



CELEBRATING THE TIES THAT BIND AND THE JOYS WE FIND



THE 65TH GRADUATION FELLOWSHIP WEEK

By the *Tribune*, with additional photos provided by Luke Turner

Since 1951, pastors, missionaries, and church members affiliated with the Baptist Bible Fellowship have gathered in May to review Fellowship progress and to cheer one another on in their service for God. The three-and-one-half days of meetings, worship, and good company is often extended by those coming early or leaving late, but whatever the schedule, whatever the weather, and whatever the world's outer condition, the people of the Baptist Bible Fellowship love to be around one another, and Graduation Fellowship Week provides one of the best opportunities to do that.

Meeting host and BBC President Mark Milioni wanted to honor the past but he also wanted to lay out some ideas for the future.

These photos and notes on the highlights will tell the story of how that went.

MISSION HIGHLIGHTS

Three couples and one single career missionary were approved Wednesday. The missionaries and their fields are T.J. and Kimberly Gritts (Spain), Janice Hickey (Ecuador), Jaron and Nicki Rogers (Nicaragua), and Jonathan and Anna Saliba (Colombia). An additional family was approved to go to a Creative Access Nation, and they may be contacted through the BBFI Mission Office.

TEAM (short-term) missionaries approved were Katie Bishop (Taiwan), Michael Cox (Mexico), Lu May (Thailand), Rebecca

McMurphy (Thailand), Josh and Erin Taylor (Honduras), and Michael Todd (Peru).

Military chaplains approved and endorsed were 1LT Joseph Isip (U.S. Army Reserve), 1LT Nathanael Logan (U.S. Army Reserve), and Courtney Merchant (CPT pending commissioning – U.S. Army).

Greg and Nina Hunt (Taiwan and Canada) and Bob and Janice Marshall (Wales) received their 30-year pins, while Dean and Deloris McClure (Brazil), Jerry and Shari Pierce (Retired SMORS), and Frank and Finetti Howell (Retired Philippines) were recognized for their 50 years of service as BBFI missionaries (the Howells were unable to attend).

Two milestones were also announced during the meeting. In the Fellowship's 65-



ALUMNI & FRIENDS BANQUET



PRESIDENTIAL RECEPTION & CAR SHOW



CLASS OF 1960 REUNION



OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP

year history, the Mission Office has processed more than \$1 billion for worldwide evangelism. This past year saw the total given rise to \$1,078,040,254 toward missions through the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Also, Greg Lyons announced the enrollment of their one-millionth camper through the camp ministries in the Philippines.

COMMENCEMENT

Thursday morning, BBC held its 65th annual commencement. The address was given by Elmer Towns, Dean of the School of Religion at Liberty University and a longtime friend and student of the Baptist Bible Fellowship (an edited version of the address is published in this magazine). The seminary conferred 12

degrees. The undergraduate college conferred 32 degrees and one certificate in the ministry division, and 22 degrees in the professional studies division.

BUSINESS MEETING

With Keith Bassham's announcement that he will be resigning from the *Tribune* at the end of the year, President Eddie Lyons and the Executive Committee proposed expanding the communication role of the *Tribune* office and renaming the editor's post BBFI Director of Communications. A complete job description and application process will be in place June 1, and those interested in the new position should contact BBFI Secretary Paul Foster at secretary@bbfi.org.

The Mission Office budget was viewed and approved, and the vice presidents reported the work and progress made by the colleges, APEX (church planting), and other BBFI entities. President Lyons also announced a committee had been formed to review and revise certain parts of the BBFI Constitution and Bylaws to bring them up to date and to reconcile inconsistencies. Paul Foster encouraged pastors to attend the international meeting in Korea next March 14-17. Details are available from the Mission Office and in the *Tribune*. A "Church Revitalization Seminary" will also take place in southern California February 16-18, 2016.

Other future BBFI meetings take place at High Street Baptist Church, Springfield, MO,



September 14-16, 2015, and Cape Cod Church, Cape Cod, MA, September 19-21, 2016.

