

ONE LORD ONE VOICE ONE VISION

# ONE

magazine

The  
Johnson's  
Journey

*Brave Enough to Be Broken*

Standing Up to the  
"Mom Push"

*Answer  
the Call*

HOMEMADE  
FAITH

Let  
Them Go

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# A Burden for Free Will Baptists

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

"Free Will Baptists prayed for a Burden, and God gave them one."

I wish I had a dollar for every time I heard this dry quip from Executive Secretary Keith Burden. It's typical Keith. He doesn't take himself too seriously. But after 15 years working in the office next to his, I have learned he *always* takes the Lord's work seriously.

Recalling my time with Keith, six words come to mind—six "B" words for Burden.

**Bible.** After three decades of pastoring churches in California and Oklahoma, Keith arrived at the Executive Office in 2002 with a pastoral heart, a love for the Word of God, and a gift for simple, brief, yet powerful preaching. A true student of the Word, I offer him the highest praise I can: I've never heard him preach without being fully prepared.

**Books.** Not only is Keith an excellent writer who has won numerous awards for his editorials in *Contact* and *ONE* magazines (though he would never tell you), he is also concerned about *the books*. The records. After 15 years as clerk of the Oklahoma State Association and 18 years



as assistant clerk of the National Association, he became clerk of the National Association when Waldo Young stepped down. He served three years, until accepting his current role. Keith remains passionate about recording the history of the denomination. He once told me, "We have a generation that doesn't have a real appreciation for its history. It's so important for the denomination to understand how it came into being and the weight of its legacy."

**Budget.** Nobody warned Keith he would face the most devastating financial downturn since the Great Depression during his time as executive secretary. He faced excruciating staffing decisions, trimmed the office budget to the bone, and often refused a raise to ensure his staff received one. Standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other denominational leaders, Keith weathered the storm. In spite of the challenges, he leaves the office with a positive financial picture.

**Bold.** I never wondered where I stood with Keith. He always spoke truth. Boldly. He never picked a fight; neither did he run from conflict. He faced it head on. I haven't always agreed with Keith (don't tell him), but I always knew he stood for what he believed and, more importantly, what he thought God wanted.

**Boomer.** The office didn't change Keith. Don't misunderstand. The position took its toll. The constant travel, challenging situations, and tough decisions wore on him. But

he remains a small-town Oklahoma pastor at heart. He's a quiet man, but if you want to get him talking, just ask him about his family...or Sooner football. Then pull up a chair.

**Birdie.** You learn a lot about someone when you play golf. Keith was too busy to play much golf, but those rare matches taught me a lot. He played his own game, never trying to match distance with the big hitters. He hit it short and straight down the fairway. Really straight! And, no

matter how bleak the score, he never quit. Too many times I arrived at the 18th tee one up, only to walk off the final green shaking my head. Keith gave it everything he had until the very end. True in golf. True at the office.

We'll miss him. **ONE**

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# Standing Up to the “Mom Push”

BY AMY RIENOW

I cannot say for sure when it started, but as long as I have been a mother I have felt what I refer to as a “constant push.” The push moms experience from the time our kids are babies, is a push to *do* more and *expect* more from our kids. This sense that we moms need to ensure we are maximizing our kids’ fullest potential is frankly overwhelming. Every area of our kids’ development—social, physical, athletic, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual—all seem to demand a push.

Sure, at times we need to push our children. Our nine-year-old Ray went on a trip last summer with his grandparents and his cousin. While he was excited to go, he was also quite anxious about the whole thing. He needed several “mom-pushes” to help him overcome his fear and enjoy the trip. At times, pushing our kids is

helpful, but we need to do it according to our decision about what is best for our kids—not pressure from the culture around us.

This pressure applies to all moms, whether at home with their kids or in the workforce. Somehow, we unconsciously believe the same lie: we carry the responsibility to *raise our kids perfectly*. That sounds ridiculous! Who actually believes that? Sadly, many of us do without realizing it. We experience underlying pressure as moms to get it all right. We understand we face a little window of time called childhood, and we want to give our kids the best chance of success. We want them to be in great schools, great activities, and excel at them all. The cultural “mom-push” is that uneasy sensation you can always do more for your kids. It is an idealistic expectation that you can pave a beautiful, smooth road for your kids that will enable them to drive into the world of adult success.

One of the best ways to learn as a mom is to hang out regularly with other moms in the next stage of parenting.



Being blessed with many wise friends who have kids slightly older than mine, I have often clung to their wisdom. One such “next stage” friend of mine, Stephanie, gave me valuable wisdom when my oldest son graduated from high school.

RW’s high school experience had ups and downs like most kids. His senior year was rather emotional for me. While much of it was filled with enjoying the fruit of all the hard work of parenting, I also experienced a regular evaluation of my “mom choices.” I was unprepared for the sense of regret I began to feel, questioning some of the choices Rob and I made. *Did we make the right educational choices? Should I have pushed him to do percussion team? Would it have been better if I had sent him to the public school?* These questions were not nearly as bad as the “should have” thoughts that regularly floated through my brain. Thoughts like, *I should have pushed him to develop his math gifts more. I should have gone to more of his games. I should not have over-parented him so much.* I was hard on myself unnecessarily because of an uneasy feeling it was possible to parent without regrets, to parent perfectly.

My friend Stephanie gave me a beautiful picture that now guides me in my mom mission. She said, “Amy, when you look back at the 18 years of RW in your home, you see a road with potholes, and you are focusing on the potholes. What you are not seeing is the beautiful road. What is worse, you actually think the road is supposed to have no potholes! There is no such thing as a smooth, paved road for any of our kids. Now, let me tell you what you cannot see. As RW leaves your home, you are going to see how God paves the potholes. God is going to fill—according to His plan, not yours—the potholes in RW’s road.”

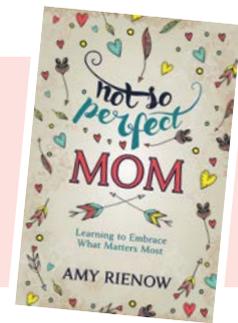
You cannot parent without potholes, whether the potholes are your mistakes, circumstances you cannot change, a difficult school environment, or a lack of good friends. Your kids and you will experience many disappointments in the growing-up years. By the time our kids are 18, some of their childhood dreams will have come and gone. They may never play on the varsity

basketball team, make a school musical, or have a close group of friends. If we are honest with ourselves, we will admit these dreams were not just for our kids; they were our dreams as well.

When dreams don’t come true, where do you want your kids to go for comfort and guidance? I want them to come to me or to their dad. If my kids feel my most important goal was pushing them to greatness, they will not come to me when greatness is eluding them. However, if heart-connected relationship is clearly the most important goal in my parenting, my kids will want to come to me when their dreams are fading. They will not value themselves based on performance. Instead, my kids will know I value them for who they are.

Mom, you can’t do it all, and your kids can’t do it all. Stand up to the “mom-push” and start pushing back. You may not believe it, but your kids do want to have heart-connected relationships with you. A loving relationship with you builds resilience in your kids to deal with the inevitable disappointments that are part of life—everyone’s life. Make sure your kids know you are pleased with them for who they are rather than what they are becoming. **ONE**

Order Amy Rienow's latest book, **Not So Perfect Mom**, at [randallhouse.com](http://randallhouse.com).



**About the Writer:** Amy Rienow and her husband Rob founded Visionary Family Ministries, a ministry created to equip parents, encourage couples, and help families live for Christ. She is the author of several books including *Visionary Parenting*, *Visionary Marriage*, and *Shine: Embracing God’s Heart for You*. Amy attended University of Illinois and Wheaton College Graduate School where she earned an MA in Clinical Psychology. She has her hands full as a busy mom, speaking at women’s events, and serving in the worship ministry at church.



# Husbands: Lead Your Homes in Family Worship-Discipleship

BY MATTHEW STEVEN BRACEY

Forming new habits—new practices—is sometimes difficult, especially if they cut against the grain of your family upbringing.

## Family Matters

Throughout my childhood, my mother ensured I attended church on Sunday mornings. As my youth turned to adolescence, I began attending church on Sunday and Wednesday evenings, as well as other church events, because my mother deepened her commitment to church attendance and spiritual life.

Fast-forward about a decade to the eve of my wedding. God instructs the husbands to give godly leadership to his home. “What does such leadership look like?” I thought. “Am I really prepared for this?” My personal family experience included Christian moral standards in the home and (generally) faithful attendance in the church. “Is that all God requires?” I wondered. I thought not. My pastor and youth pastor taught me better than that. I knew the Bible called me to more.

Undoubtedly, I am tremendously grateful to my mother’s good influence, as well as my father’s, because God, within the cradle of that context, gave new life to my spirit. But as someone thinking about my own responsibility to my future wife—as someone thinking about

the accounting I will one day give to God for my stewardship of that calling—I knew He expected more from me. Christian morals and church attendance are great. But they’re just the beginning.

Husbands: your responsibility to your family, to lead them in family worship and discipleship, is paramount.<sup>1</sup> If your parent(s) modeled good family worship-discipleship, then carry forward that good legacy. However, if your upbringing was like mine, give thanksgiving for what you received, yet know you may need to build upon what you were given, or even construct a whole new foundation. Whatever your background, scrutinize the spiritual quality of your leadership in the home according to the revelation of God.

## Biblical Foundations

The biblical justification for family worship-discipleship is straightforward and strong. In the Old Testament,

<sup>1</sup> Hereafter, I will refer to this dual role as family worship-discipleship. Worship does not modify discipleship adjectivally. Instead, worship-discipleship is a compound word describing a dual role for the godly husband.

God establishes His covenant with man so that its leaders would oversee the spiritual development of their homes, teaching the Lord's commandments to their children and their households (Deuteronomy 6:7) and instructing them in the way of righteousness (Psalms 1:1-3). The purpose statement (*so that*) may seem too emphatic, but it is precisely what the Bible says: "For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him" (Genesis 18:19; cf. Galatians 3).

Joshua also demonstrates the Old Testament's enjoiner: "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD" (24:15). In addition, Psalm 78 explains that generational discipleship occurs across decades and centuries (verses 3-4; 6-8).

The New Testament expands this emphasis on family worship-discipleship. Husbands shall honor their wives and lead them spiritually unto holiness (Ephesians 5:26; 1 Peter 3:7), as well as fathers leading their children (Ephesians 6:4). In summary, the Bible instructs husbands and fathers to lead their homes in family worship-discipleship. If you're not the receiver of a biblical heritage, then pave new ground and build new structures.

### Elements of Family Worship-discipleship

Family worship-discipleship does not occur spontaneously. It requires planning and time. Husbands must reject laziness and passivity and instead choose to seek intentional, diligent leadership. That is the example we see in Jacob, who led his household to forsake pagan deities, to purify themselves, and to worship God alone (Genesis 35:2-3). I hesitate to describe what family worship-discipleship should look like in each family setting. Each home will differ according to its composition and the unique personalities and life stages of its members. Nevertheless, I recommend several elements that could, or even should, be included in family worship.

Donald Whitney makes some helpful suggestions in his excellent (and short!) book *Family Worship*. If you've not read it, please do so. It's affordable, easy-to-read, and practical. Whitney points to three primary components of family worship-discipleship: read, pray, and sing. Read the Bible, and pray and sing to God as a family. Whitney identifies three additional, components: catechesis (Bible teaching), Scripture memory, and book reading. Exactly how husbands incorporate these various elements into their own family settings will depend upon the variables I reviewed above, according to the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Whitney also suggests brevity, regularity, and flexibility. How can we as husbands add yet another responsibility to our family's already busy lives? Family worship-discipleship should not take long. Fifteen minutes is sufficient; too long may be counter-productive. In addition, husbands should lead their families with consistency, as regularly as they eat their meals. Finally, they cannot be too rigid but be flexible through the changing seasons of life.

Family worship-discipleship is an indispensable part of family leadership. Non-Christian upbringing, inconvenience, and other difficulties are not good excuses to fail in this calling. Nothing is. The foundational reason husbands must lead their families in the instruction and admonition of the Lord is because He directs us to—pure and simple. In conclusion: husbands, resolve to give your families a moral education and to guide their spiritual development and, in doing so, to obey your Father's command to lead your homes in family worship-discipleship. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Matthew Steven Bracey (M.T.S., J.D.) works at Welch College as vice provost and professor, teaching courses in ethics, theology, and law. A prolific writer, Matthew is also co-founder and senior editor of the Helwys Society Forum (thehsf.com) and has published articles and/or reviews in the *Biblical Higher Education Journal*, *The Brink* magazine, *Christian Academia* magazine, *Evangelical Quarterly*, *FUSION*, and *Integrity*.

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# Imagine

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO WITH A TEAM OF 75 DISCIPLESHIP SPECIALISTS?

BY RON HUNTER JR.

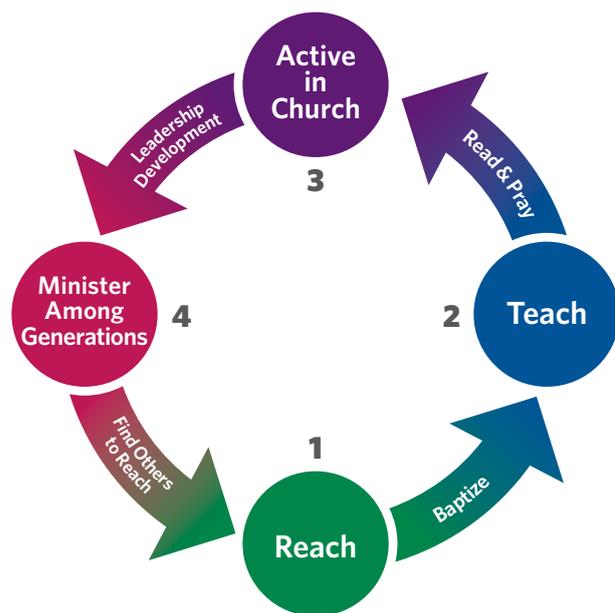
Three wrongs don't make a right, but three lefts do. Driving habits can vary as much as one's temperament behind the wheel. Most men believe movement equals progress and will go three miles out of the way as long as the tires are turning, even if the car does not get any closer to the destination. And what about that road trip? If only you could synchronize every family member's bladder or agree not to hit three fast food restaurants to satisfy the cravings of every rider. While you may lose most battles with your spouse arguing over the time saved if you exit only off the right side of the interstate because reentry is faster, one item everyone agrees on is measuring progress toward your vacation destination. No one wants to leave for the beach and palm trees only to drive aimlessly toward snow-capped mountains.

Oddly enough, many ministry leaders can be as scattered on ideas of discipleship. When it comes to discipleship, Judges 21:25 seems to be the strategy of some churches: everyone doing what is right in their own eyes without regard to better, proven principles. What if you could hire a team of experienced and proven discipleship experts to help develop every step of your congregation's progress toward being disciple-making disciples? What do you think a team of 75 discipleship specialists would cost to help you every week of every year? I will answer that question later.

This team of 75 could examine the appropriate learning styles and abilities of your students then develop a way to teach each lesson and also show transformational disciples of all ages—from nursery to the most experienced adults—how to walk daily with Christ. This team does not see discipleship through a single lens but a multi-pronged approach. Just as you don't want to approach road trips haphazardly, your congregation would appreciate a long-term view rather than weaving from idea to idea. Is it time to focus on the bigger

picture and see the need for an intentional on-ramp and, eventually, an interstate that moves people down a disciple-making path?

Randall House is your team of specialists that maps out what can best be seen in a circular flow chart of helping a person find Christ, enter into discipleship, use his or



her gifts in the church, and have regular faith conversations in the home and workplace. Each of the four vital benchmarks creates actions that lead to the next phase. (See chart at bottom of previous page.)

It should not surprise anyone that every step in the circle is biblical, because the Great Commission has always included a *reach and teach* approach, even though most churches focus on one or the other. When both are emphasized, your congregation will find a sustainable discipleship pattern. When you see a growing church, you will find an emphasis on making disciples who make disciples.

Ministry leaders mistakenly believe the focus must be on what happens at *church*. By doing that with excellence the rest will take care of itself. Unfortunately, that approach teaches families to compartmentalize church and life. The mentality that all discipleship comes from a lesson and a sermon is more like historical Roman Catholicism, where adherents go through the motions at church but walk away from it in everyday life. The Protestant church's criticism of compartmentalized faith—weekly confession without daily discipleship—has crept into our methodology. The way to break this hypocritical trend is to teach all ages how to work on disciple development each day.



Remember, discipleship is not an event; it's a way of life. Events provide vitally important onramps to inspire and challenge people to live out their faith in daily discipleship. Events are momentary, but lifestyles are sustainable habits. *Discipleship* by its name includes *discipline*; consistently living as a disciple daily, not once a week. *Events* describe an occurrence with a defined starting and ending point such as a weekly church service, annual conferences, youth camps, or even a class that might offer a slightly longer event. Each event should guide the disciple toward more profound, routine habits like daily quiet times with Scripture and prayer. Church equips

the disciple with theological boundaries, in-depth teaching, and a place to serve within the community of believers. The daily disciplines of quiet time and prayer bring accountability, connections to family and Christ. The way-of-life approach reveals deeper, more sustainable relationships that hold families together through the most trying times of life.

You might give your members a copy of *Our Daily Bread*, but that is a little light, doctrinally neutral, and only for adults. Randall House offers a devotional magazine for each age (including 11 distinct life stages from early childhood readers to elementary, teen, and three stages for adults). **For the price of one latté, you can put 13 weeks of devotional discipleship content in the hands of every family member.** A more significant benefit, the material creates conversations between parents and kids, grandparents and grandkids, and the older folks with the younger in church. In a day when senior adults have few ways to connect with the teens and kids, D6 Curriculum provides a connection at church and during the week.

Your church provides depth through sermons, songs, and connection with other disciples. Don't ask your team to develop their own lessons, questions, or curriculum when they should be focused on relationships. Let Randall House provide a proven, award-winning curriculum with a team of 75 specialists behind it: writers, editors, designers, printers, and church ministry consultants. Put our team to work for you.

Can you afford to hire our staff of discipleship specialists? Yes, you can! Just call and let us show you how five to eight dollars a person can change your *weekly* discipleship into *daily* discipleship with a devotional for every person. We can assure you the price of NOT doing church and home discipleship is far more costly. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Ron Hunter Jr., Ph.D., is CEO of Randall House Publications, author of *DNA of D6* and *Toy Box Leadership*, and co-author of *Youth Ministry in the 21st Century*. Learn more about generational Sunday School curriculum: [www.d6family.com](http://www.d6family.com).

