

ONE LORD ONE VOICE ONE VISION

# ONE magazine

OCTOBER - NOVEMBER • 2021

## Celebrating **100 ISSUES** *of ONE Magazine*

***He's 100  
Issues Old!***

(Just like ONE Magazine!  
Read more, page 7.)

**A Handful of Corn**

*100 Issues of  
Missions Milestones*

*History of Our Histories*

**Molded for His Purpose**

**Make the Right Choice**

*I Gave Him a Ham!*

# Legacy of Leadership

**Elizabeth Lawliss McAdams holds an important place** in Free Will Baptist history. During the 1935 organizational meeting, when it came time for delegates from the East and West to agree on the doctrinal *Treatise*, "Sister Lizzie," wisely made a motion to adopt the document *before* a public reading. The motion passed, the group came together, and the details are still being ironed out.

**Born October 1, 1884, near Troy, Alabama**, Lizzie answered God's call to missions at 13, and, at 25, felt God's call to preach. She and her husband Hiram worked well together as an evangelistic team. They went to Barbados as missionaries in 1918 and later served as home missionaries. Sister Lizzie served on the first Home Missions board and also was one of the first WNAC officers. Over 50 years, she preached in 17 states, held more than 300 revivals (with 10,000 converts), and organized 11 churches.

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OCTOBER - NOVEMBER 2021 • VOLUME 18 • ISSUE 6

*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

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# What's in a Name?

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

"Connect?" [pause]

"Taken."

"Cross Roads?" [pause]

"Taken."

"Direction?" [longer pause]

"We like it, but that name has been proposed for a Bible study magazine already in development at Randall House."

The endless list of potential names droned on, each followed by a valid reason it could not be used. This hours-long meeting on January 17, 2005, marked the third time denominational directors and departmental editors had gathered to select a name for a new denominational publication. Each meeting lasted hours. Each left the matter unresolved. With the press date for the premier issue only weeks away, settling on a suitable moniker had become a matter of urgency.

The tension in the room was palpable.

Selecting a name seemed such a low priority when the denomination began its long journey toward a new publication. In 2001, a Georgia resolution raised the possibility of combining all denominational publications into a single periodical. In response, the moderator appointed a Publications Committee to explore the feasibility. Three long years of research, consultation, meetings, number crunching, and (sometimes heated) debate revealed that a unified publication was not only a possibility but also held great potential.

By spending the same amount of money and combining resources, denominational departments could reach more people, publish more pages, and present a unified face to the denomination. Best of all, they could offer the magazine free to readers, doing away with subscription fees. It was a no-brainer for delegates to the 2004 convention in Kansas City, Missouri, who voted overwhelmingly to begin publishing the next year.

Much was accomplished in following months: budget set, managing editor hired (yours truly), editorial themes

established, design template finalized for the already arriving manuscripts. The committee even spelled out the goals of the magazine in a mission statement: *to communicate to Free Will Baptists a unifying vision of our role in the extension of God's Kingdom.*

Still, no name.

When Board of Retirement Director Bill Evans read the final name on the list without a viable option, an uneasy silence filled the conference room. Serious faces reflected the shared knowledge we had to get this right, and we needed to get it done quickly. Suddenly, from the far end of the table, Welch College President Matt Pinson blurted out, "Who would think it could be so hard to find a name for *one* magazine."

Immediately, the gravelly voice of the late *Contact* magazine editor Jack Williams replied, "I like it."

Just like that, *ONE Magazine* had a name.

In retrospect, the name fit well. Eight departmental publications united into one magazine. Its goal was to spell out God's work (one Lord) in and through Free will Baptists (one voice) drawing us together to continue that work (one vision).

As the publication celebrates 100 issues, the name *ONE Magazine* has become synonymous with journalistic excellence, quietly winning more than 100 industry awards for writing, design, and reporting. The editorial team, though representing eight departments, has truly become a unified voice, working together to coordinate themes, produce quality content, and encourage readers with stories of what God is doing throughout the world. *ONE Magazine* editors and contributors have developed influence in the larger world of Christian publishing, serving on the boards (and as board presidents) of both the Evangelical Press Association (EPA) and the Protestant Church-





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## FIRST GLIMPSE

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Owned Publishers Association (PCPA).

As attention shifts to the next 100 issues, the simple mission remains unchanged: tell the amazing story of what God has done and continues to do through this denomination.

One Lord. One story. ONE Magazine. 

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

### The Short List

*(Narrowed from 75 potential names)*

Forward	Focus	Passage
CrossRoad or Cross	Upward	Arminian Observer
Roads	Direction	Advocate
Together	Kerusso	Advance
Connect	Fusion	The Compass
The Free Spirit	Harvest	Servant Life
Current	The View	

### A Few Chuckle-worthy Ideas That Didn't Make the Cut

*(the result of exhausting hours of intense brain-storming)*

The Covered Dish	WNDITWB (We've	Clean Feet
Mostly United	Never Done It This	FreeWay
	Way Before)	

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Eddie Moody    MANAGING EDITOR: Eric Thomsen

ASSOCIATE EDITORS: Ken Akers, David Brown, Kathy Brown, Chris Compton, Danny Conn, Elizabeth Hodges, Josh Owens, Deborah St. Lawrence  
LAYOUT & DESIGN: Randall House Publications    DESIGN MANAGER: Andrea Young    DESIGN: Marianne Stewart    PRINTING: Randall House Publications

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# *From the* **BEGINNING**

THE FORMER EXECUTIVE SECRETARY  
LOOKS BACK AT THE ORIGINS  
OF ONE MAGAZINE

BY KEITH BURDEN

For decades, Free Will Baptist national ministries communicated with constituents primarily through print. Each department produced its own publication—some monthly, some bi-monthly, and some quarterly. Some within our ranks were convinced a unified publication would be more effective and a better use of resources. Thus, at the direction of the national association, a publications committee was formed. Members were appointed, and meetings with the departmental directors and editorial staff were scheduled.

Early in the process, a broad survey was conducted to determine the level of interest among Free Will Baptists regarding a unified publication. The results indicated people were open to the idea of a single denominational magazine. Not surprisingly, there were skeptics in some of the various agencies. They were fearful they would all lose editorial control; no one knew for sure how such a venture would be managed, or what it would look like.

Over the course of numerous meetings, the committee, with the assistance of a consultant, hammered out a

variety of logistical details (a mission statement, editorial structure, how the contents of the magazine would be organized and allotted, and eventually, a suitable name). One issue, which surfaced early and often, was the matter of finances. How much would it cost?

A three-member subcommittee was charged with the task of carrying out a cost analysis to determine the feasibility of a unified publication. Once the subcommittee calculated the amount of revenue each department would contribute and projected a detailed list of expenses, a budget was formulated. That brought clarity to the process. It was no longer a question as to whether we *could* do it, but if we *wanted* to do it. The answer was a resounding yes!

That year, at the 2004 convention in Kansas City, Missouri, delegates overwhelmingly approved the Publication Committee's recommendation to combine all denominational publications into a single periodical. In short order, a managing editor was hired and regular meetings with the members of the editorial staff were scheduled. In the spring of 2005, the first issue of a bi-monthly, 48-page,



full-color magazine went to press, and more than 60,000 subscription-free copies were delivered to the mailboxes of Free Will Baptists.

Despite its success, *ONE Magazine* has faced formidable challenges over its life span. Dwindling resources and escalating costs have necessitated belt-tightening on several occasions. Today, the magazine stands as a testimony to God's faithfulness and provision. Additionally, it illustrates what a diverse denomination like ours can accomplish if it lays aside its differences and works together to achieve a common goal.

*Today, the magazine stands as a testimony to God's faithfulness and provision.*

Thank God for *ONE Magazine*. May it continue to communicate to Free Will Baptists a unifying vision of our role in the extension of God's Kingdom for years to come. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** Keith Burden served as executive secretary of the National Association from 2002 to 2019. Serving as editor-in-chief of *ONE Magazine* became a significant part of his role.

## *About the Cover*

Barrett Campbell, a junior at Pleasant View Christian School in Pleasant View, Tennessee, is 100 issues old, born in May 2005, days after the first issue of *ONE Magazine* hit mailboxes. Initially reluctant to have his face featured on a nationwide magazine, Barrett eventually agreed, with the stipulation that "no one tell Nonna (his grandmother, Donna Forrest), so it will surprise her when it shows up in her mailbox." Barrett was photographed at the family home in Chapmansboro, Tennessee. Be sure to read the article from Barrett's dad Rusty, "Make the Right Choice," on page 46.



## *About the Redesign*

Lead Designer Marianne Stewart shares her thoughts about the design updates reflected in this issue.

"We wanted to update the design while adhering to what readers already love about *ONE Magazine*. You regularly express appreciation for its readability, including the larger font sizes and use of white space, so we made sure the new look kept those features. News pages and columns were reworked to allow for more text, a request made abundantly clear in last year's reader survey. Margins throughout the magazine shifted to the outer edges to allow for more photos and pull quotes without compromising article length. Additionally, the new cover design features an outlined, colored box around the masthead, a subtle nod to the original cover design from 2005. We are excited to see the new look take shape and anticipate many more years of serving Him and you through *ONE Magazine*."



A decorative image featuring a large pile of yellow corn kernels in the top left corner, several scattered kernels in the center, and a partially shucked ear of corn in the top right corner. The background is plain white.

# A Handful of Corn

BY DAVID CROWE

*“There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon” (Psalm 72:16a).*

As I thought about this article for the 100th issue of *ONE Magazine*, my mind returned to a book I read many years ago entitled *Centennial Record*. The book was published in 1881 in Dover, New Hampshire, by the Free Will Baptist Printing Establishment. It detailed a meeting held in New Durham in 1880 to celebrate the first 100 years (1780-1880) of the Northern Free Will Baptists and their founder, Benjamin Randall.

The first chapter of the book summarizes that history and begins with Psalm 72:16. The writer took the principle of this text to account for the existence and growth of Free Will Baptists. Just as a handful of corn planted on the mountains can produce fruit that shakes like the cedars of Lebanon, Free Will Baptists faithfully sowed the “handful of corn” God had given them to sow.

It’s not my purpose to cover that history, but to share some basic truths about our history. First, we are not now, nor have we ever been, among the largest of denominations. We are not even among the largest Baptists, but we are as much a part of the Body of Christ as any other denomination or any other Baptists.

Second, God has given us the handful of corn He expects us to sow. The *Centennial Record* records how Free

Will Baptists were faithful to sow what God had given them, and He blessed their obedience with souls saved, churches planted, schools started, and missionaries sent to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. Free Will Baptists experienced tremendous growth during that first century, despite all the things that stood in their way. As I’ve studied our history, I have been amazed we exist as a denomination today. The only reason is because faithful Free Will Baptists in both the North and the South sacrificially sowed the handful of corn God placed in their hands. I think we understand those seeds are the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is our responsibility to sow those seeds into the soil of the hearts and minds of men, women, boys and girls of all races, creeds, colors, and countries.

Third, it continues to be our responsibility to sow that handful of corn. Because those who came before us were faithful, we have a denomination we love, and we serve together as we serve Christ. Because they were faithful, we have missions programs, colleges, churches, and schools to teach and train our young men and women to take advantage of their own opportunities for faithfulness. If we’re not faithful, our children and grandchildren may not experience the blessings we enjoy!



*What will we do  
with the handful  
of corn God has  
placed within  
our hands?*

Finally, as I look back over the first 100 issues of *ONE Magazine* (2005-2021), I think of where we were as a denomination when the magazine started and where we are now. We've seen many wonderful things take place over these 16 years, but we've also seen the number of churches and pastors decline and a sharp downward trend in overall giving. Should we be discouraged? Should we quit? The answer is a resounding, ***never!***

So many have done so much, and it's our time now. What will we do with the handful of corn God has placed within our hands? I believe we are standing on the edge of some amazing things God is about to do. I believe Free Will Baptists are more unified than I have ever seen in my years of ministry among

us. As Trymon Messer used to say, "I believe God is up to something." (And, by the way, God is *always* working, and I want to be part of it, don't you?)

As you consider with me these 100 issues of *ONE Magazine*, let's do everything we can to make the next 100 issues the best years Free Will Baptists have ever seen. I'm glad God helped me to understand I didn't have to sow someone else's handful of corn. He gave me my own handful of seeds to sow with my unique abilities, personality, and gifts.

I don't have to sow your handful of corn, and you don't have to sow mine. When we are all faithful to the task, we all win. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** Dr. H. David Crowe is CEO of North American Ministries: [www.fwbnam.com](http://www.fwbnam.com).



**FEBRUARY 17, 2005** Homer Willis, former general director of NAM (1956-1973), dies.

**FEBRUARY 9-13, 2005** Nine Pinar del Rio churches and one mission work hold a children's crusade. Around 1,660 individuals attend at least one service, and 578 children make a profession of faith.



**MARCH 15, 2005** Pioneer medical missionary Dr. LaVerne Miley dies. The Free Will Baptist minister, medical doctor, missionary, and college professor established a hospital in Ivory

Coast, West Africa, where he served as a medical missionary for 19 years while planting eight churches.

**APRIL-MAY 2005** Vladimir Lopuga, one of the first cross-cultural ministry representatives for Home Missions, takes Sacramento FWB Church to self-supporting status.

2005

# 100 Issues of MISSIONS MILESTONES



Since *ONE Magazine* published its first issue, many events have occurred on the mission field, both at home and abroad. National departments have changed names and staff, new mission fields have been reached, new churches have been planted, and faithful servants have passed into eternity, just to name a few. Though this is by no means an exhaustive list, here's a look at 100 major FWB missions milestones from the last 16 years.

**DATES IN ORANGE ARE EVENTS FOR HOME MISSIONS/NORTH AMERICAN MINISTRIES (NAM).  
DATES IN TEAL ARE EVENTS FOR INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS/IM INC.**



**JUNE 2005** ETEAMS serve in seven countries: Brazil, Cuba, France, Japan, Panama, Russia, and Uruguay; 66 students, 14 leaders, and six interns.

**JUNE 1, 2005** Luis Felipe Tijerina receives official registration document of The Association of Free Will Baptists in Mexico after two and a half years of work.

**DECEMBER 7, 2005**

The FWBIM board votes to open Bulgaria as a field. Less than 1% of Bulgarians are Christians.

**2006** The Northwest FWB Church in Chicago, led by David Potete, erases \$600,000 in debt.

**FEBRUARY-MARCH 2006**

Desert Springs FWB Church in Sierra Vista, AZ, dedicates its new church building.

**FEBRUARY-MARCH 2006**

Bill and Debbie Pitts lead Cross Pointe FWB Church in Lancaster, OH, to self-supporting status with 145 people present.

**JUNE 30, 2005** Director of Mobilization Eddie Payne, former missionary to Ivory Coast (25 years) and eight years as Welch missions professor, retires. During his tenure, 20 career missionaries appointed, 36 short-term overseas workers approved, 344 ETEAM students, 69 ETEAM leaders, 126 CMP students served.

2006

**DECEMBER 17, 2005** Anthony and Lea Edgmon and Tim and Kristi Johnson hold the first events at an outreach center in Alpedrete, Spain.

**JUNE-JULY 2006** Randy Ledbetter and Scott Warren begin a work in Salt Lake City, Utah.

**JULY 18, 2006**

Tim and Lydia Awtrey appointed as first missionaries to Bulgaria.

**SEPTEMBER 15, 2006**



FWBIM purchases seminary property in Chame, Panama, providing permanent location for a Bible institute as well as retreat center.

**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2005**

Inman FWB Church hosts the first International Bible Conference in connection with the Gwen Hendrix Hispanic Bible Institute. Around 350 people attended the bilingual event.

**AUGUST 24, 2005**

Strategic withdrawal of missionaries from Ivory Coast due to expected violence surrounding elections.

**OCTOBER 15, 2005**

International Training Alliance forms. Founding members: Wycliffe Bible Translators, Operation Mobilization, Christian and Missionary Alliance, Caleb, Tentmakers, and FWBIM.

**AUGUST 19, 2005**

Paul Amiezi installed as the first African director of the FWB Bible Institute in Bouna, Ivory Coast.



**OCTOBER 7, 2006**

Chaplain (Colonel) James B. Bishop, chaplain with Home Missions for 22 years, dies.



**FALL 2006**

HM targets New York state for new churches, beginning in Rochester.



**APRIL 2010**

*Into the Darkness*, 75-year history of FWBIM, published.

**APRIL 27-29, 2009** IM Board adopts new purpose statement and eight core values.

**MARCH 19-21, 2009** Church in Montevideo, Uruguay, sponsors attendance of underprivileged children to festival held in coordination with Franklin Graham crusade; over 20,000 children attend and missionaries Jaimie and Tammy Lancaster lead several children to Christ.

**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2008** Jerry and Julie Barron celebrate 38 years of work in Mexico, planting four churches and mentoring young men for the pastorate.

**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2008** Chaplain Lt. Col. Tim Sturgill (Air Force) receives Meritorious Service Medal for work as deputy command chaplain.

**FEBRUARY-MARCH 2007** FWBIM launches GPS (Global Purpose Seekers) for youth in grades 7-9; holds first GPS-Xperience September 20-23, 2007.

**JULY 5, 2010** IM celebrates 75 years since the day Laura Belle Barnard set sail for India. Anniversary is accompanied by the release of *Into the Darkness*, a comprehensive history of Free Will Baptist missions work from 1935-2010.

**APRIL 5, 2010** 65 walkers begin the Go10 Walk for the World. During the 84-day, 2,500-mile fundraising effort, nearly 2,000 walkers retrace Laura Belle Barnard's steps from Georgia to the docks of New York City across 14 states, carrying a traditional Indian Bible and passing a well-worn baton from group to group. The walk ends in July at the National Convention in Oklahoma City after raising more than a million dollars.

**NOVEMBER 10, 2009** Missionary to Ivory Coast (1982-2003), Robert West dies.

**APRIL 13, 2009** "Mr. Foreign Missions" Raymond Riggs dies; 35-year ministry with IM, member of first board (1943), promotional director (1950-1953), first general director (1953-1959), board member (1961-1978); opened Brazil, Ivory Coast, Spain, and Japan.

**DECEMBER 21, 2009** Trula Cronk, pioneer missionary to India (1948-1972), dies.

**FEBRUARY 2009** HM holds three-day Summit featuring Dr. Troy Bush.

**MARCH 12, 2009** Long-time HM employee Iva Mae Bracey dies: worked May 1968-March 2009; bookkeeper, missionary mail, mailing lists, prayer warrior.

**MARCH 22, 2008** Côte d'Ivoire celebrates 50 years of FWB work with more than 1,000 people attending; in 2008—70 churches and mission works, Bible institute and Doropo hospital operated by Ivorians.

**APRIL-MAY 2008** Home Missions establishes \$1 million endowment in honor of Richard and Carolyn Adams following her death November 10, 2007.



**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2007** Richard and Carolyn Adams retire from HM; Richard continued development of the Church Extension Loan Fund.

**MARCH 21-22, 2008** Brazil celebrates 50 years of FWB work with about 400 Brazilians present; the first church was planted in Campinas, São Paulo in April 1958; 2008—25 churches and mission works, 20 ordained pastors.

**OCTOBER 21, 2007** Eugene Waddell dies, former general director of FWBIM (12 years), associate director (5 years), board member (20 years);

**FEBRUARY 20-24, 2007** Cuban FWB Association celebrates 65 years at their annual meeting.

**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2007** Bobby and Sue Aycok retire from 40 years of missionary service in Brazil.

**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2007** Dennis and Trena Owen retire after 16 years in Uruguay; they previously served 11 years in Spain.



led IM into Russia, Mongolia, China, and Central Asia; reinstated contact with Cuba; during his tenure, 64 missionaries appointed and TEAM (later ETEAM) ministry initiated.

**OCTOBER 2010**

Final payment of \$50,000 made on Panama seminary property.

**AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 2010**

Tim and Amanda York join church planting team in Buffalo, NY, to reach the large deaf community, 93% unreached with the gospel.



2011

**FEBRUARY 10, 2011** James Forlines resigns as IM general director after 12 years (1999-2011); saw extraordinary overseas growth in numbers of conversions, baptisms, and churches planted; emphasis on partnering with national leadership.

**JANUARY 8, 2011**

First students graduate with three-year degree from Panama seminary.



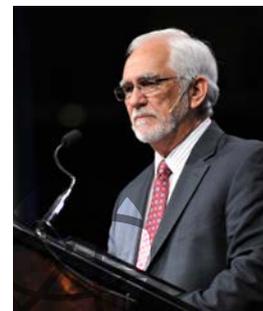
**MARCH 11, 2011** Earthquake and tsunami devastate Japan; IM missionaries play critical role in relief, partnering with The Hanna Project, Master's Men, and C.R.A.S.H.



