



From the President

Don't Fret

by Evangelist Wil Rice IV

Some very strange items began appearing in my Ford truck this spring. I've been driving the F-350 since it was new in the spring of 2004. I've been over the mountains, through the desert, to the far ocean, and back again. I know the truck well, so I was startled when contraband began appearing in a truck I thought should know better.

It began with the ash tray. We have one of those retractable jobs that folds up into the console. One day in late February, I found a crumpled cigarette butt in an ash tray that had until then been squeaky clean. It struck me as a little out of character for my trusted dually.

A couple weeks later, I pushed the eject button to clear the CD player, and out popped a thug CD, the kind bearing tattooed men and foul language. We rarely use our CD player anymore, and I was beginning to think that my truck needed a little more supervision than it had been receiving.

Actually, the first incident betraying my truck's suspect activities came weeks before the ones I've just mentioned. I was cleaning out a very dirty cab: McDonald's bags, Coke cans, and a variety of debris. The work was a little overwhelming for one guy, so I was about to employ my wife and kids to help me. That is when a Good Samaritan took me aside and advised me against having my family help. "There are probably spent needles from drugs on the floor of your truck. I would be careful if I were you, and I wouldn't let your family in until you check it out first."

Bad, bad truck! What was going on? Actually, I know what was going on. You see, our truck was stolen from our hotel at 5:45 A.M. one February morning. I actually watched the

guy drive off onto the dim street. All that was left in the parking spot was the sign before which I had parked the previous night that said, "Hotel is not responsible for valuables left in vehicles."

We got our truck back two days later, minus what we had left inside, but full of things we did not own! The fellas that had "borrowed" it had used it to go shopping for the valuables of anyone naive enough to trust a padlock or hotel security camera.

What did the truck snatchers get from us? Well, among other things, they stole the complete CD sermon set from a 1960s John R. Rice revival crusade in Ohio, Ranch publications on child-rearing, a preaching Bible, and scads of sermon notes! I have no idea if any of the cargo did the thieves any good, but I would rather lose my stuff than be forced to keep any of theirs.

We live in a day when it is easy to think that the worst of people are getting away with the worst of sins.

It is even possible to envy them! This is both an age-old temptation and the wrong way to think. Psalm 37:1 says, "Fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity."

The psalm goes on to assure us that there is a God in heaven and that He will guide us one step at a time and never forsake us. At the end of the day, that truth is more valuable than anything that a thief could steal and certainly more desirable than anything he could leave behind. Wait on the Lord, follow the Lord, and by all means, don't fret.



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visit billriceranch.org for photos, videos, registration forms, and exciting opportunities!



Have You Met Abbey?

by *Evangelist Bill Rice III*

The first time Mary and I met Abbey Brown, she came to the Ranch as a teenager – I think she was fourteen – with her church group. Although there were several hundred teenagers at camp that week, Abbey stood out. Everybody in the Brown family is attractive – well, maybe not Dad – but everybody else certainly is! And Abbey is no exception. Abbey has brown hair, pretty eyes, and an infectious smile.

Oh, I almost forgot to tell you, she also has a handicap.

When Abbey was three years old, she contracted Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever. Her parents told us that her condition was misdiagnosed. This resulted in brain damage, so that Abbey cannot talk and is impaired physically. She can walk with some difficulty, and she is able to speak by texting on an iPhone or using a special device, which looks like a computer and turns her typed words into “voice.” She has limited use of her hands, and walking is difficult for her. Having said all of this, you should know that at camp Abbey met friends, enjoyed the services, and walked around camp as if she were in the flatlands of her home state, Oklahoma. I’m sure the hills in Tennessee and, specifically, the hills on the Ranch provided a challenge; but you would not have noticed that first.

Her condition has resulted in muscles that don’t work properly, so her hands and arms bend in shapes that sometimes look uncomfortable. Her legs do not cooperate with her mind the way they should.

So what did Mary and I first notice when we saw Abbey? Obviously, she had a handicap; but I must say in all honesty that the handicap was not what stood out when we met her. She is unable to

talk, but she communicates well with her “talking device” or her iPhone. After spending some time with Abbey, it becomes obvious that she is very intelligent. So what did we notice first?

Her smile!



Somewhere I have heard or read that it takes more muscles in the face to frown than to smile. But if none of your muscles cooperate the way they should, what difference would it make how many it takes to smile – or to frown?

Wil said to me last week that one needs to train himself to smile; and no matter the number of muscles employed, smiling is not always easy to do. However, Wil said, “It takes more character and control in your life to rule your attitude than it does to rule your face.” And that is what you see in Abbey Brown: an attitude that is just super, which comes out in her face in the sweetest smile you will ever see. Abbey recently spoke to a group at the Ranch during a Family Week. She told us that many of her friends were doing things that she would like to do (like driving a car), but she cannot because of her condition. But she did not dwell on that. She reminded us that, like the Apostle Paul, she would glory in her infirmities. In the years I have known Abbey Brown, she has lived what she said that evening. After Abbey finished speaking, everybody who had heard her was moved visibly.

I stood then, so we could talk briefly. Her sense of humor is just about perfect. I love to tease her, so I told her I was standing on her right side because that is the arm that is weakest. I could say anything, and she wouldn’t hit me. Without missing a beat, she made a fist with her left hand and acted as if she was going to plant it on my nose!

Abbey has founded a company that produces a blog and also note cards displaying paintings that she has done. Yes, I said paintings that she has done. She sells a packet of her note cards for \$8, and so I asked her if she realized that a book I was selling was priced a dollar less than her cards.

“Your cards are eight,” I said, “Do you know what my book sells for?”

She punched a key on her machine and the voice said, “Nine dollars!”

She got the last laugh.

