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ONE

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A Free Will Baptist Magazine

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But we need your help! Gaps still remain in the collection. If you want to donate books or records, please contact commission chairman, Robert E. Picirilli: repicirilli@comcast.net. Let's work together to preserve the amazing story of Free Will Baptists for the next generation.

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MAGAZINE

TO COMMUNICATE TO
FREE WILL BAPTISTS A
UNIFYING VISION OF OUR
ROLE IN THE EXTENSION
OF GOD'S KINGDOM.

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First Glimpse >>

The Lion of Lyon Street

The 2015 national convention has been over for weeks—boxes unpacked, minutes recorded, thank you notes in the mail, and post-convention review published...typos and all. Usually, by this time, I have turned my attention to the growing honey-do list, begun whipping my neglected lawn back into shape, and started renewing my love-hate relationship with golf. Usually, the only convention I think about in August is the one nearly a year away.

But as the green of summer has given way to the golden hues of early fall, I find my mind wandering back to those days in Grand Rapids. I just can't shake this particular meeting, for a number of reasons:

That bird. The resident Red-winged Blackbird was the lion of Lyon Street, fiercely guarding her nest, located somewhere between the headquarters hotel and the convention center. She introduced herself on my first trip to the press office, my arms loaded with files and equipment. Swooping down like a P-51 Mustang in the hands of a World War II ace, she pecked away at my unprotected face and head. Like any macho man...I

dropped my gear and dashed for safety. Papers flying, briefcase dragging—I'm sure it was a sight. It didn't take me long to learn to avoid her territory. By the way, you can see this little demon in action on YouTube.™ Just search for "Real Life Angry Bird."

That girl. During the Tuesday evening youth service, a 16-year-old church planter from Utah stood tall beside her friend, and together they shared their testimony. Two lives—one amazing story! A scant 18 months earlier, her friend had been a skeptical member of the Mormon Church. Then Ashton entered the picture, and with kindness, acceptance, and patience, introduced her friend to the Savior. This year, he took part in the Truth & Peace Student Leadership Conference, one of a growing army of young leaders poised to take the Church into the coming decades. Perhaps my buddy Jon Forrest put it best: "Gives you hope for the future, doesn't it?" Absolutely, Jon!

That moment. It was one of those life-altering conversations you never forget. A good friend and former pastor drew me

aside in the main concourse. As people streamed around us, time stood still while he shared his recent diagnosis, a complex neurological disorder that may end with every pastor's nightmare—the inability to speak. While my heart broke for him and the challenge he faces, I couldn't help but think I am glad to be part of a conference where we take time to share blessings, fellowship, and heartaches. I'm sure that many of the people who flowed around us during our conversation will join me on my knees as we lift up my friend in prayer.

That God. He moved in Grand Rapids... in worship, in powerful preaching, in fellowship, in unforgettable ways. And while I could point to many moments that challenged me spiritually, I will never forget Tom McCullough's call to repentance during the final moments of the convention:

May we repent today of fostering an "us versus them" mentality that restricts access to the gospel of grace, offered freely to all men by the Father, who is no respecter of persons. God plays no favorites.

No wonder I can't get this convention out of my head. I hope I never do. **ONE**

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Letters:

Have something to say?

Say it!

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

Email editor@nafwb.org or send correspondence to:

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

We live in an age where superlatives are so overused that they no longer have much meaning to me. Therefore, I'm faced with a dilemma when trying to express my appreciation for Crystal Hodges' article in the August-September issue of *ONE Magazine*. Suffice it to say that if I had a top ten list of my all-time favorite articles from *ONE* and/or *Contact*, this would be on the list. Crystal is a gifted writer and this article touched my intellect and my emotions. Please use her again in the future as one of your contributing writers.—*Bill Ezell, Joelton, TN*

We Goofed! We apologize for the omission of a 2015 Welch College graduate in the August-September edition of ONE Magazine. Madison Ann Lindgren of Bakersfield, California, graduated cum laude with a B.S. degree in Child Development and Learning, with Licensure in K-6.



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SUPREME DECISION?

“GET ENGAYGED.”

Those were the words I saw pinned to a young man’s shirt on the day after the Supreme Court’s ruling on so-called same-sex marriage. Perhaps you had a similar experience. In *Obergefell v. Hodges*, a 5-4 majority held that the Fourteenth Amendment requires states to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples and recognize other states’ same-sex marriage licenses.

What followed was the declaration that “love wins” and a rainbow light display from the White House. We could explore how the majority’s opinion is based on conviction rather than the Constitution, and represents a serious threat to American democracy, state’s rights, and religious liberty, as the dissenting opinions point out. However, we will not do so here.

Instead, we will consider how the Church should respond. Though cultures and societies change, God and His Truth do not. We’re still called to biblical integrity and public witness. We’re still called to encourage and equip our churches and congregants.

Biblical Integrity and a “Radical Love” Ethic

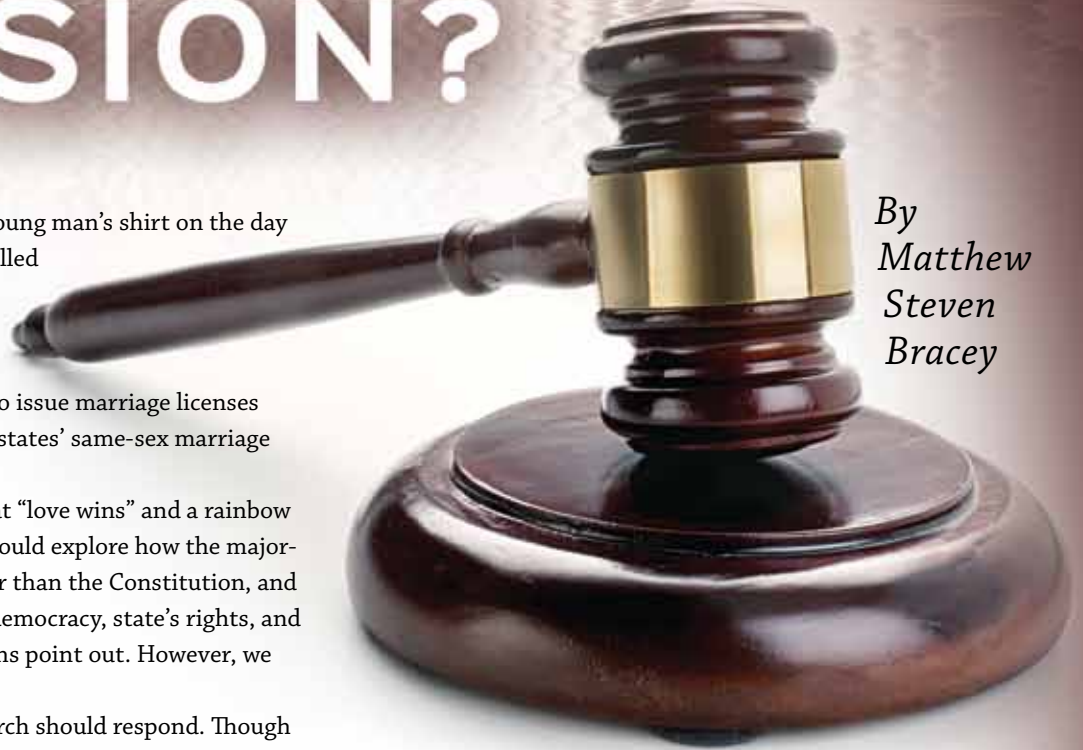
Whatever the cultural consensus, the Church is Christ’s Bride, and she must remain faithful to Him and His Word. This means we must commit ourselves to a basic creation-fall-redemption-consummation narrative, and its implications for gender, dignity, sexuality, and marriage. God created the world perfect. He made males male, females female, and marriage the union between the two (Genesis 1:27; 2:24-25). Jesus Himself later affirmed this model (Matthew 19:4-6).

However, mankind sinned, resulting in original sin and total depravity (Genesis 3:6-7). We are all sinners, whether adulterers, gluttons, homosexuals, idolaters, liars, murderers, thieves, or something else (Romans 5:12-14). Thankfully, God provided salvation in Christ to all who would accept His free gift. This is

great news for a dying world!

Yet in sharing this good news, we must remember all persons have dignity, whatever their view of life and the world. And yes, this includes same-sex marriage advocates, homosexuals, even those who confuse their gender. Because God has created all people in His image and provided a general atonement, we must treat all people with basic human dignity.

We must also remember marriage is the union between one man and one woman. Marriage isn’t simply tied to Creation, but to the gospel itself. If we redefine marriage, we redefine the gospel. A secular culture, much less five Supreme Court Justices, cannot truly change the definition of marriage, or grant rights that God has not created. God alone creates rights; courts, legislatures, and other human institutions can only recognize and



By
*Matthew
Steven
Bracey*

protect them (or not).

As we stand for these beliefs as a Church, we must remember the Christian love ethic. We must exude compassion, forgiveness, grace, and kindness. This means our words, tone, and body language should never be interpreted as animosity, bitterness, harshness, hate, hostility, ridicule, or some other characteristic antithetical to Christ's love. Cheap shots, insensitive remarks, mudslinging, and name-calling have no place in the Christian's discourse. Instead, we must embody the fruit of Christ and His Spirit (Ephesians 5:7-10; Galatians 5:22-23). This holds true, even when others do not act in kind—even when they ridicule us with labels like backwards, bigot, and narrow-minded (Matthew 5:38-39).

In addition, we should begin thinking about how to help our congregants answer questions like, "Should I attend same-sex ceremonies of friends or family?" and "How do I answer my child if he asks why his classmate has two daddies?" We should also think toward developing what a theology of persecution and suffering might look like in an American context. Increasingly, we are condemned, denounced, and vilified...just for being Christians. Though the American Church has not had to think about this for centuries, it is upon us, and we must prepare ourselves (John 15:18-27; 2 Timothy 3:12). Along these same lines, we should begin to develop a theology of civil resistance and disobedience. Although we affirm governments' biblical role to encourage good and punish evil (Romans 13:1-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-3; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-17), the government can only go so far before Christians are forced to make hard decisions about where our loyalties lie.

Finally, these considerations serve to illustrate why our church and denominational leadership must maintain and strengthen its resolve to protect the integrity of its offices as seasoned people leave positions and new ones fill them. This is especially urgent as millennial leaders—that's my generation—step to the plate. After all, the future is at stake, and we must protect Christ's Church from false gospels.

One of the best ways to prepare tomorrow's leaders today is to use tools that foster a church culture of Christian orthodoxy. For example, church leaders should make frequent use of the *Treatise, Church Covenant*, historic documents, curricula, conference and symposium literature, and so forth. This may be done through sermon or Sunday School series, small group studies, etc.

Legal Matters

In addition to remaining true to Christ and His Word, church leaders must educate themselves and their congregations on legal matters. Legal protection is like football pads—pads don't guarantee players will not be injured, but they help tremendously. Similarly, legal protection is no guarantee against legal

trouble (especially in a secular society with activist judges), but it's highly recommended to guard against the possibility. Church leaders should be proactive in such pursuits.

"The community knows what we believe and respects that" isn't good enough. In our culture, refusing to add legal protection is like stepping onto a football field without pads—a sure bet for trouble. I offer two examples:

Scenario #1: You're a pastor or deacon. Your church has a policy stating your venue is open generally for public use. What happens if you refuse a same-sex couple who has their own officiator and wants to use your venue?

Scenario #2: A long-time church member's grandson is a homosexual. She doesn't agree with her grandson's lifestyle, but wants to honor his desire to have a church wedding. She approaches you and requests use of the church. Even though church leaders and members don't support same-sex marriage, policies don't explicitly forbid using the facilities for these purposes. Again, what happens if you refuse?

In both scenarios, refusal could easily spell legal trouble that likely could be avoided. Churches should adopt or update documents that reflect their intentions in these matters. In fact, as a general rule, policies should be reviewed annually (at least). Church leaders should meet immediately and present resolutions to their church bodies if they have not done so. The suggestions in *Protecting Your Ministry from Sexual Orientation Gender Identity Lawsuits* provide a helpful starting point. This free, online pamphlet explains that every church needs a statement of faith, religious employment criteria, and policies on facility use, formal membership, and marriage. Additionally, churches not otherwise incorporated should do so immediately to protect the assets of leaders and members. Finally, churches without affiliation to Free Will Baptist associations and organizations that affirm biblical marriage should seek membership to strengthen their legal position.

"What happens if governments remove our tax exemption?" many ask. Already, authors such as *The New York Times'* Mark Oppenheimer are arguing for this very thing. If the day comes where we must choose between biblical integrity and tax exemption or even basic legal recognition, unequivocally, we must choose the former to honor the Bible. Still, we don't have to accept such opinions sitting down. In fact, we don't have to accept a majority culture that unfairly characterizes us as bigots and narrow-minded either. God doesn't call us simply to give leadership to His Church, but to influence the culture around us.

A Stewardship of Citizenship

As the Father sent Christ to be the Light of the World, He has sent us. We don't have the luxury of hiding in Free Will Baptist "monasteries." That would do nothing for a lost world. Our calling as Christians—not to mention our Baptist heritage—

won't allow it. Our *Church Covenant* states, "We will everywhere hold Christian principle sacred and Christian obligations and enterprises supreme; *counting it our chief business in life to extend the influence of Christ in society*, constantly praying and toiling that the kingdom of God may come, and His will be done on earth as it is in Heaven" (italics added).

As Free Will Baptists, we believe our faith and witness has public implications. Just because the tide of American culture turns doesn't mean our calling has changed. From the cultural mandate to the gospel message to the Church's mission, God commands His children to transform their culture. Yet how can we do this in our American context as good, Christian citizens?

First, we stand for our beliefs, honestly yet lovingly, in our respective spheres of influence.

Second, we stay current on news and politics, especially the intersection of church and culture. We must know the issues and candidates; care about who occupies Congress, the White House, and the Supreme Court; and vote according to our biblical values. At times, we may find ourselves voting *against* someone more than for someone. The choice not to vote—or to vote for a candidate who has no chance of winning—is imprudent in our evil day.

From the cultural mandate to the gospel message to the Church's mission, God commands His children to transform their culture.

Third, we encourage talented young people in our churches to follow God's call, not only into church ministry, but into the centers of culture: journalism and news media, local school boards, politics, the entertainment industry, and so forth. While cultural change is slow, it is vital.

Fourth, we should consider putting principles to pen and purse. For example, publically signing statements of faith that affirm our beliefs, such as the *Manhattan Declaration: A Call of Christian Conscience* or *Here We Stand: An Evangelical Declaration on Marriage*. These documents affirm the sanctity of life, biblical marriage, and religious liberty, and may be easily found online. Or we might stop actively supporting (financially or otherwise) institutions that oppose Christian values, be it our favorite coffee franchises, entertainment enterprises, or sports establishments. In our highly globalized economy, this is challenging but possible.

Fifth, we should be involved in grassroots social and political efforts. Lead an initiative on social media or through church to

make phone calls or send letters expressing our positions to political representatives. Participate or organize an event(s) that serves the community and brings awareness to issues resulting in change at local, state, and federal levels.

For example, who would have thought in 1973 that the pro-life cause would have gained the momentum and victory it has in recent days? And yet, in the aftermath of *Roe v. Wade*, Christians reaffirmed their commitment to biblical integrity; participated in the marketplace of ideas; and founded adoption agencies, crisis pregnancy centers, and free health clinics. Perhaps we can do similar things for the cause of biblical marriage.

Why don't we create a church culture that honors successful marriages? Why not celebrate anniversaries with fellowship, food...even presents? Certainly we want to be sensitive in doing so, as our churches are filled with people whose relationships have not succeeded; but that is no reason not to celebrate those whose have. It would be a great witness to celebrate biblical examples of marriages before the watching, secular world!

Finally, we must be realists. Not all our efforts will pay off. Our points may be misunderstood. Our initiatives may not pan out. Sometimes, our preferred candidates won't get elected—and

even when they do, they will disappoint us. But the public implications of the gospel don't rise or fall on the success of our efforts, just as God's call to faithful preaching doesn't depend on how many pews are filled (just ask the Prophet Jeremiah). Whatever happens, God simply calls us to be faithful in our public witness.

Conclusion

On June 26, 2015, the *Obergefell* ruling made history—no mistake about it. Yet the question remains as to how we will respond. As we equip Christ's people for the world, protect Christ's Church from the world, and proclaim Christ's gospel to the world, we can respond with thanksgiving, for He will be faithful, whatever comes. No matter how cultures and societies change, God, His Word, and His call do not change. And whatever the world may say about marriage, we anticipate that greater, final marriage between Christ and His Church...and in this we hope and rejoice! **ONE**

About the Author: Matt Bracey works at Welch College as registrar, Law and Policy advisor, and faculty member, teaching courses in history, law, theology, and interdisciplinary studies. He holds degrees from Cumberland School of Law (J.D.), Beeson Divinity School (M.T.S.), and Welch College (B.A.). He lives in Mount Juliet, Tennessee, with his wife Sarah and their kitten Puzzles.

Who we are, what we do, and where we are going...

