

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

MARCH 2014 | VOL. 64 NO. 7

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ON THE TABLE

A game plan

by Keith Bassham | Editor

As this issue of the *Tribune* goes to press, the Olympic Games in Sochi have displaced the Superbowl in the news, baseball pitchers and catchers are showing up in their training facilities across the South, and March Madness is nearly here.

Those who know me may be surprised I even take note of sports, let alone reference them in these pages, but I may have to reverse that indifference to get along in life. A *Washington Post* article written by Chris Beneke and Arthur Remillard tells me that while religion's influence in this country is receding, sports "are on the opposite trajectory." The article says that 50 years ago four in ten Americans considered themselves sports fans, and the number today exceeds six in ten. And churches appear to be suffering loss as a result. Beneke and Remillard cite a 2013 study in which eight of 14 pastors "identified sports as the main culprit for low Sunday service attendance."

There is another side to this of course. Religion does thrive in the arena as we all know. Witness Tim Tebow and others like him among players and coaches known for their outspoken evangelical beliefs. And even though evangelicals in the Colonial Era considered playing sports idleness at best and even a sinful distraction from godliness, attitudes changed in the 19th century. Presbyterian minister James Naismith invented basketball partly to fulfill his goal to reach people through athletics, and the Young Men's Christian Association (or the YMCA as people know it today) was begun in much the same way.

And then there are those who have decided to mix their theology and their sports. In January, the Public Religion Research Institute issued a report that concluded "half of American fans see supernatural forces at play in sports." This influence has some variety to it. One in four American sports fans believe his or her team has been cursed at some point. A little over one-fourth have prayed for God to help their teams, and about one in five believes God plays a role in determining the outcome in a game. I don't know what to make of that differential — apparently some of those praying for their teams don't really believe it will make a difference. I suppose the same would hold true among many Christians and their respective endeavors.

You can see the news release with the complete story online at <http://publicreligion.org/newsroom/>. Search for "sports poll" to quickly find the story.

You will see in the BBC President's column a statement regarding a very large gift given to the college by the Rawlings Foundation. The Foundation pledged a matching gift of \$600,000 provided the college could raise the same amount on its own in the months of December and January. It is a generous gift, and it could not have come at a better time. I commend President Mark Milioni for his audacity, and I thank the Rawlings family for their continued involvement with the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

Keith Bassham

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

Hope for a lost world



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

The rapid changes in our world can give us a sense of uncertainty and unease. We can be thrown off balance by the suffering we see around us, the evolving technology that outpaces our ability to absorb it, and the daily problems of a political, economic, and spiritual nature.

As problems mount, we can become discouraged and lose heart. But basing our hope on man's ability to solve problems or modify a situation is not the answer. That only gives temporary peace. The root problem of our culture is spiritual.

The challenge is we speak of hope more often than we believe in it. Hope is not a strong word for many. It has more to do with "wishing" than "expecting." It has the sound of resignation, an inability to bring about, influence, or even believe that a desired event or goal might ever come to be. "Well, I hope so," we say sarcastically. Hope, as we understand it, is not a word of excitement and expectation. It speaks more often of resignation and helplessness.

The New Testament's use of the word is different. Repeatedly Paul writes about hope. To the Thessalonians he writes of the armor of God, including the "hope of salvation" as a helmet. To the Colossians he writes of the "hope laid up in heaven," and of the "hope of glory." Peter writes in his first letter, "we have been begotten again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."

The secular non-religious understanding of the word bothers me. I don't like the word without its Christian meaning. When the world says, "I hope so ..." doubt resides in the sentiment. Our hope is different. Our hope is not a sentiment. Our hope is a hope that does not disappoint. How differently the Bible uses our word. Rather than resignation, the word bristles with excitement and expectation. It is for the writers of both the Old and New Testaments a strong word filled with encouragement.

It's more than a word game. A lively and excited hope is a necessary ingredient in the Christian life. Our being able to hang in there in the difficult times is determined by the nature of our hope. For Christians, it has to do with our holding to the promises of God, the integrity of God. We know in whom we have put our trust. Even if hope's fulfillment is delayed, we have no doubt that God is faithful.

Our hope must rest always in God's love and His faithfulness. In a post-conservative, post-modern, post-Christian, anti-truth world, we need the hope that comes from God. It is this hope that we take across the street and around the world. It is this hope that our world needs. It is this hope that makes a difference. We have the call, the opportunity, and the power to take it to a world of souls outside of Christ. Let's work together to do that.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

World Mission Forum



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

I would like to share with you an exciting event the Mission Office of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International will be hosting. It is the first World Mission Forum being held March 27-28, 2014. This two-day event will take place at the facilities of the World Mission Service Center in Springfield, MO.

It is our desire that those attending this special event will receive a tremendous blessing as they increase their knowledge and zeal for worldwide missions. The services the World Mission Service Center provides both to those who go as missionaries and those who send missionaries will also be presented.

Sessions will be presented to three specific groups: pastors, prospective missionaries, and mission-minded students. Combined sessions will be held each morning with targeted breakout sessions for each group in the afternoons. Following are brief explanations for these three tracks:

PASTORS - This forum allows for pastors to meet together and receive an in-depth understanding of how to achieve and sustain missions momentum within their churches. Information will be given on the process and benefits to having a missionary intern serve for a season in their ministry. Ideas on how to improve efforts as a sending church and how to become a sending church will also be shared. An opportunity to meet with possible candidates for a future internship will also be given.

PROSPECTIVE MISSIONARIES - Are you interested in serving as a missionary? Come learn about the necessary steps toward answering God's call for your life. Discussion items will include: the theology of missions, the BBFI philosophy of missions, raising support, working with your sending church, choosing a mission service center, and other practical issues.

MISSION-MINDED STUDENTS - This forum is designed to help young people who have sensed a call of God to become a missionary determine their next step. Relevant issues such as preparing to be a missionary, how to know where God is leading you, where to do your internship, and what mission opportunities are available now will be among the topics discussed.

Pastors, missionaries, and Mission Office staff leading the sessions will challenge you with the need to share the gospel around the world while sharing insight from their firsthand experiences.

To register for this event online, go to www.bbfimissions.com. You may also register by calling (417) 862-5001.

The Builders are our heroes!



by Dan Lamb | Interim NCPO Director

The BBFI Builders are such a valued piece of the NCPO team. The main purpose of the BBFI Builders has been to help baby churches get into their first buildings. In the fall of 1999 Brent Anderson, the former BBFI Builder director, and Jack Reed made the first tentative steps to assemble this team of builder missionaries. Through the years we have had sometimes more and sometimes fewer builder missionary families, and at times we have had up to ten couples and singles working with the ministry.

They travel across the country, living out of motor homes and trailers, moving from state to state, helping our churches with construction needs. I can only imagine how helpful it would have been to have the Builders in Hillsboro in 1975 when we started out!

Not only do our Builders build with their own hands, but they also generate volunteers, both from the church they are working on and from other churches. It is very common to hear of teams coming from other states to volunteer on a project.

The savings of God's money on these projects is something to be excited about! These are just a few recent projects from the last year.

- In Joplin, MO, Faith Baptist Church completed their new building in January 2013 after it was destroyed in a tornado. The Builders saved the church \$450,000.
- Lighthouse Baptist of Chillicothe, OH, experienced an estimated savings of \$180,000. Lighthouse Baptist of Xenia, OH, has estimated savings of \$150,000 on work done so far.
- Fellowship Baptist Church of Winamac, IN, has an estimated savings of \$220,000.

We are grateful to see the Lord adding to the BBFI Builders family. Mike and Anita Barton from Homer, LA, have joined the team and are now raising their support to get on the road to building. Each builder raises support for his family, just like a missionary would.

Some churches' projects have required a construction manager who could take a building out of the ground all the way to completion. Craig Miller, one of our Builders, stepped up to this need and has been a real help to churches.

Our Builders are now scattered about our nation working on a variety of projects, but we are preparing to gather in Jackson, MS, to help Pastor Bill Fluker renovate the church's first building.

I just can't say enough good about these families. The BBFI Builders have had their hands on all four churches started out of my home church, Hillsboro Bible Baptist Church, and they would love to provide the same help for you. Please contact our office at (417) 536-8826 or email us at office@bbfinpcpo.com for more information or to be put in contact with the BBFI Builders.



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

—Laurence Sterne

John 3:16 not among top 5 list of verses shared on YouVersion Bible app

YouVersion has released its year-end analysis of how its millions of users engaged the Bible this past year.

Users shared 68 million Bible verses in 2013 via the Bible app, installed 49 million times this year (and nearly 123 million times worldwide).

The Bible verse that was "book-marked, highlighted, and shared ... more than any other verse" in 2013? Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

Rounding out the top five: Isaiah

40:31, Matthew 6:13, Joshua 1:9, and Philippians 4:6.

By comparison, the Bible's most-read chapter was Romans 8 — "read 4 times per second in 2013," notes YouVersion. The other top chapters were Romans 12, Matthew 5, 1 John 4, and Hebrews 12.

Last year, *Christianity Today* noted how the Web's most-popular Bible verses match up — except for John 3:16. Once again, the key verse which ranks high among other digital Bibles failed to make YouVersion's top list.

Source: Jeremy Weber, www.christianitytoday.com

Survey: Half of Americans seem to think God cares about football

"As Americans tune in to the Super Bowl this year, fully half of fans — as many as 70 million Americans — believe there may be a twelfth man on the field influencing the outcome," said Dr. Robert P. Jones, PRRI CEO. "Significant numbers of American sports fans believe in invoking assistance from God on behalf of their favorite team, or believe the divine may be playing out its own purpose in the game."

Football fans are more likely than other sports fans to report praying to God (33% vs. 21%), to believe their team has been cursed (31% vs. 18%), and to perform rituals before or during games (25% vs. 18%).

Source: Public Religion Research Institute, publicreligion.org

1 in 5

sports fans perform a ritual before or during sports games

On Sunday, are you more likely to be in church or watching football?

25% church
21% football
21% both
33% neither

Does God reward athletes who have faith with good health and success?

YES 48% NO 47%

Millennials the most evangelistic generation

They've been called "the social justice generation," and for good reason — Millennials are actively taking up the cause of the poor, the oppressed, the orphan, and the widow. Sure, skeptics argue, they might feed the hungry and free the captives in this life, but what about the next? According to this view, Millennials are elevating physical needs over spiritual needs and forgoing evangelism altogether.

Yet the latest Barna research reveals this is not the case.

In fact, in answer to the question of evangelism on the rise or in decline, Millennials are a rare case indeed. While the evangelistic practices of all other generations have either declined or remained static in the past few years, Millennials are the only generation among whom evangelism is significantly on the rise. Their faith-sharing practices have escalated from 56% in 2010 to 65% in 2013.

Not only that, but born again Millennials share their faith more than any other generation today. Nearly two-thirds (65%) have presented the gospel within the past year, in contrast to the national average of about half (52%) of born again Christians.

"One way to understand this trend is that there are proportionally fewer born again and evangelical Christians among Millennials than is true among older generations," says David Kinnaman, president of Barna Group. "So part of the explanation may be that those who remain committed to these theological perspectives are all the more motivated to make a 'case' for their faith among their peers. In other words, in the middle of a generation defined by their religious indifference, these Millennial evangelists stand in stark contrast. This trend of younger evangelists should be a source of encouragement to faith leaders.

Source: Barna Group, www.barna.org

In the NEWS of the WEEK

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH

George J. Wilson, Pastor
Durant, Oklahoma

To The Tribune:

The church here in Durant is still being blessed of the Lord and we are rejoicing in Christ Jesus as He continues to open doors that we can go forward with Him. We had exactly 100 in Sunday school Dec. 20; 60 the following Sunday and 77 last Sunday. The Sunday night attendance is usually greater than Sunday morning. Our people are very enthusiastic and are growing in grace. There have been 34 baptized. We organized last Aug. 9, with 12 members and there have been 50 additions since then. Our average Sunday school attendance for October was 54, for November it was 63 and for December 72. Our Wednesday night attendance is good.

