

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

DECEMBER 2015 | VOL. 66 NO. 4

BORN THAT MAN  
NO MORE MAY DIE

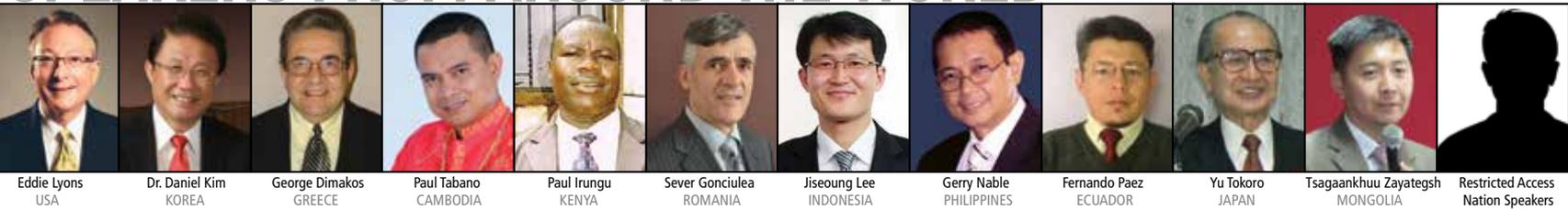
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눈을 들어 바라봐라!  
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ON THE TABLE  
**Merry Christmas**

by Randy Harp | Editor

**M**erry Christmas! Okay, I will admit that is hard for me to say. Not because I don't want you to have a merry Christmas, but because I am writing this the first of November. I am the type that teases my wife about watching Hallmark Christmas shows the day after Halloween. I am still adjusting to the schedule of the *Tribune*.

Like many of you, Christmas is one of my favorite seasons of the year. Yes, I love watching classic Christmas movies. Yes, I love all the decorations and festive spirit. Yes, I love children's Christmas musicals at church. And yes, I love the giddiness of my children as they anticipate opening presents. But most of all, I love that we can celebrate the greatest miracle in the history of the world.

There are many ways we celebrate that miracle. For some it is through a candlelight Christmas Eve service. For others it is reading the Christmas story out of the Gospel of Luke on Christmas morning. And still for others it might be singing happy birthday to Jesus on Christmas day. What is important is that we each take time to celebrate that miracle. My prayer for my family as well as yours is that we would each remember what is the true meaning of Christmas. That we would take notice, as Steve Van Winkle writes this month, of the gift we have each been given, a gift that could only be given to us by a loving God.

This issue of the *Tribune* also marks the end of an era as Keith Bassham provides his final contributions as executive editor. He shares both an intensely personal feature on the "wind of God" as well as the Afterwords. It is important to note that only founding editor, Noel Smith, served as editor longer.

Without Keith knowing, we assembled a special feature highlighting his 20 years of service to the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. Keith's influence and ministry is evident by the testimonials written by those who have known him best. Keith, I believe I can speak on behalf of an entire fellowship of pastors, missionaries, church members, and friends when I say, "Thank you."

As we go to print for this issue of the magazine, I have begun my travels on behalf of the BBFI and the *Tribune*. My goal over the next several months is to be in as many churches and state fellowship meetings as possible. If I can serve you, your church, or your state fellowship in any way, please let me know. One goal as I travel is simply to listen. I hope to hear how the BBFI and/or the *Tribune* can add the most value to you and your ministry.

One immediate way I can hear from you is for you to take a few minutes to complete the brief online survey found at [www.tribune.org/surveys](http://www.tribune.org/surveys) or by scanning the QR code at right. The questions will provide insight on how readers interact with the *Tribune*.

Thanks again for allowing me to serve Christ as I serve you.



BAPTIST BIBLE  
**TRIBUNE**

DECEMBER 2015

VOL. 66 NO. 4

**FEATURES**



**The Last Christmas Gift**

When everything else is gone, only one gift can overcome the sadness of the moment.

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**Raising a Sail for the Wind of God**

Our dreams, and thus our prayers, may be too small when God has something in mind for us.

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**Thank You, Keith Bassham**

Acknowledging a job well done, in the words of colleagues and friends.

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Don't miss any of the *Tribune's* digital offerings on our website [www.tribune.org](http://www.tribune.org). You can find old articles, a digital page-turn version of this month's magazine, and a link to sign up for the *Tribune* Update email.

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

## Keep the heat on



by Eddie Lyons | President | BBFI

Several years ago our town was hit with what some called the worst S ice storm in 100 years. It didn't take long until most of the city was without electricity, and life seemed to grind to a halt. As temperatures dropped to single digits, it became clear we needed to find a place with heat — something important but often unappreciated.

Much like heat in a building, our Fellowship entities can also be overlooked. Because of this network where no one stands alone, we have the support of others in ministry when times get tough. Within this arena of cooperation we are able to train young leaders in our colleges. We are able to plant churches. Missionaries are vetted and approved. Support can be raised. The mission gets accomplished.

All of this does not happen by accident. We have carefully set up structures to support these efforts. Our colleges train our students. APEX is our church planting arm. Our Mission Office takes care of the vital administration of receiving and sending our missionary support. Our *Tribune*/Communications Office keeps us networked by reporting the stories and information we need to stay connected.

Supporting our Fellowship entities may not always seem exciting but, like the electricity in our houses, it is vital to accomplishing our mission.

It is budget time for me at church. Designated giving that goes to a great, highly promoted project is truly inspiring. And yet nothing gets accomplished without the vital overhead that keeps the heat on and all the bills paid.

Baptist Bible College and Boston Baptist College need our support. Investing in young leaders requires us taking the long view. I look around at the pastors of some of the great churches in our Fellowship and hear stories of when they were unknown students. Sometimes the stories include statements like, "No one expected God would use him or her like He has." Please consider supporting future leaders by sending a monthly gift to our colleges.

APEX is our church planting effort. When we support new church plants we are part of the greatest vehicle for evangelism.

When we support the Mission Office it is like investing in a great mutual fund of missions — taking part in the ministries of the hundreds of missionaries the office services. Our missionaries receive every dollar designated to them. There are no administrative charges assessed. This has been possible for our 65-year history because churches supported the office. They need our support.

Our *Tribune*/Communications Office is vital to keeping us together. The vision of our recently installed editor includes some new avenues for keeping our Fellowship connected. Your support in these efforts will strengthen the *Tribune* and our Fellowship greatly.

As you prepare your budget for the coming year, don't forget the big difference your support can make. Help us "keep the heat on."

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

## Plenty of opportunity



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

What is 750,000 miles long, can wrap itself around the earth 30 times, and grows 20 miles longer each day? It is the line of people on earth who do not yet know Jesus as Savior.

Robertson McQuilken in his book *The Great Omission* wrote:

*"... in a world in which nine out of every ten people is lost, three or four have never heard the way out, and one of every two cannot hear, the church sleeps on. How come? Could it be we think there must be some other way? Or perhaps we don't really care that much."*

Betty Stam's covenant made as a high school student was:

*"Lord, I give up all my own plans and purposes, all my own desires and hopes, and accept Thy will for my life. I give myself, my life, my all utterly to Thee to be Thine forever. Fill me with Thy Holy Spirit. Use me as Thou wilt; send me where Thou wilt; work out Thy whole will in my life at any cost, now and forever."*

C. T. Studd wrote from Cambridge in 1883:

*"I had known about Jesus dying for me, but I had never understood that, if He had died for me, then I didn't belong to myself. Redemption means buying back, so that if I belong to Him, either I had to be a thief, and keep what wasn't mine, or else I had to give up everything to God. When I came to see that Jesus had died for me, it didn't seem hard to give up all for Him?"*

Theodore Williams of India said:

*"We face a humanity that is too precious to neglect. We know a remedy for the ills of the world too wonderful to withhold. We have a Christ too glorious to hide. We have an adventure that is too thrilling to miss."*

George Murray said that for years he was "willing to go, but planning to stay." Not until he became willing to stay, but planning to go did God move him to Italy.

What is God doing in your life right now? When God speaks to you, all He wants you to do is surrender and join Him. He is preparing you for an assignment. It could be tomorrow or a few years from now. Be assured, He will prepare you to be equipped for whatever He is setting up for you.

Ask God to reveal to you through His Word what He would have you to do as you give your life to him. Are you willing to go but planning to stay or willing to stay but planning to go? More missionaries are needed to reach the ever-growing line of people who do not know Jesus as their Savior.

# Know who you are



by John A. Gross | Church Planting | BBFI

When my wife, Susan, and I first went to Houston we were enamored with an area on the west side of Houston. The area was called Memorial, an up-and-coming fully developed exclusive area of beautiful office buildings, large homes, mature successful executives, and educated entrepreneurs. This was an aggressive, exciting, fast-paced, moving, and growing area.

Susan and I thought this would be a great section of town to start a fundamental Bible-believing Baptist church. We were young and excited as all young church planters are beginning their ministries. But we soon realized we were not experienced — we were not the successful mature entrepreneur people this area represented. We did not identify with them socially, economically, or experientially. As difficult as it was, we had to admit this area was not our culture, and we did not identify with them well.

One of the first questions we have to ask ourselves when going to a city or an area is: Are we one of them? You may have a desire to reach a certain class or a particular style of people, but whether we like it or not, we tend to reach those who are like us. In America we have cultural and geographical differences throughout the country. The culture represented on the East Coast — Boston, New York, New Jersey — is totally opposite from that of Southern California or East Texas. Have you ever talked to a fellow who went from upper Manhattan to East Texas trying to plant a church? The truth is we have a greater opportunity of reaching those who represent our gifts, our talents, and our experiences.

When starting a church you should take a true honest evaluation of who you are and what your gifts, talents, and experiences represent, and ask yourself, “Who am I?” Not to say that it can’t be done or that it hasn’t been done, but it is very unusual for a person to develop a successful ministry among those of whom he is vastly different socially, economically, and experientially.

The wonderful thing about this discussion is that God has a prepared place for the prepared person. Long before we ever began to think about church planting, God had us in mind. He has allowed your experiences, your education, and your background to prepare you for the ministry He has planned for you. It becomes our challenge to pray, to seek His guidance, and to allow Him to show us the way. With that said, God can overrule all circumstances — for our God is a miracle-working God. He has planted churches in the most unusual places, with the most unusual people, at the most unusual times, under the most unusual circumstances.

And He can do it with both you and me as we submit ourselves to His will and instruction.

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# THE LAST CHRISTMAS GIFT

By Steve Van Winkle

The highlights of Christmas are the soft comforters we sink into easily. Engaging this season is like coming home and being warmed by a familiar fire. The lowlights of the holiday, however, could drive Billy Sunday to the nearest tavern.



“Life’s just sad.”  
These are words spoken to me by a former church member. The occasion belied the melancholy of the message, as people around us were laughing and eating and chatting at the party we attended several years ago.

