himself.

Baptism, the ordinance signifying new life in Christ, also paints a vivid and public picture of the believer united with Christ, not only in His death, but also in His glorious resurrection. We are raised with Him through faith in His saving work. Formerly dead in sins and shortcomings of the law, God makes the new believer alive in Himself.

Jesus Himself said this “spiritual” rebirth must take place. He told the religious seeker Nicodemus, “You must be born again.” The human condition outside of Christ is so desperate that apart from the work of the Spirit, no one can be saved. The Spirit must convict, draw, enable faith, and ultimately give life to the soul.

We would not—could not—come to Christ apart from the divine enablement of the Holy Spirit to believe. Charles Wesley, who spent many years pursuing salvation by his own efforts, eventually experienced salvation by grace. He later described that moment in the lyrics of the classic hymn “And Can It Be?”

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night.
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray;
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light.
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.*

GUILTY AS CHARGED

Not only did Christ regenerate us, He also completed the work of propitiation (substitution) for the sin judgment we faced (verses 13-15). Although the law (and God’s holy nature) demanded punishment, Jesus met and fulfilled these demands when He “nailed our sins to the cross.” His finished work on the cross effectively cancelled the debt. All that remains is for us to accept Him as our salvation, the sacrificial lamb who paid the death penalty for our sin.

Any form of spirituality that denies or diminishes the death of Christ on the cross is not authentic spirituality. “No man can come to the Father but by me,” says Jesus. In his book, *The Cross of Christ*, theologian John Stott wrote, “The essence of sin is man substituting himself for God, while the essence of salvation is God substituting himself for man.” Authentic spirituality is secured by the work of Christ.

Paul’s argument is clear: if you have substance in Christ, why would you ever want to return to the shadows? Every other religion in the world is a shadow, a self-made religion. It appears in various forms and often seems to be genuine, but upon closer examination proves nothing more than smoke and mirrors. Why settle for shadow when substance is ours?

STAY CENTERED

We find three warnings in verses 8, 16, and 18: 1) don’t be taken captive; 2) don’t let anyone pass judgment; and 3) don’t allow anyone to disqualify you from salvation found in Christ.

Instead, center your entire life around the person and work of Jesus. No salvation exists apart from Him; no sanctification takes place apart from Him. We must stop seeking an “experience” of spirituality and instead, seek the One who holds our eternal destiny. He is not hiding. He uses simple, unchanging means to reveal Himself: prayer, the Word, the ordinances, and fellowship.

TOO MANY CHURCHES TODAY FALL INTO THE TRAP OF CULTURE-CENTERED CHURCH LIFE AND WORSHIP, RATHER THAN CREATING A CHRIST-CENTERED COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS.

In addition, center the life of the local church on the person and work of Jesus. I have been increasingly concerned about the casual way we admit people into church membership, not necessarily new Christians, but those who transfer from other

congregations. We must challenge their beliefs regarding the person and work of Christ and be sure they distinguish shadow from substance.

Too many churches today fall into the trap of culture-centered church life and worship, rather than creating a Christ-centered community of believers. In the classic book, *The Dwelling Place of God*, A.W. Tozer wrote:

It is now common practice in most evangelical churches to offer people, especially the young people, a maximum of entertainment and a minimum of spiritual instruction. It is scarcely possible in most places to get anyone to attend a meeting, where the only attraction is God. One can only conclude that God's professed children are bored with Him, for they must be wooed to meeting with a stick of striped candy, in the form of religious movies, games and refreshments.

The world offers plenty of entertainment. Instead, we must offer Christ, something (Someone) the world cannot find anywhere else. Let us strive for authentic spirituality rooted in the person of Christ and secured by the work of Christ. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dr. Barry Raper pastors Bethel Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland City, Tennessee, and directs the Pastoral Program at Welch College. Learn more about Welch College: www.welch.edu.

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God Made a Way

“Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6).

BY SUE
HAYES



I want to share a glimpse of how God brought me through an incredible journey with Him. It all started with the desire of my mother’s heart that one day her children would serve the Lord. One of life’s greatest blessings is to have a godly, praying mother. She was a tremendous influence in my life and taught me to put all my trust in God. Proverbs 3:5-6 was the passage she encouraged me to memorize as my life’s verse.

When I was seven years old, I accepted the Lord during a revival service at Akron Free Will Baptist Church in Akron, Ohio. God became my priority, and I committed to serve Him. As the years passed, and as I continued to walk with the Lord, I began to desire to become a home missionary. With the encouragement of my mother, after high school graduation, I attended Welch College. My first priority was to trust God, plain and simple. I knew if I put trust in Him for eternal wellbeing, I could trust Him for the life’s work He had for me.

Attending Bible College gave me time to pray and cultivate my relationship with the Lord. The more I prayed, the more God shaped and worked out the details of my life in accordance with His will and not mine. After two years of college, I felt as though God was changing directions for my life. I wanted my life to count, and I knew if I just trusted Him, He would make a way, even though I couldn’t see the way.

And then, the day came when God made things very clear. I received a phone call from Randall House Publications. Little did I know that, as a result of that call, I would serve God for the next (almost) 40 years, working for various Free Will Baptist national ministries. It was hard to be patient and wait for His direction, but God knew what was best for me. He sees the end result.

We just need to stay focused on our calling and serve Him to the best of our abilities; always trust God.

It was hard to see the bigger picture of why God never gave me an opportunity to become a church planter. He has, however, used me for the last 25 years in my role at North American Ministries (Home Missions) to serve church planters, as well as the Free Will Baptist family across the denomination. As accounting administrator for the Church Extension Loan Fund (CELF), I have the awesome responsibility to help Free Will Baptist churches borrow money to buy property and construct facilities. Though I am not a church planter myself, every day I have an opportunity to help new churches. What a blessing!

May the Lord produce His joy and peace within us as we trust Him to do His work through us. We just need to stay focused on our calling and serve Him to the best of our abilities. Always trust God.

If you want to know more about the Church Extension Loan Fund, contact North American Ministries at 615-760-6137 or toll free at 877-767-7674. **ONE**

SEAS



SEASONS

Savor
the

By
Kevin
Trimble

Just a few short weeks from another change of station, with boxes, giveaways, yard sale, and packing to move to a new post with new neighbors and new ministry, I find myself thinking about a new season.

It seems as though we arrived in Kansas only a few days ago, yet three years have flown past, the days filled with ministry. I have buried some heroes—all good soldiers too young to die. God has blessed me with opportunities to share in grief. I have been honored to marry several couples and trained others in relationships. I saw many babies born and enjoyed ministry during deployment. Darla has served the post and its families in a number of ways by preparing meals for the homebound, carrying the burden when families have lost loved ones, teaching children to worship, encouraging young women to be good wives and mothers, and occasionally serving as a

peacemaker. This has truly been another joyous season in our lives, one of many God has given us to enjoy.

We began the journey of life as a couple almost 30 years ago. Life had its ups and downs as we learned what it meant to yield to one another. During this first season, our focus was on each other. Our jobs consumed most of our time, and everything was new and exciting.

A few years later, we entered the season of children, going from one stage to another. Babies and diapers, toddlers and scrapes, Bible verses and songs, sports and dating—all seemed to take so long at the time, but as we look back, those years evaporated quickly.

Growing up in a pastor's home, our children Nathan and Rachel spent their share of time at quarterly meetings, in all day services, and revivals. Today, they are better for it. Their stories today reflect the fun, hard work, and even the struggles our family faced together. They endured the stress, competition, and excitement of football, basketball, baseball,

soccer, and cheerleading. The entire family was involved in booster clubs, fundraising, homecoming, and every facet of the season of children.

When our kids left for college, Darla and I found ourselves in a new season, learning to parent long distance, to focus on our own relationship, and to embrace new ministries God gave us. We have been in this season for a number of years and are truly enjoying our work and the fruit produced. We are blessed with adult children that love God and have spouses who also follow God.

