

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

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YOU CAN  
**BELIEVE**  
**IN GOD**  
WITH GOOD REASON

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# Have You Tried It?



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ON THE TABLE

## Accessible apologetics

by Keith Bassham | Editor

From the feedback I receive, people are interested in the apologetics series the *Tribune* began in the January issue. Finding material on the subject is not difficult, and any reasonable writer/compiler could do the gathering. What is difficult is finding that middle ground of usability between the complex and the reductionist — not too academic, and not too simplistic. Throughout the series, I am trying to make an argument just as an ordinary person would over a cup of coffee, or across a student's desk, or at the water cooler (if there are water coolers nearby). And if I find myself in great waters, I will keep the lifeguard in sight, and try not to speak about things I can't wrap my brain around.

The point I try to make is that it is not so much about winning an argument to bring another person around to your way of thinking as it is about gaining confidence in your own personal apologetic. After all, Peter tells us to expect that people will ask a reason for the hope that is within us. What good is that if we are unsure of the hope ourselves? And perhaps it is that lack of confidence that accounts for the fact that so few are asking us about it in the first place.

So, will these articles make you an expert on apologetics? Not hardly. But they should awaken your interest and give you the confidence that we believe what we believe for good reason.

Interested in going further into the subject? Good, because there are treasures within your grasp. One is a book and author I have used particularly in the "Evidence for God" articles, *The Reason for God* by Tim Keller. It was *Christianity Today's* Apologetics Book of the Year in 2009. It is available just about everywhere, even at Walmart, written by a pastor with an evangelistic heart, and while it cannot answer every difficulty or problem in its few hundred pages, it is very thorough.

And if you don't mind a ride on the wayback machine, C. S. Lewis's *Mere Christianity* is still good for today. Remember that it was J. R. R. Tolkien who counseled Lewis shortly before his conversion from atheism that he was suffering from "a failure of imagination." Lewis opened his mind, and God opened his heart. Lewis gives his own account of his conversion in *Surprised by Joy*, a personal apologetic, if you will.

*Christianity Today's* 2010 Apologetic Book of the Year is *God Is Great, God Is Good: Why Believing in God Is Reasonable and Responsible*. You can tell from the title it is meant to be an answer to the new atheists like Hitchens and Dawkins, and the authors of the articles are all experts — Habermas, Behe, Craig, and so on, all names you will see in the apologetics articles in the *Tribune*. Not light reading, but it makes some of the best thinking on the subject accessible to all of us.

*Keith Bassham*

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

## Asking God for revival



by Mark Hodges | President | BBFI

The meetings of the BBFI this year will center on the theme of “Revival.” If we are really serious about having revival this year, I believe that there are some questions that we need to ask.

Are we satisfied with the condition of our church? What is our own personal spiritual state and condition? Are we like the Laodiceans who said they were rich in their abundance, and that all was well with them when they failed to realize that they were poor, wretched, and blind?

The word revival really means to live again. Revival is an experience that can only happen to God’s children. Lost people cannot be revived because lost people do not have life. You can only revive life where life has been. We need a revival today. We all know it. And God wants to give it.

Revival is the sovereign, supernatural movement of God among his people that comes about as a direct result of their prayer, repentance, and holiness, all of which results in a fresh walk with the Lord. To put it simply, it is the manifested presence of God. God is omnipresent, meaning that He’s always present. But His manifested presence is when He shows up personally and powerfully.

Zechariah 10:1 “Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so the Lord shall make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field.” I believe Zechariah is referring in part to literal rain. But I think he also is speaking of spiritual blessings outpoured on the people of God. God’s outpoured blessing is likened to the rain. God says to ask for rain in the time of the latter rain. Oh, how we need it today! We are to ask for His showers of blessing to come down upon us.

We are to ask for revival. We read about the showers of blessing in the prophecy of Ezekiel, the time when the spirit of God sweeps over the land and souls come to the Lord, and the Lord’s presence becomes so very real. When that happens, people are convicted and give up their sins and walk with the Lord. The fear of the Lord comes back. Then Bible reading becomes popular and prayer becomes paramount. Family altars will once again be set up; prayer rooms will be in use as God’s people have a burning desire to call upon the Lord! Charles Finney said, “Revival is a new beginning of obedience to God.”

Can we honestly say that we rejoice in the Lord Jesus with “a joy unspeakable and full of glory”? Can we say with Paul that to us “to live is Christ, and to die is gain”? May God give us grace to examine and be honest with ourselves. E. M. Bounds said, “It is not great talents or great learning or great preachers that God needs, but men great in holiness.”

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

## Opportunities in our future



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director

Many churches and individuals have already responded to the need in Haiti after the earthquake devastated the capital city and other parts of the country, and others are still asking how they can help. The BBFI has two missionaries on the ground (Wes Land and Tom Franklin) and one in the U.S. (Susan Perkins) who are actively involved in relief efforts for thousands of Haitians. These efforts began immediately, and continue as I write this column.

Due to the overwhelming need in Haiti and the amazing desire of people in our Fellowship churches, we have set up a plan with our missionaries to be most effective in our assistance. Right now, we are in the Relief Phase providing initial assistance of daily needs to help people get back on their feet with their families. This will continue for at least one more month. At the same time, we have begun the Assessment Phase, looking at the best way to prepare for the third phase — the Rebuilding Phase. This phase will be more long term in its approach, and it will provide a way for churches to offer hands-on assistance in the months and years to come. You will receive more details in the *Tribune* and on our website, [www.bbfimissions.com](http://www.bbfimissions.com).

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, excitement is building for our first global meeting in a foreign country in February 2011. This meeting will be hosted by Bible Baptist Church, Cebu City, Philippines. This church was founded by missionary Bob Hughes and is now under the leadership of Armie Jesalva.

For 60 years the preachers and churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International have followed God’s leading to reach our entire world with the gospel of Jesus Christ. We want you to join the many pastors, missionaries, and church leaders from every continent on earth to celebrate what our Lord has done through the efforts of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International.

We also look to the future with the intent of partnering with other nations to reach out to all the peoples of the world with the gospel. Other nations are now sending their own missionaries around the world — many times in very difficult and somewhat closed places. Together, we must all renew our obedience to the Great Commission in these days of unprecedented opportunities worldwide.

Everyone who attends will see the big picture of God’s work around the world through the BBFI. How exciting it will be to see and meet pastors and missionaries from all over the world who can trace their faith back to the work of our churches and missionaries!

If you need help with your travel plans, feel free to contact the BBFI Mission Office. We can help by making travel packages available for groups.

Let’s make sure our pastors and missionaries all have the opportunity to attend this historical event! See you in Cebu in 2011!

## Church planters sending church planters



by Wayne Guinn | Director | NCPO

Recently, I had a call to be in Mobile, Alabama, on office business. While I was there, I visited Living Water Baptist Church and Pastor James Richardson. We had a wonderful service and the fellowship was refreshing and sweet with this good church. Living Water Baptist was a project we took on about five years ago with Brother Chuck Ford. We loaned this new church the money to buy and remodel the building where they presently meet. It would be an understatement to say this project turned out well. The building is beautiful and well kept, and the Sunday night I visited, there was a full house. The pastor and people were faithful with every payment and paid this 30-year mortgage off in five years. That's exciting, but what's even more exciting is they are sending one of their members to the next church planting school (April 19-23).

Vic Baxter plans to launch a new church in Easton, Georgia, this July. This is an example of God's plan in action. Follow the process and it works. Family Fellowship Baptist Church birthed Living Water Baptist Church which will birth Trinity Baptist Church this summer.



*Vic Baxter and family*

### UPCOMING NCPO EVENTS

#### Church Planting School

April 19-23 at Canyon Creek Baptist Church, Richardson, Texas, with Pastor Rick Carter hosting. Come and glean from men like Tom Wagoner, Charles Lyons, Duke Hergatt, John Arnold, Dave Shaffer, Mark Milioni, Monty Maple, Keith Bassham, Jim Smith, Jason Todd, Rick Carter, and Wayne Guinn. For more information, call (417) 889-1017 or email [office@bbfincpo.com](mailto:office@bbfincpo.com).

#### R.P.M. Conference

Plan to join us at Canyon Creek Baptist Church April 19 and 20 to "rev-up" your heart and ministry. Tom Wagoner will challenge us about Revival. John Arnold will lead us to Pray. Charles Lyons will help us generate and maintain Momentum in our ministry. This will be held in conjunction with the Texas State BBFI meeting. Contact Canyon Creek Baptist for information about lodging. Hope to see you there.

## Three reasons we don't have revival



by Tom Wagoner | Pastor | Central Baptist Church | Dunn, NC

We have gotten so used to the normal, the mundane, and even the dead. That is why when we hear Isaiah cry out to God in Isaiah 64, "Oh that thou wouldst rend the heavens," it challenges us. Tear open the heavens, God, that they might know your Name and that the fire of God would burn again in our churches, our Fellowship, and across our land. Can we really believe God? Can we take Him at His word and lay hold of His promises that this is His desire for us?

Vance Havner, using Isaiah 64, gives three reasons we do not have revival. The first is found in verse 5 which says He "meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness." God abhors our sin and we have sinned. The first and foremost thing that hinders a great move of God in revival is our sin, and when we come to grips with it, it will be a wonderful day. I visit our state fellowships and preach on sin in the life of men of God and it is disturbing how few people publicly acknowledge, either at the altar or verbally, that they have sinned at all. We need to get honest about our sin and do so publicly that our people might see the pattern of how to repent.

Mr. Havner's second reason is found in verse 6, a familiar verse regarding our being unclean things and all of our righteousness as filthy rags. Havner says our self-righteousness hinders great revival. The pride and self-magnification that is going on in our churches, our pulpits, and across our movement is costing us when it comes to a real move of God. God help us to recognize that there is nothing in any of us, nothing in you or me, except our old man, and the sin nature, and those things that grieve God apart from the person and work of the Holy Spirit and Jesus Christ who lives in us. "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."

