



# The TEXAS CHALLENGE

Published by the Texas State Association of Free Will Baptists

## Plans Set for 101st State Meeting in McAllen Church 101: Little Is Much When God Is In It

The 101st Annual Session of the Texas State Association of Free Will Baptists will be meeting June 10-12, 2015, at the Light of Life FWB Church in McAllen. Travel information and directions to the hotel can be found here.

Board meetings will begin on Wednesday morning June 10, and the formal opening of the Annual Session will begin with the Wednesday evening worship service. Our keynote speaker for the evening worship services will be Gowdy Cannon, Associate Pastor and Pastor of Bilingual Ministries at Northwest Community Church in Chicago, IL. The tentative meeting schedule for the Annual Session has been posted for worship services and business meetings. For an overview of all conference activities, please view our draft master schedule in PDF.

Lodging at this year's State Meeting will be at two adjacent hotels: the Homewood Suites and the SpringHill Suites.

As in years past, we will make pre-registration available to all attendees. You may register online or you may register using a printed registration form and mailing it or e-mailing it to the State Office. All pre-registration must be completed by May 15 in order to have your information compiled prior to the meeting. Onsite registration will also be available, but you are encouraged to pre-register if you know that you will attend. Pre-registration helps us to keep records more efficiently, and pre-registered attendees will have a pre-made nametag at the registration table.

If your church has had any directory changes since last year's State Meeting, please include that in your church's reporting form so that we can update the directory for the 2015 Yearbook.

Please make plans now to join us in McAllen, and feel free to contact the State Office if you have any questions.

## State Meeting Travel Info

If you are planning to fly to the State Meeting, you can fly directly to the McAllen area through McAllen-Miller International Airport, which is served by American Eagle (via DFW) and United Express (via Houston - Bush Intercontinental).

If you are planning to drive to the State Meeting, Light of Life FWB Church meets in the facilities of the United Methodist Church at 1801 Trenton Rd. McAllen, TX 78504.

To drive from the conference hotels (link) to the church, turn north (left) onto Ware Road, and travel approximately 6.0 miles to Auburn Road. Turn east (right) on Auburn Road, which becomes Trenton Road. Travel approximately 1.6 miles to the United Methodist Church at 1801 Trenton Road.

For additional information about the host church, visit this site.

For other travel information, please visit the McAllen Convention and Visitors Bureau.

Stay up to date on Vertical Three  
news at [www.verticathree.com](http://www.verticathree.com)

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# BREWER'S BEAT



Marcus Brewer  
State Office Coordinator

Greetings, everyone! I hope you had an enjoyable holiday season, and it is a season since both Thanksgiving and Christmas have passed since I last wrote in this space. I also hope that your 2015 is off to a good start. From the State Office's point of view, 2015 looks to be a much calmer year than 2014, now that the 100<sup>th</sup> State Meeting and hosting the National Convention are in our rear-view mirror. But that doesn't mean that there won't be plenty of activities to keep up with.

As our various boards and committees finalize their plans, we'll be able to announce dates and places for additional events throughout the year, but we want you to make sure to plan ahead so that you can attend and be a part of all that is going on in Texas Free Will

Baptists during 2015.

The date of the Men's Conference is still to be determined, because a number of men have indicated that the recent dates in early December have had scheduling conflicts. If you have suggestions on a favorable date for the Men's Conference, please contact John Collier ([wjcollier3@gmail.com](mailto:wjcollier3@gmail.com)). If you have a noteworthy event coming up that you want to share with the state, please let us know, both for inclusion in the *Texas Challenge* on its publication schedule and for e-mail distribution anytime throughout the year. Wishing you the best for a 2015 that is filled with God's blessings and guidance for you, your families, and your churches!

## Thomaston Teen Seeks E-Team Funds & Prayers

My name is Laura Davis. I am a member of Thomaston Free Will Baptist Church in Thomaston Texas, and I am 15 years old and a sophomore at Cuero High School. I am writing because I have just recently been selected by Free Will Baptist International Missions Department to serve this summer as a member of ETEAM Chicago 2015. I am very excited about being chosen and pray that God will be glorified by my willingness to serve. I am humbly reaching out to spread the gospel to the ends of the earth. I need your partnership to make this opportunity a reality. First, I covet your prayers that this may be a successful and safe trip for my team. Next, I pray that my financial needs be met. My financial responsibility is \$3700. I needed half of my total funds in my account at Free Will Baptist International Missions by February 15, and the remaining by April 30. My family and I are working hard to provide as much of the funds as possible, but I know we will not be able to cover the entire expense by our efforts alone.

