

The TEXAS CHALLENGE

Published by the Texas State Association of Free Will Baptists

Clearview Is "All In" New Building

by Randall Wright (McKinney)

All In! The song writer said it best, "To God be the Glory, great things He has done!" What a Journey! After almost three years of searching, praying, bidding, talking, and construction, Clearview is now in our own building! It has taken us almost a year to get the project complete. Over the past several months we have worked through the challenges of not having a regular place to meet. While waiting on our Certificate of Occupancy, we have met in homes, parks, restaurants, and in other church facilities. Our people have been patient, generous, committed, and now we are so excited about the next stage of ministry for Clearview.

The first Sunday of October we were able to have our first "official" service in our building. There was an "air of excitement" as our congregation arrived for our first service. It was a special time as we worshipped, fellowshiped, and prayed together. We enjoyed getting a few group pictures to remember the special day. It was also special for the things that we did not do on that day. We did not arrive early to unload a trailer or set up and break down our facility! It was nice to just be part of our congregation standing around and enjoying one another after the service, without rushing to get everything packed up and out of the building.

I want to thank the great people of



Texas and our great churches for all of your support and financial gifts over the past three years. It has truly been a blessing, and that support has greatly assisted us to be able to accomplish what we have. However, we still need your support! Although we have a building, we are not quite ready to go self-supporting. We have taken a large step of faith with this building and still have about 1000 square feet that remains unfinished. I prayerfully request that you please continue to support our ministry.

We are moving forward! Now that we have a building we are trying to improve and implement new ministries that we have struggled with as a result



of not having our own place. We have scheduled a Community Block Party to reach out to our community and our Grand Opening service was the first Sunday of November. We have also scheduled our first revival with Dr. David Crowe. Our revival will be November 16-19. We begin Sunday morning and before our evening service on Sunday, we will have our Building Dedication at 5:00. I would like to invite you to join us for our dedication service and stay for our revival service.

Thanks for your past and continued support and to God be the Glory!

Randall, Collette, Joshua, Rebekah, and Leah Wright

BREWER'S BEAT



Marcus Brewer
State Office Coordinator

As many of you know by now, I have gone back to school, enrolling in the Ph.D. program at Texas A&M University's Department of Civil Engineering. Some might say I'm a glutton for punishment, and that could be at least partially true, since I'm jumping in as a full-time student after having been out of school for roughly 15 years. For some perspective, my mechanical pencil is older than many of the undergraduates on campus, and I have one professor who is (barely) younger than me. I do think, though, that this will open up some doors in my professional career and I think the timing is right for me.

Others have asked how I plan to find time in my schedule to be a student. Well, for starters, the National Convention is over and the State Meeting is still most of a year away. More to the point, though, I have reduced my hours from full-time to half-time at my job at Texas A&M to make room in the schedule. Of course, that also means that my paycheck is reduced by an equal proportion. Suffice it to say that the next few months will be full of changes and adjustments. In the long run, though, I'm confident it will be worth it.

Life in general, and the Christian life in particular, has its share of changes, some good and some not so good. But if we're faithful to God, He sees and knows our ups and downs and has a plan for us that will work out to our benefit (Romans 8:28). If you're going through struggles and difficulties, I pray that God's presence will especially be known to you and you will be confident to do His will in your life. And I'd ask for your prayers as I continue to adjust to this new routine. I'd also ask for your

patience as it may take me a bit longer to respond to your e-mails and phone calls than it used to. (And it might me take longer to finish my articles for the Texas Challenge, like this one, which was actually written after the submission deadline. Sorry!)

Men's Conference Set For December

Men of Texas, make your reservations and pack your bags! The annual Texas Free Will Baptist Men's Conference is coming up! This year's conference (formerly men's retreat) is scheduled for December 5-6, 2014, at Camp of the Hills near Marble Falls, Texas.

In Matthew 22:37 and in Mark 12:30 Jesus taught us to love God with every part of ourselves. Every aspect of our lives is to be devoted to him. But how do we do that? What does that even look like? Find out at "All In: Loving God With All My Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength". Out speaker will be Jeff Sloan. Jeff is the Pastor of Bixby Free Will Baptist Church, Bixby, Oklahoma, and is former Director of the School of Christian Ministry at Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College. This is an event no man should miss! The cost is just \$75 and includes your conference fee, lodging, and three meals. Registration is open to all men and young men in high school and above. There will be gifts and prizes for every man who attends. There is a special gift for attendees who preregister at www.texasfwb.org before



November 17. Your pastor will be receiving more information soon. Maps and directions to Camp of the Hills can be found at www.campofthehills.org.

"All In", the 2014 Texas Free Will Baptist Men's Conference is presented by the Christian Education Board of the Texas State Association of Free Will Baptists.

Contact John Collier (wjcollier3@gmail.com or 903-570-8279) for more information.

