

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

JUNE 2011 | VOL. 61 NO. 10 | \$1.95

A GOOD KIND OF MOMENTUM

BBC GRADUATION & FELLOWSHIP WEEK

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ON THE TABLE Momentum

by Keith Bassham | Editor

Two features dominate the *Tribune* this month. First is the report on the May Graduation Fellowship Week. We report not only what happened but also some impressions from several who attended. The crowds and the schedule have slimmed somewhat from a couple of decades ago, but the quality of the presentations and the general enthusiasm created a great atmosphere for fellowship. We approved a good group of missionaries, and noted a larger-than-normal ratio of younger attendees. In the words of one observer, it was a good kind of momentum.

The second feature is an analysis of a book and an idea that created some controversy in the evangelical world this spring. The book is *Love Wins*, and the idea is no wrath of God toward sinners. The notion of a hell-free gospel comes up every few years or so, and even though the traditional views are well founded and well defended, we must be teaching sound doctrine continually. Greg Christopher of Baptist Bible College has provided his analysis of the new book and a defense of the traditional view of hell.

I don't know that I'll ever get used to the idea that the end of the year for the *Tribune* falls about now. Our fiscal year, the calendar we use for business purposes, runs from July to June. Our publishing year, the one we use to record volume and issue numbers, ends in August. My annual meeting with the Board of Directors takes place during Fellowship Week. And I just set up the time for our audit to take place a couple of months from now. So for us, it's the end of the year.

I suppose it all makes sense when you remember the official birthday for the *Tribune* is June 23, 1950 (on a whim, I showed that date when I set up our Facebook page — by the way, you could join the *Tribune's* more than 1,500 Facebook friends if you want).

This end of the year thing also explains our publishing schedule this time of year. We do not publish in May until after the Fellowship Meeting, and then we do not publish again until July with a combined July-August issue.

We had a good year financially. We spent less than we took in. Some of our planned cost rises did not occur, and even though our annual offering is down some from previous years, most of our friends came through for us, and we uncovered some new ones along the way.

We learned more about publishing in the digital age. We expanded a few digital offerings from the *Tribune* (I mentioned the Facebook thing above) so a complete copy of the magazine is available alongside the abridged edition we publish on the *Tribune* website. We will look for more ways to improve in the future.

I am profoundly grateful for the opportunity to serve our Fellowship this past year, and I appreciate the continued vote of confidence in the work of the *Tribune*.

Keith Bassham

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

Let's go fishing!



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

It is amazing to me that the first words Jesus ever said to those who would become His followers were, "Follow me" (Matthew 4). When He said those words, He was talking to nearly strangers. He gave them no formal introduction. He just simply said, "Follow me." But even more amazing is why Jesus asked these men to follow Him. He didn't say, "Follow me, and I will make you prosperous," or "Follow me, and I will make you popular," or even "Follow me, and I will make you powerful." What He did say to them was surprising, intimidating, and frightening. He said, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

You could understand if they had looked at Him and said, "Thanks, but no thanks."

Look at their response. "And they straightway left their nets and followed him" (Matthew 4:20). Immediately they left home, business, friends, and family and began to follow Jesus. Jesus kept His word to these men, because by the end of the New Testament these fishermen became fishers of men. Jesus spent all three years of His ministry doing two things — turning people into followers and turning followers into fishers of men.

Listen to the words one more time. "Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men." Isn't it interesting that the first people Jesus called to follow Him were fishermen? The first title He gave to them was "fishers of men." What He basically said to them was this, "What you are now doing for a living, I want you to do with your life."

When Jesus said, "I will make you fishers of men," He was saying I will take you with your personality, your background, your testimony, your influence, and I will use you to catch men and women and boys and girls and bring them into My family.

We are all grateful for modern technology. Our buildings are loaded with bells and whistles and gadgets that are absolutely incredible, but I want to state what I hope is obvious. Buildings don't reach people. Technology doesn't reach people. Bells and whistles and gadgets don't reach people. Only people reach people. Boats don't catch fish. Rods and reels and hooks and lines and sinkers by themselves don't catch fish — only people catch fish, and that is why the fishing business should be our business.

The BBFI has always been a great evangelistic movement. Let's be reminded again to be "fishers of men." Let's preach for souls, persuade souls, and win souls! Let's encourage each other to be soul-winners. Let's teach our church members to be personal soul-winners. I would like to challenge every state fellowship meeting to have at least one sermon promoting personal evangelism every time they meet. Our primary business is the fishing business, and no matter what else we do or how well we do it, if we ever get out of the fishing business we are out of business.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

Step back and assess



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

Our missionaries are dealing with conditions on the field that could hinder their ability to stay and minister. Also, our churches at home are dealing with the economy and paradigm shifts that could hinder keeping our missionaries on the field. In times like these, we must step back and consider our commitment to the Great Commission — the heart of God. Do our hearts line up with His?

Reaching our world has never been easy. However, today we are experiencing various uncertain circumstances across the globe all at the same time. Consider the following:

- Political unrest – anti-Americanism, coup attempts, civil wars
- Natural disasters such as earthquakes in Haiti, Chile, New Zealand, and Japan
- Major crime areas and threats to safety as seen in Mexico
- Foreign governmental roadblocks – red tape, visa denials, BBFI registration, taxes
- Increased cost of living in most countries – in parts of Europe gas prices are over \$9 a gallon
- Religious antagonism in the Middle East and parts of Asia
- Economic situation in the States – loss of jobs, income, and support (giving through the Mission Office has decreased by more than \$1 million compared to last year's giving)

Our missionaries are on the front lines in dangerous areas faithfully serving the Lord and laboring on behalf of our churches back home. They rely on our prayers! These prayers keep God's power active, His protection sure, and His provisions certain.

Are these worldwide circumstances causing our efforts to wane? Has the lifeline gone flat? Well, not quite, but the devil is trying to pull the plug. He would like to cancel the covenant of God to bless the nations and evangelize and make disciples of all peoples. God's mandate to our churches is still the same and still alive because He has not yet returned. So we must engage in fervent, intense, persistent prayer for our missionaries and their needs — "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." (James 5:16)

We may not all be called to go to the ends of the earth and preach, but every one of us has been called to pray. Prayer is not optional, it is operational. It makes things happen.

We must also lift up our churches and their leaders before God that He would give them wisdom to meet the multiple challenges that are facing them in their ministries at this time in history.

God gave us prayer because Jesus gave us a mission. To accept Christ is to enlist under a missionary banner. So it would seem impossible to be "in Christ" and not participate in Christ's mission in the world. As in everything God requires, prayer must be done with all our heart, all our soul, and with all our strength. Could this really be said of each one of us? Perhaps it's time to step back and assess.

NCPO helps churches regardless of age



by Wayne Guinn | Director | NCPO

The ministry of the NCPO is not limited to working with new church plants and church planters. As the following testimony shows, we also offer consulting services to all churches, whatever their situation may be.

"Almost exactly one year ago, the building program our church started in the mid-2000s was in jeopardy. Through the usual things that tend to derail building projects and the worst recession in memory, our church was in a situation where we were only holding our heads above water because of God's miraculous grace.

Our situation involved complications that went beyond lack of capital to intricacies of loan arrangements and concerns of foreclosure. Among all the very bright people in our church, we were at a loss of how best to address the situation, not just in the short term but also to bring the project to completion. That's when I openly asked fellow BBF pastors if they knew of anyone who might be available to consult with us on the issue. Jason Todd directed me to Wayne Guinn and the National Church Planting Office.

My impression had been that the NCPO was strictly for new church plants. Nothing could be further from the truth. The resources of the NCPO are available to any church, no matter the size or age. I contacted Wayne Guinn, and that began a process which has brought our church back to a position where we are again nearly ready to build.

Wayne graciously consulted with me and then with our building committee by phone. We set a time for him to come to Bozeman for further discussion and meetings with our note-holder. Wayne introduced us to potential solutions we had never considered. His vast experience with building programs was a great comfort and a source of wisdom that helped us see the possibilities for our stalled program.

Wayne next met with the note-holder on our new land. Wayne was able to speak with him as one with considerable knowledge, and Wayne introduced him to the solution that enabled us to jumpstart our program, going so far as to talk specifics about debt and payments.

In all ways, Wayne Guinn and the NCPO were not only a comfort to me, but also a source of valuable counsel to our church as we searched for solutions. Going beyond comfort and counsel, Wayne also acted as advocate for us, articulating ideas with expertise and simplicity that people in our church could understand and the people intertwined in our project outside the church could trust.

Churches aren't about buildings, but when churches set out to construct facilities, the NCPO can be a source of wisdom, understanding, and ability to help them see the project to completion."

From Steve Van Winkle,
Pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church, Bozeman, MT



BBFI NATIONAL FELLOWSHIP MEETING
SEPTEMBER
26-28, 2011
BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE



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

—Laurence Sterne

Churches provide dollar value to community, researcher says

As cities and counties continue to eye possible taxes and fees for churches and religious organizations, interesting new research from The University of Pennsylvania's Ram Cnaan examines the economic value of a congregation to its surrounding community.

Using information from congregations in Philadelphia, Cnaan says churches, on average, provided \$476,663.24 of services in 2009 to their surrounding communities.

He's now about to release information from a pilot study of 12 historic churches in Philadelphia, with one estimated to provide \$6.1 million of services to the community (nearly 10 times its annual budget). Cnaan describes himself as "nonreligious," according to *Christianity Today*.

Source: <http://blog.yourchurch.net>

Persecution mounts against China's Shouwang church

Members of the Shouwang congregation in China were arrested in May as they gathered to pray in the commercial area of Zhongguancun in Beijing. Leaders of Shouwang Church, the largest unregistered church in Beijing, have been in an ongoing battle with authorities since being forced out of their worship space and prevented from renting or buying a new building.

Sunday wasn't the first time church members had been taken into custody by authorities. On April 10, police detained 169 members attempting to hold services in a public park. Then on Easter Sunday, police detained about 34 church members.

Despite the mounting persecution, house church leaders are taking a stand for the Shouwang congregation. Nineteen house church leaders are petitioning China's legislature to resolve the ongoing tensions and to guarantee religious freedom in their country.

Source: www.cbn.com

Christian apologist embarrassed at lack of training among students

In a recent article, Mike Licona of the SBC North American Mission Board has admitted, both to his embarrassment and astonishment, that his children did not learn apologetics at home or at church. The reason for his embarrassment is that he is himself an apologetics teacher.

In the article, he says our Christian students find themselves in a hostile environment at secular colleges and universities. "A 2007 report by two Jewish researchers found a strong bias against evangelical students at secular universities. More than 1,200 faculty members from 712 colleges and universities were interviewed pertaining to their feelings toward various religious followers. The results were alarming. Three

percent of American faculty members admitted having negative or unfavorable feelings toward Jews while 33 percent admitted having them toward Muslims. But 53 percent admitted having negative or unfavorable feelings toward evangelical Christians. The researchers concluded, 'Conservative Christians have for some time been concerned about their children's campus environment. These data certainly legitimize their concerns.'

Licona notes that no such hostility is apparent where Judaism and Islam are concerned, even when orthodox Jews and Muslims hold to pro-life and anti-homosexuality views. According to Licona, "It goes beyond secularism and the religious. On many of our college campuses, it is a war against evangelical Christianity."

Source: The North American Mission Board provides apologetic resources for students at www.4truth.net.

Atheists seek chaplaincy

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — As contradictory as it sounds, a lack-of-faith group is seeking to be acknowledged as a faith group within the United States military. Atheists are pushing for status as chaplains.

The New York Times reported in April that joining the chaplain corps is part of a broader campaign by atheists to win official acceptance in the military, which would help ensure that their literature would be distributed, their events would be advertised and they would have clout with commanders.

"Humanism fills the same role for atheists that Christianity does for Christians and Judaism does for Jews," Jason Torpy,

president of the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, told *The Times*. "It answers questions of ultimate concern; it directs our values."

Atheists groups are emerging at military posts, including one called Military Atheists and Secular Humanists at Fort Bragg in North Carolina and a new chapter at Fort Campbell in Kentucky.

"Defense Department statistics show that about 9,400 of the nation's 1.4 million active-duty military personnel identify themselves as atheists or agnostics, making them a larger subpopulation than Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists in the military," *The Times* said.

Source: Erin Roach at bpnews.net Copyright 2011 Baptist Press

In the NEWS of the WEEK

BY R. O. WOODWORTH

The ministry of **Stanford Kruse**, Wichita Falls, Texas, is being signalized by the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in an unusual way. For the last three weeks a total of 32 have united with the church. May 6 seven gave testimony to the joy of a newly-found Saviour and publicly expressed a desire to unite with the church, making a total of 11 additions for the day. Increasing numbers are attending the Sunday School. The average now is over 200. The offering Sunday was \$337.38. A young Army officer has made full surrender to Christ. He plans to enter the Baptist Bible College at the earliest possible date.

On May 6 the Calvary Baptist church, Chickasha, Okla., called **Curtis Goldman** as pastor. Bro. Goldman tendered his resignation to the Central Baptist church, Center, Texas, of which he became pastor last May. Under his leadership, the church enjoyed a marked increase in growth numerically and spiritually and a new building was begun and completed. He will assume his new responsibility June 3.

Paul Morgan, founder and pastor of the Calvary church will remain on the field until Bro. Goldman arrives and will preach his farewell sermon May 27. He has already begun preparation to move to San Antonio, Texas, his new field, on which he recently established the Berean Baptist church. Handicapped because the pastor was compelled to divide his time between it and the church in Oklahoma, it has nevertheless made today gains.