I looked at him a little blankly while my mind raced to decide whether his statement was true.

“I mean, the older you get,” he said, “the farther the fall, and the closer you come to the end.”

He was right. My brain ran through all the scenarios in life common to everyone and determined that all of them came up sad in the end.

We anticipate graduating, but we say goodbye to friends, often for the rest of our lives. We celebrate a new job or promotion, but personal obsolescence looms just over the horizon where our replacements, trained in new ways, nomenclature, and technology await.

Little humans are often born of happy marriages. Sons and daughters scurry across living rooms to greet us at the door and roll carelessly on grass carpeting a yard; to our delight, they know no sensible limits to exuberance over the most trivial knowledge or cheapest gifts. Then, just when we begin to enjoy them as friends, they usually look out that door and beyond that lovely yard and leave behind the trinkets and toys and wonder gifted them in their childhood to find a life of their own.

And, the marriages that gave us such miracles, that began in hope and successfully navigated life’s hardships and blossomed throughout a lifetime, all end with the sadness of separation previewed in the vows that bound the couple in the beginning. Death ultimately does us all part.

This truth was driven home to me only a few months ago.

I have a rare kind of friend, the kind who grows up with you. His name is John L. Smith. Seriously. I’ve known him since I was in kindergarten and his house was a staple throughout my childhood.

Within that house were parents who were as stable as boulders. The strength of their marriage was never discussed because

it was never in question; they were the kind of people who seemed to have been born married.

Finally, a few years back, the only thing that could end their marriage found Smith's dad, Herb. With his death, a vow spanning decades was fulfilled.

While delivering my daughter to college in Phoenix this late summer, I had the chance to visit Darlene, Herb's widow. I hadn't actually talked to her for years, and, catching up, she spoke to me in a way I hesitate to characterize for fear of being misunderstood.

She spoke to me normally. By this, I mean she wasn't Smith's mom talking to a friend of his, nor was she an "elder" spewing proverbs and platitudes to an ungrateful youth.

While speaking so, Darlene uttered

saddest things I had ever heard, she did so with a thin, faraway smile I found puzzling, contradictory, even.

The German poet Friedrich Von Schiller once wrote:

"Only wholeness leads to clarity,  
And truth lies in the abyss."

I felt like I had just peered over the edge of the abyss and couldn't escape the truth that the farther you go in life, the more you discover that every joy is, in fact, barbed with sadness ...

Which is something Mary learned in a way similar to the wet blanket thrown over my perspective at that party years ago.

The second chapter of the Gospel of Luke is most noted, I suspect, for the nativity account, or what we would call the Christmas

drive Billy Sunday to the nearest tavern.

Mary was given warning.

Luke two is indeed the chapter of otherworldly visitation and indescribable good news of great joy. Luke two is the warm comforter wrapping us in familiar hope, warming us with paeans of peace. At least, the first part of Luke two. The entire second half of the chapter chills human decency to the bone.

It relates a moment in Mary's life at Christmas plus 40 days. We're taken into the Temple where she and Joseph have come with their newborn Son for the required purification rites.

They've arrived with their meager offering of two doves, indicative of the poverty we've come to associate with a meek Savior. It's here, in this Temple, the Christmas narrative

## Having just relayed one of the saddest things I had ever heard, she did so with a thin, faraway smile I found puzzling, contradictory, even.

one of the most profound things I have ever heard. Recalling how life had changed after Herb's death, she said she never realized all the mundane necessities he kept tidy until his absence forced them on her.

Then she revealed a discovery that froze me. Darlene said she also found she could no longer finish the stories she had always shared with people.

"What?" I asked.

"Our stories. When I play cards or games with people, I tried to tell them stories about my family or funny things that have happened, and I found I couldn't finish them. And then I realized the parts I couldn't recollect were the parts of the story Herb always told; we always tag-teamed telling stories."

Death had taken more than her husband; it ripped away parts of her she continued to discover missing years later. Emotions began to pool in my eyes, and I didn't speak for fear they might embarrassingly leak out.

"I've grown so used to him telling those parts, I didn't know how to, so they just ended."

I noticed something about her at that moment. Having just relayed one of the

story. Over the years, I've written what seems like endless recollections and reflections about the watershed event in all of human history.

Philip Yancey first alerted me to the forgotten events that accompanied the glow of heavenly light and stanzas of angelic praise. In particular, I remember him writing of Herod's order to kill all the children two years old and under in a psychopathic bid to thwart God's eternal plan of salvation.

He reminded his readers of the name history had assigned to that tragedy: "The Slaughter of the Innocents." Then, Yancey rightly recounted how Christmas has been largely sterilized for our consumption, whether for the sake of idealism or capitalism. (See the painting and sidebar at right.)

"Greatest Hits" are sold unchallenged by "Biggest Flops," and there's a reason we're often shown "highlights" of something and never "lowlights." Full-disclosure can be very inconvenient.

The highlights of Christmas all of us know are the soft comforters we sink into easily. Engaging this season is like coming home and being warmed by a familiar fire. The lowlights of the holiday, however, could

continue with even more joy ladled upon the young family.

Only six weeks or so have passed since this couple was visited by lowly strangers smelling of sheep and speaking of wonders seen and heard in a clear night's sky. On this day, however, Joseph and Mary come to the Temple in their usual obscurity, when an old man interrupts their ordinary journey with an encounter that defies description.

Luke says this man, Simeon, was devout and given a special assurance, namely that he wouldn't depart the earth before seeing "the Lord's Christ." With Mary, Joseph, and Jesus coming to the Temple, the Holy Ghost reveals the day has come.

I have always dwelt on this encounter. I see an elderly man, rather frail and slow moving and usually looking vaguely unaware. On this day, he's different; he steps up into the courts of the Temple with purpose, looking for someone, attentive to the guidance of an unheard voice.

Then, through the haze and dust of the morning, his gaze fixes upon Mary and Joseph. He approaches them anxiously, yet cautiously, transfixed all the while at the wad of blankets



## Minimizing the horror of a *Massacre of the Innocents* Oil painting by Pieter Bruegel the Elder (c. 1565–67)

Bruegel set the story from Matthew's gospel as a contemporary Flemish atrocity so that the soldiers wear the distinctive clothing of the Spanish army and their German mercenaries. The artist also drew upon his experience of the exceptionally severe winter of 1564-5. Shortly after its creation, the painting came into the possession of the Holy Roman Emperor, Rudolph II, in Prague. The slaughtered babies were painted over with details such as bundles, food and animals so that, instead of a massacre, it appeared to be a general scene of plunder.

The painting is a unique example of multiple narrative, requiring us to read each episode one by one. In the background, immediately below the

church, a father tries to smuggle his baby to safety, though the mounted soldier on the bridge behind and the many horses tethered suggest that he is unlikely to succeed. A soldier herds women into a house at the extreme left; another soldier carries a baby (one of the few that have not been changed) out of a nearer door, while against the wall of the same house, neighbors seem to be consoling a grieving mother. Moving to the right, a standing woman grieves over her dead baby lying in the snow (changed to an array of hams and cheeses); a couple seem to beg a soldier to take their daughter rather than kill their baby son (changed to a goose or swan); a huddle of villagers console or restrain a father who might otherwise attack the German mercenary in striped

hose who guards a dead baby (changed to a bundle). A seated woman grieves with her dead baby (changed to a bundle) on her lap. A group of soldiers stab with pikes at a pile of babies (changed to livestock) to ensure that they are all dead; women run off in horror as another mercenary stabs a baby (changed to a young boar); a soldier stabs at a baby (changed to a pitcher) cradled by a seated woman. At this point, a distinct group forms as villagers remonstrate with a young, elegantly dressed herald.

Reading across the foreground right to left we see a baby (changed to a bundle) torn from a mother and her daughter. Two generations of a family grieve for a baby about to be stabbed (changed to a calf).

Source: [www.royalcollection.org.uk](http://www.royalcollection.org.uk)

insulating their baby.

Reaching his arms out to take the child, he stops himself, withdraws his arms slightly, and looks up at the mother holding her child. Simeon's eyes ask permission to take Jesus from her; Mary gingerly holds out the bundle while Joseph takes a nervous step forward.

I hear an involuntary chuckle and see a tear well up in his eyes when he finally beholds the face of the Lord's Christ. Simeon stares at the child for a few precious seconds; he speaks.

His words are grandiose, and my only vision of Mary's face as she hears them is as if she received a blank check written on an account filled with joy. Simeon tells God he is now happy to depart this earth in peace, having seen the salvation he longed to behold.

Her son — it is her Son he speaks of

gravity; when he looks up to speak directly to her, his cadence and tone changes. His numb voice reluctantly warns this young mother her son will face a difficult life and not everyone will receive him so happily.

But, the words contained in parentheses in verse 35 must have been the most foreboding of all for her to hear: "Yea, Simeon said, 'and a sword shall pierce through your own soul also.'"

Gone now are the bright words of hope and satisfaction of fulfillment. The herald on this day is far from angels proclaiming peace and good will; rather, it is a lonely old man graphically warning of a coming pain that will sear and wound Mary's soul.

Mary's countenance falls instantly from eager reception to strained uncertainty punctuated by horror. She has found that

birth, no one can deny feeling her soul, like any mother's, has finally slumped over, dead from long, varied, and crescendoing sadness.

It's Christmas. Like the job you'll soon be too old for or the baby you'll one day watch walk out the door or the wedding that ultimately ends in the house of mourning, Christmas was ushered into our world on the wings of joy and the songs of eternity, encouraging all people to recognize, celebrate, and worship the incarnation of God's son, our Savior.

It ends on a cross in blood and mud and irredeemable treachery. And, like life, once you look hard at it, it's just sad.

But.

For almost 15 years or so, I've laid bare my recollections and musings on this season; let me end with one more.

## with healing in His wings, Mild He lays his glory by,

when Simeon exclaims he has now seen God's salvation. It is the salvation first mentioned in Genesis, illustrated in every sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament and reaffirmed by a cadre of prophets throughout the centuries.

Mary's son, he says, is the climax of all God has been working toward for thousands of years. Her son, whom she now cradles in her arms, has indeed met the "hopes and fears of all the years."

In terms of treasures, none could be greater; in terms of purpose, none could be higher; in terms of longing and anticipation, none could be deeper. And all of it was spoken over her little baby boy.

Happiness, perhaps even pride, must have warmed her heart listening to his words. Then, Luke says, this godly old man blessed them.

But, he wasn't finished.

It's here I see Mary's exultation turn to

other side of Christmas where innocents are massacred and dreams mingle with nightmares; it's where people stand breathless trying to take in how life can serve up indescribable joy with a check exacting unplumbed sorrow for the pleasure.

These events and these words are as much a part of the full disclosure of Christmas as Shepherds and dreams and celestial visitations. It's all Christmas, full-disclosure Christmas.

