

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

JANUARY 2010 | VOL. 60 NO. 5 | \$1.95

THE JOURNEY TO **BECOMING A MISSIONARY**

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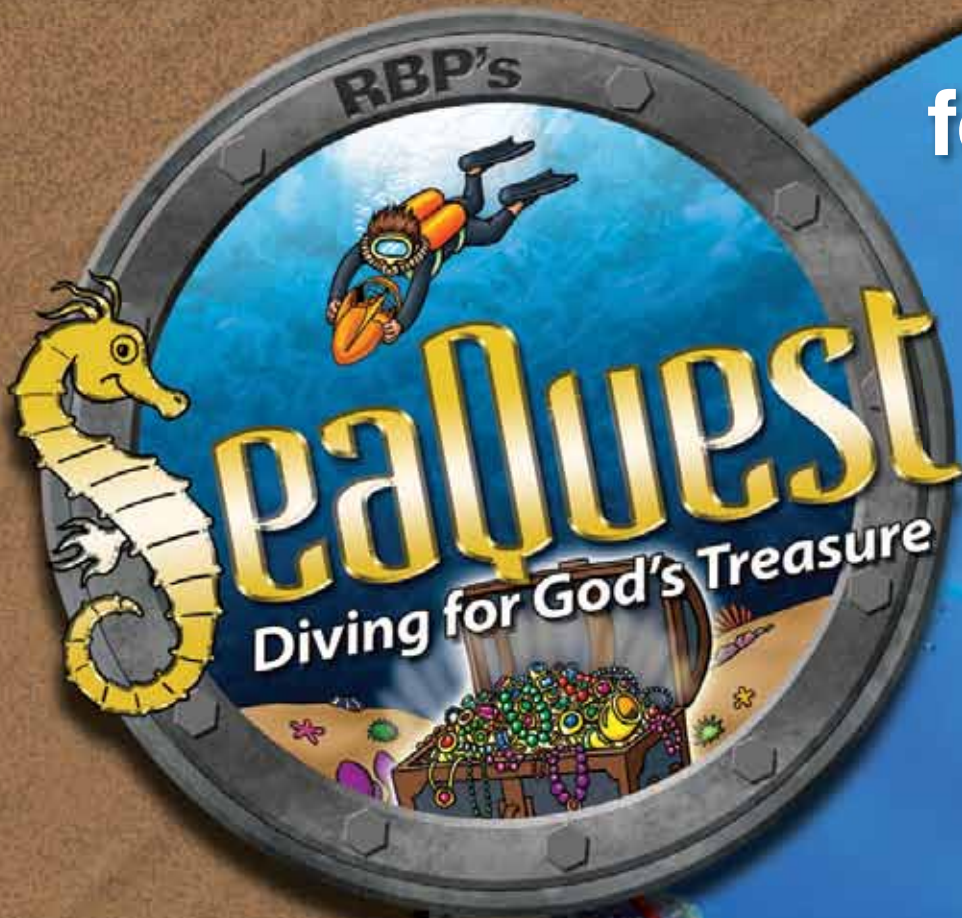
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ON THE TABLE

A non-extreme makeover

Readers will notice a slightly different look in the *Tribune* this month. The pages are wider. There are some layout and design changes. A few of the columns and ads have been shifted, but nothing here could be considered an extreme makeover. It's more a matter of redecorating than remodeling.

More important is what we did not change. Our commitment to communicate the heart and vision of this Fellowship remains unaltered. In fact, with the New Year, I am determined to make the *Tribune* more useful and helpful to our Fellowship than ever. To that end, be looking for regular columns from pastor evangelist Tom Wagoner this coming year on the subject of revival. Also, this issue carries the first in a series of articles about apologetics. I call the series "With Good Reason," and each month this year a practical essay on defending the faith will be offered.

Of course, our mission remains the same. We will tell the good news of what God is doing among the preachers and churches of the Fellowship. We will stand for the Articles of the Faith of the Fellowship. We will promote biblical values wherever we find them, both in and out of the Fellowship, and we will publish in such a way that others are encouraged to read over our shoulders. And we will honor our past, this year being our 60th as a Fellowship, but we will not enshrine the past, preferring to spend more time looking out the windshield in the front rather than the rearview mirror. The windshield is, after all, much larger than the mirror for a reason.

Speaking of honoring the past, two Fellowship heroes were called to glory in the days just prior to our deadline. We ordinarily publish shorter notices in such cases, but Thomas Ray, author of our Baptist History series, had providentially written an article about BBFI missionary Don Espinosa a few months ago, and with Don's passing it seemed appropriate that I publish Tom's article. Likewise, when I heard of the homegoing of Curtis Goldman, I pulled up an article I had written about him in 2002 hoping to shorten it, but Mr. Goldman could barely be contained in a book, let alone a few lines. So I offer the reprinted article with some appropriate edits.

With this issue then, we begin a new year with a new look. It is my hope and prayer that for our Fellowship and for the *Tribune*, 2010 is a year of revival, a year of prosperity, and a year of countless spiritual victories. May we anticipate these things with good reason.

Keith Bassham

TRIBUNE

JANUARY 2010

VOL. 60 NO. 5

With Good Reason
Apologetics as a tool for every Christian

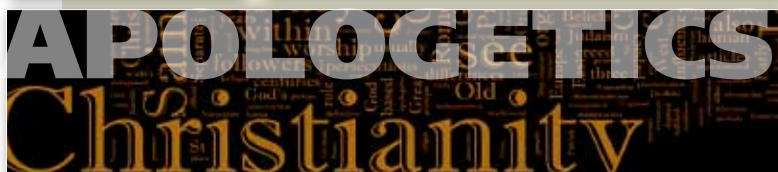
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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

Revival requires unity



by Mark Hodges | President | BBFI

Sixty years ago, a group of Baptists came together to form a fellowship of pastors known today as the Baptist Bible Fellowship. This Fellowship has been successful in training young people for the ministry, starting churches across America, and sending missionaries around the world. Godly men banded together to make a difference to a lost world that was lacking unity and integrity.

This is to be “The Year of Revival” for our Fellowship. One of the key elements to revival in our Fellowship is a walk in unity — unity in doctrinal purity, unity in personal godliness, and unity in our divine purpose. Unity, not uniformity or unanimity. By unity, I mean a oneness of heart on our doctrinal position and our direction (purpose) of this Fellowship.

Most are familiar with the book by Alexandre Dumas, *The Three Musketeers*. The heroes of that story had as their motto “All for one and one for all.” The Apostle Paul challenged the church at Ephesus to adopt a similar motto. Ephesians 4:1-7 says, “*I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all. But unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ.*”

The Lord provides us with seven great possessions for unity: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father. Did you notice that everything is about Him? When our lives, our desires, our will, and our interests stop being about Him and start to focus on us, we are headed for trouble!

I believe Satan’s strategy to defeat the church is to divide and conquer. And if he can defeat our churches, he will defeat our Fellowship. Satan’s method is deception and destruction. He wants to deceive us so that he might divide us and, therefore, destroy us.

On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded just 73 seconds into its flight. The disaster was ultimately blamed on one inexpensive O-ring. Records reveal the space shuttle comprised one million components, yet it took just one to destroy the whole. In our Fellowship and in our churches, Satan is working to find that one whom he can destroy. That is why Paul tells us to exercise the right walk, “*With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love...*” and the right work, “*Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.*”

Sixty years old now, this great Baptist movement can unite as comrades to be a tremendous testimony to the world. “All for one and one for all.”

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

International Global Meeting 2011



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director

I was visiting with Jun Lumagbas in a Starbucks in Cebu, Philippines. Jun is the associate pastor of Bible Baptist Church — Cebu. When I shared an idea I had been praying about, he said he had been thinking the same thing. The idea was to have an international global meeting outside the United States organized cooperatively by U.S. and international Baptist Bible Fellowship leaders.

While visiting our missionaries and national leaders around the world, this same desire to be truly “international” has been expressed. So I brought this idea to the leaders of the BBFI-USA and they also expressed excitement for a meeting where we celebrate what God has done around the world for nearly 60 years — but this time outside the U.S.

We have established a planning committee of international leaders and set the meeting in Cebu, Philippines, for February 21-24, 2011. Cebu is right for many reasons. The missionary effort of the Filipino churches has been amazing. One of our great missionaries, Bob Hughes, ministered in Cebu where a thriving church continues under the leadership of Armie Jesalva. They are well able to host such a meeting and many missionaries and churches in the Philippines would be able to participate. Transportation to and in Cebu is accessible. The cost for accommodations is very reasonable.

Excitement is already growing in many countries as they look forward to attending this historic meeting. We anticipate pastors, missionaries, and national leaders from the USA, Africa, Latin America, Europe, Asia, the South Pacific, Australia, and the Middle East to be in attendance to celebrate God’s work through the BBFI.

Churches in America are already talking about sending their pastor and his wife. Others are planning to send the entire staff, and some plan to make it a mission trip for their church. Wouldn’t it be great if every state would send their chairman or national director? Some suggest that states raise funds to send a national pastor from another part of the world. For that national pastor to meet other pastors in various countries with ties back to the BBFI would give him the understanding that he is part of something greater. What a joy it will be to see and meet missionaries who can trace their faith to early BBFI missionaries sent from the USA.

Our desire is to see the nations rejoice for God’s glorious gift — Jesus Christ. We want to celebrate and praise God for what He has done over the past 60 years and renew our vision for the future with the intent of coordinating our efforts from every nation to reach out to all the people of the world with the gospel.

The Mission Office will set up travel packages from several locations in the USA. Accommodations are being reserved at this time in Cebu. Costs will be provided as soon as we can get some confirmations. Plan now for Cebu, Philippines, in February 21-24, 2011!

Searcy highlights Boston "Ignite" forum



by Wayne Guinn | Director | NCPO

What a great Ignite Church Planting Forum we had at Boston Baptist College on November 16-17! We would like to thank Dave Melton, Ken Gillming, Randy Ward, and all the students and staff for being great hosts for our two-day event. We also appreciate Grace Snavelly and the college ensemble for their special music.

Ryan Bevin, who pastors Lighthouse Baptist Church in Chillicothe, Ohio, got us off to a great start, bringing a tremendous challenge to start new churches. Ryan shared his journey of how God used him to start his church and his continued endeavor. He was also a part of our breakout sessions along with Duke Hergatt, Rob Willis, Keith Gillming, Terry Kizer, Tim Robertson, and Matt and Stacy Burns. We appreciate all of those who took of their time and money to be a part of the success of our Ignite Church Planting Forums.

The highlight of our Forum was hearing from Nelson Searcy, author, pastor, speaker, and church planter. Nelson pastors The Journey in Manhattan, New York. They now have several other locations around New York City as well. He was able to share a three-hour interactive workshop with 40 to 50 pastors and staff on the eight church systems he has developed and is now writing books about. Even in three hours, Nelson wasn't able to cover everything he wanted to. However, those attending received great information. Nelson also handed out copies of his books to those who didn't already have one and offered several free resources that would be sent via email. He then had the opportunity to speak to the students on Tuesday morning, giving them a brief testimony about how he started The Journey and what is happening with the work now. He wrapped everything up by bringing a challenge and call for commitment to church planting.

If you would like to hear some of the sessions of our Ignite Church Planting Forums, you can listen to the podcasts on our website at www.bbfincpo.com.

We also want to make you aware of two events coming up. Please do everything you can to attend the February National Meeting in Savannah, Georgia. We thank the *Baptist Bible Tribune* and Keith Bassham for allowing us to use this meeting to focus on church planting. It is our goal to get as many of our church planters there as possible. You won't want to miss being there February 15-17.

Our next Church Planting Candidate School will be held at Canyon Creek Baptist Church in Richardson, Texas in conjunction with the Texas State Fellowship Meeting and Conference April 19-23. We will give more information about both of these events during that week as they become available. If you know of anyone that is interested in planting a church or getting ready to, please have them contact the NCPO at (417) 889-1017 or office@bbfincpo.com.

Revival in the Providence of God



by Tom Wagoner | Pastor | Central Baptist Church | Dunn, NC

In the last three Baptist Bible Fellowship gatherings that I have been a part of, I have noticed that the meetings have turned to the subject of revival again and again. I have felt the heartbeat of our pastors as well as our leadership, in particular our current president, Mark Hodges, who has announced "Revival" to be the theme for 2010. It really appears that in the providence of God, the winds of revival are beginning to blow — not only in our churches, but also across our nation in various movements.

My personal pilgrimage in search of revival began in the February 2009 National Meeting when much was said about our need as a Fellowship to seek God's presence and His glory. The Lord started speaking to me personally, so I began reading anything I could find on the subject and praying specifically for revival. A few weeks later, a close friend, Jack Lemmons, who is the pastor of McLeansville Baptist Church, sent me the biography *Manley Beasley: Man of Faith/Instrument of Revival*. This book so stirred my heart that I shared it with a few men in our Fellowship. No matter where I have been for the last few months, I have found that it has spread through several of our states.

Manley's story is an interesting one. His heart and his passion were for revival and a life of faith. He, along with James A. Stewart, Bill Stafford, and others established what they called an "International Congress on Revival" that gathered for the purpose of seeking God's face. They brought together revivalists from all over the world as well as people who were experiencing revival personally. There was preaching and music, but most of the time was spent seeking the Lord and speaking of revival.

As a result of that book and the moving of the Spirit in my life, the Lord began to stir my heart to begin transitioning a camp meeting that I lead in the mountains of North Carolina from just a historic camp meeting to a "Southern Congress on Revival." I announced it to the camp meeting on the week of July 4th. While there, an older man of God that I love and respect deeply, Billy Martin from Winston Salem, taught each morning on the subject of revival. He said that the three things that have always preceded revival were prayer, preaching, and the providence of God. The first two did not surprise me. When he spoke of providence, it was a stark reminder that we do not have revival when we desire or prepare for it, but instead when God deems that it is time for an individual, church or movement to experience genuine revival.

Revival is defined many different ways. I will elaborate on this subject in future columns, but I will offer this definition now: Revival is an extraordinary move of the Holy Spirit producing an extraordinary work of God among His people where Jesus Christ is glorified and magnified in an extraordinary way.



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

-Laurence Sterne

Music ministry is a high stress job

Of the 15 most overworked and underpaid professions out there, church music ministry rates number five, according to PayScale.com

You may not think of people who plan, direct, and conduct performances for religious services as being under a particularly high amount of stress. But they also choose the appropriate psalm or hymn for every wedding and funeral — only some of the most important events in a family's life. And those stressful situations can create some demanding clients.

