

ONE LORD ONE VOICE ONE VISION

ONE

magazine

KALEIDOSCOPE: *MULTIFACETED BODY OF CHRIST*

Help, Hope,
and Healing

Surviving Michael

Fearfully Made

*I Am Your Child's
Missionary*

The Same...
Just Different

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Master's Men

CHANGING MEN TO CHANGE THE WORLD



FELLOWSHIP
BIBLE STUDIES
DISASTER RESPONSE
IMPACT OUTREACH
SPORTS FELLOWSHIP
RIDGE CHURCH PROJECT
OPERATION SATURATION



MASTER'S MEN
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JUNE - JULY 2019 | VOLUME 16 | ISSUE 4

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



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Kaleidoscope

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

Mickey has red shorts?!

My family couldn't help but laugh at my incredulous reaction.

After 46 years of red-green color blindness, my wife recently purchased corrective glasses for me as a gift. And what a gift! I discovered a “whole new world” as I flipped through a children's book with suddenly brilliant Disney characters—Goofy's green hat, Daisy Duck's purple smock, Nemo's reef, and yes, Mickey's red shorts. Who knew?

Over the next few days, I confess I held my breath while I watched my first sunset in full color and enjoyed twinkling Christmas lights for the first time. Perhaps the most startling colors appeared during my first drive through the rural Tennessee countryside. Previously drab farmhouses and cottages tucked unobtrusively between hills and swales suddenly glowed like

gaudy rides at a county fair. Red roofs. Green roofs. Orange roofs. Unbelievable!

Intrigued, I began to research my “miracle” glasses. I discovered scientists question the new technology, insisting color-correction lenses don't really heal the condition but simply accentuate colors seen already. They compare it to turning up the brightness and contrast on a television for a better picture. Not a bad thing, if you ask me. They hold out hope for a “real” cure within the next few years, after successful long-term therapy replaced the missing *L opsin* gene in two color-blind monkeys, interestingly named Dalton and Sam.

While I'm no scientist, and I don't understand all the technical jargon, I can tell you with assurance I am enjoying more colors than ever before. The world is a much brighter place at full spectrum!

Reminds Me of the Church

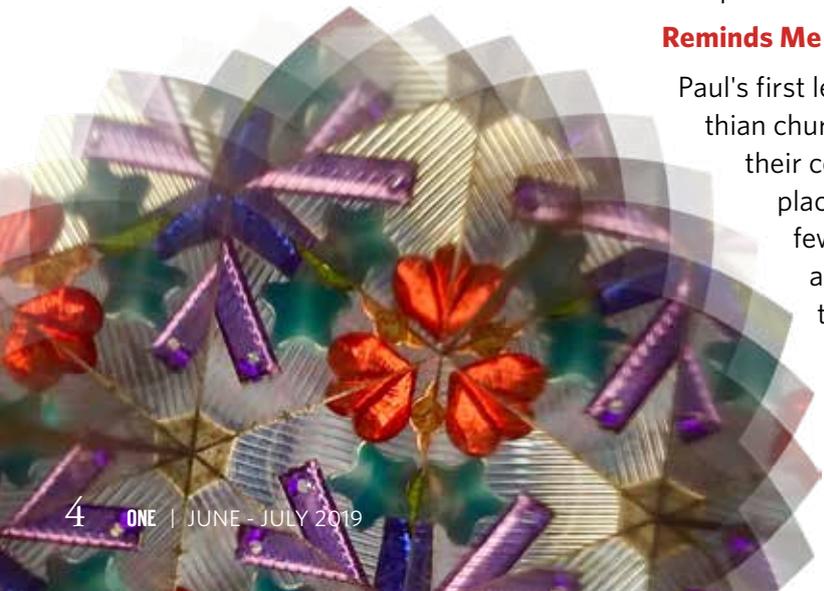
Paul's first letter to the Corinthian church makes it clear their congregation had placed a high value on a few specific positions and gifting within the church. They exalted individuals to an unhealthy

level. Paul admonished the Corinthians, reminding them the Spirit has gifted every member of the church for the common good (12:4). He compared the church to the human body: one member the eye, another the foot, still another the hand—right down to the “uncomely” or “less honorable” features. All parts serve a particular and important function. And the body cannot function properly without all of its parts.

God help us to avoid the failure of the Corinthians, limiting the “spectrum” of the church and presenting a drab and lifeless picture to the world around us. Instead, let us embrace God's kaleidoscope and become the church in full color. May we encourage and build up one another as we work together to build His Kingdom into a mosaic of His grace.

Struggle with colors? Ever wondered if you are colorblind? Visit <https://www.colour-blindness.com> to take the Ishihara Color Test for a quick self-diagnosis. 

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





Flourish!

SAVE THE DATE

A CONFERENCE FOR FREE WILL BAPTIST WOMEN
MARCH 28, 2020
CENTRAL FWB CHURCH, HUNTINGTON, WV

WNAC.ORG

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JULY 20, 2019

MORE INFO: FWBMASTERSMEN.ORG

The Same... Just Different

WNAC FACES A MOMENT OF TRANSITION AND OPPORTUNITY

BY ELIZABETH HODGES

Psalms 78 and 105 portray God's work in history to fulfill His mission. Times of trouble and deliverance reveal God's sovereignty over all people. He provides for our needs and invites us to join Him in His work. Can you and I look at history and praise God for His faithfulness? Can we look at that same history, confess our sins, and cry out for help? Are we sensitive to new doors of opportunity He may be opening to allow us to join Him where He is working?

First Chronicles 12 recounts the forces that gathered to help David at Hebron. Nestled in verse 32 we read, "The children of Issachar...were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do; the heads of them were two hundred." Matthew Henry describes these men as "weather wise; [they] understood public affairs, the temper of the nation, and the tendencies of present events. They knew how to rule, and the rest knew how to obey."

The *Word in Life Study Bible* portrays these men as the "wisest members of Israel's Sanhedrin. It seems reasonable to infer their job was to perceive trends, discuss major issues, evaluate information, and consider strategy. God's people still need those who can understand the times. More than ever, we need people who can buttress faith with discernment. God has not called us to shut

down our critical faculties. Jesus exhorted us to 'be wise as serpents and harmless as doves' [which] means knowing God and knowing the times."

As women of WNAC and the Free Will Baptist denomination at large, we need to be like Issachar's sons. We need to understand the times and know what we must do. WNAC faces a precipice of transition and opportunity. We must broaden our outreach while maintaining our original purpose. We must embrace the women's ministries of all Free Will Baptist churches whether or not they look like our own. Each group seeks to meet the unique needs of the ladies in their church, has a place of service in the Kingdom, and should feel connected to WNAC.

We are the women's ministry department of Free Will Baptists existing to *help each woman fulfill her God-given roles in the Great Commission at home, in her church, community, and around the world.* We pray for wisdom as we seek to know our times, perceive the trends of our day, discuss major issues, evaluate information, and develop strategies to move forward. While maintaining our current ministries and broadening our reach, we will focus on three major areas.

THRIVE: Since June 1935, WNAC has supported missions and ministry causes at home and around the



world. In the early 1960s, major fundraising efforts were transferred to the Home and International Missions departments respectively. Still, WNAC continues to offer prayer support and financial contributions. Awareness of missionary needs is a burden shared with our church families. Annual weeks of prayer support the North American Mission and World Mission Offerings. The Steward Provision Closet is a tangible expression of support for North American church planters and international missionary families. This reach extends to international Bible institutes and seminaries, as well as our international sisters. Two scholarship programs exist to help students at home and abroad:

Cleo Pursell Foreign Student Scholarship assists international students studying in their native language at our Bible institutes and seminaries. *Dr. Mary Ruth Wisheart Student Scholarship* benefits young ladies studying at our Free Will Baptist colleges in the States.

Co-Laborer, Together with God, and now *Treasure's* thought-provoking Bible studies help equip women to grow and faithfully serve the Lord: www.wnac.org/treasure/treasurebiblestudies.

SHINE: In early years, WNAC sponsored declamation contests and YPA and GA groups, the precursors to Vertical Three. Those activities were handed off to CTS in the 1960s as well. In recent years, a new avenue for ministering to young ladies arose. *Shine!* conferences began in 2015. These conferences are geared to 12- to 18-year-old young ladies, moms, and youth leaders. The goal of *Shine!* conferences is to help girls find their identity in Christ and in Him alone. As a result, they will be able to filter cultural messages through that lens. Sometimes, hearing the same truths from a different voice is what God uses to solidify His message to one's heart. We are seeing this happen, and to Him be the glory and praise. Adult attendees receive pertinent information to help young ladies navigate the technology-saturated society in which they live. We anticipate these events becoming more frequent in the months to come.

During this season, the *Miley International Student Scholarship* was begun. This scholarship assists international Free Will Baptist students who come to the United States to study at one of our Free Will Baptist colleges.

FLOURISH: As we seek to broaden our outreach and footprint in the denomination at large, we recognize the need to minister through regional events. Many women will never attend our annual convention, but they would attend a ladies' day event in their area. As we seek to mentor, come alongside, and help women, each event will address relevant topics in addition to providing the important aspects of fellowship and networking. The first regional event will be held in the Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia tri-state area March 28, 2020, at Central FWB Church in Huntington, West Virginia. (See our ad on page 5.) It is our goal for these regional events to fall within driving distance of all Free Will Baptist women in the near future.

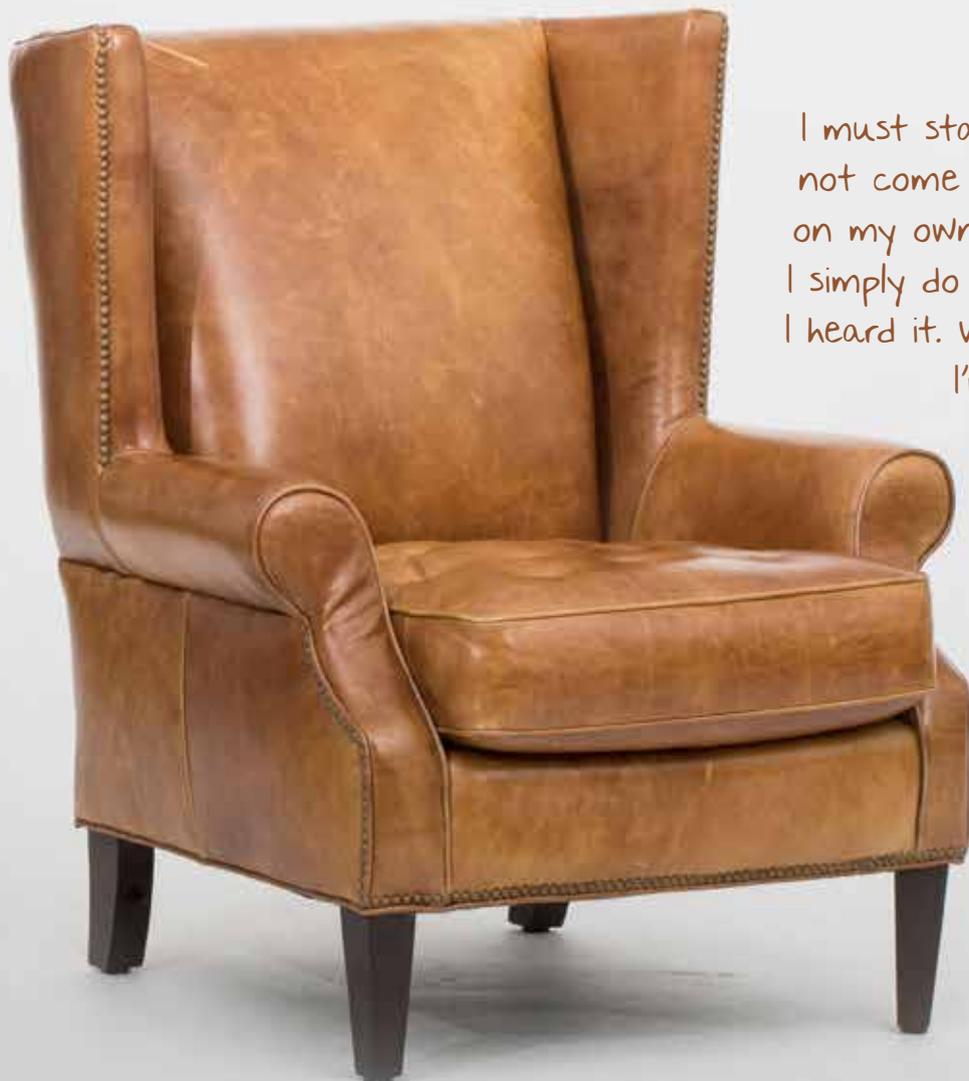
Departmental funding for these efforts will take many forms. We are grateful for The Together Way funds received monthly. A number of churches have placed WNAC in their annual budgets. Special offerings have been received. Gifts and dues have been received from our women. God will direct each local group to determine which method works best for them and it will be greatly appreciated. Where He leads, He provides, and that is where we rest.

It is the goal of WNAC leadership to grow and change to meet the needs of all women for the generation that will follow us. We have not done things exactly as our mothers and predecessors, nor did they. Those who come behind us will not mirror us. Our goal is to leave a firm foundation upon which to build. May they do extraordinary things for God that change the trajectory of their generation. But may we be faithful until God has completed His work within us. "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6). He will keep His promises to us as He did to the sons of Issachar. **ONE**

About the Writer: Elizabeth Hodges is director of Women Nationally Active for Christ. Read more: www.WNAC.org.

Saved to *Serve*, Not to Sit

BY B.J. EATON



I must start by admitting I did not come up with this catchy title on my own. I also have to admit I simply do not remember where I heard it. With that being said,

I'm using it, because it

is true. I believe we also can agree it is backed by Scripture.

It is a truth found throughout God's Word. God does not intend for His people to *be served*, but *to serve*.

Too many people today are looking for a place where they can get fed, get their needs met, or get entertained. They go to church to “get” something. Jesus never intended for His followers to get saved and get comfortable. Instead, He calls us to get saved and *get* to work!

Scripture never indicates that when someone believes in Christ, He turns to him or her and says to get comfortable, that he doesn't have anything to do right now; or to just have a seat in the pew and try not to fall asleep. If you look back over your week and the most suffering you have done for Jesus was not nodding off while the Word was preached, something's wrong.

In most circumstances in Scripture, when new believers came to Christ, He sent them away with a “go” or “do.” After Jesus' resurrection and just prior to His ascension, He commissioned His followers to “go” and “be.” Immediately following His ascension, as the disciples stood gazing in amazement, God's messengers rebuked them: “Why are you guys just standing here gazing? Jesus is coming back just like He left. Get busy!” These messengers were relaying the sense of urgency we all must have toward the gospel we have been entrusted to share. In the mission of His Church, there are no exemptions for anyone truly following Him.

In the book of 1 Corinthians, Paul made it pretty clear to the local church that we are all part of the body of His Church. We all have specific tasks we are designed to do with the gifts and talents we are given, and one is just as important as the next. We must all function in our own capacity for the whole to function at its best. God has something for each of us to do as we submit and serve.

As I think back on my time as the youth pastor at First FWB Church in Glasgow, Kentucky, I am so thankful for the folks who followed through with the desire God gave them to get involved in youth ministry. While it is true that what was accomplished would not have

been possible without the Lord, the leading of the Holy Spirit, and the leadership and direction of the pastor, it is also true several children in that church are children of God today because a layperson chose to serve.

