

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

JANUARY 2009 | VOL. 59 NO. 5 | \$1.95

*Be still,  
my soul:*

*thy God doth undertake  
To guide the future, as He has the past.  
Thy hope, thy confidence let nothing shake;  
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.  
Be still, my soul: the waves and winds still know  
His voice Who ruled them while He dwelt below.*

*-Katharina von Schlegel, 1752*

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VOL. 59 NO. 5

# BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

J A N U A R Y 2 0 0 9

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## From Crisis Control to Christ Control

Calvary Baptist's mission week was interrupted by approaching wildfires, but that didn't stop the church family and guests from reaching out.



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## The Baseline of Life

Sometimes we forget that, even though we're not on the peak, thanks to Christ's hand in our lives, we're not mired down in the valley.



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## Global Partners: LOOK

This issue of GP emphasizes the need to look around, upward, inward, and outward if we're going to reach our world with the gospel.



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The Baptist Bible Tribune (ISSN 0745-5836) is published monthly, except for a combined July/August issue, by the BBFI, 720 E. Kearney, Springfield, Missouri 65803. Periodical class postage paid at Springfield, Missouri, and other mailing offices.

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**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** Individual subscriptions are \$15 per year anywhere in the U.S.; \$20 per year in foreign countries. Postmaster send address changes to: Baptist Bible Tribune, P. O. Box 309, Springfield, Missouri 65801, 417-831-3996, fax 417-831-1470.

*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.*

# On the Table

By Keith Bassham



## So, what's new?

**N**othing, actually, according to Solomon in Ecclesiastes. Newness for us is more like using the phrase, "We have a new car. It is used, but I mean it is new to us." So in that sense, 2009 is a new year because we have yet to experience all that will occur the next 12 months. As the various authors in this issue of the Tribune write, we will experience new challenges, new joys, new heart-breaks ... well, you get the picture. And that whole package of newness is illustrated on the cover of this magazine, for our proper response to that 2009 version of time is captured in the lyric, "Be still, my soul."

We do have something new for the reader in this issue, though (with the caveat I referenced in the first paragraph). Global Partners is here as well, along with the usual columns and news articles.

Meanwhile, Newsweek magazine has decided to enter the same-sex marriage debate with a large noise. The cover title for the December 15 issue is "The Religious Case for Gay Marriage," and the feature essay, "Our Mutual Joy," is written by religion editor Lisa Miller. According to Miller, there is no serious argument for a traditional one-man/one-woman marriage to be taken from the Bible (she uses Old Testament examples of polygamy for examples), celibacy is the ideal ("family stability is the best alternative"), and arguments against same-sex marriage are not rooted in the Bible but in tradition.

For the record, most of what Ms. Miller writes is not new. The arguments she makes are easily refuted. For instance, she says in one place that neither the Bible nor Jesus explicitly

define marriage "as between one man and one woman," when it is obvious that Jesus does just this in Matthew 19, and he quotes Genesis 2:24-25 to make the point. Another of Ms. Miller's assertions is that the Bible does not refer to sexual acts between women, when women are explicitly mentioned in Romans 1:26: "... for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature ..."

Other arguments previously encountered (and adequately answered) include her qualifying the Levitical phrases about homosexuality as "throwaway lines," and intimating that David and Jonathan shared a homosexual relationship. But, I am accustomed to major news magazines' religion editors taking the side of the most progressive (they don't like to be called liberal) wing of Christendom (I don't like them being called Christianity), but editor Jon Meacham (some of whose religious essays I have found very well-informed) has decided to put some oomph behind Ms. Miller. According to Mr. Meacham, "No matter what one thinks about gay rights — for, against or somewhere in between — this conservative resort to biblical authority is the worst kind of fundamentalism ... to argue that something is so because it is in the Bible is more than intellectually bankrupt — it is unserious, and unworthy of the great Judeo-Christian tradition."

To which Richard Land, who heads the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, says "It doesn't surprise me. Newsweek has been so far in the tank on the homosexual issue, for so long, they need scuba gear and breathing apparatus. I don't think it's going to change

the minds of anyone who takes biblical teachings seriously."

So there is the rub. Newsweek says taking the Bible seriously is, in actuality, "unserious, and unworthy." The question for Mr. Meacham and Ms. Miller and their peers is this: if you take the Bible seriously on the questions of the existence of one and only one God, other moral issues, or the teachings of Jesus, or the universality of the application of those teachings (the two essays by Mr. Meacham and Ms. Miller assert they do take these things seriously, and Ms. Miller writes at one point, "We cannot look to the Bible as a marriage manual, but we can read it for universal truths as we struggle toward a more just future.") on the premise that they are rooted in both the Bible and "the great Judeo-Christian tradition," how do you explain your rejection of the historic teaching of Christianity regarding homosexuality? And further, if the "unserious" and "unworthy" fundamentalism is embraced by such a narrow sliver of the American population, how do you explain such a large majority of that same population agreeing with "the worst kind of fundamentalism" that same-sex marriage should be rejected? Surely the fundamentalists have not been able to pull that much wool over that many eyes.

One thing is certain from this bit of news. Newsweek and other allies of the homosexual activist movement clearly expect that Bible-believing Christianity will be the largest (and perhaps the only serious) roadblock in their way toward a fully accepted and socially legitimated homosexual lifestyle.

Let us not lower their expectations.



# PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

Rob Hoffman | Second Vice President : Education | Baptist Bible Fellowship International



## BBFI colleges are your best choice

Recently, Chris, one of our single college students, told me how he was humiliated and mocked by his professor and other students at the University of Tennessee over a statement he made concerning religion in answer to a professor's question. This was in Knoxville, in the middle of the Bible belt.

No doubt thousands of eager young adults leave our student ministries and Christian schools every fall to attend secular universities all over America. They leave with a desire to grow and learn, and more often than not, a desire to please the Lord. These are young lives searching for their place in a treacherous academic world. At risk are the hearts and minds of our most precious commodity — our future. What they will encounter in the secular university setting is frightening:

- A Darwinian view of origins that degrades humanity to the level of every other species.
- A humanistic view of authority that places man at the center of his own universe, responsible to no one.
- A hedonistic view of ethics and morality that removes any barriers to decency.
- Either atheism or a pluralism that replaces the Creator God with a small god incapable of anything spectacular, whoever he (or she) may be.

In short, the character, values, morality, and faith you have faithfully taught them will face an onslaught of attacks by the very people you have taught them to respect: their professors, mentors, and friends. It is time we ask: why send our students to

schools where they will be exposed to those who cause students to doubt their faith and values?

In recent years, we have seen a strong emergence of Christian schools and universities that offer wonderful opportunities for our students to gain a well-rounded biblical worldview and an education academically equivalent to any school in America. Many of these schools are world-class in the sense that their professors, staff, and academics are second to none, equal or surpassing that of secular universities. But I would like to take that one step further and say that our BBFI academic institutions are the best choice for our students.

Our BBFI schools are especially well-equipped to train students to live in a generation whose worldview is warped, whose view of historic Christianity is blurred, and whose view of self is scandalized.

- They teach a foundational worldview built around the historic doctrines of the Christian faith. The BBFI holds a unique view of church life, and our schools mirror that uniqueness. We are a Baptist fellowship and our schools are Baptist schools. At our schools your students will learn the unique place of Baptists in church history and the principles of church government and doctrine that make us distinct.
- Students learn an historic and biblical worldview of the environment in which God is the Creator and Sustainer, and man is the manager of all that is around him.
- Students have a more personalized education. The professor-to-student ratio intentionally allows your stu-

dents to interact with professors and staff who are ministry and local-church minded.

- Students will be members of a local church while at college, with a pastor and staff who care for them and where they are provided with opportunities for internship and ministry in a unique local-church setting.
- Students learn that evangelism is a priority in life and will learn strategies that will enhance their ability to win their generation to Christ.
- Students learn loyalty to the pastor and staff of their local churches.
- Students learn the biblical view of sexuality missing in our culture and will be held to high standards of Christian ethics and morality.
- Because of their excellent accreditation and relationship with other schools in their area (our two BBFI-owned schools have regional accreditation on par with secular schools in their area), even when a student must take subjects not normally a part of Bible college education, such as nursing, etc., students are able to stay on our campus and take classes at other schools in town.

In a time when historic Christianity is being attacked every day in media, academia, and government, we can't afford to lose one student to their claims. Our BBFI schools have academic excellence, balanced standards, and a worldview that will set the feet of our students on a solid foundation for life. Pastors, I challenge you to actively promote BBFI schools among your high school students and single young adults. These schools are worthy of your students and your financial support.

# BBFI NATIONAL MEETING

# WITH

FEBRUARY 16-18, 2009

CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH  
HOUSTON, TEXAS

# ETERNITY IN VIEW



**Larry Maddox**  
Host Pastor

**It has been said that things are bigger in Texas, and I agree!** The

Central Baptist Church family is extending a big welcome as you join us for the BBFI National Meeting in February. We are anticipating the biggest and best meeting ever and your attendance will make that happen.

The City of Houston is a booming metropolis with a million things to do and to see. We hope you will avail yourself of the opportunity to explore our city.

Please make plans now to be here as we are challenged to be more aware of our individual responsibilities to the Lord and to His people "With Eternity In View".

## GOLF TOURNAMENT

### CINCO RANCH GOLF CLUB

Thursday, Feb. 19  
8:00 AM

\$50 per person  
(includes lunch)

Call 281-492-2689  
for reservations



**Madeline Nelson**  
Ladies Ministry  
Coordinator,  
Central Baptist

**Madeline Nelson** will be the guest speaker for a ladies meeting on Wednesday morning. **The Women's Ministry** reaches out to the women of Central Baptist Church by offering activities that encourage service and fellowship.

Two of the many activities are:

**Threads of Love** is a ministry to the families of premature babies in the NICU of a local hospital. We sew, crochet and knit premie sized baby items and blankets.

**The Mentoring Ministry** pairs women for the purpose of encouragement, friendship and accountability for one year.







# SCHEDULE

## Monday

### Evening

**Ray Redmon,**  
Missionary to Korea

**Bruce Humbert,**  
Richton Park, IL

## Tuesday

### Morning

**Pat Finley,** Winchester, KY

**Richard Edwards,**  
Jacksonville, FL

**Wayne Guinn,** National  
Church Planting Office

### Afternoon

### Breakout Sessions

### Evening

**Lance Patterson,**  
Missionary to Kenya

**Gary Grey,** Springfield, MO

## Wednesday

### Morning

**John Westfall,**  
East Greenbush, NY

**Tom Wagoner,** Dunn, NC

**Keith Bassham,**  
Tribune Editor

### Afternoon

**Shopping,** Memorial City Mall

### Evening

**Greg Lyons,**  
Missionary to the **Philippines**

**Johnny Hunt,** Woodstock, GA

# SPEAKERS



Bruce Humbert



Ray Redmon



Pat Finley



Richard Edwards



Wayne Guinn



Lance Patterson



Gary Grey



John Westfall



Tom Wagoner



Keith Bassham



Greg Lyons



Johnny Hunt

## HOTELS

LaQuinta - \$79.00 per night,  
King and Double same rate  
15225 Katy Freeway  
Houston, Texas 281-646-9200  
We have 75 rooms reserved at this hotel.

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Katy, Texas 77450  
281-395-4800

Candlewood Suites  
\$129.99 per night with full kitchen  
19998 Park Row Drive - off the Katy Freeway  
Houston, Texas 77449 281-578-9993

Hampton Inn and Suites  
\$119.00 per night (standard)  
22055 Katy Freeway  
Katy, Texas 77450 281-392-1000

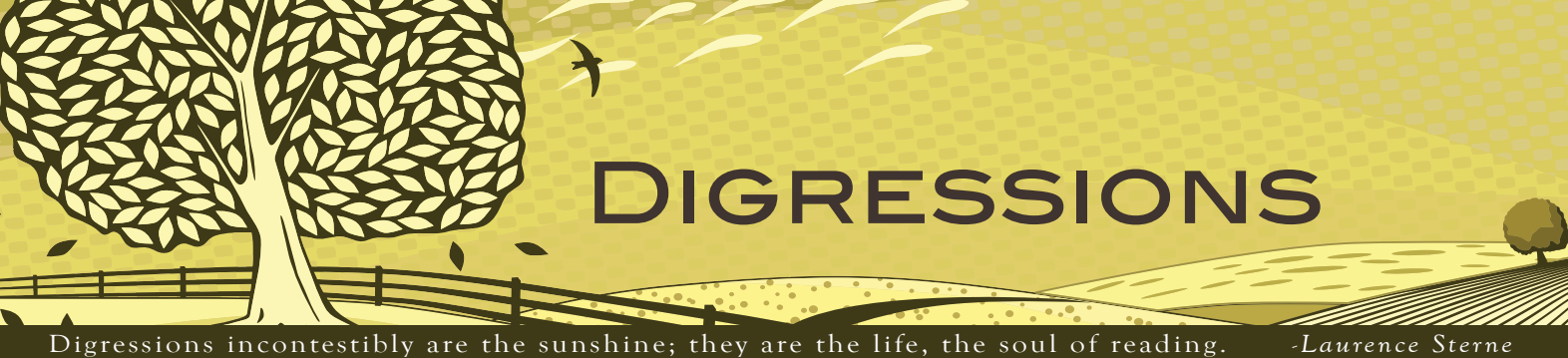
Spring Hill Suites (Marriott)  
\$154.00 King - \$149 Double  
2501 Texmati Drive  
Katy, Texas 77494 281-644-4455

Comfort Inn & Suites  
\$118.50 - 2Q/King - Suite - \$135.15  
32025 Interstate 10 West at Mason Road  
Katy, Texas 77450 281-392-8700

Super 8 Motel - \$95.00 to \$105.00  
22157 Katy Freeway  
Katy, Texas 77450 281-395-5757

Crown Plaza Hotel - \$139 per night  
I-10 West (Katy Freeway) at Hwy 6  
Houston, TX 77079 281-558-5580





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

-Laurence Sterne

## Church uses text messaging to get congregation connected

In an effort to increase retention levels and help the congregation grow spiritually, one Florida church found a way to stay on people's minds throughout the week — text messaging. Assisted by technology from Fellowship Technologies, the church asked for volunteers who would receive and read Bible verses daily via text message. One hundred twenty-five people committed to reading the text-format verses for a 30-day period. Tracked with management software from Fellowship Technologies, the results showed that those who participated became more involved in other ministry opportunities in the months to follow. Getting people involved and growing spiritually takes time, but if you have to start somewhere, why not start simple and utilize a method that most people are already comfortable with and (literally) attached to?