NORTH AMERICAN MINISTRIES

BY BRAD RANSOM

If I could use one word to describe what is going on at North American Ministries, it would have to be *exciting*. God has been doing so many new and exciting things, and North American Ministries gets to be part of it. You can also partner with us by supporting the *Mission: North America Offering* on November 22, 2015. Give through your local church or visit us at www.fwbnam.com to make a secure online donation. Any gift will help us continue to provide encouragement, training, resources, and support to help our field teams be successful.

OUR FAMILY

ANSWERING THE CALL. Across the denomination I have heard, “Where are all the young preachers answering the call to ministry?”

I’m glad to report that young men are still answering the call to ministry, and many have accepted the challenge to plant a church. God is still calling and many are answering. As director of church planting, I receive phone calls and emails from men interested in planting churches almost weekly. Currently, North American Ministries has 52 church planters and associates planting 42 churches in 24 states, territories, and in Canada.

While five church planters have gone self-supporting, resigned, or entered eternal glory, 15 new church planters and associates have joined our team in the last two years, with more working through the application, assessment, and approval process. We see God doing an exciting work, and it is a joy for North American Ministries to be a part.

HISPANIC MINISTRY. It is exciting to see what God is doing through Free Will Baptist Hispanic Ministry. According to Hispanic Director Rick Bowling, North American Ministries currently has six full-time, Spanish-speaking church planters who oversee the ministries of 40 local churches. Hundreds of Spanish-speaking Free Will Baptists meet on a weekly basis to hear the gospel and reach their communities with the good news.

CHAPLAINCY. Colonel Kerry Steedley (retired), director of chaplain support, reports eight Free Will Baptist chaplains minister to hundreds of soldiers and their family members weekly. Many members of the military are being saved, baptized, disciplined, and sent out to reach others wherever they go in their military careers.

OUR FOCUS

The focus of North American Ministries always has been (and will continue to be) planting new churches, but we also have answered the call to help struggling churches across the denomi-

nation. Our Church Revitalization program already has had an impact, ministering to hundreds of church members, pastors, and local churches through the national POWER Conference (held in May in Branson, Missouri), regional conferences on leadership and church growth, legacy church plants, and the Examining the Body church assessment program administered by Jim McComas, director of church revitalization. Churches that have struggled and felt they didn't know where to turn have commented that, through the efforts of the department, they have hope once again. Although we do not guarantee success for every church, we offer help, hope, support, and training.


MEN AT WORK

Master's Men has also become an important part of our family and focus. Men's ministry should be at the heart of every church. Following the recent merger of North American Ministries and Master's Men, we are working together to impact the local church through discipleship and encouragement of men.

Master's Men is busy serving as the liaison between church planters and men in the local church. Director Ken Akers stands ready to assist your church with materials, resources, and training to lead your men to be all they can be in the local church.

INTO THE FUTURE

The future of North American Ministries has never been more exciting. As we see all God has done, we eagerly anticipate what He will do in the future. As we move forward to plant new churches, assist in revitalizing struggling churches, train, encourage, equip, and send, we need your prayers and support.

Visit our new website www.fwbnam.com for more information on these areas of ministry and other exciting things happening around North America. Please remember to pray for us and to give sacrificially to the Mission: North America Offering November 22, 2015. Our entire team, including Executive Director David Crowe, stands ready to assist you or your church any way possible. 

About the Writer: Brad Ransom is director of church planting for North American Ministries.

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NEW DOORS OPENING FOR **WNAC**

By Elizabeth Hodges

This has been a historic year for Women Nationally Active for Christ. The process of becoming a national department was finalized with the adoption of the proposed charter during the national convention in 2015, joining the denomination for the first time since 1939.

God is opening doors for WNAC—direct answers to prayer. It is exciting to see Him at work among us. Women must also be able to graciously and “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints” (Jude 3) if they are going to be salt and light where God has placed them. Pray for our devotional writers as Satan attacks, seeking to hinder and defeat. Contact our office if you would like a sample copy of *Treasure*.

As women, we have been burdened for our young ladies and the influence of the culture in their lives. In seeking to equip our members to “be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15), our monthly Bible studies have targeted current issues faced by our women.

Thanks to the receipt of a Free Will Baptist Foundation grant, WNAC will host two conferences targeting 12- to 18-year-olds in the coming months. These conferences will be hosted by Fairview FWB Church in Spartanburg, South Carolina, October 24, and First FWB Church in North Little Rock, Arkansas, November 21. Entitled, *Shine! Realizing Your Worth*, these conferences will challenge young girls to pursue biblical womanhood and purity.

Beth Bryant, pastor's wife from Olive Branch, Mississippi, will speak to the girls concerning spiritual and moral purity. Rachel Bryant, a registered nurse from Olive Branch, Mississippi, will discuss the physiological consequences of the choices they make today. Meanwhile, moms and youth leaders will be encouraged and challenged by Sarah Sargent, WNAC board member and Ohio WAC president, and Ana Batts, pastor's wife from Nashville, Tennessee, who will share practical tips to help young girls navigate the challenging culture in which they are maturing. As our culture seeks to lure our children away from the faith, we

want our young ladies to stand as firm as Daniel when he faced a similar situation.

The excitement for the *Shine!* conferences is building. Please contact our office for registration and/or hotel information. (877-767-7662; phyllis@wnac.org)

In many of our states, the women meet at different times from their state's associational meeting. This year I was privileged to visit three of their state associational meetings for the first time: Idaho (Utah), North Carolina, and Virginia. What a blessing to meet these dear people, present the ministry of WNAC, and thank pastors for their support. I look forward to visiting more meetings in the coming year.

The women of WNAC continue to support mission and ministry causes around the world faithfully, as they have since 1935. These ladies are prayer warriors, financial supporters, and advocates for Christ's kingdom. God is honoring and blessing their efforts. To Him be the glory! **ONE**

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



Shine!

realizing your worth

OCTOBER 24 - FAIRVIEW FWB CHURCH, SPARTANBURG, SOUTH CAROLINA
NOVEMBER 21 - FIRST FWB CHURCH, NORTH LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

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12 TRENDS

in Missions

BY CLINT MORGAN

As Kingdom thinkers, we should be aware of trends affecting world outreach. To be effective in reaching the lost, we must know the major factors shaping the flow of our culture. On the other hand, as a mission agency, we also must be aware of trends and issues potentially influencing our operations, programs, and ministries.

Below are some of the leading contemporary trends that will influence how we do missions now and in the near future. Some missiologists see the world stage changing so rapidly that any predictions or strategies beyond a three-year period are basically unreliable. With that caveat in mind, consider 12 major trends impacting world outreach.

MUTUALITY: Former pioneer nations are quickly becoming the next missionary force to reach the world. We must work together as equals. The days of having only one strategy are over. Believers in the West must recognize we no longer set or dominate the agenda of world outreach.

UPG (UNREACHED PEOPLE GROUPS): Focus on people groups rather than a geographical location such as a country or city. In the early days of sending agencies, the main focus was a particular country. Now, we know the majority population in a country may be Christian, but many unreached people groups may still exist within that context.

SHORT-TERM MISSIONS EMPHASIS: Specialization missionaries are moving front and center, ahead of the general or career missionaries that were the norm for more than a century. Missiologists are divided as to whether this trend is effective and will produce positive results both in the short and long term.

PARTNERSHIPS: Sending churches, evangelical mission agencies, and other organizations with mature national churches are developing stronger partnerships. The ultimate purpose is to enhance our effectiveness in expanding the Kingdom. We must safeguard our distinctives but not allow them to separate us from the larger Body of Christ. Nothing short of interdependence will maximize the potential of believers to expand His Kingdom.

FOCUS ON SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMANITARIAN EFFORTS: If we combine ministering to needs and sharing our

faith, we will touch the whole man. Though generally classified as a generational issue, this approach finds its roots in philosophical and theological positions.

BAM (BUSINESS AS MISSION): The raised level of resistance to mission agencies and non-governmental organizations (NGO) in many countries provides an impetus for agencies to employ different methods to penetrate creative access contexts. This doesn't mean missionaries simply pose as business specialists. Instead, missional entrepreneurs find their place in expanding the Kingdom.

LOCAL LEADERSHIP: We must learn to leverage the commitment and passion of local leaders. Missionaries must change roles willingly from main leader to shared leadership. The focus on leadership training must never take a back seat, whether done by the missionary force or local educators.

GREATER FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY: Believers will give if properly motivated, but they demand accountability, and they should. Missional churches will hold missionaries and agencies more accountable in the areas of soliciting and distribution of funds.

FOCUS ON THE MISSION: Churches are becoming more mission-focused and less missionary-focused. Once, missionaries were heroes who traveled where others could not go to share the gospel. This is no longer true and greatly affects believers' support of missionaries versus support of an agency, a project, or a special interest group.

INCREASED RESISTANCE: Last year, an estimated 165,000 people died in religious clashes. Some sources report over 200 million believers face persecution each year. All indications point toward an increase in resistance to the gospel in the coming years.

MERGERS: We are likely to see some significant mergers of smaller mission agencies. This moves beyond partnerships to the actual merging of assets and shifting of personnel into a consoli-

dated missionary force. These should not be acts of convenience, but rather joining forces to be strategically stronger.

TECHNOLOGY: Missionaries today are way past the slide projector and laser pointers. What will the next generation bring to our ministries? It is truly hard to imagine what technology will look like in 10 years. Technology is constantly in flux, and those who desire to thrive in any long-term venture will commit to moving forward with this flow.


It is impossible to predict with a great degree of precision the sum total of the effects these trends will have on International Missions. However, we must be keenly aware these factors will affect our operations and execution of strategies as we make use of the positive elements and take preventative measures to offset the negative effects. ONE

About the Writer: Clint Morgan has been general director of International Missions since 2011.

PREACHING + TEACHING =

CHURCH PLANTING

BY CLINT MORGAN



I love hearing about churches being planted around the world. Whether the new works emerge in Africa, Pakistan, or the States, I rejoice over what God is doing through His faithful servants.

At Free Will Baptist International Missions, we are committed to seeing churches planted. In new missionaries' pre-field training, we emphasize a church-planting plan as clearly defined in the passages known as the Great Commission. In very simple terms, this plan can be stated as: Evangelism + Discipleship = Church Planting.

Sometimes we have a "cart-before-the-horse" application of the Great Commission. Preachers and speakers often use these passages to declare our primary task is to plant churches.

However, the weight of the biblical command found in these passages (Mark 16:15, Matthew 28:19, 20) leans toward preaching (evangelism) and teaching (discipleship). Some translations render *teach all nations* as *make disciples*.

True disciples want to worship, fellowship, and network with other disciples to fulfill the functions of the Body of Christ as prescribed in the Scriptures. This community of believers will covenant together to function in a way that is biblically sound, Christ centered, and culturally relevant. Good discipleship produces a

vibrant, spiritual entity of Christ followers. The Bible defines this as a church.

The narratives of the early church reveal this pattern of church multiplication. In the first 50 years of Christianity, new churches emerged in every corner of the then-known world. The strength of the early Christians was obedience to the mandate to go, preach, and make disciples.

Ultimately, we know it is God who multiplies the church. As believers, we are simply laborers together to fulfill His purpose. In Acts 2:47 we are told *the Lord* added to the church daily.

The rapid growth was not tied to numbers, but solidified by the ongoing strengthening of believers that resulted in church multiplication. We see this process clearly revealed in Acts 9:31 and 16:5, "Then had the churches rest throughout all Judea and Galilee and Samaria, and were edified...so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in numbers daily."

We are looking for men and women who understand this plan and are committed to nothing less than winning the lost, discipling new believers, and seeing these converts gather as a God-honoring community resolved to live in obedience to the Holy Spirit every day. ONE

MISSIONS *in the* 21ST CENTURY

JEFF
TURNBOUGH

*Philip Jenkins, distinguished professor of history at Baylor University, has researched and written extensively about the historic growth of the Church, specifically focusing on trends in the past two centuries. One of his most helpful works is **The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity**. Jenkins gives statistical evidence that the heart of Christianity no longer resides in the West, but rather in the continents of South America, Africa, and East Asia. This is what he calls the Global South.*

He paints a picture of current-day Christianity that is non-white and poor. This revelation should cause us to pause and reevaluate our perspective on worldwide Christianity. Combine that with *Operation World's* Patrick Johnstone informing us that the Church in the United States is in decline (with the exception of some growth among minority ethnic groups), and perhaps we should rethink missions. Obviously, from a Kingdom perspective, we are concerned about understanding the current growth and expansion of Christianity, and how these facts inform our thinking and our work.

The new international director of OM (formerly Operation Mobilization), Lawrence Tong, is from the Global South. When he became OM's director, OM's international office moved from the UK to Singapore. In a recent initiative, Tong writes:

Globalization means that we should seek out new frontiers of mission, where millions live unnoticed by God's people. These "least reached" are essential to the Kingdom of God. As a reflection of where the growth and energy of the Church is today, people from these regions deserve and expect a greater participation alongside Westerners, who will no longer have the dominant voice. My plea is that we all—West, South, East—leave our own tables and find a new, third roundtable where we sit as equal partners, making joint decisions about our future. Since we all have been called by the same Master to this greatest of tasks, in God's eyes everyone's ideas and concerns matter. It is everyone's business.

Consequently, OM addressed this issue by creating what they refer to as the third table. In general, people from my culture tend to come to a meeting with a plan and voice ideas quickly. Brothers from other cultures have taught me that while they may be more



reticent to share their perspectives quickly in a meeting dominated by leaders from the Global North, they do have relevant ideas or perspectives on the issues we are discussing. Many times, they feel out of place in our Western-style meetings.

OM's proposal creates a space where leaders from the Global North and South sit as equal brothers to discuss the needs of the Church and the world outside the Church. The talkers intentionally wait to hear from those more reticent to speak. We all have things to learn from each other. As God's people who long to see God's Kingdom established on earth, we need one another. Jesus proclaimed the world would know us by our love. In the 21st century, that means intentional, specific, and concrete measures to begin conversations with our brothers from around the world. We must gain and follow a global understanding as we work together to fulfill the Great Commission.

Our challenge is to embrace the changes that have taken place in the global Church for the sake of the continuing expansion of the gospel of the Kingdom. **ONE**

About the Writer: Jeff Turnbough has served as director of field operations for Free Will Baptist International Missions since 2008.

SAME Direction Only DIFFERENT

BY TERRY AUSTIN

Doing God's will for your life may cause you to go in two different directions at the same time. It really is possible, although it took me a while to figure that out. I didn't understand how to go in two different directions at the same time, and I am not really sure it is common knowledge.

Allow me to explain: when I trusted Jesus Christ as my Savior, I thought all my roadblocks were gone. I thought I would have a clear path with no obstacles, and everyone would see things the way I saw them.

It wasn't long until I discovered just the opposite. I realized doing God's will or simply living day-to-day would bring about challenges I never dreamed. I would have to figure out a different way, or a new direction, to get done what was needed.

The idea of changing my mind or changing my direction caused a dilemma for me. How could I do this and maintain my integrity? It seemed I would compromise God's will or

give myself over to doubting. Either one of these options was unsettling to me because I felt I was like a wave driven and tossed by the wind (James 1:6). I felt as though I was that double-minded man who could not be depended on or trusted. Honestly, I felt I was compromising God's will in order to accomplish God's will.

Maybe you can imagine how hard it was for me to learn that life is unpredictable. Pastoring a church was full of challenges, and I often had to adjust my thinking to accommodate someone or something. Whether I was ministering to people or keeping the church within its budget, I learned to check my direction often to ensure I was still on course.

And, of course, sometimes I had to take a different direction to accomplish my goal.

My big dilemma came when I realized God was calling me into the military as a chaplain. This was big—I mean really big—because it was something I said I would never do. I was called to preach, not to be a military chaplain. But God was also calling me to be an Army chaplain. I had to reconcile the two callings. I came to realize I could accomplish God's will for my life by changing directions...yet going in the same direction. I could be an ordained minister endorsed by Free Will Baptist North American Ministries while serving in the Army as a chaplain. I stayed on course serving God, but changed directions by joining the Army.

I believe Peter faced the same dilemma when God used him to break down social and racial barriers between the Jews and Gentiles. The Scripture (Acts 10:27-29) records Peter defying Jewish law by visiting Cornelius and his Gentile friends. Peter

simply stayed on course serving God, but changed directions by evangelizing the Gentiles. He suffered ridicule and misunderstanding from the other apostles, but he was confident in God's will and knew he could be a faithful, believing Jew and minister to the Gentiles.

I came to realize that I could accomplish God's will for my life by changing directions . . . yet going in the same direction.

Maybe it's time for you to stay on course by accepting a new direction from our Lord. He has a work prepared for you and for me. Simply do as Peter did and listen to the Holy Spirit who leads us into all truth. **ONE**

About the Writer: Chaplain Colonel Terry Austin joined the Marine Corps in 1975, where he accepted Christ and answered the call to preach. During a missions conference, he committed himself to chaplaincy and returned to active duty December 1989. He has represented Free Will Baptists through *Desert Storm*, *Operation Enduring Freedom*, and *Operation Iraqi Freedom*.

