

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

OCTOBER 2013 | VOL. 64 NO. 2

THE HARVEST IS PAST, THE SUMMER IS ENDED...

Jeremiah 8:20

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THE JEREMIAH PROJECT p. 10

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FEBRUARY TRIBUNE OFFERING



YOUR GIFT KEEPS THE FELLOWSHIP MAGAZINE COMING



ON THE TABLE

Forty years in the ministry

by Keith Bassham | Editor

It just dawned on me a few days ago that I have been “officially” in the ministry 40 years. I spent the summer between my first and second year at BBC with Faith Baptist Church near Kaufman, TX, and before I left to return to school the church licensed me to preach the gospel. Ordination would come later, of course, but it was the first such commission I received from a church.

I’m not sure how it happened, but inductively I came to appreciate the importance of this church-preacher connection. Even today, when someone asks me how to recognize the call of God upon his or her life, I like to point them to the church. A functioning church will recognize the call, sometimes before the individual.

A good example comes from the life of George Truett, noted pastor of First Baptist Church in Dallas, TX, for 47 years from 1897 to 1944. George gave his life to Christ in his late teens, and he was from that point a faithful laymen. He had, however, given himself to study law as a profession. He was a good Sunday school superintendent, and in that capacity he even preached occasionally — always preferring to stand next to the pulpit rather than behind it, for he never thought himself worthy to be a minister.

Once, in a Saturday evening meeting at his church in White-wright, TX, not far from Sherman, a deacon moved that the church ordain George Truett to “the full work of the gospel ministry.” George protested, but the voice of the church became, to him, the voice of God, and he relented.

He wrote later, “There I was, against a whole church, against a church profoundly moved. There was not a dry eye in the house ... one of the supremely solemn hours in a church’s life. I was thrown into the stream, and just had to swim.”

The next day he was examined and ordained, and the next time he preached was from behind the pulpit of First Baptist Church in Sherman, TX. The rest of the history is well known.

I have thought for a long while that churches should take a greater role in identifying and affirming potential ministers in their midst. Is this not what we read in Acts 13: “As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away.”

Perhaps the reason we see so few “surrendering” to the ministry these days is because the church is not doing its best to help them recognize the call. No doubt churches can be as mistaken as individuals can, but the Bible says there is wisdom in counseling with others. And if the church is to function as the body of Christ, it ought to be doing all it can to help channel the call of God to its youth.

Keith Bassham

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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

Nothing but manna?



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

I have long felt that one of the particular temptations of the maturing Christian is the danger of getting accustomed to his blessings. Like the world traveler who has been everywhere and seen everything, the maturing Christian is in danger of taking his blessings for granted and getting so accustomed to them they fail to excite him as they once did.

It was Emerson, I believe, who said if the stars came out only once a year, everybody would stay up all night to behold them. We have seen the stars so often that we don't bother to look at them anymore. We have grown accustomed to our blessings.

Israel in the wilderness got accustomed to her blessings, and God had to chasten the people. God had fed the nation with heavenly manna each morning, the very food of angels; and yet the people were getting tired of it. "But now is our soul dried away," they said, "there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes" (Numbers 11:6).

Nothing but manna! They were experiencing a miracle every morning, yet they were no longer excited about it. Nothing but manna!

One of the evidences that we have grown accustomed to our blessings is this spirit of criticism and complaining. Instead of thanking God for what we have, we complain about it and tell Him we wish we had something else. You can be sure that if God did give us what we asked for, we would eventually complain about that! The person who has gotten accustomed to his blessings can never be satisfied.

We in ministry have heard our share of criticism from people. I have learned to listen to honest, sincere criticism and tried to profit from it; but I have learned to pay little attention to the "wilderness grumbings" of the disgruntled saints who had gotten accustomed to their blessings.

In our families, our children go through this stage, usually early in adolescence. Every local church has its share of members who are like this.

I believe God is grieved when we are accustomed to our blessings and start to complain and criticize.

The only cure for the sin of getting accustomed to our blessings is this: constantly give thanks to God for all He gives and does. A thankful heart, lost in the wonder of God's grace and goodness, will never take God's blessings for granted.

The BBFI has been blessed. We are not without challenges but we have been blessed and we continue to be blessed. We will have to restructure NCPO but we will emerge stronger, more creative, and very local church oriented. BBFI missions is the best in the world. Our colleges are preparing students to be world-changers. Our churches are preaching the soul-saving, lifesaving gospel of Jesus Christ. We enjoy a wonderful Fellowship.

I invite you to come alongside and make our Fellowship stronger and more effective. Our world needs the BBFI! I am glad I am part of it!

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

Missionary kids



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

It is said that each year five percent of the worldwide missionary force returns home and resigns, yet 70 percent of these cases are preventable. If we take a more proactive approach in assisting them before they return, we can potentially keep many on the frontlines of missionary service. How can we work together to curb this trend?

We want to be more actively involved in assisting and ministering to our missionary kids. This would include preparing missionary parents, their children, and the sending church as the family returns to the U.S. This will be the first step as we try to develop something more for our families as they face these life changes. Our MKs return as third culture kids (TCKs) and often find themselves not able to relate well in either the U.S. or the foreign culture. So, we would like to do all we can to help prepare them to be successful in their transition as they re-enter this culture. Many of our newly approved missionaries are missionary kids and are able to thrive in their ministries on the mission field. Let's do all we can to help all of them transition and hopefully see more return into the Lord's service.

Missionaries also face many spiritual and emotional battles on the field. Oftentimes they struggle and need someone to come alongside them. Adequate funding could assist the sending pastor, someone from the Mission Office, or a mission field representative to visit missionaries to counsel and encourage them and perhaps save a marriage, family, or ministry. Perhaps retreats on the field, right where our missionaries live, can be organized at no cost to the missionary where we can spend some quality time together lifting our brothers and sisters up who are constantly being bombarded by the devil.

We would like to provide training for sending churches to help them understand what their missionaries expect and need from them and, in turn, what they should expect from their missionaries. Regional meetings across the United States would be set up where the ideas of what other churches are doing for their missionaries would be shared with sending pastors. Pastors who have successfully backed their missionaries would be included in this part of the education.

Initiatives such as these are just a snapshot of things we would like to do for our missionaries. They are not intended to usurp the authority of the sending church — on the contrary. When called upon, we want to be equipped and available to assist missionaries in the best way possible. We stand by the biblical pattern of the local church as the missionary's sending agency. We want to come alongside and assist churches as they strive to fulfill the Great Commission.

Would you consider what part you will have in this newly established Missionary Care Offering? You can promise an annual gift or commit to giving a set amount each month. This is a very important way you can make a difference in many missionary lives.

Fall Church Planter's Candidate School



by Wayne Guinn | Director | NCPO

The next NCPO candidate school will be hosted at Bible Baptist Church of Wilmington, OH, October 7-11, 2013. Host pastor Kelly McInerney has included some unique material in this school. There is a second track for state chairmen and representatives October 8-9. During that series of sessions, Ohio pastors will explain their state church-planting movement, including recruiting and training church planters, as well as resourcing and accountability. On Wednesday, October 9, chairmen and state reps will tour three of Ohio's newest church plants, and hear testimonies from six of the church planters. The meeting is designed to spark ideas and encouragement for church planting movements in other states. For more information, contact Pastor Kelly McInerney at (937) 383-1122, or pastor@bbcwilmington.org.

SPEAKERS AND TOPICS

- Kelly McInerney—Pre-Launch & Launch
- Rick Carter—Building a Stewardship Mindset
- Rick Carter—Funding Your Capital Needs
- Duke Hergatt—Who's the Man
- Duke Hergatt—Comfortable in My Own Skin
- Duke Hergatt—Tripod of Reason
- Duke Hergatt—Discipleship
- John Arnold—Prayer Habits that Last a Lifetime
- John Arnold—Four Steps to Intimacy with God
- John Arnold—How Prayer can Strengthen the 7 Vital Areas of Ministry
- Linzy Slayden—Building a Ministry Team for Success
- Josh Bevan—Prayer & Faith in Church Planting
- Josh Bevan—Building a Core Group
- Ryan Bevan—Communicating Vision
- Dan Lamb—Integrity in Leadership
- To Be Announced—Personal Support & Pre-Launch Costs
- To Be Announced—Budget and Stewardship
- Jason Todd—Pastor's Family Life
- Jason Todd—Financial Integrity & Church Resources
- Keith Bassham—Leadership Traits of a Successful Pastor
- Keith Bassham—History and Philosophy of the BBFI

BBFI President Linzy Slayden has announced that due to changes in banking regulations enacted the past several years, the lending bank working with NCPO has asked for certain changes in the financing section of NCPO's structure. Details will be worked out when the BBFI Directors meet in Ventura, CA, for the Fall Fellowship Meeting.



AUSTIN TEXAS
BBFI NATIONAL MEETING
FEB. 17-19
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ADDITIONAL HOTELS

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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

Linzy Slayden ★ Rick Blackwood ★ Fred Young
Keith Bassham ★ Randy Hogue ★ William Fluker
Tim Hawks ★ Cal Thomas

MINISTRY SESSIONS

Turning Consumers Into Contributors
Transitions ★ Prayer Ministry ★ MANNA Worldwide
Conflict Resolution ★ Sr. Adult Ministry
Water for Life ★ Veteran Ministry ★ Gateway Project
Student Pastor's Panel

HISPANIC FELLOWSHIP

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

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

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DIGRESSIONS

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

“Eighty-two percent of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited.”

Dr. Thom Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door*

“A study including more than 15,000 adults revealed that about **two-thirds are willing to receive information about a local church from a family member and 56 percent from a friend or neighbor.** The message is clear that the unchurched are open to conversations about church.”

Philip Nation, LifeWay Research

“Four percent of formerly church members are actively looking for a church to attend regularly (other than their previous church). Six percent would prefer to resume attending regularly in the same church they had attended. The largest group, **62 percent, is not actively looking but is open to the idea of attending church regularly again.**”

Scott McConnell, LifeWay Research

“Only two percent of church members invite an unchurched person to church. **Ninety-eighty percent of churchgoers never extend an invitation in a given year.**”

Dr. Thom Rainer, *The Unchurched Next Door*

Source: www.backtochurch.com

News sources report more abortion clinics closing

Several news sources have recently reported an upturn in abortion clinic shutdowns (prominent online sources include Huffington Post, Bloomberg News and Time.com). A *Baptist Press* story says the total shutdowns so far this year is 44. Abby Johnson, a former Planned Parenthood director and abortion clinic manager, witnessed the closing down of the clinic she left four years ago when she became a part of Coalition for Life.

Virginia’s number one abortion provider closed in July according to the *Washington Post*. Another clinic in that same state performed more than 3,000 abortions in each of the past two years – but it has been shut down after state and local government regulations made it impossible to operate.

