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ONE

MAGAZINE

A Free Will Baptist Magazine

SPECIAL REPORT:
2014 Convention

PAGE 52

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**Marriage
Mentors**

**THE FASTING
MOTHER**

**BROUGHT TO
MY KNEES**

*Just Like
Family*

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Family: *It Matters*

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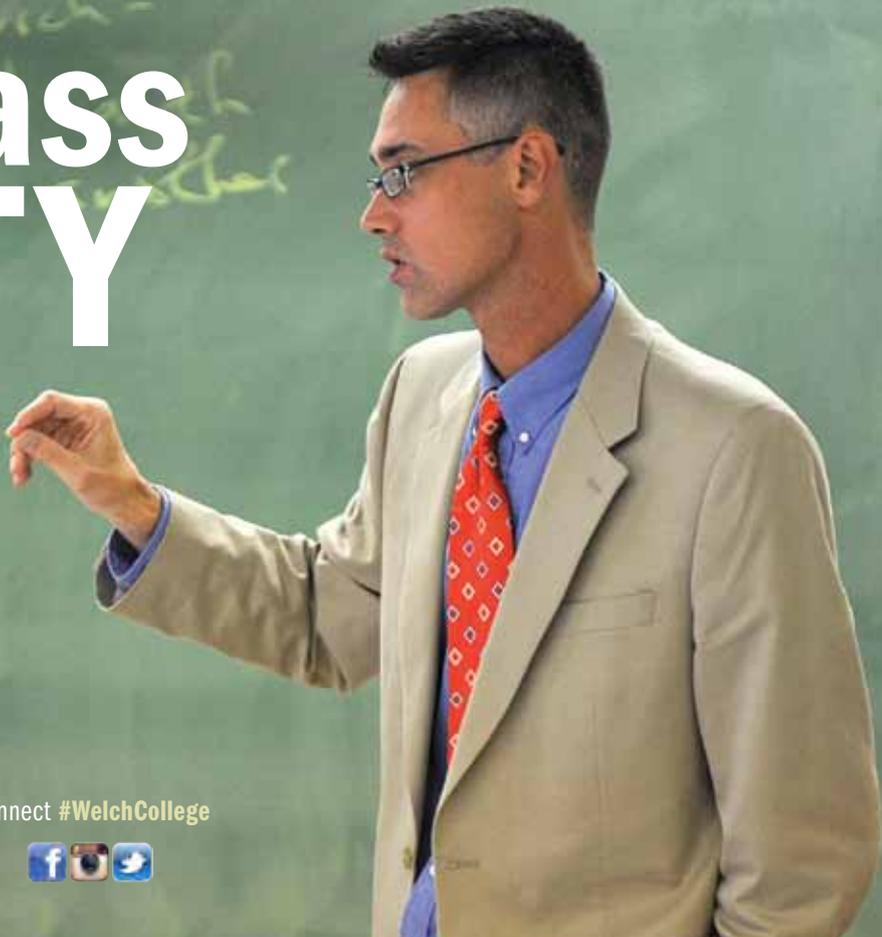


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First Glimpse >>

Up in Flames

Soft candlelight bathed the sanctuary in a gentle glow as a capacity crowd exchanged excited whispers. Smiling ushers seated grandmothers and mothers while haunting melodies swelled to a crescendo then faded into expectant silence—the moment had arrived.

“I uh, th...think this is us,” the nervous groom stuttered into the semi-darkness of the hallway where we waited.

I couldn't help but smile, remembering my own pre-wedding jitters. “I think you're right. Ready to go?”

“As ready as I'm gonna get,” he responded with a crooked grin. With that, we stepped through the doorway and walked solemnly to center stage. The wedding party made the usual grand entrance. Stunning bridesmaids, smiling groomsmen, adorable flower girls, and one nervous little ring bearer crowded the small stage—18 people in all. It was a tight squeeze.

When the back doors of the church opened, the crowd rose to its feet spontaneously, as the radiant bride walked slowly up the aisle on her father's arm. She didn't notice the crowd, the candles, even her bridesmaid friends. Her eyes fixed on the nervous young man waiting for her.

She and her father paused at the foot of the stage and looked up to where we stood waiting. It was my cue. “Dearly beloved, we are gathered here today in the sight of God and these witnesses...”

From the corner of my eyes, I saw the groom swallow...twice... and I hoped someone had told him not to lock his knees.

“...to join this man and woman in holy matrimony. Who gives this woman to this man?” After a moment of hesitation, the bride's father responded, “Her mother and I.”



The bride kissed her father on the cheek and stepped to the stage to join the groom. It quickly became apparent that her long, flowing train required more space, so I stepped back to allow the maid of honor to adjust the beautiful gown around her.

It was only a moment before I smelled smoke, and with startling clarity, I realized I had backed into the bank of candles lining the stage behind me. I was on fire!

“Let us pray,” I stammered quickly, and for the next 30 seconds or so, I offered a somewhat distracted prayer (I'm sure God understood) while simultaneously beating out the smoldering cloth on my backside. When I opened my eyes after the amen, I expected to see hundreds of horrified faces, but no one seemed to notice, not even the bride and groom. I guess no one expects the preacher to go up in flames at a wedding.

The rest of the ceremony went smoothly, and before long, the newlyweds were dashing through a cloud of bubbles toward their car while I silently thanked God that I hadn't become the next viral video on YouTube. **ONE**

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Letters:

Have something to say? Say it!

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

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

Paul Harrison's article, "Real Lives at Stake" (February-March 2014, page 6), was very powerful. I appreciate the way he shared his personal story to bring the problem of abortion to light again. I was brought to tears and vowed to pray for these innocent lives. Thanks for the reminder that each precious baby is a real life created by God! Love *ONE Magazine*! —Kim Herring, Lubbock, TX

My former graduate school has just informed me that they have been receiving a copy of ONE Magazine in my name for several years now. I assume the subscription is in my maiden name. I am no longer at that address, and I need to unsubscribe from your publication.—Charity (via email)

From the ONE Staff: Charity, thanks for the update, and you are not alone. Life happens! And, as you might imagine, with nearly 60,000 subscribers, *ONE Magazine* receives hundreds of address and subscription changes every issue. When you encounter your next major life event, simplify things by visiting www.onemag.org/subscribe.htm and using the *Update My Address* option. We certainly want you to receive your magazine!

Correction, Please! We published inaccurate author's biographical information for the article, "Education Alone Cannot Save Us," on page 25 of the June-July issue of *ONE Magazine*. The appropriate description should read:

Dr. Gregory K. Hollifield is a graduate of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, former professor at Crichton College, and member of Cross Creek FWB Church in Olive Branch, Mississippi.

A Walk Through FWB History

What do you really know about your heritage? Free Will Baptists in the South began in 1727, making this one of the oldest Baptist groups in the nation. For more than 250 years, Free Will Baptists have contributed to the moral and spiritual fiber of the nation. **Would you like to know more?**

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Marriage Mentors

By Drs.
Les & Leslie Parrott

“If you could share just one sentence of marital advice to these 200 students before you leave, what would it be?”

It’s the closing question we pose every Monday evening to a guest couple in our Marriage 101 class at Seattle Pacific University. After our lecture we always have a “real life” couple come in for a brief interview. And we end every interview with that question.

Typically, the husband and wife look at each other as if to say, “you go first.” Eventually, one of them does. Occasionally we need to remind them it’s just one sentence, but they always give our students a pearl of wisdom.

We’ve been doing this for nearly two decades, and even after 28 years of marriage ourselves, we’re as curious as the students to see what the couples say. Here’s a sample:

“If you don’t learn how to forgive you won’t learn how to stay married.”

“Marriage doesn’t make you happy; you make your marriage happy.”

“What is now will be then, only more so.”

“When you argue—and you will—make sure you know what the fight is about.”

Our students write down what our guests say, and by the end of the semester they have a treasure trove of marital wisdom. So do we. You’re never too experienced to learn from the experience of others. “When people tell me they’ve learned from experience,” says Warren Buffett, “I tell them the trick is to learn from other people’s experience.”

We couldn’t agree more...especially when it comes to marriage.

Our Story

We’d been married less than a year, total beginners, when Dennis and Lucy Guernsey, married a couple decades, invited us to their home. We’d



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recently moved from Chicago to Los Angeles to start graduate school. They must have seen the uncertainty in our eyes as we navigated the uncharted waters of a new marriage. Actually, we learned later that Dennis and Lucy mentored plenty of other new couples before we came along. And we couldn't have been more grateful. "One night I got so mad at Dennis," Lucy told us while the four of us sat in Adirondack chairs in their back yard, "that I took my wedding band off and threw it at him."

Wow! We didn't see that coming. Dennis laughed loudly as they recounted the story. "She drove off in our little Volkswagen and left me looking around to find the ring."

They told us it was their first fight, and nobody ever taught them how to fight right. Their vulnerability and authenticity, as well as their obvious love for each other, immediately drew us to them. So much so that Dennis and Lucy literally mentored us through our first ten years of marriage, until Dennis passed away at 56 of a brain tumor.

Why Marriage Mentoring?

The Guernseys gave us more than a treasure trove of marital wisdom. They gave us a vision to help other couples discover the amazing gift of marriage mentoring we'd received. In 1991, we began linking faculty and staff couples at our university with engaged or newlywed students. We began running out of mentor couples, so we started recruiting them from area churches. We wrote a little booklet called *The Marriage Mentor Manual*, and it wasn't long before we were doing training events for marriage mentoring in churches around the country. Soon, we had a video kit called *The Complete Guide to Marriage Mentoring*. Recently we launched the online *Marriage Mentoring*

Academy, making it easier than ever to be trained and certified as a marriage mentor couple (see sidebar). To date, we've trained a quarter million couples, and we're just getting started.

Why? Because marriage mentoring is the most effective means for turning around the staggering divorce rate and helping couples enjoy lifelong love to the fullest. How? By waking up the sleeping giant in the church...couples like you who have much to offer less-experienced couples. Consider these facts from a recent survey of more than 3,000 couples:

- **84% of church-going couples want a marriage mentor couple.**
- **Only 22% of couples say they have a marriage mentor couple.**

Imagine what would happen in your church if a band of couples decided to mentor other couples, whether preparing for lifelong love, repairing a love that has lost its way, or just wanting to move from good to great. Actually, we don't have to imagine because it's happening in churches across North America and couples are enjoying the positive difference it makes.

Any Age or Stage

Truth be told, every couple needs marriage mentors, a couple who knows the road and can point out the potholes and sharp turns as well as the scenic vistas and best road stops.

Meet Brandon and Stephanie. Married for five years with two young children (this is Stephanie's second marriage), they are trying to blend a family, and they're doing a decent job. But when they met Scott and Brenda, married 18 years, they realized they had a lot to learn. After all, Scott and Brenda each brought two children into their marriage. It was during a barbecue with their Sunday School class that the two couples met, and they've been meeting ever since. It started as an organic relationship, but now it's intentional. They meet routinely to talk about everything from coping with ex-spouses to disciplining the children. "Scott and

Brenda are like our travel guides," says Stephanie. "They don't tell us what to do, but when they make a suggestion we pay attention because they have the experience we don't."

Brandon and Stephanie are just starting to mentor an engaged couple who are in the same situation they were just five years ago. "We realized that we have experience that can probably benefit this new couple," Brandon says. Marriage mentoring is like that. We're usually a step ahead and a step behind other couples. So, you can be mentored and mentor at the same time, regardless of your age or stage.

The Boomerang of Blessing

When a seasoned, more experienced couple comes alongside a less experienced couple and allows them to learn from their successes as well as their challenges, the tide rises for both couples. Mentoring not only enlightens the newer couples, it rekindles intimacy for the mentors, too. We call it the "boomerang of blessing." In one of our last mentor meetings with Dennis and Lucy, before his illness took over, we told them how deeply we appreciated their investment in us. "Oh, you kids have no idea what we get out of doing this," Dennis said. "We get more out this than you'll ever know."

Maybe he's right. But one thing is certain: we'd be foolish not to learn from the experience of a wise couple. In fact, on a Monday evening, in our Marriage 101 class at the university many years ago, we interviewed Dennis and Lucy. When we posed our question about some advice in a single sentence, Dennis may have given the wisest counsel of all: "Find a relatively healthy and happy couple who will walk alongside you for a season and serve as your mentors." **ONE**

About the Writers: Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott are #1 *New York Times* best-selling authors of *Saving Your Marriage Before it Starts*, *The Good Fight*, *Love Talk*, and *The Complete Guide to Marriage Mentoring*. Learn more at www.MarriageMentoring.com.

D6 Family Launch

D6 is excited to announce the launch of D6Family.com. The new site has features that make it easier to navigate and highlights family ministry bloggers who add content weekly.



The D6 concept comes from Deuteronomy 6:5-7 which says, *“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up”* This is what D6 Family is all about: to impress God’s commandments—our faith in God—on our children. We don’t just go through our lives talking about everything but faith. Instead, we deliberately make it part of the conversation, to pass it on to our children (or the children we are around). D6 is a way of life.

Through the new site, we hope to empower parents and leaders to grow with their families in Christ. D6Family.com includes:

Resources for all ages—devotional magazines; curriculum; more about D6, the D6 family, the D6 church, and family ministry.

D6 Conference information about the annual conferences and more.

Social media—use D6Family.com as a springboard for all social media options and resources.

Free family ministry content—during D6 Days, the site offers free family ministry resources and programs for families and ministries. This is your chance to view exclusive video and audio content to encourage you as a parent or family ministry advocate. You will receive free video and audio from the D6 Conference. 

For the latest resources for your family or to equip your church to be more family focused, take time today to check out www.D6Family.com.



WHAT LURKS BEHIND THE DOOR?

BY JAIMIE LANCASTER

We have an outbuilding adjacent to our house in Uruguay. If we had the money, it is where the maid would stay. The building has a small room for a bed, a bathroom with a shower, and room for a washer and dryer. For us, it serves as a laundry room and storage.

One evening, Tammy burst into the house, short of breath, looking as if she had seen a ghost. I asked her what was wrong, and she told me a snake—or some kind of animal—had come out of the toilet tank. I went out and looked. Sure enough, I saw an opening on the top of the tank about as big as my thumb. I looked closely and hit the tank with a stick, but nothing appeared. I chalked Tammy's excitement up to her being out there without her glasses.

A week later, I opened the door and our uninvited guest was there. I could see the tip of his head sticking out of the hole. I flushed the toilet, hoping he had disappeared for good. The next night, he was back.

We took the mysterious invader's picture and tried searching the Internet, but couldn't figure out what it was. We left for a visit to the States, warning our house sitters about the monster that had invaded the laundry room. They entered cautiously for the two weeks we were gone. They saw it a couple of times, and it even growled at them.

For three weeks after we returned, we didn't see our unwanted guest. We speculated that perhaps it had just used our laundry as a place to raise other little monsters and then departed. Still, we checked the tank and made noise every time we entered, but we no longer saw the monster. Life was good...until I opened the door.

It was back! Tired of living in fear of this creature, I took a rake and ran the handle over the tank. I had a fire iron on the other hand, prepared to send this thing back to his maker. I got closer and closer and the monster didn't move. I finally touched it with the rake and...it hopped.

It was a frog! I ran back to the house and got Tammy. We confirmed the growling and hissing, evil-eyed monster was, in fact, a little frog. We had a good laugh about how much misery this frog caused others and us.

Fear is like that. We usually imagine things are worse than they are. We make our "monsters" grow until they become powerful enough to change the way we view the world. When we finally face our fears, they may not be all that pleasant (it *was* still a frog), but usually it's not as bad as we think.

Let's live fearlessly.

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love (1 John 4:18). ONE

About the Writer: Jaimie Lancaster and his wife Tammy work in Uruguay, a hard place to share the gospel and plant churches. For 17 years they have enthusiastically, creatively, and fearlessly shared the gospel. Learn more: www.fwbgo.com.

Intersect >>

Thirty-Six Years and Counting



Our first date was a simple stroll through autumn leaves, but talk about chemistry! Our backgrounds, our personalities—they all blended into an astounding experience, with sparks flying in every direction.

Those sparks soon led to an all-out fire, and Diane and I married May 19, 1978. We finished college, bought our first house, and rejoiced over two sons. After four years of campus ministry, we moved off to struggle through seven years of graduate school.

Twenty-plus years of pastoral life followed. Those years carried with them the deaths of loved ones, Diane's cancer and

chemo, and a host of challenges that inevitably come with being human. No one ever said life would be a cakewalk.

Looking back on 36 years of happiness . . . well, by and large that's true. At times, happiness wouldn't have been how we described it. Mainly, however, we have sensed God's blessings and been happy.

Why have we enjoyed decades of joy? Undoubtedly God's goodness and mercy are why. We've made plenty of mistakes and found ways to foul up when the right thing was plain enough. In spite of all our failures, the good Lord has smiled on us. As Psalm 103:10 says about God: "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."

Two broad commitments have served us well. First, we have given ourselves to God and His Church. At root, we have sought to please Him. We asked Him for direction, and, when we discerned His leading, we went that way...whatever that meant.

Commitment to Him, in turn, led to commitment to His Church. The Church is Jesus' bride, and you can't expect to please the Lord if you disrespect His spouse. So, however imperfectly, we have tried to give ourselves to the church. Though a cost is involved in this giving, it has always served us well and blessed our home.

We have also been committed to each other. Again, we've not lived this out perfectly, but at root we have worked to keep our vows, all of them. Those promises to be faithful whether rich or poor, in sickness or health, to love and to cherish each other no matter what—those are potent commitments, and if a couple can keep them in focus, they're doing pretty well.

Four rules have especially helped us in our commitment to each other. When I lost my cool and lashed out for no good reason, instead of logging it on a scorecard, Diane referred to Rule #1. It's not an easy rule, that's for sure, but in an amazing way it paints over despicable blacks in a beautiful white. I love Rule #1.

Rule #2 also helps. Sometimes silence

is truly golden. The ever-humorous Ogden Nash said:

*To keep your marriage brimming
With love in the loving cup,
Whenever you're wrong, admit it;
Whenever your right, shut up.*

Not bad advice. But sometimes you need to speak up. Some things don't respond well to silence. So when words or deeds like cactus needles stick you, and you can't just pluck them out and get on with it, say "ouch!" to your mate and refer to Rule #2.

Billy Graham never allowed himself to be alone with a woman other than his wife. Jesus taught that one must keep pure, not just his hands but also his thoughts. Looking leads to lusting, which

leads to . . . just ask King David. He'll tell you what it leads to. So, when dealing with the opposite sex, refer to Rule #3. Avoiding a stain is better than using the best cleanser.

Finally, Rule #4 keeps George, Abraham, Ben, and your marriage in proper order. If infidelity is the fast track to divorce, financial folly is the slow lane to the same destination. When watching commercials on TV or walking through the mall, tell yourself a thousand times, "I don't need that." It's the truth most of the time. You really *don't* need it. Contentment goes a long way toward giving you a good night's sleep. Husbands and wives usually thrive if Rule #4 is well observed.

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Intersect: *where the Bible meets life* is a regular column of *ONE Magazine*.

About the Author: Dr. Paul Harrison pastored Cross Timbers Free Will Baptist Church in Nashville, Tennessee, from 1991-2013. He served 17 years as adjunct professor at Welch College, teaching Church History and Greek.



