

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

APRIL 2012 | VOL. 62 NO. 8

AS A FELLOWSHIP, PLANTING CHURCHES  
**THE PIONEER SPIRIT**  
AS BELIEVERS, DEFENDING THE RESURRECTION

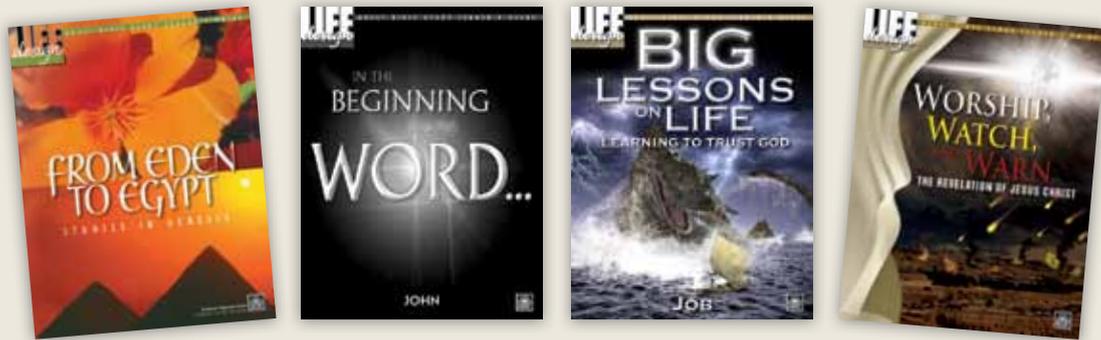
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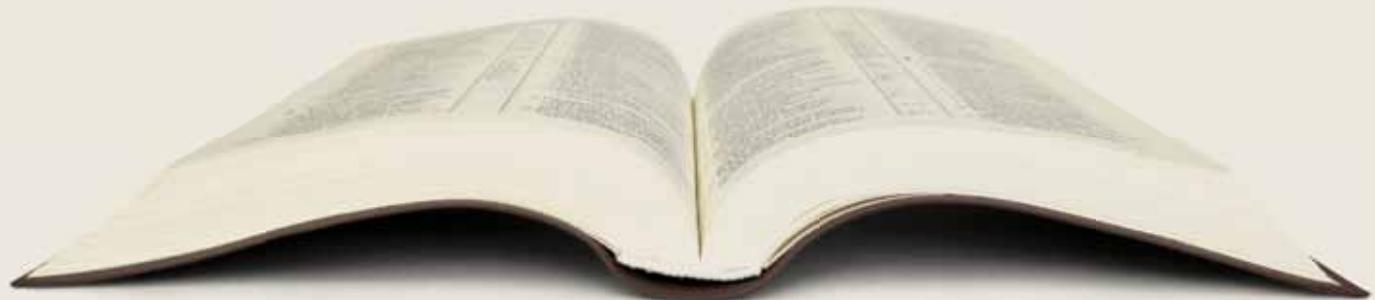
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# EVERY BOOK HAS A BEGINNING, A MIDDLE, AND AN END



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Winter 2012-13	Job
Spring 2013	Acts
Summer 2013	Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy

QUARTER	BIBLE PASSAGES
Fall 2013	Proverbs
Winter 2013-14	1 Corinthians
Spring 2014	Old Testament Survey
Summer 2014	New Testament Survey



ON THE TABLE  
**Honored to serve**

by Keith Bassham | Editor

I began attending church to be near a pastor's daughter during my teens. That decision led to another to become a Christian, and a later one to enter the ministry, and so on — a chain of choices and pushes and pulls that led me to the *Tribune* about 17 years ago.

The irony is that a few days after I joined the church, I met up with a fellow church member in my high school journalism class. She had a copy of a newspaper called the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. I looked the paper over, and she told me a little about it and the editor, and then she said, "Just think. Someday you could be their editor."

I dismissed that memory for a few decades. And then, 10 years ago, in the February BBFI meeting in Gulfport, MS, I was named the editor of the *Tribune*. A side note, if you will, is in order. The editor at the time I learned about the *Tribune* was of course Noel Smith, the founder and editor until his death in 1974. I have enormous respect for him, as well as for all my predecessors, but I am pleased he was not omniscient. He wrote, for instance, in 1952, that if the Baptist Bible Fellowship continued and if the *Tribune* lived for 25 years, "some modernist will be editing it."

Anyway, my kids surely don't think I'm a modernist. I was the last in the family to acquire an iPad, a gift given to me by the officers of the Fellowship in recognition of my 10 years as editor. They all, with the help of my wife and a few friends, managed to surprise me with that, a weekend getaway, and a very nice note of appreciation which read:

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an iPad, a gift given to me by the officers of the Fellowship in recognition of my 10 years as editor. They all, with the help of my wife and a few friends, managed to surprise me with that, a weekend getaway, and a very nice note of appreciation which read:

**Congratulations on ten years at the helm of the Baptist Bible Tribune.**

*On behalf of the pastors of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, we the undersigned officers express our gratitude and recognize your faithfulness to the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ, and your faithful participation and valuable contributions to the BBFI.*

Thank you. I am honored to serve.

*Keith Bassham*

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

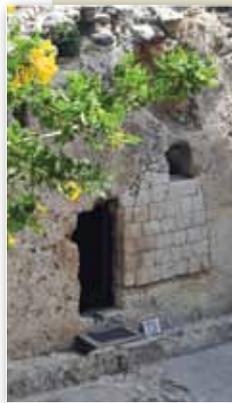
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*By-lined opinions expressed in the Baptist Bible Tribune are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the Baptist Bible Fellowship.*

PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

## Investors or consumers?



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

You may be familiar with the term day-trader. A day-trader is a high-risk investor who jumps in and out of the stock market, often many times a day, to capitalize on small price changes. These people have virtually no interest in the companies whose stock they are purchasing. They are simply trying to catch stocks that they think are going to rise in value, and then they will sell and go looking for other quick-pick opportunities.

The church is not like the stock market, but within the church there are a lot of what I call day-traders. They know a little about God, and think they can buy a small share of Christianity without first investigating Jesus' claim to being Lord over all of their lives. They show up with a "What's in it for me" mentality.

The great need in our churches today is for investors, not consumers. We need folks who stay faithful and invest their time, energy, finances, talents, personality, wisdom, and experience to build the church and accomplish the vision of world evangelism. It takes hard work and patience, but it pays off. The local church is the greatest work in the world and it deserves our full devotion.

Luke 14:25 tells us that Jesus was speaking to "great multitudes." What He has to say was not just to His core followers. There is a phrase that rings through this passage three times and gives the message Jesus is sharing a pungent sharpness that you can't miss. Three times Jesus says, "He cannot be my disciple" (verses 26, 27, and 33). Unlike a few churches today, Jesus was not looking for a crowd. He was looking for commitment. He was not looking for decisions alone. He was looking for disciples. He was looking for men and women who would invest their lives in a cause bigger than their own plans.

Too many Christians today have a consumer mentality instead of an investor mentality. Our churches would be much stronger if we embraced the investor approach. Therein lies the challenge ... to take consumers and make them investors.

I think the same is true in the BBFI. Just think how much the BBFI could accomplish for the Lord if we had an investor mentality instead of a consumer mentality! If pastors — young and old and in between — brought their abilities, passion for ministry, wisdom, energy, personality, finances, and experience to the work, we could accomplish much more for the Lord than we are doing now.

We want to keep our BBFI projects strong and invest in new opportunities for ministry but it takes prayer, manpower, and finances. It takes pastors of all ages to invest in our movement. The BBFI is unique and it is worth the investment. There are many kinds of churches in the big tent of the BBFI and they all are invited to support the major causes of the Fellowship. Let's be investors in this great work of God.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

## One of the best-kept secrets



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

You have probably heard about the Mayan "prediction" which declares that the earth will be ravaged by a variety of cataclysmic astronomical events around December 21, 2012. So, what does that mean? Not a thing, really. It is just a phony theory invented by conspiracy theorists, doomsayers, and people looking to make money on people's fears.

As believers, we know the only source for understanding future events is the Bible. Only God knows and can predict the future! What one can know is that we have today, and God calls us to plan our future knowing it is in His hands.

Our goal is to reach the world for Christ one day at a time, and we can do so by financially supporting those who have surrendered their lives to take the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world. Your efforts confirm your commitment to our Lord and his Great Commission. I would like to challenge you to make it part of your legacy.

There are many ways to leave a legacy to the BBFI Mission Office, ways to help expand our reach into the far corners of the world and to continue your commitment to the Lord's work for years to come.

We can discuss with you various methods of support — gifts can include specific assets such as securities, your home or other property, or you can simply designate a specific percentage or amount of the remainder of your estate after you have provided for your beneficiaries. When planning to give a gift, it is important to consider how you want your gift to be used. An unrestricted gift is especially valuable as it allows BBFI Missions to assign the gift to the highest priorities when it arrives. Restricted gifts can be directed to specific projects. A current use fund can be established for a specific program and provides the flexibility of using the full amount of your gift, while a trust fund creates a permanent legacy while providing an annual income in perpetuity.

One of the best-kept secrets is the charitable gift annuity. It is a way to support BBFI Missions in the future while, at the same time, increasing your income (for the rest of your life). A charitable gift annuity is a contract with BBFI Missions specifying that in return for your irrevocable gift, BBFI Missions will pay you and/or another beneficiary a fixed income for life. When all income beneficiaries die, BBFI Missions will use the remainder of your gift in the vital work of supporting missionaries. In addition to favorable rates of return, charitable gift annuities also afford donors many tax benefits.

To better understand all our giving options, see the website [www.bbfimissions.com](http://www.bbfimissions.com) and click on "Leave a Legacy." If you want more details, please consult Rick Vanhooser, BBFI Mission Office, chief of operations.

Because your tax situation may be unique, always consult your attorney, tax advisor, or financial advisor about the plan best suited to meet your needs

# Welcome, Rick Carter, to the NCPO team



by Wayne Guinn | Director | NCPO

The ministry of the NCPO is a work in progress. We started seven years ago with our purpose being to recruit church planters, assist in training church planters, helping them network and raise their personal and work support, and assist them in financing their property and building.



Rick Carter

We have seen our work evolve to include consulting with churches on financial matters as well as problem resolutions. We also have expanded our umbrella to include the BBF Builders, a wonderful group of construction missionaries who, by their efforts, have saved millions of dollars of God's money with their volunteer labor. We have further expanded the building ministry to include a construction management team that will be able to save thousands of dollars for our well-established churches who are planning to build and expand their present ministry.

