

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

MAY 2010 | VOL. 60 NO. 9 | \$1.95

GLOBAL PARTNERS

A look at 60 years of history, how things work today,
and what the future may hold for BBFI missions

INSIDE

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A NEW J. FRANK NORRIS BOOK p. 22

ARGENTINA TO KANSAS BY BUS p. 23



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ON THE TABLE

Are we really that old?

by Keith Bassham | Editor

This month, the Baptist Bible Fellowship is 60 years old. Next month, June 23 to be precise, the *Tribune* itself turns 60, and in the next issue we will mark it officially. However, Baptist Bible College and Louisiana Baptist University are both planning celebrations and recognitions for their respective graduation weeks.

I'm not certain anyone paid much attention to 60th anniversaries until Queen Victoria of Great Britain dubbed the 60th anniversary of her reign a Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Incidentally, if Queen Elizabeth still reigns in June 2012, that will be her Diamond Jubilee. I am a contrarian on the subject of celebrations (my wife will confirm), and I would rather observe off-year anniversaries, say the 35th or 36th.

There is, of course, nothing magic about the 50th, or the 60th, or the 75th anniversaries, but to do anything for that long should be noted. Just as any other human organization, the Fellowship has its historic highs and lows — proud moments and times we would like to forget. On the whole, we have done pretty well holding onto the things we should, and occasionally holding onto things that should have been let go.

As I mentioned a few months back, our founders held little hope that we would maintain organizational or doctrinal integrity beyond the first 25 years. I personally think it was in vogue to be a prophet of doom during the boom years of the Fellowship. So while they would make such public pronouncements, appearing all objective and statesmanlike, surely they were cheering everyone on in secret. After all, they were the founders — did they actually think so little of their work? But, on the chance they were honest in their doom-saying, let me say I am glad they appear to have been mistaken.

One other word. We like heroic stories with fireworks and pizzazz, but in the *Tribune's* 60-year run you won't find those things in day-to-day Fellowship life. They were admittedly more a feature of the early years of the Fellowship when massive energy was necessary to merely survive. But it is a mistake to believe church life is always going to be big, loud, and exhilarating.

It is a fact most of us do not worship and work in megachurches. Life is not loud and exciting; big things do not happen every Sunday; budgets are tight and there are parts of church work that are boring and routine. But the day-to-day plodding is probably more the norm for church life and has been so for most of the history of the church. Mega-things are the exception, not the rule; and we have survived as a Fellowship not because of the fireworks, but because of the day-to-day faithfulness of thousands of people who have done the grunt work, and the tedious teaching of doctrine and practical Christian behavior consistently and constantly, and just about everything you and I enjoy in this Fellowship is due, humanly speaking, to such people.

Keith Bassham

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Easter: Around the Fellowship
A sampling of Easter reports from churches

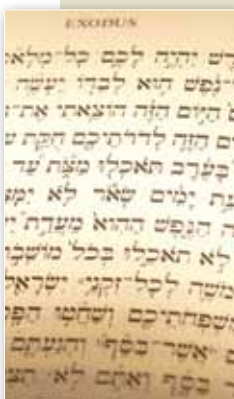
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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

An undaunted godly passion



by Keith Gillming | Vice President: Education | BBFI

After anxious months of scrutinizing all the debates on the National Health Care, we all watched a beaming President Barack Obama sign a historic \$938 billion overhaul that guarantees coverage for 32 million uninsured Americans and will surely affect the lives of all citizens in America.

Not everyone was applauding the new bill. As the president paraded in front of society at large, attorneys general from several states were filing suit to stop the new health care bill, which they believe is an attempt by the federal government to infringe upon state rights.

Even still, there is no backing down. *Washington Post* reform advocate Ezra Klein quoted Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, who said, “We won that fight, and once we kick through this door, there’ll be more legislation to follow.”

Regardless of how you feel about the passing of the present administration’s Health Care Reform Bill, you have to marvel at the persistent and aggressive focus they have given to what I consider a socialist agenda.

The verse that keeps coming to mind is Luke 16:8 where the Lord commends the corrupt financial manager because he had done whatever it took to cover his deceptive accounting. Jesus finally concludes, “...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” So while we can’t commend the dark political methods of our day, we can surely be as fierce in our zeal for Baptist Bible College and Boston Baptist College as any politicians can be.

Imagine what we could do as a unified, undaunted Fellowship of churches if we focused only on fulfilling the Great Commission through our Bible colleges and missionaries. The impact would be felt across the world.

Let me encourage you to show such tenacity in helping Baptist Bible College achieve its \$600,000 May Offering goal. Don Baier, treasurer of the BBC trustees, told us recently that “The financial position is much improved.” We can certainly thank God for His bountiful blessings, but there is still a great need for our involvement!

In the Northeast, Boston Baptist College is seeking a dedicated group of churches to help with their \$150,000 May Offering that will go towards preconstruction of new dorms and funding of student scholarships. I know personally the great impact they are having in the Northeast and would encourage your financial support to this offering as well.

If politicians can be so insistent to pass a bill to give a false sense of temporary health in our lives in America, how can we not be more passionate and dedicated about investing in the lives of young heroes who carry the message of eternal life around the globe? So many are giving to multiply our impact — let me urge you to join them.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

Adversity in our world



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director

Not only are there economic issues affecting our missionaries’ outreach, but also natural disasters affecting our missionaries’ ministries and the people to whom God has sent them. The flooding in the Philippines and the earthquakes in Haiti and Chile have wreaked havoc. They have been devastating to the believers in those countries as they have lost family members, homes, and churches.

The wonderful fact about BBFI-affiliated churches is that they have a heart for missions and concern for the people in these affected countries. Since the flooding in the Philippines, \$62,730.71 has been sent to various missionaries whose people and works have been affected. Also, \$457,848.83 has been sent for the relief and rebuilding efforts in Haiti.

Just when things seemed to be overwhelming, on February 27, 2010, our missionaries in Chile were awakened by an 8.8 earthquake and an average of 20 aftershocks for the next few days.

Word from our missionaries has been that none of them were injured and so far no one in their many churches was killed or received major injuries. However, there has been much property damage.

Church leaders have worked alongside the missionaries to provide medical relief and assistance during the initial stages. The missionaries are formulating a plan right now to begin the reconstruction phase for their church buildings. Damage is being assessed and the process for rebuilding is being planned.

The Mission Office has set the Chile Relief Fund to receive special funds to assist the missionaries and local churches as they rebuild and reach out to their communities. One hundred percent of what is sent will be given directly to the needs in Chile.

CHILE EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

- All BBF Missionaries have been contacted and are safe
- Initial reports find great damage to several church buildings, pastors and believers homes
- Missionaries are assessing damage and formulating a plan of response

To donate funds for this effort send to:

BBFI Mission Office – Chile Relief
P.O. Box 802757
Kansas City, Missouri 64180-2757

As a reminder, don’t forget to plan to attend the Cebu Global Fellowship Meeting on February 21-24, 2011, in Cebu, Philippines. It will be a wonderful time of fellowship with other church leaders and believers from around the world. Already there are people from all over Asia, Mexico, Europe, South America, and the U.S.A. who are making plans to attend.

To learn more about this event and for travel information, go to www.Cebu2011.com.

Spring NCPO school



by Wayne Guinn | Director | NCPO

March and April have been busy months for the NCPO office. Preparations have been ongoing for the Spring Church Planting School in Richardson, Texas. School candidates are committed to attend, and it's always exciting to be around these young church planters. The RPM (Revival, Prayer, and Momentum) Conference, April 19-20, will also be a part of the spring school.

Tom Wagoner will be challenging us about revival. John Arnold will be focusing us on prayer, and Charles Lyons will instruct us on the importance of momentum. Join us at Canyon Creek Baptist in Richardson and rev-up your church for growth.

Along with these preparations, Jason and I have been on the road in Virginia, Florida, and Texas encouraging pastors to lead their churches to become Church Bank churches. In all, 26 churches have agreed to get on board to help us raise \$3,000,000 and replace the existing bank line of credit. Because of new federal requirements the bank is unwinding our unsecured line of credit, which simply means that as it pays down we cannot re-loan the money as we have in the past. This not only curtails our ability to help new churches, but it also greatly impacts our income. If you would like more information about becoming a Church Bank church, please contact us at 417-889-1017 or by e-mail at office@bbfincpo.com.

God continues to bless our loan program as we have closed several loans and are working on others in New Hampshire, Ohio, Texas, Tennessee, and Florida.

The BBF Builders are busy working in Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and Ohio. Pray for these good folks as they labor for our Lord. They are literally saving churches millions of dollars a year in construction costs.



BBF Builders doing construction work on Bethel Baptist Church in Uniontown, Pennsylvania

The hill of the Lord



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

Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" What a wonderful question God seems to be asking our Fellowship. Psalm 24 has become important to me as I am challenged of the Lord to ascend in revival into His presence.

Much has been said about repentance and the providence of God, but many of us believe the time is right for His people to experience an unusual move of God, what we are calling revival. Duncan Campbell from the Hebrides Revival off of Scotland said, "Revival is an unusual, captivating awareness of God in the life of an individual, a church and a community." We have seen very little of the unusual manifestation of God in our churches, and I grieve because of that.

Psalm 24 is associated with the return of the ark to Jerusalem and begins in verses one and two with a statement about calling the Lord's claim when the Psalm says, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof..." This earth is His, our movement is His, our churches are His, and we are His. The Lord claims control of all that is. Then we see the Lord's call when he asks the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" The hill of the Lord speaks of spiritual power. We know that when God moves in revival, the power will come.

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord?" Someone has said the answer to that question falls into three areas: Christ-likeness of life, Christ-likeness of longing, and Christ-likeness in language. Christ-likeness of life involves having clean hands and a pure heart. Clean hands speak of the outward life and pure heart speaks of the inward life. How many times have we projected something we really are not? How many times have we stood to preach when in reality the power is not upon us? Then it follows with Christ-likeness of longings — not lifting up our souls to vanity (the original carries the idea of emptiness and shallowness of this world). Finally, Christ-like in our language involves not swearing deceitfully, and this projects the importance of our words. They must be trustworthy, honest, and dependable. God give us revival! If these things are true, we can ascend to the hill of the Lord.

When asked the question, "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord" in Psalm 24, I hope that we all will cry out to God, "We will! We want to stand in your holy place."

Let's seek the Lord's face individually, together with our brethren, and in our state Fellowship meetings. Let's weep and cry out to God, fast and pray and believe Him for revival. It just may be in our next meeting when the power of God will fall and we will see the glory of God almighty manifested in revival.

A website has been established for the purpose of communicating our prayers for and our reports of genuine revival. It is www.revivaljourney.com.

REAL.

integrity | unity | holiness | mission

Baptist Bible College Fellowship Week | May 10-13

KEEP IT REAL! It's a phrase that is often heard in our culture. Jesus said, "Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me." (John 15:4) Our challenge at BBC is to produce fruit through our students that will remain for generations. Lasting fruit will only come as we are rooted in the True Vine, Jesus Christ.

Our BBFI President, Mark Hodges, has issued a call for revival throughout our Fellowship. As we gather this May on the campus of BBC we will examine the fruit that often results when God revives his people — the fruit of Integrity, Unity, and Holiness.

I hope you will join us on the campus this May as we meet together for our annual Graduation Fellowship Meeting. I can't wait to tell you of all the great things God is doing in the lives of our students, and the plans that He has given us for the future.

Jim Edge
President, Baptist Bible College

Monday | Real Integrity

Executive Committee Meeting—8 AM
National Director's Meeting—1 PM
Evening Service—6:30 PM
Mark Hodges, Speaker

Tuesday | Real Unity

Class Reunions 7—9 AM
Ladies' Meeting—9 AM
BBFI Business Meeting—9 AM
Speakers—Randy Harp, Tom Wagoner, Mark Milioni
National Director's Luncheon—12:30 PM
Missions Field Rep Meeting—1:30 PM
Evening Service—6:30 PM
Fred Young, Speaker
Presidential Reception—8:30 PM

Wednesday | Real Holiness

Class Reunions—7-9 AM
Missionary Approvals, Jon Konnerup—9-11 AM
Mike Frazier, Speaker
State of the College Address—11 AM
Alumni Luncheon—12:30 PM
Missionary Luncheon—12:30 PM
Evening Service—6:30 PM
Jim Baize, Speaker

Thursday | Graduation

Graduation Ceremony—9 AM
Dave Melton, Commencement Speaker

Music | led by Nate Harmon
BBC Choir and Orchestra

WWW.GOBBC.EDU

*"I am the vine, ye are the branches:
He that abideth in me, and I in him,
the same bringeth forth much fruit:
for without me ye can do nothing."
John 15:5*

Host Hotel
Holiday Inn Hotel
2720 N. Glenstone Ave.
\$78.00 for Single/Double
417-865-8600

Other Local Hotels
Best Western Coach House Inn
2535 N. Glenstone Ave.
\$59.95 for Double Queen
417-862-0701
www.bwcoachhouse.com

Candlewood Suites
1920 E. Kerr St.
(access rd. to Glenstone)
\$79.00 for Studio Suite
417-866-4242
www.candlewoodsuites.com

Doubletree Hotel
2431 N. Glenstone Ave.
\$94 for Double Queen or King
417-831-3131

Drury Inn
2715 N. Glenstone Ave.
\$89.99 for Standard or King Deluxe
Provide BBC corporate ID#305014
417-863-8400

Eagles Lodge
2611 N. Glenstone Ave.
\$42.00 for Double/King
417-864-3565

Hampton Inn
2750 N. Glenstone Ave.
\$95.40 for Standard
417-869-5548

Motel 6
2655 N. Glenstone Ave
\$37.99 for first person
\$6 for second adult
417-831-2100
www.motel6.com

Ramada Oasis Inn
2550 N. Glenstone Ave.
\$67.00 for Standard
\$77.00 for Poolside
417-866-5253
www.ramadaoasis.com

Special Events

Monday

BBFI Historical video

BBFI past President's honored.

