

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

OCTOBER 2012 | VOL. 63 NO. 2

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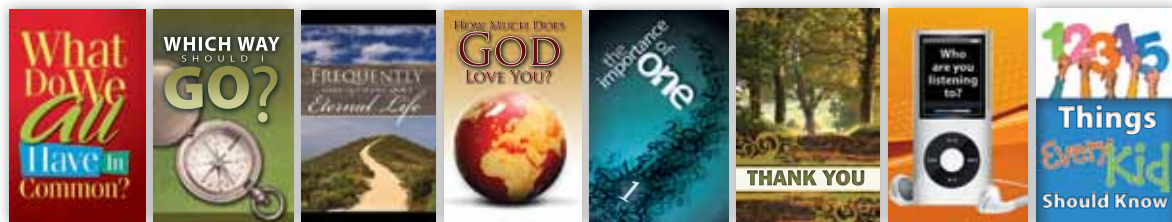
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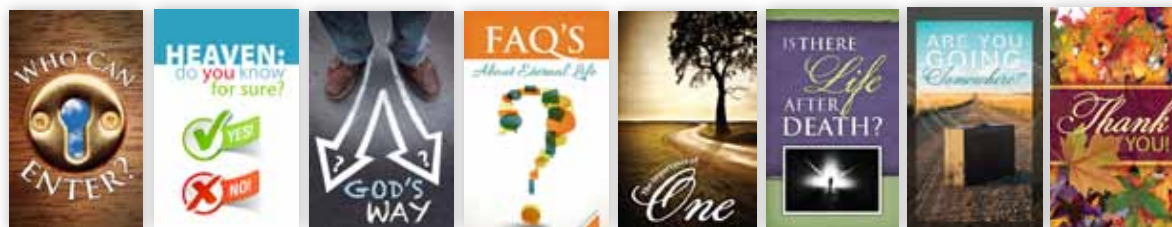
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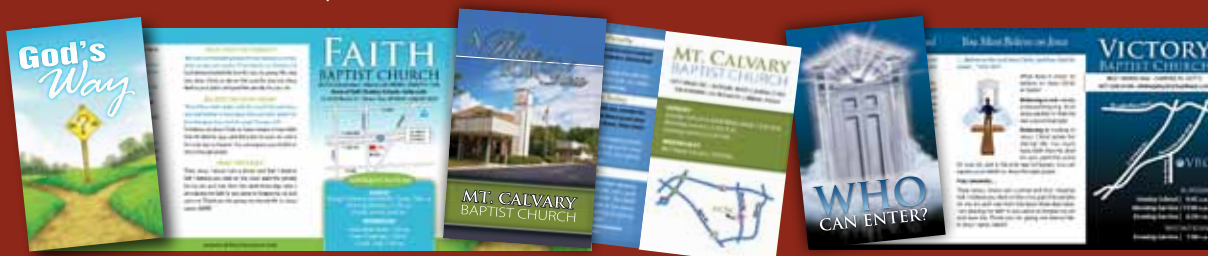
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ON THE TABLE

2012 and beyond

by Keith Bassham | Editor

The world was swirling as the *Tribune* went to press this month. The Democrats and Republicans had just finished their nominating conventions. The Middle East, always near the flash point, is making far more noise than usual, and some of those citizens of those nations, no longer content to war among themselves, are attacking and killing American diplomatic personnel.

In the meantime, at home the economy is, if anything, worse than it was the last election year; joblessness is at an all time high; prices for energy and food are rising; those items we used to call moral values have taken on the character of specimens in an "Antiques Roadshow," curiosities at best, but more often the subject of outright attack. Liberty has been redefined in Western culture as the absolute right to do wrong with impunity and complete insulation from complaint or censure.

In this election year, as citizens of a representative form of government (note I do not say a democracy), before we begin to ask who we should vote for, we must ask ourselves, "Who are we?" Only then are we prepared to go to a ballot box to determine who will represent us over the coming months and years.