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# Brave Enough to Be Broken

BY MARIE DRAKULIC

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“For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh” (2 Corinthians 4:11).

I recently watched a movie where the hero's family is trapped inside a burning skyscraper. In one scene, amongst the flames and burning timber, he kneels to eye level with his son. “I'm scared,” the son admits. “It's okay to be scared,” he replies. “In order to be brave, you've got to be a little scared.” Now, here I am, in the middle of that action movie, with tears in my eyes. Because I get it!

I get what it's like to be stuck in a fire that feels as though it will consume you at any moment. I know what it's like to look into your child's eyes and see fear—fear you can't take away. It's not monsters under the bed or a loud thunderstorm. You can't flip on the lights or hold them until it passes. The fear is *real*.

Sometimes, I close my eyes and imagine things are different—that we aren't the family who people know because of a cancer diagnosis. For a moment, I see Austin as a normal teenager and us as a family growing up together. I imagine we are regular people with everyday problems. But when I open my eyes, reality hits me like a Mack truck. The reality is Austin has brain cancer, and it is deadly. We don't get to grow up together or even plan next summer's vacation. We can't see past the next MRI. We are in the middle of a burning building, with fire surrounding us. Cancer hasn't afforded me the luxury of not seeing my own brokenness. I am reminded of it every day. And it is both a gift and the most pain-

ful, heart-crushing thing I have ever experienced.

You might think it odd I would call it a gift. I'm still struggling to find the words to describe it myself. But I have never been so sure of God's love for me than I am right now. It seems the hotter the flames, the more I know how deep and reckless and all consuming His love is for us. His love is so deep, He willingly stands in the fire with us. C.S. Lewis describes this phenomenon in his allegory, *The Magician's Nephew*:

*He thought of his Mother, and he thought of the great hopes he had had, and how they were all dying away, and a lump came into his throat with tears in his eyes, and he blurted out: “But please, please—won't you—can't you give me something that will cure Mother?” Up until then he had been looking at the Lion's great feet and the huge claws on them; now, in his despair, he looked up at its face. What he saw surprised him as much as anything in his whole life. For the tawny face was bent down near his own and (wonder of wonders) great shining tears stood in the Lion's eyes. . . . For a moment he felt as if the Lion must really be sorrier about his Mother than he was himself.<sup>1</sup>*

I may look strong, but I live afraid. Yet, that fear drives me to Jesus. Every morning, I get up and put one foot in front of the other. It's because of Him. Every time I

<sup>1</sup> *The Magician's Nephew* by C.S. Lewis, originally published in 1955 as a volume in *The Chronicles of Narnia*.

listen to a bad report at the oncologist and turn again to mother my children. Him. Every time I minister to others. Him. Only Him. Always.

That's where bravery comes in. I have full access to Christ's power when I surrender the full measure of my brokenness. Paul said in 2 Corinthians, "I rather glory [boast] in my infirmities [weakness], that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (12:9). I have to tell you, I would rather do plenty of other things than boast about my weaknesses. Like hide in a cave. Being vulnerable sometimes feels like having my heart raked over hot coals.

But when I am brave enough to be broken, God's extraordinary power is alive in me (2 Corinthians 4:7). When I am brave enough to face reality, I remember the greatest truth: Heaven is real and Christ died so we might attain it. Cancer doesn't get to win. When I am brave enough to "ugly cry" in front of someone, I get to experience the richness and depth of true friendship. When I am brave enough to admit it *will* hurt and things might *not* get better this side of eternity, I experience a joy that goes deeper than my circumstances.

What about you? Are you brave enough to be broken? You may not have a child with cancer, but I assure you, my friend, we have all been broken. Your brokenness may have come at your own hand—sin, addiction, or rebellion. Your brokenness may be a result of someone else's rejection through divorce or abandonment. Your brokenness may be a result of death. I am learning grief never goes away, only changes as time passes. Your bro-

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IT IS BOTH A  
GIFT AND THE  
MOST PAINFUL,  
HEART-  
CRUSHING  
THING I  
HAVE EVER  
EXPERIENCED.

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kenness may result from failing health or poor finances. Or your brokenness may simply be the result of living in a world that is dying. We live in the in-betweens and untills, a time after perfection and before complete redemption. Whatever it is that caused it, you *are* broken.

It takes a good dose of courage to see the fire around you and admit you are afraid. You need to be courageous to stand before others and admit you are vulnerable, to confess you can't make it better, to ask for help. It *will* be painful, but it will be worth it.

I will never forget the day when I knew it was cancer. They hadn't told us officially yet, but I knew. I grabbed my phone and ran from the hospital room. Bursting into tears, I called my best friend. "I know God can be glorified in this, but I don't want it," I cried. And He has been glorified in this. Over and over, I have seen Him do "exceedingly, abundantly" (see Ephesians 3:20). Oh, but I think I know what Paul means when he calls it a weight, because some days the glory of Heaven seems too heavy a burden to bear on earth. Lord, help me to be brave—brave enough to be broken.

"For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:16-18). **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Marie Drakulic and her husband Tony are team members with Daryl Grimes, planting Flagship FWB Church in Erie, Pennsylvania: [www.flagshipchurch.com](http://www.flagshipchurch.com).

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At 2:45 a.m. on June 25, Jesus welcomed Austin Drakulic home. In the words of his family: "Austin fought brain cancer valiantly. Please do not think for one second he lost that battle. No, Austin gained the greatest victory one can be awarded. He gained Heaven. And he is more alive now than he ever was here."

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith" (2 Timothy 4:7).

The family wishes to thank everyone across the denomination that prayed for them during Austin's illness.

# Let Them Go

BY STACIE COMPTON

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“What do you want to be when you grow up?” I asked my daughter as we drove through town. “Well, maybe a doctor for animals or a teacher, or maybe a missionary” she answered.

“Oh, wow! Those all sound fun,” I replied nonchalantly. “Wait...a missionary? That would mean you would have to live far, far away from Daddy and me. Are you sure you want to do that?”

The truth of the matter was I wasn't sure *I* wanted her to do that. Sure, I meant all the things I vowed when we stood before the church and committed ourselves to see her disciplined and raised in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord. However, in that dedication service, I'm not so sure we meant *that*.

The deeper reality is, we at IM find parents all too often want their children to serve the Lord wholeheartedly—just on their terms and near their homes. The dilemma is people around the world are dying and going into eternity without hearing of Jesus Christ. And, quite honestly, it's our own fault. We have the answers they need. Yet, we often hold tightly to the reins of those gifted with the opportunity to go.

Never in my wildest dreams, when they laid my baby girl against my skin in the delivery room, did I imagine she might one day walk through airport security with the intention of boarding a plane to a far-away land to share the gospel. Our girls are only seven and 11, but this reality hit me right in the heart.

I still get emotional thinking about the opening ceremony of E-TEAM 2018 at Welch College. Neil Gilliland gave the final speech of the night. Those who have heard it know exactly what he says. My face flushed, and I could feel the tears dripping from my cheeks. I wasn't expecting those emotions. I'm simply an IM employee. I was there to support these students as they prepared to embark on their journey. Neil told the parents, “Say your good-byes well. You will not get the same child back when he or she returns.” It hit me hard. He's



right. They are about to be forever changed by the impact of the gospel. Mommas, hear me loud and clear: it's our duty as parents to let them go.

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SAY YOUR  
GOODBYES  
WELL. YOU  
WILL NOT GET  
THE SAME  
CHILD BACK  
WHEN HE OR  
SHE RETURNS.

---

their faces, but the blessings those families receive is also great. What pride and joy must fill their hearts when they read updates from various fields—souls

The call is clear: “Go into all the world to preach the gospel.”

I've stood against the wall at the airport, quietly watching mothers send their children and grandchildren to Spain, Bulgaria, France, and beyond. The sadness is real as they wipe tears from

saved, baptisms, new works established—and they have a role in each of them.

Each summer, hundreds of teenagers are given an opportunity to go. We must support them in this. Their Heavenly Father is calling. Our obedience matters as much as theirs. Will you let them go? Eternity is at stake. Your son or daughter might be the one who shares the life-changing message of Jesus' love for the world.

Pray hard, hug them tight, and *let them go.* 

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**About the Writer:** Stacie Compton joined IM in January 2016. She and her husband Chris attend The Donelson Fellowship and have two daughters, Kaylee and Hannah. Stacie graduated from Welch College in 2004. She loves music, cooking, and spending time with friends and family.

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# IT'S A

# CHURCH

BY KRISTI JOHNSON

## A Son Is Born

We couldn't believe our eyes! In June 2000, we watched as our first-born child, Alejandro, came into the world and was carefully placed into our arms. As new parents, we weren't sure how we would handle this new responsibility. After a nine-month wait, we were thrilled to see how God answered so many prayers for our little one's safe arrival. It's a boy!

## A Daughter Is Born

In January 2003, Ana was born and won our hearts from the moment her precious eyes gazed into ours. She was so tiny and beautiful and completed our family perfectly. Again, we realized our insufficiency as parents and begged God for grace and wisdom as we journeyed through parenthood with her. It's a girl!

## A Church Is Born

Our eyes filled with excitement three years later when we watched people walked through the door for our very first church service in

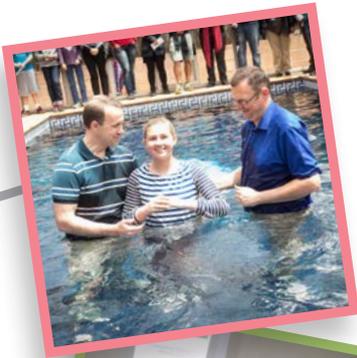


Alpedrete. It was the moment for which we had been waiting. Our storefront building had been renovated, and everything was ready for the big day. Eighteen people from many different backgrounds filled the main room of the church, joining as the Body of Christ in Alpedrete.

One lady told us she couldn't believe a church was finally in her town. The tears streaming down her face reminded us God had providentially placed us in Alpedrete, a town where the motto is "Heart of Stone." Many stone-cold hearts in this small pueblo needed to be softened. And this was just the place God planned for people to come and find out about His love for them. It's a church!

## Growing Children

Alejandro and Ana didn't stay babies very long. They grew into children who wanted someone to read them books at night, help them with schoolwork, and chauffeur them to various after-school activities. I remember vividly when they were first learning to ride their bikes. Tim ran after them, holding on to the back of their bicycle seats while



they pedaled unsteadily around the park. Not only did they eventually get the hang of riding their bikes, they also found their God-given talents in learning new languages and playing and singing in our church's music group. Those tiny babies grew into teenagers.

### Growing Church

The Alpedrete church, just like our children, started off in a *newborn* stage. The early days were filled with late nights of preparation, little sleep, and lots of spoon-feeding as we taught members how to grow as

a church. As missionaries, we led music, taught classes, preached sermons, cleaned the church, and spent many hours laying the groundwork for what would become a new church plant.

As we busily ministered, we also tried to teach others to do these things. Soon, they began to try out their training wheels. They took on new responsibilities like sponsoring ladies' meetings, organizing evangelistic events in a local fair, and working with the Evangelical Olympics in Madrid. They found their God-given talents and used them each Sunday to teach children's classes, lead music, preach sermons, and do what needed to be done in the church. They attended Bible studies where they learned about spiritual gifts and doctrines and apologetics. They soon became a mature group of believers, serious about loving God and ready to share His love with those around them. This newborn church was growing.

### A Child Leaves the Nest

Our emotions were high when we drove off the campus of Welch College on a balmy day in August 2018. We had just said final goodbyes to Alejandro, after helping him set up his dorm room and register for classes. It was bittersweet to watch him fulfill

his dreams and goals while stepping out of the nest. As hard as it was for us to hold back the tears, we knew we had spent the last 18 years preparing him for this moment. He was ready.

### A Church Leaves the Nest

We are also filled with emotion as we observe the Alpedrete church taking steps to leave the nest and fly on its own. We've watched members struggle through the years, and we've seen God graciously bring them through many difficult times. We've often experienced the same emotions we felt that August day when we left our son at college. *Will they be okay? Will they continue to grow? Will they be able to handle all the responsibilities coming their way?* But deep down in our hearts, we know they are ready.

### Empty Nest, Full Hearts

We will soon be on the *other* side of parenting the two precious children the Lord has given us. One has left the nest and the second is teetering on the edge, ready to test her wings and fly away to college in a few short years. Even though our nest is starting to feel a little empty, our hearts are filled, knowing both our children have chosen to follow God's call on their lives.

We are also almost to the other side of planting a church in Alpedrete. As we look toward this transition, we remember the admonition Paul gave the new church at Philippi: "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (1:6). May God fill each person in the Alpedrete church with this vision as they walk into the future and continue to fulfill the good work God began in them a few short years ago.

We couldn't be prouder to announce: "It's a CHURCH!" **ONE**



**About the Writer:** Kristi Johnson and her husband Tim have worked as church planters in Spain for over 20 years. Along with their children Alejandro and Ana, they enjoy exploring new cities and trying new foods along the way.

# Just a Spark!

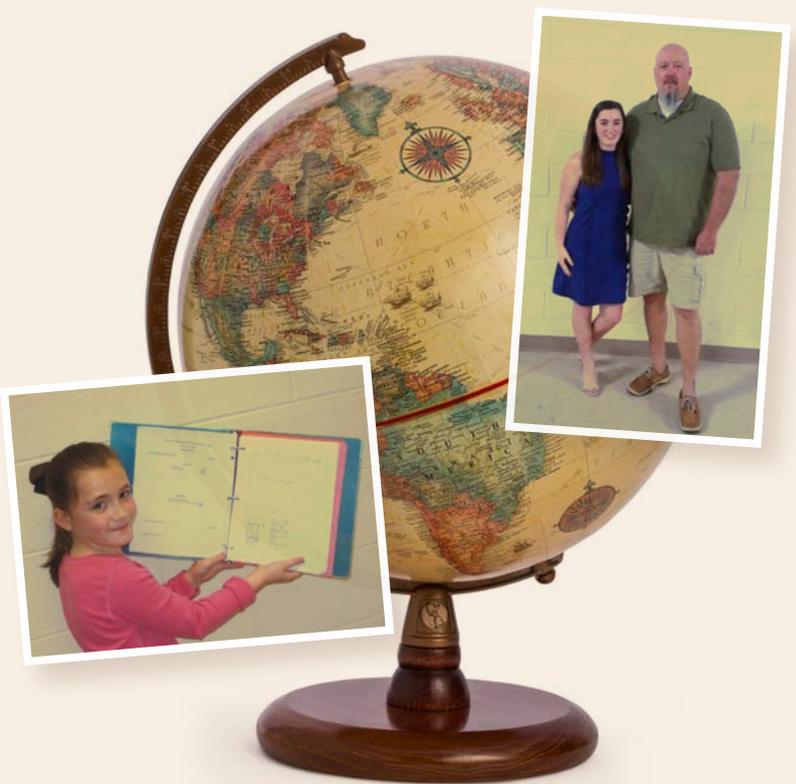
BY PAMELA HACKETT

Olivia Hefner is eager to serve the Lord as she participates with E-TEAM through IM. A member of Fairview Free Will Baptist Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, Olivia is a junior at Broome High School. She is active in cross country, student government, Beta Club, and the debate team. An active honorary member of the Women Active for Christ Ministry at Fairview since she was a very young, she listened intently each month as the lives of our missionaries unfolded during meetings. Missionaries visiting Fairview stirred a passion in her heart as they shared burdens about the countries where they minister. Her interest in missions deepened further at summer camp, where she was exposed to E-TEAM.

The first place she served was St. Croix, Virgin Islands. She looked forward to the preliminary events at Welch College, preparing for the culture, and connecting with her teammates and others. Her faith never wavered when she thought about the cost of raising her funds.

On her last Sunday before leaving for Welch College, my husband and I noticed Ronald, her dad, crying after Sunday School. We were both concerned, knowing he had been hesitant to let Olivia fulfill her dream to serve with E-TEAM and travel so far away from home. We approached him, thinking we could comfort him in some way. We explained we understood his reluctance in letting his “little girl” go so far from home. He hadn’t visited St. Croix to make sure it was going to be a safe place for his daughter.

After we had said what we thought he needed to hear, he looked at my husband and I and, with big tears flow-



ing down his cheeks, said, “You don’t understand; I’ve already lost her.” Tim and I glanced at each other; we really didn’t comprehend what he meant. He added, “I have already lost her to the mission field.” He explained that he knew she was burdened for the regions beyond, for people who need to hear the gospel. Tim and I finally understood his tears.

Olivia served on E-TEAM Brazil this year. Her enthusiasm has been contagious to our congregation and among the teens at Fairview. Another girl from our church saw Olivia’s passion. Raegan Price spent her first E-TEAM experience in Chicago. Olivia is proof “it only takes a spark to get a fire going.” **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Pam Hackett is an alumna of Welch College and the University of South Carolina Upstate. Pam was recognized in 2013 for more than 25 years of teaching by the South Carolina Association of Christian Schools. She has been the South Carolina WAC coordinator for ten years and a member of the WNAC board since 2009. Pam has served as mission study chairman for her local WAC ministry for 28 years. Her husband, Tim has pastored Fairview FWB Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, for 28 years.

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# Cathy Crawford With the Lord

**Antioch, TN**—Former missionary to France Cathy Crawford joined her Savior May 9, 2019. The 67-year-old valiantly battled cancer for about five years. She transferred to a hospice facility in April so they could better manage her needs.

A native Ohioan, she was appointed to missionary service in April 1982 and served until June 2014.

Cathy departed for France in August 1983. Completing language study in the fall of 1985, she initially worked with John and Pansy Murray at the church in Nantes. She wrote and distributed gospel tracts, participated in marketplace ministry, provided counseling, and led Bible studies.

In 1989, Cathy began working with Dennis and Carol Teague in a church-planting effort in St. Sébastien. Personal evangelism, teaching Bible studies, counseling, and youth work were her main contributions to the effort there. Cathy continued in these ministries throughout her time in France, although the locations varied.

IM's General Director Clint Morgan stated, "Throughout the years I knew Cathy, she was extremely committed to building strong relationships and speaking into the lives of unbelievers. She was known by her colleagues as having a servant's heart. Her legacy will live on in those whose lives were transformed by the messages she so willingly shared."

