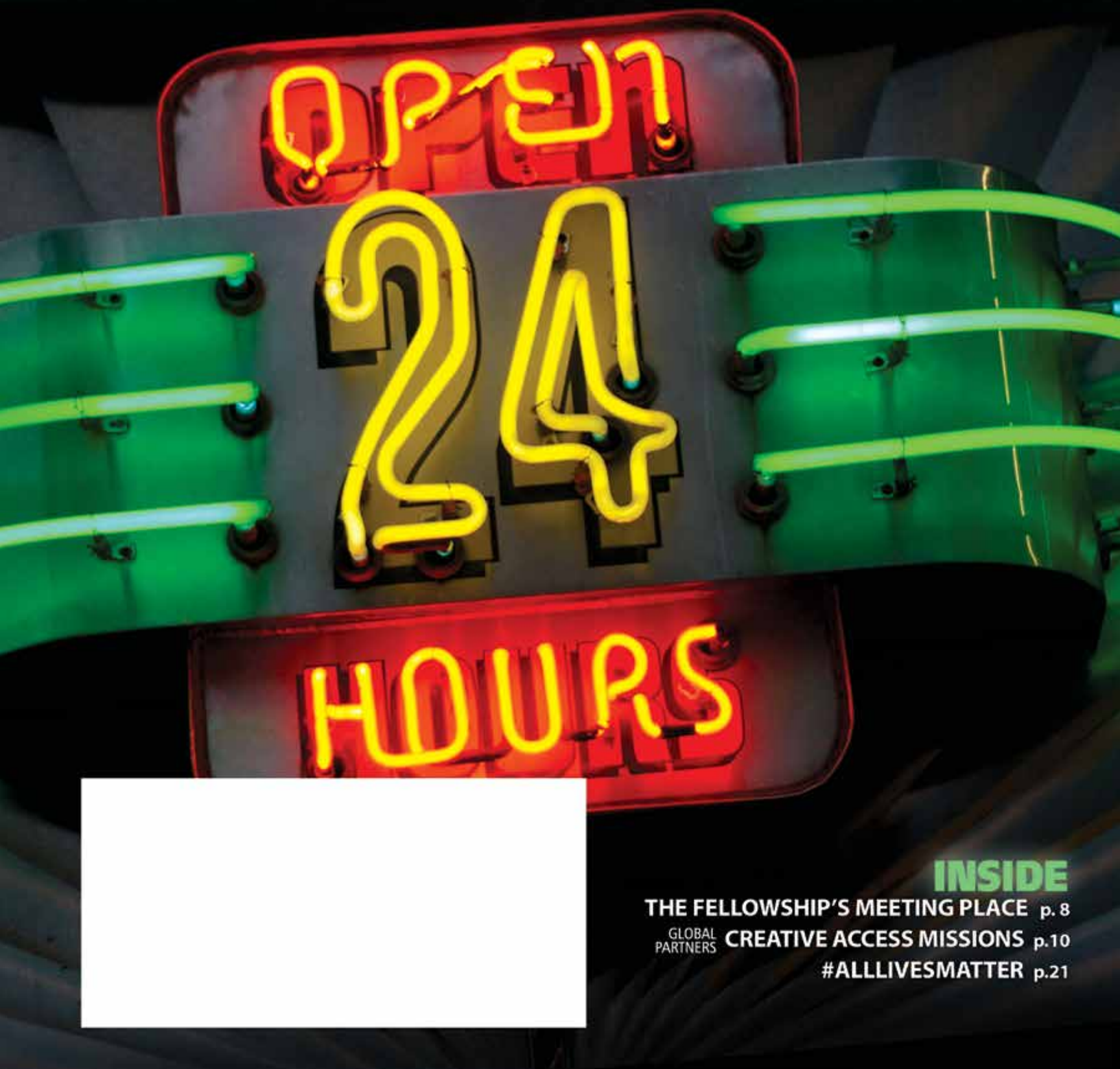


BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

FEBRUARY 2015 | VOL. 65 NO. 6



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#ALLLIVESMATTER p.21



BBFI World Mission Service Center

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"This was very helpful with good information about BBFI Missions. It was great!" - Future Missionary

"Other pastors need to hear this information on missions." - Pastor

March 12-13, 2015
BOSTON
BAPTIST COLLEGE



ON THE TABLE

A not-mean man

by Keith Bassham | Editor

When I am an observer of seemingly insoluble problems — especially those that appear to be endemic in certain cultures and locales — I tend to go into quiet mode. Instead of being ready with an apt answer, I am more like Preacher Jim Casy in Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* (I mean the Casy early in the book, not later when he turns union activist), trying to figure things out, because as Casy says, "Preachers gotta know."

I grew up in a lower class, but not abject poverty. I don't remember going hungry because there was nothing to eat. I slept in a car a couple of nights when I was on my own and between apartment rentals, but I knew it was a temporary thing at worst. There were bad places in my town growing up, and though I did not realize it at the time, I know now I was fortunate I was the one bullied when I was there, and I was not a bully myself. That line could have been easily crossed, and where would I be today if it had?

And so it is true that I do not, and probably cannot, completely comprehend what it means growing up black in a place like Ferguson, MO. Intellectually, I can see how a perpetual distrust can manifest itself in fear, and then rage, and how what may seem perfectly reasonable from one perspective will appear horribly wrong from another. But I have not lived that way. Therefore, while I have my opinions and thoughts, I am not free with them.

I am thankful, then, that a friend of mine can help. Charles Lyons, pastor of the multi-ethnic Armitage Baptist Church in suburban Chicago, has been a columnist for the *Tribune* through most of my 13 years as editor. When I think of Charles, I think of the line from one of Raymond Chandler's books, "... down these mean streets a man must go who is not himself mean ..."

Charles grew up tough in a tough neighborhood. But he has known God is tougher since he was a kid, and so he gave Him his allegiance early. Today, he preaches the Gospel to both small and great — and to the mean — and I depend upon him to give me eyes, ears, and words for days like these.

In this month's "Urban Current," Charles's column, he talks about Ferguson and other tragedies. Some won't like what he wrote, or that he wrote anything about it at all. We argued some over the words he used. Editors and writers do that, and in a couple of places neither of us was completely happy with the phrasing we left on the page. But, Charles has made an observation and guided us to a hopeful solution. Chandler could have been describing Charles when he wrote, "If there were enough like him, the world would be a very safe place to live in, without becoming too dull to be worth living in."

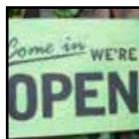
Keith Bassham

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

FEBRUARY 2015

VOL. 65 NO. 6

FEATURES



The Fellowship "meeting place"

Noel Smith said it best when he referred to the *Tribune* as the place where everyone can gather

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Global Partners

Creative Access Missions

When standard missionary avenues are blocked, how do we get the Gospel out?

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Urban Current

#AllLivesMatter

We don't all see things the same way, but the Gospel influence brings us to the same cross.

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

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By-lined opinions expressed in the *Baptist Bible Tribune* are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editorial staff or the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

Focus on church planting



by Eddie Lyons | President | BBFI

When our Fellowship began, there was a great focus and passion for church planting. When my parents, Boyd and Donna Lyons, left BBC in 1956, they were off to start a church in New York state. Listening to their stories as a kid, it was apparent this pioneering church planting fervor had been carefully instilled in them. That emphasis was not so strong when I graduated from BBC in the 1980s. It has been great to see this emphasis return in the last decade. Many young men have gone out with great vision, passion, and energy to start churches and they are succeeding.

I recently got a call from Sean Sears who planted a church in the Boston area in the spring of 2005 with six people in his living room. In that conversation he said they were going to add a fourth service on February 15 because they have averaged over 900 in attendance for the last ten weeks. They have also started two more churches out of their church with plans to launch a third this September.

The church planters of our Fellowship are great men doing some great things. I love being around them and hearing from them. They inspire me. I learn things from them. Recently, one of these church planters asked me what my budget for direct mail advertisements for the year was. I was embarrassed to tell him that it was almost nothing. He encouraged me to be more aggressive and spend some money to reach out. He told me how this has worked for him and described the families God brought to the church through this investment. I went to our deacons and presented a plan to be more aggressive to reach beyond the immediate group of people we have coming by utilizing direct mail. We adjusted our budget. The first two mailers have been sent. We are passionate about reaching people with the Gospel.

Our church planters can inspire and teach us all. Watching God develop their stories and seeing the people reached in real time is better than reading a book. We need to rub shoulders with these men and hear their stories.

I recently had lunch with a leader of a large denomination. A critical part of what he oversees is church planting and church revitalization. He said, and I summarize, that if you don't have new churches being constantly planted, a fellowship will die. Growth will come from the church plants. Younger pastors in younger churches will attract a younger crowd and more effectively reach this generation. The importance of church planting in our Fellowship cannot be overstated.

Our meeting February 15-18 in Orlando, FL, will be all about church planting. I am asking our church planters to join us because we need you. All of us can and should learn from these men.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

BBFI Korea – March 14-17, 2016



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

Those who attend the BBFI Korea 2016 Global Meeting will see for themselves the enormity of what God is doing on a worldwide scale. When you attend, you will join people and pastors from around the world — those whose lives have been impacted through the ministries of our missionaries and the churches who sent them. You do not want to miss this opportunity; rather you should make plans to take part, to “Lift Up Your Eyes and Look!” just as the meeting theme urges.

Look Upward | See God's love for the harvest | Monday PM

Look Outward | See the needs of the harvest | Tuesday AM & PM

Look Inward | See yourself in the harvest | Wednesday AM & PM

Look Forward | See the harvest reached together | Thursday AM & PM

Speakers from around the world will share what God is doing in their regions and challenge us to do even more in missions. You will be encouraged by special presentations and music. The Korean pastors and churches are already preparing for the event — you won't want to miss it!

Seoul, the capital city of Korea with over 600 years of history, has a population of over 25 million people. This metropolis is the business and cultural hub of South Korea where skyscrapers tower over Buddhist temples. Take in the views from the Seoul Tower built atop a mountain peak and enjoy the distinct Korean flavors in one of its many teahouses and shops. Museums and authentic, ancient palaces are some of the fascinating places you can visit.

The BBFI Korea 2016 meeting has reserved space for 3,200 people in the Kintex International Conference Center. Check out the facility online at www.kintex.com and click on “English” in the top right corner of the homepage.

How can you plan for this meeting? Watch for the promotional video from the BBFI Mission Office and show it to your church. Visit the website www.bbfikorea2016.com for more information and to register online. A travel package with the Mission Office will be available soon.

Following are some suggestions to consider:

- Send your pastor and his wife
- Send a group on a mission trip
- Help send your missionary if you are a sending church
- Help send a national pastor of one of your missionaries
- Send your state chairman and/or state national director

Missionary efforts will be multiplied in the countries represented. Pastors and leaders from around the world will be encouraged and inspired to return home and share in the responsibility of carrying out the Great Commission. These were the results seen following the Cebu Global Meeting in 2011, and we anticipate the same outcome from Korea 2016. Come be a part of this meeting and encourage our partners from around the globe to join us in the Great Commission. I know you will be blessed beyond measure.

Inner-city church planting



by John Gross | Church Planting | BBFI

New York City veteran pastor Tim Keller has written:

"God began history in the Garden, but is ending it in the city ... People are pouring into the cities ... the looming question is whether or not planet earth will be able to handle the mega-surge of people pouring into the cities from all over the world ... Back in 1950 there were 2.2 billion of us. Today's estimate is 6.6 billion. If today's birthrates continue to accelerate in the major cities of the world by 2050, the figures suggest there will be 11.7 billion people on earth. If this happens, there will need to be built one city of 1 million people every week for the next 43 years."

In January 2015, the BBF Builders headed to inner-city Detroit to come alongside Pastor Jerel Bland and the Hope church. This new church launched September 28, 2014, in the old Packard showroom with plans to use the facility as a significant outreach center near downtown Detroit. The team is building out a section of the facility that will serve as an outreach center for "at-risk" children in one of the most depressed areas of the country. Ron Trosclair, BBF Builder's team leader, told me he welcomes volunteers and financial support for those who want to become involved in this winter project.

This winter, the Builders will also begin working with Revive Baptist Church in inner city Cincinnati, OH, where Pastor Kirk Kirkland has planted this work. The church has acquired a 13,000-square-foot building needing to be built out. Midway Baptist Church in Raleigh, NC, will be providing work assistance in this remodeling project.

The Builders have been a blessing to suburban areas as well as inner-city projects throughout the country. They have been helping our churches build their structures for over 15 years — developing over 100 church projects. At the church's invitation they volunteer their labor, bringing their RVs and motor homes for their lodging.