During this new season of our lives, however, we have been given an opportunity to work and improve several areas we neglected during 20 years of pastoring.

What I Have Learned

First, we have realized that life is not a single snapshot. My U.S. Army photo looks great, and I present a striking example of an officer. Yet, the photo does not reveal the years of training, the sacrifice of deployments, the hard

knocks and rigors of airborne school. Badges and ribbons cannot communicate these moments. Our lives are the same. The snapshot of a perfect family does not reflect the hard work and effort placed into good behavior, family devotions, and discipline. When a farmer plants a fruit tree, he doesn't expect to get fruit the next fall. He plants so future generations can enjoy fruit. The family is the same way.

I have also learned that I am definitely not perfect. Scripture tells us that no one is good, not a single one (Romans 3:12), and I believe it. Marriages, relationships, employees, soldiers, kids, even our dogs continue to require training, effort, and discipline to be successful. At times, we may appear to be perfect, but we simply are not. While I don't promote tearing children down, because we are God's creation, chosen by Him, we did teach our kids that they were not perfect and needed correction. This is true for me as well. Each new season of life reminds me that I am slowly molding into the image of God, but I will not reach full maturity until I get to Heaven.

Marriage is a constant series of adjustments. Almost daily, Darla and I declare our love to each other, yet the "old man of flesh" continues to plague us as we struggle to submit, yield, compromise, and continue to remain fresh in our relationship. We still go on dates and hold a weekly "power hour" to work through the tough issues that are a result of fallen creation.

I've also learned that life is a delicate balance. To run a marathon, I must balance training with my work, or I might get fired. I must balance leisure, finances, and other aspects of life. Everything is about balance—give and take. I may take a donut, but I have to work it off somewhere, or before long, I will find myself out of balance physically. I can skip today's devotion, but it is crucial to catch

up before my one-day break becomes a bad habit.

In all of this, I have learned not to take life too seriously but to accept each moment knowing I still have much to learn from those around me, that God continues to work on me, right here where I am. He is building in me what He wants me to be.

Lessons to Share (Ecclesiastes 3:1-9).

As I look back over the seasons of my life, I would offer some simple suggestions to help you savor your own seasons:

Enjoy the current season. Embrace each moment; today will soon become a memory. Each season serves a purpose, and the growth we experience today will prepare us for the next chapter in our lives. Tomorrow is truly built on today.

Don't wish away the season. Children wish to be teenagers, and teens can't wait for a job, car, and independence. Be careful not to wish too hard for another season or lament one that has past. I have friends who still lament their high school years. Others have adult children, and they long for the years when they were children. I counsel soldiers to slow down, to enjoy the day, the moment they have been given. We are often so

driven to climb the next rung of the ladder, to graduate with the next degree, to achieve that next accomplishment that we forget the journey is more important than the destination.

Gather wisdom from the current season. What is God teaching you today? Nothing in our lives is wasted from the perspective of the Eternal. God uses every event—even tragedy—to teach us something. From washing dishes to years spent on the assembly line, God can teach us and use our efforts for His glory.

Understand that every season is worth it. When we read Ecclesiastes 3, we often focus on "to everything there is a season." I encourage you to take a moment to reflect on the less-familiar verse nine where the author counts the cost of the seasons of life. If all is in vain, however, why do we work, eat, have children, and live? From my perspective, I think if we slow down, enjoy the seasons we experience, focus on the moment, and learn something from every day, then we can say, "Yes! This season has been profitable."

I have known countless leaders in both church and army who have reached the end of their ministries only to find they regret the choices they made throughout the seasons of their lives. They spent too much time at work, too little time with their kids, too little time resting or saving or reading or...you get the picture. Don't wait! Cherish every moment, enjoy every season, and devote your all to God, your family, and those along the journey of your life. **ONE**

About the Writer: Chaplain Kevin Trimble is the middle child of a mid-western dairy farmer who raised him to love the ministry. He holds a doctorate in Theology and completed a Master's in Religion from Hillsdale FWB College while deployed to Afghanistan. Chaplain Trimble has been awarded the Bronze Star, the Army Achievement Medal, and numerous other awards and recognitions. Learn more: www.homemissions.net.

Cherish every
moment, enjoy
every season,
and devote your
all to God, your
family, and those
along the journey
of your life.



Across the Nation >>

Trading Gold for Silver

BY KERRY STEEDLEY

On April 2, 2015, at Fort Benning, Georgia, in the historic Infantry Center Chapel, Free Will Baptist Chaplain David Trogdon was promoted from major to Lieutenant Colonel. His wife Connie and Dr. David Crowe, executive director of North American Ministries, removed the old gold oak leaves and placed new silver oak leaves on his uniform coat. His children and grandchildren assisted in putting the new rank on his uniform shirt.

A financial advisor probably would not recommend trading gold for silver. An Olympic athlete certainly would not trade a gold medal for a silver one. But, for Chaplain Trogdon, it was an exchange to celebrate, one that produced joy, thanksgiving, and praises to God.

Family, friends, fellow chaplains, chaplain assistants, civilian employees, and members of the local community and churches gathered to celebrate this special day with David and Connie. A chaplain assistant, a true “battle buddy,” who had deployed and served in combat in Afghanistan with David, got up early and left Fort Jackson, South Carolina, at 4:00 a.m. that morning to arrive for the 11:00 a.m. ceremony. The senior chaplain at Fort Benning presided, and the senior chaplain assistant published the promotion orders.

How did this day happen? Chaplain Trogdon said it was all about the grace of God. This day reflected years of faithful service to God and country, and David was recognized for his outstanding ministry by an officially appointed promotion board. The board considered two things: past performance and future potential.

While a major, Chaplain Trogdon was requested by name and selected to serve in a lieutenant colonel position as deputy installation chaplain at Fort Benning. Free Will Baptists can be proud of this soldier-servant. He served eight years as an enlisted soldier before he was commissioned as an officer. A native of Fort Wayne, Indiana, Trogdon received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Pastoral Administration and Bible from Welch College and a Master of Divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He is a graduate of the U.S. Army Intelligence Center and a host of other military courses. He pastored Tippett’s Chapel FWB Church in Clayton, North Carolina, for nine years before becoming a pastor to soldiers and



their families. He is a veteran of multiple deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. He has received a host of awards and decorations, including the Purple Heart (for being injured in combat) and three Bronze Stars.

To this ambassador for Christ to the United States Army, we say congratulations on the promotion, on changing rank from gold to silver. Well done, and well deserved!

We also thank David’s wife Connie, children Joshua and Rebekah, and their four grandkids for providing loving support for Brother David as he works for the Lord. ■



About the writer: Kerry Steedley serves as the Director of Chaplain Support for FWB North American Ministries.

Becoming a DIRECTOR

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

As I look back on the road the Lord has led me on, I am amazed to see how He truly guides our steps, even when we do not fully understand His reasoning at the time. I was born into a Free Will Baptist preacher's home. I was raised in church and active in my father's ministry. As a child, I was not always content with the fact that church always came first in our home, especially when I had to miss a ball game because it was scheduled for a Wednesday evening. Looking back, I realize that missing a few ball games to learn about the relationship I should have with the Lord was a small price to pay.

During my high school years, the godly example and heritage set before me developed into a deep love for the Lord. I was not always a shining example of what it means to be a Christian in my public high school, but I was an example. Like most high school students, I had many plans for my life, although very few came to be. In my plans, a local college was the best choice. In God's plans, I enrolled at Welch College. In my plans, I would remain at Welch for two years at most. In God's plans, I graduated four years later with a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration, not my first choice in majors. If I had followed my plans, I never would have attended the place where I met my wife and was introduced to my employer.

Two years after graduation, I found myself discontented in my work. I did not feel as though I was using my education and training in the way that was useful to the Lord. I was surprised to receive a call from Ray Lewis. He asked me to interview for the position of business manager at the Board of Retirement.

