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First Glimpse >>

From the Editor: Throughout my life, few people have taught me more about wise time management than my dad. His latest advice, an excerpt from his upcoming book on Scripture memory, simply had to be shared. I hope you enjoy a guest editorial from the man who taught me to read...

Learn to Say **NO**

The most used excuse in the world is “I don’t have time.”

My reply is simple. We all have the same amount of time—24 hours each day, no more, no less. The difference comes in how we use time. When you ask yourself how to squeeze the most out of each day, remember the key is saying no. Such a small word, but so important.

Say no to procrastination. Start. Do it. Don’t put it off. Say no to self-indulgence. Little will happen until you begin.

Say no to temptation. Read Matthew 4:1-11 and recall that Jesus defeated temptation with Scripture. Set aside time daily to saturate yourself in the Word of God, then allow it to guide every action. Embrace the declaration of Psalm 119:11: “Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee.”

Say no to glitter. Every trap has bait...and it often glitters. Culture, fashion, and the media feed pride, vanity, and self-centered living. Sure, glitz and glamour can be desirable, and without vigilance, we will find ourselves wasting time, energy, and money pursuing the dazzling glitter of a godless culture. Instead...

Say no to the crowd. Noah said no and survived the flood. Daniel refused to conform, and the lions failed to find him appetizing. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego didn’t bow, and the fire didn’t burn them. See through the silliness of chasing the latest fashions, trends, styles, and name brands. Instead, use that time for something really worthwhile—the Word of God. Remember the admonitions of Isaiah 40:7-8 and Psalm 119:89: “The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, but the Word of God abideth forever. Forever, O Lord, thy word is settled in Heaven.”

Say no to the pursuit of the trivial. From collecting antique marbles to playing chess, I often find myself involved in things that are not sinful, just trivial. Avoid things that have little to do with your ultimate purpose in life. Be selective. Be clear about your purpose, roles, values, and responsibilities to God and man. Be about what is essential...and eternal.

Say no to pleasing people. It is impossible. Jesus didn’t do it, and you can’t either. Instead, concentrate on pleasing God.



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Say no to (out-of-control) technology. Technology can be a real time saver. From calendars and alerts to keeping up with family and friends on social media, it can be a productive and useful tool. But without restraint, this valuable tool will steal your time rather than saving it. Schedule times to unplug. Stop being a slave to social media, and put technology back into its place.

Say no to negative people. God wants us to seek out wise influences...just read Proverbs 13:20. Obviously, life has some negatives, but why dwell on them or hang out with people who do? Our thoughts shape our actions, habits, and character. We must “keep our hearts with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life.” Avoid negative people and embrace the positive influence of Scripture instead.

Say no to fuzzy focus. Just as a magnifying glass will focus the sun’s rays enough to start a fire, we must focus the direction of our lives. Priorities, purpose, goals, aims, objectives—define your direction. Know what you will do. Know what you will not do. Focus intensely and avoid distractions.

Say no to busy. One of my college professors concluded the final class time of every course with the statement, “Beware of the

barrenness of a busy life.” Good advice! Do less to achieve more.

Say no to easy. It is delusional to think you can accomplish anything of value without effort. Napoleon Hill once said, “Following the line of least resistance makes all rivers and most men crooked.” Accept the (sometimes difficult) challenge of the faithful Christian life and live it to its fullest.

Say no to mindless activity. Television, video games, YouTube—an hour a day adds up to 40 eight-hour working days each year. Time better spent engaged in things of eternal significance! Consider a person who uses the same amount of time to memorize five Bible verses a month. In 40 years, he or she will have a quarter of the New Testament memorized! How would you like to have such a person teach your Sunday School class or fill your pulpit?

Twenty-four hours a day. We all have them. The question is: what will you do with them? **ONE**

About the Writer: Over the course of his career, Neal Thomsen pastored four churches in Florida and Georgia, was a professor at Luther Rice Seminary, and taught fifth grade at a number of Christian schools.



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NECESSARY SPURS

BY DAVID BROWN

“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.”

(HEBREWS 10:24)

In June 1942, the world was embroiled in World War II, and things weren't going well for the Allies. Most of France had been occupied by Nazi Germany. Great Britain, though remaining free, had endured heavy bombing by the German Luftwaffe. The United States had been bombed by Japan six months earlier, with several battleships destroyed or damaged.

Sometimes, those of us who weren't alive during World War II don't realize how precarious the fate of the world was during this time. On June 12, 1942, Royal Air Force Wing Commander Ken Gatward was asked to volunteer for an “unsafe” mission. He and his navigator, Flight Sargent George Fern, were chosen for the assignment because they had demonstrated skill in accurate flying at low altitude during attacks against German positions at Dunkirk. The British had learned that the Nazis were holding daily parades down *Champs-Elysees*, a main thoroughfare in Paris, to demonstrate their power over the French and to demoralize any resistance.



Gatward was instructed to fly down *Champs-Elysees*, use a chute to drop the French flag on the *Arc de Triomphe*, then drop to second-floor level—about 20 feet off the ground—and strafe the parade with 20mm guns before shooting up Gestapo headquarters at the end of the street.

His “mission impossible” was a success. He accomplished his objectives and returned home safely. He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross by Great Britain and honored as a French hero after the war.

Did this mission accomplish anything strategically to help end the war? No, but it accomplished a very important objective. It boosted the morale of the French underground resistance and boosted the morale of British citizens everywhere. The Germans wanted everyone to think they were invincible, that their goal of world domination was inevitable. Ken Gatward’s courageous foray down the *Champs-Elysees* reminded everyone, including the Germans, that they were not invincible. In the language of the writer of Hebrews, you might say his actions “provoked the Allies to good works” in the war against Germany.

The word translated *provoke* needs a little explanation. The Greek word *paroxusmon* is literally “beside sharpening” and has been translated spur, incite, stir up, motivate, and provoke. What are ways we can spur one another on toward love and good works?

Heroic actions. Simple acts of courage can affect hundreds, thousands, even millions of people. Consider the most familiar example from Scripture, when David confronted and killed Goliath as recorded in 1 Samuel 17. Perhaps you remember the story. Israel and the Philistines were prepared for conflict, with their armies lining the Valley of Elah. Each day, the giant Goliath challenged the warriors of Israel to fight, but no one was brave enough to take his challenge. The Israelite troops were demoralized, dismayed, and terrified. Each day, when Goliath made his challenge, they ran from him in great fear.

But when young David faced the giant, killed him with a simple sling, and then cut off his head, they surged forward with a shout and pursued the Philistine army all the way to Goliath’s hometown of Gath, some seven miles to the west. His single heroic act spurred the entire army of Israel to a great victory.

Now, I realize that acts of heroism are few and far between, and most will never experience an opportunity to perform a heroic act of this magnitude, but some might. And even if we do not find ourselves in a position to commit a heroic act that spurs others on, we all can benefit by observing and teaching the heroic acts of others.

Consider the story of missionary Jim Elliot, who died at the hands of Auca Indians in 1956. His testimony continues to spur missionaries to spread the gospel, even in the hard and dangerous places. Read about martyrs from the early days of Christendom...or simply watch the news to witness heroes of the faith standing tall in our world. Heroic acts of faith, even martyrdom, continue today, and these actions should spur us toward our own works of courage for the cause of Christ.

Encouraging words. Proverbs 25:11 reminds us, “A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver.” A word of encouragement at just the right time can change someone’s life. You may think you never know the right thing to say, but if you stay in God’s Word and remain sensitive to His Holy Spirit, God can use you to say just the right thing at just the right time.

I have encountered some great encouragers in my lifetime. During my time at Welch College, Bert Tippett encouraged me as he did so many others. He encouraged me to stretch myself, to do things I didn’t know I could do. Jack Williams is another great encourager who continues to spur me on to good works that I cannot imagine doing. Unfortunately, we live in a world where it is more popular to tear one another down. Don’t fall into that trap! Be an encourager, and you will spur others on to good work.

Slapped serious. The Greek word translated *provoke* includes an element of anger—the idea that sometimes we may need to correct one another firmly to get us back on the path to love and good deeds. Sometimes, we may need to make someone angry to get his or her attention. Have you ever been angry with a friend who set you straight? Swallow hard and think again as you remember the words of Proverbs 27:6a: “Faithful are the wounds of a friend.”

**WE LIVE IN A WORLD WHERE
IT IS MORE POPULAR TO
TEAR ONE ANOTHER DOWN.
DON'T FALL INTO THAT TRAP!**

A good friend will not let you go astray, even if confrontation hurts. Why? His intent is to spur you on, to correct you in love. The truth hurts, but the truth also heals. I have had a number of “slaps up side the head” in my lifetime, both figuratively and literally. And while they hurt at the time, ultimately, they helped. We all need friends who hold us accountable for our own impossible missions.

Two weeks after the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941, President Roosevelt met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff at

the White House to express a desire that Japan be bombed as soon as possible. He wanted to boost American morale after the disaster at Pearl Harbor.

Many of the Joint Chiefs told him it was impossible. The President insisted, and a plan was formulated. Lieutenant Colonel James Doolittle led the mission that came to be known as "Doolittle's Raid." On April 18, 1942, 16 B-25 bombers were launched from the aircraft carrier *USS Hornet* in the Pacific Ocean about 650 miles from Japan.

It was a desperate act. The bombers were stripped down to lower their weight. The lower gun turrets and rear guns were removed and replaced with black painted broomsticks. The planes took off from the aircraft carrier but could not land safely on the carrier. They had only enough fuel to make their bombing runs and turn west toward the coast of China, where they hoped to land before they ran out of gas. Each of the 16 bombers had four 500-pound bombs. At best, only 64 bombs would be dropped. Still, the planes were launched, and all but one dropped bombs on their assigned targets.

They all crashed, either in China or in the waters near China. Each plane had a five-member crew, a total of 80 men. Thirteen

were killed, but 67 survived, not only this mission but until the end of the war. The damage done to Tokyo and four other Japanese cities was no more than a pinprick in the scope of the War in the Pacific. Doolittle speculated that he would be court-martialed for losing 16 planes while inflicting minimal damage.

Was it worth it? Yes! The daring raid demonstrated to the Japanese empire that they were vulnerable to attack, and that perhaps they shouldn't put too much faith in their leaders. It forced the Japanese navy to reposition their ships to protect the homeland. But most important, when it was reported "back home" that the United States had bombed Tokyo, it tremendously boosted the morale of the American people. Doolittle was not court-martialed; instead, he was awarded the Medal of Honor by President Roosevelt and promoted to Brigadier General. All 80 pilots were awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross, and their actions spurred us on through the long and difficult war.

Let's learn from these stories of heroism and spur one another on toward love and good deeds through heroic acts, encouraging words, and when necessary, a slap up side the head—necessary spurs for the sake of God's Kingdom. **ONE**

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

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Stewardship Defined

By definition, according to *Merriam-Webster*, stewardship is “conducting, supervising, or managing something.” The interesting thing about stewardship is how we think of it in terms of tithing and giving for Christians.

Many times I’ve heard people say, “I tithe because 10% belongs to God.” Though I understand the logic behind that statement, the truth is, 100% belongs to God. As stewards, we simply manage what God has put under our care. The Apostle Paul reminded us in 1 Corinthians 4:2, “Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

Being a faithful steward means I remember and act like every dollar I have and spend is God’s money.

Stewardship and Missions

One way we apply this is through missions. The Great Commission requires Christians to go into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the world (Acts 1:8; Matthew 28:19-20). I am responsible to witness to my neighbor, friend, coworker, and others I meet on a daily basis. It is also my responsibility to reach those in other geographical regions, from my state to every country in the world.

How can I reach people I don’t know in places I’ll never go? Through faithful stewardship of God’s money and sending church planters to places I can’t go. It’s all part of stewardship. On top of the 10% we give to our local churches, we should also support church planting and missions as a regular part of our giving.

Stewardship and Me

So, what does all this mean to me? How should we apply stewardship to our daily lives? Here are a few key points to remember. *Everything* belongs to God—money, possessions, even time. When I pay my mortgage, I spend God’s money. When I fill up the gas tank in my car, it’s God’s (including the car). When I give my tithes to my local church, it’s His anyway. As I support missions, I do it with God’s money. It’s all His.

When we approach stewardship from the perspective of manager rather than owner, it’s easier to give it away. I believe the foremost stewardship question in our minds should be, “Is God pleased with the way I manage His money?”

Obvious Conclusion

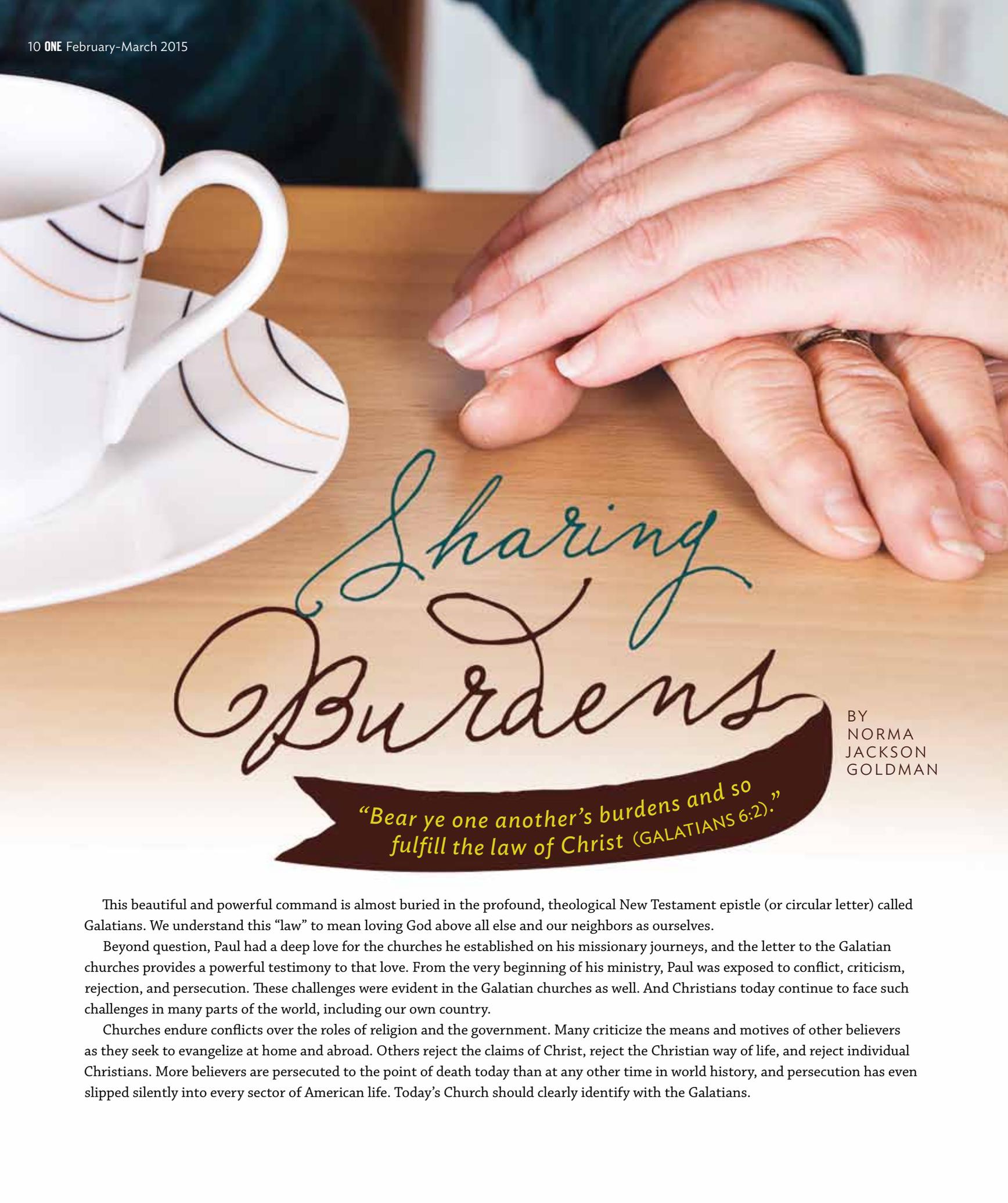
I believe one of the most convicting passages of Scripture is Malachi 3:8-9, “Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.” This passage is convicting because it is true for far too many Christians.

Again, it goes back to our idea of stewardship. Why rob God of His own resources? The truthful answer is that we have laid claim to what rightfully belongs to Him. When we correct our thinking and remember our biblical role as stewards, it becomes much easier to manage correctly. **ONE**



About the Writer:

Brad Ransom is director of church planting for Free Will Baptist Home Missions. Learn more: www.homemissions.net.



Sharing Burdens

BY
NORMA
JACKSON
GOLDMAN

“Bear ye one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (GALATIANS 6:2).”

This beautiful and powerful command is almost buried in the profound, theological New Testament epistle (or circular letter) called Galatians. We understand this “law” to mean loving God above all else and our neighbors as ourselves.

Beyond question, Paul had a deep love for the churches he established on his missionary journeys, and the letter to the Galatian churches provides a powerful testimony to that love. From the very beginning of his ministry, Paul was exposed to conflict, criticism, rejection, and persecution. These challenges were evident in the Galatian churches as well. And Christians today continue to face such challenges in many parts of the world, including our own country.

