

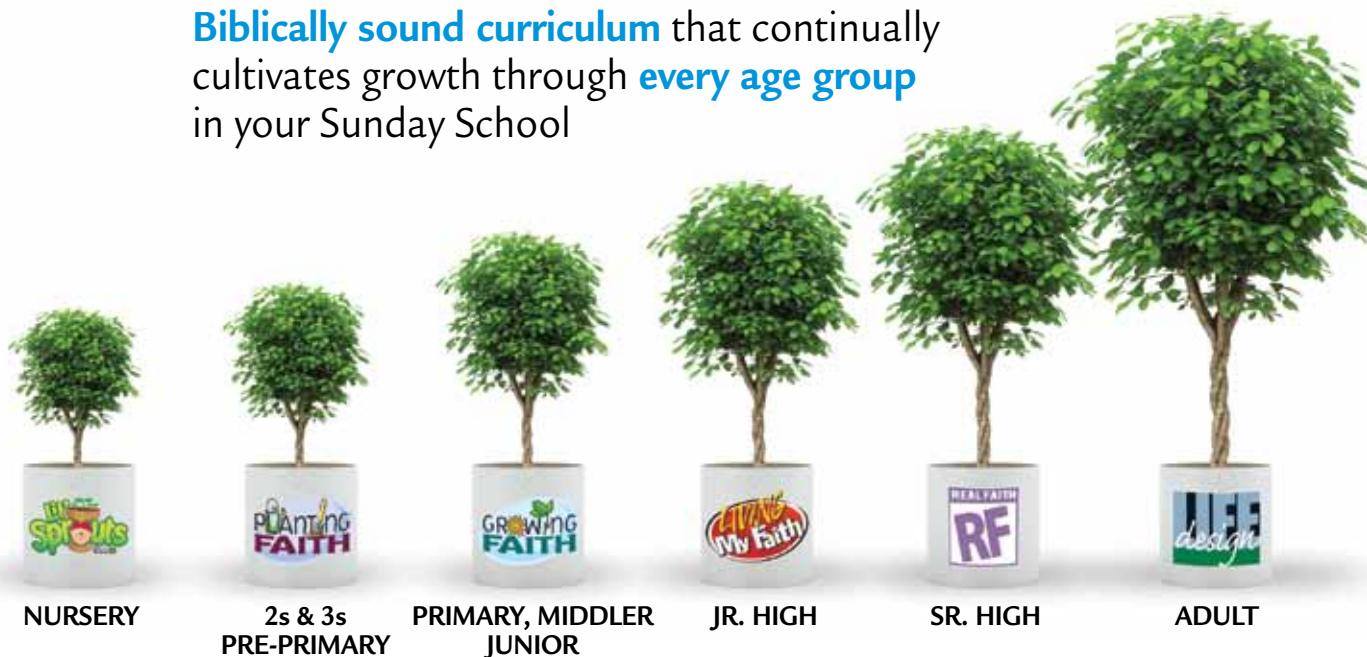
BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

FEBRUARY 2012 | VOL. 62 NO. 6



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ON THE TABLE

This *Tribune* is about the *Tribune*

by Keith Bassham | Editor

Pardon us as the *Tribune* departs a little from its mission this month. We generally talk about the Fellowship with little self-awareness, but this month we're talking up the *Tribune*. The feature articles show where the *Tribune* fits in the world of Baptist publishing, gives a brief rundown of the *Tribune* history itself, and we wrap up the section with a biography of founding editor Noel Smith.

We don't do this often, but we are in the middle of a fundraising effort, namely the February Tribune Offering, and I thought it a good idea to let the *Tribune* brag on itself a little. Be assured, we will not make it a habit.

And there is plenty of good stuff — the familiar news, information, and comment — you are used to.

One thing on a lot of minds this month is the Winter BBFI Fellowship Meeting hosted by Hallmark Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX. The church has quite a history itself, and Pastor Mike Haley graciously offered to host the meeting when an unexpected turn cancelled other meeting plans. The church and the community are an ideal place for BBFI meetings given the historical connection between the Fellowship and the city. Those interested in some proto-history should visit the campus of Arlington Baptist College and get a look at the historical museum there. And there are many great churches to visit in the DFW area for the early arrivers. Weather can be variable, though, so be prepared for anything.

I have been pleased with the responses to the January *Tribune* encouraging Bible reading and study in the New Year. Many people have taken on reading the Bible in a year in the past, and I am hoping that the *Tribune* materials will cause those numbers to swell. I would like to add another encouragement, especially as we enter this very important election season, to pray.

Let's adopt the attitude to do what we can (and that includes being involved in the electoral process) and to pray that God will do what only He can do. Harold Lindsell said:

God cannot do some things unless we work. He stores the hills with marble, but He has never built a cathedral. He fills the mountains with iron ore, but He never makes a needle or a jet airplane. He leaves that to us. If then, God has left many things dependent on man's thinking and working, why should He not leave some things dependent upon man's praying? He has done so. 'Ask and you shall receive.' And there are some things God will not give us unless we ask. We cannot suppose that God will do for us without prayer what He has promised to do for us only through prayer.

Keith Bassham

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

The Divine Potter and the BBFI



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

The biblical background for the great hymn “Have Thine Own Way” is found in the message that came to Jeremiah the prophet while he was visiting a pottery. God spoke to Jeremiah through the elements of nature and the events that were taking place in his nation.

Jeremiah was a reluctant young man when the call of God came to him with a revelation of the divine purpose for his life. After several excuses, He felt compelled to become a spokesman for God and to warn his people of the consequences of their sin.

Jeremiah preached the love of God, and the people turned a deaf ear to his message. He preached and appealed to their reason, but they refused to think logically. Jeremiah preached judgment and condemnation, and still the people continued to live lives of sin.

Jeremiah's day was similar to our day in many respects. The people were guilty of idolatry while at the same time they were regular in their attendance at temple worship. They were materialistic and lived as if this world was the totality of human existence. They were lovers of pleasure and were in countless pursuits of new excitement. Most of the people gave no serious thought to the condition of the nation, the circumstances of their own lives, or what the future held for them.

Jeremiah went to the potter's house and saw him as he worked at his wheel. As Jeremiah gazed upon the scene, there dawned upon his mind several great truths that were of significance both for then and now.

Under the skillful hands of the potter the lump of clay could become a flowerpot, vase, birdhouse, serving dish, or any number of things. The potter's plan, along with the pliability of the clay, determined what the vessel was to become.

Jeremiah saw God as the divine Potter and Israel, His nation, as the clay. God used this experience at the potter's house to help Jeremiah understand that God had a purpose for nations. It was true with regard to ancient Israel, and it is true of our modern world. The divine Potter has a purpose for individuals and families that we reach our full potential for Him. It is the will of God that each of us be saved and live a consecrated life to the glory of God. The divine Potter has a purpose for churches. As Christ walked through the seven golden candlesticks (Revelation 1-3), even so He walks in the midst of churches today. I believe the divine Potter has a plan for the BBFI. My prayer is that we will work together under the Potter's hand to become a vessel of beauty, honor, and usefulness. The message that Jeremiah learned when he visited the potter's house was both comforting and challenging. We have a great future if we work together. Let's cooperate completely with the leadership of the Holy Spirit and do something great for the Lord.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

Coming to America



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

With the influx of immigrants flooding into the United States comes a God-given opportunity to nations within the boundaries of our own country. They are coming into our cities, communities, and perhaps even next door.

Our Fellowship should seize the opportunity to reach these multitudes. All of our churches should take up this challenge to not only reach their community but also the surrounding communities that are taking on a new cultural dynamic. Research shows that most churches are not prepared to reach other ethnic groups. It may be because of the language barrier or a lack of cultural understanding. More than likely, it is due to the uneasiness we have in reaching out to a culture different from our own. We must begin to find ways to connect with these other cultures. This is a time for our churches to experience cross-cultural evangelization up close and personal.

Many of our churches could become multicultural or even multilingual. As we see some of these immigrants come to know Christ, we should anticipate sending people back to their home countries with the gospel.

In light of the explosive Latino growth in our country, we now face another mission challenge. We already have Spanish-speaking pastors working alongside some of our churches while others have started their own ministry works. We must join with them in evangelizing and discipling Latinos across our country. Millions of Latinos need churches to teach them the truth of the gospel in their own language right here in America. We are commanded in scripture to sow the gospel and make disciples of all nations.

Terrorist attacks made us more aware of Islam. Many were surprised to discover that Islam is the second-largest religion in the world with over one billion adherents. Christians in the U.S. have begun to discover they have Muslim neighbors. They work with Muslims, and their children play with Muslims. As Islam continues to grow (the United Nations estimates that after 2055, over half of the world's population will be Muslim), we will have increasing opportunities to share the gospel.

I am sure many Muslims have specific reasons for coming to our country from the Middle East, but I believe God has a greater purpose — He is bringing them to America so they can hear about Jesus the Savior. They have heard about Him as a prophet, but we know He is far more than that. He is God and He loves us so much that He was willing to come to earth to rescue us from our sins and draw us into a relationship with the Father. Actually, many are hungry to hear this incredibly good news.

What will you do to reach the people God has brought to our country from the regions beyond? We must be poised to reach out to them. Let's join hands as a Fellowship to have a life-changing effect upon the multitudes coming to America.

Electronic giving — a good option for today's churches



by Jason Todd | Associate Director | NCPO

I read somewhere that 75 years ago, 95 percent of church offerings were received in cash, and only five percent of the offerings were received by check. Today, we are observing another financial transition taking place as more and more people in our churches handle their finances electronically. With an entire generation of Americans accustomed to online bill pay and using their debit cards, there is little need for carrying cash or checkbooks.

As new churches are being planted, many are automatically beginning to offer these new ways of giving. In my view, churches need to be looking for ways to help people be faithful in their giving (through whatever methods possible). We should train people to give, and to give faithfully.

Giving members an opportunity to set up electronic giving means their giving will be more consistent even when their pay schedule does not coincide with their church attendance. In other words, members who travel on business or frequent vacationers can know they are still giving faithfully and consistently. You can truly give the first-fruits through electronic giving before anything else has a chance to make a demand on those resources.

Churches that do not have electronic giving available to their members are no doubt missing opportunities. According to data from the Federal Reserve, the trend toward electronic transactions in churches mirrors a trend in American culture at large. By 2007, 53 percent of U.S. households used online banking. That represented a marked increase from four percent in 1995. Similarly, by 2007, 80 percent used direct deposit for income or benefits payments, up from 53 percent in 1995. This is why we encourage our church planters to start with an electronic giving plan as soon as it is affordable.

Another major attraction for electronic giving is the ability for churches to allow their members' electronic gifts to be done in one transaction with multiple designations. With all of this in mind, the NCPO has partnered with Electronic Ministry Resources in Springfield, MO, to provide complete and affordable solutions for electronic giving transactions, both online and using an in-church kiosk. Some of the features of their online giving include:

- Designated giving – easily managed by the church
- Customizable and secure online giving page
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- The ability for church members to give a one-time donation or initiate automatic recurring giving. Giving can be cancelled or designations/amounts easily adjusted by members.
- Quick and easy setup with no setup fee
- Affordable transaction fees

If you are searching for an easy and affordable solution for electronic giving online or through a stand-alone kiosk, please email the NCPO at office@bbfincpo.com for more information about Electronic Ministry Resources.

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- Texas Motor Speedway
- Historic Stockyards with longhorn cattle drive

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PREACHING FOR RESULTS

STRATEGIES FOR CHURCH GROWTH

DEVELOPING SMALL GROUPS

REACHING THE UNCHURCHED

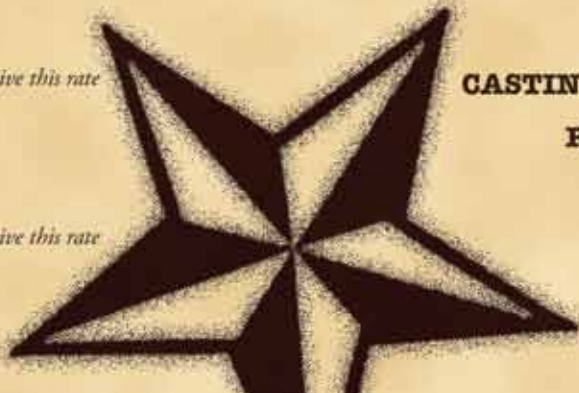
CASTING THE VISION FOR CHURCH PLANTING

RE:FRESHER FOR LADIES FELLOWSHIP

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

STUDENT MINISTRY

WORSHIP MINISTRY





SCHEDULE

Sunday Feb 19

AM Tim Chambers

PM Jon Haley

Monday

6:30 PM RE:FIRE — Passion for ministry - Phil Hopper

Tuesday

9:00 AM Workshops

- A. Church Growth Strategies - Phil Hopper
- B. Connecting with Community - Sean Sears
- C. Ladies Brunch

10:00 AM Workshops

- A. Vision Casting for Church Planting- Lonnie Lehrman/Anthony Milas
- B. Power of Social Networking - High Street Team
- C. Student Ministry - Christopher Ward
- D. How to Increase Giving - Brian Moore

11:00 AM Testimony of Church Planter

RE:FINE — Redefine success - Rob Willis

12:00 Lunch at Church

6:30 PM Testimony of Church Planter

RE:FINE — Redefine Success - Tim Chambers

Meal in Family Center

Wednesday

9:00 AM Workshops

- A. Effective Preaching - Jerry Thorpe
- B. Developing Small Groups - Sean Willeford
- C. Children's Ministry - Rachel Adams
- D. Worship ministry - David Wenger

10:00AM Workshop

- A. Workshop - Steve Stroope

11:00 AM Steve Stroope Message

12:00 Meal in the Family Center

6:30 PM Testimony of Church Planter

RE:FOCUS — Accomplishing the Mission - Linzy Slayden



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

-Laurence Sterne

Poll: Evangelicals divided on GOP candidates

WASHINGTON (BP) — Evangelicals who vote Republican are divided over whether to support Mitt Romney, Rick Santorum or Newt Gingrich for the GOP nomination, according to a new poll.