And, those familiar with the life of Jesus know Simeon's words to be true: At Jesus' respectful, but unmistakably distant, calling of his mother "Woman" in Cana you sense the tip of Simeon's sword pierce a mom's soul. Coming to see her beloved son, Simeon's blade must have sunk deeper when she hears Jesus ask who his mother and brothers and sisters really are. When we see Mary at the foot of her son's cross 30-some years after His glorious

Somewhere along the way, when I was a kid, my mom developed a Christmas habit of saving one Christmas gift for last. This gift wasn't laid under the tree with the others we had been ogling for a couple weeks; she typically fetched this present from its hiding place once our expressions reflected a grim realization that Christmas Present had slipped into Christmas Past.

As the finale, this gift was always the best, but, more importantly to us, it extended Christmas a few more precious minutes. Holding back the biggest gift for last, my mom suspended our disappointment from sensing the best was now behind us.

Like Christmases in our home on various streets in Lincoln, NE, Christmas itself has one last gift for those in dark places. I have to believe it's the gift Mary latched onto, because I can't conceive of another means by which her sanity remained intact.

Maybe the splendor and wonder of the first Christmas is exalted so much in hopes of drowning out the hard edges we don't care to relive. But, what is strange is that, like Christmas Eves with one last Christmas gift squirreled away by my mom, Christmas itself holds something — not so much back — as it does in trust.

It's the Last Christmas Gift of the first Christmas.

Oh, we revel in the magnificence with which Christ's birth was announced and we cherish the memories it has given us over a lifetime, but the Last Christmas Gift is something you won't find in memories or under a tree or even in Luke chapter two, yet it's the most priceless of them all.

It's the gift of a happy ending.

Which sounds trite, I know. The Bible has

persevere through the reality of her divine son's nature and brutality of his enemies without hope that the last gift of his birth would be worth the pain along the way?

It's the Last Christmas Gift. The gift of an assured happy ending.

And, we see shadows of this gift throughout life: Maybe graduation separates us from college friends, but it paves fresh avenues for new ones. Our vocational effectiveness may wane as life unfolds, but we find there are better things to spend 40 hours on in a week. The feeling of loss associated with children departing to forge their own lives is often salved by anticipated new additions to families.

And, the happy marriages that bind two people so tightly that one cannot finish a story without the other nearby, may end on earth

in trust. It's not sung by a heavenly host, and it has never invaded a night sky with holy brilliance. It was unknown to Solomon when he lamented the evils he had seen. And, so many people today endure life's inevitable sad notes with cheap tokens of happiness and empty expressions of peace while this Last Christmas Gift sits, unnoticed and unopened on their laps.

The Last Christmas Gift was the heart of the joy set before Christ on the cross; it was the balm that triaged the mortal laceration of Simeon's sword in Mary's soul. In one broad, bold stroke, it wipes away life's accumulated sorrow.

The Last Christmas Gift is revealed in the familiar carol's refrain, namely that Christ was "born that man no more may die." The Last Christmas Gift is the happy ending attending

## Born that man no more may die, Born to raise the s

fewer tight little explanations for big questions than most Christians realize; however, in one compact sentence, the writer of Hebrews declares how Jesus was able to endure the sadness His life generated:

*Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith; Who, for the joy set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God (Hebrews 12:2).*

The baby born in Bethlehem and whose life set the table for a feast of sorrow in the lives of those who loved him, saw beyond the moment of tears to a greater joy. It was joy in the end — the joy set before Him — that propelled His affections beyond the cross to the joyful reunion with God in a city soon to be filled with family.

It must have been the joy Mary clung to through the manifold waves of sadness throughout her life. What mother could ever

with the appointment we all must keep. But, the Last Christmas Gift, held in trust by the Father, brings reunion; it is His promise that, in knowing His son, we actually "lose" no one.

This Last Christmas Gift explains the smile Smith's mom wore while speaking of sadness we all hope doesn't actually exist. It's more than fond memories of what once was — this last gift of Christmas is the assurance of what is yet to come.

We all understand life ends the same for everyone. In Ecclesiastes two and nine, Solomon sized up people and their situations and concluded that no matter what we enjoy or build, regardless of how we live or of the wisdom we pass on, "one event" happens to us all.

For people willing to peek over the abyss, this one event mutes the joys and celebrations and love of a lifetime.

But, there's one Last Christmas Gift held

eternal life.

My former church member was right, unfortunately, when he observed with Von Schiller's mercenary clarity that life, indeed, is just sad. What makes it ultimately sad is the inevitable end the last enemy brings to us all.

There are many who choose to see life as it dares us not to, with all the sorrow and misery lurking behind every droplet of joy. But, if Christmas gives us anything meaningful, it is the gift that doesn't deny the sadness so much as it defeats it, that keeps all of us from believing the best is now behind us.

I want to leave them, and all of us, with this gift that the Father has stewarded away for the end, when we need it most. May we all let Christmas chase life's encroaching sadness away with the only gift that redeems life by overcoming death with beautiful, eternal life. It's the best gift of all.

Indeed, it's the Last Christmas Gift.

# RAISING A SAIL FOR THE WIND OF GOD



## MY JOURNEY TO AND THROUGH THE *BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE*

BY KEITH BASSHAM

**W**hen I received my first impressions of a call to ministry at the age of 16, I had only been a part of the family of God a few months. Between the time of my conversion and the call, our church had gone through a change of pastors, and I was experiencing some changes myself.

My original impetus for attending church in the first place had disappeared when her pastor father migrated to a larger church a few hundred miles away. Our short romance, one-sided it turned out, had already ended anyway, and so my object of focus at church had taken a more serious turn. Our new pastor was very much interested in our youth group, though he was puzzled by the relatively large group of young men and women, boys and girls really, who had declared they had been called to ministry.

Eventually, I realized that was largely

a fad and peer-based response among the group, but as a newcomer I was barely aware. It turns out that a year or so before, the church youth had taken a trip to visit missionaries in Mexico, and the missionary family had a teen-aged son. This young man, reportedly very attractive, had apparently inspired several female camp attendees to place themselves in God's service without reservation. All the girls involved appeared to have been called to Mexico. And the young men in the group were equally seized with all this newfound spiritual interest on the part of the girls, and that is how it was that nearly everyone in my youth group had been called to ministry.

As a relative newbie, I may have been affected by some of the enthusiasm (though it had waned a little), but the call I was sensing was not connected to a fleshly person; nor was it a flash of lightning so much as it was a

continual drumbeat. Therefore, after several weeks of listening to the drumbeat, I made the decision for ministry.

But to do what in that ministry? My version of the Mexico pseudo-call took the form of a missionary to France who presented his field in my church shortly after I announced my call. I determined I would be a missionary, and not just any kind of missionary, but a missionary to France. And that was my testimony — and honestly, my plan — for several months after. I discovered long ago that people often invent the voice of God for something they have really just cooked up for themselves. “I will be a missionary” may sound noble in itself, but when intoned as “God has called me to be a missionary,” well, who is going to argue the point? No one did in my case, and since no one did, I eventually had to argue it myself.

Better to admit you are on the wrong path and to get on a good one than to persist in a wrong course and to commit spiritual fraud to boot. The Bible has several examples of people who attempt that kind of fraud, and it never works out well for them. And so I had to eventually admit that France was a whim, a voice of my own and not God.

While I was talking to and listening to myself, God was at work putting the pieces of my future, and especially these past 20 years, in place outside both my view and earshot. My church was Temple Baptist Church in Dumas, TX. I was a junior in Dumas High School, taking Journalism 1 and assisting the editor of *The Demon Tale* (seriously, that was the name of the school's newspaper). A classmate and a fellow church member showed me a copy of a newspaper called the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. I asked what it was about. I don't recall whether it had come to the church or to her home, but she explained it was the newspaper for the churches in fellowship with Temple Baptist. We spent a few moments glancing at it before class began, and then she said, "Think. You could be the editor of this some day."

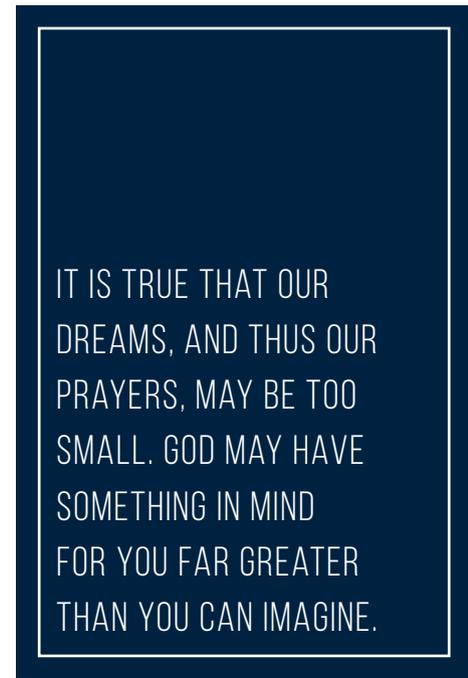
I took little notice of her comment that day, and I was only reminded of it much later. After all, editing newspapers can hardly be called legitimate ministry — or so my thinking was at the time. Nevertheless, I stayed with *The Demon Tale* through my senior year and won some editorial writing contests. I placed first across all divisions in my last state contest in Texas, but five years later I was leaving Baptist Bible College and heading for my first post-graduation ministry assignment. By the end of that year (1976), I was pastoring and publishing some in a local paper.

Twenty years of pastoral work followed, and in each venue, I wrote and managed to publish some of what I wrote. In the early 80s, as the Oklahoma BBF secretary, I was asked to begin a newsletter we called *The Pastors Letter*. It gained a following and some of my articles caught the notice of James Combs at the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. Among the newsletter's recipients was Mike Randall, who at the time was vice president of Baptist Bible College. We had had brief contacts with one another, and when he became the editor of the *Tribune* in 1995, he asked me to join him as an assistant editor.

I saw to it that my office was next to

Mr. Randall's, and I learned all I could from him and 10-year *Tribune* veteran Tom Harper. Seven very short years later, BBC trustees made Mike Randall the college president, and he graciously recommended to the Fellowship that I succeed him at the editor's post at the *Tribune*. And that is the brief story of my journey to the *Tribune*.

Now, I have omitted many details and names, and the path was not a straight one, just as no life path is. But I have often used the story of Jesus and Nicodemus to demonstrate that my story is not merely one of circumstance, coincident, and fortuitous — right place, right time, right people, etc. As I wrote above, God was doing things away from



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my eyesight and earshot. The young lady in my journalism class spoke more than she knew.

Near the end of their conversation, Jesus told Nicodemus that the Spirit was much like the wind. It is an easy concept since the words for spirit and wind are the same whether in Aramaic (*ruach* in the spoken language Jesus was likely using) or Greek (*pneuma* in the written record's language). Jesus said the wind blows where it wants, and you can hear the sound of it, but you cannot tell where it is coming from, nor can you know where it is going. Such is true, he goes on, of everyone who is born of the Spirit.