Source: *Target Marketing*, December 2008, "Retaining the Flock" by Heather Fletcher; p 11.

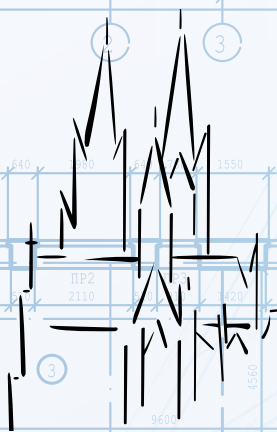
## Churched or Unchurched?

An Ellison Research study shows that trying to list Americans in either the "churched" or "unchurched" category may not give an actual understanding of church attendance. Of the individuals surveyed who considered themselves "churched", 63% attend at least once a week. The remaining 37% can be broken down as attending three times per month (12%), twice per month (16%) and once a month (9%). The end result is that a quarter of Americans who consider themselves churched, may only attend once or twice per month. Survey results indicate that rather than two categories, an accurate picture of church attendance is as follows:

- 11%** More than once a week
- 22%** Once a week
- 14%** Two to three times a month
- 5%** Once a month
- 9%** Occasionally, but not on a regular basis
- 10%** Only on religious holidays
- 29%** Do not attend at all

Source: Ellison Research, [www.ellisonresearch.com/release/20080714.htm](http://www.ellisonresearch.com/release/20080714.htm)

## Study shows unchurched prefer gothic church architecture



In an age where church architecture has become noticeably more functional and less about stained glass and steeples, unchurched Americans ages 25-32 gave 58.9 of 100 possible preference points to church buildings that were more gothic in outward appearance when compared to more modern architecture. According to a LifeWay Research online survey

taken by 1,684 adults who had not attended any kind of church within the previous six months (except for special days or events), the majority of people were more attracted to traditional church architecture than a contemporary functional design. In a society mesmerized by outward appearance, it comes as a small surprise that "More than half of the unchurched indicated

the design of a church building would impact their enjoyment of a visit to church." Yet the survey also speaks to the fact that even unchurched Americans associate church architecture with something that appears foundational and unchanged.

Source: *Baptist Press*, "Architecture survey: Unchurched prefer traditional styling for churches outside, in" by Tobin Perry, [www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=27767](http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?id=27767)

*In the* **NEWS of the WEEK**

**GLENVILLE BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH**

**J. J. Adrian, Pastor**

**Wichita, Kansas**

To The Tribune:

We thank God for the way He has blessed us during the past 2½ years since we got started. Our Sunday school average for November was 181. In December the attendance was 197, 183, 280, and 173, respectively. The average for December was 208.

We made a \$200 Christmas missionary offering pledge at Fort Worth, and the Lord gave us \$3 more than that. This was our first

Christmas missionary offering, and we had only a few weeks to raise it.

We closed the old year and opened the new year with a week of revival services. Rev. G. E. Caskey, Winfield, Kan., was the evangelist. The Lord blessed the meeting in a wonderful way, several were saved and several families united with the church. Our desire is to serve the Lord more faithfully in this coming year, redeeming the time in 1959. **J. J. ADRIAN.**

High Street Baptist church, Springfield, Mo., **W. E. Dowell**, pastor, had a total offering of \$14,615.34 on Dec. 21. It was missionary day.

First Mount Pleasant Baptist church, Franklin, Ind., **Frank Collins**, pastor, had 312 in Sunday school on Dec. 21 and a total offering for the day of \$3,482.50. It was missionary Sunday.

South Side Baptist church, Springfield, Mo., **Fred Neidy**, pastor, had 439 in Sunday school Dec. 21 and a total offering for the day of \$2,999.11. It was missionary day.

Bible Baptist church, Fredonia, Kan., **W. L. Smith**, pastor, had 169 in Sunday school Dec. 21 and an offering for the day of \$600.

Gideon Baptist church, Wichita, Kan., **Martin Ralston**, pastor, had 450 in Sunday school Dec. 28 and an offering for the day of \$800.

Grace Baptist church, Amarillo, Tex., **M. O. Garner**, pastor, observed the pastor's 6th anniversary on Jan. 4. There were 338 in Sunday

school, four additions by baptism, five by letter, and a total offering for the day of \$510.

A revival in Bible Baptist church, Miami, Fla., **George E. Ziemer**, pastor, resulted in 52 professions of faith in Christ.

Bible Baptist church was organized at Hobbs, N. M., on Dec. 14 with 35 charter members. Rev. **Bill Purdy** of Amarillo, Tex., was called as pastor of the congregation, which is temporarily holding services in the Elks Hall. Sunday following the organization, 60 were present for Sunday school, there were five additions to the church, and the offering for the day totaled \$212.25.

Westside Baptist church, Staunton, Va., **Sam Whitfield**, pastor, has adopted a \$12,000 budget for 1959. A special Christmas offering totaled \$430.72. Last year, there were 35 additions to the church, 29 of them by a profession of faith in Christ.

printed January 16, 1959

Growing a Virtual Church?

When Linden Lab launched Second Life as an online virtual world in 2003, the goal was to provide a way for people to mingle and live through personalities called avatars, which users create. Living as a virtual resident in Second Life enables users to earn money (L\$ is the currency), buy and sell items, and interact with other visitors. There are no missions or points to gather so it's not like a game, it's simply an online gathering place. And it's such a successful gathering place, that some companies (including Dell and IBM) have virtual campuses where users can visit and learn about the companies and products they sell.

In this virtual mixing pot, LifeChurch.tv hatched the idea of creating and launching a virtual church. "The church is designed for people to discuss spiritual topics because an avatar lets them ask questions that they would never ask in real life," according to Bobby Gruenwald, a pastor



at LifeChurch.tv who helped kick off the virtual church. "Yet, there's a real person behind every avatar."

When the first service was held this year, there were almost 200 Second Life residents in attendance. Accord-

ing to Gruenwald, there was a wide range of people among the group — from Christians to unbelievers who came just to see what was going on.

Source: [www.ministrytodaymag.com](http://www.ministrytodaymag.com), "Virtual Church" by John Brandon.

What makes people start church shopping?

When Protestant churchgoers switch churches within the same community, 58% say they do so because their previous church "failed to engage their faith, or put their talents to work, or it seemed hypocritical or judgmental." When it comes to choosing a new church, 42% said they left their former church because they found a church that "offered more appealing doctrines and preaching, or the preacher and church members' faith seemed more 'authentic.'"

Source: *USA TODAY*, April 22, 2007, "Dissatisfaction, yearning make churchgoers switch" by Cathy Lynn Grossman, *USA TODAY*.



Archaeologists put Martin Luther's trash on display

Looking for insight into the daily life of Martin Luther, excavations began in 2003 at Wittenberg Monastery, the building where Martin Luther was born, and his parents' house in Mansfield, Germany. At the three sites, archaeologists uncovered a variety of artifacts that were revealed at the German State Museum of Prehistory in an exhibition coinciding with Reformation Day (October 31) in 2008.



Among the items found at his parents' home were toys, food items, a wedding ring, and a stash of 250 silver coins. At the Wittenberg site, researchers focused on a waste pit filled with refuse containing parchment book bindings, tools for sharpening goose writing quills and other tools of the prolific writer's time there.

Source: *Spiegel Online International*, October 28, 2008, "Archaeologists Unveil Secrets of Luther's Life" by Matthias Schulz.





# From Crisis Control... ...to Christ Control

By Annie Gudzun, member of Calvary Baptist Church of Yorba Linda, California

**How missionaries visiting a local, sunny California church got weather warmer than expected.**

Calvary Baptist Church (CBC) of Yorba Linda has supported missionaries around the globe for over 30 years, and on Saturday, November 15, Pastor Brian Moore was planning his first missions conference. The special missionary guests included Bruce O'Neal (president of MANNA Worldwide), Bill and Marie Burr (San Luis, Mexico), BBFI Mission Director Jon Konnerup, and Lance Gotcher (Manila, Philippines). They had all arrived in Yorba Linda, California, for this special event and were planning to share their experiences and testimonies with the congregation. They were staying at hotels and with friends, preparing for the next day's events, but nearby, an innocent spark ignited somewhere alongside the freeway.

This spark grew and a small fire quickly became a wildfire, then two wildfires. Later reports said the flames destroyed 180 homes, severely damaged a high school, killed countless pets, ruined heirlooms, personal relics, family photos, and displaced thousands of families. The evacuations were sudden and frantic. Fathers, husbands, wives, mothers, grandparents, and

children all were suddenly homeless and uncertain about the future. About 75 percent of our own congregation at Calvary had to be evacuated. However, we are grateful no one was killed.

Lance Gotcher describes his experiences: "I smelled the smoke when I walked out of my hotel room and I could see ash coming down and heard sirens all around. From my hotel window, I could still see the lines of fire burning through the hills surrounding Yorba Linda. Once the sun went down, the fires lit up the night sky with that eerie, orange glow. The whole thing just made me thankful to be alive and safe; it also made me think about family. Each day is a gift and I'm thankful for God's protection in my life. This was definitely an experience I will never forget. You never know what a day will hold; all of your dreams — your house, your life — could literally go up in smoke in a matter of hours."

Lance, his wife, Melanie, and their children have been living in the Philippines for eight years and have seen homes destroyed from flooding and Typhoons. "In the Philippines, we don't have the kind of response by aid

organizations, police, and government that you do in the States. People of course are in a state of shock at first when natural disasters strike. Sometimes (what they want most) is just a shoulder to cry on or someone to show that they care," he says.

Bill and Marie Burr are long-time members of Calvary Baptist and have been commuting on missions to Mexico for the past eight years. "We constantly deal with natural disasters, mainly due to frequent sandstorms in Mexico. When the wind blows hard, the sand gets into everything, making it impossible for the people to even cook their food. The sand pollutes the water, making it even more dangerous to drink. It is not for us to know why (these things happen) only to reach out and pray."

Bruce O'Neal was also staying at a local hotel in which the flames came right up to the parking lot. He describes his dealings with victims of natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes: "Besides the immediate needs of food and shelter, people need to be mentally comforted. They want someone to speak with, someone who will sit down, pray with them, and





**Far left: A wall of flames approaches Yorba Linda. Center: Only charred rubble remained where Calvary Baptist Church member Becky Bates' home once stood. Inset: Calvary Baptist pastor Brian Moore. Top right: Fire crews respond to a blazing hillside.**

listen to them about their personal experiences."

Jon Konnerup had to walk a mile and a half back to his hotel after they closed the roads off that led up to it. A small inconvenience compared to many. He witnessed our community and our church in a time of crisis and went on to say, "We (the missionaries) are used to being the ones 'putting out fires' around the world. This time the emergency was here in Yorba Linda and we were blessed and impressed to see Calvary Baptist pull their forces together, reach out, and help the community."

Calvary Baptist Church of Yorba Linda did not miss a beat. During the first hours of the fire, our staff members immediately phoned all our members. They made sure all evacuees had shelter, food, medicine, childcare, whatever they needed. For those without a place to go, many of our church members opened their homes to displaced families. The church opened its doors as well. We had some families sleeping over in the youth room. We prayed with many of them. Our parking lot looked like a temporary RV park.

Pastor Brian and Youth Pastor

Colston Copeland drove up through neighborhoods, helping the young, the old, and even the pregnant evacuate, and managed to pry open some garage doors for some thankful residents. Power was out and many people could not get their cars out of the garage.

Sadly, one of our longtime members, Becky Bates, did lose her home. She describes the moment she found she had lost her home. "I had to walk up that hill [to my house]. It nearly killed me. I'm not a young woman. My heart was beating 1,000 beats a minute. When I finally reached my street, several of the homes were burned down. Before I saw it, I knew my house was gone. There were so many people there. When they realized I was the homeowner they all flipped out their cameras. It was all too much to absorb."

When asked about her plans, she replied, "I'm not sure about my future, but I do know that this is all part of God's plan. I've been thinking a lot about Romans 8:28 the last couple of days. I will call upon the Lord no matter how great or small the problem. Through all of this I've found out who my true friends are. Many of my friends at Calvary have called, prayed

for me, and offered me assistance during this difficult time. This is a blessing in disguise. I received a phone call from my daughter I haven't heard from in two years. I pray that God will give me the grace to handle everything that comes my way."

Pastor Moore summed it up in a statement; "Yorba Linda, for the most part, is a very white-collar, upper-class city. It isn't often that people in our city experience heartbreaking struggles. For one weekend our congregation experienced a crisis. I'm convinced that people come to know Christ during times of trouble, tension, or transition. This experience gave our church an opportunity to be the hands and feet of Jesus. Many Christ followers sacrificially gave of their money, bought food, met and prayed with their neighbors, provided comfort to those that have lost their homes, and have showed one another the love of Christ. That was the theme for our mission conference. Our church was reminded that many around the world are in a constant state of crisis. We must take the gospel across the street and around the world. This was a missions week that our church will never forget!"



