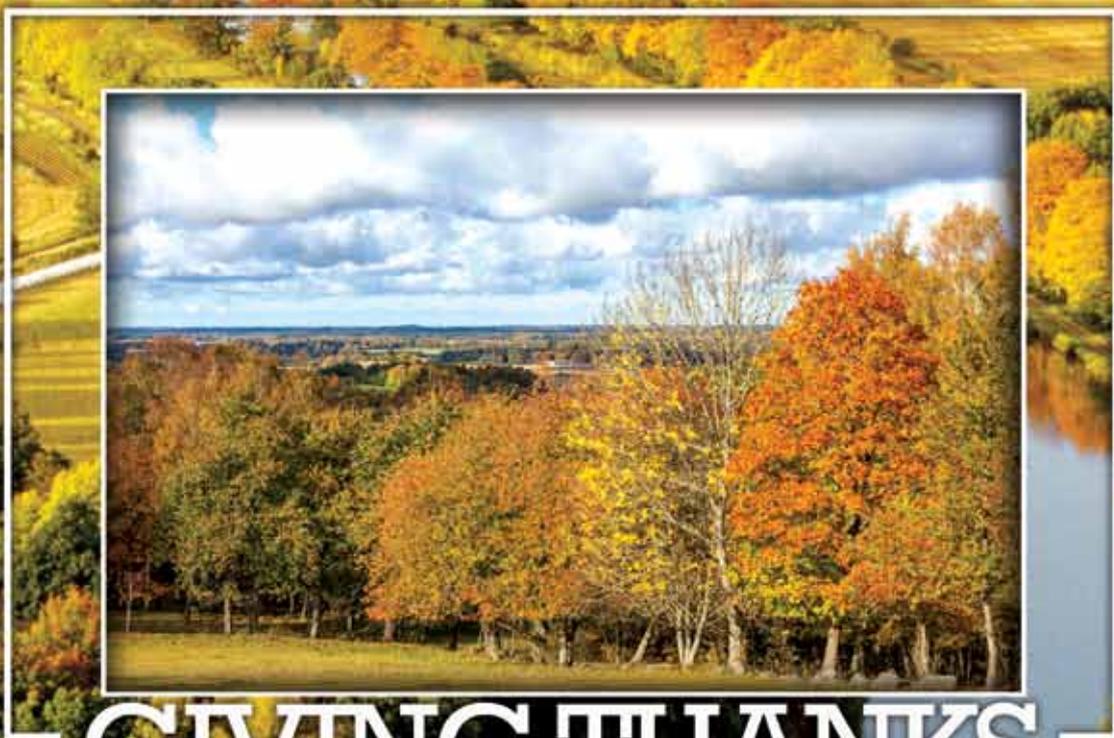


# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

NOVEMBER 2013 | VOL. 64 NO. 3



## GIVING THANKS

A MATTER OF PERSPECTIVE

### INSIDE

- PERSPECTIVE: HIGH AND LOW p. 10  
BBFI NATIONAL MEETING REPORT p. 12  
BAPTIST HISTORY: JEREMIAH WALKER p. 20



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ON THE TABLE  
Fellowship

by Keith Bassham | Editor

When I lecture students and others about the Baptist Bible Fellowship, I begin with the language of fellowship itself. You may safely ignore anyone implying that the word *fellowship* derives from the idea of two fellows in the same ship. It is an apt metaphor, but poor etymology.

The word itself comes from some very old words in the ancestry of modern English by way of Norse/Germanic: *fee* (as in money, property) and *lay* (or *lag*, as in laying something down), thus laying down resources in a joint venture of some sort. The *ship* on the end has nothing to do with sailing; it comes from the ancestor of the word *shape* or *form*, and is a very common suffix in Old English. Those involved may indeed be in a boat together, but the important point is that fellowship is, at its base, pooling resources for a common cause.

My lecture points out that this idea has biblical warrant. *Fellowship* in the New Testament is the word often used by translators for the *koinonia* word family, and those words carry the ideas of commonality, communication, and sharing. Paul declares his appreciation for the Philippian fellowship, and later in the epistle our translators use the word *communicate* to translate the verb forms in that word family. A close look will show that Paul is not talking about letters and cards. He is thankful that they supplied his physical needs over a long time, and had thus been involved with his mission. The connection is not difficult to see. Fellowship is more than just people palling around and exchanging pleasantries — in the New Testament people in fellowship are sharing resources (and in the case of the Philippians, scarce resources) for the sake of the gospel ministry.

But fellowship is more than a mere financial arrangement. In our Fellowship, families are intertwined, often in unique ways. Be especially careful about repeating gossip in our bunch — you may be talking to a cousin or a brother-in-law of the verbal target. And you may find that the stranger you just met at a Fellowship meeting is not a stranger at all, but a longtime Fellowship partner you had not yet met face to face.

It was my very great pleasure to meet some of those Fellowship partners at Ventura Baptist Church in our September meeting. All the Ventura folks were welcoming and anxious to serve. Of course, we are grateful to Pastor Lewis McClendon. Executive Pastor Mark Craig arranged for our special guests at the meeting, and he facilitated my interviews with George Barna and Kirk Cameron. I suspect he puts wheels on all sorts of things in the Ventura church. Harry White and Dow Jones (no, really) were very helpful to me personally. And I cannot say enough good things about Mike Flippo who lent his photographic skills to the *Tribune* for the week. Mike is a pro in every sense, and with Rob not able to be at the meeting, Mike was indispensable. Those are his photos in the meeting report. Thank you, Baptist Bible Fellowship, for bringing these and other good people into my path.

*Keith Bassham*

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

NOVEMBER 2013

VOL. 64 NO. 3

Perspective: high and low 10  
*A new viewpoint can remind us of the big picture*

Ventura meeting uplifting and productive 12  
*Meeting report from BBFI national meeting*

Urban Current: A Miami model 21  
*One church where cultures and community abound*



## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

BBFI Departments	4
February BBFI Meeting Info	8
Digressions	6
Baptist History - <i>Jeremiah Walker: From fame to shame</i>	20
School News	24
Fellowship News	25
Afterwords - <i>Giving thanks – a Baptist eucharist</i>	30

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**Executive Editor:** Keith Bassham  
**Assistant Editor:** Rob Walker  
**Director of Office Services:** Karri Joy Perry  
**Email address:** editors@tribune.org  
**Web site address:** www.tribune.org

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

## Raise your motivation



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

Most of the motives in this world can be identified with money, position, or power. Now, there is nothing wrong with achieving a better job or a higher standard of living, provided you don't stop there, and provided you don't measure success in those terms. Some of the greatest people who ever lived gladly surrendered money, power, and position to achieve real living. By the standards of today's world, even the Lord Jesus would be considered a failure.

As Christians, our standards must be spiritual and our motives must be spiritual. The highest standard is the glory of God, and the highest motive is the love of God. When you put them both together, you have a tremendous force for good.

Folks ask the question, "What am I getting out of this?" Perhaps what we get out of it determines what we put into it. Peter asked the question one day, "Lord, we have left everything to follow you. What are we going to get?" Peter took a giant step forward when he said to that beggar in Acts 3, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have give I thee." Peter moved from "What will I get?" to "What can I give?" when he heard the cock's crow, and when he saw Jesus Christ looking at him in love. His heart was broken, and he wept bitterly. It was then that he realized how much he needed the love of Christ to motivate his life.

If our lives are motivated by less than the love of Christ, they will be empty and dull. No matter how much we get, we will not enjoy it. It is love that makes life exciting and enriching. It is love that puts value into life.

Christian love cannot be manufactured. We can pretend for a short time, but eventually the masquerade has to come to an end. Love is a living thing because it flows from the heart of God. Let me remind you of 1 John 4:19, Galatians 5:22, Romans 5:5, and other passages. When the Spirit of God comes in, love also comes in. This means that if you and I will yield to the Spirit, He will fill our hearts with love and cause that love to control and motivate us. Actually, we are to become channels of His love to this world.

The glory of God and love for souls should be the dominating motivation in our spirits to do the great work of God. God is glorified when we work together to give souls across the street in America and souls around the world the life-saving, soul-saving gospel of Jesus Christ.

There will no doubt be ongoing issues for our movement. It will not get any easier if the BBFI continues to emphasize differences that exist instead of the common ground we have among ourselves. Let's put aside secondary issues and pull together for the glory of God and a love for souls.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

## New Mission Office associate to connect with youth



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

While we are thankful for the current force of missionaries on the field, it is clear that our missionaries need more help on the front lines. And the number of young missionaries sent is fewer than it has been in decades.

A youth pastor is a key spiritual influencer in the lives of young people, and he plays an important role in our future missionary force. Statistically, the average age of a BBFI missionary is 53, and many of our missionaries are approaching a time in their lives when, for various reasons, they will be unable to remain on the field.



Lee Tomlin

Something must be done to encourage the younger generation to come behind them and build upon what they have started, as well as reach into new areas where our Fellowship has never been.