"Every now and then you'll get a strange request," said Dan Fenn, Music Ministry Director at St. John's Lutheran Church in Northfield, Minnesota. "A couple of years ago I got a request to play the Beer Barrel Polka at a funeral. You have to ask yourself, is this appropriate for a worship service?"

How Payscale.com defined high stress and low pay jobs: Starting from a database of over 2000 jobs, Payscale used data from over 36,000 respondents who ranked their jobs for quality of life factors, and chose those requiring a bachelor's degree or higher where the national median pay is less than \$65,000. The survey was conducted between August 10, 2009 and October 1, 2009.

Source: CNNMoney.com and PayScale.com

Golfing pastors the new eco-terrorists?

Now that researchers at the Danish Golf Union have discovered that golf balls may take from 100 to 1,000 years to decompose naturally, concern has been expressed regarding the potential hazards to the environment. Over time, chemicals and metals from the balls leach into water and soil and can have harmful effects on plant and animal life.

In response, several golf ball manufacturers have introduced biodegradable balls so golfers can enjoy environment-friendly hooks, slices, and shanks.



Source: CNN.com (Submitted by reader Bill Kolb, O'Fallon, MO)

Social media trends: Reaching people faster

38 years

Amount of time it took for radio to reach 50 million listeners

13 years

Amount of time it took for terrestrial TV to reach 50 million viewers.

4 years

Amount of time it took for the Internet to reach 50 million users.

9 months

Amount of time it took for Facebook to add 100 million users. If Facebook were a country, it currently would be the fourth most populated place in the world. This means it easily beats the likes of Brazil, Russia, and Japan in terms of size.

Source: Econsultancy.com

Megachurch-goers younger, give less

The average age of megachurch-goers is 40, compared with nearly 53 at a typical Protestant church. Nearly two-thirds of megachurch attendees are younger than 45, double the numbers in Protestant congregations of all sizes. The vast majority are 18 to 44.

- Nearly a third of megachurch attendees are single, compared with 10 percent in a typical Protestant church. They also tend to be wealthier and better educated.

- Sixty-two percent of megachurch attendees said they had experienced

much spiritual growth in the past year. But nearly 45 percent never volunteer at the church and 32 percent give little or no money to the congregation. The study did not include comparable data on volunteer rates at churches of all sizes.

"The ethos of the megachurch is to say 'You can't just sit there and spectate, that's not enough, you've got to do this or do that,'" said study co-director Scott Thumma, a sociologist at the Hartford institute. "But a lot of people said, 'I'm perfectly happy coming here and doing that.'"

Divided loyalties also might play a role: Just three-quarters described the megachurch they were attending as their "home" church, and many said they were attending more than one church.

Thumma said the findings don't necessarily mean that megachurches don't foster involvement. The study found that significant numbers of even the least-involved participants still give generously, have invited others to church, and attend services weekly.

Source: Hartford Institute for Religion Research at Hartford Seminary and Leadership Network

RE: FWD: Beware Hoax Emails!!!

Some Baptist Bible Fellowship pastors have been receiving hoax emails, purportedly from missionaries who find themselves stuck in some overseas situation or emergency. BBFI pastors are a generous lot with missionaries, and if the amount requested is not too large, or if the situation described seems plausible, they are quick to respond.

However, at least two preachers acquainted with the *Tribune*, after receiving such an email, contacted the BBFI Mission Office, only to discover the missionary was not only not in any trouble, but he was safe and busy on the field — not in some far off country or in a hospital.

Hoaxes, scams, and viruses are a part of email life. Do what you can to protect yourself electronically, but more than anything else, use common sense. It takes just a moment to contact the missionary or the Mission Office to confirm the truth.

I discourage friends from forwarding emails to me, regardless of the hilarity of the joke or the depth of the need contained within. I also advise people not to pass emails around when they contain many names in the To: field. Every time someone does that with a forwarded email, thousands of strangers gain access to your email information and that of your friends and family — and now they all know you enjoy receiving forwarded hoaxes, scams, and jokes.

The Tribune



In the **NEWS of the WEEK**

6286 F. MAINE ROAD
P. A. F. B.
Plattsburgh, New York

Rev. G. E. Hodges,
Pastor Beaver Street Baptist
Church,
Jacksonville, Florida:

We were transferred from Savannah, Ga., to Plattsburgh. In Savannah we were members of Bible Baptist church.

We found that this city of about 22,000 people had only one Baptist church. There are of course churches of other denominations. We have attended three of these churches and have not found one of them that gives an invitation for anybody to accept Christ as Saviour. Here, if you wish to be baptized or become a member of the church, you must talk to the pastor. We never hear anything about any-

body being saved.

The people here are desperately in need of a New Testament Bible-believing church. Once such a church is organized, I believe it would not be long before it could support a pastor full-time.

My husband and I have held a prayer meeting in our home, where nine of our friends and neighbors were present. We have several families that are already interested in a genuine New Testament testimony.

The opportunity here, as you can see, is great. I don't believe I have ever been in any place that needs Bible teaching and preaching more than is needed here.

Mrs. A. C. Lundin.

Last year was a good year for Bible Baptist church, Durant, Okla., **Paul R. Morgan**, pastor. In 1958, the average weekly Sunday school attendance was 80 and the average weekly offering was \$51.91. In September 1959, the average weekly Sunday school attendance was 128 and the average weekly offering was \$110.15. In 1959 the church's total offerings amounted to \$8,933.17, of which \$690.16 was given to missions. (In addition to the \$690.16, the Christmas missionary offering was to be added.) During 1959, there were 51 professions of faith in Christ, 44 additions to the church by baptism, 26 by letter, and eight by statement.

* * *

GULF BREEZE, FLORIDA

To The Tribune:

On Dec. 27 we organized the First Baptist church of Santa Rosa Shores, Star Route 1, with 15 charter members.

We need the prayers of our Fellowship people. We have here a great field; this is a new area, with around 200 families and about 5,000 homes being built within a mile of the land on which we hope to erect a permanent building.

Kenneth W. Clukie
8 Bay Street,
Star Route 1.

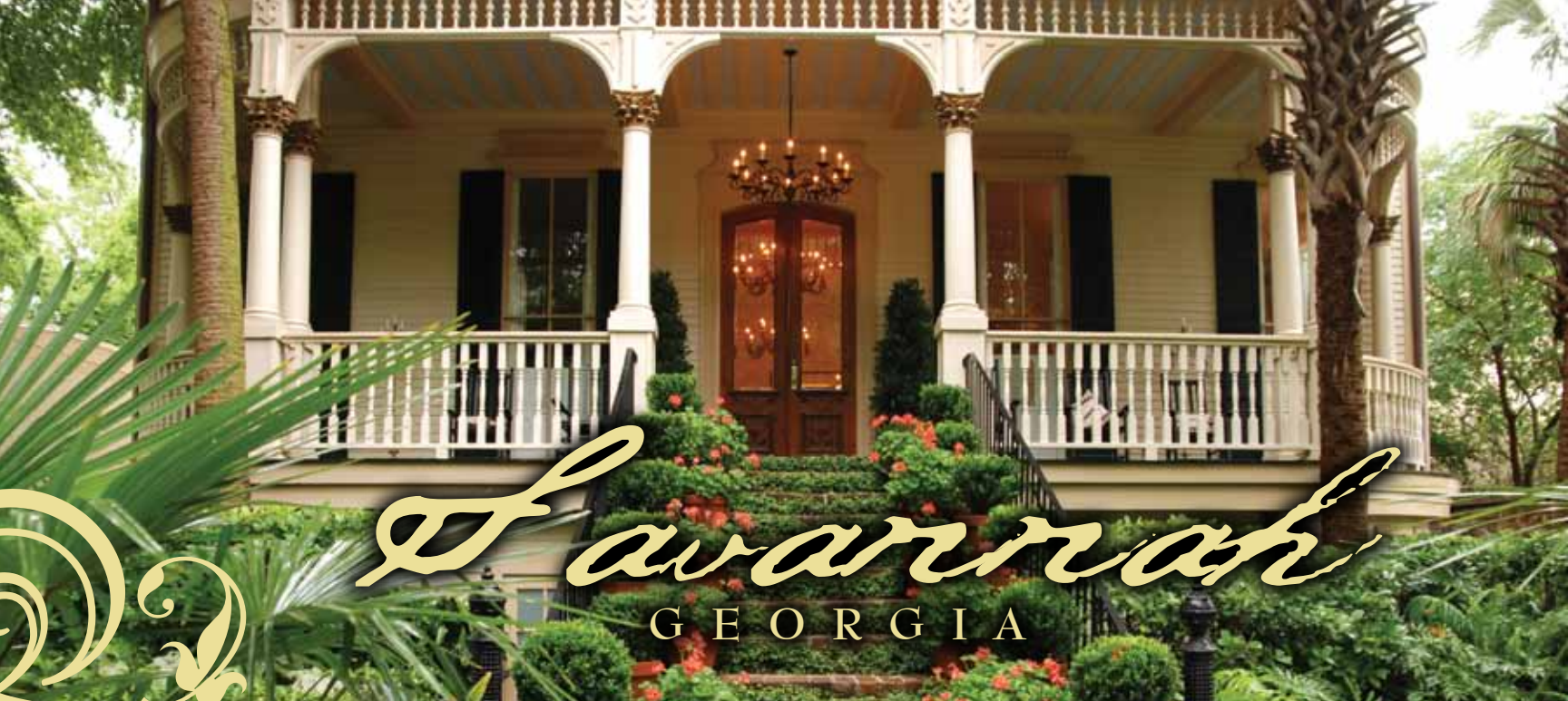
* * *

Central Baptist church, Sherman, Tex., **Lloyd S. Ledbetter**, pastor, had 415 in Sunday school Dec. 20, including 21 visitors, and a total offering for the day of \$722.

Story appeared in the January 15, 1960 edition of the *Tribune*.

Praying through the *Tribune* for January

- Pray for the families of the pastors who have passed on to glory.
- Pray for unity among the preachers and churches of the Fellowship.
- Pray for revival among the preachers and churches of the Fellowship.
- Pray for the planning of the international fellowship meeting in the Philippines.
- Pray for church planters you may know.
- Pray for those who work in the National Church Planting Office.
- Pray for musicians and music ministers in your church.
- Pray for the BBFI National Fellowship Meeting in Savannah.
- Pray that God would use you to help open someone's heart to Him.
- Pray for missionaries who are in preparation.
- Pray for those who work in the BBFI Mission Office.
- Pray for missionaries newly arrived on the field.
- Pray for those who work for God in the inner cities.
- Pray for the students in our Bible colleges.
- Pray for those entering retirement, that they would continue to be productive for God.
- Pray for those who minister to strengthen marriages and families.
- Pray for Bible Baptist Church in Galveston, as they continue to rebuild.
- Pray for those struggling with weight and other health issues, that their lives would testify to the power of God.
- Pray for the Tribune staff and the annual offering to be received in February.



BBFI National Fellowship Meeting ■ February 14-17

Bible Baptist Church | Pastor Herb Hubbard | Savannah, GA | www.bbsav.org

In the last nine years, it has been our privilege to be the host church for three National Meetings. The meeting this February is one we look toward to with much excitement. As one who has been deeply involved in our NCPO efforts, what joy it is that our emphasis will be upon church planting! Many testimonies will be shared and men who have started works will be preaching for us. Of course, mix all that with the beauty of Savannah at springtime, with our parks, great southern food, and hospitality and you come up with a formula for a wonderful time together. My church is excited and we look forward to demonstrating again southern hospitality. God bless and we look forward to seeing you in February.



Herb and Shirley Hubbard

Host Hotel

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Savannah, GA 31401
Phone: (912) 233-7722
www.marriott.com/savrf
Reservation Link: standard room Bible Baptist Fellowship (800) 285-0633

Other Hotels

Hampton Inn & Suites Savannah/Midtown (brand new) \$99 plus tax per night
Rate includes complimentary continental breakfast for up to two guests per room
20 Johnston Street
Savannah, GA 31405
(912) 721-3700
(800) 426-7866
(use property code SAVMD)
www.hamptoninn.hilton.com

Spring Hill Suites (Marriott)
special BBFI rate \$79 until January 16
11317 Abercorn Street
Savannah, GA 31419
(912) 920-3787
www.marriott.com/savsh

SpringHill Suites Savannah Downtown/Historic District \$119
150 Montgomery Street
Savannah, GA 31401
Phone: (912) 629-5300
Fax: (912) 629-5301
www.marriott.com/hotels/travel/savhd-springhill-suites-savannah-downtown-historic-district

For those who would like to stay on the beach you can check out www.tybeevisit.com

Beach Hotels - about 35 minutes from Bible Baptist Church, 20 minutes from downtown

Ocean Plaza Beach Resort / \$89 ocean front, \$69 pool side
15th Street & Ocean Front
Tybee Island, GA 31328
Phone: (912) 786-7777
www.oceanplaza.com

Desoto Beach Hotel / Grand Deluxe \$116.95, Premier \$89.95, Standard \$69.95
212 Butler Avenue
Tybee Island, GA 31328
Phone: (912) 786-4542
Toll-Free: (877) 786-4542
www.desotobeachhotel.com

Special Events

Thursday Feb. 18, 2010

Savannah Trolley Tour
Leaves the church at 9:00 a. m. and includes a guided tour of Savannah, lunch at Lady and Sons, and returns to the church by 12:30. Total cost: \$37 per person.

Reservations must be made in advance of BBFI meeting

Golf Tournament
Benefits go to the BBFI National Church Planting Office

Guest Speakers

Paul Monroe
Morris Brown
Mark Hodges
William Fluker
Rick Johnson
Duke Hergatt
Joe Murray
Phil Hopper
Jayson Workman
Monty Maple
Archie Emerson
Jim Combs
Charles Pettit
Bill Monroe

Bumper stickers, athiests, and little old ladies

God said it. I believe it. That settles it.

And that is what passes for defending the faith, or defending the non-faith in the first decade of the 21st century. Somehow, I don't think this graffiti-like repartee is the serious mental and spiritual engagement Paul had in mind in Acts 17:16-18:

synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

*But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts:
and be ready always to give an answer to ev-
ery man that asketh you a reason of the hope
that is in you with meekness and fear:*

moot. But the atheists have at least done me one favor — they have shown me where to start a series of essays on apologetics, defending the Christian faith.

The word apologetics comes from the Greek word *apologia*, used by Peter and translated by the word “answer” in the passage quoted above, and also used by Paul in Acts 22:1 (“hear ye my defence”) and Philippians 1:17 (“I am set for the defence of the gospel”).

