

B A P T I S T B I B L E

TRIBUNE

MARCH 2016

NAVIGATING



p.10 It's a Personal Thing

p.12 Easter? Passover? Resurrection Day?

p.14 Maximizing Easter



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Press



ON THE TABLE

Easter

by Randy Harp | Editor

EASTER

The Resurrection changed everything! Do you believe that? As Christians, it is the foundation to all we believe. H. A. Ironside stated, “The Gospel is the Gospel of the risen Christ. There would be no Gospel for sinners if Christ had not been raised.” R. A. Torrey says, “The crucifixion loses its meaning without the resurrection. Without the resurrection the death of Christ was only the heroic death of a noble martyr; with the resurrection it is the atoning death of the Son of God.” We dedicate this issue of the *Tribune* to making much of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

To do this, I purposely chose three approaches to Easter for our features — future issues may follow the same pattern — an inspirational piece, a theological writing, and some practical advice for pastors and their staff. Our regular features also address Easter from various perspectives and the “AfterWords” is a personal application page. Jon Konnerup also recently took a trip to Costa Rica. He reports about it in this issue. There is a lot of exciting Fellowship news to share! I am still amazed at how much content we can squeeze into 32 pages.

I look forward to the next few months. Our theme for April is a follow-up to Easter called, “Next Step.” It will include different areas in which pastors, churches, and church members can take the proverbial next step. The theme for May is “The Fellowship.” We will include history of the BBFI, highlight its multiple entities and ministries, and share some of our vision. In June we will focus on “Communication.”

In this issue, I also need to take a few moments to express my apologies. In the February magazine, we overlooked a typo of epic proportion. Not only was it the largest word on the cover; it was our theme word on the cover. I wrote an apology on the *Tribune* Facebook page I would encourage you to read, but I want you to know I take full responsibility for this mistake and we are putting additional measures in place so this doesn't happen again.

Once again, I encourage you to partner with us in this vital ministry of the BBFI. By the time you read this, February has come and gone, but we still need your participation in our annual February *Tribune* Offering. There is more information on page 21 that helps explain the purpose of this offering. You can communicate your commitment either to your state chairman or directly to our office for this special offering. We have already begun to expand our ministry through our monthly BBFI Leadership Podcast and initial steps toward a BBFI mobile app, but we need your support to fulfill the vision for our expansion.

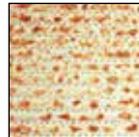
As always, thank you for allowing me to serve Christ as I serve you. If I can ever be of service to you, please let me know.



It's a personal thing

Seeing something familiar can bring comfort and confidence, and whether that reminder is served in an empty tomb or a baseball park, it's personal.

10



Easter? Passover? Resurrection Day?

Avoid terminology warfare with a look into history and a reminder of what it is we celebrate at Easter, Passover, and Resurrection Day.

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Maximizing Easter

Four practical areas to consider when it comes to guiding your church to help people find and follow Jesus during the Easter season.

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

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FROM THE PRESIDENT EASTER

Easter is about much more than one historic event. The resurrection of the Son of God and his ascension to the right hand of the Father set in motion the restoration of all things. Jesus, through his church, is leading history to its redemptive conclusion.

Resurrection is not just about having more time to live. Who wants to live forever in a world where things stay the same as they currently are? In our fallen state, sin disrupts everything.

The resurrection of Jesus is the unfolding of a plan where God is moving to restore righteousness and bring healing to all of creation. In this new kingdom, injustice and violence will be no more. There will be no more sickness. The blind will see, the lame will walk, and special-needs kids will no longer live with their disabilities. It will be a time where we will be safe and secure, where even the lamb will lay down with the lion, and death no longer exists.

As a fellowship of churches, we get to be part of the grand plan of the ages. When we come together and share reports, we catch a glimpse of the big picture of what God is doing. The power of the resurrection is at work and we get to watch and be part of it. So, no matter how hard your ministry is, no matter how difficult the challenges you face, remember we are on the move. What Jesus set in motion when he rose from the grave is still at work in our ministries. Like a mighty warrior, Jesus came to rescue mankind and to defeat both sin and death. It was the plan of the ages. The rescue of an eternal God.



Eddie Lyons
BBFI PRESIDENT

WORLD MISSIONS EASTER AND MISSIONS?

What do Easter and world missions have in common? Basically, everything! Easter is not just a day or an event, it is the foundation of our faith, the basis of our hope, and the reason we spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Christ risen from the grave is the theme of our music and the thesis of our preaching. All BBFI efforts depend on the resurrection of Jesus. "And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14).

For many, religion is a mystery. They often wonder, "Does anyone hear my prayers? Is there someone who cares for me? Have I been good enough?" Leading up to Easter

celebrations, some in the Philippines take part in bloody rituals in which they whip their own bare backs. It is believed the self-inflicted pain of these rites will cleanse the devotees of their sins, cure illnesses, and even grant wishes.

Sicilian natives put on terrifying masks of zinc and dress in red robes to represent devils. On Easter morning, they run about entrapping as many souls as possible. Later in the afternoon, the Virgin Mary and the risen Christ triumph and the devils are carried away by angels.

Most of the world has missed the true meaning and purpose of Easter. The celebration has become a time

of parades, festivals, and parties. On the inside, these people are unknowingly without hope, forgiveness, and purpose. Many have no one to turn to — suffering tragic loss, personal difficulties, financial ruin, natural disasters, and wars.

This is where world missions enters the picture. As obedient disciples of the risen Christ, we have a duty to tell people around the world the Gospel of Jesus. Jesus is alive!



Jon Konnerup
BBFI MISSION DIRECTOR

BBFI LEADERSHIP

CHURCH PLANTING CHURCH PLANTERS AND EASTER

A benefit of being director of the BBFI church planting program (APEX) is visiting our church planters as they begin the planting process. Easter is one of those seasons of the year that lends itself to inviting people to church. Considering the condition of our country, however, invitations at Easter are certainly met with more objections than they used to be. Still, we have the opportunity to invite people at a time more acceptable than many other times during the year. Of course, our planters are taking advantage of this opportunity as much as possible.

Obviously, it is impossible to report on all of the church

planters making special plans for Easter. It is important we remember to pray for these pastors and their churches as they face the struggles of planting and growing these young churches. It would be great if some of our senior churches could remember these young people and their churches in a special way for Easter.

FROM ROBBY POLLARD
PASTOR OF VILLAGE PARK CHURCH,
THE WOODLANDS/SPRING, TX AREA

God has been giving us tremendous breakthroughs this year and we are praying for the same through Easter. For our Easter celebration, we are praying God will send us 200

people from the community to hear the message of hope found in the Gospel. We share the message through two outdoor worship services on Friday night and Sunday morning. The services will be held in the scenic amphitheater at the Creekside YMCA where we gather on Sundays. On Sunday morning, we will host a community Easter brunch followed by our worship gathering. After the service, we will host a large community Easter egg hunt for kids and adults.



John Gross
BBFI CHURCH PLANTING (APEX)

BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE THAT WHICH I ALSO RECEIVED

“For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received.” The Apostle Paul tells the Corinthians that, because he heard the Gospel, he is compelled to share with them the message of Easter: the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:3-4).

The more I read that phrase, the more I realize it describes the mission of BBC. A group of men who were gloriously saved wanted to see more saved, so they started a college where they could share what they had “received.” Then their students would go into all the world to do the same.

That is BBC. We have sent and are sending men and women

into every state and nation, to people and to churches who are very different. The common denominator is the message — the Gospel — the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is saturated into every class, chapel, and activity here at BBC. You cannot escape this precious, powerful, and eternity-changing truth. The education our students receive prepares them to take the Gospel to anyone, anywhere, and through any means. Today’s technology makes it possible for this generation to do more for the cause of Christ than ever before. That is why it is imperative we do more as a college than just survive. We are working

diligently to make BBC stronger than it has ever been.

To reach this world, it will take an “All In” commitment. Join us May 2-5 for Fellowship Week as we are challenged from great speakers to be “All In.” Guest speakers this year include Tom Messer, Mark Hoover, and Jonathan Falwell. We are looking forward to and anticipating a powerful week. Please make plans to join us.

To learn more about Fellowship Week, go to www.gobbc.edu.



Mark Milioni
BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE PRESIDENT

PERSPECTIVES: EASTER

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE A NARNIAN EASTER

I am a Narnian at heart. If you’ve never read C.S. Lewis’s books, read them — you will do yourself a huge favor. I have read all seven of the *Chronicles of Narnia* at least once a year for as long as I can remember. It moves my soul.

Literary critics make a fuss over the *Chronicles*. I think it is documented that J. R. R. Tolkien, an important friend and academic colleague of C. S. Lewis, hated the whole Narnia series. Some Boston students and I sat in “The Eagle and the Child” in Oxford, in the exact room where those two Christian giants squabbled about it (and as I sit writing this, I look at the autographed menu students gave me that day as a souvenir of that

study trip — great memory!). But it’s not the literary genre that draws me to Narnia. It’s Aslan. That great and mighty lion is a picture of the Lord Jesus that bounds into my heart and mind every time I re-read the stories. He is certainly not tame, but is just as certainly good. And when Aslan is near, nothing can be the same. Then, betrayal, selfishness, greed, and bitterness threaten Narnia to its core. The King of the Land, the true King, Aslan, has that awful choice to make if Narnia is to avoid destruction.

Payment for sin is too awful for words. I feel so much like Lucy, the little child who crumbles under the horrific consequences of sin and cannot

understand all that happens because of it. It can only begin to be revealed at sunrise. Easter changes everything. It isn’t fiction or fantasy that our Savior walked out of the tomb, and that truth is the defining tenet of the Christian’s hope. A Lion and some children might help you, like me, feel it all afresh and anew.



David Melton
BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE PRESIDENT

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IN THE TRENCHES

Pastor

Phil Housley
Pastor | Park Crest Baptist Church | Springfield, MO

The most awesome day for every believer is just around the corner. At Park Crest, there has always been a special emphasis on Easter because we know there will be a number of guests. The subject matter is always the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the difference this event makes for all mankind. Whatever you do for this special day, the end goal is to introduce the unsaved to the only one with power over the grave who can forgive and transform their hearts and lives.

For Easter 2014, we made special efforts to get everything right. We enlisted every member who would show up early to greet. They were on the lot, at the doors, and in the sanctuary. Our members were waiting with food, and everyone was asked to have a smile. God used the message in a great way that day! Decisions were made, and we also had one of the highest attendances of the year. After the dust settled and we evaluated everything, there were two things we noticed:

“The question from the visitor hit me hard — hard enough to stop things at our church, call our people to prayer, and turn our attention to the role of the church every Sunday ...”

