

BAPTIST TRIBUTE

JULY/AUGUST 2016

WHAT IS THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL?

BBFI

PART 3: CHURCH PLANTING & THE TRIBUTE

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ON THE TABLE
Living history

by Randy Harp | Editor

I was able to take my daughter with me on a recent weekend trip to the Dallas/Fort Worth area to visit a couple churches. On our way home we stopped by the Sixth Floor Museum at Dealey Plaza in downtown Dallas. We were at the very place JFK was assassinated. I love to take my children to places where history took place to help them have a better appreciation for what they learn in school. It was difficult to explain to my ten-year-old daughter how something like this could happen. Less than two weeks later, just a couple blocks from where we had been, an individual gunned down five police officers while injuring seven others. Again, it was difficult to explain to my children how something like this could happen. To be honest, there is no reasonable explanation. Our world is a dark place. It is full of hurting people, and we know hurting people hurt other people. The only hope, the only answer, is Jesus Christ. It is our responsibility to share that hope.

As a network of pastors and churches, the Baptist Bible Fellowship International has been sharing that hope for over 66 years. In this issue of the *Tribune* we wrap up our three-part series on “What is the BBFI?” by sharing a brief overview of that history. Rob Walker, our assistant editor, did a great job designing an historic timeline of the BBFI. (A single PDF of this timeline is available on our website if you would like to download a copy.) It is amazing to see the impact of the BBFI over the years. This issue also highlights two other entities of the BBFI: APEX, our church planting ministry, and the Communication Office including the *Baptist Bible Tribune*.

As a reminder, the next National Fellowship Meeting is September 19-21 in Cape Cod, MA. We anticipate a great meeting and you will not want to miss out. For more information, see the ad on page 9 or visit www.bbfi.org. I also encourage you to save the date for the February National Fellowship Meeting hosted by Kim Beckham and Central Baptist Church in Tyler, TX, February 20-22, 2017.

One final thought ... I would like to personally congratulate the newly elected officers of the BBFI (see page 23 for results). Would you take a moment right now to pray for these six men by name along with the BBFI as a whole? As Jerry Falwell said often, “Nothing of eternal significance happens apart from prayer.”

As always, if there is ever anything I can do for you, please let me know.

THE FELLOWSHIP: PART 3



Church Planting

Whether launched, birthed, or planted, new churches are a catalyst for furthering the Gospel and discipling believers.

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The Tribune

From its inception, the *Tribune* has served one purpose – to share the good news of what God is doing in and through the BBFI.

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The BBFI: A History

An overview and timeline of the major events and players who formed and shaped the BBFI over the past 66 years.

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Boston Baptist College: 40 years

In spite of skeptics and the culture of the Northeast, the BBFI has been training ministry leaders here for the past 40 years.

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Don't miss any of the *Tribune's* digital offerings on our website 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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FROM THE PRESIDENT CHURCH PLANTING

In 1950, the Baptist Bible Fellowship was incorporated in the State of Missouri. The genesis documents that are held by the Secretary of State declare the following purposes for why we exist: to foster home and foreign mission work, to support Bible colleges, to publish religious newspapers and periodicals, to engage in religious educational work, to aid and encourage the building of churches, to own, buy, and sell real estate for religious purposes, and in general further the Christian religion.

The world has changed in the last 66 years. BBFI leaders and participants have gone through typical generational changes. What has not changed is the stated purpose. We still exist to “foster home and foreign mission work.”

It is clear an equal emphasis was placed on home and foreign church planting. Planting churches in the United States is vital to the health of our Fellowship.

Tim Keller writes about the importance of planting local churches:

“The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for 1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in any city, and 2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else — not crusades, outreach programs, para-church ministries, growing mega-churches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes — will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting.”

Our founders had it right. Planting local churches is our strategy both at home and abroad. There is nothing as life-giving as the passion and energy I see in the church planters of our Fellowship. When we provide resources, support, and encouragement to these men, we fulfill our stated purpose.



Eddie Lyons
BBFI PRESIDENT

WORLD MISSIONS CHURCHES START CHURCHES ... AROUND THE WORLD

The philosophy of BBFI missions has always been, and still remains, evangelism, discipleship, and church planting. The idea is churches start churches around the world by sending their own people as missionaries. This is the New Testament pattern.

We believe the local church is the hope of the world, designed by God to reach the world. Our first mission director, Fred Donnellson, said, “Make your church a headquarters for world missions.” Church planting is the most significant strategy in reaching people for Christ and raising people who will worship Him.

Making disciples is at

the heart of everything we do. Everywhere we go we should preach the Gospel, disciple people, and plant churches. In Acts, we see the Apostle Paul sent out to establish new churches in unreached areas. These congregations were witnesses to their communities and became the “salt and light” Jesus referred to in Matthew 5:13-16.

Donnellson also said, “Go to the mission field and duplicate what you’re doing here at home.” The next step is leadership development. Our missionaries establish Bible institutes, colleges, and seminaries so national leaders learn more about biblical leadership and, in turn, start more Baptist churches.

As the national church grows in strength and maturity, the missionary gradually steps back and supports the church’s leadership initiatives. This means he mentors leaders and fills support roles while looking to start more churches.

The result of church planting is missions. After 66 years, we have seen this come full circle as churches in the Philippines, Korea, Kenya, Japan, and Brazil are now sending and supporting their own missionaries!



Jon Konnerup
BBFI MISSION DIRECTOR

BBFI LEADERSHIP

CHURCH PLANTING FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHURCH PLANTERS

The Baptist Bible Fellowship has been a church planting organization for 66 years. Its purpose from the beginning has been to encourage church planting and church planters. It offers several unique avenues of personal and financial support for the church planter.

First, let’s start with the local church. Membership within the local church becomes a wonderful opportunity of fellowship for the church planter. Having a close relationship with the pastor and church family affords a fantastic opportunity for raising support.

A second avenue of support in the infrastructure of the Baptist Bible Fellowship is the

state fellowship — containing chairmen, officers, and fellow pastors within the state. The state organization offers an opportunity for the church planter to seek acquaintances and personal friendships among fellow pastors and their leaders. Developing friendships and fellowshiping within the state organization are additional ways for the church planter to network and gain support personally, and financially.

A third area of support for the church planter is on the regional level. Each region is composed of several states and has a coordinator who will encourage and support the planter and his needs.

The fourth area of fellowship for the church planter is the National Fellowship. The church planter has an opportunity to introduce his project to the pastors and churches within the national organization of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. This organization of pastors and churches gives the church planter unlimited ability for fundraising, networking, and fellowship.

BBFI churches have proven themselves ready and anxious to assist our church planters wherever possible.



John Gross
BBFI CHURCH PLANTING (APEX)

BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE CHURCH PLANTING AND THE FAMILY

Church planting has been an important part of my life from the very beginning. My uncle, Gene Milioni, was greatly influenced by the founders of our movement and did what they said. He graduated from Baptist Bible College and started a church. My parents joined him and helped establish Trinity Baptist Church. We were totally committed to church planting. This emphasis on evangelism and church planting is what made the early Baptist Bible Fellowship so successful.

Thirty years later, I moved my young family from an established ministry to plant a church. I learned then a fact to which every church planter can

attest — church planting requires everyone to be all in. One of my greatest experiences was to watch my children, at a very young age, do and be responsible for actual ministry. They did it all — planning, set-up, decorating, welcoming, teardown, and follow-up. Today I joyfully watch them serve and lead with great skill in their churches. Their love for the Lord, their ability to help others and to know why they do it attest to what they learned as they helped plant a church.

Church planting continues to influence my family in ways I never imagined. I was asked to teach a church planting class at BBC. I had no idea how that opportunity would lead to my

continued involvement with BBC and eventually to serve here as president.

The future of our Fellowship is directly tied to our church planting efforts and our church planting effectiveness is directly tied to the education the church planter receives. That is why BBC is so important. I begin each year praying many of our students will surrender to one of the most difficult tasks God can assign us, church planting.



Mark Milioni
BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

PERSPECTIVES: THE FELLOWSHIP

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE A SUMMER SHOUT-OUT TO THE *TRIBUNE*

I have heard the jokes as long as I've been associated with Boston Baptist College ... "You guys are the red-headed stepchild of the BBF!" "We never hear anything about you, are you still there?" "Do you guys have a Fellowship Week?" I won't deny that in 20 years in Boston, it has grown weary at times.

Then, there was this turning point. At a national meeting several years ago I grumbled to Keith Bassham about our lack of publicity and he metaphorically flipped the table on me. He said, "David, send me something and I'll publish it!" When I asked him to clarify (I was so caught off guard!) he told me he would gladly run a monthly update

from Boston just like he did for BBC. "The View from Boston" was born that day. And what a difference it makes.

I teased for a while saying probably only my mom and three of my friends read my *Tribune* articles! But everywhere I go, on campus and around the country, people talk to me about what they've read about us in the *Tribune*! Students tell me they "scan" my article to see if I mention them (like when Phil did well in Ecclesiology, or Angela wrote a good exam, or I "caught" Eric witnessing to a neighbor). Friends all across the Fellowship say nice things about my articles, but more than just those kind words, what I hear

is, "Boston is in our ongoing discussions"... we are "in the news" of the BBFI.

Keith started it and Randy has continued to generously tell our story, as can be seen in this issue that gives significant coverage to our 40th anniversary. Thanks to the *Tribune*, so critical to the life of our Fellowship, Boston is on the map. No kidding.



David Melton
BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE PRESIDENT

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BBF

BBFI

BBFI

The BBFI is a church planting story *by John Gross | APEX Director*

I grew up in a little West Texas town called Phillips in the heart of the panhandle of Texas. Phillips had only one blinking red light, a Phillips gas station, a post office, and a general store. But ... we had our 3A high school, the Fighting Blackhawks, the pride and joy of the community.

Phillips gets its name from its founder, Frank Phillips, who was the owner and president of Phillips Petroleum Company. This area was a giant oil field. At its zenith, Phillips was the largest inland oil and gas refinery in the nation. The company built over 700 homes to provide housing for the employees. These houses were approximately 700 square feet of living space each with the same floor plan and yard size. It was a Mecca in the 1940s and 50s for hard working oil field hands known as roughnecks. Some say there were 3,000 to 4,000 men employed by Phillips in this West Texas oil field. The oil boom in the late 30s and 40s brought these men and their families by the droves into this area looking for work to provide a living for their families.

About five miles south of Phillips is another small town, Borger. Observing the large population growth in Phillips and Borger in such a short period of time, Scotty Alexander received a burden and a call of God to plant Fellowship Baptist Church in Borger. Following Alexander as pastor of the church was Pastor McDowell, and later my pastor, Bill Ferking.

In 1950, Ferking announced Fellowship Baptist Church of Borger would join with Baptist Bible Fellowship International to support the cause of missions at home and abroad. Since that time, many young people from the church have attended Baptist Bible College and entered fulltime ministry. Fellowship Baptist has supported many church plants, colleges, and missionaries in the past 66 years.