# The Baseline of Life

By Steve Van Winkle

I've been watching the news more lately. You probably have too. If we compare notes, we'd probably have the same impressions. There's less work, more uncertainty, and a general feeling of foreboding about 2009. Watching all the handwringing over the economy, it seems this New Year is beginning with something no other has

for nearly 15 years or so the culture has blared at us that the bottom line is the standard by which we should be reviewing our lives.

I think, however, that Christians should bear in mind a baseline the world never factors.

That dawned on me last Thanksgiving. My wife, Cheryl, and I were

some of the purple mountains' majesty hundreds of miles away. Bouncing over ruts (I would be lying if I called them roads), we traveled an old stagecoach trail, complete with a genuine, leftover, weathered-gray signpost along the route, through a high meadow. Along the way, we drifted through old homesteads littering the choice ground now dusted with snow under an obscenely blue sky, while the wind was pushing over the sage and the tops of the pines.

Something occurred to me up there. I could see more mountain peaks above me. They were close by, and the valley was "out there," far beneath my elevated view. I was high up, and yet, I was in a kind of valley.

I thought if I didn't know better, if I hadn't kept track of how far up I had traveled, I would look at this plateau and think it was a valley. I was looking around and realized how my perspective on life had been altered.

I have whined and complained this past year. I have felt the depths and the despondency. I have learned to distrust myself, and I re-learned lessons good

**...it seems this New Year is beginning with something no other has in recent memory: two strikes.**

in recent memory: two strikes.

I have heard and seen a lot of people take some stock of what's going on. Many people have learned lessons and many more are searching for some. It's not always easy to maintain perspective when the economy seems to be collapsing, especially considering that

with a church member whose family owns one of the oldest ranches in Montana. He invited us up to hunt elk; my usual luck prevailed as we only saw a great big herd of nothing.

But we were roaming up on a high plateau that overlooked the entire valley and brought us eye level with



men had taught me years before. But the journey to and the view from that high plateau on the Climbing Arrow Ranch helped me. It helped me regain perspective.

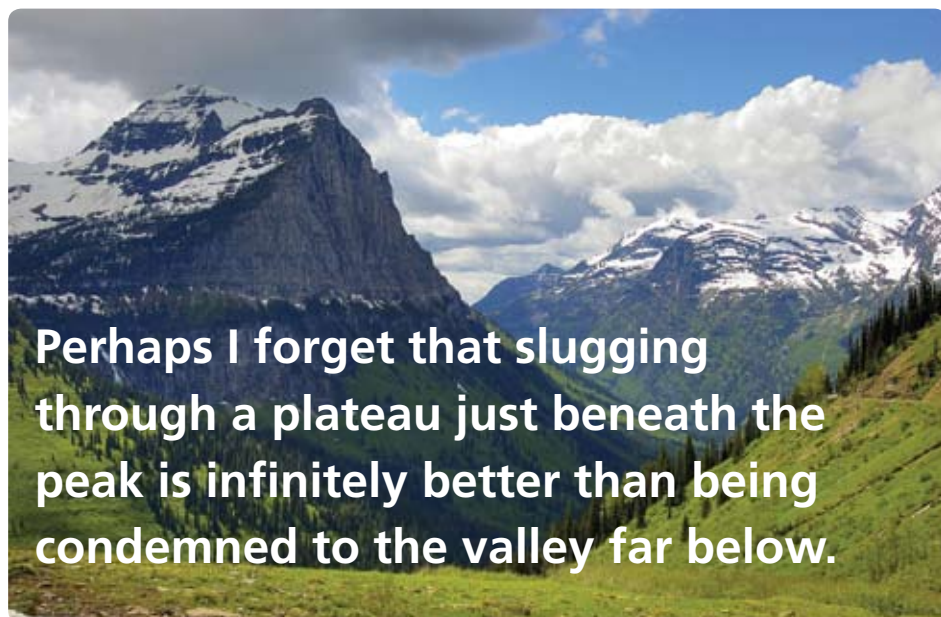
Here I am in a place where only a privileged few get to go without paying thousands of dollars, and I live in a place where only a privileged few in my vocation get to call home, and I have a church that God has pulled out of the grave with people I am privileged to know, and I have a family whom I have a hard time writing about simply because I do not have the vocabulary to describe my love and my satisfaction and my awe and my gratitude for them, and I have now known the Lord for 25 years, and I have navigated 15 years of ministry in one church without having to sell used cars, and I have written a thing or two, and I have made friends of indescribably interesting people and discovered brothers-in-arms in the ministry, and have met men along the way I cherish more than my own father, and have been given incredible and undeservedly kind words from my peers, and have been given opportunities for interesting ministry outlets by college presidents, popular authors, and an editor whom I admire greatly, and I can look out my window and watch a sky bleed to the ground over the peaks of the Bridgers, and I can read of Billy Neumann's fabulous Sunday in a tiny town and of Ron Sear's Thanksgiving Meal to hurting people, and I can remember the missionary families celebrating this holiday a world away from loved ones, and I can stop on my way home from the madness and catch brown trout with HD colors as mottled leaves fall like rain around me from a fall breeze, and I can hear my daughter sing and feel the wetness of a tear, and I can think of the sunrises I will see out hunting the next several days, bursting over the Spanish Peaks and warm a chilled deer stand, and I can make less money than I did a year ago and get a raise in blessings, and I can walk into the church I walked into originally 23 years ago and know that it is still here,

and I can see that God has the final say in everything even if I think I know the reason or the future, and I can read Noel Smith and feel a kinship I can't explain, and I can feel gut-punched at friends' health struggles, and I can get dozens of cards on Pastor Appreciation Day, and I can watch Nebraska football with my son and smile as I pass on a sweet addiction to him, and I can read the scripture and wonder at how it speaks still and teaches me still, and I can stand to preach at one of the worst times in our nation's economic history and sense that I have something to say from God, and I can think

condemned to the valley far below. I think I too often take for granted how high God has taken my life, how far up he has planted my feet; consequently, I am prone to look at the plateaus as though they were valleys.

It doesn't mean the plateaus aren't hard or painful. They are. I have never experienced such madness and uncertainty and anger and apathy as I have this past year. It's just that, every now and then, I need to remind myself that, because of Christ, I will never see the actual valley floor again.

While the world measures its worth by the bottom line, this is the



of the distances I have been able to travel preaching that Word, and I see the people in our church who God has called to the mission field and to church work, and I can read the sticky notes my daughter leaves on my desk telling me how much she loves me, and...

...And I remind myself that the valleys I trudge through are indeed long and far below the peak. But maybe, just maybe, the valley is actually a plateau high above all the sorrow and misery and pain and lostness and loneliness and addiction and depression that could have marked my life if God hadn't lifted me high above the real valley's floor. Perhaps I forget that slugging through a plateau just beneath the peak is infinitely better than being

baseline of the Christian life. It doesn't mean that the economy won't crash or that trials can be avoided or that people won't lose their jobs. It means that, for Christians, these things happen far above the valley floor, where heaven is a real hope, and brothers and sisters in Christ are genuine comfort, and biblical hope buoys all because Christ loved us and died for us.

No one knows what a day may bring forth, let alone a year. But, while the bottom line can be fickle as economies adjust and times change, the baseline of our life in Christ keeps our perspective stable and our hope constant, no matter what circumstances and situations 2009 will bring upon us all.





## America's Oldest African American Church

The founding of the First African Baptist Church of Savannah, Georgia, in 1788, is a story stranger than fiction. George Liele, the famous black preacher and missionary to Jamaica, had managed to gather a small group of converted slaves in the Savannah area. When Liele departed to Jamaica in 1783, he left his little congregation under the care of one of his converts, Andrew Bryan. Bryan's owner was in sympathy with his ministry and allowed him to build a small house of worship on his property.

However, there were certain white people in Savannah who, fearing the preaching of the gospel would lead to an uprising, were opposed to the assembling of black people without the presence of a white person. Their hostility to Bryan and his congregation resulted in many members being inhumanely beaten, whipped, and imprisoned. Andrew Bryan and his brother, Sampson, a deacon, were so cruelly cut and their backs so lacerated that their blood ran down. Andrew lifted up his hands to heaven and declared to his persecutors that he rejoiced not only to be whipped, but also to freely suffer death for the cause of Jesus Christ.

Several sympathetic whites informed Bryan that if he could persuade a white Baptist minister to officially organize his church and ordain him to the Baptist ministry, it would help legitimize him and his church. Bryan enlisted the assistance of his fellow black preacher, Jessie Peter, who explained to Abraham Marshall that blacks in Savannah were suffering for their faith. Marshall, a renowned evangelist and pastor, was always fearless in his Master's cause. Not fearing the wrath of man, he traveled by horseback 165 miles from Kiokee, Georgia, to Savannah and met with Andrew Bryan.

After examining the candidates, and assisted by Jessie Peter, he baptized 45 persons of color and formed them and others previously baptized into a church, with the newly ordained Andrew Bryan as their pastor. Marshall gave the church two certificates. The first certificate constituted the little plantation mission as an official Christian church and the second was the ordination of Andrew Bryan as a minister of the gospel. This remarkable event was made even more remarkable by the fact that Andrew Bryan was between 65

and 70 years of age at the time of his ordination.

In 1790, Bryan was able to purchase his freedom and eventually purchase the freedom of his wife and only daughter. The same year, Andrew also purchased property in Savannah and, through the sacrificial efforts of these humble Baptist slaves, they erected a meetinghouse.

Beginning with 67 members in 1788, the church increased to 250 by 1790, and by the year 1800, the church could boast over 800 members. The growth of this slave church is phenomenal. However, when you consider that all the church members, including the pastor and deacons, were required to have written permission in order to attend the church services, their growth was truly miraculous.

Bryan's personal evangelism and the training of co-laborers to minister to the slaves' spiritual needs on their particular plantation was the primary reason for the church's growth.

Bryan's faithfulness and

Christian character gained him the support of many who had been violently opposed to his ministry. In 1800, Bryan wrote Dr. John Rippon, "We enjoy the rights of conscience to a valuable extent, worshipping in our families and preaching three times every Lord's Day, baptizing frequently from 10 to 20 at a time in the Savannah (River), and administering the sacred Supper, not only without molestation, but in the presence, and with the approbation and encouragement of many of the white people."

On October 1, 1812, around 90 plus years of age, this grand old champion of the faith rested from his labors. It is estimated that over 5,000 attended his funeral.



Rev. Andrew Bryan



THE FIRST AFRICAN BAPTIST CHURCH.  
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# GLOBAL PARTNERS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE BBFI MISSION OFFICE

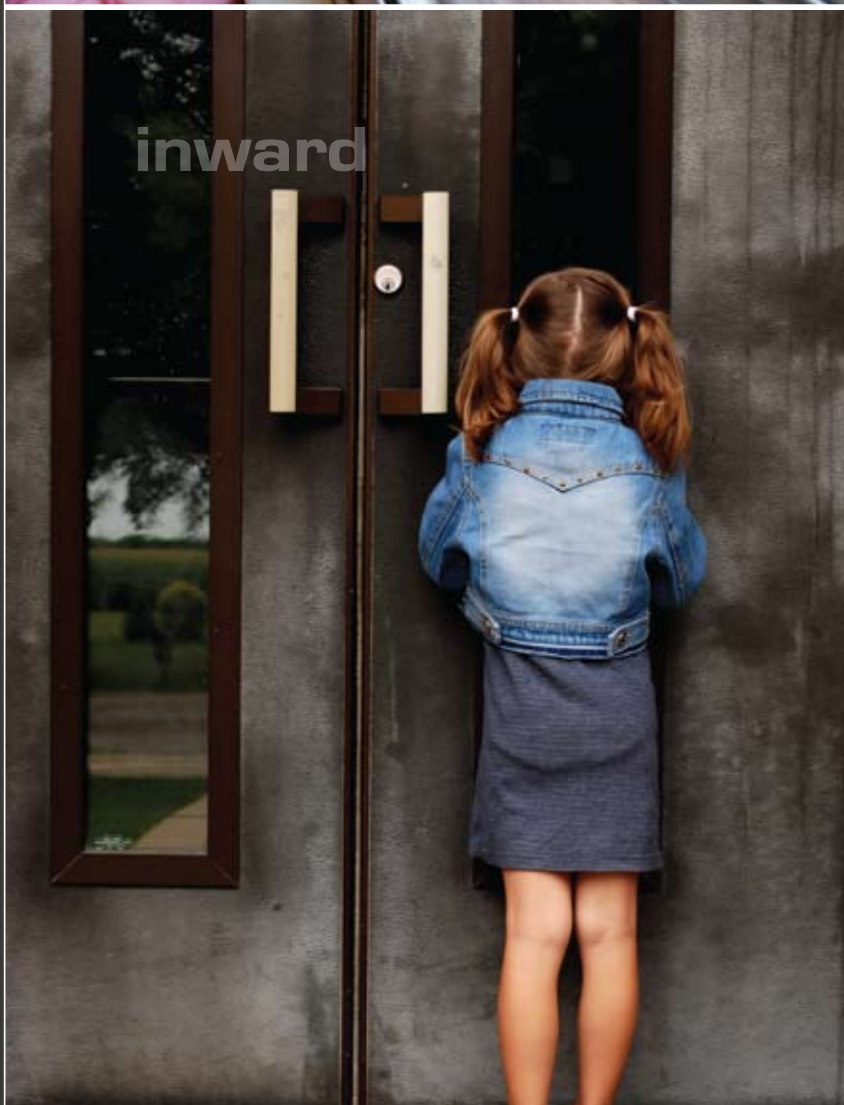
JANUARY 2009



outward



upward



inward



LOOK



around



## Lift up your eyes: LOOK!

By Jon Konnerup, BBFI Mission Director

As I think about this issue of *Global Partners* and its emphasis, I am reminded about the Philippians and how they cared for Paul as he did his missionary work. Times were not always easy for Paul or for those who prayerfully and financially supported him. In those tight situations, both Paul and his supporters did what they had to in order to get the gospel out. I think we can all agree that our times are volatile at best, with perhaps as much uncertainty as there was in those days.