Again, we are expanding our vision for the purpose of creating a stewardship department. To assist me in this area, I have asked Rick Carter to join our team. Rick is a 1968 graduate of Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO, with 40 years of ministry experience. He has served as a BBF leader at all levels, including the vice president's office at Baptist Bible College. He will be assisting in writing and developing stewardship materials. We plan on having our first campaigns available in September of this year. In addition, we are now prepared to assist churches who want to build, expand, remodel, or pay off their existing debt by utilizing our experience in capital fundraising campaigns. Our campaigns are designed not just to be a fundraising experience, but a faith-raising experience.

In addition to these two new programs, we are prepared to conduct financial seminars, designed to help get your people out of debt and to establish financial disciplines that can lead to prosperity. The first prerequisite to giving is having!

If you feel that any of these programs can be a blessing to you and your church, please contact the NCPO office for more information. It is our desire to serve you! Please contact us at [office@bbfincpo.com](mailto:office@bbfincpo.com) or 417-536-8826.

## A message from the chairman of the Baptist Bible College Board of Trustees

History is clear. The key to the success of Baptist Bible College is found in her partnerships. Our founders understood the value of a strong ministry training center, and the result is literally hundreds of thousands of people coming to Christ. Storefront churches and pioneer missionaries defined the late 50s and 60s in the Fellowship. Many of those works grew to great size and stature. More than 12,000 graduates have launched ministries as pastors, missionaries, teachers, and solid Christian lay leaders from the steps of Baptist Bible College. Today 861 missionaries work in partnership with the BBFI, many of them graduates of Baptist Bible College. The original purpose of our training center remains solidly intact. In spring 2012, 70 percent of the students at BBC are enrolled in missions and pastoral ministry studies.

Over the years leaders of the college also recognized the value of preparing tentmaker ministries and broadened the scope of the school to include education and ministry-oriented business offerings. Churches across America were significantly strengthened by the trained lay leaders in their midst. In today's world, these tentmakers are a prized commodity as larger and larger portions of the world are being labeled as restricted, and the access is often restricted to these tentmakers.

We have found that God works when we are laborers together — our pastor and church partners, our students preparing for ministry, and a highly qualified faculty teaching on behalf of the churches who share their young people with us.

With this historical understanding the trustees have come to the task of finding God's choice for the next president of BBC. We have submitted ourselves in the spirit of 2 Corinthians 12:15, "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you ...." We have to the best of our abilities excluded the politicking, back room sessions, and influence groups.

The process has been careful. Men were invited to apply through public nomination — available to any man who met the qualifications — and 14 inquiries led to seven formal applications. Two of those men withdrew, and the trustees interviewed five men in Fort Worth. We invited a representative from the alumni, one from the faculty, our BBFI president, and our 2nd vice president for education to join us. After background checks, reference checks, written questions, interviews, and debriefing, we prayed, then took a single ballot vote. We expected God to move and He did. Two men emerged to become finalists for the position: Ron Sears and Mark Milioni.

Now we must move on to the next step. April 23, the finalists will be in campus interviews with faculty, students, and Fellowship leaders. After receiving their collective counsel, the trustees will meet once again to pray, one prayer for the right man. We expect God to work and He will.

We have prayed for a mature spiritual man who could accept the mantle of leadership for the next generation. We have prayed for an academically sound leader of faculty and students who can cast passionate vision. And we have prayed for a man with the worldview of our Savior to lead a resurgence of commitment to the greatest cause in our universe — the cause of Christ. We covet the prayers of our partners. And we look forward to introducing the next president of BBC at the May Fellowship.

Respectfully,  
Douglas Cox  
Chairman, Board of Trustees



# DIGRESSIONS

Digressions incontestably are the sunshine; they are the life, the soul of reading. -Laurence Sterne

## John 3:16, Tebow, and Wikipedia

With all the coverage of John 3:16 and Tim Tebow, Barna Group recently released a study on Americans' cursory knowledge of the biblical reference. Part of our interest, in conjunction with American Bible Society, was to determine if people even know what the "3" in John 3:16 refers to — would people even know where to look or what the reference meant?



Tim Tebow

My Canadian friend pointed me to the [Wikipedia] searches for John 3:16 over the last 60 days. During that time, the tool indicates that "John 3:16" has generated more than 375,000 searches.

Nearly half of the searches (183,009) came in just two days — the Monday and Tuesday (January 9 and 10) after Tim Tebow threw for 316 yards in a playoff game. If you recall, Twitter and Facebook and traditional media exploded with talk about uncanny spiritual symbolism of the Denver quarterback's exploits.

Source: [www.davidkinnamon.com](http://www.davidkinnamon.com)

## Technology and Faith: 12 positives by Ed Stetzer

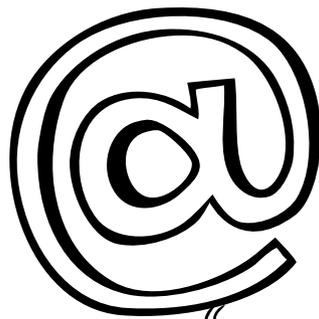
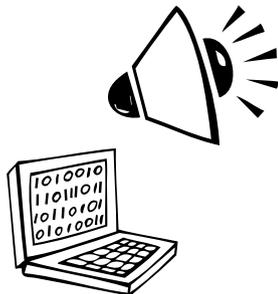
Lifeway's Ed Stetzer recently put out a simple question on Facebook and Twitter asking "What is new to consider in the areas of faith and technology?" Here are 12 positive effects he received:

1. Online Community and Discipleship – No more distance barriers, instant contact.
2. Simulcasts and Video Venues – Related to the first. Thousands can attend or listen in on conferences and services that used to be out of reach.
3. The Bible and Music at Our Fingertips – No explanation needed.
4. Increased Use of Video – Could explain why some churches begin in theaters.
5. Promotion of Events – With all the connections, the words gets out in more places more often.
6. Church-Specific Social Networks – A high tech version of older "prayer circles."
7. Church Apps – The new .com for churches has become mobile apps replacing websites.
8. Searchable Sermon Notes and Personal Notes – Instant access to notes and ability to share them quickly.
9. Follow Conferences You Don't Attend – Same as points one and two.
10. Instant Accountability – Think twice, and maybe more, before you put your words online.
11. Growth of Networks and Resources for Missions and Church Planting – Distance ed gone wild.
12. Prayer for an Area – Virtual prayer walks using tools like Google maps and Google Earth.

## Court decides university can expel student for believing homosexuality is a choice

Augusta State University expelled Jennifer Keeton from the school's professional counseling program after she expressed her biblical belief about homosexuality and refused to attend "remediation" sessions in 2010. In a recent ruling from United States District Court for the Southern District of Georgia, Ms. Keeton's appeal was rejected.

In its ruling the court said, "Every profession has its own ethical codes and dictates. When someone voluntarily chooses to enter a profession, he or she must comply with its rules and ethical requirements. Lawyers must present legal arguments on behalf of their clients, notwithstanding their personal views .... So too, counselors must refrain from imposing their moral and religious views on their clients."



## In the NEWS of the WEEK

BY R. O. WOODWORTH

The work of the Baptist Bible Fellowship goes on. The Lord Jesus Christ, sitting at the right of God, is "confirming the word by signs following." We hear of reports of growth in all parts of the country and in all phases of the work. In a letter from Bartlesville, Okla., Bro. Dean Bowden, brother-in-law to Bro. Scotty Alexander, Enid, Okla., tells that he is seeing much fruit in this city to the praise of Him who gave Himself for us. This beloved brother now has a blessed work going on in Bartlesville, which has some peculiar features. Hearing that he was scheduled to speak in a west-side mission, a convention church, being without a pastor cancelled its services to attend the mission services. A few weeks later Bro. Bowden was called as pastor. The blessing resulting from the new relationship may be seen by the fact that the name of the church was changed to Bible Baptist church, that the Sunday school quarterly was thrown out, and that action was taken by unanimous vote to affiliate with the Baptist Bible Fellowship by supporting its missionary projects.

In connection with the preaching and witnessing of Bro. W. H. Fisher, the Holy Spirit is quickening souls in the Central Baptist church, Lufkin, Texas. The last report of the work indicated that every seat was filled for Sunday's services. The growth of the work has the attention of a great many of the city fathers, many of whom no doubt are wondering how far it will go. But Bro. Fisher and his people are rejoicing that God is saving sinners and "making ready a people prepared for the Lord."

We heard in private of the interesting Fellowship meeting we did not learn about in time to announce, but which is still being felt. All the members of the East Texas Baptist Fellowship which sponsored the meeting including the host-pastor, Brother Fisher received an impulse.

The High Street Baptist church, Sunday, March 23, heard a most clear, powerful, and decided statement of saving truth, illustrated by many gripping Bible incidents; and well worth remembering was the testimony of the guest speaker, Rev. Frank Fort, Houston, Texas, that for 17 years he had found the ministers who preach the Blood of the Lamb of God and the Word of God were the men who were winners of souls. He called to mind the preaching of the much-blessed pastor, Dr. W. E. Dowell, who preaches nothing but the Word.

What possibilities for service the field, Center, Texas, presents to the new pastor of the Central Baptist church, Bro. Charles N. Moseley, pastor, may be inferred from the fact that 50 percent of the membership rededicated their lives already and two came into the church. Before accepting this charge, Bro. Moseley was assistant to Bro. Curtis Goldman, pastor of the Calvary Baptist church, Chickasha, Oklahoma.

Much prayer in prospect of a meeting recently closed by Bro. Lew Cass Bennett, pastor Rose Hill Baptist church, Willard, Mo., in the Liberty St. Baptist church, Jacksonville, Fla., was certainly answered judging by the report of the services. Bro. Bennett was enabled to speak in marvelous power and the Spirit assuredly worked, so that from time to time great conviction came upon the people which resulted in some marvelous conversions. Bro. Bennett's ministry made the privilege of serving Christ appear so honorable and so pleasant, that many felt truly

humbled, and all were so fired with new desire to win souls and work for the Lord that both pastor, Bro. Bryant Hodges, and people are planning a more intense and longer meeting.