"The Bright and Morning Star" published by **R. L. Freeman**, pastor of the First Baptist Church, Trenton, Michigan, gives us a bit of interesting information about the Bible. "The Bible contains 3,568, 480 letters, 773,692 words, 31,173 verses, 1,189 chapters, and 66 books. The conjunction "and" appears 46,277 times proving that the Bible is a complete unit from Gen. 1:1 to Rev. 22:21. The word "Lord" occurs 1,855 times, the word "reverend" once (in Ps. 111:9). Ezra 7:21 contains all the letters of the alphabet except "j". The longest verse is found in Esther 8:9. The shortest, John 11:35. The middle verse is Ps. 118:8.

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man."

"If you read 23 chapters a week, at the end of a year, you will have read the Bible through."

The missionary services held in the Grace Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla., through April 29, met with good success. The pastor, **J. C. Brown** advises that the services were deeply spiritual and evangelistic. **Miss Bessie Lee Mullican**, missionary to Old Mexico directed the services and also interpreted for her Mexican pastor, **Rev. Octanio Jaramillo**, who brought the evening message in his native tongue. An offering of \$114.33 was given to Miss Mullican for her work. Four united with the church the following Sunday.

Three weeks will be spent by **Dr. Fred S. Donnelson** in the state of Mississippi, where he will preach in 10 churches. Accom-

panied by Mrs. Donnelson, he left Springfield by car May 11 for Jackson.

Dr. Victor E. Sears reports from South Bend, Ind., that his church, The Twin Cities Baptist Tabernacle, will soon be the largest in that area judging by its present rate of growth. The altar has been filled Sunday after Sunday with those who want to follow the Lord and the Sunday school attendance has been exceeding the 500 mark. Including 22 who united with the church May 13, 76 have been added to the membership in the last four Sundays. April 22, twenty-two expressed their desire to join the church by publicly receiving Christ as their Saviour; April 29, 15 came for the same purpose. Seventeen came the following Sunday; and May 13, 22 more joined. The foundation of their new 160x100 feet church plant has been laid. Dr. Sears' ministry commands the respect and confidence of all the city fathers and officials.

James Combs, who is studying for his B. A. degree in Kansas City, Kas., has accepted a call from the Tabernacle Baptist Church, Joplin, Missouri. For the past weeks he has been commuting between the two cities weekends. May 6 Bro. Combs with two fellow students, **James Nelson** and **Estil Phelps**, visited the Baptist Bible College, Springfield. In the services at Joplin both boys rendered special music.

On May 6 the services of the Kansas City Baptist Temple, Kansas City, Mo., which attracted capacity crowds, were climaxed with the dedication of a new Plymouth Suburban purchased for the missionaries in Old Mexico. Present at the ceremony was **Dr. Rodriguez**, Mexican missionary, supported by the Kansas City Baptist Temple and the First Baptist Church, Wichita, Kansas. **Wendell Zimmerman**, pastor of the Kansas City Baptist Temple left with the missionary for Mexico to review the field, returning for all Mother's day services.

Fresno, Cal.—(RNS)—Opposition to a bill pending in the legislature that would require school district officials to transport parochial pupils over present public school bus routes was voiced here by Disciples of Christ churches of the South San Joaquin District.

An adopted resolution declared that "appropriation of public funds for use by church-operated schools is a direct violation of the fundamental principle of separation of Church and State in America."

Contributions to Baptist Bible College for April 15 to May 9

Basil Malof, Washington, D. C.	\$ 50.00
Bethel Baptist Church, Wichita Falls, Texas	25.00
Prairie St. Baptist, Arlington, Texas	30.00
Central Baptist Church, Tyler, Texas	1400.00
Tulsa Baptist Temple, Tulsa, Okla.	100.00
Bible Baptist Church, Gainesville, Texas	4.92
Bible Baptist Church, Enid, Oklahoma	20.00
Parise Arakelian, Student	5.00
Fred Martinez, Student	3.90
William Stradley, Zenia, Kansas	10.00
Calvary Baptist Church, Taylorville, Ill.	50.00
Mrs. J. M. Henson, Portland, Tennessee	8.50
Bible Baptist Church, Enid, Oklahoma	15.00
Mr. and Mrs. Alec Skinner, Detroit, Michigan	25.00
Grace Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla.	40.00
Bible Baptist Church, DeQuincy, Louisiana	25.00
First Baptist Church of Wright City, Overton, Texas	15.30
Fred Martinez, Student	1.90
Elaine Stewart, Student	5.00
Clifford Clark, Tulsa, Oklahoma	5.00
Park Avenue Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia	8.45
Bible Baptist Church, Enid, Oklahoma	32.00
Bible Baptist Church, Gainesville, Texas	8.00
Park Avenue Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Va.	10.67
Bible Baptist Church, Gainesville, Texas	6.19
Gospel of Grace Broadcast, Lebanon, Missouri	20.00
Riverside Trinity Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Texas	37.50
Freeway Baptist Church, Houston, Texas	30.86
Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan	5504.20
Temple Baptist Church, Detroit, Michigan	375.45
W. Main St. Baptist Church, Henderson, Texas	10.00
Fellowship Baptist Church, Perryton, Texas	54.19
Fellowship Baptist Church, Great Bend, Kansas	12.16
George Tucker, Detroit, Michigan	13.70
Calvary Baptist Church, Snyder, Texas	11.50
First Baptist Church of Wright City, Overton, Texas	8.20
Torrance Baptist Tabernacle, Torrance, California	5.00
Bible Baptist Church, Enid, Oklahoma	10.00
Hart Haven Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Florida	31.90
Bible Baptist Church, Gainesville, Texas	5.00
Ottumwa Baptist Temple, Ottumwa, Iowa	142.76
Bible Baptist Church, Enid, Oklahoma	16.00
Park Avenue Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia	9.37
Castleberry Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Texas	150.00
Bible Baptist Church, El Reno, Oklahoma	100.00
Lawrence Hoover, Detroit, Michigan	10.00
First Baptist Church of Wright City, Overton, Texas	9.17

TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Sunday, May 13:

Sunday School Attendance	4,066
Church and Sunday School Offering	\$6,250.28
Additions to Church	35
Preacher at Both Services	Rev. Charley Dyer

(The city-wide bus strike was still on.)

DOWELL ADDRESSES GRADUATING CLASS

Rev. W. E. Dowell, president of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and pastor of High Street Baptist church, Springfield, preached the Baccalaureate sermon for the graduating class of the Conway, (Mo.) Consolidated Schools Sunday evening, May 13. His theme was, "A Sure Formula For Success."

Baptist Bible Tribune FOR BIBLE BELIEVING BAPTISTS

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Easter around the Fellowship

We had a great Easter weekend with 407 attending and eight saved in three services in our church. Our first church plant, Aaron Cavin's Life Church, had 195, and not sure how many salvation decisions.

There were four BBF church plants started in the past five years who had a combined Easter attendance of almost 900 this year. The overwhelming majority of these people are previously unchurched!

Sean Sears – Grace Church, Stoughton, MA

I have been serving the Lord as a pastor for 59 Easters. Our final count at Cielo Vista was 3,406 with 80 accepting Christ. God, let me live long enough to see 5,000 in our services for You!

*Johnny Morgan – Pastor Emeritus – Cielo Vista Church
El Paso, TX*

At Calvary we average 125 and had 160 today with about 20 regulars away on vacation and such. No decisions but lots of visitors for follow-up. Last Sunday I baptized five.

*Tim Shafer - Calvary Baptist Church
Hanson, MA*

This is our first Easter since opening a second campus 10 weeks ago. Our attendance was just at 1,600. We have 27 people who accepted Christ to follow up on this week.

*Jeff Love - Bridgepoint Church
Boise, ID*

We had 360, the most ever, with five baptized.

*David Almanzar - Canon Community Baptist
Canon City, CO*

The Lord blessed us at Northside. We had five adults pray to receive Christ. I also got to baptize a young man that I was able to pray with for salvation last month.

*Jon Haley – Northside Baptist Church
Arkansas City, KS*

We had a record high last week of 227 and today we had 363. In the first service, eight kids and four adults were saved. Seven kids and four adults were saved in the second service, so 23 total. Had lots of visitors from the 5,000 egg invitations we passed out.


*Michael Haley - Cross Creek Baptist Church
Fountain, CO*

We had over 190 today (usually about 145), and while we did not have altar results (this is Fort Collins) we did baptize five last week and they were all here today!

*Marc Leverett – Bethel Baptist Church
Fort Collins, CO*

We had 1,447 in attendance Easter and two people saved.

*Herbert Gilbert – Beacon Baptist Church
Taylor, MI*



We average 250 and had 379 on Easter. A former Muslim woman who has visited several times accepted Christ this morning. Just got the most precious email from her rejoicing that Jesus is really alive!

*Lee Huddleston – Seacoast Church
Redondo Beach, CA*

We were blessed despite thunderstorms all weekend. Just under 700 in attendance, five professions of faith on top of four the previous week. One was a self-described atheist who has been attending for several weeks.

*Bob Stephenson – Graceway Baptist Church
Springfield, MO*

I did a four-week focus on evangelism prior to Easter, and while we average 400 plus in attendance, we had 687 on Easter at The Journey with 17 people inviting Jesus Christ to be their Forgiver and Lord!

*Rob Willis – The Journey Baptist Church
Rochester, NH*

Our church had a day of evangelism. We had three services, and we were striving to double our attendance (around 350 this year) by everyone bringing a guest. We had 210 in the early morning garden service, 310 in the 9 a.m. service, and 420 in the 10 a.m. service. We estimate 710 unique guests and members, and seven came forward for salvation. I thumbed through the connection cards and there is a lot of follow-up to do this week!

*Daniel Dennis - Thomas Road Baptist Church,
Phoenix, AZ*

We had a total of 274 yesterday, and it was a great celebration for us. Our attendance was not all that much higher than normal but our church is energized.

Mike "Moose" Marcellus – First Independent Baptist Church, Austin, TX

We had 1,058 in attendance (three services) with 24 making decisions to follow Christ. The best part for me was a family that came as a result of my son (six years old) inviting his friend to church.

*Ben Feldott - Cape Cod Church
East Falmouth, MA*

For the first time in our new building and only second time in six years since being pastor of our church, we broke 100 in attendance with 117, and we had one man saved — the brother of one of our ladies. This man almost died two years ago when he slammed his car into a building while in a drunken rage. Drugs, alcohol, and years of being an absent father, and it came down to yesterday and he gave his life to Christ.

*Walter Swaim - Abiding Life Baptist Fellowship
Pasadena, TX*

Easter was incredible at Sunrise. One hundred and fifty attended the first service, 442 the second, and six adults invited Jesus Christ into their lives. One was my neighbor George. When I preached a funeral not long ago, he was there and said, "I like the way you talk. Is it okay if I come hear you every other Sunday, 'cause I work every other Sunday?" George was there Easter with several other neighbors. He invited Jesus into his life yesterday.

*Otis Ledbetter – Sunrise Church
Clovis, CA*

We had quite a day in Wilmington! It was the grand opening of our new auditorium, and we had 1,641 in attendance, with 12 saved, two baptized, and more than 100 first-time visitors. We also had a special push to wrap up our new building expenses, and nearly tripled our average weekly offering.

*Kelly McInerney - Bible Baptist Church
Wilmington, OH*

Great day at South Creek with 185! Thanks to all those who volunteered!

Robert Hodges – South Creek Baptist Church, Orlando, FL

Four thousand Easter eggs distributed this year. Four thousand invitations to come to church and hear the Good News of Jesus Christ!

*Ben Seyden – Riverside Baptist Church
Kankakee, IL*



A GOOD KIND OF MOMENTUM

GRADUATION FELLOWSHIP WEEK 2011

By the Tribune

The photos tell most of the story. Graduation Fellowship Week, held this year on the campus of Baptist Bible College May 9-12 in Springfield, MO, at one time did actually take most of a week. But that was a generation ago, and these days the meeting packs an awful lot of preaching, singing, encouragement, inspiration, and reporting in a little under three days. Gone are the far-into-the-night business meetings, replaced by a neat package that gets most Fellowship work done Monday afternoon. Preachers were on point, the music was uplifting, and the atmosphere was relaxed enough to earn the name fellowship. So by the time graduation was finished Thursday morning, we were all just a little sad it was over.

Some representative quotes:

On the overall effect: *"I am 68 years old and been with the Fellowship since 1956, and I am thrilled that we are again seeing excitement. We had more younger pastors and staff present than I have seen in over 10 years. I am excited about what God is doing in our Fellowship."*

On the meeting itself: *"I left encouraged about the future of BBC. The music was excellent all week. It was less of a show and*

more of a worship service - fantastic. Thank you, Bro. Edge and all of your staff for your hard work."

On comparing this meeting with previous meetings: *"This year was different for me. The momentum was a good kind of momentum, and it didn't require anyone trying to talk it up for me. I was greatly encouraged. Let's be sure to keep our leadership in prayer."*

On some of the preachers: *"Jerry Thorpe hit a home run as he consistently does. Jonathan Falwell was gracious, effective, and excellent. Linzy Slayden lifted our spirits and placed our Fellowship on the right course."*

The other preachers – Jim Goodman, John Theissen, Jerry Pelfrey, and Dave Freeman – all brought the right combination of warning, instruction, and inspiration to the daytime crowds in the W. E. Dowell Fieldhouse. The music, under the direction of David Giles, Nate Harmon, and some other very talented musicians and singers, had something for just about everyone. Their Tuesday night presentation featuring some real-time poster painting brought everyone to their feet at the end.