The BBFI Mission Office continues to do all it can in assisting our churches and their missionaries. We recognize the need to reach out to youth pastors and assist them to challenge and encourage their young people to consider and experience global missions.

Lee Tomlin has joined the Mission Office staff to assist with this vision. Lee served as a youth pastor and has a strong passion for missions and seeing more young people surrender to God's calling on their lives. He will communicate and work with youth pastors across the country to help them build what he calls "Missions Momentum" within their churches and youth ministries. He will connect with youth pastors around the country, assisting them with mission-focused youth events, global mission trips, and other resources.

We will provide information and ideas on how to impact youth, not only during a mission conference, but throughout the year. A new website is planned with resources geared toward youth pastors and youth-focused missions, information about current mission opportunities, and guidance for young people through the steps of becoming missionaries. These resources, along with others, will allow youth pastors and young people to learn more and increase their passion for global missions both now and in the future.

Youth pastors are encouraged to contact Lee at [LTomlin@bbfimissions.com](mailto:LTomlin@bbfimissions.com). Please help us welcome Lee to the Mission Office as he helps us in preparing to fulfill the Great Commission with the next generation.

# Care for people and new churches



by Dan Lamb | Interim NCPO Director

I could hear a lot of little voices as they entered the hallway that leads to the church office. They didn't stop; just kept coming until I heard the knock at my office door. "Papa," they cried, and in came all seven of them. All church business stopped as I visited with my grandchildren. They were there just long enough to make sure I knew they were at the church and off they went. Except the youngest — she is only just 3 years old — she stayed to visit awhile. Then off she went to join the rest of the gang. She left behind her flip-flops, each pointing in a different direction. She does not realize that everything stopped for her, or how much she is loved.

My heart is to care for her spiritual walk, and to be part of her decision-making — so that her life is not going every direction, like her flip-flops. The people of the world are so much like that. They move through life making noise, going in every direction. They don't seem to have a care or thought beyond this earthly life. The answer for them is a Bible-teaching, gospel-preaching church!

A baby church is just that, a baby. It needs to be birthed and cared for. The birth process only begins with a burden in someone's heart. Will you, pastor, seek a burden for a city or town in your area? Will you, Christian, seek a burden for a specific area? Begin praying for a new church plant. Let the birth of a baby church begin in you.

The NCPO team has a burden for the people of our country. Our burden is that every state would have a soul-saving station in each city — a church where every soul is cared for and sought after. We are taking a fresh look at the vision and the method of how we can best recruit, train, and equip the BBFI church planter of the 21st century. Will you combine your heart and mind with us in our endeavor to plant more churches? We are looking to you for help as we refresh the NCPO. Call us! We are open to your input!

**Editor's note** – During the BBFI National Fellowship Meeting held recently in Ventura, CA, Third Vice President Dan Lamb was appointed interim director of the National Church Planting Office. The third vice president oversees the work of the NCPO, and Dan's familiarity with the office made him a natural choice. He will serve until a permanent director is appointed. Dan is the pastor of Hillsboro Bible Baptist Church, Hillsboro, OH.



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# DIGRESSIONS

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

## Mexico City to ponder offering temporary marriages

The minimum marriage contract would be for two years and could be renewed if the couple is happy, the bill's co-author, Leonel Luna, told the *Guardian* newspaper. The licenses would include a pre-divorce agreement on the disposition of children and property if the couple decides to terminate the marriage.

"The proposal is, when the two-year period is up, if the relationship is not stable or harmonious, the contract simply ends," Luna told the *Guardian*. "You wouldn't have to go through the tortuous process of divorce."

Source: Baptist Press, [www.bpnews.net](http://www.bpnews.net)

## Fox Sports fires broadcaster for his "religious beliefs concerning marriage"

Craig James, who was fired by Fox Sports Southwest because he voiced views reflecting traditional biblical belief, is going to court over his termination.

James, a former NFL Pro Bowler and ESPN analyst, was dismissed by Fox Sports Southwest just one day after he was hired. Jeff Mateer, general counsel for Liberty Institute, tells OneNewsNow that Fox Sports made it clear why they fired James.

**57%** of Americans have not read the Bible in the past week.

**33%** of Americans have not attended a Christian church in the past year.

**27%** of Americans have never made a commitment to Jesus

Source: Barna Group; [www.christianitytoday.com](http://www.christianitytoday.com)

## Robert Knight: When the bizarre is commonplace

A bizarre child-abuse case is unfolding in California that the media are ignoring. State authorities should have stepped in long ago to stop the abuse — except that they apparently approve of it. After all, the parents are the perps.

Here's what's happening.

Two lesbians in Berkeley are turning their adopted 11-year-old boy into a girl. Seriously. The lad, who they acquired at age 2, is being given drugs via an implant on his left arm to block his puberty. The next step would be a surgery that will mutilate him forever. It's supposed to be fine because the boy, Thomas, has bought into the idea. The two women say that the drug scheme will give the boy, now named Tammy, more time to think it over.

And we're supposed to be OK with this?

Children cannot give meaningful consent to such an earth-shattering decision, which is why adults must

protect them from their own folly. We must also protect them from child abuse, no matter the source.

The civilized response to this news is to rescue the boy, revoke the adoption and charge the women with endangerment, abuse and whatever else the authorities can find to deter such criminal insanity. The next step would be to take a hard look at an adoption process that allows such horrors to be committed and even encourages them.

Where are the adults? Where are the liberals who so often skate over legitimate parental rights in their quest to use government force to dictate child rearing?

We're talking about the administration of Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown, who signed a law on Oct. 1, 2012, outlawing the right of parents to take their children under 18 to counseling for unwanted same-sex desires. They can hire only counselors who affirm the children as homosexual. That's California's current idea of freedom.

Source: Complete article available at [www.onenewsnow.com/perspectives](http://www.onenewsnow.com/perspectives)

## "They have said themselves that the reason they terminated him was because of his religious beliefs concerning marriage,"

says Mateer. "Craig actually believes that marriage is between one man and one woman — and he said that during a U.S. Senate debate over a year ago" in his unsuccessful race for the seat that Ted Cruz eventually won.

The attorney explains that the lawsuit is not just about Craig James and Fox Sports.

"It's really about an attitude in corporate America and whether corporate America can somehow impose, in their view, some sort of political correctness," says Mateer. "But really what it comes down to is, can people of faith act on and believe a certain thing? Can they express a biblical belief about marriage?" — and get hired; or once hired, keep their job?

Source: [OneNewsNow.com/legal-courts](http://OneNewsNow.com/legal-courts)

# In the NEWS of the WEEK

SEVENTEENTH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

Ralph Liles, Pastor  
Bowling Green, Kentucky

To The Tribune:

I wish to thank you for the interest you have shown in our work here in Bowling Green. If you have noticed our bulletin for this week, you have already seen some of the many blessings God has bestowed upon us.

We have had an addition to our church already since the Herald was made up. Last Thursday night one of the ladies who has been coming regularly to our church came to me and asked what she had to do to join our church. She said she wanted to join that night if she could. Of course we did not refuse! God has been dealing with her for almost a month to come into the fellowship of our church. I knew it but I never mentioned it to her. God is able to have His own way so I just waited on Him. She told one of our ladies she had gotten so miserable she didn't know what to do about her church membership, and I feel sure her husband is under conviction of the Holy Spirit about his. He is having quite a struggle because all his people are members of the same little country church they have been members of since they were saved.

I was told they asked about getting their letter to unite with another church and upon finding the church they had in mind, the pastor told them the church would not give them a letter. It seems that all the Southern Baptist churches in this vicinity do the same.

I have recently had a long conversation with another man who has been frequently visiting our church and he told me the same story. I went by his place of business to give him a little booklet I printed with our church covenant and confession of faith in it and also one of the little books from Westvue Baptist in Murfreesboro. During our conversation he said, "I guess you have been wondering about my coming over to your church and not making any move to come into the fellowship of the church." Of course I had been wondering about it, but I was going to let him and God work out the particulars if God wanted him to unite with us. He told me the church he belonged to (somewhere out in the country) would not grant him a letter unless he would unite with another "Missionary" Baptist

church, meaning of course, a co-operating church of the Southern Baptist Convention. We had a long conversation about what a real N.T. church was and what powers they had of admitting or refusing to admit members or to release them, and I believe I convinced him he could unite with any body of believers he desired if they would admit him to their body, and that they could not "get me tied up with any other such outfit as that," using his words. They have people believing they cannot unite with any other body of believers unless the church agrees to it. I believe God will give us that family soon.

We have other families who want to unite with our church, but for some reason they are holding back yet. I have heard some weird tales of what kind of church we are and what we do (we even make other Baptists from any other Baptist church submit to being baptized again!)

We are in the process of letting the people of this city know what we stand for and against. We have distributed over 100 of the booklets from Westvue church this past week. We ordered 150 of them to start our campaign to enlighten the people of Bowling Green about what is happening under their very noses in the S. B. C. and co-operating organizations. That is all the funds we had to begin with, but God is opening up doors we did not know existed for other funds.

