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ONE

MAGAZINE

A Free Will Baptist Magazine

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Jumping With My Son
OUT OF THE
MOUTHS OF BABES
Deep Water
•••

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MAGAZINE

TO COMMUNICATE TO
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UNIFYING VISION OF OUR
ROLE IN THE EXTENSION
OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

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First Glimpse >>

The Graduate... Student



“Is everything okay?”

My wife’s concerned voice drifted from the kitchen, where she was whipping up a batch of her famous brownies.

“I’m fine,” I replied sheepishly, realizing my mental groan had become audible.

But I wasn’t fine. After an 18-year hiatus, I had decided to finish the graduate program abandoned shortly before the birth of our daughter. The first, agonizing week of deciphering the historical development of Arminian doctrine left me questioning that decision. More than once, my wife’s matter-of-fact questions echoed through my mind: “Are you sure you want to do this? You do realize you have a full-time job, don’t you?”

My reasons for returning to school were simple. First, I wanted to finish what I had started. (Thanks, Mom and Dad, for drilling that into my head.) Second, I wanted to challenge myself (I guess a magazine, three boards, and a music ministry program weren’t enough). Most important, however, I am driven to learn, and I knew the structure of an academic program would push my learning beyond what I would pursue on my own. With these things in mind, the new Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry at Welch College seemed a perfect fit.

It didn’t take long to realize education had changed dramatically in my absence, becoming technology-driven, research and report-centered, and more difficult than I remembered. As I read the first-week posts (online reports) from others students, I couldn’t help but think maybe my wife had been right. Their

posts were excellent. Mine sounded like I felt...lost and confused. Thus the groan!

Fast-forward a year and six classes. Grad school is still not easy. Sometimes, the tightrope-walk of balancing family, ministry, career, and school is nearly impossible. Occasionally, my posts still sound dazed and confused. And I even took two textbooks on our most recent family vacation. Ugh!

But the rewards of my studies far outweigh the difficulties. This year has taught me many things, and I would like to share three: First, I *can* do this. In spite of doubts, my 44-year-old brain is still capable of acquiring and applying information, although maybe not as quickly.

Second, the knowledge I gained this year has changed forever my perspective on God, His Church, and my role in building His kingdom. I have a deeper understanding and appreciation for doctrine and theology, and I am more committed to gospel-centered church ministry than ever before.

Finally, through this experience, I have developed a deep respect for my classmates, from passionate young theologians who give me great optimism for the future of the denomination to godly older men who remain committed to learning. They have become more than classmates; they are friends, and I wouldn’t trade anything for the fellowship we enjoy together. Iron truly sharpens iron, especially in the crucible of academic deadlines.

Does grad school still make me groan? Absolutely. But in the midst of the groans, I have also grown, and I am grateful.

Interested in the graduate program at Welch College? I recommend it without hesitation.

Visit WWW.WELCH.EDU for more information. 

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letters:

Have something to say? *Say it!*

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

Three cheers for "Two Cheers for Differences" by Jackson Watts (April-May 2016).

I love to see diversity celebrated for all the right reasons, rather than being celebrated for the sake of, well...diversity. Our God is, after all, the One who created and extols unity in diversity. As Rev. Watts so aptly describes in his article, we have much to learn from one another.

—Kam Congleton, Clayton, North Carolina

I have really enjoyed the ONE Magazine from the beginning. There are so many great writers, and it is always what I need for encouragement. It is a must-read for the local WAC group because of the information. Thank you for keeping us informed.

—Sue Riddle, Local WAC Coordinator, Muldrow, Oklahoma

I received ONE Magazine yesterday and sat down about midnight to read it.

I thoroughly enjoyed the issue, especially the article about Greg Ketteman's mother. However, I think readers would be served better if you used a darker ink or a larger font for your articles. Keep up the good work.

—Doris Perkins, Idabel, Oklahoma

From the editorial staff: Thanks for the encouragement and suggestion, Doris. It is always good to get feedback from readers, and your request for a larger, darker font has been noted in preparation for the upcoming redesign in the June-July issue of 2017.

Calling for History...

In early 2014, the Free Will Baptist Historical Commission began the monumental task of creating a digital archive of national, state, district, and quarterly minutes. Over time, these valuable records are being added to www.FWBHistory.com and welchlibrary.wordpress.com available to everyone in searchable PDF format.

We need your help! Gaps still remain in the collection. If you can donate books or records, please contact commission chairman, Robert E. Picirilli: repicirilli@comcast.net. Let's work together to preserve the amazing story of Free Will Baptists for the next generation.

www.FWBHistory.com



DISCIPLESHIP

IN THE CHURCH

By Brad Ransom

I've been in full-time ministry since 1982. For the first 25 years, I served in local church ministry as a staff pastor and lead pastor. The last decade I've been in denominational leadership and have spent a lot of time reflecting on the years I spent in the local church, especially the years I served as lead pastor. I have come to realize I did some things well and others not so well.

Sometimes, it's hard to see the "forest because of the trees." When you're in the midst of leading a church, preparing several sermons and lessons each week, counseling people in the church, organizing stuff, visiting hospitals, nursing homes, and shut-ins (along with the other things pastors do on a weekly basis), it can sometimes be hard to keep all the plates spinning. In addition to ongoing responsibilities, a pastor has ministry positions to fill, people to train, leaders to mentor, and the list goes on. Looking back, I think I organized things pretty well. I loved on people and built some fantastic relationships with families in hospital rooms, counseling sessions, and even the funeral home. But one thing I could have done better—intentionally building disciples.

Don't misunderstand. I'm not talking about recruiting volunteers. I think I did okay at that. I'm talking about building leaders instead of filling slots. Over the years, I did build up some leaders, and most are still involved in ministry. But I certainly did not disciple to the level I could have.

I had the privilege of seeing hundreds of people come to the Lord during my tenure as a pastor. Our church was fantastic at successful outreach events and seeing people baptized, but in retrospect, I don't think the number of leaders produced from these converts was in balance. If the truth were known, I think this is common among churches. After thinking about it for several years and training church planters, I have learned some things that may be helpful to others as they disciple and train leaders.



DISCIPLESHIP BEGINS WITH KNOWING YOUR CONVERT.

Too often, we try to force everyone into the same mold, or run him or her through the same discipleship process. In today's culture, many people need to learn the basics before they can move on to other things. Many new converts in this generation have never been to church and know nothing of Creation, the Fall of Man, redemption, etc. They don't know the stories of Moses parting the Red Sea, David and Goliath, Daniel in the lion's den, Jonah and the whale. They have no idea who Saul is (or that he became Paul).

Discipleship begins with learning the spiritual background of your converts. If they have little or no history with church or Sunday School, it is crucial to begin where they are. We need to talk about worldview, absolute truth, integrity, character, and a dozen other things. Nothing should be assumed or taken for granted.

DISCIPLESHIP CONTINUES WITH ONE-ON-ONE CONVERSATIONS.

Having a discipleship class is fine, but don't run your new converts through a class and assume they are "good to go." Classes are important, but so are one-on-one conversations. Pastor, you can't do this alone. You need help from other leaders who will take this task as a challenge and help disciple new converts. This is a time-consuming process, but nothing yields better results in the long run.

I met Scott through Mandy, who visited our church. Scott and Mandy were both unbelievers and met at work. Scott had a bit of a drinking problem, but after dating they got married. It wasn't a pretty picture. The marriage quickly declined and was consumed by alcohol, fighting, and nasty words of discouragement. The marriage failed. Scott and Mandy divorced, moved, and Mandy changed jobs. She moved to our area and came to church after being invited

DISCIPLESHIP BEGINS WITH LEARNING THE SPIRITUAL BACKGROUND OF YOUR CONVERTS. NOTHING CAN BE ASSUMED OR TAKEN FOR GRANTED.

by her next-door neighbor, who attended our church. Mandy was saved, and by God's divine providence, Scott also was saved at a different church in another area. Scott and Mandy began talking again, and Mandy introduced me to Scott when they began exploring the possibility of trying their marriage again, this time as a Christian couple. I began to see amazing growth in their lives. Scott and I began spending time together talking about the Bible, spiritual things, ministry, church, and more. Scott, Mandy, my wife Lori, and I began spending a great deal of time together. Scott and Mandy didn't have a church background, but both were hungry to

THE ONE ON ONE INVESTMENT WAS WORTH THE EFFORT AND PAID THE HIGHEST DIVIDENDS.

learn and grow. Eventually, Scott and Mandy married again and made amazing progress in the Lord. Over the next several years, Scott became very involved in the church and later volunteered as director of ministries. Eventually, Scott went on to pastor and serve as a hospital chaplain. He remains active in ministry and pastors First FWB Church in Ardmore, Oklahoma.

I tell you this story because it is a story of investment and high return. I spent much time with Scott individually, and our families were close. Our discussions were intense at times. Scott and Mandy are great examples of people who were far from God but now are great leaders themselves.

I certainly don't take credit for where Scott and Mandy are spiritually, but I am thankful I was able to invest in them. God gave the increase in their lives, and they are great servants for Him. The one-on-one investment was worth the effort and paid the highest dividends.

By the way, this process goes both ways. Who invested in you? I am thankful for those willing to have those conversations with me when I was young, new, and growing in my faith. I'll forever be indebted to men

like Edwin Wade, Charles Wilson, Gary Curry, Keith Burden, David Crowe, and others who have invested in me and given me opportunities to grow and serve.

DISCIPLESHIP CAN BENEFIT FROM SCIENCE. That may sound strange, but I strongly suggest finding out as much about people as you can. Using spiritual gifts assessments to identify a convert's spiritual gifts is a great way to help new believers plug in to ministry. A personality assessment and other "scientific" instruments to gain insight can be very helpful when discipling them and guiding them into a place of ministry in the church.

Many free resources are available in print and online to help new converts discover their personality types, spiritual gifts, love languages, spiritual strengths, and more. Take advantage of these resources to help move new converts along in their spiritual journey. Do your research and find resources that can help you and your converts discover as much as possible.

DISCIPLESHIP REQUIRES PLUGGING PEOPLE IN. Many people go through discipleship classes and programs only to be added to a class roll or membership list and never reach their full potential. It isn't enough to send new converts through a program. They must get plugged in to ministry and build relationships with others. If your church doesn't have a system to get new people plugged in, you need to create one. Develop a plan to move new converts through your discipleship process, discover their gifts, and then get them involved. It is the best way to "close the back door" of our churches and keep converts from slipping out unnoticed.

Often, we perceive a lack of willing volunteers to serve the necessary roles in the church. Maybe it isn't a lack of people, but a lack of disciplined believers who have been effectively plugged in to ministry. It will be a time investment for sure, but one well worth it.

Discipleship doesn't just happen. It is a process requiring time and effort. Jesus invested His entire ministry into discipling leaders who would go on to turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6) for Christ. Who are *you* investing in? **ONE**

Why I'm STAYING:



Advice to Aspiring Church Leaders

By Matthew Steven Bracey

As a young man, and even a college student, I occasionally heard of people becoming disenfranchised with their churches or denominations. Some, I learned, even left their denominations, though I'd never personally known anyone to do so. That all changed when I was in divinity school. A classmate of mine—let's call him Tom—who had been raised as a Southern Baptist, converted to Lutheranism. "What makes a person in his mid-20s make such a significant change?" I wondered.

My roommate and I talked about this at length. He also had been raised in the Southern Baptist tradition, while I grew up in a Free Will Baptist church. "Have you ever considered leaving Southern Baptists?" I asked him.

"I'm not sure," he replied, adding: "What about you? Would you ever leave Free Will Baptists?"

I don't suppose anyone had ever asked me this question directly, but it had been on my mind since Tom's switch. "No," I answered. "God has placed me among Free Will Baptists, whatever their challenges. In my own life, God has revealed His Word, given His gospel, and offered direction through the Free Will Baptist people. And I hope He uses me."

At the time, I didn't realize how important that

question and my answer would be for the future. I had committed to serve Free Will Baptists in my heart and in my head. That day in the spring of 2011, for whatever reason, was special. At a time when my peers were leaving their childhood confessions, I was finding assurance and encouragement in my own.

Fast-forward several years. Occasionally, I still hear expressions of discontent among Free Will Baptists: "My church is too traditional." "Business meetings and associational meetings are boring and pointless." "I could do a better job if I were in charge of the church or a denominational agency." "I'm tired of disunity." "I'd rather be involved with a 'successful' denomination."

Sometimes, those who express these sentiments aren't committed to their local churches, much less the denomination. They've lost their zeal for what God is doing among Free Will Baptists. Some are bitter and resentful. Others are disgruntled to the point that they've left the denomination to become Anglican, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Southern Baptist, charismatic, or non-denominational. I've heard others respond, "Well, as long as they're in church, that's all that matters."

Such remarks sadden me deeply. Being in church isn't

all that matters. My heart breaks to hear stories about folks unhappy with their churches, or to see people leave the denomination I love. God has used Free Will Baptists significantly in my life. Maybe the same is true with you. I want to see God continue to use this denomination, both now and in the future. I want to see the denomination survive and thrive.

What can we do? While grumblings can discourage, they can also inspire. Whatever our age or generation—whether teenagers, young professionals, middle-aged, nearing retirement, or elderly—we don't have to sit idly by.

GET INVOLVED



I remember in my youth group as a teenager, when I complained about this or that, my youth pastor never stopped at simply listening. He would listen, sure. But invariably, he would suggest I step up and *do* something: “Simply sitting on the sidelines isn't sufficient. Excuses are empty. While talking can be useful, it must turn into action. Don't become negative and bitter. Avoid people and communities that inspire these harmful qualities. Resolve to be hopeful and helpful, and to encourage these qualities in others.”

Of course, getting involved means working with people—perhaps the very people who frustrate us most. Nevertheless, we must work through our feelings, no matter who is at fault. Retreat is not the answer to difficult people or situations. Honest, loving dialogue is the answer along with respect, patience, and love toward the people who test us the most. As 1 Peter instructs: “Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous: Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.” (3:8-9).

As an example, quarterly meetings have become important to me. However, many church leaders and even pastors complain about how seemingly boring and pointless they are—how a Friday night or Saturday morning is awful timing. My response: church business is God's work. Meetings are as boring and pointless as we make them. To the extent we find them so, we can train our minds otherwise. As we attend these meetings, in time we can provide influence and leadership to these endeavors in profitable ways. In this day especially, our churches, quarterlies, districts, associations, and denomination need us as much as they ever have. Let's step up, challenges and all, and get involved.

PRACTICE PATIENCE

We also must practice patience. In recent years, I've asked several church leaders, “If you could offer any advice to someone my age about leadership in the local church and denomination, what would it be?” Each of them, in different seasons of life and types of service, answered the same: “In your desire to serve and to change, be patient with your fellow-laborers, especially those older than you.”

Simple advice, yes, but important.

Certainly, youthful zeal for local church ministry can be good. But it can also be headstrong and inexperienced. Rather than viewing older leaders as roadblocks, we should see them as people made in God's image who are often wiser than us. The fact is, they've been “around the block” a time or two.

Sometimes our ideas aren't as grand as we think; other times they're just bad. Sometimes, though, we have good ideas that just need to be tempered and directed. That's what God intended: that the older would teach the younger, and that the younger, as they grow older, would teach the next generation, and so forth (2 Timothy 2:2; Philippians 4:9).

Whatever our hopes to lead, we must do so in concert with our spiritual fathers and mothers. They don't want to rain on our parade as much as they wish to help—even when it might not seem that way. As we interact with our elders, we should do so with honor, respect, and humility. “Honor thy father and thy mother” has application for biological, adoptive, and yes, spiritual parents (Exodus 20:12; Matthew 19:19). Similarly, “Rebuke not an elder, but intreat him as a father; and the younger men as brethren; The elder women as mothers; the younger as sisters, with all purity.” (1 Timothy 5:1-2; 1 Peter 5:5).

Responding to spiritual elders with patience and submission will mean we resist the urge to interpret them uncharitably. Why do we give ourselves every break under the sun, while not extending grace to others? Rather than assuming the worst of them and their motives, why don't we assume the *best*—or at least the better? When our elders make decisions that don't go our way, our first thought should not be to “wash our hands of this ministry,” or to “shake the dust from our feet” of that church. The likely case is they had a good, sensible reason for their decision, and we can learn from them.