Coming Up:

All-Boards Meeting
January 30 & 31, 2015
Fellowship FWB
Bryan, TX

The Texas Challenge is published online quarterly by the Texas State Association of Free Will Baptists. It can be viewed at:

www.texasfwb.org/challenge
Mail comments and articles to:
501 Russell St.
Henderson, TX 75654
903-646-6038
fwbtexaschallenge@gmail.com

The editor reserves the right to accept, reject, and edit any articles submitted for publication. All articles represent the personal views of the authors and do not necessarily represent the policy or positions of the Texas State Association of Free Will Baptists.



Mt. Union Honors Centenarion

Sister Clara Little celebrated her 100th birthday on September 25. Her grandfather James Lunsford is one of the founders of the Mt. Union FWB church in Garrison. He started the church 127 years ago and Sister Little has attended since she was a young girl. Her son Robert Little is a deacon of Mt. Union today. We thank her family for the many years of service they have given for the cause of Christ. We wish her the best and a very happy birthday and many more to come. Pictured with Mrs. Clara is her son Deacon Robert Little, Deacon Kenneth Rector, and pastor John Voss.

Meet Lakehills' New Pastor

Allen Bowen was called to serve Lakehills Free Will Baptist Church in February 2014. The Bowen family arrived to begin their ministry in June.

Allen was born in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1972 to Jimmy and Lois Bowen and, upon graduation from Wake Christian Academy, attended Welch College in Nashville, TN, where he graduated in 1994.

Allen and Jennifer (Hampton) were married in March 1994. Jennifer is the daughter of Dr. Charles and Peggy Hampton. Jennifer graduated from Hume-Fogg Academic High School in Nashville and attended Welch.

Allen and Jennifer have three children, Emma, Karah, and Josiah. Jennifer is a stay at home mom who, in addition to all her other responsibilities, home-schools the girls.

Allen and Jennifer have a long history of serving in Free Will Baptist Churches. In 1995, they moved to Greenville, North Carolina to serve as Youth/Associate Pastor at Trinity Free Will Baptist Church. In 2000, they became Associate Pastor at Thayer Free Will Baptist Church in Thayer, Missouri. In 2002, due to a parent's health, they moved back to Nashville, TN where Allen taught middle school in the Metro Nashville Public School System.

Allen is honored to follow in the footsteps of a man such as Keith Woody. The work that Keith began in Cedar Park is an enduring testimony to his faithfulness and obedience to God. God has blessed Lakehills. It is Allen's intention to continue Keith's work to carry the Gospel and minister in the Cedar Park community so that people will come to know the liberating truth of Jesus Christ.

Fellowship Has Busy Fall Planned

Fellowship FWB Church had VBS August 20-21. We used Group's Weird Animals and had a successful VBS. We had 32 of our church folks to be involved in our 3 day VBS with great attendance each night. We directed our VBS towards preschoolers through sixth grade. One of the fun things we have done each year is to have a competition with our VBS offering. The offering competition is the boys against the girls and each team has a representative. Alex Dickey represented the boys and Hannah Odle represented the girls. Our offering recipient this year was the Rainbow Ministries children's orphanage in Mexico that is run by the Bivens. We raised over \$500 in our 3 day VBS to send to the orphanage.

We had a special presentation on Oct 5th and 12th in our evening services. Donna Ness presented "Touching the Hem of His Garment." From the beginning of the Bible to Revelation, it's the story of the Tallit. This prayer shawl is used by the Jewish people in their prayers today...and as they have done throughout their history, since God told Moses to have the men wear this when they stand to pray. What a way to discover the history and prophetic implications of this garment.

Fellowship hosted Daniel Speers on Nov 9th in our evening service. He shared with us about his upcoming missionary adventure and giving us an opportunity to partner with him and his family.

Our annual Fall Festival was Oct 25th. This is a community outreach ministry that we have in our church parking lot every fall.

Remembering the 2014 National Convention



Central Texas temps soared into triple digits as 4,320 delegates and visitors converged on Cowtown when the National Association of Free Will Baptists returned to Fort Worth, Texas, July 27-30, for the 78th national convention, the fourth in the city. The 2014 theme explored "Principles of Sowing and Reaping."

Music Coordinator Kevin Justice and the Music Commission produced a series of unforgettable worship services featuring a 100-voice convention choir, an orchestral ensemble, and numerous talented individuals, families, and groups who lent their voices to the music. Brian Hughes, minister of music and youth at First FWB Church, Clayton (NC), served as convention worship leader and guided the congregation into worship. Throughout the conference, speakers examined critical principles of sowing and reaping—the Word of God as it applies to life, stewardship, relationships, and evangelism.

After Texas Moderator Marcus Brewer taught Sunday School, Danny Gasperson, pastor of Zephyr Hills FWB Church (NC), spoke from Matthew 13, "Principles of Sowing and Reaping in the Word of God."