Our new building, 40' by 60' with Sunday school rooms in each corner, is now under construction. We hope to have it completed in March. Volunteer labor is being used except for some hired supervision.

I would like to extend a personal word to pastors who have been considering starting new churches in new fields. It certainly is a joy to get out and start from scratch and try to build on the proper foundation, indoctrinate the people, preach the Word and expose sin when necessary with no strings attached nor axes falling on your head "for waking up a sleeping deacon." I have enjoyed the work here and am looking and praying for hundreds of conversions here in Durant.

Our church is located in one of the neglected areas of Durant. The financial struggle has been and is difficult but God is giving the victory. The spiritual blessings have more than offset this by drunkards, gamblers, "good moral men" and others being transformed by the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It was about the first of July when Bro. Loys Vess, Bro. Wayne Imboden, Bro. "Big Jack" McCaughey, Bro. Bill Beall and I looked over a vacant church building once used by the "Jesus Only" group. The building was 28'x48' and in pretty fair condition. The rent was \$40 per month. Bro. Vess said to the other brethren, "Let's chip in here and pay this rent for the first month." Bro. Vess and the other three gave \$10 each. Bro. Vess also gave us 50 song books and some benches. He spoke one night for us during our first ten-day revival, late in July. Bro. Lester Singleton spoke four nights.

In September, Bro. Vess came and held a two week tent revival, driving back and forth from Denton, Texas much of the time. The offerings weren't sufficient to cover the revival expenses; not to mention his contributing his time free. Bro. Vess has certainly played a vital role in establishing the work here. Others too have certainly contributed. Bro. Wayne Imboden of Denison, Texas certainly backed the tent revival here along with his church. Bro. Ted Hicks and his church in Whitesboro, Texas really supported the

revival, too. At the climax of the revival we had a Fellowship meeting with a good number of Texas and Oklahoma preachers present to let the people of Durant get better acquainted with our Fellowship and manifesting their cooperation and interest.

We have received cash donations for the work here as follows:

Ramsey Baptist Church, Paris, Texas	\$ 50.00
First Baptist Church, Wright City, Texas	25.00
Grace Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla.	100.00
Bible Baptist Church, El Reno, Oklahoma	25.00
Victory Baptist Church, Duncan, Oklahoma	20.00
East Texas Fellowship, (Center, Texas Meeting)	8.42
Oklahoma Fellowship, Sunnyside Baptist Church, Oklahoma City, Okla.	92.27
Independent Missionary Baptist Church, Broken Bow, Okla.	25.00
Southside Baptist Church, Denison, Texas	5.32
	8.75

There are also some others who pledged that has not yet been received.

The Foster's were with us Sunday, Jan. 31. We had a record attendance of 119 in Sunday school. Attendance is increasing and enthusiasm continues to mount. We had two more saved last week.

We certainly do wish to express our sincere appreciation for those who have had a part in the work here and we do want your continued prayers.

GEORGE J. WILSON.

* * *

From the bulletin of Grace Baptist church, Oklahoma City, Okla., J. C. Brown, pastor:

WELL GLORY!!!

439 in Sunday school last Sunday. We missed our goal by 61, but we feel sure that we would have reached it had there not been so many of our regular members sick. We do thank the Lord for the presence of each one. And it shows what we can do when we try. The following is the number enrolled and the number present last Sunday according to the reports:

	Enrolled	Present
Adult Bible Class	142	138
Victory Class	67	76
Young Married People	19	18
Young People	13	14
14 and 15-Year Boys	9	7
14 and 15-Year Girls	20	7
12 and 13-Year Boys	9	6
12 and 13-Year Girls	8	11
10 and 11-Year Boys	10	13
10 and 11-Year Girls	11	14
8 and 9-Year Boys	18	17
9-Year Girls	12	12
8-Year Girls	9	11
7-Year Boys	6	9
7-Year Girls	13	10
6-Year Boys	9	7
6-Year Girls	13	12
5-Year Class	11	12
4-Year Class	5	5
4-Year Class	7	5
3-Year Class	5	5
1 and 2-Year Class	12	17
Nursery	15	11

We can see by the above report the classes who really worked at the job. Those who had more present than they

I AM THIS DAY SENDING MY SMALL CONTRIBUTION

From Texas:

"I have just read with passionate interest your remarkable article on 'The Courts decision in the Rocky Mount Church.'

"If Southern Baptists of the Convention think that this is a signal victory, every honest thinking man will bow his head in shame at the depravity of the Convention leadership, and cost what it may—property, goods and even life—there will arise such a band of courageous souls, that will wash their hands clean from this miasma of iniquity, and formulate a new group that will stand true to the Word of God that will rock the citadel of the Southern Baptist machine.

"Indirectly speaking, this Editorial in The Baptist Bible Tribune is a clarion call to Baptists North and South to arouse themselves in the light of the judgment day and heed the call of our great Commander The Lord Jesus Christ, 'Come out from among her my people.'

"I sincerely hope that The Bible Baptist Fellowship will place in your hands sufficient funds to publish this article and give it world wide recognition. When the Lord Jesus Christ was on earth you will remember that he sent Peter on a fishing trip, to catch a fish that had sufficient funds to pay the personal tax for his little band of disciples; were He the Mighty Lord Jesus on earth today He would perform equally as great as that to raise the money to put the article into the hand of every pastor and Sunday school superintendent in the S. B. C. But though He is absent He can perform that miracle of supplying that need today.

"I am this day sending my small contribution to the Rocky Mount church, together with a letter of encouragement to Carry On."

had enrolled shows that they were working to reach the goal of 500.

The following is the report by department for the month of January and also a report of the entire Sunday School average attendance:

Adult Department	189	4/5
Junior Department	62	3/5
Beginners Department	53	3/5
Nursery Department	23	2/5

The average attendance for the entire Sunday school was 329 1/5, compared with 260 average attendance for January, 1953.

* * *

From the Cassville, (Mo.) Republican:

NEW BAPTIST CHURCH ORGANIZED HERE

A new Baptist church is being organized in Cassville according to an announcement this week. The Rev. Ivan Bare of Springfield is to be the pastor of the church which will be called the Bible Baptist church. It will be affiliated with the Bible Baptist Fellowship of Springfield, of which the Springfield High Street Fundamental Baptist church is a member.

Services at the present time are being held in the Jethro Hutchens home at 96 Gravel Street and services will be held in this home until a building is secured.

The church will have an all Bible Sunday school with classes for every age. Bible School will

20,000 ELC YOUTHS ATTENDED BIBLE CAMPS IN 1953

[Religious News Service]

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Some 20,000 young people of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELC) attended youth camps during 1953, the Rev. Carlyle W. Holte, associate ELC youth director, reported at a national ELC Bible camp committee meeting here.

Average age of the campers was 13.8 years in 1953 compared with 14.8 in 1952, Mr. Holte said.

The Rev. Carroll Hinderlie, Watertown, S. D., president of the ELC's International Young People's Lutheran League, said the time has come for a re-appraisal of the Bible camp program to make it a climax of the young Christian's experience rather than an incidental means of summer recreation or a cheap week's vacation.

begin at 10:00 a. m. with preaching services at 11:00 a. m. each Sunday morning and at 7:30 p. m. each Sunday evening. Mid-week prayer meeting will be held at 7:30 p. m. each Wednesday night.

* * *

CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH Don Brown, Pastor Chickasha, Oklahoma

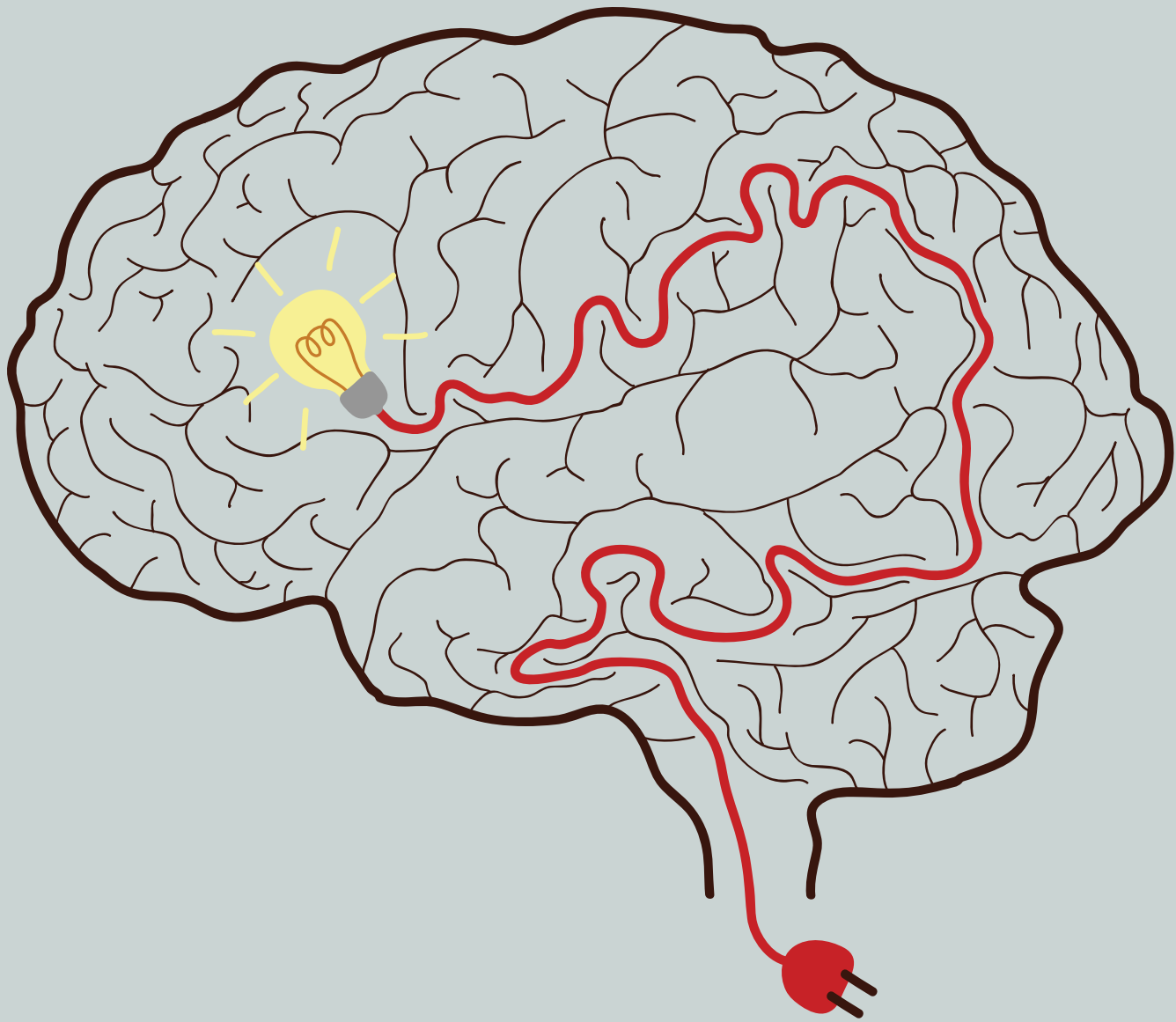
To The Tribune:

I am enjoying your coverage of the North Rocky Mount Missionary Baptist Church case. As I read this issue I was thinking how beneficial it would be to our independent churches to have this article in brochure form for distribution to our membership and their Southern Baptist friends. I think I can well deliver several hundred myself.