The third reason Mr. Havner gives for why we don't have revival is something I don't suppose I have heard anyone say before (remember, he is a North Carolina preacher). He says we are not stirring ourselves up. Verse 7 states, "There is none that calleth upon thy name, that stirreth up himself to take hold of thee." God help us to do what we need to do, whether we feel like it or not, whether we are emotionally moved or motivated, to get up, get in the Word of God, begin a fast, pray, call a solemn assembly, and experience genuine revival. It is time for us to stir ourselves up. If we are not stirred up by the things going on around us, let's get in the prayer closets and ask God to give us the strength to do what we need to do and be stirred.

*Please send any comments, thoughts, or information you would like to communicate with the author to [cbcdunn@cbcdunn.com](mailto:cbcdunn@cbcdunn.com).*



# DIGRESSIONS

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

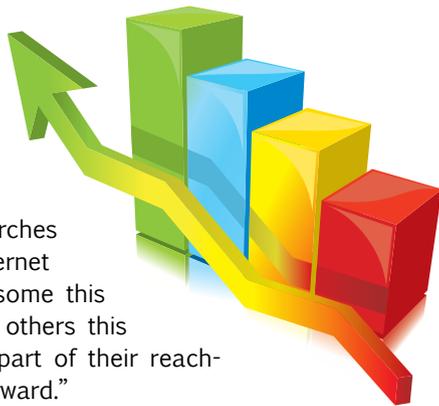
## Trends among churches

**1. Multi-site churches** According to the book *Multi-Site Roadtrip*, an estimated 2,000 churches in America use the multi-site model. Travis: "If you're a large church, you're thinking multi-site."

**2. Social media** According to the Pew Research Center, 85 percent of 18 to 29-year-olds use social networking at least once a week. Senior pastors under 40 who are leading large churches all use social media. Travis: "This is a radical shift in how we understand leadership. Fifteen years ago, pastors were wondering how they could be less accessible. Today, younger pastors want more access."

### 3. Internet campuses

Turnkey solutions are being developed that make it cheap and accessible for all churches to incorporate an internet campus. Travis: "For some this will be a fad, but for others this is going to be a big part of their reaching strategy going forward."



**4. Online giving** It's here, and it's growing. If churches want to encourage donations from people in the pews, they're going to have to provide more natural ways for them to give. Travis: "Younger leaders recognize that no one carries cash or checkbooks anymore."

**5. Declining mobility rate** Americans have stopped uprooting (that is, relocating at least 10 miles from their current home) at the pace they used to. According to a Nielsen study, the percent of the U.S. population that moves is at an all-time low. This could spell trouble for churches whose growth is tied to the turnover rate.

Source: Dave Travis, *Christianity Today International/Leadership Journal*, christianitytoday.com

## 50 years ago...in the Baptist Bible Tribune

*In the* **NEWS of the WEEK**

**CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Cecil B. McLeod, Pastor  
Vidor, Texas

To The Tribune:

I am writing this letter with regard to the great revival meeting that we have just finished in our church. Bro. Homer Ritchie was our evangelist for one week. I can truthfully say it was the greatest meeting I have ever had the joy of being a part of, or in. We had people saved every service Bro. Ritchie preached. We have baptized 28 as a result of this meeting, plus a large number of additions to the church by letter.

The church was in a spirit of revival when Bro. Ritchie came and he certainly took advantage of the situation by preaching some of the most masterful and dynamic messages that I have ever heard. He is one of the greatest blessings this church has ever had to come its way.

In addition to what he did for this church in the way of soul winning, he also started the ball rolling toward this church sending me to the Holy Land. Last night we raised \$1,000 with only \$1,500 more to go; this will be no problem to raise. Had it not been for Bro. Ritchie, I doubt very seriously if this dream would ever had turned into a reality. I expect to leave sometime in the fall.

**CECIL B. McLEOD.**

---

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH**  
Homer G. Ritchie, Pastor  
Fort Worth 2, Texas

To The Tribune:

I just recently concluded one of the most successful revivals I have ever conducted in my ministry. Although the church averages between 275 to 300 in Sunday school, it experienced a community-wide revival. Never have I been in a church that has greater influence in its community than the Calvary Baptist church in Beaumont, of which Rev. Cecil McLeod is the good pastor. Thirty per cent of the congregations which crowded into the beautiful church auditorium were visitors. Business people, including bank presidents, and leading clergymen nightly attended the revival. It was the first meeting I ever conducted in which three times as many people were saved as compared with church attendance. If I remember correctly, we had 24 saved and seven or eight church additions. We experienced some amazing conversions, some of whom the church had been praying for for several years.

The people were truly awakened to the spiritual responsibilities and opportunities in their community. Although I had not known Bro. McLeod as well as some other preachers, I discovered that he is a congenial, spiritual and enthusiastic pastor. The townspeople speak most highly of him.

The revival was so successful that the pastor and church decided to continue the revival three days longer with the pastor doing the preaching.

During the meeting I urged the church to send its pastor to the Holy Land, and immediately large contributions were received.

You will be interested to know that in the last several Sundays we have had over 50 conversions in First Baptist and above 60 additions to the church. First Baptist is experiencing a revival and our hearts are thrilled to see God working so mightily in our midst.

**HOMER G. RITCHIE.**

Story appeared in the March 11, 1960 edition of the *Tribune*.

## Surprising facts about Christianity around the world

- **This past Sunday, it is possible that more Christian believers attended church in China than in all of so-called “Christian Europe.”** Yet in 1970 there were no legally functioning churches in all of China; only in 1971 did the communist regime allow for one Protestant and one Roman Catholic Church to hold public worship services, and this was mostly a concession to visiting Europeans and African students from Tanzania and Zambia.
- **This past Sunday, more Anglicans attended church in each of Kenya, South Africa, Tanzania, and Uganda than did Anglicans in Britain and Canada and Episcopalians in the United States combined** — and the number of Anglicans in church in Nigeria was several times the number in those other African countries.
- **This past Sunday, more Presbyterians were at church in Ghana than in Scotland,** and more were in congregations of the Uniting Presbyterian Church of Southern Africa than in the United States.
- **This past Sunday, the churches with the largest attendance in England and France had mostly black congregations.** About half of the churchgoers in London were African or African-Caribbean. Today, the largest Christian congregation in Europe is in Kiev, and it is pastored by a Nigerian of Pentecostal background.
- **This past week in Great Britain, at least 15,000 Christian foreign missionaries were hard at work evangelizing the locals.** Most of these missionaries are from Africa and Asia.

Source: Mark Noll, *The New Shape of World Christianity*

## Kids in Haiti

- Haiti has the highest rates of infant, under-five and maternal mortality in the Western hemisphere. Diarrhoea, respiratory infections, malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS are the leading causes of death.
- Some 60 percent of people, primarily in rural areas, lack access to basic health-care services.
- Numerous schools and hospitals have closed because teachers, social workers, and health providers could not go to work for fear of violence.



- It is estimated that about 5.6 percent of people aged 15-49 years old in Haiti are living with HIV/AIDS. This includes about 19,000 children. Antiretroviral drugs are extremely scarce.
- As many as 2,000 children a year are trafficked to the Dominican Republic, often with their parents' support.
- Only a little over half of primary school-age children are enrolled in school. Less than two percent of children finish secondary school.
- Approximately 1,000 children are working as messengers, spies, and even soldiers for armed gangs in Port Au Prince.

Source: [www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

## U.S. is most religious in industrialized world

With 89 percent of the population religious and 62 percent highly so, the United States is the most religious nation in the industrialized world, according to an international survey released this week.

Religiosity remains high among all adult age groups, according to the Bertelsmann Foundation's Religion Monitor, and large majorities of Catholics and Protestants say that their religious beliefs affect their political views.

In comparison, faith plays a far less significant role in developed European countries such as Britain, France, and Germany.

Dr. Martin Rieger, director of the Religion Monitor, said the results contradict the view that the world is becoming increasingly secular.

“The United States demonstrates that the role of religion does not necessarily decline even when countries have

achieved considerable economic, social and cultural progress,” he said in a statement.

The survey found that 85 percent of Americans believe in God and life after death, 80 percent pray regularly, and 75 percent attend religious services or visit a place of worship, with half going at least once a week.

In contrast, 48 percent of Britons, 46 percent of Frenchmen and 28 percent of Germans and Austrians are non-religious. Among European nations, only strongly Catholic Poland and Italy are as religious as the United States. Globally, American religiosity ranks between that of Europe's industrialized countries and that of developing countries such as Brazil, Guatemala, and Nigeria.

Source: Matthew Ray Brown on his In Good Faith blog, published at <http://weblogs.baltimoresun.com>.

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD  
PART 2

Third article in the series

# With Good Reason

by Keith Bassham

In my last article, I explained that I would not begin the section on the existence of God by using the classic formulations (for instance, explaining the teleological argument, the anthropological argument, the cosmological argument, etc.). My reasons were basically two. First, these articles are intended to give some guidance to the average Christian for defending his or her faith in ordinary life situations, so I'm less interested in the jargon and more interested in how the arguments work.

And in the second place, I want to leave room for a Christian apologetic that demonstrates God. After all, the goal is not to win a debate about whether God exists, but to show Him to others as One who deserves their faith and trust. In other words, our apologetics should ultimately be God-glorifying. Paul writes to the Colossians, "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man." (Colossians 4:5-6)

Also in the last article, I referenced to Tim Keller's idea of a ladder with three rungs, a ladder that takes someone from unbelief to belief. A person on the first rung will realize that it takes faith to disbelieve as well as to believe in God. A person on the second rung in the ladder sees that it takes more faith to disbelieve than to believe. And the third rung is where personal commitment leads to certainty of belief.

