

ONE LORD ONE VOICE ONE VISION

ONE

magazine

JUNE - JULY • 2023

All Together Now!

Free Soloing

Best Supporting Actor

From Salem to Sneads

The Bible and Gender

God of Promises

*Facts About
Feelings*

She Needed a **Horse!**

New England Freewill Baptist **Sarah (Sally) Parsons** gave her life to Christ in 1792. Within five years, she had become well-known, traveling regularly across the region to speak in churches and meeting houses. With this in mind, the New Durham Yearly Meeting received an offering in 1797 to buy Sally a horse, saddle, and bridle, so she could travel, exhort, and pray. When Sally married Benjamin W. Randall (son of Benjamin Randall, the denomination's founder), the Yearly Meeting gave her the horse and tack as a wedding gift. Sally's work proved inspirational to the women who later founded the Woman's Missionary Society.

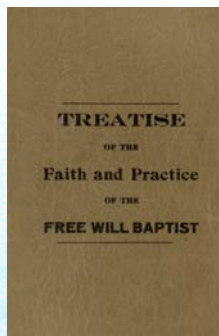
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Treatise of the Faith and Practice of the Free Will Baptist (1935)

Provides a historical look at the foundation for the beliefs and practices of Free Will Baptist churches. Royalties will be contributed to The Together Way Trust.

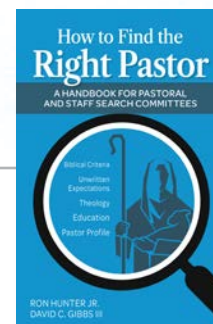


A View From Joy's Window

Seven Reasons to Be Joyful

by Neil Gilliland, Ph.D.

While reinforcing the truth that our joy is grounded in the person of Jesus Christ, this book offers a joyful perspective in light of the world's social, political, financial, and religious landscape.



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by Ron Hunter Jr. and David C. Gibbs III

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Available at www.randallhouse.com

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

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From the Editor: Regrettably, Mrs. Virginia Cheshier was omitted from her husband Carl's obituary (April-May, page 61). Our deepest apologies for this oversight.

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Just Okay?

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

**"Thank you, Preacher.
That was...well,
it was okay."**

I couldn't help but smile at his honesty, so different from all the "Great jobs" and "What a good sermons" I had heard up to that point.

"Just okay?" I replied with a grin.

He ducked his head, embarrassed. "I didn't mean anything bad by that. I just..." His voice trailed off.

"No offense taken. Really! Just glad you were here tonight."

As he passed through the back doors of the church, I smiled again, this time ruefully. Better than anyone in attendance, I *knew* the sermon was "just okay," and that was being generous. I struggled to deliver every word. It wasn't the text I wanted to share. It didn't "feel" like a revival sermon. But God had turned my attention to James 3:2-12 time and again. Compelled to speak from that text, I gave it my best shot.

Obviously, he listened. You see, the sermon was about our *words* as believers (including a healthy emphasis on honesty).

I'm not sure I recall a time when words held such power. In this politically correct, social media-driven world where our lives are lived and spoken publicly for all to see, a single sentence can bring down a company or cause someone to lose a job or get "canceled." Worse yet, words can tear a family or church apart. Words have been weaponized and sharpened, and when released like deadly arrows, they hold immense power.

That's why James' three simple reminders about speech are so important for Christians today to hear and apply.

Little words aren't so little (James 3:3-5). Have you ever stopped to consider how much small words (four letters

or less) shape our lives? *Yes or no. I do or I don't. Stop! Go!* James used simple illustrations to demonstrate the power of small words: a horse's bit, a ship's rudder, and fire—small things that make a profound difference for good or bad. Thankfully, as Christians, we have the Holy Spirit to help us guard small words with His quiet nudges that remind us to "think twice and talk once" (James 1:18).

Little words carry lasting impact (James 3:6). Like a pebble tossed into a still pond, our words create an ever-widening ripple. We never know how far they may travel. Where will our ripples end? This is especially important for parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, pastors, Sunday School teachers, youth workers, and teachers. The next generation will follow our lead and model their speech on what we say, and how we say it.

Our words should be consistent with our "walk" (James 8-12), an accurate barometer of our relationship with Christ. We should *speak* our faith, and then *live* out that faith. How do we do this? James makes three suggestions:

1. Recognize our inability to control our words and surrender fully to the Holy Spirit's leading (verse 8).
2. Talk to others remembering they are made in the image of God (verse 9), with all the respect that demands.
3. Be consistent in our speech (verses 9-12) as befits a Christian: blessing not cursing; sweet not bitter; producing the fruit of the Spirit rather than wallowing in the weakness of the flesh.

Day by day, hour by hour, our words write the book of our lives for others to read, especially those closest to us. Think of your words like a "you-choose-the-ending" story. What will your chapter say tomorrow?

Listen to the Spirit. Talk to others with respect. Make your speech and your life consistently reflect your walk with God. You will have greater impact on everyone around you. **ONE**

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

Update on Fort Myers Church Hit by Hurricane Ian



Portillo Family

Two years ago, I started a church with my wife and church leaders in the living room of our house. For the glory of God, it has been a privilege to serve and grow together in the Word of God. It is our vision to plant Free Will Baptist churches in Southwest Florida and expand the gospel in this area, not only in Spanish but in English as well. We want to build a church in Fort Myers, Florida, that reaches many families, and in turn, takes missionary trips in the United States and around the world. We ask for your prayers as we build our church.

On September 28, 2022, Hurricane Ian hit our community. I immediately requested an emergency response from Free Will Baptists. I am grateful for the quick response of many brothers and sisters from Free Will Baptist churches in

Kentucky and Georgia, along with churches from Pensacola, Florida; Jacksonville, Florida; and many other churches from South Florida. With their help, we were able to help many families who lost everything. We thank each of the churches for being part of this calling to help our community in this hard time.

Since the hurricane hit our community, God placed a burden in our hearts to help in the recovery of people who need not only material things, but also spiritual help. Thanks to Pastor Rufo Gomez, Rick Bowling, and Sam McVay for helping us put together all of this amazing help. We thank the Lord for their lives as they have been a part of our ministry, providing help and guidance. We are thankful to everyone who was part of it. **ONE**

From Pastor Joel Portillo and family

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FREE SOLOING

BY ANNA FORLINES KOZYUTYNSKA

Recently, the Lord opened an opportunity for me to live in Hidalgo, Mexico, and partner in a coffee shop ministry. El Buho Café is adjacent to a world-famous rock climbing destination, the infamous El Potrero Chico. Those of us working in the coffee shop met rock climbers from all over the world and shared our testimonies and the love of Jesus, all while financially supporting a nearby village school.

During this unforgettable time, I learned a great deal about rock climbing. The sport is inherently dangerous. Climbing smart is a must. While suspended hundreds of feet in the air, reliable gear and a reliable partner are crucial to hold you securely to the wall. Potrero Chico has some massive climbing routes. The tallest cliff face in the park is 2,300 feet. To put that into perspective, the Empire State Building is only 1,454 feet from bottom to tippy-top.

Now, imagine a wall nearly a thousand feet taller than the one in Potrero Chico: El Capitan in Yosemite National Park. A famous climber named Alex Honnold climbed it in 2017 with *no* gear, *no* safety precautions, and *no* partner. During his ascent, it literally was Alex, the rock, a chalk bag, and thousands of feet beneath him. One wrong move and he was done. Just crazy sauce!

A National Geographic documentary followed Honnold's harrowing four-hour ascent and the years of preparation that went into the climb. The resulting film won an Academy Award and became the highest grossing National Geographic documentary of all time.

This popular and fast-growing sport is called free soloing. And if it sounds terrifying, it is. The eventual death rate for

free-solo climbers has been estimated to be as high as 80-90%. They may climb safely for years, but one slip can be fatal.

“I CAN DO IT MYSELF.”

Why in the world would anyone ever think that? Though I have never tried free solo climbing, I often walk through life with a free solo attitude. I try to free solo through to-do lists, struggles with sin, past hurts and failures, future decisions, sadness, and pain. Like a free solo climber, I think, “I’ve got this. I can do it on my own.”

Catch this. *The success rate of trying to free solo through life is zero.* God knows this. From the beginning, He created us to walk in community, sharing our struggles, temptations, and blessings, encouraging one another along the way. He has given us His safety manual, the Bible, to guide us in His routes of righteousness. He even promises to equip us with safety gear—His armor—to protect us from our own evil desires and the constant attacks of the enemy. As Christians, the best news is we are never alone. He has given us the great Comforter, His Spirit, to lead and guide every step of the way.

Our culture encourages a self-reliant, do-it-yourself mindset, but this toddler-like attitude only leaves us isolated, anxious, struggling, and lonely. Why? When we try to do things on our own, we push away the crucial help offered by God and others. And when we push away these helping hands, we suffer.

Our culture encourages a self-reliant, do-it-yourself mindset, but this toddler-like attitude only leaves us isolated, anxious, struggling, and lonely. Why?



FOUR WAYS TO AVOID FREE SOLOING

- **Find accountability.** Determine who can share everything in your life. Leave nothing in “dark corners.” We cannot expect to navigate all of life’s temptations alone.

- **Share the gospel.** Your testimony, Scripture, music. Use every opportunity to point others to Jesus.

- **Be open to correction.** I have so much pride; it is a true work of the Spirit to be able to receive advice and correction. But to keep from wicked ways, we must invite others into our life who will help, encourage, advise, and correct us when we are wrong.

- **Continually pray for wisdom and consult His Word.** All wisdom comes from God, and His Word and His Spirit lead us in to righteousness.

We especially find God’s help in three areas. First, **God’s love is the only love that can truly and eternally fill us.** He loves us greater, deeper, and stronger than anyone or anything else ever can. He is the only One who can fill the God-sized hole in our hearts.

Second, **our worth is found in God alone.** He created us, is our perfect Father, and sees us as treasured children. He is the only One who provides true and eternal worth.

Third, **God is our authority.** Every action should be in obedience to Him. When I have a do-it-myself attitude, I view myself as my own boss to decide what is right and wrong. This attitude is so dangerous. Only God is perfect. Only His instructions are perfect. Only His love is perfect. Only God has the perfect plan for our lives.

Do you ever find yourself “looking for love in all the wrong places”? Have you tried to create your own sense of worth? Do you seek your own desires over what God wants for you? I struggle with this, too. You are not alone in the fight against a free solo attitude. But free soloing through life leaves you exposed to danger and loneliness. In contrast, walking with God and leaning on His grace bring the greatest freedom. The joy and peace that comes from leaning into God rather than relying on self are worth the surrender.

In addition to harming our relationship with God, free soloing can also destroy relationships with other people. It sometimes results in a spirit of rebellion towards authority. At all ages, but especially in our younger years, an attitude of disobedience and defiance creates a slippery slope to destruction.


Free soloing also can produce a spirit of unforgiveness. Everyone has a different story. Some are deeply wounded by abuse while others were betrayed by a loved one, broken by addiction, abandoned by a family member, or faced with the heartache of divorce. Even if you do not find yourself in one of these situations, *everyone* experiences deep hurts needing forgiveness and healing. Free soloing leads to bitterness, but forgiveness leads to freedom.

Free soloing isolates us from true friendship. We desperately need close friends in our lives with whom we can share our struggles with sin, pray, and reveal deepest secrets. Often, these friends are found in the Christian family, but free soloing also isolates us from the church. This is especially dangerous because our Christian family is meant to encourage us and hold us accountable.

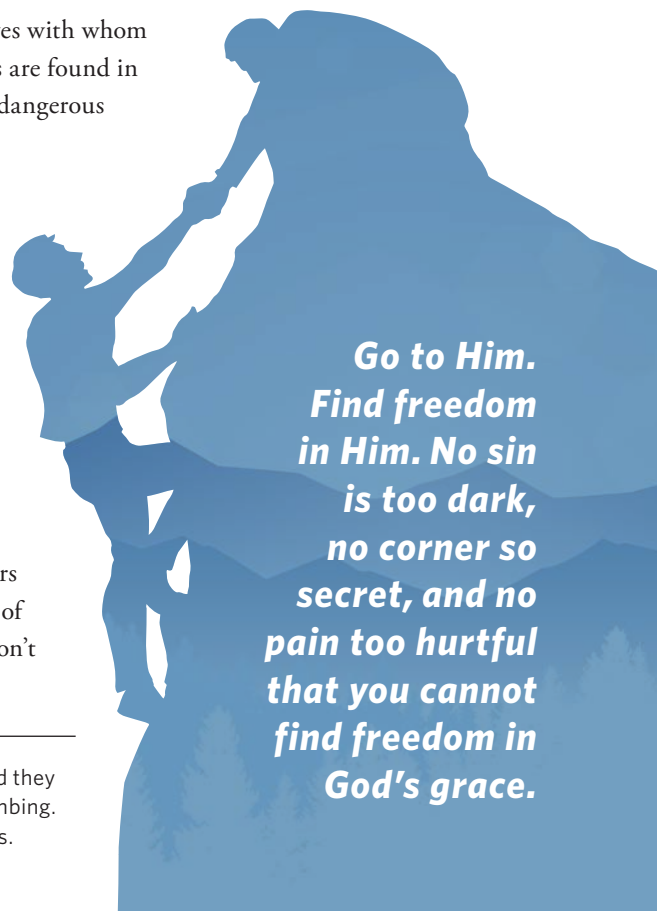
So, find a mentor. Meet regularly. Share what is on your heart.

This requires openness, vulnerability. Free soloing keeps us from this blessing. When we allow ourselves to be open with trusted mentors and friends, we can experience the beauty of what it truly means to walk in community within our church.

Finally, free soloing isolates us from ministry opportunities. It is selfish; it keeps the focus on self when there's a whole world out there aching with needs and desires only Jesus can fill. We have an amazing opportunity to serve others and point people to Jesus. It's time to stop free soloing and return to living in community with those the Lord has placed in our lives.

According to popular rock climbing website 99boulders.com, approximately 250 climbers have fallen to their deaths since Alex Honnold conquered El Capitan in 2017. The sport of climbing is dangerous enough, but trying to free solo through life also can be deadly. Don't become another statistic! 

About the Author: Anna (Forlines) Kozyutynskyi lives in Nashville with her husband, Vlady, and they recently welcomed a baby boy. She enjoys nature and outdoor activities like hiking and rock climbing. Her passion is to share the importance of openness and freedom that can only be found in Jesus.



*Go to Him.
Find freedom
in Him. No sin
is too dark,
no corner so
secret, and no
pain too hurtful
that you cannot
find freedom in
God's grace.*



Shine

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Dirty Feet

During the American Revolution, a man in civilian clothes rode past a group of soldiers repairing a defensive barrier. Their leader was shouting instructions at them but making no attempt to help them. When the rider asked why he didn't help, he retorted with great dignity, "Sir, I am a corporal!"

The stranger apologized, dismounted, and proceeded to help the working men. When the job was completed, he turned to the pompous corporal and said, "Mr. Corporal, next time you have a job like this and not enough men to do it, send word to your commander-in-chief, and I will come and help you again."

You see, the rider was none other than George Washington.

The disciples of Jesus, including Peter, often had the attitude of the corporal rather than the attitude of George Washington.

In John 13, we find one of the most memorable incidents in the Bible. It was the night before Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion. It was an intense time in Jesus' life. His public ministry had ended, and He had turned His full attention to His disciples. Jesus had sent Peter and John to prepare their Passover meal. The food had been prepared. The table had been set, and I'm sure the disciples thought everything was ready. But it wasn't!

In the culture of Jesus' day, it was a common courtesy to have a servant stationed at the door to wash the dust from guests' feet when they arrived. The practice was necessary because people wore sandals and did most of their traveling on foot. Imagine the situation: Jesus and the disciples entered the house,

but no one was there to wash their feet. Perhaps they paused momentarily, wondering why Peter and John had "dropped the ball" regarding this important detail. Reclining at the table, maybe each disciple felt uncomfortable, grimy, dusty, and unwashed. They saw the basin and towel in the corner, but that is where they remained.

Perhaps one or more of the disciples thought, "Somebody ought to *at least* wash Jesus' feet. But if I do it, where will that put me on the social pecking order? All the way at the bottom. If I volunteer, I might get stuck with the job from now on. Maybe if I just wait, somebody else will do it."

If you've been in church very long, you know that kind of thinking occurs. The awkward moment set the scene for Jesus to impart three important truths to His disciples.

A MODEL to FOLLOW

Jesus saw the need. Unlike the disciples, He did something about it. He did not lecture His disciples about serving others but chose to provide His own living example. What do the actions of Jesus teach us about serving others?

Verse 4 tells us He rose from supper. Serving others sometimes means doing things we may not desire to do, or that may be uncomfortable for us. Jesus rose from the table when He could have remained reclining in comfort.

Sometimes—okay, most days—when the alarm sounds in the morning, I simply want to roll over and go back to sleep. But I must get up and get moving—the first step in serving others. To serve, we must be willing to be uncomfortable.

Verse 4 also says Jesus laid aside His garments. Serving others usually requires denying self, laying something aside. Our lives are full of activities. To add a service for someone usually means we must subtract another activity, perhaps one we deeply enjoy. A servant often must deny self to have the time and energy for others.

Verses 4 and 5 tell us Jesus wrapped Himself in a towel and poured water in a basin. This reminds us service often demands inconvenience and preparation. Service doesn't just happen. Many things go undone in the church because we

simply don't want to be inconvenienced, or we are unwilling to pay the price of preparation. For instance: most churches want first-class music, but a great music program, Christmas cantata, or offertory won't happen without practice.

Verse 5 also says Jesus began to wash their feet. Action. Serving others demands action. At some point, we must start serving. We can think about it. We can pray about it. We can plan and prepare for it. But at some point, we must simply act. That is what Jesus did. By this action of washing the dirty feet of His disciples, He illustrated for them the true meaning of humility and love.

