

Winter 2011

THE TEXAS CHALLENGE

Merry Christmas
Texas!



Lakehills FWB Church - Beginnings...

by Marsha Hood

I've been asked to give a history of our church, a glance, if you will, into the past 20 years.

Let me begin by putting into perspective just what 20 years looks like....Twenty years ago, there were only four buildings on Cypress Creek Rd.: MD Totco, Faubian Elementary, La Petite Academy and Texaco; the population of Cedar Park was 3,500; gas was \$1.12/gallon; the average monthly rent was \$495; the median new home price was \$120,000; Bro. Woody turned 50 years old; the church bulletin was typed on an electric type writer; and I didn't have to have my notes typed in a font size of 14 to see them without glasses!

August, 1991, was an exciting time. We packed up our things and moved to Austin with the Woody's. Wes and I were young and had no family in Oklahoma - we had nothing to leave behind. The Woody's, however, were leaving an established church, long-time friends, family members and a granddaughter that was almost one year old. Arriving into Austin in late August left apartment rentals scarce. Fortunately, we were able to secure the last two 800 sq. foot apartments in a complex on North Lamar. "This must be a really nice place if it has a security gate" we commented to each other not realizing the gate at the entrance was to keep out all the drug dealers and car burglars for which that area had a reputation. The first Bible study was held in our apartment and our first Sunday service was held in the Woody's apartment with eight people in attendance - Bro. Keith & Neva, Charles & Ann Reeves, Wes and I, and my mom and sister who were visiting from the Dallas area.

We went right to work looking for a temporary location to hold services. The more we looked, the further north our search took us. We were able to secure a store front building in Northwest Austin on Research Blvd. We painted and remodeled the space. With donated pews from the Collin Creek Church in Plano and a piano my dad bought me when I was two years old, we began having services in the rented building. It was in this building that we began to reach area families and our number grew to about 35. This was a sweet and exciting time. Every new person that walked through the door was



Marsha Hood - there from the inception an answered prayer.

We began to set our sights on land, and after much searching and seeking God's will, we found a piece of property on Buttercup Creek in Cedar Park. We all loved the property and thought it would be the perfect location because it was nestled in a subdivision - what potential. As it turned out, endangered cave spiders also thought the same thing and had built homes on the property. The city would allow us to purchase the land, but we would not be able to build on it - the search would have to continue.

Like with everything else, God's timing and plan is always perfect. A tract of land on Cypress Creek Rd., owned by Mr. Nelson, was purchased at a great price and financed with a loan by the National Home Missions Department. In 1994, a group of volunteer men and women from the FWB building team moved their RV's onto the church property and building began. We also had many of our people that helped during the building process. Hours were spent, working side-by-side. The church truly was a labor of love. There were occasional set-backs. Like when Bro. Keith thought the best way to paint the peak of the church was to place a ladder on top of a scaffold and then proceeded to fall about 30 feet breaking both his wrists. He was out of commission for a couple months, but in spite of that, the building moved forward. In early 1995, the first official service was held in the new church building. There was no electricity: no heat, no lights but that could not dampen the spirits of those who gathered to worship that Sunday morning. Through it all, God was faithful and the church officially organized with 71 charter members.

This brings me to something that I think has been instrumental in the success of our church – The Members. Our church has been built on the shoulders and backs of people who love the Lord and are willing to work. Our people have always been hard workers. They have taken our kids to camps and retreats, hosted VBS, taught Sunday School, worked with the youth, led the music, participated in outreach, cleaned the church, cared for the church grounds, and much more. People with different backgrounds, gifts, talents, careers, income and education levels have all labored together. There have been no BIG I's and little You's. We have been happy to have each person that walked through our doors. Our church is friendly and our people truly love and care for each other.

Through the years there have been sad times of loss when cherished members of our church family have gone to be with the Lord. And we have had been families who have gone through other difficult trials. There have been many more happy times (babies born, dedications, and weddings). We have had many saved and baptized, including Neva's dad who was saved at the age of 89. We've had one accept the call to the mission field, and two young men called to preach out of our congregation.

As the church grew, we saw a need for additional space. A second wing was added for classrooms and a new fellowship hall was built. Our church members did most of the labor themselves. A Sprint cell phone tower, that was located at the edge of the church property, proved to be a tremendous blessing. After several years of receiving monthly payments, they offered us a one-time lump sum buyout payment. We received enough money to pay off the church loan. Our church is completely paid for - debt free.

Looking back, it's hard to believe that 20 years has come and gone. Bro. Keith has preached 1,040 Sunday morning "old-fashioned, meddling, step-on-your-toes, God-inspired" sermons. We've had 2,080 evening Bible studies. We've sung approximately 6,240 church hymns. The babies that were born in our church during those early years are in high school or college now. The city's growth has exploded all around us. We now have a full-time associate/youth pastor who works with our young people and leads the music. We have a wonderful Mother's Day Out program. We continue to focus on outside missions, supporting those who carry the gospel abroad. We offer opportunities for men, women and youth to fellowship with monthly meetings and weekly Sunday School and Bible studies.

