Missouri Free Will Baptist

GEM Magazine



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the GEM Magazine

Volume 97, Number 3
May-June, 2026

The Official Publication of the Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptists

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The Free Will Baptist GEM (1929-present), published by the MO State Association, grew to widespread regional, even national distribution across the denomination. The longest-running Free Will Baptist periodical, the GEM continues to be published today. The Historical Commission invites you to enjoy reading nearly a century of amazing history in the GEM Magazine.

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Editor - Stanley Bunch
Layout - Page Printing





How Are We Better Together?

For more than a year we have included several written articles in this publication that dealt with the topic of being better together. Specifically, as it relates to Christian believers, congregations, and associations. Christians serving together interdependently is a common thread through the New Testament. The Bible does not present isolated believers, congregations, or ministries as part of God's plan for the body of Christ. We need each other and are dependent upon each other, perhaps more so when we think otherwise.

The apostle Paul acknowledged many times his need for fellow laborers to accompany him, the need of the prayers of others, and the need for correction and instruction. None of us are beyond the same needs. We need God, the Bible, a calling, as well as other believers.

How are we in the ShowMe State, showing that we believe we are better together?

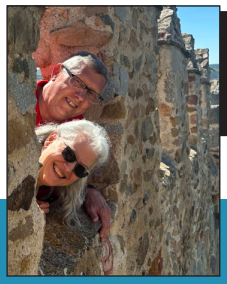
- Several months ago, the Niangua FWB Church needed a new roof. Funds were few. The Liberty Association joined together and replaced the roof. What one or two could not do, several churches cooperating was able to accomplish.
- A local church needed help making their mortgage payment. The Bethel FWB Church in Marshfield donated funds from their surplus to not only pay the mortgage that was due, but to help cancel the loan.
- The Clifton FWB Church in Thayer burned a few years ago. Other churches sent donations to help them rebuild.
- The Calvary Chapel FWB Church in Buffalo has partnered with the Esperanza, and the FWB Church of Faith International in outreach and work projects several times.
- The MMB Disaster Relief Ministry cleared nuisance trees at the Nevada FWB Church and spent countless days and manhours doing clean up after a tornado ripped through NW Arkansas. They have also assisted in numerous other areas affected by storms.
- The MOFWB Retiree Ministry donated $15,000+ for needs at the Niangua Youth Camp.
- The MOFWB CE Board and Executive Office have provided multiple seminars, retreats, conferences, and other opportunities to equip those who lead and minister. They, and the MOFWB Women's Ministry have provided thousands of dollars in scholarships to students at FWB colleges who are preparing to serve local churches.
- Every year the Niangua Youth Camp, Mission Board, and Executive Office provide a cost-free evangelism conference (see page 11) to motivate and help local Christ followers to be soul winners and disciple makers.
- In 2025 the Kansas State Association joined with the Missouri State Association to host the first National Convention of FWB that was jointly hosted by two associations.
- Every year the Youth Ministry Board cooperates with the Youth Camp Board to provide speakers, counsel, and other aids to help campers have a God impacted week.
- The MOFWB State Association works together with the National Association to provide ministry board members, missionaries and funds, prayer support, and involvement.

God is pleased when we work together in harmony and cooperation. The churches in Antioch supported the churches in Jerusalem. The churches in Colossae and Laodicea mutually shared Paul's letters of encouragement. (Colossians 4:16)

Panamanians have a good saying regarding working together. "One hand washes the other!" So True.

"Everyone needs at least six friends. They need to work together harmoniously or carrying the casket could go badly."

Thank you Missouri Free Will Baptists for being "BETTER TOGETHER!"



from the Missions Director, Steve Reeves

The Pastor Is The Key!

The last command Jesus gave the Church before He returned to heaven was to go to all the world with the Gospel (Acts 1:8). Since that moment Missions has been the priority of the Church. It is not The Great Suggestion, it is still The Great Commission. How do we go about fulfilling these marching orders of Jesus? It begins in the local church. There the Gospel is preached, disciples are made, and the Lord of the Harvest calls out workers. If obedience begins with the church, then the pastor, the spiritual leader of the church is vital. I am so thankful for our FWB pastors here in Missouri. If it were not for them, we would not have a mission program. There would be little to no support for missionaries. Pastor, you are the key to missions! I don't want to just leave you with the Lord's command without offering some help as you promote missions in your local congregation. Here are 7 practical ways a pastor can lead his church into missions.

1. Preach the Scriptures

This first one is easy. Preach the Word. The Bible is a missions book. Missions is the heart of God. As you preach and teach (if you are faithful to the text) you will teach the importance of missions. Missions can be found in every book of the Bible. Your people want to hear from God. Regularly teach that missions is central to God's plan, not a side program. When people see missions throughout the Bible, they understand it is God's heart.

2. Lead by personal example

The pastor who personally cares about missions inspires the church. If you have a burden for missions and missionaries, your people will develop the same burden. Pray publicly for missionaries in each worship service and Bible Study. Read about missionaries like William Carey, Hudson Taylor and Adoniram Judson. Read the stories of FWB missionaries like Thomas Willey, Missouri's own LaVerne Miley and Lizzy McAdams. Visit mission fields when possible. You will never see the world in the same way. Cultivate personal friendships with missionaries and church planters. People usually follow the passion of their leader.

3. Make sure Missions is regularly seen and heard in the church

Give Missionary updates during services. Each Monday I send out a power point of prayer requests for a particular missionary or church planter supported by the Show Me Plan. Feel free to use these freely, or modify them if you wish. If you do not receive the Missions Focus, please get your email address to me. Pray for unreached people groups. Learn and pray for those who live in the 10/40 Window. Use mission maps or displays in the church. Share testimonies of missionaries when you preach. Visibility builds awareness and compassion.