The Jan. 4-8 nationwide survey by the Pew Research Center shows Romney and Santorum with the support of 22% each and Gingrich with 18% among white evangelicals. Rick Perry gets 10% of the evangelical vote and Ron Paul 4%. All of the phone calls were conducted after the Jan. 3 Iowa caucuses and before the New Hampshire primary.

Romney actually has a significant lead among white Catholics, who favor him at 33%, followed by Gingrich (19%) and Santorum (17%).

Romney also has a lead among all Republicans with 27% to 16% for Santorum and Gingrich and Paul at 12%. Perry stands at 6%.

Some Republican voters and leaders have expressed frustration with the GOP field, and the poll reflects that sentiment. Fifty-one percent of GOP voters rate the choices as excellent/good compared to 44% who rate it fair/poor. At this point in 2008 — when John McCain, Mike Huckabee and Romney were leading the pack — 68% of GOP voters rated the field as excellent or good. Pew said the tepid support for the field compares to Democrats in January 2004, when 47% of Democrats rated their field excellent/good. John Kerry eventually got the Democratic nomination.

The poll was based on landline and cell phone calls with 1,000 adults.

Source: Michael Foust, associate editor of Baptist Press. Copyright 2012 Baptist PressRead

Study: 1 in 5 atheist scientists attend church with family

A recently published study found that nearly one in five scientists who consider themselves atheists nevertheless bring their children to a church service one or more times a year.

Printed in the December edition of the *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, the survey sampled 275 university-level faculty members.

“Our research shows just how tightly linked religion and family are in U.S. society,” said Dr. Elaine Howard Ecklund of Rice University, lead investigator for the study, in a statement.

“[S]o much so that even some of society’s least religious people find religion to be important in their private lives.”

The study stated that the main reasons were related to social and personal matters, including attending at the behest of a Christian spouse or catching up with friends.

Roy Speckhardt, executive director for the American Humanist Association, told *The Christian Post* that the study’s findings were not surprising to him. “Like many who do believe in a god, these folks likely attend church for the community experience, or the cultural connection to the religion.”

Source: www.christianpost.com

Bible readers prefer accuracy, word-for-word translation

Most American Bible readers prefer word-for-word translations of the original Greek and Hebrew over thought-for-thought translations and value accuracy over readability.

That is the finding of a new study by LifeWay Research. A total of 2,000 Bible readers participated in the study through a demographically representative online panel. To qualify, participants had to read the Bible in a typical month either by themselves or as part of a family activity and not merely in a corporate setting.

When asked whether they prefer “word-for-word translations, where the original words are translated as exactly as possible” or “thought-for-thought translations, where the translators attempt to reproduce the intent of the original thought rather than translating the exact words,” 61% chose word-for-word.

That includes 33% who strongly prefer word-for-word translation and 28% who somewhat prefer it. In contrast, 20% prefer thought-for-thought, including 6% with a strong preference and 14% who somewhat prefer it. Fourteen percent say both translation philosophies are equally fine, and 5% are not sure.

Regarding accuracy, respondents were asked, “In general, what is more important to you in a Bible: total accuracy to the original words, or easy readability?” Three out of four (75%) opt for total accuracy, with 43% saying accuracy is much more important and 32% saying it is somewhat more important.

Fourteen percent say easy readability is somewhat more important, and 8% say it is much more important. Three percent are not sure.

“It is interesting to note that Bible sales do not necessarily follow these preferences,” said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. “Those reading the Bible each month represent only a portion of all Bible purchasers.

“Bible readers can share their preferences for different translation principles but may not be aware of which characteristics are present in specific translations — even the ones that they own. Without specific instruction most readers will not notice when a translation moves away from a literal or word-for-word translation.”

Source: David Roach, Lifeway Research

In the NEWS of the WEEK

By R. O. WOODWORTH

Bro. Stan Kruse, pastor of the Bethel Baptist church, Wichita Falls, Texas, has proved that the God-appointed way of reaching men who are lost in sin is visitation. Exemplifying the apostles who "Daily in the temple and in every house ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ", pastor and people go afield seeking the lost. It is interesting to observe the results. They must challenge every reader. December saw 54 people come into the fold of the church and receipts totaling over \$2,500. The first Sunday of the new year yielded greater increase. The record showed 16 additions, \$500 offering and 318 Sunday school attendance. The extensive growth of the work during 1951 required employing a full time secretary and expanding the Sunday school facilities. And now Pastor Kruse contemplates employing a full-time personal worker to assist him in the work.

Under the preaching of David Cavin, the Castleberry Baptist church, Fort Worth, Texas, is growing increasingly conscious of its obligation to seek and to save the lost. This truth is evidenced by increasing interest taken by the members in the work and the increasing numbers joining in the visitation program. Though most of them hold no official position as connected with a committee or staff, a great host of the congregation combine their efforts one night a week to win the unsaved. With faith in a living God and a real passion for the souls of men, they are bringing men and women to Christ every week. Realizing that the work of winning souls can be carried on only by a united, vigorous exertion and effort, they are doing their utmost under the leadership of the pastor, David Cavin, to reach as many as possible by every possible means.

Providing free transportation for the soldiers in a nearby army base has proved an effective means of evangelizing the men stationed there. This necessitates the purchase of a new bus and makes two the church operates.

The crowds, which have grown nightly since the current revival conducted by Bro. Cavin at the High Street Baptist Church, Springfield, Mo., began, Jan. 12, required the opening of the balcony to seat them Sunday morning, Jan. 20. Sunday school attendance was 2,015. W. E. Dowell, pastor of the High Street church substituted for Bro. Cavin at all services in the Castleberry Baptist church with his usual good results.

Bert J. Homer, who conducted an all-out spiritual campaign against principalities and powers for 22 months as pastor of the Fellowship Baptist church, Perryton, Texas, recently resigned to accept a call from the Central Baptist church, Anthony, Kansas. Jan. 13 marked the beginning of his work on this field. The Holy Spirit fixed His seal of approval on the services by adding to the church two new members, one by salvation and another by baptism. This preacher's record as pastor of the Perryton church demonstrates that loyalty to Christ and love for the lost souls is not dying out. Improving a dilapidated army barracks for a church house, he started with 20 members March, 1950. During the ensuing 22 months, 70 souls were saved, the membership reached over 100 and the offerings increased from \$15 a week to \$125, and a 15-minute radio broadcast

was inaugurated and carried on.

The Sunday school attendance of the Kansas City Baptist Temple, Kansas City, Mo., was 506, the breakdown of one of the Sunday school busses notwithstanding. This fine attendance and the 60 workers who turned out the following night for visitation gives assurance that the workers are growing more enthusiastic about building the Sunday school and winning the lost. The pastor, Wendell Zimmerman, a great torch for God, spoke Jan. 11 in Deepwater, Mo., to a group of people interested in sponsoring a revival. The extension school of the Baptist Bible College initiated and taught by Bro. Zimmerman has a current enrollment of 34.

The increasing numbers attending the services of the Prairie Street Baptist church, Arlington, Texas, is enough to satisfy anyone that the hand of God is upon Fred Harris and his work and that He is leading them step by step in the work of establishing a sound fundamental testimony in that city. The fact, too, that two knelt at the altar in Sunday's services in submission to Christ indicates that the Spirit of God took an active part in the services. Accompanying Fred's report was a check for the Baptist Bible College, Tribune, and our mission office.

"Already here, yes, already here A mighty revival is already here" is the song ringing in the hearts of the congregation of the Bible Baptist church, Dequincy, La., in which the pastor, E. Fred Null, is conducting a revival which will long be remembered. The visible results thus far, which are 14 saved, and several additions, evidences not only deep longing for souls among the members, but they argue well for the future.

The Tulsa Baptist Temple, Tulsa, Okla., has seen some great days in its history—days of high enthusiasm and spiritual fervor—record-smashing days—but Sunday, Jan. 13 was the highest except Easter services. Averaging well over 400 for the month of December, the attendance almost reached 500 January 13; 479, the count for the day was the highest on a regular Sunday. A public stand for Christ was taken by six people who were touched by the Holy Spirit through the message of the pastor, Clifford Clark.

The entire membership of the Tabernacle Baptist church, Roswell, N. M., senses that indefinable

movement of the Holy Spirit of God permeating the whole church, electrifying and charging the very atmosphere. New members, which are being added weekly, give new life and interest to the older workers. Bro. Howard Ingram, pastor, is enjoying the work of leading the people. He is preaching with added fervor and power, which is having a decided and desired effect upon the people. Two of the largest congregations ever to assemble in the auditorium gathered for the morning and evening services and thirteen responded to the invitation to meet Christ at the altar last Sunday.

The next few months should be interesting ones for the Bible Baptist church, Lawton, Oklahoma. There are many things on the agenda that have a direct bearing on the life of the church in the coming months.

With the closing of a real estate deal for a piece of property, 100x183, and the expanding of present facilities, the people have taken on new life and the number of people joining the church—16 in the last two Sundays—plus the renewed zeal and fervor of the people promises the best attendance and results in the history of the church. Building on the new church will begin this summer.

In addition to these plans for enlargement, the church bought the pastor, Johnny Morgan, a new home, into which he will move in 30 days.

Some 75 people, many of whom had attended church for a long time, made a public stand for Christ during the 10-day meeting led by Stan Kruse, Wichita Falls, Texas, in the Lake Worth Baptist church, Fort Worth, Texas. Among them 30 professed Christ as a personal Saviour who united with the church by baptism together with eight others who joined by letter. Bro. Van Nortwick, pastor, reported it to be the first revival ever held in the new auditorium.

Judging by the fine attendance and the large response, the whole church was stirred and aroused as never before. Certainly it is a good criterion on the attitude of the majority of the membership, at least, toward the need of going into the highways and hedges compelling sinners to come to the house of the Lord.

Just a little over a year old, the Bible Baptist church, Springfield, Mo., has enjoyed a remarkable growth. Having outgrown one section of a church building which they rented, they bought the entire building and proceeded to fill it both Sunday morning and evening.

Faye Blakey, pastor has led this church in its rapid growth in addition to adhering to a full-time school schedule at the Baptist Bible College. A peak attendance was registered Jan. 20 and two souls were saved. With four short of the 200 mark, they are striving for 250.

A revival conducted by Bro. Cecil Daniels, pastor of the Lynn Street Baptist church, Springfield, Mo., for the First Baptist church, Greenfield, Mo., scheduled to close Jan. 21, was extended to a third week because of the blessings of God upon the ministry of the evangelist and people. The pastor of the

First Baptist church is Bro. Floyd Harper.

Dan Cupid has been kept pretty busy around the Baptist Bible College recently. Cupid certainly knows how to deplete the ranks in the single girls' and boys' dorm.

During the holidays, Jewell Smith and Sara Aldredge, Don Franklin and Nancy Ward, Cleve Singleton and Barbara Walker, Dona Backs and Delbert Schroeder, and Jean Miller and Cecil Wagner embarked upon the tempestuous seas of matrimony. Rumor has it that several others are making plans for the summer holidays, and I've heard some rumors about another couple, but I'm not talking —yet!

Bro. Tate Roberts, pastor of the Division Street Baptist church, Springfield, Mo., has proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the hand of the Lord is upon him. His steadfast and unmovable stand for the truth and his ministry of always abounding in the work of the Lord has been honored and owned of God. That this is a true statement is proved by the results of the last two Sunday's services. Jan. 13, the attendance was 99 and four people were saved. Jan. 20, the attendance increased to 129 and one man rededicated his life and one family surrendered for the mission field. Bro. Frank Hooge, missionary to the Philippines, was the guest speaker for the evening service.

WE SHORE DID, AND IT WAS TOOTHsome VITTLING TOO

We finally had that duck dinner—two Missouri divines, Fred Donnellson and Noel Smith with Noel's Son, Charles and also Rev. Ted Hicks of Whitesboro, all enjoyed a real hour of fellowship with a stuffed duck in the middle of the table as the center of attention last Friday afternoon.

Dr. Donnellson was on his way for a week-end revival with Bro. Ted Hicks at Whitesboro, and Bro. Noel Smith was headed for Denton fill the pulpit for Bro. Vess who was in Detroit with Bro. Vick's church. These men bring something from the school and from lives filled to the brim with activity for the Lord. They are a tonic to any people.

—Bill Beall (in "Southside Baptist News" Denison, Texas).