When we consider what is going on around us — the economic situation in the U.S., the worldwide financial crisis with its many unknowns, and the rise in cost of living and goods around the world — we can get discouraged and start wondering if there is any hope in reaching our world for Christ. Do we have what it takes to stay with it or will we just give in? Well, let's take to heart Paul's advice to the Philippians "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13). We must stay on the task of sharing the gospel around the world by looking at our world and seeing the great harvest and looking at ourselves and seeing what we can do with God's help to accomplish the task!

In this issue, you will see a focus on the situation our world is in and its great need for the gospel more than ever — look around and see the world. We will also take a look outward at the harvest through what God is doing in the lives of others. God is still in the saving business and lives are being changed all around the world as He works through faithful, dedicated servants. While looking at the harvest, look inward and see yourself and what God could do with your life. He has a plan for you to participate in sharing the gospel with every creature — are you involved? And then look upward and see the Lord and Who He is. He, as the Lord of the Harvest, leads us to accomplish this great task He has given us.

# LOOK around





# nd see the world

By Mike Randall

The Lord Jesus Christ was still at the well, where He brought the woman to Himself for salvation, when He told his disciples, "...lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest," (John 4:35). We know His reference was to the whole world (Matthew 13:38). When we look on the fields, here is what we will see.

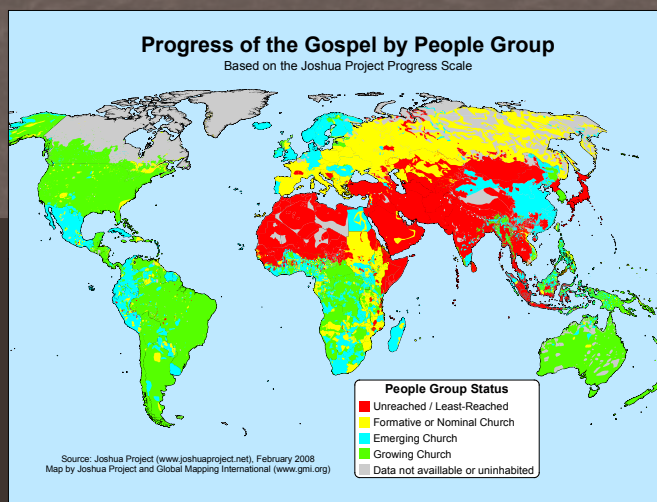
## 6.7 BILLION PEOPLE

Lift up your eyes and imagine a line of people four abreast, walking one pace apart past a point on the equator every second. Imagine that line going around the world and never ending because the number of people being born is so much greater than the number of people dying. That is our world today. According to the United States Census Bureau, the world population is 6 billion 747 million people.<sup>1</sup> Asia and Africa have the largest populations, with 60 percent of the world population living in Asia (4 billion) and 13 percent in Africa. Europe contains 12 percent and only 5 percent of the world population lives in the United States.

As one might expect, world population is increasing because more people are born each day than die. According to data from the CIA's *2005-2006 World Factbooks*, world population increased by 211,090 people per day in 2007. That calculates an increase of 77,047,850 people per year, 6,420,654 per month, 8,795 per hour, 146.5 people per minute, and 2.4 per second. According to the United Nations, world population is expected to peak at 9.22 billion in 2075.<sup>2</sup> Jesus commissioned the believers in New Testament churches to preach the gospel to each one of these people (Mark 16:15).

## 16,000 MAJOR PEOPLE GROUPS

When we lift up our eyes we see a diverse world — people who "...fainted and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd," like Jesus described in Matthew 10:36. According to the U.S. Center for World Mission, there are approximately 16,000 major people groups in the world.<sup>3</sup> Of this number, 6,880 are considered unreached or least reached, even though most have some sort of evangelical Christian work taking place. These groups total more than 2.1 billion people.



Facts about these groups include the following:

- **60 percent of unreached or least-reached people groups live in countries closed to missionaries from North America.**
- **Nearly one billion people are in 330 Muslim-dominated people groups.**
- **About 900 million people are in 2,438 Hindu-dominated people groups.**
- **About 375 million people are in 830 Buddhist-dominated people groups.**
- **There are approximately 2,550 unreached tribal groups in the world.**

A people group may be defined as "A large sociological group of individuals who see themselves as having a common affinity with one another. From the viewpoint of missions, a people group is the largest possible group within which the gospel can be spread without encountering barriers of understanding or acceptance."<sup>4</sup> Preaching the gospel to every creature includes these people groups.

## SPIRITUALLY UNFRIENDLY FORCES

When we lift up our eyes and look on our world we will see spiritual obstacles to the advancement of the gospel, just as Paul encountered. He wrote, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them," (2 Corinthians 4:3-4). Paul encountered Greek mythology, Roman emperor worship, and Christ-rejecting Judaism. Besides religion, first century philosophical systems such as Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Gnosticism also made people spiritually blind. Today we must challenge the claims of world religions opposed to Christ, such as Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. We also must counter the false teachings of Catholi-

cism, the cults, and the new age movement. The philosophies of our day, existentialism, hedonism, materialism, postmodernism, etc., contribute to spiritual blindness.

Again Paul writes about these forces, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places," (Ephesians 6:12).

## A REASON TO GET INVOLVED

Finally, when we look and see the needs of our world we become motivated to get involved in gospel missions. I am currently helping missionary Elmer Deal write his autobiography, *Out of the Mouth of the Lion*. Here is an excerpt from a sermon he once preached about Paul's vision of a man from Macedonia who urged him to "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," (Acts 16:9).

*"Paul had a calling to reach the unsaved multitudes of people throughout the world. Here he saw a vision of the people of Macedonia, who needed the gospel. William Carey saw the vision of the great need in India and he went to India. David Livingstone saw the multitudes of lost souls in Africa and he went there. Hudson Taylor saw the multitudes in China that needed Christ and he went there. We need a vision of people who need the gospel.*

*"Paul also heard the voice of a man who urged him to come to Macedonia. We too need to hear voices like this man's. These are missionary voices urging us. How many have ever been in Africa? How many have ever been to China? How many have ever been in South America? How many have ever been to Japan? How many have ever been to the Philippines? Well, our missionaries have been there, like this man from Macedonia. You need to hear their voices because that is a special way for you to see these countries with spiritual eyes and the great needs that are there. Through the voices of missionaries you can look on the fields and see they are white already to harvest. Hear this voice and you will increase your burden to pray and your burden to give. Then you can make your decision to go. Paul saw a vision. He heard a voice. He surrendered to go. What about you?"*

## SOURCES

1. [www.census.gov/ipc/www/worldhis.html](http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/worldhis.html)
2. [www.un.org/esa/population/publications/longrange2/worldPop2300final.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/longrange2/worldPop2300final.pdf)
3. [www.oneworldmissions.com](http://www.oneworldmissions.com)
4. [www.wycliffe.org](http://www.wycliffe.org)

Bible Baptist Church  
Mromboo, Tanzania





# ward

see the harvest and what God is doing

By Jim Smith

In John 4, Jesus has just spoken with a sinful and confused woman at the well of Samaria. He finishes speaking with her and the disciples show up. Their felt needs and their sensed priorities are natural, normal, and totally out of step with the program. They are concerned about all the wrong things. They are concerned about lunch. They are concerned about religious traditions. They are concerned about their image, perhaps their reputation. Their concerns and their priorities are misplaced.

So our Lord encourages them, and us, to change the direction of our sight. Instead of focusing on the temporal, instead of judging based on tradition, instead of worrying about our own reputations, He calls on us to lift up our eyes and He calls on us to look.

If we are to be effective in the task of world evangelization, it is imperative that we be informed. In order to be informed, we must look.

Every month in the pages of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, there are actual accounts of the work of God in our time through the ministries of pastors and churches and missionaries all around the world. Look and be informed.

Every day on the Daily ConnectionPoint, which you can subscribe to at [www.connectionpoint.net](http://www.connectionpoint.net), you can read a current missionary account and see some current statistics about our missionary program and the countries where we serve the Lord together. Look and be informed.

We live in the age of information. There is so much information at our disposal. There is no excuse for Christians to be ignorant of what is happening in our world. You should know that more than 6.7 billion people inhabit this planet. You should know that most of them have never heard a clear presentation of the gospel. You should know which countries are wide open to the work of the gospel. You should know which countries are more difficult to enter. Look and be informed.

There is no excuse for Christians to be ignorant of what God is doing all over the world. You should know the people on your team. If you attend a church that prayerfully and financially supports missionaries, you should know them. You should know how they are doing. You should know what they need. You should know if they are rejoicing about

anything. Most BBFI missionaries write between four and 12 letters each year, informing their supporters. These are just a few excerpts.

**RANDY AND LINDA PERKINS** in Australia wrote, "Anna was saved as a girl in an independent Baptist church started by an American missionary. The church only lasted a couple of years. Now she is married with two beautiful children. She started coming to our MOPS ministry about three years ago. Then she began attending the ladies Bible study. Last Easter her husband came along to a church picnic. In May, he went out and bought a Bible for himself and began attending the men's Bible study. On Father's Day, September 7 in Australia, Chris, Anna's husband, trusted Christ as his Savior. It is so much fun to watch God draw people to Himself and He lets us get in on the action! Praise the Lord."

**MIKE AND CHRISTY NAPPER**, deputation missionaries to Burkina Faso, wrote, "We recently had a great meeting at Living Water Baptist Church in Mobile, Alabama. We had a rough couple of days leading up to that Saturday, including some scheduling conflicts. During the invitation, our 7-year-old son, Hunter, came forward and received Christ as his Savior. We were able to see clearly why Satan would not want us in church that night. We rejoice that God is good and has a perfect plan!"

**PHIL AND MELODY STEPHENS**, missionaries to Zambia, write, "While on bush 4X4 visitation visiting widows, elderly, and the sick, we arrived in a new village area near our work, Sinamanjolo Baptist Church. After 45 minutes teaching who Christ is at widow Olivia's hut, her son Teddy asked us to help him receive Christ. I told him it was personal and he must call on Christ with words of his own heart. He did. He said, 'Jesus, I



Phil Stevens in the bush

you come live with me and forgive my sins. I believe only you.” Now that is the biblical, repentant, obedient faith of a man calling out with the heart to the Lord for salvation. When he raised his face, the light of joy was seen in his eyes and the smile of relief replaced the downcast look of despair from a few moments earlier.”

**KEN AND KRISTA DOWELL**, missionaries in Nicaragua, write, “Continually beaten by her brother and molested by her stepfather, Maritza took the first opportunity to leave the house. The man she went with was somewhat better to her than she had previously experienced, but her third pregnancy brought beatings of a new and more ferocious kind. The purpose of the beatings was to cause an abortion. He was successful. She decided to raise her two boys on her own, which meant she had to work 12 hours per day and seven days per week to eke out an existence. This young, illiterate mother had been saved as a girl but had very few opportunities to attend church. As the boys grew and she found them to be in grave danger of robberies and beatings in their barrio, Maritza began praying that God would do a miracle and enable her to find a job that would allow her to get her family into church and also move to a safer location.

Three years ago, God gave her that miracle. Now she has a good job and teaches Sunday school (you should hear her read!). She also works in our feeding center and in our AWANA program. Her younger sister, whom she raised, works alongside her in these ministries. Her older son and his bride teach Sunday school, head up our youth ministry, and will soon go on our church staff full time. Her younger son is the caretaker of our church property and also works with our AWANA program.

The corruption, the church robberies, and the many other dangers of living in such a poverty stricken nation at times wears us down. Yet it is Maritza and the other jewels of God like her that bring purpose, refreshment, and rejoicing to us every day of our lives.”

**TOM AND GAIL GRITTS**, missionaries to England, write, “The internet and email have changed the way we correspond and the world keeps getting smaller as the pace of communication increases. This is nowhere more apparent than with the phenomenon of Facebook. Long-lost friends and relatives are getting easier to find. You can now chat and catch up with people you went to school with years ago through simple text and pictures.

Tom Gritts working in an English school



This amazed me this week when my daughter phoned to say that I was on Facebook. I don't have a Facebook account, but apparently I have a Facebook page! Someone who had been in my school assemblies years ago thought others might be interested and set up the 'Mr. Gritts came to our school appreciation society.' Right now it has 65 members. I do know a few of them, but most were not known to me by name. I have been doing school assemblies in English schools for over 20 years. At one point nearly 1,000 children per week were hearing the gospel and learning the songs. This little Facebook page shows that though they haven't all responded to the gospel, they have not forgotten the songs. I can only trust that the words of the songs will have planted some gospel truth in their hearts and that they might even begin to search for the truth as they grow older.

I am not a techno-genius! I can barely get my email. Yet, I can see this as a door of opportunity. It reminds me of the scripture “...he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together” (John 4:36).

I have sown, but another man may be the one to know how to draw in this harvest. One of the Bible college students has joined the society and is planning to put some video clips of the assemblies on the sight. Maybe he will get the opportunity to work with this harvest.”