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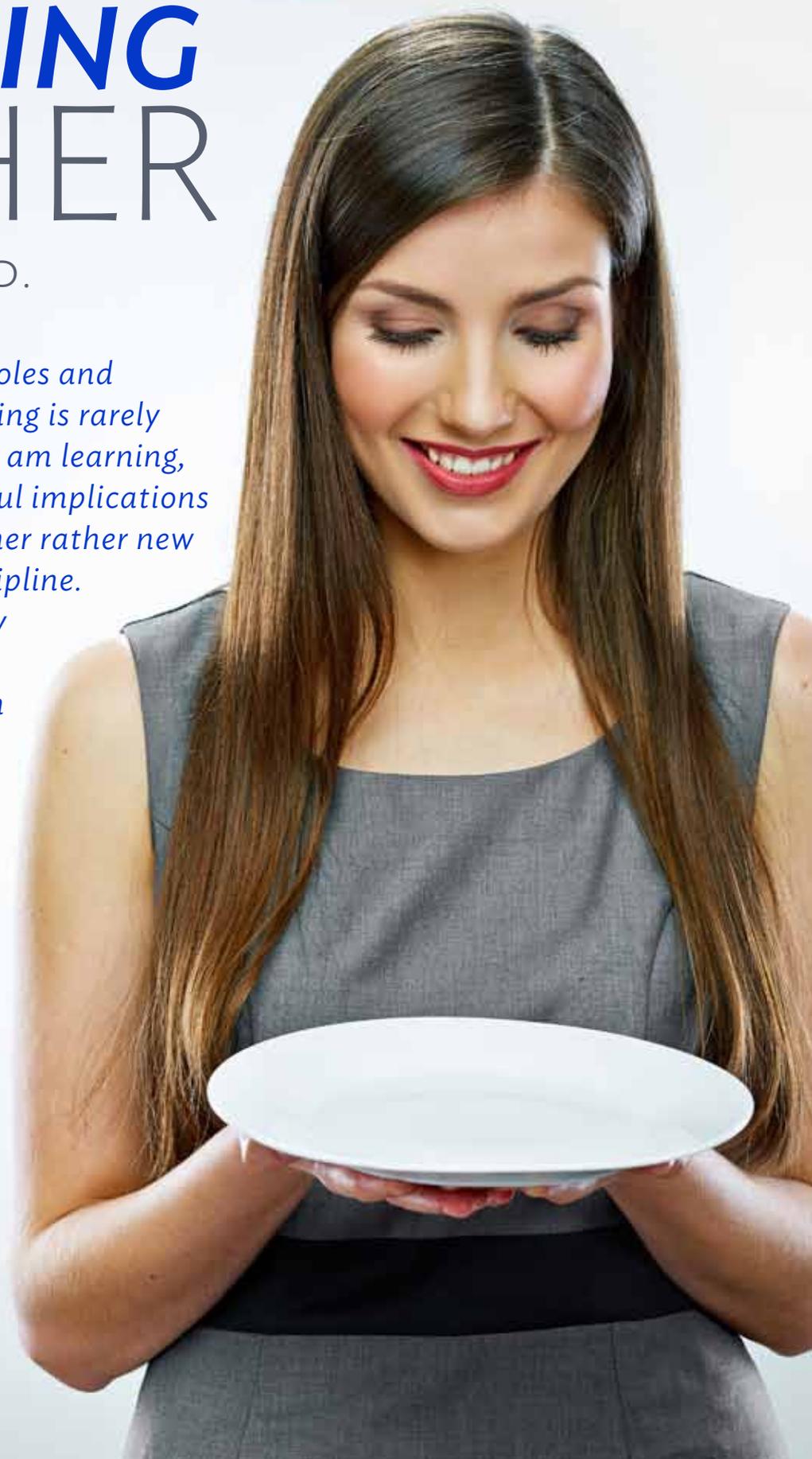
The **FASTING** MOTHER

BY RACHEL D.

When women talk about their roles and responsibilities as mothers, fasting is rarely mentioned, if even considered. I am learning, though, that fasting has powerful implications in family life. Fasting is altogether rather new to me as a regular spiritual discipline. I have only practiced it with any regularity within the past few months. But I have already seen powerful effects on my walk with Christ and on my family.

First, fasting causes me to rely on God in a whole new way. When hunger (or, more frequently, a craving) strikes, I am reminded to seek the face of God once again. Walking in the Spirit becomes a moment-by-moment reality as I turn to Him to keep me from being irritable, from complaining, or from giving in to weakness. Others have affirmed what I have experienced in my own life is true in theirs as well. When we fast, we are more in tune with the Spirit, and more inclined to hear His voice than on average days.

Second, fasting allows me more time to pray for my family. While I occasionally undertake a longer fast, mine typically covers only one meal—breakfast. Mornings are usually hectic, as we get ready for school. When I remove my need for nourishment in the morning, I am less stressed,



less hurried, and more focused on my husband and children. I have extra time to re-commit them to God, to pray over their hearts and their day, and to ask God to guide me as a mother—whether that day’s particular need is for gentleness in the face of frustrations or wisdom to deal with the challenges of training.

Now, don’t think I’m one of those people who doesn’t like breakfast. I’ve always preferred to eat as soon as my feet hit the floor in the morning. And there are still mornings when I do eat. I’m not a legalist. I just see a profound difference in our family’s day when I fast intentionally.

Third, intentionally fasting tempers my fleshly reaction when I am involuntarily left hungry, thirsty, waiting, or worse. Mothers are typically the last to eat, generally take what’s left over, and rarely get to eat a meal uninterrupted. When I am accustomed to placing myself in a state of want, I am less likely to complain or react strongly when circumstances like these are beyond my control.

Fourth, fasting has a direct impact on spiritual warfare.

If we are followers of Christ, we are automatically engaged in spiritual warfare. Jesus showed us a direct correlation between fasting and spiritual power. He fasted and prayed before His temptation in the wilderness. He explained when casting out demons, “This kind does not come out but by prayer and fasting.” If I hope to be an effective watcher in our family (Proverbs 31:27), specific, focused prayer (at times accompanied by fasting) should be a regular part of my role as a wife and mother. There is no more powerful thing I can do for my family than to pray the presence and work of the Holy Spirit into their lives. He can keep them from the evil one.

As the keeper of the home, wives and mothers have a unique position as we see and respond to the needs of our husbands and our children. When our walk with Christ is close and constant, the spiritual, physical, and emotional blessings flow out to the rest of the family. Joy, peace, and love reign in the home. And grace, mercy, and forgiveness abound when the flesh desires to get in the way. What power God gives us, if only we will avail ourselves of it. **ONE**

About the Writer: Rachel, a wife and mom of three boys, works overseas serving North African immigrants in Europe. Learn more: www.hannaproject.com.

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Free Will Baptists: Doing More Together

WHO ARE FREE WILL BAPTISTS?
Have you noticed a Free Will Baptist church in your community? Maybe you have heard of "Baptists" all

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Helping the family rise above the culture...

ELEVATE

BY DEXTER GUIN

A silhouette of two hands holding a house-shaped cutout against a sunset sky. The sun is visible through the cutout, creating a bright glow. The hands are positioned on either side of the house, with fingers pointing towards the center. The background is a sky with soft, golden clouds and a bright sun near the horizon.

Throughout the Bible, various writers describe the home and family as a precious gift from the Lord.

The Bible speaks often about both marriage and the home. In the New Testament (Ephesians 5:23-33), we learn marriage is an example of the believer's relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 127:3 says "children are an heritage of the Lord." On a number of occasions, the Bible provides clear instructions to help couples thrive in the unique relationship of marriage, with a plan for establishing a godly, successful home.

The home has been compared to Heaven, providing a small glimpse of what Heaven will be. Our homes should be the most desirable places on earth, the place where we long to be at the end of the day. Our homes should make every member of the family feel safe, secure, and loved. They should be a sanctuary from the world and the devil, a place where God is not only exalted but is also known by all and allowed to be the head of the family.

Because God places such a premium on marriage and the home, it is no surprise that no other institution on earth comes under attack more than the home. If Satan can destroy or distort the home, he will eliminate one of the greatest tools the Lord has given us in our fight against "the wiles of the devil." The Bible describes the home as a man and a woman coming

together in the sight of God in holy matrimony to raise a family that brings glory to God. It is important to understand that a couple living together without marriage is not equivalent to a biblical marriage or home. This practice should never be accepted or condoned by the church. In contrast, we should help families elevate, to rise above the attacks and distortions of the culture.

Marriage and the home are sacred institutions established by God Himself (Genesis 2:24), and must be protected at all costs. No other entity on earth can accomplish what the home can accomplish. The home provides the foundational training ground for children, the place they learn to become godly adults (Deuteronomy 11:18-22). Parents are instructed to bring their children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord (Eph-

sians 6:4). This will not happen at school (even Christian school), at sports events, or even at church (as important as it is). Biblical instruction should take place in the home.

We are losing far too many homes among Christians today. According to many studies, divorce rates are comparable inside and outside the church. What is the answer? The following sugges-

Throughout the Bible various writers describe the home and family as a precious gift from the Lord.

tions may seem elementary, but they still work.

Keep family devotional time a priority. It is crucial to bring our entire family before the Lord on a regular basis.

Your family activities should revolve around the Word of God and His Church. Nothing is more important for your family than prayer time, the Word, and being faithful to church—nothing!

Make your personal prayer and devotional time a priority. Be sure your personal walk with God is where it should be. Collective prayer and Bible reading with the family are important, but they should never replace your private personal time with the Lord.

Be a man or woman of integrity; do what is right before God and your family. If your credibility is destroyed before your family, it is very difficult to lead or influence them concerning the things of God.

Keep marital vows sacred. In a world filled with infidelity, immorality, and behavior that makes a mockery of the traditional marriage—one man and one woman for life—honor God by honoring the one you vowed to cherish. Love your spouse and be faithful “until death do you part.”

Enjoy and protect the family the Lord has given you, and count them as one of life’s greatest blessings. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dexter Guin pastors Woodmen Road Free Will Baptist Church in Colorado Springs, Colorado. Learn more: www.woodmenroadfwb.com.



Legacy for the Next Generation

After years of working feverishly to unify the efforts of Free Will Baptist women, **Mrs. Alice E. Lupton** of New Bern, North Carolina, was elected first president of the Woman’s National Auxiliary Convention in 1935. It may be her work with Free Will Baptist youth, however, that became her greatest legacy.

Working hand-in-hand with Lucy Linton, she started the “Little Workers League” for children. The organization exploded, eventually blossoming into the Free Will Baptist League, a nationwide movement of evangelism and church training for young people. Mrs. Lupton’s work continues today through the National Youth Conference and Vertical Three ministries.

Why not start your own legacy for the next generation by establishing an endowment through Free Will Baptist Foundation?

MRS. ALICE E. LUPTON
First General League Secretary

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A Family AFFAIR

By Susan Burke

One night around the dinner table, our family began reminiscing about our adventures on itinerate when preparing for the mission field. Our son Brandon, then eight, told every church that his favorite foods were ribs, steak, and chicken. He is now 13 and in middle school, and it struck us funny that he dressed in a suit every Sunday to tell people across the country what his favorite foods were.

It has been over four years since we raised enough support to move to Colorado to start Truth Free Will Baptist Church. Our children have grown and changed during those years, but one thing has not—our ministry is still a family affair. While on itinerate, our children were a big part of our services. The boys helped set up equipment, and Katie sang a solo in every service.

Four years later, the kids continue to be a big part of our ministry. They still help us set up for church every Sunday morning. Tyler is active in the music, playing the guitar and drums, and helping to lead worship for church and youth group. Brandon has a way with young children and helps in children's church when needed. Katie still loves to sing and helps us set up the children's church area. One of the biggest ways they help our ministry here is by bringing families to Truth. We came in contact with six of our church



It is encouraging to see our kids share their faith.

families through our children's schools. Of the eight baptisms we celebrated on Easter Sunday, six new believers were a direct result of contacts made by our children. Praise God!

One of our most faithful families came because their son met Tyler at school, and he began attending youth group meetings. Soon, the entire family began attending our church. Another faithful family came because Brandon and I were wearing University of North Carolina shirts at school, and it led to a conversation with a lady who is also from North Carolina. Three other families at Truth have children in Katie's class...and these are just a few examples of how our kids have helped us reach people. Even more awesome—these families have invited other families, and our church has grown

because of the simple friendships of our children.

It is encouraging to see our kids share their faith. Recently, Katie wrote and performed a song about Jesus for a school fair. Tyler gets to school early enough to pray with his friends before classes start. I have often wondered what our children would be like if we hadn't moved to Colorado to start a church.

Would they have discovered and developed their talents?

Would they see the big picture of a world without Christ?

Would they have had the impact that resulted in many people coming to Christ?

It is not always easy, and our children don't always like the fact that they have to go to church early and set up. It's been difficult to use our home five-plus times a



month for rehearsals and events and then expect them to get up the next morning for school. But, they have faithfully jumped in to help because we are in this together. It's a family affair.

My prayer is that our experience as missionaries to Castle Rock, Colorado, has set the stage for our children always to be willing to go wherever God sends them. Maybe one day there will be another generation of missionaries in our family. **ONE**

About the Writer: Susan Burke was born to missionary parents in the country of Uruguay. She spent the first 10 years of her life helping to plant churches in Uruguay and Panama. She and her husband Donnie moved to Castle Rock, Colorado, in 2010 to begin planting a new church. Visit www.homemissions.net for more information.

Evangelism in the Post-Christian West

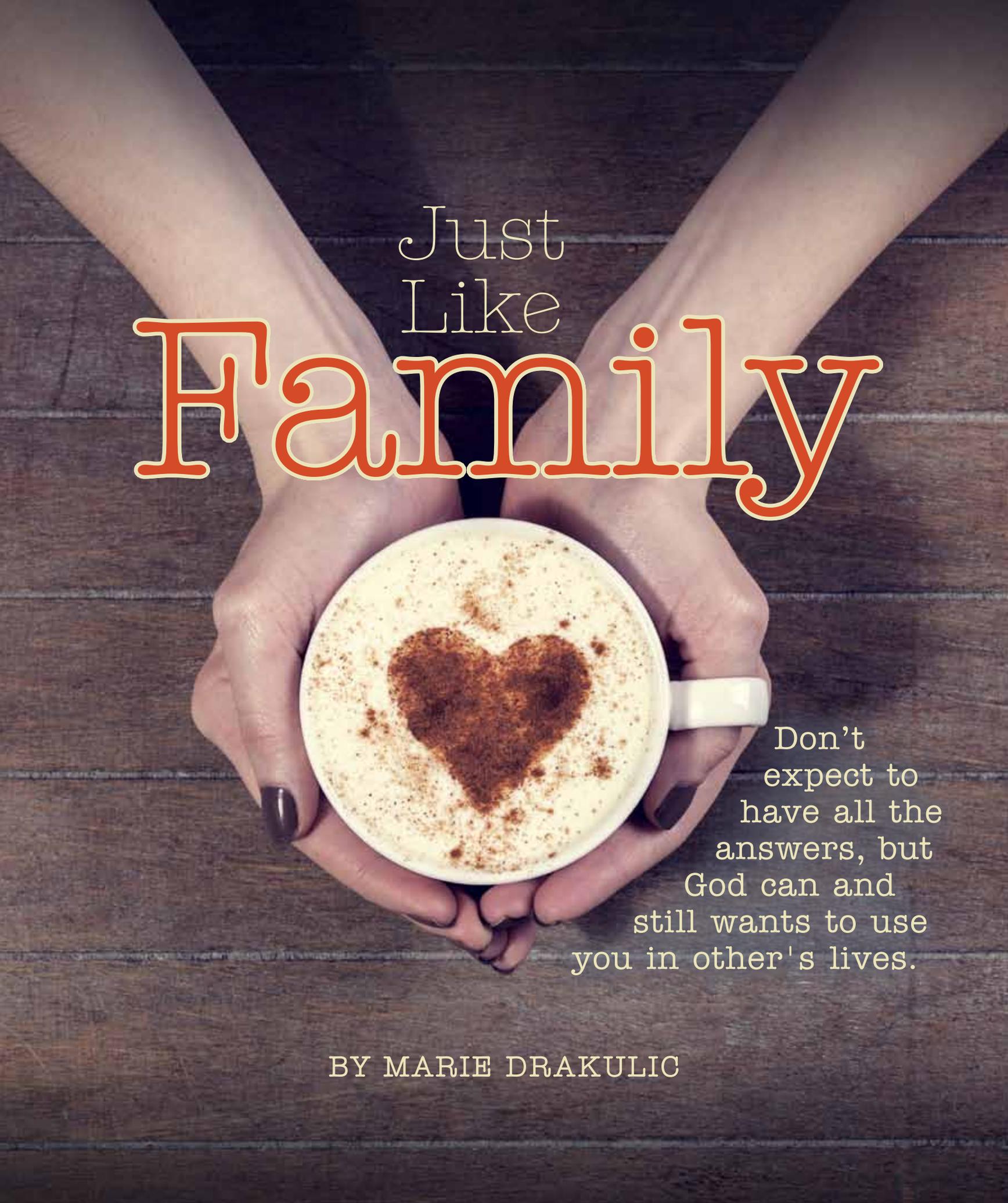
The Commission for Theological Integrity invites you to take part in the **18th annual Theological Symposium, October 27-28**, on the Campus of Welch College in Nashville, Tennessee. This year's symposium will explore "Evangelism in the Post-Christian West" and will include a panel discussion **featuring Dr. Mark Coppenger**, professor of apologetics and director of Southern Seminary's Nashville campus. Make plans to attend this important event today.



MARK COPPENGER
Featured Panelist

Contact the commission to pre-order the latest issue of **Integrity: A Journal of Christian Thought**.

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Just
Like
Family

Don't
expect to
have all the
answers, but
God can and
still wants to use
you in other's lives.

BY MARIE DRAKULIC

“And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations” (Matthew 28:18-19a)

Something miraculous happened at my house this weekend.

The “Latté Ladies,” our women's ministry, met at my house for breakfast and Bible study. You may think this sounds mundane, but that couldn't be further from the truth. You see, between bites of pancake and sips of coffee, discipleship happened.

In the little over a year since we began this Bible study, I have come to love these women just like my own family. They have been a blessing to me in so many ways—helping, praying, encouraging, laughing, relating, fellowshiping, sharing—the list goes on. Yet, possibly my favorite thing about this group of women is their willingness to be brutally honest. They aren't afraid to ask the tough questions, and they are truly seeking the answers.

I often think of Phillip when he asked the Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8:30 if he understood what he was reading. Only, I feel helpless at times to answer their questions. Sometimes, I honestly have to say, “I don't know.” They challenge me to dig deeper into God's Word and seek His face. Their burdens have become my burdens, and these wonderful women are constantly on my heart.

“Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers” (3 John 1:5).

Although the Latté Ladies aren't my children, I feel abundant joy in seeing them grow in grace. Just thinking about them and how they have grown brings a smile to my face. Nothing makes me happier than to see them experience Christ in a real and personal way. I think of the grieving mother who is just beginning to heal. I

think of one who has served in the church for many years and is now seeing Christ move in new ways in her life. I think of a hurting mother who is learning to love her kids again. And, it doesn't stop there! The light of God is shining through these women into their homes. God is using them to reach their families for His glory.

So, I rejoice in hearing that an unbelieving husband took his kids to church for the first time. I praise the Lord for the husband who has been saved and is following in believer's baptism. What amazing joy I have in seeing a stony heart softened by the gospel—the gospel being lived in her life. What a privilege to be a part of something so incredible! I am humbled to know God chose me to lead them, to disciple them.

At times, I feel inadequate. After all, I am far from perfect, and my family has its own problems. How can I possibly help another when sometimes I don't know how to help myself? I find hope and encouragement from Jesus' words in the Book of Luke, “The things which are impossible with men are possible with God” (18:27). By becoming a vessel for God to use, He can work through me to do works greater than I.

Last Saturday, that is exactly what He did. The Potter took a scarred, broken pot and used it for His glory. As I sat with tears streaming down my face, I looked around the table at each of the women in the group, and my heart was crushed with love for them. After battling my own demons and fruitlessly arguing with God, He brought me healing. We didn't end that day knowing the answers to our hardest questions, but we grew one step

closer to knowing the character of God.

As the time drew to a close that day, I challenged the ladies (myself included) to “be Jesus with skin on.” It is the same challenge I share with you through this article. Someone—or many people—you know needs to see Jesus in your life. It may be a family member, friend, neighbor, or another person in your church who is hurting and searching for answers. Don't expect to have all the answers, but God can and still wants to use you in another's life. He is calling you to surrender your will to His purposes. Sometimes, He will call you to pray at an altar with someone or share God's Word with her; other times, God calls you to serve humbly or to meet a need in their lives. When you allow Him to take the brokenness of your own life into His capable hands, He can do something far greater than you can imagine.

Discipleship is a beautiful thing. Christ set the example for us when He surrendered His rightful place on a heavenly throne and knelt before fallen creation to serve and to save. God calls each of His followers to “go and make disciples.” No one is exempt from this calling. If you have been mercifully and wonderfully saved by the grace of Jesus, then, it is your turn to serve through discipleship. God can bring a miracle to your home, too.

“Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God and went to God; he riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments, and took a towel, and girdeth himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet” (John 13:3-5a). **ONE**

MILITARY MARRIAGE

BY TERRY AUSTIN

I remember telling my wife Mona about the Lord calling me to be a military chaplain like it was yesterday. I explained that I might have to be gone at times, maybe even deploy to war. It would be a different kind of ministry, and I wasn't even sure what to expect. Well, 34 years later, with years of separation through three wars, numerous deployments and training exercises, and after moving ten times, she still tells me she loves me...and I think I know why.