4. Build a Missions team in your church

The pastor should not carry missions alone. I believe God has placed folks with a missionary heart in every local church. Find those people and empower them to help you. Form a missions committee or leadership team that can communicate with missionaries. With the creation of social media this has never been easier. Organize missions events. Every church needs at least one time a year when they emphasize Missions. (a Missions Conference, missionary speaker, etc.). These annual events remind the church of its Jesus given calling to reach the world; locally, nationally, and internationally. Let this group lead prayer efforts. When a missionary says prayer is the most important thing a church can do for them, they are not just trying to sound spiritual. Coordinate trips and support. This creates shared ownership.

5. Include Missions in the church budget

Where the church invests money shows what it values. A pastor can lead the church to support missionaries monthly. Many of our churches have the Show Me Plan and missions giving in their monthly budgets. God will always bless the church that gives regularly and sacrificially to missions. Even small churches can have a meaningful mission budget.

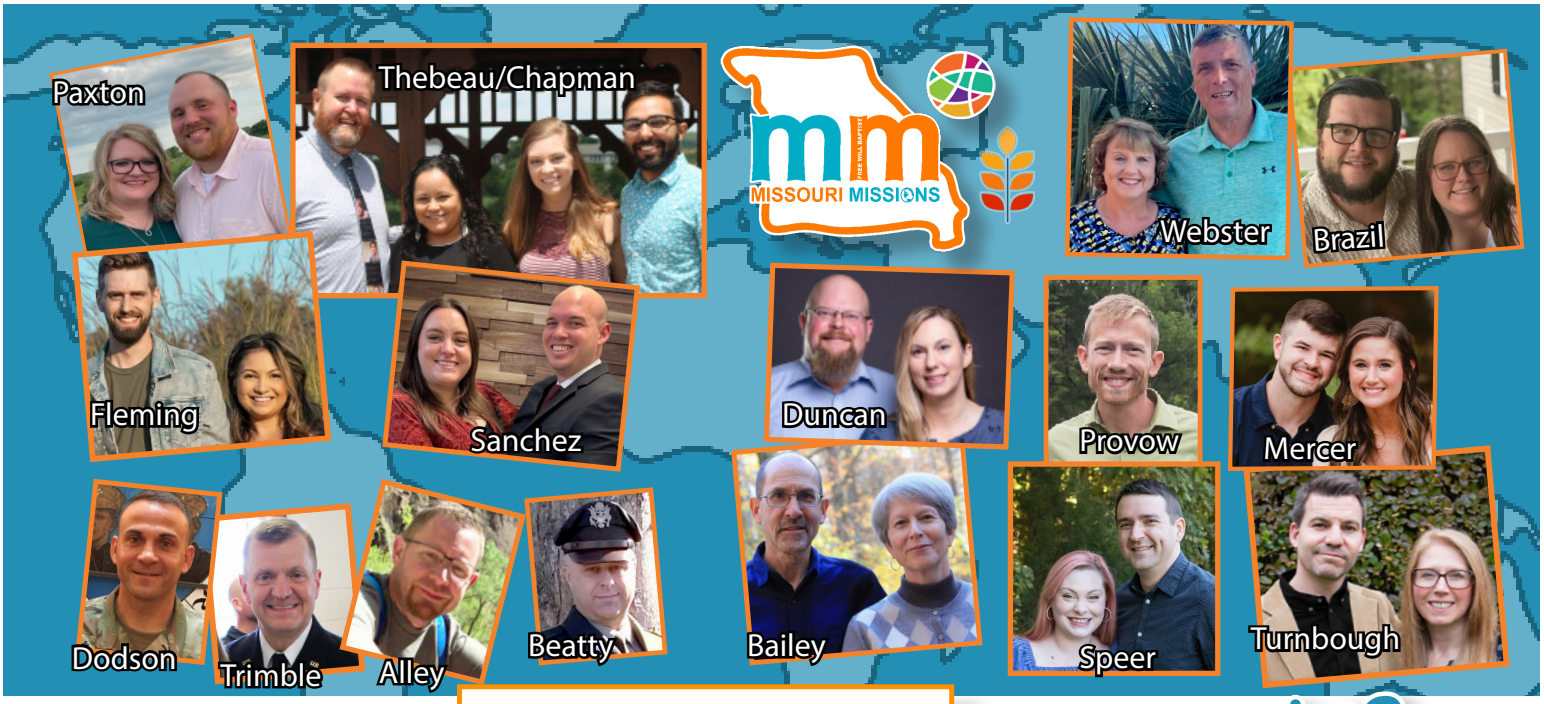
6. Encourage short-term Mission opportunities

Short-term trips often change people's lives and the way they look at the lost world forever. Encourage your people to participate in the Hanna Project, E-Team, College Missions Program, etc. As they go make sure to give them time to share their personal testimonies afterwards. Many career missionaries first sensed their call on short-term trips. Adam and Carol Duncan in Ecuador are a case in point.

7. Look for those God is calling to be missionaries

Preach and challenge your church about God's call. If we never ask them to consider that God may be calling them, chances are they may never consider it. Then help them receive training and encourage them all the way. Commission and send them from the church. Sending workers fulfills the command of Christ found in Matthew 9:37–38.

God's heart is and will always be lost people. Missions is simply reaching out to lost people wherever they live - down the street or halfway around the world. Pastor, let God use you to ignite this same heart in your congregation. Your church will be changed and the world will be changed as well.