Having done that, I urge all Christians to vote, and I urge all Christian leaders to echo the charge. Read the "Afterwords" column (page 30) in this *Tribune* in which one of our Fellowship founders logically and sensibly and biblically lays out the Christian's responsibility. Duplicate that page and distribute it among your church members. You have my permission to freely do so.

But voting and activity in the temporal realm is not enough. Just as we were finishing the magazine for this month and preparing to go to Canton for the fall Fellowship meeting, an old friend phoned me and told me his church is seriously fasting and praying for our nation until Election Day. Understand me — the United States of America is not a Christian nation, however the United States (and this is so in every country that believers inhabit) contains within its borders a distinctly Christian nation. In that great passage from Peter's First Epistle in which Christians are taught how to behave themselves in days like ours, we read, "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy" (1 Peter 2:9, 10).

On that basis, I encourage all our Fellowship people to fast and to pray as intercessors for our nation in the coming weeks. Set aside one day a week, observe daylight fasting, fast multiple days — do it as a church, or as a class, or as a small group, in your neighborhoods, that we may obtain mercy.

Keith Bassham

BAPTIST BIBLE TRIBUNE

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Can Christians vote for a Mormon?
The Baptist Press panel looks at a question facing believers

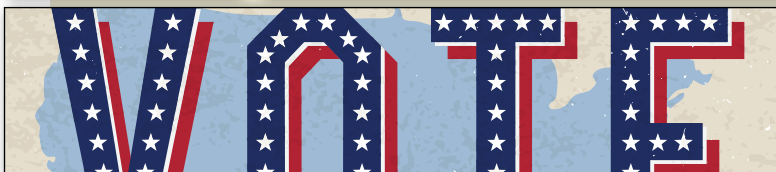
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Executive Editor: Keith Bassham

Assistant Editor: Rob Walker

Director of Office Services: Karri Joy Perry

Email address: editors@tribune.org

Web site address: www.tribune.org

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PRESIDENTIAL PERSPECTIVE

The Christian and the ballot box



by Linzy Slayden | President | BBFI

William Paterson, one of the signers of the United States Constitution, and a Justice on the U.S. Supreme Court, said that juries should always be reminded of this text of the Bible: “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked beareth rule, the people mourn” (Proverbs 29:2).

I would go on to add that not only should juries be reminded of it, but also judges, lawyers, doctors, ministers, teachers; in fact, the entire nation should remember it.

There is a leadership crisis in America today because there is a character crisis. But there is an even greater problem than the leadership in this nation, and that is the people who put these people into leadership. Now if this verse is true, then how I vote, and how you vote, can determine whether God is moved to bless us or break us.

In a republic, a vote is both a vision and a reflection. It is a vision of what we want in a leader, and it is a reflection of who we are as a nation. The quality of government depends far more on good leaders than it does on good laws. Laws, statutes, and constitutions are as worthless as a cruise ship in the desert without godly reliable leaders. That is why Noah Webster once instructed his students:

“When you become entitled to exercise the right of voting for public officers, let it be impressed on your mind that God commands you to choose for rulers just men who will rule in the fear of God. The preservation of a republican government depends on the faithful discharge of this duty. If the citizens neglect their duty and place unprincipled men in office, the government will soon be corrupted; laws will be made not for the public good so much as for selfish or local purposes; corrupt or incompetent men will be appointed to execute the law; the public revenues will be squandered on unworthy men; and the rights of the citizens will be violated or disregarded.”

God is so concerned with leadership, and especially political leadership, that he has outlined in His word the characteristics we should look for in a leader. Everyone knows that it is the government that stabilizes the nation. But God says it is righteousness that stabilizes the government. If those in authority are not righteous, the government will not be stable, and neither will the nation.