Abbey is twenty-four now and is as beautiful as ever. Her sweet spirit and wonderful smile are still among the first things you will notice when you meet her. She writes a blog. You need to check it out: silentinspirations.com. There you will see all of her cards with the paintings she has done.

“How do you paint?” I asked her publicly. “Do you use your teeth, your hands, or your toes?”

She punched a key and the lady in her device said simply, “Fingers!”

Amazing!

Just about everything you learn about Abbey Brown is amazing, and she attributes all of it to what the Lord has done for her. On the back of one of her cards, you will find this statement: “With limited use of her hands, Abigail considers her ability to paint a gift from God. It is her prayer that these cards serve as a reminder of His goodness to us.”

What gift of God do you use regularly that you consider to be from you?

“I can sing,” says one.

“I can speak publicly,” says another.

“I can pray, I can witness, I can go to church”—these are the kind of statements that many of us make.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if you and I recognized that our abilities – whatever they may be – are gifts? These gifts come from God. Abigail knows she is gifted, and she knows the Source of her gifts. If you and I could learn that, we would smile a lot too.

BACK AT THE RANCH...



Starting, Continuing, and Finishing

Several times each summer, we hear young people told to “take the next step” in God’s will for their lives. It’s a common theme here, and a great one—that you can find God’s will for your life one step at a time. What a blessing that this truth applies to ministry as well!

A few years ago, we got camps going again in Northern Arizona by using the facilities we had developed so far. Our first camps here lacked valuable things like electricity and running water in the guys’ cabins, but we still had camp! Year by year, we have added more features to the campground, including the aforementioned utilities. This year we were able to add a concrete floor to our temporary open-air auditorium, lights for our basketball court, and some cover for outdoor dining. Each made a significant impact on the atmosphere of camp.



The great thing about the “one step at a time” principle is that each step not only takes you to God’s will, but each step also sees you already in God’s will. The future is great for inspiration, but we serve the Lord today! The summer of 2017 demonstrated that again.



We spent much of the summer telling folks about the opportunity we have before us to construct our 10,000-square-foot dining hall, which will also provide an upgraded temporary auditorium, allow us to increase camp capacity, and enable us to hold more events year-round. A donor has promised a \$4 to \$1 matching fund to get this building up. We are raising funds for an estimated \$250,000 of infrastructure work, and he will match that by paying for the \$1,000,000 building itself.

To date we have raised approximately \$65,000 toward the infrastructure and have completed the electrical portion of that work. Up next is

our fire suppression system expansion, which must be completed before we can do any more building.

The whole project is a big step toward God’s will for this ministry. But while we move that foot forward, we are also seeing God accomplish His will now through what He has already provided.

We had an almost fifty percent increase in summer campers this year. More young people were saved, and more young people surrendered their lives to the Lord. We were able to see God use this ministry now even while we try to take another step to what He has for us in the future. As a matter of fact, just before writing this article, I learned that one more teenage girl accepted Christ as her Savior on the way home from our final week of camp. One more! One more step and one more soul, all in following the Lord.



See a virtual rendering of our dining hall and see how you can help!
westbranchAZ.org



On Friday, **August 4**, we graduated eight-teen young people at our third **Bill Rice Bible Institute graduation**. Several are planning to attend Christian colleges this year. We are thrilled with how God worked in the lives of these students.



NEED FOCUS



We just finished a wonderful summer at Ranch, and we thank the Lord for the many ways He worked in hearts through the preaching of His Word. None of this would have been possible without the tremendous summer staff that God gave us! But we could not have supported this tremendous staff without friends who gave to the Faith Project this year to help pay for their salaries. Thank you to everyone who gave!

Have you ever made a hole-in-one at the Branding Iron Greens? If you’ve ever enjoyed Cowboy Town, you’ve probably at least attempted a hole-in-one at our 18-hole putt-putt golf course. It’s a popular place! Many summers of camper foot traffic and blazing sunshine have done a number on the course. It’s time for some much-needed repairs, including fresh, new carpet and new putters. The estimated cost is \$2,000. Would you consider helping with this project? And who knows? This just may improve your hole-in-one chances next summer!



Calendar OF EVENTS

FALL RETREATS

- Elementary Retreat 2..... **Sept. 7-8**
- Junior & Senior High Retreat . **Sept. 14-15**
- Ladies’ Retreat..... **Oct. 5-7**
- Men’s Challenge..... **Nov. 2-4**
- Couples Retreat..... **Nov. 30-Dec.2**

REGIONAL EVENTS

- Youth Conference
Peoria, AZ..... **Sept. 9**
- Ladies & Girls Night in the Pines
West Branch, Williams, AZ..... **Sept. 15-16**
- Men & Boys Campout
West Branch, Williams, AZ..... **Oct.6-7**

WEST BRANCH

Ladies & Girls Night in the Pines

Ladies and Girls of All Ages - Bring a Friend or Come Make One!

September 15-16 · West Branch, Williams AZ



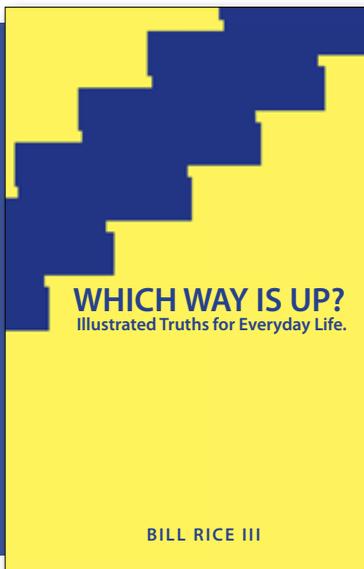
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Evangelist Bill Rice III
Evangelist Wil Rice IV

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Richard Coyle,
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