

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

NOVEMBER 2015 | VOL. 66 NO. 3

... AND WHEN HE HAD
GIVEN
THANKS...

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ON THE TABLE Milestones

by Keith Bassham | Editor

While this is not my final issue as editor of the *Tribune*, this is likely my final “On the Table” introduction column. Next month a new name and a new face will grace this section of the magazine.

Beginning with this issue, *Tribune* readers will begin to get to know Randy Harp, the new editor and BBFI Director of Communications. Randy was one of five candidates interviewed for the position, and the *Tribune* board of directors believed he was the best qualified to fulfill the job description they published during the summer. I agree with this assessment, by the way. His appointment was ratified by the BBFI Committee of Directors and approved during the business meeting held during the September Fellowship Meeting.

BBFI President Eddie Lyons (who also serves as the chairman of the *Tribune* directors) expressed the board’s appreciation for my work with a nice bonus (\$1,000 for each of the 13 years I have served as editor) and the title to the *Tribune* auto I have been using. My wife received some roses. It was a very generous gesture, and I am grateful. Not all BBFI personnel have been given so gracious a farewell. The night of the presentation, President Lyons asked if I wanted to say something, and I told him I was overwhelmed and at a loss for words.

I hope my waving off the opportunity to make a speech is appreciated and not interpreted as ingratitude. I will have something more formal to say about my departure next month, and I will have an opportunity to give proper recognition to some people then.

We will also be kicking off our annual fundraising effort, what we have been calling the February *Tribune* Offering the past 20 years or so, and we may keep the name. There is no BBFI meeting in February 2016, however, so we will just have to manufacture a deadline for all the commitments from the pastors, churches, and state fellowship leaders. As you will learn from Editor Harp’s column in this *Tribune*, the job he has been given is bigger than the one I leave. And we all know what that means.

So, read Editor Harp’s column, go on past the biographical material, and look at the plans. Think of it as a catalog, and think of a dollar amount you want to invest in each of those projects. The sooner the funding is there, the sooner the work can get underway.

I am the fifth *Tribune* editor, but I barely knew Editor Smith and Editor Zimmerman. On the other hand, Editor James Combs and Editor Mike Randall were and are well known to me. Both heavily influenced my own work on the *Tribune*, and I am happy to bring their work back to our pages during this transition time. I believe it is the only time four editors have been represented in the magazine at one time as we all publish our thoughts on giving thanks.

May your Thanksgiving season be blessed.

Keith Bassham

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Don’t miss any of the *Tribune*’s digital offerings on our website www.tribune.org. You can find old articles, a digital page-turn version of this month’s magazine, and a link to sign up for the *Tribune* Update email.

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

Mission-focused



by Eddie Lyons | President | BBFI

We must be mission-focused. What is the reason for the Baptist Bible Fellowship? Why do we have colleges, the Mission Office, a Church Planting Office, and the *Tribune*? For that matter, why do we serve in our local churches? We must never forget why we do what we do. We do not exist to perpetuate a fellowship, colleges, or departments. Our institutions exist to serve the mission of Jesus Christ.

One of the greatest clarifying statements I have ever heard came from John Ortberg: “Jesus did not start a church and then give it a mission. Jesus started a mission and then gave it a church.”

From the moment Jesus began his ministry he was on mission. He looked at the crowds of people and noted they were fearful, empty, hurting, hopeless, confused, and dying. He had come to save them. Matthew puts it this way:

But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, “The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Matthew 9:37-38

One of the great things about our Fellowship is that, at our core, we, the laborers, are committed to evangelism, discipleship, and the truth of God’s word.

We are also deeply committed to the local church. Local churches are free to find the best way to reach the people in their unique cultural setting. Each cultural setting requires every pastor to discover how to communicate the Gospel so it can be heard and to develop a sense of community that fits the people of that area. Our desire is to plant churches in the north and south, east and west, rural and urban areas. We are a multi-generation Fellowship. It is our goal to reach people everywhere in every culture of every generation. The message does not change, but the presentation must.

When we are mission focused we are able to celebrate the diversity in our Fellowship. No one method or style will work across the board. When we gather together at our meetings we should expect and celebrate diversity. Our churches should have different styles of programming. Our activities and methods should be varied.

We must strive to move with the times and reach all generations. We must honor the older generation and be grateful for their faithfulness and sacrifice. The elders need to celebrate that young leaders have taken the heart for the mission and are doing things differently, with creativity and innovation while not compromising the truth. When our Fellowship remains mission focused we will be able to serve one another with grace and love and move with unity in the middle of diversity. We have come together to reach this world as laborers in a great harvest that must not be lost.

WORLDWIDE MISSIONS

Join us in Korea



by Jon Konnerup | Mission Director | BBFI

Word is spreading, interest is gaining, and people from all over the world are notifying the Mission Office they are coming to the BBFI Korea 2016 Global Meeting on March 14-17, 2016. Individuals from Africa, North and South America, Europe, the Middle East, and from all over Asia have signed up, and many are working on their entry visa permits, passports, and airline tickets!

Preparations are in progress as a number of committees in Korea are working in conjunction with the Mission Office to make this an unforgettable event. Special presentations, cultural exhibitions, a large Korean choir, and uplifting music from around the world will make this a memorable occasion. The key speakers are already working on messages that will encourage us to “Lift Up Our Eyes and Look” — upward to God with thanks, outward to the world in need, inward to see our part, and forward as we work with our worldwide partners to fulfill the Great Commission.



It is not too late to make plans to attend this special occasion as we recount what God has done through our efforts the past 65 years. Leaders from around the world want to express their gratitude and we can encourage them by conveying our desire to work with them and, in turn, let them know how we appreciate their efforts. Your attendance could play an integral part in the future of missions. Come and learn how you can influence our efforts to help change people’s lives eternally through Jesus Christ.

We would love to see as many pastors and their wives, church members, and students make this a once-in-a-life-time trip and meet people from all around the world in one place — people whose lives have been eternally changed because of the mission efforts of the churches and missionaries of the BBFI. Register today at www.BBFIKorea2106.com or contact Jill Wolf (Jill@bbfmissions.com) at the Mission Office for additional information. In order to receive the reduced group rate by staying at the “headquarters” hotel, the MVL, you need to make arrangements through Jill Wolf. Don’t wait too long. Join us!

Church planting in Boston



by John A. Gross | Church Planting | BBFI

If the greatest deterrent to growth in a church is leadership, then a close second is structure. As a church begins to grow, most are structured to choke out the growth. When the body grows the structure must grow as well, or it will stunt the growth. What works for a church of 100 will not work for a church of 500. Most churches have used the same organizational structure for the life of the church, and they struggle to grow.¹ The testimony of Sean Sears of Boston gives credence to this principle. He writes:

As a pastor, I've been blessed by the investment of many highly gifted and generous leaders. We believe that where we are now is a result of where others, by God's grace, have pointed and pushed us. We also feel a responsibility to pass what we're learning on to others.

Our family moved to Boston in August of 2001 to run the youth program at Boston Baptist College. It was too expensive to live in the city, so we bought a home in Stoughton, on the south side, and began involving ourselves in the community through the school system, sports little leagues, etc. Our neighbors knew we were Christians and asked us to talk to a distraught friend about God. That led to a Bible study which continued to grow until Ben Feldott and Cape Cod Church sent us out to launch Grace Church in November 2005.

The first four years were the hardest, as we had no "launch team" and no coaching. We did have two things going for us: a network of 54 BBFI churches praying for us and paying our way, and we were already friends with the people we were trying to reach. God blessed, and at the end of year four, we finally hit that magic number every planter chases — 100 people attending.

At the beginning of our fifth year, we found a few mentors who taught us to look for obstacles to disciple-making and who showed us how to remove many of those barriers. We started keeping stats, looking for spiritual trends, investing our resources more strategically, leveraging our connections intentionally, and streamlining our discipleship process and leadership pipeline.

God has allowed us to plant three other churches near us, we have moved into two consecutively larger facilities, and we have baptized hundreds of our friends. Today we help an average of 1,100 neighbors, friends, and family draw closer to God each week in four identical services. But we can't stop or slow down. We are still in New England, where all six states are in the top ten least religious states of our country. Ninety-seven percent of our county is still disconnected from faith, and there are three more towns near us without a single Gospel-centered church.

We're glad for everyone God has brought to faith in Jesus but we're more focused on everyone else who still hasn't even had a chance yet!

¹ Thom S. Rainer, *One Key Reason Most Churches Do Not Exceed 350 in Average Attendance*, www.thomrainer.com, March 25, 2015



TRIBUNE OFFERING

Just a reminder that your support is greatly appreciated.

Randy Harp new leader of Tribune and BBFI communications

I am thankful. I want those to be my first words in print as the newly selected editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. Not only because this is a Thanksgiving issue, but more fittingly because that is truly the way I feel. I am humbled and grateful for this incredible opportunity. Some of you I know personally, but I realize there are many who do not know me at all. I hope that changes over the coming months and years. In the meantime, I would like to introduce myself to you and share a little of how I see God using this ministry.