The work here in the Calvary Baptist church is progressing. Our Sunday school has had a slow but firm increase in these past three months with our best attendance yesterday of 223. I don't know whether you have been informed or not of the local missionary work undertaken by the Calvary Baptist church of Chickasha. Bro. Vincent Bernot, formerly of Austin, Texas, now getting well established in the city of Anadarko, Okla., about 6,000 population. We are in our second week of revival and Bro. Bernot, I'm informed, had 21 in attendance in that mission Sunday school hour yesterday. This meeting is to continue indefinitely. We believe that we will have a firm foothold in Anadarko very shortly. At present we have about 14 who are interested in the establishing of a church there. Our church here in Chickasha has leased a large building in Anadarko which was owned by the county. We have auditorium space for well over 100, and an abundance of Sunday school rooms plus living quarters for Bro. Bernot and his family. The building is of native stone situated well off the street with plenty of parking space, etc. For this building we pay \$70.00 per month.

With this added home mission-

[Continued on back page.]



SURPRISED BY CHURCH

THERE IS NO REPLACEMENT FOR A GOOD LOCAL CHURCH

By Steve Van Winkle — Pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church, Bozeman, MT

I was saved when I was a high school senior in Lincoln, NE, and, rarely before and never after, had I darkened the door of any church. After graduation, I managed to make it to Montana on \$50 and some beef jerky.

On the verge of starvation and lodging at the recently-burned, largely uninhabitable “Why-Go-By?” hotel in Livingston, MT, my fellow adventurer (a polite term for “idiot”), Dirt, and I had made a habit of going over the mountain pass to Bozeman and eating at the

Bonanza restaurant where we filled our coats with rolls and other possibles from the salad bar.

Still in its infancy, my Christianity to that point could aptly be characterized as “Jesus and Me.” If I had my Bible and a couple Christian friends, I was set; even the friends weren’t all that necessary: Jesus and Me had everything I would ever need.

Then I met a pastor.

On one of our incursions to Bonanza,

Dirt and I met the founding pastor of the church I now serve. It’s a long story; suffice it to say that he was kind to a couple of 18-year-old ... adventurers ... and invited us to the BBF church he had started the year before.

Dirt soon lost the adventurous spirit and left for home. The preacher arranged for me to work for room and board with a young couple in church struggling to establish a horse training business. I didn’t know it at the time, but this church would become the hub

of my life, and meeting this pastor was the beginning of my ecclesiastical education: I met Christ in Nebraska; I met Christianity in Montana.

My new employers and I attended our church routinely, if not regularly, and I was consistently confronted with many things I had determined unnecessary to vibrant Christianity. Soon, though, I was persuaded of the need for baptism and church membership. As if that wasn't concession enough from me, faithful church attendance as a means of growth through instruction in doctrine and fellowship with believers was next.

Now coming more frequently, I was told a young church requires funds to keep the ministry supplied and that missionaries would have to be supported. I reconsidered the greedy church stereotype I had held and was introduced to my obligation to help send the gospel to people I would never meet. Ironically, these things and more were the very reasons I had concluded local churches to be a hindrance to vibrant faith before.

C. S. Lewis was surprised by joy; I was surprised by church. A miser of my own freedom and time, I was surprised that involving myself in people's lives was more rewarding than the power to do what I wanted when I wanted. I was surprised I enjoyed the company of this eclectic group of Christians and by the growing warmth of strangers becoming family. Discovering purpose to life in the context of a little group of people in a tidy storefront surprised me, along with the confidence to live boldly for Christ that grew out of learning and belonging.

I thought church would be a hindrance to vibrant faith; ultimately, I was surprised that it was the very fountain that fed it with unexpected blessings.

Under the influence of my church's ministry, the practical truth of a long-neglected term, *the primacy of the local church*, emerged. It means that the local church is the primary, God-ordained institution through which He accomplishes His purposes in this world. It does so not simply through the transfer of information or inviting people to be spectators, but by an up-close community that serves as both classroom and lab.

In church I learned the importance of serving in the example Jesus left us, and in

church I was able to serve others. In church I learned the sanctifying value of community, and in church I was able to participate in community. In church I learned the need for accountability in both choices and growth, and in church I was able to be accountable and help others be so.

My local church brought all these and much more to my attention and then into focus and then into practice.

When I played football, we routinely received instruction on weightlifting, specifically on the need to be well rounded in targeting muscle groups. Our coaches reinforced this with stories of pitiful victims of bicepomania — a coined word referring to guys who only did arm-curls, ignored the rest of the body, and whose arms got so bulked with muscles their scrawny legs could no longer support them. The stories described a person like one who stands in front of a carnival mirror: hideously distorted, dragging themselves down the sidewalk on their massive arms while their legs scraped the pavement behind them.

It's an apt description for what happens when Christians are left to "Jesus and Me." If not for a local church, I would have constructed an entirely elective Christianity where I learned only about topics that interested me from people I consistently agreed with in the cocoon of fellowship with

the one person I love the most (me). I would have fallen victim to spiritual bicepomania and become grossly distorted in my spiritual growth.

My church exposed the truth that "Jesus and Me" is actually religious shorthand for the "Sovereign Me," where I decide what truth to know, who's worthy of my company, what's necessary to give. The more I searched and learned the Scriptures, the more I was convinced that the first primary benefit of the primacy of the local church in my life was to deliver me from the subtle poison of the Sovereign Me.

It's been 29 years since my first service at FBC, and much has happened to the esteem and primacy of local churches. The blessing (or curse) of technology has ushered in an era of unimaginable access to treasures of biblical knowledge and teaching.

The Internet now allows us to browse limitless commentaries on our phones while we search for the perfect mate through online Christian dating sites. Streaming technology allows people to view multiple church services from the comfort of anywhere. Podcasts deliver the best sermons to multiple mobile devices and Kindle delivers the hottest books right to our hands. Want fellowship? Try the online foyer or a Christian chat room. You can even learn to pastor a church without ever leaving the basement and give to whatever

A miser of my own freedom and time,

I was surprised

**that involving myself in people's lives
was more rewarding than the power to
do what I wanted when I wanted.**

By placing believers in a culture where topics can't be chosen by personal interest, sermons can't be shut down, and people can't conveniently be ignored with a click, the church is uniquely crafted to be the primary vehicle through which God grows a balanced people.

In church, we are confronted with what is good for us, not what sounds good to us.

ministry or church you prefer with your credit or debit card with a click or tap.

Truly, it's a marvel — a marvel with a great many benefits to be sure. However, for all these benefits, there is one thing that makes them wholly inferior to a local, identifiable, flesh-and-blood church: We are still the Sovereign Me.

We don't like the sermon we downloaded or clicked on a podcast? Shut it off.

We don't like the service we're watching online? Pick a different one, or wait till next week.

Don't like the "wink" we got from the dating site? Press "Ignore."

Don't like the Kindle book? Download a new one.

Pastor of the church we "attend" online says something we don't agree with? Give your credit card information to a different online ministry.

Find the topic in the online foyer boring or tire of the person in the chat room monopolizing the conversation? Close the browser.

Whether it's with a click or a tap, whether in the car or office, we are able to shut down the things, topics, and people we find inconvenient, unimportant, or convicting.

Partly because of this, a frightening number of Christians today have abandoned the local church or perceive it as one resource among many equals. The effect is an epidemic of spiritual bicepomania. Christians have bulked up on the interesting teachings of favorite personalities, but have neglected what

they perceive to be mundane or irrelevant.

It's seen in believers who can quote ancient theological texts but can't recite a prayer need in another Christian's life; others can draw elaborate eschatological charts but have little idea how to lead someone to Christ. If you sit across the table from these elective Christians, they appear spiritually well nourished with powerful muscles; they have all the appearance of biblical health. Walk away from the table and their wobbly legs will be evident and their core muscles will strain to hold their torso steady.

The ministry of the local church was ordained of God to combat this very kind of imbalance. By placing believers in a culture where topics can't be chosen by personal interest, sermons can't be shut down, and people can't conveniently be ignored with a click, the church is uniquely crafted to be the primary vehicle through which God grows a balanced people. In church, we are confronted with what is good for us, not what sounds good to us.

The local church is a unique community that can't be shut down by preference or discomfort and that does not suffer anonymity. The surprising discovery for believers who commit to and invest in it is that the very mundanities and irrelevancies we have scrupulously avoided are the irreplaceable building blocks of life and faith.

Truly, we are surprised by church and that its primacy is the lifeblood of a satisfying Christian joy.

WHY DON'T THEY GO?

Among Americans who say religion is at least somewhat important in their lives, but attend worship services no more than a few times a year

37%

do not attend due to issues related to religion or the church itself

24%

do not attend due to other personal priorities (16% say they are too busy)

24%

do not attend due to practical difficulties (work, health, transportation)

Pew Research Center survey, June 28-July 9, 2012



THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH:

LOCAL | ORGANIZED | VISIBLE | INDEPENDENT | COMPLETE

By Noel Smith – Founding Editor (1950-1974) of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*

From a series of articles published in 1955

I have emphasized in previous articles that the Greek word *ekklesia* was translated church instead of assembly by the King James revisers, but from here on out, in the interest of smooth reading, I am going to uniformly employ the term *church*.

In the New Testament, we have the church, first of all as a universal institution. We have the church in abstract, as in Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 5:22. But what a great many people forget is, before an institution can mean anything, it must be translated into the concrete. It must be particularized. It must be localized. As Gilbert K. Chesterton said, “Nothing is real until it is local.” The church as an institution is meaningless until it assumes concrete shape and form.

Now, conceivably, the church could have

been particularized as a universal monarchy with a succession of bishops — as the Roman Catholics claim. It could conceivably have been particularized in regional form, or in some other form.

But when you turn to the New Testament what do you find? You find that when the church assumes concrete shape and form it is the form of a local, organized, visible, independent, complete assembly. In the New Testament, you don’t find the “the church” at all; you find churches — the church at Jerusalem, the church at Antioch, the church at Corinth, the church at Ephesus, the church at Philippi. There are the churches of Galatia, and the churches of Asia. You don’t find the Southern Missionary Baptist Church. You don’t find the General Baptist Church. You

don’t find the Roman Catholic Church. You don’t find the Episcopal Church. You don’t find the Pentecostal Church. You don’t find the Methodist Church. You don’t find the Presbyterian Church. You don’t find the Four Square Church. You don’t find the Central Assembly.

In the New Testament you find only local churches. And you find local churches from Jerusalem clear to the last chapter of Revelation. “The church” is not a New Testament term. It is not New Testament language. The New Testament term is churches.

Nearly everybody on earth refuses to acknowledge this. The Apostles’ Creed refused to recognize it. “I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.”

I don’t. I believe in New Testament churches. (Half the Baptist churches are not New Testament churches; they range all the way from Unitarian to third-rate Sunday civic clubs.) In the New Testament there is no “true, invisible, universal church.” The church is universal, but there is no universal church. The family is universal, but there is no universal family. The jury is an English institution, but there is no English Jury.

You don’t have the family until you first have local, visible families. You don’t have the jury until you first have local, visible juries. You don’t have the church until you first have local visible churches.

I love all my brethren in Christ. If a 300 lb. Negro in an African jungle is in Christ and Christ is in him, that man is my brother. (*Editor’s note: Mr. Smith wrote these words in 1955 when the word “Negro” was commonly used where we would more likely use the descriptors “black man” or “African-American.” More than a few of Mr. Smith’s counterparts in the South would have refused to call a black man a brother in Christ in those days, so while the language may seem impolite to us today, the point he was making was valid.*) And I will treat him as my brother, although I will not demand that his habits be like mine. I won’t demand that he take a cold bath every morning if he doesn’t want to. But I will love him.