From helping with the bus route, volunteering for activities, teaching classes, visiting families, or simply sitting and talking with a student having a bad day, those men and women were there to help. Many young souls came into the Kingdom because someone chose to serve not sit. No pastor, even if he is blessed with a large staff, is capable of reaching the lost, making disciples, and maintaining the church without the help of the congregation. God didn't intend for church to be done by the few. I truly believe He intended the church to BE the church.

It is the same with Cultivate FWB Church, which we are helping to plant in Athens, Alabama. God already has blessed us with folks eager to serve. We launched January 27. Every week, people have been willing to help with the kids, greet visitors, prepare and bring food, help with the music and technology, and anything else that needs to be done. Every spot to be filled has been filled with a willing and selfless servant. It is a blessing to be part of this church plant and to witness God's people coming together to serve willingly.

Without effective service from laypeople, the church cannot survive—much less succeed. Always be praying about how God wants to use you, and be ready to submit to say yes to His call to service. After all, you were saved to serve, *not* to sit. **ONE**

About the Writer: B.J. Eaton, along with Joel Franks, is planting a church in Athens, Alabama, in conjunction with the Alabama State Mission Board and North American Ministries. Learn more about Free Will Baptist church planting efforts: www.FWBNAM.com.

I Am Your Child's Missionary



BY HANNAH DRIGGERS

“It must be nice to have summers off.”

“You get off work at like, 3:00 p.m., right?”

“If they ran things like they used to!”

“Well, it wouldn’t be so hard if they hadn’t taken God out of schools!”

Sigh. Smile. Nod.

These are the things people say to teachers. In fact, these are the types of things other Christians say to me because I am your child’s teacher, or your niece’s teacher, or a teacher in your church. And I get it. I really, really do. I understand your frustration when you put a sign in your yard that says, “Put Prayer Back in School.”

I’m not saying I don’t sympathize, or even agree. But there is so much that people, or, more directly, Christians, don’t understand about the job I do.

You see, I am your child’s teacher, but I am also your child’s missionary. I see my classroom as a safe haven for students, my job as a burden bearer for our youngest truth-seekers, and my lessons as a foundation for the gospel message I am confident will be presented in some other setting.

I pray and prepare my classroom for your child’s presence all summer long. I research the best practices when it comes to environment, and I think long and hard about the arrangement, colors, and decorations. I am

not a glorified crafter; I am a professional who is intentional about every item in my classroom.

In this era of teaching, I am also careful to cultivate an environment accepting of all my students. I am a Christian (and a honest-to-goodness Free Will Baptist), but I am painfully aware I will have students in my class who do not believe as I do. In fact, I have had and will continue to have students who align themselves with anything from reincarnation to a transgender lifestyle. I do not have to accept the choices my students make to give them a comfortable environment in which to learn. Instead, I intentionally build relationships with all my students, and I pray God will place other Christians in their lives to speak truth directly to these areas.

I teach around 70 eighth graders, and in the past, that number has reached as high as 100 at a time. Because of this, I always have a student who is depressed, discouraged, or going through trials I cannot imagine. Sometimes, I know what is going on in their lives, but often, I can only see the storms hiding behind their eyes.

When your child is absent for a few days because her grandmother passed away, I watch her carefully as she returns to make sure she is doing okay. When one of my first young students died suddenly, my relationship with God helped me not only through my own grief but my students’ grief as well. All teachers take on the burdens

of their students, but Christian teachers also take on the eternal burden of their students' spiritual well being.

As I prepare lessons to teach, I understand I must cover a set of state standards. How I deliver these standards is primarily left to me. For example, I must teach and review how to identify, follow, and interpret more than one theme in a text, but I can choose the text. I choose texts according to what is appropriate, interesting, and worthy of study. In this age of technology, it takes a great deal to capture the interest of my students. My philosophy is to choose areas of study relevant to real life. If we study Holocaust literature, I ask my students who was responsible for speaking up for the Jews (and others)? Why was it wrong? What parallels do we see today? While their answers are often fringed by rhetoric from social media or the news, I truly believe that if I can teach my students to look for truth, they will find it. As I studied literature at Welch College, I began to realize my worldview makes all the difference in interpreting the lessons I see within. I remember the truths I learned in literature like *The Lord of the Rings* or *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, but I also remember the connections I made to truth in works such as *The Great Gatsby* and *Othello*. I know my students can do the same.

While I am your child's teacher, I am also the missionary in my classroom. It is my attitude that determines the atmosphere, and it is God who will use my lessons to reach my kids. The next time you see a teacher like me, say a prayer instead of a joke. I promise I will be grateful.

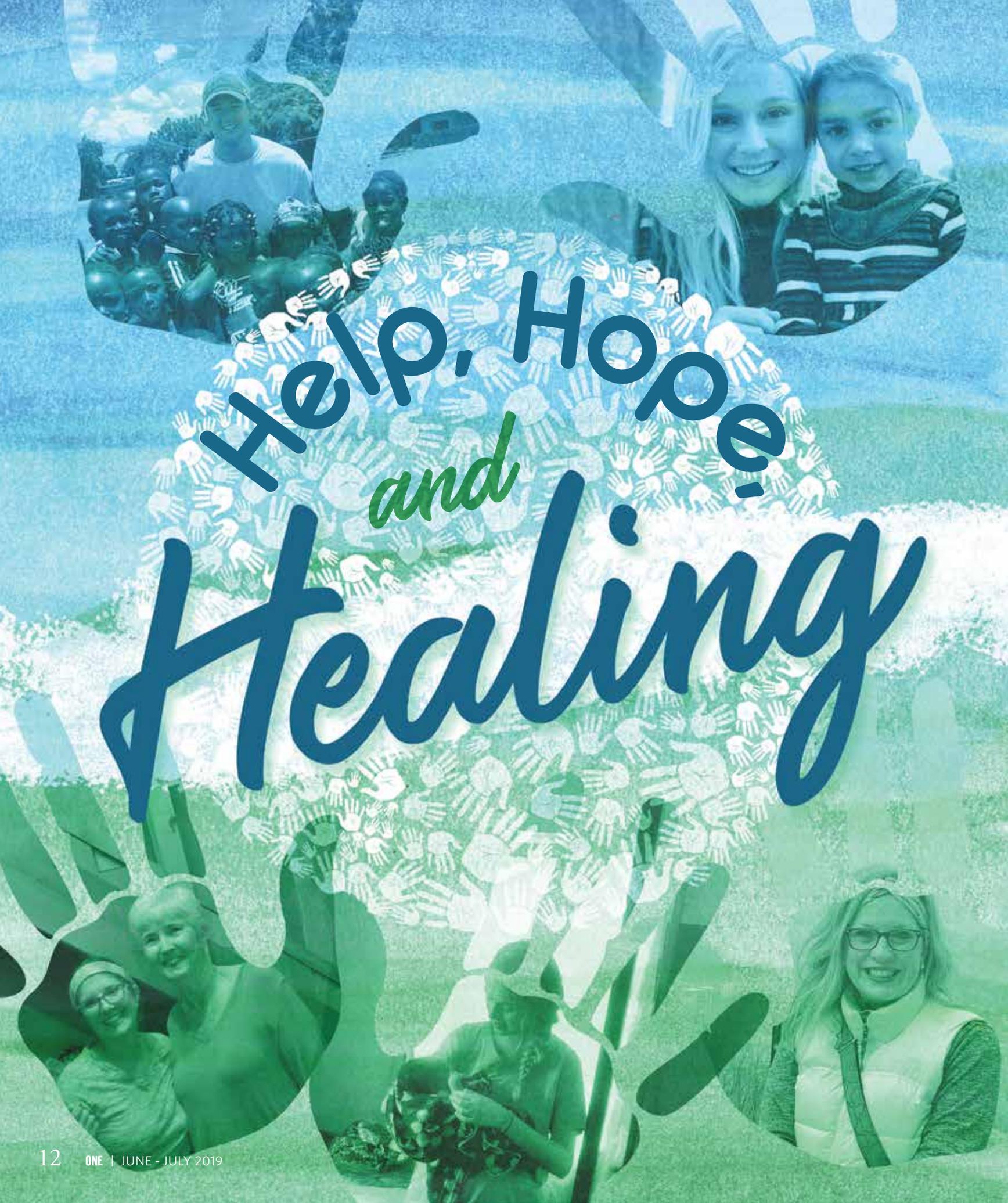
One final note: God hasn't left public education. He continues to send His workers into this field, and it is a field ripe for the harvest. 

About the Writer: Hannah Driggers teaches eighth grade in South Carolina.

Ten Ways Churches Can Help Teachers

- 1. Pray specifically**—by name—for teachers and students in your congregation.
- 2. Take part in school supply drives.** Even schools in wealthy areas have underprivileged students.
- 3. Participate in supplemental food programs** to meet needs for hungry kids.
- 4. Be engaged, supportive parents** for your own children and their teachers.
- 5. Sponsor special events** for a class or school.
- 6. Support events** sponsored by Christian student organizations. Check for FCA or Good News Club. If the school doesn't have one of these clubs, consider starting one as a church.
- 7. Offer volunteer hours** for school workdays or projects, both individually and as a church. Notice the school for needs like painting and yard work. Often the budget has no room for these items, and teachers do this work themselves.
- 8. Host a special event** at church for local teachers.
- 9. Honor teachers** during a special service.
- 10. As a church, send letters of appreciation** for teachers to local papers then provide a copy to the teacher or school(s).





Help, Hope *and* Healing

Many people around our world are trapped by poverty, oppression, politics, and war. Disease and injury are prevalent. Education is inadequate or altogether non-existent. Basic health care is lacking. In short, people need our help. During 2018, The Hanna Project sent teams to various parts of the world to lend a helping hand.

In Ecuador's jungles, our team focused on two avenues of help. A construction group helped construct a school. Quality education aids in breaking the cycle of abuse and poverty. A medical team visited several jungle villages to provide much-needed healthcare.

A dual team of medical and construction workers traveled to Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa, as well. Working in the hospital in Doropo, the medical team assisted local staff with surgeries, emergency medicine, basic treatment, wound care, and more for hundreds of people. The construction team completed several maintenance projects, including renovations to the new Dr. Lavergne Miley Medical Block at the hospital.

In Kazakhstan, a team helped construct a new Hope Center. Additionally, the team served 100 individuals during an eye clinic, providing free screening and eyeglasses, and assisted with English classes.

THP returned to Bulgaria in an ongoing renovation effort at a local hospital. The team prepared and painted an entire wing of the facility; repaired lighting and plumbing; and provided new beds, bedding, and furniture. The mayor and city leaders expressed great appreciation for all THP has done to bring hope and healing to the people of Bulgaria.

In November, a team of construction workers flew to Tokyo to renovate a meeting center for Hope Alive. The team cleaned, painted, built a wall, installed flooring, and completely renovated bathrooms. Sometimes working into the early morning hours, the team prepared the space to be used for English activities and other meetings for Hope Alive.

A couple days after Christmas, an 11-person team trav-

eled to Bulgaria to bring hope to hundreds of children by distributing Christmas shoeboxes. The team visited 11 villages and distributed more than 300 shoeboxes. Joyful tears flowed down the faces of children as they opened their boxes. As much, or perhaps more, than the gifts they received, the children, parents, and grandparents were overwhelmed by the love demonstrated by the team as they played games and sang Christmas songs with the villagers. Local officials and villagers alike begged the team to return.

What an incredible blessing to use the resources we have been given to share help, hope, and healing with those around the world.

Several projects and trips have been planned for 2019. In May, a team traveled to the jungles of Ecuador to work in construction, medical, and educational efforts. In August, a team will return to Côte d'Ivoire to provide medical help, construction work, and children's programming. In September, a team will travel to Kazakhstan to work alongside partners in the Hope Center. Bulgaria also will receive a team in September. A construction team will inaugurate work in the Dominican Republic in November as we help build an English school. In December and January, a team will return to Bulgaria to deliver Christmas shoeboxes. Other trips and projects are being planned even as this article is written. As plans are solidified, our website is updated with details and costs.

If you wish to support The Hanna Project's efforts financially, or if you are interested in participating in a project, visit www.hannaproject.com to give or apply today.

MEREDITH PARRISH

Many amazing things could be said about The Hanna Project. However, my praise for the organization is this: it gave me a chance to experience my love for the medical field for the first time, on foreign soil. Next semester, I will start nursing school. Before my trip to Ivory Coast last summer, nursing school was a good idea. However, after hands-on experience, ministering to people, and sharing Christ through medicine, I realize nursing school is no longer just “a good idea” but my calling.

Our trip had a two-fold mission: work with the medical staff in the indigenous hospital and help finish construction on a new wing of the hospital. After three flights, four days of lost luggage, and a ten-hour drive upcountry, we finally arrived in Doropo. To say I felt completely lost and in the middle of nowhere is an understatement. However, through the teaching of the missionaries around me, the hands-on experience in the hospital, and interacting with the locals, I realized the middle of nowhere was where God had to take me to get my attention. I quickly recognized I did not travel almost 5,000 miles solely to touch other people’s lives, but to be ministered to myself.

I will forever be grateful for The Hanna Project and every cross-cultural and lifelong lesson I learned on my trip. My life has been impacted immensely.



ASHLEY RAINS

Just two days after Christmas, I traveled to Bulgaria with The Hanna Project. Our team’s purpose was to provide Christmas parties for villages. This included singing Christmas songs, preparing snacks and crafts, playing fun games, and everyone’s favorite part—opening Christmas gifts!



Like many people, I was familiar with Operation Christmas Child and the shoebox initiative. In fact, I participated personally at times with my family and our church. This year, I was able to *hand out* these shoeboxes to children. What an incredible opportunity! Seeing the looks on their faces, hearing them gasp in amazement, listening to squeals of joy, as each one opened his gift—these are things I will treasure forever.

As with any other team, it is always interesting to see God at work among you. He brought together 11 people from diverse states, age groups, professions, and walks of life to serve Him and those He loves so much. Traveling with THP created new friendships and bonds I will cherish for years to come. Among those was the privilege of getting to know our host missionaries. Without this trip, they would have remained faces on a prayer card.

I am so thankful I had the opportunity to travel with The Hanna Project and be a part of the ongoing work in Shumen, Bulgaria.

JENNIFER THOMSEN

After helping with the logistics for The Hanna Project, I felt the need to go on a trip myself. I looked at the trips scheduled for 2018 and tried to see where I could use my talents and skills. After a lot of prayer, I decided to go to Svishtov, Bulgaria, and I am so glad I did.



I could tell you so many things about our team and the things we did. We had a great team dynamic. I loved ministering with two people from my church. I loved the time in our room where three ladies from three different generations shared, laughed, and cared for each other. We painted a wing in a local hospital and helped with cooking classes at night. We visited with our missionaries, worshiped with Bulgarians, had a scavenger hunt around the city, and were on the receiving end of a missionary kid’s practical jokes.

The thing that impacted me the most was a conversation with Anna Postlewaite. A few of us had been inside of an Orthodox Church. It was a very moving experience. As we stood on the steps on the church, Anna took a deep breath and asked us to pray for her friend because “she knows lots of gods, but she doesn’t know the true God.” With tears running down my cheeks, I promised to pray for her friend. I stood on the steps of the church and thought, “This eight-year old girl gets it. It isn’t her parents’ job to tell others about Christ; she shares their ministry.”