**MARCH 2, 2012**

Richard Adams, longtime director of development for HM, dies; raised \$2 million for church-planting endowments.

**SEPTEMBER 27, 2011** The IM Board selects veteran missionary Clint Morgan as general director after a year as interim director.



2012

**JANUARY 2012** Panama (January 6-9) and Uruguay (January 14-15) celebrate 50 years of FWB missions work.

**AUGUST-OCTOBER 2012** IM sponsors IMpact Ride, a motorcycle rally and ride in 12 states.

**NOVEMBER 15, 2012** ★

Major David Trogdon receives the Witherspoon Award, the highest honor a military chaplain can receive.



**OCTOBER 17, 2012** IM's World Missions Offering hits \$1 million enabling all missionaries to return to their host countries.

**MARCH 15, 2013** Rolla D. Smith dies at age 92; general director of FWBIM (1959-62; 1975-86); between his tenures as general director, he served on the board (1962-1975).

**2013**  
HM celebrates 75 years

2013

**2013** Two Brazilian churches send a missionary to Turkey.



**DECEMBER 1, 2013**

David Crowe replaces the retiring Larry Powell as director of Home Missions.

**DECEMBER 31, 2013** Bobby and Geneva Poole retire after 53 years of missionary work in Brazil.

2014

**JANUARY 1, 2014**

Molly Barker retires after almost 50 years of service in Uruguay.



**JANUARY 11, 2015**

IM turns Panama work over to national church leaders after 53 years of missions work.

**APRIL 27-28, 2015**

IM board appoints first missionaries to the Samburu, an unreached people group in Kenya.



**DECEMBER 31, 2013**

Larry A. Powell retires as general director of HM after 14 years (1999-2013).



**SEPTEMBER 3, 2014**

HM and IM form partnership for cross-cultural ministry projects in North America with the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign as first project.

**JANUARY 10, 2015** Trymon Messer, former general director of HM, dies; served 25 years, 22 as associate director (1978-95) and three as general director before retiring in 1998.



**APRIL 27, 2015** IM board appoints Tyler and Kelli Penn to work with international students in Illinois in joint project with NAM.



**MARCH 30, 2014** After a 25-year quest, the Villalba Church is dedicated, the first Protestant church on the northwest side of Madrid, Spain.

2015

**2015** Ivorian Free Will Baptists organize outreach into Ghana.



**2015** Master's Men becomes an entity of NAM, ceases being a national department.

**APRIL-MAY, 2015** NAM implements 10-week summer internship program for college students.



**APRIL 2018**  
IM Board adopts new logo.



**JULY 9, 2017** Jimmy Aldridge, missionary to Ivory Coast (22 years) and first overseas secretary (15 years) dies.

**FEBRUARY 23-27, 2017**

Cuban FWB Association celebrates 75 years at their annual association meeting.



**DECEMBER 2016**

Ownership of the Ridge Church (New Durham, NH), founded by Benjamin Randall, is transferred to NAM.

**MARCH 2016** Brazilian couple moves 1,400 miles to serve as missionaries to an unreached area of Brazil.

**OCTOBER 27, 2016** ★ Chaplain (Major) John Carey retires after 30 years of military service, 16 as a chaplain.

**JULY 20, 2016** The retiring Mirial Gainer is honored for 40 years of work in Japan.

**2016**

**JANUARY 1, 2016** Jeff Turnbough becomes CEO of International Training Alliance, a partner organization IM helped found, while temporarily maintaining responsibilities with IM.

**MAY 25-26, 2015**  
NAM hosts first Power Conference with over 300 people from 17 states.



**AUGUST 2015**  
IM Launches *IMages*, an interactive, digital newsletter.

**OCTOBER 1-30, 2015** IM holds 30 Days of Prayer and Fasting with focused requests for each day.



**AUGUST 19, 2018**  
Paul Robinson, pioneer missionary to Uruguay, dies.

**2018**

**JANUARY 23-24, 2018**  
NAM hosts first Pastors' Boot Camp training.

**MARCH 16, 2017**  
Church planter Billy Bevan dies at age 69 while involved with revitalization project in Dothan, Alabama.



**2017**

**OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2016**  
NAM partners with Welch College to plant a church in Gallatin, TN, and train college students in church planting.

**DECEMBER-JANUARY 2019**  
NAM sees five church plants launched in three-month period.

**2019**

**APRIL-MAY 2019**  
Missionaries partner with Operation Christmas Child to evangelize unreached towns and villages in Bulgaria.

**MARCH 7, 2020**  
Women of the Good News dedicate women's center in Bondoukou, Ivory Coast, to provide safe housing for village girls in the city for schooling and to serve as a conference center for women.

**MAY 25-26, 2020** NAM hosts first Hispanic Power Conference, with translation into English provided.

**DECEMBER-JANUARY 2021** Bulgaria missionary team produces gift version of the Gospel of Luke thanks to U.S. church donations.



**MARCH 31, 2021** Veteran missionary Carlisle Hanna retires after 70 years of service in India.

**JUNE-JULY 2021** Summit Church, Missoula, MT, holds first service; planted by father and son team, Clayton (Tammy) and Josh (Kimberly) Hampton.

**JULY 20, 2021** HM officially changes its name to FWB North American Ministries.

★ **MARCH 28, 2019** Chaplain (COL) Terry Austin awarded the Distinguished Service Medal (36 years in military; 30 years as chaplain) upon retirement; completed final assignment as command chaplain for Joint Force Headquarters, National Capital Region/U.S. Army Military District of Washington, D.C.



**APRIL-MAY 2020** Chaplain (Colonel, retired) Terry Austin becomes chaplain support officer. ★

**JUNE 2020** ETEAM 2020 canceled due to COVID-19 pandemic; first year without ETEAM since 1992.

**JULY 18, 2020** Sandra Bishop, retired missionary to Japan (44 years), dies.



**SEPTEMBER 2020**  
NAM launches onsite Church Planter Assessment Center, three-day program required for all church planting candidates.

**APRIL 20, 2021** IM Board approves Philip Bonsu for ministry internship/partnership with Connect Church in Russellville, Arkansas.



# The STATE → of the MISSION

A DECADE OF  
CHALLENGES AND BLESSINGS

BY CLINT MORGAN

Article II, Section 3, Clause 1 of the United States Constitution requires the President of the United States to “give to Congress information of the State of the Union and recommend to their consideration such measures as he shall judge necessary and expedient.” In layman’s terms, the President informs Congress and citizens of the actual state of the country as it relates to challenges and accomplishments, as well as activities to achieve future success.

Though I am not the President, I do think it appropriate to inform Free Will Baptists of the state of the Mission. First, let’s take a brief look at the past, a cursory overview of where we stand presently, and a quick glimpse into the future. Please understand, this is not intended to tell you what I have accomplished as general director. God has provided an amazing staff—both office and field workers, national believers, and partners to IM. Collectively, we have worked to execute His plans and bring honor and glory to Him. Seeing God at work in, with, and through IM has been quite exciting.

February 6, 2021, marked my tenth year as general director. In all transparency, when I stepped into this position the Mission was passing through deep, dark waters relationally with our constituency, leading to enormous financial challenges. These factors certainly affected the pursuit of strategic goals and objectives and, thereby, our overall effectiveness.

Therefore, in 2011, the priority was repairing and rebuilding relationships. This meant other directors and I traveled

extensively to churches, district associations, and state meetings. We visited pastors, leaders, and laymen. We listened, dialogued, and learned how to move forward together.

We worked hard over five years rebuilding relationships and renewing trust. I vividly recall the first time a pastor told me, “I trust IM.” To be honest, I almost wept. We hear this often now. We see it reflected in the openness and support of pastors and leaders who, ten years ago, would not invite us into their churches. Now, these same pastors invite IM missionaries to speak in their services and pledge prayer, moral, and financial support for them.

Progress in rebuilding relationships and trust opened the door for more strategic thinking. The IM leadership team set goals and objectives that reflected an understanding of the Great Commission. They found their basis in missiological best practices; demanded a high level of commitment from the IM staff, both office and field; and, above all, called for profound trust in God as the means and power for realizing them.

As I look back on the past decade, several strategic aims pointed us in the right direction. We rewrote our mission statement to proclaim clearly and concisely what we are about as a mission. It now reads, “*We exist to labor with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission.*” This statement displays a strong commitment to unity in a





concerted effort to obey Christ's last command to make disciples of all nations. What greater cause could we have than the cause of Christ?

Using our mission statement as the starting point, the IM leadership team looked forward and planned accordingly. I want to share five important objectives set by the leadership team during this period. They kept us focused, even when things became chaotic. We will review these five objectives from three angles: past, present, future.

### **Objective 1 : Broaden our support base.**

**Past:** In 2012, our financial records revealed only 45% of FWB churches regularly donated to IM. This was unacceptable. We knew efforts must be made to correct this.

**Present:** In 2015, we set a goal to increase the number of churches giving to IM by 20% before the end of 2020. We met and surpassed this goal.

**Future:** Our 2020-2025 strategic goals and objectives state we want to increase the number of churches giving to IM on a monthly basis to 75% by December 2025.

### **Objective 2 : Expand our missionary force.**

**Past:** In the late 1990s, just over 100 IM missionaries shared the gospel globally. That number dropped to a low point of 72. This was unacceptable. A strong emphasis was placed on expanding our missionary force.

**Present:** At the April 2020 board meeting, we gratefully reported 103 IM missionaries on staff. Though great progress has been made, we must continue this growth.

**Future:** Our goal is to have 125 IM missionaries serving five years from now.

### **Objective 3 : Become more of a truly “international” mission.**

**Past:** Since 1935, we have been called “Foreign” or “International” Missions. Yet, in 2011, only three board-approved, foreign-born missionaries graced our missionary force. It was imperative we set up structures and processes to provide the possibility of non-North American believers serving with IM.

**Present:** Presently, we employ 13 foreign-born IM missionaries. These brothers and sisters bring a much-needed “international” perspective to IM.

**Future:** God will continue to call believers from many nations to go into all the world. We want to play our part in ensuring these called ones serve where He leads. We anticipate seeing the number of foreign-born, board-approved missionaries double over the next five years.

### **Objective 4 : Seek mutually beneficial partnerships.**

Our mission statement declares we “*labor with the Body of Christ.*” In reality, we often rejected the idea of working with non-Free Will Baptists, or even Free Will Baptist organizations not directly attached to IM. Thankfully, this is no longer the case.

**Past:** In 2011, IM partnered with three other evangelical organizations.

**Present:** We currently partner with 21 evangelical agencies or churches. Each of these organizations contain strong Free Will Baptist connections. Most importantly, they are members of the Body of Christ.

**Future:** We anticipate God sending more partners for IM. We will build from a common vision to fulfill the Great Commission, sharing our resources to collectively expand His Kingdom.

### **Objective 5 : Increase the number of Free Will Baptist believers and churches outside North America.**

The IM task is to take the gospel to the nations, with a focus outside of North America. (Note: this does not exclude reaching immigrants and refugees within the United States in collaboration with North American Ministries.)

**Past:** Free Will Baptists pioneered works in many places around the world. From the handful of converts and churches planted in India and Cuba in the 1930s, we grew to 33,699 believers and 480 churches and church plants in 2012.

**Present:** The faithful labors of IM missionaries and national believers keep those numbers on an upward trend. The 2019 field statistics demonstrated an average attendance of 35,537 people in Free Will Baptist churches outside of North America, comprising about 13% of the

FWB denomination. The 845 churches reported constitute close to 40% of FWB churches.

**Future:** We set our 2020-2025 goal to see 2,000 churches planted with an average attendance of 50,000 believers each Sunday. God must direct, and we must *“labor with the Body of Christ”* to realize these faith-based marks.

I don't want us to get bogged down in this plethora of facts and figures and miss what is really important. These numbers are not ribbons or trophies to prove how hard our missionaries work or proclaim IM as a shining example of a great mission agency.

If we see anything other than God at work through obedient servants and Him being glorified through these efforts, we are focused on the wrong things.

The Mission is certainly in a much better position relationally and financially than we were in 2011. This by no means implies we have reached the pinnacle of collaboration within the Body of Christ, achieved optimal financial support from our denomination, or realized maximum fruitfulness for the ministries of our missionaries. We must continue to grow in our relationship with Him—the One who called us to proclaim His salvation to all people.

We must continue to build our relationships within the Body of Christ. We must give as He leads. We must march in the cadence He sets. We must always depend on Him to bring about the harvest.

We must raise our voices in praise to Him alone for what He has accomplished through IM. With heartfelt joy, I see Free Will Baptists moving down the time-culture continuum from our humble beginning in 1935. From sending Laura Belle Barnard to India as our first missionary to seeing IM workers in cross-cultural ministry in over 20 countries.

The past has taught us many lessons. The present fills us with hope. The future calls us to continue our commitment to God's command articulated in IM's mission statement *“to labor with the Body of Christ to fulfill the Great Commission.”* **ONE**

*If we see anything other than God at work through obedient servants and Him being glorified through these efforts, we are focused on the wrong things.*

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**About the Author:** Clint Morgan has been general director of IM, Inc. since 2011. Learn more: [www.iminc.org](http://www.iminc.org).



# HIGH Impact!

The **Free Will Baptist Foundation** is making a big difference for the denomination. After passing \$100 million in assets in 2021, current impact on ministry is **\$2.4 million annually**, with future impact of more than **\$40 million!** Find out more about how you can partner with the Foundation to make a profound difference for ministry long after you have gone to your eternal reward.



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# 100 Issues, \$100 Million

BY DAVID BROWN, CPA

*ONE Magazine* and Free Will Baptist Foundation have been good for each other. You might say the first grant was issued to the magazine in early 2005, when the Foundation gave the magazine \$20,000 as “seed money” to get started and purchase new equipment.

If you consider this a grant, it has paid enormous dividends back to the Foundation over the last 16 years. When *ONE Magazine* was conceived, it proved a huge win for the Foundation because, unlike the other national ministries, the Foundation did not have its own publication. It did not even have a mailing list to use for promoting the work.

When *Contact* magazine was published, every department was granted a page in each issue. Since the Foundation was then supported by the Board of Retirement, the two ministries

split the pages, and each had six pages per year. Today, the Foundation has at least four pages in every issue of *ONE*. Though the magazine is bimonthly rather than a monthly publication, the Foundation still receives at least 24 pages a year.

When the first issue of *ONE Magazine* was published in April-May 2005, the Foundation was not an independent department with its own board. The Board of Retirement board, along with the national directors, served as the Foundation board. In July 2005, that changed when the first independently elected board was affirmed by delegates to the National Convention and added to the national directors, who also continue to serve on the board.

The total assets of the Foundation in April 2005 hovered

around \$30 million. Today, those funds have tripled to over \$100 million. Endowment Funds were at \$5.7 million, and today they, too, have almost tripled to \$15 million. The denomination had no estate planning program or grant program. Today, we have both, with future gifts to Free Will Baptist ministries from the estate plan totaling in the \$30 million range. Since 2016, \$2.6 million has been issued to ministries through the grant program, with more to come (from both programs).

*ONE Magazine* gave the Foundation a platform to advertise our programs and educate the denomination about the importance of providing for the denomination’s future. Free Will Baptists responded, and we have enjoyed phenomenal growth.

It’s clear the Foundation’s success is covered with many “fingerprints,” from employees to individual supporters and ministries. *ONE Magazine* is such a ministry. The Foundation has been good to *ONE*, but *ONE* also has been very good to the Foundation.

Thank you, *ONE Magazine*! **ONE**

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**About the Columnist:** David Brown is director of Free Will Baptist Foundation. To learn more about the grants program, visit [www.fwbgifts.org](http://www.fwbgifts.org).





# A HUNDRED (and Two) YEARS OF WISDOM

AN INTERVIEW WITH REV. WALTER H. RICHARDS

With the 100th issue of *ONE Magazine* approaching, I thought it would be interesting to hear from a centenarian, so I traveled to Texas to interview Walter H. Richards, likely the oldest living Free Will Baptist preacher. Throughout his life, he pastored exclusively in Texas, and all were small churches.

With Mr. Richards quickly approaching 102 years of age (January 14), I didn't know what to expect. But the sparkly senior quickly set me straight: "I don't hear so good anymore, and I don't see so good. I might get a little confused about what I had for breakfast, but if you get me started in the right direction, I still talk well about the past."

True to his word, Mr. Richards did talk well. Once he heard my questions (sometimes a challenge), his answers were quick, direct, and full of good humor. Enjoy the following excerpts from our conversation.

—Eric Thomsen, Managing Editor, *ONE Magazine*

## HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A FREE WILL BAPTIST?

Since 1946—75 years. I pastored 65 of those years. Preached 'til I was 99. But I'm retired now. Someone once asked me, "If you weren't Free Will Baptist, what would you be?" I told him, "I'd be ashamed."

The denomination has really helped me and stood by me. I'm so grateful to be a Free Will Baptist.

## I UNDERSTAND YOU ATTENDED FREE WILL BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE [NOW WELCH COLLEGE]. WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT THOSE DAYS?

I graduated from the college in 1949. I was a little older than most of them. I only started pastoring after I got out of the Navy. The Lord called me to preach, and, pretty quick, I saw that if I was going to preach, I needed some

help. I was a sixth-grade dropout, and college was *hard!* But I stuck it out.

I remember Charley Thigpen\* especially. He was so influential. He came during my second year there. He was a great friend. I remember going to the train station to pick him up when he arrived.

## YOU MENTIONED THE NAVY. WHEN DID YOU SERVE?

I'm one of the few living WWII veterans. Served in the Pacific.

## DO YOU REMEMBER THE FIRST SERMON YOU PREACHED?

The first sermon? Sure do. It was the old First Church in Bryan, Texas. The pastor had his tonsils removed and couldn't preach. Asked me to preach for him on Sunday night. I went to my older brother and got some pointers. I preached for a whole five minutes before I ran out of things to say. I told the Lord if He saw fit to give me the opportunity, I'd sure like another try. And He let me keep trying for the next 65 years.

I remember my last sermon, too. I was 99. I preached on how to know God: get in the Word and visit with Him often. I even preached one time at the National Convention. Brother Carl Cheshier asked me to preach the "moderator's message" for him in Atlanta.\*\* That was one of my greatest honors.

While I don't pastor today, I still attend church faithfully, pay my tithes, and try to help in any way I can. I have a very active prayer list. I pray more now than I've ever prayed, from an hour to an hour-and-a-half every day. I pray for people specifically, by name. I pray for our churches; I pray for our pastors. I have one son, and he's a pastor too. I'm so proud of him.



*Someone once asked me,  
"If you weren't Free Will  
Baptist, what would you be?"  
I told him, "I'd be ashamed."*



I may not be a pastor, but I am still faithful to tell people about the Lord. I get regular visits from Home Health. Not one of them comes through my door without hearing, "Do you know the Lord? Are you a Christian?"

### WHAT WAS YOUR FAVORITE BOOK OF THE BIBLE TO PREACH FROM?

John. No question, it was John. I admire John above the other disciples. And he shared so many good, practical things in his writing. Not just spiritual, but practical. How to live!

### WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE A YOUNG PREACHER?

Get in the Word! Stay in the Word! Preach the Word! Oh, and keep better records than I did. I can't tell you how many weddings and funerals I did, but after 65 years of preaching, it was a whole bunch. I just wish I could remember them all.

### HOW HAS CHURCH CHANGED?

Oh, my! It has changed tremendously. People are so busy and sometimes too busy for the important things. Too busy for church. Too busy for each other. That concerns me.

### WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO TODAY'S FREE WILL BAPTISTS?

It's pretty simple. Get in the Word. Pray honestly for everything. Jesus will meet every need in our lives when we just turn our lives over to Him. Let Him lead, and you will have the greatest adventure you can imagine.

### WHAT ARE YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU LOOK BACK ON YOUR LONG LIFE?

My wife [Margaret] and I were married 73 years and eight days. I miss her. She was a good wife. Always made me smile to hear the kids at church call her "Mrs. Preacher." I have two great children: my son Walter and my daughter Marilu. It has been a good life.

I'm ready to go whenever the Lord wants, but I turned my life over to Jesus a long time ago, and I don't think he's quite done with me yet. But when I go, I'll go happy for every experience He gave me. Anything and everything good that I accomplished, Jesus helped me. Anything and everything good in my life, Jesus did it! **ONE**

**\*Dr. Charles (Charley) Thigpen** became the dean and later the president of Welch College from 1979-1989. He also served as the denomination's moderator from 1954 to 1960, the youngest man ever to serve in that role. He died in late 2020 at age 94.

**\*\*Carl Cheshier** served seven years as the moderator of the National Association and nine years as the assistant moderator. He honored Rev. Richards by asking him to deliver the opening message (the moderator's message) of the convention business session at the 1999 meeting in Atlanta, Georgia.

