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ONE

magazine

EVERYDAY
HEROES

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Let's Go, Etsuko!

.....

*A New Look at
Free Will Baptist
Women's Ministry*

.....

**Do We Still Need
Master's Men?**

.....

Between Cultures

.....

**Can You
Hear Me Now?**

FREE WILL BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRY

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To communicate to Free Will Baptists a unifying vision of our role in the extension of God's Kingdom



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Heroes

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

"I wonder if travel will ever feel safe again."

The thought flits across my mind like a startled sparrow as I snug down the nosepiece on my mask and unsuccessfully try to get comfortable in the worn leather seat. Glancing around the cramped airplane cabin, I see fear reflected in many eyes, anger in a few, and resignation in others. COVID-19 has changed everything.

Glancing out the plane window it occurs to me that all changes haven't been bad. Cold and flu cases are at record lows due to better hygiene. Working from home has become a win-win for many small businesses and their employees as they cut overhead expenses and save on gas money. And college applications for medical and research fields have soared as we gained new appreciation for frontline heroes and the work they do.

Ah...*heroes*. Such an interesting term. Most people have come to associate it with first responders, soldiers, or individuals who perform extraordinary feats. This seems to have been the intent of the Greeks, who first coined the word *heros* to describe the demigods and warriors of their mythology. However, I lean toward the simple English definition from the mid-1600s: "One who exhibits great bravery."

Heroes have been on my mind a great deal during the past year. Without taking any (well-deserved) credit from those who literally put their lives on the line daily, some lesser-recognized folks have demonstrated true heroism through the pandemic. Pastors, who stumbled wide-eyed through their first online sermons and comforted endless grieving families. Decision makers, from school to church to government offices, whose seriously tough decisions made them targets for a frightened and frustrated population. Parents, who guided children through terrifying months, not to mention the stress of at-home learning. And, what about survivors, who lived through COVID-19 (or some other catastrophic illness) and then faced down the terror of returning to the daily routine in spite of overwhelming anxiety? Such courageous examples to a frightened world!

My mind also wanders to "everyday heroes" who have dedicated their entire lives to ministry. Long before COVID-19, they served through wars, nuclear threats, gas and food shortages, social revolutions, and in

faraway places. I consider Carlisle Hanna's 70 years of missionary work in India, and Velma Mosley, who has taught the same children's Sunday School class in Tennessee since television was only available in black and white. Charlene Denman served 65 years as clerk for the Central Texas District, and people like Cheri Ham (IM, Inc.) and Sandy Goodfellow (Welch College) quietly kept things running, from computers and phones to light switches and software.

As the jerk of wheels on the runway startles me back to the present, I reflect that maybe John Stott was right when he said, "All heroes are but shadows of Christ."

Whatever God has planned for us, I pray we all cast "heroic shadows" for Him. **ONE**

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

Just want to express my deep appreciation for Dr. Moody's most recent Better Together column: "Life in HD." I add a hearty amen! We need each other at our best and at our worst. As a healthy family forgives one another countless times, moving past the pain of unintentional hurts, so must we in the family of Christ. As Dr. Moody points out, "We grow to love people... as we grow together in Christ." Sure, easy to say, not so easy to do; but

didn't Jesus die for the **ungodly** (Romans 5:6), and didn't He come to seek and to save the **lost** (Luke 19:10), not the perfect? When we choose to love by overlooking the faults of others, it is then we most reflect the love of Christ. Thank you for sharing the words of J. P. Seley, one of those saints who truly reflected the heart of Jesus. "Love covers a multitude of sins" (1 Peter 4:8).
—Kam Congleton (NC)



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Let's Go, **Etsuko!**

BY RUTH MCDONALD



“Let’s Go, Etsuko” is the rhyming way she introduces herself to Americans. Miss Etsuko Asahi is a Japanese Christian and an invaluable member of the church planting team at Good News Chapel in Western Tokyo, where she has served since 2003. She came to faith in Christ as a young adult and is still the only Christian in her immediate family. Her family claimed no religion at all; she says she was best described as an atheist before coming to Christ.





After earning an undergraduate degree in Japanese literature at a well-known university, Etsuko spent several years teaching Japanese to American missionaries and serving various roles in her church. As her desire to teach the Bible to Japanese people grew, she decided to enroll in Columbia Graduate School of Bible and Missions (now CIU) in South Carolina. Her hard work paid off when she graduated in 1993 with a Master's degree in Old Testament.

During those four years of graduate school, one of her required texts was a little yellow book by Leroy Forlines entitled *Systematics: A Study of the Christian System of Life and Thought*. As she read, her beliefs about infant baptism, the role of Israel and the Church, and the doctrine of “free will, free grace, free salvation” solidified. The words of Mr. Forlines rang true in her heart, even though they differed from what she had been taught by the group that disciplined her. Etsuko determined to find a church with those beliefs when she returned to Japan.

Though she had a deep desire to teach the Bible to Japanese who knew so little about it, she found limited opportunities through the next few years. She taught English as a Second Language and worked as an interpreter for an international church in the Tokyo area. But her longing to share the Word of God in her own language to her own people never went away.

Some years later, burned out and looking for new opportunities, she came across a newspaper article featuring Tetsuo Kazama. He came to Christ under the influence of Free Will Baptist missionaries and was helping a new church plant called Good News Chapel (GNC). At his invitation, she visited the new church. The initial GNC church-planting team included Ken and Judy Bailey, Donnie and Ruth McDonald, Mirial Gainer, and Brenda Wendlandt (now Carney). Her first impression was “Oh, no! There are way too many foreigners here.” Fearing she would be roped into interpreting again, she pretended she spoke only Japanese. After several Sundays, missionaries discovered not only was Etsuko completely bilingual but also seminary trained.

She was relieved the team didn't expect her to translate but encouraged her to engage in teaching the Bible in Japanese. Since then, Etsuko has taught home and

church-based Bible studies, spoken during Sunday worship, ministered to children in Sunday School, and helped produce written communications like bulletins and printed schedules. She also has graciously assisted various missionaries with sermon preparation and corrected language mistakes when needed.

She also fills a vital role as she offers advice on cultural issues and counsels church members through difficulties and doubts. This is not her favorite task, since she is often put in the uncomfortable role of sounding board. She says Japanese people offer a more polite “cover story” to the American missionary, while reserving the raw truth for her. She has especially grieved over interpersonal conflicts within the church as she provides counsel and guidance.

Overall, though, Etsuko is thankful for the years spent ministering at Good News Chapel. As a lay leader, she's received only minimal financial compensation for her service and realizes not everyone can do that. God has provided for her living expenses as she lives with and cares for her elderly father.

Etsuko's cross-cultural experience and past dealings with missionaries uniquely equipped her to work with a missionary team. She enjoys the hope, encouragement, and fellowship she receives from her missionary family. Though her mother passed away many years ago, her church family joins her in praying fervently for the salvation of her father and younger brother.

Etsuko's most cherished time at GNC is the opportunity to teach the Bible to Japanese people. She loves to see others get excited about the Word of God and watch understanding dawn in their hearts. She has found a place where she is welcome to use her gifts.

A few years ago, she especially sensed the Lord placed her in exactly the right place at the right time. After the funeral of a church member, the family and church staff rode in a small bus to the crematorium. Casual conversation with a young relative of the deceased turned into a question-and-answer session about the Bible. Like the Ethiopian eunuch of Acts 8, the young man had been reading the Bible but needed someone to answer his many questions. He occupied the seat beside Etsuko and just in front of Pastor Kojima of a sister church, both

Japanese believers who came to Christ as adults from non-Christian families. Both have equipped themselves through study of the Word and were prepared to answer this seeking man's questions.



Like many in ministry, Etsuko wishes to devote herself to the teaching of the Bible without the burden of "church trouble." Her advice to others getting started in lay ministry is to "be prepared that difficult people are part of the package." However, she testifies trials have refined her faith

and helped grow her love for others and her understanding of the grace of God.

The emotional healing she has experienced by serving Christ and other people has surprised Etsuko. Her childhood home was devoid of physical affection and touch.

But as she taught the kids at church, she delighted in receiving their hugs and affection and found God filling an empty spot in her heart. She has also found great healing in being able to care sacrificially for her father in his old age. Though they had a troubled relationship during her young life, Christ has flooded Etsuko's soul with forgiveness and genuine love for him. She gives God the glory for restoring relationships once broken by sin.

Etsuko is a blessing to her church and to everyone who meets her. Many who visit Japan from the U.S. fall in love with her contagious smile, her sweet spirit, and her enthusiastic welcome. They all remember "Let's Go, Etsuko!" **ONE**

About the Writer: Ruth McDonald and her husband Donnie have shared the gospel with the Japanese for over 35 years. Want more from Ruth? Follow her blog at ruthnasia.com as she seeks to intentionally find joy in her journey or visit iminc.org to learn more about her ministry in Japan.

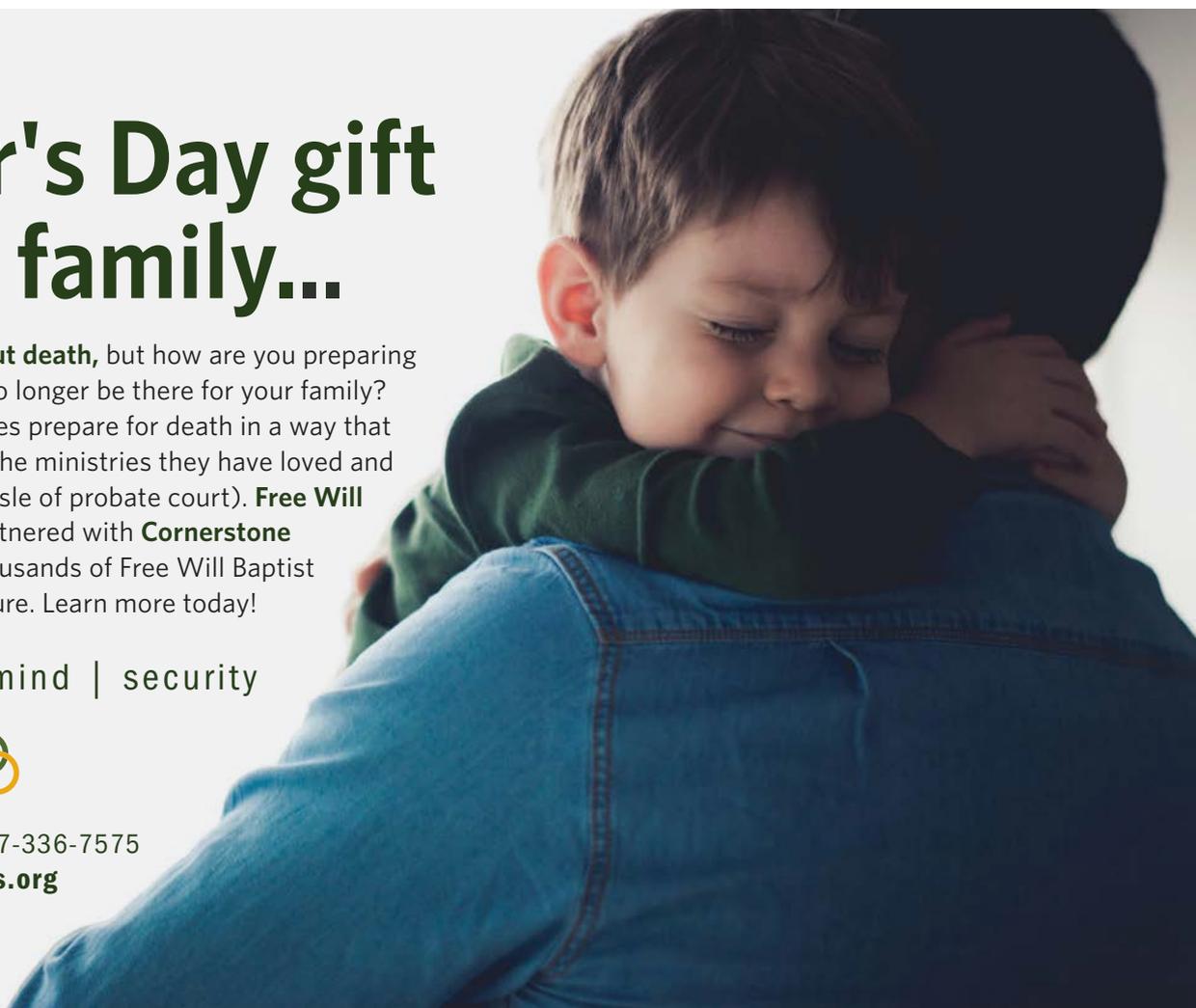
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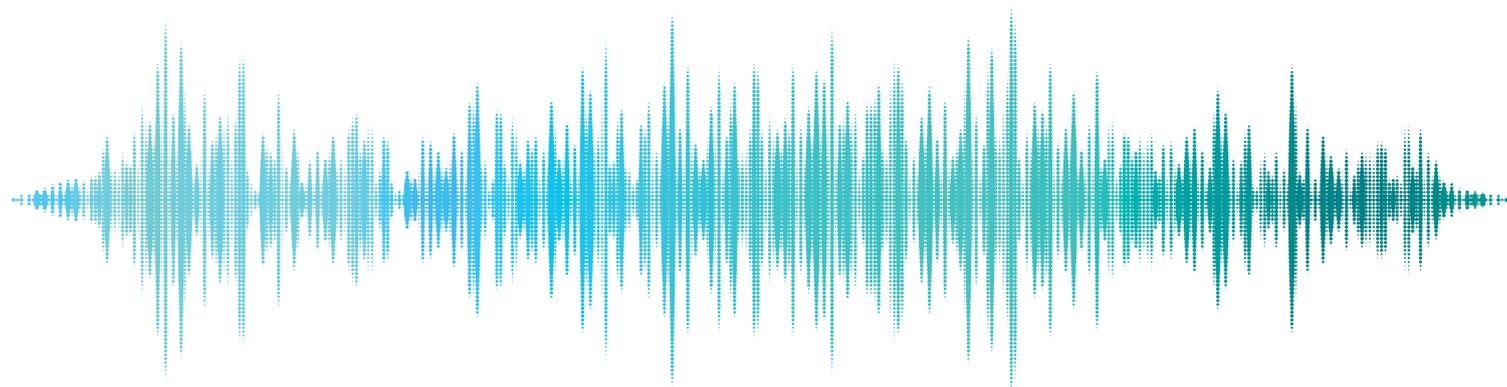


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Can You Hear Me Now?

BY JUDY COMBS PUCKETT



Imagine you are attending a worship service at your local church. You arrive in the parking lot, proceed toward the entrance, and enter a world virtually closed to you because you cannot hear well. You are greeted by ushers, but you don't hear that greeting. You see their smiles, but all you hear is the clamor of voices surrounding you. You don't ask a question because you cannot understand the answer unless you are well practiced at lip reading.

The familiar cell phone ad from a decade ago asking: "Can you hear me now?" illustrates the necessity of hearing well for effective communication. In this information age, with its advanced technology, it seems strange a large number of the adult population will miss out on critical information and pleasant experiences because they are losing their ability to hear. It's not that they can't hear—the sound is still there—but they cannot understand what is being said. This is the new normal for many senior adults.

Hearing loss and impairment isn't limited to the elderly, but it has become a major problem for an aging population of Baby Boomers. Nearly all seniors experience hearing loss to some extent because we are living longer than our parents did.

Hearing aids may seem a perfect solution, but they have their limitations. Wearing hearing aids can carry a social stigma and often become a roadblock for those who need

to seek or accept medical help. Others lose their hearing gradually and do not realize what has caused them to withdraw from social situations or life in general. Hearing aids are also very expensive.