A MESSAGE to ACCEPT

The actions Jesus modeled communicate an important message. In verses 6-8, Peter objected to having his feet washed by his Master. At first read, it may seem a noble objection, a humble objection to letting the God of the universe stoop to wash Peter's feet. But Jesus' response reveals the motivation behind Peter's unwillingness to be washed: pride.

Jesus was interested in teaching Peter far more than the need for humble service. He wanted Peter to understand the need for spiritual cleansing. That, unless the Savior washes us, we will never be clean. A few days later, after denying Jesus, do

you think these words, and Jesus' humble example, came back to Peter? I am sure they must have.

A MINISTRY to PERFORM

In verse 12, after completing His task, Jesus asked the disciples if they understood what had just taken place—the point behind His actions. He wanted His disciples to understand clearly that a relationship with the Savior is not simply about getting needs met but about a personal transformation in character and thinking. We must know the Savior Jesus to become like the servant Jesus.

The memorable moment in verses 14-17 concluded with Jesus instructing His disciples to follow His example. And the result of obedience? A blessed and happy life. In our self-centered culture, serving others may sound like the complete antithesis of a happy life, but according to the Savior, this is the key to the fulfilled Christian life.

As we bring our own dirty feet to the Savior for cleansing, let us echo with Peter, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." **ONE**

Adapted from Master's Men Direction Bible Studies.

To serve,
we must be
willing to be
uncomfortable.

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Your passing may be one of the most difficult storms of life for your children and loved ones. So, give them a steady hand to guide them through the storm. Since 2013, **Free Will Baptist Foundation** and **Cornerstone Estate Planning** have helped thousands of families create plans to avoid the legal and financial nightmares of probate court, and when you die, their caring staff will walk beside your family through the dark days. Give your family the gift of a well-prepared plan for the future, so they will be **steady through the storm!**



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DIRTY HANDS

BE INVOLVED IN THE FATHER'S PASSION

BY DANNY
GASPERSON

My dad was a career sailor in the U.S. Navy. An electrician who worked on submarines and cruisers, he was good at what he did. He worked hard and served honorably. That was his job. But one of his favorite hobbies was being a “shade-tree” mechanic. For those a few decades younger than me, before emissions equipment consumed every square inch under the hood and electronic parts required computerized diagnoses, regular guys with a little aptitude and a few tools could work on their own cars. My dad was one of those guys, and he loved it. Being a sailor was his job; being a “grease monkey” was his passion.

Most Saturday mornings found him in the garage, hood raised on our old Plymouth, tinkering with the engine. Not necessarily because the car was broken or needed to be repaired—he was simply doing preventative maintenance or making slight adjustments to make it run better. Really, he was just doing what he loved. It brought him joy.

Occasionally, Dad asked me to help him. As a young boy without experience or expertise to offer, “helping” him usually meant holding the flashlight. My attention span wasn’t very long. Often, the light and my focus were directed at something other than the place they belonged.

Repeatedly, he directly yet lovingly admonished, “Danny, stay focused on the work!” His words were short, but his patience was long.

Helping Dad brought great joy and satisfaction to this young boy’s heart. While under the hood with Dad, I looked for the dirtiest, greasiest spot and intentionally put my hand or arm in it. Then I would strut into the house, look for my mom, stick out my filthy hands, and proudly proclaim, “Me and Dad are fixin’ the car.”

Obviously, Dad didn’t need my “help.” Truthfully, involving me cost him time and trouble. So why did he include me? Because he loved me. In fact, he loved me so much he wanted to spend time with me, sharing the thing that brought him so much joy. He was willing to invite me into his passion. I learned much about my dad by working with him doing what he enjoyed most.

Likewise, our Heavenly Father has graciously invited us to labor with Him in His greatest passion: making disciples of all nations and spreading His glory to the ends of the earth.

THP SPECIAL PROJECTS

Through generous gifts from friends of THP, over the past two years, The Hanna Project has:

- 🌍 Provided numerous **wells and hand pumps** in villages in **India** and **Pakistan** to provide clean and safe water to people who did not have access.
- 🌍 Shared **humanitarian relief** to **Afghan refugees** in Pakistan and **Ukrainian refugees** in Bulgaria, France, Spain, and Moldova.
- 🌍 Delivered **emergency relief** to victims of devastating monsoon flooding in **Pakistan** and **India** and to those sustaining catastrophic damage from Hurricane Ian in **Cuba**.
- 🌍 In partnership with Bridge Builders for the Cross, helped **transport rice and beans** to **Cuba** to help with severe food shortages.

To learn how you can help The Hanna Project continue providing **Help, Hope, and Healing**, please visit www.hannaproject.com/where-we-work/our-projects and look for THP Clean Water or THP Emergency Response.

Does He need our help? Absolutely not! In fact, involving us sometimes makes the work slower and more tedious. So why does God include us in this monumental task? He loves us. He wants to spend time with us. He wants us to know and understand His heart. He wants to share with us the passion that brings ultimate joy to His heart.

Working with our Father in His greatest passion is one of the richest blessings in life. How can we partner with God in His work? The Bible teaches three primary ways to be involved. We are responsible and privileged to do all three.

Pray. The work of God is a supernatural work requiring supernatural resources. We have access to those resources through prayer.

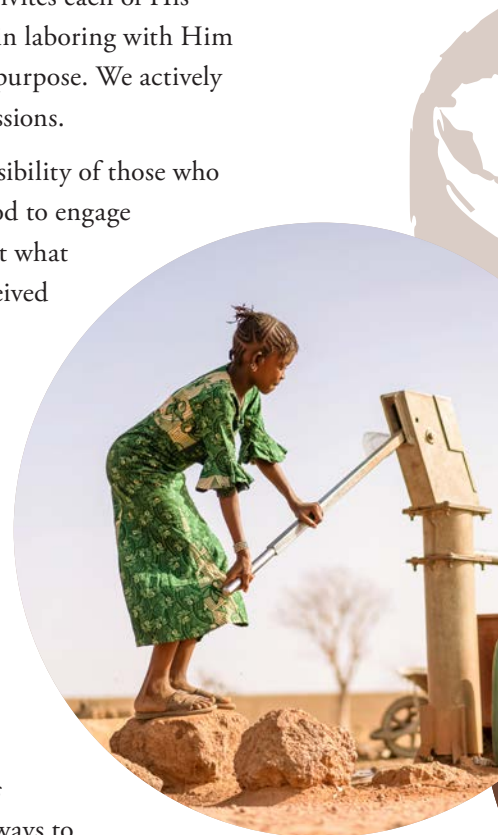
Provide. The work of God requires expenditures. Those called to full-time service need financial support. Spreading the gospel, making disciples, training leaders, and building churches require financial resources. Every member of God's family shares in this responsibility through sacrificial giving.

Most realize these first two ways to engage in God's passion, but the third is my favorite.

Participate! God graciously invites each of His children to "get their hands dirty" in laboring with Him in His greatest passion, His global purpose. We actively involve ourselves in the work of missions.

We understand the role and responsibility of those who have received a special call from God to engage in missions as a career ministry. But what about those of us who have not received such a call? Are we exempted or excluded from the work of global evangelism? Certainly not. Is there a way for non-missionaries to be personally, actively involved in missions? Absolutely. We not only can; we must. It is our responsibility and privilege.

One of the easiest and best ways to get our hands dirty is through IM's partner, The Hanna Project (THP). The Hanna Project *provides help, hope, and healing* in practical ways to desperate people around the world.



THP serves through three avenues. Full-time, career field workers live among and serve others, providing help through education, community development, and compassionate services: emergency response, disaster relief, and clean water projects. The focus of this article is the third option. The Hanna Project offers short-term opportunities for willing volunteers who want to use time, energy, abilities, and experience to serve others in compassionate and honoring ways. These short-term teams provide all of us the chance to get our hands dirty in our Father's passion.

It's clear in God's Word: God gifts every believer with unique abilities and aptitudes to accomplish God's purpose—His global will. The Hanna Project can help you use whatever gift, skill, interest, or experience you have in serving others. THP receives a wide variety of requests for help and assembles teams capable of meeting those needs. They send teams to do construction projects, provide medical care, help with education, conduct athletic or youth camps, assist with community development, or offer other specialized training. No matter what your talents, strengths, or interests, The Hanna Project can find a place and way for you to serve.

Most THP teams are comprised of a group of individuals from various places with common interests and abilities working together to meet a particular need.



Opportunities to Get YOUR Hands Dirty

Tokyo, Japan • August 2023

Sapporo, Japan • August 2023

Bulgaria • September 2023

Tajikistan • September 2023

Bulgaria, Operation Christmas Child • December 2023


THP also sends teams made up of friends or families desiring to serve together. A group from a local church or churches can form THP teams to perform needed tasks.

Last year, THP sent a team of ladies to teach sewing skills to women whose families have immigrated into Europe from North Africa and other places. They gave these women the ability to provide for their families. Another team completely refurbished a hospital ward in Bulgaria. A medical team performed basic health exams, taught prenatal healthcare, and distributed vitamins and over-the-counter medicines to people living in the jungle of Ecuador. Teams to Kazakhstan and Tajikistan performed vision clinics and eye-glass distribution. In Central Asia, THP teams helped with the construction of Hope Centers, which minister to the needs of the poor in their communities. Earlier this year, a THP team from Kirby FWB Church in Michigan traveled to Jamaica to construct a new kindergarten classroom for a rural basic school. THP Cuba repaired and refurbished playground equipment so children and young people can enjoy a safe place to play during summer camps.

The opportunities and options to get your hands dirty are limitless. The Hanna Project has a place for anyone with a desire to serve others. THP will enable you to use whatever abilities or interests you have to join your Father in His work.

“Dirty hands” are a gracious gift from the Father. With them we experience the joy and satisfaction that comes through serving and helping others. We get to observe our Father perform miraculous works only He can do. We gain insight into His greatest passion and experience the intimacy of precious time with Him.

Don't let the things of the world distract your attention. “Stay focused on the work” and get your hands dirty.

Learn more about opportunities through The Hanna Project or apply for a team by visiting www.hannaproject.com/where-we-work/our-projects. 

About the Author: Danny Gasperson frequently gets his hands dirty participating in THP trips. Though his initial trips focused on Central Asia, he has since traveled to Asia, South America, Central America, the Caribbean, and Africa. His wife Jackie sometimes joins him in overseas service.



A SHINING LIGHT EXTINGUISHED

BY CLINT MORGAN

Recently, my colleague Don Matchett and I attended the memorial service of pioneer Free Will Baptist missionary Carlisle Hanna. From beginning to end, the service honored God. It also properly recognized a life well-lived in God’s service.

Over the last few years, much has been written about Brother Carlisle and his 70 years of missionary service with Free Will Baptist International Missions (IM). The memorial service offered some new and interesting insights into his life.

Family members offered a glimpse of this man by those who knew him best. Affectionately known to them as father, father-in-law, grandfather, great grandfather, uncle, and faithful missionary to India, they joyfully, and sometimes tearfully, shared life lessons they learned from this godly man. One got the feeling they could have shared much more than they did.

The service lasted a bit over two hours. Even then, it was as if we had barely begun to properly review Brother Carlisle’s life and work in India.

His children clearly expressed appreciation for each one who prayed for and supported the Hanna family throughout their years in India. One of the boys indicated the impossibility of giving proper thanks for the life of Brother Carlisle without thanking supporters. They mentioned an example of a person who had prayed for the Hanna family every day for 50 years. Bro. Carlisle’s daughter Brenda Kay Roach succinctly stated, “Someone had to send those beautiful feet to India, and you did it.”

We also learned a little background of the Hanna family. Carlisle Hanna’s dad was a shining standard of a gentle, loving, and kind father. Don Hanna said, “It is not hard to see why God chose this family to bring a child into this world who would grow up to love the people of India and take light into that very dark land.” Growing up in a home with such a loving father made it easy for Brother Carlisle to speak to lost people about his loving Heavenly Father.

Carlisle and his wife Marie (who passed away in 1998) were truly a missionary couple. They completed each other in life and ministry. When Brother Carlisle spoke of the

HANNA:



death of his daughter Sheila during their first term, and later of Mrs. Marie's death, he said, "It is only human to ask why. But I was not at peace until I told the Lord I didn't need to know why now or in eternity. I told the Lord I was His, and was His servant, and would live for Him."

He certainly kept his word.

Two characteristics of Brother Carlisle shaped the thinking of his family and others to whom he ministered: he was both a leader and a follower. He *led* his family to love God, love God's Word, and love others. He modeled it in his life. He studied the Bible every day. He read it through over 80 times and *followed* it to the best of his understanding.

A grandchild described later visits with Brother Carlisle, "We wanted to help him walk and not feel the pain, but we couldn't. Now he knows profound bliss in seeing the face of his Savior and his wife."

I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light.

—Carlisle Hanna

Dr. Don Hanna, the oldest son, gave the closing message. Speaking for his siblings, he affirmed, “As his children, we have been blessed beyond measure.” His closing remarks were a poem about his dad entitled, “He Walked With God.” The poem took us on a short journey through his dad’s childhood, his calling, his service in India, and his passing. He closed with the words, “Now, he walks with God.”

I believe the following quote appropriately reflects the life of Carlisle Hanna: “I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light.”

Carlisle Hanna absolutely let his light shine in a land filled with darkness. Now his light has been extinguished, but the candles he lit will burn until Christ returns.

This denomination will forever honor the faithful service of Carlisle Hanna. Generations to come will remember and point to his example of faithfulness. May God bless the Hanna family, the works in India, and those who follow Carlisle Hanna’s example of faithfulness to the end. **ONE**

About the Author: Former missionary to Ivory Coast and France, Clint Morgan has been director of IM since 2011.

His Legacy Continues BY KRISTI JOHNSON

I still remember the linen placemats with elephants stitched in the corner adorning the dining room table of my childhood home in South Carolina. They were beautiful and exotic. Not the kind of placemats meant to be used for everyday dishes like spaghetti or meatloaf. They were special to our family because they’d come all the way from India in the suitcase of Carlisle and Marie Hanna.

The Hannas were the first missionaries I ever met. They often visited my home church, always remembering everyone by name. Even as a small child, they made me feel important each time we talked. I often wondered if the children to whom the Hannas ministered in India felt as important as I did when I was around them.

Their ministry to me continued when they were far away in India. Opening the mailbox to find an envelope stamped from India with Brother Carlisle’s beautiful cursive handwriting inspired me to do the same

when I became a missionary. Now, I have the privilege of working at IM and encouraging new missionaries to follow Brother Carlisle’s example of sending handwritten notes to supporters.

Well done, thou good and faithful servant. When I received the news of Brother Carlisle’s passing, one of the first things that came to mind were the placemats they’d given us. I can only imagine Brother Carlisle feasting with the Lord Himself, a banquet deserving special placemats.

Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord. What a sad day for those of us who grieve his absence on Earth, but what a joyous one for the heavenly feast our faithful friend is now enjoying. **ONE**

About the Author: Kristi Johnson, a native of Johnsonville, South Carolina, served as a missionary to Spain with her husband Tim for 25 years. She now works in the IM office as development communications manager, where she continues telling IM’s story to supporters.

Carlisle Hanna Ends Seven Decades of Service



Carlisle Hanna

Antioch, TN—Ninety-three-year-old Carlisle Hanna entered the Lord’s presence February 17, 2023. Born August 3, 1929, near Lake City, South Carolina, he is survived by three children: Brenda Kay (Michael), Donald (Millicent), and Mark (Elizabeth). Carlisle was preceded in death by his beloved wife Marie, their daughter Sheila Marie, their grandson Jason, his parents, father-in-law, mother-in-law, and nine brothers and sisters.

Hanna served more than 70 years in India beginning in 1952. His dedication to his Savior and the people of India impacted thousands, not only in India but also in the States. Clint Morgan, general director of IM, stated,

“Few men have impacted a country, a people, a denomination, and the world of missions like Brother Carlisle, better known as ‘Uncle’ by the people of India and those who knew him best. If ever a missionary gave of himself completely, he did. For 70 years, he served the Indian people with compassion and passion. He never felt he could give enough or do enough. He has been honored in many ways by people and mission organizations. None could come close to capturing the welcome home he received as he left his earthly home and joined the Lord he loved shamelessly, shared joyfully, and served willingly.”

A celebration of his homegoing was held March 4 in Turbeville, South Carolina. A memorial service will be held in India as well.

Learn more about Carlisle Hanna’s life and work on IM’s website and by reading the article on page 14 of this issue of *ONE Magazine*. 

Sharon Ferguson Dies

Antioch, TN—Former missionary Sharon Kay Ferguson went home to her Lord April 10, 2023. The 75-year-old grew up in Blaine, Kentucky. She left the small town to attend Welch College in Nashville, Tennessee, receiving a degree in Bible and missions.

She met her husband Ledgel during a revival meeting in her home church. Together, they served the Lord in the United States then in Ivory Coast (1977-1990; 1991-1995). They pastored in Georgia and Kentucky before responding again to mission field needs, this time in France (2006-2010).

They returned to Blaine for their retirement, serving as volunteers at Camp Caleb and their home church, Cherokee FWB Church.

Survivors include Ledgel, her husband of 47 years; her brother Mike (Eileen) Roberts; and numerous extended family and a host of close friends.



Sharon and Ledgel Ferguson

Funeral services were held April 14 at Cherokee FWB Church in Blaine. 

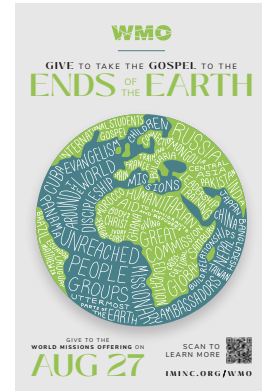
WMO 2023 Set for August 27

Antioch, TN—The annual World Missions Offering is scheduled for August 27, though individuals and churches may give to the WMO at any point in the year. This year's theme focuses on the main purpose of missions: taking the gospel to the ends of the Earth.