This story can be told many times over as we review the history of church planting in the Baptist Bible Fellowship — it has always been a church planting movement. Beginning with approximately 100 churches in 1950, the Baptist Bible Fellowship has grown to several thousand affiliated churches in the United States and over 18,000 foreign missionary churches — all this without an organized funding of planters other than the voluntary giving of the sending church and the local and state fellowships. Amazing! The Baptist Bible Fellowship colleges and affiliates are responsible for infusing in their students a church planting spirit, teaching the local church responsibility of going and making disciples, baptizing and teaching them to go and do likewise.

It wasn't until 1999 that the Baptist Bible Fellowship under the leadership of Kenneth Gillming established the Judea Samaria Project to encourage and supply funding for church planters. In 2004, it transitioned to the National Church Planting Office (NCPO). The NCPO was renamed APEX in February 2015 with the focus of encouraging church planters on a local, state, regional, and national scale.

When we examine the successes of our Fellowship church planters, we are amazed. It is impossible to name them all. We have never had the resources, technology, education, tools, communication skills, and organization we have today. The possibilities are limitless. We stand on the shoulders of many great successful church planters and we need to thank the Lord every day for their sacrifices and faith and for the opportunities they provided through the years.

How the BBFI helps church planters

by Dan Greer | BBFI 3rd Vice President

I recently attended a breakfast where Rafael Cruz spoke to about 50 pastors in my area. In his message he said if there is any hope for America it will not come from politicians — but from pastors. He proclaimed “... there is a responsibility to the pastor to bring the light of the Gospel the light of the truth of God to a world in darkness.” I agree there is a need for pastors to preach “the light of the Gospel ... to a world in darkness,” but there is also a need for pastors to lead their congregations to multiply themselves by planting more churches. Church planting has been a BBFI staple from its inception — emanating from the “Rawlings Revival Days” of yesteryear to modern assessment, training, and coaching agencies of today.

When you Google “Church Planting” you get approximately 934,000 hits, including agencies offering a variety of services to would-be planters that rivals corporate marketing of our day. One can purchase these services for only “seven easy payments of \$349” or for six to ten percent of total offerings. The unique thing about BBFI church planting is there is no denominational fee or percentage requirement of the planter's offerings. To be approved by the BBFI APEX national committee, a planter must first be recommended by a sending church pastor and then by two additional affiliate pastors, complete the application, be cleared by an assessment agency, agree with the 20 Articles of Faith of the BBFI, attend BBFI local, state, or national meetings, and support BBFI projects. Once approved by the national committee, the church planter is placed on the website, invited to BBFI sponsored training events, and promoted among local, state, and area fellowships for financial support.

For more information about becoming an APEX church planter, contact John Gross, Director of APEX, at cpjohngross@icloud.com or (832) 748-8528.

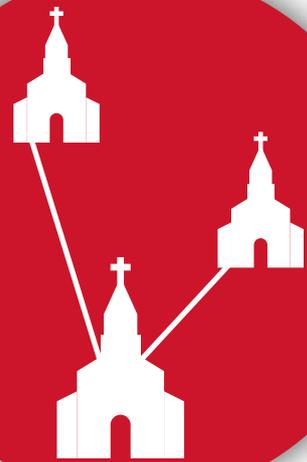
CHURCH PLANTING MODELS

BY RANDY HARP

When it comes to church planting there is no one-size-fits-all model. The examples here are some of the more common church planting models found within the BBFI. There are many other models used in starting new churches, as well as a combination of the models listed. However, Ed Stetzer reminds us that, "We should not allow the model to become the main thing, but a tool in order to bring glory and honor to King Jesus as we advance His mission of sharing and showing the gospel to the nations."

TRADITIONAL/PARACHUTE MODEL

A church planter and his family, sometimes with a small team, "parachutes in" to a new location to start a church from scratch. It is common for this church to begin in the planter's home with a small Bible study. The attendees of this Bible study eventually turn into a launch team as the group moves toward officially starting a church.



MULTI-SITE MODEL

A church meets in two or more locations with the same leadership. Some multi-site churches have campus pastors who preach while others show a video of the sermon from the lead pastor. They typically will share expenses, which makes it more affordable to expand staff and provide diverse programming.



CHURCH SPLIT MODEL

Unresolved tensions within a church build until one group leaves to start a new church. This is not the ideal model for starting a church, but, unfortunately, has been the reason for hundreds of churches starting across our country. It is advised to have an outside ministry counselor help bring healing to both congregations in these instances.



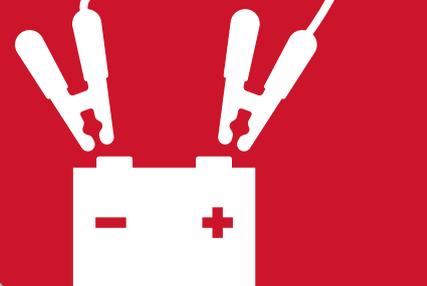
MOTHER CHURCH MODEL

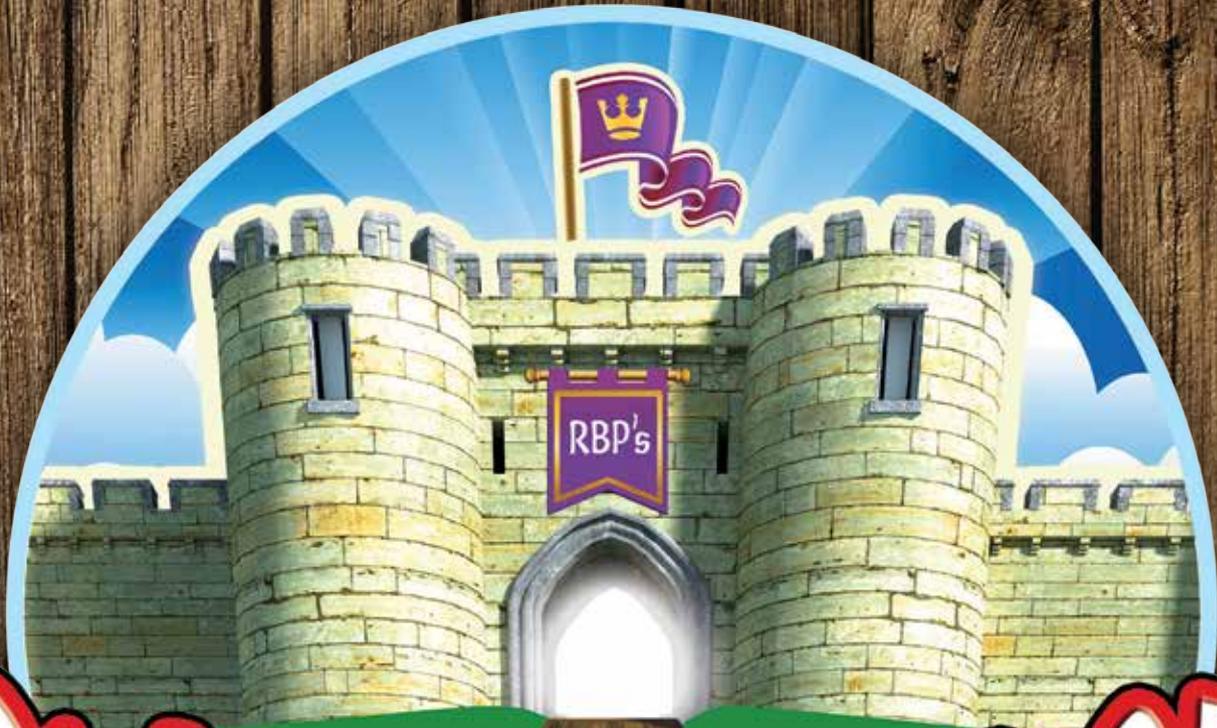
A new church is birthed from an existing church that provides much of the initial leadership and resources. Oftentimes, a large group from the existing church forms the launch team. This planter has bought into the mission, vision, and values of the existing church and seeks to reproduce it in the new church.



RESTART MODEL

A church creates for themselves an entirely new identity. Oftentimes the restarted church is in a new location and is given a new name and branding. A common type of a restart is the merger of two independent churches.





Over *the* moat

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AUTHOR, "ORDERING YOUR PRIVATE WORLD" & EDITOR AT LARGE, LEADERSHIP JOURNAL

GORDON MACDONALD



PROFESSOR, MIT & ORIGINATOR OF MIT OPENCOURSEWARE

DICK YUE



CEO, CHILDREN IN CHRIST
FULL NAME AND PICTURE WITHHELD FOR SECURITY PURPOSES

JENNIFER

SPEAKERS



EDDIE LYONS



BRUCE GARNER



JON SLAYDEN



KEVIN WHITACRE



STEVE VAN WINKLE



BRIAN MOORE



ARCHIE EMERSON



PAUL BLUE

SEPTEMBER 19-21

IN THE TRENCHES

THE BBFI: THE TRIBUNE.

Pastor

Gary Fuller

Pastor | Gentle Shepherd Baptist Church | Lincoln, NE

MAKING THE MOST OF OUR BUNDLE

I love the *Baptist Bible Tribune*! The latest format is off-the-charts useful to ministers and lay people alike. Our church has been offering copies of the *Tribune* on the display table of our foyer since Mike Randall was young and good looking, since Keith Bassham had a full head of hair, and since Randy Harp was in OshKosh B'gosh.

It would embarrass me to estimate how many unclaimed copies I've dropped into the dumpster once their sell-by date had long since passed. I felt like an unholy steward, tossing away nuggets of gold. When I considered the work and wisdom that went into each issue, the treasured keepsake each copy represented, I knew I had to make better use of this quality resource.

Here is what we have done. As soon as our

Tribune bundle arrives, I skim my copy, making mental notes of must-read articles, pieces written by my friends, news I can use, and events and victories needing to be recognized. Then I go back through, devouring the aforementioned, while noting which articles would be most beneficial in edifying my congregation in corporate readings. The next Wednesday evening, we hand out a copy to each couple or individual present and I direct them to those articles. Those who feel comfortable reading aloud each read a paragraph. Usually, "Baptist History" or "Urban Current" are our go-to articles. I may point out some victorious church, or Fellowship report, or one of our Fellowship leader's offerings. Oh, and just for fun, if I happened to photo bomb one of Rob Walker's Fellowship

Meeting pictures, we play "Where's Waldo?" The first person to find my mug gets a gift card or one of our assorted promotional freebies.

Following our perusal of the *Tribune*, I urge each person/family to take their copy home and read every word, because "this is the best *Tribune* that team has ever produced!" This is not a fabrication because each one is better than the previous one.

Invariably, we will still end up with a few on the foyer table. These, I take with me to the shut-ins, the nursing home bound, and even to some of the homeless.

And that, my friends, is how we make efficient use of our Fellowship's paper. Do you have additional ideas of how to effectively make use of the *Tribune*?