I believe the wind of God began blowing through my life years before my first conscious encounter with Him. Consider my school friend who led me to Christ, Joe Carrell, whom I met in the sixth grade because we "coincidentally" sat next to one another in an all-school band. And the wind continued to blow after my conversion. Later, one of Joe's friends at BBC became a close friend to me, and still later that close friend was instrumental in my moving to Oklahoma after my time in Canada, and that move brought me into the Oklahoma Fellowship circle that included Dave Hardy, who made me his assistant pastor, and who hosted Mike Randall one weekend where we met and began to form a friendship that eventually brought me to the *Tribune*.

The wind of God — you cannot tell where it is coming from, nor can you tell where it is going. I believe at a time such as this, when the world is going through such turmoil, and when our nation is being rocked to its core, and for me personally, in the midst of major transition, it is important we experience the truth of the wind of God.

That wind of God will take you places neither you nor anyone around you may have even vaguely anticipated. And those places can be filled with joy. It is true that our dreams, and thus our prayers, may be too small. God may have something in mind for you far greater than you can imagine.

And those places can be filled with challenge, as the wind of God may take you where you would not have chosen on your own. I could fill this magazine with stories of God's leading a very reluctant Keith Bassham down a path he would never have chosen. But a stubborn refusal to go down those paths will often do you hurt.

There are so many opportunities to do ministry today, and the need for competency in areas that at one time seemed unrelated to ministry, if anything, is even greater. To anyone seeking God's will for a vocation, I would say take all you have and are and place it at God's disposal. Do not wait for "a call" that may never come because you have already determined what that call looks like. Rather, you should volunteer, and find ways to use your giftedness and abilities to serve God and others. Raise the sail, and allow God's wind to take you where He will.

To Keith Bassham, in appreciation for

# 20 YEARS AT THE TRIBUNE

ASSISTANT EDITOR 1995-2002 • EXECUTIVE EDITOR 2002-2015



1995



2001

FROM: Randy Harp *Tribune* Editor / BBFI Director of Communications

**D**uring my first staff meeting with Rob and Karri here at the *Tribune*, our first order of business was to decide the best way to honor the 20 years of service Editor Keith Bassham has given to the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. It did not take long for me to realize the positive impact he has had on this office. Much can be said about Keith's skill set as an author, editor, or even historian. But if you truly know him, what is more noticeable is his kindness, authenticity, loyalty, and genuine desire to honor Christ with his life.

Keith has been pouring into my life since Homiletics class my junior year at Baptist Bible College. He has continued to influence my life whether through phone calls, emails, visits to his office while I was in Springfield, or having him preach at my church. His ministry will continue at the *Tribune* if in no other way than through his investment in me personally.

As I read through the tributes submitted it is evident the impact Keith has had not just on this office or on my life but in our entire Fellowship. Proverbs 3:27 states, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so." As you read through these next few pages, I encourage you to take some time to think of ways you have been influenced by Keith's ministry. If you feel compelled, you can send an email or note of encouragement to the *Tribune* office and we will make sure he receives it.

### A new editor

"... there is no doubt in my mind that my good friend and associate Keith Bassham is fully qualified to receive the endorsement of the BBFI to be our new editor."



"Since the *Tribune* office is in the same building as our offices, Keith and I occasionally got to spend time discussing the issues in our Fellowship and what was taking place around the world. He always took interest in hearing about my international trips, eager to hear about how missionaries were doing and the different ministries going around the world. I appreciate the way he kept missions in the forefront by publishing news and stories about missions.

I am grateful to count Keith as one of my friends. I will always be thankful for the times we have had together. He will be missed here around the Mission Office building. Thanks, Keith, for your diligent, steadfast faithfulness to the Lord and to our Fellowship."

*Jon Konnerup*

### A voice for the Fellowship

Editor Bassham was one of several representatives from the BBFI when leaders from three independent Baptist fellowships met in Atlanta to discuss a framework for future cooperation among Baptists.



"I am thankful for Keith Bassham's time at the *Tribune*. He is one of the smartest men I know. As a student of our Fellowship's history, at present he knows us better than anyone. Navigating the diverse opinions of pastors was surely a challenge, he, however, made it look easy. He has led in a way that brought stability and credibility to our organization."

*Eddie Lyons*

### Representing the *Tribune* in Korea

While in Korea for the 50th anniversary of the Korea BBF, Keith and Shari Bassham enjoy a meal with Lee Jung Bum and his wife. Pastor Lee was one of Ike Foster's "preacher boys" when Foster started the church in 1954.



## FROM: Mike Randall *Tribune* Editor 1995-2002

**W**ith this issue and after 13 years, Keith Bassham is closing out his tenure as the editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. He began his work as the assistant editor, when I invited him to join the *Tribune* staff in 1995. He has seen and reported significant events in the history of the BBFI for the past two decades. Now, his departure is a significant event in itself.

I was first attracted to Editor Bassham when I read his well-written articles in the Oklahoma BBF newsletter he edited in the 1990s. It was obvious he could write, but working with him day by day, I became even more aware of his keen intellect. He would often surprise me by his amazing ability to recall something he read or relate some obscure detail of church or BBFI history. Because of this, I gave him the nickname "Univac," after the computer of the same name. Some may not know this, but to better qualify himself and better serve the BBFI, he studied hard and earned his Master of

Science degree in Administrative Studies in 2012 from Missouri State University. "Univac" Bassham is probably one of the most intelligent people I know.

Along with intellect and writing skill, Editor Bassham has always had the heart of a peacemaker. Make no mistake, he is his own man and able to effectively express his opinions. I have observed him standing his ground with those who disagreed with a position or policy he espoused, while he still conveyed a conciliatory demeanor, embracing the common motives and goals shared with his counterpart. He works to cultivate harmony, to do what is best for the common good, even if it means some sacrifice or discomfort on his part. He is a peacemaker.

I have also been impressed with his stewardship. He has operated the *Tribune* for the past 13 years on a well-thought-out budget, annually approved by the BBFI executive officers. His stewardship has maintained the quality of

equipment, quality of operation, quality of design, layout, paper, and printing, without overspending the budget. Almost all the *Tribune* reserve funds inherited in 2002 are still available, even though all the Fellowship enterprises, including the *Tribune*, have suffered financially since the economic crash of 2008. In my opinion, all this speaks especially well of the stewardship of our *Tribune* Editor Keith Bassham.

On a personal level, my wife and I have grown to love Keith and his wife, Shari, more and more over these years. He has become more than a coworker. He is a peer and they are valued friends. We join the thousands of readers of the *Tribune*, the pastors, missionaries, leaders, and friends of the BBFI in thanking Editor Keith Bassham for all he has done to advance the cause of Christ and edify our souls. We wish Keith and Shari Bassham all God's best.

### Connected to missions

Keith and Shari Bassham with former Mission Director Carl Boonstra and his wife, Elsie, at a surprise reception to celebrate Carl Boonstra's 80th birthday and the Boonstra's 57th wedding anniversary.



### A warm welcome

Keith's relationship with Ira Walton, along with exposure in the *Tribune*, helped introduce the Brothers of Cyrene to the Fellowship.



### Historically speaking

At the Baptist History Celebration in Charleston, SC, with fellow presenters Tom and Gail Gritts (back), and Thomas and Peggy Ray (at left).



**"If ever a man was a gift to a time and an assignment, Keith Bassham is that man. Understanding the times and knowing what to write, our brother has approached his work with grace and truth.**

**His life is above reproach. His journalistic labor is even-keeled, erudite, attentive, creative, thoughtful, and thought-provoking. Under Bassham's hand, the *Baptist Bible Tribune* has thrived, growing, improving, serving the BBFI well.**

**I think Noel Smith is smiling."**

*Charles Lyons*

**"I am a long-time reader of the *Tribune* (dating back to the early 1970s), and so have examined decades of *Tribunes* under all its editors. Under Keith Bassham's editorship, the *Tribune* continued its mission as the rallying point of the BBF, with timely news and information from within the BBF and regular checks of trends and issues in the larger religious and secular worlds. I came to expect — and was not disappointed — that each issue would be informative, interesting, balanced, and well-assembled. Keith always approached his task with intelligence and discernment.**

**And as a contributing writer, I must say he was an easy editor to work with. He rarely asked for material changes in what I submitted, and what changes he made were reasonable, even from a writer's point of view!"**

*Doug Kutilek*

#### FROM: Tom Harper *Tribune* Assistant Editor 1983-1985, 1990-2006

**W**hen Mike Randall became *Tribune* editor in 1995, I think he had already decided to hire Keith Bassham. But he still asked who might be a good candidate for another assistant editor, and I didn't hesitate to recommend Keith. No one else had the required mix of talent, background, and recklessness to drop into that spot and make a go of it. Although it's difficult to remember exactly when we first met, when we did I was immediately impressed by Keith as an intelligent man of integrity, someone who liked study, and didn't fear questions. And he knew a lot about how to use the language, also, which was important. Plus he seemed really to want the job. Later he remarked that he felt guilty

getting paid to have so much fun.

We tried to cure him of those guilt feelings with long proofreading nights and rewrites and budget fights and other things that plague the publishing world, but we never could. We all shared the pressure, and the fun. But when time came to wear the big hat, would the weight of it squash away all that fun?

I'm ahead of my story. Keith wasn't ready for the big hat right away. It was obvious that in time he would be, but the right kind of leader doesn't start there or assume that he's there without serious growth and help. Keith had a healthy fear of making a mess of things, and enough genuine humility to spend the requisite time with Mr. Randall and Mr. Combs, and in study and reflection,

and in communication with others in the field, and most importantly in prayer and seeking, asking God for the wisdom necessary for what was coming.

And what was coming was tough.

Few people know all the inside, political-type struggles surrounding the executive editor position, but everyone recognizes the influence the position carries. With influence comes the pressure. I was proud to watch Keith stay true to his principles and not succumb to pressures from lots of people who wanted to use the *Tribune* for lots of peripheral things. And we still had fun.

Those are good memories, but the better memories are long talks in the office about the Bible and family, debates about various topics, creative

sessions with the whole team that gave new and better direction to our work ... basically all the things that made it worthwhile to hang around with a great editor and friend for 11 years. By the way, nobody has better taste in or more profound knowledge of quality BBQ than Keith.

Along with James O. Combs and Mike Randall, Keith Bassham had marvelous influence in our Fellowship, and on me personally. It was a true privilege to be there when he became *Tribune* executive editor and watch it all unfold. The entire BBFI, and all of us who worked at the *Tribune* during his 20 years, are grateful for the honor of it.

### Coast to coast ... and beyond

Preaching in Seoul Korea as a guest of Dr. Daniel Kim as Bible Baptist Church celebrated its 47th anniversary.