The IM website (iminc.org) hosts resources to promote the offering within churches: bulletin inserts, PowerPoint slides, videos, children's curriculum, posters, and more. Many resources are available in English and Spanish.

Don Matchett, director of church relations, notes, "With

3.28 billion unreached people in the world, we all have a part to play in taking the gospel where it's most needed. We get to be a part of evangelizing, ministering, partnering, teaching, training, and *giving!* Let's work together until the gospel reaches the ends of the Earth." **ONE**



IM Partners With 1040i in Côte d'Ivoire

Antioch, TN—IM General Director Clint Morgan and his wife Lynette, an RN, went to Doropo, Côte d'Ivoire, to serve with IM partner 1040i in February. Through medical interventions, construction projects, and biblical teaching, hundreds of people were impacted.

Medical personnel dispensed more than a thousand prescriptions, performed 100-plus surgeries, provided prenatal and postnatal care tips to local women, and supplied 364 medical consultations. The construction team painted the "Eagleton" house and a water tower, put a new roof on

the first Free Will Baptist church constructed in 1968, and completed numerous repair jobs and emergency plumbing/electrical tasks.

A bicycle repair team fixed more than 30 bicycles and other modes of transportation at the "shade tree bike shop"—a valuable means of ministry. Bible teaching sessions covered many hours, with pastors and institute students engaging in meaningful conversations. Clint declared, "Good seeds of the gospel have been planted, and God will bring a harvest." **ONE**



Svishtov, Bulgaria—"Praise God, we found a bigger place to meet on Sundays in Svishtov!" Lydia Awtrey exclaimed. "We also have a new church van, so we can take disabled and elderly people to church. So very grateful. Thank you for your prayers."

Hokkaido, Japan—In mid-February, Japan's Free Will Baptist pastors and teachers met at New Life Church with the Bishops for their annual leaders' conference. They shared ministry updates, participated in leadership training, and enjoyed fellowship and encouraging one another.

Bangladesh—In February, IM's partners in Bangladesh celebrated the completion and dedication of two New Testament Bible translations into local languages with funds from IM's partnership and Word of Life in Bangladesh. Support the ministries in Bangladesh by giving at www.iminc.org/give.

Thunderstruck

BY PAUL V. HARRISON

“If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray?” (Matthew 18:12)

The Sons of Thunder, as Jesus called them, made a lot of noise for God, and something had to be done. So, Agrippa silenced James by lopping off his head. John, however, lived on. Sent to Patmos in his 90s, he survived exile and returned to Ephesus. Eusebius, the early church historian, picks up the apostle’s story.

Once, when visiting a church in a nearby town, he saw “a youth of powerful physique, of pleasing appearance, and of ardent temperament.” Turning to the pastor, John said: “This one I commit to thee in all earnestness in the presence of the church and with Christ as witness.”

The unnamed minister took the youth home and poured himself into him. He “reared, kept, cherished, and finally baptized him.”

Eventually, the pastor “relaxed his stricter care and watchfulness,” and the devil seized the opportunity. “Some youths of his own age, idle and dissolute, and accustomed to evil practices, corrupted him when he was thus prematurely freed from restraint.” They led the youth into inappropriate entertainment and then took him on some of their thieving excursions.

“He gradually became accustomed to such practices.”

A natural leader, “he became a bold bandit-chief, the most violent, most bloody, most cruel of them all.” Oh, the heartbreak of contemplating the lives of former church members.

One day John came back to town: “Come, O bishop, restore us the deposit which both I and Christ committed to thee.” The minister’s confused look led the apostle to explain: “I demand the young man.”

Dropping his head, the pastor said, “He is dead...dead to God, for he turned wicked...and at last a robber. And now, instead of the church, he haunts the mountain with a band like himself.”

John tore his clothes and said, “A fine guard I left for a brother’s soul!”

The aged apostle then demanded a horse and rode off toward the robber’s mountain den. Taken prisoner by an outpost, he said, “Lead me to your captain.” When they led John to him, the believer-turned-brigand—armed and dangerous—recognized him and “turned in shame to flee.”

Eusebius related that John, “forgetting his age, pursued him with all his might” and thundered: “Why, my son, dost thou flee from me, thine own father, unarmed, aged? Pity me, my son; fear not; thou hast still hope of life. I will give account to Christ for thee. If need be, I will willingly endure thy death as the Lord suffered death for us. ...Christ hath sent me.”

At this, the bandit broke, “baptizing himself a second time with tears.” He embraced John, but he did so, hiding his right hand, ashamed of its deeds. The apostle would have none of it. He took that hand in his and kissed it.

For some time, he gave himself to the penitent thief and “restored him to the church, furnishing a great example of true repentance and...a trophy of a visible resurrection.”

ONE

About the Columnist: Paul V. Harrison has pastored Madison FWB Church in Madison, Alabama, since 2015. Previously, he pastored Cross Timbers FWB church in Nashville, Tennessee, for 22 years. He was an adjunct professor at Welch College for 17 years, teaching church history and Greek. Paul is the creator of Classic Sermon Index, a subscription-based online index of over 66,000 sermons, with clients including Harvard, Baylor, and Vanderbilt, among others: classicsermonindex.com.






BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

BY JACKIE AND
DANNY GASPERSON

His name appears nowhere in the biblical “credits,” but he plays a crucial role in the story, and his life teaches us valuable lessons.



Each year, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences awards Oscars to the best actor and actress. Setting aside their own identities, these highly gifted performers totally embrace a character's persona. Their roles are so prominent, and their performances so convincing, they carry the story's weight. Easily recognizable, they are the superstars of the industry.

But the Academy knows that no matter how talented the lead actor or how powerful the performance, a single actor cannot tell the story without help. They must be surrounded by other performers who assist with the narrative, who support the leading role. Their parts may not be as noticeable, but their contribution to the story is just as critical. They are stars in their own right. Therefore, the Academy also appropriately recognizes and awards these actors with Oscars for best supporting actor and actress.

The same is true in ministry. To some, God has given obvious gifts and visible roles and responsibilities within the Kingdom. Their names and ministries are well-known and celebrated. But seldom do they work alone. They are surrounded by crucial co-laborers whose roles are not as visible but are equally valuable. Without them, the work would be less effective or possibly non-existent. Acts 16 highlights one such supporting actor.

THE CONTEXT

Paul and his new traveling companion Silas had embarked on Paul's second missionary journey, revisiting churches from the first journey. Prevented by the Lord from going into new areas in Asia Minor and Galatia, they made their way to Troas. One night, Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia pleading, "Come to Macedonia and help us." Realizing this was the Lord's leading, the team made their way to Philippi, a Roman colony and leading city of the district of Macedonia. The ancient city was renamed after Philip of Macedonia, father of Alexander the Great. As a Roman colony, her citizens had the same rights and privileges as those who lived in Rome itself.

Paul typically began ministry in a new place by attending a Sabbath meeting at the local Jewish synagogue. Apparently, Philippi had no synagogue, and Paul's team joined a group, primarily women, who met regularly for prayer beside the river. Paul shared the gospel, and Lydia, a worshiper of God from Thyatira, was saved, along with her family. Lydia invited the missionary team to stay in her home, and they remained for several weeks sharing the gospel. Souls were saved, and a church was established.

THE CIRCUMSTANCE

Paul and Silas returned regularly to the place of prayer beside the river to preach and teach. One day, a young slave girl, possessed by a demon who enabled her to predict the future, began following them, crying out and

causing quite a disturbance. After several days of enduring her behavior, Paul, troubled by the situation, turned and, in the authority of Jesus' name, commanded the spirit to leave the girl. She was miraculously delivered.

This created a problem for the slave girl's owners who had been exploiting her demonic ability for financial gain. The men became irate and seized Paul and Silas, dragging them before the magistrates, officials appointed by Roman authorities and responsible for maintaining public order. The slave owners did not care about Paul and Silas' preaching. Because a loss of revenue was not a chargeable offense, they accused them of teaching unlawful customs. Though clearly a bogus charge, when large crowds joined the attack, the magistrates, perhaps motivated to restore peace quickly, ordered Paul and Silas to be stripped, beaten with rods, imprisoned in stocks, and carefully guarded.

At midnight, though in pain and restrained, Paul and Silas were praying and singing praises to God. Everyone in the prison heard their worship. God responded with a powerful earthquake that shook the prison, opened all the doors, and loosened the prisoners' chains. When the jailer awakened and saw all the doors open, he assumed everyone had escaped and drew his sword to kill himself. Paul called out to stop him, assuring him all captives were still present.

This powerful demonstration brought fear and conviction to the jailer's heart. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (verse 30). Paul shared the gospel, and salvation came to the jailer and his family. In gratitude, the jailer brought

Paul and Silas to his home, washed their wounds, and prepared a meal for them. He and his entire household were baptized that night.

The following morning, the magistrates sent officers to release the prisoners, but Paul refused to leave. His reasoning shook the magistrates more than the earthquake had shaken the jail. Paul revealed he was a Roman citizen. Their unjust trial and his public punishment violated his rights. Because the consequences of their actions could be severe, the magistrates personally came and sheepishly escorted Paul and his friends from prison, requesting they leave the city.

THE CHARACTERS

Though several important characters contributed significantly to this story, this article will consider only two.

The Apostle Paul plays the lead role. His gifts, calling, and commitment were extraordinary and obvious. God used him to accomplish great things for the Kingdom. Although most would feel unqualified to play a role of such magnitude, we learn much from Paul to help us fulfill the roles God has assigned us.

Many glaring questions surround Paul in this story. Why did he wait until the next day to claim his rights as a Roman citizen? How and why could Paul and his friends offer prayer and even praise to God under such unimaginable circumstances? Why, when their chains were loosened, did they not escape? We are not told Paul's reasoning, but some clues point us in the right direction.

First, Paul had learned to live with "Kingdom perspective." Because he trusted God and submitted to the leading of the Lord in his circumstances, the jailer heard the gospel and was converted. Years later, in his letter to the church that grew out of this series of events, Paul—once again in chains for the Lord—explained his circumstances served to advance the gospel. Some might say Paul was chained to the prison guards. Paul understood the prison guards were chained to him!

He proclaimed the gospel to a captive audience. He realized this God-ordained situation allowed the gospel to spread throughout the entire palace guard (Philippians 1:12-13). This perspective taught him to be content whatever the circumstances of his life (Philippians 4:11). He understood that for him to live was Christ and to die would be gain (Philippians 1:21). We can learn from Paul:

living with "Kingdom perspective" enables us to remain faithful and praise the Lord in the most challenging circumstances.

Now we come to the primary focus of this article: the role of the prison guard, someone with whom most of us can identify. Who was he? We are given little information, so we must fill in the gaps. His name appears nowhere in the biblical "credits," but he plays a crucial role in the story, and his life teaches us valuable lessons.

How did he get this part in the story? He was likely just an average guy. Perhaps he earned his position of responsibility by working hard and being faithful. Philippi was a destination for many retired Roman officers and soldiers, so perhaps he merited the position from his honorable military service. He had a family and obviously influenced them toward the gospel successfully.

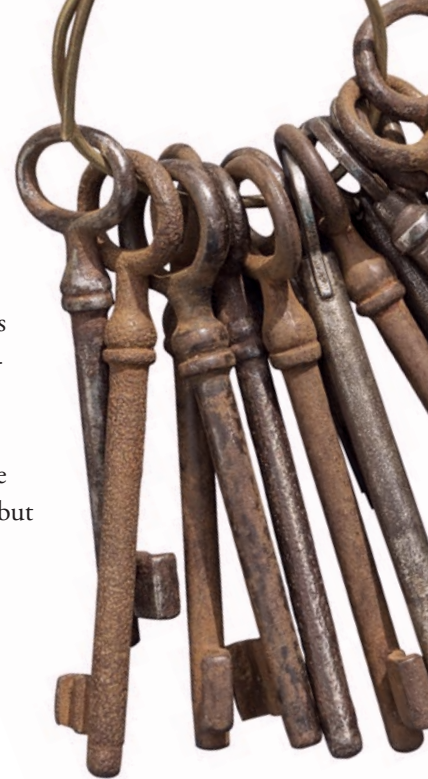
Regardless of the accuracy of our speculation, we can be sure he was not included in the story by accident. God loved the jailer, and he needed salvation, so God orchestrated his inclusion in this exciting drama.

Try to imagine how that eventful day transpired for him as he prepared to work the graveyard shift. No doubt he hoped for a quiet, uneventful evening. He was probably aware the charges against his new prisoners had no merit and braced himself for a long night of complaining and cursing, the typical behavior of his usual clientele.

When these men, falsely accused, brutally beaten, shackled, and chained in a filthy jail, lifted their voices to pray and praise God, it must have shaken him as much as the subsequent earthquake. They did not attempt to escape when presented the opportunity and even displayed concern when he was about to take his own life. The power demonstrated in response to their praise surely convinced him their God was far superior to the marble idols of the Romans. This was a God he wanted and needed to know, so he asked: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (verse 30).

THE CONTRIBUTION

The moment someone is saved, God adds that believer's name to the cast of characters in the grand script of His





will. That night, the jailer played an easily overlooked yet important role in this story.

The jailer was saved, and his actions prove it was not just an emotional response. His was a commitment. He took the prisoners to his home, shared his experience with his family, and encouraged them to join his commitment to faith. He offered care and hospitality to his new friends. All these things placed the jailer and his family at great risk. Short hours before, he contemplated suicide out of fear over what the authorities might do to him for “losing” prisoners. A few short verses later, he was willing to risk all to do the right thing. The jailer had a new perspective. He trusted the Lord the way he saw Paul and Silas trust the Lord.

His contribution to Paul’s ministry is far from insignificant. He cared for their physical needs. After being stripped, brutally beaten, and tossed into a damp and dirty prison cell, the missionaries were susceptible to infection or other physical problems. The jailer’s care may have saved their lives; it undoubtedly hastened their recovery. He ministered to their emotional needs with food, hospitality, and, most importantly, love and kindness for

his new brothers in Christ. He did all this at great risk to him and his family.

Some might say the jailer only played a small role that night. But I suspect Paul and Silas would claim at that moment in time, he was their “Best Supporting Actor.”

THE CONTINUATION

The Bible does not reveal what became of the Philippian jailer and his family. But we know after this event, more people came to faith, and a church was born in Philippi. Possibly, this man played an important role in the founding and care of the church. Sometimes, great supporting actors are given a larger role.

It is probably not coincidental that the same compassionate, generous support demonstrated by the Philippian jailer became the “personality” of the church that eventually became dear to Paul’s heart and instrumental in his ministry. **ONE**

About the Author: Jackie Gasperson and her husband Danny have been married 41 years. Jackie works for IM and WNAC. The Lord has blessed them with two children and two wonderful grandsons.

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From Salem to Sneads

ROAD TO RESTORATION

BY DUANE LITTLEFIELD

In 2021, the pastor of the First Free Will Baptist Church in Sneads, Florida, approached the Salem Association Mission Board with a crisis. The church had suffered a loss of membership through death and departure and faced the possibility of closure. The mission board had previously received funds from another church that closed and resolved to do everything possible to prevent the loss of another church. Sneads tested that resolve. The church had a pastor with a servant's heart, a small number of older individuals, and a building in disrepair.

The Salem Mission Board began by praying and providing the church a quarterly supplement to bridge the financial gap. As the association prayed, God moved! He led a couple to move from the state of Kansas to Sneads, Florida. The couple played a key role in the restoration of the church facility.

It became clear the facilities needed renovation. The building had a 1970s appearance, with dark paneled walls and worn carpet covering the sanctuary. Classrooms and restrooms were all located in a damp basement. This certainly hindered the older members along with any others who attended services. Through a 1980s addition, God provided a large, unfinished area behind the sanctuary ready and waiting to be finished into ADA-compliant restrooms, classrooms, and a pastor's office.

With the approval of the church, the Salem Mission Board began to develop plans for renovating the sanctuary and completing the unfinished space. The plans called for volunteer labor from within the association. Clearly, the completion of this effort would take dedication and financial support from churches in the association. The association and churches generously gave of their funds to ensure the project could be completed. It soon became clear that

through working together, much could be accomplished.

As volunteers from across the association came together, their work brought them closer to one another. Each workday provided another opportunity to learn more about one another and the other churches in the association. This labor of love by the men and women who volunteered resulted in an ongoing time of fellowship, one rarely experienced. Individuals were no longer known only by the positions they held in the association or local church. Instead, volunteers became true friends.

As the work progressed, unexpected obstacles led to questions about how to proceed. Government regulations, unexpected construction issues, and rising costs all appeared to be giants in the way. As each giant arose, so, too, did the answer from God regarding how to address the situation. Whether the challenge was physical or financial, the Lord always provided the solution. Near the completion of the project, the Florida State Mission Board provided a financial gift that carried the work through to completion. It was clear God would see to fruition what He had started.

While buildings are important, the need to restore a Great Commission mindset among the people is even more



important. To accomplish this goal, the association invited National Association Moderator Dr. Tim York to host a week of revitalization services at Sneads. Afterwards, the Sneads church and two other churches went through the book *Experiencing God*, learning how to seek out the places where God was working and join Him in His work. The church learned more about their neighbors through the Know Your Community report. In March, the three churches also participated in *The Hope Initiative*. The remodeling gave the church hope, and these further activities directed that hope beyond the doors of the building.

The churches of the Salem Association are not islands, struggling alone to survive. They are joined together by love and friendship. We know these congregations have a willingness to aid and assist one another to ensure the gospel message goes forward. Churches of the association proved this by giving physically and financially to assist one of their own and stand ready to do it again if the need arises.