Randall House provides our Free Will Baptist chaplains with **complimentary curriculum** both on the battlefield and at home.

The emphasis on solid biblical teaching and family connections is important for our soldiers and their families as they function in a stressful and demanding environment.

Some of our chaplains use *Fusion* (D6 Curriculum for adults) while others find *The Brink* (D6 Curriculum for young adults) helpful in navigating issues that really matter. Ron Hunter, a former soldier himself, says the generosity to our heroes in uniform is made possible by churches that support the mission of Randall House.

—Chaplain Col. Kerry Steedley



THE Pickle MAN

By Jennifer Thomsen

When I was growing up, my family always visited with people from our church after the Sunday evening service. We never had elaborate meals—normally leftovers or sandwiches—but I have fond memories of those times. As kids, we enjoyed playing hide and seek and capture the flag, eating peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, and sharing lots of popcorn.

During this time, my mom purchased a pickle holder from Tupperware. It was green, square, and had a handle on top. The pickle container fascinated me, and I don't even like pickles. One Sunday evening, I was in the kitchen playing with the pickle container, when Terry Austin walked into the kitchen. The Austins were among the families that came to our house on a regular basis. Terry sat down beside me and started playing with the pickle container.

Before long, we were talking to the pickles, pulling them out of the juice to “give them air.” From that moment forward, every time the Austins came over, Terry and I gave the pickles air. I dubbed him, “The Pickle Man.”

Fast-forward 30 years, to the 2012 National Convention in Memphis, Tennessee. I had been working at a doctor's office and left the convention early to train a new employee. The phone at my desk rang, and the caller ID indicated my husband's cell phone. I answered the phone, but it wasn't my husband. To my horror, I heard a gruff voice say, “Check his pockets again. I found a cell phone; he has to have a wallet...”

I demanded, “Who is this, and why do you have my husband's cell phone?”

My voice must have been tinged with hysteria, because all my coworkers came rushing to my side. Suddenly, in the background, I heard my husband say, “Thanks a lot, Terry...I'm not really dead, but she is going to kill me.”

My heart stopped beating like a jackhammer, because I realized someone was playing a joke on me...that crazy Pickle Man.

During the 30 intervening years, my family and the Austins remained in contact. As pastors, Terry and my dad shared burdens with one another, encouraged each other, and even filled in for one another when needed.

When Terry served a tour of duty in the first Gulf War, we sent him packages. From time to time, when he was back in the States, we would meet for dinner at Cracker Barrel. Over the years, the table gradually filled with adult children, their spouses, and eventually grandchildren.

It is amazing how Christian friendships stand the test of time. I am so glad the Pickle Man became my dad's best friend in college, and that their friendship has remained intact over the years. Who could have guessed that the goofy guy who took time to help a young girl “give pickles air” would someday become the highest-ranking Free Will Baptist chaplain, a Colonel in the U.S. Army? Way to go, Pickle Man! **ONE**

About the Writer: Jennifer Thomsen has worked with Free Will Baptist International Missions since August 2012. She and her husband Eric attend Bethel FWB Church in Chapmansboro, Tennessee, and have one daughter, Victoria. Jennifer enjoys baking (without pickles) and exploring new places.



The Song of St. Croix

◆ ◆ BY GENE WOOTON ◆ ◆

*"I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day:
the night cometh, when no man can work" (John 9:4).*

It would be an understatement to say we were surprised when God called us to St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands. Since our arrival, however, He has made it clear over and over that we are exactly where He wants us, and we need to work while there is time. Through all the changes we experienced in the past year, He remains our constant. No matter what unknown we have faced, we rest in the fact that it matters less what we know and more that He is known. The ministry in St. Croix has been challenging with some exciting highs and some dark lows. Through it all, it is clear God is at work on this island, in our community, and on our campus.

When we first moved here, we were worried about being able to connect with the people. Would we be able to form friendships here like we have in other places? Would the people under-

stand us? Would we understand them? Would they be patient with our sons, who can be challenging at times?

Through all the doubt and questions God has shown me that people are people; they hurt, they laugh, they want to hear from God. The people on this island are no different. Even more, believers have a unique bond that goes beyond barriers of race, social status, age, and cultural differences. Sure, we have had some difficulties understanding each other; still, we have been able to form close bonds with the church people and community here, and God has provided us with a family. He has opened doors for us that we never could have kicked open on our own.

On campus, we just wrapped up the 2014-15 school year at Free Will Baptist Christian School (K-12) and summer is in full swing. The thought of being pastor to a school of students was

"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation"
(Revelation 5:9).

new to me and, honestly, terrified me. But God provided a great team of people called to minister here. Stephen & Rejyna Beck have been here eight years; they understand the culture well and have a unique and practical way of working as a family to form friendships and reach islanders. Stephen has greatly helped me navigate my first year as school pastor.

We have been able to reach into the community through simple sweat equity. The National Honor Society of the school adopted an overgrown, paint-chipped intersection that had been neglected for years. It has a 30-foot wall, with a sign that announces visitors' entrance into our neighborhood. The school, church, and mission teams from the States have helped revitalize this part of the island. As we worked and sweated, planting flowers, painting, and weed-eating, the islanders honked and waved encouragement as they passed by. Our main goal has been to show Jesus' love in a practical way. At least six newspaper articles have been written, and one evening, a news story aired about the work done to spruce up this intersection. In each interview, we are careful to point people to Jesus Christ.

The church is just as amazing as every other aspect of the ministry here in St Croix. It is filled each week with people from all over the Caribbean. We recently had World Missions Day, and it was an amazing service. We had 32 states, islands, and countries represented in a crowd of about 150 people. As I looked out over the crowd, I couldn't help but think of the passage, "And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9). I have often wondered what that worship service in Heaven might look like. This year, I was privileged to get a small glimpse. **ONE**

About the Writer: Gene Wooton is senior pastor at Free Will Baptist Church in St. Croix, Virgin Islands. Gene and his wife Angela have four children. The whole family is involved in this island ministry.

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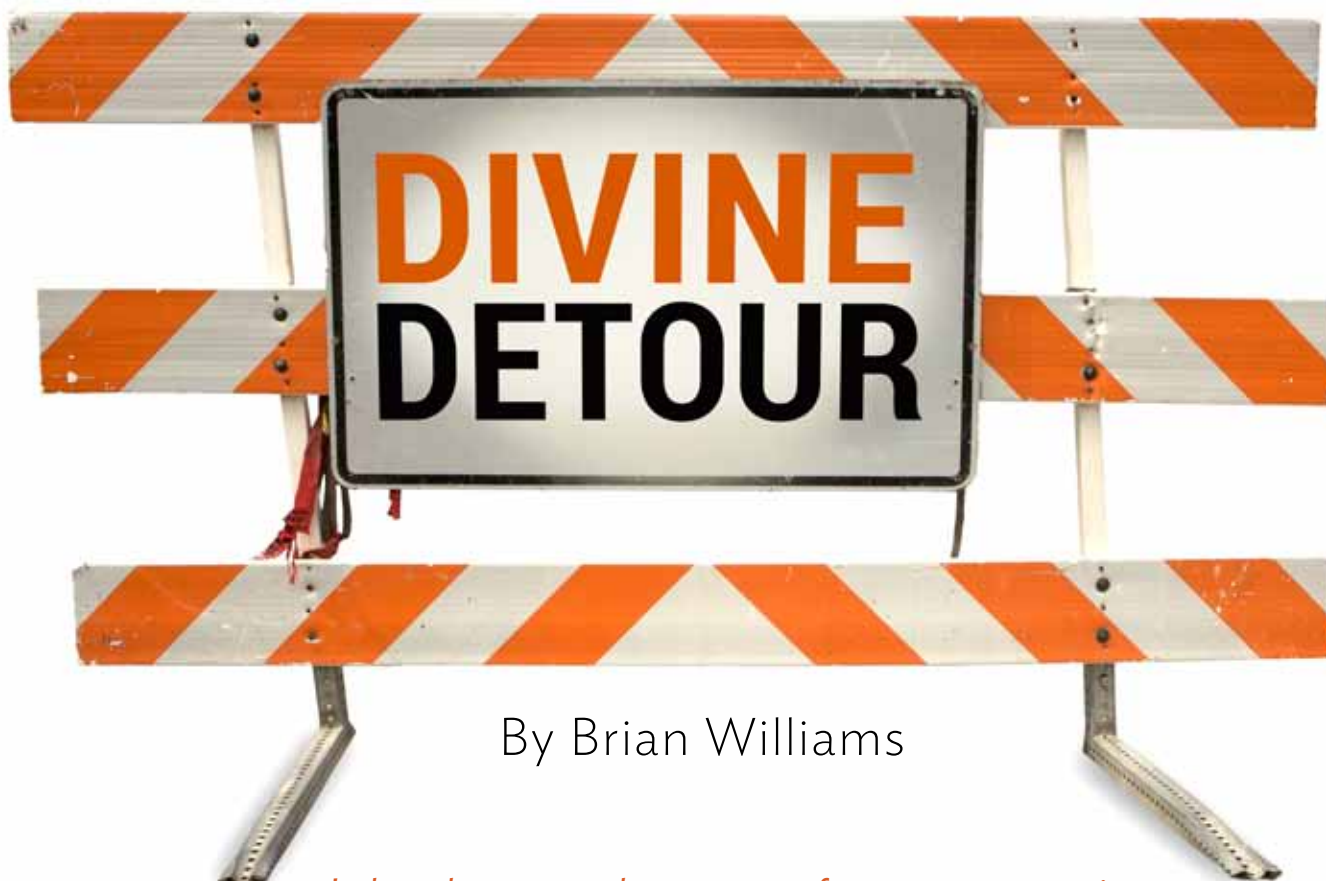
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By Brian Williams

It has happened to most of us at some point. While driving along at 70 miles per hour and enjoying the beautiful scenery, suddenly, the thought strikes you that you are headed in the wrong direction, and panic sets in. We don't brag about moments like these, but they happen more often than we care to admit.

Or, maybe it happened like this. You're driving along, and you see a "Road Closed" sign followed by a number of detour signs. All of a sudden, the ease of travel and the confidence of an early arrival seem to be in jeopardy. Who knows what this "detour" will look like?

Perhaps your journey became very confusing because of road signs. In fact, you may have been traveling in a location such as Wytheville, Virginia, where one highway is named both I-77 north and I-81 south. Which direction is it? Is it north? Is it south? It's hard to tell from looking at the signs.

Traveling can be confusing, wouldn't you say? Like traveling, life can often be confusing as well. While doing ministry and life, you look around only to realize you're no longer going in the

direction you intended. What must happen in those times? How should we respond? Because this happened in my life on at least two different occasions, let me share my story.

It first happened to me as a senior in high school. I was graduating with both a high school diploma and a vocational degree in electronic technology. It was 1991, and the world of electronics was changing rapidly, so opportunities were abounding.

I had just completed the initial interview to be hired by the Newport News Shipbuilding Company in Newport News, Virginia. They would pay for me to further my education while also paying me a really good wage for an 18-year-old boy. Life was good, and my career was set when God used a message from His Word and some godly counsel to help me realize I was heading

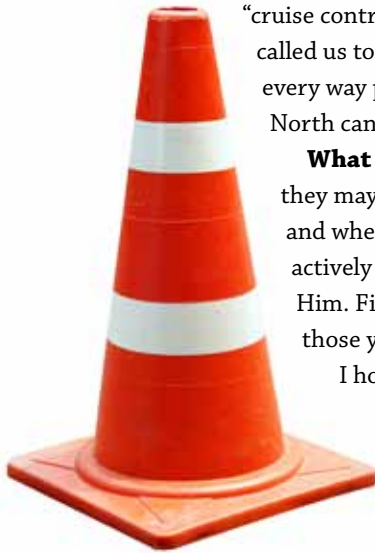
in the wrong direction. I submitted to God’s direction for my life and to His calling. Instead of starting a job at Newport News Shipbuilding Company, I enrolled at Southeastern FWB College that fall, and my life was changed forever.

The second instance came when I was serving as a pastor in Lincolnton, North Carolina. I had been there for over 11 years, and we were having the time of our lives. Our children were born there and spoiled by the good folks in the church. I often remarked that I could see myself retiring at the church. God was blessing the ministry, and the “cruise control” was set. It was at this point in our lives, however, that God gripped our hearts for the Northeast and called us to serve as church planters in Buffalo, New York. I must be honest and say we analyzed this “road sign” in every way possible to make sure we were indeed following God’s new direction for our lives. After all, life in the North can be quite different than life in the South.

What should a person do when sensing a new direction? First, consider the road signs in your life. While they may be unclear or even confusing at times, as a general rule, they serve as clear indicators of where you are and where you are going. Second, follow the prompting and direction of the Holy Spirit. He is intricately and actively involved in the lives of believers, leading them where He sees fit. You will never go wrong in following Him. Finally, consider the counsel of other believers. While none of us like a “back-seat driver,” the counsel of those you love and trust may confirm the new direction in which God is taking you.

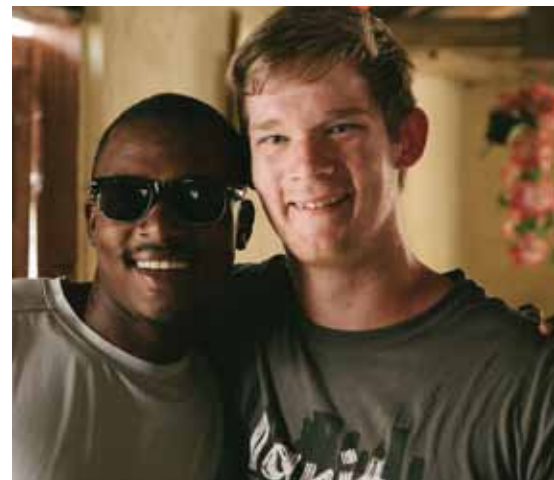
I hope you enjoy the trip! **ONE**

About the Writer: Brian and Emily Williams are church planters in Buffalo, New York.



FROM WELCH TO THE WORLD

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Across the Nation >>

Power Conference a Success

Branson, Missouri—The First annual Acts 1:8 Power Conference for church growth and revitalization was hosted by North American Ministries in Branson, Missouri, May 25-26. Approximately 330 people from 17 states attended the conference.

Rev. Jeff Jones, pastor of Hilltop FWB Church in Fuquay-Varina, North Carolina, preached the opening service on Monday evening with music provided by Southern Raised, a family Southern Gospel group known for “bluegrass with class.” Christian humorist, songwriter, and inspirational speaker Aaron Wilburn wowed those present with his homespun humor and lifted spirits with his music.

On Tuesday, Rev. Jim McComas began the day with the story of David and Goliath. Although humorous, he communicated his ideas in a way that will not be forgotten.

Six breakout seminars featured the topics, Power in Your Preaching, Power in the Pews, and Power in Your Plan. Pastor Rob Morgan spoke on his new book, *Mastering Life Before It's Too Late*, and shared ways to schedule days to be productive in your work and in your relationship with the Lord.

Dr. Brad Ransom, NAM director of church planting, offered creative ideas for outreach. Aaron Wilburn shared important information on the five most important minutes of a sermon, and pastor and



Rob Morgan



David & Kathey Crowe

homiletics professor Jeff Jones taught guidelines for expository preaching. Last but not least, Jim McComas, NAM director of church revitalization, spoke on guaranteed principles for church failure—roadblocks to church growth. Each session was packed, with people standing in the back of the room and filling the hallway.

At six o'clock on Tuesday evening, the music began, and people poured into the hall. It seemed no one wanted to miss anything. When it came time for the preaching services, almost everyone was already in and



Brad Ransom



Jim McComas

seated. The Calvarymen, a well-known Missouri quartet started the Tuesday session, followed by Christian Davis, bass singer with the Dailey and Vincent quartets, Southern Raised, and others. On both nights, when the congregation stood to sing, it was like an old-fashioned revival time. You could almost hear the echoes of the evangelists and feel the inspiration of old. Executive Director, Dr. David Crowe, stepped into the pulpit on Tuesday evening, and brought the house down with a sermon from his heart.

This was a much-anticipated



Jeff Jones



Conference Attendees

and well-planned conference, and no one left disappointed. New relationships were formed, great meals were shared, and information gathered. Many said this was the greatest conference they had attended. One commented, "I leave this meeting with hope for my ministry, my church, and our denomination." This conference was a rousing success.

Due to the overwhelming response, North American Ministries has already made the decision to hold a conference next year. Details are forthcoming. ■

Introducing New Church Planters



Billy and Gloria Bevan recently assumed the pastorate at Eastside FWB Church in Dothan, Alabama. A joint project between the state of Alabama and North American Ministries, this ministry comes under the Church Revitalization division. Bevan comes from a long ministry at Sardis FWB Church in Eufaula, Alabama. He has pastored since 1970 in Georgia, Mississippi, and North Carolina, and brings a wealth of knowledge to this ministry. He graduated from Welch with a B.A. degree in Bible and Pastoral Training. He served as president of Southeastern FWB College in a full-time capacity for six years and part-time for seven years. The Bevan family consists of son, Billy Bevan, Jr., daughter, Karla, and their families. Please pray for the Bevans and this project.