A real leader believes that what is right is right, and what is wrong is wrong; and knows the difference between the two and never compromises the former with the latter. He stands against what is wicked, and he stands for what is right. He is more concerned with what is morally and spiritually right than what is politically correct.

I want my children and grandchildren to know a strong, free, and God-blessed country. May the Lord help us to be a righteous people, and vote for righteous leaders! For only then can we ask God to bless America.

CHURCH PLANTING

What does the National Church Planting Office do?



by Jason Todd | Associate Director | NCPO

That is the question I still get when traveling to churches and state fellowships. First, we do not start churches — churches start churches! The National Church Planting Office (NCPO) was designed to be a resource for our BBFI churches and church planters. The NCPO officially started in January 2005 and here is what we have been doing:

- Recruiting church planters and then training them through NCPO Church Planting Schools for core competencies
- Helping build a partnership for those church planters for personal and ministry support
- Working to position them financially to be able to borrow money for land or buildings, and then securing the necessary financing
- Consulting with problem resolution
- Facilitating volunteer construction and ministry groups to help church planters offset costs
- Coordinating with the BBF Builders to save thousands of dollars in building costs for church plants (and established churches)
- Under the directive of the president of the BBFI, the NCPO launched the Gateway Project to help churches evangelize among African Americans and Hispanics

But, we can't do all of that without help, so here are some ways you and your church can be involved:

- Pray!
 - that God will continue to call church planters
 - for the NCPO as we train and partner with church planters and their sending churches
 - that God will continue to open doors with private lenders in our BBFI churches throughout the country. These lay people are thrilled to invest their money in God's work and receive a return on it at the same time.
- Consider supporting the NCPO on a monthly basis.
- Invite a NCPO representative to your mission conference or state fellowship meeting.
- Think about someone you know who would benefit from attending our Church Planting School.
- Support our Church Planting School prayerfully and financially.

In 2008, the economy and credit crisis dealt a major blow to what we were trying to accomplish with the Judea/Samaria Project and our loan acquisition program. Today, we need to raise enough monthly support to underwrite our annual budget so we can offer our services to our Fellowship at little or no cost to the new churches. Find out how you can support us at www.bbfinco.com, or call (417) 536-8826, or look us up on Facebook (facebook.com/bbfinco).

Panel asks: Can Christians vote for a Mormon?

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — **Addressing an issue on the minds of many evangelical voters as a Mormon runs for president**, a Baptist seminary panel said Tuesday that evangelicals must jettison — for the good of their faith — the idea that the White House occupant must be a “religious mascot” for Christianity.

Southern Baptist Theological Seminary hosted the panel discussion, less than two months before American voters will choose between President Obama and Republican nominee Mitt Romney, who is Mormon.

“I heard someone in recent days say, ‘I would never vote for anyone who is not an authentically professing evangelical Christian,’” said Russell D. Moore, dean of the school of theology at Southern Seminary. “Well, if that’s the case, then as far as I can see, you have about three candidates in the last 100 years or so ... that you could possibly vote for: William Jennings Bryan, Jimmy Carter and George W. Bush.

“The question is not John 3:16 in terms of reading the regeneration of the person’s heart,” Moore said. “The question is Romans 13: Does this person have the kind of wisdom to bear the sword on behalf of God’s authority that He has granted to the state? And can I trust that person to protect society? That’s the fundamental question.”

American Christians too often, said seminary president R. Albert Mohler Jr., have seemingly assigned a “priestly role” to the White House, hoping the president will represent and promote the Christian faith. But that is a uniquely American idea, Mohler said, and unhealthy for Christianity.

“I had a pastor say to me, ‘You just can’t be faithful and vote for someone who represents such things or believes such things [as Mormons believe],’” Mohler said. “And I said, ‘What if you’re a Christian in Utah? Do you just not vote? What if your decision is between two Mormon candidates?’