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# New building and church named for Mary Deal

By Mike Randall

**Lubumbashi, Congo** – The Mary Deal Memorial Baptist Church was named and a new building dedicated on November 16. Over 500 people attended the special services, which included a ribbon cutting, messages, special music, presentations, honored guests, and a luncheon. The church, formerly called Bible Baptist Church, was renamed to honor Mary Deal who, with her husband, served as a missionary to the Congo for 50 years. She passed away last April. Special guests included Missionary Elmer Deal, Pastor Don Carden of Craig County Baptist Church of Vinita, Oklahoma, nephew to the Deals, his wife, Louise, and Evelyn Martin, niece to the Deals.

A capacity crowd of 450 filled the building, while outside was an overflow crowd of more than 100. Besides American guests, Province Chief Kalau, Director of Lubumbashi Hospital Chengi Borasisi, leaders of the Congo Baptist Bible Fellowship, and a group of 30 area pastors attended. The three-hour service began with a ribbon cutting and water glass ceremony. Congo custom is to drink water out of a glass and then deposit the water on the ground as a ceremonial cleansing before a structure is dedicated. Host Pastor Willy Tshamala then called the meeting to order and welcomed the people. Several groups presented special music. Guests and honorees were recognized. Mission-

ary Elmer Deal presented his wife's testimony and expressed his gratitude to all involved. Sending Pastor Jean Kyenge Salumu gave the history of the church and Carden preached the dedication message from the book of Nehemiah. Mukendi Cikala, Congo BBF Secretary/Treasurer translated the services into Swahili, English, and French.

Following the services, the church hosted a luncheon for all in attendance. The meal included traditional chicken, fish, and goat meat, bukari (mush made of manioc and corn flour), beans, french fries, boiled potatoes, rice, boiled eggs, tomatoes, cabbage and mayonnaise salad, bread, and cake.

The new building is approximately 41 feet wide by 74 feet long and 28 feet high. Accommodating 450 people, it took five months to build at a cost of approximately \$75,000. Gifts to the Mary Deal Memorial Fund, which was established at

*(continued)*



## Observations from Mary Deal's memorial

**By Don Carden, Pastor  
Craig County Baptist Church  
Vinita, Oklahoma**

**O**n November 16, I had the honor to preach the dedication service for the Mary Deal Memorial Baptist Church. Only with the Lord's help does one find the words sufficient to honor someone like Mary Deal. Aunt Mary and Uncle Elmer have been very special to us. My sister, Evelyn Martin, and I spent our high school years with them and they became like adopted parents.

I have always been a missions supporting pastor, but this trip has brought mission work to life for me as never before. I had the honor of speaking in six Congo churches. I also visited many of the other churches in Lubumbashi and met their dedicated pastors. The people have won our hearts. Our burden for the great masses of people needing the Lord as Savior in Africa has never been greater.

the BBFI Mission Office, provided the financing. Friends in the United States, the Congo, and missionaries in several other countries contributed. Volunteer church members did much of the work. Subcontractors provided technical and skilled labor. Walls were constructed out of burnt red bricks with stucco finish. The roof was made of sheet metal on steel trusses. Windows on each side illuminate the large auditorium area. The floors were of hand-finished concrete. It has a double-door entrance, an office, a baptistry with dressing areas, and rest-rooms. It is served by electricity, running water, and sewer.

### **Congo BBF helped plant the church**

Founding Pastor Tshamala was won to Christ through services held in the Katuba village where he grew up. Elmer Deal and teams he organized conducted such evangelistic services beginning in 1959. After training in a Bible institute, Tshamala served under Pastor Salumu of the Kasai Baptist Church. Ten years ago, Deal, with the Congo BBF, bought property three miles from the University of Lubumbashi where Tshamala began the church. His sending church was the Bethel Baptist Church of Lubumbashi and Pastor Salumu. Average attendance is now 120-150, filling the older building to capacity. Tshamala, his wife, and five children live in a home on the property.

### **Special meetings prior to the dedication**

The Congo BBF sponsored a Bible conference and other meetings in conjunction with the dedication. Carden spoke to a group of 45 Bible institute students in a nearby village and was the featured speaker with Deal at a three-day Bible conference in the older facilities. A crowd of 100 to 150 attended the conference each day. Louise Carden and Evelyn Martin spoke to a group of over 100 ladies from Congo BBF churches. The Congo BBF is led by President Twite Mutombo, Vice President Paul Matembo, Secretary/Treasurer Cikala, and 33 directors. Their ministry, alongside Deal's, has now planted 162 churches in the Congo.

# LOOK Inward



**Tarl & Adrienne Reeves**  
approved May 2008



**Richie & Missy Orrick**  
approved May 2008



**Brad & Mindy Morrow**  
approved May 2008



By Jim Smith

**A**s in a parallel passage to John 4, in Luke 10 Jesus uses similar words concerning the work of world evangelization. But this time, He commands us to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers into the harvest. As we are effectual and fervent in our prayers, it is not unusual that the Lord of the harvest places within us the desire to become those laborers sent to do the work.

One of the exciting things about the Baptist Bible Fellowship International is the variety of ways that God allows us to be involved in world evangelization. From our very inception many years ago, our emphasis has been the establishing of churches on the North American continent and all around the world. We clearly see that in order for us to be faithful and efficient in preaching the good news, making disciples, baptizing, and teaching, we must follow the New Testament pattern of church planting.

Many of our international church-planting missionaries sense the need for others to come alongside and help them. A few support ministries that come to mind are missionary aviation, missionary children's education, major funding for camps or Bible institutes, and experts in construction. Sometimes God has used people just like us and other times He brings along people who are very different.

In addition to the career missions program, the BBFI has gradually come up with three different programs that are suited for people who cannot make a life-long commitment to church planting but sense that the Lord wants them to join forces with those who have made such a commitment.

As you look to the Lord for direction in your life, please consider these options.

**TEAM** – The **Total Exposure Associate Missionary (TEAM)** program is designed to allow individuals interested in missions to get a taste of life on

the mission field. TEAM missionaries spend one to three years working side by side with a veteran missionary. They get hands-on experience in cross-cultural ministry and firsthand knowledge of missionary life. With a positive recommendation from their host missionary, the TEAM missionaries can use this time as fulfilling their

internship requirement for career missions. So far we have seen 50 percent of those who complete their commitment as TEAM missionaries come back for approval as career missionaries.

**STEP** – The **Support Team Endorsement Program (STEP)** is designed to allow qualified people opportunities to use their skills on the mission field. The endorsed STEP participants serve in a support role determined by their host missionary. Some who have served in this program are teachers, counselors, and administrators. Those involved in STEP must meet the same educational requirements as career missionaries. STEP participants go on the invitation of career missionaries. This

allows the STEP participant to use his or her skills for the cause of Christ around the world.

**LiTE** – The new **Limited Time Experience (LiTE)** mis-



Fred & Effie Donnelson  
arrived in China in 1933



Jim & Becky Lee  
approved in 1971

sions program is being designed for volunteers that want to be personally involved in world evangelization for a limited time (less than a year). Perhaps a college student is willing to dedicate a summer or a semester assisting a missionary or maybe a retiree desires to put his life skills to use somewhere else. Missionaries needing temporary assistance and volunteers willing to provide that assistance will have a connecting point through the LiTE program.

**CAREER** – These are men, women, and families who have committed to a life-long career in evangelism, discipleship, and church planting worldwide. This group of missionaries is the great strength of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. We have specialized in career missions for nearly 60 years. Our career missionaries are well-qualified, academically trained, practically experienced, spiritually gifted, motivated, and godly men and women.

As I look over the great army of missionaries that God has directed to serve Him through BBFI churches, we are impressed with the variety. We have singles and couples. We have small and large families. We have those who have committed themselves for short periods of time and others for a lifetime.

Behind all of these servants on the frontlines we have hundreds of thousands of faithful, generous church members who pray and give and sometimes sacrifice so that others may hear and believe.

We would implore you to look inward, at yourself, to see what God could do with your life. Do not hesitate to call us or look on our website to get more information. [www.connectionpoint.net](http://www.connectionpoint.net)

LOOK upwa


...THOU ART WITH  
ME; THY ROD AND  
THY STAFF THEY  
COMFORT ME.





# ard see the Lord

By Jim Smith



**I**t almost goes without saying. But maybe that is the problem. We go without saying the obvious. If we have been instructed by our Lord to lift up our eyes and look on the field, if we have been instructed by our Lord to pray that the Lord of the harvest would send laborers, it is clear that He wants us to look to Him!

In all of your looking and your praying and your giving and your going, don't forget to look up and see the Lord. Remember Isaiah? Before he ever answered the call, he saw the Lord "high and lifted up!"

The next time you are singing in your church about the holiness of God, or the presence of God, or the greatness of God, stop and see Him. Our worship of Him is sincerely spiritual when it is based on eternal, biblical truth.

When we see the Lord, we see that it is only by His grace that we are used and others are drawn to Him.

When we see the Lord, we see that it is in His strength alone that we can accomplish the fulfilling of His purpose in our lives.

When we see the Lord, we see His holiness and we see our sin. As we make ourselves accountable to Him and as we agree with Him regarding our sin, He cleanses us from our unrighteousness.

## In Closing...

**W**hen you look and see the world, do you see it the way God sees it? God has so much compassion for it that He gave His only Son to die for the world. Now that is unbelievable love and compassion! He saw them as sheep having no shepherd, in the dark, without direction, lost in their sins.

What about the ripe harvest? People are searching for truth and are trying everything they can to find that peace and fill that emptiness. You need to look around at the harvest and respond as Paul told the Philippians. They didn't wait for someone else to do the job or be the answer — they responded on their own. They gave and continued to give without hesitation. "But I rejoiced in the Lord greatly, that now at the last your care of me hath flourished again; wherein ye were also careful, but ye lacked opportunity. Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only" (Philippians 4:10, 15). As we see the harvest, we cannot afford to wait. We need to respond by going and giving so others may go to the regions beyond.

Then, have you taken a look at yourself? Have you considered what it is that is keeping you from participating in missions? Is there something other than Christ that you are putting first? The evangelization of the world is not a spectator activity. It takes everyone doing his or her part, giving every bit of energy, ability, and commitment. Sure, you might feel afraid, unsure, unable, even weak. Remember what Paul told the Philippians in 4:13, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Finally, look to the Lord. Paul reminded the Philippians to remember all that God had done for them and how it is God who will supply and sustain them. "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:19). May we consider His riches that He uses to supply our needs — all through His Son Jesus Christ. Isn't our God good? We can rejoice over what God has done through the churches and missionaries of the BBFI and join right in with Him.

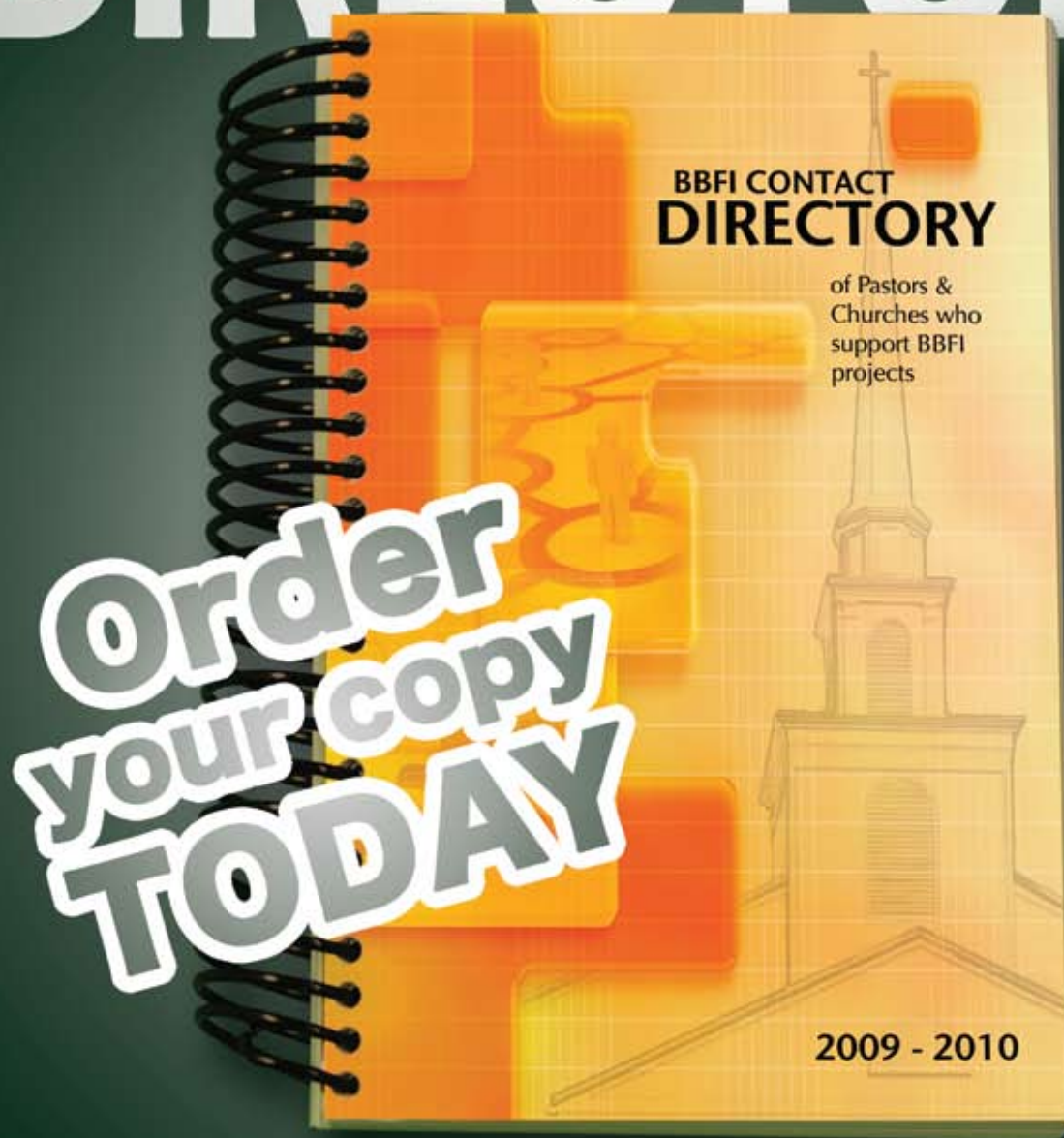
Jeanne Hendricks wrote in her book *Afternoon*:

*Living is not a spectator sport. No one, at any price, is privileged to sit in the stands and watch from a distance. Being born means being a participant in the arena of life, where opposition is fierce and winning comes only to those who exert every ounce of energy.*

So it is with world evangelization. The choice is yours. My hope is that you, like the Philippians with Paul, will choose to get involved in missions and do all you can to spread the gospel around the world.