Chris and Megan Davenport are teaming with church planters Carl and Cynthia Spruill to plant a Free Will Baptist church in Kaneohe, Oahu, Hawaii. This will be the second Free Will Baptist church on the island. Luther Sanders planted the first in Waipahu in 1959. Chris graduated from Welch College with a B.S. in Missions. The percentage of professing Christians on the island is very low. Kaneohe is growing and is home of MCB Hawaii Marine Corps Base. Please pray for Chris and Megan as they begin this exciting church plant in Hawaii.



Carl and Cynthia Spruill are planting a new Free Will Baptist church in Kaneohe, Oahu, Hawaii. Oahu boasts a population of 953,000, including Kaneohe, with a population of 35,000 residents. Nearly 60% of the Hawaiian people claim no religious affiliation. Carl's grandparents, Luther and Helen Sanders, established the Waipahu FWB Church in 1959, and his parents, Wayne and Brenda Spruill, worked in the church as well. Carl feels the Lord calling him to plant a church on the opposite side of the island. He will be the third generation of a family dedicated to ministry in Hawaii. The Spruills have three children—Noah, Keola, and Leilani. Please pray for this family and the new church plant in Hawaii.

John and April Moran are planting a new Free Will Baptist church as a joint project between North American Ministries and the state of North Carolina. John comes from Sherwood Forest FWB Church in New Bern, North Carolina. He attended Southeastern FWB College earning a B.A. degree in Bible and Pastoral Training. The new church plant will be in Apex, which, at one time, was rated #14 in the list of best places to live in the United States. The current population tops 42,000 with an expected increase to 50,000 by the year 2020. This is a young, educated, and diverse population. John and April have two daughters, Alicia and Ashlyn. Please pray for the Morans as they reach the people of Apex and plant this new church.



Offering Video Released

Antioch, TN—North American Ministries has released a new video to help churches promote the 2015 Mission: North America Offering scheduled for November 22, according to Brad Ransom, director of church planting. Churches can access the video at www.fwbnam.com.

“God Will PROVIDE”

BY RICK BOWLING

It seems like only yesterday when Trymon Messer and I began to pray for the Hispanic population in North America. We came to the conclusion that something had to be done. Trymon said, “The work must be done, Rick, but you cannot use any worker from our existing works. That means we have no church planters and no place to meet, but God will provide!”

It has been over 15 years since this ministry started, and Trymon knew exactly what he was talking about. God has supplied. Today, we have six full-time church planters who oversee 40 Hispanic works in the United States and works in every country in Latin America with the exception of Bolivia. We also have two mission works in Haiti. Around 3,000 Hispanics meet in Free Will Baptist churches every Sunday in the United States.

Our church planters are some of the greatest preachers and soul winners I have ever known. Their life motivation is to serve the Lord, win people to Christ, disciple them, and send them out to build more churches. Many Hispanic people come to the States because they have no way to provide for their families in their own countries. When they hear the Word of God and receive Him as their Savior, their priorities change. They become concerned the spiritual needs of their loved ones. Some return to their homelands and start churches. Those staying in the States have the same desire to reach others.

Dr. Rufo Gomez led Pastor Oscar Portillo to the Lord in Lexington, Kentucky. He immediately enrolled in Earl and Gwen Hendrix FWB Hispanic Institute. After graduating, he and his family went to Fort Myers, Florida, and started a church. They won many of their friends and family members to the Lord and built a strong work in Fort Myers. Currently, they are making plans to open another church in the Fort Myers area.

Rafael Barney came to know the Lord under Pastor Diego Cueva. He is now seeking to become a Free Will Baptist Navy chaplain. Retired Colonel Kerry Steedley is working with him, and hopefully, in a short time, we will have our first Hispanic chaplain.

Well, Trymon, as usual, was right. God has provided. And, we continue to look for a great future with qualified missionaries ready to get involved, a new correspondence program that will reach throughout the Americas, and preacher boys and their families called by the Lord for service.



The future looks good, but there is still much to do. Millions of Hispanics now live in the United States, and in all, we as Free Will Baptists have fewer than 100 works. You can be part of this ministry through prayer and financial support...and perhaps by getting involved in the ministry yourself. Maybe God is providing through you! **ONE**

About the Writer: Rick Bowling is director of Hispanic Ministries for North American Ministries.

Why the SAMBURU?

BY EDDY SIMMONS

Why has Free Will Baptist International Missions appointed missionaries to the Samburu people of Kenya?

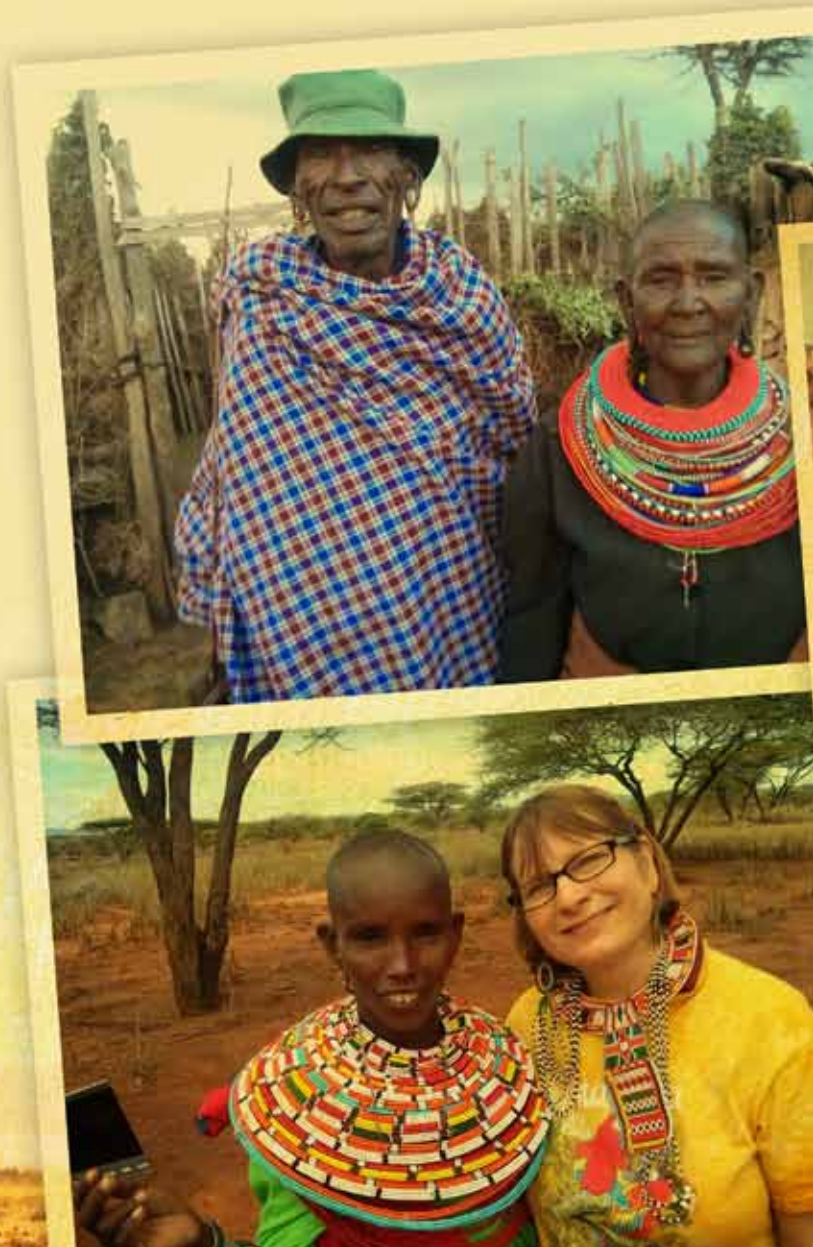
Primarily, because God promised in Revelation 5:9 that He would save people out of “every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.” That includes the Samburu people! It is God’s will that people of every culture worship Him around the throne in Heaven. These days, God is calling the Samburu people of Kenya to Himself in a mighty way. Missionaries have been working among them for several decades with some progress. Many women and children have accepted salvation but few men.

Well, things have changed. God is moving and is drawing men, women, and children to Himself. In May, we visited a new area called Ngisiu. We found a new primary school with about 12 students. We met a group of older men, Samburu elders, waiting for others to arrive to discuss community matters. We took the opportunity to share a story from God’s Word, the story of *Zakayo* (Zacchaeus). When we finished, the men said they were not ready to follow Jesus, but: “We want to hear more about God. When we hear more, we will follow.”

God is at work in the hearts of the Samburu people, and we must hurry to get the gospel to them while they are ready to hear.

In their lostness, the Samburu have chosen a promiscuous lifestyle that has led to a high number of AIDS cases. Diseases such as malaria, typhoid, tuberculosis, etc. also put them at risk for early death. They suffer high infant mortality rates and die from simple medical conditions such as diarrhea, due to lack of access to clean water and good medical care. These present us with a practical and urgent reason to share the gospel with the Samburu.

Because of their remote location in Kenya, good records of their true numbers, mortality rates, or causes of death do not exist. The AIDS rate is likely much higher than the published statistic of 7%. In a very practical sense, we must get the gospel to them quickly—before they die.



That is also a good biblical reason to reach them. Love, compassion, care, and concern for the least among us are strong biblical reasons to reach out to the Samburu people with a sense of urgency. We must seek to reach all of the lost in the world before they die in their sins. So many people have no access to the saving news of Jesus Christ and will spend eternity separated from God unless we reach them with the gospel.

The Samburu have been waiting for someone to bring God's Word back to them. A Samburu legend says they once knew God and had His Word. They say God gave the white man His Word and the black man His Word. The white man took care of the Word, but the black man was careless and his cow ate the Word. They believe the white man will bring God's Word back to them. (This legend is repeated in many cultures.) In a sense, they are waiting for someone to bring God's Word back to their people.

The Samburu are nonliterate for the most part, so the Word must be brought to them in oral form through "chronological Bible storying." This method is effective, because the Samburu have always passed down heritage and life lessons through stories. Sharing God's Word in the form of storytelling is natural to them. After hearing it just one time, they are able to retain the narrative and pull deep, spiritual truth from the stories.

They often share these stories from God's Word with others. The chief and elders of the area asked us to bring God's Word to them and to live among them. A door for the gospel has opened, and we must walk through it by faith.

The Samburu believe in one God, N'kai, but do not know how to relate to Him. They have been trying to reach N'Kai through prayer, sacrifices, and ritual. They do not know whether or not N'kai hears them or even cares. They have earnestly tried to follow the one true God, but have been missing a vital portion of the story—the story of Jesus. They do not know they must approach God through His Son, Jesus (*Yesu* in the Samburu language), to be heard and helped. They do not know His one true and final sacrifice, Jesus, reunites them with Him through faith. It is imperative for someone to take the news of Jesus to them.

So, why the Samburu? Because God is moving among them, drawing them to Himself in an extraordinary way, and we must join Him where He is at work! **ONE**

About the Writer: Eddy and Amanda Simmons currently pastor Faith FWB Church in Matthews, North Carolina. During the April 2015 board meeting, the couple was appointed to work among the Samburu people. Learn more about them under the missionaries tab on www.fwbgo.com.

THE SAMBUR- WHO?

The Samburu people live in north-central Kenya. A semi-nomadic tribe, they primarily herd cattle, sheep, goats, camels, and donkeys.

The Samburu have traditional customs and live in mud and dung huts. Two to five families typically form a small settlement. Arid conditions and the sparseness of food and water for their animals keep settlements widely separated.

Their religious practices seem Old Testament in nature, consisting of prayer, circumcision, and animal sacrifice to N'kai, their name for God. In some areas, they have an annual sacrifice to commemorate God's call to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac and His provision of a substitute.

The Old Testament practices of the Samburu stem from their belief that they accompanied the Hebrews to Mt. Sinai during the Exodus from Egypt. Since the Samburu are considered a "Nilotic" people, or people who came from the area of the Nile River, this is a distinct possibility. Though they have some knowledge of God, they have no knowledge of Jesus.

In spite of the religious rituals the Samburu practice, they often rely upon *Laibon* (witchdoctors) to ward off evil spirits, heal sickness, and curse enemies. They tend to worship the gods of the mountains and rivers when times are tough.

The Samburu currently do not have a written language or a Bible in their language. Progress is being made. However, it will be many years before they have an entire Bible (or learn to read). Therefore, it is necessary to share the gospel using oral Bible storytelling methods.



Around the World >>

E-TEAM 2015

Antioch, TN—Eleven teams of students deployed to assist missionaries and national workers in nine countries in June. Team leaders arrived for training on June 9; student training began June 11.

After days packed with music and mime practice, learning to make balloon animals and paint faces, Bible and cross-cultural training, teambuilding skills, and much more, the teams departed for approximately ten days of ministry.

Teams served in Chicago, Illinois; Cuba; France; Haiti; Hokkaido, Japan; Jaboticabal, Brazil; Kazakhstan; Limeira, Brazil; Panama; Spain; and Tokyo, Japan. All teams returned to Nashville for debriefing and closing ceremonies July 1.

E-TEAM is a cross-cultural summer ministry opportunity for students completing grades 10-12. ■



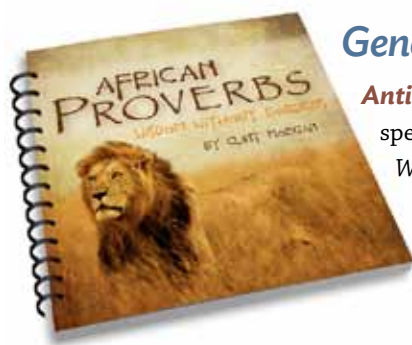
Alpedrete's Journey Off the Map

Alpedrete, Spain—The Alpedrete Church's VBS theme "Journey off the Map" explored Bible lessons demonstrating how Daniel and his three friends followed God. During the daily opening assembly, a mission's moment focused on the hospital in Doropo, Côte d'Ivoire, founded by missionary Dr. Laverne Miley. Dr. Miley (performed by Anthony Edgmon) visited one day, giving students more insight about the hospital.

Forty-four children (18 from unchurched families) filled the off-the-map territory during the week, with an average of 38 kids per day.

Eight volunteers team-taught the Bible class, snack time, craft time, and music time. Four other people served as the director, mission's moment leader, decorations coordinator, and "Mike"—who visited at the end of each day to remind the kids of the truth discovered that day. Four teens led the groups to each activity and ran the store where children bought prizes with the coins they earned for good behavior and participation.

During the week and in the closing service, children and adults contributed offerings to help with the much-needed renovations of the Doropo hospital and purchasing more equipment. Anthony Edgmon wrote, "We were thrilled to collect over 650€ (over \$700) to help our Free Will Baptist brothers and sisters in Christ who work at the Doropo hospital. We were also thrilled to have several of the children and some of their family members who don't attend church visit for the closing program. Pray these children and their parents will rely on Christ as their Guide and Savior." ■



General Director Publishes First Book

Antioch, TN—General Director Clint Morgan, well known for interjecting African proverbs into sermons, speeches, and ordinary conversations, published his first book in July. Fittingly, *African Proverbs: Wisdom Without Borders* features 30 African proverbs and their application to everyday life.

The beautifully illustrated book, published by Randall House, contains art reminiscent of the African savannah. Books may be ordered from International Missions (www.fwbgo.com). ■

Costa Rica LMC 2015

Costa Rica—The 2015 Leadership Matters Course in Costa Rica was held May 10-23. The training team arrived Thursday, May 7, to invest two days in pre-course preparation.

The course venue was the La Montaña Christian Camp, close to San Ana, Costa Rica. Located in the mountains in a tropical cloud forest, it is a two-hour drive from the capital city of San José. The sponsoring mission was Christian and Missionary Alliance of Canada.

Ten people formed the training team. Jeff Turnbough served as lead trainer.

The 28 participants represented 14 countries, eight nationalities, and eight mission organizations. ■

Brazil Leadership Workshop

Brazil—The fourth Leadership Workshop, sponsored by the Alliance of Free Will Baptist Churches of Brazil, occurred July 3-4, 2015, at the Marincek FWB Church in Ribeirão Preto. Leaders discussed the family—its biblical definition and the challenges to the family the Church faces. “It was a valuable time of reflection and sharing of experiences, preparing our church leaders to deal with the increasing disintegration of the family,” stated Kenneth Eagleton.

Two additional Free Will Baptist churches joined the Alliance, bringing the total to eight. During the workshop, the women held a Women’s Conference with Rejane Eagleton as the speaker. ■

Snapshots Around the World



States—Lázaro and Ariadna Riesgo arrived in the United States July 10. After four days in Miami, Florida, with family and friends, they landed at Nashville International Airport July 14, in time to attend the National Association in Grand Rapids, Michigan. The couple, serving as educational specialists for Latin America, will be based in Nashville, Tennessee. In the midst of all the changes, Lázaro says, “In His lap there is peace and joy.”