Before, we showed that the common arguments against the existence of God are not so hard to overcome, and that underlying them is the hidden assumption that believing in God is a matter of faith while disbelieving is a matter of science, or reason, or intellect, or whatever one may want to use as an antonym of believing. The idea there is that it is unreasonable to have faith in God when there are so many "proofs" against His existence. The representative "proof" arguments we looked at — the presence of evil, the misbehavior of believers, and the lack of proof certain — were answered. Further, we discover that a good many scientists

believe in God or some other higher power, indicating that science and technology have not ruled out belief in God. So if all the science and technology human intellect has gathered in the past six millennia have not effectively ruled out the existence of God, disbelief is just that — a matter of faith.

But how much faith does it take to disbelieve? Keller says it takes more to disbelieve than to believe. Why is that? Okay, here we might allow for a little jargon and introduce the term *the anthropic principle*. What that means is that it looks like the universe, or at least the part we know best, has been designed to produce and sustain humanity, and Christian apologists and scientists alike sometimes refer to the "fine-tuned universe."

Let's look at the problem from the other side, and assume for now God does not exist. Without God there is no Genesis creation, but somehow you have to explain how the universe came to be, and more importantly, you have to explain how we came to be.

The materialist's answer is chance. Random events. Everything we know about the universe — galaxies, stars, planets, and other astronomical phenomena — and everything we know about the earth — gravity, light, heat, life forms — all that we acknowledge to exist is here because of a series of random natural events.

So, what are the odds that this planet containing these life forms flourishing in these physical circumstances arose by chance within this universe? I will allow Sir Roger Penrose, an English mathematical physicist and Emeritus Rouse Ball, Professor of Mathematics at the Mathematical Institute, University of Oxford, and Emeritus Fellow of Wadham College, to give the numbers (I included all the *curricula vitae* so you would know he was not a Vegas bookie, by the way). In his book, *Large, Small, and the Human Mind*, he says, referring to the so-called Big Bang, "What is the probability that purely by chance the universe had an initial singularity even remotely as it does? The probability is less than one part in 10 to the 10th power and this 10th power to the 123rd power. Where does this estimate come from? It is derived from a formula by Jacob Beckenstein and Stephen Hawking.... What does this say about the precision that must be involved in setting up the Big Bang? It is really very, very extraordinary.... If I were to put one zero on each elementary particle in the universe, I still could not write the number down in full. It is a stupendous number."

Charles Edward White, professor of Christian thought and history at Spring Arbor University in Michigan, gives a few concrete examples of the problem:

*The fine-tuning of the universe is shown in the precise strengths of four basic forces. Gravity is the best known of these forces and is the weakest, with a relative strength of 1. Next comes the weak nuclear force that holds the neutron together. It is 10<sup>34</sup> times stronger than gravity but works only at subatomic distances. Electromagnetism is 1,000 times stronger than the weak nuclear force, and the strong nuclear force, which keeps protons together in the nucleus*

*of an atom, is 100 times stronger yet. If even one of these forces had a slightly different strength, the life-sustaining universe we know would be impossible.*

*If gravity were slightly stronger, all stars would be large, like the ones that produce iron and other heavier elements, but they would burn out too rapidly for the development of life. On the other hand, if gravity were weaker, the stars would endure, but none would produce the heavier elements necessary to form planets.*

*The weak nuclear force controls the decay of neutrons. If it were stronger, neutrons would decay more rapidly, and there would be nothing in the universe but hydrogen. However, if this force were weaker, all*

What is the probability that purely by chance the universe had an initial singularity even remotely as it does? **The probability is less than one part in 10 to the 10th power and this 10th power to the 123rd power.**

*the hydrogen would turn into helium and other elements.*

*The electromagnetic force binds atoms to one another to form molecules. If it were either weaker or stronger, no chemical bonds would form, so no life could exist.*

*Finally, the strong nuclear force overcomes the electromagnetic force and allows the atomic nucleus to exist. Like the weak nuclear force, changing it would produce a universe with only hydrogen or with no hydrogen.*

*In sum, without planets, hydrogen, and chemical bonds, there would be no life as we know it.*

*Besides these 4 factors, there are at least 25 others that require pinpoint precision to produce a universe that contains life. Getting each of them exactly right suggests the presence of an Intelligent De-*

*signer. ("God by the Numbers," Christianity Today, March 2006. The article is available at [www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/march/26.44.html](http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2006/march/26.44.html).)*

The British theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking summarizes the problem for non-believers in simpler language when he wrote in *A Brief History of Time*, "It would be very difficult to explain why the universe would have begun in just this way except as the act of God who intended to create beings like us." (p. 127)

Granted, all this does not prove the existence of God, and in fact there have been several alternative explanations, some of which include alien activity. But then you have to explain where they came from and how conditions for their existence arose... plus if you have intelligent aliens coming to earth to engineer the planet in a precise way, you are making quite a case for Intelligent Design.

Alvin Plantinga, the philosopher I referred to in an earlier article, makes a gambling-related point. He says that if a poker dealer deals himself 20 straight hands of four aces, the other players are going to accuse him of cheating. It may just be barely possible that he

dealt those winning hands purely by chance, but it's a lot more plausible to believe that he is cheating. And in the arena of apologetics, the Penrose numbers and the Hawking summary make the existence of God a much more plausible explanation for the fine-tuned universe.

So who is taking a greater leap of faith, the believer or the non-believer? But before we answer, maybe we can turn our attention to something else difficult to explain without God — the sense of moral right and wrong.

William Lane Craig begins the argument, "In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the whole moral duty of man can be summed up in the two great commandments: First, you shall love the Lord your God with all your strength and with all your soul and with all your heart and with all your mind, and, second, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On this foundation we can affirm the objective goodness and

rightness of love, generosity, self-sacrifice, and equality, and condemn as objectively evil and wrong selfishness, hatred, abuse, discrimination, and oppression.”

The atheist or non-believer may counter this by saying that you don't have to believe in God to have love, or generosity, or self-sacrifice, and so on. Actually, I agree. But the question is not, can you love or be generous or be sacrificial without believing in God, but is it possible for these qualities, and our judgment of their right-ness, to exist without God? In other words, why is it good to love rather than to hate another human? Why is it right to be generous and not selfish? What is the basis for our convictions about human rights? Nature observes the law of survival of the fittest — at what point and why did humans claim that nature's law of fitness is inappropriate for us and decide that self-sacrifice (the exact opposite of survival of the fittest) was laudable?

The evolutionist might say that somewhere along the line, humans decided it was biologically worthy, and maybe even necessary, to be moral for the survival of the species, and they created customs and laws in response. One prominent civil libertarian distrusts all notions of authority, human or otherwise, declaring that human rights and a sense of justice is just “there,” and somehow the race has discovered it.

But is it possible to have a basis for right and wrong without God? Ethicist Richard Taylor is just one among those who say no. He wrote, “The modern age, more or less repudiating the idea of a divine lawgiver, has nevertheless tried to retain the ideas of moral right and wrong, not noticing that, in casting God aside, they have also abolished the conditions of meaningfulness for moral right and wrong as well. Thus, even educated persons sometimes

declare that such things as war, or abortion, or the violation of certain human rights, are ‘morally wrong,’ and they imagine that they have said something true and significant. Educated people do not need to be told, however, that questions such as these have never been answered outside of religion. ....Contemporary writers in ethics, who blithely discourse upon moral right and wrong and moral obligation without any reference to religion, are really just

weaving intellectual webs from thin air; which amounts to saying that they discourse without meaning.” (*Ethics, Faith, and Reason*, pp. 2-3)

The argument for morality that is just “there” to be discovered begins to sound like the notions of right and wrong arose from an “accidental” moral Big Bang. And if you abandon that proposal and try to fall back on another godless explanation, say, like biological evolution, you are no better off. Keller argues, “Today we believe that sacrificing time, money, emotion,

and even life — especially for someone ‘not of our kind’ or tribe — is right.... How could that trait have come down by a process of natural selection? Such people would have been less likely to survive and pass on their genes.”

And finally, at the bottom of the equation, there is an abyss no one wishes to look into: if there is no God, there is no objective moral standard of right and wrong.

So here is the question. Is it more likely that these two facets of our existence, a fine-tuned universe and our sense of moral right and wrong, just happened?

Craig concludes, “If God does not exist, then it is plausible to think that there are no objective moral values, that we have no moral duties, and that there is no moral accountability for how we live and act. The horror of such a morally neutral world is obvious. If, on the

other hand, we hold, as it seems rational to do, that objective moral values and duties do exist, then we have good grounds for believing in the existence of God.”

Good grounds? Laying the fine-tuned universe down next to the necessity of objective moral values, we have just examined two large pieces of evidence to make the existence of God plausible, evidence that philosopher and theologian R. C. Sproul says is so compelling that a person has to override the senses to deny Him. And that is precisely what the Apostle Paul says happened when he wrote in Romans 1:18 that humans “hold the truth of God,” meaning they “hold down” or suppress the truth of God.

That is Keller's second rung: realization that it takes more faith to disbelieve than to believe in God, and yet a person will take that position all the while declaring that the believer is the irrational and unreasonable one.

But for those whose minds are open to the truth of the God who made us, there is the third rung of Keller's ladder, the one that takes us beyond plausibility, beyond probability, and on to certainty. This only comes with personal faith.

We have all read and heard the ubiquitous sermon illustrations about faith. The chair we must sit in, the jet we must board, the branch we must cling to else we fall over the cliff... all pictures of faith in action, and all true; each one teaching us to “...taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.” (Psalm 34:8)

Acknowledging God's existence is not the goal here. John 4:23 declares that God is seeking worshipers, not merely those who assent to his existence. And that is a partial explanation for atheism and agnosticism — it is an attempt to throw out God in order not to be under His authority, regardless of the evidence for His existence. New York University Professor Thomas Nagel wrote in 1997, “I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers.... It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want a universe like that.” (*The Last Word*, p. 130)

There it is. It comes down to a faith position on both sides, but which is the more plausible? You can believe in God, with good reason.