### Where honor is due

Spending time with former *Tribune* editor James Combs at the May Fellowship Meeting.



### Fundraising

Part of the editor's responsibilities included coordinating all fundraising efforts for the February *Tribune* Offering.



"Keith Bassham will be honored by many for his wonderful writing skills, his deep and insightful thinking, and his hard work and faithfulness at the *Tribune*. I need to honor Keith as a friend. In my first years as the president of BBC, there were many days when I needed someone to listen, someone to cry to, and someone to understand. On those days, I meandered over to Keith's office, pulled up a chair, and just talked. Keith was always loving, encouraging, and helpful. He became a "pastor" to me in those tough times.

I hope to have the same said of me in years to come.

Thanks Keith for loving and serving all of us, for being a 'pastor' to our Fellowship."

Mark Milioni

"Keith has masterfully performed at the toughest job in the BBFI. The *Tribune* lands in front of all eyes every month, so the editor literally lives in a glass house. A memory I have of Keith sums up his extraordinary skill and service pretty clearly for me. Several years ago, a handful of us from Boston sort of gang-tackled Keith with complaints that we didn't think we were getting as much 'coverage' in the *Tribune* as we thought we deserved. We were animated. Keith was not. He gently but clearly explained that he understood his job to be to tell the Fellowship story each month — based on what came to his knowledge. He looked at me and said, "Dave, you can write — write!" That day "The View from Boston" was born — birthed by the editor who is a phenomenal journalist, a gifted word smithy, a thoughtful consensus-builder, and a remarkable leader who demonstrated character and grace. Thanks, Keith."

David Melton

### FROM: Eric Shadle *Tribune* Webmaster 1998-2004

I arrived at Baptist Bible College in 1997. Around a year later, I joined the *Tribune* staff to help expand their online presence and, later, to archive previous issues. It was a fantastic opportunity to work on campus and be involved in what I loved. Yet, little did I know the way this opportunity would impact me.

The first time I met Keith Bassham, he was assistant editor at the time, he had a computer with the side off on his desk. He loved computers and so did I! But our relationship was more than just guys swapping tech ideas. Sometime along the way he decided to invest in me — the type of investment to see a return for God's kingdom. A mentorship.

The truth was, I had a zeal for God's Word and little experience. I needed someone to guide me. It was not uncommon for Keith to come to my

office and dialogue with me on many of the ideas from the day. Where others might have been too busy to spend time with a Bible college sophomore, he wasn't! He loved to make me think, especially about the Bible. In many ways, he brought balance to my thinking — allowing me room to explore and at the same time giving me Biblical reminders along the way.

He further shaped my thinking as I sat in his Preaching Workshop class. His love for the proper understanding of God's Word and preaching couldn't help but rub off on me. He encouraged his students to find a pulpit to fill for preaching experience. At some point, like many others, I found myself preaching at his pulpit.

I remember one time greatly enjoying an office prank. My partner in

crime and I finally took it too far and Mr. Bassham confronted us. Later that evening, as I asked his forgiveness, he assured me all was fine. As best I remember, he said something like, "Well, it was funny!" I remember thinking how gracious he was. He made his point yet reinforced that everything was okay.

As my family started and our first child came, balancing graduate school, work, and home life was a challenge. Through all of this, Keith was there as much more than a boss — he wanted me to succeed. He was wise in not taking the load from me, but seemed to be monitoring my progress. I'm sure he knew it was part of God's working in my life and it served a purpose for me.

Our family arrived as missionaries in Ethiopia over six years ago. We are amazed how God used so many

relationships to prepare us for such a diverse place. For me, one of those relationships was with Mr. Bassham — not only working alongside of but being mentored by a man who loved God and people. When you get around those types of people, it changes you.

Let me tell you today, Bro. Bassham, what I didn't quite realize then. Thank you for teaching me the balance in life and ministry. Thank you for teaching me to have a love for God's Word and preaching. Thank you for teaching me that investing in others for God's kingdom is always worth it. Thanks for the mentorship!

Psalm 32:8 - "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."

## Reporting from Cebu City

Alongside Mike Frasier in Cebu City, Philippines, for the 2011 BBFI Global Meeting.



## 10 years as editor

Honored by the BBFI officers for a decade as *Tribune* editor.



## California style

The September National Meeting in Ventura, CA, brought an opportunity for *Tribune* interviews with George Barna (below) and Kirk Cameron.



**“Working with Keith Bassham over the years has not only been a pleasure, it has afforded me the opportunity to labor alongside someone with remarkable balance throughout many of the struggles and transitions of our movement. His editorial expertise has continued to bring quality articles to the *Tribune* from prolific writers within our ranks and encouraging reports from the field. In the pulpit he is substantive, articulate, relevant, and easy to listen to.**

On a personal level, I have called on him for advice or sat across the desk from him while discussing a difficult issue. I admire his graciousness and yet firm stance on things that matter. As Keith passes the baton to Randy, the impact of his legacy will continue to resonate far into the future. Thanks, Keith!”

Dan Greer

**“Keith Bassham is one of the treasures of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Soon after I was elected as the representative for the state of California, I saw how much Keith contributed. Whenever a procedural question came up that a committee didn’t have an answer for, someone inevitably would say, ‘Call Keith, he’ll know.’ And he did know. The same thing happened when we wanted to know about the history of an issue. He always seemed to know the date and the place where a decision was made or a vote was taken. I always appreciated his willingness to help any way he could. I am glad I had the privilege of serving alongside Keith.”**

Lewis McClendon

## FROM: Karri Joy Perry Director of Office Services 2002-present

**W**hen I accepted the job at the *Tribune* 13 years ago, I really felt God was opening the door for me to be in full-time ministry. And having grown up in a missionary/pastor’s home, I was excited to serve people in ministry. Yet, I never thought of how God would use this job and specifically Keith Bassham to teach and minister to my family and me.

When I started here, I was hired to handle bookkeeping, subscriptions, and office work. However, either because our staff was decreasing or because he saw potential in me, Keith began training me to edit the *Tribune*. Being the wordsmith and writer he is, he had lots of experience and wisdom to pass down to me — the inverted pyramid method of writing news articles, how not to bury a lead, how to use demonstratives sparingly, etc.

But his teaching went far beyond

job skills, living out God’s Word in front of me and helping me love God and others more. One verse he taught me to apply was, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Thessalonians 5:14). No matter who called or how rude the person may have been, Mr. Bassham tried to show grace. In fact, I once asked him why he took the calls of one of our more difficult and regular callers. He explained he had learned from Mike Randall to comfort the feebleminded. (So thank you Mr. Randall, you taught Keith an invaluable lesson he in turn taught me.)

I observed Keith more than once listening to and comforting a widow, widower, or someone who was brokenhearted, and at times that person was me. He was never too busy, he never

considered himself too important.

He also has given me a new appreciation for and taught me how to honor those who have gone before us. From the way I observed Keith interact with Mr. Randall and Mr. Combs, to publishing “60 Years Ago in the *Baptist Bible Tribune*,” to seeking wisdom and prayer from our veteran pastors and missionaries, Keith has taught me humility and how to love and appreciate those who worked to build what we all enjoy today.

But above all, Keith has taught me just a little bit of what the love of our Father looks like. Thirteen years has brought many changes in my life, and during each of them Keith has been a listening ear, a man with wise counsel, someone who would give and sacrifice anything he could to help. He cared. He loved. He served.

In fact, if you’ll allow me to take a verse a little out of context (since I understand the *Tribune* office is not a church), Mr. Bassham has exemplified 1 Peter 5: 2-3: “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

I know the *Tribune* has been a ministry to Keith, but it differs from pastoring because you rarely see how you’re affecting and helping those around you. I hope and pray that through my family and me, Keith has seen some of the fruits of his labor.

Thank you for investing in me Bro. Bassham! I will always be thankful for the lessons you have taught me and for the friendship you’ve provided.

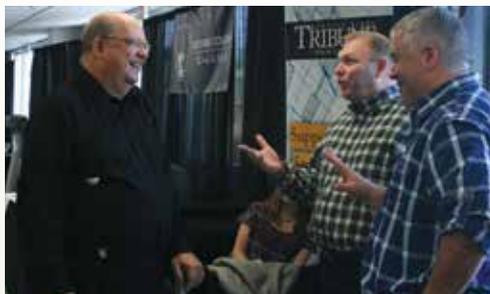
## Students at heart

Visiting the Passages Bible exhibit in Springfield, MO, with Don Richardson (left), Elmer Towns (left center), and Mark Milioni (right).



## Winding down

Enjoying fellowship at one last May Fellowship Meeting as the editor.



"I've known Keith for about 33 years. I'm glad I can call him my friend.

Back during the early years, I reroofed a huge church where he was an associate pastor. His pastor put Keith on the roofing crew. I told the guys not to let up on him and work him hard. To our amazement, he worked harder than anyone on the crew, day after day, and gained the respect of everyone there. My lead man asked time and again if we could use Keith on other roofing jobs.

When he became *Tribune* editor, Keith took his hard work ethic and took a good magazine and made it great. When I started RiverWest Baptist, Keith sent bundles of *Tribunes*, which hugely benefited our new church.

If I could give one word to describe Keith it would be *faithful*. He has always done his job well. He has also become the unofficial historian of the BBF. There is no one that knows more about our Fellowship than Keith."

Paul Foster

"Keith, please accept our thanks, congratulations, as well as appreciation for the way in which you have served with excellence the pastors, the fellowships, the colleges, and the many members of our churches.

As editor of the *Tribune* these many years you have presented news, promotions, and advertising with a scholarly approach that presented a fair and balanced report for all of us. We have all profited because of your willingness to share your gifts through writing. You have been a spirit of encouragement and uplifting for everyone."

John Gross

"My thought of Keith Bassham and his ministry as our *Tribune* editor is one of trust. As the steward of our Fellowship voice, I found Keith to be fair and balanced in his approach to every issue."

Rob Hoffman

FROM: Rob Walker *Tribune* Assistant Editor 2006-present

**Diplomacy:** skill in managing negotiations or handling people so there is little or no ill will.

Long before 1796, when the word *diplomacy* was added to the English language, the apostle Paul expressed the concept in his epistle to the believers at Rome. Chapter 12 of Romans gives a detailed charge regarding personal conduct ... *to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think* (verse 3) ... *be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love* (verse 10) ... *not slothful in business* (verse 11) ... *given to hospitality* (verse 13) ... *rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep* (verse 15) ... *mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate* (verse 16) ... *if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men* (verse 18).