John M. Frame expands on that a bit and says apologetics has three divisions:

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unbelievers.

Offense – exposing the foolishness of unbelieving thought.

Frame also says that these divisions are so interrelated that to do one completely, you have to be doing the other two as well. But we are still not to the “how-to” stage, so I will leave the statement on the shelf and come back to it later.

What is apologetics not?

A couple of other things have to be taken care of here. For instance, what is apologetics not? It goes without saying that it is not apologizing for the faith. We are not sorry for believing in God, or Jesus, or eternity. We defend these beliefs, along with others, and we are not willing to give them up, let alone apologize for them. That is unfortunately not true for some in Christendom who have given up defending the faith in favor of making it more tolerable.

You may be familiar with Christopher Hitchens, author of *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything* (2007). Known several years ago as a columnist and news commentator, he is better known now as a representative of aggressive atheism, and in that role he frequently debates representatives of Christianity. In an October column for Slate.com, Hitchens describes some things he has observed on the debate circuit. Read his comments about an opponent he simply calls Wilson.

“Wilson isn’t one of those evasive Christians who mumble apologetically about how some of the Bible stories are really just ‘metaphors.’ He is willing to maintain very staunchly that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ and that his sacrifice redeems our state of sin, which in turn is the outcome of our rebellion against God. He doesn’t waffle when asked why God allows so much evil and suffering — of course he ‘allows’ it since it is the inescapable state of rebellious sinners. I much prefer this sincerity to the vague and Python-esque witterings of the interfaith and ecumenical groups who barely respect their own traditions and who look upon faith as just another word for community organizing.” (Faith No More, October 26, 2009, www.slate.com)

Even Hitchens knows the difference between apologetics and apologizing, and he respects a firm defense.

Apologetics is also not just adopting a

My goal is not to prove
skilled debater or that
many facts at my finger
demonstrate that Chris

crafty debating style. The goal of apologetics is not winning debate points. I admire great debaters, and I sometimes wish I had their skills; apologetics is not just about winning arguments. There is a relational component. Peter’s quoted phrase begins with, “Sanctify the Lord God in your hearts.” The American Standard Version translates the phrase, “sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord.” There is the starting point for apologetics rightly done. My goal is not to prove I am a skilled debater or that I have many facts at my fingertips, but to demonstrate that Christ is Lord.

Nor does apologetics replace faith with proof. Rather it is more about removing roadblocks to faith so that the unbeliever may respond to the gospel. One who comes to God must believe that He is (Hebrews 11:6).

Let me show you a Bible example of how faith and facts can work together. In the Christmas nativity story, we read in Luke 2 of the birth of Jesus Christ. Sprinkled throughout the story are various facts (it is interesting that Luke takes pains at the beginning of his Gospel to tell us how he gathered these facts) about the community and politics of the time. We read of the decree of Caesar Augustus, the administration of a man named Cyrenius, and some calendar information. However, merely believing Jesus was born at a place and time in history is not enough for salvation to occur. John tells us God became flesh (John 1:1, 14), and Luke tells us when and where. Thus we have secular truth and spiritual truth working as partners, and that is a form of apologetics.

Near the end of the Gospels, you are also presented with similar “secular” markers placed

in the resurrection stories. What the Bible is saying to us by including this information is that Christianity is not like some mysterious, esoteric cult with made up “facts” only the initiated insiders fully understand (the Roman world had plenty of those, by the way), but Christian and non-Christian alike can check out the story, and an honest person will have enough information to judge its credibility.

Who needs Apologetics?

Craig Blomberg of Denver Seminary says at least three kinds of people need apologetics: anyone who is concerned about evangelizing the lost, anyone who is concerned that professing Christians not abandon faith, and anyone who is concerned about growing spiritually. He is right.

Apologetics and evangelism go hand in hand. In one sense, apologetics is not optional, or just for scholars, theologians, preachers, or evangelists, or the advanced Christian. For Paul in Athens (Acts 17, one of the most important sections of the New Testament concerning apologetics) apologetics is simply teaching about God the Creator and the resurrected Christ. These concepts are essential to Christian knowledge, but they are not complicated. Granted, people sometimes throw up artificial roadblocks that the ordinary Christian may not have solutions for (spurious questions about supposed contradictions in the Bible or “what ifs”), but many do have serious questions about Christian beliefs that don’t sound quite right to them. They deserve serious responses. That is part of what Peter has in mind when he urges us to have a good answer when people ask

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about our hope. A testimony of a life changed or of a need met, coupled with an intelligent answer to a question, is a powerful witness.

For instance, Christians are sometimes stymied when someone asserts there is no universal moral law. This type of objection is more common these days with the prominence of the debates about abortion and homosexuality. The argument goes, “Who is to say something is right or wrong? What is wrong for you may be right for someone else.” And if there is no universal moral law, then there cannot be only one “right” God or only one “right” way to believe.

The truth is, everyone believes in some universal moral law. Chuck Colson, I believe, used to use an example about coming upon a little old lady crossing a street. The question is, “Do you help her across the street, or do you push her out in front of a bus?” If only one of the options is correct, why is that so? How did that “truth” get into us?

Keep in mind, this example makes a point, but it doesn’t lead a person to faith. Apologetics is best used like a recipe, with the ingredients gathered in advance, and then mixed together gradually. And do not believe you are under pressure to make a convert. God’s Spirit and God’s Word does that (Romans 1:16). However, your sensible and logical response to a question may be all that is necessary for a person to become open to the Lord. Blomberg reminds us that “God’s Spirit does not work in a vacuum,” and God uses people to bring people to Himself.

Apologetics is also part of the solution to people abandoning faith, an especially acute situation among our youth. Steve Wright,

in *ReThink*, speaks of students who, “when they graduate, they graduate from God,... We have more workers, more activities, larger budgets, more staff, larger buildings, and still more students leaving the church and abandoning their faith.”

Blomberg asserts, “In adolescence, many fall away from the faith of their parents because no one is able to give convincing answers to their hard questions. Students go off to universities and discover a whole new world in the academic study of religion. When their churches back home show no interest in this world or are unable to reply, many give up on the church.” Liberals and atheists often start out in conservative or fundamentalist churches, where “God said it, and I believe it,” is the beginning and ending of settled truth.

What could happen if students in our churches were exposed to smart, thoughtful defenders of the faith from our colleges and seminaries, ready to answer the hard questions? Or think of the difference a pastor could make with a few sermons a year addressing the same issues. Replace the bumper sticker theological slogans with well-thought-out responses our youth can use in the lunchroom and on the sports field. Don’t allow the teachers in the classroom to become the sole authority on origins and philosophy of life — give the kids a viable alternative so their minds are guarded beforehand.

And those concerned with their own spirituality need apologetics. Blomberg says, “Tragedies in the present have a way of obliterating good feelings about God’s presence in the past. Unless we have logical, rational arguments for the truth of our faith on which

we can fall back when our emotions betray us, we too will be tempted to ‘hang it all up.’ Or at best, we will backslide rather than grow in our walk with God.”

Apologetics is a way of telling the truth about God. The dark prognosis, the emergency call in the middle of the night, the death of a child, or a community-wide disaster could happen to any or all of us, and in the presence of such a formidable rock-face, bumper-sticker thinking is no comfort. In a foreshadow of the text from 1 Peter, Isaiah 8:13 speaks to us, “Sanctify the LORD of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread,” that is, with an accurate view of God, He seems very big, and everything else seems very small. People armed ahead of time with a large view of God, along with a sense of His plan and purpose, and filled with the hope of glory placed in the heart, will be more ready to stand in the face of personal tragedy. Apologetics, centered as it is on the truth of God, creation, and resurrection, allows people to declare, “We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 1:16).

So what is apologetics? It is an answer to a question and a defense of your faith. And who needs apologetics? We all do, to be effective in evangelism, to prevent our youth and others from abandoning the faith, and to face bad times with confidence in the one true God.

This is the first article in the Tribune series, "With Good Reason", essays on the subject of apologetics. Topics will help answer questions about God, Jesus, science, Truth, other religions, suffering, and other subjects.

Replace the bumper sticker theological slogans with well-thought- out responses our youth can use in the lunchroom and on the sports field.

J. Curtis Goldman: One-of-a-kind pastor

by Keith Bassham

From the Baptist Bible Tribune, February 15, 2002

J. Curtis Goldman claimed that had he been born February 12, he would have been named Abraham, after the 16th president of the United States. And had he been born the 14th, he would have to bear the name Valentine. As it was, he was born to John and Stella Goldman February 13, 1923, in San Angelo, Texas. The J is just an initial, nothing more.

John Goldman was what Curtis called a “weekend drunk,” and he was unfaithful to his wife. Though Stella was a Christian, she had long given up hope that John would ever be saved. Curtis would ride his bicycle around town looking for him on weekends. He actually saw his father with another woman one Sunday afternoon in 1938. Curtis’ love for his dad died that day. That love would be rekindled years later, after Curtis was saved in 1945. John Goldman would himself be saved in 1948.

By the time of the Second World War, Curtis had graduated from Tyler Junior College. After graduation, he enlisted in the Army Air Corps, volunteering as a combat glider pilot in 1942. One event in his training shows some of his character.

In the final phase of his training in Okmulgee, Oklahoma, after which he would receive his commission, Goldman was instructed by his check pilot to hold his two-seater Taylorcraft at 500 feet. The check pilot then instructed Goldman to do a two-turn spin to the left. Goldman said such a maneuver was against regulations because the plane was too low. The check pilot insisted he make the spin, taking full responsibility. Goldman says, “I throttled back as I pulled the nose up, kicking the left rudder, causing the plane to come out of the stall into a spin. The ground was coming up quick, and as I held [the aircraft] in until the full two turns were completed, the check pilot literally yelled for me to turn loose of the controls.”

The check pilot took the controls and safely landed the plane. Goldman knew he would be among the 50 percent of his class who washed out for doing such a stupid stunt.

“Get out of the plane,” the check pilot said. Goldman’s heart sank. He thought he had washed out. And then the instructor said, “You’re okay, kid. You passed with flying colors.”

Goldman was speechless. The check pilot went on, “All we are checking you glider pilots for is guts. Had you not completed the full two turns, I would have washed you out!”

Goldman received his wings in December 1943. Although officially the G on his wing insignia stood for “glider,” Goldman and his fellow pilots said it stood for “guts.”

Goldman participated in airborne invasions of France, Holland, and Germany, as well as resupply and evacuation missions all over Europe during the war. In July 1945, he returned from Europe, planning to reenter the conflict in the Pacific after 90 days of furlough. During that furlough the atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, ending the war and Curtis Goldman’s military career.

A friend, Clyde Davenport, arranged a double date for Curtis and Katherine Ruth Aven in September 1945. When Clyde and his date got out of the car to enter a honky-tonk, Katherine remained in her seat. She refused to go in with Curtis because she was a Christian. No amount of persuasion would change her mind, so the foursome went skating. Or, at least, Curtis tried skating. On the way home, Curtis told Katherine they would marry. When he asked her for another date, she suggested they all go to Central Baptist Church the next Sunday evening.

John Rawlings was preaching. Curtis was hostile during and after church. He made a scene during the altar call when his friend Clyde was responding to the invitation. He cursed the preacher on his way out of the building. Poor Katherine decided to get some things understood. If she was to continue seeing Curtis, he had to agree to straighten up, and for them to date during the week, Curtis must attend church with her every Sunday night. In his words, Curtis was trapped.

Aware that Christians ought not to marry unbelievers, Katherine and her mother had made a pact that the couple would marry only if Curtis was saved before Christmas, about four months away.

The Sunday before Christmas, John Rawlings was closing the service. Katherine was planning how she would return Curtis’ ring, praying for the strength and courage to end the

relationship. Rawlings said, “I believe someone is here tonight who should accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior. Who is it? Is it you?”

Curtis knew he was the one with the need.

Rawlings continued, “If it is you, will you, right now, by faith, receive Jesus Christ into your heart as your very own Savior and Lord?”

Curtis responded from his heart, “Yes sir, I will.”

J. Curtis Goldman had become a Christian just a few days before Christmas. And Katherine knew that she would soon be Mrs. Katherine Ruth Goldman.

Curtis and Katherine were married March 28, 1946. She introduced her new husband to Christian basics, like praying before meals and tithing. He responded slowly and skeptically, but he came to enjoy his new life. In June, he thought perhaps the Lord might be calling him to preach.

Curtis hated the idea of speaking in public. He had earlier attempted a course in public speaking. After less than two weeks, his professor encouraged him to drop out, calling him a hopeless case. Besides, Curtis also knew preachers didn’t make much money.

Finally, after months of struggling with the decision, he surrendered to the call in March 1947. The next day he quit his college classes and placed an ad in the local newspapers:

Young preacher has never preached a sermon, but wants to get started. Phone Curtis Goldman #5867.

The next Saturday, March 8, the pastor of Central Baptist Church in nearby Lindale called. He asked Curtis if the ad was serious or just a prank. After being assured the ad was a serious offer, the pastor engaged Curtis to fill his pulpit the next day since he had to be away for a revival meeting and his supply preacher was in the hospital.

One of his hearers compared Curtis’ preaching to that of Sam Jones. He was invited back a couple of weeks later, but this time was different. The music service was short and uninspiring. Curtis tried to preach, but after about 10 minutes he just dismissed the crowd. When he came back for the evening service, he hardly expected anyone to show up. To his surprise, the church was packed. He preached, and sev-

eral people were saved.

Goldman enrolled in Bible Baptist Seminary of Fort Worth in the fall of 1947, studying under the faculty headed by J. Frank Norris and Louis Entzminger. In December 1949, his pastor, John Rawlings, took him to Center, Texas, where Central Baptist Church was seeking a pastor. The church called Goldman and he fully plunged into the work, "having the time of his life," as he puts it. School was put on hold, and it would be almost 50 years before Curtis Goldman would receive his degree in theology.

The church grew from about 20 to over 200 in attendance over the next 18 months. Near the end of May 1950, Goldman and his church raised a special offering of \$100 for Bible Baptist Seminary. The church's treasurer, however, did not know how to spell the word "seminary" so he left the payee line blank on the check, just filling in the amount. When Goldman arrived in Fort Worth, the now famous split in the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship was underway. By Wednesday, May 24, the Baptist Bible Fellowship had been formed, along with Baptist Bible College and the Baptist Bible Tribune. In the formational meeting, after the motion was made to begin Baptist Bible College, Goldman seconded the motion and gave his check for \$100, filling in the words "Baptist Bible College" on the blank line.