The funeral was held Tuesday, May 14, in Sciotoville, Ohio. **ONE**



*Cathy Crawford*

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## Missionary Account Updates

**Antioch, TN**—As of April 30, 2019, three missionary accounts showed deficits: India Ministries/Carlisle Hanna, Kenneth and Rejane Eagleton, and Jerry and Barbara Gibbs. Two missionary accounts had dangerously low balances: Tyler

and Kellie Penn and Dennis and Carol Teague.

To donate to deficit accounts, mail a check to IM, Inc., P.O. Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37013 or donate online at [IMinc.org/give](http://IMinc.org/give).

For the latest account balances, visit [IMinc.org/news](http://IMinc.org/news).

# IM Announces New Director of Mobilization

**Antioch, TN**—General Director Clint Morgan announced Danny Gasperson, of Asheville, North Carolina, has accepted the position of director of mobilization. As part of his duties, he will also become the administrative director of The Hanna Project. Gasperson began his new role on July 1, 2019.

Morgan noted, “We are excited to have Danny join our home team. His work in missions, church mobilization, and discipleship clearly reveal his passion for missions.”

Gasperson pastored Zephyr Hills FWB Church in Asheville for 19 years. He and his wife Jackie promoted missions awareness and involvement during their tenure. Danny once said, “We thought we were a ‘missions-minded church’ but discovered we were just a church that didn’t mind missions. As we examined our priorities and oriented them to God’s priorities, missions went from being part of the program to the heart of the program. Our people developed personal ownership of missions.”

That heart for missions became evident as the congregation sponsored an annual prayer summit. Missionaries discovered Zephyr Hills attendees truly knew

them—their prayer needs, their family members, their particular missionary efforts, and their fields of service.

As a result, missionaries love to participate in this local church endeavor. Morgan affirmed, “We’d love to see Danny help churches across the country make a similar journey.”

Though a congregation of fewer than 100 people, Zephyr Hills is consistently one of the top donating churches to the WMO (World Mission Offering) and overall missions support. In 2018, Zephyr Hills gave more than \$32,000 to IM, ranking in the top 20 donating churches in the nation. Their \$19,200 WMO offering placed them at number four in the country. Gasperson regularly promoted IM and THP at association meetings and other FWB churches. He also encouraged churches in western North Carolina to participate in a Perspectives course, broadening their vision, understanding, and participation in the Great Commission. He has led multiple overseas trips with The Hanna Project, primarily in



*Danny Gasperson*

Central Asia. Many of his church members have participated in mission trips both overseas and in the States.

The 59-year-old was elected to IM’s board at the 2018 National Association of Free Will Baptists. His acceptance of the director of mobilization position will necessitate the election of a new board member at the 2019 convention in Ohio.

Danny graduated with a B.A. from Welch College in 1984. He earned a M.A. from Bob Jones University in 1985. Married for 37 years, he and his wife Jackie have two children, a son-in-law, and two grandsons.

Gasperson informed his church of the new position on Sunday, May 12. “Pray for Zephyr Hills,” Danny asked, “as they make adjustments and seek a new pastor. Jackie and I are eternally grateful to our wonderful Zephyr Hills Church family who faithfully loved, encouraged and supported us for the past 19 years. We, too, desire your prayers as we transition into this new stage of ministry. I am thrilled and honored to join the IM family to learn from and labor with them as we strive to make God’s Name famous to the ends of the earth.” **ONE**

# Kept in Love, Part 2

BY BARRY RAPER

## Jude 22-23

In the April-May issue, we learned love is the motivation for telling others about Jesus. In fact, this is the central message of this passage: You are *kept* in the love of God to reach out *with* the love of God. In these verses, Jude notes three categories of people: those not obeying false teachers but experiencing serious doubts, those swayed by false teaching and living in danger of fire, and false teachers themselves. He encourages us to have mercy on those who doubt and save others by snatching them out of the fire, to show mercy with fear. I summarize Jude's call to reach out in this way:

**Reach out with mercy.** While we certainly must speak about the judgment of God, we also must be motivated by the mercy of God. Consider Jesus and the rich young ruler. Even as Jesus revealed the material possessions that kept him following Christ, He loved him.

**Reach out with urgency.** The phrase *snatching from the fire* communicates pulling them, seizing them with urgency. When our large family of seven goes on vacation, it gets a little hectic. It's hard to keep up with everyone.

One year, while sitting poolside, I heard a splash and realized our daughter Caroline, probably four at the time, had fallen into the deep end of the pool and was thrashing underwater. It was only a moment, but I felt paralyzed. I couldn't move. But a lady, a total stranger, jumped into the pool and snatched her from the water—with urgency.

When people are in danger of eternal fire, we must not remain indifferent or paralyzed by inaction. Certainly in evangelism, we encounter seasons to exercise patience. We cannot force someone to follow Christ. However, we must do everything we can—with urgency—to snatch them from the fire.

**Reach out with purity.** What does it mean to *hate the garment stained by the flesh*? Simply this: hate the sin but love the sinner. In reaching the sinner, refuse to compromise God's standards of holiness. We must not become entangled in their sin and defile ourselves.

Hate what sin does as it damages and defiles, but remember that God offers every sinner pure "clothes" in exchange for their defiled garments stained by sin (Zechariah 3:1-6). This is the

great exchange of the gospel, the offer we hold out to any and everyone. God made Christ sin for us, the One who knew no sin, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. So, reach out with purity.

My first experience with personal evangelism was my parents. I didn't grow up in church, and my parents didn't go to church. I didn't know much at all about Christianity. Yet, the night I was saved, when I returned home from church, I went straight to my parent's bedroom. They were still awake, so I told them, as best as I knew how, that I had been saved. I had a new love for God, and I already loved my parents. So, I immediately began to reach out to them. It should always be that simple:

**Love God, be kept by His love, and reach out to those who need to know His love. ONE**

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**About the Columnist:** Dr. Barry Raper pastors Bethel FWB Church near Ashland City, Tennessee. He also serves as program coordinator for ministry studies at Welch College and is a member of the Tennessee Christian Education Board. Barry and his wife Amanda have five children.

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# The Johnson's Journey

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

It sounds like the beginning of a Free Will Baptist fairy tale: two preacher's kids meet while working at Chick-fil-A in Smithfield, North Carolina, fall in love, and get married two years later. Maybe not a fairy tale, but close!

Four years later and the General Manager of another Chick-fil-A in Garner, North Carolina, Luke Johnson and his wife Amanda welcomed baby Brayden, a healthy, happy child. Another three years passed, and on January 24, 2010, five-pound, six-ounce Landen joined the Johnson's story. Luke and Amanda were delighted to welcome another healthy baby. After a brief hospital stay, they took Landen home. Life was good.



As days and weeks stretched into months, however, the Johnsons began to be concerned about their new son. At Landen's first appointment, his weight had dropped significantly. Doctors began to monitor his health closely. When he weighed only eight pounds at his six-month check-up, the Johnsons were referred to a geneticist at University of North Carolina Hospital. After extensive testing, the specialist shared five words that destroyed any fairy tale illusions Luke and Amanda might have held: "Your son has primordial dwarfism."

Luke recalls the raw emotions of that moment. "We felt shock, then fear. We wondered, 'What does this even mean?' We had been to doctor after doctor, and they all told us that although he was small, he looked good, so we didn't expect the diagnosis. Honestly, Amanda and I didn't say much to each other the rest of the day. I clearly remember thinking to myself 'I'm not reading my Bible tonight because I'm angry.' The next few moments as I battled through those emotions I opened my Bible to where I left off the prior evening. I was amazed by God's overwhelming presence as I read Isaiah 26:3-4: 'Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord forever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.'" The words provided a divine reminder that God had everything under control. They brought hope and peace in the middle of that life-changing day.

The Johnsons immediately began learning all they could about primordial dwarfism (PD). The rarest type of dwarfism in the world, only 100 cases exist worldwide, with roughly 50 in the U.S. Only one in 4 million children are born with the condition. Landen could expect to grow to only three feet tall. Possible complications included bone and vascular problems, strokes, seizures, and aneurysms. The stark data was terrifying, but doctors also offered the couple encouragement, explaining that with advancement in research life expectancy is far greater than it used to be.

Because PD is such a rare condition, the few medical "experts" on the disease were all located at Alfred I. Dupont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Delaware. "On a whim, we decided to give them a call," Luke recalls. "It was obvious God was at work when we immediately

spoke to the assistant of one of the doctors. After an hour of answering our questions, she told us the first available appointment was months away. She excused herself for a moment. When she returned to the call, she said, 'We have a cancellation. Can you be here in two weeks?' Of course, we enthusiastically agreed."

It was the beginning of Landen's medical journey—a difficult passage the entire Johnson family would travel together. Landen began seemingly endless testing. DNA research soon revealed he was not at risk for vascular problems, which was a huge blessing. However, some two years later, a doctor in Scotland diagnosed Landen with DNA Ligase IV Deficiency. At the time only 11 cases had been documented worldwide. Today, there are 38. Ligase 4 is such a recently discovered condition that little is known about it, although it often causes the patient to become immune deficient. Amanda recalls, "When they told us Landen would eventually need a bone-marrow transplant, things got even more frightening. It was an emotional time."

Immediately following his diagnosis, other than his size, Landen thrived. At age five and 20 pounds, he had a fully-developed, outgoing personality and a heart-melting smile for everyone he encountered. Luke and Amanda rejoiced over Landen's every healthy moment.

In October 2016, though, while Luke was away preaching a revival, the Johnsons learned, as feared, that Landen's immune system had begun to fail. He needed a transplant urgently. Without it, his prognosis was not good. "Those were difficult days," Luke recalls about the anxious weeks spent waiting for a matching bone-marrow donor. "Yet, through each new challenge, my mind went back to those verses in Isaiah, and I was reminded again and again that the Lord is our strength."

Other small reminders of God's nearness arrived constantly through cards, conversations, and "chance" encounters. On the day we were told the blood marrow transplant needed



to move forward, Amanda randomly turned to a page in the back of her devotional journal to take notes. The following Sunday morning, after I used Deuteronomy 31:8 in my sermon, Amanda showed me that “random” page—Deuteronomy 31:8. “And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.” Amanda muses, “The Word of God is given so we have hope. I don’t know where we would have been without the Bible in this journey.”

After locating a matching bone marrow donor—a young male from Western Europe—and undergoing another barrage of tests, seven-year-old Landen began the

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“NO, WE DON'T ALWAYS HAVE IT TOGETHER. WE ARE NOT A TOWER OF STRENGTH—WE DEFINITELY ARE NOT. BUT GOD HAS GIVEN US STRENGTH. AND WE HAVE LEARNED TO LEAN ON HIM THROUGH THIS JOURNEY. WHEN WE PRAY, WE TELL GOD OVER AND OVER, 'WE TRUST YOU.'”

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transplant procedure May 25, 2017. Amanda recorded her thoughts just prior to the procedure in the family’s online journal, “We have so many questions, fears, and uncertainties. It is so scary, and we know it is going to be difficult. We also know God has a plan, and it’s a perfect plan. He makes no mistakes, and He will carry us through this. I’m praying my faith will be bigger than my fear, and that I will trust God every step of the way.”

Six long weeks in the hospital watching Landen struggle tested that trust—not only for Amanda but for the entire family. Chemotherapy left him worn, shaking, and exhausted. He was terrified

on the morning of the transplant. And on day 26, Amanda woke to find Landen’s hair everywhere as the powerful drugs took full effect. The entire experience was excruciating. During this time, the Johnsons were often separated from Brayden and three-year-old Hannah Grace, Landen’s younger sister, who joined the family in August 2014.

It was 70 difficult days before Landen returned home the first time. And, though the transplant was regarded as successful, two years later, Landen continues to struggle with infections (primarily BKV), fatigue, and nausea from the powerful drugs he takes. Most recently, Landen has fought a fungal infection spreading towards his brain and a narrowing carotid artery that indicates, at some point, Landen had a stroke.

Luke reflects on the rough road the family has traveled together: “It has been a long, hard fight—hundreds of infusions, thousands of doses of medicines, 13-plus hospital admissions, countless tests and procedures, many days of pain, and long sleepless nights of running into Landen’s room to make sure he is okay.”

Amanda shares the practical challenges of PD: “Clothes are really tough. At nine years old, Landen wears toddler-sized clothes. On the bright side, skinny jeans fit well. It’s hard to find age appropriate things, and he really likes to get dressed up.”

Yes, it’s been a long, tough road, but the Johnsons refuse to be defined by the Landen’s illness or the struggles they have endured. “First and foremost, we are a family committed to Christ,” Luke shares. “No, we’re not perfect. No, we don’t always have it together. We are not a tower of strength—we definitely are not. But God has given us strength. And we have learned to lean on him



through this journey. When we pray, we tell God over and over, ‘We trust you.’”

Amanda chimes in, “We are a team—a great team—and we stick together.”

The Johnsons also have learned a great deal about people through their experience. “We have been overwhelmed at how much people care. And it touches us. Nearly 6,000 people from nine countries follow Landen on Facebook. They have gone past sympathy to empathy, actively helping us through our situation. They have gotten involved in our lives personally. We received a check for \$2,000 from a lady in New Jersey we have never met in our lives. We have been reminded constantly there are many good people in this world who genuinely care.”

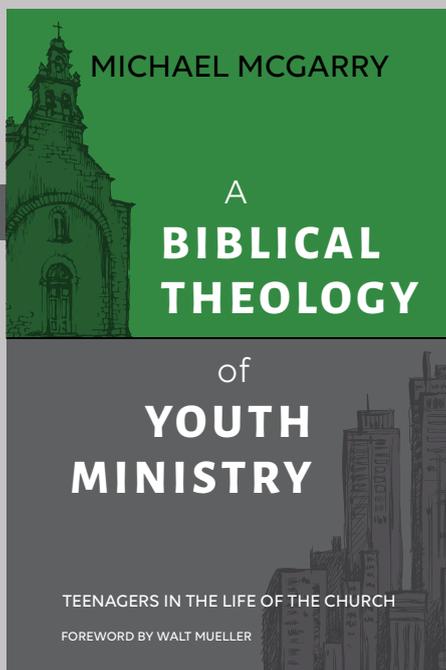
The Johnsons also have been amazed at the opportunities their journey has given them to share the gospel. Luke and Amanda made up their minds to take every chance to share their faith during Landen’s long hospital stay. The first week, Luke spread the word throughout the hospital that he would be in the family waiting room on Sunday for prayer and Bible study. Not a single person he

invited came. “Only one man showed up,” Luke recalls with a smile. “He was a fellow believer; we shared and prayed together, then he took me to visit his daughter Callie, who was battling cancer.” Luke was able to pray with Callie and encourage her.

During a concert to benefit the transplant division of the hospital, Luke had an opportunity to preach a short sermon, and he will never forget the tremendous altar response. “Glenn Jackson, another young transplant patient led in prayer at the close of the benefit concert. He had received Christ not long before going into the hospital for his transplant. Glenn went home to be with the Lord in January 2018. His dad John began attending our church after Glenn’s passing, and God began dealing with his heart. While John was leading a hunt in the mountains of North Carolina, he gave his life to Jesus, and I had the privilege of baptizing him in the river where he and Glenn often went fishing.”

Landen also has become a bold witness for the Lord. Amanda recalls an interview with NBC-Charlotte and

*(continued on page 38)*



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MICHAEL MCGARRY

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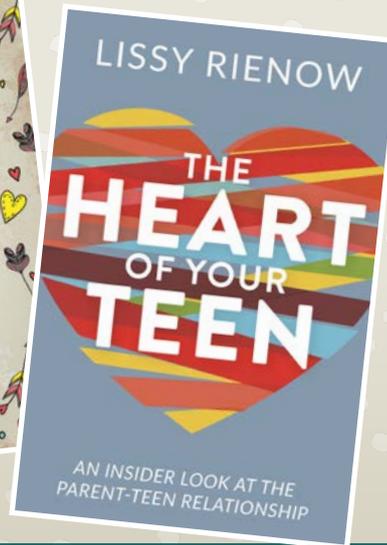


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# Grants Delivered in 2019

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Free Will Baptist Foundation has awarded \$1.5 million in grants over the last three years (2017-2019). The grants were funded by a strategic harvest of realized capital gains to supply the \$500,000 needed for each year. The last quarter of 2018 was difficult as we experienced a market correction and were uncertain if 2019 grants would be issued. However, following a recovery in January of 2019, we were able to offer grants again. While it is the intent of the Foundation to make \$500,000 in grants every year, market conditions may affect our ability to do so.

The Following grants were awarded in 2019:

IM Bulgaria Missions Team	\$60,000
Randall House on Demand Streaming	\$60,000
IM Women of Good News	\$50,000
Welch College	\$50,000
Randall University (library renovation)	\$31,500
Camp Hope (IL)	\$25,000
Cumberland Youth Camp (TN)	\$25,000
Faith FWB Church (Goldsboro, NC; Christian school in Brazil)	\$20,000
Hope Center (Door of Hope)	\$20,000
Hilltop FWB Church (Southeastern FWB College accreditation)	\$17,500
South Carolina Disaster Relief (command center)	\$17,500
Alabama Children's Home (update flooring)	\$16,500
Awaken FWB Church (Tifton, GA, church plant)	\$15,000
IM Cuba Nursing Home Expansion	\$15,000

ONE Magazine: PULPIT	\$15,000
California Christian College (online program launch)	\$10,000
Faith FWB Church Chandler, IN (Matt's House)	\$10,000
Harmony FWB Church Ada, OK (Bible distribution)	\$10,000
Morganwood Camp (MS; renovation)	\$10,000
NAM (McPherson, KS, church plant)	\$10,000
NAM (Earl and Gwen Hendrix Bible Institute, OK)	\$7,000
Masters Men Conference for Boys	\$5,000

Since 2017, the following aspects of Free Will Baptist ministries have been blessed with the following amounts (Note the list is not exhaustive):

IM	\$330,000
Camps	\$207,000
Welch College	\$200,000
Other Colleges	\$154,500
Randall House	140,500
Children's Homes	\$81,500
North American Ministries	\$79,500
Local Churches	\$65,000
State Ministries	\$62,500
Board of Retirement	\$47,650
ONE Magazine	\$36,500
Rekindle	\$35,000
WNAC	\$22,000 <small>ONE</small>



# Choices: Freedom and Responsibility

BY JOSHUA EIDSON

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We live in a day when we are confronted with an overabundance of choices in every area of life. Our culture has become so inundated by choices that psychologists and economists reveal we cope with decision fatigue. One of the most recognizable coping mechanisms is to adopt a “uniform.” Steve Jobs’ black turtleneck and jeans may be the most recognizable example. Highly productive individuals have long understood the need to scale back the number of choices made on a daily basis, because the more choices an individual must wade through, the harder it is to make high-quality decisions. To reduce the stress and fatigue associated with daily choices, it helps to streamline those things required to make a quality decision.

