

To Keith Bassham, in appreciation for

# 20 YEARS AT THE TRIBUNE

ASSISTANT EDITOR 1995-2002 • EXECUTIVE EDITOR 2002-2015



1995



2001

FROM: Randy Harp *Tribune* Editor / BBFI Director of Communications

**D**uring my first staff meeting with Rob and Karri here at the *Tribune*, our first order of business was to decide the best way to honor the 20 years of service Editor Keith Bassham has given to the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. It did not take long for me to realize the positive impact he has had on this office. Much can be said about Keith's skill set as an author, editor, or even historian. But if you truly know him, what is more noticeable is his kindness, authenticity, loyalty, and genuine desire to honor Christ with his life.

Keith has been pouring into my life since Homiletics class my junior year at Baptist Bible College. He has continued to influence my life whether through phone calls, emails, visits to his office while I was in Springfield, or having him preach at my church. His ministry will continue at the *Tribune* if in no other way than through his investment in me personally.

As I read through the tributes submitted it is evident the impact Keith has had not just on this office or on my life but in our entire Fellowship. Proverbs 3:27 states, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so." As you read through these next few pages, I encourage you to take some time to think of ways you have been influenced by Keith's ministry. If you feel compelled, you can send an email or note of encouragement to the *Tribune* office and we will make sure he receives it.

### A new editor

"... there is no doubt in my mind that my good friend and associate Keith Bassham is fully qualified to receive the endorsement of the BBFI to be our new editor."



"Since the *Tribune* office is in the same building as our offices, Keith and I occasionally got to spend time discussing the issues in our Fellowship and what was taking place around the world. He always took interest in hearing about my international trips, eager to hear about how missionaries were doing and the different ministries going around the world. I appreciate the way he kept missions in the forefront by publishing news and stories about missions.

I am grateful to count Keith as one of my friends. I will always be thankful for the times we have had together. He will be missed here around the Mission Office building. Thanks, Keith, for your diligent, steadfast faithfulness to the Lord and to our Fellowship."

*Jon Konnerup*

### A voice for the Fellowship

Editor Bassham was one of several representatives from the BBFI when leaders from three independent Baptist fellowships met in Atlanta to discuss a framework for future cooperation among Baptists.



### Representing the *Tribune* in Korea

While in Korea for the 50th anniversary of the Korea BBF, Keith and Shari Bassham enjoy a meal with Lee Jung Bum and his wife. Pastor Lee was one of Ike Foster's "preacher boys" when Foster started the church in 1954.



"I am thankful for Keith Bassham's time at the *Tribune*. He is one of the smartest men I know. As a student of our Fellowship's history, at present he knows us better than anyone. Navigating the diverse opinions of pastors was surely a challenge, he, however, made it look easy. He has led in a way that brought stability and credibility to our organization."

*Eddie Lyons*

## FROM: Mike Randall *Tribune* Editor 1995-2002

**W**ith this issue and after 13 years, Keith Bassham is closing out his tenure as the editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. He began his work as the assistant editor, when I invited him to join the *Tribune* staff in 1995. He has seen and reported significant events in the history of the BBFI for the past two decades. Now, his departure is a significant event in itself.

I was first attracted to Editor Bassham when I read his well-written articles in the Oklahoma BBF newsletter he edited in the 1990s. It was obvious he could write, but working with him day by day, I became even more aware of his keen intellect. He would often surprise me by his amazing ability to recall something he read or relate some obscure detail of church or BBFI history. Because of this, I gave him the nickname "Univac," after the computer of the same name. Some may not know this, but to better qualify himself and better serve the BBFI, he studied hard and earned his Master of

Science degree in Administrative Studies in 2012 from Missouri State University. "Univac" Bassham is probably one of the most intelligent people I know.

Along with intellect and writing skill, Editor Bassham has always had the heart of a peacemaker. Make no mistake, he is his own man and able to effectively express his opinions. I have observed him standing his ground with those who disagreed with a position or policy he espoused, while he still conveyed a conciliatory demeanor, embracing the common motives and goals shared with his counterpart. He works to cultivate harmony, to do what is best for the common good, even if it means some sacrifice or discomfort on his part. He is a peacemaker.