Ron Trosclair, Jack Reed, and Charles Rogers, along with their wives, form a remarkable team. There are other volunteers who join them on each project. In these few short years they have saved churches over \$12,000,000. This is truly a work of love on the part of these wonderful people. Their financial support comes from our Fellowship churches and individuals. Our Fellowship is marvelously blessed to have this team working with us.

Some projects in 2015 include: Fellowship Baptist Church, Winamac IN; Mercy Baptist Church, Jackson, MS; Dunnegan Bible Church, Dunnegan, MO; Park Crest Baptist Church, Springfield, MO; West Division St. Baptist Church, Springfield, MO; and Serenity Baptist Church, West Chester, OH. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Ron at rontros@yahoo.com or phone (318) 623-6225.

Thom Rainer forecasts 15 trends for churches in 2015

15
in '15

The CEO of Lifeway Christian Resources says his research is showing 15 trends affecting churches this year:

1. Smaller group gatherings – Rainer says, "Churches that are growing will likely do so through multiple services, multiple venues, and multiple sites. This trend is influenced by Gen X and the Millennials."
2. Pastoral search committees may be out, to be replaced by something similar to professional headhunter agencies in the secular world.
3. Small groups become more important – Rainer says, "I see a new movement of 'groups' taking place that will be similar in growth as the Sunday school movement was in the late 19th century"
4. Prayer movements – more meetings dedicated solely to prayer.
5. More multi-site churches – presumably meeting in smaller venues
6. More pastors on staff sharing the preaching and teaching duties.
7. Theological education on-site in churches – higher studies made available without moving to a seminary or college community.
8. In denominational churches, more grassroots partnerships among congregations
9. People continue to flow from smaller to larger churches
10. Congregations and communities will get along better as churches serve and communities come to appreciate what churches offer.
11. Individual churches will seek more separation from denominational structure. Rainer says, "Denominational structures will continue to get smaller and more streamlined, and churches will not be able to expect the same type of resources they have received in the past."
12. Continued integrating of lifestyle and verbal evangelism
13. More emphasis on congregational singing – Rainer says, "There will be an increased emphasis on intentionally bringing the congregants into worship through singing."
14. More churches phasing out Sunday evening services
15. Increase in bi-vocational staff

DISCLAIMER – the Tribune is always in favor of more Christians living more obediently, winning more people, doing more Bible study, and praying more. We hope those will be trends in 2015 among our Fellowship.



Want to know what the Tribune Editor thinks of these 15 trends and how they pertain to our Fellowship? Read his response to each point at www.tribune.org/?page_id=4328 or scan this QR code to go directly to this bonus feature.

WINTER IN ORLANDO!

COMPELLED 2015

BBFI NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP MEETING

February 16-18, 2015

ORLANDO BAPTIST CHURCH

ORLANDO, FLORIDA | PASTOR DAVID JANNEY

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



RICK BLACKWOOD

*Senior Pastor
Christ Fellowship Church
Miami*



EDDIE LYONS

*President
Baptist Bible Fellowship
International*



DAVID NASSER

*Senior Vice President
for Spiritual Development
Liberty University*



BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP
INTERNATIONAL

BBFI.ORG



where to stay

All of these hotel properties offer shuttles to and from the airport. They are also all within five miles of the meeting site. When you make your reservation please use the group name: Baptist Bible Fellowship

The Wingate by Wyndham
5750 Hazeltine National Dr. Orlando, FL 32822
(407) 826-5258 | WingateOrlandoAirport.com
Rate: \$75 per night

Fairfield by Marriott
7100 Augusta National Dr. Orlando, FL 32822
(407) 888-2666 | FairfieldInnOrlandoAirport.com
Rate: \$119 per night

Hampton Inn by Hilton
5767 T.G. Lee Blvd. Orlando, FL 32822
407.888.2995 | HamptonInnOrlandoAirport.com
Rate: \$129 per night

Springhill Suites by Marriott
5828 Hazeltine National Dr. Orlando, FL 32822
407.816.5533 | Springhillsuitesorlandoairport.com
Rate: \$134 per night

Marriott Orlando Airport
7499 Augusta National Dr. Orlando, FL
(407) 851-9000
Rate: \$189 per night

schedule

MONDAY

4:30----- Registration
6:00----- Opening Session: Eddie Lyons

TUESDAY

9:00----- Morning Session: Keith Bassham
10:15-12:00----- Ladies Fellowship with Donna Janney
10:15-11:00----- Effective Church Planting Curriculums and Training: Eddie Lyons and Sean Sears
Strategy and Empowering Vision: TBA
Children's Ministry: Orlando Baptist and High Street Team
11:15-12:00----- A Strategy for Church Planting in America: John Gross and Dan Greer
Cross Cultural Ministry: Russell Johnson
Great Weekend Service Planning: Orlando Baptist and High Street Team
12:30-2:00----- Special Lunch and Resources for Church Planters Only
6:00----- ** Please Register at: www.orlandobaptist.com/bbfi
Evening Session: David Nassar

WEDNESDAY

9:00----- Morning Session: Greg Lyons
10:15-11:00----- Ladies Session
10:15-11:00----- Panel Discussion of Today's BBFI Planters - Anthony Milas, Troy Wolfe, Josh Bevan, and John Markum: Moderated by John Gross and Dan Greer
Increase Your Churches Giving: Brian Moore
Youth Pastor's Forum: Moderated by Dustin Janney
11:15-12:00----- Effective Church Marketing: Jon-Eric Moseler
Multi-Site Church: Rick Blackwood
Senior Adult Ministry: Don Norman
6:00----- Evening Session: Rick Blackwood

iPastores Hispanos!

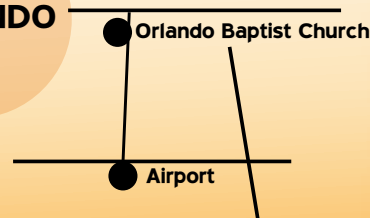
Tendremos nuestra reunión el miércoles
en el pequeño auditorio, de 9 - 12
-Música, Oración, Predica y Mesa Redonda
-más información: jsmith@bbfmissions.com

getting there

Orlando Baptist Church
500 S. Semoran Blvd.
Orlando, FL 32807

Approximately 9 miles from Orlando International Airport

ORLANDO



www.worldchangingchurch.com/#/bbfi

COMPLETED 2015

THE FELLOWSHIP'S “MEETING PLACE”

BY KEITH BASSHAM
Editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*

Nearly any “thing” you can think of spends a certain amount of its resources promoting itself. This is true whether the “thing” is an organization, a product, or even a communication medium. At times the “thing” will be driven to speak up for itself.

That is what we do at the *Tribune* about this time each year — we speak up for ourselves. In an ordinary month, nearly all the magazine content does what the *Tribune* has been doing 65 years — telling the good news of what God is doing among the churches and preachers of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. That is, we speak up for the Fellowship, and not for ourselves.

But at least once a year, we do speak up for the *Tribune*. I mentioned in a column last month that the *Tribune*’s founding editor Noel Smith published something about that shortly before his death. I was in error — sort of.

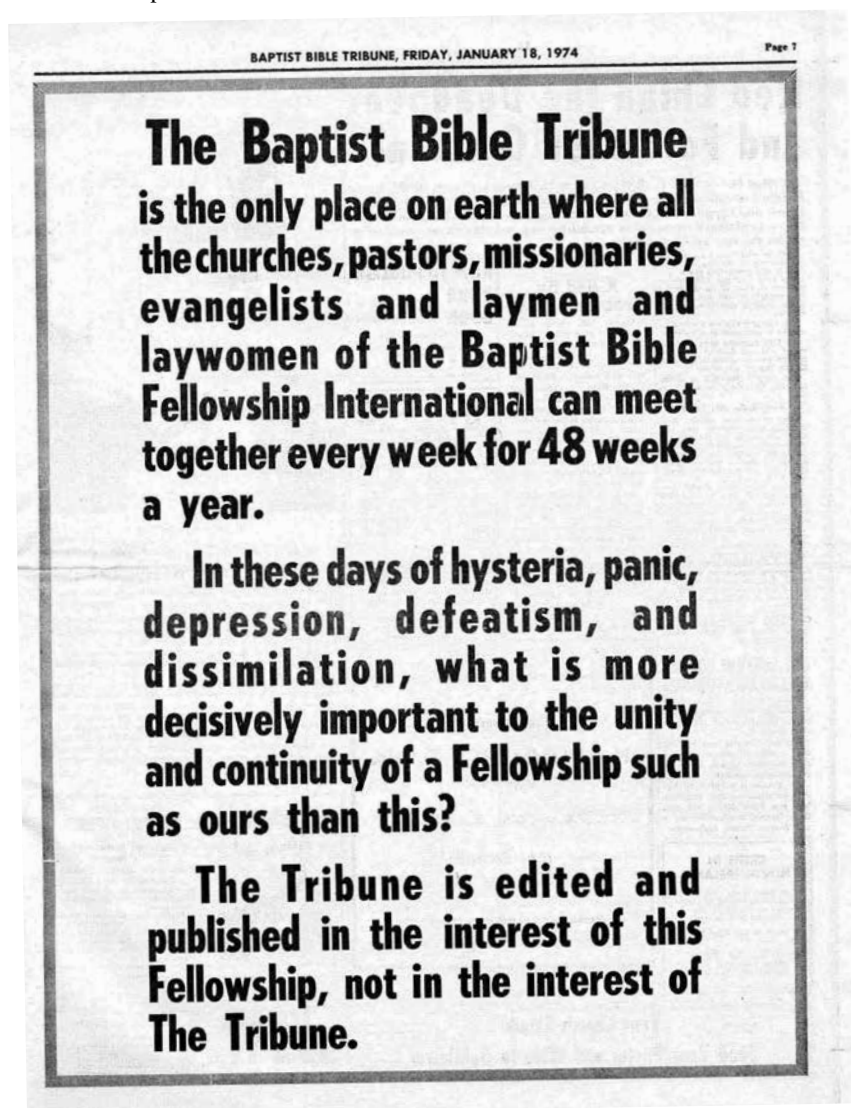
The fact is, the full page (reproduced here) appeared in the January 18, 1974, issue, typeset and printed a few days before Mr. Smith’s death on January 12. Things like that happen in the world of periodical publishing. As an example, I am working on the February issue of the *Tribune* as I write this. Assuming I finish this article, and we meet our printer’s deadline (that is an ironic term in this context), and further assuming I should meet my Maker a

day or so later, I would still be the editor for the February issue, albeit posthumously. Something like that happened in January 1974.

And nothing in the preceding paragraph is all that necessary for what I am doing here at the moment, but at least if something unforeseen does happen, I have corrected the error, and my conscience is clear on that score.

The main point was and is, what Mr. Smith said about the weekly eight-page *Tribune* in 1974 can be said as well for the current monthly version. Though the

newspaper has become a magazine, and black and white newsprint has given way to glossy pages with full-color photos and images, and though we now give readers the option to take advantage of digital versions of the magazine, what Editor Smith said more than 40 years ago is still the truth. Amid all the changes we have seen in the world and in our Fellowship, his statement is a constant. The *Tribune* is still the Fellowship “meeting place,” and it is the only meeting place where we all can meet regardless of time zone or geography.



Because of the vital role of the *Tribune*, and because of the way the *Tribune* is funded, once a year I ask our churches and pastors to commit to the February *Tribune* Offering. Realizing the importance of the *Tribune* ministry, a large part of our budget comes from churches who send support monthly (much like a missionary), and many of those churches receive a monthly bundle of *Tribunes*. Then there is the revenue we receive from individual subscriptions and advertising. And finally, we receive the annual February *Tribune* Offering, which has become more important to our survival the last several years.

To be honest, just about every aspect of Fellowship ministry is under stress. We here at the *Tribune* have been and will continue to pull for our missionaries, our colleges, and our other entities. We do all we can to support them and to urge



FOUR THINGS ABOUT THE *TRIBUNE*

others to do the same. But right now, we need to shine a spotlight on our own need.

We need to raise \$150,000 in this year's February *Tribune* Offering. We have raised that amount before. More than once, in fact, when the need was not so great as it is now. If this is your first time to participate, a gift of \$15 is the cost of an annual subscription, and all gifts are appreciated. As a starting point, why not cover the price of a single subscription and perhaps one or two more? Many will give a larger amount, but you have to start somewhere. For more information, email editors@tribune.org or call (417) 831-3996.

In the meantime, we will continue to provide news and information for and about our Fellowship. We will continue to provide *Tribunes* to new churches, retired ministers and widows of ministers, our Bible college students, our missionaries, and to a large number of churches outside our Fellowship to keep everyone informed. We will continue to provide news and other content to help churches and believers grow and prosper. We will continue to produce a quality publication that reflects well on all of us. We will carefully manage our finances and bring good value to the Baptist Bible Fellowship. That has been, and will continue to be, my commitment.