One year later, in May 1951, Goldman resigned the pulpit of Central Baptist Church, not knowing where he would go. He attended the first BBF meeting in New Mexico, hosted by church planter Howard Ingram in Roswell, New Mexico. Paul Morgan of Calvary Baptist Church in Chickasha needed a preacher to fill in for him the next Sunday. Morgan was leaving Chickasha to begin a church in San Antonio.

Goldman preached a revival meeting in the church the next week, after which the congregation called him as pastor. There was a small split in the church within a short time of his moving to Chickasha, but the following two years saw growth, with an average attendance of nearly 300 when he resigned in 1953. Again, Curtis did not know where God would lead.

Two churches, Southwest Baptist Church of Denison, Texas, and later Tabernacle Baptist

Church in Altus, Oklahoma, voted 100 percent in each congregation to call him as pastor during the summer of 1953, but he had no peace about those opportunities. Earlier, Howard Ingram had asked him about going to Albuquerque to start a church, but the matter was dropped, for Ingram at least. The thought of going to Albuquerque, though, grabbed Goldman's heart. Albuquerque was why he had turned down the other churches.



J. Curtis Goldman: 1923-2009

In September 1953, Curtis and Katharine and their family moved to New Mexico and began the Temple Baptist Church of Albuquerque. His dream was to build a church with 1,000 in attendance.

The church organized officially October 18, 1953, with 17 members. The first order of business was to call Curtis Goldman as pastor. His greatest hope, in fact, was to continue as pastor of the church until October 2003. If Goldman accomplished this, he would occupy a unique place as a founder and pastor of a church for 50 years.

The second order of business was to secure property and to begin construction. Goldman acquired several lots, and after some initial setbacks, began building. One year later, over 200 people packed out the small building. More plans and more construction followed. In 1956, after dozens of people had been saved week after week, the church reached a record attendance of more than 600. By 1983, after 30 years, the church had gone through 10 separate building programs, given over \$2 million to missions, established a Christian school with 200 students, recorded more than 9,000 conversions, and boasted an average Sunday school attendance of over 1,000. On one special Sunday in the 1970s, 2,584 attended services at

Temple Baptist Church.

In the spring 1998, Curtis Goldman went back to school. Baptist Bible College's oldest underclassman was a great hit among the student body. In May, after finishing requirements for the Graduate of Theology diploma, he walked the platform at graduation to the applause and delight of all attending the ceremony. Upon receiving his diploma, however, he was greeted with another document. The ceremony paused as Curtis Goldman was presented an honorary doctorate. The unique surprise was fitting for such an unusual preacher.

Curtis Goldman's ministry was not without its bumps. Several church splits occurred at Temple Baptist. He had been an outspoken leader in the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, taking controversial positions on a variety of issues. He "filibustered" one national fellowship business meeting, threatening to read through the Bible beginning at Genesis 1:1, and

holding the floor until the president agreed to let him speak to an issue fully. At the end of the discussion, Goldman's motion was approved by a great majority of the pastors voting. His persistence had won the day.

Curtis Goldman remained devoted to his family. He considered his greatest achievement (in partnership with Katherine) a family that served God. His children, Joe Goldman, Sue Garard, and Kristy Haas, are all actively serving the Lord.

He will be known for his soul-winning zeal, his "straight shooting" manner, and his sometimes outrageous sense of humor. One thing is certain: he was never ignored.

Curtis Goldman, US military veteran and BBFI pastor, passed from this life December 3, 2009. His son-in-law, Allen Garard, officiated a private memorial service December 7, after which Goldman was buried with full military honors at Houston National Cemetery, Houston, Texas. His book, Silent Warrior, is available from 21st-centurypress.com and Amazon.com. For more information about obtaining Curtis Goldman's books and productions, contact the Mustard Seed Foundation (suegarard@aol.com).

The Journey to Becoming a Missionary of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International

By James G. Smith | BBFI Associate Mission Director

Some of our earliest childhood memories have to do with playing games. From the start of the game when we choose the color of our token, through the progression of the game, to the final satisfaction of the end accomplishment, we have a simple illustration of real life. Let's use that illustration to show the journey to becoming an effective BBFI missionary!

The evangelization of the world and the fulfillment of the Great Commission has been the heart of God and His people since the time of Christ. Since the Holy Spirit came to indwell believers on the Day of Pentecost, His purpose has been to empower believers to bear witness of the light of the gospel. Our job, as believers connected to that power, has always been to share the Good News.

For fifty-nine and a half years, pastors of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International have been approving missionaries sent out by local Baptist churches to go to people groups around the world. Some of the details in that approval process have changed over time, but the basic system has remained intact. This concept of local churches sending missionaries to make disciples and establish local churches in other parts of the world and among people different from themselves goes all the way back to Acts 13.

According to the U. S. Center for World Mission, there are approximately 16,000 different major people groups in the world. Of this number, 6,880 are considered unreached or least reached.



Wycliffe Bible Translators defines a people group 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."

The churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International take seriously the responsibility to plant indigenous churches among all those people groups. It is imperative that our churches be sensitive to the Lord's leading in the lives of the followers of Christ in our care. *Global Partners* wants to encourage young people to obey the will of the Lord, prepare for His service in a cross-cultural context, go through the steps delineated in these next few pages, and become part of our great team of interdependent missionaries identified with the Baptist Bible Fellowship International.

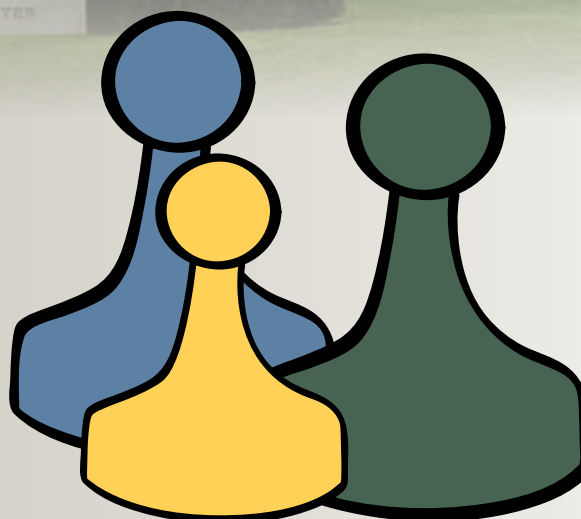
We are virtuously proud of the servant-leaders that God has saved, placed within our churches, and then called to take the Good News far away. We have asked some of them, including missionaries from different continents and different generational perspectives, to share their experiences in the process of becoming BBFI missionaries. Hopefully you will enjoy the very personal aspect of each step and will find this an interesting mix.

Also, consider your personal participation. Every game has spectators and cheerleaders. Most games have commentators and critics. I know for sure that every game needs participants. Consider your part. Get in the game!





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Can You Hear Me Now?

By Keith & Debbie Gandy, Germany

Paul Marcelli is the New York actor that personifies the 50 Verizon employees who each drive 100,000-plus miles annually to test the reliability of the Verizon network. Has the actor and the marketing emphasis brought the desired dividends in a highly competitive market? From 2002 to 2004, Marcelli and his well-placed ads were able to not only gain market share, but reduce customer turnover. In the world of balance sheets, that is a good thing.

As children of God, the question we constantly pose is, "Can I hear Him now?"

Theologians will argue concerning the validity of a biblical calling — is it a command or a call? Do only vocational workers receive such a call? In essence, that is the thrust of Gary Friessen's helpful, albeit controversial, 1980 volume *Decision Making and The Will of God*. Friessen would argue that there is no specific will of God for the individual believer, but rather the exercising of wisdom, based upon the guidelines of what scripture indicates.

Nonetheless, there are strong examples of specific task-oriented men who

received a clear indication of what their ministry was to entail, and to whom it would be:

Jonah – not to the people of Tarshish, who also needed the gospel, but rather to the inhabitants of Ninevah.

Jeremiah – the prophet called from the womb who could not voluntarily lay down his assignment due to his deep-seated passion, even when he experienced pain as a result of executing that calling.

Barnabas and Saul – specifically separated for the task of reaching out cross-culturally.

Pastors – Ephesians 4:11 seems to indicate that God will give specifically gifted men to mature the body.

While theologians wrestle with the scriptural principles, I personally sense a specific command tied to a specific people group: Germans. This does not mean that the subjective, pragmatic experience of one person will in any manner provide a convincing argument towards

answering the biblical question. It simply indicates that my identity in Christ is momentarily locked in a specific direction.

As a 17-year-old whose life was not in any fashion Christ-centered, the abduction and subsequent murder of a work colleague shocked me and caused me to question where her soul resided in eternity. I had never shared the gospel with her and that burdens me to this day. Over the following months, I wrestled with whether I would put Christ first in my life for the first time. I eventually surrendered my heart to Him, never wanting another friend to enter eternity without at least having heard an explanation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

Within a few short weeks of that decision, I sensed a burning desire to eat sauerkraut. Well, maybe not! I did have a desire to minister among Germans, a people and culture not yet mine. Unexplainable? Well, maybe.

Psalm 37:4 records: "Delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart." That is not a new age guarantee that if you generate happiness in Jesus, all your Disney fantasies will somehow be cosmically fulfilled. It indicates something even bet-

ADVANCE ONE

ter. When Jesus becomes the absolute focal point of your heart, you can be assured that the desires you carry were planted by Him.

Can it be that a person who has dealt with Jesus becoming the Lord in his or her life will come to a place where Jesus plants His direction and will? That is what this Psalm seems to indicate.

Does that constitute a call? Is that only restricted to full-time vocational Christian workers? Does that specifically indicate the details and duration of the calling? Once again, there appears to be room in that passage to indicate a leading of Christ, and that it will be individually tailored.

It is wise to filter the dreams of a 17-year-old whose life has been turned upside down from the emotions and shock of tragic circumstances. At the very least, in the case of this missionary/church planter, hundreds

of Germans will line up and state that they are thankful that someone cared enough, that someone had the passion to go, and someone had the passion to sacrifice and send.



Additionally, following Jesus is not for the faint-hearted. Alan Redpath, the English writer, is famous for the words: "When God wants to do something impossible, he takes an impossible person and crushes him."

Pain, even deep pain of the soul, will cause any person to question whether running is the best answer. However, that "calling," that deep-seated assurance that their personal identity is tied to ministry that brings pain, is what allows the soul to push through the fog

until clarity returns.

It is my strong impression that there are people who will experience a Psalm 37:4 desire that cannot be explained away or denied. That passion must find expression. In my estimation, that meets the criteria of what in practical circles would entail a "calling."

Even as theologians continue to debate the biblical basis of a "calling," even as we cannot agree on the biblical definition and application of the concept, we must agree that there is a need and those with the skill-set must go and be sent.

Somehow you read the pages of the Gospels and Acts and hear the voice of the Savior asking clearly, "Can you hear me now?"

Advance to PREPARATION

Preparation at Baptist Bible College

By Jesse & Glenna Parnell, Uruguay

When I received the call to be a missionary, I was 14 years old and was attending the church where I had given my life to Christ the year before. Over the next couple of years, I began to grow in the Lord. I met my future wife, Glenna, at our church youth meetings and we began dating. We shared a call and leading to the ministry, so when we were married, we decided to go to Springfield, Missouri, on our honeymoon to visit Baptist Bible College.

While there, we monitored a church history class. I should have chosen any class but that one because I didn't have a clue what was going on, and I left thinking there was no way I could pass that class. I don't know if it was that experience or something else, but we decided to stay at our local church and not go to BBC at that time.

In March 1976, an evangelist came to our church and the Lord used his preaching to bring me to a very important conclusion in my life. I realized I had been called to the mission field but wasn't moving toward the fulfillment of that call. That night I told Glenna I planned to be in Bible college by September. In May, I accompanied my pastor to the fellowship meeting at BBC and began making arrangements to start school.

The professors at BBC were both spiritual and practical, giving us a good education and preparation for the mission field. Missionary Elmer Deal was teaching missions during that time and his passion showed as he shared many of his experiences on the field. There was great emphasis placed on our spiritual



walk with the Lord. I especially remember the special "lectures week" each semester.

I always looked forward to them with much anticipation. The chapel speakers were often pastors who challenged us to go forward.

We had gone to BBC to get the preparation necessary to be missionaries and move on to the next step. We were given the privilege of returning to our home church in Odessa, Texas, to do our internship. During the eight years after surrendering to be a missionary, I had the opportunity to come in contact with many different missionaries and mission groups. We decided that the BBFI had the best mission program and there was no doubt that we wanted to be BBFI missionaries. In May 1980, we were approved as BBFI missionaries to the country of Uruguay.

Advance to INTERNSHIP

Internship is Necessary

By Jason & Nadia Kratochvil, Nicaragua

When I look back at when my wife and I graduated from Baptist Bible College, our minds were full of great information we had received from our studies, and we were confident that it would aid us in reaching Nicaragua for Christ. There was just one problem: we were so green! The grandeur of walking in the footsteps of great missionaries such as Hudson Taylor and Fred Donnelson filled our eyes, yet we were still crawling, lacking the practical experience needed to take those first big steps.

A short time after graduation, we were contacted by Edgewood Baptist Church in Rock Island, Illinois, where Mel Brown is pastor. They asked if we would be interested in their mission's internship program — which of course we were. After a weekend interview, we were brought on staff.

The next two years developed into an intense practical training program that prepared and equipped us to face ministry and life experiences that we could never have expected. We were trained and then given the

liberty to apply that training in areas such as preaching, officiating marriages and funerals, starting new ministries, counseling, dealing with issues and problems both within families and the church, church administration, music, and children's ministries.

One aspect of our internship for which I will be eternally grateful is that the focus was not only on the "ministry." A great portion was also focused on understanding and developing ourselves so that we could do the work God called us to do more efficiently and with excellence. Great priority was given to strengthening our marriage, which is vital as missionaries going to a foreign country. Each of the three pastors on staff gave us personal time each week to focus on building us in different areas of life and ministry.

As a missionary now living in Nicaragua, I can honestly say that without the training that we received at Edgewood Baptist Church, we would have been severely handicapped as missionaries in our first few years here. We have grown and learned many new things, yet we are constantly using techniques and applying

principles that we developed during our internship at Edgewood. While the culture in Nicaragua is different, the principles are the same. I will forever be grateful to Pastors Mel Brown, Tim Green, and Ed Kuriscak for their investment in our lives and ministry.