Will you please prayerfully consider allowing me to come and share this ministry opportunity with you and your church? If you are able to help, you will be making a contribution to this summer ministry and to an unparalleled opportunity for God to help me understand my lifelong involvement with international missions.

If possible, I would like to make an appointment to come and share this ministry with your church at your earliest convenience. I will attempt to contact you to follow up on this request. Please join me in prayer the Nations would come to know the glorious name of Jesus through this ministry opportunity.

May God bless you and your willingness to serve His Kingdom.

May 1-3 – Texas FWB Youth Retreat (Camp of the Hills, Marble Falls)

May 16 – Texas FWB State Youth Competition (New Beginnings Church, Bryan)

June 10-12 – 101<sup>st</sup> Texas FWB Annual Meeting (Light of Life FWB Church, McAllen)

July 19-22 – 79<sup>th</sup> National Association of FWB (Grand Rapids, MI)

September 25-26 – Texas FWB Women's Retreat (Mt. Lebanon Camp, Cedar Hill)

TBD – Texas FWB Men's Conference

*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](http://www.texasfwb.org/challenge)  
Mail comments and articles to:  
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Henderson, TX 75654  
903-646-6038  
[fwbtexaschallenge@gmail.com](mailto: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.



# ETEAM

# West Fork District News

Exciting News!!! The West Fork Youth Camp has a new website! Please take a moment to check it out at [www.WestForkCamp.org](http://www.WestForkCamp.org)

This new site is colorful, vibrant, and fun, and ready to show kids and families what camp is all about! It has a photo gallery, and is also equipped to accept tax deductible donations, as well as allowing campers' registration fees to be paid online.

In addition, the site allows parents and kids to learn more about camp week, print forms, find a map to the camp, get contact info, and more!

Please feel free to explore this new site, and share it with the families in your church!

There is also a new Facebook page for the West Fork Youth Camp at [www.Facebook.com/WestForkCamp](http://www.Facebook.com/WestForkCamp)

You are welcome to check out the Facebook page, and "Like" us - for the latest news, updates, and information, on the West Fork Youth Camp!

This year, Camp will be held from June 22nd-26th, you and the children from your church, family, and community, are welcomed to join us!!! We look forward to seeing y'all there!



# Weatherford Church News

Do you know anyone who who is shut in, or otherwise unable to attend church regularly, but who desires to have solid Biblical teaching? Or, do you, or someone you know, desire to have more Bible teaching during the week, or for a small group study? If so - we have a wonderful resource to share! To answer these needs, First Free Will Baptist Church of Weatherford, has established a media ministry - which is based online, and also makes hard-copy DVD's available at the church, or upon request. You are invited to visit: [www.WeatherfordFWB.com](http://www.WeatherfordFWB.com) under the "Videos" tab; there you will find a variety videos - complete with PowerPoint presentations - from every Sunday sermon at First Free Will Baptist Church in Weatherford, over the past year. In addition, you will also find many of our Wednesday evening lessons, including our on-going series called "Analyzing the Bible Through Science" which helps to build a comprehensive Biblical worldview, by looking at evidence from the world our Lord created!

Please feel free to view and share these teachings, or use them for small group studies. We began this media ministry to give as many people as possible, access to sound Biblical teaching, any time, any where. New sermons/lessons are added each week, so feel free to check back often!

Long-time member Sister Billie Jean Barnes, went home to be with her Lord and Savior, on January 16, 2015. She was a life-long member of First Free Will Baptist church in Weatherford, where for over 70 years, she served the Lord faithfully, in various roles from Sunday School teacher to an active member of the Women's Auxiliary. Sister Billie Jean, and her husband, Richard, raised their family in the church. Sister Billie Jean's father, also a long-time member, was instrumental in funding and coordinating the construction of the current sanctuary, after a fire that destroyed the original building in approximately the 1930's.

