

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

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Christianity: NEAR THE END?

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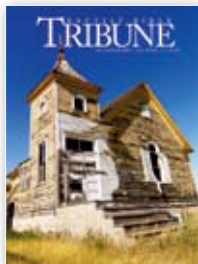
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BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

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Christianity: Near the end?

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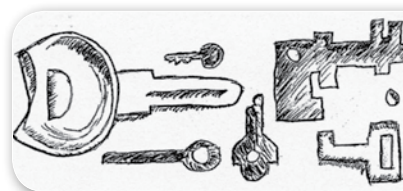
When preachers get together, bonds should be formed that unite for the gospel cause. It happened in Mobile, Alabama, where next?



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On the Table

By Keith Bassham



Misinformation or exaggeration?

Have you heard? The days of Christianity are over according to some recent news stories and headlines appearing in the secular press. Dig a little deeper though and you will find the declarations (or what Mark Twain referred to as an exaggeration when news of his death were being circulated in the 19th century) based upon an amazing data-set of contradictions and a good deal of wishful thinking on the part of secularists everywhere.

For instance, take the battle over same-sex marriage in this country. Some new states have joined the pro side the past 12 months by way of state legislatures rather than by court adjudication, albeit with very slim margins and veto overriding. The current US administration's agenda is far less friendly to conservative evangelicals than either Mr. Bush's or Mr. Clinton's. One could say that the culture war is winding down with the other guys winning.

Or is it? Some recent Gallup polling shows that since 2004, people have become more conservative on their views of abortion and same-sex marriage, and especially so in the number of people identifying themselves as prolife. In an online analysis, Gallup's Lydia Saad said, "...the results are conspicuously incongruous with the results of the 2008 elections, in which the Democratic Party won the White House for the first time in eight years." (www.gallup.com under Politics and Government tab)

In this issue, I take a brief look at some of this conflicting data and reporting in the cover article, "Christianity: Near the End?" I suggest following up using the resources I point to in the article for a more complete view of the issue. And I will revisit the subject in the months to come.

Also in this issue, we have invited former editor Jim Combs to submit another practical article. Mr. Combs continues to delight and challenge with his creative pen. Any of his articles could be taken directly to the pulpit or teacher's podium with confidence in his logic and presentation. He is a treasure both to the Fellowship and to the *Tribune*, having been with the BBFI since its inception. Our newer readers should know that Mr. Combs was the *Tribune* editor during the 1980s and '90s, and he was the one who changed the format from a newspaper to a magazine. So much of what we do now is based upon what he did then.

Speaking of now and then, this is the last issue of the current volume, number 59. Our next magazine will be the first in our 60th year, and we pray it will be our best ever. Long story short — our days may be numbered, but if so, only by God, magazine headlines notwithstanding.

Here is one of the best Fourth of July stories I have heard this year, and it was reported in several news stories in the *Rochester (NH) Times*.

When the Rochester, New Hampshire, Jaycees disbanded earlier in the year, one result was the local fairground association was left without a partner for the annual Fourth of July fireworks and celebration. Mark Perry, Rochester Fair General Manager told a local newspaper, "This is really a year when we need this event," noting the economic pinch.

Sensing an outreach opportunity and a way to serve their community, Rob Willis and Journey Baptist Church stepped up to fill the gap with funding and volunteers for the community event that did take place July 3.

The church underwrote the \$15,000

expense, arranged for Christian music for entertainment, provided about 130 volunteers, and accepted canned food donations in lieu of admission expense.

Perry and the community were appreciative. "I am very pleased. It was the biggest crowd in memory, and they handled it well. This is one of the nicest groups I have ever worked with. They were extremely happy, even parking cars and emptying garbage cans, and at the end of the night they left the grounds spectacularly clean," said Perry.

About 10,000 people attended and donated two tons of food to a local food pantry during the event. Pantry coordinator Anne Ackerman said of the donated food, "This makes a huge difference. It will help us through the summer months until we do a food drive in the fall. [The Journey Church] did really well. And to make the fireworks free in this economy was wonderful."

Rob Willis is a graduate of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, and The Journey Baptist Church is the fruit of a mission project of Granite State Baptist Church in Salem, New Hampshire, where Anthony Milas is pastor.

All our pastors and workers, and any church members who are able, should plan to attend the Fall BBFI National Meeting hosted by Pastor Mike Frazier and the Canton Baptist Temple. We are publishing information in this and the next issue, and I encourage you to visit the meeting website, www.bbfi-canton09.org, to register and to have all the information you need to plan your trip. Canton Baptist Temple is a historic church in our Fellowship, and Pastor Frazier and the church are doing all they can to make this meeting extra special.

Plan to attend!



Being before doing

Once again, this month we celebrate the birthday of the greatest nation on earth, the United States of America. This land, “home of the free and the brave,” turns 233 years old. Thank God for our soldiers, sailors, coastguardsmen, airmen, and marines fighting the good fight and defending our rights and freedoms from the forces of evil. May God help us to always remember their heroic sacrifice.

God certainly has had His hand on this nation from its inception. Our forefathers were men who believed in God and built this nation on the principles found in God’s Word. As we celebrate the birthday of this great nation, we all are deeply concerned for her future.

We live in an age where the “king of rock and roll” and the “king of pop” (who are now dead) are more popular among our youth than the King of kings. Immorality is rampant even among many who serve in respected positions. And what is even worse, society has seemingly begun to ignore or to accept these moral failures.

Our young are indoctrinated by educational systems that are citadels of shameless atheism, agnosticism, and blatant humanism. They are inundated with the voices of thousands who are calling them to lives of godlessness.

It would be very easy to place blame on our politicians, on Hollywood, or our educational system; but the truth of the matter is that God has called His people (2 Chronicles 7:14) to repent and turn from their wicked ways. God has called His people to holiness. “But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy” (1 Peter 1:15-16).

Leonard Ravenhill said, “What we need now is a revival of holiness. A revival of character. A revival of people who are utterly selfless and prepared to lay their lives on the altar for God.” I believe that it is high time that our Fellowship cry out to God in repentance and ask God to revive us again. The Psalmist says, “Wilt thou not revive us

changed. We are to “Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine” (2 Timothy 4:2).

As our world seemingly is coming apart at the seams, we have the answer. The hope of our world is in the person of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and invested in the local

...God will mightily use us again when we humble ourselves before Him and recommit to lives of holiness.

again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?” (Psalm 85:6).

Baptist educator Elmer Towns (who loves our Fellowship) recently indicated to me that we are not putting enough emphasis on soul winning and church planting. Our Fellowship was built on these two things along with a strong emphasis on missions. It would be foolish on our part to ignore the fact that our Fellowship is not as aggressive and effective in reaching this world as we have been in the past. I, for one, am not willing to sit idle and accept that our Fellowship cannot be used of God to shake this world for Christ.

It is my opinion that God will mightily use us again when we humble ourselves before Him and recommit to lives of holiness. The great evangelist Gypsy Smith said, “If you are ‘IN’ with God, then you are at ‘OUTS’ with the world.” Where most religious leaders are embracing the world, God’s instructions are clear in Titus 2:12, “Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.” While some pastors’ pulpits have become dispensaries of human philosophies, our mission has not

New Testament church. Don’t sell the church short, because the gates of hell will not prevail against her. Yet, the ministry and outreach of the church is in urgent need of revival, to live again. In our recent S3 conference in Winter Haven, Bill Monroe said that in order for our churches to grow, our pastors will have to grow (spiritually).

God help us to grow to be men of holiness, integrity, and godliness. The Apostle Paul hit the target when he challenged the Colossians, “Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him” (Colossians 3:12-14, 17).

My challenge to God’s servants of the BBFI is found in the principle of “being before doing.” What we do is always determined by who we are and what we are.



DIGRESSIONS

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

-Laurence Sterne

Website offers conservative reviews on films

Christian Film News.com is a nonprofit ministry of Films for Christ (founded in 1959) that provides a Christian perspective on the news from Hollywood as well as the latest movies and games.

Source: www.christianfilmnews.com



One in six Americans are Baptist

17.2% of total U.S. adult population are Baptists

6.7% Southern Baptist Convention

1.8% National Baptist Convention

1.2% American Baptist Church

7.5% Other Baptist



Source: Pew Research Center, www.pewforum.org

Pieces of world's oldest surviving Bible come together online

A collection of 800 pages and fragments from the work known as the Codex Sinaiticus are now all in one place and available to be viewed online at www.codexsinaiticus.org. Parts of the collection had been stored in four locations around the world for more than 150 years since it was discovered at the Monastery of Saint Catherine at Mount Sinai by German scholar Constantine Tischendorf.

"If you would have liked to see it before you would have had to travel to four countries in two continents. If you want to see the manuscript right now all you have to do is go online and experience it for yourself," says Juan Garces, the Codex Sinaiticus project manager. The British Library purchased 347 pages from the Soviet Union in 1933, 43 pages are held by the University Library in Leipzig, Germany, and the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg contains six fragments. The remaining 12 pages and fragments were discovered in a hidden room at the Mount Sinai monastery in 1975.

The manuscript, written in Greek, is believed to be around 1,600 years old and contains the complete

New Testament but is missing parts of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha. Most of the portion from Genesis to I Chronicles is missing and is presumed to be lost. Animal-skin pages that are 15" x 13.5" account for more than 400 pages of the manuscript, which scholars now believe was written by four different penmen.

Source: Associated Press, by Nardine Saad, Associated Press Writer, July 6, 2009



President Obama hosts Gay Pride celebrants, snubs Day of Prayer

President Obama became the first chief executive to host a White House ceremony celebrating “gay pride” Monday, telling several hundred homosexual guests in the East Room that America still has what he called “old attitudes” about homosexuality but that they have “an ally and a champion” in the Oval Office.

The June 29 ceremony marked the 40th anniversary of the Stonewall

Riots — which launched the modern-day “gay rights” movement — and also Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Month, which takes place each June and which was recognized by an Obama proclamation at the beginning of the month.

Conservative commentators were quick to note that the White House ceremony came only a month and a half after Obama chose not to

host — as was a custom under the Bush administration — a White House event commemorating the National Day of Prayer.

Monday’s event was historic; even though former President Clinton signed “Gay Pride Month” proclamations, he never hosted a White House ceremony celebrating it.

Source: ©2009 Copyright Baptist Press, by Michael Foust, June 30, 2009.

Worldwide numbers of internally displaced persons

26 million total

14.4 million
under U.N. care in 2008

13.7 million
under U.N. care in 2007

16 million
refugees and asylum seekers



Source: United Nations via Al Jazeera

Vatican officials temper pope’s interpretation of evidence from what is belived to be the tomb of Paul the Apostle

When Pope Benedict XVI announced that a probe inserted through a small hole in the tomb believed to be that of the Apostle Paul revealed pieces of purple and blue material, incense grains and small fragments of bone that were carbon dated to the appropriate age, he followed it up by saying “This seems to confirm the unanimous and uncontested tradition that these are the mortal remains of Paul the apostle.” Now, the head of the Vatican Museum’s diagnostic laboratory wants to make sure that he’s on the record as saying that the analysis of the materials “does not confirm or exclude” that the relics in the tomb belong to the Apostle Paul.

Vatican archaeologists uncovered the tomb in 2006 in a crypt under the basilica and said at the time that the fact that it was positioned exactly underneath the epigraph ‘Paulo Apostolo Mart’ (Paul the Apostle and Martyr) at the base of the cathedral’s main altar was conclusive proof that it was the apostle’s sarcophagus.

Source: www.ansa.it, July 3, 2009.