As we face the future, it's reassuring to know that God is just as faithful today as He was 20 years ago when this work began. He is still in control, and he still calls and uses people to do His work. We may not be the biggest church in town, but what a blessing to be in a place where God's word is taught and His truth is proclaimed.

And here's a footnote the editor just received:

Tomorrow we are honoring Bro. Keith and Neva with Pastor Appreciation. We're doing a 12 Days of Christmas parody. Our daily gifts are: cup of Christmas Joe (Starbucks gift cards), new books to read (gift card to Mardels), sewing shopping spree (gift card to Hancock Fabric), a romantic dinner date (gift card to Olive Garden), brunch at Panera (giftcard), lots of cards and letters, a total house cleaning (gift certificate to have their house cleaned), a little extra cash, brand new ties, extra paycheck, pictures of your kids (framed picture of the kids in our church), new suit.

The kids will be singing the song and then we'll give them a living Christmas tree with all of the "gifts" tied to it.

Now that's really "Pastor Appreciation!"

My Church

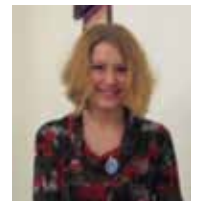
By Ashton Hood, member of Lakehills FWB Church

In my experience, church isn't someplace you go once a week because your parents make you. To me, church is like going to my Grannie's house. It's a treat, and you always come back feeling refreshed.

My church is unique. It has a big personality, but is, in fact, quite small. And I like it that way. I have attended my church almost every Sunday since I was born.

Some of my favorite memories have bloomed there, such as: Our annual garage sale, our Christmas card exchange, vacation bible school, and our delightful youth events.

A church isn't a building. A church is a body of people who want to love, and serve God with a burning passion. To me, my church is like my family. We grew up together. And I love my church with all my heart.



Lighthouse - Victoria

Meet Pastor Nick Stewart

by Lee Wilcox

The title of the feature may be “Driving Miss Sally,” but after the weekend in Victoria I have to say that Nick



Stewart is also driven, but in a different way. Nick has been preaching for 12 years and 10 of them have been at this fairly small brick veneer church in Victoria. The church itself has a unique history having been built as



a Freewill Baptist church but used over the years by other denominations as well.

This is a family affair with Nicks Parents (Earl and Judy) being the magnet that drew Nick, wife Angie, and sons Reagan and Louie to Victoria. Nick says their songs stay with the hymnal and services tend to be very traditional (King James, Bible). I say it’s a family affair because it’s Earl Stewart leading the singing and Nick’s wife of almost 19 years, Angie Stewart playing the piano.

Their sons are on the front row and with the youth choir. They obviously do not need the hymnal to sing out.



Nick describes his church as intentionally old fashioned and it obviously works. The church seats about 70 people and it appeared that more than 85 were in attend-

Compiled by Lee Wilcox



Earl & Judy Stewart (Nick's parents, are “Lights” in the Lighthouse

ance. We attended in Victoria because it was the day they called the “Big Sunday” for the church.

They have focused on inviting people who are unchurched to attend on that day. It is here that Nick’s background, education and

talent (courtesy of his mom Judy), in the Media and communication come into play. The church mails a DVD (created by Nick) to anyone who the members have invited. The invited person sees Nick and also assorted church members on the dvd. Thus, it is not a totally new environment when they arrive. Should you care to see the DVD and other ads created by Nick, they are on line at the churches website: www.victorialighthouse.com.



Pastor Appreciation gift – right up his alley!

At alter call there was also standing room only. Four people came forward and accepted the Lord. Others were on the verge but not quite ready to commit. Nick then challenged them to give him five weeks. Altogether it was quite moving.

Not the least of the enjoyable things this weekend was a fish fry capping off the really “big sunday”. The fish were caught and fried by members. The food was great, the company was great, and it was a very good day for Lighthouse

church. I am sure that more will follow.

This writer has noticed that most Freewill Baptist Pastors refuse to take the credit for their ac-

tions. Nick is no exception and gives the credit to God. When asked how he heard the call, he told me that he was the youth pastor for his church and actually heard God tell him that he had bigger plans.

When asked how he met Angie he responded immediately that it was a God thing. Nick went to Minnesota to a youth camp with some kids. Angie was nearby helping a sick sister. How else would you account for it? You win Nick, I can't see another way to get from there to where the two of you are today.