# Updates on the BBFI relief efforts from missionaries in Haiti and the BBFI Mission Office



## Camping out

I am camping out here and have limited or shared computer access. We have been giving out food, medical supplies, buckets of hope, tarps, water, clothes, shoes, tents, diapers, and other supplies. We have given out more than 10,000 individual meals and we have given direct aid to 15 churches. We continue to support, supply, inspect, and evaluate the needs of churches and national pastors, including the churches affiliated with late missionaries Mel Kirk and George Leslie Baker.

*BBFI Missionary Wes Lane*



## Hidden dangers

As I travel in with teams from our church, we are being very careful and using a lot of discernment. The government of Haiti and the United Nations now reports that there could be as many as 2,000,000 IDP's (Internally Displaced Persons) and there is plenty of evidence that people are hungry. This, combined with the problems of AIDS, outlaw gangs, poverty, and voodoo makes the current work in Haiti very challenging.

*BBFI Missionary Tom Franklin*



## With money given toward Haiti Relief (as of February 2):

1. Over 200 Buckets full of Hope have been made and most are now in Haiti. The contents can feed a family of four for over a week and includes a spiritual encouragement letter and a gospel tract in Creole
2. Over \$1,000 of medical supplies have been distributed to the D.A.S.H. clinic on Delmas #48, to Pastor Odvin's clinic, and to many pastors who have members with significant injuries
3. Seventy bags of concrete were purchased to begin reinforcing Pastor Leny's (Asian Baptist Clearing House) outer church wall for security purposes
4. A small, used, enclosed truck was purchased for \$1,700 to transport food, shelter, materials, and water from the airport, etc. to the churches
5. Over 20 bundles of water, an inverter, several new car batteries, solar and larger type flashlights have been given out
6. One large eight-man tent has been donated for base camp operations and for the deaf ministry students in Bro. Funtecha's church
7. A used Toyota van was purchased for \$3,500 to save money on transporting groups and supplies into Haiti. Bus tickets, one way, for groups of seven from Santo Domingo, cost over \$1,000
8. Paid armed guard from the Dominican Military to accompany 2,500 pounds of relief supplies
9. Initial gasoline and diesel deposit has been established
10. Several cash offerings to Haitian pastors have been made in extreme cases

## Assessing needs

I've completed initial evaluations on 16 different churches in the affected area with quite a few left to go. We are currently working on body recovery at Eglise Baptise de Don Burger and Eglise Du Tabernacle. We are prioritizing churches' and members' needs, applying for aid from the World Food Program, OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), and several NGOs (Non Governmental Organizations), coordinating and organizing efforts from different church groups, meeting with key leaders at the American Embassy, United Nations base, field hospitals and clinics. I am logging GPS coordinates and elevation data and last night began contacting specific NGOs that could advise us on low-cost permanent housing that can withstand future earthquakes and hurricanes.

Approximately half of the churches evaluated have been initially classified as destroyed and/or condemned, attendance is down approximately 50 percent in most of the churches and in several cases churches cannot have services. I have, in my first group of initial evaluations, 16 pastors/full-time workers who have lost their homes and three pastors/full-time workers homes that need repair. Between 2,000 to 3,000 in these works need food, and approximately 35 percent need shelter. In most cases, everyone has lost their jobs and all report deaths and/or injuries to church members. One pastor reported that he has had 26 funerals in the last few weeks.

*BBFI Missionary Tom Franklin*



## Mission Office announces plans for Haiti Rebuilding Phase

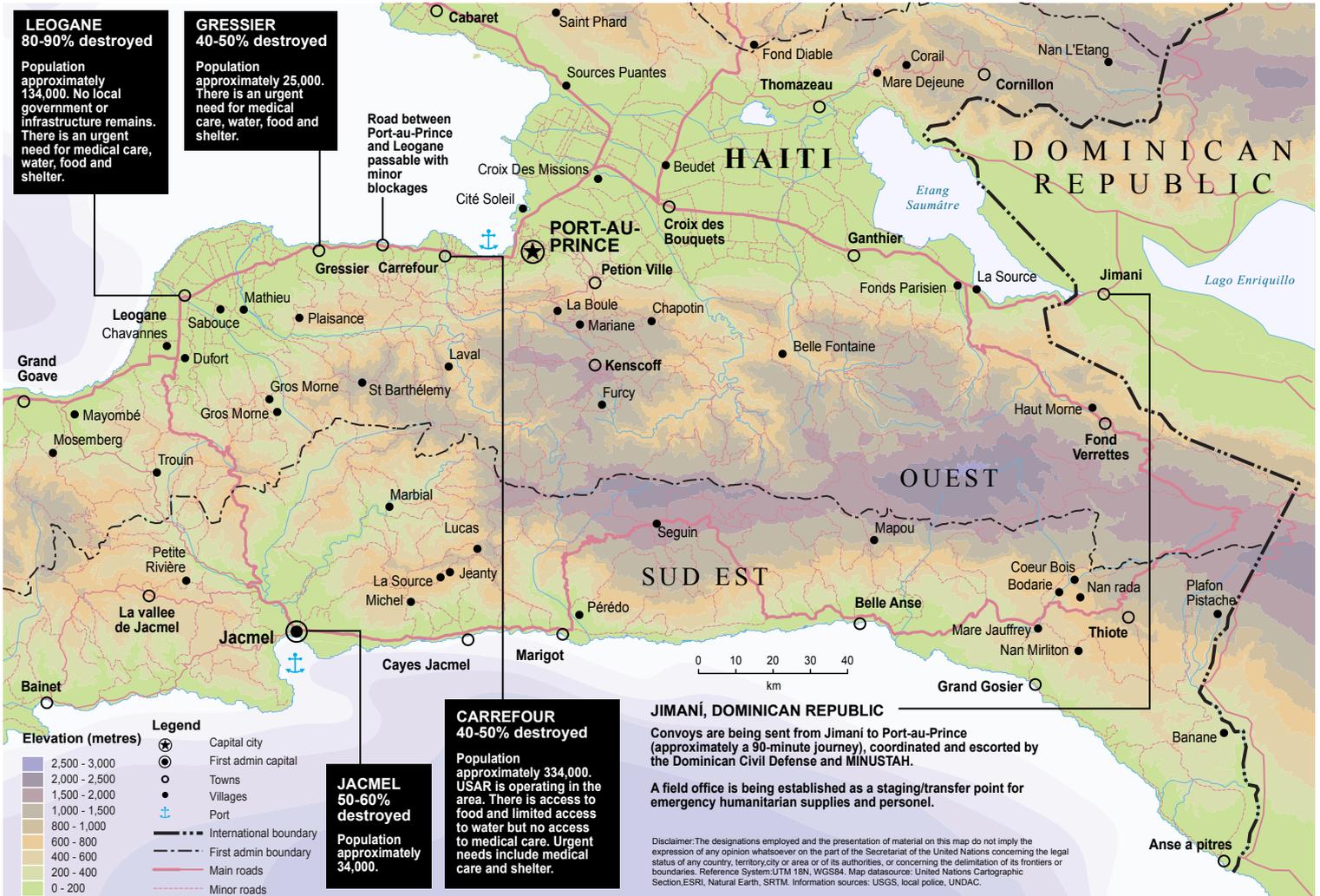
BBFI Mission Director Jon Konnerup has announced extended plans for a Rebuilding Phase for Haiti. Konnerup says, "Right now, we are in the Relief Phase, providing initial assistance for daily needs. This will continue for at least one more month. At the same time, we have begun the Assessment Phase looking at the best way to prepare for the third phase — the Rebuilding Phase."

## Jennings to coordinate Haiti Rebuilding Phase Stateside

Pastor Dennis Jennings of Cherry Street Baptist Church, Springfield, Missouri, has offered to coordinate teams from U.S. churches for the Rebuilding Phase. The Mission Office will have an active role, working side-by-side with Jennings. Pastors and mission leaders who want to send a team or join a team this summer to minister with the Rebuilding Phase should contact Sally Gritts in the Mission Office at [sally@bbfmissions.com](mailto:sally@bbfmissions.com). Updated information is available on the Mission Office website, [www.bbfmissions.com](http://www.bbfmissions.com) or by following the Mission Office Twitter account.



## Haiti - Damage Assessed in Surrounding Towns



# The story of Gregoire

by Mike Randall

**D**oes the gospel of Jesus Christ really change lives and people? Does missionary work make a difference? Are believers living in a primitive culture genuine? Should we invest in BBFI missionaries like Elmer and Mary Deal? An inspirational answer to these questions is found in the story of Gregoire (pronounced GREG'-wahr), the first significant conversion in the ministry of Elmer and Mary Deal.

The Deals were sitting in their first African home, eating their lunch on a fine April day in 1960, when a short, young African man came to their open window and asked if they were the missionaries. Elmer and Mary replied that they were and invited him in. He was very interested in the word from God and wanted to talk to Elmer about the gospel of Jesus Christ. He had walked about 150 miles over several days from his village on the west side of Lake Tanganyika. He was looking for the Deals, who lived in the country, five miles from Albertville/Kalemie, a town on the western shore of Lake Tanganyika, in what was then called the Belgian Congo. Elmer wasn't fluent in Swahili yet, so he instructed him by looking up verses in his English Bible and having Gregoire find the same verses in his Swahili Bible. After several hours, Elmer had prayer with Gregoire and he left.

Gregoire came back for another session the next day and more on the days following. In this process, the Deals discovered that Gregoire was the son of a Batabwa tribal witch doctor and in line to succeed him. Yet, he was earnestly and seriously interested in the gospel. On his own each night, Gregoire reviewed all the Bible verses Elmer showed him. Soon, despite language limitations, Elmer was able to lead Gregoire to Christ. On the sixth day after this process began, Gregoire showed up at the Deal's home carrying a large number of fetishes and idols. He gave them to Elmer and

Mary, held up his Swahili Bible, and said, "I don't need these fetishes and idols any more. All I need is the Word of God." Deal described those animistic idols as small clay images that looked like strange animals. A fetish might be bird feathers tied together, or a small bottle with some liquid in it, or the petrified head of a rooster. Gregoire's people worshiped these things, believing they had a spirit that could help or hurt them.