50 years ago...in the Baptist Bible Tribune



ALASKA—They are attending the Daily Vacation Bible School of Bible Baptist church, Anchorage, Alaska, a work established by Rev. and Mrs. Don White, Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries. There were more than 200 enrolled in the two-weeks’ school, with a high attendance of 234. There were eight professions of faith in Christ. The Sunday school attendance of the church has reached 164.

Story appeared in the July 24, 1959 edition of the *Tribune*.

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Meeting)



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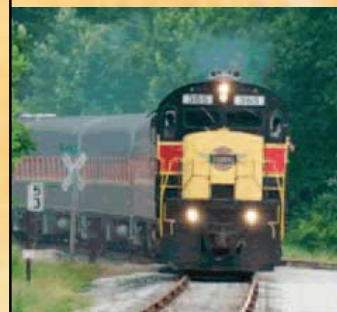
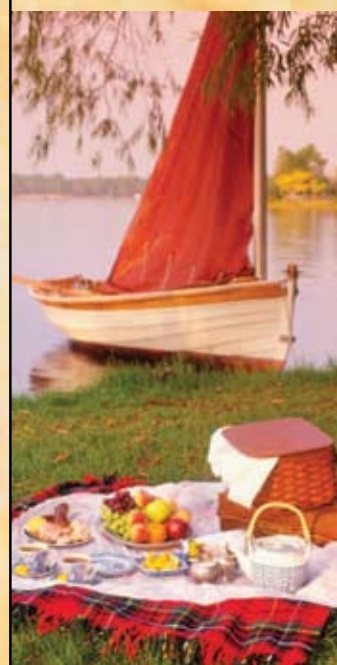
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Christianity: NEAR THE END?

By Keith Bassham

"... a cousin of mine was seriously ill two or three weeks ago in London, but is well now. The report of my illness grew out of his illness. The report of my death was an exaggeration."

Mark Twain, in a note to an inquiring reporter, May, 1897

Back around Easter, Editor Jon Meacham of *Newsweek* authored a cover piece with the title "The End of Christian America." One thing is certain — Mr. Meacham knows how not to bury the lead. (Pardon my excursus here, but "burying the lead" is journalism jargon for what happens when the main point of an article is nowhere to be found in the first few sentences. One of my jobs as an editor is to "unbury" leads when I rewrite news submissions.) You can read the entire well-written article on the *Newsweek* website.

The article, and the stark presentation (the cover that issue carried the headline, "The Decline and Fall of Christian America" in red letters forming a cross against a black background) was an eye-catcher, published as it was nearly on the heels of a spate of anti-Christian bestselling books. Those books, written by Richard Dawkins (*The God Delusion*), Christopher Hitchens (*God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*), Sam Harris (*Letter to a Christian Nation*), and others lesser known, postulate that faith in all

forms is an enemy that must not only be discouraged but wiped out. And it appeared that Mr. Meacham was about to declare their victory was in sight. That is not the case, of course, and it was not even what Meacham had in mind as it turns out.

What stirred the muse behind the *Newsweek* article was a line buried deep within a religious survey:

According to the American Religious Identification Survey..., the percentage of self-identified Christians has fallen 10 percentage points since 1990, from 86 to 76 percent. The Jewish population is 1.2 percent; the Muslim, 0.6 percent. A separate Pew Forum poll echoed the ARIS finding, reporting that the percentage of people who say they are unaffiliated with any particular faith has doubled in recent years, to 16 percent; in terms of voting, this group grew from 5 percent in 1988 to 12 percent in 2008 —roughly the same percentage of the electorate as African-Americans. (Seventy-five percent

of unaffiliated voters chose Barack Obama, a Christian.) Meanwhile, the number of people willing to describe themselves as atheist or agnostic has increased about four-fold from 1990 to 2009, from 1 million to about 3.6 million.

On the surface, if you add the empirical data to current anecdotal doom and gloom, stir in the wishes of the Dawkinses and HARRISES, and extrapolate far enough into the future, I can see how some might think the obituary of Christianity is nearly ready for proofing. But read Mr. Meacham's piece a little further:

Let's be clear: while the percentage of Christians may be shrinking, rumors of the death of Christianity are greatly exaggerated. Being less Christian does not necessarily mean that America is post-Christian. A third of Americans say they are born again; this figure, along with the decline of politically moderate-to liberal mainline Protestants, led the ARIS



authors to note that “these trends ... suggest a movement towards more conservative beliefs and particularly to a more ‘evangelical’ outlook among Christians.” With rising numbers of Hispanic immigrants bolstering the Roman Catholic Church in America, and given the popularity of Pentecostalism, a rapidly growing Christian milieu in the United States and globally, there is no doubt that the nation remains vibrantly religious — far more so, for instance, than Europe.

And that is a puzzle to many. Sociologically, we should not be here. Christianity, and certainly the stream of Christianity represented by the Baptist Bible Fellowship, should have disappeared long ago.

John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge have authored a book, *God Is Back*. Micklethwait is editor in chief of *The Economist*, and Wooldridge is its Washington Bureau chief. Their thesis is that the death of God continues to be a great exaggeration. They write:

Prophets have been predicting the death of God for generations. ... In the early eighteenth century [Thomas] Woolston predicted, with

the self-confidence that seems to be God’s gift to certain types of English polemicists, that Christianity would be entirely expunged by 1900. Half a century later, Frederick the Great wrote to his friend Voltaire to say that Woolston had been too pessimistic: religion “is crumbling of itself, and its fall will be but the more rapid.” Voltaire replied that its end could be in the next fifty years. In 1882 Friedrich Nietzsche insisted that God was already done for. “God is dead. God remains dead. We have killed him.” (God Is Back, p. 32)

Here in this country, after the Scopes Trial, or the so-called Monkey Trial of 1925 in Dayton, Tennessee, you and I, or those who believed as you and I do — that the Hebrew and Greek scriptures translated into English give us a true and accurate account of a God who created the universe, of a God who now sustains that same creation, and who is in the process of making things right through the death and resurrection of His Son — those who believe such things, and those beliefs themselves, should be extinct by now.

Each new surge of technology seemed to make God obsolete, or to

drive Him further away from the minds of people. The Russian cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the world’s first person in space, is said to have reported he did not see God there (Gagarin probably did not say it. There is some evidence that Nikita Khrushchev made the statement about Gagarin, and for propaganda purposes it sounded better coming from Gagarin).

C. S. Lewis had something to say about that by the way. He wrote, “To some, God is discoverable everywhere; to others, nowhere. Those who do not find him on earth are unlikely to find Him in space.... But send a saint up in a spaceship and he’ll find God in space as he found God on earth. Much depends on the seeing eye.” (“The Seeing Eye,” *Christian Reflections*, p. 171)

Blinded to God, the humanist hope was that all religion, and especially Christian religion, would be a footnote in history in the 21st century. But religion, far from being a footnote, is almost daily in the headlines — in Middle East conflicts, in European society (in France they are authoring legislation regarding headscarves), and even in China, where a couple of years ago a Chinese economist converted to Christianity after concluding that free markets and Christianity go hand in

hand. In our own country, religious discussion finds its way into every political contest (who can forget then-presidential-candidate Barack Obama in the 2008 campaign disdainfully referring to working class people who “cling to guns or religion”).

And whatever Mr. Obama was trying to say (he later attempted to explain the comment), the secularists don't like it that we are not yet extinct. We especially, some of the most conservative Christians among the evangelicals, and all our language and message and witness, should have been gone and out of their hair a long time ago. And yet here we are.

Micklethwait and Woolridge observed the same in their studies:

There are two particularly upsetting things about the way that religion is prospering. The first is that the “wrong sorts” of religion are flourishing. In the 1960s most thinkers imagined that, if religion was to survive at all, it would be in its most reasonable and ecumenical guise — mild Anglicanism, say, or Graham Greene’s doubting Catholicism. In fact, certainty has proved much easier to market; the sort of religions that claim Adam and Eve met exactly 6,005 years ago or that take a particularly strict interpretation of jihad. In the America the tolerant-to-a-fault Episcopal Church has been in relentless decline. By contrast, the Southern Baptists have prospered. Altogether conservative Christians now make up a quarter of America’s popula-

tion, according to Pew [Research Center], significantly more than fifty years ago. People who seek liberation from liberation do not turn to liberation theology. (God Is Back, p. 17)

Just as Mr. Meacham was quick to point out that he was not pushing the death of Christianity, I must also say that the ARIS data showing a decline in self-identifying Christians, the recent victories among the gay activists, and the current political balance of power should be cause for concern. I am glad of the observations recorded in *God Is Back*, but we are a long way from running victory laps.

So, what should be our response to our current situation?

First, just as the financial world finds it helpful to publicize “green shoots,” or good news about the economy, consider some fairly prominent atheists who have recently changed teams. British biographer A.N. Wilson comes to mind, because he wrote an enjoyable apologetic published in a major British newspaper about the time the *Newsweek* article appeared. Wilson had a childhood faith which he forsook at the age of 30, and he describes both his departure and return. Of his turn to secularism he writes:

*Like many people who lost faith, I felt anger with myself for having been ‘conned’ by such a story. I began to rail against Christianity, and wrote a book, entitled *Jesus*, which endeavoured to establish that he had been no more than*

a messianic prophet who had well and truly failed, and died.

Why did I, along with so many others, become so dismissive of Christianity?

Like most educated people in Britain and Northern Europe (I was born in 1950), I have grown up in a culture that is overwhelmingly secular and anti-religious. The universities, broadcasters and media generally are not merely non-religious, they are positively anti.

To my shame, I believe it was this that made me lose faith and heart in my youth. It felt so uncool to be religious.

And his description of a renewed faith is just as frank:

My own return to faith has surprised no one more than myself. Why did I return to it? Partially, perhaps it is no more than the confidence I have gained with age.

Rather than being cowed by them, I relish the notion that, by asserting a belief in the risen Christ, I am defying all the liberal clever-clogs on the block: cutting-edge novelists ...; foul-mouthed, self-satisfied TV presenters ...; and the smug, tieless architects of so much television output.

But there is more to it than that. My belief has come about in large measure because of the lives and examples of people I have known — not the famous, not saints, but friends and relations who have lived, and faced death, in



"It is up to us

the light of the Resurrection story, or in the quiet acceptance that they have a future after they die.

And then there are those further afield who are connecting the dots spiritually in unexpected ways. Following the steps of Alexis de Tocqueville (*Democracy in America*) nearly two centuries ago, Chinese economist Zhao Xiao saw and wrote about the moral basis of democracy and market economies. His conclusion was that the presence of churches in America (see a complete story about Zhao Xiao and his conclusions at www.pbs.org/frontlineworld/stories/china_705/interview/xiao.html) was directly related to the country's success. Though he was not a believer, he authored a widely quoted paper called "Market Economies With Churches and Market Economies Without Churches." In an interview with PBS's *Frontline*, he said that he began without an inclination toward Christianity, but his experience with churches affected him.

From this point, I started to study the Bible. But my initial motivation for studying the Bible is not really pure. My purpose for studying the Bible was not to prove that there was a God. I wanted to look for proof against the existence of God. The reasons are simple. First of all, I believed that I'm not really a good person. I felt that I had a lot of bad thoughts and did a lot of bad things. So if there was a God, whatever bad thoughts I had, he would know; whatever bad things I did, he would know. To me, this is too insecure, so I would rather not have a God. So this was how I studied the Bible: I wanted to prove that it was a good book but that there was no truth to it.

But after reading it for over three months, I admitted defeat. I discovered that this kind of book China does not have. China does have morality books. But China does not have a book like the Bible.