Churches endure conflicts over the roles of religion and the government. Many criticize the means and motives of other believers as they seek to evangelize at home and abroad. Others reject the claims of Christ, reject the Christian way of life, and reject individual Christians. More believers are persecuted to the point of death today than at any other time in world history, and persecution has even slipped silently into every sector of American life. Today’s Church should clearly identify with the Galatians.

Paul had great concerns for individuals within this group of churches, and an even greater concern for the Body of Christ—the vast collection of believers who followed “the Way” of Christ. He was deeply concerned that they follow closely the instruction he had given them so they could stand firm against false teachings and false leaders trying to undermine his authority and teachings.

Against this backdrop, Paul delivered this simple yet profound command to “Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

All Have Burdens

No matter what is going on in the world around us, everyone has burdens. No one is exempt, however it might appear to those on the outside. Burdens are not the same; some are clearly heavier than others. But whether it’s a physical

ailment, financial issue, family grief, or loss of a job—it’s a burden to be carried. The word *burden* originated from a heavy weight or stone carried for a long distance, and it can be applied literally, or figuratively. Christ Himself carried a heavy burden, a heavy load of suffering, to purchase our freedom.

All Need Help

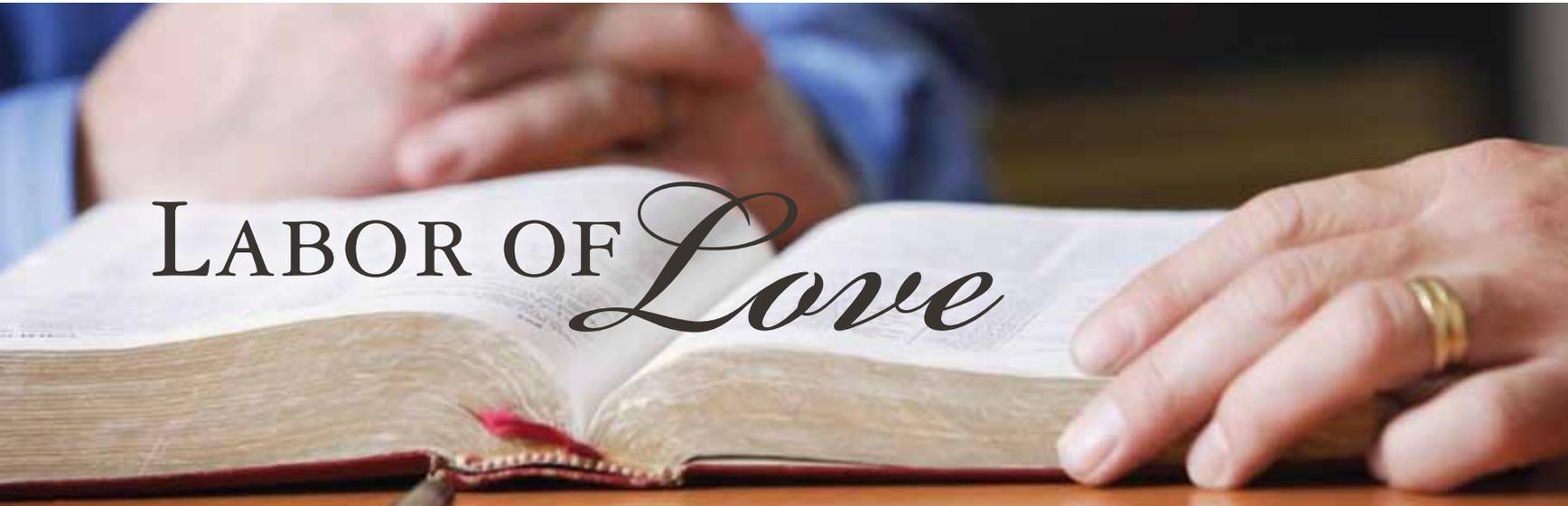
Though we all have them (largely as a consequence of living in a fallen world), none is able to bear his burden alone. God never intended we should. One of the most beautiful pictures of His care is the fellowship of believers, through which He planned for us to be surrounded by helpers. Fellow believers are called to walk beside us, sharing our pain and distress, praying for our strength and endurance, and rejoicing with us when the burden or weight is lifted.

Mature Christians play an important role, standing with younger or less mature believers, easing the burdens they bear. Not only do godly helpers bring encouragement and relief, they paint a beautiful picture to the watching world of what it means to be part of God’s family.

In God’s economy, giving is always getting. That means the more we give—self, time, and resources—the more God returns to us. While gaining more is certainly not the objective, we all could share examples of how God more than repaid our feeble efforts with His own style of giving. It’s difficult to take on the stereotype of a crochety, grumpy, pessimistic Christian when we are enthusiastically engaged in bringing hope, encouragement, affirmation, and support to others.

Whose burden will you carry today? **ONE**

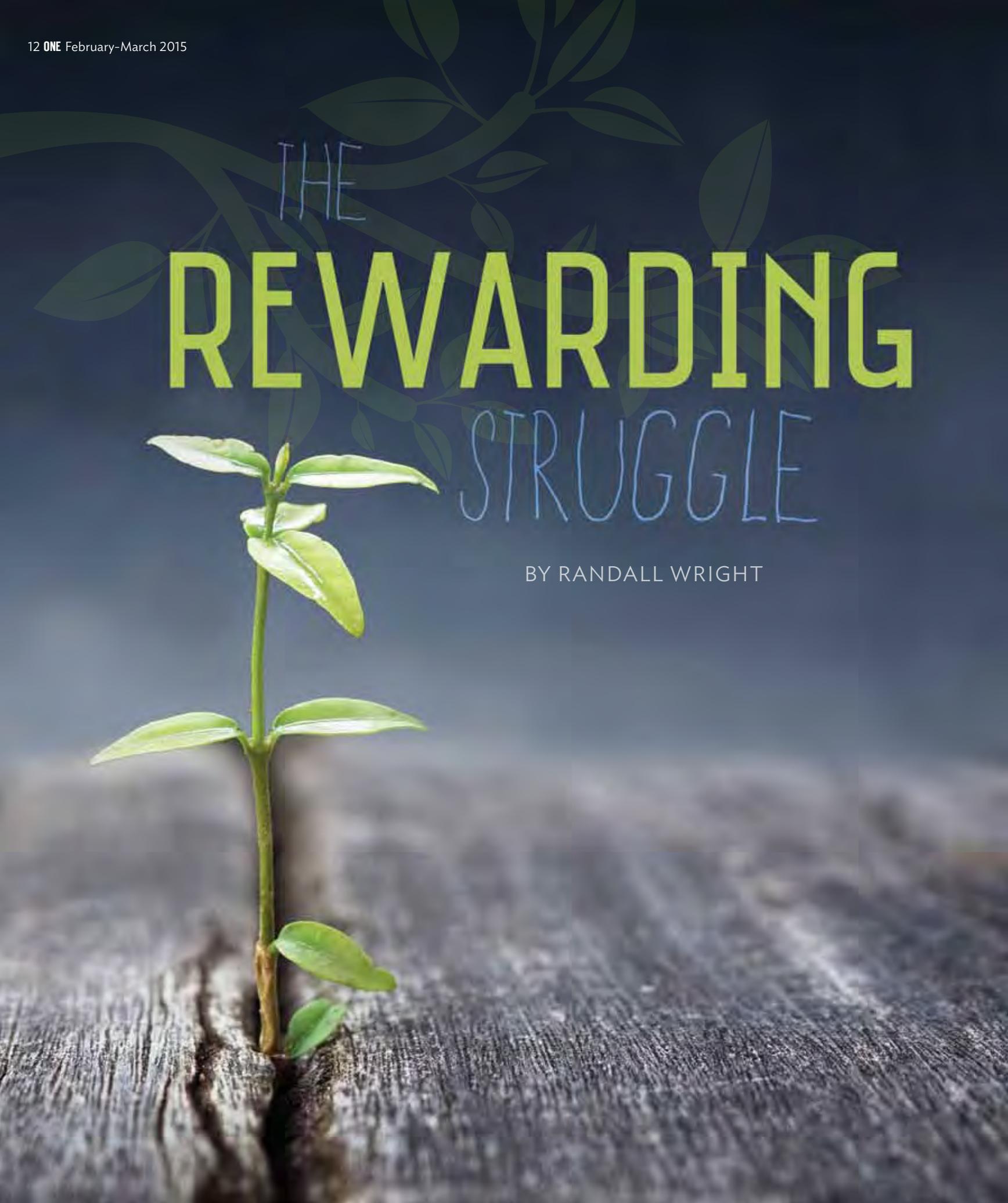
About the Writer: Former magazine editor Norma J. Goldman enjoys a successful freelance career in her retirement. The award-winning writer lives near Houston, Texas. Learn more about retirement options at www.boardofretirement.com.



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THE
REWARDING
STRUGGLE

BY RANDALL WRIGHT

The message in my inbox that morning was a simple invitation, but it sent my mind spiraling in different directions. The request:

“Would you consider writing an article sharing the experience of getting this far into your church plant?”

We will soon celebrate our third anniversary, and my initial thought was, “Are you kidding? There are dozens of church planters who are doing a much better job. I am the poster child of all things not to do. Apparently, they have not heard that I am about to publish my first book, *Church Planting: What Was I Thinking?*” (Okay, so I’m just kidding about that last part.)

As I agonized over the article, I wondered, “Should I write about the struggles, or should I write about the rewards? Should I talk about the good, or should I talk about the bad? Should I talk about how God has blessed, or should I share how Satan has battled? Should I talk about the blessing of being in a new building or tell about the Easter Sunday when a storm knocked out the power and kept us from getting into our storage facility to get our ‘church in a box,’ (the trailer that houses our chairs, podium, sound, etc.)”

One night, while returning home from our newly-built church with two of my children, Joshua and Rebekah, I shared my daunting challenge and asked what they thought I should write about. Their responses boiled down to two simple ideas: write about the struggles, and write about the rewards.

Then, my son Joshua said, “You should call it ‘The Rewarding Struggle.’” We all felt like we were onto something, so we took a vote. It was unanimous. We were all in agreement. After all, the three of us made up 60% of the original five members of our church, and we would talk to the other 40% when we got home!

Over the past three years, I have said often that church planting is both the most grueling and most gratifying thing I have ever done. To be honest, though, it is not just something I have done. It is something we have done as a family. So, in reflecting on this rewarding struggle we call church planting, it is obvious that this truly has been a family effort. So, I asked each family member to give me the number one truth they have learned about ministry since we began planting a church.

**PRINCIPLE #1
FROM JOSHUA:** 

“Don’t take your church and church ‘stuff’ for granted.”

Having spent our entire ministry (prior to church planting) in established churches, we did not realize how easy it is to take for granted all the things that make up a typical service. Most people give little thought to the items church planters set up and take down each week. Most people rarely come to church and think, “Oh, great, the speakers are still hung from the ceiling” or “Wow, someone has already set up the nursery this morning.”

Most children’s workers never find themselves asking, “Okay, which hallway has the most room to set up chairs for class?” Ministry in an established church and building has its own challenges, yet rarely do pastors worry about whether or not the building will be unlocked, or if everyone will be able to get in, since someone or several people usually have

a key to the church facility. That is not always the case when renting a school or other types of facilities, and the only way the doors are unlocked is when a paid school employee gets there to unlock them. Over the years we have found ourselves laughing at these particular situations, and we have learned not to take anything for granted.

**PRINCIPLE #2
FROM REBEKAH:** 

“People come and people go.”

When we first began thinking about church planting, several planters said, “Randall, you will go through three congregations before you have an established group.”

I would smile, and deep inside I thought: “I will be the exception!”

After three years, we have learned that someone else will have to be the exception! In a church plant, people really do come and go. In the past three years we have seen nearly 40 key people and workers leave for various reasons. These are not the people who visit and don’t return, or the ones who come for a while and then leave. These were people who served, gave, and helped carry out various ministries of the church.

Instead of mourning the losses, we have learned to celebrate and be thankful for the investment these people made while they were here. As you read the Apostle Paul’s writings in the New Testament, you often find him giving thanks for people whom God had brought into

his life who were no longer closely related to his ministry.

PRINCIPLE #3 FROM LEAH:



“Be Flexible.”

Very few statements have been made more during our time of church planting. It is good to realize that it has taken root in my children’s hearts and minds. For three years, I have constantly reminded my family, our congregation, and myself to be flexible. Sometimes, they have had to remind me.

When you have no permanent meeting space, limited resources, and a small work force, it forces you to be flexible. When you have to set up equipment every Sunday, with temperamental sound and video equipment, you have to be flexible. Church plants and planters can quickly find themselves out of a contract with the place they have been meeting, and they are not quite into their new facility. In situations like this, a congregation may have to meet at parks, in homes, or even at a restaurant.

As a reminder, and in appreciation for our people’s flexibility, on our one-year anniversary, I gave all of our launch team a Slinky.

PRINCIPLE #4 FROM COLLETTE:



“Have tough skin but keep a soft heart.”

Church planting is not for the weak of heart, but you have to keep a soft heart. This endeavor can deliver some tough blows, which, if we are not careful, can become hardening agents to our hearts. Besides the natural challenges that come

from moving to a new place, meeting new people, and trying to start a new church, you will face supernatural challenges from Satan. No matter how many people we reach, he will make sure we also face rejection. No matter how much good we do, he will certainly cause some to question our motives or criticize our decisions.

Jesus set the example for this when He said, “And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet” (Matthew 10:14). His words stand as a beacon of light to show us what to expect and how to respond. In other words, don’t let what happens on the outside stay with you; leave it behind. In the world of church planting, you may have to cultivate tough skin, but you must maintain a soft heart. After all, the quality of our lives is dependent upon the condition of our hearts (Proverbs 4:23).

PRINCIPLE #5 FROM RANDALL:



“Find your fulfillment in being faithful.”

Pastors and church planters are often results-oriented. (Guilty as charged!) If the attendance is up, we are up. If the turnout is down, we often go down with it. I am not saying this is the way it should be, or that it is always this way, but often a pastor’s spirit can fluctuate with visible results.

In these three years, I have learned this truth, and even had to lean on it more than ever. Faithfulness is the primary characteristic God calls for in His servants. “Moreover, it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful” (1

Corinthians 4:2). I have come to realize that if we are faithful in little things, in His time, He will give us more (Luke 19:17).

Our faithfulness will be the basis of our reward when we stand before the Lord (Matthew 25:21). According to Revelation 2:10, being faithful unto death is the basis of receiving a crown of life.

FAITHFULNESS
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In our church-planting adventure, which way do the scales tip? Do they lean toward the rewarding side, or are they weighted to the struggle? The answer is...yes! Some days, they lean more in one direction than the other. To realize, however, that my entire family has learned these valuable lessons about life and ministry certainly adds to the list of rewards.

And in the final analysis, regardless of which direction the scales tip, the thing that must always be acknowledged is that God is faithful (1 Corinthians 1:9). Are you facing a struggle? Rest in the fact that God is faithful. Are you rejoicing in a long-awaited reward? Then rest in the fact that God is faithful. **ONE**

A new convert shares her story...

Right Church, Right Pastor

Growing up, my sister and I attended First Baptist Church in our small hometown. My great-grandmother would pick us up every Sunday to ensure we attended. My parents weren't religious people, so they didn't care much about going but didn't mind if we did. When my great-grandmother got sick and could no longer drive, church ended for us.

We grew up in a sinful environment at home and at school. I always believed in God but never truly knew His love. When I was 15, my best friend since kindergarten died in a car accident. I completely shut down and turned away from everyone, especially God. "How could He do this to me?" I wondered. "Isn't He supposed to love me? Why would He want to hurt me so badly?"

Hate began to fill my life, and my last three years of high school were filled with sin. Not long after graduating from high school, I learned I was pregnant. My boyfriend and I moved in together during the pregnancy. After our son was born, I really felt like something was missing. My boyfriend, our baby, and I started going to a Nazarene church in the next town. We didn't attend regularly, but when we did go, I felt as if my life was coming together.

We married, and he joined the Army. What a miracle God was playing in our lives, but we had no idea. We moved across the country, and life seemed to get better. We tried out different churches randomly but never heard the message that was trying to get through.

When the Army led us to Tennessee, we were truly blessed.

Upon arrival, we met some great Christian families who believed in us, answered my questions, and showed me the true meaning of unconditional love. They

looked after me during that first year when my husband was deployed to Afghanistan. I was alone, raising our son and pregnant with our second child. After my husband returned, we started to explore the community and met a pastor who opened the door we had been waiting for.

After attending this church, we knew immediately this was the one. This was the church we had been yearning for. These were the people who would become our family. These were the messages that would lead us to salvation. After attending that church for a little over a month, that message from God came, and we were saved that morning. A month! God had been working in my life for so long; I just needed the right pastor and the right church to open my heart, not only to hear His Word but feel it.

After I accepted Christ, everything was gone...every hateful feeling, every hurtful sin that I had been holding onto was gone. I felt so light, so peaceful, something I had never felt before. My husband and I were baptized the next month. It has now been nine months since our baptism, and our lives have been amazing.

God has blessed us with a passion for helping others, for seeing the best in everyone, for letting go of negativity. Most important, we have a special bond and love for Him, our church, each other, and our two amazing boys. We are continuing to grow spiritually, and our love for Him grows stronger by the day. I can say wholeheartedly that I have been redeemed; I have been set free, and it is all thanks to His love for me. 