But how do you minimize the *number* of daily decisions? The starting point is our priorities or, better yet, a single priority. We should use our finite decision-making resources to move closer to the fulfillment of our

priorities. Our ability to make important decisions is often worn down by the routine decisions required just to live: *What will I wear today? What will I eat for this meal? What do I want to watch on Netflix? What book to read next?* But which of these decisions actually produces valuable results? If we use our goals and priorities as signposts, they will help us focus on decisions that really matter and hopefully will provide guidance on clear direction for specific decisions. We begin to see the potential benefits of a work “uniform” or always having the same breakfast or lunch. Anything that eliminates repetitive decisions helps conserve the capacity for quality decision making. One area we can all use more capacity for quality decision making is with our money.

Personal finance has its own plethora of decision points: *How should I budget my money? What should I invest in? What percent should I save and invest in these options? Should I buy or rent?* The multitude of choices regard-

ing money is relentless. Again, our decision must start with our priorities. A solid budget is a good place to put priorities in action. We all know the basic living expenses we have to cover, so those are given top billing on the budget. It's only when we get down to the "leftovers" or budget surplus that we get to make choices about where to put our disposable income.

Hopefully, you include a line (or lines) for saving and investing. Having clearly defined financial goals in mind makes those investing decisions easier. *Everyone* should be saving for retirement so they can provide for themselves during their later days when they may or may not be able to work. Multiple options are available for retirement investing. This is where a trusted financial advisor can come in handy. They know the strategies to best grow your assets according to your age and career stage, so you can be well prepared when retirement comes. Let those you trust help make decisions. This also will help ease the decision fatigue that plagues us all.

Freedom of choice allows us to tailor our lives like never before, but it does not come without drawbacks and responsibility. Eliminate or minimize the number of recurring daily choices. Focus on decisions that offer a higher rate of return. Define important decisions by establishing clear priorities. Once you establish those priorities and begin making important, focused decisions, recruit help to guide and affirm the decision process. As Peter Parker's uncle once told him: "With great power (the ability to choose) comes great responsibility." Use it wisely. **ONE**

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

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# Does Your Wallet Reflect Your Worldview?

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

*“Money is the root of all evil...can I get an amen?”* Through the years, I have heard 1 Timothy 6:10 misquoted many times to claim if you have money, you have serious issues with your spiritual health. Money itself is inanimate, so it can’t be good or evil—much like a hammer is unable to be good or evil on its own. Both are simply tools.

First Timothy 6:10 says, “For the *love* of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” When you add the important word *love*, the emphasis of the verse changes. Anything temporary could be inserted into the position of money: food, sports, family, shopping, and so on. So, what does the love of “whatever” have to do with worldview? Your *worldview* is how you interpret the world around you. When a situation arises, the lens through which you filter the situation to make a decision is your worldview. As the old saying goes, “Does your walk match your talk?”

In today’s Western culture cash is king. However, for the Christian, Christ is King. Which king does your wallet say you serve? You can live below the poverty line and suffer from the love of money. If you don’t have it but always want or desire it, it is no different than having a great deal of money and desiring more or wanting to protect it. Both have the same end result: a temporary

thing takes the number one spot that should belong to our eternal God.

According to exhaustive research, most Americans approach their worldview through their monetary situation. If you make more than \$100,000 per year in household income, you earn almost \$40,000 above the national average. A study by Princeton University reveals that \$75,000 is the “magic” number where emotional well-being (the frequency and intensity of experiences of joy, stress, sadness, anger, and affection that makes one’s life pleasant or unpleasant) tops out, meaning your happiness doesn’t increase with more income. The study also shows that

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money affects life evaluation (what people think about their lives when thinking about money). This increases steadily with the more money the household makes. In other words, more money buys more satisfaction with life but not necessarily happiness. This brings us back to the original question: “Does your wallet reflect your worldview?”

Christ is the ultimate source of happiness and satisfaction in life, but studies show that is not the way we live. We turn to temporary monetary gain to find satisfaction with living, even though more money doesn't mean more happiness. If our worldview is truly through the Christian lens, can you be satisfied with your life if your income falls below the national average? Are you happier with your joy in Christ than your large bank account? If you were put through Job's trials, would you still find your hope and joy in God? Job proclaimed, “Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken

away; blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job 1:21).

If we converted Job's wealth into today's monetary value, his livestock alone would put his wealth around \$56 million, without considering any other businesses he would have run with his herds. Even though God allowed Satan to attack Job, destroying not only his family but his finances, Job did not waver.

Would the same be true of us? If our world fell apart around us, would we trust more in God's grace or the currency that states, “In God we Trust?” Does your wallet reflect your worldview? **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** John Brummitt is director of the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. A 2004 graduate of Free Will Baptist Bible College, John began working for the Board of Retirement in the spring of 2006. Learn more about the Board of Retirement at [www.boardofretirement.org](http://www.boardofretirement.org).

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# Curriculum Discipleship Plan

## 2019 Scope and Sequence

### September 2019

#### New Testament

*The Supremacy of Christ*

- Week 1 - Lordship of Christ
- Week 2 - Alive in Christ
- Week 3 - New in Christ
- Week 4 - Submission in Christ
- Week 5 - Reconciled Through Christ

### October 2019

#### Old Testament

*God's Grace for All Nations*

- Week 1 - God Pursues the Disobedient
- Week 2 - God Answers Prayer
- Week 3 - God Forgives the Repentant
- Week 4 - God Shows Compassion



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# For God & Country

## 2019 POWER CONFERENCE REVIEW

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The Power Conference sponsored by North American Ministries provides an incredible opportunity for pastors, their wives, associate pastors, youth pastors, those interested in increasing and learning more about church outreach and growth, and children to learn more about God. This conference, free of charge, offers something for any age.

This year's meeting was held in Branson, Missouri. The opening Aaron Wilburn concert Monday night started the conference with an abundance of laughs and chuckles. Wilburn offered amazing talent in music and comedy but also expressed deep, heartfelt themes in his lyrics. He expressed his faith in everything he did. Attendees also were blessed by special music from One Focus. The group's music featured beautiful and worshipful harmonies that provided an atmosphere centered on glorifying God.

Retired Chaplain Colonel Kerry Steedley spoke on Monday night. Chaplain Steedley represented both his country and his faith well as he shared the Scripture with those present. He confronted believers with the idea of being under the authority of God. From Luke 7:1-10, he reminded listeners Christians wear the cross of Christ wherever we go. He shared three practical truths: Jesus cares, He wants to bring change, and He is in charge. Just as the Roman Centurion acknowledged these truths, so Christians must recognize those truths in their lives.

Tuesday morning began with a panel discussion featuring Tim Forman, Gary Mitchener, Ken Simpson, and Frank Wiley and moderated by Shiloh Hackett. These men discussed ideas for creating a more welcoming atmosphere for visitors. Guests had the option of attending four of the eight seminars provided by eight impact

speakers during the Tuesday training conference. Jeff Goodman provided sessions on "Generating Impact" and "Maximizing Your Guest Experience." Brad Ransom provided insight to "The Evolution of Evangelism" and "Generating Momentum." Debe Taylor discussed "Lessons for Life: God Lessons and Heart Lessons." Rick Bowling led a session entitled "What about Me?" Ken Simpson promoted generosity through the session "Encouraging People to Be Cheerful Givers." During "Growing your Church Through Kindness," Jason Taylor reminded attendees to uplift those around them in church. Tim Forman reminded Christians of their need to be involved in their church during his breakout seminar. David I. Crowe (Piney Grove FWB Church, Guin, Alabama) shared "How to Go Everywhere From the Middle of Nowhere." He reminded pastors the direction of the church can always be improved. The afternoon concluded with a second panel discussion featuring David I. Crowe, Mike Cash, Jason Taylor, and Jeff Goodman. Each panelist was given time to express his opinion on topics relating to church growth. This time created a unique opportunity to hear opinions from several diverse points of view.

Tuesday night began with an hour-long concert provided by One Focus. Attendees praised God through worship and song. Many attendees remarked upon the excellent song selection during the concert. Jim Mc-

"The Power Conference was a great time of connecting with other leaders while learning best practices to carry home and apply in our churches." —Jason Taylor



"The Power Conference provides a great time for my husband and I to take a step back from our daily routines and reflect on our ministry. I appreciate all of the great mentors who speak and the seasoned advice we receive." —Heather Gonzalez

"The Power Conference was a 'shot in the arm' for me. It was filled with powerful preaching, informative seminars, and sweet fellowship." —Jim McComas



Comas provided special music Tuesday night, and his song truly touched the audience as he sang about the disciples who met Jesus on the road to Emmaus. The chorus of the song reminded listeners of their many blessings. Following the music, Dr. Joe Arthur spoke from a father's point of view, sharing about Jairus, whose daughter died. He reminded listeners that fathers do anything for their children. And, when this man could not provide for his child, he sought out another, greater father—a Father who can always provide. Even in the face of death and defeat, we can be confident our Father provides.

Following the Power Conference, the North American Ministries board met on Wednesday morning. The board accepted another church-planting family. Dan and Kami Houghton and their family are returning to Vermont, where Kami was born and raised and

Dan went to high school. Dan grew up in a military family and served in the U.S. Army attached to 7th Special Forces from 2000-2003. From 2003-2015, Dan climbed the corporate ladder in a large communications company. He left his career in 2015 to pursue ministry and served as youth pastor and media director at New Life FWB Church in New Bern, North Carolina. Dan and Kami soon felt the call to plant a church, and after many months of praying and fact-finding, they have determined the Lord is calling them to Burlington, Vermont. [ONE](#)

**About the Writers :** North American Ministries is an organization dedicated to starting new Free Will Baptist churches in areas where there are none in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.

# A Heart for Lost Soldiers

BY JONATHAN TRUETT

What does it mean to be in the center of God's will? A wise man once told me, "To hear from God, you have to be in a place spiritually where God can speak to you." For me, the place where I felt God calling me was at the Truth and Peace Leadership Conference the summer before my junior year of high school. During Truth and Peace, an army chaplain "just happened" to be on the campus of Welch College for the day. Allen Pointer, Truth & Peace director, invited him to speak to us about life as an army chaplain.

Looking back, I know God placed him there for a reason. Little did I know, but that sunny day in July my life changed forever. I experienced a burden I had never felt before. The thought that a soldier, who stares death in the face to keep this nation free, could die and spend eternity in Hell broke my heart. That day, I felt God calling me to become an army chaplain. On Wednesday, July 22, 2015, at the conclusion of the Wednesday evening service of the Free Will Baptist National Convention, I accepted God's call on my life to the chaplaincy. From that day forward, I knew what God was calling me to do. I had no clue how or when I would get there, but I knew I had to follow God's call.

As I began searching, I learned that Welch College once held an agreement with the Vanderbilt University Army ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) program. I called Welch College to see if the agreement with Vanderbilt University was still in place. They told me it had been a long time since anyone participated in that program. I received an email reply the next day, indicating the agreement remained, but participating in ROTC

would be very difficult with the relocation of the college.

During my senior year of high school, I traveled to Welch College for a visit. While in the Nashville area, I also met with the ROTC Cadre (training staff) at Vanderbilt University and immediately fell in love with the program. I am currently a second-year cadet in the Vanderbilt Army ROTC while studying pastoral theology at Welch College, and I could not be happier. The Lord is moving in the hearts of some of our cadets. Along with another cadet, I hold a weekly Bible study on Vanderbilt's campus with our fellow cadets. We average 12 cadets each week, seeking a place to dive into God's Word. After graduating from Welch College, I plan to pursue a Master of Divinity degree and apply for the Chaplain Candidate Corps. This will be a long journey, but this is where I feel God leading me.

The burden God put in my heart for lost soldiers in July 2015 grows stronger each day. **ONE**



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**About the Writer:** Jonathan Truett is a pastoral theology student at Welch College and a member of Vanderbilt ROTC. He plans to become an army chaplain when all requirements have been fulfilled.

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# Sailor's Call

BY RAFAEL BARNEY

I have been in military ministry for most of my naval career, which started in the year 2000. I was in Meridian, Mississippi, at the religious program specialist school when terrorists brought down the Twin Towers in Manhattan. (I was born in Queens.) I deployed to the Middle East shortly after on the U.S.S. *John C. Stennis* (CVN74) as a member of the religious ministries department.

After that tour, I deployed with Marines to Fallujah, Iraq, to provide our warriors an avenue to seek out spiritual growth. These challenging tours gave me the resilience and assurance that serving God is what matters most in the short life we are given.

The direct call to chaplaincy came when I was the administrative leading chief petty officer in the Pentagon for the Navy Chief of Chaplains office. While there, during routine workday activities, I logged a book that arrived in the mail for our admiral. It was *The Blessing of Adversity* by retired Admiral and former Chief of Chaplains Barry Black. I asked the admiral if I could read it, and he gave me permission. While reading this book, I felt God's call and direction for what lay ahead as a minister versus administrator. I immediately enrolled (Spring 2011) in a Masters of Divinity program, which I completed in May 2018.

Military ministry is a unique vocation. Those who embark on this calling must be willing to leave their comfortable communities to embrace an unknown adventure. Those serving in the chaplaincy are serving on the mission field for our Lord's Kingdom. Being a Navy

chaplain opens doors of ministry, not only within the U.S. Navy, but also within the U.S. Marine Corps, the U.S. Coast Guard, and the Merchant Marines. The diversity of that mission field is why I did not choose the U.S. Army or Air Force chaplaincies.

The Barney tribe is a family of six including my wife Tatiana and four little ones. Thanks to their resilience, and my wife's loving support, we are seeking to represent Christ directly as a U.S. Navy chaplain. Genesis 2:8 gives us insight regarding how important wives are to their husbands. I thank God every day for placing this beautiful, loving, and warm-hearted Christian (baptized at Casa de Dios FWB Church in Woodbridge, Virginia) woman in my life. It is thanks to her constant support and God's infinite grace and love I continue to pursue His call to serve as a chaplain. **ONE**



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**About the Writer:** Rafael Barney is currently serving in the navy as he works to fulfill all requirements to become a full time chaplain. Learn more about the chaplaincy: [www.FWBNAM.com](http://www.FWBNAM.com).

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# Austin Awarded Distinguished Service Medal

**Washington, D.C.**—Chaplain, CH (COL) Terry Austin was awarded the Distinguished Service Medal, March 28, 2019, at Fort Myer, Virginia, on the occasion of his retirement from active-duty. Major General Michael Howard, commanding general of Joint Force Headquarters—National Capital Region/ U.S. Army Military District of Washington, presided at Austin's ceremony and presented the award. Since 2006, Chaplain Austin has served as senior Free Will Baptist military chaplain according to his rank and length of service.

Chaplain Austin served 36 years in the military, 30 as a chaplain. The retirement award covered the last ten years of Chaplain Austin's outstanding military service. He first served as 8th Army chaplain and as senior U.S. Army chaplain in Korea. Austin additionally served as the installation management agency staff chaplain in San Antonio, Texas, where he supervised all U.S. Army garrison chaplains and chaplain assistants. He next served as the

installation staff chaplain at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, one of the army's premier installations and home to the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault). Finally, Austin served as command chaplain for Joint Force Headquarters—National Capital Region/U.S. Army Military District of Washington. In this position, Chaplain Austin was responsible for chaplain training and participation in state funerals, including all funerals at Arlington National Cemetery and all ceremonial events in the nation's capital.

Free Will Baptists are grateful for Terry Austin's commitment to his calling to serve God and Country. The denomination deeply appreciates the faithful service he and his wife Mona performed and provided to soldiers, their family members, and Department of Defense civilians. North American Ministries is proud to have endorsed Chaplain Austin and applauds his distinguished service.

—Kerry Steedley, Director of Chaplain Support, NAM **ONE**

# Additional Chaplain Update

Lee Frye was recently promoted from captain to major. He moved from Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, to Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia, this summer to serve as combat aviation brigade chaplain. **ONE**



# Gomez Starts New Work in Tennessee

Millions of Hispanics have come to the United States seeking a better way of life. As a result, the United States has become the second largest Hispanic nation



*Dr. Rufo Gomez & Family*

in the world. Under the Lord's leading, former Home Missions director Trymon Messer, initiated efforts to reach this people group. That mission continues with current director, Dr. David Crowe.

One of the first Hispanic church planters was Dr. Rufo Gomez. He and his family began their ministry in Lexington, Kentucky, in 2002. Since that time, they have established a church in Lexington, three churches in Georgia, one in Fort Meyers, Florida, and recently began a church in Greeley, Colorado. Like all our Hispanic church planters, the Gomez' strategy includes opening multiple works.

Since there is a growing need for church planters in the United States, Dr. Gomez has been tasked with starting a new mission work in Middle Tennessee. He launched the church in April.

The new congregation is located in Smyrna, a suburb of Nashville.

Dr. Gomez is focused on winning people to Christ, discipling believers, and sending workers out to begin new churches. Additionally, he will begin a leadership program to provide intense training for new missionaries. The Gomez family needs your ongoing support. Free Will Baptists have fewer than 100 Hispanic churches in the United States. The harvest is great, but the laborers are few. I have no doubt Dr. Rufo will be successful. Please pray and consider putting this important ministry into your church budget or consider giving personally. As God adds His blessings, we will see churches started throughout the state of Tennessee and the United States.

—Rick Bowling, Cross Cultural Officer, NAM **ONE**

(continued from page 25)

*People* magazine. “After the news crew got everything set up and ready to go, Landen looked at the reporter and said, ‘I have one question before we start. Are you a Christian?’ We weren’t really surprised, because that is Landen. He is a bold witness for the Lord. We are amazed and inspired by his courage.”

One day, after a flooring installer completed work in the Johnson home, Luke realized Landen was missing. Luke chuckles: “We looked outside and saw Landen standing in the seat of the man’s truck, holding the steering wheel, and talking earnestly to the installer. When I told him the gentleman had to go home, the installer replied, ‘Its okay; Landen has been telling me about the day he got saved and asked me if I had ever been saved.’”

Landen often approaches a complete stranger and asks, “Are you happy?” If the person replies no, he will immediately share his faith. “Our son has such a unique story,” Amanda concludes. “But the most important part of his story is his faith in Christ, and he will tell anyone about that!”

And Landen already knows what he wants to be when he grows up: a preacher “just like dad.” He doesn’t intend to

pass up opportunities to share his young faith along the way.