Applications for visits of Dr. A. Reilly Copeland, Waco, Texas, come in from many cities and states. His many pressing duties, however, permit him to accept very few. But we are glad to mention that he was present on March 19 at the Jennings Avenue Baptist church in Fort Worth, Texas, Dr. B. F. Dearmore, pastor. The prominent characteristics of this man's preaching is a persuasive earnestness and affection. A complete set of Calvin's Commentaries were among the hundreds of books recently received by the Baptist Bible College from the Tabernacle Baptist Bookstore, operated by Dr. Copeland.

This week's issue of the Tabernacle Times, edited by Bro. James O. Combs, pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist church, Joplin, Missouri, is full of interest. It tells of some of the excellent things the Lord has been doing during the Bible conference held by Noel Smith, who brought a series of special messages for the occasion. Another interesting article showed the Sunday school attendance on the up-grade. A third article was an account of the plans to paint the auditorium and not the least for interest and importance.

God is blessing the ministry of E. Fred Null as pastor of the Bible Baptist church, DeQuincy, Louisiana, in a remarkable and striking manner. His people are readily responding to his leadership because they have been assured it is an earnest and profitable one for the church. Together they are carrying the glorious torch of the Gospel into many a dark home. One woman submitted to the claims of Christ as they were pressed upon her by Bro. Null and his wife in her home Saturday night. At the close of the services the following Sunday the number which were saved and united with the church were four. Everyone is looking forward with high expectation to the revival meeting which is slated to open March 31, with Bro. Bill Beall, Denison, Texas as the evangelist.

We continue to receive encouraging reports of good work that is being done in Denison by Bro. Beall and his people. There are many evident symptoms of a revival of spiritual character.

In a recent issue we briefly mentioned that in response to the challenge, "who will help pay for material and erect the new auditorium?" given by Bro. Beall one Sunday morning, scores of people responded. That was a refreshing season for the whole church. The building of the auditorium has tested them and compelled them to trust more fully the grace of God. Many times the Holy Spirit has seemed to "fill all the house" and to make His presence felt in a real way. In a telephone conversation, Bro. Beall stated everyone was anticipating occupying the new quarters. The completion of the building will make available 3,000 square feet of floor space.

Oklahoma City, Okla., is sharing in the blessings being poured out so richly on our Fellowship. The Grace Baptist church brought to the city, Dr. W. E. Dowell, Springfield, Mo., a man whose ministry has been and is owned and honored of God in an unusual way. Bro. J. C. Brown, pastor, works hard holding revival meetings and organizing churches. March 23 he led in the organization of a new Baptist Bible Fellowship church in Brittain.

Tulsa Baptist Temple, Tulsa, Okla., is now enjoying signal manifestations of grace. But we are not surprised at this. The pastor, Bro. Clifford Clark, his assistant, Bro. R. C. Tapp and people have been praying and working for the salvation of souls earnestly and sincerely. God has graciously answered their prayers and honored their efforts, and His own presence is now wonderfully manifested and felt among the congregation. God is so blessing the church that 496 registered for Sunday school March 16, and on March 23 an attendance record of 530 made one year ago, was shattered. For the first time in the history of the Church attendance reached 545.

Blessed tidings of God's grace poured out upon the Greeley Baptist Temple, Greeley, Colo., come from Bro. Dennis J. Brown, pastor. Dennis Brown is one man who never works by fits and starts but 365 days in the year. His services are being attended in large numbers than ever before. But the numbers attending are not the most remarkable feature. It is the presence and power of the Holy Ghost, the prayerful, believing and expectant spirit of the membership and the deep conviction of unsaved men and women. Every Sunday this year souls have been added to the church, including March 16 when four precious souls demonstrated their hunger for righteousness and peace by seeking the Lord and membership in the Church.

We are grateful to the pastors who send us reports of their work which enables us to put others mentally into the midst of God's grace in their churches as we are through the aid of their reports. One from Bro. Bert J. Homer shows that the people of the Central Baptist church, Anthony, Kas., are shouting the praises of God for His grace upon them. March 30 was set aside as Missionary Sunday when all their students in Baptist Bible College returned and participated in the special service.

## Pastors say Mormons not Christians

Most pastors feel strongly that Mormons are not Christians, according to a survey by LifeWay Research.

The survey polled 1,000 American Protestant pastors and asked them to respond to the statement: "I personally consider Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) to be Christians."

Three-quarters (75%) disagree with the statement, including 60% who strongly disagree and 15% who somewhat disagree. Just 11% somewhat agree, 6% strongly agree and 9% do not know.

"Though pastors believe overwhelmingly that Mormonism is not Christianity, their opinions should not be confused with personal scorn for Mormons," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research.

In the LifeWay Research survey, pastors' self-identification as either Mainline or Evangelical was a predictor of their opinions regarding Mormons. While two-thirds (67%) of Evangelicals strongly disagree that Mormons are Christians, just 48% of Mainline pastors feel the same way.

Source: David Roach on Monday, October 10, 2011.  
Excerpts from story by David Roach - [www.lifeway.com](http://www.lifeway.com)

## Bill condemning Iran and urging freedom for Christian pastor passed by House

March 1, 2012, the U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill condemning the government of Iran for continued persecution, imprisonment, and sentencing of Youcef Nadarkhani on the charge of apostasy. The bill, H. Res. 556, is sponsored by Pennsylvania's Joseph Pitts, and it passed with a roll call vote of 417-1, with 15 abstentions.

Youcef Nadarkhani has been in prison in Iran since 2009, when he was arrested for protesting the teaching of Islam at his children's public school. Since his arrest, Nadarkhani has been charged with apostasy and attempting to evangelize Muslims. He has been found guilty in Iranian courts and sentenced to execution. At press time, he continued to live in prison though internet sources have spread rumors of his execution. Both the White House and the U.S. Department of State issued statements urging the pastor's immediate release.

## Fellowship Week

May 14 - 17, 2012



It's  
All  
About  
The  
Gospel

For I am not ashamed of  
the gospel of Christ...

Romans 1:16



Ron Sears  
Interim President

The student body, staff, faculty, and administration want to invite you to the campus of Baptist Bible College. We are in prayer and preparation for the May BBFI Fellowship meeting. Our theme for this year is, *It's All About The Gospel*. Each of our speakers will focus on the subject that binds us together as family - the Gospel of Jesus Christ. These men are excited about what God is doing in their life because of their salvation. Their heart is to share that passion with us. I also want to invite you to be in prayer for our annual May Offering. You will be contacted in the near future to see what God has laid on your heart for BBC. You are important to our college and your participation is needed now more than ever.

In His name,  
Ron Sears, Interim President



Linzy Slayden  
BBFI President

It's All About the Gospel!

The church is unique from every other organization or institution in the world in one respect; Its mission is determined by its message. Practically every other organization in the world determines its message by its mission. For example, the airline industry has a mission. Their mission is to fly people from one place to another. What is their message - "We love to fly and it shows." Years ago, you used to hear this about United Airlines, "Fly the friendly skies of United."

The church is just the opposite. Our mission does not determine our message. Our message determines our mission. What is that message? It is the gospel. What is the mission? The mission is to spread the gospel. It's all about the gospel.

The gospel is the only message that has the power to take a person from sin to salvation, from hell to heaven, from deadness to life and from darkness to light. The gospel impacts eternity! Let's gather at Baptist Bible College in May and once again be challenged to take the life-saving, soul-saving power of the gospel across the street and around the world.

Pastor Linzy Slayden  
Friendship Baptist Church, Owasso, OK

# BBFI National Meeting Report

**Unusual and different are not words commonly used to describe fellowship meetings among Baptists,**

**but the February meeting in Fort Worth, TX, was that from the beginning.**

As an example, this would be the first February meeting in the States in two years. Last year's winter meeting took place in the Philippines. And then hosts Hallmark Baptist Church and Pastor Mike Haley had little notice for planning the meeting. When it was clear the church originally slated to host the BBFI 2012 winter gathering was unable to keep the date, the executive officers scrambled to find a new venue. Fortunately for us all, Pastor Haley and the Fort Worth church stepped up to offer their beautiful facilities and famous hospitality. Finally, the tenor of the winter meeting has been changing the past few years to emphasize church planting and the BBFI National Church Planting Office, and where you have church planters, you are going to have less gray and more youth hanging out. And with the theme — Refire, Refine, Refocus — almost anything can happen.

**Hallmark has a great history with the Baptist Bible Fellowship,** and the church did all a church could to welcome and host their extended family — very nice meals, helpful church members manning the doors and information desks, spotless facilities, and a real attitude of servanthood made the meeting one to remember. And knowing this was all planned and accomplished on relatively late notice made it even more a labor of love.



**Church planters were everywhere.** They held workshops, gave testimonies, and a few preached in the services. In the opening service Monday, the church planters were led to the platform to cheers and applause as heroes, and throughout the week we heard about their new works and their future plans. Featured preachers Steve Stroope, Phil Hopper, Tim chambers, Rob Willis, and Linzy Slayden, having led the smaller churches that called them to become much larger congregations, spoke from experience to encourage the kind of persistence, courage, and faith necessary to build churches today.





**The National Church Planting Office is still a newcomer** and not very well known as BBFI institutions go. Led by Director Wayne Guinn (above, right front) who is assisted by Jason Todd, NCPO assists start-up churches, holds church planter training schools, consults with established churches about their finance needs, and otherwise provides needed support to connect established churches with church planters. In this meeting, Wayne Guinn unveiled the Gateway Project, a new outreach to help churches reach into ethnic communities. He introduced Steven Johnson and Ira Walton (left) who will be promoting the outreach and providing assistance to those who want to minister to this mission field.



**Mornings were given to sets of workshops** and a concluding message in Hallmark's new sanctuary. The workshops, covering topics such as growth strategies, social networking, community connecting, student ministry, and stewardship were led largely by church planters and younger pastors. Two notable exceptions were the preaching workshop taught by Jerry Thorpe and the growth sessions led by Steve Stroope, both veterans with years of successful ministry. Shelly Switzer of Taylorville, IL, spoke during the Ladies Brunch held Tuesday.



**There is no general business meeting** held in the February meeting, but that does not mean there is no business. National directors, trustees, missionary committees, and other representative BBFI bodies held their own meetings throughout the week in preparation for business to take place in May. Significantly, the Baptist Bible College trustees met to interview prospective candidates for president of the college (a report from the trustees is published in this issue). The directors heard reports from the offices of the colleges, the Mission Office, NCPO, and the Tribune.