(1) the Sunday after Easter, our people fell right back into the “regular Sunday” routine,
(2) returning visitors noticed a difference the next Sunday, and one even asked the question, “What happened?”

Without question, as the pastor, I am to blame. I did not cast a vision for every Sunday, only Easter. I did not have the expectation, and therefore, it was easy to go back to what each member had done prior to all of these efforts. The question from the visitor hit me hard — hard enough to stop things at our church, call our people to prayer, and turn our attention to

the role of the church every Sunday and every day of our lives.

This Easter at Park Crest, the subject matter of the message will be the same, because the Gospel is the good news people need to hear. Our efforts to greet, welcome, and encourage those who walk through our doors will be the same that day as it was the week before. We will expect visitors, and we will ask the Lord to use us and do great things in His church on Easter and every Sunday thereafter. Our mission is to show the love of Christ so others come to know Christ and then grow in their relationship with Christ.

Missionary

Lance Gotcher
BBFI Missionary | Philippines

Experiencing Easter in the Philippines was a big adjustment for us when we arrived here as missionaries in 2000. It's one of our least-attended Sundays of the entire year. The Philippines is more than 80 percent Catholic. They are devoted to their religion, but they are dead spiritually. We focus on the resurrection of our Savior — Paul reminds us this event is everything to us. But, for most Filipinos, the events leading up to the resurrection are their focus: Ash Wednesday where devoted Catholics have a black charcoal

mark put on their foreheads, Maundy Thursday is remembered for Jesus giving the Lord's Supper to the disciples, and Good Friday focuses on the death of Jesus as well as Black Saturday.

Every year in our city of Antipolo, the *Alay Lakad* (Walk Offering) trek is made to one of the most famous cathedrals in the Philippines. A vision of Mary was supposedly seen in a tree at this cathedral in the 1600s. Last year, more than four million people walked to this church from as far away as 30 miles, taking five to nine hours to make penance and show their devotion to God. It's a sight to behold as entire highways are shut down to make way for the devotees. We have done outreaches during this event; last year several

people were saved at our church location about two and a half miles away from this cathedral.

Four million people. That is bigger than every city in the United States except New York. It would be like the entire population of Los Angeles, Chicago, or Houston being so devoted to one religion that they gave up 36 to 48 hours to go to a church. As we minister in the Philippines, we want to show people devotion to a religion will not save them, it's only their decision to receive Christ and their devotion to Him that matters.

Please pray with us that more Filipinos would be loosed from the bondage of religion and realize a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is what they need in their lives.

“It would be like the entire population of Los Angeles, Chicago, or Houston being so devoted to one religion that they gave up 36 to 48 hours to go to a church.”

EASTER

Children's Ministry

Caleb McClure

Family Pastor | North Park Baptist Church | Humble, TX

Easter — a time when people are more willing to attend church and hear about this God-man named Jesus. We should step out of our comfort zones and reach the families of our community. Families with kids are more willing to attend a church with attractive programs for children. But obviously it has to be more than just a great program. We want to create an atmosphere where people have no stumbling blocks to hear the Gospel. Reggie Joiner, founder of The Rethink Group Inc., says, "One hundred years from now the only thing that will matter is someone's relationship with God." We should take this to heart this Easter as families who normally wouldn't walk into a church building will walk onto our turf and we get to tell them about Jesus. How cool is that?

One outreach that has worked for us at North Park is our candy-shooting cannons — that's right, cannons shooting candy out of an eight-foot Easter basket. We rotated groups of younger kids (pre-K) and older kids (K-fifth grade) during the Sunday school/ Connection Group hour. Kids and their parents made memories and became comfortable with us, then we encouraged parents to attend the main service while we presented the Gospel to the kids in our building. Twenty-five kids received Christ that day! Well worth the time it took to build and paint the massive Easter basket, make powerful air cannons, stock up on tons of candy, and have mass chaos while moving 100 plus pre-k and elementary kids.

Working with families can be messy, but Jesus always ran straight toward the messiness of people's lives. I would encourage churches to not overlook the importance of reaching the next generation. Make them a priority.

A LifeWay Research survey shows that 41% of Americans plan to attend Easter services, while 39% do not have plans to attend any religious service. That leaves 20% of the U.S. population unsure about attending church on Easter. That means

64.6 million people in the U.S. haven't made up their minds about going to church on Easter.

Youth Ministry

Ron Foster

Pastor of Family Ministries | Mariners Church | Annapolis, MD

A few years back, I had a great conversation with Kevin, our worship pastor. We had just left a staff meeting where we look ahead to Easter and planned for our Good Friday service. I'm sure if you've been on staff at a church, this sounds familiar.

That's what led to my conversation with Kevin. Everything was just so familiar. His heart was stirred. Here was the problem: we gave almost an entire month of focus on the birth of Jesus (and rightly so), but when it came to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, which is the cornerstone of everything on which we base our faith, we gave just a weekend (maybe an extra week if you do something for Palm Sunday). It seemed out of balance.

Kevin was right. I knew we couldn't change the culture by just adding events or programs. It needed to start with our focus. I needed to get our students to saturate themselves with Jesus way before the celebration of his resurrection. The first year, we did a series leading up to the crucifixion and resurrection. That helped a little, but it still didn't feel like enough.

That's when it hit me. We needed more than to just focus when we were together. We needed to do it as individuals, in unity. So I turned to something I love to do — writing. My thought was to write a 40-day devotional in which students read a passage of Scripture on Jesus' life along with thoughts to challenge them for that day. We would all start on the same day and talk about it when we got together. Then I thought, "I don't want this to be about me. Let's get as many contributors as will participate and see what happens."

This was fun. One benefit of graduating from BBC was having a variety of people in various aspects of ministry to call on. And call on them I did — pastors, youth pastors, worship pastors, missionaries, professors, counselors, and the list went on. I put the days together so day 38 was on the resurrection, giving us a few days to focus on after the resurrection.

This will be our third year doing the 40-Day Journey. "Jesus" is the title, and not only do we have our students reading through it, but many adults have asked for a copy. As I referenced each day on Facebook to our students, people from all over requested one (which I am more than obliged to do electronically)! I am excited to focus not only myself but also those around me on Jesus. This is it. This is what we as Christians look to — the cross of Jesus! The death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior!

"Here was the problem: we gave almost an entire month of focus on the birth of Jesus (and rightly so), but when it came to the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, which is the cornerstone of everything on which we base our faith, we gave just a weekend ..."

(CONTINUED)

Women's Ministry

Lynn Fuller
Pastor's Wife | Gentle Shepherd Baptist Church | Lincoln, NE

Easter is an event I greatly anticipate. In my part of the country, it represents the threshold between the cold winter and the lush greens of springtime. But on this one day, it doesn't seem to matter whether it's nasty or nice, spring wins!

Easter morning can be a bit overwhelming with added services and extra attenders. It is a day when people who don't otherwise attend make their way to church, putting regular attenders, and especially those in ministry, into more of a hosting role than that of worshiper. The thought is, if this is going to be the only day this year someone is going to come to church, we don't want anything to get in the way of giving them an experience that will change their eternity. We attempt to prepare for every distraction that may come. Is the temperature warm enough? Is there too much noise? Is the music loud enough? Are there enough seats for everyone at breakfast? Are the visitors in the front of the line? Is the coffee good?

At some point, I become aware I have been so concerned for others, I have taken my focus off of the personal impact of what this day signifies in my own salvation story. I become aware of my distracted worship, and I realize my distracted state just isn't good enough for the one who gave his life for me. It's a beautiful thing when you can still your senses and go into a quiet place right in the midst of a crowd. I have choked back tears realizing my living Savior found a way in the busy-ness of this day, surrounded by distraction, to spend holy time alone with me. He doesn't need my distracted worship.

“At some point, I become aware I have been so concerned for others, I have taken my focus off of the personal impact of what this day signifies in my own salvation story.”

Worship Ministry

Eddie Harrison
Worship/Creative Arts Pastor | Crosspointe Church | Yorba Linda, CA

It happens every year. Worship pastors and creative directors get through Christmas, take a deep breath, look up, and suddenly it hits them ... Easter! If your church is like most, resurrection Sunday is the single greatest opportunity to reach your community with the Gospel.

Let me encourage you in three areas that will make all the difference in the success of your Easter services. I will break each area down into two distinct perspectives: “event” and “eternity.”

1. PLANNING

Event - It's important to map out your plan before acting on it. Ask yourself: Who are we trying to reach?, Does the service need to be kid-friendly?, How many volunteers do we need?, etc. Write everything down and attach timelines and due dates to each item.

Eternity - Don't make the assumption you have to wait for the service itself for God to start working. The Holy Spirit will work through your planning if you pray and follow his lead.

2. PREPARING

Event - Start working the plan. Whether it's recruiting volunteers, shooting and editing videos, practicing music, or other creative elements, this is the grunt work of ministry.

Eternity - If you don't keep reaching your community with the Gospel central in your heart and mind, you risk discouragement during this season of hard work. Remember, every detail is a piece of the puzzle. When all the pieces combine, it will provide a beautiful picture of Christ and the sacrifice He lovingly made for all.

3. EXECUTING

Event- This is it! On the day of the service or event, your volunteers and staff are in place and you should be doing the one thing you do best, such as speaking, acting, leading worship, working with children, etc. Resist the temptation to do everything! If your planning and preparation were done with excellence, this should be the most enjoyable and stress-free part of the process.

Eternity- Don't rest exclusively on the laurels of your planning or preparation skills. Prayer is key to God doing things neither you nor I can do on our own. Ask God throughout the process to put his “super” on your “natural” and then wait for God, in His loving-kindness, to respond.

There is no better plan for our services than the one God has. The good news is He chooses to use people like you and me to carry out His work.

BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

MAY FELLOWSHIP WEEK AND GRADUATION

MAY 2-5, 2016

ALL IN

GUEST SPEAKERS



Tom Messer
Trinity Baptist College
Jacksonville, FL



Mark Hoover
NewSpring Church
Wichita, KS



Jonathan Falwell
Thomas Road Baptist Church
Lynchburg, VA

In 2015, ISIS became a world power, gay marriage became law, Bruce Jenner became a woman, mobs became common, politics became prominent, terrorist attacks became reality, natural disasters wreaked havoc, Planned Parenthood was exposed, and science made claims for man to achieve immortality. These headlines are not only shocking, but serve as a wake-up call for Christians and ministries.