“Throughout most of Christian history, folks haven’t struggled with this question because they didn’t have the luxury of struggling with it. ... The separation of the priestly role from government is something that has to happen in the minds of American evangelicals,” Mohler said, warning against viewing government as an idol.

Moore agreed, saying U.S. Christians have been guilty of trying to Christianize American history.

“So many evangelicals want to go back and claim Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln and John Adams as orthodox, evangelical Christians,” Moore said. “The problem with that [is that] Abraham Lincoln and Thomas Jefferson and John Adams were great men who did fantastic things for our country, but once you start claiming them as orthodox evangelical Christians, you’re not elevating those men,

you’re downgrading the Gospel into something that fits whatever they happen to hold. And you wind up with [modern-day] politicians who learn the language of evangelical faith in order to use it, in order to manipulate people into supporting them.”

The four-member panel said Americans on multiple occasions have elected candidates who did not hold to evangelical beliefs. Among them were Unitarian William Howard Taft and Catholic John F. Kennedy.

“We went through this back in the ‘60s with John Kennedy,” said Mark Coppenger, professor of Christian apologetics at Southern Seminary. “They thought, ‘Oh, if we elect a Catholic, then the Pope will just have a hotline and tell him exactly what to do.’”

The panel, though, said evangelicals still face tough questions

about potentially electing a Mormon for president -- mainly whether a Mormon president would boost the image of Mormonism around the world.

“How do we think of that in terms of world missions?” Mohler asked. “How do we think about this in terms of missions on Third Avenue in Louisville, Ky.?”

Greg Gilbert, pastor of Third Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky., said it’s a “difficult question.” Mormonism clearly isn’t part of orthodox, historical Christianity, panelists said.

“It may not be a kind of atomic moment where the whole nation wakes up and thinks, ‘Oh, I like Mitt Romney’s tax policies; I’m going to take a look at the Mormon church,’” Gilbert said. “I don’t think that’s what’s going to happen.”

Instead, Gilbert said, a Romney president would give Mormonism more “respectability.” In that scenario, Gilbert said, it would become



(Continued on page 15)



DIGRESSIONS

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

-Laurence Sterne

In reality: Believers not as generous as they think they are

A quarter of respondents in a new national study said they tithed 10% of their income to charity. But when their donations were checked against income figures, only 3% of the group gave more than 5% to charity.

The people most likely to misreport high levels of giving were those who said faith was very important to them and those who attend services more than weekly, according to a report by University of Notre Dame sociologists Christian Smith and Heather Price presented at the recent Association for the Sociology of Religion meeting in Denver.

Source: David Briggs, The ARDA, thearda.com

Survey: Bible reading frequency among churchgoers

19% Every day

26% A few times a week

14% Once a week

22% Once or a few times a month

18% Rarely/never

"Bible engagement has an impact in just about every area of spiritual growth," said Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research. "You can follow Christ and see Christianity as your source of truth, but if that truth does not permeate your thoughts, aspirations and actions, you are not fully engaging the truth."

Source: Russ Rankin, Baptist Press, www.bpnews.net

Hobby Lobby Stores Inc. files federal lawsuit over healthcare mandate that requires employers to provide coverage for morning-after pill

The Oklahoma City-based chain sued in federal court, claiming the government is forcing the business owners to "violate their own faith."

Hobby Lobby owner David Green objects to providing the "morning-after" pill and the "week-after" pill in their insurance plan for two basic reasons: because the pills are abortifacients, and because of the strongly held religious beliefs of the company's owners.

"We know that we have been blessed by God's grace, and we believe it is because we have chosen to live our lives and to operate our business according to his Word —

Natural disasters not all bad — if you're an archaeologist



- Low water levels in the Missouri River revealed *The Montana*, a wooden steamboat that was built in 1882. *The Montana* was the largest vessel to travel the Missouri River until it sank in 1884 after striking an underwater tree.