Brazil—To reach a larger number of students, the Bible institute in Campinas established decentralized teaching points. The newest class at Marabá FWB Church in Araras attracted 12 students for an Old Testament Survey series of classes. Though more demanding on professors (teaching the same class multiple times in multiple locations), it allows a greater number of Free Will Baptist people to be trained.



Panama—The FWB Church in Colón, Panama, celebrated its 39th anniversary over the weekend of June 12-14. Situated near the Caribbean Sea entrance to the Panama Canal, Colón is the capital of Colón Province.



Japan—Ken and Judy Bailey arrived in the States July 1. They will serve as missionaries-in-residence at Hillsdale FWB College in Moore, Oklahoma, for the 2015-16 school session.



Bulgaria—Trif and Vanya Trifonov and their three children (Deborah, Monika, and Stefan) arrived in the U.S. June 29, and spent two months visiting churches and building relationships with supporters. Stefan found time to compete in Music and Arts competition in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he won his category.



Japan—On June 14, baby Yuki was dedicated at Kamifukuoka Christ Church. His grandparents and aunt (all believers) were able to attend the service. Heath Hubbard provided the introduction, Josh Crowe brought the message, and Ken Bailey performed the dedication ceremony. After the service, everyone enjoyed a fellowship meal.



Panama—Efraín González, pastor of Las Tablas Church in Panama, baptized four people June 28.



Bulgaria—Seven children from the Svishtov English clubs joined missionary kids and New Life Church children to learn about Jesus throughout a week of camp. Amy Postlewaite said, “God allowed us to have some meaningful, gospel-centered conversations with some of the parents who were in attendance as well.”

STRONG COFFEE PANAMA AND THE GOSPEL

BY CHRISTOPHER TALBOT



It is called a Bialetti 6799 Moka Express 3-Cup Stovetop Espresso Maker, and I bought it immediately after returning from Panama. If you know me, you know I love all things coffee. I especially like strong coffee—none of that wimpy, sugary stuff for me (unless it's a pumpkin spice latté, of course). Whether it's a pour-over method or a French press, I love trying different types of java.

In the spring of 2015, my wife Rebekah and I, along with seven amazing students from Welch College, went on a mission trip to the country of Panama, where I tried some of the most magnificent coffee that ever burned my taste buds. Our friend and guide Lázaro took me aside and showed me how to make a good Cuban/Panamanian espresso. If my impulsive purchase is any sign, it is evident I loved this new type of coffee. As I sat sipping my small cup of espresso in Panama, I distinctly remember thinking “These are my people, and I could get used to this.”

I’m getting ahead of myself though. Let me go back to the beginning of our trip. While serving in youth ministry, mission trips had led us north to New York and south to Florida, but we had yet to cross international borders. To say we were a bit overwhelmed by the thought of this trip is a slight understatement. Still, we were excited to see what God had in store for us.

Our trip to Panama took approximately five hours, with a lay-over in Atlanta. Once in Panama, we traveled several more hours, winding through the mountains of Central America. Late in the night, we arrived at *Seminario Bautista Libre* (Free Will Baptist Seminary) in Chame, Panama. For ten days we spent time with the students of the Seminario, learning much about them...and ourselves.

Our time provided a wealth of experiences and service opportunities. We worked alongside the students and ministered with them in a variety of ways—in the public schools, cleaning and refurbishing the facilities, and distributing tracts. Weekend ministries were a major highlight for us all as the Seminario students left for their church ministries, some as far away as four hours from the school. Our team split up to join them for those few days. Simply put, this was cultural immersion in the fast lane. Each of us was thrown into situations far outside our comfort zones. We stayed with host families, tried new foods, preached through translators, and made new friends thousands of miles away from our homes. For many students, this was the most memorable and life-changing event of the trip.

While the Welch students could share a myriad of experiences, two events in particular stand out. First was our own weekend ministry. My wife and I joined another married couple named Ricardo and Nella. Unfortunately, neither Ricardo nor Nella knew much English. Rebekah and I knew even less Spanish. We communicated by punching words into Google Translator in hopes modern technology would carry the conversation along. Quickly, I learned the limits to both contemporary gadgets and my 10th-grade Spanish! Although a language barrier stood between us, in those few days we grew close to these Christian brothers and sisters. Ricardo and Nella quickly became close friends.

In particular, I remember sitting in Nella’s mother’s house before dinner. Nella’s family is predominately Catholic, including her mom. Ricardo typed a message into his phone to be translated for me. It read, “We are trying to take the gospel to Nella’s mother.” I was deeply moved by these short words on the screen. The same gospel I proclaim to my unbelieving family and friends is the same gospel Ricardo and Nella are proclaiming in another country, and it offers the same hope in both places.

A second event was life changing. Samuel Riggs, one of the students on the trip, grew up in Spain in a missionary family. Thankfully, this gave him the wonderful skill of being bilingual, a gift we used often during the trip. One of our last nights in Panama, we conducted an evangelistic service for the neighborhood surrounding the Seminario. Those in charge asked for one of our students to preach during this time. On a whim, I asked Sam if he would be interested in preaching, and somewhat apprehensively he agreed.

That evening, Samuel preached an amazing, God-glorifying gospel message. Steve Torrison, who led a group from Hillsdale FWB College at the same time as ours, translated for Samuel... except he translated the sermon from Spanish to English so we could hear what Sam was preaching. Sam told us from Scripture that we were all at enmity with God, with no hope in ourselves. While we were made in the image of God, we have sinned, just like Adam and Eve, and deserve eternal punishment in Hell. Yet, if we want to become friends of God, as the Bible says, there is a hope available in Christ. His deeply moving message brought me right back to the first observation—the universal hope we have in the gospel.

Back to my coffee. As I sat on the porch at the Seminario sipping coffee, I continued to think of how “these were my people” and “how I could get used to this.” However, as I thought more on the events surrounding our trip and the impact the Panamanian students made on us, I think those statements resonated even deeper with me. Thinking about their hunger for God’s Word and their love for the gospel, I thought how these really are my people; they are my brothers and sisters in Christ. However, our bond is stronger than a simple human relationship; it is Christ’s blood that draws us together.

I also pondered how I could become accustomed to this. Sure, we enjoyed our time in Panama, and I discovered something I really could get used to: watching Christ’s people desire to know Him more and tell others about Him. What might have started with a thought about simple coffee led to a resounding truth about God’s mission for us in the world. **ONE**

At Welch College >>

Former Welch College Board Chairman With the Lord

Reverend Gene Outland, former Welch College Board of Trustees chairman, died Saturday, May 9, in Nashville, Tennessee. He was 80 years old.

A 1957 graduate, Mr. Outland loved Welch College. His late wife, Peggy, as well as their daughter Angela and her husband Mark Trotter, also attended Welch. His granddaughter, Audrey Trotter Jordan, graduated Friday, May 8, summa cum laude from Welch College, with the honor of being named Most Outstanding Student.

Mr. Outland was elected to the Welch College Board of Trustees in July 1996. He served 12 years on the board and was chairman 2006–2008. He pastored churches in North Carolina, Illinois, and Tennessee.

Former Vice President for Financial Affairs Tom Sass said, “Brother

Outland was a great man of God . . . His great, deep love exhibited for the Lord, for family, and for his college are wonderful, loving, giving examples of what it means to be Christ-like through life.”

Welch College President Matt Pinson said, “No one loved Welch College more than Gene Outland. I saw this personally when he served on our Board of Trustees, especially during the two years he served as chairman. Even after he fulfilled his term on the board, he called weekly to inquire of the wellbeing of the college and to let me know he was praying for me and for the college. He was truly an outstanding man of God with a servant’s heart.”

A celebration of Mr. Outland’s life was held Friday, May 15, in Nashville, Tennessee. ■

Vice President for Church Relations Retires



Reverend Gary Fry, vice president for Church Relations since February, 2012, announced his retirement from Welch College in August. Mr. Fry served the college establishing and developing relationships with churches across the nation in an effort to raise awareness of the college’s needs while also looking for ways the college could be of service to pastors and churches.

In addition to traveling for the college, he served as public relations coach for traveling music groups and also worked to promote the online program.

Before coming to Welch, Mr. Fry, a 1972 Welch College graduate, served as the Missouri State Association executive director, pastored Mountain Grove Free Will Baptist Church for 23 years, and served on the Welch College Board of Trustees for 12 years, ten as chairman.

Fry said, “I have certainly enjoyed my time at Welch. There is not a better group of people with which to work. Were it not for my failing health, I would continue to serve the Lord here. These are exciting times at the college. We have a growing student body, and there is a

great spirit on campus. The administration and board are moving the college forward toward relocation. It’s a great day to be a part of the Welch family!”

President Matt Pinson said, “We are saddened to see Brother Fry retire. Gary Fry represents what Welch College is all about. His service as a member and chairman of the Board of Trustees, and now as a vice president, have been outstanding. He has served, and will continue to serve, as a valued advisor and friend to me and the college. His commitment to Welch College and his understanding of its mission are second to none.”

Vice President for Institutional Advancement David Williford said, “Gary Fry has been a friend, a confidant, a counselor, and an outstanding representative for Welch College. On a personal level, I will miss him. On a professional level, all of us will miss his insight, wisdom, and the skills he brought to bear as he shared Welch’s story with the churches of our denomination. Gary served faithfully in spite of health issues that often made it difficult on him. My prayer is that God will give him a fruitful ministry in his retirement years, because, even though Gary will be slowing his pace, he will never cease to labor in the work of the kingdom.”

Reverend Fry and his wife Shirley plan to make their home in Mountain Grove, Missouri, where he will provide pulpit supply and continue to represent Welch College as a regional representative. ■

Intersect >>

How Should We Read the Bible? MATTHEW MCAFFEE

As depraved creatures, we are prone to the error of extremes. This problem not only shows up in our daily habits, but can also affect the way we read the Bible. Let me illustrate this point with two approaches to Bible study: (1) the proof-text approach, and (2) the exegetical verse-by-verse approach.

The first could be called the “shotgun approach,” since it tends to gather different passages on a single topic—compiling all the Bible teaches about a given issue. This is a necessary method of studying the Bible, referred to by theologians as Systematic Theology. The burden of this method, however, is that care needs to be given to the context of each passage consulted. Unfortunately, folks often pull some word, phrase, or idea out of a passage without first understanding its function in context.

This leads to a misappropriation of Scripture and impedes the understanding of what the Bible actually says. Gathering passages on a common theme or topic requires much digging and a detailed study of every text. Only through this kind of hard work do we adequately reach a proper understanding of biblical teachings on theology and practice.

The second approach is the verse-by-verse method, working through a specific text in painstaking detail. We research the historical background of the passage and analyze the literary context surrounding the passage—all before studying the words and phrases within it. The goal is to arrive at an accurate interpretation of what the author was saying to his own audience.

But it does not end there. The final step in verse-by-verse study is to transfer meaning from the original context to our own. This is one of the most difficult steps, because we are prone to start with application first. When we do this, however, we bypass the meaning of Scripture and read into it our own preferences and convictions. Instead, we need to draw it from the passage. The more effort we expend in trying to understand the Bible’s teaching in its own world, the more we can identify application for our own day. Scholars call this process exegesis.

Another danger in verse-by-verse interpretation is to think it is the only way to study the Bible. Indeed, it helps maintain fidelity to the text of Scripture and makes it harder to import our own views and culture into the text. Yet if we push things too far, we can become narrow in our understanding of the Bible. We develop a segmented understanding of biblical truth, never seeing how the parts relate to the whole.

A similar problem exists in the arena of preaching, with advocates of expository preaching arguing it is the only way to preach. Don’t get me wrong. I think a healthy diet of verse-by-

verse exposition of the Bible is the best (even primary) means of stimulating growth and maturity in the church. But surely there is a place for putting things together into a cohesive theological framework.

Reading and studying the Bible needs both synthesis and exegesis. We must organize biblical teaching into a comprehensive system of thought if we are to move from the biblical text into the context of our own world. We must distill the underlying principles of Scripture in order to interpret our world in a distinctly Christian way.

I recommend that we read the Bible both exegetically and systematically, since both are necessary for the life of the church. Systematic Bible teaching needs the rigor of sound exegesis to avoid the misuse of Scripture by inserting our own context and ideas. Those immersed in exegesis also need to pull back from the details to understand the meaning of each passage in light of the whole canon.

But we must consider one last and final step. Both study methods should be anchored in the overarching story of redemption as it unfolds progressively through the Bible. Creation, fall, redemption, and new creation—this progressive framework is the fundamental perspective of the Bible. Each text and doctrinal teaching needs to be oriented toward Christ and the story of redemption. God the Father is working to subjugate all things under the feet of his Son (Hebrews 2:5-8), realized once and for all at His second coming.

As followers of Christ, we need to understand the broad outline of Scripture, the progressive record of God’s redemptive work in history, the thread that ties the biblical canon together. Scripture is a unified and cohesive message from God. The exegesis of individual texts is necessary, because individuals from diverse times and places penned the Bible. The human nature of Scripture makes it necessary to understand the author’s meaning as intended for his unique context. Still, as a divinely given book, the Bible must be read as a cohesive whole by connecting individual contexts and meanings to one another and to the redemption story.

In short, we need to read the Bible both in part and as a whole, with careful attention to locating individual passages within the story of redemption. We should avoid unhealthy extremes in our biblical interpretation, and keeping these three aspects in mind—exegesis, synthesis, and the redemptive context—should help us to do so. **ONE**



WHAT Difference DOES A YEAR MAKE?

By David Williford

“What possible difference could a year at Welch College make in my child’s life?”

That’s a question we often hear from parents as we meet with prospective students and their parents and encourage them to consider Welch as their college of choice. Those of us who minister here are obviously convinced that this place will make a significant difference in the lives of students.

Parents, however, want to know why they should send their child to Welch College if their son or daughter is going to transfer eventually to finish a major Welch does not offer. It’s a legitimate question. Why attend Welch for only one or two years?

The early years of college have a significant impact on a young person’s worldview, values, and priorities. Being in a place that echoes the teachings and values that parents and churches have imparted into their lives will make a major impact on what kind of person that individual will be throughout his or her life.

Welch College instills and reinforces biblical values and a

Christian worldview in students. Even if one is only exposed to that influence for one or two years, the long-term effects can be significant.

Another factor is our long tradition of seeing students come to Welch, intending to stay only one or two years, but finding this is the place God had for them all along. After experiencing the atmosphere and allowing the Holy Spirit to work in their lives, students often change their plans and complete a degree program with us, often in a totally different field of study than originally planned.

Many pastors of Free Will Baptist churches today came to Welch intending to stay only a year, or intending to pursue a degree other than ministry. Missionaries serving across the world came to Welch intending to stay only for one year. While here, the Lord did significant works in their lives, and they now serve

Him in ways and places they never dreamed possible.

One young man who came to Welch (then Free Will Baptist Bible College) illustrates what a single year can do. This young man had dreams of studying engineering at Georgia Tech. His plans were made and his goals set. His mom, however, wanted him to experience at least one year at the college, so she made him an offer: attend Bible College for one year, and she would pay for him to go to Georgia Tech. (If not, he could pay for Georgia Tech on his own.) In his words, “Nobody had ever accused me of being stupid, so I took the deal.”

In late fall of that year, during a prayer meeting in the men’s dorm, he was challenged by the Lord to reexamine his life, his goals, and his priorities. “That night, I took my hands off the reins of my life and turned them over to the Lord to do His will.”

That young man answered the call to preach and stayed at the college for four years, until he graduated. Over the years, he has had—by any earthly evaluation—a successful ministry. He has labored faithfully among Free Will Baptists, and now, even in

retirement, continues to be active and faithful.

His college friends called him Bobby. His wife called him Robert. His five daughters call him dad. I still see him on our campus occasionally. I ran into him in a meeting recently and greeted him, saying, “Good morning, Dr. Picirilli. How are you today?”


Did a young man’s decision to attend the college for one year make a significant difference in his life? In the life of the denomination? In the work of the kingdom? I think all of us would say a resounding yes! Can you imagine our movement without his influence? Think of the way our theology and education system at Welch have been impacted by his life, teaching, and writing.

That story can be replicated numerous times—men and women who came to Welch intending to stay only a year, but during that year the direction of their life totally changed. Don’t discount the value of having your son or daughter attend Welch College, if only for a year. Who knows, you might be the mother or father of the next Robert Picirilli. **ONE**

About the Writer: David Williford is vice president for institutional advancement at Welch College. For more information, visit www.Welch.edu.






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How in the **WORLD** Did I Get Here?

BY RAY LEWIS

Has God ever done something for you that exceeded your wildest dreams? As I sat at my desk this afternoon working on my last article for *ONE Magazine*, I took a look around and caught myself asking, “How in the world did I get here?”

Growing up, I couldn’t even dream big enough to picture myself being blessed the way the Lord has blessed me. If anyone had told me that someday I would oversee a \$60 million ministry and stand before hundreds of people giving reports, I would have laughed at them.

Yet, here I am winding down a 32-year ministry with the Board of Retirement. I am amazed that God honored me with the privilege of serving Him through this ministry. Getting here has been amazing. God's Word tells us He knows the plans He has for us and that His plans are to prosper us and not harm us and to give us hope for the future. I'm a living testimony to the truths of those words. I haven't always understood the paths that led to the fulfillment of His plan, but I say, "Thank you, Lord, for Your plan for my life."