The Bible is a book that claims inspiration from the will of God. It talks about the history of the relationship between God and human beings, and this kind of book does not exist in China.

Xiao is right of course. His article references the Puritans who colonized the American Northeast and laid moral foundations that still hold, if they are somewhat repressed by the descendants of those same Puritans. I wonder when I read articles and books written by men like Christopher Hitchens who authored *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*. The founding documents of the United States, the universities, the hospitals — all are the results of "poison" religion. The great anti-slavery movement and the civil rights movements had religious, even Christian, roots. The *God Is Back* authors say, those movements were "both religious at heart, led by religious people, nurtured in churches, justified in religious language."

These reasons may or may not confound the enemies of Christianity, but remember Mr. Wilson's characterization of himself when he was outside the faith: It was not reason that took him to the far country, rather "it felt so uncool to be religious."

We are led where we want to be led. But that attitude is something we can work with in a country like ours when we apply the Baptist principles of soul competence and religious liberty. It is up to us to declare and live out the gospel persuasively, and to do a better job of it than our detractors can undo. We do not head for the hills and away from the threat.

When Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, became aware of the data prompting Mr. Meacham's article, he wrote in his blog, "Our proper Christian response to this new challenge is not gloom, but concern. And our first concern must be

TO DECLARE AND LIVE OUT THE GOSPEL PERSUASIVELY, AND TO DO A BETTER JOB OF IT THAN OUR DETRACTORS CAN UNDO."

to see that the Gospel is preached as Good News to the perishing — including all those in post-Christian America."

A. N. Wilson closed his testimonial article with a strong statement to that effect. He wrote:

Sadly, they have all but accepted that only stupid people actually believe in Christianity, and that the few intelligent people left in the churches are there only for the music or believe it all in some symbolic or contorted way which, when examined, turns out not to be belief after all.

As a matter of fact, I am sure the opposite is the case and that materialist atheism is not merely an arid creed, but totally irrational.

Materialist atheism says we are just a collection of chemicals. It has no answer whatsoever to the question of how we should be capable of love or heroism or poetry if we are simply animated pieces of meat.

The Resurrection, which proclaims that matter and spirit are mysteriously conjoined, is the ultimate key to who we are. It confronts us with an extraordinarily haunting story.

J. S. Bach believed the story, and set it to music. Most of the greatest writers and thinkers of the past 1,500 years have believed it.

But an even stronger argument is the way that Christian faith transforms individual lives — the lives of the men and women with whom you mingle on a daily basis, the man, woman or child next to you in church tomorrow morning.

Introductory note by Keith Bassham

A few years ago, Chuck Ford, chairman of the Alabama/Northwest Florida BBF, invited me to speak at a fellowship meeting in his state. Among the gentlemen I met during that week was one Ira Walton, pastor of Crenshaw Community Baptist Church of Luverne, Alabama.

Ira is a black man, a former Marine, and at the time he was a bi-vocational pastor. He and his family were charming. His wife prepared an excellent meal for us, and the dinner table provided an opportunity for one of the most educational encounters I have had when it comes to matters of Christianity and race.

It turns out Ira and I share an enthusiasm for, how shall I say it — for self-expression — which means I did not have to spend a lot of time sizing him up, and that evening we began forming bonds of friendship. His experience, temperament, vision, and dedication to the hard and honest work of church building is more than enough to commend him, but I was concerned that Ira and some of his brother preachers would find it hard-going in our Fellowship.

I regret I have to say these things, but to borrow a phrase given me by Charles Lyons, there is a difference between inviting and welcoming people who are different from ourselves. This is true whether the difference is cultural, generational, methodological, geographical, or racial, and our Fellowship history is strewn with examples of this resistance to the new or different.

Mind you, we generally get around to doing the right thing, but it is not always the first thing we do. The Brothers of Cyrene are giving to the Baptist Bible Fellowship an opportunity, not to sit at their table, nor to invite them to ours, but to share the one table the Lord has given us by his death and resurrection to reach a long neglected and difficult to reach community. Let us get to know them and their unique perspectives and problems. This article, submitted by the secretary of the Brothers of Cyrene, will introduce you to this fellowship of black pastors who want to connect with the values and vision of Baptist Bible Fellowship.

Brothers of CYRENE

**AND AS THEY
CAME OUT,
THEY FOUND
A MAN OF
CYRENE...**



**...HIM THEY
COMPELLED
TO BEAR HIS
CROSS.**

The Brothers of Cyrene was started primarily for the purpose of fellowship. However, their mission and purpose today is to evangelize Black America by planting strong independent Baptist churches in their cities, towns, communities, and neighborhoods with aggressive emphasis on soul winning, teaching, preaching, praying, discipleship, and education. The Brothers of Cyrene, with the Lord's help, want to reverse the negative trends found in the home, education, drug and crime, incarceration, and high mortality.

Pastors James Richardson (Living Waters Baptist Church, Mobile), Samuel Mitchell (Bible Study Baptist Church, Moss Point, Mississippi), and Ira A. Walton Sr. (Crenshaw Community Baptist Church, Luverne) are all close friends, shepherding churches they planted, and active in their respective state fellowships.

Because these pastors were all bi-vocational, they never had time for any serious fellowship except when their paths would cross or when they spoke



on the phone. When two of these men and their wives met at a restaurant for a time of fellowship, they realized they shared the same problems and concerns in their ministries and in their communities. They discussed the urgency as well as the difficulties encountered in reaching black communities and how they could best evangelize and do it at a faster pace.

Pastor Walton suggested that instead of meeting at a restaurant, a group should meet at someone's church and invite other inner-city independent Baptist pastors to be a part of the fellowship. On August 9, 2007, Pastor Richardson was host of the Alabama/ Northwest Florida Baptist Bible Fellowship meeting, and Pastor Walton decided at that meeting to engage the six black pastors who were in attendance.

With a flyer in hand complete with an agenda, a date, time, and place for a larger fellowship, Pastor Walton went to work in inviting those pastors in attendance to a special fellowship meeting. The meeting took place at Living Waters Baptist Church in Mobile where Pastor Walton began to share his God-given vision for the fellowship



Above: The Brothers of Cyrene (standing L-R) Jerome Binns, Raymond Bell, James Richardson, Eric Riles, Eddie Goodall, Reggie Williams, Eligah Moore, Victor Baxter. Seated L-R: Bill Fluker, Secretary; Ira Walton, Moderator; Sam Mitchell, Treasurer.



Al Janney with Ira Walton

with all the pastors in attendance. In that first meeting, they discussed structure, issues and concerns in reaching Black America, the need to plant more churches, and the need to assist and encourage other pastors.

That vision culminated in a meeting March 28, 2008, at Living Waters Baptist Church. The group formed and developed a purpose and mission statement. They named the fellowship Brothers of Cyrene taken from Matthew 27:32. The name of the fellowship originated in the heart and mind of Pastor Walton's great friend, Pastor Chuck Ford. The fellowship named Walton as moderator. Two other officers, Bill Fluker and Sam Mitchell became secretary and treasurer respectively.

The Brothers of Cyrene are not of the opinion that the blacks must separate in order to effectively address the unique circumstances involving Black America. They desire and desperately need the help of predominantly non-black congregations to reach Black America and plant churches.

Rather, this fellowship, through its website (www.brothersofcyrene.com), will serve as an information hub for Bible college graduates, laymen, church members, etc., who have been called of God in this task. The website will provide information and locations where pastors, youth directors, Christian schoolteachers, choir directors, etc., are needed. Additionally, this site will provide a means by which believers of like faith will have the opportunity to search for and find independent Baptist churches in other cities and towns. The site will offer other opportunities as well.

The Brothers of Cyrene are pastors and laymen who are active participants in their state fellowships. They are affiliated with and work closely in conjunction with the

Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) and state fellowships in planting churches. They desire to work with other Bible-believing fellowships, mission boards, and local churches in their efforts to evangelize their communities and neighborhoods.

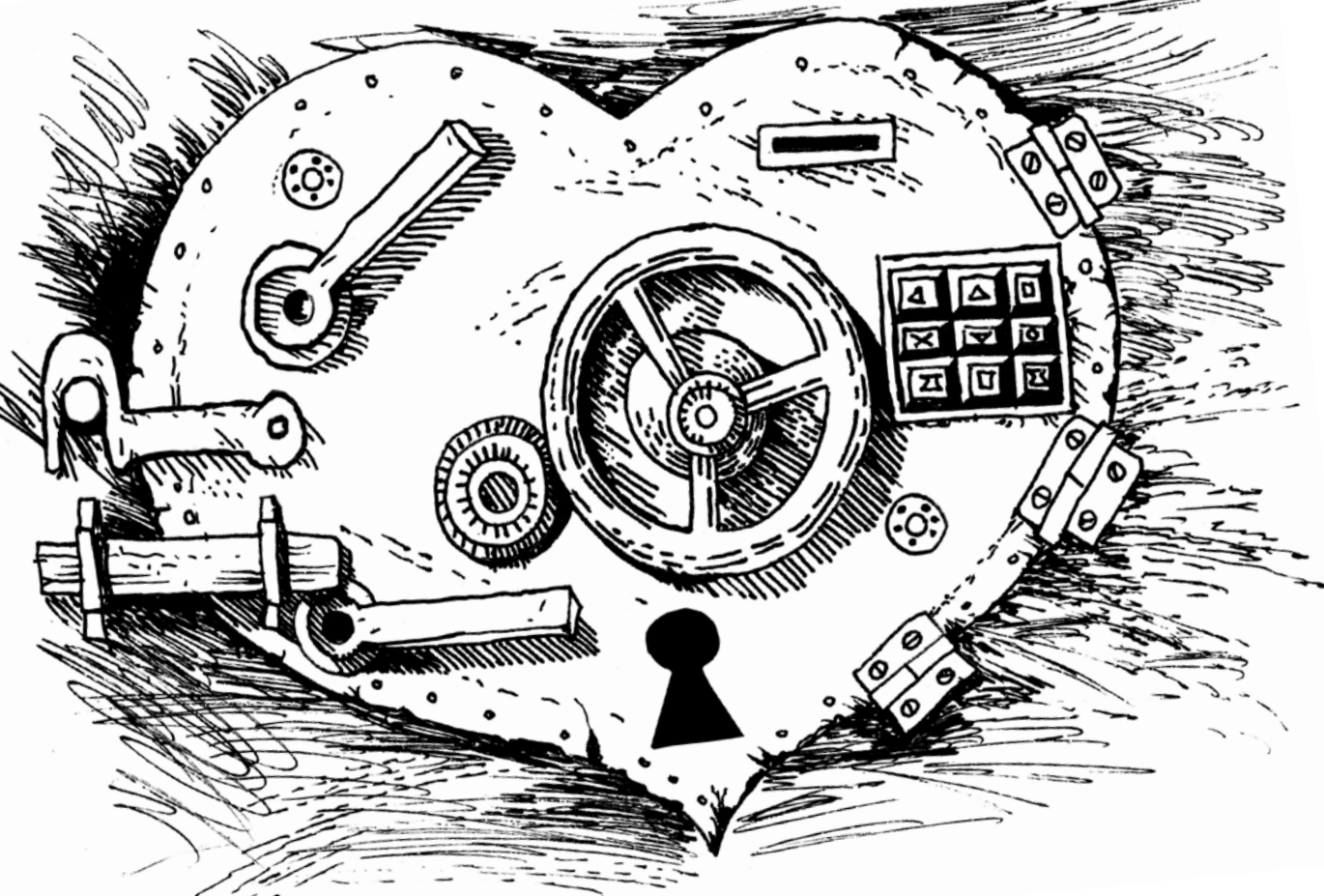
They strongly desire the pastors of the state fellowships to truly embrace their vision by encouraging their members to pray and to get involved. They ask all those in the BBFI and in other Bible-believing ministries who already have productive and prosperous ministries, to help the Brothers of Cyrene reach the unreached for Christ.