Sister Bille Jean Barnes is survived by her son Dennis Barnes, of Fort Worth; daughter Sabrina Stoffel, and husband Tim, of Fort Worth; niece, Brenda Geeslin; and nephews, Clarence Earl Harris, Donald Ray Harris and Gary White.



# Huntsville Welcomes New Pastor Michael Hunt

I was saved when I was 13 years old at the First Free Will Baptist Church in Wagoner, Ok. This is the church that I grew up in, and thanks to my wonderful pastor Jimmy Layne, I grew in Christ when I was 15 years old I started teaching Sunday school class and doing children's church on Sunday mornings. By the time I was 16, I was driving the church van, running a van ministry for the church, as well, as teaching Sunday school and children's church. I married my high school sweetheart when I was 18, my wife Tyriesha came to wagoner in the ninth grade and it was love at first sight. We were married on May 30 1997 then in 1998 we had our first child Amanda she is still living in Oklahoma and is very active in the band at Wagoner High school. In 2002 we had a son Zachary but he passed away when he was only 12 days old this caused me to walk away from God and go down a very bad path but God kept me safe and then in 2006 we had moved from Wagoner to Tulsa and we had our third child Riley she is now 8 years old and loves to play soccer and to be with her friends. In 2011 we had our fourth child Skylar she is a crazy 3 three year old that loves to talk and loves to play with everyone. Then in 2013 we had our fifth child Gage he is a very fun little boy that loves to run around and get into everything. In 2010 I was ordained to preach the gospel through the South Grand River association in Oklahoma. I served as the youth pastor at the First Free Will in Wagoner from 2007 to 2010 I also served as the assistant pastor from April 2010 till December 2010. In 2011 I took the position of Pastor at Trinity Free Will Baptist Church in Muskogee Ok and was there till 2012, when we left there we went to help a friend out with their church. I am a full time student at Welch College and I am currently a junior working toward my bachelor's in ministry. We came to Pine Prairie in August after being called to candidate for the position of pastor we fell in love the first time we walked through the door. In September of 2014 we moved from Wagoner Oklahoma to Huntsville Texas and have been working hard ever since. At the church we are working on ways to reach out to the community and to get more people into the church and to help everyone grow closer to Jesus. In March of this year we are going to be having our first ever Friend day and we are hoping and praying that this day will be a great success. Our goals for the future is we would love to work on getting a youth program for teens and to start a college service for the area college students at Sam Houston University.



## Promise Is the Theme of Youth Retreat

- What:** State Youth Retreat  
**When:** May 1, 2, & 3, 2015  
**Where:** Camp of the Hills, 1552 CR344, Marble Falls, TX 78654  
**Who:** All students 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> grades  
**Cost:** \$90 if registered by April 17<sup>th</sup>; \$100 after April 17<sup>th</sup>.  
**Cost includes (2) nights lodging and (4) meals.**

Our theme this year is "Promise". We will be looking at the commitments that we make and the commitment God makes to us. Our theme verse will be John 3:16. We will be doing our own cooking this year, and we need 3 adults who will be willing to assist in that role this year. Please contact Baxter Horton if you are interested in helping or if you have any questions (972.742.6860 or

## CTS Competition Seeks Entries, Judges

CTS State Competition this year will be held on Saturday, May 16, 2015. It will be held at New Beginnings Free Will Baptist Church in Bryan, Texas. The start time will be 9:00 a.m. The following link will provide rules and entrance sheets. Once at the vertical three page, click on NYC.  
<http://verticalthree.com/>

If you have children competing, please make sure to complete the form and send it one of two ways.

- Put it in the mail with the entrance fee to Teresa Voltz at 822 Weeping Willow Way, Magnolia, TX 77354
- Fill out the form, scan it and email it to Teresa Voltz at [mtvoltz@consolidated.net](mailto:mtvoltz@consolidated.net) and bring the money to the state competition to turn in.

Fees for competition are \$25.00 for a single entry, \$45.00 for an entry containing two to four people and \$75.00 for entires containing five or more.