Immediately, Gregoire began telling people everywhere what he had learned. He went on his own to nearby villages, distributing tracts Elmer gave him and preaching. He won many to Christ. Elmer continued to disciple him one on one. Gregoire became part of Deal's gospel team to evangelize villages, often being the featured preacher.

When Gregoire won his younger sister to the Lord, Elmer rejoiced, but Gregoire's father was very displeased. He brought a band of his followers to Gregoire's house and demanded that he renounce Christ. They chanted and danced around his house. They placed idols and fetishes on the ground. Gregoire responded by playing gospel messages in their native dialect on a hand-crank record player Elmer gave him. Finally, Gregoire came out of his house, gathered up the idols and fetishes, and dumped them into an open toilet hole a few yards away. Incensed, his father and his band cursed Gregoire. Then they left.

Gregoire witnessed to all his family. When his mother became ill, he brought Elmer to visit her. As Elmer talked to her, he saw that she understood more than he expected. Before the end of their conversation, Elmer led her to the Lord. She, like Gregoire, immediately shared her new faith with friends and family. Gregoire and Elmer were elated. Later she passed away and Elmer was able to share the gospel with a large group at her graveside funeral.

During a time of unrest, Baluba tribal

warriors overran the area where Gregoire lived. A band of warriors confronted him at his house and demanded that he, a Batabwa, bathe in their tribal medicine and thus become one with them. If he didn't they threatened to kill him, his wife, and young son. The Balubas believed that if they bathed in the "medicine" concocted by their witch doctor, they would be protected from harm in battle. By this means, the Balubas conscripted people from other tribes. Fearing the consequences, Gregoire submitted.

After that uprising passed, Gregoire was disturbed and confessed privately to what he had done. He asked forgiveness from God, from Elmer, and from the other Christians. He vowed never to do it again.

A few months later, the Balubas overran the area again, and when he refused to bathe in their "medicine," they captured him. As soon as she could, Gregoire's wife, Maria, told Elmer Deal. He immediately obtained a patrol of ten U.N. troops and began a search. Just before dark, Deal and the patrol located Gregoire, along with several other Christians at the back of a village. Balubas, with clubs, machetes, and other weapons, stood aside as a U.N. Major and his patrol freed the captives. Gregoire explained that they were captured because they told the Balubas, "We do not need your medicine because God is protecting us."

In the dark of the next morning, Gregoire was captured again. This time the Balubas slapped, kicked, and beat him as he was taken away. They let him and the others go free after

intimidating them and getting a month's wages as ransom. Afterward, when Elmer questioned him, Gregoire quoted Matthew 10:17-20 and Matthew 5:10-12, "Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and



*Elmer and Mary Deal in their first house in Africa*

shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."

Gregoire grew in his faith and courage. He became a strong associate in Elmer Deal's ministry. Besides village evangelism, Gregoire preached and helped Deal organize his first church in Lubeleyi village. He became the first African pastor of Central Baptist Church of Albertville/Kalemie. He taught alongside Deal in the city school and accompanied him to provide food and other supplies to refugees in the surrounding area. He was instrumental in beginning a gospel outreach to the Moba area

and tribe of his birth.

When the Simba rebels took control of Albertville/Kalemie and the surrounding area in 1964, a Simba patrol came to Gregoire's home at about 10:00 on a Saturday night and began to interrogate him about furniture he was storing for a neighbor whose house had burned down.

The warriors accused Gregoire of stealing the furniture and took him prisoner. After beating him for a period of time, they were incensed by his response and carried him to the Lukuga River bridge. There, bound hand and foot, they threw him into the raging high waters.

Mwanangwa, a Christian that had also been taken prisoner with Gregoire, said he overheard the soldiers when they returned to their post. They said, "We have just killed a good Christian man. When we would beat him he would only pray. As we threw him off the bridge he prayed, "Mungu unisamehe," (God forgive me). He went under and came up and cried this same prayer again. The last time he came up he prayed, "Mungu pokea roho yangu," (God receive my spirit) and was seen no more. The turbulent, muddy, crocodile-infested waters of the Lukuga River claimed the life of a great, young Christian preacher. He had only been a Christian four years, but his life, his faith, and courage would have a lasting influence for Christ.

Since his death, the story of Gregoire has become an example and challenge to a whole generation of Christians in the Congo. Hundreds of other young Africans have picked up his mantle and carried the gospel to their countrymen. The Gregoire Memorial Baptist Church in Moba, which was established by a young man whom Gregoire won to Christ, is still going strong. Deal reports that a large number from Gregoire's tribe have accepted Christ and numbers of churches have been established among them. In all, through Deal's ministry, over 155 new churches have been planted in the Congo since Gregoire was martyred. Tertullian was right: "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church."



*Gregoire Memorial Baptist Church in Moba*

*Note: For more information about Gregoire and other inspirational stories about African Christians, read Elmer Deal's autobiography, **Out of the Mouth of the Lion!** Order it at [craigcountybaptist.com](http://craigcountybaptist.com) or phone 918-256-7255.*



## Center of the action

**T**he creak of the ox cart in Thessalonica. The scream of the traffic cop's whistle in New Orleans. The call of the shopkeeper hawking merchandise in Corinth's bustling market. The conductor's baton taps the music stand calling the rehearsing St. Louis Symphony to attention. The roar of 30,000 throats in the Aphrodisias stadium. The collective moan rises from the masses at Wrigley field.

From the moment they said "Come let's build a city and a tower that will reach into heaven..." cities have been the center of the action. Okay, the tower of Babel didn't make it very far, but the concept seems to be memorialized in the ziggurats of Mesopotamia. The city-state idea persisted for centuries. The ancient world was run by cities from Babylon to Beijing, from Antioch to Alexandria. The power, the ideas, the influence flowed from cities.

Before the archeologists broke the news, Bible readers knew about Ur, Jericho, and Nineveh. Who could have known that 2,000 years before Christ, a gathering of people on a rocky crag called Jerusalem would be the center of the world's attention for generations to come. Ephesus, Athens, and Rome all figure prominently into the story of the early church.

More recently, we have witnessed global urbanization. The industrial revolution powered a gathering of population in urban centers growing villages to towns, towns to small cities, small cities to medium-sized cities, medium to large, large cities to megalopolises.

Cities run the world. The daily global chatter is "Beijing said today..." "Washington will proceed with its..." "Moscow is moving toward..."

There are many kinds of cities: political cities (Washington D.C., London, Beijing), cul-

tural cities (Paris, Milan, St. Petersburg, Cairo), cities of entertainment and leisure (Miami, Las Vegas, Rio), and commercial cities (Hong Kong, Dubai). These are world-class cities, meaning they are of such size and influence that they maintain significant position in the international network of urban centers.

The character of cities is unique. Everything urban is magnified, multiplied, and intensified. The good. The bad. The ugly. Cities are centers of culture, education, and technological sophistication.

There are also more sinners per square inch in cities so the political power tends not to be of the cleanest sort. The "culture" can show its dark side quickly. The media can be sleazy. All of that and more. The density of cities creates potential for anonymity, which can provide cover for depravity.

Cities do what cities do. Cities function as distribution engines. Whatever is in them will be distributed. Urban centers are huge amplifiers. They will amplify whatever is in them. Cities are sociological hilltops. Whatever is in them will roll or flow down the hill into the surrounding social structure and culture.

This is precisely why God chose to use cities to evangelize the world. The gospel was first preached in cities by divine direction. The Holy Spirit chose cities as the first places for local churches to be founded, so the power and influence of the gospel would not only impact the city itself but also be distributed and amplified from the city. This is what happened. We read the record and see evidence of the world being evangelized within 100 years of Christ's ministry. No web, no wireless communication, no air travel, no printing presses. How was this incredible feat accomplished? The power of cities.

# URBAN CURRENT

In God's plan, in God's program, in God's work, the city is where the action is. If cities are central to God's plan, what ramifications are there for our lives? "But I'm not in a city," you say. "I'm not called to the city," you protest.

You can participate in the activity of God in and through cities worldwide.

1. **Educate yourself.** What is the largest city close to you? What is the population? Who is the mayor? Who are some of God's people in that city?
2. **Visit a large city.**
3. **Vacation in a large city.**
4. **Get to know some urban Christians.** These days technology makes almost anything possible and fast.
5. **Pray for cities and God's workers in them.** Make a list of the world's 10 largest cities and start there.
6. **Are there local churches, Christian ministries, urban Christians who need financial support who you could help?**
7. As you become more knowledgeable, **are there urban ministries you or your church can partner with in some way?**
8. **Pursue employment and/or a promotion that takes you toward the city instead of away from it.**

The city is where the action is. We can all be part of the action, in some way, on some level. It will matter in eternity.

by Charles Lyons, Pastor  
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# Muslim, but open to the gospel



*By Jon Konnerup – BBFI Mission Director*

Rina's dad was near death and almost in a coma. His time was short. While her Muslim family was reading the Quran to him during his last moments, Rina was whispering in his ear, "Don't listen to them, dad. Remember what I told you. All you have to do is believe in Jesus." She kept whispering louder and louder as the readings by her family continued. It was not long until Rina's dad passed on into eternity. Where he is today, Rina is not sure — she can only hope.

This is what it's like for many Christians who live in the country of Indonesia, the fourth largest populated nation with 240.3 million people. Although it's home to the world's largest Muslim population, it is open to the gospel. Since the mid '70s, it has been illegal to pass out Christian tracts or visit people house to house. However, there are still limitless opportunities to present the gospel in a country many have considered to be closed.

Today there are two BBFI missionary families serving in Indonesia. Tom and Janice Crawford were the first to enter in 1973. Larry and Nancy Quinlan arrived 22 years ago.