If you desire to write us, send correspondence to the following address:

*Brothers of Cyrene
c/o Crenshaw Community Baptist Church
1607 Rutledge Loop Road
Luverne, AL 36049*

Please visit our website for further information: www.brothersofcyrene.com.





SEVEN SECRETS OF DYNAMIC LIVING

BY JIM COMBS, TRIBUNE EDITOR 1983 - 1995

Hast thou heard the secret of God?" (Job 15:18) Within the pages of Holy Writ are many secrets that are discussed and revealed. We read of secret sins, secret things that belong unto God, secret faults that hinder our progress, and of the "secret places of the stairs."

Secrets are intriguing, interesting, fascinating. But in this article, I am taking the ancient question of Eliphaz, who probably did not know the answer, either, and associating it first with the profound doxology of Paul in Romans 16:25-27:

"Now to him that is of power to establish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began.

But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith; To the only wise God be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen."

Whatever Eliphaz may or may not have had in mind, Paul unveils by divine inspiration the great secret of the ages that the gospel of Christ and His glorious salvation would be made known to all nations for the obedience of faith...the gospel is an open secret.

Paul enlarges on that concept when he writes in Colossians of "the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints; To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of

this mystery among the gentiles; which is Christ in you the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:26, 27).

This is the greatest secret of dynamic Christianity, that Christ is actually alive in His divine and dynamic presence in your very life and being. As a tooth grows from inside out, Christian character and conduct ideally proceed from within, from the reality of the indwelling Christ. Let me build on these concepts by suggesting and selecting seven open secrets for dynamic Christ living, based on the power-packed principles of the Word of God.

1. THE SECRET OF DRAWING ENERGY FROM CHRIST

This mysterious (as God calls it) power and presence can teach you what you need to know, if you are only receptive

and teachable. It can inspire you with new thoughts and ideas, so that your work will have a freshness and originality beyond your own abilities.

This extraordinary power, this presence, is no abstraction, but actually the most practical thing there is. This Power is really no less than Jesus Christ personally living in your life. "Christ liveth in me," Paul gloriously affirmed in Galatians 2:20.

As a born-again child of God, you have the right and privilege to cooperate with this Indwelling Person and to allow Him to work through your body, mind, and estate, so that you no longer grovel on the ground, so to speak, amid limitations and difficulties, but can soar upon wings like an eagle to the realm of spiritual dominion and radiant joy.

Right within your heart and mind, within your own consciousness of His dynamic and divine presence, Christ lives to impart His energy, wisdom, grace, power, and resources to you. But you must make conscious contact with Him, no longer ignoring what is already real and potentially vibrant within your person.

As Christ was born in a stable, so Christ comes into the tabernacle of your body, at first perhaps so quietly you scarcely realize He is there. But as Christ grew on this earth, so Jesus will become larger in your thinking and planning as you practice His presence, as you commune daily, hourly with Him.

When you are born again, when you receive Christ, He does indeed make His supernatural entry into that new nature that is created in you at the moment of salvation. Now he desires to enhance, enrich, and empower your life, raising you toward your full potential, whatever may be your realm of activity. By prayer, by communion, by cultivating a constant consciousness of His presence, you will tap his infinite resources. From Him you can receive all the spiritual energy and strength you need to accomplish great exploits

for God. You can join the inspired apostle in declaring, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

2. THE SECRET OF DECIDING ON LIFE'S GOALS

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" (Romans 12:1,2).



Now that you are a Christian, you can understand that you make a presentation of your body and all that you are to God in an act of commitment, surrender, and submission to His will. This will result in no conformation to the evil standards and ungodly trends of a wicked world. By the power of Christ living in you, and by the conscious "renewal of your mind," you will experience ongoing transformation within the will and plan of God for your life.

It is of prime importance to have a definite major life goal. At whatever age you are (the younger the better, but mature age is not a limitation), prayerfully set forth in writing what you want to be and what you want to accomplish in the life that is ahead of you. Make this goal consistent with Romans 12:1 and 2, and be flexible, amenable to entering new and unexpected doors of opportunity, if God opens them and so leads you. Overcome carnal inertia or lackadaisical procrastination by getting started now.

Let me give you three powerful, practical principles to keep in mind as you move forward into the future, trusting God for His guidance: (1) All spiritual achievements, all material riches, all worthwhile aims anyone acquires through prayer and hard work begin in the form of a clear, concise, mental picture of the thing one seeks. Commit that concept to memory, and put it in practice! (2) The time it takes you to accomplish your goal is the exact time necessary to deliver the service to God and to others that is of equal value to your visualized goal. You must render a service of equivalent value to the object of your purpose. That is true of small intermediate goals as well as the grand and noble purpose of your whole life. (3) Whatever you can visualize as being possible, even remotely

possible, within the realm of God's Word and will, can come to pass. You must believe it. That is faith. Believe God! Believing can eventually make it real!

3. THE SECRET OF DEEPENING YOUR PERSONAL DEVOTION

"Now abideth these three: faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love" (I Cor. 13:13).

What is the first and great commandment? "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matthew 22:37). To seek first the kingdom of God involves loving Him. Love him emotionally with the heart; love Him spiritually with the soul; love Him mentally with the mind. As you love Him more, His presence and power will flow the more through you.

When Christ quoted from the Old Testament, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" He called it the second commandment. If your vertical love toward God is in order, your horizontal love toward others will tend to follow. But notice Christ said to love others "as thyself." There is a sense in which you love and accept yourself in Christ. Don't unintentionally diminish God's investment in you by belittling or demeaning yourself. You are "accepted in the beloved." You can accept yourself, feel good within about yourself, know in your heart that you belong to Him and are beautiful in His sight.

4. THE SECRET OF DISMISSING THE NEGATIVE FORCES

Some folks, even some "dwarf Christians" seem to treat life as "one blamed thing after another." They never become victorious Christians because they think so negatively about their lives, their situations, and their problems. Remember the three enemies of the believer are the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Surrounded and sometimes bombarded by negative forces, ideas, and trends, we need to claim victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. "Love not the world," John appeals (I John 2:15,16), "for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."

Selfish immorality, covetous greed, and arrogant human pride are the trinity of evil in our world system. None of these things lead to happiness or ultimate success. We overcome this ex-

ternal enemy, the world, by faith. "Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?" (I John 5:5).

Likewise, the flesh, the old nature within us, is an internal enemy:

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like . . . (Galatians 5:19-21a).

We overcome the old nature, the flesh, by "crucifying." Christ died on the cross for those sins. "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." (Galatians 5:24).

Against Satan, the ultimate evil, there can be victory. "And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony; and they loved not their lives unto death" (Revelation 12:11). By spiritual resolve and the power of the indwelling Christ, these negative forces can be overcome. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." (James 4:7-8).

5. THE SECRET OF DOING THE IMPOSSIBLE

And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask believing, ye shall receive. (Matthew 21:22).

All things are possible to him that believeth. (Mark 9:23).

Faith does move mountains! Pray and believe! Whatever you can conceive as in God's will and believe in your heart, you can receive or achieve by the grace and power of God. "More things are wrought by prayer," someone has

said, "than the world dreams of."

Remember that it is not mere passive submission God wants, but active obedience. Therefore, let God energize your thinking; develop and plan to reach your goal. Plan your work! Work your plan!...with exuberance!

But it will take time!

6. THE SECRET OF DARING TO BE GREAT FOR GOD

The pathway to greatness for the believer begins with a yielded heart at the foot of Calvary. But do not be deceived into a false humility, an excessive sense of "nothingness" before God. I once attended a prayer meeting where everybody prayed "just to be nothing." God must have heard their prayer, since I have not heard of any of them since. You want to be something, somebody for God. You want to be everything God has called you to be! Live your life with a sense of divine service, motivated by love!

7. THE SECRET OF DELIGHTING YOURSELF IN GOD

"Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4).

Scan Psalm 37 for these watchwords of joy and success in Christ.

"Trust in the Lord" (verse 3)

"Delight...in the Lord (verse 4)

"Commit thy way unto the Lord (verse 5).

"Rest in the Lord" (verse 7)

"Wait patiently" (verse 7)

"Cease from anger" (verse 8)

"Fret not" (verse 9)

"Depart from evil" (verse 27)

"Wait on the Lord and keep his way" (verse 34).

As you gradually draw energy from the indwelling Christ and delight in God, following these "open secrets," you will grow mightily in grace and you will become a dynamic, successful Christian, ever increasing in love, peace, and joy!



SEVENTY-FIVE CENTS A BASKET

BY SANDIE POWELL

She scrubbed and scrubbed until her knuckles bled. It wasn't her choice, but it fell her lot to hold her family together.

Adelaide, affectionately called "Addie" by friends and family, had always been a hard worker. Addie had ten children. Her husband, Pearl, met an untimely death and left her to care for this large brood with the only means she could. She washed baskets of laundry for 75 cents each.

Pearl had been the town drunk. This was not a spiteful label, but one he had rightfully earned. He met his death in a brawl, following a lengthy drinking spree. Addie received word from a friend late one night as she bedded down her children in the tiny one-room converted barn at the edge of town. This was home for Adelaide and her large family.

The rich folks in town knew Adelaide would do the best possible job, carefully scrubbing their laundry. They stuffed the baskets full and felt charitable as they paid her 75 cents a basket. One day, a prosperous lady substituted a worn sweater for the 75 cents. As Addie traveled home, weary and disappointed, she looked at the used sweater and noticed the pearl buttons had all been cut off, making it even less usable and certainly not worth her afternoon of hard work.

The disappointment was particularly difficult because this basket of laundry had a special purpose. It was earmarked for something that was more precious to Addie than food, milk, or even fuel to heat their drafty barn home. It was earmarked for a piano lesson for her precious Linnie.

Linnie was the youngest of the ten and often accompanied her mother on washday. If there was a piano anywhere in the vicinity, Linnie would sit down and quietly plunk out melodious tunes, much to the amazement of her mother's patrons. Adelaide recognized the God-given talent in Linnie and was determined her youngest daughter would develop and use her talent for God's glory. Adelaide was a dedicated Christian and had passed her faith on to each one of her ten children.

One day, after a long afternoon of heavy washing, Addie noticed a hideous, whitewashed upright piano in the corner of the living room of an elderly man she washed for. She asked if the piano was for sale. The man was anxious to get rid of the eyesore and said he would gladly sell it for \$5 if someone would remove it from his home. She managed to raise the money, and she and little 10-year-old Linnie pushed the piano all the way through town to their barn home. That piano filled one whole corner of the cramped dwelling, and Addie beamed with every note Linnie played day after day as she faithfully practiced on her piano.

Linnie, or Linda as we know her now, became a skillful church pianist. She is Linda Guinn, the wife of Wayne Guinn, director of the National Church Planting Office. Those of us who know her have enjoyed her musical talent and God-given gift. Truly, Adelaide's sacrifice and 75-cent baskets of laundry have brought huge dividends. Nothing ever given to God is forgotten or wasted.

Baptist History

BY THOMAS RAY



Exchanging freedom for slavery

On May 13, 1809, 13 black members of the First Baptist Church of Philadelphia were dismissed at their request in order to establish the First African Baptist Church. About a month later, on June 19, the church was organized and called as their first pastor Henry Cunningham who served the church from 1809 until 1812.