I did not grow up as a Free Will Baptist. I didn't even grow up in a Christian home. Neither did I come from a long line of preachers. I was the sixth of seven children born into a poor tenant farmer's family. Growing up in poverty wasn't easy. I was on the receiving end of a lot of jokes because of the hand-me-down clothes I wore, or the lack of funds to take part in class outings and activities that most other students were able to do. Many times, I was the recipient of what is called bullying today.

All this caused me to become very withdrawn. I developed low self-esteem and almost no self-confidence. Throughout school, I would rather receive a failing grade than stand and give an oral report.

In high school, I saw no way to go to college, but God did. One day, I saw a catalog for a small college where I could attend for one semester if I worked really hard during the summer, saved every thing I made, and got a campus job.

Well, I made it! I love history, so I planned to become a history teacher. On the last day of orientation, the incoming freshmen were in the auditorium. The president announced where we were to meet with our advisors. All I heard him say was, "Everybody whose last name starts with the letter 'L' go to Room 201." So, I went. As I sat there, I soon realized this was the room for business majors, not history majors. I was too shy to tell the professor I was in the wrong room, so I just stayed. Three and a half years later, I graduated with a business degree.

Four years later, I left my secular job to attend Welch College. After graduation, I moved to North Carolina to my first pastorate. Three years into that ministry, having never attended a national convention, one day I drove to Charlotte where it was being held. Of all the restaurants in Charlotte from which to choose, we ended up seated next to Dr. Joe Ange. He asked if he could submit my name to the pulpit committee of a church in Alabama that he thought would be a good fit for me. I told him yes. To be honest,

I never expected to hear from them, but a couple of weeks later I received a call and ultimately ended up there.

During a deacon's meeting three years later, one of the deacons said, "I think we should send our pastor to the national convention." So they did. During that convention, a call went out for a business teacher for the college. From the first day I stepped foot on the Bible College campus, my dream had been to return one day as a business teacher. I was hired. It was a dream come true, and I assumed I was there to stay until retirement. That was not God's plan, however.

Toward the end of that year, Herman Hersey invited me to come to work as business manager for the Board of Retirement. My first reaction was an immediate no. He asked me to pray about it, however, so I did. And, on May 16, 1983, I began this journey.

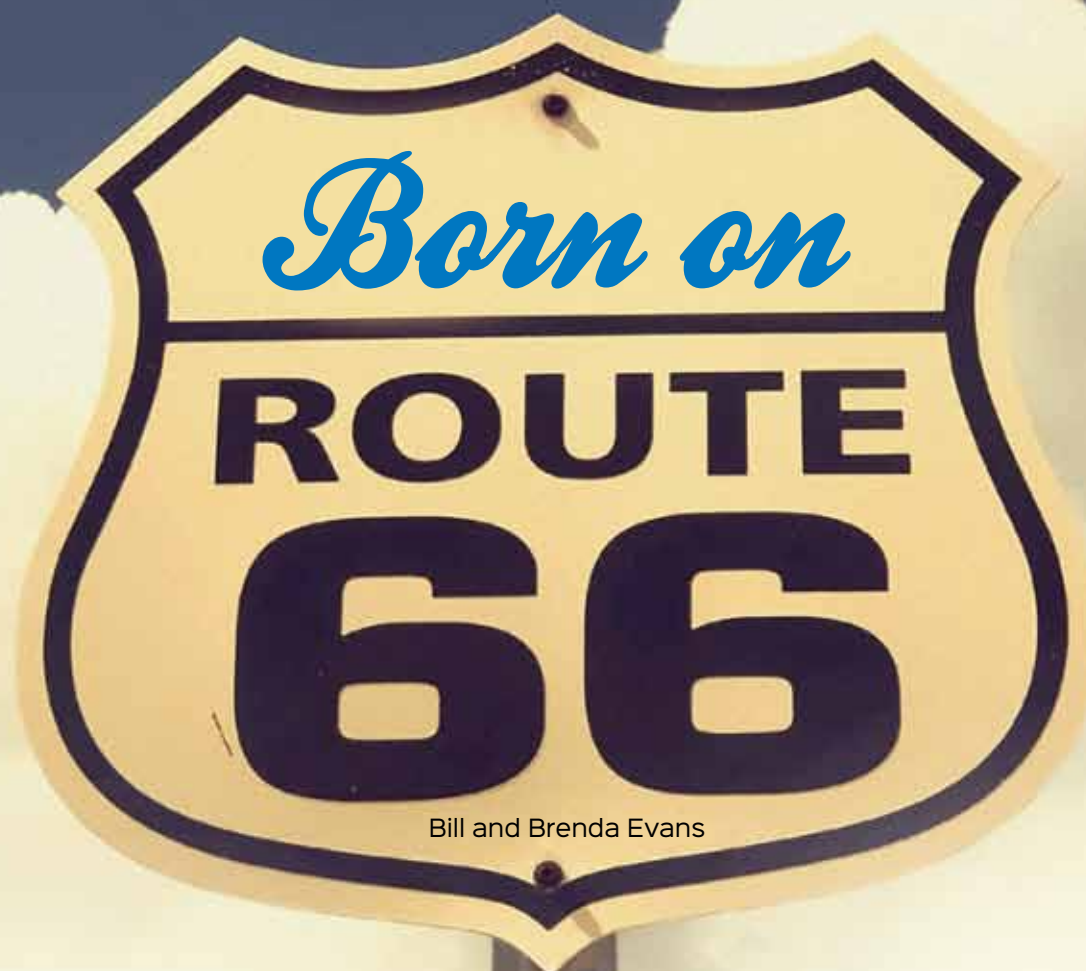
As I look back over my life I can see how God worked in all of these things, and more, to complete His plan for me. Most important, I see that God's plan for my life did not depend on whether I grew up in a Christian environment or not. It depends on my relationship to Him.

I also realize that growing up poor and experiencing all I did helped develop within me a compassion for other people. I believe that is why I have such a burden for the needs of Free Will Baptist ministers and employees. I want to see them reach retirement and not worry about how they will survive.

I see that God's plans for me are far better than anything I could ever dream for myself. Little did I know when I sat in that room with the business majors in 1966, that it was exactly where God wanted me. He knew that 16 years later, He would fulfill a dream I didn't even realize at the time. Had I not taken the position at the Bible College, I would not have met Herman Hersey and been offered a position with the Board of Retirement.

The journey has been long, and sometimes the road has been rough. Even though I didn't always understand how the rough spots were working toward fulfilling His plans for me, He was faithful! When I look back over my life, I stand amazed at how God worked out His plan for my life, even when I had no idea what He was doing.

I remind you, God has a plan for your life as well. Just trust Him and know His plans for you are to prosper you and not harm you, and to give you hope for the future. **ONE**



Bill and Brenda Evans

Call him Rocky. Silver hair, jeans, white button-down shirt...and a 1970 Chevy Monte Carlo SS, 454 Big Block, 360 horse. Black cherry. A shining beauty!

Born 73 years ago near Springfield, Illinois, along famous Route 66, Rocky Vernon likes his Monte Carlo, but inside his condo in Park Hills, Missouri, we saw his real love: the Lord and his family. Rocky's Bible was on the island counter where we settled down for coffee and conversation. To our left was a family photo gallery: a wall of pictures of Shirley, his wife of 42 years, who died three years ago, his two daughters, grandchildren, and parents.

We talked about the Lord, cars, the desert Southwest, motor homes, volunteering, and some life lessons he's learned. One of the first things Rocky learned after he was saved at about 40 was that he could give up his Maximum Strength Maalox. "I carried a jug of that stuff in my car. The biggest they made." Rocky said. "I was in sales, then later a sales supervisor, but I absolutely dreaded sales calls, so I drank Maalox by the gallon. During three nights of lay testimonies in the church Shirley and I attended, I gave my heart to the Lord. Some time later, I had a big presen-

tation in Kansas City, so I prayed, 'Lord, help me do my best.' It was a big deal, slide presentation, the whole thing. They introduced me and handed me a mic. It was dead. Then another mic, and it was dead, too. But I went on anyway. I never did pray for better success, and sales were no better after I got saved, but I had more success within. So I stopped carrying around those jugs of Maalox."

"Eight years later, I knew I still wasn't growing. Our daughter Cindy had a bad car accident, and that impacted me spiritually. Then Shirley and I were in Nashville to meet friends and attended an early morning worship service at The Donelson Fellowship. The Holy Spirit dealt with me. I was hungering. Something was not right. I knew I needed hard Bible preaching and teaching, not just the little moral lessons I'd been getting. When we got home, we found Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church. I'm a deacon there now and a co-Sunday School teacher with two other fellows."

When Shirley was diagnosed with Stage 4 cancer, Rocky held to another ideal: treat women well, a lesson he learned as a small boy at a baseball game where he

knocked down a brassy, young female first baseman. That day, his father taught him a better way to deal with females. He never forgot.

“Shirley was my woman” Rocky said. “I had always taken care of her and was determined to do that through her illness. She was an RN and showed me some things; so did home health. I was good with my hands, so I took care of her. The 5FU pump for chemo, all that. And when I botched it—like a colostomy episode in the shower—we laughed together. I’d rather talk about Shirley than myself, because she lived for 17 months with Stage 4 cancer and never complained. I don’t think I could do it.”

Rocky’s third life lesson is dogged determination: “I’m not afraid to try anything. I’m one of those jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none kind of fellows. My friend Ken Bailey and I tackle all kinds of projects for people who need help in our town. I was in sales, not building, but out in Yuma, Arizona, where we spent our winters, my landlord and I built a casa, a small daytime house with one large room, laundry room and bath, no bedroom.”

“And probably the highlight of our careers was eight years with Helping Hands, the Home Missions building program that Hap Gwartney headed up. We worked on 20 projects, usually two or three weeks long, sometimes three or four a year. The Lord just blessed us 10 times over what we gave. I learned that God has a remnant of people, redeemed ones, who want to help others.

“We had wonderful people, no foul words, just testimonies from mostly retired people working with their hands. We were in Oklahoma in April once—tons of rain and tornadoes all around.

We were never touched. It was like we were already in Heaven.”

Shirley would try anything as well. During the winter of 2012, their two youngest grandsons, ages two and four, had planned to fly out to Arizona with their dad on his business trip, then drive back to Missouri with Rocky and Shirley in their motor home. All the while, Shirley was growing sicker and sicker and was on the couch or bed most of the time. “I wanted to cancel the plan,” Rocky said, “but she insisted, ‘Let’s do this.’” So the grandsons came, and the four of them spent eight days getting back to Missouri. Shirley entertained the four-year-old, and Rocky kept the two-year-old occupied and drove.

Another lesson Rocky has learned is to prepare for the future. More than a dozen years before Shirley’s death, they created a living trust to manage the distribution of their estate. They also took out a gift annuity at Free Will Baptist Foundation to benefit the Lord’s work and insure that Shirley would have lifetime income. “I always assumed I’d be the first to go,” he said, “and I wanted to be certain Shirley was taken care of.”

Beyond that, Rocky and Shirley prepared for their deaths in other ways. Rocky is a veteran, and so a few years before Shirley got sick, they decided to be buried at Missouri Veterans Cemetery in Jacksonville, Missouri. He explained: “We’d lived around the United States a lot, but both of us had some family near there. It’s 200 miles away from here, but if we believe God’s Word, she’s not there anyway.”

Having both financial and burial plans in place years ahead of time was a blessing. “We knew for almost two years

that Shirley would not live, and we never dodged the issue. When she died, I called the funeral home and our pastor Wayne Phillips. That part was easy, because she was so sick the last two weeks that I had asked the Lord to take her home. At the end, she died peacefully. It was raining the day of her service, but it stopped for five minutes, and our grandsons brought her in, her nephew preached, and the girls and I gave eulogies. But let me tell you what the Lord made happen. On the 200-mile trip back here, the Lord sent us five rainbows. Our granddaughter Emma said, “Those rainbows mean Momo is with Jesus.”

Settling the financial issues after Shirley’s death was easy because of their living trust. “Everything was done in a few days, and I kept the girls updated. I had seen on my mother’s side of the family what happens when there aren’t good financial plans made ahead. So we had everything in place—still do—and I keep the girls updated so there’ll be no turmoil.”

What other lessons has Rocky learned? That you are sometimes willing to drive 10 hours and 660 miles for a 454 Big Block, 360 horse shining beauty. That you are smart to invite only one grandchild at a time for an extended stay. That you can’t live in the past or for yourself. That you should walk three or four miles every morning. That you can pass along your love for Sprint car racing to a grandson if you take him to Knoxville, Iowa, so he sees the fast wings and open wheels for himself. That alongside Route 66 in the middle of Illinois was a good place to begin life...73 years ago. **ONE**

Brown on Green >>

Granted

Free Will Baptist Foundation is happy to announce the awarding of grants to our ministries. For many years, our ministries have applied for grants from non-denominational grant-making organizations. Most have been rejected because of a bias against denominational ministries. Now, the grants being made by the Foundation will be exclusively for Free Will Baptist ministries.

The eight grants issued in 2015 are pilot grants and limited to national departments and commissions. The purpose of the pilot grant program was to give the Foundation grant committee (the nine-member elected board) a trial run through the process of making these hard decisions on a smaller scale before the grant program becomes much larger. We also need to perfect the follow-up process to make sure grant funds are used for the purposes requested.

COMMISSION FOR THEOLOGICAL INTEGRITY

The Commission for Theological Integrity received a grant for \$2,500 to help publish Integrity: A Journal of Christian Thought.

FREE WILL BAPTIST HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Free Will Baptist Historical Commission received a grant of \$5,300 to purchase a viewer/printer/scanner that will convert historical documents to digital format.



Women Nationally Active for Christ (WNAC) received a grant of \$7,500 to produce two conferences called Shine! Realizing Your Worth for girls ages 12-18.



Master's Men received a grant of \$10,000 on behalf of North American Ministries to continue the restoration of the historic Ridge Church in New Durham, New Hampshire.



randall house

Randall House received a grant of \$10,000 to produce Grace, Faith, Free Will by Robert Picirilli and Free Will Baptist Doctrines by J. D. O'Donnell in Spanish.



FREE WILL BAPTIST
INTERNATIONAL
MISSIONS

Free Will Baptist International Missions received a grant of \$10,000 for a business-as-missions project in Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa.



The Board of Retirement received a grant of \$14,700 that will be added to the Labor of Love endowment to support retired Free Will Baptist pastors.



Welch College received a grant of \$15,000 for hardship scholarships.

The next round of grants will be available to Free Will Baptist national departments, commissions, and other ministries as well. While it is difficult to project the economy and what may happen, we believe the Foundation will be in a position to award around \$500,000 in grants in 2017. **ONE**

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

MY

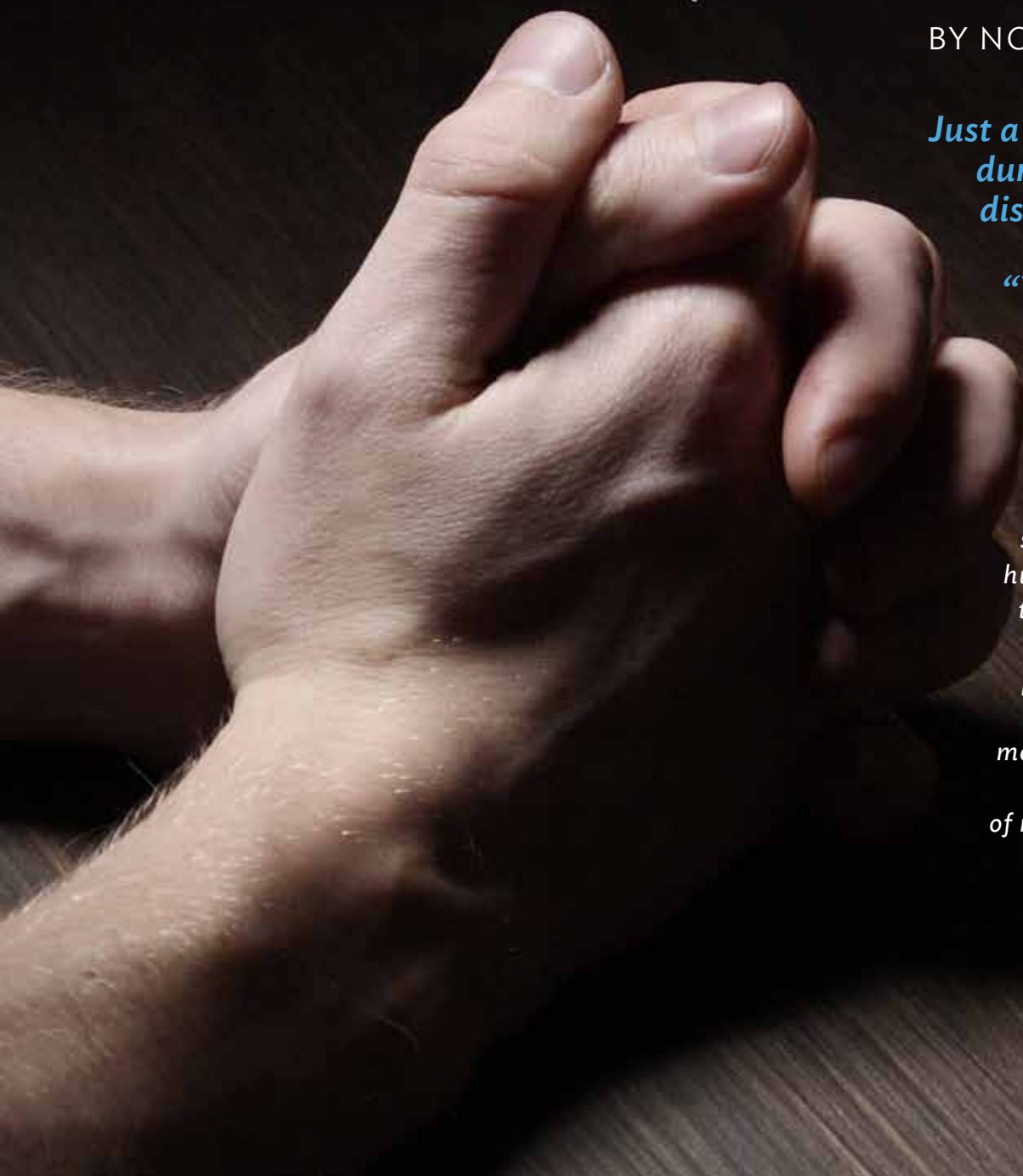
PRAYER

for PASTORS

BY NORMA J. GOLDMAN

Just a couple of weeks ago, during a Bible study on discipleship, one of the questions was, “Who has invested in you and helped you develop as a disciple of Jesus?”