The task the Lord has set before me is not easy, nor do I take it lightly. This ministry serves those in the denomination who give their lives serving others.

After I was hired and began to learn about this vital ministry, I decided I needed to further equip myself for the task God had placed in front of me. I graduated from Tennessee Tech University in 2011 with an MBA (master’s degree in Business Administration) with an emphasis in finance. I know the Lord has allowed me to follow this path, and to train under the outgoing director for nine years before opening the door for me to expand and develop this ministry as director of the Board of Retirement.

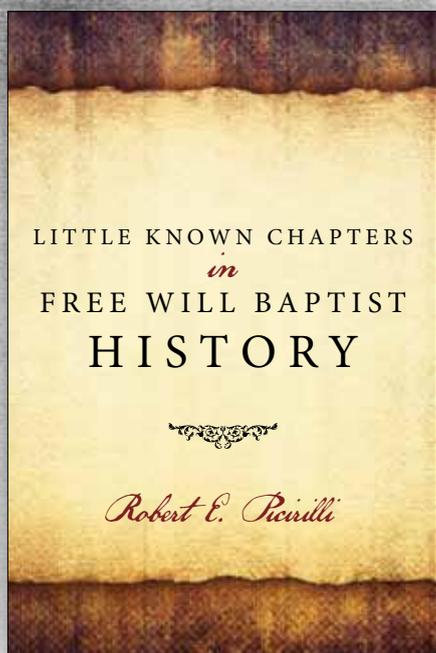
The task the Lord has set before me is not easy, nor do I take it lightly. This ministry serves those in the denomination who give their lives serving others. The Board of Retirement provides retirement benefits for all denominational employees, from pastors to department heads, and we strive to be the best retirement option for each of our participants. While the leadership is changing, our goals remain the same. We want to provide every Free Will Baptist employee with the means to create a sustainable retirement, so they are comfortable in their retirement

years and able to serve the Lord in capacities that were impossible during their working career. I believe the beginning of retirement is not the end of our ministries, but a time to explore new avenues of service.

As I move forward on this path I would ask a few things of you. First, please remember the Board of Retirement in prayer. While our ministry of investments and finances is different from other ministries, we still need prayer. Second, I ask for prayers and support for me as I begin my tenure as director. This is the Lord’s ministry with which He has entrusted me, and I want this department to grow, as He would have it grow. We do not pray for good returns; we pray that the One that controls everything would help us prepare His servants for whatever the future holds.

I look forward to serving this denomination as director and pray that together we can minister to this world to bring more people to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. **ONE**

About the Writer: John Brummitt graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since the spring of 2006.



Interesting stories to be discovered and shared.

LITTLE KNOWN CHAPTERS IN FWB HISTORY

BY DR. ROBERT PICIRILLI

[excerpt from chapter 7]

Among the ideas given shape by Reverend Henry Melvin was using a quartet of men, FWBBC students, to travel and promote the college during the summers. From the first, these quartets sang *a capella*: that is, without instrumental accompaniment—although Melvin himself played the piano and sometimes did so for the first quartet or two. His son, Billy, who was a member of the first group, is confident that Melvin invented the name, the *Gospeliers*, which was worn by the first several quartets. That name, by the way, sometimes got fouled up: I remember one newspaper article that had it *Gospel Spellers*, and I think another source made it *Gospel Liars*, but perhaps that was a typographical error.

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FORGIVENESS:

By
Norma
Jackson
Goldman

Hallmark of the BELIEVER

Is it hard for you to say these simple words: **“FORGIVE ME; I’M SO SORRY?”** Can you remember the last time you spoke them, or when someone last said them to you? In an unforgiving culture, Christians, of all people, must practice and model the forgiveness that so characterizes our Savior.

As difficult as it may be, asking for and receiving forgiveness is an essential, regular part of our Christian experience because our old, fleshly nature seems to delight in offending others and in being offended!

For a believer, carrying the knowledge you’ve offended someone becomes a burden, stealing your joy and dampening your zest for life. On the other hand, if you’re the offended one, the event or thoughtless word that created the offense seems to be top of mind, no matter

how hard you try to put it aside. The hurt grows, taking on far greater importance than is warranted.

My lovely and talented friend of many years wears a perpetual frown on her face. Likely she is unaware that she looks angry, or at the very least, annoyed in a major way. Unfortunately, she is also easily offended. People new to her acquaintance often ask if something is wrong, not realizing what lies beneath the surface.

You see, many years ago, her husband

abandoned her and their young child. Though she had no money and no job, over time, she was able to care for and educate her daughter successfully. She is now married with a child of her own. But throughout all these years, my friend remains unable to forgive the one who so deeply hurt her. Her wounds seem as fresh as if they occurred yesterday. Although God has provided a comfortable retirement, she lives under the weight of unforgiveness.

In rethinking these events, she often

expresses the sentiment that she was treated unfairly. Of course she was! But that was years ago, and while the many good things that have followed will never erase the impact of that offense, she has had multiplied opportunities to forgive and move on. But she chooses to carry that frown.

For a believer, forgiving another's offense is liberating! It frees the mind and heart to move on; it frees our spirit to join with God's Spirit, so that we become more like Him.

Forgiveness isn't easy—it's counter-cultural. Our world dictates that we stand up for ourselves and assert our rights. But by "rights," none of us really can approach our righteous Heavenly Father. Isaiah declares, "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid

on Him the iniquity of us all."

This truth from Scripture begs the

THE WORDS
**"I'M SORRY;
 PLEASE
 FORGIVE
 ME,"**
 CAN MAKE A LIBERATING
 DIFFERENCE, BOTH IN
 YOUR LIFE AND THAT
 OF ANOTHER.

question: if God has forgiven me from the sins of a lifetime, how can I fail

to forgive the offenses of others? No offense you and I have suffered could approach the magnitude of our offenses against God. If Jesus willingly, abundantly provided forgiveness through His sacrificial death, do we really have a right to withhold forgiveness?

Take a moment to reflect: have you offended anyone? If so, prayerfully go at once and express your sorrow for the offense, freeing both parties to move forward in peace and harmony. Has anyone offended you? Rather than carrying that hurtful weight (a pebble easily becomes a boulder), forgive that one (whether he or she asks for forgiveness or not) and refuse to let your joy in the Lord be stolen. This very day, the words "I'm sorry; please forgive me," can make a liberating difference, both in your life and that of another. Will you say them? **ONE**

About the Writer: Former magazine editor Norma J. Goldman enjoys a successful writing career in her retirement from her home near Houston, Texas.

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Leader Profile >>

Leadership comes in all forms and sizes, but the results are the same. Leaders influence thinking and behavior and make a difference in their culture. Profiling leaders shows a diverse combination of traits and styles, but impacting lives is always a common theme.

Daniel Edwards

Daniel had parents who cared deeply about him and his relationship with God. His dad worked for Delta Airlines, but even with a busy schedule, he made family and church the priorities of his life. His mom provided the constant in the lives of Daniel and his siblings, taking the family to church every Sunday regardless of dad's schedule.

According to Daniel, he got his passionate side from his mother, who taught him how to debate. Now a father himself, he recognizes the Sunday morning challenge his mom faced getting three young kids to church by herself. Like Daniel, leaders often have parents who significantly shape their development, and their children recognize it.

Ever heard of a "Tough Mudder?" Well, Daniel is training for his third one and plans to run a half marathon this year. He understands the need for solid preparation and desires to mentor younger pastors. He quickly admitted that God was working on him before a life of ministry was even on his own radar. He is thankful that God is using his abilities in leadership, connecting, and speaking.

Daniel, you are a great leader! ONE



Do you have kids? (one-word descriptions)

Haven (age 4) – Passionate

Lincoln (age 1) – Happy

What does your ideal date look like? The ideal date is finding a babysitter without any difficulty so Nicole and I can enjoy dinner and a movie.

What do people misunderstand about you? People often miss when I am kidding.