The gentleman I told you about not wanting to "get tied up" has already, without our even intimating we were in need of it, given us two checks of \$200 each. That has set us up where we can look the world in the face almost as far as some of our dragging back debts are concerned. We have used part of it to enlarge our seating capacity for Sunday school. God even laid on the hearts of the people of another Baptist church here in town (in the convention too!) to give us four 8-foot benches this past week. I am continually amazed at what God can and will do for a people who are trying to obey Him and glorify His holy Name. God will certainly honor those who honor Him! I have discovered a blessed help I had overlooked

before—I have quit doing all in my power to bring honor and glory to God and instead have learned to allow Him to use His power through me to bring the honor and glory. Of course I

had read and heard that before, but to experience such is the only way of knowing Him in His power.

RALPH LILES.

Bible Baptist church, Appomatax, Va. has called Rev. Pat Giles as full-time pastor. Oct. 25 the church had 150 in Sunday school. Bible Baptist church was organized last year by Rev. Paul Donnelson, pastor of Park Avenue Baptist church, Lynchburg. On Oct. 25 Mr. Donnelson and a large number of his congregation attended, in the afternoon, the installation service at Appomatax. That night the Appomatax church reciprocated; the pastor and most of his congregation attended the evening service at Park Avenue.

Mr. Donnelson and his congregation has sponsored the organization of a Bible Baptist church in Richmond, Virginia. The new church, which was organized with 17 charter members, has called Rev. Gene Lowery as its pastor.

Under the sponsorship of Park Avenue church, a Bible Baptist church was organized last summer at Hopewell, Virginia. Rev. Cleve Gibson was called as pastor. The church is experiencing a constant growth. The new church at Hopewell already has a young fellow who is preparing for the Baptist ministry. He is Brent Everett Gibson. He was born last Oct. 11. His lungs were working, and he weighed 7 pounds and 7 ounces. His father will probably be back down on earth between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Incidentally, Giles, Lowery, and Gibson are all graduates of Baptist Bible College.

Zion Bible Baptist church, Detroit, Mich., Harold Jessop, pastor, had 21 in Sunday school Oct. 25, and a Sunday school offering of \$16.37.

Bible Baptist church, Enid, Okla., Scotty Alexander, pastor, had 439 in Sunday School Oct. 25, and an offering of \$491.43. Alexander is serving his 10th year as pastor of the church.

## TABERNACLE BAPTIST CHURCH

Everet Baty, Pastor  
Altus, Oklahoma

To The Tribune:

Enclose you will find a check for the Baptist Bible Tribune.

I have been wanting to write this letter for sometime but I can see if I get it done I'll just have to stop and do it. No one will ever realize how thrilled I am over becoming pastor of the Tabernacle Baptist church. Everything is here—the Lord, the call, the commission, the challenge, the workers, and the lost. I can truthfully say that the people have received us in a very wonderful manner, for which we praise God.

I appreciate Bro. Wayne Imboden's ministry here at Altus, and I appreciate being able to step into a church already "going" for the Lord. Bro. Imboden is well liked here, and he will always have a place in the people's hearts.

My first sermon as pastor of the church was Sept. 6. Since then, God has blessed and we have had several saved and

added to the church. My heart was blessed especially Sunday before last. On that date we had 294 in Sunday school and 14 forward that night. Of that number two were saved (an elderly man and a young airman), three came into the church by baptism, one by statement, one young man surrendered to preach the Gospel, and others came for rededication. Truly, God's blessings are upon us. Very shortly we are going into a \$1,000 building program. Our building fund is growing and in God's own time and way, we will see that new auditorium. Please pray for us.

I am looking forward to the Thanksgiving Fellowship in Denton. It will be my first at Denton, and I plan to be there from Monday on.

As soon as we can have ground breaking ceremonies, I'll send you a mat for the Tribune. I appreciate your ministry. May God bless you.

EVERET BATY.

Paul Morgan has begun his second year as pastor of Greeley Baptist Temple, Greeley, Colorado.

First Baptist church, Johnson, Kas., John Nestor, pastor, had a Sunday school attendance of 88 Oct. 25 and a total offering for the day of \$434.25.

Grace Baptist church, Oklahoma City, Okla., J. C. Brown, pastor, had an average Sunday school attendance for Oct. of 345.

Fellowship Baptist church, Great Bend, Kas., Albert Adrian, pastor, had a Sunday school attendance of 120 Oct. 25, and the total offering for the day was \$126.70.

Fellowship Baptist church, Okmulgee, Okla., R. T. Eichenaur, pastor, had a total offering of \$132.12 Sunday, Oct. 25. There were 25 in Sunday school.

## AUSTIN AVENUE BAPTIST CHURCH

Arthur L. Patton, Pastor  
Brownwood, Texas

To The Tribune:

You will find enclosed two dollars (\$2.00) for which we wish to subscribe to The Tribune. Also enclosed please find \$5.00 which our church wishes to designate for Rev. Chas. Coleman and family, missionaries to India.

We would like to inform you that we are the new pastor of the Austin Avenue Baptist church of Brownwood, Texas, succeeding Bro. J. T. Wood, who started the church something like a year ago. We are happy to report our Sunday school is growing and God is blessing our efforts. Enclosed is a picture of the new church building.



The recommended hotel is:  
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*ADDITIONAL HOTELS*

- Courtyard – (512) 255-5551
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- Best Western Executive Inn – (800) 447-4136
- Staybridge Suites – (512) 733-0942
- Red Roof Inn – (512) 310-1111
- Hampton Inn – (888) 370-1940

# SPEAKERS

MONDAY



Linzy Slayden

TUESDAY



Fred Young

WEDNESDAY



William Fluker



Rick Blackwood



Keith Bassham



Tim Hawks



Randy Hogue



Cal Thomas

# MINISTRY SESSIONS

Tuesday and Wednesday mornings will start with breakout classes at the Wingate Conference Center designed to benefit just about anyone in ministry.

# HISPANIC FELLOWSHIP

During morning sessions, the Hispanic pastors and ministry leaders will have preaching, worship, testimonies, and special music all in Spanish.





Dona Eggar



Carol Kent

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

Four-man scramble on Thursday  
Contact Steve Ledbetter at (512) 508-0810  
or register at [texasbbf.org](http://texasbbf.org)

Turning Consumers Into Contributors *Monty Maples/John Gross*

Transitions *Randy Harp*

Prayer Ministry *John Arnold*

MANNA Worldwide *Bruce O'Neal*

Conflict Resolution *Kim Beckham*

Sr. Adult Ministry *Larry Lilly*

Water for Life *Mark Reynolds*

Veteran Ministry *Dennis Isbell*

Gateway Project *Steve Johnson*

Student Pastors Panel *Jon Slayden/Jeremy McCarter*



James Smith  
Elias Salazar  
Manuel Tec  
Hugo Campos Sr.  
Russell Johnson  
Mark Williams  
Miguel Carreon  
Ricardo Murrillo  
Enoch Guterrez

P



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By Kevin Carson

## I can see you, kind of.

As I write, I am flying at 30,000 feet above the Ozarks. I can see Table Rock Lake, Taneycomo, and Bull Shoals. The towns of Branson, Hollister, and Ozark are more difficult to make out. I see farms, open pastures, winding roads, ponds that look like puddles, and matchbox structures. Trucks, cars, and boats, merely dots against the background, are barely discernible. Certainly, the majesty of the Mark Twain Forest is abundantly clear. I experience the Ozarks; it seems strangely quiet and peaceful today.

From this perspective, things are different; helpful, you might say. You see connections, relationships, and patterns. Here you can observe how the Finley, James, and

White Rivers connect in a chain of sorts, one feeding another, and feeding another still. You can discern the relationships between the winding roads and the variations of the Ozarks' geography where hills, water, forest, and plains share the same space. These various elements combine to create a pattern that would make the finest quilt-maker proud. Absolutely gorgeous.

Although the beauty of the Ozarks can be considered, appreciated, and admired from this high, this perspective fails to reveal the depth of the beauty of the Ozarks. From here it is impossible to see the towering oaks, the clumped acorns, the energetic squirrels, and the deep brown bark. Gone are the sounds of waves massaging the shore, the gentle caress of the breeze, the light whiffs of humidified

air, and the occasional splash of a fish. Missing are the faint moos of nearby cattle, the bullfrog's deep croak, the coyotes' unsettling bark, and the commanding hoot of the owl. Absent are the brilliant array of leaves, the orchestration of the birds, the greenish-tan hue of the fields, and the gigantic hay bales that dot the countryside.

Plus, where are the people? From up here you can't see the farmer, bus driver, mailman, clerk, fireman, mechanic, or coach. Where are the grandpas, grandmas, dads, moms, brothers, sisters, sons, daughters, husbands, wives, uncles, aunts, and so many friends? The silence is deafening. There are no laughs, fun-filled screams, chats, cheers, whispers, and conversations. It is impossible to observe the glimpses, the glimmers, the winks, the scowls,

the smiles, the squints, the tears, and the hugs. This perspective, as quiet and helpful as it may seem, fails to catch the essence of the Ozarks.