I grew up in Springdale, AR, where I began going to church as a teenager and was saved under the ministry of Don Elmore at Temple Baptist Church. It was there, while studying engineering at the University of Arkansas, I received my calling to full-time Christian ministry. I enrolled at Baptist Bible College in 1996 and graduated in 1999. While at BBC I was given many opportunities including serving as student body president, resident assistant for three years, and intern for the Tribune. Easily the best thing that happened to me while in Springfield was meeting and eventually marrying my wife, Stacy. I could not have asked for a better partner in ministry over these past 15 years.

After graduation I served as youth pastor at Orlando Baptist Church with Dave Janney. In 2003, I transitioned to a youth/associate role at Bible Baptist Church of Champaign, IL. After a pastoral transition took place, I felt it was time to plant a new church. God moved my small family of three to the Flint, MI, area where we established Solid Rock Baptist Church. I had the privilege of leading this church from its infancy to becoming a mature, self-supporting church. In 2012, my now family of five moved to Texas where I assumed the leadership of North Park Baptist Church in the Houston suburb of Humble.

God provided many other opportunities along the way to help me become the person I am today. In 2009, I completed my Master of Divinity from Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary in Lynchburg, VA. I am currently one seminar away from being A.B.D. (all but dissertation) for a Doctor of Ministry from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Ft. Worth. Since 2010, I have served on the Board of Trustees for Baptist Bible College, the



past two years as chairman of the board. I have also been an alumni association vice president. In Michigan I served multiple terms as vice president of the state fellowship. I also serve as a board member of the mission organization New Hope Initiative led by Sandy Baird.

I can easily look back over my ministry experience and see how God has prepared me for this new role. It was in Orlando that I truly developed a heart for missions. It was in Michigan that I was able to experience first hand the rigors of church planting. And it was most recently in Houston that I have worked through the challenges of church revitalization. I would not say I am an expert in any of these areas, but I am capable of having an intelligent conversation in each of them.

I wrestled with the decision to leave the

local church to lead a ministry that will be vastly different than anything I have ever done in ministry. I sought counsel and advice from many friends and mentors. The question I kept asking myself was, "Can I be a part of making disciples of Christ in a greater way in the local church or as director of communications for the BBFI?" For years I have prayed God would allow me to be a part of something much greater than me alone. Making disciples of Christ in a local church certainly accomplishes that objective, but I am excited by the great potential before me to strengthen, equip, and encourage the leaders in multiple churches across our Fellowship as they carry on the day-to-day task of making disciples. I want to serve leaders who serve in local churches. That is what I want to commit my life to. I want to serve Christ by serving leaders. I want to be a help, a resource, in any way I can.

So what exactly does that look like? What is the future of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*? What is my role as director of communications for the Baptist Bible Fellowship International? Obviously this will be a work in progress over the next few months as I get settled in. My goal is to build upon the solid foundation of the men who have served before me as *Tribune* editor. If you look back over the years, each man brought a different skill set and even passion to the position. I have known personally the previous two editors, Mike Randall and Keith Bassham. Both are great men I have much respect for, but I am nothing like either of them. I am not better. I am not worse. I am just different from them.

I want you to know I am extremely excited about the opportunity to lead this ministry. I commit to you I will do my best to lead with integrity, humility, and a passion to make more disciples of Jesus Christ. If there is anything specific I can do for you, please don't hesitate to let me know.

"I want to serve leaders who serve local churches"

MY VISION

Three phases summarize the expansion I see for the *Baptist Bible Tribune* and communication within the BBFI: in print, online, and in person.

In print

Many have asked me if I plan to do away with the print edition of the *Tribune*. My immediate answer is, “No!” I personally find extreme value in a print magazine. Sure, I have some ideas I would like to implement to the print edition, but most of those are procedural matters, such as becoming more thematic in individual issues and expanding our contributing author base and ministry focus.

The primary goal will remain the same as it is now — to produce a magazine pastors, staff, lay ministry leaders, and church members will all benefit from.

Online

Yes, the *Tribune* and the BBFI have an online presence, but this is an area I’d like to see drastically change. I plan to implement a landing page for the BBFI that allows visitors to navigate various ministries such as state fellowships, national meetings, the Mission Office, our colleges, and APEX. This landing page would also make multiple resources available to visitors including a digital version of the print magazine, webinars, blogs, a bi-weekly podcast, and a diverse presence on multiple social media platforms.

One key to successfully navigating the online world will be to bring everything to a mobile platform. In the near future we will develop at least one BBFI app that allows access to the *Tribune*, blogs, podcasts, church locators, missionaries, etc.

In person

This is an entirely new aspect for this ministry. I want to establish a team of leaders to assist churches and pastors in three specific areas — consulting, conferences, and coaching. I also plan to work with several different ministries in establishing a church health assessment that will assist churches in both planting and revitalizing. Finally, we would like to host national and regional leadership conferences in the coming years and launch a BBFI coaching network to inspire, equip, and hold accountable those willing to take the next step in their leadership development.

There are also a few additional resources we hope to make available as soon as possible. In the coming months you will be hearing about church video announcements, sermon bumpers, custom graphics, and presentation designs. We want to maintain an updated directory of state fellowships and be a central location for church staffing, both where candidates can place their resumes and churches can place their openings. We would also like to be a place where those who have a gift and passion to write will be able to have their books published either in a print or eBook form.

Since you asked...

If your head is spinning after reading the above paragraphs, imagine how mine feels. Yes, the scope is large and the vision is daring, but I couldn’t be more excited or more convinced God is going to use this expanded ministry to make a major difference for the cause of Christ.

Maybe you are even asking yourself, “How can I help and/or be involved?” I am glad you asked! **One simple thing you can do — join our email list.** I don’t have a fancy eBook to offer you for joining yet, but it will be a great way for you to stay up to date as we continue to expand this ministry. Sign up via the QR code above or the link on our website.

Also, subscribe to our podcast on iTunes. In the near future we will begin a bi-weekly leadership podcast that will include interviews of ministry leaders from all over the world.

I am going to be looking for more regular contributors. We will need content for both our print magazine as well as our blog sites. **If you currently have a blog, I would love to know about it.** Will you send a link to your blog to my email at raharp@tribune.org?

We also need your help financially. You probably knew that was coming didn’t you? Here is the reality: the *Tribune* is currently set up financially to do exactly what the *Tribune* has been doing for years. If we



are going to expand the scope of this ministry, it is going to take a significant amount of new partners as well as a greater commitment from current partners. **We are seeking monthly support, additional subscriptions, and one-time gifts to help us get set up for the future.** You can give by sending support directly to the *Tribune*, through the Mission Office, or through our upcoming online giving portal.

Most importantly, we need your prayers! I have surrendered this ministry to Christ and have asked Him to show me His plans. Would you covenant with me to pray for God’s blessings as we seek to serve Him? I would love to come to your church or your state fellowship meeting and share more specifically the vision of what we will be doing. I want to serve you as you serve your local church!



THANKS

GIVING

The attitude virtue

By Mike Randall, Editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune* (1995–2002)

The words thanks and thanksgiving appear 98 times in the Bible. Related words such as bless, praise, or glorify multiply the number into the hundreds. Over and over again, the believer is commanded to be thankful and to give thanks to God.

First Thessalonians 5:18 says, “In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

Ephesians 5:20 says, “Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Philippians 4:6 says, “Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.”

These commandments, as all of God’s instruction to us, are for our benefit.

Thanksgiving is a tremendous virtue that influences other actions with its greatest effect on the attitude. Cicero, the Roman orator, once said, “A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all other virtues.”¹

Thankfulness was so important that Christ modeled it in His earthly ministry as an example to his disciples. He gave thanks

before the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 8:6). He thanked the Heavenly Father for answering His prayers (John 11:41). He gave thanks when He instituted the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19). His practice of thanksgiving must have been distinctive because it was the means by which the disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized Him after His resurrection (Luke 24:30-31).

Thoughtful, heartfelt thanksgiving as a regular practice influences a right attitude in at least five areas.

A RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD

First of all, when we are thankful, we recognize God at work in our lives. Our thoughts are projected toward the Lord, the object of our gratitude. Psalm 107:1 says, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."

The words of the popular gospel song by Johnson Oatman Jr., suggest this: "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done."² Thanksgiving makes us aware that God is at work in our midst.

Second, thoughtful and heartfelt thanksgiving promotes faith toward God, because it recounts all the good that God has done for us. James 1:17 says, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning." Psalm 103:2 suggests that thanksgiving helps the believer to "forget not all his benefits." This remembrance of what God has done builds confidence in the believer to continue to trust God. It encourages his faith.