As Dr. Moody states so often: “We are better together.” [ONE](#)

About the Author: Duane Littlefield is clerk of Florida’s Salem Association and the Florida State Association of Free Will Baptists. He also serves as pastor of First FWB of Malone, Florida. Read more about how the work of the Salem Association led to a national campaign named Operation Restoration on page 62.



Before

Grieve With Hope

BY BARRY RAPER

1 THESSALONIANS 4:13-18

I first remember crying over someone's passing in 1983. I was seven years old at the time, and I didn't know the person who died. But in my home state of Alabama, it was hard *not* to know who Bear Bryant was. The grief was short-lived, of course, because I didn't really know the famous college football coach.

I wish I could say that was my last experience with grief. However, like you, I have had many other brushes with grief over time, including the death of both parents. When we face the death of those we know and love, grief isn't short-lived. When grief settles in, what do you do?

Some people seek to cope by ignoring it, pushing on through sheer willpower and suppressing any sign of emotional hurt. Another person might try to cope with grief through alcohol or substance abuse, a temporary and harmful way to numb the pain of loss.

If you have been touched by the loss of someone close, Paul's words in 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18 provide a foundational text for dealing with grief. In these short words, Paul reminded us the Christian's greatest weapon against grief is the hope of the gospel. Consider three simple instructions from the passage.

Grieve because you are human (verse 13). Grief is natural for the Christian. Experiencing no grief at the passing of a loved one is unnatural, even unhealthy. The Bible never says Christians shouldn't grieve. Instead, it says Christians should grieve with hope—not a wish or unfounded hope—a hope grounded in the gospel.

Paul didn't want the Thessalonians uninformed or ignorant about grief. It seems these new Christians had real questions regarding what happened to loved ones when they died. Sadly, we still encounter uninformed or misguided views of what happens when a Christian dies. I often hear people say God needed another angel. Scripture is clear: human beings are human beings, and angels are angels. In our eternal state, we don't change over from one to the other. But what really happens? I will answer that question

in a moment, but for now, let me drive the point home:

We grieve because we are human.


If we aren't careful about how we talk about this subject, we might be guilty of communicating that grief isn't normal or is something you should just get over or snap out of. Careless words might communicate that if the one grieving really had faith, he or she wouldn't be so sad—being selfish, in fact, to want the loved one here rather than Heaven. So the reasoning goes. And this way of talking about grief isn't ultimately helpful.

In *A Grief Observed*, C.S. Lewis pulled back the curtain on his struggle to cope with his wife's untimely death. His words were raw and unfiltered as he wrestled with the reality of why and how her death happened. His candid words give readers a glimpse into the seemingly endless battle of working through grief: "Aren't all these notes the senseless writings of a man who won't accept the fact that there is nothing we can do with suffering except to suffer it?... How often—will it be for always?—how often will the vast emptiness astonish me like a complete novelty and make me say, 'I never realized my loss till this moment?' The same leg is cut off time after time."

Some in the world of psychology and counseling have identified five stages of grief. While not everyone goes through all five stages, even one is painful. Grief comes to us in different ways. It can sneak up on you in unexpected ways. It can settle in on you.

In this short verse, Paul gave us **permission to grieve**. Grieve in a way that is different than the world, but still grieve. Grief is natural for the Christian, but it is affected by a supernatural hope in Jesus.

Hope because you are a Christian (verses 14-17). The Christian's hope, spelled out in verses 14-17, is not wishful thinking but fixed upon the person and work of Jesus. In this section, Paul linked the resurrection of Jesus to the resurrection of Christian believers. His resurrection secures our resurrection.



When we face the death of those we know and love, grief isn't short-lived.
When grief settles in, what do you do?

The metaphor of sleep found here describes death three times: “them which are asleep” (verse 13), “those also which sleep” (verse 14), and “them which are asleep” (verse 15). We know it is a metaphor because Paul continued in verse 16: “The dead in Christ shall rise first.” This phrase or metaphor does not mean a person’s soul or spirit “sleeps” in death but communicates the idea of rest and peace.

The Bible teaches that in the moment of a Christian’s death, his or her spirit goes to the Lord. We find this in 2 Corinthians 5:8, where Paul said to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. At the second coming of Christ, these believers will be given a resurrected and glorified body and will return with Him.

We find a beautiful illustration of what it means to sorrow with hope in the life of Jesus Himself when His friend Lazarus died. In John 11:35, we find the simple words: “Jesus wept.”

Though the shortest verse in the Bible, John 11:35 contains one of the most important truths for us to understand about sorrow. Jesus wept, even though He fully knew He was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. Yet, confronted with the death of His friend and the pain of loss for Mary and Martha, Jesus still wept. He grieved...with hope of resurrection.

As Christians, we base our great hope on the day Jesus Christ will return, when we will be reunited with all loved ones who died in the Lord.

Share grief because you are family (verse 18). “Comfort one another with these words.” What words? The words we just read, the gospel. Now, we must be careful when encouraging people during times of loss. Sometimes, we feel the need just to say something, and we forget how hard it is to hear and receive a well-meaning but poorly timed and painful statement.

Joni Erickson Tada had a diving accident as a teen and

has been a quadriplegic for decades. She once recalled well-meaning friends who offered “comforting” words that struck Joni to the core. They quoted Romans 8:28, telling her things work together for good, and James 1:3, encouraging her to welcome her trials, and to “rejoice in suffering” based on Romans 5. All are right and true biblical mandates, but when your heart is being wrung out like a sponge, sometimes hearing a laundry list of good biblical reasons about what has happened is like rubbing salt in the wound. When people suffer great trauma and grief, they don’t want answers, because answers don’t reach the problem where it hurts: in the heart.

Sharing the grief of others doesn’t mean offering a single statement of encouragement beside the casket and walking away. That isn’t how grief works. Those in grief need the ongoing encouragement the gospel message brings. Sharing grief is a “one another” ministry. “Comfort one another with these words.” We share grief in this way because we are family, and we aren’t meant to endure grief alone. Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep (Romans 12:15). If one of us suffers, all suffer together (1 Corinthians 12:26).

This is a passage about resurrection and reunion. I have been out of high school for almost three decades, and with each year, the next reunion seems less important. Don’t misunderstand, I enjoy seeing the people I went to school with, but a high school reunion isn’t a matter of life and death. If it happens, it happens; if it doesn’t, it doesn’t. But I am staking all my hopes on another reunion—the one with all my loved ones who died in Christ. That is why I have hope in my grief. [ONE](#)

About the Columnist: Dr. Barry Raper is associate dean of Welch Divinity School and pastor of Bethel FWB Church near Ashland City, Tennessee.

The Bible and GENDER

BY MATTHEW STEVEN BRACEY

Today, the topic of gender is pervasive and controversial. Where biblical Christianity roots gender in God's creation of man and woman, today's cultural prophets preach gender is "socially constructed."

My aunt recently attended a function with her granddaughter. "Who's that girl?" she asked.

"That isn't a girl, Nana. That's a boy," returned the granddaughter.

Nana arched an eyebrow. "No, that's a girl."

The granddaughter felt embarrassed. "If someone *says* he's a boy, he's a boy."

Nana, with no timidity, pressed: "I don't care what someone says. A boy's a boy. A girl's a girl."

"You can't say that!" exclaimed the wide-eyed granddaughter.

"I most certainly can."


Perhaps this conversation recalls one you've experienced.

How ought we as Christians think about such cultural developments? Consider four important truths.

Our ultimate allegiance is to God and His Word. The Apostle Paul explains Christians are citizens of God's Kingdom, not the world's (Philippians 3:20). God has given us the "word of life" (Philippians 2:16), including His word on gender. Our ultimate allegiance is neither to family, friends, or workplace peers, nor to cultural or political leaders. We must not bow to the ever-changing whims of the present evil age. Rather, our ultimate allegiance is to King Jesus, and our values are informed by His Word.

Christians are simply different from non-Christians, whom Paul describes as "enemies of the cross" who glory in dishonor and shame (Philippians 3:18–19). Insofar as the values of these lesser allegiances are consistent with those of God's Kingdom, we should support them. But where the two conflict, we must follow the "King of Kings" (Revelation 19:16).





This proposition is often difficult. As Jesus warned, the world could hate us as it hated Him (John 15:18-19). We must, therefore, cultivate the courage to follow Him fully. We may face genuine challenges concerning the topic of gender. However, whatever the challenges, we must not act falsely. We must be true to the character of our holy, righteous, and just God. Where others follow the spirit of the age, we follow the Spirit of Christ, revealed from Scripture's opening words.

God created only two genders. Genesis 1–2 recounts God's creation of the world: the stars, lands, waters, animals, and humans. Significantly, He created humans "in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (1:27). Our being man or woman is not incidental—not fluid—but given graciously by God and tied mysteriously to His image. To deny this truth is to deny God's "good" creation (1:31).

God created only two genders. But He did not make all men the same and all women the same. Manhood and womanhood include variation according to a person's historical period, cultural background, and personal qualities. Consider the differences between Moses and Paul, Ruth and Phoebe, J. S. Bach and C. S. Lewis, or Susanna Wesley and Flannery O'Connor—all very different, and yet, most assuredly, all men or women. John Wayne is not the sole picture of manhood, nor is Martha Stewart the singular image of womanhood.

We should celebrate our God-given differences. However, we must not confuse intra-gender distinction with inter-gender fluidity. God has created only two genders, but sin has perverted God's good design for them.

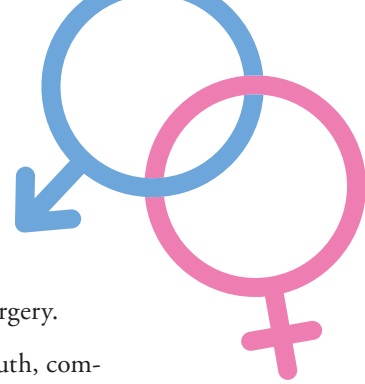
Sin has perverted God's good design of the genders. God created the genders—distinct yet complementary—to live and work together (Genesis 1:28). However, Adam and Eve followed the serpent's leading rather than God's (Genesis 3:1-7). Thus, God cursed Adam *as man* and Eve *as woman* (Genesis 3:16-19). Likewise, their sons and daughters (you and me) are not sinners only in some generic sense. More specifically, we are not the *men* or *women* God created us to be.

Christians recognize sin has impacted all men and women (Romans 3:23). Even Christians, who are being restored to Christ's image, struggle against sin (Romans 7:19). For example, Christian husbands are not fully the men God created them to be but struggle to love their wives as Christ loves the Church; Christian wives are not fully the women God created them to be but struggle to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22-33).

Likewise, sin impacts the broader non-Christian culture. For example, transgenderism adopts a socio-cultural understanding of gender rather than a biological understanding. Thus, people identify as genders not matching their birth sex, and gender dysphoria may even lead some people to undergo gender reassignment surgery.

Transgender advocates regularly portray traditionalists (those who identify gender biologically rather than as a social construct) as bad, discriminatory, hateful people. Yet those same voices are conspicuously silent when someone having undergone reassignment surgery discovers the procedure only worsened problems. Transgender advocates sometimes point to intersexuality (individuals born with both male and female physiology) to support their beliefs. However, even the intersex person is genetically male or female.

Biblical theology helps us understand why we struggle with gender. We all live under sin's curse, which impacts even manhood and womanhood. Thankfully, God has not left us in our brokenness.



God desires the restoration of broken people. God does not want anyone to perish but for all to come to repentance (2 Peter 3:9). As the great hymn says, Jesus, *friend* of sinners. God loved us in all our sin (Romans 5:8). God’s heart has not changed, and He calls Christians to be ambassadors of His glorious Kingdom to the hopeless, including the transgender (2 Corinthians 5:20).

We represent God’s Kingdom by modeling the example of its King. In our beliefs and behaviors, we must demonstrate grace and truth (John 1:14). Whatever societal pressures, we follow the truths of God’s Word: God created only two genders, but sin has perverted God’s good design. We must not succumb to the spirit of the age that is passing away with its lusts (1 John 2:15–17).

However, this commitment to truth must never become an excuse to be rude or nasty. Instead, we should communicate to all people—including the transgender—biblical virtues like compassion, love, and kindness (Galatians 5:22–23). Play games together; enjoy meals together; see films together. Show grace but remain true to King Jesus.

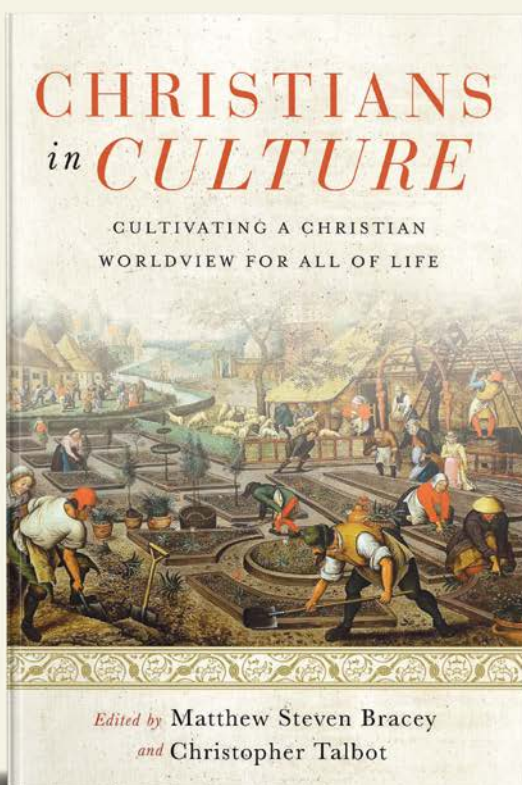
A young woman recently testified against a California bill on transitioning. She had previously identified as transgender, even receiving gender reassignment surgery. She

quickly regretted the transition, describing it as a “brutal nightmare.” It did not make her happy, only more miserable. She now rejects transgender ideology and embraces her womanhood. But she cannot undo her surgery.

The world is full of such examples needing truth, compassion, and hope. Adopting a gender opposite the one God gave us will not fix our problems. Healing is found in God alone who binds up the wounds of the brokenhearted (Psalm 147:3). But how will people know about this great God if no one tells them (Romans 10:14–15)?

In Christ, we have a profound message of hope. We may not now be the men or women God created us to be. But we anticipate a better day. By His great power, Christ will transform the bodies of our lowly conditions—with all their struggles—into conformity with His glorious body (Philippians 3:21). Praise be to God, He is making all things new (Revelation 21:5). **ONE**

About the Author: Matthew Bracey (M.T.S., J.D.) works at Welch College, where he serves as vice provost for academic administration and teaches courses in history, law, and theology. He is a co-founder and senior editor of The Helwys Society Forum.



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Welch Hosts Forum23

Gallatin, TN—Approximately 250 students, faculty, staff members, and guests attended Forum23 from March 5-7, 2023, on the Welch College campus in Gallatin, Tennessee. Plenary and breakout sessions challenged and encouraged attendees. Ajith Fernando, teaching director of Youth for Christ in Sri Lanka, was the keynote speaker. Other speakers included:

- Nancy Guthrie, Bible teacher, conference speaker, and author
- John J. DeBerry, Jr., senior advisor to Tennessee Governor Bill Lee
- Brian Croft, founder and executive director, Practical Shepherding, Inc.
- Jonathan Locklear, associate pastor, Woodhaven FWB Church (MI)
- J. Matthew Pinson, president, Welch College

Throughout the conference, attendees were urged to recognize and honor the call of God on their lives. In so doing, they will:

- Avoid the wisdom of men, which empties the power of the Cross; instead relying solely on the power of God, which saves the souls of men.
- Embrace the glorious eternal destiny for which human beings were made, and which Christ secured for all on the Cross.
- Reject temptations toward comparison, competition, and celebrity.
- Guard oneself and God's people against wolves within and without.
- Stand firm for God, the Bible, and righteousness in society.
- Maintain humility and deliver the pure Word and gospel.
- Make discipleship a priority to perpetuate deep, abiding faith.

Forum24 will meet on campus at Welch College March 3-5, 2024. Learn more: welch.edu. **ONE**

Welch College Receives High Athletic Awards From the NCCAA

Gallatin, TN—The National Christian College Athletic Association distributed the men and women's basketball awards at the National Basketball Championship Tournament in Joplin, Missouri, March 8-9. Welch College Athletic Director and men's basketball coach Greg Fawbush was named National Coach of the Year for the NCCAA II men's division. The award was his second significant award this season, previously named Mideast Region Coach of the year February 23, in Lansing, Michigan. Coach Fawbush led the Flames to a 19-win season and a top ten ranking on two separate occasions this season.

Abby Bragg received the Dr. Marti MacCullough Award for the NCCAA II women's division. The award, repre-

senting the NCCAA's Game Plan for Life initiative, is the highest award given each year. Although it includes athletic accolades, it is based primarily on Christian character and leadership. Abby is the all-time leading scorer for the Lady Flames and was First Team All-American last season. Maci Bowman and Olivia Delk were also named to the Second Team All-American.

These awards finished off a historic year for the Welch College athletic program. Mitchell Moody received the Elvin and Joyce King Award in cross country in November 2022, the highest award given in cross country by the NCCAA. The cross country team also had three runners qualify for the national meet: Mitchell Moody, Nathan

Shute, and Hannah Barnes. Moody also won the first Welch College Invitational race held in September 2022.


The Lady Flames volleyball team made history by winning the regional tournament and qualifying for the national tournament. Ashleigh Sage was named Regional Player of the Year and First Team All-American. Meg Gates and Michaela Pinkerman were named Second Team All-Region. Kenadee Osbourne made the all-regional honorable mention team.