Considering the large population of Indonesia, it's amazing how few independent Baptist missionaries have served there throughout the years. In January 2010, BBFI President Mark Hodges and I had the opportunity to visit Indonesia and to speak



*Indonesian pastors gather together for a conference*



*Jon Konnerup (right) with Larry Quinlan (left) and a small church*





Larry and Nancy Quinlan in a local shop

## God is as compassionate toward the Indonesian held captive for centuries as He is toward anyone else in the world.

at a pastors' conference attended by over 175 pastors, missionaries, and Christian workers. Their zeal and commitment was heart stirring, to say the least, as they often face enormous hostility.

Satan is not happy that the light of Jesus is shining in one of his long-time strongholds. Sometimes church buildings are closed down; however, the church (the people) just moves to another location and continues following their Savior. The churches I attended all shared a strong desire for more missionaries, more training of national pastors and leaders, and a deep commitment to reach their country for Christ.

The world's third largest mosque is located in Jakarta, the capitol city of Indonesia. Every day, five times a day, one can hear the calls to prayer coming from numerous mosques all over the city. Every time I heard these calls to prayer I was reminded of Jesus' call to prayer in Matthew 9:37-38, "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." I

wonder if we are as faithful in our prayers to the only true and living God as they are to a false god.

During my entire visit, my prayer was for more laborers to go to this seemingly "closed" country that, in reality, is a wide-open country. Indonesia has more than 300 ethnic groups and over 17,000 islands, one of which is the world's most-populated island. Their language is believed to be one of the easier languages to learn since it uses the Latin alphabet. God is as compassionate toward the Indonesian held captive for centuries as He is toward anyone else in the world. I believe He is calling someone to share the wonderful story of His love with these millions to ultimately set them free from captivity and bondage to sin.

Will we be moved with the same compassion that Jesus had for those He saw as lost without a shepherd? We know the time is short and the believers in Indonesia are calling for help — help to reach their friends and families so they won't feel the hopelessness when they pass on into eternity.

BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

# A refreshing spring semester



by Jim Edge | President | Baptist Bible College

**B**aptist Bible College will celebrate 60 years of service to our Fellowship this coming May. Over those years, countless thousands of students have walked the halls, listened in class, and received inspiration in chapel. The story of Baptist Bible College is a story of people — over 12,000 people who have left this campus to work for Christ. Many of these men and women are still in full-time ministry today. Others, while not employed full time by a church, are serving the Lord and their church in a culture that needs the light of the gospel desperately. The goal of BBC is to train your young men and women, your best and brightest, in Christian ministry. We want them to leave this place filled with the Holy Spirit, equipped by a conservative Christian worldview, and undergirded with a knowledge and ability to study for themselves God’s holy Word. The story of Baptist Bible College is a story of people.

One such person is our student body president, Lauren Wilcox. Lauren has been married for seven months to her husband, Oron. They are from Ashland, Ohio, where her father is pastor of Trinity Baptist Church. She was saved at the age of 12 and surrendered her life to the Lord at Camp Chautauqua under the ministry of Bruce Humbert during her sophomore year in high school. It was also at camp that she heard a Baptist Bible College singing group and decided to visit the college.

Today, Lauren is a senior with a double major in both business management and elementary education. She also plays on the girls’ basketball team and is student council president. About her time at BBC, Lauren states, “During the past four years I have grown tremendously as a Christian and as a person. We receive instruction in the classroom, but we are also challenged to put what we’ve learned into action. When missionaries come, we are challenged to move outside our little world to the lost. We see how ministry can be done creatively. And one of the biggest blessings is that I have made friends for life during my time here.”



Oron and Lauren Wilcox

After graduation in May, Lauren and Oron plan to pursue their dream of beginning a non-profit construction company that will help missionaries on the field complete their facility needs at a low cost.

Oron and Lauren are just two of 466 undergraduate students on campus this semester. Combined with 79 students enrolled in the graduate programs, the total enrollment for the semester is 545. All are students that you have sent us to mold and train to serve Christ. I continually challenge our faculty to know our students by name and by story, because every name and every story is important to God’s plan.

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BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE

## Harry Boyle with the Lord



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

Just a few days ago, our chancellor, our much-loved former president, and the best friend Boston Baptist College has ever had, Dr. Harry Boyle, went to Heaven. He had fought numerous serious health issues for years, but his passing still caught us off guard. Just days earlier we joked to each other on the phone. Now, days after his death, I just don't know what to say.

I want you to know what a contribution Bro. Boyle made. I would like to find some way to explain it. You surely know that he was the president of our college for almost 20 years. Those were largely very difficult years, trying to mature our college to stability. The short of it is that he simply would not let us fail. As I have thought about it since that Thursday morning, I have come to conclude that perhaps no other person had the potential (humanly speaking) to grow up Boston Baptist College. Bro. Boyle had the strength of his own ministry at Grace Baptist Church in Portland, Maine, he had the reputation among preachers, he had the strength and tenacity to see it through, and he had the heart to make it happen. It is all even more impressive to me now, somehow, than it has ever been before. I wish I could explain it better to you, but I just don't know what to say.

Our campus is just not the same. I cannot really grasp yet that Bro. Boyle will never come back to his office across the hall, that he will never poke his head in my door and say, "Hey, buddy!" with that big smile of his, that he will never again mingle again with our students, poking guys in the ribs, giving grandfatherly hugs to young ladies, creating smiles all around. I wish I had some way to do justice in explaining the hole this leaves in our college family. I just don't know what to say.

I am already thinking about commencement in May. I have no memory, none, of a graduate from this college not standing on the platform getting a diploma from Dr. Boyle. I still have to figure out how somebody can finish at Boston without that. He stood there handing out diplomas with a particular joy, and then if the graduate was from Portland, oh boy, forget protocol. I remember one young lady in particular... I wouldn't be surprised if Bro. Boyle had paid for most of her education personally. She didn't get a handshake with her diploma... I thought they would squeeze each other in half — they were both so full of joy. What am I supposed to do to make up for that experience for the class of 2010 and all those who come after? I don't know what to do. I don't know what to say.

How about this, who of the Boston students who went to Italy on a study trip with Bro. Boyle can ever forget him reading II Timothy 4 to us in the ruins of Nero's Judgment Hall on the top of the Palatine Hill in Rome? His voice cracked as he read, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." Nobody who was there will ever forget that memory. I cannot tell you what

(continued on page 20)

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(Boyle continued)

that moment was like.

Harry Boyle was a preacher's preacher. He was a people's pastor. Boston Baptist College will forever be indebted to Grace Baptist for sharing

Pastor Boyle with us. His impact on staff and students alike simply cannot be measured — really it was his impact on everybody he met. My 13-year-old, Samuel, had a special friendship

with Dr. Boyle. Sam publicly proclaimed at a banquet last year that he was Dr. Boyle's favorite. People laughed, but they did have something really cool between them. A young boy and a legend. I picked up Samuel from school the day Dr. Boyle went to be with the Lord, still grasping for some way to tell my son the news. Samuel jumped in the car, and before I could get a syllable through the lump in my throat, my boy said, "I know, I got an email on my phone." Then the tears came — for both of us, and countless others around the globe. None of us know what to say. There just are no words.



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# Children's ministry training at Cool Kids Kollege

Miamisburg, OH

Cool Kids Kollege, held at the Chautauqua Youth Camp, will take place March 19-20. Hosted by Steve Harney and Cool Kids Ministries, this college weekend is for those interested in children's ministry.

This year's theme is "Working On, Not Just In" children's ministry. "It is designed to get us all to take a step back and look at what we are doing and ask ourselves a simple question, 'Is this working?' If it isn't," says Harney, "then what can we do to change it and make it better?"

Fifteen speakers from across the nation will share their expertise on how to be better prepared, equipped, and excited to reach this generation. The speakers include Ronnie Caldwell, Scott Phillips (head of the children's ministry department at Liberty University), Sheldon Rhodes, Greg Hamilton, Jill Harrington, Dave Hill, the One Team, the E-Team, and Soul Patrol. They will cover topics such as having a successful after-school program, getting into the public school to minister to students, being an effective storytell-

er, using technology in the classroom including creating videos and graphics, reaching parents, disciplining children effectively, organizing records, creating an E-Team (children evangelizing other children), and training children how to minister and serve while they are young.

This year's attendance is expected to surpass

last year's record-breaking 220. For more information, go to [www.coolkidskollege.com](http://www.coolkidskollege.com) or contact Steve Harney at (606) 305-4218 or [steve@coolkidsministries.com](mailto:steve@coolkidsministries.com).

Kid Kollege West will take place November 5-6 at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri.

## Texas BBF meets in Galveston

Galveston, TX

Part of the crowd of about 175 preachers and wives who attended the January Texas BBF meeting at Moody Gardens in Galveston, Texas, January 18-20. The event included a banquet Monday evening, workshops, worship services, shopping outings, and golf. Special guest preacher for the event was Larry Upchurch of MidWay Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, who spoke on stewardship. Guests stayed at the Moody Gardens Hotel and Spa Resort. Rick Carter is the chairman of the Texas BBF.



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# Nebraska pastor leads chaplain's conference in El Salvador

Lincoln, NE

Pastor Gary Fuller of Gentle Shepherd Baptist in Lincoln, Nebraska, led a symposium of police chaplains in El Salvador while visiting Central America in January.

Fuller was visiting missionary Herbert Breucop when called upon to address the Capellan Policial Cristiano (The Christian Police Chaplains of El Salvador) Wednesday, January 20, in the central police station of the country.

During his three-hour presentation, he challenged the 60 police employees in attendance, including the social services department, administrators, chaplains, officers, and swat

team members, to enhance the police effectiveness and esteem in the community by following up with victims of crime, offering assistance, services, spiritual help, youth work, counseling, transportation, pastoral, and other practical services to the citizenry.

According to Fuller, the country's chief of police asked him to plant the seed of community ministry, or what Fuller calls "a ministry of presence." Fuller reports that what began as a presentation of the model used by his home chaplaincy corps became a revival service complete with praise, worship, singing, preaching, and special prayer. Two chaplains who were present minister to police in areas where witchcraft is rampant. The



Nebraska pastor and police chaplain Gary Fuller praying with an El Salvadoran police department employee. Fuller spoke to Capellan Policial Cristiano during his mission trip to Central America in January.

social workers seemed overwhelmed by their task, and several came forward in an invitation for special prayer and to ask for the Lord's power upon their ministry.