When Mona and I exchanged vows on our wedding day, we both believed it was God's will. It was a mutual decision based on what we believed our Heavenly Father wanted us to do. We really didn't know what we were getting into; we just believed it was His will. We loved each other and knew He would take care of us. Our journey began by moving to Nashville, Tennessee, attending and graduating from Welch College. Three years later, with our two children, we entered the pastorate for a couple of years.



I never resisted the calling of God to be a preacher, but I have heard testimonies of men who did. I answered the call to preach when I was in the Marine Corps. For me, the call to preach meant I would be a pastor, unless, of course, God called me to be an evangelist. That's really all I knew. I had no idea how many thousands of ways I could serve God, but I did tell a few friends and the Lord that I would *never* be a military chaplain. Deep down inside, I thought it would be a great ministry, just not for me.

After the first pastorate, Mona and I traveled to 12 Free Will Baptist churches seeking God's will. Six voted for us to come join them, but we didn't believe it was God's will. The other six churches did not vote in our favor, but we believed it was God's will. During this time of our lives, we struggled to understand what God wanted us to do until I looked deep inside my heart and answered the call to serve our denomination, our country, and our Lord as an Army chaplain.

Our journey toward ministry in the military began with the overwhelming support of her family and underwhelming support from others.

Our journey toward ministry in the military began with the overwhelming support of her family and underwhelming support from others. For three years, I attended Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary during the week and came home on the weekend. The separation was especially hard with two young children, but our hearts were firmly fixed on accomplishing God's

will. Mona did her part at home with the children, and I worked hard to graduate with a Master of Divinity Degree, which would qualify me to be an Army chaplain.

We entered active duty December 1989, and I deployed to Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm within the first year. Mona took care of things at home, wrote me often, and prayed for my safe return. After seven months I returned and found a healthy, happy family and knew that our Lord had taken care of them and everything was fine. It was a simple but clear confirmation that my family, especially Mona, was as committed to military ministry as I was.

I attribute our successful military marriage to three things we have practiced through the years. **First, be committed to doing God's will.** For 34 years Mona and I have been committed to doing His will; everything else is subordinate to that, including our own plans. The opinion of others does not matter, only God. So, do as Jesus did in Luke 2:49: be about your Father's business.

Second, never put your family through great difficulty unless it is a mutual decision. I have never volunteered for an overseas or difficult assignment unless I included Mona in the decision. Our families sacrifice enough, and I did not want to be away longer than necessary. I have seen great Americans with a chest full of ribbons and awards retire from the military without their family standing by to see them. Ribbons and accomplishments mean very little without your family.

Third, always remind each other there is nothing more important than your relationship. Take time, regardless of where you are, to let your spouse know you love him or her. In today's technological world, take advantage of smart phones, email, Facebook, Facetime, Skype, and ooVoo just to say, "I love you."

I have taken two vows in my life. The first I took as a teenager when I swore to support and defend the United States of America as I entered the Marine Corps. The second came when I stood before God and vowed to love Mona Jean "until death do us part." Those two vows have complimented each other for a long time, and I do not see an end in sight for either one. Because of my commitment to Christ, I am able to love my country and my wife. Our military marriage continues to win the daily battles and wage war against the things that try to separate us. ☞



Across the Nation >>

Easter 2014 Attendance in Home Missions Churches

The Home Missions Department rejoiced with the Home Missions churches and their attendance records for Easter Sunday, 2014. Souls are being saved and lives touched for the Lord. Here are a few of the results:

Home Missionary	Attendance
Nate Altom and Tommy Jones (Greensburg, PA)	100; with 20 visitors
Donnie Burke and Mark McCraney (Castle Rock, CO)	109; 15 first-time visitors, 8 baptized
Jeff Goodman and Josh Bennett (Marana, AZ)	209; 25 first-time visitors, 12 salvations
Daryl Grimes and Darin Alvis (Erie, PA)	82; 10 first-time visitors
Dexter Guin (Colorado Springs, CO)	130; 19 visitors
Howard Gwartney (San Tan Valley, AZ)	180; 45 first-time visitors
Allen Hall (York, PA)	66; 17 first-time visitors
Jim Kilgore (Greenfield, CA)	167
Jim Martin (Rochester, NY)	56; 1 first-time visitor
Kent Nelson (St. Croix, VI)	175; 2 salvations
David Sexton and Marc Nepl (Suffolk, VA)	218; 17 first-time visitors
Tim Osborn (deceased, Oakland, TN)	102; 1 saved, 1 new member
Tim Riggs (Mobile, AL)	106; 10 first-time visitors
Scott Warren (Salt Lake City, UT)	126; 8 first-time visitors, 4 salvations
Brian Williams and Timothy York (Buffalo, NY)	67; 4 first-time visitors, 1 salvation

Clarksville Church Dedicates Building



Clarksville, TN—The 180 Free Will Baptist Church in Clarksville, Tennessee, recently dedicated a new building. The church began under the leadership of home missionary Clayton Hampton, who now pastors in Michigan. Current church planter Chad Kivette has taken the 180 Church to the next level. The people are blessed to worship in this first new building with all included facilities for every area of worship. Approximately 200 people were present for the day's dedication services and festivities. Thanks to Pastors Hampton and Kivette, for their ministry efforts in Clarksville. ■

Foundation Introduces New Staff Members

Antioch, TN—The Free Will Baptist Foundation is adding two field representatives to its staff, according to David Brown, general director. The men will act as liaisons between the Foundation, Cornerstone Estate Planning, and individuals who wish to safeguard their estates for their heirs and the ministries they love.



Todd Smith graduated from Bob Jones University with a Bachelor of Arts in Bible (1992) and a Masters in Pastoral Theology (1994). After graduating, he pastored Hillside FWB Church in Florence, South Carolina, six years before working as a home missionary church planter in Aiken, South

Carolina, for seven years. Todd served ten years as state clerk for the South Carolina State Association, and for the last eight years as executive secretary for the state. He has been a member of the General Board of the National Association and currently serves on the Executive Committee. He and his wife Teresa have three children.



Kris Wootton was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia, and studied Business Law at Kennesaw State University. He later opened an independent insurance company and a mortgage company. Kris and his wife Jenica have three children—six-year-old twins and a 14-month-old baby girl. Kris accepted

Christ at age 18, and has been an active member of his church since.

“We are pleased to add such quality individuals to our staff,” said Brown. “These men are passionate about serving the Lord through helping others.”

To learn more about the ministry of the Free Will Baptist Foundation, visit www.FWBGifts.org or call 877-336-7575.

Brown on Green >>

Risky Business

Risk is part of life. Learning to manage risk is what is important. What is the appropriate amount of risk to take in different situations? Determining the level of risk with which you are comfortable is the first step before setting up an investment account. This may sound like an easy process but it's not.

Many people believe they have a high risk tolerance, but when the market "goes south," they can't take the risk and bail out. It is easy to say you have a high risk tolerance when you have just enjoyed five straight years of good returns in the stock market. But you have a high tolerance for risk if you can handle a 20% correction (or even worse, a 38.5% downturn like those experienced during the market meltdown in 2008) without panicking.

Historically, the stock market has been positive 76% of the time, but that means it is negative one in four years. The stock market never goes straight up without occasionally experiencing a serious downward correction.

Others have too low a risk tolerance and never get comfortable in the stock market. If your risk tolerance is this low, it will be difficult to meet long-term goals because your earnings rate will always be low.

Risk should be tempered by your particular investment goals. If you are saving for a relatively short-term goal (three to five years) you shouldn't take a lot of risk. In a short-term window, you can't afford to experience a significant downturn, as it will affect your overall earnings rate severely. Someone saving for retirement at a relatively young age should be willing to take more risk. Even if they encounter

significant downturns, the overall return will be good because they have a longer time horizon.

For a long-term investment, returns will be better for those who invest in a mixture of stocks and bonds. Many studies have confirmed that staying fully invested, even during downturns, will deliver the best return over time. Jumping out of investments and "cashing out" every time the market gets volatile leads to lower returns.

Sometimes, older investors get close to retirement and believe they need to take more risk to build their account faster. It's very risky to do this, because if they experience only one bad year, they could lose money.

Generally, the shorter your time horizon, the less risk you should take. However, your own risk tolerance is important to consider as you invest as well. Consider your appetite for risk carefully before you invest. **ONE**

About the Writer:

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

The Penalty for Missing the Market

Trying to time the market can be an inexact—and costly—exercise.

**The chart illustrates a return on a lump sum of \$10,000 invested in the S&P 500 Index from January 1, 1980, to December 31, 2011.*

Period of Investment	Average Annual Total Return	Ending Value Of \$10,000 Investment
Fully Invested	11.06%	\$286,700
Missing the 5 Best Months	9.12%	\$163,290
Missing the 10 Best Months	7.49%	\$100,770
Missing the 15 Best Months	6.09%	\$66,248
Missing the 20 Best Months	4.83%	\$45,284

*Source GE Asset Management

WHAT TO DO ABOUT ROADKILL

BY BRENDA EVANS

Roadkill is about collisions.

Running into animals who wander into your path, and you can't avoid hitting them. Human animals, I mean. People you bump into or even run over and just keep going. Perhaps God put them in your way, but you don't notice that. You unexpectedly strike an object, briefly apply your brakes, then speed on.

You can't predict these collisions. You and another person arrive at the same intersection at the same time, so you bump into one another. You have three options. You can say, "Excuse me," and move on. You can avert your eyes and act as if you don't see him. Or you can recognize the collision as a God-thing, and you stop and offer help.

Earlier this month I went for a pedicure and collided with the beautiful Sela, thoroughly tattooed and all set to beautify my feet. We had more than an

hour to intersect, so while she worked her magic—massage, pumice stones, potions, and polish—we chitchatted. I found out she is 28, single, frugal, a part-time musician, Christian college alum, and cat lover. When I steered the conversation to the Lord, she was willing to talk only a bit. After the final polished stroke, she said, "You know, I've given up on me and God. Besides, my mother would die of a heart attack if I ever said I'd go to church again."

In a hurry, she stuck my feet in the dryer and left the room. Conversation over. I prayed later that our brief collision would nudge her toward the Lord. And maybe, if I schedule another pedicure, I will ask for Sela.

I say maybe because people like Sela are not always on my radar. I mean people who have either given up or been given up on. People like Mephibosheth, "a dead dog," as he called himself, despite the fact

he was the grandson of the great King Saul (2 Samuel 9). He was a crippled exile, an outcast that people didn't even bother to look at anymore—no better than roadkill. David, nevertheless, searched for him, found him in Gilead, and brought him back to Jerusalem into the royal household.

Someone said recently that the trouble with always averting our eyes and never looking at people is that if we do it often enough, we go blind and never really see anybody's needs anymore.

Blind? Is that me? I admit that I do avert my eyes. Too often, I am the priest and Levite in Jesus' parable. I walk by, leaving the wounded to the next fellow. Let *him* be the Good Samaritan. Or I don't even see the dead dogs, nobodies, and roadkill that cross my path because I don't look long and hard, or I fail to do anything when I do see them. It is easier



It is easier, in our natural squeamishness and pride and impatience, to pass by.

And when He ascended, He left the people of the earth to me...to us, to win, teach, and watch over. His Commission reminds me of my mother. Sometimes, when I was a child and we went to town, Mother asked my sister Grace to watch out for me. Four years older and wiser, Grace would latch onto my hand and not let go. She had a vice grip. She told me what to do and not do. She would not let me get lost, taken, or hurt, go hungry, or get into trouble. Grace never averted her eyes from the job Mother gave her.

I revisited Romans 12 earlier this week, and the Lord hammered me with the idea of personal responsibility and stewardship in my work for Him. The words clanged around in my head like steel mallets on a brass gong. Stop averting your eyes. Stop running over, around, and past people with needs. Get past your chronic contentment and do something. Engage in ministries of mercy.

A ministry of mercy, I have learned, is not just a feeling. It is an action. Mercy sees a need and meets it. Of course, Jesus demonstrates this in His greatest parable on mercy: The Good Samaritan, spoken directly to the lawyer who wanted to justify his failure to give of himself and his time to help his neighbor. In the end, Jesus simply says to the man, “Go and do likewise” (Luke 10:37). I wonder if the lawyer did.

I know. I know. It’s hard to “go and do likewise.” Meeting needs takes time, compassion, kindness. It takes humility and patience to stoop down, as Romans 12 says, and serve another person. It takes effort to encourage, comfort, feed, distribute, provide. It takes time to overcome evil with good.

for me to hover with the somebodies who can take care of themselves than to hang with the nobodies who can’t. Sometimes, I just want to sit and soak, to be content with myself, and look at nobody.

Maybe what I need is a jolt like James Still wrote about:

*Last night I ran a fox over.
A sudden brilliant flash of gold,
A setting sun of gilded fur
Appeared in my car’s beam,
And then the fatal thump.*

What will it take to jar me into faithful stewardship toward those I see along the way? Will it take a “fatal thump”? To Jesus, people in need were like brilliant flashes of gold in His headlights. He braked for them: the untouchable leper, the hemorrhaging woman, Jairus’ dead daughter. He held conversations with the self-satisfied. He ate with publicans, sinners, and outcasts.

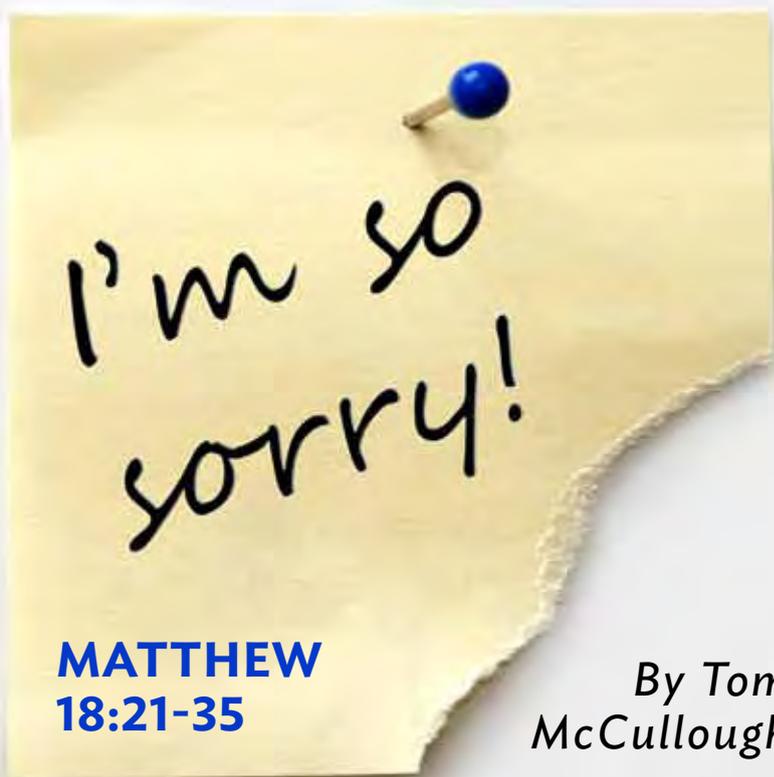
Not only does it take time and other graces, it also takes personal encounters with dead dogs, nobodies, and roadkill of various sorts. How will I know genuine needs unless I give face-to-face time to become acquainted and exercise discernment in how to best give the help needed? It is easier, in our natural squeamishness, pride, and impatience, to pass by. But I know that ministering stewards stop and sit and listen. They don’t just write checks or hand out \$20 bills. They connect, actually touch people, actually bind up wounds. They stoop down, as Jesus did, and wash feet.

Memory is sometimes a thorn, sometimes a salve. I remember when I rarely averted my eyes. The time Bill and I took in a stranger, a paroled convict, for a few weeks. The many times hungry families came to our parsonage door, and we fed them whatever we had. I remember two neglected neighbor boys who spent long hours with our sons. A lonely seminary couple 2,000 miles from home became our spiritual children for a year.

But somewhere along the way, I’ve begun to avert my eyes more and more. Sometimes, the fox in my headlights is a scraggly-haired woman at a Virginia fast-food restaurant who asks me to help her, and I say I can’t. I’m in a hurry to get where I’m going: a spiritual retreat in the mountains. Oh, my, what would Jesus have said to that? **ONE**

About the Writer: Brenda Evans is a retired English teacher. She and her husband Bill (former director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation) live in Cattlettsburg, Kentucky. They are proud grandparents of seven.

Forgiven People **FORGIVE**



On June 2, 2010, on what should have been the last play of the major league baseball game between the Detroit Tigers and the Cleveland Indians, first base umpire Jim Joyce ruined Armando Galarraga's perfect game by calling a player safe who obviously was out.

Every camera, every eye, every slow-motion replay saw the same mistake, and Joyce himself immediately knew he had made the wrong call. But in 2010, replays didn't matter in baseball, and the play stood. Joyce had to live with his mistake, and Galarraga lost the chance to join the most elite group ever to take the pitcher's mound. In the 138-year history of the major leagues—over 300,000 games—only 23 men have ever thrown a perfect game, and never more than once.

What would you do if someone made a mistake that cost you a place in history, hundreds of thousands of dollars in contracts and endorsements, and the acclaim of your peers for the next century? This would have been just another story in baseball lore if it hadn't been for the way Galarraga responded to this terrible mistake. No one would have been surprised if he had vented his rage by attacking Joyce's ability as an umpire, even his worth as a human being. Most would have reacted just that way. But something incredible happened after the ball game. Joyce said, "I'm sorry," and Galarraga simply replied, "I forgive you."

I have never been called upon to forgive to that degree, but I have been called upon to forgive a thousand other smaller offenses that caused heartache, discouragement, and pain. None were as historic as a monumental blown call, but it still has not always been easy to forgive, from a joke at my expense to an intentional slight or a violation of a trust.

Perhaps I am not the only one who has struggled to forgive. Has anyone ever asked you to forgive him, and the words caught in your throat? Or maybe you actually spoke the words, but your heart retained bitterness, animosity, and anger. Have you planned revenge or secretly prayed for God to teach the offender a lesson? If you haven't experienced this struggle, you should be nominated to the Spiritual Hall of Fame.

Jesus knows the heart of man. He knows you and He knows me, so in Matthew 18:21-35 He shared an incredible story about forgiveness, the forgiveness we receive and the forgiveness we show others. It's the story of a King who forgave much, a servant who was forgiven much, and the unforgiving spirit that ruined his life. The story reminds readers that those who have truly experienced the forgiving grace of God will also grant forgiveness to others.

The Question

The story comes on the heels of a question from the Apostle Peter, a thinly veiled attempt to promote his position among the followers of Jesus. “How often should I forgive someone—seven times?”

Everyone listening that day knew that according to rabbinic teaching, the acceptable limits of forgiveness only reached four offenses. “Offend me once; I forgive. Offend me twice; I forgive. Offend me three times; thin ice. Offend me four times; you’re done.”

By suggesting seven times, Peter thought he was being unusually magnanimous (and probably looking for a pat on the back). Imagine his chagrin when Jesus countered with a principle rather than a number. He was not suggesting we keep track and forgive 490 times. He was telling Peter, “Don’t keep track of offenses at all...just keep on forgiving.”

God’s Crazy Grace

As we read this parable, three clear pictures emerge. The first is God’s crazy grace. Jesus loved to use hyperbole in His teaching, and you will find no better example than this. The servant owed his king 10,000 talents or 200,000 years of wages for the common laborer...if he saved every penny. The sum is absurd, approximately \$10 billion today. And when Jesus used this sum in the story, He knew exactly the effect it would have. “That’s ridiculous! That’s crazy! No one could ever repay that much.”

I’m sure His listeners quickly acknowledged this King had every right to throw the man and his family into debtors’ prison. But the forgiveness of the King is equally crazy. Who in his right mind would forgive such a debt? Such forgiveness astounded Jesus’ listeners.

Jesus didn’t have to spell out whom His characters represented. It was apparent to all. The King represents the Father. Servant #1 represents the would-be fol-

lower of Jesus—Peter, you, and me. Servant #2 represents all others with whom servant #1 has relationships—the person seeking forgiveness. His message to Peter was clear, “Before we start talking about how often and to what degree you need to forgive, let’s stop and consider how much you’ve already been forgiven.”

Most times, we have an incorrect view of our sin and how much God really has to forgive. We base it upon the incorrect idea that we really aren’t as bad as other people. Sure, we may be flawed by sin, but at the core we’re really good people. We may do bad things, but we are inherently good. Nice idea, and when we compare ourselves to Saddam Hussein, Adolph Hitler, Joseph Stalin, or the freak in Cleveland who kidnapped, imprisoned and raped women...next to them we look pretty saintly, right? Wrong. The ultimate comparison is not with others. We must lift our gaze to the ultimate standard of goodness—the holy character of God.