Sunday evening, Randy Corn, pastor of Bethlehem FWB Church (TN) explored "Principles of Sowing



and Reaping in Life" from Galatians 6:7-8. He warned listeners to be wary of the danger within, understanding the possibility of falling into sin. He encouraged restoration-bearing the burdens of those who have fallen, and urged the congregation not to quit, because "In due season we shall reap if we faint not."

Monday evening, South Carolina Executive Secretary Todd Smith spoke from 2 Corinthians 9:5-15 on "Sowing and Reaping Through Stewardship." He urged listeners to have an attitude of cheerful giving, from the heart, and not out of necessity.

The Tuesday afternoon Preaching Conference highlighted Texas pastors Howard Bass, pastor of First FWB Church, Tomball, and longtime state moderator Keith Woody. Tuesday night, Will Harmon, pastor of



Cavanaugh FWB Church, Fort Smith (AR), challenged listeners to embrace biblical unity as he explored "Principles of Sowing and Reaping in Relationships" from Proverbs 6:16-19.

Home missionary church planter Heath Ferguson wrapped up the annual Wednesday night missions service by addressing "Principles of Sowing and Reaping in Evangelism" from Psalm 126:5-6 and Romans 1. He issued the challenge to embrace the power of the Word of God and make evangelism an overriding passion, to give everything to follow the call of Christ to plant the seed of the gospel. The altars filled and the convention came to a close in the best way possible, with men and women dedicating themselves to the call of the gospel.

Eighty-four volunteers from eight states arrived at the convention a day



early for Impact Fort Worth. The annual outreach event started 9:30 Saturday morning when participants left First FWB Church in Weatherford and Friendship FWB Church in Haltom City to distribute 2,000 flyers and 1,000 gospel tracts.

Extreme Texas heat didn't slow the determined groups that went door-to-door in neighborhoods near the churches and others who cooked and prepared meals for community picnics hosted by both churches. Eric Halleran, pastor at Weatherford said, "We were privileged to work with Impact volunteers to share the good news of God's Word with our community. A thousand people got the gospel today! It just gives you a sense of what is possible in Christ."

Reach That Guy (sponsored by the National Youth Conference) participated in local outreach and service, as 147 participants ranging in age from four to 62 volunteered throughout Fort Worth, supplying more than a thousand hours to six organizations.

Fort Worth residents made note of the efforts. "This is the best group to come through in years," said one convention center security guard. "Absolutely," chimed in a second. "I just wish you guys could come back and train some other groups on how to behave when visiting a city."



Light of Life Impacting the Valley



Dear Brothers and Sisters, fellow workers in the kingdom of God: Our Churches, 1st FWB church of Weslaco and Light of Life FWB Mission, will be hosting our 101st State Meeting in June of 2015. We are soooooo excited! Relax, this letter is not to ask for money! The Church in Weslaco, under the direction of Pastor Faron Thebeau has been an established church for

more than 30 years now, and Light of Life in McAllen is a three year old, self-supported mission work. What we need from you is something better and more precious, lasting and more powerful than money!

First of all we covet your prayers. Please add 1st FWB Church of Weslaco and Light of Life Mission Church in your prayer list. Pray for our pastors and their families. Pray for those we are trying to reach and disciple. Pray for the strength, wisdom and courage that we need to do the Lord's work in this troubled and diverse area. Pray that we will not be swayed nor discouraged. Pray because, as you well know, the harvest is ready but the laborers are few...Knowing that we are covered by the prayers of our sister churches all over Texas will strengthen our hearts to keep on keeping on.

Secondly, we are writing to invite your church/ministry to come, witness and be part of the Lord's work in our city. We want you to be part of our history and efforts in the re-planting and growing of our church here in McAllen. What a better opportunity than the occasion and location of our 101 state meeting! Notice that I said "re-planting." Yes, there used to be a FWB church here, the beautiful land and building are still there, but it is no longer FWB... We need to reclaim our presence in this prosperous city. We want to be a house of prayer, a school of doctrine, a place of refuge, a spiritual hospital, a nursery of young souls, a bright Light of Life! If you are able to come, our churches will be delighted with your presence during the State Meeting, but we are asking you to prayerfully consider arriving a day or two before, or stay a day or two after, and join us in an effort which we have called "Impact & Revival @ the Rio Grande Valley." There is strength in numbers! A helping hand is always welcome and will do us much good as a young church to be joined by other and will, most definitively, greatly impact the community. There's so much you could help us accomplish in just a few days. Yes, we might be self-supported financially, but we are not self-sufficient, nor independent from the rest of the body that is formed from all the churches throughout Texas. .