Hearing challenges pose a difficult situation for churches as well. Pastors and church leaders may be unaware of the profound impact hearing loss has on members of their congregations. It minimizes the worship experience to such a degree some drop out of church altogether. When unable to hear and respond appropriately, many people find it easier just to stay home and read the captions on television. It is unfair to overlook the needs of a growing segment of your church population simply because there are no easy solutions. Church leaders should consider meeting with senior members struggling with this problem to discuss their issues and find solutions. Use these key questions to find answers and help the hearing impaired enjoy being in church again.

It minimizes the worship experience to such a degree some altogether. When unable to hear and respond appropriately, just to stay home and read the captions on television.

Can You Hear the Music?

This may seem like a silly question because music is loud in most churches today, but volume isn't the point. Ironically, the louder the accompaniment, the less understandable the words for the hearing impaired. While wearing a hearing aid increases volume and should help distinguish sounds, that is often not what happens with music. Instrumental music (especially electronic instruments) easily overpowers voices and competes with other instruments for clarity. To the hearing impaired, this may result in irritating noise rather than soothing, enjoyable music. Music sounds very different when you lose the ability to hear certain tones in the upper or lower registers. It can be difficult to determine the key being sung or played, so people often stop singing altogether.

To resolve these issues, make sure the music leader has a good microphone, loud enough to be heard over the instruments. The worship leader also should place or hold the mic low enough to allow for lip reading. Instruments may not need amplification in an average size church building, but if they do, the person in charge of the sound system should make sure the mics are balanced for the increased volume.

Lyrics on an overhead screen help tremendously, and it's important the lyrics appear *ahead* of the moment they are to be sung. Encourage your projectionist to stay ahead of the lyrics rather than playing catch up. It also helps if the text lines do not continue when the music pauses. Lines of text should stop as the phrasing stops. These simple tips are helpful for everyone singing, not only the hearing impaired.

If your church uses hymnals, the music leader should announce the song numbers loudly and clearly and repeat

it for those who may have missed it. Searching the index or pestering a neighbor wastes time that could be spent singing.

Singing at least one song acapella allows the hearing impaired to hear better and participate more freely. Familiar hymns make good acapella selections because most people know these songs by memory.

Lighting also plays a part in effective worship. Those with hearing loss compensate by depending heavily on their sight. Make sure the lighting is adequate for reading Bibles and lyrics in the hymnals.

Can You Hear Announcements?

People with impaired hearing often miss announcements about fellow church members who are ill or grieving. They miss learning about special programs and events because they cannot understand the announcements. When they are left "out of the loop," it affects their service opportunities, relationships, social life, and may leave them feeling as though they don't matter.

Displaying announcements onscreen or printed in the church bulletin is a simple way to ensure everyone sees them. It is helpful to show announcements both before and after services. Also, make sure the information stays onscreen long enough to read dates and times.

When announcements are made verbally, the speaker should use a microphone and speak slowly, so each word is pronounced. Choose a person whose voice projects well.

Can You Enjoy Socializing?

A person with hearing loss is limited when it comes to socializing with other church members. They often cannot

drop out of church many people find it easier

hear the names of visitors, so they simply greet them and wish them well. Providing the names and a photo of new members on screen encourages the hearing impaired to interact.

Having members speak from their seats is problematic for the hearing impaired. Those praying public prayers should use a microphone, so everyone is able to hear. When prayer requests are solicited, the leader should repeat each request into the mic. Those giving testimonies should use a microphone. Similarly, in business meetings, all motions and items of business should be clearly restated by the moderator.

During social events, the noise level rises (as it should) as people enjoy talking and visiting together. This atmosphere makes it difficult for the hearing impaired to participate in conversation, and prolonged noise becomes irritating. Just being aware of this challenge helps us understand why some people do not participate in these events, or why they may leave early. Consider providing a table in a smaller or quieter setting to give those with hearing loss an option for visiting separately.

Can You Hear the Message?

Nothing is more important than hearing the message from God's Word. That is why most of us come to church. If your church is able to afford hearing devices for the impaired, invest in good, quality pieces. If you are unable to afford them, some members may volunteer to pay for their own device. (Make sure the devices work with your sound system before purchasing them.)

Much of what we get from the message depends upon the speaker. Pastors and preachers may spend countless hours

preparing the message God lays on their heart, but if the congregation cannot hear or understand, everyone's time is wasted. Diction and projection are both critical for hearers to receive the message. You must speak slowly and pronounce your words clearly if you expect your message to be received.

As the message begins, state the Scripture reference clearly, repeat it, and provide enough time for everyone to find the passage and follow along. This gives hearers—even impaired hearers—the context of your message.

Consider giving the congregation notes to follow along, possibly adding blanks to be completed as you preach. Again, a projection screen is ideal, but if you don't have one, simply insert a paper into your church bulletin. The message stays with hearers longer when they hear *and* see it. Even those who cannot hear at all can follow a message when they see the main points written out.

When someone is straining to listen and follow, it takes a toll mentally, so keep your message to a reasonable length. Today, most people are programmed to listen for about a half hour. After that, most listeners (not just seniors) subconsciously begin to tune out. People may sit politely and appear to be listening but speaking too long can negate the effects of a wonderful message.

Can You Hear Me Now?

If you fail to see the importance of this article, try this experiment: come to church next Sunday with ear plugs and see what a difference it makes in your ability to worship. Put yourself in the place of the hearing-impaired members who come seeking a worship experience. Consider how your service ministers to those individuals. It will change your perspective and give you more empathy with those struggling to hear. **ONE**

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

HEROES

BY MARK PRICE

From the time I was a small boy in south-central Ohio, I had heroes. My heroes seemed a bit strange to many of my friends. My heroes were not like theirs: Superman, Batman, or Underdog. As far as I know, my heroes never wore capes. My heroes invested their lives in sharing Jesus with individuals who have never once heard His name or story.

Along my journey, especially as a WMO ambassador and IM board member, I've met many individuals much like myself: lay-leaders, youth, and pastors who have their own godly heroes of the faith. I'd like to introduce you to a few of mine.

The Unnamed Servant

Scripture contains many nameless characters. They are real; we just don't know their names. This first young lady is like that, because she prefers to serve the Lord outside the spotlight. We will call her June.

June's story begins with a two-fold prompting. She and her husband spent time out of town with family during a nephew's health crisis. While there, they met Eddy and Amanda Simmons. Meeting them and hearing the details of their ministry to the Samburu in Kenya certainly left an impression on her.

The second prompting came when her local church hosted a Go Global event. Her pastor recalls, "I believe we heard from 11 missionaries that weekend. Hearing their stories and their desire to help equip local churches to support mission work around the world left an impression on her."

June asked her pastor to form a mission committee and implement a Missionary of the Quarter (MOQ) focus. The leadership team approved, but went a step further, enlisting the finance committee's support. They included a budget line in the annual stewardship plan. Anyone can designate a gift to the MOQ any time. Wednesday night offerings are designated for the MOQ. When the MOQ visits the church, a special offering is taken. At the end of the quarter, all the money collected is sent to the missionary's account.

"Our hope is not only to educate our church family about the work of missionaries, but also to inspire them to become more involved through prayer, giving, taking mission trips, or even considering if God may be calling them into mission work," Pastor Paul explained. "The quarter-long focus on specific missionaries, with updates and anticipation of their visit, has created excitement. In many ways, our church family feels they know our missionaries more intimately."

Macy Wallace

I met 11-year-old Macy at a WMO dinner. (One of our most effective efforts to educate and partner with Ohio pastors and churches has been through WMO dinners,

where missionary speakers or IM leaders share stories of God reaching the unreached.) Macy's dad, Pastor Del Wallace of Forest Valley FWB Church in Springfield, Ohio, asked if he could bring his daughter to a dinner. Knowing the impact missionaries made on my life and biblical worldview, I didn't hesitate to agree.

As we welcomed pastors and their wives, Del walked in with two "dates," his wife Shonda and their daughter Macy. I made sure Del, Shonda, and Macy were introduced to our missionaries. That little girl beamed all evening. Somehow, I was confident she "got it." Macy knew instinctively that those who make their home in a strange land, struggle to learn a new language, and adapt to a different culture—all to share Jesus with those who have never heard His name—are worthy heroes.

Macy led her church to support missionaries through the WMO. Many folks in her church have roots in Kentucky, and Kentucky basketball fans are competitive, to say the least. So, Macy suggested an Ohio State versus Kentucky WMO offering contest and movie night, with all proceeds going to missions. Pastor Wallace reported: "Kentucky won by \$10 (they cheated!) so I had to dress head to toe in Kentucky blue." We all know the real winners are those who will hear the gospel as a result of Macy's efforts.

Sandy Mounts

A number of years ago, when our youngest daughter was born, we lived in the Columbus, Ohio, area. We visited Westerville FWB Church and immediately fell in love with the church and Pastor Mike and Sandy Mounts. I witnessed Mike's heart for missions, and how his heart became the heart of the Westerville Church family. For the last 11 years, Mike and Sandy have ministered to Harrison FWB Church in Minford, Ohio. Their hearts are still as vibrant and passionate about missions as they were 28 years ago when I met them.

Sandy leads the charge for missions within the Harrison Church. With a membership of roughly 80, they go above and beyond in their efforts and creativity. A small, rural church in the foothills of Appalachia, the Harrison Church often receives WMO offerings in excess of \$12,000! When God's people have a mind to work, "little is much, when God is in it."

Often, individuals and their churches "get their feet wet" by supporting missions through the annual World Missions Offering. But the WMO is just an entry point. With time, many churches grow their hearts and budgets to support missions in more significant ways. **ONE**

About the Writer: An IM, Inc. board member since 2011, Mark Price has pastored Porter FWB Church in Ohio for 22 years. Married for 36 years, he and his wife Deanna have two married daughters, Lacey and Hannah, and dote on their four grandchildren. Learn more about IM and the WMO at iminc.org.



Del and Macy Wallace



Macy Wallace, age 12



Harrison FWB Church leaders present WMO offering to Steve Lytle



Mike and Sandy Mounts with Penn family



A New Look at
FREE WILL BAPTIST
Women's Ministry

Since 1935, WNAC has existed to provide opportunities for each woman to fulfill the Great Commission through her God-designed roles at home and abroad. From the beginning, WNAC has focused on training, service, and global outreach. Over the years, these primary areas of focus have grown to include exciting new ministries. Perhaps it is time for you to take another look at the vital ministry carried out for and by Free Will Baptist women.

WNAC Digital Media

WNAC.org has been streamlined. Find information on the various ministries in which Free Will Baptist women are involved. Resources are available for Spanish, French, and Portuguese speakers.

E-blasts contain news of current happenings keeping individuals and groups informed. Connect with us on social media via Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

Treasure Bible studies are published quarterly in a downloadable, printable format. *Treasure* magazine is now an online, free resource, available to women across the denomination and beyond.

Provision Closet

From the first suitcase of linens in 1962 to the present supply of household goods, small appliances, linens, and other essentials, the Steward Provision Closet continues to meet the needs of missionaries and church planters and their children, along with other related ministries such as Bible institutes,

The Hanna Project, and other global partners. Today, WNAC groups and churches across the nation follow guidelines for provision donations to assure the quality and usefulness of the items provided. For more information on how your church or group can get involved in this crucial ministry, visit wnac.org/closet-2.



Endowment

Established in 1990, the Marjorie Workman Endowment provides WNAC donors an opportunity for long-term giving. Gifts to the endowment will remain in the fund permanently, but interest earned by the endowment serves to fund the various ministries of WNAC on an annual basis.



WNAC Scholarships

WNAC provides educational scholarships as part of its ongoing mission:

helping Free Will Baptist women of all ages discover and utilize God-designed roles for communicating the gospel. The Mary R. Wisheart Scholarship assists young women studying at Free Will Baptist institutions for higher learning here in the U.S. The Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship helps international students pursuing Christian education within their own country or region of the world. The Miley International Student Scholarship helps international students pursuing Christian education within the U.S.



Flourish

Regional "Flourish" conferences and events bring women together around relevant topics to help them live victorious, faithful lives. Fellowship and networking are important aspects of these conferences. While COVID-19 limited Flourish activities in 2020, WNAC looks forward to resuming these exciting events in the near future.



YWAC



YWAC

Young Women Active for Christ was established to encourage youth participation in our ministry. Cynthia Wallace writes monthly studies complementing the *Treasure* Bible studies. Topical studies are also available. Customize group studies to meet the needs of your young ladies.

Shine

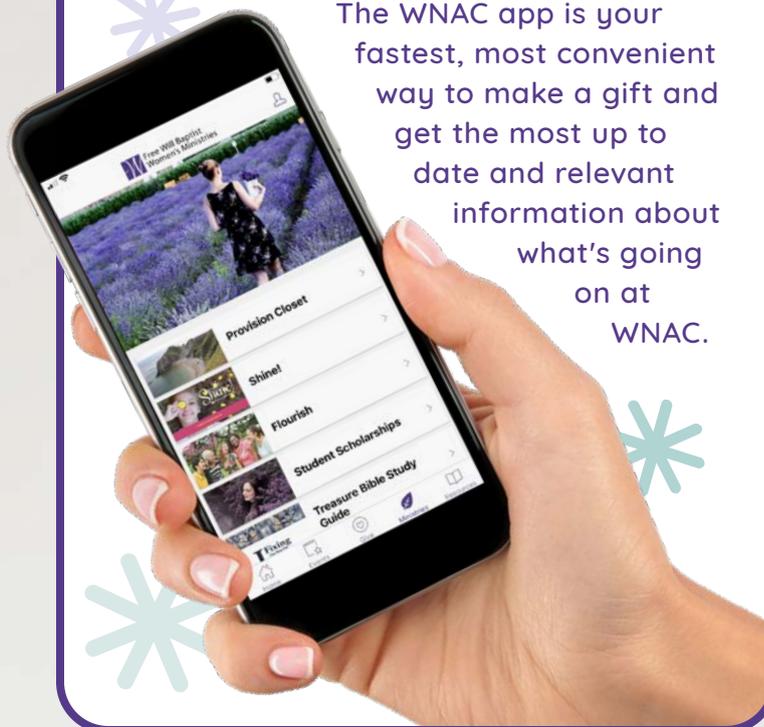
Since 2016, Shine conferences have provided a safe place for junior high and teen girls to confront cultural messages with biblical truth. The conferences provide practical suggestions for good decision making in a difficult

world. Adult leaders have opportunities to examine challenges confronting the girls with whom they work and receive helpful resources to become more effective workers.

The Shine Facebook page provides encouragement for adult leaders, while the Shine Instagram page is geared toward the girls. Callie Milling manages both accounts. The Shine website, fwbshine.com is managed by Tori Matlock and provides bi-monthly blogs for the girls and monthly blogs for adult leaders.

See pages 17-18 to read recent material from Shine.

Have you seen the WNAC App?



The WNAC app is your fastest, most convenient way to make a gift and get the most up to date and relevant information about what's going on at WNAC.



Shine





Through the Fog

BY CLAIRE RYAN

One morning while I lived with my grandparents, I woke up to a thick layer of fog. Pawpaw pointed outside. “You’ll need to be extra careful today,” he said.

I nodded and sat across from Pawpaw. Sometimes, we sat quietly; sometimes we talked. But, he always sent me off to work with a prayer.

“When we pray, we don’t inform You of anything You don’t already know,” Pawpaw told God gently. “You already know about the fog.”

Immediately, my throat tightened, and I got that growing pressure behind my eyes that can only mean one thing: waterworks knocking at the door.

Lord, You know about the fog.

Figuratively speaking, if I have come across one layer of fog in my life, I’ve barreled through hundreds more. Sometimes, it’s so thick, I can hardly see my feet hit the ground in front of me. A head-on collision occurs, and I’m left feeling broken, bruised, lonely, and forgotten.

This fog can appear in many forms: the loss of a job, the death of a loved one, fear, a broken heart, a lonely spirit, self-doubt, bullying, a secret sin, etc. My fog is most often worry; but as the staircase rises higher, it can reach the level of fear.