Tom Strode of *Baptist Press* reports, “State legislatures enacted 69 pro-life laws this year, according to a report released Thursday (Sept. 5) by Americans United for Life. In all, 48 states considered about 360

Mennonites and Amish appeal to young adults seeking stability and simplicity

The bottom feeders of reality TV are manufacturing a different image in shows such as “Breaking Amish” and “Amish Mafia,” where stripper poles, lap dances and revenge take center stage. “Like a bully who can spot his next victim, reality television has set its beady eyes on the Amish,” declared a television review in *The New York Times*.

Yet even though it is not a fair fight — with plain Anabaptist communities choosing a path of non-resistance — there is a growing interest in their simple lifestyle that emphasizes faith and community over fame, technology and wealth.

Who today would want to join the Plain Mennonites or Amish?

Young women, Baptists and seekers who have personal contact with Anabaptist life are some of the more likely candidates, according to a new study.

Distinctive, stable communities that place faith and family life at the forefront present an attractive alternative to some people, especially young adults, who appear to be seeking a genuine alternative to a modern world that glorifies technology, consumerism and secular lifestyles, suggests researcher Cory Anderson of Ohio State University.

Source: David Briggs <http://blogs.thearda.com>

such proposals in 2013, AUL reported. The legislative action this year continued a recent trend in states: 70 ‘life-affirming measures’ became law in 2011 and 38 in 2012, according to AUL.

To access the full report, see bpnews.net/BPnews.asp?ID=41036

In the NEWS of the WEEK

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Cletis Gibson, Pastor
Hopewell, Virginia

To The Tribune:

The Lord sure is blessing us here in our work. Yesterday was a wonderful day. We had 32 in Sunday school and one united with our church by letter from another Baptist church, then last night (Sunday) we had four more come into the church—two by letter and two by accepting Christ, making a total of five yesterday. Our attendance is going up all the time and there is a great opportunity here for us to build a good church.

People are exceptionally good to us, and are hungry for the Gospel and a place to worship without being cramped with formalism. I am very happy with the way things have been going.

I have a job with one of the milk companies in town, work-

BEDFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
Haskel Bolton, Pastor
Bedford, Indiana

To The Tribune:

The Lord is blessing the Bedford Baptist Temple in a wonderful way. We have just purchased a lot 100x110 in the best section of town. God supplied the money and we have the title to it. We are praying that God will open the way for us to erect a new building sometime next year.

Our church has been growing slow but sure. We had 55 two weeks ago with an offering of \$101. Last Sunday we had 57 with an offering of \$90. The Lord blessed us with three additions in these two Sundays. We are expecting to run in the seventies this month.

The Bedford Baptist Temple supports nearly every phase of our fellowship work, except The Tribune. Some of our people receive it, but not all of them. We support our Home mission work. We have adopted Bro. and Mrs. Stan Yuchnovicz as our missionaries.

Bro. Smith, I want to give my members, every family, a subscription to the best religious publication in circulation, for a Christmas present from their pastor. Will it be possible to have some type of certificate to present to them?

May God's richest blessings rest upon you in your work in behalf of the cause of Christ.

HASKEL B. BOLTON.

The weekly bulletin of Stone Baptist church, Pontiac, Mich., L. Dickens, pastor, is an attractive job. Harold Ferguson is superintendent of the Sunday school. Sept. 27 the Sunday school attendance was 439 with an offering of \$205.07. The previous Thursday night 27 members of the church made visits

ing from 6:00 a. m. to around 2:00 p. m. I feel I was very fortunate to get those hours because that gives me some time in the afternoon and evening to do the visiting I have to do. I don't have all the time I need, by any means, but guess the days just don't have enough hours in them.

I am sending our tithing check to the Fellowship tomorrow and will designate part of it to The Tribune. I certainly enjoy getting The Tribune. It came today and I have already read everything in it. I wonder if you could send me about 4 copies of it weekly for a few weeks and I believe I can get some new subscribers for it.

Pray for us and our work here. I will write and send you a picture soon.

CLETIS AND KATE GIBSON.

to 504 couples. The following is from the bulletin:

The one thing that destroys joy and breaks fellowship is unconfessed and unforgiven sins. You cannot sing or rejoice when sin is allowed to remain in your life. The Holy Spirit is grieved and unhappiness will be your lot. We cannot serve God with the whole heart when things are not right within our hearts. This accounts for the poor service rendered by so many people. Sin breaks fellowship, takes away joy, hinders unselfishness, grieves the Holy Spirit. Sin is against God, righteousness, Heaven, the souls of men. Sin is the devil's weapon. It is a slide into Hell. It is a destroyer of all that is good. Christians need to hate sin in any form.

Fellowship Baptist church, Perryton, Texas, has had a highly successful meeting. The pastor, Lloyd Willson, did the preaching and the singing was under the direction of Julius Blasz. On the closing day there were 130 in Sunday school.

Mr. Willson became pastor of the church last July. Since he became pastor the Sunday school, which was averaging around 55, averaged 65 in July, 81 in August, and 96 in September.

Following the National Fellowship meeting at Wichita, the Fellowship Baptist church revised its mission program. It is now as follows:

- 40 per cent of the mission offerings go to foreign missions
- 30 per cent goes to Baptist Bible College
- 10 per cent goes to Missions Office
- 10 per cent goes to the field agent, Rev. Loys Vess

Bible Baptist church, St. Louis, Mo., B. E. Rodgers, pastor, had 93 in Sunday school Oct. 4.

Fellowship Baptist church, Great Bend, Kas., Albert Adrian, pastor has broken its record of Sunday

DR. VICK TO BE AT WICHITA
OCTOBER 13-16

WICHITA, Kas.—Dr. G. B. Vick, pastor Temple Baptist church, Detroit, Mich., and president of Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Mo., will conduct a Sunday school conference in Wichita's Baptist Tabernacle here Tuesday through Friday, Oct. 13-6.

Dr. Vick will speak to the members of the Sunday school staff each evening at 7:00 o'clock and will speak to the entire congregation at 8:00 o'clock. Rev. Art Wilson is pastor of the Wichita Tabernacle.

school attendance the last three Sundays. The first Sunday there were 107 present, 110 the second Sunday, and 127 the third Sunday. Adrian became pastor of the church one year ago.

The Sunday school of Bible Baptist church, Enid, Okla., Scotty Alexander, pastor, broke all of its records for Sept., when it averaged 446 a Sunday. In September the church had 18 additions.

West Side Baptist church, Hutchinson, Kas., has observed its fourth anniversary. Lonnie Smith is pastor, and J. L. Powers is the associate.

On Sept. 20 the West Side Sunday school had an attendance of 407. The church was organized four years ago when 19 people met in the Y. M. C. A. building on a Sunday afternoon to organize a Bible Believing church. Despite the fact that the Y. M. C. A. auditorium was available to the new congregation on only Sunday evenings, the crowds grew rapidly. A garage building was rented, the only available building in town at the time, for \$100 a month. The first Sunday the church met in the garage building, there were 57 present. Money was raised to purchase lots at Twelfth and Madison streets, and a building was soon under way.

Before Sept. 20, the highest Sunday school attendance was 346. The church has a membership of 250.

Central Baptist church, Sherman, Texas, George Sullivan, pastor had 403 in Sunday school Sept. 20. There were 50 visitors.

Fellowship Baptist church, Okmulgee, Okla., R. T. Eichenauer, pastor, had 68 in Sunday school, Sept. 20 and an offering of \$64.98. It will be noted that the offering averaged almost one dollar each.

MISSOURI YOUTH FELLOWSHIP MEETS AT HIGH STREET

BY LOGAN COFFER

Missouri Youth Missionary Fellowship held its monthly meeting at the High Street Baptist church, Springfield, Tuesday evening, Sept. 29, and our hearts are again full of praise for God's presence with us.

Several hundred young people and friends from our Missouri churches listened intently to Rev. Ike Foster as he told about his rich experiences in the Japan mission work the past four and a half years. Ike and his fine wife, Jane, returned to the states just a few weeks ago. How God has blessed and used them to win many Japanese souls to Christ and establish the Chiba Bible Baptist church.

Another high point of the service was when they sang a duet so beautifully in the native language of Japan. Jane also has an outstanding solo voice. No one can deny the great burden the Fosters have for the salvation of the heathen. They plan to open a work in Korea after about a year's furlough here and that plan has already been wholeheartedly approved by the Baptist Bible Fellowship. As their need was presented God moved in our midst in a very wonderful way and an offering of \$174.46 was received; \$170 will be given to Ike and Jane to help open the new Korean mission work and the remaining \$4.46 will cover the printing and postage expense of the meeting.

Also as a special feature we were happy to have Hollis Warren sing many Gospel songs for us. Hollis is well known as Springfield's "singing shut-in" and he is a wonderful Christian fellow.

Our thanks to High Street church for furnishing our meeting place and to Waudell Maple and Wendell Graham who served as songleader and pianist.

Watch for the announcement of the October meeting. Our missionaries are depending on us so let's band together and aid in their support through the Missouri Youth Missionary Fellowship.

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ARE YOU A CITIZEN?

By G. M. Matheny – BBFi missionary in Romania

ASSURANCE COMES FROM AN UNEXPECTED SOURCE

WE CROSSED THE FRONTIER OF ROMANIA MAY 6, 1991,

about a year and four months after their revolution. During their revolution many people had died, and they were working hard to make their transition to a western-style economy. It is amazing to me how much the country has been transformed in the last 20 years; there are large stores now, and one can buy anything he or she wants, Romania has also joined both NATO and the European Community. But in May of 1991, America was like Disneyland compared to Eastern Europe.

Just getting this far had been a week-long ordeal since leaving the States, and my prayer was simple: “Just get me to Romania.”

We waited on the train for a while, and three young soldiers boarded with machine guns. These were not draped over their shoulders, but in their hands. One of them shouted, *“Pasaporte, pasaporte.”*

I could at least figure out what that meant, and I handed him our passports. He stared at me and said, *“Opt Pasaporte?”* He

then put his machine gun under his arm and lifted up eight fingers.

I nodded my head, yes, and eventually he understood that the rest of my family was up front in a compartment. He then turned around and walked off the train with our passports. I had been told to never let anyone walk off with your passports, as they’re the only acceptable proof of identity. So I followed him off the train and tried to get our passports back. Two more soldiers came up and pushed me back. Well, you can’t argue with people holding machine guns! I must have had a startled look on my face, as one soldier said, “Okay, okay, no worry.” I got back on the train and thought, “They have our passports, and if this train leaves, I’m sunk.”

After about ten minutes, a uniformed customs agent came on and said something to me in Romanian. I shrugged my shoulders and said, “I don’t understand.” To my surprise he started speaking to me in broken English.

“Are these your bags?” he pointed to our

bags in the hallway that were on the ground.