Third, as we express our thanksgiving, we also generate genuine feelings of affection and love toward our Heavenly Benefactor. First John 4:19 says, "We love him, because he first loved us." We learn to love God through receiving His love. His love is expressed in Christ's dying on the cross for us and our sins. It is also partly revealed through His goodness and blessing on our lives. As we recount these

things, our love for Him is established and strengthened.

Fourth, heartfelt thanksgiving prepares our attitude for worship. Jonathan Edwards said, "Among the many acts of gratitude we owe to God, it may be accounted one to study and contemplate the perfections and beauties of His work of creation. Every new discovery must necessarily raise in us a fresh sense of the greatness, wisdom and power of God."³ Thus, through thanksgiving we obtain a right

thanksgiving, but a humble mind is the soul out of which thanks naturally grows. A proud man is seldom a grateful man, for he never thinks he gets as much as he deserves."⁴

Thanksgiving helps us have a humble attitude. It also helps us see how dependent we are. Because He is the vine and we are the branches, we are dependent on God. John 15:5 says, "... without me ye can do nothing." Thanksgiving reinforces these helpful attitudes.

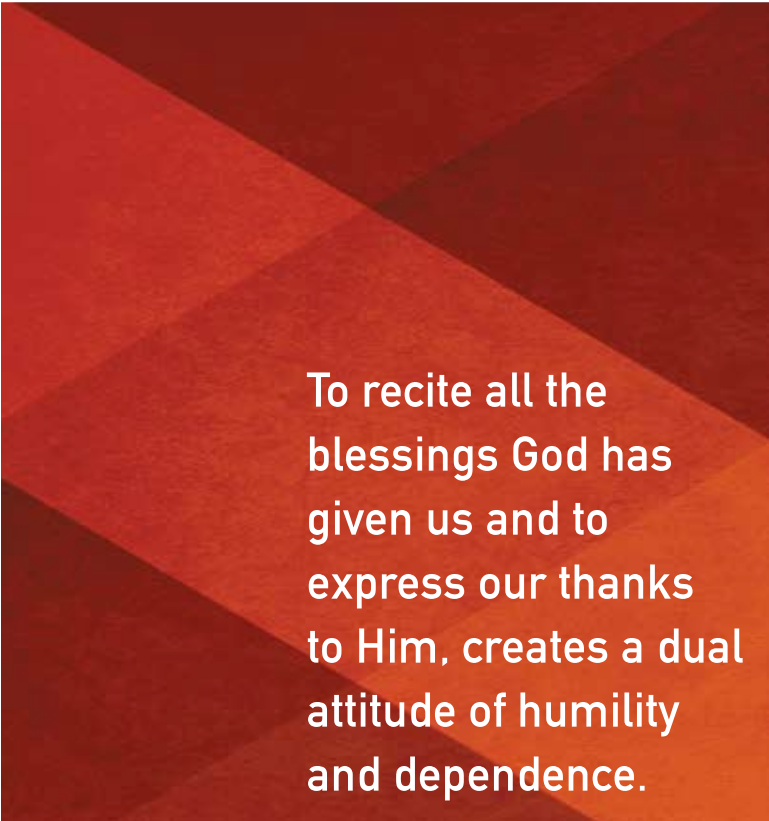
A RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD OTHERS

Thanksgiving not only focuses on God as our benefactor, it also recognizes the good others have done for us. In nearly every epistle of Paul, he expresses thanksgiving for people and the things they have done for him and the Lord (Philippians 1:3). To express our thanks to those who have contributed to our lives is to have an attitude of respect, appreciation, and love for them.

A child had been in a New York hospital under the care of one nurse for a long time. When he found out he was soon to go home cured, he put his arm around the neck of his nurse and said softly, "My mamma will never hear the last of you."⁵ Gratitude helps build relationships because it

produces a positive attitude between people. It is difficult to hurt, criticize, or argue with people after we thank them for some kindness or good deed done for us. Thanksgiving certainly helps us have a right attitude toward others.

Another way thanksgiving sets right our attitude toward others is to help us remember God is in control and works even the evil of others to our good. Once Matthew Henry, the famous scholar and commentary writer, was confronted by thieves and robbed. In his diary he wrote, "Let me be thankful first, because I was never robbed before; second, because, although they took my purse, they did not take my life; third, because, although they took my all, it was not much; and fourth,



To recite all the blessings God has given us and to express our thanks to Him, creates a dual attitude of humility and dependence.

attitude toward God, one of awareness, faith, love, and worship.

A RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD SELF

The practice of heartfelt thanksgiving also affects our attitude toward self. To recite all the blessings God has given us and to express our thanks to Him, creates a dual attitude of humility and dependence. First Corinthians 4:7 says, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" Recognizing that we didn't gain what we have on our own puts down our pride. Henry Ward Beecher once said, "Pride slays

because it was I who was robbed, not I who robbed.”⁶

A RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD LIFE

It is easy to be discouraged and defeated as negative things occur in our lives. Frustrations, pressures, and stress can sour one’s attitude and outlook. Thankfulness changes all that. When we express thanks to God and to those who have contributed to our lives, we have to examine positive things. That practice itself lifts our attitude and makes us positive. It helps us look away from the negative and refocus on the positive, upon God and His work in our lives. Thus, thanksgiving produces a right attitude toward life.

Years ago, a wagon train of emigrants made its way along the Oregon Trail. Water and grass had been scarce for several days. Wagon breakdowns caused many delays. It was stifling hot, and a general feeling of fretfulness had overcome the optimism and cheer with which the group began. At the next night’s stop, a meeting was held to air complaints and grievances. When they all gathered around the campfire, one arose and said, “Before we do anything else, I think we should first thank God that we have come this far with no loss of life, with no serious trouble with the Indians, and that we have enough strength left to finish our journey.” This was done and then there was silence. No one voiced a single complaint. Looked at in the light of their blessings, every problem faded into insignificance.⁷

A RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE FUTURE

The future is an unknown, fraught with

potentials for danger, harm, and defeat. Thanksgiving changes all that by directing our attention to the positive things that have happened and to God, our Savior, our Protector, and Provider.

This effect of thanksgiving is illustrated by Paul’s experience as a prisoner on his way to Rome. After surviving shipwreck, Paul arrived in Italy and traveled toward his destination. Acts 28:15 says, “And from thence, when the brethren heard of us, they came to meet us as far as Appii forum, and The three taverns: whom when Paul saw, he thanked God, and took courage.” He was able to face the future because in thanking God, he recounted how he was delivered from danger and death. Now God had provided new companions and it all resulted in renewed faith and courage to face the future.

Thanksgiving helps us have a right attitude toward God, self, others, life, and the future. It is the virtue that works on our attitude and makes it right.

HOW TO DEVELOP THANKFULNESS

The word “thankfulness” is “thinkfulness” in the old Anglo-Saxon language.⁸ According to one of the African languages, to be thankful means to sit down before God. Both of these ideas suggest how we might develop thanksgiving as a practice. We must be quiet before God and think. Think of all He has done for us in saving our souls and providing for all our needs. Think of all our privileges, opportunities, and responsibilities. In the words of Psalm 46:10, we need to “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth.” We must pause daily, perhaps at the start of

the day and surely at its close, and sit before God and thank Him. When we deliberately take time to think about God, His redemption in Jesus Christ, all His benefits, and all our blessings, there can be only one result ... thanksgiving.

Notes:

- 1 Mead, Frank S., editor, *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, (Westwood, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1965), p. 439.
- 2 Peterson, John W., editor, *Great Hymns of the Faith*, (Grand Rapids, MI: The Zondervan Corporation, 1973), p. 370.
- 3 DeMoss, Arthur and Nancy, editors, *The Family Album*, (Valley Forge, PA: *The Family Album*, 1975), p. 103.
- 4 *The Encyclopedia of Religious Quotations*, p. 439.
- 5 *Benedict’s Scrapbook*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), p. 228.
- 6 Knight, Walter B., *Knight’s Master Book of New Illustrations*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1956), p. 682.
- 7 *Ibid.*, pp. 681-682.
- 8 *Oxford English Dictionary*, (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1961), Volume XI, p. 246.

This article first appeared in the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 15, 1998, as part of “The Christian Virtues” series.

T

THANKS

GIVING

A time to bless the Lord

By James O' Brien Combs, Editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune* (1983–1995)

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name.
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

Psalm 103:1, 2

Psalm 103 is a great heartfelt expression of thanksgiving and praise. It is evoked by the Psalmist's own experience, as evidenced by his use of the personal pronoun and by the grace and majesty of God Himself.

This great psalm says several things about maintaining a spirit of thanksgiving:

THE REASONS FOR THANKFULNESS

We should be thankful to the Lord for His

benefits. All good things of life, be they physical or spiritual, have their origin in God. He is the giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17). We should be thankful for the benefit of forgiveness, "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities ..." (verse 3). Only through the atoning death of Christ can our sins be forgiven. Mark 2:7 says, "Who can forgive sins but God only?" We should be thankful for the healing of our diseases, "... who healeth all thy

diseases," (verse 3). God has encouraged us to pray for the sick, and I have seen many people restored to health, sometimes suddenly, sometimes progressively.