**BBFI President Linzy Slayden, on behalf of the national officers of the BBFI, recognized Keith Bassham** upon his tenth year as Tribune editor. He presented Bassham with a new Ipad, a certificate for a weekend getaway, and a letter of appreciation. The Baptist Bible Tribune raises an annual offering in conjunction with the February meeting. Although several states did not report their commitments at the meeting, and others had only an incomplete report, at the end of the meeting \$95,000 had been raised and reported.



**The next meeting of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International will take place on the campus of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, May 14-17.**



# “It is finished.”

## BUT IT IS FAR FROM OVER.

“...WE BELIEVE ON HIM THAT RAISED UP JESUS OUR LORD FROM THE DEAD; WHO WAS DELIVERED FOR OUR OFFENCES, AND WAS RAISED AGAIN FOR OUR JUSTIFICATION.”

ROMANS 4:24-25

**O**n the cross, Jesus died for sins. That’s what the phrase from the Epistle to the Romans means when it says he was delivered for our offences. We are sinners, and the teaching of the Bible is that Jesus atoned for our sins by his death. And just as he was dying on the cross, the Gospel of John declares, “... he said, It is finished: and he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.”

Other texts in the New Testament elaborate on those simple words, “It is finished,” so we may know what is meant by them.

“Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)

“Christ died for the ungodly.” (Romans 5:6)

“Christ died for our sins.” (1 Corinthians 15:3)

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” (Galatians 2:20)

Clearly some type of exchange is in view here. Jesus gives His life as a ransom, He dies for the sinner, He gives himself for me — all these point to some type of payment. And not only that, but the Epistle to the Hebrews, comparing the repetitious offerings of the animals of the Old Testament with the single offering of Jesus on the cross, says what Jesus did was “once for all.” A major lexicon tells us that in the time of Jesus, receipts for payments in that part of the world were often introduced with the word *tetelestai*, an ancient counterpart to something like our phrase, “paid in full.” All these point to some type of transaction taking place with the death of Jesus Christ on the cross.

sacrifice of Jesus Christ. “It is finished.”

But it is far from over. And that is why the gospels run on another chapter or two after the cross narrative, and why the Book of Acts opens with events that take place seven weeks later, why the epistles explain the implications of living in the light of the knowledge of what was finished, and why the New Testament ends not with the death of Jesus, or even the resurrection of Jesus, nor even with the establishment of the

*there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is Christ not risen: And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.”*  
(1 Corinthians 15:12-14)

First of all, people have a problem with a literal understanding of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Some do not believe it at all, and strangely enough, even many of those who believe in the death of Jesus

**“And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these, that ye have, one to another, as ye walk, and are sad?”**

Luke 24:17



There are those in Christendom who are uncomfortable with the notion of God visiting wrath on His Son for the sins of others, but I honestly cannot read these texts (and many others) with clarity any other way. So, what was Jesus saying in His dying moments? I think He intended us to understand that He had accomplished, fully accomplished, some great thing — the sin problem was taken care of. When the veil in the temple split, the great sin barrier that separated God and man was taken down. Sins were forgiven, the debt was paid in full, and the way to God was open by the

church, but the glorious and triumphant return of Jesus at the end of the age.

So why is it not over? That is what we will explore together for the next few minutes.

**THE EASTER STORY REALLY DID HAPPEN**

It is finished, but it is not over because we must go on defending the truth of the resurrection today. “Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that

do not believe in the resurrection, nor do they understand why it is important. So we begin here. It really did happen.

I remember reading Josh McDowell’s *Evidence that Demands a Verdict* in Bible college. And in particular, I recall this section. He writes:

*I had a debate with the head of the philosophy department of a Midwestern*

university. In answering a question, I happened to mention the importance of the resurrection. At this point, my opponent interrupted and rather sarcastically said, "Come on, McDowell, the key issue is not whether the resurrection took place or not; it is 'do you believe it took place?'" What he was hinting at (actually boldly asserting) is that my believing was the most important thing. I retorted immediately, "Sir, it doesn't matter what I as a Christian believe, because the value of Christian faith is not in the one believing, but in the one who is believed in, its object." I continued that "if anyone can demonstrate to me that Christ was not raised from the dead, I would not have the right to my Christian faith."

Examine that chain of logic. Paul says if Jesus is not risen, your faith is in vain, and McDowell (rightly, I think) says that if Jesus is not really risen, you have no right to Christian faith.

I wrote about this in the *Tribune* apologetics series a couple of years ago (those issues are available in the *Tribune* archives at [www.tribune.org](http://www.tribune.org)). Christianity is part of God's story, but it is not a made-up story. It is locked in time and space. You and I can visit the sites where the episode occurred. Archeologists and historians, while not always unanimous in their details and conclusions, have shown again and again that the people and place names mentioned in the Bible were there when and where they were supposed to be.

Archeology has confirmed many of the details given in the Gospels (and the Bible generally), many of which were doubted at some point, especially beginning in the Enlightenment Age. Some recent discoveries include items concerning Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, James (the brother of Jesus), and fishing boats in the region of Galilee (that is the body of water Jesus walked on). And then there are the many other contemporary figures whose

existence and whereabouts are easily placed within the Gospel narrative. See for instance F. F. Bruce's *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* for references to the Roman emperors, Judean rulers, and high priests. Everyone is where he or she should be, and place names are accurately used in the Gospels.

The Bible believer has no need to fear an honest investigation into the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

One of the unique aspects of Christianity is its dependence, not on philosophies or mystical teachings, but upon objective truth. Henry Morris, in *Many Infallible Proofs*, wrote, "Christianity (including its Old Testament foundation) is based upon historical acts and facts. Other religions are centered in the ethical and religious teachings of their founders, but Christianity is built on the great events of creation and redemption."

To see the importance of this statement, take a look at the content of the gospels



themselves. There you find the story of the historical Jesus all right, but you discover something else. We actually know very little about his life as a whole. Only two of the Gospels tell us anything about the ancestry and birth. It appears that he was 30 years old when he began his public ministry, but we know almost nothing about those 30 years. In fact, the gospels have four chapters covering events of those earlier years, but fully 85 chapters are devoted to his last three and one half years on earth.

And where do the Gospel writers really get down to business? Twenty-nine chapters are spent describing Christ's last week of life, and of those, 13 chapters are devoted to the 24-hour period beginning at sundown the day before the crucifixion: the last day. The events of the last day take up the space of a full 579 verses, 218 describing the betrayal, arrest, and trials, and 361 covering the time spent in the upper room, the Supper, the discourse on the

Mount of Olives, the prayer in Gethsemane, the crucifixion, His death, and His burial.

The remainder of the gospels deals with the Lord's resurrection and appearances afterward. The point is, Christianity is based not on the philosophy of Jesus, but upon who He was and what He did, but there is more. All we know and believe about the Jesus of the Bible stands on these historical records subject to objective examination. If Jesus was not who He said He was, and did not do what the Bible declares Him to have done, then Christianity is not only not unique, it is a sham! That is why McDowell responded the way he did.

Suppose Paul the Apostle had a squishy take on religion when the subject of the resurrection of Jesus Christ came up in 1 Corinthians 15. Can you imagine him saying something like, "Well, you know, I just think that Jesus lives in my heart, and that's my truth. You, of course, may have a different view, and I can respect that."

No. According to Paul, Jesus died and was buried and rose again in real history: "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen ..." (1 Corinthians 15:3-5)

Don't miss that last phrase. It does not read, "And his presence was felt," or "And the disciples were moved by his life and death," or "And he continually abides with us in spirit." It says, "And he was seen ..." Clearly, it was not over at the cross.

### WHAT FOLLOWED THE CROSS WAS NECESSARY

Second, it is not over because the Easter story reveals who Jesus was and why He came.

I have to be careful here not to be misunderstood. The death of Jesus on the cross, His life given for us, the shed blood of redemption — these are definitely not side issues as the gospel information cited above shows. However, if we confine our preaching and witnessing to the facts contained in the doctrine of atonement we are not proclaiming the gospel.

Adrian Warnock, author of *Raised with Christ: How the Resurrection Changes Everything*, writes:

*It is interesting that most Christians talk about the Cross often, and yet we seem to only speak about the Resurrection at Easter. I have also noticed that there is a big contrast between our preaching today, which tends to assume the Resurrection while emphasizing the Cross, and the preaching of the book of Acts, which does the exact opposite, speaking far more about the Resurrection and how it has saved us. Charles Spurgeon noticed this neglect in his day as well, and argued that if our preaching better matched the book of Acts, we would see more people become Christians.*

I was bothered when I read that, and checked it out. I think Mr. Warnock is on to something. I have already pointed out the gospel passage in 1 Corinthians 15:3-5, and I do note that many preachers, when wanting to give a capsulated gospel tend to stop at the end of verse 4. But remember there were no verse



### A hymn by Charles Wesley

Christ the Lord is risen today, Alleluia!  
Earth and heaven in chorus say, Alleluia!  
Raise your joys and triumphs high, Alleluia!  
Sing, ye heavens, and earth reply, Alleluia!

Love's redeeming work is done, Alleluia!  
Fought the fight, the battle won, Alleluia!  
Death in vain forbids him rise, Alleluia!  
Christ has opened paradise, Alleluia!

Lives again our glorious King, Alleluia!  
Where, O death, is now thy sting? Alleluia!  
Once he died our souls to save, Alleluia!  
Where's thy victory, boasting grave? Alleluia!

Soar we now where Christ has led, Alleluia!  
Following our exalted Head, Alleluia!  
Made like him, like him we rise, Alleluia!  
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Alleluia!

Hail the Lord of earth and heaven, Alleluia!  
Praise to thee by both be given, Alleluia!  
Thee we greet triumphant now, Alleluia!  
Hail the Resurrection, thou, Alleluia!

King of glory, soul of bliss, Alleluia!  
Everlasting life is this, Alleluia!  
Thee to know, thy power to prove, Alleluia!  
Thus to sing, and thus to love, Alleluia!

divisions in the original letter, and observe the conjunction and phrase in the next phrase: “and he was seen.” Sin atoned for on the cross is good news indeed, but the news of the risen Savior is what got the early Christians in the most hot water.