Brother Robert Posner, Pastor of the Collin Creek Church, has already committed himself to praying and being part of "Impact & Revival @ the RGV." Would you please, seriously bring it before the Lord and see if it would be in His perfect will for your church to consider a mission trip to McAllen during the 2015 state meeting? It is not too early to start praying and planning...we already are!

We are including a couple pages from our Church yearbook so you can see who you are praying for, and to hopefully entice you to come and meet these beautiful peoples in person.

In The Lord's love and service,
Ana E. Yacobian (Pastor Greg Yacobian's wife)



Pulpit Supply

FWB Ministers available to preach where needed:

Brandon Snowden
936-577-0551
bsnowder@gmail.com

Pastors Wanted

Texas FWB Churches currently seeking pastors:

EASLEY CHAPEL

Comanche

Contact:

11601 Hwy 16 N
Comanche, TX 76442

FIRST CHURCH

Kermit

Contact:

Kenneth Edwards
432-586-5286

UNION ARBOR

Beckville

Contact:

Charles Cammack
903-754-3067

Submit pulpit supply and vacancies to:
fwbtexaschallenge@gmail.com



At the 2014 TWAC sponsored Ladies Retreat, Jamie Ferguson (Woodforest, Magnolia) detailed faithfulness, challenged us to 'step it up a little bit' and put our faith to work, encouraging us to be 'Hall of Faith' Women. Jamie defined faithfulness - doing what I know God wants me to do today, trusting that God has a plan for the future. We are here to do the work the Lord has for us as His stewards. All stewards have a requirement to multiply the talents they are given. The command is the same for every steward, although the talents are not equal. An action must take place in order for the requirement to be fulfilled, do something with what He has given us. The Lord will return to reckon (calculate, tally) with the stewards. 'What the Lord expects, He will inspect.' Every steward will receive his proper reward, praise or punishment, according to the faithfulness of the steward. A few things to be faithful over: Faithful to your Heavenly Father, your family, your friends, your field of service & future workers. What area do you need to 'step it up a little bit'?

Jamie also encouraged us to be



'Hall of Faith' Women by reviewing the lives of Sarah, Jochebed, and Rahab. Faith overcomes doubt, fear, and your past. What has the Lord asked you to do? Don't allow doubt to keep you from it. Have you received some bad news, something you're not sure you're going to make it through? Psalm 56:3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee. Don't allow past mistakes to keep you from fulfilling God's purpose for you. God can use you - if you are willing. We were so blessed by Jamie, our cups were overflowing!

Ana Yacobian (Light of Life, McAllen) prepared our hearts for prayers of confession, thanksgiving and supplication. Collin Creek's Amy Horton, Melia Reyes, Bethany Lopez, and Ashley Blagburn, led us in praise and worship with Sheryl Anderson, (Mt. Union, Garrison), joining with sign language. Barbara Neyman with the 1st Tomball ladies paved the way for completion of 30 parachutes for the Voice of the Martyrs, love in action.



Friday evening, Sharon Dickey (Fellowship, Bryan) got the ball rolling with a scavenger hunt and photo booth which led into charades and the fellowship was enjoyed by all! Saturday, testimonies of praise and prayer requests included Phyllis Bass (First, Tomball) sharing Kim Gott's story of forgiveness, restoration, and faith in action assisting the Voice of the Martyrs, Judy Smith (Fisrt, Henderson) with the latest on her Ministry Cottage, Ruth Bivens with Mexico updates, and Linda Holguin (Magnolia) relating God's provision after church break-in.

Please be praying as we prepare for the June 2015 FWB state meeting in the Rio Grande Valley and be watching for more information in the Texas Challenge. TWAC seeks to bring Texas women together for encouragement, spiritual growth and further the goals of WNAC. Contact Mitzi Burks or any TWAC Officer for TWAC/WNAC membership information.



Where a Quart of Energy and the Promises of God Take Us

by Ruth Bvens

We send you greetings from our little house in Pharr, Texas. This feels like another hit and run landing. We got "home" Thursday night and are trying to get ready to leave again. When I say we are "home," I wonder where "home" really is. This little house looks more like a storage building every time we blow through here. I have considered trying to find someone to clean the house, but, I am afraid no one could handle this job without major supervision. But then, "This World Is Not My Home."

We have not completely unloaded the van. Bud wanted to get back to Morelos ASAP when we came in Thursday evening. When we considered that we would not be here on Nov. 4th for the regular election, we stayed over 'til Monday to vote on the 20th. Now Bud is anxious to get back to the children's home. John bought a little VW Beetle from his brother-in-law in Reynosa and needs someone to take it up to him. Bud intended to take it up on Tuesday and have me drive the van. His plan was to have a few days with John and Paulina at the children's home before we headed toward Alabama for the State Association. Those dates are Nov. 5-7. But, I told him that I am just not up to driving that distance. So, we scrapped that plan and now he is working on figuring out how to get the VW to John. The brother in law has offered to take a few days off and drive it up. Meanwhile it is fun to see a little VW parked out front. It brings back memories of all the VWs we owned over the years.