“How do I get past this break-up?”

“Why do bad things happen to good people?”

“Why don’t they like me?”

“I’m fat, I’ll stop eating.”

“No one cares about me.”

“I am worthless. I should just give up.”

These questions and thoughts penetrate the mind and

continue to enforce the false belief we lead meaningless lives in a meaningless world where no one cares.

The fog thickens.

Too often, I attempt to force myself through the unforgiving fog. My natural instinct is to hurry out of it as fast as I can, using my *own* strength.

This is not what the Lord has called us to. I imagine Him looking down at me with overwhelming love and grace saying, “What are you doing, child? Don’t you know that *I* am your eyesight? I cause the blind to see. Is it not enough that *I* be your strength? My power is made perfect in your weakness.” With an undying, incomprehensible love, He proclaims, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Oh, but being still is *hard*; especially when I find myself in the fog.

What does it mean to be still? Consider the beginning verses of Psalm 46: “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore, we will not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling” (verses 1-3). Though the fog becomes too thick for us to breathe, though we can’t see daylight on the other side, though our hearts are heavy with sorrow, though our joy be threatened by this life. Being still in the presence of the Lord means although we find ourselves in the midst of all of life’s frantic activity, we stand firm and still, trusting the God of all comfort has gone before us. We should not fear; we should not cower; we should not run and hide.

“Know that I am God.” In this, He loudly proclaims,

“I am omniscient! Omnipotent! Omnipresent! I am love, I am justice, and I am undefiled! I am strong enough to carry your burdens, holy enough to pay for your sins, and merciful enough to forgive your humanity! I. Am. God. You can know this; you can trust me!”

Wow! The Great I Am says all of that to *me* and to *you*.

Nothing in your fog can stand against the love of our Savior. Fear has no place, heartbreak self-destructs, and death cannot prevail. Despite our poor vision and the fact we can't see what's coming next, we are not alone.

Take a breath, slow your walk, and take it one step at a time.

Most importantly: be still.

He already knows about the fog. ONE

About the Writer: A 2017 graduate of Welch College, Claire Ryan teaches at Cheatham County Central High School in Ashland City, Tennessee.



Intentional Relationships

BY HANNAH GORRELL

The COVID-19 season of life has lasted much longer than any of us hoped or expected. It seems we have been endlessly separated from friends and loved ones in one sense or another. Sometimes, we only see our friends through screens or plexiglass. The past year has felt like one of the loneliest times in history. We have been challenged to find new ways to interact and form relationships.

As human beings, we are made for relationships. God told Adam it was not good for him to be alone, so God created a companion for him. We should resist the temptation to take the easier route, shying away from relationships. My prayer is that we find new ways to be intentional in our friendships. Intentionality will enrich our love for people even more. We may express this by writing letters to friends far away or making phone calls to grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

I encourage you to set aside time every day to do these

things. Make time to express yourself but also to relax. The relationships you need to maintain are not far away. Be sure to spend time with those in your household. Honor your father and mother and those who take care of you. Remember, your siblings are your companions for life.

Commit to reaching out to a different friend or loved one every day this week. You will be surprised when you not only lift their spirits, but they also raise yours. ONE

About the Writer: Hannah Gorrell is a 2021 senior at Welch College. Hannah is a WNAC scholarship recipient. She was born and raised in Charleston, WV, where she attends McCorkle FWB Church. Hannah enjoys gardening, singing, crafting, and spending time with and cooking for friends and family.

Do We Still Need Master's Men?

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

“Do we still need Master’s Men? and Does Master’s Men still exist?” are the questions I hear more than any others,” Director Ken Akers admits with a shake of his head. Since the department merged with North American Ministries (NAM) in 2015, many Free Will Baptists have been under the misconception the ministry no longer exists, or worse, the underlying need for Master’s Men no longer exists.

Truthfully, this confusion is nothing new. For decades, Master’s Men battled the false notion it was only about sports fellowship activities for men, such as softball and golf tournaments that drew friendly competition from across the nation. “Those tournaments were a lot of fun and a great way to promote fellowship and raise money,” Akers notes. “But sports fellowship activities represent only a tiny part of the work of Master’s Men.”

For 65 years, the mission of Master’s Men has remained unchanged: to promote spiritual growth in Free Will Baptist men. “It is our goal to develop men of priority, prayer, purpose, purity, and passion,” says Akers. “We challenge Free Will Baptist men in churches across the denomination to be passionate about loving God, leading their families, and serving their church and denomination. Yes, we have become part of NAM, but the ministry and mission of Master’s Men continues unchanged.”

The organization is made up of “chapters” or groups of men in local churches who meet regularly for fellowship, Bible studies (provided by Master’s Men), and service activities. State and national leaders work closely with these local chapters to carry out a variety of important works:

national disaster response efforts (begun in 2006), Operation Saturation outreach events that help church planters, annual IMPACT outreach events in each National Convention host city, and maintenance of the Ridge Church in New Durham, New Hampshire. Master’s Men additionally produces Direction Bible studies and, of course, continues the sports fellowship activities loved and enjoyed by so many.

“The Work Never Stopped.”

The work of Master’s Men continued in 2020, despite COVID-19 challenges and restrictions, especially disaster response efforts. “Storms didn’t stop just because the virus started,” Akers observes with a smile. “In fact, 2020 had more named storms than any other year in recorded history!” Master’s Men responded to each new disaster. When COVID-19 limited travel, Akers coordinated with state and regional teams to meet the needs. “It just makes sense,” he says. “When a hurricane hits Texas, it is easier for a Texas group to help their own rather than a team from the East coast that might be recovering from its own disaster.” This ongoing emphasis on state and



regional Disaster Response Team partnerships proved especially effective during the shutdown.

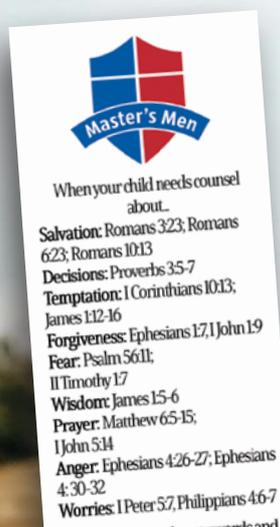
Although the national IMPACT outreach event was canceled when COVID-19 forced the National Convention to go virtual, Master's Men challenged local church groups to adopt the event on a local basis through IMPACT Hometown. People across the nation responded, working with Master's Men to make a difference in local communities hit hard by the virus.

Master's Men also focused on critical repairs to the Ridge Church in 2020. Although renovations to the historical structure were completed several years ago, structural weakness to the bell tower required immediate attention. Master's Men oversaw the \$150,000 project, now completed, and the church is ready for visitors as travel restrictions lift.

A regional downturn in COVID-19 numbers during the fall allowed for the rescheduled Deep South National Golf Tournament to take place in Albany, Georgia. The number of competitors was down from previous years,

A Gift for Dad!

Master's Men would like to provide free bookmarks for Father's Day. Contact us with the quantity your church needs, and we will ship them to you: masters@nafwb.org



fwbmastersmen.org

Master's Men exists for the following purposes:

Discipleship. Master's Men facilitates spiritual growth in men. Faithful teaching of the Word calls men to intimacy with God, purity in life, leadership in the home, faithful worship, mentoring, commitment to the mission of church and denomination, prayer for pastor(s), and a burden to share the gospel.

Stewardship. Members are taught to support the ministry of the local church and denomination financially. They learn that stewardship involves not only giving to the Lord's work, but giving their lives to advance Christ's Kingdom.

Soul Winning. Men are mobilized out of spiritual lethargy and challenged to influence their families, communities, and workplaces with the life-changing message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Edification. Master's Men equips men to serve the Lord through the local church by developing them into spiritual leaders.

Fellowship. Men need the examples and encouragement other men provide. These relationships are one of the greatest benefits of the organization.

Does your church need a Master's Men chapter?

Visit www.fwbmastersmen.org

or call **877-767-8039** to learn more.

but participants had a great time being together in the great outdoors. And numbers rebounded quickly for the 2021 tournament, which moved to Dothan, Alabama, and the Dothan National Golf Course.

In short, during a time when many ministries were limited in scope, the work of Master's Men continued. So, do we still need Master's Men? Considering 2020, the answer should be obvious: absolutely! Join Master's Men in their efforts to make a difference in and through the lives of Free Will Baptist men. **ONE**

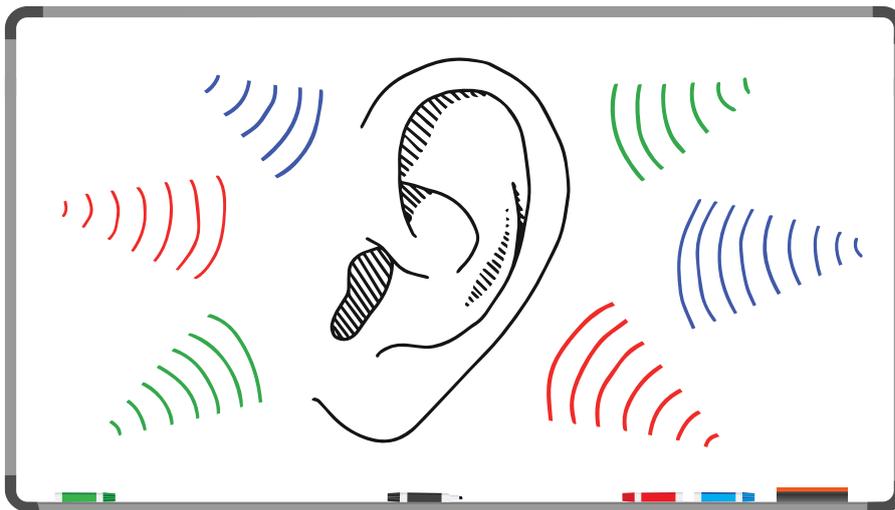
About the Writer: Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of *ONE Magazine*. Email: eric@nafwb.org.

Leaders as Listeners

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.

About six issues ago, Leadership Whiteboard covered the leader as a *reader*. This issue explores the leader as a *listener*. Stereotypes tend to elevate the leader to a platform where she or he can be *heard*. After all, leaders are often viewed as “large and in charge,” setting the course, and not asking questions. However, some of the most gifted leaders are known for surrounding themselves with smart people and listening to their counsel when decisions are formulated. The following paragraphs provide quotes, values, and warnings for leaders.

Stephen Covey said, “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” That statement may be more convicting than you wish to admit. Steve Jobs remarked, “It doesn’t make sense to hire smart people and then tell them what to do.” J. Oswald Sanders cautioned, “Many so-called leaders are too busy to listen. True leaders know that time spent listening is well invested.” These quotes remind us listening leaders cast vision, but they allow other brilliant people to add the tactical details of how that vision will be accomplished.

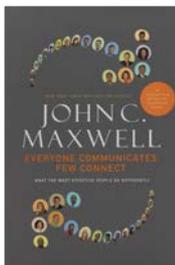


A listening leader exhibits several qualities. First, admit you don’t know everything and, consequently, need to listen. Second, respect people enough to hear and apply their insights. Third, recognize involvement in “the details” often leads to micromanagement. Fourth, ask others how to accomplish the vision.

Leaders need to hear the following warnings. President Eisenhower warned that it is difficult to listen when you feel the need to be heard: “You don’t lead by hitting people over the head—that’s assault, not leadership.” Ike commanded and won the greatest battles because he listened to his advisers. Be

careful not to feign listening simply to appear you are allowing input. Finally, do not confuse listening with consensus-style leadership. Great leaders own the responsibility for casting vision and determining strategy, but allow input and consider advice when it comes to the tactics. Remember, leading is not possible without followers, and followers bring value to the leadership equation. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Ron Hunter Jr. has a Ph.D. in leadership and is CEO of Randall House Publications. You may contact him at ron.hunter@randallhouse.com.



RECOMMENDED BOOK

Everyone Communicates, Few Connect

By John Maxwell

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

“Leaders who refuse to listen, will eventually be surrounded by people who have nothing helpful to say.”

—Andy Stanley

1000 QUESTIONS and NO GOOD ANSWERS

BY BRENDA EVANS



Helping others can be as simple as listening, participating in an email exchange (as Brenda Evans shares in this article), or quietly being present to offer support. The point is anyone can do these small things to make a real impact upon the lives of friends and loved ones.

By email over several days during the COVID-19 pandemic, my friend Dee Smith told me the story of her 12-year struggle with left temporal lobe epilepsy. Here is a shortened version of our conversations.

Dee—Thursday, 3:45 pm: I read your article in *ONE Magazine* about being a participant in life, not just a passenger. I've been looking for that word *participant* since June 9, 2009. Thanks for making my day and reminding me of Isaiah 46:3-4.

Brenda—5:19 pm: Glad you read it. Remind me about June 9, 2009.

Dee—7:58 pm: That's the day they took my driver's license, so I walked two miles to work. I was 43. I have funny stories: dog bites and large trucks splashing rainwater; how people stop and offer you a

ride, and how you cry but tell them to go on.

Brenda—Friday, 12:05 pm: Wow, Dee! I knew it had been years since you have driven, but I didn't realize it had been that long. Wondering: do you write about all this? You draw and paint, have creative bones, and big gray matter. Are words your thing, too?

Dee—Monday, 4:22 pm: I used to write, but now I can't make sense like I used to. I do record the dates of every MRI, CT, hospital stay, new medicine and when I went on and off it. I'm a little obsessive about that. I can hand a new doctor three pieces of paper that tell him every procedure I ever had. I keep planners with seizure times, so doctors can see the changing patterns. In 2009, I didn't have seizures very often and didn't feel them until someone looked

at me funny. Then I knew I wasn't making sense. Later, I went up to 300 seizures a year, and now I am over the 700 mark. That doesn't count what I call "flitters" that are small and continue for a day.

Brenda—Tuesday, 3:52 pm: Do you get a warning a seizure is coming?

Dee—Wednesday, 1:32 pm: I get a song. I've had two seizures this morning. At 9:30 I heard the song come into my mind. I never remember the song. It's just there. I started long, slow breaths to calm down. Our brain normally has 80 electrical pulses per second, and during a seizure, the pulses can climb to 500. It felt like my mind was wired to an electric switch, like a 50-pound weight was sitting on my chest, like I had worked all day and desperately needed rest.

David [Dee's husband] asked if we should take a walk. We started, but I felt like I couldn't take the next step. When we talked, I said things that didn't make sense. I couldn't think of what a vehicle was called or plants. When we met people, I tried to smile to get the haunted look off my face.

Back home, I took a shower, and the song started again. My body was overwhelmed, like someone pushing on my face, eyes red, mind rolling. That was the second one today. Today is a day on my seizure calendar that I will likely record four to six.

What could I say? The next day I emailed Dee with a "condolence" of sorts, something like a glib, "I'm so sorry you are going through all this, Dee. I love you and am praying for you." I say "glib" not because my words were insincere. I meant them. But they felt shallow and, most of all, unhelpful. What do you say to those walking through times like Dee's because of chronic illness, death of a spouse or child, mental illness, divorce, a family suicide, wayward children or spouse? Do shallow words hurt? Is silence better? I did know for

certain Dee did not need a "sermon" from me. This was not a "teaching moment." What could I **teach** Dee anyway? So, I said what I felt: I'm sorry. I love you. I'm praying for you.

Brenda—Monday, 10:30 am: If I pry too much, just say so, and I'll zip my lip—or stop my fingers from typing. When you write, your words are powerful. They make really good sense. Have you thought about writing your story? You have things to say. See, I'm prying. But this morning, I thought of you when I saw the *Shoe* cartoon in the newspaper. It was both funny and serious—about bringing things to the table, not just our elbows. You've got things to bring to the table.