If we take a moment to look at our country and world, we can see the Gospel is needed more than ever before. To reach this world we must be "All In." We must be willing to do whatever, whenever, and go wherever to share the message of Jesus.

Join us on the campus of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, May 2-5, 2016, as we explore what it means to be "All In".

Mark Milioni
President
Baptist Bible College



MONDAY

6:30 PM Session 1: Tom Messer
8:45 PM Party in the parking lot

TUESDAY

9:00 AM Breakouts
9:00 AM Ladies meeting
10:00 AM Session 2
11:30 AM Business meeting
12:30 PM Alumni banquet
6:30 PM Session 3: Mark Hoover & Mark Milioni

WEDNESDAY

9:00 AM Breakouts
10:00 AM Missions morning
6:30 PM Session 4: Jonathan Falwell



IT'S A PERSONAL THING

By David Melton, President, Boston Baptist College

Photo by Christopher Penler / Shutterstock.com

The New Testament is amply clear that the theological ramifications of the bodily resurrection of Jesus are immeasurably beyond words. We are saved when we believe in our hearts the Lord has been raised from the dead! We pass from death to life because he did. No one should ever diminish the attention due that truth. Yet there is another side to this wonder. And it's very personal.

My favorite of the crucifixion and resurrection accounts is John's Gospel. Most likely John was the youngest of Jesus' 12. He is always listed after James, he is a "Boanerges" but seems to be from the middle or the back of the pack. John is likely the young man who runs for his life from Gethsemane, literally runs out of his clothes, but he also stands at the foot of the cross when no other apostles do. I believe he loved Jesus dearly, but it is also likely, because of his age, he was not the same kind of target as the older disciples would have been. That's probably the best reason to understand John standing on Golgotha while other apostles were absent. It should also be remembered John lived to almost the end of the first century, which by my math, means he may have only been a teen when he first began to follow Jesus.

Young John is not only close by on crucifixion day, but he is also the one who does that Easter Sunday morning sprint to

the tomb. Peter huffs and puffs in second place, getting to the tomb after John, but the old fisherman outdoes the hesitant younger man and barges right into the sepulcher (what could have been more Peter-esque?). Only once burly Peter has dared, does young John follow into that "new tomb" of Joseph of Arimathea — probably the first time that Galilean teenager had been inside a grave in his life. Only John's Gospel records the astounding detail of which he himself had been an eyewitness. Inside the tomb, in one place the linens in which the body of Jesus had been wrapped were found together. But nearby, the cloth that had covered the Lord's face was separately folded (literally "rolled" — maybe like nice hotels often do with their washcloths). Jesus left a tidy tomb! Young John noticed that.

The teenaged disciple believed right then and there, even though he still didn't know from the Scriptures the resurrection was necessary. Why at that moment? John had spent three years — three formative years, his first years away from home, watching Jesus day and night. He leaned on Jesus' breast at the Last Supper, surely an indication his habit was to shadow Jesus, picking up every detail he could. On Easter Sunday, John was awakened by a message from the women that Jesus' body had been stolen! But once he

sprinted to the tomb and dared step inside, his personal understanding of Jesus sealed the deal. That Sunday morning, what John saw inside the tomb was not a crime scene where thieves had snatched and grabbed. Housekeeping had already come! The Lord of all Glory had stood up over death, tidied up the way he usually did, and left the tomb in as good a shape as he found it — ready for the next occupant! Only someone who knew Jesus so personally would have picked up on that. How many times, as they moved from town to town, had John seen Jesus pack up his few belongings? Laundry room lessons from Jesus led to a young man's rock-solid faith that the crucified one had also defined himself as the resurrected one!

That kind of personal, practical faith in the resurrection changed John, and it is what changes us. Yes, it changes us theologically and soteriologically, but it also changes us in basic ways, real-life ways. The early Christians made the resurrection the focus of everything they did almost immediately. They used the fish or the cross as their cryptic symbols (after all, how would you draw the resurrection?), but they began to have their meetings on the first day of the week. The resurrection changed their personal schedules. Every Sunday was Easter! The Sabbath was for rest, but Sunday was for celebration! Paul told his

churches it was the perfect occasion to “lay by in store” as they had been prospered by God. And as an elderly man, we meet John again, five or six decades later, when he is exiled on Patmos in the midst of the Aegean Sea. The old disciple was still personally celebrating Resurrection Day. He was “in the Spirit on the Lord’s Day” when he was given the Revelation. I see an old man, stooped and bruised, alone on a rocky outcropping surrounded by water, restricted from the ones he loved and from the churches that needed him. But it was still Sunday morning — the Lord’s Day. So alone, that old apostle determined to salute that first Easter Sunday one more time. It was personal for him as it should be for us. Every week starts with a resurrection morning.

When we truly believe that, the personal impact is tangible. Death isn’t it. There is life after the grave. Our Lord reigns over even the grim reaper. That is a reality! As Paul wrote to the Thessalonians, believers don’t even grieve in the same way others do. We see death, not as the end of the story, but as the startling end of just one chapter. The epilogue will be just fine! This is an essential and personal aspect of living as a Christian. Death isn’t it. Jesus is risen and now, for the believer, to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord!

Years ago, someone — a strong biblical believer — recounted an amazing experience to me that occurred during her vicious battle against cancer. At a very low point, when she felt she was dying, she had a dream of a much-loved father who was already with the Lord. In that dream, her dad was relaxed, grinning a familiar grin, as he sort of leaned through a billowy open door. There were no conversations, just a loving dad’s smile with a hint of, “Maybe I’ve got a surprise for you.” (Surely everybody who ever had a great dad knows that kind of smile?) But then, her dad gestured her to wait — a gesture she had seen countless times before in her childhood. She didn’t die that night. She did, in fact, wait a while. I think she waited about another year to go through that door.

I don’t recount that to make any statement about near-death encounters, but it reminds me of how incredible personal our faith in the resurrection is. Those we have lost to heaven — and at this point of life, I sometimes feel I know about as many on the other side as on this side — are alive and well. With the Lord! Healthy. Even holy. That’s

not just some creed and it’s certainly not just wishful insanity. It’s personal faith, like John had. Easter says we must not and cannot grieve like those who have no hope. Death itself is dead. Jesus killed it on that Sunday morning in Joseph’s tomb.

For me, the personal resurrection truth found me a few months back, in a place I would least expect it. Two friends from out of town came to see us in Boston and wanted to see a baseball game, so my wife, Kim, and I made it a double date and headed out to Fenway Park. It was a beautiful evening, a New England masterpiece, with just a touch of a mild breeze and perfect short-sleeve weather. We got to the park early to watch batting practice, and to have an Italian sausage. The four of us talked, snacked, people-watched, all with the crack of the bat in the background and the buzz of the steadily filling stands.



It was the epitome of a wonderful earthly moment. Good company, fun sounds, the aroma of comfort food, all in the setting of an impeccable green vista under a fading blue sky. What more can life give? Then it happened. About 15 rows in front of me, with his back to me looking out over the Red Sox dugout, I saw him. It was my dad. I wouldn’t realize it until later, but it eventually dawned on me that dad and I had our first Fenway experience together when I was just a kid, maybe 15 feet higher up in those very same grandstands. But, I hadn’t seen dad in almost 20 years, yet there he was at Fenway! In fact, the last time I saw dad he was in a hospital room and had on an oxygen mask, he did one last poof of exhale, and then all the monitors

went to zero. Dad left us for heaven back on that miserable April night in 1995. But there he was at Fenway Park on this beautiful evening all these years later. I know you are thinking I’m crazy right now, but I tell you with my hand on a Bible, the man I saw, from the back, was the spitting image of my dad. It took my breath away. It was such an incredibly personal moment that I couldn’t bring myself to mention it to anyone for a few days. Of course, the man eventually turned and I realized he was just another baseball fan, not my dad at all. But the memory, unlike anything I have ever experienced at any other time, was a lesson. A personal one.

I do believe in the resurrection, right down to the core of who I am. That night at Fenway proved it to me! Jesus lives! And because he lives, we live. And those who have died in Christ, they too, live. I didn’t see my dad at Fenway Park that night, 20 years after he first touched heaven’s shores. And I’m not expecting to see him again anywhere on this earth. But dad is alive and well, so my eyes of faith didn’t flinch as my befuddled mind gawked at that man in the ballpark, all my senses short-circuited in incredulity — the venue wasn’t right! Yet it is not ridiculous to think we will see our loved ones who are “present with the Lord” — it is reasonable! Death didn’t beat them. Well, maybe death did beat my dad, but it didn’t beat my dad’s Lord.

Jesus took death by the throat and beat that old monster. Then, the Lord of all the ages stood up in Joseph’s tomb and did a bit of cleaning — polite people always take care of things they borrow. Jesus finished by rolling up the napkin that covered his face for 72 hours — and I think he rolled it the same way he had always packed up his things. The way John had watched him do it so many times during three years of itinerant travel. Once packed, the Lord of Glory told a buff angel to roll back the stone because, “Peter and John will be here in a little bit.” The resurrection thing was now going to be a matter of public record. Henceforth, death — the death of Jesus and subsequently the deaths of all those who know Him — death itself would have a new address. Death is in his pocket. Jesus owns it. The value of that historical and theological truth is incalculable. But it’s also so very, very personal. It was for John. It is for you and me.

EASTER?

PASSOVER?

RESURRECTION DAY?

BY JAMES R. ADAMS

As a Christian with a Jewish upbringing, I've often been puzzled as to why Easter is not more prominent and central to the believer and the church as a whole? Why can we, as the church, not more clearly articulate its exact relevance to society and use its amazing power for evangelism? After all, we try to correct the misunderstanding and wrong focus of Jesus' birth being called "the holiday season" or "X-mas," we rightly say "Jesus is the reason for the season," but as regards the Resurrection Day, it seems we have lost the cutting edge of what it really is and how its clarity can be used to give hope, joy, purpose, and forgiveness to a needy and waiting world.

TERMINOLOGY

The word *Easter* seems to have come from an Anglo Saxon Pagan festival (yes — blame the Brits again!). It was originally called *Estera* or *Eostre* — there are several spellings — and it was celebrated from at least the seventh century and dedicated to a Teutonic goddess of fertility (hence, many say, the bunny and egg symbols). So, more accurately and Biblically, we would be better to use "Resurrection Day."