A friend of the *Tribune*

Working in a Creative Access Nation

(name and location withheld for security reasons)

KNOWLEDGE, NEWS, PARTNERSHIP

World Tax Citizen. WTC. At first glance, this sounds important, even prestigious. Many people want to be a World Citizen. But tax citizen? Not so much. Let me explain. But before I explain, please consider you are reading this in the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, which I'll talk more about shortly.

Where my family serves, you should be out of the country a total of 90 days in any five-year period. It doesn't matter if it's consecutive, as long as you're gone 90 days. Otherwise, in order to avoid what I'll explain next, you have to be gone 31 days consecutively every year after year five. Forever.

If you can't meet that requirement, you become the fabled World Tax Citizen — paying taxes to the government on all your income, from all over the world. If you make \$1 anywhere, you

pay tax on it to this foreign government.

If I took a survey and asked how many people knew, prior to now, about being a World Tax Citizen, how many could check the "yes" box? I predict not many. I admit it's obscure, as are many of the unique challenges of overseas life.

However — and this is worth pondering — people who read the *Baptist Bible Tribune* know far more about the lives of missionaries than almost anyone else from any other sending organization. That's one main reason the *Tribune* is so valuable. We get to tell you what it's like.

We also get to share good news — the former domestic abuser who now prays and serves in a local church. Or the government official who, even though being a Christian is a threat to his or her career, answers the call of the Spirit and begins to be remade. Or the young

professional who discovered that pursuit of material gain quickly rings hollow, and life must have more meaning.

What about partnership? The common goal for the BBFI has always been fulfilling the Great Commission. The partnership of churches in support of our shared goal is universally known because the *Tribune* emphasizes it 11 months per year.

Many years ago my first exposure to missionary life came from the pages of the *Tribune*. God worked on us and now our family serves overseas. We have valued and continue to value the *Tribune* for what it brings to the BBFI: Knowledge of the world at large; the news of God's work on the mission field; and a true demonstration of the partnership among all the churches that makes it possible.

.AND CHURCH PLANTING

Pastor

Mike Marcellus

Pastor | First Independent Baptist Church | Austin, TX

While a student at BBC I was exposed to many successful church planters and teachers who equipped me for solid teaching and preaching. I then spent ten years on a church staff that helped prepare me to be a church planter.

In 1985, my wife, Jena, and I went to Austin for Thanksgiving. One night, God wouldn't let me sleep, so I got on my knees to find out what He wanted. He revealed He wanted me to start a church in Austin. Since we had recently purchased a home in Dallas, I told God there was no way. But He convinced me it was His will and I agreed

to do it. By Sunday night God had led people to me who were willing to be part of starting a new church.

We didn't know BBF churches would support a pastor starting a new work, so our few families committed to paying my salary. We found a free conference room to meet in on Sundays, and we gathered in one of our people's houses on Wednesdays. Running out of space, we moved three times within the first year.

In those first few years, we were a typical BBFI congregation — very traditional, anglo,

reaching a lot of military families, and doing well. But after five or six years, the Air force base shut down and the dynamics of our congregation changed. We started reaching multi-ethnic families and today we have over 25 nationalities in our church. God has used our church to launch many into fulltime ministry — 98 of our congregation have become pastors, missionaries, student pastors, ministry leaders, or ministry staff. Two to three of our young people go to Bible college each year to prepare for ministry. We have planted five churches; four of those on purpose!

Today I serve as chairman of the Texas BBF. I wish I knew then what I know today about networking with this wonderful organization. The Texas BBF helps, sponsors, and underwrites new church plants. Church planting is a main focus of the Texas BBF. We have assisted close to 200 new works over the years.

It was well worth the sacrifices to plant our church and equally worth the sacrifices to be heavily involved in planting churches locally, across Texas, and nationally.

Church planter

John Markum

Pastor | LifeCity Church | Santa Clara, CA

In 2009, I reached out to our fledgling National Church Planting Office about planting a new church in the Silicon Valley — San Jose, CA. At the time, I did not understand the massive transitions our movement was going through in church planting. All I knew was I was turned down because I had no plans for a building — they had nothing for me in terms of coaching, tools, systems, or fundraising. That was hard to hear. I know they meant no ill toward me, but it felt like rejection from the group with which I had spent my life, education, and ministry.

Then, in 2013, months before I planted LifeCity Church, I was invited to a California BBF pastors' meeting. Admittedly, I hadn't been to a state meeting in over eight years. When I got there, I was the youngest man by 20 years. I was

afraid I would be rejected again. However, they listened to me and asked questions — not about our name, music style, or Bible version — but about logistics, cost of living, and the needs I had. And one by one I began receiving support from many of them, both financially and relationally.

Since then, I've attended every meeting with these men as possible. I went on a mission trip to Mexico with a handful of them, had my airfare paid to attend two national meetings, and was even invited to be on a church-planting discussion panel during the Orlando Fellowship Meeting. A few California pastors took special offerings to help our plant get over difficult hurdles. A team from Calvary Baptist of Bellflower and Pastor Ken Goodban hand-delivered a check of \$5,000 and prayed over us. Brian Moore, our state

chairman, led churches to donate another \$1,000 to LifeCity to help us get through last summer.

At 34, I'm still the youngest pastor in our state meetings. But, the group is shifting — and growing. Men who haven't attended in years have come back. Other planters have been encouraged to connect. Discussions continue for how we're going to plant more churches in our state.

Our Fellowship has further to go in church planting, but I have hope we're moving in the right direction. I'm humbled and grateful for the multi-generational concern and passion to pursue church planting within our Fellowship. We've come a great distance in only a few short years, and I believe the best is yet to come.

The *Tribune* through the years

By Rob Walker | *Tribune* Assistant Editor (Updated and adapted from an article by Tom Harper in the January 2000 issue of the *Tribune*)

The story of the *Baptist Bible Tribune* goes all the way back to the meeting of pastors, workers, and students who gathered at the Texas Hotel in Denton, TX, after the previous day's falling out with J. Frank Norris, who was then president of the World Fundamentalist Baptist Missionary Fellowship. Having left the WFBMF meeting under protest, the group gathered to discuss opening a new college in Springfield, MO, to oppose Norris's leadership at Bible Baptist Seminary. In the course of those discussions, the idea for an entire new Fellowship took root and was eventually agreed upon. At that meeting, Noel Smith, former editor of Norris's *The Fundamentalist*, stood up and made the case that if there was going to be a new Fellowship, there should be a way for the group to communicate. "Let's have a paper, and let's call it the *Baptist Bible Tribune*," said Smith.

Smith's background in journalism and evangelism were harnessed to a zeal for the written word, and within about a month's time, the first issue of the *Tribune* rolled off the press. Editor Smith's legendary pen set the tone and the terms of the debate in the early days, and the personality of the BBFI was largely cast in his image. This was possible, almost inevitable, because of the nature of the organization. The Fellowship was small at first, there were no boards or state associations, or anyone to oversee Smith's work. His initial, and often witty criticism of Norris was soon replaced with a passion for growth of Baptist Bible College, the ever-increasing number of new missionaries being sent around the world, and the growth of new churches all over America.

Smith realized the only entity with a common link to all the churches was the *Tribune*, and he packed a lot of useful news into eight pages. And he was unflinchingly honest. He was also wise and knew that without a common information and news source, the emerging Fellowship would fragment. The *Tribune* kept the vision clear, reported genuine progress, and let everyone know the BBFI was a going concern.

When the founding editor died in January 1974, he had personally guided it through the first 1,130 issues. Assistant editor Dick Barnard ran the paper until November 1974, when Wendell Zimmerman, pastor of Jacksonville Baptist Temple in Jacksonville, FL, was appointed editor. Zimmerman moved the *Tribune* office to Florida and, in 1980, changed

from a weekly format to biweekly. He would go on to serve as editor until 1983.

James Combs was appointed the third editor and served in that capacity until 1995. Combs was a California pastor and evangelist, and, under his leadership, adjusted the publishing schedule first to every three weeks, then monthly beginning in 1991. In 1992, Combs



1950-60s

1974 (top) | 1983 (bottom)

1991

THE FUTURE OF THE *BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE* by Randy Harp

With every new editor of the *Tribune* comes change. In my case, the change came prior to being named the new editor. The *Tribune* is now part of the Communication Office of the BBFI. In the November 2015 *Tribune* I summarized the expansion of the Communication Office with three phrases I have repeated at every state and national Fellowship meeting I have attended. Those three phrases are in print, online, and in person.

IN PRINT

I continue to be asked if the print edition of the *Tribune* will give way to a digital-only format. My answer continues to be, "No." It is true that many magazines, even ministry-based magazines, have made this transition, but I believe there is still great value in the print form. Our primary goal will remain as it has always been — to produce a magazine pastors, staff, missionaries, lay ministry leaders, and church members will all benefit from.

coordinated a format change for the *Tribune* from newspaper format to a magazine form that is similar to today's *Tribune* which coincided with the change to publishing 11 issues per year. Also under Combs, the *Tribune* began to publish *The Baptist Preacher* (1992), which was published six times per year as something of a leadership journal for pastors.

When James Combs retired in 1995, Mike Randall was chosen as the fourth editor. Randall had pastored in Missouri, Ohio, and Indiana, and had also served as a faculty member at Baptist Bible College, and, from 1991-1998, as vice president of the college. Well-known for his business acumen and his ministry and publishing experience, Randall guided the

Tribune with a steady hand until 2002 when he returned to BBC to serve as president.

Keith Bassham was chosen to succeed Randall as *Tribune* editor after serving as assistant editor since 1995. In a world increasingly enamoured with pixels, Bassham held to the belief that a quality print publication was not only of great benefit to the Fellowship, but could be provided at a great value. During this time, the *Tribune's* digital footprint was expanded to include a downloadable version of the magazine as well as a digital page-turn version, along with expanded website features. Bassham resigned in 2015 as the longest-tenured editor since Noel Smith.

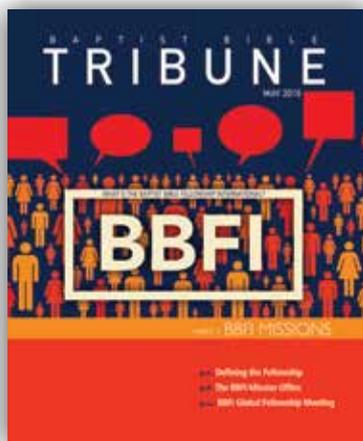
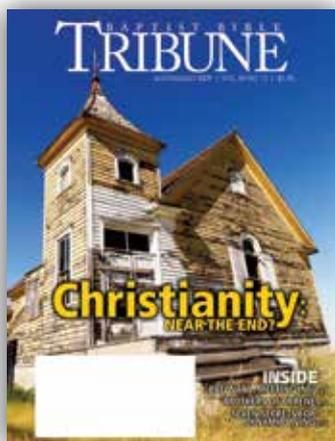
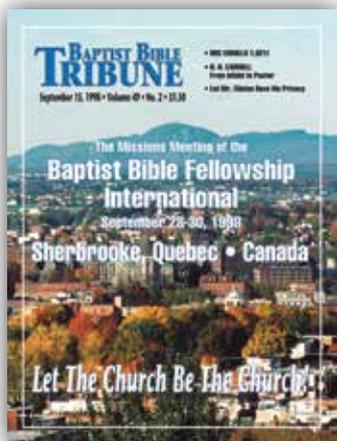
In the process of finding a successor to Keith Bassham, the BBFI Executive Committee established a new BBFI Communication Office that would include the *Tribune* production office, yet provide additional developments to enhance the communication avenues of the Fellowship. In 2015, Randy Harp was appointed to the position of Communication Director/*Tribune* Editor after pastoring in Texas and Michigan. In 2016, Harp announced the launch of the BBFI mobile app as a new tool to help the Fellowship remain connected.