Tuesday

9:00 AM Ladies' Meeting – "Purse" everance!

Speaker: Sharon Hoffman

12 ladies will win a great gift!

9:00 AM BBFI Business Meeting

8:30 PM Presidential Reception

all living BBC Presidents honored.



Sharon Hoffman

Wednesday

9:00 – 11:00 AM Missionary Morning

Stirring testimonies from the field as well as from our
Missionary Candidates.

12:30 PM – Alumni Luncheon

BBFI Founders will be honored

Thursday

9:00 AM – BBC Commencement

1:30 PM – Curtis Goldman Memorial Golf Tournament

Branson Creek – see www.gobbc.edu to register

Guest Speakers



Dave Melton



Jim Baize



Tom Wagoner



Randy Harp



Mark Hodges



Fred Young



Mike Frazier



Mark Milioni

Class Reunions

Alumni Luncheon (For all Alumni and Friends)

Wednesday May 12 at 12:30 - BBC
Cafeteria - Tickets are \$15

Classes of 1950-1955 Reunion

Tuesday, May 11 - 1:00 PM, Ryan's on East
Kearney - Contact Bill Hathaway at 417-833-8584

Class of 1957 Reunion

Tuesday, May 11, 1:00 PM, University Plaza Hotel

Class of 1959 Reunion

Tuesday, May 11, 7:30 AM, BBC Cafeteria -
Contact Jorene Howard at 417-865-1559

Class of 1960 Reunion

Tuesday May 11, 12:30 PM, BBC Cafeteria -
Contact Branson Howard at
417-865-1559

Class of 1962 Reunion

Wednesday May 12, 7:30 AM, Shoney's at 2731
N. Glenstone - Contact John Page 417-862-6478
or jcp6560@aol.com

Class of 1970 Reunion

Contact Sue Garard at suegarard@aol.com

Class of 1972 Reunion

Contact Driscoll Cruthfield at
417-753-4491 or hbma@usa.com

Class of 1980 Reunion

Wednesday May 12, 7:30 AM, IHOP on North
Kansas Expressway - Contact Debbie Christopher
at 417-833-2310

Class of 1990 Reunion

Tuesday May 11, 12:30 PM, BBC Cafeteria -
Contact Tim Wertz at 417-881-4200

Register online for childcare,
golf, and other opportunities
during the week at
WWW.GOBBC.EDU

Paul Gabriel – Columbus Baptist Temple, Columbus, OH There were 335 present with one first-time visitor who surrendered to the Lord for salvation and will be baptized next Sunday. The highlight of the day was an afternoon service celebrating the second anniversary of Sound Doctrine Baptist Fellowship, a church plant currently meeting in our youth center and led by Pastor Emmett Shasha, a Liberian immigrant who is one of our men and trained in our church. About 100 people were present, including leaders in the Liberian community and other local pastors.

Otis Ledbetter – Sonrise Church, Clovis, CA At Sonrise we had 516 in two services. The Celebration Choir and Stage 7 Drama Team collaborated to give an incredibly powerful message on dumping your baggage at the cross! We witnessed three salvations and numerous rededications!

Chris Kondracki – Southside Baptist Church, Dover, DE On Easter we had a record 750 in attendance for morning worship with seven souls saved, three baptized, and other public decisions. Praise the Lord!

Sean Sears – Grace Church, Stoughton, MA A year and a half ago our weekly attendance was about 85, but even so, we sent out Aaron Cavin to start Life Church with 15 of our people. Yesterday, on Easter Sunday, Grace Church had 282 in two services with 13 adults saved and Life Church had 200 with 7 adults saved.

Ben Feldott – Cape Cod Church, Falmouth, MA We had a great Easter with 1077 in attendance (three services) and nine salvation decisions.

Keith Gandy – BBFI Missionary to Germany Leading up to the Easter weekend we had a five-week series called “CSI - Searching for the truth.” It was an apologetic series, and at the conclusion of the series we executed an informal survey among the 320-plus in attendance. (Yes, in Europe!) Sixteen adults stated that they made decisions to follow Christ in the last five weeks. An additional six stated they are on the verge of making a decision. This week I spoke with three men from our congregation that are exploring the initial steps to plant churches.

Jeff Love – Bridgepoint Church, Boise, ID At Bridgepoint, our attendance was over 1,400 in three weekend services. Fourteen people accepted Christ as Savior and will be followed up on this week. Our staff and people did a great job. The Holy Spirit’s work continues to be apparent in the lives of people.

Jim Baize – Ocean View Church (formerly Midway Baptist), **San Diego, CA** We had over 2,000 in attendance, nine baptized, 12 saved, and several families expressing interest to join. Our offering was more than \$47,000... and to cap things off we had an earthquake in the afternoon!

Robert Hodges and Jay Braymer – South Creek Baptist Church, Orlando, FL We set up for 75 and had 150 attend, 100 more than our largest day so far. We had an understaffed, over-stressed, wonderful, chaotic, crazy, blessed day!

Linzy Slayden – Friendship Baptist Church, Owasso, OK Two saved Friday after Good Friday service. Several rededications on Sunday! Lots of follow-up now! Looks like we have to go to two services from now on for special days.

Easter

AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

Joey Candillo – Bales Baptist Church, Kansas City, MO We served breakfast before church and did an egg hunt after the service. We had 162 in the service.

Jerry Burton – Calvary Baptist Church, Rittman, OH Over 200 in service and lots of visitors. Our people went all out. Choir did “Behold the Lamb,” and then I preached on John 1.29: Behold, the Lamb.

Jim Fox – Crossroads Family Ministries, Sayre, PA We enjoyed three performances of an Easter musical-drama titled “My Savior, My God,” and on Sunday the third performance was followed by the message, “What If There Had Never Been An Easter?” Attendance was about 60 each on Friday and Saturday and 150 on Sunday. There were many first-time visitors and at least six decisions for Christ.

Steve Alexander – Smith River Baptist Church, Smith River, CA Our service was packed full with overflow chairs set up. The service was not only emotional with the return of my wife who almost died of a brain hemorrhage in February, but also the power of God fell on the service. When the invitation was given, the altar was filled from left to right and people were kneeling four rows deep and down the aisle.

Larry McAden – Calvary Baptist Church, Snyder, TX We had a record attendance of nearly 500 view a dramatic and choral production, “The Apostles at the Last Supper,” and at the conclusion the cast members served communion to the congregation.

Chris Stephens – Broadway Baptist Church, Sweetwater, TX God blessed in Sweetwater. We had a record attendance of 224 and a record offering of \$11,000. Choir performed the cantata “Champion of Love.” The altars were filled. It was an amazing day, and we had our first ever sunrise service with 38 in attendance.

Bill Howe – Rolling Hills Baptist Church, Pittsburg, PA We had our “Each One, Bring One” emphasis. We had been averaging 130, but had 235 for Easter. Blessed by the faithfulness of our people to invite their friends and relatives.

James Kastl – Faith Baptist Fellowship, Otahuhu, New Zealand We had our sunrise service at One Tree Hill and had 17 come out this year. After the service we had breakfast at our house and a time of games and fellowship.

Mark Milioni – First Baptist Church, Medina, OH We had over 1,400 in three weekend services. There were at least 25 that made a public decision for Christ. We have prayed and planned for this day for many months and God answered. It seems like the entire church was involved in some way. Many new faces, friends and family. We are blessed with a great BBC educated staff - Nate Harmon, Nate Day, Barbara Milioni, and me.

Michael Haley – Cross Creek Church, Fountain, CO Leading up to Easter we had our 2nd annual Operation Egg Toss here at Cross Creek Church. Sunday afternoon before Easter over 40 people distributed 2,700 plastic eggs in our neighborhood. The eggs contained candy and an invitation. One of our participants received one in his yard last year and as a result, he and his wife visited our church and they have both been saved. We had 184 on Easter Sunday, which is just about double what we have been averaging this year. We had 11 families fill out their Connections Card stating that they were first-time visitors. Three were saved in junior church and several adults made professions as well!

Bill Herald – Calvary Baptist Church, Pittsfield, IL We had a full house (191) for worship, and we had a great spirit. That number is about 60 over our weekly average. We had to put out extra chairs... it was GREAT.

Can we trust the Bible?

PART 2

Fifth article in the series

With Good Reason

by Keith Bassham

John Piper of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minneapolis quotes from a letter sent to his local newspaper. It is fairly representative of the attitude a skeptic might have if he or she has given some thought to the Bible's credibility.

One of the few worthwhile statements in the Bible is, "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

...Knowledge of the Bible is hindered by the informal censorship imposed by religious leaders who would rather their followers didn't know what's in it — the innumerable contradictions, historical errors, plagiarism, absurdities, meaningless prophecies, myths presented as historical fact, and countless instances of divinely ordered or approved atrocities... It is true that the Bible has some worthwhile material, including entertaining stories, inspirational sentiments and astute observations about human behavior. However, these worthwhile parts could probably be contained in a pamphlet.

When people make such statements, I try to find the question behind the question. For instance, I don't know the context of the letter, whether it was prompted by a political issue, a public statement, or some local debate on a religious matter. Perhaps the author's own religious experience left a bad taste in his or her mouth. Whatever the prompting, the letter has cleverly packaged a series of questions Christians need to answer. Let's see if we can unpack the bags.

First, is it true that religious leaders have actively censored the Bible, hoping that

believers will not know what is in it?

This one makes me smile. For well over 100 years, skeptics have been making the claim that religious people in the past have been tinkering with the Bible to deal with "inaccuracies" and "embarrassing facts." One well-known group known as the Jesus Seminar concluded in the 1990s that only a very small part of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John accurately presented what Jesus actually did and said. The rest, they said, was added for one reason or another.

My question here is this — if people had been tinkering with the Bible anyway, why didn't they do a good job of it, take out the potentially embarrassing material, and reconcile the so-called inaccuracies and contradictions? Why not add in a sentence or two that tells us where Cain got his wife, expunge the record of David and Bathsheba, or make God a little less fierce toward the Canaanites? No, Jesus had some "hard sayings," (John 6) and Peter says Paul wrote "some things hard to be understood" (2 Peter 3:16), and all those things are still in the Bible. So if people had been tinkering around with it, they missed a lot of opportunities for "censorship."

Try this sometime when someone says there are many contradictions and inaccuracies. Reply by saying, "Show me an example." If a skeptic has done enough reading to actually identify one or even several, rest assured that others on both sides of the issue have seen them. You can also be sure that believers have dealt with the apparent contradiction or inaccuracy, and there are answers to the problems. Most of the apologetics resources I have pointed to in these articles will have the information you need. CARM (Christian Apologetics and

Resource Ministry — www.carm.org) has a section devoted to Bible difficulties.

One apologetics scholar, Norman Geisler, says most of the so-called mistakes are based on errors of the skeptics themselves. In *When Critics Ask*, he says the skeptics' mistakes fall into these categories:

- Assuming that the unexplained is not explainable
- Presuming the Bible guilty until proven innocent
- Confusing our fallible interpretations with God's infallible revelation
- Failing to understand the context of the passage
- Neglecting to interpret difficult passages in the light of clear ones
- Basing a teaching on an obscure passage
- Assuming that a partial report is a false report
- Demanding that NT citations of the OT always be exact quotations
- Assuming that divergent accounts are false ones
- Presuming that the Bible approves of all its records
- Forgetting that the Bible uses non-technical, everyday language
- Assuming that round numbers are false
- Neglecting to note that the Bible uses different literary devices
- Forgetting that only the original text, not every copy of scripture, is without error
- Confusing general statements with universal ones
- Forgetting that latter revelation supersedes previous revelation

But what about the other part of this ques-

tion? Are the Jesus Seminar people, and people like them, correct? In other words, the next question to unpack here is:

Assuming no one consciously tinkered with the text, how can we be sure the Bible we have today was transmitted, copied, and translated accurately over many hundreds of years?

A full answer to this would fill a book, so let's just take a look at what we know about the Gospels, the first books of the New Testament. First of all, though we do not have any original manuscripts (that is, all manuscripts of the Bible are copies and copies of copies), more than 5,600 Greek manuscripts and fragments have been recovered and studied. In contrast, in the study of Jewish, Greek, and Roman literature, if historians have more than a few dozen manuscripts, they are delighted. Also, among most ancient works of literature, several centuries elapse between the original compositions and their earliest existing copies. This is not true for the Gospels. At least some portions of the Gospels we have date to the early second century, whole books of the New Testament can be dated to the second century, and one codex containing nearly all the Bible is dated to between the years 325-350.

So, we have many copies to compare and some quite early so we can see if changes have occurred. With so many copies, and with those copies all written by hand, it is inevitable that small differences would occur from one manuscript to the other. However, with so many copies to compare, and knowing that errors would be spread out among them, it is relatively easy to be certain (from purely a technical and not a faith standpoint) of about 97 to 98 percent of the wording of the New Testament. Of that two or three percent left, about half are related to word endings, articles such as "a" or "the," and none have any effect on actual teaching. In fact, the great Greek scholar A. T. Robertson (1863-1934) noted that only about a "thousandth part of the entire text" of the New Testament is of concern to textual critics.