So how is here, right now, this place — up in the clouds *per se* — how is this perspective helpful? Let me share two ways the big perspective/big picture is helpful for us.

First, we occasionally need the reminder of the big perspective and how everything connects and relates. It is good to take time to notice the themes and patterns in life around us. As you guessed, I'm not talking about geography necessarily. Instead, I'm talking about life — my life, your life, our lives.

In the daily grind, it is easy to lose the Big Picture Perspective. God works in and through these details of life for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28). God is up to something good, and you are part of that. If we fail to see the big picture, then it is much easier to either minimize what God is doing or not consider God at all.

Consider my flight today. I know all these rivers are connected, yet today's flight reminds me of that. I see the connections and can pause to praise God for His wonderful work. It is very good (Genesis 1:31). I see man's ingenuity in the road system, farms, structures, and hydroelectric dams. However, this is not about man; this is about God's grace to man. None of these great accomplishments — even me floating up here — would be possible without God. So, this perspective helps keep me grounded in my own time and space of life. God created, works, and plans. We benefit.

When we observe the big themes and patterns in life, we learn where God desires to do His marvelous work of redemption in our lives (Ephesians 2:10; 3:20). Where does God want to change us? What character piece are we missing? Where have we been living without careful consideration of God and His plan?

There is a second way the big perspective is helpful to us. The big picture helps us recognize the in-depth, intense, multifaceted beauty of the daily grind. God has a place He wants to work His plan, purpose, and goals — our lives. The nitty-gritty, the ups and downs, the good and bad, the best and worst of life all fit together in God's plan to help

grow us into His Son's image. In the midst of football season and practice, school days, work demands, shopping trips, yard work, traffic jams, and so forth, God desires to take us from where we are to where He wants us in our character or inner man. Without the big perspective, we fail to realize the beauty of actually what is around us daily.

In fact, we must work to maintain our focus in daily living with the perspective of God's purposes and plans. Often in the rush and activity of everyday living, it is easy to be annoyed by the mundane things in life that tend to be frustrating. However, God is using the minutia of the common and ordinary circumstances to help you grow into Christ-likeness (James 1:2-12; 1 Corinthians 10:13). If you fail to see God at work in the mundane, you will fail to see Him at all.

From the quiet, you appreciate the noise. From a distance, you long for the intimate. From the larger context, you gain perspective on the immediate proximity. In the daily struggles of life, people and objects often garner our frustration, attacks, and rage. However, God places those people and objects into our lives for our good and His glory. Instead of individuals becoming our objects of contempt, God wants us to embrace them, live life with them, to essentially welcome them into our lives as the gifts they are. God places us in a context with people where He does His good work — for, to, and in us; for, to, and in them.

This Thanksgiving season, we have so much for which to be grateful. First, only in Christ is all this possible. Prior to a personal relationship with God through Christ, you

were unable to honor God. However, now as a child of God, God changes you by the power of the Spirit through the Word of God, in the midst of your circumstances (Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Corinthians 3:18). Right now, God is up to something good in your life as clearly previously demonstrated through the death of Christ and your salvation (Romans 5:1-11).

Furthermore, we can be grateful for the seasons of life. The Thanksgiving holiday, teeming with family gatherings, church socials, holiday shopping, sports, and food, reminds us of another year quickly coming to a close. In just weeks we say goodbye to this year and begin a new year. This seasonal change is much bigger than the calendar though. Solomon wrote, "To everything there is a season, and a time for every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1). He further penned, "He hath made everything beautiful in his time" (3:11). Essentially, Solomon reminds us that the details that make up life as we know it — the people, places, concerns, and responsibilities — come and go by God's design and are fitting to this time and place in your life and mine. Solomon challenges us to recognize the season of life in which we live today, right here and now, as part of God's gift to us according to His good plan and purpose. He writes, "... but for a man to rejoice and to do good in his life. And also that every man should eat and drink, and enjoy the good of all his labor, it is the gift of God" (Ecclesiastes 3:12-13). We give thanks, responding appropriately both to the good and bad in life, the seasons of God's calendar, as we see the big perspective of God's character and design.

So, today and during this Thanksgiving season, enjoy the scenery wherever you are — flying high gaining perspective, or walking along slowly through the circumstances of life in a fallen world. God is good and is in the details. Happy Thanksgiving!

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

IF WE FAIL TO SEE  
THE BIG PICTURE,  
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Photographs by Mike Flippo

## VENTURA MEETING UPLIFTING AND PRODUCTIVE

By the Tribune

Ventura Baptist Church and Pastor Lewis McClendon have been hosting missionary communication workshops several years. That “we’re-for-the-missionaries” mindset, coupled with the church’s physical location and well-thought-out facilities, made it a natural choice for a backup venue when a prior location had to be replaced. And in a situation where a thousand things could have gone wrong, Pastor McClendon and his congregation made hosting a Baptist Bible Fellowship national meeting look easy.

Where churches often have at least a year or two to prepare to assemble speakers, music, workshop leaders, and support people, the Ventura church had months. The program was filled with people both inside and outside the ranks of the BBFI, and while some find this disconcerting, most attendees welcomed the input and connections with other Christians, especially those who share our concern for evangelism and discipleship.

BBFI preachers in the services included

Steve Bender, Jon Konnerup, Brent Moeller, Mike Frazier, Linzy Slayden, Bruce Garner, and Lee Tomlin. George Barna also addressed the Tuesday morning assembly. The Wednesday evening speaker was Kirk Cameron (see the *Tribune* interviews with Kirk Cameron and George Barna on pages 14-15). Workshop leaders included Jim Baize, Otis Ledbetter, Kurt Bruner, Rim Rickard, Dan Smith, Steve Van Winkle, Jon Slayden, Linzy Slayden, Mike Gleason, Tim Adrian, Dennis Jennings, Jon Konnerup, Steve Bender, Lee Tomlin, Jim Smith, and Sharon Smith. Providing special music for the meeting were Terry Blackwood, Sylvia Lange, and John and Anne Barbour. Humorist Tim McClendon entertained those who attended a barbecue dinner Sunday evening hosted by the church.

September is traditionally the missions emphasis meeting for the BBFI calendar year, but this year marked a change. For decades, a chief interest in the September meeting was the Annual Projects Offering dedicated to

building church facilities and homes overseas. Instead, future meetings will be more concerned with missionary care and safety. Mission Office personnel cited increased threats to Americans living abroad and the need to spread resources more widely among missionaries. More training for missionaries and those who minister to them is part of the solution according to leadership. On the care front, the Fellowship will provide retreats, better outreach to missionaries’ children, and more training for sending churches and pastors through a missionary care offering.

Missionaries approved in September were career missionaries Carol Elkins to Nicaragua and Cory and Jessie Lyons to the Philippines. TEAM missionary Jacob Lyons was also approved.

Veteran BBFI missionary to Japan, Lavern Rodgers, received the Fellowship Faithfulness Award. Rodgers has been a missionary six decades, and several Japanese nationals traveled to California to see him receive the





honor bestowed upon him. In his remarks, Rodgers recounted how he responded to the call for missionaries after the World War, and how many said “it couldn’t be done there.” He ended his message by encouraging all to “come to Japan.”

Jon Konnerup presented the annual Mission Office audit and it was approved by the Committee of National Directors. Pastors wishing to obtain a copy of the audit may contact the Mission Office.

In other business, BBFI President Linzy Slayden announced that NCPO Director Wayne Guinn had resigned his position. New banking regulations and developments in banking relationships have made it necessary for the Mission Office to assume oversight of the current NCPO church loans. BBFI Vice President Dan Lamb has been appointed interim director of the NCPO to oversee training and recruitment of church planters. Slayden said the new conditions will require some restructuring, but “...as NCPO goes forward it will be leaner, more creative, and

more local-church oriented.”

College trustees proposed and ratified by the directors are (Boston Baptist College) Tracy Roby, Tim Roberson, and Dave Brown, and (Baptist Bible College) John Alexander, Rohn Boone, Brian Weed, Fred Young, and Terry Kizer.

The Fellowship heard reports from the colleges, including approved and international colleges, the Mission Office, NCPO, and the *Baptist Bible Tribune*.

President Slayden also announced that due to recent events in the Middle East, the planned Holy Land excursion is cancelled.

The next meeting of the BBFI is scheduled to take place near Austin, TX, at the United Heritage Center in Round Rock. The meeting is hosted by the Texas BBF and organization is led by the South Texas BBF and its chairman Mike Marcellus. The meeting is February 17-19, 2014.

The May meeting next year is scheduled on the campus of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, May 5-8.