Testimony from a new convert at the 180 Free Will Baptist Church in Clarksville, Tennessee; Chad Kivette, pastor.



How to prepare for a quickly approaching retirement...

Turning Off the **ALARM CLOCK**

BY RAY LEWIS



Several years ago, I received a “retirement countdown clock” that shows the time left until I retire. As I began writing this article, my clock displayed 437 days, 3 hours, 29 minutes, and 25 seconds. As you read this, that number has counted down to less than a year.

The number one question I have been asked since announcing my retirement is, “What are you going to do when you retire?” A few days ago, I responded to a friend who asked me that question with, “I’m going to turn off the alarm clock.”

Wouldn’t it be nice if that were all there was to making sure we’re ready for that big day? As that day rapidly approaches for me, I am more aware than ever that there is much to do before I actually “turn off the alarm clock.”

As I enter my final year of employment, I realize I am facing the same questions I have been asking others across the country at local, state, and national meetings for more than 32 years. Questions such as: have I adequately prepared financially so that I have enough money to do the things I’ve always talked and dreamed about doing in retirement? How am I going to spend my time once I do turn off the alarm clock? Should I sell

my home and downsize or even relocate to a different city or state? All are important questions that need answers.

As I head down the home stretch, I realize that if I have not adequately prepared, retirement may turn out to be one of the most financially, emotionally, and spiritually challenging times of life.

I realize now the importance of starting to prepare early for this new chapter in my life. It comes much sooner than we realize. I'm very thankful for people like Herman and Vernie Hersey, who challenged and encouraged me years ago to get started and be consistent, and to Bill Evans who continued to encourage and challenge me in my preparation.

What are the things I need to do during the last year before retirement? **First, it is important for me to remember to pray about every decision I make.** I must earnestly pray and seek God's plan for this period of my life. You see, I don't believe God is through with me yet. I believe that even in retirement He can use me. So, it is important to include Him in my plans and decision making during the countdown to retirement, because no matter how much planning I do, if my plans are not His, I will be "of all men most miserable."

Another thing I must do is take a realistic look at my finances. I must determine my anticipated retirement income from all revenue sources. It is important to know how much money will come in when I retire. For most retirees, income usually comes from one or more of these sources: Social Security, pension funds, personal savings, and in many cases, income from continued employment.

Once I determine my expected income, I need to ask myself, "Can I live on that?" The only way to answer that question is to look at expenses. Many financial planners suggest taking a trial run, living on projected retirement income the last 12 months before actually retiring. This means tracking my

spending. Some expenses aren't likely to change in retirement, such as food, upkeep, maintenance of the home and utilities, auto expenses, and, of course, tithes and offerings. It is important to keep other expenses in mind such as increased healthcare costs, travel, hobbies, etc. Tracking spending will help determine areas of overspending so needed adjustments can be made before actually "turning off the alarm clock."

The last year of employment is also a good time to consider insurance needs. With children grown and on their own, the mortgage (hopefully) paid off, and either debt-free or headed in that direction, the need for large amounts of life insurance usually decreases. At the same time, however, it may be necessary to look at long-term care insurance. Medicare needs to be in place before employer-provided health insurance ceases. Shopping for the best Medicare supplement that meets both needs and budget is essential. It is also good to shop around to see what auto insurance discounts are available and make sure I am getting the best deal when it comes to insurance needs.

It is crucial to review my legal documents during the countdown to retirement. Has anything changed since I had them drawn up? It is extremely important to update or prepare legal documents for estate planning, to make sure my will is up-to-date, my power of attorney is still the way I want it, and I have a living will that clearly spells out my advance directives. I must also remember to keep these documents in a secure place, and be sure my heirs know their location in case something happens to me. I need to make sure the beneficiaries of my life insurance policies and retirement accounts are up-to-date.

Finally, it is important to know what I am going to do with myself when I "turn off the alarm clock." One of the first years I was employed by the Board of Retirement, I attended an AARP



It is important to know what I am going to do with myself when I "turn off the alarm clock."

conference in Washington, D.C. One of the speakers made a statement I've never forgotten. He said, "Most retirees can complete everything they have planned for retirement within the first six months. Then what are they going to do?"

I recently read a statement that sums it up perfectly. "Make sure you always have something scheduled that you can look forward to doing. If you don't have a reason to get up each day, one day you won't."

So, the countdown has begun for me. Even though I started preparing for this day more than 30 years ago, much remains to be done before I step aside. I encourage everyone who reads this article to make adequate preparation for this exciting period of life because it's coming... whether you're ready for it or not!

The Board of Retirement is here to help you with your preparation. Give us a call, stop by to see us, or visit us on the web at www.boardofretirement.com. Let us know how we can help you prepare to turn off the alarm clock. **ONE**

About the Writer: Ray Lewis is outgoing director of the Board of Retirement. He and his wife Ida live in Antioch, Tennessee. For more information about retirement and financial planning, contact the Board of Retirement at (877) 767-7738 or online: www.boardofretirement.com.

Welcome to REALITY

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

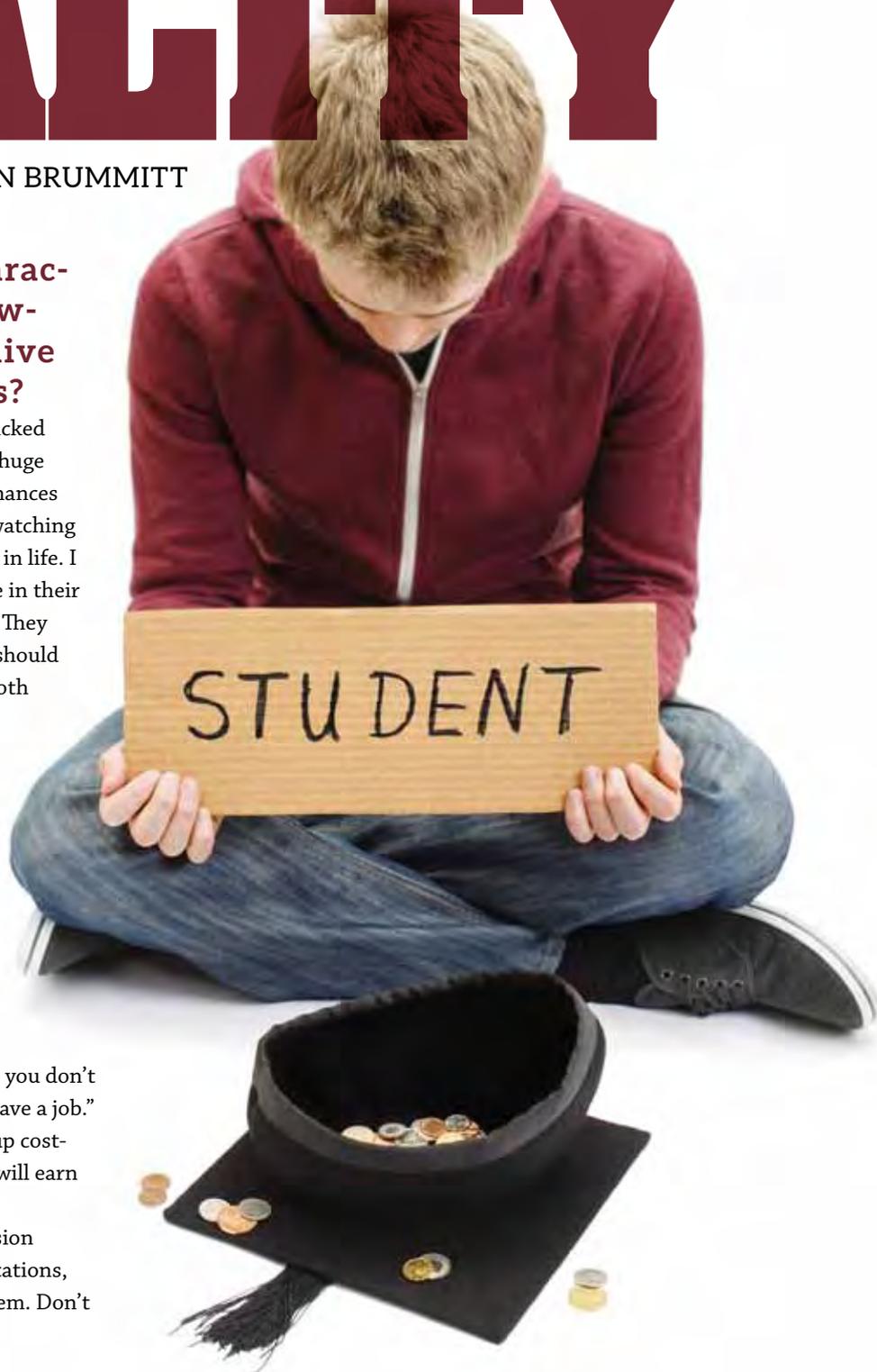
Have you noticed how the characters on television can work low-paying jobs yet still afford to live in nice, downtown apartments?

Or even be unemployed for seasons and still not be kicked out of their homes? Even if you have not noticed the huge difference between real life and your favorite show, chances are you have been affected by it. As kids growing up watching television, we build ideas of what it means to “arrive” in life. I have noticed more and more people, especially people in their 30s, struggling financially as a result of this mindset. They think that by the time they reach the age of 30, they should have a home, a family, and everything should be smooth sailing. Welcome to reality! For most of us, mistakes and decisions made between the ages of 18 and 25 have affected us far greater than we could ever have imagined.

Sometimes, we end up paying for decisions made during the first five to ten years on our own until close to retirement (and sometimes into retirement). Decisions such as how to finance our education, weddings, credit cards, and housing have lasting effects on our lives.

We know we need to go to school, so we take out loans to pay for it. We are told, “Don’t worry about it; you don’t have to pay on them until you are out of school and have a job.” We never look to see how much those loans will end up costing us, or if the careers we start—if we get to start—will earn enough income to cover those payments.

The same goes for weddings and marriages. Television shows dream weddings and honeymoons in exotic locations, but they rarely show us the price tags that go with them. Don’t



misunderstand. I am not saying you shouldn't have a nice wedding or honeymoon, but consider the cost of a 20-minute ceremony and remember you are still just as married, even if you don't fly the family to an all-inclusive resort at the beach. The same goes for the honeymoon; you should have one, but plan for something that fits your price range. Finances are the number one cause of divorce in the U.S., so don't start your marriage by stepping out in the wrong direction.

Credit cards are a totally different (and dangerous) animal. Stay away from them until you have control of your finances and a stable income! In a perfect world, never put anything on your credit card that you can't pay off by the end of the month. (Even in an imperfect world this is the smart practice.) Credit card debt accrued in your early 20s can stay with you late into your 40s if you are not careful. Be wise with your credit cards. They will cause problems if you do not pay them off every month.

When it comes to housing, what we see in shows and movies—enormous, well-decorated homes owned by characters working minimum wage jobs—is not reality. We see where our parents live and what they have now, and for some reason we think that is where we should start. Again, 20- to 30-year-olds are the worst about thinking they need big houses that come with huge mortgage or rent payments. Follow the general rule of thumb. Thirty percent of your monthly income is an “afford-

able” rent or mortgage payment. If you have other debt such as student loans or credit cards, your 30% will need to be adjusted downward.

Thirty percent of your monthly income is an “affordable” rent or mortgage payment.

Some people may be thinking, “There is no way I can find a place for less than 30% of what I make.” Welcome to reality. Either get a roommate to share the expenses or get a second job to make up the difference. Both can be hard, but this is reality, not a TV sitcom.

Don't let the first five years on your own ruin your finances for the rest of your adult life! Parents, talk to your children and encourage them not to make the same mistakes that millions of young adults make every day. Television and media have led us to believe it is normal to have it all without ever having financial troubles that can't be solved in a half hour, but that is not reality...and reality is where we live. **ONE**

About the Writer: A 2004 graduate of Welch College, John Brummitt is Chief Financial Officer for the Board of Retirement. Learn more: www.BoardofRetirement.com.

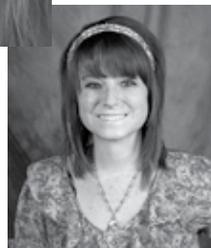
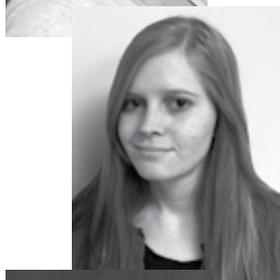


SCHOLARSHIPS

for the next generation

The Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart Student Scholarship offers educational assistance to female students from all four Free Will Baptist Colleges: California Christian, Hillsdale, Southeastern, and Welch. Your gifts continue to prepare the next generation to serve the Lord and His Church.

2014-15 Scholarship Recipients (clockwise from top right): Rebekah, Welch; Dominique, Southeastern; Rebecca, Southeastern; Jessica, California Christian; Leah, Hillsdale; Bre, Hillsdale; Brianna, Welch; Amber, Gateway; Abby, Welch.



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To apply for the Wisheart Scholarship, visit the financial aid office of your college.

Brown on Green >>



TRUST IS A WORD WE ENCOUNTER REGULARLY AT THE FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION.

We manage trusts for a variety of charitable agreements: gift annuity trusts for individuals that pay a fixed-dollar amount for life; charitable remainder trusts that also pay an income for life and possibly for a fixed period of years beyond the life of the donor.

Endowment trusts managed by the Foundation preserve principal and pay out earnings to various Free Will Baptist ministries as directed by the donor. We also manage revocable trusts currently paying 2.75% for both Free Will Baptist organizations and individuals who either directly or indirectly benefit ministries.

While managing these financial trusts is important to us, a second meaning for this word is even more important. Webster defines *trust* as confidence: reliance or resting of the mind on the integrity, veracity, justice, friendship, or other sound principle of another person or thing. Trust is not something to be given or taken lightly.

HONESTY

The Foundation has worked hard for 35 years to earn your trust. We have done this in many ways. We strive to be completely aboveboard in all we do. We believe it best to always tell the truth, even when the truth hurts. We have invested the various funds we manage in an appropriate manner to achieve the goals of the trusts.

We sometimes err on the side of investing too conservatively; even so, we experience negative earnings from time to time. Whether the earnings are positive or negative, our pledge is to report them to you faithfully, just as they are. Thankfully, our history shows a reasonable rate of return through the years.

CONFIDENTIALITY

We earn your trust by being confidential with your personal information. Planned gifts require us to accumulate a great deal of information. Some of it relates to what the individual wants to do through his or her gift; other items are required for accurate calculations. We also need detailed information concerning your financial position. This information is never disclosed to anyone for any reason.

We earn your trust by never trying to tell an individual which ministry he or she should benefit. The donor is always in the driver's seat. You tell us whom you want to benefit, and we help you find a way to do so.

PROFESSIONALISM

We earn your trust by the conduct of our office. We operate the Foundation according to sound business practices. We act as a fiduciary for your planned gift. Our job as a fiduciary is to walk the tightrope of managing trusts in such a way that we are equally responsible to benefit the donor and, at the same time, deliver to the ministry the original value of the gift or more.

PROVEN TRACK RECORD

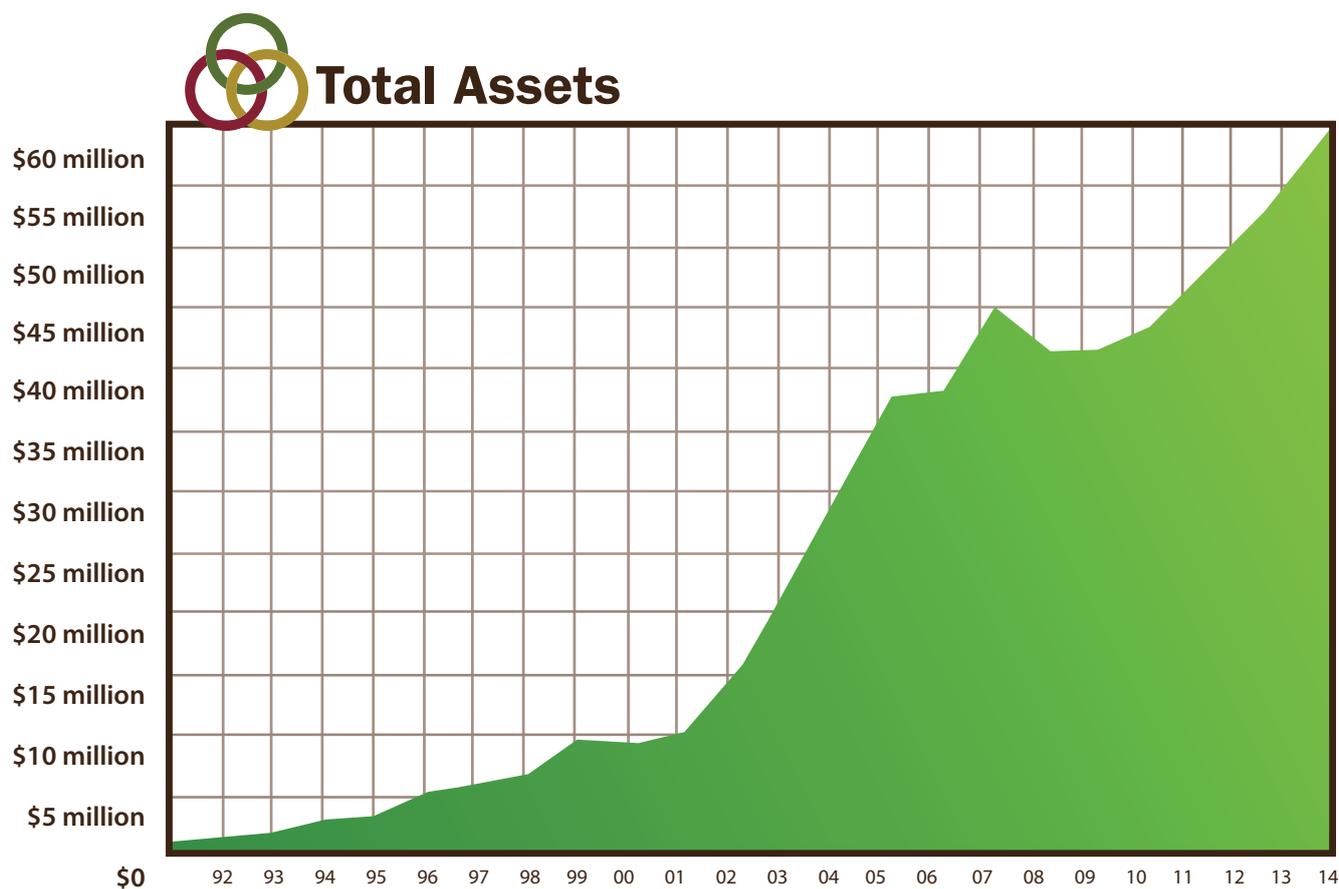
We work to earn your trust by doing a good job and providing a lengthy track record of good returns. Many ministries and individuals have had trusts with the Foundation for a long time. We have earned their trust through performance. We manage funds for all the departments of the National Association. Many state associations have trusted us with various funds as well.