The internship program at Edgewood was both the hardest and most fulfilling experience we had faced up to that point in our lives, and it not only pushed us but it also enriched us and enabled us to serve the Lord in ways that we had not considered before. In my opinion, an internship is not only important but necessary for every missionary going to another country for the first time. I believe it could mean the difference between success and failure in those first few years on the field.



**Advance to
APPLICATION**



The Application Process

By Sally Gritts, BBFI Mission Office

I was seven years old as I watched my parents be approved in 1982 as Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionaries. While sitting with my grandparents in the W. E. Dowell Fieldhouse, I was taking it all in and thinking how exciting it all was. We, as a family, were going to England to tell people about Jesus! At that time, I had no idea I would eventually be so personally involved with the process that brought my parents to that point in their lives. Twenty years later,



I went through a similar process and was recognized as a TEAM missionary to England while my parents sat on the stage behind me. Today, I am still involved in this process as I'm now part of the team who helps prospective missionaries navigate the route to approval or recognition.

A prospective missionary's first contact with the Mission Office is usually a nervous phone call or email to the new candidates office. We make every effort to help them feel at ease and answer any questions they may have. When they are ready to make an application, we ask that they do so

ADVANCE ONE

Deputation: Obstacle or Ministry?

By Eric & Amanda Shadle, Ethiopia

Our family was approved as BBFI missionaries to Ethiopia in September 2006. Like most missionaries, we traveled the United States presenting our ministry to different churches, groups, and families.

We learned very quickly that deputation is unique for every family. Some missionaries may take longer getting to the field than

others. This may require them to make more calls to pastors and to present their ministry in more churches. God may want to grow one missionary family in a different way than another. It was good in those times for our family to remember that God has a different plan and purpose for each family raising support for their area of service. We were reminded not to compare our support level or our deputation time with others, but to acknowledge that we were right on the

timeline God had for us in getting to Ethiopia.

Some may have the idea of deputation being an obstacle to be overcome so that real ministry can start. Our family traveled for several years presenting the field of Ethiopia. It was important in those times to remember that ministry for our "deputation family"

was already taking place.

We tried to focus on being a blessing to the next pastor and the next congregation knowing that this was at the heart of ministry. The goal was not to just reach Ethiopia, but to love God and those

we would be presenting our field to in a unique way. This helped us to see each pastor, church, and individual as an opportunity for service while we made our way to Ethiopia.

Our deputation experience allowed us to meet pastors and churches all over America. Spending time with these churches and seeing their sacrifice for missions has changed our family. Their support is not just about finances but attached to it are real people and memories from our time spent with them. A stronger faith and having the privilege of watching God make a smooth path for our family are some of the blessings. Watching Him provide in very personal ways, and hearing how He was working in the lives of those in the churches left a permanent impact. Deputation provided the opportunity for many different areas of growth to take place in our family's life and ultimately to further prepare us for our field of service.



by either sending us an email or letter. Receipt of this prompts us to send out an application packet, which outlines the necessary paperwork. In addition to the application, we ask for personal testimonies, a belief statement, college transcripts, and recommendations from the sending church, internship church, and other pastors. A physical must be submitted and some medical history paperwork must be completed. A background and credit check is conducted on each applicant and spouse. Candidates have approximately 12 weeks to complete the paperwork and medical tests. Providing all internship, educational, and application requirements have been met, a missionary candidate is presented to the pastors on the Mission Committee and then to the entire Fellowship for approval/recognition.

Candidate school is the final piece of the process. Each year, candidate school is held in July at the Mission Office. Career missionaries attend two weeks: the first week in the year

they are approved and the second week the following year. TEAM missionaries attend one week in the year they are recognized. This is an intense time of learning for the missionary. Areas addressed include spiritual, relational, and practical aspects, as well as Mission Office procedures. The subjects covered encompass a vast range, from budgeting and safety in a different country to keeping one's spiritual life active and what to expect when visiting a church.

I really enjoy working with new missionaries and am looking forward to the upcoming approvals and recognitions in May. In addition to helping many great new candidates, I will have the opportunity to take my little brother and his wife through the process!

**Advance to
DEPUTATION**

**Advance to
ATTITUDE
CHECK**

CONTINUE

Attitude Matters

By Beau & Valerie Moore, Portugal

Over the past year I have often thought, "Every Christian should spend a few years of his life on deputation." This is a completely different tune from what I was singing at the start of our travels. I thought to myself, "What an ineffective system we have for getting missionaries to their countries. In the time that I am wasting here in the States, I could be on the mission field seeing souls saved." Over the past two years, God has taught me that I needed to experience a few things in order to make it on the mission field.

Most missionaries' first experience is financial. I left my six-figure income and began collecting \$400 per month from my sending church with taxes and health insurance far exceeding that amount. I was shocked to find that our expenses actually increased when we became missionaries as gas reached \$4.76 per gallon and a Motel 6 charged over \$100 per night as we traveled the New England states. Deputation put us in a position to experience God's provision as only one can on deputation! We have a wealth of experiences concerning God's faithfulness in provision to recall during those tough financial times once we reach Portugal. The more financial burdens we faced as God stretched our faith, the more we trusted Him to provide.

As we both quit our full-time jobs and sold our second car, we didn't realize just how much time that meant we would spend together. We have traveled over 100,000 miles, bought 14 new tires, and could write a book of humorous RV stories. This new "with-you-24-hours-per-day" schedule was challenging for only a short time until we both quickly realized that there were moments that we were each other's only source of encouragement. We had better get our attitudes straight if we wanted to have a single friend in the world! During the lonely times of deputation, a spouse becomes a lifesaver.

Our attitudes began changing about deputation as we started treating it as our current ministry instead of something we had to endure to start our "real ministry." Early on we had a bad experience with a church that promised support and reimbursement of our travel expenses (of which we received neither). Through that, God taught us that deputation was not about us. We realized that God was the One opening the doors to the particular churches we were in and there was a purpose for each and every one. If we weren't going to receive support, maybe a particular church member needed to be exposed to our burden so God could call him to be a missionary. Maybe we were there because the pastor needed a listening ear

and a source of encouragement during a difficult point in his ministry. Maybe we were there to witness a particular ministry idea to add to our list of "definitely do this" or "definitely don't do that." Instead of expecting to receive from a church, we expected to contribute. It was just an added bonus when we were blessed in return, and we very often were.

In two years, we have visited almost 150 churches. About half have taken us on for support, and we are so thrilled to be leaving for a European country after only two years of deputation. We give God all of the glory, of course, but we have had two little secrets to our ministry to which we attribute our success.

The first was a weekly email we called the "Tuesday Newsday." We made it a mission to find a few prayer warriors in every church, to present them with our most pressing prayer requests, and to keep the members plugged into our ministry with these updates. This list had grown to over 700 people praying for us every Tuesday, and we know that it is through their prayers that God has worked so many miracles in our lives.

Our second secret has been our two beagles that have made themselves memorable in many churches by appearing on our prayer card and in the "Tuesday Newsday," and by meeting the kids after services. Paisley even has her own supporting church as one pastor made sure we knew their church was taking us on because of the dogs! Of course our beagles have

now taken the back burner to our beautiful little three-month-old daughter, Avery.

Our last deputation prayer letter was sent just days before we left for Portugal. In it, we reflected over the past two years of deputation. We ended the letter with, "...the blessings of deputation have far outweighed the burdens. Overall we have had a wonderful experience. We recognize how valuable these life lessons will be once we reach the field. What a great training ground for exercising faith in your Christian life." Deputation has been essential in confirming our commitment to our call and increasing our burden for Portugal. We are so glad we had the opportunity!



**Advance to
LANGUAGE
STUDY**

Importance of Language Learning

By Georgia Webb, Mexico

A missionary candidate once asked me, "Do you know of any successful missionary who did not have much language aptitude?" My answer was "Yes, I have known some, but all of them had done their best to learn the language." I have never known one successful missionary who did not work at learning the language.

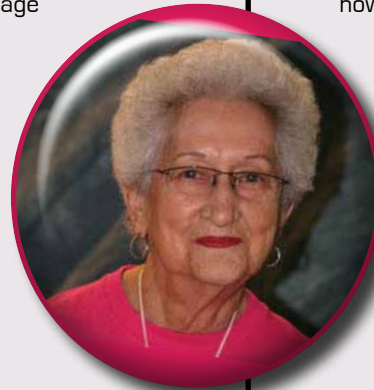
Another missionary candidate told me frankly that he had no intention of learning the language, that he planned to use an interpreter. He soon went back to the United States.

It is possible to be fluent in the language and to fail as a missionary, or to be deficient in the language and succeed in the work, but I do not believe the latter will be true if the missionary does not do all he can since acquiring the language is of paramount importance!

It is my opinion, based on 61 years of observation, that failure to acquire a working knowledge of the language is the number one cause of missionary casualties. This is some-

times true even when it is not the expressed cause. It may be the underlying cause even when the missionary says, and most likely sincerely believes, that he is leaving the field for other reasons.

The real reason may simply be that this missionary is unhappy. Without the language, there can be no cultural adaptation. Once a new missionary gets over the excitement of being where the Lord has called him to minister and a certain fascination with all that is new and different, a sense of loneliness and homesickness sets in. This is natural and will go away as the missionary learns enough of the new language to be able to participate in the life of the country. But if there is no language learning, there is no cultural adaptation, and the missionary has no life outside of his family and other English-speaking foreigners. He then becomes unhappy



and leaves the field.

Then too, not knowing the language results in much frustration in the ministry. How can you lead someone to the Lord if you can't speak his or her language? How can you counsel effectively through an interpreter? I was told of a missionary who in a large evangelistic meeting told the audience through an interpreter that if anyone would like to know more to call and talk to him. Someone in the audience responded, "How can we? You can't understand us."

Preaching or teaching through an interpreter is usually very unsatisfying, no matter how good the interpreter is. In the early days of the work in Mexico, G. Beauchamp Vick, who was noted for his very eloquent messages, came to Mexico and preached in our churches. His interpreter, missionary 'Big Jim' Smith, told him, "Keep it simple, Dr. Vick, because no matter how much steak you put into it, when I finish with it, it will be hamburger meat!" In these days of a global econ-

The Best Tool

By Vernon & Mary Smith, Tanzania

As foreigners in a developing country, we have the appearance of being very rich people. We have a decent vehicle to drive, a nice home, clean clothes, and plenty to eat. Most of the people we deal with do not have these things. Therefore, the gulf between us can seem quite wide, and as missionary strategists we ask ourselves, "How will we bridge that gulf? How will we communicate the gospel to them?" In our experience here in East Africa since 1990, there is no greater tool than opening your mouth in the language of the host country in a mannerly fashion.

I remember going into a lumberyard office one day. There were at least eight people sitting in chairs and waiting. The older gentleman behind the desk at the end of the room

appeared to be the one in charge. I immediately stuck out my hand as I headed towards him to shake his hand. I uttered one word — "Shikamoo" — to the man. It is a very respectful term of greeting reserved for those who are older or higher up in societal rank. When I said that one word, showing proper respect, immediately the office was abuzz with, "Oh... that foreigner knows Swahili, he really knows Swahili." But I had only said one word. The key? Language and manners. By showing respect I gained respect.

When Mary and I embarked on the journey of language learning, we had set our jaw and made a commitment to learn the language no matter what. We prayed and asked God to not only give us the language for the sake of gospel communication, but to give it to us so that we could have some social satisfaction, i.e. friendships in the host language, and eventually the ability to be spiritually satisfied and to be able to truly worship in another

language besides our mother tongue. God has granted our requests in every area that I've mentioned.

Some keys to language learning:

1. Commitment. Language learning has been the hardest academic thing we've ever done. I don't think I have ever put any more effort into any one thing as I have language learning. Yet, the ability to communicate the gospel freely has been priceless!

2. Forward thinking. A missionary must not sacrifice his/her future ministry of communication by yielding to the needs of the moment. The temptation is to just get a translator, go and preach, get some people on board, and then be able to give a good report to our faithful supporting churches. However, whenever possible, direct communication is absolutely the best choice. Not only is this a benefit from a ministerial point of view, but

omy, English is spoken in many parts of the world. It becomes a temptation to some missionaries not to bother to learn the native language of their people, but the hearts of people can rarely be reached except through their heart language, their mother tongue. It takes a great deal of effort and prayer to learn a new language, but it is worth it.

Learning the language requires a willingness to make mistakes, be corrected, and even be laughed at. When I first got to Mexico, I worked with a national pastor who was always getting up in front of the congregation and saying, "Have you heard the latest of Luisa's jokes?" It wasn't fun to be laughed at, but at least I learned not to say that again. Eventually I realized they weren't laughing at me, they were laughing at the hilarious things I said.

Languages vary in their degree of difficulty for English-speaking people. Some use that fact as an excuse not to bother with language learning. But the fact that the language of one's people group is harder than some others just means it will take longer to learn. But no language is unlearnable. To a child, one

language is as easy to learn as another.

Now for some recommendations.

1. To future missionaries:

Expose yourself to foreign languages as much as possible now. Study one if possible. Make the acquaintance of people who speak another language. Listen to recordings of other languages. Listening is the first step in language learning, so listen, listen, listen.

I do not recommend trying to learn a language on your own. I tried to do that with German. When I finally found a German lady to help me, I realized it hadn't worked. You will need correction.

Learning all you can in advance pays off. I had two years of Latin in high school. Then I had 10 semester hours of Spanish in college, and later took private classes at a Berlitz language school. The result? I started teaching in Spanish three weeks after I got to Mexico. However, this will not be true in all cases. Remember, I had a national pastor who always corrected any mistake I made and told everybody about all the funny ones!

Back then, in 1948, we knew nothing

about language school. But we do now. I highly recommend that new missionaries enroll in the very best language school they can find, preferably on their field of service. Most will need the organization and discipline of a school. If none are available, by all means find a good tutor, one who will correct you ... and maybe laugh at you!

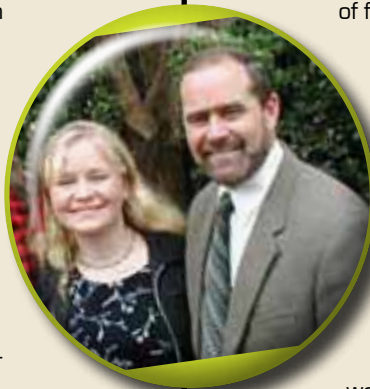
2. To pastors and churches:

Encourage new missionaries to make language learning their priority. You want them to reach people for the Lord and build indigenous churches on the field. Help them see that this can only be accomplished if they take the time to learn the language and the culture. Your missionaries appreciate and respect you. You will be a blessing to them and to their work if you influence them to make language learning their priority.