What is the one thing the Johnsons want you to remember about their journey? “Through it all we have endured. Jesus has proven Himself and His Word true. We realize many families are enduring a difficult time in their lives. Whether financially, physically, or emotionally, life has become unraveled. We want you to know that no matter what you are experiencing, you can possess hope and peace through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Do you know Him as your personal Savior? If not, we encourage you to get to know him today.” **ONE**



Learn more about the Johnson's:  
[onemag.org/johnsons\\_journey.htm](http://onemag.org/johnsons_journey.htm)

**About the Writer:** Eric K. Thomsen is managing editor of *ONE Magazine*. Contact him: [eric@nafwb.org](mailto:eric@nafwb.org).

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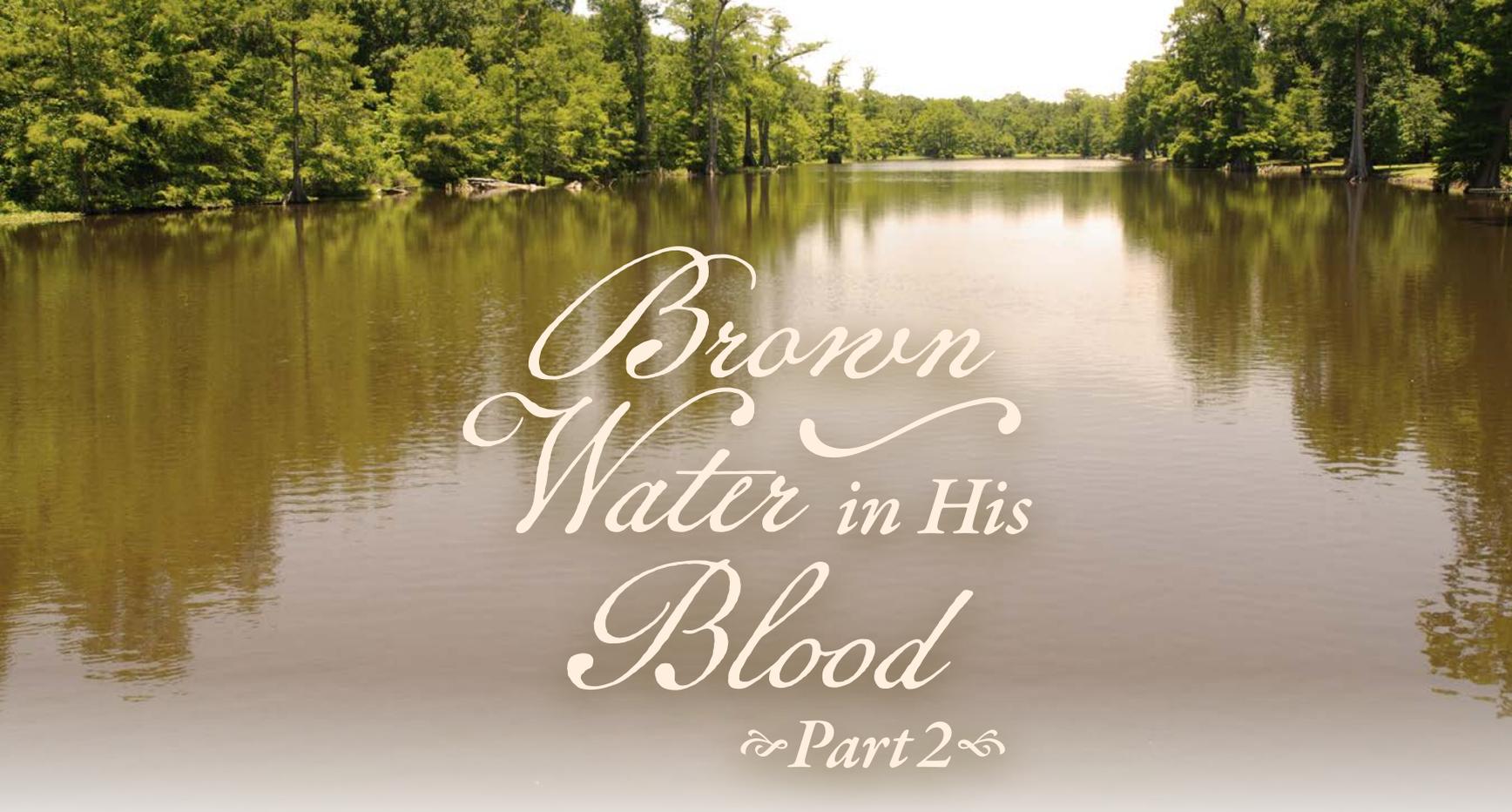
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# Brown Water in His Blood

Part 2

BY BILL AND BRENDA EVANS

“Call me riverman,” David Smith grinned. When asked if brown water is in his blood, he admits it. “But,” he says, “truth is, river water is usually green, not brown—unless there’s a flood. The Corps of Engineers calls it brown water and oceans blue water, so we do, too.”

After 45 years on brown water, David will talk about anything and everything that has to do with the river. After high school he went on the Ohio River as a towboat deckhand; three years later he became a pilot, then captain, and is now sole owner of River Marine Enterprises, LLC, based in Paducah, Kentucky.

When asked about his business and the rivers he works, David talks first about the people in his life. His wife, Chariot, is at the top of the list. “We’ve been married 31 years, but Chariot says it’s just half that long because I’ve been gone so much. I’m here a while, gone a while—four months one time this year. But Chariot says, ‘I prayed for this, so won’t complain.’ She asked the Lord to give me those hauls, even the long ones.”

David was in his 30s when he and Chariot married. She

was in her 20s, settled, had a job, and her own car. “I was already on the river, so she knew what she was getting into. It was 30 days on, 30 off. When I’d been with Ashland Oil for a while and had become a captain, they brought me into the office to manage moving their petrochemicals on the river. I went to work in the morning, came home, ate supper, went to bed, and repeated that. Finally, Chariot said, ‘Why don’t you go get on a boat. We had more time together.’ So I did.”

Chariot’s self-sufficient, not high-maintenance, David said. “She’s in all our church stuff and community Bible study. Has Christian friends and our dog. She’s in two book clubs. We both love to read. She’ll say, ‘Listen to this...’ She wants me to hear how an author says something, the way he writes.”

Chariot has a sense of humor, too, and David likes to laugh. Once he stumbled on his towboat with both hands full, hit his face on the capstan, and looked like he'd been in a bar fight, blood dripping everywhere, broken nose, 24 stitches. When Chariot saw him, she quipped, "At least the dog will still love you."

Their main home is Flatwoods, Kentucky, but they also rent a house in Paducah, Kentucky, near David's office. "The house is small. I call it a closet with rooms, but Chariot loves it. Gets housework done in 15 minutes. When I'm home, I cook. She cleans up—says I touch everything in the kitchen, so it's a job."

David has friends, both pastors and laymen, in churches in Paducah and other cities on the river. "One church is small, older, and there's Brother Terry Sills, a retired pastor in his mid-80s, such a pleasure. Reminds me of Bill Little in the Westwood Church at home. Bill's with the Lord now, but he was a dedicated Christian with a keen sense of humor. Brother Sills is like that. A good man."

More than 40 years ago, it was the influence of Christian people that wooed David back to the Lord. He was saved at 15, but drifted. A friend invited him to a revival when he was in his 20s. "All I've got is blue jeans," David said. "No problem," the man answered. So David went—just for one night, he thought. Instead, he was back every night and got right with the Lord. Ed Cook was pastor, and the Worthington twins were the evangelists. The Westwood Church soon became David's spiritual home. "I was single back then, but two married couples took me in, Ron and Betty Salmon and Bill and Judy Coburn. Been there ever since."

Christian friends on the river also have helped David spiritually. "I've known Captain Dave Dewey for 30 or 35 years. My towboat is named the *Captain Dave Dewey* after him. Such an amazing man—has a prison ministry, got locked in for 21 days one time. He just doesn't quit. Another friend on the river saw my Bible duct-taped together and told me he'd help me get a new one. I just said, 'No, it's my river Bible. I'll keep it.'"

David calls the river "a common bond" with both friends and family. "The older I get the more I treasure

the time I've worked with my family on the river: my dad, two brothers, and grandmother. Dad stayed on as engineer until three weeks before he died at 75. My grandmother was a cook. Three meals a day. Up at 4:00 in the morning, finally in bed at 7:00 that night. She said only one thing worried her on the river—ice. The terrible noise of it against the barges and towboat unnerved her."

On the business side, three things stand out for David. First, he has a great business manager, Chris Entrup who runs his office. "She's a tremendous person. Used to work for Dave Dewey, knows the business, takes care of our accounting, payroll, insurance, invoicing. Everything. She's very direct. When the men complain, I tell them, 'I know. She talks that way to me, too. I know who the owner is, but I also know who's boss.' She and Chariot are great friends, so I don't catch a break."

The second thing David says about the river business is that you find your niche and serve it. Paducah is the modern-day hub of river traffic. From there, towboats serve the Ohio, Tennessee, the Upper and Lower Mississippi, and Missouri rivers. "Recently, we've dry-hauled on the Missouri River carrying coal, coal slag that's left over from power plants and used in asphalt, DDG (distillers dried grains) from ethanol plants used in livestock and poultry feed, corn, soybeans, fertilizer, cement. You name it. This year, during the late winter and spring flooding on the Missouri, we worked the Ohio."

As far as getting clients, David says their business comes mostly by word of mouth. "It's a small industry. Everybody knows everybody. We'll get a call, 'You got any horsepower available?' They want a towboat and crew ready to push barges for them by the day or by the ton."

The third thing David says about the business is to

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"THAT BOAT IS YOUR WHOLE WORLD. YOU ALL HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER, GET ALONG, KNOW YOUR JOB AND DO IT. IF YOU DON'T, YOU HAVE TO GO."

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know the river, your towboat, your navigation equipment, and your crew. “That boat is your whole world. You all have to work together, get along, know your job and do it. If you don’t, you have to go.”

But when you talk to David, he always comes back to people. Robert Gray, a longtime Ashland Oil employee over the marine department, was one of David’s “treasures.” Mr. Gray introduced river traffic to the use of radar in the 1940s along with other innovations. “What a brain and heart!” David said. “He had total recall even in his 90s. He’d call—‘Just checking on you,’ he’d say in his raspy voice. I’ve been blessed with people. He was one of those treasures. After his death, his son sent me a book. His dad had told him it was important that he get that book to me.”

David is also known as a river historian and singer. “I have a messy collection of books, magazines, photos, etc., going back decades,” he said. He was on the board

of governors for the river historical society know as *Sons and Daughters of Pioneer Rivermen*, and editor of their quarterly magazine called *S&D Reflector*. David is also a member of an Ashland barbershop choir of 25 men called the *Singing Kernels*. The pun on their name is intended.

When asked when he might quit brown water and retire, David quipped, “Retire? I’ve heard of it. But river people never really retire.” **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Bill and Brenda Evans live in Ashland, Kentucky, along Rockhouse Fork Creek that empties into a larger stream that runs north into the Ohio, an Iroquois word meaning *great river*. You may contact them at [beejayevans@windstream.net](mailto:beejayevans@windstream.net).

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# Legacy of Learning

**Dr. Moses M. Smart came to know Christ in 1828** during a revival in Limerick, Maine. The professional educator soon became instrumental in the first Free Will Baptist institution of higher learning. In September 1842, he began underwriting the expenses of the Bible department at **Parsonfield Seminary** (pictured) and soon became headmaster of the school. According to *Free Baptist Cyclopaedia*, Smart later moved with the institution to Whitestown, New York, where he continued as a professor until 1849, when his connection with the denomination ended. Smart was especially influential on a young student named John J. Butler, who later became one of the leading theologians among northern Free Will Baptists. In 1843, Smart published *A Brief View of Christian Doctrine*, the first volume of systematic theology published by a Freewill Baptist.

Help Randall House continue this Free Will Baptist legacy of learning by establishing **an endowment with FWB Foundation**.

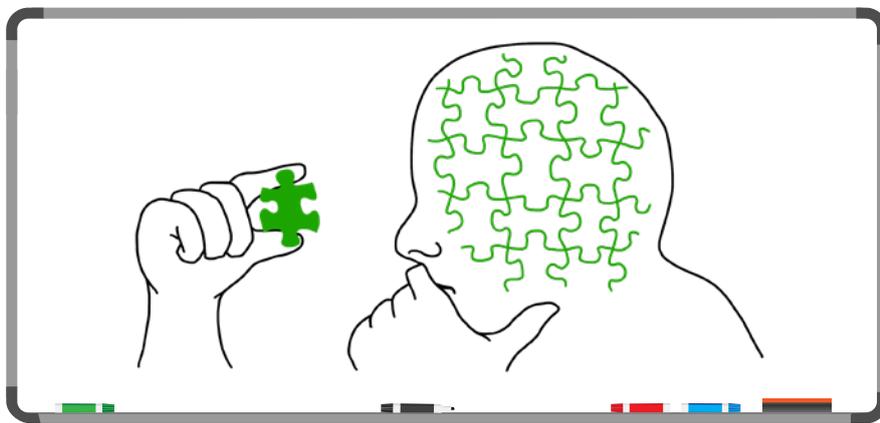


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# Self-Awareness in Leadership

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.



How many times have you snapped a photo of your wife or daughter only to be asked to retake it at least five more times? Their self-awareness of every detail can teach leaders to be more self-aware through better reflection. This leadership category, by its very namesake, poses one of the most significant blind spots for leaders today.

By nature, leaders bring passion and self-confidence often referred to as conviction. First, do not confuse personal conviction with biblical principles; they are not always the same. Leaders must bring a determination and doggedness because inspiration and persua-

## LEADERSHIP QUOTE

*"Pride goes before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall" (Proverbs 16:18).*

sion cannot be done from timidity. However, that confidence does not automatically remove weakness or provide competence for gap areas.

What then is self-awareness, and how does self-awareness impact one's conviction regarding leadership? *Self-awareness* comes from the Greek: *know thyself*. The Harvard Business Review said, "The trinity of self-awareness is know thyself, improve thyself, and complement thyself" (allowing others' strengths to balance your weaknesses). It stops you from living in your own world and thinking you're always right. Self-awareness requires self-reflection or self-examination of both reason and emotions.

As ministry leaders, you must guard against blind spots and not squelch critical feedback regarding your ideas. The idea of zero self-awareness is older than the

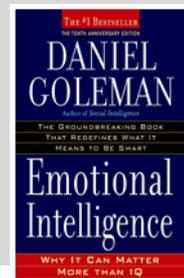
fable *Emperor's New Clothes* in which only a child was willing to tell him the truth; the emperor had nothing to hide behind.

Self-awareness improves decision-making because it removes factors that could otherwise predetermine an adverse outcome. The Bible is not silent on this subject as the various leaders writing in the Psalms reflect on searching their emotions, thoughts, attitudes, decisions, and actions (Psalm 19:14; Psalm 139; Psalm 73:26). James warned about inauthentic assessment of self as one who looks in a mirror and forgets what is seen. Paul reminds believers to examine themselves when partaking of communion, again in 2 Corinthians 13:5. No human finds right standing before God without admitting vulnerability and need of Christ. Likewise, no leader finds right standing before the organization or team without acknowledging self-awareness and the need for the giftedness of the whole Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12).

## RECOMMENDED BOOK

***Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More than IQ***

By Daniel Goleman



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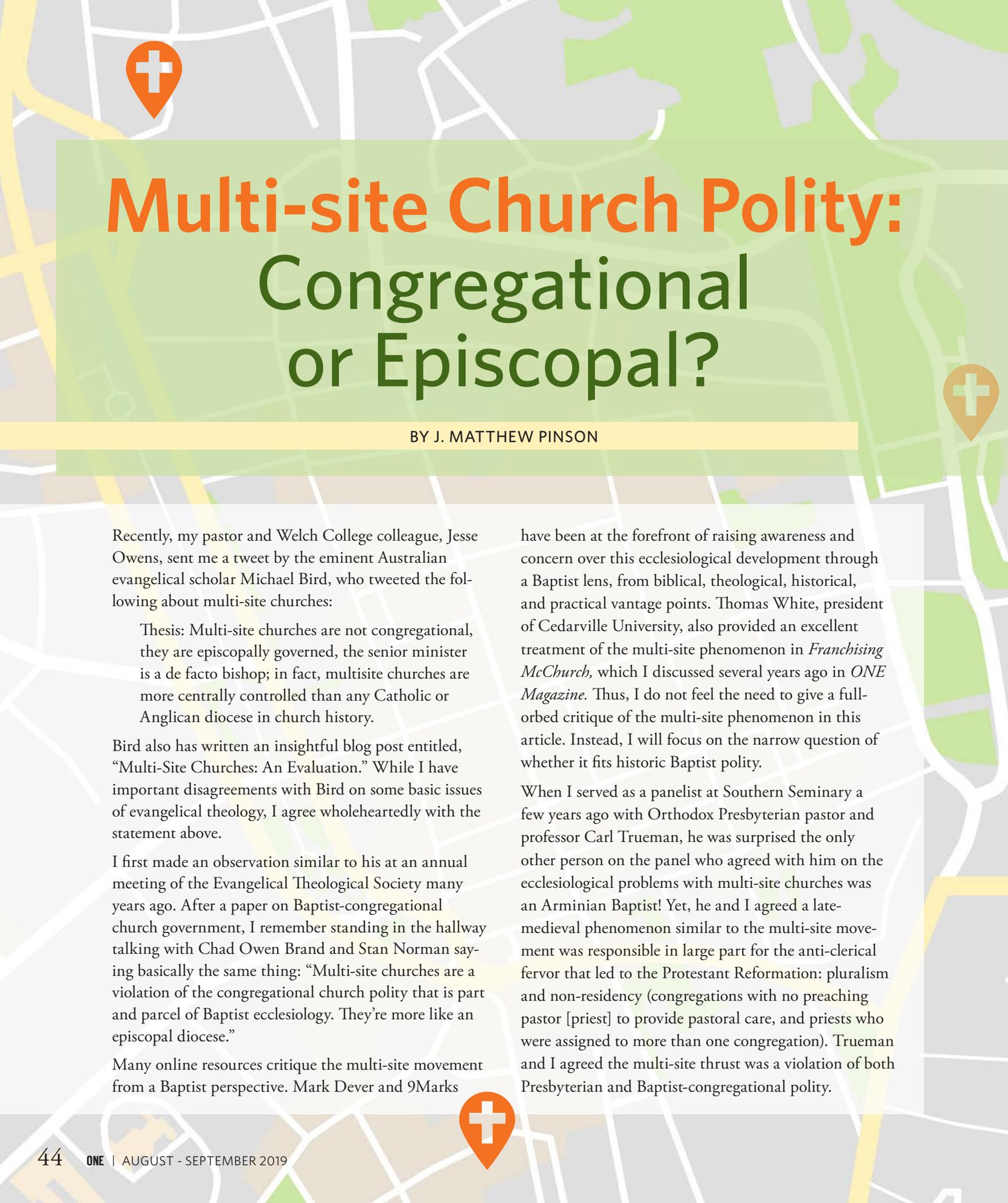
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# Multi-site Church Polity: Congregational or Episcopal?