All children coming to attend the State CTS Competition will also have to pay a fee of \$10.00 per person. This is for all children competing or not. This will cover lunch and fees incurred.

We hope many children will come to compete and also come to fellowship with other children.

Please have entries postmarked or emailed by Saturday, May 2, 2015.

Also, judges will be needed so volunteers would be appreciated. Please let Teresa Voltz know.

If you have any questions, please contact Teresa Voltz at [mtvoltz@consolidated.net](mailto:mtvoltz@consolidated.net) or 832-647-3458.

## Pulpit Supply

FWB Ministers available to preach where needed:

**Brandon Snowden**  
936-577-0551  
[bsnowder@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:fwbtexaschallenge@gmail.com)*



Need a lift? My granddaughter, niece, great niece and I went to one of those 'fun' trampoline places where you can play dodge ball, jump and land in pits filled with nerf/foam squares for a soft landing. Of course 'Grammy' had to run and jump with them! Thank Heaven for soft landings! However, I was wedged in so-o-o tight I couldn't budge, wondering how am I going to get out of this! The attendants were probably thinking here is another 'adult' we're going to have to pull out! LOL! Finally, I was able to lift my leg a smidgen, and begin climbing out. We did have lots of fun, but I did not jump back in that pit again!

All of us need a lift on occasion! Isn't God so good to us! He knows us inside and out (Psalm 139); knows just what we need, when we need it! Praise God for those "Lord lifts"- an answer to a long time prayer request, church members returning to services, a welcomed visit of 16 men from a local



rehab center for mid-week service, and fellowship with our sister church in the baptism of the Pastor's grandchild - joy! Go to Him, He is able to deliver thee! Psalm 40:2(The Message) "He lifted me out of the ditch, pulled me from deep mud. He stood me up on a solid rock to make sure I wouldn't slip. He taught me how to sing the latest God-song, a praise-song to our God." 'O praise His name, He lifted me!' Here are a few ways you can receive, or give, a "Lord lift" in the coming months.



'Giddy Up Girls' to Light of Life Church, McAllen, TX, for the 2015 TWAC State Meeting, June 11th. Our guest speakers will be Mitzi Munsey Satterfield for the ladies session, and Jeff Cates for the joint session, focusing on Matthew 28:19-20, the Great Commission. Come fellowship with your sisters in Christ! Shine your light by supporting, preparing and/or distributing invitations throughout the week for Saturday (13th) evening's outreach event in the park. Be watching for more details, but save the dates now, the second week of June.

Mt. Lebanon Camp, Cedar Hill, TX, will be the site for the ladies state retreat, sponsored by TWAC, on September 25th & 26th. Ana Yacobian will be inviting us to "Be Still and Know", and Dr. Janice Banks will focus on "Now Get Up and Go". A link to the retreat brochure will be available on the [www.texasfwb.org](http://www.texasfwb.org) website. Register by August 31st to



receive a discount. A limited number of motel style rooms are available with varying costs. Invite a friend(s) to come with you!

Check out the 'Texas Women Active For Christ' Face Book page, thanks to Sharon Dickey and Ana Yacobian!

Refresh at the WNAC Conference, 'Flourish', September 3rd - 5th, Embassy Suites, Murfreesboro, TN. See [www.wnac.org](http://www.wnac.org) for more information.



Thank you Texas FWB women for your prayers, support and work for the Lord! TWAC seeks to bring Texas women together for spiritual growth, encouragement and opportunities to fulfill our role in the Great Commission in the home, church, community and world. Contact Mitzi Burks, 903-646-1667, [mburks@eastex.net](mailto:mburks@eastex.net), or any TWAC Officer for TWAC/WNAC membership information. May God be glorified in all!

# News From The North Houston Project



We are excited to announce that Jonathan and Ashley McNeese moved to Houston the last week of February and are already beginning to take over the children's ministry. Children's ministry is a vital part of our ministry and the McNeeses will lead this area to new heights in the upcoming weeks. Our next large children's event is less than a month away and it centers around our celebration of Easter. Please be in prayer for the McNeeses and for this children of our area. We want to make the largest impact possible with this age and the future of our community.