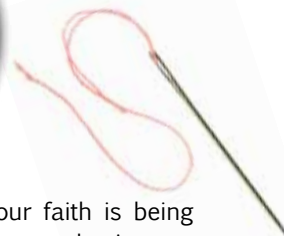
- A year after wildfires burned 93,000 acres in Minnesota's Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, Forest Service archaeologists are finding stone tools on the vegetation-free ground. "It's interesting because you see that landscape similar to what it was like after the glaciers receded; really open landscape ..." said archaeologist Lee Johnson.



- A wooden vessel has been washed ashore in Alabama by Hurricane Isaac. Some think it may be a Confederate blockade runner, or a rum runner from the Prohibition era. "Either way, it's quite interesting. This is the most visible it has been in recent years. Eventually the shifting sands will pull it back under the beach," said a local resident.



Source: www.archaeology.org/news



and we are very grateful for that. But now our faith is being challenged by the federal government," Green emphasizes.

"By being required to make a choice between sacrificing our faith or paying millions of dollars in fines, we essentially must choose which poison pill to swallow," says Green. "We simply cannot abandon our religious beliefs to comply with this mandate."

The deadline for complying with the mandate is January. If the government is successful in imposing the coverage irrespective of a person's faith, business owners such as the Green family will face fines of up to \$1.3 million per day

Source: Charlie Butts, www.onenewsnow.com, story by Associated Press

In the NEWS of the WEEK

"Hawkin's Day" will be celebrated at Twin Cities Baptist Tabernacle, Mishawaka, Ind., Rev. Victory E. Sears, pastor, Sunday, Oct. 26, in honor of 32 years of ministry by Dr. M. E. Hawkins.

Dr. Hawkins, 72 years old, was born in Pierson, Michigan. He graduated from Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, in 1911. He has pastored Baptist churches at North Chester, and Hastings, Michigan. For 17 years he was pastor of First Baptist church at Mishawaka. He is now associate pastor of Twin Cities Tabernacle. For 12 years Dr. Hawkins was president of Mid-Missions, and he is now president of the South Atlantic Baptist Mission. Dr. Hawkins will speak at the evening hour on the day of the celebration.

"Heading for home from the Indiana Revival on the Texas Special out of St. Louis a man across the aisle was telling a young lady in the chair in front of him of his son's auto accident at Sherman Texas Friday night, when the car in which the four young men were riding crashed into the high school building, seriously injuring all four boys. When the young lady went forward for water, I walked across the aisle and told the man that I was a Baptist preacher from Denison, Texas, just 10 miles away from the place where his boy was in the hospital, and asked him if there were any way that I could help him. He told me, 'My people go to a Baptist church.' I sat down and began to talk to him, giving him Scripture after Scripture—John 1:11, 12; Ro. 10:9; 10, 13. At 70 miles an hour, through the darkness of Missouri, he prayed the sinner's prayer. He hugged my neck, he cried, he shouted, he praised the Lord. He said with great relief, 'Now I can help my boy!'—Rev. William Beall, pastor Southside Baptist church, Denison, Texas, in The Southside Baptist News.

William Beall, pastor Southside Baptist church, Denison, Texas, held a meeting for Indianapolis Baptist Tabernacle, Indianapolis, Ind., Rev. George Young, pastor. At the close of the meeting Beall took a "dollar-bill" offering for Mr. Young. It totaled a \$100.

Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle, Detroit, Mich., E. J. Rollings, pastor, read 1,084 chapters in the Bible during the week of Sept. 21, making a total of 58,484 chapters the church has read during the 56 weeks since the campaign of Bible reading started. The church's aim is to get every member to read at least one chapter a day.

Tabernacle Baptist church, Roswell, N. M., Howard Ingram, pastor, had 404 in Sunday school and eight additions to the church, Sept. 28. Tabernacle church will entertain a Fellowship meeting Oct. 22-23. Dr. W. E. Dowell, pastor High Street Baptist church, Springfield, Mo., will be one of the speakers.