“Well, yes, they are,” I said, and added, *“I’m sorry, but there is no place to put them.”*

“Where is your paperwork?”

“For what?” I responded.

“For your bags. Show me the papers for your bags!”

I told him we had been in several countries and no one had asked for papers before. Apparently, these papers were to contain a list of what was in each bag. He was, after all, a customs agent and his job was to inspect what was brought into the country. “You have no papers, you open bags,” he said. He moved people off and away from our bags and started opening them; some of our bags were only cardboard boxes with masking tape on them, so he used his knife to cut the tape.

Now something happened here that I will never forget. One of our cardboard boxes was filled with Romanian New Testaments, and it also contained my English Bible and a Russian Bible that someone had given me while I

was in Hungary. He had told me to give it to the Russians who come into Romania to sell things at the open-air market. This customs agent only wanted to know one thing — “Why you have Bibles?” I knew it had been illegal to bring in Bibles under communism, but since Romania’s revolution I was told it was no longer a concern. I couldn’t understand what the problem was, but he was not going to let this pass.

He fired off questions, **“Why you have Bibles? Are you going to sell them? Why you in our country? How long you going to stay? What you going to do?”** He had lots of questions.

“I’m not going to sell them.” I said.

“Why you have them?”

“I’m just going to give them away.”

I was afraid to tell him I was a Baptist preacher coming to start churches. If he didn’t like the Bibles, then for sure he wouldn’t like me being a missionary. This man seemed to have the authority not only to make the train wait, but also to approve what and who went into Romania (or stayed behind).

And then, he asked, “You Romanian?”

“Romanian? No, I’m American.”

“You no Romanian?” he said again.

I shook my head and said, “No, I’m American.”

“You American?”

“Yes,” I said.

“You American citizen?” He asked.

“Yes, I’m an American citizen!”

“No!” he said, and he started going through the box of Bibles.

I stared at him for a moment, and then said to him, “What do you mean, ‘No?’”

“No! You no American citizen!”

I said, “What, is this a joke?”

Then he found the Russian Bible I had. **“This is Russian Bible,” he said, and he seemed quite proud of himself for finding it. “Why you have Russian Bible?”**

“I’m just going to give it away,” I said.

He looked at its pages for a few seconds and asked, “You Russian?”

I said “No!” and reached for my passport

to prove who I was, but it was gone, for they had taken the passports earlier. I thought, “What are they trying to pull here?” I put my hand in the air, as though I was taking an oath and said, “I’m an American citizen!” It now seems funny to me, but at the time it certainly was not.

“You American?”

“Yes, American!” I responded.

“You an American citizen?”

“Yes, you got it, an American citizen!”

“No,” he said.

“No what?” I shot back.

“No, you not an American citizen!”

I was totally bewildered. I stared for a moment, and then I said, “Okay, I’m not an American. I’m not Russian, and I’m not Romanian. Who am I?”

He reached for my English Bible, also in

shook it and said, “I am so glad you come to our country!”

“Oh, really,” I said. I had mixed feelings at this point. He was a Christian and I was not in trouble, but he had really pulled one on me, and all I could do was grin.

He told me that before the revolution he would let Bibles enter Romania. He said one man had written a book about him saying that, “God had blinded the eyes of the customs agent.” He told me when he opened bags during communism and saw any Bibles, he just closed the bags and said nothing. And then he added, “God didn’t blind my eyes; He just put me there to let Bibles through.”

I was glad that was over, and our bags had been inspected, and apparently everything was a “go” for getting into Romania. A few minutes passed, and back came the soldiers

with our passports; as I understand it, they just registered them there at the border. The train started moving again and we passed over into Romania. I was relieved to have all that behind me, and glad to know we were getting off at the first city. When the train stopped for the last leg of our seven-day ordeal, I realized the Lord had

answered my prayer, “Just get me to Romania.”

Later, after we arrived and our host pastor helped us get to our apartment, we ate and went to bed early. Our two boys slept in the living room, our three girls in one bedroom, our baby in a makeshift crib, and my wife and I in the other bedroom. Everyone went to sleep except for me; I couldn’t sleep. I just lay there in bed staring into a dark room. I stayed there for a while and then got up and went into the living room, where there was a small light shining from the kitchen, and I thought, “I will pray one more time and thank the Lord for getting us here.”

For more stories by Garry Matheny, see www.truechristianshortstoriesfreebygmmatheny.com.

“WHY YOU HAVE BIBLES?”

I knew it had been illegal to bring in Bibles under communism, but since Romania’s revolution I was told it was no longer a concern.

this cardboard box, and said, “Read this.”

I thought he wanted to see if I could read English, to prove I was an American. I began reading the first verse I saw, but he stopped me and said, “No, read this.”

He pointed to Ephesians 2:19, the verse that says believers are citizens of heaven. He stopped me at that point, and said, “You Christian, and Christians are citizens of heaven.”

I stared at him and said, “Yeah,” questioning where this was going to lead. It seemed to have helped me when I read even that one verse in God’s Word, something I needed because I had this crazy thought I might actually be going to jail.

He then looked both ways and said to me, “I am Christian also, and I also citizen of heaven.” He then reached for my hand and

The Jeremiah Project

Surely these are poor;
they are foolish: for they
know not the way of the
Lord, nor the judgment
of their God.

By Keith Bassham

The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.

Jeremiah 8:20

This past summer, I was asked by my pastor to deliver a series of messages from the Book of Jeremiah for Wednesday evenings, and I am adapting some of that material for *Tribune* readers.

Studying Jeremiah is especially appropriate these days, and parts of the text look as though they could have been generated yesterday afternoon. Read the following section from Jeremiah 5:

1 *Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof; if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth; and I will pardon it.*

2 *And though they say, The Lord liveth; surely they swear falsely.*

3 *O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? thou hast stricken them, but they have not grieved; thou hast consumed them, but they have refused to receive correction: they have made their faces harder than a rock; they have refused to return.*

4 *Therefore I said, Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God.*

5 *I will get me unto the great men, and will speak unto them; for they have known the way of the Lord, and the judgment of their God: but these have altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds.*

6 *Wherefore a lion out of the forest shall slay them, and a wolf of the evenings shall spoil them, a leopard shall watch over their cities: every one that goeth out thence shall be torn in pieces: because their transgressions are many, and their backslidings are increased.*

7 *How shall I pardon thee for this? thy children have forsaken me, and sworn by them that are no gods: when I had fed them to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves by troops in the harlots' houses.*

8 *They were as fed horses in the morning: every one neighed after his neighbour's wife.*

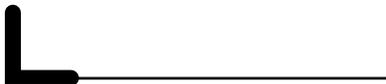
9 *Shall I not visit for these things? saith the Lord: and shall not my soul be avenged on such a nation as this?*

The sense of danger and doom is palpable. God appears almost puzzled (not that He is, of course) as He looks upon a world and nation of His own creation acting without sense and without moral compass, said creation having stubbornly rejected those things: "Surely these are poor; they are foolish: for they know not the way of the Lord, nor the judgment of their God." Can one find a better description of our times?

Tragically, I could have opened my Bible almost anywhere in the book of Jeremiah and chosen any section at random, and the result would have been very nearly the same.



Perhaps more than any of the other prophets, the book of Jeremiah reveals more about how Jeremiah related to God.



Jeremiah is not known as a quick-pick-me-up section of scripture, and that is part of the challenge of the book. There are a few places where the heart soars and gains inspiration, but mostly the passages run like the one quoted and can be summarized: God's judgment is coming — nothing will stop it, and you had better make things right while you can.

Well, now that I have introduced that little ray of sunshine, let's talk about how I will proceed with the study.

First, rather than just jump into Jeremiah, I want to take some time to talk about the Old Testament in general. The reasons will become clear as we move on.

Before tackling a document like Jeremiah's prophecies, we need to ask questions about how we should read and

approach the Old Testament in which it appears, and the need for asking those questions. And then we will use the answers to those questions to create a map of some sort (not a geographic one, but rather a mind map); something to help us organize our thinking about the issues related to Jeremiah, his people, his times, and us. We will see how God shaped the map, and how Israel fits on the map, and how Jeremiah fits on the map, and finally how we fit on that same map. Using the map we focus our gaze on Jeremiah, the man, and how he related to God — Jeremiah reveals more about that sort of thing than perhaps any of the prophets. Only after that can we clearly see how God wants us to respond to what His prophet was saying to His people about 600 years before the birth of Jesus, and what those words say to us today.

So, what about the Old Testament? If we were to ask people who have no traditional Jewish or Christian backgrounds, "Why should someone study the Old Testament?" their answers would probably go in two basic directions. The more positive responses might be something like, "The Old Testament is an old book, but we should study it because there are still some things that are good for us today." And the more negative responses would be something like, "Actually, the Old Testament is so old and irrelevant that it isn't worth reading at all." That sort of answer is what I would expect from people who have little or no interest in the teachings of the Bible.

However, I think that if church people were really honest, their answers would not be all that different. It's not that we don't value the Old Testament. As long as we stay with the familiar stories and characters, most people don't have a big problem with the text. The creation story is familiar. And same for the flood. And the Tower of Babel. And then you have the main characters who show up often in our pulpits: Adam, Eve, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, and maybe a prophet or two like Isaiah or Jeremiah, Elijah, and Daniel.

Such characters and stories give us the wherewithal to create and illustrate moral lessons such as "Thou shalt not kill or bear false witness." David's fight with Goliath teaches us about faith and courage. Daniel in the lion's den teaches us much the same

lesson. And I'm not forgetting the Psalms, but really we are generally familiar with only a fraction of them — the ones we hear read at funerals mostly. The sad truth is if you took all those stories and characters and sections that we are familiar with, you might be able to fill the pages of one of the longer books of the Old Testament, and that would leave a huge section of God's inspired Word still largely unknown. Why is that?

Well, for one thing, there is a huge distance between us and the world of the Old Testament. Granted, it's a long way from here to the ancient New Testament world of Greece and Rome too, but we have much in common with those societies. They are a primary source of our Western world politics and philosophy. What do we know of Babylonians and Assyrians, or what commonalities do we share with Egyptians and Philistines, with Hittites and Hivites and Edomites and the hundreds of tribes and families that make up the Old Testament story, or with Israel, the center of the Old Testament story for that matter?

And here is the problem with contenting ourselves with knowing a few familiar things, and reading a few familiar stories, and thinking about a few familiar characters. The thing we need to understand is this: *God was making Himself known, and He did it through the languages and literatures and cultures of the people of the Near and Middle East*, and they certainly understood what He was saying. So, despite the cultural, language, and theological distance between us, we have to make that trip and get as close to them as we can if we want to have a good grasp of the whole of God's mind, and not just a part of it.