The Lady Flames basketball team was ranked in the top ten in every ranking this year. They also received several awards:

- Olivia Delk, First Team All-Region, Regional Newcomer of the Year, and Second Team All-American
- Macey Bowman, First Team All-Region and Second Team All-American
- Abby Bragg, Second Team All-Region and Game Plan for Life award winner
- Faithe Johnstone, regional Freshman of the Year

The Flames basketball team won 19 games for the first time since returning to full-time NCCAA play. They were ranked in the top ten twice throughout and produced two five-game winning streaks throughout the season. JC Chapman was named First Team All-Region, EJ Byrd made Third Team All-Region, and DJ Estes made the regional honorable mention team.

“This was a historic year for the athletic program at Welch College,” Fawbush said. “We had two athletes receive the highest awards in their respective sports from the NCCAA. We also had three All-Americans and a regional championship. The historic year is attributed to the hard work of our coaches: Katie Bryan, Emma Guthrie, Matt Bracey, Jon Wilson, Malik Mims, Claire Ryan, and Joy Brown. Our players embraced our culture this year, and God honored their hard work.”

For more information regarding Welch College athletics, contact Greg Fawbush (fawbush@welch.edu) or visit welchatletics.com. 

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MEAL PLAN

Country Ham
Summer Salad With Lettuce
Field Peas — Deviled Eggs
Homemade Biscuits
Tea/Coffee
Gold Chiffon Cake

Mix ingredients; chill in refrigerator until firm; serve on lettuce.

✝ ALL ONE IN CHRIST

In Christ there is no east
nor west,
In Him no south nor north,
But one great fellowship of love
Throughout the whole wide earth.
In Him shall true hearts
everywhere
Their high communion find—
His service is the golden cord
Close-binding all mankind.

Join hands, then, brothers of
the faith,
Whate'er your race may be!
Who serves my Father as a son
Is surely kin to me.
In Christ now meet both east
and west,
In Him meet south and north,
All Christly souls are one in Him
Throughout the whole wide earth.

—William J. Dunkerly (1852-1941)



Welch Graduates Are Citizens of Two Cities

BY KEVIN L. HESTER

A college education is often thought to be ultimately about getting a job. Welch College graduates do that and more. Ninety-six percent of Welch graduates in the last five years are employed. Job satisfaction rates (89%) and employment in the field of education (69%) indicate a Welch College education prepares graduates for the work force as well as any other institution. But a Welch education is about more than a job. Welch desires to help its graduates come to understand their place as citizens in the “city of God” and the “city of man,” to use the language of Augustine of Hippo.

The mission of Welch College is “to educate leaders to serve Christ, His Church, and His world through biblical thought and life.” Welch College has labored tirelessly to inculcate this mission in students as expressed in its institutional objectives. Welch measures success in meeting these objectives in a number of ways, but one of the most significant is the biennial Survey of Recent College Graduates. This survey is administered to college graduates from the last five years. The most recent survey was conducted in late fall 2022. Some of the most striking findings from this report are detailed below.

Leadership for the Culture

In 2020, as part of Welch College’s decennial reaffirmation process with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, Welch announced a Quality Enhancement Plan centered on principles of civic leadership. This new initiative, titled “CITIZENS: Civic

Literacy, Civic Discernment, and Civic Engagement,” was designed to help students bring the values of Christ’s Kingdom to bear on the surrounding culture.

The college created a new general education course to introduce civics from a Christian perspective. In addition, the college identified various new, civic-oriented learning opportunities through Christian service. Finally, several co-curricular offerings such as Constitution Day, voter registration emphases, and blood drives highlighted Christian views on citizenship and service. These efforts appear to be bearing fruit in the voting habits of graduates and in their engagement in volunteer service in their communities.

Ninety-six percent of Welch College graduates over the past five years have registered to vote. In the most recent mid-term national election, almost 75% of those same graduates voted. But these students aren’t simply interested in national issues. Well over half (58%) of these students voted in their most recent local elections. These





numbers demonstrate Welch College graduates are engaged in the political process and committed to making their voices heard.

Various news and media outlets have touted the growth in voting habits by this age demographic, celebrating that 27% of voters under age 30 cast a ballot in the most recent national election.¹ The last presidential election estimated the voting percentage for this age demographic at 50%.² While impressive, this pales in comparison to 75% of Welch College graduates in the same age bracket who reported voting in the 2022 mid-term election.

Similar comparisons can be made when reviewing the volunteer service of Welch graduates. The most recent data on volunteering was gathered by the U.S. Census Bureau in its *2019 Current Population Survey: Civic Engagement and Volunteering Supplement*.³ The data was sponsored by Americorps and published December 2021.⁴ It reported approximately 30% of Americans volunteer time for various organizations including churches. Demographics impacted this number significantly. Baby Boomers volunteered at 31%, Generation X at 35%, and Millennials at 28%. The census further reported approximately 17% of those ages 20-30 volunteered.

While Welch College graduates demonstrate a robust employment rate (96%), and many are engaged in graduate education (46%), they also reported volunteering at a rate of 37.5%. (Further, this number does not include volunteering at church, although it is included in the nationwide volunteerism rates cited above). Not only do Welch College graduates exceed their peer group by 20%, but their volunteer work also surpasses the national average and the average for all other demographic categories. These graduates take seriously the commitment learned at Welch College to “serve Christ, His Church, and His world” with 66% of them indicating their experiences at Welch were instrumental in encouraging their ongoing commitment to community service.

1 <https://thehill.com/changing-america/respect/diversity-inclusion/3730922-researchers-say-2022-election-had-second-highest-young-voter-turnout-in-last-30-years>

2 <https://circle.tufts.edu/latest-research/half-youth-voted-2020-11-point-increase-2016>

3 https://www.census.gov/data/datasets/time-series/demo/cps/cps-suppl_cps-repwgt/cps-volunteer.html

4 <https://americorps.gov/evidence-exchange/key-findings-2019-current-population-survey-civic-engagement-volunteering>

Leadership for the Church

Welch College celebrates these successes among its graduates, yet its core focus always has been service to the church. Serving our neighbors and fulfilling our civic duties are important parts of a Welch College education, but service to Christ and His Church has always been the heart and core of our mission.

Welch graduates are active church members and regular attenders. Ninety-four percent of all respondents reported regular engagement in their local congregation. This compares to the 39% average weekly attendance of those age 24-38 in *Barna's 2022 Weekly Church Attendance Survey*.⁵ But Welch graduates don't simply attend; they serve! Almost half (46%) of male graduates in the last five years report being actively engaged in preaching ministry. Almost half serve as teachers (49%) or in children's ministry (46%). Thirty-nine percent are involved in music ministry, and 39% are specifically engaged in disciple-making ministry. They attested to Welch College's contribution in preparing them for their active service as well. Ninety-one percent of all respondents indicated the ministry training they received met their expectations, and 96% said Welch College's biblical and theological studies prepared them for the ministries in which they are engaged.

A Welch College education isn't just about the numbers; it's ultimately about the people. As I read these reports, I am encouraged by the difference our graduates are making in their churches and communities. I am thankful for the support of our denomination. It is only as you pray for us, provide for us, and point your children toward attendance that Welch College can complete its mission. This mission is ultimately fulfilled when graduates are supporting our denomination as Christian leaders committed to loving God and loving others as themselves. Jesus told us the Kingdom of God is like a mustard seed. Small things can produce mighty results. May this seed continue to grow and bear fruit for His Kingdom. **ONE**

About the Author: Dr. Kevin Hester is senior professor of divinity, dean of the School of Theology, and program coordinator for theological studies at Welch College. He is also a member of the Free Will Baptist Commission for Theological Integrity. Learn more: FWBTheology.com.

5 <https://www.barna.com/research/church-attendance-2022/>



GOD *of* PROM

BY LAURA HEMBREE ★★★★★★★★★★

Twelve years ago, my husband Shaun asked me a question that changed the course of our lives: “What do you think about my being a military chaplain?”

I wish I could say I had some Spirit-filled response and bubbled with enthusiasm at the thought of this work. In reality, my reaction was closer to the biblical character Sarah. Perhaps you remember in Genesis when she overheard three men telling Abraham she would have a son within a year. She thought it impossible to have a child in her old age; in much the same way, I thought it impossible to change the course of our cozy, happy life. As newlyweds, we had already made a major move to Washington and, after living there two years, returned to Oklahoma. We had an infant son and a three-year-old daughter and were searching for the perfect home to put down roots in Oklahoma.

In that moment, I could only think of all the reasons this sounded like a bad idea. I dismissed his question and let

him know I was not on board. He accepted my response and did not mention it to me again.

Months went by, and we bought a house in Shaun's hometown of Haskell. Not long after moving into our new home, the Lord began to work on my heart.

Chaplain ministry would

come up in some way or another in what I was reading or in conversations I had. As time passed, I read verses like Jeremiah 29:11 and knew I was reading God's promises that He would be with me on this journey.

After many months of not bringing up the subject, I approached Shaun and let him know if he still felt led to pursue chaplain ministry, I was at peace. We talked about it, prayed over it, and decided we would continue seeking God for a confirmation.

In November 2012, during a Veteran's Day service, our pastor's sermon spoke directly to Shaun and me. Repeatedly, our pastor addressed specific things about which we had been praying and seeking the Lord's guidance. We both knew we had received our confirmation. From that moment, we began to take active steps toward a chaplain ministry. We called North American Ministries and active chaplains. We received encouragement and helpful advice on which direction we needed to go.

Shaun first needed to complete the educational requirements, a Master of Divinity, so he enrolled in classes the following January. Going back to school is hard. Going back to school while raising four children and working full time is even harder! We soon discovered how difficult it is to balance all the responsibilities well.

Throughout this journey, we were encouraged by the reminder in Philippians 1:6 that we could be confident, because the God who began a good work in us would faithfully perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. I can look back to that November day when we surrendered to God's calling and see God's hand in every step of this journey.

It would be false of me to say this process has been all sunshine and rainbows. We experienced times of both blessing and trial, but in all circumstances—good and bad—we saw God's faithfulness. Through every obstacle along this path, we stood on the promise that God called us to chaplain ministry, and He would walk alongside us, helping us complete the work at hand.

When my husband submitted his paperwork to become a Chaplain Candidate in the Oklahoma Army National Guard, he did not pass his hearing test at MEPS (Military Entrance Processing Station). That raised many questions and doubts for us because Shaun only had one more chance to pass the hearing test. He asked our home church to lay hands on him and pray for him to pass. On Sunday evening, January 27, 2019, our pastor anointed Shaun with oil, and the church prayed for his hearing. The next day, Shaun took the hearing test again and passed! My pastor's wife shared the great news in an email to the church. I have kept that email to remind myself that God *is* faithful!

He has proven that again and again. When we needed encouragement, He sent people along with the right words. During moments when we wondered how to pay for school and support a growing family, Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides, would show up. We learned to trust God at His word. What He says, He will do. What He has spoken, He will fulfill.

Shaun completed his Master of Divinity degree during the summer of 2022. I relate well to the waiting Abraham and Sarah endured. I did not have to wait for a promised son, but I understand waiting for a promise to be fulfilled. I know what it means to learn about God and myself. I learned to overcome personal struggles during this season

ISES



of waiting. I grappled with questions about whether we heard God right: “Did He *really* promise us this?”

I imagine Abraham and Sarah went through a similar experience of learning about themselves and how to trust God. I like to imagine they remained faithful because God had made a promise to them, and they clung to the hope God would fulfill His promise. Genesis reveals Abraham and Sarah went through a process to reach the place where they fully trusted God and His promise. They had their own personal struggles and doubts to overcome, but through it all, they remained faithful to God and allowed Him to work in them. Ultimately, He used them for His purposes.

I love that, in spite laughing at what she heard and then denying it, Sarah is listed in Hebrews 11 with other heroes of faith. She had her own questions regarding how God would work things out for them, but she received credit for her faithfulness. Sarah grew in her faith and learned to trust God at His word. Despite my reservations at the thought of chaplain ministry, through God’s patience with my growing heart during our season of waiting, I am now excited about the road ahead.

Shaun recently was selected to begin active duty. From the beginning of this journey, Shaun and I felt drawn to full-time chaplaincy. We received this great news right before Thanksgiving, and it brought us so much joy. We are so close to ending one journey and starting another. Our family will face new obstacles, but I am confident God will be with us. The lyrics of the song “Promises” encourage me: “Though storms may come and the winds may blow, I’ll remain steadfast. And let my heart learn when You speak a word, it will come to pass. Great is Your faithfulness to me.”

Whatever comes our way, I hold tightly to the One who began this good work in us and will see it completed. I’m anchoring my life on that promise, for He is the God who keeps His promises. [ONE](#)

**Through God’s
patience with my
growing heart
during our season
of waiting, I am
now excited about
the road ahead.**

About the Author: Laura Hembree is the wife of Chaplain (CPT) Shaun Hembree and a mother of four. She has experience in many aspects of ministry: church planting, church pianist, and children’s ministry. Laura loves playing the piano, guitar, and dulcimer.

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I Only Have Two Hands...

BY JAMES*

I didn't know Kevin well. He was a semester behind me in language classes. When we met at university orientation, he asked me how to renew his student visa, something I had done only a few months earlier. I gave him my number in case he had any more questions, but that was our only interaction, until one day...

I was getting a coffee on lunch break, when Kevin walked up and said, "Hey, James! I hear you're a Christian. I'm Turkish and grew up a Muslim, and I like talking about religious things. Would you share what you believe?"

What an opportunity! As a Christian studying at a secular, French university, a young Turkish Muslim student basically said, "Will you share the gospel with me?" We went outside, sat on the curb, and began talking about our beliefs. Kevin made a strange statement: "I know I'm not really a Muslim now, but I want to die a Muslim."

As an American, the words, "I want to die a Muslim," sent up red flags and started sirens screaming in my head! But I quickly realized Kevin was trying to say, "I know I'm not living right, but I want to have a right relationship with God when I die." *Muslim* was the only way he knew to express that desire.

As we continued talking about differences between Islam and Christianity, Kevin made a rather bold statement. He said, "James, I feel Islam is a *stronger* religion than Christianity."

I inquired, "What do you mean?"

Kevin didn't mince words. "In Islam, if you're caught stealing, they cut off your hand." He admitted the punishment is rarely practiced anymore but remains the consequence in "true Islam." He continued, "If a woman is caught in adultery, she is stoned to death. Islam has strong consequences to keep people from sinning, and I think that makes it a strong religion. What are the 'consequences' in Christianity?"

I sat for a moment with no idea how to respond. In the States, we learn about God's grace and love and Jesus' sacrifice, but I rarely consider consequences. I prayed desperately for words. I didn't want to throw out a "pat answer" without appropriate context.

Suddenly, it was as though the Holy Spirit whispered, "You

need to tell this young man about Hell." "What?!" I prayed. "God, this is my *first* spiritual conversation with this young *Muslim* man who I *don't know* well!" The Holy Spirit still nudged, "Yes, I want you to tell him about Hell."

So, I told Kevin, "Christians believe humans are fallen creatures. If the Bible instructed us to go around chopping off hands or stoning people, we would often get that wrong. However, in Christianity, whether you steal something, commit adultery, tell a 'little white lie,' or murder someone, the consequence for any sin is eternity in Hell, separated from God. If I had to choose between getting my hand cut off or spending an eternity in Hell, I believe Hell is the stronger consequence!"

To my surprise, Kevin responded positively. "Oh yes! In Islam, we believe in Hell, too. But we believe you're born in a 'good place' with God. When you sin, it knocks you down, but with good works, or by getting your hand cut off, you are put back in the right place where you can go to paradise."

I looked at Kevin and asked, "But, man, how much have you sinned?"

He quietly nodded.

I said, "Me too. I've sinned more times than I can count, and the problem is *I only have two hands!* I can't pay for my own sins. That is why I believe Jesus had to be God! Only Jesus, by being God and living a perfect life, could be a perfect sacrifice and pay for the sins of the world." I shared a simple gospel message: Jesus was the perfect sacrifice, and by trusting in His death, burial, and resurrection, we can be right with God and go to Heaven.

I was late to my next French class, but I know my teammates and God are okay with that. I wish Kevin accepted Christ that day, but he didn't. He's still searching. He is watching me and other believers, and he knows our lifestyle is different. I've shared the gospel with him on other occasions. Please pray Kevin would come to accept that the price—the penalty—of his sins were paid through the Cross. **ONE**

About the Author: James works with Muslim immigrants and students in France. *For security reasons, all names in this article have been changed. Please visit THP.org to learn more.

The Problem With Porn in Gen Z and How to Defeat It

BY CHRIS DAVENPORT

The following article returns to the series: “Reaching Gen Z With the Gospel.” The subject matter is difficult but necessary. Pornography is clearly a problem, even among Christians. If we are going to reach Gen Z with the gospel, we must first address our own failures and learn how to defeat temptation ourselves. This will better position us to reach rising generations with the saving power of Jesus Christ.

Ted Bundy, who brutally raped and murdered over 30 women, said in an interview, “I’m not blaming porn for my actions, but it started with an addiction to porn.” When pornography no longer fulfilled Bundy’s needs, his depravity escalated into a murder spree.

Pornography is a problem that needs to be defeated. Webroot.com reveals that “over 40 million American people regularly visit pornography sites, and 35% of all internet downloads are related to pornography.”

Pornography can ruin lives. It causes viewers to see people as mere objects and dehumanizes those involved in producing porn: single mothers and fathers in need of money, sex slaves, people who believe they have no value, and those who have only found acceptance by creating X-rated videos.

Pornography is not only used by adults. It has made its way into children’s hands, especially those in Generation Z (born 1997-2012). Access to pornography on handheld devices has made it more accessible than

at any other time in history. By age nine, pornography had already taken over my life. My friends' parents and family members had adult tapes and magazines to which I, as a curious kid, had easy access. I never remember any conversations about sex or pornography in my household or school, and because of this, viewing pornography easily turned into an addiction that spiraled out of control.