In the 66 years since that first *Tribune* was published, a lot has changed within and without the BBFI. But one thing remains the same, and that is the primary role and function of the *Baptist Bible Tribune* — to report the work of the Baptist Bible Fellowship in all its facets, and to encourage independent Baptists in the work of the Lord. In an editorial shortly before his death, Noel Smith said of his more than 20 years with the *Tribune*, "... most of what I write is pecked out on my personal typewriter. It is hard work. And the hours are long, day and night. ... But I have no complaints. And my work has had, and is having, its rewards. I choose to do what I am doing. And because I know it is worthwhile." And as long as the *Tribune* continues to tell the good news of what God is doing in and through the BBFI, it will indeed be a worthwhile venture.

1998

2009

2016



ONLINE

Yes, the *Tribune* and each BBFI entity has been online for years, but this has been the greatest area of growth in the previous year as seen most obviously during the Global Fellowship Meeting in Korea this March. Thousands of people were able to watch the services online and see recap videos via our social media platforms. The BBFI social media presence has more than doubled and looks to continue its growth. A new monthly leadership podcast was started in January and during the May Fellowship Meeting the new BBFI and BBFI Missions apps were introduced.

IN PERSON

This third phase of expansion is still a work in progress, but I have been able to visit many churches and lead strategic planning seminars and exercises. The goal is to provide resources for pastors to become more efficient and effective in ministering to their churches and communities. Plans are being finalized now to launch the BBFI Coaching Network during the February National Fellowship Meeting in Tyler, TX, at Central Baptist Church. More information on the Coaching Network will be made available in coming months.

1950

First steps

May 25, 1950 - After a confrontation with J. Frank Norris (president) on May 24 at the World Fundamentalist Baptist Fellowship meeting in Denton, TX, 120 pastors, laymen, and students gathered in the ballroom at the Texas Hotel to discuss creating a new college in Springfield, MO. During the meeting, the idea of establishing a new fellowship was brought up, and eventually approved.

June 23, 1950 - First issue of the *Baptist Bible Tribune* is printed. Subscription cost is \$2 per year for the weekly publication in newspaper format.

Sept. 5, 1950 - Baptist Bible College opens in Springfield, MO, with 120 students enrolled. Classes were initially held at High Street Fundamental Baptist Church, with the first dormitories and administration buildings being completed just a few weeks later.

Sept. 17, 1950 - The Baptist Bible Fellowship holds first national Fellowship meeting in Springfield, MO. More than 100 pastors are part of the 300 people from 18 states who attended the meeting.

Sept. 20, 1950 - Primary policies for mission work were approved and several former WFBF missionaries were approved as the first BBF missionaries.



1959 - Number of *Tribune* subscribers passed 10,000

1951 - Fred Donnelson named 1st mission director

1951 - 17 graduate in BBC's first graduation exercise

1969 - Baptist Bible College launches radio station (KWFC 97.3 FM) to broadcast Bible teaching, preaching, and gospel music

1969 - America's Ten Largest Sunday Schools by Elmer Towns lists five BBFI churches

1960 - Unanimous decision to remain a Fellowship (not a denomination)

1966 - Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College opens; Ted Hicks named 1st president

1968 - Jack Bridges named 2nd mission director

1960

1970

BBFI presidents by decade

1950-52 W.E. Dowell

1955-57 David Cavin

1962-63 W.E. Dowell

1967-69 Al Janney

1952-54 John Rawlings

1957-59 George Hodges

1963-65 Scotty Alexander

1969-72 Parker Dailey

1954-55 Victor Sears

1959-62 Art Wilson

1965-67 Art Wilson

1950 - 19 missionaries on 4 fields

1960 - 169 missionaries on 17 fields

1970

1950-1959 Total Mission Office receipts of \$3,694,290

1960-1969 Total Mission Office receipts of \$17,174,191

1,594

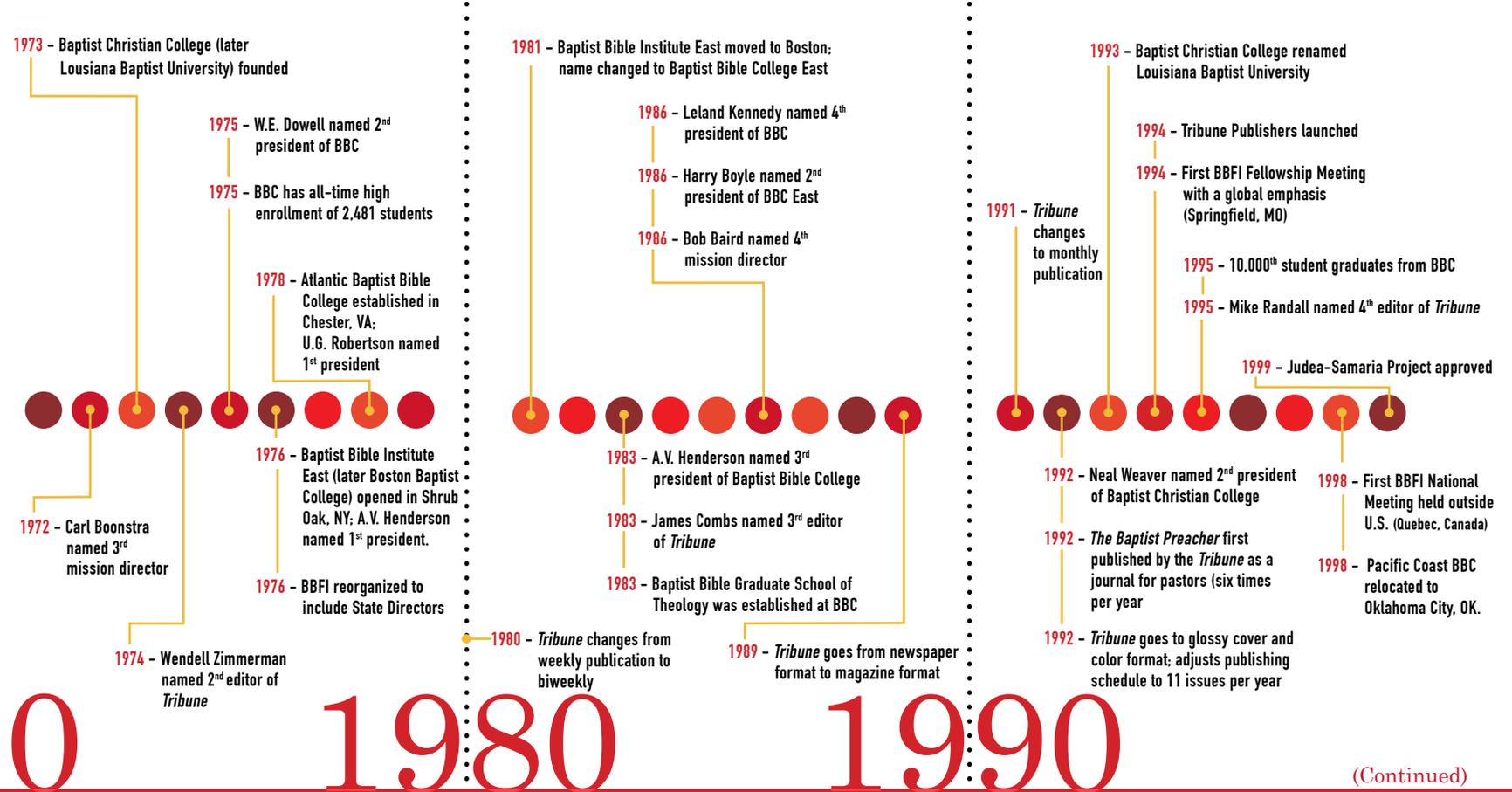
THE BBFI A HISTORY

by Keith Bassham | former editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*

Baptist Bible Fellowship International history is a chronicle of persons, events, struggles, achievements, defeats, and victories. It is also the story of God at work in our modern world, touching lives, saving souls, planting churches, sending missionaries, and spreading the Gospel. The story of the BBFI cannot be presented in any great detail in the space available here. This brief history will sketch the basic elements of our past — the beginnings, development through the decades, structure, nature, changes, and current status.

THE FOUNDING

The back-story leading to the founding of the Fellowship is long, circuitous, and (fortunately) adequately documented. For the purposes of this article, I will start the story in the 1940s. For many years, J. Frank Norris, the dominant leader of the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship, held a dual pastorate in Fort Worth, TX, and Detroit, MI. From 1936 onward, his associate, G. B. Vick, was the resident leader of the Michigan church, leading it successfully. In 1948, Vick reluctantly agreed to become president of the Bible Baptist Seminary of Fort Worth, TX, the Fellowship school. He recognized the potential for disagreement with Norris, whose outrageous and unpredictable behavior is legendary (one Baptist historian called Norris "God's Rascal"), but Vick agreed to take on the task. The seminary made dramatic strides under Vick's leadership.



(Continued)

1972-74 A.V. Henderson	1980-83 Verle Ackerman	1990-94 Parker Dailey
1974-77 John Rawlings	1983-86 Leland Kennedy	1994-98 Sam Davison
1977-80 David Cavin	1986-88 Harold Henniger	1998-02 Kenneth Gillming



In May 1950, Norris opposed Vick's leadership of the school and arranged to install another president. When the Fellowship met, there was vigorous debate, Norris's actions were challenged, and an impasse was reached. Vick resigned, and in a meeting with 120 pastors and sympathizers, the Baptist Bible Fellowship International was born. During the same meeting, Baptist Bible College (BBC), the Mission Office, and *Baptist Bible Tribune* were founded.

W. E. Dowell became the first president of the new Fellowship, Vick was named to lead the new school, Fred Donnelson became mission director, and Noel Smith was the founding editor of the *Tribune*.

THE FIRST DECADE

During the first decade, the priority was just getting things going while attracting and retaining participants. At BBC, enrollment

grew from 107 to 565. Churches were established all over the country, many of them begun by graduates of BBC, numbering 716 by the end of the decade. State and area fellowships formed to advance the cause of church planting, missionary work, and the training of future pastors, missionaries, and workers. Other independent Baptists also joined the new Fellowship. Funds handled through the Mission Office in 1959 totaled \$774,885. When 1960 began, 169 BBFI missionaries were serving on 17 fields.