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

Recently, my pastor and Welch College colleague, Jesse Owens, sent me a tweet by the eminent Australian evangelical scholar Michael Bird, who tweeted the following about multi-site churches:

Thesis: Multi-site churches are not congregational, they are episcopally governed, the senior minister is a de facto bishop; in fact, multisite churches are more centrally controlled than any Catholic or Anglican diocese in church history.

Bird also has written an insightful blog post entitled, “Multi-Site Churches: An Evaluation.” While I have important disagreements with Bird on some basic issues of evangelical theology, I agree wholeheartedly with the statement above.

I first made an observation similar to his at an annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society many years ago. After a paper on Baptist-congregational church government, I remember standing in the hallway talking with Chad Owen Brand and Stan Norman saying basically the same thing: “Multi-site churches are a violation of the congregational church polity that is part and parcel of Baptist ecclesiology. They’re more like an episcopal diocese.”

Many online resources critique the multi-site movement from a Baptist perspective. Mark Dever and 9Marks

have been at the forefront of raising awareness and concern over this ecclesiological development through a Baptist lens, from biblical, theological, historical, and practical vantage points. Thomas White, president of Cedarville University, also provided an excellent treatment of the multi-site phenomenon in *Franchising McChurch*, which I discussed several years ago in *ONE Magazine*. Thus, I do not feel the need to give a full-orbed critique of the multi-site phenomenon in this article. Instead, I will focus on the narrow question of whether it fits historic Baptist polity.

When I served as a panelist at Southern Seminary a few years ago with Orthodox Presbyterian pastor and professor Carl Trueman, he was surprised the only other person on the panel who agreed with him on the ecclesiological problems with multi-site churches was an Arminian Baptist! Yet, he and I agreed a late-medieval phenomenon similar to the multi-site movement was responsible in large part for the anti-clerical fervor that led to the Protestant Reformation: pluralism and non-residency (congregations with no preaching pastor [priest] to provide pastoral care, and priests who were assigned to more than one congregation). Trueman and I agreed the multi-site thrust was a violation of both Presbyterian and Baptist-congregational polity.

I hold this concern for our own Free Will Baptist family. Ministers frequently ask me what I think about having a Free Will Baptist multi-site church, from the vantage point of our faith and practice. I always explain it in the only way one can explain it in terms of the *Free Will Baptist Treatise of Faith and Practices*, and that is in line with Bird's comment above and people like Dever's and Trueman's approach: it is not in harmony with Free Will Baptist polity.

We must understand, Free Will Baptists hold some important differences with the wider Baptist tradition of church government. We tend to give more power to the conference or association, such as the authority for presbyteries to examine and ordain ministers, so churches in good standing with a Free Will Baptist conference or association cannot ordain their own ministers without the authority of the presbytery or ordaining council of a local conference or association.

However, on issues that touch this question of multi-site churches, we agree with Dever and other Baptists. Free Will Baptists historically have believed local congregations should be self-governing. That means, among other things, they must choose their own pastor(s), deacons, officers, and teachers; do their own discipline; control their own property; have freedom to separate from one conference and unite with another; and have control of their own finances.

This self-governance principle has always opposed the Episcopal and Presbyterian models of church government that give ecclesiastical bodies or individuals outside a local congregation control over the internal elements of governance of that congregation, including the things listed in the previous paragraph. Whether a diocese or a bishop, a synod or a presbytery, these bodies or individuals cannot control the internal governance of a local congregation.

Again, historic Free Will Baptist polity, as I show in my pamphlet *Free Will Baptists and Church Government*, stipulates a stronger relationship between conference or association and the local church than most Baptist polities. The conference or association historically has been responsible, for example, for the examination, ordination, and discipline of office bearers (ministers, and, the further you go in our history, deacons). Fur-

thermore, associations and conferences have the right to involve themselves in local church disputes and often do so. But they have the right only to advise, never finally arbitrate, in those disputes. Their only recourse is to remove fellowship from an erring congregation. I do not wish to minimize the differences between historic Free Will Baptist polity and other Baptist polity.

However, all Baptists agree on the congregational governance of the local church: 1) it is the entire congregation, not the pastor(s) and deacons, who govern the local Baptist church; 2) it is the congregation, not a body outside that congregation, that governs the local Baptist church.

This is borne out in the *Free Will Baptist Treatise*, which places within the self-government of each local congregation "full authority to transact its business, choose its pastor and officers, receive, discipline, and dismiss members, hold free title to all its properties, and conduct all its internal affairs" (Part IV, Chapter I, Section I.B).

Sometimes, ministers who've read a lot about multi-site churches and hope to experience growth in their ministries ask me, "Would there be a problem with me having a multi-site church?" I always tell them this: "If different congregations arise out of your church, and you can find a way to keep them together somehow without violating the *Treatise* (which Free Will Baptists believe is based on New Testament polity), then by all means do so."

When they ask what this does and does not mean, I explain that each gathered body of believers needs sole authority to do those things that lie within the power of the local church enumerated in the *Treatise*. So you need to ask the following eight questions:

1. Will this gathered body of believers have sole authority to transact its own business?
2. Will it have sole authority to elect, maintain, and dismiss its own preaching pastor(s) who leads, feeds, and cares for it (i.e., leadership, preaching, and pastoral care), and not be answerable to the preaching pastor of a higher authority or church outside itself, or any religious body outside itself?
3. Will it have the sole authority to elect, maintain, and dismiss its own deacons chosen from within its own membership?



4. Will it have the sole authority to receive its own members in the way it wishes to receive them, or will a higher authority outside the church determine how members are received or who is received?
5. Will its pastor(s) and deacons have the sole authority to administer baptism, the Lord's Supper, the washing of the saints' feet, and other ordinances in the congregation?
6. Will it have its own policy and process for disciplining, excommunicating, or dismissing members, administered solely by its own office bearers without control of an outside body?
7. Will it have the sole authority to decide where to meet? And if it owns property, will it hold title to that property with full authority to sell or purchase additional property without permission from a higher authority outside itself?
8. In short, will it have sole authority to conduct its own financial affairs and all other internal affairs, and not have a higher authority control the outcome of any of its internal affairs?

These eight simple questions arise naturally from an examination of the *Treatise*. And, as I tell ministers who have questioned me about this, if you can answer all these questions in the affirmative about the congregation of believers spinning off from your main congregation, you will be in line with historic Free Will Baptist polity. Yet, an affirmative answer to the above eight questions is a direct violation of the whole point of the multi-site movement, as it is of other episcopal approaches to church government.

Often a subsequent question arises: "Well, President Pinson, if I have enough church growth to be able to spin off other congregations, is there anything I can do that would not be in violation of the *Treatise* and historic Free Will Baptist polity?" My answer is always the same. "Yes! Plant churches!" This is the answer Jonathan Leeman gives in his 9Marks article "The Alternative: Why Don't We Plant?"

This answer lines up with New Testament polity and with historic Free Will Baptist polity as outlined in the *Treatise*: we plant churches. Of course, a church cedes

A young man with dark hair, wearing a dark blue blazer over a light-colored collared shirt, is smiling broadly. He is standing in a library with bookshelves filled with books in the background. A semi-transparent grey box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

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**IF DIFFERENT  
CONGREGATIONS  
ARISE OUT OF  
YOUR CHURCH,  
AND YOU CAN  
FIND A WAY  
TO KEEP THEM  
TOGETHER  
SOMEHOW  
WITHOUT  
VIOLATING THE  
TREATISE...THEN BY  
ALL MEANS DO SO.**

church-planting model. For example, just as Free Will Baptist North American Ministries often sponsors a mission for many years before it goes self-supporting and becomes its own self-governing church, so a local congregation with the means to plant a church can do the same thing. A new local gathering can be a mission of the church that planted it for several years before it becomes self-supporting and self-governing. During these intervening years, there is room for differing models of control that still lie within the bounds of Free Will Baptist practice.

Another positive aspect of church planting is it can be done with the advice, assistance, and accountability of a church entity like Free Will Baptist North American Ministries (NAM).<sup>1</sup> The church plant in which I am involved currently, though a self-governing plant, is in full cooperation with NAM. Its pastor Jesse Owens is an associate church planter who receives training, counsel, and prayer support from NAM, as well as the ability to raise non-salary financial support through NAM.

Furthermore, I have had some ministers ask me, “Is there a way to network the churches that grow out of my church?” I say, “Yes. That’s what we call an association or conference.” Of course, when at all possible, it’s healthy to unite with conferences or associations who can stretch us out of our comfort zone and help us experience the diversity of the Body of Christ within our Free Will Baptist theological confines. I encourage

power and control when it mothers a church and then encourages the church to become self-supporting and self-governing. But that is the New Testament model and the model that fits Free Will Baptist faith and practice.

Of course, there is a lot of room for variation in the

these ministers to be active in broader associations. We need Free Will Baptist conferences and associations, not cultural niche associations. We don’t need to divide ourselves by our cultural preferences, where it’s almost like we’re in an association where everybody likes either sushi or fried chicken, or everybody likes either bluegrass or indie-folk, or everybody wears either skinny jeans or khakis to the ministers’ retreat.

That said, let’s pretend a large Free Will Baptist church planted ten successful Free Will Baptist congregations over a period of 15 years, and over an eight-to-ten-year period, each one of those churches became self-supporting and self-governing, and they all associated with the original church that planted them, meeting together for fellowship, encouragement, accountability, and other ministry, say, once a quarter. This would be much like what has happened throughout 400 years of Baptist history. It’s called a conference or an association. But, in this concept, the original, larger congregation that planted all the other congregations would have no more power or sway over what happened in the association, or in the internal governance of each of the local planted congregations, than any of the planted congregations.

I think it is imperative Free Will Baptists be ourselves. This means drawing from our own rich biblical and historical resources of church polity rather than from trends that might seem successful at the moment, but ultimately represent a departure from Baptist faith and practice and embrace the faith and practice of non-Baptist religious bodies. This is precisely what multi-site is: a move away from historic Free Will Baptist and Baptist polity toward Episcopal polity.

My prayer is that we will avoid this theological misstep and do what we see in the New Testament and Free Will Baptist history and plant more New Testament churches! **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** J. Matthew Pinson is president of Welch College and chairman of the Free Will Baptist Commission for Theological Integrity. Learn more about the college: [www.Welch.edu](http://www.Welch.edu).

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<sup>1</sup> Free Will Baptist North American Ministries is sometimes known as Free Will Baptist Home Missions.

# Welch College Graduates 52 in Commencement Exercises

Welch College conferred degrees on 52 students in its second commencement exercises on the new campus in Gallatin, Tennessee, according to Provost Matthew McAfee. The Student Activities Center was converted into a 700-plus seating auditorium for the Baccalaureate service on Thursday evening, May 9, and the commencement ceremony on Friday morning, May 10. The college awarded degrees in multiple programs, including two-year associate's degrees, four-year bachelor's degrees, and the Master of Arts degree in Theology and Ministry. Fifty-two percent of the class graduated with honors.

Dr. Bruce Ashford, provost of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, North Carolina, delivered this year's commencement address. Ashford urged graduates not to withdraw from culture but to transform every square inch with the gospel of the Kingdom of Christ. During baccalaureate, Dr. Mark Stripling, pastor of North Little Rock FWB Church in North Little Rock, Arkansas, reminded graduates of God's faithfulness, calling them to a life of thankfulness and service to Christ.

On Thursday afternoon, May 9, six graduate students received the M.A. in Theology and Ministry and participated in the hooding ceremony, held in the Presidents Dining Room of Celorio Hall. Dr.



Jeffrey Cockrell, program coordinator of the M.A. in Theology and Ministry, reflected on their course of study throughout the program and the importance of scriptural exegesis and its faithful application to life and ministry in a secular age. A reception followed for graduates and their families.

President Matt Pinson recognized retiree Sandy Goodfellow for 39 years of faithful service as director of plant operations. His work was crucial to the successful relocation of the college to Gallatin from its West End campus. Martha Fletcher, executive assistant to the president, was honored for ten years of distinguished service. Dr. Ron Callaway, program coordinator of Intercultural Studies, was named Academic Advisor of the Year for the second year in a row. President Pinson also honored John Carter by naming him Professor Emeritus of History. Carter recently retired from decades of service as history program coordinator and is only the fourth retiree to receive this designation, along with Mr. Leroy Forlines, Dr. Robert Picirilli, and Ralph Hampton (deceased).

The college congratulates the 2019 graduating class and commends them to the service of Christ's Kingdom.

## Associate of Science Degrees

Kandace Joyce Ailworth  
Pleasant View, Tennessee  
Biology

Riley Malone Bell  
Joelton, Tennessee  
Biology

Alegna Leelaine Cochran  
Cottontown, Tennessee  
Business

Madelynn Grace Crawford†  
Cave Springs, Arkansas  
Biology

Victoria Jazmine Crook  
Portland, Tennessee  
Biology

Christy Lynn Harris  
Greenville, North Carolina  
Business

Anna Elizabeth Kear†  
Mount Carmel, Tennessee  
Early Childhood

Maggie Rae Parrish  
Lake Butler, Florida  
Biology

Meredith Ashley Parrish  
Smithfield, North Carolina  
Biology

Alexis Marie Saunders  
Dover, Tennessee  
Biology

Ashley Michelle Snipes  
Jesup, Georgia  
Biology

Christopher Devante Thompson  
Chattanooga, Tennessee  
Business

**Associate of Arts Degrees**

Daniel James DeCresie  
Greenville, North Carolina

Kelsey Renée Horton†  
Ashland City, Tennessee  
Teaching

Victoria Elizabeth Thomsen†  
Joelton, Tennessee

William Garry Walker†  
Spruce Pine, Alabama

Savannah Grace Watts  
Pleasant View, Tennessee

**Bachelor of Science Degrees**

Karlee Elizabeth Alberty\*  
Chouteau, Oklahoma  
Exercise Science

Dalton Warren Alvis\*\*†  
Erie, Pennsylvania  
General Christian Ministry

Caitlyn Rose Braxton  
Greenville, North Carolina  
Exercise Science

Adra McClellan Brown\*  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Psychology

Erica Elizabeth Brown  
Alma, Georgia  
Psychology

Brenan Hardy Clyatt  
Lake Butler, Florida  
Pastoral Ministry

Haley Breanna Cole\*  
Killen, Alabama  
Psychology

Michaela Lynn Cowart\*\*  
North Kingstown, Rhode Island  
Music Performance

Ashley Merritt Floyd  
Turbeville, South Carolina  
Psychology

Anna Grace Forlines  
Hendersonville, Tennessee  
General Christian Ministry

Baylea Renee Freeman\*\*\*  
Virginia Beach, Virginia  
Psychology

Joshua Allen Hunter\*\*\*  
Pleasant View, Tennessee  
Youth and Family Ministry

Brandon Scott Justice  
Wellington, Kansas  
Youth and Family Ministry

Dakota Kailyn Kron\*\*\*  
Knoxville, Tennessee  
Early Childhood, Licensure PreK-3

Thomas Coveak Moody\*\*  
Nashville, Tennessee  
General Christian Ministry

Hannah Caroline Morgan\*\*\*  
Cedar Hill, Tennessee  
English, Licensure 6-12

Jonathon Gregory Reed  
Muscle Shoals, Alabama  
Youth and Family Ministry

Elizabeth Kathryn Stevanus\*\*  
Pleasant View, Tennessee  
Child Development and Learning,  
Licensure K-5

Kimberly Mikayla Strickland  
Jacksonville, North Carolina  
Child Development and Learning,  
Licensure K-5

Michael James Szabo†  
Deerfield, Michigan  
Business Administration

Erick Lee Werner  
Norfolk, Virginia  
Business Administration

Erick DeV Vaughn Wilson  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Business Administration

Joshua Randall Wright  
McKinney, Texas  
Business Administration

**Bachelor of Arts Degrees**

Jacob Alexander Austin\*\*  
Clarksville, Florida  
English

Michaela Lynn Cowart\*\*  
North Kingstown, Rhode Island  
English

Keren Delgado\*\*  
Russellville, Arkansas  
Intercultural Studies

Corbin Garrett Madden  
Crossville, Tennessee  
Youth and Family Ministry

Emily Anne Petty  
Beecher City, Illinois  
Intercultural Studies

Ryan David Whiticker\*\*\*  
Westmoreland, Tennessee  
History

**Master of Arts Degrees**

Joshua Ray Colson  
Johnston City, Illinois  
Theology and Ministry

Gregory Randall Fawbush  
Greenbrier, Tennessee  
Theology and Ministry

Matthew Douglas Honeycutt  
Murfreesboro, Tennessee  
Theology and Ministry

James Michael Keel  
Dover, Tennessee  
Theology and Ministry

Julie Marie Montero  
Hialeah, Florida  
Theology and Ministry

Cherish Christine Steigauf  
Nashville, Tennessee  
Theology and Ministry

\*\*\* Summa Cum Laude - 3.75

\*\* Magna Cum Laude - 3.50

\* Cum Laude - 3.25

† Not Present

# Congressman and Dr. Black Receive Welch's Strong and Courageous Award

Tennessee Congressman Diane Black and Dr. David Black were presented the Strong and Courageous Award honoring their Christian faith and service in Sumner County, according to Dr. Charles Lea, special assistant to the president. The award was presented during the May 13 Welch College Strong and Courageous Banquet, sponsored by Sumner Regional Medical Center and HighPoint Health System.

In introducing the award recipients, Lea noted the many accomplishments and Christian example of this couple. Congressman Black has helped people through her service as a registered nurse, instructor as an educator at Vol State Community College, and her work as a state representative, state senator, and member of the U.S. House of Representatives.

Dr. David Black, a nationally renowned toxicologist, is founder of Aegis Science Corporation, which he led from 1990 until September 2016. Dr. Black is well known for his collection of Bibles and historical documents linking his love of country and the Christian faith.