But when I hear these brethren talking about belonging to “the true, invisible, universal church,” I want to kick them on



THIS NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY NOT ONLY HAS A FAITH, IT HAS AN ORDER AS WELL.

IGNORE THE ORDER AND YOU WON'T LONG HAVE THE FAITH.

the shin. Brother, you are not nearly so pious as you sound. Why don't you take your collections from your "true, invisible, universal" church? When collection time comes, you want a local, visible church; local visible ushers, local, visible collection plates and visible lucre — preferably the folding kind.

Are you a member of the "true, universal, invisible" family?

Woman is a universal institution. But none but bachelors and theologians are interested in a generic, abstract, universal, invisible woman. A real man wants a woman particularized, visible, and localized — preferably by the lakeside, gazing at the moonbeams teasing the waters, while wandering zephyrs toy with her hair. I think I can venture to assert, without fear of successful contradiction, that when my universal, invisible, true church brethren want lips to kiss, they want visible, material, perfumed lips. (To my confirmed bachelor friends I humbly apologize for embarrassing you. And I trust I am not inadvertently guilty of laying temptation in your pathway. But, really, there ain't nothing like it.)

When does your "true, universal, invisible" church ordain elders, and where does it ordain them? When does your "true, invisible, universal" church appoint deacons, and where does it appoint them? When does your true, invisible, universal" church authorize the baptism of converts, and where does it do it? When does your "true, invisible, universal" church observe the Lord's Supper, and where does it observe it? The Bible says that Christians should not forsake the assembling of themselves together. Where does your "true, invisible, universal" church assemble, and how often does it assemble? Which leads in public prayer? Who takes the offering that has been laid aside as God has prospered?

The church must exercise discipline over its members. "But if he neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church" (Matthew 18:17). Come now, brother: tell me how two or three visible church members can bring a visible,

disorderly brother before your "true, universal, invisible" church?

Those who talk so piously about "the true, invisible, universal" church aren't nearly so profound as they sound. It's pretty shallow philosophy. The original purpose of God in creating Adam and his race was to materialize His Spirit. The invisible God would become visible; He would manifest Himself in visible, material, local form. That is the philosophy of creation. That is the philosophy of the Incarnation. "The Word became flesh." God became man. In the Last Adam, God became visible, material, local (as He had in the first Adam). In Christ dwelt "all the fullness of the Godhead BODILY."

What is the philosophy of the church? The local church as a corporate entity is "the body of Christ" (1 Corinthians 12:27). The church is Christ in visible form. The church is Christ in flesh and blood. The church is Christ in the heat and cold, in famine and peril, in war and pestilence. As He was sent by His Father in material form — so we as Christians, and as a church in this weary world, are sent.

Why, brother, the whole emphasis is on, not invisibility; but on just the opposite — VISIBILITY.

If I, a visible man, am flat on my visible back, on a visible bed in a visible hospital, I don't want some invisible pastor of some "true, invisible, universal" church flying through the window in the form of some kind of a pious ghost; I want a visible preacher from a visible church to come to see me. I want him to extend to me a visible hand, and I want to hear and see a visible man reading the Bible and praying.

Your abstract, institutional love and compassion are not worth a thin dime to a fellow lying on a hospital bed. I know that from experience.

We are indebted to the Protestant Reformation, not the New Testament, for "the true, universal, invisible" church. In those heavy, dark days, the Roman Catholic Church, sustained by the civil treasury and sword, claimed that the Church — and the only Church — was the visible, monarchical Roman

Catholic Church. In an effort to counteract that false claim and its devastating spiritual and moral effects, the Protestants claimed that "the true" church "may exist without visible form, because it is both visible and invisible. The invisible church is composed of all who are united to Christ. The visible church consists of all who profess to be united to Christ."

In 1561 the *Confession of Faith of Scotland* said: "This (the Catholik) Kirk is invisible, knowin onlie to God, who allone knowth whome he has chosin, and comprehendis alsweall the Elect that be departed, (Commounlie called the Kirk Trimphant), as those that yit leve and feght against syne and Sathan."

And so, eventually, "the universal, invisible" church included the dead in Christ.

In the New Testament — to go back a little way — wherever you find the church particularized, you find a local, visible church. And that is the only kind you do find. This New Testament Christianity not only has a faith, it has an order as well. Ignore the order and you won't long have the faith. The Apostle Paul is just as authoritative when he is talking of "the churches" as he is when he is talking of the resurrection.

Ignoring the order of Christianity has been the chief contributor of this current sentimental, subjective religion which has substituted *Reader's Digest* for the Bible and Norman Vincent Peale for St. Paul. All of your high and holy feelings and intentions are worthless unless you have a method of translating them into the concrete. In the New Testament when you find the church in the concrete, it is CHURCHES, not "the church."

**Adapted from Noel Smith, "New Testament Christianity, Part VI: Church or Churches?" Baptist Bible Tribune (Springfield, MO), Vol. VI, No. 3, July 29, 1955, pp. 4-5, and Noel Smith, "The Care of the Churches, not the Church was Upon Him," Baptist Bible Tribune (Springfield, MO), Vol. VI, No. 12, October 7, 1955, p. 4.*

Jayme Radak | **Brazil**

The Lord has given me two special ladies to mentor during this time of healing. Both received Christ as children but for various reasons have wandered away from the Lord, living a life of bondage. Tiffany, my nurse, had been judged by Christians and felt the church is an unsafe place. Deanna, with terminal stage four cancer, has allowed circumstances in her life to turn her away from God. During our times together I have had the privilege to show them that Jesus came to heal the brokenhearted and to set the prisoners free.

John & Jo Ann Sleppy | **Alaska**

Recently, the Lord has really burdened my heart for Elias, a very congenial little Native man. He is in his 80s. His wife is mostly bedfast. She has heart problems and nearly died several months ago. Elias had a really painful case of shingles last winter, mainly in his right leg. He is beginning to walk normally, but still has a lot of pain during the night. He still works hard outside tearing down an old rental house. He is pulling all of the nails and cleaning up the plywood and lumber, ready for someone else to build into another building. The Lord has brought us together quite often lately. We have had some substantial conversations. He is willing to take time to listen to the gospel. He has at least five grown daughters with families. His girls live all over the place, but they love their dad and always come if there is a crisis. The girls' mother and Elias's first wife died when most of the girls were young. His second wife helped him raise the girls. She is their "mom." I do not believe Elias is born again, but he is willing to listen and ask serious questions. Please pray with us for Elias and Bernie.

Lavon & Carolyn Waters | **Spain**

Rosmeri used to attend church quite regularly. Her husband gave her a lot of grief because he didn't want to bring her to church. About a month ago, she took it upon herself to get to church however she could. After the first Sunday back we found her out in the park in front of the church crying. We offered to help in any way and she said, "You already did. I am crying for joy." She then told us that she felt as though she had come back home. Since then, she has brought two of her grandchildren, her daughter, and her unsaved brother. Now she is working on her unsaved husband and son — both named Julio. She knew even after much time had elapsed that she would find the church doors open and she would be welcome.

Rudy & Lorraine Johnson | **Peru**

A few days ago we gave New Testaments to a barber and a banker. We have been back to the barber and he is asking questions. That is a good sign and we are just waiting for God to move in his heart.

At our Wednesday night Bible study the banker raised his hand and on Thursday night I went to his home and led him to Christ. Something happened that has never happened before. After he prayed and asked Jesus to forgive him of his sins and come into his heart, he asked me what night of the week we could have a Bible study in his home where he could see his family and friends saved! We chose Tuesday nights. Please pray for these meetings.

Will & Dorothy Rogers | **Canada**

A few weeks ago, Dorothy was able to accompany our daughter, Susie (who is an RN), on a medical missions trip to Kenya. For two weeks they ministered in a remote region with a team of doctors and nurses. Every day the people would line up in long lines to be seen. Some of the needs they saw were truly overwhelming. But a couple of humorous cases were worthy of special note:

In one case, a lady was convinced she had worms. When one of the nurses asked her how she knew she had worms, she said she could hear them moving inside her. This usually happened before mealtime. The nurse told her that those were the grumbings of an empty stomach. In another case, a lady said she broke out in a skin rash every time it got cold. When the weather warmed up, the rash went away. They tried to explain the concept of goose bumps to her.

These stories illustrate a powerful spiritual lesson. Just as many people are ignorant of some of the most "obvious" scientific truths, truths we easily take for granted, many more people are ignorant of the most basic spiritual truths concerning salvation in Christ. And that is no laughing matter. That is why every one of us needs to be involved in missions. We know about Jesus, but the most simple and basic facts concerning Him are not known amongst multitudes.

Lonnie & Martha Smith | **Mexico**

We rejoice over the salvation of five souls and six baptisms! Two of the new converts are an elderly, tenderhearted doctor named Dr. Luis Hernandez and his wife, Elizabeth. Dr. Luis has a nephew who is a Christian, so he had been exposed to the gospel in the past. Recently, one of our ladies began doing physical therapy with their son and invited them to church. As I was writing this letter, Dr. Luis came by to see me and said three things I wish to share with you: (1) I have never been received anywhere with so much love as in this church; (2) We have never received the support and help from anyone like we have from you; and (3) When I was a Catholic, I never had a priest touch me or embrace me as you have. Dr. Luis was one of the six baptized.

Tim & Alison Stephens | **Cambodia**

Besides his responsibilities at Faith Baptist Church, Pastor Sarorn is also the director of Hope House Education Center, a children's vocational school in Kampong Speu. Because of his hard work and leadership skills, Sarorn has earned the trust and respect not only of the center's owners but of the children, the staff, and the local villagers. Even though the center's main purpose is secular, Sarorn has used his influence to begin teaching the Bible to the adults associated with the center. He is currently teaching two lessons a week from the book of Matthew to staff members and parents of the students. Since becoming the school's Cambodian director, Sarorn has seen eight to ten Cambodians come to Christ. Please pray for his continued testimony to these people in Kampong Speu.

James & Lori Bradley | **Mexico**

Angela came to church in tears because her sister was in the hospital and near death. On Monday she called and asked if James and Alejandro could go to the hospital and visit her sister. They did, and they found Maria Elena unresponsive. However, James and Alejandro presented the gospel to her and offered an opportunity to pray and receive Christ. Although she couldn't respond verbally, she showed visible signs of finally being at peace. Her respirations settled down and she looked more relaxed. Only God knows if Maria Elena accepted Christ as Savior, but we believe she did, and less than 24 hours later she passed away. Through this time of ministering to the family, her grown children asked James to do a funeral and share with the family what had brought their mother her dying peace.

Patrick & Ann Janel McClure | **Brazil**

In 1717, some fishermen brought in their nets and hauled in a headless statue of the Virgin Mary. A little later, they discovered the head, and then, according to the story, they had a bountiful catch. It was a small statue, not even three feet tall, and with distinctive, nearly black, skin. The statue became known as Our Lady of Aparecida (who Appeared), and is now the patron saint of Brazil.

A shrine was built for her in 1745. In the 1950s, a new much larger basilica was built, which was consecrated by Pope John Paul II in 1980. This second basilica is the largest shrine to Mary in the world, and the second largest basilica, second only to St. Peter's Basilica in the Vatican City. While much of Brazil's Roman Catholicism has become nominal over the years, and cities like ours are far more spiritist than Catholic, our recent visit to Aparecida, the city where the statue was discovered and now houses the two shrines, made it clear that there are still people deeply rooted in the worship of Mary and the saints. This opulent basilica and its vast campus are surrounded by visibly poor and rundown neighborhoods, and the overall feel of the city is oppressive.

Inside the shrine there is a room known as the Hall of Promises, where people have brought all kinds of items to thank Mary for answering their prayers. Thousands of pictures line the walls, and a bizarre collection of wax body parts hangs from the ceiling. These body parts are wax representations of what Mary allegedly healed. In the past, people carved wood or in some way made these pieces; now they can conveniently be bought at the shrine store, along with candles (sold by the meter) to burn in prayer or thanksgiving. Pray for the spiritual darkness that persists in this great country.