As I reflect upon my nine years at

the *Tribune* working for Keith Bassham, I am privileged to have worked alongside such a gracious and diplomatic spirit. Keith did not manage the *Tribune* as if it were a soapbox for his preferences and opinions (and yes, he has a few). His approach was well-expressed in his instructions to me as the *Tribune* photographer. At Fellowship gatherings, he directed my work with the camera so the *Tribune* could reflect the whole community that is the Baptist Bible Fellowship — fledglings and veterans, missionaries and church planters, the unknowns and the well-knowns — they all had a place in his vision for the *Tribune*. In the office, he often explained his editorial decisions and the background information behind why he chose to travel in a certain direction with the material. Each explanation was an investment in my understanding of Fellowship history and the purpose of the *Tribune*. He didn't just tell me

what to do, he taught me what to do. And he was willing to make the same investment in just about anyone who walked in his office door.

Visitors to Keith's office often noted the loaded bookshelves covering the walls and joked about how smart he must be. Now, as I write this, many of those books have taken up residence in boxes not far from my desk awaiting moving day. With each squawk of the packing-tape dispenser, I am reminded that it was not the large library that made Keith wise. As the degrees and framed accolades come off his office wall, I understand that it was not his education or achievements that brought him respect. For me, the two green fabric-covered swivel chairs that sit in front of his desk say it all.

In those chairs I received words of both admonishment and appreciation from Keith, while never feeling belittled or blandished. I sat in those chairs as

he expressed care for my family and an interest in my well-being that was beyond gracious. I would like to think that the way he treated me was because of who I am as a *Tribune* employee, but the fact is, he treated me that way because of who he is. And it's how he treated the wide spectrum of people who stopped by to sit in those green chairs or called to speak with him. His counsel was wise, his willingness to listen was invaluable, and his transparency was refreshing.

Keith Bassham truly has the heart of a diplomat. As a man of God, he personifies the attributes of Romans 12, and his work within the BBF speaks to his wisdom in handling people and affairs. The example he set will continue to be an influence in my life and I will always be grateful to have served with him.

# Fall outreach events provide opportunity for churches to serve the community



BBFI churches around the country are reaching their communities through events during the Halloween season. Providing a safe environment for family fun has proven to be a great outreach, as several of the churches that responded to this report stated that they had guests return to campus for services the Sunday following their event. From Harvest Parties to Trunk-or-Treat, and even a live walk-through drama called Judgement House, churches are bringing a little light into this traditionally dark holiday.

**Pictures provided by:**

- Cape Cod Church - East Falmouth, MA*
- Church For Family - Beaumont, CA*
- Cypress Creek Baptist Church - Cypress, TX*
- Grace Church - Stoughton, MA*
- Granite United - Salem, NH*
- High Street Baptist Church - Springfield, MO*
- LifePoint Church - Chicopee, MA*
- Lighthouse Baptist Church - Murfreesboro, TN*
- Orchard Church - Denver, CO*
- Park Crest Baptist Church - Springfield, MO*
- Radiant Church - Philadelphia, PA*
- Second Baptist Church - Midland, TX*
- Seminole Baptist Temple - Springfield, MO*
- Sonrise Baptist Church - Ozark, MO*
- Tabernacle Baptist Church - Roswell, NM*
- Winter Haven Baptist Church - Winter Haven, FL*



## Bloody Bethlehem

Students reported the shooting began in classroom 15 at 10:38 a.m. PDT, Thursday, October 1, 2015, where English and writing classes are conducted. Chris Harper-Mercer, a student in the writing class, entered and fired a shot to the back of the room.

He shot the assistant English professor at point blank range. Allegedly asking two students for their religion, he shot them after they responded. Nineteen people were shot. Ten were killed.

Harper-Mercer is described in a *New York Times* piece as “withdrawn and quiet ... spending most of his time indoors at his mother’s apartment.” His stepsister said, “He always put everyone before himself and wanted everyone else to be happy.”

Madness and murder is loose in the land. The list I am reading includes all shootings of four or more persons per incident across the country from January 1, 2015 to October 6, 2015. It identifies 298 such incidents.

During the 1970s and 80s, with many having fled the “dangerous cities,” I was bending any ear that came close with the dire prediction, “What’s in the city today is everywhere else tomorrow. You can run but you can’t hide.” What more dramatic example of this than the mass murders that have now violated many a serene street and shattered many a quiet town.

One mass shooting after another is met with talking-heads assuring us our laws are inadequate. The discussion soon moves from legal and political to psychological. “These people are sick. Our mental health support system is weak.” Several days later, if the talk show host is low on fodder, there might be discussion about our social fabric.

Legal. Political. Psychological. Social.

Strangely, we never make it from legal to moral, much less to spiritual. Consequently, public discourse never gets close to root causes, nevermind solutions.

What does mass murder have to do with

Bethlehem? Quite a lot to those who know the Bible story.

Bethlehem is not just about a baby in a manger; it’s the drama of two teenage parents becoming intercontinental refugees fleeing a violent killer on a rampage.

Mary and Joseph’s flight is as much part of the Christmas story as is the newborn cradled in his young mother’s arms.

Can we reconcile the westernized Christmas of soft candlelight, gentle snow, gathered family, brightly wrapped presents, zippy gadgets, played out on a stage that holds everything awful and evil at bay with the reality of Jesus’ entrance into the world?

The Christ child was born away from the comforts of home because a foreign power decided to count the taxpayers. This set the stage for a midnight bolt for safety and a bloodbath involving Bethlehem babies.

Herod became king as a result of a battle in which his brother was killed.

Herod perceived that the party of Antigonus represented a possible rivalry. He killed 45 of them. Mariamne, Herod’s wife, had a young brother who served briefly as high priest. The brother’s popularity made Herod nervous so he arranged for the young man’s drowning while swimming one hot day. His wife’s grandfather was 80 years old when Herod had him put to death.

In what can only be described as an ancient soap opera of accusation, infidelity, intrigue, and deceit, Herod had his uncle Joseph killed. He killed three of his own sons for plotting against him.

Sick and dying, he felt there would be rejoicing over his death so he retired to hot springs east of the Dead Sea. He ordered principle Jews held in the arena at Jericho to be killed upon his death so there would be mourning, not for him of course, but over the death of the Jews that would hopefully dull the rejoicing over his own death.

Can anyone say crazy? How do you spell egomaniac?

Herod represented the political power of Rome. Legally, he could send soldiers to Bethlehem on a search-and-destroy mission. Would babies in Bethlehem have been spared with stronger sword control? Psychologically maybe he was a wing nut. He could have been a socially inept loner who lived next door and “seemed like a nice guy.” He just happened to be on the throne.

Sure, you can easily look at a case file like Herod’s and, absent any other theory, diagnose him as mentally ill. What if he was just a sinner, a man of weak character with no moral code and too much power? What if Herod’s primary problem was spiritual not legal, political, psychological, or social?

Herod was depraved. Oh! And we’re different? Look at us walking around like 50 million babies have not been slaughtered legally in the land of the free and home of the brave. Planned Parenthood is still open and funded, by us.

A bloody, grieving Bethlehem reminds us that a real Savior came into a real world. Our world.

Face it. The Christmas you hope to experience this year is a universe away from the reality of Jesus’ earthly arrival.

You want to be home. He left home.

You desire to be surrounded with your own. He came to His own and they didn’t receive Him.

You hope for comfort and tranquility.

Remember. A stable. A midnight escape. A bloody Bethlehem.

by Charles Lyons, Pastor  
Armitage Baptist Church,  
Chicago, Illinois  
[charles.lyons@armitagechurch.org](mailto:charles.lyons@armitagechurch.org)



## Sounds of the season



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

I heard the bells on Christmas day ... only they began playing on November 1! The Scrooges of the world may not be happy, but I love listening to music that celebrates the birth of our Savior. Music is powerful. The opening chords of “Away In A Manger” evoke memories many Christmases past, memories of loved ones who are now singing sweet refrains in a heavenly choir. The opening question of “Mary Did You Know” reminds me of the sacrifice made by a woman brave enough to trust God. The lyrics of “Joy to the World” lead me to worship and praise the Savior born that night.

Yes, music is powerful. It can make you laugh or cry. It can unite or divide. It can comfort and heal. It can draw you closer to God.

One of the joys of having an office very close to the chapel is hearing our bands rehearse. It begins with a drumbeat, then a guitar. Vocalists join in, and soon the whole area is listening to great music. The voices of these young men and women bring a new perspective to a stressful day as we find ourselves singing along and praising God together.

I love our worship teams. They lead us in chapel and travel nearly every week to lead worship at churches and youth events. Having been in the ministry for three decades gives me a little experience, and I can honestly tell you — our bands are very good! They are filled with young people who love the Lord and who are using their talents to serve Him. They are great ambassadors for Christ and for BBC.

These students worked hard to provide a way for you to experience their music first hand. Jason Cross worked tirelessly with our groups to produce their first CD, *Break Away*. It features both worship songs and an original song written by the group. This music will allow you to experience the heart of BBC. You can order your copy at [www.gobbc.edu](http://www.gobbc.edu).

One of the things I love most about this CD is the opportunity it gave students from all over the country to work together as they prepared for a life of ministry. T.J. Storz from Washington, Amber Steelman, Luke Johnson, Cierra Rodriguez, and Tyler Hanewinkle from Texas, Daniel Marino from Mississippi, Justin Warren from California, Brianna Morton, Jared Ebert, Tim Michalak, and Grant Reynolds from Missouri, Jared Mays from Tennessee, Heather Hanshew from West Virginia, Austin Uphoff from Illinois, Jordan Biggs and Aubrey Gleason from Oklahoma, Michelle Torcita from Ohio, Titus Gamble from Arkansas, and Hanna Worden from Colorado came together at Baptist Bible College to be trained, coached, taught, and fine-tuned. These students are a great representation of both the diversity and unity of the BBFI. Each brought their own talents and then worked together to make something remarkable. Music is powerful. May the voices of BBC and the BBFI change the world for Jesus Christ.

For more information on our new CD, go to [www.gobbc.edu](http://www.gobbc.edu).

## A “little” bit of Christmas



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

The leaves are down in New England. The days are short. The cold is coming. But so is Christmas. I know that the exact date of Jesus’ birth is unknown, but for those of us up north, it sure does work out well that Christmas comes during the winter. It brightens up the cold and dark. It is the most welcome winter visitor. Theologically, Christmas is, of course, the story of Emmanuel — the kind of thing that makes every believer smile! Emotionally, just about everybody gets a little happier and nicer for a few weeks. Personally, my family highlight reel is just full of Christmas memories. Gastronomically, any time you cook up a big turkey or ham (or better yet, both), I’m all in! God bless Christmas — it is a big deal.

But Christmas is also a “little deal.” After all, the Lord came to us as the smallest little human, a newborn you could cradle in your hands, born in a tiny village, in a little country, with little fanfare. Christmas is the perfect time to think about little blessings that make a huge difference. Little ornaments combine to make a beautiful Christmas tree. Little decorations turn a simple sugar cookie into a Christmas cookie! All in all, I think one of the most appropriate ways to celebrate the Christmas season is to “go little” — to remember the small things that can easily go unnoticed ... unless we didn’t have them.