The first couple of months of 2015 have found Woodforest Free Will Baptist Church with much to be thankful for and much to pray about. God has put us in contact with several families that began to attend in January but almost just as quickly the devil began to work in the lives of the families. While we are thankful for the prospect of adding people to our ministry we are reminded that there is a spiritual battle that rages all around us and we are not immune to its effects. However, through the struggles God has allowed us to slowly continue to grow our overall ministry.

Also, in the first quarter of this year, we are researching the feasibility of building a permanent church building of our one. As many of you already know we currently own approximately 3.5 acres of property near the Woodforest

Development. Using the money that we currently pay in rent we can build a nice building on our own land that would allow us to better reach our community from a permanent location. Please be praying about this with us as we make our site plan and seek out an architect, engineer, surveyors, and builders. We want to use the people that God has for us to use and not make mistakes in the process.

In January we had a visit from Brutus of The Ohio State University. One fan in our church was pretty excited over the Buckeyes' win in the NCAA National Championship game.

Jonathan and Ashley McNeese have moved to Houston and are just now starting their ministry here. Please pray for this couple as they lead our children's ministry and pray about supporting them financially as they are associate missionaries. God has blessed us with the McNeeses and we are excited to see how God is going to use them.

#### Current Prayer Requests:

1. Pray that we can see people saved and find a way to baptize those that have been saved.
2. Pray for Jonathan and Ashley McNeese as they adjust to moving across the county and as they start their ministry at Woodforest Church.
3. Pray for our outreach efforts leading up to and including Easter
4. Pray for the faithfulness of our families
5. Pray that we can have an enormous impact in our community for Christ



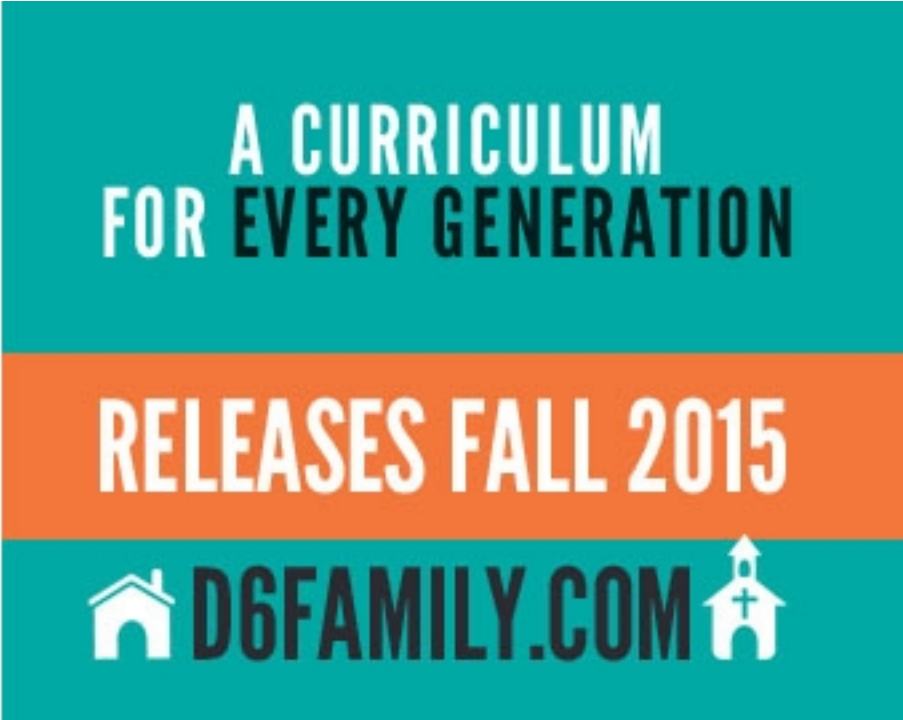
## SUBSCRIBE

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## \$10.00 per year (four issues)



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



# State Meeting Lodging Info

Lodging for this year's State Meeting has been arranged at the Homewood Suites and SpringHill Suites, adjacent hotels located along Expressway US-83 within walking distance of several restaurants and easy driving distance to numerous others. Room rates are valid for Tuesday night (June 9) through Friday night (June 12).