To illustrate, I've heard fellow millennials express impatience toward those with whom they're ministering who, they believe, are “stuck in their ways.” These church leaders, often early boomers or from the silent generation, insist

dogmatically on a particular Bible version, believe women should wear only skirts, and won't sing much beyond Stamps-Baxter and the Gaithers.

Other millennials are frustrated by those with whom they serve, often generation xers and late boomers, who err in the "other" direction. In their vision of youth ministry, they order too much pizza, play too many games, and have too much fun. Their general philosophy of ministry isn't biblical enough, their music is too entertainment-oriented, their songs aren't theological enough, and their dress and grooming is too irreverent.

In either case, these millennials probably view their

I WANT TO SEE GOD CONTINUE TO USE THIS DENOMINATION, BOTH NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.

elders too simplistically, whomever they're working with. As people, we're complicated and opinionated. And while we all want the best for everyone involved, we're going to disagree about how to accomplish that. Even so, we must work together.

So my response to fellow millennials: wherever we are in our personal views of these matters (and believe me, people my age are all over the place), as we work with our generation x, baby boomer, and silent generation elders, we need humbly to honor and respect them, wherever they're coming from. We need to listen to them and learn from them, even when we don't agree with them.

One day, we'll walk in their shoes, and certainly we'll want those we mentor to practice patience with us. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).

DISAGREEMENT

As stated above, working side-by-side with people from different backgrounds and generations will mean we disagree sometimes, maybe often. While this shouldn't be a problem, I've noticed an inability among many in this age to disagree "Christianly." Either we avoid disagreement altogether, or we argue in unChristian ways. One produces lowest-common-denominator compromises, the other disunity. Both generate frustration.

What can we do? Commit ourselves to sticking together, no matter what. We are, as the song says, the family of God. As brothers and sisters in Christ, we've been washed in the fountain, cleansed by His blood. From rags to riches, we who were orphans are now joint heirs with Jesus.

Disagreements will come, and that's okay. But we stay together. And we resolve to avoid disagreement in an unhealthy manner. We don't go looking for trouble, but we don't forfeit our integrity either. We can disagree Christianly and prayerfully, knowing that we'll stumble in doing so, but determining to do better the next time.

When we disagree, we should do so in a manner that is passionate and vigorous, yet friendly and respectful. Disagreement need not spell the end of friendship. Not every disagreement is a personal attack (although some are).

What does this look like practically? From words to tone to body language, our general spirit should be Christlike. Whatever our critical points of difference, we must remember to say encouraging, positive, winsome things. Not the empty flattery Jude warns against (Jude 16), but honest words of edification.

We should remember wisdom, too. Some hills are legitimately worth dying on—points of orthodoxy. But not every hill is worth taking. Some are not that important. Others, while important, require timing. Trying to climb it now might be unwise. Instead, consider pursuing the issue in a month, a year, or a few years. Certainly, we don't want to "stir the pot" so it boils over; in that case, it would have probably been better to leave well enough alone. If no fruit will come from a critique, question, or idea, then perhaps we should move on.

Finally, don't lose the forest for the trees. Discussions and even disagreements may not be as significant as we think when we consider the Church's greater heritage through space and time, and its larger mission to the ends of the earth. On the other hand, let's resolve not to be moved one jot or tittle on those gospel essentials, whatever the mood of culture.

COMMITMENT

Do you know people who are discouraged or disgruntled with his or her local church or the denomination? (Maybe it's you.) Encourage them to get involved. If they're interested in leadership, remind them to be patient with everyone—especially those older than them—who can provide a great source of insight, love, and wisdom. If they disagree with people, remind them of what's truly important, and encourage them to disagree as brothers and sisters, and not as strangers or enemies.

No, this article can't account for all contingencies of specific circumstances. But whatever they are, we can all choose to commit ourselves to serve the denomination we love. Are you waiting for problems to improve? You'll always wait. Problems never go away. Usually the grass is not that much greener—just different.

At some point, we have to commit ourselves to the enterprise—frustrations, problems, struggles, and all. Going forward, then, let's remain positive, build up one another, and inspire a movement, refusing negativity that destroys. Where do we want to see the denomination in

**GOING FORWARD, THEN,
LET'S REMAIN POSITIVE,
BUILD UP ONE ANOTHER,
AND INSPIRE A MOVEMENT,
REFUSING NEGATIVITY
THAT DESTROYS.**

five years? Ten years? Twenty years? If we refuse to serve it, we'll see it to its grave. But if we step up and do our part, we can inspire something beautiful. **ONE**

About the Writer: Matthew S. Bracey serves as associate vice provost for Academic Administration at Welch College, where he is also a member of the faculty, teaching courses in history, law, theology, and interdisciplinary studies. He holds degrees from Cumberland School of Law (J.D.), Beeson Divinity School (M.T.S.), and Welch College (B.A., History, Biblical Studies). Matthew is co-founder and senior editor of the Helwys Society Forum: www.hfs.com.

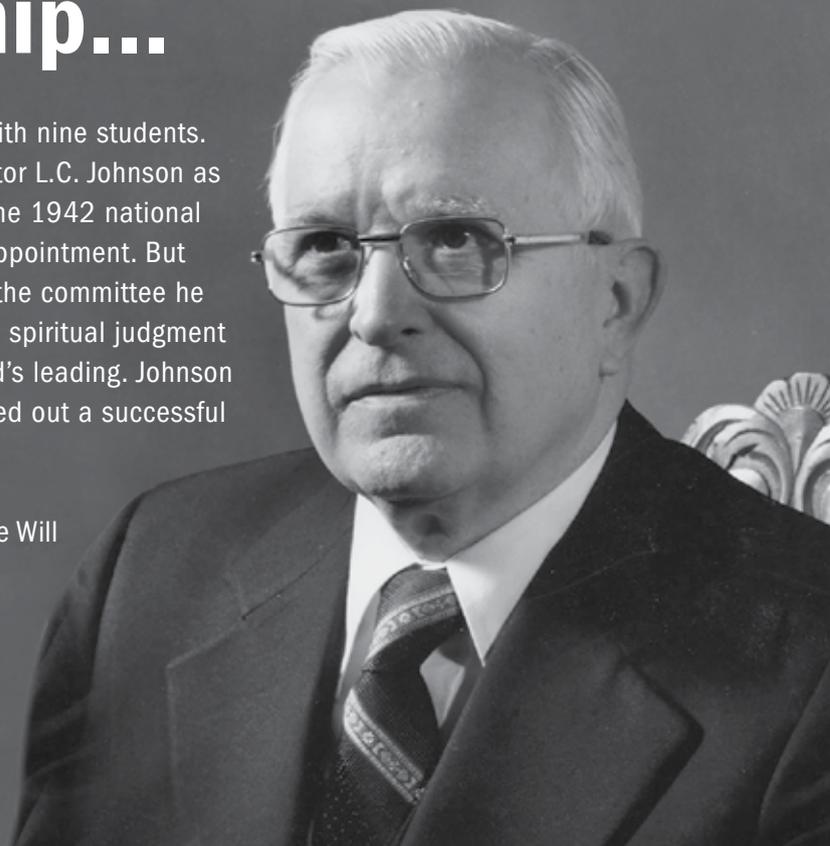
Legacy of Leadership...

Free Will Baptist Bible School opened September 15, 1942, with nine students. The Board of Trustees appointed South Georgia native and pastor L.C. Johnson as the first president. When initially approached by L.R. Ennis at the 1942 national convention, the soft-spoken southern gentleman resisted the appointment. But at the urging of his colleagues, he graciously accepted, telling the committee he could not understand the appointment but would submit to the spiritual judgment of older, more experienced men who seemed certain about God's leading. Johnson quickly proved to be a man of courage and vision, and he carved out a successful educational program for the new college.

Why not create your own legacy with an endowment through Free Will Baptist Foundation to benefit the ongoing work of Welch College?



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LEADERSHIP WHITEBOARD

Can You Spot the Leader?

|| BY RON HUNTER JR.



Saul, anointed by Samuel at the direction of the Lord, was selected based upon the external, aesthetic qualities the people desired. Because of Saul's selection, Samuel had a preconceived idea of how the next king should look. As a result, when God sent Samuel to Jesse's house, Samuel had a tough time spotting the next leader. As he stood in front of the oldest (who probably looked the part), Samuel must have been surprised and maybe even aggravated when God said no to him and to each brother who followed.

You know how the story ends; Jesse called the youngest (and smallest), who had not even been considered. Imagine the dinner conversation that evening if David had been overlooked totally. But God confirmed young David as the next king of Israel.

LEADERSHIP QUOTE
 "THE MOMENT A PERSON FORMS A THEORY, HIS IMAGINATION SEES IN EVERY OBJECT THE TRAITS WHICH FAVOR THAT THEORY."
 —THOMAS JEFFERSON

Leadership theories today run the gambit. The oldest and least used theory is trait (outward appearances). At the end of day, internal qualities matter every bit as much. External and internal qualities can be numerous, but look for leaders courageous enough to make hard calls regardless of what it does to his or her position. Leadership never should be about self-preservation or perpetuation; that's a manager's mindset.

Leaders hold moral choices above pragmatic ones and intelligently pursue what is right rather than "being right." As you grow as a leader, do not focus on ways you don't measure up externally—the old-school mindset. Instead, focus on the internal characteristics God values. Become a person after God's own heart, which in itself is an internal measurement.

RECOMMENDED BOOK:

JESUS ON LEADERSHIP

BY C. GENE WILKES

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Jumping

With My SON

BY (CPT) KEVIN TRIMBLE



About the Writer: CH (CPT) Kevin Trimble serves as battalion chaplain for the 4th BN 1st SWTG (A) in Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He formerly pastored Oak Grove FWB Church in Greeneville, Tennessee. He and his wife Darla have been married more than 30 years. His son, (CPT) Nathan Trimble, a graduate of Vanderbilt University, is married to Delaney.



In June, I had a special opportunity specific to my calling, ministry, and job. I was able to jump with my son Nathan. For those in the airborne community, jumping is a regular event and at 4th Battalion, 1st Special Warfare Training Group (Airborne), it is a biweekly occurrence. Typically, I have the chance to pray, to connect with soldiers in the Q-course (special forces qualification course or Green Beret school), discussing family and relationship issues, their faith, and perhaps the butterflies in their stomachs as many haven't jumped since airborne school.

This day was different. It was a beautiful June day, early in the morning, and I was to jump with the 18A class, the young officers in training to be detachment commanders. This class was especially important to me, as our son Nathan was a member of the class. Nathan's road to the Q-course began at Welch College while enrolled at the Vanderbilt ROTC program. He has since graduated ranger school, deployed, and has been selected to go through the two-year rigorous training of the SFQC.

I must confess I enjoy being a chaplain. I enjoy getting up each day, working out with soldiers half my age, jumping from planes with them, hearing their struggles, and leading them into a deep and rich faith. Yet, above my professional joys, the privilege of being my son's chaplain is a blessing beyond measure.

In the spring of 2015, Darla and I moved to Fort Bragg at roughly the same time Nathan and his wife Delaney moved there to begin training. As a family, we prayed earnestly not to get in each other's way, granting space for each of us to work and minister. Our places of worship are different as well. In our prayers, we asked God for the privilege to make the most of our time. Our situation is unique. Most generational soldiers never serve at the same post, much less the same battalion.

As we settled in and began work and ministry, our family looked for intentional ways to connect without being obtrusive. We live close enough that Nathan often stops by for food, a place to change clothes, a visit, or a chance to rest. My counseling load is fuller as regularly a young man stops by and says, "Your son said you could help me." The privileges of ministry are endless, and to find open doors in the lives of young families as they work

through the demands of the Q-course is a daily reminder of the glory and grace of God.

On that June morning, I served as I do through each airborne exercise. I helped soldiers put on their chutes; talked and prayed with several; and asked about families, faith and children. I prayed for the group before we began the operation, and I must confess, my spirit was moved as I remembered our struggles to raise godly kids, memorizing Scripture and pointing them to God as the source of strength for our lives.

I was reminded of the words the Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesian church: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). J. B. Phillips shares a unique perspective on this passage:

Live life, then, with a due sense of responsibility, not as men who do not know the meaning and purpose of life, but as those who do. Make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days. Don't be vague but firmly grasp what you know to be the will of God.

Long ago, Darla and I determined we would live intentionally in our family. We are making the best use of our time, realizing that each day is fleeting. As Phillips writes, "make the best use of your time, despite all the difficulties of these days," I understand. Life is filled with difficulty for the modern family, with society's deteriorating views and the rapid evaporation of the cause of Christ from many lives. Intentionally, with determination, our kids—and now their spouses—understand the importance of every day, of every jump. **ONE**



Out of the Mouths of Babes

BY AMY POSTLEWAITE

*“Don’t you know God? I love God.
Do you want to know God?
Because I think He can help you!”*

These are the words my four-year-old daughter shared one day (in very simple Bulgarian) with one of her best friends at preschool. She actually spoke them in a moment when this friend was sitting in “time-out”—something she apparently knew he needed God’s help with! Anna has a very honest and upfront personality, which often results in her receiving her own “time-outs.” But when I heard about this preschool conversation, I felt so thankful that God had given her the courage to share simple words of truth with her friend who most likely had never heard the gospel.

My husband and I also felt challenged—convicted that maybe sharing our faith among the people we came to reach didn’t have to be as scary and complicated as we had thought. Maybe the limitations of which we were keenly aware as first-term missionaries were not as limiting as we felt they were. Maybe the simple ways we were seeing God work in and through our preschool-aged kids could teach us a great deal about effectiveness in ministry.

When we moved to Bulgaria, we quickly learned an important key to reaching people with the gospel is gaining their trust. The years Bulgarians spent under a Communist government contributed to a great suspicion many of them have towards each other and outsiders. To gain credibility and trust in our communities as missionaries, we must find ways to identify with them. One of the most natural ways for our family to identify with others in our community was sending our daughters to Bulgarian preschool only a few months after our arrival in Bulgaria—a decision that wasn’t easy for us. We were blessed to have good teachers for our kids.

I knew it is normal for most moms and kids to be emotional on their first day of preschool. Even so, for me, this day meant releasing my preschooler to spend all day in a place where she couldn’t communicate or be understood. It meant realizing the teacher may not tell me if a problem occurred because of the shame-based culture. It meant spending many months of our first year on the field adjusting to

viruses from the preschool to which our bodies weren't accustomed. It meant responding to my daughter's tears, confusion, and protests. It meant sleepless nights wondering, "What in the world am I doing to my children? Have I completely blown it by bringing them here?"

One thing we repeated to our children (and ourselves) in the midst of adjusting to school and to a new culture was "When you don't know what to do, just pray. Remember God is able to do big things in and through your life when you trust Him." I vividly remember many moments of praying for my oldest daughter during the school day as I pushed my younger daughter's stroller over the cobblestone streets of our town. I also vividly remember a day when we were at a Bulgarian coffee shop with friends. I overheard Anna whisper a prayer before sipping her hot chocolate. She prayed her teacher would come to church one day and her classmates would learn about Jesus.

I felt rather pessimistic at that point that we would see this take place. We had quickly learned it often takes months or years to earn a person's trust or friendship in Bulgaria. We knew the probability of Anna's teachers or classmates trusting us enough to walk into our church building, which many people in our city believed to be a cult, was pretty unlikely. But we continued in prayer anyway, waiting to see what big things God might choose to do.

In spite of our weakness, limitations, and even lack of faith, we saw God help our family begin to identify with kids, parents, and staff members at the school. We could sympathize with other parents struggling to let go of their kids. We strove to deal with problems in a peaceful and humble way, and we saw this make an impression on others. Anna's classmates soon embraced her as a friend and didn't shun her because she was a foreigner who couldn't speak well. As our language abilities improved, we felt less self-conscious making conversations with parents in the foyer and began to sense less suspicion from them than we did in the beginning. Even though we hated making cultural and linguistic mistakes, we were thankful for the way these mistakes kept us humble and often gave us opportunities to relate to people in a better way.

God eventually blessed us with the gift of trust among people in our community as well. Our church in Svishtov had been conducting free English clubs for elementary aged kids for several years and had seen good relationships develop because of this. We decided to start another English club for preschoolers, based on the interest of a few parents we knew from the preschool. We were amazed when some of the same kids Anna had prayed for soon began to attend.

A Bulgarian friend and I spent an hour each week teaching preschoolers simple English through songs, games, and books. It was challenging, but we grew to love the kids and their parents with all our hearts. Relationships of trust continued to grow. There were times when different parents and children stopped attending or distanced themselves from us for various reasons. We

wondered if this ministry would dissolve soon after it was started, but God allowed it to continue. He was indeed capable of doing big things!