Who is your favorite author? Tim Keller

What books have you read in the last six months?

Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God by Tim Keller

Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church by Harry Reeder III and David Swavely (Daniel is reading it a second time.)

Exponential: How You and Your Friends Can Start a Missional Church Movement by Dave Ferguson and Jon Ferguson

Bridges of Grace: Innovative Approaches to Recovery Ministry by Elizabeth A. Swanson and Teresa J. McBean

How People Change by Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp

The Power of Habit: Why We Do What We Do in Life and Business by Charles Duhigg

Dreamland: The True Tale of America's Opiate Epidemic by Sam Quinones

What is your biggest failure? Getting expelled from college.

What is your biggest success? Marrying Nicole!

What is your one indulgence? White mocha latté

What would you like to see Free Will Baptists do in five or ten years?

Learn to balance diversity with unity for the sake of the gospel mission. I'm passionate about recovery ministry, and I would love to see us equip churches across the denomination to reach people in addiction.

Paper or Plastic

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WNAC >>

Time to Flourish

Murfreesboro, Tennessee—Thursday night, September 3, women from across the United States will gather for a time of refreshing in Murfreesboro, Tennessee. Women Nationally Active for Christ will host a national retreat, the first since 2008, at the beautiful Embassy Suites and Conference Center. Registration is \$90, payable to WNAC (877-767-7662; www.wnac.org).

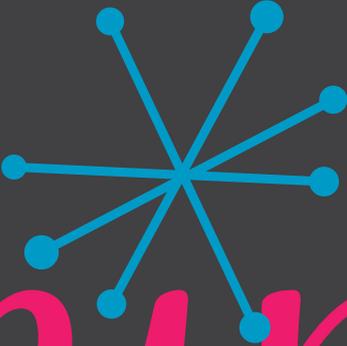
Rooms must be reserved directly through the hotel (615-890-4464; group code: WNAC). All rooms include a two-room suite, either a king bedroom suite (sleeps 3); or a suite with two queen-sized beds (sleeps 5). The room rate is \$134 (plus tax) per night. Breakfast is included.

The speaker is Izabella McMillon from Charlotte, North Carolina. A native of Romania, Izabella grew up under communist dictatorships.

The Lord brought her out of the darkness of Communism and into the light of His presence through a simple shoebox gift. Izabella now serves as Speakers Bureau manager for Samaritan's Purse, sponsor of Operation Christmas Child. You will be blessed as Izabella shares her story and challenges us from God's Word. Only eternity will reveal who packed the box that reached Izabella in Romania!

Our retreat project goal is to pack 300 boxes for OCC. Ladies can bring shoebox items with them or purchase them Friday afternoon. OCC shoeboxes and labels will be provided. We will prepare the boxes after the Friday evening service.

Make plans now to join us for this exciting time of refreshing, renewal, and relaxation! ■



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Grand Time in the

River City

Grand Rapids, Michigan

July 19-22, 2015

The surging waters of the Grand River churned past DeVos Place Convention Center, as nearly 3,500 Free Will Baptists gathered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, for worship, fellowship, and business July 19-22. This is the first meeting of the National Association in the “River City.”



Living Water

Free Will Baptists from across the nation arrived in Grand Rapids ready for great worship and powerful preaching, and they were not disappointed. Convention Music Coordinator Kevin Justice and the Music Commission delivered a strong program with a convention choir, orchestral ensemble, vocal ensemble, and a wide variety of special music that prepared listeners to receive the Word of God.

Following a Sunday School lesson from Paul Harrison, pastor of Madison FWB Church (AL), Gary Fry, vice president for church relations at Welch College, shared *The Word of God: Its Inspiration* from 2 Timothy 3:16-17. He reminded listeners that God did not leave His inspired Word open for personal interpretation. Rather, He gave us hard and fast laws within His Word as the basis for absolute truth.

Sunday evening, after Michigan State moderator Ron Helms welcomed the National Association to the state, Rick Locklear, assistant pastor of Woodhaven FWB Church (MI), explored the *Interpretation of God's Word* from 2 Timothy 2:15, sharing practical questions to ensure believers are correctly interpreting God's Word. On

Monday evening, Gene Norris, Michigan promotional secretary, took a second opportunity to welcome convention-goers to his home state before fiery Tennessee preacher Frank Woods took the pulpit to address the “confrontational” aspect of the Word of God (Hebrews 4:12). He reminded the congregation that the Word is both quick and powerful—convicting of sin and changing the sinner from the inside out.

On Monday, Sarah*, spoke at the WNAC Celebration Service on *I Surrender All* from Matthew 4. She described how the fishermen apostles left everything—even their nets—to follow Christ. She reminded listeners the invitation to follow Christ requires surrendering all, and “letting go of the nets” must be a daily act for every believer.

Tuesday morning's Preaching Conference featured powerful sermons from Danny Baer, academic dean at Southeastern FWB College, and Brian Williams, lead pastor at NorthPoint FWB Church in Buffalo, New York. On Tuesday night, 40-year missionary veteran Steve Lytle preached from 2 Timothy 4:1-5 on *The Word of God: Its Proclamation*. He emphasized the importance of correct living and correct content in preaching, making it clear that every member of the congregation is both

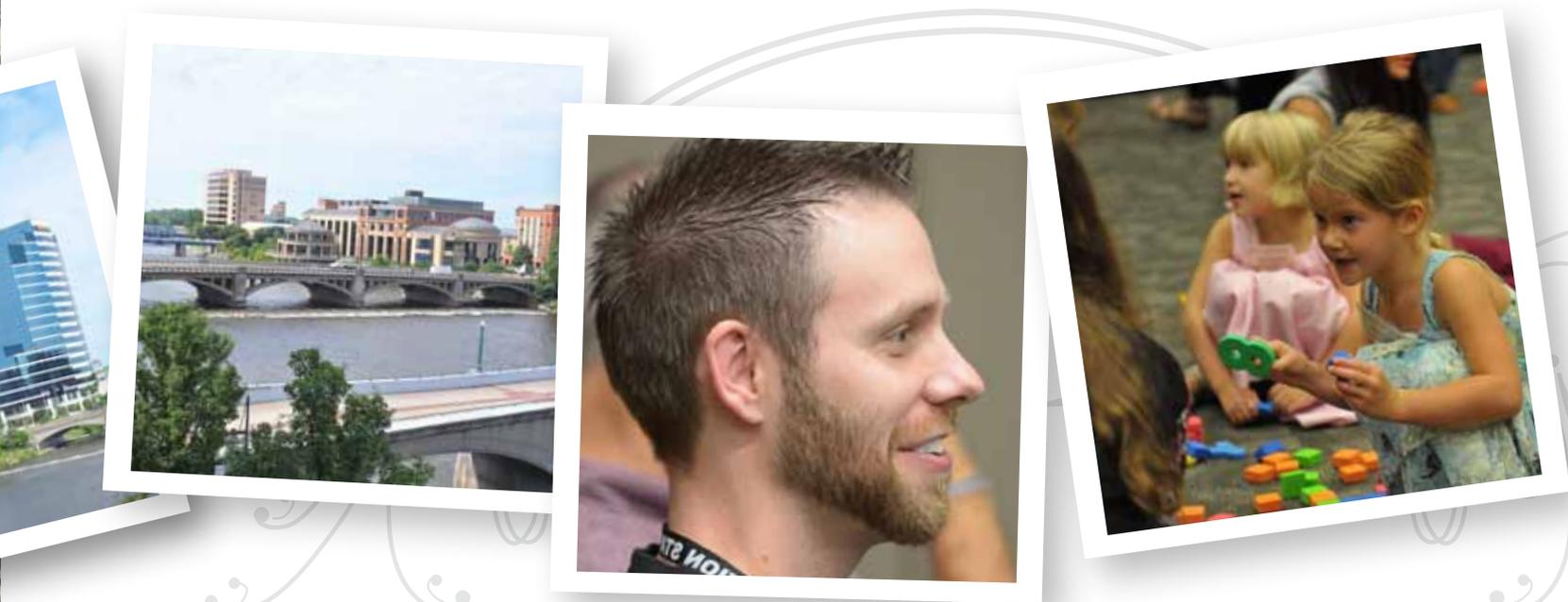
capable and responsible to proclaim the Word of God.