MMB SHOW ME plan Updates

- STATE -

Grace Fellowship - Cape Girardeau: Ray tore his Achilles tendon at the Ministers Retreat in March and had to have surgery. Please pray for a quick recovery.

Mosaic – Rolla: The church has recently had several baptisms to start 2026. One lady is from Iran. Pray for Mosaic as they continue to offer the Good News to Rolla.

Freedom Point – Florissant: The church celebrated its second anniversary in March. Over 100 people have come to know Jesus in the 2 year existence of the church.

Esperanza Church – Grandview: Esperanza has baptized 5 new believers in the first 3 months of 2026. The church is participating in almost all of the events of the state and the local association as well.

Bradley and Madison Mercer, University of Missouri: The 'Let's Speak English' group that meets at Rejoice Church continues to reach out to international students. Praise God for the lives that have been changed.

- NORTH AMERICAN -

The Villages (Florida): Please pray for Frank and Debbie as they go through the fund raising process and the building process for the new home of Connect Church. Ask God what He would have you do.

Brazil (Hawaii): Please pray for Dylan and Katie and the new team as they work and prepare for a September launch date for the new church.

- INTERNATIONAL -

Baileys (Japan): The women from three of our Tokyo-area churches met in March at Iriso Christ Church for fellowship and a meal together. The three churches are the Iriso Church, Good News Chapel and KCC. Pray for these ladies that they will live their testimonies before their families and friends! Please pray for the "seekers" who also attended!

Speer (Japan): Please pray for Daniel and Kate as they will be the only missionaries in the Saporro Church for the next several months while the Bishops are on stateside assignment.

Provow (Bulgaria): The churches in Shumen and Novi Pazar are both seeing a good amount of first time and returning guests in their services.

Turnbough (Spain): Matthew and Brooke have been informed by their landlord that their apartment is being sold. They are looking for a new home. Please pray for God to lead them to the exact place where they can be a powerful witness for Jesus.

Duncan (Ecuador): Carol recently did home visits in the village of Puka Urku. They also organized a village clean up as well. These visits allow Carol and Adam to share the Gospel as well as offering much needed medical assistance.

Baptisms

Grandview - Esperanza



On March 8th, Pastor Victor Sanchez baptized Brian Munguía, Brian's wife, Elda Guzmán Sagastume, and Florimar Motaban.

Ozark Family Church



On February 22nd, Pastor Gary Mitchener baptized Gerald Travers.

PLEASE SEND BAPTISM PHOTOS

How? Group pictures taken close up are best. (Fill the frame with the people.)
Include the pastor if possible. Please include dates and names. Send to stan@mofwb.org.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY RETREAT

HEIRLOOMS

More information and online registration at MOFWB.com

TELL YOUR STORY

SEPTEMBER 18-19TH

SPEAKER KRISTI JOHNSON

Thousand Hills Resort Hotel

120 Wildwood Dr S
Branson, MO 65616

Cost: $60 + room
$20 late fee after August 18th

MISSOURI FREE WILL BAPTIST women's MINISTRY

PASTOR'S WIVES RETREAT

To celebrate Pastor's Wives Appreciation Month, this year the Pastor's Wives Retreat met at the Child Evangelism Fellowship headquarters in Warrenton, MO, on March 6-8. The theme was "Joy in the Journey" with 25 ladies in attendance. Kristi Johnson, the new WNAC director, was their speaker. They had a wonderful time resting and supporting one another.





PASTOR'S RETREAT

Dr. Eddie Moody challenged those who attended the annual ministers' retreat. We were blessed to have several Randall University ministerial students join us, as well as Randall President Bob Thompson, and Oklahoma Free Will Baptist Executive Director James Cofelt.

Dr. Moody challenged us to capitalize on our strengths as Free Will Baptists and to improve upon the areas where we may need to be strengthened.

Naman Dement, music minister at the Farmington FWB Church led in Spirit-filled worship. Another joyful experience was getting to know some who we may not have known and to spend several moments in prayer together. We would love for your pastor and leaders to join with us next year.







Make plans to join us at the

Missouri State Association of Free Will Baptist

113th State Convention

June 1st *through the* 3rd

at the Oasis Hotel and Convention Center in Springfield, MO

Raising the Bar; Pursuing Christian Excellence

Music: Naman, Amanda Dement & Family

Speakers:

Monday Evening
David Gibbs

Tuesday Evening
Jacob Jones

Wednesday Evening
Brent Patrick

Tuesday Morning Sessions:

9:00 am .. Various Threats (Legal and Otherwise) Facing Our Churches *

10:30 am .. Missions Celebration (Hosted by MO Women's Ministry)

1:30 pm .. Raising the Bar in Preaching: Best Practices for Pulpit Ministry; Panel Discussion *

* Hosted by the MO Christian Education Board

PRE-REGISTER APRIL 1 - MAY 25 AT MOFWB.COM

REGISTER

Room Cost:
$112 + tax

All individuals are responsible for making their own hotel reservations. Call the Oasis at 417-866-5253

2026 Nominating Committee Recommendations

Christian Education Board

Replacing Melvin Moon	Nomination: Jackson Watts	Term expiring 2031

Missouri Mission Board

Replacing Curt Gwartney	Nomination: Curt Gwartney	Term expiring 2029
Replacing Aaron Pontious	Nomination: Aaron Pontious	Term expiring 2029