1. The Baptist Bible Fellowship still needs the *Tribune*. No other part of our Fellowship can regularly be in so many places, so often, and so economically, as the *Tribune* can. And while there are other fine Christian magazines and papers, there is only one publication in the world with the primary emphasis on OUR churches and OUR preachers, and that is the *Tribune*. We promote the doctrines and the values of the Baptist Bible Fellowship in a way no other medium can.

2. The *Tribune* connects people in and out of the Fellowship. Besides being a news source for people in the Fellowship, the *Tribune* is the public face for the BBFI. About 10,000 churches receive at least one copy of the *Tribune* each month, and many of our friends in other fellowships, conventions, and mission organizations depend on the *Tribune* to keep them up to date on our goings on. Add to that some Lifeway research showing that a majority of Christian leaders still rely upon and prefer print as their primary source for ministry-related news, you can see the importance of the *Tribune* in our Fellowship's outreach.

3. The *Tribune* supports the messages from our churches' pulpits with feature articles about doctrinal, moral, social, and political issues. When you distribute the *Tribune* at church, your evangelism efforts are promoted with news stories about churches reaching their own communities. Church people get to know the missionaries and their families a world away, and they are reminded we are all involved in a great enterprise. In last month's issue, the entire Fellowship was able to celebrate the life and ministry of Marjorie Browning as a family, and we all experienced both the sense of our diminishment and her victory through the pages of the *Tribune*.

4. We provide subscriptions at no charge to all our BBFI missionaries and students in BBFI-owned colleges, to ministry retirees and their widows, to new churches, and to thousands of non-Fellowship churches. That's how the *Tribune* shows up in prisons, in truck stops, medical offices, and libraries. We also provide reprint and archival services, data, and historical information for students, scholars, and churches. Our regular website (www.tribune.org) hosts current *Tribune* articles and digital archives in addition to a monthly digital edition of the magazine. We also communicate through a monthly email update and a *Tribune* Facebook page. And this past fall, the *Tribune* began funding a completely revamped BBFI website at (www.bbf.org).

EDITORS OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE



Noel Smith
1950-1974



Wendell Zimmerman
1974-1983



James Combs
1983-1995



Michael Randall
1995-2002

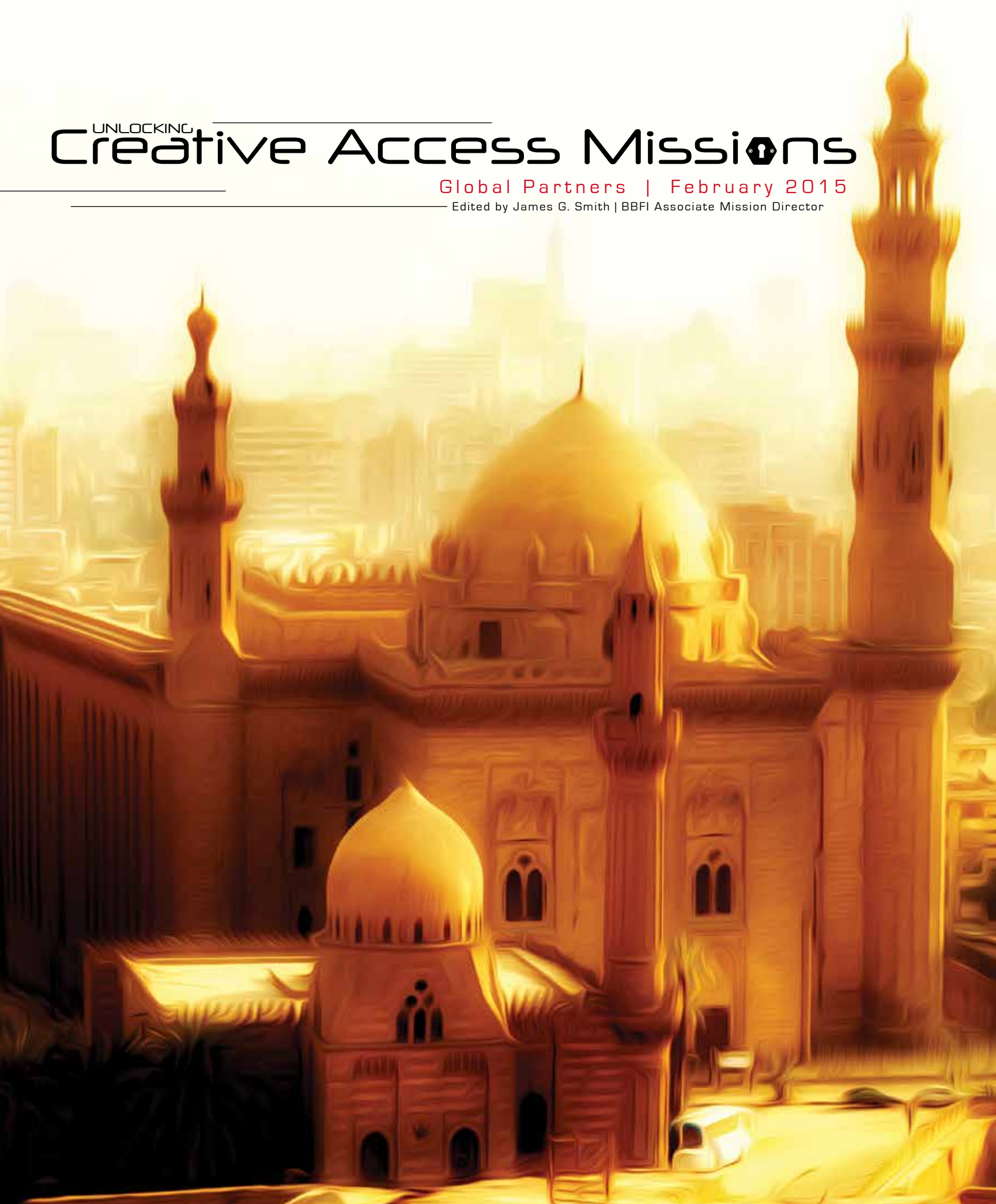


Keith Bossham
2002-current

UNLOCKING
Creative Access Missions

Global Partners | February 2015

Edited by James G. Smith | BBFI Associate Mission Director






This year we celebrate 65 years of missionary endeavors of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. From the beginning, BBFI churches have been sending workers into the world, often into hostile and difficult places. In this edition of *Global Partners*, we want to explore some of the intricacies of what we call Creative Access Missions — those places where traditional missionary access is not possible.

Our world is becoming increasingly hostile toward the Good News of Jesus Christ and its messengers. In a world of constant turmoil, we want to help BBFI missionaries establish a long-term presence so they can build the relationships necessary to evangelize, make disciples, and establish churches.

The 10/40 window across North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia encompasses a majority of the unreached people in our world today. The BBFI has been actively helping missionaries go to these countries since the Fellowship's beginnings. However, the China of Fred Donnelson's day has long since become an industrial and military giant under Communist leadership — persecuting Christians who endeavor to freely worship within its borders. Similar restrictions and persecutions occur in neighboring countries like North Korea and Mongolia.

Muslim countries throughout the 10/40 window have seen a revolution of extremism and instability since the 1970s. Islamic countries known for having cordial to cold relations with the West, have rapidly become more aggressive and even hostile toward Western influence. That makes them resistant to the infiltration of missionaries and a renewal of the Christian faith and practice. The growth of Islam into Europe and the West presents a changing and challenging environment for the expansion of the Gospel. However, with these challenges, we continue to accept the responsibility of delivering the message of Jesus Christ.

In the September 2014 National BBFI meeting, the mission committee approved policies designed to help our missionaries working in these difficult parts of the world. We identify the countries as Creative Access Nations (CAN). We serve a God who is creative and has given us the ability to be creative and to evaluate, reason, and problem solve. Therefore, each missionary endeavors to enter his or her field through creative means to obtain visas. Some go and teach, others establish legitimate business platforms, and others enter working through localized non-governmental organizations (NGOs). One thing is certain, their purpose for going is still the same — to reach the lost with the Good News of Jesus Christ and see Baptist churches established in those communities. The mission of God the Father, and the directive of His only to go into the entire world with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit remains, the same regardless of how hostile or unwelcoming the world becomes.

Within this *Global Partners*, you will hear from some of the BBFI's missionaries working in Creative Access Nations. We are honored to have men and women of this caliber serving the Lord and the churches of the BBFI. We have purposefully endeavored to keep their specific countries and personal identities hidden. We desire to help, not hinder, the ministries they are doing in their countries. Please accept this information in the form of a prayer request. Pray for these missionaries and the people with whom they are sharing the Good News! 



The same trip that may have taken 19th-century missionaries months, only took 20th-century missionaries weeks, and today can often be made in a matter of days. But, in the 21st-century, accessibility doesn't always translate into access for missionaries, church planters, or religious workers. Before we look at some of the specific challenges and opportunities of mission work in "closed" or limited-access countries, as followers of Christ, we must answer the following questions:

- **Do restrictions and limitations negate the local church's mission?**
- **In light of God's sovereignty, are these countries completely closed?** (*Ephesians 1:11; Romans 11:33; Isaiah 8-9*)
- **Can God be banished when heaven is his throne and the earth is his footstool?** (*Isaiah 66:1*)
- **Are all the "closed doors" permanently locked?**
- **Is Christian missions limited by official government sanctions?**
- **Are we to obey men rather than God?**

The answer to these questions lies in the firm convictions of the first apostolic missionaries who said: "... Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard ... We ought to obey God rather than man." (*Acts 4:19, 20; 5:29*).

Similarly, Daniel purposely broke the special law of the Babylonians in order to obey God, even though it meant being thrown to the lions (*Daniel 6*).

When human governments seek to block God's agenda to fulfill the Great Commission, the Christian's prior or greater responsibility is toward God.

FACTORS CREATING NON-ACCESSIBILITY

Countries that deny visas to traditional missionaries are not necessarily always anti-Christian. There are several major factors that contribute to the classification of a Creative Access Nation (CAN).

1) The religious factor

This is the most common reason for the listing of a CAN. No missionaries are allowed in ... no missionary activity is legal.

- This was the case in the former USSR.
- In China, communism abolished both God and religion.
- In recent years, the hostility of Muslims toward Christian missionaries has reached new proportions. Islam's declared war against Christianity keeps most of the Muslim countries of the world non-accessible with traditional missionary passports. Proselytizing of any kind is a criminal offense in countries like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Libya, etc. Christian minorities in Muslim countries see the emerging political ideology of Islamization in the latter part of the 20th century as a form of oppression and as a threat to the very survival of the church.
- In recent decades, Hinduism in India has acquired a new lease on life and is moving from the defensive to the offensive. Militant Hindus would like all missionaries expelled from India.
- The religious factor may also affect the subsequent factors in varying degrees.

2) The nationalism factor

Nationalism was a great force in less-developed countries during most of the 20th century. Many countries gained independence from Western colonial powers and achieved nationhood after World War II. Now, all foreigners are guests. Foreigners enter, remain, function, and depart only with the permission of that sovereign government. In such nations foreigners have no rights, only privileges.

3) The economic factor.

Many of the less-developed countries have complex economic problems. Many have run-away growth in human population. That leaves them with too many people and too few jobs. The high rate of unemployment pressures governments to not allow expatriates to take jobs away from their own citizens. In some countries, the government is determined to get rid of all expatriates. Some countries have a limited quota for the total number of foreigners in the country regardless of their professions. Other countries are more selective and favor individuals with expertise in certain fields and professions. Such individuals are given work permits beyond the transit or tourist visa allotment.

4) The political factor

Every so often certain countries will face mutual conflicts with each other. If there is a stalemate and no peaceful settlement, it can result in strained or non-diplomatic relations between them for significant periods of time. Foreign citizens of these affected countries often are forced to leave the country. Missionaries, like the rest of the foreigners, are caught in the crossfire of these political conflicts. Therefore, such countries enter the CAN list till the political problems are resolved between those two countries.

5) The war factor

The crisis of war, either internal civil war in a nation or external transnational war, can force a country to be on the CAN list. The instability produced could dictate the evacuation of all existing missionaries and the non-issuance of entry visas to others.

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE

The above factors of non-accessibility should help us as we determine the deployment of missionary personnel and the nature and methods in ministry to be undertaken within a nation or cultural group. With those things



in mind, let's consider some aspects of the work that can be done.