Jim & Becky Lee | **Mexico**

Alberto and Mayela came to Bible Baptist Church del Rio about eight years ago. They were soon involved with the youth department and the music in the church. God led them to go to the Bible instituted in Cd. Mante for further training for the ministry. After they graduated and had worked with another young pastor for a few months, they felt the need to move to Las Delicias, Chih. to begin a new work. They have been sent as missionaries of Bible Baptist Church del Rio. Yesterday I received news that they now have people ready to be baptized!

Richard & Ann Konnerup | **Kenya**

Praise the Lord we have completed the Sunday school building that is also used for a preschool during the week! It has taken us just over one year to complete it as we built according to the available monthly funds that came in.

We give pastor Evans Abuta credit and thanks for such a nice building as he oversaw the project, coming periodically from his church by bus several hours away from the town of Kombolcha to Maili Saba.

The church in Maili Saba lost its pastor, Pastor Isalona, several years ago. While on his way home one evening he was attacked by three men with machetes. He died three days later. Pastor Evans kept the church going as he has relatives living in the area attending the church.

The church in Maili Saba has now called a graduate of our Bible college in Ruiru, Pastor Ronald Nyongesa, who has a wife and two children. Under Pastor Ronald the church is growing and people are accepting Christ as Savior. Recently, 14 people were baptized in a river a mile away.

The church is in a small village and is only able presently to pay him 500 shillings, which is about \$6, a month. A livable wage is ten times that, but he is blessed to have other churches in Kenya we have started to help him monthly. Also, he farms a bit and now this preschool will give the church more funds from school fees to add to his salary as well as to pay the teachers. It is good for a pastor to look to the Lord to provide through his church people.

Mark & Michele Hale | **Portugal**

Their daughter attended our Vacation Bible School last June and came home telling her parents, "This has been the best week of my life!" The entire family began attending our services the following Sunday and have since only missed a couple of services due to their work schedules. Both parents have a strong desire to know God and His Word and, over the past few months, we have spent many hours talking with them and sharing God's Word to answer their many questions. We could see them coming closer and closer to the truth and begged God to shine His light into their hearts and reveal Himself to them.

Those prayers were answered! Jan was gloriously saved. Grinning from ear to ear he said, "I finally understand why the gospel is the good news! I am saved, not because of anything I could do, but because I accepted what Christ has already done for me!" His tearful wife, Andrea, shared, "I have been praying for his salvation for so long. I am thankful that God has saved my husband!"

Karen Marvin | **Papua New Guinea**

Last year six Papua New Guineans with machetes attacked an Australian trekking expedition in the Morobe Province (where I will be working), leaving two dead and eight wounded. As I read the horrific account, I was reminded of why we go. We go because the people are hopeless and desperate. We go because without the gospel they will stay that way. I am going because through the power of the gospel students I will be working with can grow up to serve the Lord.

CHILE

MINISTRY WHERE THE LAND ENDS

By Jon Konnerup | BBFI Mission Director

IQUIQUE:
20°13'S 70°9'W

Our missionaries in Chile, South America, have been told that the name Chile comes from the old, indigenous Mapuche word *chilli*, which means “where the land ends.” Upon my arrival with Pastor Richard Edwards, BBFI Field Representative to Chile and pastor of First Coast Baptist Church in Jacksonville, FL, in December 2013, we were told we had literally arrived at the end of the earth!

Chile is an isolated country, and because of its geographical boundaries some people have referred to it as an “island.” To the west is the broad Pacific, while the majestic cordillera of the Andes is on the east. The Atacama Desert, the driest, hottest desert in the world, is situated in the northern region. To the south lies Antarctica, with Chile being one of seven nations claiming ownership over specific areas of this polar region.

Because of its relative isolation from the

rest of the Latin countries, this once-communist nation now a democratic republic, the Chilean people have developed their own unique culture and attitude. Her people are proud of their country and are very independent in their viewpoints. Chilean natives Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral, in fact, have each been recipients of the Nobel Prize in literature.

The 2012 census tells us Chile’s population was 16,634,603. It is the highest-rated economic power on the continent and, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, ranks seventh worldwide. It touts a literacy rate of over 97 percent with more than 30 percent of the population having some sort of higher education. Spanish is the primary language, but nearly ten percent of Chileans speak English. Chile has major universities, and some of its law schools hold joint partnership

with Yale University. The nation boasts top-rated medical facilities and a construction boom that built the tallest building in South America, the Gran Torre, standing at 874 feet.

Chile produces a third of the world’s copper and operates the largest copper mine in the world. Other major industries include agriculture, fishing, lumber, and tourism. Many of the most beautiful places on earth are found in Chile, from the great desert of the north, to the amazing volcanoes along the cordillera, to the lakes and glacier regions of the south.

There are over 2,300 islands in Chilean territory, including one of the most remote inhabited islands of the world, the famous Easter Island with its fascinating giant statues called *moai*. The Juan Fernandez Islands, home of the “Robinson Crusoe Island,” are another famous island chain in Chilean territory. It is reportedly named after the well-

known book characterizing the life of a sailor who was rescued from these islands in 1709.

Missionaries in Chile consider themselves to be rescuers of a sort to the people of this wonderful place. When the first missionaries arrived in Chile, the population was approximately 90 percent Roman Catholic, with just a handful of evangelical or protestant churches. The most recent statistics show 67 percent of the population to be Catholic, around 16 percent evangelical/protestants, and nearly 12 percent claim no defined religion.

In 1955, Joe and Alta Lingo and Dick and Miriam Inlow were the first Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries in Chile, arriving within a few weeks of each other. These missionaries established their first churches in the capital city, Santiago. Chilean pastors were prepared to take the first works, and

eventually, other BBF missionaries began to arrive. Today, there are around 45 organized churches and missions being worked by BBF missionaries, along with a team of over 25 national pastors. We were able to visit with each of our four missionary families during our stay.

Dave and Hope Reinhardt arrived in Chile in 1982 and have lived and worked in several cities, including Santiago, La Serena, and now in Iquique. They have been instrumental in the evangelization of many Chilean people and have trained and ordained several national pastors. They have been involved in the planting, organization, and preparation of church leaders in La Serena, Coquimbo, Copiapó, Ovalle, Osorno, Iquique, and other towns in the northern regions of the country. At this time, they ask you to pray for the

growth of each of these works and for the construction of a new church in Iquique.

Dustin Reinhardt, David and Hope's son, and his wife, Carla, arrived as missionaries to Chile in 2012. At this time they are working with Dustin's parents to strengthen the churches in Iquique started several years ago. They plan to focus on planting new churches in the northern region around Iquique.

Dave and Peggy Disney also arrived in Chile in 1982, arriving on the same plane as the Reinhardts. While the Reinhardts focused on the northern half of the country, the Disneys concentrated their efforts on the central and southern regions. Starting with their first church in Concepcion, they have been able to help several of the young men saved under their ministry receive their formal Bible training and begin their own works. They have established churches and missions in Concepción, Constitución, Talca, Los Angeles, Santiago, and Algarrobo, as well as several smaller towns throughout the country. Until this year, Dave has been the missionary pastor of one of the first churches built by BBF missionaries in Santiago, but this church now

SANTIAGO:
33°27'0"S 70°40'0"W



VINA DEL MAR:
33°0'S 71°31'W



has its first Chilean pastor. A few years ago the church in Santiago took on the task of sending their first Chilean pastor as a missionary to the country of Paraguay, and a church was founded while Pastor Ulloa was living and working there. Now one of the local men continues to pastor that church, and other Paraguayan churches continue to gain the benefit through the ministry of the Chilean churches. At this time, the Disneys ask for prayer as they continue the reconstruction of church buildings in Talca and Concepción which were damaged in the 2010 earthquake.

Joel and Wendy Solomon arrived in Chile in 2005 after having ministered in Colombia for several years. They have planted a church in the La Florida, a sector of Santiago. I had the opportunity to be with them in one of their services and thoroughly enjoyed the time of fellowship and sharing the Word of God with them. The people exhibited a genuine love for the Lord and for the lost around them. I was blessed by their friendship and interest in what is happening with the gospel around the world. They have been involved in Bible studies and have begun preparatory work for starting a mission in Valparaiso.

Since their approval in May 2013, Jeremiah and Tanya Rue are on deputation as BBFI missionaries to Chile. There are so many opportunities ahead for them in Chile and I know they desire to arrive and get to work as soon as possible. Please consider having them in your church to share their burden and passion for Chile. Let's get them there as soon as possible.

There are two things that impressed me most during my visit to this country with Pastor Richard Edwards. First, I was impressed by the work that the missionaries have done through the years in training the national leaders. Our missionaries have established strong churches and have trained strong leaders to continue leading these churches. It was a joy to speak with national pastors and hear their zeal to see new churches started by their churches using those they are training themselves. Churches starting churches — isn't that the way it should be done? I commend the past and present missionaries for their diligence to the Great Commission.

Second, Dave Disney and several national pastors shared that the Chilean churches

are ready to spread the gospel beyond their borders. They want to join in with others who are sending their own to people who need to hear the truth of Jesus Christ. One pastor said, "Other pastors and I have been discussing this great need and desire, but we are not sure how to go about it." Then he looked at me and said, "Because you work with the BBFI and all those missionaries around the world, you know how. Will you help us?" My heart jumped a few extra beats with joy, and we began a three-hour discussion about how to help the churches in Chile step further into the Great Commission and take the gospel to the uttermost parts of the world.

God is doing great things around the world. He has used our early missionaries to set the foundations and then those who have worked alongside the nationals to build an even stronger base. Around the world, we see the same desire as the pastors and churches in Chile — we want to take the gospel to the world!



EASTER ISLAND:
27°7'S 109°22'W



Bill Nye and Ken Ham debate origins of life

PETERSBURG, Ky. (BP) -- Hundreds of thousands of people comprised an international audience to watch a debate between creationist Ken Ham and evolutionist Bill Nye, demonstrating a vibrant interest in origins in an era when many consider the topic settled science.

"The battle is really about authority. It's more than just science or evolution or creation. It's about who is the authority in this world, man or God?" Ham, founder of Answers in Genesis and the Creation Museum, said Feb. 4 during a debate he hosted in Petersburg, Ky., with Nye, known on television as "The Science Guy." The event was streamed live online.

"If you start with naturalism, then who decides right and wrong? Well, it's subjective," Ham said. Marriage becomes "whatever you want it to be." Euthanasia and abortion also become acceptable because "we're all animals."

"But if you start from God's Word, there

are moral absolutes. God decides right and wrong. Marriage: one man and one woman. Sanctity of life: we care for old people; they're made in the image of God. Life begins at fertilization, so abortion is killing a human being," Ham said, explaining how a person's view of the origins of life impacts all of life.

Ham distinguished between the way scientists determine what happened in the past and the way they investigate phenomena in the present, calling the two fields "historical science" and "observational science." Creation, as described in the Bible, he said, is the only viable model of historical science when it comes to origins.

"People by and large have not been taught to look at what you believe about the past as different from what you're observing in the present," Ham said. "You don't observe the past directly."