**Jon Konnerup**  
BBFI Mission Director

# BBFI CONTACT DIRECTORY



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## BBFI ministries do Thanksgiving outreaches, even in Scotland

Most cultures have some type of harvest celebration, but an American-style Thanksgiving has a unique religious base. That is why churches here at home find it natural to use the holiday for outreach, and our missionaries have found the American customs provide a draw for their churches overseas as well.

First Baptist Church of Newcastle, Delaware, gives a Thanksgiving meal for their community each year. Pastor Ron Sears reports that the church served a Thanksgiving dinner to 350 people this year. Members of the church, 116 of them, served the dinners and sent the Thanksgiving diners home with another box of food. If the goal is evangelism, it works, as 57 people prayed to receive Christ, and 13 others indicated they wanted to learn more about the gospel in their responses this year.

Meanwhile, BBFI missionaries Jon and Ruth Bergen took the American Thanksgiving with them to Brechin, Scotland. Jon says, "Thanksgiving is my holiday, and I have missed it with family for the seventh year now, so I adopt folk here and share the love."

This year Jon had an official count of 122 who shared their eight Thanksgiving turkeys (at a cost of £25 or USD \$37 each), along with pumpkin pies, several pans of green beans, stuffing, corn pudding, and all the traditional fixings. The event has grown more popular each year. Jon says, "It kind of blossomed out of control on us. Folks are asking in September if we are doing it and I just can't say no."



Center photo: **First Baptist Church of Newcastle, Delaware, served 350 people at their Thanksgiving outreach.** Bottom photo: **Missionaries Jon and Ruth Bergen brought an American Thanksgiving to 122 people in Brechin, Scotland.**



# This *Tribune* is not bankrupt — thanks to you

By Keith Bassham

"Tribune files for Chapter 11." Did you see that headline a couple of weeks ago? I knew, of course, that the story was about the Chicago Tribune, but it still caused me to sit up a bit.

I thought about taking a good photo of a regular newspaper front page with that headline (all the major papers carried it) and framing it for my office. Not that I rejoice in the troubles of the Chicago business that runs the Tribune newspaper there, but just as a sort of reminder to me that all flesh is grass. Life in the natural world economy carries no guarantee, and what few proba-

only on the Internet. Meanwhile, Time Inc. (Time magazine, Fortune, People, and Sports Illustrated) said they were cutting 600 jobs. Gannett, the largest newspaper publisher in the country, will do likewise, laying off about 10 percent of its workforce. Back in the middle of October, you could have bought TV Guide for \$1 — no, I'm not talking about a single copy of the magazine — the whole business of the print magazine was sold for \$1. The only way some papers will stay in print is by making cuts in production and staff.

Blame the economy, falling ad revenue, lack of readership, distrust of the mainstream media, or whatever. The fact is papers have fallen on hard times, and Christian papers feel the pinch too. We here at the Tribune make our own small adjustments when necessary, but I am happy to say pastors and churches and others receiving the Tribune continue to see the value of their monthly window on Fellowship news and information. And they demonstrate it with their steadfast support. That is why, with all the bad

and the values of the Baptist Bible Fellowship in a way no other publication 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. The National Church Planting Office receives most of their inquiries about church planting from outside the BBFI because of the Tribune, which is received by about 11,000 different churches. Add to that a recent Lifeway study showing that 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 involved in a great enterprise.

bilities there were for financial success have been rendered less so by the current situation.

And, as you probably know, the Chicago Tribune is not the only publication in trouble. In the same city, the Chicago Sun-Times is cutting both the staff and the physical paper itself. Readers there have found the paper has shrunk in size by one inch to save newsprint costs. A few weeks ago, the century-old Christian Science Monitor newspaper announced their weekday publishing schedule would cease. They will continue doing a weekend edition, but during the week the paper will be accessible

news going around in the publishing world, I continue to be optimistic about the Tribune and our future. And here are some other reasons:

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

Because of the services we perform, once a year I ask our churches and pastors to commit to the February Tribune Offering. We're not panicky. Our bills and staff are paid on time. We operate on a carefully-managed budget (what a concept). And if our past experience is any indication, we expect to be here, serving our Lord and this Fellowship this same time next year.

So I urge pastors and churches to participate when you receive the letter and card asking for your help. This is one time when I think I prefer to stay out of the headlines.



...if our past experience is any indication, we expect to be here, serving our Lord and this Fellowship this same time next year.





## Young church ready for a big jump

**J**ason just returned from a visit to one of our new church plants in Saginaw, Michigan. Guiding Light Bible Baptist Church, pastored by John Franzel, called the National Church Planting Office with the opportunity to purchase a Presbyterian church that had merged with another one further into town.

The building can seat 200 in the auditorium, and it has a nice fellowship hall with full kitchen and plenty of office and Sunday school space. After the NCPO helped the church negotiate with the Presbyterian Church, an agreement was reached to purchase the building and property for \$45,000. Jason was shocked to find that the building is bigger than he originally thought and in move-in condition. Only God can open up an opportunity like this and place the NCPO in a position to help a church that is only two years old.

With the help and support of Capitol City Baptist Church in Holt, Michigan, where John's son, Daryl Franzel, is the pastor, as well as the Michigan Baptist Bible Fellowship, this opportunity could turn into a reality after approval

from the NCPO loan committee.

Thanks to support from BBFI churches across the country to the National Church Planting Office, we can help young and infant churches just like Guiding Light Bible Baptist Church jump through a door that God has opened. Would you consider supporting the NCPO as we help state fellowships and churches start and establish new churches all across the country?

The events of the past month and a half have greatly encouraged me about the future of church planting in the BBFI. Our church planting conference at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, received high marks from the students, college administration, and all the guest lecturers. Boston Baptist College was alive with excitement about church planting. Ken Gillming, of the college administration, tells me about 60 percent of all the students in Boston are actually attending and serving in new church plants. Working with several state fellowships, we were able to recruit many students

for summer internship positions this next summer. Texas, Ohio, Oklahoma, Virginia, New Hampshire, New York, and Massachusetts, as well as others will be working with these students this next summer to keep the church-planting fire burning.

### Building Toward the Future

We here at the NCPO have embarked on a big endeavor. Staying strong and advancing

our capabilities to continue to make loans in these economic conditions is a real challenge. Therefore, we have launched a campaign to begin to raise \$3 million to broaden our financial base. Our strategy is to get as many churches as possible to join with us in getting their people to use a bank in the shape of a church and drop in their pocket change at the end of the day to help us help church planters. This will not put any pressure on the churches' regular or mission budget. Several churches have already gotten involved and the results are exciting. One church in Georgia has been aver-



aging \$900 a month, a North Carolina church \$500 a month, a small church in Ohio \$300 a month, just to name a few. For information call 417.889.1017 or email [bbfincpo@aol.com](mailto:bbfincpo@aol.com). If only 300 churches would respond we could reach our \$3 million goal in the next four to five years. Would you be one of the 300? We need your help. God is doing great things with our new church plants. Don't miss out on being part of the team!



Guiding Light Bible Baptist Church facilities



# World Scope

Mark D. Hodges | BBFI First Vice President : Missions



## Partnership

**T**hink about the power of a tiny grain of wheat. One single grain can grow into a fully mature stalk of wheat. That stalk can in turn produce countless more grains of wheat. It all begins with planting a single seed. It ends with a mighty harvest. "...Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest" (John 4:35).

For almost 60 years the BBFI has facilitated a vital partnership between churches and missionaries worldwide in fulfilling the Great Commission. It all began as a small seed, but now we rejoice in seeing the spiritual increase around the world. Missionaries went to foreign lands, some even in barren and unresponsive places; they cultivated the ground, repeatedly sowing and watering the seed. In spite of the weeds, birds, and pests, the seed has sprung up and has yielded many times over. This has brought the BBFI a harvest of souls and now we are witnessing the same process of growth in foreign countries. The BBFI churches in the Philippines are now sending missionaries out to Cambodia, Russia, East Asia, and other regions of the world. In addition, Mexico, Costa Rica, Australia, and many other countries are sending forth Fellowship missionaries.

One of the key factors to our churches' relationship with the missionary is the Mission Office. As the new first vice president of missions, I traveled to Springfield in October to meet with Mission Director Jon Konnerup and to familiarize myself with how we care for our missionaries. The scripture entreats us to give honor to whom honor is due (Romans 13:7). First of all, let

me say that we are extremely blessed to have Jon Konnerup serving our Fellowship. He is a man of integrity and one who loves the Lord's work and missionaries. Even though his work is rewarding, and his responsibilities are great, he willingly shoulders a heavy load so that God's work through our missionaries might be accomplished. I look forward to our work together over the coming years. His sweet wife, Pam, also exhibits that caring love for our missionaries.

The Mission Office associate directors are godly men who are willing and capable of assisting our director in various aspects of missionary needs. It was also my privilege to meet each member of the Mission Office staff. These wonderful people exhibit such an amazing spirit of devotion and service.

After my three-day visit, I came away with two vivid thoughts: First, I had no idea our Mission Office was responsible for doing so much! Our churches and missionaries should really be grateful to have such dedicated people who are so eager to serve. As a result, I came home and increased our giving to the Mission Office by 50 percent. Second, I wish it were possible for every pastor and missionary could take a full tour of our Mission Office and witness all the work they do assisting our missionaries.

The BBFI Mission Office processes designated gifts for over 4,000 churches and 896 missionaries. They are also involved in processing the funds of other entities of our Fellowship such as our Bible colleges, National Church Planting Office, Mission Office, the Tribune, BBF Builders, MANNA, etc. The BBFI

Mission Office provides a variety of services — bookkeeping, banking, mailing, reporting, medical fund processing, training, counseling, and prayer. Every year they assist in raising funds to help build church buildings and missionary homes on foreign fields.

Our churches receive the benefit of mission conference resources, videos, a daily ConnectionPoint newsletter, trips, and more. With such a small staff, I honestly don't know how they are able to accomplish all that they do. One of our sister missionary organizations, one that ministers to nearly the same number of missionaries, employs more than double the number of staff we have employed in our Mission Office. We owe a great deal to these precious people who make great sacrifices for our churches and our missionaries, and who do their work with such efficiency. Many of these workers have worked untold hours this year on the reporting project so that all of our missionaries and the Mission Office will be current with IRS, homeland security, and new non-profit organization regulations.

I know that this has been a difficult year for many missionaries (especially economically), but our missionaries are resilient and God is going to bless their willingness to serve during these trying days. As we look at what has been accomplished for the Lord through our BBFI churches and missionaries, let's rejoice and remember what the Bible says, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:6-7).





Charles Lyons, Pastor  
Armitage Baptist Church  
Chicago, Illinois

## Election Exegesis

**B**arack Hussein Obama will be inaugurated as the 44th president of the United States on January 20, 2009. First, let's all reread Romans 13:1-2. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers for there is no power but of God: The powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power resisteth the ordinance of God and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation." The following verses are similarly instructive.

The election of Obama is huge and historic, both culturally and politically. He certainly is not a true Chicago African-American. He is a transplant. His multi-national roots, cross-cultural upbringing, Ivy League education, and ability to overwhelm the Chicago Democratic machine leave him quite out of step with the parade of black, Chicago Democrat politicians we are accustomed to in Chi-town.

The new White House will reflect a greater reality. The post-moderns (POMOs is what I call them) with their rootless relativism, shallow materialism, and passionate environmentalism have rejected the good ol' boys. At least they want to think so. A fresh voice of hope and change, a new color tout-ing attractive aspirations brought new and young voters out in droves. They don't like the world their parents created, one of divorce that brings division far beyond the living room, social despair, and corporate corruption. This guy with the funny name really seems believable. Let's not kid ourselves. For the same reason this generation has embraced Obama, this generation has left various fundamentalist groups in droves. They're tired of the bickering,

the strange colorlessness, the mindless narrowness, and the failure to engage meaningfully with culture and a world that obviously could use some help and hope.

"Seek ye first the American dream and all its benefits and a little god will be added to you." The road to the new reality was paved in part by white Christians trying to do better for their kids, fleeing cities, the centers of influence and power, in a non-strategy of retreat, isolate, and insulate. The salt was first taken off the meat and, what do you know, became less and less salty. The light was put under a bushel until it could not even be seen flickering. Our cities, our culture, our politics became less and less influenced by the truths of the gospel. The liberals, the godless, the heathen, the atheists have stepped in quite nicely, thank you.

Get on your computer and find a blue state/red state map. Look at the blue states and the regions they form versus the red states and their regions. Click on any red state that color codes the voting patterns of the state. You will see within the red states that the blue regions are the cities in virtually every case. States that would otherwise be red went blue because of their urban regions. Cities run the states. Urban centers wield disproportionate clout. The urbanization of our culture is one direct result. Newsflash to those escaping down Arkansas back roads or deeper into the backwoods of east Texas or diving deeper into an east Tennessee holler — this trend is not turning around. The irrelevance of the isolationists will only become more intense. The POMO's amoral, immoral, pluralistic relativism, multiculturalism, and

environmentalism are going to continue to become larger than life.