Retiree Ministry Board

Replacing Don Anderson	Nomination: Don Anderson	Term expiring 2031

Youth Camp Board

Replacing Tim Hodges	Nomination: Tim Hodges	Term expiring 2031

Youth Ministries Board

Replacing Luke Tyler	Nomination: Luke Tyler	Term expiring 2031
Replacing Layton Smith	Nomination: Seth Romines	Term expiring 2029

Historical Preservation Committee

Replacing Gary Fry	Nomination: Gary Fry	Term expiring 2029

Randall University Trustee

Replacing Lyle Hoover	Nomination: Lyle Hoover	Term expiring 2029

Executive Committee

Nominations: Moderator - Rick Dement — Assistant Moderator - Melvin Haas
Clerk - Justin Lawson — Assistant Clerk - Faron Thebeau

In the interest of promoting a healthy and effective state ministry, we the **2026 Nominating Committee** submit this year's nominees for boards and state offices. In consideration of prior suggestions from the Missouri General Board, we have confirmed (1) that nominees are supporters of Missouri COOP, (2) that they have demonstrated both a heart and ability for the position for which they are nominated, and (3) that all nominees have been contacted and expressed a willingness to serve.

Prayerfully Submitted,

Ryan Akers, Chairman
David Beltz
Carl Short
Melvin Haas
Jennifer Lawson



2026 Retiree Retreat

Monday, October 26 thru Wednesday, October 28

at Lodge of the Ozarks in Branson

Attendees are responsible for their own lunch on Tuesday.

Hotel check-in begins at 3pm on Monday.

Single $155/person **Triple $105/person**

Double $110/person **Quad $100/person**

$75 deposit per person required with registration.

ALL pastors are welcome to attend!

Registration payment may be made by check (payable to MOFWB Sr. Board) or cash.

Special Music & Speaker:



the Lesters



Rev. Ken Simpson

NOTE: If, AFTER YOU HAVE REGISTERED, you find you cannot attend, please let Bro. Ron know as soon as possible:

(417) 257-9723 or Ronblindafb@gmail.com

Registration Form

Deadline: Monday, September 28th – no room guarantee after deadline.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Church: _____ Pastor: _____

List all persons staying in a room:

_____ _____

_____ _____

Special needs: _____

Mail to: Ron Blanks • 9172 County Road 6990 • West Plains, MO 65775

2026 Evangelism Conference

At the Niangua Youth Camp - August 21-22 till noon.
Begins with dinner on Friday at 5:30 pm.
This conference is for anyone involved in local church ministry.
Attendees will be encouraged, trained, and receive resources to help in the ministry.
There will be training for discipleship and practical soul winning.

Speakers

Ron Hunter
D6 Family Ministries

Faron Thebeau
Mosaic FWB Church

Josh Chapman
Mosaic FWB Church

Derek Altom
D6 Family Ministries

Information

Everyone is invited to attend this FREE conference!
For more information: email stan@mofwb.org or call (866) 532-6537
Register online @ MOFWB.com or QR
If you plan to stay overnight at the camp, bring bedding with you.

Sponsors

CAMP NIANGUA

MISSOURI MISSIONS

Prayerfully consider setting aside less than 24 hours to be better prepared to serve Him.

CAMP NIANGUA WORK DAY

On March 28th, over 180 workers from various FWB churches worked together to make needed improvements to Camp Niangua.

"We are so thankful for everyone who came and worked hard! We accomplished far more than we had planned! We have now completed both of the decks/steps on the men's dorm! Every closet, nook, and cranny in the camp has been combed through and organized! We cleared much of the pond as well as much of the front of the camp! The camp looks amazing!







THANK YOU to our amazing Missouri churches for all your support and hard work!"

- Chase Spradlin, Camp Niangua Director



Missouri Free Will Baptist

2026 State Calendar

June 1-3	MOFWB State Meeting – Oasis Hotel & Convention Center, Springfield, MO
June 2	Missions Celebration and CE Board Seminars
June 8-12	Teen Camp – Camp Niangua
June 22-26	Pre-Teen Camp – Session 1, Camp Niangua
July 6-10	Pre-Teen Camp – Session 2, Camp Niangua
July 19-22	NAFWB Convention & National Youth Conference, Columbus, OH
August 21-22	Evangelism Conference – Camp Niangua
September 18-19	MOFWB Women's Ministry Retreat – Thousand Hills Resort, Branson
October 26-28	Retiree Retreat – details on page 10
November (TBA)	E3 Conference – location to be determined
November 2	General Board Meeting – State Office, Lebanon, MO

All events & additional information, as it becomes available, can be found at mofwb.com

CHRISTIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

The annual meeting of our State Association is just around the corner. Our forefathers had the wisdom to form churches into associations because they knew we could do far more together than individually. They also knew we could help each other stay on the right path in both doctrine and practice. They wholeheartedly believed in "Better Together!" Today, as a State Association, there are numerous things we do to support and help each other as we work together to fulfill the Great Commission.

The annual Association Meeting is about so much more than just being informed and taking care of business. We all enjoy the opportunity to fellowship with one another, build relationships, worship, and pray together. We also have an incredible line-up of preachers, and seminars.

The Christian Education board, which exists to provide and promote resources for discipleship and ministry in our local churches, is excited to help sponsor an amazing opportunity during the Tuesday seminars. Dr. David Gibbs from the Christian Law Association will be with us to share information that will help us protect our churches and preserve Christian liberty for our children and grandchildren.

As you know, we live in difficult and complicated times. Churches and ministries are facing lawsuits like never before. In light of this, our state association is partnering with the Christian Law Association to give legal assistance and protection to our churches and ministries. If you are a part of our State Association, then this benefit is available to you. The Christian Law Association offers a wide variety of services free of charge to churches, ministries, and Christians.