Rev. Mancil Webb has accepted a call to the Bible Baptist church of DeQuincy, La. The former pastor, Rev. Fred Null, plans to go to the Philippine Islands as a missionary for the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

The Sunday school of Tulsa Baptist Temple, Tulsa, Okla., Clifford E. Clark, pastor, averaged 503 for the month of September, which was the highest in the history of the church. The church is now aiming for 600.

There were 12 additions to the Bible Baptist church, Fredonia, Kas., following a series of meetings in the church by Rev. James O. Combs, pastor Tabernacle Baptist church, Joplin, Missouri. Rev. Bert Rutter is pastor of the Fredonia church.

Estel Phelps, associate pastor of Ottumwa Baptist Tabernacle, Ottumwa, Ia., was a recent speaker at the Wednesday evening service of Tabernacle Baptist church of Joplin, Missouri.

The bus situation at Metropolitan Baptist Tabernacle, Detroit, Mich., E. J. Rollings, pastor, is obviously in a healthy condition. The details are as follows:

| STATEMENT OF NEW SUNDAY SCHOOL BUSES | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Purchase price of Reo bus | \$ 900.00 |
| Purchase price of Ford bus | 400.00 |
| Painting Ford bus | 200.00 |
| Painting panels on Reo bus | 12.00 |
| Lettering on both busses | 12.50 |
| Battery for Ford bus | 15.50 |
| Repair Tire | 18.30 |
| Miscellaneous | 4.00 |
| | <hr/> \$1,562.30 |
| Fencing parking enclosure | \$ 181.19 |
| Cinders for parking enclosure | 20.00 |
| | <hr/> \$1,763.49 |

RECEIVED:
Cash as of 9/30/52 \$524.50
Pledges owing 405.00

Balance to be raised \$929.50
\$533.99
You still can help on the purchase of the new busses if you wish to do so. We will take a bus offering each month until the balance is raised.

You can be sure your money is well spent as we have \$4,000.00 worth of busses and bus facilities for our investment of \$1,763.49. The Reo bus is worth \$2,500.00, the Ford bus is worth \$1,000.00 and the chain link fence, stone, cinders, etc., is worth \$500.00.

NEW CHURCH ORGANIZED AT HOSINGTON, KANSAS

HOSINGTON, Kas.—Calvary Baptist church has been organized here with 25 charter members. Rev. Carl Bush, a graduate of Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Mo., has been called as pastor. The church unanimously adopted the New Hampshire Articles of Faith and Church Covenant. The church will cooperate with the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

TEMPLE CHURCH BREAKS ALL RECORDS FOR OFFERINGS

TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH
G. Beauchamp Vick, Pastor
DETROIT, MICHIGAN

Sunday, Oct. 5—
Sunday school attendance 3,908
Offering \$8,232.26
Additions to church 36
Preacher: Pastor Vick at the morning service, and Associate Pastor Stanley Kruse, at evening service.

TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH
Raymond Schwartz, Pastor
HUTCHINSON, KANSAS

Baptist Bible Fellowship,
Springfield, Missouri.

The Temple Baptist church feels they want to send this letter to you to let you know they are behind the program of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, and that they are back of their pastor, Bro. Raymond Schwartz, in the part you have given him in carrying out this program.

May God bless your work for the honor and glory of Jesus Christ.

TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH
By Mrs. F. E. Brown,
Church Clerk.

FELLOWSHIP TO BE HELD AT ROSWELL, N. M.

ROSWELL, N. M.—Dr. W. E. Dowell, pastor High Street Baptist church, Springfield, Mo., will be one of the main speakers at a Fellowship meeting to be held at Tabernacle Baptist church here Oct. 22-23. Rev. Howard Ingram is pastor of the church.