My immediate response was to list the names of several pastors who made huge investments (whether they knew it or not) in my spiritual growth over the past six decades. Because my life’s work has taken me many places, I have had the privilege of being part of many wonderful churches and have grown to love and appreciate their ministers and staff.



PRAY FOR PROTECTION FROM THE ENEMY

My habit is to pray urgently and regularly for my own pastor, as well as others I have known and worked with over the years. First, I pray God's protection over them and their families, because the intent of the evil one is to destroy their reputations, discourage them in ministry, tempt them to do less than God's best, and to create havoc within the church family. No work is more important than the advance of God's kingdom...and the evil one knows it!

PRAY FOR VISION AND DIRECTION

Few church members have any idea how many demands (many unreasonable and counterproductive) are placed on the shoulders of their pastor. Wise is the church leadership that stands as a buffer between the pastor and anything that takes away from prayer, preparation, and preaching. When the pastor can focus on these fundamentals, he is in an optimum position to hear from God and to cast a vision for what God wants to accomplish in the congregation.

Many churches suffer from the lack of a clear vision and direction, a direct result of allowing less important tasks and responsibilities to devour his energy and focus. Without direction and vision, members are fuzzy or confused about their own roles in accomplishing Kingdom ministry and purpose. When the vision is

clear and well articulated, members can see more readily how their specific gifts and training can be used to accomplish ministry goals that build up the body and the surrounding community. We must pray for clear vision and direction.

PRAY FOR BOLDNESS AND WINSOMENESS

Next, I pray they would be faithful to the gospel, making much of Jesus, lifting His name high, and bold in the proclamation of the Word. I ask God to help them to be winsome in their preaching so people will be drawn to the gospel, and that nothing in their lives (or mine) would hinder anyone from receiving God's truth.

PRAY FOR VISION

My Nashville pastor of many years is blessed to have a strong group of laymen that protect his time so he can focus on the fundamentals—prayer, preparation, and preaching. God has blessed him with a clear vision for what God wants his congregation to do at home, in Tennessee, and around the world. The staff organizes its work and priorities to fit that vision and help members find their places of service within the vision. In that environment, I found deep joy and satisfaction in my personal growth and ministry, using my gifts more fully than ever before.

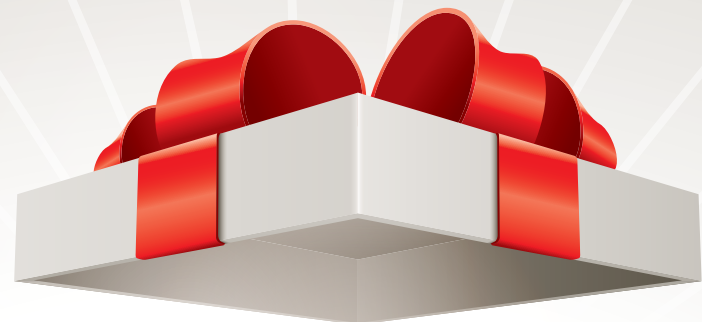
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PRAY FOR PASSION FOR THE WORD

Many faithful pastors have fed my soul and spirit, and have encouraged me to develop a life-long passion for the Word; they have encouraged me to press on despite life's setbacks. Now, well into this latter season of life, my appetite for His word is undiminished, my energy for ministry grows, and my gratitude for the contributions of these faithful pastors overflows to the glory of God.

Wouldn't today be a good day to write a note of appreciation and gratitude to a faithful pastor, letting him know you are praying? **ONE**

About the Writer:

Former magazine editor Norma J. Goldman enjoys a successful writing career in her retirement from her home near Houston, Texas.

HOLY
BIBLE

David and Goliath:

A REVITALIZATION STORY

BY JIM MCCOMAS

Since I began my role of director of church revitalization for North American Ministries, it has been amazing to me how many Bible stories deal with different aspects of this topic. Nehemiah could be considered the first “revitalizer” of the Old Testament. Certainly, the Apostle Paul could be viewed as both a pioneer church planter and revitalizer. It’s not likely that many have considered the story of David and Goliath found in 1 Samuel 17 as a classic revitalization tale, but I believe five ingredients in the story give us some powerful lessons for church revitalization:



A powerful enemy. The Philistines were loud and proud, large and in charge. They had a vocal spokesman in Goliath. The goal of this enemy was the complete and total destruction of God's people, the children of Israel.

Today, we, as God's people, also have an enemy—the devil. He has some vocal spokesmen in this wicked world in which we live, and their goal is the complete and utter destruction of the army of God.

A powerless army. The Army of Israel was gathered on the field of battle, ready for war. Unfortunately, they were doing just about everything but what an Army was built to do—engage the enemy!

The story is told of a Civil War general who ordered an advance on the enemy. One regiment did not heed the call to move forward. Upon questioning by the general as to why they had stayed where they were, their commander sent back this reply: “General, I am persuaded that any further display of valor by my troops will bring them into direct contact with the enemy.”

The American Church today still gathers each Sunday. We show up, dress up, and our schedules are filled up. Unfortunately, in all our busyness, we are not taking the fight to the enemy.

An army is not built for the parade ground; it's built for the battlefield.

A passionate patriot. This difference maker showed up in the middle of the fight. Just a young shepherd boy, David did three important things that we need to do as well:

He analyzed the situation. Before he gave opinions, advice, or commentary, he studied what was going on. He watched Goliath issue his challenge, and he observed his brothers, friends, and countrymen run in terror.

He stated the problem. David declared what everybody knew but nobody would admit: this wasn't right. Someone needed to stand up to Goliath. Someone needed to defend God and the right.

He offered a solution. David didn't just criticize the status quo. He offered a choice for change and volunteered himself as the change agent! He knew Goliath needed to be whipped, and he offered to get the job done with God's help.


If we are going to see revival in our churches and in our movement, we must stop fighting each other and aim our attacks at the devil.

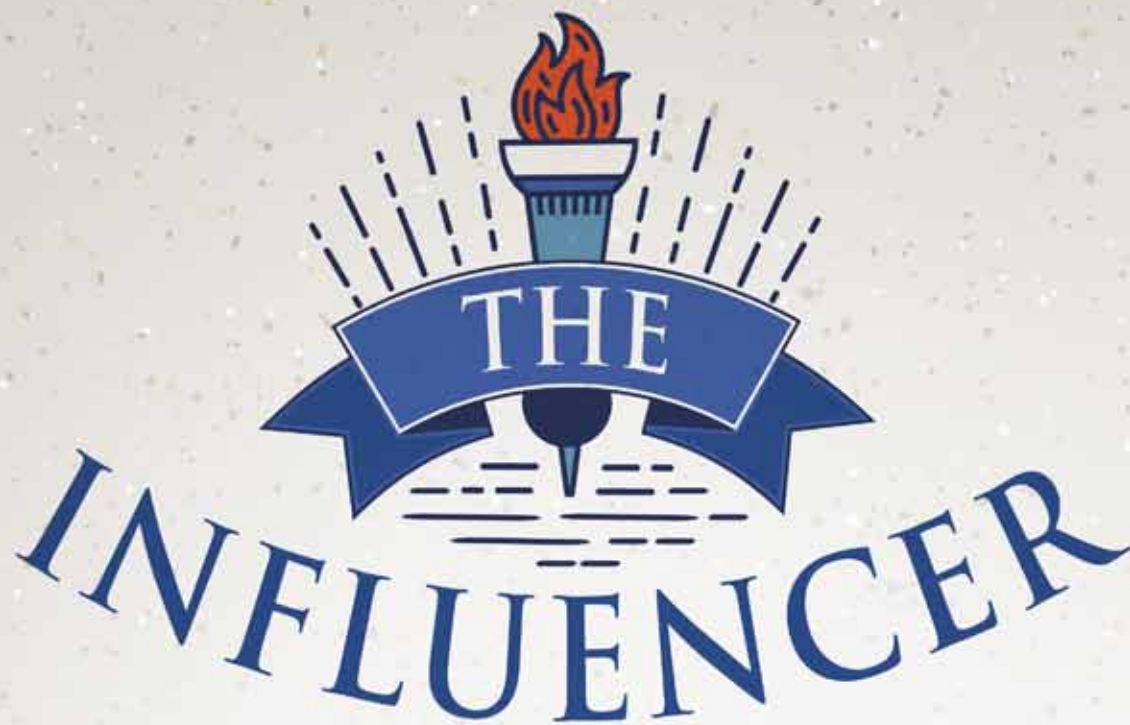
A pitiful response. Finally, the children of Israel got fighting mad. Finally, they got angry enough to confront someone. The bad news? It wasn't Goliath at whom they directed their anger; it was David. They questioned his motives, disparaged his character, and belittled his bravery. Why? I believe it was easier for them to fight someone familiar rather than the real enemy.

Free Will Baptists have this down to a science. We are experts at tearing each other down, while the real enemy runs rampant and unopposed. If we are going to see revival in our churches and in our movement, we must stop fighting each other and aim our attacks at the devil.

A power hungry potentate. David not only had to battle his bitter brothers, he had to fight a power-hungry king. Saul, who had done nothing to stop Goliath for 40 days, now insisted David use his armor. Why? Because “We've always done it this way!” If we are going to revitalize our churches, we must be willing to get out of our comfort zones and do things differently.

A probing question. David eventually was victorious over Goliath. He battled through friends and family to get to the real enemy. What kept him going through it all? I believe the secret can be found in his thought-provoking question: “Is there not a cause?”

David knew he had something worth fighting for. I believe our families, our churches, our country, and the souls of men, women, boys, and girls are worth the fight. Let's get busy working together to defeat the real enemy. 



THE INFLUENCER

By Wayne Miracle

A NEW OPPORTUNITY

My phone rang while I was attending a pastor's conference, so I left the meeting to take the call because I saw it was from Dr. Matt Pinson. He said, "Hello Wayne, I have a big favor I would like to ask of you." I said, "Sure brother, how can I help you"? He then said, "Would you consider being a Welch College Influencer? I would like for you to go to the various associations in Georgia and the surrounding areas and tell the story of what God is doing at Welch College."

"I want you to talk with people," he continued. "Give a report on what is going on at Welch, particularly in the new online bachelor's and associate's degrees we offer, and just be a representative of the college in your area." I assured him I was very grateful to have the privilege of representing Welch, and I would proudly do my very best to represent the college with honor and distinction.



At first, I was excited about this great opportunity. But when I began to consider all the other hats I wear, I honestly had to ask myself, "Why would I want to take on another responsibility?" Quickly the answer to that question became very clear to me: It's because I believe wholeheartedly in and am passionate about the work and mission of Welch College, and I want others to be too.

WELCH AND ME

I first learned of Welch College shortly after my conversion in 1977. At that time I became very interested in what the college was all about. A few years later, a new pastor came to our church who showed me his *Lumen* yearbooks. It was then, when I found out about the kind of faculty, staff, and students associated with the college and what God was doing for the kingdom through their lives, I said to myself, "That's the kind of school where I would love to be a student!" Little did I realize that just a few years later God would allow my dream to come to fruition when I enrolled as a ministerial student. As you can see, I'm very interested in Welch College; I know what it did for me, and I can see what it is continuing to do in producing leaders to serve Christ, His Church, and His world. This makes me want to invest myself in my alma mater and share it with others.

KINGDOM-FOCUSED STUDENTS

One of the main reasons I get so excited about Welch College is because of its student body. The students at Welch College are a cross section of some of the best and brightest students in our denomination. When you have the opportunity to talk with them, you soon discover they have an overwhelming passion for Christ and His Church, and for spreading His Gospel to the ends of the earth. Whenever I have the occasion to be on campus and engage in meaningful conversation with the students, I'm spiritually refreshed to see and hear their excitement about being a

student at Welch, and to be given the opportunity to be involved in ministry.

A COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE

Some Free Will Baptists still think of the college as only a seminary-type school just for young people interested in vocational ministry. However, the college is so much more than that. Welch College is a Christian college that offers over 40 different programs of study, but these programs are always Bible-based and come from the vantage point of a Christian worldview, which is so needed in our current culture.

CENTERED ON MINISTRY

However, since I'm a pastor, I get the most excited about Welch's Pastoral Ministry program. As I talk with the pastoral students, it's evident that they've been trained exceptionally well in Bible, theology, preaching, and ministry in general. It's obvious that the college is producing some of the best-equipped young people for ministry ever. It's easy to see why this is the case: the professors and staff at Welch are great and godly people. They're not just Christian professionals who have high standards of excellence; they're spiritually minded people who want to reproduce a heart and mind for God in their students.

So, when Dr. Pinson initially called, and when I examined all my other responsibilities, you can easily see why I readily accepted his invitation. I cannot imagine why anyone would not be so passionate about such a great work in the Kingdom of God!

I want you to have the same excitement for our Free Will Baptist college I do, and I encourage you to check out the college at www.welch.edu. Get to know more about your school, and ask the Lord how you can pray for and support this Christian community of faith and learning! **ONE**



THE STUDENTS AT WELCH COLLEGE ARE A CROSS SECTION OF SOME OF THE BEST AND BRIGHTEST STUDENTS IN OUR DENOMINATION.

About the Writer: Wayne Miracle is pastor of New Life Fellowship Free Will Baptist Church in Statesboro, Georgia. He serves as moderator of the Georgia State Association and is a member of the Executive Committee of the National Association of Free Will Baptists.

Master's Men >>

Good Days for Good Springs: National Golf and Softball Tournaments

Antioch, Tennessee—

The Master's Men National Golf and Softball Tournaments started with cool, wet, cloudy days but ended with high temperatures and high spirits. It was already raining Thursday morning, August 6, when 40 golfers met at Windtree Golf Course in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, for the 2015 tournament. While some decided to forego the rainy round, a soggy but cheerful group took part in the 7:30 shotgun start. Teams paused several times during heavy showers, but everyone finished.

Scores were where you would expect for the conditions. In the championship flight, the father-son team of Tommy and Cage Ellis, from Good Springs FWB Church, Pleasant View, Tennessee, won a scorecard playoff to top defending champions Ronnie Dunn and Paul Ballard—both teams scoring a 5-under-par 67. First flight, first place went to Garnett Reid and Clint Morgan followed by Jim Gaw and David Allen in second. First place, second flight went to the grandfather-grandson team of Roger and Rusty Cooper with Eric Thomsen and Manuel Lopes finishing second.

"While the weather was less than desirable," said Ken Akers, Master's Men director, "the attitudes and fellowship were sunny. Thanks to all the brave golfers for supporting Master's Men."

While it never rained on Friday or Saturday, August 7-8, the softball fields were soaked as the national tournament started. Twelve teams representing six states participated in the 2015 event. The weather was perfect for softball the entire weekend. Friday saw a mostly cloudy day with temperatures in the low 80s. Saturday was sunny and warm, but a light breeze kept the conditions comfortable.

Every team played four games Friday, finishing around 5:00 p.m., and three teams remained undefeated going into Saturday. Eight teams began the double elimination segment of the weekend on a



foggy Saturday morning. Teams had little time to rest between games. By noon, the number had been whittled down to eight teams, and down to four by 2:00 p.m.

As the trophy rounds began, some teams had already played five games, and had to play four more to continue. It proved to be another good day for Good Springs Church, as they won the tourna-

ment for the first time in their long history of participation. They finished with a perfect 8-0 record for the weekend. Lebanon FWB Church (SC) took second place, while Sylacauga, (AL), finished third and Northridge, (OH), finished fourth.