And the Corinthian passage is not the only place where resurrection is included in the definition of the gospel. The Epistle to the Romans opens with these words:

*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, (Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:*

Here, Paul says the gospel is something promised by the prophets in the scriptures, and that gospel concerned his Son Jesus Christ, a son of David by human birth, but who was demonstrated to be the Son of God by the resurrection from the dead. A good example of the Cross + Resurrection approach is seen in Acts 17:1-3, where we read that He went to a synagogue (“as his manner was,” in other words it is what He did all the time) and for three successive Sabbaths, argued “that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.” He even argued the resurrection on Mars Hill in Athens, and before Agrippa at one of his hearings before going to Rome. Near the end of his life, Paul writes, “Remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of David was raised from the dead according to my gospel.” (2 Timothy 2:8)

And going back to the gGospel texts, God and Jesus hung everything said and done in the Gospels, all the claims made and all the promises given, on the resurrection. In his trials, Jesus was mocked by Romans and accused of blasphemy by Jews because of his claims. When God raised him from the dead, he was “justified (vindicated) in the Spirit,” as 1 Timothy 3:16 says. Jesus was declared to be the Son of God by the resurrection as Paul stated in Romans 1. Had Jesus remained dead and in the grave, he was not who he said he was at all.

But I think the most gripping evidence for the need to reemphasize the resurrection in our gospel witness is found in one of our favorite witnessing passages, Romans 10:9. How does one become a Christian? According to the text ...

*That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

Two things you need to see here: the Lordship of Christ, and the fact of the resurrection. Any part of Christendom in which Jesus is seen as something less than the Lord of the universe or in which the resurrection is in doubt is representing something that is

made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus”), and in Colossians 3:1-2 (“If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth”).

But those are not abstract ideas limited to a future existence. Those who believe in Christ are new creations (creatures in the King James Version). In other words, what God is doing when He saves us as individuals is to bring his future will and purpose back to right here in the present in bits and pieces. This is the language N. T. Wright (all of whose views I cannot espouse) uses to describe what God is doing today, and I think he is right on this particular detail. We have, after all, been given

## “IT IS FINISHED.” BUT IT IS FAR FROM OVER...

...because the resurrection gives us a true picture of who Jesus was and why He came, and finally, it is not over because the resurrection defines what we are to be about as well.

not Christian. What followed the cross was necessary to vindicate God and Jesus Christ, and it should be emphasized as a critical part of the gospel.

**IT'S NOT OVER BECAUSE WE ARE NOT OVER**  
So, it is finished but not over because we continue to defend the resurrection, because the resurrection gives us a true picture of who Jesus was and why He came, and finally, it is not over because the resurrection defines what we are to be about as well.

Time and again our own lives are defined by Christ's resurrection in the New Testament. Just as His death is treated as our own (as punishment for our sins), we are identified with the risen Christ in Romans 6:4 (“like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life”), Ephesians 2:5-6 (“Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ ... And hath raised us up together, and

a taste of “the powers of the world to come” (Hebrews 6:5), and while no human or group of humans has the power to build the ultimate kingdom of God on earth, you and I, having tasted what God is going to do, can bring bits and pieces of that future kingdom into our homes, into our families, our churches, and our communities. Perhaps those around us will begin to hunger for what we have tasted by embracing the resurrected Son of God and the life He offers.

We are made witnesses, after all, by One whose authority and power derive from His resurrection — “All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

“It is finished.” But it is far from over.



# URBAN CURRENT

## What part of “Go” do you not understand?

*Editor’s note – Charlie Miller is subbing this month for Charles Lyons who is taking a sabbatical.*

**O**n the flight back from the national meeting in Ft. Worth, I took some time to digest all of the challenges, charges, and commands I heard from the church planters and pastoral leaders. My head was full of quotes, ideas, and new names. My heart was heavy — sagging from the weight of knowing I was returning to a broken city that needs someone (really anyone) to “have compassion” on them and to “make a difference.”

En route, I overheard another conversation where a mother asked her son, “What part of ‘No’ do you not understand?” I smiled. I knew how that kid felt. He was smarter than me though — since he did not actually answer the question. After a chuckle to myself, I settled in. Then God spoke to me, “What part of ‘Go’ do you not understand?” I don’t mean to imply that I heard an audible voice, but I know with certainty that God was speaking to me.

My mind was drawn back to the Great Commission. “Go into the world and make disciples.” What part of “Go” did I not understand? I introspectively interrogated myself, “Am I going ... and where do I ‘go’ when I am ‘going?’”

You see, I am a pastor, but is my flock limited to those who come within the confines of my fence? I am a church-builder, but am I building church buildings, or am I building the church? I am a leader, but am I leading people to reach out or merely holding meetings?

Am I actually going into the world to make disciples? Am I leaving the monastery, the books, and the controlled environment and going into the world? Am I a farmer in the field planting and harvesting, or am I in the barn

convinced that the better part of the work is already done?

What part of “Go” do we not understand?

It is not as if I have not personally led anyone to Christ in the last year. In fact I have personally led three people to Christ this past year. But, what makes me uncomfortable is that they found me. I did not find them. They came into my church. Thank God for that — but I should go into the world.

So what do I do with this? God speaks vaguely to me most of the time ... or so it seems. I have been praying, reading, and meditating (not like in yoga — just thinking while I walk). I just could not figure it out! I confess I became a little frustrated with God. “You speak to me on a crowded plane when I needed to sleep — yet, here I am wide awake and begging and you give no answer?” Does God ever do this to you?

I awoke this morning. I went through my usual ritual: breakfast, quiet time, Facebook. I had a friend request and two pending messages. I clicked and found a request from a student in our first student ministry. I accepted and went to his page to see how he was doing. I was very interested since this young man was extremely gifted in several areas. As I looked at his page I knew that his life was radically different from the way it was 12 years earlier.

I opened my messages and saw that one was from him. There was a long message from this young man. The last 12 years had included alcohol, drugs, illicit sex, jail, attempts on his life, and homosexuality. My heart was broken. I continued to read. He said he had reached out to me because he thought we were the only ones who loved him.

I wept as I read it. I weep now as I write about it. We messaged back and forth several times. I gave him my number so I could speak

with him. So far he has not called. I love this young man, and I hope I have the opportunity to help him.

Later I was driving to get my girls from school — still thinking about my former student. I have a bit of a commute to the school, and it takes me through a neighborhood most people don’t want to live in. It is here that God speaks again to me, “You can’t help your friend right now — he’s too far away. But you can help these people.” While stopped at the light, I saw a teenager giving drugs to another teenager.

God forgive me for driving through a neighborhood without trying to reach it. God forgive me for stepping over the hurting without trying to help. God forgive me for not going into the world. My heart is terribly heavy now. There is a neighborhood across the street from my church that no one has reached. I will go into it. There is a neighborhood I drive through that no one has reached. I will reach it. I have no idea what that looks like right now. Are we talking campus extensions or church plants? I really don’t know, but I am not waiting for the whole plan. I am simply going to go. God will share the rest with me when I need to know. For now, I will just go.



*by Charlie Miller, Pastor  
Lima Baptist Temple,  
Lima, OH*

# HISTORY

# BAPTIST

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## KIN CHOESS AND THE FATHER-TALKER

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Long before the white man settled in the Brazos River Valley in Central Texas, the area was inhabited by the Wacoes, a tribe of American Indians. The Wacoes had a unique tradition that long ago a stranger carrying a cross had passed through the area and informed them a white man would one day come and tell them all about the Great Spirit. The Wacoes accepted this as a prophecy and firmly believed a white man they named “the Father-Talker” would come and fulfill the prophecy.

In the mid 1800s, white settlers began arriving in the valley. Unfortunately, they did not come to tell the Wacoes about God, but they came to steal their land, and adding insult to injury, they systematically began killing off the buffalo. The Wacoes were infuriated; they depended upon the buffalo as their major food source. The braves retaliated against this threat to their livelihood by attacking the settlers. Governor Sam Houston, fearing a full-fledged war, interceded between the Wacoes and the settlers and arranged a treaty between the two parties. The Wacoes faithfully adhered to the treaty but the settlers ignored the agreement. They continued to encroach upon the land that had been reserved for the Indians. The settlers also continued slaughtering the buffalo. These treaty violations resulted in open warfare.

The settlers appealed to the federal government who proceeded to send the cavalry. The tribe was defeated and placed under the control of an Indian agent. Naturally, the Wacoes were disillusioned by the actions of the white settlers, resulting in a rejection of the promised prophecy. But one of them, Kin Choess, the tribe’s medicine man, refused to abandon the prophecy.

Our story’s hero had been a worshipper of the Great Spirit from his youth. He had often prayed, “Come, oh Great Spirit, and tell us.” One day a chief named Soda Arako returned from a trading trip to the Seminoles and told how he had seen with his own eyes the Father-Talker, and that he promised to visit them in the spring. In the middle of June 1877 a runner began informing the Wacoes the Father-Talker had come. The next day the Father-Talker arrived. His name was A. J.

Holt, a renowned Baptist missionary.

Holt announced that in two days he would talk to all of them at the Hill West of the Ford on Sugar Creek. On the appointed day an enormous crowd had gathered. Holt spoke of the wonderful Christ, his miraculous birth, and holy and sinless life, his sacrificial death, and his glorious resurrection. No one listened more intently than Kin Choess, and slowly a great peace filled his heart. At the conclusion of his message, Holt asked if anyone would like to walk that road, that person should arise and come forward. Kin Choess was one of the first to respond. Afterward Kin Choess, overcome with emotion, wrapped his arms around the Father-Talker and lifting him up, he began carrying him about with tears streaming down his face. For Kin Choess this was the beginning of a new and exciting life of faith. He no longer made medicine to the unknown God; he went directly to Jesus who had given him supreme peace.

After several years, Holt was transferred to another field. The day he departed Kin Choess took him aside and said to him in his broken English “When me I down and get up no more, Jesus come take me to Him. Then I be very happy, but I watch for you come. By and by after long time, you lie down and get up no more. Then you come up and I see you come; then I come and take you by hand, and lead you up to Jesus and say, ‘Here Jesus, this is the Father-Talker that told me about you.’”

Holt said of Kin Choess, “He was one of the most sincere and spiritually minded persons I have ever met.” Thank God for missionaries past and present who have devoted their lives to reaching people for Christ.

*Editor’s note – This article refers to American Indians. In choosing that term, we referred to Guidelines for Bias-Free Writing published by Association of American University Presses, which recommends using “American Indian. This term is favored by some over Native American, which is also accepted. Whenever possible, writers are encouraged to use the name of the specific people, e.g., Cherokee or Crow, rather than this umbrella term.”*



by Thomas Ray



BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

## Embracing miracles



by Ron Sears | Interim President | Baptist Bible College

The young student said to me, “In three days I will be 23!”  
“Congratulations!” I replied.