The Policia Civil Nacional (National Civil Police) and the Capellan Policial Cristiano invited Fuller back for another seminar next year.

# Lawrences celebrate 50th wedding anniversary

Hattiesburg, MS

Grant "Larry" and Faye Lawrence celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on December 24 with their children and grandchildren. Lawrence has pastored churches in Ohio, Indiana, Virginia, and Mississippi. He has been the pastor of Manchester Road Baptist Church in Franklin, Ohio, for nine years.

Grant and Faye graduated from Baptist Bible College in 1969 and 1970. He has served the Baptist Bible Fellowship in different capacities throughout his years of ministry, including as the academic dean of Atlantic Baptist Bible College.



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# Lighthouse church plant chartered in Ohio

Xenia, OH

Lighthouse Baptist Church in Xenia, a church plant from Lighthouse Baptist Church in Chillicothe, Ohio, chartered on Sunday, January 31, with 101 members.

Since the church's inception in August 2009, Lighthouse has had 216 people saved, 39 follow the Lord in baptism, and 537 recorded first-time visitors. Sunday morning attendance has averaged over 130 people and the church is now self-supporting with a full-time pastor and has a weekly



Charter members of Lighthouse Baptist Church



The Bevan family

average offering of over \$2,300.

After Josh Bevan and his wife, Candace, graduated from Baptist Bible College in 2003, they moved to Chillicothe, Ohio, to help start the Chillicothe Lighthouse Baptist Church with Pastor Ryan Bevan. For the next six years, Josh served as the youth minister and assistant pastor there. In the spring of 2008, Josh and Candace felt God calling them to start a church in Xenia and they surrendered to that call.

Bevan was ordained in January 2009 and in June of that year he and his family moved to Xenia. That summer, with the help of other fellowship churches, they began to canvass the city and within three weeks held their first Wednesday Bible study with 31 people in attendance.

The church began holding Sunday after-

noon services in August in the 1500-square-foot conference room of the Holiday Inn. They rented a room for the nursery and the junior church and youth classes met in separate locations in a dining area. By the end of August, they averaged 87 people in attendance with a high of 107, and had had 165 first-time visitors "After starting with just eight people from the church in Chillicothe, including my family of five along with Eric and Ashley Woodworth and Gavin Anderson, God quickly began to show His desire to see a church started in the city of Xenia," states Bevan.

In September, Lighthouse began holding Sunday morning and evening services. Their Grand Opening service took place September 6 with a gospel concert by "Soul'd Out Quartet". There were 170 people in attendance that morning and 40 first-time visitors.

"My wife and I had prayed for the last year that 100 people would come to know Christ by the Grand Opening service," says Bevan. "God not only answered that prayer, but exceeded it by allowing us to see 119 souls call out to Christ for salvation by the Grand Opening!"

The church outgrew the Holiday Inn, so in September they moved to the Greene County Fairgrounds Dining Hall. This new location offered more than twice the room for \$7 more a week.

Bevan praises God for the work He has done and says that with the help and support of the Ohio Baptist Bible Fellowship along with 20 other churches who sent financial support, God has planted and established an exciting and thriving new church in Xenia.



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# Adrian celebrates 50 years in ministry, 22 at TRBC

Phoenix, AZ

On January 24, 2010, special services were held to celebrate Ken and Judy Adrian's 22 years of service at Thomas Road Baptist Church and 50 years in the gospel ministry. During the celebration, Ken Adrian passed the baton of senior pastor to his associate, Daniel Dennis. Adrian will stay on at TRBC and take the position of teaching pastor.

The Adrians were honored with video congratulations from Jan Brewer (governor of Arizona), David Stokes (pastor of Fair Oaks Church, Fair Oaks, Virginia), and Keith Gandy (missionary to Germany), along with a short video of their 50 years in ministry. The chairman of the deacons made several presentations on behalf of the church, which included an Acura RL, a mission trip to the Philippines to minister with Greg Lyons, and a Hawaiian vacation on their return route.

Tim Adrian, Ken and Judy's son and pastor of Westside Baptist Church, Hutchinson, Kansas, preached on "Some things change while other things stay the same" from Joshua 1. After the morning service, *hors d'oeuvres* were served along with a meal. Several pastors helped celebrate with the congregation, including Kent and Julie York and missionaries Leonard and Susie Smith.

Daniel Dennis began working at Thomas Road Baptist church under Ken Adrian in 2006. He was a saved as a young boy at Sandusky

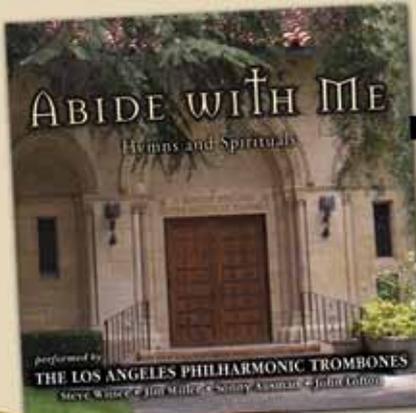
Baptist Temple, where his dad, Russell Dennis, pastored (now pastored by Wally Gilbert). He attended Heritage Baptist College in Indianapolis where he worked until 2003. He moved to the Phoenix area to be the principal of Palm's Academy where he served until becoming the associate at TRBC.



The Adrians (right) with the Dennises

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## Iowa church celebrates debt-free status

Ames, IA

Heartland Baptist Church in Ames, Iowa, celebrated "Victory Sunday" January 31 as they burned their mortgage, retiring \$1 million of debt on land and buildings. With almost 600 in attendance, the crowd included the church's bank president and Ames's mayor. Pastor Randy Abell related how "the Lord has blessed and provided even in tough economic times and a very harsh winter." He also thanked God "for the many souls that have been saved and added to the church in the last seven years."

Randy graduated from Baptist Bible Graduate School in 2003 and restarted a church of 12 adults, adding Baptist to the congregation's name and remodeling an old auction barn on the north side of Ames. Since then, the church



Heartland Baptist Church gathered together for Victory Sunday

has twice built structural additions and average attendance has climbed to over 400. Heartland also started a Christian school and a Bible institute, and the congregation supports over 30 missionaries and is very involved in Iowa church planting.

Abell says the church will now begin praying for what the Lord would want next as their current buildings are already overflowing. Abell

thanked the church for their faithfulness, and he mentioned appreciation for his wife for allowing him to work long hours over the last seven years. He also thanked the Iowa Baptist Bible Fellowship for an interest-free loan he received when he first arrived in Ames. He said, "I am thankful for all the wonderful friendships in the BBF that have helped lead our church to victory!"

## Don Elmore and Temple Baptist celebrate 30 years

Springdale, AR

Temple Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas, celebrated the 30th anniversary of Don Elmore serving as their pastor December 20, 2009. As a surprise gift, the church gave Don and his wife, Lona, a trip to Branson and revealed plans to build a shop building in the back yard of the pastor's home. Don says, "It was a very sweet day and the love of this people is overwhelming. It is a delight to pastor this people." In the photo, Pastor Elmore (center) poses with some of his deacons.



## Good news, bad news for Keller missionary family

Sam and Karen Keller — Australia

Last year had some good news and bad news. It started out with the bad news: in February 2009, Karen was told she had only three months to live. She was in stage four of liver failure, and any kind of infection would be fatal for her. She was in the hospital ER nine times in the first six months of the year, and in three of those she was not expected to live. She was disoriented, weak, and getting worse.

Then the good news: due to the generosity and prayer of our supporting churches, our family, and many friends, she was able to go a doctor right

here in New Mexico who was having some great success with a new treatment of the liver. He has been used of God to restore Karen's liver. On her last test, her liver function was in low normal range. She has been going to him once a month since the initial treatment of two weeks, and he has now cut it down to once every two months!

All of this has come at a high price, and not only financially (\$1,500 each trip) but in time and energy. I have not been able to travel and report to our churches, although I have been in several

conferences, and late last year Karen was able to go with me to one.

While we were on the field, our sending church was able to make up our lack of support due to attrition, but that is not possible now, and we are in great need of added support. Please continue to pray for us, and if you need a veteran missionary in your mission conference, I am now available and Karen might be able to go some.

## A. Lucius (Lou) Hill

Nampa, ID



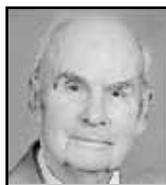
BBFI pastor A. Lucius (Lou) Hill left this life January 28, 2010 at 64 years of age after a battle with bladder cancer. He was born January 15, 1946, in Amarillo, Texas. Lou married his wife, Pamela, in June 12, 1966. He pastored four churches in the U.S. during the last 30 years and led each of them to be strong, mission-minded churches. His heart for missions and his belief that missions is the primary job of the church played a strong part in his willingness to answer God's call to be the Executive Director of Balkan States Ministries.

Lou is survived by his wife of 43 years, three daughters, and nine grandchildren. Memorial services were held January 30 at Bridgepoint Church, Boise, Idaho, and February 5 at Lakewood Baptist Church, Irving, Texas.



## Ralph Van Nortwick

Hamilton, OH



Ralph Van Nortwick, member of the first graduating class of Fundamental Baptist Bible Institute in Ft. Worth, Texas, in 1940, passed from this life January 21, 2010, at the age of 100 years. He was born November 22, 1909, in Wilkes Barre, Pennsylvania, and married Lucile E. Mack in Schenectady, New York, in 1934.

He prepared for the ministry in Ft. Worth, and the couple moved to Hamilton, Ohio, in 1952, when he started the Lindenwald Baptist Church where he was the pastor for 25 years. He has maintained an active ministry throughout life. He recently celebrated his 100th birthday with a reception of family and friends. He is survived by his children, 9 grandchildren, and 14 great grandchildren. He was preceded in death by his wife, Lucile Van Nortwick, April 8, 1999.