The conclusion is, for the Gospels at least, that apart from very minor differences among the manuscripts, the text was "set" within a couple of hundred years from the original writings. Even if some person or persons

were to try to "poison" the text by introducing changes, there were enough true copies to set everything straight. Again, I stress, I am speaking here from a purely technical view. God surely has some interest in the preservation of His Word, as stated in the Bible in several places.

What about the question that the Bible contains historical errors or presents myth as historical fact?

Again, I have to smile when I read something like this. The Bible is a large book, so I turn once more to the Gospels and let them stand for the whole in this brief article. Though it was popular during the 18th and 19th centuries for some philosophers to question whether Jesus ever existed or not, hardly any question the point today. Perhaps that is because, as Craig Blomberg (*The Historical Reliability of the Gospels*), whom we have quoted already in this series, says, "A dozen or so non-Christian writers or texts confirm a remarkable number of details in the Gospels about Jesus' life — that he was a Jew living in the first third of the first century, born out of wedlock, a self-styled teacher who became very popular, selected certain men as his inner core of disciples, disregarded Jewish dietary laws and ate with the despised, enraged certain Jewish leaders, even though believed to be the Messiah by others, was crucified by Pontius Pilate but believed to have been raised from the dead by some of his followers who began a fledgling religion that never died out."

Archeology has confirmed many of the details given in the Gospels (and the Bible generally), many of which were doubted at some point, especially beginning in the Enlightenment Age. Some recent discoveries include items concerning Pontius Pilate, Caiaphas, James (the brother of Jesus), and fishing boats in Galilee. And then there are the many other contemporary figures whose existence and whereabouts are easily placed within the Gospel narrative. See, for instance, F. F. Bruce's *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* for references to the Roman emperors, Judean rulers, and high priests. Everyone is where he or she should be, and place names are accurately used in the Gospels.

A friend recently reminded me that one of

the key points in apologetics regarding history and archeology is that if the Bible record can be validated in points where we can check it out, we should also assume that the record is trustworthy where we cannot do such a check. And over the years, so many Bible facts were brought into question (the existence of Hittites, the ability of Moses to write, and so on), but later research has often shown the Bible was right.

The letter we mentioned at the beginning of the article also used the phrase "meaningless prophecies" as one of the less worthwhile parts of the Bible. On the contrary, fulfilled prophecy is one of the greatest confirmations of the Bible's trustworthiness.

Does the Bible really show prophecies being fulfilled?

Yes. Though there are prophetic sections throughout the Bible, and more than a few are susceptible to different interpretations, many are clear and unambiguous. J. Barton Payne, in the *Encyclopedia of Biblical Prophecies*, lists nearly 200 prophecies literally fulfilled in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here is a small sample:

Place of birth (Micah 5:2)

Time of birth (Daniel 9:25)

Manner of birth (Isaiah 7:14)

Sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12)

Manner of death (Psalm 22:16)

People's reactions (mocking, spitting, staring, etc.) (Psalm 22:7, 8, 17)

His side pierced (Zechariah 12:10)

Burial in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:9)

Having spent some time in a recent article dealing with probability and math, I'll not do the same here, but can you imagine the odds of only these eight prophecies being fulfilled as they were in one man in one event? Can you extrapolate that to 191 prophecies being accurately and literally fulfilled in the same way. It is beyond belief.

Or, is it that God wants us to have belief, and He has confirmed the truthfulness of the Bible to help us firm up that belief? We can believe the Bible with good reason.

REMEMBERING | PAST REJOICING | PRESENT RENEWING | FUTURE

60 years of Baptist Bible Fellowship Missions

by James G. Smith | BBFI Associate Mission Director

We want to invite our readers to look back, look now, and look forward. Depending on your age and your DNA, you will be drawn to one of those vistas more than the others. But at least a glance in each direction will probably be a good thing for each of us.



On this amazing 60th anniversary of the BBFI, we can truly look back to 1950 with a sense of wonder at the humble and ambitious beginnings. Our history is well known to most of the readers of *Global Partners*. We will not now go into the minutia of the now famous and sometimes fabled meeting in a hotel in Fort Worth 60 years ago this month. We have some very good historians among us. We would highly recommend our readers to make themselves available to the writings and thoughts of men like Jimmy Combs, Mike Randall, Keith Bassham, Billy Hamm, and David Stokes.

The idea for this *Global Partners* started germinating in a fast-paced interview at a restaurant in Springfield with Missionary Lavern Rodgers. It was encouraging to catch his excitement for the future of the work in Japan. Then, in some moving reports received from missionary kids and grandkids, we were able to catch a glimpse of missionary life six decades ago. Finally, in some extensive email correspondence, we were able to sense the satisfaction that comes from a life of service to the Lord. Let us REMEMBER!

REMEMBERING

As we look back to remember, our desire is to focus some attention on some unsung heroes who were our first global partners.

From what we have been able to ascertain, there were 22 adult missionaries in five different countries that would be immediately identified with the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

China	Fred & Effie Donnelson
Japan	Ike & Jane Foster Olson & Leila Hodges
Philippines	Lavern & Evelyn Rodgers Frank & Elsie Hooge Alvin & Clara Marsden Elmer & Daisy Gullion
Mexico	Harold & Connie DeVilbiss Jim & Joey Smith Georgia Webb Bessie Milican Wanita Milligan Jean Kinard



Bill Logan preaching

If we have erred in our count or our identification, we apologize... and we would welcome your corrections. (jsmith@bbfmissions.com)

Some of our original missionaries were missionaries who were already identified with the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship. All of them were identified with their sending churches and pastors. Those pastors who would join together to begin this new movement would bring along with them their own missionaries. Some were not identified immediately but over the course of the first year or so. As information was scattered around the world and processed by our missionaries, they each made the decision to become BBFI missionaries.

To our knowledge, none of these men and

women were perfect — although my mother was probably the closest! These missionaries had some of the same strengths and weaknesses of their pastor counterparts in the U.S.A. There was a sense of urgency. The war was over and the renewed interest in eschatology had changed the way ministry was perceived and executed here and around the

world. Personal evangelism, discipleship, church planting, and pastoral training were important.

The first missionaries did not sign any agreements. They did not fill out any financial or work report forms. They didn't even have an official mission director until the summer of 1951. They were not provided with an extremely efficient service center. There was a lot of good will. They were fewer and they trusted more. There was a sense of excitement and risk as families signed up to depend on this new movement.

Of that original group, it is exciting to report that Ike Foster, Lavern Rodgers, Harold and Connie DeVilbiss, and Georgia Webb are still active missionaries with the BBFI. We are happy to be able to share with our readers some information on some of our first global partners.



The Donnelsons

Fred & Effie Donnelson | China*By Richard Logan*

Fred and Effie Donnelson, along with their children, Paul and Lois, went to Hangchow, China, in 1932. Their ministry began at Central Baptist Church, a work started by Mr. and Mrs. W. S. Sweet. Mr. Sweet had recently passed away. The Donnelsons worked alongside Mrs. Sweet to continue the ministry of the church and the Christian Academy for children. At the same time, Fred Donnelson also started over 20 countryside churches.

The Donnelsons were forced to leave China three times because of war. They spent 18 months as prisoners of war during World War II. They were forced to leave China in 1949. When the Baptist Bible Fellowship began in 1950, Fred taught missions at the new Baptist Bible College. In July of 1951, Donnelson officially became the first mission director of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Effie was the dean of women at BBC for 20 years.

*The first BBF church in Japan**Ike Foster with serviceman Bill Hathaway while stationed in Japan. In answer to Ike's prayers, God later called Bill Hathaway to return to Japan as a missionary.**Georgia Webb in Mante (from the Feb. 24, 1972 Tribune)***Ike & Jane Foster | Japan***By Paul Foster*

Isaac (Ike) Foster was saved at the age of 17 when Art Wilson came to Emporia, Kansas, to hold a tent revival. God called him to preach, but Ike wanted to be a farmer, ignoring the call. While taking his large plow horses to the barn, out of nowhere a cloudburst spooked the horses and they ran with Ike caught in the reigns. As they dragged him through the field, he told God that if He spared his life, he would preach. Immediately the horses stopped running. Ike put them in the barn, and has been preaching ever since.

Ike attended Bible Baptist Seminary in Fort Worth where he met and married Jane Dilmore. They were approved as missionaries to Japan in May of 1948. Ike traveled to Tokyo to set up a house. Jane arrived in July and the Hodges arrived in August of 1948. The Rodgers arrived in May of 1950. They started two churches and had planned to start a third when a letter was received from the states that would change Ike's life.

After the Korean War, W. E. Dowell sent Ike a letter along with \$300 asking him to go to Korea to see if he could find a group of Baptists that Dowell had heard about. When Ike arrived in Korea, he saw people with no food and buildings in shambles. In October of 1952, God touched Ike's heart and called him to return to Korea as a missionary.

Because the Fosters could not have children, they adopted a girl in 1954, to show the Korean people that girls were not to be second-class citizens and that they were as important as boys. They named her Kay. In 1957, they adopted a boy and named him Paul. Today, Kay is a pastor's wife and Paul is a church planter in Oklahoma.

Ike purchased an old graveyard in Seoul, built coffins, and dug up and moved the bodies to make room for the first church building and home to be built in March of 1955. Ike disassembled old U.S. army barracks for the lumber and built Korea's first Bible Baptist Church and his home, which are still being used today.

The Foster's ministry has been a fruitful one, pioneering both Japan and Korea for the BBF. Jane went home to be with the Lord in August of 2006 and was buried in Yecheon where they started a church in 1955. At 86 years old, Ike continues to teach in the Bible institute, preaches regularly, and has translated numerous books.

Lavern & Clara Rodgers | Philippines

What fun to sit with Lavern Rodgers just hours after his arrival on this continent from Japan. First order of business is to choose something off the menu. It doesn't take as long as I would have suspected for an 82-year-old. Anything Mexican. Growing up in San Antonio, Texas, and now living for 60 years in Japan, it is reasonable that he would want "anything Mexican."

The four original missionaries to Japan teamed up and God blessed their individual and corporate ministries. The Fosters were first to arrive in Japan, followed by the Hodges, the Rodgers, and the

*An organizational meeting held at the Chiba church with the Fosters (center right) and the recently arrived Rodgers (center left)*

Marsdens. When the BBF started in May 1950, all of them declared themselves BBF missionaries and the work of the Baptist Bible Fellowship of Japan was off and running.

There are now 88 churches and 250 Bible college graduates. The Rodgers' fifth church was started 41 years ago, Chofu Baptist Temple. Chofu has started five more churches. They give \$200,000 a year to missions. They have 42 people in full-time ministry.

There are 18 totally supported Japanese BBF missionaries scattered throughout the world. They can be found in Peru, Okinawa, Indonesia, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Uganda.

As exciting and satisfying as it is to talk about the details of 60 years ago and all that has happened since, Lavern Rodgers wants to focus on the future. He is now retracing his steps in the churches that have begun under his ministry. His key verse for this time of his life is Mark 1:38, "And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth." He is encouraging each church to take the gospel to "the next town!"

Georgia Webb | Mexico

I came to Mexico in 1948 as a missionary of some churches in the Missouri and Kansas state fellowships. The BBF didn't exist yet, of course, and I was never an official missionary of the WFBMF. Soon after it came into being, both the BBF and WFBMF wrote all of us on the field, inviting us to be their missionaries. My sympathies were with the new group, so I accepted their invitation. After several in the BBF kept asking me when I was approved, I finally said, "You didn't approve me. I approved you!"

I had finished a semester and a summer session of evening classes and a year as a full-time student at Midwest Bible and Missionary Institute in St. Louis (which later moved to Kansas City, uniting with the Kansas City Bible College to become Calvary Bible College) when my pastor from Lawrence, Lloyd Willson, recommended I meet with Pastor Wendell Zimmerman in Kansas City about opportunities in Mexico.

Pastor Zimmerman suggested that I should go on to Mexico right away, that he was supporting a national pastor, José Bueno, who needed help with the children's work. I guess at 21 you think you can handle anything, even taking charge of children's work when you had only taught children four or five times! The Lord soon gave me His assurance that He did want me to go on to Mexico and after a little more than one month of deputation, I came to Mexico the first week of November of 1948. And here I am still!

I worked in several different cities in the early years. In 1955, James L. Smith asked me to come to Mante every two weeks and teach in the institute there. Believe me, I had to study a lot, but I managed to keep ahead of my students!

I was involved with the institute in Mante and helped start and build up the new church and missions in other nearby towns until 1970, when I moved to Querétaro. There I joined Marvin and Rosalie Hooze and a group of workers who had just finished at the Bible institute. Our purpose was to start a new work in this fanatically Catholic city.

We started the Spanish language school in the early days of 1971 with the purpose of helping new missionaries going to Spanish-speaking countries. Although the school closed in 1992, it was a fruitful ministry over the years.

*Georgia Webb's autobiography, **More than a Dozen**, is available through the Tribune.*

Bill & Lois Logan | China

By Richard Logan

Bill and Lois Logan began their ministry in Shanghai, China, in 1946 alongside Lois's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Donnelson. Bill and Lois worked with the Donnelsons to establish Shanghai Baptist Tabernacle and worked to rebuild the country churches that had been ravaged by war. Because of Bill's passion for radio broadcasting, he and a radio team from Shanghai Baptist Tabernacle produced over 50 programs a week.

