

NAFWB NEWS

2021 FREE WILL BAPTIST NATIONAL CONVENTION

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IMPACT: Fun, But Exhausting

With the forecast calling for rain and the numbers smaller (no doubt) due to the pandemic, IMPACT seemed to be destined for a dismal outcome this year. However, a few things remained the same this year as in every other year. First, IMPACT 2021 gave an opportunity for believers to serve and fellowship in a different setting. Shiloh Hackett, IMPACT Coordinator for Tennessee summed it up perfectly: "I am hopeful IMPACT helps the way in which it was designed. It truly reflects our focus—people from all parts of the denomination working together for the same purpose."

That purpose, to reach the community with the gospel, was the second goal accomplished through IMPACT 2021. At Cross Creek FWB Church in Olive Branch, Mississippi, volunteers offered a free car wash. The first carload that arrived was interested in details about the church and service times. As the day progressed, more people stopped, and the volunteers were busy despite the gloomy weather. When asked why she chose to volunteer to help wash cars, Baylor, a fourth grader from Kentucky said, "It's fun, and you get to help people at the same time!" Another young volunteer confessed he had never washed cars before. After a while on the job, he was asked how he felt about washing cars now. Soaked, soapy, but smiling in his "IMPACT Memphis" t-shirt, he replied, "It's fun!"

Another group of volunteers conducted a prayer walk through the community with Pastor Paul Bryant. This is

something the church does regularly, so it was unique to be able to help with their ongoing ministry in addition to something new like the car wash. In total, 51 volunteers washed 34 cars and prayed over 621 houses. The prayer walk team had the opportunity to pray with 15 different individuals about various needs and concerns.

A second team of volunteers worked at Faith FWB Church in Oakland, Tennessee, with Pastor Jordan Osborn. They participated in Operation Saturation: canvassing the neighborhoods near the church. Forty volunteers passed out 2,000-plus cards providing information about the church. The church will have an open house at the end of the month, and the flyers were designed to invite community members to come explore the church. Convention photographer Rodney Yerby said this about volunteering at Faith: "It was about 90° with 100% humidity, but we had a really good turnout and a great time together!"

Thinking about signing up to participate in IMPACT next year in Birmingham, Alabama? You can find information about the service projects for next year and register at fwbmastersmen.org. Olivia, a young participant from Oklahoma was asked what she would tell people thinking about participating next year. She said, "It's fun...but exhausting!"

GOING VERTICAL...THREE

Derek Altom is the new director of events at Randall House and director of the Vertical Three Conference. The NAFWB NEWS asked him to share his vision for the conference and his new position.

God has blessed me with some amazing opportunities in my life. One of those opportunities that has most impacted me is being Free Will Baptist. Since the day I was born, God has used people throughout the Free Will Baptist denomination to shape my life and ministry. I do not know where I would be without my brothers and sisters in the denomination. I am thankful to the Lord that He has called me to a life of service in our movement.

He has given me the opportunity to serve churches in Alabama and Oklahoma. He also has given me the opportunity to travel to various churches and state associations throughout the denomination representing Welch College. In December of 2020, God saw fit to move me to Randall House and D6 Family Ministry as director of events and development. What a joy the last several months have been!

Because my role includes things like Truth & Peace, YET, and CTS Ministry Expo, the Lord has placed me in a position to help shape the students of our denomination. I do not take this responsibility lightly and it is going to take all of us doing

our part. I believe our future is bright. I believe that the students of our denomination are going to play a critical role in seeing our movement move forward for the glory of the Lord.

I am passionate about instilling who we are as Free Will Baptists in the minds and the hearts of our students. It is important for them to know where they come from, on whose shoulders they stand, and how all the pieces of the "Free Will Baptist puzzle" fit together. The reality is we are "Better Together" as Free Will Baptists and that includes the students of our denomination too.

If the denomination is going to thrive, we must continue to invest in our students and provide them opportunities to serve and lead. This is my passion.

May God help us all to do our part to achieve this. Our future depends on it. Let's work together to provide opportunities for the students of our denomination to serve and lead. After all, that is the essence of generational discipleship.