Check this out. American adults who oppose legalizing gay marriage: 61 percent. Twenty-one year olds who believe gay marriage should be legal: 61 percent (New York Times/CBS news poll). That's as telling a cultural indicator as you'll find. Gay activism began in the cities. Now it's marching across the land. In my first "Urban Current," February 2005, I wrote "You Can Run... but not Far Enough. You Can Hide, but Why?"

It's a sunny day in our land. The day of a religion that thrives because it is supported by the dominant culture is over. Old Testament prototypes give us great inspiration — Joseph in Pharaoh's palace, Daniel, Nehemiah, Esther. Happily, New Testament Christianity thrives in the most hostile of environments. First-century Christianity shook the world because it was rooted not in an embracing culture but in the dynamite power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our day presents incredible opportunities to those who understand the times and know what to do. Here are some things we can all do:

1. Pray for President-elect Obama.  
The heart of the king is in the hand of God.
2. Pray for revival among God's people. We need to wake up, shake ourselves, and get back on the frontlines. Don't fight people. Rescue people. Fight the devil.
3. Pray for and support worthy New Testament church efforts in metropolitan areas at every opportunity.

Let's go find some big, bad needs, meet them in the name of Jesus, and regain credibility as the answer people.



# Reflection and Resolution

**T**he end of one year and the beginning of another is typically a time for reflection about the year ending and for resolutions about the coming year. The songwriter proposes it is a good thing to count your blessings, because it would surprise you what the Lord has done. I am counting, but I am not surprised.

The year ending has brought significant change in my own personal life. Some of the changes are so positive — Carol and I gained three more grandchildren during 2008. But even positive changes create challenges; for instance, we're buying more Christmas gifts for the new little ones.

I also am reminded about the positive changes in my own life because of new friends I have met. I have enjoyed being on the road and representing Baptist Bible College. I am thankful to meet former students of our college who are still faithfully applying what they learned while students here at BBC. I enjoy hearing their stories about how the Lord has worked in their lives to bring them to where they find themselves ministering today.

But right now I'm thinking more about the present and the future. One of the joys I experience is sharing in the lives of our current students. As I write this article, I am sitting at my desk wearing a BBC Patriot basketball jersey. The players had been instructed to give their travelling jersey to someone in the faculty or staff and ask them to wear it to the last home game before the Christmas break. I am wearing the jersey of Bobby Hughes. He is six-foot-eight-inches tall. I am not. He is thin and lean. You can guess what

my frame is. The shirt is long enough on me to be a dress (that would make people talk). But the joy and laughter came when Bobby entered my office. He remarked he had never been in the president's office. I replied that the fact he had not visited before indicated he was a good kid. I am simply thankful to get to know tomorrow's servants. I am blessed indeed.

There have been personal challenges I hadn't planned for. One of the challenges has been related to the church I am a member of, Park Crest Baptist Church. Before assuming the

**I am simply  
thankful to get to  
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servants. I am  
blessed indeed.**

role as president of the college, I was allowed to teach a Sunday school class with some great people. I liked that assignment and enjoyed being with them often. But since becoming president, for the first time in my life, I have not been regular in attending my church. I don't skip church, you understand. These days I am on the road and in a different church every week. I feel like a perpetual first-time visitor. Many of my missionary friends have indicated it is something they deal with also. The whole experience has only solidified my belief in the importance of a

local church as a home.

Then there is the challenge in our future. Whatever else may be out there for us, the future at Baptist Bible College presents opportunities for us to see the Lord do great things. I have resolved to always lean on Him and to expect Him to do even greater things than I have ever asked for or thought about. That's a resolution I hope I can always keep.

I have resolved to learn how to have a better school tomorrow than we have today. Part of that resolution involves the importance of relevance. This takes a willingness to listen and have open conversation about the real issues of ministering in today's world. Just because we have always done "it" a certain way isn't a reason to continue doing what isn't working. I have resolved to pray and ask God for the wisdom He has promised. I believe He is still looking for vessels to work through. I want to see the Lord glorified in our midst.

Our school has been blessed with some great friends. I want to see our circles of friendship grow, and I want to see us reach out and make new friends. Those friends represent opportunities for more ministry, and that will make the need for more trained workers even greater. I want to do all that I can to make a difference in reaching this world.

I want to be found faithful in the coming days. This year, amid all the changes and challenges, I have learned that being faithful is maybe the best thing I can do. Together we can encourage each other to continue in the battle until our days are done.





## Boston's Spiritual Surge in 2009

I've enjoyed the vacation from politics. Remember how before election night every other TV commercial was a political ad? Then they just go away. Good riddance. But I still remember a few things. I remember way back in the primary season when people were still arguing about Iraq — when Wall Street still brought smiles instead of scowls. I remember politicians haggling over “the surge” and whether it was a good idea.

There's not much debate on the surge these days. It really was just kind of logical. More boots on the ground made it possible for our troops to get their job done. Skeptics made all kinds of prognostications, but in the end, the surge was the right approach.

It is pretty easy to look at the state of our world and see that the spiritual battle is raging hot across this depraved planet. If you actually sit down and think about it, you can feel discouraged. I know that Jesus triumphs in the end, but sometimes that is hard to visualize when I watch current events. I think we need our surge — a spiritual surge. I am absolutely convinced that more boots on the ground will work for us too. We need more young people to invest their lives in the service of Christ, to fight His battle, to go — not with guns — but with the gospel, go to places that seem to be devolving into chaos, and let the light of the gospel do its work.

Way back last year when politicians argued about the surge, many people doubted, some in sincerity. But in our case, I don't see how anybody can doubt. We've just got to send them out to join in true spiritual engagement.

So I called together the leadership at Boston Baptist College, and I challenged us to our own surge. When it seems like everybody is calling for cutbacks, and we all know that the economy is struggling... well, we're going to throw the Book at our circumstances — the leather-bound One. We're going forward in Boston. We're running a tight budget, of course, but now is the time for more to train for ministry — not less. So our surge strategy is to acknowledge that many of our best church families will have a harder time

**If we train them well, they will carry their own just fine.**

than ever financing Christian education. If moms and dads were counting on refinancing their homes for college money — that may not be an option in our age of \$700 billion bailouts. The public funding is still there, but the problem is that more people are going after the same financial pie, and the pie is not growing.

So in Boston — our tuition is not surging. We've flat-lined tuition for next year.

And furthermore, we've determined to make capital improvements happen within our budget — and we are earmarking all of our 2009 Annual Offering for scholarship money — every dollar. This year, it's all for them. We're going to set a record for fundrais-

ing for us, \$200,000, and then we're going to give it all away — to put more boots on the spiritual frontline. No retreat. Surge.

Somebody asked me a few days ago if we can pull it off. What kind of question is that? In battle you do what you have to do to accomplish your mission. It doesn't take a seminary degree to decipher the Great Commission. We have to get this done. So I'm not bashful to ask you to help. Ignore pundits or feelings of desperation that might suggest that this generation of young people won't do the job. I believe in them. I'm not just like them. But I like their energy, and with their tech toys, I believe they will “e-vangelize” in their generation. If we train them well, they will carry their own just fine. Shoot, they may text-message the gospel to the ends of the earth — okay by me.

So here's the deal. Help us. I can't print this money; we have to raise it. Find something for Boston this year, too. Ask around. If you haven't been to Boston, somebody you know has. We're stoking the fires pretty good up here in New England. Help us raise scholarship funds that will keep the troops coming, even in a recession.

Know a young person who has a heart to serve God but needs financial help to train for the Lord's work? Call us, 1-888-235-2014, and talk to Joe Sawyer at extension 218. He's our Surge specialist. We're recruiting every day. Politics ebbs and flows, it gets loud and then it quiets down for awhile. But not in our work. The battle is on, but in Boston we're calling for an all-out surge. And I like how this one is going to turn out, too.

# Family Weekend 2008

Springfield, MO

Baptist Bible College hosted 93 families at its first annual Family Weekend on October 24-25. Recognizing the important role families play in the college experience, President Jim Edge invited families to campus as a great way for them to enjoy time with their kids while getting a taste of campus

life. For many of the 309 participants, this was their first visit to campus.

Edge started Family Weekend by welcoming parents and extended family members to campus with a reception on Friday evening. On Saturday, students led their families on a tour of the campus and introduced them to professors and staff. Additional ac-

tivities throughout the day included a performance by the BBC choir, student testimonies, a testimony from Eddie Lyons (pastor of High Street Baptist Church), a performance by Branson comedian Jarrett Dougherty, and brunch in the newly-remodeled cafeteria. A family barbeque began Saturday evening's events followed by alumni basketball games and a time of praise and worship with the Breakdown ministry. The weekend culminated with a devotional led by Dan Brown.

Baptist Bible College extends its thanks to the families for making Family Weekend 2008 a success. Mark your calendars for next year's Family Weekend on October 23 - 24, 2009.



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After the meeting, people came up to me and personally thanked me for having someone so unique. On another note, you will not find a more cooperative person to work with and when it comes to finances one who completely trusts the Lord and does not parade his needs before the congregation.

We are a church that averages a little over 500 in Sunday School, but regardless of the size of the church, Randy and his teaching will be very much at home and will lead your people to the place of understanding God's Holy Word. He presents the clearest plan of salvation you would ever want your people to hear. I know our people drew closer and so will yours."

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## MEXICO

Ed &amp; Annita Hoagland

About three months ago, I had the privilege of leading Alberto Lira to Christ, the 87-year-old father of one of our deacons. Yesterday he left this earth to enter into the kingdom of heaven. Last night at the viewing, I was able to present the gospel to the family that had gathered and seven of them accepted Christ. What was interesting was that a man from a viewing across the hall came in to listen. At the

end, he asked me to go to his room and speak to his family who were mourning the loss of his brother. I presented the gospel to them and 17 members of that family made a profession of faith in Christ. I am thankful to have a part in what God is doing here in Mexico City.



Mike &amp; Jill Ivey

## KOREA



Bonnie came to Korea to teach English. Coming from a broken home and with no religious training, Bonnie was amazed to hear the message of the love of Christ shown for her at Calvary. At first she couldn't understand

how the claims of Christ were any different than those of any other "teacher," but she finally understood him to be the eternal Son of God and placed her faith and trust in His work for her. Joy flooded her face as she gave her public testimony and was baptized on a Sunday morning.

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## PORTUGAL

Scott & Norma Edwards

Ken Schroeder makes his living selling hot dogs on one of the plazas in Portalegre where young people hang out each night. But the Ken who was selling hot dogs for the last several years has been changed to be a witness for the Lord. He is giving of the money he earns, studying his Bible, and sharing his faith. Dan and I accompany him some nights to

encourage him, meet the young people, and eat a hot dog. One of the young men we witnessed to, Helder, was recently saved and baptized at another church in the area. We were happy that he gave his heart to the Lord.



Will & Dorothy Rogers

## CANADA



Recently, a young Sri Lankan high school student named Navron returned to our services after having drifted away over a year ago. After the service, he spoke and prayed with me about making sure of his salvation. When I asked

him why he decided to return to church, he replied, "I just suddenly felt like I was so far from God and I needed to seek Him!" This is a wonderful example of God's working in response to prayer. Navron has not missed a service or an activity since, and is perhaps the most enthusiastic member of our youth group.



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# Williams honored for 25 years at Boulevard Bapt.

Burleson, TX

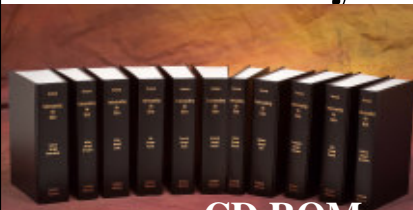
Boulevard Baptist Church honored their pastor, Terry Williams, and his wife, Shela, for their 25th anniversary at the church on September 21. All of their children were present for the event, with the church bringing their mis-



sionary children home to participate in the service: Len Williams, Jeff and Andrea Williams (Russia), Roy and Jennifer Webster (Argentina), and Russell and Janet Brinkley (Scotland). The day featured special music by the Tommy Drewitt family, dinner on the grounds, and a special 2:00 p.m. service with area pastors attending. Some pastors speaking were Ronnie Reese, Al Jones,

and Dick Webster. Paul Cooper, associate pastor, moderated the services. The Williamses were presented with many gifts including a generous love offering, a flag flown in March 2008 over the U.S. capitol, plaques, gifts, and a scrapbook of cards and letters from church members and friends. Over 600 were in attendance for the service. Terry and Shela are 1968 graduates of Baptist Bible College.

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# Bible Baptist dedicates new staff/missions housing

Gulfport, MS

Bible Baptist Church and Pastor Jim Stady recently dedicated a new staff housing 4-plex building. The build-


ing was completed in August of this year and currently houses employees, with one unit dedicated as a mission apartment. The architectural design was done by Mark Troschesett and Mike Hare, both members of Bible Baptist,

and site work and drainage was provided by Dennis Stieffel, also a member of the church. Jarrad Lee's company, Classic Homesteads, LLC, served as general contractor. The structure is debt free as paid for by church revenues.



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Tracy Roby, Sending Pastor  
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# Central Baptist launched, Koonce called as pastor

Westerville, OH



Pastor Herb Koonce and his new congregation launched Central Baptist Church on November 2. The congregation had been meeting since September 4. Cook Road Baptist Church, Mansfield, Ohio,

and Pastor Jack Hackworth sponsored the new church. Hackworth officiated at the charter service as 43 individuals became charter members and called Koonce as their pastor.