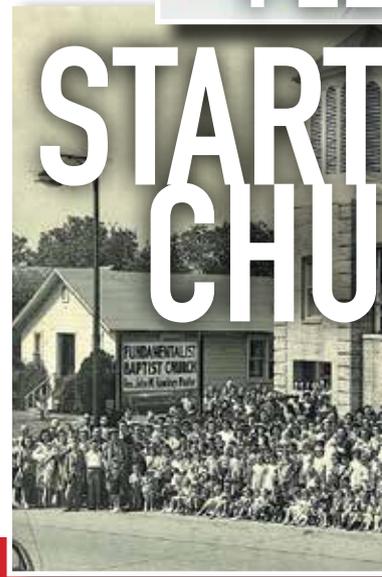
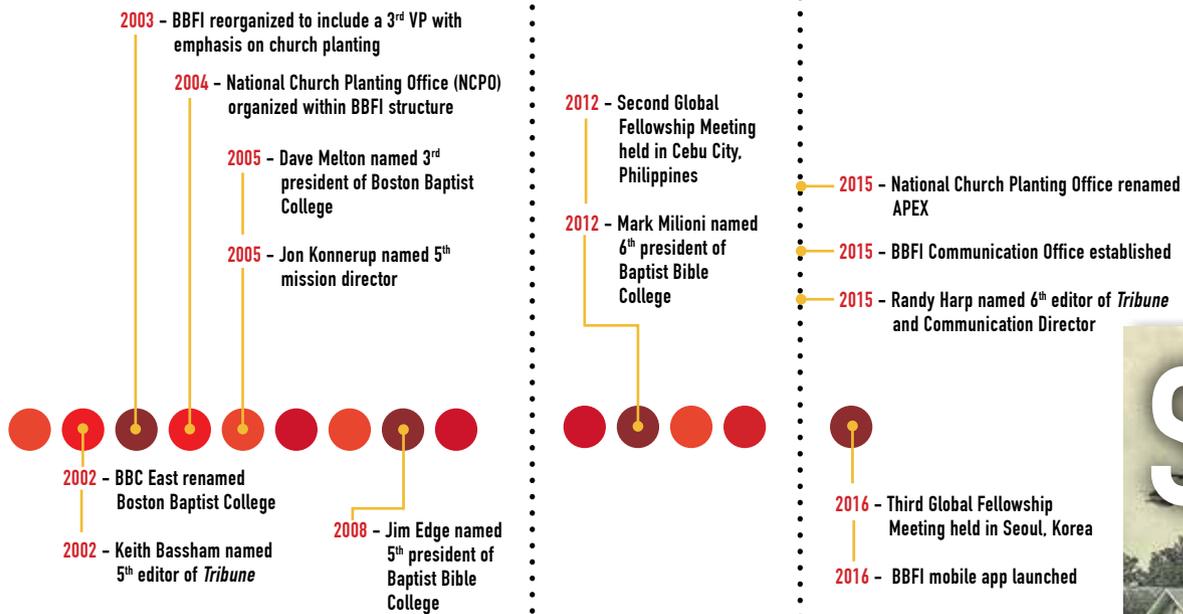
1960: A YEAR OF DECISION

As the new decade began, it was obvious to all that the original bylaws and organization were obsolete. Many months were occupied with prayerful consideration and discussion regarding the nature of the Fellowship. In the September 1960 meeting in Oklahoma City, OK, pastors elected to reject the concept

of a tightly controlled denomination and to remain a fellowship of pastors and churches. The new constitution and bylaws established a voluntary fellowship based on the Baptist principle of the autonomy of the local church.

THE 1960s AND DYNAMIC GROWTH

During the 1960s, continued growth characterized the BBFI (the *I* was added to designate International). College enrollment soared to 1,370 by 1969, and the campus had a 5,000-seat fieldhouse and a radio station. Graduates totaled 2,481, and church planting continued in earnest. A new school, Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College, was begun in 1966 in southern California. Pastors and churches listed in the Fellowship Directory in 1969 totaled 1,594. In 1968, Jack Bridges succeeded Fred Donnelson as mission director. In 1969, the Mission Office handled \$2,939,980 in funds. As a new decade began, 336 BBFI



2000 2010 2015

2002-06 Bill Monroe
 2006-09 Gary Grey
 2009-10 Mark Hodges

2010-14 Linzy Slayden
 2014-present Eddie Lyons

2000 — 894 missionaries on 100 fields

2010 — 864 missionaries on 95 fields

2000-2009 Total Mission Office receipts of \$385,497,522

2010-2015 Total Mission Office receipts of \$227,553,012

3,326 churches listed in the 2000 Fellowship Directory

2,550 churches listed in the 2015 Fellowship Directory

missionaries were on 32 fields. The Elmer Towns's 1969 book *America's Ten Largest Sunday Schools* showed that of the ten largest Sunday schools in America, five were part of the BBFI.

YEARS OF TRANSITION: THE DECADE OF THE '70S

Several events suggest the 1970s were years of transition for the BBFI. The BBFI named Carl Boonstra mission director in 1972. Some of the founding leaders passed from the scene during the 1970s. Founding *Tribune* editor Noel Smith left this life in January 1974. Wendell Zimmerman succeeded him at the *Tribune*. Founder Fred Donnelson died a month later. G. B. Vick, still president of BBC, passed away in 1975. W. E. Dowell, Sr. was elected to succeed him. In 1976, a new Fellowship-owned school was started on the East Coast. Baptist Bible College East began in New York and later moved to its current

campus in Boston, MA. Its first president was A. V. Henderson.

Also in 1976, the Fellowship's structure was changed. Hoping to achieve more grassroots participation, BBFI regional directors were replaced by directors appointed by the various state fellowships. The directors were (and still are) divided into three standing committees dealing with procedures, missions, and education (and later church planting). Among other refinements, a method to allow other independent Baptist colleges to provide missionary training for future BBFI missionaries was enacted while the Fellowship itself would operate three schools, Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College (now renamed and no longer associated with the Fellowship), Baptist Bible College, and Baptist Bible College East (now known as Boston Baptist College).

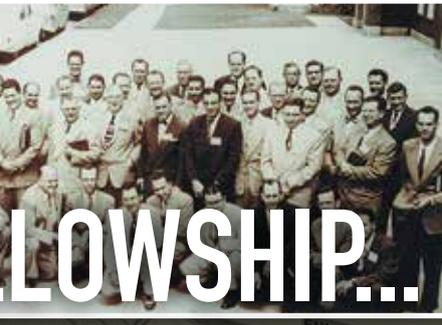
During the 1970s BBC's enrollment hit its

apex (2,481). Church planting continued, and the 1980 directory listed 2,997 who identified themselves as part of the BBFI. Giving through the Mission Office totaled \$10,567,951 and 528 BBFI missionaries were on 67 fields of the world at the end of the decade.

THE 1980S — ORGANIZATIONAL ORDEAL

During the 1980s, a new generation of leaders grappled with significant trends and new problems. In 1983, both W. E. Dowell, Sr. and Wendell Zimmerman retired. A. V. Henderson and James O. Combs succeeded them at BBC and the *Tribune*, respectively. Founders and early leaders moved off the scene, and the newer leaders lacked the common experiences and purposes that welded their earlier counterparts into a unified movement. A variety of issues became reason for division.

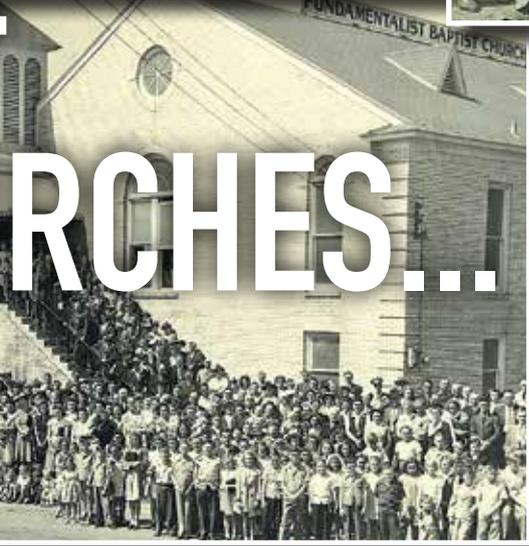
Enrollment declines and financial struggles led to Leland Kennedy taking the



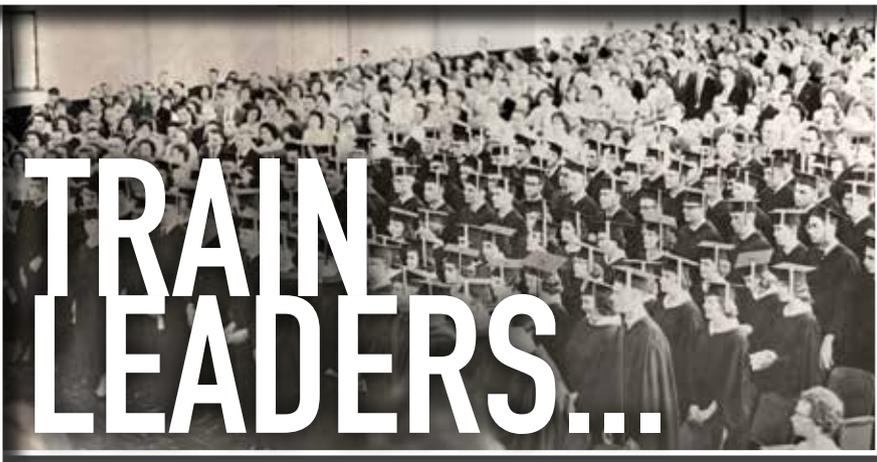
FELLOWSHIP...



REACH
NATIONS...



REACHES...



TRAIN
LEADERS...

...REPEAT

lead at BBC and Harry Boyle doing the same at Baptist Bible College East. Also during 1986, Bob Baird was named to succeed Carl Boonstra as mission director.

Despite developing polarization within the Fellowship and its institutions, church planting continued in the United States and abroad. There was a reversal of the 12-year enrollment decline at BBC, and there were 2,939 pastors and churches who identified with the BBFI according to the Fellowship directory. As the decade ended, 734 BBFI missionaries were serving on 80 fields of the world, and gifts handled by the Mission Office totaled \$19,004,880.

THE BBFI HEADING TOWARD A NEW MILLENNIUM

Through the 1990s, the work of the BBFI continued much as it had. In 1992, *Tribune* editor James Combs began a sister magazine call *The Baptist Preacher*.

In 1995, James O. Combs retired and Mike Randall, who had been serving as BBC's vice president, was named to replace him. In 1998, the BBFI held its September meeting in Sherbrooke, Quebec, Canada, the first time a national meeting was held outside the United States. Also in 1998, Pacific Coast Baptist Bible

College was relocated to Oklahoma City, OK, and renamed Heartland Baptist Bible College. The college subsequently cut its ties to the BBFI. In 1999, the pastors approved the Judea Samaria Project, a program for new church funding.