When you do, you will reach only one conclusion: total depravity. We are completely corrupt. No part of us is untouched by sin. We speak sinful words, do sinful deeds, and think impure thoughts. We are sinful to the core. Scripture is clear that God’s verdict against the totally depraved human race is death—such a severe judgment that no one could make restitution.

But in His crazy grace, God paid the debt I owed through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross. “For our sake He (God) made Him (Jesus) to be sin who knew no sin, so that in Him (Jesus) we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). Our sin makes the servant’s debt seem like Monopoly™ money. But praise God, no debt is too big for Him to forgive!

Man’s Cruel Response

Put yourself in the place of those hearing Jesus’ story for the first time. The

servant’s next move is even crazier than the forgiveness he experienced. He turns around and brutalizes a peer, a fellow servant who owed him only three months wages. How absurd and cruel is that? Who would do such a thing? The King forgives, yet the one forgiven demands immediate restitution from others?

His cruel response underscores the difference between the size of the debts and the responses of the offended parties. Simply put: God has forgiven us a gazillion times more than He asks us to forgive others. So, if you’re wondering how much is too much to forgive, look to the Father. If you can’t overcome the degree of the offense you’ve been asked to forgive, consider how much the Father forgave you. The Apostle Paul echoed this principle to the Ephesian and Colossian churches, “And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Ephesians 4:32).

Facing the Judge

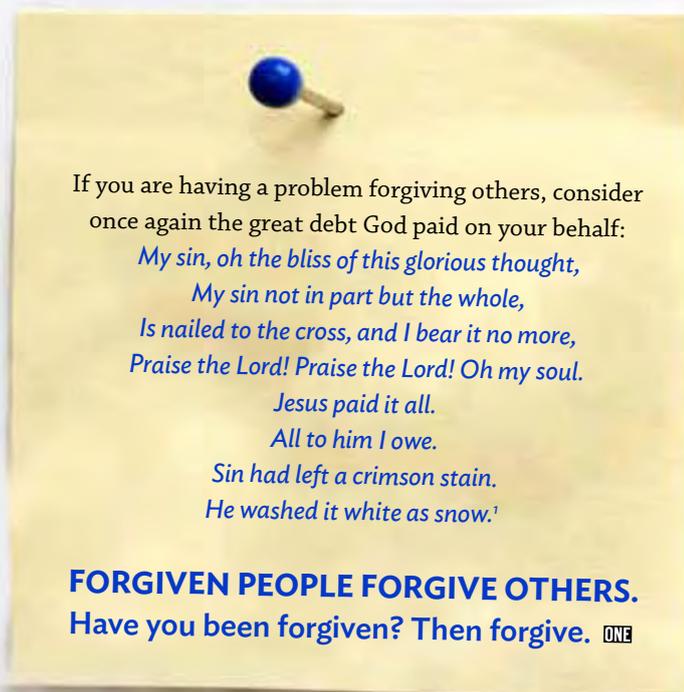
Jesus quickly painted a third picture of the fate of the unforgiving. The unforgiving servant was cast into outer darkness with no hope of reconciliation. The King who showed mercy and grace also proved capable of righteous wrath against the ungodly. Does this mean that every time we fail to forgive, God withdraws His saving grace and we run the risk of eternal punishment? That is inconsistent with the rest of Scripture.

While I do believe it is possible to walk away from the grace of God, I also believe that occasional sinful action in the life of a believer does not disqualify him from grace. So, for whom is this horrific punishment reserved? Not someone who struggles to forgive but keeps trying; not someone who knows the need to forgive, wants to forgive, but finds it very, very hard because of painful experiences and memories.

No, the king in the parable condemns the one who deliberately refuses to forgive. Someone incapable of granting forgiveness to others makes it clear that his own heart has not experienced forgiveness. If I fail to show mercy to others, two things are true: 1) God's mercy has had no saving effect on me, and 2) I will pay the consequences for my brutal treatment of others.

Forgiveness is not easy. The road toward sanctification is a long and difficult route. Forgiveness may take time. It may require the help of Christian friends and counselors. It may only be partial, but true believers will make the effort by the grace of God within them, to forgive as they have been forgiven. It is impossible to have an unforgiving spirit after truly experiencing the forgiveness of sin by a gracious God.

About the Writer: Tom McCullough spent 14 years as a missionary in France and taught six years at Welch College in Nashville, Tennessee, before returning to pastor Central Free Will Baptist Church, his home church in Royal Oak, Michigan. He is also a member of the Free Will Baptist International Missions Board.



¹ "Jesus Paid It All." lyrics by Elvina M. Hall, 1865.

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Midnight on BUTLER ROAD

BY JACK WILLIAMS



Photo caption: #20 James Rios; #24 Harold Kelly; #40 Larry Butler; #34 Mitchell Vining; #30 Mike Vining; #14 Jack Williams; #3 Raymond Mariche; #33 Henry Devoter; Coach Arlon Adams (sport coat).

LARRY BUTLER grew up on a West Carroll Parish cotton farm in northeast Louisiana. The 6'4" son of a Free Will Baptist deacon became a legendary basketball player at Forest High School and Northeast Louisiana State University, then coached basketball 36 years at Start High School in Richland Parish. "Larry the Legend" stepped into the fast lane of Louisiana basketball in the eighth grade when he started at center for both the Forest junior team and varsity. Opposing coaches faced five years with Larry as center at Forest.



“When I was growing up in Start, Louisiana, one of my greatest heroes was my basketball coach, Larry Butler. Not only was he a terrific coach, he made sure that we learned what it meant to be part of a team off the court, too.”

—Tim McGraw

I wish you could have known Larry Butler. He was more than a tall farm boy. He was intelligent, widely read, courteous, hard working, thoughtful, and a great teammate. Larry lived on the west end of Louisiana Parish Road 364, later named Butler Road. I grew up on another cotton farm on the east end of that same road. We rode the same school bus 11 years, which means it was unusual for the two of us to not see each other every day.

When Larry began playing, men’s basketball at Forest was mediocre at best. Two things changed that. Arlon Adams was hired as coach, and Larry Butler discovered a love for basketball. Arlon and Larry soon became lifelong friends. Arlon knew how to coach and how to communicate with farm boys. During Larry’s last four years as center at Forest, the team’s record was 26-14 (freshman year), 36-3 (sophomore year), 37-2 (junior year), 35-5 (senior year). He was named to numerous all-tournament teams, as well as All-State. Larry was difficult to guard. An excellent ball handler, he played defense with the tenacity of a Navy SEAL, could run four quarters without stopping, and rebounded tirelessly. Plus, he had a “secret weapon,” an almost unstoppable fade-a-way jump shot Coach Adams taught him.

He evaded clingy, man-to-man defenses, clearing the way for teammates to drive for uncontested layups. He infiltrated zone defenses with ease and scored with his patented fade-a-way jumper. He shot free throws well and consistently hit shots from 25 feet when needed. Larry was a player destined for more than

high school hoops, and when he enrolled at Northeast College in Monroe, the entire Gulf States Conference soon understood why the lanky deacon’s son was constantly featured in local newspaper articles.

Band of Brothers

One element that made the Forest Bulldogs different during Larry’s years as center was the unusual composition of the squad, which included four sets of brothers: the Butler brothers, Larry and Robert; the Kelly brothers, Glen and Harold, both of whom were also All-State players; the Vining brothers, Mitchell and Mike; the Willams brothers, Jerry and Jack. The team almost had a fifth set of brothers, the Rios brothers, James and Raymond. James Rios was the fastest player in the state, with lightning quick hands. One of the Vining brothers, Mike, was later named to the Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame.

Larry Butler impacted many people during his years as a player and coach, one of whom was a young basketball player at Start High School who was struggling with his identity. His name was Tim McGraw, and he later became a world-famous country music singer.

McGraw said, “When I was growing up in Start, Louisiana, one of my greatest heroes was my basketball coach, Larry Butler. Not only was he a terrific coach, he made sure that we learned what it meant to be part of a team off the court, too. When it flooded—

which it did every year—Coach Butler would load up his players in the back of his truck and take us to the local cotton gin where there was a huge pile of sand. We would fill sand bags, load them in the truck, and bring them to people’s yards and anywhere else they might be needed. It was Coach Butler’s way of teaching us how to give back to our community, a premise that is central to The Neighbor’s Keeper Fund.”

The fund is a charitable organization Faith and Tim McGraw founded in 2004 to help people in need and to encourage the spirit of neighbors helping neighbors. To further demonstrate his love and respect for Coach Butler, McGraw also established the Larry Butler Memorial Scholarship at the University of Louisiana at Monroe. The scholarship is for men’s basketball.

Midnight on Butler Road

During basketball season, each week began for the players with a three-hour practice Monday night. We would run 40 laps on the gymnasium bleachers, followed by push-ups, position shooting, and wind sprints. Larry often ran beside me. His shoes were ragged from hard use. The pace never slowed. Game nights were typically Tuesday and Thursday, and weekend tournaments usually included three or more games. When the team played “away” games, we usually rode in cars or on a school bus, arriving back at Forest between nine and eleven o’clock.

Since few of us had vehicles, we’d walk five miles home—in the dark, on dirt or gravel roads until midnight. If it rained, we walked wet. If temperatures dropped, we walked cold. The four of us (Larry and Robert Butler, my brother Jerry and I) logged many miles walking home after games. Dogs growled and barked at us; vehicles passed with a honk or wave while we walked home as quickly as possible. Midnight on Butler Road was lonely, dark, and sometimes scary.

Teen Pastor

I became a Christian at age 16 and was called to preach eight months later. I well remember the first Sunday School class I attended at Sardis Free Will Baptist Church on the west end of Butler Road. The teacher wore blue jeans, ragged tennis shoes, and a sweatshirt. He was also my friend. He pulled a folded quarterly from his back pocket and talked for an hour. Larry Butler kept my attention that day. He was a good teacher—well prepared, interesting, and practical.

The Sardis Church voted me in as pastor in 1959. I was 17 and

a high school senior. I was an awful pastor, but the congregation loved me anyway. One Sunday morning when I gave the invitation at the close of my sermon, Robert Butler came to the altar and was saved. He was my first convert and eventually became a preacher also.

When church leadership suggested that I begin visiting in the community and invite people to church, I was terrified. But Larry Butler volunteered to accompany me on the door-knocking adventure. We walked from house to house knocking on doors, making friends with neighborhood dogs, and inviting folks to church. Since I had a stuttering problem, I had to repeat myself often, but Larry never wavered. He kept the dogs at bay and introduced me as his pastor. I was embarrassed for him. That was the day I knew I loved that tall deacon’s son. When the door-knocking vigil finally ended, I walked home, turned on the radio, and listened to the Grand Ole Opry on WSM, a longtime family tradition...and worked on the Sunday morning sermon.

Different Paths

My time with Larry Butler ended sooner than I expected or wanted. After I finished high school in 1960, I moved to south Arkansas and worked as a lumber grader in an oak flooring mill, then relocated to Nashville to attend Welch College. The last time I saw Larry play basketball was in the fall of 1960, his senior year. He and his Forest teammates won that one also. Our paths drifted apart as ministry responsibilities took me to California until 1977 before returning to Tennessee.

Larry was also busy as a coach and educator for 36 years. His Start High School teams were incredibly successful, earning him a career record of 546-235. He also taught history and served as principal, until his influence came to a sudden and tragic end.

He suffered a heart attack during a basketball game in Cleveland, Mississippi, on January 18, 2002, and died at a hospital later that day. He was 58. His brother Robert officiated the funeral. Two of the pallbearers were former teammates at Forest—Harold Kelly and Mike Vining.

It’s midnight again on Butler Road. Oh, how I wish I could walk that dusty road with the tall deacon’s son and watch him shoot the fade-a-way jump shot one more time. But it is not to be, because Larry Butler has answered a higher call. He finished his course; his tennis shoes are no longer ragged. The boy from the Louisiana cotton field continues to cast a long shadow and impact people for good. Just ask Tim McGraw. **ONE**

Around the World >>

Encouraging, Historic Annual Board Meeting

Antioch, TN—The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions met April 28-30, 2014. Monday, the board divided into two committees: the candidate committee interviewed two people, and the finance committee reviewed the proposed budget. The full board convened for some reports then adjourned early to share dinner with the Home Missions directors and board members. Tuesday, the board and directors met all day, then adjourned for supper. The board concluded receiving reports Wednesday morning, acted on proposals, and concluded before noon.

Board members voted to partner with the Home Missions Board for the purpose of cross-cultural ministry projects in North America. “I’ve looked forward to a partnership like this for a long time,” stated General Director Clint Morgan. “I am excited about the possibilities that exist as Home Missions and International Missions work more closely to reach the vast international population in the United States.”

Steve and Lori Torrison were assigned to Uruguay. The Torrison were appointed to Panama in 2004 and served two terms in the country. The transition to Panamanian leadership, however, prompted them to investigate missions service in another Spanish-speaking country. A visit to Uruguay led them to request a transfer of service to this hard place in much need of continued missionary involvement.

The board gave a partnership blessing to Tony and Dana Sebastian as they prepare to serve in Asia with a partner organization.

The position of Educational Specialist for Latin America was approved. The position is designed to assist the Mission in maintaining partnerships in Hispanic countries, particularly where we no longer have resident missionaries. In light of the new partnership with Home Missions, the position will also help us connect with growing Hispanic ministries in the United States.

Lazaro Riesgo and Dr. Ariadna Iglesias were approved as short-term interns, filling the new position of Educational Specialist for Latin America. Originally from Cuba, the couple serves at the Chame Seminary in Panama. An article in the October-November issue of *ONE Magazine* will introduce them.

The board voted to amend the current policy concerning keeping missionaries stateside when liquid assets are less than 10% of the operational budget. As long as missionaries have secured the funds they must raise during their stateside assignment, the assignment will not be extended more than three months beyond the original assignment time. However, when liquid assets are less than 10%, the Mission will keep approximately 30% of the missionary force for stateside fundraising ministry.

An unqualified approval of the audit was received from Blankenship CPA Group. The board approved a \$6.7 million framework budget for 2015 to be presented at the July 2014 meeting of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. The operational budget for 2015 will be approved at the December 2014 board meeting.

Board members Danny Williams (AL), Jeff Manning (NC), Mark Price (OH), Nelson Henderson (AR), Rob Morgan (TN), Greg McAllister (CA), Tom McCullough (MI), and Janice Banks (OK) were in attendance. Brad Ransom reluctantly announced his intention to resign from the IM Board, citing his inability to fulfill his heavy travel schedule and responsibilities as Home Missions’ director of church planting and maintain the type of focused involvement he deemed appropriate as a board member. ■

Willie Gage Welcomed Home



Antioch, TN—Former missionary to Côte d’Ivoire Willie R. Gage entered Heaven on Tuesday, May 27, 2014. Her husband Howard preceded the 93-year-old in death in 2005.

Willie was 45 when she and Howard applied for missionary service in 1966. When completing a standard questionnaire for the Mission, she responded to a query concerning how long she had considered missionary service by saying, “For many years I have taught others we could not truly pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth laborers if we would not be willing to go ourselves.” She was willing.

The Gages served two years building furniture, outbuildings, missionary housing, churches, and the hospital at Doropo. After a year stateside, missionaries requested they return to Ivory Coast for more building projects, and the couple gladly resumed their ministry, serving until 1973.

Mrs. Gage’s funeral was Friday, May 30, at Greenbrier Free Will Baptist Church in Adair, Oklahoma, and officiated by missionary Robert Bryan. Mrs. Gage leaves behind two daughters (Ruth Bivens and Sue Wilcox) and one son (W.H. Gage) and their families. ■

Nova América Church Building Project

Campinas, Brazil—Several years ago, churches in Indiana raised money to buy property for the Nova América mission church. It took some time for the church to locate property with a clear title, but they eventually purchased property with two small rental houses.

About the same time, a church member who had been preparing for missionary service was commissioned. She spent two years in an internship in South Africa and currently resides in Turkey, where she is learning the language. Nova América used the income from the rental houses to help support this missionary.

This year, the church decided to build. They tore down one of the rental houses, leaving one to provide Sunday School rooms and a kitchen. They began building with funds raised through a number of projects. The men of the church go to the construction site after work and on weekends, completing the construction themselves. Women of the church prepare meals at the construction site for the workers, make pizzas to sell, and collect and sell discarded electronic equipment for recycling. They purchase building supplies with the money.

The congregation held their first service in the unfinished building July 10. Even without a roof and flooring, the worship was enthusiastic and heartfelt. “It is amazing to see the hard work this group of 40 people is putting into this project,” says Kenneth Eagleton, missionary to Brazil. ■

Bulgaria Churches Enjoy Retreat

Bulgaria—No exact word for *retreat*—a time of relaxation and fellowship—exists in Bulgarian, according to missionary Tim Awtrey, “but we went on a retreat anyway.” The two Free Will Baptist churches in Bulgaria met for a nationwide church retreat in May. It was the first time the two churches have come together for a national conference.



In July 2013, Trif and Vanya Trifonov began a church in the city of Varna. “They have done an amazing job reaching the people of Varna,” Awtrey said. “Having a time to fellowship with other brothers and sisters is especially important for us in a country where evangelical Christians make up less than a half percent of the population.”

Members of the International Missions team gathered before the retreat to work on officially registering the Free Will Baptist church work in Bulgaria. They hope to have the churches in Bulgaria officially recognized by the Bulgarian government by the end of 2014.

“In the past,” Tim wrote, “the Ministry of Religious Affairs has been known for hostility towards Protestant churches, and we need their approval for registration. Keep us in your prayers.” ■



Brazil—Pastor Rui Magno Xavier reports two people were baptized at the Jardim Palmeiras FWB Church in Uberlândia, Brazil, on May 18.



Panama—Two people were baptized Sunday, May 18, by pastor Cirilo Mendoza at the FWB Church in Chitré, Panama.



Spain—The Alpedrete congregation participated in a one-day church retreat Saturday, May 31. Games, a picnic lunch, and song time provided plenty of time for fellowship.



Panama—Rolando and Keila Delgado received visas from the U.S. Consulate on May 28 and flew to Miami, Florida, on June 9. After several weeks in Miami, visiting family and acclimating to the U.S., they traveled to Arkansas where they plan to serve the Hispanic population. ■

Learning to follow
the Holy Spirit's leading...

FLEXible



BY
ALICE F. SMITH

After completing my first term of missionary service at Doropo, Côte d'Ivoire, and finishing a year of stateside assignment (called furlough back then), I was ready to begin my second term in 1982. Arilla Wode and I had been asked to join Norman and Bessie Richards in a church-planting effort in Agnibilekrou.

During that first year, I enjoyed visiting and getting acquainted with each of the families in the small congregation. Though I loved each family, I was especially fond of Christophe and Yiri Palenfo, a young Lobi couple. Christophe worked at the local sawmill, and Yiri enjoyed being a housewife and mother to their two children, a little girl named Clémence and a baby boy named Marcellin. In later years, two more boys—Raymond and Michael—were added to the family.

One morning I was busy taking care of household duties, hoping to find time to work on correspondence before lunch. I also needed to review my lesson for an afternoon ladies' Bible study. Around mid-morning however, I began to feel impressed to go see Yiri—that she needed for me to come. I tried to ignore this, telling myself I had too much to do. I'd wait to see Yiri at the afternoon Bible study. Still, the feeling persisted, getting stronger by the minute. So, I put everything aside, locked the doors, and went to my car. During the five-minute trip to Yiri's house, I reminded myself of the important lesson already learned at Doropo: missionaries must be flexible with daily programs and schedules.

When I arrived near the Palenfo house, I parked the car and began the five-minute walk down the dirt path leading to their house. Yiri had evidently been watching for me and began running toward me. She was crying and said, "Oh Alice, I'm so glad you've come. I've been asking the Lord to send you! Marcellin is so sick; he's having convulsions, and I don't have a way to get him to the hospital."

We ran to the house. Marcellin was burning up with fever. I instructed Yiri to put a wet towel on him to help cool his body. Then we grabbed up Marcellin and little Clémence, and raced to the car. We arrived at the hospital just when the convulsions began again. Thanks to my white skin, we were admitted quickly, and Marcellin began to receive an intravenous treatment for malaria immediately. We prayed and, thanks to the good Lord, Marcellin's little body responded to the medications. He was released from the hospital the following morning.