Approximately 250 individuals attended the sold out community event on the Welch College campus. The evening began with a special rendition of the national anthem performed by State Representative Terri Lynn Weaver. Welch



College *Rejoice!* ensemble provided music before Congressman John Rose presented a challenge and testimony.

The ancient leader of Israel, Joshua, portrayed by Greg Wilson, also made an appearance. Welch President Matt Pinson shared the college's mission as a Christian community of faith and learning.

Event patrons, along with event speakers, enjoyed an opening reception hosted by President and Mrs. Pinson in the Presidents Dining Room in Celorio Hall.

Although donations continue to be received, the Strong and Courageous event has raised over \$80,000 for student scholarships at Welch.

# Answer the Call

BY EDDIE MOODY

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Our world today has many problems and much pain. On an average day in the United States, 129 people take their lives,<sup>1</sup> 130 people die after overdosing on opioids,<sup>2</sup> 880 people are raped or sexually assaulted,<sup>3</sup> 1,748 babies are aborted,<sup>4</sup> and 2,156 marriages end in a divorce.<sup>5</sup> Culturally, the world seems to be upside down, with right viewed as wrong and wrong as right. On an average day, 11 Christians are killed somewhere in the world for their decision to follow Christ.<sup>6</sup> There are 7,102 people groups unreached by the gospel, which equates to 3.19 billion people without access to the gospel of Jesus Christ.<sup>7</sup> Our nation and our world need Jesus Christ and His Church.

Yet, the Church is waning in influence. On an average week in the U.S., between 100 and 200 churches close.<sup>8</sup> Since the nation's founding, the majority of Americans have worshiped weekly in some way. That has changed. Though the population of the U.S. increased by 61 million people between 1990 and 2010, worship attendance decreased by 100,000 people.<sup>9</sup> Today, only 52% of Americans are members of a church, down 19% from 2000.<sup>10</sup> Recently, the nation's largest Protestant denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention, reported their membership had reached its lowest point in 30 years,<sup>11</sup> and only half of children from Southern Baptist homes remained in the denomination as adults.<sup>12</sup> I suspect if we had the data on Free Will Baptists, we might find similar results. Soon, you will be the minority if you are

a member of a church. The world needs churches at a time when they are struggling to survive.

What, if anything, can Free Will Baptists do about this? I hope you did not chuckle when you read that question. The National Association of Free Will Baptists (NAFWB) has fewer than 2,500 churches in the U.S. and limited resources. You will not hear Free Will Baptists mentioned in the media (unless something goes dreadfully wrong). Even Free Will Baptists are unlikely to see themselves as important in addressing problems. Peruse the social media sites of most Free Will Baptist congregants and observe how many times you see them posting or sharing about the denomination?

So, if you are a Free Will Baptist, *should* you concern yourself with the challenges our world faces? Are those



problems not best left for larger, better-funded groups with bigger platforms? We are unable to ignore these issues because they impact our friends, family, co-workers, and classmates. Our role as the ambassadors of Christ *demands* we address them (2 Corinthians 5:20).

Recently, while reading the parable of the talents (Matthew 25:14-30), I could not help but think about Free Will Baptists. You know the parable. One servant received five talents, another two, and the last received one. As I consider Free Will Baptists, we have a lot in common with the servants who received two and one talents. I can't help but observe Jesus' wrath at the individual who assumed he could do nothing with his one talent.

It is also noteworthy that Jesus pointed out to him that God does a lot with little (Matthew 25:26). It forces one to think of the parable of the mustard seed (Matthew 13:31-32) where we are reminded God uses small things. Scripture provides many examples where God uses those who are small to accomplish His will. Consider Gideon (Judges 6-8) and God's insistence that he attack an army with limited resources. Let us not forget David initially was overlooked (1 Samuel 17) and the manner in which God used him. God is capable, willing, and wants to use any person who answers His call. But how can we? We can begin by striving to help our leaders, churches, and agencies be healthy and effective.

### Healthy and Effective Pastors

We need healthy leaders, and one of the biggest threats to their health is discouragement. The downturn in worship attendance and major challenges faced by pastors can be discouraging. In a survey, Free Will Baptist pastors were asked about their greatest barriers in ministry. The top response was disappointment (43%).<sup>13</sup> I, too, have found it easy to become discouraged and feel insignificant. As we toil in our respective ministries, we can begin to feel most churches in America are megachurches operating multiple sites. In reality, most American churches (59%) have fewer than 100 attenders<sup>14</sup> and 65% of churches have plateaued or are in decline.<sup>15</sup> Never forget Satan is the father of lies (John 8:44), and he looks for ways to create confusion and discouragement.

Satan uses discouragement to keep many people from fulfilling their mission.

Though the gospel is the answer to the major problems in life, fewer people are interested. Today, the pastor is more likely to encounter suspicion than a listening ear. One study indicated even self-identified Christians do not have a high opinion of pastors, with 43% rating the ethical standards of clergy as just average.<sup>16</sup>

Most pastors struggle with these and similar issues. This does not mean we should accept the decline in our churches as the status quo. However, we would benefit from attacking these issues *together*. The message of Ecclesiastes 4:9 is that we are better when we work together. Proverbs 27:17 teaches us that as we interact with one another, we make one another better. As pastors, we would do well to find another pastor who has been where we are and who can partner with us on our ministry journey. Those further along in ministry will benefit from this relationship as Elijah did with Elisha (compare the Elijah of 1 Kings 19 to 1 Kings 21). Through encouragement and coaching we can increase the health and effectiveness of our pastors.

### Healthy and Effective Churches

Too many churches are unhealthy, filled with division and self-centeredness. Unhealthy churches will not survive the current environment. We must have an outward focus, an Acts 1:8 mindset focused upon others rather than our own comfort and preferences. Effective churches adapt to the changing ministry landscape where fewer lost people naturally visit the church by learning to meet the needs of people in their community. Increasingly, the depressed, addicted, abused, trapped, and entangled must find in our churches the hands and feet of Christ. As we reach them, we must disciple them to reach their families and friends.

Effective churches develop pastors and leaders and engage in leadership transition without losing momentum. The results of a recent Free Will Baptist pastor survey indicated 55% of responding pastors were over the age of 50.<sup>17</sup> We must be proactive about developing pastors and making effective transitions.

At the end of the survey, two open-ended questions asked how the NAFWB could help pastors and churches. Many respondents mentioned the value of the resources provided by the NAFWB and noted the need for *more* resources to help them be more effective. We hear you. We will be looking for ways we can help one another by providing resources and networking opportunities.

This will take time. Often, we seek a quick fix to our difficulties. Sometimes, for a struggling church it is a new, perhaps younger, pastor. For the pastor it may be a bigger, seemingly better church or a new facility. I do not think these kinds of problems can be solved quickly. In Thom Rainer's research on breakout churches (churches that experienced a drastic turnaround), he found their pastors had tenures ranging from 11.2 to 21.6 years.<sup>18</sup> **Effective ministry takes time.** Churches need to stick with imperfect pastors, and pastors need to persevere through the ups and downs of a ministry. Congregants must learn how to effectively meet the needs of a despondent or addicted friend and point them to Christ. Much will be unnoticed by others, like a small church helping a recovering addict start over or a bi-vocational pastor shepherding a young married couple in the early stages of marriage. Much will seem unimportant like a young person who answers the call to ministry, learns another language, and heads off to a previously unreached people group in a place most people have never heard about. Little things—seemingly unimportant things—are largely unnoticed but mean a lot in the Kingdom of God.

That's the story of Free Will Baptists. Let's answer the call. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Dr. Edward E. Moody recently stepped down from his position as professor and dean at North Carolina Central University to become executive secretary of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. The long-time pastor of Tippetts Chapel FWB Church in Clayton, North Carolina, he holds a Ph.D. in counselor education. He is author of the *First Aid for Emotional Hurts* series and has published many articles in scholastic journals.

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# 2019

## BIG CHANGE IN THE BUCKEYE STATE

83RD NAFWB CONVENTION | JULY 21-24, 2019 | CINCINNATI, OHIO

As 4,416 Free Will Baptists converged in Cincinnati, Ohio, July 21-24, for the fifth National Convention in the Buckeye state, change was in the air. On Tuesday, July 22, at 2:18 p.m., delegates to the National Association of Free Will Baptists unanimously elected Dr. Edward E. Moody, Jr. as the tenth executive secretary in the association's 84-year history. Moody follows Executive Secretary Keith Burden, who will retire in September after serving the denomination for 17 years.

Moody, a North Carolina native, has pastored Tippet's Chapel FWB Church in Clayton, North Carolina, since 2000 and leaves his role as professor of counselor education and associate dean of the School of Education at North Carolina Central University, where he has served since 1995. Moody holds a Ph.D. in counselor education from North Carolina State University, an M.A. in clinical psychology from Middle Tennessee State University, and a B.A. in pastoral training from Welch College. A prolific author, Moody has authored *Surviving Culture*, *First Aid for Emotional Hurts: Helping People Through Difficult Times*, and the *First Aid for Your Emotional Hurts* training series, along with numerous professional journal and magazine articles.

Other personnel changes, though less obvious, also will affect the face of the convention in years to come. Debbie Burden, convention registration coordinator since 2013, will also retire in September. During Debbie's final year as coordinator, more than 3,000 people pre-registered for the convention, and onsite registration went quickly and efficiently, staffed by interns and volunteers working under Debbie's leadership. Debbie commented on her years in the role: "It's been a pleasure to serve as coordinator the last six years. Anna Fox will be the new coordinator, and I expect a seamless transition to her leadership as I enjoy retirement years with my family in Oklahoma." As Anna Fox learned her new role in Cincinnati, Lauren Riggs took her place as exhibit hall coordinator.

In spite of this “fruit basket turnover” making change the norm in 2019, the things that make the convention unique remained the same: outreach, worship, and the orderly business of the denomination.

## Outreach

Saturday, July 20, at 9:00 a.m., 79 Impact volunteers gathered at two Free Will Baptist churches near Cincinnati. Forty volunteers (some as young as age seven) painted Sunday School classrooms and the auditorium ceiling, cut and removed overgrown brush and trees, laid waterlines, and cleaned and repaired the church sign at Ambassador FWB Church. The remaining 39 volunteers braved the heat and humidity to distribute information about Lighthouse FWB Church to the community near the church. After the day of outreach was completed, multiple church members expressed their desire to serve with Impact in coming years.

Throughout the week, Serve the City volunteers worked many hours in projects around the city including ministry to the homeless, volunteering for various local outreach organizations, and donating to the annual blood drive. At least one person was saved as a result of this annual effort of the Vertical Three Conference.

## Worship

Powerful music, Scripture, and preaching characterized worship in Cincinnati. Music Coordinator Kevin Justice and the Music Commission planned a series of unforgettable services featuring a large convention choir, an orchestral ensemble, and a wide variety of talented individuals, families, and groups who shared their gifts. Kevin Denton, worship leader at

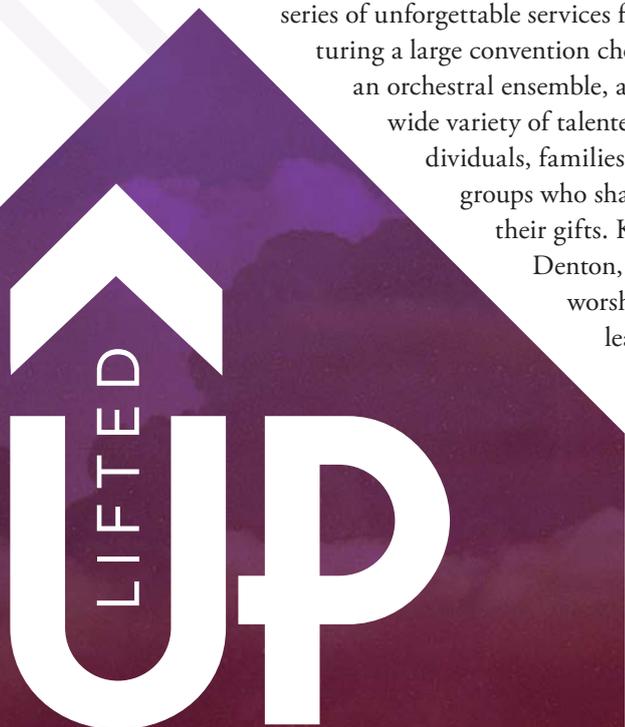
Faith FWB Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina, guided the congregation into worship, and throughout the conference, sermons explored passages surrounding the theme *Lifted Up*.

On Sunday morning, Paul Keener (OH), long-time manager of Ambassador Bible Bookstore, taught Sunday School using D6 curriculum before Dr. Timothy Eaton, president of Randall University preached on *Lifting Up Our Eyes for Help* from Psalm 121:1. Sunday evening, retiring U.S. Army chaplain (COL) Terry Austin spoke from Hebrews 12:12, challenging listeners to “lift up them hands” again and again—a resounding cry from the 30-year preacher in uniform to lift our own hands, raise the hands of other believers, and seek out and lift the hands of the oppressed.

Daniel Edwards, pastor of Faith FWB Church in Chandler, Indiana, shared a powerful message Monday on *Lifting up the Son of Man* from John 3:14 and John 12:32. On Tuesday, Tom Dooley, pastor of New Road FWB Church in Austintown, Ohio, preached on *Lifting Up the Promise of Christ’s Return*, drawing from Luke 21:28 and encouraging listeners to “look up for the Lord’s coming.” Diego Cueva, pastor of Iglesia Cristiana Casa De Dios in Woodbridge, Virginia, concluded the convention during the Wednesday missions service by challenging the congregation to *Lift Up Your Eyes to the Harvest* from John 4:35.

This year’s worship services were peppered with special presentations. After welcoming delegates to the state Monday evening, Mark Price, Ohio state moderator, presented Executive Secretary Keith Burden and his wife Debbie two white oak rocking chairs handmade by an Amish craftsman. Price offered the beautiful gift on behalf of Ohio Free Will Baptists to recognize the Burdens’ diligent service and to congratulate them on retirement. The congregation rose to its feet in an enthusiastic ovation for the couple.

RYAN LEWIS, EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATOR FOR THE EXECUTIVE OFFICE, COMMENTED, “OVER THE LAST DECADE, I HAVE WATCHED KEITH BURDEN BRING US TOGETHER AS A DENOMINATION. AND TODAY, I THINK WE ARE MORE UNIFIED THAN WE HAVE EVER BEEN. IN SPITE OF SOME DIFFICULT TIMES, HE HAS BROUGHT US TO A POINT WHERE WE CAN STEP FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE INTO A BRIGHT FUTURE.”



LIFTED  
UP



Executive Secretary Keith Burden welcomes successor Eddie Moody into office.



Mark Price honors Keith and Debbie Burden for their service.

During the Wednesday night service, Moderator Tim York and members of the Executive Committee also honored Keith and Debbie Burden for their faithful service to the denomination, announcing a reception will be held in the couple's honor during the 2020 convention in the Burden's home state of Oklahoma. For the second time during the week, delegates rose with a spontaneous and lengthy ovation for the couple.

## Business

**General Board.** On Monday, July 22, the General Board heard reports from nine national agencies and four commissions as Moderator Tim York guided board members through a three-hour, 37-minute meeting. The board approved a flood of recommendations, including a recommendation from the Executive Committee naming Dr. Edward E. Moody, Jr. as the candidate for executive secretary; a recommendation to approve the 2020 denominational budget of \$30.6 million; a recommendation for the 2026 convention to be held in Charleston, West Virginia; and a recommendation to grant an extension to the committee studying procedures and discipline of board members. Delegates later approved all recommendations during the business session.

Clerk Randy Bryant additionally read the names of 19 appointments to national committees: Credentials (5), Nominating (6), Resolutions (5), and Obituary Committee (2). Moderator Tim York appointed Dr. Sarah Bracey (TN) and Eric Thomsen (TN) to the Denominational Research Committee formed in 2018.

During Tuesday and Wednesday business sessions, delegates approved reports from the following departments:

**Executive Office.** Auditor Terry Hill noted a financial turnaround of more than \$1.6 million for the Executive Office over the last 17 years, noting, "At Keith Burden's first convention in Tampa, Florida, in 2003, I explained what the word *insolvency* meant after a number of years with substantial convention losses. Under Keith's leadership, the organizations under his responsibility report a combined cash balance of \$1,554,000, and stored net assets of \$1,662,000. I applaud Keith for his accomplishments."

Keith Burden delivered his final report as executive secretary, noting his gratefulness for the office's solid financial picture, a result of the generosity of Free Will Baptists. He reported that giving is up again in 2019. Burden applauded the ongoing success of *ONE Magazine*, pointing to the magazine as an important denominational milestone. As convention expenses continue to rise, he pointed to the 2020 increase in church fees as an important source of relief for convention funding.

Burden thanked the denomination for the privilege of serving as executive secretary and expressed his excitement about Eddie Moody's election as his successor. He thanked his wife and family for their help and support during his time in office and concluded by thanking his staff, noting, "They have become more than coworkers; they are my friends."

**Welch College.** President Matt Pinson reported improved finances and celebrated the largest fall enrollment in 34 years. He attributed the explosive growth to the new "branding" of the college (new name and campus), the obvious atmosphere of spiritual formation on campus, and continuing improvement in academic excellence. This improvement, he suggested, is reflected in a consistent rise among college rankings.

"It's an exciting time to be at Welch," Pinson stated, pointing to several goals for the near future: elimination of existing construction debt; increased enrollment

that will result in additional residential construction on campus; construction of a new student services building and a thousand-seat auditorium; and a growing slate of undergraduate and master's degree programs, including a residential, on-campus Master of Divinity undergirded by substantial scholarships and financial aid.

"We believe education at Welch is more than just classroom learning," Pinson concluded. "Our students have the opportunity to become an integral part of a Christian community of faith and learning." He called on listeners to pray, support the college financially, and point students toward the school. He honored Dr. Eddie Moody for his work on the Welch College Board of Trustees. Pinson also announced the release of a new book, *The Apologetics of Leroy Forlines*, that explores select writings of F. Leroy Forlines regarding apologetics and the knowledge of God.

**Randall House.** CFO Michael Lytle shared an up-and-down financial picture for Randall House since 2015, noting "roller coaster" finances are not unusual in the publishing industry. The financial report revealed a deficit in 2018, and Lytle identified a decrease in curriculum sales as the primary reason for that deficit. To meet the financial challenges, Randall House presented a \$200,000 reduction in the 2020 budget.