I have also been impressed with his stewardship. He has operated the *Tribune* for the past 13 years on a well-thought-out budget, annually approved by the BBFI executive officers. His stewardship has maintained the quality of

equipment, quality of operation, quality of design, layout, paper, and printing, without overspending the budget. Almost all the *Tribune* reserve funds inherited in 2002 are still available, even though all the Fellowship enterprises, including the *Tribune*, have suffered financially since the economic crash of 2008. In my opinion, all this speaks especially well of the stewardship of our *Tribune* Editor Keith Bassham.

On a personal level, my wife and I have grown to love Keith and his wife, Shari, more and more over these years. He has become more than a coworker. He is a peer and they are valued friends. We join the thousands of readers of the *Tribune*, the pastors, missionaries, leaders, and friends of the BBFI in thanking Editor Keith Bassham for all he has done to advance the cause of Christ and edify our souls. We wish Keith and Shari Bassham all God's best.

### Connected to missions

Keith and Shari Bassham with former Mission Director Carl Boonstra and his wife, Elsie, at a surprise reception to celebrate Carl Boonstra's 80th birthday and the Boonstra's 57th wedding anniversary.



### A warm welcome

Keith's relationship with Ira Walton, along with exposure in the *Tribune*, helped introduce the Brothers of Cyrene to the Fellowship.



### Historically speaking

At the Baptist History Celebration in Charleston, SC, with fellow presenters Tom and Gail Gritts (back), and Thomas and Peggy Ray (at left).



**"If ever a man was a gift to a time and an assignment, Keith Bassham is that man. Understanding the times and knowing what to write, our brother has approached his work with grace and truth.**

**His life is above reproach. His journalistic labor is even-keeled, erudite, attentive, creative, thoughtful, and thought-provoking. Under Bassham's hand, the *Baptist Bible Tribune* has thrived, growing, improving, serving the BBFI well.**

**I think Noel Smith is smiling."**

*Charles Lyons*

**"I am a long-time reader of the *Tribune* (dating back to the early 1970s), and so have examined decades of *Tribunes* under all its editors. Under Keith Bassham's editorship, the *Tribune* continued its mission as the rallying point of the BBF, with timely news and information from within the BBF and regular checks of trends and issues in the larger religious and secular worlds. I came to expect — and was not disappointed — that each issue would be informative, interesting, balanced, and well-assembled. Keith always approached his task with intelligence and discernment.**

**And as a contributing writer, I must say he was an easy editor to work with. He rarely asked for material changes in what I submitted, and what changes he made were reasonable, even from a writer's point of view!"**

*Doug Kutilek*

#### FROM: Tom Harper *Tribune* Assistant Editor 1983-1985, 1990-2006

**W**hen Mike Randall became *Tribune* editor in 1995, I think he had already decided to hire Keith Bassham. But he still asked who might be a good candidate for another assistant editor, and I didn't hesitate to recommend Keith. No one else had the required mix of talent, background, and recklessness to drop into that spot and make a go of it. Although it's difficult to remember exactly when we first met, when we did I was immediately impressed by Keith as an intelligent man of integrity, someone who liked study, and didn't fear questions. And he knew a lot about how to use the language, also, which was important. Plus he seemed really to want the job. Later he remarked that he felt guilty

getting paid to have so much fun.

We tried to cure him of those guilt feelings with long proofreading nights and rewrites and budget fights and other things that plague the publishing world, but we never could. We all shared the pressure, and the fun. But when time came to wear the big hat, would the weight of it squash away all that fun?

I'm ahead of my story. Keith wasn't ready for the big hat right away. It was obvious that in time he would be, but the right kind of leader doesn't start there or assume that he's there without serious growth and help. Keith had a healthy fear of making a mess of things, and enough genuine humility to spend the requisite time with Mr. Randall and Mr. Combs, and in study and reflection,

and in communication with others in the field, and most importantly in prayer and seeking, asking God for the wisdom necessary for what was coming.

And what was coming was tough.

Few people know all the inside, political-type struggles surrounding the executive editor position, but everyone recognizes the influence the position carries. With influence comes the pressure. I was proud to watch Keith stay true to his principles and not succumb to pressures from lots of people who wanted to use the *Tribune* for lots of peripheral things. And we still had fun.

Those are good memories, but the better memories are long talks in the office about the Bible and family, debates about various topics, creative

sessions with the whole team that gave new and better direction to our work ... basically all the things that made it worthwhile to hang around with a great editor and friend for 11 years. By the way, nobody has better taste in or more profound knowledge of quality BBQ than Keith.