Left: Central Baptist Church charter service attendees. Right: Herb and Judy Koonce (left) and Jack and Pat Hackworth (right).

# Missouri BBF Christmas fellowship at Park Crest

Springfield, MO



Pastor Gary Grey and Park Crest Baptist Church hosted the Missouri BBF Christmas Fellowship December 8. More than 160 preachers, wives, and staff members attended the celebration which included a meal, music, and a prayer time.

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# New building opened at Park Street

St. Petersburg, FL

Park Street Baptist Church, pastored by Dan Jeffers, celebrated the grand opening of their new 27,000-square-

foot Family Life Center on November 9. The building includes a gym, kitchen, bookstore, exercise room, game room, and classrooms. "Thanks to a

lot of hard labor from the church folks and some of the BBF Builders, we were able to get in this building at \$63 a square foot, well below the average in this area. It is our hope that this will open a new avenues and possibilities in ministry to the community," said Jeffers.



# Mid-Way Baptist to host ministry workshop

Raleigh, NC

Mid-Way Baptist Church will host a PLACE workshop for church pastors

and leaders April 2-3. The workshop is designed to help church members discover how best to use their abilities and gifts in ministry. Gene Schuyler, membership/ministry pastor of Mid-Way Baptist, says attending a PLACE workshop is the "greatest investment of time and money."

national BBFI meeting, is well known for its very active membership. Schuyler says, "The PLACE process has had a tremendous impact in helping our members at Mid-Way to better know their abilities and spiritual gifts and to develop them to a greater service in knowing where they fit into God's Work."

At the workshop, one of the tools leaders receive and learn to use is an assessment tool that combines spiritual gifts with four personality types, abilities, passions, and experiences of life. Each leader will discover that effective ministry is a summation of personality, skill sets, passions, and life experiences.

Those interested in attending the National PLACE Assimilation Workshop held at Mid-Way Baptist Church in Raleigh, North Carolina, April 2-3, 2009, may register online at [www.placeministries.org](http://www.placeministries.org) or call PLACE Ministries toll free 877.463.2863. Registrants can save up to \$70 by booking early.

More information about the April workshop is available from Pastor Gene Schuyler at Mid-Way (919.772.5864) or by emailing [gene@mid-way.com](mailto:gene@mid-way.com).

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*-Stacey Smith*

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# Byars celebrates 30 years at Overland Park

Overland Park, KS

Overland Park Baptist Temple honored Pastor Emeritus Jerry Byars and his wife, Arline, for 30 years of leadership and service at the church on October 19. Day-long activities included special morning and evening services, an evening fellowship, and two presentations by the church's board of deacons on behalf of the congregation.

Many special guests participated in the event. Evangelist Bernie Rodgers conducted the morning and evening services. Byars was saved under Rodgers' ministry at Bible Baptist Church, Maplewood, Missouri, in 1954. Also present were Evangelist Clyde Spain and his wife, under whom Byars first served as youth director at Tabernacle Baptist Church, Roswell, New Mexico. Spain also officiated the Byars' wedding in 1959. The couple's four daughters (all of whom are in full-time service) were brought as a surprise for the event, plus a weekend of family reunion. Shana Byars Roby, Stacy Byars Hughes, and the family of Shelly Byars Rooks were featured soloists and musicians during the services.

Following the morning service, the Byars received a framed certificate of recognition. At the conclusion of the evening service, they were presented a ten-day,

all-expense-paid trip to the Rocky Mountains and Banff National Park, Canada. The trip will coincide with their 50th wedding anniversary in 2009. The Byars also received numerous congratulatory cards and letters from missionaries, former and current church members, and friends.

Byars retired as senior pastor in 2007, and now serves as pastor emeritus with an emphasis on missionary outreach and support. The church concluded its 2008 faith promise missions conference Sunday, November 1, with a goal of \$520,595.40.

A 1959 graduate of Baptist Bible College, Byars pastored churches in Kansas, New Mexico, Texas, and Florida before his



Above: Jerry and Arline Byars (Center) with Clyde and Mavis Spain (left) and Bernie and Janet Rodgers (right).

call to Overland Park in 1978. He summarized his 30 years' experience by saying: "I would never have dreamed of such a rich and full 30 years of service with this congregation. They truly feel like my family."

Photos by Jim McClanahan.

Below: Members of the choir watch as deacon Norman Stewart reads the certificate of recognition presented to Jerry and Arline Byars at Overland Park Baptist Temple Sunday, October 19. Seated on the platform are (left to right), special guest Clyde Spain, Ed Hughlett, Tracy Roby, and guest preacher Bernie Rodgers (hidden).





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## Jimmy G. Tharpe

Shreveport, LA

Jimmy G. Tharpe, long-time pastor of Baptist Tabernacle of Shreveport, Louisiana, and founder of Louisiana Baptist University, graduated from this life November 25 at age 78.

Tharpe was born in Sibley, Louisiana, on May 12, 1930, to Lester and Fern Tharpe. He entered the gospel ministry in 1952 by organizing and pastoring Trinity Baptist in Doyline, Louisiana. In 1956, he was called to Baptist Tabernacle where he served as pastor for 47 years, after which he retired. During those years, he also founded Baptist Christian College, Baptist Christian Academy, and Louisiana Baptist University (which currently has 1200 students enrolled in the campus and distance learning programs of the university and seminary). He held four earned degrees and 10 honorary degrees.

Tharpe was preceded in death by his wife of 56 years, Edith, his parents, and a sister. He is survived by his children, 20 grandchildren, 24 great-grandchildren, and two brothers.

Memorial services celebrating his life were held on November 29, 2008, at Baptist Tabernacle with Tabernacle's pastor, Jon Isbell, officiating, assisted by Bill Kincaid, Johnny Ramsey, and Mike Landry (former pastor at Baptist Tabernacle).



## Juanita "Nita" Joyce Joiner

Tucson, AZ

Juanita "Nita" Joyce Joiner quietly went to be with her Lord on November 29. Born May 27, 1934, in Decatur, Illinois, Nita is survived by Pastor J.C. Joiner, her husband of 55 years, and their five children, eight grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by a younger brother.



Nita Joiner moved to Tucson in 1959 with her husband, J.C., where they established the New Testament Baptist Church on Easter Sunday, March 29, 1959, and served together 49 years. An involved pastor's wife, Nita is best known for her imagination and creativity that influenced all areas of her personal and ministry life. Nita has influenced thousands of people throughout her many years in ministry by directing her church's children's ministry, women's ministry, children's musicals, and for 19 years, a summer camp for the elementary-aged children of her church and for kids throughout Arizona.

Nita was also a pianist, sang in the church choir, and assisted and directed many Christmas and Easter programs. She was a sought-after speaker for marriage and family seminars, ladies' conferences, and colleges throughout the United States and in 13 foreign countries.

Nita Joiner's strong personal faith was reflected in every area of her life. Believing that she was in need of God's amazing grace, at an early age Nita accepted Jesus Christ as her personal Lord and Savior. His forgiveness of her sins and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit inspired Nita to live a life dedicated to the passion of telling others that Jesus is the Way to eternal life — a life she now knows in full.

Nita's life verse was demonstrated in all she did as a wife, mother, grandmother, friend, and servant of God: "I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13).

In lieu of flowers, the family has requested contributions go to the Nita Joiner Summer Camp Scholarship Fund at New Testament Baptist Church. A memorial service was held December 4 at New Testament Baptist Church.

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• **Maranatha Baptist Church**, 2284 Third Ave., Dothan, AL 36301 334-794-2536 Pastor Bill Schneider

### ALASKA

• **Anchorage Baptist Temple**, 6401 E. Northern Lights, Anchorage, AK 99504, 907/333-6535, www.anbct.org. Pastor Jerry Prevo

### ARIZONA

• **Thomas Road Baptist Church**, 5735 W. Thomas Rd., Phoenix, AZ 85031, 623/247-5735. Pastor Ken Adrian

### CALIFORNIA

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

• **The Fundamentalist 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

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• **Tabernacle Baptist Church**, 301 W. Whyte Ave., Roseville, CA 95678, 916/728-5500 Pastor Brad Gunter

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

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

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• **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 32241, 904/786-5320 Pastor Tom Messer

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• **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

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• **Millington Street Baptist Church**, 1304 Millington St., Winfield, KS 67156. 316/221-4700. Pastor K.B. Murray

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

• **Northwest Baptist Church**, 2755 Princeton Rd., Hopkinsville, KY 42240, 270-885-0842, www.nwbapt4u.org, Pastor Kevin Randolph

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

### MARYLAND

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

• **Crossroads Baptist Church**, 10290 Old Columbia Rd., Columbia, MD 21045, 410/309-6590 Pastor Robert Haas

### MASSACHUSETTS

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

### NEBRASKA

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

### NEW JERSEY

• **First Baptist Church of Dover/Rockaway**, 126 Mount Pleasant Ave., Dover, NJ 07801, 973/361-8870. Pastor John Hackworth

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

### NEW MEXICO

• **High Plains Baptist Church**, 2800 E. 21st Street, Clovis, NM 88101-8620. 505/769-1382 Pastor Charles D. Miller

### NORTH CAROLINA

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

• **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 Pastor Ralph Sexton, Jr.

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

### 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

• **Grace Baptist Church**, 3023 N. Union Rd., Middletown, OH 45044, 513/423-4658 Pastor Roger D. Green

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

### OKLAHOMA

• **Temple Baptist Church**, 2200 E. Okmulgee, Muskogee, OK 74403. 918/687-4793 Pastor Alton Chiles

### 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

### SOUTH CAROLINA

• **Capital City Baptist Church**, 2243 Percival Rd., Columbia, SC 29223, 803/738-1480 Pastor Paul Monroe

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• **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

• **Liberty Baptist Church**, 602 Manco Rd., Lewisville, TX 75067. 972/436-3493 Pastor Dick Webster

• **First Baptist Church**, Hwy. 64, Wright City, TX 75750, 903/839-2700 Pastor Richard G. Boone

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

• **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 Bill Campbell

• **Bedford Baptist Temple**, 2403 Bedford Road, Bedford, TX 76021. 817/267-6239 Pastor E. Nathan Finch

• **Burleson Boulevard Baptist Church**, 315 N. Burleson Blvd., Burleson, TX 76028-3907. 817/295-4342 Pastor Terry M. Williams

• **Temple Baptist Church**, 4301 Thomas Dr., Midland, TX 79703. 432/694.3634 www.tbcmidland.com Pastor Stephen Willis

VIRGINIA

• **Community Baptist Church**, Chantilly, VA, Washington D.C. area. 703/968-8871. www.cbc4me.org Pastor Mike Aylestock

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

WEST VIRGINIA

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

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# The forgotten generation

By David Almanzar

*pastor of Cañon Community Baptist Church  
Cañon City, Colorado*

I had a missionary friend come to present his field and burden to our church. The next day, as we were casually talking, he said, "You have a gray-haired church."

Immediately I was apologetic and somewhat defensive. After he left I thought about what he said and how I answered and thought, "Why should I be apologizing for the church God is building in Cañon City, Colorado?"

When I came to the church eight years ago the regular attendance was about 30. Last week we had 235 in the services. Back then the church was heavily in debt (a bond program gone bad) for property they no longer even owned. Now we have a debt, but it's for property and buildings purchased and built in the last couple of years. Before, the older buildings were in need of repair and woefully outdated. Today, every square inch of the building has been repaired and remodeled. The church has gone from not supporting a pastor to taking very good care of me, and we have a full-time associate pastor, a part-time music director, and two secretarial staff members. We also help support 43 missionaries at \$120 a month. All that is accomplished by a gray-haired church.

As I look over our mostly gray-haired congregation, I see a group of people who grew up during the heyday of the BBFI. They were a part of the times marked by the bus ministry, the big days, the three-or-more-services-a-week, the soul-winning visitation night, big youth camps, singing with the hymn books, and wearing a suit and tie for church.

Now we are supposed to tell that generation of people to forget all that because we are now "something-or-the-other driven."

"Technology and seeker-sensitive thinking has bypassed you, and we have to keep up with society, so get out of the way or get run over."

I see those gray-haired ones differently. They love the Lord, they love the church, and they love souls. They

have been willing to give up many of their loved traditions in order to reach out to the lost and unchurched. Many gray-hairs and younger ones alike have been saved and baptized in our church.

I think the church is doing a lot of things today without due consideration for this generation of people. We criticize and condemn them for their reluctance to abandon all they grew up with, telling them to "get with the program." And through all this, I observe these gray-hairs are still willing to give of their time, gifts, and money to see people saved, disciplined, and called into ministry.

In Cañon City they have given sacrificially so we could build a church seating 600. My gray-haired church has no problem putting in screens to sing praise choruses, no prob-

lem with chairs instead of pews, no problem with a large lobby or atrium that will also house a coffee house, no problem with three large, well-equipped nurseries. They just want consideration and appreciation for their being gray-haired faithful. After all, they were willing to build this \$1.7 million building for the next generation.

My last pastorate, where I was for 20 years, was not a gray-hair church. There are definitely differences between the two congregations.

In my former church, the average age of the membership was much younger. The members were consistently late to services and activities. We could not do as much financially. It was more difficult to get volunteers. A potluck dinner contribution from the younger church could be a loaf of bread and a jar of peanut butter. My current gray-hairs literally bring pots of home cooking.

This past Veterans Day we identified 42 veterans, and we had them stand in our congregation. Most of them were Vietnam, Korea, or WWII vets. And gray-hairs. I say, let's ask God to bless the church of the future, but be sure to include the church of the now. In your thinking and planning, don't forget the gray-hairs, the forgotten generation that makes our present and future possible.



*The Almanzars*



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