“It’s a special day because the doctors told my parents I would not live longer than three years. If I did live, I would never walk or talk.”

Well, that intrigued me and so I asked him to tell me his story. As he finished, I walked away with a renewed joy that God does the impossible. He still works miracles and here before me was a perfect example — a walking, talking, student preparing his life for God’s glory.

We shy away from miracles. When they happen and when they don’t, we cannot explain them. We want to pray boldly but feel much more secure with the added, “If it be your will.” That statement makes the skeptic in each of us feel better. It becomes easy to say the lack of the miraculous must be the result of the request not being the will of God. But, how do I handle the obvious miracle walking away from me?

As my student friend and I parted, I walked past a room filled with students. The professor was before them expounding eternal truth. As I looked into their faces I remembered that the “accuser” has declared they will never make it ... if they do, they certainly will not walk or talk. Yet, here they are walking, talking, and preparing to carry the gospel to a lost world.

The halls of BBC are filled with miracles. Each one is an answer to a prayer offered from a heart of concern. The experts are scratching their heads and saying, “We never expected this from them.” Yet, here they are proving the accuser wrong.

Soon they will leave and carry the gospel to their world. Before anyone realizes, they will be planting churches, teaching a class, calming a group of teens after the lights go out at camp, or finishing their last duties before approval for their new country of burden.

Have you noticed that those who become servants serve now? A church planter naturally creates even as a child. David killed his lion and bear before his Goliath. Peter was outspoken before he declared, “Thou art the Christ ...” In fact, those earlier events gave both of them confidence in what God would do through them on the hillside facing the giant or saying in the face of prison, “Pray that with all boldness we may speak.”

These students roaming the halls are already involved in serving God. They are already becoming what they will one day be — servants of the most high God. The really awesome thing is, there are hundreds (thousands) of future students actively involved in developing into the servants of God who will be in the halls of BBC. I just want you to know we are praying for you in faith that God will work a miracle in your life too; that you will astound the deceiver who is saying, “It can’t be done.”

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE

## A decade of discovering



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

I am writing at almost 40,000 feet heading home from a ten-day study trip with Boston students and staff. More than 40 of us have spent the past week and a half on the ground in Israel. Now we are almost home, and we have the obligatory olive wood souvenirs, tourist t-shirts, dirty laundry, and tired feet to prove it!

When we recruit students here, we talk a lot about “Think — Discover — Impact: Think Biblically, Discover Globally, Impact Eternally.” That is not just cutesy marketing jargon. That is us. Every spring break for the past ten years we have taken students to Europe or the Middle East to study biblical or church history on location.

Do we have fun? You cannot spend this much time with so many clever, witty people and not laugh a lot. I am smiling now as I think about that long Boston line trampling through the ancient water tunnel constructed by King Hezekiah 2,700 years ago — 25 minutes of sloshing through knee-deep water running through a channel carved out of solid rock below Jerusalem! Our big guys squeezed through some tight spots. Our young women learned to power themselves through crowded souks and barter deals with the best of them. Lots of memories of our tenth anniversary study trip.

Do we work hard? Oh, man! So much information, a working knowledge of the land of the scriptures, connecting the dots in biblical stories and their application — this is no vacation ... this is big-time study. Students get to a whole new level.

At Boston, we embrace the demands that today’s students put on us ... students want to be challenged, they want to explore, they want to ask (and answer!) hard questions. Many desperately want the Word of God to burn in them white hot, and our faculty, staff, trustees, and administration — and our supporting churches — want us to meet that challenge. This world needs the touch of competent, Spirit-driven men and women more than ever. It is our job to help get them ready.

A bunch of us sat out on the roof of our hotel in the old city of Jerusalem and talked about our discoveries in the biblical world. Kayla will graduate in less than two months and she and others in her class will have studied on the ground in Greece, Italy, Israel, and all over Europe. Our students have the course work to match up with anybody from any college, but they have “discoveries” that nobody can match. That is just a Boston fact. Nick still talks about the food in Italy. Jamie can talk about ancient Ephesus and Corinth. Now Stephen and Rob and Travis and Michelle can talk about Capernaum, Nazareth, and Jerusalem in the first person. We have walked those hills, we have divided up and yelled at each other in David’s Valley of Elah like Israelites and Philistines, and we have trekked down the Mount of Olives with Jerusalem in front of us bigger than any IMAX.

Ten years of study trips, the first ten years winds up today. Discovering the world of biblical studies is just in the soul of Boston Baptist College. Next spring we will “discover” some more.

# BBFI Mission Office offers ways to leave a legacy

Springfield, MO

The Baptist Bible Fellowship Mission Office has announced it has plans and counseling available for those who want to extend their giving to missions beyond their earthly lives. The office also can help with estate planning for those who want to give a gift to missions and help secure their retirement at the same time.

In their release of the Leave a Legacy information, Mission Director Jon Konnerup and Chief of Operations Rick Vanhooser stress that many who love and give to BBFI missions would like to see their estates continue missionary support, but they have no plan to make that happen. For instance, they say that most people die without a will, and this is one of the first items to consider in estate planning.

Rick Vanhooser gives the logic for preparing a will:

*There are many advantages for people who have a will. First, you specify the distribution. You can give any amounts or percentages to the persons that you pick rather than depending on the state statute to allocate or distribute in a manner that you might find totally unacceptable.*

*Second, you nominate the guardian. If you have minor children, I'm sure you would far prefer to pick for yourself the most important person who will be entrusted with the care and upbringing of those loved ones, rather than have the state judge, who knows nothing about you or your family or your desires, select someone to be the guardian.*

*Third, you choose the executor, a personal representative. He or she has a great deal of power and authority. He or she will be in charge of managing the estate, paying all the bills, and making the final distributions under your plan. You want to make sure you have selected someone who will do a good job and see that the plan is properly carried out.*

*Fourth, you can create trusts. There are many reasons to create trusts. Some family members would be far better to receive distributions of income rather than a lump sum principal amount. You can make provisions for these family members in a way that is most helpful to them in a trust.*

*Finally, you can make transfers to charity. The gifts to charity could serve as a*



*legacy or remembrance to your involvement and support of those charities during your lifetime.*

If one wants to make a gift to BBFI missions, for instance, there are other ways to designate a donation as well:

*Unrestricted gifts are especially valuable as they allow BBFI missions to fulfill its high-priority needs when your gift arrives.*

*Restricted gifts can support important initiatives such as building projects, Candidate School, disability or medical funding. You can direct your bequest to any approved program of BBFI missions.*

*A current use fund can be established for a specific program and provides the flexibility of using the full amount of your gift.*

*A trust fund creates a permanent legacy while providing an annual income in perpetuity to carry out its purposes.*

One of the best ways to give, Jon Konnerup points out, is the charitable gift annuity. He says, "Creating a charitable gift annuity is a wonderful way to support BBFI missions in the future while, at the same time, increasing your income."

Briefly, a charitable gift annuity is a contract with BBFI missions specifying that in return for your irrevocable gift, BBFI missions will pay the giver and/or another beneficiary a fixed income for life. When all income beneficiaries die, BBFI missions will use the remainder of your gift in the vital work of supporting missionaries. In ad-

*(Continued on page 23)*

## SEEKING PASTOR

After almost 30 years as our pastor, Kenneth Rhoades is retiring from Central Baptist Church in Sulphur Springs, Texas! The church was organized June 14, 1949 with 26 charter members. An Independent Fundamental Baptist Church founded by Dr. John Rawlings with over 60 years of winning souls to Christ in our community and around the world.

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is II Timothy 3:16 (KJV) "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness." Our congregation is mission-minded in thinking and committed to ministry in our neighborhood.

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Central Baptist Church  
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Sulphur Springs, Texas 75483  
genemattison@yahoo.com

(Continued)

dition to favorable rates of return, charitable gift annuities also afford donors many tax benefits. For example, in return for a gift of \$50,000, a 65-year-old will receive an annuity of \$2,350 each year for the remainder of his or her life (\$50,000 x 4.7% percent). This amount will never change.

While the income beneficiaries are alive, BBFI missions will invest the gifted assets in a pool of investments, from which the annual payments to beneficiaries will come. After the beneficiaries pass, the remaining assets attributed to the original gift will be removed from the pool and used by BBFI missions in the vital work of supporting your missionaries.

The Leave a Legacy information on the website also gives answers to common questions about taxes, other reasons for making a charitable gift to missions, and offers some basic instruction about making a plan. Vanhooser asks,

"What if you don't have a plan? What will happen in those circumstances? The state certainly has a plan, and it will decide where your property might go. This may be very different than the decision that you would make with your own plan."

To better understand Leave a Legacy as well as other giving options, visit the BBFI Mission Office website at [www.bbfimissions.com](http://www.bbfimissions.com) and click on "Leave a Legacy" or call 417.862.5001 and ask to speak to Rick Vanhooser.

*This article is intended as a general guide only and is not intended to replace professional financial or legal advice. Your tax situation may be unique. The Tribune and the BBFI Mission Office urge you to always consult your attorney, tax advisor or financial advisor about the plan best suited to meet your needs before making decisions of this nature.*

## Gateway Project initiated in Ft. Worth meeting

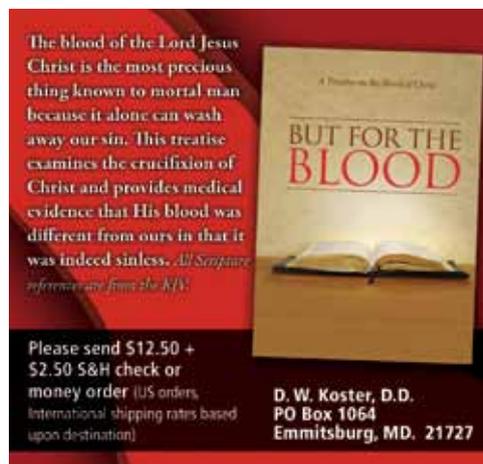
Springfield, MO

During the February BBFI meeting held at Hallmark Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, in February, National Church Planting Office Director Wayne Guinn and BBFI President Linzy Slayden announced the Gateway Project. According to Guinn, the Gateway Project provides another tool established for churches who want to plant new churches. The Project's focus will be building bridges of communication into ethnic communities and areas in the U.S. that have been largely abandoned or ignored by conservative Baptist churches.

Two men, Pastor Ira Walton and BBFI Missionary Steven Johnson, will be spearheading the project in the beginning. Ira's focus will be on African American populations, while Steve will target areas with Hispanics.