We made a run up to the Getsemani Children's Home in Morelos on the 4th of this month. Bud was immediately busy fixing supper for the kids again. That is one of his great joys, and the kiddos too! The lady who fixes supper when we are not there has a pretty limited imagination. So, when Abuelo (Grandfather) shows up with his great menus and rich disserts, everyone celebrates.

We left there on the 9th and headed

for Oklahoma. We stayed with my brother and his wife, W.H. and Wanda Gage. We had a sweet visit with them, and happened to time it just right to get to go to their annual fish fry at the Greenbrier FWB Church, where I grew up. I got to see some folks I had not seen in a good while. Saturday Bud had to spend the morning in Tulsa with a tax man. Our regular accountant, Ron Curtis has had a recent heart surgery, and other complications. He had another heart surgery on Tuesday after we were there. My sister Sue Wilcox is painfully waiting for back surgery. She recently changed doctors and is greatly encouraged that her surgery and recovery will not be as severe as she had anticipated. According to Ron's wife Jane he is doing well. All of these dear servants are worthy of your prayers. We love and appreciate them so.

On Sunday, the 12th, we were blessed to have a chance to go to the Westside FWB Church in Pryor, our last "home" church in Oklahoma. And again, the timing was great. They had a lovely meal that day to celebrate Pastor Appreciation Day for Pastor Andy Nichols. Again, we got to visit with dear friends.

We left there and drove to Blanchard, OK. Bud spoke at the Christ Chapel FWB Church, where our dear friends, and major helpers, Mark and Brenda Cole are members. We spent the next few days staying with them while we attended the Oklahoma State Association at Hillsdale College. There, we again saw friends and supporters from our home state. The meetings were an encouragement, and the preaching outstanding! What a great blessing. ,

We left Mark and Brenda's Wednesday afternoon and made it back to Pharr Thursday evening, after dark. Sunday we attended "our" church in McAllen, the Light of Life FWB Church. Again, it was good to be with friends and hear another good message by pastor Greg Yacobian. We were tickled to see their older son Gregory and Angela Rochelle, a young lady from the church while we were at Hillsdale.

Brother Macario Sanchez came over . He comes each Tuesday to make a visit to the Food Bank. He always heads home with a load of fresh vegetables and fruits. Today he wanted to share with us so I took a huge papaya, a couple of cucumbers and two big, yellow, bell peppers. He and his congregation are planning a concert and dinner on Nov. 8th and again on Dec. 13th to raise funds to repair the roof of the church there in Reynosa. He wanted me to let everyone know, in case anyone wants to come on the 8th for tamales and a concert. They hope to have a concert and meal project every month until they raise enough money to make the needed repairs.

Please keep us in your prayers. The violence in Mexico just continues. We are getting older with every day that passes and have not stopped looking, and praying for someone to help us out in Altamira. I feel like I have about a quart of energy each day and have to be wise about where I use it. Needless to say, I am always a week or two behind. Meanwhile, "Hubby" is always going in a hard trot. I have given up trying to keep up with him.

So, please keep us, our beloved Mexico, and all the faithful workers there in your prayers.

SUBSCRIBE

To the Print Edition of

\$10.00 per year (four issues)



Send payment to: Texas FWB Treasurer, PO Box 25, Thomaston, TX 77989

Provows Attend Intercultural Training

by Josh Provow

Since our last newsletter was published, we have spent a grand total of one night in our home in Missouri. The day after we returned home from Denver, we packed our bags for our seven-week training at the Center for Intercultural Training in Union Mills, NC. Two days ago we arrived in Clarksville, TN, where we are spending time with Lydia's family. Some extended family is coming up from Alabama today, so we are going to celebrate Thanksgiving early. In a few days, Josh will drive to southwest Missouri to speak at the Indian Creek Association's mission conference, and Lydia will stay in Tennessee and help her family pack up for their impending move to Missouri. Lydia's dad Mike accepted the pastorate of Stonebridge FWB Church, a mission church in Troy, MO.

You might be wondering what life was like at our seven-week training camp. Well, in one word, it was amazing! The seven weeks were broken down into three different modules. The first four weeks revolved around equipping us for life overseas. Weeks five and six were all about how to learn languages effectively. And week seven was the culmination when we studied different strategies and tools for church planting.

All throughout the seven weeks our kids had amazing childcare. During the equipping course, the girls learned about cultures from around the world, including a day on Bulgaria. Each week they memorized Bible verses like Psalm 56:3, Proverbs 18:10, and Romans 5:8, verses that all apply well to overseas work. And during the language weeks, the girls learned words and phrases in Portuguese. While clearly they won't use much Portuguese in Bulgaria, it helped give them confidence that they can learn Bulgarian. We were proud parents whenever they were able to say things and sing songs in a brand-new language!