In the months to come, it became evident the extremely high

fever caused no brain damage. Sadly, both Christophe and Yiri died at a young age in 1996: Christophe from a stroke and Yiri from a "gynecological disorder." If only they could see Marcellin today, I'm sure they would be proud of him. He is a handsome young man, gifted in music, and doing well in his pursuit of a higher education.

I can look back over the many years I've known the Lord and be thankful for the beautiful—though sometimes strange—pathway along which the sweet Holy Spirit of God has directed my steps.

Marcellin could have died before reaching his first birthday celebration. It happens every day in Africa, especially to little ones whose temperatures get so high that convulsions begin. Thankfully, Marcellin's mother had become a Christian and knew how to pray. She asked the Lord to send help and, though it took awhile for me to listen, the Holy Spirit convinced His missionary servant to go and help. Believe me, since that day, this is one missionary lady who doesn't tarry when impressed by the Holy Spirit to say or do something!

How wonderful is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. I'm thankful He bears witness with my spirit, and I am God's child (Romans 8:16). He also convicts me of sin, enabled me to understand, believe, and receive Christ as my personal Savior. He comforts and encourages me; He indwells me; He empowers me to witness; He helps me understand God's Word. He prompts me to worship God; and, as He did that day at Agnibilekrou, He guides me. I can look back over the many years I've known the Lord and be thankful for the beautiful—though sometimes strange—pathway along which the sweet Holy Spirit of God has directed my steps. 

About the Writer: Alice Smith served in Côte d'Ivoire for more than 30 years. She saw the difficult, hard-packed ground become a ripe harvest field. Alice resigned in 2011 to care for her ill mother in West Virginia. Mrs. Smith has joined her Savior, and Alice actively promotes missions in her home state. Visit www.fwbgo.com.

Sports injuries point a Welch College graduate to God's will.

Brought to My Knees

BY JAKE MANNING

“You tore your ACL.” Four words an athlete never wants to hear. As a high school senior, I dreamed of leading my team to a basketball state championship. The dream shattered, however, when I landed awkwardly after a layup during the first game of the season. Two days later, I got the news I had torn my ACL. I spent my senior year on the bench keeping stats. Four years later, as a college senior, it happened again.

Senior Again, Same Injury

I played basketball three years for the Welch College Flames. Coming into my senior season, I had high expectations. Once again, I dreamed of leading my team to a regional championship.

During a casual pickup game, I stole the ball and cut down the lane. Before I got the shot up, I

pain before. Two days later, I sat in the doctor's office with my coach and found myself reliving a nightmare.

“I'm sorry,” said the doctor, “but you have torn your ACL. I assume you will want to have surgery?” And then the painful reminder, “Standard ACL rehab takes seven to nine months.”

I sat in stunned disbelief. This was my year. All summer I had prepared tirelessly for my last season of basketball. And in one moment, all the hard work had been washed down the drain. I fought back tears.

When I tore my right ACL in high school, it happened for a reason. God was trying to get my attention. I was putting many things before my relationship with God—relationships, popularity, especially sports. Tearing my ACL was a wake-up call. Looking back, it was the best thing that could have happened to me.

What about this time? After I returned from the doctor's office, I lay down in my dorm room, hoping to wake up and discover it had just been a bad dream.

What are you trying to teach me, God? Why am I going through this again?

Lessons From Job

I turned to the Bible for answers. If anyone had the right to question God it was Job. He was a wealthy man with a beautiful family. Then, in a short period of time, Job lost his money, his family, his house, and his health. His own wife told him to curse God and die. His friends determined he needed to repent of sin that must have caused his tragedies. Through it all, Job declared himself

collapsed to the ground in agony, once again holding my left knee. Not again. Please, not again, I thought to myself.

My teammates immediately ran to me. “Jake, what's wrong? Are you okay?”

“Just pray,” I told them. “Just pray.”

My teammates circled around and prayed that my knee would be okay, but I had felt this

innocent, and he claimed integrity. Again and again he called on God to make Himself known.

When God came to him, He asked Job to consider the beauty, wonder, and order of creation—the seas and oceans, the sun, life and death, the rain, the seasons, the clouds, the animals. Then, in chapter 40, God told him, “Job, you cannot make any of these things. I have creative power. I have sustaining power. I have absolute power, and you want to question me? Can you do what I have done? Can you manage what I have created? Can you contend with the Almighty?”

Surrender to God’s Will

What was Job’s response? He covered his mouth in a gesture of submission. Job didn’t know why he was going through hardships (and he was never told), but he knew the One who did know—the One who holds the whole world in His hands.

As I read Job’s story, I realized I didn’t need to know the answers to my questions. I simply needed to follow Job’s example and trust God’s sovereignty. Like Job, I needed to submit and surrender my life to His will. So that’s what I did.

Was it hard going to practices and sitting on the sideline feeling like I was no help at all? Yes. Did I want to be out there on the court fighting to win with my teammates? Yes. But, was I at peace with the situation? Yes. I knew God had a plan.

Fast-forward Three Months

I went to the doctor for my normal check-up. On the previous visit, the doctor told me that my knee was still abnormally swollen. Consequently, he told me I had to stay off of it for three days and keep it elevated, or my knee would have to be drained.

I followed the doctor’s orders and took it easy, but my knee remained swollen. In my mind, I expected at least a two-week

setback in my recovery. The doctor came in to look at my knee. Go ahead. Just drain it, I thought. Get that mammoth needle out!

“Well, Jake,” the surgeon said, “Your knee is looking great! I know we originally were shooting for a seven-month recovery time, but you’re way ahead of schedule. In fact, there is a slight possibility that I may release you in six weeks.”

My mouth dropped.

“You weren’t expecting to play ball this year were you?”

“I didn’t think that was an option”

“Well, it would be an incredible recovery if I released you in six weeks, but...”

“But there is a chance?”

“With the way your knee is looking so far...yes, there is a slight chance.”

That’s all I had to hear. I had a chance to come back and play ball. And my next appointment happened to be three days before Senior Night. I went to the gym after leaving the doctor’s office, sat on the floor, and began praying.

Lord, it’s in Your hands. I want to play so bad. However, if You don’t want me to, then I am okay with that. But if You do clear me, I will give You all the glory. I promise to let it be known that only by Your grace am I able to come back.

Six weeks passed, and the day finally came. “Jake,” the doctor said, “your knee looks great. There’s no need for you to come back. I know it has only been four and a half months, but I am going to go ahead and release you. You have made an excellent recovery. Do you have any questions?”

Somehow, I maintained my composure. “I do have a question, sir. How do you feel about me playing this Friday for Senior Night?” I knew what he was going to say.

“I know you would love to play,” the doctor said sympathetically, “but it’s going to be really hard to go from 0 to 60 in

just three days. The chances of you getting hurt again are high. If it were three weeks from now, I might say yes, but it’s just too big a risk for me to tell you to play. However, it’s ultimately up to you. You know your knee better than I do.”

I thought to myself, I may know my knee better than you, but I also know that God has just given me the okay to play ball.

I left the doctor’s office with a huge smile on my face. When I got to my car, I sat in the parking garage praying. “God, You are so good. Thank you for giving me another chance.”

I’d love to say I scored 40 points and hit a buzzer beater to win the game that Friday night...but I didn’t. I was out of shape, my shot was off, and we lost. But I played. I got to be out there with my team. I got to start on Senior Night.

God’s Explanation and Your Choice

I’m still not completely sure why I tore my ACL. Maybe God wanted me to realize once again that my relationship with Him was far more important than basketball or anything else. Maybe it was for the very thing I am doing now, telling this story so He may be glorified. Maybe you needed to read my story because you are also going through some kind of trial and asking God “why?”

I may not understand, but I do know this: we serve the God who holds the world in His hands. He had my torn ACL in His hands, and He holds your problem as well.

The choice is yours. Today, in the midst of your trial, you can either turn away from God or you can turn to Him. Perhaps you need to stop asking God “why?” and start asking “what?” God might be trying to tell or show you something.

As Laura Story said in her song: “What if trials of this life are Your mercies in disguise?” **ONE**

At Welch College >>

College Graduates 34 During Commencement Exercises

Welch College conferred degrees on 34 students from 10 states and two other countries in commencement exercises at Memorial Auditorium, Friday, May 9, according to President Matt Pinson. Students completed degrees in multiple programs ranging from two-year associate's degrees to four-year bachelor's degrees. Thirty-five percent of the class graduated with honors.

Dr. David Dockery, president of Union University and president-elect of Trinity International University, compared the list of graduates to the list of names in Paul's closing in his epistle to the Romans. He challenged the graduates to stand firm, not grow weary in doing good, and to stay true to the things learned during their time at Welch. He advocated following in the footsteps of those listed by Paul who were willing to risk everything for the cause of Christ and who found their identity in Him.

Tim Campbell, executive director for Arkansas Free Will Baptists, delivered the Thursday evening baccalaureate message from James 4:13-17, imploring graduates to surrender their dreams and aspirations to the will of God as an act of sacrificial worship to Him. He reminded graduates that while we dream and plan, "our ambitions must be rooted in God's will." He concluded by telling the story of Dr. LaVerne and Mrs. Lorene Miley, encouraging graduates to emulate their willingness to be used by God to make an immeasurable difference in the lives of so many.

Theology Program Coordinator and Campus Pastor Matthew McAfee was named Academic Advisor of the Year. President Pinson recognized Ron Callaway, Dr. Kevin Hester, Dr. James Stevens, Brenda Spruill, Wayne Spruill, and Ernie Thompson for 10 years of service to Welch College. Terry Forrest was presented with a plaque recognizing 23 years of service.

The college commends to you, and the work of the Lord, the members of the 2014 graduating class.

2014 Graduates with Majors and Honors

ASSOCIATE OF SCIENCE DEGREES

Jacy Summer Congleton
Clayton, NC
Business

Priscilla Colleen Kacha Good
Nashville, TN
Business

Kimberly Gail Hagood+
Whitesburg, TN
Business

Nathaniel Matthew Hagood+
Whitesburg, TN
Business

Samuel R. Hersey+
Atlanta, GA
Business

Stacey Lee Kelley
Marietta, GA
Business

Chris Allen Pate
LaVergne, TN
Business

Johanna Grace Riggs+
Nantes, France
Nursing

Candice Dawn Curtis Smith
Fielding, New Brunswick, Canada
Business

Frances Angela Williams
Nashville, TN
Business

Derek Lynn Wilson
Sparta, TN
Ministry

ASSOCIATE OF ARTS DEGREE
Nathan Ray Colvin
Dickson, TN

BACHELOR OF SCIENCE DEGREES

Jamie Elizabeth Beckermann
Barnhart, MO
Business Administration

Victoria Elizabeth Bell*
Lexington, NC
Exercise Science

John Preston Cloninger
Hendersonville, TN
Business Administration

Daniel Lee Coker*
Iuka, MS
History
Licensure 7-12

Taylor Jean Coker*
Chapmansboro, TN
Business Administration

Quentin Michael Dickerson
Nashville, TN
General Christian Ministries

Phillip Andrew Easley
Kansas City, MO
General Christian Ministries

Haylee Lanise Hubbard
Hot Springs, AR
Psychology

Timothy Jack Hutchinson*
Riverview, MI
Youth Ministry

Autumn Jade Monroe
Norman, OK
Psychology

Edith Barrett Perry***
Ashland City, TN
Business Administration

Kayla Marie Sample***
Sesser, IL
Child Development and Learning
Licensure K-6

Hope Nicole Sisk
Nashville, TN
Early Childhood Education
Licensure PreK-3

Jared Andrew Wall
Knightdale, NC
Youth Ministry

Emily Elizabeth Whitworth**
Pleasant View, TN
Business Administration

BACHELOR OF ARTS DEGREES

Bethany Mae Douglas***
Fredericktown, MO
English

Kenneth Robert Engel*
Jacksonville, FL
Pastoral Ministry

Anthony Ryan Horton
Joelton, TN
English

Jacob Alton Manning***
Greenville, NC
Pastoral Ministry

Josue Israel Suarez**
Hialeah, FL
Pastoral Ministry

Samantha Jean Williams***
Springfield, AR
English

BACHELOR OF MUSIC EDUCATION DEGREE

Robert Andrew Blake Cyrus
Nashville, TN
Music Education
Licensure K-12

*** Suma Cum Laude

** Magna Cum Laude

* Cum Laude

+ Not Present



Simpson to Coach Flames Golf Team

Barry Simpson was recently named the Head Golf Coach for Welch College. After three years without a program, Simpson accepted the challenge to bring varsity golf back to Welch College.

He has hit the ground running, having met with current student-athletes who plan to play golf and has been on the recruiting trail as well, working hard to put together a solid team for the fall.

“This definitely wasn’t something I had thought about doing,” said Simpson. “But, when Gary (Turner) presented the idea, I was intrigued with the opportunity. I am really looking forward to the fall.”

“When we lost Coach (Sam) Horne after just one season, I was disappointed, to say the least,” said Gary Turner, WC Athletic Director. “I wanted someone who knows golf and understands Welch College. Barry will bring stability to our golf program and take it in the right direction. I am excited for what he is going to do for Welch College.”

Simpson was born in Kansas City, Kansas, and raised in Shawnee, Kansas, a suburb of Kansas City. After graduating from Shawnee Mission Northwest High School in 1977, he served four years active duty in the United States Marine Corps. He attended Welch College from 1981-1986, graduating magna cum laude with a B.A. in Pastoral Administration. He served on the pastoral staff of New Hope Free Will Baptist Church in Joelton, Tennessee, for 22 years (1984-2006), 16 as Senior Pastor. He served as director of development for four years (2007-2010) at Free Will Baptist International Missions in Nashville, Tennessee.

Currently, Simpson resides in Joelton, Tennessee, with his wife of 31 years, Jena Carrington Simpson and serves as senior pastor at Heads Free Will Baptist Church in Cedar Hill, Tennessee.

The Simpsons have two sons and two grandchildren.

Christa Hill Joins Welch Library Staff



Christa Hill, a 2011 summa cum laude Welch College graduate, will join the Welch Library staff as Library Manager this summer. Since graduating, Christa has worked at her high school alma mater, Wise County Christian School in Wise, Virginia, teaching 6th-12th grade English. She has been an integral part of campus life there, coaching volleyball and creative writing contests and even serving as mascot for the basketball teams. She has also been an active member of Central Free Will Baptist Church in Norton, Virginia, where her father, Rev. Gary Hill, pastors.

Christa worked in Welch Library for three years as a capable and dependable student clerk while completing her B.A. in English. As part of the library staff, she will now assume responsibilities for managing circulation, periodicals, student workers, and the library website. She will also provide reference support for the evening shifts in the library and hopes to soon enroll in graduate classes toward an MLS degree.

“We are delighted to have a person of exemplary Christian character, academic excellence, and loyalty to Welch College as part of our staff here,” commented Librarian Carol Reid.

President Matt Pinson said, “I’m pleased to welcome Miss Hill to this position. She combines sterling intellectual skills with a heart for God, and she has a deep appreciation for the mission and vision of Welch College.”

Christa said, “I am immensely thankful for the time I spent at Welch College as an undergraduate, and I hope, as Library Manager, to impact the lives of students just as my professors, mentors, and bosses impacted me when I was a student.”

LIFE HAPPENS, WHETHER WE ARE READY FOR IT OR NOT.

Most of us will have six or seven life-changing events during our lifetime. We see some of them coming, make the proper adjustments, and everything goes along without much headache (marriage, children, and retirement plans).

Other events surprise—even shock—us and we have to react in a short time frame (job loss, disability, health problems, death of a spouse or child, or forced retirement). No one knows what the future will hold for us or our family. So, what do you do if your plans don't go according to plan?

1. EVALUATE THE DAMAGE.

Often, when the worst happens, we simply react without thinking the situation through. You lose your job, and you

immediately draw out retirement funds to pay your bills. Making impulsive decisions is a mistake. Take a step back and look at the situation from a long-term viewpoint.

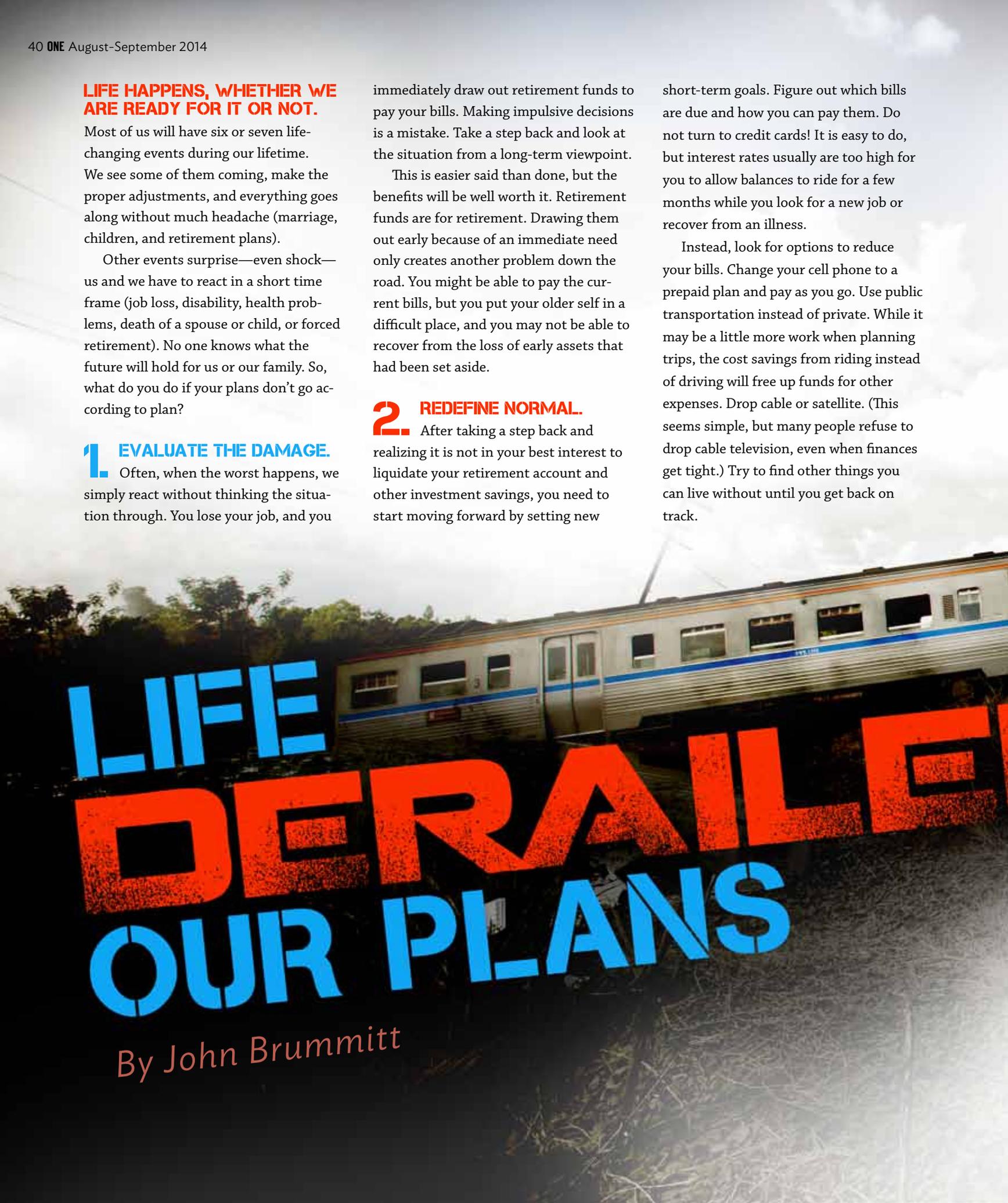
This is easier said than done, but the benefits will be well worth it. Retirement funds are for retirement. Drawing them out early because of an immediate need only creates another problem down the road. You might be able to pay the current bills, but you put your older self in a difficult place, and you may not be able to recover from the loss of early assets that had been set aside.

2. REDEFINE NORMAL.

After taking a step back and realizing it is not in your best interest to liquidate your retirement account and other investment savings, you need to start moving forward by setting new

short-term goals. Figure out which bills are due and how you can pay them. Do not turn to credit cards! It is easy to do, but interest rates usually are too high for you to allow balances to ride for a few months while you look for a new job or recover from an illness.

Instead, look for options to reduce your bills. Change your cell phone to a prepaid plan and pay as you go. Use public transportation instead of private. While it may be a little more work when planning trips, the cost savings from riding instead of driving will free up funds for other expenses. Drop cable or satellite. (This seems simple, but many people refuse to drop cable television, even when finances get tight.) Try to find other things you can live without until you get back on track.