After they were forced to leave China in 1949, they continued their ministry in Taipei, Taiwan. Several members of Shanghai Baptist Tabernacle fled China and also settled in Taipei. Shortly after the Baptist Bible Fellowship began in 1950, the Logans were among the first missionaries to be approved by the new movement.

Taipei Baptist Tabernacle was chartered in April of 1953. There were five other churches started from the ministry of the Taipei Taberna-



Jim Smith passing out New Testaments in Sonora, Mexico

cle. Bill continued his radio ministry in the Shanghai dialect to minister to those who had relocated to Taiwan and to reach those on the Mainland of China. Soon his ministry extended to television broadcasts.

In 1968, Bill and Lois moved to Hong Kong to begin a new work. They began a rooftop elementary school as a means of entry into Hong Kong and later established Faith Baptist Church.

In 1979, Bill, along with his son, Richard, began Video Bible Studies International to produce Bible study materials in Chinese to assist in training Christian pastors and workers.

Bill passed away in May of 2002. Lois still lives in Springfield, Missouri. Richard continues to work with their video ministry, working closely with Taipei Baptist Tabernacle and other missionaries needing assistance with video production.

Jim & Joey Smith | Mexico

By Leonard Smith

James L. Smith graduated from the Bible Institute of Los Angeles in June 1944. Two days later, Jim married Helen Josephine (Joey) Darling at First Baptist Church in Tucson, Arizona. They immediately traveled to Oklahoma to attend the Wycliffe Summer Institute of Linguistics, and on August 31, 1944, they crossed the border at El Paso, Texas, to begin a lifelong ministry in Mexico. After studying Spanish at a university in Mexico City, they went to the west coast of Mexico and began a ministry with Wycliffe Bible Translators working with the indigenous peoples, the Guarijios, in Arachuyvo, Chihuahua.

Jim felt led to leave Wycliffe in 1948 to begin the ministry of preaching, evangelism, church planting, and training of pastors among the Spanish-speaking Mexican people. In 1950, their sending pastor, Wendell Zimmerman, became part of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and Jim was adopted into the Fellowship as one of the original missionaries already on the field.

In the summer of 1951, Zimmerman proposed to the Smiths the ministry of a Bible institute. The family moved from Alamos, Sonora, to Ciudad Mante, Tamaulipas, where Jim was instrumental in establishing, directing, and teaching in the Baptist Bible Institute until the summer of 1959.

In the summer of 1960, after a year of furlough, the Smiths moved to the city of Chihuahua in

the state of Chihuahua. In the two years that they were there, Calvary Baptist Church was founded. From Chihuahua, they moved to Tucson, Arizona, where the ministry emphasis shifted to making constant trips south into the state of Sonora, Mexico, holding Bible conferences, evangelistic meetings, and pastor training seminars. Joey passed away in September of 1987 and Jim died in October of 1991.

Jim and Joey had five boys and five girls. Of the ten children, nine are still alive, all of them faithful to the Lord, active in ministry in their local churches. Leonard and Richard are BBFI missionaries in Mexico, Jim is an associate mission director with the BBFI, Mark is pastor of Grace Community Church in Flagstaff, Arizona, and Barbara Johnson is on staff at Ocean View Church (formerly Midway Baptist Church) in San Diego.

One of the blessings of being the Mission Director of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International has been to meet many of our veteran missionaries who have served on the mission field for 50 or more years and several who have passed the 60-year mark. These have served in many countries all over the world. As you can imagine, they have experienced all kinds of issues and overcome various circumstances without giving up. They have set the pace for our Fellowship when it comes to serving as missionaries.

The example of our veteran missionaries encourages and challenges all our other missionaries to keep going, knowing that the same God who protected and carried early missionaries through difficult times is able to do the same today. Even though we are now experiencing economic woes, physical dangers, hostile governments, and health problems, our veteran missionaries endured these same problems with a steadfast, unmovable, always abounding attitude, for they knew their work was not in vain.

Our proven missionaries helped pave the way, oftentimes entering a country without knowing anyone. They met local people, led them to the Lord, trained national leaders, and began a church-planting movement that many others can now build upon and learn from. Many national churches are expanding their ministries and sending missionaries around the world. In fact, the Global Fellowship Meeting to be held in Cebu City, Philippines, on February 21-24, 2011, will give all attendees a beautiful picture of the accomplishments of our early missionaries who were supported by BBFI churches in the United States. For more information about this meeting see the information across from this page well as online at www.Cebu2011.com.

Our missionaries today are using creative ways to enter and remain in

many "closed" countries so they might reach people and ultimately start church-planting movements in those places. They may not look exactly like our traditional churches; however they function doctrinally and philosophically the same as all our other churches. I have seen them and witnessed their passion to spread the name of Jesus to others in their countries and beyond.

The Great Commission is still valid for today. We can't rest on our past accomplishments but must keep up the great work started 60 years ago through the efforts of the pastors and missionaries of our Fellowship. We need more missionaries who are called of God, well-prepared, and ready to make a huge impact upon a people group. We will find them in your church.

As of the end of 2009, our numbers of missionaries were as follows:

- Career Missionaries – 845
- TEAM Missionaries - 36
- BBFI Chaplains - 14
- Resigned Missionaries – 21 in 2009
- Deceased Missionaries – 7 in 2009
- In 2009 we approved and recognized 29 missionaries - 14 career and 15 TEAM (85% of TEAM missionaries return as career missionaries)
- The Mission Office processed 40 million dollars

In May 2010, we have career missionaries to approve, TEAM missionaries to recognize, and a chaplain to endorse. More are already preparing for approval in September 2010.

As a Fellowship, we must continue to build upon what our early leaders started and our early missionaries accomplished, with a renewed vision to reach our world, at any cost!



let the no

welcome

Join us as we celebrate 60 years of worldwide evangelism and church planting through the efforts of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International!

Speakers from different regions, music from various countries, and fellowship with believers from all over the world will make this meeting a blessing for everyone. You won't want to miss this and I look forward to seeing you in Cebu!

Jon Konnerup
BBFI Mission Director

With much excitement we invite all of you to the 2011 Global Fellowship Meeting here in Cebu City, Philippines! A

very warm Filipino hospitality and blessed Christian fellowship await you at our church.

We are honored that the BBFI has chosen to meet in our church for what will be a historic gathering. This Fellowship meeting should give all of those attending a taste of Heaven, where all nations and kindreds and people and tongues will join in singing *Amazing Grace* and all the other blessed songs of the redeemed.

Make your plans and preparations now to come. We have begun our preparations and will be ready to receive you in February 2011!

Dr. Armie Jesalva
Host pastor, Bible Baptist Church
Cebu City, Philippines

nations rejoice

BBFI GLOBAL FELLOWSHIP MEETING FEBRUARY 21-24, 2011 CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES

remember

Following God's leading to reach out to the entire world with the gospel of Jesus Christ, the past 60 years has found thousands of pastors and churches involved in this movement. Starting in the U.S.A. with a college, mission program, and news magazine, the BBFI is now reaching into over 100 countries with thousands of churches worldwide. Having multiple Bible institutes and colleges, and sending missionaries from many countries has expanded our efforts like never before. What our early leaders dreamed about has grown around the world.

renew

As you join us at our destination of Cebu City, you will look with us to the future as we are inspired by the many other nations that are now sending their own missionaries around the world with the gospel. Together, we will renew our obedience to the Great Commission in these days of unprecedented opportunities worldwide. More people than ever need to hear the gospel. Ours is the greatest message the world has yet to receive, and we have the greatest power to get the job done — the power of Jesus Christ.

rejoice

Join the many pastors, missionaries, and church leaders from every continent on earth to celebrate what our Lord has done through the efforts of the BBFI. Resulting from these efforts are well over 6,000 churches started outside the U.S. with an average church attendance of more than 1.2 million precious souls. God is working right now, through us, to reach the world.



travel planning

Accommodations

- The official hotel for the meeting:
Crown Regency Hotel
\$80 double occupancy per night
Reservation will be required
- Other hotels (Marriot, Hilton, Marco Polo, and Shangrila) are available for a higher cost. All these hotels are within driving distance.
- Meals will cost approximately \$20 per day per person

Travel packages

A suggested itinerary would be to arrive on Friday February 18, rest on the 19th, and attend church on the 20th. The meeting will be from Monday the 20th through Thursday night the 24th.

The Mission Office has several package options to join others from the U.S.A. as a group or you may plan your own itinerary. Several are planning to attend the meeting and then on their way back to the States they will visit a missionary or two in another Asian country.

If you plan to travel on your own, the Mission Office can give you the information of the travel agent being used for the package deals who may then assist you with your travel plans.

Transportation

Transportation will be provided by Bible Baptist Church (the host church), making it possible to travel from the hotels to the conference center.

REJOICING

To give a broad view of missionary activity within the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, *Global Partners* did a brief survey to a hand-picked group of missionaries in different parts of the world, of different ages, in different cultures, and with different backgrounds. We think the results are intriguing. We were most interested in this part of *Global Partners* to show the present work of BBFI missionaries and cast a vision for future work of BBFI missions.

Our present ministry is ...

Tim and Barbara Downs Côte d'Ivoire/Belgium

Currently, we're involved in a new church plant in Bruges, Belgium, while at the same time, we have four church planting teams on the ground in Côte d'Ivoire with whom I am in daily contact. I also make periodic visits for training and encouragement. There are also 24 churches in Congo with whom we keep in touch for prayer, encouragement, and training.



Jim and Laura Hutchinson, Russia

We are working with a church plant with several Bible studies running and planned to begin.

David and Cherie Green, Taiwan

God has led us to partner together with my parents, Dave and Terri Green, as well as BIMl missionaries Jon and April Flowers. My father has been a great help for us in transitioning to life here in Taiwan and allowing us to work together.



Many times it is hard for missionaries to work so closely together, especially when they are related. We are working together to reach the people in Taichung County by working toward building indigenous churches! With a current average rate of 15 years to bring a church to the stage of indigenous, the work is obviously very slow.

Lance and Melanie Gotcher, Philippines

While we have been on furlough, our church staff has been able to help launch our newest church plant — Sumulong Baptist Church - Laguna/Calauan. This church was started in January 2010 with relocated families whose houses were completely washed away during Typhoon Ondoy. There are already 3,000 families in this area with the potential of housing 10,000. God has blessed us with two small houses to meet in at the present time.

Sumulong Baptist Church currently meets in three locations, but we exist as one church. Our auditorium seats 200, but we have been averaging over 850 in weekly attendance.

We also have two other churches that have been started out of our ministry — SBC - Makati and SBC - Eldorado. El Dorado has already started its second location and is averaging 200 in attendance. It was started in 2006.



Steve and Jenelle Swann, Bulgaria

Our present ministry is working with the church I started ten years ago. Although I have assisted other churches in their start-up, most of my time has been spent with Mladost Baptist Church. Beyond working to build a strong church, I have invested my time in trying to develop Bulgarian leaders from within the church. My prayer is that one day one of the men in the church will step up and take over as the pastor. The current statistics say that it takes around 20 years to build a self-supporting church here in Europe.

Max and Debbie Harmon, Peru

Right now we are working in a new church

plant in La Molina, a middle-class area of Lima. We just celebrated our first anniversary as an organized church. It functioned as a mission work for a few years ahead of the organization.

With our loan fund we have helped 70 churches with land purchase and/or construction projects.



Vladimir and Debbie Lukyanov, Russia

As church planting missionaries we are working with several churches in our region. Along with the Williams family we are preparing future church leaders to grow God's work. A missionary in a small work has to wear many hats nowadays and be a pastor, bus driver, soulwinner, counselor, builder, friend, designer, and even an accountant or a doctor. Although it is hard to juggle so many responsibilities sometimes, my main ministry now is of a preacher to our congregation and a teacher at the Bible institute where we train our leaders.

Leonard and Susie Smith, Mexico

We are spending most of our time with a new church plant. It is in the beginning stages of taking the congregation from a Bible study to a church. We meet during the week in four different areas of the city in people's homes where the hosting family and neighbors meet together for a Bible study. One evening a week is dedicated to teacher workshops. Then on Sunday we all meet in a home [the garage, actually] for Sunday church services. We are also working with the other churches that we have had a part in starting over the years as needed and as time permits, with special meetings like Bible and mission conferences, evangelistic services, teacher training seminars, etc.



Some missionary methods that we currently use that have changed over the years are...

Tim and Barbara Downs, Côte d'Ivoire/Belgium

From my perspective, most changes in missionary methodology have come as a result of technology. The assimilation and dissemination of information has formed a new paradigm for teaching and training. Communication that was unimaginable 20 years ago is the norm today. The idea of working in two countries would have been impossible. We never even had a hope of having a phone in Kinshasa and now we have instant communication via several different media. Truly amazing! Another significant change for us in the BBFI has been the rethinking of “closed” fields. It thrills me to know that we are having a part in reaching behind closed doors.

Jim and Laura Hutchinson, Russia

I've noticed in our own ministry that one of the more effective modes of evangelism is simply getting to know the people on a personal level. Spending time with individuals cannot be overlooked. As a church, we have been out on street evangelism with no significant, tangible results. The best results we have seen have been from one-on-one interaction.

David and Cherie Green, Taiwan

I have been around evangelism my entire life. Most evangelicals believe in the Great Commission, but many times we have fallen short of completing it. Yes, we see people saved and we see them baptized, but one thing that seems to have been lacking until recent years is a push toward discipleship! Of course, it is time-consuming, and sometimes overwhelming, but in a culture with absolutely no form of Christian influence, it is absolutely vital to disciple those who trust in Jesus Christ. We have a bilingual 16-lesson discipleship program that has been a great source of growth in the lives of young Chinese believers.