1) Emphasize the primacy of local churches

The local New Testament church is more than a match for the powers that oppose it since the Head of the local church has been exalted to the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him (1 Peter 3:22; Ephesians 1:18-23; 3:20, 21).

Every local church needs to think biblically and act responsibly as to its role in global missions, like the church in Antioch (Acts 11, 13, 14, 15 and 18). The local church enlists, selects, supports, authorizes, ordains, commissions, and sends the missionary. The missionary needs to be seen as the primary responsibility of the local church while at home or overseas.

The local church needs to be the

primary moral supporter and caregiver of missionaries. The local church serves as the catalyst for global missions because people, money, and prayers flow from the local church.

2) Promote partnerships among local churches and missionary personnel

The Great Commission was given to the local church. The first New Testament church that received the Great Commission had 120 members. So, a church of 120 members was expected to evangelize and disciple the whole world. How? They won converts and established other local churches. Then, together, these local churches spread the Gospel over the whole known world.

3) Focus on the diaspora of Creative Access Nations and their networks.

When an unreached people leave their geographical location, they become

more open to new ideas and to change. This "diaspora" leaves the people more open to give the Gospel a hearing. For example, there are four million Iranians who have left the oppressive regime of Islamic Fundamentalism. In the last seven months, we know of 500 Iranians who have been baptized.

4) Become creative in the fulfillment of the Great Commission

The Non-Resident Missionary

This is when a missionary may live in a country other than the restricted country that is his target. For example, Iran is "closed" to missionaries. Yet, Iranians can be reached in Germany, France, Holland, Canada, and the United States. Presently, Afghan refugees living in Iran are being evangelized and disciplined by "strategic coordinators" who live outside of Iran. These coordinators have been able to guide and grow their work in creative ways.

The Tentmaker Missionary

A Christian businessman or woman can live in a country that may deny residency to a missionary. As they live and work among the people, they become effective witnesses for Christ. With appropriate training, they can also establish churches among those who become believers.

The National Missionary

There are more third-world missionaries today than from the Western World. These third-world missionaries have everything but resources. They sometimes know the language, culture, religious background, and history of the people to whom they minister. The only thing they may lack is the resources to carry out their mission. If Western Christianity, that seems to have an abundance of resources, can partner with third-world missionaries and provide responsible assistance, then perhaps the Commission can be fulfilled more efficiently and effectively. 🔑



We serve in a nation where religious visas are not an option. Sometimes, following God's call involves getting creative to find a way to stay. One option is to take a job somewhere and let your employer handle the visas for as long as you can keep your job. Another option would be to start an NGO. These organizations run the gamut, but typically work to alleviate harsh living conditions for people in need, either socially or economically. A third option is to open a legitimate and credible small business.

When it came time for us to decide which route to take, NGOs in our country were facing a lot of scrutiny and many were being closed down. We prayed, sought counsel from others who had faced the same dilemma, and finally decided God was leading us to start a small business. From the beginning, we knew if we wanted to do this right, two things needed to be true of our endeavor:

The business needs to be successful and operate with a high standard

Starting a business is hard work — it takes time and effort to become profitable, especially in a developing economy like that of our host nation. Our dedication to following laws and staying above board with daily business practices gives us credibility with the local government and is a testimony, not only to local believers, but also to other business workers. Believe it or not, there are

missionaries who do nothing to fulfill the obligations of their visas. This ends up only hurting their cause and the efforts of others associated with them. Our visas are not simply a “front” to keep us in the country; they are our responsibility and an opportunity to be a light for Christ through our work ethic. Working to actually develop our business and do what we say we're doing keeps us in good standing with the local government, gives us security and longevity on the field, and paves the way for future workers in our field.

The business must benefit and enhance the ministry

Everything we do is rooted in a desire to serve God, not make a profit. We do not take a salary from this venture and our vision has always been for our business to ultimately benefit the church. Every dollar invested goes back to the business, the employees, and the local church. By hiring leaders from our churches part time, we give them an opportunity to provide for their families and still have time to serve. We also try to help our employees see their jobs as an opportunity for outreach. Our business gives them an avenue to connect with people, and everyone, from customer to supplier, is a soul who needs to hear the Gospel. Every amenity associated with our business is available for use by the church. Currently, our youth group meets every Saturday evening for discipleship right

in our coffee shop.

Running a business along with ministry instantly doubles the workload for the missionary, which can be overwhelming. We've learned, though, that many times the two responsibilities coincide. Every day there are countless teachable moments as we work side by side with nationals. We must see our business as an opportunity for hands-on discipleship rather than a distraction from it. If we find the right people and train them well, in time the burden of the business will be lessened and we can focus our energies elsewhere.

CHALLENGES

Approaching missions in this way is still relatively new to us in the BBFI, but is unavoidable as all over the world it is becoming increasingly difficult for missionaries to obtain visas. Most of us have very little business training. We need businessmen from the churches in our Fellowship to coach and invest in us Creative Access Nation missionaries. Would you pray about offering your wealth of wisdom to encourage, mentor, and coach some of us? A little goes a long way in benefitting the missionary's business situation and enriching the ministries, not to mention cutting the attrition rate of missionaries serving on fields such as ours. Please contact our Mission Office if you would be interested. 🔑





Business Platform in a Creative Environment *by T.U.*

The 67 nations in the 10/40 window are still the most unevangelized countries on earth, due in part to the difficulty for laborers to obtain visas to work these fields. When the Lord of the harvest gave the command to “Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel,” He meant just that! “Closed-door” countries require faith, patience, and wisdom.

We have seen that both education and business can be used to open doors that would otherwise be closed. It is up to each laborer to know the gifts and talents the Lord has given to him. Each one must receive clear guidance in his walk with Christ to determine which key should be utilized to open a field. It would be ludicrous to use either one of these keys if it was possible to obtain a visa where one could focus solely on doing the work of an evangelist.

The Lord led us to access the nation of our calling through a small business project. This project, that has often taken us “out of the box,” has provided us with a visa that has now resulted in reaching our desired goals of winning souls and planting churches. The business platform to obtain a visa has been beneficial for the following three reasons:

1) The business platform visa has withstood the onslaught of militant religious entities trying to force my family and me out of the country. When certain religious organizations found out that a visa had been obtained through the business sector, they immediately went to court to state that my purpose in being in the country was not the business project. Immigration and the State Attorney General’s office were convinced by their accusations and filed a court case to close down the business entity and have my family and me removed from the country. Two Supreme Court justices gave oversight to the case due to the nature in which it was filed.

The case was quickly resolved when our alert attorney showed the justices the free-trade business agreements between our two countries. The justices quickly laid down the gavel and stated, “This man has the right to exercise his religious freedoms under our constitution so long as he fulfils the objectives of the government-approved registered project. What he does in his private time religiously is protected.” For comparison sake, should I have opted for the education platform, this ruling would not have applied under the free-trade agreement that the justices swiftly adhered to.

2) The business platform visa opened major doors to the business, education, and law enforcement sectors of the country. I would never have dreamed that respect for the type of project implemented would have carried so much weight in these communities. An afternoon business Bible study that has operated now for several years came as a result of working with managers in a company to enhance their leadership potential. Several people were saved and now meet once a week at lunch for Bible study and prayer. Police chiefs, political security division heads, military officers, and the mayor of the capital city along with his 45-person entourage all enlisted the project’s services.


During a time of strife in the country, one of these police chiefs allowed me to utilize a community center for an evangelistic meeting and gave the meeting guarded protection. A mission was born from the people saved in this meeting. That mission is now a church plant reaching the community for Christ. Principals from various government and religious schools have received our two- to three-hour training for teachers. “Gospel seeds” were dropped in those events that were attended predominantly by heathen

religions. I have made acquaintances and built relationships which can be used in the future for clear Gospel presentations.

3) The business platform visa gives the right status to do financial transactions, lease buildings, own a vehicle, and travel freely within the countries of the region — all because I have an authentic business visa with a registered business.

The project office houses my library and affords me the time to study for messages and prepare material for the Bible Institutes. Over 80 percent of what my office does is for the work of the ministry. The computers, copy machines, printers, and laborers in the office operate daily for the furtherance of the Gospel in some aspect.

Preparation to fulfill the needed objectives for a business visa came from being raised by a wise father who taught his six sons several occupations and business skills. An effective internship and then a pastorate prior to serving in a foreign country provided the spiritual development and spiritual warfare training essential in preparation for the business platform approach.

The Lord of the harvest would never call His laborers to do something He did not prepare them for or grant them the talents to fulfill. A thorough and completed Bible college training along with a comprehensive internship is vital in reaching into the 10/40 restricted access nations. Creativity that comes from serving the Lord in major leadership roles during internship is required. There are two important elements in any attempt to creatively enter and operate the business platform for Christ’s sake. One is a godly, praying family. Two, pastors leading in a thorough understanding of the issues when opening restricted doors. 



A Translation Business *by I.T.*

At the very beginning stages of ministry in a Creative Access Nation (CAN), a missionary will usually need to be learning the language. Even at the language learning stage, a business platform is very useful. I am still in the language learning stage and am often asked why I am studying the language. They can see that I have brought my wife and children from the U.S.A. to a developing country, and they expect an answer that justifies this radical move. The locals are always satisfied when I explain to them how their country continues to have increased global business opportunities, and that I want to establish a translation business to take advantage of these opportunities.

Of course, a person can only study a language full time for so long before he runs out of classes to take, or before red flags begin to fly. For long-term ministry in a CAN, a business platform provides a stable way to gain a visa into the country. However, business is not our reason for moving our family to a third-world country. Our hearts and priority is to spread the Gospel, disciple new believers, establish local churches, and train national pastors to lead and plant their own churches. Both business and ministry are very time and energy consuming. So the challenge is to find the right business to complement the ministry.

God has created and developed a wide variety of CAN missionaries, so their skills,

passions, and businesses can be just as varied. We have a passion for starting a translation business for several reasons.

1) We understand that the better we learn the language, the more effective we can be in communicating the Gospel and training national leaders. Since a translation business is my platform, the locals understand I will naturally need to attend translation school after finishing the typical language classes. This extra training will be a huge help in reaching the professional level of communication we desire.


2) Our country has limited written Christian resources in the native tongue. As we disciple believers and train national leaders we will need to develop our own lessons or translate them from the great wealth of resources we have in English. By God's grace, the work we already plan to be doing for ministry will become our business platform for obtaining a visa.

3) Translation school provides a great opportunity to establish necessary relationships. While in basic language school, all of my classmates are understandably not nationals. However, in translation school, my classmates will be nationals interested in the same kind of

business I am — translating from English to their native language.

We anticipate many of these classmates will be very interested in spending time with an American family. This gives us prime opportunities to develop relationships in which we can share the Gospel repeatedly over a long period of time. Also, our new friends will have the opportunity to see how the Gospel is lived out in our lives over a period of time. This kind of time is extremely valuable ministering in a culture with a worldview that completely excludes God.

4) I need a national business partner for a proper translation business. We hope to see some of my classmates come to Christ who would be interested in partnering with an American. Should God provide us with a very business-minded Christian national translation partner, this partner can take the majority of the load of the business to allow me to spend my time doing what God really wants me to do.

We understand it is a lot of work to get into and stay in a CAN. However, my family and I want to be a part of what God is doing. I am a minister, not a businessman. However, we pray for the faith to trust God to provide the way even when we cannot see all the steps ahead of us. 



One of our families is living and working among a group of displaced people (DP). These people are sometimes referred to as refugees. We asked our people to explain the uniqueness of this type of creative access ministry.

Refugees live on the streets or in temporary shelters; occupying abandoned buildings or makeshift hovels. They often come from Islamic states or limited access nations and are naturally resistant to traditional approaches of evangelism. They commonly have a negative opinion of the West and the United States in particular. They live desperate lives and are in a fight for survival. These characteristics call for creative strategies and specialized personnel to minister to their physical and spiritual needs. Outreach to DPs is exacting physically, emotionally, and spiritually. It demands mobility, creativity, and courage. It requires workers who are men and women of faith and extraordinary prayer. It is not a ministry for the faint of heart.

Unlike traditional fields of service that sometimes lend themselves to youth mission trips and short-term exposure excursions, DP ministries require mature, seasoned, and cross-cultural savvy men and women who understand the significance of self denial. Nik Ripken says this mission field “often requires — or, at least, results in — callouses on the hands and the heart as the faithful struggle with lostness, persecution, starvation, and flying bullets.” Men and women of faith and courage who are willing to fill this requirement may provide a valuable contribution to refugee ministry, short or long term.