Although we should know the facts and be informed, and we could take further time to argue over the origins and pagan nature of Easter, and for that matter Christmas, I do not want to waste time on something that's just words and not critical to a lost world. What we can see clearly is Jesus never mentioned or kept Easter and the New Testament doesn't reveal Easter ever being a part of the early church. However, Passover and the Resurrection were the focus of their faith, and not just once a year!

More relevant than arguing over what we call it is the background, purpose, and real meaning of the season of the Resurrection. I would humbly propose a few thoughts for the pastor in you, the Sunday school teacher, the home leader, the parent, the school teacher or daycare worker, or any growing church member. We should be able to articulate and evangelize better around the incredible reason for this season — Jesus' resurrection — which uniquely offers life to all who come and believe in Him. (1 Corinthians 15: purpose (verse 14), joy (verse 15), forgiveness (verse 17), a future (verse 18), and hope (verse 19).)

It's not about eggs, candy, Peeps, and bunnies. Has Satan confused us with the background and purpose so we lose our ability to preach its centrality to the message of new life and hope only found in Jesus? Part of the problem is we have forgotten our roots and the Biblical basis of the Resurrection season. Now I know this may be a shocking reminder, but Jesus was Jewish! As were all his disciples, and apostles, and writers of the New Testament (with the possible exception of Luke).

A FEW BASIC QUESTIONS

What is the basis of what is commonly called Easter? What did the disciples and Jesus celebrate in the upper room the night before he was betrayed and suffered death for us? The answer is ... the Passover. And Jesus is the fulfillment of every minute detail of the Passover as instigated by God in Exodus 12 and as celebrated still today by every Jewish family in their homes.

This event gives us the correct context for Jesus' death, burial, resurrection, and ascension — the blood of the personal lamb sent by God applied to each home so God's wrath can pass over and freedom can ensue. So, what did the Passover Festival entail and what does it mean?

The Passover is a major focus of the children of Israel's deliverance and beginnings as a nation — the beginning of the calendar year to them (Exodus 12:1-2). It has been celebrated for over 3,500 years with a set format for thousands of years. It looks

We should be able to articulate and evangelize better around the incredible reason for this season — Jesus’ resurrection — which uniquely offers life to all who come and believe in Him.

back to slavery and God’s amazing provision of deliverance. It looks to the Lamb — a personal, all-sufficient, and redemptive substitute to all who acted by faith and applied the results of its death, the blood, to their house and life. Lastly, it looks forward to new life and purpose in the Promised Land which God prophesied to Abraham in Genesis 15:13-16 as a fourth generation freedom from slavery.

Space does not permit me to go into depth regarding the Passover Order of Service or, *haggadah*, but it is the family meal Jesus celebrated in the upper room (Matthew 26:17-30). That meal is the basis of our Lord’s Supper or breaking of bread, Communion service, and its meaning should be clear — He is still our Passover, sacrificed for us, our Lamb as John described Him (1 Corinthians 5:7 and John 1:29).

A CUP AFTER THE SUPPER?

In 1 Corinthians 11:25 “... He took the cup when he had supped saying this cup is the New Testament ...”

Ironically, understanding what this means requires a simple look at the very part of religious Judaism that frustrated me growing up — tradition. The meticulous, unchanging, preserved tradition of Jewish practice enables us to know exactly what the Bible is talking about. In the Jewish Passover service at home, the service revolves around four cups: two before and two after the family supper. So, we know it’s the third cup, called “the cup of redemption” in the *haggadah*, that Jesus used to refer to himself.

We also have the amazing ritual of the *Afikomen*, which is Aramaic for “One who is to come” or “desert.” In this tradition, the middle portion of three unleavened breads is shown, then wrapped in a linen cloth and hidden by the father. After the supper, the children search for the hidden bundle and when it is found, everyone partakes of it.

And lastly, according to Jewish tradition (Leviticus 23:4-14), three days after the Passover the Feast of Firstfruits is celebrated, clearly referring to Jesus’ resurrection.

MY PROPOSAL

So, what I am proposing is nothing dramatic or terribly new. You don’t have to become Jewish (or go back) — that’s what the book of Hebrews is all about! However, my plea would be to get back to a Biblical basis of celebration and witness of the true meaning of Easter or Resurrection season. Let’s see it contextually as it was and is — our hope, our joy, our foundation of forgiveness. Truly a waiting world needs that.

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MAXIMIZING

EASTER

to see people find and follow Jesus

By Brian Moore

Don't get me wrong, every service is important and every weekend should be treated like the "big game" for Jesus, but at Easter, crowds are larger, opportunities for evangelism are greater, details are heightened, and God's presence is felt at greater levels. Easter magnifies the Word and the worship.

To maximize opportunities for people to find and follow Jesus on Easter, you need to focus on four things: prayer, promotion, personal evangelism, and preservation.

Prayer

1. I challenge our deacons, trustees, and small group leaders to pray and lead the way, and we call our church to special times of prayer on Tuesdays from 9:00-9:30 a.m. to pray specifically for Easter.

2. I give all staff members two weeks to come up with five people they plan to invite to Easter services and we write them on the white board during a staff meeting. We then begin to pray for these people together.

3. We challenge our staff, leaders, and entire church to go on a spiritual growth journey leading up to Easter through daily devotionals. We recommend *Easter Every Day* by Jim Denison (available for download at www.denisonforum.org)

4. On Palm Sunday, we hand out cards and ask people to write down names of five local non-churched people they commit to pray for and invite to Easter services.

5. Forty days prior to Easter, we challenge our church to fast and pray for Easter weekend. We ask them to fast from something such as chocolate, caffeine, or social media so they can feast on God.

Promotion

1. A difficulty of Easter is that it's not on the same day every year. Very few people wake up Easter Sunday and decide to go to church, so each year we have to get the word out about the date. The Holy Spirit may be working in someone's life, and we want our promotion to help serve as a catalyst for action. Paul explains the principle in Romans 10:14, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

2. We have used direct mail campaigns through a U.S. Postal Service program called Every Door Direct Mail (go to www.usps.com and search for EDDM). It is cost-effective and you can even ask about special rates for non-profit entities. Remember, evangelism is not an expense. It is an investment.

3. We love to use business-card-size invitations. We emphasize not just inviting people, but bringing people with you. These small cards are great tools in the hands of our people.

4. Yard signs are another visual to get the word out about Easter. Families and kids love to take these and put them in their yards.

5. At Crosspointe, we use social media as a countdown reminder as the date for Easter gets closer. We also ask our people to change their profile pictures to our Easter graphic, which we make available on our website.

6. When designing your visual promotions, make Easter the headline of your promotion and not the name of the series. Put the new series at the bottom of the promotion rather than at the top.

7. We will invest money into Facebook sponsored ads, Google AdWords, etc., but keep it simple. I love to post Facebook videos about inviting my friends. Showing a fun video in church is another great way to get the word out about Easter.

8. Every Palm Sunday, I preach on sharing our faith and inviting people to church. We usually share a live or video testimony of someone who accepted Jesus the previous year as a result of being invited to church.

Personal evangelism

- 1.** As pastors, we have to get out of our office bubble. It is important to model personal evangelism for your people. Talk about (from the pulpit) who you are inviting and how you are inviting them. Do this every week for four weeks leading up to Easter. One reason I'm involved in the Chamber of Commerce is to share my faith and invite unsaved people I have a relationship with to church.
- 2.** Palm Sunday is also a great day for communion. We take the elements and then challenge people to hand out ten invite cards before Easter Sunday.
- 3.** If you are not already doing multiple services, Easter is a great time to try the idea. It is probably good to test the schedule one to two weeks before Easter to work out the kinks. If you are going to add a service, be mindful of your regular service times when planning. If you normally meet at 10:00 a.m., have one service at 9:30 a.m. and the other at 11:00 a.m. to spread out the crowd.
- 4.** I always start a new teaching series on Easter and emphasize the series will continue the following week. We ask people to commit to the entire series by making it a next step on the connection card. I'm amazed at how many people we retain just simply by asking them to come back for the entire series. We have seen as many as 20 percent of our first-time guests attend the next week and eventually stay at the church by continuing the series with us. Nelson Searcy says, "People are seven times more likely to come back if they check a box saying they will come back."

5. On Easter Sunday, we make sure a pen is on the bulletin and the connection card is inside the program. This is how we have had the most success in getting contact information from our guests. During the welcome, we announce we will donate \$1 to mannaworldwide.com in honor of each guest who turns in a connection card. We show a picture on the screen of the feeding centers and children we support.

6. Don't rush the welcome time. Have music playing in the background and have the person doing the welcome actually fill out their own connection card right then on the stage. You can generate positive peer pressure by asking everyone (both members and guests) to fill out the card in order to update the church's database.

7. An idea I learned from Rick Warren is to do a simple spiritual survey on the connection card. Have the letters A, B, C, and D printed on the back of your connection card, and during the invitation ask people to complete the survey as follows:

- A. Circle A if you have **Already** accepted Jesus
- B. Circle B if you **Believed** in Jesus for the first time today
- C. Circle C if you are **Considering** it
- D. Circle D if you **Don't** care

We take the offering at the end of the service so we can collect those cards.

8. On Easter, we do a spontaneous baptism for anyone who accepts Jesus. We tell them, "There is no greater day to accept Jesus and be baptized than Easter. It symbolizes the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and the death of your old life, your sin, yourself. You are being raised up in a new life in Jesus."

Preservation

- 1.** We have people who follow up on the cards on Sunday afternoon. You will need extra people to do data-entry and follow-up, so prepare now!
- 2.** We send personalized emails to the following:
 - First-time guests inviting them back for part two of the series the following weekend.
 - Those who checked B on the card — inviting them to a special dessert at the pastor's home.
 - Those who were baptized — inviting them to the membership class.
 - Those who volunteered — thanking them for going out of their way to make Easter special.
- 3.** Try to make Easter services as normal as possible so there isn't a disappointment when people come back. People need to hear the senior pastor speak, so it's probably not the best time to bring in a guest speaker or musician.

4. Be careful not to overdo it when it comes to your volunteers. If people are bringing friends, they can be excused from volunteer duties. Run a lean machine on Easter.

- 5.** Parents are going to ask their children two questions after Easter services:
- **"Did you have fun?"** — Make sure the answer is always, "Yes!" Have pictures with the Easter bunny, do an egg hunt, give a gift bag, candy, etc. Make that child feel special. We want to put a smile on the face of every kid who attends our services.
 - **"What did you learn today?"** — Give parents a page explaining the lesson so they know the right questions to ask. Our job is to lead kids to find and follow Jesus, so present one big idea that can lead them in that direction.