Along with James O. Combs and Mike Randall, Keith Bassham had marvelous influence in our Fellowship, and on me personally. It was a true privilege to be there when he became *Tribune* executive editor and watch it all unfold. The entire BBFI, and all of us who worked at the *Tribune* during his 20 years, are grateful for the honor of it.

### Coast to coast ... and beyond

Preaching in Seoul Korea as a guest of Dr. Daniel Kim as Bible Baptist Church celebrated its 47th anniversary.



### Where honor is due

Spending time with former *Tribune* editor James Combs at the May Fellowship Meeting.



### Fundraising

Part of the editor's responsibilities included coordinating all fundraising efforts for the February *Tribune* Offering.



"Keith Bassham will be honored by many for his wonderful writing skills, his deep and insightful thinking, and his hard work and faithfulness at the *Tribune*. I need to honor Keith as a friend. In my first years as the president of BBC, there were many days when I needed someone to listen, someone to cry to, and someone to understand. On those days, I meandered over to Keith's office, pulled up a chair, and just talked. Keith was always loving, encouraging, and helpful. He became a "pastor" to me in those tough times.

I hope to have the same said of me in years to come.

Thanks Keith for loving and serving all of us, for being a 'pastor' to our Fellowship."

Mark Milioni

"Keith has masterfully performed at the toughest job in the BBFI. The *Tribune* lands in front of all eyes every month, so the editor literally lives in a glass house. A memory I have of Keith sums up his extraordinary skill and service pretty clearly for me. Several years ago, a handful of us from Boston sort of gang-tackled Keith with complaints that we didn't think we were getting as much 'coverage' in the *Tribune* as we thought we deserved. We were animated. Keith was not. He gently but clearly explained that he understood his job to be to tell the Fellowship story each month — based on what came to his knowledge. He looked at me and said, "Dave, you can write — write!" That day "The View from Boston" was born — birthed by the editor who is a phenomenal journalist, a gifted word smithy, a thoughtful consensus-builder, and a remarkable leader who demonstrated character and grace. Thanks, Keith."

David Melton

### FROM: Eric Shadle *Tribune* Webmaster 1998-2004

I arrived at Baptist Bible College in 1997. Around a year later, I joined the *Tribune* staff to help expand their online presence and, later, to archive previous issues. It was a fantastic opportunity to work on campus and be involved in what I loved. Yet, little did I know the way this opportunity would impact me.

The first time I met Keith Bassham, he was assistant editor at the time, he had a computer with the side off on his desk. He loved computers and so did I! But our relationship was more than just guys swapping tech ideas. Sometime along the way he decided to invest in me — the type of investment to see a return for God's kingdom. A mentorship.

The truth was, I had a zeal for God's Word and little experience. I needed someone to guide me. It was not uncommon for Keith to come to my

office and dialogue with me on many of the ideas from the day. Where others might have been too busy to spend time with a Bible college sophomore, he wasn't! He loved to make me think, especially about the Bible. In many ways, he brought balance to my thinking — allowing me room to explore and at the same time giving me Biblical reminders along the way.

He further shaped my thinking as I sat in his Preaching Workshop class. His love for the proper understanding of God's Word and preaching couldn't help but rub off on me. He encouraged his students to find a pulpit to fill for preaching experience. At some point, like many others, I found myself preaching at his pulpit.

I remember one time greatly enjoying an office prank. My partner in

crime and I finally took it too far and Mr. Bassham confronted us. Later that evening, as I asked his forgiveness, he assured me all was fine. As best I remember, he said something like, "Well, it was funny!" I remember thinking how gracious he was. He made his point yet reinforced that everything was okay.

As my family started and our first child came, balancing graduate school, work, and home life was a challenge. Through all of this, Keith was there as much more than a boss — he wanted me to succeed. He was wise in not taking the load from me, but seemed to be monitoring my progress. I'm sure he knew it was part of God's working in my life and it served a purpose for me.

Our family arrived as missionaries in Ethiopia over six years ago. We are amazed how God used so many

relationships to prepare us for such a diverse place. For me, one of those relationships was with Mr. Bassham — not only working alongside of but being mentored by a man who loved God and people. When you get around those types of people, it changes you.