Dee—Monday, 4:33 pm: I looked up *Shoe*, and yes, most of the time it's not just my elbows on the table. But I'm not like I used to be. I used to be one smart cookie. Now I'm the crumbs. In high school, I watched my grades, so I would graduate third in my class and not have to give a speech like numbers one and two did. Now, one minute I laugh, the next I cry. I've always hated to cry in front of someone. Attached are a few things I wrote.

Brenda—Tuesday, 11:06 am: I read your email and attachment last night. I cried but laughed, too. You're a good writer. You've got the bones of a long story here. I say, "You go for it, girl!"

Dee had started. That was good and I said so. I encouraged her to flesh out those bones. I gave her a few examples of where she might insert more detail, explanation, dialogue. I didn't hear from Dee for several days and worried I had pushed too much. Then I received the following email.

Dee—Saturday, 4:17 pm:

Today, I sat outside while David was working in the yard. I just kept writing down things. How about in the next couple of days I write on some things you mentioned, open them up? I am going "willy-nilly"

What do you say to those walking through times like Dee's? Do shallow words hurt? Is silence better?

with all this. Today made me think of good and bad things I haven't thought about in forever. If I write a book, forgive me. I ramble, so at some point, you may need to tell me to zip it!

I didn't ask Dee to zip it. In less than two weeks, she sent seven more attachments with 6,000 words of her story: praying in childhood though her family never went to church; her marriage; her father's suicide; her salvation, baptism, and teaching Sunday School with her husband David; her jobs; her mother's remarriage; her sister and cousins; her questions and struggles with left temporal lobe epilepsy for more than 11 years. Dee's stories were harrowing, inspiring, and funny all at once.

She shared Psalm 139: 23-24, the "search me, O God" verses and Psalm 27:14, "wait on the Lord; be strong... wait," and nine other Bible passages. Sometimes, she prayed for guidance and help, sometimes she didn't. She clung to Revelation 21:4: "God shall wipe away all tears...and there shall be no more crying."

Dee explained she has been on ten different medications,

had four EEGs, three MRIs, two CTs, a PET, a Ictal Spect, a Wada test that tore her carotid artery, two psych exams, and one left temporal lobe surgery at Vanderbilt, which gave her no seizure relief.

She told funny stories about her, her sister, a gown, and a hospital IV pole. She described an awful skin disorder caused by medication. She was told twice if she only believed, God would heal her. Along the way, Dee has asked 1,000 questions with no good answers, but she is strong, and she waits. What I can do is be her friend and pray. With her last attachment, Dee added these 34 words:

Dee—Monday, 3:24 pm: Well, that is my story, and I'm sticking to it! LOL. With the brain change, I'm totally different now. My perky, quirky self has gone away. How I miss that silly girl! **ONE**

About the Writer: Brenda Evans lives in Ashland, Kentucky. She can be reached at beejayevans@windstream.net.

Literary Legacy...

Born in Myrtle, Missouri, in 1932, Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart spent three decades teaching English and literature at Welch College. Then, in 1985, at age 52, Wisheart began a new career when she was elected executive secretary of WNAC, a role she continued until retirement. Dr. Wisheart played a key role in the preservation of Free Will Baptist history, serving ten years on the Historical Commission, several as chairman (the only woman to serve in either capacity). She additionally wrote a number of books detailing the work of Free Will Baptist women in history. When she retired, Dr. Wisheart settled on an annuity option that named WNAC as her beneficiary. Though the influential teacher and leader has gone to her eternal reward, her money continues to support the ministry she loves.

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Why Do I Write?

BY NEIL GILLILAND

Why do I write? I often ask myself that question. I have no illusions I will ever write like the historically great writers of years past or even present. I have friends, ordinary people like me, who are so creative. I marvel at their ability to express the simplest moments of life in word pictures that capture the essence of being. In comparison, my writing seems woefully mediocre. I often find myself winding my way back to the question: why do I write?

Some write because they are aware the gift honed over years of practice will impact a wanderer or wonderer and cause them pause to think. Their words may alter the trajectory of someone's life. Their poignant sentences slice deep into the hearts of men and women. I suppose a deeply hidden part of me hopes some random words I form into a paragraph will leave a lasting mark on a reader. But the likelihood of that is slim at best.

So, why do I write?

Maybe—just maybe I don't write for others. Maybe it is more for me than them. It almost sounds selfish. In reality, most of what I write is never meant to be published or even read by others. Writing provides a catharsis for my mind. Like most people, my mind is constantly moving, but when I write, that motion is captured on screen or paper, and I don't have to rehearse those thoughts over and over. Even better, I can go back and edit the thoughts captured before me in sentences rather than whirling about in my mind like a Texas tornado.

Why do I write? Writing records memories far too easy to forget. I can recreate a scene and leave a legacy to go back and read. We all have events in our lives that are keys to whom we have become, but it is easy to let those memories slide into the slough of the forgotten. It typically is easy to remember the major events of our lives, but the reality is common everyday moments are the ones that

shape and mold us. Every now and then, I find simple thoughts I have recorded about an ordinary moment in life, and I smile and remember.

Why do I write? It brings clarity to my thoughts. Sometimes, I think if a brain surgeon opened my skull, it would look like a plate of spaghetti—a tangled mess. But when I write, I bring order to the craziness running around in my brain. The clarity helps me make wiser decisions. It allows me to be a better communicator, both publicly and privately. As a counselor, I often suggest that people write what they are experiencing emotionally. It gets it out of their head and onto paper.

Why do I write? Again, this may border on selfishness but when I write, I leave something for future generations to read and understand who I was. Recently, I came across an old photo of my dad and his sister standing in the doorway of an old, clapboard house. I'm guessing Dad was three or four years old. By the time he was six, both his parents had died, and he was orphaned. I looked at his sister and wished I knew what she was like. What she thought about life, what was meaningful to her. I wish she had written something for me to read.

Maybe one day, my bored grandson will be sifting through my things and run across some obscure piece I wrote, and he will know a little more about the old guy he called "Papa."

Why do I write? I have no idea, but I will probably keep doing it. You should, too. **ONE**

About the Writer: Neil Gilliland is director of member care and mobilization for IM, Inc. Learn more: iminc.org.

When God GIVES A Mountain

BY ANNABELLE ELLIS



“And the LORD said to Moses, ‘Is the LORD’s hand waxed short? Thou shalt see now whether my word shall come to pass unto thee or not’” (Numbers 11:23).

On December 11, 2019, I drove to Antioch, Tennessee, to meet with the IM board, seeking approval for a two-year term in Tokyo, Japan. As I drove, I prayed simply, “It’s Yours, Lord. Do what You will.” After the board granted approval, I told the Lord, “I want Your face and hand to be seen in every aspect of this. I want everyone to see what You can do!”

Some of the largest mountains we scale come from God. I eagerly anticipated climbing with Him.

Following orientation in January 2020, I began fundraising—scheduling speaking arrangements, making phone calls daily, and sharing with everyone willing to listen how they could partner in reaching the unreached with the gospel. I threw everything into the Lord’s hands. Within the first month of fundraising, my account neared 20% funding. I was hopeful, prayerful, and optimistic I’d be fully funded by the end of the summer and in Japan by September. I thought I had reached a mountaintop, when I’d only begun to climb.

During the following weeks, COVID-19 made a grim trip around the globe. Satan used the pandemic to inflict crippling fear; destroy familial, societal, and economic infrastructure; and spread largescale sorrow and hopelessness. The entire world suffered. As the pandemic spread

like wildfire in the U.S., I wondered what was going on beneath the surface, beyond what we could see. What was the Lord doing? What was *I* doing—attempting to raise funds and grow support in a world immobilized overnight? I knew worrying over the “what ifs” would change nothing, but no one fundraises during a global crisis. What do you do when there is *nothing* you can do?

I felt like I had scaled a mountain only to come face-to-face with a vertical stone wall with no climbing gear—no way around and no way up. As COVID-19 raged, IM hosted an online meeting for all stateside missionaries. Lauren Riggs, intern to Spain, shared a humbling truth during the meeting. The pandemic didn’t take God by surprise. He *still* brought new people to be appointed with IM. He knew what was coming, and He knew what He was doing. “Maybe this mountain isn’t for me to climb,” I mused. “Maybe it needs to be moved. Maybe *this* is how God will be seen.”

Maybe, just maybe, God gives some mountains so they can be given *back* to Him.

God’s purpose is for every nation, tribe, people, and tongue to know and worship Him. My aim is to proclaim Christ through obedience, but it isn’t *my* mission. Rather, it is *God’s* mission to bring all people to Himself.

He invites us to join His mission and proclaim the gospel among those who have never heard (2 Peter 3:9). In the spring, I journaled out of honest vulnerability: “I *know* what You say in Your Word, but I want to *see* it, Lord. I want to see you move a mountain.”

I didn’t need to remind God of His Word. I needed to remember to call on Him to hear, then step wholeheartedly in faith toward the One who is faithful to provide. I began to ask God fervently to provide in spite of the circumstances.

My schedule filled little by little. My account began growing again, reaching the 50% mark. I set a goal, in work and prayer, to be fully funded in December. As summer turned into autumn, my schedule booked fully, and my account rose steadily. The Lord fulfilled His promises of provision. He sent individuals and churches to partner with me in getting the gospel to Japanese people.

On December 11, 2020, I received a phone call from IM, Inc. I heard, “I’m calling to tell you you’re fully funded.” The rest of my morning overflowed with praise to the Lord. I had witnessed a mountain thrown into the sea! God provided for me to go from approval to fully funded in exactly 365 days, as though a pandemic never occurred.

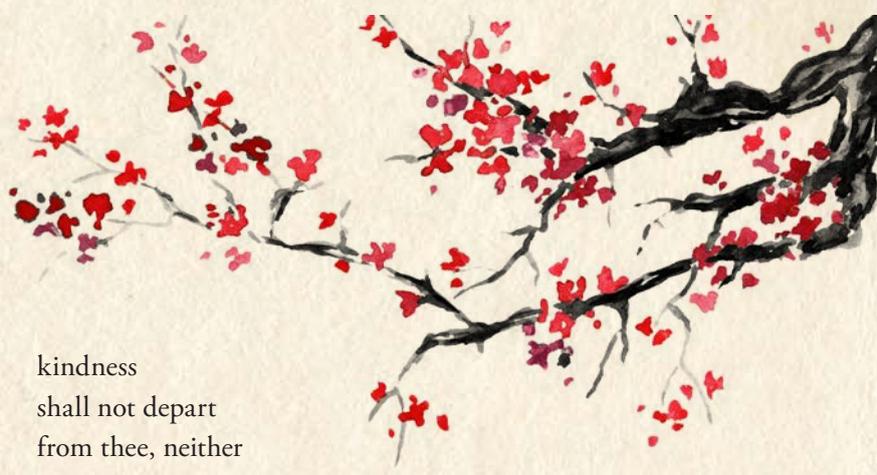
SOME OF THE LARGEST MOUNTAINS WE SCALE COME FROM GOD. I EAGERLY ANTICIPATED CLIMBING WITH HIM.

Only the great I AM can do that.

As I pondered His faithfulness during the Christmas season, the Holy Spirit brought the children of Israel to mind.

I thought about all they wrestled with for hundreds of years—waiting, longing, desperately desiring to see

God’s faithfulness. Isaiah 53 prophesies Christ’s love for humanity by taking the punishment we could never bear or afford. The next chapter speaks of His love in beautiful, metaphoric detail that becomes quite literal. “For the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my



kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed,’ saith the LORD that hath mercy on thee” (Isaiah 54:10).

This promise that if the earth were to crumble underfoot, God’s love would not fail was delivered to a people about to go into 70 years of exile under Babylonian captivity followed by centuries of waiting for the promised Messiah. God’s love did not fail. Jesus brought hope and love incarnate. He fulfilled the ultimate promise from God from the beginning of humanity. God did that. God kept His Word and did what He said He would do.

He faithfully continues to provide for the gospel to be proclaimed to all who have yet to hear. He promises every nation will gather around His heavenly throne, and He is patiently keeping His promise. He is a faithful, promise-keeping God, and it’s all because of who *He* is. It is His nature, His character, to be faithful.

Even when we can’t see, even when a mountain is dropped directly in our path, even when we walk through valleys so deep we feel we’ll never emerge, God remains the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He will be what He has been. He is faithful to hear, faithful to see, and faithful to keep His Word to those who are His and those who have yet to hear of Him. **ONE**

About the Writer: Annabelle Ellis cultivated her passion for reaching the lost by participating in ETEAM (Brazil and Japan), CMP (Japan), and serving her local church. She attended Welch College and graduated from Austin Peay State University with a B.S. in social work in 2020. She awaits Japan’s reopening to begin her internship. Visit iminc.org to learn more.

Missionaries Assigned to Two Colleges

Antioch, TN—Missionaries in Residence (MIR) live on the college campus, teach intercultural courses, and interact with students. For the 2021-2022 academic year, Dr. Kenneth and Rejane Eagleton will serve as MIR at Randall University in Moore, Oklahoma, while Tim and Kristi Johnson will serve Welch College in Gallatin, Tennessee.

Initially appointed to Ivory Coast in 1984, the Eagletons served through 2002, focusing on medical work and, eventually, leadership training. The civil war in Ivory Coast led to re-assignment to Brazil in 2003, where leadership training remains their focus. Kenneth served as regional director for Latin America and Africa from 2012 to 2017, before accepting the director of field partnerships position in 2018. The Eagletons will continue to be available for missionary services and meetings, and Kenneth will continue as director of field partnerships. Randall President Bob Thompson stated, "Their presence will help us encourage student involvement in missions. It is our desire and prayer to be a Great Commission university."

Appointed career missionaries to Spain in 1997, the Johnsons began their ministry in Villalba. In 2005, Tim and Kristi joined Anthony and Lea Edgmon in planting the first Protestant church in Alpedrete's history. In August 2022, Tim will transition into a full-time faculty position and program coordinator of Intercultural Studies. He will fill the



Kenneth & Rejane Eagleton

role left by retiring professor Dr. Ron Callaway. Ron and his wife Linda served as missionaries to Panama, Cuba, and Spain from 1976 to 2003. Tim and Kristi have two children. Alejandro attends Welch College, where he plans to complete his



Tim & Kristi Johnson and Family

M.Div. following his 2022 graduation. In June, Ana will graduate from high school in Spain where she studies bilingually in French and Spanish. She plans to participate in Truth & Peace this summer and attend Welch in the fall. **ONE**

Cheri Ham Retires

Antioch TN—Cheri Ham announced her retirement effective March 31, 2021. Cheri filled various roles over 24 years with IM. After beginning part time in December 1996 with computer and network responsibilities, Cheri demonstrated a passion for excellence, attention to detail, and a firm grasp of anything related to data and technologies. After becoming full time in 2002, Cheri added web development and communications responsibilities to her duties. In May 2006, Cheri shifted to the financial operations department. Starting as an accounting clerk, she quickly advanced to financial operations assistant and, ultimately, financial operations manager.

CFO Rob Conley remarked, "Cheri can take on any task, simply 'figure

it out,' and get it done. She comprehends computer data better than anyone I've worked with. While her expertise is top-tier, her love for missionaries is the first thing you notice about her—leading her to go above and beyond for them."

Cristina Price, missionary to France, spoke for many missionaries when she said, "God blesses missionaries with many gifts; unfortunately, crunching numbers and navigating technology are not always among them. To fill that gap, God gave us Cheri Ham. She wears her genius lightly; her humility and genuine love for her mission family are undeniable." **ONE**



Cheri Ham

Veteran Missionary Carlisle Hanna Retires

Antioch, TN—Carlisle Hanna, a faithful servant in India for 70 years, announced his retirement on March 31, 2021. “Though we knew Brother Carlisle’s retirement letter would come, it was difficult to see it in print,” reflected General Director Clint Morgan. “An era of Free Will Baptist missions is closing. Seventy years of service is a milestone few could imagine, and even fewer will obtain. This denomination will forever honor the faithful service of Brother Carlisle; generations to come will speak of his example of faithfulness.”