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

# DRIVING DISCIPLESHIP

— — — *for* 16 Years — — —

BY RON HUNTER JR.

We celebrate the 100th issue of *ONE Magazine*. Because the first issue rolled off the presses in 2005, that marks 16 years of reporting. Sixteen years may remind us of the time lapse from birth to when the typical child gets his or her driver's license. Just as a child develops over this period, so have our national agencies.

Randall House gets the honor of designing and printing *ONE Magazine* for the Executive Office, a responsibility we do not take lightly. Nor do we take lightly the knowledge that everything we do every day is to serve our local churches and the families within your churches. When asked to document milestones that have occurred for Randall House since that first issue in Spring 2005, a cascade of memories reflect on God's direction and achievement.

*ONE Magazine* launched a year after CLEAR Curriculum, which later became D6 Curriculum. This line revolutionized how other publishers do Sunday School and small group studies. One hundred issues ago, Randall House sold around \$1.9 million in curriculum annually. This grew to over \$4.6 million in total revenue pre-COVID. Prior to the first issue of *ONE Magazine*, the abbreviation for Deuteronomy 6—now known around the world as D6—had never been uttered, as that iconic label was first used in July 2007.

The launch of a generational discipleship curriculum led to the first-ever family ministry conference called D6 in 2009. In time, the discipleship conference expanded into

eight countries, with five holding annual events. Yet, the global ministry of Randall House includes more than conferences, as books and curriculum have been translated into multiple languages, with publications reaching 21 countries. D6 Curriculum has won over 160 content awards and close to 50 design and printing awards! Free Will Baptists can be proud their publishing house ranks top in Bible content, doctrinal distinctions, and excellence in writing and design. What started as CLEAR has been through three generations of curriculum: D6, D6 2nd Gen, and currently, D6 EveryDay. As a result, many pastors have grown to value and stress discipleship in their churches, specifically generational discipleship or family ministry.

The inaugural year of *ONE Magazine* also saw Randall House publish the first non-Free Will Baptist author, Stan Toler, and that same year Dave Ramsey became a regular contributing columnist in our teen and adult devotional magazines. Since that time, we have published works by Michael W. Smith, John Trent, Richard Ross, Timothy Paul Jones, Jim Putman, Philip Nation, and Brian Haynes—all while continuing to produce Free Will Baptist history and doctrine from greats like Robert E. Picirilli, Leroy Forlines, and others. We have seen new writers pick up the baton and carry it well: J. Matthew Pinson, Jackson Watts, Matthew S. Bracey, and others. We completed the *Randall House New Testament Commentary Series*

edited by Robert Picirilli and Harold Harrison and written by numerous scholars who contributed this great work for pastors and teachers alike.

We have helped other organizations outside of Randall House with publishing and printing. Not only does Randall House print *ONE Magazine*, we also produce *The Gideon* magazine, adult studies for Baptist Way Press (now GC2 Press), and several Free Will Baptist state newsletters. We love collaborating and offering our strengths to our tribe of Free Will Baptists and the greater Body of Christ.

Student and children's ministry shifted from the National Youth Conference (which offered options for far more than teens) to the Vertical Three Conference, named after the three Hebrew friends of Daniel who stood tall and refused to bow to the peer pressure of the Babylonian culture. Since 2005, Truth & Peace has grown from 60 students to 140, offering the best leadership training for Free Will Baptist high school students. The national Youth Evangelistic Team (YET) has been blessed to garner the sponsorship of North American Ministries (NAM), including trips to new church plants and other churches during its annual tour.

The publishing world has been blessed (and, in some ways plagued) by the digital world over the last 16 years. Randall House stepped boldly to the front and often led the way through early digital development of books, videos, curriculum, and distribution. Drawing from over 300 speakers, the D6 Conference has produced resources for the local church and families such as D6 Plus and the D6 App. Likewise, since 2015, the D6 Podcast has featured interviews with some of the world's greatest ministry leaders. Today, over 300 episodes offer valuable ministry, discipleship, and parenting insights.

As we recount the growth and opportunities for your Free Will Baptist publisher, you can take pride knowing **Randall House is driving discipleship on a global scale.** Our awards are your awards. And, if you had kids born into D6 Curriculum, if you have used the devotional magazines, you have seen your kids earn more than a driver's license. They

discovered God's road to drive, the same one they will intuitively share with their own children. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** Since 2002, Ron Hunter Jr., Ph.D. has served as executive director and CEO of Randall House & D6 Family Ministry. He pastored 11 years before starting his present role. Hunter has five published books. He is passionate about leadership and discipleship. He married his college sweetheart, Pamela, and they have two married children: Michael and Lauren, and one grandchild, Kinsley.





# New Name, New Campus, *Same Mission*

THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT REFLECTS ON  
A HUNDRED ISSUES AT WELCH COLLEGE

BY J. MATTHEW PINSON

April 2005, the date of *ONE Magazine's* first issue, seems a world away for Welch College. Some of the best and most difficult of times for the denomination's college have occurred since 2005, yet God has providentially guided us to fulfill our mission as we have grown, both qualitatively and quantitatively.

## *A Strategic Plan*

As I reflect on God's care and protection, I'm amazed by and thankful for His leadership. The year 2005 saw the rollout of a strategic plan with bold goals. After the board shelved the idea of relocation in 2001, when I was elected the college's fifth president, they began thinking about relocation once again. With the help of Colonel Mark Johnson (the son of Welch's founding president L. C. Johnson and his wife Ruth) and fundraising consultant Clark Dickerson, we conducted a new feasibility study regarding campus relocation. The results prompted Welch leadership to recommend a fresh start in the effort to relocate, the vision of Dr. Tom Malone many years before.

## *Great Recession*

We located to 66 beautiful acres in Gallatin, Tennessee—perfect for a new campus. I'll never forget the feeling when we signed the closing documents on the property just weeks after the 2008 financial bailouts in Washing-

ton, D.C., that signaled the onset of what came to be known as the Great Recession.

In the fallout of the recession, I wondered why God had led our leadership team and board unanimously to purchase this property. The real estate market in Middle Tennessee locked up tight, and we were unable to sell the West End Avenue property in midtown Nashville. Higher education was hit hard by the Great Recession, including Welch. Many private colleges closed their doors. Our enrollment, which reached a 22-year high in 2007, plummeted.

These became some of the most difficult years financially in the college's history. In addition to the enrollment and financial difficulties other private colleges faced, we also experienced a crisis with our 50-year-old defined benefit pension plan, which was "underwater." We had to borrow money to buy out the plan and pay our retirees and other pensioners what they had earned.





### *Focus on Mission and Excellence*

During these difficult years, with no hope in sight from a human perspective, we began carefully and systematically working on our mission and our excellence, finding every way (that didn't cost money) to double down on our mission of educating leaders to serve Christ and His Church, of mentoring students, of making our processes better and more excellent, and at increasing retention and graduation rates.

Over four tough years, we took huge strides forward in every metric used by the higher education community, and people began to take notice.

Our rankings in publications like *U. S. News and World Report's Best Colleges* continued to improve.

Through the valley of the Great Recession, we kept the deep, abiding sense the Lord was leading us with His own hand, comforting us with His rod and staff, and that He would bring us through.

### *New Name*

In summer 2011, the college proposed a name change at the National Convention. The name proposed several years earlier had been voted down, but we sensed the need to pursue a name change again. Too many students were being rejected from competitive graduate programs or barred from foreign countries closed to traditional missions. People didn't realize we had grown into a com-

prehensive Christian college centered on a robust biblical worldview curriculum.

We considered the name "Johnson," after our beloved founding president, Dr. L. C. Johnson. We quickly abandoned that idea because of the existence of nearby Johnson University, also accredited by both our institutional accrediting agencies. After considering several other names, the college decided on Welch College, after John L. and Mary Welch. The secretary of education of the National Association, John—perhaps more than anyone else—fostered the idea of a Free Will Baptist college. His wife Mary also was instrumental in the founding years of the institution. At the 2012 convention, the vote to change the name passed by 97%.

### *New Campus*

In fall 2012, on the heels of the name change, enrollment rebounded, and we began to see the light of day. Two years later, the college found a buyer for the West End property, and in 2015, we celebrated groundbreaking on the new campus. As we looked back over the ten years since the initiation of the strategic plan, we realized every strategic initiative had been met, and we had begun construction of a new campus—the greatest strategic initiative of them all. In 2017, after two years of construction, we opened the new campus in Gallatin.

Situated in a beautiful and growing suburban community in Sumner County, Tennessee, the campus consists of beautiful red brick, white-columned, Jeffersonian-style buildings in a traditional academic quadrangle. Building interiors are equipped with state-of-the-art technology and conveniences. The new campus has won architectural awards from two national magazines: *American School and University* and *Learning by Design*. We thank God for this new blessing that is helping us grow into the future.

### *COVID-19*

The COVID-19 pandemic hit hard in spring 2020. The months of lockdown proved especially difficult for private colleges where the full-time student body largely consists of dormitory students. Yet, given the present unforeseen circumstances, we have managed to survive and do well. Had the pandemic not depleted enrollment by 15%, Welch would have marked the largest enrollment in 37 years. And, though leadership projected a \$765,000 deficit for

the 2020–2021 fiscal year, we ended with a deficit under \$100,000. Despite COVID-19, Welch enjoyed a higher enrollment than 28 out of the last 37 years.

### *Welch Divinity School*

As the world slowly recovers from the pandemic, we have turned our focus to the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree in the new Welch Divinity School, which will open in the fall of 2021. As with all new academic programs, it will take time to launch the program (especially with lingering COVID-19 concerns), but the M.Div. will bear great fruit in the future. We are amazed by how many undergraduate students are interested in continuing the M.Div. through the accelerated B.A. to M.Div. program made possible by the nearly \$500,000 grant from a private charitable foundation.

### *Mission-Driven*

Through a “hundred issues” of challenges, changes, and achievements, Welch College has remained committed to our distinctive founding mission. Recently, Welch hosted ten-year reaffirmation visits from both of our

accrediting agencies, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSCOC) and the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) Commission on Accreditation. The ABHE visiting team gave Welch a formal commendation on its commitment to the mission of Christ-centered higher education, and the way the mission is integrated throughout the institution. This commitment has been embraced, not only by the board and administration, but also by faculty, staff, and students. The ABHE vice president observed this is a rare commendation from ABHE.

We are excited about how God will use Welch College in the future as we stay focused on our distinctive Christian and Free Will Baptist mission. I believe we are poised to enter the most fruitful era of mission fulfillment in the history of Welch College. It is my prayer that God will continue to use Free Will Baptists to support this vital ministry of educating Free Will Baptist leaders to serve Christ, His Church, and His world in this complex, secularizing age. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** J. Matthew Pinson is the fifth president of Welch College. Learn more: [www.welch.edu](http://www.welch.edu).

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# Lessons From a Hundred Years Ago

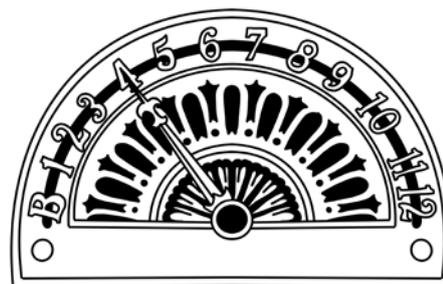
BY RON HUNTER JR., PH.D.

Winston Churchill paraphrased George Santayana's original quote, "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." A hundred years ago, in 1921, Warren G. Harding was sworn in as President, the first Lowe's hardware store opened, Amelia Earhart took up flying,

Adolf Hitler was named leader of the Nazi Party, and the fallout from an innocent elevator ride decimated the affluent neighborhood of Greenwood in north Tulsa, Oklahoma.

On May 30, 1921, across the tracks in the affluent, all-black Greenwood district of north Tulsa, Oklahoma, also known as the "Black Wall Street" of America, a young black teen named Dick Rowland rode the elevator up a floor to the restrooms. Sarah Page, the young teenaged female elevator operator, screamed as Rowland left the elevator. Rumors spread quickly that Dick had assaulted Page.

Police arrested the young man as mobs threatened to lynch him. Tensions rose in the streets, shots were fired, and pillaging began as citizens from white southern Tulsa stormed the black district of Greenwood. They invaded homes along East Archer Street, torched Mt. Zion Baptist Church, the Stradford Hotel, and 35 square blocks. Families watched looters carry off their belongings: pianos, china, and other heirlooms. Hundreds of men, women, and children were shot and killed in the streets that day. After a century, lessons from south and north Tulsa teach us so much. But are we good students? Let's consider three important leadership reminders, so we never repeat such a horrifying event.



## Number one, find the truth before spreading rumors.

Too quickly, leaders repeat what they hear versus what truly happened. In this case, they believed the baseless rumor that a young black man had assaulted a white lady, allowing violence to precede truth. Sarah Page later exonerated Rowland, refusing to press charges and explaining an accidental set of events caused her surprised shriek. Ethical leaders should be strong enough to resist the pressure to repeat stories impugning others without proof.

**Second, we do not trust what we don't know.** The "other side of the tracks" describes people, practices, and cultures that are different, but "different" does not mean inferior. The Great Commission calls us to engage the other side of the tracks lovingly. We forget that we, too, live on the other side of someone's tracks.

**Finally, sin creates injustice, but pride magnifies injustice on both sides.** Ethics does not rationalize the destruction of property or harm to innocents in the name of justice. A strong witness does not fear negative labels that result from having coffee with someone who identifies as LGBTQ+ or have apprehension that others will think we condone the behavior. We should not ignore talking about racism for fear people will claim we are "woke," proponents of BLM, or have adopted Critical Race Theory.

As C. S. Lewis' book *The Screwtape Letters* warns, we must not repeat yesterday's history by failing to engage people and issues under one label—Christ! **ONE**

**About the Columnist:** Ron Hunter Jr. has a Ph.D. in leadership and is CEO of Randall House Publications. You may contact him at [ron.hunter@randallhouse.com](mailto:ron.hunter@randallhouse.com).



## RECOMMENDED BOOKS

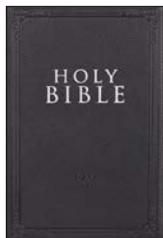
*Philemon*

**1 Samuel 16:7**

**Romans 10:12**

**1 John 2:11, 4:20**

**James 2:9**



## LEADERSHIP QUOTE

*"If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed"* (Mere Christianity).

—C. S. Lewis

# EQUIPPING SERVANTS *for the* NEXT 100 ISSUES

BY JOHN BRUMMITT

*History: a chronological record of significant events (such as those affecting an institution), often including an explanation of their causes.*

As we look back over the last 16 years, many significant events have changed the Board of Retirement, and what we provide to the denomination. Assets under management at the Board of Retirement have grown from just under \$30 million to over \$100 million. Many plan developments have taken place over the last 16 years, including a plan document (to protect churches with the IRS regulations), the addition of investment options for participants, increased technology to allow participants more preparation tools for retirement, financial education resources (through the [www.reinvestfwb.com](http://www.reinvestfwb.com) website and podcast), and the list goes on. But those significant events in the history of the Board of Retirement aren't events that highlight our *goal and purpose* at the Board of Retirement.

*Our goal and purpose is to help Free Will Baptist denominational employees prepare for their retirement years and to create opportunities for ministry in retirement because of their financial preparation.*

Earlier, I indicated we had grown assets from \$30 million to \$100 million since 2005, but we have also paid out over \$40 million to participants during that same period. We have seen hundreds of denominational workers enter retirement and enjoy a new phase of ministry without the stress of working to meet living expenses.

That is not to say all participants stop working in retirement, because that is not the case. The majority continue into a new ministry once they retire. The ministries look different from their previous working careers but carry less stress and allow them opportunities they didn't have

before: travel to a mission field, develop a ministry to their grandchildren, or help support a struggling ministry through guidance and support.

The possibilities for ministry in retirement are endless. Pursue whatever the Lord puts on your heart because of financial preparation during your working career. Take advantage of many needed ministry opportunities that don't have funding. If your retirement covers your expenses, you can fill the gap.

Over the last 16 years, the ministry impact of participants in their retirement years is staggering. Churches unable to pay a pastor found stable financial footing because retired pastors stepped into the position without pay. Their important ministry made it possible for churches to rebound and later hire a pastor.

Countless retirees have developed crucial local-church ministries because they were not hindered by a full-time job that limited availability. Other retirees enjoy road-tripping around the country in their RVs, helping churches and mission works for a month or two before heading off to the next location. They provide refreshment to the pastors and church planters in each new area.

These are only a handful of examples of how Free Will Baptist "retirees" have impacted the Kingdom.

When I think of our history, the changes made to the retirement plan, and the growth we have seen, it all comes back to the ministry accomplished through individuals and organizations we serve. We are helping you prepare for your future ministry for the denomination and the Gospel of Jesus Christ. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** John Brummitt became director of the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement in January 2016. He graduated in 2011 with an MBA from Tennessee Tech University. A 2004 graduate of Welch College, he has been with the Board of Retirement since spring 2006. Learn more: [www.boardofretirement.com](http://www.boardofretirement.com).



# History of Our Histories

BY PHILLIP T. MORGAN

*If a stranger asked who you are, how would you respond? You might begin with your name and occupation, but you would quickly turn to history, explaining where you came from and to whom you are connected biologically, intellectually, and spiritually. History tells us who we are, helps us explain ourselves to others, and gives us direction for the future.*

Denominational history serves the same function. With a strong identity comes the confidence to be ourselves in a culture pulling us simultaneously in a thousand directions. Furthermore, knowledge of our history helps us communicate the truth of the gospel. Confident and articulate, we can face the future, trusting our past will give us wise counsel as we face new challenges.

Not surprisingly, the past is a contested place. Historians have understood the story of Free Will Baptists in many ways. These approaches often overlap and are informed by earlier histories. Consequently, a broad understanding of our historiography (how people have understood and recorded history) is helpful. The following is a broad outline of a Free Will Baptist historiography since the formation of the denomination in 1935, though many wonderful resources are omitted due to space. It is hoped this guide will

lead to further reading and encourage Free Will Baptists to clarify our identity and prepare for a unified future.<sup>1</sup>

## *The National Association of Free Will Baptists*

Prior to the formation of the National Association in 1935, histories about Free Will Baptists focused on either the Palmer (Southern) or the Randall (Northern) Movements individually. Histories of the Palmer Movement highlighted genealogical and doctrinal connections to the English General Baptists who immigrated to North Carolina in the seventeenth century. Narratives of the Randall Movement focused on their founding in the New England pietistic revivalism of the eighteenth century—and especially biographies of important leaders. While both sides were aware of the other and occasionally mentioned one another or corresponded, they remained distinct groups, and their histories reflect distinguishable characteristics.

After 1935, new histories attempted to bring the two narratives together. Damon Dodd's *The Free Will Baptist Story* (1956) was the first major attempt along these lines. Dodd highlighted the doctrines of Arminianism and believer's baptism over other doctrines to emphasize the similarities between the two groups. Dodd recognized the Palmer connection to England, drawing heavily from George Paschal's masterful *History of North Carolina Baptists* (1930) to inform his early narrative of North Carolina Free Will Baptists.

Other historians focused on more specific narratives. Some, like Paul Woolsey in *God, A Hundred Years, and a Free Will Baptist Family* (1949), wedded biography, family history, and associational history. Others focused on regional and state activity, spurred by the Historical Commission's first publication, *History of Free Will Baptist Associations* (1976), edited by Robert E. Picirilli. Over time, these detailed accounts of various state associations enhanced our historical understanding significantly.

### *William F. Davidson and Michael Pelt*

Still, Free Will Baptists lacked an academic, well-researched treatment of the movement. William F. Davidson filled this void with *An Early History of Free Will Baptists* (1974). By 1985, he had expanded his research to bring the narrative forward to the late twentieth century in *The Free Will Baptists in America, 1727–1984*.<sup>2</sup> This volume engaged myriad sources, including associational minutes, official histories, court records, and broader histories by non-Free Will Baptists.

Like Dodd, Davidson attempted to explain the movement's history considering its unification. However, Davidson avoided Dodd's oversimplification. Instead, Davidson argued the relationship between the two movements prior to the 1911 Northern Baptist merger was sporadic and largely limited to organizational models and theological terminology. Though the Randall Movement plays a significant role in his narrative, he gave prominence to the Palmer Movement.

Davidson's work contained two particularly important developments. First, he revealed the missing connection between English General Baptists and North Carolina General and Free Will Baptists. Working with North Carolina State Archivist George Stevenson, Davidson learned Palmer's father-in-law was named Benjamin Laker.