## INTERVIEW: George Barna

George Barna presented some material from his book, *Maximum Faith*, in which he describes what he and his researchers have discovered about people in churches and their spiritual growth, or lack of spiritual growth. He briefly described “ten stops on the journey to spiritual wholeness,” saying that Christians rarely experience the sense of brokenness (stop seven) and surrender (stop eight) necessary to become true disciples of Jesus Christ.

I spoke briefly with Mr. Barna after his presentation at the BBFI meeting, and we talked about transformation and the journey he described.

**Editor:** *I've been reading George Barna since sometime in the 1980s and quite honestly didn't know what to expect today, because I've never heard you actually speak. I expected a lot of stats and analysis, but you sounded more like Dallas Willard with your spiritual transformation material.*

**Barna:** I've been called a lot worse; I can tell you that. I've learned that when I do presentations I can't give [people] the full blast of the data that's behind whatever it is they are wanting me to communicate to them. So I have to give them an analysis or interpretation without necessarily the specific data analysis. People's eyes glaze over when I do too much of that.

**Editor:** *The group you spoke to today is made up mainly of pastors. What is a pastor's first step to moving people along in these transformational stops?*

**Barna:** I don't know whether I can give you a generic first step for every ministry, because everybody is starting at a different place with different people. But, I think in terms of the philosophical perspective on what to do, certainly, one of the things would be to recognize that people have to have a biblical worldview in order to make the right kind of choices to enable them to be willing to move through the stops on the journey. So, teaching is a vital part of that, certainly not the only part, it is not even the major part, but you know, we are talking about what can a pastor do. That is certainly something they can do — make sure people have a really solid biblical foundation. Then when they get to different stops of the journey, when they are confronted with different possibilities in life, they can make the best choice possible from a biblical vantage point. One of the things I didn't get to talk about is how people are broken by crises that happen in their lives. They are not broken because they figured it out intellectually, or they read about it in the Scripture. They might have a beginning of an understanding of what brokenness is from that, but then God either orchestrates or allows situations that are very difficult for them, situations that are designed to move them closer to Christ and recognize that God is their only hope.

**Editor:** *So you are saying you could learn about brokenness by reading a text, say Psalm 51. But Psalm 51 would not break you in and of itself. A crisis is necessary.*

**Barna:** Having that as context for understanding what is going on is vitally important, but even more important is to have people around you who can see the crisis for what it is, which is a message from God. And not listening to the message from the culture that says, “Don't give in, you can overcome this,” and realizing maybe God doesn't want you to overcome it. You know, this could well be, in most cases it seems to me, He's trying to get your attention. He's trying to help you put life in perspective and understand what He wants with you in that relationship. So, for pastors to help people see those kinds of things as well, and, you know, to recognize that, sure, we can pray that your house is going to be restored after a fire, you know, pray that you are emotionally whole after the divorce, pray that

*(Interview continued on page 22)*



## INTERVIEW: Kirk Cameron

*Kirk Cameron was well known as a teen television actor in the 80s and 90s. The past several years, however, he has become an outspoken spokesperson for Christianity and conservative family values. I spent a few minutes with Kirk before he addressed the Baptist Bible Fellowship in Ventura in the September meeting.*

**Editor:** *I had read an article about you a couple of weeks ago and the author said there's a target on your back, and it gets bigger with your newest film. Do you often feel singled out?*

**Cameron:** When I'm around a bunch of Baptists, I do (laughing). I feel singled out in more like a fish out of water in Hollywood than I do when I'm working on the movies that I do, or I'm traveling around in a marriage conference, which are normally in churches. So when I'm in a Christian culture, Christian community, no, I feel like I'm with my brothers and sisters. But here in L.A., yes, it's different. I mean, culturally I'm the guy with the target on his back.

**Editor:** *I've seen a lot of the so-called "celebrity Christians" for whom Christianity basically is their hobby. I certainly don't get any of that from you. You're not just an actor that happens to be a Christian, you are a Christian who occasionally ...*

**Cameron:** Who moonlights as an actor?

**Editor:** *Where did that come from?*

**Cameron:** Let's see, I was an actor long before I was a Christian. I say long before, I was nine years old when I started acting. I came to Christ when I was about 17-18 years old. I think as is the case with anyone who is regenerated by the Spirit of God, you come to a place, like the prodigal son, where you recognize your own depravity, and you come to your senses, and you say, "I'm headed down the wrong road," and you turn back to the one who can save you. And so I know that happened with me. The Bible says the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and I sensed that as an atheist. I understood that I'm smaller than a little gnat under the mighty hand of a holy God. And you don't play games with that.

**Editor:** *Were you an atheist intentionally or was that sort of a default position?*

**Cameron:** I think it was more of a default position. That's a good question. It was probably more of a default position, but, it was one I embraced as I got older, because it was more conducive to the funnest [sic] forms of sin. Interestingly, it really never was a default position, because the Bible tells us in Romans that what can be known of God is clearly seen by the things that He's made, so that no one has an excuse. So the default position is to believe in the Triune God of the Scriptures. And we have to suppress the truth in unrighteousness. So, that's kind of a long answer, but that's the way that I approached Christianity.

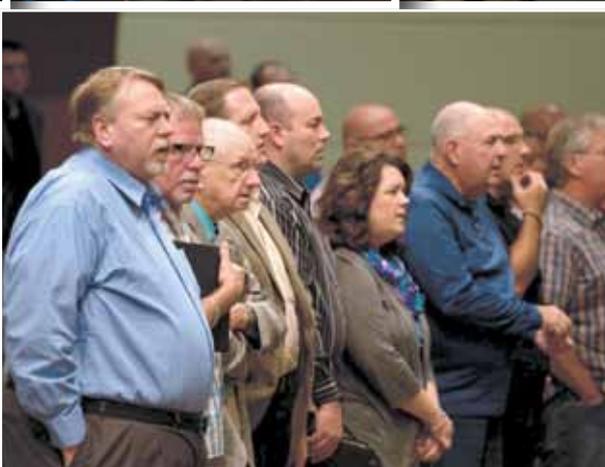
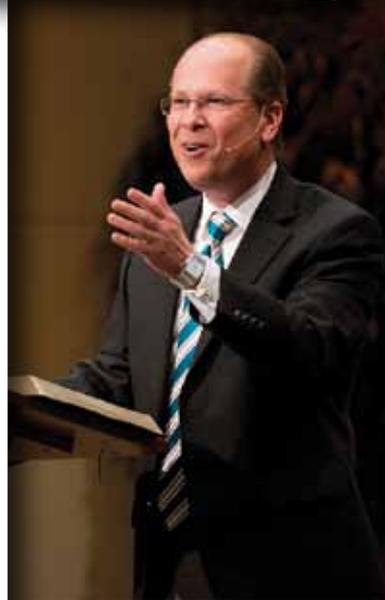
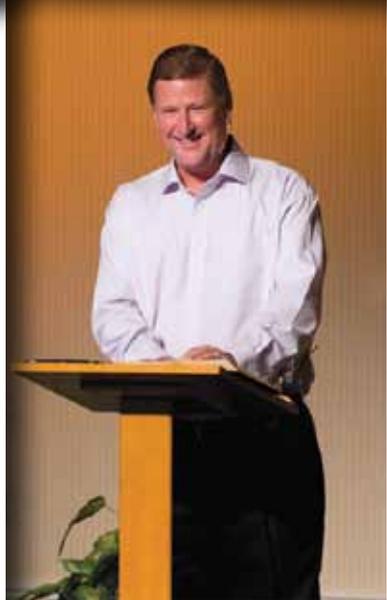
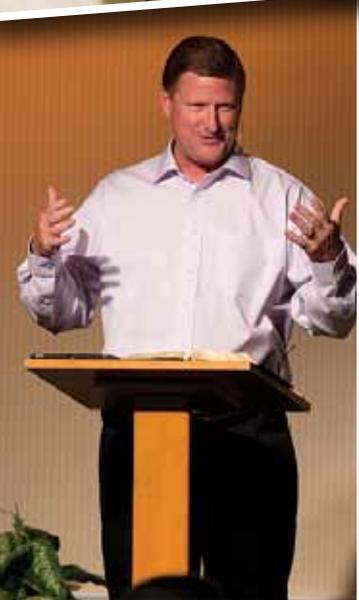
**Editor:** *Who or what turned you?*

**Cameron:** Well, I was asking some questions at about 17 years old and a friend invited me to go to church. I had no interest in church, but I had a great interest in the girl that invited me to church.