Easter is hard work, both in preparation and execution. I pray the following prayer as I lead the Easter charge at our church, "God, I will do the possible. I will pray and fast, promote, personally evangelize, and do my part to preserve the people you will give us on Easter. And God, I'm relying on you to do the impossible, the thing I can't do — change people's hearts and lives!"

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THE RICH COAST

BY JON KONNERUP | BBFI MISSION DIRECTOR

In October 2015, I had the privilege of visiting the rugged, rain-forested Central American country of Costa Rica. With its Caribbean and Pacific coastlines, Costa Rica — meaning “the rich coast” — was appropriately named by Christopher Columbus after seeing the gold decorations worn by the indigenous population. Since its colonization in the late 1500s by Spain, Costa Rica remains heavily influenced by Spanish culture. This country, known for its beaches and volcanoes, began to develop in the early 1800s with the introduction of plantations for its infamous coffee; but there is something of much greater significance — its people.

Two million of Costa Rica’s 4.8 million population live in the capital city of San José. The most recent nationwide survey found that 70.5 percent of the population identify as Roman Catholics (44.9 percent practicing, 25.6 percent non-practicing), 13.8 percent claim to be Evangelical Protestants, and 11.3 percent report no religious affiliation.

During my visit, I spent time with each BBFI missionary serving in Costa Rica and was able to see a glimpse of their respective ministries. Allow me to share how God is using them in His plan to reach the people of this country.

I spent a day touring the region of San José where **Ramon and Annette Perez** minister. This area is very difficult and somewhat dangerous, but the people in their church were loving and kind. The Perez’s have ministered in numerous churches since going to Costa Rica as missionaries in 1979.

Jonathan and Sarah Robertson (2008), along with their children, have embarked on a new ministry of holding Bible studies and leadership training in several area community centers.

Jeff and **Maudie Meek** arrived in Costa Rica in 1956. Since Jeff’s passing in 2005, Maudie continues to be involved in the work there. She, along with the assistance of several Costa Ricans, leads a correspondence course ministry in the country.

Anna Marie West (1974) stays busy as she works in various churches and ministries alongside BBFI missionaries John and Karry Barnes. She helps train teachers and is very involved in the ladies’ ministries.

I enjoyed preaching in several churches under the ministry of **Randy and Sandy Roberts** (1988). One church they started has been turned over to a national pastor, and their newest church is growing rapidly. Under their leadership, the BBFI-approved seminary they are involved with continues to train pastors and leaders.

Randy and Sherry Rhoton, who have been in the country since 1986, are doing a tremendous job of reaching Costa Rican people with the Gospel and training them to continue in the ministry. While visiting with them, I spoke at a Saturday men’s breakfast and in a Sunday morning service. I was blessed by the testimonies of those who have come to Christ. God has given the Rhotons and their ministry in Costa Rica a burden to reach into Panama where they have started at least one church.

An invitation from **John and Karry Barnes** to participate in the Bible college graduation was the primary purpose for my visit to Costa Rica. For the past three years, John has invited me to be part of this week of fellowship, and this year I was finally able to participate in their graduation ceremony.

I shared my testimony and preached in several churches. It was a privilege to challenge them from God's Word and encourage the male graduates and their pastors at a special banquet. The ladies had their own special banquet. The next day, there was a luncheon attended by 55 full-time leaders and their wives — all from the Barnes's ministry.

Evening services during graduation week were filled with anticipation and excitement with many pastors and their church members in attendance. Every night the place was filled with four overflow rooms using closed circuit TV. The music provided by numerous churches was uplifting and God-honoring.

Just 16 months after their approval in 1970, John and Karry began their missionary journey by driving to Costa Rica in 1971. During their first four years there, they established a church in San Sebastian. In 1978, the Barnes started Baptist Bible College and Institute, which has taught the truths of the Scripture without interruption for 37 years. Over 500 men and women serving in nine different countries have graduated from this college. Since that time, a branch of the Bible institute has opened in the southern part of Costa Rica with additional institutes soon to open in the northern zone and in Panama. God has also miraculously provided a youth camp facility, which has been an exciting evangelism and Christian development tool, ministering to over 11,000 annually. This camp, operated and funded by nationals, set a record last year with over 13,000 campers of all ages in attendance. The Barnes want to plant more churches, disciple new Christians, and train more national leaders. There are many areas where this need is urgent. They have built a strong team of faithful, dedicated, and focused servant-leaders. It was evident they are always planning and considering how to better develop more leaders who will be active in all areas of ministry.

The Barnes's ministry includes 33 churches representing 6,000 to 6,500 people weekly. Churches and missionaries reaching outside the country are served through the Costa Rican mission office. There is a harvest of souls in these churches and camps for

students and families on a weekly basis. Discipleship and leadership training are the churches' main emphases, while the four-year Bible college trains those preparing for full-time ministry. Ministry students are required to work an additional 30 hours per week in their local churches. They also have two Bible institutes designed to help lay people become better servant leaders for God and their respective churches. There are new ministries being initiated, new outreaches being developed, and new churches established each year.

I was blessed by the genuine interest in the things of God, not only from the pastors and leaders, but also from the members — from the parents to the young people. It was heart-moving to see their love for God, for people, for church planting, and for world missions. They shared their longing to reach other cities and countries with the Gospel. Some told me God wants them to be missionaries in other Latin American countries, while others told me of their desire to take the Gospel to Cuba. Right now, the Barnes have three unregistered churches in Cuba with each having an attendance of approximately 75. They had a delegation of seven go to Cuba to be in the end-of-year fellowship meeting among those three churches. These Costa Rican churches have trained experienced young pastors willing to go to Cuba. Many others expressed desire to go to Bible college and then into full-time ministry. Despite the fact I went to challenge and encourage them, I was the one who was encouraged.

I left the country amazed at the Lord's work there. There are still many unreached cities outside of San José. This Latin American country has the potential to be a hub for mission work not only throughout Costa Rica but in outlying regions. I believe our missionaries have built a solid foundation of strong churches and leaders capable of reaching their own and countries beyond — doing all they can to fulfill the Great Commission. I am always thankful for God's blessing and work through our missionaries around the world.



“There is a harvest of souls in these churches and camps for students and families on a weekly basis.”

A. J. GORDON — Zealous for missions

Adoniram Judson Gordon (1836-1895) was born in New Hampshire into a devout Christian home and was, of course, named for famous New England native and pioneer missionary, Adoniram Judson. Gordon was converted to Christ at 15, and by age 16 sensed God wanted him to devote his life to the Gospel ministry.

From his youth, A. J. was eager for knowledge, read widely, and excelled in his schoolwork. Gordon attended New London Academy in New Hampshire, followed by four years at Brown University (where Francis Wayland was president), and finally three years at Newton Theological Institute, where one of his favorite professors was Horatio Hackett, under whom he gave particular attention to the study of Greek. Gordon had a lifelong commitment to Bible inerrancy and opposed liberalism and destructive higher criticism, which he rightly believed to be spiritually deadly.

His first pastorate was Jamaica Plains Baptist Church outside Boston (1863-1869), followed by a 25-year pastorate at Clarendon Street Baptist Church in Boston. He vigorously opposed the even-then ongoing process of established churches abandoning the inner cities and leaving them without a Gospel witness.

During the first half-dozen years at Clarendon Street, Gordon had a solid, if unremarkable, ministry. The church was formal, stiff, and self-satisfied. But that was all changed — transformed — when D. L. Moody went to Boston for a crusade in 1877. Moody's tabernacle was erected across the street from Gordon's church, and Gordon's congregation enthusiastically cooperated in Moody's crusade, the Clarendon Church building being regularly used for after-service counseling of those responding to Moody's preaching. The church and pastor developed a continuing burden for the "down-and-outers" of Boston and a greater appreciation for achieving the work of the ministry through the power of the Holy Spirit.

During the last decade of his life especially, Gordon was consumed with the cause of foreign missions, preaching, traveling, writing, and promoting this essential work, even to the injury of his own health (and, some think, a shortening of his own life). He was, for a time, chairman of the executive committee of the American Baptist Missionary Union. He was also associate editor of *The Missionary Review of the World*. Among the missionary outreaches he championed was Jewish evangelism.

Somewhat unusual among Baptists in the northern United States in that era, Gordon unashamedly embraced the imminent, pre-millennial coming of Christ, and participated in

the famous pioneering Niagara Conference (1878) promoting pre-millennialism. One of his most famous books, *Ecce Venit*, is about the imminent and personal second coming of Christ (adopting, however, a "fulfilled" rather than "yet-future" view of Revelation 4-18).

Gordon saw the desperate need for many more biblically trained missionaries. At the same time, he recognized the impossibility of meeting the demand through the standard and rather lengthy college-and-seminary course of training. So, in 1889, Gordon founded Boston Missionary Training School, a three-year Bible institute. Gordon was severely criticized by some of his contemporaries for this supposed "short-cut" method of producing missionaries. Along with D. L. Moody's Bible institute in Chicago, BMTS set the pattern for several generations for training those preparing to serve in conservative, fundamental ministries. After his death, this school was renamed in Gordon's honor.

Gordon was a regular speaker at Moody's summer Bible conferences in Northfield, MA, as well as similar conferences elsewhere. He spoke frequently and regularly at preachers' meetings and mission conferences, and on college campuses.

Always a prolific writer, Gordon started and published the monthly magazine *The Watchword* (1878-1895), which focused on prophetic themes. Among the more notable of his numerous books are *The Ministry of the Spirit*; *The Holy Spirit in Missions*; *How Christ Came to Church*; and *In Christ*. He also compiled a hymnal and wrote several hymns, composing the music for, among others, "My Jesus, I Love Thee."

There were a few "warts" in Gordon's views. His teaching that the New Testament gift of healing persists to the present day would be at odds with those who recognize all the miraculous spiritual gifts expired in the first century (he did not oppose the use of medicines and physicians, as some do). Likewise, his openness to women in the ministry is contrary to the views of nearly all fundamental preachers.

Worn out by incessant labors, Gordon, just 58, died after a brief illness. His last utterance: "Victory!"