LIFE DERAILED OUR PLANS

By John Brummitt

NO ONE KNOWS WHAT THE FUTURE WILL HOLD FOR HIM OR HIS FAMILY. SO, WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOUR PLANS DON'T GO ACCORDING TO PLAN?

3. BE POSITIVE.

Life doesn't always go as planned. We are going to face hardships and tough times, but as Christians we can rise above the hardships because of the hope we have in the Lord. Financial difficulties are going to happen, things outside of our plans. How we react to those difficulties speaks volumes to those around us. We can't say we trust the Lord with our lives and then blame Him for the troubles we face.

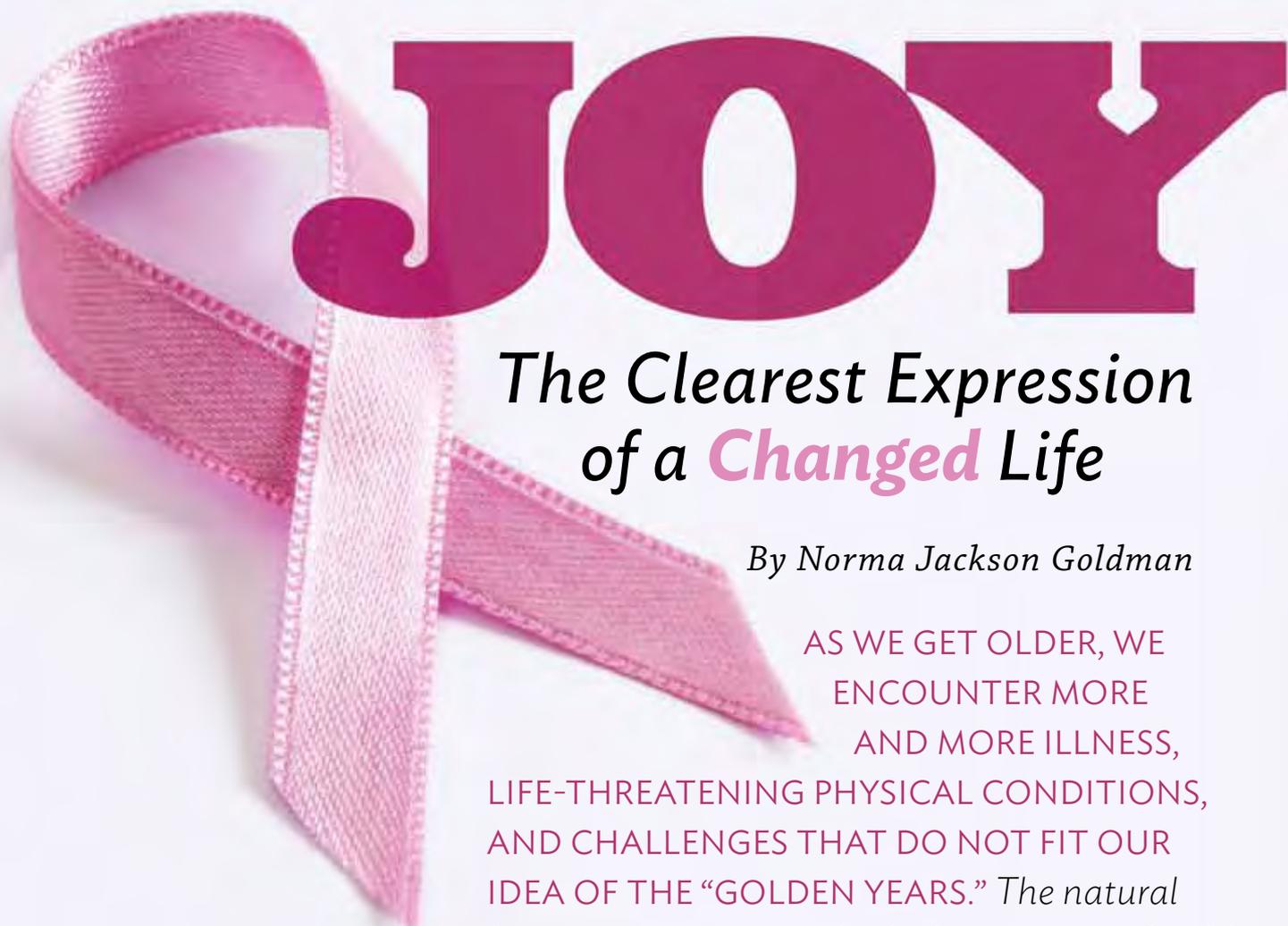
4. FIND WORK (if physically possible).

This might be more difficult in some situations than others. If you lose a job, however, finding work—any work—should be your main focus. Many times, people try to find a job equivalent to the one they lost where they can start back at the same level or higher.

In the ideal situation, this would happen every time, but unfortunately it is not always the case. While looking for a comparable job, be willing to take a lower-paying job to get by until the ideal position becomes available. Remember, it is always easier to find a job when you have a job. Taking a lower-paying job doesn't mean you are "going backwards" in your career; you are simply putting your family's needs first and your ego second.

Plans are going to be derailed by the unexpected. How we react can reduce them to short-term speed bumps or create long-term difficulties. Stay calm when the worst happens. Financial difficulties won't kill you, and you are not alone in facing the problems. The challenges you face today may allow God to "work all things together for your good." 

About the Writer: John Brummitt graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since the spring of 2006. Learn more about Free Will Baptist retirement options: www.BoardofRetirement.com.



JOY

*The Clearest Expression of a **Changed** Life*

By Norma Jackson Goldman

AS WE GET OLDER, WE ENCOUNTER MORE AND MORE ILLNESS, LIFE-THREATENING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS, AND CHALLENGES THAT DO NOT FIT OUR IDEA OF THE “GOLDEN YEARS.” *The natural human response is to think about our own health, mortality, and what the future might hold. But when I look at my friend Laura* as she battles cancer, I see a very different response—one that makes little sense to an unbeliever. What I see in Laura is pure joy, even in the most difficult days of treatment and experimental chemotherapy.*

Laura has stood on my left at church for many years, and our good friend Tess has stood on my right. No words adequately express how powerful their individual testimonies have been to me—their friends and family, our Bible study class—literally everyone who touches their lives. Tess, now cancer-free, consistently uses her experiences to encourage and strengthen others walking the long mile to recovery.

Laura was certain she had won, and we rejoiced with her, thankful God had honored our prayers with healing. Within a year, the cancer was back, not in one, but three places—inoperable. And yet, her joy is undiminished. She is in her place at worship whenever humanly possible, lifting her heart to praise the Lord. Her joy is a clear expression of a life changed by the Spirit of God.

Laura is neither a super-woman nor a martyr. She longs to be free of hospitals, tests, and powerful drug treatments. She yearns to work in the yard, to continue teaching children as she has for many years, and to live without concern about what the next test might reveal. But she has intentionally mapped out some good choices designed to bring her to a new place in her ongoing relationship with the Lord.

A Conscious Choice

Within days of her cancer diagnosis, Laura asked for prayer from friends, her church, and family members. She asked not only for healing, but for God to teach her more about Himself through her experiences. In making this conscious choice, she expressed the sure knowledge that God would be with her, no matter what.

Peace With God

After an initial bout with “why me?” she quickly moved on to gather a “war chest” of Scripture verses to help her cope in all

One of the greatest challenges any believer faces is to look past what he or she is experiencing to see God at work in productive, redemptive ways.

situations. She wanted to be able to give a reason for the hope of healing within her. Her desire was that nothing about her illness would interfere in her peace with God. She knew that peace brings joy.

She wanted to claim every promise, to be able to “rejoice always” as Paul taught the believers in Philippi. Paul knew well the hard lessons of imprisonment, discouragement, and personal illness, yet he modeled joy for others and counseled them (and us) to rejoice always (Philippians 4:4).

The Ability to See Past Present Circumstances

We see the theme of joy in the midst of trials throughout the New Testament. James and Peter offered instruction and encouragement as they faced persecution without and dissension within the first century churches. The writer of Hebrews said it best when he said Jesus *endured* the cross for the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2). One of the greatest challenges any believer faces is to look past what he or she is experiencing to see God at work in productive, redemptive ways.

Are we to ignore, deny, or pretend bad things do not exist? Do we just harden ourselves and march into the face of adversity? Not at all! We rejoice, knowing He knows our trouble, He hears our petitions and no matter what, He cares. Laura knows He is with her. Is this your testimony in adversity? **ONE**

* Name changed for privacy.

About the Writer: Former magazine editor Norma J. Goldman enjoys a successful freelance career in her retirement. The award-winning writer lives near Houston, Texas. Learn more about retirement options at www.boardofretirement.com.

MAKE THE MOST OF

Mentoring

BY JOY CORN

Mentoring is a hot topic these days. Businesses use internships and mentors to train workers in specialized techniques. The education world offers opportunities for volunteers to mentor students with deficits in core skills. Boys and Girls Clubs of America and many similar organizations recruit mentors for children with few good role models.

In every mentoring situation, the mentor must meet two requirements: 1) he or she must have more experience or knowledge than the trainee, and 2) he or she must be sincerely interested in someone else's growth.

These simple requirements transfer into the spiritual realm as well, where Christians are instructed to "teach" the next generation with patience and perseverance. It is a calling we all need to embrace. In Titus 2:3-5, Paul described the role of a mentor in terms of the older teaching the younger. He began the chapter with instructions for aged men, then followed with instructions for older women. He said to Titus, "The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; that they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed"

Perhaps you are already a long-time "mentor." You see yourself in Paul's description of "older men and women" in Titus. You make a practice of planting seeds of wisdom in others. Others may identify with the "young men and women" in this passage, still learning, not yet the seed planters. The truth is, every Christian should be both—never too old to learn and never too young to teach. Two important phrases in these verses give us insight into the characteristics and methods of mentoring.



Informal

The phrase "teachers of good things" in verse 3 does not refer to formal instruction such as a lecture or sermon, even a lesson. Rather, it describes informal instruction combined with personal example. Mentoring is informal. We must teach during the everyday, teachable moments of life.

I remember Haddon Robinson describing the moment when his father prevented him from stealing a ride on the subway by slipping underneath the turnstile. He said, "That was a teachable moment for me." No doubt you have experienced many similar moments when life presented an opportunity to speak into someone's life, whether to your own children or to others within your sphere of influence. Informal moments are fertile soil for lessons of all sorts—including lessons about loving God and about eternity.

My first mentor was my mother. She was a master at using informal lessons of life. You can't get more informal than posting Scripture on the back of the bathroom door. I must have read Psalm 1:3 hundreds of times in the years that verse was posted in our bathroom: "And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth its fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper."

I was always intrigued that my mother could quote verses to

any hymn I chose (and hum the tune). Those words and tunes were planted in my heart like seeds. I know many hymns today because my parents sang them in the car or Mother played and sang them at the piano.

In third grade, my teacher Elsie Jackson assigned a science project to put together a series of reports on the planets and heavenly bodies. I will never forget my mother's suggestion to use Psalm 8:3-4 on the cover: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him?" That suggestion became a teachable moment. It taught me to take a bold stand about my faith...at least it seemed bold for a third grader in public school.

Intentional

We learn a second characteristic of mentoring from the word *teach* or *admonish* in verse 4. This Greek word relates a totally different meaning from the word *teacher* in verse 3. The transliteration *sophronizo*, from which we derive our modern term *sophomore*, gives us insight into the meaning. Perhaps you've heard the definition of *sophomore*: a wise fool, one with pretense of intellect. This Greek word makes it clear a mentor should bring others to their senses about life and steady them through exhortation and guidance.

Put most simply, mentoring is intentional. You must have a plan for mentoring. Yes, some life lessons come about naturally, but others are taught only through intentional planning. You may have to go out of your way to make the lesson stick. Like the time when I was ten, and my mother and daddy challenged me to read through the Bible, with the promise of a new Bible (with my name engraved on it) for completion. I accepted the challenge and used that Bible from fifth grade through college.

Take a moment to consider who could benefit from your experience—perhaps someone in your family, a neighbor's child, or a new attendee at church. Maybe it is a young mother who would welcome the seasoned experience of someone who has "been there." Be intentional as you strive to mentor. Deliberately seek out those without godly influences. Mentoring must be intentional.

Methods of Mentoring

Return to the phrase "teachers of good things" in verse 3 to find insight into the methods of mentoring. First, we teach through example. Great mentoring is built upon example. My mother never delivered a sermon on cooking Sunday dinner, a lecture about taking care of things, or a diatribe about being wasteful, but her consistent actions spoke volumes. She gave no speeches about loving your neighbor, but I saw her live this out. Through her consistent example, I learned about managing time, getting enough fresh air, the importance of family meals, frugality, consistency, loyalty, and church involvement. Effective

mentoring is lived rather than spoken.

My sister has been and continues to be an influential mentor. She sets an example in generosity (She gave her husband a kidney, for Heaven's sake!), hospitality, and curiosity. She is always ready and willing to help. She takes a genuine interest in the lives of others and helps them feel welcome and important. She continues to learn and to seek out wisdom. Carol sets a high bar with her example, and I want to be that kind of example for others.

Verse 4 sheds more light on mentoring methods. Mentoring should be focused on encouragement. Bringing "younger women" to their senses about their roles in life involves encouraging them, steadying them through exhortation and guidance.

Two examples come immediately to mind. The first is June Critcher, my Sunday School teacher and later pastor's wife. Mrs. Critcher was a great encourager to me, particularly during my teen years. She taught the "Teen-ette" Sunday School class, and took genuine interest in the details of our lives. I remember her calling on the morning of a state math competition in ninth grade to assure me she was praying for me. As a fresh graduate of eighth grade home economics, she paid me to hem dresses and mend clothes for her children. She often asked me to sing a particular song as a special during the days when my nerves were almost debilitating. These early votes of confidence were empowering.

Mrs. Critcher encouraged my all-girl Sunday School class to memorize Scripture. First, we learned passages about being godly women, then godly wives. Later, she pushed us to memorize the entire first chapter of James. Her encouragement was a seed that gradually grew into confidence and bore much fruit over the years.

A second mentor encouraged me in a professional context. I was privileged to work with Betty Plunkett at Pleasant View Christian School for nearly 10 years. She was a wonderful example and mentor to students, with a unique way of making everyone feel important. "Problem" students especially respected her because she loved them unconditionally. She provided a great example of diligence, consistency, and willingness to stand on principle. But she was also an encourager to me.

I went to visit Mrs. Plunkett at Alive Hospice only a few days before she died from cancer. Even in her weakened state, she had not lost the gift of encouragement. Knowing I had a challenging class, she spoke empowering words of wisdom and insight—making me feel special to the very end. She was a wonderful encourager and mentor.

The goal of every mentor is to build up the lives of those we touch. These verses ultimately instruct us to train others in such a way that God will receive glory from their lives, and "the Word of God be not blasphemed." So make the most of mentoring and start changing someone's life today. **ONE**

About the Writer: Joy Corn teaches math at Pleasant View Christian School. She is president of Cumberland Association Women Active for Christ. Learn more about WNAC at www.wnac.org.

WNAC *in Central Asia*

The Central Asian Sisters Training (CAST) gathered international acclaim during its two-week run in April 2014.

This unique conference, which included multiple languages, nationalities, and venues, met an eager and captive audience. Crowds listened, interacted, and even took the stage to share personal stories—tragedies, redemptive accounts, ongoing life dramas filled with acts of kindness and scenes of joy.

As with any major production, much happened behind the scenes. The planning, packing, and heart-preparation, as well as funding and gifts from WAC groups, churches, and individuals contributed to the effectiveness of this meeting.

From opening ceremony to closing finale, women sensed God's presence and the powerful prayers of His people. In the end, the CAST received standing ovations as women rose to their feet and prayed, giving all praise and glory to God.



Here's how WNAC leaders described it:

"Wow! Wow! Wow! Blessed! Blessed! Blessed! Working at the orphanage and watching the joy on the kids' faces was amazing. We fixed American cheeseburgers for them—their first...ever. We made yarn fork flowers together. Kids of all ages loved it. The passion these folks have for Christ is simply amazing." —Amy Johnson

*"I came face to face with women living out **Philippians 3:7-8**." —Phyllis York*

"It was amazing to sit around the table with fellow Christians and sing, 'What a Friend We Have in Jesus,' and hear it in both languages." —Janie Campbell

"What a privilege to share communion with fellow Central Asian believers." —Elizabeth Hodges

"To visit a believer's home, share a meal, hear dramatic testimonies of God's saving power, and then worship [together] in four languages was a glimpse of Heaven. Unforgettable." —Diana Bryant

Central Asian women said:

“Please tell the women in America thank you for making this conference possible.”
(repeated in both countries)

“I’m thankful for this conference so I can improve my ministry.”

“God is telling me He loves me, and He wants to teach me through this difficult season.”

“Today, I’m like a caterpillar enclosed in a cocoon. I want to get out, but I can’t.”

“God can change the seasons and give us joy.”

“This is all about me. I need this.”

“I want to be a butterfly—one of these people who encourages others.”

“I prayed for two sisters and not only my eyes cried, but also my heart.”

“Thank you for this idea.”

“These crafts are wonderful. I want to use them in our Sunday School.”

“Now I have activities to share with the moms of the autistic children I teach.”

“The brownies and banana bread are delicious. I will be making both of them.”

“I cried when I saw the bras. This is such a wonderful gift for us here.”

“These are our favorite kind of headscarves, but we cannot buy them anymore.”

“Getting a red headscarf is like a dream come true.”



**Want to hear more about
WNAC in Central Asia?**
Read the article in the *Treasure*
(Program Helps) section at www.wnac.org.



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Leader Profile >>

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

David Potete is almost a Chicago native...almost, but not quite. David's parents lived in Chicago when he was born, but his dad knew that a birth cost less in Tennessee, so he sent David's mom to live with his grandmother when she was eight months along. The day after he was born, David and his mom returned to Chicago.

Both parents were believers, and from his dad David learned compassion, generosity, and giving ownership back to God. His mom passed along humility, concern, and sacrifice. While David loves being a pastor, he studied business in college and quickly acknowledges that God's calling can lead to any career. He felt a call to large cities. When he saw no one going to Chicago, the city became his harvest field.

When talking about his quiet time, David describes it as a struggle to read Scripture without thinking about sermons or teaching. He prefers reading bigger portions of the Bible—entire books in one setting—and uses drive times for prayer.

David has been pastoring since 1983, specifically in Chicago since 1991. He describes his long-term goals in ministry simply: "I want to serve God in Chicago until I am old and be buried in the plots my wife and I bought...close to our favorite hotdog joint. If our health should decline, and God leads us away to a warmer climate, I want to help a young church leader plant a church in a large southern city—not in the suburbs."

David, you are a great leader! **ONE**



Get to Know David:

What is an ideal date for you and Pam? Sounds corny, but because Pam does not work outside the home, she ministers right beside me as I make hospital visits, officiate at funerals, or visit the homebound. Just being with her all the time makes our whole life a date.

What are the names, ages, and brief description for your kids?
Becky, age 32 – Great wife and mom to four of my grandsons; serving in an Ohio church.

Julie, age 30 – Great wife and mom to my grandson; lives in Kentucky and works in a girls' home.

Stephanie, age 24 – Just finished her master's in social work.

James, age 14 – potential.

Who is your favorite author of all time?
It is about a 20-way tie!

What are your top three books of all time (other than the Bible)?

The Silver Chalice – Thomas B. Costain

The Prodigal God – Tim Keller

Where Love Is, There God Is Also – Leo Tolstoy

Do you exercise? How and what do you do? I am a runner and a stair climber (urban mountains). Right now I am working through a knee injury, but will be running at least one more Chicago Marathon, so all four of my kids can have a medal from Dad. I want them to have a tangible reminder that Dad never quit and how finishing is important.

What is your favorite quote? "You can tell whether you are becoming a servant by how you act when people treat you like one." – Gordon MacDonald

Why Free Will Baptist? Arminianism is biblical and logical. Our denomination was such an unbelievable blessing in helping us start the church in Chicago. I will be pestering many Free Will Baptists throughout eternity saying thank you over and over again. I really mean that.

What would you like to see in Free Will Baptists in 5 years or 10 years? Making a truly concerted effort to plant churches and have a presence in the largest cities of our country and the world.