In the beginning, our preschool English club met in a room that doubled as a church nursery and storage room. The moms usually sat on a couch and chatted during the lessons. One day, as I was teaching the preschoolers, I overheard one mother asking another mom who had just begun attending the church what it was all about. She had been intrigued by signs about the Bible



study but did not know what we did or represented. These kinds of conversations continued to take place during our English club. We saw new believers and even "seekers" sharing with others their positive and personal experience with the church and Jesus.

More and more women not only began attending the English clubs but also visiting our church's Bible studies and worship services. The beautiful thing is most of these women did not come because they were invited by members of our missions team. They came because they had been invited by other Bulgarian moms, and sometimes their kids, who had "tasted and seen" what our ministry was all about.

Needless to say, my heart grew deeply attached to these children and mothers—most to whom God had connected us through our own children. Then came moments when our prayers for these precious friends became especially fervent. We watched two different mothers associated with our English clubs suffer through the unexpected death of their husbands. We watched others struggle through unemployment, divorce, and other serious issues. I didn't always have the wisdom to give them clear answers, or the language ability to formally disciple them. But I realized I could be involved in the discipleship of these children and mothers who desperately needed to know Jesus. I could pray for them, identify with them, and support them because of the

relationship of trust God had provided.

These were simple things I had seen my preschool daughter model in her interactions with her classmates. When we saw the power of God displayed in our simple attempts to show His love, we saw lives truly changed. We knew, without a doubt, God put us in that place, with those people, for that time.

Ministry to children and through children is an invaluable part of Free Will Baptist missions work in Bulgaria. I hope it is important to you, your family, and your church as well. The time it may take to build trust with parents is worth it. Encouraging children to be “disciples” who are faithful in prayer and witness is one of the most powerful ways we can be a part of reaching the world with the hope of the gospel.

“But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 19:14). **ONE**

About the Writer: Amy and her husband Jonathan arrived in Svishtov, Bulgaria, in February 2013, joining Tim and Lydia Awtrey in planting New Life FWB Church. They moved to Pleven in October 2016, to lay groundwork for a church in that city.



Around the World >>

September Missionary Balances

Antioch, TN—Balances as of September 30, 2016, reveal the following deficit accounts:

India Ministries/Carlisle Hanna.....	(142,235.45)	Anthony & Lea Edgmon.....	(17,212.10)
Jeff & Susana Turnbough.....	(45,816.25)	David & Angie Outlaw.....	(10,148.10)
Josh & Alicia Crowe.....	(44,129.76)	Don & Ruth McDonald.....	(3,040.19)
Nathan & Linda Snow.....	(34,871.84)	Neil & Mandi Morgan.....	(2,787.23)
Jerry & Barbara Gibbs.....	(28,836.87)	Matt & Cristina Price.....	(2,630.16)
Kenneth & Rejane Eagleton.....	(27,332.25)	Dale & Sandra Bishop.....	(581.62)
Steve & Lori Torrison.....	(25,348.96)	Shannon Little.....	(540.15)
Dennis & Carol Teague.....	(17,665.95)	Robert & Judy Bryan.....	(245.48)

Though not deficit, the following account balances are extremely low and in need of additional support:

Tyler & Kellie Penn.....	2,841.75	Steve & Becky Riggs.....	4,231.42
Rusty & Brenda Carney.....	2,965.52	Tim & Lydia Awtrey.....	6,936.46

Setting Them Up for SUCCESS

BY CHRIS COMPTON

It is the time of year when resolutions are made, and goals are set. We identify things we want to achieve, areas we want to improve, and things we want to stop. Maybe you already know what your New Year's resolution will be, or maybe you have been thinking about it but haven't settled on a resolution yet. In whichever position you find yourself, all parents should resolve to teach kids about money.

Parents are responsible for educating their children in all matters of life. Yet a subject parents often forget or avoid is teaching their kids to handle money responsibly. To be fair, some parents have conversations about money, but most are reluctant about teaching good money habits and financial education. Perhaps this is because they don't think about it, don't feel like they have adequate knowledge, or they simply are not good at handling money themselves.



Parents need to remember their kids are watching them as they deal with money and will form behaviors and attitudes based upon those observations. We don't do our children any favors by neglecting to teach them about money. By making this a priority early, parents can help their children avoid major financial mistakes in the future.

The early years are the best time to start sharing lessons about handling money. A study done by David Whitebread and Sue Bingham of the University of Cambridge showed children form money habits by age seven. Some parents might think a child is too young to understand money, but studies reveal that children as young as three can understand basic financial concepts. Don't worry about starting too early, or even starting too late. The key is to start. Parents should consider teaching their kids about money with four basic stewardship lessons: earn some, give some, spend some, and save some.

Earn some. It is okay to give your children money, but don't always give them money for everything they want. Consider the following suggestions to help them learn the value of work:

1. Assign them chores and pay them for their work. Consider a chore chart and tell them what you will pay them for each chore. As they get older, increase their responsibilities (and their pay).
2. Give them educational projects outside of schoolwork such as a book report or extra reading and pay them for their work.
3. Allow them to be entrepreneurial and come up with "new jobs" above their normal chores and, once again, pay them for those. Who says work can't be fun?

Give some. One of the greatest privileges we have as Christians is giving back to God. Parents not only need to model giving, but they must teach their kids the responsibility of giving. Teaching kids to tithe is important and will help our children give in other areas. Help them set aside money in a jar or envelope each time you pay them. Later, they can give at church or to a missionary. Let them be the ones who give, so they will experience the joy of sharing. Make sure they see you give faithfully, even when finances are tight. They will never forget it.

Spend some. Kids love to spend money like everyone else. Let them. Help them set aside a certain percentage of the money they earn to spend on something they want. Take them to the store and let them use their money to buy the toy. As they get older, teach them about important financial topics like need versus want, the value of things, and how to set up a budget and balance a bank account.

Save some. Children need to understand the importance of saving. As they earn money or receive money as a gift, teach them to put away a portion for savings, in a jar, envelope, or savings account. Teach them to save regularly. Let them save for a particular goal, like a toy or gadget they want. Once they reach the goal, celebrate and take them to the store to purchase it. As they get older, help them set bigger savings goals such as car and college, and begin to teach them about compounding interest and investing.



The goal should be to keep kids from entering adulthood with no idea of how to handle finances wisely. Before we know it, they will be making important financial decisions that will affect the rest of their lives. Let's not leave those choices to chance. Teaching our children is our responsibility. If we make it our goal to instill good financial wisdom early in their lives, we can save them grief, and set them up for success.

The Board of Retirement is your financial services agency. If we can help you teach your children about money, please contact our office: 877-767-7738. **ONE**

About the Writer:

Chris Compton is communications officer for the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. Learn more: www.BoardofRetirement.com.

Discipleship Emphasis in Uruguay

Uruguay—On October 1, 2016, the first discipleship class began with 11 participants from Melo and Rivera.



The program, Grupo D (D Group), is based on Jesus' command to "make disciples" and Paul's advice to Timothy to "teach faithful men" who, in turn, teach others (2 Timothy 2:2).

Students will participate in online discussions and chats, theoretical and practical applications of discipleship, and monthly evaluations/meetings. The end result is for these students to view discipleship as a lifelong process and a natural complement to evangelism. As they make discipleship a priority in their lives, they will teach what they have learned to the next group, becoming disciples who make disciples who make disciples. ■

Graduation in Central Asia

Central Asia—God is doing some incredible work in Central Asia. International Missions and The Hanna Project's partnership with organizations on the ground in these countries allows Free Will Baptists to play a strategic role in God's Kingdom efforts.

For several years, one of our workers has assisted in the training of pastors, teachers, youth workers, and other leaders for churches in several of these countries. In September, nine students graduated with Bachelor of Arts degrees. The group of seven men and two women representing three Central Asian countries defended their final papers in much the same way Master's students in the United States must.

"Please be in prayer as God uses these freshly-trained leaders to advance His Kingdom in Central Asia," said the American professor. ■

30 Samburu Respond to the Gospel



Kenya—After a weeklong visit to Barsalinga, Eddy and Amanda Simmons' coworker among the Samburu, Jackson, called September 3 to share good news with the Simmons.

Eddy enthusiastically reported, "He visited Mama Wetu's place again, and eight more people repented of their sins, surrendering their lives to Yesu trusting Him by faith! This is in addition to six who were saved in this same area just a couple of months ago. While he was there, they also gave thanks to God for the healing of Mama Wetu's brother who was suffering from some severe back issues. They had prayed for him about two weeks ago. He is healed and giving glory to God!

Jackson visited a place called Lomer, where many new believers live. It is a place we visit often, sitting around the fire late at night talking about Jesus with the elders. When Jackson visited this past week, the men had a lot of questions. Seven of them had already accepted Christ, but one was new and from a different area. When they finished their discussions, the new man asked more questions about Yesu and shortly thereafter surrendered his life to Yesu!

Next, Jackson visited a new place near the home of Jonathan and Esther—a couple we trained in the oral Bible storying methods we use. When Jackson and Jonathan visited this place and shared the gospel, 15, yes, 15 people surrendered their lives through repentance and faith in Yesu!

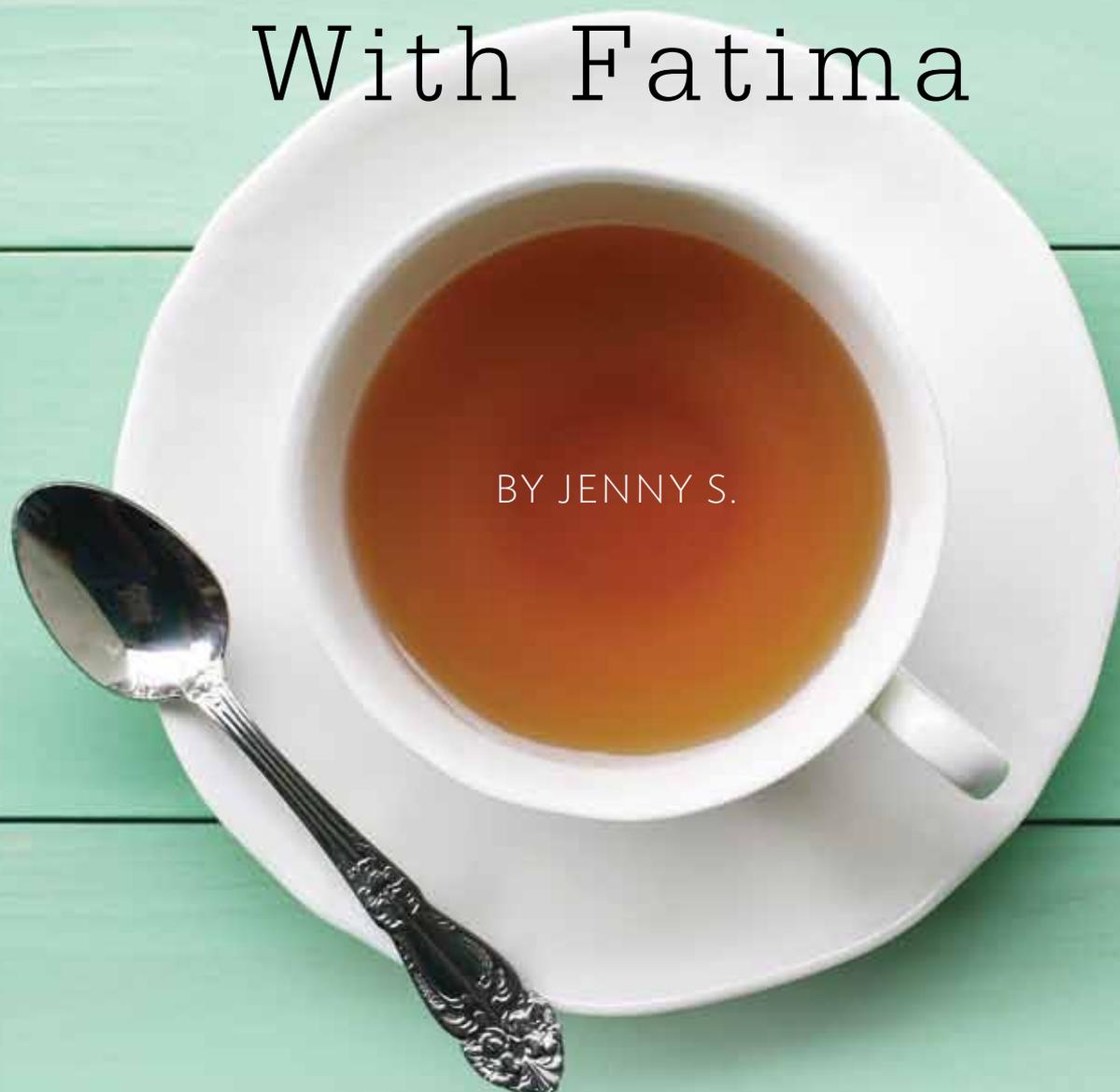
Jackson also baptized Thomas' wife last week. He had four candidates for baptism but was not able to work out a time to baptize them all. Thomas is one of the men we have trained in the oral Bible storying methods. He continues to be a faithful helper in the gospel ministry and is our guard on our short-term trips.

In addition, a couple of weeks ago, our female coworker in the gospel, Eunice, traveled four hours from her home to continue to evangelize and disciple the ladies of Barsalinga. She shared the gospel with a group of ladies, and seven surrendered their lives to Jesus."

Jackson travels four-to-five hours from where he lives to evangelize and disciple in Barsalinga. ■

TEA

With Fatima



BY JENNY S.

**The clatter and clinks of coffee mugs, teacups,
and spoons stirring in sugar resounded in the cramped space.**

I had just sat down in the café at a busy time. Who would have thought a Sunday afternoon would be so busy in a coffee shop? Usually, when I showed up during the week it was empty, especially in the back, but now every table was filled with Spanish people chattering loudly about last week's events. I had to grab one of the smallest tables and sit on a stool.

This is one of my favorite cafés. Everyone in town seems to know about it. It's painted in lively colors, has old furniture, stacks of even older books and magazines, and strange paintings that change every week.

I fiddled with my notebook, nearly dropping my pencil as I waited for my friend. I shouldn't say friend, because we had never met before except briefly on Facebook. I prayed I wouldn't make an idiot of myself, and that God would give me just the words to say. I doubted I would be able to do much that day other than learn a little Arabic, but if God would just lay the foundation for His work in her heart—before she even came—that's what I needed. A miracle.

Usually, I wouldn't have picked a Sunday to meet, especially not a Sunday when I was going to a Bible study, but this was the only time either one of us had. This worked out, so I could study a little Arabic, and then, when we finished, I could go right upstairs to the apartment where the Bible study was held, rather than making two trips into town that day via bus and walking.

Just as I suspected, my Moroccan friend arrived 15 minutes late, but I spent the time preparing for our lan-

guage exchange and studying up on the few Arabic words I did know.

I was surprised to see such a young woman come toward me. She looked to be a late teen rather than a college student. Fatima* also didn't wear a head covering like most Moroccans I knew. She was the first Moroccan university student I had ever met. My experience only included Moroccans who lived in the country or the impoverished immigrants to whom I gave food and clothing



at local centers. This girl, on the other hand, wore trendy Western European clothes and walked with confidence.

We sat down and immediately began asking about each other. I learned Fatima was studying computer science and was almost done with her studies. Next semester she would study in Germany where her brother lived. She knew several languages and spoke English nearly perfectly. In that moment, I knew this wasn't going to be much of a language exchange, but more of a Moroccan lesson. Fatima really was interested in what I did in Spain and wanted to help in any way she could. She knew from our online conversations I wanted to learn Arabic so I could teach English to Moroccan immigrants here in Malaga.

She wanted to know if she could come help me afterward if I was teaching a class. "No, I'm not teaching a class," I said uncomfortably. I was unsure how my language partner would respond to me going to a Bible study as this was only our first meet-up. My Spanish language partners frequently responded negatively when I talked about my religious activities.

We began working on the difficult Arabic language, practicing basic greetings and beginner vocabulary words from days of the week to numbers. It was amazing how fast the time flew. We drank hot tea and enjoyed the beauty and poetry of the Arabic language. We both seemed to enjoy the other's company. Soon, we were talking again. We dawdled over our empty teacups and found it hard to part the cozy café.