A good place to start the journey for a

Christian way to think of the Old Testament I think is to discover what Jesus thought about the document. Read Matthew 5:17-18:

"Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break



Jeremiah lamenting the destruction of Jerusalem. By Rembrandt, 1630

one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

These words raise all sorts of practical questions that we cannot go into here, but a couple of things are certain. Jesus did not believe the Old Testament was irrelevant, and we can be certain he had no intent to make it irrelevant with what he did and taught. In fact, he intended that we learn and teach it

if we expect to be what he calls "great in the kingdom of heaven."

And that's just the start. Remember how Jesus spoke with Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration in Matthew 17? He did not think those two Old Testament characters had nothing to say to those of us in the New Testament era. Think then of all the many passages from the Old Testament

quoted in the New. One of the most well-known statements, the phrase in Romans that many believe was the basis of the Reformation: "The just shall live by faith." Paul did not coin that phrase. It did not originate in the New Testament. It is Habakkuk 2:4.

And there is more. The Gospels point out the many Old Testament prophecies Jesus fulfilled. The book of Hebrews is filled with relevant quotations from the Old Testament. And then we have this explicit statement about the value of the older testament from Paul the Apostle: Romans 15:4 — "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope."

Further, there is the key passage that teaches us about the nature of the Bible and its origin and purpose: 2 Timothy 3:16 — "All scripture is given by inspiration of God,

and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works."

Taken together, those two passages tell us a great deal about our relationship with the Old Testament. The passage from Romans tells us that the Old Testament is essential for Christians to develop and to maintain a Christian hope — "that we might have hope." You read the stories, and the psalms, and the promises, and even all the in-between stuff

from the prophets and the history sections, and your hope in Christ will grow, Paul is telling us. Why should we purposely ignore or limit our exposure to those tools for our Christian development?

The second passage is a clear affirmation of the relevance of the Old Testament. If you read both letters to Timothy you will see numerous references to the “Scripture” and “Scriptures.” What Scriptures could Paul be referring to if not the Old Testament texts?

And there is another passage affirming the need for a familiarity with the Old Testament: 1 Corinthians 10:11 — “Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.”

The context informs us that Paul was referring to the story of Israel’s Exodus from Egypt, and at least three things are going on in this verse. First, he says those events were recorded, written down. Second he said they were written for us, that is at least for Paul and his fellow Christians at Corinth. And third, he said of himself and those early Christians, that for them the ends of the world are come, and by doing this he includes us in that group. And finally, he is saying that even though we are living in different times and in different places, that the stories and lessons and values passed on in the Old Testament continue to have value and application for us even in our modern world.

So, if the Old Testament is not irrelevant, and if we see the New Testament filled with references to the Old Testament, and if we believe with Jesus and Paul that we should learn and practice the things we learn there to help us in our walk with God, and if we can overcome the distance and learn its content, then we need to read and understand it.

So how do we do that generally, and how do we do that in more specific ways, such as when we are assigned to study an Old Testament prophet? How do we get into Jeremiah’s world and into the world of the people he spoke to, and then make the proper application of those words he spoke?

First, **proper application of the Old Testament to today involves leaving our own world behind**, and unpacking our bags a little. You can’t really do this perfectly, I

After all, Paul did say that those things written in the Old Testament were written for us, that is, they were given with us in mind even if we aren’t about to cross Red Seas or get the tablets of the Law from Mount Sinai.

know, but you have to understand that what was written and said to people who lived thousands of years ago was tailored for them, and not us. The Bible is God’s Word of course, but you have to come to terms with the notion that, in the Old Testament especially, we are not hearing God and his inspired writers speaking directly to us; we are overhearing them, and looking at those words over the shoulders of those who first read and heard them. The church is not identical to Israel, let alone our own country. The words, “If my people ...” (2 Chronicles 7:14), and the instructions following were intended for a specific people in a specific situation. While a general application can be made to establish a need for prayer and dependence upon God, I would hesitate to take it much beyond that.

This works both directions, by the way. The Old Testament believers knew very little if anything about Jesus Christ. Even if they understood all the prophecies, there was still a lot of information they could not have put together the same way we can. We have a much better understanding of so many things concerning New Testament truths than most anyone in the Old Testament.

On the other hand, there are some connections that exist, and those connections will help us. After all, Paul did say that those things written in the Old Testament were written for us, that is, they were given with us in mind even if we aren’t about to cross Red Seas or get the tablets of the Law from Mount Sinai.

One of the connections is God Himself. We serve the same God as they did in the Old Testament. That means we serve Jeremiah’s God, and what he learns and teaches about God instructs us. And Jeremiah learns about God’s plans, and he comes to know those plans are sure and steady. That means the Old Testament and New Testament are two phases of one unified divine design. One does not replace the other, and one does not contradict the other. They work together to accomplish God’s purpose.

Another connection is that **both Jeremiah and his people lived on the same planet you and I occupy**, and we therefore share some history. These are not fairy stories. The events did not happen in another universe. We know when and where Jeremiah lived, and the people he knew.

1 Kings 6:1 - And it came to pass in the four hundred and eightieth year after the children of Israel were come out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon’s reign over Israel, in the month Zif, which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord.

This is such an important passage for learning about Israel’s history. We know from secular sources the dates of Solomon’s reign — you can look it up in an encyclopedia — and by using this passage you can go back to determine the date that Moses led the nation of Israel out of Egypt — and you can go forward to see when the nation of Israel split after Solomon. And then you can calculate

when the kings of the northern kingdom lived and died, and the same with the southern kingdom, which is where Jeremiah comes in. And we can learn from that the names and dates associated with the rise and fall of dynasties and pinpoint with some accuracy when Jeremiah lived, and who was in charge, and who the enemies of the people of God were. These things happened in real time and real space right here on our planet with a real people named Israel and Judah.

And we know that God created the ancient nation of Israel to accomplish certain things, including taking care of the sin problem of the world. When they fail, God judged them and punished them by sending them into exile, and that's a big part of the story behind Jeremiah. However, in that story, He also reveals a plan to restore them, and that gives the background for the message that Jesus proclaimed, that he would set the captives free, and their restoration was a kind of coming back from the dead, and that is the background for understanding the resurrection.

Another connection we have with the Old Testament, aside from the same God and the same world, is that **we are the same kind of people**. We, like the people of Jeremiah's time, are human beings made in the image of God, but we are fallen into sin, and because of that sin we are not in a relationship with God. What God wants to teach us through Jeremiah and the other prophets, is that though we sin, God wants us to return to Him. Much of the time Jeremiah is telling people that God wants

them to repent and to return to Him.

A second principle we observe as we try to apply the Old Testament is to **realize both testaments are necessary to make up the entire story of God at work in the world**. They work with one another.

Let me show you how that works, and why it is important. Romans 1:1-6:

Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God, 2 (which he had promised afore by his prophets in the holy scriptures,) 3 concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; 4 and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead: 5 by whom we have received grace and apostleship, for obedience to the faith among all nations, for his name: 6 among whom are ye also the called of Jesus Christ.

What we learn from this is that the coming, the life, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ was a continuation of a story that began in the Old Testament. The same truth is given in Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."

Even in 1 Corinthians 15:1 and following, which is where many Bible students and preachers go to get a capsule definition of the gospel, there the formula goes like this:

Jesus died according to the Scriptures, was buried, and rose the third day according to the Scriptures. And as we pointed out earlier, when Paul refers to the Scriptures in his epistles, he must be referring to the Old Testament Scriptures since the New Testament was still in process at the time.

Now, this tells me that if I want to truly understand the New Testament and its teachings, I am going to need some understanding of the Old Testament part of the story because that's where the story begins. This second principle, both testaments tell one story, is perhaps the most important idea to grasp as a Bible student prepares to study and to understand the Old Testament.

Jesus himself says as much in Luke 24, where we see and hear a resurrected Jesus declare to believers, downhearted at the events of the crucifixion, these great truths: "Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

It really is one story. That one story, according to the texts quoted above, is the story of a God who is faithful to His promise to provide a Deliverer who would save sinful humans and eventually rule the universe. This thread runs from Genesis to Revelation, and a key to understanding the Old Testament is to pick out this thread as it winds its way through the texts.



What God wants to teach us through Jeremiah and the other prophets, is that though we sin, God wants us to return to Him.

LAND OF THE ETERNAL BLUE SKY MONGOLIA

By Jon Konnerup



Mongolia, a landlocked republic located between Russia and China in the heart of eastern Asia, is one of the oldest countries in the world. Ranked 19th in terms of its landmass, Mongolia, with its population of 2.7 million people, is the most sparsely populated country on the globe. Arable land is difficult to find as much of its northern and western regions are mountainous and the Gobi Desert is located in its southern realm. Average temperatures range from 65°F in the summer to -20°F in the winter. It has been known to drop as low as -40°F during the long, cold winter.

While 95 percent of the population speaks Mongolian, the official language of the country, Russian, is the most commonly spoken foreign language, followed by English. English is gradually replacing Russian as the second language.

Because of its connections with China, Mongolia has experienced a turbulent history since ancient times. During the rule of the warrior emperors Genghis and Kublai Khan, the empire stretched from Poland in the west to Korea in the east; and from Siberia in the north to Vietnam and India to the south. In its earlier years, it was recognized as the largest empire the world had ever known and boasted 25 percent of the world's population. Voyagers and explorers, such as Marco Polo, took full advantage of the country's open commerce.

Genghis Khan became one of the central figures of the nation's identity. Mongolians look upon him positively for his role in uniting warring tribes. The country came under strong Russian influence, resulting in the proclamation of the Mongolian People's Republic as a Soviet satellite state in 1924. After the breakdown of communist regimes in Europe in late 1989, Mongolia experienced



KUBLAI KHAN REQUESTED RELIGIOUS TEACHERS FROM EUROPE AND TIBET TO TEACH MONGOLIANS THE CHRISTIAN AND BUDDHIST FAITHS. **EUROPEANS GREATLY FEARED THE MONGOLS AND FOR MANY YEARS CHRISTIAN MISSIONARIES WERE HESITANT TO GO TO MONGOLIA.** DURING THAT TIME, TIBETAN TEACHERS EAGERLY BEGAN TO INFILTRATE THE COUNTRY, AND THE BUDDHIST RELIGION WAS INTEGRATED INTO THEIR CULTURE AS THE MAIN RELIGION.



its own democratic revolution and peacefully transitioned from communism to democracy in 1990.

Ulaanbaatar, the largest city in Mongolia, is the coldest capital in the world. This main urban center, with its plazas, markets, museums, and temples, is home to about half the nation's population. An 80-foot-tall statue of Buddha and many prayer wheels are housed in one of its Buddhist monasteries.

A round, felt tent known as a ger is the traditional Mongolian dwelling. Over 45 percent of the people live in gers, not only in remote areas but also in communities surrounding the capital city. Of the people who live in buildings, only 42 percent have

indoor plumbing.