We should be thankful for redemption and satisfaction. Verses 4 and 5 say, "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the

eagle's." The literal rendering of verse 4 from Hebrew implies we are redeemed from the pit. That is true. Redemption is from the pit of sin.

THE RECIPIENT OF OUR THANKSGIVING

During the Thanksgiving season, there is generally much said about the spirit of thankfulness, or feeling thankful, as though our thanks are directed toward a system, or just to America as a society, or to a general movement of being appreciative.

The Lord is the One to whom thanksgiving is to be rendered. He is the LORD, or Jehovah, as the Hebrew Scriptures read, *YHVH*. That is the name used in this psalm. He is Jehovah, the covenant-keeping God, everlasting, supreme, sovereign.

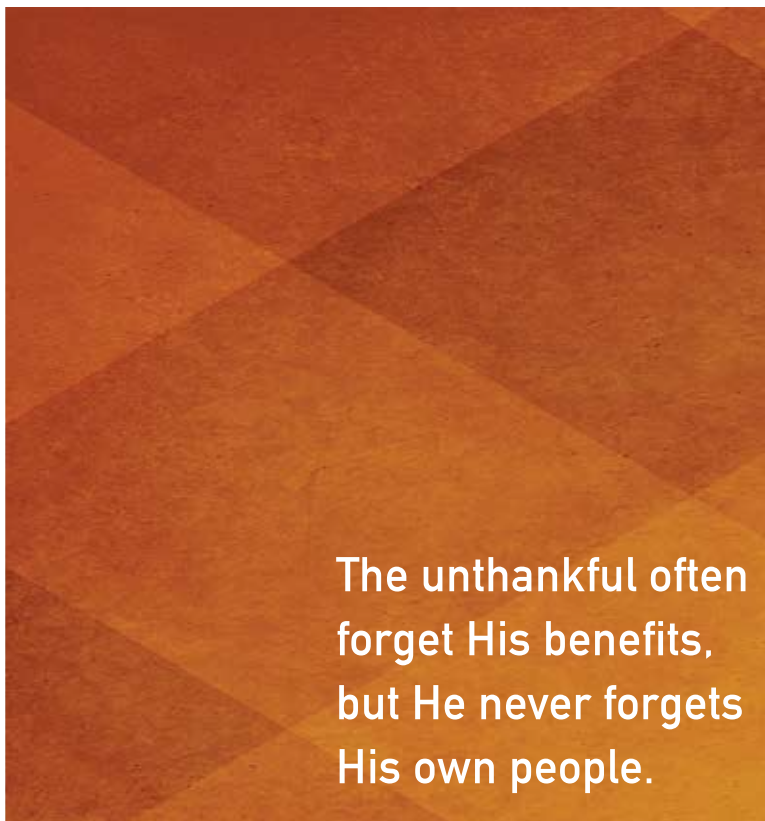
He is absolutely righteous. Verse 6 says, "The LORD executeth righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed." There is always unrighteousness with men, but never with Him. No man can honestly say God has been unfair with him. He could not, for he is the righteous God. We ought to be thankful to Him.

God has revealed Himself. Verse 7 says, "He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel."

There were men before Moses' time who knew God and communed with Him, but a special revelation came to Moses. It was with him that special revelation had its beginnings, as indicated in the five books of Moses. God is not a concealed Deity. He has revealed Himself in the wonders of nature and in the Word of God, the Bible.

God is filled with mercy. Verses 8-11 say,

"The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide: neither will he keep his anger for ever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." By His mercy, His loving and tender favor to the undeserving, He deals with sinful man, and yet remains absolutely righteous.



The unthankful often forget His benefits, but He never forgets His own people.

THE REMEMBRANCE OF GOD

Verses 13 and 14 speak of God's remembrance, "Like as the father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

The unthankful often forget His benefits,

but He never forgets His own people. The unthankful may enjoy the protection of God, but they do not recognize it.

God protects His children by the removal of their sin. Verse 12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, [so] far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

God protects His thankful children by bestowing pity upon them. Though His children may not be all He desires, He does not cast them off. His pity springs from the fountain of His love. He loved us before we were saved, and extends a special love upon us when we become His children.

THE REALM OF GOD'S DOMAIN

How our souls should be thrilled with His goodness and grace. He has satisfied us here with good things. He will continue to bless us forever in that "kingdom which cannot be moved."

God's mercy is from "everlasting to everlasting," (verse 17). In the eternal city, we shall just begin to enjoy the exceeding riches of His grace in his kindness toward us by Christ Jesus. Ephesians 2:7 declares that God has saved us so, "That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."

So today and tomorrow, as well as on Thanksgiving Day in America, bless the Lord. Praise the Lord. Thank the Lord for all of His benefits which He has so richly bestowed on us.

This message is an edited version of one published in the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 7, 1986.



HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
SPRINGFIELD, MO
SEPTEMBER 14-17

revitalize &



By Keith Bassham

Those who attended the Baptist Bible Fellowship meeting held September 14-16 at High Street Baptist Church in Springfield, MO, experienced elements of both the traditional and modern. The theme was Revitalize.

The tradition? As a meeting venue, High Street Baptist Church has been a lynchpin in Fellowship life from the beginning when its then pastor, W. E. Dowell, was elected to be the Fellowship's first president. And also when the church provided facilities for the newly established Baptist Bible College in the same year, 1950. And when the High Street church secretary's desk was the *de facto* Mission Office for the developing Fellowship. And when the church hosted rallies and conferences for the BBF numerous times during our 65-year sojourn.

The preachers were there, of course. That is part of the tradition. Preachers took the platform (Dwayne Wright, Brian Moore, Gene Appel, Jerel Bland, and Anthony Milas) and these and several others led well-attended breakouts dealing with all aspects of church life. Friends met, and old friends reunited, and each evening groups gathered throughout the well-prepared and inviting facilities long after the last notes were played and the last amens were said, enjoying fellowship. That is the tradition.

Less traditional, of course, is the fact that a national meeting was held in a Springfield church. It does not happen often, largely because the Fellowship gathers in May on the campus of BBC each spring for the May Graduation Fellowship. A scheduling fluke made it possible for High Street's pastor and BBFI president Eddie Lyons to host the meeting. And host it he did, with the aid of a church membership who were so very gracious and serving during the meeting. Everything, whether we are speaking of the welcoming physical facilities or the platform presentations, was done with excellence — and the High Street people made it look easy. I know it was not. Many thanks go to Eddie and Cindy Lyons, their family, and their church for providing this service to the BBFI.

The music was decidedly contemporary, with the High Street praise band and singers leading throughout the meeting. And the breakouts covered a raft of modern issues facing preachers and churches. Another nontraditional element was the presence of the students from BBC, who attended the morning sessions. Bringing students into the meetings helps them connect with the Fellowship, and it introduced the students to pastors, missionaries, and other leaders they need to know.

Along with the normal Fellowship activities, two events made the meeting historic. Tuesday evening, the *Tribune*





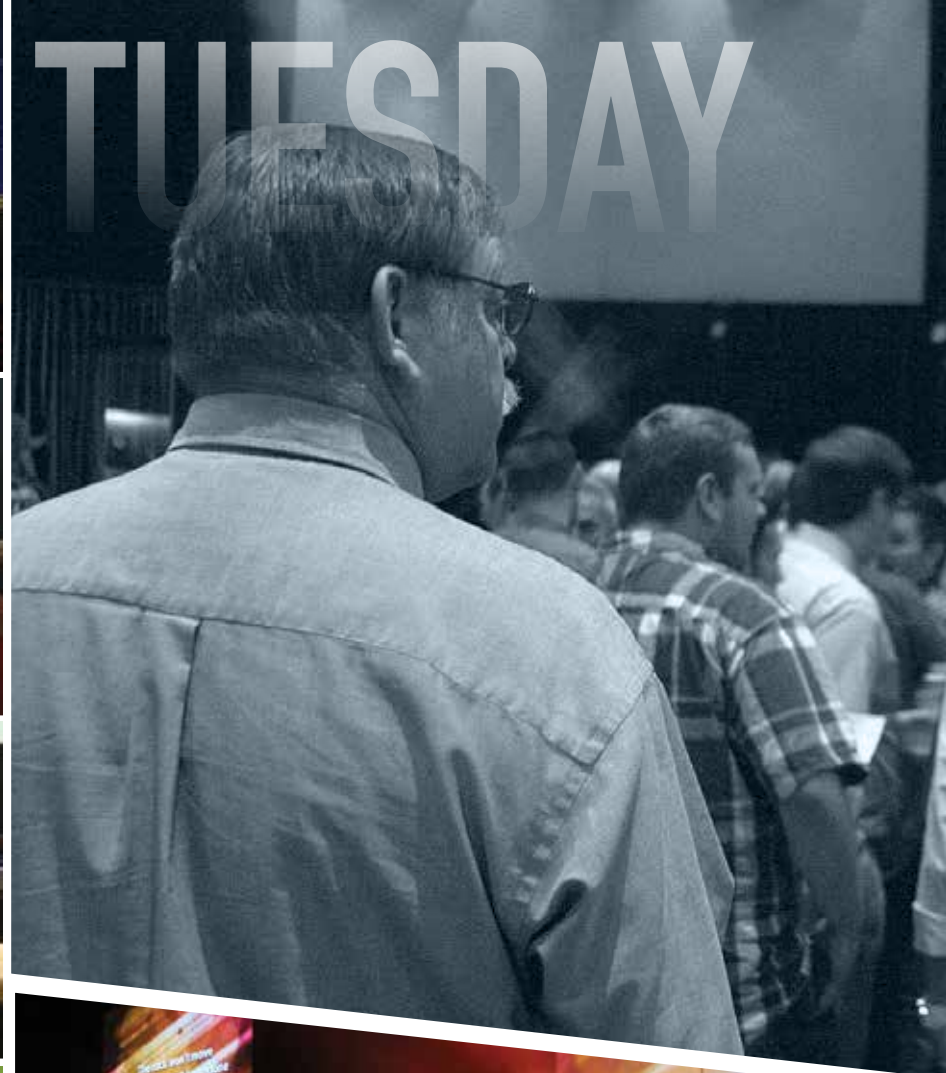
editor (you will excuse my use of the third person here) received thanks and a bonus from the Fellowship in appreciation for his more than 20 years of work at the *Baptist Bible Tribune*. The new *Tribune* editor was introduced during the week. Randy Harp (see his column in this issue) begins work as the new editor and BBFI director of communications.