Baptist Bible Tribune

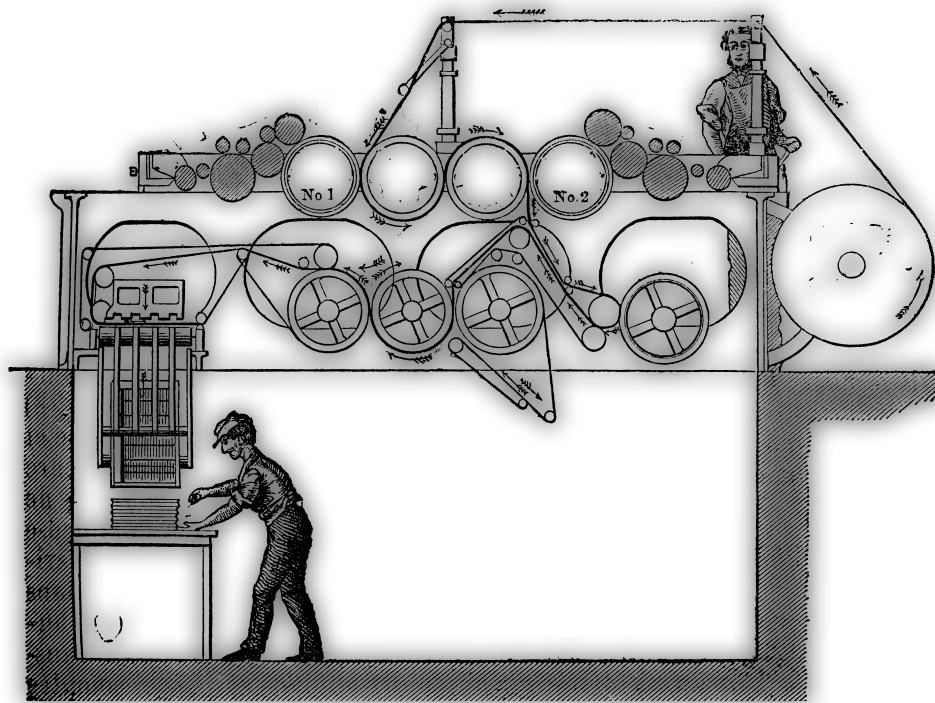
FOR BIBLE BELIEVING BAPTISTS

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Baptists have always been publishers

by Keith Bassham

I came to faith in Jesus Christ in my teens. I had little to no background in religion, and everything associated with serious Christianity and Baptists was new to me. At about the same time, I was just beginning to have an interest in journalism. I was on the school newspaper staff, and later in an editorial position (I confess to quite a lot of nerdy activity in high school), and now I could argue what seemed a whim at the time was actually God's providence. Given all that, you can imagine my disappointment when I learned that the branch of God's family I had embraced found virtue in the phrase, "nary a piece of literature!"

I was relieved to learn that slogan was just that, and most of the time it was a custom (to use Shakespeare's language) "more honour'd

in the breach than the observance." Baptists did read and write, I discovered, and they had been at it a long time. This article will reflect a small slice of the history of Baptists and their publishing. I warn you though, that it is a slice. If all I did in the next few pages was to merely recite the names of Baptist periodicals, both extant and those dead and long buried, I would not have enough space.

We all know that the invention of the movable type printing press made the Reformation possible, and Baptists benefited perhaps more than any other group in that era for reasons I will give in a moment.

Pre-Gutenberg reformers such as John Wycliffe in England and John Huss in Bohemia had both experienced good receptions to their ideas and preaching. But movements

like Wycliffe's or Huss's could not travel far because of the limitations of the spoken word. They were localized and easily suppressed by authorities. The establishments who opposed them had access to the monasteries and scriptoriums that were at the heart of the information industry in Europe before 1500.

However, with the printing and rapid distribution of Luther's *95 Theses*, the German New Testament, and books in European languages 100 years later, the Reformation spread easily throughout the general population. Peter Drucker, who calls this era the Third Information Revolution, says that an individual person working with others in a print shop could be responsible for as many as 2.5 million pages of text in a year's time, whereas a couple of generations before, an

individual monk would have been able to produce just a little over 1,000 pages. That is the definition of an information explosion.

Just as internet access, blogging, and social media levels the playing field for communicators today, the printing press was especially helpful for anti-establishment reformers — and that's a fairly apt name for Baptists in the English separatist tradition. Baptist ideas spread through the printed word would not be localized, and thus easily suppressed. As was true for countless anti-establishment and separatist Christians, when they wrote, their ideas became truly portable and possible to spread across national boundaries.

Of course, other social changes took place alongside the development of printing, and these changes also had an effect in the West so that knowledge moved from ecclesiastic scholars and royalty to the masses, and then this knowledge became set as it moved from orality to literacy.

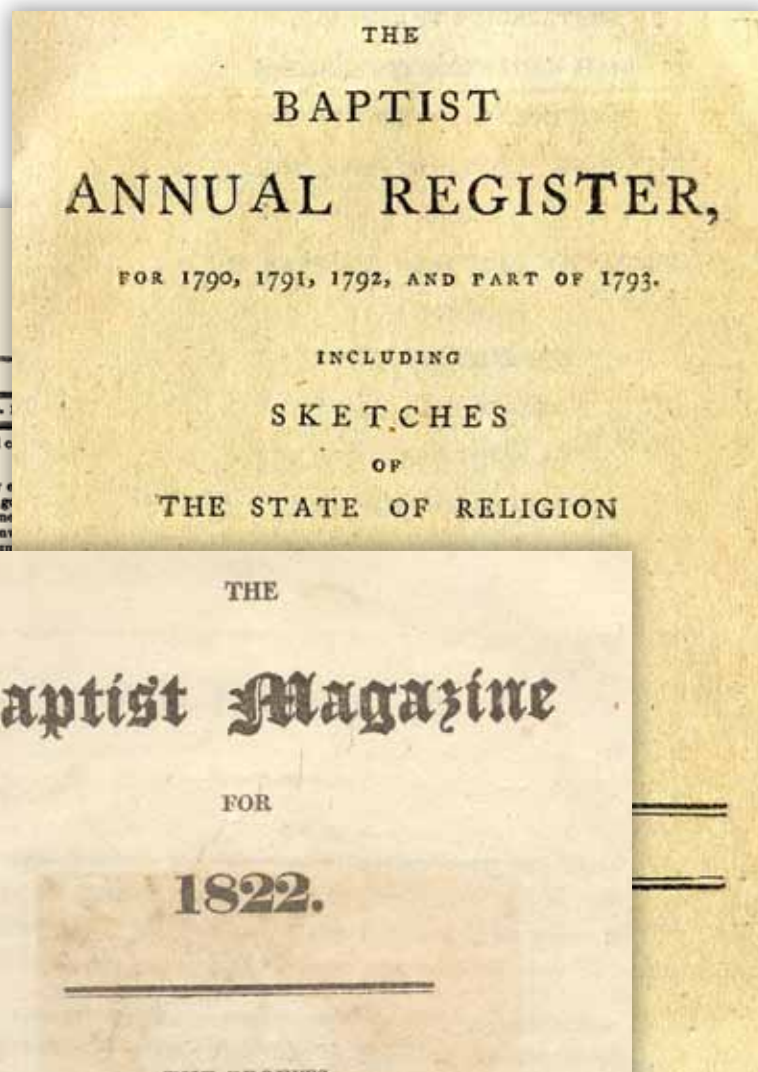
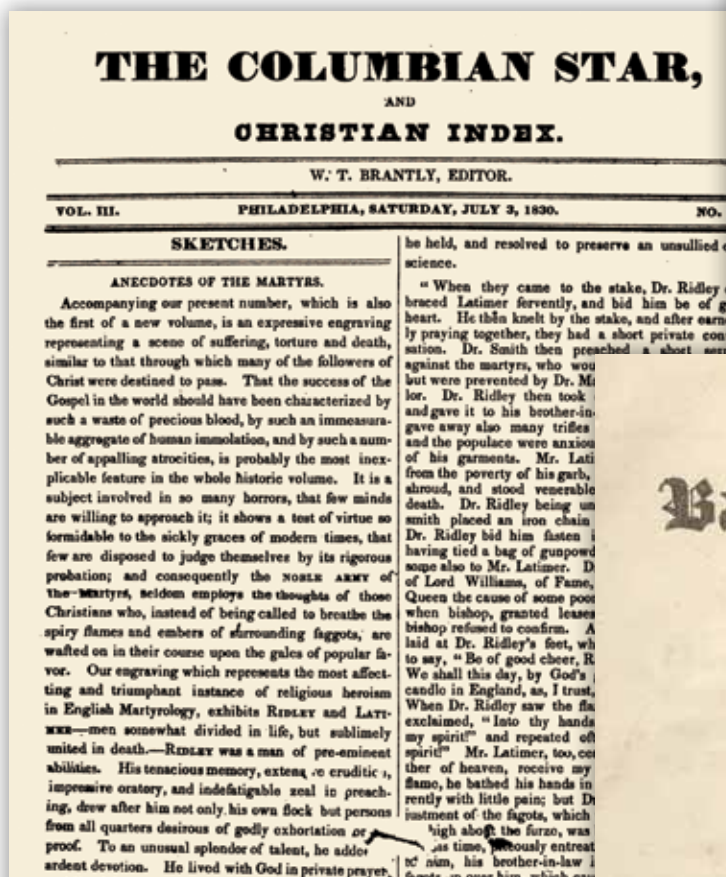
Baptist churches and associations began flourishing shortly after, and it was only natural they would communicate with one another and with the rest of the world. These communications give us a look into what was happening in those congregations.

John F. Kennedy is supposed to have

declared that magazines are “the interior dialogue of a society,” and I’m reasonably certain he coined that last phrase. The day-to-day and week-to-week contemporary exchange of information, even when filtered by writers and editors in Baptist periodicals, should and does yield valuable information for the historian, and in some cases it may give a better and more accurate picture than the official history books and position papers. This is surely true of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Aside from some short summaries in encyclopedias and a few romanticized book-length accounts of the founding of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the only genuine history of our Fellowship is contained in the pages of the *Tribune*. I have a friend or two who like to regale us with their memorable stories of events long past, but they forget I have access to the archives with the contemporary records. And when I compare their recalled versions with the actual printed stories from the day, I know that what I am really hearing from my friends is sometimes an adventure in postmodernism.

Papers of record have that “correcting” function. An example of an important paper for historical purposes would have to be something like *The Christian Index*. *The Index* claims to be the oldest continuously published religious newspaper in the United States, and I am not prepared to dispute that.

It was not the first however. A Presbyterian paper, *The Christian Secretary*, holds that position. Nor was it the first Baptist paper. In 1819, *The Christian Watchman* was founded in Boston, and *The Index*, or the paper that became *The Index*, began publication in 1822 in Washington, D.C. under the name *The Columbian Star*. Luther Rice began the paper to promote the missionary activities of Rice’s friends like Adoniram Judson and the new Columbia College, later named George Washington University. Known for a time as *The Columbian Star and Christian Index*, in 1831 the masthead shortened and it became *The Christian Index*. The paper moved first to Philadelphia and then to Washington, GA, when Jesse Mercer took over the publication



Omit the details, and the story of *The Index* could be the story of all Baptist newspapers

in 1833. The paper knew several homes in Georgia before taking up permanent residence in Atlanta, and ultimately becoming the official organ of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

From at least the time that Mercer became publisher the paper had financial problems. When he gave it to the Convention, he still had those troubles in mind when he wrote to readers, “... let me beseech you to hold fast to *The Index*. That such a publication is needed in the south is acknowledged by many, but too few feel the right sort of zeal in the cause.” In other words, send money! How often I have thought those thoughts myself!

And if a fine paper like *The Index* had its woes and lean times (sometimes the paper did not even publish during the Civil War, and the Georgia Convention sold it in 1861) think of the lesser-known and smaller papers. After the war, *The Index* took up some of these, absorbing papers in the region — Florida, Tennessee, Alabama — and the convention eventually bought it back in 1920.

Omit the details, and the story of *The Index* could be the story of all Baptist newspapers — starting, moving, starving, changing locations, owners, and names. And what names: Thomas Armitage’s history has a short list from the 19th century — *The Watchman*, *The Christian Secretary*, *The Latter Day Luminary*, *the Religious Herald*, *Zion’s Advocate*, many named simply “The Baptist,” or if associated with a state association, “The Tennessee Baptist,” *The Baptist*, *The Baptist Pioneer*, *The Baptist Advocate*, *The Baptist Witness*, *The Baptist Recorder*, *The Baptist Register*, *The Baptist Chronicle*, *The Baptist Examiner*, *The Baptist Times*, *The Baptist Review*, *The Baptist Quarterly*, *The Baptist Advance*, and more elaborate names, such as the *Christian Contributor*, *Watchman of the*

Prairies, and *the National Baptist*.

And a whole presentation could be devoted to the numerous publications among the German Baptists and Swedish Baptists — papers like *The Monthly Gospel Visitor*, *The Christian Family Companions*, *The Primitive Christian*, *The Pilgrim*, *The Progressive Christian*, and *The Gospel Preacher*. Some of these became official organs, while others were more family oriented and designed to help reinforce in the home the teachings from church.

Generally speaking, the Baptist periodicals’ content was very similar to those materials you might see in publications today — sermons, expositions of doctrines held in common with all evangelicalism, others setting forth Baptist distinctives, and on occasion, confessional items with and without explanation. Reports from associations, missions, statistics, opinion articles dealing with moral issues, sometimes mirroring the non-Christian press with a tone very nearly like those of the standard temperament and abolition newspapers. But as you know, the slavery issue was handled differently among Baptists in the north and south, and that is reflected in the newspaper content. An abolitionist stance, or an

emancipationist stance was nearly unthinkable in the deep South, and those attempting it even in border states would have trouble. Some brave souls paid dearly for their insistence on both a free press and an anti-slavery position.

And in nearly every instance, the proprietor and editor was a pastor or educator, had been one or the other, or was going to be after the assignment on the paper ended. These were luminaries like Mercer, Vedder, Wayland, Newton, and Hovey to name a few.

It is important we take note of that last point. The editors of Baptist periodicals tend to be preachers rather than professional journalists. One implication of that fact is that Baptist newspapers, magazines, and journals will tend toward being cause driven. But I’m getting ahead of myself a bit.

In the publication trade, a periodical like the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, or any of the denominational or convention magazines and newspapers, is considered an association periodical. With that designation, the official trade is in line with a typology advanced by Leonard Goss and Dan Aycock in their book *Inside Religious Publishing*. That typology comes from a grid with squares arranged two by two. Each square’s position is determined



— starting, moving, starving, changing locations, owners, and names.

by how much or how little the publication is cause driven, and to what extent the content is determined by the stakeholders or readers.