There is this student here in Boston who stops in about once a week and asks if he can empty the trash in my office. He isn’t on the job. It’s just a little thing he has started doing. I look forward to seeing him each week. Another student comes to mind who sets up chairs for our chapel every week. Again — not a payroll thing — a little thing, but everybody who sits and listens to God’s Word proclaimed on this campus is a beneficiary. Here’s a “little” thing ... I came back from a quick trip a few weeks ago and hadn’t arranged a pickup at the airport. One of our students just volunteered to give me a ride back late on a Sunday night. I would venture to say that just about every day somebody on this little campus does a little act of kindness and service, and it adds up to making Boston such a great place to go to college. As I look at a little Christmas picture on my mantel, I am determined to remember those kinds of things.

Yep, Christmas is right on top of us. Students and staff will take a little break. I hope to get a little rest myself. There will be a lot of big “goings on” — concerts, parties, church celebrations, family get-togethers, and then that gargantuan shin-dig-of-all-shin-digs on Christmas morning. This is a big time of year — probably the biggest. But Christmas will always be about God’s “little” Gift that was so much more than it seemed. And maybe remembering other little gifts is one big way to celebrate.

SPRINGFIELD, MO

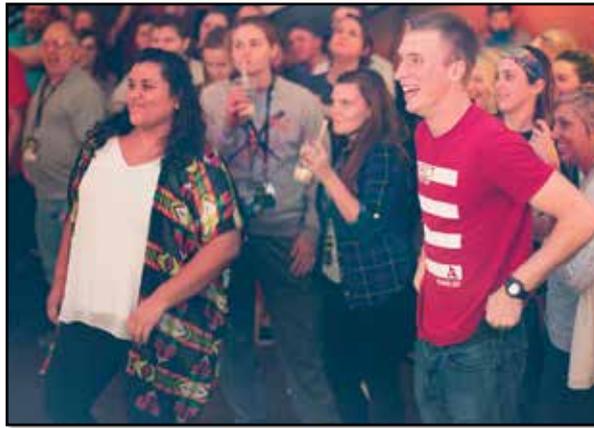
## BBC hosts over 150 students for fall College Days events

Baptist Bible College hosted over 150 students for College Days September 23-25 and November 4-6. The guest speaker for the event was BBC graduate and pastor at Sagebrush Community Church in Albuquerque, NM, Scott Harrop. Future BBC students were challenged to find the path God wants for their lives, and to choose God in their lives before relationships. These challenges were designed

to make students aware of their choices and the impact they could have on the world. On Wednesday night, students went to Sky Zone indoor trampoline park and topped the night off with a time of praise at Classic Rock Coffee Company. Thursday was packed with a trip to Lamberts, a BBC fair for prospective students, and a home basketball game.

Of the new fall schedule for College Days,

Nate Harmon, BBC vice president of student affairs says, "This year we moved our College Days events to the fall in hopes of recruiting juniors and seniors before they make their college choice. This year did not disappoint. Under the direction of John Decker, director of admissions, we had a very successful College Days season."



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## Austin church devastated by flood for a second time

After spending the past two years recovering from a devastating flood on Halloween 2013, First Independent Baptist Church of Austin, TX, and Pastor Mike Marcellus were hit again. Marcellus says, "We were just about back to where we were prior to the last flood and now we will have to start all over again." As the water level rose October 30, Marcellus and members of the church did all they

could to protect and preserve the building and property, until they were eventually ordered to evacuate.

Even in the midst of devastation, the church continues its ministry. They had planned to host a community fall festival October 31. A neighboring church partnered with them by bringing their trunk-or-treat event to First Independent's parking lot.

Although the building was not available Sunday, the church gathered in the parking lot for worship and preaching. Pastor Marcellus says, "God is going to get the victory through all of this."

Donations to aid in the recovery can be sent to First Independent Baptist Church, 8401 Bluff Springs Rd., Austin, TX 78744, or see their website at [www.firsthchurchaustin.com](http://www.firsthchurchaustin.com).



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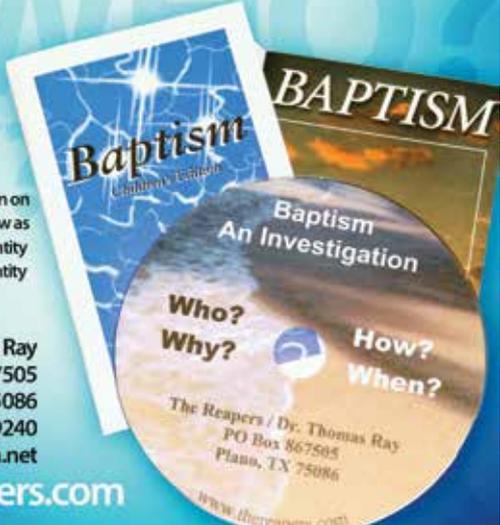
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## Filipino evangelistic camp ends season on high note

Greg Lyons reports the Manila-based Global Surge multicultural team and evangelistic camp just finished their year after hosting 122 camps since January. In the last camp, Greg says, "I had the privilege to be at camp and see over 1,214 adults and young people come to camp. Over 600 responded to the invitation. They were dealt with about salvation and filled out commitment forms, signing at the bottom that they are deciding to follow Jesus! A great night!" Area churches will follow up with discipleship for the new converts.

The Global Surge evangelistic camp ministry has a 16-year history, and more than one million young people, public school teachers, parents, and school and government officials have received the Gospel through the effort.



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## Greenways celebrate 50 years at North Side Baptist

Pastor Don and Bernice Greenway celebrated 50 years at North Side Baptist Church November 8, 2015. A crowd of current and former members filled the auditorium for both services as Greenway spoke on "The Things I've Learned Over These 50 Years" and "What's Next After 50 Years." The celebration also included a church-wide chicken and brisket luncheon and several congratulatory gifts including roses for Mrs. Greenway, a letter from the governor of Texas, a plaque, cards, and a monetary gift.



Don Greenway began his ministry as associate pastor for Lloys Vess at Denton Baptist Temple Denton, TX, in 1963. In November 1965 he became the pastor of North Side Baptist Church, pastoring a small congregation of 25 people. "Over the past 50 years there have been a lot of building programs and remodeling projects for the church," says Co-Pastor Kevin Greenway. "However, one thing has not changed — the calling, purpose, and mission of North Side to preach the Gospel message each week,

win as many people to the Lord as possible, and help Christians walk closer to the Lord."

North Side has a long tenure with two other staff members. Associate Pastor Bill Hillier has been the children's minister for 37 years and Co-Pastor Kevin Greenway has been on staff for 33 years, first as youth minister, and now he teaches a couples' ministry along with leading the music.

As for future plans for Don Greenway, Kevin says, "Retirement is not in his vocabulary. His plans are to keep on keeping on and keeping the main thing the main thing ... until Jesus Comes!"

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## WITH THE LORD

SPRINGFIELD, MO

### GARY D. WILSON

Gary D. Wilson, longtime BBFI pastor, passed from this life September 13, 2015. Born July 28, 1941, in Lindsay, CA, Gary grew up in Springfield, MO, and was class speaker for the first graduating class of Hillcrest High School in 1959. He was a 1961 graduate of Baptist Bible College.

Gary worked alongside Pastor David Cavin in Ft. Worth, TX, and at High Street Baptist Church, Springfield. He also directed the first Youth Congress of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, which met on the campus of BBC. He pastored five churches in five states, and was a gifted musician.

Gary is survived by his wife, Carol, three children, and three grandchildren. A memorial was held at High Street Baptist Church in Springfield, MO, September 26.

LYNCHBURG, VA

### MACEL (MRS. JERRY) FALWELL

Macel Falwell, the widow of Jerry Falwell, Sr., joined her husband in heaven October 15, 2015, at the age 82. Born October 4, 1933, Macel married Jerry Falwell in 1958. They were together 49 years until his death in 2007.

Macel Falwell and the elder Falwell were married 49 years. The couple wed April 12, 1958. He was an early conservative cultural warrior and founder of Moral Majority. He died in May 2007. Mrs. Falwell is survived by her three children.

SPRINGFIELD, MO

### ELDA BELLE COLEMAN

Elda Belle Coleman, who with her husband Charles Coleman served as a BBFI missionary to Pakistan, was taken to glory October 14, 2015. She was 94 years old.

Born July 29, 1921, in Keowee, OK, she married Charles E. Coleman in 1948 in Enid, OK. Together they spent their lives spreading God's Word, and were active missionaries many years.

Mrs. Coleman is survived by her husband, Charles, five children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Services were held October 17, 2015, at Dale Street Baptist Church in Springfield, MO.

WICHITA, KS

### MARCELLA SCHEPIS

Marcella Schepis entered glory October 25, 2015, at the age of 90. Born in Winfield, KS, April 12, 1925, she was preceded in death by her husband of 65 years, longtime BBFI Pastor Michael S. Schepis. The couple founded Grace Baptist Church of Wichita, KS, in 1955.

Mrs. Schepis is survived by eight grandchildren, 14 great-grandchildren, and a great-great-granddaughter. Services were held October 28, 2015, at Grace Baptist Church.

GRAND PRAIRIE, TX

### TOMMY O'DELL

Tommy Jene O'Dell left this life October 22, 2015. Born August 14, 1944, in Columbus, MS, he was the pastor of Trinity Baptist Church in Grand Prairie.

Pastor O'Dell is survived by his wife of 45 years, Sandra, six children, and 13 grandchildren. A memorial service was held October 26, 2015, at Trinity Baptist Church.

BETHEL, AK

### JOHN G. SLEPPY

John G. Sleppy, age 75, left this earth for his heavenly home October 15, 2015. John and his wife, JoAnn, served as BBFI missionaries to the indigenous people of southwestern Alaska nearly 47 years. JoAnn plans to continue the ministry she and her husband began.

John is survived by his wife of 53 years, JoAnn, four children, and six grandchildren. Two memorial services were held October 23 and 24, 2015, in Bethel, AK.

DALLAS, TX

### ROSS HUGH DICKSON, JR.

Ross Hugh Dickson, Jr. joined heaven's host August 9, 2015, at the age of 80 years. His death was due to a stroke suffered four months earlier.

Mr. Dickson graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, in 1972 and ministered in churches in Missouri and Texas 50 years. He is survived by his wife of 55 years, Betty Jo, two sons, one grandchild, and one great-grandchild.

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# It was an honor

By Keith Bassham, *Tribune* Editor 2002-2015

In September, when BBFI President Eddie Lyons made a presentation to my wife and myself at the September BBFI meeting, he asked if I would like to say something. I did want to, but I knew my comments might become a rambling recollection of events and people who deserved more organized thought, and so I demurred at the time. This is the speech I would have wanted to make that evening.