The people of Bulgaria challenged me. But the request of an eight-year-old asking me to pray for her friend changed my life. I can’t wait for the day her friend knows the true God.



COTY STROUD

My name is Coty Stroud. I’m 28 years old and live in North Carolina. Last fall, I was privileged to join The Hanna Project on a trip to the Ivory Coast. My part of the trip consisted of construction work

at a local hospital. A medical team also offered basic patient care and performed surgeries. On the flight over, I had the honor to sit with Sherwood Lee. For many years, Mr. Lee worked in Ivory Coast as a doctor at the Miley hospital. Naturally, I asked, “What is the most important thing I need to know? I don’t speak the language so I’m a bit concerned how to communicate with people.” I’ll never forget Mr. Sherwood’s response: “Coty, there are no language barriers when it comes to love.”

Wow! What a powerful statement—not only for the trip but for living life.

We arrived in Doropo in the far northeast of Ivory Coast and began working. We helped local workers paint, lay tile, finish plumbing, perform light electrical duties, install HVAC, hang windows and doors—you name it; we did it. The medical team performed several

The Hanna Project (THP)

exists to bring *help, hope, and healing* to those in need around the world. THP focuses on meeting practical needs and providing direct solutions to real problems to give hope for tomorrow.

THP is a faith-based, not-for-profit organization, tax exempt under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue code. Established to demonstrate compassion to people suffering the ravages of war, poverty, disease, and disaster. Identifying and addressing human needs enables us to bring help, hope, and healing to many who thought no one cared.

Learn more about THP and its efforts at HannaProject.com

surgeries, delivered babies, saw many malaria cases, and met the needs of the day.

Traveling with THP changed my life. I view the world from a different perspective. I see people differently. My love for God has become more passionate. Working alongside the men of THP and experiencing how God can use individuals is something I will remember for a lifetime.

Before we left, the locals gathered to let us know how thankful and blessed they were by our help. But the blessing was all mine.

What happened those weeks—what God did in my life, what He showed me, and what He taught me—was worth every sacrifice and money spent to be there. Every follower of Christ is commanded to go. That may be next door or maybe around the world. I don't know what door God is going to open next, but I hope that door involves THP.

MIKAYLA SPRENKLE

I traveled to Bulgaria in December 2018 for an Operation Christmas Child distribution with The Hanna Project. We went to villages delivering gifts to the children, playing games, and sharing the gospel. We worked in mainly Muslim villages. God really opened my eyes to what it meant to never hear the Word. My heart was broken. Several nights, I thought to myself, “Will they ever understand? How will God move here?”



Yet, by the end of each visit, I saw smiles turn into hugs, and hugs turn into a friendship. I truly believe our team did exactly what we came to do: plant seeds and deliver not only gifts, but *hope!*

Undeniably, God left His mark. He showed up right when we needed it. One day He provided just the right number of Bibles to distribute to the Bulgarian parents accompanying their children. Every child's gift almost seemed tailored for them, even though we didn't know what was in the shoebox. God was moving.

I am eternally grateful to THP for providing me with this opportunity. At only 17 years old, my life has been changed forever. It is my prayer everyone can share an experience like mine. **ONE**

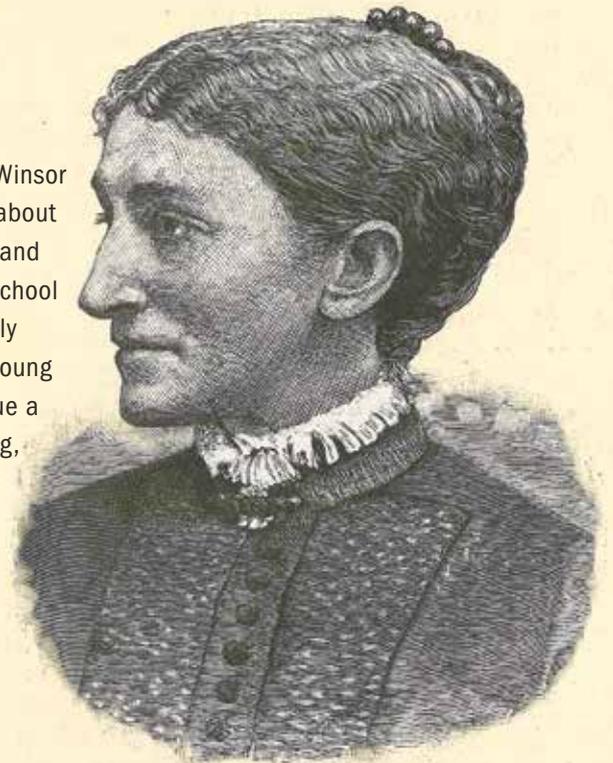
About the Writer: Sam McVay is the former director of The Hanna Project.

Legacy of Generosity

Free Will Baptist women's ministry can be traced to the early 1840s, when Ann Winsor of Providence, Rhode Island, formed the Women's Missionary Society after hearing about desperate spiritual needs in India. Women soon helped underwrite missions efforts and provided funding and teachers for Storer College in Harper's Ferry, West Virginia, a school for former slaves. Half a century later, women played an instrumental role in the early work of the National Association, sending missionary Laura Belle Barnard, guiding young people, and supporting the general work of the denomination. Today, women continue a vital role through missions funding, the Steward Provision Closet, training, publishing, and more. Mary Ruth Wisheart notes in her book *Sparks Into Flame*:

WNAC has a missionary heart, a missionary purpose, a desire to fulfill the Great Commission in every way possible...Free Will Baptist women have contributed time, money, and materials to help get the gospel to the world. It would be impossible even to attempt to set down all they have done.

Create your own legacy of generosity through **an endowment with FWB Foundation.**



Mrs. M.M. Brewster served as founding editor of *The Missionary Helper*, first publication by and for Free Will Baptist women.



FREE WILL BAPTIST FOUNDATION
877-336-7575 | www.fwbgifts.org

Power of Prayer

BY KEN AKERS

A recent event in my life reminded me that prayer is both important and powerful! On February 6, my wife, three volunteers, and I traveled to Haiti. This year marks 20 years since I began making trips to volunteer with Mountain Faith Mission. Over the years, I've experienced many miracles and blessings.

On this recent trip, the day after we arrived, the country erupted in turmoil. Chaos and riots against the current president swept the country—what Haitians call manifestations. Roadblocks of rocks, trees, trash, and burning tires piled in the streets. You don't dare drive through or around them. Many people are hurt or killed during these dangerous events.

While we felt safe where we were, we knew we needed to leave the country. We hoped after a few days things would calm down, but that was not the case. Things went from bad to worse. I began to use Facebook to reach out to prayer warriors in the States. We were located 45 miles from the airport in Port Au Prince, the nation's capital. The trip normally takes two to three hours. Information we gathered indicated no way to reach the airport due to the roadblocks at many points along the way.

As we began to pray and ask for prayer, we knew God was listening. Without going into great detail, we secured a helicopter to pick us up in an open field and drop us off in a secure area of the airport. Once there, two Haitian airport workers met us. They helped us through security to the Delta desk then back through security, customs, and immigration. We reached our plane with minutes to spare.

These terrifying and exciting events are not the only answers to prayer we have encountered in Haiti. We met

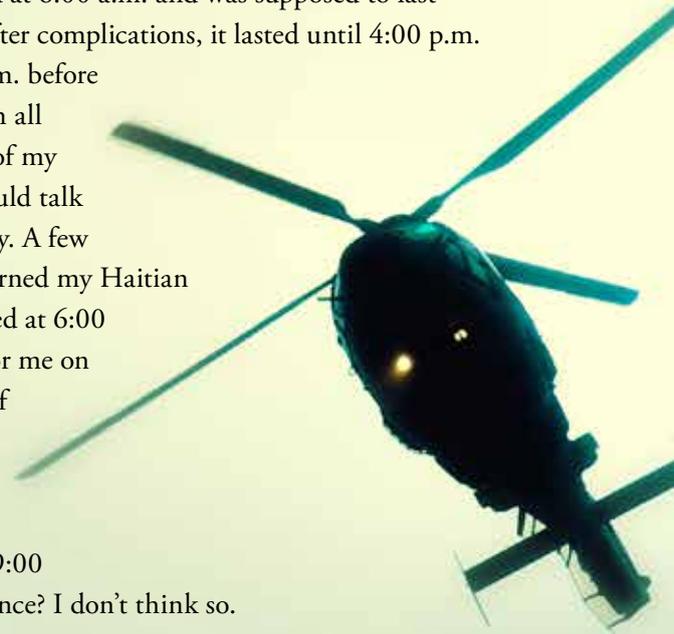
a man who told us he had been brought back from the dead through prayer. We spoke with a Haitian pastor who gets up at 3:00 a.m. every morning to pray. One morning while we were there, as he started praying, the demons showed up (not uncommon in Haiti), and he fought with them through prayer.

Then I recall a moment in 2006. After two heart attacks, I had been scheduled for bypass surgery. My surgery started at 6:00 a.m. and was supposed to last until noon. After complications, it lasted until 4:00 p.m.

It was 9:00 p.m. before I woke up with all the tubes out of my throat, so I could talk with my family. A few days later I learned my Haitian friends gathered at 6:00 a.m. to pray for me on the morning of my surgery. They continued all day, praying until 9:00 p.m. Coincidence? I don't think so.

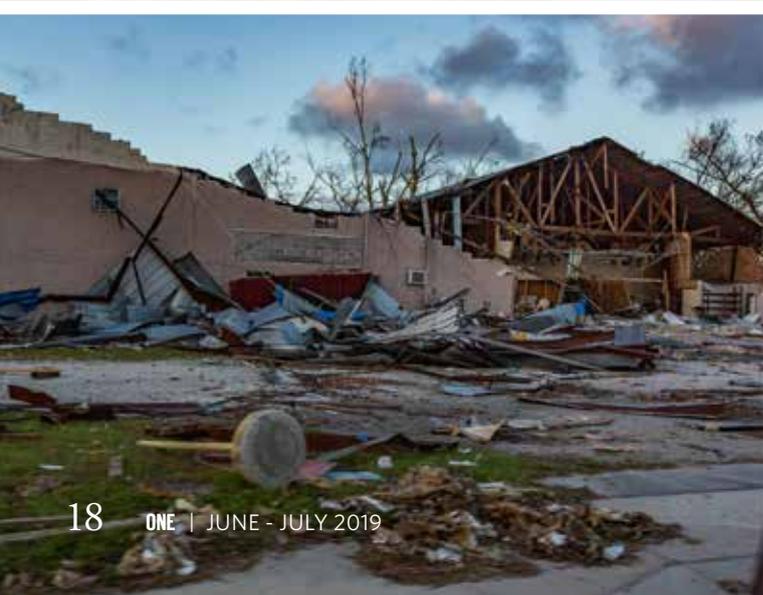
I know some people may be skeptical when they hear these types of stories of God's direct intervention. But I can tell you firsthand: there is power in prayer, and God is listening! **ONE**

About the Writer: Ken Akers is CFO of North American Ministries and director of Free Will Baptist Master's Men. Learn more: www.fwbmastersmen.org.



Surviving Michael

BY ALLAN AUSTIN



On September 17, 2018, my son Jaron and I, along with teammate Jimmy Baxter, from Eufaula, Alabama, headed to North Carolina to provide disaster relief after Hurricane Florence. We worked in Washington and New Bern for about four days before returning home with plans for a second trip. A few weeks later, on October 4, my family returned to New Bern to continue our work in the area and to attend homecoming at our former church.

On Sunday, October 7, we saw that a storm was headed toward the Gulf Coast, specifically the Florida panhandle, where we live. Believing hurricanes move slowly, and it would be days before landfall, we made plans to continue our work until Thursday before returning home. The following morning, however, Hurricane Michael had already passed Cuba and was deep into the Gulf of Mexico.

By lunchtime, the rapidly changing predictions for the storm made it clear it was time to head back to Florida. After spending the night in South Carolina, we arrived home at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday and immediately began preparing our home and church—boarding up and tying down. We knew by all predictions Hurricane Michael was going to be a severe storm and it was headed our way.

By Wednesday morning, October 10, the winds had begun increasing rapidly. We lost power at 10:30 a.m. but continued listening to the weather radio. We heard Michael would make landfall at Mexico Beach with 155 mph winds—a strong Category 4 hurricane later upgraded to a Category 5. Those who live in hurricane prone areas understand when a cyclone makes landfall, it almost always slows down. Michael proved to be different.

Clarksville, Florida, our town, is situated 40 miles inland from where Michael made landfall. When the eye hit us, hurricane-force winds were still 150 mph. For hours, the winds raged, with sustained winds of 70 mph. That evening, the community slowly emerged from their shelters to check on each other and start removing debris and trees from roads and houses. Not a tree or house went unaffected in Calhoun County. The devastation was unbelievable. Leaves had been stripped from the few trees that remained standing, making it look like the dead of winter.

Thursday morning, people began to stop by to ask what they could do to help; others stopped by who needed help. Cell service went out about 9:00 p.m., Wednesday evening and did not return until late Friday night. People were in shock and could not communicate with friends and family for help. Our church began to help with what we had. We grabbed several cases of water

and chainsaws and went to work. By Friday, most roads had cleared enough that we could check on church members and others in the community.

Traveler's Rest Free Will Baptist Church became the distribution center for our side of the county. God sent people our way from all over the country bringing supplies, food, work, and support. Many times, they arrived exactly when needed with the supplies and necessary equipment. Our church set up a place for anyone to get the supplies they needed. For almost two months, we handed out supplies to those hit hardest by the storm. We also served meals for both storm victims and relief workers.

It will be years before all the trees are removed and houses no longer have tarps on them. FEMA and other organizations have been helping with cleanup, and the community has worked tirelessly to make great strides toward recovery. We are surviving Michael.

After experiencing the third worst storm to hit the United States and the second worst to hit Florida, we are adjusting to a new normal. Things will never be the same, but God has done remarkable things through people from all over the country.

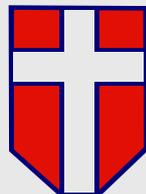
Much still remains to be done. If you can help with cleanup or rebuilding, your work will be appreciated. A relief training and organizational meeting for the southeast region (Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Mississippi) took place May 17-18, 2019, at Camp Mt. Pleasant in Bonifay, Florida. To find out how you can get more involved, contact Allan Austin at 843-731-4986 or Tim Jordan at 334-794-5181.

I have learned it is not a matter of *if* disaster will strike but rather *where* and *when*. May God help us be prepared. Along with the people of Northwest Florida, let me say *thank you* to all who went the extra mile to help us. 

About the Writer: Allan Austin is pastor of Traveler's Rest FWB Church in Clarksville, Florida. Learn more about Free Will Baptist disaster response efforts: www.fwbmastersmen.org.

It's a Disaster!

In recent years, we've seen a more active season of natural disasters—hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, and earthquakes. When we don't volunteer ourselves, we provide supplies to affected areas through donations by Free Will Baptist people and churches.