Ham said a scientist can observe that the earth is not flat but cannot observe the age of

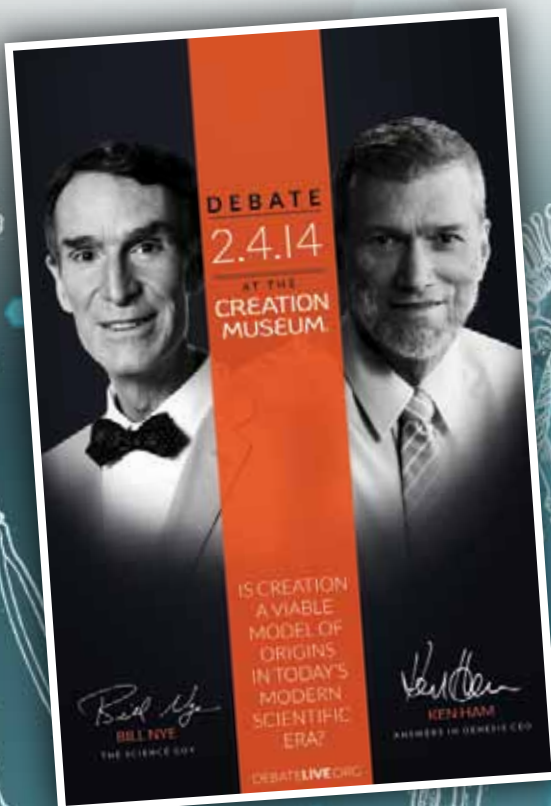
the earth. "There's a big difference between historical science, talking about the past, and observational science, talking about the present," he said in the 150-minute debate moderated by CNN's Tom Foreman.

Nye, CEO of the Planetary Society, said mainstream science makes no distinction between historical science and observational science. "These are constructs unique to Mr. Ham," he said, adding that the same natural laws apply to the past and the present.

Nye claimed that if students are taught creation as a viable model of origins, then the U.S. economy will suffer because America will lag behind other nations in technological advancements.

Ham cited several accomplished scientists and inventors who embrace the creation model, and he asked Nye to name one piece of technology that could only have been developed starting with a belief in molecules-to-man evolution.

Nye, an agnostic, made a case for what



he called the absurdity of "Ken Ham's creation model."

"Mr. Ham and his followers have this remarkable view of a worldwide flood that somehow influenced everything that we observe in nature -- a 500-foot wooden boat, eight zookeepers for 14,000 individual animals, every land plant in the world underwater for a full year. I ask us all is that really reasonable?" Nye said.

Fossils found in limestone in Kentucky, for example, prove the earth is much older than Ham allows, Nye said. "We are standing on millions of layers of ancient life. How could those animals have lived their entire life and formed these layers in just 4,000 years?" he said. "There isn't enough time since Mr. Ham's flood for this limestone that we're standing on to have come into existence."

The Bible is not "a more reasonable assessment of the natural laws we see around us than what I and everybody in here can observe," Nye said, calling such a view "unsettling, troubling." Nye charged Ham with holding a "magical" notion that natural laws have not always operated in the same way, an apparent reference to Ham's view that God intervened in the world supernatu-

rally at key points in history.

In the debate over origins, Ham said the terms need to be defined correctly. "I assert the word 'science' has been hijacked by secularists in teaching evolution to force the religion of naturalism on generations of kids," he said.

"... We see the collapse of Christian morality in our culture and increasing moral relativism because generations of kids are being taught the religion of naturalism and that the Bible can't be trusted," Ham said.

Creationists and evolutionists work side-by-side on medicines, vaccines and other innovations, Ham said. "It doesn't matter whether you're a creationist or an evolutionist. All scientists have the same experimental, observational science."

Where he and Nye differ, Ham said, is in their starting points as they try to interpret the evidence for how life began -- something they didn't witness.

"It's a battle over philosophical worldviews and starting points but the same evidence," Ham said. "I admit my starting point is that God is the ultimate authority. If someone doesn't accept that, then man has to be the ultimate authority. That's really the dif-

ference when it comes down to it."

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, was among those at the debate, afterward writing that "the problem with human reason is that it, along with every other aspect of our humanity, was corrupted by the fall."

"We have not lost the ability to know all things, but we have lost the ability to know them on our own authority and power," Mohler wrote at albertmohler.com. "We are completely dependent upon divine revelation for the answers to the most important questions of our life."

"Our sin keeps us from seeing what is right before our eyes in nature," Mohler wrote. "We are dependent upon the God who loves us enough to reveal himself to us -- and to give us his Word."

The central issue in the debate was not the age of the earth or the claims of modern science, Mohler said. "The question was not really about the ark or sediment layers or fossils. It was about the central worldview clash of our times, and of any time: the clash between the worldview of the self-declared 'reasonable man' and the worldview of the sinner saved by grace."

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IT ALL WORKS TOGETHER

A February Tribune Offering update from the Editor

By the time this magazine is published, we will have received the 2014 February Tribune Offering at the Midwinter Fellowship Meeting of the BBFI in Austin, TX. I hope you and your church were represented in the offering and mentioned in the report. In addition to that report, I will have had an opportunity to address the Fellowship about the *Tribune* and its importance in an organization like the Baptist Bible Fellowship. I plan to go over some of the things I have said before — about how our Fellowship was founded. I will mention again that the organizational meeting in 1950 was not called for founding a fellowship. The meeting was supposed to make plans for a college, but by the end of the day, the Baptist Bible Fellowship was formed and named, complete with a proposed college, a missionary vision, and a publication — the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. Again, I will make the claim that everything just seemed to work together.

And here we are, more than 60 years later, still working together. Take the *Tribune*, for instance. The *Tribune* is not like most magazines you receive. It tells the story of the Baptist Bible Fellowship — our pastors, our missionaries, our churches. No other magazine in the world does that. And it is funded differently, too. We do have individual subscriptions and advertising, of course, but the bulk of our budget comes from monthly support and bundle subscriptions (churches send us money in exchange for a bundle of magazines monthly). That explains our focus on the Fellowship. It is another way of working together.

What I have been emphasizing these past few months, however, is that a large part of our budget we raise comes from the annual February Tribune Offering, which is given above the

regular monthly support, much like the May college offering. In the past, the offering helped with the extras, but the past few years it has become a vital part of our budget.

Frankly, I need your help more than ever.

These days I often receive notes from pastors telling me their churches are going through tough times and they will have to forego supporting the *Tribune* for the time being, or maybe even permanently. They are not mad, nor do they want to cease participation — they just find themselves unable. And don't forget, our Fellowship has just raised a very large offering for our college in Springfield, and that may affect what happens to the *Tribune* offering this year.

I won't belabor the point. Our churches and pastors have been participating in this offering a long time now, and many have already sent their gifts and promises, but if the past few years are any indication, we will have gifts and promises coming in through the end of the year. Whenever, or however, we are grateful.

How much should you give? Again, if you've participated before, you already know. If this is your first time, a gift of \$15 is what it takes to cover the cost of an annual subscription, and all gifts are appreciated. As a starting point, why not pay for your subscription and perhaps one more?

Whatever you decide, we at the *Tribune* appreciate your participation in the February Tribune Offering. As I have said above, we can receive your gifts and promises any time if they have not yet been made. If you have questions or need more information, please email me at editors@tribune.org or call 417.831.3996.

A partner in the work,
Keith Bassham
Editor, *Baptist Bible Tribune*

TOGETHER, IT ALL WORKS. WON'T YOU JOIN WITH US?

URBAN CURRENT

Ministering in an urbanized world

Are you doing Jerusalem ministry in an Athens world? Have you ever considered the difference between Peter's Pentecost message and Paul's Areopagus message and asked yourself why?

Jerusalem. Jewish. Centuries of history, tradition, worship, ceremony, and sacred texts. The city is dominated by the Temple Mount and in the first century, the glorious gleaming Herodian temple. Streets sound with prayers, hymns, chants. Its rhythms are created by a religious calendar. Big events are festivals handed down by God to Moses. Everything is regulated by, permeated by a belief in the one true God and the interpretations of His will through His Word. A strict moral code prevails. Every inhabitant strains to know and obey. Most recently, the story of Jesus' life, death, and resurrection has been Jerusalem's headline.

Athens. Greek. City of the highest aspirations of a sophisticated, erudite people. Searching out philosophies and knowledge. Dominated by the Acropolis, crowned by the stupendous Parthenon, monument to the polytheism of the Grecian and Roman world. Worship of the human mind. Adulation of the human body. Celebrations of sensual indulgence. Religion filled with mythical gods, their loves, their wars, their feats, their deaths.

Paul left Jerusalem and the old world it represented behind. Jesus had prophesied its demise. From the glory of Pentecost to waves of persecution, the center of Christian gravity shifted to Antioch. The old world has essentially a scriptural worldview. The prevailing faith expressed in the temple, in the synagogue, was accepted and respected.

In Athens, Paul interacts with the new world. It's the world of pluralism, secularism, and humanism. A world of philosophical and theological exploration and theorizing human achievement and self-actualization.

For a generation I have been a student pursuing how to live, proclaim, teach, and apply

"Jerusalem" truth in an "Athens" setting. The 21st century urbanized, westernized world is secular, pluralistic, and humanistic. You pastor, you shepherd, you minister, you teach Sunday school in this new world.

Here's the deal. Context matters! What are several prominent elements of context that demand attention? The prevalent religious or theological strain certainly matters. Roman Catholic? Mormon? Islamic? This impacts how you minister. The sociological reality comes into play. If this leads us to think about what kind of meeting space is suitable, and what music is appropriate, it will be important in other ways as well. Next, the culture is an undeniable part of our context. This will inform everything from food to schedule to evangelism. Then, what is the political color? This is a huge issue where I serve, and increasingly everywhere. Ignoring it just makes us less effective in pointing people to Jesus.

This is the tale of two cities, the tale of two worlds. Look over your shoulder at a nation that possessed a Judeo-Christian worldview, ethics, and values. Divorce was frowned upon. Profanity not respectable. People who were immodest in public were tramps, sluts, and whores. Birth out of wedlock was a shame.

Look at the nation in which we now live. It is humanistic, pluralistic, secular. We have a President who presumes to re-imagine marriage. Your 9-year-old is watching Miley's pornographic new hit, thinking it's a love song.

Depravity has greater cultural and societal freedom now. The pathologies are deeper, stronger. Relationships are weaker, sicker. All of this is cooking, simmering in a pluralistic broth. This impacts our churches.

We're dealing with game-changing factors that were urban realities a generation ago. They are everyone's reality now. Horrific crimes show up in small towns. Church shootings are creating a new branch of the security industry. Childhood ministry worker screenings are rou-

tine. Sodomite radicals set an agenda forwarded by a self-identified homosexual community that becomes more demanding by the day. The cause has been accepted by the masses. Kids in your church are questioning their gender, exploring various sexual expressions, and/or have friends who are.

What effect has this urbanized new world had on families? Disconnection, brokenness, complications. This generation is technically savvy, but relationally clueless. We shouldn't redefine family. We need to welcome the confusion into the clinic called church. This plays into church health, affects the church leadership pool, and must impact how we teach, preach, and counsel.

Never has there been more discretionary money or time. In this context, how do we measure the spiritual, emotional energy sucked out of people by the pace and complexity of life?

What would it be like to preach to people in the 1700s who had never seen a billboard, never watched one commercial, never seen a lewd video, whose most prominent piece of literature was the Bible?

Context matters. Those who have not paid attention to urbanization are playing catch-up. Our passion to be fruitful must include understanding our context. Answering the how and why questions begins to inform a more effective ministry. The sons of Isaachar understood the times and knew what to do.

Our context directs, never dictates, our ministry. Our context colors, never compromises, our work. It shapes, not restricts, service to our Savior and world. Find the most God-honoring intersection of truth and context.

So how are we doing in Athens?

by Charles Lyons, Pastor
Armitage Baptist Church,
Chicago, Illinois
charles.lyons@armitagechurch.org



HISTORY

BAPTIST

RICHARD CURTIS – *Trials and Tribulations of Pioneer Baptists*

During the American Revolution the Baptists of South Carolina suffered for their loyalty to the American dream of independence. Richard Curtis Sr., a Baptist deacon, his son Richard Curtis Jr., a licensed Baptist preacher, and his stepson John Jones served with honor under the command of General Francis Marion, known as the Swamp Fox.