**Editor:** *Same thing happened to me, the same age, too.*

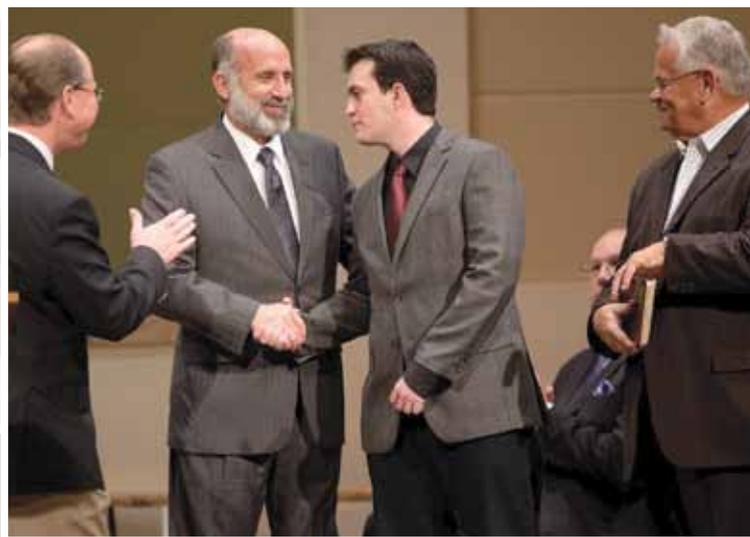
*(Interview continued on page 23)*











# HISTORY

# BAPTISTS

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## JEREMIAH WALKER – *From fame to shame*

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Jeremiah Walker was one of Virginia's most famous and effective evangelists, pastors, church planters, and champions of religious freedom. But a moral failure brought him shame and inflicted a devastating blow to the Baptist's cause.

Jeremiah Walker was born June 28, 1746, in Fauquier County, Virginia. Shortly after his birth, his family moved to North Carolina. There, Walker came under the influence of the Separate Baptists and was converted and baptized in his 20th year, April 6, 1766. Walker soon began to preach in the surrounding area. Although he had little formal education, his fondness for reading combined with his natural genius allowed him to overcome every obstruction, and he developed himself into a great preacher.

The renowned Samuel Harris often preached in Walker's neighborhood, and impressed with young Walker's ability, Harris invited him to accompany him on a preaching tour in Virginia. God greatly blessed their efforts especially in the area of Nottoway. As a result, Nottoway Baptist Church was organized in 1769, and Jeremiah Walker was elected their first pastor. His preaching and organizational abilities were demonstrated as he and his co-laborers were able to establish between 20 and 30 churches over the next several years. The Nottoway church experienced phenomenal growth becoming the largest church in Virginia.

Walker's activities did not escape the notice of the civil authorities. He was arrested in August 1773 and released that same month. He was jailed again in September for continuing to preach without a license and was not released until March 1774, having been incarcerated for approximately six months. His imprisonment only increased his popularity. Huge crowds attended his meetings resulting in numerous conversions. Everyone testified that Walker's moral conduct

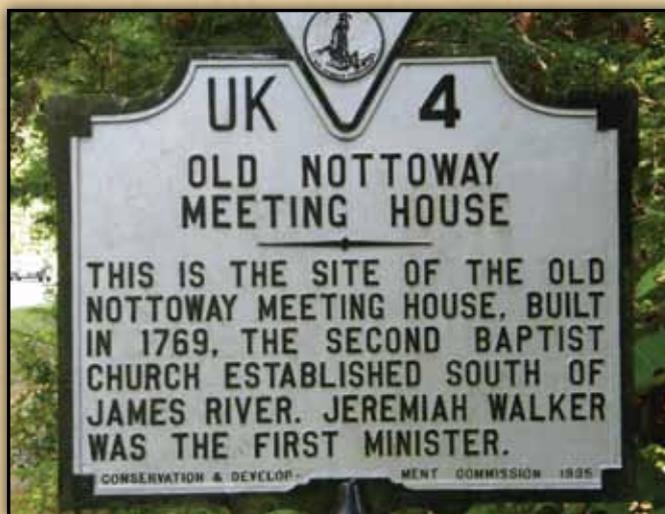
had always been exemplary, but sadly in 1774 he was excluded from his church for conduct unbecoming a minister. However, he was soon restored on account of his deep contrition.

Walker's outward moral conduct and his efforts to obtain religious freedom for all Virginians helped restore most of his reputation. In 1775, the Baptist General Association sent a petition to the Virginia General Assembly requesting that the Anglican Establishment be removed and religious liberty accorded to all. Walker was a part of the small group chosen to present the petition. The Baptists presented

additional petitions in 1778 and 1780. The later memorial was written by Walker. He was recognized by both friends and foes as the Baptists' most eloquent and effective advocate for religious freedom. But, again in 1783 or 1784 he engaged in immoral conduct that totally destroyed his reputation and usefulness.

Humiliated by his failure, he moved to Georgia in an attempt to put his life back together. Walker would never have another hint of scandal attached to

his name. In Georgia he held several important public offices and was able to obtain wealth and respectability as a Baptist minister, but he never regained his effectiveness as a Baptist preacher. In 1788, he returned to Virginia, confessed his sins, and sought the forgiveness of the Nottoway church, and forgiveness was granted. Walker and the Georgia Baptist Association parted company over Walker's rejection of Calvinism. Walker wrote a book *The Fourfold Foundation of Calvinism Examined and Shaken*. This book produced turmoil among many Baptists. Jeremiah Walker died at the age of 46 on November 20, 1792, and his life is a reminder that all ministers of the gospel should "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (1 Peter 5:8).



by Thomas Ray



# URBAN CURRENT

## A Miami model

I can't read this."

The earnest 16-year-old held his Spanish Bible out to the pastor. The pastor hesitated. Not only the 16-year-old but also his parents worshipped in the Spanish-language congregation. The young man, not unlike most second-generation immigrants in the States attending American schools, spoke primarily English. The Spanish spoken at home with his parents, relatives, and maybe here and there on the street was not the Spanish of scripture, theology, and Bible study.

The pastor gave the young teenager a King James Bible and sent him home. Quite soon the young man returned holding out the KJV to his pastor saying "I can't read this either." The pastor handed him a New King James Version. The teenager reported back "I can read this." How could the pastor know that this encounter would lead him into a great adventure?

Russell Johnson, with wife Beverly, came to Miami in September 1977 and founded Iglesia Biblica Bautista. A missionary kid from Peru, he led the church for the first 12 years, functioning in Spanish. His encounter with the teenager started some wheels turning. The next year, they counted 79 visitors who needed the Spanish service translated for them at the back of the auditorium. Checking local census information they discovered their community was only 33 percent Hispanic while the remainder was 33 percent Anglo and 33 percent African American. "If we reach every Hispanic in our community," Johnson told his congregation, "we will only reach 33 percent of our area."

Johnson realized something had to change. "If we start an English church for the English speakers, we will be bringing division to many families. That can't be a good thing," he reasoned. "If we start an English service, we can continue as one church ministering to the whole family even though families have different language needs." In 1989, the congregation started an English service.

Miami! Multifarious vice! Multinational

variety! A multicultural vortex! It's challenging enough to function in any urban environment. The city of Miami, colorful, volatile, transitory, presents a unique challenge. Yet right in the middle of it all is International Bible Baptist Church — thriving, preaching the Word, reaching people, making a difference. Calling themselves IBB, their name now matches their reality.

"Miami is always changing," Pastor Johnson says. "During our 36 years we have witnessed entire neighborhoods change from primarily Anglo, to Cuban, to Haitian. Every political and economic upheaval or environmental event within the western hemisphere can bring about an immediate influx of immigrants that are absorbed into the fabric of our community. The immediate area around our church has maintained a very even level of diversity for several decades with changes coming as younger generations move west or north to newer neighborhoods but with recent arrivals taking their place in the community. In the early years of our ministry, the Hispanic community was primarily Cuban. However, over the course of the years, even though Hispanics are the largest group in south Florida, today non-Cubans outnumber the Cubans."

I asked Johnson about challenges to his family when they moved to Miami.

"I grew up in a much bigger city than Miami so the diversity and pace of the city was a welcome thing for me," Johnson replied. "My wife, however, had to make some early adjustments coming from a much smaller town. The pace of life and the changes of an evolving ministry presents a constant challenge that never really allows us to get too comfortable in any situation.

"Our children grew up in very diverse public schools where they were often the minority. That has been a positive for them and allowed them to have a much larger perspective of the world around us. Our daughter married a young man from El Salvador. My son has recently moved his family to London, an even more diverse city, to plant a church."

I was interested to hear Johnson explain how a Spanish-language congregation could expand its heart and mission and reach not only second-generation Hispanics who speak English, but Anglos and African Americans as well. He summed up what I know had to be a great leadership challenge in a simple statement. "We set about to create an environment where everyone is comfortable." Clearly with the present makeup of the congregation, they have achieved significant success. There is a lot to pay attention to in the IBB story.

Johnson was clearly prepared by God to lead this effort. However, even with divine preparation Johnson had to do community exegesis, be creative, and take risks. I can't help but wonder if some of the brethren Spanish and English didn't eye these developments askance.

We don't always appreciate innovation when it first emerges from its cocoon. A second language congregation, instead of a new church, keeps families together, leverages strength, broadens outreach, and displays unity in an increasingly fractured world. It seems like a win-win to me.

One church, two congregations, two languages, 30 nationalities, support for 24 missionary families around the world, and engaged in strategic partnerships with other gospel-focused organizations ... don't you think this is what Jesus had in mind when He said I will build my church?