The Wednesday night missions service, always a highlight, started with a parade of home and international missionaries, with 2015 E-TEAM members hoisting the flags of the nations before them. International Missions Director Clint Morgan commissioned the new missionaries, and denominational leaders surrounded them as David Crowe, director of North American Ministries, prayed for their ministries.

Michigan native and long-time missionary to France Tom McCullough shared a message on *The Word of God: Its Globalization* from Acts 10. Based on the example of Peter and Cornelius, he challenged listeners not to let prejudice or resentment divide the world into “us versus them.” Instead, Christians must understand that the gospel is for all people—no matter how sinful, unlovely, or unlike us. “Acts 10 gives us the perfect window that the Word of God is global. It is for everyone...and this has been the message of God since the very beginning.”

The service closed with thousands of emotional voices joined in the powerful refrain, “Freedom's calling; chains are falling; hope is dawning bright and true. Day is breaking; night is quaking; God is making all things new—Jesus saves!”

*Name withheld for security. Sarah works for a missions organization ministering in limited-access countries.



Going Deeper

The 2015 program was marked by more training opportunities than any meeting in recent history. Engage Leadership Network, a ministry of Randall House, offered 94 workshops. Welch College hosted 22, and WNAC, the Music Commission, International Missions, and the Commission for Theological Integrity took part in these training events, creating an incredibly diverse and jam-packed program. “I can’t believe how many workshops are on the schedule this year,” said Missouri pastor Jackson Watts. “This is a great opportunity, with something for everyone.”

In spite of the busy schedule, Free Will Baptists found plenty of time for fellowship, with events like Laughter and Latté (sponsored by WNAC), dinners, receptions, reunions, and simply catching up with friends in the Exhibit Hall.

They sampled local flavor at nearly 100 restaurants in downtown Grand Rapids, hitting the streets where they relished comfortable temperatures in the mid-80s. “Grand Rapids has been a great convention city,” said Mark Driggers (SC). “I have enjoyed the break from the heat, people have been friendly, and the food has been fantastic! I hope we come back here again.”

Business on the River

General Board

On Monday, July 20, the General Board heard reports from nine national agencies and four commissions as Moderator Tim York guided board members through a three-hour, 36-minute meeting in the Ambassador Ballroom of the Amway Grand Hotel. The board approved several recommendations, including a 2016 denominational budget of more than \$25 million, an Executive Committee recommendation that the 2021 convention in Birmingham, Alabama, be changed to July 17-20, 2022, and a wording change in the *Treatise* to clarify

and strengthen the denomination’s legal stance on marriage and the family.

Clerk Randy Bryant read the names of 22 appointments to 2015 national committees: Credentials Committee (5), Nominating Committee (7), Resolutions Committee (5), and Obituary Committee (5).

During Tuesday and Wednesday business sessions, delegates heard, discussed, and approved the following reports from departmental directors:

The Executive Office

Although the Executive Office finished with a \$5,922 operational deficit due to a downturn in giving to The Together Way, Auditor Terry Hill reported the Executive Office remains in stable financial condition. The agency finished with a surplus of \$23,850 when considering the financial reports of the convention and building services. Executive Secretary Keith Burden made note of a looming budgetary shortfall, however, and indicated that unless financial conditions improve, the 2016 administrative budget will be reduced \$10,584. He warned that few areas remain to trim operations.

Burden also made note of the fact that independent legal counsel approved the 2014 merger between Home Missions and Master’s Men in a seven-page legal opinion. He announced the development of a security plan for churches after recent violence against a congregation in South Carolina.

He recognized Todd Smith for his work on the Executive Committee and updated delegates on the development of church revitalization efforts. The pilot program conducted in Springdale, Arkansas, is nearing completion, and revitalization will be the focus of the Leadership Conference in December. Burden told delegates that *ONE Magazine*, which continues to reach nearly 55,000 Free Will Baptist households, recently celebrated its first decade in print.

He challenged Free Will Baptists everywhere to help meet our full potential. “I stand in opposition to those who say the day of the denomination is past.

Now, more than ever, we need to lay aside differences and join hands to advance the Kingdom of God.”

Welch College

President Matt Pinson reported continuing academic and community excellence, with regional and national accreditation, an annual ranking among the best colleges by *U.S. News and World Report*, and consistently high scores on the Noel-Levitz Student Satisfaction Survey. He celebrated a campus culture of spiritual formation where “young men and women discover how they can serve Christ, His Church, and His world.” He asserted that Christian higher education is more important now than any other time in the school’s history, as the college develops students who will be salt and light in a crumbling culture.

He reported that the college turned a corner financially in 2014-15, aided in part by a boost in enrollment after Gateway College closed in 2013. The college finished the year with a surplus of \$180,000. While this may not be a trend, it is a welcome respite. He introduced a new program, a Master’s degree in Theology and Ministry.

Pinson also rejoiced over the sale of the West End campus and reported the start of construction on the new campus near Gallatin, Tennessee. “The excitement is almost palpable,” he shared. “We have waited so long, and now, it has come to reality. We are launching out in faith, building on the work of those before us.”

He introduced “Building on the Legacy,” a capital campaign that seeks to raise \$5 million toward the cost of constructing a new campus, scheduled for completion by January 2017. He was pleased to share that \$2.1 million has already been raised during a silent phase of the campaign and shared plans for the new campus, with new technology and classic Jeffersonian academic structures.

Randall House

Executive Director Ron Hunter described 2014 as both rewarding and chal-

lenging. As predicted at the 2014 convention, the publisher experienced a loss of \$322,249, the result of the cost of developing a new line of curriculum (while continuing to produce existing products), accounting adjustments for obsolete products, and significant remodeling to operational facilities. “While these financial challenges are concerning,” said Hunter, “they were not unexpected, and we have implemented a 6% budget correction in 2015 to counteract the expenses.”

He celebrated the release of 14 books in 2014-15 (nine by Free Will Baptist authors) and introduced D6 2Gen, a new curriculum line based on a comprehensive discipleship strategy for church and home. “I am more excited about the launch of D6 2Gen than I have been about any previous Randall House initiative during my tenure,” Hunter said.

The new curriculum, which starts Fall 2015, will be available in print and digital format and feature three separate studies each quarter—one month in the Old Testament, one month in the New Testament, and one month reserved for special topics such as apologetics, key theological concepts, and cultural issues. The material continues to use the CLEAR learning system, although the system has been improved and adapted for the new content.

While enthusiastic about these achievements, Hunter cautioned delegates about the future: “All Christian publishers are

facing challenging days as church attendance declines in the United States. So far, Randall House has weathered the storm that has put many other publishers out of business. In recent days, however, as a result of our emphasis on Free Will Baptist doctrine, we have seen a significant decline in sales outside the denomination. Now, more than ever, we need Free Will Baptist churches to support Randall House by using our curriculum. We are the only Sunday School publisher on the market dedicated to teaching our doctrine.”

He encouraged the denomination to embrace church revitalization by focusing on strengthening and equipping families for generational discipleship.

International Missions

Director Clint Morgan rejoiced that the department ended 2014 in the black, and thanked the 700 churches that gave to International Missions during that year. However, he also challenged the remaining 66% of Free Will Baptist churches to support the cause of global evangelism. In May 2015, World Missions Offering totaled \$567,150 (down nearly \$120,000 from last year), but according to Morgan, it is not too late for churches to take part. “The power of one obedient Christian—if fearless and focused—is formidable,” Morgan told listeners, “but the power of the Body of Christ working together as one is unstoppable!”