The highlight of Fellowship Week for many is the missionary presentation. Jon Konnerup presented 25 missionaries for approval, including one new chaplain, Stephen Jimenez, and both a family and a single man for Restricted Access. Those missionaries who can be named are: (career missionaries) Joshua and Amanda Allred — Mexico, Scott and Dominique Pethtel — Italy, Zac and Whitney Pyle — Mongolia, Sean and Janelle Willeford — Philippines, and Brian and Rebekah Wright — Wales. TEAM missionaries approved were Kaitlynn Ames-Dixon — Guatemala, Randall and Rachel Fernandez — Pakistan, Nathan and Tiffany Foltz — Tanzania, Janice Hickey — Ecuador, Jonathan and Lexi Taylor — Ecuador, Benjamin and Raelene Walker — New Zealand, and Mike and Cristi Wyatt — Japan.

Missionaries receiving special recognition for their service were (30 year pins) David and Peggy Disney, Tom and Gail Gritts, Jack and Joy Loveday, David and Hope Reinhardt, and Terry and Carol Taylor. Receiving 50 year globes were Lonnie and Georgine Brooks, Bob and Verna Griggs, and Dorothy Mae Willcut.

In other business

Baptist Bible college announced a May College Offering total of \$852,000, with





\$500,000 of that total given by an individual.

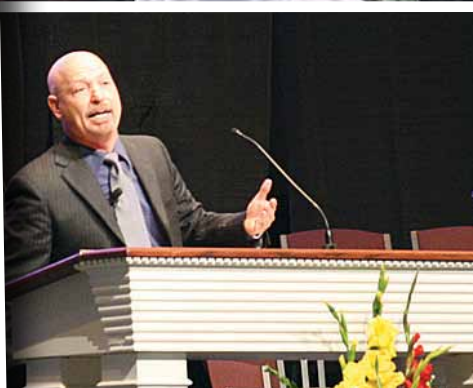
The Committee of National Directors and pastors in the General Business Meeting received reports from the BBFI Mission Office, the National Church Planting Office, the Baptist Bible Tribune, and the colleges associated with the BBFI. These reports included information about finances, activities, and plans for the future.

Jon Konnerup and the BBFI Mission Committee approved a policy change for chaplains that will allow them to continue to observe the doctrinal distinctives and requirements of the BBFI in light of new military social policies.

The BBFI Executive Officers also recognized Jon Konnerup for his leadership in the preparation and execution of the International Meeting held in Cebu City earlier this year.

Pastors approved a resolution thanking Pastor Billy Hamm for his pioneering work with the electronic communications of the BBFI, especially his establishment of the BBFI Network, a service that still provides valuable communication tools to the Fellowship today.

The next national BBFI meeting will take place on the campus of Boston Baptist College, September 26-28, 2011.







High Street Baptist Church is 75 years old

The Wednesday evening service for Graduation Fellowship Week was transferred to High Street Baptist Church as the congregation celebrated its 75th anniversary. Jonathan Falwell, whose late father Jerry Falwell was an alum of both BBC and High Street, spoke to the Fellowship that evening.

The High Street church was founded in 1936, but its close association with the Baptist Bible Fellowship began in 1950 when the new fellowship was organized. Bill Dowell had been called to pastor High Street in 1941, and in 1950 he was the president of the World Fundamental Missionary Baptist Fellowship with offices and a seminary in Fort Worth, TX. In May that year, just as the annual fellowship meeting began in Fort Worth, a group of pastors including Dowell determined to begin a new fellowship with a college and mission office in Springfield, MO.

Pastor Dowell was named president of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, and he offered the use of the High Street facilities to Baptist Bible College until buildings could be erected at the newly purchased property where the college stands today.

The importance of High Street to the history of the BBF cannot be overstated. The church provided the first classrooms, the first mission secretary, the tremendous leadership of Bill Dowell, and all the encouragement and backing the new movement needed. Over the years thousands of students have called High Street their church home, and scores of missionaries and pastors received their first practical training at High Street.

Photos featuring Jonathan Falwell courtesy of Tim Miller at Red Vine Studios





NEWLY APPROVED MISSIONARIES

CAREER



Joshua and Amanda Allred — Mexico
 Sending Church: Broadway Baptist Church, Sweetwater, TX
 Sending Pastor: Chris Stephens
 Contact: (325) 338-4867 or Joshua.Allred@bbfmissions.org

A family has been approved to a Restricted Access Nation. They may be contacted through the Mission Office.



Scott and Dominique Pethtel — Italy
 Sending Church: Lighthouse Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, TN
 Sending Pastor: Charles Ray
 Contact: (615) 895-1357 or Scott.Pethtel@bbfmissions.org



Zac and Whitney Pyle — Mongolia
 Sending Church: Lifepoint Baptist Church, San Angelo, TX
 Sending Pastor: Phillip Webber
 Contact: (325) 655-9319 or Zac.Pyle@bbfmissions.org



Sean and Janelle Willeford — Philippines
 Sending Church: Hallmark Baptist Church, Fort Worth, TX
 Sending Pastor: Mike Haley
 Contact: (817) 370-0123 or Sean.Willeford@bbfmissions.org



Brian and Rebekah Wright — Wales
 Sending Church: Bible Baptist Church, St. Charles, MO
 Sending Pastor: Steve Parks
 Contact: (636) 947-0367 or Brian.Wright@bbfmissions.org





T.E.A.M.

Kaitlynn Ames-Dixon — Guatemala

Assisting: Jerry and Mindy Kinman

Sending Church: New Testament Baptist Church, Largo, FL

Sending Pastor: Matthew Trill

Contact: (727) 536-0481 or Kaitlynn.Ames-Dixon@bbfmissions.org

A single man will be going to a Restricted Access Nation (RAN) field as a TEAM missionary to assist a veteran RAN missionary. He may be contacted through the Mission Office.

Randall and Rachel Fernandez — Pakistan

Assisting: Paul and Teresa Herson

Sending Church: Metro West Baptist Church, Wellesley, MA

Sending Pastor: David Melton

Contact: (781) 413-7714 or Randall.Fernandez@bbfmissions.org

Nathan and Tiffany Foltz — Tanzania

Assisting: Vernon and Mary Smith

Sending Church: Baptist Tabernacle, Shreveport, LA

Sending Pastor: Jon Isbell

Contact: (318) 294-3521 or Nathan.Foltz@bbfmissions.org

Janice Hickey — Ecuador

Assisting: Glenn and Sherri McGhee

Sending Church: First Baptist Church of Meadowview, Mesquite, TX

Sending Pastor: R. D. Wade

Contact: (214) 391-7176 or Janice.Hickey@bbfmissions.org

Jonathan and Lexi Taylor — Ecuador

Assisting: Tony and Joy Anzalone

Sending Church: CrossPointe Baptist Church, Kansas City, MO

Sending Pastor: William Boren

Contact: (816) 322-4517 or Jonathan.Taylor@bbfmissions.org

Benjamin and Raelene Walker — New Zealand

Assisting: Dalton and Paulette Walker

Sending Church: Ventura Baptist Church, Ventura, CA

Sending Pastor: Lewis McClendon

Contact: (805) 644-7191 or Benjamin.Walker@bbfmissions.org

Mike and Cristi Wyatt — Japan

Assisting: Mike and Becky Winters

Sending Church: First Baptist Church of Meadowview, Mesquite, TX

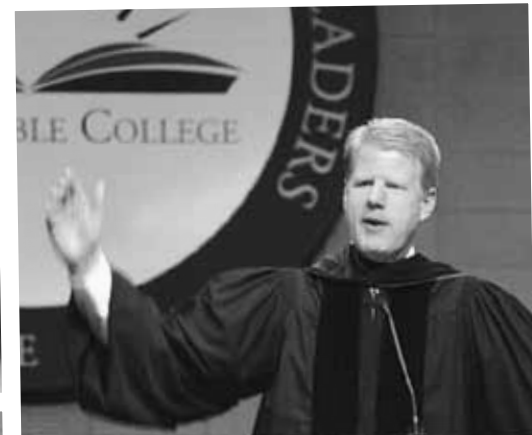
Sending Pastor: R. D. Wade

Contact: (214) 391-7176 or Mike.Wyatt@bbfmissions.org

CHAPLAIN

Stephen Jimenez has been endorsed as an Army chaplain. He served his internship at Canyon Creek Baptist Church where Rick Carter is pastor. His sending church is Temple Baptist Church in Albuquerque, NM, where Fred Gurule is pastor. He may be contacted through the Mission Office or through his sending church at (505) 265-5834.







Christian view of hell challenged

Book Review of *Love Wins*

Reviewed by Gregory C. Christopher, Ph.D.

Baptist Bible College Vice President of Academic Affairs

Love Wins: A Book about Heaven, Hell, and the Fate of Every Person Who Ever Lived.

By Rob Bell. New York: HarperOne, 2011, 202 pp., \$22.99.

Editor's note: In March, popular pastor Rob Bell of Mars Hill Bible Church in Grandville, MI, released a book describing his view of God's wrath, a position at odds with the traditional Christian view of hell and the future for nonbelievers. While the Tribune does not feel compelled to respond to every "wind of doctrine," I thought it proper given Pastor Bell's influence and popularity among younger evangelicals that we respond. Greg Christopher of Baptist Bible College has kindly provided his analysis.

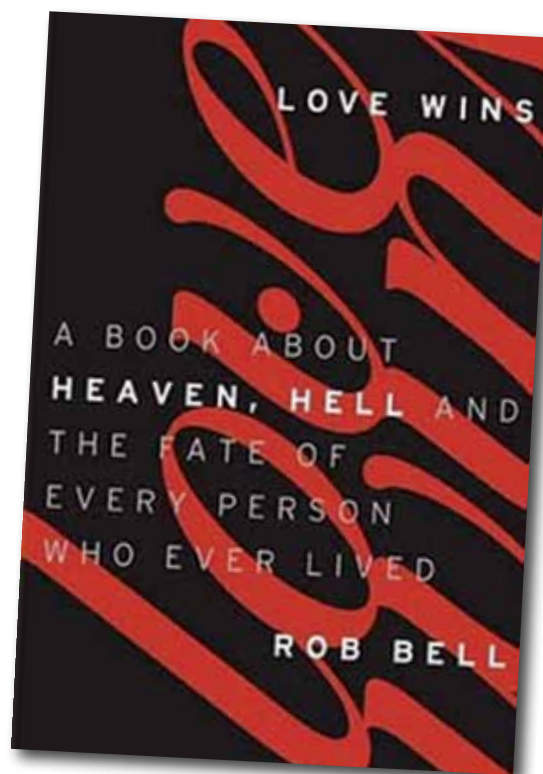
A firestorm of controversy and debate began even before the book was released on March 15, 2011. The debate spread across the Evangelical world because of an eye-catching promotional video posted on YouTube.¹

As I publically evaluate the book, *Love Wins*, I do understand that my work may be understood as the work of pride and one without love. The book itself projects the central attribute of God as that of love. I am keenly aware of the risk I take. One may interpret this book review as arrogant, old-fashioned, hard-lined, and uncaring conservatism. The claim may be that in the face of God's love I show anything but love.

I am especially keen about the risk I take because of the larger culture in which we live and do ministry. We live in a world that demands tolerance. The assumption is that we do not know everything and certainly should not assume that one is right and one is wrong. We must learn to love those with whom we disagree and acknowledge their contribution as to how we understand the world in which we all live.²

The Bible presents a very different

understanding of the role of Christ-like leadership. Ephesians 4:11-16 defines the expectation of the pastor-teacher and the evangelist. In distinction to those who deceive, Christ-like leaders are to speak the truth with love. When truth is taught, the congregation



matures and is not tossed about with every wind of doctrine. But to "love" without truth is not biblical love. It is in this context that I review *Love Wins*.

SUMMARY OF LOVE WINS

Bell rocked the conservative world of theology and the world of ministry with the publication of *Love Wins*. He does so by questioning two basic platforms of the gospel. First, he redefines traditional theology or at least places great

emphasis on the love of God as opposed to the holiness or righteousness of God. He writes,

Of all the billions of people who have ever lived, will only a select number "make it to a better place" and every single other person suffer in torment and punishment forever? Is this acceptable to God? Has God created millions of people over tens of thousands of years who are going to spend eternity in anguish? Can God do this or even allow this and still claim to be a loving God? (p.2)

Second, he redefines the nature of hell. He rejects what conservatives understand to be the definition of hell as the eternal place of eternal punishment. He redefines hell as an "intense experience of correction" (p. 91). Though my review focuses on Bell's definition of hell, it is not possible to separate his understanding of God's nature and his view of the eternal destiny of unbelievers.

EVALUATION OF LOVE WINS

I review Bell in three steps. First, I demonstrate that the basis for Bell's position is a highly unacceptable use of God's Word. He selectively chooses verses and either removes them from the context or actually grossly manipulates the verses to fit his purpose. Second, there are passages of scripture that speak to the nature of eternal hell which Bell ignores. One's response to Jesus in this life does have eternal consequences for the unbeliever. Third, I show the relationship between the nature of God's righteousness and the need to accept the gospel message. Paul's claim is that mercy wins.³

BELL'S USE OF SCRIPTURE

The basis for Bell's position is a highly unacceptable use of God's word. He selectively chooses verses and either removes them from the context or actually grossly manipulates the verses to fit his purpose. His conclusion is that hell is an "intense experience of correction" (p.91) and not everlasting punishment.

