

NAFWB NEWS

2021 FREE WILL BAPTIST NATIONAL CONVENTION

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21, 2021 | MEMPHIS, TENNESSEE | NAFWB.ORG

PAINT ME A BIRMINGHAM

THE NATIONAL CONVENTION TURNS ITS SIGHTS TOWARD THE "STEEL CITY"

Birmingham, Alabama, paints a different picture for those who have attended previous National Conventions in the city. Because so many events were postponed by COVID-19, Birmingham will host the World Games in 2022 instead of 2021. This shifted the National Convention back a week, but it also gave the city an incentive to give downtown Birmingham a *major* facelift.

The I-20/I-59 bridge has been replaced, complete with LED ribbon lighting. The 31-acre CityWalk BHAM is under construction as a gathering place for visitors and for the community, with a quarter-mile walking trail. The city plans to construct a "challenge course," amphitheater, and a sports area with artificial turf. From 16th Street to 18th Street, space will be created for food trucks, a roller-skating rink, and an activity zone. Check out the fascinating master plan for Birmingham at citywalkbham.com/masterplan.

The Uptown District, located on the campus of the Birmingham-Jefferson Convention Complex (site of the convention), has a number of new restaurants and eateries within walking distance. Pizza restaurants, hot chicken, and burgers are among the diverse types of food available. Also in the Uptown District, the Alabama Sports Hall of Fame gives fans an opportunity to explore 5,000-plus sports artifacts. Interested in getting in the game instead of reading about it? TopGolf™ is located nearby and is perfect for people of all skill levels.

If you are searching for a free, educational activity, visit the Civil Rights District with six blocks of free historical sites. The Alabama Jazz Hall of Fame boasts exhibits to honor musicians such as Nat King Cole and Lionel Hampton. Other free attractions include the Birmingham Railroad Park and Birmingham Botanical Gardens. The city of Birmingham also offers a large zoo featuring 230 species of animals sprawled across 122 acres. If you enjoy unusual attractions, check out Sloss Furnaces, a free national historic landmark, currently the only 20th century blast furnace preserved in the United States. View the city from amazing heights from the observation deck at Vulcan Park, home of the world's largest cast iron statue built for the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis.

If you are looking to spend time outdoors, head to Red Mountain Park with hiking trails to explore, aerial adventure tours, and team building activities. Visit redmountainpark.org to reserve your adventure.

We look forward to seeing you next year! **Put July 24-27, 2022**, on your calendar for the 86th National Convention as Free Will Baptists enjoy a fresh, new Birmingham.

About the writer: Hannah Driggers is the librarian at Olanta Elementary School (SC) and a member of the convention press team.

70 Years of Faithfulness

HONORING THE LONGEST-SERVING MISSIONARY IN HISTORY

This week, we honor missionary Carlisle Hanna and celebrate his 70 years of faithful service to God in the country of India—the longest missions career for any missionary in any missions organization. His call to India dates to August 15, 1948. He attended a youth rally where God's Spirit tugged at his heart and called him to India. He felt God directing him to Welch College, and he "dropped his nets" and followed Christ.

At college he met and fell in love with Marie Wright who had also been called to India, and they married in 1949. They were appointed as FWB missionaries in 1951 and arrived on the field in 1952. Shortly after arriving, their eight-month-old daughter, Sheila, suddenly became gravely ill and passed away. Bro. Carlisle reflects on those days. "We were very, very empty at this time. We did not think about quitting. We thought we might not live, but we did not think about quitting."

God blessed the Hannas with three more children, Brenda Kay, Mark, and Don (who were at the convention this week with their families). I asked Don and Brenda Kay to share one of their fondest memories of India. They both agreed it was

going with their dad to villages to preach the gospel. What a legacy for his children to remember those moments as their favorite from childhood!

Life and ministry was difficult for the Hannas. It tested every ounce of strength, passion, and commitment they had. Bro. Carlisle faced the death of another family member when, on April 23, 1998, Marie passed away. However, he stayed in India for another 23 years of ministry to the people he loved.