For instance, among Baptist papers, you might put something like the *Sword of the Lord*, the newspaper begun by John R. Rice in the first part of the 20th century, and currently edited by Shelton Smith, in the square holding the names of those publications which are both very independent and driven mostly by the cause of the owners or chief supporters. It carries no official support from any recognized Baptist body, and the owners and publisher seek no acknowledgement. It is a prime example of that type of Baptist Bill Brackney calls “the Come Outers,” in chapter seven of his recently published *Baptists in North America*.

The other three squares in the typology grid include publications driven primarily by the subscribers or target markets. These would be quarterlies or journals tied to fairly narrow specific interests — history, for instance. And then there are publications that advance the cause of or promote an organization. Still technically independent from denominations or conventions, their interests intersect with those organizations, but with few exceptions, Baptist publications, even those founded by individuals or churches, eventually become the public face, in print at least, of the constituencies making up a common membership.

Historically then, Baptist periodicals, unless they were tied to organizations at their founding, began life as independent and cause-driven organs. That helps explain why many of the founders and editors of those papers were people trained first for the pastorate. Both they and their publications were agenda oriented — either for cause, for an organization, or for a constituency.

This brings to mind something I read

in one of the bio articles on the website of the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives. The article is about John Mason Peck, early missionary to the West sent by Triennial Convention in 1816, and later by the Massachusetts Baptist Missionary Society. According to the article, Peck’s thinking on church planting was systematic, with what the article designates a “... slowly developed strategy included organization of Bible and Sunday school societies, systematic itineration, theological education, and journalism — in the order cited.”

The work of the ministry, the cause, comes first in that list, and journalism, the actual publication of information about that work, is last.

That also helps explain why Baptist publications are at the center of so much controversy. Deeply held beliefs become editors’ agenda, and as I have already intimated, Baptist publications often were read the way Internet blogs are read today, and I am not the first to make that observation.

This short foray into Baptist publishing has a few implications for those of us who produce the publications and for those who read them.

Though many Baptist publications are still agenda oriented, there is a greater dependence on journalism skills. The formation of the Baptist Press in 1946 was a real breakthrough, showing that we were not just about publishing sermons and statistics and devotionals. We can report news and help Baptists make sense of it. And because of the agenda, we can also find the news under the news, often catching things the secular media miss. My informal research indicates that most of us holding editorial positions, and I think this is the case in many denominational or fellowship administrative positions, were more likely trained in ministry

rather than journalism. That means as pastors we like to smooth things over, and as journalists we like to stir things up a bit.

That does not mean there are no standards, however. The Baptist Press and The Associated Baptist Press have the look and feel of real news bureaus. The writing and reporting is technically professional, though there is still that agenda thing going on. I don’t say that’s a bad thing, and a truly objective viewpoint may not even be possible. But that does bring up the next thing we have to make a decision about.

As Baptists, we have to work out a balance between objectivity and agenda, and we must tell the truth. Given that Baptists have historically been for freedom, and that includes freedom of the press, we have to go back to the typology grid and take care of the stakeholders. I make no bones about it, the *Tribune* is the magazine of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. It is not mine. It is not owned by this segment or another. It is a publication owned and published for the benefit of the Fellowship.

For my own part, I tell people that the *Tribune* has an agenda. We are friendly to other Christians and certainly to other Baptists, but the largest chunk of our function is related to promoting the interests of the constituents (pastors, missionaries, church members) associated with the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

That means what we do is not pure journalism. However, even when a statistic puts us and our ministries in a bad light, I feel obligated to publish the truth. If an audit shows that contributions are down, the audit story will reflect that. On the other hand, our ministry news stories are primarily going to be good news, and the doctrinal and devotional articles are going to reflect the thinking of the broad middle of our constituency.

Finally, print journalism may be dying. Magazines, and especially smaller circulations, are having a struggle, and we echo what Jesse Mercer wrote at the time he was turning *The Index* over to the Georgia Baptists, that “a publication is needed in the south is acknowledged by many, but too few feel the right sort of zeal in the cause.” I have that zeal, and I pray that many in our Fellowship continue to share it with me.



"LET'S HAVE A PAPER, AND LET'S CALL IT THE BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE"

(Adapted from an article written and published by Tom Harper in the January 2000 issue of the Tribune.)

The Baptist Bible Fellowship began with no written plan or formal structure. As evidenced by Noel Smith's quote at the Texas Hotel (his words form the title of this article), this was a spontaneous movement of Baptists ready to get to work now and iron out the details later. But few would have known much about the new Fellowship if not for Noel Smith and the *Baptist Bible Tribune*.

Smith's background was journalism and evangelism. He had worked with J. Frank Norris for several years, editing *The Fundamentalist*. Though he never graduated from high school,

he read voraciously and had a tremendous reservoir of general and scriptural knowledge. His understanding of human nature was unsurpassed.

Editor Smith's legendary pen set the tone and the terms of the debate in the early days, and the personality of the BBFI was largely cast in his image. This was possible, almost inevitable, because of the nature of the organization. It was small at first, and there was no Sunday school board, no common literature beyond the Bible, no state or county associations, no one overseeing anything.

The only entity with a common link to all the churches was the *Baptist Bible Tribune*.

The Fellowship congealed within a swirl of social change. Worldwide, Stalin was murdering millions of his citizens, the World Council of Churches had long ago exchanged the Savior for socialism, and the seeds of another war were being sown in the minds of North Korean peasants.

In America, the aftermath of WWII was further tempting the country into U.N. internationalism. Ecclesiasticism and liberalism, once the marks of mainstream

Baptist Bible Tribune

FOR BIBLE BELIEVING BAPTISTS

SPRINGFIELD, MISSOURI, FRIDAY, JUNE 23, 1950

NO. 1

VOL. 1

REASONS FOR BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

"That is Final" —
It Was

The following statement is self-explanatory—Editor:

It is commonly known among us that there has been for many months a widespread and deep-rooted restlessness among our people, both the ministers and the laity, because of the manner in which the affairs of the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship and the Bible Baptist Seminary have been handled.

We have felt that our voice in the conduct of these affairs has not been commensurate with the responsibilities which we have been asked to assume, and for the amount of money which we have contributed to the work of these institutions. We have sensed, and deeply sensed, the absence of the

\$100 FOR FIRST COPY OF THE T R I B U N E

Mr. Ben S. Peltz of the Ben S. Peltz Shoe and Luggage Co., Paris, Texas, paid what was probably the highest price ever paid for a copy of any newspaper. Mr. Peltz asked Rev. Lester Singleton, pastor of the Ramseur Baptist church, Paris, to telephone THE TRIBUNE and request that the first copy to roll from the press be mailed by air, special delivery, and that Mr. Peltz was mailing THE TRIBUNE a check for \$100 for it.

Mr. Peltz is a converted Jew and a member of Mr. Singleton's church.

Bulletin

One of the most beautiful pieces of property in Springfield has

"Is There Not A Cause?" [I Sam. 17:29]

SEPARATION FROM WFBMF AND THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP AND BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

THE REAL ISSUES INVOLVED

BY G. BEAUCHAMP VICK

Because so many of our good friends, pastors in our Fellowship, were not present when these matters were discussed by Dr. Norris and myself, from my intimate knowledge of developments, I shall try to calmly and fairly state the issues as I see them, so that each may judge for himself.

A little over two years ago, I was urged by Dr. Norris to consider accepting the presidency of the Bible Baptist Seminary. I had no desire to do so. I had held the position but a few months of continued service on the part of Dr. Norris and many other pastors in the Fellowship. I consented.

evitably be would want should be changes, I advance so cision accord "Then you through or nancial cern

NOEL SMITH

Ministers from 18 States At Winter Conference

denominations, were continuing to seduce Baptists and others. Socialism was in vogue, communists were in government, and Americans were becoming lazy and luxuriant.

Smith believed these issues were of great import to independent Baptists and drove to the core of them in the pages of the *Tribune*, all the while reporting the progress of churches, missionaries, pastors, BBC, and all the activities of the growing movement.

A typical issue, December 14, 1951, began with a missionary report from Japan, which included information about the Japanese government and religion. There was a warning about commercializing Christmas reprinted from the *Religious News Service*. A report on the Denton, TX, Fellowship meeting (the first national meeting) included a picture of all the missionaries present. F. S. Donnelson had a report, the first Baptist Bible College yearbook was offered for sale (\$2.50), and letters to the editor were all positive.

Besides "News of the Week" and "The Tribune Town Hall," the editor's series called "Nimrod, the Rebellious Panther" ran its second installment, and his editorial warned the "New Dealers" that judgment was coming.

Smith packed a lot of useful news into eight pages. And he was unflinchingly honest.

He was also wise and knew that without a common information and news source, the emerging Fellowship would fragment. The *Baptist Bible Tribune* kept the vision clear, reported genuine progress, and let everyone know that the BBFI was a going concern.

When the founding editor died in January 1974, the *Tribune* had been an 8-16 page weekly for all of its 1,130 issues. Assistant editor Dick Barnard ran the paper until November, when Wendell Zimmerman, pastor of Jacksonville Baptist Temple in Jacksonville, FL, was appointed editor. The operation was moved to Florida and some years later began publishing bi-weekly. Zimmerman edited from 1974 to 1983.

Then James O. Combs, a California pastor and evangelist, was asked to assume editorship. Mr. Combs focused his energy and creativity into the *Tribune* until 1995. Under his administration the *Tribune* was published every three weeks, then monthly beginning in 1991. In January of 1992 the current magazine format was adopted, and we now publish 11 issues a year (July-August are combined).

Mr. Combs retired from the *Tribune* in March 1995 after 12 years as editor, and Mike Randall succeeded him. In addition to a long and successful career pastoring in Missouri, Ohio, and Indiana, Randall served as a faculty

member at Baptist Bible College, and, from 1991-1998, as vice president. When Randall returned to BBC as president in 2002, the Fellowship appointed Assistant Editor Keith Bassham to the post of Executive Editor, where he serves today. Former editors Combs and Randall continue to be frequent contributors to the *Tribune*.

The Fellowship's world is different. This current issue is very different from the early eight-page weeklies, and we have planted our flag in the world of digital publishing, but the *Tribune* remains today what it has always been — the record of what the BBFI is accomplishing in its service for God. There is no other record of the overall movement, no other way to know of the vast work of starting churches here and abroad. Years from now we will know the work of the BBFI mainly through the pages of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*.

The focus has stayed the same: to report the work of Baptist Bible Fellowship in all its facets, and to encourage independent Baptists in the work of the Lord. We do this so you can know that you are not alone in this Fellowship work. You can pray intelligently for other servants of Christ in their struggles. And we can rejoice together in what God is accomplishing through us.

WENDELL ZIMMERMAN

JAMES COMBS

MIKE RANDALL



Noel Smith

FOUNDER OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

By Keith Bassham



The definitive biography for Noel Smith is contained in the now out-of-print book, *The Best of Noel Smith*, by Mrs. Norma Gillming. A shorter version of that biography is available online in the Classics section of the *Tribune* website and on the website hosted by Pastor Billy Hamm, www.noelsmith.org. For this article, I will be quoting extensively from Mrs. Gillming's invaluable work. As a close personal friend of Mr. Smith, and in her teacher's role at Baptist Bible College, she saw things up close.

In many ways, Smith was the prototype of the preacher turned editor I wrote of in another article in this *Tribune*, and his work in that role was central to the founding and early years of the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

Noel Smith was born in Greenvale, TN, in Wilson County on August 7, 1900. He loved his native state, and he said once about her "... and Tennessee, whose child I am fortunate enough to be, in whose warm earthly bosom I hope to sleep my last earthly sleep." Noel Smith died January 12, 1974, in Springfield, MO, but his wish for a Tennessee burial was fulfilled with his interment in Mount Olive Cemetery, Knoxville, TN.

When Noel was a child, his parents moved to Murfreesboro, TN, and he lived there until he was 17. His education was limited to what he

received in the Murfreesboro Public Schools, where he attended through the eighth grade.

