

## Randy Smith

Randy Smith, was born September 13, 1961, in Woodbury, NJ, third in a line of 10 children.

Randy came to know the Lord at age 13 and continued to grow in his faith attending Haddon Heights Baptist Church and Baptist High School, in NJ. He credits many of his high school teachers with prompting his desire to know the Word and to teach it. After graduating in 1979, and one year at Philadelphia College of the Bible, Randy threw a back pack over his shoulder and headed to Jerusalem. It was during this time his love affair with the land of Israel began. Randy continued to study and learn more about the land of the Bible and how it relates to the understanding of the Scriptures. He attended language school and political Near East courses at Hebrew University. He studied at Ecole Biblique and the Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies. One of the highlights of his education was participation in the Pottery and Field Studies in Archaeology at the Ir David Excavations in 1982. It was also during this time he began leading day tours around the city of Jerusalem in order to help pay for his classes.

Randy returned home to the United States in 1982, and while teaching an adult Sunday school class in Maple Shade, NJ, met his wife, Dottie. They married three years later and moved to Elkhart, IN, and started attending Elkhart Grace Brethren Church. There he ministered as youth director and along with his wife started a daycare ministry at the church.

In 1987, Randy moved his family to Ft. Lauderdale, FL, accepting the position as head master of the Christian school at the Ft. Lauderdale Grace Brethren Church.

One year later, Ft. Myers Grace Brethren Church, found themselves without a pastor and the Smiths were called by the congregation to shepherd the flock located there. During his time in Ft. Myers, Randy not only earned his masters and doctorate, but continued his love of the Holy Land.

So in 1989, the Smith family packed their bags and headed for Jerusalem. Randy began working for Biblical Resources, and returned to the land he loved and doing what he does best, teaching. The family was only there for a short time when the Gulf War erupted and tourism died and the family needed to return to the USA. Randy began a new pastorate at the Ft. Lauderdale Grace Brethren Church.

The Smiths continued to feel called to the Holy Land and the family was able to move back to Jerusalem in 1995. It was during this time Randy started his own business leading study tours to Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Greece, and Egypt. Unrest included numerous suicide bombings and bus bombings. The Smiths lived surrounded by sandbags and yet felt a sense of peace about being right where they were. It was in seeing the tragedy of war, Global Vision Outreach was formed as a humanitarian organization to provide food, medicine and blankets for victims of the war.

In 2002, the Smith family returned to Florida and began attending the Grace Brethren Church in Sebring, FL. Two years later the church approached Randy about being the pastor and he accepted. Randy started The Great Commission Bible Institute. GCBI, now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year, providing in-depth, tuition-free Bible instruction, page by page, over 1 year.

The Lord has given Randy a real sense of purpose and drive to teach His Word. He finds nothing more humbling and fulfilling than following that path.

Ed Lewis, Executive Director of CE National, has this to say about Randy, "A man of the Word. I love that about Randy. There are few people who are so devoted to studying the Bible like Randy Smith does.... And he understands the culture in which the Bible was written and how it applies to our lives. I know he loves the Word....and he loves the lands of the Bible....and he loves impacting students to learn Bible truth....but above all he loves Jesus. He is a motivator and he loves to see that others know and learn the Bible. What a great gift he is to the body of Christ."

The Wall of Honor is CE National's highest individual award. The CE National Board of Directors is pleased to present the 2015 Wall of Honor to Randy Smith, a loving and faithful servant of Christ.