For us grown-ups, each module was cram-packed with helpful information. During the equipping course, we spent several days learning how we can be effective team members when we arrive. Believe it or not, the number one reason missionaries leave the field is because they can't get along with other missionaries! We praise God that we are joining a team that we already love! But interestingly enough, we learned that the most effective church-planting teams are multicultural. In missions circles, our Bulgaria team is somewhat unique in that we are both multicultural and highly unified.

The language course was all about giving us the tools we'll need to learn the language when we get on the field. We learned how to make some of the unique sounds that we don't make as often in English. For instance, Bulgarian has the letter "ж," which makes the same sound as the letter "s" in the word "leisure." Ж is a common letter, as in the word жаба (zhaba), which means "frog." And if you're wondering, we're pretty sure that's where Jabba the Hutt got his name! There were times when we wondered how much two weeks of learning language tools could possibly help us. But then we learned that the average person who does the two-week language training chops about six months off of their language learning on the field!

Week seven we wrapped up all of our learning by looking at some different ways that churches are being planted around the world. We were amazed to learn some of the different ways God is moving! For instance, between the years 600 and 1870, there was only one recorded case of a group of at least 1,000 Muslims coming to Christ. Between 1870 and 1970, two such groups came to Christ. From 1970 to 2000, there were ten. Pretty dismal, right? But

then, between 2000 and 2012, there were at least sixty-nine such groups, consisting of tens of thousands of new churches and millions of baptisms. Friends, our great God is doing something today in Muslim countries that previous generations could only dream of! Since our family is going to be working with a people group that is 96% Muslim, we were so encouraged to hear that God is already working!

And yet, as amazing as the training was, when we think about CIT, our minds instantly think about the amazing friends we made there. It never ceases to amaze us how quickly people can bond when the Holy Spirit dwells in them. Whenever our "class" all makes it to the field, we will have friends in over a dozen countries around the world!

We're so thankful for our time at CIT. We're better equipped for the field, and we will be better church planters for it. And we have you, our faithful prayer warriors and supporters, to thank for sending us. Thank you!

Thank you for praying for our team and our family. Our God delights in hearing and answering your prayers. If you are interested in partnering with our family, our team, or with FWBIM, please pray and see what God would have you do. If He asks you to give, please give me a call at (573)783-9645, or visit www.fwbgo.com/give. God bless you and your families!

-Josh, Lydia, Naomi, Phoebe, Zoe, and Malachi



Family Ministries Expanding in Arkansas

The Lord is opening doors for Free Will Baptist Family Ministries. It's no secret there is an incredible need to help hurting children throughout this country. We believe God has called, and is using Family Ministries to accomplish this goal. As God is opening doors for us to minister, we cannot help but have a strong desire to "walk through" those doors. As many of you know, Free Will Baptist Family Ministries has been given a great opportunity to expand the service we provide in the state of Arkansas. The building that was donated in the small town of Charleston was a great gift. But that's not how we realized it was God that was working.

When Family Ministries met with the Department of Human Services in Arkansas, we were told this area was that very region of the state that had the greatest need for a ministry like ours!! That's when we realized God was "directing our path" (Prov. 3:6).

Please pray for us as we step through these "doors of divine direction". And be a part of what God is doing through Family Ministries by helping us with the renovation of this building. There will need to be extensive work done before we can be approved to operate by the state of Arkansas. Every dollar counts!! Just earmark your donation for the "Arkansas Project".



Leadership Conference to Address Biblical Marriage

Nashville, TN—Pastors and church leaders are encouraged to attend the 2014 Free Will Baptist Leadership Conference, which will meet at Nashville Airport Marriott Hotel December 8-9. Dr. Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, will be the keynote speaker.

He will be joined by speakers Matt Pinson, president of Welch College; Eddie Moody, pastor of Tippett's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, member of the Welch College Board of Trustees, and chair of the Department of Counselor Education at North Carolina Central University; and Phillip Whiteaker, a judge serving on the Arkansas Board of Appeals and chairman of the FWB Foundation Board. Together, these men will explore "Affirming Biblical Marriage," from the scriptural basis of marriage to historic beliefs and practices and new ways to strengthen and defend marriage in today's increasingly hostile culture.

More than 150 church leaders from across the U.S. and Canada are expected to gather for the annual event. The meeting will feature worship services, practical instruction, and plenty of time for conversation and

networking. Registration for the conference is \$190. Attendees can Register Online or mail in the attached Registration Form. Hotel reservations can be made online at Nashville Airport Marriott (group code: fwbfbwa) or by calling 615-889-9300. Rooms are \$127 per night plus tax with complimentary parking and Wi-Fi.