Stevenson traced Laker back to England and narrowed the time frame for his conversion to General Baptist doctrine. Palmer Movement historians and Baptist historians had affirmed this link since the nineteenth century but lacked the necessary sources to outline the connection in full. Thus, Davidson's history placed the deep research of Stevenson within the broader context of Free Will Baptist history.

Second, Davidson made the first attempt to explain the 1962 denominational split in North Carolina. He argued that denominational polity (structure) was well known to everyone in 1935 and had been reaffirmed in 1955. Within that context, he argued the North Carolina State Convention leaders who claimed a "connectional" form of government during the Edgemont Church dispute knowingly contradicted the denomination's stance on the matter. Though Davidson attempted an evenhanded treatment, he presented the North Carolina State Convention as the offending party that refused to engage with a patient and conciliatory National Association.

Undoubtedly, Michael Pelt authored *A History of Original Free Will Baptists* (1996), at least in part, as a response to Davidson's portrayal of these events leading up to the split. Pelt, prominent in the North Carolina State Convention (also known as Original Free Will Baptists), provided a detailed analysis of the development of Free Will Baptists. Like Dodd and Davidson, he attempted to explain the relationship between the Palmer and Randall Movements prior to the twentieth century. Strongly emphasizing the connection with English General Baptists, Pelt gave less credence to the influence of the Randall Movement but did not dismiss the movement completely.

More importantly, Pelt argued the issue of church polity was *not* settled in 1935. According to his book, North Carolina Free Will Baptists historically practiced a connectional form of church government inherited from the English General Baptists. In his narrative, certain denominational leaders forced the issue of church polity and ousted the connectional North Carolinians.

For those who navigated such troubled waters in person, a balanced narrative may be impossible, but their perspective remains valuable to future historians.

### *History in the Twenty-first Century*

Since 2000, Free Will Baptist history has diverged into three distinct tracks. Two approaches expanded on earlier

models. State histories continue to be written with increased detail and new information. Microhistories are another prominent historiographical form that continue to emerge. Many are biographical, but others address less personality-driven accounts.

Robert E. Picirilli's *Little Known Chapters in Free Will Baptist History* (2015) and *Free Will Baptist History* (2019) are the most academic approach to microhistory. Both books give detailed attention to various figures influential in specific areas of Free Will Baptist history. Further, Picirilli emphasizes the influence of certain members of the Randall Movement in the South, as well as the historical interplay between Free Will Baptists and Separate Baptists. While he doesn't deny the dominant influence of the Palmer Movement, he argues Free Will Baptist doctrine is "too biblical and too probable to have just one or two beginnings." His narrative emphasizes pietism and Arminianism (like Dodd) to argue for broader denominational foundations and influences. Most of these microhistory essays are meant to modify or expand—not fundamentally alter—the dominant historical narratives.

A growing number of scholars have pursued a third approach through historical theology. Though many earlier Free Will Baptist historians have included information on doctrine, their treatments often lacked depth, focusing instead on summary overviews of doctrine without discussing historical change. J. Matthew Pinson's *A Free Will Baptist Handbook* (1998) introduced this discussion to the broader public by highlighting the historic doctrinal and theological statements of Free Will Baptists over time. Intended for clergy and laymen alike, this introductory book also provided copies of several important historic statements of faith.

Pinson's 2015 publication, *Arminian and Baptist*, delves deeper into the theological and historical tradition of Free Will Baptists, emphasizing the specific Arminianism of the denomination. In the process, he engaged the theology of Robert E. Picirilli and F. Leroy Forlines in new



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ways, as well as the history of the English General Baptists, emphasizing their importance for modern Free Will Baptists. Other emerging historians, such as Phillip T. Morgan and Jesse F. Owens, also have worked along these lines, but until now most of their work has been limited to academic papers.

Many have given discussion, formal and informal, to the future survival of our denomination. Yet historical awareness is deeply important for *any* movement's survival. Knowledge of our past clarifies our present identity and offers direction for the future. We cannot articulate our understanding of Scripture or defend against false doctrine if we don't take seriously the tradition we've received. We also need more and better histories that address the past century with fresh eyes and more refined historical models.

By fully exploring Free Will Baptist interaction with American culture, evangelical movements, fundamentalism, and the vast social and cultural changes of the past century, perhaps we will gain the wisdom to flourish in the future. **ONE**

1 For an excellent and quick overview of Free Will Baptist history, see J. Matthew Pinson's *A Free Will Baptist Handbook* (1998).

2 Davidson expanded on his earlier work again in *The Free Will Baptists in History* (2001), but his most significant contribution was already present in the earlier books.

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**About the Author:** Phillip T. Morgan is curator of the Free Will Baptist Historical Collection and History Program coordinator at Welch College. Learn more: [www.FWBHistory.com](http://www.FWBHistory.com).

# *Celebrating 200 Years of History at the Ridge Church*

BY KEN AKERS



Many changes have happened at the oldest Free Will Baptist church in New England over the last two centuries. The church, known simply as the Ridge Church, was home to the founder of the Northern Movement of Free Will Baptists in 1780, in New Durham, New Hampshire. Elder Benjamin Randall was credited with starting this movement in the home of deacon Zachariah Boodey. Randall passed away in 1808, and the current building was not constructed until 1818-1819. Though Randall never attended this church, his family and other founding families met for worship there.

The structure is the oldest standing Free Will Baptist church building that is still a Free Will Baptist church. Other buildings in both the Northern Movement and the Southern Movement (started by Paul Palmer in North Carolina in 1727), remain standing, but are no longer owned or used by Free Will Baptists.

The original building did not have a bell tower; it was added later. The original beadboard walls and ceiling were eventually covered with a metal overlay. The original sanctuary included wood stoves at the back of the auditorium, with heat resonating throughout the building from stove pipes that exited the front. This proved effective heating, with accounts that the building once reached a sweltering 90 degrees during a service!

Master's Men accepted the challenge of repairing and restoring the Ridge Church in 2007. The first project was to make temporary repairs to rotted beams on the bell tower and replace the 25-year-old roofing. Over the following four years volunteers scraped and painted outside and inside and repaired the support and foundation under the building.

While the most urgent repairs have been completed, the job is never truly finished on the 200-year-old building.

We are grateful to pastor Jim Nason and the congregation of the First FWB Church of New Durham, New Hampshire. After seeing Master's Men's desire to preserve this special piece of Free Will Baptist history and dedication to ongoing care, the church voted to deed the property to North American Ministries, making it forever a historical landmark for Free Will Baptists.

During the necessary survey to transfer ownership of the property, surveyors discovered the back of the building was a foot over the line of the neighbor's land, perhaps caused by turning the building at some point in the church's history. North American Ministries purchased 25 feet behind the church, so today, the building sits completely on land owned by the denomination.

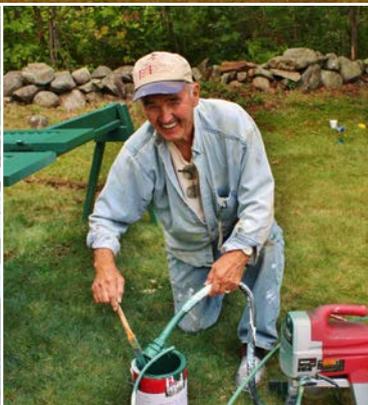
As mentioned, we have worked on this building since 2007. Over that time, we have spent over \$200,000, and volunteers have shared many hours to complete the work. Had it not been for many volunteers, the cost would have been much higher, or the work might not have been completed at all. We are planning a 200-year celebration in 2022, so please make plans to join us. More details will be forthcoming as the date nears.

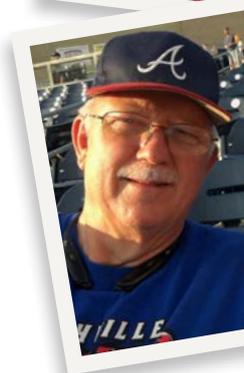
Also, we are going to need help to maintain the building. If you love Free Will Baptist history, would you consider donating to help us continue the upkeep on this important piece of Free Will Baptist history? Donations can be sent to Master's Men, PO Box 5002, Antioch, TN 37011 and earmarked *Ridge Church Preservation*. 

*The structure is the oldest standing Free Will Baptist church building that is still a Free Will Baptist church.*

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**About the Author:** Ken Akers is director of Master's Men and CFO of North American Ministries. Contact: ken@nafwb.org.





# Molded for His Purpose

BY ERIC K. THOMSEN

When Elizabeth Hodges began driving her father Ronald Creech to associational meetings when she turned 16, she had no idea those long Carolina miles were preparing her to be director of WNAC someday. She was just excited to drive while her dad snored (loudly) in the passenger's seat.

"I loved those trips," she recalls. "I remember going to one meeting in the mountains where people were shouting and waving. The preacher began jumping the pews, and when he went by, he hit me on the head with the Bible. It scared me to death! Daddy just laughed and told me people worship differently. That moment prepared me for international travel, where worship is so different and yet comes from a pure heart."

This treasured memory is but a single instance in an endless string of ways God molded Elizabeth for His purpose. And "growing up Creech" as she describes her childhood, proved to be the perfect setting to learn these important lessons.

## Life at the Creech House

Elizabeth's quiet, reserved, and happy-in-the-background mother taught her to be meticulous, compassionate, and the importance of writing personal notes and letters. "She had a remarkable memory," Elizabeth recalls. "Names, addresses, phone numbers—she could pull them all off the top of her head. I did not inherit that memory."

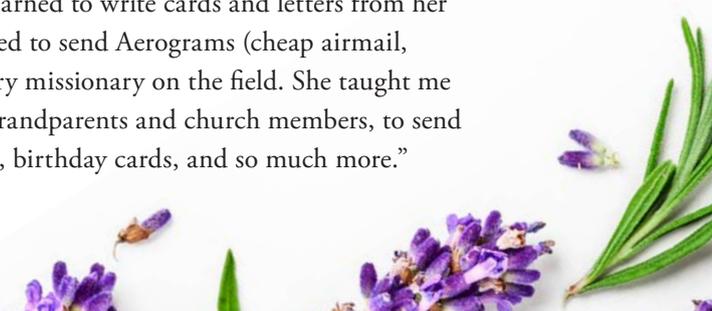
In contrast to her quiet mother, Ronald Creech was "like a bull in a china shop—outgoing and fun." He genuinely

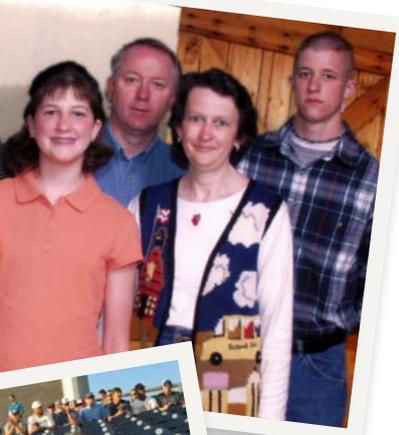
loved people, all types of people. "Daddy was known for surprising Mom with uninvited guests," Elizabeth notes with a smile. "We never knew who it would be, sometimes people he picked up on the side of the road—total strangers. He was a magnet for unusual people, some a 'few fries short of a Happy Meal.' One thought he was a lawyer and always dressed in a three-piece suit. Another wore watches all the way up her forearm. But Daddy loved and ministered to them all. And along the way, he taught me to love all people."

Her mother reinforced the importance of loving everyone, including special needs individuals, fostered by caring for Lois, Elizabeth's special needs sister, who had the brain function of an 18-month-old infant. "When Lois was with us, people always stared. Mom quietly explained to us that Lois was different, but she was just as God made her."

She recalls the agony her parents experienced when they made the excruciating decision to place Lois in a lifelong nursing care facility. "Mom told me that choice was worse than if Lois had died. But she and Dad knew it was the best thing for Lois and her long-term health." Not expected to live past age 19, Lois lived 65 happy years before her death not long before this article was published.

Elizabeth also learned to write cards and letters from her mother. "She used to send Aerograms (cheap airmail, basically) to every missionary on the field. She taught me to write to my grandparents and church members, to send thank you notes, birthday cards, and so much more."





Throughout her life, in each new role, Elizabeth has continued to put great emphasis on written cards. “Today, I even make the cards I send,” she says with a smile. “People say Millennials would rather get a text. Not true! When you take time to write a card, people know you went out of your way to let them know you care. It is a lost art that needs to be revived.”

The cards and letters from the Creech house built strong relationships with missionaries. “All the missionaries wanted to stay at our house, because Mom knew how to cook and make people feel welcome. Pop Willey used to take off his socks and show us his missing toes. Gross! I will never forget that he liked cantaloupe and vanilla ice cream for breakfast. We always loved for missionaries to visit because Mom bought ‘missionary cookies,’ peanut butter wafers and fudge stripe cookies. It was the only time we got them.”

### Business and Leadership Lessons

From her dad, Elizabeth learned the importance of church and denominational business and working with others. “Daddy was able to differentiate between an issue and a person. He would argue with Wade Jernigan at the convention until they were blue in the face. Then, they would leave business and take their families out to lunch. To this day, the Jernigan girls are some of my dearest friends. Even when people hurt him, Dad never held it against them.”

When traveling to denominational meetings, her dad intentionally found the pastor of the smallest, least known church and made a big deal of him. “He told us kids God doesn’t call everybody to a place of notoriety, but faithfulness is honored, no matter where one serves.”

Leadership did not prove easy in the Creech home, however. Elizabeth points to a difficult time in the early 1960s, when her father became a key figure in a painful denominational schism, resulting in a public trial that went all the way to the North Carolina Supreme Court. “The night before the trial, denominational leaders gathered at our house. Leroy Forlines, Robert Picirilli, Billy Melvin, L.C. Johnson, Paul Kettelman—all the big names were there. They knelt around Dad in the living room floor and prayed for hours. We kids were supposed to be in bed, but

we sat at the top of the stairs and listened, at least until we got caught.”

Elizabeth notes her parents were never quite the same after the trial.

### Starting a New Phase

Elizabeth never thought about the many lessons learned “growing up Creech” until college, when she suddenly realized being a Creech made a difference. “My professors and administration all knew my parents, and I realized I knew many denominational leaders because they had visited our home.

Today, Elizabeth realizes the weight of these lessons, both good and bad, that prepared her for leadership, and how many doors opened to her because of the influence of her parents.

The life lessons continued after she met Eddie Hodges, and she and the Swainsboro, Georgia, native quickly began “one of those Bible College romances.” The couple soon married and began ministry life together, Eddie as a pastor, Elizabeth as a teacher. Elizabeth’s deep respect for her husband of almost 45 years is obvious. She chuckles: “Eddie had no clue about what it meant to marry a Creech, but he soon learned! It only took one convention.” She describes Eddie as a man of strong faith, a “prayer warrior, content to serve smaller, lesser-known churches because those people needed a pastor, just like the big churches.”

Life as a pastor’s wife and teacher proved fulfilling, though exhausting, to Elizabeth. She settled happily into the routine of church, home, children, family, and classroom. She had no idea that through the decades, God was continuing to prepare her for another important work. The preparation suddenly became clear May 29, 2010, when the WNAC board chair called to tell her she had been selected as the nominee to become the sixth director of WNAC. Suddenly God’s lifetime mosaic of preparation began to form a beautiful picture.

## Putting It All Together

Her childhood home and personal relationships with missionaries helped her understand the need for the denomination to respect, support, and care for missionaries and their children. WNAC provided the perfect opportunity to fulfill this role.

Her mother's quiet efficiency taught her to organize and facilitate activities. The small staff in the WNAC office required all her time management, leadership, and organizational skills.

The thousands of cards and letters written throughout her life reminded her of the importance of making personal connections with women in churches across the denomination, and her years as a pastor's wife helped her understand the women she would lead.

Curriculum writing and lesson planning as a teacher prepared her for magazine deadlines and planning, and educational associations and committees taught her organizational management.

Her outgoing dad taught her to love everybody, no matter how quirky—crucial for a director, because Free Will Baptists are different in every region of the country, and even more so internationally.

While Elizabeth does not think she could have done the job earlier in life because of her roles as mother and caregiver, she reflects, "God's timing was simply perfect; I brought everything I learned through all those years of preparation into this role."

And, she is glad for the preparation, because accepting the unexpected opportunity proved a difficult choice and an even more difficult role. "When the WNAC opportunity came up, Eddie had peace about it before I did," She recalls. "He completely accepted the changes it meant for us, and my work as a pastor's wife."

Elizabeth doesn't think people understand the reality of being a denominational director. "They only see us on the road, speaking, traveling. They don't understand the pressure goes with you; you never get away. If it hadn't been for Eddie, I would have left

the job years ago. But he reminded me time and again God was not done with me yet."

## Looking Back and Moving Forward

The work at WNAC may have been difficult, but it was fruitful. During 11 years at WNAC, Elizabeth saw the ministry reach significant milestones: becoming a national department once again (after breaking away in 1939); groundbreaking collaboration between agencies; building new bridges to Free Will Baptist women; and expanding ministry for a broader international outreach; *Shine!* Conferences for teen girls; Flourish ladies' events; and, most recently, the introduction of multilingual resources. "It has been hard work to start these initiatives," she notes, "and I look forward to seeing my successor take them to the next level."

What will she miss the most? "That one's easy," she replies with a smile. "The relationships with Free Will Baptist women, national office personnel, other national directors, and churches across the denomination."

When asked to share the one thing she would say to the denomination as she reaches her final weeks in office, Elizabeth doesn't mince words: "Over the years, FWB ladies have supported missions, projects, and many other things well through WNAC, but they have not always seen the need to support the WNAC office itself. We have tackled the resulting financial challenges by streamlining the staff and operations, but unless this mindset changes, the office is in trouble. The women *must* support this ministry. Yes, we receive The Together Way funds, but no department can operate from that alone. It is my fervent prayer the next director will not fight the financial battles I have faced."

Maybe that's another lesson Elizabeth learned "growing up Creech." She puts it to you straight! 



**About the Author:** Eric K. Thomsen has been managing editor of ONE Magazine since 2005. Email: [eric@nafwb.org](mailto:eric@nafwb.org).



**ELIZABETH C.  
HODGES  
ED.S., CMP**

**HONORS**

**ASSOCIATION OF  
CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS**

Student events coordinator  
(1995-2006)

Accreditation coordinator  
(1995-2006)

Accreditation commissioner for  
the Southeast (1997- 2006)

- chairman of CHCA's steering committee
- served on three on-site visiting teams
- chaired eight on-site visiting teams

**SOUTHERN ASSOCIATION  
OF COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS**

Accreditation coordinator  
(2003-2006)

Member of ASCD (Association  
for Supervision and Curriculum  
Development)

*Empire's Who's Who: Empowering  
Executives and Professionals*  
(2005)

*Manchester's Who's Who* (2005)

*Marquis Who's Who of  
American Women* (2006)

**EDUCATION**

May 1976 • B.S. Bible and Elementary Education  
Welch College • Nashville, Tennessee

May 1980 • M.Ed. Early Childhood Education (K-4)  
Georgia Southern College • Statesboro, Georgia

December 2006 • Ed.S. Administration and Supervision  
Tennessee State University • Nashville, Tennessee

November 2013 • CMP (Certified Meeting Planer)

**EXPERIENCE**

**1976-77**

Liberty Christian School  
Durham, North Carolina  
Elementary teacher

**1977-81**

Appling County Schools • Fourth District Elementary  
Surrency, Georgia  
Elementary teacher

**1981-83**

Coffee County Schools • Satilla Elementary  
Douglas, Georgia  
Elementary teacher

**1983-90**

Stay-at-home mother of three  
Part-time interim teacher  
GED and adult reading teacher

**1990-2006**

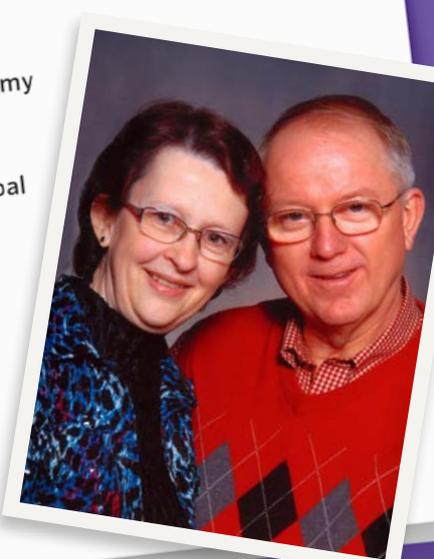
College Heights Christian Academy  
Gallatin, Tennessee  
Elementary teacher, Academic  
Coordinator, Elementary Principal

**2006-10**

Sumner County Schools  
Gallatin, Tennessee  
Elementary Teacher

**2010-21**

WNAC Director



# Video Training Now Available

BY BRAD RANSOM

For several years, NAM has provided practical training for pastors and churches, delivered in a variety of ways. NAM's leadership team travels to district associations, state meetings, and local churches as well as other special gatherings to deliver information and help that can be applied immediately in the local church context.