A memorial service was held January 25 at Lindenwald Baptist Church in Fairfield, Ohio, with Andy Olinger officiating.

## John Pursseley

Bolivar, MO



John Robert Pursseley of Pleasant Hope joined his Lord Tuesday, February 2, 2010, at the age of 82. He was born November 14, 1927, near Bolivar, and married Ruth Billingsly April 5, 1950. The couple bore three children, Robbi, Krista, and Scott.

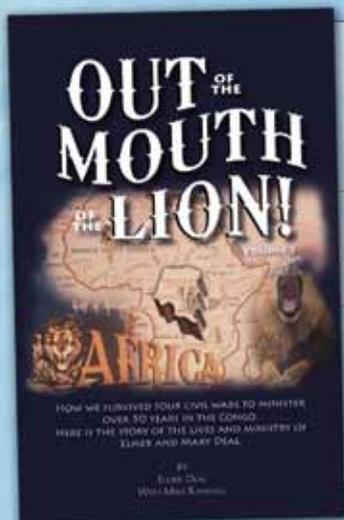
He spent more than 50 years in the ministry as a pastor, missionary, teacher at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, and president of Baptist Bible College of Great Britain. He was a World War II U. S. Army veteran. Survivors include his wife, Ruth, of the home; his three children and their spouses; 10 grandchildren; and 16 great-grandchildren.

Memorial services were held February 5, at Berean Baptist Church in Bolivar with sons-in-law David Almanzar and Kenneth Dowell officiating.

In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the church building fund at Iglesia Bautista Amistad, Managua, Nicaragua.

### Elmer Deal's Autobiography

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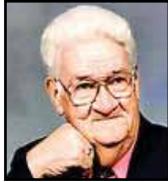
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## Don Brown

Springfield, MO



BBFI evangelist Donald Lee Brown, of Springfield, Missouri, went home to be with the Lord on January 12, 2010, at the age of 85 years. Don was born in Richwoods, Missouri, September 8, 1924.

Don accepted the Lord at the age of 13 in a Methodist revival. He surrendered to the ministry service in the late '40s, and began his ministry in Buffalo, Missouri, where he started Bible Baptist Church in 1950. He also pastored Calvary Baptist Church in Chickasha, Oklahoma, before going into full-time evangelism. Don preached in revivals, mission conferences, and youth camps and served as an interim pastor all across the country. He was instrumental in starting 67 new works and saw many souls come to the Lord through his evangelism ministry. He founded Beth-Eden Bible Camp in 1973 in Conway, Missouri, where over 4,100 people

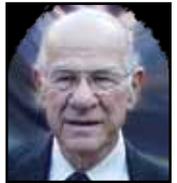
have been saved and countless others have surrendered their lives to Christian service.

Don was married to Edna "Nita" Hightower in 1945. They shared 45 years together before Nita's death in 1990. To this union was born one son, Terry. Don was married the last 18 years of his life to his wife, Anne, who preceded him in death on October 27, 2009. He is survived by his son and daughter-in-law, Terry and Elizabeth Brown of Cabool; six grandchildren; one sister; seven great-grandchildren; numerous nephews and nieces; many friends and loved ones. He served in the Merchant Marines during World War II.

A memorial service was held January 16, 2010, in Springfield, Missouri, with Larry Hargus, Jim Fryer, and John Day officiating. In lieu of flowers, contributions can be made to the Beth-Eden Bible Camp Memorial Fund, 1510 Timber Drive, Cabool, Missouri 65689.

## Harry Boyle

Portland, ME



BBFI pastor and Boston Baptist College Chancellor Harry Raymond Boyle was promoted to Heaven February 4, 2010.

He was born in South Portland, Maine, on March 2, 1936, and grew up on Peaks Island across the bay from Portland, Maine. He was saved while serving in the U.S. Air Force. While he was stationed in Amarillo, Texas, he met his future wife, Georgia Yancy, at Grace Baptist Church of Amarillo. After their marriage in 1958, the Boyles served on the staff of Grace Baptist under Pastor M. O. Garner. In Amarillo, Boyle earned both a bachelor and masters degree from West Texas State University and was later granted a Doctor of Divinity from Faith Baptist Seminary.

In June 1970, the Boyles moved their young family back to Portland, Maine, to plant Grace Baptist Church, a church Boyle pastored until his retirement in November 2008. He continued to preach and teach at area churches until his death.

When the Baptist Bible Fellowship started a college (Baptist Bible Institute/College East) in Shrub Oak, New York, Boyle was involved. He became vice president of BBCE in December 1979. In February 1985, Boyle became president some years after the move to Boston. He held this office until May 2006, when he was named chancellor of the college.

Boyle was a leader of the Baptist Bible Fellowship of Maine, serving as its chairman on many occasions. He was also instrumental in the planting of many young churches throughout Maine and New England. Missions was near to Boyle's heart, so much so that in lieu of flowers, the family has requested that donations be made to the Grace Baptist Church Missions Fund for distribution, in Harry Boyle's name, throughout the world. (Grace Baptist Church, 476 Summit St., Portland, ME 04103-1619)

Chancellor Boyle is survived by his wife, Georgia, four children, and eight grandchildren. He is also survived by generations of spiritual children who love and treasure the legacy he passed on to so many.

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# From Argentina to Kansas by bus

By Don Nevels

BBFI Missionary to Argentina

*Editor's note: Last summer, I met Don Nevels face to face when he came to the church I attend. During his presentation he mentioned coming to the States from Argentina via land... specifically, he traveled by bus. I asked him to write about his trip — the motivation, the surprises, the dangers, the people, and the learning. He produced several thousands of words about the trip, and the Tribune will print excerpts from his travel journal. Don and his wife, Lucy, graduated from Baptist Bible College in 1964 and they were approved as BBFI missionaries in 1967.*

Last year I took a short furlough traveling from Argentina, South America, to the United States by bus, stopping to visit numerous missionaries in South and Central America as well as Mexico, finishing the bus trip in Lawrence, Kansas, where my daughter and her family live. The trip took five and one half weeks including brief stopovers in each of the Central American countries and Mexico. The distance was 11,250 miles with 245 hours and 30 minutes sitting on buses on the three continents.

While visiting supporting churches, invariably people would ask me what prompted me to take a bus trip of this nature. I responded with two of the three main reasons. The first reason was that a Peruvian man in our church in Argentina asked me to stop by his town in Peru to try to win his married sister, Beatrice, to Christ. I did make the visit, and the Lord gloriously saved Beatrice. The second reason was that I wanted to visit missionaries in the Central American countries, and I wanted to share our work with them. Several of them mentioned this was their first time to have someone from Argentina visit. In every case, it was a blessed time with people of different lands and customs as well as a time to meet the missionaries and their families.

The third reason was actually my principal reason for traveling to the States by bus in the first place. I wanted to see if it could be done, and if it could be done, then to survey some little-known and all-but-forgotten territories for missions, territories where we have never planted a gospel light.

Looking at the top of South America, eastward, way over by the Atlantic Ocean you will notice three small countries situated between Venezuela and Brazil formerly referred to as the three Guyanas (or Guianas), namely British Guyana, Dutch Guyana and French Guyana. Today, only French Guiana uses its historic name.

Guyana (formerly British Guyana) gained independence from the United Kingdom in 1966. Guyana has its own national flag and monetary system called the Guyana

dollar. The capitol city is Georgetown. Surinam, (formerly Dutch Guyana), gained independence from the Netherlands in 1975. Surinam has its own national flag and monetary system called the SRD, the Surinam dollar. Surinam's capitol city is Paramaribo.

French Guiana is not an independent territory. This is made very clear as one descends from his motorboat after crossing the Maroni River that serves as the Surinam/French Guiana border. The large green and white sign that greets you has only one word on it, "FRANCE," and you can't miss it when you descend from your motorboat. In spite of the fact that French Guiana (as well as Guyana and Surinam) is situated in the Amazon jungle with its anacondas, tarantulas, toucans, and monkeys, the nation very proudly flies the French national flag just as you would see in downtown Paris.

Each of the three Guyanas speak a different national language plus Creole and other indigenous languages respectively. I am told that the Surinamers look down on the people from Guyana. A taxi driver mentioned to me that he was a "Surinamer" and not from Guyana, though it appeared to me he could be from either place. So a Surinamer is a person from Surinam. Apparently there is that age-old feeling of superiority with feelings of disregard for those of neighboring countries.

There are basically three principal religious influences in Guyana: Hindu, Muslim, and Christian (of all denominations). I saw dozens of Muslim and Hindu places of worship. Of course the Muslim buildings are those with the towers and crescent and star on top of the towers. The Hindu followers have a custom of purchasing a flag of their favorite god and placing that flag on a tall bamboo pole. Usually the family will have five to ten such poles with flags of their favorite gods all planted in one corner of their house property out by the street for passersby to notice. I picked up no signs of intolerance among the different religious groups in any of the three Guyanas.

Everyone seems to dwell in the land accepting the right of the others to exist as well. Probably the most astonishing and unusual sight on earth for me was to see a Muslim mosque and a Jewish synagogue on the same block right next door to one another in downtown Paramaribo, Surinam. This tells me there is not only religious acceptance, but is perhaps the most encouraging sign that independent Baptists as ourselves have a door open to these three small nations that have heretofore, for some reason, not been evangelized by the Fellowship.

More to come ...

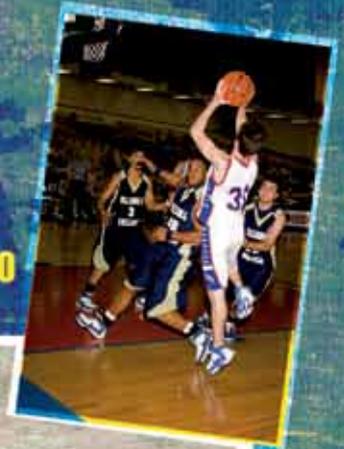
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