Chances are, one of your favorite ministries has already placed its trust in the Foundation. We encourage you to ask them about our performance. The Foundation has seen incredible growth through its history but especially over the last 23 years. Since 1992, the Foundation has grown from \$920,000 to over \$62 million.

NEW AREAS OF SERVICE

In recent years, we have developed new facets of ministry. We now offer estate planning seminars to churches, and these sessions provide much more than information. Through our partner Cornerstone Estate Planning in Atlanta, we connect Free Will Baptist families to local attorneys to prepare estate planning documents. Within five years, the Foundation will also begin making grants to our ministries, impacting Kingdom work in a way we have never done before.

At Free Will Baptist Foundation, trust is not just what we do but who we are. We are trustworthy. Call 877-336-7575 to begin trusting us with your money today. 



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

An Interview with Nelda Spaur...

“What Am I Doing Here?”

BY BILL AND BRENDA EVANS



At Nelda Spaur’s house you get a gracious smile, a handshake, and her most comfortable chair. She insists. Last October, as leaves turned from green to red in the Blue Ridge Mountains, we visited Nelda in Gordonsville, Virginia. Single and 85, she talked to us about what she’s doing with her life.

Bill: When I first called to ask if we could interview you, you said you'd had a recent setback and weren't exactly young anymore, yet you seemed cheerful and optimistic? How do you manage that?

Nelda: You work at it. When I sit down to eat three meals a day, and there's no one there but me, it's lonely. So I read—newspapers, mysteries, Christian books... any good story. It stops my loneliness. We have a good library. Used to be an old Catholic church, but it's renovated now and is a really good place. Of course, neighbors call, too, or friends come by, or my daughter and I go to lunch.

Bill: Sounds as if you purposefully storm the gates of loneliness.

Nelda: I do. I'm optimistic by nature, and I like to do things. Sometimes I'll call a girlfriend, and we'll go to the Ruritan's bingo club. We take a covered dish and little gift bags, something like a cup of soup or cookies. If you bingo, you get to pick a little bag. It's all in fun. Then we eat and tell jokes or funny stories. I usually tell something to make people laugh.

Bill: So laughter and activity are two answers for your loneliness?

Nelda: They are. I have a friend who is alone and doesn't even try to interact. You have to pull conversation out of her. So, she's always sad. Of course, I have a disadvantage, too. I can't take my baby anymore, so I have to depend on somebody else.

Brenda: Your baby? Do you mean a boyfriend?

Nelda: (laughter) No, my car. My family won't let me drive it now, but I still call it my baby. The day I bought it, I was driving along punching buttons and turning knobs to see what all the gadgets

were for. Somehow, I got the emergency flashers going and couldn't figure out how to turn them off. So I pulled over, and a policeman stopped and asked me if I was in trouble. I told him I was, that I couldn't figure out how to turn off the flashers. He asked how long I'd owned my car. I grinned and told him two hours. So he showed me how to work everything.

Brenda: And you call it your baby because you had to learn how to tend to it.

Nelda: Yes, but since last May, I haven't driven.

Brenda: Why not?

Nelda: It started with breathlessness and erratic heartbeat. Then things got really bad. I lost all memory from May to July. I quit smoking back in 1980, but you know your sins will still find you out. So, I'm on oxygen around the clock, don't go upstairs unless someone is here, and can't drive my baby. But I still get out because I've got my angels.

Bill: Your angels?

Nelda: My 73-year-old neighbor across the street, my daughter and daughter-in-law. They're my angels, people who are really good to me, who want to take care of me. I guess my mother was the first. For years, she was an invalid with polycystic kidney disease. But when I was 15 and got saved at youth camp, she said that was all she had been living for. She was so good to me. The very next month she died.

Three years later, my father also died. He had been a cook in France during World War I and was gassed. He never got over it. After the war, he was a chicken farmer in Mart, Texas, but that was bad for his lungs. When I was two, we moved to

Washington, D.C. He took a job in animal husbandry at the National Zoo but still coughed all the time.

After he died, I was 18 and alone. My mother's best friend took me in. Aunt Myrtle, I called her. She was an angel to me. I went to Strayer Business College for a year, then on to Carson-Newman College for two years. I eventually ended up in insurance, was licensed, and handled the walk-in business for an agency for many years.

The Lord has put such good people in my life. My favorite verse is 2 Timothy 1:12: "I know whom I have believed and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that Day."

Bill: But, Nelda, Paul couched those words in a passage on suffering. Trusting the Lord when we are suffering isn't easy.

Nelda: No, it's not, but the Lord is good. Without Him, during my two marriages, I would not have made it. My second marriage ended in divorce, and my first husband, who had polio when he was younger, eventually developed terrible pain and began drinking to stop the misery. When I drove in the driveway each day after work, I didn't know if I would find him dead or alive. One time, he sent me out of our bedroom and wouldn't let me back in. I didn't know what might happen. In the end, his death came quickly.

Financially, I carried us both for a long time, but the Lord took care of us because I didn't forget Him. When the Lord puts money in my hand, I give at least a tithe back to Him. Always have.

Bill: Speaking of finances, you told me that you have a gift annuity at Free Will Baptist Foundation. How do you deal with financial issues?

Nelda: I took out the gift annuity in the 1990s after I sold a piece of property. The income has been good, plus a tax benefit. I also have IRAs and a monthly check from family mineral rights, so I know what is coming in. Each month, I write down my bills and tithe. Frivolous stuff and charities like Salvation Army and the Cancer Society come out of anything left. I've also already paid for my funeral. Plus, I'm doing a special endowment for each of my great-grandchildren. When they are 18, that money will be there for them.

An hour after leaving Nelda's home, we pulled onto Skyline Drive and headed north into the autumnal reds and oranges of the Blue Ridge Mountains. But we took a part of Nelda with us. Her cordiality, her laughter, and especially her shimmering last words: What am I doing here? **ONE**

About the Writers: Bill Evans, former director of the Free Will Baptist Foundation, lives in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, with his wife Brenda, a retired English teacher. Visit www.fwbgifts.org for more information on planned giving that benefits your favorite ministry.

Brenda: I've been looking over your spoon collection. What's that all about?

Nelda: I like to travel, and I've bought them as reminders of the places I've been.

Brenda: What was your favorite trip?

Nelda: A mission trip to Mexico. It changed me, made me think, especially about my prayer life. I had always believed in missions, but teaching 15 little children every day through a translator in a tiny apartment in Hidalgo made

me understand that just being grateful for my own salvation was not enough. I needed to share Him with others.

It's like that robin that landed on my patio last winter after a big snow. He looked out of place. Then he turned his head to the side and looked at me like he was saying, "What am I doing here?" That's what the mission trip did for me. Made me think about what I am doing here.

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SHARING THE GOSPEL

Beyond This Life

BY TODD SMITH

On a typical Sunday morning, Lisa and her children went to church while her husband stayed at home because he didn't feel well. When she arrived home after church, she found her 32-year-old husband dead from a sudden heart attack. He left behind a dear wife and precious young children.

Sam, a hardworking father with a wife and two teenage daughters also passed away suddenly, a victim of a silent heart condition. He was 51 years of age. He was greatly loved by his family and friends.

At a young age, Vivian's vehicle was hit head on by a trailer, which came unhitched from a truck traveling from the opposite direction. She left behind a husband and two little girls.

Although the names have been changed, these stories are true, and they all have something in common: they remind us that we are not promised a tomorrow, and we should be prepared for the future. No doubt, you have similar stories you could share as well.

The greatest preparation a person can do for the future regards faith and a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. God also wants us to prepare for the future, however, by being faithful stewards over that with which He has blessed us. Stewardship is not only important in the here and now, it is also important for the future and the unexpected.

Solomon reminds us that the ant stores in the summer to pre-

pare for the winter months (Proverbs 6:6-8). Job reminds us we can learn a lot from the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air (Job 12:7-8). God ingrained into the creatures of this

earth to prepare for harsh times. How much more should we, created in His image, be prepared for the future? God has opened a window of opportunity for the Free Will Baptist Foundation, in cooperation with Cornerstone Estate Planning, to partner with every Free Will Baptist ministry, mission agency, and local church to equip families with the right tools and resources to prepare for the future. If you say, "Whoa, what does this have to do with missions?" let me tell you.

Can you imagine if every Free Will Baptist family included Free Will Baptist missions and ministries in their end-of-life planning? It could be possible for missionaries with accounts in the red to stay on their fields longer without leaving to raise necessary funds.

It could be possible for mission churches to be built and growing churches to be expanded or remodeled without taking on a huge debt, which might hinder it financially for many years. If so, missionaries could expand their outreach and accomplish more for the Lord's work, allowing many who would not otherwise have the opportunity to become believers and be disciplined in Christ.

End-of-life gifts to the Lord's work are gifts that keep on giving long after we are gone. Have you included missions in your plan for the future? If not, and you would like to consider doing so, we are here to help you continue to share the gospel beyond this life. **ONE**

Around the World >>



McPeak Resigns to Pursue Entrepreneurial Goals

Antioch, TN—Mark McPeak, director of advancement since February 2012, tendered his resignation from Free Will Baptist International Missions, effective December 31, 2014. Previously, McPeak served as director of communications (April 2005-April 2008) and deputy director of stateside operations (April 2008-February 2011) for the Mission.

During his tenure at IM, Mark helped develop strategies for communications, development, missionary stateside assignment, and other dimensions of the Mission's stateside and home office operations. He led initiatives, provided focus, and supplied a strategic viewpoint in discussions. McPeak is leaving International Missions to pursue other business opportunities.

"I am truly sorry to see Mark leave. He is my good friend and brother. An African proverb comes to mind: Between true friends, even water drunk together is sweet. Mark is that kind of friend to me." General Director Clint Morgan stressed, "I value his wisdom, marketing and business insight, and godly character. I am confident he is pursuing God's heart and will, and wish him many blessings in his new path."

Mark explained, "I was absolutely certain God led me to IM and have enjoyed every moment of my time here. As certain as I am that I was led to IM, I am equally sure it is His plan for me to leave."

Through the years, Mark's market research and business strategy acumen have proven vital to the Mission. He will continue to focus on these strengths as he engages in a joint-venture company to be launched in 2015. ■

Snapshots Around the World



South Korea—Monday, November 3, 2014, Clint Morgan, Jeff and Susan Turnbough, Dale Bishop, and David Outlaw departed for South Korea to attend an international missions summit. The six-day event (November 4-9), organized by the Free Will Baptist Convention of South Korea, brought Korean international missionaries in from China, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Kenya. Leaders discussed ways for Free Will Baptists in the United States and Korea to collaborate in reaching Asia and other areas of the world with the gospel.



France—Four young adults were baptized Saturday, December 6, 2014, in France. Cyprien, Joel Teague's best friend and extreme sports champion, became a Christian over a year ago. Marie and Agathe both accepted Christ in recent months as a result of the *JPense* events initiated by the Teagues. Timothée attends the St. Sébastien church. Many unchurched friends and family members attended the event. "Some were skeptical as they came," wrote Lydie Teague, "but left wanting to read the Bible or come back for a *JPense* event."



Bulgaria—Trif and Vanya Trifonov sponsored an international Christmas celebration in Varna, Bulgaria, December 4. Around 80 people from nine countries, mostly non-Christians, gathered in a restaurant. Various nationalities told how Christmas is celebrated in their home countries. They sang Christmas carols and brought traditional greetings. Trif explained the true reason for Christmas, read Scripture, and emphasized that the message of Christ's birth transcends culture. ■

Board Decisions 2014

Antioch, TN— The Board of Free Will Baptist International Missions met December 9-11, 2014, in the Antioch, Tennessee, offices. Throughout the three-day session the board celebrated all God has done through the Mission in 2014, heard reports from the various departments, acted on proposals, and conducted general business.

The Mission's financial outlook and budget occupied many hours of discussion and prayer. After much deliberation, the board adopted a 2015 budget of \$6,255,000. Board members expressed great encouragement at the possibility of finishing 2014 in the black. "Except for 2012, which was full of anomalies," stressed Chief Financial Officer Rob Conley. "It has been seven years since we've seen this possibility."

The board approved "seconding Dr. Jeff Turnbough to International Training Alliance (ITA) to serve as chief executive officer while retaining his responsibilities with Free Will Baptist International Missions as regional director of Europe and candidate shepherd, understanding that 40% of his salary compensation will be provided by ITA." The council of International Training Alliance, our partner organization,

unanimously voted to invite Jeff, IM's director of field operations, to be the CEO of the organization. General Director Clint Morgan presented this to the IM board and recommended joint employment.

"With Jeff's transition and Mark McPeak's recent resignation," Clint Morgan stated, "we will see a bit of reorganization and revamping of roles in the office. While we will not seek to fill either of these director positions immediately, thankfully we have capable staff on hand to fill holes their absences will create." Curt Holland, who was hired as cross-cultural ministries consultant for a 90-day period, will remain on staff and oversee short-term ministries for both IM and THP. Sam McVay, currently associate director of advancement, will serve as director of church relations.

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



Turnbough Accepts CEO Position of ITA

Antioch, TN—Dr. Jeff Turnbough, director of field operations, received a unanimous request from the council of International Training Alliance (ITA) to serve as CEO of the organization. During its December meeting the Free Will Baptist International Missions (FWBIM) Board voted to allow Jeff Turnbough "to serve as CEO while retaining his responsibilities with FWBIM as regional director of Europe and candidate shepherd, understanding that 40% of his salary compensation will be provided by ITA."

International Training Alliance is a consortium of evangelical mission organizations begun in 1995. FWBIM has been a member since 2005. Other member organizations include General Baptists, Christian and Missionary Alliance, OM, Wesleyan Global Partners, Wycliffe Bible Translators, World Horizons, TentMakers USA, and Caleb New Zealand.

"Most mission organizations," explains Turnbough, "do a good job of training workers in Bible, theology, methodologies, and cross-cultural missiology. We have not done as well with practical leadership skills: management, relationships, communication, public relations, personal life management, basic leadership skills, etc."

ITA addresses these key areas through the Leadership Matters Course (LMC)—time-tested, practical knowledge presented in workshop format with ample opportunity for trainees to practice and develop skills. LMC training grew out of the Townsend Institute, a training program Wycliffe used with its missionaries.

More than 30 FWBIM personnel have benefitted directly from the courses. Jeff and Susan Turnbough serve as senior trainers, as does IM missionary Robert Bryan. Jeff and Robert have worked to translate the course into Spanish and French. More than 2,300 individuals from over 200 mission agencies have participated in the 75 courses held in at least 20 countries. Nine courses planned for 2015 will benefit workers in Cameroon, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Germany, the Philippines, Poland, South Africa, and Turkey.

"We are honored to have Jeff chosen for such a significant role," emphasized Director Clint Morgan. "His gifts and competencies qualify him to lead the LMC training program. We are blessed he can continue serving IM while also serving ITA and the greater Kingdom."

Jeff will assume leadership of ITA January 1, 2016. ■

One Generation ...to the Next

Psalm 145:4



APRIL 26, 2015

FREE WILL BAPTIST INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS
WWW.FWBGO.COM

Leader Profile >>

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

Thomas Hoffmaster II

(Huff) felt the call of God on his life to pastor as a young teenager. Surrendering to God at age 21, he tried to negotiate away from his calling by singing in a part-time gospel group. "I was scared and tried to justify it," Huff said, as he talked about how God worked on him during his travels.