Their commitment to America's independence did not escape the notice of their British adversaries and Loyalist neighbors. In retaliation, British troops and Loyalist sympathizers destroyed their homes and crops and stole their livestock. The Curtis families were subjected to frequent attacks and unable to provide for their families. They decided their only hope was to immigrate to the West (present-day Mississippi.)

In 1780, the Curtises and several neighboring families began their long and difficult journey. They planned to travel to East Tennessee where they would float down the Holston and the Tennessee into the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers. Upon reaching the Holston, they began to construct three large flat bottom boats. They finally began their journey in the spring of 1780. Unfortunately, some of the members of the expedition contracted smallpox. Those infected were placed on the third boat and were required to follow about 200 yards behind the other boats.

The Curtises and their fellow travelers were aware of the potential dangers they faced, especially from hostile Indians. Upon reaching the Tennessee River, the first boat was suddenly attacked by hostile Cherokees. Skilled marksmen of the Curtis family were able to repel their attackers while experiencing only minor injuries. During the attack the second boat was able to sail out of danger. When the Indians realized their plan had failed, they directed their attack to the third boat and were able to board the vessel massacring everyone on board except one woman. Their victory would prove to be a disaster, however. Unfamiliar with smallpox, and with no immunity, the disease spread like wildfire through their village with deadly consequences.

The Curtis family and their companions were saddened

by their loss but thankful for their own deliverance. They continued their journey, landing about 20 miles above Natchez. The families built log cabins and prepared the land for crops. And these stalwart Baptists did not forget nor neglect their commitment to Christ.

Richard Curtis Jr. travelled far and wide holding services in private homes. It is said among these new settlers that there was not a home where the Bible was not read daily and family and private prayers sent up to Heaven. However, there was no religious freedom in Mississippi, which was controlled by the Catholic Spanish government. The only religion allowed was Catholicism, and Baptist preachers were forbidden to settle in the territory. The Baptists were able to avoid the Catholics' wrath, but the activities of Richard Curtis Jr. did not go unnoticed — especially after the Baptists organized a church in 1791 and called Curtis as their pastor.

In order to avoid detection by the Catholic authorities, baptisms were often held at night by torchlight. However, when Stephen De Alvo renounced the Catholic religion and united with the Baptists, religious persecution began in earnest. An arrest warrant was issued for Curtis and De Alvo. If arrested, they would have been sent to the silver mines in Mexico, which amounted to a death sentence. Fortunately, Curtis

and De Alvo were warned and were able to hide in a thicket. Knowing they must leave Spanish-controlled Mississippi, the church collected the necessary supplies for their journey. A brave woman named Cloe Holt dressed as a man, avoided the authorities, and delivered the supplies.

Curtis and De Alvo travelled to South Carolina, to Curtis's old home place, arriving in 1795. Curtis was not idle. He frequently exercised his preaching skills. In 1798, word was sent to the exiles notifying them that it was safe to return to Mississippi. Curtis and De Alvo immediately returned to their families. Curtis renewed his ministry and was able to establish several Baptist churches.

The hardship experienced by our Baptist forefathers is almost impossible to comprehend. Richard Curtis died October 28, 1811, at about 60 years of age.



by Thomas Ray



Thank you!



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

You have prayed. You have given. You have made the following announcement possible:

Baptist Bible College is very pleased to announce that we have successfully accomplished our goal of raising \$600,000 to meet the matching gift opportunity.

We shared this opportunity with you at the beginning of December with only eight weeks to meet the terms of this offer: If we could raise \$600,000 by January 31, 2014, then a loving donor would match those funds. Honestly, I was not sure this was possible. Churches and individuals are struggling in this economy. We began to pray and to plan and set this opportunity before you, and you responded in an amazing way. We have truly experienced the words spoken by Gabriel in Luke 1:37, "For with God nothing shall be impossible."

Thank you to the many churches and individuals who sacrificially gave at a difficult time of year to meet this extremely large goal. There were many new donors and many who gave that have not given in a long time. Thank you for believing in us and for being our friend.

Thank you to our donor, the Rawlings Foundation, for providing the very generous matching gift. This gift will meet such an important need at Baptist Bible College. We greatly appreciate the generosity, love, and friendship that the Rawlings Foundation has shown.

Thank you to the great team I work with here at BBC — from our tech department to social media to administrative assistants to our finance department. Your hard work was tremendous and worth it.

Thank you, Lord, for what this offering has done for our Fellowship. It has brought a great amount of interest, unity, and excitement to the BBFI. This offering has demonstrated that the Baptist Bible Fellowship is indeed alive and can accomplish great things when we work together.

Now I must ask that we move forward together in unity again. The attention that this offering has gathered has overshadowed some other very important needs that I want to bring to your attention. We will soon gather at a national meeting and be reminded of the important role that the *Baptist Bible Tribune* plays in our Fellowship and in our world. We need to support that need and help *Tribune* editor Keith Bassham exceed their goal. We also need to support our friends in Boston and at the BBFI Mission Office. My wife, Barb, and I have personally committed to give to help with these great needs. How about you? We have proven what we can accomplish when we work together.

Thank you again for the tremendous gifts, encouragement, and interest, and to the Rawlings Foundation for providing this tremendous opportunity.

It's all about the finish



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

In Boston we love our hockey — the Boston Bruins. I grew up ignorant of hockey. That all changed in my years in New England. The Bruins may not be a full-blown religion, but if you have to choose between a Bruins game and a good steak dinner ... I guess it comes down to how hungry you are?

The Bruins have a goalie right now named Tuukka. He's Finnish. Watching him again last night, I learned something about a finish — not the Finnish. Hockey teams play 60 minutes of regulation in a game. The one time we all got to celebrate a Stanley Cup Championship, in my recollection, they called the team's achievement "Full Sixty to History." They played the whole game. They finished. Last year, not so much. Our Bruins got back to the finals, but lost. Tuukka gave up two goals in about 17 seconds right at the end of the game! So from the Finnish I am reminded about the finish.

Working in a college, the concept of "finish" sits in front of us all the time. Our recruiters urge prospects to finish high school strong. Then, once students come to Boston, finishing is paramount. Finish every assignment. Finish your full preparation for exams. Finish your degree. We are all about "finishing" in Boston. We want to do everything we can to help students get the degree and get out there to serve.

Lots of colleges make transfer of credits a headache. It is really a simple business strategy in truth, rarely having anything actually to do with course content or even source of accreditation (though that myth is still out there). No, every college realizes that every course you take in transfer is one more course a student will not take from your college and will not pay you for! I know firsthand, transferring credits can be an all-out war.

Not in Boston. Years ago we settled in our minds that our job is to find ways to help our students finish. We revamped our curriculum and made it amazingly flexible and accommodating, within the rules of educational authorities, to say yes to transfer credits. We are in the finishing business.

Never has this been more important than now. More and more students are doing work at community colleges. Plans change. Sometimes young people discover only partway through college somewhere that they really want a solid Christian education — regardless of their career field. And they need to finish college. I can say this emphatically ... nobody looking to complete his or her degree should make a final choice until they check with us. We are absolutely a "finishing school." I could reel off name after name of our students who are proof of what I say.

In hockey we celebrate every goal, and even a good hit or a good save. But if we don't finish well, you should see how fast our Finnish goalie zooms off the ice when the job doesn't get done. But when we win, Bruins have this tradition of banging helmets with Tuukka. Hey, can we do that at Commencement?

SPRINGFIELD, MO

BBC students see missionary work firsthand in Panama

By Jim Smith – BBFI Associate Mission Director

More than a year ago, talks began between Baptist Bible College and BBFI World Mission Service Center to do a trip together for BBC students. Panama was chosen as our destination country and Jim and Phyllis Childress were contacted to see if they would be interested in hosting this kind of a trip. Jon Slayden organized and guided the students and Sharon and I took care of cross-cultural preparations.

Jim and Phyllis Childress are veteran missionaries and old hands with visiting groups, so they were quickly prepared with the basic logistics. Because of their passionate interest in helping prepare the next generation of cross-cultural church planters, they assembled a rather intense educational package for our BBC students.

After going through an application and screening process, we chose seven students to form our group and began training sessions to prepare them for what was to come. Each student was responsible to raise his or her own funds, and it was interesting to watch how that developed with each of them.

Students returned early from Christmas break in order to board our plane on January 1, 2014. Changing planes in Dallas and again in Miami, we arrived late evening in Panama City ready to begin what Jim Childress had termed “Operation Double Exposure — Panama 2014.”

The basic idea was to expose our students to a variety of aspects of missionary life and work. The students were exposed to different cultural influences with churches on different social levels, and they met pastors, missionaries, and leaders in four different provinces and on a reservation.

We travelled as far west as the Costa

Rican border. We crossed the Panama Canal several times and spent part of one day seeing it in operation.

The missionaries we met were Jim and Phyllis Childress, Dan and Cricket Young, and Thomas and Elvira Corbello.

The pastors we met were Pastor and Mrs. Byron Willis, Pastor and Mrs. Rodrigo Contreras, Pastor and Mrs. Fredy Centeno, Pastor and Mrs. Norman Ortiz, Pastor and Mrs. Horacio García, Pastor and Mrs. Darío Pizarro, Pastor and Mrs. Roberto Maldonado, Pastor and Mrs. Modesto Hernández, Pastor and Mrs. Genaro Hernández

The students received stories from the pastors, and the pastors also shared their prayer requests with them. The students sang songs in Spanish and gave personal testimonies at each opportunity. Panama is a fascinating country and the church planting efforts of missionaries and pastors have been producing spiritual fruit for many years.

The students gave us some of their impressions of this trip:

JOSH OSBORNE

I got to speak with more than ten pastors about their ministry and history there in Panama. I heard them speak about their victories, their struggles, their goals, and their needs. This type of exposure to ministers in another part of the world has helped me think about how to form my future ministries. But it also showed me what reaching other parts of the world looks like so that I can help these and other pastors around the world if God puts me in such a position.



KADI MOORE

On this trip, God opened my eyes to a side of missions I had never known before. I had always known that spiritual warfare was real, but going into another country and hearing the stories of people who have battled on the front lines, it becomes much more real than I would have ever imagined. Satan is working hard to keep the people from coming to the saving knowledge of grace. He does this in many ways, making it very difficult at times for the missionaries and pastors there.

BLAKE HUNTER

One of the most encouraging times to me was the dinner at the Young's house. Dan and Cricket Young have been missionaries in Panama since 1986, and have been a part of several different works there. They provided a lot of advice for missionaries from their experiences. Along with Jim Childress, they stressed the need to build the nationals' trust in God's direction. They contrasted building a rules-based church and building a relationship-based church. We asked the Youngs what worked best in conveying this message to the Panamanians. Dan Young replied, "There is no substitute for your own personal walk with the Lord."

MEGAN HUNTER

Pastor Pizarro told us, "All God needs is a willing heart." This is the phrase that echoes in my mind from our trip to Panama. All too often I get mixed up in how I am going to please God with my life. This trip opened my eyes, again, to see that God just needs you to be still and trust Him. He will do the rest. The national pastors in Panama were such a great encouragement for me. I gleaned so much from them and their families. They were gracious to allow our group



OWASSO, OK

OK church hosts annual Men's Wild Beast Feast and Life Skills Retreat

Friendship Baptist Church and Pastor Linzy Slayden welcomed about 700 men from 32 churches for their two-day Beast Feast and Life Skills Retreat January 31 and February 1.



The annual event features a dinner and worship service Friday night and workshops Saturday. Slayden says that 12 men were saved during the Friday evening service when BBC President Mark Milioni preached.