Missionaries are approved and honored in all national Fellowship meetings. New career missionaries approved this time are Brian and Jezel Cain (Philippines), Elmo and Kathryn Compton (Peru), Paul and Meagan Hopkins (Peru), and Ben and Raelene Walker (New Zealand).

Chad and Jennifer Braymer were approved to be TEAM missionaries to Costa Rica, Don and Cathy Mingo were reinstated, and CPT Cody Coolidge received BBFI authorization for chaplaincy in the U.S. Army National Guard.

Retired missionaries Frank and Finettie Howell received their 50-Year Globe award. Thirty-year pin recipients were Ron and Christine Enoch, Linda Fitzgerald, Greg and LuAnn Lyons, and Rose Yarnell. Missionaries Larry and Dawn Nelson, Larry and Nancy Quinlan, Ennis and Rebecca Pepper, Tom and Lisa Reesor, and Scott and Norma Edwards were awarded their 30-year pins but were not present at the meeting.











BAPTIST history

By Doug Kutilek

WARREN W. WIERSBE — Being all he could be

I suppose some present-day believers may have never heard the name of Warren W. Wiersbe, but such must be few and far between. Wiersbe, noted pastor, Bible teacher, and voluminous author, has been on the radio more or less continuously for over 50 years, first during his pastorate in Covington, KY, then at Moody Church in Chicago, and later as the chief Bible teacher of “Back to the Bible” broadcast. Though long since retired from these ministries, his messages are still rebroadcast regularly, and are decidedly worth hearing. His messages are chiefly clear and plain expositions of Bible passages, with a strong emphasis on practical application, and seasoned with a touch of humor.

Warren Wiersbe was born in East Chicago, IN, in 1929. He was always an avid reader of books in his public school years. He attended Indiana University and Roosevelt University and graduated from Northern Baptist Theological Seminary (Th. B.), a strongly conservative seminary in a theologically eroding denomination. He pastored Central Baptist Church in Chicago (1951-1957), was on the staff of Youth for Christ (1957-1961), pastored Calvary Baptist Church in Covington, KY (across the river from Cincinnati; 1961-1971), then Moody Memorial Church in Chicago (1971-1978), and finally was Bible teacher and general director at “Back to the Bible” in Lincoln, NE (1980-1990).



When the Wiersbes were moving from Chicago to Lincoln, NE, Mrs. Wiersbe informed the real estate agent they were looking for “a library with a house attached.” And that is what they found. The basement — the entire basement — of the Wiersbe home in Lincoln is now a vast sea of books, hundreds, no, thousands, and in fact many thousands of them (I would guess at least 12,000; Wiersbe admits to buying himself books for Christmas!). They are not showpieces, but well-used tools, the resources for thousands of sermons and Bible lessons, and Wiersbe’s numerous publications. Of these, we will note only a few of those we have found most valuable.

The most famous and most extensive production in Wiersbe’s voluminous writings (over 150 individual books) is his “Be” Series of commentaries on all the New Testament (*Be Loyal* on Matthew; *Be Diligent* on Mark; etc.) and parts of the Old Testament. The individual volumes have sold more than four million copies. The whole New Testament series was consolidated into two hard-back volumes, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*. He also produced expository

outlines on the whole Bible, published in two volumes.

While at Moody Memorial Church, for six years Wiersbe wrote a regular column, “Insight for the Pastor” for the now defunct *Moody Monthly* magazine. These columns dealt with various practical aspects of the ministry, but especially biographical sketches — with bibliographies — of a broad spectrum of notable preachers and Christian authors. These columns (with some additional material) were compiled into two volumes — *Listening to the Giants* (1976), and *Walking with the Giants* (1980). To me, these are far and away the most informative and valuable volumes of Wiersbe’s immense output. Just get and read them.

Why Us? When Bad Things Happen to God’s People (1984) does a better job of addressing the issue of Christian suffering than any other book on the topic known to me. It is a must-read.

With the late Howard Sugden, Wiersbe co-authored *Confident Pastoral Ministry* (1973; original title: *When Pastors Wonder How*), revised and retitled as *Answers to Pastors’ FAQs* (2005). This is an immensely practical and helpful book of advice for pastors about the ministry.

I would be remiss if I failed to mention *The Integrity Crisis* (1988) and *Real Worship* (1986), both dealing with important issues in contemporary American Christianity.

When Mr. Wiersbe came to write his autobiography, he couldn’t help himself and ended up with the title *Be Myself* (1997). It is well written, informative, candid, and often funny. He doesn’t golf or follow any sports teams or have any hobbies (other than collecting books) — study, teaching, and ministry have been his life. In a 14-page appendix, he gives an annotated and candid account of most of his published works through 1997.

In the spectrum of theological beliefs and practices, Wiersbe is decidedly and thoroughly conservative and fundamental in theology. In practice, he would be properly characterized as evangelical.

As of this writing, Mr. Wiersbe is still with us in “the land of the living,” though in his mid-80s; his health is fragile, which necessitates very limited activity. When three others and I had the privilege a couple of years ago of spending two or three hours with him, he was warm, witty, informative, and clear-minded. Much of the wisdom and knowledge gained by him through decades of study, ministry, and teaching are preserved for our use and benefit in Wiersbe’s recorded spoken and written words. “The writing that men do lives after them.”



URBAN CURRENT

Manila moment

Johnny spent his days on gritty streets dodging jeepneys, suffering from the constant diet of diesel fumes. He sold cigarettes, used drugs, and sniffed glue. Scrabbling for survival, he likely never gave thought to being one of 25 million people in metro Manila, probably never contemplated that he was part of the 70 percent of the population under age 25 ... didn't get up in the morning marveling that in a rapidly urbanizing world, Asia was urbanizing even faster ... may not have known nine of the top ten largest urban areas in the world are Asian.

Massive metropolis! Yet the Gospel came to Johnny. Johnny was saved. Johnny became one of the first students to enroll in the new Baptist Bible College Asia.

It was not some light bulb moment for Greg Lyons. It just seemed obvious. Manila should be the target of major evangelism and church planting efforts. If the first century is a model, namely Paul leveraging the amplification and distribution power of Roman cities to evangelize the world, it seemed reasonable to Greg to target the city where he grew up.

Greg recalls a conversation with 18 fourth-year Bible college students. Over half of them were from Manila. Seventeen said they were leaving the city.

Greg says, "The investment of missions for decades in Metro Manila built a launching pad for cross-cultural church planting in the 21st century. Several factors are currently in play that point to this movement."

He cites five facts:

1. The Gospel has taken root in the Philippines. Mission efforts have been present in Southeast Asia since the time of Judson, but Christian population in the Philippines far outpaces other nations in the region.
2. Filipino culture values assimilation in a host country. Filipinos are found in over 160 nations and have a reputation of fitting into

the host culture.

3. Linguistically, Filipinos have a high aptitude to learn new languages. Reports of Filipinos living in a foreign country for six months and being conversant and at times fluent in the host language are commonplace.
4. The spiritual fervor of Filipino Christians stands out and a new wave of Filipino missionaries is already present throughout the Southeast Asian nations.
5. The establishment of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) economic movement is paving the way for borderless travel for Filipinos to serve in otherwise closed or restricted nations.