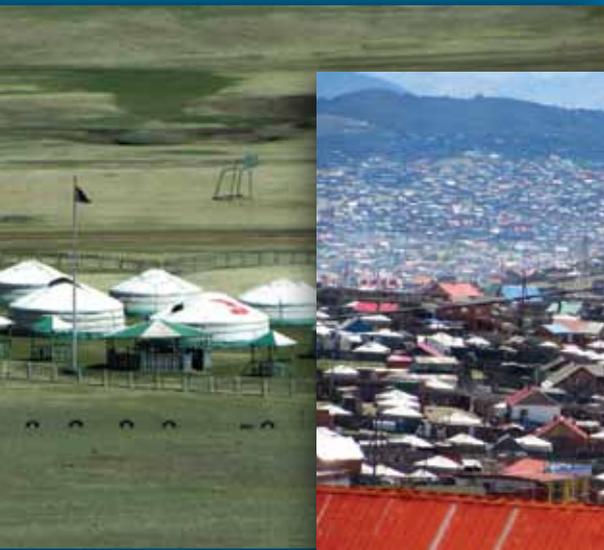
Approximately 30 percent of the population is nomadic or semi-nomadic. Twenty percent of the population lives on less than \$1.25 USD per day. About 59 percent of the total population is under age 30, of which 27 percent are under age 14.

The Mongols are a very religious people. Genghis Khan once said, "We Mongols believe that there is but one God by whom we live and by whom we die." Kublai Khan requested religious teachers from Europe and Tibet to teach Mongolians the Christian and Buddhist faiths. Europeans greatly feared the Mongols and for many years Christian missionaries were hesitant to go to Mongolia. During

that time, Tibetan teachers eagerly began to infiltrate the country, and the Buddhist religion was integrated into their culture as the main religion.

Buddhism began to decline in the 20th century as Russian atheism and materialism grew, and their profound effects began to influence Mongolia. During the 1990s, a mood of tolerance towards the West and a desire for education and progress among the younger generation began to spread as Mongolia became more open to foreign development and commerce.





The fall of communism in 1991 restored public religious practice, and the end of religious repression allowed other religions to spread. Prior to 1990, there was no permanent missionary work in the country. In 1990, only four believers were known to exist in Mongolia. Shortly after, however, the country began to open up, and by 1993 there were as many as 1,500 believers. The government passed measures that required all churches to be registered. Today, the Christian population has reached nearly 20,000, with most of the church members being younger.

Since 2007, the BBFI has had one family ministering in Mongolia, and another family will join them when they finish deputation. Three families from the Korean BBF have ministries in this country. Our missionaries have a deep desire to reach the Mongolian people with the gospel and have started three churches in Mongolia. In June 2013, the Korean BBFI celebrated 20 years of ministry with these churches in Mongolia.

The country is technically open to mission work, but the requirements are

so difficult that many are unable to obtain religious visas — much less permanent visas. Most people are able to obtain work visas or launch a non-profit business in order to gain entrance to the country. Limitations apply to certain aspects of mission work, yet many opportunities will be open wide once we are more established and have more assistance.

One of the leading educational institutions in the country was started years ago by a group of Koreans (one of which was a missionary of the Korean BBF) and is now a full-fledged university with over 3,000 students and offering several degrees. It is a bright light of the gospel in this region of the world. We are in current need of people with





a Master's degree or a minimum of a TESOL certificate to teach English in this university. You could take this great opportunity to commit to a summer or even one to two years to reach out to students!

We have a tremendous need for trained teachers to teach in the Bible college and others who can help with sports camps, agricultural training, or teaching English at various camps or MANNA centers. Perhaps your church would help with a summer or even a winter camp to reach young Mongolians who are eager to know the truth.

Of course, there is always a need for more full-time missionaries. The BBFI missionaries who have been in Mongolia for the past six years are overwhelmed with the number of possible ministry opportunities. They are constantly working to secure the means that will allow them to remain in the country doing the Lord's work. They can hardly wait for our other missionary family to arrive and are desperate for even more help. God is still calling people to go. Who will answer the call?

The hearts of the Mongolian people readily respond to the gospel message as they

begin to see how the love and forgiveness of Jesus can transform their lives. We need Christians with a passion to live and work in Mongolia to come alongside these servants of Christ and assist with discipleship and in training church leaders. We also want to partner with Mongolians to reach out beyond their borders to other parts of Asia with the gospel message.

Mongolia is known as the land of the eternal blue sky — but in reality, it is the land with great need of knowing the One who gives eternal life to those who repent and believe.

MONGOLIA

LAND OF THE ETERNAL BLUE SKY



Terry & Carol Taylor | **Saint Vincent**

We are presently holding four Bible Clubs per week, which enables us to minister to about 350 more souls each week! The last frontier here in St. Vincent seems to be her kids! A boy in Carol's Sunday school class recently told her how he was able to open his Bible and show a classmate how to invite Jesus into his heart!

Carol gave an invitation at the close of one Bible Club, and nearly the entire class stood saying they wanted to receive Jesus into their hearts! There were 110 kids present that day! Please pray for both the teachers and students in the four schools where we currently hold clubs: Cane-End, Stubbs, Mespo, and the Evesham School. It's neat to have kids wherever you go come and want to talk with you!

Dan & Jackie McCaskill | **Scotland**

Our Sunday night "Nicodemus" services continue with wonderful results. When those who attend other churches leave, they comment on how interesting they find the basic truths of God's Word. Though these people have church backgrounds, many are hearing the basic truths of the first eleven chapters of Genesis for the first time. Pray especially for Fiona, May, Margo, and Angus. They have been the most faithful and are hearing the gospel preached. My prayer is that God's Word will bring the needed conviction to their hearts, and they will bow their knees in repentance to our Creator God.

Robert & Sandra Frazier | **Mexico**

We are always blessed when we can participate in the ordination of a pastor and the organization of a church. Gonzalo and Elsa were our students over 10 years ago in the Bible institute. They started a mission out of Juarens Baptist Church, once pastored by Garland Hamilton, in an area east of Juarez. This region has been ravaged by violence over the last four years. Abandoned houses around the church were robbed of doors, windows, plumbing, and fixtures. In January, Gonzalo was ordained as a minister of the gospel and the mission was organized into a church. Seeing all the empty houses in the immediate vicinity, we wondered how a work could be flourishing here — but the people kept coming until the church was full! God is working in this neighborhood and the surrounding area!

David & Peggy Disney | **Chile**

Lucas, an exchange student from New Zealand, is living with one of our faithful church families. As we were chatting one Sunday, I asked him what he had learned during his time in Chile. He said that he was not a Christian when he arrived, but that he would leave Chile a Christian. I asked him if he understood what it meant to be a Christian. He said that he thought it was believing in God. I explained to him that even the devils believe in God, and they are obviously not Christians. He was surprised, and then asked the question that every preacher loves to hear: "Well then, how does one become a Christian?" We sat down together and went to the Scriptures, and Lucas received the Lord Jesus as his Savior!

Ginnie Switzer | **Ethiopia**

Johnnie was a troubled young man with no hope and no future. His uncle worked on our compound for a short time. Johnnie came with him and sat all day, unable to work as doctors had him on strong, mind-numbing drugs. Every day Rex prayed with him and showed him love, kindness, and compassion. After many months Johnnie slowly improved. He began working for us once a week. His doctor began to see a difference in him and started reducing the drugs. Johnnie rarely missed a Bible study. Today, Johnnie is a child of the King and remains faithful to his Savior. Johnnie's family has not received Christ but they know he is a changed young man!

Ray & Kristi Rhoton | **Costa Rica**

As most of you know, we can go months at a time with little growth and excitement in the ministry. Then, when we least expect it, God shows that He is still busy at work, and we see a wonderful chain of events that seem as if they will never stop — people accepting Christ, following Him in baptism, committing to Bible studies, and finding a place to serve others. We are so thankful for these encouraging and exciting times.

We are experiencing a time of growth in our ministry that comes after an unfortunate time of discouragement the last few years. We are so very happy and honored to share that 24 people have made the decision to accept Christ as their Savior and seven have followed in baptism since the beginning of March! Sometimes we get so caught up in our busy schedules with services, Bible studies, kids' clubs, youth groups, and seminary, that we forget the simplicity of what it is all about.

Kevin & Kim Davis | **Wales**

Our teen ministry has experienced a decrease in numbers, but we've used this time to really focus and invest in those who have remained faithful. There have been some wonderful discussions and encouraging signs of growth in our group. Some of the teens seem more willing to open up and share within the smaller group setting, so we are choosing to be thankful for this and not become discouraged with those who have made the choice to stop coming on Sundays. Our Friday night dodge ball outreach is still going strong, as many of the teens continue to attend. We've been encouraged that some that used to mock and laugh during the "God-Talk" are starting to ask some good questions afterwards. Please pray as we share the truth with these young people who have been indoctrinated in evolution and scientific rhetoric and struggle with the concept of faith in God.

Stay connected with missionaries at
BBFIMMISSIONS.COM

SEE MORE MISSIONARY LETTERS ON PAGE 27



HILARIO AND JAVIER The gospel changed their lives

By Leonard Smith, BBFI missionary to Mexico

BBFI missionary James L. Smith was always burdened for the smaller villages lost in the mountains and deserts of Mexico. He would set up his truck in the town square and present the gospel. Sometimes there were numerous and visible results, and sometimes there were none. Sometimes churches would sprout up as a result. Sometimes they wouldn't. His ministry was never motivated by numbers or the lack of them. So he would continue.

In the summer of 1968, I accompanied my Dad, "Big Jim," as he went to the village of Huitchea in Sonora to evangelize.

A few weeks prior, in a place not far from Huitchea, Mr. Valenzuela, a Yoreme Mayo Indian, was attacked by two Mexican (non-indigenous) men. Mr. Valenzuela's 20-year-old son, Hilario, angry and seeking revenge, set off on a plan to find the two men with the intent to kill them.

As he walked through the town square, the man with the truck, my dad, was speaking through a portable PA system talking about Good News. Hilario stopped and listened. The Spirit of God did His work in the young man's heart. Right there and by himself, he repented

of his sin and received the gift of eternal life. He was now a new creation in Christ. The change was drastic. He said later, "As I walked back home, I felt like jumping in the air!" The hatred towards the men who had assaulted his father would soon be gone. He did not tell anyone about his conversion for a whole year.

He then started attending the small adobe church in his village. Only several years later did Missionary Smith know anything about the incident and the transformation.

Hilario Valenzuela went on to pastor that church in his village. He then planted and pastored another church in the town of Etchojoa. Hilario evangelized in many other villages and helped translate the Scriptures into the Yoreme Mayo language. Hilario recently went to be with the Lord, after a painful illness.