He shared exciting statistics from 2014—950 conversions, 927 baptisms, and an average international weekly attendance of 26,371. The Hanna Project has upcoming trips to Côte d’Ivoire, Ecuador, and Tajikistan, and two teams, with a combined 25 participants, took part in CMP (College Missions Program) trips this year. Five additional students spent six weeks serving as Overseas Apprentices, and more than 100 high school students participated in E-TEAM, traveling to 11 sites around the globe for a firsthand look at missionary work on the field. “We cannot neglect the fact that 41 of our present 74 missionaries went on short-term missions trips,” Morgan reflected. “This shows we are getting a 55% long-term return on our short-term participation.”

Morgan pointed out growing challenges to global evangelism: 50 countries now have restrictions for preaching the gospel and planting churches; 22 countries are completely closed to the gospel; NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) are being forced out of many countries; and an estimated 100 million Christians faced persecution in 2014. “We believe the number of ‘restricted access countries’ will increase over the next 10 years,” he cautioned listeners, “and this means we must find creative means to enter these areas.”

Though not ready to make a proposal, the Mission is considering a name change as the next logical step in meeting these



2015 Convention Overview

Registration

Board members - 56
Licensed ministers - 16
Local church delegates - 45
NAFWB Attendees - 1,830
NAFWB Staff - 14
Ordained deacons - 74
Ordained ministers - 390
State Delegates - 59
NYC - 2,586

Total Attendees 3,475*

*Note: Many attendees register for more than one convention.

Live Streaming

National Association

Total Visitors - 5,266
Unique Visitors - 3,126

NYC

Total Visitors - 1,493
Unique Visitors - 924

2015 Budgets

Executive Office - \$857,350
FWB Foundation - \$1,223,600
Home Missions - \$5,043,420
Int'l Missions - \$6,900,000
Retirement - \$561,000
Randall House - \$4,624,250
Welch College - \$5,508,831
WNAC - \$286,000
Theological Commission - \$7,700
Historical Commission - \$4,280
Media Commission - \$3,020
Music Commission - \$3,775
Total \$25,023,226

challenges. The department welcomes thoughts, feedback, and perspectives regarding the idea.

Morgan introduced several "international" missionaries. Trif and Vanya Trifonov are Bulgarians who have been appointed as career missionaries to their home country. Cuban missionaries Lazaro and Ariadna Riesgo will serve as Hispanic educational specialists for the department.

He celebrated the arrival of career missionaries Josh and Lydia Provov in Bulgaria after nearly five months of waiting for visas and introduced Eddy and Amanda Simmons as new missionary appointees to the Samburu, an unreached people group in Kenya. As he closed his report, Morgan honored veteran missionaries Steve and Judy Lytle for four decades of missionary service. Judy will continue to work in a part-time office role as financial clerk.

WNAC

Executive Director Elizabeth Hodges rejoiced over \$900,000 given by the 4,000 members of Women Nationally Active for Christ in the past two years—\$419,000 in 2014. In addition, women gave \$45,000 to the Steward Provision Closet in cash gifts, gift cards, and supplies, making it possible to share provisions with more than 100 North American and international missionary families in the past year.

WNAC awarded six college scholarships in 2014-15. Two Indian pastoral students (names withheld for security reasons) received \$1,775 from the Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship. Four additional Dr. Mary R. Wisehart scholarships of \$1,000 were awarded to female students at each Free Will Baptist college. Recipients include: Briana Hurley (Welch), Blake Braishier (Hillsdale), Angie Fuller (California), and Rebecca Collier (Southeastern).

The department helped underwrite the cost of installing new bathrooms at the seminary in Altimira, Mexico; and paid for improvements to the seminary in Chamé, Panama. They sent \$3,000 to help construct and outfit a Feminine Health Center in

Cotê d'Ivoire, West Africa, and sent \$1,000 to the hospital in Doropo to help rebuild and refurbish the hospital after a recent fire.

Director Hodges announced three upcoming retreats: the *Flourish* national retreat in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, September 3-5, and two *Shine!* regional retreats for 12- to 18-year-old girls, moms, and youth leaders. The retreats were made possible by the pilot grant program at FWB Foundation, which provided \$7,500 toward expenses. The first retreat will be hosted by Fairview FWB Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina, October 23. The second will be held at First FWB Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas, November 21. Learn more: www.WNAC.org.

Delegates unanimously approved the proposed WNAC charter, created after the organization joined the National Association in 2014, before Hodges introduced the 2016 WNAC theme "I Surrender All," based on Romans 12:1-2. She concluded her report by saying, "This is an exciting time to be part of WNAC! Please let us know if we can serve you in any way."

North American Ministries

Director David Crowe expressed gratitude to Free Will Baptists, who gave \$4.3 million in 2014, enabling the department to improve financially. The Church Extension Loan Fund continues to thrive, with \$56 million in loans helping to underwrite the cost of general expenses. He thanked 54 church-planting families and eight Free Will Baptist chaplains ministering to men and women in the Armed Forces. Forty-one churches (80 when combined with Hispanic outreach efforts) are currently being planted in 23 states—16 new since last year's convention. In 2014, 11 churches reached or neared self-supporting status. According to Crowe, the average time to start a church has dropped from 9.5 years to 7 years, and he anticipates the timeframe will drop even further.

Crowe praised his staff at North American Ministries (NAM) for their hard work on behalf of the ministry and introduced a new website (www.fwbnam.com) that reflects recent changes in the organization.

He celebrated the success of the department's first POWER Conference held in Branson, Missouri, May 25-26. Approximately 330 people from 17 states attended the conference, leading the department to sponsor a second conference in 2016, addressing the theme "Hands Held High" and the ministry of encouragement.

Although Master's Men merged with North American Ministries in 2014, the organization's activities have continued without pause, including: IMPACT Fort Worth; disaster relief efforts; leading a college missions trip to Haiti; Operation Saturation in Pennsylvania; and several sports fellowship activities.

Crowe honored Publications Editor Ida Lewis, who will retire at the end of the year after nearly 25 years with the department. "The thing I am going to miss most about Ida is her laughter," Crowe said. "She set such a good tone of humor in our office."

As he finished his report, he remembered the faithfulness of former Board Chairman Randy Wright, who lost his struggle with cancer in February 2015. The department will publish *Randy Wright's Journal*, which contains his devotional thoughts and notes from his final sermon. Crowe also honored outgoing board member Ron Parker for his service on the department's board.

Board of Retirement and Insurance

After being honored by his board, outgoing Director Ray Lewis thanked the denomination for the opportunity to serve 32 years with the Board of Retirement. He joined the organization in 1983, serving under directors Herman Hersey and Bill Evans before becoming director himself in 2005, when the Board separated from the Foundation. Lewis will complete his duties December 31.

During his years in the office, assets grew from \$3 million to more than \$56 million and from 735 participants to 2,700. This growth continued again in 2014, with \$2.7 million in contributions, 44 new members, and less than 1% in operational expenses.

Incoming Director John Brummitt will begin his new responsibilities January 1, 2016. Brummitt graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since 2006, working alongside Lewis for nearly a decade. "I'm excited to step into this role," Brummitt shared. "It has been my honor to serve under Ray's faithful ministry, and I am thankful for the time he has invested in me and my family. I'm also thankful his ministry will not end here, but he will continue to serve the Lord in new avenues." He asked delegates to pray for him and his family as he enters his new role.