The above points to Metro Manila emerging as a significant launching pad for evangelism and church planting, Greg argues. Resourcing ministries there will result in a church planting effort that could sweep through Southeast Asia all the way to Jerusalem.

As a missionary kid, Greg's Manila roots run deep. He arrived when he was five and completed primary and secondary school. Dad and Mom Lyons are 80 and 79 years old, respectively, continuing to serve in Manila. Greg was approved by Baptist Bible Fellowship International in 1985 returning to Manila by 1987 with an urban vision.

Greg's experience in Manila taught him the difficulties of buying property, building buildings, buying buildings, etc. He created the Non-facility Dependent urban church planting strategy (NFD). He believed unburdening the church planter of the traditional idea of building or buying a meeting place would free up the vision and resources, greatly enhancing the new church's survival and growth trajectory.

"At the beginning, we just didn't have



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potential church planters," Greg says. "A few years ago, the Rawlings Foundation invested in a camp ministry which is wildly successful in reaching thousands of urban youth. Because we had launched Baptist Bible College Asia, we are able to channel camp converts to the college. Presently, 90 percent of the BBICA students are camp converts. This combination of evangelism, discipling, and ministry training is producing a flow of church planters."

"My vision is 100 churches planted by 2020," Greg explains. "Of the 24 churches launched so far, the mother church is 20 years old. The youngest was launched last May. Twenty-one are in Manila, two are in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. One is in Jhelum, Pakistan. Four new congregations are in incubation. Two of those are in Pakistan."

"Nine of the 24 are at a place where they are self-supporting and able to reproduce." Greg says, "It looks like six years is a reasonable expectation to achieve this. Due to our intentional targeting of youth, it's going to take five to ten years for an 18-year-old to reach some level of economic stability and productivity. This plays to the financial stability of the church."

Johnny struggled in Bible college surviving pneumonia and other health issues resulting from his life before Christ. Graduating, he immersed himself in training driven by a vision to plant a church in the inner-city streets of Manila. Incubating his new work through strategic evangelism, discipleship, and a small group network, Pastor Johnny Royo launched with several hundred in their first service. The congregation is thriving spiritually while struggling financially due to the economic straits of many of its members. Yet, they support missionaries and have sent out a church planting team!

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



Everything has changed



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

It's been said that a baby changes everything.

I remembered this truth when our baby granddaughter came to visit. Having a baby in the house has changed everything ... when we wake, sleep, work — everything. Holding her has the power to change more than just my schedule; it changes my attitude and my heart. I am her PopPop and she is one of the reasons I am at Baptist Bible College. There is nothing more important in the world than doing all I can to help prepare men and women who will share the Gospel with her and her generation. That little baby has changed our world.

I look at this world where she will grow up, and it is sobering. Our world is growing darker. Hope seems to be lost. Sound familiar?

Long ago, the world was cloaked in darkness. God had been silent for 400 years. God's people were eagerly yearning for the long-expected Savior. While they were waiting for the Savior to arrive with great pomp and circumstance, the silence was shattered by the birth cry of a newborn son. A stable prepared to shelter sheep sheltered the Lamb of God. The world was changed forever by the birth of this one little baby, Jesus.

His birth united shepherds and kings. His life united men and women, rich and poor, slave and free. His resurrection united man with God. Our lives are changed forever. There is hope!

We believe Jesus changed the world. We believe He can do it again. When he came the first time, He changed the world Himself. This time, He is using His people to change the world.

At Baptist Bible College, we believe that if you can change a life, you can change the world. For more than 65 years Baptist Bible College has been that life-changing experience for men and women. Our students and alumni go on to change the world. The need for world changers is greater now than ever before. People in our own cities have never heard the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. Who will share the hope of the Gospel with them? Who will train the next generation of world changers?

BBC/LifeChangeU is striving to become the hub of the next generation of world changers. Will you help us train one more?

Change a Life. Change the World. BBC/LifeChangeU

Christmas is coming soon. It is a time to celebrate the birth of a little baby that changed everything. There are many churches making BBC part of their Christmas offering. Would you consider this? There are many projects that need attention and I would be glad to help you or your church choose one you can be excited about. Your gifts to BBC help change lives here on campus which in turn helps change lives all over the world.

New England thanks



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

Up here in New England we tend to think we invented Thanksgiving. I know that true-ists will point out it was a Midwesterner, Abe Lincoln, who created the holiday. Historians won't let turkey and stuffing be a Plymouth creation, either. Still though, Thanksgiving feels like a part of who we are in New England. So please indulge me the opportunity to "go local" and share some of my thanks. Beyond even giving us Himself, the Lord has poured good and perfect gifts into our lives. Here are some at the forefront of my mind right now.

- My wife, Kim, and I just celebrated our first 25 years of marriage. I am thankful for a wife who is my best friend, my trusted advisor, my most helpful critic, my tireless coworker, an amazing mom, and the patient life-partner that a guy like me so desperately needs.
- The Melton guys. David, Sam, Matt and Josh. As we get older it seems what our sons think of us becomes more and more important — just when it seems we have so little control over that! Guys — your Mom and I are thankful we have you. We pray every day (as we have since before you were born) that you would grow to be godly men. We're thankful we are beginning to see the answer to all those prayers.
- I'm thankful for a church that lets me preach to them. "Hi" to everybody at MetroWest. I'm thankful for you more than you know.
- My college family ... the Boston family! I will not hide that leading a Baptist ministry college at this point in history — in a place like New England — has plenty of challenges. But I'm very thankful I get to do it, and I'm thankful for everybody in the Boston picture.
- I'm thankful the Lord has seen fit to raise up Chairman of the Board Tim Robertson from a fearful bout of cancer. Last Thanksgiving we didn't know what was coming.
- I'm thankful the Lord would not let a massive brain aneurysm take Steve Dillard, our chairman of our regents, from us. Just yesterday I talked with Steve again ... doctors, physical therapists, and we ourselves are a bit "shocked" at what God has done in the past two months!
- I'm thankful for the team of leaders, professors, and staff in Boston. Don't tell them what we are doing "can't be done." I don't want them to know that. I want them to just carry on!
- I'm thankful for the students I get to work with. I'm not just an administrator; I am a teacher — in my heart and soul. I just left the classroom minutes ago. Few things fuel me more than locking minds with curious students, studying hard together, and then "getting it." I see in our students the future of our churches.

So, find a great turkey dinner, heap on the cranberry sauce (probably from New England!), spend time with loved ones, and make your own list of blessings. Thanks for letting me start my list in front of you.

Elmer Towns to teach course at BBC in January

Well-known author and Christian educator Elmer Towns will be returning to the BBC campus to teach a course specially designed for pastors and ministry leaders, *Spiritual Factors of Ministry: an Introductory Study in Evangelism*, January 11-15, 2016.

“If God is pouring out His Spirit, you better make sure you are standing under the spout.”

Elmer Towns
From his book, *Spiritual Factors of Ministry*



“The course is based on a study of the biblical and theological understanding of what it takes to minister in and through a local church and in para-church ministries. Recognizing that students come from various church backgrounds, this course is designed to build on the students’ spiritual background. It will represent the philosophy, principles, and spirit of evangelism that is needed for ministry,” says Towns.

“It has been a great joy to get to know Dr. Towns and to spend time with him,” said BBC President Mark Milioni. “He can walk across our campus and share story after story of his experiences here. One of my favorites is his first experience of a chapel service. Dr. Towns recounts how he felt the power of the Holy Spirit fill the room as the Gospel was proclaimed, and he was challenged to go to a city and take that city for Christ. I am truly excited to welcome Dr. Towns to our campus and I encourage all our students and BBFI pastors to take the opportunity to be mentored by this man of God.”

Milioni urges BBFI leaders to take advantage of this opportunity. He said BBC and Elmer Towns share a passion for equipping pastors and ministry leaders and are partnering together to make this course available at little or no cost. Those interested should contact Emily Milioni at emilioni@gobb.edu to register or to obtain additional information.