"Where are you going again?" Fatima asked persistently. I smiled as a sense of peace filled me.

"To a Bible study."

"Oh! Are you Catholic?"

"No, no, I'm not Catholic. I'm an evangelical Christian. We're different."

"How so? I've always been interested in learning about different religions and cultures."

That was a good enough reason for me



*Not her real name.

to start sharing. I explained briefly about the differences between the operations of the Catholic and Evangelical Church, but knew I wasn't getting to the heart of the issue. Despite this, Fatima's eyes glowed with even more interest. I felt a strong push from the Holy Spirit just to invite her upstairs instead of speaking more.

"Do you want to just come with me? See what it's like for yourself?" I asked her. Fatima's smile grew as she nodded.

"Yes, when does it start?"

"I imagine people are already there. Let's go."

So, we gathered our things and paid the bill. It was shocking this was really happening. I had close Spanish friends I had been inviting to church and talking to about Jesus for years, and they either refused to talk about religious things, or it never seemed to pertain them. Yet, here was a Moroccan university student coming with me after our first meeting to a Bible study.

Many people were at the meeting. Most were Americans studying about missions at a local school. Tonight, one of their teachers was leading the lesson. Seeing Spanish people and a Moroccan in the crowd, he began to share the life-giving message of the gospel.

What led up to this moment?

A verse comes to mind. Jesus approached Peter and Andrew on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. They were busy working, casting their nets into the sea to catch fish for the day. They had never met Jesus before, but He walked up to them and announced, "Come, follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men."

This was just the start of their discipleship journey as Jesus invited them to join him. The account above was the start of Fatima's story and the invitation from Jesus through various means to start her own discipleship story.

TEACH ENGLISH
IN THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

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This verse has meant a great deal to me during my own personal journey. What led me to this moment in Spain and giving Fatima the same invitation someone once gave me?

It took two girls in junior high who asked if I knew Jesus. Afterward, a youth leader handed me a saltshaker and told me to "go be salt to the earth" when I was 16 and new to this faith journey. Later, a college peer mentor asked me, "Have you ever thought about missions?" Then, even further down the line as a non-traditional university student at a Bible college, the mission director shared her knowledge and wisdom from years of service in Japan: "We don't just make disciples. We make disciplers—disciples who make disciples."

Without each and every one of these people pouring their lives into me, I

could not possibly do the work I'm doing now. They felt a calling in their lives, not of missions but to go make disciples.

Two of them thought their calling was to serve overseas, but God actually called them to stay at home and make disciples. But their passions for missions bled into everything they did, from youth ministry and mentoring to blogging. One retired from the field to teach missions classes.

Each disciplined me to, in turn, make disciples myself. And though the work is new and fresh in Spain, I continue to be a fisher of people in a new context, seeking to be someone who makes disciples who will make disciples themselves. Whether we meet at teahouses or in homes or in an English class—wherever they are in their lives, I'm working to bring them closer to Christ by reaching heartfelt needs. **ONE**

Snapshots Around the World

Bulgaria—On September 20, the Provows restarted the church Bible study in Svish-tov, Bulgaria, working through the book of James. The group—a mix of mature believers, new believers, and people who are studying the Bible for the first time in their lives—meets each Tuesday evening.

Japan—Ruth McDonald launched the Good News Club on Wednesday afternoon, September 14, at the Good News Chapel church plant with an eager group. Katie Speer led the elementary-aged kids in a 20-minute mix of English and Japanese gospel music. Mr. Tetsuya Kazama followed with a creative introduction to what the Bible is and the story of Creation. Ruth directed the children in a follow-up time to the Bible story via flash cards and games. Seventeen children attended the first club gathering with nine moms and one grandmother in the mix. This new ministry is scheduled through December 2016, on an every-other-week basis.



Japan—Mr. Imai and Ms. Asai were baptized Sunday, September 4. Both recently made professions of faith at the Good News Chapel Church (Tokyo) through the ministry of Donnie and Ruth McDonald. The baptism ceremony was performed at the Iriso church, with church people from all three Tokyo FWB congregations in attendance. Mr. Imai and Ms. Asai shared written testimonies of their salvation experience, impacting all in attendance with their earnest faith.



Côte d'Ivoire—Two pastors from Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire—Pastor Samuel and Pastor Silas—arrived in the States on Monday, September 5. They traveled and spoke in churches in Missouri, Arkansas, and Oklahoma during September and October. Their goal was to communicate all God is doing in Ivory Coast and the importance of the partnership between IM and the ministry there.

Bulgaria—Weekly English clubs in Svish-tov, Bulgaria, began September 15, following the summer break. Over 25 people—around half new to the clubs—attended one of the three weekly groups.

Spain—The cultural center in Alpedrete has given permission for the Alpedrete Church to perform their Christmas musical on November 12. Though the date is not ideal for a Christmas event, this is the first year they've provided an open date. For the past several years, the neighboring town of Collado Mediano has hosted the musical.

India—Shalom FWB Church, a house church in South India, was full and people were sitting outside to hear the message, Sunday, September 25.



Japan—Nathan Snow baptized two believers—his son Noah and Ms. Meguro—on Thursday, September 22. Ms. Meguro recently believed following more than a year of Bible studies. Her family is opposed to her Christian faith.

Reflections on the Master's in Theology program at Welch College...

Practical (prak-ti-k_uh_l)

BY TODD PARRISH

Practical *adj.* - designed for actual use; fitted for actual work.

If I had to sum up my most recent course in the Welch College graduate program, the term practical would allow me to do it with just one word. Busy pastors and church leaders spend time, effort, energy, and money attending workshops, taking classes, and sitting in on conferences. While some of the information gleaned from these endeavors is useful, many times the pastor or church leader walks away with material that will rarely, if ever, be put to use. My experience in the class Ministry and Leadership I has been different.

As the course began, we were encouraged to read Jonathan Leeman's book *Reverberation*. Leeman's call for the church to make God's Word central in everything challenged me. I took that challenge with me to a weekend leadership retreat for our pastoral staff and deacons, where we spent Friday night and Saturday in a remodeled 1700s farmhouse.

Before the retreat, I shared selected portions of Leeman's book. We spent Friday night sharing our hearts and vision regarding Leeman's call to "get back to the Word." I was amazed when our leaders were hungry for the challenge. I shared additional thoughts from Mark Dever's *The Deliberate Church*, where he urged the church to preach, sing, pray,

and see the Word of God—the regulative principle.

What a joy it was to kneel on 200-year-old, heart-pine boards and remember the Lord's death and resurrection. We celebrated communion and washed one another's feet, bringing to life the story recorded in John 12-13. We spent the rest of that night praying and casting vision for the coming church year.

But the practical influence of this class didn't end at the retreat. After sharing the ideas of Leeman (and other authors), I challenged our congregation to attend the upcoming celebration of the Lord's Supper and washing of the saints' feet. I explained that we are to "see" the Word of God (as Leeman and

Dever teach). I told them if they would return that Sunday night, they could do that when we gathered around the Lord's Table and picked up the basin and the towel. To my amazement, a record crowd attended the communion service that night. And it was standing room only during the washing of the saints' feet that followed—an overflowing crowd of men and women and observers.

As the class read *Ten Questions to Diagnose Your Spiritual Health* by Donald S. Whitney, I began to share key ideas in staff meetings. As we sat around a conference table, my heart warmed to hear church leaders discuss the importance of regularly evaluating our walk with the Lord. They were grateful for guidance in



This class made a difference in my ministry personally, to the family I love, and in the people I lead.

this area. After the meeting, one associate pastor immediately returned to his office and ordered Whitney's book.

During the following midweek service, I met with the men of the church for prayer and reflection. Again, I shared Whitney's thoughts and questions. Again, men with a heart for God began to share their own desire to know more about the Lord, and how we can keep from becoming "dry souls."

When recently asked, "What did this course mean to you?" my response was simple. It was one of the most practical

courses I have ever taken. I applaud the leaders and faculty of Welch College for having the heart and wisdom to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, to craft a program that not only touches the intellect but also speaks to the heart and trains the hands. This class made a difference in my ministry personally, to the family I love, and in the people I lead. Thank you for a tremendous experience where I was challenged, renewed, and sharpened by my interaction with others who have a similar heart for ministry. **ONE**

About the Writer: Todd Parrish is a 1989 graduate of Welch College. He has been senior pastor at First FWB Church in Washington, North Carolina, since June 2012. He and his wife Merinda have two adult daughters, Emily (Vickery) and Ellen. Learn more about the Master's in Theology: www.Welch.edu.



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Intersect >>

Reflections on Hagar and Ishmael, Part Two

BY MATTHEW MCAFFEE

In the October-November edition of Intersect, we explored the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. We were reminded of the consequences of sinful actions, and its effects on subsequent generations. In Abraham's case, his sin with Hagar affected the entire course of human history. Thankfully, God remains faithful in spite of our sin.

God's Grace Offers Sustenance Amidst the Consequences of Sin

These circumstances illustrate well the words of Scripture in Romans 5:20, "But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." Grace abounded indeed. In spite of Abraham's lack of faith, and in spite of his decision to follow ungodly counsel, the divinely promised heir was born. They named his him Isaac (which means *he laughs*) because everyone who would hear of Sarah having a child in old age would laugh. What was impossible for man was possible with God.

In the midst of celebrating Isaac's birth, however, we mustn't forget the tragedy of Hagar's situation. In fact, the Bible does not allow us to forget it. Before long, Sarah saw Ishmael deriding his brother. Such behavior might be expected in any sibling rivalry, but we need to remember, at least from Ishmael's perspective, his place as heir had been supplanted.

As tensions grew, Sarah had enough. She had already sent Hagar away once (Genesis 16:6), and she was ready to do so again. Sarah charged Abraham: "Cast out this bondwoman and

her son; for the son of this bondwoman shall not be heir with my son, *namely*, with Isaac" (Gen 21:10). Scripture tells us Abraham was distressed by her request. Ishmael was his own flesh and blood. How could he expel his own son from the security of his own home into the harsh elements to fend for himself?

But the Lord instructed Abraham to let the lad and his mother go, and so they departed. Abraham sent them away with limited provisions that soon ran out. The scene of Hagar and her son on the edge of death is almost too unbearable to read, especially for those with sons and daughters of their own. She placed the boy under a tree, sat down some distance away, and cried out, "Let me not see the death of the boy" (Genesis 21:16). Once again, we find a stark reminder that our sins can bring unbearable pain on others.

"God heard the voice of the lad" (Genesis 21:17)—these are words of great comfort to the hurting soul. God's tender mercies were extended to young Ishmael and his mother that day. God helped them, and furthermore He promised He would make Ishmael the head of a great nation (Genesis 21:18).



Why Is This Story Important for Us Today?

This passage of Scripture seems to pull us in two different directions. The mystery of God's providence is certainly at work here. On one hand, Abraham and Sarah disbelieved the promises of God and made a sinful decision, which adversely affected their loved ones. On the other hand, God worked to fulfill his promises to Abraham, while at the same time caring for the used and abused maidservant of Sarah, along with her dying son.

Why is this story important for us today? First, it reminds us of the need to wait patiently for the Lord. As the psalmist instructs us, "Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He will strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!" (Psalm 27:14). When we fail to wait on the Lord, the consequences can be dire. We need to think not only of ourselves, but also of others, and how our sin affects them.

Further, these two characters were made in the image and likeness of God. They had intrinsic value to Him and were in need of His grace. The story of Isaac and Ishmael becomes a story of wars, pain, suffering, and hatred. As Paul later reminded

the Galatians, these two sons are symbolic of two ways of life—one leading to bondage and the other to freedom (Galatians 4:21-31). We know Isaac was the child of promise, through whom redemption would come for the world. Furthermore, the redemption of God's glorious gospel coming through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and culminating in Jesus Christ is good news for the nations, even the descendants of Ishmael.

We are all too familiar with the constant media coverage of Islamic terrorism in our world. We continue to witness the fallout from this painful story, sometimes on a weekly basis. We can rest assured that the Great Judge sees all injustices carried out in this sin-cursed world and will right all wrongs when Jesus returns a second time.

At the same time, we need to remember God's tender mercies toward Hagar and Ishmael revealed in this compelling narrative. The gospel of Jesus Christ is for their descendants too. Consider the tender compassion he showed this mother and her dying son. Pray that the hope of God's glorious gospel would reach the nations, even the sons and daughters of Ishmael.

About the Writer: Dr. Matthew McAfee is vice provost and program coordinator of Theological Studies at Welch College. He earned a B.A. degree from Welch College, a M.Div. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and a M.A. and Ph.D. from University of Chicago.

At Welch College >>

Welch Makes Strategic Personnel Changes

A number of important personnel changes recently have occurred at Welch College, according to President Matt Pinson. "These are exciting times of change at Welch, and it is especially exciting to welcome new employees during this time of expansion, growth, and relocation," President Pinson remarked.

Changes in Academics

Several academic personnel changes have occurred to facilitate strategic growth and leadership development at the college, Pinson told faculty in a recent gathering. "We are sensing a pressing need to free Dr. Greg Kettelman's time to work on strategic growth initiatives," Pinson said. These new initiatives planned for the new campus include an evening adult studies program; more online degrees; a master's degrees in Christian leadership, teaching, and educational administration; and agreements with area colleges and universities for baccalaureate degrees in nursing, ease of transfer to Welch, and outreach to Christian high schools and the homeschool community.



Dr. Matthew McAfee, faculty member in Theological Studies and former campus pastor, has been named vice provost to assist current provost, Dr. Greg Kettelman. McAfee will continue to coordinate the undergraduate theological studies program. A graduate of Welch College (B.A.), Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and the University of Chicago (M.A., Ph.D.), McAfee has written a number of scholarly and popular articles in journals such as the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* and the *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* and recently co-authored *Sexuality, Gender, and the Church*. He will transition from his campus pastoral role into the new administrative position. He lives on campus with his wife Anna, who serves as women's resident director, and their four children: Abigail, Lydia, Samuel, and Marianne.



Dr. Kevin Hester has been named associate vice president for institutional effectiveness while continuing his role as dean of the School of Theol-

ogy. A graduate of Welch, Dr. Hester holds a M.Div. from Covenant Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Saint Louis University. He authored *Eschatology and Pain in the Theology of Gregory the Great* along with many articles and journal entries. Kevin and his wife Leslie have four sons. The two oldest, Spencer and Seth, are students at Welch. Younger brothers, Justin and Jackson, are in high school and middle school respectively.



Matthew Bracey has transitioned to associate vice provost for academic administration. Bracey graduated from Cumberland School of Law at Samford

University (J.D.) and holds a B.A. in history from Welch and a master's degree in theology from Beeson Divinity School at Samford. He has written widely and is co-author of *Sexuality, Gender, and the Church* and co-editor of *The Promise of Arminian Theology*. He will also continue teaching and serving as registrar. His wife Sarah is currently pursuing a doctorate in counseling and serves as an adjunct instructor in psychology at Welch.



Chris Talbot has been named campus pastor. Talbot will continue to oversee and teach in the Youth and Family Ministry degree program at Welch. A graduate

of Welch College, Talbot holds an M.A. in ministry from Grace Theological Seminary and plans to pursue a doctoral degree. He also serves bi-vocationally as youth and family pastor at Sylvan Park FWB Church in Nashville, and has written numerous articles for online and print media. He lives in Gallatin with his wife Rebekah and their son William.



Dr. Charles Lea has been hired in a part-time role as special assistant to the president for adult education and professor of educational leadership. Lea

served 16 years as academic vice president at Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin, Tennessee. For the past eight years, he worked as founding director of Union University's Hendersonville campus. Dr. Lea holds a doctorate in higher education leadership from Vanderbilt University. He will spearhead the initiative to launch an evening adult program in Sumner County and consult with campus leadership regarding community relations in Gallatin and Sumner County.



Phillip Morgan will begin duties as a full-time faculty member in January after John Carter, long-time history professor at Welch, announced his planned retirement recently. In December, Carter will end a 35-year tenure at Welch. He has agreed to continue teaching in an adjunct capacity after retirement. Morgan currently serves as associate pastor for youth and music at Heads FWB Church in Cedar Hill, Tennessee, where he intends to continue serving bi-vocationally. A 2008 Welch graduate with a B.A. in music, Morgan will complete an M.A. in history from Middle Tennessee State University in December. He plans to pursue a Ph.D. at MTSU in the field of public history. Morgan and his wife Megan have two children: Isaiah and Julia.