The key passage of chapter 3: "Hell" is Matthew 25:46.⁴ The context is the judgment of sheep and goats which will occur following the seven-year period of tribulation at which time Jesus Christ returns to earth to establish His earthly kingdom.⁵ The key phrase for Bell is *eis kolasin aiōnion* ("into eternal punishment"). Because of the importance of his interpretation, I quote his argument here. He writes:

The goats are sent, in the Greek language, to an *aion of kolazo*. *Aion*, we know has several meanings. One is “age” or “period of time”; another refers to intensity of experience. The word *kolazo* is a term from horticulture. It refers to the pruning and trimming of the branches of a plant so it can flourish.

An *aion of kolazo*. [sic] Depending on how you translate *aion* and *kolazo*, then, the phrase can mean “a period of pruning” or “a time of trimming,” or an intense experience of correction” (p.91).

I offer three responses to Bell’s interpretation of the phrase *kolasin aiōnion* as “an intense experience of correction.” First, Bell has proposed an interpretation of the key phrase that is counter to biblical scholarship. There is no lexical evidence for his interpretation. The noun *kolasin* in the NT means transcendent retribution and must be translated as “punishment.”⁶ Bell argues that the term *aion* has several meanings. However, he claims that *aiōnion* cannot mean “eternal” or “forever” because such an interpretation “is not really a category the biblical writers used” (p. 92). There is no basis for such a conclusion. NT scholars agree that *aion* does “pertain to a period of unending duration,” and should be translated “without end.”⁷

Second, the parallel phrase, *hoi de dikaiōi eis zōēn aiōnion* (“and the righteous into eternal life”) shows Bell’s interpretation is untenable. Bell does not deny that believers have eternal life, but does deny unbelievers will suffer eternal punishment even though Jesus uses the same adjective *aiōnion* to define both eternal states. If *eis zōēn aiōnion* means “into eternal life,” then *eis kolasin aiōnion* must mean “into eternal punishment.”⁸

Third, Bell fails to note the parallel passage in Matthew 25:41. Jesus defines the goats or unbelievers as those who are cursed. Their destiny is the eternal (*aiōnion*) lake of fire, a place originally prepared for Satan and his angels.⁹ There is no opportunity for future reconciliation.

The claim of chapter 4: “Does God Get What God Wants?” builds on chapter 3. Bell argued that hell is not eternal punishment but leads to restoration. In chapter 4 he connects God’s love to His plan to reconcile all things. Bell writes, “At the heart of this perspective is the belief that, given enough time, everybody will turn to God and find themselves in the

joy and peace of God’s presence. The Love of God will melt every hard heart, and even the most “depraved sinners” will eventually give up their resistance and turn to God” (p. 107).¹⁰ The basis for his claim includes Matthew 19:28, Acts 3:19-21, and Colossians 1:20. I focus here on Colossians 1.”

Bell claims without comment concerning Colossians 1:20 that all things will be reconciled to God. For him, this must include all unbelievers though in this life they did not believe. Such unbelievers will be in a position in the next life where God’s love will “melt their

of second chance for the unbeliever in the next life unless Bell is a Universalist, a claim he denies.

PASSAGES OF SCRIPTURE BELL OMITTS

There are passages of scripture that speak to the nature of hell which Bell omits. I consider two passages.

The first is 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10. The return of Jesus with His mighty angels and the imagery of a flaming fire set up the context of future judgment. The objects of His judgment are unbelievers who did not know God and did

He selectively chooses verses and either removes them from the context or actually grossly manipulates the verses to fit his purpose.

heart” and they will “eventually give up their resistance and turn to God” (p. 107).

Such an interpretation is flawed. I make three points. First, if “all things” in 1:20 refer to the possible reconciliation of all human beings, should this not also include the reconciliation of Satan and his angels? I am not aware of anyone who argues that Satan and his angels will be reconciled to God. However, given Bell’s interpretation such an idea would be consistent with “all things.”

Second, if by “all things” Paul is referring to human beings, then 1:21-28 is not necessary. The fact is 1:21-28 explains why and how God reconciles human beings. Before salvation, believers were alienated from God and were enemies. But now because of their response to the gospel and to Christ, they are reconciled to God on the basis of the death of Christ.¹² The believers of Colossae heard the gospel and responded to the message (1:23). Paul explains that he preaches and warns every man (1:28), a ministry unnecessary if Bell is correct about the future reconciliation.

Third, the point of 1:20 is the rebuttal that any part of creation is outside the scope of reconciliation. The parallel passage may be Romans 8:38, 39. Paul’s point is that the cross “effectively overcame every evil agent and rendered it powerless.”¹³ There is nothing in this passage suggesting that there is any form

not respond to the gospel (1:8). They will be punished, defined as everlasting destruction.¹⁴ The term Paul uses comes from OT passages that speak of the coming prophetic judgment.¹⁵ This destruction is not a reference to annihilation. Paul defines the eternal destruction as the separation of unbelievers from His glorious presence revealed at the second coming of Jesus Christ (1:9). Because the believers responded to the gospel (1:10), they will enjoy the presence of the glorified Savior. Those who did not believe in this life do not have a second chance sometime in the afterlife. Unbelievers are judged and separated from the glorified Jesus Christ. There is no basis to suggest that love wins as defined by Bell.

A second passage is Revelation 20:11-15. John describes the Great White Throne Judgment at which time all unbelievers are present for the final judgment. The basis for the judgment is twofold. First, they are judged according to their deeds (20:12). Second, the names of the unbelievers are not found in the book of life (20:12, 15). Unbelievers will be cast into the Lake of Fire (20:14, 15). This is the second death. In contrast, believers have part in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over them (20:6). The Lord referred to the eternal lake of fire also (Matt 25:41). There is no evidence that love wins as defined by Bell.

Bell does discuss the eternal state of

Unbelievers are judged and separated from the glorified Jesus Christ. There is no basis to suggest that love wins as defined by Bell.

Revelation 21 and 22 (pp. 111–115). He speculates about why the gates of New Jerusalem are not shut. People are free to come and go. He asks, “Can God bring proper, lasting justice, banishing certain actions — and people who do them — from the new creation while at the same time allowing and waiting and hoping for the possibility of the reconciliation of those very same people? Keeping the gates, in essence, open?” (p. 155).

While he speculates about how love might win, he misses the larger context. The new city is called holy Jerusalem (21:2). The reason the gates are open is because there is no sin in the new heaven and earth. All unbelievers have been judged and are in the lake of fire (21:8). The phrase, which is the second death, clearly connects this passage back to the Great White Throne Judgment (20:14). The city itself is filled with the glory of God (21:11). The Lamb was in the presence of the city such that there was no need for a temple (21:22). There was no need for the sun or moon because the glory of God is the light (21:23). Only those who are written in the Lamb’s book of life are present (21:27). There is no place for Bell’s creative speculation even if he attributes that creativity to God Himself.¹⁶ There is no evidence at the end of the Bible that love wins as defined by Bell.

BELL’S USE OF POSTMODERN LANGUAGE

One should not miss Bell’s use of the language of postmodernism. I cite two examples. First, Bell suggests that there are various perspectives with reference to the definition of hell throughout church history. He claims that the Christian faith is generous enough to handle the vast range of perspectives. The implication is clear. Those who hold the more traditional view must tolerate those like Bell who do not. Either position is consistent with the gospel. He writes, “To shun, censor, or ostracize someone for holding this belief [of hell] is to fail to extend grace to each other in a discussion that has had plenty of room for varied perspectives for hundreds of years now” (p. 111; emphasis mine).

Second, Bell uses the notion of story. The

basis for choosing a position is not necessarily the assumption that one position is correct. Rather, the issue is which position has the better story. Bell writes, “It’s important that we be honest about the fact that some stories are better than others.” The conservative view in which unbelievers are tortured forever isn’t a very good story. Bell has a better story. He writes, “In contrast, everybody enjoying God’s good world together with no disgrace or shame, justice being served and all the wrongs being made right is a better story. It is bigger, more loving, more expansive, more extraordinary, beautiful, and inspiring than any other story about the ultimate course history takes” (p. 111). If the goal of theology is to create a story in which at the end everyone “will eventually give up their resistance and turn to God” then we must admit love wins. However, such a story is not the story of the Bible.

The goal of theology is not to create a Jesus who is palatable, but to proclaim the truth of the gospel. The very center of that gospel is the righteousness and holiness of God. Paul thoroughly defines the gospel in the book of Romans. The question is significant. How can a righteous God reconcile the unrighteous who cannot meet His righteous standard? The answer is God’s global plan of mercy.

The reason why unbelievers need God’s mercy is because they are unrighteous. Paul presents evidence that both Gentiles (Rom 1:18–32) and Jews (Rom 2:1–3:20) are unrighteous and thus are objects of God’s wrath. The message of hope is the gospel (Rom 1:13–17). The presentation of the message is critical, for only in that message does the unbeliever learn about the righteousness of God (Rom 1:17). It is the death of Christ that provides the basis by which unbelievers meet the righteous standard of God (Rom 3:21–31). It is in this latter context that the issue is clear. Unbelievers fall short of the glory of God, not his love (Rom 3:23).

One should not underestimate the truth that God does love humanity (John 3:16). Paul is clear that God demonstrated His love by pointing unbelievers to the cross of Jesus Christ (Rom 5:8). God who is righteous acts in accordance with high standards of rectitude as

he renders a favorable verdict freeing those who have faith in Jesus Christ of all charges (Rom 3: 26).¹⁷ While love motivates His actions toward the ungodly, it is His righteous character that requires payment for sin. Jesus Christ paid that price in His death (Rom 3:21–25). Those who do not exercise faith in this life remain the objects of His eternal wrath and will suffer eternal punishment (Rom 1:18; 2:5, 8). Only those who are justified in this life escape the wrath of God (Rom 5:9; 8:1).

IMPLICATIONS

First, how one responds to Jesus Christ in this life does matter. The passages to which I refer do not leave room for Bell’s idea that hell is an intense experience of correction. There is no biblical evidence that there is hope for unbelievers in the life to come.

Second, though one is a pastor and is concerned about the practical matters of life, that does not provide the basis to creatively tell a story that is more palatable to the congregation and the greater culture. A pastor must be first true to God’s word and then teach the congregation that they might mature and learn to think through that truth in a practical manner. There is no room for sloppy exegesis in the ministry of a Christ-like leader.

Third, God’s Word is clear. Romans 16:17 teaches that we are to pay careful attention to those who are in dissension, those who are in the state of being in factious opposition.¹⁸ We are to pay careful attention to those who cause offenses — an action or circumstance that leads one to act contrary to a proper course of action or set of beliefs.¹⁹ The benchmark or the set of beliefs in this context is the gospel which Paul defines in the book of Romans. We are to respond by avoiding such individuals or keeping away from them. For many this is unkind and unloving. However, we must understand that God’s truth trumps all. The expression of love apart from truth is not biblical love. As Christ-like leaders, we must speak the truth in love.

NOTES

¹ www.annarbor.com/faith-rob-bells-new-book-love-wins-unleashes-backlash/

² The Barna Group released results of a survey concerning what Americans believe about Universalism and Pluralism (April 18, 2011). The results are significant. For example, 43% of Americans agreed and 54% disagreed with the statement, “It doesn’t matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons.” Similar results emerged for the statements, “All people will experience the same outcome after death, regardless of their religious belief” (40% agreed, 55% disagreed) and the statement, “All people are eventually saved or accepted by God, no matter what they do, because he loves all people he has created (40% versus 50%).” (www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/484-what-americans-believe-about-universalism-and-pluralism).

The issue is acute for young believers. David Kinnaman, president of the Barna Group, writes: “This gap [between younger born again Christians and their parents’ generation] represents increasing pressure on young believers to understand those differences and to find meaning and confidence in their faith convictions. This may be part of the reason young people are hesitant to share their faith with others and why they have so many questions about the nature of heaven: they are less certain what they believe and crossing the divide to communicate with their peers on this issue is a big jump. Helping to prepare young people for this belief gap and enabling them to understand biblical teaching — while also encouraging healthy friendships with people who hold other spiritual views — are crucial challenges for today’s Christian leaders” (www.barna.org/faith-spirituality/484-what-americans-believe-about-universalism-and-pluralism).

³ It is important to clarify terms. It is common to refer to the eternal destiny of the unbeliever as hell. However, Revelation 20:14 speaks of the lake of fire as that eternal abode for unbelievers. Bell uses the term hell in the more popular sense.

⁴ Bell refers to a number of OT passages suggesting God’s intent is not for unbelievers to experience eternal punishment. Rather, one is to understand that “there is movement from judgment to restoration, from punishment to new life” (p. 85). This provides the groundwork for his argument in chapter 4: “Does God Get What God Wants?”

In chapter 3, for example, Bell refers to Ezekiel 16 and Jeremiah 32. He writes, “No matter how

painful, brutal, oppressive, no matter how far people find themselves from home because of their sin, indifference, and rejection, there’s always the assurance that it won’t be this way forever” (p. 86). The implication here is that unbelievers will have opportunity to be restored to God in the afterlife. However, his interpretation of these OT passages cannot be accepted. The focus here is Jeremiah 32.