CLA has been providing free legal assistance to Bible-believing churches and Christians since1969. They also work hard to keep us up to date on the latest legal battles threatening our freedoms.

We hope you are making plans to join us June 1st through June 3rd for the State Convention. Also, try to free up your schedule on Tuesday, June 2nd and join us for these seminars.

New Opportunities are Opening Up in Latin America!



Panama has a FWB couple who are working as chaplains in a Christian school in El Salvador, and they are now seeing baptisms and sensing a call to plant a church.



We have heard that there is a FWB church in Costa Rica and that they would be interested in partnering with us to expand their work in the country.



Free Will Baptists from Virginia have started a language institute in the the Dominican Republic to teach English as a second language. This would help students become better prepared for the job market. They have requested that we partner with them.



There is already one FWB church in Honduras that has preaching points in four or five outlying areas. Panamanian FWBs are exploring how to come alongside them to expand other church plants.

IM comes alongside partnership countries to facilitate:

- Evangelism
- Church Planting
- Discipleship
- Youth Camps
- Hope Centers
- IMpact Projects
- Bible Training of Leaders & Pastors
- Other Benevolent Ministries

Give to Global Partners to join IM ministries around the world!

On the return slip, write "**IM Global Partners**" to designate your gift amount.
Mail your gift to **P.O. Box 5002 | Antioch, TN, 37011**.
You can also give online at **www.iminc.org/give**.

NEW
D6 DISCIPLESHIP TITLES
Designed to Meet Discipleship Needs Across Generations



7 Ideas for Summertime Fun



• Legacy Coalition Blog Team - June 3, 2024
• *Written by Elaine McAllister, Author and Friend of Legacy Coalition*

Another school year has ended! Those who were once kindergarteners walk across the stage of life as graduates. It seems May is a subtle reminder of how quickly time passes as well as a gentle nudge to plan for summertime fun.

Take a trip to your local discount store for your stash of things to turn summer SUN days into FUN days with your grandkids. Pool noodles, glow sticks, inflatable kiddie pools, balloons, small plastic cars, sidewalk chalk – you get the idea. Save a few empty water bottles, check your attic for clear Christmas lights, and search your toolbox for zip ties, duct tape, and hammers to prepare for some fun.

Here are 7 ideas to get you started:

1. Oodles of Noodles
Bend each one to form a circle and use duct tape to secure the two ends. (The shorter the noodle, the smaller the circle.) These are great for a ring toss game outside. Simply drive a stake into the ground and have some fun. They also make great targets to throw water balloons through.

2. Glow in the Dark Bowling
Activate a few glow sticks to put inside a few water bottles. Fill each one halfway (or so) with water to help them stand upright before putting on the lids. Set up a backyard bowling alley and have some late night fun.

3. Soaker Jump Party
If you have access to a trampoline, this is great fun for all. Blow up several balloons and toss them inside the trampoline 'net.' Fill several more balloons with water and add them. As the kids jump, the air filled balloons will be all over the place while the water filled ones will burst, cooling off the jumpers and anyone standing nearby. Keep a trash can handy to pick up the pieces afterward.

4. Sidewalk Journeys
Using sidewalk chalk, create trees, stores, houses, bridges, intersections, and more on your driveway. Older grandkids may want to be the artists, while younger ones make their way through city streets and around curves with little vehicles.

5. Sidewalk Cross
Another sidewalk chalk activity begins with each child (or an adult helper) drawing the outline of a cross with a dark color. Using that same dark color, draw random straight lines to give the cross a stained glass look. That's when the fun begins. Use several colors to fill in the 'pieces' for a springtime piece of art.

6. Frozen Fun
Put several colorful small plastic toys (balls, cars, trinkets, bracelets, etc.) in the bottom of a large plastic bowl. Cover with water and freeze. Repeat (more toys, more water, then freeze) to fill the bowl. When summertime heat comes, send the kids outside with a small hammer and a giant ice cube where they can stay cool 'rescuing' frozen loot.

7. Kiddie Pool Campout
Inflate a rectangular swimming pool and fill it with a few pillows, fleece blankets, and grandkids! Read books, tell ghost stories, look at the stars together, sing silly songs, or whatever in your own backyard. To keep unwanted critters away, put the pool inside a netted trampoline. Or just use the trampoline, without a pool. It's great for an evening or an all-nighter!

Conclusion

Celebrate grandparenting always! Be creative! Be spontaneous! Be intentional! Turn fleeting moments into forever memories with your grandchildren.

Visit elainemcallister.com for more ideas, resources, stories, and just encouragement about life in general! Copied from: https://legacycoalition.com/blog/

Why AI matters to Christians

(AI = Artificial Intelligence or Computer Generated Intelligence)
Welcome to the new technological revolution. When I was in high school, computer processing speed seemed to double every 6 months. The seeming exponential growth in computational power was breathtaking. Over the years, the continual growth and advancement of computers seemed to level off and seemed less innovative.

In recent years, many of you have probably been grappling with the ubiquity of cloud computing. All your files live somewhere on the internet. Your life lives somewhere on the internet. Everything is on the phone. Everything is on an app.

We began to be delighted with the fun of conversing with Alexa, Siri, and Android. You can search for groceries, movies, music, set the temp in your house, see your house, etc. from your computer or your phone. Your TV listens to you. Your phone listens to you. It all seemed like it was beginning to become really useful.