Let me tell you today, Bro. Bassham, what I didn't quite realize then. Thank you for teaching me the balance in life and ministry. Thank you for teaching me to have a love for God's Word and preaching. Thank you for teaching me that investing in others for God's kingdom is always worth it. Thanks for the mentorship!

Psalm 32:8 - "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye."



## Reporting from Cebu City

Alongside Mike Frasier in Cebu City, Philippines, for the 2011 BBFI Global Meeting.



## 10 years as editor

Honored by the BBFI officers for a decade as *Tribune* editor.



## California style

The September National Meeting in Ventura, CA, brought an opportunity for *Tribune* interviews with George Barna (below) and Kirk Cameron.



**“Working with Keith Bassham over the years has not only been a pleasure, it has afforded me the opportunity to labor alongside someone with remarkable balance throughout many of the struggles and transitions of our movement. His editorial expertise has continued to bring quality articles to the *Tribune* from prolific writers within our ranks and encouraging reports from the field. In the pulpit he is substantive, articulate, relevant, and easy to listen to.**

On a personal level, I have called on him for advice or sat across the desk from him while discussing a difficult issue. I admire his graciousness and yet firm stance on things that matter. As Keith passes the baton to Randy, the impact of his legacy will continue to resonate far into the future. Thanks, Keith!”

Dan Greer

**“Keith Bassham is one of the treasures of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Soon after I was elected as the representative for the state of California, I saw how much Keith contributed. Whenever a procedural question came up that a committee didn’t have an answer for, someone inevitably would say, ‘Call Keith, he’ll know.’ And he did know. The same thing happened when we wanted to know about the history of an issue. He always seemed to know the date and the place where a decision was made or a vote was taken. I always appreciated his willingness to help any way he could. I am glad I had the privilege of serving alongside Keith.”**

Lewis McClendon

## FROM: Karri Joy Perry Director of Office Services 2002-present

**W**hen I accepted the job at the *Tribune* 13 years ago, I really felt God was opening the door for me to be in full-time ministry. And having grown up in a missionary/pastor’s home, I was excited to serve people in ministry. Yet, I never thought of how God would use this job and specifically Keith Bassham to teach and minister to my family and me.

When I started here, I was hired to handle bookkeeping, subscriptions, and office work. However, either because our staff was decreasing or because he saw potential in me, Keith began training me to edit the *Tribune*. Being the wordsmith and writer he is, he had lots of experience and wisdom to pass down to me — the inverted pyramid method of writing news articles, how not to bury a lead, how to use demonstratives sparingly, etc.

But his teaching went far beyond

job skills, living out God’s Word in front of me and helping me love God and others more. One verse he taught me to apply was, “Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men” (1 Thessalonians 5:14). No matter who called or how rude the person may have been, Mr. Bassham tried to show grace. In fact, I once asked him why he took the calls of one of our more difficult and regular callers. He explained he had learned from Mike Randall to comfort the feebleminded. (So thank you Mr. Randall, you taught Keith an invaluable lesson he in turn taught me.)

I observed Keith more than once listening to and comforting a widow, widower, or someone who was brokenhearted, and at times that person was me. He was never too busy, he never

considered himself too important.

He also has given me a new appreciation for and taught me how to honor those who have gone before us. From the way I observed Keith interact with Mr. Randall and Mr. Combs, to publishing “60 Years Ago in the *Baptist Bible Tribune*,” to seeking wisdom and prayer from our veteran pastors and missionaries, Keith has taught me humility and how to love and appreciate those who worked to build what we all enjoy today.

But above all, Keith has taught me just a little bit of what the love of our Father looks like. Thirteen years has brought many changes in my life, and during each of them Keith has been a listening ear, a man with wise counsel, someone who would give and sacrifice anything he could to help. He cared. He loved. He served.

In fact, if you’ll allow me to take a verse a little out of context (since I understand the *Tribune* office is not a church), Mr. Bassham has exemplified 1 Peter 5: 2-3: “Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.”

I know the *Tribune* has been a ministry to Keith, but it differs from pastoring because you rarely see how you’re affecting and helping those around you. I hope and pray that through my family and me, Keith has seen some of the fruits of his labor.

Thank you for investing in me Bro. Bassham! I will always be thankful for the lessons you have taught me and for the friendship you’ve provided.