Ira, who was converted to Christ while in the military, also sees great potential in reaching military personnel who will shortly be leaving the ranks of the active military. He says, "I am of the opinion that the best way to get prospects in the pipeline is to tap into vast resources of people who truly understand the meaning of service. They are the men and women who volunteered to sacrifice their lives in the service to our country, a diverse group with many talents and abilities." Citing plans to downsize the U.S. military, he believes a renewed effort to minister near and around exiting military bases will give a lot of opportunity for mentoring and training.

Steven recently returned to the U.S. from Bolivia after political circumstances there required him to leave. He has been actively ministering in Hispanic communities since coming back to the States. Both Ira Walton and Steven Johnson may be contacted through the National Church Planting Office of the BBFI.



# Wild game supper at Baptist Temple

Springfield, MO

Baptist Temple of Springfield, MO, hosted their fourth annual Men's Wild Game Supper Friday, February 17. In attendance were 128 men and boys, and 78 of that number were guests. The guest speaker was professional John Wayne impersonator and evangelist Gene Howard, who is a 1977 Baptist Bible College graduate.

Pastor Mark Rounsaville said, "The event did everything we had hoped. Not only did we have a record number of guests, but we saw eight professions of faith in Christ and 11 rededications. Although the event provided a great time of fellowship and fun, it was organized for the primary purpose of bringing guests to hear the gospel."

The evening included a catered BBQ meal, a wild game taste contest, a humorous skit entitled *If Deer Could Talk* written and directed by BBC professor Steve Dowell, and some door prizes. The top door prize was a Rossi Combination 243/50 caliber muzzleloading gun.

Evangelist Howard stayed for the Sunday services where two adults joined the church, and one presented himself for baptism.



Gene Howard poses with Craig, Nadine, and Mark Rounsaville

# Founder's grandson is LBU graduation speaker

Shreveport, LA

Nathan Lorrick, grandson of Louisiana Baptist University's founder, Dr. J. G. Tharpe, will be the graduation speaker at the 38th graduation services at LBU. Nathan is a gifted pastor and speaker. He is a graduate of East Texas University and earned both a masters and doctorate from Liberty University. In 2007, he became pastor of First Baptist Church of Malakoff, TX. Since that time the church has tripled in size. He is also in great demand as a speaker and has spoken in some of America's largest churches.

LBU's Homecoming and Graduation Week begins May 1, culminating with graduation on Friday, May 4, at Summer Grove Baptist Church. Scheduled activities include 20 on-campus workshops featuring some of America's outstanding speakers and a Wednesday night homecoming cookout and concert at Baptist Tabernacle. The week will end with the university's Cajun Feast.



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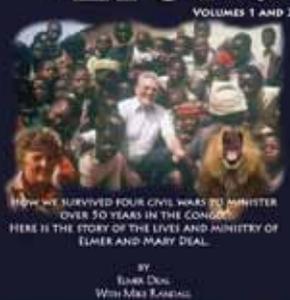


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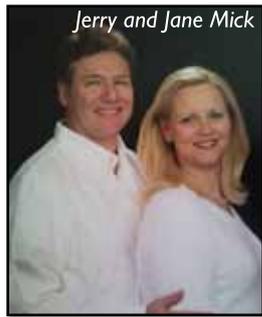
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# Bangor Baptist Church has Family Day

Bangor, ME

Bangor Baptist Church had its first ever Family Day on January 29, 2012. The event was designed to invite attendees who were not members of the church to join the church officially. Senior Pastor Jerry Mick shared a message on the importance of why a person should be a member of a local church, the vision of the church, the major biblical doctrines of the church, and then he asked people to walk the aisle and come and join.



Jerry and Jane Mick

The church for two months asked and encouraged non-members who had been attending to pray about becoming a part of the church. The church has three morning worship services, and by the end of the morning 49 families had joined the church. Mick says, "When nine families came and joined at the 8:00 AM traditional service, we knew it was going to be a banner day for the church and the Lord! We praise the Lord for what he is doing in Bangor."

Bangor Baptist Church was established in 1967. The church had its highest Sunday morning attendance January 22, 2012, of almost 1,100, with a morning temperature of 13 degrees below zero a couple of hours before church started. The following Sunday, January 29, was Family Day.

In January 2012, Pastor Mick finished his 28th year at Bangor Baptist Ministry, and he is now in his 14th year as senior pastor. The church's ministries include a Christian school, two radio stations, and a home for unwed teen mothers. Bangor Baptist is the largest independent Baptist and largest BBFI church in Maine.

# BBC Student Center refurbished by Alumni Assoc.

Springfield, MO

During Baptist Bible College Alumni Days, held in March, the BBC Alumni Association refurbished BBC's student center. Guests,



students, and faculty came to the student center after the Thursday chapel service for the reveal and sandwiches.



Association president Tim Wertz says, "The Alumni Association purchased two high definition televisions, a speaker system, tables, end tables, and chairs. The over \$12,000 project was raised over the past two years. The end result is a beautiful student center filled with commercial-grade furnishings that will be enjoyed by BBC students for many years."

Wertz wishes to thank all those who participated in the project to help enhance student life.

## MAY REUNIONS

### Alumni Banquet

Wednesday May 16th at 5pm  
BBC Cafeteria

### 1997—15 year Reunion

Call Tom Parker at 239-494-0886  
Email tom4anna@me.com

### 1972—40 year Reunion

Contact John McCall at 719-487-0910  
Email jmccallotan@msn.com

### 1962—50 year Reunion

Contact John Page at 417-862-6478  
Email jcp6560@aol.com  
Tuesday 1pm—Shoney's

### 2002—10 year Reunion

Call Joey Candillo at 817-729-5161  
Email Jcandillo21@yahoo.com

### 1959-1960— Annual Breakfast

IHOP on N. Kansas—Tuesday May 15th at 7:30am  
Contact Branson & Jorene Howard 417-865-1559

## MISSIONARY LETTERS

### Tom & Gail Gritts | England

Eva Cecil was a faithful member at Temple Baptist Church in Wolverhampton, England, for nearly 20 years before she passed away. During that time, she witnessed to her friend, Barbara, and often brought her to church and many church functions. Barbara became a friend of Eva's family and after Eva passed away, the family continued to keep in contact with her.

When Ian and Marie Hutchings (Eva's son-in-law and daughter) started Hope Baptist in Cannock, Barbara began attending there because of the family connection. Eventually Barbara accepted Christ as her Savior.

In November, Hope Baptist Church came to Temple Baptist Church for a baptismal service and Barbara, at over 80 years of age, was baptized along with five teenagers. The crowd cheered! I am sure Eva cheered from Heaven as well!

### Correction

Last month we published a missionary letter for Christina Fulmer, missionary to Kenya, but titled it Christine Fulmer.

# LBU hosts Louisiana BBF

Shreveport, LA

On March 2, Louisiana Baptist University hosted the Louisiana Baptist Bible Fellowship with approximately 40 people in attendance. Ron Troscaille of the BBFI Builders gave a mission report, along with messages by Wayne Duboise (Shreveport, LA) and E. J. Brinson (Lakeland, FL). LBU has a standing commitment to host the LBBF March meeting — the largest meeting each year.



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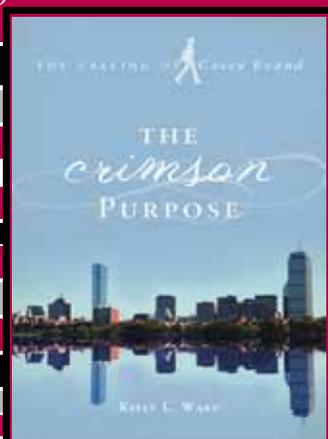
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Rev. Jeffrey Lavoie is a graduate of Boston Baptist College and is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Exeter.

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## Herb Fitzpatrick

Annapolis, MD

Richard Herbert Fitzpatrick, former pastor of Riverdale Baptist Church in Upper Marlboro, MD, left this life February 11, 2012, at the age of 85. Born July 29, 1926, in Roanoke, VA, he attended Practical Bible Training School in Binghamton, NY, and graduated from Bible Baptist Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, in 1947. Upon graduation from seminary, he founded Calvary Baptist Church in Connersville, IN. He built the church to a regular weekly attendance of 1,300, reaching a high of 2,100 in attendance at Sunday school, the largest in Indiana at the time.



In 1964, he accepted the pastorate of The First Baptist Church of Riverdale, MD, outside Washington, D.C. The church became one of the area's first megachurches, and when it moved to Upper Marlboro the name changed to Riverdale Baptist Church.

Mr. Fitzpatrick served as a leader for Baptist Bible Fellowship, Baptist Bible College, and Liberty University. He retired in 1998 becoming pastor emeritus of the church, but he remained an active preacher in the Washington area several years.

He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Lois Bartlett Fitzpatrick, two children, and two grandchildren. Memorial services were held at Riverdale Baptist Church February 14 and in Roanoke February 15, 2012.

## Harry Vickery

Springfield, MO

Harry E. Vickery, a Springfield native, joined his Lord in glory February 13, 2012. Born February 1, 1928, he graduated from Central High School, served in the U.S. Coast Guard, and then attended Baptist Bible College where he later served as a trustee. Harry went on to found Baptist Temple and Christian Schools of Springfield. His ministry also included serving as chaplain to the Springfield Fire Department. In 1975 Harry and his wife Kathryn moved to New York City where he pastored there and later in New Jersey until 2001 when they retired and returned home to Springfield.



Mr. Vickery is survived by his wife, Kathryn Rogers, of 63 years, three children, seven grandchildren, and ten great-grandchildren. Memorial services were held at Baptist Temple February 17, 2012.

## Editor's note:

Veteran BBFI Missionary Ray Masters passed away unexpectedly in Argentina in early March. Our deadline passed before we received the information for a proper tribute. We will publish that information in the next issue.