The next pastor was John King (a white minister from Virginia), who would serve First African from 1813 until early in 1832. Without pastoral leadership, the church began to struggle and to experience a slow but steady decline in its membership. At the same time, Philadelphia had become the home to an ever-increasing number of runaway slaves and freemen who sought and found refuge in Pennsylvania. The church came to the conclusion that if they were going to evangelize Philadelphia's growing black population, they must obtain the services of a black minister who could provide them with stability and leadership.

Shortly after their search was launched, they were informed about James Burrows, a black preacher in Virginia who was having great success in preaching the gospel among the slaves. The church immediately corresponded with Burrows and invited him to come to Philadelphia.

Burrows was receptive to the church's invitation, but there was one major problem. James Burrows was a slave, and his owner refused to allow him to go to Philadelphia until he was paid in full for his property. First African Church had only 60 members, all of whom were poor, and it was impossible for them to raise the money that was required to obtain Burrows' freedom (a healthy educated slave like Burrows would sell for somewhere between \$800 to \$1000). The church offered to pay Burrows' owner in installments for his freedom, but he refused their offer. The church members were naturally disappointed, but they strongly believed that James Bur-

rows was God's man for their church. The church had run out of options but they still had faith in the God who hears and answers prayer.

During this crisis, two cousins, Samuel and John Bivins, would make one of the most selfless sacrifices in Baptist history. Samuel and John, who were both freemen, decided, after much prayer and discussion, to make an astounding offer. They offered to place themselves in bondage as security for the freedom of James Burrows. Burrows' owner accepted Samuel and John's offer. They immediately traveled to Virginia and these freemen willingly became bond slaves in order that

James Burrows might be free to preach the gospel. Burrows hastened to Philadelphia where he was installed as pastor of First African Baptist Church.

Burrows and the church did not forget Samuel and John Bivins. Through their self-sacrifice and the gifts of interested friends, Burrows and the church were eventually able to obtain their freedom. Samuel and John Bivins had served as slaves for one

year, a sacrifice they gladly made for the sake of the gospel. The pair returned to Philadelphia where they assisted Pastor Burrows in the work of the church.

Burrows' ministry and the growth of the church would more than amply justify Samuel and John Bivins' sacrifice of love. Upon the arrival of John Burrows in 1832, the church had only 60 members. At his death in 1844, that number had increased to 252. (Remember, in that day, Baptist churches had approximately five times as many attendees as they had members.)

When you are challenged to make a physical or financial sacrifice for the work of God, remember Samuel and John Bivins, who willingly exchanged freedom for slavery for the furtherance of the gospel.





Charles Lyons, Pastor
Armitage Baptist Church
Chicago, Illinois

Gonna run on...

I'm on my run. The sun warms my face. I'm making tracks down the parkway that flanks the Boulevard. I follow a path through the grass. Back when I started, there was no path. This summer I'm reflecting on God's goodness as I mark 35 years as pastor of Armitage Baptist Church in this world-class city. When I began, there was no path. I marvel at supernatural strength for every step. I ponder God's grace for the race. My mind flits to my preacher father, 58 years the pastor of Ashburn Baptist here in the Chicago area. What an example!

Exodus 23 comes to mind. God gave me this passage in 1980 when we were trying to buy this big old Masonic Temple. We sealed the deal in 1981, exorcised the place, and are still sanctifying it. In verse 20, God tells Moses and the people He will send an angel before them. Then He says He will bring them to the land of the Amorites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Canaanites, the termites...you remember the passage. I understood that to say that God would lead us to the enemy, to His enemies, in order to show His power over them.

I didn't know that the first enemy would be an Irish Democrat slumlord family. They owned this building we ended up buying at a rock-bottom price. Wow! God led us to face the gangs. In fact, we took over their headquarter corner when we bought this building. Every night 25 guys would be hanging out on our front steps. I spotted their former chief a couple weeks ago praising God on our front row. God led us to an eyeball-to-eyeball facedown with the Chicago Democratic machine. We stood, they stumbled and backed away.

God led us into a Holy Ghost encounter with radical homosexuals. It's a great story, but suffice it to say Saints 2, Rad Homosexuals 0. What really freaked them out? We loved on them all the way through.

Oh yes, through many dangers, toils, and snares...

I think of when my back problems wouldn't even let me walk and then would only let me walk but not run. A ritual has evolved. As I begin my run, I think of the blessing of being able to run again. I lift my hands above my head, crazy-man like. You know, like the winner breaking the tape...only

was running at a stronger, faster pace than it felt like. So many nights getting up to preach my 3rd or 4th message of the day I thought, "I'm not getting the job done." A couple months ago, I asked all the men who were called to preach to come and sit in the front. About 20 guys came and filled the front row.

I've failed Him, He's never failed me. I want to holler back to all those coming up behind me, "When you don't think you can run one more mile, you can do all things through Christ. When you think you can't go one more step, you don't have one more sermon in you, one more service, one more counseling

...the passing traffic sees no tape and no other runners, just a skinny white man running down the parkway with his arms in the air and his lips moving.

the passing traffic sees no tape and no other runners, just a skinny white man running down the parkway with his arms in the air and his lips moving. I'm thanking God for letting me run one more day, praising Him for His goodness and faithfulness all these years and miles later.

Today, I want to yell over my shoulder to all you servants behind me running at the 2-year mark, the 8-year mark, 17 years, 26 years, 34 years, "GOD IS GOOD! HE'S FAITHFUL! Oh, He will test you to grow you. He'll turn up the fire to purify you. He'll stretch you to within an inch of your life, but He will never, ever leave you. He's running with you right now."

Many days when I thought I was trudging sluggishly, the fancy shmancy sport tool my staff gave me told me I

session, one more deacons' meeting, not one more Bible study in you, when you don't have one more tear, when you just know one more family leaving will break you...they that wait upon the Lord will renew their strength, they will mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not faint. The race is not given to the swift. Your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

He may not come when you want Him, but He's always on time. I'm a witness! I've got to testify! This is my story, this is my song, I'm praising my Savior all the day long. Can somebody help me praise Him? Can I get a witness? I said, can I get a witness? God is good! God is able!

Miracles ahead! Answered prayer. More souls. I believe I'm gonna run on...see what the end's gonna be.



World Scope

James G. Smith | Associate BBFI Mission Director



Open doors and adversaries

For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries. (1 Corinthians 16:9)

In the Scriptures, when God tells us about open doors, He quickly adds, “and there are many adversaries.” Paul was saying this when he was in Ephesus. Later he would ask them to pray for him, specifically for the boldness he needed to proclaim the good news.

The doors for effective church planting are open all across Latin America. There are approximately 600 million people in that region which extends from the northwest corner of Mexico to the southernmost point of Chile. The BBFI has from its inception had a presence in this region. And after much work, time, and resources invested, our churches in Latin America are doing well in evangelizing, baptizing, and making disciples. These churches are also reproducing themselves and sending out missionaries and pastors.

Most of my life has been spent in this area of the world. Having been born and reared in Mexico, then serving in Ecuador, my heart is stirred when I think of the BBFI work in Latin America. Currently, the BBFI has 228 adult career missionaries and four adult TEAM missionaries in the 21 countries of Central and South America. Working alongside these missionaries are hundreds of local pastors and Bible institute students, and thousands of believers.

However, Latin America still has an ever-expanding population which needs to hear of the love of God. For

example, Brazil’s population grew from 54 million in 1950 to 171 million in 2000. Mexico, the second largest country in the region, also more than tripled in the last half of the 20th century.

That’s an open door – but we should consider the adversaries that plague our missionaries: government restrictions, political turmoil, cultural unrest, government coalitions, and our common adversary, the devil.

From Bogotá, Colombia, Craig Lingo reports, “The central government has arbitrarily established limits of capacity in church buildings according to the various areas of the city. In April 2009, a picture of our church build-

concern all of the drug-related violence in several areas of Mexico.

The relationships between the governments of different countries can also have an adverse effect on the efforts to do ministry. There is some apprehension regarding the formation of ALBA, the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas. This group, whose purpose is to integrate nations in Latin America, at the moment, includes Cuba, Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Honduras, and Nicaragua.

One cannot talk about adversaries to international church planting without considering the strategy of the adversary that the Apostle Peter described as a roaring lion, seeking whom he would devour.

As we pray for the furtherance of the gospel in Latin America, let’s pray specifically that our missionaries would have patience, would be creative, and would be bold in the presentation of the good news. We need

to take advantage of the open doors, fully armed to fight the adversary and the adversaries.

I think Craig Lingo has the right attitude. He said, “The wonderful aspect of the church is that it is an organism. It is not a building. History has proven that it has an amazing capacity to adapt to whatever situation it is placed under. Therefore, the question is not whether the church will survive. Rather we must ask God to show us how to become more effective in an ever-changing world.”

BBFI Mission Director, Jon Konnerup, with Craig Lingo (L) overlooking Bogotá, Colombia.



ing appeared in the largest newspaper in the country. The gist of the article was that 90 percent of all non-Catholic churches in Bogotá were far from complying with the new regulations. Our church may have to relocate.”

One of our missionaries in Central America recently stated, “We are having difficulties with the government that unless the Lord intervenes will demand the closing of some churches.”

We have seen the recent political unrest in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. For some time now, we have witnessed with



NATIONAL CHURCH PLANTING OFFICE

WAYNE GUINN
NCPO DIRECTOR

Busy summer months for NCPO

Summer has brought a flurry of activity to the NCPO office. June turned out to be one of the most productive months in our history for church loans. We have been involved in projects in Michigan, Georgia, New York, North Carolina, Virginia, Florida, North Dakota, Indiana, Texas, and Massachusetts. God's blessings are evident in the building expansion of these churches.

Good reports are also being received from our new church plants in Arkansas, Kentucky, New York, South Carolina, North Carolina, Ohio, Michigan, Washington, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida, Georgia, Alabama, and Indiana. Pray for our church planters that God will continue to bless. Let me also encourage you, if you are not currently supporting a new church plant, to prayerfully consider beginning to financially support one of our new church plants.

Plans are falling into place for our Ignite Church Planting Conference at Baptist Bible College Springfield and Boston Baptist College. The dates for Springfield are October 26-27, 2009. The dates for Boston are November 16-17, 2009. Why not make

plans to attend one or both of these conferences and help us encourage the students about becoming future church planters! Look for a list of speakers and topics in next month's Tribune.

Fall Candidate School is set for October 12-16, 2009. It will be hosted by Sauk Trail Baptist

Temple in Richton Park, Illinois, and Pastor Bruce Humbert. Please contact our office at bbfncpo@aol.com for more information and a registration form. You may also call (417) 889-1017.

"Upward Conference" is planned for October and will be co-hosted by the NCPO, the Mission Office, and the Tribune. If your ministry has plateaued and you are looking for answers, this could be just what you need. This event is to encourage growth in the churches of the BBFI. A limited number of scholarships will be made available on a first-come basis. The cost of the conference will be \$99 and the dates are October 13-15. Speakers and topics will be in next month's Tribune.



Keynote presenter for BBC (Springfield) Ignite is Eric Geiger, co-author (with Thom Rainer) of *Simple Church*. Eric is Executive Pastor of Christ Fellowship in Miami, Florida. For more information about Eric, see his website, www.ericgeiger.com. Contact the NCPO office for more information about Ignite.

Bentonville, AR. - Philip, April, and their children are attending Mike Brinson's Lifepoint Baptist Church regularly, thanks to a divine appointment, a newspaper article,

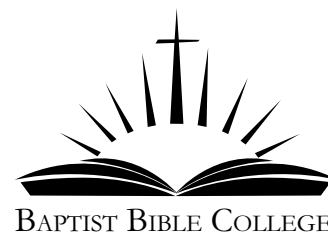


Pastor Mike Brinson (right) with the Jackson family from the new LifePoint church plant.