I hope this article will encourage churches and families not to be afraid to talk about pornography. It is a real problem, but one rarely discussed in churches and Christian homes because of discomfort or not knowing the information to help defeat the addiction. This article also provides some practical ways to defeat pornography by removing those addictions and placing safeguards and boundaries in our churches and homes.

The first way to defeat pornography is **to talk about it**. We cannot be afraid to speak out against this stronghold of Satan. Your church should hold conferences, seminars, and yearly sermon series dedicated to the dangers of pornography and strategies to fight back and defeat it. Men and women's small groups and Bible studies should hold one another accountable in this area. According to *Covenant Eyes*, 64% of Christian men view pornography. Other sources cite up to 90% of men regularly view some type of pornography.

This problem has risen over the past few years. Pornography has been a major contributing factor in gender confusion for Generation Z. And it is a serious problem. According to *Meet Generation Z* by James Emory White, as many as 48% of younger members of Gen Z now identify as being "something other" than 100% heterosexual.

In our homes, not only should spouses hold one another accountable, but they should also speak openly with their children about sexuality, biblical standards, and the challenges created by our sinful culture. We must go past the "birds and bees" and tackle hard conversations that will save lives and relationships.

In high school, right after I gave my life to Christ, I knew I desperately needed to defeat pornography. A friend wanted to help me defeat this problem, too, and gave me a list of Bible verses to memorize. If you want to defeat pornography in your life, you must **memorize Scripture**.

I think about Jesus, who was tempted by Satan just like we are. Every time Satan presented a temptation, Jesus always quoted Scripture in response. Pornography is an

addiction that becomes a daily battle, which turns into a temptation that needs the power of God's words. Quoting Bible verses when tempted not only helps remove the urge to view pornography but also helps remove the images you've seen in the past.

A third way to defeat pornography is to **have an accountability partner**. This individual may need to check on you every day, and you must be completely honest about the addiction. Satan would love for you to hide your struggle, but you must share every detail with your accountability partner.

It's not enough to tell your accountability partner when you mess up. You should both suffer the consequence. What is something you dislike doing so much it will prevent you from slipping? My accountability partner and I both hated running, so when I messed up, we both had to run set distances, which helped greatly in defeating this temptation.

A final way to defeat pornography is to **download *Covenant Eyes***, an app that sends reports to you and your accountability partner regarding what you have viewed online. That way, if you have a problem with honesty, your partner will know what you've watched and when you watched it and can confront as necessary.

These are four simple, practical ways to defeat pornography in your life or to help others in their struggle. Breaking the power of porn is not easy, even with the best strategies. Just remember, because God defeated death, He can defeat anything that leads to death in your life. **ONE**

About the Author: Chris Davenport is the pastor of The Bridge Church in Fredericksburg, Virginia. Before serving at The Bridge, Chris and his wife Megan worked with Carl and Cynthia Spruill at the Free Will Baptist church plant in Kaneohe, Hawaii. Chris graduated from Welch College with a B.S. in missions, and Megan studied nursing at Tennessee State University. The couple has one daughter, Lily.

4 Practical Ways to Defeat Pornography

- 1 Talk about it.
- 2 Memorize Scripture.
- 3 Have an accountability partner.
- 4 Download *Covenant Eyes*.

Master's Men Celebrates Another Great Golf Tournament



Championship 1st Place
Tim Baumgarten
and Don Dease

Dothan, AL—Sixty-four golfers from eight states traveled to Dothan, Alabama, March 29-31 for the annual Master's Men Deep South Golf Tournament. Director Ken Akers shared his thankfulness for the great weather enjoyed during this year's tournament: "This was one of the best years we've ever had. The mornings started cool but warmed up nicely." Akers noted that while scores were not as good the first day, they improved throughout the tournament.

Between the competitive rounds of golf, players enjoyed great fellowship over excellent food. This year, every golfer also left with at least one prize and the usual Deep South participant's bag.

In one of the closest finishes in the tournament's history, Tim Baumgarten and Don Dease finished a single stroke ahead of second-place team Tommy Ellis and Brandon Beecher, followed by Cage Ellis and Randy Perry to round out the championship flight.

Johnny Waters and Bobby Jackson finished first in the first flight, followed by Riley Young and Todd Tilley. Cliff Donoho and Marc Hartline scored first in the second flight, followed by Tom Dooley and Mike Rapp.

"This year, we were happy several father-son teams participated," noted Akers. "We appreciate all our golfers and sponsors and look forward to doing it all again next year."

For the latest Deep South updates, visit www.FWBMastersMen.org. **ONE**

Master's Men Announces Plans for IMPACT Raleigh

Antioch, TN—Master's Men continues to develop plans for IMPACT Raleigh to be held Saturday, July 15, in Raleigh, North Carolina, in conjunction with this year's National Convention.

In one project, IMPACT volunteers will work with a nonprofit in the Raleigh area—With Love From Jesus—sorting, stocking shelves, and organizing donations. A second group of volunteers will work with a local church in various ways.

Visit www.FWBMastersMen.org for ongoing updates and to register for this year's IMPACT. **ONE**



Championship 2nd Place
Tommy Ellis and
Brandon Beecher



Championship 3rd Place
Cage Ellis and
Randy Perry



First Flight 1st Place
Johnny Waters
and Bobby Jackson



First Flight 2nd Place
Riley Young
and Todd Tilley



Second Flight 1st Place
Cliff Donoho and
Marc Hartline



Second Flight 2nd Place
Tom Dooley
and Mike Rapp



Facts ABOUT Feelings

BY BRENDA EVANS

A friend recently said, “Feelings are not facts.” I agreed because she’s a good and wise friend, but later, I questioned the statement. After we each went on our way, I couldn’t let go of the feeling that, somehow, my good friend was dead wrong.

Often, feelings *feel* like facts. Even the most negative feelings can seem supported by evidence and genuinely threatening, not imagined. But social scientists and psychologists assert our normal tendency is to accept the most extreme version of pain, injury, or disaster. The most extreme version may not be the true version. In addition, there’s our usual “confirmation bias,” the tendency of ours to look only for whatever confirms what we’re already thinking.

Fear is an example. It’s a strong emotional motivator that often drives me to feel edgy, tense, or anxious. I am also a not-proud-of-myself worrywart. Too often, I plant “worry seeds” and go on to water, cultivate, and grow them into a thriving field of *what-ifs*. What if this, what if that—on and on, until my fear feels warranted, whether it is or not.

Consider the Alaskan willow ptarmigan. In winter, the ptarmigan’s best protection against arctic wolves and gyrfalcons is white feathers on white snow. In a threat, a flock of ptarmigans scatter, each skittering alone across the snow to a solitary place. The lone ptarmigan’s next move is no move—absolute stillness. Outwardly, she freezes, crouching with head



down, eyes open, and simply waiting. Inwardly, her heart rate and respiration increase.

Scrub trees in arctic tundra give no substantial protection or defensive shelter, so the ptarmigan counts on her white feathers and stillness to hide her in the snow. She avoids flight because she's too halting. When aloft, she limps and stammers through the air. On the ground, she skitters well. Her feathery feet become winter "snowshoes," nearly doubling foot surface, so she runs, hunkers down, and waits. When it turns night, she flutters a short distance and burrows her way into the snow, alone and safe in her private snow cave.

Run, stay invisible, keep still, burrow: these are the ptarmigan's way of dealing with fear.

I understand hunkering down, burrowing, staying invisible. Heart racing, gasping for air, trying not to give myself away—trying not to show I'm secretly scared to death.

I even *try* to flutter and claw my way into a cave to stay safe, to avoid people's prying questions, admonitions, or condemnations. To keep off their radar. To be strong and courageous—to be a "snow chicken" which is what some people call the ptarmigan.

I say *try* because I'm not certain I would make a good snow chicken. I'm no good at going it alone like the ptarmigan—skittering away from the flock, counting only on herself, white feathers, and the God-given white snow.

While my mind tells me I have a deep streak of independence—or at least the desire for it—my heart says I have a much deeper streak of fear. This is especially true when it comes to isolation and its menacing sidekick, loneliness. Together, they feel like a bottomless chasm I might stumble into. Add the statistical warnings that many of us married women will live our final years alone. Indeed, I already number more widows than widowers among my friends. And that's a fact!

In January, I got a notice from my retirement fund with a "life expectancy divisor" for 2023 used to calculate my required minimum distribution for the year. It was 19.4. At first, that figure didn't even make me blink. Then I looked at it again and blinked twice. Next, my jaw dropped about six inches. Finally, I asked my husband Bill if I understood the figure correctly. He said I did.

As of this year, my retirement fund is prepared to send me retirement money for another 19.4 years—until I'm 99 and a half. Fear raises its head when I think about that. Actually, it's worry. How many long years might I go on alone? Bill's life expectancy is shorter; plus, he's older than I am. Can I be a determined "snow chicken" and go on alone? I don't know. Many of my friends are "snow chickens"—going on alone, I mean. And that's a fact.

Bottom line: I need factual and biblical ways to analyze and deal with my feelings. Here are four.

Feelings are often as unstable as sand. They move and shift, or become fixations that fling us up, then fling us down. The author of a recent memoir bragged she was among those who "worry well." She is a knitter and used the word *unraveling* both as a metaphor for worry and as a literal practice she sometimes uses to correct bad stitches. To her, worry (even if it means emotionally unraveling) is a good thing. I have not found this to be true.

For me, worry is an addictive nuisance, but even worse, a destructive habit and often a sin. If you think about it, worry is usually centered around the desire to control the future and make it happy, trouble-free, and 100% good. My worry won't, and can't, do that. In my better moments, I remember what Jesus said: "In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world" (John 16:33b). He governs the world and my life for good. I don't. But His governance is for *ultimate good*, not so that everything happening to me now is good. That's what Romans 8:28 means. That's a fact.

Feelings often look at life through a false loupe. A *loupe* is the small magnifying device used by jewelers, watchmakers, dentists, and many others to see details closely and clearly. It's held close to the eye—generally one eye only. A false loupe is flawed, clouded, or distorted and gives an untrue view.

Feelings are often a false loupe. They cloud, skew, or misrepresent facts. When I feel cranky, what I see through my one-eyed loupe may be fouled up. All the world looks mean, malevolent, or uncaring. Remember Saul's warped feelings for David the musician? He was looking through a false loupe and threw javelins as a result. Let's not throw javelins. That's a fact.

Feelings are a good and gracious gift from God. Authors Carolyn Manahey and Nicole Whitacre said it this way:

Our wise Creator embedded emotions into our humanity...and when He surveyed His creation and called it good, He didn't mutter under His breath, 'except for emotions!'...Just as our minds enable us to think, and our wills enable us to choose, so our emotions enable us to respond.

That's a fact.

God gave us feelings because He Himself is a feeling God. Our emotions are made in our Creator's image (Genesis 1:27). Yahweh expressed anger, grief, sadness, frustration, love, and even jealousy throughout the Old Testament. Jesus' life was messy. Emotionally, He was jerked this way and that—so much love and joy, disappointment and grief. Then there is the Holy Spirit and the fruit He wants to grow in us—nine kinds in Galatians 5:22-23 alone—most of them holy, emotional fruit to feed and nurture our spiritual lives. That's a fact.

What can we do about our feelings?

- 1. Acknowledge** they are good but may be flawed and not based on facts.
- 2. Manage** and rule over them, not them over us. Avoid knee-jerk responses. Refuse scattered black thoughts and untidy emotional clutter. Practice Philippians 4:8.
- 3. Pray with Zephaniah:** "Quiet me, O Lord" (3:17). Or pray with David and other Psalmists, or the many prayers of Paul in his letters. Stay open to Paul's prayer words. Let them affect your heart of hearts.
- 4. Cling to the fact of who Jesus is.** As author Karen Sargent says, "He is all-knowing when I don't know, all-powerful when I am powerless, and ever-present when I don't feel Him."

That's a fact. May we never forget it. **ONE**

About the Author: Brenda Evans and Bill, her husband of 60 years, live and work on the banks of Rockhouse Fork in Ashland, Kentucky. Contact her at beejayevans@windstream.net.

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Curriculum Discipleship Plan

Summer 2023 Scope and Sequence

- June 4** God Restores His People (Ezra 1:1-11; 2:64-70)
- June 11** God's People Respond to Needs (Nehemiah 1:1-2:20)
- June 18** Overcoming Opposition (Nehemiah 4-7)
- June 25** Reverence for God's Word (Nehemiah 8:1-18)
- July 2** The Supremacy of Christ (Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:1-18; 4:4-16)
- July 9** The Sacrifice of Christ (Hebrews 9-10)
- July 16** God's People Live by Faith (Hebrews 11:1-40)
- July 23** Passing On the Faith (Titus 2)
- July 30** Walking in Light and Truth (1,2,3 John)
- August 6** God Is Love (1 John 4:8, 16; Psalm 40:11; Ephesians 2:4; John 3:16; Romans 5:8)
- August 13** God's Word to the Church (Revelation 2:1-3:22)
- August 20** God Is Worthy of Worship (Revelation 4:1-5:14)
- August 27** Heaven (Revelation 21:1-22:5)



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Inflated

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

Inflation is on everyone's mind right now. Last year was the worst year for inflation in the U.S. since 1981. The average rate for 2022 was 8% but topped out in June at 9.1%.

It might surprise you to know the record for annual inflation in America was 18% in 1918. The government began measuring inflation in 1914. In the years following World War I, the nation experienced five years of double-digit inflation in a row followed by negative inflation of 6.1% in 1922.

Disinflation returned in 1927, continued through the first few years of the Great Depression, and ended in 1934 when it again turned positive (with only a slightly negative downturn in 1938 and 1939). From that time to today, the nation has experienced some measure of positive inflation every year, with the exceptions of 1949, 1955, and 2009, when it was only slightly negative.

Many people recall the 1970s and early 1980s as a terrible period for inflation. From 1973 to 1982, inflation averaged 8.75% annually. The worst year was 1980 at 13.5%. Three other double-digit inflation years took place during that period: 1974 at 11%; 1979 at 11.3%; and 1981 at 10.3%. During the 1980s, the Federal Reserve took aggressive action to bring inflation under control.

Paul Volker became the chairman of the Federal Reserve in August 1979 and began to raise rates aggressively. The Federal Funds rate was already 11% when he took office. In September, he raised it .5%, an aggressive move at the time, but we hadn't seen anything yet!

On October 8, the rate jumped again by 1.5% only to rise more aggressively 14 days later by 2.5%. In only two months, the Federal Funds rate went up 4.5%, from 11% to 15.5%. The rate began to fluctuate but reached a peak of 20% on four occasions in 1980-81. This aggressive action caused two recessions: a short one in 1980 from January to July and a deep recession starting in July 1981 and lasting until November 1982.



The pain caused by the Fed's actions were real. In 1979, the inflation rate was 11.3%, Gross Domestic Product (GDP, a measure of growth in the economy) was 3.2%, and unemployment was 6%. By 1982, those numbers were painfully worse except for the inflation rate, which was down to 6.2%. However, the GDP was -1.8% and unemployment reached 10.8%

Many (especially those who lost their jobs) consider the actions of the Fed unconscionable because it caused so much pain to the economy. The reality: the actions of Paul Volker set the stage for one of the longest and largest growth periods in U.S. history by finally taming inflation. His actions tamped down inflation for 37 years, or until it reared its head again in 2021.

Looking to these lessons of the past, the Federal Reserve has determined inflation must be tamed once again. Once again, there will be pain, although not as destructive as that experienced in the 1980s. On the bright side, we will all be better off when we get inflation back under control. **ONE**

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

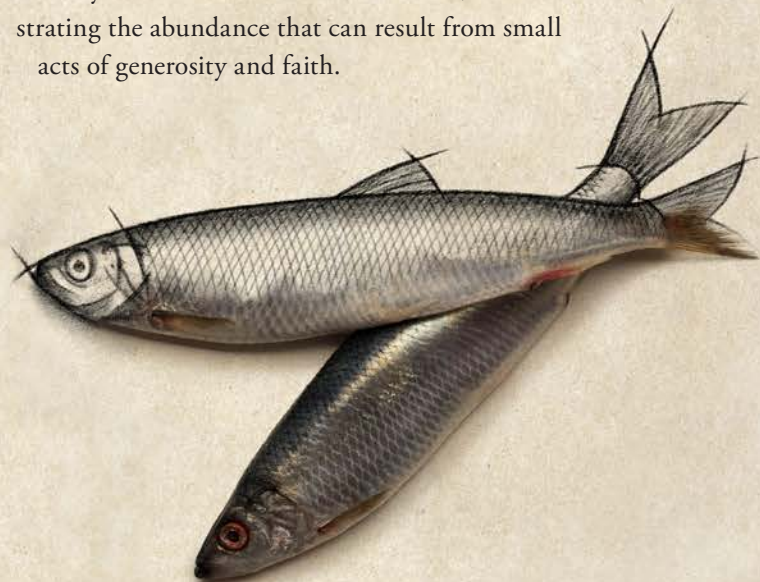
Compounding Possibilities

BY CHRIS COMPTON

Small, seemingly insignificant acts can have an impact beyond anything imagined. For example, a kind word, simple gesture, or thoughtful deed can brighten another's day or even change his or her outlook on life. Drinking more water, taking a short walk each day, and cutting back on sugar can lead to increased energy, better sleep, and improved physical health.

Breaking down big goals into smaller, manageable steps can help us achieve success over time. Small actions and changes may seem insignificant on their own, but when combined with others and repeated consistently over time, they can have a profound impact on our lives and the lives of those around us.