Staff Changes



Katie Bryan, assistant women's basketball coach, has been named head coach of the Welch Lady Flames basketball team. Bryan graduated from Welch in 2012 with an A.S. in Biology before transitioning into Welch's nursing program with Belmont

University. Katie graduated in 2014 as a registered nurse with a B.S.N. degree from Belmont and was inducted into the Sigma Theta Tau International Honor Society of Nursing. She is currently employed in the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit at Centennial Medical Center in Nashville.



Mrs. Emily Vickery recently accepted the position of receptionist. Emily graduated summa cum laude from Welch College in May, receiving a B.S. in Psychology.

One week later she married **Zach Vickery**, also a 2016 Welch graduate. Zach was recently hired as the college's first graduate assistant while completing the M.A. degree in Theology and Ministry. He plans to pursue doctoral work in biblical studies. He is providing research and academic assistance to Kevin Hester and Matthew McAfee and providing administrative assistance to Dr. Jeff Cockrell, program coordinator for the M.A. program. Zach and Emily reside in Ashland City, Tennessee, where he serves as youth pastor at Friendship FWB Church.



Mrs. Terri Cockrell is the new academic office manager at Welch College. She is the wife of Welch graduate program coordinator and faculty member Dr. Jeff

Cockrell. The Cockrells have two adult sons, Drew and Joel. Cockrell most recently was employed in the Admissions Office at Volunteer State Community College in Gallatin. She brings over six years' of collegiate office experience and 20 years in administrative offices, including ten years accounting experience. She holds the A.A.S. degree in Business Data Processing from Johnston Community College in North Carolina.



Debbie Mouser, former director of enrollment services, has shifted to a new role as director of recruitment. “This new, more specialized role will enable

Mrs. Mouser to do more of what she has done so well at Welch—engage in direct recruiting and communication with applicants and their parents,” said David Williford, vice president for advancement. Mouser has served Welch full time for the past six years. She is a Welch graduate and has been the pianist for the College Choir since 2008. She and her husband Marvin have three adult children: Matthew, Megan, and Amanda.



Derek Altom, manager of the Office of Institutional Advancement, will step in as acting director of Enrollment Services. A Welch graduate, Altom began

his role in the Advancement Office last year after a successful pastorate in Ada, Oklahoma. Derek and his wife Jennifer have four sons: Stephen, Larry, Josiah, and Silas.



AnnaGee Harris recently became office manager for Enrollment Services, according to Derek Altom. A 2005 graduate of Welch College, AnnaGee received the M.A.T. with an emphasis in Theater from Trevecca Nazarene University. She has served in a part-time capacity as director of the Evangels Drama Team since 2009, and for the last three years, worked as site administrator for Trevecca Nazarene University at Volunteer State Community College. David Williford, Vice President for Institutional Advancement, stated, “We are thrilled to welcome AnnaGee Harris to the enrollment services team. During her years as a student and following, she has enjoyed traveling, representing Welch College, and encouraging students to consider

Welch. I’m delighted she has chosen to become part of the team in a full-time capacity.”



Daniel Webster has been appointed director of marketing and recruitment for Welch Online. The part-time position will allow him to remain in North Carolina where he pastors Glad Tidings FWB Church in Asheboro. Webster graduated from Gateway Christian College and served ten years as an associate pastor at Gateway FWB Church in Virginia Beach, Virginia, where he managed music, media, worship, and single young adult ministry. He holds an M.A. from Maranatha Baptist University, an M.B.S. from Virginia Beach Theological Seminary, and is concurrently seeking an M.Div. and M.A. in Church Music at Maranatha Baptist University. Daniel and his wife Kimberly have three children: Aaron, Julianna, and Noah.

“These are exciting times of transition at Welch College,” President Pinson said. “The college is poised for tremendous growth as we move to the new campus, and these strategic changes will make that growth possible. Please join me in praying for these servants of Christ as they embrace their new roles in this Christian community of faith and learning.”

Welch College to Purchase Land Adjacent to New Campus

Nashville, TN—Welch College recently entered a partnership with three other Free Will Baptist ministries to purchase 64 acres of land on Big Station Camp Boulevard in Gallatin, Tennessee, according to President Matt Pinson. The partnership will consist of the FWB Foundation and North American Ministries, both of Antioch, Tennessee, and FWB Family Ministries of Greenville, Tennessee.

“We are so grateful to these entities for helping us obtain this valuable property next door to our current 66-acre campus in Gallatin,” Pinson said. “We’ve entered into an agreement to purchase all but ten acres back from these ministries after we have sold a portion of the land to a real estate developer. At the time this transaction occurs, the National Association will receive four acres of land, and FWB Family Ministries will receive six acres of land. I’m excited about the possibilities this gives Free Will Baptists for the future.”

The sale price for the parcel, which is owned by Fifth-Third Bank, is \$2.7 million. Welch’s current 66-acre-campus recently appraised at \$5.8 million. “This is an excellent investment,” Pinson continued. “Our property, which has a good bit of flood plain intended for athletic fields and parking, appraises at twice-per-acre what we’re paying for this new parcel, which has no flood-plain acreage and commercial zoning and prime road frontage. We owe so much to Bob Bass, our relocation project consultant, who was the visionary behind this transaction.”

“This is a win, win, win situation,” said Foundation Director David Brown. “The partnership for acquisition of land is a good investment for the Foundation, will allow the college to expand their footprint all the way to Big Station Camp Boulevard, and will provide a potential site for a new Free Will Baptist National Offices Building in the future.”

Dr. H. David Crowe, executive director of North American Ministries said, “What an exciting time it is for Free Will Baptists. I am thrilled to partner with Welch, Family Ministries, and the Foundation to see this purchase come to fruition. It’s a win for everyone.”

Tim York, Chairman of the Board of Family Ministries said, “We are thrilled to expand our ministry to Middle Tennessee and to work with Welch College and other Free Will Baptist ministries. This exciting partnership will provide much needed resources to accomplish the objectives and mission statements of our different ministries.”

On
Being

F A T
and

FLOURISHING

BY BRENDA EVANS

It's actually Ruby's fault. She started it. "Be fat and flourishing," she advised, "even when you get old. That's what the King James Bible says." She ought to know.

Not that Ruby, a long-ago Kansas City friend, was overweight, rich, and ready to put one foot in the grave. She wasn't. She was in her 70s (or her eighth decade, and my husband Bill reminds me I'm there, too), living on retirement income, and only a little plump. What Ruby meant was that older people like her still ought to have vigorous sapwood and bear fruit. Exactly what the Psalmist meant by "fat and flourishing" in 92:14.

I thought of her last week when yet another tree fell across the road we travel to and from town—a 15-inch pine at least 40 feet tall this time. Apparently, the sap to its roots had dried up, so they weakened their hold on the soil and keeled over. Tree sap flows through a layer between the heartwood of a tree and its bark. This sapwood layer is soft and living. Heartwood in the middle of the tree is harder, without sap, and more or less dead. If a tree has healthy sapwood it continues to thrive and bear fruit, even if its heartwood begins to rot out. Ruby was determined to be fruitful sapwood.

Sometimes, we older folk act like we are useless. We make unfounded excuses for taking ourselves out of activities, including community and church ones. Then again, sometimes our oldness slaps us in the face, like it did when I turned 70. My husband Bill congratulated me, kissed me, and promptly told me for the first time that I was now in my eighth decade. A milestone to him, one he was well past and proud of. A hazard to me, it felt like he had skinned all the bark off my shins. So, I did what any wounded 70-year-old wife might do; I denied it.

"Can't be," I said. "I'm just 70."

"Is," he said. A man of few words. Sometimes.

"Eighth decade doesn't make sense to me."

"Does to me."

"Well, just tell me why."

And he did, on and on, until I finally understood. Sort of. At least I caved in, because I knew he was a numbers guy, and I was not. Actuarial charts, spreadsheets, statistics. He understands them all.

But so what if I'm in my eighth decade...or seventh or ninth or whatever decade, for that matter? My vitality in the Lord and my fruitfulness does not have to die. That's what Ruby meant. I can stay full of sap and green, not turn into heartwood just yet. To Ruby, becoming heartwood meant getting to that place in life where you say your time has

passed, and there's not a thing left for you to do.

I admit to some things I can't do now and other things I never could. I've always had limitations. Never could run with horses, for example, as the Lord reminded Jeremiah. Lion-infested thickets along my Jordan terrify me as well, always have (12:5). But I'm not ready to roll over into the easy, lifeless center and play dead, just waiting like heartwood to become a stick of furniture or firewood. Not yet anyway. I want to bear fruit.

There are many options older folks. The Holy Spirit is the sap-producer in our lives—the place fruitfulness begins (Galatians 5:22-26). That fruitfulness is not just about developing inward graces of the Lord; it's also about bearing those graces outwardly. Fruit is outgrowth, visible and useful for the benefit of others in all kinds of ways.

Take temperance, for example, a fruit of the Holy Spirit in Galatians 5. What bursts out of and grows on the limbs and branches of our lives when we are temperate? We tend to think first of sexual purity or avoiding certain vices such as alcohol, gluttony, gossip, and road rage—or home rage. (Something we personally don't have much trouble with.)

But then there's greed. We do have trouble with that, and that's a fruit-of-the-Holy-Spirit issue. We older Christians can and should model self-restraint over our wants. Models are not just words on paper, 10-second sound bytes, or 140-character tweets. Models in the use of money are three-dimensional people who breathe, think, and do. They have length, width, and depth. Fruitful models are generous, frugal, self-controlled.

How do I measure up regarding money? What about my length, for example—my money habits over the long haul? How disciplined, accountable, and reliable am I? What about depth? Is my self-control thin as bark on a birch tree? Shallow discipline over money is a self-control failure that impacts family, friends, church, and community. Impulsivity and greed—always spending, bragging, grasping, hoarding—means no Spirit-induced sap is flowing through my life, and I'm no model. My roots are dried up, just waiting for collapse.

This week, the fallen pine is still there, half on the south side of the road, half on the north side with two lanes cleared through the middle for traffic to come and go. Chain saws have exposed its insides. I slowed yesterday to look at its heartwood and sapwood. They were there as I expected. I saw no rot. Just a lack of sap to the roots, I assume, made the tree vulnerable to collapse.

Tree removers will come soon and cut the pine into manageable logs or grind it into mulch or sawdust on the

spot. That's what you do to fallen trees. Jesus' mote-and-beam parable came to mind, His words about sin—my neighbor's and my own. Their speck. My log (Matthew 7:5). I have my favorite specks. Don't we all? I'm quick to notice and talk about the

I want to be fat and flourishing for the Lord.

sawdust of other people's sins. Greed is one of those, always in someone else's eye, not mine. Jesus warned about that.

I was reading Jeremiah 32 this morning on my daily route through the Chronological Bible. Jeremiah was praying in the courtyard of King Zedekiah's palace in Jerusalem where he was imprisoned: "Ah Lord God," he began and went on for several lines. Immediately, the Lord talked back to him: "I am the Lord,

the God of all flesh: is there anything too hard for me?" (32:18-27). Jeremiah believed there is nothing God can't do, including dealing with greed, listed among the despicable sins of Judah and Israel that brought about their judgment. Do I also believe God can do anything, including help me get my sap flowing against the destructive power of greed?

I think of Datchie—her arms always open, spread wide to hug anybody who came through her back door. Datchie was old, fragile, and with meager income, but her spirit was green and fruitful. She taped a \$20 bill to the bottom of her kitchen trashcan to hide it from thieves, and to save it for someone in need. Becoming heartwood was anathema to Datchie. Even in extreme frailty, she was full of sap and flourishing. The spread of her arms and the breadth of her generosity flowed out to bless others. Into very old age, she continued to bear the beautiful fruit of generosity.

I want to be like Datchie. A Spirit-imbued old woman radical about bearing visible fruit: self-control, reliability, generosity, frugality. I want to be fat and flourishing for the Lord. **ONE**

About the Writer: Brenda Evans is a retired English teacher. She and her husband Bill, former director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation, live in Ashland, Kentucky. Learn more about smart giving at www.fwbgo.com.



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Brown on Green >>

A Gift of Another Color

We are all familiar with making gifts to churches or ministries simply by writing a check and placing it in the plate at church or mailing it to a ministry. Now, however, you have a new way to give by making a rollover gift from your IRA to ministries. This type of gift has been available for a few years, but it had to be renewed by congress every year, making it difficult for tax planning. Now the law has been made permanent, and it is easy to plan an IRA rollover gift every year.

Here are a few important facts about this law:

- The gift must be directly transferred by the IRA trustee to the ministry. Making a withdrawal from your IRA account and giving the amount of the withdrawal to ministry does not qualify under this law.
- The owner of the IRA must be 70 and a half or older to be eligible to make a transfer.
- The maximum roll-over amount per year is \$100,000. No charitable tax deduction is available for this transfer, but the amount of the transfer does not count as taxable income.

You may not be in a position to make a \$100,000 transfer, but you can use this strategy for smaller amounts. Many people older than 70 and a half have paid off their houses and their total charitable contributions are not high enough to allow them to itemize their deduction on Schedule A of their income tax return. However, these individuals must still withdraw their required minimum distribution (RMD) from their IRA account every year, whether they want to or not.

Using this direct rollover provision to transfer the amount of your RMD to ministry will allow you to meet the requirements of the law and reduce taxable income. Older individuals are designating their giving to ministries by transferring their RMD to ministry. Consider an individual—let's call her Helen—whose income is \$40,000 a year, gives \$4,000 a year to her church, and has a RMD of \$2,000 a year. She is unable to itemize her charitable deductions, so a \$4,000 outright gift has no impact on her taxes. However, if she directs her RMD of \$2,000 to her church and pays

the other \$2,000 out of her pocket, her taxable income is reduced to \$38,000 and the \$2,000 reduction in income saves her \$300.

Our motivation for giving to the Lord's work should not be to receive a tax deduction, but it doesn't hurt to enjoy tax savings. Another way to look at it: why not give the tax savings back to ministry and consider it a way to give more without spending more? Using the example cited above, Helen could give \$4,300 and still have the same amount as net income. ☐



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.

Too Old?

BY ELIZABETH HODGES

Earlier this year, I was asked to participate in a Hanna Project (THP) trip to Kazakhstan. The trip would be a new experience for me, but offered a return to a country that holds a special place in my heart. The team was a blend of men and women, people returning to Central Asia and those who had never been. We even had one member who had never been out of the United States. (I well remember those feelings in 2014.)

The team would be involved with distribution of eyeglasses, putting final structural touches on the physical center, installing new playground equipment, distributing medical kits, and providing encouragement to the workers, orphans, and those recovering from addictions. It was a mammoth task for young, strong, able-bodied persons, however, at 62, I was one of the younger female team members. But God knew who needed to go and serve on this team.



The guys on the team mixed and carried concrete for a driveway and sidewalks. They helped fence the sports ground and assisted in the building of a gazebo. Most team members did some painting at some point during the trip. The days were scorchers—106+ degrees. A cup of cool water given in the name of Jesus took on new meaning for all of us during these days.

The ladies helped with a kids' day that involved a trip to the zoo and park with 38 youngsters. Each child received a backpack with school supplies. Others helped with distribution of eyeglasses. These two activities yielded over 250 contacts for the leader of this Hope Center. Pray these contacts will open doors to the formation of a church in this village.

One gentleman could not see well at all. Once his eyes had been tested we were told he needed -14 readers, which we did not have. So team members began looking through the collection of prescription glasses sent by one of our churches. A pair of -10 were found and given to the man. His response? "I can see!" I couldn't help but recall the story of blind Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52). One lady, a seamstress, was holding white paper under her work so she could see to sew. Now, she can see well, and will be able to work better. She had tears in her eyes when she thanked us for coming to her village. Perhaps she will become a Dorcas (Acts 9:36-42). Each person seen in the eye clinic was offered a copy of the New Testament in their heart language, whether Russian, Kazakh, or Uzbek. Pray the seeds planted will return a rich harvest.

Friendships were also rekindled during this trip. Danny Gasperson and Michael Walker have made over a dozen trips each to Central Asia. Many team members had ministered at the Hope



Center on previous trips. The mother of the pastor had washed their clothing in anticipation of their return. Read more about this amazing story from Curt Holland, THP director, in the February-March issue of *ONE Magazine*.