Lance and Melanie Gotcher, Philippines

Church planting. We have used rented facilities and unique locations to start church plants. We feel that no idea and almost no location where it is impossible to start a new church service. We have had the mindset in the last few years to try to reach the people where they are, including outreaches through our children's ministries.

We have also been more active in feeding hungry children in our area through our church out-

reaches and MANNA Feeding Centers. This has resulted in many people receiving Christ and many people being added to our churches.

Steve and Jenelle Swann, Bulgaria

I think that the way of keeping in contact with supporters has changed over the years with email, Skype, Facebook, and other Internet applications. Another thing that has changed is that more people are getting involved in mission trips and helping missionaries. This has helped in that



mission awareness is up and people pray more and are more excited about missions. We have had several groups come over and help with our summer VBS and they have been a blessing to our church and to us.

Max and Debbie Harmon, Peru

Contacting churches and pastors via email, cell phones, and computers.

Vladimir and Debbie Lukyanov, Russia

We used to be able to easily rent the empty

meeting halls, which the Communists erected for the sake of atheist propaganda. We were turning them into houses of prayer where the message of the gospel echoed off of the rafters. In time, the people gained access to more than they ever had in their lifetimes, and our “free” offerings blended into all that became available. The Orthodox Church has replaced the Communist party to hinder the work of the Lord, blocking the rental of these still-empty halls.

In addition, Russian missionaries of the past worked primarily by themselves. Recently it began to change. Even despite 11 time zones that separate many of us, we are able to leverage tremendous talents by collaborating and working together on discipleship materials, translation, coming together for fellowship meetings, and serving side by side. Jeff Williams, our families, and I are working as a team, which allows us to use our strengths and compensate for our individual weaknesses.

Leonard and Susie Smith, Mexico

What I have noticed is that the big “what, why, and how” we do ministry has basically not changed, but there have been some adjustments to present-day needs and opportunities. In the early years of our ministry, well-attended evening services were the norm. The city was smaller. Transportation was not an issue. However, with the alarming rise of slaughtering drug cartels and the violence that has overtaken much of Mexico, particularly cities like Culiacan, there has been a visible reduction of all nightlife. People are reluctant to leave the safety of their homes to wander through the city, including going back and forth to church. Hence, Bible studies in various homes through the week have become a viable alternative for those who are unable or reluctant to attend on a Sunday evening.

Much of the city has free Internet. People have computers. Everyone has at least one cell phone. Technology has arrived. With that we have found some of our methods of communication have had to be expanded to include this technology.

One of our churches is experimenting with live streaming on the Internet, and they don't even have their own church building yet. They meet in two rented houses that are right next to each other. Technology has made some things easier or more difficult, depending on our expertise or lack thereof.

**Tim and Barbara Downs,
Côte d'Ivoire/Belgium**

From the beginning, our objective has been to stimulate indigenous church movements. We thought that it would be in Congo alone, but God has moved us twice, and we have kept the same objective in view. In ten years, we foresee the church in Bruges as a force for change and a leader in the hope of uniting Baptist churches across Belgium and Western Europe. In Africa, the next ten years should see an exponential growth in church launches and further development in training methods.

Jim and Laura Hutchinson, Russia

In ten years, we hope to have several churches planted and have several people for each of those churches attending the Bible college we are developing. Our desire is that those students will either be called to take over the church plants we have already started or be sent to start other churches in other parts of Russia. Our ultimate dream is to send our nationals to other countries as missionaries. This could be greatly effective, especially since they have access to other countries that we as Americans would never be able to get into.

David and Cherie Green, Taiwan

In the next ten years, I pray that God will allow us to plant another new church. There are scores and scores of towns with no true churches established to reach Chinese. There are so many opportunities, so few laborers.

I also hope that God will open the doors for an English outreach and summer program that will reach the many elementary-age students. The current church plant we are working with is within three blocks of three large elementary schools! What an awesome opportunity! We are praying and hoping to begin a ministry where teachers in America can come over during their summer break and take part in a summer English day camp outreach for children, as well as singles that would want to step out by faith and be used by God in an amazing way.

Lance and Melanie Gotcher, Philippines

I see my ministry in ten years... planting more churches and handing our main church over to a national pastor. We are working on plans to plant churches throughout Metro Manila and in the surrounding areas and other islands in the Philippines. We would love to help start or plant 50

churches over the next ten years. We are helping train young men in our Bible college at this time and developing men on our church staff to be able to accomplish this goal. Eventually, we would like to help plant a total of 100 churches in the Philippines during our time here as missionaries.

Steve and Jenelle Swann, Bulgaria

We have spent considerable time working on children's ministries. I would hope that in ten years, we will begin to see these young people grow up and become spiritual leaders. The lack of committed Christians in churches here is depressing and at the only theological seminary in Bulgaria there is not one Baptist man studying for the ministry. In ten years, we hope to have some young Christian men who are willing to go out and start churches.

Max and Debbie Harmon, Peru

La Molina Church functioning on its own with a national pastor and supporting many Peruvian missionaries in and out of the country.

Hopefully visiting loan fund recipients full time and encouraging them to start churches out of their churches.

Vladimir and Debbie Lukyanov, Russia

To produce fruit there is no substitute for sowing. By laying the framework of biblical evangelism now we will reap if we faint not. In ten years, we plan to do pretty much the same thing — more sowing of God's Word, discipling our members to be the best they can be for God, and sending out men and women from our churches to start new works. Although methods will undoubtedly change, with more Christian men and women our goal is to start many small churches in surrounding county seats and towns.

Leonard and Susie Smith, Mexico

What Susie and I hope and pray the Lord will allow us to accomplish is based on part vision, part reality, and totally dependent on God's will, leadership, and provision. We would like to continue evangelism, discipleship, and the planting and development of more local churches. Working with, through, and alongside our Mexican brethren has always been my strategy, and the Lord willing, will continue. I envision an active role in preaching, teaching, training, mentoring, counseling, and encouraging our pastors, teachers, and church members in the ministry.

The BBFI, after 60 years, is going to thrive or perish, depending on how it faces the future. Will we embrace and adapt? Will we coast into oblivion? Will we strengthen and encourage?



How will

As we have seen the past and present, allow me to offer some suggestions as to the future of BBFI missions. Eli Harju once introduced me as “a prophet and the son of a prophet.” He was joking. I have never been accused of being a visionary. But in my position as an associate director in the Mission Office, I have begun to feel the general pulse of our movement and maybe I can glimpse into where we are headed.

All of us are much more aware of all that takes place around the world because of the communication technology that has exploded and is exploding in our lifetime. We can see the methods of ministries that are different than our own. Some of us will choose to embrace some of those methods. Some of us would rather choose to criticize or even demonize them. How many of those methods will we adopt as our own as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission in our lifetime?

Allow me to offer some questions regarding our future.



Will our pastors and missionaries...

- ...adapt multi-site or multiple campus ministries?
 - ...adapt incarnational pastoral ministries?
 - ...become more involved with the suffering of the people around them?
 - ...concern themselves more with the sex-slave trade that is rampant?
 - ...become more involved with addictions recovery?
 - ...adapt “short-cycle church planting” ministries?
- #### Will we...
- ...see more “church in a box” ministries?
 - ...be frightened away from ministries in isolated villages?
 - ...be frightened away from hardcore inner-city ministries?
 - ...slack off of evangelism to focus more on member care?
 - ...slack off of discipleship to emphasize evangelism?
 - ...sacrifice integrity or purity for the sake of expediency or personality?
 - ...see technology play a greater role in our Fellowship churches and mission stations around the world in ten years?

There are lots of questions facing us, but not so many answers.

I do believe that we will become more aware of the significance of geography and culture, blending the complexities of the good news and the host culture. It is obvious that all pastors and leaders and Christians desperately need to understand the cross-cultural aspects of the communication of the good news.

I also believe that Christian living includes accurate identification with people and deep understanding of their culture. But it goes farther. Incarnational living always includes sacrifice. In

Romans 9, Paul said he would be willing to be accursed if it meant the salvation of Israel. What are we willing to sacrifice so that others can know the Truth?

We can look around and see different methodologies in place that will probably make their way into our ministries in the near future. But more important than technical or methodological advances is our philosophical growth and our theological steadfastness. We must continually embrace that philosophy that characterized our blessed forefathers — the idea that the winning of the lost and the establishment of biblically sound churches was worth every effort and any sacrifice.

Nothing could be more important than fulfilling God’s will in my life and my ministry. Therefore, I should always be alert to His leadership. The ministry is not an occupation in which we are trained once and for all. Upon entering the ministry, we did not receive a binder with all the possible answers to any conceivable question.

The common requirements for effective ministry both now and in the future are love, trust, and obedience. We love our Savior. We trust our Creator. We obey our Lord. We must love God above all else. We must love the people to whom we minister. Seems pretty trite and maybe unnecessary to say that. But in fact it may be the most important line in this issue of *Global Partners*. So I will repeat it. We must love the Lord God above all else and we must love the people to whom we minister.

We celebrate what we remember from the past 60 years. We acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the present ministries of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, and we absolutely rejoice in the prospects of an ever-increasing and ever-more-effective ministry in the time allotted us.

One of the awesome attributes of our true and living God is His immutability. The Scriptures teach us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. But the BBFI is not. There are some things that cannot be changed; that should never be changed. But in a world that is obsessed with progress, development, and technology, change in methodology and organization is inevitable. Let us prayerfully and lovingly march into the future that is now.

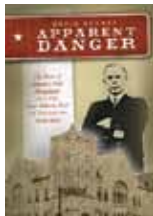
we reach *their* children?

New J. Frank Norris book released

The *Tribune* interviews David Stokes, author of *Apparent Danger*, a new book detailing a significant event in the life of J. Frank Norris

Tribune - First of all, I think I have to ask who was the man you are writing about?

DRS - J. Frank Norris (1877-1952) was a preacher, broadcaster, newspaper publisher, and pastor of the first megachurch in America — First Baptist in Fort Worth, Texas (1909-1952). He also simultaneously pastored Temple Baptist in Detroit (1934-1950). He was one of the “fathers” of fundamentalism, as well as the independent Baptist movement. In fact, you could pretty much call him the “grandfather” of the BBF, due to his influence in the lives of BBF founders. If you wanted to “build” a J. Frank Norris you’d need some Billy Sunday, along with a measure of P. T. Barnum, and a dash of William Randolph Hearst.



Tribune - You have written articles and composed lectures about Norris, and now this book. Is there a personal connection?

DRS - I grew up around the old Temple Baptist Church in Detroit. My grandparents and mother were converted under Norris when the church was located at 14th and Marquette. I have never forgotten hearing stories about the man and his ministry.

Tribune - Norris’s influence was felt across the landscape — in politics, in society as a whole, as well as in the religious world. You have chosen a relatively thin slice of his life to write about. Tell us briefly about this episode and why it fascinates you.

DRS - The shooting of D.E. Chipps by Norris in July of 1926 is — more than any other event in the colorful preacher’s life — a window into his mind and ministry at the peak of his career. It was also a big story back then. Can you imagine how cable news would deal with a megachurch pastor shooting a man in this day and age? Norris at that moment was striving to receive the mantle of William Jennings Bryan, who had died a year before. It’s a story with drama, good guys, bad guys, and all shades in between.

Tribune - What gave Norris his knack for using media to his advantage?

DRS - He was a student of people — in fact, “populism” is probably the best description of his overall approach to ministry. Accordingly, he was always on the lookout for the latest medium or gadget. If he were alive today and in his 30s, he’d be on the internet, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and such.

Tribune - I was always fascinated by the relationship Norris had with the two Dallas pastors, George Truett and later W. A. Criswell. Criswell said in his autobiography that his mother adored Truett, but his father was a big fan of Norris. Can you comment on Norris and his relationships with other highly visible preachers?

DRS - J. Frank Norris was described by one biographer as the most successful “lone wolf” in Baptist history. His ego and propensity toward conflict ensured that he would never have a lot of close preacher friends. He went through people like a hot knife through butter. He couldn’t stand Truett; likely and largely because the famous Dallas pastor was so often dismissive of him. And reading his paper at the time — the *Searchlight* — you see names come and go. He had a quick mind and very strong

personality — not necessarily traits that lead to familiarity or intimacy.

Tribune - In some ways, Norris was a man of his times, but surely he had a couple of things going a pastor could emulate today. What do you think?

DRS - Well, I think you said it right there. He was a man of his times. And if he were here today, he’d be a man of these times. Aside from that, though, I think there are a couple of things he did that would benefit any clergyman today.

He was a voracious reader — and not just the Bible and theology. A self-styled “expert” in international affairs, he read every major periodical of the day on everything from foreign affairs to American politics. He was comfortable, therefore, commenting or opining on just about anything.

He was also unpredictable — refusing to fit into anyone’s mold or stereotype. I saw in the *Searchlight* a kind and generous eulogy to Robert LaFollette after his passing in 1925 — though the senator from Wisconsin had pretty much been a leftist. Norris, on the other hand, was part of the religious right decades before the phrase was articulated. Bryan, one of Norris’s heroes, was himself a “progressive” — someone we would consider today a political liberal, even with his fundamentalist view of scripture. Norris was fond of saying: “Consistency is the virtue of fools.” Interestingly, there was a picture of Bryan (a famous pacifist) over Norris’s desk the day he shot Chipps.