When pressed for a verse that provided the greatest support Nick was hesitant to choose just one. Then he thought, probably Matthew 28:18-20

18. And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

19. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

20. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

This was a good weekend, meeting a young pastor and his family, a spirit-filled church, and seeing four lost souls accept the Lord.



*Every church has its "Good Cooks!"
Lighthouse is no different!*



The ladies have provided lap blankets for those who feel a chill. The blankets are placed throughout the church.

Lakehills

Pastor/State Moderator: Keith Woody

by Lee Wilcox

Keith Woody has pastored the Lakehills FWB Church in Cedar Park Texas for 20 years. Like many other Texans, Keith was not born here but I think it is very fair to say he got here as soon as he could. As Keith puts it, his dad was raising six kids on \$20 wages per week and he felt he could just do better in Texas.

Well, he must have been right. Keith's family moved to the Lubbock area from Norfolk, Arkansas, right after World War II and he has been a Texan ever since. He met his wife Neva at a movie in Lubbock. After getting his courage up he asked her for her phone number and promptly lost it. He says that meeting her again had to come from God. Something certainly must have been right because in December they will have been married 51 years, and have a son and a daughter.

Keith was called by God during a revival meeting. He credits Neva for having the good sense that convinced him to attend Hillsdale College in Moore, OK, before accepting his first call. He then pastored in the Lubbock area for 10 years.

Keith came to Lakehills after pastoring Capital City Church in OKC for ten years. The state board found a way to make money available for an outreach in Austin and the Lakehills church was born in a small apartment with four people. That apartment had been transformed to a moderately large church that was packed with over 300 members, guests, and friends. Keith denies responsibility for this growth and attributes it to God's work.

Obviously Austin is a contemporary city. In keeping with that, Keith describes his church as contemporary people worshipping in a traditional way. He describes them as a young church with young families. That youth was on display that day with many songs performed by the youth of the church.

His goal is that his church can better support missionary causes and carry God's word around the world. He credits the friendliness of his people for the growth of the church and says you cannot teach or preach that.

Keith says that if he gets a visitors card, any visitor can count on being called three times after their visit. Every Sunday cannot be a twentieth anniversary, however, if you are in the Lakehills area on Sunday, I certainly recommend visiting. The members will greet you with friendship and I expect the sermon will be uplifting.



Lakehills' 20th Anniversary



Sister Neva Woody with Lee Wilcox



Pastor Alan Barus answered the call to preach at Lakehills FWB Church; he returned to preach the 20th Anniversary service.



Ashton Hood, Rachel Foley, Kennedy & Venessa Jones and Kate Bartlet brought special music



Altamira, Mexico – Following Bud and Ruth Bivens.

Two very busy people working hard for the Lord in Mexico!



I trust that you enjoyed a sweet Thanksgiving time and are well on your way to getting ready for Christmas. Our Thanksgiving was so sweet. On the Monday before, we drove up to Piedras Negras and got to see Paulina and all of the children and young people from the Getsemani Children's Home.

They were all out of school that day because of some national holiday. John and Paulina took most of them to Piedras on Friday and they spent the weekend there at the house getting some needed work done. They have added a second floor to the house and are putting on the finishing touches. The kids all love to go there, just for the change of scenery. The final few who had not come down on Friday arrived Tuesday morning and Paulina took them all to buy shoes. We left as soon as Bud got a couple of cakes made, cooled and frosted. He has to leave some kind of special treat every time we go. That is just one reason they all love to see us come for a visit.

Brother Ruben Badillo, reminded us that on the last day of our Ministers' & Workers conference in Altamira all of the pastors and their wives accompanied us to a lovely restaurant for a meal. It is a new place there in Altamira called. Before El Corral opened we have occasionally gone to for special meals to another restaurant near Tampico called Las Palapas de Simon. Ruben told us that last week the local drug cartel tried to extort money from the owner of the restaurants under threat of kidnapping his wife and children. He refused to give them money, and a battle ensued. The army got involved, and before it ended the restaurant owner was killed. He was a young man, around 38 or 40 years old, very friendly. And, he came from Cues de Palmas Altas. That shows you how close the we are to the evil that is destroying the country. Yesterday Bud's doctor told him that we should not sit together on the bus. If someone assaulted the bus they would immediately know that we are traveling together and that could lead to an extortion threat. It has certainly happened before and we had not even thought of the possibility. So, is one in front and one in back from now on.

You are among those we count when we list our blessings. Thank you for your continued support and prayer. We will be heading back to Altamira next week, by bus. Bud is anxious to get the duplex finished. Please keep us in your prayers. God bless you abundantly for your investment in the work in Mexico. We could not do it without you.

Make me a blessing to someone today.