Advance to LANGUAGE TOOLS

also it is of benefit for longevity's sake on the field. If missionaries can form friendships because of their ability to communicate, they will obviously be more personally satisfied with a host culture.

3. Willingness to laugh at oneself. Learning a new language is difficult! One will make mistakes. Humility and a good sense of humor will go a long way in helping the missionary to learn the language. At the end of our language school training in East Africa, Mary and I invited the teachers over for a pizza party. We agreed to speak Swahili the entire evening. As Mary explained the culture of eating pizza by the slice and with your hands, she inadvertently mixed her vocabulary, and instead of saying "we eat this type of food with



our hands," she said "we eat this type of food with our feet." The teachers, with surprised and humorous looks on their faces, began to remove their shoes! After a good laugh, you can bet that Mary has never made that vocabulary mistake again! I have made so many mistakes from the pulpit (sometimes funny, sometimes not) that it would take many pages to explain

them all.

At the end of the day, I can say that I have certainly enjoyed my four-wheel drive vehicle, decent clothes, good house, etc. However, our best tool by far has been the tool of language. Whenever possible, the missionary should learn the language of the host country, and learn it well.

Advance to CULTURAL ADAPTATION

Cultural Adaptation

Jim & Amy Smith, Japan

The first year in a foreign country is like an extended boot camp. While my boot camp for the Marine Corps only lasted 13 (seemingly endless) weeks, stretch that out to a year and you have a fairly good picture of what this experience is like. First, there is the adrenaline rush, the "Wow, I'm really *here!*" phase. This is followed by a somber realization that, "Wow, I am *really* here," accompanied by the notion, "Okay, now what?" Then, there is a more somber realization that you have no idea what is going on, but that you'd better get to work, fast. After a few weeks of hard labor, you realize that you have to pace yourself because this is going to be a long haul.

There is no fast and painless way to learn a new culture. It's easy to learn about any culture. There are dozens of great books on *Bushido* or the *Samurai* spirit, and tea ceremony, and *tatemae* (public expression), and *honne* (true thoughts). Anyone can learn about Japanese culture. But to really learn it is to live it, and in the case of Japan, it's all tied up in language. Language isn't just a vehicle for expression, but is in itself a cultural forum with its own intricacies and influence. Every once in a while I hear of "missionaries" in other organizations here in Japan that conduct all their activities in English. There may be a few foreigners here

who can receive the Word of God in English, but not many Japanese. It isn't so much that Japanese aren't well trained in English, because some are quite fluent. But if you want to make a heart connection somewhere near where culture and reality intersect, then it had better be in their own language.

I have found that an excellent way to learn Japanese, and perhaps other languages as well, is a combination of intensive learning combined with opportunities for application. Full-time language school gave me the basic knowledge to get started, but without opportunities to apply what I learned that day, things were easily forgotten. My Korean counterparts, for example, excelled because they

worked part-time jobs after school and had not only opportunities but the necessity of using everything they knew to understand and be understood.

Regardless of who you are, learning language takes a tough skin. I learned to swallow my pride every time I made a mistake and people either looked at me quizzically or perhaps even laughed at me. I'd like to share a funny anecdote about language *faux pas*, but actually, I think my wife holds the title for "Most Egregious Language Error." I'll let her tell it.



"During my undergraduate Sophomore year, I came to Japan for the "Year-in-Japan" study abroad program. Some people looking for English conversation took me to lunch and learned that I spoke a little Japanese. They probably thought, "Let's have some fun," and started asking me questions in Japanese. First, they asked me what I wanted to bring home as a souvenir. I proceeded to tell them that I wanted some pearls for my mother. However instead of saying the word for pearls, I confidently told my new friends that I wanted "mutual suicide like Romeo and Juliet" for my mother. Then they asked about my favorite Japanese dessert. Well, I had become very fond of Japanese sweet bean paste (*anko*) used in many traditional sweets. But instead of *anko* I said *unko*. Let's just say that the latter is also a brown substance... I think that's probably the best laugh those Japanese folks had ever had."

A lot has happened since we came to Japan. Our entire family has learned a few things about Japanese culture and language, but it is a lifelong process. However, now as we are starting our first work in Saitama Prefecture, we are seeing some of the fruits of our labors and the labor of prayer that so many in our supporting family have undertaken. Just this past month, we have seen our first two professions of faith here at Wakaba and we hope to see many more. We are grateful to God and all who faithfully support this ministry for the privilege of being ambassadors to Japan.

GLOBAL PARTNERS

A SPECIAL FEATURE OF THE BBFI MISSION OFFICE

JANUARY 2010 EDITION

The Journey

By Jon Konnerup, BBFI Mission Director

In this issue of *Global Partners*, our intent has been to show the process of becoming a Baptist Bible Fellowship missionary for one who is called of God to serve on the foreign mission field and who desires to use the BBFI Mission Office as his service center. It all begins with the call of God upon that person or couple, and it is this call that helps keep the missionary on the field when trials, discouragements, and attacks come his or her way.



Two things I believe strengthen and prepare our missionaries the most are the education and internship requirements. Many facets of cross-cultural ministry with an emphasis on church planting are covered during a missionary's time of education.

Our missionaries use different methods to reach out to their communities, but their ultimate goal is to share the gospel and establish local churches.

The internship process our missionaries go through enhances their abilities to accomplish that goal. We have found, for the most part, that the longer the internship in a BBFI-affiliated church, the shorter the deputation experience of raising financial support. We

are one of the few independent Baptist mission groups that require a one-year minimum internship before going to a foreign country as a career missionary.

The deputation process is a time to build one's faith and trust in the Lord. This process was a great experience and training for me as I later encountered numerous situations in Kenya. If I had not learned to put my faith in God to supply my needs and take care of my family, I might have crashed and burned. An added blessing was to build a prayer team that I knew was praying for us. When discouragement came, knowing they were lifting us up in prayer encouraged us to keep going forward for the Lord.

This process set up by the pastors of the BBFI has worked well for years. We must understand our world needs more people from our churches answering the call and going through this process.

Our prayer is that more churches will become sending churches and that many more people will follow the call of God to serve in another country. As a result, they will experience the blessings of God upon their lives just as did the ones you have heard from in this issue. May the Lord bless the efforts of the churches and missionaries of the BBFI in reaching our world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.



HISTORY

BAPTIST

DON JOSE ESPINOSA — The man who wouldn't quit

In 1934, a 32-year-old Jewish woman discovered she was pregnant — her 10th pregnancy. Her plan was to obtain an abortion, just as she had with her nine previous pregnancies. But, fortunately for her unborn child, she was unable to acquire the \$25 required for an abortion. On December 4, she gave birth to a baby boy she named Don Jose Espinosa.

Don's childhood was filled with painful experiences. His father abandoned the family when Don was three, but the most painful experience of his childhood would occur when his mother would become angry and remind him that if she had been able to borrow \$25, she would have aborted him. Subjected to this environment, Don became a professing atheist.

Don, sensing a lack of personal fulfillment, attempted to fill that void through alcohol and a love of gambling. However, he soon learned that the pursuit of pleasure and self-gratification could not fill the emptiness in his life. In 1961, Don's life was impacted and changed by a young Christian couple he met in a bowling league. His new friends became concerned about Don's spiritual condition and convinced him to allow their pastor, Jeff Meek, to visit him.

Pastor Meek found Don angry and argumentative. After three hours of responding to Don's arguments, he asked Don if he would like to pray and receive Christ as his Savior. Don received Christ into his life that day!

Not long after his conversion, Don felt called to preach the gospel. He enrolled in Baptist Bible College in 1963. There he met Cherie Loless, who would become his faithful companion and untiring co-laborer. Upon graduation in 1966, Don hoped to obtain a position on a church staff in order to gain additional experience that would equip him for the pastorate. However, he did not receive an offer. In fact, not even one pastor interviewed him.

Disappointed but not deterred, Don gathered his family and returned to Long Beach, California, and founded the Bible Baptist Church where he would minister for six and a half years.

In 1972, in response to what he believed was God's call to the mission field, he resigned his church and he and Cherie were approved as Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries to Argentina. After 14 months of deputation, the Espinosas had raised their support and were ready to enroll in language school. To everyone's surprise, and especially Don's, learning Spanish would be the biggest and most discouraging problem of his ministry. After seven months with little or no progress, he decided they would proceed to the field where Don could devote himself to learning Spanish.

Settling in Mendoza, Argentina, he hired a private tutor, but after two years of intensive study, he could barely make himself understood. This was probably the low point in Don's ministry. He began to wonder if he had made a mistake in going to a Spanish speaking country and considered whether it would be wiser to transfer to an English speaking field. But he was determined to complete the final two years of his first term.

In 1977, he made a decision that would transform his ministry. He decided to move to San Rafael and start a church. In their home, the Espinosas founded the Temple Baptist Church. Even though Don's Spanish was limited, he persevered and depended upon the Lord to produce results.

And God did bless. People began to commit their lives to Christ and, miraculously, Don's ability to communicate in Spanish began to improve. However, September 26, 1981, was to be a major turning point in Don's ministry.

The Espinosas were driving a group of young people to a church activity when a tire blew and their truck rolled over three or four times. No one was killed, but Don's neck was broken and he was totally paralyzed. The doctor fused Don's spine and informed him he would never walk again. But feeling began to return to his legs, and after a year of rehabilitation he returned to the field. Don believed God had spared his life for a purpose and that each day was a precious gift.

For the next 15 years, he labored relentlessly. He raised the money to build a church building, improved and expanded the Bible institute, and devoted himself to building a strong mother church in San Rafael. God blessed his efforts with thousands of conversions. Approximately 35 young men were called into the ministry. Thriving and vibrant churches were established. The church in San Rafael had a high attendance of over 1,100. An annual international youth conference was established in San Rafael that impacted thousands of young lives. Don's work is even more remarkable when you realize there was seldom a day when he was free from pain.

In 1996, he had spinal cord surgery to relieve his suffering. In 1997, he was subjected to brain surgery, and in 1998, he was forced to undergo another spinal cord surgery. Don was now in his 60s and no one would have criticized him if he had taken a medical retirement. But he refused to quit. He returned to the field after each surgery even though he had to learn to walk again after each operation. In spite of his doctor's efforts, his physical health continued to deteriorate, and from 1998 to 2001 he was forced to preach from his wheel chair.

In May 2001, he suffered a massive stroke which left him completely paralyzed on his right side. Don subjected himself to extensive and painful therapy with the intention of returning to Argentina. But in March 2004, he finally accepted the reality that he could not return to his beloved people. Don's health did not stop his ministry — it only changed it. The final blow came in 2008 when Don's doctor informed him that he had terminal bladder cancer. Although he would experience unbearable pain, his thoughts were on the people of Argentina. One of his last efforts was to raise building funds for a congregation that had outgrown their facilities.

Don left this earth November 23, 2009, but the life and ministry of Don Jose Espinosa continues through the people he won to Christ and trained.

by Thomas Ray





Love in any language

URBAN CURRENT

I'll never forget when Lydia got mugged. "He hit me in the head and grabbed my purse," she said. In the language of Lydia, "head" has two syllables. I could have pounded those thugs to a pulp for assaulting such a sweet lady.

Lydia was a hillbilly (this is what dthese dhem dhose Chicagoans call people who aren't from here). No, seriously! Hillbilly with a capital *H*. I mean Hillbilly smothered with gravy and grits on the side. From the hills of West Virginia, she never claimed it was almost heaven. I don't think she finished grade school, but she sure was "bwernd-agn" and she could play a mean gee-tar. Hard times marked her face. But you know what? The love of Jesus had her smiling more often than not. Before Jesus, her live-in boyfriend abused her girls. Her only son was troubled. She worked in a factory. Her working life ended when some person with a forklift knocked her in the head. It severely affected her balance. Even after she recovered from the blow, she couldn't work. The company told her there was nothing they could do. The lying, thieving cheats knew she was just a poor single mother and they didn't have to cough up anything.

What a servant she was. For many years our afternoon Sunday school crew would wrap up ministry at about 4:00 in the afternoon and then go to Lydia's house. She fed the crew of 10 people every Sunday. Pork chops, greens, ham, home-made biscuits, gravy. Mmm mm mm, I can taste it now.

She applied to live in Logan Vista. Logan Vista was a 9-story building that a non-for-profit called Hispanic Housing had bought and renovated. It was a block north of our church next to the Logan Square subway station. I said "Lydia, you're not going to get in there. They're filling it with Puerto Rican grandmothers." "I'm a

trustin' Jesus. I need a place," she responded. I turned around twice, and don't you know she was announcing she got in Logan Vista. I know, what with federal funds and all they had to have ethnic quotas to fill. Somehow Lydia became the filler of all quotas non-Hispanic. It was nine floors of Puerto Rican grandmothers with a few grandfathers thrown in. There wasn't another black or white person in the whole building. If they spoke any English at all it was *poquito*. Lydia, who loved to talk to everybody, found she couldn't talk to anybody. She smiled a lot.

The great Chicago heat wave of July 1995 caused power outages across the city. One knocked the electricity out at Logan Vista. No lights, no power to pump the water to upper floors, no elevator. Darkness, silence, oppressive heat. Lydia went apartment to apartment, floor by floor with knocks, gestures, and smiles, checking on the elderly residents' well-being. She was an instant hero. Everybody knew Lydia as the lady who checked on everybody in the dark swelter of the blackout. She still couldn't talk to anybody.

Every time I turned around Lydia was bugging me, "We've got to get a Spanish speaker over to Logan Vista to start a Bible study." "Yes, Lydia, yes," I would say. One day Lydia announced to me she had started a prayer meeting. "A prayer meeting," I exclaimed, "how are you doing that?" She said she started leaving the door open while cooking. The scents wafted up and down the hallways. Residents would follow their noses, find the open door, stick their heads in to be met by a cheery, Jesus-powered hillbilly woman. She would offer samples and invite people to come back for dinner, pointing to her clock. While doing this, she got the idea of starting a prayer meeting. With gestures she began to gather a group of Puerto Rican grandmothers to pray on Friday nights. This

went on for weeks. I never had the heart to tell her that the repeated mention of "Maria, Maria" probably meant that they were not praying with one accord. Turns out, love is its own language. Kindness, service, and some down-home cookin' can forge deep bonds. With the prayer meeting going, Lydia became more and more insistent that I get a Spanish speaker to start a Bible Study. She was now having 10 women every Friday night in her small apartment.