Tribune - Thank you, David, for taking time for this interview.

Apparent Danger: The Pastor of America’s First Megachurch and the Texas Murder Trial of the Decade in the 1920s will be available in bookstores everywhere in June, as well as on the web at Amazon.com and Barnes and Noble. Now though, there is a limited release via the publisher and via www.apparentdanger.com.

From Argentina to Kansas by bus: Avoiding a swim with the piranhas

Editor's note – Last year, BBFI missionary Don Nevels traveled from Argentina to the United States by bus. Later, at my request, he produced a document about the trip, and the Tribune is printing excerpts from his travel journal. Don and his wife, Lucy, graduated from Baptist Bible College in 1964 and were approved as BBFI missionaries in 1967.

If I calculate correctly, the Western Hemisphere is composed of 23 nations, not counting the island nations. The Lord made it possible for me to briefly visit each of them on this trip. The gospel is being preached to people in Canada, U.S.A., Mexico, seven Central American countries, and ten South American nations. But do you realize there are really 13 nations in South America? Most people count only 10 because the three Guyanas are all but forgotten and overlooked (see previous article).

I feel some consideration should be given to them, even though they do not claim to be Latin American though they are situated in South America, nor do they speak Spanish like Argentina or Portuguese like Brazil. They speak English, Dutch, and French respectively. Guyana, Surinam, and French Guyana do figure in the Bible. Where, you ask? In Mathew 28:18-20. Wouldn't that part about "all nations" include Guyana, Surinam, and French Guyana? You and I may have overlooked them, but He who left us the Great Commission certainly has not. To that end He may have placed a burden on this missionary to visit, explore, investigate, or survey these three lands whose souls will enter eternity just like yours and mine. It doesn't seem quite fair that I could go to heaven because someone came to my town, while these three nations go to hell simply because they are tucked away between jungles, rivers, and the Atlantic ocean in a hard-to-reach corner of South America.

Though these three small countries are

situated on South America's northeast Atlantic coast, neither of the three consider themselves in any manner as Latin America or Latin American. In Surinam, I asked a few people if they knew where Argentina was. They thought for a moment and took an unsure guess asking me if Argentina was located on the top part of South America. Spanish is in no way spoken in any of the three countries. Guyana speaks English (and Creole), Surinam speaks Dutch (and Taki Taki, which I presume parallels the Creole of Guyana), with a relatively high number of younger people speaking English, but only to foreigners like myself who cannot speak Dutch. Of course, French is spoken in French Guyana, with almost no one speaking English, not even to foreigners.

In the interior of Surinam, it was needful to frequently cross rivers in motor boats which carry 10 or 12 passengers as there are not enough bridges yet to drive over the rivers. Each time the motorboat docked for its passengers to descend or ascend upon arrival on the other side of the river, you had to be very careful of your footing as the motorboat wobbles in the water quite a bit while other people walk around attempting to disembark, and you need to place one foot firmly on the dock, then push yourself with your second foot still inside the boat. It really gets tricky when the tides are at different levels, sometimes lower and sometimes higher, and sometimes level with the dock, which is the ideal. You always rely on the firmness of the dock as you make that frightening jump from the boat to the dock and get your balance again

in order to begin walking away in a normal fashion.

At one river crossing in Surinam, after I had gotten the hang of it in Guyana, I started as usual and made my jump to the dock, but this time the dock was on floaters or pontoons that made it a floating dock.

When our boat arrived this time, my jump was downward from the side of the boat, and I figured the dock was firm. But to my surprise, it sank somewhat with my jump, throwing me off balance on the plank that was only about 30 inches wide. Gravity and inertia did what they were made to do, and a wobbly dock forced me to the other side of the plank, and I needed

to stop my forward motion so as to not

end up in the water with the piranhas on the other side of the plank. I was on the edge of the plank spinning my arms like an airplane propeller in reverse, hoping to balance myself and regain stability while I let out a cry of some sort. But I cannot outcry in Dutch, so I did it in English. A dark-skinned Dutch-speaking Surinamer next to me quickly grabbed the back of my shirt and pulled me back upright an instant before I was going to be rebaptized in the mud of a Surinam river.

I don't know why my guardian angel waits till the last instant to rescue me from danger. Sometimes

I think he does these things intentionally. It seems like he could have given me a few seconds warning. I felt like a dummy when they all jumped to the plank and maintained their balance. The women did better than I did. Even a five-year-old boy jumped quite elegantly compared to me. But I thank the Lord for a dark-skinned guardian angel who was watching over me when I was in danger of falling into a muddy Surinamese river that was quite likely populated with hungry piranhas.





The new tilt

URBAN CURRENT

I stared at the page a long time. I stared in disbelief. I was holding a major Christian magazine (not the *Tribune* — I said major, not the best). I was looking at a double-page ad for a huge conference to be held in Florida. It spoke of winning souls. It trumpeted global effort. It had a big graphic with faces of every ethnicity possible. Below the graphic were the names and pictures of 42, yes, 42 speakers. From among the 42 speakers I could only find 6 who seemed to be of a different ethnicity than white American. I was stunned. I saved that ad. I scrutinized it once again as I prepared to write this column. I clipped to it an ad from a denominational paper for another conference. This one was sponsored by a leading church in the Bible belt. Its focus was all about being innovative and missional. Twenty-two speakers, yes 22, every one of them white. I have to tell you I don't ever see 22 white guys in one place in my day-to-day life. I couldn't help wondering what world this group represented, certainly not the real world.

Neither of these conference ads was a reflection of the vision found in The Book. When the Word was made flesh, the greatest cross-cultural mission ever, it modeled the mindset and the heart every New Testament church should have. Leaving glory. Leaving comfort zones. Going to the gritty and the gory. Jesus left no room for confusion. He said He wanted His house called a house of prayer for all nations. The Acts 1:8 command is to go to Samaria (close but different) as well as “the uttermost parts” (different and far). Acts 2 makes clear what kind of called-out assembly God has in mind. In Acts 10, the Holy Spirit pushes Peter out of his cultural paradigm into the paradigm of God's plan. The church in Antioch had a leadership team that appears to

have had its origins in three continents.

The evolving reality of America's urban centers in the 1900s predicted the multicultural flavoring of American society. Back in the 80s and 90s, we had already gone from Ford to Honda, Richardson to Jordan, Chancellor to Chung, GE to Sony, Cleavers to Cosbys, Good Humor to Haagen-Dazs, and Kodak to Fuji.

Charles Barkley said “You know the world is off tilt when the best rapper is a white guy, the best golfer is a black guy, the tallest basketball player is Chinese, and Germany doesn't want to go to war.”

No, Charles, this is the new tilt.

Ray Bakke points out, in *A Biblical Word for an Urban World*, that 80 million Chinese live outside China. One million Japanese live in Sao Paulo, Brazil. France used to rule 46 countries; all 46 are now represented in Paris. Marseille with a 2-million-person population is 31 percent African. Amsterdam is 20 percent Muslim. Britain ruled 52 nations in its colonial heyday. All 52 are now in London. The U.S. is the largest Irish nation in the world, the largest Scandinavian nation in the world, the largest Jewish nation in the world, and the second-largest African nation in the world.

It's important to remember this is not a matter of color and ethnicity only. Academics, mobile home park folks, skaters, artists, single-parent families, bikers, etc... may be your color but not your culture.

We read our sociology texts through theological lenses. We can't call ourselves biblical if we're out of touch with the biblical vision of the New Testament church. It's not very good stewardship on our part to be Jesus' mouth, hands, and feet in the earth, to deny the statistics that tell us what is going on in our nation and in our

world. We are not in touch with reality if we are pretending the current trends don't exist.

Having lived this thing for almost a generation now, I can tell you a culturally diverse church is a powerful, visible witness to the world. While I was writing this piece ABC7 News called wanting permission to shoot video during our Easter services. The caller commented she had heard a lot about our church and how multicultural it was. Some years back we were under attack by radicals. John Leo wrote of one of the demonstrations in *US News and World Report*. “The most common chant was ‘Racist, sexist, anti-gay / Born-again bigots go away.’ The ‘racist’ charge is particularly weird: The Armitage congregation is roughly 30 percent black, 30 percent Hispanic and 40 percent white. Somewhat confused, the woman with the bullhorn tried to lead the crowd in singing ‘Little Boxes’ a song about suburban conformity popularized by Pete Seeger in the 1960s. It was, without a doubt, the least appropriate song anyone could have sung about this diverse urban congregation.”

As well, a multicultural church is an educational opportunity for everyone involved. It's a reminder of our need to live beyond our little box. It can reach out to all nations in unique ways.

It's not a mystery — the gospel is supra-cultural. Our outreach is cross-cultural. The result — our church is multicultural.

by Charles Lyons, Pastor
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BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE

Noel Smith said, “Tell me what you have done”

by Jim Edge | President | Baptist Bible College



Fresh out of Baptist Bible College in 1973, full of zeal and idealism and determined to plant an independent Baptist church in the Boston area, Carol and I were packing to leave Springfield for Boston. Noel Smith, of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, had heard I was going to Boston and asked me to stop by his office before leaving town. His words to me that day were simple: “Young man, I hear that you are going to Boston. You are a brave soul. When you write me, don’t tell me what you are going to do, tell me what you have done. Too many men spend their time dreaming about what they want to do, and never do anything.” And then he abruptly sat down, opened his desk drawer, and wrote me a check.

I think of that conversation as I reflect on what we are doing at Baptist Bible College.

1. There is a great spirit of revival among our students. They are proud of BBC and want to be here.
2. By God’s grace and the sacrifice of many, we averted a financial collapse and enjoy a greatly improved financial position. With a strong May Offering, we can finish this fiscal year in the black.
3. Our re-conceptualization of all curricula is ongoing.
4. We have a large number of students who want to represent BBC on our summer teams, and all of our teams are fully scheduled.
5. Our students, staff, and faculty are more involved in community efforts than ever before.
6. Our communication with all of our constituents is improved.
7. Our Rebranding Team continues to refine our focus to become the BBC our founders envisioned.

BBC must continue to address cultural issues with accurate and concise biblical information. Our structure must be streamlined and efficient, and our students must be able to confront a disobedient and aggressively anti-Christian culture with grace and truth. If we do not address the issues of our day, we will cease to be the institution God intends and our founders envisioned. Our goal is for BBC to be *the* place to come for worldwide ministry training in the 21st century.

As we approach the May meeting, we are praying for a groundswell of enthusiasm for BBC and our goals. On Wednesday morning, we will share with you in more detail all God has done, and our vision of tomorrow’s BBC. Your participation in our May Offering will ensure that we are able to stay true to the course we have set.

When Dr. Smith finished his brief admonishment to me, he demonstrated his love for young preachers by sitting down and writing a check. If you haven’t already, would you follow his example and send a special May Offering for the young men and women preparing for a lifetime of ministry at Baptist Bible College?

BOSTON BAPTIST COLLEGE

A group effort

by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College



Last month, I was traveling in Egypt with a bunch of our students, and, somewhere out in the Sahara desert, we stopped for a break. This Egyptian “truck stop” consisted of a gas generator that powered the one gas tank and a single light bulb inside a shed. The fire for the grill wasn’t propane but a good old-fashioned fire. You could tell what the snack bar had on the menu — it was hanging up there skinned for all to see! We Americans just stood out in the desert sun trying not to look as out of place as we were. Then I noticed a huge produce truck headed from the Nile valley farms toward Cairo. The driver kept jumping in and out of his cab, looked under the hood a few times, and then started trying to shove his huge truck by himself.

Now, I don’t speak any Arabic, but I do speak fluent “bad battery.” Car trouble is in my DNA. So I ran over to get behind that huge truck. My effort didn’t change the situation much, so I called to Tim, Davey, and Nick. I think Ryan and Eric jumped in too! I wouldn’t swear to it, but I even think a couple of our Boston girls joined in! There we were, a bunch of Americans, shoulder-to-shoulder with a couple of Egyptians pushing for all we were worth. We rocked it, we grunted, we strained, we won. Our new friends waved as they jumped in the cab and headed out across the desert.

I stepped back, wiped my sweaty forehead, and swelled my chest in spite of myself. Sometimes you just know you’ve made a difference. There would be salads in Cairo — thanks to a few people from Boston.

We are building a great Baptist ministry college here in Boston. Most Bible colleges are built in the middle of a large constituency of churches that can feed them students and cash. Our founders, in the wisdom of God I believe, situated our college where there was *no* constituency. We were founded as a Great Commission idea. We have great spiritual needs in the Northeast, so what better way to attack the problem than to channel young people right onto the playing field? When I talk to locals about Boston Baptist College, usually the response I get is, “I never knew there was such a thing here.” Well, there didn’t use to be. But there sure is now.

Right now we are raising our annual offering. We have never been able to do this without help, and we can’t do it now. If you value the idea of some of us determined to educate a new generation of Baptist leaders, who believe that biblical studies never go out of style, where evangelism is everyday business, where serving means more than any celebrity...this is a truck you ought to help push. This has always been a group effort. Still is. I can’t do it without you.

Garms attends TESOL conference in Boston

Springfield, MO

During Baptist Bible College's spring break, professor Kelli Garms attended and presented at the 44th annual TESOL (Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) conference in Boston, Massachusetts. The conference is a forum in which teachers help other teachers by presenting on issues that affect the English language learner (ELL) in today's classrooms. Garms presented in collaboration with Stuart Landers from Missouri State University in Springfield, Missouri, and Sally Cummings from Saint Michael's College in Colchester, Vermont. The presentation consisted of three perspectives for practicum sites in TESOL.