Hanna cited health as the reason for ending his time in India. He wrote: “I have reached a point in my life and health that I know I must retire. I have served 70 years with IM. I am thankful the Lord enabled me to serve these years. We are grateful for the many who have been



Carlisle Hanna

reached for Christ and the many churches in both north and south India. This is a difficult step, but one I must take.”

Brother Carlisle has served longer than any other Free Will Baptist missionary in history. In fact, Morgan noted, “He has served longer than any other missionary we can find from any agency. Brother Hanna is known and appreciated far and wide by Free Will Baptists and others.”

Board Chairman Jeff Nichols stated, “So many things changed in the world in 70 years, but Carlisle Hanna was a constant in India. The denomination was represented well by Brother Carlisle, his faithful service, and consistent presence with the people of India.” Vice-chairman Rodney Yerby agreed, “Not only has Brother Hanna shined the light of the gospel in a dark part of the world, his life has also provided an example of humility and faithfulness while advancing the Kingdom to the unreached.”

Carlisle and his wife Marie were appointed in 1951 and sailed for India in 1952. When Marie went to be with the Lord at age 70, she had served faithfully 46 years. She died and is buried in India. Hanna served unflinchingly through wars, pestilence, earthquakes, Bengal tigers, disease, severe spiritual attacks, and the loss of a child and spouse. All the while, he remained faithful to his Heavenly Father, his calling, and the people of India. Because of the marvelous work of the Father and the devotion of Carlisle and Marie Hanna, the gospel surges forward in India.

“We pray the grace, mercy, and love of Christ be bestowed on Brother Carlisle each day,” Morgan concluded. “Please join us in praying for Brother Hanna’s health as he moves from full-time missionary status to a well-earned rest and retirement.” **ONE**

 Full versions of these releases may be found on [iminc.org/blog](https://www.iminc.org/blog)

ETEAM Deletes Overseas Destinations Due to COVID-19

Antioch, TN—Dr. Neil Gilliland and the IM leadership team announced April 1, 2021, all ETEAM *international* trips are officially canceled for 2021. Barring additional virus spikes and lockdowns, ETEAM *will* move forward with a trip to Chicago, IL, where students will serve at Northwest Community FWB Church and other cross-cultural ministries in the



Chicago area. Gilliland stated, “In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we canceled all ETEAM trips. Unfortunately, most countries remain closed, making international travel impossible.” **ONE**

Chicago area. Gilliland stated, “In 2020, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we canceled all

The top of the page features a close-up, slightly blurred image of the American and Mexican flags. The American flag's stars and stripes are on the left, while the Mexican flag's green, white, and red vertical stripes are on the right. The title 'BETWEEN CULTURES' is overlaid on this image in a large, white, serif font with a drop shadow.

BETWEEN CULTURES

BY MAYAN BUSTAMANTE

My earliest memories revolve around growing up in a Christian home in Mexico, where my grandfather was a pastor. From that early age, my life was marked by seeing all the missionaries who came to visit my grandfather's church. Though only four years old, I remember hearing my mother pray for me. Her prayers were very specific; she asked God to give us the opportunity to come to the United States, so I could learn English and one day translate for the missionaries who visited our church. God heard her prayer.

In the fall of 2001, Rick Bowling asked my father to plant a church in Norman Park, Georgia. I said goodbye to my family and friends in Mexico to start something new. At the time, I was very excited to meet new people and learn more English. I remember when I first arrived at Cool Springs FWB Church. Everyone was nice and friendly, and I was really happy. Our church grew fast—from 80 to 300 people in only three years. I missed my family in Mexico, but I was very grateful our church members treated me like family.

After three and a half years at Roca de Salvacion Georgia, Rick Bowling called my father again and told him about the need of a Hispanic church in Effingham, South Carolina. My parents visited Lebanon FWB Church a couple of times, to see the area and visit the Hispanic population. As always, my father prayed about it, and when God answered, he told me we were moving. This was the first time I was really upset about moving. I remember being angry! I had already left my family in Mexico, and now he wanted me to leave my new family and friends. I had only begun to feel at home in Georgia.

When I told my father how I felt, he said, "When God calls, we go." I found myself in the same position I had three years earlier. I had to start over again in a new school, with new people, in a place where I did not know anyone.

God, in His mercy and grace, put me in a good Christian school with incredible people. This time, *everything* was hard, and I mean hard in the ministry and hard in school for me. We traveled back and forth every other weekend to Georgia so my dad could preach while the new pastor settled in. We drove home from Georgia late on Sunday night and arrived in South Carolina around three or four in the morning. Because I had to go to school first thing Monday morning, I was always tired in school. The ministry was also very difficult. While my parents worked hard to get people to come to our new church, at the time, the Hispanic community was very small.

During these years, I missed my family in Mexico more than any other time. My grandmother and grandfather passed away, and I was unable to see them. I have always



enjoyed being an only child, but during this time of my life, I missed my family so much that I wanted a sibling. One day, while praying, God answered and said to me, “You see all these people around you, all the people that your parents have reached; they are your family; they are your brothers and sisters.”

During this time, starting around age 16, the Lord began to open doors for me to translate on mission trips. I remembered my mother’s prayer. God never forgets, and in His right time, He always answers our prayers. I fell in love with mission trips, and I knew God was calling me into missions. I could see this was no longer about my parents’ ministry. God was giving me my own ministry.

I never felt “normal” because of my parents’ work. I have always felt people had a higher standard for me. The way people looked at me, what people expected from me—it made me feel miserable sometimes. Often, church planters’ kids have an indescribable yearning just to be normal, to belong. Now, I can tell you I am okay *not* being normal because God has blessed me incredibly. His mercy and grace have been indescribable. He continues to teach me that I belong, and I belong to Him. Just as my parents followed wherever He called them to go, it is now the same for me. When he calls, I will follow.

I am grateful for the opportunity to work for North American Ministries (NAM). I know God allows things to happen so we can grow and learn and be ready for His blessings. After I met David Crowe, director of NAM, three years ago, he gave me the opportunity to travel on different mission trips to translate for him. Not only has it been an honor to translate the words of wisdom God has given him, but also to learn from someone with a great passion for God.

It also has been an honor to be part of Rick Bowling’s life. Seeing how he serves the Lord nonstop inspires me to continue fighting for the Hispanic community. I am grateful for my parents and their example and all the wisdom God gave them to instruct me in the Lord’s path. Their prayers and their teachings have made me into the woman I am today.

So yes, the ministry life is hard, yet is 100% the best thing parents can offer their children! **ONE**

About the Writer: Mayan Bustamante, along with her parents, Fernando and Reyna, are currently serving North American Ministries in South Carolina. Mayan is the chief translation specialist for NAM.



Beyond SPRING TRAINING

BY BRAD RANSOM

Each year, Major League Baseball teams take the field during the hottest months of the year. No wonder we call them “the boys of summer.” Their athletic feats and fierce competition are so compelling that MLB has become known as “the American pastime.”

Yet, the MLB season doesn’t start when some celebrity throws out the first pitch (which rarely gets anywhere near the plate). No, major leaguers start their work long before the first game. Each year, they join their teams for spring training—long weeks of conditioning, batting practice, grass drills and fungoes, and even practice games with other teams. They give their full attention to being their best before each new season. Training does not stop just because they reach the big time.

The same should be true for pastors and churches. Training doesn’t stop when ministry begins. It should be a regular, ongoing part of every church.

For seven-plus years, North American Ministries (NAM) has developed resources and training for churches in our denomination. When Jim McComas served as director of church revitalization, he developed a great program to assess church health and work with church leadership to develop a strategy for moving the church forward.

After Jim’s ministry shifted to FWB Family Ministries, the job of helping established churches was added to my duties, along with my role as director of church planting. It is impossible to visit churches across the country like Jim did, because most of my travel time is focused on visiting church planters. However, I have a great love and passion for helping the local church grow and develop healthy structures and systems. I have been a student of church growth and revitalization for more than 20 years and have worked extensively with churches, both as a consultant and coach. The new role of church revitalization wasn’t an obligation but stems from love for our churches and excitement to help.

NAM recently focused on producing written and video resources that can provide help to any church who wants it. We have partnered with the executive office to promote ReKindle: nafwb.org/rekindle. We regularly add new resources to our growing inventory. Below are descriptions of some of the resources NAM has developed and made available to pastors and churches.

PASTOR’S BOOT CAMP TRAINING

Boot camp training is typically two days long, generally held twice per year at the national office building in Nashville, Tennessee. Space is limited, so pre-registration is required. Each participant is responsible for travel and lodging. Covered topics usually include: setting up a healthy structure for your church; values, mission, and vision; time management; discipleship; church health; and encouragement for pastors.

LIVE SEMINARS

I am happy to present seminars at your location by special arrangement. Please contact NAM for more information. Available on a very limited basis, these sessions must be scheduled well in advance. Among the sessions, we cover:

- Conflict resolution (team management)
- Creating momentum in your church
- Cultural relevance in ministry
- Dealing with various personalities
- Developing leaders
- Developing a strategy for your church
- Developing systems for your church
- Navigating the rough waters of change
- Outreach
- Reaching diverse generations
- Recruiting volunteers

- Retooling, refocusing and relaunching your church
- Spiritual gifts
- Strategy for evangelism
- Structure
- Values, mission, and vision, and why your church needs them
- Other topics as needed

FRESH WIND RESOURCES

Fresh Wind Resources is an 80-page church revitalization manual offered free to pastors and leaders. The manual outlines a process for church assessment and how to develop a plan moving forward. Thirteen online videos accompany the manual and can be used by a pastor and leadership team to walk their church through a revitalization process.

TEAM TRAINING

Team training is a four-plus hour, interactive classroom-styled training designed to help your leadership team work together more effectively. (Pre-work is required for all participants.) Sessions are held at your location (pre-arrangement required) and cover:

- Accountability
- Understanding personalities on a team
- Communicating with diverse personalities
- Adaptability
- Conflict resolution
- Perceptions in the workplace
- Overcoming dysfunction
- Other topics as needed

VIDEO TRAINING

NAM offers several seminars on video, covering topics such as understanding personalities, effective communication, adaptability, conflict resolution, and overcoming dysfunction. We can tailor training for your specific situation or team by special arrangement. Video resources are growing constantly, and we add new sessions regularly. For an up-to-date list, please contact our office.

REFRESH

The Refresh column in *ONE Magazine* addresses church health and growth topics and is designed to help leaders

address these issues. *ONE Magazine* is released bi-monthly through a free subscription. If you would like to subscribe, contact the Executive Office or access the magazine online: www.onemag.org.

REKINDLE COACH'S TRAINING

Rekindle is a church revitalization strategy led by the Free Will Baptist Executive Office. This program involves some costs; the Executive Office can provide more information and guide your church into getting started. Rekindle requires a six- to 12-month commitment and working with an assigned coach. Rekindle includes ten strategies to lead a church through renewal:

1. Renewal of the pastor and his wife
2. Renewal in prayer
3. Renewal in outreach
4. Renewal in relationships
5. Renewal in stewardship
6. Renewal of key documents
7. Renewal in discipleship
8. Renewal of organizational structure
9. Renewal in leadership development
10. Renewal through facility assessment

CONFERENCE TRAINING

NAM provides other training opportunities from time to time, such as the POWER Conference and seminars at the National Convention and annual Leadership Conference. We work hard to provide the most relevant yet tried-and-true practices that allow churches to be “who they are” within the context of their local culture. Please feel free to contact our office for more information. If we can help you or your church, please let us know. Take your church “beyond spring training” and into a new season of church health. **ONE**

**All resources are free of charge to our Free Will Baptist churches (except Rekindle). Certain training opportunities require travel and lodging, which is not provided.*

About the Writer: Brad Ransom is chief training officer and director of church planting at North American Ministries. Learn more: fwbnam.com.

Discipleship, an Interview

BY BRAD RANSOM

The following is an interview with Jeff Jones, Pastor of Hilltop FWB Church in North Carolina.

Ransom: Can you define exactly what *discipleship* means in the context of the local church?

Jones: *Discipleship* is simply following the teachings, life, and aim of another person. *Discipleship* for the local church is teaching people to become more like Christ. Every church exists to 1) see people saved; 2) see them follow the Lord in baptism; and 3) teach them how the Bible says they should live.

Ransom: How important is discipleship and why?

Jones: Sadly, I am afraid this “third part” of the Great Commission is often left out of the plan of a church. We have a step-by-step process to help someone trust Christ. Then, everyone who is saved and willing to take the next steps follows this process. First, we want them in a one-on-one discipleship program. Men are trained to work with men and women with women. We use the book *Simple: The Christian Life Doesn't Have to be Complicated* by Rob Morgan. We encourage these individuals to take the “Essentials” class which takes place during our Connection Group time (Sunday School). After they complete ten weeks in Essentials class, they meet in the pastor’s home and talk about different Connection Group classes.



The final, and most successful way, we disciple lately has been through “D-Groups.” We encourage participants to use Robby Gallaty’s book *Foundations*, with five devotions each week using the HEAR journaling method. They meet with a small group once a week to review what was studied. Discipleship at Hilltop is completely focused on getting people in God’s Word. We firmly believe His Word works! The natural result is growing relationships with mature believers.

Ransom: What process do you use to develop leaders?

Jones: When someone trusts Christ as Savior, first, we connect them to one-on-one discipleship that takes place on Wednesday nights during the midweek service. We cover important areas new Christians need to know. Second, we have a rotating “Essentials” Sunday School class that explores the fundamentals of our faith and church doctrine. The lessons include: a) knowing you are saved; b) the importance and

role of the church in a Christian’s life; c) practical Christian living; d) foundational things we believe and affirm as a member of our church; and e) practical information about what Free Will Baptists believe and general information about what believers should know about their church’s beliefs.

Ransom: What suggestions do you have for pastors developing a discipleship program?

Jones: The strongest thing I can encourage is the pastor be involved both in D-Groups and promoting from the pulpit how a new family can get connected. Nothing connects people to a church more than discipleship. I recommend producing material that answers *what happens next?* for visitors. We do this with well-designed printed information: connection cards in seat pockets and an electronic “connection” wall in our lobby. I want it easy to access, and I desire it be as impressive as possible.

It is so important to get the church on the same page. I never want our church to forget we exist to see people saved, baptized, and taught how the Bible says they should live! **ONE**

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

Introducing New Church Planters

Anchorage, AK—North American Ministries is pleased to welcome Kris and Tana Willis to the NAM team. The Willis family will serve as church planters to Anchorage, Alaska. Alaska is among the top five most unchurched states in the nation. Only 22% of the population considers themselves evangelical Christians. Clearly, the need for the gospel is great in this region.

The Willis family comes to NAM from Cramerton FWB Church (NC), and previously served at Capitol FWB Church in Sacramento, California, where Kris was the associate pastor and Tana was active in women's ministry. Kris and Tana have four children: Rebecca, Joshua, Abigail, and Daniel. For more information about the Willis family and their work or to support them financially, please visit fwbnam.com/willis.

Mariposa, CA—North American Ministries welcomes Don and



Kris & Tana Willis

Teresa Ellerd to the church planting team. In a joint project with the California State Mission Board, the Ellerds are launching a new church plant in Mariposa. Don and Teresa currently minister at LifeGate FWB Church in Turlock, California, where Don is lead pastor. Don also serves part-time as the director of The Barrier, a FWB non-profit that owns and operates Sweetwater Christian Camp in Mariposa. Don will continue to serve as director of the camp



Don & Teresa Ellerd

while they work to plant a new FWB church in the area. The Ellerds have two children and one granddaughter.