The standard biography is *Adoniram Judson Gordon* by his son Ernest B. Gordon (Revell, 1896). See also *Dictionary of Baptists in America*, edited by Bill J. Leonard (IVP, 1994), pp. 134-5. George Houghton wrote his 1970 doctoral dissertation at Dallas Theological Seminary on Gordon. George Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Bob Jones University Press, 1973), pp. 21-26, has an extended analysis of Gordon's life and contribution.

God is a people mover

Her complexion suggested strong chai. Slight of build, she still easily pushed the wheelchair containing my elderly mother through Chicago's O'Hare Airport. She had arrived less than a year ago from Myanmar and lived in a neighborhood known as an immigrant entry point close to where I live. Intrigued to be unexpectedly conversing with someone fresh from the land of Adoniram Judson, I asked why she would tolerate living in Chicago in January. She spoke of a harsh political climate and her excitement to be in the U.S.

According to the Pew Forum and 2014 U.S. Census, immigrants account for 13 percent of the U.S. population. That shakes out to 42.391 million people. Five percent are Muslim. Seventy-four percent self-identify as Christian. The top three countries of origin for immigrants to the U.S. are: Mexico (12.38 million), the Philippines (1.82 million), and India (1.66 million). These are followed by Puerto Rico, China, El Salvador, and Vietnam, all with more than one million each. In 2013, 990,553 people were granted legal permanent resident status. Department of Homeland Security statistics show nearly half, 46.4 percent of those, were new arrivals.

Large cities have always been entry points and gathering places for immigrants, legal and otherwise. Noteworthy now is the accumulation of immigrants in mid-size and small cities, even towns. I say again, what the city sees today, everyone sees tomorrow. For example, in the past 15 years, the foreign-born population of Gwinnett County, GA, outside Atlanta, has more than doubled. Similar increases have been seen in places like Scranton, PA, Indianapolis, IN, and Des Moines, IA. The nations are not merely arriving in our land but are being dispersed throughout the country. Your local mini-mart, hospital, and community college bear witness to this reality.

Yes, more than ever, the mission field is coming to us. Also, thousands are arriving from nations such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and China, where missionary access has been difficult or denied. Many of these new arrivals experience freedom they did not enjoy in their countries of origin.

Linking new arrivals to safety and security concerns is nothing new. These issues have been at the forefront in past waves of immigration. The phrase, "There goes the neighborhood,"

"IMMIGRANTS DRAIN THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC RESOURCES." 48% OF EVANGELICALS

voices a sentiment that was around long before our generation. Different now is the speed of travel, the numbers, and fresh visions of terror and mayhem on our screens.

Forty-eight percent of evangelicals say, "Immigrants drain the country's economic resources." Furthermore, more evangelicals admit the media influences their views on immigration more than Scripture, their local church, and national Christian leaders combined, according to this same research. (12/15 Lifeway Research)

We value our security: physical, social, and economic. When does valuing turn to worshiping? When does something we value become an idol? An easy answer would be when that thing displaces God. We are loath to acknowledge anything displaces God. How do we make that judgment?

Jesus made quite clear our mission in life is to make disciples of all nations. Anything that gets in the way of Jesus' command is, at

best, running the danger of displacing God. If I move to get away from "them" or if I vote to keep "them" out, is my value system God-centered or self-centered?

Let's consider several things.

God is in control, specifically of this world and the people in it. "The earth is the Lord's ... the world, and those in it" (Psalm 24:1). God has a track record of moving people from one place to another to accomplish His purposes. In Genesis 11, God is moving Abraham and his family. In Genesis 37, God moves Joseph to Egypt, and then moves Jacob's whole family to Egypt. In Joshua 1, God moves His people into the Promised Land. At the end of 2 Kings we see God moving Judah to Babylon. In Nehemiah, God begins to move the people back to their land. In Luke 2, we see God moving Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem. In Acts 2, we read a list of places from which people have come to Jerusalem for what God will do on the day of Pentecost.

Persecution is scattering believers in the opening verses of Acts 8. In Acts 13, God sends two of his choicest servants to faraway places.

"... God ... from one man ... made every nation of men that they should inhabit the whole earth and He determined ... the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him ..." (Acts 17:26, 27).

God is all about His plan to redeem. If all you see are radical Muslims, egotistical heads of state, famine, and warring factions, you only see what unbelievers see. We are blind then, if we don't see God's hand in the current massive population shifts in our world. What is God doing where you live? How will you join Him in His work?

by Charles Lyons, Pastor
Armitage Baptist Church,
Chicago, Illinois
charles.lyons@armitagechurch.org



THE RIGHT ANGLE

BIBLICAL WISDOM FOR A CONTEMPORARY WORLD

By Kevin Carson

A Do you ever have the attitude of the trolls in Disney's *Frozen*, when they sing, "We're not saying you can change him, 'cuz people don't really change."

Sadly, that is true for someone who does not have a personal relationship with Christ. However, for the believer, lasting change is always possible. How can we be so certain? Because believers, through the Spirit, have the power of the resurrection, which gives them the hope and ability to change.

When Paul wrote to the Christians at Ephesus, he emphasized the power of the Spirit that resides in each saved person. For Paul, it was imperative every Christian understand the significance of possessing the power of the Spirit for change. He prayed, "... that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places ..." (Ephesians 1:18-20).

Here, Paul uses five words to express the power God gives to every person in Christ. He identifies this great power as resurrection power — the power that raised Jesus from the grave! It is resurrection power that provides you the ability to change for God's glory.

He prays again in Ephesians 3, "... that [God] would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ... Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly

above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." (3:16-21).

Again, Paul refers to the strength we receive through the Spirit in our inner man. He describes it as strength that does exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think. It is the same kind of strength that empowered Jesus exceedingly abundantly above all anyone could have ever imagined when it raised Him from the dead. It is amazing power!

Why is hope of change important through the power of the Spirit?

Real hope in the power of the Spirit for life change is important because there are so many counterfeit imitations. People receive false hope in a variety of ways. Some of the most popular include psychotropic medications that promise a cure, the power of positive thinking, hope in a list of behavioral changes which can include anything from new exercise programs to specific diets to spiritual

disciplines, or hope placed in special people or relationships. Often in life, we bounce from thing to thing just hoping something will ultimately work. When it does not, two things typically happen. First, we suffer severe discouragement because nothing has changed despite our efforts. Secondly, our experience confirms our false belief that there is nothing we can do to really change.

True hope is in the power of Christ.

Prior to salvation, every person is under the inescapable influence of the world, the devil, and the flesh (Ephesians 2:1-3). However, when you are saved by grace through faith, you become God's workmanship (Ephesians 2:10). God breaks the power of sin and begins to do a good work in you (cf. Romans 8:13). Plus, God moves you from outside His family with no hope to inside His household where He begins to grow you (Ephesians 2:11-22). As part of God's family, through the resurrection power of the Spirit, you have hope for real, lasting change.

Q What hope does the Resurrection give for personal life change?

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF TRUE HOPE BEGINS WITH PRAYER

Pray to recognize the incredibly vast power God provides to you in your circumstance

(Ephesians 1:18-23)

Pray to enlarge your gratitude for God's provision of strength

(Ephesians 3:16; 5:18-21)

Pray to realize God is active and works in you according to His plan to grow you

(Ephesians 1:11; 2:10)

Pray to acknowledge God's strength as greater than all other spiritual forces

(Ephesians 1:20-21; 6:10-11)

Pray to increasingly hope in God alone

(Ephesians 3:14-21)

Have a question?

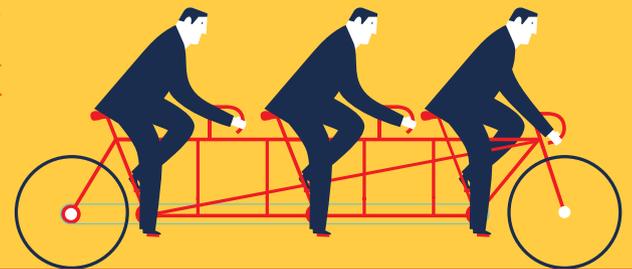
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Kevin Carson serves as department chair of Biblical Counseling at Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary in Springfield, MO. He is the pastor of Sunrise Baptist Church in Ozark, MO.

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Our Vision Is Expanding

If you have read the past few issues of the *Tribune*, you know this ministry is expanding. There are three phrases that define our vision: In Print, Online, and In Person. To the left you can see ways we would like to expand.

Here is the reality, the *Tribune's* budget has been established for the purpose of a print magazine. If we are going to fully expand the Communication Office, we need to expand our budget. This requires, minimally, two things. **We need new partners.** If you are not a regular supporter, would you consider giving in 2016? If you are not ready to make a long-term commitment, would you consider a one-time February Tribune Offering. **We also need a stronger commitment from our existing partners.** We are so thankful for your support over the years, but as we expand, would you consider expanding with us?

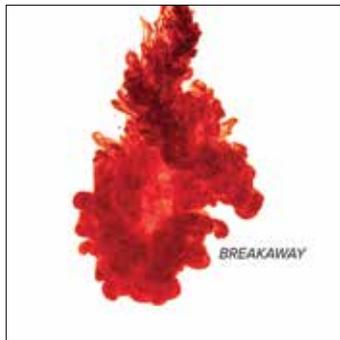
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SPRINGFIELD, MO

BBC RELEASES WORSHIP ALBUM

Break Away, a Baptist Bible College recruiting team, released its first worship album and the first of its kind (full band and vocals) in the school's history in January. Over a dozen students from around the country participated in the album's creation. Among the songs is an original song, "You are Here," written by students during a songwriting retreat at Table Rock Lake near Branson, MO. Jason Cross, worship studies faculty at BBC and producer of the album, says, "One goal of the



project was to give an outlet for the students to express what God is doing in their lives and give a larger voice to how they perceive God to be working in our school. The song they ended up with does a great job of telling that story. I couldn't be more proud of them during this process."

The album was recorded in Springfield with the vast majority of it recorded on the campus of BBC. You can order a CD of the project at www.gobbcc.edu or you can download it from iTunes and Amazon by searching "Break Away" in the artist category.

DES MOINES, IA

CARTERS HONORED FOR 15 YEARS AT CAPITOL CITY CHURCH

In January, Capitol City Church, Des Moines, IA, honored Pastor Mark Carter and his wife, Lisa, for 15 years of pastoral service. The Carters are transitioning to lead Compassion Builders International, a Christian-based, non-profit organization with a passion for raising funds to help build churches and community centers in developing countries around the world. In addition to an engraved brick representing the new mission churches to be built, the church presented the Carters



with a video depicting their ministry and giving personal testimonies. The church also presented the Carters with a love offering.