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

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

M.Div. in biblical studies from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and a Ph.D. in systematic theology from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

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

"Dr. Moore has made a profound impact on today's church," said Executive Secretary Keith Burden. "He understands the challenges churches face in trying to reach a suspicious and sometimes hostile culture, and he offers practical advice for bridging the gap between church and culture. We are pleased to welcome him to this year's conference."

Worship services will feature music provided by Welch College, including the Rejoice ensemble and The College Choir, directed by Dr. James Stevens.

Several national boards will meet in conjunction with the conference, including the Executive Committee, Board of Retirement, FWB Foundation, Home Missions, International Missions, Randall House, and Welch College.

Randall House Launches Academic Imprint

Randall House launches an academic imprint called Randall House Academic. The purpose of the academic imprint will help develop and enact a long-term and systematic plan within Randall House's book division to produce theological, historical and reference-oriented books primarily written by Free Will Baptist scholars. Academic works provide more scholarly works for pastors, serious Bible study, and texts for colleges and universities. Randall House has been in the Christian publishing business since 1962 providing Sunday school curriculum, books, Bible studies, and other ministry related items. It is the publishing department of Free Will Baptists and the D6 Resource provider with the ultimate goal of building believers both in church and at home. Randall House is naming Charles Cook the academic editor to work under Michelle Orr who leads the book division. Charles Cook is married to Laura and they have two sons. He will continue to lead the growing congregation at Cookeville Free Will Baptist Church where he has pastored for over four years. Before coming to Cookeville, Charles worked for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in the Christian Guidance division and prior to that as an associate pastor at Peace Church in Florence, SC. Along with years of practical ministry experience, Charles also served as a research assistant to the chair of Duke University's doctoral program in religion while completing a Masters of Theological Studies degree through Duke Divinity School. Charles' time at Duke followed two years of study at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary and an undergraduate education at Welch College. Along with pastoring, Charles currently teaches online courses in both the Philosophy and Biblical

International Missions to Increase Short-Term Ministry Efforts

Antioch, TN-Based on feedback from constituents and analysis of current trends, the Board of International Missions challenged administrative staff to develop a proposal to increase opportunities for involvement in humanitarian and other short-term activities.

As part of the solution for this challenge, the Mission engaged Curt Holland as a short-term, cross-cultural ministries consultant. Curt's role will help the Mission in several key areas:

- Conduct an analysis of the trends and interests of the current generation and our churches so IM can align programming and projects to actual needs.
- Identify global needs IM can address through short-term teams and projects for long-term impact.
- Engage Free Will Baptists in focused conversations about these needs.
- Develop strategy for short- and long-term mobilization and impact.
- Holland's 90-day engagement involves not only the activities described above, but also planning and scheduling trips and projects.
- International Missions has always included humanitarian and holistic emphases with evangelization and church planting. Our heritage with pioneer missionaries like Thomas Willey in Cuba, Dr. LaVerne Miley in Côte d'Ivoire, and Carlisle Hanna still serving in India reflects ministry to the whole person," says Clint Morgan, general director. "The current generation is ready to engage sacrificially, going where needs are the greatest, and we want to be their conduit. We began The Hanna Project to engage in help, hope, and healing, ministering to needs to give a strong gospel witness. This is the next step."

Mark McPeak, director of advancement, agrees and adds, "This effort will require more effective, diverse communication including social media. We hope to engage a new generation with the message that they can change the world and they can do it in partnership with International Missions."

"I am honored to have this opportunity," Holland responds. "God has changed my own life and the lives of many others through short-term missions. I believe short-term trips and projects have long-term impact. My passion is working with the Gen X and millennial generations, seeing them live out their desire to be involved in changing the world."

Holland, an expert in short-term missions, has led more than a dozen trips. His work begins immediately. The board and leadership of International Missions encourage all Free Will Baptists to be personally involved around the world.

Studies programs of Hillsdale College. Michelle Orr said, "Randall House has increased its standing in the publishing world over the past decade. I look forward to working with Charles to further develop authors and works in the academic genre." Charles remarked, "I look forward to working with Michelle Orr and the Randall House team. In the midst of a changing denominational and cultural landscape, it is an honor to help facilitate rigorous reflection

on God's Word and the Word's impact on lives, Christian communities and the broader culture."

Executive Director of Randall House Ron Hunter said, "The timing is right as we watch some of our founding scholars of the modern day movement prepare to pass off the scene, Randall House will take an active role in helping develop the scholars who will guide our future. I am most excited about working Charles and Michelle to proactively plan needed works that both chart and document our path."