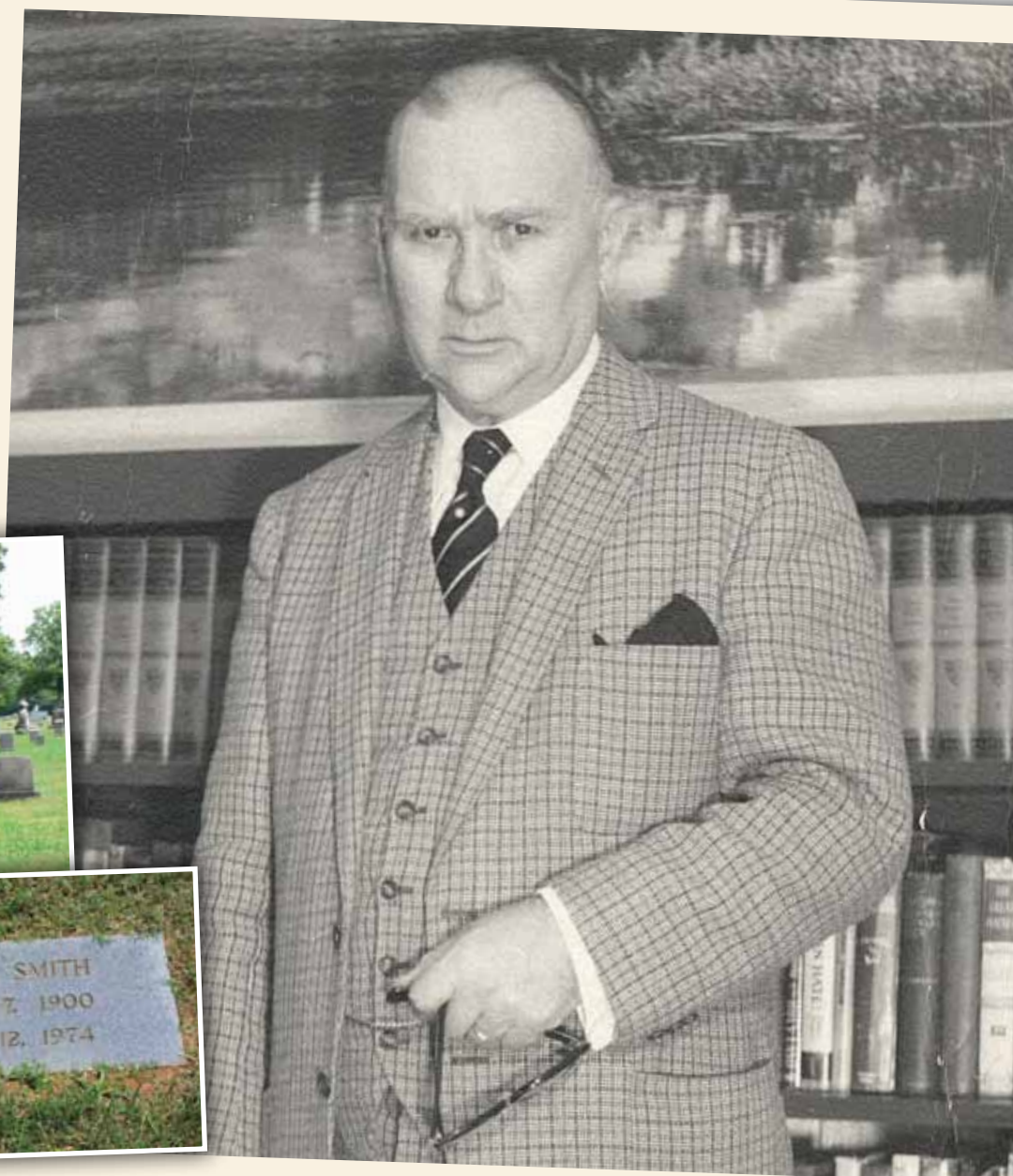
When he was ten, he went out to work, for times were extremely hard and Noel's parents were struggling to earn a living during those years. Noel says of his parents:

When I was a child my father and mother carried me to the Old Fall Creek Baptist church in Wilson County, Tennessee. The services I attended in that frame church,

nestled among the cedars alongside the gravel road, are fresh in my memory after these many years.

Smith became a Christian when he was 15 in the Sunday school of the First Presbyterian Church in Murfreesboro. He recounts that experience:

I was saved when I was 15 years old. I was saved on the steps which led from the



Sunday school assembly room up to the balcony in the First Presbyterian Church, Murfreesboro, Tenn., on a bright Sunday morning in March, between 10:30 and 11. I was saved when Miss Helene Hudson (now Mrs. T. M. Jones of Macon, Ga.,) who was my teacher in the public school, stopped me halfway up those steps and showed me in 10 minutes how to be saved. A half hour later the Rev. Dr. J. Addison Smith (one of the noblest men I ever knew), late father of Dr. Herbert Booth Smith of Los Angeles, warmly recommended to his Session that I be received into full membership of the church. In those few moments there on those steps something happened to me that had never happened before. The aches and groans and sorrows and woes of 35 years have rolled over my head, but in the midst of it all, the eternal flame which the blessed spirit of God lighted in my heart that spring morning has continued to burn. It has never gone out. It is burning today — burning with all the natural, spontaneous glow with which it burned in those glad days in the long ago. It is a wondrous glow — strange, mysterious, fascinating. Many a tear of gratitude and wonder has dropped in its light.

After the death of his mother, Smith left home and became a railway express agent, working out of Nashville. Those years between his leaving Murfreesboro and his establishing himself in Chattanooga were years of wandering and sin for Smith. He often speaks of those times with great regret. He says: "My mother died young, modest, retiring, and sweet. I put out on my own. The money was good. The years were bitter, and the bondage was great. How bitter the years and how great the bondage, none but God and I shall ever know."

He worked for the Southern Express Company on the Nashville-Chattanooga & St. Louis Railway (NC&STL) between Nashville and Atlanta. In addition to the Nashville-Atlanta run, he was a messenger on the Louisville & Nashville Railroad (LN) between St. Louis and Nashville, Bowling Green, KY, and Memphis, and Clarksville, TN, and Nashville. This 15-year association accounted for his lifelong love affair with trains.

In 1918 Smith was living in Chattanooga, TN, where he was "converted." By that expression



he does not mean that he was saved, but that his life was changed, his direction was totally different — that he would never be the same again. He eloquently explains what happened:

I was converted (not saved, but converted) in November, 1918. I was converted in Billy Sunday's tabernacle, in Chattanooga, near the post office, a few days before Mr. Sunday was 57 years old. I never raised my hand for prayer. I never spoke to anybody. Nobody spoke to me. I never went "forward." I never shed a tear. I had no "feeling" save a few tugs at my lonely heart by the strains of an old and beautiful hymn. After Mr. Sunday had finished his prayer, I told the Lord that if He would help me to find the shore, I would preach the Gospel as long as I lived. The thought of preaching had never before entered my mind. Nobody had ever mentioned it to me. I had never mentioned it to anybody.

The Lord helped me to find the shore. He brought me back to the hope and warmth and satisfaction I first knew on the steps, on that bright Sunday in March.

After his conversion, he began to study the Bible and to read widely. He put it this way: "We got our initial training from the works of I. M. Haldeman, James M. Gray, Reuben Archer Torrey, and C. I. Scofield. We then went way back to Charles Finney, and came on down through Henry Ward Beecher, Philip Brooks, Talmadge, Moody, and Sam Jones."

Soon he was holding meetings all over the South. Some of those revival meetings revolutionized whole communities. Often he

preached in a tent. He records: "I would go out and put up the tent myself, then go back to the room, change clothes, go back to the tent and preach — twice a day for four or five weeks."

While living in St. Louis, Smith constantly held noon shop and factory meetings and open-air meetings sponsored by the evangelistic department of the Metropolitan Church Federation. He also was very active in the work of the Sunshine Mission of St. Louis.

In the fall of 1930, Smith resigned his job with the railroad and was ordained to the ministry by Second Baptist Church of Clarksville, TN. Somewhere in his meetings, probably in Dixon, TN, he had met the girl who was to become his wife.

When he married Mattie Linda Stuart, it was during the depths of the depression. He had previously baptized the young lady in May of 1932 in Dixon, TN.

We were married on a cold February night, in those lean and hard depression years. A lawyer, hard up himself, lent us his Chevrolet coupe to drive 25 miles to get married. I managed to get up \$2 to give the preacher, which he seemed glad to get. I was holding meetings — at places where they could get nobody else. She was teaching school.

However, the new Mrs. Smith lost her teaching job because married women were not allowed to teach in those days. Then the family existed on only what offerings were given to the itinerant preacher.

But I was paid, mostly, with congratulations. I would get enough money to get

back home, pay the rent, and put in enough groceries to do her until I could come back again. We sold everything we had. I sold my library, cashed in all my insurance. She cashed in her insurance. We sold her watch. I sold my gold belt buckle. The last thing we sold was her fountain pen. It brought \$1.25, which with some chickenfeed in my pocket, was enough to buy a bus ticket to Waynesboro, Tennessee.

A short time after this final act, things began to improve for the young couple.

Smith's association with J. Frank Norris and his separatist Baptist group occurred as the result of Smith's differences with Louis D. Newton, president of the Southern Baptist Convention. Smith recounts:

Following the St. Louis convention, J. Frank Norris invited me to come to Fort Worth to make an address or two at one of his Fellowship meetings. At the time some of the most hard-working successful men in the country were members of that Fellowship.

I went. As a result of my addresses, I received a number of invitations from ministers from here and there. I was able to accept some of them.

I was in Vicksburg, Miss., where I had gone for two or three addresses. While there I received a telegram from Norris asking me to succeed B. F. Dearmore at the Bible Baptist Seminary.

I didn't want to go back to Fort Worth; I wanted to go back to Clarksville, Tennessee. But I asked myself whether I had a sufficient reason not to accept the Fort Worth work.

Right or wrong, I accepted that position at Fort Worth. Right or wrong I believed that God had opened that door for me. (Incidentally, I haven't changed my mind.)"

Smith went to Fort Worth in the winter of 1947, and he continued to teach in the seminary until May of 1947, when he resigned his position and went to Nashville. His stay in Nashville was rather short, for in July Norris persuaded Smith to return to Fort Worth as the editor of Norris's paper, *The Fundamentalist*. Smith served as the editor of the paper and as a teacher in the Fort Worth Seminary until the split came in the World Fundamental Baptist

Missionary Fellowship that formed the Baptist Bible Fellowship in May 1950.

The details of that controversy continue to be the subject of books and papers. In the overall scheme of things, the organizing of 100 or so churches and pastors in the middle of the 20th century for a shot at worldwide evangelism efforts should not have been more significant than any of hundreds of other disagreements among Baptists. For Smith and his spiritual descendants however, and I am one of those, the move was pivotal.

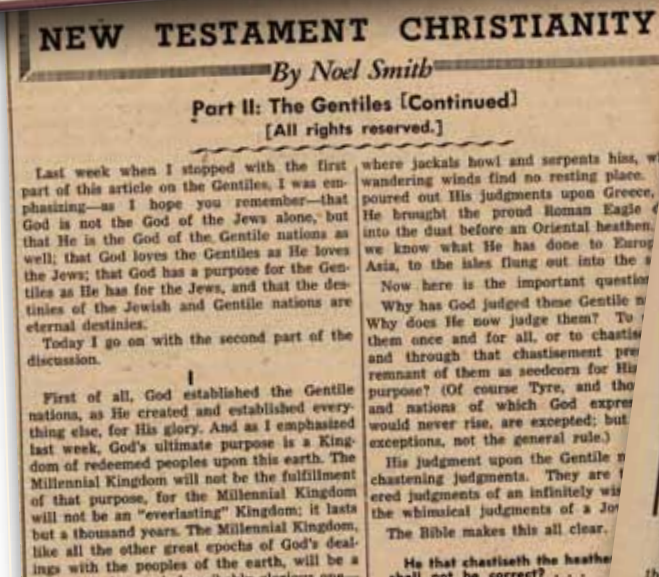
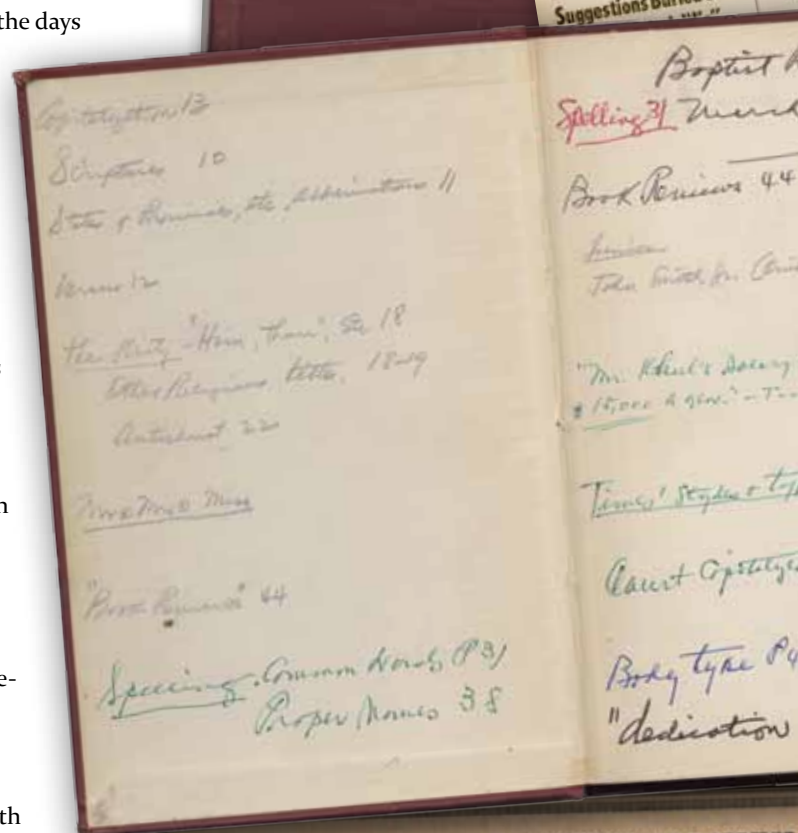
During the organizational meeting in May 1950, Smith rose to his feet and said, "Let's have a Fellowship paper, and let's call it the *Baptist Bible Tribune*." And about eight weeks later, the first *Tribune* came off the press.

Mrs. Gillming writes, "In the days and months following the split between the groups, Norris engaged in a type of pamphlet warfare that would do credit to John Milton in the 1640s."

The references to the problems in Fort Worth diminished with time. Even as early as July 7, 1950, Smith was assuring his readers that they would not be fed a steady diet of the internecine wars. He kept his promise, and although he criticized *The Fundamentalist* and J. Frank Norris on and off the next three years, the main part of the *Tribune* focused on the positive achievements of the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

As the years went on, Smith's references to Fort Worth virtually ceased. He became caught up in the phenomenal growth of Baptist Bible College, the ever-increasing number of new missionaries being sent out around the world, the growth of new churches all over America, and the rising dangers of materialism in the nation. These themes were expounded in his editorials, and the problems that he once had with Norris faded from his view.