Missions has been a passionate part of Carter's ministry and during the past 15 years, the church's annual mission offering grew from \$92,000 to over \$200,000. In that time, the church has grown from 478 in average annual attendance to an average high of 828.

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MISSIONARY LETTER

George & Luisa Dimakos | Greece

Mehdi fell from scaffolding and broke his back. While lying down at the hospital, he says he saw Jesus tell him to get up. So, even though he was an Iranian Muslim, he obeyed, surprising the hospital staff when he didn't need surgery. The staff brought priests to anoint him with holy oil, calling it a miracle, but Mehdi was not comfortable with them. He heard about Javad, one of our Farsi leaders, and he came to Athens with his friend. After a few days of studying the Scriptures, with tears he and his friend received the Lord and were baptized. Mehdi is thanking the Lord not only for healing him but also for coming into his life and filling him with unspeakable joy. We have a miraculous Savior!

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SAN ANTONIO, TX

TEXAS BBF GATHERS IN SAN ANTONIO FOR FELLOWSHIP MEETING

The Texas BBFI met January 18-19 in San Antonio at the Riverwalk Plaza Hotel for their first of three statewide fellowship meetings of the year. State chairman Mike Marcellus reports there were nearly 250 in attendance for the event including pastors and wives, missionaries, and staff from six different states and around the world. The theme of the meeting was "Ministering to the Last Generation" with keynote speakers Rick Blackwood, Baptist Bible College graduate and pastor of Christ Fellowship in Miami, FL, and Mark Hoover, Arlington Baptist College

graduate and pastor of Newspring Church of Wichita, KS. John Decker, BBC's director of recruiting, spoke to the youth pastors and Nina Trinidad from First Church in Austin spoke to the ladies. Nate Harmon and BBC's worship team, Break Away, lead worship.

The Texas BBF also invited Spanish-speaking pastors to attend with special guest Jim Smith from the BBFI Mission Office. Charlie Bell and Dennis Metzger from Fort Worth's Alliance Baptist Church hosted this aspect of the meeting. Pastor Elias Salazar broadcast these sessions on *Radio Pacer*.

During the business meeting, the Texas Fellowship raised \$10,000 for a new boiler system for BBC and gave \$22,000 to a new church plant in north Texas. Several missionaries were also present and set up displays and shared their ministries. Newly approved missionary Don Mingo said of the meeting, "Spirit-filled worship refreshed my soul and preaching on Christ's soon return challenged me to reach out and do all I can to bring our communities to Christ."



Below: Charlie Bell (left) and Jim Smith



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SMITHFIELD, RI

MASSACHUSETTS BBF HONORS CURT ROWE AND SETS RENEWED VISION

Sixty pastors and church staff members gathered at Ocean State Baptist Church in Smithfield, RI, to pay tribute to Curt Rowe, longtime pastor of Heritage Baptist Church in Springfield, MA, for 18 years of faithful service as the chairman of the MaBBF. Curt was presented with a plaque acknowledging his faithful service. In addition, over 20 churches contributed more than \$3,000 as a thank you gift to him and his wife, Cathy. Several pastors shared testimonies of Rowe's impact on their

lives and ministries. Cathy, shared a moving testimony highlighting his integrity, godliness, and love. Rowe's tenure as chairman ended the same way he served — encouraging, uplifting, with a challenge to follow his example.

Linzy Slayden, former BBFI president and pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Owasso, OK, was the featured speaker. He reminded pastors of their high calling as preachers of God's Word, inspiring them to remain faithful and providing practical advice about how to succeed.

John Kerns, the new chairman of the

MaBBF and pastor of Faith Baptist Church in Osterville, MA, gave a renewed vision for the state fellowship: "To help pastors lead growing and reproducing churches." To help pastors catch the vision, Kerns invited Sean Sears of Grace Church in Avon, MA, to lead an exercise to identify and remove obstacles to accomplishing the vision. The session not only provided MaBBF officers with vital information, but also trained pastors in an exercise to use with their own church leaders to identify and remove obstacles to succeeding at their mission.

John Kerns (left) with Curt Rowe

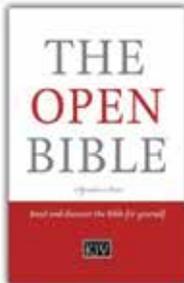


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ENFIELD, CT

GARY SANTINO INSTALLED AS NEW PASTOR OF FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH

Faith Baptist Church formally installed its new pastor, Gary Santino, on Sunday, January 31. Santino became the seventh pastor of the church founded by five families in 1961.

Gary Santino was born in Norwood, MA, grew up in Sanford, ME, and is a 1988 graduate of Boston Baptist College. After graduation, he served at Blackstone Valley Baptist Church in Cumberland, RI, under pastor Robert Lewis

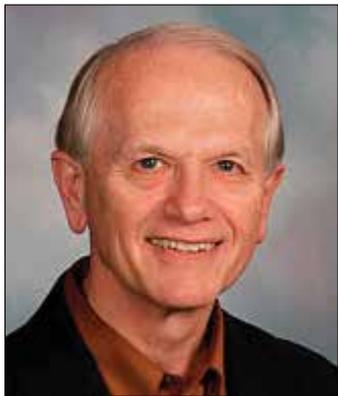
as youth and assistant pastor for five years. In 1992, he and his wife, Lana, were approved to go to Romania as Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionaries. They served there with their six children for the past 23 years. During their time in Romania, the Santinos established four churches and were involved in training national pastors and church leaders.



FORT WORTH, TX

LARRY CORNELL TO CELEBRATE 50 YEARS OF MINISTRY; SET TO RETIRE

Pastor Larry Cornell will celebrate 50 years of ministry and, after 37 years at Castleberry Baptist, Fort Worth, TX, will retire from the pastorate March 20. Along with his wife, Judy, Cornell ministered at First Baptist Church in



New Castle, DE, and pastored First Baptist Church in Milford, DE, before going to Castleberry Baptist in Fort Worth.

Cornell has been

active in the BBFI during his entire ministry, serving as an officer in the Mid-Atlantic BBF and on the Mission Committee of the BBFI. He is on the board of MANNA Worldwide. Cornell

recently stated about Castleberry Baptist, "It has been such an honor to be their pastor. I am so thankful for God's grace and His richest blessings during these 37 years of serving with some of His most choice people and staff."

Cornell will be available for revivals, mission conferences, banquets, and pulpit supply.

During the Cornell's time in Fort Worth, Castleberry relocated to their new campus where they partner with High Point Academy. Castleberry utilizes High Point's gym as their recreational center and High Point uses Castleberry's worship center.

Castleberry is debt-free, completely remodeled, and supports over one 100 missionaries and projects.

The celebration service will be at Castleberry Baptist from 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. March 20. The lunch and reception will start at 12:30 p.m. and end at 2:00 p.m. All are cordially invited to share this special day with Castleberry Baptist Church and the Cornells.

MOSHI, TANZANIA

TANZANIAN CHURCH CELEBRATES 20TH ANNIVERSARY

Bible Baptist Shanty Town in Moshi, Tanzania, celebrated their 20th anniversary January 17. This was the first church started by BBFI missionaries Bob and Dee Dodson and is led today by Tanzanian pastor Ernesti Mlembezi. There were many special guests for the celebration including missionaries and national pastors from Tanzania and Kenya. Don and Lona Elmore from Temple Baptist Church, Springdale, AR, and some people from the Dodson's sending church, were also present.



MISSIONARY LETTER

Mark & Michele Hale | Portugal

I remember starting our church with just two boys attending every Sunday. When my wife took the boys to the Sunday school room, I would sit in the empty auditorium and pray for their salvation and for the thousands of people in our city. It was a discouraging time and we labored for years with occasional visitors, but only with a few adults who came and went. We knew God called us here and were determined to stay until He said it was enough. Until a year ago, space was not a problem. Our small auditorium had plenty of seats to spare. Now, with so many coming to services and four families taking our new members class, it has become a challenge to fit everyone. We are thankful for space problems!

DES MOINES, IA

IOWA BBF CELEBRATES ANOTHER YEAR OF MINISTRY

The Iowa BBF celebrated another year of ministry with its Pastor/Wives Retreat in January. Because churches and ministries in Iowa are spread out across the state, the Iowa BBF hosts an annual event as a time of encouragement and to celebrate what God has done around the state.

Pastor Randy Abell says, "Our BBF churches in Iowa are spread out across the state from the Mississippi river on the east side to the Missouri river on the west, and from the northern plains near the Minnesota border to the rolling hills near Missouri. From some of our churches, like Mark Baptist (Mark, IA), you

can hardly see another building, yet hundreds gather on Sundays. There are churches in small towns like Bible Baptist (Ottumwa, IA), where the pastors are seen as spiritual leaders and have great influence in their communities. Still, others minister in the Iowa cities and university towns, like Ames, where Heartland Baptist has won dozens of university professors to the Lord and has reached hundreds of students from around the world who came to Iowa for Ph.d. programs but found Christ!"

The Iowa BBF has sponsored seven church plants in the last decade and five of those are now self-supporting churches.



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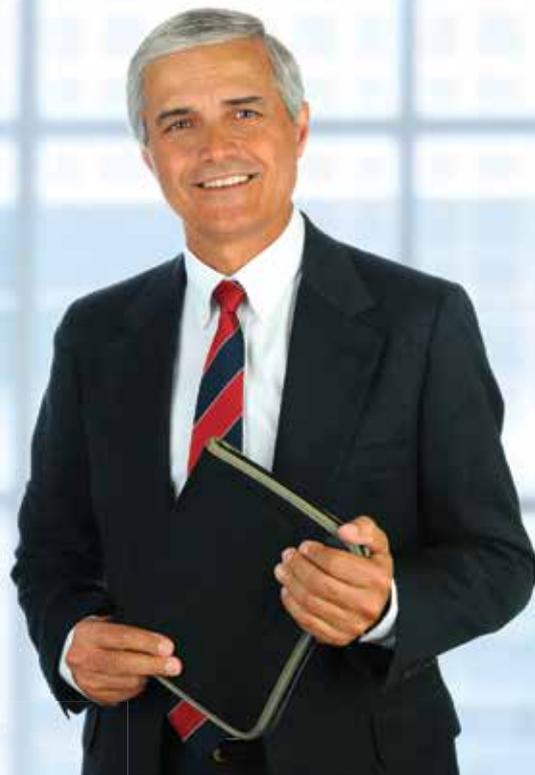
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CINCINNATI, OH

KEITH TAYLOR INSTALLED AS PASTOR AT HARTWELL BAPTIST CHURCH

Hartwell Baptist Church installed Keith Taylor as pastor January 24, 2016. The day was the culmination of two years of prayer by Tommy Trammel (founding pastor) and the church as they sought a man to lead the church. Pastor David Halcomb (Franklin, IN) was special guest



for the service.