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• **New Testament Baptist Church and School**, 111 Ash St., East Hartford, CT 06108. 860/290-6696 *Pastor Michael Stoddard*

**DELAWARE**

• **Southside Baptist Church**, 4904 S. DuPont Hwy. (US 13 So.), Dover, DE 19901, 302/697-2411 *Pastor Chris Kondracki*

• **First Baptist Church**, 6062 Old Shawnee Rd., Milford, DE 19963, 302/422-9795 *Pastor David Perdue*

**FLORIDA**

• **Palm Springs Drive Baptist Church**, 601 Palm Springs Dr., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701, 407/831-0950 *Pastor Scott Carlson*

• **Tabernacle Baptist Church**, 6000 West Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32808, 407/295-3086 *Pastor Steve Ware*

• **Winter Haven Baptist Church**, 1500 Dundee Rd., Winter Haven, FL 33884, 863/294-6478 *Pastor Mark D. Hodges*

• **New Testament Baptist Church**, 2050 South Belcher Rd., Largo, FL 33771, 727/536-0481 *Pastor Matt Trill*

• **Trinity Baptist Church**, 800 Hammond Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32221, 904/786-5320 *Pastor Tom Messer*

• **First Coast Baptist Church**, 7587 Blanding Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32244, 904/777-3040 *Pastor Richard Edwards*

• **Harbor Baptist Church**, 428 Tomoka Ave., Ormond Beach, FL 32173, 386/677-3116 *Pastor Ronald L. Todd*

• **Colonial Baptist Church**, 2616 51st Street West, Bradenton, FL 34209, 941/795-3767 *Pastor James Landsberger*

• **Sonshine Baptist Church**, 23105 Veterans Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33954, 941/625-1273 *Pastor William K. Bales*

• **First Baptist Coconut Creek**, formerly Calvary Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, FL. 954/422-9611 *Pastor Jerry Williamson*

• **Lighthouse Baptist Church**, 6815 Markham Rd. Sanford, FL 32771, 407/829-4400 *Pastor Dale Hardy*

• **Calvary Baptist Church**, 123 Thunderbird Dr., Sebastian, FL 32958. 772/589-5047 www.calvary-baptistchurch.com *Pastor Clifton Cooley*

• **New Life Baptist Church**, 35000 Radio Rd (at Poe St.), Leesburg, FL 34788 352/728-0004 newlifebaptistchurch@earthlink.net

• **Suncoast Baptist Church**, 410 Warrington Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33954, 941/625-8550, *Pastor Chip Keller* www.suncoastbaptistchurch.com

• **Grace Bible Baptist Church**, 1703 Lewis Road, Leesburg, FL 34748. 352/326-5738, *Pastor George Mulford III* www.gbbconline.com

• **Orlando Baptist Church**, 500 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32807. 407/277-8671, *Pastor David Janney* www.worldchangingchurch.com

**GEORGIA**

• **Cornerstone Baptist Church**, 1400 Grayson Hwy., Lawrenceville, GA 30245. 770/338-2677 *Pastor Tim Neal*

• **Central Fellowship Baptist Church and Academy**, 8460 Hawkinsville Rd. Hwy 247, 3 miles north of Robins Air Force Base, Macon GA 31216. 478/781-2981 www.centralfellowship.org *Pastor Rodney Queen*

**HAWAII**

• **Lanakila Baptist Church**, 94-1250 Waipahu St., Waipahu, HI 96797. 808/677-0731 *Pastor Steven C. Wygle*

**ILLINOIS**

• **Sauk Trail Baptist Temple**, 4411 Sauk Trail, P.O. Box 347, Richton Park, IL 60471. 708/481-1490 *Pastor Bruce Humbert*

**IOWA**

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• **Friendship Baptist Church** 2209 E. Pawnee, Wichita, KS 67211 316/263-0269, *Pastor Steve Day*

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• **Oak Hill Baptist Church**, 2135 Oak Hill Rd., Somerset, KY 42501, 606/679-8496 *Pastor Gary Phelps*

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• **Central Baptist Church**, 2855 Greenhouse Rd., Houston, TX 77084. 281/492-2689 *Pastor Larry Maddox*

• **First Baptist Church of Meadowview**, 4346 N Galloway Ave., Mesquite, TX 75150. 214/391-7176 *Pastor R.D. Wade*

• **First Baptist Church**, Hwy. 64, Wright City, TX 75750, 903/839-2700 *Pastor Richard G. Boone*

• **North Park Baptist Church**, 4401 Theiss Rd., Humble, TX 77338. 281/821-2258 *Pastor John Gross*

• **Berean Baptist Church**, 302 N. Town East Blvd., Mesquite, TX 75182. 972/226-7803 *Pastor David Mills*

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# Should churches be tax-exempt? (Yes, and here's why)

By Erik Stanley

**S**COTTSDALE, Ariz. (BP) — Why is your church tax exempt? Why should it continue to be tax exempt? If I were to sit down and ask you these questions, would you have a clear and coherent answer? I suspect this is something we seldom think about. After all, tax exemption for churches has always been given and we assume, because of its historical longevity, it always will be given.

The fact that many Americans cannot explain why churches are tax exempt indicates a forgotten history and is emblematic of a society that has systematically devalued the church as a beneficial societal institution.

Whenever I litigate a case about church tax exemption or speak about the Alliance Defense Fund's Pulpit Freedom Sunday, the inevitable media comments go something like this: "Churches should pay taxes just like everyone else! They have tons of money, so why can't they pay their fair share? Why should churches get a free ride? Make them pay!" Comments like these are more prevalent today than any other time I can remember.

Cases involving local governments attempting to tax churches are also becoming more prevalent. For example, the Alliance Defense Fund (ADF) recently litigated and won a case against the city of Mission, KS, for attempting to impose a "driveway tax" on churches. Or consider the case of Liberty Assembly of God in New Hampshire which was slapped with a property tax bill simply because the local taxing authorities said some rooms were not being used for a religious purpose.

So why should churches be tax exempt? There are very sound and valid reasons for church tax exemption. First, there is the "social benefit" theory of tax exemption. This recognizes the fact that churches provide great benefits to society by their good works. Churches minister to the poor and needy in the community, provide numerous social services for the downtrodden among us, and reach out to the "least of these" in thousands of different ways. The social benefit theory justifies tax exemption for churches as a kind of bargain — churches provide needed services, so they are entitled to tax exemption.

One corollary of the "social benefit" theory that is often overlooked is what I have termed the "intangible benefit" theory of tax exemption. This highlights the intangible and often unseen benefits provided by churches to the community. Things like reduced crime rates resulting from transformed lives, suicides prevented when people surrender to Christ, and people with destructive behavioral patterns that harm the community changing into hard-working and virtuous citizens who contribute to the well-being of the community. It is difficult to put a price tag on these types of intangible benefits provided by churches,

but there is no question that they exist.

An interesting study conducted a few years ago attempted to put a value on the economic worth of one church. The study estimated that the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia provided over 6 million dollars of economic value to the community, a figure that is nearly 10 times the church's annual budget.

It is easy to see the benefits provided by churches. In fact, churches provide more social services and intangible benefits to the community than they would ever pay in taxes. It makes no sense to tax churches because the tax dollars taken from the church reduce the amount of benefits it can provide to the community. In a very real sense, taxing churches harms society.

But there is also a constitutional reason why churches are tax exempt. Our history is one of an unbroken practice of exempting churches from taxation. Churches were exempt from the very first time the tax code was passed at the federal level, and have remained exempt in every iteration of the tax code ever since. Every state in America also exempts churches from property taxes. When the U.S. Supreme Court decided a case regarding the property tax exemption of churches, called *Walz v. Tax Commission*, it stated that providing a tax exemption for churches was a less intrusive option under the Constitution than requiring churches to pay taxes.

That makes sense when you stop and think about it. As the Supreme Court said in a very early case, "The power to tax involves the power to control." Taxation is, in essence, a very strong assertion of control by a sovereign over its subjects. Exempting churches is a way to ensure that the state cannot control churches.

Overall, there are very good reasons why churches are tax exempt. We need to remember these reasons and proclaim them to others in society who reflexively shout that the church should pay its fair share. We should take up the cause of passionate defenders of church tax exemption like Kentucky state Rep. Whittaker of the 19th century. During the debates on the Kentucky Constitution in 1890, he loudly proclaimed, "Let an untaxed Gospel be preached, in an untaxed church-house, from an untaxed pulpit; let the emblem of a crucified, but risen Christ be administered from an untaxed altar, and, as the spire points heavenward, let it stand forever untaxed." Amen.

*Erik Stanley is senior legal counsel for the Alliance Defense Fund, online at [telladf.org](http://telladf.org)*

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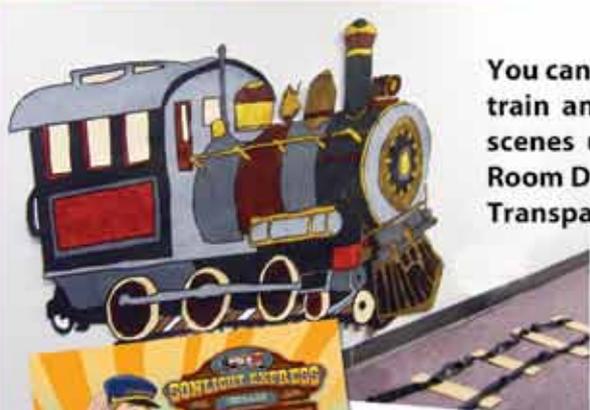
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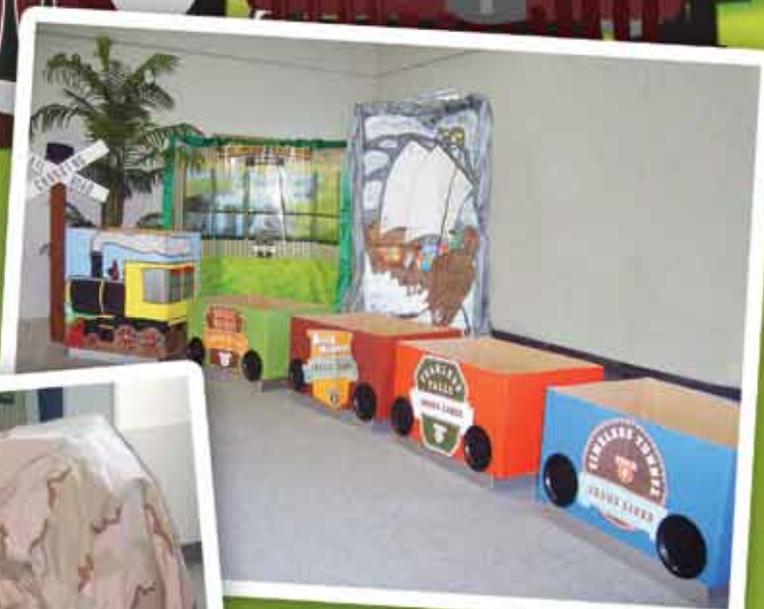
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