MASTER'S MEN

Free Will Baptist Men's Ministry

Disaster Response Team

Recently, we learned it is getting harder for men and women to take time from work and family commitments to travel for a long period of time. However, we are also seeing more volunteers serve in their own neighborhoods. Many pastors have taken the lead in organizing their churches to reach their areas before and during disasters.

A couple years ago, we set up several regional directors to guide regional disaster relief efforts. Currently, Master's Men has fully equipped trailers in Florida, Arkansas, Kentucky, and Tennessee. We also partner with leaders in Alabama, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Illinois, states that have their own trailers with equipment.

Master's Men will continue to coordinate Disaster Response Teams to offer help. But we also will equip and assist local congregations to reach the communities around them.

In the book of Nehemiah, the Jews accomplished the task of building the wall around Jerusalem by working in their own areas. Nehemiah 4:6 tells "the rest of the story" when he said it was done because *the people had a mind to work*. If Master's Men DRT can help you, always feel free to reach out to us. But if you want to help others, don't wait on us!

Above all, serve the Master.

For more information regarding Free Will Baptist disaster response, visit www.fwbmastersmen.org.

Coming “Home”

BY JUDY BRYAN



“Welcome home!”

When we returned to the States a year ago, it seemed everybody greeted us the same way: “Welcome home!” We appreciated their warmth and love, but we didn’t quite feel like we were home. Yes, our family is here, and close friends are nearby. But, we worked so hard for so long to adapt to life in another culture, *here* just doesn’t seem like home.

“How does it feel to be back home?”

Frankly, it’s a little awkward sometimes. We lived in two overseas cultures and loved them both. We learned to communicate in another language. We became accustomed to different foods and ways of doing things. We adjusted to new lifestyles. Consequently, we see life from another vantage point. Coming back to family and friends is wonderful, but speaking only English and acclimating to American culture is like a wearing a borrowed coat—it doesn’t always fit comfortably.

“Glad you are back home!”

Reentry into our “home” culture can be a major transition for missionary families. That transition is not always smooth. Don’t assume we feel “at home” just because we are physically in the States. We carry an American passport. However, culturally, we are no longer 100% American. Robert and I are still processing this change. We find ourselves thinking as we did in the

culture we left. It takes time to settle back into life in our birth country.

Reentries are not created equal.

We’ve discovered our return to the States this time is different from all earlier occasions. Coming to the U.S. for stateside assignment was not too traumatic for us. We always knew we would return to our field of service. Granted, we were “foreigners” there, but we actually felt more at ease in our host culture than in our birth country. While in the States, we enjoyed our favorite foods, seeing family, visiting churches, and sharing about our ministry, goals, and future plans—but we always knew we were going back.

Retiring to the States is a totally different story. When Robert and I came “home” in May 2018 to begin our transition from missionary service into retirement, we really didn’t know what to expect. Our home church, Bethany FWB Church in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, made us feel very welcome. They threw a retirement party beyond our expectations. They certainly made us feel special! But we found we still didn’t feel at home.

For the first time in nearly 50 years, we are not anticipating and working towards a return overseas. For nearly five decades, we were identified as missionaries, but no longer. So, who are we now? What are we supposed to do? That identity crisis is yet another hurdle to overcome in reentry.

Six Ways to Help Missionaries “Come Home”

- 1. Help them settle in.** If a missionary is settling nearby permanently or for stateside assignment, clean their home or apartment. Stock the kitchen with staples and favorite foods. Give them gift cards to help them ease into stateside life.
- 2. Make missionary kids feel special.** Discover their interests and meet their needs. Invite them to join your family on trips to the zoo, playground, etc.
- 3. Pray, and let them know you are praying.** Pray for specific things such as marriages, family life, travel, speaking engagements, account needs, readjustment, and spiritual health. Remember, they have the same struggles you do.
- 4. Partner financially.** Giving faithfully is more important than how much you give. Missionaries depend on regular giving. Help lift the financial burden.
- 5. Support the Provision Closet.** The WNAC Provision Closet meets a huge need for missionaries. Whether you make donations of items, cash, or gift cards, all are appreciated.
- 6. Ask.** If you are unsure what might be most helpful, just ask. You may be an answer to a missionary’s prayer. Missionaries need opportunities to share with people who genuinely want to know what is going on in their lives. Asking a simple question could begin a lifelong friendship with a missionary.

You can help.

Perhaps you are wondering how you can make reentry easier for the missionaries you know. Here are some ideas:

First, *recognize they feel like foreigners in their own birth country.* Be sensitive to their needs and feelings. Get to know them, their likes and dislikes, their favorite foods. Include them in special events, concerts, or family outings. Invite them into your home and learn about them and what their life was like in the country they served. Understand they may be grieving. Family may be close by, but they still need a friend. Be that friend!

For those on stateside assignment, *recognize they need a home base* as they travel to share with supporters about their ministry and to secure additional financial support. Offer an open door to your church. Invite them to share in your ladies’ group or other small groups, or perhaps in Sunday School classes. This makes their time “home” so much easier.

Be aware you are part of their ministry. Your prayers and support are essential elements in their outreach. When they tell you about people coming to Christ and being transformed, recognize you played a role in that person’s salvation through your prayers and support. Rejoice with them and be encouraged!

Pastors, when they call you to schedule services, understand they’re not trying to disrupt your preaching schedule. They want to assist you in helping your church accomplish the final order Jesus left us: make disciples among all nations. Please respond to their calls.

Missionary children are people, too.

Be sensitive to missionary children. Some attend school in another culture and speak another language. Attending school in the States is not always easy. Be a friend to them. Living in the States is a big change. To you, they may act a bit different than the young people in your church. Remember, they live most of their lives in another culture and see the world through different lenses. They are going to be different. Be sensitive to their needs and their transition.



Missionaries are like you... and they're not.

Remember missionaries are just like you: they need friends, encouragement, and acceptance. At the same time, they are different. Having lived most of their lives and raised their family in another culture, they have adopted different lifestyles, languages, and

cultural tastes. Following Paul's

example, they have become like the people they serve to bring them to Christ. It will take some time for them to settle into life in the good ole USA.

Understand they will never again be 100% American. Accept them as they are and reach out to them. Don't

assume anything. Be sensitive. They may be surrounded by family and friends, yet feel lonely. They may not feel at home yet. They may be grieving the loss of people left behind in their country of service. Listen to their experiences and their stories, and you will learn a great deal about them. Include them. Understand they want to know you as well.

We've been back in Oklahoma almost nine months now, and we're getting used to Fahrenheit, gallons, and inches. We're building deeper friendships and finding our niche. We're beginning to feel more and more at home. To mimic Paul, we're learning to be content, no matter where we live. [ONE](#)

About the Writer: Robert and Judy Bryan retired at the end of 2018 after 50 years of overseas ministry in Côte d'Ivoire and France. Learn more about Free Will Baptist global ministry: IMINC.org.



Photo: Wikimedia Commons: Bull-Doser, Released to Public Domain

While we have your attention...

No one wants to think about death, but death is inevitable. Have you prepared your estate in a way it will benefit your children and the ministries you love? **Free Will Baptist Foundation** recently partnered with **Cornerstone Estate Planning** to provide help in this crucial area of life. Contact the Foundation today for more information:

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

Snapshots Around the World



Samburu: Eddy Simmons reports Jackson and Eunice, their Samburu coworkers, led 14 women, four teens, and one man to the Lord on Saturday, February 23. This new area first received the gospel message earlier in the week. Also, the translation of key Old Testament passages has moved forward with the hiring of a Samburu translator (pictured at left) and the completion of the first 50 passages.

Bulgaria: Josh and Lydia Provow host weekly game nights where mostly young men gather for a game of Catan followed by a Bible study. Those attending are Muslim, atheist, and agnostic. Additionally, one group has a Turk, Gypsy, and Bulgarian playing together. The various ethnicities rarely gather in harmony.



Spain: In February, Mandi Morgan hosted a painting party as a women's outreach.



Eight ladies, including two who do not attend the church, attended. She reminded attendees they are masterpieces in God's eyes.

Bessie Richards Enters Heaven

Antioch, TN—Former missionary to Côte d'Ivoire Bessie Richards joined her husband Norman in praising their Savior on Monday, March 4, 2019. The 74-year-old had battled a variety of illnesses over the last few years.



Bessie and Norman were married for 50 years (1963-2013) prior to his homegoing in August 2013. They were married a little over two years prior to their appointment by the Board to serve in Ivory Coast in 1966. The couple spent the majority of their time in Agnibilekrou where they planted a church, trained leaders, and led the congregation to expand into village ministry. Bessie taught child evangelism classes, held Bible studies for women, and taught

sewing classes as both an outreach tool and to help women support their families. She also worked in a reading room, promoting literacy among young people.

When their return to the States became medically necessary, Bessie and Norman worked with Home Missions in Louisiana.

Bessie's life was celebrated Saturday, March 9, 2019, at The Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee. **ONE**

Cuban Association Meets



Cuba—Delegates from the Free Will Baptist churches in Cuba gathered at the Cedars of Lebanon Seminary in Pinar del Rio to conduct the business of the Cuban national association February 18-21.

The convention featured services, competition, a graduation, meetings of the various demographics (men, women, youth, and children), and opportunities for fellowship. Former director of Mobilization Sam McVay and Director of Partnerships Kenneth Eagleton represented IM at the convention. Both men preached during the services.

A pastor was ordained during the Friday evening service.

The Cuban seminary also held a graduation ceremony Friday evening. Three students received an associate (AA) degree in Bible and ministry and four students received the Bachelor of Arts (BA). Only a couple of weeks earlier, a group of 16 students received their AA degree from one of the seminary extensions in Havana.

Around 500 people attended the Cuban convention. [ONE](#)

Hope Alive Launch

Japan—The Hope Alive Church in the Tokorozawa area of Tokyo, Japan, officially launched on January 13, 2019.

Heath Hubbard reported, “We are blown away at the many ways we have watched God work out all the details of this launch and amazed to report 14 people have indicated they want to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior! That’s 14 people who found true HOPE in Jesus Christ! Most of these people have been attending our Hope Alive Bible Studies over the last several years. We have watched God begin to open their hearts to the truth of the gospel. Now they are ready to take that step to follow Him by faith!”

Discipleship courses for these new believers began January 20.

The team acknowledged God worked so miraculously because of the partnership of many people who joined together to get the gospel to the Japanese people.

The Tokorozawa team, led by Heath and Joni Hubbard, includes Daniel and Shelby Culwell (IM short-term interns), Jack and Ashley Kettelman (IM short-term interns), and Matt and Courtney Lindsey (tentmakers with a partnership blessing from IM). [ONE](#)

Missionary Account Updates

Antioch, TN—Only one account showed a deficit as of February 28, 2019: India Ministries/Carlisle Hanna. Three missionary families had accounts with dangerously low balances: Dennis and Carol Teague; Jerry and Barbara Gibbs; and Tyler and Kellie Penn.

To donate to deficit accounts, mail a check to IM, Inc., PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37013 or donate online at IMinc.org/give.

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

Fearfully Made

BY JEN THOMSEN

Do you have a daughter who struggles with self-image? Are you at a loss about how to help her? Maybe you have told her she is beautiful until you are blue in the face, but it doesn't seem to make a difference. This generation is no different than yours and mine. The teen years are still difficult. It's not a new phenomenon for girls to compare themselves to thin, beautiful models and actresses, or to measure themselves against peers they believe are prettier or more athletic.

With competing voices from media and peers, how do we as parents and youth workers help our girls understand their worth does not spring from how they view themselves, or how others view them? How do we help them recognize and tune out the subtle thoughts the devil plants in their minds?

The simple truth is God made *everyone*. Every person is beautifully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:13-16 is straightforward:

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.

God made each person unique. Before anyone saw or even knew about us, God put thought into the person we would become. No one is made by accident—an amazing truth. We are created exactly the way God wants us.

Your teen might not jump for joy when you share these verses with her. If she is longing to be a bit taller or

shorter, to have straighter or curlier hair, to have clear skin or a different nose, reading that she has been made that way on purpose might not sound ideal. Social media and television are so full of seemingly perfect people, it can be easy to wish for something unattainable.

How do we help our girls see themselves as beautifully and wonderfully made? It's our job to remind them constantly. This is not a one-time conversation. You must reiterate this fact over and over and over again. Teens are often unkind to each other, and Satan's lies can easily become ingrained. We must continually remind girls (and guys) they don't have to compare themselves to other people. They don't *have* to look like everyone else at their school.

They need to be reminded when they see their reflection in the mirror they are beautifully and wonderfully made. Leave sticky notes on a mirror or other

BEFORE ANYONE SAW OR EVEN KNEW ABOUT US, GOD PUT THOUGHT INTO THE PERSON WE WOULD BECOME... WE ARE CREATED EXACTLY THE WAY GOD WANTS US.

visible place to remind them of this fact. In our home, we have a large wall mural proclaiming we are beautifully and wonderfully made. Simple reminders in everyday life can reinforce this truth.

Because we are beautifully and wonderfully made, we also must take care of our human bodies. First Corinthians 3:16-17 says, “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are.” As we remind our girls God created them beautifully, we must teach them to honor their bodies by eating well, exercising, and going to the doctor regularly.

It’s worth noting that, for some girls, a simple decoration or reminder that they are beautiful will not be enough. Some girls who struggle with self-image may need additional support or even professional help. If you suspect depression, anxiety, or another form of emotional or mental illness, please seek medical advice. There is no shame in finding the help they need.

Finally, we must remember to practice what we preach. As we teach girls they do not need to compare themselves to others, remind them they are beautiful, and teach them to honor their bodies, be sure you are doing the same. Are you comparing yourself to women in magazines or on television, or even your peers? Do you celebrate the way God created you, or does your daughter hear you complain about the way you look?

Our children are watching and listening, even when we don’t think we are teaching. Let us teach them in actions and in words that they are wonderfully and fearfully made. **ONE**

About the Writer: Jennifer Thomsen has worked with IM, Inc., since August 2012. She and her husband Eric attend Bethel FWB Church near Ashland City, Tennessee, and have one daughter, Victoria, who recently graduated from Welch College. Jennifer enjoys baking, snorkeling, and exploring new places.





Myth-Busting: Why Young People Are Leaving the Church

BY CHRISTOPHER TALBOT

We find ourselves in panic mode. A quick search online, a cursory look at top new books regarding church growth, or a lingering glance over empty pews in our church cause our hearts to be heavy about the emerging generation. We have a deep desire to keep these young people in our churches, and we frantically look for how to keep them from leaving the church.

Add to this what many sociologists are calling the rise of the “nones.” That is, the increasing population of those who consider themselves non-religious. As Pew Research notes, “A shorthand we use to refer to people who... say their religion is ‘nothing in particular’—now make up roughly 23% of the U.S. adult population.”¹ This group is significantly higher among emerging generations, making up nearly two-thirds of millennials in the United States.

The problem isn’t a lack of information. The problem is we’ve been misinformed. Somewhere along the way, we’ve caught wind of trouble. In doing so, we’ve been told we need to change *everything* to keep our youth from changing. It seems many leaders and laymen have bought into myths that simply aren’t true. Simply looking at the facts may “bust” a few of these myths. The following five myths simply are not true.