The Bible is full of stories where small things made a big impact. Consider David's faith, courage, and the smooth, small stone in his defeat of Goliath—how it inspired the Israelite army to victory. Or the widow who gave two small coins in the Temple treasury and received Jesus' praise for her faith and generosity. Recall when Jesus fed five thousand with only five loaves of bread and two fish, demonstrating the abundance that can result from small acts of generosity and faith.



It is also true small things can have a big impact in life and in ministry. The Lord gifts all believers with time, talents, and resources to be used for the furthering of His Kingdom. No matter how small or insignificant we think our gifts are, God can multiply them by His strength to produce a great impact in our lives and on the world around us.

This principle is not only true in life and ministry but in savings as well. When it comes to retirement savings, time and compounding interest are your friends! You probably have heard the term compound interest, but what does it mean? *Compound interest* works by allowing your savings to earn interest not only on the principal invested, but also on the interest earned over time. As your savings grow, the amount of interest earned also increases, accelerating your savings growth.

Consider a 25-year-old who puts aside \$3,000 per year toward retirement for a decade. That is basically \$58 dollars a week for ten years. Or \$30,000 for those of you doing the math. After 10 years, at age 35, the individual stops making contributions completely. By age 65, the \$30,000 investment will have accumulated \$472,000 (assuming 8% annual return).

Now consider a 35-year-old who starts putting away \$3,000 per year for 30 years, or \$90,000. At age 65 the investor will have accumulated \$367,000 assuming the same 8% annual return, a difference of \$105,000. Plus, this person had to contribute \$60,000 more money for less return.

As you can see from this example, time is the key ingredient for compound interest. The more time compound interest can work, the more powerful it becomes. The earlier you begin saving for retirement, the more time your money has to grow. It is best to start saving as early as possible, even if it's a small amount. The power of compound interest can turn your small savings into a substantial nest egg over time.

Don't wait! God can use us and our money in a compounding way for ministry, both now and in the future. **ONE**

About the Author: Chris Compton is accounting administrator for the Board of Retirement. He graduated in 2007 with an M.A. in Bible exposition from Columbia International University. A 1998 graduate of East Tennessee State University, he has over 18 years of administrative/financial experience in varied fields and seven years in pastoral ministry.

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D6 EveryDay Foundations



We're excited to share with you the next iteration of D6 EveryDay curriculum—**D6 EveryDay Foundations**, launching September 2023!



In this day of eroding morals and shifting values, how do you equip people to stand for truth? A confident knowledge of God's Word and a clear understanding of how to apply it for real life is essential. *D6 EveryDay Foundations* provides solid biblical exegesis, applied scriptural principles, and detailed studies of key Old and New Testament characters. This foundation of Christ and the unshakeable Word of God constructs a solid groundwork for one's faith.

D6 EveryDay Foundations curriculum helps build confidence in the unchanging, enduring, and authoritative Word of God. The three-year curriculum plan explores key passages of the Old and New Testaments, emphasizing major characters and themes, and applying God's Word to current cultural issues.

But is what we learn at church enough? No! Even if a student never misses a single Sunday, the challenge of being rooted and grounded in Scripture is too much for curriculum alone. We must depend on at-home partnership with families and the faithful work of the Holy Spirit, so truth goes beyond head knowledge to heart knowledge, anchored in a permanent place. Combining at-church and at-home tools, D6 helps churches equip parents with mortar for the building blocks of faith.

Before we look at what is new, consider what is NOT changing, the features that set D6 Curriculum above others:

- High view of Scripture
- Church and home emphasis and resources
- Family alignment and resources for every age
- Practical biblical application
- Intentional focus on developing biblical literacy and a biblical worldview

New Features and Enhancements

***D6 EveryDay Foundations* will be published in two-month blocks rather than 13-week quarters, so you'll order six times a year instead of four.**

Why this change?

Research and surveys reveal many churches and groups prefer four to ten week Bible studies over longer studies. Beginning in September 2023, *D6 EveryDay Foundations* will transition to two-month blocks, while still following a three-year scope and sequence.



These six, two-month blocks provide:

- More starting points to make it easier for newcomers to join existing classes and groups
- More times to emphasize and promote discipleship
- More opportunities to grow by starting new groups

The first block will cover September and October 2023. This coincides with the usual starting points for church and school schedules. The next block will cover November and December (replacing the awkward December-February quarter). January provides another natural starting point, so the January-February block offers a great opportunity to promote discipleship classes and groups during your New Year initiatives. *D6 EveryDay Foundations* will round out the year with the March-April block, May-June block, and July-August block.

D6 EveryDay Foundations facilitates new opportunities to grow and promote generational discipleship every two months, six opportunities every year for churches to:

- Promote discipleship initiatives
- Invite people to Sunday School or Life Groups
- Emphasize and encourage at-home discipleship through devotional study guides

D6 EveryDay Foundations will cover the same number of lessons every year, but in six blocks rather than four quarters. *Classic curriculum* will follow the same two-month block schedule, so churches using *D6* and *Classic* can order both together.



D6 EveryDay Foundations comes with new Teaching Essentials (replacing the current Teaching Resources).

We're expanding the usability of the teaching components (posters, handouts, take-home papers, and more) by offering one set of *Teaching Essentials* for each age range (not age group): pre-school, elementary, teen, and adult. Every set of *Teaching Essentials* will include a teaching guide (teacher/lesson book).

Teen and adult groups will use a hybrid *Teaching Guide Plus Essentials*. Teaching essentials are downloadable with the code in the teaching guide (no extra teaching essentials to order).

D6 EveryDay Foundations reduces the number of components, making it easier to know exactly what you need.

Why this change?

New *Teaching Essentials* accommodate a wider age range in a class and allow greater adaptability for students. We will continue to offer the appropriate devotional study guides for every age group:

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- *Adventure Guide* (grades K-2)
- *Explorer's Guide* (grades 3-5)
- *Velocity* (young teen/middle school)
- *Forward* (high school)
- *Brink* (young adults without children)
- *Fusion Family* (parents *with* children at home)
- *Fusion Next* (adults *without* children at home)
- We will continue to offer our *Bible Teacher* (spiral bound), *Bible Scholar*, and *Depth* in the *Classic* curriculum line.

D6 EveryDay Foundations provides new ordering options.

To make ordering easier, we're offering locked-in level billing for standing orders on a bank draft.

- Price rate will lock in for the duration of the three-year scope and sequence (10% adjustment allowed from the initial order without losing the locked-in rate)
- Curriculum cost for each block will be spread over two months (level billing) for easier budgeting
- Order and payment will be processed automatically, so you know your account is current and you receive your resources at the right time
- Obviously, a resource going from 13 lessons to 8 will be less expensive per unit, however purchasing 6 times a year rather than 4 will cost more. Locking in your rate will guarantee savings for the duration of the three-year curriculum cycle.

We are excited to see the impact these new enhancements in *D6 EveryDay Foundations* will have on our everyday lives. If you have any questions, our team is happy to help you: 800-877-7030 or randallhouse.com/contact. **ONE**

Leadership and Learning

BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.



Leadership and learning are two interdependent concepts that should not exist without each other. Effective leaders understand the importance of continual learning and personal development, which allow them to improve skills, gain new insights, and stay relevant in a constantly changing world. On the other hand, learning without leadership can lead to knowledge without direction or purpose. To be a successful leader, one must be committed to learning and personal growth, both vital components of effective leadership.

How do you identify areas where growth is needed? Leaders should reflect on current skills and identify areas for improvement. This inventory process could include evaluating communication, time management, delegation (or lack thereof), conflict resolution, strategic planning, and a host of other areas.

For most leaders, gaps in knowledge will be easy to spot. Narrow those areas down to one or two where you most want to develop and see improvement. Then seek opportunities to turn these weak areas into strengths over time. Progress will occur when you invest time in training, workshops, or conferences; reading books or articles; and in seeking feedback from

colleagues or mentors. Note: while leaders can learn from social media, often the material is too brief for long-term improvement. Instead, dive into a course where you find a teacher, coach, or mentor who can help you improve.

Practice and apply your newly acquired skills. Leaders should look for opportunities to test what they have learned in real-life situations. Practicing new skills develops muscle and mind memory, making them habits (hopefully good habits). Seeking feedback and evaluating progress move you toward your end goal. By continuously improving skills, leaders can stay ahead of the curve and provide better support to team members and organizations. **ONE**

About the Columnist: Ron Hunter Jr. has a Ph.D. in leadership and is CEO of Randall House & D6 Family Ministry. You may contact him at ron.hunter@randallhouse.com.



BIBLE VERSES


Luke 2:52
Proverbs 1:5
Proverbs 10:17
Proverbs 18:15
Philippians 3:13
Proverbs 26:11-12
2 Peter 2:22

LEADERSHIP QUOTE


“Leadership and learning are indispensable to each other.”
 —John F. Kennedy

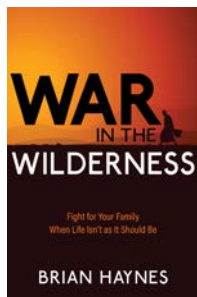
Generational Discipleship in Japan

Tokyo, Japan—January 27, a group of influential Japanese pastors gathered at the Ochanomzu Christian Center in Tokyo to hear four speakers discuss the importance of generational discipleship. Each expressed how the future health of the church and families depend on a shift to the family ministry model, where reaching and teaching go together.

Dr. Ron Hunter spoke, and Free Will Baptist missionaries Jack and Ashley Ketteman were among the influential leaders gathered. Mahoko Iwagami led the meeting and announced the release of *The DNA of D6: Building Blocks of Generational Discipleship* in Japanese. These leaders and pastors are building toward a future D6 Conference in Japan. 

Exciting Updates From Randall House & D6 Family Ministries

- Randall House is excited to announce the Northwest Ministry Conference will become **D6 Northwest**, the west coast D6 conference. D6 will continue to be held in Orlando and other cities around the world. Visit D6Conference.com for the latest information.
- Randall House marked a record year in book sales, surpassing the previous sales high. With the release of several Amazon top new releases, this record is sure to rise. *War in the Wilderness: Fight for Your Family When Life Isn't as It Should Be* by Brian Haynes became the top new release on Amazon followed closely by *REST: Overcoming Spiritual Fatigue* by Marianne Howard. Explore these books and other new releases at randall-house.com.
- Randall House & D6 Family Ministry released volume five of the *Southwestern D6 Family Ministry Journal*. The book examines ministry for various groups inside the local church, discusses theological concepts and practical ministry, and includes book reviews on ministry-related titles.
- This fall, Randall House will release its latest line of curriculum: **D6 Everyday Foundations**. Read the article on page 50 to learn about the exciting enhancements in this iteration of D6 Everyday curriculum. Please visit d6.family/foundations-updates to access online resources and the latest updates.
- Randall House has released a NEW app: *30 Days Connecting With the Heart of Your Teen* by Richard Ross and Gus Reyes. The *30 Days* app helps restore strained relationships and strengthen family ties through intentional generational discipleship. Hundreds of thousands of families have already used it to reconnect, and now it's your turn! Available in English and Spanish. 



A Call
to Be

All In!

D6 CONFERENCE 2023 REVIEW

BY LAUREN BIGGS

Are you “all in”? Deuteronomy 6 tells us to love the Lord with ALL our heart, ALL our soul, and ALL our strength! The 2023 D6 Conference brought together a thousand people from around the world to connect, learn, and grow in their faith and ministries through an “all in” approach.

Attendees engaged in inspiring main-stage sessions, personal conversations, and powerful worship experiences centered around family, faith, and discipleship. They experienced 90-plus engaging breakout sessions to equip them with new strategies and tools to lead their family ministries in applying foundational biblical truths and generational discipleship principles in practical ways.

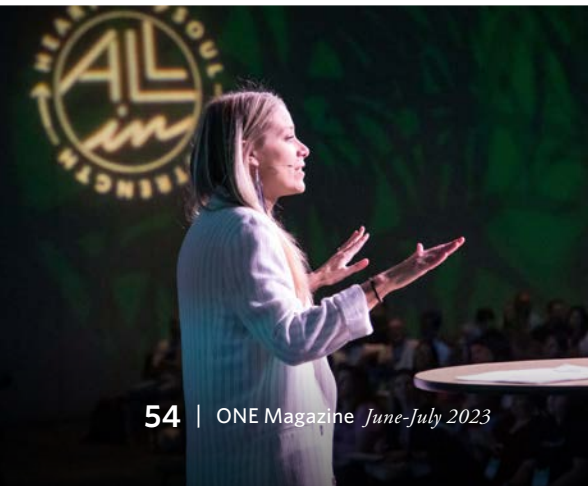
Ministry leaders and parents also had the opportunity to network and build relationships with fellow family ministry leaders. As an event focused on God’s Word and

connecting and deepening relationships, the D6 Conference left everyone inspired to be ALL IN on their mission of creating strong families and churches.

ALL IN ON THE MAIN STAGE

Emcees **Marianne Howard**, **Jon Forrest**, and **Kevin Jones** entered the stage with D6 Conference director, **Dr. Ron Hunter**, to share about the “All In” theme. Each speaker and topic was strategically organized to drive home principles God commanded in Deuteronomy 6.

Messianic Jewish **Rabbi Jacob Rosenberg** opened Monday night’s general session by giving attendees a deeper understanding of the *Shema* (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) and its importance as the starting point for family ministry. **Adam Griffin** shared a powerful message supporting the idea that “the Great Commission starts behind your front



door.” He encouraged attendees to examine their lives for idols and to become all in for God as a family and believer.

Hillary Morgan Ferrer closed the opening session by offering simple steps parents can teach kids to help interact with culture yet remain steadfast for Christ. She told listeners that part of a parent’s job is “to help develop our kids’ spiritual immune systems. Help kids think critically and discern for themselves.”

While attendees were still pondering and discussing the first day’s lessons, **Kelly Minter** opened day two with “Living Missionally in Our Everyday Lives.” She walked through Matthew 8–9 to unfold the scriptural truth the harvest is plentiful, but workers are few. After sharing her life experiences and reflecting on the ways God orchestrated her life, she said, “We are right in the middle of the harvest field right where we are. We are called to minister the same way that Jesus did: preaching the gospel, teaching the Word, and performing acts of compassion. We are called to be servants, disciples, and on mission for God’s mission and His glory.”

Marianne Howard delivered challenging yet encouraging instruction from her new book *Rest*, which teaches how to overcome spiritual fatigue. She pierced the heart of listeners by reminding them they must protect intimacy with God more than performing for God. After reading the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:28, “Come to me all who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest,” she shared, “You have to choose to surrender and be ALL IN to the Giver of rest.” She closed the talk with a powerful blessing, urging each attendee to close their eyes and open their hearts to connect to God and His powerful presence.

Ron Hunter opened the next session with a deep dive into foundational Scripture passages for generational discipleship. He challenged ministry leaders to ask the introspec-

tive questions: “What’s on your church’s radar? Are your leaders and volunteers looking at the right priorities for discipleship?” He noted key areas where churches should focus to evaluate and carry out family ministry. **Brian Haynes** recounted his family’s testimony of enduring a season of wilderness, using different types of “desert” from Scripture as metaphors for life. He challenged attendees to fight for their families despite hardships. He shared the encouraging reminder: “God is the same in all the seasons we walk through.”

Alisa Childers opened the final general session with a biblical response to the growing movement of Progressive Christianity. She thoroughly defined the movement and taught listeners how to spot it in our culture today. “If we’re Jesus’ followers, then what we believe about the Bible, about the Cross, and about the gospel should be what Jesus taught about those things,” she told listeners, urging them: “Teach your kids the real thing!” **Chrystal Evans Hurst** wrapped up the conference with a powerful biblical talk about how to walk with God in obedience as we face problems and seek solutions in our lives. Reliance upon, surrender to, and trusting the Lord are what it takes to endure challenges in life and ministry. She concluded, “Following Jesus means, ‘Don’t focus on the problem; focus on His Word and obey.’ In your obedience, that’s where the solution lies. Your problems are opportunities to see God at work in you.”

ALL IN ATTENDEES

The conference renewed hope for many as testimonies were expressed, teams were strengthened, prayers were answered, stories were told, and excitement and energy were obvious throughout the week. Here’s what a few attendees had to say:

“This ministry of discipling children and connecting hearts to God permeates our everyday lives and friendships. Attending D6 2023 inspired and pointed our eyes up, out, and in.” —*Sarah*

“I love the ALL IN theme. You must have your whole heart on fire for Jesus. It’s not just about knowing the D6 philosophy; it’s about your relationship with Jesus and letting that overflow into your home and ministry.” —*Joel*



“You get to hear from so many speakers at D6 Conference. Every voice shared a variety of topics with foundational truths from the gospel.” —*Kristen*

“I have been refreshed and refilled from my time at the D6 Conference. I am excited to take this content back to ministry and staff.” —*Jenae*


With over 40 ministry providers in the resource center, attendees discovered solutions to ministry challenges and connected with ministry organizations from across the country. From curriculum, books, ministry philosophies, and other resources, attendees spent valuable time in conversation and absorbed new strategies.

ALL ABOUT 2024

The D6 team invites you and your ministry team to attend **D6 Conference 2024**, which will take place in two cities: **D6 Orlando, Florida, April 2-4** at the Caribe Royal, and **D6 Northwest in Seattle, Washington**, with dates to be determined. The conferences will explore the theme **Every Day**. Deuteronomy 6 describes the *everyday* opportunities to disciple our families. Discipleship is not an event; it's a

way of life. Together, churches and families, let's focus on discipleship every day!

By attending with your ministry team, you can divide and conquer to get the most out of the conference with a team debriefing time each day. Register today at d6conference.com.