"I can't tell you how much I appreciate all the teams and their sportsmanship during the tournament," Akers said. "We are looking for ways to boost attendance next year by adding more teams, and we are considering adding a co-ed tournament. We would love input from our churches."

Visit www.fwbmastersmen.org throughout the year for more information regarding upcoming tournaments. ■

Leader Profile >>

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

Nelson Henderson

Leadership often comes from the right influences during the developmental years. "I feel tremendously blessed that I can trace my spiritual heritage back at least three generations on both sides of my parents," said Nelson with a reflective smile. A fourth generation believer and a native of the Midwest, his great-great-grandfather was a Primitive Baptist minister in Newton County, Arkansas, and his great-grandfather led the music in the church he grew up in.

His dad, a bivocational pastor and employee at Boeing, was Nelson's pastor through his youth. His dad, now retired, was bivocational by choice his entire ministry. Both parents made sure Nelson was in church, even though he admits that he drifted away from God as a teenager.

Only two churches have experienced Nelson's pastoral leadership during his 30 years of ministry, the first a three-plus-year ministry in Oklahoma followed by 26 years at First FWB Church in Pochontas, Arkansas. Nelson has great compassion for hurting people. His comforting and encouraging demeanor puts people at ease and opens the door for the counsel of Scripture. His heart beats continuously for people in need, which comes in part from his quiet time routine. For years, his morning has started with prayer and reading from the *One-Year Bible*.

Nelson admits feeling inadequate to mentor others, but he also realizes that God has positioned him to promote missions. He never even met a missionary until he was 25 years old, but Norman Richards made quite an impression. From that moment, Nelson has personally supported missions and missionaries, and he currently serves on the Board of International Missions. **Nelson, You are a great leader!** **ONE**



Do you have kids? Travis (and wife Susan) live in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, and have two children. Rachel (and husband Dennis) live in Maumelle, Arkansas, also with two children. *Nelson made me promise to include that his four grandchildren "are the pride of his life!"*

What does your ideal date for you and Melba look like? We like to get away to a cabin or bed and breakfast with no cell phone coverage, which does not happen often, so we try to protect our evenings.

What do people misunderstand about you? Feeling insecure or inadequate in ministry.

Who is your favorite author? Bruce Wilkinson (*First Hand Faith*) and Phillip Yancey, but favorite books also include *Wonder O' the Wind* by W. Phillip Keller and *Brothers, We Are Not Professionals* by John Piper.

What is your one indulgence? I am a collector, but my wife says I am a borderline hoarder.

Paper or Plastic

Fiction or Non-Fiction? Non-Fiction

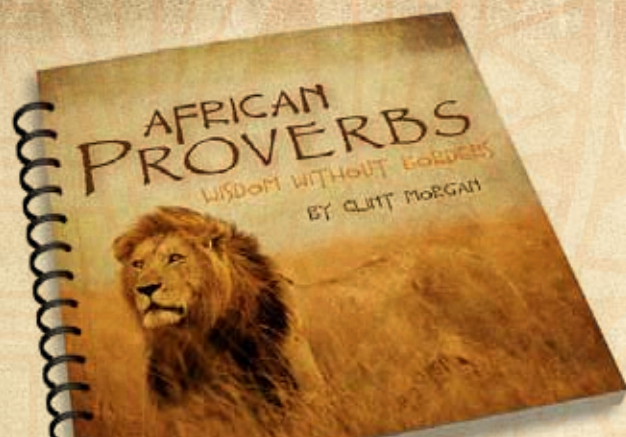
Music or talk radio? Music

Sushi or Burger? Burger

Facebook, Email, Pinterest, Twitter, or texting? Facebook

Tie or No Tie? Depends if it is Sunday morning or night, but no tie is more comfortable.

Mac or PC? PC



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In the REARVIEW

A look back at the 2015 Youth Evangelistic Team tour...BY KEVIN SKILES

For the past two summers, the Lord has allowed my wife Christy and I to travel with some of the most talented and amazing kids we have ever had the privilege of knowing. Although we have worked and traveled with students for several years at Sefner Christian Academy, we were apprehensive about this new adventure to which the Lord led us. Traveling all over the country with 15 people in a 15-passenger van can seem quite daunting, especially when 13 of them are teens.

As we met these students and began to work with them, however, that apprehension was replaced with an unexplainable peace, and God worked in and through the Youth Evangelistic Team (YET) in ways that showed His incredible ability to use the ordinary to accomplish the extraordinary for His Kingdom.

This summer, YET traveled to the Northeast, working with churches from North American Ministries. We began our tour with Pastor Nate Altom at Keystone FWB Church in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. Continuing north, we traveled to Exeter, Rhode Island, and ministered at Beacon FWB Church, pastored by Bill Reynolds. Our next destination was North Point Church in Buffalo, New York, pastored by Brian Williams, followed by the Flagship Church in Erie, Pennsylvania, with Daryl Grimes. Our last stop on the tour was Lyon Park Fellowship in Arlington, Virginia, pastored by Michael Kernodle. Then it was a quick trip back to Nashville, Tennessee, to practice for the National Youth Conference. The 2015 tour concluded with a Sunday morning worship service at the 180 Church in Clarksville, Tennessee, pastored by Chad Kivette. As I look back on this whirlwind tour, several key words come to mind:

CHALLENGES

Besides the obvious challenge of traveling in cramped quarters, unexpected situations always present themselves. Whether it was driving through

New York City traffic, finding a hospital in Rhode Island after one of the team members fell and cut his head, or just dealing with everyday teenage drama, the three-week tour certainly held its challenges, but the Lord was faithful to deliver us through everything that we faced. He always causes us to triumph in Christ.

FELLOWSHIP

The fellowship we experienced, both with each other and with other believers we met, is an amazing testimony to the oneness of God's people and His Church. Because of our mutual faith in Christ, it is easy to develop friendships that will last for years to come.

SERVICE

Through projects as simple as cleaning the church for Sunday service, the students learned that ministry is much more than singing on a stage. Worshiping God is about every aspect of our lives, not just a Sunday morning event!

ENCOURAGEMENT

Certainly, we want to be a refreshing boost to those who minister in places that do not have the "spiritual bubble" under which many of us live. But the encouragement is reciprocated in the lessons team members learn from these missionaries as they see what it takes to build a church from the ground up.

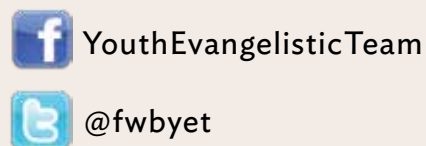
Toward the end of the tour, the students were waiting for a hotel shuttle and began to sing on a sidewalk in downtown Arlington, Virginia. A man walked by in tears, thanking them for what they were doing. It is my desire that the Lord will use these experiences to develop a heart for ministry in these talented young people. We want the Lord to use their abilities for eternal purposes rather than temporary gain! **ONE**



STATS:
 2,679 miles
 13 students
 7 services
 6 churches
 3 weeks



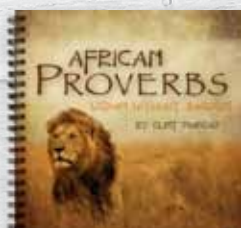
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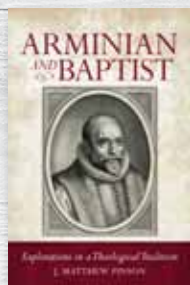


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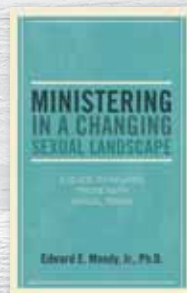


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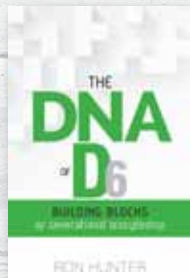


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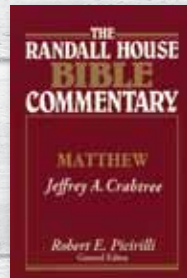


The DNA of D6

by Ron Hunter

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Hunter's book shares great proven strategies for generational discipleship and the health of your church.



Randall House Commentary: Matthew

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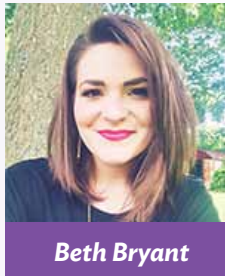
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WNAC >>

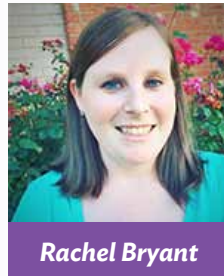
Shine! Conferences Hosted in South Carolina and Arkansas

Antioch, TN—Following the receipt of a Free Will Baptist Foundation grant, WNAC will host two conferences targeting 12-to 18-year-olds in the coming year. The conferences will be hosted by Fairview FWB Church, Spartanburg, South Carolina, October 24, and First FWB Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas, November 21. The conference theme, *Shine! Realizing Your Worth*, will challenge young girls to pursue biblical womanhood and purity.

Beth Bryant, pastor's wife from Olive Branch, Mississippi, will speak to the girls concerning spiritual and moral purity. Rachel Bryant, registered nurse from Olive Branch, Mississippi, will discuss the physiological consequences of the choices young woman make as teens. Meanwhile, moms and youth leaders will be encouraged and challenged by Sarah Sargent, WNAC board member and Ohio WAC president, and Ana Batts, pastor's wife from Nashville, Tennessee, as they share practical tips to help young girls navigate the challenging culture in which they are maturing. "As our culture seeks to lure our



Beth Bryant



Rachel Bryant



Sarah Sargent



Ana Batts

children away from the faith," said Hodges, "we want young ladies to stand as firm as Daniel when he faced temptation from an ungodly culture."

To learn more about the conference, visit www.WNAC.org. ■

About the Denomination >>

2016 Nominees Requested

ANTIOCH, TN—The 2016 Nominating Committee, which will serve through the national convention in Kansas City, Missouri, is prepared to receive nominees for the 2016 convention election, according to Joel Franks (KY), committee chairman.

The committee will meet December 8, 2015, at the annual Leadership Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, to consider nominations and to compile a report with a single nomination for each position to be filled. The report will be presented to delegates at the 2016 convention.

The following board and commission positions will be filled in 2016: Welch College (3), International Missions (3), Randall House Publications (3), Women Nationally Active for Christ (3), Commission for Theological Integrity (1), Historical Commission (1), Music Commission (1), Media Commission (1), General Board (12), Executive Committee (3), and General Officers (4). The following boards do not elect members in 2016: Home Missions (North American Ministries), Board of Retirement, and Free Will Baptist Foundation.

Nominations, accompanied by a brief resume, must be submitted in writing exclusively to the chairman on or before November 30. Contact Chairman Joel Franks:

Nominating Committee, Joel Franks, 559 Coon Creek Road, Glasgow, KY 42141
Phone: 270/579-4085, Email: jfranks@fomntt.com.

2015 Leadership Conference Promotes Church Revitalization

Antioch, TN—The 2015 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference will return to Nashville Marriott Airport Hotel December 7-8. Pastors and church leaders across the denomination will explore the theme, "Rekindle," and the important topic of church revitalization.

Dr. Harry Reeder, senior pastor of Briarwood Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, will be the keynote speak-



er for the conference. Dr. Reeder is passionate about church revitalization. He authored *From*

Embers to a Flame: How God Can Revitalize Your Church and is founder of Embers to Flame conferences dedicated to church renewal. He has led conferences around the world including South Africa, Kenya, Australia, Uganda, and South Korea, in addition to the United States.

“Church vitality or revitalization is nothing more than following God’s prescription for church health,” Reeder noted. “Church health naturally leads to conversions and improved personal dis-

cipleship, for our good and God’s glory. If a body is healthy, it will grow appropriately. So our focus is on the spiritual vitality of the church knowing that a healthy church will grow.”

The meeting will feature more than keynote sessions, however, with plenty of time for renewing friendships during banquet-styled meals. Each service will feature music provided by Welch College, and a number of national boards will meet in conjunction with the conference.

“This is a great opportunity for pastors and leaders to be refreshed and renewed while exploring a subject that is vital for our movement,” said Ryan Lewis, conference director. “We are pleased to have Dr. Reeder as keynote speaker, and we look forward to learning from this man who has dedicated his life to revitalizing churches.

Visit WWW.NAFWB.ORG to register. ■

The Executive Committee Forms Local Association Revitalization Committee

Grand Rapids, Michigan—During its semi-annual board meeting, the Executive Committee of the National Association formed a committee to promote revitalization within local associations and quarterly meetings.

The group will meet in November to formulate options for revitalization, and to explore best associational practices. Committee members include William Smith (GA); David Shores (IL); and Daniel Edwards (IN). Questions, concerns, and suggestions should be addressed to Daniel Edwards: pastordaniel@faithinchandler.com. ■

Randall House Director Published in Two Books

Antioch, TN—Ron Hunter, executive director of Randall House and co-founder of the D6 Conference, releases two new books this fall. Hunter has served as executive director of Randall House since 2002, and has published four books, written over 50 magazine articles for various magazines, plus writes the Leader Profile column for *ONE Magazine*.

The DNA of D6: Building Blocks of Generational Discipleship reflects on the journey of D6 from Genesis to current culture. Ron begins the book by sharing vital philosophy necessary to understand before a leader can move to a healthy strategy. He also shares important principles that lead to implementation. Published by Randall House, this book is an ideal resource, both for ministry leaders just starting in family ministry and those with an established program needing refinement.

Ron remarked, “Most churches spend their time and effort on what happens at church rather than equipping parents and grandparents to live out the message each day at home.” Chapters include: 1/168: Flawed Fraction or Ministry Multiplier, The One-Eared Mickey Mouse, The Senior Pastor Complex, and Staffing for a D6 Church. The final chapter, Changing the Way People Think, offers a unique look at leadership in the context of changing a church’s culture.

Youth Ministry in 21st Century: Five Views (Youth, Family, and Culture) provides an up-to-date look at philosophical approaches to youth ministry. Written in an essay/response format, Ron addresses “The D6 Approach to Youth Ministry.” Chad Clark, Greg Stier, Fernando Arzola, and Brian Cosby offer alternate views. Edited by Chap Clark and published by Baker Academic, *Youth Ministry in 21st Century* will be used as a textbook by university and seminary students across North America.

Both volumes are available for purchase from Randall House Publications: store.D6family.com ■



Photo: Mark Cowart



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

ONE to ONE >>

BLINDSIDED

I love football. I had the privilege of playing the game in junior and senior high school. It taught me a lot about self-discipline and the importance of teamwork.

One of my more memorable experiences on the gridiron came at the beginning of my junior year in high school. We had completed the grueling period known as “two-a-days.” These twice-daily practice sessions occurred during the preseason and the sweltering summer month of August. As athletes, we experienced the exhausting, muscle-aching process of getting into good physical condition.

One component of becoming game-ready was scrimmaging other teams. It was conducted under game-like conditions, but the coaches were out on the field to evaluate players and give instructions between plays.

Limited in size and talent, our team had several players who, like me, played both offense and defense. On this particular occasion, our team started on defense. I played the position of outside linebacker, which included tackling the ball carrier.

The very first play from scrimmage was a running play to my side of the field. I vividly remember sprinting towards the halfback, making contact, and locking my arms around the runner to make the tackle.

That’s when it happened. The split end on the opposing team was responsible for blocking me on that play. But, because the running back turned up field sooner than expected, the split end had a poor angle and consequently delivered an illegal block to my back with his helmet.

I immediately dropped to my knees. The blow knocked the breath out of me. It hurt...a lot! Coach Wadsworth instructed me to stand to my feet. I couldn’t. I literally crawled to the sideline on my hands and knees.

Once I caught my breath and regained my wits, I felt an arm around my shoulder. I heard the familiar voice of our family physician, Dr. Powell. He asked me a series of questions, try-

ing to ascertain if I was seriously injured. In a matter of minutes he escorted me to the locker room, removed my shoulder pads, and determined I needed medical attention.

In characteristic small-town fashion, my doctor drove me in his own vehicle to the hospital. Following a battery of tests, the doctor informed my parents I had a bruised kidney. Pain medication was administered, and I was kept in the hospital that night for observation. The next day, I was transported by ambulance to a medical center in a neighboring community where I spent six days recovering from the injury. Thankfully, the internal bleeding stopped, and surgery was not required.

Remarkably, I was able to return to play the last five games of the season. While some questioned the wisdom of that decision, I was determined I would not allow an injury to keep me from doing something I was passionate about. I am happy to report that I finished my high school football career without further incident.

As in football, to excel in the Christian life you must be committed, disciplined, and willing to work hard. Playing by the rules doesn’t mean you won’t encounter some tough breaks. Sometimes you get blindsided. It happens.

Getting knocked down is nothing to be ashamed of—staying down is. Get up, dust yourself off, and get back in the game. Allowing yourself to become a victim will keep you from pursuing your passion and doing great things for God.

“Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs even though checkered by failure, than to rank with those poor spirits who neither enjoy nor suffer much because they live in the gray twilight that knows neither victory nor defeat” (Theodore Roosevelt). **ONE**





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