THE PREACHERS

Preachers Jerry Thorpe, Ben Feldott, D. L. Moody, Eddie Lyons, David Janney, Ronnie Floyd, Mark Milioni, and Ed Trinkle all made it their business to encourage and to inspire a Fellowship to work together, to value one another, to lift up Jesus, to dream, to plant churches, and to take risks. While there was plenty of material to keep up the interest, the preachers were all involved in serious business and they did the work for which they were appointed. It would be difficult to find a more able group to press the causes of our Fellowship.

THE FAITHFUL

Three Baptist Bible College professors were presented the Fellowship Faithfulness Award: Shirley McCullough, Bill Dowell, Jr., and Richard Bemarkt.

Shirley McCullough has taught in the Business Department at BBC since 1974, and hundreds of churches have benefitted from her work in the classroom. Dowell is a well-known name at BBC. Bill Dowell, Sr. was one of our founders and served as a BBC vice president and president. His son, Bill Dowell, Jr., taught at BBC nearly 40 years teaching Bible, theology, and communications to countless future pastors and missionaries in the Fellowship. Richard Bemarkt taught at BBC 43 years, covering classes for everything from Greek to youth ministry. The versatility, enthusiasm, and dedication to the students in their charge provide a model for all those who want to have a lasting influence for God in this world.





A FELLOWSHIP CONNECTION TO NEPAL



FELLOWSHIP FAITHFULNESS AWARDS



Gritts



Saliba



CAREER

T.J. and Kimberly Gritts — Spain
 Sending Church: Seminole Baptist Temple, Springfield, MO
 Contact Info: (417) 881-4200, tj.gritts@bbfmissions.org

Janice Hickey — Ecuador
 Sending Church: First Baptist Church of Meadowview, Mesquite, TX
 Contact Info: (214) 391-7176, janice.hickey@bbfmissions.org

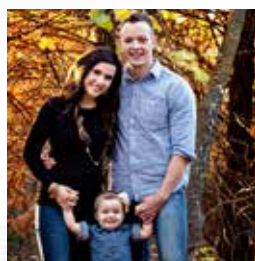
Jaron and Nicki Rogers — Nicaragua
 Sending Church: First Baptist Church, Webster, TX
 Contact Info: (251) 332-4041, jaron.rogers@bbfmissions.org

Jonathan and Anna Saliba — Colombia
 Sending Church: Graceway Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
 Contact Info: (417) 887-0212, jonathan.saliba@bbfmissions.org

One family has been approved as Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionaries to a Creative Access Nation. They may be contacted through the Mission Office.



Hickey



Rogers

NEWLY APPROVED MISSIONARIES

TEAM

Katie Bishop — Taiwan
 Host Missionaries: David and Cherie Green
 Sending Church: Cherry Street Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
 Contact Info: (417) 889-1999, katie.bishop@bbfmissions.org

Michael Cox — Mexico
 Host Missionaries: Adolfo and April Ruesga
 Sending Church: High Street Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
 Contact Info: (417) 862-5502, michael.cox@bbfmissions.org

Lu May — Thailand
 Host Missionaries: Ricky and Tammy Salmon
 Sending Church: Friendship Baptist Church, Wichita, KS
 Contact Info: (316) 263-0269, lu.may@bbfmissions.org

Rebecca McMurphy — Thailand
 Host Missionaries: Ricky and Tammy Salmon
 Sending Church: Cherry Street Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
 Contact Info: (417) 889-1999 or at rebecca.mcmurphy@bbfmissions.org

Josh and Erin Taylor — Honduras
 Host Missionaries: Miguel and Christina Lopez
 Sending Church: Calvary Bible Baptist Church, Westerville, OH
 Contact Info: (614) 891-1250, josh.taylor@bbfmissions.org

Michael Todd — Peru
 Host Missionary: David and Tonya Liles
 Sending Church: High Street Baptist Church, Springfield, MO
 Contact Info: (417) 862-5502, michael.todd@bbfmissions.org

CHAPLAINS

1LT Joseph Isip has been endorsed as chaplain to the U.S. Army Reserves.
 Sending church: Calvary Baptist Church, Bellflower, CA

1LT Nathanael Logan U.S. Army Reserves
 Sending Church: Seminole Baptist Temple, Springfield, MO

Courtney Merchant (CPT pending commissioning) has been endorsed as chaplain to the U.S. Army.