Known as the "Gateway to Yosemite," Mariposa County only has 20,000 people and yet receives over 5 million visitors each year from around the world. This gives them a unique opportunity to spread the gospel message. For more information about the Ellerd family and their work or to support them financially, visit fwbnam.com/ellerd. **ONE**

Summit Church Holds First Services

Missoula, MT—Launch Sunday at Summit Church in Missoula, Montana, was a huge success. Sixty-three people gathered for the Spirit-filled service, and three new believers were baptized. Several first-time visitors were excited to learn more about Summit Church and plan to attend again in the future. Visitors from different

traditions and faith backgrounds shared that the message encouraged them to examine their lives to see if they were truly living in relationship with Jesus.

After the service, everyone gathered for a barbecue lunch and time of fellowship. Summit Church is led by Clayton and Tammy Hampton and Josh and Kimberly Hampton. Please



continue to pray for Summit Church and the Hamptons as they build relationships in Missoula and reach their community with the gospel. **ONE**



Black Swan

✧ Preparing to Survive the Unexpected ✧

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

If 2020 revealed anything about churches and ministries, it is how thin a financial margin many have.

In 2020, Congress passed a stimulus plan that included the PPP Loans (Payroll Protection Program), which became a significant lifeline for many small businesses, churches, and ministry organizations. Some churches thrived through the challenges of 2020 and came through stronger than before. For many churches, however, this “black swan” event forced them to close or to drastically reduce their ministry during a time when the communities around them needed them most.

Much can be said about *black swan* events. A black swan refers to an unpredictable event beyond the norm, with potentially severe consequences. Usually characterized by their extreme rarity, severe impact, and widespread nature, black swan events are apparent in hindsight and often carry significant long-term effects that change the course of everyday life. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic will change the way we live forever, and in generations to come, those changes will become the normal way of life.

Because of the extreme impact of black swan events, it is better to prepare for them in advance. While a black swan event is described as unpredictable, we can take specific steps to leave us in a better position to handle the unexpected. Having little to no debt, establishing an emergency fund, being in good standing with local companies, and building strong relationships with our congregations are all keys to thriving during the

unexpected. When it comes to black swans, what you *don't* know is far more relevant than what you *do* know. The ability to fall back on healthy relationships and savings allows churches and ministries to weather unknown events together rather than in isolation.

For example, let's say a church carried \$100,000 in debt at the start of the 2020 pandemic and had little savings. As we know, the government urged (or mandated, in some locations) everyone to stay home and avoid gathering to minimize the spread of the virus. Suppose this example church had a strong relationship between its congregants before COVID-19. In that case, the church still could minister and receive financial assistance from congregants to pay the bills and the pastor. However, if congregational relationships were weak, it is likely the congregants used this opportunity to check out other churches (and virtual services allowed congregants to worship from anywhere). Because our example church had little to no savings, it proved much harder to tran-

sition to new technology that would allow them to host virtual services. The effects of the COVID-19 black swan for this congregation will be lasting, potentially devastating, and look predictable in hindsight. Sadly, far too many churches found themselves like this example church: unprepared to pivot from in-person services to virtual services quickly and efficiently to keep their congregants together and continue ministry.

Black swan events expose weaknesses, but they also present opportunities. In 2019, local mask makers had no idea that a year later, they would be called upon to help industrial mask manufacturers meet the demands of the pandemic. Yet they were prepared to step up and help through the crisis. Likewise, churches that prepared for virtual outreach and offered online services continued their worship services and outreach without missing a beat. Their advance preparation allowed their outreach to be far more significant than they ever imagined. In contrast, churches that failed to prepare for virtual wor-

ship services or had no means for online giving struggled financially during the pandemic. Some pandemic-related changes may continue. While most churches have returned to in-person meetings, online giving and virtual services will continue as well.

Who knows what the next black swan event will be—terrorist attack, financial crisis, another pandemic, changing laws, or new technology? Having the church financial strategy planned and on track will not protect us from the black swan. But planning ahead will prepare us to face it and thrive during the effects that follow. **ONE**

About the Writer: John Brummitt became director of the Board of Retirement in January 2016. He graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since spring 2006.

You have **no chance** of survival!

No one wants to talk about it, but death is an inevitable part of life. Are you ready? Those who love their families prepare for dying in a way that benefits their families and the ministries they have loved and supported. Since 2013, **Free Will Baptist Foundation** has partnered with **Cornerstone Estate Planning** to help thousands of Free Will Baptist families prepare for the future. Watch a brief video explaining how **you can have peace of mind about the future.**

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(estate planning tab)

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College Savings Options

FIND YOUR STRATEGY

BY CHRIS COMPTON

College is expensive. According to educationdata.org, the average cost of college in the United States is \$35,720 per student, per year, including tuition and additional expenses. While the price tag for private versus state university is clearly different, both cost a lot of money. Not only that, the cost of attending college continues to rise.

College is not for everyone, and not everyone is going to go. For those who are, how will they pay for it? Many parents and students go into debt to make college a reality. Student loan debt has skyrocketed to more than \$1.7 trillion for Americans over the past decade. Graduating from college with a massive student loan debt load is a difficult and discouraging way to start a career and move forward with other financial goals.

You are probably thinking there must be another option. Good news! You can get a head start for yourself or for your children (and grandchildren) by saving for college through a financial option that offers tax breaks. These tax breaks can help your money stretch. Many products in the marketplace help families save for college, and each has its own advantages and disadvantages. Two of the most popular that offer significant tax breaks include the 529 plan and a Roth IRA.

A **529 plan** is a dedicated college savings plan run by an individual state. Some are prepaid tuition plans, but most are savings plans. Here is how they work: you place after-tax dollars into a 529 plan, the money is invested, and you withdraw it tax-free (when used for educational purposes).

A 529 plan has many advantages. You are not restricted to your state's plan. You can choose from any state plan. These plans have high contribution rates, and for most of them, have no income limits. When a 529 plan is set up, a beneficiary must be named. If this beneficiary does not go to college, you can switch beneficiaries. The money invested in a 529 plan grows tax free and is tax free upon withdrawal, as long as it is used for educational purposes.

The only major disadvantage to a 529 plan? If the money is not used for educational purposes, the growth is subject to taxes and a 10% penalty.

While a **Roth IRA** is a retirement account, it also can be used as a college savings option, which offers great benefits and flexibility. Roth IRAs are similar to 529 plans in that you make after-tax contributions, and they grow tax free. Withdrawals are tax free once you reach age 59 ½ and have had the account for at least five years. Earnings are usually taxed and penalized if withdrawn prior to that age, but some special rules allow you to avoid these penalties if the money is used for college expenses. You can withdraw contributions any time without taxes or penalty if the money is used for college expenses for yourself, your spouse, your children, or your grandchildren.

Saving for college may require a combination of strategies. You may want to utilize both a 529 plan and a Roth IRA. Or you may choose to use another option altogether. The important thing is to start early and do the research to determine which option is right for you and your family. Saving wisely can give you more options and help you get ahead of ballooning college expenses.

Remember, you don't have to save for college alone! Grandparents, aunts, and uncles are often happy to contribute, and you can even let your kids pitch in. Their education will mean more to them if they help pay for it. **ONE**

About the Writer: Chris Compton is communications officer for Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. He graduated in 2007 with a M.A. in Bible exposition from Columbia International University. A 1998 graduate of East Tennessee State University, he has over 13 years of administrative/financial experience in varied fields as well as seven years of pastoral ministry experience.

Rich?

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Most Americans would not describe themselves as rich. The median (half are higher and half are lower) household income in the United States is \$68,500. A household would need to earn \$201,000 annually to reach the 90th percentile of income in the U.S. At this level of income, the individual is wealthier than 90% of the households in the U.S. The 95th percentile is reached at \$270,000; the 96th percentile at \$295,000; the 97th is at \$330,000; the 98th at \$387,500; and the 99th at \$531,500. So, most would say they are not rich.

However, if we evaluate income on a global level, we see a very different picture. A household only needs to earn \$32,750 to reach the 90th percentile worldwide. This becomes even more dramatic as household incomes increase. Household income of \$49,500 is in the 95th percentile; \$55,500 the 96th percentile; \$63,500 the 97th percentile; \$70,000 the 98th percentile; and \$99,000 the 99th percentile.

Are you rich? By global standards, even those Americans with modest incomes are, in fact, rich.

The worldwide household median income is around \$7,600 annually. Some countries fall far below the median. For instance, in Ivory Coast, the annual household income is \$1,320.

Even American households at the poverty level fall into the 79th percentile worldwide. To demonstrate worldwide conditions, consider 70% of the world's population cannot read, and this number is particularly low for women. Around 50% of the people in the world live in homes unfit for human occupation.

With this reality check in mind, how are we to manage our wealth? God's Word offers good advice. In the parable of the rich fool in Luke 12, Jesus told listeners our lives do not consist in the abundance of possessions. It is simply untrue that "whoever dies with the most toys wins." In Jesus' story, a rich man hoards his abundance of crops and goods. God declares him a fool as he dies and states the same is true for *anyone* who lays up treasure for himself on earth but is not rich toward God. In 1 Timothy 6, we find additional instructions:

we should never trust in our wealth, but rather, we should do good and be generous in what God has provided.

Rich? We each should evaluate our level of wealth on a worldwide scale. However, regardless of our income, we all should tithe. If the Lord has blessed you with wealth, then be generous toward God because He has blessed you to be a blessing to His work. **ONE**

U.S. Percentile	Income Level	Worldwide Percentile
99TH	\$531,500	
98TH	\$387,500	
97TH	\$330,000	
96TH	\$295,500	
95TH	\$270,500	
90TH	\$201,100	
65TH	\$99,000	99TH
50TH	\$70,000	98TH
47TH	\$63,500	97TH
41ST	\$55,500	96TH
36TH	\$49,500	95TH
23RD	\$32,750	90TH

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

On C. S. Lewis and Denominational Survival

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON



I recently read an address C. S. Lewis gave to a group of Anglican priests and youth leaders in 1945. It reminded me of what many in the Free Will Baptist Church have been thinking lately: doing everything we can to de-emphasize Free Will Baptist confessional beliefs and practices is probably the surest strategy for denominational extinction we could devise. After a few general observations about denominational identity and survival, this article will look more closely at what Lewis can teach us.

The First Strategy for Denominational Survival

Two strategies for denominational survival seem to be competing for prominence in the Free Will Baptist Church (as in all denominations). The first states: if we want to keep from dying, we must emulate the non-denominational, consumer-oriented megachurch. This, among other things, means de-emphasizing “strange” doctrinal beliefs and practices such as the possibility of apostasy, the washing of the saints’ feet, or requiring immersion for new members transferring from non-immersionist churches. It means not teaching distinctive Free Will Baptist doctrine from the pulpit. It requires making it as hard as possible for people to discover our congregation is Free Will Baptist, based on its publications and communications.

The Second Strategy for Denominational Survival

The second says: If we want to keep from dying, we must fulfill the Great Commission mandate of evangelizing people and teaching those we evangelize everything Jesus and His deputies, the inspired Apostles, taught. This means we must teach and preach doctrine, like the Apostles in the New Testament said to do, and we must practice New Testament teachings, even those strange to people outside our confessional tradition. This includes distinctive Free Will Baptist doctrine and practice.

If we don’t carefully instill the scriptural doctrines our confessional tradition has affirmed, and if we don’t emphasize distinctive biblical practices our tradition has extolled, and if we do our dead-level best to cover up the fact we are Free Will Baptists, within a generation we will

be assimilated into the non-denominational matrix and will go out of existence as a separate denomination.

These two strategies are mutually exclusive. If one is right, the other is dead wrong. You can't embrace a hybrid of the two.

The Last Thing We Need Is Another Denomination

Please understand. I do not think, nor did Lewis think, we need more denominations, more schism. Unless a separate Free Will Baptist denomination is necessary because of our conviction that our doctrine affirms Scripture, it would be wrong to have another denomination. It's schismatic. It's divisive. Without that conviction, we could simply join another denomination. I think Lewis, good Anglican that he was, would agree with me.

Something breaks my heart—and I think breaks the heart of God—about the wide proliferation of denominations that basically believe the same thing but are separated because of squabbles rather than the doctrine and practice the Bible entails. A denomination is not a “network.” It is a fellowship of churches that believe the affirmation of certain scriptural, apostolic doctrines and practices necessitates a separate denomination.

The last thing we need is another denomination. If other conservative Arminian Baptist denominations believe the washing of the saints' feet is a divine ordinance to be practiced liturgically, as well as the other beliefs in the *Treatise* we believe necessitate our existence—by all means, let's join up! Let's not be divided because of our preferences, or because we are used to seeing each other or golfing or eating sushi together at the National Convention each July.

If we're going to fall over ourselves to find more efficient ways to bury our Free Will Baptist identity, doctrine, and practice, why go to the trouble of having a separate denomination? Why not just join the Southern Baptists or become non-denominational?

Are “Missional” and “Confessional” in Opposition?

Many Free Will Baptists have been talking about these things of late. We're trying to figure out what it means to be who we are, with integrity, *in a mission field* in our secular age in the West. We're in a rapidly secularizing culture. We must be missional. And when new believers on the mission field are converted, they want you to level with them about what's true and what's false. They're hungry and thirsting for knowledge. They want to know what the Bible really means.

What does the Bible mean when it says you will receive the crown of life only *if you continue*? What does it mean when it says you can *fall away* and *not be renewed to repentance*? Is affusion (sprinkling) okay in baptism? Is infant baptism okay? Or, do I have to be immersed as a convert to follow Jesus in baptism? Do we need to observe the Lord's supper literally and physically, or was that just a spiritual lesson? Do we need to wash people's feet literally, physically, or was that also just a spiritual lesson?

That's why the people opposing Protestant liberalism most in mainline denominations come from the global South and the mission field. It's people in the consumeristic modern West who want to de-emphasize theological precision and biblical doctrine and practice—who seem to want to do anything but teach and preach and sing doctrine.



“...I am convinced that historic and traditional practices, and orthodox and wisdom-laden ways of believing, are what the next generation really needs.”



These conversations are happening frequently among Free Will Baptists—especially 20-somethings in the ministry. They are embracing a new mentality David Kinnaman, the president of the Barna Group, prescribes, noting, “After countless interviews and conversations, I am convinced that historic and traditional practices, and orthodox and wisdom-laden ways of believing, are what the next generation really needs.”

Now to What C. S. Lewis Said

In light of these exciting conversations taking place, especially among Free Will Baptists in their 20s, I loved what I read recently from C. S. Lewis. Again, remember he’s talking to Anglicans in England in the 1940s:

“Some of you are priests and some are leaders of youth organizations. . . And here at the outset I must deal with an unpleasant business. It seems to the layman that in the Church of England we often hear from our priests doctrine which is not Anglican Christianity. . . It is not, of course, for me to define to you what Anglican Christianity is—I am your pupil, not your teacher. But I insist that wherever you draw the lines, bounding lines must exist, beyond which your doctrine will cease either to be Anglican or to be Christian: and I suggest also that the lines come a great deal sooner than many modern priests think. I think it is your duty to fix the lines clearly in your own minds: and if you wish to go beyond them you must change your profession.

“This is your duty not specially as Christians or as priests but as honest men. . . . Men who have passed beyond these boundary lines in either direction are apt to protest that they have come by their unorthodox opinions honestly. In defence of those opinions they are prepared to suffer obloquy and to forfeit professional advancement. They thus come to feel like martyrs. But this simply misses the point which so gravely scandalizes the layman. We never doubted that the unorthodox opinions were honestly held; what we complain of is your continuing your ministry after you have come to hold them. We always knew that a man who makes his living as a

*We need to be what
the Scriptures call us
to be with integrity
and without apology.*

paid agent of the Conservative Party may honestly change his views and honestly become a Communist. What we deny is that he can honestly continue to be a Conservative agent and to receive money from one party while he supports the policy of another.