I will begin by saying it has been an honor to serve our Fellowship in this office. The editor's job is not always what one might think. I consider that the job is a high office only in the sense that it is highly visible, and that it gives one a good overall view of things. And I got a good parking space.

That wide and expansive view has given me opportunity to be a confidant and adviser to six BBFI presidents, five college presidents, two mission directors, and numerous other leaders throughout the Fellowship. Our exchanges have run from the routine and mundane to important policy matters. Some of my counsel was rejected, but at least someone bothered to ask. Better that than working with and around a lot of know-it-alls.

And so I leave this office with a profound sense of thanks. Being here has meant seeing and doing far more than I ever thought probable. I am humbled to know the product of my mind and heart receives the attention of people around the world, and that through this medium I have exercised influence vastly greater than I could have supposed as my ministry began nearly 50 years ago.

I want to thank the individuals who have made this experience possible. I begin that list with those nearby. My two closest work companions the past several years have been Karri Joy Perry and Rob Walker. Karri joined the *Tribune* not long after I became editor. She was, and continues to be, the lead office administrator, but her role has expanded considerably in every way, making her irreplaceable.

Rob came to us nine years ago when Tom Harper, whose friendship I continue to enjoy and value, departed the *Tribune*. Replacing Tom as an editor and writer was difficult enough, but Rob has also gone on to create an enhanced position, responsible for the look and feel of the *Tribune*. Especially since taking on the design role, his fingerprints are on every page, and I have depended on him far more than anyone knows. Hardly anything I have done at the *Tribune* can compare in importance with adding Rob and Karri to the mix, and I shall miss working alongside them as much as anything.

Working back from the present, I am so very thankful that Mike Randall saw promise in me and offered a position at the *Tribune* when he became editor. In many ways, he never left the *Tribune* as his influence remains, and that is apparent to a watchful eye. The same is true of former editor James Combs, whose agile mind and imagination stoked the *Tribune* in the 80s and 90s, and he was a valued friend and adviser until his death.

And around me are good friends and encouraging supporters — pastors, missionaries, church members — some of whom were instrumental in my coming to the *Tribune* and keeping me there. I can only list here those individuals whose contributions to my life have been so longstanding that any account of my life would be incomplete without their mention. There is Joe Carrell, the high school friend who led me to Christ. Dan Bray was my discipling pastor who shepherded me as I responded to the call to Gospel ministry as a teen, and the one who gave me my first real ministry job after college. There are pastors who poured significant resources into my life as I was being prepared for the *Tribune* — among them S. G. Hancock, Bill Carter, Dave Hardy, Joe Tuttle. And others who came along during my *Tribune* years — Billy Hamm, Gary Grey, Steve Van Winkle, Keith Gillming, and those BBFI officials I mentioned earlier.

And I should mention teachers I had at BBC — Jim Sewell, Bill Dowell (both father and son), Ken Gillming, and Marcia Wofford in particular. Certainly the people in the churches I served, both before and after I came to the *Tribune*, have left footprints for which I am also grateful.

Finally, I must publicly thank my wife Shari. Next to her, all other influences mentioned in this column grow dim. As my wife and the mother of our children, Shari has made countless sacrifices. She worked many years outside the home so I could serve churches "full time." She understood — or at least remained supportive — when I spent money for a book or tuition, money that could have gone toward a pair of shoes or a dress or a dinner out. She played the piano, directed the children's choir, ran the junior church, kept three boys (relatively) quiet during church, and made sure no criticism of our family was legitimate. She sympathetically listens to my gripes, and she appears interested when I read her my first drafts of sermons and articles. And she has done that sort of thing more than 40 years. There ought to be a medal for that somewhere.

Baptist Bible Fellowship International, it was an honor.



DECEMBER 2015

# PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<p>1</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Fernando &amp; Carolyn Torres</b> <i>Spain</i></p>	<p>2</p>  <p>CHAPLAIN <b>LCmdr Ken &amp; Gwen Amador</b> <i>U.S. Navy Reserve</i></p>	<p>3</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Dan &amp; Rachael Smith</b> <i>Portugal</i></p>	<p>4</p>  <p>T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY <b>Karen Marvin</b> <i>Papua, New Guinea</i></p>	<p>5</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Larry &amp; Nancy Quinlan</b> <i>Indonesia</i></p>
<p>6</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Joe &amp; Sylvia Wells</b> <i>Retired</i></p>	<p>7</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Roger &amp; Sandra Monasmith</b> <i>Australia</i></p>	<p>8</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Max &amp; Debbie Harmon</b> <i>Peru</i></p>	<p>9</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Linda Fitzgerald</b> <i>Germany</i></p>	<p>10</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Dan &amp; Meshelle Bowles</b> <i>Zambia</i></p>	<p>11</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Rebecca Terrell</b> <i>Brazil</i></p>	<p>12</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Max &amp; Jennifer Kennedy</b> <i>Nicaragua</i></p>
<p>13</p>  <p>WORKERS IN <b>Restricted Access Nations</b></p>	<p>14</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Dick &amp; Linda Redding</b> <i>Mexico</i></p>	<p>15</p>  <p>BBFI MISSION OFFICE - SPRINGFIELD, MO <b>I.T. Department</b></p>	<p>16</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Carl &amp; Bonnie Clark</b> <i>Botswana</i></p>	<p>17</p>  <p>T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY <b>Brennan &amp; Libby Penner</b> <i>Belgium</i></p>	<p>18</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>David &amp; Cherie Green</b> <i>Taiwan</i></p>	<p>19</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Faye Woods</b> <i>S.T.E.P.</i></p>
<p>20</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Ed &amp; Joyce Butler</b> <i>Philippines</i></p>	<p>21</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Chris &amp; Lois Tignor</b> <i>Ecuador</i></p>	<p>22</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Craig &amp; Fran Lingo</b> <i>Colombia</i></p>	<p>23</p>  <p><b>Baptist Bible College</b> <i>Springfield, MO</i></p>	<p>24</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Thomas &amp; Lisa Reesor</b> <i>New Zealand</i></p>	<p>25</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Keni &amp; Vanessa Epp</b> <i>Honduras</i></p>	<p>26</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Rich Moeller, II</b> <i>Scotland</i></p>
<p>27</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Garland &amp; Charlene Hamilton</b> <i>Mexico</i></p>	<p>28</p>  <p><b>BROTHERS OF CYRENE</b> <i>EMBRACE THE CHALLENGE TO A LIFE OF MISSIONS</i></p>	<p>29</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Brian &amp; Rachel Weed</b> <i>Nicaragua</i></p>	<p>30</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Peter &amp; Zorka Abrman</b> <i>Slovakia</i></p>	<p>31</p>  <p>MISSIONARY <b>Eric &amp; Amanda Shadle</b> <i>Ethiopia</i></p>		

As is the business of tailors to make clothes and cobblers to make shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.

*Martin Luther*

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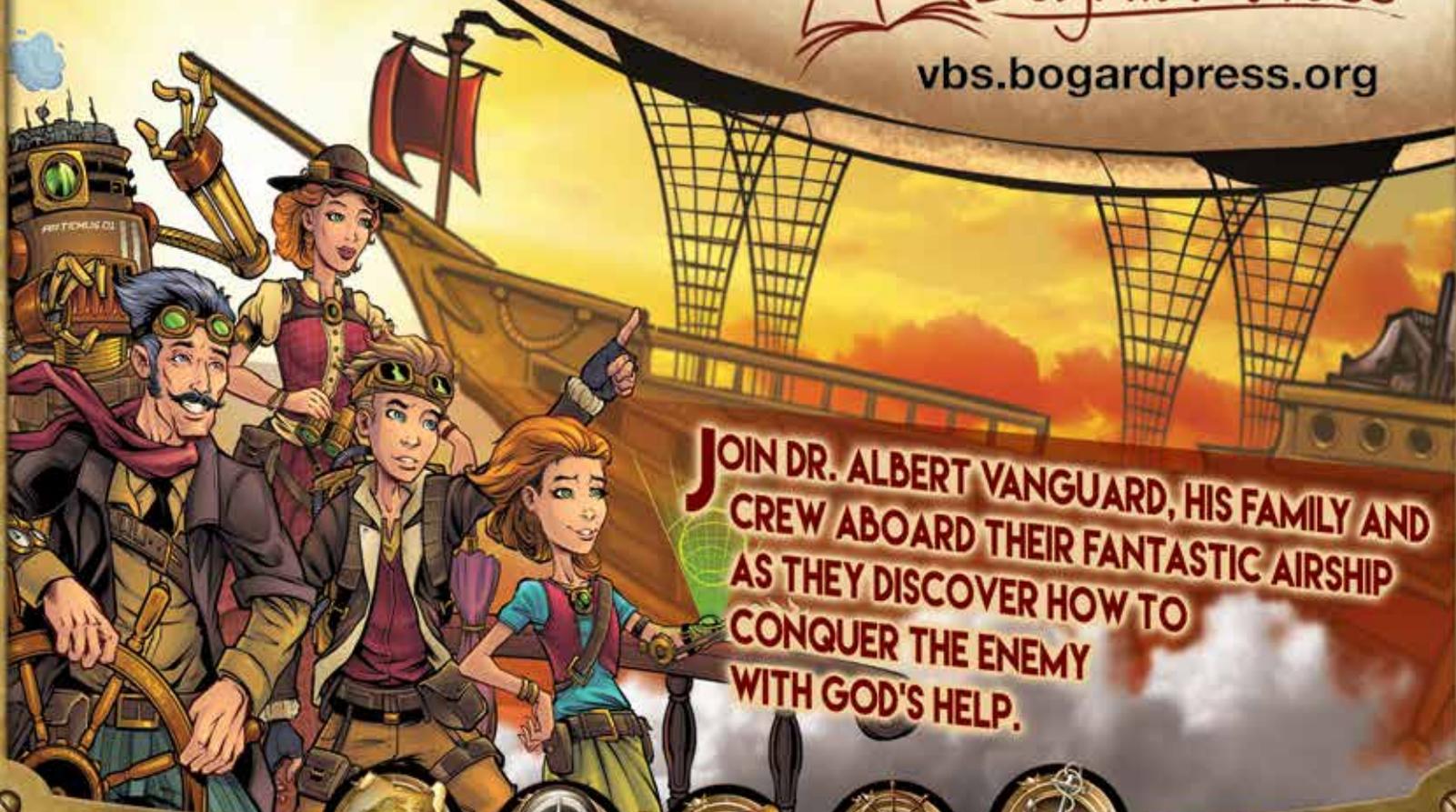
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ROMANS 8:37

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**PRAY** — Hezekiah Conquers Worry (Isaiah 37:1-20, 33-36)

**STAND** — Shadrach Conquers Peer Pressure (Daniel 3:1-30)

**OBEY** — Gideon Conquers Discouragement (Judges 7:7-21)