Then, ChatGPT hit. Initially, it was fun to use it to quickly aggregate internet searches. Maybe you asked it to explain things. Maybe you generated pictures. Two years ago, ChatGPT or Dalle would spit out strange pictures that were barely recognizable from the prompts they were provided. Now, Nano Banana can generate unbelievable pictures of all kinds.

What you may not have counted on was the exponential growth of AI in 2025. Trillions of dollars are being funneled to this technology. The AI companies bought tons of Graphics Processing units (the computer part that allows the gamer at church to play cool games) causing extreme pressures on the GPU market. A few months ago, there was an enormous shift towards providing Random Access Memory (RAM) (this is what allows you to keep those 50 google chrome tabs open without your computer crashing) to AI companies at scale causing the price for RAM to increase significantly. Now, the storage is being bought out. Western Digital just divulged that the full 2026 industrial level inventory of storage they plan to produce has already been bought out. So storage (where you save your cat photos in the cloud) might see a price bump. Data centers are springing up around the country. These centers are vital to AI companies being able to process data and feed their models.

But it's not just the computer industry that is affected by this. As the capabilities grow, so do the fears. Will AI become sentient or conscious? This is outside of the scope of what we will cover, but the Bible reassures us that we don't have to worry about man creating life. Creation can never be greater than its creator, whether the creator is God or man. Furthermore, those who can't even say where life came from (like evolutionists) cannot give life to something.

Will AI take jobs? Yes. It already is affecting the tech industries, but it won't be able to fully replace humans. It is revolutionizing how your shop, the price you pay, the medical care you receive, the customer service you interact with, etc.

Will AI be everywhere? Yes. Companies are racing to make sure they don't fall behind. You have probably been interacting with some form of AI for years without knowing it. Now, you are just going to be more aware that it exists.

Will AI cause problems for humanity? It already has. Already there is what is called "AI Psychosis". Already there are individuals with psychological issues already engaging with AI in ways that have led to suicide. Already people are making terrible decisions based on bad responses from AI. AI is not always correct. But when it is wrong, it is confidently wrong….and makes you feel good about being wrong.

Over the next couple of articles, I want to bring your attention to a much bigger issue. The race to define "good". This is the battleground. There is more danger than you can imagine. There is also more opportunity than you can imagine.

Read the entire article on the MOFWB State Website. Mofwb.com
Scott Collins pastors the South Fremont FWB Church

When Waiting on God is Really Hard

by Chuck Lawless: Church Answers Consultant https://churchanswers.com/blog

When I became a believer at age 13, my pastor told me to begin praying for my parents to become believers. I followed his direction, and I started praying that God would save my mom and dad.

Frankly, God took His time.

My dad turned to Christ when he was 71—36 years after I began praying for him. God dramatically changed my dad (so much so that we weren't always sure he was the same person!), but it still took more than three decades for God to answer my prayer.

My mom took even longer. Eleven years after God saved my dad, my mom turned to Christ at age 79. She lived only six months longer, but she, too, was unbelievably different after her conversion. Still, God listened to my prayers for 47 years before He answered them.

At the time of mom's conversion, I said more than once to others, "When God finally answers your prayers, you don't worry about the delay anymore." And, I still stand by that statement today. When I knew both my parents had met Jesus, it didn't bother me that God took decades to answer my prayers. I simply praised him for what He had done in His timing.

Now that you know some of my story, you would think that I no longer get stressed when God seems to take His time in responding to my prayers. If anybody knows better by experience, I should be that person. After all, I lived what I've just told you.

Still, though, I struggle at times. I have an older sister and a buddy I love like a son for whom I've been praying 50+ years and 14+ years, respectively. Every day, I plead with God to save them.

Every day. For years. Decades even. And each day, I learn through my sometimes weak faith more about waiting on God—and more about me.

1. **I'm learning in my waiting that nothing I've done or earned can change hearts.** I may have a PhD in Evangelism and Church Growth (earned under my supervising professor at that time, Dr. Thom Rainer), and my title may be "Senior Professor of Evangelism and Missions," but none of that matters right now. Only God can move a heart to turn to Him—and He does so in His time. The meantime as I await God's response is a learning time for me. If you're waiting for God to answer a prayer, too, I trust He is teaching you something in your meantime.
2. **I'm reminded daily that God's calendar is not my calendar.** What seems like a long time to me is hardly long for an eternal God. He is never hurried nor late, never worried nor uncaring, never unaware of my concerns nor not sovereign over all of them. We wait now, but God controls the calendar and the clock. He answers us at precisely the right time according to His perfect plan, not according to our imperfect one. The bottom line is this: God is faithful and right in all that He does, regardless of His timing. I'm still learning to trust God based on what I do know about Him rather than worry about His timing I don't know.
3. **I'm learning what fasting is all about.** John Piper concludes that "Christian fasting, at its root, is the hunger of a homesickness for God."[i] It is a longing for God to make Himself known more than anything. Again, Piper's words convict me: "If you don't feel strong desires for the manifestation of the glory of God, it is not because you have drunk deeply and are satisfied. It is because you have nibbled so long at the table of the world. Your soul is stuffed with small things, and there is no room for the great."[ii] When I truly want God to do the great work of saving my sister and my friend—so much so that the temporary pleasure of food loses its power—the discipline of fasting makes sense to me. Waiting still hurts, but I can do it prayerfully with hope and anticipation.
4. **I'm being stretched to trust God all the way to death.** In the musings of a man growing older, I've come to realize that I may die with prayers yet unanswered. It's possible I may go home to heaven still longing for God to draw my loved ones to Him. I desperately want Him to answer my prayers while I'm here, but He may not— for now. My death, though, would not preclude God's answering my prayers when I'm already in heaven. I should be able to die with waiting faith then because I've learned to live with waiting faith now. My trust should be both present tense and future tense; that is, it should be "the reality of what we hope for . . . the evidence of things we cannot see" (Heb 11:1, NLT).