THE SUN DO MOVE

In Muncie, Ind., a Jewish Rabbi, Rabbi Maurice Feuer of Beth-El Temple, has been added to the faculty of the Delaware County School of Christian Living. This "Christian" school is sponsored by the Delaware Council of churches.

In Bay St. Louis, Miss., St. Augustine's Mission House, a Roman Catholic college and seminary for Negroes, has the largest enrollment in its history—118. Twenty-seven Negro priests have been ordained at the Mission House since it was established 30 years ago.

Moonshine in South America: According to the United Press, in Argentina the "man in the moon" has taken the appearance of a woman—the Late Eva Peron. La Presna, a labor paper, reported that a "formation of shadows was seen on the moon resembling a woman's face." Of course the face

Two senators sponsoring legislation to protect military chaplains from being forced to perform same-sex ceremonies

Mississippi senator Roger Wicker (R) has joined colleague Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) in introducing the Military Religious Freedom Act — legislation that explicitly outlines how the Defense of Marriage Act should be applied to the Department of Defense when it comes to chaplains and military facilities.

"We see that the DOD approved in May of this year a same-sex marriage celebration in a military chapel [at] Fort Polk, Louisiana," Wicker notes. "DOD also proclaimed June as 'Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Pride Month.' So, this DOD under President Obama is really, really pushing hard on a radical pro-homosexual agenda."

The Military Religious Freedom Act is designed to prevent military chaplains from being forced to perform a marriage ceremony to which they object for reasons of conscience. It also prohibits marriage or marriage-like ceremonies at military facilities that are not between one man and one woman.

"This bill would be a way to protect our chaplains and make sure that we don't run all of them out of the service simply because there's a group at the top that's got a radical agenda," the Mississippian adds.

Source: Chad Groening, www.onenewsnow.com

Iranian pastor released from prison after more than 1,000 days

Christian Solidarity Worldwide (CSW) reported Sept. 8 that Youcef Nadarkhani, in jail since 2009, was acquitted of apostasy (converting from Islam to Christianity) but found guilty of evangelizing Muslims. CSW said Nadarkhani was sentenced to three years in prison for the latter charge but was released due to time already served. Nadarkhani said he never was a Muslim.

In September 2011, Nadarkhani was given four chances to recant his faith in court and refused each time. Following was reported as one of his court exchanges:

"Repent means to return. What should I return to? To the blasphemy that I had before my faith in Christ?" Nadarkhani asked.

"To the religion of your ancestors, Islam," the judge reportedly replied.

"I cannot," the pastor responded.

Source: Michael Foust and Erin Roach, Baptist Press, www.onenewsnow.com



By Steve Van Winkle
Pastor of Fellowship Baptist Church
Bozeman, Montana



I stood on this late Saturday night in the parking lot taking in the lights flashing blue-white-red-blue-white-red and watched the smoke ooze up over the roof with a menacing determination. If the building had been 100 stories taller, it could have been the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

It wasn't. It was Heritage Christian School in August 2012. It was where I had watched countless events involving my kids, from sports, to singing, to last May's graduation. It is where so much of my life had happened in the last ten years.

And, it was on fire.

It is also where Fellowship Baptist Church landed as a layover on our now eight-year building program that had seen more than its share of postponements and disappointments and emergencies of cash and congregation. We had sold our building 18 months earlier in anticipation of soon building, but as costs

climbed unexpectedly, we were forced to stay in this gym longer than we anticipated.

When we began our building program, we were a healthy-appearing church in terms of attendance and finances, a church with a staff of four and with its own building it had occupied for 20 years. This Saturday night, in this parking lot, we were a church that had lost sizable percentages of people and money, had sold its building of 20 years, had plans to say goodbye to its sole remaining staff member in the morning, and had placed much of our essential equipment and future ability to meet in that gym.

And, it was on fire.

And the thought I had as I watched wasn't a Bible verse or inspirational quote, and it wasn't even concerned with the school itself. I simply looked up and took the whole scene in and said to myself, "Seriously?"