Cummings described her practicum program including its involvement with refugee resettlement program classes and overseas practicum sites. Landers described the other side of the practicum coin as the coordinator for cooperating practicum teachers. His role includes student placement while fulfilling the needs of his institution. Garms presented the current form of the practicum class at BBC and the steps she took from the inception of the minor through today.

The TESOL minor at BBC was implemented in the Communication Department in 2007, and is available to students pursuing any major.

The minor, consisting of 18 credit hours, trains students to teach English as a second language (ESL) or English as a foreign language (EFL) in classrooms all around the globe. The minor has provided BBC another opportunity to forge relationships with other area academic institutions.

The Communication Department is excited to offer this minor that provides cross-cultural ministry opportunities within the U.S. and overseas. It is anticipated that TESOL courses will be available for online distance education beginning in the fall of 2010. For more information about the TESOL minor, contact professor Kelli R. Garms at kgarms@gobbc.edu.

LBU hosts Louisiana BBF

Shreveport, LA



A group of 70 pastors, their wives, and church staff members attended the Louisiana BBF meeting on the campus of Louisiana Baptist University March 23. State chairman Ron Fox presided over the meeting. LBU Vice-President Mark Crook did a 90-minute seminar on "Managing Conflict in the Church" and Rick Carter preached the message. The university trio and BBC student Amber Keeny presented special music. LBU provided lunch for their guests during the meeting.

Seminole Baptist to send Shiels to fill pulpit while Esquibel on furlough

Springfield, MO

Pastor Don Baier and Seminole Baptist Temple will be the sending church for James and Sarah Shiels as they fill the pulpit for BBFI missionary Jose Esquibel at Alconbury Independent Baptist Church in Huntingdon, England, from June 2010 through June 2011.

James, who was born in England, was saved as a young man and eventually wound up under the discipleship of Esquibel. It was during this time that Shiels felt a call to full-time ministry. He enrolled at BBC in Springfield, Missouri, in 2000 and it was there that he met and married Sarah. After both graduating in 2005, they served an internship under Esquibel in England. They then returned to the US and have been involved at Seminole while seeking God's direction.

Lord willing, their goal is to fill the pulpit at Alconbury for one year before returning to the states to pursue approval as BBFI TEAM missionaries to an area about 30 miles from Alconbury where seven small aging Baptist churches have struggled to stay open.

The Shiels are currently raising a minimal amount of support for the one-year period at Alconbury. If you would like to partner with Seminole for this one-year project, please send support to Seminole Baptist Temple, 4221 S. National, Springfield, Missouri, 65810.



Pastor Don Baier (left) with James and Sarah Shiels

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I invited the pastors to come to our house for a planning meeting, but Pastor Murimi was late. I called his wife and she said he had left home on time, but had forgotten to carry his cell phone with him. Finally, about three hours later, we heard he had been arrested. We tried to get him out before the court closed, but we were too late. The next morning, after paying a \$14 fine for not wearing a seat belt, Pastor Murimi was released from jail. When I saw him later that day, he was laughing, promised never to leave home without his cell phone, said he would never remove his seat belt before the bus stop again, and thanked God that now when he counseled people he would be able to say that even in jail God is with you.

Wilfredo's life was never easy. His father deserted the family when he was seven and his mother died when he was 14. He had to start working at the market hauling bags and boxes to pay for his own food, clothes, and school. At 20, he married Karla who brought him to Christ. He worked as a welder and made good money, but was unhappy with the fact that after nine years of marriage he was still living

with his in-laws. He asked God for his own house near a good church. God gave him both. They built their own house and three months later, just a block away, we opened the doors to our church. Wilfredo and his wife joined our church in May of 2003 and soon after they became full-time staff. Wilfredo is now the pastor of our Flagship church in Managua. Pray for this family as they continue to fight on the front lines!

Dan & Meshelle Bowles | **Zambia**

The other night, Dan was on his way back from Pastor Kasonde's house when a man flagged him down at a stop sign. He told Dan his friend was poisoned and needed a lift to the hospital. Once they reached the house, the man who was poisoned was carried and placed in the vehicle. Dan tried to talk to him, but he could not speak. He just gave Dan a piece of paper from his pocket. The paper was an official police investigation paper of an assault from two days earlier. So Dan informed the police. The victim reported that one of the other boys was the one who tried to

kill him. The next day, Dan went to the hospital to check on the young man, but he had already left the hospital. Dan went to the house where he picked him up the day before, but he was gone. However, on Sunday when Dan gave the invitation, one man came forward; it was the victim. He called on Christ! After the service, Dan learned that Mr. Mulenga had reported being beaten to the police by one of his friends two days before, and then he tried to kill himself. The poison he had taken was a crop fertilizer concentrate. Dan's help had saved his life and now his soul is saved too!

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Leo Smith with Grace Baptist OKC 40 years

Oklahoma City, OK

Pastor Leo Smith and his wife, Colleen, celebrated 40 years of ministry together with Grace Baptist Church of Oklahoma City March 21.

The Legacy Celebration brought together current members, former members, and a host of pastors, evangelists, and friends. Many stood and gave testimonies that Sunday filled with joyful laughter, funny stories, and bittersweet memories of past members now residing in heaven. People spoke with love and affection towards their pastor and his wife going the extra mile for them. Many recalled hospital visits, visits in the home, and kind words of encouragement and compassion. A common statement throughout the day was, "They have always been there for our family through good and bad times and it was their love that kept us going."

Smith recalls how they loaded everything they owned in a U-Haul truck, two trailers, a station wagon, four kids, a big dog, and one horse. They rolled into Oklahoma City on Wednesday, March 17, just in time for church, proclaiming,

"Here we are!" He says, "There were many trials but a lot of great times. It seemed at times that we lived at the church. Over the years the four kids became janitors, groundskeepers, painters, plumbers, Sunday school teachers, ushers, greeters, and even bus drivers, all without pay. I would just tell them, 'that's the life of a preacher's kid.'"

Smith did the same with others as he has taken many young men under his wing, offering them mentoring and experience in the pulpit.

The four Smith children grew, married, had kids, and began serving the Lord in many

different ways. Mike, the oldest, says, "If you ask the four kids why they are all still faithful to the Lord and His church you would hear one singular reason, 'Dad and Mom never griped or complained about church members.'"

Mike serves as pastor of Del Baptist Temple in Del City, Oklahoma, Mark has been a missionary and a pastor, while Leo and Colleen's daughters, Susan and Shelley, continue to attend Grace Baptist Church, filling many vital roles. Mike also points out there is a third generation stepping up to carry on the legacy that Leo and Colleen Smith began decades ago as

grandsons and granddaughters are now entering into full-time ministries.



Park Crest gives special gifts at mission conference

Springfield, MO



Pastor Phil Housley and Park Crest Baptist Church capped their annual mission conference March 3-7 with a presentation of special offerings to three missionary families. The missionaries participating (left to right) were Greg and Luann Lyons of the Philippines, Victor Baxter (Georgia church plant), and Brad and Sheri Jones (Mexico). The special gifts were raised among Sunday school classes. Housley and his wife, Stephanie, pose with the missionaries.

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Remembering Negatu Aragow, Ethiopian pastor

Springfield, MO

by Richard Konnerup

Ethiopia is on the east coast of the continent of Africa. Directly to the south is the country of Kenya where we currently serve, but my family and I started our missionary journey nearly 50 years ago.

I recently visited Ethiopia for the remembrance service on January 23 for Pastor Negatu Aragow who passed away and was buried in December. The service was attended by 103 friends and pastors who had been touched by Negatu's life. Of course, there were many more who were unable to attend. Negatu left behind his wife, Aberash, and four grown children.

Negatu came as a young man in 1964 to work in the ministry with the Sidebottoms and us. As the work developed, he became the headmaster of the elementary school in the small village of grass-roofed huts where we lived. He later became the pastor of the church in the nearby

town of Kombolcha. The church grew under his ministry.

In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie was overthrown by his own military. Marxists in ideology, the new government was harsh and many thousands died at its hand. This government lasted until 1991, but until then it turned against anything and anyone from the West, and that included churches. Some of the Ethiopian people with whom we worked were arrested and imprisoned only because they worked with us. Many missionaries were forced to leave. Denton Collins and I were arrested in the countryside after being accused of treason, partly because we sent Bible correspondence courses around the country, including to the military. We were under arrest for three months. Gordon Wright headed this ministry but had gone on furlough.

Negatu and others spent eight months in an old Italian prison built back in the 1930s. The only food they had was brought to them by their families. Life was very harsh. Negatu and several others were taken to the center of the town to

be hanged one night. Their only crime was that they worked for the foreigners from America. This hanging was averted only by the grace of God as over 100 people had gathered to witness this possible hanging. After eight months in prison, Negatu was released along with some others and were made to leave town. They were prohibited from returning. He was separated from his family for four years. He went to the capital, Addis Ababa, 200 miles from his family. He immediately began the work of visiting and doing the work of an evangelist.

Amazingly, he was able to get a small plot on the edge of the capital. Though my family and I, after my release from arrest, had gone to Kenya to work, we were able to fund the building of a small house for him. He was then able to bring his family to join him. Some time later, he was able to start a church in that house and continued to pastor it until his death.

We miss Negatu as a friend and co-laborer. Pray that the Lord will raise up someone to fill his place in the church. Other trained pastors are desperately needed in Ethiopia.

Richard Konnerup has been a BBFI missionary to East Africa since 1960. He is the father of Jon Konnerup, BBFI Mission Director.



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BBCAsia graduates 300, expects larger student body

Manilla, Philippines

For 300 Filipinos, March 12 marked the fulfillment of long years of hard work as the graduating class of Baptist Bible College Asia celebrated the school's 10th commencement.

Baptist Bible College Asia is a growing institution whose aim is to train Filipinos who have surrendered their lives to the ministry and prepare them to effectively reach the world. Founded in 1998, this past year saw a record-high enrollment of 804 and attendance for the next school year is expected to reach over 1,000 students.



BBCAsia's rapid growth has been fueled largely by the evangelistic summer camp ministry reaching the youth of Manila. At this writing, the current camp season is only halfway through and already BBCAsia has received 733 new student applications. The majority of these students have little prior acquaintance with the Bible. The education provided by BBCAsia is vital in grounding these young believers in a solid doctrinal foundation and good biblical teaching to ensure they are fully equipped for their future ministries.

The swift expansion of enrollment in BBCAsia has been accompanied by a growing need for a qualified faculty to invest in the student body. To this end, BBCAsia has extended an invitation for retired individuals with their Masters degrees to come to Manila on a short-term basis and teach in the college. Whether for an entire two-month block of classes or for a one-week module, there is a great opportunity for experienced professors to help train the Filipinos.

Collette McGuire is one such individual who has answered this call. McGuire is a retired school teacher from Westside Baptist Church in Hutchinson, Kansas, pastored by Tim Adrian. As a young girl she had surrendered her life to go to the mission field, and she thought she had missed her chance, that God could no longer use her. When she learned about the ministry of BBCAsia, she shared her story with Pastor Adrian, and he encouraged her to go over for the summer and experience the ministry. After her first trip to Manila, McGuire knew that this was where God wanted her. For the past three years, she has been traveling back and forth to the Philippines, teaching for one block of classes at a time. She has become a vital part of the faculty of BBCAsia and has helped shape the lives of countless young people.

To foster a greater connectivity between Baptist Bible College Asia and partnering churches in the States, a U.S. Board of Trustees has been created to cooperate with the Filipino Board. Former Arizona pastor Ken Adrian has



been appointed as the Vice President of Leadership Development and has taken on an increasing level of involvement in the school. Adrian will now represent BBCAsia in the U.S. and abroad.

In anticipation of the February National Fellowship Meeting in Cebu City, BBCAsia and the USA BBCAsia Board has invited the many pastors who will be flying into the Philippines to witness first-hand the ministry of BBCAsia. They have put together two different travel packages for those interested. The first option is to fly in before the meeting and experience classes underway. The second option is to depart later and attend next year's graduation, scheduled for March 1. If you are interested in making arrangements to experience the college, contact lukelyons@impactingasia.org or go online to www.impactingasia.org.

Faith Videos: J. Leland story on DVD

Simpsonville, NC


Faith Videos recently released a DVD version of the Broadman film *Magnificent Heritage*, the true story of 18th century Baptist John Leland's crusade for religious freedom during America's early days. Leland was influential in the inclusion of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

The 55-minute color film was produced by Broadman films and was distributed in 16mm format for several years. Bob Harrison of Faith Videos secured the rights to DVD distribution last

year. Of the film, former Southern Baptist Convention president Frank Page says, "This powerful story portrays the tremendous impact that one individual had upon the shaping of our country's beginning...His insistence upon protection of our religious rights has allowed Baptists and other evangelicals to be free to preach the Word of God without fear of reprisal and persecution."

Magnificent Heritage (price \$20) and other Christian videos are available at the Faith Videos website, www.faithvideos4u.com.

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Sagmount Baptist Camp turns 50 this year

Joplin, MO

by Ray Brinson

Sagmount Baptist Camp will observe 50 years of camp ministry during the summer of 2010, and campers attending the Midwest Youth Camp in mid-July will celebrate the 50th anniversary July 15. Six camp weeks are scheduled for 2010 and each is invited to give special recognition to the anniversary.