Javier Jacobi is from the same Yoreme Mayo village of Huitchea, Sonora. His father came to Christ when Javier was a child. Upon coming to the Lord, Mr. Jacobi gave up his



"Big Jim" Smith passing out the gospel in Sonora.

birthright, a position that made him governor over a district of eight Mayo Indian villages. He renounced the position, along with the financial benefits, because of the pagan rituals that accompany the position. The governorship transferred to Javier's uncle.

When Javier came of age, he too was offered his lucrative birthright. Having been brought up in a Christian home, and having been saved as a young man, he also declined the honor. It was transferred to his cousin.

I met Javier a few years ago when he was part of a musical group led by Pastor Hilario. Javier was first taught by Pastor Hilario, and then by UIM Missionary Eldon Miner, who took him through Theological Education courses. Javier has now lived in the State of Jalisco ten years. He pastors a church in La Huerta and leads the Extension Theological Education in Autlán, Jalisco. I was recently honored to preach and teach at a family conference at his church. We had a great meeting! What a blessing it is to serve the Lord and watch how the gospel changes lives!



At far left, Javier Jacobi.
At left, Hilario Valenzuela with Leonard Smith.

HISTORY

JOSEPH MURROW- American Indian Missionary for 72 years

BAPTIST

Joseph Murrow was born in 1835 in Richmond County, GA. His father, John Murrow, and three of his brothers were Baptist preachers. Joseph was converted in 1854 at the age of 19 and was baptized by his eldest brother. Shortly after his conversion he enrolled in Mercer University, completing his studies in 1857. That same year, in response to a plea from H. P. Buckner for additional missionaries to the Indian Territory (Oklahoma), Murrow not only volunteered, but resolved to spend his life among the Indians.

September 16, 1857, Joseph was ordained by the First Baptist Church of Macon, GA. Immediately he set out on his long journey to the West. Upon reaching Mississippi, he was married October 8, 1857, to Miss Elizabeth Tatum. He and his bride travelled by boat from Memphis to the mouth of the Arkansas River, passing through Little Rock and Fort Smith. They discovered that neither town contained a Baptist meeting house or a preacher.

Joseph and his new wife arrived on December 10, 1857, at Buckner's home at Micco near the present Eufaula, OK. Murrow would prove to be an untiring laborer who would experience great joys, victories, and personal tragedies. In 1858 his young wife Elizabeth and their baby daughter succumbed to the perils of frontier life. Tragically, Murrow would have to experience the loss of three additional wives.

In 1860, Murrow moved about 60 miles west of Micco to minister to the neglected Seminole Nation. The Seminoles responded with open hearts and minds to the preaching of the gospel. Murrow baptized 200 Seminoles, and in 1861 he founded the first Baptist church in the Seminole Nation. One report says that 60 percent of all Seminole adults were Baptists. In about 1869, he relocated his mission work to the Choctaw Nation where he founded the town of Atoka and

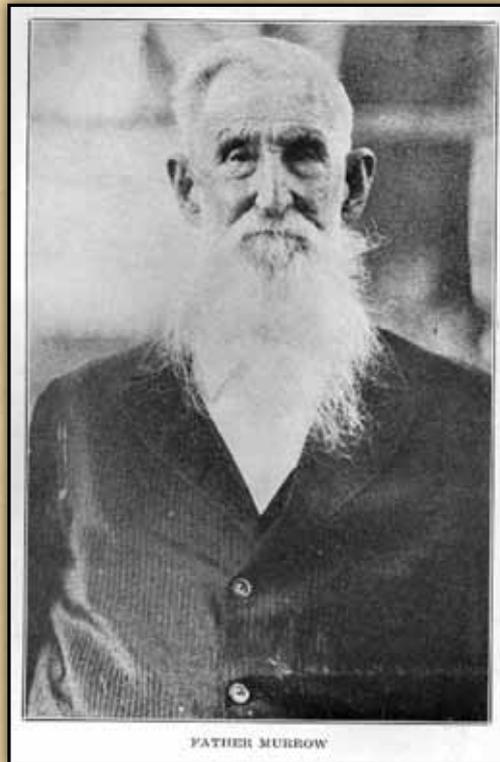
established a church, remaining its pastor for 23 years.

As we have previously stated, life on the frontier was extremely hazardous. Missionaries were exposed to the summer's searing heat and the winter's bitter cold. They were often forced to sleep on the ground and their diet was frequently inadequate, which often produced severe physical problems. In 1870, Murrow experienced a complete physical breakdown and was forced to return to his home in Georgia. His family, shocked by his physical condition, placed him in the Atlanta Hospital for the Blind. Everyone assumed this was the end of Murrow's missionary work, but thankfully the doctors discovered that his eye disease was caused by overwork and neglected health. The doctor's prescription of rest and an improved diet soon restored Murrow's eyesight and health.

With his health fully restored he returned to his missionary work among the Choctaw Nation. Father Murrow, as he was affectionately called, helped the Indian Baptist churches form several associations, and he was instrumental in helping establish the Baptist Theological

School for the training of preachers and teachers. Always burdened for the unreached tribes, he was able to influence several missionaries and Indian preachers to settle among the neglected tribes.

Few if any missionaries have labored as long and successfully as Joseph Murrow. He organized more than 75 Baptist churches in the Indian Territory. He assisted with the ordination of more than 75 Indian ministers. He baptized more than 2,000 converts, most of whom were Indians. Father Murrow traveled thousands of miles, preached over 3,000 sermons, and at the age of 94, after 72 years as a missionary among the Indians of Oklahoma, Joseph Murrow had kept his promise to spend his life among the Indians. He entered into his well-deserved rest September 8, 1924.



by Thomas Ray





URBAN CURRENT

One Cross

Weeks ago the nation's first black president stood in Washington, D.C. celebrating the 50th anniversary of the historic march on Washington and Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

That celebration stands in stark contrast to another event that brought jaw-clenching attention to race this year, namely the trial of George Zimmerman for shooting Trayvon Martin.

Both events have sparked waves of discussion, media coverage, and water-cooler talk. How could one event be so powerfully positive and the other so ugly and divisive? The elephant in the room is the deeply divergent views between many black and white believers.

You have to love the dear souls who stand up and say, "We need a national conversation on race." All the while, some are screaming down anyone who does not share their perspective. So much for fostering genuine conversation. The idea that people who don't agree with me are racist or hate me is mindless — not to mention not helpful to any pursuit of understanding or the broadening or deepening of one's thinking.

Much was made of race and profiling in all the hype and headlines around Zimmerman. In the trial, race was not an issue and profiling really didn't get much play. Is this where I go on record? I have been profiled three times. I mean, I have been stopped by police three times. Nobody can tell me it wasn't about my appearance. I don't offer this to counter anyone or anything. I simply contribute it to the conversation. Each time I was engaged in ministry. During one of these I was spread eagle, hands on top of the car, frisked in full view of hordes of school kids walking down the block. Were these stops racial? Two were for sure. In all three, the police were just doing their job.

Speaking of perspective, I've had a couple rude awakenings. Naturally, I assume my own perspective is informed, wise, balanced, complete, and right. Imagine my shock when in conversation with my African-American pas-

tor prayer partner, two or three sentences completely stop me cold because they contain a view I hadn't considered. It doesn't mean I automatically agree. It doesn't mean I throw my perspective out and embrace his. It means my perspective is now broader and, ahem, "more complete."

I have to admit, I had strong reaction to my white brothers, sisters, and friends running out and buying hoodies a few months ago. A nice gesture, and I'm pretty sure I understand the heart behind it. But I wanted to say to those folks, "Every cause has symbols. Causes are not won by symbols. Is the cause of justice worth your life?"

Google "Humboldt Park Chicago Shootings" or "Garfield Park Chicago Shootings." Virtually all of these are black people shooting other black people, and we have not even seen an arrest, much less an unpopular verdict. I've lived here 40 years. I invite my newly-hoodied white friends to move in alongside me. Upon completing your first ten years of living in a hoodie neighborhood, laboring for the good of the hood, I will personally conduct your graduation ceremony presenting you the hoodie of your choice.

Symbols are easy. Talk is cheap. Christians ... walk the talk — live the life — love our neighbors.

The Zimmerman trial reminded us there are different perspectives on the same issue and that conversing with each other we all learn.

In Washington in 1963, King said "We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protests to degenerate into physical violence. Again and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force. The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to distrust all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny."

King never made the white man the boogie man, though he could have.

President Obama said in his speech August 28, 2013, "Because they marched, America became more free and more fair ... To dismiss the magnitude of this progress — to suggest, as some sometimes do, that little has changed — that dishonors the courage and the sacrifice of those who paid the price to march in those years."

It is ironic that in the face of such duly noted headway, those who see racism in every breeze and racists behind every bush don't advance the conversation necessary to take us forward. Neither is the gap bridged when I dismiss views not my own.

At this late date, it behooves every believer to do everything reasonable, and some things unreasonable, to learn from our brothers and sisters of different ethnicity and culture. Bridge the gaps, build relationships, serve, love, and never ever allow unnecessary, unbiblical division to mark us. Four decades pastoring a multi-cultural church have taught me the potent witness of people different from each other loving and serving Christ together.

Jesus' blood either makes us one with Him and each other or we're all going to hell.

There is one cross, one Savior, one way, one truth, one life, one church of God in Christ, one heaven.

Perspectives and politics are not more powerful than the cross.



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

The White House



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

There is an old familiar house on the east side of our campus. This little house is very old and has been in rough shape for decades, to the point of being condemned and almost torn down numerous times. Generations of BBC students have wondered about this old, white house. Does someone live there? Is it a part of BBC? What could we use it for? Some courageous volunteers grappled with those questions and began a renovation project that would take a lot of time and effort, but would result in turning what some thought a disaster area into a thing of beauty.

This renovation has been a work in progress for the past few years. Recently, the last projects were finished, inspections were passed, staff was trained, and the little old house became ready for a new use and a new name — and so we held a contest. One part of the renovation involved installing white vinyl siding to cover the weather-beaten, whitewashed wooden exterior. This project provided the old house with a new name, the White House. This White House was not renovated to be used as a home for the President, but for someone much more important — BBC students!

This beautifully renovated old house is now our new coffee-house. The White House is staffed by students who are coffee experts. They have developed their own specialty coffees and smoothies. If you have the occasion to be on our campus, please stop in for a venti non-fat caramel macchiato with an extra shot of espresso. They will know exactly what you mean!

The White House has quickly become a favorite spot on campus for our students. They come not only to drink coffee, but to study and hang out and to use the internet. The White House also serves as a new venue for small group meetings, special events, concerts, and guest speakers.

Why go through the trouble and expense of renovating this old house? It is because we love our students! The White House serves to enhance student life, and that is one of the most important aspects of college. At BBC, we are working very hard to make living away from home a special time in a student's life.