I've learned, but I'm still learning when waiting's hard. How about you? Have you been waiting on God a long time? If so, let us know—our Church Answers family would be honored to join you in prayer.

[i] John Piper, *A Hunger for God: Desiring God through Fasting and Prayer*. Good News Publishers. Kindle Edition, Kindle loc. 93.

[ii] Piper, *Hunger,* Kindle loc. 229

Financial Report

Please note: The amounts listed are for two months, February 2026 - March 2026

COOP Disbursements

19% MO Missions..... $19,028.94
21.5% Gen/Exec..... $21,532.74
8.5% Youth Camp..... $8,512.94
2% Youth Ministry..... $2,003.05
2% Christian Education $2,003.05
2% Retiree Ministry $2,003.05
9% State Retirement .. $9,013.71
3% Show-Me $3,004.57
33% Nat'l Ministries .. $33,050.26
Randall U (.1121)..... $3,704.93
Total Disbursed..... $100,152.29

RECEIPTS

COOP

Amity..... $162.30
Bailey..... $741.00
Bailey Chapel $243.00
Belton $1,121.20
Bethel Marshfield.....$1,612.00
Black Oak $1,475.11
Byrd $768.00
Calvary Chapel..... $10,364.00
Coon Creek 300.00
Copper Mines $2,162.01
Cornerstone..... $250.00
Cuba $1,127.00
D6 Commission $525.13
De Soto 1st..... $3,119.00
Esperanza FWB $826.80
Faith - Fair Grove $162.10
Faith Chapel $1,745.03
Farmington 1st..... $7,660.93
Fellowship..... $3,480.00
First Day $762.64
Fredericktown 1st $425.00
Freedom Point..... $1,013.39
Freeman Chapel..... $502.00
Friendship..... $349.00
Gary Tune..... $50.00
Generations..... $1207.19
Good News..... $578.90
Gospel Light $800.00
Grace..... $5,789.17
Grace Fellowship..... $3,025.00
Grace Pointe..... $735.00
Grant Avenue..... $1,149.77
Hannon..... $2,272.94
Hartville..... $3,650.00
Hopewell..... $2,015.50
Houston 1st $1,956.69
Hurryville..... $774.00
Koshkonong..... $438.87
Leadington..... $2,075.00
Lebanon 1st..... $3,680.26
Liberty - Gatewood $241.00
Marshfield $443.38
Mill Creek..... $834.11
Monett 1st..... $675.30
Mosaic $2,544.33
Mt. Pisgah..... $1,040.00
Neosho 1st $1,598.00
Nevada $973.18
New Hope..... $481.00
New Life - Licking $951.46
Number One..... $25.00
Oak Grove - Mtn. Grove .. $580.00
O'Fallon 1st $3,694.66
Ozark 1st - Heritage $761.79
Ozark Family Church.... $7,385.85
Park Hills 1st..... $1,390.25
Parkview..... $813.00
Pleasant Home..... $340.80
Pleasant Ridge - Urbana . $499.00
Republic..... $1,018.70
Resolve..... $200.00
Rock Chapel..... $947.50
Safe Harbor $375.00
Seymour $2,151.00
Smyrna $273.00
Springfield 1st..... $2,425.00
Stockton..... $361.55
Stonebridge $1,652.84
Thayer $3,125.00
Trinity..... $1,685.90
Union $60.00
Union Light $486.00
United $3,739.44
Unity $1,120.00
Verdella..... $861.73
Victory - Alton $3,906.41
Waynesville 1st..... $1,736.39
West Plains 1st..... $2,705.03
Willow Springs..... $650.80
Wolf Creek..... $3,187.00
Total $129,035.33

Show-Me Plan

Alan Kinder..... $100.00
Belton $525.00
Black Oak $360.00
Brent Emmerson..... $150.00
Byrd $50.00
Calvary Chapel..... $90.00
Cleo Reeder $90.00
Copper Mines $300.00
Cuba..... $191.60
D6 Commission $71.61
De Soto 1st..... $1,618.00
Esperanza FWB $90.00
Farmington 1st..... $1,320.00
Farmington 1st - WAC $150.00
Fellowship..... $1,010.00
First Day $381.32
Frank Webster $180.00
Fredericktown 1st $200.00
Freeman Chapel..... $720.00
Friendship..... $350.00
Gary Tune..... $146.64
Generations..... $207.06
Gospel Light $1,800.00
Grace..... $1,047.25
Grace Pointe..... $440.00
Graceful Daycare..... $370.00
Grant Avenue..... $90.00
Hannon..... $1,000.00
Hartville..... $710.00
Hopewell WAC $50.00
Jerry Rader..... $40.00
Joshua Provow..... $150.00
Kevin Williford..... $40.00
Leadington..... $600.00
Lebanon 1st..... $233.24
Macedonia - Purdy $10,000.00
Mill Creek..... $140.00
Mosaic $350.00
Mt. Pisgah..... $161.00
Mt. Pisgah Women $25.00
Myrtle..... $338.00
Neosho 1st $475.00
New Hope..... $400.00
New Life - Licking $395.00
Number One..... $60.00
Oak Grove - Mtn. Grove .. $301.00
O'Fallon 1st $3,906.05
Oliver Adamson $60.00
Ozark 1st - Heritage $575.00
Ozark Family Church..... $425.00
Park Hills 1st..... $200.00
Pleasant Grove - Anderson $300.00
Pleasant Home..... $400.00
Pleasant Ridge - Urbana . $140.00
Republic..... $105.00
Resolve..... $200.00
Richwoods 1st $297.95
Rock Chapel..... $800.00
RB.....$4,000.00
Springfield 1st..... $600.00
St. Francois Assn.....$11,812.65
Stockton..... $329.50
Stockton Auxiliary $120.00
Thayer $1,550.00
Trinity..... $150.00
Trisa Johnson $71.37
Twin Oak Auxiliary $110.00
Union $45.00
Union Light $650.00
United $950.00
Unity $3,430.00
Verdella..... $1,723.46
Waynesville 1st..... $11,886.50
West Plains 1st WNAC..... $75.00
Willow Springs..... $212.00
Wolf Creek..... $400.00
Total $73,041.20