Oh, that 16-year-old who handed the pastor the Spanish Bible? His name is Marcel Sanchez. He now co-pastors with Russell Johnson.

Ain't God awesome?

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



you'll get a job after you've just suffered through a bankruptcy, but that's typically, its odd to say, but typically I've found that's not the kind of prayer that God answers. So, the better prayer and relational encouragement and practical assistance would be to help the person look at that situation and seek to understand, what is God doing? Why? And be able to move forward on the journey recognizing this is actually for my benefit.

**Editor:** *Is brokenness and humility the same thing?*

**Barna:** Humility is the diminution of your ego, but brokenness is coming to recognize that there are so many things that have gotten out of control or out of order, or have been too magnified that should not have been, and I have latched onto those things, those would become the things that I want. Brokenness, I think, is all about redefining what you love. And so, it can't be sin, or sinful activities, it can't be self, and it can't be adulation or comfort or whatever. We have to be broken of all that stuff. The only thing that really matters is that relationship I have with God, who made me, who loves me, who protects me, and who has incredible stuff in mind for me. If I would just give up my agenda and adopt His.

**Editor:** *You mentioned in your presentation that we should be investing resources in the last four stops (experiencing personal brokenness, choosing to surrender and submit fully to God, love for God, love for humanity). What exactly are we talking about in terms of investing resources?*

**Barna:** Number one is helping people first of all to know this is the journey. I mean they settle for churchianity now because they don't know what the end of the journey is supposed to look like and what's supposed to happen for them to get there. You know,

we give them the big tool of a menu and we say, "Oh, all right, I have to complete as much of this as possible" and it becomes like school. Wow, we finished all the papers, I'm an A student. It doesn't matter. They need the map.

**Editor:** *An assignment might be reading your Bible through in a year. Something like that?*

**Barna:** Not a bad thing, but not the end game, you know. It can help in the end game, but it's not your main game. So, helping people understand what that's about, connecting people in such a way that now they begin creating a different language around the journey and start talking to each other about where they are along the journey, and starting loading up with people who can help them to get further down the journey. And it's not going to be much quicker but it will make more sense, it will be more efficient, maybe less painful. It will certainly be more fulfilling because they will have greater context for understanding what is going on and what their potential from that is — encouraging people through all of that and creating new measures of fruit. One of the things I'm writing now is basing my new research trying to figure out is that if you're a Stop-4 person, you don't bear Stop-7 fruit. So we're beginning to understand what is a Stop-4 person looks like in terms of what they produce for the kingdom? And what I am beginning to see is that there's patterns, there is a lot of overlap, but there are specific things that happen at each stop that you couldn't have produced earlier because of who you were, and so that transformation process enables you to become a more fruitful person, a more broadly fruitful person.

**Editor:** *Thank you for taking the time talk with the Tribune, I know you have to catch a flight.*

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**Cameron:** There is always a pretty girl in there somewhere. So I went to church and heard Chuck Swindoll. And I started asking questions and investigating Christianity and the claims of the Scriptures. My pastor told me once, and I always remember this, he says, “Kirk, I want you to remember something. When people ask you how did you find the Lord, I want you to remember, you did not find the Lord. He wasn’t lost. You were and He found you.” I can look back now and say, you know, I wasn’t seeking after God, I was seeking after my own pleasure and God sought me out and turned me around and he saved me.

**Editor:** *You’re wearing a Liberty University shirt — what’s this all about?*

**Cameron:** Oh, my Liberty shirt. Let’s see, Liberty University is a great university.

**Editor:** *We know them well. Good friends.*

**Cameron:** I was at Thomas Road in Lynchburg, VA, and this last year I’ve had the privilege of getting to know the staff and some of the students at Liberty University, and we have actually been in partnership on the new film that I’m making called *Unstoppable*. So they are helping to produce through their film department some of the content for the *Unstoppable* project.

**Editor:** *It is going to broadcast from the campus.*

**Cameron:** It is going to broadcast live from Liberty University next Tuesday and I have had a chance to tell a lot of people about Liberty University and I think they are doing an incredible job.

**Editor:** *Tell me about the movie.*

**Cameron:** Well, it’s called *Unstoppable*. It’s a brand new project that is based on a true story — a very personal project. My friend Matthew, 15 years old, just died of cancer this year and this is kind of a visual journal where I take a journey to the heart of the question, “Why does God let bad things happen to good people?” I think it’s fresh and unique in its approach

**Editor:** *Is it a documentary?*

**Cameron:** What I actually do is recreate the Biblical narrative, starting in the garden of Eden with Adam being created out of the dirt, and Eve coming out of his side, and Cain murdering Abel, and the flood, and all the way on through. So, I like to look at it as — I think of it more as a visual journal of a guy who’s trying to wrestle through the question “Where is God in the midst of tragedy and suffering?” and he goes to the Bible to find the answer in the great narrative story from the garden to the heavenly city and figuring out, where is, why is God letting so much tragedy take place in this whole thing — where is He?

**Editor:** *One last thing — talk to me about your wife’s foundation — Firefly.*

**Cameron:** The Firefly Foundation — the camp that we run is called Camp Firefly. We started it about 25 years ago and it’s a camp for terminally and seriously ill children and their families. We invite six families every summer around the country to an all-expense paid family vacation where they get away from needles and chemotherapy and doctors and treatments and just have a blast together. So, you know, kids with bald heads and missing limbs are all jumping in the pool together, and dads are golfing, and moms have queen-for-the-day makeovers and forget about all the difficult stuff, and just have fun and develop family memories and talk about their faith and just have a great time together. And it’s called Camp Firefly. We’ve been doing that for about 25 years and actually, that’s how we met Matthew, who is the inspiration for my film *Unstoppable* when he came to camp two years ago.

**Editor:** *Kirk, thanks so much for talking to the Tribune.*

**Cameron:** Oh, you’re welcome, my pleasure.

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## Why we do what we do



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

**H**ave you ever been challenged in a church service to pray more, and then committed to the Lord that you would pray more? How about to give more, or to read your Bible more? You leave that service fully intending to uphold your commitment and meet the challenge. But, for some reason, your commitment to follow through just seems to fall through.

Have you ever asked yourself why? Why don't we pray more? Why don't we give more? Why don't we read more of the Bible? We all know these things are necessary to become more like Christ, but we still struggle. We know that these things are important, but are they important enough? Do we realize their true value?

There is a thought process occurring with every decision you make. Why do you do what you do? It is all about motivation and value. Why are you motivated to go to work? You value money. Why are you motivated to work on your house? You value your home. Why do spend time with your family? You value them. Why do you spend time watching TV? You value entertainment.

Why do you do what you do? The reality is you will do whatever is important to you. You make time, sacrifice for, and give to whatever it is that you value. If you value the Bible, you will read it. If you think church is important you will make time for it. If you value people, you will tell them about Christ and give so that others can go and do the same. The more that you value something, the more important it becomes to you.

How important is Baptist Bible College to you? What value do you place on it? G. B. Vick led my parents to the Lord at Temple Baptist Church. My parents learned from Dr. Vick how to have a godly home and led me to the Lord at a young age. My pastor trained at BBC and challenged me to do the same. The education I received at BBC equipped me to become a true shepherd to those in my congregation. My children have chosen to attend BBC. Baptist Bible College has been valuable in my life and ministry. Therefore, I have personally chosen to sacrifice and give my all so future generations can continue to be trained to make an impact on our world for Jesus Christ.

How valuable is BBC to you? Consider this: Is a college dedicated to preparing the next generation of ministry leaders of any value to you, your children and grandchildren, and your church? If BBC has been important to you, then join me in giving financially. When you give to BBC you are investing in our current students, their future ministries, and in results that will have eternal value.

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Don't let your commitment to follow through, fall through.

## 33 Somerset Street



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

**I** make notes to myself. I have this special tray beside my computer — literally within arms reach as I write this — and in that tray is the most eclectic, fascinating (to me), and inspiring tidbits I can collect that can't be damaged if I spill my coffee. The little collection sits just beside the picture of my wife, Kim, if that tells you something about how I feel about my "notes."

On one of those notes is an address — 33 Somerset Street, Boston. I found this address years ago doing research on the life of the great missionary Adoniram Judson. He instructed friends to send him parcels to that address in downtown Boston, and at the "missionary rooms" there they would find a way to get the articles to Burma. I was determined to find out what I could about 33 Somerset Street.

As I suspected, the "missionary rooms" are long since gone, and ironically enough for me, the address now is just steps from the building that houses the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education — a place I know well. Today, 33 Somerset is really only an entrance into a modern building. That is a shame.

I have seen "33" and cannot help but wonder how much eternal good was done in that little building in the 1800s. I know that letters of love and encouragement passed through there on their way to faithful servants like Judson. Some dear saint, whose identity is completely lost to us, went about the daily routine of thankless jobs — making sure people who would change the world got taken care of.