Google, and the *Baptist Bible Tribune*.

The story began when Mike emailed a newspaper columnist some questions about a planned highway bypass in Northwest Arkansas. Mike explained he was starting a new church, and the columnist published an account of their correspondence. April read the column mentioning Mike and the new church, searched for more information using Google, and that directed her to the Tribune website (www.tribune.org) where she found contact information for the Brinsons and Lifepoint.

Mike says, "Her husband Philip and family moved from Florida and have been searching for a church home for a few months. Since that Divine appointment, they have graced us with many visits and I have had the opportunity to visit with them in their home. They have made a commitment to join Lifepoint and help us reach Northwest Arkansas for Christ. God sees the big picture and is working in ways we could never imagine. We praise His name for calling us to start a new church."



Summer is training time for BBC student interns

Almost as soon as the final “Amen” was spoken at Baptist Bible College’s 2009 Fellowship Week events, the majority of the students headed for destinations all over the world! Yes, I said the world! It used to be a common thing for students to complete their spring semester at BBC and then go home to work for the summer. But now it is becoming increasingly common for students to accept challenges to experience ministry on a whole new hands-on level! We have students completing internships, short-term missionary experiences, and ministry training times around the globe this summer. These students are being exposed to ministry in a brand new 21st-century method that seems futuristic. Well, as we are quickly learning, the future is here!

First, I want to give an update regarding two of our students who were involved in a serious automobile accident on May 24 in Michigan. Many of you have been praying about this situation. Steven Crane and Cynthia Murray (the granddaughter of K.B. Murray) are both giving God the glory for their recovery from what could have been life-threatening injuries. Cynthia’s crushed voice box was especially critical. She recently reported to us (in a strong voice) that she was doing great and the doctors are expecting continuing recovery. She loves to sing praises to God and prays she will be able to resume all of her singing ministries. Steve’s fractured knee cap is improving and he plans to resume his work for BBC’s security staff when he returns. Steven and Cynthia are both quick to say their lives are testimonies of God’s grace. Both believe God must have something special planned for

them because He spared them through this accident. We believe that too! It is through ordeals like this that we realize what is really important—the students God will use in the future.

We have students who have completed missionary experiences in Costa Rica and Colombia this summer through BBC’s field-training courses. Students are serving on mission fields in the Philippines, Tanzania, Kenya, Southeast Asia, Europe, and other countries of South America. Most of these interns are working alongside veteran missionaries. Kristin Sorrell is in the Philippines working with the Greg Lyons family. She has reported that her experiences will forever shape her plans and preparations for her future ministry. That kind of testimony is repeated over and over by our students serving God on these mission fields.

I joke that many of these students training overseas have fallen so in love with their ministries that they don’t want to come back to America. In reality, most of these students are even more determined to complete their education and receive as much preparation in the classroom as possible. The past has taught us that they return more goal-oriented, focused, and committed to the process of their educational development. They know there is such a great need but they also recognize a huge need to be properly prepared to minister in this modern world!

We also have a large number of students working in camps and churches around the country. In fact, as I write this article, there is a group of high school campers on the campus of Baptist Bible College. This group of teens from New Mexico and West

Texas are having a great camp experience here at BBC. But alongside the campers are our own students who have returned this week because they are doing internships in these various churches. Will Hamlet is doing an internship in New Mexico leading up to his wedding later this month in Arkansas. Mike Petracca is interning at his home church in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Mike Ziegler is here this week while doing an internship in Des Moines, Iowa. Daniel Jarvis is back on campus while doing an apprenticeship in Lubbock, Texas.

Next week, Baptist Bible College will host a LIFT Camp on our campus. There will be approximately 200 campers here for that event. But along with those visitors there will be a host of BBC students returning as counselors and interns in the many churches represented. BBC’s own Rec Team will be serving with the camp. This further shows the number of students who are investing their summer in the service of our Lord. They are being stretched to do more than they thought they could do, yet, they are being blessed more than ever.

These are just a few examples of the many practical, hands-on, ministry experiences our students are having this summer. The sun does not set on the ministry of Baptist Bible College this summer because of the worldwide outreach of our own students. They are scattered everywhere having the learning experiences of a lifetime! I am eager to hear their testimonies when they return in August. Praise the Lord for the great things He is doing in and through the students of Baptist Bible College!



It's been a rainy summer...so everything's growing

Soggy. Wet. Puddles.

Probably the best way to describe this summer in New England. For those of you who have had triple-digit heat, you feel no sympathy for me — even if your heat is a dry heat. For us, this has been the summer of tall grass. It just stays wet, so we can hardly get the mowers out. I look out the window now and the front oval on campus is not neat and pretty. But the guy's lawn across the street is no better. Rain rules right now.

Tall grass can be a bit annoying. But it is a sign of health! I like to see things grow. As a pastor and college leader, growing is what I want. Not all growth is pretty, but it sure beats what happens in the other seasons.

Here in Boston I am privileged to be watching growth. All kinds of it.

More and more churches are joining the Boston team. I have been saying it over and over again; this effort that we share together — to build a great ministry college in the midst of New England — where the gospel is about as scarce as anywhere in the U.S., this is a great task. But it is also a great privilege. I am so thankful that more and more of you are responding. Our number of giving churches continues to climb steadily. Now, our bottom line is not exploding, because I've heard from a number of pastors who are being forced to trim missions giving (temporarily) due to these tough financial times. But, we are growing our team. In response to that, I have had several pastors call or email to say that they are giving us a "raise." That is so much appreciated

as well as needed. Obviously, it is not cheaper to do the business side of a college than it was a few years ago. So just like all of us individually, institutionally COLA (Cost Of Living Adjustment) is not just a soft drink. For those who can and are doing more...thanks so much! We're growing.

Our influence is growing. Just last

ordained in the summer of '09. You just met Jeff Francoeur. Like a lot of other Boston alums, he has joined the battle, winning people to Christ, helping to build churches. Making a difference. And I am meeting "Jeffs" all over the place — men and women who studied in Boston and who are now serving the Lord in a variety of places. If it takes a little rain to make things grow...I say, "Let it pour."

Even our student body is growing. I just finished a recruitment briefing...and we will be up again this fall. Our team is working hard all summer, just as they did all through the past year. And it is paying off. I look at a board on a wall and see names. I don't know those young people yet, but I see Jeff from Michigan, and Ryan from Massachusetts, and Grace from Texas, and Katie from Pennsylvania, and a whole bunch more. They are on their way to Boston! They will study with us, travel the world with us, serve with us, and they will grow! New students come to us with a desire to serve the Lord. When they leave four years later, we'll have them loaded with everything we can give them to do the job well. Four years of rain. A lifetime of service.

Well, now I am feeling better about the weather forecast. There are some clouds (some of them are dark) literally hovering over our campus. I would prefer to see the sun today, but I'm not in charge of the weather. I am ready for the guys to cut the front lawn and trim and edge and all that stuff. I like the neat, trim, tidy look. But the rain keeps coming and coming and coming.

But so does the growth.
Open the heavens. Bring it on.



week I got to see another of our graduates get ordained. How's this story? A young man in a New England town gets invited by a friend to church. He goes. He knows right off the bat that he's in a really different kind of church than the Catholic ones he had seen occasionally. He goes back again. He gets saved. His pastor, Dayton Burt, invests in him, grows him in faith, and then advises him to take some Bible courses at Boston Baptist College. The young man eventually dives in and surrenders to ministry and goes to college full time. He graduates; he serves as an assistant pastor at Temple Baptist in West Bridgewater, Massachusetts, finds a godly wife. He gets

BELIZE

Dan & Vicky Weaver



The other day, my wife received a call informing us that Jose had a heart attack and died. My heart was broken. Jose was my mechanic and also a close friend. I met him several years ago. I began bringing our vehicles to him for repairs and as time went on, our friendship grew. One day I stopped by the shop to have him look at my truck, but there was nobody there. I walked through the building to the back of the shop, and there, sitting in a chair all alone, was Jose. I sat down beside him and we began to talk. Within a few minutes, we began talking about heaven. I asked him if he was going to heaven. He said, "I sure hope so." I asked him if it would be okay if I showed him what God said in the Bible about how a man can be sure he is going heaven. I read

some Scriptures to him and then we talked some more. Finally he said, "Mr. Dan, in all my life no one has ever shown me those things. You asked me earlier if I was going to heaven, and now I can see that I am not." A few minutes later, there in the quiet of that back room, Jose knelt down beside his chair and trusted Christ. As he stood to his feet he gave me a big bear hug. "Thanks Mr. Dan, you're a good friend," he said. As I was leaving he called out to me, "Mr. Dan, you forgot your Bible." "Keep it Jose," I said. "There is a lot more good stuff in there you need to know."



Kevin & Kim Davis

WALES

A little more than two years ago, we led Delyth to the Lord. She has been very faithful and has a real heart for the Lord. She's been baptized, gone through our discipleship program, is involved in one of our weekly ladies' Bible studies, and also serves each Sunday doing our Welsh scripture reading. One of Delyth's constant prayer requests has been to see others in her family saved. On March 30, her prayers were answered — her daughter,

Lisa, asked Christ into her heart! Pray for Lisa as she begins her walk with the Lord. She has a rough past and years of bondage to drugs and alcohol that pull at her. Living in a small village where everyone knows you and the only thing you know is going to the pub is going to be a very difficult transition. Lisa has two children, Liam, 13, and Sasha, 11. We are committed to helping this family be restored and healed, and are hopeful that Lisa will allow God to be glorified in her life as she walks in obedience. What a testimony her life could be to our village!

GERMANY

Wilhelm & Sandra Falk



Renee has been coming to our services since 2004. Gordon Pulley led her to the Lord. Renee got married when she was young. She married a Muslim and had a daughter, Jasmine. When her daughter was two years old, her husband disappeared with their daughter. She did not know where they went. She began searching, but had no success. When she got saved, she began asking us if we would consider praying that the Lord would move her daughter's heart somehow to give a sign of life. So we began praying diligent-

ly. It has been four years now. But two months ago, Renee received a call from her daughter. Last time she saw her was 24 years ago. Jasmine is now married and has a little girl, Sarah, who is three years old. In June, Renee went to visit Jasmine, her husband, and granddaughter in Dubai. What a blessing! God is faithful, and he answers prayer.



Steve & Kelli Mowery

SPAIN

On a recent trip, we had an Arab bus driver named Yihya. We developed a special bond. One evening, Susie and I were able to sit down and witness to him for three hours. He was visibly moved by the gospel, knowing that none of his good works

could save him. The next day, he came up to me at lunch and told me, "I went to bed last night but woke up after a short time and spent most of the night meditating on what you told me." I am going to send Yihya an Arabic Bible this week. Pray for his salvation.



Allen & Aase Owens

MEXICO

Fabiola is a friendly talkative 16-year-old. Her mother and father are drug addicts and her mother offers services to men, as Fabiola put it. Fabiola has been using drugs since she was 12 and she left her home because her parents are abusive. Her sister tried to kill herself twice and Fabiola just didn't want to be around that stuff anymore. A half hour before the bus

pulled out, a friend called her and said, "Come to camp with me." So she came. Without me saying anything about God yet (other than praying in front of her before I ate at dinnertime), she said, "I am looking for God. I haven't used drugs in five days, and for me that is good, but I know I need help." Pray that Fabiola will find Christ and exchange her old life for a new life in Christ.