“Even when we have thus ruled out teaching which is in direct contradiction to our profession, we must define our task still further. We are to defend Christianity itself—the faith preached by the Apostles, attested by the Martyrs, embodied in the Creeds, expounded by the Fathers. . . .”¹

Lewis and Denominations

C. S. Lewis spoke here as an Anglican to Anglican clergy, and he did what he did in so many other places when he talked about *confessional* doctrine and not just “mere Christianity.” In his writings, Lewis talked about cardinal doctrines like the virgin birth, but also about lesser doctrines such as the Anglican doctrine of the real presence of Christ in the Lord’s supper. Some people read only Lewis’s wonderful book *Mere Christianity* and think that is all Lewis was interested in—a sort of amorphous, non-denominational Christianity.

But they forget the preface to *Mere Christianity*, where Lewis said “mere Christianity” is like the central hall of a great house which leads to distinctive rooms, and he did not want his appropriate discussion of mere Christianity, which unites Christians in the different distinctive “rooms”—denominations or confessional traditions—to discourage people from going into those rooms and exploring them and enjoying them.

¹ C. S. Lewis, “Christian Apologetics,” in *God in the Dock: Essays on Theology and Ethics*, ed. Walter Hooper (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970).

His silence in *Mere Christianity* about his Anglican distinctives of doctrine and practice should not be interpreted as “sitting on the fence” regarding doctrines and practices distinguishing one denomination from another, nor that he thought them unimportant:

“I hope no reader will suppose that ‘mere’ Christianity is here put forward as an alternative to the creeds of the existing communions—as if a man could adopt it in preference to Congregationalism or Greek Orthodoxy or anything else. It is more like a hall out of which doors open into several rooms. If I can bring anyone into that hall I shall have done what I attempted. But it is in the rooms, not in the hall, that there are fires and chairs and meals. The hall is a place to wait in, a place from which to try the various doors, not a place to live in. . . . When you do get into your room you will find that the long wait has done you some kind of good which you would not have had otherwise. But you must regard it as waiting, not as camping. You must keep on praying for light: and, of course, even in the hall, you must begin trying to obey the rules which are common to the whole house. And above all you must be asking which door is the true one; not which pleases you best by its paint and panelling. . . . When you have reached your own room, be kind to those who have chosen different doors and to those who are still in the hall. If they are wrong, they need your prayers the more; and if they are your enemies, then you are under orders to pray for them. That is one of the rules common to the whole house.”²

Moving from Entry-Level Christianity to Unabridged Christianity

Oh, how desperately we need this sort of time-honored wisdom in our own day of an evangelicalism unsure of itself, so intimidated by the spirit of the age. We need what we find throughout Lewis’s writings and the writings of the great saints and martyrs in the church’s past: *we need to be ourselves*.

2 C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan, 1960), 6–12.

We need to be what the Scriptures call us to be with integrity and without apology. We need to teach what the Scriptures teach, practice what Scripture enjoins us to practice. We need to zealously evangelize the lost and then just as zealously teach them to observe *everything* Jesus and His deputies, the inspired Apostles, teach and command and enjoin in the New Testament—not just the core, not just what it takes to be saved, but *everything*.

Leroy Forlines put it this way: “The part of the Great Commission that says we must teach people to observe everything Jesus teaches and commands means He won’t allow us just to teach ‘entry-level’ Christianity. His Great Commission to us demands we teach ‘unabridged Christianity.’”³

This is what has, historically, happened on the mission field. New Christians rescued from the grip of sin and its devastation and fitted for glory usually don’t want to stay at the “entry level” in the hall. They want to know more. They want honest, direct answers to questions that arise when reading the Bible.

If we believe the Free Will Baptist confession of faith and practice is biblical, we need to teach it and preach it and practice it with gusto—not be ashamed of it. This, we’ll find, is not only a good recipe for survival as a small, theologically distinctive denomination. It’s also a commonsense expression of the Great Commission—an honest, authentic attempt to teach people *everything* Jesus and His Apostles put forward for His Church. It’s this kind of full-throated, confident discipleship in Christian truth that will lead mature disciples to make other disciples of Christ and bring growth and replication and renewal to our churches in our increasingly secular age. **ONE**



About the Writer: J. Matthew Pinson has been president of Welch College since 2002. To learn more about Welch College, visit Welch.edu.

3 See Forlines’s classic essay, “A Plea for Unabridged Christianity,” *Integrity: A Journal of Christian Thought* 2 (2003), 85–102: fwbtheology.com.

Taste and See, That the Lord Is Good

Part One

BY MATTHEW MCAFFEE

PSALM 34:6-9



Psalm 34 is beautifully written. A psalm of thanksgiving, it is a splendid example of Hebrew poetry, written as an acrostic of the Hebrew alphabet. Each line begins with a successive letter of the Hebrew alphabet, beginning with א and ending with ט. It is a wonderful reminder God has not only revealed Himself to us in straightforward prose, but also in skillfully constructed poetry. The beauty of the composition is matched by its moving content, as the psalmist invites listeners in verse 3: “O magnify the LORD with me; and let us exalt his name together.”

The psalms lift our spirits to the heights in calling for songs of loudest praise, but also meet us in times of need, binding the wounds of broken hearts and crushed spirits. In his book *Out of the Depths*, Bernhard Anderson points out “these songs are sung by people who, after a time of patient waiting (see Psalm 27:13-14), have experienced the goodness of God in the everyday world.”

Over the next two Intersect columns, I will focus particularly on verses 6-9. In these verses, David reminds us the Lord is attentive to the cries of the poor and downcast. He hears them and is attentive to their needs. In our lowly estate, we

are able to experience the goodness of God. Such poverty reminds us we must fear Him and walk carefully according to His will.

The Lord helps the humble (verses 6-7). *This poor man.* The statement, “*This poor man* cried out and the LORD heard,” refers to the moment in the not too distant past when the psalmist experienced deliverance from God. He cried out to the Lord, the Lord answered him, and delivered him from his distress. We don’t know the specifics, but the psalms are often general by design. We can all identify with distresses of various kinds, and the truth of Scripture reminds us we must wait on the Lord for strength (Psalm 27:14) because He does hear us and will answer us according to His will.

The angel of the Lord. In the Old Testament, the angel of the Lord often signified the presence of God among men. As Abraham welcomed three guests into his home in a show of hospitality, one was the angel of the Lord. Two of the messengers went on to judge Sodom and Gomorrah, but the other lingered with Abraham. In the passage, Abraham interceded to the Lord on behalf of his nephew Lot. The angel of the Lord is the presence of the Lord himself! The angel

of the Lord’s encampment among His people reflects Israel’s wilderness journey to Canaan, the land of promise.

In Exodus 14, God led the Israelites through the Red Sea, as though on dry ground. Just before Moses stretched out his hand over the water to divide it, we read, “And the messenger of God going before the camp of Israel set out and went behind them, and the pillar of cloud before them set out and stood behind them” (Exodus 14:19). The context of this passage is rescue from Egyptian bondage: the messenger going before the camp of Israel to lead them out of Egypt moved behind them to form a protective barrier between them and Pharaoh’s army. Actually, this created a double barrier. The pillar of cloud remained stationed behind, while the messenger moved along behind the camp of Israel.

Again, we read in Exodus 23:20: “Behold, I am sending a messenger before you, to guard you on the way, and to bring you unto the place that I have established.” Here, the messenger is the means of leading God’s people along the way to receiving the land of promise, “the place that I have established.” In both contexts, the Lord was with His

people. Once the tabernacle was completed, we read:

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud had settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. Throughout all their journeys whenever the cloud was taken up from over the tabernacle, the sons of Israel would set out; but if the cloud was not taken up, then they did not set out until the day when it was taken up. For throughout all their journeys, the cloud of the LORD was on the tabernacle by day, and there was fire in it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel (Exodus 40:34-38).

Jesus, the Word made flesh, “tabernacled among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). And we, the church, have now become the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19; 2 Corinthians 6:16). In 2 Corinthians 6:16, Paul quoted from Exodus 29:45 to connect the tabernacling of the Holy Spirit in believers: “I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.”

The angel of the Lord encamps among His people! **ONE**

About the Columnist: Dr. Matthew McAfee is provost and professor of biblical studies at Welch College: mjmcafee@welch.edu.



Callaway to Retire

Dr. Ronald Callaway, longstanding program coordinator of Intercultural Studies at Welch College, will retire at the end of the spring semester, according to Provost Dr. Matthew McAfee. Callaway has served in the position for 18 years, starting in the fall of 2003.

Before coming to Welch, Callaway and his wife Linda served as missionaries in Spain, Panama, and Cuba with IM, Inc. During their time in Spain (1977-1995), Callaway filled the role of pastor of a church plant in Alcalá de Henares (1979-1981), worked in a church plant in Móstoles (1982-1995), and taught in the Spanish FWB Institute (1985-1995). Since 1989, he has been involved with missionary activity in Cuba, especially in the training of church leaders in the Free Will Baptist seminary Los Cedros del Líbano. He also served as a member of the FWB Bible Institute of Panama from 1997-2003, becoming its director in 2000, and has continued to teach as a visiting faculty member at the Seminario Bautista Libre de Panamá since 2005.

“Dr. Callaway came to Welch College with an impressive résumé of missionary service in Spanish-speaking contexts among Free Will Baptists,” McAfee said. “But his efforts in global evangelization did not end when he became professor of missions. He has mentored almost two decades of Free Will Baptist missionaries, both in the classroom and on the field. We are grateful for the legacy Professor Callaway established for missions at Welch College.”

Dr. Callaway, a native of Texas,

served in the U.S. Navy from 1965-1972 before coming to Welch as a student, receiving a Bachelor of Arts degree in Bible and Missions



Ron Callaway

in 1975. He went on to complete the Master of Divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1997. While a faculty member at Welch, Dr. Callaway also earned a Doctor of Ministry in Missiology from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, which he completed in 2014. The Welch Board of Trustees named him professor of Intercultural Studies when the college implemented faculty rank in 2019.

President Matt Pinson said, “Recently I overheard a Free Will Baptist national leader talking about how many young missionaries had emerged from Ronald Callaway’s mentorship. Indeed, what he has done in missions education and shaping the lives of young missionaries has been impressive. It arises from a keen mind, a humble heart, and a love for people, combined with a biblical worldview that places the Great Commission at the heart of the Church’s task. We will miss this dear friend and servant of God immensely, but his legacy among Welch graduates across the world will endure.”

The Callaways have one daughter, Rachel DeMerchant, who ministers in Canada with her husband Aaron and their three children. **ONE**

AS YOU

AT THE 2021 D6 CONFERENCE

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

“As you go...”

What picture does this familiar catch phrase bring to your mind? For me, it recalls long childhood trips from our Florida home to my grandparents’ farm in northwest Arkansas, crossing four states on worn highways and bumpy county roads. Just when I thought I could ride no further, my dad would let up on the gas and ease into a “wayside park” (think rest area without bathrooms).

After pulling up to a weathered picnic shelter, we clambered out and unloaded our big, green plastic Igloo™ cooler. I always knew I could count on bologna sandwiches (Spam on occasions) and cheese puffs, a rare treat! After lunch, Mom and Dad stretched their legs and repacked the car while I explored. I learned to anticipate these special moments “along the way” when we paused our trip as a family, and these simple lunch stops remain among my most treasured memories.

Generational discipleship works much the same way, as we pause from our daily journey through life to mark faith moments with children, grandchildren, and others we are discipling. These simple moments *as we go* become milestones they never forget.

With this in mind, attendees to the 12th D6 Conference, April 7-9, in Orlando, Florida, were challenged to make discipleship deliberate, a conscious part of everyday life. Three remarkable days featured 60 speakers and 83 breakout sessions covering every imaginable discipleship topic. Lydia Randall, conference speaker, reflected on the remarkable week: “D6 is truly a conference like no other, it is uniquely special. I have had the blessing of being part of D6 since the beginning. It has greatly impacted me in ministry and in leadership, but most importantly, it has helped me grow as a mom and wife.”

ON THE MAIN STAGE

John Trent kicked off the conference by reminding listeners it was “the Word of God flowing through the Spirit of God that made it clear in Scripture that discipleship should take place in the home.” “When we chose this year’s theme,” said Dr. Ron Hunter, director of the D6 Conference, “it was because we realized when it came to discipleship, God didn’t give us another ‘appointment on the calendar.’ He simply asked us to teach our children *as we go*. We are at this conference to learn to do this more effectively.”

Dr. Tim Elmore, Founder & CEO of Growing Leaders and author of *Generation Z: Unfiltered*, offered profound insight into the current generation that has grown up with smart phones, social media, mass shootings, and skyrocketing anxiety—topped off with a global pandemic. Based on research, he predicted Gen Z will respond with cautious behavior and distance themselves from authority figures they see as unnecessary. He challenged listeners to follow the example of the sons of Issachar in 1 Chronicles 12:32, who understood the times and knew how to respond. How do we disciple this troubled generation? Remind them God has more for them than surviving a pandemic. Believe in them, and pour ourselves into preparing them for adulthood, “building bridges of relationship that bear the weight of Truth.”

Valerie Bell, chief executive officer for AWANA, defined the difference between precaution and preparation. One guards children against perceived threats. The other equips those same children to face the danger and become resilient disciples. How do we produce resilient children? Develop the “spiritual elasticity” of a child to bend and flex but not break against the weight of the culture, understanding resilience is the muscle discipleship

GO

builds. This starts with saturating our own lives with faith so children can follow our example.

Arlene Pellicane, author and founder of Happy Home University ministers to families through speaking and writing. She offered humble (and humorous) guidance to help parents manage technology's influence on their children. She challenged them to turn digital devices into "vegetables" rather than "candy" by limiting gaming, restricting phone use, and banning devices at mealtime and from the bedroom at night. These simple steps allow parents to impress God's love on children "while they are young and in the absence of technology."

Dr. Ron Hunter, Randall House CEO, compared discipleship to visiting the Grand Canyon. Many are content to stay on the rim and gaze in awe, while only a few are willing to hike into the depths of the canyon for the full effect. To "go deeper" into discipleship, Dr. Hunter encouraged people to deploy four approaches to discipleship: D6 discipleship, church integration, discipleship milestones, and adoptive (or mentoring). These models overlap to form a comprehensive discipleship program. He urged both a plan to start the "descent" into discipleship but also to complete the journey out of the canyon. Churches must prepare parents, grandparents, and children for the "ascent," the continued moments of discipleship that happen throughout the week with intentional faith connections.

From Moses' encounter with God at the burning bush, **Ryan Frank**, CEO of KidzMatter, exhorted listeners not to become distracted or discouraged by their own inabilities and shortcomings but to find comfort and encouragement in God's simple statement: "I AM." Fear of people should not overwhelm us, because, "It's not about what you are, but about WHO is with you." God doesn't always speak when or how we expect; instead, He simply needs us to be available when He calls. Dr. Frank closed with the words of the old gospel song: "Through it all, through it all, I've learned to trust in Jesus through it all."

In a first for the D6 Main Stage, a three-person research panel explored hot topics and trends in family discipleship. **Dr. Michael Wilder**, **Dr. Shelly Melia**, and **Dr. Timothy Paul Jones**, explored the renewed emphasis on discipleship beyond the church; new appreciation, support, and training for parents and grandparents; and significant focus on reaching, discipling, and teaching teens. In addition, they discussed the church's growing focus on ministry to singles and single parents, as well as addressing the particular needs of their community context.





After describing how much the world has changed since the first D6 Conference 12 years ago, Tennessee pastor **Jay Strother**

reminded listeners it is difficult for young adults to find their way in today's culture. Further, this generation is choosing things other than church. How can we recalibrate church ministries to meet young adult needs? Strother pointed to the relationship between Paul and Timothy as an example of what young adults need: 1) spiritual mentors; 2) a spiritual root system; 3) someone to feed the fire of their spiritual gifts; and 4) opportunities to share in gospel ministry.



