

# NAFWB NEWS

2021 FREE WILL BAPTIST NATIONAL CONVENTION

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## GAMEPLAN FOR GROWTH

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY EDDIE MOODY SHARES A STRATEGY FOR THE NEXT DECADE

*Our churches need to grow.  
We need to disciple our children.  
I want to give my all to the Lord.*

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

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

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

In other words, If I go through life thinking about **who I am reaching and training** and **what I am giving**, I am more likely to stay on task as Christ's disciple.

If you focus on these three goals this fall (and throughout the decade), you will not be alone.

- + **In August**, the Executive Office will provide resources to help churches and associations study their strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.
- + **In September**, we will focus on reaching specific groups, including college students, those struggling with same-sex attraction, prisoners, and others.
- + **In October**, we will look at ways to train and disciple people more effectively.
- + **In November**, we will look at identifying the resources we have, and how we can use them in the Lord's work.

**Working toward goals together has great value, so GET IN THE GAME.**

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

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

## Molded for His Purpose

LIFE LESSONS THAT PREPARED DIRECTOR ELIZABETH HODGES FOR THE WNAC OFFICE

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

"I loved those trips," she recalls. "I remember going to one meeting in the mountains where people were shouting and waving. The preacher began jumping pews, and when he went by, he hit me on the head with the Bible. Scared me to death! Daddy just laughed and told me people worship differently."

This treasured memory is a single instance in an endless string of ways God molded Elizabeth for His purpose. Her quiet, hard-working, and meticulous mother instilled a love for special needs individuals by caring for Lois, Elizabeth's profoundly limited sister.

In contrast, her "bull in a china shop" father taught Elizabeth the importance of church and denominational business and the value of working with others. "Daddy was able to differentiate between issue and individual. He would argue with Wade Jernigan at conventions until they were both blue in

the face, then they would leave business and take their families to lunch." To this day, the "Jernigan girls" remain some of Elizabeth's dearest friends.

Looking back, Elizabeth realizes how these early moments prepared her for leadership, and how many doors opened to her because of the ministry and influence of her parents.

The life lessons continued after she met Eddie Hodges. She and the Swainsboro, Georgia, native soon found themselves in "one of those whirlwind Bible College romances." They married and began ministry life together, Eddie as a pastor, Elizabeth as a teacher. "Eddie has such a strong faith," Elizabeth notes. "He is a prayer warrior, content to serve in smaller, lesser-known churches because those people need a pastor, just like the big churches."

Elizabeth settled happily into the routine of church, home, children, family, and classroom. She had no idea that, as the decades passed, God was continually preparing her for another important work. His preparation suddenly became clear May 29, 2010, when the WNAC board chair called to tell Elizabeth she would be the sixth director of WNAC.

Her childhood home and personal relationships with missionaries helped her understand the need for the denomination to care for missionaries—financially, of course, but also through respect, support, and care for their kids. WNAC has provided the perfect opportunity to partner with IM to fulfill this role.

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

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

Her outgoing dad taught her to love everybody—crucial for a director, because Free Will Baptists are different in every region of the country, not to mention international churches.

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

Looking back over 11 years at WNAC, Elizabeth identifies significant milestones: groundbreaking collaboration between agencies; becoming a national department; building new bridges to FWB women; and expanding ministry to include international outreach, *Shine!* Conferences and, most recently, multilingual resources. "It has been hard work to start these initiatives," she notes, "and I look forward to seeing my successor take them to the next level."

## Meet the Speaker

**John Weaver III (Wednesday Evening)** has served in many positions of leadership over the past 25 years. Previously fulfilling roles as program manager, team leader, regional director, and ministry field leader in Afghanistan, he is currently a discipleship coach, teacher, and ministry leader. He has received degrees from Welch College and Columbia Theological Seminary. He has authored three books: *Inside Afghanistan*, *A Flame on the Front Line*, and *Najiba: A Love Story From Afghanistan*.

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

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

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

**About the writer:** Eric K. Thomsen is the convention press officer and managing editor of ONE Magazine.

## More Than Coffee

It was only fitting that a night to honor Elizabeth Hodges would begin with hundreds of prayer warriors lifting an urgent missionary need to the Lord. No one present at **Laughter and Latté** Monday evening would underestimate the power of prayer from women of God. And, while the event included good natured joking and great coffee, it also consisted of heartfelt thanks to Elizabeth and many tears.

After prayer, Elizabeth's grandkids played a unique game of "Grammie or No Grammie?" They were asked questions like, "Did Grammie ride a horse to promote WNAC?" *No Grammie* was the answer to that one. "Did Grammie ride in the trunk of a car because there were too many passengers?" *Grammie did*, in fact, do that one. Of course, Elizabeth quipped, "You do what you have to do to serve the Lord." **She definitely does that!** Another question was "Did Grammie help clean up after her first meeting as director?" The crowd answered for the grandkids on that one: "Absolutely!"

**Seems fitting that Elizabeth ended the night by saying, "It has been my privilege to serve you."**

## News, Updates & Announcements

**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 Wednesday, 10:00 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., in RCC Lower Hall.

**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](http://nafwb.yerbyphoto.com).

### Missing Something?

The following items are waiting to be reunited with owners at Convention Registration:

- + Purse, Emily Lawson
- + Giveaway bags (2)
- + Kavu™ Bag
- + Youth Santa Biblia
- + Wallet, Allen Austin
- + Blanket
- + Water Bottle
- + Sweater
- + Child's Shoe

**NAFWB Playlist.** Enjoying the music during the worship services? Listen to all your favorites on Spotify by searching NAFWB Convention Music '21. This public playlist includes music from both adult and Vertical Three services.



[iminc.org/e-team-leader-form](http://iminc.org/e-team-leader-form)