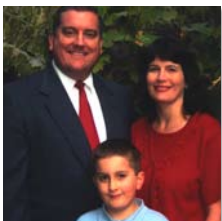
SCOTLAND

Rick & Cheri Moeller



Twenty years ago, I led Sibusiso and Phindi Makhanya to faith in Jesus Christ. Cheri and I discipled the couple, and then for 14 years, Sibusiso pastored the first church that he and I planted together in South Africa, the Osizweni Bible Baptist Church. Sibusiso is a high-character man with great leadership ability and talent. He has led many of his own people to faith in Christ. He truly loves his Lord. The Osizweny church never had the financial capability to support a pastor full time. So, Sibusiso was a teacher and "trainer" for the South African government and several international corporations. One corporation saw his potential almost a year ago and transferred him to the city of Durban to work with their agents. After much prayer, Sibusiso re-

signed the Osizweni church and turned it over to Sipho Inkosi, whom he had discipled (his brother-in-law). After Sibusiso sold his home and moved his family, the economy dropped drastically. His employers reneged on their promises and eliminated his position. So, in these rough economic times, he is without a job. But, as always, Sibusiso has been willing to be used by God. He volunteered to lead the Hammarsdale work when Cheri and I had to leave South Africa. The Lord is really blessing him there. In the last two months, 16 people have been saved and three baptized. Once again, Sibusiso's qualities are shining through.



Mark & Michele Hale

PORTUGAL

We don't know the lies that were whispered as he secured one end of the rope, nor the untruths that were communicated as he slipped his head through the noose. One thing is for certain, Darius was listening to the wrong ones as he made his plunge into eternity. Just 22 years old at the time of his

death, he was one of the orphans in Lithuania we had repeatedly tried to reach. But sadly, he rejected the gospel in favor of the temptations and deceptions of the world. Intellectually, we can say we tried, but spiritually and emotionally we grieve for yet another lost soul. I can still see his smile and hear his voice, but I can no longer help him.

AUSTRALIA

Tony & Julie Sullivan



Ron is in his early 70s and was recently saved. He continues to grow and makes conscious efforts to get into God's Word and learn all that he can. Ron told me, "If I am going to be a Christian, I need to know what the Bible says." He has now completed the Old Testament and is halfway through the New Testament. However, Ron and his wife are doing more than just reading. A couple of weeks ago, we arrived at our rented facility for services and the locks had been changed

without notice. I started calling people to let them know about our situation. When I phoned Ron, he immediately suggested we come to his place and meet on his back porch. So off we went. The Lord gave us a good time of Bible study, discussion, and fellowship, and He used a new believer to make it all happen.

Fundamental Baptist celebrates 75 years

Palmer, TX

Fundamental Baptist Church and Pastor Gary Miller celebrated the church's 75th anniversary with special services June 27. More than 330 attended the morning service that featured a sermon preached by former pastor S. G. Hancock, a historical review of the congregation, and a dinner.

Miller presented Hancock with a plaque honoring him for his 30 years of leadership in the Palmer church. Another former pastor, Keith Bassham, now editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, sent a video greeting in which he displayed his ordination certificate presented by Fundamental Baptist in 1976.

The church began in 1934 when Evangelist J. C. Johnson was passing through town to conduct a revival in a nearby community. Passing Palmer each day for two weeks, he decided to ask permission to hold a meeting. There was no electricity, and the people sat on split logs, but by the end of the two-week meeting, more than 30 people had been converted. The new church acquired the land they had been using for the impromptu revival and began work on a permanent structure which was completed in 1935 on the site of the present auditorium.

The first official service was held June 17, 1935 with about 50 members present. Another building was finished in 1944, and it became a Sunday school building when the current auditorium



Above: 333 people attended the 75th anniversary service of Fundamental Baptist Church.

was dedicated in 1975. Since then the church has added newer buildings and a family life center (2004).

Gary Miller, who had served as an assistant pastor to Hancock, was called to be senior pastor upon Hancock's retirement in 2007. Fundamental is the sending church for BBFI missionaries Bill and Quessie Harvey, and currently supports 103 missionaries and mission projects. They completed their 38th faith promise mission conference this year.



Pastor Gary R. Miller presents a plaque to former pastor S. G. Hancock.

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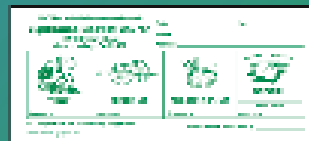
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Winter Haven teens minister in Nicaragua

Springfield, MO

Recently, Overflow Student Ministry, the high school ministry of Winter Haven Baptist Church in Winter Haven, Florida, pastored by Mark Hodges, took a week and a half mission trip to minister with Missionaries Jason and Nadia Kratochvil in Managua, Nicaragua. Youth Pastor Nathan Braymer says the group experienced firsthand the hard work that goes into a new church plant in a foreign country.

While in Nicaragua, the Winter Haven group spent two days painting murals in classrooms of the newly-renovated Iglesia Bautista Esperanza in Managua, participating in visitation



with the church members to promote the children's festival, and had hands-on ministry experience at the festival. The children's festival had over 100 children in attendance, and the Winter Haven group participated in face painting, performing as clowns, a karate demonstration, crafts, making balloon

animals and caricatures, and Bible lessons. "Working side by side with the people of Nicaragua to achieve the same goal of reaching kids was a great experience," says Braymer.

The group also took part in a youth event at a local sports camp where Braymer spoke to about 40 teens. Of the Kratochvils, Braymer states, "Jason and Nadia have done an excellent job in their first term as missionaries. They have established a church that is reaching their community for Christ, are working now to develop the man that will be taking over that ministry, and working with another national to take with them as they start their next church."



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Lighthouse Baptist and Bevan mark 5th year

Chillicothe, OH

On May 17, Lighthouse Baptist Church and Pastor Ryan Bevan celebrated their fifth anniversary. They had a record attendance of 1,018, 210 being first-time visitors. For the occasion, the church rented the Ohio University, Chillicothe branch, Shoemaker Center. The day consisted of a concert with the Mike LeFevre Quartet, a steak and baked potato dinner, inflatable games for the kids, and services praising God for His work. Twenty-four accepted Christ as Savior that day with more after follow-up visits were made.

Bevan, his wife, Sarah, and their children arrived in Chillicothe to plant a new work in August of 2003. They were sent by Bible Baptist Church of Wilmington, Ohio, and Pastor Kelly McInerney.

Lighthouse was a church plant project of the Ohio Baptist Bible Fellowship. The mission began with 8 people meeting in a hotel conference center. The church was established in January 2004 with 45 charter members. Since their inception, they met in three other buildings before purchasing the present church facilities with over 21,000 square feet and 15.5 acres.

"What has the LORD done in the last 5 years? Average attendance from 8 people to 425, over 2,000 saved, more than 5,000 visitors, over 500 baptisms, offerings that have grown



from \$700 to over \$10,000 a week, 21 monthly mission projects, lives changed, families restored, marriages saved all to the glory of God," says Bevan. "The Lord has made this possible through the prayers and support of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the sending and supporting churches within the Fellowship. Praise the Lord that He is still building churches today!"

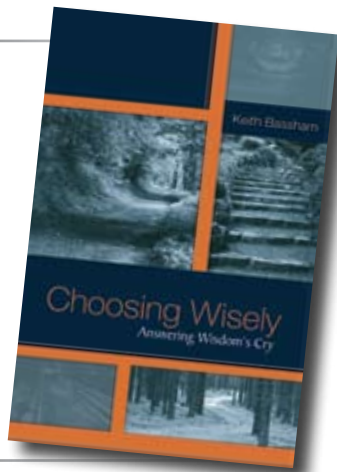
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Seminole Baptist sends team to Ecuador

Springfield, MO

Twenty-six adults and student from Seminole Baptist Temple, pastored by Don Baier, went to Santo Domingo, Ecuador, June 7-14 to help BBFI missionaries Joe and Sylvia Wells. The group consisted of two teams: a construction team which laid tile for a local church, and a drama team which presented a wordless drama to over 3,500 people. Chris Highfill, Seminole's youth pastor, said, "God went way beyond our expectations as to how He would move in Ecuador, and He blessed us with being able to see over 800 people ac-

cept Jesus Christ as their Savior." As a result of the trip, two students surrendered to full-time mission work. "After every activity I hold, I wonder if it made an impact for the cause of Christ," says Highfill. "I have returned with a new perspective. I truly believe that nothing can change the culture of your student ministry like a mission trip."

A wordless drama was used in schools, churches, and public squares.



Murray retires after 42 years at Millington Street

Winfield, KS

Friends, family, and church members gathered on May 31 to honor K. B. Murray with a retirement celebration. The City of Winfield proclaimed the day "K. B. Murray Day." At the celebration, several people whose lives had been influenced by the couple gave testimony. Murray was given a notebook of letters, cards, and notes of appreciation from around the world and the church gave him a number of gifts. The service was concluded with honoring Murray with

the title of pastor emeritus. Dan Inman of Lincoln, Nebraska, was the guest speaker and special music was provided by the Murray family. Jeff McCaskill, formerly an assistant to Murray, became pastor of the church.

The week before his retirement the *Winfield Courier*, a local newspaper, published a story about Murray and the church. Murray told the interviewer, "It has been my privilege to pastor some of the most wonderful people to ever walk this earth. All I've tried to do is the right

thing and get the Word of God out. I'm just a vessel used to a small extent to bring about all the glory that belongs to God. God never promised the journey of serving him would be easy, He just promised it would be worth it."

K. B. Murray graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, in 1961. His first pastorate was at Bible Baptist Church in Stillwater, Oklahoma. He also was the pastor of Bible Baptist Church of Neodesha, Kansas, before accepting the pastorate of Millington Street Baptist Church in Winfield on September 20, 1967. Over the past 42 years, Murray has been a faithful preacher, servant, and friend. He has led the church to strongly support worldwide missions and Baptist Bible College. In 1988, he became the National Secretary for the Baptist Bible Fellowship and served in that position for the next 14 years. In 2000, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Baptist Bible College and Louisiana Baptist University for his lifetime of ministry.



K.B. Murray (center right) with family and friends at his retirement.

Mick celebrates 25 years at Bangor Baptist

Bangor, ME

Bangor Baptist Church celebrated Pastor Jerry Mick's 25th anniversary in the ministry on April 4. To celebrate, the church held an open reception for members and friend. They also gave Mick and his wife, Jane, a trip to Hawaii as a gift of appreciation.

Mick began as a teacher at Bangor Christian Schools in 1984, after graduating from Baptist Bible College in 1982. He served in numerous capacities until August 1997 when he became the senior pastor (see Tribune article "Bangor Baptist back in the black," January 15, 2001). Under Mick's leadership, the church has grown from approximately 375 in attendance



Jerry and Jane Mick

to its current weekly attendance of 900 — becoming one of the largest Baptist fellowships in Maine and the New England area. The church also operates Bangor Christian Schools serving approximately 300 students (accredited by the NEACS), two Christian radio stations (WHMX 50,000 watts and WHCF 100,000 watts) reaching a large part of Maine and the Canadian Maritimes, and a Godparent home for unwed pregnant teens. The ministry is debt free and has buildings and properties valued at \$9 million. Bangor Baptist Ministries has an annual budget exceeding \$3 million and employs approximately 60 people. The Sunday services are heard weekly over WHCF radio.

BBC Class of 1959 holds 50th reunion

Springfield, MO



On May 13, the Class of 1959 of Baptist Bible College held their 50th class reunion at Baptist Temple in Springfield, Missouri.

Photo by Tom Dye.