At the end of 1999 there were 3,326 pastors and churches listed in the Fellowship Directory. Eight hundred and eighty BBFI missionaries served on 111 fields of the world, 34 chaplains were serving in the United States military, and contributions processed by the Mission Office for the fiscal year ended June 30, 1999, totaled \$31,814,400.

2000 AND BEYOND

The BBFI met in Fort Worth in 2000 to celebrate the Fellowship's 50th anniversary. It was a Global Jubilee in every sense of the word with guests and speakers from around the world reflecting the reach of the Fellowship. The next few years, however, would prove challenging as the terms, purposes, and methodologies for cooperative work among Baptists became the cause for debate, and in many cases, division, and in some cases, significant decline.

In many ways, the BBFI is like a train that,

once on its way, continues where the track takes it. Therefore, the Fellowship in the early 2000s, looked much as it did a decade or so before. In 2002, Keith Bassham was named editor of the *Tribune* to succeed Mike Randall who succeeded Leland Kennedy at BBC. Bassham would hold the post until the end of 2015. Meanwhile, Randall was succeeded by Jim Edge, and Mark Milioni followed him as president of the college. David Melton became head of Boston Baptist College, and Jon Konnerup was named mission director. A new agency, the National Church Planting Office (later known as APEX), was also established to provide funding and training for church plants.

By 2016, two Global Fellowship Meetings, one in the Philippines and another in Korea, established the international credentials of the Fellowship, and they validated our historical emphasis on fulfilling the Great Commission. The year before saw the establishment of the BBFI Communication Office, and Randy Harp's appointment as Communication Director, replacing the *Tribune's* editor position and signaling an expanded reach into the digital world.

OUR OWN UNIQUE CELEBRATION THE



By David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

Harold Rawlings, whose family was so instrumental in the foundation of Boston Baptist College, said it better than anyone else, “When this college was started, some said it was crazy and it would fail. But on the fortieth anniversary, I am happy to say that Boston Baptist College is alive and well!” And Faneuil Hall erupted in applause. It was that kind of week in Boston, as we celebrated our first forty years during the last week in May.

Graduation Week is always busy in Boston, but this year included even more activity as college alumni and friends from around the world gathered to celebrate our first four decades. The reunion, held on Monday the 23rd, reunited alumni from every decade with leaders past and present, and friends from far and wide. Selfies abounded as did animated conversations about the good times and accomplishments of this improbable dream, a Baptist ministry college in the Northeast! Bill Howe from New Jersey, a member of the first graduating class, talked about “day one” — when A.V. Henderson addressed the first student body on the very first day of classes in Peekskill, NY.

Jim Edge told a story almost nobody knew, how our campus in Boston came to be a reality. Then Loran McAlister left hardly a dry eye in the house when he told of the kindness of students to his family when they first moved to Boston. Friends just stayed and stayed and stayed. I went home by about 10:00 that evening — it was the first night of a long week! — so I really don’t know when the

reunion finally ended. But what a night it was!

The evening before graduation, Tuesday night, is always an honored tradition in Boston. The graduating class shares a final dinner together with their families and friends along with the college trustees, regents, and staff. The graduation banquet is a huge family dinner, where the graduating men and women honor their families and churches through videos, and are honored with heartfelt tributes. It’s a scrumptious meal served with a lot of heart. It’s the classic warm-up for Commencement Day.

The culmination of all Graduation Weeks in Boston is a hectic, frenetic, and practically regal Wednesday in the heart of the city. Faneuil Hall belongs to the people of Boston, and it was where some of the earliest notions of a free nation were vocalized by the likes of Samuel Adams and John Hancock. These days, the Hall welcomes dignitaries, political forums, and more tourists than you can count. But, on Graduation Wednesday, it’s all ours, the venue for Class Day Honors

in the early afternoon and Boston Baptist Commencement at the strike of five. That climax to our academic year starts with “the Boston walk”, a sort of “so long” to the city for our grads. The long procession stops traffic (that’s a power move in itself!), and once the bagpiper, the flag-bearers, and all the trustees and faculty and platform guests with the graduates reach Faneuil Hall, there is a short lull. I stood waiting with the graduates at the door and had a few minutes to let my mind wander. I don’t know if this is what A.V. Henderson, and John Rawlings, and Jack Henry, and Harry Boyle and so many others had specifically in mind. But I think they must be pleased. A Baptist college in the Northeast, more specifically in Boston! Harold Rawlings was spot on when he said that many thought it was a crazy idea — an idea doomed to fail. Standing outside the historic soul of our city, of our country, looking back at men and women ready to receive their degrees — knowing what they have studied, what they have experienced, and what they dream to

“STANDING OUTSIDE THE HISTORIC SOUL OF OUR CITY, OF OUR COUNTRY, LOOKING BACK AT MEN AND WOMEN READY TO RECEIVE THEIR DEGREES — KNOWING WHAT THEY HAVE STUDIED, WHAT THEY HAVE EXPERIENCED, AND WHAT THEY DREAM TO DO FOR THE LORD — CALL ME CRAZY, BUT I SENSED THOSE WHO PUT US ON THE MAP, STOOD AND CHEERED IN SPIRIT.”

FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY IN BOSTON



do for the Lord — call me crazy, but I sensed those who put us on the map, stood and cheered in spirit. A new generation of Baptists is stepping up to the plate.

The Commencement ceremony itself soared. No less than three alumni missionaries were on the program: trustee and BBFI missionary to Ecuador, Tony Anzalone ('83), a missionary ('08) to a Creative Access Nation, and recently returned short-term missionary to Rwanda, Kelsey Simoneau ('14). Proud parents beamed. Not a few pastors in the crowd smiled those kind of smiles that are a little too infrequent. The graduates seemed to soak in every minute. For most of Commencement, I get a platform scene as a mere spectator, and the view is amazing, the experience gratifying. I watched Zach Viola, from Florence Baptist Temple, Florence, SC, (Bill Monroe, pastor) receive the Harry R. Boyle Achievement Award, in recognition of his extraordinary success in completing his degree. Zach will join our missionary force in short order. I got to be

“just Dad” and see my own son acknowledged for his remarkable scholarship. I listened to wise words from Harold Rawlings, calling our graduates to the mission of Jesus, and to live holy lives anchored to the unchanging Scriptures. For me, there was little work, other than handing out some diplomas and shaking a bunch of hands, and giving even more hugs.

I cannot honestly say there is little I love more at Commencement than our final tradition. My wife, Kim, joins me on that historic dais, and all across the hall we join hands, and raise our voices in the “Doxology.” Faneuil Hall has heard so much in almost three centuries. It heard calls for revolution, calls for abolition, debates on political issues, and even one BBF national meeting. But nothing, and I mean nothing, tops hundreds of voices, joyful to overflowing, filling that majestic hall with the “Doxology,” the ultimate, timeless hymn of praise to the one true God.

Four decades complete. Started well. Alive and well. Just getting warmed up.



JOHN HARPER – FERVENT FOR SOULS

When the largest ship then afloat, the *Titanic*, struck an iceberg at 11:40 p.m. April 14, 1912, in the western North Atlantic, it was carrying over 2,200 souls (the precise number is unknown), including a crew of about 890. In less than three hours, that colossus of the ocean, the pride of the White Star Line, disappeared below the waves, descending to its permanent grave some 13,000 feet below the surface. All that remained alive of its teeming humanity were something over 700 individuals (including 187 crewmen) who found refuge in the fatally too-few lifeboats.

The ship was built with all the latest advances in ship safety and luxury. It was deemed a virtually unsinkable floating palace. Passage was eagerly sought by many of the rich and famous on this, its maiden voyage. The trans-Atlantic crossing promised to be among the most rapid ever, perhaps the fastest of all. Such was the plan and the promise, but in truth, the ship was in a headlong rush to eternity for most of those aboard, though likely none had the least notion of how soon and how calamitous the end would be.

Among the passengers was a Scotsman in his late thirties, one John Harper (1872-1912), and his six-year-old daughter, Annie (her mother had died four years earlier). John would likely have attracted the notice of few. He was a preacher and pastor headed to America, Chicago more precisely, for a return engagement at the famous Moody Church, where just two months earlier he had concluded a greatly blessed three-month evangelistic campaign. The last memories any of the survivors of *Titanic* had of John Harper was of him, first entrusting his daughter to a crewman who placed her in one of the lifeboats (Harper also urged believers to surrender lifeboat seats to unbelievers), then on the deck of the doomed ship earnestly trying to win people to Christ. Last of all, after the sinking, he, having given away his life vest to another person, was in

the cold waters, clinging to debris, calling out to fellow ill-fated passengers, asking if they knew the Lord, if they had been saved, and urging them to decide for Christ before it was too

late. His final acts were entirely in character for this man whose whole purpose in life was the salvation of sinners.

Harper grew up in a small village in Scotland. He had the blessed upbringing of a devout Christian home, where the father regularly led the family in Bible reading and prayer. He responded in faith to the Gospel at age 13, and felt the call of God to the ministry in 1890. Though having no formal education beyond age 14, Harper was a very diligent student of the Scriptures, employing effectively whatever Bible study tools he could obtain. While employed at secular jobs, he spent some five years in his teens and early twenties itinerating in the villages and farms near his home. During this time, he became convinced of immersion as the Biblical mode of baptism and submitted himself for believer's immersion. He was called to pastor what later became Paisley Street Baptist Church in Glasgow in 1893 (just barely into his twenties), where he remained for 13 years, winning hundreds to Christ and establishing a solid church. Called to Walworth Road Baptist Church, London, in 1906, he labored the last half dozen years of his life in that great metropolis.

All who knew him testified to Harper's exemplary character, his integrity, his diligence, and conscientiousness in fulfilling his responsibilities as a Christian and a minister, but especially his burning desire to see men and women come to Christ. He was truly "fervent in prayer." He often felt compelled to labor in intercessory prayer all night long — sometimes on Saturday night in preparation for Sunday services. Seeking the conversion of the lost and the edification of the saved, he prayed by name for each of the people who attended his preaching. The intensity and extent of his prayers is reminiscent of those of David Brainerd in the 18th century, and even of Christ's recorded in the Gospels. So intense were Harper's labors that for about six months in 1905, he was compelled to set his work aside in an effort to mend his badly broken health.