Recounting his early childhood, Huff noted that his mom married an unbeliever, not fully knowing the fights that would erupt over her going to church. Graciously living out 1 Peter 3:1, she loved her husband until she eventually saw him come to serve Christ. Huff has witnessed the pain of families personally and pastorally and has a heart for helping the hurting. God has provided Huff and his church with many blended families and the opportunity to teach them how to live out their faith before their kids. Following Christ's example, Huff spends extra time with those hurting and in need. He points to the examples of Christ's one-on-one time with His disciples and His interaction with Nicodemus and the woman at the well.

Huff stopped running from the call to the pastorate in 1993. For the last eight years, he has pastored Heritage FWB Church in Inwood, West Virginia, where he emphasizes family ministry and how God can work in the lives of imperfect people in significant ways. With the number of blended families in the church today, Huff puts a great emphasis on providing a place for them to be discipled.

When asked about what he and his wife enjoy doing, he responded, "We love conversation with each other about Scripture, our kids, and ministry...in that order." He and his wife dream of owning a motorhome someday and traveling together. On really rough days, his wife Sally sends him a picture of the motorhome with the caption, "Bet this looks pretty good right now!"

Huff, a bi-vocational pastor, works full time in providing training for an HVAC company. He sees God using this experience to stretch him even further in skills of serving people and making wise business decisions.

When talking about the future of Free Will Baptists, Huff said, "I would like to see us stop dividing over minor issues that are often personal preferences. I would love to see our denomination become more proactive and outspoken from the national level on current issues such as marriage, homosexuality, and the true meaning of tolerance!"

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

What is an ideal date for you and Sally?

Turn off the cell phones and head to our favorite German restaurant for some uninterrupted time together.

What are the names, ages, and one-word descriptors for your children?

Daniel, age 24 – Social
Jordan, age 17 – Independent

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

Radical by David Platt
From Embers to a Flame by Harry Reeder
Crazy Love by Francis Chan

What is your biggest failure?

The times I have my priorities out of alignment and put ministry before family.

What do people misunderstand about you?

Probably the same for all pastors—that we have feelings and we also hurt inside. We are not perfect and at times want to quit, but it is the love that we have for God and our congregations that keeps us going.

Paper or Plastic Questions

Mountains or Ocean? Mountains

Music or Talk Radio? Talk Radio

Coke or Pepsi? Diet Coke

Facebook, Email, Twitter, or texting? Texting

Mac or PC? Recently became a Mac convert and wondering now why I waited so long

Socks or house shoes? socks

Beating the ODDS



By Hanna Mott



You will find me proudly wearing my Nashville Predators jersey in a sea of Detroit Red Wings fans. You will find me prancing straight past the reign of corporate Starbucks to enjoy a pour-over cup of Joe from my favorite local coffee shop. You will find me rooting for the tortoise to crush the hare in the race. It's part of my 20-something, millennial DNA. It's the nature of my generation. We almost always root for the underdog and proudly wave the banner for those who have the odds stacked against them. We will stand bravely and fight for what seems an impossible cause.

I think God also stands behind the unlikely hero of a mismatched situation. His glory is displayed time and time again in the triumph achieved by the lowly people He calls to battle throughout the Bible. He called David to smash a giant with a tiny stone. He called Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego to go against their entire culture and stand up to King Nebuchadnezzar. He called Moses to march to Pharaoh's throne and boldly demand the Israelites be freed after 400 years of slavery. God is for the radical success of the unlikely victor with His unmatched power as the only explanation for triumph.

When I started my journey as student missions coordinator at Free Will Baptist International Missions, you could say I was quite the long shot. Only 22 years old, freshly graduated from college, a newlywed, and with one day of training to prepare me for the job—I was sure to be a letdown. As my first year of

E-TEAM training lurked in the future, the odds continued to stack against me. Endless government travel documents in languages I didn't understand, missed trains in Tokyo that left a team stranded, forgotten money for the Cuba team, flight delays in Brazil, and countless phone calls from parents asking questions I couldn't answer led to overwhelming fear.

It seemed dauntingly clear my defeat was on the rise against what seemed an impossible task—making my first year of E-TEAM a success. I was relieved as emails from missionaries saying they had a team safe and sound popped up in my inbox. The 82 students I had lost sleep over for months were finally out of my care for just a little while. I had 12 days to sit and wallow in failure before they arrived home to the States.

Emotionally drained and mentally exhausted, I anticipated a horrible reunion resulting in every student saying goodbye to

missions for good. I, the underdog, was overcome and accepting defeat. To my surprise, I was completely and utterly wrong. Instead of frustrated students who hated E-TEAM, I welcomed home 82 students who were marked forever by their experiences during those 12 days on the mission field. They told astounding stories of how God was moving throughout the nations. They wept, explaining their deep-felt pain for the lost around the world.

As I sat with them in awe, the only response that seemed fitting for their life-changing experience was to join the fight. They, a group of improbable high school students, and I, an improbable missions coordinator, vowed to change the world and join the seemingly endless battle to fulfill the Great Commission. As I walked through stories with them, it was obvious that the unmatched power of God was worth our lives. We, the underdogs, had decided to fight.

We vowed to be an active part in the uphill battle for the nations to know the name of Jesus. We promised to stand boldly as unlikely candidates in the face of opposition, knowing the God of unmatched power is on our side. We declared we would be part of something greater, braver, and with more impact for the gospel, rather than hide from the magnitude of the task at hand. We determined to give selflessly to global ministry projects



knowing that our financial support goes to someone meeting Jesus. We pledged to go often and experience the work helping hurting people worldwide. We agreed to pray diligently for the immense burden of international ministry to drive our core beings and shape the way we live our lives.

We will be part of a people, the Church, whom God uses to shout boldly His glory to the nations. We will stand beside our faithful friends around the world who serve relentlessly proclaiming God's glory. We will boldly stand in the name of the God of unmatched power so that the gospel will be shared even to the ends of the earth. Will you join us? **ONE**

About the Writer: Hanna Mott (pictured above, third from left) has served as student missions coordinator since 2012.

GOD HATH GIVEN
TO MAN A
**SHORT
TIME**
here upon earth,
AND YET UPON
THIS SHORT TIME
**ETERNITY
DEPENDS.**
-JEREMY TAYLOR

YOU ONLY
HAVE ONE
LIFE ...
DON'T
WASTE IT.

SEE MORE AT
FORTHEJOY.ORG

Engaging MILLENNIALS

BY NEIL GILLILAND

FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, SHORTLY AFTER THE NATIONAL CONVENTION MEETS, I HEAD NORTH TO THE CANADIAN PROVINCE OF ONTARIO FOR A WEEK OF FISHING WITH A GROUP OF MEN I GREW UP WITH IN SOUTHERN OHIO.

It is a long 800-mile trip. I have to admit, at the end of a long and busy summer, it is a relief to spend a week with no cell phones, Internet, and few people other than our group of old friends from the hills of Appalachia.

We fish eight to ten hours a day, enjoy the beauty of God's handiwork etched on Canadian topography, watch bald eagles soar overhead, and listen to the haunting call of loons. For someone who loves the outdoors, it is Eden.

This year, I listened intently to the conversations in the cabin. Most of them consisted of stories from our childhood. You know, all those back-in-the-day stories. Stories that anyone who is not a vested member of the group finds so boring they could gnaw the furniture into a pile of sawdust. As I listened, I thought, "Do you know what they talked about in the good old days? Yeah, you're right. They talked about the good old days." I wanted to stop the conversa-

tion and say, “Hey, do you realize our children and grandchildren’s good old days are right now?”

One reason I love young adults and teens is that their focus is on the future, not the past. I often tell people I am counseling, “There is no future in the past.” I don’t want to dismiss the past, but I prefer to look forward. I can’t change my past, but I can change my future. And, I can change the future by engaging this generation. I want to engage them for the sake of the Kingdom. I want to engage them so they can engage the Savior on a deeper and more intimate level and, subsequently, impact the world.

The millennial generation is different than my generation (although I see some similarities to the 1960s). I expect them to be different and to celebrate it. How do we engage this generation? While I make no claim to be an expert in engaging millennials, I do have a couple of suggestions. Let’s start with the negative, that is, a couple of things *not* to do if you want to engage millennials.

Don’t try to be one of them. My favorite African proverb says, “A log can lie in a river all its life, but it will never become a crocodile.” Don’t dress like them or cut your hair to try to look 20-something. There are no skinny jeans in my closet. Don’t try to speak their lingo. I might throw a “tru dat” out there every now and then so they will know I noticed, but they don’t expect me—or want me—to be like them. We both know, as much as I might want to be one of them, I never will be.

Don’t be judgmental or give advice without investing in their lives. A common example of a point of conflict is the music of millennials. In reality, the music of every generation has been criticized by the previous generation. Even Bach was criticized for his music in the church where he played organ. Their music may not be my preferred genre, but if they invited me to go to a concert, I would go. Investing in them takes time.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU WANT TO ENGAGE MILLENNIALS?

Simply develop relationships with them. Most millennials I talk with say they actually want to engage the previous generations as much as we want to engage them. There are so many options and complexity in their lives, having a “gray hair” help them make sense of it all is a valuable gift. However, they are not looking for us to stand in front of a group and deliver an oratorical masterpiece. They would rather sit over a cup of coffee chatting about life. It takes time...everything worthwhile takes time. Ask questions and listen, really listen, when they respond.

About the Writer: Neil Gilliland’s gift for understanding and communicating with diverse age groups is demonstrated by his demand as a speaker for everything from teen events to senior retreats. In addition to serving as member care consultant for International Missions, he teaches at Welch College and Liberty University. Each summer he dedicates almost two months of his time to E-TEAM (International Missions) and Truth and Peace (National Youth Conference) students.

As elementary as it may sound, care about them and love them.

Ask about their lives and follow up. Communicate with them. You may have to learn to text, Facebook, Instagram, or some other technological medium. It is the way they do community. When I teach a college class and ask the students the best way to contact them, they always respond, “Text me.” Keep it short and to the point. The more visual, the better. If they share a concern, follow up. If I have ever had success in engaging this generation, it is because I genuinely love and care about them.

Recently, in a Sunday morning life group, we were asked what gives us the most joy. My response, apart from my family, was hanging out with high school and college students. I love them!

Be genuine and real.

When I listen to millennials describe people I often hear them say, “They are the real deal” or “They are so genuine.” Being genuine and real is difficult. It requires a measure of uncomfortable vulnerability. If we are honest, none of us have it all together. At times, we want to give the appearance, especially to a younger generation, that we have the answers and have it together. Lay the masks aside and just be you. A few months ago, I drove past a gas station with a marquee that read, “Just be yourself; everyone else is taken.” I typically don’t look for philosophical truth at gas stations, but that is good advice if I want to connect to millennials.

Is engaging this generation important? I think it is more than important; it is critical. Deuteronomy 6 makes the importance clear. The 1960s were a great transformational time in our nation and world. The cry was “Freedom.” They wanted freedom from “the man,” the culture that dictated life, freedom from the layers of baggage laid on by society. This is also a time of cultural change in our nation and the world. The cry of today’s generation is “Significance.” They want to engage in something significant. What has greater significance than reaching the world for Christ? Give them a cause, and they will go. If they think it will make a difference in our world, they will line up to sign up. **ONE**

Who is a MILLENNIAL?

Pew Research Center defines millennials as those born between 1981 and 1998.

William Strauss and Neil Howe, authors of definitive works on generations, use a broader date base of those born from 1982 to 2004.

Taking a closer look at the ENGAGE Leadership Network...

ENGAGE

By Brandon Roysden



What Is the ENGAGE Leadership Network?

The **ENGAGE Leadership Network** is an initiative from Randall House created to connect current and future leaders through learning and community for ministry and life. A major dysfunction of any group, organization, or family is isolation, so the goal is to create a place where leaders and prospective leaders can learn from one another and encourage others to be a part of something bigger than they are.

This initiative will begin as an online community through articles, forums, podcasts, and more, along with continuing events such as the ENGAGE Seminar Series and panel discussions at the National Association meeting of Free Will Baptists and the annual GATHERING of student ministry leaders in Orlando. Beyond these opportunities, we hope the future will bring even more chances for in-depth leadership training and personal connections between leaders who will shape the future of our churches, schools, families, and denomination.

Four Channels

As a basis for organizing content and events, the website will be divided into four main channels of influence: **ENGAGE Kids**, **ENGAGE Students**, **E21**, and **ENGAGE Leaders**. Each channel will host unique content as well as general leadership content that applies to each one.

- **ENGAGE Kids** is a place where you can join other leaders who strive to reach children with the message of the gospel and build in them the foundation of a lifelong faith.
- **ENGAGE Students** is for those who speak into the lives of tomorrow's leaders. Whether you are a volunteer or veteran student ministry leader, we want you to be a part of a group dedicated to seeing faith lived out in the lives of students across the country.



E21 is for students and young adults who feel stuck between adolescence and adulthood. Often, they have the energy and ideas but just don't know what next step to take in order to make a difference. For them, E21 (formerly FWB 21) is the place to be.

The ENGAGE Leaders channel is for general leadership development. You may be the pastor of a church or leader of a ministry. You may be the leader of a successful corporation or a struggling startup. You may be a single dreamer or a family stalwart. Either way, this channel is for those who want to be more of a leader today than they were yesterday and want to learn how others are leading in their contexts around the world.

How Can You Be Involved?

The easiest way for you to get involved is to visit the site at www.engageleaders.net and look around. Sign up to be on our email list, and we'll be sure to get you news and information as we add new opportunities. Another good way to stay up-to-date and to find quotes and tips is to follow ENGAGE on social media (Twitter: @engageleader). We have accounts for each channel, so be sure to follow all the ones that apply to you. You can find a complete list online. [ONE](#)

FWB Youth Worker Gathering (promo)

April 13-15

Orlando, FL

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FOR PARENTS AND TEENS

SURVIVING CULTURE

When Character and Your World Collide

BY EDWARD E. MOODY

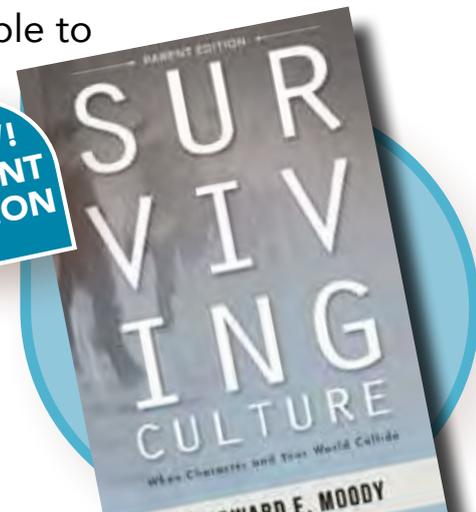
SURVIVING CULTURE

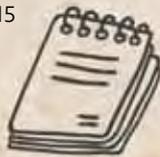
When Character and Your World Collide

Young people today are faced with many challenges that attempt to lure them away from the truth of Scripture and their foundation of faith. Dr. Moody shares strong advice with parents on the need to prepare young people to make wise decisions while navigating the culture of today.

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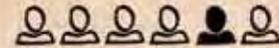


HABITS



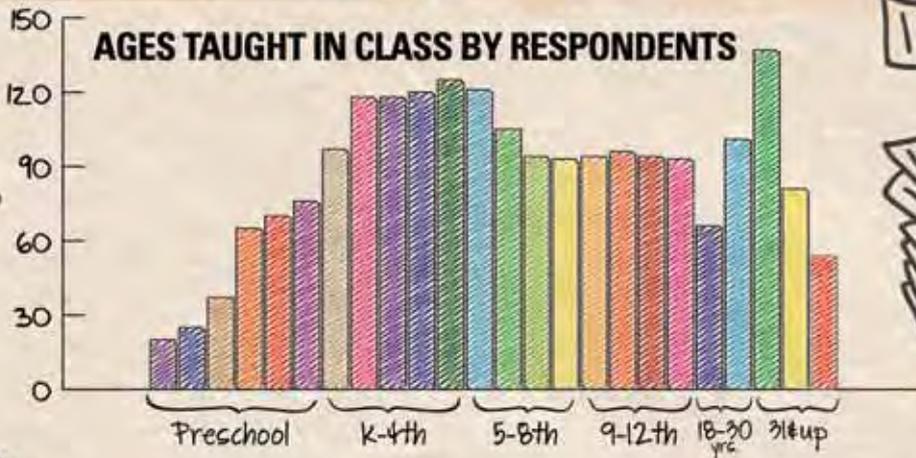
RANDALL HOUSE sent a link to an online survey to nearly 17,000 D6 leaders along with a PDF copy of the survey. 967 completed either the online or paper survey to provide the following survey data.