MYTH #1: YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T WANT TO BE AROUND ADULTS

You may have heard it said that young people who attend church don’t want to be around those older than them. You may have read or listened to someone who declared youth only want to be around people their own age. This simply isn’t true. More than ever before, young people are not only longing for intergenerational relationships, they are requesting them.

An article from the Fuller Youth Institute recently noted, intergenerational relationships “meet kids’ needs

1 Michael Lipka, “A closer look at America’s rapidly growing religious ‘nones,’” Pew Research Center, May 13, 2015. Accessed February 17th, 2019. <http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2015/05/13/a-closer-look-at-americas-rapidly-growing-religious-nones/>

for belonging and attachment.”² And while “intergenerational ministry” is a favored buzzword today, the practice has ancient roots. Each new generation consistently looks for older believers to admonish, challenge, and encourage them in their faith formation.

MYTH #2: YOUNG PEOPLE CAN'T HANDLE THEOLOGY

Much of the literature regarding youth leaving the church revolves around two areas: 1) lack of parental involvement and 2) lack of an articulate faith. Certainly these two areas are deeply interconnected. Nevertheless, pastors across the board can help their students give words to their beliefs by teaching them historic doctrines of the faith. This doesn’t require a dull, monotone delivery. Instead, it should be compelling and life giving. After all, we’re sharing scriptural truth that has had ability to “turn the world upside down” (Acts 17:6).

In her fascinating book *Almost Christian*, Kenda Creasy Dean notes, “If teenagers lack an articulate faith, maybe it is because the faith we show them is too spineless to merit much in the way of conversation.”³ Students don’t want to learn dry, non-relevant truths. But that is not what theology is. Every day, students learn chemistry, algebra, and foreign languages. As Christian teachers, we should share with our young people the truths of the Bible in a way that shows their importance and

2 Kara Powell, “Moving Away from the Kid Table: A Bigger Vision of Church” Fuller Youth Institute, August 2, 2010. Accessed February 2, 2019. <https://fulleryouthinstitute.org/articles/moving-away-from-the-kid-table>

3 Kenda Creasy Dean, *Almost Christian: What the Faith of Our Teenagers is Telling the American Church* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 36.

power. Young people want theology, but they want a theology for all of life.

**MYTH #3:
YOUNG PEOPLE JUST WANT TO HAVE FUN**

In many ways, myth three is simply a misnomer. Youth generally do want to have fun, but this isn't their *ultimate* desire. To think a student's greatest want or desire is simply entertainment is myopic. After spending any amount of time with a young person, you'll realize they express many deeper needs. They wish to be affirmed, loved, and cared for. They want to sense hope, joy, and happiness.

So, yes, young people want to have fun. But they want more than *just* fun. And the wonderful truth is Christians have something much better than "just fun." We have a message that offers satisfaction for our deepest longings. As C.S. Lewis wrote, "If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."⁴ Fun alone doesn't satisfy our students. But we can point our young people to a message and a God who does. Have fun with your students, but realize they have deeper longings and questions we can answer.

**MYTH #4:
YOUNG PEOPLE DON'T CARE ABOUT DEEP QUESTIONS**

Certainly, we find a corollary between this myth and myth two. What seems to be consistent across all studies and surveys concerning the "failure to launch" is lack of engagement with deep questions by those in the church. It isn't that youth don't care about deep questions; it is that they haven't received *answers* to their deep questions. Or those questions were never addressed. Whether Larry Taunton's study with Fixed Point Foundation, David Kinnaman at the Barna Group, or Christian Smith with the National Study of Youth and Religion—all agree students have bemoaned the church's lack of engagement with the deep things of God. If you want to keep young people in church, begin facing difficult

4 C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980), 136-137.

questions head-on.

This means dealing with struggles and inquiries about science, sexuality, doctrine, and more. More than ever, young people need a holistic Christian worldview that speaks to every area of life and culture. The days of pithy one-liners are behind us. Young people with deep questions need deep answers.

**MYTH #5:
YOUNG PEOPLE WANT CHURCH TO BE "RELEVANT"**

Myth five may be the biggest myth on this list. In trying to keep young people in the church, we've tried to accommodate our practices to their culture. In an effort to reach this generation, we've sought to change our practices to become more "relevant." The problem? Young people don't actually want the church to be "relevant." At least not in the way we've conceptualized. Instead, they want to the church to be the church.

In a fascinating study by George Barna about designing worship spaces with millennials in mind, participants were asked to select words that described their ideal church. Of these, 78% chose "community" over "privacy;" 77% chose "sanctuary" over "auditorium;" 67% chose "classic" over "trendy." Another 67% chose "quiet" over "loud." What is more, when shown pictures of sanctuary images, millennials chose classical and traditional spaces over progressive and trendy auditoriums.⁵

What this study finds, and what we may have known already, is young people don't want the church to become something it is not. Instead, they want—even

YOUNG PEOPLE WANT—EVEN NEED—THE CHURCH TO BE WHAT IS HAS BEEN FROM THE BEGINNING: A COUNTER-CULTURAL COMMUNITY THAT PROCLAIMS A LIFE-CHANGING MESSAGE.

5 "Designing Worship Spaces With Millennials in Mind," Barna. November 5, 2014. Accessed February 10, 2019. <https://www.barna.com/research/designing-worship-spaces-with-millennials-in-mind/>

need—the church to be what it has been from the beginning: a counter-cultural community that proclaims a life-changing message.

One of the most important statistics in this discussion has been discussed by a wide group of researchers. Focus on the Family, in their study on Millennial Faith Participation and Retention noted that *only 11% of adults who left the faith said they had a strong faith as a child.*⁶ This is significant. Those who are leaving the church weren't really part of the church to begin with—they hadn't actually embraced the faith they claimed. Instead, the church is losing those who haven't resolved their doubts and who were unable to articulate what they believe.

These realities should call us to think deeply and biblically about how we're ministering to the next generation. With all the various "solutions" out there, what should one do? I think David Kinnaman articulates it

6 Glenn Stanton, "Are Young People Leaving the Church in Droves?" Focus on the Family, accessed February 5th, 2019, <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/about/focus-findings/religion-and-culture/are-young-people-leaving-the-church-in-droves>

well: "After countless interviews and conversations, I am convinced that historic and traditional practices, and orthodox and wisdom-laden ways of believing, are what the next generation really needs."⁷

In the midst of panic, we should return to the tried and true ways of God's wisdom. Let us return to God's means of grace, and the deep teaching and preaching of His Word to call young people to a compelling Christian faith. **ONE**

About the Writer: Christopher Talbot is author of *RE/Modeling Youth Ministry*. Chris teaches youth and family ministry and serves as campus pastor at Welch College. He is pastor of Youth and Family ministry at Sylvan Park FWB Church in Nashville, Tennessee. Chris is a regular contributor to Helwys Society Forum. He and his wife Rebekah live with their two sons in Gallatin, Tennessee.

7 David Kinnaman, *You Lost Me: Why Young Christians Are Leaving the Church and Rethinking the Faith* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2011), 202.



A CHRISTIAN
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OF FAITH &
LEARNING

welch.edu



Athletic Director Inducted Into Hall of Fame



Welch College Athletic Director and Men's Basketball Coach Greg Fawbush was inducted into the National Athletic Association of

Private Schools Hall of Fame on March 29, according to Welch President Matt Pinson.

"We're very proud of Coach Fawbush achieving this honor," Pinson said. "The Hall of Fame is for private school coaches, players, and athletic directors who help build and advance the cause of private schools."

Fawbush coached at Seffner Christian Academy in Tampa, Florida, for 22 years before joining the

Welch staff in 2017. On January 26, 2019, Fawbush achieved his 400th win at the Welch vs. Georgia Northwestern Tech game (104-71).

Since beginning at Welch, Fawbush has added soccer (men and women) to the college sports program and has led the school to rejoin regional play in NCCAA Division II.

For more information on Welch College athletics, visit welch.edu/athletics.

President Pinson Honored by Southeastern Seminary

Welch College President Matt Pinson was recently honored with an award from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest, North Carolina, according to Welch Provost Matthew McAfee.

"Each year, Southeastern Seminary honors several evangelical scholars at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society (ETS)," McAfee said. "At this year's annual meeting in Denver, Colorado, SEBTS honored President Pinson along with four other honorees—Kevin Vanhoozer of

Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, Peter Gentry of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Nathan Finn of North Greenville University, and Matthew Emerson of Oklahoma Baptist University."

In particular, Pinson was recognized for generating outstanding scholarship as both an author and editor at the academic and popular levels while also leading a college at the highest administrative level. Among those works that SEBTS Provost Bruce Ashford highlighted were *A Free Will Baptist Handbook: Heritage, Beliefs, and Ministries*



President Matt Pinson (left)

(Randall House, 1998), *Four Views on Eternal Security* (Zondervan, 2002), *Perspectives on Christian*

Worship: Five Views (B&H Academic, 2009), *Classical Arminianism* (Randall House, 2011, by F. Leroy Forlines, edited by Pinson), *Arminian and Baptist: Explorations in a Theological Tradition* (Randall House, 2015), and *Sexuality, Gender, and the Church: A Christian*

Response in the New Cultural Landscape (Welch College Press, 2016).

McAfee, along with Welch colleagues Jeff Cockrell, Matt Bracey, and Jesse Owens, who also attended the annual meeting, joined Pinson for this special recognition. McAfee remarked, "I am delighted

to see our president receive this well-deserved recognition. It is encouraging to see the impact Welch College is having on the broader evangelical community. Welch College is exceedingly proud of its president and his accomplishments."

College Choir Tours Three States

Over spring break, March 13-19, the Welch College Choir traveled to Tennessee, North Carolina, and Virginia during their annual Spring Choir Tour, according to David Wiliford, vice president for Institutional Advancement. The 40-member choir, directed by Dr. James Stevens, chairman of the Welch Music Department, ministered in seven churches, an assisted living center, and two Christian schools during the seven-day tour.

The program, "Oh, Praise the Name," consisted of sacred choral selections and gospel songs designed to encourage and evangelize. Selections included: "Blessings," "How Great Thou Art," "Is He Worthy?," "Come Thou Fount," and "Praise the Name."

Todd Parrish, who traveled with the choir, shared: "The tour has been wonderful, and the Holy Spirit has been evident in every service. Free Will Baptist people received our students with tremendous enthusiasm and expressed incredible excitement and thanksgiving for what God is doing at Welch College.



It was a joy to see choir members using their talents to serve Christ and make an impact for His Kingdom! What an honor it has been to

'praise His name!'"

For more information about booking Welch musical groups, visit www.Welch.edu.



Kept in Love

PART 1

BY BARRY RAPER



Jude 22-23

Several years ago, a well-known atheist named Penn Jillette released a video in which he described beliefs and proselytizing:

“I’ve always said that I don’t respect people who don’t proselytize. I don’t respect that at all. If you believe that there’s a Heaven and a Hell, and people could be going to Hell or not getting eternal life, and you think that it’s not really worth telling them this because it would make it socially awkward—and atheists who think people shouldn’t proselytize and who say just leave me alone and keep your religion to yourself—how much do you have to hate somebody to not proselytize? How much do you have to hate somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? I mean, if I believed, beyond the shadow of a doubt, that a truck was coming at you, and you didn’t believe that truck was bearing down on you, there is a certain point where I tackle you. And this is *more* important than that.”

His logic is sound. And it ought to be sobering to us. It is interesting Jillette used the word *hate*—How much would you have to *hate* somebody to believe everlasting life is possible and not tell them that? He’s right. But let me turn it around: What is the expression of true love? Love is the motivation for telling others about Jesus. In fact, this is the central message of these verses in Jude: You are kept in the love of God to *reach out* with the love of God.

Context of Jude

Jude writes, under the inspiration of the Spirit, with a pastoral concern. The recipients of his letter were not fully aware of the spiritual dangers surrounding them, primarily in the form of false teachers. He urged these believers to “contend for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints.” On the heels of this memorable phrase, Jude supplies the reason, “For certain people have crept in unnoticed who long ago were designated for this condemnation, ungodly people, who pervert the grace of our God into sensuality and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ.”

Jude provides a series of comparative illustrations of privilege, presumption, and judgment in verses 5-16. Then, Jude defines the response from the church—the community of believers—in the face of opposition and deception from the false teachers.

Jude’s central command to believers is to “keep yourself in the love of God.” But, we must remember this is only possible because God empowers and keeps us. Three times in this short letter, the idea of *keep* or *keeping* is brought to our attention. Verse three indicates we are kept or preserved by Jesus Christ (or for Him). And the letter closes with a look to the future: **He is able to keep or preserve you from falling and to present you faultless before His presence.**

Between our conversion to Christ and this eventual presentation in glory, Jude presents two basic responsibilities for every believer: 1) to keep ourselves in the love of God, and 2) to reach out to those around us. In the remainder of this article, we will examine Jude’s advice for carrying out the first of these responsibilities.

“Keep Yourself in the Love of God”

Building your most holy faith.

Jude tells his readers to keep themselves in the love of God by building their faith. This command is both personal and subjective. To possess real, saving faith, it must be personal and inward. However, this command also refers to the objective, unchanging body of truth believed—thus, the earlier admonition to contend for the faith *once and for all delivered* to the saints. The body of Christian faith isn't emerging or evolving. Instead, it is objective and unchanging—hence, the call to contend for “the faith.”

We find an intensely interpersonal dynamic in this exhortation. In the Western world, we think primarily in individual terms. I hear “building yourselves up” and automatically think about what I can do to build myself up. Certainly, we have spiritual exercises we can do in private, but it seems clear in this passage the emphasis is on what happens between believers—that we are habitually and consistently building one another up in the faith.

Our church has been in a building project for some time, under the capable leadership of our building committee. The committee carefully selected contractors and builders and hired them to construct the new facility. That's great for a physical building, but we cannot hire out the building

of our most holy faith. We must be involved ourselves, and with other believers.

Praying in the Holy Spirit. Here, Jude presents a contrast between believers who possess the Spirit and therefore can pray in the Spirit versus those who are devoid of the Spirit. I've never met a praying Christian who strayed far from God. Want to stay in close communion with God? Continue faithfully praying in the Spirit.

Waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ. We typically do not like to wait for anything. We don't choose the longest line at the store. Most drivers seek to get in the fast lane, and few things are more frustrating than a *slow* fast food restaurant!

Our culture doesn't help us with waiting—it has conditioned us to be extremely impatient. However, in another sense, the temporary nature of this world makes us long for the return of Christ. Some things are worth waiting for, and in this case, the mercy of Jesus is our goal. We anxiously anticipate the second coming of Jesus. In the meantime, we assume a posture of waiting... anxiously. We understand that this waiting involves His timing, not ours.

As those who have been redeemed, we have experienced His mercy and lovingkindness. We have a foretaste of what we will experience fully on the last day. We are on the road of mercy,

following the path that leads to eternal life. It is a current possession and also a future promise.

The rise of navigational apps has made driving without a map possible—at least until Siri™ leads you astray. Recently, a massive landslide on one of the primary Nashville interstates made traffic almost insufferable. As highways slowed to a crawl, my phone app sent me a direction I wouldn't have planned to go—a step of faith, so-to-speak. I was both traveling and believing the new route would take me to my desired destination. My journey was leading me somewhere specific. In much the same way, as we drive the road of mercy and lovingkindness in faith, the route is leading to eternal life.