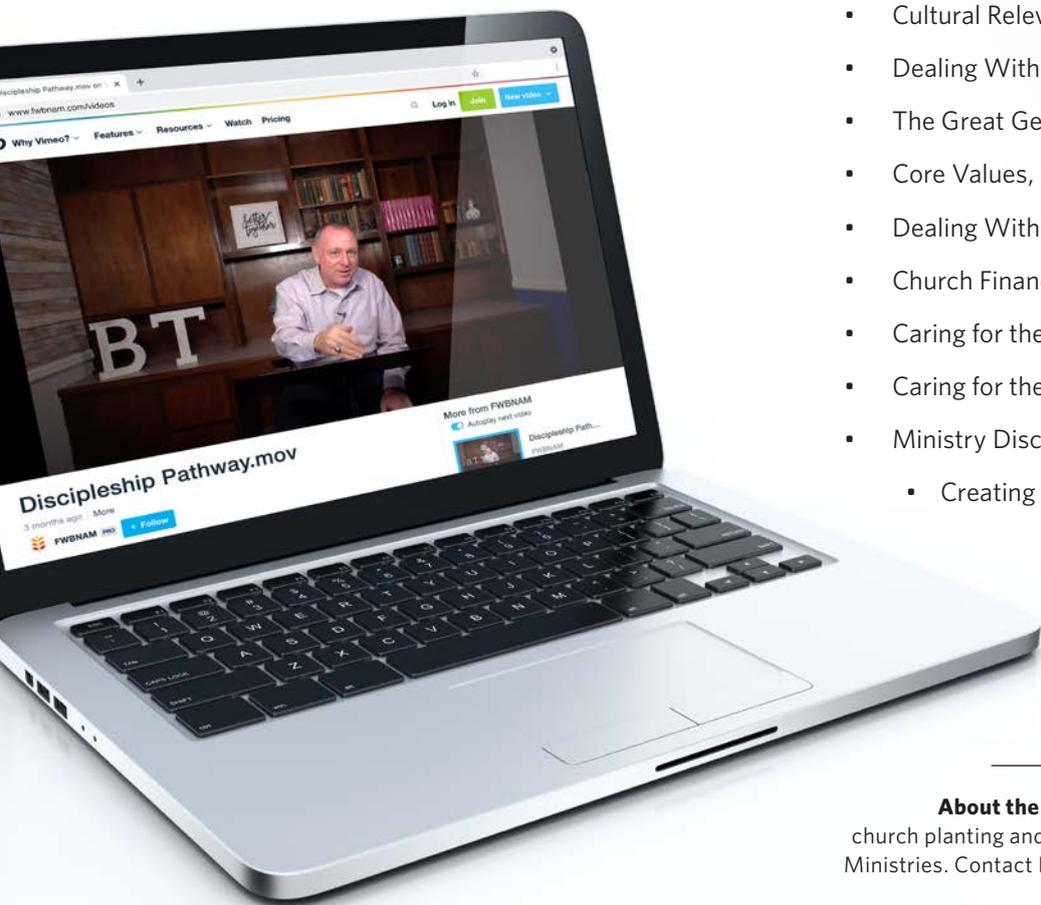
NAM also provided pastor's boot camp trainings at our office in Antioch, Tennessee, training more than 50 pastors (to date) in this event alone. We also provide seminars at the National Convention, Leadership Conference, and our own POWER Conference each spring. In total, several hundred pastors have received training from NAM through one of our events. We work continuously to provide tools to help local churches and pastors.

For over a year, NAM has been developing a new resource we are very excited to make available free of charge to all churches and pastors. The **Pastor Resource Video Series** includes 15 short, to the point videos covering a wide variety of topics applicable for churches in every stage. Whether your church is growing, in decline, or falls somewhere between, we hope you will take advantage of this free resource.

## Videos include:

- The Midas Touch: Creating Momentum in Your Church
- Developing Leaders
- Essential Systems for Your Church
- Strategic Planning
- Cultural Relevance
- Dealing With Personalities in the Church
- The Great Generational Divide
- Core Values, Mission, and Vision
- Dealing With Church Bullies
- Church Finances and Budgeting
- Caring for the Flock: Bereavement Counseling
- Caring for the Flock: Crisis Counseling
- Ministry Discouragement
  - Creating a Discipleship Pathway
  - Post Christianity: How to Minister to 21st Century Families

Please visit [www.fwbnam.com/videos](http://www.fwbnam.com/videos) to learn more and to view the videos online. 



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**About the Columnist:** Dr. Brad Ransom is director of church planting and chief training officer for North American Ministries. Contact Brad: [brad@nafwb.org](mailto:brad@nafwb.org).

# NAM Experiences Growth During a Pandemic

The recent pandemic has left its impact on ministries around the world. North American Ministries is no exception. Some church plants have delayed launching new works, going self-supporting, or getting into new facilities for months. However, we are thankful to see most of those efforts now moving forward. We pray and work with excited anticipation of how the Lord will show Himself strong and build His church in the coming months.

Consider some of the exciting things that have taken place, despite the global pandemic.

- Five new church planters were assessed and appointed.
  - **Kris Willis family** to Anchorage, AK
  - **Don Ellerd family** to Mariposa, CA
  - **Amos Dillard family** to Chula Vista, CA
  - **Jim Kilgore family** to Waco, TX
  - **Frank Webster family** to The Villages, FL
- Nearly 60 pastors successfully completed NAM's intensive two-day Pastor's Boot Camp training. Topics included growth principles, spiritual warfare, discipleship, security and safety, outreach, and evangelism, leadership, dealing with conflict, developing servant leaders, and more. This training is offered free for Free Will Baptist pastors.
- NAM launched a new video training series for pastors and churches. See the Refresh column on page 36.
- Several church plants saw significant advances:
  - Purchase and renovation of a new church building in Erie, PA
  - Renovation of church building, eight baptisms, and doubled church attendance in Waipahu, HI
  - Launch of new work and purchase of church building in Missoula, MT
  - Expansion of house churches, with 46 conversions and baptisms in Utah

- Completed renovation and launch of church in Sevierville, TN
- Groundbreaking for a new church building in Montgomery, TX
- Church buildings completed in Winchester, VA
- Land donated for a building in Wytheville, VA
- Sixteen baptisms in Gilbert, AZ
- Extensive community ministry (police chaplain, crisis pregnancy, cancer association) by Pastor Travis in Ashland, OH
- Consistent, growing, and faithful discipleship groups contributed to a strong return to in-person worship in Buffalo, NY
- The chaplaincy ministry continues to grow:
  - **LT Matthew Saunders** commissioned
  - **LT Shaun Hembree** commissioned
  - **LT Jonathan Truett** commissioned
  - **2 LT Elliott Deilus** commissioned
  - **CH (LTC) Brad Hanna** graduated from Army War College
  - **CH (MAJ) Kevin Trimble** deployed to serve in Operation Swift Response
- Masters Men expands ministry through new resources and tools:
  - New equipment for DRT; mobile command center
  - Men's Bible studies in Spanish
  - Plans for a new ministry focused on young men

I trust you will agree God is still at work building His Kingdom. These things are clear evidence of how He is accomplishing His plan. We give Him all the glory and thank Him for the privilege of being called into this vital ministry.

November 21, 2021, is Mission North America Offering Sunday. Please mark your calendar and plan to give generously. Your gifts help make all the advances described above possible. Your gifts provide resources, training, and encouragement to church planters. They make it possible for us to provide training and resources to all our pastors and churches. They help us partner with states to send church planters to needy areas to begin new churches.

Your gifts are investments in ministries that will reap eternal dividends. We ask you to pray for the various ministries in which NAM is engaged and to plan to give a generous offering on November 21. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Sam McVay is church relations officer for NAM: [sam@nafwb.org](mailto:sam@nafwb.org).

## 2021 Power Conference: A Hispanic Celebration

Attendees from 12 states, Honduras, and Mexico took part in the first Hispanic Power Conference, May 29-June 1, at The Donelson Fellowship in Nashville, Tennessee. Although the numbers were affected by COVID, over 300 Hispanic speakers still attended the conference. As I saw church planters and pastors bring their people to the conference, I thought about all the labor and tears of these great men of God and was glad they could bring their people to an event like this. Hispanic ministry in the United States is not easy.

They came to worship and rejoice over what God has accomplished in their lives. This was the first Hispanic event ever sponsored by the Free Will Baptist denomination in the States.

Conference services were great. Dr. Noe Martínez from Mexico and Dr. David Crowe preached. Dr. Martínez pastors a church in Mexico City with more than 12,000 parishioners. Dr. Crowe, director of NAM, has worked at the ministry for 25-plus years and has been in hundreds of Free Will Baptist churches. Both men brought their experience and wisdom to the pulpit.

Church planters taught a broad spectrum of seminars related to the Christian life and ministry. All presenters have built multiple mission works across the Americas. All services and seminars were translated into English and Spanish, so everyone attending could understand and participate in all activities.

The Parsons Quartet presented music for the conference, along with a music group from the Hispanic church in Lexington, Kentucky. Both groups sang songs in English



and Spanish, and attendees enjoyed these exciting times of praise and worship.

Nicole Hackett, principal of Pleasant View Christian Elementary School (TN), organized a nursery for the conference. More than 50 children brought energy, emotion, and excitement to Nashville. Nicole kept complete control and, despite their energy, taught the children about Jesus. We are thankful for everyone who volunteered to help her.

I am grateful for the success of the first Hispanic Power Conference, and I continue to anticipate how God develops the Hispanic ministry in the Free Will Baptist movement. **ONE**

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**About the Writer:** Rick Bowling is cross cultural officer for NAM. Learn more: [www.fwbname.com/cross-cultural](http://www.fwbname.com/cross-cultural).

# Chaplain Updates

The following is an update on where our Free Will Baptist military chaplains are currently serving.

**ONE**



**CH (CPT) Amir Ashoori**  
Army Reserve  
Fresno, CA



**CH (CPT) Michael Beatty**  
Fort Leonard Wood, MO



**CH (CPT) David Dodson**  
Eglin AFB, FL



**CH (MAJ) Lee Frye**  
Hunter Army Airfield,  
Savannah, GA



**CH (LTC) Brad Hanna**  
Oklahoma Army  
National Guard



**LT Hal Jones, CH USN**  
San Diego, CA



**CH (LTC) Tracy Kerr**  
Fort Stewart, GA



**LT Mark McCraney,  
CH USN**  
Norfolk, VA



**CH (MAJ) Kevin Trimble**  
Brigade Chaplain  
Fort Stewart, GA

# Is it time to give **something** back?

During this time of year when we emphasize thankfulness, recall the words of Psalm 116:12, which asks what we will "render unto the Lord" in light of the blessings He has given us. One way to give back is through a charitable gift annuity with **Free Will Baptist Foundation**. Enjoy secure fixed income for life in exchange for a future gift to ministry.

To learn more, **contact the Foundation today**, and start enjoying the blessings of both giving *and* receiving

**877-336-7575 | [fwbgifts.org](http://fwbgifts.org) | [foundation@nafwb.org](mailto:foundation@nafwb.org)**

Single Table		Joint Table	
Age	Rate	Ages	Rate
65	4.2%	65/65	3.8%
70	4.7%	70/70	4.2%
75	5.4%	75/75	4.6%
80	6.5%	80/80	5.4%
85	7.6%	85/85	6.5%
90	8.6%	90/90	8.2%





# A CHAPLAIN'S *Journey*

BY (2 LT) ELLIOTT J. DEILUS

My journey as a chaplain candidate began in 2006 when I enlisted in the U.S. Army Reserve as a chaplain's assistant at age 17. In 2008, at only 19, I deployed to Iraq and served alongside chaplains and other members of the Unit Ministry Team. Throughout the deployment, my chaplain and I visited units outside the wire (off the secure base) to provide religious support.

Over the years, I served under many different chaplains and learned from them in various ways. Some were true men of God I desired to emulate. Others seemed to struggle with their role as chaplains and spiritual leaders. My main takeaway from those years, however, was that I could serve God in the chaplain role, if it was His calling for me. After completing nine years in the Army Reserve, I concluded my contract, was honorably discharged, and turned my focus to a career in law enforcement.

After my wife and I married, we both felt a strong conviction from the Lord that He wanted more from us. We attended church faithfully, had Bible study together, paid tithes, and gave to missions. But overall, we lived the typical American lifestyle with a nice home, plenty of money, and eating out whenever we wanted.

During our daily Bible studies, my wife and I read passages of Scripture and wrote what we learned from those passages in our journals. Then we shared with each other and discussed what God had placed on our hearts. God repeatedly put missions and ministry on our hearts, and we began to seek ways to serve Him in that capacity.

In 2016, God led us to Good News FWB Church in Chesterfield, Virginia, where Pastor Glen Johnson trained

and molded me to be a better servant of Christ. He provided multiple opportunities for me to preach and encouraged me to participate in outreach. He also gave me the position of missions director, where I acted as a liaison between our church and missionaries. In 2019, I left the police force, and my wife and I moved to Ecuador to serve as missionary teachers in an international Christian school. During this time, God continued to train me to serve Him as I taught middle school and high school Bible classes to international students. While in Ecuador, God placed a U.S. Air Force officer in our path. That interaction once again stirred my heart towards the U.S. Army.

God blessed us with two children while in Ecuador. He took the first home with Him in March 2020 and allowed us to keep our second. In the early stages of the pregnancy, my wife and I began praying about how we would provide for this special gift from God. We had prayed for children for six years, and desired my wife stay home



Chaplain Candidate  
Elliott Deilus

to raise our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Once again, God placed the U.S. Army on my heart, and my wife and I prayed earnestly about the possibility of the chaplaincy. After much prayer, research, and contacting chaplains, we reached a peace that this was God's direction.

We returned to the States in early 2021 due to medical complications with my wife's pregnancy, and God allowed me to use that time to complete the requirements necessary to become a chaplain candidate. I was ordained while

on furlough in December 2020 and was administered the oath of office at Good News FWB Church by a close friend, a retired colonel in the U.S. Army, February 28, 2021. I am currently assigned to a military intelligence unit as a second lieutenant where I am being supervised by a God-fearing chaplain who loves God and soldiers.

My journey is not over, but today, I have a clear mission before me. I look forward to seeing where God continues to take me on this chaplain's journey. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** Elliott J. Deilus (2 LT) is the newest member of the Free Will Baptist chaplains sponsored by North American Ministries. Learn more: [www.fwbnam.com/chaplaincy](http://www.fwbnam.com/chaplaincy).

# The Chaplain's Call

★★★ BY (COL-RET) TERRY AUSTIN ★★★

Free Will Baptists have always strived to honor Christ and serve our fellow man. We have served our communities by providing compassion and comfort during times of crisis and personal pain. We have planted churches throughout the United States and around the world to uplift Christ. We have gone to difficult places and placed ourselves in harm's way to remind our world of God's unending love and persistent presence.

On May 7, Free Will Baptists once again demonstrated our commitment to this country and our fellow man by witnessing the commissioning ceremony of Second Lieutenant Jonathan Truett as an officer in the U.S. Army, and



Chaplain Candidate Jonathan Truett

as a chaplain candidate. Jonathan is endorsed by Dr. H. David Crowe, director of North American Ministries to serve as an Army chaplain. He will represent Christ and

Free Will Baptists both home and abroad. He has taken an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, fulfilling his calling to minister to our men and women in uniform.

Free Will Baptists currently have four ministers serving as chaplain candidates. This is exciting news for us, with many more opportunities available to serve as a military chaplain in the armed forces of the United States.

Opportunities to serve as a chaplain are numerous. Beyond the military chaplaincy, police, fire, hospital, Civil Air Patrol, and various other chaplain positions are available. Let me encourage you to broaden your ministry within your local community by serving as a chaplain.

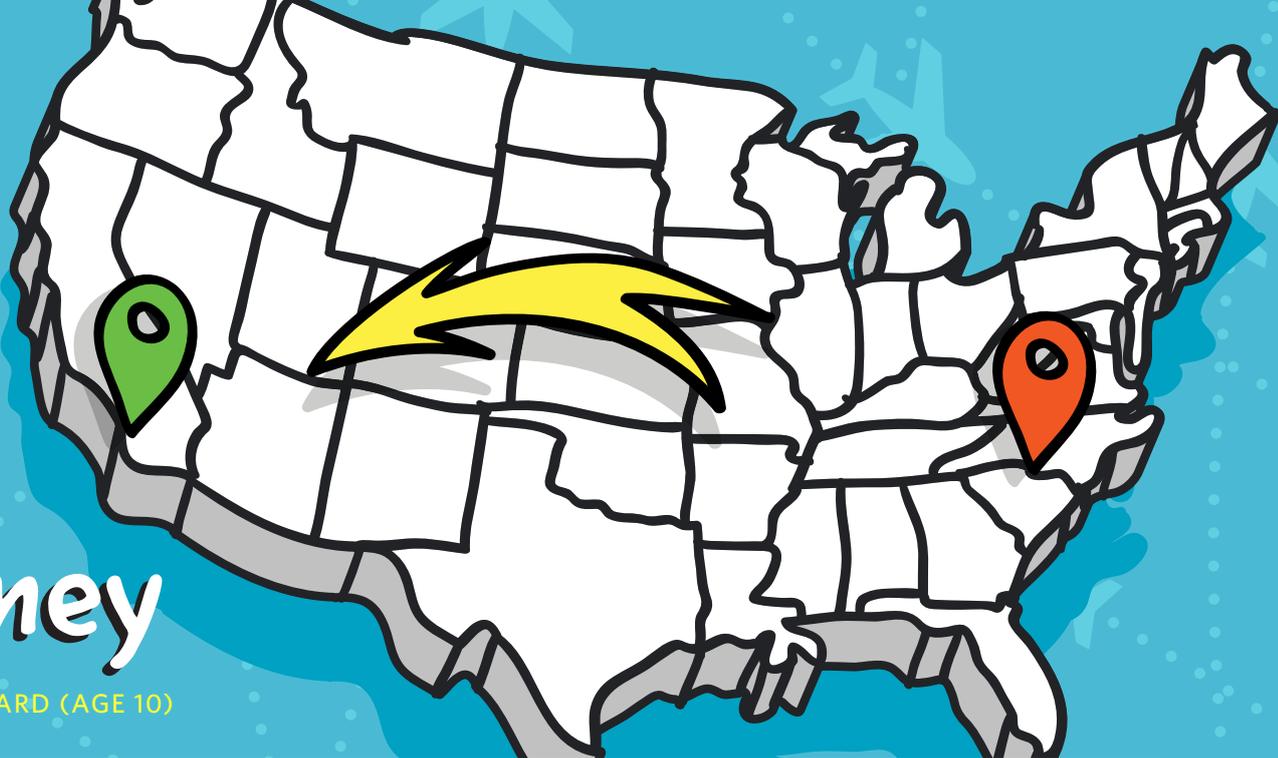
If I can help you fulfill your calling as a chaplain in any capacity, please contact me. It would be my pleasure to help you fulfill God's calling for your life. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** (COL-Ret) Terry W. Austin is chaplain support officer for North American Ministries. Learn more: [www.fwbnam.com/chaplaincy](http://www.fwbnam.com/chaplaincy).

# My Journey

BY ELLIE MAE DILLARD (AGE 10)



My journey began December 4, 2015, in Charlotte, North Carolina. I awoke to a cold, misty morning with a lump in my throat. I knew today was *the day*. I quickly changed into travel clothes and padded down the stairs to see my family gathered in the small living room. I put on a brave face for my little sister, even though I wanted to join the rest of our family's tears. Today was the day our journey began. The journey to California. The journey into church planting.

Saying goodbye was bittersweet. We knew leaving our family would be hard because everyone lived so close together. But on the sweet side, we knew this was the right decision. I am a details girl. I enjoy having plans, but in this instance, there were no details. I had no idea what Irvine was like. I could barely spell "Irvine." As I walked onto the plane, clutching my sister's hand, half of me was filled with fear; the other half of me was filled with excitement.

As soon as I arrived, I noticed people from all over the world—different ethnicities, different colors, and different languages. It wasn't long before I had friends from all over the world, too: Philippines, China, Romania, Korea, Japan, and Taiwan. I thought my PB&Js were fancy until I saw their lunches!

During this time, I also saw a miracle happen. I got the joy of experiencing a church start from nothing. Over time, our baby church grew, and grew, and grew! But then the global pandemic happened. It affected our church life.

We went virtual and had to cancel all our events. It felt like nothing would ever be the same again. But I learned the church is not a building: it's the people. I saw Grace City celebrate its fourth birthday with a lot of people who had learned the same thing. We were not in a building. (Actually, we were in a field.) But none of that could stop God!