Jeremiah, as do other OT prophets, prophecies of impending judgment. The basis for that judgment is laid out in 32:23–35. There is also the promise of restoration. Jeremiah is clear, however, that the restoration is based upon God’s eternal covenant, a clear reference to the New Covenant in Jeremiah 31:31–34 (J. Andrew DeArman, *The NIV Application Commentary: Ezekiel* [Grand Rapids: Zondervan 2002] 297–98). Jeremiah uses the covenant formula in 32:38 (cf. 24:7; 30:22; 31:1). God pledges to protect His people and they in turn promise to be loyal and obedient (NET Bible). The basis for that loyalty and obedience is the New Covenant. In the future God will no longer relate to the nation by means of the Mosaic Law but will relate to the nation as those whose sins are forgiven. Paul refers to this event in Romans 11: 26–28. At the time of Jesus’ second coming, the whole nation will be born again. Set in context, Bell must manipulate the prophecy to understand Jeremiah suggesting that unbelievers have a second chance to be restored to God in the future. That is completely foreign to Jeremiah’s prophecy.

⁵ The assumption here is a traditional dispensational position. The point of the evaluation however is not contingent on this theology.

⁶ Bauer Arndt Gingrich Danker *Greek English Lexicon* (BADG), p. 555. The verb, *kolazo* means to penalize, punish (e.g., Acts 4:21; 2 Peter 2:9) (EDNT, vol 2 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991] 544, 555). Louw and Nida explain the term has the implication of punishment resulting in severe suffering (Semantic Domains, 38.2).

⁷ BDAG, p. 33. EDNT, vol 1 [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1991] 44–45. Louw and Nida define the term as pertaining to an unlimited duration of time (Semantic Domains, 67.96).

⁸ Donald A. Hagner, WBC, vol. 33b: Matthew. (Waco: Word Bible Commentary, 1995) 745. Michael J. Wilkins. *The NIV Application Commentary: Matthew*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004) 812.

⁹ R. T. France argues that Jesus’ reference to fire

refers to a fire that destroys the unbeliever. (*The New International Commentary of the New Testament: The Gospel of Matthew*. [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007] 966–97). The position is referred to as conditional immortality. For an evaluation of this position, see Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids, Zondervan, 1994), pp. 1148–1153.

¹⁰ Bell makes a similar claim later in the chapter. The goal is to demonstrate that his view is not new in the church. He writes, “At the center of the Christian tradition since the first church have been a number who insist that history is not tragic, hell is not forever, and love, in the end, wins and all will be reconciled to God” (p. 109).

¹¹ A similar critique can be made of Bell’s interpretation of Matthew 19:28 and Acts 3:19–21. The contexts both anticipate the time when Jesus establishes His earthly kingdom. There is nothing in the context to justify Bell’s understanding that love wins.

¹² In the parallel of Ephesians 2:1–22, the point is clear also. Only those who have been made alive are reconciled to God. This refers to both Jews and Gentiles.

¹³ Ralph P. Martin, *The New Century Bible Commentary: Colossians and Philemon*. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1973) 60. Homer A. Kent, *Treasures of Wisdom: Studies in Colossians and Philemon* (Winona Lake: BMH Books, 1978) 51, 52.

¹⁴ The term *tinō* (punished) means “to experience something bad, often in retribution for some wrongdoing” (Louw and Nida, *Semantic Domains*, 90.77). BDAG, 1006.

¹⁵ DNTT, vol. 1, 465.

¹⁶ He writes, “Potentials, possibilities, and the promise that God has an imagination and is not afraid to use it. Hard and fast, definitive declarations then, about how God will or will not organize the new world must leave plenty of room for all kinds of those possibilities. This doesn’t diminish God’s justice or take less seriously the very real consequences of sin and rebellion, it simply acknowledges with humility the limits of our powers of speculation (p. 116).

¹⁷ BDAG, 246–247.

¹⁸ BDAG, 253.

¹⁹ BDAG, 931.

HISTORY

BAPTIST

SUSANNAH SPURGEON – The faithful pastor's wife

Susannah Spurgeon will always be remembered as the faithful wife and encourager of the great preacher Charles Haddon Spurgeon. However, she also deserves to be honored for her literary contributions and the founding of the Book Fund that supplied theological books to ministers who were too poor to buy them.

Susannah Spurgeon was born to Susannah Thompson on January 15, 1832. Her parents were earnest Christians and members of the historic New Park Street Chapel. Susannah was influenced by the ministry of the renowned Baptist pastor and author James Smith. She stated, "I have seen him administer the ordinance of baptism to the candidates, wondering with a tearful longing whether I should ever be able thus to confess my faith in the Lord Jesus Christ."

Susannah's conversion occurred from a sermon preached by S. B. Bergene at Poultry Chapel where she was visiting. She later wrote, "From that service, I date the dawning of the true light in my soul. The Lord said to me, through his servant, 'Give me thy heart,' and constrained by His love that night witnessed my solemn resolution of entire surrender to Himself."

Susannah first heard 19-year-old Charles Spurgeon on Sunday night, December 18, 1853. It was his first Sunday at New Park Street Chapel. She was not impressed by the young preacher. She thought

his manner was countrified, his clothes were rumpled, and his hair unevenly cut. But her first impression soon changed. Before long they were deeply in love, and Charles proposed August 2, 1854, and they were married 18 months later, January 8, 1856.

The first 10 to 12 years of their marriage Susannah played a very active part in her husband's ministry. She was actively involved in personal work, visitation, and providing counsel

to young girls and women. Susannah had given birth to twin boys named Charles Jr. and Thomas on September 20, 1856. The birth of the twins was extremely difficult. She would never fully recover, and her health would continue to decline until by the time she was 36 she was a semi-invalid.

Although weak and in poor health, Susannah was a constant encourager to her husband and a faithful instructor to her sons. They were converted at a young age and both became Baptist preachers. Thomas would become the successor of his father as pastor of Metropolitan Tabernacle.

An important event occurred in Susannah's life in 1875, when Charles gave her a proof copy of his *Lectures to My Students*. When she finished the book she told him, "I wish I could

place this book in the hands of every minister in England."

Spurgeon replied, "Then why not do so: how much will you give?"

Challenged by her husband, Susannah scraped together enough money to buy 100 books to give to poor ministers, and thus was born the Book Fund. Susannah and her helpers would eventually distribute over 200,000 books free of charge to poor ministers.

Mrs. Spurgeon was herself a gifted writer. She gathered the material and edited, assisted by Spurgeon's private secretary Joseph Harrald, the four-volume *Autobiography of Charles Spurgeon*. She wrote several other books, but perhaps her most popular and influential was *A Cluster of Camphire or Words of Cheer and Comfort for Sick and Sorrowful Souls*.

On October 7, 1903, with her life slipping away, she gave her parting blessing to her son, Thomas, "The blessing, the double blessing of your father's God be upon you and your brother."

"When very near the end, she clasped her feeble hands together, and her face aglow with heavenly radiance exclaimed; 'Blessed Jesus! Blessed Jesus! I can see the King in His Glory!'" (Charles Ray in "*Mrs. C. H. Spurgeon*"). She went to be with her Lord October 22, 1903. She was 71 years old. She was laid to rest beside her husband's grave at Norwood Cemetery where they will rise together on the resurrection day.



by Thomas Ray





URBAN CURRENT

Boston as a base

Boston is home of the first public school, the first subway system, the first all female law school, and the first phone call in history. Called the Athens of America because of the 100 colleges and universities in the metropolitan area, the city is also a booming center for medicine, research, electronics, engineering, finance, and high technology: principally biotechnology.

Boston, as many cities are, is experiencing gentrification, producing some of the highest cost of living in the United States. Maybe that's why 70 percent of housing units in Boston are occupied by renters rather than owners. A two-bedroom apartment in Boston costs \$1,343 a month on average. The average single-family housing unit in Boston lists for about \$500,000.

This is what David Melton experienced when he arrived in the mid 1990s. The current president of Boston Baptist College says his move from Springfield, Missouri, to Boston doubled his mortgage. Later, when he moved to Wellesley, a Boston suburb, his mortgage doubled again.

Yes, there are financial reasons not to go to the city. But the Apostle Paul never went to the city because it was cheaper. The Holy Spirit led him there because that's where the souls are.

Speaking of souls ... the unofficial capital of New England, Boston, has 617,594 people in the city proper. Greater Boston is peopled by 4.5 million, making it the tenth largest metropolitan area in the country.

The city of 21 official neighborhoods grew by almost five percent from 2002 to 2010, with the white population at 47 percent, African American at 22 percent, and a growing Hispanic population rising to almost 18 percent. Known the world over for its history, its prominence in academia, and its culture, more than 18 million

people visit the city every year. In 2006, Boston and its metropolitan area ranked as the fourth largest cyber city in the United States with almost 200,000 high-tech jobs. Greater Boston boasts the sixth largest economy in the country. It was classified as an "incipient global city" by a 2004 study group at Loughborough University in England.

Pedestrian commutes are far more popular than in cities of comparable population. The city famous for Bunker Hill also has one of the highest rates of bicycle commuters.

Melton claims he became a reluctant church planter in this metropolis known as one of the birthplaces of the hardcore Punk genre of music. He was drawn to Wellesley, a suburb in Greater Boston. He studied demographics for three months, discovering that in all likelihood, 98 out of 100 people were not born again, with only 1.7 percent of the people professing to be Christian. With three-fourths of a million residents, the Yellow Pages "Churches" section was only two-thirds of one page. His church plant became the only Baptist church in Wellesley.

He is living and serving powered by a desire to be "where the need is the greatest." His attitude is "let's play hardball with the big boys." He stresses an "understanding of the importance of the role of higher education."

It seems to me these three things are motivations, attitudes, and mindsets that the generation of young Christians coming up need to grip firmly. This is the heart which will cause one to bury his or her life like a seed in a place like Boston, believing God will grow it and make it fruitful in ways that will mark eternity. Investing one's life in a place like Boston is a way to leverage one's life in a global urbanized mission field.

Remember Moody. A native of Northfield,

Massachusetts, 17-year-old D.L. Moody came to Boston for the same reason many people all over the world move to cities: to try to make some money. While working as a clerk in Holton's Shoe Store in Boston, his Sunday school teacher visited him and won him to Christ. Several decades after Moody's conversion, he returned to Boston. While he was leading successful campaign after successful campaign, this effort in the hard soil of Bean Town would be called a failure by some.

It is worth noting that it was Moody who said, "Waters run down hill and the highest hills in America are the great cities. If we can stir them, we shall stir the whole country."

Robert Raikes, the founder of Sunday school in a city across the ocean, was then responsible for a Sunday school teacher who came to visit young Moody in a city on this side of the ocean. Who could have known that man would in turn impact cities on both sides of the ocean?

Boston should be viewed as a base: a base of theological education, a base for urban ministry education, a base of evangelistic endeavors, a base for concerted church planting efforts, a base for gospel operations of all kinds, a base from which Great Commission projects can be launched across the region and the world.

by Charles Lyons, Pastor
Armitage Baptist Church,
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A woman's walk with God

My mother always said...

This is the prayer journal of Ruby Prentiss. Ruby's name is a fiction, but she is a real composite of women I have known and loved. She is a woman in ministry facing all-too-real challenges, not unlike the ones ministry women all over the world experience. Through her journaling, you will most likely see some of yourself and realize that you are not alone.

I recall a number of maxims my mother used, like "Do the best with what you have" or "Waste not, want not." But the life lesson I never understood until recently is "Enjoy your children every day; they'll be grown before you know it." Oh, how often these past few months that phrase has echoed in my head!

Sure enough, I blinked and it happened. No one knows exactly how or when it actually happened, but my little girl is growing up. Overnight. I can almost see every other mother nodding in agreement. To be honest, I'm rather shell-shocked. Wasn't it just yesterday that I was brushing her unruly auburn tangles? I will never forget when she confidently glided down the stairs last night to greet her handsome date before their senior banquet. How, in just 17 short years, had she grown into this gloriously beautiful young woman — with, I must add, the most wonderfully thick red hair, with a shine that most girls

only dream of, swept up in the cutest modern style ever?

I remained composed during the traditional photo shoot, but as soon as our front door closed after them, my composure failed me. I simply burst into tears. My husband's comforting arms and nonverbal affirmations weren't much comfort. My little girl had grown up. Only two months until graduation, then we'll be experiencing our very last summer together before she spreads her wings off to college.

Have I poured enough into her?

My experience of motherhood will go on with three more children in the home, but I couldn't help asking myself if I'd done enough with my firstborn — enough in the most profound work I'll ever do. I've always taken the admonition of rearing children in the fear and nurture of the Lord very seriously. Gripped again by the weight of responsibility, I placed my head on my pillow still asking, "Have I done enough as

her mom? Enough teaching, enough listening, enough loving, enough challenging, enough being present for her times of rejoicing and times of tears?"

I remembered what it felt like when she used to love climbing up on my lap to hear a story or just to cuddle. My mom had a saying

for that, too, "A mother's lap is the place where security and where trust is developed."

Those lap-time moments are gone forever. But hearing details about a "totally awesome, fun evening" while plopped across my bed feels almost as good. It's a miracle, but I think I'm going to enjoy this new, sweet season in our relationship.