Stones of Remembrance Part 2: Freedom



Thomas Helwys believed that he was free to follow his reading of scripture and his conscience in rejecting the teachings of the Anabaptists and returning to England. He and the remnants of the Smyth group will establish the first Baptist church on English soil in London in 1612. Thomas Helwys was a lawyer and a committed Puritan who had joined together with Smyth during his pastorate at Lincoln. Helwys helped to fund the congregation in Holland and assisted in leading the church. While in Holland he wrote several important works that would express the sentiments of the community. In 1611 he published the earliest Free Will Baptist creed or statement of belief entitled "A Declaration of Faith of English People Remaining at Amsterdam." This work together with his "Short and Plaine Proof" published the same year clearly present that the congregation was committed to the theological position that would come to be known as Arminianism. The congregation believed that Christ had died for all men and that all men could be saved. In other words, Helwys and his congregation were united in teaching that the human will though tainted by sin was able through prevenient grace to freely accept or reject the free offer of salvation. His belief in free will was defended in his "Short and Plaine Proof" where he explicitly rejected the Calvinistic teaching of predestination.

Helwys' experience with religious persecution and his theological commitment to free will and the freedom of the conscience also prompted him to publish the first English book to argue for religious liberty. This principle so foundational for Americans was virtually unheard of at this time but it was an outgrowth of his commitment to scripture and his theology of free will. In 1612 before

his congregation returned to England he published a book entitled, "A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity" in which he argued for the freedom of religion. He said, "the King is a mortal man, and not God, therefore he hath no power over the mortal soul of his subjects to make laws and ordinances for them and to set spiritual Lords over them...(and) If the Kings people be obedient and true subjects, obeying all humane lawes made by the King, our Lord the King can require no more: for men's religion to God is betwixt God and themselves; the King shall not answer for it, neither may the King be judge between God and man." This plea for religious liberty was not heard however. Shortly after returning to England Helwys was arrested by the king and imprisoned where he died in 1616 as the first Free Will Baptist martyr for the faith.

The movement begun by Helwys and his small congregation would continue to grow and flourish. Though they occasionally referred to themselves as "free willers", originally a title of derision given to them by their opponents, they typically used the term general Baptists to indicate their distinction from Calvinistic Baptists who had arisen in 1633 and were referred to as particular Baptists. They continued to defend their beliefs in the free will of man and the freedom of religion in numerous apologetic and doctrinal statements. Most important among these is the statement that will come to be known as the Standard Confession of 1660. This document will not only be the guiding source of belief for the General Baptists in England for the next 50 years but also one of the American groups of Free Will Baptists we will look at shortly. The Standard Confession continued to emphasize free will and religious freedom. On free will and the free offer of salvation the confession taught, "IV. That God is not willing that any should Perish, but that all

should come to repentance, 2 Pet. 3. 9. and the knowledge of the truth, that they might be saved, 1 Tim. 2. 4. For which end Christ hath commanded, that the Gospel (to wit, the glad tydings of remission of sins) should be preached to every creature, Mark 16. 15. So that no man shall eternally suffer in Hell (that is, the second death) for want of a Christ that dyed for them, but as the Scripture saith, for denying the Lord that bought them, 2 Pet. 2. 1. or because they believe not in the name of the only begotten Son of God, John 3. 18. Unbelief therefore being the cause why the just and righteous God, will condemn the children of men; it follows against all contradiction, that all men at one time or other, are put into such a capacity, as that (through the grace of God) they may be eternally saved, John 1. 7. Acts 17. 30. Mark 6. 6. Heb. 3. 10, 18, 19. 1 John 5. 10. John 3. 17." Concerning religious liberty the Confession taught, "XXIV. That it is the will, and mind of God (in these Gospel times) that all men should have the free liberty of their own Consciences in matters of Religion, or Worship, without the least oppression, or persecution, as simply upon that account; and that for any in Authority otherwise to act, we confidently believe is expressly contrary to the mind of Christ, who requires that whatsoever men would that others should do unto them, they should even so do unto others, Mat. 7. 12. and that the Tares, and the Wheat should grow together in the field, (which is the end of the world,) Mat. 13. 29, 30, 38, 39."





The Texas Challenge
501 Russell St.
Henderson, TX 75654
fwbtxaschallenge@gmail.com

Happy Holidays From The Texas Challenge

I hope you have enjoyed reading this issue of The Texas Challenge. Please have a safe and pleasant holiday season. Remember to count your blessings this Thanksgiving and to reflect on the Light of the world at Christmas. As 2014 comes to an end, take note of how far the Lord has brought you, and enter 2015 with expectations of going farther and deeper in your relationships with God and your neighbors.

Our next issue will arrive in January, and we would love for you to share with the readers how your church celebrated the holidays. This would also be a great time to share your plans for the New Year. What programs will you begin? What community outreach events will be on your calendar? Who in your church deserves a shout out? Send us your stories before January 7. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



SUBMISSION DEADLINES

In order to put the newsletter out in a timely and consistent manner, please observe the following submission deadlines for future issues.

Spring Issue

March 25

Summer Issue

July 1

Fall Issue

October 1

Winter Issue

January 7