Want to know more? You can follow the White House on your favorite social media: Twitter - The White House @WhitehouseBBC, Facebook - The White House at BBC

Want to be a part of helping BBC continue to train men and women for the ministry? Join our Generations program at www.gobbc.edu/generations/

Doing it right



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

I have learned something about myself in the past couple of years. I think Major League Baseball has been my teacher.

Anybody who knows me at all knows that I am a Boston Red Sox fan. I really like “the Old Time Team” ... most of the time. Last year I was remarkably silent about baseball. The whole 2012 baseball season is conveniently fogged in my mind. Just blocked it out. Who is Bobby Valentine, anyway? Can't place the guy!

That's what I have learned ... if I really loved the Red Sox, I would enjoy watching the game whether it is 2012 or 2013. I have learned that I like watching the Red Sox play *well!* Sure, I like to see them win, but if they at least play well I can still find enjoyment in watching. But let some guy “pull a Buckner” (if you have to ask, please don't) and I've got the remote in hand ready to act. Baseball is fun to watch – as long as it is done right!

I guess I'm that way about a lot of things. I just came back from the Next Step Up Conference at Lighthouse Baptist Church in St. Louis and that was done right! Pastor Keith Gillming and his whole team did an amazing job of providing a program, meals, and camaraderie that you should check out for yourself next year. Well done!

Later this month I will get to surprise a dear friend, Pastor Gary Favor, and the amazing Faith Baptist Church in Dayton, as they celebrate their 50th anniversary. Half a century of winning souls and discipling folks in the Dayton area, and giving more to missions around the world than almost any other church their size that I have ever heard of! They are getting it done, and eternity alone will show how extraordinarily well they “played the game.”

I probably wear out Boston students and staff with my penchant for doing things well. I don't like trash (not even a gum wrapper!) on the ground. I am particularly picky about light bulbs (If we are going to have light bulbs, then all of them should come on when you flip the switch!). I want classes that start on time, end on time, and are riveting and challenging for students. I want audits that look good (eh ... um ... that's where you might come in!), accreditation reviews that are sparkling, and recruitment that goes relentlessly after the best young leaders.

I like it when things are done right! I know there is a danger in being a perfectionist, and St. Francis was probably onto something when he asked God to grant him “the serenity to accept the things I cannot change.” Yet seeing something done right just makes sense — on campus or on the diamond. So in Boston we are pressing on for greatness and excellence in what we do. And “Go Sox!” (I hope they are still playing by the time you read this!)

SPRINGFIELD, MO

Milioni emphasized distinctives in BBC opening convocation

When Baptist Bible College students, faculty, administration, and local supporters gathered in the BBC Fine Arts Auditorium for the first chapel on August 22, President Mark Milioni got down to basics.

"The students," he said, "became a part of a great family — a family that God has used in incredible ways to reach millions of people." He recounted the importance of the college in the history of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and its evangelistic work throughout the world.

Milioni chose to use the name of the institution to make his points. He said, "We are a college. We are a highly recognized academic institution. College is not a glorified high school; it is a specialized time of focused learning. It is a time of difficulty. This is all part of the plan to bring out your best."

The Bible, he said in his address, "is the basis for our beliefs, our teaching, and our worldview. We believe the Bible is inerrant, infallible, and inspired. We base all of our



education on the Bible. No matter what your major is — the Bible is center of all we teach."

He also emphasized the Baptist heritage of the college. He said, without apology or equivocation, "We are Baptist. That means we believe in Bible-based doctrine. As Baptists we are known as people of the Book, Bible believers. Baptists have a powerful history. We

are committed to living differently, to sharing the gospel, and to serving our local church."

Milioni pledged to give the students his best and asked the same of them.

The registrar's office is reporting an undergraduate enrollment of 305 students, 88 of whom are freshmen. The incoming freshman class last year had 73 students.

SPRINGFIELD, MO

Bairds spent their lives serving and raising servants of the Lord

By the Tribune

August 2014 is a month of important milestones in the lives of Bob and Ann Baird. Most people in the Baptist Bible Fellowship know them through their association with the BBFI Mission Office, where Bob served as mission director until 2005. This past August he and Mrs. Baird celebrated two more milestones. The pair celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary and Bob celebrated his 80th birthday with the family.

Baird has enjoyed an incredibly busy, productive, and fruitful 80 years as a businessman, missionary, pastor, and the longest-serving mission director in the history of the BBFI, having been at that post 19 years.

Together with Mrs. Baird for 60 years they have made an impact around the world equaled by only a few. They visited almost 100 countries and worked tirelessly on behalf of the missionaries and churches of the BBFI. Though

difficult, they profess to have loved every minute of their service. They literally have friends and ministry partners in every corner of the globe. What blessed and meaningful lives they have lived.



For all of their influences and successes, however, they treasure their family. They were so happy to have the entire clan together to celebrate these special occasions.

Their daughter, Deana Young, and her

husband, Raymond, live in Springfield. Deana has retired after many years as a guidance counselor in the Springfield School District. The Youngs have operated an inner-city ministry in Springfield more than 30 years.

This has been the passion of their lives as they have seen over 1,000 inner-city young people saved, baptized, disciplined, and mentored. They are iconic figures in the inner city of Springfield.

The Youngs have a daughter, Megan, who is married to Kris Keller. She is also a teacher and has taught 6th grade for the past few years. Kris, her husband, has been serving a local Springfield congregation as a youth pastor, however Kris will begin graduate work at Perkins Seminary at SMU this fall. The Kellers have one son, Truitt.

The Bairds have one son, Sandy, and his wife is Karen Baird. They both graduated

(continued)

Bairds (continued)

from BBC in the early 80s and are well known among the Fellowship. They served as church staff, church planters, and pastor for 15 years in suburban Houston, TX. The past seven years, they have been working to support missionaries and mission projects around the world. Sandy and Karen have visited 56 countries doing mission work, and two years ago they founded New Hope Initiative, an organization that serves the needs of some of the poorest people in the poorest communities of the world.

Sandy and Karen have two children, Kyle and Kelsey, both of whom are on the administrative staff of Veritas Christian Academy in Austin, TX. They are also cofounders of Kibera Penda Project, which offers secondary school scholarships to children from the Kibera slum of Nairobi, Kenya. This project has grown in four years from 12 to over 100 secondary school students under full scholarship.

The Baird's daughter Ava is married to Daniel Darnell. She and her husband serve as staff at Austin Stone Church in Austin, TX. They also are directors of media operations for New Hope Initiative.

One can hardly imagine the great satisfaction of knowing that a life was well spent in ministry, but to have an entire family involved in ministry is a huge bonus. The *Tribune* is pleased to honor Bob and Ann Baird on these very important milestones in their lives, and we pray they have many more fruitful years of serving God and their family.

ST. LOUIS, MO

Lighthouse hosts Next Step Up church growth conference

Pastor Keith Gillming and Lighthouse Baptist Church of St. Louis hosted the 2013 Next Step Up growth conference August 26-27. Gillming says about 100 BBFI pastors attended, and many brought their church staff members as well. Jeff Iorg, president of Golden Gate Theological Seminary in San Francisco, CA, was the keynote speaker.

Designed to help pastors with ongoing professional development, Next Step Up was begun five years ago by Pastor Gillming. The two-day conference generally includes a main presenter, with other leaders holding breakout sessions on various topics. President Iorg's sessions were based on his book, *A Case for Antioch*, in which he postulated the first Gentile church at Antioch serves as a great biblical model for a transformational church today. Gillming says, "In a day when the church in North America is more of an event we attend

than a community of life-changers, Jeff Iorg showed how to revitalize underperforming churches with the biblical example from Antioch."

Others involved with the conference were David Melton, president of Boston Baptist College, who spoke about pastoral communication; Group Publishing representatives who led several sessions on a "Thriving Youth Ministry" and "Cultivating a Dynamic Children's Ministry." Lifeway Bookstores sent Ken Braddy with thousands of dollars worth of free material for teaching ministries in the church and led two breakout sessions as well.



Jeff Iorg

The 2014 Next Step Up will feature Jonathan Leeman, editorial director for 9Marks associated with Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. That conference is scheduled for August 25-26, 2014. For more information or to receive permission to listen to the live stream recordings of the 2013 conference, phone (314) 291-6919.

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LYNCHBURG, VA

Elmer Towns steps down from Liberty for sabbatical

Chancellor and president of Liberty University, Jerry Falwell, Jr, has announced that Elmer Towns left his post at Liberty University Baptist Theological Seminary and the School of Religion to begin a sabbatical the last of August.

Towns, who co-founded Liberty University in 1971 with Jerry Falwell, Sr., will continue a relationship with the school, but a Liberty press release says he will no longer be in the classroom. His

new role will be mentoring Liberty's leadership and developing a transition plan and search for new deans, talking with many prominent Christian leaders he knows across the country.



The 80-year-old Towns has written more than 170 books and has lectured and taught seminars at more than 110 theological seminaries and colleges nationwide and abroad.

When he addressed the new Liberty students at opening convocation, Towns told students he was proud to be a part of Liberty's history. He said, "I think the educational future is great, I think God's going to do something (at Liberty), and God began to get me excited about a transition. I'm going to write, I'm going to travel, and I want you to pray for me ... pray that I would find that right person to take over the duty of the dean of the School of Religion and the dean of the seminary."

During the search for new deans, Gabe Etzel will serve as the acting dean for the School of Religion, and David Hirschman will be acting dean of the seminary.

Christian, patriotic & military neckties - \$15 value, **SALE \$6**, Clip-on ties, \$7
 Humor book *500 Laughter Doeth Good Like a Medicine* - \$6 (1,500 sold)
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WAU, PAPUA, NEW GUINEA

Tania Tia with the Lord

Tania Tia, pastor of Wau Baptist Church, was taken to glory August 28, 2013. Pastor Tia was won to Christ through the ministry of BBFI missionary Charles Mosely and received his first training through the Baptist Bible Training Center of New



Guinea with former BBFI missionary Frank Holt.

Pastor Tia led the church in Wau more than 30 years and was a featured speaker in the 1994 BBFI Global Meeting as an example of the effectiveness of Fellowship missions.

TULSA, OK

Bethel Baptist Tulsa to re-launch in October

Pastor Keith Kaufman and the congregation of TriPoint Baptist Church of west Tulsa, formerly known as Bethel Baptist Temple, have announced the re-launching of the church to take place October 20, 2013. The re-launch will consist of several evening services featuring pastors of the Oklahoma Baptist Bible Fellowship in the days leading up to the official opening date.



Pastor Keith Kaufman baptizes one of several new people involved with TriPointe Baptist Church.

smiled upon this ministry with a wonderful attitude and spirit, an increase in average attendance, and we believe a bright future ahead."