God was not finished. Last fall, our family announced we were launching out of Grace City to start a new work in the San Diego area. I was especially excited because I had matured spiritually since our journey started. I was now a disciple of Jesus, so I had a new perspective on the work being done. Now, I see how we can help others have strength to move across the country to start churches, just like we did. We can open our doors to people far from God and far from home.

Back in September, the new church in Chula Vista felt like a dream. But now, it is a reality. We are here. We are excited! If I could tell you one thing it is this: never say no out of fear. Instead, say yes and trust God will work out the details for your journey. **ONE**



Ellie Mae Dillard

**About the Author:** Ellie Mae Dillard and her family (parents Amos and Melissa and siblings Addison and Aiden) are church planters in Chula Vista, California, where they are starting City Lights Church. Learn more: [www.fwbnam.com/dillard](http://www.fwbnam.com/dillard).

# A Momentous Moment

BY BARRY RAPER

ISAIAH 6:1-8

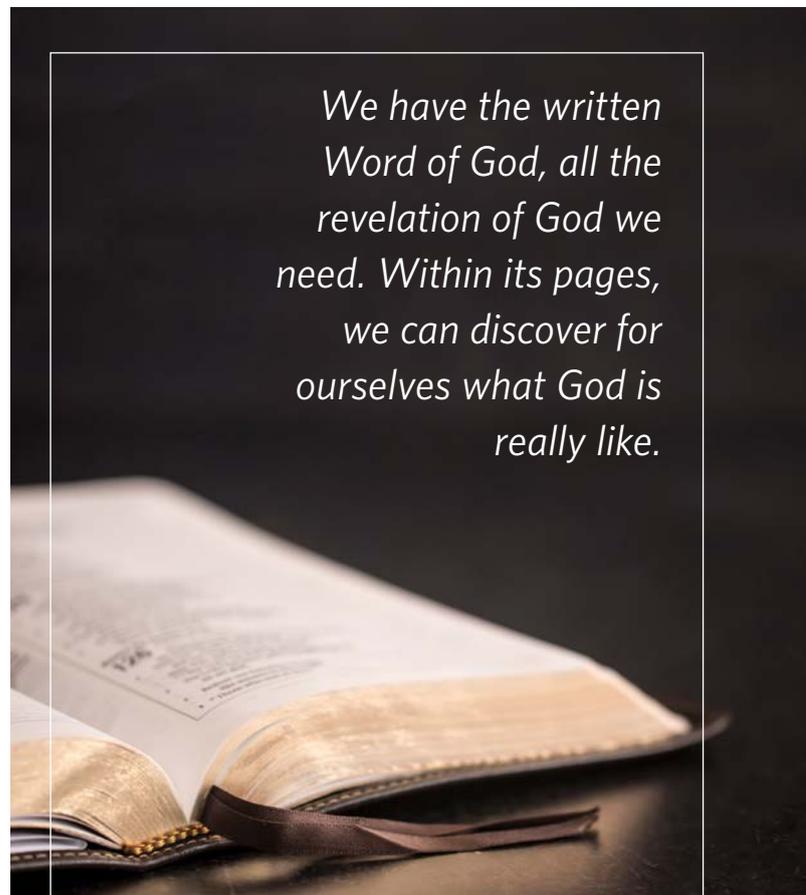
As the years (or magazine issues) fly by, with all their changes and challenges, it is encouraging to know we hold to the unchanging hand of God. As the old song says:

*Time is filled with swift transition,  
Naught of earth unmoved can stand,  
Build your hopes on things eternal,  
Hold to God's unchanging hand.*

We find one of these momentous moments in Isaiah 6. The chapter simply begins with the statement, "In the year King Uzziah died, I saw the LORD." While this timestamp carries little significance for us, it held great consequence for Isaiah and the nation of Israel. King Uzziah came to power at the tender age of 16, when the people made him king. From 2 Chronicles, we know he ruled well, following in the godly footsteps of his father Amaziah. As Uzziah sought the Lord, God made him prosper. He built cities, fortified the army and military power, and with each new accomplishment, his fame spread. Sadly, at the end of Uzziah's life, we encounter a major shift in his story. After disobeying God's command, he was crippled by leprosy and died. Sadly, he did not finish well.

I always find it striking Uzziah reigned over 50 years. It is hard for Americans to grasp a half-century reign in a political system that elects political leaders every few years. With a new ruler for the first time in 50 years, we can be sure Israel was experiencing a major time of transition. A milestone. A turning of the tides. Yet even in this time of change, Isaiah caught a vision of Someone who doesn't change. And, as a result, his entire life changed. While none of us are prophets, this passage helps us navigate our own milestone moments, often followed by great change.

**When confronted by change, behold the revelation of God.** In sharp contrast with Uzziah, who had passed off the scene, Isaiah had a vision of the LORD, seated on a throne. God's unchallenged and unchanged position is one



*We have the written  
Word of God, all the  
revelation of God we  
need. Within its pages,  
we can discover for  
ourselves what God is  
really like.*

of absolute power and authority—no election, no passing the gavel, no coronation. He is seated on His eternal throne above all earthly thrones and powers.

The angelic beings in Isaiah's vision further illuminate the nature of God. These beings, called *seraphim*, have six wings—two covering their faces because of the unapproachable light of God's glory, two covering their feet as an expression of humility, and two flying to do the bidding of God. We probably have been conditioned in our thinking about angels from television shows like *Touched by an Angel*, where angels are beautiful, funny, even bumbling at times. When people encountered angels in Scripture, they usually experienced so much glory and splendor they

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## INTERSECT

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were terrified or tempted to worship. In Isaiah's vision, these majestic, terrifying, angelic beings bowed in awe and wonder before the overwhelming majesty of God. They cried continually "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory."

When we express superlatives we say, for example, *fast*, *faster*, and *fastest*. Or *good*, *better*, and *best*. With each word, we use a different word for increasing emphasis. In Hebrew, sometimes emphasis is based on repetition. So, the threefold emphasis from the angels is the way of "underlining in bold," saying in the strongest way possible that God is holy, utterly righteous, and perfect in all His attributes.

How can we behold the revelation of God today? Read the Bible. We no longer need a vision like Isaiah. We have the written Word of God, all the revelation of God we need. Within its pages, we can discover for ourselves what God is really like.

**When confronted by change, experience the redemption of God.** In response to the revelation of God, Isaiah had a breakthrough moment. This breakthrough came because he gained an accurate view of God, and as a result, he began to see an accurate picture of himself. The blazing light and glory of God revealed Isaiah's own darkness, and he immediately became deeply aware of his own sinfulness and guilt. He reacted with a cry of agony: "Woe is me!"

As the old saying goes, "You have to get people lost before they can be saved." In other words, a person must become aware of his or her own sinfulness and condition apart from God. And this awareness brings a sense of being undone and helpless without the grace of God.

Isaiah further confessed he was a man of unclean lips and lived among a people of unclean lips. He had a personal problem with sin, along with everyone else around him. Verses 6 and 7 describe Isaiah's cleansing when one of the seraphim touched his lips with a burning coal, cleansing his sin.

Guilt can only be removed through atonement. And the ultimate atonement for guilt—not just for Isaiah but for all mankind—was provided by Jesus at Calvary. Isaiah him-

self later prophesied regarding the suffering servant who would "bear the sins of many." He described the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The old gospel song describes it this way:

*What can wash away my sins?  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
Oh, precious is the flow  
That makes me white as snow;  
No other fount I know,  
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.*

### **When confronted by change, join the mission of God.**

We certainly don't have the same commission as Isaiah. He was a prophet, and you and I don't receive the call to be prophets in the strict sense of the word. But his calling is relevant, for the moment we receive Christ and our hearts are washed clean, just like Isaiah we receive a commission. The Great Commission to "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you."

This is our mission, and it is the mission of God. How astonishing that He invites us to join Him in His work! The Apostle Paul described us as *co-laborers*. We work with other Christians but also with God. He is always working in the world, and He invites us to join Him.

However, we must be willing to embrace the mission. Isaiah heard the voice of God in the question, "Who will go for us?" And he immediately volunteered for service. "Here am I; send me."

Even as we mark this important milestone for *ONE Magazine*, we must remember it is only a moment. Life continues, and with it comes change and transition, sometimes good, sometimes difficult. **ONE**

*We work with other Christians but also with God. He is always working in the world, and He invites us to join Him.*

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**About the Columnist:** Barry Raper pastors Bethel FWB Church near Ashland City, TN. He is associate dean of Welch Divinity School.

THREE  
FOR  
30

# GOING DEEPER

A GAME PLAN FOR GROWTH

BY EDDIE MOODY

*Our churches need to grow.*

*We need to disciple our children.*

*I want to give my all to the Lord.*

These thoughts frequently run through our minds, but unless we focus upon what we can specifically do to address them, we will never accomplish what we would like. Coaches do not just say, “We want to win more games.” They talk about and focus upon specifics to accomplish team goals. We must block out more, take wiser shots, and so forth.

Three for 30 works much the same way. Last year, the Free Will Baptist denomination developed the 3 for 30 plan which involves reaching, training, and giving our resources back to the Lord. If we reach, train, and give of our resources, our churches and ministries are more likely to grow.

It is easy to get distracted in our busy world, but a church focused upon reaching its community will likely see less backbiting and complaining and more growth. If we are actively engaged in discipling and equipping others, we should see a healthier church. And, if we all identify and develop our resources, we should be more effective.

In other words, if we go through life thinking about who we are reaching and training and giving, we are more likely to stay on task as Christ’s disciples.

If you focus on these three goals this fall (and throughout the decade), you will not be alone. And the Executive Office is working hard to provide resources to help, including the following:

- In August, the Executive Office provided resources to help churches and associations study their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.
- In September, resources focused on reaching specific groups, including college students, those struggling with same-sex attraction, and prisoners, among others.
- In October, we are considering ways to train and disciple people more effectively.
- In November, we will identify the resources we have and how we can use them in the Lord’s work.

Working toward goals together has great value, so get in the game.

Let us hear from you. Send us your updates at [questions@nafwb.org](mailto:questions@nafwb.org) and share what you and your churches and ministries are doing to reach, train, and give. We will share with others, and it will be a way to demonstrate how we truly are better together. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** Eddie Moody has been executive secretary of the National Association since 2019.

REACH  
TRAIN  
GIVE



# Make *the* Right Choice

THE COST OF A COLLEGE EDUCATION IS MORE THAN DOLLARS AND CENTS

BY RUSTY CAMPBELL

*“Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy is understanding”  
(Proverbs 9:9-10).*

## Perils of a Secular Education

College students are at a critical point in their lives. It is a time when they develop an identity, formulate worldviews, and prepare for independence. Although the decision of where to attend college will have a significant impact on students and families for the rest of their lives, many fail to consider Christian higher education as a viable option.

Dr. Steven J. Henderson, president of Christian Consulting for Colleges and Ministries, wrote an article in *Christianity Today* about why parents and students should choose a Christian college. The most revealing statistic from the study was that 52% of incoming freshmen who identify themselves as born-again and attend a public university no longer identify themselves as born-again four years later. Freshmen who attend private secular colleges have an even greater rejection rate at 63%.

Many Christian parents might contend their child would fall into the 48% who did not reject their faith after four years. After all, they had 18 years to train and prepare them for what they might face at the university.

However, Howard Kurtz of *The Washington Post* reported a study that concluded 72% of those teaching at American universities and colleges are self-described liberals: “The liberal label that a majority of the faculty members attached to themselves is reflected in a variety of issues. The professors and instructors surveyed are, strongly or somewhat, in favor of abortion rights (84%); believe homosexuality is acceptable (67%); and want more environmental protection ‘even if it raises prices or costs jobs’ (88%).”

## Alternative to a Secular Education

The mission of Welch College is *to educate leaders to serve Christ, His Church, and His world through biblical thought and life*. Families of prospective students sometimes raise objections as to why their student cannot attend Welch. Here are four false notions that frequently arise.

### Objection #1: Attending Welch is too expensive.

The subtitle to Dr. Henderson’s article asks: *Is a Lower Price Worth the Cost?* The impetus for his research was the downward spiral of his own freshman daughter who

went to a public institution on a scholarship. He contends the cost of the pain and suffering his family endured far exceeded the monetary savings of attending the public institution.

That's why Welch is committed to helping students pay for education and graduate with a minimum of debt. The good news is that 90% of the student population currently receives some type of financial aid. Substantial resources are available in the form of scholarships and federal aid and are within the reach of almost every Welch student. Semester by semester, hundreds of Welch students find ways to finance their education. You can be one of that number, and the college can help.

### **Objection #2 : Welch doesn't have my major, so I must go somewhere else.**

While it is true many Christian colleges offer only a handful of degrees, according to a 2017 survey from the U.S. Department of Education, more than 30% of college students change their majors at least once before graduation, and 10% change majors three times or more (*Data-point*, December 2017). This means a student can obtain a solid biblical foundation by attending a Christian college his first two years. Dr. Henderson's research shows the first year of college is the most critical for establishing a course for religious commitment while in college.

Welch College is aware of the need for Christian laity in a variety of fields in which we do not offer degrees. However, we also have many associate degrees that can be obtained in two years. With regional and national accreditation, these degrees can transfer to virtually any college to be applied toward a bachelor's degree in the student's field of choice.

### **Objection #3 : Welch is only for preachers and missionaries.**

Welch offers 40-plus programs of study. These programs include not only pastoral ministry, youth ministry, missions, and teacher education; they also include sports management, psychology, business, English, science, music, pre-law, pre-nursing, and others.

One of the benefits of a Welch education is all graduates are required to take a strong core of Bible classes. Welch believes this is a key component in fulfilling the mission of educating leaders to serve Christ and His Church.

### **Objection #4 : I won't be able to do anything with a degree from Welch.**

Welch is regionally accredited by the Commission on Colleges of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACSOC). The commission also accredits the best private and public institutions, including flagship state universities, throughout the southeast region.

Welch also maintains its longstanding accreditation with the Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE), which is approved by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA). The teacher education program is approved by the Tennessee State Department of Education to offer degrees leading to teacher education licensure in grades Pre K-12.

Many graduates transition easily into graduate school after obtaining a bachelor's degree. Additionally, the teacher education program enjoys a 100% placement rate for graduates, and approximately 75% of business graduates already have job placement on graduation day.

### **You Always Have a Choice**

While the importance of a Christian education is significant for today's culture, it is not a new phenomenon. Daniel and his peers faced the same challenges 2,500 years ago when the Babylonians forced their culture on the captive Hebrew teenagers (Daniel 1). As the author of the Proverb said, "The knowledge of the holy is understanding."

Choosing Christian higher education provides young people with the biblical foundation necessary to navigate the postmodern culture of today. Like Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, may our students be found ten times better in all matters of wisdom and understanding.

This brings us back to Dr. Henderson's question: *Is the lower price of a secular education worth the cost?* Remember you *can choose* the Christian education alternative at Welch. The college is ready to help you make that option a reality.

For more information, visit [www.welch.edu](http://www.welch.edu). To request information about attending Welch, or to learn more about financial aid, visit [www.welch.edu/admissions](http://www.welch.edu/admissions). **ONE**

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**About the Author:** Rusty Campbell is administrator of Pleasant View Christian School in Pleasant View, Tennessee.

# Parrish Named Associate Vice President for Institutional Advancement



Todd Parrish

Todd Parrish has been tapped to serve as associate vice president for institutional advancement at Welch College. In this role, he will continue his work in major gifts acquisition and church relations but also work alongside David Williford, vice president for institutional advancement, in the overall administration of

fundraising and external relations.

Before assuming his current role in January 2018, Parrish pastored First FWB Church, Washington, North Carolina. A North Carolina native who ministered in North and South Carolina for 26 years, Parrish has served in various denominational roles, including assistant moderator of the North Carolina State Association and vice president of the Welch College Alumni Association.

“This is a great move for the college,” Williford said. “Todd is an invaluable member of the Institutional Advancement team. His efforts have resulted in remarkable success in fundraising and public relations. He loves Welch College and her mission, and he gives himself untiringly to advance Christian higher education among Free Will Baptists.”

A 1989 Welch graduate, Parrish obtained the M.A. in Mental Health Counseling from Webster University in 2010 and the M.A. in Theology and Ministry from Welch in 2018. He is nearing the completion of his doctorate in educational ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and is writing a doctoral thesis on the advancement function of Welch College.

Welch President Matt Pinson said, “I’m excited to have Todd Parrish in this new role to assume more leadership for ‘friend-raising’ and fundraising at Welch. When he came to the college, I knew he would succeed in these

roles, and he has shown himself to be stellar at both. His love for Welch runs deep, and he’s known for his strong work ethic and can-do spirit. It’s a joy to see him taking a more expansive leadership role in Advancement.”

Parrish and his wife, Merinda, Welch’s clinical coordinator for teacher education, have two married daughters, Emily Vickery (Zach) and Ellen Stox (Kevin), both Welch graduates, and two grandchildren, Lucy and Jack. **ONE**

## Owens Hired as Divinity School Faculty Member

Dr. Jesse F. Owens recently was hired as a full-time faculty member in the newly formed Welch Divinity School, according to Provost Matthew McAfee.

A 2010 Welch pastoral ministry graduate, Owens received the M.Div. (2013) and Ph.D. (2021) degrees from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Since 2016, Owens has worked in the college’s facilities department managing lawncare operations while also serving as an adjunct instructor in the areas of theology and history.

He has led church planting efforts at Immanuel FWB Church in Gallatin, which he will continue to pastor on a part-time basis. Prior to arriving at Welch, Owens pastored First FWB Church in Louisville, Kentucky, from 2014 to 2016.

“Dr. Owens comes to this role from a long line of Free Will Baptist ministers,” McAfee said. “His father, Frank Owens, currently pastors Sylvan Park FWB Church in Nashville, Tennessee, and his grandfather, Guy Owens, pastored numerous churches over decades of ministry among Free Will Baptists.”



Dr. Jesse Owens

“Dr. Owens has demonstrated success in the classroom for the last five years,” McAfee continued. “He has established an excellent reputation among faculty peers and students. His academic credentials are what we need as we launch the new M.Div. program. I believe he has promise as a scholar who

will serve our denomination well and contribute to the Reformed Arminian cause.”

Owens begins faculty responsibilities as assistant professor of historical and systematic theology. His primary focus will be theology courses in the newly formed M.Div. degree, as well as undergraduate courses as needed. As

part of his faculty responsibility, he will serve as acting director of the Christian Service program, a role that appropriately overlaps with his ministry experience.

President Matt Pinson notes, “It’s unusual to find a faculty member who combines pastoral and church planting experience, high marks from students in classroom teaching, hands-on experience, a strong work ethic, and great promise as a publishing scholar in one person. Jesse fits this profile to a tee, and we’re delighted to see him transition to the full-time faculty of Welch Divinity School.”

Owens and his wife Tiffany have two young children, Gavin and Carter.

For more information about the residential M.Div. degree or the online M.A. degree in Theology and Ministry, contact Dr. Martin Sheldon ([divinity@welch.edu](mailto:divinity@welch.edu)).

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## Memorial Service Honors Franklin Leroy Forlines



F. Leroy Forlines (1926-2020) at the 2019 Welch College Commencement

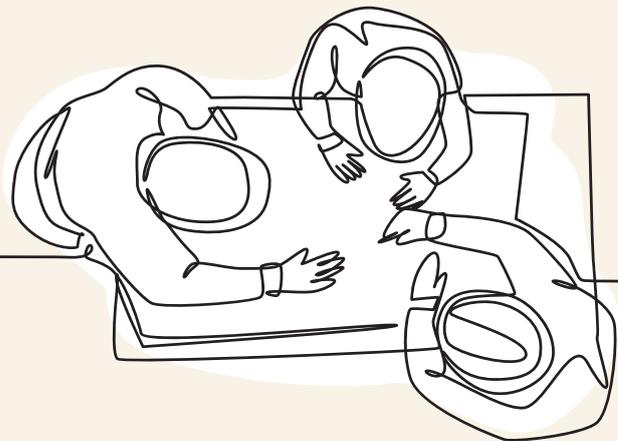
On Saturday, August 7, more than 100 people gathered in Celorio Auditorium to celebrate the life and legacy of F. Leroy Forlines, who died December 15, 2020. Born on a tobacco farm in North Carolina, Forlines went on to teach at Welch for more than a half-century, influencing generations of students for the Lord and for truth.

Family and friends honored Forlines by singing his favorite hymns and reciting his favorite

passages of Scripture. At intervals throughout the service, a dozen people made remarks in memoriam, including family, friends, colleagues, and former students. They shared musings and stories that evoked tears, laughter, and sober reflection regarding this man of God, man of honor, and man of integrity. Near the end of the service, a Forlines granddaughter sang a hauntingly beautiful rendition of the folk song, “Wayfaring Stranger.”