Lewis closed his final report by honoring outgoing board member Jack Daniels, who

Speakers

Sunday Morning, July 19
Sunday School: Paul Harrison (AL)

Sunday Morning, July 19
Gary Fry (TN)

Sunday Evening, July 19
Rick Locklear (MI)

Monday Evening, July 20
Frank Woods (TN)

Tuesday Morning, July 21
Pastors/Laymen Conference
Danny Baer (NC)
Brian Williams (NY)

Tuesday Evening, July 21
Steve Lytle (TN)

Wednesday Evening, July 22
Tom McCullough (MI)

Elected in 2015

Home Missions

2017
David Sexton (VA)

2021
Earl Hanna (SC)
Tim Stout (OH)
Mike Cash (AZ)

Board of Retirement - 2021

Larry Clyatt (FL)
Rick Dement (MO)
Ron Barber (OK)

FWB Foundation - 2021

Gene Williams (NC)
Rick Locklear (MI)
Phil Whiteaker (AR)

Theological Commission - 2020

Rodney Holloman (TN)

Historical Commission - 2020

Eric Thomsen (TN)

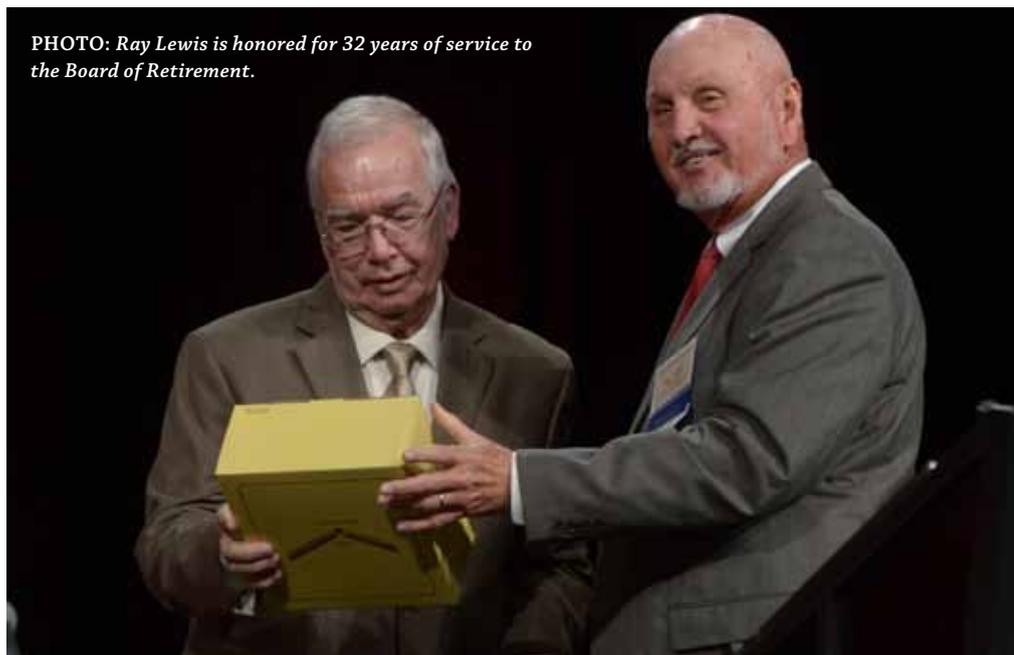
Music Commission - 2020

Bryan Hughes (NC)

Media Commission - 2020

Travis Penn (IN)

PHOTO: Ray Lewis is honored for 32 years of service to the Board of Retirement.



Executive Committee - 2018

Glenn Poston (TN)
Mike Wade (OK)
Edwin Hayes (OH)

General Officers

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

The following boards did not elect members in 2015: International Missions, Randall House Publications, Welch College, and WNAC.

Convention Coverage:

Editorial: Emily Faison, Ida Lewis, Deborah St. Lawrence, Eric Thomsen, Jack Williams, Phyllis York

Photography: Lora Krugh Campbell, Rodney Yerby, Stephen Lopes



has served the department for 28 years. He urged pastors to enroll in the retirement plan and encouraged congregations to support their pastors, associates, assistants, and teachers as well. "I want to challenge you to roll up your sleeves," Lewis said. "Focus your minds and hearts, join hands with the new director, and boldly face the future of Free Will Baptists."

Free Will Baptist Foundation

This has been a momentous year for Free Will Baptist Foundation, according to Director David Brown, with record growth of \$8.4 million, bringing total assets to more than \$60 million, up 76% since 2008.

The department piloted a grant program in 2015, using realized gains from investments to award \$75,000 to six national departments and two national commissions. This grant program will continue, with more than \$5.1 million in the grant pool if all holdings were liquidated.

In cooperation with Cornerstone Estate Planning, the Foundation has helped 870 families plan their estates. While the Foundation does not break even on this program,

Brown reminded listeners, "This is not a money-making venture. We want the program to be offered as a service to our members. We may see great returns in time as they remember Free Will Baptist ministries in their estates."

"It bothers me deeply to hear people say Free Will Baptists are done as a denomination," Brown concluded. "No! We're not done! And in many instances, we are just getting started...Sure, we face many challenges, but God has gone with us in the past, and He will go with us as we face the challenges ahead."

The Commissions

During 2014 and 2015, the Historical Commission took a significant step toward developing a digital archive. Thanks to a large contribution from David Crowe and North American Ministries, the collection added more than 700 books, records, newspapers, personal diaries, and journals

in searchable PDF format. In light of this donation, the commission named the digital archive the David Crowe Digital Collection. These files are available on both the Welch Library website and the growing online collection at www.FWBHistory.com.

The commission has also undertaken the monumental task of scanning and archiving national, state, and local association minutes to be added to FWBhistory.com. If you can help fill the gaps in the collection, please contact the commission. Commission member Eric Thomsen thanked FWB Foundation for a \$5,000 grant to purchase new equipment for scanning historical documents.

Media Commission

Commission Chairman Travis Penn honored outgoing treasurer Adam Carnes for his service to the Media Commission and introduced Josh Owens as his successor. He praised commission members for their work in streaming and archiving convention services and thanked FWB Foundation for their financial assistance.

Commission for Theological Integrity

Dr. Matt Pinson, chairman of the commission, thanked other members for their work and encouraged delegates to visit www.FWBTheology.com to read weekly blog posts. He also solicited papers for the upcoming Theological Symposium to be held on the Hillsdale College Campus in October.

Music Commission

The commission continues to assist with planning and leading the convention music program, according to Chairman Doug Little. The organization is in discussions with North American Ministries to provide assistance in church planting and revitalization efforts. **ONE**



#truth in Grand Rapids

The 2015 National Youth Conference (NYC), held at DeVos Place Convention Center in Grand Rapids, Michigan, July 19-22, celebrated a historic milestone as the Church Training Service (CTS) celebrated 50 years of training Free Will Baptist students. More than 2,500 attendees registered for the conference, and students spent the week exploring the Truth of God's Word.

Tennessee Pastor Corey Minter opened the teen service Sunday morning by challenging students to seek answers to their questions of faith. Sunday night, Dr. Charles Jackson, Hillsdale FWB College science professor, revealed that believers have science on their side and do not have to forfeit their intellect to be a Christian. Monday evening, Michigan pastor Joe Wilson challenged students to give up comforts and follow Christ to be truly free. Mark Mittelberg, co-author of *Becoming a Contagious Christian*, affirmed how the truths of history and science lead to confident faith on Tuesday night.

The week wasn't all about teens, as Katie Greenwood, children's editor at Randall House, led 75 of the youngest Free Will Baptists in crafts, games, and Bible lessons each night. Arkansas children's pastor Johnny Miller taught 167 children (Grades 1-3) to "Give God a High Five" and coordinated a children's choir, which kicked off the NYC Awards on Wednesday night. In Highway 456, Steve Greenwood and Josh Wooten, Tennessee children's pastors, led an energetic worship time for 262, 4-6th grade students each night.

The CTS Ministry Expo (Bible and fine arts competition) is an important element of the conference. During the past 50 years, CTS has helped churches train generations of young people. This year, 821 students competed; but more importantly, they had an opportunity to explore and shape the talents God has given them.

An increasingly popular option has been the ENGAGE Leadership Network seminars. With more than 90 sessions on topics ranging from productivity to theology, students and parents took advantage of these informative and inspirational sessions, made even stronger by the involvement of International Missions, North American Ministries, WNAC, Welch College, and the Free Will Baptist Music Commission. On Monday night, ENGAGE hosted the annual panel discussion to address the pastor's role in a local church.