The needs of the displaced are myriad. They often lack basic health services and would benefit from health professionals who volunteer to offer care in the form of free clinics. Even when government agencies offer health services, unregistered or isolated refugees often fall through the cracks. One recent volunteer came with his daughter as his assistant and brought a suitcase full of medicines, vitamins, and supplies. Just two days of clinics allowed dozens of men, women, and children to receive basic care. As a result of

this display of Christian love and concern, a number of ladies began attending Bible studies for the first time.

In our country of ministry there are now over one million refugee children. Less than half are attending any type of school. Most roam the streets, search for food, or work menial jobs for handouts. Virtually any attempt to minister to these children is looked upon with favor. For this reason, children’s programs, vacation Bible schools, camps, and retreats are excellent opportunities to sow seeds of the Gospel into the lives of the displaced. We will be hosting a team of eight to ten men and women next summer to conduct vacation Bible schools specifically for refugee children.

Adult education is another need among the displaced. Refugees are hard pressed to find work, and competition for the few jobs available is fierce. Men and women who lack the basic skills of reading and writing are greatly disadvantaged. Personnel are needed to teach literacy, increasing their opportunities for making a livelihood for their family.

Those refugees who are educated profit from learning English. English language classes are sought after in refugee communities as English proficiency increases the opportunities for employment. Teaching simple English can be done without expertise in the local language. Volunteers can contribute to refugee ministry by teaching basic and advanced English.

As host countries are bombarded by the influx of refugees, logistics become a challenge. Aid agencies and government organizations often fail to provide the necessities to house and care for displaced families. We have partnered with local churches and organizations to provide blankets, kerosene heaters, food staples, and clothing. Offering relief and care in Jesus’



name can be a powerful witness to people in need and often opens the door to sharing the Gospel message.

Regardless of the ministry focus or length of time ministering to displaced peoples, proper preparation is essential. It is our opinion that pre-field preparation should include the following:

1) Spiritual development and prayer support. Ministry to refugees demands an attitude of self-denial and sacrifice as well as a daily dependency on God. Potential workers should be mature in their faith, proven in service, and supported by a network of friends and family lifting them up in prayer.

2) Security training. Often, fields of service to DPs are restricted or sensitive places. Before arrival on the field, workers should undergo training and be aware of security risks. They must learn to be discrete in conversation and communication. They should develop an awareness of their surroundings and be sensitive to the directions of those hosting them in the country.

3) Cultural awareness and education. Potential workers should study the culture of the displaced they are coming to minister to, as well as the culture and context of the country hosting the refugee community. There must be a willingness to set aside personal freedoms in dress, mannerisms, and conversation in order to relate to DPs without offense. Learning basic greetings in the language is also advised. 🔑



From Platform to Establishing Churches *by T.L.*

As missionaries with the BBFI in North Africa, we were initially uncertain of how we would enter the country and later be able to stay for the extended time needed to see churches established. Going to a country where over 90 percent of the people were of the Islamic faith, we understood there would be challenges concerning long-term visas and developing a presence that would see lives changed. In that struggle, there were three main objectives we wanted to accomplish. First, we wanted to keep our main objective of making disciples and establishing churches at the forefront. Second, we wanted to be honest and above reproach in our dealings and connections with the people. Third, we wanted to develop a legitimate presence without our platform being a façade.

Establishing a Platform

We entered the country on student visas while learning the language. I went to the American University while also looking for opportunities to establish a more permanent platform. During that time, we were introduced to a struggling Baptist church in the inner city. Established almost 40 years prior, the national pastor had passed away and the church had asked the most educated member of the church, a medical doctor, to become the pastor. On my initial entrance into the church of about 40 people, I was confronted with a pastor distressed and asking to be “relieved of his duties.” It was apparent his time as the pastor had been difficult for him and for the church. Within a year he had resigned and we began reorganizing the work while looking for a new national pastor to prepare for that ministry.

Through a member of the church who desired to establish an export division of his mercantile shops, we began to see a platform emerge that would allow us to stay

in the country. He needed a foreign partner to establish contacts overseas and offer credentials to gain the legal standing of a national corporation with foreign interests. In the course of a year, we established the company’s legal and financial standing with the government and I was able to obtain our business/investment visa. Some churches are hesitant to support missionaries who have other businesses in the country. However, the structure of this company allowed me to offer about 15 to 20 hours a week in the business and 40 to 50 hours in ministry work through the afternoons, evenings, and weekends.

Our evangelistic opportunities also expanded into cities and villages throughout the country when visiting production plants and shops. We would often incorporate outreach events with our church members on these trips, and I would not be seen as an outsider because we had established a presence in the communities through the business. As a part of my agreement with my national business partner, proceeds that were to be directed to me as a salary from the business were given directly to the local churches to help finance these outreach programs.

It is important for missionaries in Creative Access Nations to have skills alongside their ability to preach the Gospel and establish churches. However, missionaries must balance their time between the work and ministry, and follow local and international laws in regard to how they handle proceeds they receive through their work. Being honest, legitimate, and authentic in establishing a platform is important. It will provide opportunities to meet people and establish relationships in the community.



Establishing a Presence

The establishment of our own business platform allowed us to build extensive relationships on various levels throughout society. Handling the legalities of the business helped us meet people in government, legal fields, and business. Yet we were also able to connect with various people throughout the country in the factories and local shops who handled our products. The way we conducted business and treated the people we worked with helped set us apart; yet, it also helped us integrate into the community.

Establishing trust and integrity are important in every aspect of ministry, no matter where we are called to go. However, where people are continually skeptical of you, you have to be building trust all the time. Once trust was built into our relationships, we were welcomed into villages and homes allowing us to work through the day and having village meetings for preaching and teaching late into the evenings. Through these meetings we saw many come to faith in Jesus and get baptized. As our numbers increased, we increased our presence and helped teach believers and establish new pastors and leaders in the developing congregations.

Establishing Churches

As we established outlying churches, it was also important to develop the church in the city as a training facility for the churches and pastors. In time, the church grew to over 250 and the lay leaders became our teachers and trainers. Pastors and leaders from outside the city would travel in for weeklong modules throughout the year. The leadership coordinated efforts to reach other communities in the country, allowing me to



travel freely when invited.

Before leaving the country, we saw three churches established and organized with national pastors. In addition, two villages had their own meetings while their leaders received training and help from the three sister churches. An added benefit was the expansion of the business platform to employ many of the church members in each community. By the time we left, we were confident God's work was going strong and churches would continue to be established without our physical presence.

Looking Ahead

One of the great tasks in front of us as a Fellowship is to understand that creative access into countries is becoming the norm instead of the exception throughout the world. Since coming to work in the Mission Office, there have been changes developing in Russia and Europe regarding immigration. Greater restrictions on visas are developing throughout the world, including areas where we have had missionaries who have been readily accepted for decades. Looking forward we need to carefully evaluate our understanding of how missionaries are able to enter countries and become established as they carry forward the Great Commission. We must pray for and prepare to equip missionaries for the possibility of carrying out ministry alongside a platform to help remain long term. In truth, it is not an easy task and carries many added responsibilities. However, it is important that we see the positive opportunities that come with carrying out such a ministry in being faithful to "go into all of the world." 



The Great Commission – Creatively!

by Jon Konnerup | BBFI Mission Director



A renewed commitment to reaching the lost is growing. A renewed effort to effectively plant churches is mushrooming among a younger generation. New technology assists in spreading the Good News. This is a time of unlimited mission possibilities. However, there is danger in planning as if nothing has been done in the past, to go as if no one has gone before. Unnecessary mistakes can and will be avoided by knowledge and wisdom.

The BBFI must become the vehicle for our younger generations to do what God has called them to do — being sent out by our churches to evangelize, disciple, and establish churches in the regions beyond. For this to happen, the BBFI must provide new opportunities while maintaining our main focus on church planting.

The past has given the BBFI a legacy of tried-and-true methods to reach the world through church planting. This focus should not be changed as we still see the scriptural method of fulfilling the Great Commission is church planting. I am concerned for the thousands of people groups without a community of believers with adequate numbers and resources to evangelize their own people. Our challenge is to provide every group of people on earth with an opportunity to hear the Gospel in a language they can understand. The goal is to establish a church movement within every unreached people group so that the message of salvation in Jesus Christ is accessible to everyone in the world.

We are using creative access platforms to help send those who desire to reach restricted access nations. Creative access platforms can be legitimate means for missionaries to accomplish their main objectives of reaching the people to whom God has called them. These platforms enable the missionaries to live among the people while sharing the Gospel through building relationships. "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof with you" (1 Corinthians 9:22-23).

This, of course, is not something new or specific to the 21st century. The Apostle Paul gave us the model of tent making in the New Testament. He was a preacher, philosopher, lecturer, evangelist, fundraiser, prisoner, and tentmaker. None of this took away from his ultimate goal of discipleship and evangelistic church planting, but he used different platforms in different locations to accomplish this goal. For us to be successful, it will require ingenuity, innovation, determination, creative thinking, and dependence on the Spirit of God on the part of our leadership, our pastors, and our missionaries.



A.T. ROBERTSON — Colossus of Greek Scholarship

“There is nothing like the Greek New Testament to rejuvenate the world, which came out of the Dark Ages with the Greek Testament in its hands.”

— A. T. Robertson

One thousand, four hundred, and fifty-four pages. That is how massive A. T. Robertson’s *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* is. Of course, that is the fourth edition, completed in 1923. The first edition in 1914 was a “mere” 1,376 pages. No other individual has produced anything like it. Robertson spent 26 years of an extraordinarily diligent and efficient life on the grammar, and had devoted the majority of his energy and attention for the last dozen of those years on this work, all the while carrying a full teaching load as a seminary professor, and frequently preaching in churches and conferences.

Who was A. T. Robertson, and how — and why — did he labor so long and arduously to produce what many would find to be at least as tedious to read as it must have been to write? Archibald Thomas Robertson was born November 6, 1863, on a 1,500-acre plantation in far southern Virginia, the fourth son and seventh child in the family of Dr. John (a country physician) and Ella Martin Robertson. The physical devastation of the Civil War never reached this part of Virginia, but the severe economic hardship that followed led to bankruptcy, the sale of the estate, and a move to a run-down farm near Statesville, NC, when Archer (as his mother called him) was 11. Life was hard and was filled with work, work, work every day but Sunday. Fields to clear and plow and plant, crops to tend, wood to chop, cows to milk, all just to survive. There was very little time for education and virtually no money for books. Becoming accustomed in his youth to unremitting toil day after day served Archie well in later years.

The Robertsons were Baptists in largely Presbyterian Statesville. A Baptist church was soon founded, an evangelistic meeting conducted, and 12-year-old Archie was converted to Christ. His pastor took a particular interest in him, and began to tutor him in Biblical studies. Sensing a call to preach, Archie was sent off at age 16 with just \$2.50 in his pocket (but with the promise from the local preachers’ association of monetary support) to Wake Forest College to prepare for the ministry.

His grammar school education was incomplete, he had a bit of a stutter, and he was two months late in starting his first term, but by dint of devotion to task, he was caught up by the end of the school year. For the rest of his academic career, he

excelled. In all, he spent six years at Wake Forest (1879-1885), earning both A.B. and A.M. degrees (by age 22), and earned the prizes as the best student in Latin and French, and missed by a hair’s breadth taking the medal in Greek as well.

From Wake Forest, he went to Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, KY, where he completed a three-year course of study (1885-1888). His extensive and accurate knowledge of Greek decidedly impressed Professor John Broadus. On graduation, Robertson was invited to join the seminary faculty, beginning a 46-year career there, which only ended at his death in 1934. In all, he taught some 6,000 students Greek and New Testament interpretation. At Broadus’s suggestion, young Professor Robertson began work on his grammar, researching and accumulating materials. Twenty-six years later, the first edition was completed.

One might suppose that one so focused on the minutiae of Greek grammar for more than a quarter of a century must surely have been a recluse, an eccentric, and, frankly, a bore. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Robertson was also a fervent Bible teacher and preacher and writer, who had a fine sense of humor. Robertson’s mastery of the Greek New Testament was directed toward Bible exposition, and he was perhaps the greatest Bible expositor of his day. He was for decades a favorite speaker at the annual Northfield and Winona Lake Bible conferences, drawing thousands to hear him. He was continually in demand as a preacher. And everything he wrote immediately found eager publishers.

In all, Robertson wrote 44 books besides “the Big Grammar.” His *Word Pictures in the New Testament* in six volumes is regularly the first commentary I consult. He also penned separate commentaries or studies on Mark, John, part of 2 Corinthians, Philippians, Colossians, and James. He revised Broadus’s *Harmony of the Gospels*, and wrote books on Jesus, Paul (2), Peter, John, John the Baptist, Luke, John Mark, and Mary, two books of sermons, several volumes compiled from articles published in periodic literature, and more!