Students from previous English camps, now grown and serving the Lord, made a special effort to reconnect with team members. One young lady endured a 13-hour train ride to spend eight hours with the team before making the return trip to be home for work on Monday. During the team's debriefing, Michael said, "You never know the impact you are making on a young life when you obediently serve the Lord."

And what did these young people request for prayer? That God would raise up another generation of believers. Will you join us in praying for them and for our Central Asian brothers and sisters?

The ladies on the team had the privilege of sharing in two women's fellowship meetings. The first was in Shymkent. The ladies shared their God-sized dreams and prayer requests. The second was a fellowship meeting of Kazakh women from four of the churches in Almaty. We shared our testimonies, what ministry we were involved in, and prayer requests. Women are women all over the world, with very similar needs.



At the end of the second meeting, one of the ladies told me her daughter spoke English and wondered if she could email me. "Absolutely," I responded. When I arrived back in the States, an email was waiting. One particular sentence gripped my heart: "I wish to learn more from the Bible about baptism." Pray for this young lady and her soul's need.

The Hanna Project offers short-term opportunities for Free Will Baptists to get involved personally in global outreach. You will be changed as you witness first-hand God at work around the world. Too old? Our team does not think so.



God put together a team for the work He had for us in Kazakhstan. May our sweat and hard work pave the way for precious people to come to know and serve our Savior. **ONE**

About the Writer: Elizabeth Hodges is director of Women Nationally Active for Christ: www.wnac.org. To learn more about The Hanna Project, visit www.HannaProject.com.

Know Your “Why” and Do the Hard Things

By Joshua Eidson

It is not the critic who counts, not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done them better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly; who errs, who comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds; who knows great enthusiasms, the great devotions; who spends himself in a worthy cause; who at the best knows in the end the triumph of high achievement, and who at the worst, if he fails, at least fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who neither know victory nor defeat.

—Theodore Roosevelt, Excerpt from the speech “Citizenship in a Republic” delivered at the Sorbonne, in Paris, France, April 23, 1910.

President Roosevelt was no stranger to hard things. As a young child Teddy was overweight and sickly. His dad admonished him that to survive he would have to intentionally make himself more resilient, to purpose to do the hard things. He took his father’s instruction to heart and lived a life full of adventures and accomplishments. He chose not to be a sickly, overweight man and became a resilient, confident man. He knew his *why* and chose to do the hard things.



In the century since Teddy Roosevelt lived, however, culture has molded our thinking to believe we should avoid the hard things of life, that pain or difficulties are bad, and we should stay away from them. Yet, the overused maxim "no pain, no gain" holds true. One rarely makes progress without adversity, difficulty, and occasional failure.

Over the past two years, I've watched my youngest child struggle to crawl on rug-burned knees, walk after many falls, and cut teeth resulting in swollen gums and fevers. But he never gave up on working through these developmental stages. These natural challenges paint a clear picture of how we grow in all other areas and stages of life. Whether for spiritual, physical, or financial health (or any area of our lives), we must decide that we will do the hard work if we want to see real improvement.

But why? Why would anyone choose to do the hard things? Every individual must answer this question for himself. Before someone is really committed to doing the hard things in life that produce improvement and growth, they usually have a reason, a *why*, that is driving them forward. This may be family or friends, or an event that happened, or a deep-seated core belief. Whatever it is, for one to see lasting change, he or she has to know the why and hold on to it no matter what.

Once the *why* has been settled, then comes the challenging part—

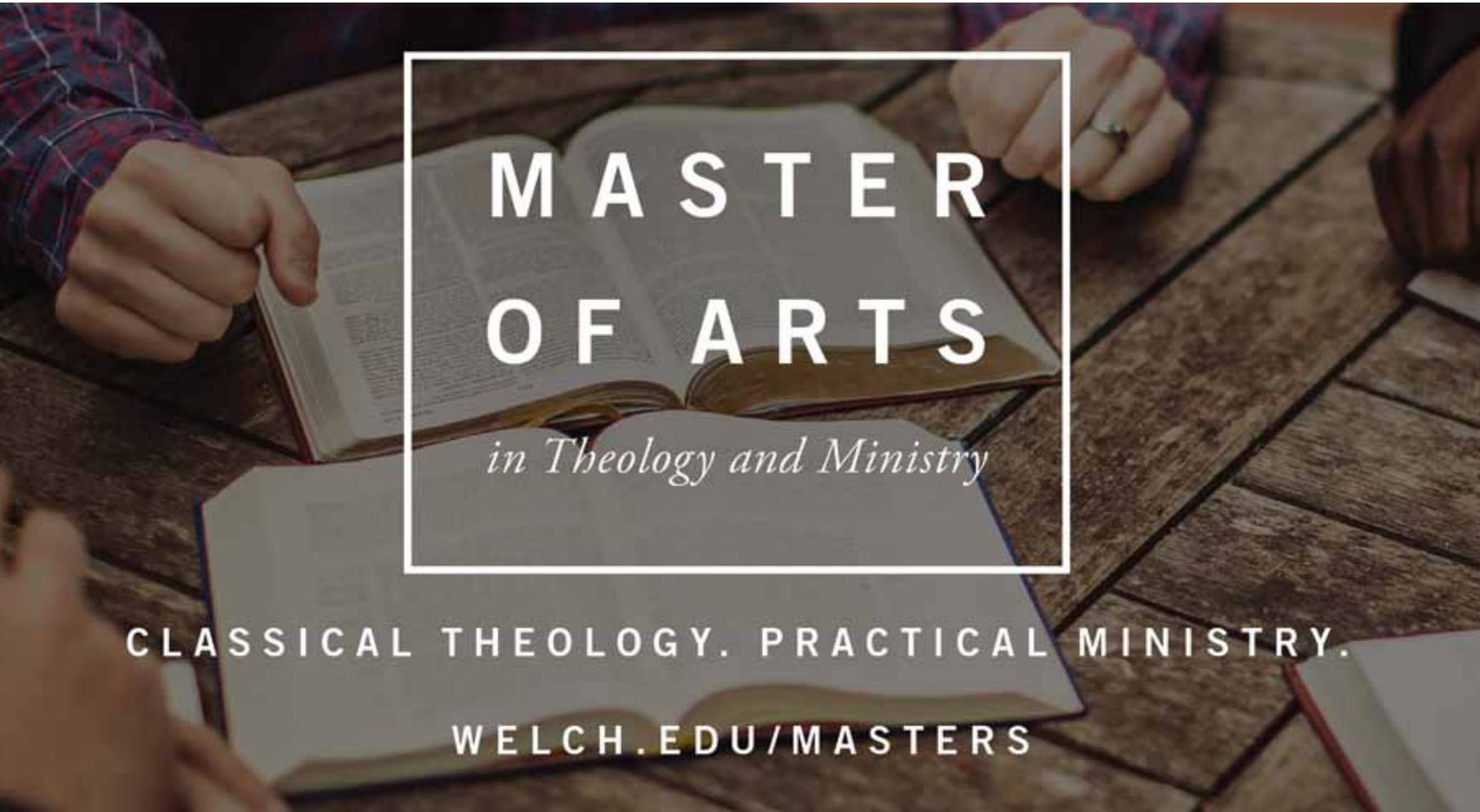
doing the hard things. Set goals or priorities and initiate steps toward reaching those goals or improving on those priorities. Undoubtedly, you will experience some failures along the way, but they should simply reinforce that you are headed in the right direction. Failure is often the result of striving towards something previously thought unattainable. Don't let fear of failure keep you from trying new things.

After all, failure really isn't failure . . . unless we fail to get back up and try again. Failures are a sign of growth, attempting something new or challenging because you want to improve. I have recently been trying to wake up earlier to make more time for spiritual and fitness goals. Often I sleep past the appointed time, but I won't quit. Each new morning brings another opportunity to get out of bed a little bit earlier, and I've been able to make progress toward my goal. "Failures" are simply markers to indicate your current level of ability, discipline, or expertise. With continued hard work—doing the hard things—you'll soon move beyond those markers.

Our *why* serves as our foundation, so make it unmovable, and anchor all of your goals and priorities to it. Whether health and fitness, financial and career, family and relationships, or spiritual disciplines, choose to do the hard things.

Remember, if you're not failing, you're not striving. Do hard things! 

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



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Lessons
learned
along the
journey
of grief...

5

Things Not to Say to a Grieving Parent

BY WAYNE BESS

In 2013, our lives changed forever with the loss of our son Matt. His death was not under normal circumstances. He died too soon, too young. And it didn't take long for the comments to begin—well-meaning comments no one is ready to hear.

On April 27, we removed Matt from life support. We were with him as he took his last breath. Before then, I knew little about losing a child; it was uncharted territory. Even though I was a pastor and thought I understood and could relate to people going through this crisis, I was wrong. Like most people, I didn't know how to respond, or what to say. Three years later, I have learned that some things are better left unsaid.

The following awkward comments come from a good place. I know people mean well, but it sure does hurt to hear them. With that in mind, consider five things NOT to say to a grieving parent:

“Everything happens for a reason.” It's a cringe-worthy comment for anyone who has lost a child. Sometimes, in this sin-cursed world, life has no rhyme or reason. The truth is, no parent should outlive his or her child. Nothing compares to this unbearable pain. To a heart clutched by grief, this cliché makes no sense. Your soul automatically screams, “What possible reason?”

The phrase often goes hand-in-hand with: “God only gives us what we can handle.”

I remember hearing this from a well-meaning friend and thinking, “But I don't want to handle it.”

However, another friend shared something I continue to live by every day. He said, “God doesn't give us only what we can handle. He helps us handle what we've been given.” So true.

“They are in a better place.” Instead of comforting me, this statement just makes me feel down in the dumps. It even

makes me feel guilty. I longed to see my son get married, have children, live life to the fullest, and enjoy our favorite things together. Children are never meant to go before their parents.

I think I speak for every grieving mother and father when I say we would give anything to hold our children again. Yes, we understand they are in a better place, but during agonized, grieving moments, it's difficult to hear. We would gladly trade places, but that just isn't possible. Deep down, parents know this truth, and in time they will find comfort in it. Facing reality is hard. Don't slap them across the face with it before they are ready.

“At least you have other children. Count your blessings.” I always want to respond, “Having other children does not make up for losing one.”

I like to think of myself as a positive person, but even three years later, my heart still aches for Matt. On the darkest, most difficult days of grief, it's hard to count my blessings.

Of course, I am blessed. I have two beautiful daughters who are the lights of my life. I also have five wonderful grandchildren. But Matt should be here with his sisters, enjoying his nieces and nephews. Our grandchildren are amazing, but I still have a huge hole in my heart. Notwithstanding my many blessings, missing Matt still hurts like nothing else. And the pain never goes away.

“I am sure this cost a lot of money.” It doesn't matter what you spend, because nothing can bring your child back. You just want to honor them and their memory. We ran a long, detailed obituary for Matt in three newspapers. Someone remarked, “Wow! I bet it cost a lot of money for that long obituary.”

“Yes,” I replied. “It cost a lot—over \$1,200. But I will never buy him lunch or dinner again. I'll never pay for another birthday or

Christmas present. I'll never take him to another ballgame." What does money really matter when you've lost a child?

We also purchased an unusual marker made from bronze. Matt's portrait is on the marker. It wasn't cheap, but it's what we wanted to do for him.

"I don't know how you do it. I can't imagine losing a child." I don't know how we do it either. We simply have learned to live with it. We have a "new normal," and in tough moments, we celebrate that we simply survived. This painful comment is a difficult reminder of what we continue to go through.

Instead... So, what should you say to a grieving parent? First, understand no words can take the pain away. Simply letting that person know you are there for them is more than enough.

Three years later, the best thing someone can do is talk about my son. I want them to say Matt by name, and not to be afraid to ask questions about his life and loves. I want to hear stories about him and learn things I didn't know. While Matt was only here for a short time—32 years—he left a huge imprint on this world. Simply hearing someone else say his name is enough to wipe away the grief and warm my heart for days. My greatest fear is that my son will be forgotten.

With these things in mind, consider the three most important things you can offer a grieving parent:

Your presence. Nothing can substitute for your presence; it's very important.

Your prayers. Never underestimate the positive power of prayer for a grieving family.

Your patience. Grief is a slow process, and it looks different for everyone. Give those who are grieving time and understanding to work through these difficult emotions.

Grief is the price you pay for loving someone with every fiber of your being. I miss Matt as much today as the day he left us. I miss his amazing stories, laughter, contagious smile, and zest for life. I miss his phone calls at all hours of the day and night and how much he loved music. And I long to see him again. Friends and family, give grieving families your prayers, support, and understanding. And most importantly, help keep their precious memories alive. **ONE**

About the Writer: Wayne Bess, Jr. is pastor of Ashland City FWB Church in Ashland City, Tennessee.

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Single Table		Joint Table	
Age	Rate	Ages	Rate
65	4.7%	65/65	4.2%
70	5.1%	70/70	4.6%
75	5.8%	75/75	5.0%
80	6.8%	80/80	5.7%
85	7.8%	85/85	6.7%
90	9.0%	90/90	8.2%



Contact Free Will Baptist Foundation:

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Shine!

Resetting the Norm BY EMILY FAISON

Nearly two years ago, I sat down with Diana Bryant, chairman of the WNAC Board, for a cup of coffee. She shared her vision for a conference that showed Free Will Baptist girls their worth in God. She described a weekend retreat-style conference with seminars and Q-and-A's, a change of pace from hyperactive youth camps or everyday Sunday School. As Diana and I talked about what that conference would look like, how we could engage young women, and communicate such an important message, I told her the conference needed to feel authentic and transparent. Caught in a deluge of programs, from both within the church and without, teen girls today tune out at the mere hint of inauthenticity. This conference could not be just a day-long sermon, but an outreach where girls would hear biblical truth from godly women across our denomination.

Extensive media influence, questions of gender identity, and constantly updating technologies are everyday life for today's girls. This isn't just the world of unchurched kids but the daily scene for kids in our youth groups. Additionally, girls face their own unique challenges growing up. While the human nature that feeds schoolhouse gossip, shifting friendships, and uncertain popularity doesn't change from generation to generation, the technologies that house teen drama have changed, and parents can be clueless. As one mom noted after the first *Shine!* conference: "I had no idea of all the things they face and temptations they try to endure...I found out things about our teen girls I didn't know they were exposed to."

Students are learning everything they know about sexuality and gender identity from their environment, which is often comprised of classmates and the media they watch and hear. Students in Free Will Baptist youth groups have friends who are gay and know classmates who identify with a gender different from that of their birth. The media landscape is filled with athletes and entertainers who abuse their wives, and women who are simultaneously shamed and praised for their looks on television. All of those instances comprise the cultural landscape young women navigate daily. Without trying, girls absorb these cultural norms. Young women learn their value is dependent on others: their friends, boyfriends, and their peers at the mall on a Friday night.



This is why *Shine!* is crucial. “So many areas of our culture and the media portray values involving self image, relationships, and sexuality as truth, when in reality, they are in direct opposition to what God’s Word teaches,” Diana told me. “We have a responsibility to our daughters to teach them the truth.”

Our students shouldn’t have to follow expectations set by worldly idols. We can change the narrative. We can reset the norms. “Culture bombards our teens with messages that do not align with God’s Word,” said WNAC Director Elizabeth Hodges. “We can turn a blind eye, or we can teach our teens to filter each message through the sieve of God’s Word.” By equipping girls, and their moms and youth leaders, with straightforward facts about gender and sexuality, information about technology, and Scripture, girls are able to learn principles they can apply to their everyday lives in school, church, and the broader culture. WNAC’s goal in bringing *Shine!* to Free Will Baptist girls is to address current issues facing teens, to provide a safe place to discuss questions and issues weighing on their hearts and minds.

Between new technologies and constantly evolving ideals in television, movies, and music, cultural issues pressing on girls today include realities their parents and youth leaders never dreamed young people would have to face. As Diana and I talked about the importance of reaching out to young women that day

In addition to teaching Free Will Baptist girls, *Shine!* offers seminars to mothers and youth leaders, covering new technology and other elements of contemporary culture in which today’s girls find themselves immersed. Seminars for girls are taught by Rachel Bryant and Beth Bryant, while adults seminars are led by Sarah Sargent and Ana Batts. *Shine!* 2017 will be held at Heritage FWB Church in Columbus, Ohio, November 11. Free Will Baptist girls are fighting a battle for their hearts and minds. Pray the Lord uses *Shine!* to turn their hearts toward Him.

so many months ago, I couldn’t help but think about how incredibly needed this conference was. A generation of young women is rising up among Free Will Baptists, and we cannot lose them to a culture that does not serve the Lord. “Satan is bombarding our girls with lies, and we are seeing the results of that in our homes, our churches, and our world,” Diana said. “But what a difference an army of godly young women would make in our families and our churches!” ☞

About the Writer: Florida native Emily Faison is the interactive editor for Brief Media, located in Tulsa, Oklahoma. A prolific writer and blogger, Emily earned a MA in Literature from Florida State University in 2015.