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Bible Baptist's 14th anniversary, mortgage paid

Wilmington, OH

Bible Baptist Church of Wilmington and Pastor Kelly McInerney celebrated their 14th anniversary on May 17 with the burning of the church's mortgage. Nearly 1,700 people attended the morning worship service held at the Clinton County Fairgrounds with musical guests Gold City.

Bible Baptist paid off a 20-year mortgage of \$2 million 15 and a half years early, saving the congregation over \$1.1 million in interest. The church is now debt free, with 32 acres and buildings valued at more than \$4 million. While the church is preparing for another building phase, leaders decided to focus on becoming debt free in this current economy. In May 2008, DHL announced the closing of their hub in Wilmington, laying off nearly 8,000 people in a town of

12,000. Though the church has lost some people to job relocation and transition, McInerney reports that the church is still averaging 950 on Sunday mornings, and last year gave a record \$270,000 to missions.

Bible Baptist Church of Wilmington began in 1995 as a mission of the Ohio Baptist Bible Fellowship and has planted churches in Springfield, Chillicothe, and Marysville, Ohio, within the last eight years. A fourth church plant is planned for early 2010.



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Dorothy (Mrs. Curtis) Thorpe

Odessa, TX

Dorothy (Mrs. Curtis) Thorpe rejoined her husband in heaven June 30, 2009. Mrs. Thorpe was born August 14, 1917, in Lima, Ohio. Because of her mother's health the family moved to West Texas. She met Curtis Thorpe in 1935, and after a three months courtship they were married in Carlsbad, New Mexico, on August 31, 1935.



They both became Christians about that time. After graduating from Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth, Thorpe pastored in Fredonia, Kansas, for five years and then moved to Odessa to pastor Temple Baptist Church. (now Crossroads Fellowship) in 1947. They served there 52 years until Mr. Thorpe's death in 1999.

The couple had two sons, Jerry and Paul. Jerry succeeded his father as pastor of the church upon his retirement. Eight years ago, two years following her husband's death, she moved to Granbury. The Thorpes also have six grandchildren and ten great-grandchildren.

Mrs. Thorpe was a lady who served Jesus Christ and His church faithfully for over 70 years. Memorial services were held, July 3, 2009, at Crossroads Fellowship with Frank Johnson, Terry Chapman, Griffin Jones, and Rick Blue officiating.

Carl Hatch

Flower Mound, TX

Carl Hatch, noted evangelist, passed into glory June 14. Hatch was born February 15, 1929, in Kennette, Missouri, to Luther and Viola Hatch. He was the youngest of seven children.



Hatch served in the U.S. Army during the Korean War era. While working for General Motors in Flint, Michigan, he was saved June 8, 1955. He immediately began working for the Lord while attending Midwestern Baptist College in Pontiac, Michigan.

Ordained into the gospel ministry September 7, 1957, he worked on the staff of Flint Baptist Temple in Flint, Michigan. In the 52 years of ministry following, he was the pastor of churches in Fresno, California, and Hialeah, Florida, founded Andrew Evangelistic Association, and had a ministry of 38 years of full-time evangelism, preaching in countless churches all over North America.

He is survived by his wife of 57 years, Ruby, his children, nine grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held June 19, 2009, at Temple Baptist Church, Flower Mound, Texas.

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Richard M. Schott

Anthony, KS

Richard M. Schott, veteran BBFI missionary, passed from this life May 22. Schott was born in Anthony, Kansas, to August A. (Gus) and Ada M. (Krus) Schott on December 29, 1927.



He grew up on the family farm in rural Manchester, Oklahoma, and graduated from Wakita (Oklahoma) High School. He joined the U.S. Army and was awarded for his sharp-shooting skills. It was during a military tour of duty that he first went to the Philippines.

On May 29, 1949, Richard and Mary Slaughter were married in Central Baptist Church, Anthony, Kansas.

Saved in 1948, and surrendering to the ministry in 1950, he graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, in 1953 and served as pastor of several churches in the States before surrendering to the mission field in 1955.

In 1956, Richard and Mary went to the Philippines where they served for over 50 years. Richard also established a 4-year Bible institute to train full-time preachers and workers to start and grow churches, resulting in many strong Bible Baptist churches that are still multiplying today throughout the Southern Philippines.

In 2006, due to declining health, Richard and Mary left the Philippines and moved back to Anthony. For the last seven months, their home has been the Anthony Community Care Center.

Richard is survived by his wife, Mary Ellen, four children, eight grandchildren, and two brothers.

Memorial services were held May 26, 2009, at Central Baptist Church, Anthony, with Anselmo Ingay officiating.

James R. "J.R." Faulkner

Chattanooga, TN

James R. Faulkner finished his earthly ministry June 10, 2009. Born June 8, 1914, in Charlotte, North Carolina, he lived to celebrate his 95th birthday.



In Charlotte in the 1920s and 30s, he was a dance instructor and performer, entertaining audiences in variety shows throughout the region. He was employed in advertising sales for Warner Brothers and United Artists. He came to faith in Jesus Christ in 1937.

Faulkner spent two years at Charlotte Bible Institute, and then enrolled in Bob Jones College, then in Cleveland, Tennessee, where he met Magdalene, his wife of 65 years.

After pastoring and serving with other Christian organizations and revivals, he joined the faculty of Tennes-

see Temple College at the invitation of Lee Roberson in 1946. In 1949, he became associate pastor to Roberson, and in 1952 he was named vice president of Tennessee Temple, holding that post until retirement in 1985.

His demeanor and skill defined "the second man," and his life provided an example to thousands in the ministry. He also had a large part in the growth of Tennessee Temple as it grew from a college to a university, and served as a founding board member of both Baptist International Missions and the Southwide Baptist Fellowship.

He is survived by five sons and their wives, 17 grandchildren, 19 great-grandchildren, two half-brothers, and many nieces and nephews.

A memorial service was held at Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, on June 15, with David Boulter and Randall Faulkner officiating.

Joseph M. Boyd

Schererville, WV

Joseph M. Boyd, age 92, went home to be with his Lord on Monday, June 1, 2009. He was born in Jacksonville, Texas, on May 5, 1917. He earned his Bachelor's degree from Texas A&M University. He earned many awards in football and was inducted into the Texas A&M Hall of Fame. He was twice an All-Southwest Conference tackle and an All-American his senior year. Boyd starred on A&M's 1939 national title team, and excelled in both boxing and wrestling.



In 1943, he felt a higher calling on his life and surrendered to the gospel ministry. He attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary and

earned a Masters in Theology. Joe Boyd started and pastored three different churches in Texas.

In 1975, he founded the Mt. Salem Revival Campgrounds in West Union, Virginia. Boyd taught Greek and evangelism at Hyles-Anderson College in Hammond, Indiana, where he had received an honorary doctorate in 1976. For 62 years, Boyd preached all across America and in many parts of the world.

His wife of 62 years, Edith Alice Cocke Boyd, has already passed. He is survived by two children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren.

Services were held June 12, 2009, at First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana, with Jack Schaap and Johnny Colsten officiating.

Stories and testimonies from the life of Dr. John W. Rawlings are being compiled as part of his biography.

Dr. John is 95 years old and still going strong. If you have a personal testimony and/or interesting story concerning Dr. John, please contact the Rawlings family by emailing leapofaith@fuse.net or mailing to: 3350 Easton Lane, Burlington, KY 41005.

Thank you,
Kaitlyn Rawlings

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Rare Baptist-related documents now online

NEW ORLEANS (BP)--The Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary has launched a new exhibit with downloadable digital copies of a series of rare theology documents.

The collection of 16th- and 17th-century documents, available at baptistcenter.com, includes articles written by Baptists and their critics.

"We want to make these rare original documents accessible to scholars of Baptist history and theology, wherever they are," said Steve Lemke, the seminary's provost who also directs the center. "In addition to the 20 manuscripts we currently have posted, we will be adding more documents in the next few months."

Some of the earliest pamphlets available online include a critique of Anabaptists written by Philipp Melancthon dated 1528 and a

sermon by Martin Luther from 1532. Also offered are negative critiques of Baptists by Eberhardus of Cologne in 1536, Robert Some in 1589 and Lucas Osiander the Younger in 1607.

Most of the pamphlets for and against Baptists in the collection were written in the 1640s by authors including John Tombes, Andrew Ritor, John Etherington, Richard Barnard (Dwelphintramis), Daniel Featley, Robert Fage, William Hussey, Jasper Mayne, Friedrich Spanheim, Stephen Marshall, Thomas Bakewell and Thomas Blake.

Lloyd Harsch, associate professor of church history at NOBTS, specializes in Baptist heritage and has been digitizing the rarest and most important pamphlets from a collection recently rediscovered in the seminary's archives.

"John T. Christian, a church historian and the original librarian at the NOBTS, gathered these pamphlets during his travels, collecting documents relating to Baptist beliefs and origins," Harsch said.

Christian assembled hundreds of rare publications from Europe and North America. The works document the theological and ecclesiastical battles that waged

during the era, including pamphlets that are for and against the Baptist position.

Although the documents were displayed in the library at one point, they were packed away and forgotten in some long-overlooked boxes. But an NOBTS library staff member rediscovered the rare works while cleaning a storage area a few years ago.

Wanting to preserve the rare pamphlets, Harsch applied digitization technology to the materials. The research and technology for the digitization effort and for a subsequent project related to Baptist confessions of faith were funded by three scholarly grants.

In 2003-04, Harsch and Stan Norman received a research expense grant from the Lilly Theological Research Program of the Association of Theological Schools titled "New Perspectives on Ancient Ideas: A Critical Analysis of Rare Theological Writings on Baptist Life and Thought."

The funding for the digitization came through the 2006-07 theological scholars grant from the Lilly Theological Research Program titled "Out of Many Fellowships, One Family of Faith: The Collection and Digitization of Baptist Confessions of

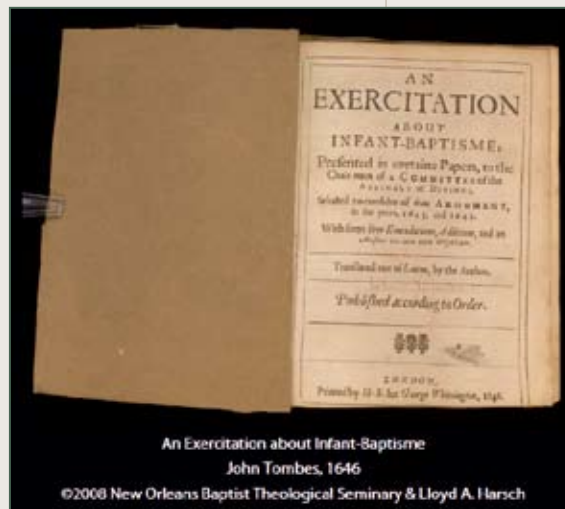
Faith," and from an Ola Farmer Lenaz grant in 2007-08 (an in-house faculty research grant) titled "Digitizing Rare Baptist Historical Documents."

Although delayed by Hurricane Katrina, Harsch spent more than a year studying digitization techniques and methods at the University of North Texas in order to produce the best electronic versions of the rare pieces.

"The digitization process will preserve these rare pamphlets in a stable format and make them widely available via the Internet," Harsch said. "Some of these may be the only copies extant today, or one of only a few hard-to-find copies. Once the pamphlets are online, people will have access to digital copies of the actual original work."

In addition to adding more old pamphlets relating to Baptists and Anabaptists, the center also intends to display digitized copies of key Baptist confessions of faith, another aspect of Harsch's research.

"Our goal is to make these hard-to-find original documents accessible to scholars all over the world in order to promote the study and appreciation of our Baptist heritage," Lemke said.



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