Having read more than half of Robertson’s literary productions, I would characterize them as having a full head and a warm heart, and displaying his exacting thoroughness in research and meticulous attention to detail. Were I limited to the New Testament related writings of only one man, I would immediately choose those of Robertson over anyone else.

Robertson’s biography was written by Everett Gill (A.T. Robertson, Macmillan, 1943; 250 pp.). Though long out-of-print, used copies can easily be found via the internet.

#AllLivesMatter

URBAN CURRENT

No one can deny our troubled racial history. Lies, broken treaties, and firewater pretty much defined our relationship with the American Indians as the new nation took shape. Others came, and the Germans, the Irish, the Italians, the Chinese — all had their troubles encountering the majority populations of the day.

There was slavery, Jim Crow laws, the KKK, the lynchings deep into the 1900s, segregation, and various expressions of discrimination. We are paying for our fathers' sins.

The last six months America has been consumed with two grand juries and the protests related to them. You have to be a robot not to be moved by the genuinely tragic deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner.

And people have been responding. Here is a sample Facebook response: "All police aren't bad. All blacks aren't criminals. All whites aren't racist." That anyone thought this needed to be said is scary.

Headlines like "NYPD Publicly Executes Eric Garner for Illegal Cigarettes," and quotes in news stories saying, "It is open season on black people" go practically unchallenged in the mainstream media. *Unrelenting* and *inflammatory* are how I would describe that kind of news coverage that sends the message, "White cops are racist; whites are suspect."

Has anyone checked the word *prejudice* in the dictionary lately? Why bother with witnesses, autopsies, and forensic evidence? Attempting to find justice without finding the truth leads us nowhere.

White people seem drawn to either of two poles. They either become guilt-ridden parrots of the liberals and media narratives, or they think black people should get over it with a glib, "everybody has equal opportunity in our country so what's the problem" attitude.

I don't speak as a disengaged, ill-informed spectator. I'm not a liberal talking head. For over half a century I've been engaged with

the African-American community developing innumerable personal relationships before there were reconciliation rallies. For the better part of four decades, I have pastored a multicultural congregation. I can tell you I've been profiled. I've been frisked against the side of my car in my own neighborhood.

But just as it would be unreasonable to deny we have troubles and racial turmoil, it is also unreasonable to ignore two grand juries, who, under media and community pressure that's hard to fathom, worked their way to certain conclusions.

And it is unreasonable to ignore black-on-black mayhem in cities across the nation.

And it is unreasonable to ignore that a 13 percent African American population accounts for almost 40 percent of U.S. abortions.

So how are we, especially those of us who believe in Jesus, to respond and do right?

First, let's admit all lives matter! That's Gospel! If we have not acted in accordance with God's value system, we need to repent. If we have not spoken up for the voiceless, the downtrodden, the oppressed, the marginalized, the weak, we should beg God's forgiveness.

Scripture brings balance. The Christian life is not self-centered. It is about sacrificing for others. The more ego-driven we are, the more we are steeped in American culture, the less Christian we are. The more Christian we are, the less we will fit into our culture, particularly as it presents itself in polarization, hostility, neglect, or denial of truth.

We are not called to tolerate. We are called to love. People who love, listen. We need to hear each other. Agree, disagree, see it differently; we need to hear each other. We need to appreciate each other's stories, histories, views, perspectives, pains, vulnerabilities, doubts, and fears. Black people should not have to suppress their history, personal experiences, concerns, and trepidations in order to relate to white believers.

The Sunday after the Ferguson grand jury decision, I commented on how difficult and emotional situations such as these often drive us into corners — the corners of our perspective, opinion, prejudice. Corners can be places of isolation, shadowy and dark.

I said then, "I am calling you out of your corners in the name of Jesus. Come out of your corners of anger, suspicion, conservatism, liberalism. Come out of your law and order corner, your civil rights corner. Come out of the corner of victimhood or political correctness. Come out of your corners of frustration, guilt. Come to the center.

"Jesus is the center, full of grace and truth. We need grace to be humble, to listen, to forgive, grace to be whole. We need truth, all of the truth. Truth is light. Truth protects us from the darkness of deception, personal agenda, prejudice.

"Grace and truth are the balance. Grace and truth represent spiritual, intellectual, emotional maturity.

"In the center, I am more likely to have my presuppositions and prejudices identified. In the center, I am forced to ask new questions and answer uncomfortable questions. In the center, I will grow, becoming more like Christ, gaining a broader perspective. In the center, as Jesus' disciples, we share pain, disappointments, fears, anger, frustration but also love, encouragement, forgiveness."

We are to model reconciliation to the world. It doesn't mean we see everything the same way. It means we all kneel at the same cross as we humbly embrace Peter's exhortation: "Let everyone be sympathetic, harmonious, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble in spirit" 1 Peter 3:8 (NASB).

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



Traditions



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

Traditions are important to who we are, what we believe, and what we will become. Traditions help us feel like a part of the family and allow us to connect with our community. Traditions are a good thing, but are greatly feared by many. “But pastor, we have always done it that way” are among the most dreaded words a pastor can hear. We must be careful that in our effort to move a ministry forward, we do not destroy the ancient landmarks, the traditions that bind the ministry together. I have learned this lesson in the churches I have pastored and as president at Baptist Bible College. Nearly every week I hear from an alumnus about what they remember and the “traditions” that meant little to them when they were students but are now some of their fondest memories.

We have made many changes at BBC over the past two years. These changes have allowed us to become healthy and to renew our focus on our original mission — to train men and women to serve Christ. Yet we have retained our doctrine and many of the traditions that make us who we are. Moving forward what are the traditions we want to instill in our students?

A tradition of excellence. We strive to produce men and women who are equipped for the ministry God has called them to do. BBC provides excellent academics along with real-world ministry experience to enable our students to be prepared for the world in which they will minister.

A tradition of worship. Our students gather twice weekly for chapel services. These services offer our BBC family a time to worship together and to be challenged from God’s word. Chapel services draw us closer to the Lord and to each other. It is exciting to hear from chapel speakers who have “sat where we sit” or whose lives has been directly influenced by a BBC alumnus.

A tradition of community. BBC alumni and friends are invited to our campus and are given the opportunity to develop relationships with our students. College life is hard, and no one understands this like someone who has been there. Alumni provide the new generation at BBC with a link to those who have gone before. Our students compare their current struggles with those of our alumni and are encouraged by what God has done in their lives.

A tradition of service. “Enter to learn, go forth to serve” has long been the motto at BBC. Our students have gone literally around the world sharing the Gospel and winning souls for Christ. This tradition continues as our students serve in their local Springfield churches and prepare to serve around the world.

A tradition of fellowship. Each year we welcome the BBFI and our alumni and friends to the BBC campus for Fellowship Week. This special time gives our students a real view of the BBFI. Fellowship Week is a special time for reconnecting, renewal, and encouragement for those serving in the ministry. We invite you to join with us as we celebrate this 65th anniversary event May 4-7, 2015.

Repairs



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

We have a long-standing family tradition. After Christmas shopping, we reconnect with our auto mechanic. Okay, so that is a positive spin for the reality — it seems like in the middle of winter every car we own needs some repair! When you drive “mature” automobiles, they break down. So my lot in life is to help my mechanic pay off his Christmas credit card balance!

Little wonder I’m thinking in terms of “repairs.” It is what all of us in ministry do. That could be interpreted a lot of ways. At Boston Baptist College we have several generations of buildings. Boyle Hall is just five or six years old, but Henry Hall, where my office is, is almost a century old! Often guests are complimentary about the “character” of Henry Hall. But as the guy who sees all the cash flow reports, “character” means “repairs.” If something breaks in Henry Hall it won’t be in stock anywhere, and it hasn’t been since the Eisenhower administration!

Far more important than old pipes or wooden trim, Boston Baptist College does “people repairs.” Thankfully, the Lord really does that, but our efforts are His workings — to get people from where they are toward what God wants them to be. Today, as I wait for the call from my mechanic, I’m reminded fixing something starts with some kind of diagnostic. Our society is, of course, increasingly secular, even anti-Christian, so many of our students walk in the door with a mind that is far from being in biblical-working-order. I do not intend to reflect poorly on our awesome students (they are ahead of most of their peers), but the reality is that some of them have just known nothing else. At Boston we start right there, where students are, and get to work to re-construct the heart and mind in the design of the Designer.

Like most repairs, it is rarely exciting moment to moment, but a time-lapse view can be astounding. I’m thinking right now of two of our students who have been saved for less than two years from pretty messed up lives. I’ve heard the witness of Christ flow out of mouths that once used quite different vocabularies! We may be (and we are) still working away, but already the engine is roaring and it’s something to behold!

Some students come from heartbreak, abuse, deprivation ... even near destruction. Now I cannot get under the hood of any automobile and make much of a difference, but I get to be a part of a team in Boston — men and women, professors and staff, academics and pastors — and together, the work we get to share in often stuns us. Recently one of our profs told me about her work with a student. Their “talk” started about a class project and turned into a “what-God-has-brought-me-from” narrative. Repair is happening. Big-time overhaul. We’re not just constructing academic degrees. We are seeing God repair His people.

And that sure is a lot more rewarding than a new radiator! Mechanic just called — \$800! Ouch.

DRESDEN, GERMANY

Crawford family ministers among multiple nationalities in Germany

By Jon Konnerup — BBFI Mission Director



When Bill and Debbie Crawford, along with daughters Tiffany and Heather, left the United States for a new life of ministry in Germany in 2001, their sole intent was to work with the German people. God had other plans.

In May 2007, the English-speaking International Baptist Church of Dresden was founded. Since that time, hundreds of people from over 50 nations have crossed the church's threshold. While the core leadership is made up of German nationals, the congregation is a mixture of Germans and internationals alike. The average attendance, usually in the mid-50s to 60s, can include as many as 10 to 15 different nationalities in the Sunday crowd.

Michael and Anne Wagner are leaders in the congregation, and their story demonstrates the importance of our missions in Eu-

rope. This couple, like most in this region of Germany, was raised atheist. After the birth of their special-needs son Benjamin, Anne came seeking God's help. Instead of finding physical healing for her son, she found spiritual healing for her soul. She took her newfound faith home and, initially, Michael would ridicule and mock her for her faith in Christ. Over time, he saw it wasn't "just some phase she was going through," as he put it. There was something different; something real. He asked if she thought it would be all right if he went to the men's three-day-a-week workout.

Soon after joining the workout sessions, Michael began attending services. God began to soften Michael's heart as he listened to the messages and watched his wife's life and the lives of other believers. He approached Bill at a mid-

week service and asked about becoming a follower of Jesus Christ. The rest is history. Today, Michael serves as a deacon at IBC Dresden and feels the call of God upon his life to be a pastor.

During my recent visit with the Crawfords, I participated in the International Baptist Church of Dresden mission conference. It was wonderful to meet people from so many places in the world. I was most impressed by the young, well-trained German leadership in the church. They have a genuine zeal to reach their own people with the Gospel and bring them out of a life of hopeless atheism to a new life in Jesus Christ.

I was also blessed to hear the testimonies of those who participate in giving by faith in the church's mission program. One couple shared how they saw their responsibility to give to missions so people around the world could hear the same saving message. They said, "The people in America gave to send a missionary to us and we received Christ! How can we then not give so that others can receive forgiveness of their sins?" This young church has promised \$35,633 U.S. dollars this next year — an increase of \$9,400 U.S. dollars.

I also saw the appreciation these people have for the Crawfords and the way they have poured their lives into the congregation. Pray for Michael Wagner as he prepares to assume the pastorate of IBC Dresden in the near future. To our knowledge, he will become one of a few Baptist German pastors. While it is a big step for someone to leave a secure position in the secular world to follow Christ in fulltime ministry, it is both rewarding and exciting.

Please continue to pray for the Crawfords and families who serve with the Wagners at IBC in Dresden, Germany.



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Lessons learned in the depths

By Keith Gandy | BBFI missionary to Germany

Over the past 16 months I have spent more than 50 days in a hospital bed with three different physical challenges. Four of those days were spent in a medically induced coma. I write from experience, and that experience has taught me several things.

We play the “Why Me” game. There are, simply stated, not always simple answers to complex questions. Why did the young cousin fly over the steering of his quad and break his neck? Why were two selfish parents not stopped from hoisting their child up by his feet and striking him until he was dead? Why do bad, horrible, and senseless things happen?

I have come to accept that God’s silence is not to be interpreted as absence or apathy. No more than the parent was indifferent when a skateboard accident broke half my front tooth. God knows and cares all the time, and I choose not to allow circumstances to dictate what I know about His heart and nature.