His focus changed to issues of local church autonomy, and in 1956 and 1957



Mr. Smith's copy of the 1950 New York Times style book and (below) his notes on the inside cover. While the ledger Mr. Smith kept (below) for recording subscription numbers tracks the numerical growth of the Tribune, the headlines and content reflect the evolution of Smith's focus from defending the position of the Fellowship to rejoicing in what God was accomplishing through the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

he wrote articles criticizing the Southern Baptist Convention, in particular regarding court cases involving three churches in Tennessee and North Carolina who wanted to withdraw from the Convention.

Later in the decade, Smith's conserva-

tive political views on race and globalism were reflected in the *Tribune*. He was outspoken in his negative reporting of the efforts of Martin Luther King and racial integration in a way that we today regret. Later, as though he sensed his world was changing, he seldom wrote on this issue, and while I am content to allow Smith to be a child of his times, those times cast a shadow still felt today.

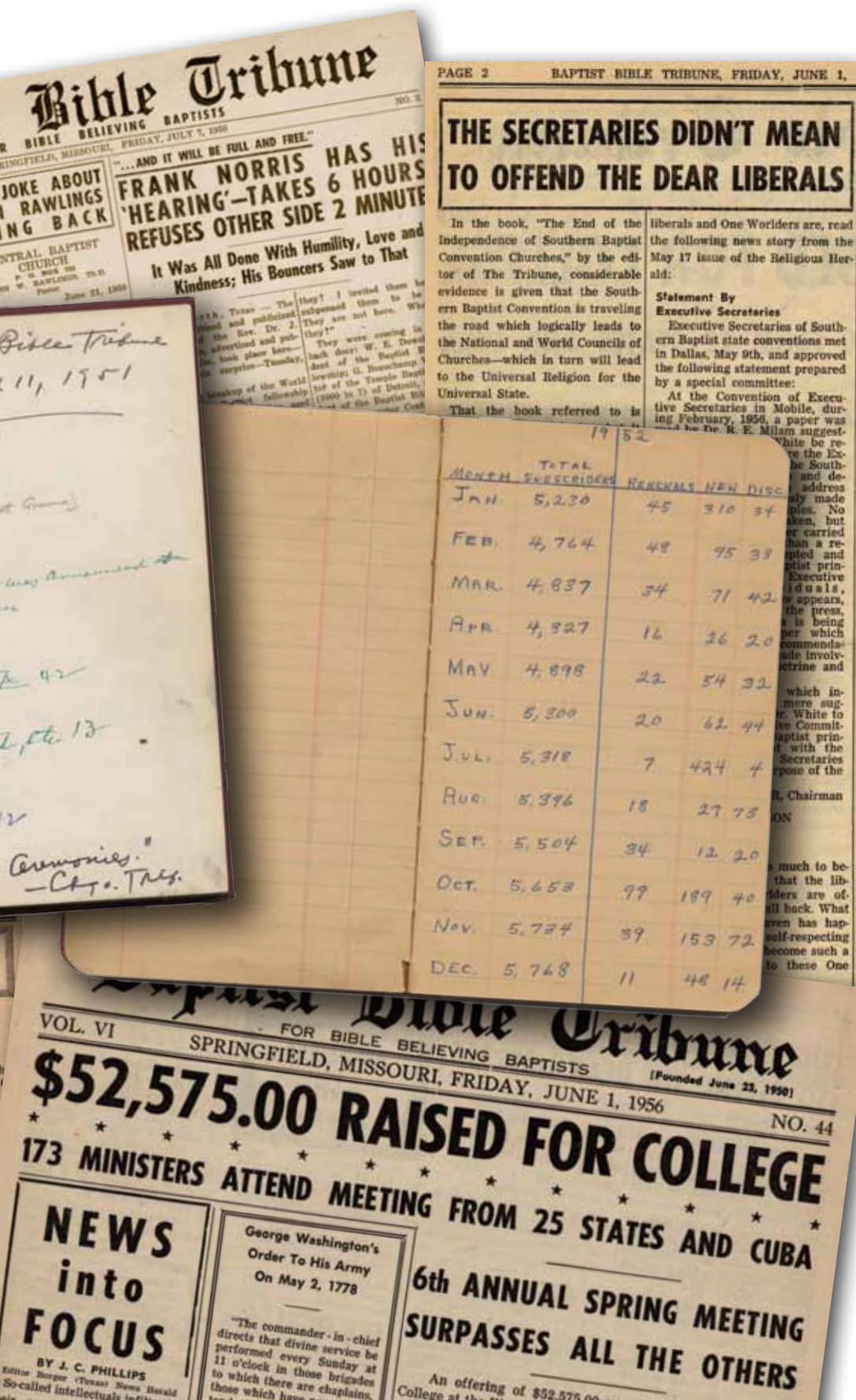
In the years ahead, these themes remained present in the *Tribune*: the growing apostasy in the church, the weakening strength in the nation, and the rising turmoil in the world. These stories, of course, did not comprise the total picture of the *Tribune*. Each issue contained news of new churches in the Baptist Bible Fellowship, reviews of profitable books, stork reports, pastoral changes, revival meetings, summer camps, missionary news, lists of contributors to the Fellowship, sermon outlines, reports from Baptist Bible College, and a host of other items.

Smith and the *Tribune* acquired prestige and a following both inside and outside the Fellowship. By 1974, in the year of his death, circulation was 27,000. Current circulation is about 29,000, just a couple thousand more today, and a short time before his death, he reminisced in an editorial.

And preaching the Gospel during the "Hoover" depression were not easy years. Mostly, I was paid with God-bless-you's instead of the shekels of the sanctuary. 'Brother Smith, this has been the greatest meeting we have ever had in this place. All these precious souls saved and added to the church. Brother Smith, I wish I had \$5,000 to give you as a token of appreciation for this great work.'

I would have settled for \$5.

And more than 20 years on the Tribune haven't been easy years. In addition to the work on the Tribune I have always carried a full teaching load. I do all my research, and most of what I write is pecked out on my personal typewriter. It is hard work. And the hours are long, day and night. And it's lonely work. Most all my work, from my childhood, has been lonely work. But I have no complaints. And my work has had, and is having, its rewards. I choose to do what I am doing. And because I know it is worthwhile.



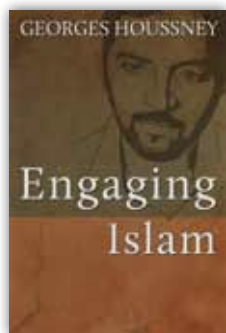
BOOK REVIEW

By Greg Baxter, pastor of Faith Journey Church, Lawton, OK

Engaging Islam

By Georges Houssney

Treeline Publishing (2010). 208 pages.



Engaging Islam is, in my view, a wonderful book by Georges Houssney providing an extensive knowledge of Islam, the Muslim world, and Arab culture as well as a practical firsthand experience on how to win Muslims and plant New Testament churches in Islamic

countries around the world. Georges couples his expertise in Muslim theology and culture with over 40 years of experience in winning Muslims to Christ. This book is a must-read for Christians who want to understand who Muslims are and how to share the Gospel with them.

Georges was born into a Christian home in Lebanon, and his family was attacked by Muslim militants and forced to flee their home after civil war broke out in 1958. He was nine years old when he began training with a militia to fight the Muslim opposition. Because he hated Muslims, after the war he joined a gang, got into

fight with them, and dreamed of avenging his family and his ancestors. At age 12 he was led to the Lord by a Lebanese seminary student in the Baptist mission center that opened in his neighborhood. God changed his heart toward Muslims and he has now been involved in Muslim evangelism for over four decades. Dwight and Jeanne Billingsley, former BBFI missionaries to Lebanon, disciplined and mentored Georges for several years before they were forced to leave the country as a result of the civil war in 1975. The Billingleys are now in Detroit, MI, working to evangelize the largest Muslim population in America.

The book has 208 pages divided into two sections of eight and seven chapters respectively. The first section describes the theology and practices of Muslims and how they practice their faith. Chapter two, “Who Muslims Are, and Who They Are Not” was very helpful. Houssney declares that most Christians have no meaningful contact with Muslims and proceeds to describe the “top ten misconceptions about Muslims” he encountered. They are: a) Islam is a monotheistic religion, b) All Muslims are Arabs, c) All Arabs are Muslims, d) All people in Arab countries are Arabs, e) Muslims are descendants of Abraham through Ishmael, f) Muslims are impossible to

reach, g) When Muslims become Christians they always face persecution, h) Muslims hate America, i) Muslims have a negative view of Christianity, and j) We need to be secretive about our work in the Muslim world (pages 23-33).

The second half of the book explains in detail how to witness to a Muslim and achieve results. The method is simple, love Muslims the way Jesus loved them. When meeting a Muslim (Chapter 9) Georges offers these tips: remember that the battle is in the heart, offer hospitality and friendship, use the Bible, tell the gospel story, deal with one person at a time to avoid peer pressure of groups, do not argue, give out literature, pray, work as a team, and use home study groups until the person is ready to attend your church (pages 117-129). Another very important principle to remember is to take a genuine interest in your Muslim friends and ask them personal questions (Chapter 10). Georges also provides practical principles on how to share the love of Christ, and the book ends with the challenge to open our eyes and see the opportunities to reach Muslims for Christ (Chapter 15). For more information, see the author’s website, www.engagingislam.org.

Greg Baxter recently received the Doctor of Ministry degree from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, VA.

Muslims in the United States according to the Pew Research Center

A 63% majority of Muslim Americans are first-generation immigrants to the U.S., with 45% having arrived in the U.S. since 1990. More than a third of Muslim Americans (37%) were born in the U.S., including 15% who had at least one immigrant parent. Despite the sizable percentage of immigrants, 81% of Muslim Americans are citizens of the U.S., including 70% of those born outside the U.S. This is a much higher rate of citizenship among foreign-born Muslims than among the broader immigrant population in the U.S.; 47% of all foreign-born are citizens.

First-generation Muslim Americans come from a wide range of countries around the world. About four-in-ten (41%) are immigrants from the Middle East or North Africa, while about a quarter (26%) come from South Asian nations including Pakistan (14%), Bangladesh (5%), and India (3%). Others came to the U.S. from sub-Saharan Africa

(11%), various countries in Europe (7%), Iran (5%), or other countries (9%).

Among the roughly one-in-five Muslim Americans whose parents also were born in the U.S., 59% are African Americans, including a sizable majority who have converted to Islam (69%). Overall, 13% of U.S. Muslims are African Americans whose parents were born in the United States.

Many Muslim Americans are highly religious: 69% say that religion is very important in their lives, and about half (47%) report at least weekly attendance at a mosque for prayer. Similarly, about half (48%) say they make all five salah prayers daily, and another 18% report making at least some salah daily.

By these measures, Muslims in the U.S. are about as religious as Christians in the United States: 70% of Christians say that religion is very important in their lives

and 45% attend services at least weekly according to recent surveys by the Pew Research Center for the People & the Press.

Overwhelming numbers of Muslim Americans believe in Allah (96%), the Prophet Muhammad (96%) and the Day of Judgment (92%). Yet the survey finds that most reject a dogmatic approach to religion. Most Muslim Americans (57%) say there is more than one true way to interpret the teachings of Islam; far fewer (37%) say that there is only one true interpretation of Islam. Similarly, 56% of Muslim Americans say that many different religions can lead to eternal life; just 35% say that Islam is the one true faith that leads to eternal life.

In this respect, Muslim Americans differ from many of their counterparts in the Muslim world and are similar to U.S. Christians.



URBAN CURRENT

No barrier

My run takes me through the Dragons hood. I passed a van parked at the curb, side door open. Driver seat, passenger seat, middle seats all occupied. Hats cocked, necks and arms well tattooed. One was busily texting. Two guys on the porch of the building in front of which the van was parked complete the scene. These are not kids. They are in their late 20s and early 30s. These are hardened gang members.

Twenty steps past, the Holy Spirit said, “Go back and tell them Jesus is real.” Approaching the open van door, the big guy whose huge arm was dark with intricate tattoos greeted me, “Hello officer.” I replied, “No, I ain’t ...” and left it hanging. “Hi, my name’s Charles.” “What up, Charles?” “The Holy Spirit (‘Oh, expletive,’ says the big guy) sent me back here to tell you that Jesus loves you. He died on the cross to pay for our sins and in a messed up world, it’s good to know there is power that can change us from the inside out.” The guys seemed to relax as I told them to stay safe and have a great day. Maybe they relaxed because they realized I was about to leave.

As I continued my run, my thoughts flowed like this: Jesus lives in me. Jesus wanted these guys to know that He was near, available. He was just that close, sidewalk to curb. But they never would have known if I didn’t stop and bear witness to His presence, purpose, and power. Jesus really, really wanted them to know that He was right there. Jesus didn’t want any barrier between them and Him, between them and their knowledge that He was right there.

I was the barrier.

Jesus is in me. If I don’t bear witness to His presence and power, people won’t know He’s present, accessible, and available. This is the divine plan. Jesus can be right there in some-

one’s office, someone’s home, or on the bus in the seat next to the person who needs Him. These people will never know Jesus was that close if we are not Holy Spirit powered witnesses. Christ does not want any barrier between Him and the people that need Him.

Oh, what a horrible thought that I, predestined, called, justified by the blood of Jesus, would be the barrier instead of the witness. How often have I allowed my self-consciousness, my fear, my ego, my schedule to cause me to become the very opposite of what God saved me for? He calls us to be conduits, channels, connectors, ambassadors, heralds, and Good News proclaimers. His intention is that we live and bear witness in such a way that people realize personally and powerfully the nearness of God the Savior, Jesus the deliverer.

The whole miracle and mystery of the incarnation was wrapped up in the title “Emmanuel, God with us.” The work of redemption, as described by Paul, claims believers are those who “sometimes were far off and are now made near by the blood of Christ.” As well, Paul revels in glorification, saying to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.