If Jude's letter ended here, we might conclude it somewhat inward focused. Keep yourselves in the love of God. He is keeping you, and you need to keep on obeying. But there is more to these verses, and we will explore reaching out in His love in the next issue. **ONE**

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



Mission Accomplished!

THE RANDALL HOUSE BIBLE COMMENTARY

BY ROBERT E. PICIRILLI

The twelfth and final volume of *The Randall House Bible Commentary* (RHBC) just rolled off the press with the completion of Luke. Publication of the set began over three decades ago.

I remember well the day Roger Reeds (executive director) and Harrold Harrison (chief of publications) asked me to Randall House to talk about a new project. My jaw dropped—if not literally, at least in my mind—when they told me they wanted to publish a set of Bible commentaries!

Some years later, a college president within the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges paid us a compliment. He had a radio ministry teaching the Bible. As he started lessons on a certain book, he selected several commentaries for study; one was our volume. That volume, he said, gave him the most help in determining what the text means. My eyes lit up.

That's precisely why we produced these commentaries. The goal from the beginning was to provide our people, especially pastors and Sunday School teachers, a reliable resource for understanding the Bible. As I said in the preface to the first volume, the intention was to steer a course between the highly technical and the merely devotional. We did not purpose to blaze new trails in biblical interpretation and criticism. We believe the Bible is God's Word, and our responsibility (and the reader's re-

sponsibility) is to determine what God has said and how to apply that to life. This is the reason the commentaries include not only explanation of the text but summaries and suggestions for teaching and preaching.

The RHBC volumes offer scholarly work in user-friendly language. Harrold Harrison came up with the original idea, but the project later morphed into what we have today. The original concept called for a limited number of volumes—perhaps four or five volumes on each of the two testaments—and would cover the entire Bible. Neither Harrold nor Roger stated a hard and fast timetable, but we never thought the project would take so long to complete.

The commentary project proved to be bigger than any other Free Will Baptist publication ever! I was both excited and pessimistic. I wasn't sure we could swing it. We simply didn't have, at that time, as I could evaluate, enough people among us with both the education and the experience to qualify them to write commentaries on the Bible. Only a handful of Free Will Baptists held academic doctorates in biblical studies. To top it off, Roger and Harrold asked me to be the general editor, with Harrold as associate editor. I think I let the opportunity—I've always been a sucker for a challenge—overwhelm my better judgment.

The plan was for the first volume to include Romans and Corinthians. Leroy Forlines was asked to write Romans, and I would tackle the Corinthians. We began to write. Changes in the plan soon developed. We would publish these books in two volumes rather than one. I don't remember why: perhaps it had something to do with the production and sales of the oversize volumes we first had in mind.

Meanwhile, Roger, Harrold, and I consulted together to line up writers for other parts of the New Testament. That's when the enormity of our task began to sink in, and our outlook became more realistic.

Qualifications for writers included an advanced degree in biblical studies (including biblical languages) and enough experience in preaching or teaching and writing to demonstrate the ability needed. We soon became aware such persons are easier to envision than to employ. Some qualified people turned us down. Others accepted an assignment and produced nothing, or started and got derailed. Some turned in unusable material. Others took much longer than allowed in their contract. Some volumes required reassignment to other writers, and some of them were re-assigned yet again.

At any rate, we were on our way. As each manuscript was turned in, Harrold edited and then, using his

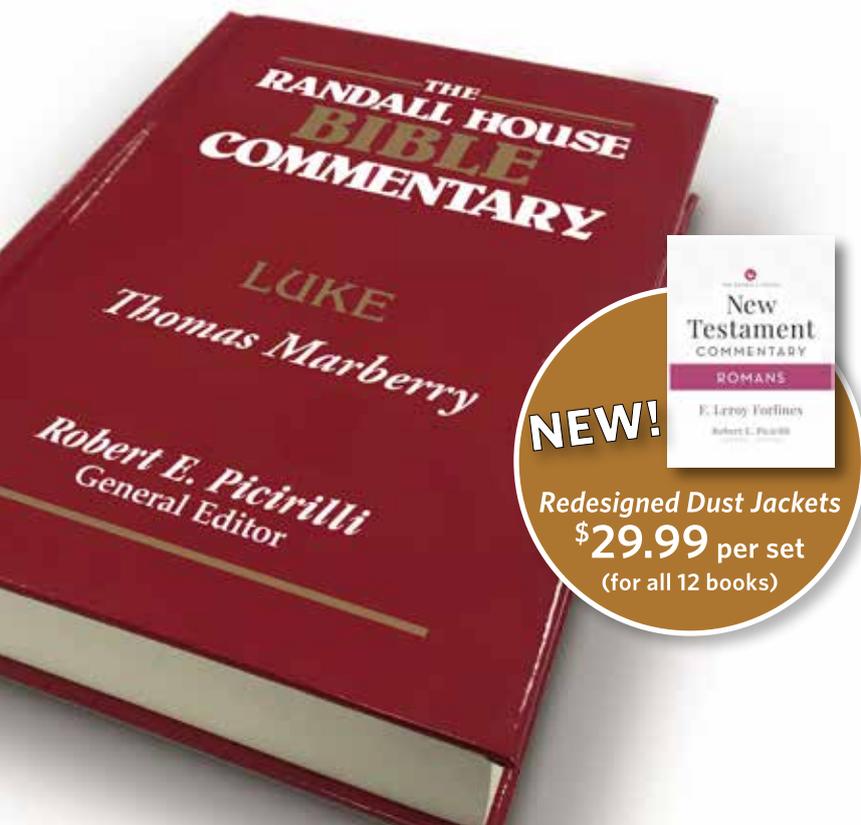
marked copy and the writer's electronic original, I would edit. Randall House conducted final edits and published. In 1987, the first two volumes were published. The final volume has been completed in 2019. The work started under Roger Reeds, continued under Alton Loveless, and reached completion under Ron Hunter. The following list shows the chronology of the 12 volumes:

- 1987 - Romans**
- 1987 - 1 & 2 Corinthians**
- 1988 - Galatians through Colossians**
- 1989 - John**
- 1990 - 1 Thessalonians through Philemon**
- 1992 - James, 1 & 2 Peter, Jude**
- 2003 - Mark**
- 2005 - Hebrews**
- 2010 - 1, 2 & 3 John, Revelation**
- 2015 - Matthew**
- 2018 - Acts**
- 2019 - Luke**

We don't have plans to tackle the Old Testament. After all, we took longer on the New Testament than the original authors took to compose it! Still, we're encouraged to see an increasing number of men and women in our denomination pursuing advanced biblical studies. This will increase our potential in the days ahead.

Now that the set is complete, we rejoice that it honors God's revelation of Himself. *The Randall House Bible Commentary* provides a legacy resource for the library of anyone who studies, teaches, or preaches the Bible, one that is reliable and practical and represents our unique Arminian perspective. **ONE**

About the Writer: Dr. Robert E. Picirilli is professor emeritus of New Testament and Philosophy at Welch College. He is author of *Discipleship: The Expression of Saving Faith*; *Grace, Faith, Free Will*; *Free Will Revisited*; and numerous other works and journal articles.



A Call to Military Chaplaincy

“LOVE, AND DO WHAT YOU WILL”

BY MATTHEW SAUNDERS

Non nobis, Domine, non nobis, sed Nomine tuo da gloriam. “Not unto us, oh Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory.”

This was the motto of the medieval military order of the church. The Knights Templar, as they were called, adopted the first part of Psalm 115:1 from Jerome’s Latin translation as their motto, partly as a means of remembering whom they served.

As a student of history and theology at Welch College, I always had an interest in church history, including the history of the Crusades and Knights Templar. Though I do not endorse the notion of a “conquering Christendom” in which the Messianic kingdom goes forth in military might rather than through missional and educational endeavors, God certainly used my interests in medieval Christianity and my experiences at Welch College to promote His call to military chaplaincy. Is this not how God often works? As Kevin Hester reminds his readers in a blog post, “The radical call of Christ is a call to love as He loved...This is something John knew and Augustine pointed out in his reflection on 1 John 1: ‘Once for all, then, a short precept is given you: Love, and do what you will.’”¹

Thus, I first sensed the call to military service as an intellectual prodding of the Spirit, and I enlisted into the Army Reserves between my junior and senior years of college. After nine months of training, I returned to Welch to finish my B.A. degree and continue into the newly established Master’s degree program in theology and ministry. Soon after, I began studies in Old Testament and archaeology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School while continuing to serve in the reserves.

¹ Read the entire blog: <https://www.fwbtheology.com/a-radical-call-to-love-god-and-do-what-you-will/>



Since moving to Chicago, I've met several good friends and colleagues who are also working on their M.Div. degrees to pursue active duty chaplaincy. This was, I sensed, the second stage in the Spirit's prodding—personal relationships.

After some time in prayer, I made the decision to transfer from my enlisted duties to military chaplaincy, and through a somewhat lengthy process of paperwork, the Department of the Army Chaplains recently approved my packet for Army chaplain candidacy. (Let me briefly express my thanks to North American Ministries for denominational endorsement and all their help in this regard.)

At this stage in my military career, I'm unsure whether I'll ever spend time as an active duty chaplain or remain in the reserves. I plan to continue my civilian education through a Ph.D. program while waiting to see what further plans God unfolds for my life. What I do know

is God's call is not always and altogether radical. God simply used my intellectual interests and personal relationships to slowly nudge me toward the chaplaincy over the last three years.

Again, to reference Hester, what makes God's call radical is its call to love in an often unloving world—love for God first then love for others as ourselves: "You see, sometimes love looks very ordinary... God's will is not only about the future. It is about the now. I wasn't waiting for God's will, I was in it even then, even in the ordinary."

May we all learn to love God more and live *pro Deo et Patria* (for God and Country). **ONE**

About the Writer: Matthew Saunders is a graduate of Welch College, and currently studies Old Testament and Near Eastern archaeology at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He has served in the Army Reserves since February of 2016.

Louis Brautigan died in 1999...

Since then, he has paid tuition for five ministry students at Welch College.

Because Louis was interested in educating young ministers, he established an endowment with **Free Will Baptist Foundation** in 1999. His estate contributed \$75,000 to the endowment, which has produced \$75,000 for ministry students over the past 20 years, leaving the original \$75,000 to work. Thanks to Louis, ministry students will continue to be educated until the Lord returns: "**Being dead, he yet speaketh**" (**Hebrews 11:4**).



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My Calling

BY SHAUN HEMBREE

My name is Shaun Hembree. I am an ordained Free Will Baptist minister from Oklahoma currently endeavoring to become a chaplain in the U.S. Army. Currently enrolled at Oral Roberts University in Tulsa, I am pursuing a Master of Divinity degree. I completed undergraduate studies last December at Northeastern State University.

Happily married 12 years, my wife Laura has done nothing but encourage and support me throughout this long process. I have been working towards this calling for more than six years, and she has never complained once. I am truly blessed to have Laura by my side, or I would not be able to accomplish this ambitious goal. My four young children also love and support me, providing little reminders of the importance of my calling every day.

I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and pledged my life to Him in 1992, at an early age. As a young adult, I felt God calling me to the ministry, and I answered that call in 2006, not knowing fully what I was to do. I have experience in different ministry capacities from church planting and teaching to associate and senior pastorates in Free Will Baptist churches. I assisted with a church plant in Seattle, Washington, for two years but otherwise have served throughout Northeastern Oklahoma at churches in Bixby, Haskell, and Checotah. Haskell First FWB Church ordained me in 2010, and I finally realized my calling fully in 2012,

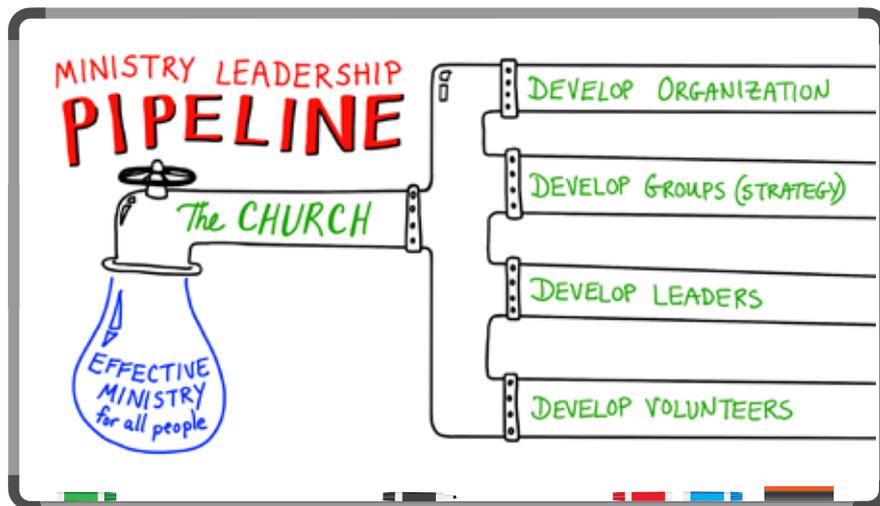
during a Veteran's Day service. God confirmed this calling to the chaplaincy in multiple ways and through multiple people. The men and women who serve our country in uniform live a rewarding but challenging life filled with demands. Our troops don't always have easy access to church or their respective support systems, so chaplains go to them. That is what I want to do.

With no prior military experience, I don't pretend to know all there is to this high calling. I do know I am physically and emotionally capable of serving, and I have always had strong convictions that Christians should live their lives to fullest potential. Our lives are a gift from God. Since He created me and sent His only Son to die for me, how could I offer to Him anything less than my best? I am instilling this truth in my children and anyone with whom I have influence. It has been one of the guiding principles of my life.

With God's help, I continue to press towards fulfilling my calling and my dream. I sincerely appreciate all prayers of support. Currently, I am being evaluated for entrance into the Oklahoma Army National Guard chaplain candidate program, which means I have a long stint of master's level coursework to complete. I cling to Philippians 1:6 which says "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." 

The Leadership Pipeline

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.



What's the hype about leadership pipelines? Many books, blogs, and videos shed light on why a pipeline produces stronger organizations. There's a reason this application is catching so much attention right now; it combines proven leadership theories and application into one process. Militaries have long practiced this, with privates, sergeants, and lieutenants all training and being trained to become greater leaders like colonels and generals. As you begin to understand the leadership pipeline, note the steps

LEADERSHIP QUOTE

"The growth and development of people is the highest calling of leadership."

—Harvey S. Firestone

of the process. Sustaining effective leadership cannot be random, accidental, or haphazard. Do you have a development process in your church?

When you read about leadership, always apply it to wherever you are in your job, career, or church. If you are a volunteer, teacher, greeter, or staff member at church, the leadership pipeline helps develop you right now, where you are. Everyone should be somewhere in the pipeline developing simultaneously.

While people describe the pipeline in different ways, the basic concept prepares each person for the next step of leading while creating effectiveness in current areas. Just like sergeants prepare privates, teachers should cultivate more teachers. You are either developing or just floating! As you refine skills,

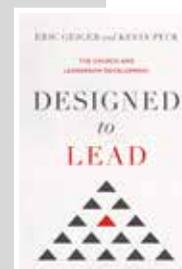
knowledge, and interaction with others, you will find opportunities to influence others, with or without a title. After leading others, especially people of diverse backgrounds and opinions, then you can lead other leaders. Everyone in the pipeline is learning, growing, and gaining more responsibility. When you can lead diverse leaders (people who do not always agree with others or you), then you can lead the organization.