From 70 years of faithfulness, and thanks to the faithful witness of committed believers, there has been a great harvest in India. **Today, there are:**

- + 120 church planters and evangelists
- + 30 ordained pastors
- + 300 FWB churches in northeast India
- + 13 churches and 11 ordained pastors in Southeastern India
- + 35 churches in Nepal
- + A congregation of Bhutanese meeting in India
- + More than 17,000 believers
- + 5,000 - 6,000 attending their National Conference

Carlisle Hanna's unquestionable commitment has been recognized at several levels. On November 16, 2000, he was recognized by his home state of South Carolina. The governor Jim Hodges presented Bro. Carlisle with South Carolina's highest civilian honor, the Order of the Palmetto, stating, "Reverend Hanna has been a humble servant of his faith, his God, and his fellow man, and, as such, has been a great ambassador for South Carolina. He is truly deserving of South Carolina's highest honor."

Bro. Carlisle will be honored at the MissioNexus meeting in September. MissioNexus is an organization uniting over 300 evangelical mission agencies and mission-minded churches representing 30,000-plus missionaries and staff members. Each year they choose one person in the world of missions to receive their Lifetime of Service Award. This year, Bro. Carlisle is the recipient.

Several years ago, I attended the National Conference in India when they honored Bro. Carlisle with heart-warming speeches, gifts of great personal and cultural value, and words of great encouragement. For me, the most moving moment was when a document was read declaring Bro. Carlisle "Uncle," as the Indian believers call him, literally

"one of us," meaning truly a man of India, one of their people. I don't think any of us doubt that Bro. Carlisle is Indian in the deepest recesses of his heart.

This week, we honor Carlisle Hanna for giving more time in service to God through IM, Inc. than any other missionary in our history. As Free Will Baptists committed to the cause of Christ, let us live our own lives and carry out our own ministry in a way that follows the example of Bro. Carlisle Hanna...UNCLE.

About the writer: Clint Morgan has been director of IM, Inc. since 2011.



Major Decisions in Memphis

During the 2021 convention, delegates made several important decisions. The denomination voted to accept two resolutions spelling out important doctrinal stances:

1. A resolution defining the Free Will Baptist doctrinal stance regarding gender, marriage, and sexuality, including the commitment to: "teach and model a biblical understanding of sexuality and gender in their families and churches, seeking to equip church members and leaders to help them remain faithful to this teaching."
2. A resolution reaffirming the denomination's stance on racism and resolving the denomination not "root its proclamation, witness, and efforts toward racial equality in language, thought forms, and understandings of justice that emerge from secular philosophical and sociological theory, such as critical race theory and intersectionality."

In addition, delegates approved a slate of recommendations from the General Board, including:

- + A recommendation to approve a 2022 denominational budget of \$30.1 million.
- + A recommendation to limit denominational officers to two, four-year consecutive terms and commission members to two, consecutive five-year terms.
- + A recommendation to integrate the Manual for Board Members into each national board's operating procedures.
- + A recommendation to update the nominating procedures in the Treatise.
- + A recommendation from the Commission for Theological Integrity to update the *Treatise* statement regarding marriage (Appendix to Chapter IV, Section 1).

2021 Convention Registration Update

At 11:00 a.m. Wednesday, the National Association had registered **2,764** and Vertical Three had registered **2,237**, for a unique total of **3,318**.

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.

Missing Something?

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

- + Bible, Paul Collins
- + Kavu™ Bag
- + Wallet, Pink
- + Phone (Van Gogh case)
- + Red and white drawstring bag, Charity Faith Greer

NAFWB Playlist. Take the convention music home by listening to NAFWB Convention Music '21 on Spotify. This public playlist includes music from both adult and youth services.

truth &
peace

a leadership training
conference

for FWB students

Grades 9-12

Application Deadline:

October 15

Reference Deadline:

October 31