WHO PARTICIPATED

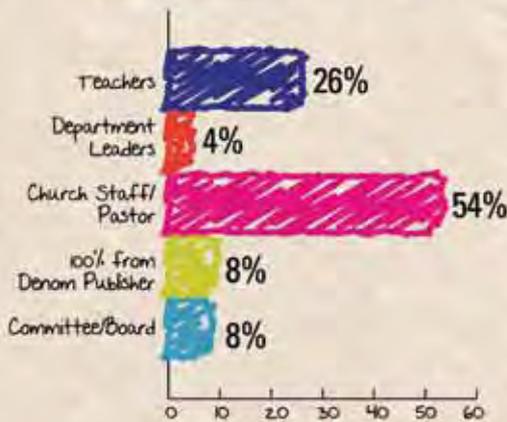
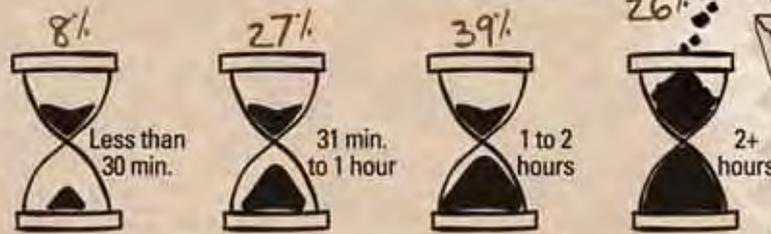


- 8% Students of Life Groups/ Sunday School/Small Groups
- 28% Teachers or Group Leaders
- 64% Pastor/Staff Member

AGES TAUGHT IN CLASS BY RESPONDENTS

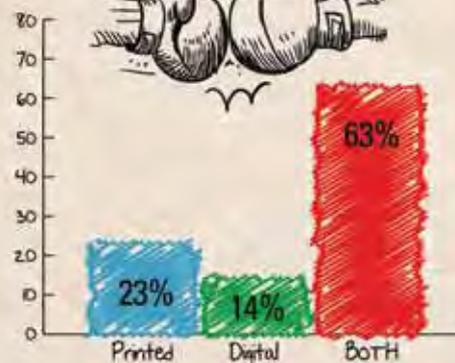


TIME SPENT PREPARING LESSONS

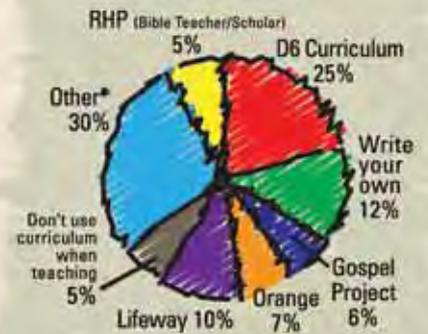


WHO DECIDES WHAT CURRICULUM TO USE

PRINTED VS. DIGITAL



WHAT CURRICULUM IS USED?



*If a selection received less than 4%, the selection was combined in 'other' category

ERROR RATE: The answers reflect a possible error rate of plus or minus 7.5% (23 more completions would have created a plus or minus 5% error rate).

NYC News >>

JULY 19-22, 2015

#truth

JOHN 8:32

NYC Speakers

Sunday AM - Corey Minter
Sunday PM - Charles Jackson
Monday PM - Joe Wilson
Tuesday PM - Mark Mittelberg

Special Reminder

**All Competition Event Entries
Deadline - June 1**
*Individual entries and state
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www.verticalthree.com
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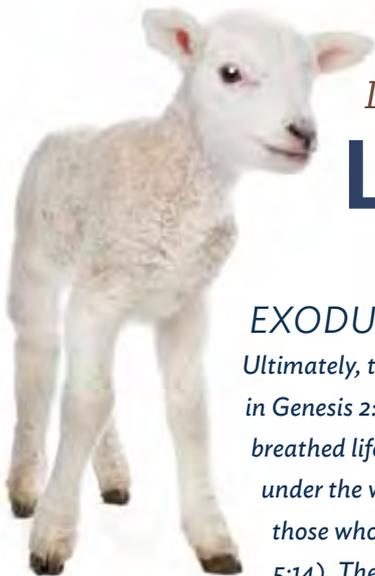
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Intersect >>



Lessons from the redemption of the firstborn, Part 1

LIFE BELONGS TO THE LORD

By Matthew McAfee

EXODUS 13:11-16 **WHAT IS LIFE? WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?**

Ultimately, these questions bring us face to face with the reality of our dependence upon the Creator. As we read in Genesis 2:7, God fashioned man from the dust of the ground, but man did not become a “living soul” until God breathed life into him. In that sense, all life originates from God. However, after sin entered into the world, man fell under the wrath of God and was condemned to die. As Paul states it, “death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned in the likeness of the offense of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come” (Romans 5:14). The story of redemption is God’s plan to rescue humanity from the death sentence passed upon us.

In the book of Exodus, we are introduced to the law of the firstborn. The basis for this law is rooted in God’s redemptive act of bringing Israel out of Egyptian bondage, but more specifically, it is tied to the killing of the firstborn Egyptian males. What happened to the Egyptians demonstrated God’s ultimate authority over human life. He is just whether He gives life or takes it. In one sense, the Egyptians were already under the sentence of God’s wrath, and the killing of the firstborn was a painful demonstration of that reality. He took the lives of both firstborn male humans and livestock, demonstrating his sovereignty over all of life.

However, God also provided His covenant people with a means of redeeming, of saving their firstborn male children. Since many Egyptians also confessed Yahweh as covenant Lord, no doubt a number of them were spared as well. The redemption came about through the slaughter of the lamb, a substitute on behalf of the firstborn male of the family. This historical event provides the basis for the Feast of the Passover, which marks the moment when the angel of death “passed over” the Israelite homes where the blood of the redemption lamb had been applied to the door.

PRACTICING REDEMPTION (VERSES 11-13)

The Passover was not simply intended to be a festival to commemorate the historical redemption of the Passover firstborn. It became a central practice in the life of the covenant community. In these verses, God instructed the people of Israel to practice the rite of the firstborn, returning it to God:

- *Every (first) breach of the womb belongs to Yahweh.*
- *Every (first) breach of the male offspring of the beast, which*

belongs to you, belongs to Yahweh.

Life is filled with constant reminders of God’s law and justice in the world. Death is the ultimate reminder. No one can escape this fate. Yet, for covenant people, the condemned are being redeemed, and the redemption of the firstborn male is a regular remembrance of this point.

In other places in Scripture, the firstborn is referred to as the “beginning of strength” (Genesis 49:3). In this passage, it refers to the “opener or breach of the womb,” connecting the firstborn idea to both father and mother. The firstborn had a special role in the ancient Near East—to procure success and prosperity in the world.

The firstborn received significant status, both in this life and in the life to come. The firstborn male carried the responsibility of ensuring the family line and estate. He held economic and symbolic significance for the overall wellbeing of the family. This status carried over to livestock and agricultural produce. The firstborn or “first fruit” was the best, and the LORD told Israel it belonged to him and was to be given back to him sacrificially.

He made it clear that all things belong to the Lord, even the firstborn. This was painfully revealed to the Egyptians who refused to obey His command. This was also clear in the mandatory sacrifice of the firstborn animal of the flock and first fruits of the agricultural yield. These all belonged to God, and sacrificing them provided a constant reminder of His ownership.

This act was both costly and difficult. What if the animal never delivered another offspring? What if the next yield was not as plentiful? These sacrifices required trust on the part of the Israelites as they submitted themselves to the principle of the firstborn.

As the life-giver (and thus the owner), God provides for the needs of his people. His people simply need to recognize His ownership and authority as Creator and allow their trust to carry over into daily financial behavior.

However, the firstborn principle did not refer only to what the Israelites owned in livestock or what they produced in agriculture; it was true of life itself. God did not sanction human sacrifice, a common practice in some sectors of the ancient world when devotees sought to secure the favor of their gods in a manipulative fashion. Instead, He established the redemption of the firstborn. He offered a means of substitution. This substitution was costly, but it communicated that God is both author and arbiter of human life.

TEACHING REDEMPTION (VERSES 14-16)

When we behave a certain way, it inevitably raises questions. In the case of the redemption of the firstborn, it raised questions for the children of Israelite families. When this rite was followed, it prompted children to ask, “What is this?” The scriptural answer pointed to God’s redemption story:

“By strength of hand the Lord brought us out from Egypt, from the house of bondage: And it came to pass, when Pharaoh would

hardly let us go, that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man, and the firstborn of beast: therefore I sacrifice to the Lord all that openeth the matrix, being males; but all the firstborn of my children I redeem” (verses 14b-15).

Passover served as a sign of God’s powerful deliverance of the people of God from the house of slavery in Egypt. It also served as an occasion to pass down the tradition of God’s redemption to generation after generation as a perpetual sign of God’s provision.

Redemption is costly. Life is at stake, and life is required for it to occur. Sacrifice has to be made for redemption to take place. This principle is the bedrock of our Faith. Every time we observe the elements of the Lord’s Supper, the new covenant Passover, it reminds us of the cost of our redemption. We belong to God, and we have violated His standard of holiness. Therefore, we are condemned to death and must be purchased (redeemed) from the bondage of sin and shame.

In the next issue of *ONE Magazine*, as we approach the Easter season, we will examine several New Testament passages that make it clear that Jesus is, indeed, our Passover lamb, whose life was given to buy the pardon for our lives of sin. **ONE**

About the Writer: Matthew McAfee is coordinator of Theological Studies at Welch College. He earned a Bachelor of Arts degree at Welch College, Master’s degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and University of Chicago, and is currently pursuing his Ph.D. from University of Chicago.



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Following His Lead

BY DUSTIN WALTERS

Choosing what college to attend is one of the most challenging yet rewarding decisions to make. It is important that this decision is made through prayer and careful consideration of God's will. In 2011, I realized God was calling me to attend Welch College. Sometimes His leading has been clear and other times it has been more difficult to perceive. I can say gratefully that I followed His lead when I chose to attend Welch College.

I was saved when I was 12 years old and answered the call to preach when I was about 16. I knew God was calling me to preach, but as I began to think about college I was almost certain I could never afford Welch College. During high school, I was a football manager, something I greatly enjoyed. One of my best friends received a scholarship to play football at the University of Northern Alabama (UNA), and I was offered a football management scholarship at the same school. We planned to be roommates. This was a much easier route than paying to attend Bible college.

I thought God could certainly use me as a positive influence in my friend's life, as well as in the lives of the other football players at UNA. In fact, I had already met with the regional director of FCA (Federation of Christian Athletes) to discuss how I might become a spiritual leader in UNA athletics. He was eager to get me plugged in. Doors seemed to be opening for me at UNA, especially when I received a second scholarship. The two scholarships, combined with a Pell Grant, would have nearly paid for my college education. It appeared as though God was opening more doors at UNA than Welch College. While I made plans to chart my own course, God was busily preparing me for His.

Fast forward to the end of my senior year of high school, only weeks away from my freshman year at UNA. It suddenly occurred to me that Satan sometimes opens doors as well, with the intent of keeping us from God's will. I will never forget the words of Lesa Parker, a graduate of Welch. She asked me if I was doing what God wanted me to do, or what I wanted to do for myself. Terry Forrest, then chairman of the pastoral program called me one afternoon, and I shared my intentions to attend UNA because "God had opened so many doors there." He understood where I was coming from but urged me to consider that Satan also opens up doors. He continued by saying, "Sometimes you



just have to burn the plow, Dustin.” (He was referencing 1 Kings 19:19-21, which tells of Elisha burning his plow, his source of income, for the sake of following Elijah and serving with him in ministry.) Mr. Forrest reminded me that many times we must burn plows and just follow. He ended the phone conversation with these words, “Son, if God has called you to preach, then why don’t you just preach? Why don’t you study pastoral ministry since that is what God has called you to do?” God used these words to make it clear that He wanted me to attend Welch College.

I realized exactly what God’s will was after reading 2 Chronicles 25:1-9. This text recounts the story of King Amaziah hiring the mighty men of Israel to join his army and battle against Edom. A man of God came to Amaziah and instructed him not to use his newly hired help. Amaziah responded, “What shall I do with the 100,000 talents I have already given the men of Israel?” The man of God responded in a most powerful way. He reminded him that the Sovereign Lord is able to provide much more than Amaziah originally invested.

Upon reading this passage, I came under great conviction about my lack of faith. I was hesitant to choose Welch because I could not pay for it. My football management scholarship to UNA was \$1,000 per semester with a promised increase each year. Tuition at Welch averaged about \$10,000 per semester. It was as though God said to me, “Dustin, if I can give you \$1,000 a semester, what makes you think I cannot give you \$10,000 a semester?”

As I write this, I am in my senior year at Welch College, and I have been amazed how God has continued to provide. He has consistently shown me that when we trust Him we will not be

abandoned.

Along this journey of trusting I have encountered both challenges and blessings. The most difficult challenge has been time management. In order for me to stay at Welch, I have to work; but to do well in my classes, I need to study. Sitting down to study is never easy for me, but I have found that it is much easier when I remember that this difficult process is molding me into Christ’s image. Another challenge I have faced is my academic ability. Sometimes, I am overwhelmed by the difficulty of college and wonder what exactly I have gotten myself into. My professors have helped me understand that being intelligent is not a matter of what I knew previously, but a matter of being diligent in my studies.

Still, the blessings of attending Welch College far outweigh the challenges. I am most thankful for the Christian community we enjoy. Welch College exemplifies community by encouraging friendship between faculty and students. The personal investment of faculty members into the lives of students greatly encourages me, because at many institutions a student is merely a number in a database. At Welch College, students like me are known by name. As students, we have the privilege of interacting in the dorms, where we laugh, cry, and study together. I truly value the community here at Welch. Not only that, but God’s Word is central to everything we do here. Students are fed on the truth of God’s Word so we might engage our culture, a culture in desperate need of God’s touch. I am thankful I followed God’s leading to attend Welch College.

I know God will continue to lead me through life. Yes, there will be more challenges and blessings along this journey. In the immediate future, I plan to graduate from Welch, attend seminary, and begin serving in a local church. One of my burdens for the Church is Christian Education. God’s truth is relevant for all of life, and my prayer is that God will use me to enable His Church to live out the Kingdom on a daily basis.

My life has been greatly impacted by Colossians 3:1-2, which encourages us to be Kingdom-minded in keeping with our new nature in Christ. I also have made it my goal to encourage Free Will Baptist churches to become more engaged in global evangelism. Jesus has mandated that we share His truth with all people, and failure to do so is disobedience.

We are called to follow Jesus in all of life. I have been amazed how God has led me thus far, and I know He will continue to lead me in the future...and it might be through the fire or the flood. He is always faithful, and He will not lead us astray. He is calling you to follow Him as well, and I encourage you to say yes to whatever He is leading you to do. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dustin Walters is a senior Pastoral Education major at Welch College. Learn more about the college: www.Welch.edu.



At Welch College >>

College Hosts Christmas on Richland Avenue



Welch College hosted Christmas on Richland Avenue, Friday, December 5. The annual presentation by the Department of Music is an ongoing part of the Sarah Lacey Nicholas artist series, named after long-time Welch music faculty member. The event features a performance by the Choral Union, which consists of current students, Welch staff, and a number of alumni singers, under the direction of Mark Lancaster.

This year, the Choral Union presented Johann Sebastian Bach's *Christmas Oratorio*. The performance was followed by Christmas carols with audience participation and three additional anthems from the Choral Union. One of the anthems was a beautiful medley arrangement of "Silent

Night" and "Away in a Manger" by Dr. James M. Stevens, chairman of the Department of Music for 11 years.

"The most enjoyable and endearing part of the fall semester is Christmas," said President Matt Pinson. "I always enjoy the beautiful decorations, the campus Christmas celebrations, and students strolling around the campus and neighborhood caroling. This is all a part of Christmas on Richland Avenue."

The College invites you to enjoy the sounds of Christmas on Richland Avenue at <http://goo.gl/3qla24>. ■

Alumni Association Announces Fundraising Project

The Welch College Alumni Association has announced its latest fund raising project. The goal of the project, called *Sound Forth His Praise*, is to raise \$75,000 to fund a new college choir and ministry team recording and new sound equipment for the Welch College traveling ministry teams and auditorium. The Alumni Association hopes to reach this goal in the next two years according to Mike Edwards, association president.

Over the past decade, the association has raised over \$250,000 for various college-related projects, including \$105,000 for the Bert and Dianne Tippett Alumni Scholarship.

For more information about the Welch College Alumni Association and to get involved, visit www.welch.edu/Alumni or email Mike Edwards: mike.edwards@welch.edu. ■

FORUM15 | Bible Conference Announced

Welch College recently announced the annual FORUM15 | Bible Conference March 8-10. The meeting for pastors, youth workers, church leaders, and students will focus on *Authentic Spirituality* and feature a wide array of speakers, according to President Matt Pinson. “Forum15 will challenge listeners to go deeper in their faith, making their relationship with God the highest priority in their lives.”

The slate of speakers includes: Donald Whitney, professor of biblical spirituality and associate dean of the school of theology at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky; Michael Haykin, professor of church history and director of the Andrew Fuller Center for Baptist Studies, Louisville, Kentucky; Robert Coleman, distinguished senior professor of Discipleship and Evangelism at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, South Hamilton, Massachusetts; Robert E. Picirilli, author, theologian, and professor emeritus at Welch College; Barry Raper,



chair of Pastoral Ministries at Welch College; and Corey Minter, lead pastor of New Hope Free Will Baptist Church, Joelton, Tennessee.

Sponsored and hosted by Welch College, the event will take place March 8-10, in conjunction with the annual Bible Conference. Although Forum15 is free, attendees are invited to attend a ticketed Tuesday luncheon with Donald Whitney catered by Chuy's Mexican Restaurant.