Track the words witness and witnesses through the book of Acts. You will see that over and over it references people who knew Jesus was alive because they had seen him. They had personal knowledge that Jesus of Nazareth was the resurrected Christ. Witnesses are not people who have mastered apologetics, gotten their doctorate in theology, and have a certificate from the latest witnessing course. In the New Testament witnesses are people who tell the story they know through personal experience.

God did not unleash a tsunami of evangelical information on the world. He unleashed a

band of people who knew Jesus was real and were ready to tell their personal stories anywhere and everywhere.

Jesus’ intention was to have no barriers between Him and sinners. No barrier of culture. No barrier of language. No barrier of geography, danger, religion. No government or personality or prejudice is ever to be a barrier between Jesus and sinners. No building, no style, no political system, no political ideology, no man-made traditions. Nothing is to come between Jesus in a believer and the sinners around that believer.

What did the first-century Roman Empire experience? “The guys that have turned the world upside down have come here” (Acts 17:6 paraphrased). Why are we falling behind in evangelizing America and the world? Because of the lack of gospel information? I think that’s a difficult case to make. How about a lack of personal spirit-controlled witnesses? Not the lack of gospel information, but the lack of personal gospel power; the very presence of a life-giving, life-transforming Deliverer. While we thank God for all the ways the gospel is disseminated, personal witness is the New Testament plan.

Dragons need to know. Jesus comes to them. To seek. To save. Jesus comes in me.

by Charles Lyons, Pastor
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BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

BBC an extension of the Greatest Generation

by Ron Sears | Interim President | Baptist Bible College



The founders of the Baptist Bible Fellowship were part of Tom Brokaw's "Greatest Generation." Their experience revealed to them that the only way to change the world was with the gospel — Jesus died for man's sin, He was buried, three days later He rose from the dead, and He is not willing for any to perish. To help them reach their world, they developed a college where students would enter to learn and go forth to serve. Since its inception, BBC has made this mantra its goal in every aspect of the educational experience.

The world may have changed since our beginning, but our goal continues to be for our students to be sent from here into the world to change it with the Gospel of Jesus. As the student leaves to serve the Savior, we can know that the mortar holding the alumni together continues to be a passion for spreading the gospel where God has called them to serve. The nurse introduces the patient to the Healer and the musician finds the sympathetic chord of God's salvation arranged in the notes. The chaplain points the soldier to the Great Captain of their soul while the teacher reveals the God of the universe as the ultimate correct answer. The youth minister moves the questioning teen to an assurance that the Savior is the way and the counselor applies the balm of God's Word to the hurting. The pastor builds upon the Sure Foundation and the missionary teaches that the unknown god is the God of the universe.

We at BBC are continuing to walk in the footsteps of our founders. We are placing an emphasis on the reality that a man does not profit by gaining the whole world while losing his soul. Every course continues to focus on the need of humanity for a relationship with the Savior. Our alumni are prepared to change their world, not with the works of man but with the message of God's salvation. We are remaining faithful in training students to learn God's truth and follow His teaching. Then we are sending them out to serve God and change the world before them.

We are continuing to walk with the same purpose and passion of the previous generation. We still face the same accuser and enemy of God. Yet, churches are being planted, missionaries are sharing the news of salvation with those who have never heard the name of Jesus, and the world is different because of those who have gone from here into the world. Our prayer is that you will continue to walk with us as we train those who enter so they will go forth and serve by sharing the good news that Jesus saves.

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE

Gotta love your friends

by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College



I know February is the love month. I certainly love my wife, Kim, and we have had a blast serving the Lord and raising boys together for 21 years. Just so you know!

But other kinds of loving relationships are God's gifts to us also; certainly high among them is the gift of a loving friend. I'm not talking about Facebook friends either, as cool as that may be. I mean David-Jonathan kind of friends. I am so glad that the Boston campus is where those kinds of friendships are born and grow. If we are really equipping young people for leadership in our churches, one of the most valuable tools we must give them is the gift of friendships. Everybody needs that kind of love. It's the biblical "cord of three strands" thing in flesh and blood.

Last night my oldest son hung out with some of the college guys. Dave will be a freshman in Boston this fall, but has a head start on some college friends for some pretty obvious reasons. When I texted him to find out who he was with, I was more than a little happy to get back, "Alex, Chet, and Chris." All three of those guys are former or current Boston students, all three really love God as best I can tell, and all three are already faithfully serving in youth ministries — investing in other young people. That's the kind of friends all parents want their teenagers to find.

Surely one of the greatest strengths any ministry college can have is a "friendship fabric." I know (since this is high season on recruiting) that prospective students and their parents ask all kinds of questions as they move toward a decision on where to go to college. I suggest a question to put high on the list is, "Who will my child's friends be?" That may well trump a question about your child's major, tuition, and the city where the college is? (Though I like all our answers to those questions, too.)

I talked to a couple of recent Boston grads last week. One of their college buddies had experienced a tragedy halfway across the country. They were trying to figure out how to be there for their friend. That's what happens when you are a part of a college where friendships based on common love for Christ and His work are the thread and weave of everyday life. I watch it happening every day here — friends praying with each other, serving in ministries together, sometimes even getting in each other's faces when one or the other needs a little loving exhortation.

I know a lot of you who visited Boston last fall really liked our city, but you absolutely loved our students. You got a taste of the kind of young people God is growing here. It's a lot of fun to watch the Lord put this thing together. BFFs — Boston Friends Forever.

Sweetwater church celebrates 80th anniversary

Sweetwater, TX

Broadway Baptist Church of Sweetwater, TX, held services December 10 and 11 to celebrate the congregation's 80th anniversary. In the Sunday morning celebration, each guest was presented an 80th anniversary watch, and those who had been members for 50 years or more were recognized with a commemorative gift. The special day concluded Sunday evening with a message from James Baker who challenged the church to remember its past, work in the present, and be excited about the future.

On hand for the event where a number of special guests, including former staff members Maurice Johnson, Joe Johnson, Evangelist Rickie Moore, and former Broadway Baptist pastors Lyndel Hix and Mike Haley.

The church began December 10, 1931, in an old mule barn with 11 charter members, and today the church has the largest Sunday school in Sweetwater. Over the 80-year history the church has had 12 pastors including A.L. Patterson (20 years), Raymond Dunn (18 years), Max Smiley (12 years), Mike Haley (5 years), Lyndel Hix (10 years), and David Chittenden (3 years). Chris Stephens has been pastor from 2008 to present. Many missionaries, pastors, pastor's wives, teachers, and musicians have been called by God through the ministry of this church.



Pastor and Mrs. Ervin Lehrman, Pastor and Mrs. Lyndel Hix, Pastor and Mrs. Chris Stephens, and Pastor and Mrs. Mike Haley

Pastor Stephens says, "I stand in awe of what God has done and in anticipation of what He is going to do in and through Broadway Baptist in the years ahead."

Christmas Dinner Theater in Pittsburgh

Finleyville, PA

By John Arnold, Crossroads Ministries/Library Baptist Church

This year's edition of our Christmas Dinner Theater was "Would it still be Christmas," and we held it in mid-December. We blended our version of The Living Christmas Tree and "Would it Still be Christmas" with a Pittsburgh, PA, tradition: the annual "Light Up Night." Each year we ask our congregation to turn in names of people they will be inviting to be their guests so we can pray with them over the acceptance of their invitations. God does amazing things as people exercise faith. This year over 1,100 came for dinner through the course of the four-night presentation.

For several months our people worked, putting the parts together to present Christ to their friends, neighbors, co-workers, and acquaintances. Our goal is to be able to provide an atmosphere to continue the conversation, to give people time to enjoy the warmth of our congregation, and to expose them to a gospel presentation. The atmosphere in our decorated-for-Christmas gym is festive as people enjoy a catered meal. They then come into the auditorium for the program.

One evening I was in the gym greeting people, and one of our new families introduced me to their friend, a co-worker, and said, "We

have 19 in our group." Sandy and Ron brought 72 of their neighbors on Saturday evening. Friday evening a group of about 50 came from the classic car community, and several of them filled out response cards. Building these relationships has taken years...

going to their cruises and other functions. At the end of the service I recognized the group by asking them to stand, and our people applauded. I said, "There is a lot of horsepower represented in this group."

One lady spoke to me after a gospel presentation and said, "I prayed that prayer with you. Can I have a copy of that prayer?" I told her I would put something together for her.

There are always surprise blessings. As I was walking around greeting people in the gym, there they were: Frank and Betty, for whom I have been praying 12 years asking God to give me an opportunity to present the gospel. They have been invited to the Dinner Theater for a long time but always declined. God answered my prayer ... I'm thrilled.



I find it ironic that the first time Rhonda attempted to attend one of our Christmas programs, before we had a tickets system, she was turned away for lack of space. Rhonda has now directed the Christmas outreach for the last 12 years.

A highlight was our Tuesday morning staff meeting going over the response cards, passing them around the table, and having our staff members fill in the details behind the names. This largest outreach of the year has afforded a great opportunity of CPR — Cultivating, Planting and Reaping.

Prayer, an atmosphere of love, and communication of the Word always assures spiritual impact. Only God can do these things.

Ennis & Becky Pepper | **South Africa**

David, the brother of one of our ladies, was recently diagnosed with liver cancer — very serious stuff. He did not live in our area but I had met him and developed a relationship with David through various functions involving his sister. David did not have a testimony of salvation when I first met him. Once he was diagnosed with cancer, his sister encouraged him to find someone in his area who would talk to him about salvation, and the report I received was that he got saved. I visited with David on the phone and asked if he would allow me to talk with him further about spiritual things. He agreed and I travelled to his home where we talked through the Scriptures for a few hours. I left feeling confident he understood salvation and was on his way to heaven. That is the good news! Sadly, he passed away a few short days later but thankfully he will spend eternity with the Lord. Even just one soul makes the effort worthwhile!

Jon & Natalie Perry | **Australia**

Have you ever had one of those moments where you were amazed at how God uses people to do His will? We just had one of those moments. We were wrapping up a Missions Celebration that was coming to a close. After preaching the Sunday morning message the pastor and a lady from the church approached me about her Faith Promise commitment. She told me she and her husband were not planning to fill out the faith promise card but God convicted them to give at least something. After some prayer and consideration for the work of missions, they decided to use the money she used to buy cigarettes to give to faith promise. She was a smoker for over 20 years and had recently given up smoking with some accountability from her husband, the pastor, and the power of the Holy Spirit. She said, "I want to continue to not smoke but now I know if I do smoke it will not only hurt me but also will hurt the missionaries that this church supports." Cigarettes exchanged for missions — praise God for the grace to change and use people like this lady to help us reach Australians.

Ricky & Jaime Owens | **Wales**

I recently preached in our Harvest service about how we reap in a different season than we sow. This truth has become so clear to me in the last couple of months. Back in July 2009, I requested prayer for Mike and Anne's salvation. This couple's children began attending our church through the bus ministry. Their son, Kyle, gave his life to Christ at summer camp. Mike and Anne have visited the church occasionally during the last two years. Recently I received a phone call from Mike and he wanted to meet with me the next day to discuss a topic that was mentioned in one of my sermons. At that meeting, Mike asked me how he could have a new life in Christ. I am very pleased to report that Mike trusted Christ as his personal Lord and Savior! He has been more faithful in coming to church and has not yet missed one of our weekly discipleship meetings since becoming a Christian. Please pray for Mike's growth in Christ and for Anne who is still unsaved.

Roy & Anna Hendrickson | **England**

Since October, three people have come to know Christ. One lady in her 60s had attended church since infancy but professed Jesus as her Savior during one of our invitations. She later remarked during a testimony time what a difference her decision had made in her life. One young mother, kneeling in her kitchen, asked Jesus to save her. Six-year-old Callum was saved in his home after attending ABC for nearly a year. He commented, "So that's what those songs we sing really mean!" Different people, different ages, different locations, but they all came to know the same Savior. We thank God for each decision made.

Lavon & Carolyn Waters | **Spain**

The Lord blessed as we celebrated our 15th anniversary as an organized church. We had services both on Saturday and Sunday and had three first-time visitors on Saturday night. One of these was a former neighbor of ours who lived in the apartment below us. She was a seamstress and did some sewing for Carolyn. Carolyn witnessed to her extensively and invited her to church numerous times. Finally, after 10 years, she decided to come to church. Immediately after arriving, she made sure we knew that just because she had come to visit our church, it didn't mean she was going to change her religion! We assured her we were just glad she had visited. Please pray she will come back for future services and come to know Christ as her Savior.

Lionel & Carol Martin | **Portugal**

We have been trying different ways to develop relationships with new people and get more exposure in the community. We decided to try adult English classes. We publicized it and had a very positive response. Carol teaches two different classes, once a week, with five students on Wednesday and seven students on Friday.

One of the students turned out to be our neighbor. We lived across the street from her five years before she would even wave back to us. Slowly, we have been breaking down the wall but we have seen a new acceptance through this class. Also, one of our students is dating the brother of a teen girl that used to come to church. As a matter of fact, the sister was saved and baptized but hasn't been to church in years. We are anxious to see how God is going to use this ministry to bring glory and honor to Himself.

Scott & Carrie Merritt | **Navajo Indians**

Recently the Ch'ihootso Baptist Church held its annual Friend Day service. This is a day we use as an opportunity to invite friends and family members that do not attend our church. Our folks worked hard in preparing a big turkey dinner as well as gift bags to present to our visitors. It turned out to be a great day. We had a full house with over 20 visitors. Our teen class was full to the brim with almost 20 young people attending Sunday school. As I walked around checking on all the classes, it was awesome to hear Ralph and Emerson, two of our men, as they shared their personal testimonies and presented the gospel of Christ so clear and plain in their classes.