FWB Family Ministries

The wonderful working of God's spirit is unexplainable. The greatest thing this side of Heaven is when young people bow on their knees and ask God to come into their hearts. It is truly humbling to be a small part of the unexplainable. We would like to share some of the unexplainable ways God has been working through Free Will Baptist Family Ministries:

We praise God for each eternal decision made for His Kingdom. During this year alone, 132 young people have received Christ as their personal Savior – 12 on one Sunday! We were also overjoyed when 7 of our youth were baptized in August, with an additional 14 also expressing their desire to follow Him in baptism. 66 babies have been born to moms receiving services from The Hope Center, with several more to deliver before the end of the year.

There has never been a time that Family Ministries needs you more than right now and believe the time and cost is worth it.

- ♥ prayer for God's protection and provision for this ministry
- ♥ those being won to Christ
- ♥ the unborn babies being saved
- ♥ our seniors being cared for
- ♥ lives and families that are being changed

Please join us in our ministry efforts:

- ♥ send gift cards or a monetary contribution to provide Christmas for our youth
- ♥ invest in eternity through estate giving, endowments & annuities
- ♥ cherish a loved one with a memorial gift in their honor
- ♥ go to our website at www.fwbfbm.com to make a credit card donation

For more information on ways you can help, contact our office at 423.639.9449.

From Texas...

Randall & Collette Wright
McKinney, Texas



I wish I could say that I was not a little nervous, but I can't! The week leading up to our Launch Service on October 23rd was one that was filled with lots of calls, visits, work, and yes, a little nervousness.

Every church planter wonders who will show up at their first service. Or maybe I should say, "if" anyone will show up at the first service. However, I knew that we would have people there, because my family and I were planning on going! Not to mention that God has also given us a GREAT core group who had worked hard and faithfully to prepare for this day. A day that we had been praying, planning and working towards for the last three months. So we all showed up a little early, 8:00 to be exact, to make sure that everything was ready.

After an hour and a half of set-up, a short prayer, a few instructions, and everyone took their places. Then visitors began to arrive! One family. Two families. Three families! They kept coming, a total of 32 first time visitors and a grand total of 64 people in attendance for our first official service! While we were grateful for the number of visitors, there were a few things that I was even more grateful for. There was a wonderful spirit in the service and our launch team did a fabulous job at meeting people and making them feel welcomed. At the end of the service I was thrilled to realize that a lady (Ryan) had committed her life to Christ and has continued to attend our services! She informed us that it was the first time in 17 years that she had been in church and the first time her children had ever been to church! To God be the glory! We are now beginning the discipleship process with her.

I must acknowledge that this great beginning is not only the work of those who are here in Texas. Many of you have had an integral part of what has taken place. You have partnered with us in prayer, supported us financially, lead your churches to support us and written cards and letters of encouragement. Again we say Thank You!

There have been several highlights since our launch service. Every week since our launch service there have been guests who have returned to the services. We have continued to have first time visitors and we were really blessed to have Brian and Melissa Lewis and their family join us the week after our Launch. We enjoyed the Lewis' being with us. Brian and Melissa were able to take part in various aspects of the service, which was a real treat.

Please continue to pray for our teammates the Lewis's, as they continue to go through chemotherapy.

Anthony & Lea Edgmon

Alperete, Spain

Dear Texas Free Will Baptists,

Recently, while reading the morning paper, I was struck by an article that stated that Spanish children are leaving childhood behind earlier than in previous generations. According to the article in the Spanish newspaper, La Razón, the Spanish education and social model push children to adopt adult roles at an early age. The article cites several statistics published by the Ministry of Health. The average age when kids initiate alcohol consumption is at 13.7 years old. Only a few years ago the Socialist government reformed the abortion legislation so that minors who are 16 years old can terminate their pregnancies without parental consent. Some blame the permissiveness of Spanish legislation, which allows people to get married as early as 14 years old. In fact, the United Nations Committee for Children's Rights has warned Spain that it should make some changes to protect children. Unfortunately, many children are home alone after school because their parents are at work or out looking for work. Obviously, this has many consequences, among which are juvenile delinquency and an increase in aggressive attitudes towards parents and other adults.

In Alpedrete, Spain we have daily contact with many families similar to ours in age. Almost six years ago we began to flesh out a vision that we had to

To the uttermost parts of the earth



start an outreach in this community to touch kids and their families. On Sundays nowadays we typically find the space filled to capacity with numerous families with children. We have a heart for the families of our community and the surrounding area. Many of the Christian parents have verbally expressed their desire for their kids to have Christian friends now and as they move into their teenage years. As you can tell from the things I mentioned in the article above, adolescence can be very challenging for many reasons. Pray with us that, we, and others in the Alpedrete church, will be able to teach and disciple these children, so that they will be prepared to live for God in the face of challenges and pressures. Pray also that the church and outreach center will be able to help parents find ways to curb these disturbing trends among children in Spanish society.