Truth and Peace Student Leadership Conference served as staff yet again, as 120 students marked the largest group in the conference's 32-year history. They came from 18 states to participate in an experience unlike any other, learning how

2015 National Youth Conference

Registration Total: 2,586

Competitive Activity Entries: 821

ENGAGE Leader Network Seminars: 94

Reach That Guy:

100 volunteers

Hours Worked: 2,700

Opportunities: 7

Buck-A-Week Offering: \$2,043.37

2016 ministries: Hawaii, Davenport;
Uruguay, Steve and Lori Torrison

Truth & Peace Participants: 120

2015 YET

13 students

2,679 miles

7 services

6 churches

2016 YET

Brynn Jones (OK)

Madison Coker (SC)

Kaleisha Garrison (MO)

Tyler Burke (CO)

Caleb Brazzell (OH)

Raygan Sellers (TN)

Ryan Williams (GA)

Mason McClintock (GA)

Leah Williams (NY)

Tristin Flynn (OK)

Gabe Knight (AL)

Taylor Richter (GA)

Hailey Boyer (MO)

Will travel to: Texas, Mississippi,
Oklahoma, and Tennessee



God has gifted each of them uniquely to be part of His plan.

Under the leadership of Allen Pointer, the training culminated with an intense five days of setup, teardown, growth, and service at NYC. Truth and Peace is available to any Free Will Baptist high school student (grades 9-12). Apply online: www.verticalthree.com.

Another group that spent the week serving—the Youth Evangelistic Team (YET). They led worship in teen services after completing a six-church tour to mission churches in the Northeast. Leaders Kevin and Christy Skiles continue to excel in guiding the tour, and the 2016 YET will travel throughout the Midsouth (Texas, Mississippi, Tennessee, and Oklahoma).

Fewer volunteer opportunities were found in Grand Rapids than usual, but volunteers still participated in seven great Reach That Guy events, contributing 2,700 volunteer hours and donating 28 pints of blood to Michigan residents. During the Tuesday offering, more than \$2,000 was collected to benefit Free Will Baptist missions. New banks are available at www.verticalthree.com, along with an online giving option.

GPS (Global Purpose Seekers) was well received in its return to NYC. Nearly 200 people made their way through seven missionary booths to talk about God's call to take the gospel to unreached people groups. This experience gave students a global missions experience where they learned about God's desire for the nations, and what Free Will Baptists are doing to spread the message of the gospel.

During the Wednesday evening Awards Ceremony, Ryan Akers (MO); First FWB Church in Star City, Arkansas; and Kylie Johnson (MI) were named Youth Worker of the Year, Youth Group of the Year, and Youth of the Year. In addition, Arkansas children's pastor Johnny Miller was presented the Jim Lauthern Legacy Award for his exemplary service to his church and NYC. **ONE**

If you missed this year's meeting, make plans now to join the 2016 conference in Kansas City, Missouri, when NYC will address the theme "Transform." Trust us...you don't want to miss it!

About the Denomination >>

Board of Retirement Seeks Accounting Representative

Antioch, Tennessee—The Board of Retirement is seeking to fill a full-time office position for accounting administrator. The position will require, but is not limited to: accounting, bookkeeping, promotion, and personal finance education. Travel will also be required. The applicant must be willing to relocate to the Nashville, Tennessee, area.

Job Title: Accounting Administrator

Skills and Strengths: Should have positive attitude, be a team player, a creative problem solver, and a self-starter. He should be dependable, detail oriented, possess excellent organizational skills, and be comfortable multi-tasking.

Description of Position:

- Responsible for accounting/bookkeeping
- Maintain and updating our custom database
- Travel and promotion of office
- Weekly payroll
- Responsible for filing 1099s at end of year and 941 and 945 reporting
- Must become expert in 403(b)(9) plans as well as other types of retirement
- Financial reporting
- Responding to clients' emails and phone calls in a professional and knowledgeable manner
- Presentations for office

Qualifications:

- Be a follower of Christ
- BS in accounting, business administration or like field
- Experience working in accounting/bookkeeping
- Skills in Excel and Lotus
- Good oral and written communications
- Strong financial understanding
- Strong personal finance philosophy
- Willingness to travel
- Have relationship with Free Will Baptists

Bonus

- CPA or MBA
- Working knowledge of FileMaker Database programming

If interested in the position please send the following to John Brummitt: resume, personal/professional references, Christian testimony, and personal finance philosophy.

Email: john@nafwb.org

Mail: Board of Retirement, Attention: John Brummitt, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011 ■

Family Ministries to Sponsor Regional Conference

Greenville, TN—Free Will Baptist Family Ministries will sponsor a regional conference September 28-29, to address the theme, "Defending Biblical Marriage and Traditional Marriage in a World of Shifting Values." The conference will begin and end at noon.

Keynote speakers include Dr. David Gibbs III, President and General Counsel of the National Center for Life and Liberty; Dr. Matt Pinson, president of Welch College; and Dr. Eddie Moody, Christian pastor, counselor, and chairman of the Psychology program at East Carolina University.

Registration is free for pastors and church leaders, and lodging is available. For more information, visit www.fwbfbm.com or call (423) 470-2100 (conference) or (423) 278-1562 (lodging). ■



Photo: Mark Cowart



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

ONE to ONE >>

THE NIGHT THE LIGHTS WENT OUT

It was two weeks before school started in the summer of 1970. I was a teenager attending a youth camp sponsored by the churches of our district association. Although the days were extremely hot and humid, we managed to enjoy the action-packed week in spite of the heat.

It was an extra-special time for me. The camp evangelist was Reverend Lynn Wood. He was the same man who preached the revival when I had been converted four years earlier. This giant of a man with a booming voice had become one of my spiritual heroes.

About half an hour before the evening service began, a typical Oklahoma storm rolled in. Strong winds, bolts of lightning, claps of thunder, and heavy rain sent campers scampering for shelter in the tabernacle. During the chaos, lightning struck a transformer and electrical power to the entire camp was lost. Fortunately, a gas lantern was found, lit, and hung directly over the pulpit. I will never forget the glowing, halo effect it produced.

Earlier, the director of the camp asked me to lead congregational singing. For some reason, the message of the hymns that evening spoke powerfully to me. At the conclusion of the singing, I took what I thought was an inconspicuous seat in a chair behind the old upright piano. From my vantage point, I could see the preacher standing behind the pulpit. The image of his silhouette is still indelibly etched in my memory.

Honestly, I do not recall the text or the subject of the sermon that evening. I do remember that during the invitation the evangelist requested piano music only—no singing. As I sat contemplating the words the man of God had spoken, I felt the most unusual sensation. I did not hear an audible voice; however, the Holy Spirit was unmistakably speaking to me.

The next moment, I felt a strong hand on my shoulder. It was my pastor. He leaned down and whispered in my ear, “Son, is the Lord calling you to preach?” In that instant, I felt the strangest combination of emotions—surprise that he would ask that question, and relief that he noticed my struggle.

I *had* been wrestling with that decision for quite some time. However, I had told no one—not even my pastor. Frankly, I was afraid to admit that the Lord might be calling me to preach. I was fearful I might be mistaking the call to preach for a call to consecration. What’s more, some friends of mine had recently acknowledged God’s call on their lives, and I did not want others to think I was simply imitating their actions.

I surrendered to the ministry that evening. My sense of calling is as strong today as it was 45 years ago. I will forever be grateful that my pastor challenged me (and other young men) on a regular basis to consider God’s call upon our lives. I am thankful he was observant and sensitive enough to recognize that God was speaking to me.

As I look back, it’s actually rather ironic. The night the lights went out is when the light really came on for me! If God is speaking to you about surrendering to Christian service, don’t fight it. Say yes!

“Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8). ONE



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