Leadership pipelines provide a process for developing people. Ministry leaders for children, students, adults, and other areas want to develop people's passions and talents in one of their ministries. The pastor cultivates leaders to cultivate every other person in the ministry pipeline, which should be all people in the church. If you are not part of cultivating the flow of your leadership pipeline, you may have some "plumbing" issues.

RECOMMENDED BOOK

Designed to Lead: The Church and Leadership Development

By Eric Geiger and Kevin Peck



Volunteer? Or Volun-told?

BY TRAVIS MCKENZIE

“I didn’t volunteer, I was volun-told.” This was the response from the son of a local para-church ministry director when acknowledged for his involvement in that specific organization. I think this could be the cry of many children whose parents are actively involved in Christian ministry. Seriously though, for many of us, if it weren’t for the volunteer (and sometimes volun-told) service of our families, much of what we call ministry in our churches would not exist. Unfortunately, a spirit of apathy toward volunteer Christian service is spreading feverishly through many congregations in the American church. Many churchgoers consider church a “spectator-sport” without recognizing the urgent need for volunteers in ministry. I have been through many church business meetings in which volunteers called to serve in some capacity respond, “I’ll do it if nobody else will.”

I have often thought, “If this is our attitude toward ministry, we’d be much better off not doing that ministry at all!”

In Colossians 3, the Apostle Paul addressed the necessity of a sincere Christian attitude in the workplace. In verse 22, he exhorted Christian workers to obey their “masters,” or supervisors, “not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God.” Paul was addressing a level of dedication to our jobs that many today have forsaken. Then, in verse 23, he stated, “And

whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” In this verse, Paul reminded his readers that whatever an employer or “master” might require, they should perform those tasks with the same level of dedication they would give Christ Himself. I also see a broader application that includes any endeavor a Christian may undertake, especially volunteer ministry.

When recruiting ministry workers, I advise them not to take “ownership” of that ministry. Ownership often causes infighting that keeps us from accomplishing



any true service for the Lord's glory. When you "own" something, you want things done your way. It's human nature. Instead, as servants for the Lord, I encourage Christian workers to approach ministry with a sense of "stewardship," that is, caring for the belongings of someone else. In the case of Christian volunteers, it means pouring yourself into Christ's ministry, just as you would if He were constantly watching. And, by the way, He is!

A great need for faithful volunteers existed in the New Testament Church. Multiple examples of volunteers in various capacities can be found in the book of Acts. Paul described volunteers in detail and expressed thankfulness for their efforts in furthering his ministry throughout his writings, as did the Apostle John. Quite frankly, we all know that without an army of volunteers, ministry in our churches would go undone. Volunteers often carry out the important responsibilities of caring for and teaching children, performing maintenance and up-keep of facilities, meeting specific needs of the congregation, and, probably most important, carrying out the public ministry of the church through any form of community outreach.

In September 2017, the Lord graciously allowed us to launch Compassion FWB Church in Ashland, Ohio. As lead pastor of a North American Ministries church plant, I have felt the enormous weight of needing dedicated volunteers from day one. Thankfully, our ministry has been blessed with individuals who have felt a sense of urgency toward the ministry and have stepped up to become dedicated volunteers.

If a serving spirit is going to thrive in our churches, it must be exemplified by the lead pastor and spread throughout the entire congregation. As servants before

the Lord, no job is beneath us. And nothing is impossible for those fully relying on God for the increase. In Colossians 3:24, the Apostle Paul indicated if we are faithful to the Lord in our service we will receive the "reward of the inheritance." This, of course, refers to our reward of eternal life with God in Heaven. We will hear Him say, "Enter in, thou good and faithful servant."

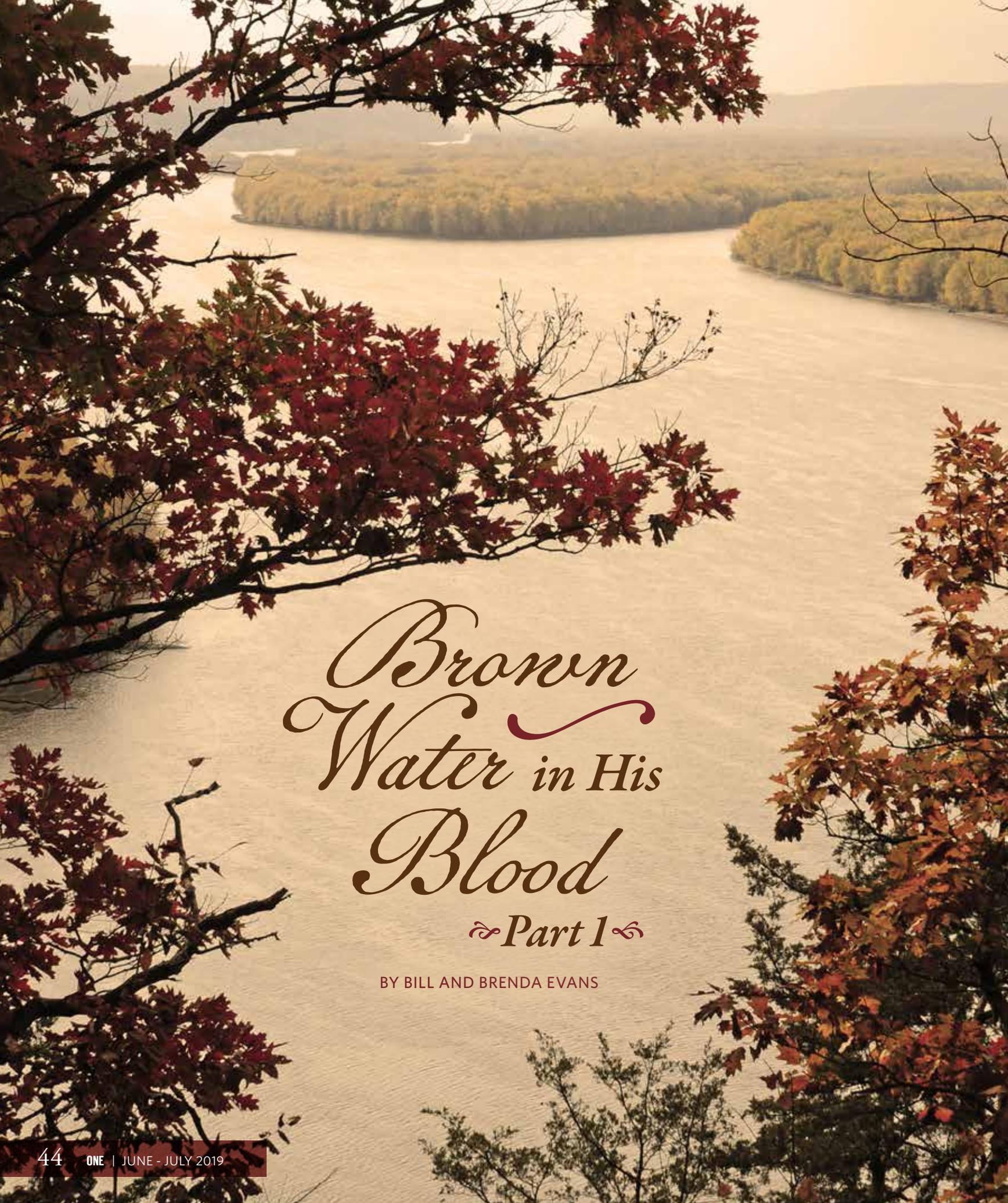
If I have learned anything after nearly 27 years of ministry, it's this: I can never expect anyone to demonstrate a greater level of dedication toward service than what I am willing to display myself. If we are going to change the trend of apathy among today's churchgoers and create an atmosphere of dedicated volunteer service among congregants, it must start with us.

Do we have all the dedicated volunteers we need at Compassion Church? Absolutely not! We are constantly praying for and recruiting volunteers who show a desire to serve the Lord. Those individuals who don't want to step up to take "stewardship" of a task or ministry are simply encouraged to participate and given ample opportunity to adopt this mindset.

Who knows, they just might see dedicated Christians in action and realize how rewarding serving God and others truly can be. If this happens, maybe they'll want to volunteer without being volun-told. **ONE**

About the Writer: Travis McKenzie is a church planter with North American Ministries in Ashland, Ohio: www.fwbnam.com





*Brown
Water in His
Blood*
~ Part 1 ~

BY BILL AND BRENDA EVANS

When you're born at the junction of two rivers, you might have brown water in your veins. At least David Smith does. As a child in Catlettsburg, Kentucky, his family's backyard butted up against the flood plain of the Big Sandy River where it emptied into the Ohio. He dreamed of riding the Ohio. By his senior year, David worked for the Merdie Boggs Company in their riverboat store. A year later, in 1974, he became a deck hand on a Boggs boat. Three years after that, he sat for the U.S. Coast Guard's pilot's exam, passed, and got his steerman's license, a one-year permit of sorts. The next year he became a certified riverboat pilot. He's ridden brown water since.

Early on, David piloted and captained 20 years for Ashland Oil, hauling petrochemicals from Ashland, Kentucky, to New Orleans. Today, he is owner of River Marine Enterprises, LLC, based in Paducah, Kentucky, now the hub of riverboat traffic for the Ohio, Tennessee, Upper and Lower Mississippi, and Missouri rivers.

In short, David is a riverman. For 45 years, brown water has been the road he travels. Recently, his brown-water haunt has been the Missouri, the longest river in North America. For 2,341 miles, the Missouri lives up to its other names—Mighty Mo and Big Muddy. In the early 1900s, George Fitch, a Midwestern newspaperman, said the Big Muddy has a personality, a sense of humor, and a woman's fickleness: "It plays hide and seek with you today and tomorrow follows you around like a pet dog with a dynamite cracker tied to his tail." David knows the Missouri. As owner, captain, and pilot of towboats, he studies its personality, its moods, and the people who dare ply its brown water.

The first thing you learn in a conversation with David is what you don't know about rivers, rivercraft, and the brown water "rules of the road." He shows you a 220-page Coast Guard book the crew lives and works by. You learn *brown water* refers to navigable rivers while *blue water* describes oceans, and you scan dozens of complex rules of navigation to live by. The second thing you learn from David is he loves rivers; the third is he loves people, and that people come first.

Five family members have worked the river. His grandmother was a cook on a towboat. "She was up at four, had breakfast ready at 5:30, then lunch and dinner, in

bed by seven. On the river, you eat fast. You have 30 minutes, but you eat in 15, rest a minute, go to bathroom, then back to work," David said.

For three generations, the river has been in his family's blood. "Dad was an engineer. He kept towboats running. He was on the river until three weeks before he died at 75—wouldn't quit." David and his two brothers have worked in various positions, as well. His brother Greg died on a river, doing a favor for a friend. "The towboat sank fast. He was trapped in the pilothouse. But when all five of us were together for family dinners, the conversation always turned to the river. That's just how it was," he said.

A boat's crew is important. "Towboats move on the backs of the deck crew," David says. Deckhands have the hardest jobs, physically, and the most dangerous. They "build tow," lashing together the towboat and up to 15 barges with one-inch steel cables called face wires and wing wires. Towboats are pusher-craft with square bows equipped with hard rubber "knees" that push against the barges themselves. A usual tow is three barges "breasted up," side by side, and five barges long. Sometimes, deckhands lash hip barges to the side of the towboat. They work the wires and pumps, drop and pick up barges, clean barges, and stand watch with extra eyes and ears for the pilot, captain, and engineer.

"Making lock" is a duty-heavy job for deckhands and a challenge for a pilot who pushes 15 barges—five long and three wide—through the lock's chamber with just over two feet of clearance on either side. The chamber of a typical lock like the Greenup Lock and Dam on the

Ohio is 1,200 feet long and 110 feet wide. A towboat with its barges is usually just under that size—1,100 feet long and 105 feet wide. For a pilot, making lock is like pushing a 1,100-foot metal thread, weighing 25,000 tons, through the eye of a needle barely wide enough to ease through. All hands on deck! No room for mistakes.

Besides locks, a pilot has to know and read the river and his boat, have good depth perception, not be color-blind, and stay extremely alert to drift (debris), channel markers, other boats. “Every time a pilot moves any one of the four steering levers, he makes a multimillion-dollar decision about the towboat, 15 barges, and the cargo he is pushing,” David says. Piloting is a weighty job, one David hasn’t given up yet, despite his responsibility as owner and captain.

“A line-haul towboat that runs the length of the river becomes your world. Your crew is like a family. You have to get along. I usually run with a seven-member crew: four deckhands; an engineer who keeps all equipment, propulsion, and machinery working; a pilot; and me. No cook. Crews typically do that for themselves now days. Several members of my crew have been with me for years. Most are on 28 days, off 28. Deckhands like 28 on and 12 off because of more pay.”

The crew’s 24-hour schedule is six hours on, six off around the clock. “I usually stand forward watch so I’m on at six, off at noon. Then I’m on again for after watch at six and off at midnight. Finally, I shower and go to bed. I wake up around five and spend time in my duct-taped Bible, *Daily Bread*, *My Utmost for His Highest*, or sometimes Chuck Swindoll on Facebook. I have a quick breakfast and am on again at six for the next 24-hour cycle.”

David was saved at 15, but he grieved the Holy Spirit for years, he says. In his late 20s he went to a revival in Ashland, Kentucky. Milton and Melvin Worthington were the evangelists. Ed Cook was pastor. “I planned to

just go one night—no more—but went back every night and haven’t quit.”

Thirty-one years ago, he married Chariot. “It’s good to be equally yoked. I was on the river before we got married, so she knew what she was getting into. She goes on the right path, is self-sufficient. Once this past year, when I was gone four months, she didn’t complain. She prays, helps me grow spiritually in the tough times.”

Getting along with people is high on David’s list. “But,” he says, “sometimes, I have to exercise my captain’s voice.” He grinned when he said “exercise” and told a story. He was captain of *The Ashland*, Ashland Oil’s premier towboat that pushed petrochemicals down the Ohio into the Lower Mississippi and on to New Orleans.

“It was blatant stupidity on the boy’s part. He was a young deckhand and could have got himself killed. He was working on face and wing wires in the dark, which I’d told him never to do. I saw movement in the corner of my eye and gave him a terrible chewing out. If he had gone overboard, I might never have seen it happen, never seen him again. The crew saw my temper, and once was enough.”

In 45 years, David has never lost a life, a towboat, or a barge. Among the worst accidents aboard his towboat was his own. “I walked across the deck with both hands full, tripped, hit my head on the capstan. Ripped my jeans. Broke my nose. Scared the crew. ‘Right now, right now,’ one deck crew kept yelling for help. Looked like I’d been in a bar fight and lost. Took 24 stitches. What I learned was not to go around on a boat with both hands full. So I don’t!”

(In *Part Two*, David will talk about running a marine business, Christian friendship, the technology of river travel, his barbershop choir, and more.) **ONE**

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

A LINE-HAUL
TOWBOAT
THAT RUNS THE
LENGTH OF THE
RIVER BECOMES
YOUR WORLD.
YOUR CREW IS
LIKE A FAMILY.