Shine!
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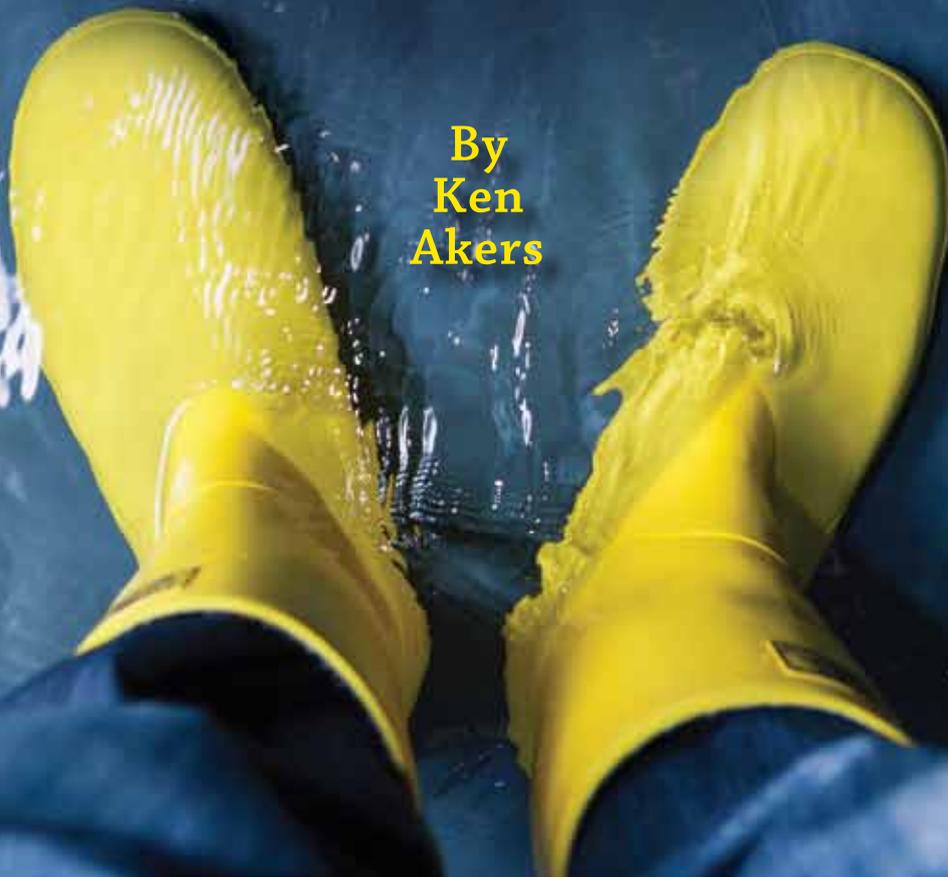
Resetting the Norm. Register: wnac.org

THROUGH DEEP WATERS

During the past year, the Master's Men Disaster Response Team (DRT) has responded to a variety of natural disasters, but the most common have been floods.

Eastern Kentucky had several occasions of severe flash flooding in addition to the normal spring floods. South Carolina experienced a historic flood in the fall of 2015 that affected thousands of people and homes. The end of December brought flooding to the areas around St. Louis, Missouri. But none of these floods compared to the recent cataclysmic flooding in the Baton Rouge area of Louisiana.

**By
Ken
Akers**



Growing up in eastern Kentucky, I have firsthand knowledge of what flooding can do. As a child, I saw the house my family lived in with five feet of water standing in it. I remember the cleanup process—throwing out personal items and washing out the mud. I remember the spring of 1977, when the river flowed several feet high through the streets of Pikeville, Kentucky, and driving home in water over the roads.

I am proud Free Will Baptists have stepped up to help in all these areas. While many were sent by or connected with Master's Men, many were not. When it comes to disaster relief, it doesn't matter who gets the recognition, but whether or not victims receive help.

Over the past ten years, the DRT (Disaster Response Team) has responded to dozens of natural disasters across North America. The first DRT response was Hurricane Katrina in September 2005, when more than 50 people gathered in Mississippi to assist Gulf Coast FWB Church and its neighbors. Since then, hundreds of additional volunteers have answered the call of the DRT.

In addition to the dozens of relief efforts across the U.S. mainland, we helped financially after flooding in Hawaii. Free Will Baptists responded greatly when the earthquake shook Haiti to its core. Others have volunteered internationally, working through International Missions, The Hanna Project, or individual ministries to make a difference around the world. We have partnered with a number of state associations to assist them in developing their own DRT units. We have helped purchase equipment and supplies, including trailers.

In recent days, however, we have seen the number of volunteers drop. We know there will be more disasters in the future, and we know people will need a helping hand. It could be you! With that in mind, will you get involved in DRT?

To become part of the Master's Men Disaster Response Team, visit our website, www.fwbmastersmen.org, and sign up today. We will keep you up to date on future training sessions and notify you when a need arises. We realize everyone cannot respond every time to every thing, but if you can help only once, it will make a difference. **ONE**

About the Writer: Ken Akers is director of Free Will Baptist Master's Men and coordinator of the Disaster Response Team.
Learn more: www.fwbmastersmen.org.

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Students will leave this weekend understanding their identities in Christ—who they were made to be, and how they can use their gifts to lead right now. So, if you (or students you know) want to be empowered to be all God has created you to be, make plans to attend the first Truth & Peace Weekend this spring.

REGISTRATION INCLUDES:

\$79

- Manual • T-Shirt • All Conference Activities
- Lunch on Saturday • Home Focus Guide

SCHEDULE

FRIDAY

- 6:00PM Registration
- 7:30PM Session 1
- 9:00PM Fun Time

SATURDAY

- 9:00AM Session 2
- 10:30AM Breakout
- 11:30AM Lunch
- 1:00PM Focus Time
- 3:00PM Session 3

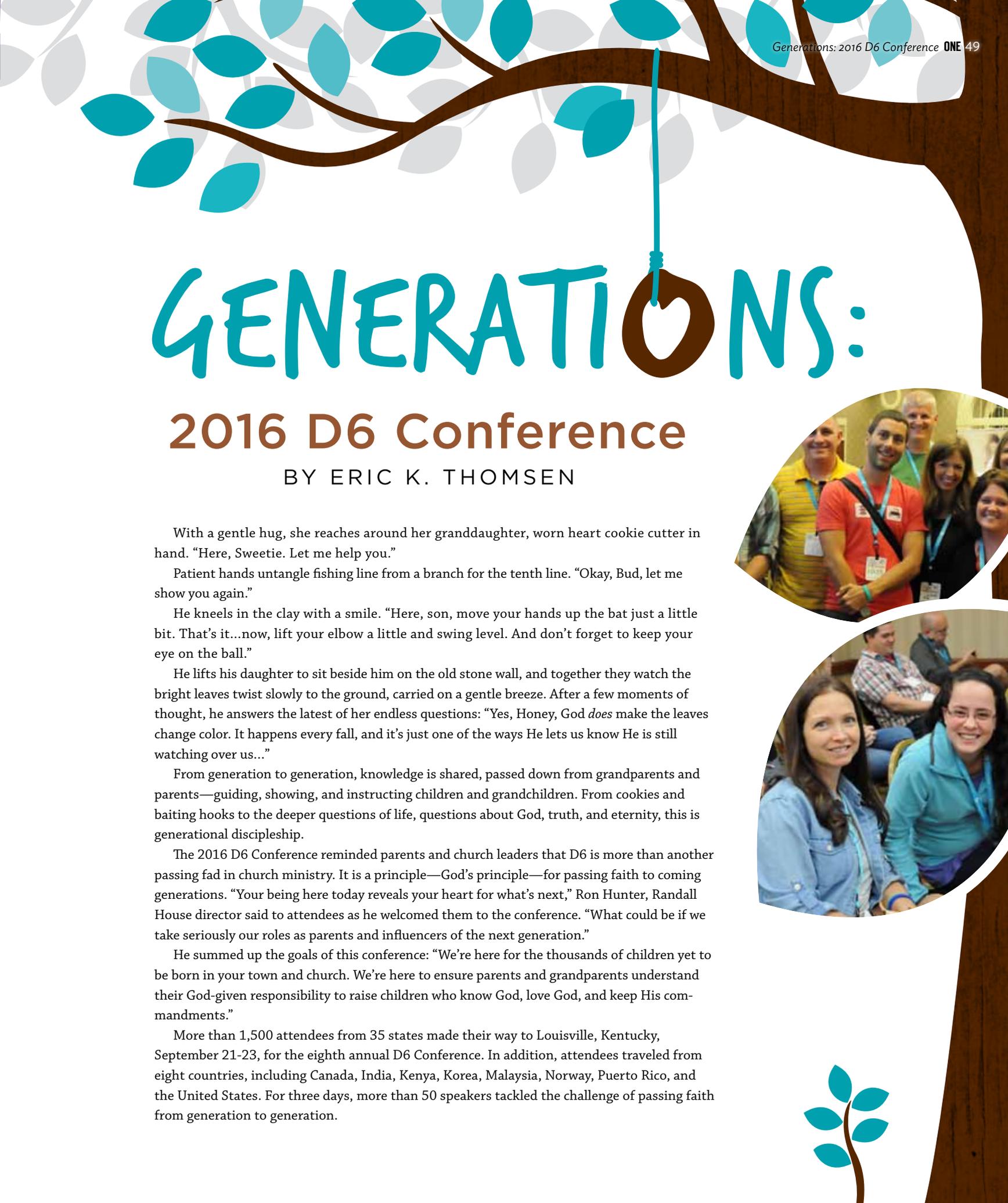
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Nashville, TN
March 10-11, 2017

More information at
truthandpeaceonline.com

*

Tulsa, OK
March 24-25, 2017



GENERATIONS:

2016 D6 Conference

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

With a gentle hug, she reaches around her granddaughter, worn heart cookie cutter in hand. “Here, Sweetie. Let me help you.”

Patient hands untangle fishing line from a branch for the tenth line. “Okay, Bud, let me show you again.”

He kneels in the clay with a smile. “Here, son, move your hands up the bat just a little bit. That’s it...now, lift your elbow a little and swing level. And don’t forget to keep your eye on the ball.”

He lifts his daughter to sit beside him on the old stone wall, and together they watch the bright leaves twist slowly to the ground, carried on a gentle breeze. After a few moments of thought, he answers the latest of her endless questions: “Yes, Honey, God *does* make the leaves change color. It happens every fall, and it’s just one of the ways He lets us know He is still watching over us...”

From generation to generation, knowledge is shared, passed down from grandparents and parents—guiding, showing, and instructing children and grandchildren. From cookies and baiting hooks to the deeper questions of life, questions about God, truth, and eternity, this is generational discipleship.

The 2016 D6 Conference reminded parents and church leaders that D6 is more than another passing fad in church ministry. It is a principle—God’s principle—for passing faith to coming generations. “Your being here today reveals your heart for what’s next,” Ron Hunter, Randall House director said to attendees as he welcomed them to the conference. “What could be if we take seriously our roles as parents and influencers of the next generation.”

He summed up the goals of this conference: “We’re here for the thousands of children yet to be born in your town and church. We’re here to ensure parents and grandparents understand their God-given responsibility to raise children who know God, love God, and keep His commandments.”

More than 1,500 attendees from 35 states made their way to Louisville, Kentucky, September 21-23, for the eighth annual D6 Conference. In addition, attendees traveled from eight countries, including Canada, India, Kenya, Korea, Malaysia, Norway, Puerto Rico, and the United States. For three days, more than 50 speakers tackled the challenge of passing faith from generation to generation.





"MINISTRY DOESN'T
JUST HAPPEN IN ONE
PLACE. IT HAPPENS
ON THE WAY."

—MEGAN MARSHMAN

The conference offered 72 breakout sessions led by presenters such as Richard Ross, founder of True Love Waits; Matt Guevara, executive director of International Network of Children's Ministry; Timothy Paul Jones, professor and associate vice president at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky; and Steve Greenwood, kids pastor at The Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee.

UP FRONT

During the first general session **Ron Hunter** used the classic toy, the Slinky Dog™, to remind leaders that getting too far in front of a church or ministry can cause irreparable harm. Instead, he urged, leaders must take the congregation with them and shared eight simple keys for implementing changes in church or ministry.

Robby Gallaty, senior pastor at Long Hollow Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tennessee, pointed to an errant comma in some translations of Ephesians 4:12 that seems to indicate *pastors* are responsible for ministry rather than the congregation. "There are no commas in the Greek language," he noted, "and this is a mistake that has stymied discipleship for 400 years. He reminded listeners that the success of the local church is not gauged by how large it grows, but how mature it is, reminding them that a church grows through making disciples."

High-energy youth culture translators **AXIS** gave listeners insight into the fast changing world of today's youth, from the choices today's students face and the immediacy of the culture around them to the evolution of social media and its impact on the next generation's view of God. In light of the changes, the group challenged listeners to adopt a 500-year plan for ministry, "whispering into the ear" of the next generation as long as God allows.

Lisa Harper, author of ten books and frequent speaker on the Women of Faith tour challenged listeners to embrace their "second half," based on Jesus' healing of Blind Bartimaeus in Mark 10. With a blend of humor and vulnerability, Lisa encouraged attendees to let God turn their most difficult seasons in life into new vision and direction for their future.

Brian and Angela Haynes, authors of *Relentless Parenting* challenged listeners to make deliberate heart connections with their children based on love and trust, especially during teen years when tension is natural. These connections will determine to whom children turn during highs and lows. This "relentless pursuit of a child's heart" requires patience, grace, trust, and forgiveness.

Based on 1 Corinthians 15, **Yancey Arrington**, teaching pastor at Clear Creek Community Church in Houston, Texas, urged listeners to make sure they get the gospel *right* when passing faith to the next generation. "The gospel message is about who Jesus is, and about what he did through His life, death, and resurrection—God doing for us in Jesus what we cannot do for ourselves." It is not something *they* can do, he continued, not religion or moral living but God's redeeming all things through the person and work of Jesus. He warned parents against making

“little legalists” who view themselves as the heroes of the Bible rather than Jesus. “When we view the Bible as a bunch of rules to follow, we put the souls of our kids at risk.”

Christian psychologist and author, **Dr. David E. Clarke**, reassured listeners that God *wants* marriage to succeed. With this in mind, he shared four suggestions for wives to help their husbands pursue (rather than avoid) intimacy in marriage. He urged women to communicate their needs specifically and completely in a letter that will become her husband’s “roadmap” to her heart.

Pat Cimo, author and director of marriage and family life at Willow Creek Church in Barrington, Illinois, challenged attendees to be the solution to making champions of the next generation. She suggested three steps to help implement needed change: 1) consider what you are inviting others into; align on a single vision and find others (through volunteer development and collaboration) who can help fulfill that vision; 2) pay attention to influence, being careful not to misuse it and to maximize its effectiveness; and 3) live out your unique leadership voice.

Reggie McNeal, missional leadership specialist for Leadership Network of Dallas, Texas, challenged attendees to make church a *verb*, not a *place*, shifting from church-centric to Kingdom-centric narrative. He reminded the audience that God created every person for a purpose—discipleship—and if that purpose goes unfulfilled, it leaves a hole in the Kingdom.

Jim Burns, president of HomeWord, asked listeners to answer a single question: “What does a healthy relationship look like?” It’s hard to know, he added, because every relationship has problems. Based on Matthew 19:4-6, Burns shared three simple (but not easy) suggestions to help couples move toward a healthy relationship: 1) have serious fun to create family bonds and offset the pain of life; 2) make communication key; and 3) get serious about spiritual growth.