Register online at www.eventbrite.com/e/forum15-authentic-spirituality-registration-5119446402. ■

College Signs Contract to Sell Campus

Welch College has signed a contract to sell its campus on West End Avenue to Forestar Group Inc., an Austin, Texas-based real estate firm. Matt Pinson, president of Welch College, reports that 7.14 acres of the 7.6-acre campus will be sold for approximately \$12 million. The lot containing Welch Library is not included in the sale.

Welch College was established in 1942 in a single building on Richland Avenue. Pinson noted the College's long history in the area. “We were founded here 72 years ago, long before the Richland-West End area became one of Nashville's most appealing neighborhoods. We recognize the pride our neighbors have in this community and are happy to have a buyer that intends to engage in meaningful dialogue with them about future plans for the property.”

Pinson continued, “We are pleased with the purchase price and are delighted to be under contract with Forestar. This firm is noted for taking a smart approach to master planned neighborhoods aligned with the needs of the larger community. They bring a sensitive vision of how to transition the existing college campus back into the residential neighborhood in a manner that fits within the historic overlay and current zoning criteria.”

Representatives plan to meet during the next few weeks with Metro Councilman Jason Holleman and neighborhood leaders to initiate discussions and to set a framework for identifying and addressing community concerns. Pinson said the College is also working with the Metro Historical Commission regarding Welch Library, the stone wall along Richland and Craighead Avenues, and other historical features of the property. Pinson also noted that the College would continue to

operate at its current location until construction has been completed on its new 66-acre campus in Sumner County.

Brentwood, Tennessee-based Land Innovations assisted the College with land use analysis and worked with Sisco & Farris, LLC, a licensed Tennessee real estate firm, to match the property's highest uses with a qualified buyer.

The College purchased property for the new campus in 2008 to accommodate the school's growth in academic offerings and enrollment. “Escalating property values and zoning regulations make it impossible for us to expand the West End campus,” Pinson added. “In an increasingly competitive environment, we need larger dorm rooms, more green space, environmentally sensitive and technologically sophisticated facilities, and other student-friendly features only a new campus can make possible.”

The contract calls for a June 2015 closing. Before that time, the buyers will complete inspections and perform other due diligence related to the purchase of the campus.

Bob Bass, relocation project consultant, said, “If the contract process proceeds as planned, we will begin transferring certain lots and buildings to the new owners soon after the closing. The core portion of the campus, including academic buildings, library, gymnasium, auditorium, dormitories, dining facilities, and the student center will continue to be used by the College during a lease-back period of 18 months.”

The College has secured Focus Design Builders of Wake Forest, North Carolina, to build the new Sumner County campus. Read the full news release at Welch.edu. ■



A Time for WAR?

BY DEBBIE ANDERSON

Tears came to my eyes as I heard my African sister in Christ describe her family's experience during the civil conflict of spring 2011 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. Their neighborhood was one of the hardest hit. For many hours, they lay flat on the floor during bombardments, praying and wondering if their home would be the next to collapse. Her young daughter begged, "Mama, let me back in your stomach where it is safe."

Men were shot indiscriminately on the streets, so she walked to market each morning for food, as did many other women. On those walks she quoted Scripture to give herself strength, and shared with other terrified women the peace she felt by trusting Christ as Savior. Piles of corpses covered with enormous flies littered the city streets and filled the air with the stench of rotting flesh. In His mercy, the Lord spared her family, and later when her husband's job led them to a new town, He used them effectively to minister to people traumatized by war.

War is ugly, brutal, and offends our innate longing for peace and security. Many people have problems wrapping their minds around the idea that the Lord of the Universe, particularly Jesus, could be in favor of war. How could the "meek and lowly of heart" Savior (Matthew 11:29), who commanded listeners to "turn the other cheek" (Matthew 5:39) and corrected Peter for cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest in the Garden of Gethsemane (John 18:10-11), desire the destruction of cities, nations, or people groups? Can the One who did not defend His own rights take pleasure in genocide? Likewise, what parent's heart does not quake at the thought of a son or daughter spilling blood on some gruesome battlefield?

Nevertheless, a rapid overview of Scripture from Genesis to

Revelation records numerous battles and wars, including quite a few directly commanded by the Lord. Before the fall of man in Genesis there was no war, except the occasion in Heaven when Lucifer and his demons were cast out (Isaiah 14:15; Ezekiel 28:16-17). In Revelation, we learn of a war in Heaven, pitting angelic hosts against the devil and his hosts (Revelation 12), and of the last battle on earth, led by Jesus Himself (Revelation 19:11-16).

After that, believers will dwell eternally with our righteous King, with no more war, sorrow, or tears. The scroll of human history will be rolled up, and the Prince of Peace will reign. Until that day, however, we live in a world torn by war, where the ungodly seek their own devices, and where the godly at times must defend their freedoms and ability to worship God.

Biblically, there is indeed "a time for war, and a time for peace" (Ecclesiastes 3:8). What does that mean? How do we believers live with that tension? When should we leave vengeance to the Lord, and when should we pray for our husbands and sons to utterly vanquish the enemy in battle? Is pacifism a responsible option? Perhaps we can sum it up in three simple questions: 1) What does it mean that the Lord is just and righteous? 2) Is war ever just? and 3) How should we respond?

Just Lord

To accept the reality and necessity of war in this fallen world, we must remind ourselves of the nature of God. All the attributes of the Lord (including holiness, love, mercy, justice, and wrath) operate perfectly in Him at all times. God would not be God if He did not judge sin. As much as He loves His creation and desires only good for us, He cannot overlook wickedness, and He will judge righteously.

The only reason believers experience the loving grace of God rather than His wrath, is because Jesus took our penalty for sin upon Himself when He died at Calvary. Every human who does not receive this incredibly merciful offer will experience the full wrath of God.

Consider a few biblical examples of judgment, when the Lord brought destruction on sin Himself or used human agents to destroy cities or peoples as instruments of His judgment:

- *Worldwide flood (Genesis 6:1-8).*
- *Destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:24-25).*
- *Judgment on Egypt (Exodus 12:29-30).*
- *God commands Israel to wipe out the Amalekites (Deuteronomy 25:17-19).*
- *The Angel of the Lord kills 185,000 Assyrians in one night (2 Kings 19:35).*

Even God's own people Israel eventually fell before the judgment of God after they did not heed gracious (and repeated) warnings to turn from their sins and idolatry. The Lord sent the Assyrians and Babylonians to defeat them and carry them into captivity.

If the Lord's chosen people did not escape His wrath, neither will any other nation, if it does not turn from wicked ways. In contrast, if a nation does repent and turn to God, it can experience the Lord's grace. The example of Nineveh in the book of Jonah provides a great example of repentance that delayed God's hand of judgment.

Non-believers often use judgment as an excuse not to follow the Lord. "I could never serve a God who does brutal things like that to innocent people." It is important to note that these judgments were often tempered by God's mercy. During the destruction of Jericho, the prostitute Rahab and her family were spared (Joshua 2:1-20). King Saul showed mercy to the Kenites, neighbors to the Amalekites, before he destroyed the Amalekites in 1 Samuel 15:5-7. Throughout Scripture, we find example after example of God's mercy in the midst of judgment.

Jesus did not give war-like commands in the Gospels (to the disappointment of His disciples who thought He had come to set up an earthly kingdom). Remember why He came—to die for our sins and destroy the works of the devil. If He had fought for His own protection, He would have defeated His purpose in coming to earth.

The book of Revelation, on the other hand, is filled with God's wrath and war, when God's justice will be righteously administered to the wicked. Praise the Lord! When this final battle is

complete, and the final judgment on sin is finished, war will end forever.

Just War?

Historically, Christian groups such as the Quakers and the Amish have favored pacifism, including two early church fathers, Tertullian and Origen. Pacifism opposes violence as the means of settling any dispute or to bear arms on moral or religious grounds. Imagine what would have happened to the world if the Allied nations had refused to stand up to Hitler. And if America and other democratic nations today suddenly declared themselves pacifists, how long do you suppose it would take for the entire world to fall into the hands of Muslim extremists? How could we share the gospel and worship the Lord?

Most Christians adhere to the belief that war is terrible but sometimes necessary. This is called the Just War View. When an aggressor attacks a country and prevents its citizens from living in peace and freedom, military response is expected. Church father Thomas Aquinas once noted that for a war to be just, three things are necessary: authority of the sovereign, a just cause, and right intentions.

Consider stories from Scripture that support the idea that the Lord is not opposed to a just war or warriors who defend their country. Moses, leader of Israel, received many direct and pointed instructions concerning warfare against the enemies of God. David, beloved king, harpist, writer of psalms, and "man after God's own heart," was a brilliant warrior. Reluctant but obedient Gideon became an unlikely hero in Judges 6 and 7, when God directed him to lead Israel into battle against Midianite oppressors.

In these stories (and many others like them), the Lord clearly received credit for these amazing military victories. He promised and provided victory in these just causes, so His people could live in peace. It seems reasonable that throughout history, His hand has brought victory to the righteous on many occasions. Obviously, many ungodly men have waged war and won for ungodly



“I could never serve a God who does brutal things like that to innocent people.”



Mercy and generosity find their source in the compassion of God.

purposes, but we can be sure the Lord ultimately will have vengeance on the unjust.

Just Response

“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream” (Amos 5:24). How do we apply these simple facts—just God and just war—to everyday life? As Christians, how do we demonstrate Christ’s mercy while seeking justice for our war-torn world?

Personal vengeance...no!

Biblically, we find a marked difference between a nation’s duty to uphold justice and defend her people and the response Jesus expects from individuals when wronged. He taught us not to take vengeance on our enemies but to hold to a higher standard of personal conduct (Romans 12:14-21) that loves our enemies without defending our own personal rights, avoids vengeance, and seeks the best for those to hate us.

The Role of Government Authority

“Wait a minute,” you may be thinking. “Is the Lord saying I should do nothing if my daughter is raped or a business partner empties our joint bank account and hits the beaches in Hawaii?”

Thankfully, the Lord gives us further guidance in Romans 13 and other places, which help victims respond to these kinds of

abuses. Passages in Romans 12 and Matthew 5 tell us not to respond in kind...you murdered my son; I’ll murder yours. But they do not mean we should not use government justice systems or church discipline to prevent further abuse. In fact, a just government plays a crucial role in God’s judgment on sin.

In Luke 3:14, a verse describing His interaction with soldiers, Jesus did not condemn them or tell them that their profession was wicked. Instead, He told them to seize the opportunity to act justly. Perhaps you have never thought of the police, military, or other civil authorities in this way. The just actions of government authorities should deter and terrify the wicked and the lawbreakers, because they act as swift human representatives of God’s judgment.

Mercy and Justice in Action

Christians have always shone brightly in the pursuit of justice and mercy. Clara Barton and Florence Nightingale championed the care of soldiers and influenced the creation of the Red Cross. Amy Carmichael spent her life and health to rescue prostitutes in India; Gladys Aylward poured her heart into the orphans of China. All were respected by local governments and used to settle disputes or otherwise help end barbaric customs.

Mercy is Abraham Lincoln’s treatment of the South after the Civil War and the American airplanes that dropped food to the Germans after their cities were destroyed during World War II. It is Corrie Ten Boom forgiving the Nazi guards who tortured and shamed female prisoners in concentration camps. It is William Wilberforce fighting for decades to abolish slavery in England. It is American soldiers giving shoes, gloves, and candy to Iraqi and Afghan children. Mercy and generosity find their source in the compassion of God.

Many organizations today continue to address issues of justice and mercy. Hope Clinics protect the unborn and give options to women considering abortion; The Hanna Project offers help, hope, and healing to those in need around the world; World Vision, Samaritan’s Purse, and Compassion International provide for children in need; and the list goes on and on. Many of these organizations were founded by and continue to be supported primarily by Christians like you and me.

Every Christian can share Christ’s mercy by joining one of the causes above or other similar efforts in his church and neighborhood. No one can do everything, but everyone can do something. Perhaps it is time to emerge from our cocoons and reach out to the hurting in our sphere of influence. Ask the Lord to guide your actions—not from a sense of guilt but from a heart that seeks justice, loves mercy, and walks humbly before God. **ONE**

About the Writer: Debbie Anderson and her husband Verlin spent two decades as missionaries to Côte d’Ivoire, West Africa. Today, they continue their work as representatives of CHE (Community Health Evangelism). Debbie’s complete study on war and justice can be found at www.WNAC.org.

Master's Men >>

Master's Men Completes Latest Ridge Church Project

New Durham, NH—Master's Men completed the latest phase in the ongoing Ridge Church renovation August 17-23, 2014, according to Project Coordinator Ken Akers. Four men from three states spent the week scraping and repainting the exterior of the building, replacing a window in the attic, and getting bids on bell tower repair. The team consisted of Ken Akers (TN), A.J. Dooley (OH), Tom Harmon (IL), Mark McCarty (OH), and local volunteers.

Since 2007, volunteers have repaired the roof structure by replacing joists and worn shingles, removed two deteriorating chimneys, reinforced and painted the sagging bell tower, repaired drainage problems under the church, patched plaster and painted the interior walls.

The renovation project began when delegates to the 2007 national convention in Little Rock, Arkansas, voted to maintain the aging structure. The building, completed in 1820, is the oldest standing Free Will Baptist church structure in the northern (Randall) line of Free Will Baptists.

"It's hard to believe that it has been eight years since we began our work on the Ridge Church," said Akers. "I am grateful to everyone who has helped, whether through money or labor. It is important for us to preserve this important landmark for future generations of Free Will Baptists."

To donate to the Ridge Church Preservation Fund, contact Ken Akers at ken@nafwb.org, call (877) 767-8039, or visit www.fwbmastersmen.org. ■



FWBF News >>

Foundation Launches Pilot Grant Program

Antioch, TN—The Free Will Baptist Foundation Board voted to implement a pilot grant program during the December 8, 2014, meeting. The program will start in 2015. The total amount available for the pilot program will be \$75,000 and will be limited to national agencies and commissions. Grant proposals will be due to the Foundation office by March 15, 2015. The Board will review proposals and award grants at the April board meeting, and recipients will be notified by April 30. The grants will also be announced at the 2015 National Convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

The Foundation board also approved guidelines for a larger grant program. Details on these guidelines will be published widely later. The available funds for the larger grant program will be in the mid-six figures and will start in three to four years. ■

The Therapist Was a **CISSY** BY JACK WILLIAMS

Don't be misled by the title. For 16 months, I've been worked on, worked over, and worked to the edge of exhaustion by the best, the most beautiful...the toughest therapist in Tennessee. Let's be clear—the therapist was certainly a Cissy, but definitely not a Sissy. That's her name—Cissy Voight.

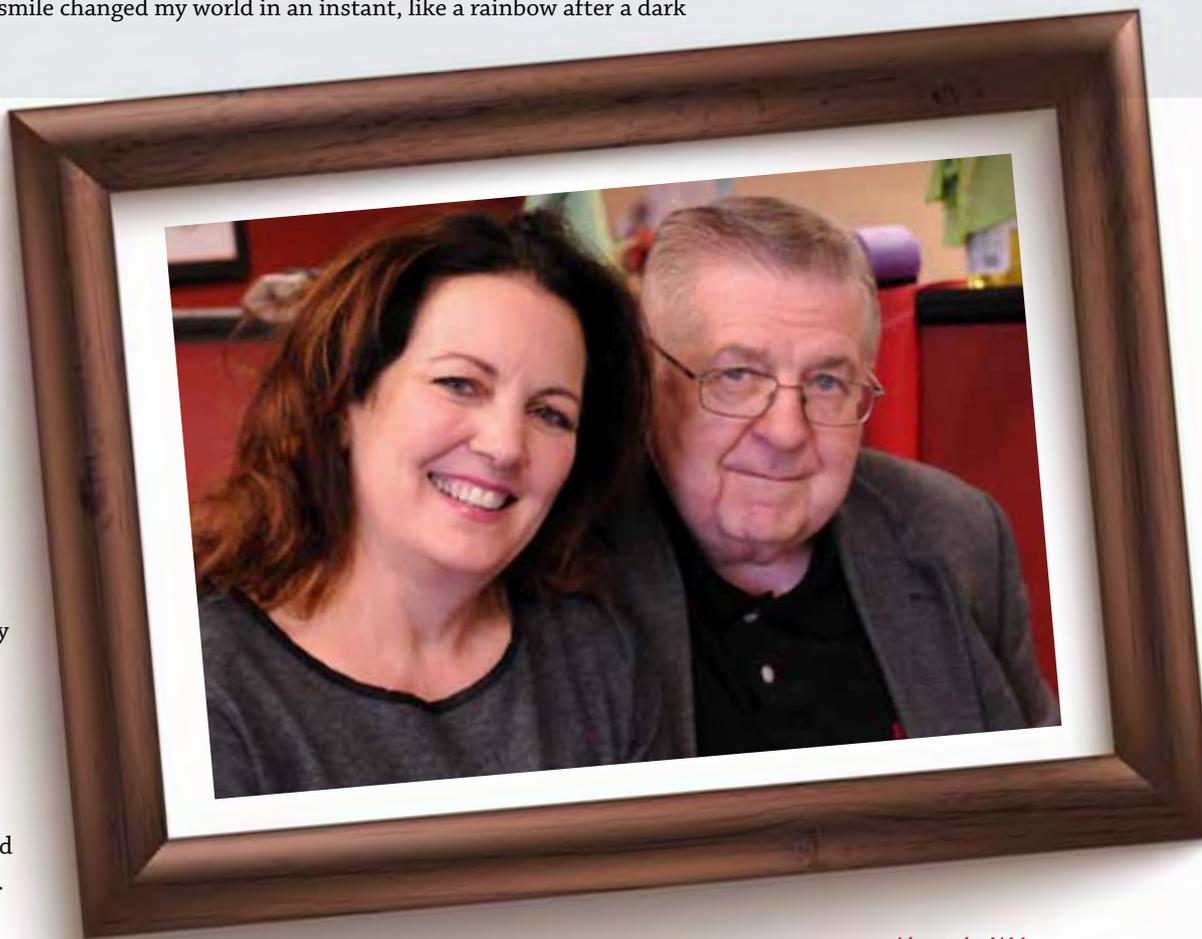
She's a Mississippi native from a wonderful Christian home. Her parents were community leaders and active in their local church, making sure Cissy and her two sisters understood what it means to love Jesus and serve the Lord. Cissy grew up in the small town of Ackerman, then relocated to Jackson and enrolled at the University of Mississippi Medical Center where she received a B.S. in Physical Therapy in 1979. She received an M.S. in Physical Therapy from the University of Tennessee in 2002.