To make reservations, attendees must call your choice of hotel at the telephone number below and identify yourself as a part of the Texas State Association of Free Will Baptists group to receive the reduced rate. You must provide guest name, requested room type (for Homewood Suites), and check-in / check-out dates.

Driving directions from the hotels to the church: turn north (left) onto Ware Road, travel approximately 6.0 miles to Auburn Road. Turn east (right) on Auburn Road, which becomes Trenton Road. Travel approximately 1.6 miles to the United Methodist Church at 1801 Trenton Road.

### Homewood Suites

(956) 630-0500  
 3801 Expressway 83 - McAllen, TX  
 Room Rates:  
 Studio Suite or 1-Bedroom Suite with King bed - **\$119.00 + tax**  
 2-Bedroom Suite - **\$179.00 + tax**  
 Rate includes all standard amenities of the hotel, including:

- Complimentary daily Suite Start® hot breakfast and Welcome Home® reception featuring a dinner and beverages Monday-Thursday evenings.
- Complimentary in-suite high-speed Internet access

Reservation deadline: May 18, 2015



### SpringHill Suites

(956) 682-6336  
 1800 S. Ware Road - McAllen, TX  
 Room Rates:  
 Suite with two Queen beds - **\$109.00 + tax**  
 Rate includes all standard amenities of the hotel, including:

- Complimentary Full Breakfast buffet included every morning.
- Complimentary snacks provided every Tuesday - Thursday evening.
- 24-Hour Complimentary Shuttle service to and from Airport and surrounding areas.
- All suites have sofa sleeper, coffee maker, mini-fridge, and complimentary Wi-Fi.

Reservation deadline: June 1, 2015





# The Provows: Trusting In A Trustworthy God

Eight weeks ago, we sent out a newsletter from a crowded hotel room in downtown Chicago. We were praising God that we had finally gone to the consulate and applied for our visas. That crucial appointment was the culminating event of months and months of filling out applications, gathering documents, and paying fees. We were discouraged to hear that the processing time was 35-40 business days, but we were encouraged to find out that the consulate requested that our visas be expedited.

With this knowledge in hand, we made every plan to fly to Bulgaria on February 19th. We packed nearly all of our suitcases, said nearly all of our goodbyes, and completed our prefield orientation at FWBIM's home office. We checked off every last one of our requirements, except for one. Visas. People around the country (as well as friends overseas), prayed that our visas would arrive in time for us to buy tickets for the 19th. But as God sometimes does, He answered our prayers by saying "No". Remember how the processing time for Bulgarian visas is 35-40 business days? Today was day 40. We even held off writing this newsletter hoping that the call would come today. No call.

And so, here we are, sitting in our home in Fredericktown, MO, wondering why we're not sending you this newsletter from Svishtov, Bulgaria. Yet, in the midst of our waiting, we have been reminded of three beautiful truths about our great God.

**1. He is Sovereign.** We doubt this will come as any shock to you, but God was not surprised when our visas didn't arrive last week. He knew it would happen, and He allowed it to happen. The words of Romans 11:33 have been a great encouragement. "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out!"

**2. He loves us.** Our son, Malachi, learned to crawl last week. And he has the super power of always knowing the

things he shouldn't get into, and then he makes a bee line for those things! And every time he does this, we have the audacity to pick him up and move him away from the danger. Why do we stop him from licking the electrical outlet? Because we love him. He doesn't understand it yet, but we are protecting him. Aren't you so glad that God protects us the same way? We don't know why our visas haven't arrived yet, but we are so thankful that the God who sacrificially loves us is in full control.

**3. He loves the people of Bulgaria.** Probably the hardest part about waiting for our visas is that with each passing day, Bulgarians are dying without Christ. Our sole purpose for going there is to tell the people of Bulgaria about the King who conquered death for them. And yet, for the moment, the King has kept us here. That's hard. But part of trusting God is trusting that His plans are better than ours, and trusting that His plans will result in Him receiving the most glory. Maybe God is delaying us so that we are sitting next to someone on the plane that is in desperate need of the gospel. Maybe the Holy Spirit is developing patience in us now so that we can display that fruit in Bulgaria.