Billingsleys in Detroit to reach Arabic speakers

Detroit, MI

Dwight and Jeanne Billingsley, after a 27-year ministry in St. Louis, MO, moved to the Detroit area in June 2010. Involved in ministries to Arabic-speaking people since their first mission in Lebanon decades ago, they believed they should establish a ministry center in the Detroit area.

The Billingsleys were helped primarily by Detroit area pastors Ken Burdett and Herb Gilbert and South Carolina pastor Bill Monroe to purchase the building to be their ministry center. That building, a former cabinet shop, is now functioning as their offices, apartment, and TV studio for making Arabic telecasts. This fall, they hope to open an Arabic language school in the building for teaching Arabic to Christians who want to work among the Arabic-speaking communities in North America and in the Middle East. Billingsley says a very successful curriculum has been secured from the Middle East designed to teach missionaries Arabic and the language skills they need to reach Arabic speakers.

He also plans to establish a Baptist church in the Dearborn area. Dwight says, "The new television series, 'The All-American Muslims,' has focused the nation's attention on Dearborn, MI, and the Muslims that make up the majority of its population. We will be using a building on the same street as the large mosque where the characters in the TV series go to pray."

The Arabic church plant in Michigan will be the third for the Billingsleys. The first was in Beirut, Lebanon, The Sioufi Baptist Church, during their time as missionaries of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Though it dissolved during the 15-year Lebanese civil war, it produced several preachers who are now pastors of Arabic-speaking churches. The second church was the Arabic Baptist Church of St. Louis, MO, which is now indigenous. The new church will be in



the Dearborn Heights area of Detroit with an estimated Arabic population of nearly 500,000 persons.

Billingsley said he is amazed how God has opened doors of opportunity for winning Arabic speakers to the Lord. He believes that Arabs can be won to the Lord and that churches can be established. The Billingsleys are currently seeking monthly support from churches across America who want to reach Arabs for Christ. Dwight and Jeanne are available for mission conferences and Sunday services. Because the Arabic church services will be on Friday evenings, it affords them the opportunity to be in churches on Wednesdays and on weekends. Support for this new ministry is being handled by the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, PO Box 191, Springfield, MO 65801-0191. Gifts should be designated "Billing-

support from churches across America who want to reach Arabs for Christ. Dwight and Jeanne are available for mission conferences and Sunday services. Because the Arabic church services will be on Friday evenings, it affords them the opportunity to be in churches on Wednesdays and on weekends. Support for this new ministry is being handled by the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, PO Box 191, Springfield, MO 65801-0191. Gifts should be designated "Billing-

Arnold & Leslie Belasco | Spain

Conversations in our Spanish class can range from bad drivers in Spain and Italy to "Is there life after death?" The professor asked for our thoughts on the latter and began at the opposite end of the table. He knows we have a definite answer. When the question came to me, there was plenty of time to speak (in Spanish) for the Lord on this topic. I explained first that this is the single reason our family moved from America to Spain. From that point forward, I used the best Spanish I could muster to give the best news ever. What a joy! At one point I was interrupted with the question, "Can a person get to heaven from hell?" Leslie and I were like kids in front of the Christmas tree. Truth was on the table that day!

Doug & Donna Stamper | Kenya

This past fall, we ordained Patrick Murimi, the assistant pastor of Bible Baptist Church of Karaba. We had the questioning time, a good challenge, and then gathered around Patrick to lay the hand of fellowship on him. We prayed for God's blessings upon his life, family, and ministry. After the prayer, I had the honor of introducing to the church for the very first time Reverend Patrick Murimi. It was so rewarding to watch him as he stepped to the pulpit, bowed his head for a moment of silent praise, then he began to lead the church in a praise chorus thanking the Lord for His bountiful blessings. I only know a few words of this Kikuyu chorus, but I must attest to the presence of the Lord in that place. Pray for Patrick and Margaret as they continue to serve God.

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President Obama and same-sex marriage: the dance continues

By R. Albert Mohler Jr.

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Some predictions are rather safe to make. 2012 is almost certain to be a determinative year on the issue of same-sex marriage. Multiple courts appear poised to strike down the Defense of Marriage Act [DOMA] and, even more urgently, the appeal on California's Proposition 8 at the Ninth Circuit U. S. Court of Appeals will set up a certain appeal to the U. S. Supreme Court. Given the facts of this case and the significance of the nation's most populous state, the Supreme Court is almost certain to take the case. This sets the stage for the courts to make some determinative statement on same-sex marriage within the next several months — a decision that will go a long way toward setting the direction of the larger culture.

At the same time, the same-sex marriage issue will play a part in the 2012 presidential campaign. The reason for this is quite simple. The issue of same-sex marriage is about far more than marriage as a legal institution and about more than sexuality and personal autonomy. It is the great inescapable issue, and we will know in fairly short order what all the candidates believe about the issue.

Then again, maybe not.

President Barack Obama has done far more to advance the cause of gay rights than any previous president. His executive orders and administrative policies have granted benefits to the domestic partners of federal employees, ordered the Department of Justice not to defend the Defense of Marriage Act in the courts, and ordered the Department of State to make the rights of homosexuals a major priority and principle of American foreign policy. Beyond all that, the President led the effort to repeal the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy, leading to the full integration of active homosexuals within the U. S. armed services.

But, what about the question of same-sex marriage? The president has explained that his views on the subject are "evolving." Just a few weeks ago, the president told George Stephanopoulos of ABC News that he is "still working on" the issue. The president has clearly affirmed something like same-sex marriage, assuring a gay rights group in October that "every single American deserves to be treated equally before the law." In that context, there is little room for

seeing that statement as anything other than a call for same-sex marriage.

The president has insisted that he is not for same-sex marriage ... yet. He undermines the Defense of Marriage Act, assures activists for same-sex marriage that he is moving in their direction, but is still "evolving."

In the aftermath of the Stephanopoulos interview, New York Magazine stated the obvious with this headline: "President Obama Won't Say if He'll Stop Pretending to Oppose Same-Sex Marriage Before the Election."

Now, *The New York Times* has published a major article arguing that the president is allowing his surrogates in the administration to advance the issue for him. In "Obama Still Lets Surrogates Take the Lead as Gay Rights Momentum Builds," reporter Mark Landler explained:

President Obama has long relied on his oratorical gifts to ease him through tricky political situations. But on the emotionally charged issue of gay rights, Mr. Obama has been content recently to let his lieutenants do the talking. And they have said some striking things.

On the specific issue of same-sex marriage, Landler reported: "There is little indication that Mr. Obama plans to endorse same-sex marriage before the presidential election in November, despite recent statements that tiptoe right up to that position."

Thus, the dance continues. The reason for the president's reluctance is clear enough. Landler nailed the rationale head-on, explaining that the president "is reluctant in an election year to be drawn into a culture-war issue — one that reliably helps Republicans turn out evangelical voters in their favor and also strikes a particular nerve with religious black voters, a bedrock Obama constituency in battleground states like North Carolina and Florida."

This disingenuous waltz will be a hard dance to maintain, and the president must know it. Nevertheless, some political authorities in Mr. Obama's own party are advising him to keep it going.

Interestingly, the latest of these is former President Jimmy Carter. Mr. Carter recently told the Associated Press that President Obama has

endangered his re-election prospects by alienating too many voters. His words to President Obama sound like an encouragement to continue his evasive dance on the issue.

President Carter said, "If your main goal is to get re-elected, avoid a controversial subject as much as you can in the first term."

Mr. Carter recalled that he alienated too many voters during his first term, and, as he told a group recently, was "involuntarily retired."

Maybe that explains it all. The first Obama term is all about "evolution" on the issue. Clarity will come only after the 2012 election. Then, and only then, will the dance end.

At the very least, President Carter has helped us to see the dance for what it is.

R. Albert Mohler Jr. is president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. This column first appeared at AlbertMohler.com.

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Roscoe Brewer

Canton, GA

Roscoe Harrison Brewer, Jr. was taken to heaven December 8, 2011. Born September 15, 1938, in Fort Worth, TX, he graduated from Amon Carter-Riverside High School and then Texas Wesleyan University with a BS in History and later received an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the California Graduate School of Theology. Most of his life was spent in ministry that started at age 22 until the time of his death, and with a passion for missions and seeing the Great Commission fulfilled.

For over 45 years, Roscoe implemented missionary ventures and projects worldwide. He was a noted missions strategist and popular speaker for the cause of world evangelization. Johnny Hunt, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, says, "Roscoe was the greatest missiologist I have ever known."

Roscoe founded S.M.I.T.E. (Student Missionary Intern Training for Evangelism) in 1965, as a young youth pastor, and thousands of youth and adults have ministered in hundreds of countries in short-term programs through this ministry. He was the former chairman of the missions department of Liberty University and the former director of missions at Thomas Road Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife of almost 53 years, Margaret, four children, and ten grandchildren.



Mel Sabaka

Las Vegas, NV

Melvin Paul Sabaka was taken to glory December 8, 2011. Mel was born May 3, 1923, in Canton, OH, graduated from Timken High School, and attended Kent State and Malone College. He proudly served his country as an Army Ranger with Merrill's Marauders in the Pacific Theater during World War II.

He began his Christian ministry at Canton City Rescue Mission and became youth pastor of Canton Baptist Temple in 1965. At age 52, in 1975, the Lord called him to Staten Island, NY, where he, his wife, and son started Bible Baptist Church now known as First Bible Church.

He had three goals in a conversation: to bring a smile to your face, to let you know there was joy in serving his Lord and Savior, and to give you something to remember.

He is survived by his wife, Jean (Engle) Sabaka, who he married May 7, 1949; two children, five grandchildren, five great-grandchildren, and thousands of spiritual children who trusted Jesus through his ministry.



Stan Yuchnovicz

Fort Worth, TX

Stanley H. Yuchnovicz, 86, went to be with the Lord on Monday, January 1, 2012. Stan was born on February 16, 1925, in Detroit, MI. He served in the U.S. Navy during World War II. He married his wife, Barbara Coffey, August 1, 1952. Stan became an ordained minister in 1952 and was a BBFI missionary to Taiwan 40 years.

He is survived by his wife, two children, and a grandson. Memorial services were held at Alliance Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX, with Pastor Terry Kizer officiating.



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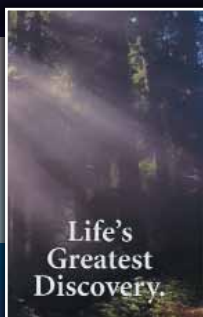
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Why not participate in the February Tribune Offering?

By Keith Bassham

The *Tribune* is the magazine of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, but we serve several different constituencies, and the magazine comes to the reader in several different ways. First, there are the readers in the churches who receive bundle subscriptions. This is the bulk of the readership. Those churches generally send a monthly offering to the *Tribune*, and we offer those churches bundles of the magazines for distribution in the church.

Of course, Fellowship pastors and missionaries receive individual magazines too — it's one of the benefits of being in the Fellowship. We also see to it that widows of ministers, retired pastors and missionaries, and students in our Bible colleges receive *Tribunes*.

In addition, we also make magazines available to pastors in our sister fellowships and associations with whom we share so many doctrinal distinctives and the burden to evangelize and to plant churches.

And we have a number of people who subscribe to the *Tribune* individually (God bless you folks), but the vast majority of each issue is circulated as described in the first three paragraphs.

I think you will agree, after reading through this issue describing the history of Baptist publishing and the *Tribune*, that the *Tribune* is not like most magazines you receive. For one thing, it tells the story of the Baptist Bible Fellowship — our pastors, our missionaries, our churches. No other magazine in the world does that.

And as you might have guessed, it is funded differently, too. We do have individual subscriptions (as I mentioned) and advertising, of course. But unlike regular magazines that depend mostly on ads, the bulk of our budget comes from monthly support and church bundle subscriptions. That's why we publish about and for the Fellowship. They are the folks who pay nearly all the bills, and without that monthly support, we simply could not publish as we do.

However, subscriptions, advertising, and monthly support will not take care of this ministry completely. One other vital part of our budget we raise through the annual February Tribune Offering (FTO). I have often said we could get by without the annual offering, but you wouldn't like the *Tribune* as much. That offering helps us do the extras, to place magazines for free where we think they will do good, and to see to it that the Fellowship has a high-quality public face. The FTO makes it possible for us to provide magazines for our friends in other fellowships, for our students, for the widows and retirees we wrote about above. We also bank on the offering to help us offset rising costs of printing, postage, and the like.

So each year, usually associated with the February BBF meeting, we receive commitments and offerings. Pastors receive a commitment card and a letter explaining the offering, state fellowship officers distribute the cards at fellowship meetings, and we even branch out a little and let others not associated with the Fellowship participate if they wish, and not a small number do (God bless you, too). Pastors can either return the card (and/or offering) to the *Tribune*, or they can pass it on to their state officers.

Those who know me know I prefer a low-key approach to the annual offering. We don't spend a lot of money on promotion, and I don't like to pressure. I prefer to let the product speak for itself. The result is that the *Tribune* continues to enjoy goodwill and support across our Fellowship, and I believe that is because we continue to produce a quality publication that reflects well on all of us.

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Finally — and this is most definitely for the pastors — why not participate? How much should you give? If you've participated before, you already know. If this is your first time, a gift of \$15 is what it takes to cover the cost of an annual subscription, and all gifts are appreciated. As a starting point, why not pay for your subscription and perhaps one more?

Whatever you decide, we at the *Tribune* will appreciate your participation in the February Tribune Offering. All commitments and gifts should be sent so they arrive at our office by the end of February. Request a commitment card or get more information by emailing me at editors@tribune.org or call (417) 831-3996.

I know you're busy, and 2012 will be half over before we know it. But before you get too busy, would you take a moment and think about the *Baptist Bible Tribune*?



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