I finally get it. Mother was right. Those curly-haired little darlings don't stay little for very long. Years from now when my daughter has children of her own, I pray she will share the same hopes, dreams, and miracle-prayers for them as I have had for her. Meanwhile, I'm storing every memory I can, not in boxes or on shelves in closets, but down deep in my heart. When I long for my daughter to be near, missing her desperately this fall, I'm going to need to climb right up into the lap of Jesus. He held the little ones and blessed them. I know He will do the same for me. I will leave the miracles to Him.

Prayer: Thank you, my Father, for our little ones. In the grand scheme of things, I know they must grow up and often leave home. And when that day comes, as it will come, I'll understand that all this is part of Your plan for my children. They are not mine; they were never mine; they are Yours. How I thank You that You never leave me nor forsake me. I ask for strength and peace that only comes from laying my Issacs down.

Verse: "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." (3 John 4)

by Sharon Hoffman
1sharonhoffman@gmail.com

Sharon Hoffman is a veteran pastor's wife, conference speaker, and writer. She is married to Rob Hoffman, vice president of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO.



BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Our students model BBFI philosophy and methods



by Jim Edge | President | Baptist Bible College

As I interact with our students, I am reminded of Ecclesiastes 9:2, “Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.” Members of the student body at Baptist Bible College flesh out that passage day in and day out. From involvement in their local churches to volunteering in the mentor programs of local public schools, these young men and women are committed to ministry now. But far from a social gospel ministry, these students have learned in the classroom that the only ultimate solution for this culture’s ills is a relationship with Christ and His church.

This was driven home to me once again as I traveled with eight of our students to the Cebu International Meeting of the BBFI. Our students were deeply moved to see the influence the BBFI has worldwide and to see other regions embrace the missionary and church planting philosophy of the BBFI. Our students saw that the BBFI philosophy works! They were especially interested in meeting college students from Bible Baptist College of Cebu. Like their counterparts in America, these Asian students embrace the same passion to influence the world. Our students walked through their facilities and saw the living conditions. After asking a few questions, they learned the staple food for the Filipino students is rice, and that it takes about \$50,000 to supply rice to the entire student body for a school year. As we met for prayer on the way home, the students said they were committing the student body of BBC to raise \$50,000 to supply rice for these students for one year. I didn’t want to discourage them, but in my heart had my doubts.

Now, three months later, I am thrilled to report to you that approximately \$10,000 has been raised for the Grain Project. BBC Student Council President D. J. Cabrera writes, “It’s something that we can do to impact our world through our brothers and sisters in the Philippines. The Grain Project is a vision from our trip that we want to accomplish as a student body. Through the Grain Project we can meet a great need and also affect the world because the students in Cebu are going to go and reach people with the gospel.”

I have learned once again the power of passion in the work of Christ and the importance of teamwork. Our student leaders are working with all of our student body to accomplish their goal. They are doing so with a servant’s heart, less concerned about who gets the credit but determined to accomplish their goal of raising \$50,000.

Our students’ desire to work together to accomplish a giant goal reminds me of our founders 61 years ago. Our students are learning our Baptist theology in the classroom, and they have embraced the BBFI philosophy of missions and church planting modeled by our pastors and churches. But it is much more than a sterile classroom experience for them; it is a lifestyle of passionate ministry, working together with their peers to accomplish the Great Commission.

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE

Of Wade and Walmart



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

Walmart has just about everything. I call it “the \$200-store” because with a family our size we can go in there to stock up on nothing fun and still leave \$200 lighter.

Then there is a wonderful guy in my town named Wade, who is a real craftsman. He is up in years and works with wood for fun. Need a power bar, go to Walmart. Need a table refinished, go to Wade.

Now I am not suggesting that Walmart and the other megamarts aren’t important, maybe even necessary. But it is an entirely different thing than going to Wade’s. One works to have just about anything you could want. The other knows what he is good at — very good at — and that is what he does. No smiley faces, no nice old fellow saying hi to you and pushing a cart toward you. Nope, just Wade (who also smiles), and his tools, and his wood.

Colleges always wrestle with what they will be. And in a Walmart world, there are tons of colleges that “do it all.” Wade-kind-of-colleges are a different story entirely. Boston Baptist College is a Wade-kind-of-place. We do ministry education for Baptists. We know we are not for everybody, we know we are not one of the big guys. We embrace the “wood” we are privileged to work with, and we pray to God to be skilled in our efforts — to do quality work, to treat every project with the love and care of a craftsman.

I can tell you about Wade’s work. He doesn’t rush, but he doesn’t waste time either. He doesn’t create the wood, he just tries to sand it, polish it, and finish it to its finest potential.

Reminds me of some students. When you — our churches — guide students to us, they are just about never “finished.” But we see the “grain of God” in their lives. So we go to work.

In Boston, I have said from my inaugural address to this very minute, “Ministry education is too important not to be led by ministers.” We have strong academics; of course, those are the tools that shape the wood into form. But ministers know the craft, and we make it clear that is what we want — we use those who bleed “ministry” to educate our students.

Get this. We just honored Phil Smith who has been an affiliate mathematics professor for us for almost a decade. He has an MBA from one of New England’s most respected business schools. But even more importantly, since the first of this year Phil has just started a new Baptist church as a ministry out of Ocean State Baptist Church pastored by Archie Emerson. Did you catch that? Our math prof is a church planter! That’s no Walmart thing. Nope, sit back and soak in the sounds and the skills of a craftsman. This is just the way Wade likes it. It’s the Boston way.

Wisconsin church back in the missions business

Sun Prairie, WI

Pastor Rick Bloom and Calvary Baptist Church held their first faith promise missionary conference since Bloom was named pastor in August last year. The conference, themed "Untold Millions ... Still Untold," was held April 15-17. BBFI Associate Mission Director Steve Bender was the keynote speaker. Missionary guests included Scott and Amanda Miller, currently on deputation to serve in Lima, Peru, as well as a missionary couple to the Arabic-speaking world, whose names cannot be disclosed for security reasons.



Pastor Bloom says he was hesitant about having a mission conference so early in his pastorate, but since the church was without a pastor more than two years, missionary obligations were being paid out of the church's general fund. He believed a renewed vision was just what the church needed.

The church's faith promise commitment was \$22,536, enough to return their missionaries to previous support levels and then some. In addition, one young man com-

mitted to attend Bible college and another was saved Sunday morning. Pastor Bloom says other decisions occurred as well.

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Riverside Baptist chartered

Kankakee, IL



The Seydens (right) with Bruce and Laurie Humbert

Riverside Baptist Church held their charter service Sunday afternoon, April 3, 2011. Church pastor Ben Seyden is a graduate of Baptist Bible College, and the mother church for the new congregation is Sauk Trail Baptist Temple in Richton Park, IL, where Bruce Humbert is the pastor. Bruce says, "Ben and Jessica and their three children are pioneering a work the old-fashioned way ... one soul at a time!" The new church's average attendance is 75.

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New church in Singapore

Larry Clayton of Salvation Evangelistic Enterprises has announced a new church start in Singapore. Pictured here are Larry Clayton and Joseph Knauf during a recent meeting in the church. The new church is a mission of Christian Bible Baptist Church of San Pedro, Philippines, where Ed Laurena is pastor. Clayton says, "Last week this new church had 36, with one adult saved and three baptized. Please pray for them, the rent for a place to meet is the most expensive I have ever seen and there are a lot of government controls on new churches."



Dr. Jimmy DeYoung,
Speaker, Author,
President of Shofar
Ministries

"I chose to complete my doctoral work at LBU because of the quality and flexibility of the program and because the school is doctrinally conservative and dispensational. My experience at LBU was very gratifying. I continue to be affiliated with the university and recommend that graduates from my School of Prophets Institute consider LBU for further studies, especially in their graduate program."



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Church planters explore differences, share purpose

Albany, NY

Church planters from Ohio, New Hampshire, Michigan, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Texas, and New York gathered near Albany, NY, to share ideas and to meet other current and prospective church planters April 11-15 at Temple Baptist Church in Half Moon, NY. Hosts for the event were the BBFI National Church Planting Office (NCPO) and the pastors of Temple Baptist Church.

The BBFI NCPO conducts a school for church planters a few times each year. Often, the school is held in conjunction with a church planting event for pastors and others interested in church planting, and specialists are invited to those events to share their expertise with both the candidates and the veteran pastors. In the April meeting, Monday and Tuesday were set aside for individual presentations and round table discussions with the church planters. They told their start-up stories,

gave advice, and spent several hours in fellowship and worship.

NCPO Director Wayne Guinn says, "This meeting gave some guys with different perspec-

Northeast, and the craziest thing dawned on me. These guys have the same heart that I have. They want to see as many people saved as possible. ... They were also as passionate about serving the Lord as I am. Maybe even a little more passionate."

Host Pastor Duke Hergatt also invited several area NY pastors to attend. He has hopes to revitalize the New York BBF around church planting efforts.

The preachers attending the conference were (from OH) Dan Lamb, Walt Yeomans, some youth from Hillsboro, Tim Carter, Charles Smith, Jeremy Stout, Ryan Bevan, and Steve Bell; (from NJ) Dave Bulka; (from NH) Anthony Milas, Rob Willis, Steve Jesmer, Michael Gall, and Tom King; (from MI) Josh Combs and Wes Morris; (from PA) Bryan Kelly and Aaron Douthitt; (from TX) Brian Lee; (from MO) Josh Todd; (from NY) Clyde McCaskill, Duke Hergatt, Kevin Maloney, Matt Eachus, Scott Fischer, Mike Switzer, and George Haddon.



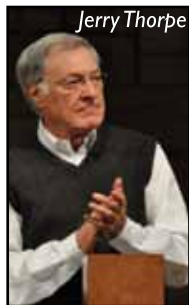
tives and methodologies the opportunity to be in contact with one another. They enjoyed the experience and rejoiced they had the same heart for evangelism and church planting."

Ohio BBF Chairman Tim Carter later wrote in the *Ohio Informer*, "I sat there listening to them talk about what the Lord was doing in the

Midway Baptist hosts Texas BBF

Aubrey, TX

Pastor John Henry Theisen and Midway Baptist Church hosted the spring meeting of the Texas BBF April 11-12. The theme was "Joy in the Journey," and preachers included Charles Lowery (Lowery Institute for Excellence), Jerry Thorpe (Pastor Emeritus, Crossroads Fellowship, Odessa, TX), and Brad Wilkerson (COC Metro, Prosper, TX).



The Midway staff hosted informative breakout sessions for ladies, student pastors, and worship leaders. After the meeting the church provided a catered lunch followed by golf, fishing, and a ladies shopping trip. Rick Carter of Canyon Creek Baptist Church in Richardson, TX, is the TXBBF chairman.

Best spring for Edgewood Baptist

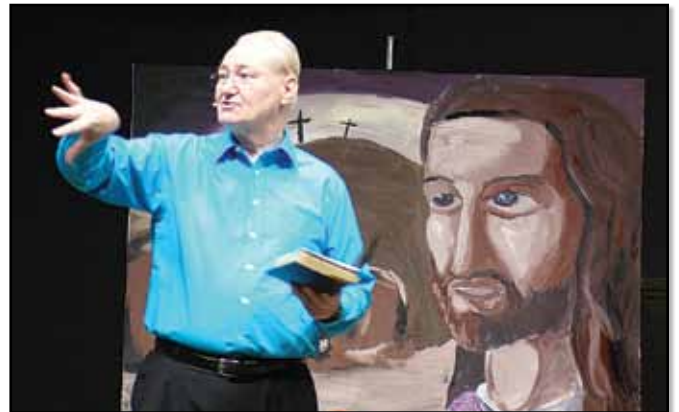
Rock Island, IL

Pastor Mel Brown and Edgewood Baptist Church are experiencing the finest spring in the church's 105-year history.

Attendance averaged 1,205 throughout the spring with a high attendance of 1,880 on Easter.

For Easter, Brown, who has served as senior pastor 42 years, preached on the topic, "The Resurrection: Change You Can Believe In," and two artists from the church illustrated the sermon on a huge canvas as he preached. More than 250 visitors attended the Easter services, and the church is on track to reach its goal of receiving 150 new members into the member-

ship in 2011, the majority of them by baptism. Edgewood supports more than 100 missionaries on a regular basis in addition to numerous missionary projects.



Pastor Mel Brown preaching on Easter

LBU graduates 177

Shreveport, LA

Graduation services were held May 6, 2011, for Louisiana Baptist University and Seminary at Summer Grove Baptist Church in Shreveport, LA. Jonathan Falwell, pastor of Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, VA, and son of the late Jerry Falwell, delivered the commencement address to the 177 graduates and several hundred guests. Among the 2011 graduates were veteran Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries Greg and Lu-Ann Lyons. LBU President Neal Weaver conferred an honorary Doctorate of Letters to Falwell. Additionally, BBF Associate Mission Director James Smith received an honorary Doctorate of Divinity.

Friday's commencement services concluded a four-day graduation week itinerary that included 17 workshops by 20 notable Christian

speakers, alumni events, a Homecoming Song Fest, and the Annual Cajun Fest Celebration honoring the graduates. This year's graduation week was also the launch for LBU's "Beginning of Miracles" campaign. The campaign's goal is



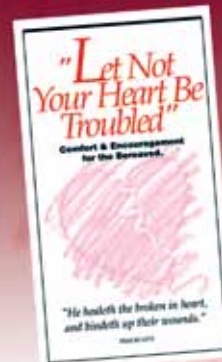
Jonathan Falwell (center) with LBU President, Neal Weaver (right) and LBU Executive Vice-President of Administration, Sandra Cory

to raise \$500,000 over the next three years to underwrite the construction of a new auditorium and conference center on the LBU campus. Nearly \$250,000 was received in pledges and contributions during the kick-off banquet.