Paper or Plastic Questions
Mountains or Ocean? Ocean
Music or Talk Radio? Music
Coke or Pepsi? Pepsi
Facebook, Email, Twitter, or texting? Email...but I do the other three
Socks or house shoes? House shoes
Mac or PC? – What is PC? So Mac!

The Competition CATALYST



BY BRANDON ROYSDEN

I will never forget the first time I saw the ocean. It was the summer of 1989, and my dad had just accepted a pastorate at a Free Will Baptist church in East Tennessee. I had never heard of CTS competition, but this church was an annual participant in both the national convention and the National Youth Conference, which meant I got a free trip to Tampa, Florida. No complaints from me!

That summer was the first in two decades of annual treks to attend the meetings of our denomination. The trips took me to never-before-seen destinations and allowed me to develop relationships with friends I now consider family. My involvement with the National Youth Conference gave me a perspective I would not have otherwise. It gave me an appreciation for our people and our movement.

As I reflect on all the hours spent studying memory verses, practicing piano, and traveling to district and state competitions, I don't think I ever realized

the impact it had on my spiritual growth until now.

It is easy to misunderstand what the Bible and Arts competition is all about. Maybe the problem is even in the name. With all of the horror stories we hear about T-ball parents and misbehavior at sporting events and pageants, it's easy to get the wrong idea. Perhaps we should call it a ministry expo or leadership training or even The Discipleship Games. I imagine many of you still refer to it as CTS (Church Training Service), which is probably about as appropriate of a name as any. The point is this all began as a way to help students learn God's Word and use their talents to glorify Him. I would contend that when done properly, it still holds the same value today it did at its inception in 1968.

In recent years, it seems there has been increasing interest in programs like Awana, The Navigators, and The Bible Bee. Is there any wonder? These pro-

grams hold Scripture to be worthy of our attention and dedication as it should be. Unfortunately, we live in a society that is increasingly biblically illiterate. According to a study commissioned by The American Bible Society in 2013, only 37% of young adults (ages 18-28) could correctly identify the first five books of the Bible and nearly half (45%) of that same group thought John the Baptist was one of the 12 apostles.¹ Is it possible that with all of the emphasis on church camp, lock-ins, and mission trips (all great, by the way), we have neglected to properly emphasize the basics of Bible knowledge and have created students who simply consume the programs on which we spend so much time, without investing in the Scriptures themselves?

Obviously, any number of strategies could deal with decreasing biblical literacy; however, as I look back at my involvement with the National Youth Conference, I am struck by how much it served as a catalyst for this kind of growth in my own life.

It taught me **DISCIPLINE**.

I grew up playing sports for some pretty demanding coaches, but I don't think any of them were as demanding as my mom when it came to studying the Bible or practicing my competition mu-

I have been able to recall most of the Scripture I memorized in competition. When I began working with my first grade son last year, I still knew these passages, even though I haven't had to recite them in years! Working with him has solidified in my mind why we do this. I have so much of God's Word hidden in my heart, and this is exactly what I want for my children! —Hope Hinson

sic...again. For some, this might seem like an unholy dedication to holy things, but it taught me that investing in the things of God is as important as the hours I spent on the baseball diamond as a child. It also showed me things worth pursuing are worth giving attention and time. In a culture that often follows the path of least resistance, competition made it clear that path rarely gets you very far.

It gave me **PERSPECTIVE**.

You've probably heard the anecdote about how little a fish knows about life outside the bowl. As a child growing up in the rural mid-South, annual trips to the national convention were virtually my only opportunities to leave my home state. The trips were our vacations. Not only did they give me a greater appreciation for the world outside my own experience, they opened my eyes to the larger Church—the Church beyond my small building and “reserved” pew.

Music competition helped me grow more comfortable with singing before larger groups of people. Competition and involvement in music at school helped that grow into a tool I still use today in ministry. —Steve Greenwood

It provided an **OUTLET**.

Now that I have two children of my own, I'm beginning to understand why my parents still joke about how rarely I sat still as a child. Children are full of energy and life, and if we do not provide them with constructive outlets, they will find their own. Unfortunately, these may be limited to things like school, sports, and video games. While none of these are necessarily bad, Bible competition taught me that the church and God's Word deserved some of my energy, too.

It gave me **COMMUNITY**.

After attending the convention year after year, I became increasingly aware of being Free Will Baptist. This continued through my years at a Free Will Baptist college, as I worked for a Free Will Baptist high school, and now as I have the privilege to be employed by the Free Will Baptist publishing house.

It's not that I think God is somehow impressed that I come from a rich denominational tradition, but I do believe this tradition has grounded me, given me a sense of community, and provided opportunities and friendships I never would have enjoyed otherwise. Not only that, I believe that fellowship outside the local body is biblical. Being involved in competition helped me see there were other students just like me, who believed what I believed, doing the same things I

Learning Scripture really helped me to learn about God and His Word. As a pastor, it was also a delight to see various young people compete and excel. —Paul Harrison

was doing. It helped me realize I was not alone.

As I sit on this side of all of my experiences with the National Youth Conference, it seems my life has come full circle. I am now involved again with all of the things I participated in as a child and student. If I could ask one thing of you as a member of our Free Will Baptist community, it would be to get involved. For some of you, that might mean taking a second look at the competition program. For others, it may be showing up at local meetings or connecting online with fellow ministers and leaders.

I know we don't have it all figured out, but the beauty is that we get to keep trying—trying to honor God with our time, energy, and efforts. Trying to live peaceably with all men. Trying to have the most impact on our families and the world with the time we are given. For me, all that started with a trip to the ocean 25 years ago. What about you? **ONE**

www.americانبible.org/uploads/content/State%20of%20the%20Bible%20Report%202013.pdf



1948 **Free Will Baptist League hosts first nationwide conference in Nashville, Tennessee.**

1962 **FWB League and the WNAC sponsor a teen banquet and youth rally at the national convention.**

1965 **Church Training Service (CTS) expands League Sword Drill and Declamation competition, adding Bible Bowl and Bible Tic-Tac-Toe.**

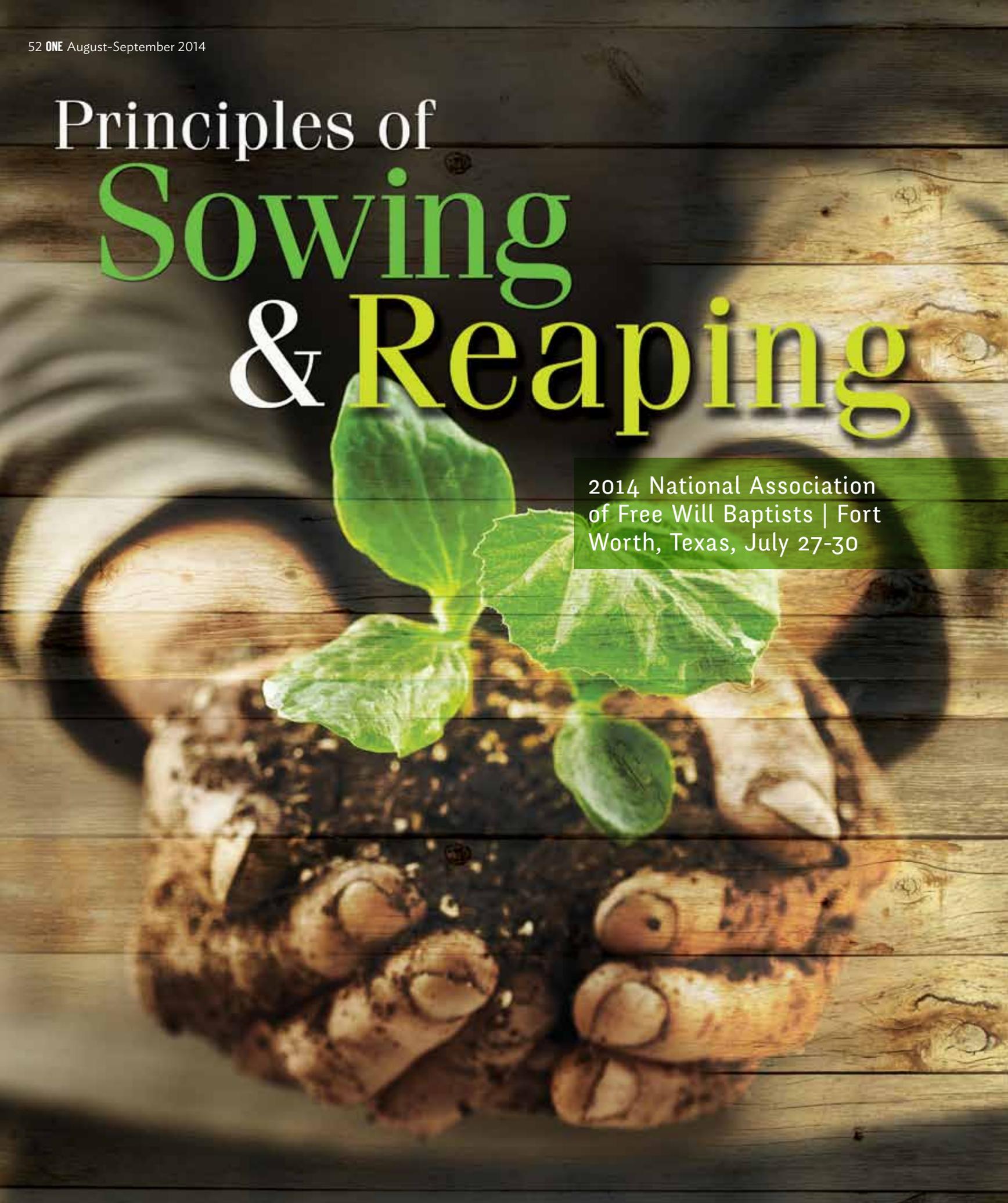
1968 **First National Youth Conference meets in conjunction with the national convention in Oklahoma City**

1972 **Music & Arts Festival added to the Bible competition**

ONE LEAGUES
 the FWBL Conference
 1945-15-17, 1948
 MOVED UNTO GOD

Principles of Sowing & Reaping

2014 National Association
of Free Will Baptists | Fort
Worth, Texas, July 27-30



Convention in Cowtown

Central Texas temps soared into triple digits as 4,320 delegates and visitors converged on Cowtown when the National Association of Free Will Baptists returned to Fort Worth, Texas, July 27-30, for the 78th national convention, the fourth in the city. The 2014 theme explored “Principles of Sowing and Reaping.”

Worship

Music Coordinator Kevin Justice and the Music Commission produced a series of unforgettable worship services featuring a 100-voice convention choir, an orchestral ensemble, and numerous talented individuals, families, and groups who lent their voices to the music. Brian Hughes, minister of music and youth at First FWB Church, Clayton (NC) served as convention worship leader and guided the congregation into enthusiastic worship. Throughout the conference, speakers examined critical principles of sowing and reaping—the Word of God as it applies to life, stewardship, relationships, and evangelism.

After Texas Moderator Marcus Brewer taught Sunday School, Danny Gasperson, pastor of Zephyr Hills FWB Church (NC), spoke from Matthew 13, “Principles of Sowing and Reaping in the Word of God.”

Sunday evening, Randy Corn, pastor of Bethlehem FWB Church (TN) explored “Principles of Sowing and Reaping in Life” from Galatians 6:7-8. He warned listeners to be wary of the danger within, understanding the possibility of falling into sin. He encouraged restoration—bearing the burdens of those who have fallen, and urged the congregation not to quit, because “In due season we shall reap if we faint not.”

Monday evening, South Carolina Executive Secretary Todd Smith spoke from 2 Corinthians 9:5-15

on “Sowing and Reaping Through Stewardship.” He urged listeners to have an attitude of giving—cheerfully, from the heart, and not out of necessity.

The Tuesday afternoon Preaching Conference highlighted Texas pastors Howard Bass, pastor of First FWB Church, Tomball, and longtime state Moderator Keith Woody.

Tuesday night, Will Harmon, pastor of Cavanaugh FWB Church, Fort Smith (AR) challenged listeners to embrace biblical unity as he explored “Principles of Sowing and Reaping in Relationships” from Proverbs 6:16-19.

Home missionary church planter Heath Ferguson wrapped up the annual Wednesday night missions service by addressing “Principles of Sowing and Reaping in Evangelism” from Psalm 126:5-6 and Romans 1. He issued the challenge to embrace the power of the Word of God and make evangelism an overriding passion, to give *everything* to follow the call of Christ, to plant the seed of the gospel. The altars filled and the convention came to a close in the best way possible, with men and women dedicating themselves to the call of the gospel.

Service

Eighty-four volunteers from eight states arrived at the convention a day early for *Impact Fort Worth*. The annual outreach event started at 9:30 Saturday morning when participants left First FWB Church in Weatherford and Friendship FWB Church in Haltom City to distribute 2,000 flyers and 1,000 gospel tracts.

Extreme Texas heat didn’t slow the determined groups that went door-to-door in neighborhoods near the churches and others who cooked and prepared meals for community picnics hosted by both churches. Eric Halleran, pastor at Weatherford

said, “We were privileged to work with Impact volunteers to share the good news of God’s Word with our community. A thousand people got the gospel today! It just gives you a sense of what is possible in Christ.”

Reach That Guy (sponsored by the National Youth Conference) participated in local outreach and service, as 147 participants ranging in age from four to 62 volunteered throughout Fort Worth, supplying more than a thousand hours to six organizations.

Fort Worth residents made note of the efforts. “This is the best group to come through in years,” said one convention center security guard. “Absolutely,” chimed in a second. “I just wish you guys could come back and train some other groups on how to behave when visiting a city.”

Business

General Board 2014

On Monday, July 28, the General Board heard reports from nine national agencies and four commissions as Moderator Tim York led board members through a three-hour, 51-minute slate of business in Hall C-D of Fort Worth Convention Center. The General Board approved several recommendations, including a 2014 denominational budget of nearly \$25 million and a recommendation that the convention approve the request of Women Nationally Active for Christ to become an official agency of the National Association, rather than an auxiliary organization. This includes reallocation of The Together Way funds to provide 15% for WNAC. (See more in the WNAC report.)

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

Free Will Baptist Executive Office

Executive Secretary Keith Burden indicated that the Executive Office remains in good financial condition, despite heavy convention attrition fees in 2013 and continuing economic uncertainty. He congratulated Free Will Baptists for an increase in cooperative giving in 2013 and thanked them for their faithfulness. He also announced a denominational church revitalization program beginning in 2015. Burden celebrated the continuing success of *ONE Magazine*, which reaches more than 55,000 Free Will Baptist households.

Free Will Baptist Foundation

The Foundation has grown by 67% or \$23 million since 2008, according to General Director David Brown, with an increase of nearly \$5 million in total assets in 2013. Based on the first half of this year, he expects the trend to continue in 2014, with projected growth of \$8 million, and total assets of \$61 million by the end of the year. “We are truly in the fast lane,” Brown told delegates. “Like an Indy car driver, we are working hard to stay in control while experiencing high-speed growth.”

The department continues to set aside realized gains to establish a grant program benefiting Free Will Baptist ministries. The board is working to finalize grant guidelines and hopes to launch a pilot program early in 2015.

Brown celebrated the success of a partnership with Cornerstone Estate Planning to provide estate planning for Free Will Baptists. In its first year, more than 420 families enrolled in the program. The Foundation recently added two field representatives, Todd Smith and Kris Wootton, to serve



as liaisons between the Foundation, Cornerstone Estate Planning, and individuals who wish to safeguard their estates. June McVay was also hired in a part-time role.

Home Missions

In his first report to the National Association, new General Director David Crowe marked 2014 as a year of faithfulness for Home Missions, as the department celebrates 75 years in existence. He pointed to a faithful God, faithful friends, faithful missionaries and chaplains, and a faithful and hardworking staff. He congratulated Free Will Baptists on gifts totaling \$4.4 million in 2013, and urged them to continue this pattern of faithful giving.

Dr. Crowe introduced new directions for the department, starting with a new name. Home Missions will become North American Ministries to reflect the broad scope of their work. “You will also no longer hear us use the term *home missionaries*,” said Crowe. “We will refer to them as *church planters* because that’s what we send them out to do.”

The department will sponsor a college internship program to give potential church planters an opportunity for on-the-field experience and will begin a new campaign of church planting and revitalization, starting new churches and working with

struggling and declining churches to rekindle growth.

Crowe introduced two new staff members who will help spearhead these efforts: Brad Ransom, director of church planting, Jim McComas, director of church revitalization, and Kerry Steedley, director of chaplaincy. McComas announced the first Free Will Baptist national church growth conference, the *Acts 1:8 POWER Conference*, May 25-26, 2015, at Stone Castle Hotel and Conference Center in Branson, Missouri. Hotel accommodations will be reasonably priced, with no charge to attend.

Master’s Men

Director Ken Akers emphasized the mission of Master’s Men—to partner with churches through training, service opportunities, and encouragement to build men who are strong at home, at church, and in the community. He reviewed a long list of Master’s Men activities in 2013-2014: IMPACT Tampa and Fort Worth; disaster relief in Moore, Oklahoma, and Tennessee; couples’ retreats and financial seminars; Operation Saturation in Tallahassee, Florida; ministry construction projects in West Virginia and Illinois; and several sports fellowship activities. He also announced the recent publication of *A How-To Manual for Christian Living, Part 2*, the latest publication in the Direction Bible Study Series.

Akers also proposed a merger between Master’s Men and Home Missions that will bring the department under the umbrella of Home Missions. Master’s Men will remain intact, with all present assets, but will minister and operate under the direction of Home Missions. After a lengthy discussion, delegates approved the proposal, which will take place January 1, 2015.

CONVENTION AT A GLANCE 2014

REGISTRATION

Pre-Registration - 2,986
National Association - 2,665
National Youth Conference - 3,251
Women Nationally Active for Christ - 598
Total* - 4,320

*Individual count. Many attendees register for more than one convention.

THEME

Principles of Sowing and Reaping

SPEAKERS

Sunday School - Marcus Brewer (TX)
Sunday Morning - Danny Gasperson (NC)
Sunday Evening - Randy Corn (TN)
Monday Evening - Todd Smith (SC)
Preaching Conference - Howard Bass (TX),
Keith Woody (TX)
Tuesday Evening - Will Harmon (AR)
Wednesday Evening - Heath Ferguson (TX)

LIVE STREAMING TOTALS

Total Visitors - 7,122
Unique Visitors - 4,730

2015 BUDGET

Executive Office - \$859,884
FWB Foundation - \$996,207
Home Missions - \$5,148,643
International Missions - \$6,700,000
Master's Men - \$148,643
Retirement and Insurance - \$550,000
Randall House - \$4,898,750
Welch College - \$5,264,984
WNAC - \$286,000
Theological Commission - \$7,500
Historical Commission - \$3,875
Media Commission - \$3,020
Music Commission - \$3,575
Total - \$24,722,438



Convention at a Glance (continued)

2015 NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Stan Bunch (MO), Chairman

Wayne Hale (Mid-Atl)

Larry Reynolds (MS)

Jack Daniel (GA)

Bruce Barnes (VA)

Steve Berry (FL)

Don Matchett (AR)

ELECTED IN FORT WORTH

RANDALL HOUSE

2016 Darin Gibbs (NC)

2020 Paul Bryant (MS)

Steve Lindsay (AL)

Randy Scott (AR)

BOARD OF INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS

2018 Robert Posner (TX)

2020 Janice Banks (OK)

Jeff Manning (NC)

Jeff Nichols (TN)

WELCH COLLEGE

2020 Jeff Crabtree (Atl-Can)

Shiloh Hackett (AL)

Eddie Moody (NC)

FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION

2015 Gene Williams (NC)

COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

2019 Rodney Holloman (NC)

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

2019 Robert E. Picirilli (TN)

MUSIC COMMISSION

2019 Kevin Justice (NC)

MEDIA COMMISSION

2019 Josh Owens (TN)

GENERAL BOARD

2017 Indiana: Daniel Edwards

Iowa: Jim Martin

Kansas: Zane Brooks

Board of Retirement

Retirement assets grew more than 17% in 2013, to more than \$53 million, according to Director Ray Lewis. Additionally, the department received a record amount—nearly \$4 million—in new contributions. Lewis announced four goals for the department as it moves forward: 1) add participants; 2) experience the highest returns from the safest investments possible; 3) operate the most efficient program possible, and 4) fine tune the program to meet the needs of investors. The program now offers four investment options to meet the needs of participants of all ages and hopes to provide a tax-deferred Roth 403b option by January 1, 2015.