## Students at heart

Visiting the Passages Bible exhibit in Springfield, MO, with Don Richardson (left), Elmer Towns (left center), and Mark Milioni (right).



## Winding down

Enjoying fellowship at one last May Fellowship Meeting as the editor.



"I've known Keith for about 33 years. I'm glad I can call him my friend.

Back during the early years, I reroofed a huge church where he was an associate pastor. His pastor put Keith on the roofing crew. I told the guys not to let up on him and work him hard. To our amazement, he worked harder than anyone on the crew, day after day, and gained the respect of everyone there. My lead man asked time and again if we could use Keith on other roofing jobs.

When he became *Tribune* editor, Keith took his hard work ethic and took a good magazine and made it great. When I started RiverWest Baptist, Keith sent bundles of *Tribunes*, which hugely benefited our new church.

If I could give one word to describe Keith it would be *faithful*. He has always done his job well. He has also become the unofficial historian of the BBF. There is no one that knows more about our Fellowship than Keith."

Paul Foster

"Keith, please accept our thanks, congratulations, as well as appreciation for the way in which you have served with excellence the pastors, the fellowships, the colleges, and the many members of our churches.

As editor of the *Tribune* these many years you have presented news, promotions, and advertising with a scholarly approach that presented a fair and balanced report for all of us. We have all profited because of your willingness to share your gifts through writing. You have been a spirit of encouragement and uplifting for everyone."

John Gross

"My thought of Keith Bassham and his ministry as our *Tribune* editor is one of trust. As the steward of our Fellowship voice, I found Keith to be fair and balanced in his approach to every issue."

Rob Hoffman

FROM: Rob Walker *Tribune* Assistant Editor 2006-present

**Diplomacy:** skill in managing negotiations or handling people so there is little or no ill will.

Long before 1796, when the word *diplomacy* was added to the English language, the apostle Paul expressed the concept in his epistle to the believers at Rome. Chapter 12 of Romans gives a detailed charge regarding personal conduct ... *to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think* (verse 3) ... *be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love* (verse 10) ... *not slothful in business* (verse 11) ... *given to hospitality* (verse 13) ... *rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep* (verse 15) ... *mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate* (verse 16) ... *if it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men* (verse 18).

As I reflect upon my nine years at

the *Tribune* working for Keith Bassham, I am privileged to have worked alongside such a gracious and diplomatic spirit. Keith did not manage the *Tribune* as if it were a soapbox for his preferences and opinions (and yes, he has a few). His approach was well-expressed in his instructions to me as the *Tribune* photographer. At Fellowship gatherings, he directed my work with the camera so the *Tribune* could reflect the whole community that is the Baptist Bible Fellowship — fledglings and veterans, missionaries and church planters, the unknowns and the well-knowns — they all had a place in his vision for the *Tribune*. In the office, he often explained his editorial decisions and the background information behind why he chose to travel in a certain direction with the material. Each explanation was an investment in my understanding of Fellowship history and the purpose of the *Tribune*. He didn't just tell me

what to do, he taught me what to do. And he was willing to make the same investment in just about anyone who walked in his office door.

Visitors to Keith's office often noted the loaded bookshelves covering the walls and joked about how smart he must be. Now, as I write this, many of those books have taken up residence in boxes not far from my desk awaiting moving day. With each squawk of the packing-tape dispenser, I am reminded that it was not the large library that made Keith wise. As the degrees and framed accolades come off his office wall, I understand that it was not his education or achievements that brought him respect. For me, the two green fabric-covered swivel chairs that sit in front of his desk say it all.

In those chairs I received words of both admonishment and appreciation from Keith, while never feeling belittled or blandished. I sat in those chairs as

he expressed care for my family and an interest in my well-being that was beyond gracious. I would like to think that the way he treated me was because of who I am as a *Tribune* employee, but the fact is, he treated me that way because of who he is. And it's how he treated the wide spectrum of people who stopped by to sit in those green chairs or called to speak with him. His counsel was wise, his willingness to listen was invaluable, and his transparency was refreshing.

Keith Bassham truly has the heart of a diplomat. As a man of God, he personifies the attributes of Romans 12, and his work within the BBF speaks to his wisdom in handling people and affairs. The example he set will continue to be an influence in my life and I will always be grateful to have served with him.