I want to think of Boston Baptist College as the progeny of 33 Somerset Street — not too much that meets the eye, and unlikely to be tourist attractions a century from now — unnoticed by most, and yet familiar to the glance of heaven, day in and day out investing in those who spread the gospel. I feel sure that in the little "missionary rooms" young men and women on their way to their life's work found help to take the next step. The hustle of the city was down on Congress Street or Charles Street or Tremont Street. Somerset was a little off the beaten path — doing what few would notice, but what eternity would celebrate. Sounds a lot like Boston Baptist College to me.

I am pretty sad about what has become of 33. Now it is just a doorway. But almost 200 years later I still celebrate what they did. I suspect there are a lot of us out there doing what God has given us to do today. My college work and your Christian service doesn't draw a lot of attention. Maybe even seems like you do pretty routine things, and that all the really "cool" stuff happens somewhere else. Please never forget that "33 Somerset" has to do its job — or the things we read about in inspirational missions accounts do not happen. Maybe they won't put up a plaque in your honor at your "33 Somerset Street," but He will. If you need to, leave yourself a note to remind you of that.

GREENSBORO, NC

## North Carolina church plant celebrates first year

More than 330 people attended the first anniversary service of Restoration Church September 9. The church is led by Joey Baynes and meets at Alamance Elementary School. Pastor Tom Wagoner of Central Baptist Church in Dunn, NC, preached for the anniversary. Central Baptist is the sending church for Joey Baynes.

As part of the celebration, the

congregation gave away a restored 1980 Ford Pinto. Baynes reports that 14 people were baptized the Sunday following the anniversary. Baynes says, "Please pray that God continues to restore lives in Greensboro! If it had not been for the fellowship and the training we received from the NCPO we would not be able to experience what we have seen God do."



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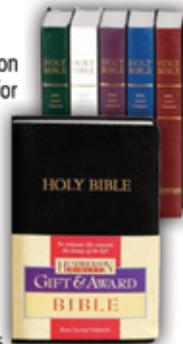
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GLADSTONE, OR

## Tri-City Baptist Temple celebrates at 40

The year 2013 has been special for Tri-City Baptist Temple and Pastor Ken McCormick. Forty years ago in July, Ken and his family started the church at the end of the old Oregon Trail with 16 people.

Today, Tri-City Baptist Temple is located on eight acres in Gladstone, OR, with property, building, and land worth over \$6 million, a membership of 1,500, and an average of over 500 in Sunday school. "Our greatest achievement is the souls saved and baptized over the years, as well as our mission outreach with over 125 missionaries and mission projects," states Pastor McCormick.

In the early days of the church, the membership met at a grade school auditorium. Pastor McCormick came early each Sunday morning to start the furnace, and a few members would set up chairs. After services, all the chairs were folded and stacked back up — again by the pastor, his wife, and a few members.

According to Pastor McCormick, his motto is, "Stick and stay and make it pay," and you can hear it said among the members as they seek to carry on God's work. McCormick and his wife, JoAnn, are still on the front line of ministry, undergirded by his staff and faithful membership committed to the call and cause of Christ.



*"Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days." Ecclesiastes 11:1*

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LOUISVILLE, KY

## KWFC named Southern Gospel Radio Station of the Year

FM radio station KWFC of Springfield, MO, was announced as winner of the National Quartet Convention Music Awards 2013 "Radio Station of the Year."

"KWFC is a most deserving recipient of our Radio Station of the Year Award. They are a powerful and positive face for Southern Gospel Music, and represent a spirit of excellence in their field," said Clarke Beasley, Executive Vice



From left: National Quartet Convention Vice President Clark Beasley, KWFC Manager Dave Taylor, and President Judy Nelson of the Southern Gospel Music Guild

President of the National Quartet Convention.

The award recognizes the station as a leader in both quality of broadcasting and positive influence in promoting the Southern Gospel Industry.

KWFC's format is a blend of classic gospel and current chart-topping songs from artists such as The Blackwoods, Oak Ridge Boys, Booth Brothers, and Jason Crabb. The station also airs popular syndicated programs *Gaither Homecoming Radio*, *Focus on the Family*, and *Turning Point with Dr. David Jeremiah*.

"We have the best message to offer in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and a beloved style of music with which to share that message," Taylor says. "We have a dedicated staff that I am proud to see receive this recognition from others in our industry."

KWFC has served the Ozarks community since April 1969 and is owned by Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO.

SPRINGFIELD, MO

## RALPH LILES



Ralph Dean Liles, 93, longtime Fellowship preacher and pastor, passed from this life October 7, 2013, in Springfield, MO. Ralph faithfully served his country in the Army Air Corps from 1942-1948, and his Lord from 1953-2013 in Kentucky, Texas, Kansas, and Missouri. He was part of the graduating class of Baptist Bible College in 1953, the first class who had begun at BBC as freshmen in 1950.

He is survived by his wife of 73 years, Ruth Evelyn Liles, four children, 13 grandchildren, and 28 great-grandchildren.

Services were held Thursday, October 10, 2013, at West Division Street Baptist Church in Springfield.

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# Giving thanks – a Baptist eucharist

By Keith Bassham

Years ago, I heard a former university president talk about a time from his youth when dairy products were kept in wells and springhouses. In his story, someone had used the milk, but the unnamed person did not replace the cap tightly on the milk jar, and milk had spilled into the well.

There was nothing to do but to pump the well until all traces of the whitish water were removed. Someone got a pump and went to work. A few neighbors came over to see what was going on, and before long the well pumping had turned into a block party. People were enjoying themselves, and the conversation, and the mild morning weather. Someone brought some sandwiches. Others brought drinks. It was an occasion.

And then the pump clogged and stopped.

Some of the men produced a few hand tools, and they went to work on the pump. After just a few minutes the problem was obvious to all. A snake from the well had been vacuumed along with the water up the hose into the pump. The snake had probably made the trip up from the bottom okay, but all that was left inside the pump were chunks and pieces of an ex-snake.

Or as the storyteller said, “It had lost its essential snake-ness.” It was that essential snake-ness without which it could no longer legitimately be called a snake. In this world, snakes come long and thin, and not in chunks.

Just as there is an essential snake-ness, I believe there is an essential Christian-ness — ideas, philosophies, doctrines, and behaviors essential to being a Christian. And there are scripture passages that reveal to us God’s core values, those things that are high on His list of essentials, but they do not always read the way we might expect.

Take a look at 1 Corinthians 14. There, buried in all that language about speaking in different languages and spiritual gifts, Paul describes a hypothetical situation. What if, he asks in verse 16, someone enters the assembly, and hears what is a genuine blessing of the Spirit but the person cannot understand the language of that blessing? How will that unlearned one be able to say, “Amen” (meaning, “I affirm,” or “Yes,” or “It is true”) to what Paul calls “thy giving of thanks.”

What I gather from that is that “giving of thanks” is a big part of what the church is to be doing when it assembles. By the way, the phrase translates the Greek *eucharistia*, from which we receive *eucharist*: *eu* – good, and *charis* – thanks, and is found again (in a verb form) in 1 Corinthians 11:24: “And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.” That explains how the English word *eucharist* came to be connected with the Lord’s Supper.

In any given church service, only a few can do some things, but we can all give thanks, and that ought to mark our worship as Christians. I would say it is an essential.

Noel Smith was sounding out this message more than 50 years ago, and his words are still appropriate today:

*“Gratitude is not a spiritual or moral dessert which we may take or push away according to the whims of the moment, and in either case without material consequences. Gratitude is the very bread and meat of spiritual moral health, individually and collectively. Gratitude is not a general virtue floating around on the periphery of the personality; gratitude is central, basic, decisive. The success, continuity and climax of individuals and nations is determined by the sovereignty of God; gratitude is the determining factor with that sovereignty.”*

*“What was the seed of disintegration that corrupted the heart of the ancient world beyond the point of Divine remedy, where God gave it up to the wallow of its filth, where men and women became foul with unnatural lusts and perversions, where not a fresh breath of purity blew through the heavy atmosphere of its stench?*

*“What was it but ingratitude? ‘... when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful ...’ (Romans 1:21).*

*“What was it that blinded with pride the eyes of that young man of that far distant time, dethroned him from his seat of authority and dignity and led him a bound slave from the wealth and comforts of his father’s house to the hog pen? What was it that led him from the music of the voices of father and mother and sister and brother to the hard, cold, barren ground of the far country where only swine grunted and fugitive winds waited their distress? What was it that tore from his back his woven robe, jerked from his feet the shoes of freedom, pulled from his finger the signet of love and left his shivering form to the mercy of such tattered rags as he could find?*

*“What was it but ingratitude? When he knew his father he praised him not as his father, neither was he thankful. The first step of civilization toward disaster, and the first step of an individual toward disaster, are one and the same — INGRATITUDE!”*

Fortunately for us humans, the step back to God begins with a thankful heart, acknowledging Him as Creator, and then as Savior. And finally, let your life be marked with thanksgiving — it really is essential.



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