We thank you for supporting our ministry in Spain. The offerings and monetary gifts are very much appreciated. I dare say, they are especially appreciated during these difficult days of economic crisis. We depend on you and other churches throughout the nation for financial support. Not only do we

count on your partnership to fund our ministry and many other ministries around the world, we also need you to labor with us in prayer as we try to impact the lives of children and families here in Spain. We face many challenges in these efforts to minister to their needs and offer the message of God's love, hope and peace. From our family and the Alpedrete Church we wish you all a very Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Bunch Resigns to Take Missouri Executive Post

Antioch, TN— On November 10, 2011, the Free Will Baptist International Mission Board voted to accept the resignations of 28-year veteran missionaries to Panama Stan and Brenda Bunch. The resignation is effective February 29, 2012.

Stan and Brenda will relocate to Missouri, for Stan to embrace the role of Executive Director of the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptist Churches, effective March 1.

"Stan and Brenda have served God and the Mission well," stated General Director Clint Morgan. "Their ministry in Panama has been creative and effective, and has proven enduring. They've evangelized, disciplined new believers, planted churches and led them to national leadership."

"God is moving in Panama; people are turning to Christ, leaders are emerging, and local churches are reproducing. Stan and Brenda have played a key role in all of those areas by their exemplary lives and service," affirmed Jeff Turnbough, director of field operations. "I will miss Stan's leadership and insight but I know he will serve the state of Missouri well."

The Bunches were appointed to missionary service in May 1983 and departed for Panama in January 1985. Stan and Brenda have three children: Jonathan, Alicia, and Amanda.

"We extend our deepest appreciation to the International Missions Department, and all of our supporters over the years, for having granted us the opportunity to be involved in the exciting and fulfilling ministry of international church planting," Stan wrote in their November 7 resignation letter. "We have been privileged to work with some of God's choicest servants and remain committed to the task of world evangelism, albeit through another ministry."

I'm writing this column immediately after returning from the Rejuvenate Marketplace conference in San Jose, CA. Just as in previous years when I have attended, this has been a fantastic resource for identifying potential locations for future State Meetings and making numerous contacts in the meeting planning industry, and it has helped provide some invaluable educational insights into event planning. All of that has been tremendous, and I'm grateful for the opportunity, but another key reason why I attend this conference is that it takes place at no cost to the State Office and very little monetary expense to me personally. As you're well aware (and as they mentioned in one of our educational sessions), there is no such thing as a "free lunch". The costs of my attending the conference were picked up by suppliers such as hotels, vendors, and city tourism departments; virtually all I had to provide was the time (and business cards and handouts about our State Meeting).

From what I've been able to determine, our State Office functions as efficiently as any in our denomination; we do a tremendous amount with very few financial resources, relying on the generosity of others to do what we do. Much of the money received at the State Office is designated for other purposes, such as missions and denominational ministries, and that money is thus passed on to those ministries accordingly. As a result, while our churches and districts support a wide variety of worthy ministries, one that often seems to be left out is the State Office itself. It's all too easy to do that, because in many ways, our State Office has been designed to run behind the scenes, as one of those things that you typically don't notice when it's working like it's supposed to. In addition, we typically do not make a strong push for financial support for the State Office; in the history of this column, it's generally mentioned indirectly and very infrequently. This edition of the column is different.

In recent months, our State Office has seen a consistent trend of monthly deficits, to the point that we are borrowing from money designated for the 2014 National Convention to stay out of the red. Some previous costs have been due to some budgeted one-time expenses, such as replacing obsolete computers for the Challenge Editor and the State Office Coordinator. But in recent months, expenses have typically been as low as expected,

but giving has been lower.

It's no secret that times are tough, and perhaps your church has experienced its own decline in support. As I mentioned in this space three months ago, churches have an obligation to

pay their own bills and provide for their pastors and should continue to do so. You should also continue to honor the faith promises that you have made to the missionaries and ministries you support. However, the State Office is just like any of the other denominational ministries you have helped to sustain over the years. In fact, it is even more closely related to you, because it is the Texas State Office, and only Texas FWB churches are responsible for its maintenance and growth.

None of us do what we do in these ministries for the money, but it unfortunately takes money to accomplish the work. The State Office has strived to minimize costs in any way possible, and we have taken a renewed look at our expenses in recent months. As an example, you may notice fewer printed copies of this magazine at your church, in response to reports that we typically had many leftovers going unused. You may also be interested to know that we are promoting an electronic PDF version of the magazine that will be available on the www.texasfwb.org website, if you would prefer not to receive a printed copy at all. However, these measures are only small ones. It will take larger ones to reverse our trend, restore the Convention funds we've used, and return our account to the "black" status that we've worked so hard to achieve in recent years.