During the final Main Stage session, **Dr. Tim Kimmel**, founder and director of Family Matters, tackled the tough yet important topic of grace-filled marriage and sex. He acknowledged today's marriages—especially ministry marriages—are difficult. With this in mind, he reminded listeners the key to building a resilient, loving marriage requires deep commitment to maintaining a heart connection with your spouse. He (and his wife Darcy) challenged



attendees not to look at their spouses through the lens of selfishness but through the lens of God's grace, understanding intimacy within marriage provides the best "test kitchen" for this grace. A grace-filled marriage views sexual intimacy as a way to personally honor and bless one's spouse. Grace gives us the power to overcome ways

sex is often misused in marriage by keeping the focus on God rather than one another.

MORE THAN THE MAIN STAGE

Between breakout and main stage sessions, attendees had plenty of time to explore exhibits filled with discipleship resources. This year, they heard from D6 ministry partners from a "mini-stage" located within the exhibit area. In spite of masks and social distancing, 891 attendees renewed friendships, shared burdens, and rejoiced to be together.

Conference attendees enjoyed powerful worship led by the Kirby FWB Church (MI) worship team, under the direction of minister of music Don Myers, who was joined by his wife Amy and daughter Abby. Now-familiar conference emcees Tommy Swindol and Jon Forrest engaged the crowd with humor, dialogue, games, gags, giveaways, and interviews with both speakers and other ministry leaders. Floridian Scott Humston amazed and entertained the audience with a unique blend of comedy and illusion, coupled with deeper devotional thoughts.

During the final session, attendees prayed together, asking God to use the things they learned throughout the conference to make them more effective in ministry and generational discipleship *as they go*. The room buzzed as people shared their challenges and dreams for the future with one another before closing with the beautiful lyrics to "The Blessing" taken from Numbers 6:

The Lord bless you and keep you

Make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you

The Lord turn His face toward you and give you peace.

After his first D6 Conference as coordinator, new Randall House events director Derek Altom observed, "Family ministry is so important! We are blessed as a denomination to have a ministry like Randall House leading the way. I count it an honor to be part of what God is doing here. All for His glory!" **ONE**

About the Writer: Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of *ONE Magazine* and has attended every D6 Conference.

V/// CONFERENCE

JULY 18-21, 2021 MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE

RESOLVED

DANIEL **RESOLVED** THAT HE WOULD NOT
DEFILE HIMSELF... (FROM DANIEL 1:8).

SCHEDULE

SUNDAY A.M.: DAVID MIZELLE (VA)

SUNDAY P.M.: QUINN NORMAN (OK)

MONDAY P.M.: VICTORIA PAFFILE (WA)
AND TREVOR HOLDEN (TN)

TUESDAY: JON FORREST (TN)

V3 EVENT TUESDAY @ 9:00 P.M.:
JONNIE W - JOKE TELLER & MUSIC MAKER

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Renasant Convention Center (RCC) will serve as the location for all major convention events and activities. Further information regarding events will be posted at www.nafwb.org/convention as details become available. See renasantconventioncenter.com for a layout of the convention center.

SATURDAY, JULY 17

IMPACT Memphis
9:00 am
(fwbmastersmen.org for details)

Registration Open
3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
RCC Main Street Lobby

SUNDAY, JULY 18

Registration (Open Daily)
8:00 am – 7:00 pm
RCC Main Street Lobby

Sunday School*
10:00 am

Morning Worship*
11:00 am

Feet Washing
3:00 pm

Usher Orientation
5:00 pm
RCC Main Hall

Evening Worship*
7:00 pm (Communion observed in the adult worship service)

MONDAY, JULY 19

General Board Meeting
8:00 am
RCC Main Hall

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

V3 CTS Ministry Expo
8:00 am – 4:30 pm

Convention Seminars
8:00 am – 5:00 pm
RCC River Front Rooms

Exhibit Hall Open
3:00 pm – 10:00 pm
RCC Lower Level Hall

North American Ministries Appreciation Dinner
5:15 pm

Evening Worship*
7:00 pm

WNAC Laughter & Latte (Ticketed)**
8:30 pm
RCC Ballroom B

TUESDAY, JULY 20

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

V3 CTS Ministry Expo
8:00 am – 4:00 pm

Convention Seminars
8:00 am – 5:00 pm
RCC River Front Rooms

WNAC Celebration Service
10:00 am
RCC Main Hall

Exhibit Hall Open
10:00 am – 10:00 pm
RCC Lower Level Hall

Convention Business Session
1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
RCC Main Hall

Evening Worship*
7:00 pm

V3 Event: Jonnie W, Joke Teller &
Music Maker (Ticketed)**
9:00 pm
Cannon Center

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21

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

CTS Bible Finals
8:00 am

Convention Business Session
9:00 am – 4:00 pm
RCC Main Hall

GPS Experience: A Missions
Experience for All Ages
9:00 am – 11:00 am
RCC 112-114

Serve the City Blood Drive
10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Exhibit Hall Open
10:00 am – 10:00 pm
RCC Lower Level Hall

Welch College Alumni & Friends
Luncheon** (Ticketed Event)
12:00 noon
RCC Ballroom B

Evening Worship*
6:45 pm
RCC Main Hall

V3 Awards Ceremony
9:00 pm
RCC Main Hall

*Worship Locations

Adult Worship: RCC Main Hall

Preschool Worship (Age 3-5):
RCC 203-205

Kids Worship (Grades 1-3):
RCC Ballroom C

456 Worship (Grades 4-6):
RCC Ballroom A

Teen Worship (Grades 7-12):
Cannon Center

**Tickets can be purchased
through Pre-Registration.

nafwb.org/convention



Danny Conn (TN)
Sunday School



Melvin Moon (MO)
Sunday Morning



Christian Powell (NC)
Sunday Evening



Keith Burden (OK)
Monday Evening



Eddie Moody (TN)
Tuesday Evening



John Weaver (OK)
Wednesday Evening

The 85th National Convention will be held July 18-21 in Memphis, Tennessee. As the denomination reunites after a difficult pandemic year, Free Will Baptists anticipate a celebratory atmosphere. Keynote speakers **Danny Conn (TN)**, **Melvin Moon (MO)**, **Christian Powell (NC)**, **Keith Burden (OK)**, **Eddie Moody (TN)**, and **John Weaver (OK)** will explore the theme “**Overcome**” from various Scripture passages, challenging attendees to *sow seed in difficult times* (Matthew 13:1-23), *follow the Good Shepherd* (Matthew 18:10-14), *work together* (Matthew 18:15-35), *be good stewards* (Matthew 25:14-30), and *reach out to everyone* (Luke 14:15-24). In addition, seminars, workshops, and panel discussions will explore other important subjects relating to families, churches, and ministry.

Convention Director Ryan Lewis expresses his excitement about the meeting: “While things are sure to look different in Memphis, Free Will Baptists once again have an opportunity to gather and fellowship in person—something I think we may have taken for granted until it was gone.”



During Tuesday and Wednesday business sessions, delegates are expected to approve denominational budgets of nearly \$30 million. Moderator Tim York will guide delegates through the election of board members, general officers, and commission appointees. In addition, national agencies and commissions will submit annual reports.

Attendees are also encouraged to take part in **IMPACT Memphis**, a one-day evangelistic campaign of service and outreach. This year, Saturday, July 17, volunteers will participate in door-to-door outreach at Faith FWB Church, in Oakland, Tennessee, or take part in outreach and work activities at Cross Creek Church, in nearby Olive Branch, Mississippi. For details about IMPACT, or to register, visit fbmastersmen.org.

Vertical Three

While denominational business is conducted, the 53rd **Vertical Three Conference** will explore the theme “**Resolved**” based on Daniel 1:8, challenging young people to stand for the Lord in the face of an increasingly hostile culture. Between CTS Expo events, seminars, and worship services, student attendees are sure to grow as their faith is challenged at the conference. On Tuesday evening, Vertical Three will host **Jonnie W**, joke-teller and music-maker, who brings a unique

blend of music and comedy to the conference. Learn more: verticalthree.com.

Convention Music

Due to continuing COVID-19 restrictions in Memphis, the **2021 Convention Choir**, guided by the Music Commission, will add voices to each evening service virtually. Learn more at FWBworship.com.

Walking in Memphis

Memphis is not the same city Free Will Baptists visited in 2012. Downtown has been revitalized, with improved parks, walking and running trails, and the beautiful new **Renasant Convention Center**. The **National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Hotel** (where Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated) offers a powerful and thought-provoking look into the history of the Civil Rights movement (to reserve a tour, visit civilrightsmuseum.org).

With the pandemic still in mind, Memphis offers many beautiful outdoor spaces to experience. Enjoy great views of downtown and the Mighty Mississippi on the **Sky Bridge** to **Mud Island River Park**. Once on the island, wander the gardens or walk beside the busy river: mudisland.com.

According to TripAdvisor.com, the **Memphis Zoo** is king of

the jungle in the U.S. Get close to a grizzly, play in a geyser, visit a petting zoo, or hop the tram for an unforgettable view of other exotic animals. Open seven days a week, the zoo costs \$21 for adults and \$16 for children (weekdays). Tennessee residents enjoy free admission Tuesdays from 2:00 p.m. until closing. MemphisZoo.org provides more details.

Need to beat the Memphis summer heat and humidity? Your kids will enjoy a **frollic in the fountains** at Civic Center Plaza, located on Main Street, between Poplar and Adams.

Every night, enjoy the **LED light show on de Soto Bridge** from sundown until 10 p.m., at the top of each hour. (The Harahan Bridge lights up, too.) Places to watch the Mighty



The Memphis Botanic Garden welcomes everybody, including little bodies. Adult admission is \$10, \$5 for children, and free for kids under two: MemphisBotanicGarden.com.

If you still have energy, enjoy horseback riding, hiking, or paddleboating at **Shelby Farms Park** or run, walk, or ride the seven-mile trail from the farm to the heart of midtown: ShelbyFarmsPark.org.

Lights include **riverfront parks** (Tom Lee, River Garden, or Martyr's Park); **Bluffwalk pathway**; and **Fourth Bluff at Memphis Park**, located on Front Street between Court and Jefferson. **Greenbelt Park** on Mud Island also has space for parking and watching the show.

Still need more options to make the most of Memphis? Visit MemphisTravel.com to learn more about the sights, sounds, flavors, and attractions of Memphis. **We'll see you in July!**

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Curriculum Discipleship Plan

Summer 2021 Scope and Sequence



- Week 1** - God Requires Holy Living (Exodus 20)
- Week 2** - God Alone Deserves Our Worship (Exodus 32:1-35)
- Week 3** - God Is Holy (Psalm 99:1-9)
- Week 4** - God Meets With His People (Exodus 40)
- Week 5** - Faith Overcomes Trials (James 1:1-18)
- Week 6** - Faith Results In Action (James 1:19-27)
- Week 7** - Faith Chooses Godly Conduct (James 3:1—4:12)
- Week 8** - Faith Brings Deliverance (Joshua 2:1-24)
- Week 9** - God Honors Obedience (Joshua 6)
- Week 10** - God Chooses Unusual Leaders (Judges 4:1-16)
- Week 11** - God Calls Ordinary People (Judges 7:1-23)
- Week 12** - God Uses Flawed People (Judges 16:1-31)
- Week 13** - God Provides Redemption (Ruth 4)



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Grace in the Cancel Culture

BY EDDIE MOODY

"If you knew what I was really like, you would not have anything to do with me." So began a young man who had just been apprehended after trying to escape from a juvenile correctional facility. I knew him because he had been on suicide watch a few times, and I was about to find out why. He went on to describe a terrible act he had committed. He said no one knew, but the guilt was killing him—literally. As he described the act, I felt dirty, but sensed his relief at being able to tell someone.

Today, many people can relate to his predicament. In fact, you can probably think of several cases where people once viewed favorably have fallen into disfavor or have become ostracized after a misstep. Some, like the young man I spoke with that day, have committed terrible acts. Others have simply landed on the wrong side of a culture turned upside down. Somehow, someday they have found themselves canceled by the culture.

In a way, we have always had a cancel culture. Zacharias, Matthew, Mary Magdalene, the Samaritan woman at the well, the lepers, the man with the withered hand, the prostitutes, and so many more biblical characters were canceled by the culture of their day. Some because of sin, others because of the circumstances they found themselves facing. In a way, Jesus was canceled because He insisted on ministering to them (Matthew 9:10-17; Mark 2:15-22; Luke 5:29-39). What does

Jesus think about the way our culture "cancels" people today?

Sometimes, even Christians are quick to "pile on" when someone falls. You find many examples of this on social media. Unfortunately, that is not what most canceled people need. By the time they are canceled, they are quite aware of their sins (though popular culture will not refer to their misdeeds as sins). Many feel trapped with no way out. Redemption feels far away. Some do not believe they could be forgiven by anyone, let alone God. They often do not know what they need, but they need grace.

As Christians, we must look at people differently. A cursory examination of the genealogy of Jesus points to God's redemption of canceled people (e.g., Judah, Rahab, David, Bathsheba). When I read Judah's words about Joseph (Genesis 37:27-28), I want to cancel him. When I read about his actions in Genesis 38, I feel dirty. But God worked with him and turned him into a different man (Genesis 44:18-34). Sometimes we are called to be like Nathan (2 Samuel 12), confronting sin and pointing people to the way out. As a result, men and women will offer God prayers like the ones in Psalms 32 and 51. Rather than "pile on," God has called us to minister to canceled people.

How can we minister to canceled people? Years ago, a popular, successful individual was sought out by many until he fell into

disfavor. However, he committed a terrible act, something no one would accept. A few years later, the individual attended a sporting event to watch his child participate. Only a few years earlier, he would have been mobbed by requests for selfies and autographs. But after being canceled, he sat alone, surrounded by sneers. Somehow, I think Jesus would have gone over to sit beside that individual during the game, just like He made a point to visit the home of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:5, 10). He extended grace.

As I sat with the young man that day, it was my job to offer grace. He knew he could unburden himself, and I would not tell anyone unless he planned to harm himself or someone else again. On the 90-minute drive home from the correctional facility, I could not get his words out of my head: "If you knew what I was really like, you would not have anything to do with me."

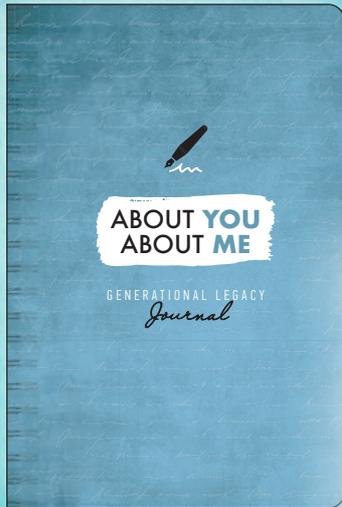
That is true of me and probably you, too. We would probably all get canceled if everyone knew what we were really like. Yet the One who knows us best gave up everything to give us grace (2 Corinthians 8:9). Let's be quick to give others God's grace. 



Eddie Moody

Executive Secretary,
National Association
of Free Will Baptists

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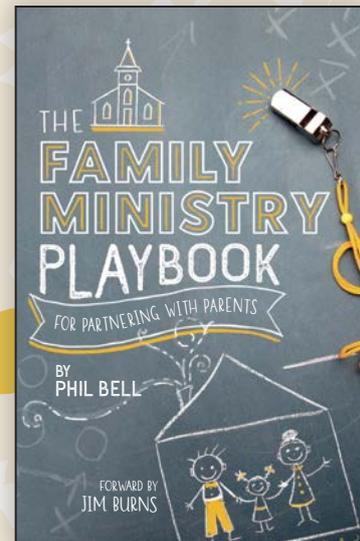
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