“This two-hour-plus service was a fitting exercise of obedience to God’s commandment to honor our fathers and mothers,” noted Matthew Bracey, theology professor and vice provost for academic administration. “We remain ever grateful for this Free Will Baptist father of the faith.” ONE

**COVER PHOTO CREDIT:** Rebekah Talbot is founder and owner of Rebekah Talbot Photography. She holds a BME from Welch College. She has photographed events from Palm Springs, California to Washington D. C. and has been published in publications including *Southern Bride Magazine* and *The White Wren*. Originally from Tuscaloosa, Alabama, she lives with her husband and three sons in Gallatin, Tennessee. [www.RebekahTalbot.com](http://www.RebekahTalbot.com)



# ON TABLE TALK

## A CONVERSATION WITH DAVID BROWN

BY BILL AND BRENDA EVANS

Tables are important to David Brown, director of Free Will Baptist Foundation. Important for eating, as for all of us, but more important for talking. Call it “table talk” if you will, a meeting of minds and lives around a table, with or without food. It is an old art David believes in and practices often. In fact, our latest conversation with David began around a table. This time with food—the swimming kind: catfish (David), salmon (Bill), shrimp (Brenda).

As we enjoyed our meal, David talked about “reaching across the table,” which he meant both literally and metaphorically. Literal face-to-face conversations across the table, but also symbolic words and actions of alliance and unity within our denomination among both leaders and congregants.

This solidarity of purpose and service is at the heart of David’s goals for the Foundation. “We exist only to perform service to and for our people and our agencies, national, regional, and local,” David said. The Foundation is about serving, not power-mongering. It aids and assists IM, NAM, Welch College, Randall House, Board of Retirement, WNAC, Master’s Men, state and regional FWB organizations, churches, and individuals. Its sole purpose is to do financial good to and for those winning the lost, discipling the saved, exercising humanitarian and educational services, or otherwise building the Lord’s work on earth.

Between bites of savory swimmers, David talked about his long-ago call to ministry. “I was saved at 11, and by the time I went to Welch College, I knew God was calling me to something, but for more than ten years I lived in confusion about what that calling meant, and what I was supposed to do.”

When he and Temisia Baker married in 1984, David soon discovered he had married an encourager. “She gave me purpose and direction,” he said. “Still, my 35th birthday was the worst birthday of my life.”

He had married a good woman, done graduate work, passed the CPA exam on the first try, worked as an auditor for the state of Tennessee, was temporarily employed at International Missions, yet had no permanent job and no children. Most troubling, David’s calling still hung over him, unfulfilled, as far as he could tell. He recalls, “At 35, I figured my life was half over, with no children to mourn me if I died at 70, and no work that fit my calling. Then everything changed. A few weeks later, I had a job at the Foundation, and we learned our son Reese was on his way.”

At first, working for our denomination was baffling for David. “Earlier, I thought I didn’t want to work for the denomination. I wanted to be somewhere I could be ‘salt and light’ for the unsaved,” David said. Yet during those confusing days and his temporary work at IM, his curiosity was piqued about the ministry of the Foundation and Board of Retirement. He noted the departments were doing fascinating financial things for the denomination. Herman Hersey had a conversation with David then sent him to Ray Lewis for an interview, and David was hired. “It was the first time in my life I was hired without having applied for the job,” David recalls. Fifteen years later (2007), David became the director of FWB Foundation.

After lingering over lunch and the good table talk at the restaurant, we headed back to David’s corner office on the second floor of the National Office Building. David’s low-slung cherry coffee table in front of the office sofa had

a lift-top he raised to regular table height. More table talk! David shared further about his calling to the Foundation.

“When I was hired as accountant in 1992, the Foundation had about \$900,000 in assets. Twenty-nine years later, we’ve passed the \$100 million mark. The Foundation was incorporated in 1980, with a little above zero funds. Now we’re at \$100 million. No question this is a God-thing!”

“From zero to \$100 million,” Bill marvels. By the way, Bill also served as director of the Foundation. David followed him into the position.

David credits the growth to the Lord, not to himself. “Sometimes, I’m too analytic and don’t allow room for the miraculous. But no question, this growth is a God-thing. I followed Herman Hersey and you, Bill, as director. You all got the ball rolling; I just had to keep it rolling. I’ve always had problems with self-confidence. But a good way to motivate me is to tell me I can’t do a thing. If I agree, then okay. But if I don’t agree, I’ll die trying to prove you wrong. I figured I could keep the ball rolling, so I worked at it.”

The fact is, David did far more than keep the ball rolling. When a consultant suggested he should raise both his and the Foundation’s profile, David began the “Brown

on Green” column in *ONE Magazine* to get more information to our people on the services the Foundation offers. Since 2009, David has written 75-plus columns of advice, information, insights, scriptural teaching, and personal experiences about financial subjects. Through more than 40,000 words, he has reminded Christian readers that money matters. And since money matters, we Christians should do something about it.

“Market performance has helped our growth, too, of course, but we’ve also added services,” David adds. Under his leadership, the Foundation has enhanced promotion through [www.fwbgifts.org](http://www.fwbgifts.org), printed material, and personal meetings.

They partner with Cornerstone Estate Planning to help people make advance plans for their estate, a needed and growing service to our people.

Other Foundation services include endowments and charitable-giving agreements (such as gift annuities and unitrusts that generate income for the donor and benefit a ministry at the donor’s death). Foundation grants, begun in 2016, continue to grow. In 2021, the Foundation sent out \$500,000 in grants to Free Will Baptist ministries, a total of \$2.6 million over the last five years.

David considers himself a problem-solver. “If a problem comes up, I try to figure out how to fix it.” Financially undergirding our FWB ministries is just such a problem. “If I gave a ‘stump speech,’ I’d remind people of the denomination’s potential. Let’s say we have 60,000 families. If every family left a tithe of their estate to denominational work, think what that would do for our ministries. People are not going to give to any organization they don’t know and trust. But across a table or at a meal, they get to know me and what the Foundation does for our denomination.”

That’s the main reason David likes table talk.

In July 2015, at the National Convention in Grand Rapids, David offered a ringing challenge to push the denomination forward. He recounted Paul’s observation in 1 Corinthians 16:9 that we have a great and wide door opened to us, an effectual door. And though our vicious adversary works to hinder us, we must not fear. The door is there. It is open, and God is our help. Then David quoted Aragorn’s reverberant battle speech before the Black Gate in the cinematic rendering of Tolkien’s *The Return of the King*:

*Hold your ground! Hold your ground! I see in your eyes the same fear that would take the heart of me. A day may come when the courage of men fails, when we forsake our friends and break all bonds of fellowship. But it is not this day. It is not this day. This day we fight! I bid you stand. Stand!*

Six years later, David still believes today is not the day to lose courage, break bonds of fellowship, or fail to stand. Instead, today we must reach across the table and strengthen our bonds of fellowship and purpose. To David, that’s what the Foundation does. It helps us rise from the table, stand, and walk through the effectual, open doors of ministry. **ONE**

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**About the Author:** Bill and Brenda Evans live in Ashland, Kentucky. You may contact them at [beejayevans@windstream.net](mailto:beejayevans@windstream.net).

*People are not going to give to any organization they don't know and trust. But across a table or at a meal, they get to know me and what the Foundation does for our denomination.*



# The Empty Church

BY KRISTI JOHNSON

*Sitting in the middle of Alpedrete is an empty church. Just one year ago, these seats were filled with people. We knew back then a virus was raging in faraway parts of the world. But we had no idea, within days, the virus would make its way to Spain and would change the course of history forever.*

On March 8, 2020, we gathered together for worship as normal. We sang. We prayed. We took communion. Several guests visited that day. If only we'd valued those moments for the luxury they were. That was the last time we have all been together in our building.

When the Alpedrete church was founded, the congregation chose to name the church "Roca Eterna" (translated literally, The Eternal Rock). The name comes from the town's granite quarries that have produced rock for several famous monuments in our area, including the Royal Palace in Madrid. It is a perfect name for the first gospel-preaching church in the history of the town.

The Eternal Rock Church has truly lived up to its name during these past 52 weeks of virtual worship services, Bible studies, meetings, and prayer times. They have shouldered many storms together—but not together. They have prayed for special needs together, but not together. They have laughed and cried together, but not together.

At least, not together physically.

Even though the Alpedrete church's building has been empty, the gospel message has still been proclaimed. At nursing homes. And in our local food bank. Through video productions and via song recordings. The Eternal Rock Church didn't stop being the church just because its doors were closed.

One year later, the seats in our church continue to be empty. But we are thankful the hearts of church members are not empty. They are filled with the truth that God is our true "Roca Eterna"...our Eternal Rock!

*Note: This was written six weeks before the congregation began meeting in person again. **ONE***

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**About the Author:** Kristi Johnson and her husband Tim began their new ministry as missionaries in residence at Welch College in August 2021, after serving as missionaries to Spain for over two decades.

# D6 Devotional Magazines Win PIAS Awards

**Destin, FL**— Randall House received five Awards of Excellence for *The Brink*, *Forward*, *Velocity*, *Explorer's Guide*, and *Adventure Guide* devotional magazines from The Printing Industry Association of the South (PIAS).

The PIAS Graphic Awards is an annual competition that promotes excellence in printing, creativity, and design. Winners were announced June 22, at the PIAS Annual Convention in Destin, Florida. **ONE**



# Discipleship Task Force

**Antioch, TN**—Randall House began a Discipleship Task Force by inviting 35 Free Will Baptist pastors and leaders from various states and churches to meet at the National Convention in Memphis, Tennessee, to hear and discuss the vision.

Not everyone who met was asked to serve on the Discipleship Task Force. The criteria for those invited included the following: local church leaders who consistently emphasize discipleship, understand generational strategy, value curriculum for discipleship that includes church and home, among others. While not everyone met these criteria, most met more than one. Churches of various sizes and approaches were included from across the country. Randall House is seeking people who carry out discipleship in a

variety of ways, but who are guided by crucial biblical philosophies.

Regarding the vision behind the task force, Dr. Hunter shared, “For churches to be healthy, discipleship must be a key ingredient. For sustainability, multiple generations must take part. I hope this task force forms a foundational resource to help our churches and Randall House. We see this group as leaders who will mentor, train, and model generational discipleship for other churches, helping us recover from negative trends all denominations face. We plan to include their help in advising, writing, and speaking into the components and strategies of our next curriculum launch in 2023.” **ONE**



# Every Pastor Needs a Retirement Plan

BY CHRIS COMPTON

We all know saving for the future is wise. Experience has taught us this. Last year was a real-life lesson on the importance of being prepared financially. Many people were caught off guard and unprepared for how the pandemic would affect their livelihood.

Some are still feeling the effects of it today. The lesson learned by many (and reinforced for some): it is a whole lot easier to prepare ahead and save for the future.

The Bible teaches us this as well. Proverbs 6:6-8 says, “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.”

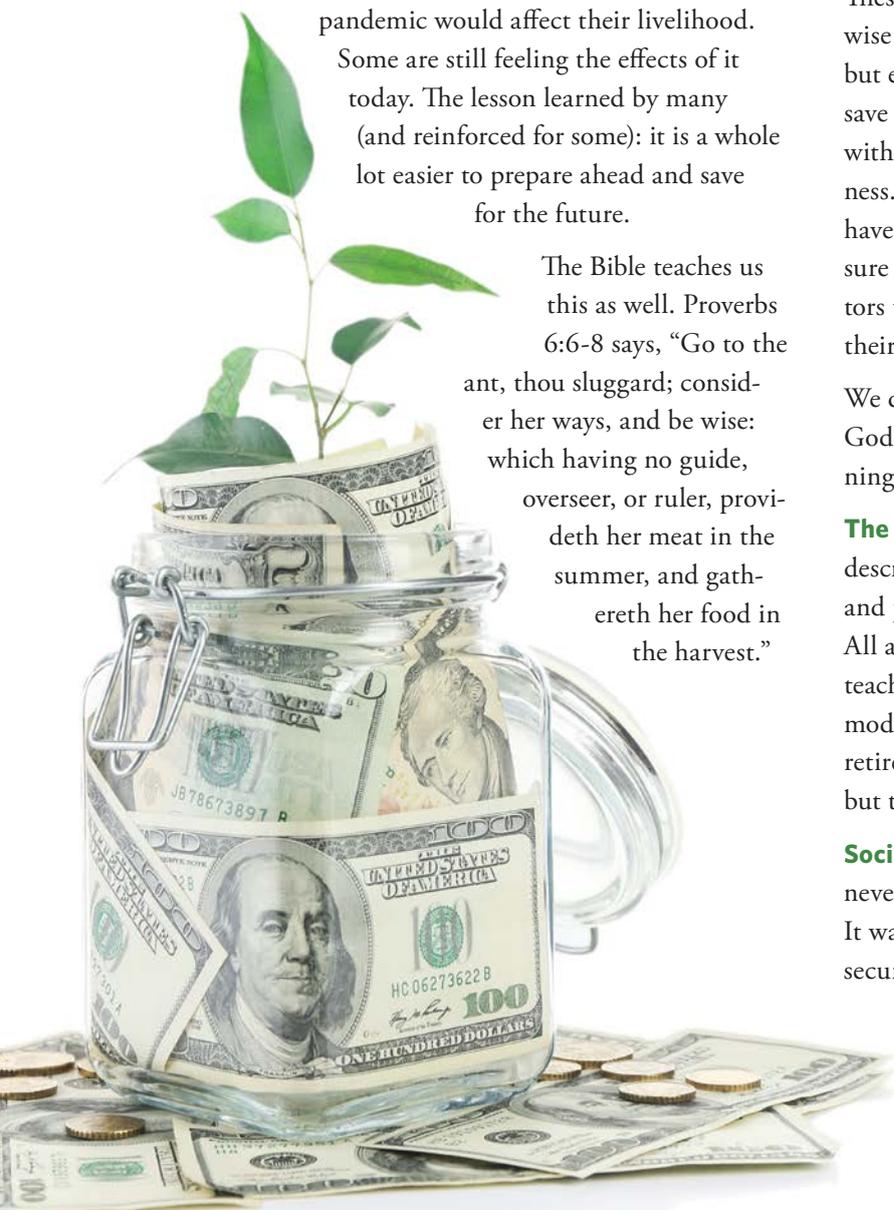
And Proverbs 24:27 says, “Prepare thy work without, and make it fit for thyself in the field; and afterwards build thine house.”

These verses and many more like them make it clear it is wise to plan. This truth is important for everyday living but essential as it relates to retirement. Everyone needs to save for retirement including pastors. Through working with pastors, I have seen many different levels of preparedness. Some arrive at retirement totally unprepared. Others have saved but not enough. Still others are saving but not sure if they are saving enough. I want to encourage *all* pastors to start saving for retirement immediately—no matter their age—and be sure to save enough.

We do not put our hope in wealth. That is reserved for God. While we put our hope in God, we should be planning and saving for the future, for many reasons.

**The Bible teaches us to save for the future.** Scripture describes saving for a rainy day, preparing for the future, and putting money to work multiplying for the future. All are noted as wise things to do. Also, it is hard to teach your people about sound stewardship if you are not modeling it yourself. Pastors can lead others to save for retirement. Not only will it help their own financial future but the financial future of others as well.

**Social Security will not be enough.** Social Security was never meant to be the sole source for retirement income. It was intended to be a supplement. The average social security benefit for 2021 is \$1,543/month or \$18,516/year. With rising health care costs and inflation, this benefit will be helpful but insufficient.



**We cannot earn an income forever.** Many noble pastors intend to stay in the ministry forever, but it is rarely possible. Health may prevent it. Or perhaps productivity and stamina are a roadblock. You may want to work forever, but you may not find a church willing to pay for an aging minister. Saving for retirement allows pastors to prepare for the end of their paying ministry. We learn from the example of Joseph in the Old Testament. He set aside enough grain during the good years to provide for the bad years. A time is coming for all of us when our productive working years end. It is crucial

*While we put our hope in God, we should be planning and saving for the future.*

to set aside income during our working years to provide for those years when our earned income ceases.

**Be free to serve the Lord in many ways.** Ministry does not have to end when the paycheck stops coming. At Board of Retirement, it is our mission to help people prepare for their future ministry. Retirement can be fruitful

ministry years if you have prepared financially for it. By saving for retirement, you put yourself in a position to serve the Lord in new and exciting ways.

Pastor, saving for retirement is not about preparing to end your ministry. It is about preparing for new ministries and new opportunities. Planning ahead will help you prepare for the day when the paycheck stops and new horizons open. Partner with the Board of Retirement. Let us help you prepare for your future ministry.

To learn more about the Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement plan, visit [www.boardofretirement.com](http://www.boardofretirement.com), contact us at [boardofretirement@nafwb.org](mailto:boardofretirement@nafwb.org) or call 877-767-7738. 

**About the Author:** Chris Compton is accounting administrator for Free Will Baptist Board of Retirement. He graduated in 2007 with a M.A. in Bible exposition from Columbia International University. A 1998 graduate of East Tennessee State University, he has over 15 years of administrative/financial experience in varied fields as well as seven years of pastoral ministry experience.

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## Curriculum Discipleship Plan

Winter 2021 Scope and Sequence



- Dec. 5** Comfort for Broken Hearts (Acts 12:1-5; James 5:7-11; Psalm 46:1-11)
- Dec. 12** Hope for Anxious Hearts (1 Kings 19; James 1:2-8; 1 Peter 5:7; Revelation 21:4)
- Dec. 19** Peace on Earth (Luke 1:26-45; 2:1-7)
- Dec. 26** Unity and Wisdom in Christ (1 Corinthians 1:10-31)
- Jan. 2** Purity in Christ (1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 6:9-11)
- Jan. 9** Contentment in Christ (1 Corinthians 7:1-40)
- Jan. 16** The Gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:1-31)
- Jan. 23** The Standard of Love (1 Corinthians 13)
- Jan. 30** The Promise of the Resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:20-58)
- Feb. 6** Seeking God's Wisdom (1 Kings 2:1-4; 3:3-15)
- Feb. 13** Seeking God's Presence (1 Kings 8:1-61)
- Feb. 20** Standing for Truth (1 Kings 18:19-46)
- Feb. 27** Wisdom for Every Day (Proverbs 1:1-33)



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# Snapshots Around the World



**Kenya**—Eddy and Amanda Simmons returned to Kenya in June. In mid-July, Amanda opened the medical clinic. Many illnesses and injuries are related to the intense heat and drought. Eddy urged, “Please pray for rain.” He also rejoiced infant churches fared well during the Simmons’ absence, and thanked faithful Samburu leaders.

**Côte d’Ivoire**—Pastor Hénoc Dah, who works in the southwestern part of Ivory Coast, far from most other churches, reported five mission churches gathered for an Easter conference. Fifteen people were baptized.

**Pakistan**—Sunday, May 23, 18 people were baptized in a Free Will Baptist church in Pakistan.



**Panama**—The National Association of Free Will Baptists in Panama held their annual business meeting Saturday, April 10, 2021, by video conference. Though 50 devices logged in, many devices had multiple viewers. COVID-19 restrictions delayed this year’s meeting. Attendees heard reports from various committees and elected a new Executive Committee for a two-year term (2021-2023). That evening, the association conducted an online service for all Panamanian Free Will Baptists.



**Chicago, USA**—Though ETEAM 2021 looked different than leaders anticipated, ETEAM Chicago evidenced God’s guidance. Twenty-four students trained and traveled to Chicago in June. They ministered with David and Pam Potete at Northwest Community Church, participating in VBS and local outreach for a large portion of their time.



**Côte d’Ivoire**—Pastor Edmond Koadja baptized six people Sunday, April 25, 2021, in Nassian, Côte d’Ivoire.

**Brazil**—Pastor Tiago Oliveira baptized four people at Campo Alegre FWB Church in Lafaie-te, Brazil, on June 23. Saturday, June 14, the Jaboticabal FWB Church baptized ten people.



**Panama**—Panamanian WNAC held its 32nd retreat via Zoom, March 19-21, 2021, with 50-60 women attending. Held Friday, Saturday, and Sunday evenings, former missionaries to Panama—

Judy Lytle, Brenda Bunch, Lori Torrison, and Ariadna Riesgo—shared in the online meeting. Carmen Delgado, Judy Lytle, and Elizabeth Hodges were the featured speakers.

**Côte d’Ivoire**—The annual Easter conference in the Bougou area featured Pastor Paul Amiezi. On Saturday, 38 people were baptized. Following the Easter service Sunday morning, they celebrated communion and feetwashing.



**Bulgaria**—Jonathan and Amy Postlewaite rejoiced over “wonderful” church gatherings for Palm Sunday and Easter. They shared the gospel (and Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes) at a school in a nearby village. In another village, they helped with a passion play and handed out 60 children’s Bibles.