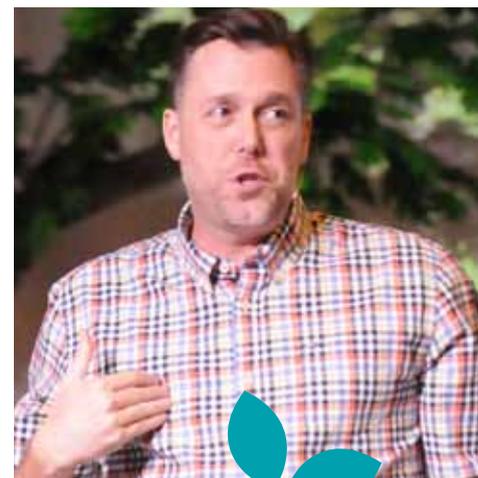
MINIS & MORE

For the fourth year, D6 Minis gave several main stage speakers an opportunity to deliver short, powerful messages addressing a single point.

Megan Marshman, director of women’s ministries at Hume Lake Christian Camps and associate dean of YouthMin Academy, challenged listeners not to miss out on divine encounters because they are consumed with ministry. She reminded them, “Ministry doesn’t just happen in one place. It happens on the way. Don’t miss out on *His* plans because you are consumed with *yours*,” noting, “His plans are *always* better.”

Terry Williams, specialist in children’s ministry at Scripture Union in Queensland, Australia, reminded listeners that just as the purpose of an apple tree is to make *more* apple trees, the purpose of Christians is to make *more* Christians. Because this is a day when young people are leaving the Faith in record numbers, he shared a simple strategy for discipleship: 1) involve them in mission; 2) give them an opportunity for divine encounters; 3) create memorable experiences; and 4) find life encouragers to join you in speaking into their lives.

Jeff Wallace, executive pastor at Peace Baptist Church in Decatur, Georgia, and founder of FrontLine Urban Resources asked, “What does it take to have the heart of a champion?” He shared six principles from the Sermon on the Mount to develop the heart of a champion: 1) have godly character in good and bad times; 2) develop influence as salt and light; 3) build godly relationships that will be assets, not liabilities; 4) pursue discipline, good use of time and talents; 5) respect the Lordship of God, seeking the Kingdom of God first; and 6) learn discernment. He reminded the audience, “We *teach* what we know, but we *reproduce* what we are.”





Josh Mulvihill, pastor to children and families at Grace Church in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, reminded listeners that grandparents are the second most powerful influence on children. He challenged listeners to follow the instruction of Deuteronomy 6:2, where God instructed Israel to let discipleship continue beyond children to grandchildren.

Eddie Moody, pastor, professor, counselor, and psychologist participated in a parenting panel discussing the content of his book *Surviving Culture*.

SIDE NOTES

D6 always delivers much more than seminars and main-stage speakers. During breaks, attendees explored exhibits filled with the latest in Christian resources and renewed friendships, discussing common challenges, swapping solutions, and praying together over ministry burdens.

On Wednesday and Thursday, they sang along with Meredith Andrews, Christian music artist, songwriter, and worship leader at Harvest Bible Chapel in Chicago. On Friday, they enjoyed worship led by Michael Boggs, worship minister at Kairos Church in Brentwood, Tennessee. Boggs traveled with the Christian band FFH for eight years, and received the Dove Award for Songwriter of the Year in 2012.

Perennial D6 favorites Tommy Woodard and Eddie James, better known as The Skit Guys, returned to D6 in 2016, delivering side-splitting humor coupled with serious sketches that encouraged and challenged attendees. Jon Forrest, youth pastor at Bethel FWB Church in Ashland City, Tennessee, brought his witty, goofy, crazy, “biggest kid in the room” style of humor to the conference, with man-on-the-street videos, off the wall interviews, and more.

Conference emcees **Tommy Swindol**, lead pastor at The Donelson Fellowship, Nashville, Tennessee, and **Ted Cunningham**, pastor of Woodland Hills Family Church in Branson, Missouri, kept the conference fast-paced and energetic with crowd breakers, crazy games, and pointed interviews with conference speakers.

In a powerful moment, Ron Hunter shared the global expansion of D6, with conferences in Norway, France, and Singapore. He shared the stage with leaders from other countries, who described the impact D6 is having around the world. He announced a D6 Conference in Malaysia in 2018, as well as the dates for the 2017 U.S. conference to be held in Dallas, Texas, September 20-22.

WHAT NOW?

As the conference drew to a close, Ron Hunter challenged listeners to take home the “seeds of discipleship” and plant them. “When you plant seeds,” he noted, “you get your hands dirty, but later you reap the benefits.” Ted Cunningham warned against planting an “acre” garden, but encouraged attendees to identify specific seeds to plant and focus on nurturing those things in the coming year.

The conference closed with prayer and worship, and the ballroom echoed with the powerful lyrics, “Lord, I need you; Lord, I need You; every hour I need You; my one defense, my righteousness—Oh, Lord, how I need you.” **ONE**

“YOU CAN LOSE YOUR
MINISTRY AND KEEP
YOUR FAMILY, BUT
IF YOU LOSE YOUR
FAMILY, YOU LOSE
THEM BOTH.”

—ROBBY GALLATY

About the Denomination >>

North American Ministries Receives Special Gifts

Antioch, TN—North American Ministries recently became the beneficiary of a generous trust from a woman in Missouri. She set up the trust several years ago, and upon her death this spring, at age 97, the funds were given to the office. North American Ministries is thankful for those who plan ahead to help this vital ministry continue.

Rev. Jose Correa and the church in Puerto Rico received a donation to help construct a school building (pictured right), which will enhance their ministry on the island. A couple recently visited the Puerto Rico work and felt led to donate \$25,000 to the school rather than add a carport to their house. Other financial needs will arise as the school progresses. If you wish to help Brother Jose and the island school, send funds to the North American Ministries office designated for the Puerto Rico school. The funds will be forwarded to the Correas to purchase items for the school and its students: North American Ministries, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Give online: www.fwbnam.com/Home/Give ■



2016 Theological Symposium Meets at Welch

Nashville, TN—One might describe 2016 as the year of F. Leroy Forlines. During the national convention, Randall House Academic released a book in his honor, *The Promise of Arminian Theology: Essays in Honor of F. Leroy Forlines*, and the Commission for Theological Integrity also recognized Forlines for his life, service, and impact.

Add to those the commission's theme for the annual Theological Symposium: "The Theological Legacy of F. Leroy Forlines." The symposium met Monday and Tuesday, October 24-25, 2016, in Nashville, Tennessee, on the campus of Welch College. With the transition to a new campus imminent, the meeting marked the last time the symposium will be held on the West End campus, where Forlines taught for nearly 60 years. Forlines, now 90 years of age, chaired the Commission for Theological Integrity for over 50 years. The symposium featured seven papers paying homage to his legacy, a paper from Forlines himself, and a panel discussion. The agenda included:

- Matthew Steven Bracey and W. Jackson Watts, "Celebrating the Legacy of F. Leroy Forlines"
- Richard Clark, "The Influence of Leroy Forlines on a non-Free Will Baptist"
- Jeff Cockrell, "Israel's Identity and Salvation in Romans: A Discussion of the Forlinesean Hermeneutic"
- F. Leroy Forlines, "The Abrahamic Covenant"
- Andrew Harrison, "The Role of Doctrine in the Church: Revisiting Forlines' 'A Plea for Unabridged Christianity'"
- Matthew McAfee, "The Old Testament Text and Canon"
- Daniel Webster, "Culture and the Arts: A Conversation with Leroy Forlines and the Early Church Fathers"
- Ramón Zúñiga Barrón, "Leroy Forlines' Influence Among Mexican Bible Institutes: Upholding and Spreading Free Will Baptist Doctrine"
- Panelists Kevin L. Hester, Matthew McAfee, Frank Owens, Robert E. Picirilli, and J. Matthew Pinson: "The Legacy of F. Leroy Forlines and the State of Free Will Baptist Theology"

With the symposium streaming live, several hundred people either attended or viewed online. To purchase the digest of papers, or the newly released volume of *Integrity*, email fwbtheology@gmail.com, call 636-222-2784, or visit the commission's blog at www.fwbtheology.com.

The Commission is pleased to announce that next year's symposium will take place on Welch College's new Gallatin campus October 22-23. More details will be forthcoming. ■

Photo: Mark Cowart



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

ONE to ONE >>

THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING

I preached my first sermon August 12, 1970. The Bible I used that evening had been presented to me by my parents on Christmas day 1962, when I was nine years old. It was a plain, King James Version Bible, a “red letter” edition with a few artists’ renderings of key biblical events interspersed throughout. It had no reference helps or study aids...not even a concordance. It had very small print and cost \$2.95.

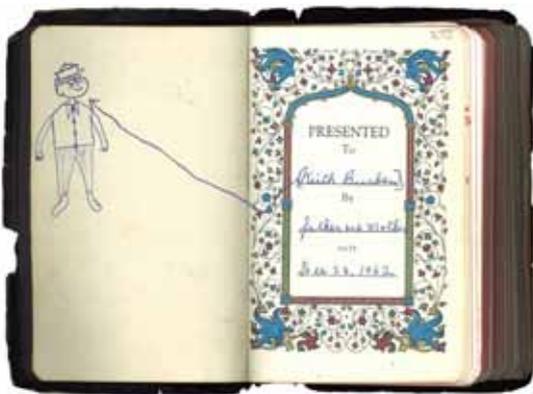
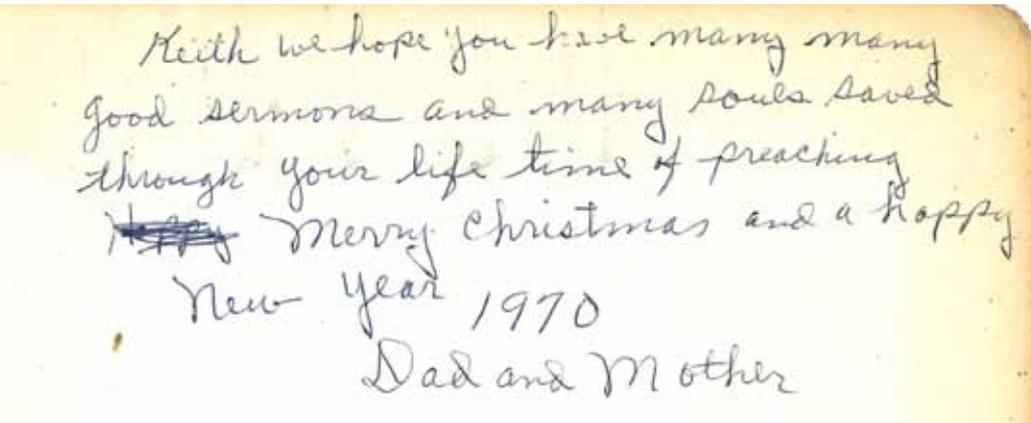
I still have vivid memories of Christmas morning 1970. After all the family Christmas gifts had been distributed and opened, my mom retrieved one last package that had remained inconspicuously out of view behind the tree. She said, “This one is for Keith.” Needless to say, my curiosity was aroused, and my

remains one of my prized possessions. It was special for a number of reasons. First, for a 17-year-old, it was like having a complete minister’s library in one volume. It had an amazing cross-reference feature. Besides pointing to related verses throughout the Bible, the reference numbers were arranged in alphabetical order in a general index. Charts, maps, and overviews of certain Bible characters were listed in the back. It had a good concordance and even an archaeological supplement.

That Bible was special, because it motivated a young believer to take seriously the reading and study of God’s Word. Although I had always honored and respected the Scriptures, I had never actually read through the entire Bible. But that changed. Somehow, inexplicably, this Christmas gift inspired me to make the long journey from Genesis to Revelation. It was the first time I ever read the Bible from cover to cover, and I did it using that old Thompson Chain.

But perhaps the thing that made that Christmas gift most special was the handwritten message on the front flyleaf. It read, “Keith, we hope you have many, many good sermons and many souls saved through your lifetime of preaching. Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year 1970—Dad and Mother.”

My parents are both in Heaven now, but their legacy lives on. That little message captured the essence of what they considered most important in life—preaching the Bible and seeing people saved. I hope I can pass along those same priorities to my children. Thank God for that old study Bible. It’s a gift that keeps on giving. **ONE**



imagination shifted into overdrive. I wasn’t all that impressed by its size, but I was surprised by its weight. It was heavy.

I remember carefully removing the wrapping paper and lifting the lid to the box. I couldn’t believe my eyes—a new Thompson Chain Reference Study Bible. The gift was a young preacher boy’s dream. With an air of disbelief, I struggled to find the appropriate words

to express my appreciation. I still recall the pleased look that came over my parent’s faces as I said “thank you” repeatedly.

To this day, that copy of the Scriptures

SEXUALITY, GENDER, *and the* CHURCH

What do Free Will Baptists believe about sexuality, gender, and the definition of marriage...and why? Should Christians actively engage public life and culture? If so, how? What do I need to know about the legal, political, and religious liberty implications of the Supreme Court decision legalizing same-sex marriage? What steps can I take to offer hope and healing to a friend or family member struggling with same-sex attractions?

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“... a culturally aware, theologically astute, and biblically grounded affirmation of the biblical approach to these issues”
—Ajith Fernando

“... thoroughly biblical, thoughtfully balanced, and theologically broad.” —Melvin Worthington

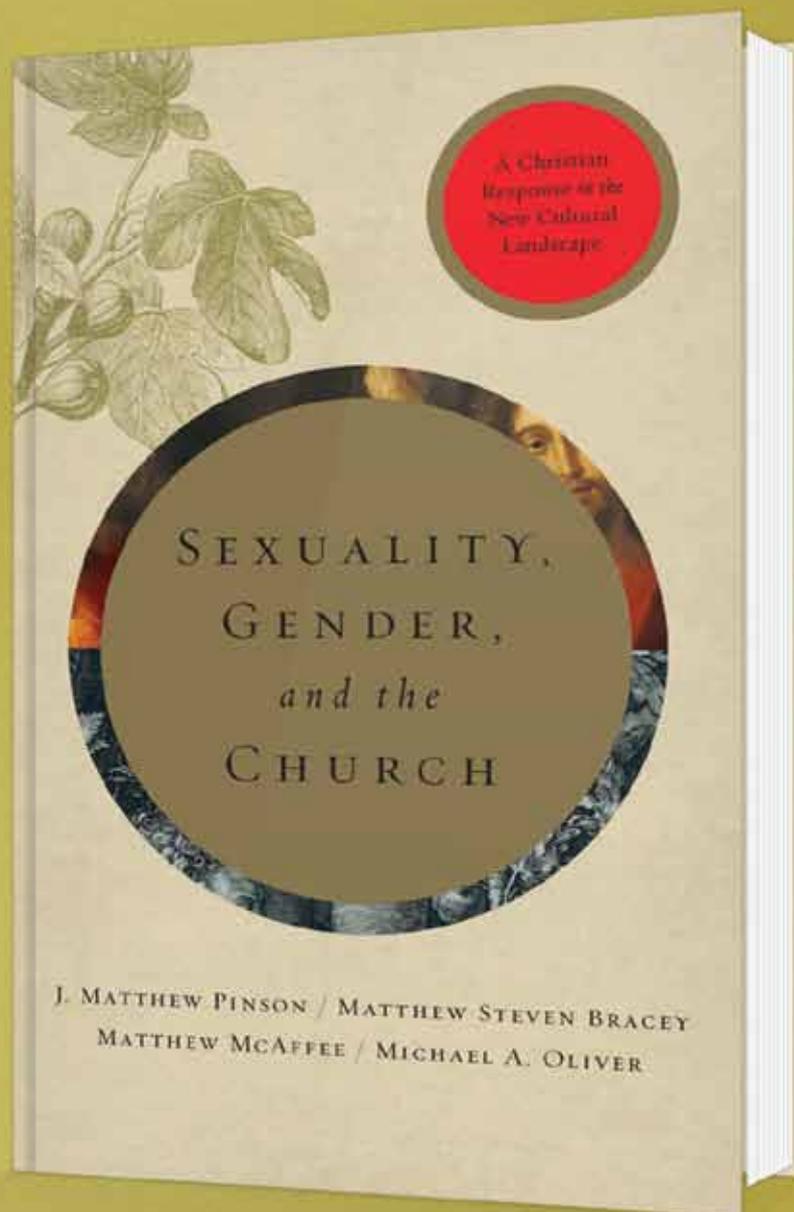
“This book, while beneficial to the church at large, will particularly benefit Free Will Baptist pastors, leaders, and churches.”
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