You can enjoy every moment of the D6 Conference, from breakouts to mainstage, by purchasing a one-year access pass to the D6 Media Vault at bit.ly/D6mediavault 

About the Author: Lauren (Hunter) Biggs serves as both the media and content coordinator at IM, Inc. and the social media manager for D6 Family. She lives in Nashville, Tennessee, with her husband Austin and two-year-old daughter Kinsley.



SAVE the DATE!

D6conference 2024

Caribe Royale
Orlando

April 2-4,
2024

EVERY DAY 2024
D6 FAMILY MINISTRY CONFERENCE

D6CONFERENCE.COM

ONE Magazine Wins Nine National Awards

Lancaster, PA—The Evangelical Press Association (EPA) presented nine awards to *ONE Magazine* including an Award of Excellence and eight Higher Goals honors during the 2023 convention held April 12-15 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.



The 75-year-old association, which draws members from more than 200 evangelical publications, helps

define journalistic standards for Christian periodicals, news outlets, and online mediums. EPA honors publications that excel in writing, reporting, art, and design. EPA seeks to provide ongoing inspiration, instruction, and opportunities for networking to strengthen today's evangelical publications. Free Will Baptist publications and staffers have been active in the organization since its founding.

“While we don't write and design for awards or recognition, it is always encouraging to see the hard work of writers, editors, proofers, and designers validated by the greater Christian community,” *ONE Magazine* Managing Editor Eric Thomsen noted. “We are honored to receive these awards and inspired to continue the level of publishing excellence that prompted them.”

ONE Magazine has won more than 125 national awards since it began in 2005, but 2023 marks the highest one-year total to date.

Executive Secretary Eddie Moody offered his congratulations: “Free Will Baptists have enjoyed *ONE Magazine* for nearly two decades now. This year's awards are an indication that the greater Christian community also recognizes the value of this magazine. How wonderful to see *ONE Magazine* honored for excellence, biblical exposition, and promotion of unity. Free Will Baptists can be thankful to Eric Thomsen and the entire *ONE Magazine* team for the excellent magazine they are producing.”



EPA President Dan Stelzer, *ONE Magazine* Managing Editor Eric Thomsen, EPA Executive Director Lamar Keener

2023 Award of Excellence

- Award of Merit (Denominational)

2023 Higher Goals Awards

- Biblical Exposition – Fourth Place:
“Are You the Weakest Link?” by Eric K. Thomsen
- Cause of the Year (Christian Unity) – First Place:
“Are You the Weakest Link?” by Eric K. Thomsen
- Department – Fifth Place:
“Leadership Whiteboard” by Dr. Ron Hunter Jr.
- Devotional – Third Place:
“God and a Good Cup of Joe” by Mark McCraney
- Fiction – Fourth Place:
“Who Made the Trees?” by Claire Ryan
- First-Person Article – Second Place:
“Uncle Bob” by Jennifer Thomsen
- Personality Article – Fourth Place:
“Uncle Bob” by Jennifer Thomsen
- Standing Column – First Place:
“First Glimpse” by Eric K. Thomsen **ONE**

VIII CONFERENCE

JULY 16-19, 2023 • RALEIGH, NC



**FUN WITH
FORREST**

**TUESDAY
9:00 PM**

Tickets are \$10 during pre-registration and \$15 onsite.

SPEAKERS

SUNDAY AM SUNDAY SCHOOL:

Truth & Peace Students

SUNDAY AM: Mason Polk (Moore, OK)

SUNDAY PM: Andy Rains (Lebanon, MO)

MONDAY PM: Arlene Pellicane (Chula Vista, CA)

TUESDAY PM: Aaron Pierce (Wilson, NC)



2023 Buck-a-Week Offering

Tuesday Evening Service

NAM Recipients:

Team Athens
(Joel Franks and B. J. Eaton)
Athens, AL

IM Recipient:

Taylor Pate
Japan

verticalthree.com

AS FOR you 2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:25).

Often, we attend a conference, revival meeting, or service and walk away feeling good. Perhaps you have even experienced this at a few National Conventions. As we learn to minister in a world turned upside down, it is our hope this year's convention will help us more effectively reach people with the gospel, train them in the Christian faith, and give of ourselves wholly to the Lord.

To do this, we will emphasize several takeaways or action steps from the convention stage, in the nightly newspaper, and through interviews broadcast before and after the service to online viewers. The goal is to *apply* the principles covered in the worship services to our daily lives.

CONTINUE IN THE WORD

Sunday morning, after a Sunday School lesson from Dr. Bruce Barnes, Butch Taylor will set the tone by encouraging us to continue in the Word by focusing upon and teaching Scripture, no matter what happens in the world around us. Attendees will be challenged to give grace and demonstrate kindness to the workers they encounter throughout Raleigh. They will prepare to display this attitude of service by participating in a feet washing service Sunday afternoon.

ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER IN THE WORD

Pastor Gene Williams will deliver the Sunday evening message challenging us to encourage and edify one another. Area church choirs will join us as we worship together, and the service will end with a special prayer for our pastors and their wives. We hope everyone will identify a pastor and his family and pray for them faithfully. Some may form groups to support each other, and others might even participate in retreats or counseling as good stewards of their ministry.

REACH WITH THE WORD

Understanding the world has come to our doorsteps across North America, Pastor Faron Theabeau will challenge us to reach people in our midst with the gospel. Both in-person and online listeners will be challenged to get to know their

communities to reach people not currently being reached by other churches. For example, could your congregation start a Spanish ministry, create a ministry to college students, or perhaps reach international residents in your community?

TEACH AND TRAIN IN THE WORD

Who are you training in the Christian faith? Amos Dillard will challenge us to teach and train children, couples, and families in the Word. Could you train youth in CTS (Church Training Service), teach a Sunday School or Life Group, start an AWANA Club, lead a D-Group, engage in marriage mentoring, start a women's ministry, or develop a ministry to widows or other hurting people at your church? Is Rekindle something that would benefit your church? Or could your church host a church leader boot camp?

GIVE YOURSELF AS A LABORER

On the final night of the convention, Ken Cash will challenge us to answer the call to labor in the field. Ken and his wife Jane ministered to the Trinity congregation in Greenville, North Carolina, until God called them as missionaries to Bulgaria. What is God calling you to do? Are you called to be a missionary, pastor, or teacher? Are you called to start a small group? Are you called to reach a coworker with the gospel? Who are we called to reach with the gospel and train in the Christian faith, and what do we have to give?

The convention in Raleigh is shaping up to be a special time where we work together to turn an upside-down world right side up (Acts 17:6) by hearing the Word and doing the work. As a result of doing these things, we will be blessed. Please plan to join us this summer, whether online or in person. **ONE**



NAFWB

The Raleigh Convention Center (RCC) will serve as the host location for convention events and activities. Further information regarding events will be posted at nafwb.org/convention as it becomes available.

All times EDT.

SATURDAY, JULY 15

Impact Raleigh

9:00 am
(See www.fwbmastersmen.org for more details.)

Registration Open

3:00 pm – 6:00 pm
RCC Main Lobby
Pre-Registration closes June 16 at nafwb.org/convention.

SUNDAY, JULY 16

Registration (Open Daily)

8:00 am – 7:00 pm
RCC Main Lobby

Sunday School*

9:30 am

Morning Worship Services

10:30 am

Feet Washing

3:00 pm

Usher Orientation

5:00 pm
RCC Hall B

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
RCC Hall B
(Sign up at www.fwbworship.com/choir.)

Evening Worship Services*

(Communion will be observed in the Adult Worship Service.)
7:00 pm

AS FOR
you



*WORSHIP SERVICES OFFERED NIGHTLY FOR THE FOLLOWING AGES:

- Adult Worship RCC Hall B
- Teen Worship (Grades 7-12) RCC Ballroom AB
- 456 Worship (Grades 4-6) RCC 306
- Kids Worship (Grades 1-3) RCC 302
- Preschool Worship (Age 3-5) RCC 301

2023 NATIONAL CONVENTION Preliminary Program

MONDAY, JULY 17

General Board Meeting

8:00 am
Hall B

Serve the City Opportunities (V3)

8:00 am

CTS Ministry Expo

8:30 am – 4:30 pm
(Visit verticalthree.com for the full schedule.)

Convention Seminars

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

Exhibit Hall Open

3:00 pm – 10:00 pm
RCC Hall A

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
RCC Hall B

Evening Worship Services*

7:00 pm – 8:30 pm

WNAC Laughter & Latte (Ticketed Event)**

8:30 pm
RCC Ballroom C

TUESDAY, JULY 18

V3 CTS Ministry Expo

8:30 am – 4:30 pm

Convention Seminars

9:00 am – 4:30 pm

WNAC Celebration Service

10:00 am
RCC Hall B

Exhibit Hall Open

10:00 am – 10:00 pm
RCC Hall A

Convention Business Session

1:30 pm – 4:00 pm
RCC Hall B

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
RCC Hall B

Evening Worship Services*

7:00 pm

V3 Event: Fun With Forrest (Ticketed Event)**

9:00 pm
RCC Ballroom AB

WEDNESDAY, JULY 19

CTS Bible Finals

8:00 am
RCC 306

Convention Seminars

9:00 am – 4:00 pm

Convention Business Session

9:00 am – 4:00 pm
RCC Hall B

GPS Experience

A Missions Experience for Every Age
9:00 am – 11:00 am

Exhibit Hall Open

10:00 am – 6:30 pm
RCC Hall A

Welch College Alumni and Friends Luncheon (Ticketed Event)**

12:00 noon
RCC Ballroom C

Choir Rehearsal

5:00 pm
RCC Hall BC

Evening Worship Service (Combined)

7:00 pm
RCC Hall BC

V3 Awards Ceremony

9:00 pm
RCC Hall BC

Find information about participating in the choir, orchestra, or praise team at fwbworship.com under the NAFWB tab.

**Tickets for events can be purchased through convention pre-registration.

Operation Restoration

BY EDDIE MOODY

“Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour” (Ecclesiastes 4:9).

January 15 was a special day at Sneads Free Will Baptist Church in Sneads, Florida. On that day, the Sneads Church and other surrounding churches celebrated the renovation of the church. However, many other important and sometimes difficult days led up to this special day.

One such moment came during a meeting of the Salem Association when pastor Charles Johnson asked Pastor Tim Hamblen how he and the Sneads Church were doing. Pastor Hamblen thought for a minute and then presented some of the difficulties he and his congregation were experiencing. The Salem Mission Board began to think of ways they could work together to support this church.

On many different days after that, people from area churches joined with Sneads Church members to work on the needs of their facility. The Florida Mission Board provided financial resources, and after much hard work, Salem emerged with a beautifully restored facility dedicated on January 15.

Hopefully, this is just the beginning. Sneads Church has been studying the results of the Know Your Community report and participating in The Hope Initiative through Church Answers. The hope is this restoration process will not only encourage the Sneads Church family but also better position them to reach their community with

the gospel. (See Duane Littlefield's article on pages 24-25.)

The Salem Association Model

The example of the Salem Association and Sneads Church could become a model for all Free Will Baptists. Recently, Ken Akers suggested Disaster Response Teams and churches across the nation consider engaging in similar activities to help churches (though not on the scale of the Sneads renovation).

For example, churches could partner to help other area churches experiencing facility challenges through small repairs. They could share the same encouragement and camaraderie the Salem Association and Sneads FWB Church experienced by coming together for a workday to help another church with landscaping, power washing, painting, and other small repairs. Some sprucing up, followed by Know Your Community, The Hope Initiative, Boot Camp on the Road, and Rekindle coaching could restore churches that need help and encouragement. (And you might find it surprising how helping another church might just help your own!)

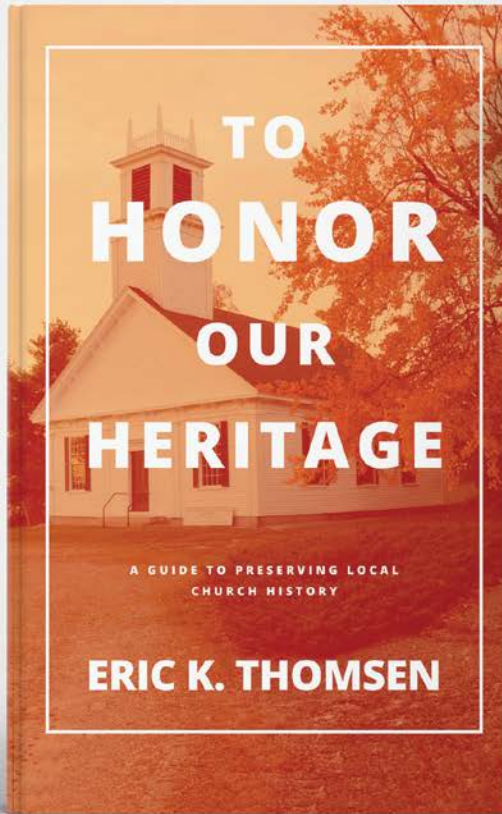
What do you think? If the idea of **Operation Restoration** resonates with you, email questions@nafwb.org and share your interest. If you could use a helping hand like Sneads, email us at questions@nafwb.org, and we will see what we can do.

Churches across North America encounter similar problems that do not have to be faced alone. Let's come together to help one another because we are truly better together. **ONE**



Eddie Moody

Executive Secretary,
National Association of
Free Will Baptists



Will the next generation remember?

We all play an important role in preserving history for those who come behind us. The new book *To Honor Our Heritage* by Eric K. Thomsen provides a simple, step-by-step guide to help both individuals and churches record the story of God's faithfulness.

Let's write our story, our church's story, and—most importantly—God's story as a testimony for the next generation.

COMING JULY 17, 2023

WHAT DO YOU **REALLY** KNOW ABOUT YOUR NEIGHBORS?

know
your
community

HELPING YOU SHARE **THE GOSPEL** MORE EFFECTIVELY

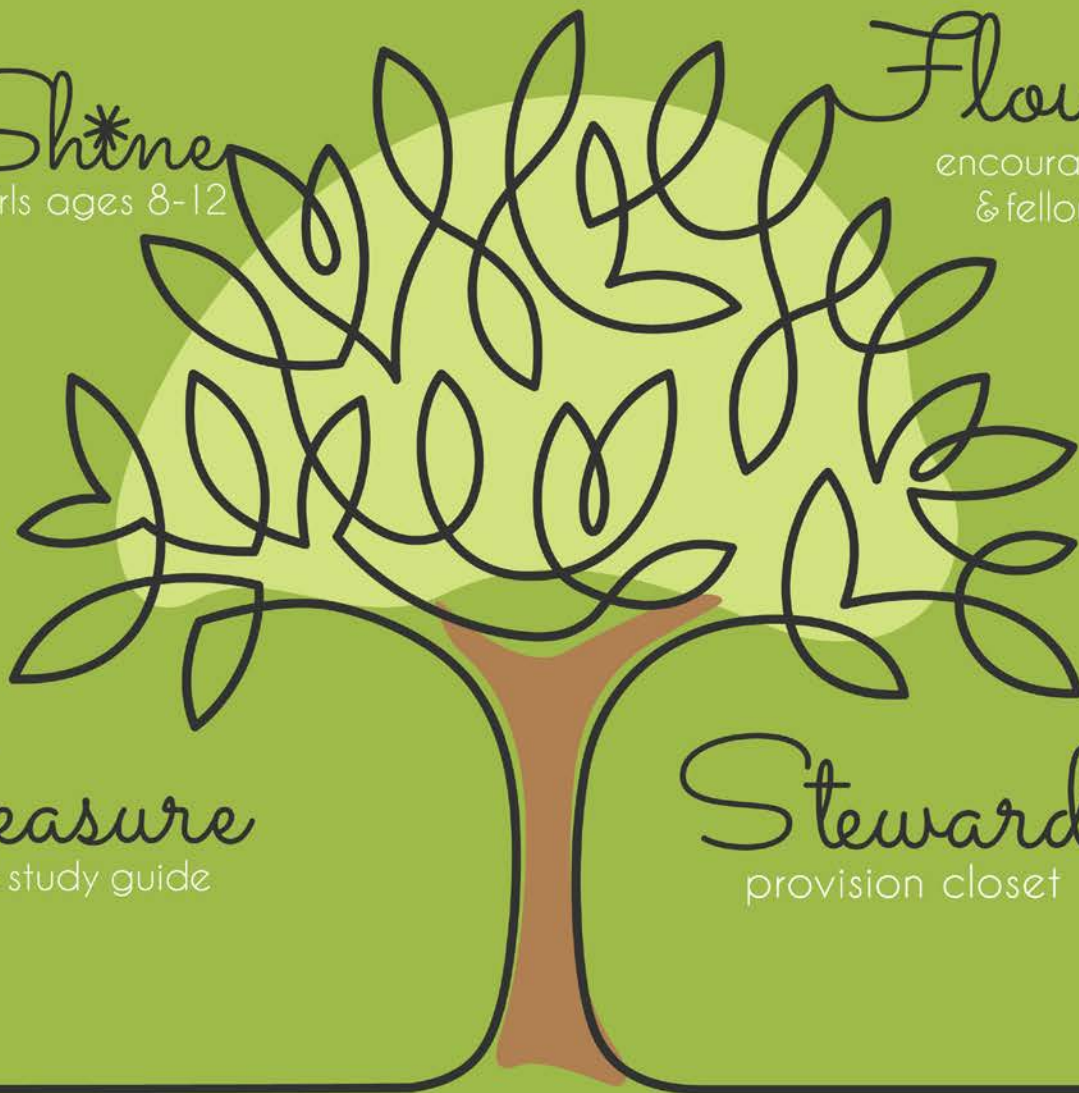
QUESTIONS@NAFWB.ORG

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH **CHURCH ANSWERS**

Scholarships
U.S. & international

Shine
girls ages 8-12

Flourish
encouragement
& fellowship



Treasure
Bible study guide

Steward
provision closet

WNAC
Ministries

www.WNAC.org