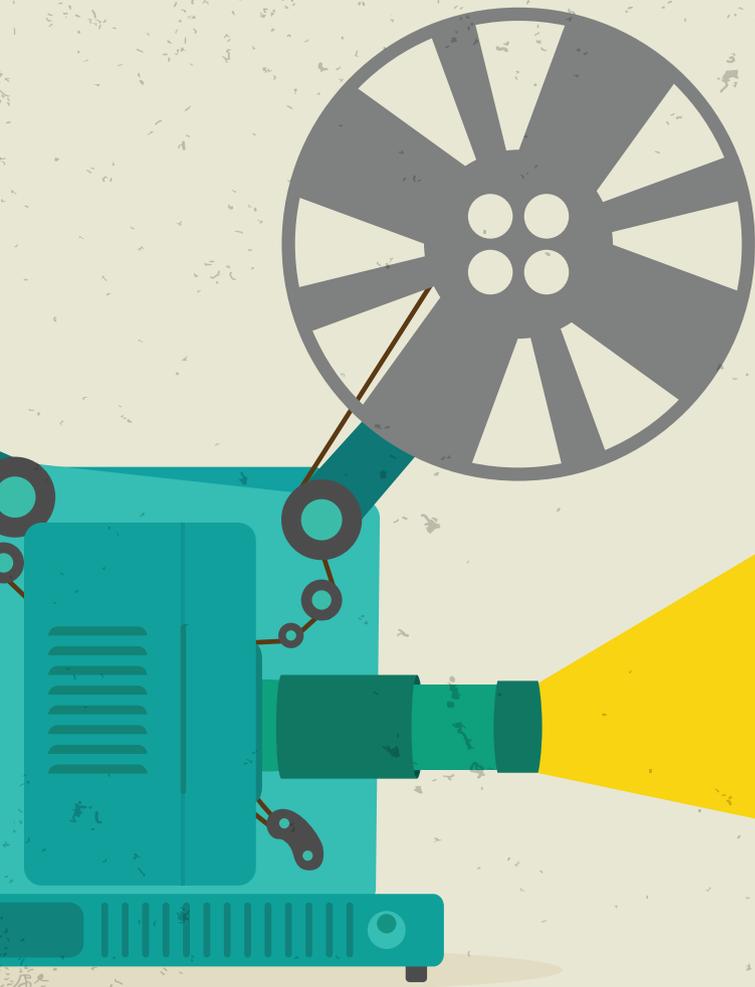
At just 39, when his efficiency and effectiveness for the Gospel seemed at their peak and promising even greater things, God called John Harper to Himself. His years were relatively not many, but they were filled with much selfless labor for eternity.

Some accounts of John Harper's life and ministry, along with testimonies from fellow ministers and some converts, and a few of his sermon outlines, are to be found in *The Titanic's Last Hero*, edited by Moody Adams (1997).



The disciples started out clueless...

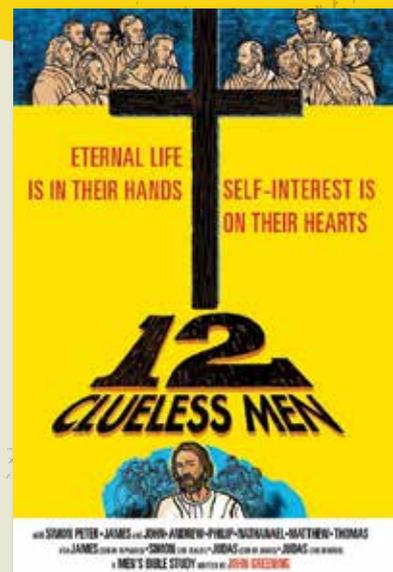
THEY DIDN'T STAY THERE



THIS MEN'S STUDY BY JOHN GREENING

considers how Jesus met with 12 clueless disciples the night before His crucifixion. The seed concepts He taught turned the men into a mighty force for the gospel. These same concepts can turn the light on for you, enabling you to gain confidence and focus for powerful living and service.

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ROCKWALL, TX

ARNOLD TO CONTINUE MINISTRY OF PRAYER AFTER RETIRING FROM PASTORATE

John Arnold, founding pastor of Library Baptist Church, Finleyville, PA, is continuing his prayer ministry from Rockwall, TX. "About 25 years ago God laid on my heart the burden of prayer," says Arnold. "Soon after, we were traveling to pastors' gatherings, Bible colleges, retreats, and local churches to share what God was teaching us, encouraging believers in the ministry of prayer. We look forward to continuing this ministry."



John and his wife, JoAnn, left BBC in 1968 to start a church in Pittsburgh, PA. After 47 years as pastor of Library Baptist Church, Arnold retired December 6, 2015. "Little did we know a seven-year-old boy, Ken Barner, would come to Sunday School via the bus ministry, and, many years later, become the next pastor of the church," says Arnold. Barner was affirmed as the church's new pastor November 25, 2015, after a two-year transition. Arnold reports the church has enjoyed a seamless pastoral transition and is doing better than ever. Arnold can be contacted at jarnold383@gmail.com.

ST. CHARLES, MO

GRACE BAPTIST CELEBRATES 40TH ANNIVERSARY

Grace Baptist Church and Pastor Kevin Kolb celebrated the church's 40th anniversary May 13-15. The celebration included Kolb interviewing his two predecessors at the Friday night service recounting God's hand upon the church in its early years. "Current members were overwhelmed by the stories and were encouraged to continue in what God has begun," says Kolb. The church also paused to personally thank the 17 founding members who were present May 15.

Members recorded their "Stories of Grace" which were shown during the month, and Kolb challenged the church to renew its commitment to the mission of making disciples noting, "You won't reach the nations if you don't reach your neighbors."



Pastor David

Ricker planted Grace Baptist Church in May 1976. Two years later Bill Butcher, who was discipled by Wendell Correll, assumed the pastorate. Butcher pastored the church 20 years and upon his retirement in 1999 was succeeded by Kolb.

Grace Baptist, in an effort to reproduce itself, has sent out two missionary families the past few years and started a three-year pastoral internship. Jonathan Krawczyk, an associate pastor at Grace, recently assumed the pastorate of a sister church in Missouri. Kolb reports Grace Baptist Church is thankful for their 40-year partnership with the BBFI, the Mission Office, and the Missouri State Fellowship.

FORT WORTH, TX

HALEY RETIRES FROM HALLMARK BAPTIST AFTER 22 YEARS

Mike Haley retired from Hallmark Baptist Church June 25, 2016. Guests for the day included many BBFI missionaries, BBFI Mission Director Jon Konnerup, former staff, and members. Haley was presented with a belt buckle from Fort Worth City Councilman Jungus Jordan who declared the day Mike Haley Day in Fort Worth, a plaque from BBFI Communication Director Randy Harp, a retirement check from Hallmark trustees, and a 22 caliber pistol for 22 years of service from the deacons of the church. Jim Baize preached a charge to both the church and the Haleys.



Mike and Diane graduated from Baptist Bible College in 1970. In 1974 he accepted his first pastoral position at Hillcrest Bible Baptist Church in Arkansas City, KS. Haley moved to Sweetwater, TX, in 1989 to pastor Broadway Baptist Church until 1994 when he became pastor of Hallmark Baptist Church. He also served as first vice president of the BBFI from 2004-2008 and is a founding member of the board of directors for MANNA Worldwide.

The Haleys are beginning a ministry of counseling and encouragement to missionaries and pastors facing burnout and depression. They can be contacted through Hallmark Baptist Church.

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Our pastor is retiring due to illness after 35 years at Lodi's Independent Bible Baptist Church. We are now taking resumes from prospective pastors.

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SPRINGFIELD, MO

BBC ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

The officers of the BBC Alumni and Friends Association met on the campus of BBC June 27 to plan events for the upcoming school year.



The mission of enhancing student life and the future ongoing development of Baptist Bible College was at the forefront as they made plans for Move-In Day, a November banquet, a Next Generation Conference, a Spring project, and the Fellowship Week banquet and golf tournament.

Herb Koonce challenged all alumni to be involved with the work the Alumni and Friends Association is doing, "With your prayers and monthly financial gifts, there is much that we can do as graduates and friends of BBC to help our young champions prepare for God's calling on their lives."

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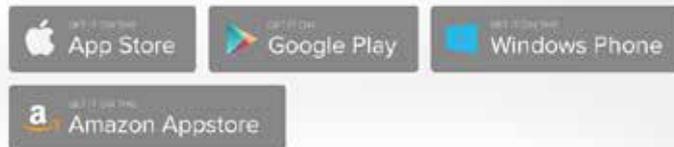
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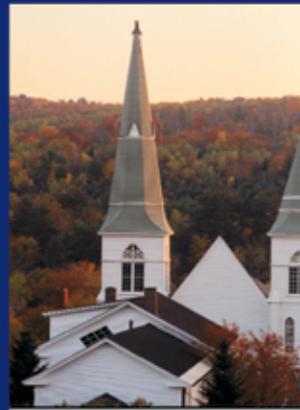
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INDIANAPOLIS, IN

GREG DIXON TO FOCUS ON GLOBAL EVANGELISM AFTER 38 YEARS AT IBT

After 38 years of pastoral ministry, Greg A. Dixon resigned as pastor of Indianapolis Baptist Temple August 16, 2015, effective December 31. The church called Pastor Matt Roller as the new pastor August 30. Matt, his wife Bekah, and their three children are lifetime members of IBT and he formerly served as director of the Wheeler Mission, the largest rescue mission in Indianapolis. "The transition of leadership has been remarkably smooth," says Dixon, "and the church, after 65 years, is in good hands for many more decades to come."

Dixon graduated from Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO, in 1977 and then returned to Indianapolis Baptist Temple, serving in many capacities. In 1987 he became the co-pastor and followed his father Greg J. Dixon as senior pastor in 1996. He and his wife, Kathy, have been married 35 years and have four daughters and two grandsons. Dixon is now director of ADVANCE, a global alliance for biblical evangelism.

CENTERTON, AR

BBF BUILDERS AND LIFEPOINT BAPTIST CHURCH EXCITED FOR NEW CHAPTER

The BBF Builders and Lifepoint Baptist Church announce a new building project to start in Northwest Arkansas in 2017.

Mike Brinson started Lifepoint Baptist in 2009 as a church plant of Cherry Street Baptist Church in Springfield, MO. After renting and outgrowing three facilities, the church made plans to move into their first owned building. In 2014, Brinson and Lifepoint Baptist Church secured a loan on five acres of land. They paid it off in one year. Last year Lifepoint started, completed, and paid for architectural and engineering plans. They are currently putting all the contractors together and will start building in 2017 with help from the BBF Builders.

The BBF Builders have had a 16-year ministry assisting churches in construction, saving churches significant ministry dollars. This building project in Arkansas is a second-generation build for the BBF Builders. They built for Mike Brinson's father, Ray Brinson, at Victory Baptist Church in Nixa, MO, in 2000.

To partner with this project, contact Lifepoint Baptist Church, 409 W. Centerton Boulevard, Centerton, AR 72719. For more information, visit www.4KingJesus.com.