I finally found someone available on a Friday night. The first night the Spanish-speaking leader held a Bible study, five or six of these women trusted Christ! Talk about picking the fruit someone else has planted and nurtured! Talk about riding over a bridge someone else built!

The thing is, Lydia couldn't have spelled *cross-cultural communication* if her life depended on it. She certainly never went to a seminar or read a book on the subject. She was full of Jesus and His love. Oh, the power of the simple things.

Lydia's in heaven now, along with some of those Puerto Rican grandmothers and a whole lot of other people she helped win to Jesus. She's my heroine. Without trying, she taught me love is the ultimate bridge over all barriers and service is the key to people's hearts.

by Charles Lyons, Pastor
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BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Let's reclaim our future...together!



by Jim Edge | President | Baptist Bible College

B BFI President Mark Hodges has called upon our Fellowship to pray for revival. Our officers, pastors, church leaders, and missionaries are praying for a moving of the Holy Spirit that will grip our hearts and inspire a fresh unity and vision. We at Baptist Bible College are committed to praying for our Fellowship and colleges to experience a fresh encounter with God. Consider this information from the Association for Biblical Higher Education regarding the effectiveness of the church in North America:

- Only seven church denominations or fellowships experienced any net growth in the past decade — and that includes the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses.
- The growth rate of established churches over the past decade is zero percent.
- No county experienced church growth over the past decade.
- Fifty percent of churches did not record one conversion last year.
- Seventy-two churches close each week in North America, while 48 new ones are being planted.

While we hope that the above statistics do not apply to the churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, we also must admit that we have lost momentum in recent years.

At BBC, we have asked God for revival to begin in our hearts and the hearts of our students. As a college, we have been through the fire. When others were ready to pronounce the doors closed at BBC, God saw fit to sustain His college through the generosity of churches and individuals and the sacrificial work of faculty and staff. We are grateful for how God has worked, yet we realize that our greatest need is for personal revival both in our lives and in the lives of our students. If our students are to truly impact their world, they will need the constant empowerment and wisdom that only a meaningful dependency upon God can provide. To reclaim our future, we are committed to join with the BBFI Executive Committee and other leaders to pray and prepare our hearts for revival.

In a world where darkness prevails, we will be more committed to the light of absolute Truth. In a world where selfishness and arrogance is the norm, we will model and teach humility and a spirit of sacrifice as demonstrated by our Savior. In an environment where leadership is seen as maneuvering and manipulating, we rededicate ourselves to a spirit of servanthood, cooperation, and unity. In a culture where materialism and carelessness have replaced discipline and hard work, we recommit to work strategically and tirelessly to reclaim the future for BBC and the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

We believe that revival is possible because God's desire for world evangelization through the local church has not changed. More than ever we need every agency in our Fellowship to work and pray for one another's success.

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE

New stuff



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

D id you get it? Whatever new thing — that Christmas gift you wanted — did you get it? Lots of us have been making “experienced” cars, carpet, furniture last a little longer than planned because these aren't the greatest days for buying anything new. But Christmas is the exception. Surely all of us got something new.

Here in Boston we have been waiting and still will wait a while for some new stuff we want. We do need a lot of new carpet, some new computers, a new snow blower or two... “new” would be nice. But it is okay when we don't go “new” just exactly when we thought we would. I am glad, however, that we do have something new... I am sure I see a newness in our students.

I often say that our students get younger every year. That is just a “new” way for me to say that the age gap between them and me broadens each year! We have to keep stretching to bridge the generational divide, and while that can get old, the payoff is a truckload of “new” that shakes up the halls and classrooms of Boston Baptist College.

Many of our students are new Christians. Most years almost half of our students are first-generation Christians, those not raised in Christian homes. These young people bring lots of questions to campus, and they have the most adjustment to get into our routine, but they also bring extraordinary new energy. I laughed to my soul at one of them the other day. He used to be a drug dealer and a drunk. He told me his new faith was “so cool” because this was the first holiday he could actually remember!

Our students also bring a new appreciation for grace. So much has been written and said about the impact of the implosion of the American family on this generation. But I think not enough has been said about how these young people respond to their adoption as God's sons and daughters. I know they have some differences, and I will be the first to admit that I don't understand all of them, but I absolutely love to hear them talk about salvation. That is the only upside to sin that I can see — the young people who are saved out of its depths seem to revel and bask in the warmth of the gospel. I joke with them that they are addicted to their iPhones. But along with that, I see in our students a reckless passion for the God who bought a relationship with them on a Roman cross.

I did get a new thing or two during the holidays. Our college did too. We have a couple more new supporting churches and several more new students. I must say, though, that this generation of young people, so different from me in a lot of ways, these students at Boston, keep making ministry education “new.” We can assume little about them, but we ought to expect much from them. The gospel isn't old hat to them. I'm sure glad we have them.

Bible Baptist in France dedicates new building

Champigny, France

October 18 was an exceptional day for the Eglise Biblique Baptiste and BBFI missionaries Paul and Alexis Dedeyan as they celebrated the completion of their new sanctuary after three years of construction and much red tape. That morning, many people came for the occasion, including some who had not attended in over 20 years,

packing out the new auditorium.

For 37 years, the church met in an auditorium transformed from a guesthouse. However, the new auditorium features ceilings 30 feet high and seating for 180 people. Dedeyan says, "In France, a Baptist church building constructed from scratch is a rare thing. Often French churches have to depend on renting a space or transforming an exist-

ing building into church facilities."

The new edifice is across the street from the old one, which is now being used as a multipurpose building which includes a fellowship hall, junior church, a baptistry, a nursery, Sunday school classrooms, and a parsonage.

The French congregation has paid off the old building in its entirety, and two-thirds of the cost for the new lot and building has also been paid for.

The Dedeyans are grateful to the Lord for permitting this project to come to fruition, and to their sending church, Sauk Trail Baptist Temple in Illinois and the many churches in the U.S. who have faithfully supported them through the years. They invite you to stop by when you come through Paris.



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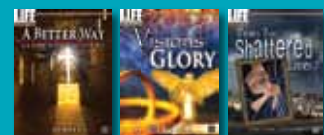


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Monroe honored at Florence Baptist's 40th anniversary

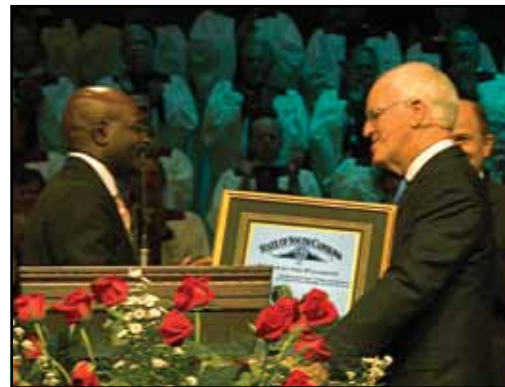
Florence, SC

Florence Baptist Temple and Pastor Bill Monroe celebrated the church's 40th anniversary on Sunday, November 1, with over 1,800 in attendance. The church was challenged to remember the great work God has done and to give Him the glory for the last 40 years.

During the event, special recognition was given to the remaining charter members of the church, Harry and Dorothy Cook, Slim and Ange Turbeville, Larry Gore, Evelyn Bridgers, and Bill and Norma Monroe. Also, people shared testi-

monies of their changed lives from trusting Jesus Christ as Savior.

A highlight of the celebration was Monroe receiving two special honors. Lieutenant Governor Andre Bauer presented him with the Palmetto Patriot Award and Senator Kent Williams presented Monroe with the Order of the Palmetto — for his selfless service, contribution to the community and state, ministry to those suffering from addictions, and support of Christian education. Florence Christian School, which began in 1972, now has nearly 1,000 graduates. Monroe



Bill Monroe (right) receives the Order of the Palmetto from Senator Kent Williams

acknowledged God's blessings on his life and the church as well as the faithful service of thousands of members through the years.

Suggestions from GuideStone for healthier retirement

By Dixie Beard

Daily we're reminded of ways to improve our physical health: eat less fat, exercise, drink more water, and reduce stress. While these things are certainly beneficial and important, we can't neglect our financial health either. Let's aim for a healthy body and a healthy retirement as well. Here are six steps for you to consider today:

1. **Take time now**, and figure out where you are. Whether you've started saving late in the game, or you're right on target, it's crucial to know exactly where you stand. Use a balance sheet format and make a list of all your assets and liabilities. Know where all of your accounts are, and how they are invested.
2. **Decide on a plan** for the future. This is the fun part. Spend some time dreaming about what you want retirement to look like. Will you downsize to a smaller home? Considering moving to another city or state? What will your activities be? How much monthly income will you need to make this dream a reality?
3. **Make saving for retirement a priority.** You will likely spend 20 or more years in retirement, and inflation may average three percent per year or more. Whatever is getting in the way of saving for retirement may

have to wait, whether it is a new car, that long vacation, or even the children's college expenses. Put a percentage of your income into retirement savings automatically each month, increasing it as you can. GuideStone makes available helpful online calculators and other tools to its participants to help you estimate your investment and savings goals.

4. **Balance the budget** and pay off existing debt. Too much month left at the end of the money? Make sure expenses are in line. For three months, keep a record of all your expenses and study the list for ways to reduce cash outflow. If you are carrying high-interest-rate debt, you are actually negating the

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interest rate you're earning on your retirement assets. Cut up those credit cards and begin paying them off as quickly as you can.

5. **Monitor your progress** at least once a year. Use GuideStone's helpful resources to determine your risk tolerance and to make sure your portfolio allocation conforms to it. You may need to adjust your investment mix as you get closer to retirement. Most impor-

tantly, don't panic if you're behind in your savings. Many adjustments can be made to live less expensively after you leave the workforce, in addition to delaying retirement or working part time in retirement.

6. **Know what you need** and when you need it. Remember, depending on your retirement income solution, you may not need your entire account balance on the day you retire.

Your account will need to continue to grow to offset inflation and to meet your retirement dreams.

Whatever your situation, take the time to fully understand your goals and your retirement assets. The best time to prepare for your future is today.

For more information, contact Dixie Beard at 214-720-4661 or Dixie.Beard@GuideStone.org.

New retreat offers marital focus for Christian couples

Arcola, MO

The Shekinah Retreat, a brand new ministry offering Christian couples a marital focus, held a dedicatory ceremony November 7. The charge was given by Dennis Jennings, pastor of Cherry Street Baptist Church, Springfield, Missouri, and then all in attendance surrounded the five-bedroom home to individually pray for God's blessing on the ministry. Couples from as far away as Atlanta, Georgia, attended the event.

Following the ceremony, Shane Salmon

provided piano renditions while guests sampled appetizers and were given a tour of the retreat. Guests were also introduced to the board of the retreat, which includes: Cindy Besselman, Charlie Chastain, Robert Gruenwald, Starr Himmel, and Randy Watson.

"We pray this ministry will live up to its name

as it endeavors to inject the 'Presence of God' into each marriage. As couples strive for God's leadership in their marriage, a beacon of light shows to a world who finds itself exponentially impacted by marital challenges. The ministry team believes that if a couple is grounded in God's love, their joy together is greater than the sum of their individual parts," says Charlie Chastain.

Recently, Shekinah Retreat sent out gift certificates to local pastors and their wives in honor of "Pastor Appreciation Month."

Lesa Chastain has begun to book pastors for their free night's stay and the ministry team looks forward to seeing ministers relax at the retreat.

For more information about the ministry check out ShekinahRetreat.



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The miracle on Galveston Island

By Dan Greer, pastor
Community Baptist Church
The Woodlands, TX

Just over a year ago on Friday, September 13, Hurricane Ike made landfall on Galveston Island at 2:10 a.m., packing winds of over 120 mph. It was the largest Hurricane ever witnessed in the Atlantic and the third-most-costly hurricane in the United States. I had never been in a hurricane so I spent the day before buying all of the supplies, gasoline, and equipment that I could get my hands on. Throughout the night, winds howled, trees fell, tornados spawned, houses vanished, and people died. In fact, I was on the phone with one of the men of our church who was telling me a tree had crashed through his living room when all of a sudden there was a pop and the power went out.

The aftermath was... I can't think of an appropriate word. No electricity, no communication, and destruction everywhere. Dennis Hankins, pastor of Bible Baptist Church in Galveston, had loaded his family and began evacuating the mainland the evening of the 13th when the winds picked up and the storm surge began flooding streets on the island. Nearly three weeks later my cell phone rang and Dennis, on the other end, breathlessly said, "Danny, can you bring some people down and help us?" I responded, "Dennis, I can't, I am overwhelmed with all of the damage up here in The Woodlands." He had been allowed back on the Island to make an assessment of the damage to his church, which reached nearly \$500,000.

The next day I began receiving calls from all around the country, mainly because Dennis

and I had talked about evacuation via an Internet discussion group and now no one could get in contact with Dennis. Suddenly, an army of volunteers began to assemble and funds began to come in. The scheduling of volunteers seemed to flow from an invisible general contractor, as many in our Fellowship began to unify behind the cause. I found myself in the midst of a miracle!

Throughout the Houston area, nearly every church in the Fellowship suffered considerable damage, loss of revenue, and attendance decline. However, a bond of true brotherhood emerged due to the leadership of Tommy Turnbow, Bob Logan, and Bill Campbell, members of our local executive committee. East Texas churches raised a major portion of the total funds and even purchased a motorized wheel chair for Dennis. Week by week the miracle continued to unfold

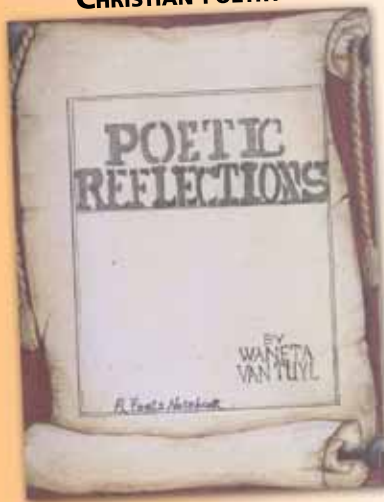
with volunteers arriving from places like Kelview Heights in Midland, Texas, where Jerry Berry is the pastor, Midway Baptist in Aubrey, Texas, where John Henry Theisen pastors, Rockpointe Fellowship in Leander, Texas, where Shane O'Brien pastors, and Bible Baptist in



From left: Mark Reynolds, Kent Wilson, Mark Butcher, Aaron Lybrand, Carl Hughes, Tim Thompson, Dan Greer, Brian Lee, Jess Hill, Justin Milam, Paul Foster. Front: Dennis Hankins



CHRISTIAN POETRY



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Waneta Fern Van Tuyl was born October 26, 1924 in LaCygne, Kan., to Jesse and Dollie Van Tuyl. She was third youngest in the family, having four brothers and three sisters. A graduate of LaCygne High School, she also attended Baptist Bible College, in Springfield, Mo. Her church is Overland Park Baptist Temple, in Overland Park, Kan., and at present she is a resident of Lenexa, Kan.