Are we ready for our visas to arrive? You better believe it! We're tired of wearing the same few sets of clothes (all the rest of our clothes are being stored in Nashville). We wish we knew when we would say goodbye to our friends and families. We wish we knew whether or not we will need to go to the grocery store tomorrow! Even though we are tired of waiting, we choose to trust God. We trust in His Sovereignty. We trust in His love for our family. And we trust in His undying desire for the people of Bulgaria to call upon His name. So will our visas arrive tomorrow? Will they arrive in two weeks? Will we be denied visas and have to start the process over? We don't know. But God does know, and that is enough. We choose to trust Him.

## Prayer and Praise

- Praise God for the numerous people who have committed to pray for and support our family. We praise God that He has used you to get us this far, and we praise God that He will use your continued prayer and support to keep us in Bulgaria!
- Praise God for the successful completion of our stateside assignment. Over the past 15 months, we had the privilege of sharing in 110 services in 10 states. God kept us safe on the roads, and God allowed us to meet so many of you!
- Please pray for a special "Women's Day" function at the church in Svishtov on March 7th. Pray for a good crowd of both church ladies and visitors. And also, please pray that one of those ladies will be Lydia!
- Please pray that God would give us boldness to share the gospel early and often. Along this same line, please pray that we would learn the language quickly so that we can more effectively tell others about the gift of salvation.
- Please pray for a strong World Missions Offering this April. This year's goal is for 900 churches to participate. If your church hasn't signed up yet, please prayerfully consider signing up at [www.fwbgo.com/wmo](http://www.fwbgo.com/wmo).
- Finally, please pray that our visas would come in God's timing. We are not asking for them to come in tomorrow (although that would be great). We are simply praying that God's will would be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.

Thank you so much for your ceaseless prayers and generosity. We are privileged to be your missionaries in Bulgaria!



Photo © Angie Edgmon

# MAKE THE TEXAS FWB STATE MEETING YOUR NEXT CHURCH PLANTING/MISSION TRIP!

*Wondering what you can do for Missions?*

Need a great project for your youth group? Want to serve in a short mission trip within the USA? Think no further! COME JOIN US!



## TFWB STATE MEETING JUNE 10-12, 2015

Light of Life is a self-supported Mission Church, but not self-sufficient by any means! We can use your help! Experience firsthand the work and joy of planting a new church.

Arrive earlier or stay later to participate in our efforts to IMPACT the city of McAllen. Help us to be known in our community and claim this city for Christ!

Whether your Church can send one or many, young or elderly, together we will do great things to impact this city with the love and gospel of Christ. Can't make it during that week? Please call us to arrange other dates with you... we want you to come!



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@MISSIONARY CENTERS

But hurry, summer is a busy time in the Valley! We must make reservations ASAP!

PLEASE LET US KNOW YOUR PLANS!

## Stones of Remembrance Part 3 & 4: Spirit Leadership & Accountability



Not only were the Free Will Baptists committed to Scripture and Freedom but they also strove to be attentive to the Holy Spirit in all their actions. Nowhere is this more evident than in the life of one of the founders of Free Will Baptists in America named Benjamin Randall.

There are two streams of Free Will Baptists that arise in America. The earliest of these is the church founded by Paul Palmer in eastern North Carolina in 1727. His father-in-law, Benjamin Laker was a General Baptist and had written to the General Baptists of England in 1702 requesting a pastor for a congregation and promising to underwrite the work. Other than a few books nothing ever came of this request however the connection between the two groups is also strengthened by the use in the southern Free Will Baptist movement of the *General Confession of 1660* as a guiding theological document. Following the ministry and church planting efforts of Paul Palmer, the ministry of Joseph and William Parker will lead to continued growth so that by 1776 there are around 20 churches established. The movement will continue to grow and will be the source of churches all across the southeast including South Carolina, Virginia, Georgia, Florida, and later through contributions of others in Alabama, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Arkansas, and parts of Louisiana.