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CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO

GARNERS HONORED FOR 45 YEARS AS MISSIONARIES AND 50TH WEDDING ANNIVERSARY

Pastor Espino and Templo Bautista Biblico (Baptist Bible Temple) of Chihuahua, Mexico, started by missionary Les Garner, hosted a united service May 22 with the eight pastors sent from the church and their congregations. The church rented the state university's fine arts auditorium to adequately seat more than 800 in attendance. Garner, who had been on a ten-week furlough, knew the deacons planned the service so all their people could worship together one Sunday. It was not until Pastor Espino asked Les and Donna to the platform that the Garners realized the church was honoring them. "Donna and I celebrated our

45th year as missionaries and 50th wedding anniversary in May," says Garner. "We had no idea the church was going to have a special service for us that Sunday." Their son, Pastor Bruce Garner of Crosspoint Baptist Church in Huntington Beach, CA, sent a video greeting and later surprised his parents on the platform to preach to the congregation. Enoch and Elda Gutierrez, who have been friends with the Garners for 45 years, also sent a video greeting along with numerous other videos and testimonies.

Garner shares, "Three of our pastors we held in our arms when they were babies and

we dedicated them to the Lord. Three others were saved as children in the church. When the Lord called them to preach we sent them to Bible school and later officiated their weddings. Three of our pastors' wives present that day also grew up in the church, two of them I dedicated to the Lord when they were born. They are the blessings of a lifetime of ministry in the same area of the country." Twenty-five people of the congregation sacrificed being in the service to teach the children at Templo Bautista Biblico. "It was an unforgettable experience we will treasure all of our days," says Garner.



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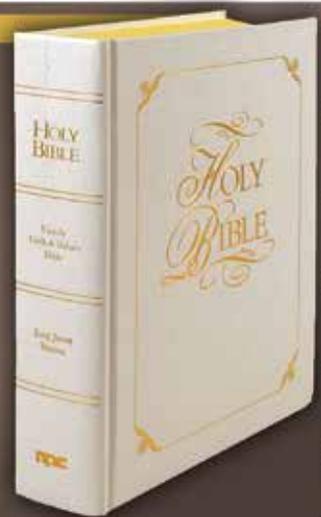
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MERIDIAN, ID

HARRINGTON AND ROCKHARBOR CHURCH SUPPORT NEW CHURCH PLANT IN A BIG WAY

Pastor Keith Harrington and Rockharbor Church announce the launch of Stonehill Church in south Meridian September 2016. Doug Connelly, who helped start Rockharbor

Church four years ago, will be lead pastor of the new church. In March, Harrington shared his vision and goal of sending 300 people with this new church plant. He says, "We illustrated this to our church by bringing a 20-foot tall, 400-pound tree on stage and saying, 'This is our church plant, one that will produce much fruit in the fall.'"

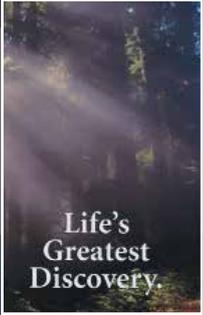
At Stonehill's first "vision" night, 212 people were present. "This number is growing and we believe this church will launch as a fully functioning body that, from the standpoint of volunteers and finances, will be self-sustaining from the beginning," reports Harrington. Rockharbor Church is providing all initial expenses, which will include portable church equipment and other significant launch expenditures.

Meridian is the fastest growing city in Idaho. "This is exciting because our city needs more churches to passionately share the message of Jesus, make disciples, and multiply itself,"



states Harrington. "We anticipate this fall to bring much glory to God as we multiply into two churches within one community for one great God."

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ELKTON, MD

CLAYTON MOORMAN

Clayton Moorman, longtime pastor of Newark Baptist Church, Elkton, MD, went home to be with his Lord June 1, 2016. Clayton was born July 31, 1949. He graduated from Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO, in 1970 and returned to the Northeast to serve as youth director of Newark Baptist Church. In 1976 he accepted his first pastorate in Granite City, IL, where he served nine years until he returned to Newark Baptist Church as the associate pastor. In 1993 he became senior pastor, an office he held until his death.

In addition to his pastorate, Clayton volunteered as chaplain at Union Hospital in Elkton, MD, for 19 years and was also on the Bioethics Committee. In 2016 he became the chaplain for the Cecil County Sherriff's Department. Clayton was active in the BBFI as a state chairman and national director for many years.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Sharon, three children, and two grandchildren. Services were held at Newark Baptist Church, Elkton, MD, June 5.

ALAMOGORDO, NM

DWAIN R. LOVE

Dwain "Doc" R. Love, longtime BBFI pastor, was taken to glory May 12, 2016, in his home. Love was born in Harrison County, IN, March 15, 1932. He faithfully ministered in New Mexico, Texas, and Idaho until his retirement in 2007.

Dwain is survived by his wife, Frances, four children, 11 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren. Funeral services were held May 21 at Gateway Baptist Church in Alamogordo, NM, Jeff Love and Chuck King officiating.

KOSCIUSKO, MS

GORDON R. PARSLEY

Gordon R. Parsley passed from this life June 6, 2015. Gordon accepted Christ at age 14 and surrendered to preach the Gospel the following year, preaching his first sermon at the local jail. He attended Bob Jones University in South Carolina and then graduated in 1969 from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO. Gordon pastored churches in Kentucky, Ohio, Oklahoma, Texas, and Mississippi for 36 years.

After retirement he continued to be faithful to God by witnessing and counseling.

Gordon is survived by his wife, Annette, and two sons. Funeral services were held June 8 at Parkway Cemetery in Kosciusko, MS, James D. Parsley officiating.

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Learning from our mistakes

By Randy Harp



Is the BBFI perfect? I think we all know the answer. My first impressions of the BBFI were all positive, largely because my pastor, Don Elmore, was extremely positive about the BBFI. The more I have learned about our history and the more I have gotten involved, the more I realize we are far from perfect. While it is true what one person might consider a mistake another person would not, there is no denying that as a fellowship we have not always gotten it right. As John Maxwell says, “A man must be big enough to admit his mistakes, smart enough to profit from them, and strong enough to correct them.”

In this final word of our three-part series on “What is the BBFI?” I would like to share a

couple thoughts on what our mistakes should teach us along with a few lessons moving forward.

First, our mistakes teach us we are all vulnerable. I, like you, could list not only pastor after pastor but friend after friend who has experienced a moral failure.

Our normal response ... “If not for the grace of God it could have been me.” I can’t emphasize enough the importance of boundaries and accountability. When a BBFI pastor, church staff, or missionary has a moral failure it affects us all. Our mistakes also teach us leadership is difficult. I once heard someone say being a pastor was the most difficult leadership position because you are typically leading

volunteers. If a volunteer or church member does not like your leadership he or she can freely walk away. I would venture to say being a leader of leaders is a more difficult task, especially when those being led are voluntarily participating in a Fellowship in which they can freely walk away. Have our leaders always made the right decision? Absolutely not. One could argue there have been plenty of bad decisions made by our leaders over the past 66 years. One of the greatest challenges of being a leader in our Fellowship is that our Fellowship is full of strong leaders who have their own opinions about how things ought to be done. Regardless of who the leader is, it is a difficult task.

I love the BBFI. I have surrendered myself to serve Christ as I serve this network of pastors, missionaries, church staff, college professors, and students who make up the BBFI. I like how one author put it, “We are products of our past, but we don’t have to be prisoners of it.” There are so many lessons we can learn as we move forward. I would like to suggest these three.

First, we must never forget our mission. In the May *Tribune* I summarized the BBFI

this way: “From a historical, practical, and personal perspective, it is a network of leaders, voluntarily committed together, based on our mutually agreed-upon Articles of Faith, for the purpose of making disciples of Jesus Christ all over the world.” This is the reason we have a Mission Office and missionaries. This is the reason we have Bible colleges. This is the reason we have APEX, our church planting ministry, and the *Tribune*. Everything we do should point back to our mission. The beauty of a network of independent, autonomous churches voluntarily working together is we don’t all have to agree on everything. As G. B. Vick said, “Methods change, but the message never changes.”

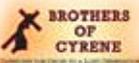
Second, we must remember the value of relationships. This is one of the greatest assets of our Fellowship. The tagline for the BBFI is “Where no one stands alone.” This is the reason we have state and national “fellowship” meetings. While pastoring my first church in Michigan I remember Herb Gilbert speaking of the importance of attending Fellowship meetings. He said, “If your church can’t afford to send you then you pay your own way.” I have even heard of men several years ago hitchhiking to Fellowship meetings. Although I don’t recommend that mode of transportation, we need to remember the value of building relationships.

Third, we need to continually ask, “Do our actions and attitudes honor the name of Jesus Christ?” At the end of the day, this is really what matters most. As a Fellowship do we truly seek to worship an almighty God? Is our petition like that of John the Baptist, in that we desire for Him to increase, and we to decrease? Are we seeking to build the Kingdom of God or our own personal kingdoms? The leaders of our Fellowship must ask this question. Every pastor, missionary, college professor, and church member must ask this question.

Many people have asked me, “How much longer do you believe the Fellowship will be around?” To be honest, it breaks my heart to even have to answer that question, but my answer is always the same. We will be here until the Lord returns!

AUGUST 2016

PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1  MISSIONARY Wilhelm & Sandy Falk <i>Germany</i>	2 CHAPLAIN LtCol James & Walda Toews <i>US Civil Air Patrol</i>	3  MISSIONARIES Ricky & Jaime Owens <i>Wales</i>	4  T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Michael Todd <i>Peru</i>	5  MISSIONARY Ramona Bowles <i>Zambia</i>	6  MISSIONARY Renae Thompson <i>Germany</i>
7  MISSIONARY Ron & Frances Maggard <i>USLG</i>	8  MISSIONARY Randy & Sherry Rhoton <i>Costa Rica</i>	9  MISSIONARY Bill & Georgia Ecton <i>Retired</i>	10  MISSIONARY Jordan & Nikki Nisly <i>Philippines</i>	11  MISSIONARY Janice Hickey <i>Ecuador</i>	12  MISSIONARY Royce & Luetta Vick <i>Mexico</i>	13  Workers in Restricted Countries
14  MISSIONARY David & Mary Campbell <i>Wales</i>	15  BBFI Mission Office <i>Finance/Accounting Dept.</i>	16  MISSIONARY Jonathan & Roberta Steffy <i>Philippines</i>	17  T.E.A.M MISSIONARY Lu May <i>Thailand</i>	18  MISSIONARY Leslie & Donna Garner <i>Mexico</i>	19  MISSIONARY Donna Woodson <i>Nicaragua</i>	20  MISSIONARY Paul & Doris Brock <i>Germany</i>
21  MISSIONARY Erwin & Amy Santoso <i>New Zealand</i>	22  MISSIONARY Jack & Joy Loveday <i>Spain</i>	23  BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE Mark Milioni <i>President</i>	24  MISSIONARY Jason & Tammy Rogers <i>Nicaragua</i>	25  MISSIONARY Keni & Vanessa Epp <i>Honduras</i>	26  MISSIONARY Virginia Masters <i>Argentina</i>	27  MISSIONARY David & Edna Marie Howell <i>Brazil</i>
28  Brothers of Cyrene	29  MISSIONARY Jean-Louis & Diane Van Meris <i>France</i>	30  MISSIONARY Scott & Gloria Brown <i>Mexico</i>	31  MISSIONARY Doug & Nedra Shoultz <i>Alaska</i>			

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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