A Sunday School teacher for many years, Van Tuyl is a gifted Christian writer whose poetry and short stories touch the hearts of those who read them. Her unique way of presenting the gospel in poetic form is a talent which lends itself to easy reading and understanding, whether writing of biblical events or simply inspirational verses. Short stories by this author have a Christian message of righteousness and often bring tears to the eyes of readers.

Forbidden Desires was written in the late 1950s or early 1960s and is Van Tuyl's first novel to be published. Readers will enjoy the gentle romance and the book will be a welcome addition to any library

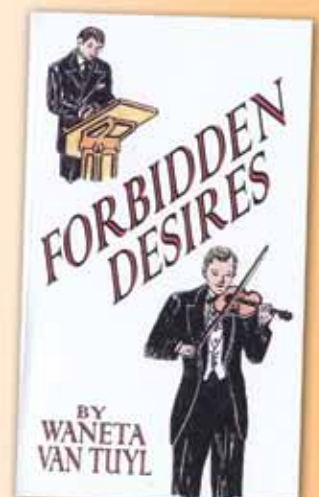


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RELIGIOUS NOVEL



(continued)

Gulfport, Mississippi, where Jim Stady pastors. One of the most incredible miracles was to see funds materialize that completely dissolved the church's indebtedness to the NCPO.

In November of this year, we decided to convene our local East Texas meeting in Galveston at ground zero. Dressed in work clothes, baseball hats, and with hammers in hand, we completed work on the roof that was required by the inspector. Many came up to me and expressed the satisfaction of physically doing something of such significance.

We are now down to the finish work, but are a little short of funds and manpower. I am con-

vinced that, with a little effort, we can experience a celebration of completion by the time we have our Texas State BBF meeting on January 18-19, 2010, which will be held at the Moody Gardens Hotel, located blocks from the church. In order to accomplish this goal, we'll need another surge of volunteers and finances. When the first wave of workers arrived on the scene, there was debilitating despair with visions of bulldozers and total demolition. Just over a year later, there is new hope and dreams of an extraordinary future with the emergence of a debt-free new facility. I have personally had the privilege of being involved in the miracle on Galveston Island.

Great Lakes Baptist Temple holds revival with Kent York

Flint, MI

Great Lakes Baptist Temple, pastored by David Chittenden, held a four-day revival with Kent York November 1-4. Chittenden became the pastor of the Great Lakes church in June 2006 and began planning for the revival at that time. During the four days, seven people made professions of faith.



Kent York (left) and David Chittenden.

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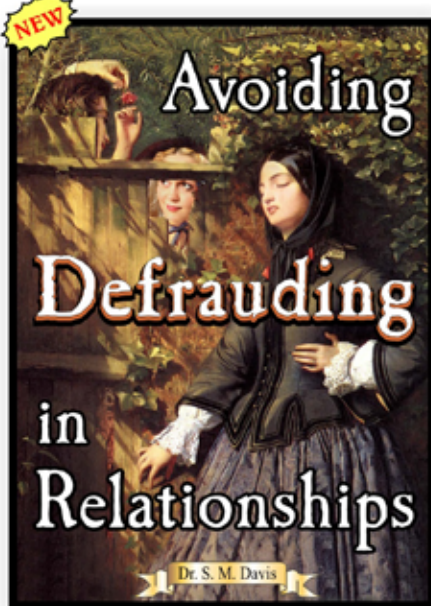
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Won by One the theme of Glenville mission emphasis

Wichita, KS

Glenville Baptist Church and Pastor Bruce Thomas celebrated missions the first three weeks of November with the theme of "Won by One," emphasizing the difference one person can make in evangelizing the world. The church hosted a different speaker each Sunday and using the backdrop of New York's Times Square, each week they presented a continuing drama about how we are each responsible to reach those around us, one person at a time.

Kicking off the celebration on November 1,

shared their burden for missions and he preached on the nations of the world and our mandate to reach them with the gospel.

For the second week of the celebration, James and Sharon Smith ministered for the day at Glenville. The Smiths served in Ecuador for 30 years and are now serving in the Baptist Bible Fellowship Mission Office.



Jerry Thorpe spoke at Glenville for the closing week of the missions celebration. Thorpe served as pastor in Odessa, Texas, for 36 years. Following his message on the "Empty Boxes in Our Lives," 22 individuals accepted Christ as their Savior.

Inner city KC church hosts community Thanksgiving

Kansas City, MO

Pastor Joey Candillo and Bales Baptist Church, with assistance from Antioch Baptist Church of Kansas City, served 500 plates of food to 350 people the Tuesday evening before Thanksgiving. Bales Baptist is in the inner city of Kansas City.

Bales Baptist is partially supported by Antioch Baptist where Bob Baier is the pastor. The backstory on this Thanksgiving dinner has to do with Antioch's own tradition. Joey says, "They do a huge Thanksgiving dinner every year for their suburban community. This year they decided

to do their dinner in the city to help people. So they called me and we held it at our church. They brought all the food and about 80 volunteers, plus we had many volunteers helping too."

Joey and an elementary school principal distributed announcements in the school next door to the church. "Many that attended were home-

less and came in from the streets. It turned out to be a cold, rainy night and I think that kept some from coming. Nonetheless, we had a good turnout. I met many folks from the community that I haven't met before," says Candillo.

The two churches consider the dinner to have been a great ministry outreach.



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CaBBF takes study tour of growing churches

San Diego, CA

The October meeting of the California BBF took to the road when pastors and staff members met for meals and tours of three growing churches in the southern part of the state.

The tour, led by Jim Baize of Midway Baptist Church in San Diego, began Monday evening October 5 with a dinner and meeting with Pastor Tony Foglio Jr. of Sonrise Church in Santee. The dinner was followed with question-answer sessions and a walk-through of the Sonrise facilities. Baize says, "Sonrise actually began as a church plant out of Midway 20 years ago and was initially called Midway Baptist Church East. They run about 2,400 in attendance every weekend and are hugely influential in East San Diego County."

Tuesday, the group met for breakfast then moved on to East Lake Church where Bob Henson is on staff. The church, pastored by Mike Meeks, has about 5,000 to 6,000 people in attendance each weekend.

Baize said, "Mike's church is a cutting-edge church in every respect. They are very contempo-

rary in their music. Their 'target' is a 35-year-old male, so everything they do is geared to reaching him. Mike said if they reach the man, they reach the family."

Baize also said, "No one can join the church without also committing to tithing and serving, yet the church baptized 900 last year."

Following the East Lake tour, the group met for lunch and business at a Mexican restaurant in the Old Town section of San Diego. At this meeting, Lewis McClendon, pastor of Ventura Baptist Church, was elected the new chairman/director of California, due to John Waldrup's resignation last month. Lewis was the long-time camp director at Ponderosa Pines Christian Camp before becoming the senior pastor of Ventura Baptist Church, where he succeeded George Golden.

Later that afternoon, the BBF preachers met with Miles MacPherson, former wide receiver for the San Diego Chargers and now pastor of The Rock Church. He was the founding pastor of The Rock a few years back when they first met on campus at San Diego State University. Now they

have over 12,000 in attendance every weekend in a \$54 million facility.

Baize reports, "Miles was inspirational, spiritual, visionary, exciting, and practical — let's see, what other superlatives are there? He was a key player in the success of California Proposition 8 [defining marriage as being between a man and a woman]."

According to Baize, Miles's ministry is where the Fellowship used to be in the late 60s and early 70s — on fire and out to save the world!

Responses from those attending the BBF meeting were appreciative. Tony Birge said, "The tours of the different ministries were great, but I think the greatest part was sitting down and listening to the pastors from these ministries, especially Miles. His energy and passion for doing something for the Lord is really contagious. After spending some time with him, you can't help but be pumped up to go do something for the Lord."

Newly elected CaBBF chairman Lewis McClendon agreed. He said, "[These churches] real-

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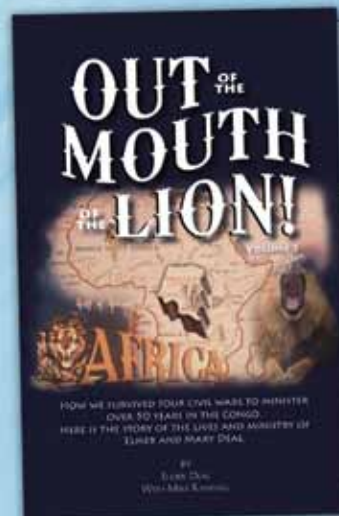
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(continued)

ly stretched my thinking. They were not all alike. One method is not for everyone. They all knew exactly what their strategy was and were very passionate about it. If I could not agree with a particular method, I could appreciate their passion for the methods they were using. And actually," Lewis continued, "The one I disagreed with the most gave me the best practical idea."

A pastor from Napa reports the meeting "grew my vision for Napa, because if God can do that in San Diego, He can do it in Napa, too — I just need to dream more, believe more, and pray more."

Craig Henson in Venice Beach said, "If there is one lasting truth that continues to ring in my ears, and Miles really kept hammering it, it's that

God is bigger than all of it — He is bigger than money, bigger than any of the obstacles, and bigger than their quite substantial personalities and ministries."

Jim Baize concluded, "This tour shows me God is still looking for people to bless. Let's be one of those people!"

Friendship Baptist holds senior adult jamboree

Owasso, OK

Friendship Baptist Church celebrated their first annual Senior Adult Jamboree November 8-9. Groups attended from seven churches in three states to hear guest speaker Tom Porter, the senior adult pastor from Temple Baptist Church of Titusville, Florida. "Tom has over a quarter century experience in ministry to that age group. He spoke with lots of humor that presented truth in a very practical way," says Loran McAlister, senior

adult pastor at Friendship. Music was provided by the Ascension Quarter and saxophonist James Taylor. The morning session ended with a BBQ meal as part of the program.

"Surveys say that only one person in 500,000 come to know Christ after the age of 65," states

McAlister. "The purpose of our Jamboree was to have a good time and encourage those who attended to see the need for outreach to that great unreached people group."



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Reierson retires after 51 years in the ministry, 38 at Victory

Pensacola, FL

On November 1, Pastor Robert "Bob" O. Reierson Sr. retired after celebrating 51 years in the gospel ministry and 38 years as pastor of Victory Bible Baptist Church. In honor of his years of service, he was installed as pastor emeritus of the church.

Reierson was born and raised in Mason City, Iowa. He joined the U.S. Army at the age of 16.



Bob and Dolores Taylor

While there, he met and married his wife, Delores Taylor. In 1955, in Chester, Virginia, Reierson was saved. After surrendering to preach in 1958, he attended Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, and graduated in 1962.

Reierson pastored churches in Virginia and Iowa before accepting his pastorate in Pensacola. He was called as pastor of Victory Bible Baptist Church in November 1971. "Due to Pastor Reierson's preaching, teaching, and leadership," states Allen Cotton, Victory's current pastor, "multiple preachers, missionaries, and teachers have been called into the ministry and countless souls have been saved, baptized, and discipled in the Lord."

Bob and Delores Reierson will celebrate their 61 wedding anniversary on March 6 of next year. The couple has four children, 10 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren.



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I'm here to interview for The Biggest Loser

By Ed Chavis

Associate Pastor | Lumpkin Road Baptist Church | Augusta, GA

With that self-incriminating, quite humiliating statement, my life was about to be turned upside down. For the third year now, our local NBC affiliate has been promoting a competition loosely based on the hit television show, "The Biggest Loser." It features two trainers, nutrition guidance, and weekly weigh-ins; unlike the show, there are no challenges, no eliminations, and no drama. They accept applications for a couple of months, from which they choose 20 finalists; from those 20 interviews, the field is narrowed to 12 participants.

Last year, I was told that I just missed the cut, and was offered a consolation prize of a reduced-fee membership. I said, "Thanks, but I think I'll just do it on my own." Twelve months and 20 pounds later, I reapplied, received the long-awaited phone call, and walked through the doors at the television studio. The lobby was noticeably empty, but I lowered my voice and said to the receptionist, "I'm here to interview for The Biggest Loser." Two weeks after that, I was in.



Most of us who struggle with our weight fight the battle privately, unless we choose to share our experience with a few close friends. Signing up for the Augusta's Biggest Loser competition did not afford me that luxury. Since the competition is sponsored by the local gym and the local nutrition center, and paid for with advertising funds, our faces, stories, and starting weights are splashed all over the local newscasts and in commercials for their respective businesses.

I have seen three immediate benefits to participating in such a program. First, God has used this experience to place me in the middle of a large number of people who do not know Christ. I have an opportunity to have an impact not only on my five teammates and the six competitors on the other team; but also on the local TV personalities, trainers, gym managers, reporters, and many others that I would have never met otherwise.

Second, because the TV station is filming profiles of each contestant "in their element," we had the

opportunity of having a news crew in our AWANA program and around our church family on a Wednesday night. The story aired three times on our local news, and it was a tremendous opportunity to get our church name out into the community.

Third, but certainly not least, are the health benefits I have already begun to reap. When I began, my blood pressure was 140/90, my back hurt every day from the residual effects of two back surgeries, I had frequent migraine headaches, and I could hardly do anything without having to stop and catch my breath. I had put my trumpet aside, because I could not play with any quality

of sound; singing was an effort, and none of my suits buttoned. Four weeks into the competition, my blood pressure is down to 120/80, backaches and headaches are completely gone, my breathing is better, my jackets button, and I am 33 pounds lighter.

People began asking me immediately for advice on losing the extra pounds — I had to tell them that one week of training and dieting does not make me an expert. But I did learn these two things early

on. First, if you have a significant amount of weight to lose, your chances of being successful by yourself are slim to none. The accountability, support, and companionship of the group have been key to whatever success I have had so far.

The other thing I have learned is about the changes we try to make in our lives, whether it be in the area of weight control, relationships, or any part of life. If we make little changes, we get little results. If we make temporary changes, we get temporary results. If we make radical changes, we get radical results.

With five and a half months left in the competition, and the workload increasing all the time, I'm not sure if my theme verse should be "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me", or "Master, carest thou not that we perish?" Losing the weight is simple — but it's not easy!

Ed Chavis is blogging about his weight-loss journey at <http://echavis64.blogspot.com>.

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