In one effort to help our bottom line, the three members of the State Office staff who receive salaries (State Office Coordinator, Challenge Editor, and Treasurer) have offered to forego their pay for a time until our account can recover. The Executive Board has not yet taken action on the staff's offer, but it is one strategy being considered. Now, these three staff members receive very little part-time pay for the work they do, but those salaries do make up a sizeable portion of our small State Office budget. My observation has been that our paid staff, as well as our unpaid board members, officers, and other personnel contribute far



more than any remuneration or reimbursement could compensate, but, as the saying goes, “we’re not in it for the money”.

What that means, as a result, is that there are many things accomplished in the work of Texas Free Will Baptists that do not show up as an expense, but someone paid for it out of their own time or money. This is the nature of volunteer organizations in general, and frequently church organizations in specific. However, what is also unfortunately common is that a small proportion of the membership typically provides the largest proportion of the personnel, time, and resources to do the work, while the rest, in effect, get the benefit of a “free lunch”.

If your district, your church, or you personally support the State Office financially, thank you so much for your faithfulness; we appreciate your investment in the work we’re doing. However, if you have recently let your support slip, or perhaps have never thought of the State Office as a ministry that needs your support, let me encourage you to prayerfully consider what you can do to help. If you’re thinking this sounds a lot like the urging that I gave you three months ago in regards to our Convention fund, you’re right, but the situation with our State Office has become more serious since that time.

Our records are an open book for those who would like to see or ask questions. Treasurer John Davis or I would be happy to answer questions you might have, but we felt it necessary to bring this urgent need to you, so that you would know where we stand. If your church does not regularly support the State Office with your finances, let me strongly urge you to consider that as you develop your budget for 2012. If that is not a viable solution, other options such as special offerings are also a good way to provide support and to provide a connection between congregations and the State Office.

I apologize for the pessimistic tone (and unusual length) of this column, but we felt it necessary to bring this to your attention. If at any time you have questions about this issue or about anything the State Office does, or can do, for you, please do not hesitate to contact me. While I am not available on a full-time basis, I will make myself available as much as possible, and I would be happy to discuss with you the efforts of the State Office and ways that we can grow stronger and move forward to accomplish great things for God in the days to come.

Texas Challenge NOW Available in your email!

More info and “how-to” from JD Davis



Everyone I know is very proud of the Texas Challenge. Sally does a superb job of editing and Randall House does a great job of printing it. However, it is fairly expensive to mail, and it is already being done on the computer.

Rather than having the state office pay for so much mailing of paper editions of the Texas Challenge, we are encouraging electronic distribution. The process is in place and ready to go. It will make it easier for most people to see, speed up delivery, and should save significant money for Texas FWBs.

Let me know if this is a good solution for you. If you want to encourage church members to get it via email, they can sign up at www.texasfwb.org. The form is on the home page. Or if you want to eliminate or change the number of copies your church gets, you can do it there. Or, they can call me at (361) 652-3813, or email me at challenge@texasfwb.org.

Thanks,
JD Davis

Jeff & Sondra Cates

Riding for the Lord in Canyon

Hi from the Cates,

We are so excited to tell you all the wonderful things God is doing here in Canyon, Texas. God has blessed our church greatly with kids. We have a wonderful group of kids and we really have nowhere else to put them. We have the church office now used as a classroom. We have divided one of the bigger classrooms into two smaller ones and now we are just waiting to get the plans back to start on the new building. Help us pray for the building project as we praise the Lord for such a wonderful problem to have.



We had a wonderful turn out at the fall festival. We had a great time with the kids. We had several hay rides and a

big hot dog and marshmallow roast. The little ones had enough candy we had to give each one a Wal-mart sack to carry it home. We praise God for all the parents who brought their little ones for a safe and Godly place to spend Halloween.

The men in our church have what they call the man cave. They have built a big fire pit in the middle of an old



shed that they have built on and enclosed. They grill meat over an open fire every Monday night. They have prayer time and just talk about the bible and get to

know one another. This has made for a very close and strong men's group in our church. It is rare to have as many and a lot of times more men than women in the church. We praise God for such a great bunch of men in our church. We ask you to pray for our men and their families as they try to lead them in the ways of the Lord.

We are having great crowds with a bunch of visitors coming lately. We ask you to pray for several families

in our church. They have had to move to find jobs and others



have been relocated in their jobs and we ask you to pray with us that God will send others to fill the holes left by those leaving.

The Lord blessed again with our booth at the Fair on the Square. We had a new young couple who came and has been there every Sunday and most mid-week services since then. We praise God for the wonderful growth we have seen this year. Please pray for our church and us as we labor here for the Lord.

Gearing up for Spain

Mick and Rachel Donahue

Hola, amigos!