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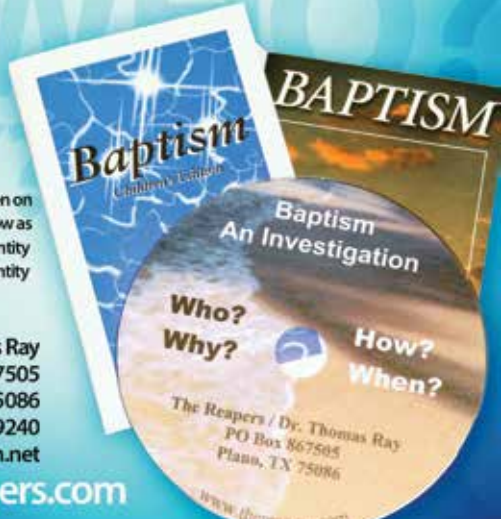
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Jon Konnerup visits Japan churches

While visiting the missionaries and churches in Japan this past September, it was a joy to see the fruit of many years of labor among the Japanese people. The experts tell us the Japanese are the largest unreached people group in the world. They are steeped in their religions of Buddhism, Shintoism and Materialism. Next month's edition of the Tribune will feature an article of what God is doing in Japan and the need for more laborers. (Photos and caption provided by Jon Konnerup)



North Texas BBF meets in Ft. Worth



Southwood Baptist Church and Pastor Dan Williford hosted the North Texas Baptist Bible Fellowship October 8, 2015. Missionaries, church planters, church staff, and pastors attended. Brian Grey of Arlington challenged the group regarding Satan's strategy to take out the leader and the importance of personal discipleship. Ron Fox of Decatur gave a moving personal testimony and reminded those attending of the treasure of Gospel ministry God has placed in clay pots. Host Pastor Dan Williford and volunteers from Southwood encouraged the Fellowship with their hospitality.

The next meeting of the North Texas BBF will be hosted by Movement Church and Pastor Troy Wolfe in Rhome, TX, November 12.



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Missionaries receive advanced training in “double time”

Glenwood Baptist Church in Kansas City hosted the first Double Time Accelerated Missionary Training workshop held on U.S. soil August 25-27. Missiologist and veteran missionary Richard Lewis conducted the training that covered a variety of cross-cultural principles in a fast-paced three days, thus the name “double time.” Twenty-seven missionaries representing three mission agencies participated.

Lewis, who has a long relationship with the BBFI, has designed the training based on his experience with missionaries around the world. He asserts, “Seventy percent of missionary attrition is for reasons that are preventable. Specific and focused training can stem the tide of missionary dropout and lead to effective cross-cultural ministry.”

Glenwood Baptist Church, led by Bruce Adrian, hosted this first-ever stateside event to equip their own global partners, to leverage the



opportunity for other churches and missionaries, and to fill a gap that exists in the training of some missionaries. “We seek to form long-term partnerships with our missionaries that add value to their lives and ministries,” said Associate Pastor Chris Regas. “Our goal in hosting this event was to send them forward on their mission in a manner worthy of God (3 John 6) and better equipped to cross cultural barriers in fulfilling the Great Commission.”

The participants were both singles and married, and varied from deputation rookies to seasoned veterans of over 30 years. One young couple said the training provided “insight into all types of areas that we would not have thought about ... anyone wanting to have a better understanding of people should take this class.” One missionary remarked how the course “made an impact on my worldview as it applies to missions and in general. This class has given me clarity on the topic of cross-cultural missions. It has equipped me with tools for planning and relating to the cultures I encounter. I wholeheartedly recommend this class to anyone called to cross-cultural ministry or anyone interested in broadening his or her perspective of the world and people.”

Another said, “Regardless of other training you may have had in college, this helped bring clarity to the details and overall cultural

study. The system Lewis gives helped me understand where to begin from rather than being overwhelmed.”

“This kind of training allows our BBFI approved missionaries to build on the foundational training they receive from their sending church, our BBFI approved schools, and the Mission Office,” Regas observed.

According to Lewis, an informal survey of BBFI leaders revealed that more than 90 percent of responders believed pre-field training was very important, and similar numbers felt Bible college or seminary education was not enough. About two-thirds of the survey responders stated they would help finance further missionary training.

Jim Smith, BBFI Associate Mission Director, sees this training as value added to BBFI missionaries: “We are very grateful for the time that Richard dedicates to BBFI missionaries at our annual Candidate School. His sessions, while limited, are always beneficial. His academic preparation and lifetime of service make him especially qualified in the area of missionary training. We have heard good reports from those who attended and would certainly encourage any candidates or established missionaries to take advantage of Lewis’s training.”

The response to the training proved to be so positive that another Double Time: Accelerated Missionary Training date is already being planned for August 2016. Those interested in attending, sending a missionary, or sponsoring a Double Time scholarship should contact: Richard Lewis (drnglewis@gmail.com) or Chris Regas (car@kc.rr.com). Class size will be limited to 30 people to maximize personal interaction and effective learning.

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Contact Information: (432) 682-3842

brian.cain@bbfimissions.org

Elmo & Kathryn Compton — *Peru*

Sending Church:

First Baptist Church, Caldwell, NJ

Contact Information: (973) 226-1004,

elmo.compton@bbfimissions.org

Paul & Meagan Hopkins — *Peru*

Sending Church:

High Street Baptist Church, Springfield, MO

Contact Information: (417) 862-5502

paul.hopkins@bbfimissions.org

Ben & Raelene Walker — *New Zealand*

Sending Church:

Ventura Baptist Church, Ventura, CA

Contact Information: (805) 644-7191

benjamin.walker@bbfimissions.org

T.E.A.M.

Chad & Jennifer Braymer — *Costa Rica*

Host missionaries: Ray & Kristi Rhoton

Sending Church:

Stillwell Bible Baptist Church, Clarksville, AR

Contact Information: (479) 754-3910

chad.braymer@bbfimissions.org

REINSTATEMENT

Don & Kathy Mingo — *STEP program*

Sending Church:

Ventura Baptist Church, Ventura, CA

Contact Information: (805) 644-7191

don.mingo@bbfimissions.org

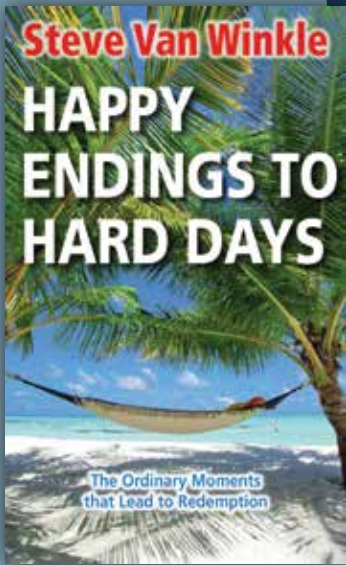
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WITH THE LORD

LEANDER, TX

ANITA JEAN WILLIAMS

Anita Williams, wife of BBFI founder Wallace "Wally" Williams, passed from this life September 6, 2015, at the age of 89. Born June 30, 1926, in Little Rock, AR, she married Wallace Lucas Williams in San Diego, CA. Anita spent her life serving at her husband's side in ministry. She is survived by Wally Williams, three children, ten grandchildren, and 11 great-grandchildren. Services were held September 10, 2015, in Georgetown, TX.

NEW WESTMINSTER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

MICHELLE JOHNSON

Michelle Johnson, who was the wife of Mark Johnson and the daughter of Faye Woods, missionaries to the Philippines, was received into Glory September 5, 2015, after a long illness. A memorial service was held at High Street Baptist Church September 11.

TULSA, OK

L. V. MORRIS

Lark Vernes Morris, longtime BBFI pastor, was taken by the Lord September 26, 2015, at the age of 83. Born July 11, 1932, he married the love of his life, Dena Marie Boyles, May 28, 1949, in Odessa, TX. Pastor Morris gave his life to the Lord at the age of 21, and he served churches more than 50 years. L. V. was a member of BBC's class of 1957 and long-time supporter of the BBFI.

L. V. is survived by his wife, Dena Marie, five children, 15 grandchildren, and nine great-grandchildren. A celebration of life service was held September 30 at Friendship Baptist Church in Owasso, OK.

MASSILLON, OH

WANDA B. CUMMONS

Wanda B. Cummons, widow of Pastor Bruce Cummons of Massillon Baptist Temple in Massillon, OH, went to be with the Lord September 26, 2015, at the age of 86. Born November 19, 1928, in Akron, she attended Kent State University in Ohio and Bible Baptist Seminary in Ft. Worth, TX.

She married Bruce Cummons in 1947, and they spent 56 years together in ministry until his death in 2004. The couple organized Massillon Baptist Temple in 1950 when Wanda was 22 years old. Together they served the church 45 years.

Wanda is survived by three daughters, nine grandchildren, 28 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandson. Services were held September 29 at Massillon Baptist Temple with Pastor Cecil Thayer officiating.

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Thanksgiving blessings

By Keith Bassham, *Tribune* Editor 2002-2015

The beginning of the Lord's Sermon on the Mount is one of the best-known and best-loved sections of the Bible. I think, though, the wide approval this text gets, especially from those outside Christianity, is because it is not understood perfectly. On the surface, the words are beautiful and simple, almost like a poem. But to make sense of the words, we have to do a little digging. First of all, consider the words. "Blessed are ..." or "You are blessed." What do those words mean?

Blessed is not a new word for these listeners. And it's not a new concept. It stems from the Creation texts:

So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God BLESSED THEM, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth. (Genesis 1:27-28).

You don't get older than that.

And then you have the other blessing texts in the Old Testament. God speaks to Abraham: "I will bless you, and you will be a blessing to others, and you shall be an instrument of my blessing for all the families of the earth." And in the stories of Abraham's descendants, the blessing gets traded, shifted around, talked about, fought over. It is a common idea in those stories.