My present condition is my new normal. There have been additional restrictions physically, changes emotionally, and challenges relationally as some of the health issues occur. Lately, I have even heard, “He’s not what he used to be.” Ouch.

Maybe you are in a season of transition and finding technology just out of your grasp, and the grandkids are not always available to repair or instruct. Maybe your chosen career field has new regulations or challenges to remain competitive, requiring further study and creative energy. Possibly the hurt of losing a spouse to disease or divorce robs you of joy at present.

One option is to fight to recover — society does celebrate those who overcome. At the same time you cannot “un-die” someone’s death or recreate dead synapses. Better to embrace God’s control and walk in this new chapter of life, with the calm assurance that if He has you there, He has you there for a purpose.

Everyone loves to be comforted, but not disturbed. Comfort only comes to those in distress. If you are in a deep, tough place, know that this is where God desires to meet people. Somehow, in a world where we throw away the broken things, God especially loves the broken.

“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted” (Matthew 5:4 ESV).

Every race is concluded sometime. It is for Him to determine how much longer. Without any expression of resignation — I am still passionate about family and ministry — I do long to see Jesus’ eyes and know him as he is, plus be reunited with some beloved family.

I count it a true blessing to know experientially that I looked death in the face and I did not fear. I know who holds tomorrow and that makes all the difference today.

Excerpted from Keith's blog at www.keithgandy.com/index.php/categories/8-just-thinkin/214-eternity.

Kennedys2Nicaragua



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SAN DIEGO, CA

Ocean View Church in San Diego prepares for transition

Jim Baize, Senior Pastor of Ocean View Church (formerly Midway Baptist Church), announced his "reassignment" (he stresses it is not retirement) after 41 years as lead pastor for the church. The announcement came the first Sunday of the new year.



Jim and Pat, his wife of 45 years, have been in the process of transitioning the church for a little over seven years. The church has given Jim and Pat a one-year sabbatical during which they plan on traveling to churches where they might be of benefit by preaching, encouraging, and counseling the pastors and the congregations.

January 11, Pastor Baize began the message and then passed a real baton to Executive Pastor Steve Boschen, who

is being recommended to the church for lead pastor. January 25 will be a celebratory Sunday in honor of the Baizes.

After the one-year sabbatical, Pastor Baize will lead a seniors' ministry at the church. In a recent church service, Pastor Baize said, "The ministry here has been more than we could have ever asked or hoped for, in every way. I would not want to trade places with anyone. God has been so good!"

O'FALLON, MO

Grace River church plant begins weekly services, grand opening set for February 8

Sunday, January 11, 2015, Grace River Church kicked off weekly services with an attendance of 105 people. Pastor Chris Highfill reported several members of the local Chamber of Commerce, including the chamber president attended. Pastor Don Baier of Seminole Baptist Temple in Springfield, MO, and his wife Becky attended the service representing Highfill's sending church.

After meeting once a month through the fall months, the church will now hold weekly services for a month before the grand opening on February 8. Leading up to the grand opening, the church will send out five different 20,000-piece mailers to the community around the school where they meet each week, inviting their neighbors to come be a part of what only God can do.

Chris and Sarah Highfill moved to the western St. Louis suburb of O'Fallon, MO, one year ago with the intention of planting a church in this growing community.



THORNTON, CO

Billy Hamm retires from pulpit at Mountain States Baptist Church

Billy Hamm, pastor of Mountain States Baptist Church in Thornton (Denver), CO, since 1979, announced he would be leaving the pulpit, and the church will begin a pastoral search. The resignation became effective December 31, 2014.

Hamm began his ministry preparation in 1960 at Arlington Baptist College. He has since attended and completed several programs, including a D.Min. from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in 2010. He is currently an adjunct professor with Liberty University Online.

Billy started pastoral ministry with his wife Jo in Colorado Springs, CO, in 1969, and then in Hollywood, CA, in 1977 before moving to Denver. He has served the Baptist Bible Fellowship and other Christian organizations in many leadership positions. He has also been active in Gospel music, publishing, online communication, and counseling.

The church plans a retirement celebration for the near future. Those interested in information concerning the church's pastoral search may contact the church at PO Box 1627, Eastlake, CO 80614.



Billy and Jo Hamm (right) with lifelong friends Ken and Judy Adrian

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Overland Park Baptist marks major milestone

More than 750 current and past members of Overland Park Baptist Temple gathered to celebrate the church's 50th anniversary in October. The special day included an expanded morning service, dinner on the grounds, and an afternoon vocal/instrumental concert featuring *Selah*.

A video presentation highlighting the church's 50-year history began the service, followed by recognition of charter and other early mem-

bers and a "Vision for the Future" message delivered by Senior Pastor Tracy Roby. "It is with great anticipation that we look ahead to what God has for us in the future," he stated. "Faith Forward!"

Organized October 9, 1964, as a mission outreach of East Side Baptist Church in Topeka, KS, Overland Park Baptist has grown under the leadership of six pastors: Donald R. Cavin (10/9/64-5/5/65), Gene E. Caskey (5/9/65-11/14/65), Bob L. Perryman (11/17/65-9/1/74), Larry Moff (9/8/74-8/78), Jerry L. Byars (10/22/78-present), and Tracy Roby who was installed as senior pastor August 4, 2002.

Since its founding, the church has grown from an original group of 13 to a family of more than 500, experienced five building programs at two locations, and seen its faith promise missions giving increase from the first \$3,838.50 in 1967 to more than \$500,000 annually.

Currently supporting 140 foreign and domestic ministries and projects, the church itself has sent an increasing number of missionaries and Christian workers through the years. At home, the congregation is dedicated to serving individuals and families through a full complement of ministries, activities, and outreaches.

Photo: An estimated 750-plus current and past members filled the auditorium and balcony of Overland Park Baptist Temple for Anniversary Sunday, October 5. Photo by Teresa Bauer.



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SPRINGFIELD, MO

WILMA BARTON

Wilma Marguerite Barton, 96, a former missionary of the BBFI, passed from this life December 30, 2014. Born February 27, 1918, Wilma trusted Christ at age 14, and married Dale Barton not long after beginning her teaching career. In 1950, the couple dedicated their lives to missionary work.

She graduated from Baptist Bible College in 1953, and in 1954 she and Dale went to Brazil. Until their return in 1979 for health reasons, the Bartons planted churches, directed the Bible institute, and trained pastors. Dale passed away in 1991. Mrs. Barton was awarded a Doctor of Humanities by BBC in 2005.

Mrs. Barton is survived by her daughters, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and their families. Services were held January 2, 2015, in Springfield, MO, and January 5, 2015, in Mount Pleasant, IA.

ARGENTINA

DON NEVELS

Don Nevels, a BBFI missionary for 47 years, passed from this life August 18, 2014, at the age of 72. Born December 12, 1941, in Cleveland, OH, he was saved in a VBS, and in 1958 he surrendered his life to Christ at a Hume Lake youth camp in California.

Don and his wife Lucy were 1964 graduates of Baptist Bible College and were approved as BBFI missionaries in 1969. He and his wife were married 52 years.

He was interred almost immediately after his passing, and his remains were placed in a cemetery for mountain climbers near his home in Argentina.

Editor's note: *I regret we did not publish this notice before. The Tribune office did receive word shortly after Mr. Nevels' death, but the information was misplaced during a busy time. He had a unique way of expressing himself in the scores of articles he sent to the Tribune over the years. His missionary reports often read like adventure stories, and he enjoyed referring to himself in the third person, as in, "this missionary." He visited the States a few years ago, traveling by bus from his home in Argentina. His journey and his reporting of it were so very typical.*

WICHITA, KS

PHYLLIS LOUISE MELUGIN

Phyllis Louise Melugin, wife of longtime pastor Ray Melugin, passed from this life January 8, 2015, at the age of 75. Born in Ft. Scott, KS, August 23, 1939, she and Ray were married in 1959, one year before she graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO. The rest of her life was spent in vocational ministry assisting her husband.

Mrs. Melugin is survived by her husband of 55 years and a loving family including children and grandchildren. Services were held January 11 with Ray Melugin officiating.

TULSA, OK

LINDA LOU ROBINSON

Linda Lou (Shaffer) Robinson, 73, wife of longtime pastor Ival Robinson, passed away January 6, 2015. Born May 15, 1941 in Downey, CA, Linda was a faithful pastor's wife 50 years. She and her husband Ival served churches in Iowa, Missouri, and Oklahoma, most recently at Southeast Baptist Church in Tulsa.

Mrs. Robinson is survived by her husband of nearly 52 years and a loving family including children and grandchildren. Services were held January 13 at Temple Baptist Church in Marshfield, MO.

AURORA, MO

LUCILLE PARSONS

Lucille Parsons, wife of Pastor Lee Parsons, passed from this life January 8, 2015. Born June 15, 1944, in Richmond, VA, she was 70 years old.

Survivors include her husband Lee and a loving family including children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Services were held January 10 at Fellowship Baptist Church in Aurora.

CONROE, TX

CECIL WAGNER

Retired pastor Cecil Wagner, 82, passed from this life December 26, 2014. Born May 18, 1932, in Faxon, OK, Cecil was a 1954 graduate of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO.

He is survived by his wife of 63 years, Jean Wagner, and a loving family including children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren. Services were held December 30, 2014, in Cleveland, TX.

FRESNO, CA

HARRY HART

BBFI evangelist Harry William Hart, 68, passed from this life December 20, 2014. Born April 10, 1946, Harry served Fellowship churches as an evangelist more than 30 years. During the 1980s, he also represented the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, contributing a number of news stories and articles.

He is survived by his wife Ruth and a loving family. Services were held December 29, 2014, in Fresno.

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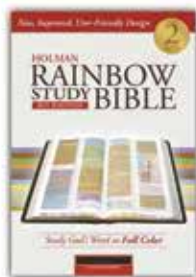
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CALIFORNIA

• **Calvary Baptist Church of Oakhurst**, At the corner of Highway 49 and Redbud (location only), 559/641-7984. *Pastor Bob Wilson*

• **The Fundamental Baptist Tabernacle**, 1329 South Hope St., Los Angeles, CA 90015, 213/744-9999. *Pastor Dr. R. L. Hymers, Jr.* sermon manuscripts at www.realconversion.com

• **Ocean View Church**, 2460 Palm Ave., San Diego, CA 92154, 619/424-7870 www.oceanviewchurch.com *Pastor Jim W. Baize*

• **Calvary Road Baptist Church**, 319 West Olive Ave., Monrovia, CA 91016, 626/357-2711, www.calvary-roadbaptist.org *Dr. John S. Waldrup*

CONNECTICUT

• **New Testament Baptist Church and School**, 111 Ash St., East Hartford, CT 06108, 860/290-6696 *Pastor Michael Stoddard*

DELAWARE

• **Southside Baptist Church**, 4904 S. DuPont Hwy. (US 13 So.), Dover, DE 19901, 302/697-2411 *Pastor Chris Kondracki*

• **First Baptist Church**, 6062 Old Shawnee Rd., Milford, DE 19963, 302/422-9795 *Pastor David Perdue*

FLORIDA

• **Palm Springs Drive Baptist Church**, 601 Palm Springs Dr., Altamonte Springs, FL 32701, 407/831-0950 *Pastor Scott Carlson*

• **Tabernacle Baptist Church**, 6000 West Colonial Dr., Orlando, FL 32808, 407/295-3086 *Pastor Steve Ware*

• **New Testament Baptist Church**, 2050 South Belcher Rd., Largo, FL 33771, 727/536-0481 *Pastor Matt Trill*

• **Trinity Baptist Church**, 800 Hammond Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32221, 904/786-5320 *Pastor Tom Messer*

• **First Coast Baptist Church**, 7587 Blanding Blvd., Jacksonville, FL 32244, 904/777-3040 *Pastor Richard Edwards*

• **Harbor Baptist Church**, 428 Tomoka Ave., Ormond Beach, FL 32173, 386/677-3116 *Pastor Ronald L. Todd*

• **First Baptist Coconut Creek**, formerly Calvary Baptist Church, Ft. Lauderdale, FL, 954/422-9611 *Pastor Jerry Williamson*

• **Calvary Baptist Church**, 123 Thunderbird Dr., Sebastian, FL 32958, 772/589-5047 www.calvary-baptistchurch.com *Pastor Clifton Cooley*

• **New Life Baptist Church**, 35000 Radio Rd (at Poe St.), Leesburg, FL 34788 352/728-0004 newlifebaptistchurch@earthlink.net

• **Suncoast Baptist Church**, 410 Warrington Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33954, 941/625-8550, *Pastor Chip Keller* www.suncoastbaptistchurch.com