Louisiana Baptist University and Seminary currently has an enrollment of over 1,400 on-campus and external-study students. Founded in 1973, LBU has been a pioneer in distance edu-

cation offering both undergraduate and post-graduate programs to students from the United States and around the world.

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BBF women honor Sharon Courtney

Georgetown, TX

One of the less-known features of BBF life on the Internet is a discussion list called the BBF-Ladies List. The discussion list, hosted on bbfi.net, serves as a fellowship vehicle for BBF women in ministry. Occasionally, the participants meet face to face at fellowship meetings, but last month Bettye Ledbetter of Georgetown convened a special get-together for Sharon Courtney who is battling cancer.

Sharon Courtney, wife of veteran BBF pastor Ed Courtney, was first diagnosed in 2004. After a time of remission, the cancer returned a few months ago, and according to physicians Sharon will live about six months.

Twenty-two women came to a luncheon in Georgetown to visit Sharon and to honor her. Terre Farwell, a BBF-Ladies List leader, says,

"Sharon is a very honorable woman of God. She loves Him with all her heart and is ready to see Him face to face. My heart was overflowing in



awe to be in her presence and call her my friend."

Each of the luncheon guests spoke with Sharon, and she addressed them all with inspiration, tears, and laughter.

Terre Farwell provided the information for this article.

Editor's note:

We regret the error. We sometimes get it wrong. Two issues back, the *Tribune* printed one of those stories we love to get. It featured a member of Beacon Baptist Church in Taylor, MI, who wanted to help church attendees with special needs. It is a great formula. A member sees a need and does what he or she can to meet that need. One of his pastors, John Reilly, who was named co-pastor of the church not long ago, helped with the submission of the story. Where we got it wrong was, for one thing, we mis-identified John as the pastor of Beacon, and for another, we misspelled his name. So, for the record, I apologize to all involved, and promise we will work harder at our proofing. Herb Gilbert, I am happy to note, remains the senior pastor at Beacon, a post he has occupied about 45 years. The church celebrates its 50th anniversary this year.

Editor Keith Bassham

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Cedar Hills Baptist Church hosts revival, Illinois BBF

Dunlap, IL

Cedar Hills Baptist Church pastored by Tim Beddingfield hosted the April Illinois Baptist Bible Fellowship April 4-5, which coincided with the church's revival meeting of which Pastor Tom Wagoner of Central Baptist Church in Dunn, NC, was the speaker. Monday night the preachers heard from Tom Wagoner, the Cedar Hills choir, and other special music. Speakers for Tuesday morning included Tom Wagoner on "Faith for the Vision," Kelly McNerney of Bible Baptist Church in Wilmington, OH, on church planting, and Bruce Humbert of Sauk Trail Baptist Temple, Richton Park, IL, on God's faithfulness. Illinois pastors also received reports from

three church planters being supported by the IBBFI and Angela Beddingfield hosted a special ladies meeting themed "Growing in Grace."

"This was the first time that Cedar Hills has ever done anything like this," says Pastor Beddingfield. "As a pastor, I could not be more proud of my people for the wonderful job they did hosting the pastors and their wives. Their love for Jesus was so



From left: Bruce Humbert, Kelly McNerney, Tim Beddingfield, and Tom Wagoner

evident to our guests. They are the most precious people I know."

Tim Beddingfield became the pastor of Cedar Hills Baptist Church in May 2010. He and his wife Angela were on staff at Sauk Trail Baptist Temple in

Richton Park, IL, for 12 years before God called them to the town of Dunlap located on the north edge of Peoria.

AFLAC medical supplement program available for BBFI

Springfield, MO

The BBFI Groups Benefits Committee approved a new medical supplement program through AFLAC at the May 2011 fellowship meeting.

According to Mel Himes of Mel Himes & Associates Insurance Agency, AFLAC offers individual plans that help offset expenses when you are sick or hurt. He says the plans pay cash benefits direct-



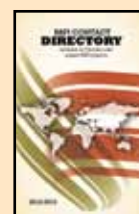
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ly to you to help you and your family with unexpected expenses due to an accident, sickness, or hospital stay. It pays regardless of any other insurance you may have in place.

Mel Himes & Associates Insurance Agency has been assisting the BBFI with insurance programs since 1992 and is an endorsed agency for the BBFI. The new BBFI AFLAC program offers a discount to all BBFI pastors and staff members.

Enrollment in the program can be done by telephone using a toll free number (877) 365-7966, though Himes stresses the caller should

identify himself or herself as part of the BBFI. Mel Himes can be reached at (800) 329-3031, extension 205, for more information.



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Trinity Baptist Church rises from literal ashes

Austin, TX

Nearly four years after an arsonist's fire destroyed their prior church building, Trinity Baptist Church in Austin, TX, dedicated their new building with 300 in attendance April 10, 2011. David Burkholder is the church's pastor.

Fire destroyed the older building Sunday morning August 19, 2007. Since then, the church has been meeting in a funeral home for morning services and renting another congregation's building for their evening activities.

Pastor Burkholder says the new facility is

completely debt-free, paid for through the congregational giving, insurance proceeds, and property sales. The church paid for construction as they built without outside financing, and moved into the new building in January.

Burkholder, who has pastored the congregation 27 years, says, "All the praise goes to the Lord. He helped us. All I know to say is that the Lord just worked everything out."



Recovering A/V equipment from water damage

West Chester, OH

"Any wire that has been in water is ruined," according to sound technician Scott Weaver of Troubadour Solutions. He says, "It may work now, but the life expectancy has been drastically reduced months later." This makes it difficult

to receive damages from an insurance company down the road.

Weaver says, "After Katrina and Ike we sent crews to help churches in New Orleans, Houston, and Galveston with their audio video systems.

We learned some things about settling with insurance companies. Some want to replace as little as possible, and you need to know what could be damaged." Some hidden damages could

happen to "snake" cables, Cat5, speaker wires, and signal cable.

Even speakers high above the floor don't have to be in contact with water to suffer damage. Weaver recalls, "The speakers hanging over the water in the New Orleans churches had condensation on the voice coils. Even if they didn't get submersed in water, any electronics in these extra-humid rooms must be thoroughly dried before the first startup."

He also warns about non-water damage, such as power fluctuations associated with bad weather. Weaver counsels, "Electronics need to be checked out before assuming they are not damaged." Scott can be contacted at doc@christianmanagement.com for information.

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Shane Peters ordained

Tulsa, OK



Shane Peters was ordained into the gospel ministry April 10 at Heatheridge Baptist Church in Tulsa, OK. In the photo are the ordination council and Shane and Tonya Peters. The council members were Rick Bradford, Bill Carter (Pastor of Heatheridge), Don Elmore, and Keith Bassham.

Del-Mar BBF holds meeting in county prison

Georgetown, DE

The Del-Mar BBF preachers had their April monthly meeting in a Sussex County Prison Institution, Georgetown, Delaware. Coordinated by Del-Mar Chairman Johnnie Brewer, Russ Kessler of Voice of Victory Prison Ministry, and Chaplain Larry Lilly, a 1972 BBC graduate, the meeting put pastors and inmates together for a worship service.

Chaplain Lilly spoke on the need to reach out to the incarcerated across America, those whom he calls "a great mission field is right in our back yard" since, according to him 95 percent of those incarcerated will one day be released back into society. Kessler noted that according to FBI statistics U.S. inmates have a 78 percent recidivism

rate, but if an inmate will receive Christ and get involved with Bible discipleship, that rate falls to less than six percent.

The prison choir provided the special music for the meeting. Kessler says, "Several preachers stated they wished their choir sounded as good as the prison choir."

Two of the inmates came from a preacher's home, and both noted that their parents trained

them up in the ways of the Lord, but it was their choice not to follow the right path. They said that it took going to prison to wake them up and start following the Lord again. Both are enrolled in the Bible institute that Kessler runs in the prison, and the institute has more than 300 students in four prisons.

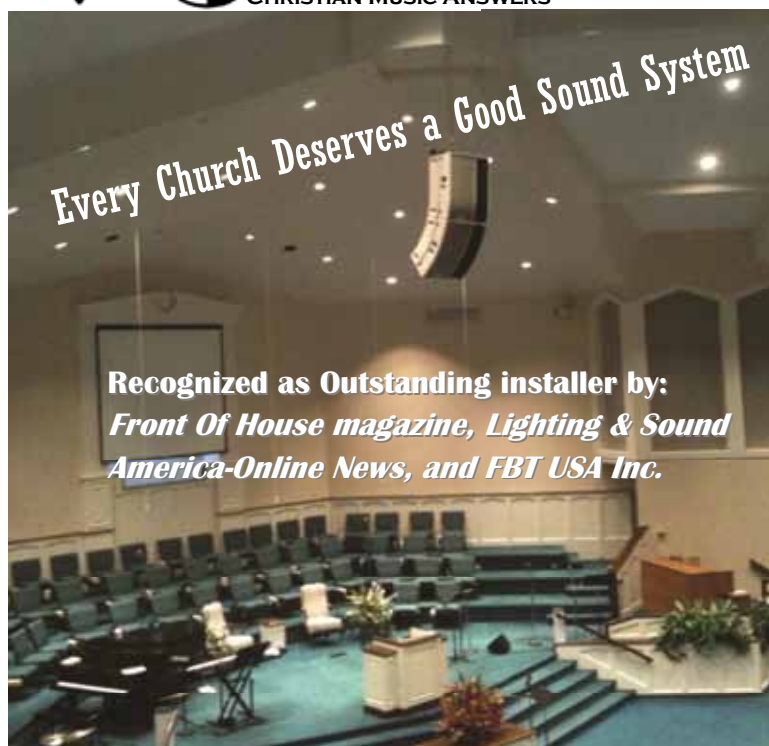
Pastor Dave Mason of First Baptist Church in Bel-Air, MD, also spoke at the meeting. He is a former police and correctional officer.

For more information regarding prison ministry, those interested may call Russ Kessler at (302) 222-4596, or contact him by mail at The Voice of Victory Prison Ministry, PO Box 186, Harrington, DE 19952.



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Bible conference and BBF meeting in Ohio

Westerville, OH



Pastor Matt Keller and Calvary Bible Baptist Church of Westerville, OH, hosted a Bible conference and the Ohio BBF meeting in early May. The conference ran from Sunday, May 1, to Wednesday, May 4, and the Ohio fellowship met Monday and Tuesday, May 2 and 3. Preachers for the Bible Conference were Ergun Caner, Brian White, and Keith Bassham of the Baptist Bible Tribune. Fellowship meeting speakers were John Cooley, Bob Burney, Brian White, and Keith Bassham. Shown at left are those who attended the OH BBF meeting.

BBC alumni project

Springfield, MO

By Marty Hughes

BBC Alumni Association President Tim Wertz is challenging all alumni to get involved in this summer's campus student center renovation project. The Alumni Association has decided to renovate, refurbish, and update the Student Center. Wertz is challenging every alumnus to contribute at least \$1 for every year since his or her graduation. The goal is to get as many alumni as possible involved in this \$20,000 project. The Alumni Association hopes to have the renovation complete before the fall semester. If you would like to be a part of this project, please send your check to BBC at 628 E. Kearney, Springfield, MO 65803 marked "2011 Alumni Project."

Puerto Rico mission conference

Dorado, Puerto Rico



Bill Hoving and North Point Baptist Church in Puerto Rico held the church's fifth annual mission conference March 25-27. Bill called the conference WOW, an acronym for World Outreach Weekend. Jim and Sharon Smith (right front) from the BBFI Mission Office joined Bill and Vicki Hoving (left front) and the church for the conference. Hoving says, "Jim and Sharon did a fantastic job in creating a passion for world missions within our people. Our faith promise giving continues to be strong as we support 12 missionaries throughout the world."

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Retirement: a contribution strategy that works

Dallas, TX

While the economy as a whole has been experiencing a significant recovery for nearly two years, many investors are still hesitant to be optimistic. When coupled with the fact that a few organizations haven't reinstated retirement incentive programs, it's causing some to even doubt the usefulness of their contributions. However, this doubt is misplaced for one important reason. Outside influences like these won't change the central fact about retirement plans: Every dollar you contribute will help enhance your financial security more than every dollar you don't contribute.

To demonstrate this truth, and to help you develop a worthwhile contribution strategy, let's examine a few facts you may not be aware of:

1. Your retirement plan is still one of your best resources for the future. Why? Three reasons stand out: Your contributions can lower your current taxable income, earnings on contributions grow tax deferred and contributions are taken out of each paycheck automatically so there's no need for you to budget funds and write a check. So when things get shaky, the solution is not to pull away from a retirement plan that can greatly benefit your future. In the long run, it's just not worth it.

2. Your consistent contributions are key. Throughout history, most investors who have endured recessions and stayed on track to reach their retirement goals have a common story: consistent contributions. Rather than reduce or eliminate contributions during hard times, these investors held to a long-term strategy that involved steady saving habits aimed at reaching their retirement goals. For example, according to a March 2011 report from Associated Press, 90 percent of retirement plans have fully recovered from the recession, and many who kept investing throughout the downturn are now ahead.