The rise of the Free Will Baptist movement in the North was an independent movement and an outgrowth of the first Great Awakening. The founder, Benjamin Randall had heard the great revivalist George Whitfield preach a number of times and had been impressed by his fervor and spirit. Upon hearing of Whitfield's death he succumbed to the leading of the Holy Spirit and was converted. He worked for a time in the Congregationalist church but this service was interrupted by the War for Independence. During this time his study of scripture under the leadership of the Holy Spirit led him to embrace the principle of believer's baptism. He was baptized into a Calvinistic Baptist church in late 1776. Over a span of 3 years he wrestled with the call of the Spirit in his life. The call was two-fold. On the one hand he felt that the testimony of scripture was to the free offer of salvation to all men and underscored free will. On the other hand he also felt the Spirit was calling him into a leadership role. In what he described as almost a second conversion (his cornfield experience) he yielded himself to the ministry and to the doctrine of general atonement. He said, "I saw an universal atonement – an universal love – an universal call – and that none would ever perish, only those who refused to accept. . . Oh what love too I felt for all mankind, and wanted that they all might share in that all fullness, which I saw so extensive and so free to all." His embrace of Arminianism would lead however to his separation with the Calvinist Baptist group of which he had been a part. In 1778, Randall became the pastor of a church in New Durham, New Hampshire which would become the first Free Will Baptist church in New England and the mother church of the northern movement of Free Will Baptists.

Under the leadership of the Holy Spirit the late 18th and 19th century brought significant growth to Free Will Baptists in both the north and the south. The southern churches being more rural and less educated grew more slowly in the less populous south. The churches of the north blossomed more quickly establishing themselves in urban areas and reaching out in church-planting efforts to the frontiers of western New York, Ohio, and even into Canada. Such growth leads to the next stone I would like for us to examine today; the stone of accountability. In the north and the south, both movements sought to develop relationships with one another and established connections organized for mutual edification and accountability. The southern connections were looser and more traditionally congregational in nature while the churches of the north were more connectional. Randall established the first New Durham Connexion in 1782 as a Quarterly Meeting of twelve churches and a few years later also established a yearly meeting. By 1827 they would establish the General Conference that would serve very much like a national association.

The churches of the south experimented with annual meetings but were generally confined to district or state meetings. Some churches and associations from the south (Alabama, Georgia, North Carolina, and Tennessee) had joined with a separate Triennial General Conference (1895-1910) eventually led by Thomas Peden of Ohio (and later the Free Will Baptist Seminary in Ayden, North Carolina) that included churches in Ohio, Kentucky, and West Virginia. It was not until 1921 that the first General Conference would be established (This was in some sense a re-establishment of the old Triennial General Conference). Though the northern and southern groups would often trade delegates, cultural differences, educational differences, and the situation of slavery in the south would keep the two from ever officially joining together.

Though such accountability is an important principle, it must be found in a balanced relationship. The danger of the more connectional approach of the northern movement would soon be seen. The social and missionary engagement of the northern movement of Free Will Baptists would lead them to seek out greater and broader connections. This movement would vote to merge with the Northern Baptists in 1910. The following quotation by Davidson will help illustrate the effects of this merger, "Seventeen Yearly Meeting were included in the union, and except for local Quarterly Meeting in Ohio, Kentucky, Texas, and other Western states, all segments of the General Conference gave up their identity and became a part of the Northern Baptist Convention. In 1908 the denomination had 1,292 churches, 68 yearly meetings and associations, and 87,015 members...The 1911 Free Baptist Register and Yearbook reported well over 100,000 members in the Randall camp. It should be noted that this was the year of formal merger."





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## Collin Creek Student to Teach English Overseas

A college student from Collin Creek has received the “most wonderful opportunity” to go to Hong Kong this summer to help junior high and high school students learn English. Melia will be leaving in June for a week of training. She will then spend the next three weeks teaching up to 20 teenagers. At the end of her time of teaching, she will go on a one-week vision trip to an Asian country.

“I have been praying a lot about this opportunity and I feel like this is what God is calling me to do,” Melia says. “I have never been outside the country. The closest experience I have to teaching is with patch club kids on Wednesday nights. This is

going to be a totally new experience for me, but I know God isn't going to send me unprepared.” Please keep Melia in your prayers for the next few months. If you would like to know more about Melia’s trip or to donate to offset the cost, please contact her Pastor Robert Posner at Collin Creek (972-424-1905).



## 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