This year's theme was Pursue, and in addition to keynote speaker Milioni, other workshop speakers were Dennis Jennings, Rob Hoffman, Bob Weger, Jon Slayden, Wes Flaugh, James Sinde, Barb Milioni, Reuben Herris, and Lance Harrington.

Slayden says, "Twelve years ago we enjoyed our

first Beast Feast and Retreat, and each has been a great blessing on many levels, but the event this year was outstanding!"

The host pastor also gave credit to his staff: Loran McAlister, Jeff Smith, Reuben Herrin, Mike Gleason, and Stephanie Wheeler. Presentation recordings from the event are available at <http://friendshipowasso.org/resources.html>.

BBC students: Panama (continued)

to experience their everyday ministry and from this I was able to see how they deal with cultural differences, meeting physical needs, outreach, and all while showing the love of Jesus.

JAKE GILMORE

I had never been on a mission trip. I had never even left the country. I had no idea what to expect, and intimidation of being in a completely new culture weighed heavy on me. However, seeing the real-life ministries of the local pastors and missionaries was encouraging and a whole new perspective. Most of the local pastors from Panama were very excited about their ministries, and especially about what God was doing in their own lives. The churches weren't always air conditioned, and I don't remember there being pews with seat cushions. However, they still worshiped the same God we do, and they still learn from the Bible. It was a blessing to be reminded that these people way down in Panama worship the same God I do here at home.

MICHAEL COX

The thing that has stuck with me the most from all the missionaries and pastors is their faithfulness. You can't do a job like this un-

less you are called by Him and given strength by Him. This isn't to scare people away from missions or ministry, but we must realize how serious it is.

EDNA MANCIA

I loved how all the missionaries and pastors we met were so on fire for God, and even though they have been through some pretty tough situations, they are still going. Although the missionaries and pastors we met were not all from the BBFI, just seeing them all work for the same goal, to reach others for the gospel, is amazing and super encouraging! I can say for sure my favorite parts were being able to talk to the children and teens. Seeing how they want to receive the gospel and seeing them wanting to be involved was something else.



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WINFIELD, KS

Kansas BBF meeting features Tribune editor

Pastor Jeff McCaskill and Millington Street Baptist Church hosted the meeting of the Kansas Baptist Bible Fellowship January 14. Guest preacher for the day was Tribune Editor Keith Bassham who gave two one-hour lectures on the history of Baptist associations and fellowships. In the afternoon presentation, Bassham spoke about the founding of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the primary figures in the founding, and the founding principles of the Fellowship.

SPRINGFIELD, MO

Missouri BBF hosted at Park Crest

The Missouri Baptist Bible Fellowship met at Park Crest Baptist Church in Springfield, MO, January 20. Preachers for the fellowship were Lonnie Lehrman of Granbury, TX, BBF President Linzy Slayden, and BBC President Mark Milioni. Host pastor Phil Housley aimed to make the meeting both practical and encouraging, and the schedule built in times for prayer and fellowship throughout the day.

Breakouts were led by John Decker, Brandt Leich, and Barb Milioni. The Singing Patriots from BBC provided music.

DES MOINES, IA

Iowa BBF holds retreat for pastors and wives

The Iowa Baptist Bible Fellowship held a pastor/wives retreat in Des Moines at the Machine Shed Restaurant January 24. Ames, IA, pastor Randy Abell says, "The BBF churches are very spread out across the state and although they don't have traditional monthly meetings, they try to get together a few times a year for encouragement and fellowship."

Iowa pastors Randy Abell (Ames), Pat Nath (Des Moines), Everett Napuunoo (Des Moines), Brian Harris (Albia), Ed Matthews (Ottumwa), Dave McIntosh (Muscatine), Robert Pate (Central City), Matt Read (Onslow), Ernie Brown (Ames), Jeremy Ward (Des Moines), Darrell DeRadcliffe (Ames), J.D. Abell (Ames).

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FELTON MOSLEY

Felton Mosley, 82, passed from this life January 15, 2014. Mosley was born December 22, 1931, and pastored almost 50 years at churches in Georgia, Florida, Oklahoma, and Texas, including Southeast Baptist Church in Tulsa, OK, for nearly 20 years. He preached a sermon based on Matthew 6:33 on his 82nd birthday.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 58 years, Pauline Mosley. He is survived by his wife of three years, Evelyn Obenour Mosley, two sons, 18 grandchildren, and 15 great-grandchildren. Services were held at Worth Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX.

BOCA RATON, FL

KENNETH GILLMING

Long-time BBFI pastor and teacher Kenneth Gillming was taken to heaven February 6, 2014, as the *Tribune* was going to press. An extended obituary and tribute will be published next month.

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

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

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At the plate

By Gary Fuller | Pastor, Gentle Shepherd Baptist Church | Lincoln, NE

A few weeks ago, a man was found brutally murdered in a neighborhood park. He was a young man of just 27 years, and late Wednesday night or Thursday morning he entered eternity from a dark and shadowy little baseball diamond in Peter Pan Park, in the middle of a rough neighborhood.

I learned about the murder from his cousin, a lady I had led to the Lord many years ago.

She and I had met in a hospital corridor. She was crying as I passed her on the way to the elevator. The Holy Spirit prompted me to return from the elevator, and I asked her if we could pray for her. Her mother was dying in ICU. Later, in her apartment, this young single mom trusted Jesus as her personal Savior. She attended our church off and on for several years. We watched her kids grow up and move on in life.

Now, she was calling on me as her pastor to be there for her and her family. She asked if we could meet with them at the scene of the crime and have prayer with the family. I believed I could offer some comfort and hope and thought I would be ministering to about 18 people.

My wife and I drove close to the park — there was nowhere to park the car. The parking lot was full; there were no spots to park on the streets for blocks around; cars were trolling for a spot. So we parked in the next neighborhood over and walked to the unlit park.

The only lights were vigil candles held by several of the attendees. The temp was hovering around 32 degrees. The crowd numbered between 250 and 300. I spotted some gang members right off (I am a police chaplain), but a majority of the group were American Indian, Omaha, and Sioux. There were several African-Americans, a couple of people I took as local news people, and a smattering of others.

They had made a circle around the crime scene, between pitcher's mound and home plate of a baseball diamond. The same diamond I had played on dozens of times when I was in Little Chiefs Baseball. The thought crossed my mind that I had struck out many times on this spot.

There was nothing organized, just people placing memorial items behind home plate and near the backstop. But there was this empty spot in the middle of the circle a few feet in front of home plate, and I decided that would be my pulpit. These people were looking for something, and I supposed that God was what they needed more than anything.

So, I cleared my throat, introduced myself as a pastor and a

chaplain for the police and fire departments, and said I was there to try to offer them some comfort from the Lord.

I led them in the first verse of "Amazing Grace." Some of the folks started praising Jesus, and I knew there would be some spiritual support for what we were trying to do. Before singing the next verse, we mentioned how special it was because it spoke of eternity. As we sang, "When we've been there ten thousand years ..." folks with some "churchin'" realized this was about to turn into something special, and they began to "get their praise on." A prayer was offered up for comfort, grace, strength, understanding, justice, love, and forgiveness, followed by some loud "Amen's."

And then, the power of Spirit of the Lord came upon this

preacher. Seldom have I felt the liberty and power that God gave on this occasion. There were no interruptions, no one stirring. All eyes, as far as I could tell in that darkness punctuated by candlelight, were on the preacher. Tattooed gangsters were nodding their heads, women with children on their hips were weeping, children were wide-eyed with interest. If only Sunday morning Christians could be so enthralled with God's message! But, death can do that. Sudden death is a real attention-getter. Murder ... well, God was speaking to them and they were tuned in.

The message was about the reality of eternity, the certainty of death for all of us, the uncertainty of life, the value of living for Christ and

the need of Christ as Savior if a person is ever going to have hope for eternity.

As I ended, I led the crowd in a prayer, which they repeated — a prayer of sorrow for sins, the belief in the death burial and resurrection of Christ, and opening the heart and life and inviting Jesus to be Savior and Lord.

At the close of the prayer, I reminded them that if we were ashamed of Jesus, He would be ashamed of us before His Father. With this in mind, I asked all who prayed to make Jesus Lord and Savior to publicly lift their hands high so all could witness their trust in Jesus. Every hand shot up, I mean, as if they were trying to touch heaven, and stayed up. Shouts began to ring out.

I will still remember my experiences on that little old ball diamond of my childhood, but those strike-outs will hardly matter after this night. Thank God for an opportunity that started in a hospital hallway several years ago. I trust the recording angel was burning up some pens writing new names down in glory that night.



MARCH 2014

PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1  MISSIONARY Jesse & Glenna Parnell <i>Uruguay</i>
2  CHAPLAIN Lt. Col. James & Walda Toews <i>U.S. Civil Air Patrol</i>	3  MISSIONARY Eddie & Janet Urey <i>USLG</i>	4  T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Jaron & Nicki Rogers <i>Nicaragua</i>	5  MISSIONARY Dan & Rachael Smith <i>Portugal</i>	6  MISSIONARY Linda Fitzgerald <i>Germany</i>	7  MISSIONARY Russ & Sylvia Daniels <i>Uganda</i>	8  MISSIONARY Arnold & Leslie Belasco <i>Spain</i>
9  MISSIONARY Lonnie & Georgine Brooks <i>Retired</i>	10  MISSIONARY Ross & Ellen Ligon <i>Nigeria</i>	11  MISSIONARY Sandra Loveday <i>Spain</i>	12  MISSIONARY Del & Lora Hooze <i>Philippines</i>	13  WORKERS IN Restricted Access Nations	14  MISSIONARY Larry & Dixie Quade <i>Wales</i>	15  BBFI MISSION OFFICE - SPRINGFIELD, MO Paul Hylton <i>Associate Mission Director</i>
16  MISSIONARY David & Hope Reinhardt <i>Chile</i>	17  T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Christian & Shawna Hendrick <i>Congo</i>	18  MISSIONARY Corey & Jessica Kershner <i>Taiwan</i>	19  MISSIONARY Naomi Musgrave <i>USLG</i>	20  MISSIONARY Paul & Alexis Dedyan <i>France</i>	21  MISSIONARY Kevin & Kristina Brown <i>Croatia</i>	22  MISSIONARY Ole & Renee Konnerup <i>Kenya</i>
23  Baptist Bible College <i>Springfield, MO</i>	24  MISSIONARY Jim & Laura Hutchinson <i>Russia</i>	25  MISSIONARY Ed & Annita Hoagland <i>Mexico</i>	26  MISSIONARY Donna Woodson <i>Nicaragua</i>	27  MISSIONARY Terry & Carol Taylor <i>Saint Vincent</i>	28  National Church Planting Office <i>Springfield, MO</i>	29  Dick & Linda Redding <i>Mexico</i>
30  Richard & Joyce Crotts <i>Papua New Guinea</i>	31  Tony & Joy Anzalone <i>Ecuador</i>					

As is the business of tailors to make clothes and cobblers to make shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray.
Martin Luther

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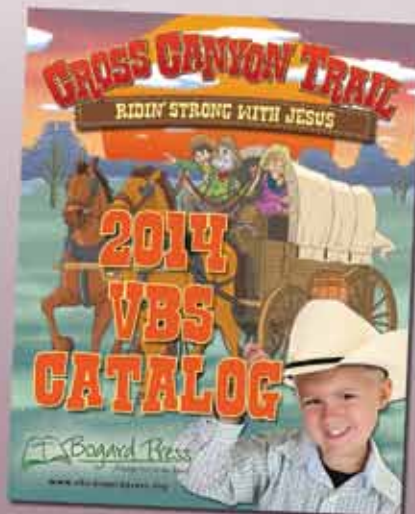
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LUKE 9:23

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