Taylor was saved under Dave McCracken's preaching at Bible Baptist Church in Stillwater, OK, and he met his wife, Cynthia, at Capital City Baptist Church in Indiana, where they were married by David Halcomb, also a BBC graduate.

Prior to going to Hartwell Baptist, Taylor pastored Columbus Independent Baptist Church in Columbus, GA, for seven and a half years.

Pastor Tommy Trammel started Hartwell Baptist 12 years ago when he learned the existing church had dispersed and the building and parsonage were about

From left: Thomas Trammel, Keith Taylor, and David Halcomb

to be sold. Two people from the old church joined with Trammel and his wife, Leah, and their daughter and son-in-law to launch the church. Trammel planned to guide the church through the beginning stages and then turn the ministry over to a permanent pastor after five years, but God blessed with many being saved and baptized and still others joining by letter or statement. The church had a high attendance of 125, and Trammel was active in the Ohio Baptist Bible Fellowship and served as first vice president of Baptist Bible Fellowship. The Trammels will now travel and continue preaching the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

OWASSO, OK

FRIENDSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH HOSTS TWO CONFERENCES IN TWO WEEKENDS

Pastor Linzy Slayden and Friendship Baptist Church of Owasso, OK, hosted their 2016 Men's Feast February 5-6. The theme was "Refine." Nearly 900 men from 36 churches in five states participated in the feast, music, door prizes, preaching, and challenges from the Word. Keynote preacher was Lonnie Lehrman, pastor of Granbury Baptist Church, Granbury, TX. The event included dinner and worship Friday, and sessions designed just for men on Saturday morning. Session speakers were

pastors Dennis Jennings, Jim Goodman, Jon Slayden, Jason Peterman, Rob Hoffman, Geoff Slayden, Charles Modrell, Ray Rhoton, A. J. York, and BBFI Communication Director Randy Harp.

The weekend prior, the church hosted their annual youth event Fun on the Run. This year, 800 students attended, a record number, from three different states. Baptist Bible College recruiting director John Decker was the speaker. During the invitation the halls were filled with students making decisions for Christ. Friendship

Baptist's student pastor, Reuben Herrin, reports, "Over the years, hundreds of students have come to know Christ through this event and many have made spiritual decisions that have changed the course of their lives forever." After the worship service at Friendship, students travelled around Tulsa making stops at a bowling alley, an ice skating center, an indoor soccer club, and a trampoline park.



WITH THE LORD

ARLINGTON, TX

A. ALVIS EDMONSON

Pastor and 1956 graduate of Baptist Bible College, Alvis Edmonson, age 84, passed from this life January 15, 2016, to be with the Lord. Born July 25, 1931, he served in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean Conflict. While a student at BBC, Edmonson pastored Noble Hill Baptist Church outside of Springfield, MO (1955-1956). Upon graduating, he went on to pastor three other churches over the next 40 years including Hallmark Baptist Church, Fort Worth, TX (1956-1976), Tabernacle Baptist, Chicopee, MA (1976-1978), and Arlington Baptist Temple, Arlington, TX (1978-1996). After retiring in 1996, he preached around the world about faith promise mission giving.

Pastor Edmonson was involved in the Baptist Bible Fellowship International

throughout his ministry serving in leadership capacities nationally and locally. He served four years as vice president of the BBFI, three terms as a member of the mission committee, three terms as a trustee for Baptist Bible College, and one term as chairman of the trustees for BBC. He also served as Texas BBF chairman and the treasurer of Red River Valley BBF.

He married Betty Carroll, who preceded him in death in 1952. He married Joanna Edmonson in 1987.

Pastor Edmonson is survived by his wife, Joanna, three children, 11 grandchildren, 27 great-grandchildren, and one great-great grandchild.

BREA, CA

DAVID RADER

Longtime California pastor David Rader, age 70, entered glory January 8, 2016. Born July 25, 1945, he planted and pastored Brea Baptist Church 29 years and was involved with the CA BBFI. He served as president at least once for the local Chamber of Commerce, Rotary Club, Kiwanis Club, Brea Boys & Girls Club, and Brea Ministerial Association. He sang with the Singing Pastors quartet who performed approximately 100 times over the last 20 years. He died from a heart attack on a flight back from Florida where he'd been for three weeks with his wife visiting their son's family.

Pastor Rader is survived by his wife, Stacie, son, and four grandchildren.

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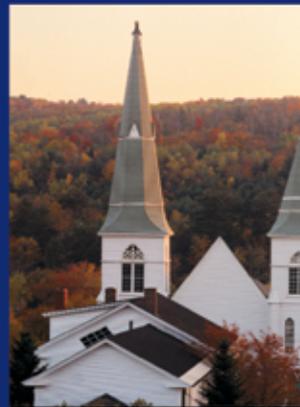
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Praying for Easter

By Randy Harp

As a senior pastor, I always wrestled with the tension of how to approach Easter. There is no doubt Easter Sunday is the “Super Bowl” for American churches. For most churches, mine included, Easter Sunday was the largest, or at least one of the largest, attended Sunday of the year. We did all we could to equip our members with tools to promote attendance on this day. We spent extra time preparing all aspects of the service. We always anticipated God showing up and lives being saved. My personal drive toward evangelism made this Sunday all the more important to me.

The other side of the tension is the personal reflection for the believer on what should be the most solemn of days followed by the most celebratory of days. I wrestled with how to help Christians grow in their relationships with their Savior during the Easter season.

A key for both sides of the tension is prayer. It is vitally important to pray extensively for the worship service and all events included around Easter Sunday. But there also needs to be prayer for oneself — to allow the Holy Spirit to examine one’s heart and to plead with the Father to renew a steadfast spirit within.

Use this prayer guide building up to Easter Sunday. Use it to pray for Easter Sunday services and as a way to help you search deep within so you are prepared for Easter Sunday.

PRAYING FOR YOUR CHURCH

- Write down the names of five people you will pray for and will invite to church on Easter Sunday.
- Pray for each service held at your church. (If possible, visit your church during the week and walk through the worship center praying over specific seats.)
- Pray there will be more visitors than members attend.
- Pray lives will be saved, rededicated, and changed.
- Pray marriages will be saved and families will be restored.
- Pray for the pastor as he prepares and communicates God’s Word.
- Pray for volunteers who will be serving, some for the very first time.
- Pray for those serving in the children’s ministry, that they would clearly communicate Easter is about Christ, nothing more.
- Pray the worship team would “disappear” on stage and lead the congregation to totally focus on the One being worshipped.
- Pray for the technology (sound system, computers, etc.) and those controlling it.
- Pray for an effective follow-up the days and weeks after Easter.

PRAYING FOR YOURSELF

Sunday – Triumphal Entry

Lord, there are so many distractions, help me to stay focused on you this week. I want to know more of the width, length, height, and depth of your love (Ephesians 3:18). May this year be different than every year before.

Monday – Cleansing of the Temple

Lord, I want to be pure before you. Search me and reveal to me anything inside that needs to be cleansed (Psalm 139:23).

Tuesday – Last Day of Public Ministry

Lord, you are my teacher. Help me to not only listen but to also obey all you have taught me. Help me to love you more than anything else and help me to love others as myself (Matthew 22:34-40). Help me today to invite someone to church.

Wednesday – A Day of Rest

Lord, help me set aside today as a day of prayer and fasting (Matthew 5:1-18). I seek more than anything to hear from you today. Give me strength as I fast!

Thursday – Betrayal and Arrest

Lord, both your enemies and your friends caused you to suffer. My own sins cause you to suffer (1 John 1:8). Give me determination and courage to follow you in all things, in all circumstances.

Friday – Crucifixion

Lord, all I can say is thank you. I do not deserve what you did for me by taking my place on that cross (1 John 4:10). Help me to never lose sight of your sacrifice, for without it there would be no forgiveness for my sins (Hebrews 10:10).

Saturday – Tomb Sealed

Lord, I know there are those who try to discredit your love and what you did for us. I pray your power would overcome and those who have questions would find answers this Easter (1 Peter 3:15). Help me today to invite others to join me at church tomorrow.

Sunday – Resurrection Day

Lord, we celebrate you today. Jesus conquered the grave, defeated death, and is victorious over the enemy. He is risen and alive! I pray today people would cross over from death to life. I pray many would have victory over the strongholds of our enemy. I pray we would experience the life you have in store for us (John 10:10).

MARCH 2016

PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		<p>1</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Scott & Norma Edwards <i>Portugal</i></p>	<p>2</p>  <p>CHAPLAIN LCmdr Steven & Jennifer Benefield <i>U.S. Navy</i></p>	<p>3</p>  <p>MISSIONARY William & Kathleen Busch <i>Germany</i></p>	<p>4</p>  <p>T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Brandon & Rachel Adams <i>Kenya</i></p>	<p>5</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Don & Delores Swearingin <i>Mexico</i></p>
<p>6</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Earl & Joyce Koon <i>Australia</i></p>	<p>7</p>  <p>MISSIONARY John & Marcia Riggs <i>Zambia</i></p>	<p>8</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Bill & Jane Coley <i>Kenya</i></p>	<p>9</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Bettye Lou Holske <i>Retired</i></p>	<p>10</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Jim & Barbie Waters <i>Zambia</i></p>	<p>11</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Joshua & Ashley Bell <i>England</i></p>	<p>12</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Jonathan & Roberta Steffy <i>Philippines</i></p>
<p>13</p>  <p>WORKERS IN Restricted Access Nations</p>	<p>14</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Ron & Vicki Letts <i>Australia</i></p>	<p>15</p>  <p>BBFI MISSION OFFICE - SPRINGFIELD, MO Paul Hylton <i>Associate Mission Director</i></p>	<p>16</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Tony Pizano <i>Mexico</i></p>	<p>17</p>  <p>T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Ali Alexander <i>Colombia</i></p>	<p>18</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Elmo & Kathryn Compton <i>Peru</i></p>	<p>19</p>  <p>MISSIONARY Bill & Barbara Neel <i>Japan</i></p>
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As is the business of tailors to make clothes and cobblers to make shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.

Martin Luther

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