Missouri Missions

Calvary Fellowship $1,449.99
Cuba..... $71.85
D6 Commission $453.53
Dale Crossgrove.....$250.00
David Beltz $5,000.00
De Soto 1st..... $60.00
Farmington 1st..... $1,005.00
Grace Fellowship..... $9,000.00
Lebanon 1st..... $28.28
Loretta Minney..... $75.00
Mosaic $11,000.00
O.R. Adamson $110.00
O'Fallon 1st $1,500.00
Oliver Adamson $160.00
Ozark 1st - Heritage $200.00
Ozark Family Church..... $20.00
Pleasant Ridge- Urbana $50.00
Republic..... $25.00
Rock Chapel..... $158.00
Ryan Akers $150.00
Scott Keith $150.00
Thayer $30.00
William Moore..... $75.00
Total $31,021.65

North American Ministries

Bailey.....$200.00
Belton $359.42
Cuba.....$71.85
Dale Crossgrove.....$250.00
De Soto 1st.....$575.00
Friendship.....$40.00
Grace.....$1,000.00
Graceful Daycare.....$185.00
Greater SGF Assn. $557.00
Hartville.....$100.00
Lebanon 1st.....$276.00
Loretta Minney.....$75.00
New Hope.....$100.00
New Testament.....$80.00
Ozark 1st Heritage.....$100.00
Ozark Family Church.....$280.00
Park Hills 1st.....$100.00
Stockton.....$60.00
Trinity.....$20.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary $20.00
Union Light $50.00
Waynesville 1st.....$20.00
Total $4,519.27

International Missions

Alvin Hook $25.00
Black Oak $200.00
Copper Mines $1,000.00
Cuba..... $143.70
De Soto 1st..... $1,142.00
Farmington 1st.....$200.00
Fellowship..... $1,445.00
Fredericktown 1st $600.00
Freida Hays $75.00
Friendship..... $60.00
Generations..... $127.06
Gospel Light $1,490.00
Grace..... $800.00
Graceful Daycare.....$220.00
Hannon..... $300.00
Hartville..... $1,105.00
Houston 1st $1,220.14
Jones Chapel.....$900.00
Leadington..... $600.00
Lebanon 1st..... $325.00
Mill Creek..... $200.00
Mill Creek SS $50.00
MMB $2,200.00
Neosho 1st $100.00
New Hope..... $200.00
O'Fallon 1st $2,025.00
One Accord..... $220.00
Ozark Family Church..... $365.00
Park Hills 1st..... $400.00
Pleasant Ridge - Urbana . $100.00
Rock Chapel..... $50.00
Stockton..... $150.00
Stonebridge $200.00
Thayer $170.00
Trinity..... $40.00
Twin Oak Auxiliary $130.00
Union Light $150.00
Verdella..... $2,300.00
Waynesville 1st..... $595.00
Total $21,622.90

ACM

Bailey..... $120.00
Total $120.00

Berea Ministries

Bailey..... $140.00
Total $140.00

CH-TN

Bailey..... $400.00
Belton $30.00
De Soto 1st..... $160.00
Derik Frederiksen $96.64
Grace..... $65.00
Hartville..... $100.00
Mill Creek..... $50.00
Myrtle..... $150.00
New Hope.....$50.00
Union Light $100.00
Unity $2,100.00
Total $3,301.64

Harvest Childrens Ministry

Fredericktown 1st $50.00
Total $50.00

Getsemani

Stockton..... $30.00
Total $30.00

Rainbow Ministries
Union Light $300.00
Total $300.00

Randall U
Farmington 1st.....$200.00
Fellowship.....$60.00
Indian Creek Assn. $232.00
Thayer $200.00
West Plains 1st.....$150.00
Total $842.00

Welch College
Thayer $200.00
Desoto $120.00
Total $320.00

WNAC
Stockton Auxiliary $10.00
Twin Oaks Auxiliary $20.00
Total $30.00

Youth Camp
Cuba $100.00
D6 Commission $190.96
De Soto 1st..... $160.00
Hannon $100.00
Hartville..... $100.00
Hopewell WAC $50.00
Lebanon 1st.....$100.00
Mt. Pisgah..... $100.00
Mt. Pisgah Women $25.00
Myrtle..... $150.00
Ozark Family Church..... $20.00
Stockton Auxiliary $30.00
Thayer $220.00
Trinity..... $80.00
West Plains 1st..... $60.00
Willow Springs..... $50.00
Total $1,535.96

Youth Camp Development
Union $30.00
Total $30.00

Young Children's Home
Thayer $38.00
Total $38.00

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