While CEO Ron Hunter acknowledged the financial challenges, he also reminded listeners Randall House operates on sales rather than contributions, unlike other denominational departments. He shared a 17-year trend indicating while Randall House is currently experiencing a dip in revenue, total sales have grown from \$2.2 million in 2002 to \$4.5 million in 2018, with a general upward trend.

Hunter challenged listeners not to be people who *talk* about problems but people who *solve* problems. With this in mind, Randall House is solving problems by lowering the cost of student devotional guides; offering all D6 products on a subscription, per-person basis for \$2.80 per month; and releasing a new, free tool—an attendance chart to help measure not only Sunday School attendance, but also gospel conversations and daily devotions.

Hunter announced the release of three new titles: *How We Get Our English Bible* by Robert E. Picirilli, *Helping Hurting Pastors* by Eddie Moody, and *Fight* by Jon Forrest. He also celebrated the completion of the final volume in the Randall House Bible Commentary series: *Luke*, written by Thomas Marberry.

**IM.** General Director Clint Morgan told listeners, "At IM, we are on a mission that is not about here but about there; not about us but about them; not about clinging to but letting go; not about getting but about giving; not about staying but about going; not about IM but all about the great I Am."

He thanked supporters for the prayer, encouragement, volunteer hours, and financial support that make it possible for IM to stay on mission. He compared IM to a sailboat encountering shifting winds, fair winds, and head winds in its ministry journey. No matter what winds IM encounters, Morgan emphasized the organization refuses "to be blown off course."

He pointed to new destinations the IM leadership team has charted: broadening the Free Will Baptist footprint in India, a strategic focus on the *nomes*, developing more international church planting teams, and ministering to immigrants and refugees. These destinations are important, Morgan concluded, because "if we do not know to which port we are sailing, no wind is favorable."

Morgan celebrated important milestones in 2018, as 527 people accepted Christ, and 1,044 people were baptized in overseas ministries. He applauded the faithfulness of missionaries, with over 25% of the Free Will Baptist missionary force now serving on the field for more than 20 years. He highlighted four categories in which Free Will Baptists can engage in missions: IM career missionaries; IM international field missionaries (currently 12 with IM); IM missionary interns who expedite career missionary status through two-year internships on an international field; and IM missionary appointees. Finally, Morgan celebrated nine new candidates and two returning missionaries approved during the board's spring meeting.

**WNAC.** Director Elizabeth Hodges underscored the mission of WNAC: *to help each woman fulfill her God-given roles in the*



# 2019

## CONVENTION AT A GLANCE

### REGISTRATION

NAFWB Attendees - **3,701**

Vertical Three - **3,299**

Total Attendees - **4,416\***

*\*Note: Many attendees register for both conventions.*

### SPEAKERS

Sunday School, July 21

Paul Keener (OH)

Sunday Morning, July 21

Tim Eaton (OK)

Sunday Evening, July 21

CH (COL) Terry Austin

Monday Evening, July 22

Daniel Edwards (IN)

Tuesday Evening, July 23

Tom Dooley (OH)

Wednesday Evening, July 24

Diego Cueva (VA)

#### Contributors:

Eric Thomsen, Hannah Driggers,  
Deborah St. Lawrence, Phyllis York

#### Photographers:

Abigail Fawbush, Eric Thomsen,  
Sydney Walker, Rodney Yerby

*Great Commission at home, in her church, community, and around the world.*

Hodges asked for prayer as her department develops and carries out new strategies to move forward as a department, maintaining all current ministries, while also broadening the reach and focus of the department.

She noted most, if not all, Free Will Baptist churches have a women's ministry seeking to meet the needs of women in the church. Because WNAC's mission is the same, she asked: "What can we learn from your women's ministry, and how can WNAC help, encourage, and strengthen Free Will Baptist women?"

Hodges shared the development of denominational women's ministry over the decades, from missionary support and the Steward Provision Closet to youth training and events, national and international educational scholarships, and publishing *Treasure* devotional guide, which will move online in 2020. Many previous Bible studies are already available in digital format at [wnac.org](http://wnac.org). Hodges celebrated \$450,000 given to missions and ministry causes in 2018, noting, "God has been faithful to bless our efforts, proving again and again that 'little is much when God is in it.'"

Hodges explained that moving forward, WNAC will partner with *all* Free Will Baptist women's ministries, whether members of WNAC or not. "How can we help your women?" she repeated in conclusion. "What can we learn from them? How can we serve together to accomplish more for the Kingdom?"

**Free Will Baptist Foundation.** Director David Brown noted Free Will Baptists have been involved in difficult ministry through difficult times since the day the denomination was founded. This was true for his department in 2018. The department reported a decrease of 3% in total assets, a direct result of chaotic fourth-quarter stock market corrections. Brown reported total assets down by \$3.5 million in 2018, only the fourth decrease in the Foundation's 27-year history.

Despite the downturn in assets, Money Management Trusts increased, and the Foundation received \$800,000 in new planned gifts. Brown celebrated the contrasting financial picture during the first six months of 2019, with an increase in assets of more than \$7 million and total assets exceeding \$80 million for the first time.

The quick financial turnaround allowed the department to continue offering grants in 2019, distributing \$500,000 to 22 Free Will Baptists ministries. Brown noted, "While it is the intent of the Foundation to make \$500,000 in grants every year, market conditions could affect our ability to do so." He observed many organizations that received grants in 2018 experienced an additional spike in donations—the result of excitement generated by the influx of grant funds.

Brown promised listeners as the culture grows darker and ministry becomes more daunting, dangerous, and unpopular, the Foundation stands ready to help Free Will Baptists fight the darkness by providing financial assistance. He honored outgoing board members Donnie Miles (SC); Wendell Walley (CA), who served as both vice-chairman and chairman of the board; and Keith Burden (TN).

**North American Ministries.** During his first report in 2014, North American Ministries Director David Crowe (who had been on the job less than a month) reported a \$1.3 million deficit—\$500,000 in the general fund and \$800,000 in assets in the Church Extension Loan Fund (CELF). Five years later, Crowe reported a significant financial turnaround. CELF finished \$454,000 in the black in 2018, and the trend continues into 2019. The same improvement is reflected in the general fund, allowing overall ministries of NAM to finish \$301,000 in the black in 2018.

Crowe celebrated the ongoing work of church planters, with 45 families in 31 active church plants. Church planters are experiencing larger launch attendance, and more salvation decisions and baptisms than in previous years. Five Hispanic families oversee 52 Spanish-speaking church plants across the nation, giving the department a total of 83 church plants. Crowe announced a 2020 Power Conference for Spanish speakers, May 25-26, in Nashville, Tennessee. The conference will explore a unified vision for Hispanics.

Master's Men, now a division of NAM, continues heading up denominational disaster response, producing Direction Bible Studies, hosting sports fellowship events, leading Impact, coordinating convention ushering, and restoring and maintaining the Ridge Church in New Durham, New Hampshire.

The Free Will Baptist chaplain's program continues to expand, with nine military chaplains in the army, navy, army national guard, and reserves. Four additional chaplains are gaining education and experience to join the military chaplaincy, while other chaplains are endorsed by NAM as hospital chaplains, law enforcement chaplains, and one chaplain serving the Secret Service. Crowe announced that recently retired chaplain Terry Austin will assist director of chaplain support Kerry Steedley with the growing program.

Crowe introduced Fresh Wind, a new department of NAM dedicated to church revitalization resources including coursework and recorded class sessions for pastors to use in training church leaders and the congregation, anywhere, anytime. Materials should be available in early 2020.

CH (COL) Kerry Steedley, director of chaplain support, honored CH (COL) Terry Austin and his wife Mona for more than 30 years in the chaplaincy, describing Austin as a "soldier's chaplain, but more important, a soldier's soul winner." Dr. Brad Ransom honored church planters Tom and Pam Jones and Jenna and Nate Altom for leading Keystone FWB Church, Greensburg, Pennsylvania, to self-supporting status.

**Board of Retirement.** Director John Brummitt celebrated the 50th anniversary of their retirement plan under the direction of the Board of Retirement. From 1969 to 2019, the plan has grown to nearly \$70 million in assets. Brummitt noted that growth continues at a near-record pace, and 2018 was a good year for the board, though investments fell off during a fourth-quarter market correction, affecting reporting numbers. Brummitt announced the upcoming **Re:Invest** conference, October 17-19, in Nashville, Tennessee, part of the department's new emphasis on financial training.

Brummitt strongly encouraged Free Will Baptists to move away from the idea

## ELECTED IN 2019

### Home Missions

2025

Jeff Jones (NC)

Frank Webster (MO)

Frank Wiley (OK)

### IM, Inc.

2024

Casey Cariker (OK)

Darren Walker (NC)

### Board of Retirement

2025

Lance Boyer (MO)

Don Myers (MI)

Randy Wilson (OK)

### FWB Foundation

2025

Brent Patrick (VA)

Hubert Stafford (GA)

Corey Minter (TN)

### Theological Commission

2024 - Thomas Marberry (OK)

### Historical Commission

2024 - Robert Picirilli (TN)

### Music Commission

2021 - Joshua Riggs (OK)

2024 - Kevin Justice (NC)

### Media Commission

2019 - Josh Owens (TN)

### Executive Committee

David Taylor (AR)

Danny Williams (AL)

David Shores (IL)

### General Officers

Moderator: Tim York (TN)

Assistant Moderator: William Smith (GA)

Clerk: Randy Bryant (FL)

Assistant Clerk: Ernie Lewis (IL)

## 2020 BUDGETS

Executive Office - \$830,450
FWB Foundation - \$2,469,000
Home Missions (includes Master's Men) - \$5,000,000
IM, Inc. - \$7,500,000
Retirement - \$673,800
Randall House - \$4,780,200
Welch College - \$9,122,524
WNAC - \$235,500
Theological Commission - \$6,000
Historical Commission - \$5,885
Media Commission - \$5,308
Music Commission - \$5,800
<b>Total - \$30,634,467</b>

## 2019 VERTICAL THREE CONFERENCE

Registration - 3,299
Engage Seminars - 82
Truth & Peace - 147 students; 14 sponsors
Buck a Week Offering - \$6,764.10

### Download convention photos:

[nafwb.yerbyphotography.com](http://nafwb.yerbyphotography.com)

"The 2019 Convention has been wonderful! The biggest highlight this week had nothing to do with budgets or reports, but that my daughter Mia trusted Jesus as Lord and Savior last night after the service! After service, Mia, with tears in her eyes said, 'Daddy, I know Jesus is telling me to follow Him and be saved, and I just can't wait any more!'"  
—Eric Puschmann (TN)

that contributing \$10-15 a month is sufficient to prepare for a lengthy retirement. Instead, he urged careful calculation of the amount needed to provide a sufficient monthly retirement income.

"The Lord has truly blessed our office over the past 50 years," Brummitt concluded. "And, we continue to help our participants accumulate assets and draw upon those assets during their golden years. Our office will strive to continue what has happened in the last 50 years...We want to help you prepare for your future ministry."

Following the report, the department honored longtime board member Rick Cason (GA) for his service.

## Commissions and Committees

**Historical Commission.** The Historical Commission continues to focus efforts on developing an archive of well-organized historical materials at Welch College, producing historical books and pamphlets, and expanding the digital collection at [www.FWBHistory.com](http://www.FWBHistory.com). Commission Secretary Eric Thomsen appealed to listeners for donations of historical items, stating: "I'm convinced attics, hall closets, and church storage rooms across the nation are filled with dusty boxes of Free Will Baptist records and materials. Please don't discard those valuable resources. We want them."

**Music Commission.** Chairman Doug Little identified 2018 as a year of waiting as the Music Commission develops a new website filled with resources designed for part-time and volunteer worship leaders. Little honored the memory of Ted Wilbanks, longtime member of the Music Commission, who died earlier this year.

**Media Commission.** Marc Nepl thanked FWB Foundation and North American Ministries for helping underwrite the cost of live-streaming the 2019 convention. The commission also thanked the Executive Office for its help in developing a social media presence, increasing followers and engagement in social media activity.

**Commission for Theological Integrity.** Chairman Matt Pinson thanked the denomination for its support throughout the commission's 60-year history. He announced the upcoming release of the latest issue of *Integrity: Theological Journal* and announced October 28-29 as the dates for the 2019 Theological Symposium, to be held on the campus of Welch College. He encouraged reading the regularly updated articles and reviews on: [www.fwbtheology.com](http://www.fwbtheology.com).

**Denominational Research Committee.** Chairman Danny Baer reported that the initial research effort from the Denominational Research Committee compiled survey responses from 639 senior pastors on a variety of topics with fascinating results. Survey findings can be viewed at [www.nafwb.org/research](http://www.nafwb.org/research).

In other business, delegates resolved to stand for life and against abortion; to research the feasibility of establishing term limits for annually elected general officers; and to extend profound gratitude to Keith Burden for his leadership, and his family for their support and sacrifice.

## IDENTITY | VERTICAL THREE CONFERENCE | CINCINNATI, OHIO

Every believer can relate to this year's theme, *Identity*, based on Ephesians 4:24. We all are made in God's image and identified as chosen, loved, forgiven, and with purpose. Service, worship, leadership, and talents are just a few ways the 3,299 students who gathered in Cincinnati, Ohio, this week expressed what it means to live out their Christ-centered identities.

Truth and Peace students Ethan McCraney, Lanae Hoffman, Jackson Watts, Ana Johnson, and Matthew Pinson kicked off the week by leading Sunday School. They communicated age is not a factor or limitation when it comes to our identity in God's plan for our lives. If we surrender and humbly obey Him, like Josiah in 2 Kings 22, it has the power to impact future generations. Derreck Lute, pastor of student ministries at Porter FWB Church (OH), continued during Sunday morning worship in Ephesians 2, explaining how God's great love gives victory over death and sin. Christ's sacrifice redeems us, gives us purpose, and makes us alive in Him.

On Sunday evening, John Howell, pastor of Chipley First FWB Church (FL), used Ephesians 4:17-24 to remind students that hope in this dark world is found in Jesus alone, because we have been redeemed, created in His image, and called His own.

Monday evening, Donald Myers, worship pastor at Kirby Church (MI), unpacked Ephesians 1:3-7 to remind students they are fully known, loved, chosen, and forgiven. He encouraged students to stop chasing counterfeit acceptance.

During the final service, Troy Sadowski (GA), executive vice president of Cornerstone Estate Planning, shared his testimony about being trapped in sin. He inspired students to find their identity by fully surrendering to God.

All week, the Youth Evangelistic Team led V3 in worship. These 13 students spent their summer traveling to ten states (3,110 miles) and serving two North American Ministries church plants.

Even children learned more about their identity in Christ and how to apply biblical truth to their lives. Katie

Greenwood led 106 preschoolers in exciting Bible lessons, games, and crafts each night. Johnny Miller guided 256 first through third graders in fantastic worship and inspiring Bible lessons. Steve Greenwood corralled 305 energetic fourth through sixth grade students in 456 Worship, challenging them to grow in their faith.

Kids' Corner provided a carnival experience for children so parents could attend Engage seminars or CTS Expo events. Eighty-two sessions offered a plethora of topics: spiritual growth, discipleship, parenting, and more.

Jane Parker taught students to minister through Serve the City opportunities across the Cincinnati community. Ten volunteers served Matthew 25 Ministries, a disaster relief organization. Others assembled and distributed 128 care bags filled with personal items and non-perishable foods to the homeless population of Cincinnati and residents at Bethany House Ministries. Nine people boxed food for homeless shelters at Free Stone Food Bank. Others donated blood through the V3 Blood Drive. Serving others reminds conference attendees to love others like Jesus.

During the Wednesday evening ceremony, CTS and other awards were presented. Youth Leader of the Year award went to Russell Ray. Youth Group of the Year was awarded to Sign Choir youth in Owensboro, Kentucky. Youth of the Year went to Erin Goucher. The Jim Lauthern Award was presented to Jim and Donna Brewer for a lifetime of hard work and dedication. This year's CTS Ministry Expo had 976 entries and 1,199 competitors; the Wednesday night awards recognized the hard work of competitors and coaches.

CTS Expo planners announced a new CTS Expo Initiative designed specifically for students with special needs. These students will compete and be judged and awarded for their talents and participation.

The 2020 Vertical Three Conference will take place in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and explore the theme *Resolved* from Daniel 1:8. See you next July! **ONE**



# “Waisting” Away

BY KEITH BURDEN

It was a hot, humid, mid-summer day. I, along with a couple of members from our church staff, had been called upon to provide music at a graveside funeral service. The trio consisted of two tenors and an alto. Although the musical selections were familiar songs, we were confessedly more nervous than usual because we were singing *a cappella*.

The service was for an elderly saint—the mother of a member of my congregation. A well-known and beloved retired minister served as the officiant. Family and friends gathered under a tent canopy erected to provide shade from the sweltering heat. An unusually large crowd gathered at the rural cemetery.

Our trio huddled outside the tent near the casket. Blinded by the glaring sun, we were able to see only



the silhouettes of those in the shaded area. On cue, the service began and we sang the opening song. After we finished, the old minister read the obituary, made a few brief remarks, and led in prayer. Following a second song, the elder clergyman proceeded to deliver the homily he had prepared for the occasion.

Abruptly, with no warning, the aged preacher stopped speaking. Although my vision was obscured because of the sunshine, I noticed the mourners shifting nervously and staring at the ground. I was unprepared for what happened next. The old minister gently laid his Bible on the lid of the casket, reached down, and pulled up his trousers, which had fallen around his ankles.

There was, understandably, a prolonged period of awkward silence. After retrieving his Bible, the unflappable old gentleman stated matter-of-factly, “I’ve lost so much weight I can’t keep my pants up.” Then, without missing a beat he continued sharing the memorial message. Frankly, I don’t remember his text or much of what he said that day. However, I will *never* forget that preacher’s wardrobe malfunction.

This true story illustrates some valuable lessons I have learned

throughout my ministry.

- **Expect the unexpected.** You cannot control everything that happens to you. Learn to roll with the punches. It will relieve much stress in your life.
- **Don’t take yourself too seriously.** Develop the ability to laugh at yourself. Everything is not a matter of life and death.
- **Be yourself.** Don’t attempt to save face by trying to be something or someone you are not. Be honest. Be real—even if it hurts your pride. No one likes a hypocrite or a phony.
- **Make the most of every situation.** God can use even a humorous experience to teach serious truths. **ONE**



Keith Burden, CMP

Executive Secretary  
National Association of  
Free Will Baptists



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