## Châteaubriant Church Meets in Own Building

**Châteaubriant, France**—On March 28, 2021, the Châteaubriant congregation met in its own building for the first time. Steve Riggs wrote, “To the best of our knowledge, the opening of the new church building last Sunday represents the first time a Protestant church has owned property in Châteaubriant in nearly 500 years.”



*Ribbon-cutting in Châteaubriant*

Jean-Charles and Magali, the couple who asked for a church in their town, cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of the new facility.

“While our building is relatively modest, we could not be more thankful for what the Lord has given us. What a joy to hear believers pray and sing praises to God,” Steve rejoiced. “The past few months of being separated almost made us forget what a privilege and blessing it is to have a place to worship together. March 28, 2021, may be just another day in history, but one we pray will have an eternal impact on the lives of many in years to come. Praise the Lord for His faithfulness and goodness!”

Unfortunately, someone who attended that memorable Sunday service became symptomatic for COVID-19 the following Monday and later tested positive, so Easter services were canceled. Services continue to be held in Châteaubriant as allowed within COVID-19 restrictions and guidelines. **ONE**

## Board Meeting Held in Memphis

**Memphis, TN**—The IM board met Sunday, July 18, 2021, during the National Association of Free Will Baptists in Memphis, Tennessee.

The board met with several interns and discussed their status with the Mission. As a result, interns to Japan Daniel and Shelby Culwell, Jack and Ashley Ketteman, and Daniel and Kate Speer were approved as career missionaries. Jonathan and Michelle Chereau were granted a second two-year internship in France, where they will continue to serve as leaders of the St. Sebastien congregation.

The board also approved an IMPact project, the New Life Church Planting Fund. The project will support the planting of a church in a community on the outskirts of Sapporo. Daniel and Kate Speer will join missionaries Doug and Miriam Bishop in planting this church.

All board members including Jeff Nichols (chairman, TN), Rodney Yerby (vice-chair, AL), Mark Price (secretary, OH), Casey Cariker (OK), Rick Cason (NC), Will Harmon (AR), Darren Walker (NC), Janice Banks (OK), and Cameron Lane (AR) participated in the meeting. **ONE**

## Joy Jones With the Lord

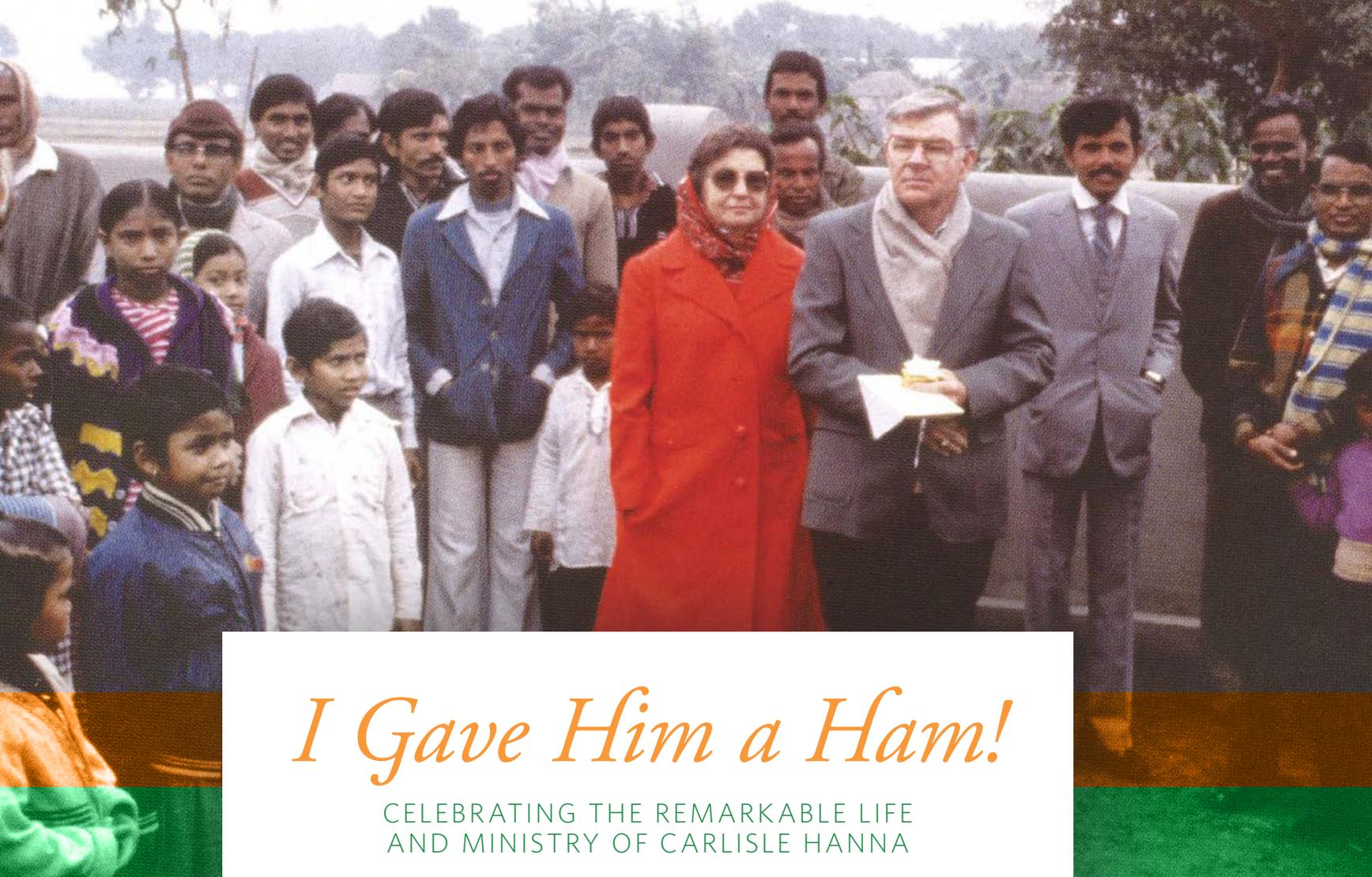
**Poteau, OK**—Joy Jones, former missionary to Côte d’Ivoire, went to her eternal reward Sunday, June 20, 2021. The 84-year-old joined her husband Bill, who died on December 19, 2011. Joy and Bill worked to plant churches in Koun Fao, Ivory Coast, from 1959-1969.

An Oklahoma native, Joy was born November 23, 1936,

in Holdenville to John “Jack” and Ora (Barnhill) Arnold. Mrs. Jones’ funeral was held June 24 at First FWB Church, Poteau. She was interred in Bryan, Texas, next to Bill. **ONE**



*Joy Jones*



# *I Gave Him a Ham!*

CELEBRATING THE REMARKABLE LIFE  
AND MINISTRY OF CARLISLE HANNA

BY CLINT MORGAN

Carlisle Hanna was born August 3, 1929, in Lake City, South Carolina. During childhood, he was greatly influenced by his parents, especially his loving mother who made a big breakfast for him *every* morning—biscuits and eggs with ham or bacon.

His mother loved books and shared this love with her children. Carlisle began reading the Bible before he ever went to school. To the best of his memory, he read the Bible through at least once a year since he learned to read. That means he has read the entire Bible more than 80 times!

His dad was a quiet farmer on a “one-horse farm” as Carlisle describes it. Though small, the farm provided the family’s needs. His father loved music and could play many instruments. As a young boy, Carlisle wanted to take lessons, but his dad said he wouldn’t pay for anyone to take lessons; either you could play, or you couldn’t. Carlisle learned to play because he could.

Brother Carlisle has a good sense of humor. He laughs at what is appropriately funny and often says things that make people laugh, though he doesn’t intend to be funny. For example, when recalling his home in Lake City, South Carolina, he said, “Sometimes during the winter, it was cold as scissors.” I’m not sure how cold scissors are, but the expression made me laugh. And, when I recently asked how old he was, he quickly quipped, “Too old to buy green bananas!”

He recounted one night when he was nine. The family heard a noise behind the house, and his dad went out to see what was going on. When he came back to his anxious family, he told them a man was trying to steal some meat from the smokehouse. When they asked what he did, he said, “I gave him a ham.”

Hanna chuckled as he recalled, “not only did Dad give the man something to eat; he gave him a choice piece of meat—a ham!”



After graduating from eleventh grade in 1946, he continued his education, first at Newberry College, then Columbia Commercial College, Welch College, and finally, Columbia Bible College. But his education is not the whole story.

On August 15, 1948, his life changed radically. He attended a youth rally where God's Spirit moved, and Carlisle answered the call to serve as a missionary in India. He told his parents he was quitting work and going to Welch College. There, he met Marie Wright, who already had answered the missions call to India. The first time he saw Marie, she was on her knees praying with the Missionary

Prayer Band. These two like-minded individuals soon fell in love and were married May 30, 1949. It seems fitting the Hannas were appointed missionaries to India two years later, at the Bible Conference hosted on the Welch campus in 1951.

In October 1952, Carlisle and Marie told their families goodbye and drove to New York City, to board a ship to India. The *U.S.S. United States* embarked at noon, October 17. After docking in London, the

Hannas took a long flight to Karachi, Pakistan, at 4:00 a.m., October 26. A final leg of their journey took them from Karachi to Calcutta, India, on October 27. They made this last flight at night, unusual in those days, but a brilliant, full moon made it possible.

Hanna recalls people "rolling out the red carpet" when they arrived in Calcutta.

But after a dramatic pause, he adds with a chuckle, "Because the governor of West Bengal was on the plane."

They soon made the long journey to Allahabad to begin Hindi language school. Imagine that trip: three days on a

train, traveling 700 miles at only ten miles per hour. They arrived in Allahabad after dark—no food or water and without the language skills to ask for what they needed.

A few weeks later, the Hanna's eight-month-old daughter Sheila became very ill. Although the first doctor to examine her was not overly concerned, Sheila quickly worsened, and by her next examination, it was obvious to the doctor Sheila was dying. Carlisle and Marie buried their precious baby in a cemetery where other missionaries had been buried since the 1850s. What a tremendous blow for this young missionary couple! Carlisle describes the tragic loss. "We were very, very empty at this time. We did not think about quitting. We thought we might not live, but we did not think about quitting."

The couple eventually had three more children: Brenda Kay, Mark, and Don. Both boys experienced their own severe illnesses that could have ended in death. Hanna recalls one particular moment when both boys were suffering at the same time: "We thought if we lost both boys, we would never return to the States again—just live and die in India. Then, we learned all the people were at church praying for the boys. And, they got better, praise the Lord!"

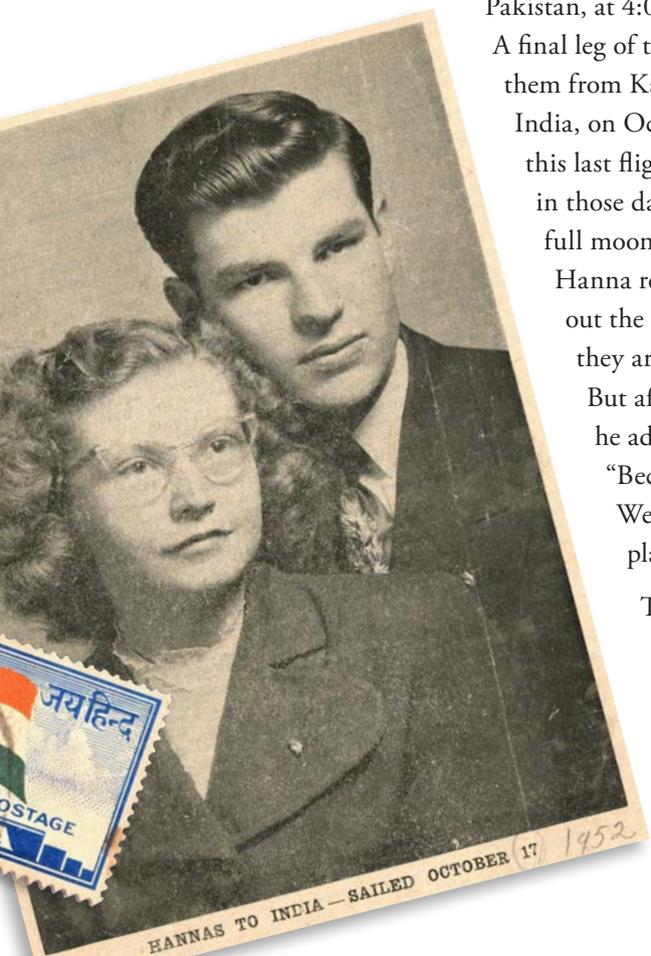
Life and ministry were extremely tough for the Hannas, especially during those the early years. They made \$75 a month—not an hour, day, or week—a month. During their first stateside assignment in 1958, they essentially lived out of their car and only averaged about five dollars per service.

Back in India, ministry opportunities were innumerable, and they tried to walk through every door God opened. They settled in the village of Sonaphur in northeast India. They opened a hostel ministry for young boys to stay and learn—first about God's Word but also important life skills. Bro. Carlisle recalls, "We had more boys than we could say grace over."

Though destroyed by an earthquake at one point, the hostel was quickly reconstructed, and the flourishing ministry continues today.

Family tragedy struck again with the passing of Marie, April 23, 1998, at age 70. All three of the Hanna children and their families were in the U.S. and unable attend the funeral. However, every shop in town closed, and thousands—Christians, Hindus, and Muslims—attended the

*Through Carlisle and Marie's devoted service, along with the work of many national believers, we have rejoiced over an impressive harvest in India.*



funeral. What a true reflection of the impact Marie made on the community.

Even in the face of loss, Hanna pressed on, unwavering and determined. He once remarked, “I don’t know the future, but I want to go as long as I can. It is a lifetime call, yes?”

And he did keep going! For 70 years, he stayed true to his calling. Through trials, tribulations, and testing he proved faithful. And through Carlisle and Marie’s devoted service, along with the work of many national believers, we have rejoiced over an impressive harvest in India.

Today there are:

- 120 church planters and evangelists
- 30 ordained pastors
- 300 FWB churches in northeast India
- 13 churches and 11 ordained pastors in southeastern India
- 35 churches in Nepal
- A congregation of Bhutanese believers meeting in India
- More than 17,000 believers
- 5,000–6,000 attend their national conference

Carlisle Hanna’s unquestionable commitment has been recognized at many levels. In 2000, he was recognized by his home state of South Carolina. Governor Jim Hodges presented him with South Carolina’s highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto, stating, “Reverend Hanna has been a humble servant of his faith, his God, and his fellow man, and, as such, has been a great ambassador for South Carolina. He is truly deserving of South Carolina’s highest honor.”

He also was honored at the MissioNexus meeting in September. MissioNexus unites over 300 evangelical mission agencies and churches with more than 30,000 missionaries and staff members. Each year, they choose a single person for the Lifetime of Service award. This year, they honored Hanna.

Several years ago, I was honored to attend the National Conference in India when they honored Bro. Carlisle with heart-warming speeches, gifts of great personal and



cultural value, and words of encouragement. For me the most moving moment was when a document was read declaring Carlisle “Uncle,” as the Indian believers call him, literally “one of us,” truly a man of India, one of their people. I don’t think any of us doubt that Carlisle Hanna is Indian in the deepest recesses of his heart.

We honor Carlisle Hanna for giving more time in service to God through IM than any other missionary in our history. As Free Will Baptists committed to the cause of Christ, let us live our own lives and carry out our own ministry in a way that follows the example of Carlisle Hanna...Uncle! **ONE**



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**About the Author:** Clint Morgan has been director of IM, Inc. since 2011. Learn more: [www.IMinc.org](http://www.IMinc.org).

# Thom Rainer Returns to Leadership Conference

**Nashville, TN**—Since COVID-19 restrictions limited attendance at the 2020 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference, Dr. Thom Rainer will return to the 2021 meeting, December 6-7, at Sonesta Nashville Airport (formerly Marriott). Pastors and church and ministry leaders from across the denomination will gather to explore the theme “Equipped for His Work,” with an emphasis on church health.



Dr. Thom Rainer

Dr. Rainer will speak during the Monday and Tuesday evening keynote sessions. The founder and CEO of Church Answers, an online community for church leaders, Rainer also served as president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. Before LifeWay, he was a member of the faculty and administration at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he was the founding dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions and Evangelism. Rainer is a 1977 graduate of the University of Alabama and earned M.Div. and Ph.D. degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

He has authored more than two dozen books, including *I Am a Church Member*, *Breakout Churches*, *Autopsy of a Deceased Church*, *Simple Life*, *Simple Church*, *Raising Dad*, *The Millennials*, *Essential Church*, and *Who Moved My Pulpit?*

On Tuesday, a wide range of seminars (see sidebar) will offer practical instruction for 3 for 30: Reach, Train,

and Give. A Tuesday evening panel discussion will additionally explore the challenges and opportunities facing Free Will Baptist pastors and churches.

Find regular updates on the conference at [www.nafwb.org/leadershipconference](http://www.nafwb.org/leadershipconference). 

## Seminars

*Church Revitalization and Worldview Thinking:  
The Church's Call to Address the Issues That Fill Our Lives*  
—Matthew Bracey

*Getting Beyond the Ministry Bubble*  
—Chris Truett

*Hispanic Ministry as a Tool for Church Revitalization*  
—Francisco Vasquez

*Lessons Learned From Revitalization*  
—Shiloh Hackett

*Discipleship in Church Revitalization*  
—Terry Pierce

*Thoughts for the Next Generation of FWB Leaders*  
—Derek Altom

*How to Avoid a Pastoral Collapse*  
—Rufo Gomez

*Tips for Effective Stewardship Preaching*  
—Will Harmon

*Letting Go: Developing a Sending Culture in Your Local Church*  
—Josh Baer

*Being and Participating:  
Two Imperatives for Hispanic FWB Leaders*  
—Jose Rodriguez

*What Every National Association Delegate Needs to Know*  
—Tim York



# Preparing for Skinny Cows

BY EDDIE MOODY

Have you ever wondered what would have happened if Pharaoh had not heeded Joseph's warning about the coming of the skinny cows (Genesis 41:17)? Egypt might have enjoyed a period of prosperity, but difficult days were still coming. Many of us believe difficult days are also coming for Christian ministries for a variety of reasons. Giving patterns have changed, and activists and politicians have been making the case for ending religious tax exemption status. The skinny cows are coming; what can we do?

Fortunately, our leaders have been preparing us for this moment for some time. If you have listened to Bill Evans or David Brown, you have heard them speak about the power of endowments. Bill likes to say, "Endowments are one of the best ways for small gifts to make a big impact."

For example, on September 30, 1982, the Executive Office received a \$100 check from Wilbur and Alma Worthington. The gift, originally known as the Worthington Trust, became the Cooperative Trust, and then finally, The Together Way Trust. That \$100 has been earning interest for Free Will Baptists ever since. After all these years, the gift has provided more than double its value to our ministries and will continue until the Lord returns.

The Together Way Trust was established to provide long-term financial resources for national ministries. The Trust principal will never be used, but the interest is disbursed based on a formula adopted by the National Association.

Endowment gifts come in several forms. They can be offerings over and above tithes. They can come from churches or individuals who want to give a lasting, high-impact gift. They can come in the form of a gift

of property. For example, an individual from Oklahoma gave 42 acres in Colorado to sell, and all proceeds went into the endowment. Currently, the trust totals \$67,849. On February 11, 2021, the Free Will Baptist directors set a goal of raising \$5 million for the trust. A modest estimate indicates this amount will realize \$250,000 to national ministries each year.

Will you consider giving? With an endowment, your gift is never touched. In other words, whether you give \$100 or \$1 million, the gift remains in the endowment as principal; only the interest is used for ministry.

This kind of giving will help Free Will Baptist national ministries avoid debt that could cripple outreach (Proverbs 22:7). Resources begin to work for the ministry. A \$5 million endowment would take pressure off the ministries, allowing them to rely upon an estimated yearly return. If the Lord tarries and people continue to give, the endowment will grow and should outpace inflation.

As former Executive Secretary Dr. Melvin Worthington noted, "Contributions to the trust will build a strong, steady, and significant financial base for denominational programs. Give today, and let your gift continue to give after you have passed away." For more information call 877-767-7659 or email [questions@nafwb.org](mailto:questions@nafwb.org). If we give together today, we will be ready tomorrow when those skinny cows emerge. 



**Eddie Moody**

Executive Secretary,  
National Association of  
Free Will Baptists



Help us tell  
**your** story...

The **Free Will Baptist Historical Collection** still has gaps. If you have books, records, or other historical materials to donate, please contact curator Phillip Morgan: [pmorgan@welch.edu](mailto:pmorgan@welch.edu).

Let's work together to **preserve the amazing Free Will Baptist story** for generations to come!



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