When the priesthood began under Moses and Aaron, and as the nation of Israel established themselves on their way out of Egypt to the Promised Land, Aaron and his sons are commanded to speak a blessing to the people each day: "The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace."

Israel's hymnbook, what we now call the Book of Psalms, opens with these words, "Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers."

What could be more basic and more woven into the thinking and theology of Israel than the idea of the blessing of God? But in what way is that blessing meant to extend to the apparently unblessed — the poor, hungry, mournful, and hated?

In Israel, a world where a man's religion was worn literally on his sleeve, appearances were everything. What this means is that people thought you could just look at a person and tell whether he or she was blessed or not blessed. Poor people were definitely out. Sick people

ditto. The underclasses were not blessed. They were in the wrong families, and the wrong professions, and they lived in the wrong parts of town. And what's more, people had come to believe this was the way things were because God made it that way.

You don't have to read very far into the New Testament before you discover what the general attitude was toward these people. "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" the disciples of Jesus asked (John 9:2). Matthew tells us:

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people ... sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatick, and those that had the palsy; and he healed them.

And so many of these people had been viewed and treated as everything except blessed.

These were the walking wounded, the not-blessed, and one thing they surely must have begun to suspect, "Whoever God is blessing, it sure ain't us."

And they, of course, are only partly right, as they begin to realize with the words of Jesus ringing in their ears. Rather, they learn they are actually blessed because of the inexhaustible resources of heaven that God, in his fathomless grace, extends to all, even those on the margins of society.

One fact helps us make sense of this, and that is the meaning of the words "poor in spirit." The word implies a cringing or cowering kind of a poverty. It speaks of a total emptiness to the point of having no hope. It is no fun, of course, to be in that condition, but that condition does make a blessing possible. God can never fill a clenched fist as He can an empty hand.

And so, as we approach a season of thanks, and the celebration of the coming of Jesus Christ in the next month, may we consider how we may be used of God to fulfill His promise of a blessing to those on the margins.

Let us be thankful to God and generous to others.

Let us be careful that we not judge too much on the basis of appearance. One may be blessed in ways unknown to us, and we would be wise to learn those ways.

May we consider that with all our possessions and comfort we may be guilty of an ingratitude that closes our spirit off to the blessings of God. Open your grasp on things so God may fill it with something better.

NOVEMBER 2015

PRAYER CALENDAR

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1  MISSIONARY Mark & Susan Schladenhauffen <i>South Africa</i>	2  CHAPLAIN Capt. Stephen & Katie Jimenez <i>U.S. Army</i>	3  MISSIONARY Randy & Linda Perkins <i>Australia</i>	4  T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Christian & Shawna Hendrick <i>Congo</i>	5  MISSIONARY Dan & Vicki Weaver <i>Belize</i>	6  MISSIONARY Janice Baker <i>Haiti</i>	7  MISSIONARY Tony & Julie Sullivan <i>Australia</i>
8  MISSIONARY Ole & Renee Konnerup <i>Kenya</i>	9  MISSIONARY Larry Rohr <i>Retired</i>	10  MISSIONARY Bill & Debbie Crawford <i>Germany</i>	11  MISSIONARY Naomi Musgrave <i>USLG</i>	12  MISSIONARY Sever & Cathy Gonciulea <i>Romania</i>	13  Workers in Restricted Countries	14  MISSIONARY Vaughn & Dana Wilson <i>Mexico</i>
15  MISSION OFFICE Reception Staff	16  MISSIONARY John & Karry Barnes <i>Costa Rica</i>	17  T.E.A.M. MISSIONARY Jonathan & Lexi Taylor <i>Ecuador</i>	18  MISSIONARY Charles & Mary Joyce <i>Burkina Faso</i>	19  MISSIONARY Pam Rather <i>Honduras</i>	20  MISSIONARY Paul & Alexis Dedeyan <i>France</i>	21  MISSIONARY Dan & Jackie McCaskill <i>Scotland</i>
22  MISSIONARY Del & Lora Hooge <i>Philippines</i>	23  BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE Faculty and Staff <i>Springfield, MO</i>	24  MISSIONARY Cody & Dannielle Wilbanks <i>Italy</i>	25  MISSIONARY Larry & Tammy Allred <i>Mexico</i>	26  MISSIONARY Jayme Radak <i>Brazil</i>	27  MISSIONARY Richard & Joyce Crotts <i>Papua New Guinea</i>	28  MANNA Worldwide
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Martin Luther

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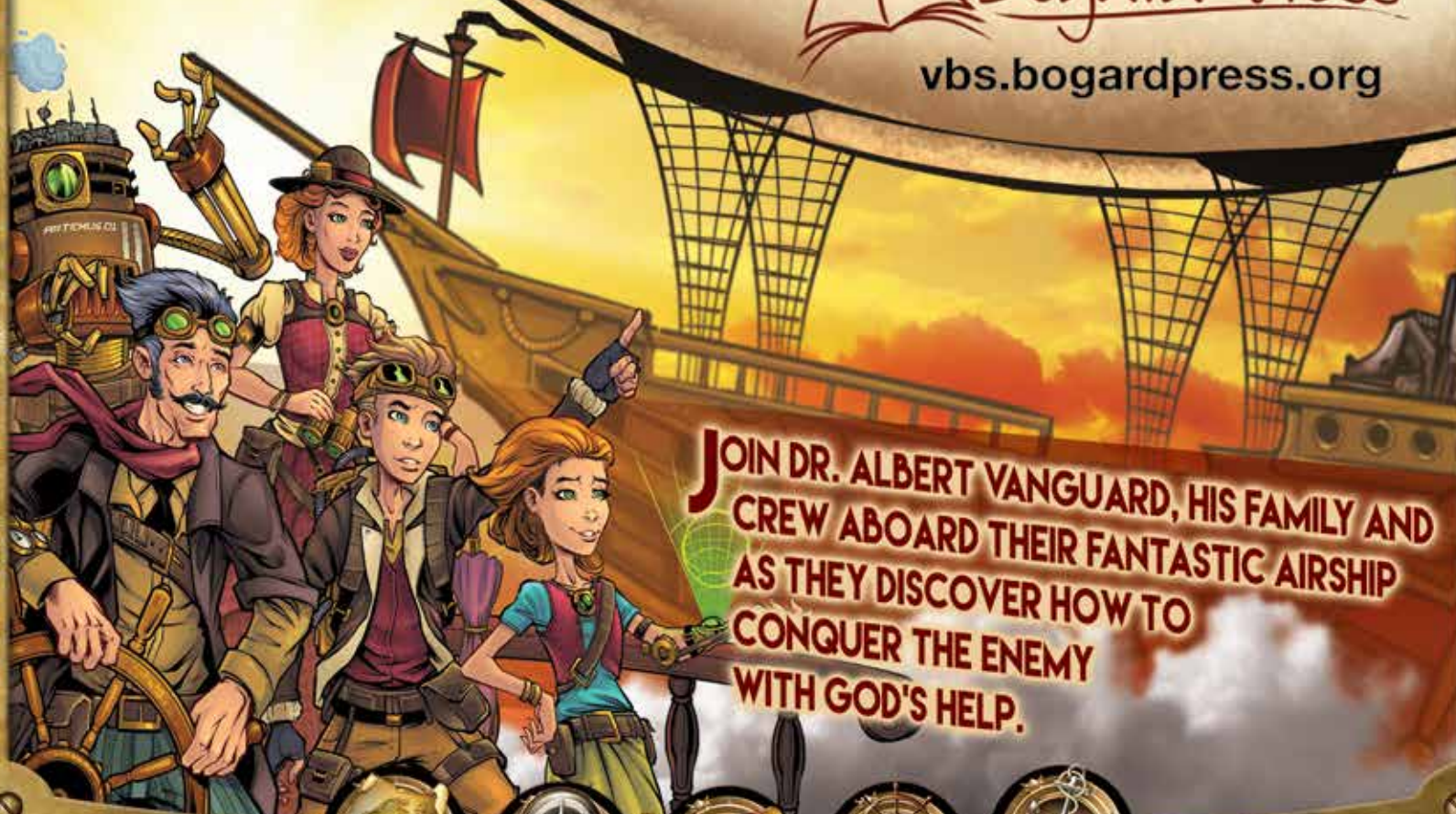
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ROMANS 8:37

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PRAY



STAND



OBEY

ABIDE — Joshua Conquers Fear (Deuteronomy 31:7-13, 23; 34:5-9; Joshua 1:1-9)

TRUST — David Conquers Threats (1 Samuel 17:32-51)

PRAY — Hezekiah Conquers Worry (Isaiah 37:1-20, 33-36)

STAND — Shadrach Conquers Peer Pressure (Daniel 3:1-30)

OBEY — Gideon Conquers Discouragement (Judges 7:7-21)