We've been so busy lately, we hardly know where to begin! We just finished 11 weeks of intensive study at the Center for Intercultural Training with our teammates Jenny, Heath, Joni, and Baby Eli. This was an extremely beneficial opportunity to spend time building trust with our teammates and to talk through some of the major obstacles we'll face as a team. This time together just reinforced what we already knew: God has given us some amazing people with whom to work! We are excited about the future God has for this team!

We are currently awaiting the final paperwork to come in so we can go to the Spanish consulate to apply for our visas (a trip that will not be easy to work into our tight schedule). The delay in paperwork is already pushing back our expected departure date of January 3. We know that this is all in God's hands--pray that any delays will be nothing more than His perfect timing!

We are keenly aware that the Enemy is at work. Spiritual warfare is intensifying as we get closer to our leave date. Please be in constant prayer for our family--and our team--during this transition time. We need God's strength and protection now more than ever! In prayer, you stand on the front lines with us! See the sidebar for specific requests.

Keith and Ian are growing all too quickly these days. Baby Ian just turned a year old (as did Baby Eli!), and he is now cruising, babbling, and playing peek-a-boo. He's a little butterball, and he loves food! Keith is now 4 1/2, and he is full of curiosity and ideas. Watch what you say--he doesn't miss a thing! And he won't forget it, either! Our boys adore each other, and they bring a great deal of joy to our lives (with a measure of frustration from time to time--ha!) The Enemy has his target on them as well--please ask our Father to shield these boys and fill their hearts and minds with truth.

Our lives are in flux right now, but it is during these times of weakness and transition that we rely most heavily on God's strength. Pray that He would be glorified in our circumstances, no matter what they may be, and that His name would be made famous both here and abroad.

*In Him, and for His glory in Christ alone,
Mick, Rachel, Keith, and Ian* Prayer Requests



Prayer Requests

- * Visa paperwork to come in soon
- * Visas to be issued quickly
- * Heath and Joni's house to sell
- * Sufficient restoration of our goods damaged in shipping
- * Truth as a guard against the Enemy's lies
- * Family members saying good bye
- * Kids' stability during the move
- * Clarity of thought and productive days
- * Sufficient funding to keep us field-side
- * Housing on the field
- * Rest and peace, not stress
- * Continued team unity
- * God's clear vision for this team

Harvest Child Care Ministries Wants to Help Families

Harvest Freewill Baptist Child Care Ministries, located in Duffield, Virginia, recently celebrated 18 years of ministry to abused, abandoned, neglected or troubled children. Since that time, over 1,400 children have lived in a Christian home environment with caring, loving house parents.

Within the last three years our ministry's focus has shifted. While we still serve children who are in state's custody, we now focus more and more on privately placed children – children from our church families who come here without the involvement of state authorities. This is a new and exciting trend for the ministry. Without the involvement of the state, we have more latitude to provide the services we feel the families need. These children are able to stay longer – some indefinitely. Also, we find that these children are better behaved and more willing to accept guidance and support from us. What a blessing it is to work with families, within our own network of churches, who need extra support to care for their children.

One such child came to Harvest the very day his parents' divorce became final. With the ongoing turmoil within the family, this family needed the support Harvest provides. With the structure and nurturing Harvest provided, along with family counseling; after a few months this young man was able to be reunited with his mom, and to a more workable relationship among all of the family members. He learned that structure was so important to his success that he gave his parents our behavior management program, so they could learn how to parent him when he returned home. Children want rules and boundaries - this is how they know they are loved and cared for. This is the success of Harvest!

We would like to help you as well. If you or a family in your church is in need of the services Harvest offers, please call Executive Director, Newl Dotson at 276-546-4400. You may visit our website at www.harvestcm.org for program descriptions. IM Ambassadors Gather, Set WMO Goal for 2012

2012 WMO Goal set for \$650,000

Antioch, TN— Ambassadors for Free Will Baptist International Missions gathered September 12-13 to celebrate the success of the ambassador program, discuss the 2011 World Missions Offering (WMO), and plan WMO initiatives for 2012.

During a celebratory dinner on September 12, Interim Director of Development Sam McVay honored Mark Price, Jimmy Aldridge, and Tom Hughes, five-year veterans of the ambassador program.

At the time of the session, Free Will Baptists had given \$476,800 for overseas evangelistic efforts through the 2011 WMO. "This is the second largest WMO in history," exulted one ambassador. "Even in the midst of a recession, Free Will Baptist people have proven faithful!" As ambassadors discussed the program and methods for increasing participation, they expressed surprise and disappointment that less than 500 of the 2,400 Free Will Baptist churches in the denomination actually participate in the annual WMO. "That must change. We need to involve more churches," one gentleman challenged. At the conclusion of the meeting, the ambassadors voted to set the 2012 WMO goal at \$650,000. "Perhaps even more significant," said Kiley Hawkins, IM's development manager, "was the determination these men expressed to involve more churches." The ambassadors set a goal to motivate 650 churches to participate in the WMO in 2012.