• **Grace Bible Baptist Church**, 1703 Lewis Road, Leesburg, FL 34748, 352/326-5738, *Pastor George Mulford III* www.gbbonline.com

• **Orlando Baptist Church**, 500 S. Semoran Blvd., Orlando, FL 32807, 407/277-8671, *Pastor David Janney* www.worldchangingchurch.com

HAWAII

• **Lanakila Baptist Church**, 94-1250 Waipahu St., Waipahu, HI 96797, 808/677-0731 *Pastor Steven C. Wygle*

ILLINOIS

• **Sauk Trail Baptist Temple**, 4411 Sauk Trail, P.O. Box 347, Richton Park, IL 60471, 708/481-1490 *Pastor Bruce Humbert*

IOWA

• **Heartland Baptist Church**, 3504 N. Grand Ave., Ames, IA 50010 515/268-1721, www.heartlandbaptistames.com *Pastor Randy Abell*

KANSAS

• **Millington Street Baptist Church**, 1304 Millington St., Winfield, KS 67156, 620/221-4700. *Pastor Jeff McCaskill*

• **Friendship Baptist Church**, 2209 E. Pawnee, Wichita, KS 67211 316/263-0269, *Pastor Steve Day*

KENTUCKY

• **Florence Baptist Temple**, 1898 Florence Pk., Burlington, KY 41005, 859/586-6090 *Pastor Wayne G. Cox*

• **Oak Hill Baptist Church**, 2135 Oak Hill Rd., Somerset, KY 42501, 606/679-8496 *Pastor Gary Phelps*

LOUISIANA

• **Mid-City Baptist Church**, 5320 Airline Dr., 10 miles north of Barksdale Air Force Base, Bossier City, LA 71111. (318) 742-0772 www.midcitybaptist.com *Pastor Jason D. Filler, Sr.*

MARYLAND

• **Riverdale Baptist Church**, 1177 Largo Rd., Upper Marlboro, MD 20774, 301/249-7000 *Pastor Brian C. Mentzer*

MASSACHUSETTS

• **Temple Baptist Church**, 540 Manley St., West Bridgewater, MA 02379, 508/583-5190 www.templebaptist.info *Pastor Bill Smith*

• **Bridgewater Baptist Church**, 20 Summer Street, Bridgewater, MA 02324, www.bridgewaterbaptistchurch.info *Pastor Doug Denny*

NEBRASKA

• **Plains Baptist Church**, 2902 Randolph St., Lincoln, NE 68510, 402/435-4760. *Pastor Raymond Smith*

NEW JERSEY

• **Open Bible Baptist Church**, 2625 E. Main St (RT. 49), Millville, NJ 08332, 856/863-0226, Email: gardner07@comcast.net *Pastor Danny Gardner*

NORTH CAROLINA

• **Northside Baptist Church**, 333 Jeremiah Blvd., Charlotte, NC 28262, 704/596-4856 *Pastor Brian Boyles*

• **Mid-Way Baptist Church**, 6910 Fayetteville Rd., Raleigh, NC 27603, 919/772-5864 *Pastor James L. Upchurch*

• **Trinity Baptist Church**, 216 Shelburne Rd., Asheville, NC 28806, 704/254-2187 www.tbcasheville.org *Pastor Ralph Sexton, Jr.*

• **Central Baptist Church**, 6050 Plain View Hwy., Dunn, NC 28334, 910/892-7914, www.cbcdunn.com *Pastor Tom Wagoner*

• **Berean Baptist Church & Academy**, 517 Glenford Dr., Fayetteville, NC 28314, 910/868-5156, www.bbcfnc.org *Pastor Sean Harris*

OHIO

• **Bible Baptist Church**, 990 W. Main, Mt. Orab, OH 45154, 937/444-2493 *Pastor Charles Smith*

• **Ashland Ave. Baptist Church**, P.O. Box 86, 4255 Ashland Ave., Norwood, OH 45212, 513/531-3626 *Pastor Jerry E. Jones*

• **First Baptist Church**, 1233 US Rt. 42, Ashland, OH 44805, 419/289-3636 *Pastor F. R. "Butch" White*

• **Calvary Baptist Church**, 516 W. Sunset Dr., Rittman, OH 44270, 330/925-5506 *Pastor Tim LaBouf*

OREGON

• **Tri-City Baptist Temple**, 18025 S. E. Webster Rd., Gladstone, OR 97027, 503/655-9326 *Pastor Ken McCormick*

RHODE ISLAND

• **Ocean State Baptist Church**, 600 Douglas Pike, Smithfield, RI 02917, 401/231-1980 *Pastor Archie Emerson*

TEXAS

• **Central Baptist Church**, 2855 Greenhouse Rd., Houston, TX 77084, 281/492-2689 *Pastor Larry Maddox*

• **First Baptist Church of Meadowview**, 4346 N Galloway Ave., Mesquite, TX 75150, 214/391-7176 *Pastor R.D. Wade*

• **First Baptist Church**, Hwy. 64, Wright City, TX 75750, 903/839-2700 www.firstbaptistwrightcity.com *Pastor Rohn M. Boone*

• **North Park Baptist Church**, 4401 Theiss Rd., Humble, TX 77338, 281/821-2258 *Pastor Randy Harp*

• **Berean Baptist Church**, 302 N. Town East Blvd., Mesquite, TX 75182, 972/226-7803 *Pastor David Mills*

• **Cypress Creek Baptist Church**, 21870 Northwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77429, 281/469-6089 *Pastor Carl Hughes*

• **Talley Rd. Baptist Church**, 3120 Talley Rd., San Antonio, TX 78253, 210/862-3108, www.talleyroadbaptistchurch.org trbc@satx.rr.com, *Pastor Larry Bruce*

VIRGINIA

• **Faith Baptist Church**, 3768 S. Amherst Hwy., Madison Heights, VA 24572, 434/929-1430 *Pastor Brian Hudson*

• **Central Baptist Church**, 13910 Minnieville Rd. Woodbridge, VA 22193, 703/583-1717, office@cbcwoodbridge.org, *Pastor Brad Weniger*

WEST VIRGINIA

• **Fellowship Baptist Church**, U.S. Rt. 60 E. at Huntington Mall, Barboursville, WV 25504, 304/736-8006 *Pastor Jerry Warren*

INTERNATIONAL

BELGIUM
• **Grace International Baptist Church**, Bruges, Belgium 8200 913/871-8901 VOIP, www.gibc.be *Pastor Tim J. Downs*

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(Sources: Constitution and Bylaws of the BBFI and The BBFI Contact Directory)

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Stuart and me

Mark Milioni | President, Baptist Bible College

I was saddened to learn that ESPN announcer Stuart Scott died January 4, 2015, following a seven-year battle with a rare form of cancer. I have closely followed his story for a very personal reason.

I vividly remember lying in a hospital bed in November of 2007 in the Cleveland Clinic. I was watching television when a special news report was broadcast on ESPN. Scott had been covering a Steelers Monday-Night Football game in Pittsburgh when he was taken to the hospital for an emergency appendectomy. That is where our stories began to merge. My wife had taken me to the emergency room in October where I was diagnosed with appendicitis. At my follow-up appointment with the surgeon, I received the news that my appendicitis had been caused by a tumor. I had never even heard of appendiceal cancer until my diagnosis, and now, ESPN was announcing that Stuart Scott had the same disease! He was the only other person I knew who was fighting this particular kind of cancer. I had someone I could relate to.

Appendiceal cancer is rare; fewer than 1,000 people are diagnosed with it each year in the U.S. Treatment includes extensive surgery, chemotherapy, and other invasive procedures. Scott and I both learned that the typical prognosis for our type of cancer is not promising, and 80 percent do not survive beyond five years. My surgery in November was the beginning of a very difficult year, after which I was on my way to a full, cancer-free recovery. Scott's story took a different path. He faced a recurrence of his cancer in 2011 and then again in 2013.

When I read about his death it shook me. It saddened me. It made me reflect on life. I have never met Stuart Scott, but we were brother soldiers in a battle together — partners in a project, teammates trying to defeat a common enemy.

Scott summarized the battle, "When you die that does not mean that you lose to cancer. You beat cancer by how you live, why you live, and the manner in which you live. So live. Live."

My battle against this insidious cancer left me with a heart of compassion. It hurts to hear of my fellow soldier's death in his well-fought battle. This heart of compassion also aches for my other band of brothers — my fellow pastors. Every week I hear about a pastor going through tough times. His battle may be caused by a disgruntled member, a disappointing staff, declining finances, or he may simply feel that despite his valiant efforts and an occasional victory, the war just cannot be won. My heart aches for you. I may not know you personally, but I do recognize your hurt, your

concern, and your worry. I understand. I have been there. My heart is right there with you, praying for you and ready to encourage you.

Don't give up, my brother. Don't give in. Don't quit. There is too much at stake. If you give up, who will be left to proclaim the saving grace of Jesus? Remember that ultimately the battle is the Lord's. So live. Live. Live for Him.

Scott's death served as a wakeup call to me. How blessed and precious life is, no matter how long it may be. God reminds us of this in James 4:14, "For what is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time, and then vanishes away." We do not know how long our lives may last, but we can use all the time we have left

to focus on what will last. What are the only two things that last for eternity? Answer: The Word of God and the souls of people. With this thought in mind, I encourage you to ponder these questions.

What am I doing with the life God has given me?

I ask myself this question daily. Am I where I should be, or have I let sin, pride, or even laziness keep me from becoming all that God has designed me to be?

How can I be the most influential for Christ?

I loved being a pastor and never considered leaving this calling until I received a call from BBC. Then this question became most real for me — do I remain a pastor and reach my city, or do I share my knowledge of ministry to enable others to reach the world?

What am I doing that is not effective?

I constantly evaluate. What works? What doesn't? What wastes time? How much time do we spend as pastors complaining and arguing with each other? Imagine what could happen if we used our words to encourage and lift each other up instead of criticizing the methods, music, and ministries of others.

What am I doing that will last?

Am I reading, memorizing, and teaching the Word of God? Am I developing relationships with others that will draw them to Christ? Am I loving my wife and family the way Christ loved the church?

What do I need to change?


So, here's to living a life focused on what is important, letting go of what is not, and appreciating the life and family we have. Thanks Stuart for helping me realize what I have been given. I will live. Live. Live for Him.

You beat cancer by how
you live, why you live,
and the manner in which
you live. So live. Live.

- Stuart Scott

FEBRUARY 2015

PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1  MISSIONARY Joe & Sherran Flippin <i>Brazil</i>	2  CHAPLAIN Lt. Elliott & Gail Barrowclough <i>U.S. Army National Guard</i>	3  MISSIONARY Arlan & Lana Payne <i>Seminole Indians</i>	4  T.E.A.M. MISSIONARIES Joshua & Brenda Casey <i>Belgium</i>	5  MISSIONARY Frank & Marjorie Thompson <i>England</i>	6  MISSIONARY Karen Kolb <i>Philippines</i>	7  MISSIONARY Jim & Gerri McCarty <i>SMORS</i>
8  MISSIONARY Ramon & Annette Perez <i>Costa Rica</i>	9  MISSIONARY Charles & Elda Coleman <i>Retired</i>	10  MISSIONARY Steve & Pam Thornton <i>Argentina</i>	11  MISSIONARY Leilonni Hamilton <i>Mexico</i>	12  MISSIONARY James & Dana Kastl <i>New Zealand</i>	13  Workers in Restricted Countries	14  MISSIONARY Shane & Kayti Salmon <i>Thailand</i>
15  MISSION OFFICE Steve Bender <i>Associate Mission Director</i>	16  MISSIONARY Hank & Nancy Mantonya <i>Brazil</i>	17  Baptist Bible Tribune	18  MISSIONARY Sam & Carita Masters <i>Argentina</i>	19  MISSIONARY Susan Perkins <i>Haiti</i>	20  MISSIONARY Joe & Sylvia Wells <i>Retired</i>	21  MISSIONARY Don & Joy Williams <i>France</i>
22  MISSIONARY George & Betty Lewis <i>Canada</i>	23  BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE David Melton <i>President</i>	24  MISSIONARY Don & LuJean Stone <i>Hong Kong</i>	25  MISSIONARY Rick & Jaimie Owens <i>Wales</i>	26  MISSIONARY Justin Rhodes <i>England</i>	27  MISSIONARY Doug & Eva Doan <i>Lithuania</i>	28  T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Nathan & Tiffany Foltz <i>Tanzania</i>

As is the business of tailors to make clothes and cobblers to make shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.
Martin Luther

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**"CHRIST ALSO SUFFERED FOR US, LEAVING US AN
EXAMPLE, THAT YE SHOULD FOLLOW HIS STEPS."**

1 PETER 2:21