It is estimated that in the 50-year history of the camp more than 50,000 have been saved, aside from the hundreds of young people who surrendered to full-time ministry and became pastors and missionaries. In the summer of 2009, there were 123 professions of faith recorded.

The history of the campgrounds begins with John Frank Walker, who first came to the area to hunt elk. He liked it well enough to build a hunting lodge there for him and his friends in 1928. Mr. Walker then thought the area needed a swimming pool, and he constructed one that was filled with water from the spring (Sagmount means "water mountain"). A restaurant and hotel, the Sagmount Inn, followed.

Rock mined out of the cave was used in all the buildings. Mr. Walker hired country boys at 25 cents a day if they had a mule to haul the rock out of the cave and up the hill to where the construction was being done, and many of the buildings remain.

The hotel was a first-class place in that day. It has many unique fea-



Old postcard images promoting Sagmount Resort in the early 20th century

tures. All the buildings have fireplaces and the one in the hotel has pipes that extend from the basement to the second floor. When they are heated by fire, the heat is carried to the second floor to help heat the hotel. It also had steam heat. All the buildings had tunnels that came from the cave. A large fan brought cave air in to cool them.

A spring comes out of the rock opening at the base of the rock bluff and spills into a large reservoir. Explorers said the spring opens up on the inside to another cave area. This spring filled the pools and supplied drinking water for the resort. Many people came and filled jugs or anything that would hold water to take home for drinking water.

After the Missouri Baptist Bible Fellowship purchased Sagmount and was operating the camp, there was a rock shift inside the spring cave that

(continued)

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Freeway Baptist honors Butcher for 20th anniversary

(continued)

caused the water not to flow enough to supply the need. As a result, someone was hired to go in and rearrange rock so the water would flow strong again.

Mr. Walker died on November 2, 1945. Not wanting to burden his children with the running of the resort, he willed it to be sold. His son, then 17 years old, took the responsibility of running the resort until it was sold to a local evangelist. Later the property was repossessed. A Joplin man bought the property in 1950 and attempted to start a casino, but it failed.

The property sat empty and was vandalized for several years before the Missouri Baptist Bible Fellowship bought it in 1960 for \$45,000, and the property found new life. The history of young people dedicating lives and surrendering to full-time service for God is still going on today.

Houston, TX

On February 20, Pastor Mark Butcher and his wife, Diane, celebrated their 20th anniversary at Freeway Baptist Church. In their honor, the church put together a "Thank You" video, took up a collection that was designated for the Butchers to take a trip, and had dinner on the grounds.

Butcher graduated from Baptist Bible College in 1977 and also has a degree from Louisiana Baptist University. He was called to

Freeway Baptist in 1990. Under his leadership, the church has grown and built additional facilities to accommodate the many young families that have joined.

Mark and Diane have been married for almost 37 years. They have three children, Mark Alan, Sarah, and Lauren, and two grandchildren, Dylan and Naomi (seen in photo). Their youngest daughter, Lauren, is very involved in the children's ministry at Freeway as well as teaching a ladies' adult Sunday school

class. For more information, visit their website at www.freewaybc.com



Special thank you to Betty Tays for her research on the Sagmount Baptist Camp history.



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Rittman, OH

By Carol Burton

Rittman is a small community of about 6,000 nestled in the richest agricultural county in Ohio. As you enter the town, you are greeted by a sign stating, "Rittman...a small town with a big heart." Calvary Baptist Church and Pastor Jerry Burton live up to their city's reputation, especially in the month of March when they hosted four missionary families.

Each weekend, different missionary families were guests of Calvary Baptist. It was a privilege to have Dave and Ann Spice, ABWE missionaries to Israel (Association of Baptists for World Evangelism), as guests. Dave was saved, baptized, and called into ministry at Calvary. He went to Bible college and served in a local church for several years before surrendering to go to the mission

field of Israel where they just completed one term. The other missionary families attending were: Aaron and Stephanie Boon going to Kenya, serving with ABWE; Barry and Denise Williams serving in Scotland with BEMA (Baptist Evangelistic Missionary Association); and Keni and Vanessa Epp, BBFI missionaries to Honduras.



Dave Spice (right) with Pastor Jerry Burton

The final Sunday morning of the month featured a "Parade of Nations" with the primary age Sunday school children marching into the sanctuary with flags of various nations while the choir sang "Reach the World." People were visibly moved by the flags waving to the words, "Each soul another flag unfurled," while a media presentation displayed pictures of all the missionaries the church supports.

Festivities culminated with an international banquet Sunday evening. Various Sunday school classes decorated the tables with themes of different countries and there was a great variety of food.

One special feature of the conference was the missionary store stocked with items brought in by church members over a period of several months. Each missionary was encouraged to shop for things they had asked for or needed for their ministry. They were allotted \$375 for purchases in the store. It was exciting to see needs met and to see the people able to do something to be a blessing to missionary families. In addition, the church presented each missionary with \$1,000 for their ministry.

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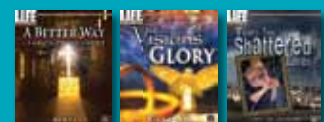


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Four ordained at Winter Haven

Winter Haven, FL

Four young preachers, all graduates of Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, were ordained into the gospel ministry March 8 at Winter Haven Baptist Church.

Pastors from Florida and other states gathered to ordain Robert Hodges, pastor of South Creek Baptist Church in Orlando, Jay Braymer, who assists in the ministry at South Creek, Jonathan Perry, who will soon be approved as a BBFI missionary to Australia, and Nathan Braymer who is the student pastor at Winter Haven Baptist Church.

David Mills, pastor of Berean Baptist Church in Mesquite, Texas, moderated the service. Lynn Perry, Howard Braymer, Ed Wilds, and Steve Lawrence served as interrogators, and Winter Haven's pastor, Mark Hodges, brought the charge.



The newly ordained ministers with their wives are in the front: (from left) Robert and Rachael Hodges, Jay and Sarah Braymer, Jonathan and Natalie Perry, Nathan and Sarah Braymer.

Former Bethel BC members to meet

Springfield, MO

Former members of Bethel Baptist Church in Springfield, Missouri (before the church merged and became United Baptist Church), and those who wish to honor former pastor Raymond Askren Sr., are invited to a surprise reunion for

Ray and Ruth Askren to be held Thursday, May 13, 2010, from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. at Dale Street Baptist Church, 1311 E. Valley Water Mill Rd. Bring your own drinks and a dish to pass around. Contact Ray Askren Jr. at (417) 429-7455 for details.

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J.O. Grooms

Lynchburg, VA



Jessie Odell (J.O.) Grooms, international evangelist, went home to his Lord April 5, 2010. Known to everyone as J.O., he was born July 21, 1923, in Wills Point, Texas, to Jessie Augustus and Opal Smith Groom.

Grooms trusted Christ as his Savior at the age of 25 and spent the rest of his life introducing people to Jesus Christ. He worked for over 20 years on the staff of Thomas Road Baptist Church with the late Jerry Falwell and taught personal evangelism at Liberty University. He was the founder of the worldwide mission ministry Treasure Path to Soul Winning, Inc. He is the author of a number of scripture memory books including *Treasure Path to Soul Winning* with over a million copies in print in 16 languages throughout the world.

J.O. is survived by his wife of 63 years, Albertina Kozlovsky Grooms, five children, 15 grandchildren, and 18 great-grandchildren.

A special memorial celebration is to be held at Thomas Road Baptist Church, Lynchburg, Virginia, on Saturday, May 1, at 11:00 a.m. The family will have a private viewing and graveside service.

Jerry Brinkman

Chickasha, OK



Jerry Allen Brinkman, BBFI pastor, passed from this life March 22 while visiting in Peoria, Arizona. Jerry was born February 2, 1938, in Savanna, Illinois, to Martin and Philomena Brinkman. He graduated from high school in Thomson, Illinois.

Having received Christ as Savior at the age of 19, he graduated from Arlington Baptist College in Arlington, Texas, and began his ministry in 1977. His last pastoral ministry was with Bible Baptist Church in Woodward, Oklahoma. He moved to Chickasha, Oklahoma, in September 2009.

A memorial service was held March 27 at Bible Baptist Church in Chickasha, Oklahoma, with Raymond Barber, Kim Hayes, and David Brinkman officiating.

Jerry leaves behind his wife, Carol, two sons, and four grandchildren.

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Navigating through suffering

By Zac Smith

Editor's note – Zac Smith is the son of Jim Smith, BBFI Associate Mission Director. He has inoperable cancer. A gifted communicator (Zac works in a church as the Central Operations Director handling web, media, design, and IT aspects of the ministry), he has been blogging about his experience. This is the third in a series of blog articles about how he is navigating through his suffering.

Once again, I must set it up with my frustration. When I came to terms with my cancer being back and getting worse — once I realized that it was not going to go away medically — my frustration changed focus. Now I was frustrated with the actual suffering. There is a continual cycle of pain in my body — sometimes to the point of writhing. This leads to an ensuing mess of pills, which leads to constipation and bloating and increased pressure on my abdomen, which leads to increased pain and therefore, more pain pills. As you can see, this endless cycle is literally mind numbing and has greatly detracted from my ability to participate. Like my grandfather used to say when he was dying of cancer, “I feel fine from the neck up.” This never-ending cycle was — and is — very frustrating.

So I began to ask God why I was still here? I feel like I have put many things into order for Mandy and the kids for when I am gone. They are secure financially and have things squared away. I finally have a real understanding of Paul's words in Philippians 1:21: “For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.”

I have a yearning to go to heaven. Not just for pain relief, but because that is truly where I want to go.

Now I must add here that there is some obvious bitter sweetness in my emotions. I desperately want to live to see Lizzy get married or see the boys accomplish their dreams or travel the Mediterranean with Mandy. But there is a very real confidence in knowing that all four of them will be with me in heaven soon and that will be greater than any earthly memory. But I live in this frustrating struggle.

Why am I still here? What is next for me? Should I make another video? The first two were so powerful! What else would I say? Should I write a book? Who would publish it? So, as you can see, the questions and the musings were constant and caused me great grief with God. I felt like I had been giving all glory to Him since this began. The more debilitated I get, the less I feel I can do. And the less I feel I can do, the more I wonder why I am still here.

But then I had lunch with one of my best friends, Lee, who taught me something. Maybe I should not know what is next. Maybe we shouldn't be praying for God to show us

what is next and help our frustration. Maybe we should continue along and let Him surprise us — as He always does. We agreed that it is best to focus not on the frustration about what is next, but rather to focus on obedience. Frustration can be replaced with surprise and anticipation.

The third simple way a Christian can navigate through suffering is to focus on the exciting future God has for you instead of the painful present you find yourself wallowing in. Frustration with knowing what is next versus trusting God that what is next will be exciting is an easy choice. And so my focus moves from “what should I be doing?” to “where does God have me?” In fact, I believe not recognizing the position God has put me in can quickly turn into disobedience. God has promised us that He will complete the work.

Philippians 1:6 — “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

So, where am I? I have found that for me, personally, the obedient step is to continue forward — encouraging others, writing and sharing my feelings, and praying for those around me. By doing so, my frustration has plummeted even though the pain cycle still remains.

On that note, I am happy to welcome a complete new wave of people to the blog. In the past few days, I have seen my story used so far and wide that the impact is beyond belief. Please feel free to share my story as much and as often as you like. So many churches have called and are using the videos in their services. Whereas just a few days ago I was so bummed out about my purpose in life and my continued existence, thousands and thousands have interacted with my story since then.

So let us take our suffering and frame it — together with where God has us in the present and with the excitement that is coming next. This will help us from spinning out of control in the doldrums.

I also want to quickly acknowledge something else that has helped my family and me rise up out of the doldrums. We have received so many cards, checks, gift cards, cash, notes — all manners of tangible encouragement. We are eternally grateful for that. We appreciate the heart behind that.

Zac's blog is www.hello-righton.com (Hello? Right on!). A video is available on the blog as well. You can send a note of encouragement to:

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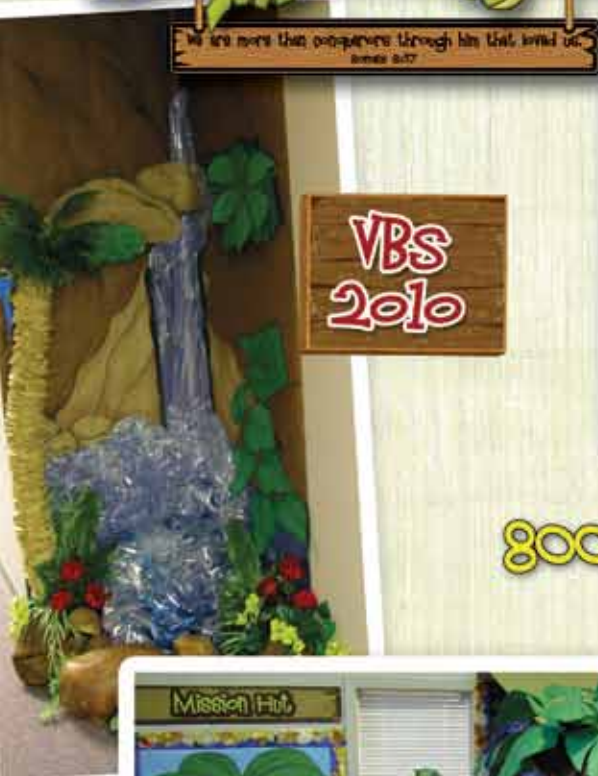


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