McVay stated, "This was my first time to be involved so closely with the ambassadors. These men and women dedicated their lives to the cause of global evangelism and their influence continues to make an incredible impact, inspiring people to make sure every woman, man, and child has an opportunity to hear the gospel. We are blessed to have this team leading our WMO effort."

The 2012 ambassador team is Jimmy and Janie Aldridge (Alabama and Mississippi), Earnie and Jean Deeds (Oklahoma), Galen and Barbara Dunbar (South Carolina), Tom and Nancy Hughes (Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, New Mexico, and Northwest District), Mark and Deanna Price (Ohio), Norman and Bessie Richards (Kentucky), David and Pat Shores (Illinois), Henry and Virginia VanKluyve (North Carolina and Tennessee), Earl and Debbie White (West Virginia), and Rodney and Mary Yerby (Alabama).

First Church in Tomball WAC hosts Missionary Dinner



Saturday night, December 3, it was all glitter and praise at First Church in Tomball! The WAC put on a gala that included a sit-down-and-be-served dinner, Christmas carols, beautiful decorations, delicious BBQ, homemade desserts of every flavor and type, young people serving bread in baskets, a lovely duet, and introduced Texas' newest home missionary and his family Randall and Collette Wright.

Randall shared with all how he was led to the McKinney area by the Lord. He visited Austin, Houston and Dallas/Fort



Worth, did his

“homework” on the needs in each city, and decided McKinney (just about 20 miles north of Dallas) was the spot the Lord wanted him to plant a new FWB church.

Why plant more churches in the good ole' USA? Randall learned in his studies that each year 40,000 churches close in this country, and in Collin County half of the residents do not consider themselves affiliated with any church. He also found that new people coming to Collin County average 94 people a week! That is a mission field!

This year the Tomball WAC has delivered over 100 shoeboxes to our active military, given baby bottles to the Crisis Pregnancy Center, collected toys for Christmas in Mexico (an annual event carried out by Eagle Heights FWB), and started a food pantry for their community.

Wildwood Christmas Bazzarr raises over \$1,000 for the kids

Wildwood FWB has a unique problem. But it's a good one...

A slew of children are coming to their Sunday morning services and even more

to Wednesday night service! Like ... around 40 kids. A typical Wednesday night adult count is around 15. The parents do not come, and are not interested in even dropping them off! Sunday, December 4th, 10 of those children were baptized!

So the Wildwood WAC decided, under the leadership of Sister Betty Friend, to raise some money to get transportation for them. They baked, sewed, canned relishes, brought garage sale items... well, you get the picture. To their own amazement they raised well over \$1,000 and still have a quilt to be auctioned off - starting at \$100. It was made years ago in Canada and they expect to get a nice amount to add to their total.

Great work, ladies!

A note from Sally...

In January our All-Boards Meeting will include the officers of the TWAC joining together to make suggestions, decisions and seeking the Lord's will for our year of 2012. We'll be deciding on a theme for 2012, as well as speakers for our annual retreat and state convention.

Our commitment is to our families, our church, our community and the uttermost parts of the world. We are here to further the Gospel Message and make disciples. It's not about us, it's about them.

We welcome anyone who would like to join us with ideas or a word from the Lord. Suggestions for speakers are welcome. If you have ideas and cannot attend, please email them to us at texasfwb@aol.com. We'll be happy to share them with the other officers.

The theme of the WNAC is “Body Builders.” (As in building the Body of Christ as well as the care of the body the Lord has given you.

This is your TWAC! We want to hear from you.



Texas State FWB Association
13293 Tommy Smith
Conroe, TX 77306

My Pastor

by Chuck Topping

My pastor is an awesome man
Worthy of all respect.
His service is unfathomable,
More than one would expect.
His love for Christ and His Bride
Goes far beyond all measure;
My pastor is an awesome man
One whom I'll always treasure.

From the Editor:

Chuck Topping is a member of Eastside FWB Church where his pastor is Dr. Kenneth Mayo. I have included this poem here because I daresay it speaks what many of us have in our hearts for our own pastors.



Kimberly Johnson Granted Leave of Absence

Antioch, TN—At her request, Kimberly Johnson will begin an official one-year leave of absence on December 1, 2011. Kimberly returned stateside a few weeks ago when Lar Nova Vida (New Life) Children's Home in Araras, Brazil, was transferred entirely into the hands of local leadership.

"Kimberly's work at Lar Nova Vida was crucial in keeping that ministry functioning. Her dedication and love for the children made a big difference, keeping many of them from becoming immersed in lives of addiction and crime," stated Kenneth Eagleton, Brazil field manager. "Kimberly was respected by many of the city authorities and professionals with whom she had contact on a near daily basis. Her work will be missed."

Please join us in praying for her to know God's will for her life."

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