He reports that the whole congregation is involved in construction, remodeling, cleaning, marketing strategy, website exposure, and other projects. Kaufman and the TriPoint Baptist people are appreciative

to all who have given funds to help with church/parsonage facelifts, along with others partnering with the church.

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NDOLA, ZAMBIA

128 attend Zambia youth camp; 13 saved

BBFI missionary John Riggs reports good results from the 11th annual youth camp in Ndola, Zambia. Brent Moeller, BBFI missionary serving in Durban, South Africa, was the speaker. The camp hosted 128 youth and counselors from 12 churches. During the week, thirteen young people received Jesus Christ as their savior, and many others rededicated their

lives to serve Christ.

Riggs says, "Our youth camp ministry started in 2003. We rented facilities from Teen Missions on the outskirts of Ndola from 2003 to 2007. In 2005 God blessed us with 52 acres on which to build our youth camp. We first met on our own property in 2008."



Lance & Amy Auterson | France

After finding the doors to the Catholic Church locked, Giovanni and Fidelia made their way down the street to run some errands. They arrived in front of our church building at the exact same time we were entering. They said hello and asked about our church, then followed us in (that never happens here). Three weeks later Lance was able to lead Giovanni, Fidelia, and Giovanni's 15-year-old sister, Alexandria, to the Lord! Praise God for the way He had already prepared their hearts to hear the gospel and for the way He directed them through our church doors. Giovanni's mom, Sandra, has come to church a few times and we ask you to pray with us for her salvation as well as for the salvation of her other daughter.

Brian & Rachel Weed | Nicaragua

It's fun to trace a person's spiritual heritage. We would like to do that with a young man named Alvaro and show you how his spiritual heritage tracks back to you. You sent us to Nicaragua. We reached Marcelo, the youth pastor in the Managua church. Marcelo reached Alvaro. Alvaro prayed for over a year for his parents' salvation and was able to reach both his mom and dad who are now serving faithfully in the church. Alvaro is presently studying in our seminary preparing to be a pastor. Who would have guessed that all this was possible because you gave?

Don & Delores Swearingin | Mexico

We just sent Erik as a missionary out of our church to the state of Zacatecas, Mexico. He is one of our young men who was saved and trained in our work in Piedras Negras since he was about four years old. He is the brother to Josue, who is going to be the next pastor of the Piedras Negras work. Erik finished his three-year Bible college course, came home and worked with us for 14 months, and then we sent him off to his place of calling.

BURLINGTON, KY

Rawlings bio released

In *The Lord Is Not Through with Me Yet: The Story of Dr. John W. Rawlings* (published by CrossBooks), author Kaitlyn O. Rawlings' new biography, readers are invited to experience the life and times of the author's great-grandfather.

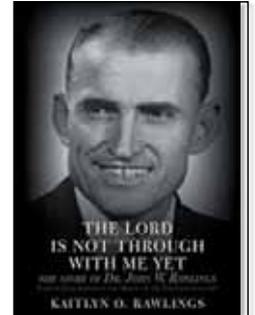
Hailed as one of the 20th century's best Baptist preachers, John W. Rawlings rose from a humble beginning in the foothills of the Ozarks near the Mississippi to lead a nation of believers

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his own journey towards the light. With heartwarming and often humorous stories peppered throughout, this historic biography will not only help readers see Dr. John's significant contributions to the founding of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, International Baptist Network, and multiple youth camps and colleges around the world, it will also leave them immersed in a story that transcends time: a story about God's love and how he works through his servants.

In addition to her great-grandfather's biography *The Lord is Not Through with Me Yet*, Kaitlyn O. Rawlings is also the author of the forthcoming fantasy fiction series *The Last World Calls*. Rawlings holds a bachelor's degree in English and is currently pursuing further education in acting and performance. She teaches 9th grade English and drama and lives in northern Kentucky with her family. More information can be found at www.kaitlynorawlings.com.

The biography of John W. Rawlings is available through Amazon and Barnes & Noble.



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Les & Donna Garner | Mexico

Earlier this summer, Donna was in a pharmacy to purchase medicine when three armed and masked men came into the store shouting for everyone to get on the floor and turn over their cell phones, watches, jewelry, and money. Donna began to pray in an audible voice and quoting Psalm 91 when one of the thieves kicked her in the ribs and told her to shut up. After a few minutes the thieves left the pharmacy, but not before spraying everyone with pepper gas. Thankfully, Donna was not seriously injured. The thieves took her Kindle reader and the cash she had to pay for her medicine, but they did not get our IDs, phone, or Donna's wedding rings that she has worn for 47 years! Most of all, we are thankful Donna was not shot by the thieves as often happens in these holdups that take place almost daily in our city.

The next day, I was involved in a serious car accident, one in which I could have lost my life. As it was, I only spent two days and a night in the hospital. Our car no longer will be able to be used. In spite of being 16 years old, it was a very good car and will be hard to replace. Thankfully, I had no damage to the neck area where I had surgery last July, though I had some minor bleeding on the brain from the shaking of the skull at the time of impact. We need your prayers as we recover from all that has transpired!

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Elmer Deal | Congo

We just returned from the national meeting in Kalemie. It was good to go back to where we started our work over 50 years ago. I saw many people I haven't seen for years and we had a happy reunion. One such person was Kipili. His father, Pastor Gregoire, was martyred in the 60s during the rebellion. Kipili was five years old when his father was thrown into the Lukuga River and now Kipili is over 50 years old and looks like his father. We had an emotional time together. He has a nice wife and two children. He is very active in the Central Baptist Church.

Vladimir & Debbie Lukyanov | Russia

I want to tell you about a man who has started attending our Sunday services. His name is Andrei. I first met Andrei when he was literally living on a staircase of an apartment building in our town ... in the middle of winter. Being homeless is a sad, terrible thing. But being homeless in Siberia is deadly. If a person isn't killed by extreme cold, people who find him squatting in apartment corridors and landings can beat him to the point of death. We found out that Andrei was a war veteran who later lost his feet in an accident and generally fell on hard times. It reminded me a little of the prodigal son. We were blessed to be able to help Andrei find a place to live. Now we are bringing him to services, inviting him to our home for lunch afterwards, and simply sharing Christ with him. He has not yet received Christ as Savior, so we ask that you pray for him. Russians are a very proud people, and many times even in dire circumstances this pride keeps them from seeing their need for Christ.

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Ordinary

By Steve Van Winkle

Pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church, Bozeman, MT

We had just arrived home from the former Gallatin Field. It's now called Bozeman-Yellowstone International Airport, an apparent concession to the trust-funders and celebrities who frequent Big Sky like royalty slumming among the local serfs.

So, the name changed to reflect a more sophisticated clientele. At least, that's my explanation for the change since Bozeman-Yellowstone International Airport is neither in Bozeman nor near Yellowstone, and has no International flights. But, it is a very nice airport and its cleanliness and simplicity and beauty cushions the blow for parents sending their daughter back to college at the end of summer.

It was a more or less quiet ride home and after a quarter-hour trying to find something to do in the quiet, we decided to lie down together. I suppose it seemed mildly scandalous any other day, but lying on our bed would accomplish the same as sitting mindlessly at a desk.

We lay there. Cheryl's head was resting on my shoulder, and we talked about things. And life. We sighed some, confessed sadness we both knew we had, and laughed enough to keep us safely removed from depression. It all came down to this: Here we were, Steve and Cheryl, and our oldest was flying off to her second year in college, our middle daughter was days away from her last year of high school, and Spartacus was about to begin his first. The ripples of life we both knew were flattening out behind us.

"We all turn out pretty ordinary." The sentence came from nowhere, and it was half said before I realized it was out loud.

"What?" Cheryl whispered.

I was looking at a picture on the wall next to my side of the bed that had been suspended there since we moved in over ten years ago. Only God knows how many times I had looked over at it. There they are in the picture, my kids frozen in time. They are the kids I once knew, dressed for Easter. Madison and Baylee are sporting corsages I bought them for the morning and Spart is wearing clothes that have no Nebraska "N" on them anywhere. They are there together, close knit and beautiful; I imagine them anxious to get home and sift through Easter baskets with grandma.

"Ordinary," I said again. "We all turn out pretty ordinary."

"What do you mean?"

"I just remember when I was 20, I felt pretty extraordinary. I walked past people knee-deep in painfully ordinary routines, and I just knew my life would be more than the ordinary."

She understood what I meant. We knew it when we were dating and in the initial years of marriage. I don't know if we

would have phrased it as such, but we had never intended to be ordinary. God's purpose was magnificent; the ministry needed our fresh faces, and our collective idealism would carry us up and over the rip tide of ordinary imprisoning the masses.

"And here we are," I continued. "Middle-aged and the kids we never dreamed we'd have are about to leave for lives of their own. No one ever tells you that when you have children you have surrendered the next 20 years of your life making sure they are fed, sheltered, and capable of becoming better people than you were and all God wants them to be. Twenty years. Twenty years of the most ordinary stuff life ever served up: oil changes, parent meetings, crusty noses, Sunday school, hand-me-downs, yard work, Christmas trees, tickle monsters, owies, back-to-school, and all the other mundane things I never realized I was enjoying when I was hoping they would end soon so I could focus on being extraordinary."

"Yeah." Cheryl agreed. "Nothing wrong with ordinary."

No. There isn't. There are three souls on this planet who never needed me to be extraordinary. They never needed me to pastor thousands, to write books, to be known by scores of people, or to pursue my extraordinariness.

They needed me to count their breaths as they lay wheezing with a respiratory infection, making sure they were doing okay. They needed me to be home at night and slip into their rooms and stare at them sleeping and silently pray for them. They needed me to sneak out with them in the middle of the night to get some pop for no reason at all, and to carry them like a "sack 'o taters" to bed. They needed me to worry about gas mileage, and to work out the fights I had with their mom, and ask to see their report cards, and take family pictures, and give them hugs for no reason, and a myriad of other daily routines I swore would never mark my life.

They needed me to be ordinary.

As I lay there next to my wife, I understood for the first time the beauty of it — of ordinary.

"I guess not." I said.

I could feel her eyelids blink against my shoulder and I wondered what she was thinking. Outside, we heard a familiar sound of straining engines as a plane was bursting into the sky after taking off from Bozeman-Yellowstone International Airport.

"There she goes." I said.

And we stayed there just a few minutes longer, listening to the engines in the sky fade into the east, and we squeezed one another a little tighter as a small reward for being so ordinary for so long.

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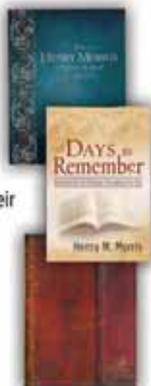
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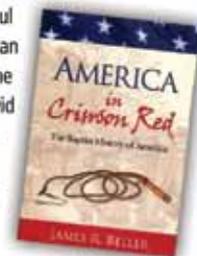
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