A physical therapist since 1979, Cissy is now employed in an outpatient setting at the Green Hills office of STAR Physical Therapy in Nashville, Tennessee, specializing in individuals with balance, gait, and vestibular disorders. I met her in 2013 after experiencing a near-fatal stroke in November 2012. I had spent 39 days in the hospital and had just transitioned from wheel chair to quad cane for mobility. Cissy Voight's million-volt smile changed my world in an instant, like a rainbow after a dark and stormy night.

Weekly Sessions

For 16 months, I met Cissy twice each week for hour-long sessions. Most sessions were scheduled for noon. I dreaded the opening pulley activities, because they made my uncooperative left arm want to scream as it was forced above my head and stretched. One day, as I exited the building, a lady stepped from the elevator and cheerily said, "I see you survived the torture chamber again!" It had been a long uncomfortable hour, and Cissy had me sweating like a horse.

For the most part, I endured the discomfort without squealing like a girl and embarrassing myself or scaring Cissy. Cissy's exercises with my left hand made me grunt now and then, but they improved its mobility. What was the most difficult part of the therapy? The struggle not to fall in love with Cissy. After all, she welcomed me every time with that killer



About the Writer:

Jack Williams was editor of *Contact* magazine for 27 years and recently retired from his role as director of communications at Welch College, which he had held since 2005.

smile and those flashing eyes. Her perfect black hair fell below her shoulders and was always clean, fresh, and shiny.

A few weeks into therapy, Cissy suggested that I change from a quad cane to a regular walking cane. I did, and now, I can walk some without a cane.

The Sweet Side

One day, as I drove past a Krispy Kreme doughnut outlet on the way to therapy, I picked up a box of doughnuts for Cissy and the staff and left them with Mariclare, the receptionist. Next time I showed up for therapy, Cissy greeted me with, “So you’re the one who’s trying to get me off my diet and gain weight.”

“No ma’am,” I replied, “Just wanted to make sure you stay sweet on these long, hard days.” I’ve continued the occasional doughnut deliveries. It seems to work.

Surprises and Disagreements

I was surprised to learn the theological mantra of therapy. It sounded almost biblical. Early on, while I tried to walk up steps, I’d hear, “The good goes up; the bad goes down,” which meant lead with the strong foot and put less stress on the weak side.

But no matter how sweet Cissy was, we disagreed during football season. She is a faithful Ole Miss fan, while I am a lifelong LSU Tiger. But even though she pulled against LSU when the

Rebels invaded Baton Rouge, I kept the doughnuts coming.

My biggest surprise came the day I arrived for therapy and found Santa Claus, long white beard and all, waiting for therapy. No reindeer, however. Cissy told me his real name and assured me that he really was Santa and filled the role each Christmas season in local retail outlets.

Graduation

Six weeks before my therapy sessions concluded, Cissy introduced me to Chelsea, a doctoral student at Belmont University, where Cissy’s husband, Michael, is a full-time faculty member. Cissy was mentoring Chelsea. The two of them were conversing, and I overheard Cissy say, “Oh, he will be graduating next Friday.” Then, she turned to me and said, “You will graduate, but there will be no cap, gown, or hood...and no diploma. We will give you a STAR Therapy T-shirt to wear.”

And that’s what happened on June 20, 2014. I graduated from therapy with a new T-shirt and a beautiful friend—Mrs. Cissy Voight. By this time next year, Mentee Chelsea from Cincinnati will be Dr. Chelsea, and I hope to see her graduate in turn.

I have returned to STAR therapy several times with doughnuts since my June 20 graduation to make sure that Marine Corps-tough Therapist Cissy Voight keeps her smile and stays sweet on hard days. **ONE**

Legacy of Innovation...

Herman Hersey made his mark as a pastor, musician, and innovative denominational executive. He is best known for ground-breaking work with the Board of Retirement. Named general director in 1969, he and his wife Vernie operated the board as a team—Herman as general director and Vernie as everything else. Herman traveled coast to coast to promote the plan. Ever the innovator, he established the Free Will Baptist Foundation in 1980 “because there was a need for it.”

His visionary innovation and hard work have paid off. Today, the Board of Retirement holds 2,000 accounts totaling \$60 million, while the Foundation recently passed the \$62 million mark and will begin offering ministry grants in the near future.

Create your own Legacy today through a gift to the Labor of Love Endowment. To learn more, contact the Foundation at:

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



Pre-Registration

2015 National Association of Free Will Baptists

NAFWB | NYC | Grand Rapids, Michigan | July 19-22, 2015

One Form Per Person | Register Online: www.nafwb.org | Name Badges Required for All Convention Events

First Name _____ Last Name _____
Home Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Country (if outside USA) _____ Phone (preferably cell) _____ - _____ - _____
Email Address _____
Church You Attend _____ Church City _____ State _____

National Association (All voting delegates must be members in good standing of a FWB church.)

Voting Delegates

- National Board/Commission Member
- Ordained Minister
- Ordained Deacon
- State Delegate (Authorization Required)
- Local Church Delegate (Delegate Card Required)

Non-Voting

- Attendee (All Ages, Including Infants and Toddlers)

National Association Information:

877-767-7659 | www.nafwb.org

Tickets

WNAC Laughter and Latté Qty _____ x \$15 = _____

Monday, July 20, 8:30 p.m.

Welch College Alumni &

Friends Luncheon Qty _____ x \$30 = _____

Wednesday, July 22, 12:00 noon

Please note: There will no longer be WNAC registration for the national convention.

National Youth Conference

Preschool

- Ages 3-5, Attending Preschool Worship - \$25 (\$35 on-site)
- Ages 0-5, Not Attending Preschool Worship - NO FEE

Students: \$25

Any student or competitor* attending any NYC competition or event MUST pay \$25 (\$35 on-site).

- Grades 1-3
- Grades 4-6
- Grades 7-12

*Competitors must pay \$25 registration fee in addition to competition fees already paid.

College Age | Adults: \$15

Adults attending any NYC competition or event MUST pay \$15.

- Adult Attendee (No students or children)

Tickets:

The Skit Guys Qty _____ x \$10 = _____

Tuesday, July 21, 9:00 pm (\$12 onsite/at the door)

NYC Information: 800-877-7030 | www.verticalthree.com

Register April 1 – June 19, 2015 (postmarked) No Refunds After June 19

PAYMENT OPTIONS:

- + Check (Payable to FWB Convention)
- + Visa, Discover, or MasterCard only (both debit and credit cards accepted)

Card # _____

Card Holder _____ Exp ____/____

Signature _____

RETURN TO:

Convention Registration

PO Box 5002

Antioch, TN 37011 / FAX: 615-731-0771

Questions: 877-767-7659 | convention@nafwb.org

Office Use Only: Date _____ CK# _____ Amt \$ _____ From _____

Convention Housing

2015 National Association of Free Will Baptists

Amway Grand Plaza Hotel (HQ)*

187 Monroe Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
800-253-3590

Rate: \$139

Mention NAFWB for group rate.

Valet Parking: \$23 per night

Self Parking: \$15 per night

Limit of 7 reservations per individual.*



Courtyard by Marriott Downtown

11 Monroe Avenue NW
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
877-901-6632

Rate: \$129

Mention NAFWB for group rate.

Valet Parking: \$23 per night

Self-Parking: \$15 per night

Limit of 7 reservations per individual.*



JW Marriott Grand Rapids

235 Louis Street NW
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503
800-971-4762

Rate: \$144

Mention NAFWB for group rate.

Valet Parking: \$23 per night

Self-Parking: \$15 per night

Limit of 7 reservations per individual.*



Major Changes are coming to the reservation process for 2015. Here are the three important things you need to know about making reservations this year:

1. Online reservations will open Monday, May 4, 9:00 a.m. CT (10:00 a.m. ET). No phone reservations will be accepted on this day. Links to online reservations will be at www.nafwb.org.

2. Phone reservations will open Tuesday, May 5, 9:00 a.m. CT (10:00 a.m. ET). Internet reservations are highly encouraged by the Amway Grand. Due to limited reservation staff, call-in reservations may experience wait times in excess of an hour on Tuesday. Calls will be answered in the order received. The Amway Grand is not responsible for lost calls, or if the block sells out prior to speaking to an agent.

3. *Group reservations. Due to individual reservation limits imposed by each hotel, groups making eight or more reservations should contact convention manager Ryan Lewis (877-767-7659) between February 1 and April 24 for information on making group reservations.

1. Prepare Personal Information

You will need the following:

- + Name(s)
- + Address, City, State, Zip
- + Phone/Email
- + Credit Card Information
- + Special Requests:
 - Wheelchair Accessibility
 - Rollaway Bed
 - Crib

2. Contact Your Hotel of Choice

Online Reservations will open at 9 am, CT, 10 am, ET, Monday, May 4, 2015. Hotel links will be at:

www.nafwb.org.

Phone Reservations will open at 9 am, CT, 10 am, ET, Tuesday, May 5, 2015.

Hotels have been instructed **NOT TO ACCEPT** reservations before this time.

3. Things to Remember

- + **A non-refundable cancellation fee of the first night's room and tax will be charged for any cancelled reservation.**
- + Hotel rates do not include 15% tax.
- + Available rooms may be posted at www.nafwb.org for transfer.

**Reservation Cut-off date:
Friday, June 19, 2015**



Gearing Up for Grand Rapids

By Ryan Lewis, Convention Manager

The 2015 National Association of Free Will Baptists has been a long time coming...

In 2005, the DeVos Place in downtown Grand Rapids, Michigan, completed the expansion of the convention center built in 2003. That same year, the National Association of Free Will Baptists became one of the first large meetings to sign an agreement with Grand Rapids to host its 2015 convention. That agreement will come to fruition in July when the national association will meet in Grand Rapids for the first time in its 80-year history.

Along with the DeVos Place, the convention has reached agreements with the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel, the JW Marriott, and the Courtyard by Marriott to house convention attendees. With rates of \$139, \$144, and \$129 respectively, these hotels offer affordable convention prices for attendees while providing a convenient, luxury hotel experience. All

three hotels are connected to the DeVos Place by an enclosed skywalk, making the 2015 convention center and hotel package a very attractive one.

Because the Amway Grand Plaza Hotel is an independent hotel with no national chain affiliation, the housing process will be different this year. The hotel relies on in-house reservations staff rather than a central reservation process. For that reason, attendees are strongly encouraged **to utilize the online reservation links that will be provided on Monday, May 4, at www.nafwb.org.**

To further alleviate opening day stress, online reservations will begin a day earlier than phone reservations. Online reservations can be made starting at 9:00 a.m. CT, Monday, May 4. No phone reservations will be accepted that day.

Phone reservations will open Tuesday, May 5, 9:00 a.m. CT. Due to limited reservations staff, call-in reservations to the hotel may experience wait times of an hour or more on opening day. Calls will be answered in the order received. The Amway Grand Plaza is not responsible for dropped or lost calls, or if the block sells out prior to speaking to an agent.

The convention will also provide an alternative method for groups needing to make large numbers of reservations. Each hotel will be imposing a seven-reservations limit per individual. Groups making eight or more reservations can contact Ryan Lewis (877-767-7659) between February 1 and April 24 for further information. The convention in Grand Rapids will mark a historic first for Free Will Baptists. Make plans now to join us in the River City.

About the Denomination >>

2014 Leadership Conference Affirms Biblical Marriage

Nashville, TN—One hundred twenty-five pastors and church leaders from 19 states and Canada gathered December 8-9, at Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel, for the 2014 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference. The conference explored and affirmed biblical marriage, from the scriptural basis and historic Free Will Baptist beliefs and practices to strategies to strengthen and defend marriage in today's increasingly hostile culture.

Dr. Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, provided the keynote address. He was joined by speakers Matt Pinson, president of Welch College; Eddie Moody, pastor of Tippett's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, member of the Welch College Board of Trustees, and chair of the Department of Counselor Education at North Carolina Central University; and Phillip Whiteaker, a judge serving on the Arkansas Board of Appeals and chairman of the Free Will Baptist Foundation Board.

The meeting featured more than keynote sessions, with plenty of time for conversation and networking during banquet-styled meals. Each service featured music provided by Welch College, including Rejoice ensemble and the 42-voice College Choir directed by Dr. James Stevens. A number of national boards met in conjunction with the conference, including the Executive Committee, Board of Retirement, Free Will Baptist Foundation, Home Missions, International Missions, Randall House, and Welch College.

"In an age where marriage is being attacked from every side," noted Ryan Lewis, conference director, "this conference equipped pastors and churches to stand for biblical marriage while attempting to bridge the gap between churches and the culture in a redemptive way."

Dr. Moore is a widely sought cultural commentator who speaks frequently to issues of theology, culture, and public policy. He has been quoted and published by many of the nation's leading news agencies and periodicals including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Chicago Tribune*, *USA Today*, and the Associated Press.

He blogs frequently at "Moore to the Point," and has authored or edited five books, including *Tempted and Tried: Temptation and the Triumph of Christ* and *Adopted for Life: The Priority of Adoption for Christian Families and Churches*. In addition, Moore has authored dozens of academic articles and essays on systematic theology and Christian ethics. He is senior editor of *Touchstone: A Journal of Mere Christianity*. Dr. Moore earned a B.S. in history and political science from University of Southern Mississippi, an M.Div. in biblical studies from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in systematic



theology from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

An ordained Southern Baptist minister, Moore has pastored a number of churches, most recently serving Highview Baptist Church from 2008-2012. He is a four-time member of the SBC Resolutions Committee and a regular columnist for Baptist Press.

"Dr. Moore has made a profound impact on today's church," said Executive Secretary Keith Burden. "He understands the challenges churches face in trying to reach a suspicious and sometimes hostile culture, and he shared practical advice to help Free Will Baptists minister with compassion while remaining true to the Bible. We were honored to have him at this year's conference."

The 2015 Leadership Conference will return to Nashville Marriott Airport Hotel December 7-8. ■

Photo: Mark Cowart



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

ONE to ONE >>

Brother Richard

He sat at the end of a pew on the right-hand side near the front of the sanctuary. A nearby window flooded the little house of worship with sunlight on Sunday mornings. In my mind's eye, I can still see his distinct silhouette from my perspective from the other side of the church house. Because he was always there, he had become as much of a fixture as the church furniture.

Indelibly etched in my childhood memory were those occasions when my pastor would say, “Brother Richard, will you please lead us in prayer?”

The elderly gentleman would rise slowly to his feet. After a long, deliberate pause he would proceed to talk to God. Judging from his grammar, he wasn't an educated man. No one was impressed by his eloquence.

What stood out most to me was the comfort and ease with which he spoke to God. It was as though he was carrying on a conversation with an old, familiar friend. I have a confession to make. On one occasion I peeked (but with only one eye), just to make sure the Lord wasn't actually standing right there beside him.

Another thing that made a lasting impression on me was the consistency of his prayers. As I recall, Brother Richard usually included three specific elements in his intercession. First, he said something to the effect, “Dear Lord, bless all those this world over that duty binds us to pray for.” I suppose it was his way of making sure no one was left out of his prayer.

Next, he characteristically interceded for those in the military when he said with a pronounced southern drawl, “Be with all the boys in the ormed (armed) forces.”

I eventually came to understand why he was mindful to pray for those who were in uniform—he was a veteran himself. In light of his example, we would all do well to remember more faithfully those who defend our country.

Finally, before he said “Amen,” he would utter those familiar words, “And please bless the message burier today.” (I'm sure he meant message bearer.)

I never really thought much about that until I became a preacher. I came to appreciate the fact that there were people like Brother Richard praying for me every time I stepped to the pulpit. (Although, come to think of it, through the years I have preached a few sermons that should have been buried.)

Did that old saint have any idea how intently a little boy was listening when he addressed his Heavenly Father? I doubt it. But here I am, more than 50 years later, writing about Brother Richard's prayers. So, the next time you pray in public, remember the Lord isn't the only one listening. **ONE**

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**Maybe the sky's the limit, but with God,
ALL THINGS are possible!
Psalm 116:12**

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