3. Your allocation forms the path to your goals. When planning a vacation, you don't just hop in the car without a plan. You choose a destination, find the best way to get there, and determine how you'll spend your stay. The same is true when it comes to retirement. You don't just throw money at a retirement plan. You consider your

goals, calculate income requirements and distance from retirement, and then determine an appropriate investment portfolio allocation that meets those needs. Without a carefully prepared allocation strategy, retirement planning can quickly become a series of guesses. And that's a guessing game you can't afford to lose.

GuideStone offers three easy-to-understand investment approaches that can help you prepare an investment portfolio that meets your needs. These funds also remain competitive in the industry. For example, the esteemed *F360 Fiduciary Rankings* ranked GuideStone's funds eight of 212 among its peers in March 2011. Review our funds today at www.GuideStoneRetirement.org/InvestmentChoices.

How do you determine a contribution strategy that works well? You look at the elements that have worked well throughout the course of history. Invest in a trustworthy retirement plan like that offered by GuideStone, maintain consistency in your contribution schedule and make sure your portfolio is allocated to meet your unique needs. And while that seems simple, it's certainly not always easy. That's why GuideStone is here to help you every step of the way. We have an unparalleled commitment to your financial

security, and we stand ready to serve your retirement needs.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Cyndi Jaquez by phone at 214.720.6561 or via email at Cyndi.Jaquez@GuideStone.org

You should carefully consider the investment objectives, risks, charges, and expenses of the GuideStone Funds before investing. A prospectus with this and other information about the funds may be obtained by calling 1-888-98-GUIDE (1-888-984-8433) or download one at www.GuideStone.org. It should be read carefully before investing.

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Percy Phillips

Willard, MO

Percy Stanton Phillips, age 84, of Willard, MO, passed away Friday, April 29. Born September 26, 1926, in Frewsburg, NY, Percy grew up in Frewsburg and joined the Navy to serve in the Pacific during WWII. After the war, he attended Moody Bible Institute and conducted various mission activities. During this time he met and married Wilma Faye Lambott.

He served as pastor at Community Church in Willard, KS, assistant pastor at Eastside Baptist Church in Topeka, KS, and afterward became a printer and maintenance engineer at Baptist Bible College, where he served 42 years until his retirement in 2008.

Percy's gracious and genteel disposition was well known to BBC students, missionaries, and pastors for more than four decades. If you were on campus for a few hours, days, weeks, or years, this behind-the-scenes minister of the gospel had an effect on your life. Those who had the privilege of being close to him will tell you that he and Wilma mentored them in Christian service. Percy is survived by his wife Wilma, their three sons, and their families.



Cecil Hodges

Savannah, GA

Veteran BBFI pastor Cecil A. Hodges went to be with the Lord April 9, 2011, at the age of 86. Born in Nathlie, VA, May 2, 1924, he served in the United States Naval Air Force during WWII, receiving an honorable discharge in 1945. The same year, he met and married Kathleen, his wife, for the next 66 years.

In 1953, Pastor Hodges entered Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO. In addition to his theological work at BBC, he was also awarded three honorary doctorates.

His first pastorate was Bible Baptist Church in Fernandina Beach, FL, from 1954-1957. In January 1957, he became the pastor of Bible Baptist Church in Savannah, GA, a pulpit he would occupy until 1998. While at Bible Baptist, membership rose to more than 4,000 and was among those churches listed in *America's Fastest Growing Churches* in the 1970s. Pastor Hodges also founded Bible Baptist Day School in 1970. The church helped organize 96 new churches, and 100 men and 41 women from the church are now in full-time Christian service around the world.

Pastor Hodges served in leadership in several positions with the BBFI, North American Baptist Missionary Association, Baptist University of America, American Association of Christian Schools, Tennessee Temple University, and Rotary International.

In June 1999, Pastor Hodges began the Effingham Baptist Church in Rincon, GA, retiring again in 2005.

Pastor Hodges is survived by his wife Kathleen, and a daughter and her family.

Memorial services were held April 11, 2011, at Bible Baptist Church in Savannah. His death was marked by a House Resolution and passed by the Georgia General Assembly honoring his life and work.



Verlyn Newell

Cobb Mountain, CA

Verlyn Ray Newell graduated to heaven on April 12, 2011. Born June 13, 1934, on a farm just south of Olivet, SD, he enlisted in the United States Air Force after graduating high school in 1953 and served in the Philippines as a member of the Air Force Security Service during the Korea Conflict.

In the Philippines, Verlyn met BBFI missionary L.D. Woosley. Under Woosley's influence he committed his life to become a missionary to the Philippine Islands. Returning from the Islands, Verlyn was stationed at San Antonio, TX, where he met Margaret Schupp who became his wife. Margaret had just graduated from Baptist Bible College, Springfield, MO, where Verlyn enrolled.

After graduation, Verlyn interned as the pastor of Banner Baptist Church in San Antonio, TX, and subsequently they applied to become missionaries through the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. During their depuration the couple learned that Margaret had Lupus, possibly fatal.

Verlyn said, "The door to my life and the mission field slammed firmly closed. But God is faithful and Margaret lived on for more than 30 years serving beside me and though she suffered with various medical issues due to the Lupus, she never complained."

The mission field being the world, Verlyn simply changed fields to the United States which took them to California where he served in several churches, ending with Grace Baptist Church, Vallejo, CA, where he was pastor 37 years until his retirement and the death of Margaret. He was also instrumental in founding what is now Napa Valley Baptist Church.

Verlyn remarried, and he is survived by his wife Betty and two sons.



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

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

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

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

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

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

GEORGIA

• **Cornerstone Baptist Church**, 1400 Grayson Hwy., Lawrenceville, GA 30245. 770/338-2677 *Pastor Tim Neal*

• **Central Fellowship Baptist Church and Academy**, 8460 Hawkinsville Rd. Hwy 247, 3 miles north of Robins Air Force Base, Macon GA 31216. 478/781-2981 www.centralfellowship.org *Pastor Rodney Queen*

HAWAII

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

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

IOWA

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

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• **Millington Street Baptist Church**, 1304 Millington St., Winfield, KS 67156. 316/221-4700. *Pastor Jeff McCaskill*

• **Friendship Baptist Church**, 2209 E. Pawnee, Wichita, KS 67213 316/263-0269, *Pastor Steve Day*

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

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MARYLAND

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

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

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

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

NORTH CAROLINA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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• **Cypress Creek Baptist Church**, 21870 Northwest Freeway, Houston, TX 77429. 281/469-6089 *Pastor Bill Campbell*

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

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

VIRGINIA

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

WEST VIRGINIA

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

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

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The most important thing on earth

By John Arnold • Pastor, Library Baptist Church • Finleyville, PA

Charles Spurgeon said, “I would rather teach one man to pray than ten men to preach.” Why do we see so many more quotes on the subject of prayer from earlier generations than we do from our current church leaders? I think it is because men of earlier generations had to depend more on the power of God than we are in the habit of doing today.

We seem to be able to produce a facsimile of spirituality, enough to satisfy us, with the latest marketing campaign rather than turning back to those things which propelled the early church forward in their quest for spiritual power and effectiveness in ministry. We are more into doing or getting a result than praying. It just takes too much of our time. If we are not in motion, we feel we are not making progress. We don’t realize that prayer is motion, and without it we are not getting ahead.

Another voice from the past is a name you may have heard quoted before. E. M. Bounds was born in Missouri in 1835. He went to a one-room school, and then went into the study of law. He practiced law from age 19 to 24 years, and then was called to preach. He was charged with being a Confederate sympathizer and spent a year and a half in a federal prison in St. Louis.

Bounds was a pray-er, writer, and revivalist. His typical morning consisted of rising at four o’clock to be alone with God in prayer until seven o’clock. In 1913 he died, but his writings live on. At the time of his death, only two of his books had been published. Homer W. Hodge and Claude Chilton took up the task of bringing nine more books from E. M. Bounds’s writings to fruition. Chilton said of these books:

“These books are unfailing wells for a
Life time of spiritual water-drawing.
They are hidden treasures,
Wrought in the darkness of dawn
And the heat of the noon,
On the anvil of experience,
And beaten into wondrous form
By the mighty stroke of the Divine.
They are living voices
Whereby he being dead,
Yet speaketh!

In commenting on 1 Timothy 2:1-6, 8 Bounds says that Paul is claiming

... prayer is the most important of all things on earth. All else must be restrained, retired, to give it primacy. The conflict is about the primacy of prayer. Defeat and victory lie in this one thing. To make prayer secondary is to discrown it. It is to fetter and destroy prayer. If prayer is put first, then God is put first, and victory is insured. Prayer must either reign in the life or must abdicate. Which shall it be?

“Prayer is the most important of all things on earth. Prayer must either reign in the life or must abdicate. Which shall it be?”

E. M. Bounds

Bounds expounds on the apostle Paul’s praying when he said, “Pauline praying costs much, is death to self, the flesh, and the world. Pauline praying is worth all it costs. Prayer which costs nothing gets nothing.”

I see a great hunger for prayer in our generation right now. We know well that the imitations of spirituality are so empty and unrewarding. They always seem to leave us with the feeling, “That sure didn’t live up to the advertisement.”

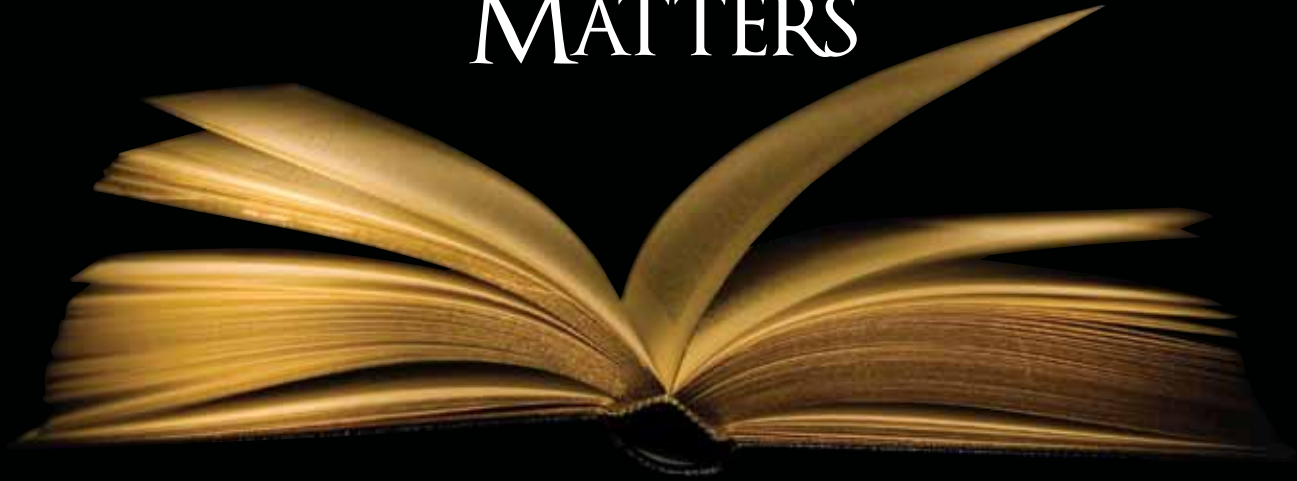
I just returned from the BBFI Mexico Pastors’ Family Spiritual Retreat outside Mexico City. Edwin and Annita Hoagland were my hosts on this trip. It was thrilling to see how eager the families were to hear more about prayer. We had six sessions on prayer, and after the sessions the people broke up into groups to pray. I was impressed

at how long their prayer times were.

On our last Sunday evening there in Mexico City, Edwin and Annita and their ministry team travelled to one of their mission churches. The pastor and his wife greeted me with their study notebooks that they had received at the retreat, and they showed me the progress they were making by writing down the things for which they were praying. The pastor said that the first time he began to pray in this fashion he prayed for an hour and a half, and now he was praying an hour each day.

At the retreat in Mexico the pastors were praying for a revival in Mexico. Around our country people are praying for the same thing. Revival starts with our prayer life and spreads out to others’ prayer lives and then the times of refreshing come.

BECAUSE GOD ALONE MATTERS

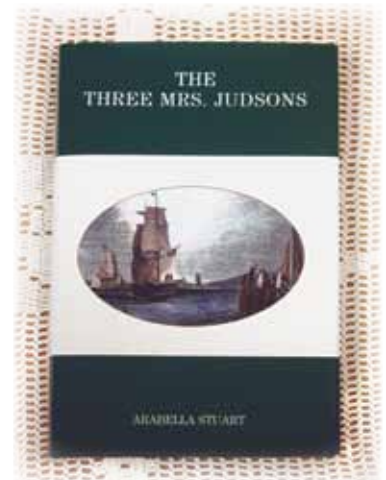


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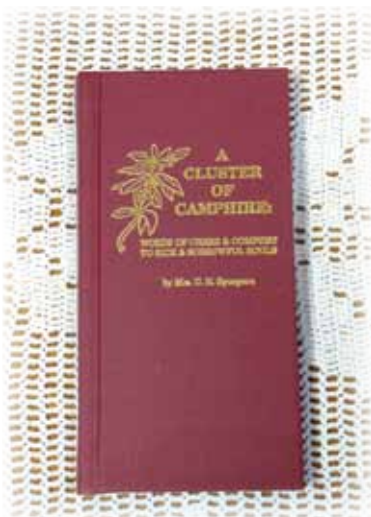
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