Honoring the Thigpens

Two celebration of life services will be held for Charles and Laura Thigpen. The first will be held **Saturday, July 24, 2021, 4:00 p.m.**, at Turbeville Southern Methodist Church (SC), with visitation immediately following the service. The second service will be held at **Welch College, Saturday, September 18, 3:00 p.m.**

Meet the Speakers

Keith Burden (Monday Evening) answered the call to preach at age 16. He completed studies at Randall University and Moody Bible Institute. Ordained to the gospel ministry in 1975, Keith was either an associate minister or pastor for 27 years. He served as assistant clerk and clerk of the National Association for 22 years before being elected executive secretary of the denomination in 2002 where he served until 2019.

Eddie Moody (Tuesday Evening) currently serves as executive secretary of the NAFWB. For over 25 years, he engaged in training professional counselors, primarily at North Carolina Central University where he was both professor of counselor education and associate dean of the school of education. He also served as pastor at Tippet's Chapel in Clayton, North Carolina, for almost two decades. He was awarded as the Counselor of the Year in 2016 by the Licensed Professor Counselor Association of North Carolina.

MISSING Conventions?

Why are we "missing" conventions? This is one of the most frequently asked questions regarding the annual meeting of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. Askers often speculate on which conventions were canceled and why. Was it World War II? Or some natural catastrophe? Why is the nearly 87-year-old denomination meeting for only the 85th time, when even COVID-19 didn't keep the General Board from gathering to do business for the denomination in 2020?

The answer to this intriguing question is a little less exciting than some popular theories might suggest. When the denomination united in 1935 at Cofer's Chapel in Nashville, Tennessee, the body determined not to meet again until 1938, making it a triennial convention. The 1935 minutes observes the "responsibility of determining where the next session of the National Association is to be held three years from now was left in the hands of the Executive Board."

However, by the time the denomination gathered in Bryan, Texas, in 1938 for its second session, it had become clear a triennial convention was insufficient for the work of the rapidly growing association. During that meeting, delegates amended Article IX of the Constitution (below) to make the National Convention an annual event.

Meetings. This National Association shall hold its regular meetings annually. The place of meeting to be alternated each year: east of the Mississippi River one year and west of the Mississippi the next year; and place of meeting to be decided by a vote of the body. The time of meeting to be on Tuesday following the Second Sunday in July, and to remain in session until its work is completed.

Since that decision in 1938, the track record of the annual convention reads much like the familiar old U.S. Postal Service slogan: *neither snow nor rain nor heat nor gloom of night stays Free Will Baptists from their annual meeting!*

Why IMPACT? A local pastor shares his thoughts:

What a blessing to be part of Impact Memphis! Through a free car wash and neighborhood prayer walk, we connected with our community and showed them a God who loves them and a church that cares for them. We are thankful for the many contacts we have because of this ministry. —Paul Bryant

News, Updates & Announcements

Picture This. Pictures from the convention are available online each day. Thanks to the hard work of Rodney Yerby and Sydney Walker, you can download your favorites: nafwb.yerbyphoto.com.

Registration and Exhibits. Registration is open daily from 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., in the Main Street Lobby of the RCC. The Exhibit Hall will be open Tuesday, 10:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m., in RCC Lower Hall.

Jonnie W, joke-teller and music-maker will bring his unique blend of music and comedy to the conference. Learn more: verticalthree.com.

National Committees Appointed Monday

Nominating Committee: Johnny Miller (AR), chair; Ben Crabtree (OH); Jonathan Locklear (MI); Shirley Jackson (MO); Todd Black (SC); Curtis Smith (IL); Kent Barwick (GA)

Resolution Committee: Matthew Pinson (TN), Chair; Bob Thompson (OK); Nate Ange (NC); Timothy Powell (CA); Bob Brown (FL)

Spilling the Beans on Great Local Coffee

NAFWB News staffer and coffee shop owner Hannah Driggers shares an inside look at local coffees.

Qahwa Coffee is closest to the Renasant Center, and it's good! I had the signature. It was a little sweet for my taste but still a good cup of coffee. However, I basically like my spoon to stand up in my coffee, so take my opinion with a grain of salt, so to speak.

Crazy Gander Coffee Company is a little further down, off Madison Avenue. They don't take cash. I got The Bucktown—delicious!

Good Morning Gorgeous is also close by. They close early, though, so I haven't been able to try it yet. It's adorable (I peeked in the window), so I feel like it would be good. Yes, I'm judging a coffee shop by its storefront.

Comeback Coffee, two blocks north of the Renasant Center is named well. It will keep you coming back, for sure.