Giving to the Lord

BY CHRIS COMPTON

Have you ever started something but never finished or followed through? An exercise routine, diet, home project, or date night with your spouse? I know I have. I have enthusiastically started many new workouts or exercise routines only to falter shortly thereafter. Sound familiar? It is easy to start something. Keeping it going is another story. We allow so many things to distract us or derail us from our goals, even when we know they are good for us. This is not only true of physical things but spiritual as well.

Christians know spiritual disciplines are a good thing. Practicing them leads to growth, godliness, and renewed faith. They are just as easy to get started but the continued exercise of them is much harder. Sometimes we resist them. Other times we allow stumbling blocks to get us off course.

Of all the spiritual disciplines, the one many Christians give up on easily or avoid altogether is tithing. Tithing is simply giving the first 10% of your income back to God. It is intended to be a blessing, not a burden; an act of obedience, not drudgery. Yet, tithing creates a great deal of anxiety for many people, especially those facing financial difficulties.

Many wonder if they should continue to tithe when they have mounting financial pressures, debts to pay, or certain financial goals. I get tempted. I have faced it too. We desire to use all of our “leftover” income to relieve financial pressures or get to our goals quicker. We know God commands us to pay our debts and bills, and we don’t want to falter there. So, we surmise it seems logical to abandon tithing for a time.

Before you consider hitting the brakes on tithing, consider a few important things. Tithing is not for God; it is for us. God doesn’t need our tithe; *we* need our tithe. Tithing is an act of obedience to God’s command. It brings blessing and joy. It also helps create contentment in our heart and keeps God first place in our lives.

The Bible clearly teaches us to give, but it never teaches us to stop giving. There are no opt-out clauses. We give because God first gave to us. And He continues to give to us. He is our never-changing pattern. To grow and become more like God, we have to be a giver like God.

Many who stop giving end up in a worse financial situation. Those who continue to give joyfully from a content heart often find themselves more blessed than ever. I have learned it is more blessed to give. Every time I have been tempted to halt my giving for a time, I continued to tithe, and God continued to bless and provide for me in remarkable ways.

I can’t explain it all, but I can tell you God is good. He is worthy of my trust. And no matter what, I will continue to give joyfully because He gave so much to me. **ONE**

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

Health Care: Retirement Budget Buster?

BY JOHN BRUMMITT



Retirement is generally expected to be the period of life when *you* get to decide what you want to do and when—a time of freedom and relaxation dedicated to one’s personal mission, ministry, or hobby. Retirement is a well-earned respite from the day-to-day grind of full-time employment. Even though most retirees and future retirees dream of being able to budget more time and financial resources to the things they want to do, we all need to know about one big retirement budget buster: health care.

The average retired couple can expect to spend \$260,000 from age 65 until death, according to a study by Fidelity Investments. Of course, the best way to help manage these rising costs of health care is to live a healthy lifestyle with quality food in sensible portions and regular exercise. Your level of health risk is one of the leading drivers of increased health care expenses. Start now, or keep up the healthy eating and lifestyle to improve your health risk factors.

Even with a healthy lifestyle, it can be hard to determine medical expenses during retirement, especially as life expectancy has increased over the last several decades. (Although the last couple of years have indicated a slight decline in the U.S.) Many people are outliving their retirement nest eggs, due to the increasing health-related costs due to aging.

When individuals reach full-retirement age, as defined by the Social Security Administration, retirees can expect some assistance with health plan premiums from the Medicare program. According to Medicare.gov, in 2017, the average annual out-of-pocket health care costs totaled \$7,600 for healthy individuals. Medicare offers a few levels of coverage options with numerous supplemental add-on plans available in the marketplace to fill in the gaps in coverage. A couple of factors affect Medicare premiums: level of retirement income and location. If

THE KEY IS
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you have a sizeable retirement fund at your disposal, you should expect to pay more for the government-subsidized plans. Location is also a factor in your monthly Medicare premium. As cost of living varies in different locations around the country, so do Medicare premiums.

Every retiree's situation is unique, and the same is true for health and related expenses during the golden years. When planning and saving for retirement, keep health care concerns and projected costs top of mind. As one ages, increasing medical expenses may be offset by declining expenditures in other areas. However, four of five American workers have not calculated health care needs in retirement, according to a 2018 survey conducted by the Employee Benefit Research Institute and Greenwald & Associates. The key is to *plan* for expenses and consider ways to meet them *before* they are incurred.

Some health care costs can be controlled; others cannot. The areas we can control start with a healthy lifestyle well before retirement age. Another way to help with future medical costs are tax-advantaged Health Savings Accounts (HSAs) for those who are eligible. Only *you* know what's best for your personal health. Own it, and enjoy your future ministry. **ONE**

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



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2019 Scope and Sequence

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Week 2 - The Impact of Choices

Week 3 - Humbly Obeying God's Word

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Boost Their Confidence

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Confidence is a very important thing and hard to keep balanced. When a person is overconfident, he or she can seem arrogant. Lack of confidence can lead to inaction. Confidence (or a lack of confidence) also can affect a ministry. When people are confident in a ministry, they are more likely to contribute and become involved in the work of the ministry. On the other hand, when people lack confidence in a ministry, it can lead to downward spiral when people stop contributing to the ministry and become less involved in its work.

Many times, an “I believe in you” affirmation from someone a person respects can make all the difference in the world. It can boost the individual’s confidence to a level he or she performs well and the expressed belief in them becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The same is true for ministries.

Over the last two years, Free Will Baptist Foundation has granted \$1 million to 32 ministries and projects. These grants have generated confidence and enthusiasm for these ministries. In many cases, giving from individ-



uals and churches has increased, allowing the ministries to do even more than their grant intended. This has been especially true for several smaller ministries that received modest grants. The fact that the grant committee expressed confidence in their particular ministry or project inspired confidence from their regular contributors, who in turn, made a stronger commitment to the ministry.

Sometimes, an “impossible” project becomes possible when

a ministry receives a significant amount of money. The regular donors begin to see the previously “impossible” project as a real possibility. This has been the most gratifying aspect of the grant program.

We have seen youth camps that struggled to expand for years receive a grant, and suddenly the rest of the necessary expansion funds begin to appear. A grant to the Women of Good News in Ivory Coast inspired not only the women of that country but the entire Ivorian Free Will Baptist movement. When ministries receive a grant, it is the equivalent of saying, “I believe in you and what you are doing.” This ignites the confidence of everyone involved in that ministry.

The Foundation staff hopes and prays the next round of grants will continue to ignite confidence in our ministries when they are awarded. **ONE**

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

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Tuesday's **Buck-A-Week** Offering at the VIII Conference will support the Hamptons, church planters in Missoula, Montana, and the Torrissions in Montevideo, Uruguay. Are you up to the challenge?



Pick up your copy of the revised **2020-21 CTS Ministry Expo Guidelines** during the VIII Conference and CTS Expo. Digital Guidelines will also be available for purchase on Firebox. **Please note if you are a current Firebox subscriber and wish to access the new Guidelines you will need to re-subscribe at the conclusion of the Vertical Three Conference.**

Outcast BMX stunt riders will be in the Duke Energy Convention Center on Tuesday evening at 9:00 PM!

These riders have been featured on Red Bull Action Sports Tour, X-Games, ESPN, and the cover of *Ride BMX* magazine. Their backflips, superman seat grabs, and other jaw-dropping stunts are guaranteed to grab your attention—and their life changing testimonies will keep it. Get your tickets online today at bit.ly/v32019bmx and don't miss special group rates online only!



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Ten Years Later

BY RYAN LEWIS, CONVENTION MANAGER



Over the past decade, the Free Will Baptist National Convention has experienced many changes and quietly achieved a number of significant milestones. The ONE Magazine staff recently asked Ryan Lewis, convention manager, to reflect upon his first ten years of meeting planning. His role provides a unique perspective on the changes taking place.

Perhaps a more daunting task than recognizing where we've been is figuring out where we're going. The past ten years have been a whirlwind for the convention, bringing numerous changes, both tangible and lasting. Live streaming of the convention services, which began in 2010, has expanded to include Spanish translation and business reports. A joint partnership with the Media Commission allows viewers around the world to "virtually" participate in convention worship. An archive of convention services and business reports is available online at www.nafwb.org/media.

Live streaming also prompted a "Text to Give" option starting in 2017, allowing those who enjoy the stream to contribute to offset the costs involved. On Wednesday night, viewers additionally have the opportunity to give to Free Will Baptist missions. During the last two years, this text-to-give option has led to offerings surpassing those of years past.

Seminars have become a vital part of every convention schedule. Through the ENGAGE seminar series and sessions led by national departments and commissions, educational opportunities are offered daily to pastors, laypersons, and students to enhance the convention experience, expand opportunities for growth, and equip attendees for ministry.

While attendance numbers are not what they were in decades past, I believe participation (and interest) in the convention is growing. Change doesn't always come quickly or easily, but good things can come from it. Today, young people and their families experience convention benefits beyond freebies in the exhibit hall. The convention offers time for renewed fellowship, unity,

and encouragement—a yearly reminder we can accomplish so much more together.

Pastor Daniel Edwards noted recently about our denomination, "We are beginning to see that what unites us is not methods or traditions but doctrine and mission." That is never more clearly on display than when 4,500 Free Will Baptists gather for the annual meeting.

This year's convention in Cincinnati will look different than it did ten years ago. All convention events will be under one roof, services will be broadcast live on the Internet in two languages, the social media presence (hashtag #NAFWB) will be greater, and registration lines will be shorter (thanks to 70% of attendees who now pre-register, mostly online).

The impact we leave on the host city, however, should remain the same. Through Impact Cincinnati and Serve the City, Free Will Baptist contributions to the city reach beyond business sessions and worship services into the community. Interactions with volunteers, staff, and employees of the city and its partners should provide a clear testimony of the One we ultimately represent. And, when it comes to our gratuities (for which Christians have a bad reputation), our generosity should reflect the blessings we have received.

I pray our spirit of unity will be on full display. What unites us is far more critical to the Kingdom than things that divide us. May we worship, encourage, learn, and debate with a spirit that reveals our commitment to our doctrine and mission. In doing so, we can leave a positive impact and create a lasting legacy. On that, we can all agree! 

A Decade of Convention Milestones

- 2009:** Ryan Lewis becomes convention manager
- 2010:** IM celebrates 75 years; live streaming begins
- 2011:** National Association celebrates 75 years; *Free Will Baptist Convention sermons* published; “Honoring Our Heritage” documentary released
- 2012:** Randall House celebrates 50 years of publishing; Leroy Forlines honored for 50 years as chairman of the Commission for Theological Integrity; *Convention Digest* and *Program* offered in digital form
- 2013:** Long-time convention staffers, Dari and Sandy Goodfellow and Mike and Sherry Anderson honored for their work; Historical Commission announces new digital archives: fwbhistory.com
- 2014:** WNAC becomes a national department; Master’s Men merges with North American Ministries; local church delegate fee discontinued
- 2015:** Hotel reservations offered online; Free Will Foundation introduces grant program
- 2016:** Live streaming of business sessions begins; Check-ins for a Cause underwrites Bibles for Kazakhstan; police security added
- 2017:** Welch College celebrates 75 years; NYC (National Youth Conference) changed to VIII (Vertical Three Conference); live streaming in Spanish begins
- 2018:** North American Ministries celebrates 75 years; Executive Secretary Keith Burden announces 2019 retirement; Historical Commission honors Dr. Robert E. Picirilli for 45 years as curator of the Historical Collection

Brewers Honored for Decades of Service



Bonner Springs, Kansas—The Kansas State Association of Free Will Baptists honored Jim and Donna Brewer for 40 years of service, Friday, April 26, during the association’s annual meeting. “Jim and Donna Brewer have been wonderful overseers of the state work in Kansas,” said Christian Education Board chairwoman Charlotte Brooks. “Without their sacrificial efforts, this association would look much different.”

The Brewers have been involved in the Kansas state work since 1977. Jim has served as state clerk for 40 years, a member of the Christian Education Board for 38 years, state camp director, and state treasurer. “Truthfully, it would be easier to list the things Jim hasn’t done in our state than the things he has,” said Janet Warden, who will follow Jim in the role of state clerk. Jim and Donna have been an effective team, she notes, as “Donna has worked right alongside Jim. Over the years, she served as assistant clerk and as a member of every committee known to man!”

Following the presentation, Jim reflected on his work: “You never really stop and think about what you are doing, or how long you have been doing it. Suddenly, one day, you realize the years have added up. I am so grateful to Kansas for giving me an opportunity to serve. It has been my honor.”

“I can’t express how much this couple means to me and to Kansas,” reflected Kansas Moderator Zane Brooks. “Few people have more impact on their state. I can’t imagine where we would be without them, and we are grateful.”

A Layman's Legacy

BY KEITH BURDEN

His name is Dennis. He will probably blush with embarrassment when he reads this column because he is a modest, humble man. The information I am about to share may appear a gross exaggeration; however, I can attest to its truthfulness.

Dennis is a lifelong resident of the little community where he was born and raised. As a young man he honorably served his country as a soldier in the United States military. After his stint in the armed forces, he went on to become a successful and highly respected businessman. Despite the demands of a growing business, he managed to find time to serve as a member of the city's volunteer fire department.

God blessed Dennis with a velvety, smooth voice. Besides serving as the long-time church song leader he also sang lead in a trio. That gifted little group sang at untold revival meetings and funeral services.

For many years, he dutifully served as the treasurer of the local church where he was a member. He burned gallons of midnight oil paying bills and balancing the church checkbook. This man was

more than a mere custodian of church finances. He led by example as he generously supported his church and denominational ministries at every level.

Additionally, he shouldered the weight and responsibility of leadership by serving as a deacon. He met every biblical qualification of that office and was held in high esteem by his peers. He bore eloquent testimony of his faith in Christ. With his lips and life he consistently shared the gospel with others. Many will be in Heaven as a result of his witness.

Years ago, when the church was engaged in a major relocation campaign, Dennis donned his overalls and spent extended periods of time helping with the construction of the new facility. His labor of love helped the church avoid accumulating a significant amount of indebtedness.

Dennis' family is a major component of his legacy. His wife Marguerite fulfilled the role of church matriarch with dignity and grace before her untimely death. He is the father of four exceptional children. Each is uniquely gifted and has made a valuable contribution to the Kingdom of God.

Now advanced in years, his steps are noticeably slower and his strength considerably diminished. Although his eyesight has dimmed and his hearing is virtually gone, he continues to attend worship services each Lord's Day. Though Dennis cannot hear what is being said much of the time, his presence speaks volumes regarding his faith and commitment to Jesus Christ.

Scores of devoted laymen like Dennis occupy the pews of our churches each week. These men and women are the bedrock upon which the foundation of our denomination rests. Thank God for the legacy they are leaving us to follow.



Keith Burden, CMP
Executive Secretary
National Association of
Free Will Baptists

Lend your voice!

The Music Commission invites anyone age 15+ to participate in the convention choir and orchestra in Cincinnati, Ohio, this July. You will enjoy worshipping with Free Will Baptists from across the nation! If you'd like to be involved, or have questions, email us: music@nafwb.org. You can also connect with us on Facebook to hear previews of this year's music: facebook.com/fwbmusiccommission.

We look forward to worshipping with YOU this summer.

For more information about the National Association of Free Will Baptists, visit: www.nafwb.org



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