Delegates approved an amendment to the charter of the Board of Retirement, allowing the board to offer the retirement plan to Free Will Baptist groups that are not part of the National Association if they do not have their own retirement option.

International Missions

“For 79 years, Free Will Baptists have actively taken the gospel to the unreached, and the work continues,” said Clint Morgan, general director. “Today, God has given Free Will Baptists the opportunity to minister in 19 countries, with career field teams in some, and support roles in others.”

He explained that 2013 was a difficult year, as ongoing financial concerns forced extreme cuts in spending, including the painful decision to lay off missionary personnel for the first time in its 79-year history. In addition, stateside missionaries were placed in a holding pattern. Morgan was quick to emphasize the temporary nature of the situation. “Our goal is to put every missionary approved by the IM Board on the field and keep them there.”

He addressed three major challenges for the Mission: shrinking denominations, a significant decline in giving to most non-profits and ministries, and a shift in doctrinal foundations. “It is easy to see that the funding pie is getting smaller,” said Morgan, “and the world missions slice is not large.” He went on to encourage pastors and churches to build young people with a strong, doctrinal foundation who understand the importance of world evangelism.

Despite the challenges encountered in 2013, the Mission enjoyed significant harvest and opportunities:

- Countries previously considered mission fields now send their own missionaries. Côte d’Ivoire, Cuba, Latin America—all have thriving churches with active missionary outreach. The Mission is working with these multi-national missionaries to educate them and support their efforts.
- International Missions and Home Missions are partnering to minister cross-culturally to unreached people groups within the U.S.
- Volunteer movements continue to flourish through The Hanna Project. In Bulgaria, a team working with The Hanna Project partnered with city workers to complete a playground designed for special-needs children. As a result, a city official accepted Christ and now attends the Shvistov Church.
- Morgan honored veteran missionary Bobby Poole (TN), for six decades of service in Brazil, and Director of Field Operations Jeff Turnbough introduced the Riesgo family as international educational specialists.
- The Mission celebrated more than 900 baptisms in 2013, with 34,000

attending Free Will Baptist churches every Sunday around the globe. More than twice the number of Free Will Baptists (10,000) attended the national convention in India than registered in Fort Worth.

“We see a great wind of God’s Spirit moving, and Free Will Baptist International Missions *refuses* to be an obstacle,” Morgan concluded. “I challenge Free Will Baptists to go until He comes, give until we drop, preach until all know, and work until He stops us.”

Women Nationally Active for Christ

After a two-year, in-depth process, the WNAC Executive Committee recommended the organization become a national department and join *The Together Way Plan* of support.

WNAC delegates voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation, and Executive Director Elizabeth Hodges petitioned the denomination for acceptance. The General Board submitted the item to the national body, and delegates unanimously approved the request. For the first time since 1939, when WNAC withdrew from the denomination, the women’s organization is an official department of the denomination. From this point forward, WNAC convention business will be conducted during the convention business session, as is protocol for all other departments.

In other news, Hodges praised 4,211 members from 22 states who gave \$534,690 to missions and ministry causes, including \$36,644 in gifts to the Steward Provision Closet. The department awarded Cleo Pursell Scholarships to Nicols Iriquite (Côte d’Ivoire) and Myriam Le Louarn (France). Three Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart Scholarships were awarded to Free Will Baptist college students Abby Greenwood (Welch), Leah Batten (Southeastern), and Jerra Henthorn (Hillsdale).

Women also provided washing machines for Cedars of Lebanon Bible Institute in Cuba and conference fees to underwrite the cost of women’s conferences in Kazakhstan and Tajikistan. Hodges introduced Phyllis York as the new editor of *Treasure Bible Study*. The Tennessean follows editor Sarah Fletcher, who resigned in October 2013 to pursue an advanced degree in counseling.

Randall House

Director Ron Hunter celebrated the completion of renovations at the Randall House facility. “The new space is highly functional,” he reported, “and will lead to increased productivity, effective workflow, and increased accountability.” Although the cost of the project was \$252,000, donated labor reduced actual expenditures to \$147,000. This allowed Randall House to finish with a budgetary surplus of \$64,827 in 2013, in spite of remodeling costs and greater convention expenses.

Hunter also shared several announcements:

- *D6: Second Generation* will launch later this year. The curriculum will continue to feature the CLEAR learning system, although streamlined and improved. The revised curriculum line will feature a more manageable theme schedule; three Bible studies per quarter; renewed emphasis on developing a biblical worldview; and

Convention at a Glance (continued)

Kentucky: Chad Blair
 Mexico Assoc: Bud Bivens
 Michigan: Gene Norris
 Mid-Atlantic: Wayne Hale
 Mississippi: Larry Reynolds
 Missouri: Stan Bunch
 New Mexico: Mark Shores

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

2017 Stan Bunch (MO)
 Wayne Hale (Mid-Atl)
 Daniel Edwards (IN)

GENERAL OFFICERS

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

The following boards did not elect members in 2014:

Home Missions, Board of Retirement,
 Master’s Men

CONVENTION NEWS COVERAGE TEAM

Editorial: Stephen Nelson, Eric Thomsen,
 Jack Williams, and Phyllis York
 Photography: Rodney Yerby, Kendra Lindsay,
 Crystal Hodges



Download convention photos at:
www.nafwb.yerbyphotography.com

increased attention to apologetics.

- A new *Randall House Academic* imprint will emphasize scholarly works of doctrine and theology, especially Free Will Baptist doctrine. The new department, headed by Charles Cook (TN) will promote classroom use by colleges and universities.
- The D6 Conference has become the global leader in generational discipleship. Randall House recently licensed other groups to replicate the D6 model in their own countries. Norway hosted the first international D6 Conference in 2013, and in 2015, the D6 Conference will meet in Paris, bringing the emphasis on generational discipleship to Europe.
- *Engage Leadership Network* will provide opportunities for ministry leaders across the nation to connect and share new ideas and opportunities. Brandon Roysden, events coordinator, will spearhead this effort.

Hunter honored outgoing board member Danny Dwyer for his service to the department.

Welch College

President Matt Pinson indicated that, in spite of extreme economic and logistic challenges, Welch College is “turning the corner,” with the highest increase in enrollment in 33 years (which means increased tuition and housing income), increased financial stability, and designated gifts on pace to match last year’s record \$1.26 million. While the school finished the fiscal year with a deficit of \$80,283, the amount is down substantially from recent years.

He also reported many positive trends: a wonderful sense of unity, increased freshmen retention, increased graduation rates, growing numbers of young men studying for the ministry (52% on campus; 62% with online and adult studies), participation in Christian Service, and high

student morale. The college was named a *Best Christian Workplace* and was listed once again among the best Southern colleges and universities by *U.S. News and World Report*.

Pinson reported a setback in the sale of the existing property on West End Avenue when Aquinas College withdrew its offer to purchase the campus after neighbors opposed the deal. He offered hope for a quick sale, however, with aggressive marketing and a strong Nashville real estate market.

Commissions

Matt Pinson, chairman of the **Commission for Theological Integrity**, announced plans to publish a new issue of *Integrity: A Journal of Christian Thought* later this year. The commission will sponsor the 18th annual Theological Symposium, October 27-28, at Welch College in Nashville, Tennessee. Pinson encouraged delegates to visit the new commission website: www.fwbtheology.com for blog-styled articles and news updates.

The **Historical Commission** distributed copies of “Free Will Baptists and the Sufficiency of Scripture” to convention delegates. The pamphlet is seventh in the *Free Will Baptist Heritage Series*. The commission continues to expand www.FWBHistory.com with recent additions of more than 60 blog posts, feature articles, and 50 years of *Contact* magazine in searchable PDF format.

Music Commission Chairman Doug Little marked 2013 as a year of change. After a smooth transition between previous convention music coordinator Chris Truett and current coordinator Kevin Justice, the commission turned its attention to refining its purpose and mission, which includes: 1) assist the convention music coordinator in planning and leading worship at the convention; 2) offer music workshops at the convention; 3) collaborate with other denominational agencies to develop music and worship in Free Will Baptist churches; and 4) build a network of musicians and music leaders to provide assistance to pastors and congregations with limited music resources.

The **Free Will Baptist Media Commission** continues to provide live streaming of convention services. In addition to live streaming, the commission offers an online archive of convention services from previous years, available at www.nafwb.org/media.

In additional business, delegates approved the report and recommendations of a specially appointed five-member committee that explored the issue of same-sex marriage and created a plan of action for Free Will Baptists. The committee recommended a wording change to the *Treatise* appendix, from “marital relationship” to “biblical marriage.” This change will be tabled for approval at the 2015 convention in Grand Rapids.



Jeff Crabtree,
Canada

Faithful Through the Seasons

2014 WNAC CONVENTION
Tuesday, July 29 – Fort Worth, Texas

WNAC announced the 2014-2015 theme, *Faithful Through the Seasons*, based on Ecclesiastes 3:1-11. Topics will range from speech and emotions to abortion, self-control, and worldview.

A writers' seminar kicked off scheduled events in Fort Worth. Women interested in writing were given the opportunity to brainstorm for *Treasure Bible Study Guide*. Angie Stewart from Iuka, Mississippi, said, "It was good to have an opportunity to share opinions and ideas, and WNAC was willing to listen."

Many women find themselves in a caregiving role for family members with long-term illness. WNAC board members Jonda Patton (Kentucky) and Janie Campbell (Arkansas) provided advice and resources for caregivers.

Missionaries Alicia Crowe (Japan), Cristina Price (France), Susan Burke and Danielle McCraney (Castle Rock, Colorado) shared ideas for establishing "Quiet Time in a Crazy World." Each speaker shared valuable information and resources for finding much-needed time with God when distractions and responsibilities creep in and take over, robbing women of their quiet time. On Wednesday morning, the Central Asia Team shared their recent experiences at two Central Asian women's conferences. WNAC President Diana Bryant (Florida) presented a seminar designed to encourage pastors' wives.

Monday night, in Room 121 of the convention center was filled with *Chuckles & Churros* instead of *Laughter & Latte*. Women of all ages enjoyed

relaxing around tables, munching on goodies and catching up with one another.

The *Missionary Mingle Luncheon*, another ticketed event, featured a boxed-lunch social. Missionaries hosted tables, and attendees were encouraged to visit multiple tables throughout the lunch hour.

Ruth McDonald, missionary to Japan since 1986, was the keynote speaker during the annual missionary service. She shared ways that God has been faithful through every season in the life of her four-generation missionary family. She and her daughters Katie (Speer), Amy, and Caroline sang an acapella rendition of "Jesus Loves Me" in two languages. It was the first song Ruth's mom taught her to sing.

During the business session, Elizabeth Hodges, director of WNAC began the session with an overview of the work WNAC accomplished in 2013. Auditor Terry Hill presented a bleak financial report. He told delegates that if revenues were not increased, WNAC would become insolvent.

Delegates had two recommendations to consider. Scholarships from the Cleo Pursell Foreign Scholarship fund were awarded to Nicholas Iriquite (Cote d'Ivoire) and Myriam Le Louarn (France) to continue their education.

The WNAC Executive Committee recommended that the organization become a national department and join *The Together Way Plan* of support. Delegates voted unanimously to adopt the recommendation, and Executive



Director Elizabeth Hodges petitioned denominational leaders for acceptance.

Delegates unanimously approved the recommendation, and for the first time since WNAC withdrew from the denomination in 1939, the women's organization is an official part of the National Association.

"This is a historic moment for WNAC," Elizabeth Hodges said. "We are grateful and excited to be part of the National Association, and we look forward to continuing our work within the umbrella of the denomination."

In other business, delegates reaffirmed the denominational stand on same-sex marriage with the following resolution:

Whereas our society has become more accepting to alternate lifestyles, be it resolved that WNAC reaffirm our stand against same-sex marriage and our stand to keep the definition of marriage to remain between one man and one woman.

As we hit the trail from Cowtown and turn our attention to the beautiful River City, we look forward to celebrating God's faithfulness through another year. Visit www.wnac.org throughout the year for information about the exciting events in store for 2015.

For more WNAC Photos: www.nafwb.yerbyphotography.com

Authentic

NATIONAL YOUTH CONFERENCE
JULY 27-30, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

Imagine what would happen if 1,300 students from all over the country committed to living truly authentic lives, not afraid to be real with themselves and others. What if they chose not to be satisfied with a “going-through-the-motions” kind of relationship with their Creator and Savior? What if they completely defied the world’s view of Jesus and instead chose to worship Him as He truly is: glorious and all-powerful? The 2014 National Youth Conference explored these concepts and more as students discussed what it means to be *Authentic*.

Services

Teens began each service with praise and worship led by the National Youth Evangelistic Team. The 13-member group of high school students traveled 3,400 miles this summer, sharing their talents in churches and Home Missions works through



music and service projects.

The theme verse of the conference was Psalm 19:14. Students heard from a broad range of speakers who examined how important authenticity is in our lives and relationships. Neil Gilliland, Eddie Moody, Angie Outlaw, and Richard Ross challenged students to be authentic by demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit, taking a stand for what is right, and having an appropriate view of Jesus.

Four students shared testimonies called “Reality Check Stories,” encouraging fellow students to be transparent with their friends and to share God’s love by “taking off the mask” and living authentically.

Students also gave to the annual “Buck-A-Week” offering on Tuesday night, which totaled \$2,561. These funds go to help International Missionaries launching Creative Access Ministries in Spain and church planters Randall and Collette Wright in



McKinney, Texas. Tuesday evening’s Shane and Shane concert proved to be a time of enjoying great music as well as praise and worship.

Preschool and middle school students also enjoyed their own times of worship and lessons from God’s Word about being authentic.

Competition and Seminars

On Sunday evening, Dr. Eddie Moody said that to be truly authentic we have to “strive for excellence. We have got to have something to offer the world to influence it.” NYC competition provides students that opportunity to strive for excellence in order to glorify God and to prepare to be authentic in a corrupt culture.

Students competed in a variety of events including Bible, music, art, and much more. This year’s competition saw a record 996 entries, 21 more than last year.

Attendees also had the opportunity to take in any of 51 *Engage Leadership Network* seminars and panel discussions on a number of relevant topics including *Teenage Mentors: Why You Should Become One* and *New Life: A Discussion on Church Revitalization*.

Reach That Guy

On Monday, Angie Outlaw made the statement, “Jesus is not here in the flesh, but He left us here to be authentic and share His love with people

NYC2014 AT A GLANCE

Registration 3,251

Competitive Entries 996

Engage Seminars 51

Reach That Guy

147 volunteers

1,011 hours worked

Locations/projects

Cook County Hospital, Food Bank.org,

Tarrant Food Bank, Aunt Edna's Closet,

Habitant for Humanity

Red Cross Blood Drive: 15 pints

Buck-A-Week

Offering \$2,561

2015 Ministries

Steve and Becky Riggs (France)

Greg and Lea Floars (Sawyer, Michigan)

Truth & Peace

100 participants

YET

Total Participants 13

Miles traveled: 3,400

Home Missions churches in Salt Lake

City, Utah and Colorado Springs, CO

Worked with churches in New Mexico,

Colorado, Kansas, and Utah

totaling over 150 hours.

2015 YET Destination – the Pacific

Northwest

**Engage Leadership
Network seminar
recordings available at
VerticalThree.com**

“My kids started asking about preschool worship as soon as we got suitcases out to head to the convention. We’ve had three come through this and I can’t thank you enough. It’s a ministry to my husband and I, but it feeds my children as well. We are beyond thankful.”

—Preschool parent

who are hurting.” One hundred forty-seven volunteers of all ages took this to heart, working for food banks, clothing donation centers, Habitat for Humanity, and a Red Cross blood drive as part of *Reach That Guy* service projects.

This also marks the first year for the Jim Lauthern Legacy Award, which will be presented to leaders who, like youth leader and visionary Jim Lauthern, have made a significant impact in youth leadership by investing time into the spiritual development of students and challenging them to be involved in ministries and events beyond the walls of the church. Thirty-three-year veteran student minister Curt Gwartney was selected the first recipient of the award as announced during the Wednesday evening awards ceremony.

Brandon Roysden, NYC director said, “This was an exciting time for Free Will Baptist young people. My two biggest prayers for them is that they leave this place with a renewed passion for living authentic lives, and that they find a heartfelt love for the people and ministries of our denomination. Events like this show us how much we can accomplish when we come together.” **ONE**

Find more NYC photos at: www.nafwb.yerbyphotography.com.



Photo: Mark Cowart



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

ONE to ONE >>

Aunt Bea

I grew up watching first-run episodes of *The Andy Griffith Show*. One of the unforgettable characters was Aunt Bea. She was the consummate homemaker. She sang in the church choir and was a member of the woman's auxiliary. Beatrice Taylor was the glue that held the family together.

Forty-one years ago, I married into the Dudley family. My mother-in-law's name is Beatrice. I have, on occasion, affectionately referred to her as "Aunt Bea." She is one of the most godly, remarkable women I have ever known.

She too, is a wonderful homemaker. Through the years she has faithfully served in various capacities as a devoted member of a Free Will Baptist church. At times she has been, quite literally, the glue that held our family together.

Recently, she pulled up roots and relocated to be near family. From my perspective, this spry 82-year-old has made an amazing transition into a different home, community, and church. Her resolve to make new friends and find happiness in a new location is an inspiration to us all.

One of Bea's favorite past-times is fishing. The other day, accompanied by her great-grandson, she gathered her fishing tackle and drove to a local farm pond so they could ply their angling skills. The weather was beautiful, and the fish were biting.

Her young fishing partner experienced phenomenal success. To her delight, she spent much of her time helping him land his catch and put fish on a stringer. It was the kind of day most sportsmen only dream of.

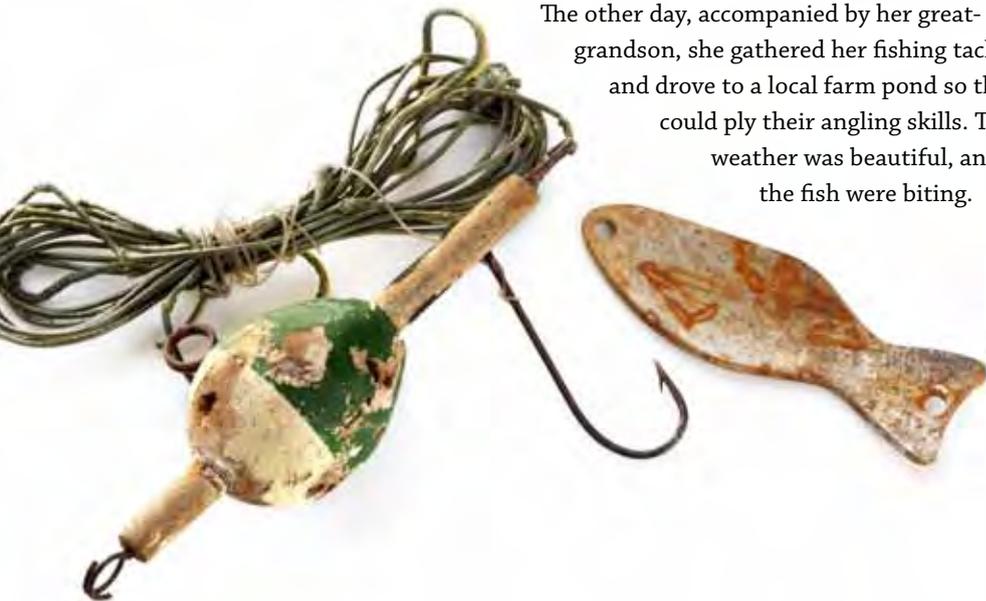
That's when it happened. As she stooped to anchor the stringer into the ground, she lost her balance, went head over heels, and somersaulted into the pond. True to her Baptist roots she experienced total immersion.

Thankfully, her great-grandson did not panic. Once she surfaced and he made sure she was okay, he called his mom on his cell phone to report the incident. However, before he could finish the conversation, he put his mom on hold because he got another bite!

After emerging from the pond soaking wet and regaining her equilibrium, Bea discovered she had lost her fishing hat and eye glasses. Attempts to recover them were unsuccessful, but the day was not a total loss. When the expedition ended, their day's work yielded a total of 21 fish. Three Ziploc™ bags of catfish fillets were deposited in the freezer and one of the funniest "fish stories" ever told had been spawned.

People like Bea are a blessing. Her adventurous spirit, ability to adapt to change, and willingness to invest in the lives of her family members is nothing short of extraordinary. I admire folks like her who grow older with grace, dignity, and a sense of humor.

Opie was right. "Aunt Bea sure is a swell lady!" **ONE**



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