It's not the stuff of inspiration, to be sure.

I hope it doesn't wind up being the title of my biography, but it seemed to be the only response I had left after all the troughs and tragedies of the last near-decade.

The spectacle had crossed the timeline from very late Saturday night to very early Sunday morning. In the dizziness of the event, I tried to account for everything that needed to be addressed before the sun rose on our routine service schedule: "Where would our church



We had sold our building on promise of constructing a new one...

meet?" ... "Would we meet?" ... "How do we get the word out?" ... "What would I say?" ... "What next?"

Over phone lines and across the Internet, we let everyone know we would meet in my front yard. It was our only option.

People brought their lawn chairs and the food they were planning to bring to the send-off for our associate pastor, Jon, and his family. We sent people over to the crime scene that had been the location of our Sunday services to redirect people who hadn't gotten word, and we arranged for the kids to meet at the members' house catty-corner from us.

I retreated to a room in our home where I abandoned my entire morning's plan. After all we had been through and all the goals we had hoped were imminent, after so many years and so many promises, I genuinely wasn't sure what to expect from this church I pastor.

Honestly, I wasn't sure what to expect from me, either.

In addition to being one of the most challenging (i.e. worst) summers of my life, the erosion of our situation mocked me. We had sold our building on promise of constructing a new one, and now we were meeting in my yard. I had gone from the confident leader of a major ecclesiastical venture in the form of a 30,000-square-foot construction project costing millions of dollars, to a now-exhausted

guy whose only response to the latest challenge was, "Seriously?"

As the time approached to start our improvised service, I watched the people intently to gauge their spirits. On a normal Sunday, our church, like many others, has a "buzz" and a busyness to them that resembles the floor of the great Stock Exchanges of the world: musicians and singers practicing, volunteers setting up spaces, teachers making copies. If you stood in our foyer the week before, you would have watched people passing each other in a sterile hallway with cups of coffee in their hands, giving the glancing, obligatory smile as they did. You could have listened as the usual clusters of individuals talked loosely about nothing of importance.

And, what church isn't like this? It's not wrong, and I'm certainly not despising the details and necessities of church in our age; however, we were different on this morning. On so many Sunday mornings, we are just individual pieces of a moving machine; on this morning, we were one. We didn't have the swagger of individuals and we weren't thinking in consumer terms. The bulwarks of individuality were reduced to ash by the fire and on my lawn was gathered something remarkable: a congregation.

Many home Bible studies have more planning behind them than did this particular



...and now we were meeting in my yard.

Sunday's service. We sang one song; we had no instruments, no video projection, and no hymnals. We only remembered to take an offering afterward.

Without the instruments and walls, I listened to the stripped down, unplugged words of "Amazing Grace," chosen in no small part because it is a song everyone knows without the words projected on a screen or typed on a page. It is a musical balm that draws our souls heavenward when the world has done all it can to drain joy from our lives and was the only song that made sense on this morning.

God looked at our church and after years of plodding, hoping, giving, believing, and expecting, He determined that the best thing to do for us Saturday, August 25, 2012, was to have the place we were meeting in destroyed by arson and melt down all our equipment in the process.

It is so often true that we want the gain without the pain, and like our ancient brethren in Acts, we would never have invited this into our lives. I reminded people that the pain we experience in times like this is not incidental to the plan — the pain IS the plan. Putting us

The truth is that we gathered because that's what churches do.

Being without a building is not a circumstance I would consider ideal, but it is proving true what is always said about the church: it's not a building, it's a people (this is usually pointed out by people whose church is in a building). This service on the green showed me something precious. It showed me again that church buildings, church projects, and church possessions can be eaten up by moth, rust, and fire, but the church remains.

And Fellowship Baptist Church remains.

...before me was assembled people who appeared to be expecting a barbecue or a game of badminton; ... some had dressed for church, others for a morning on the lawn.

But, they were all there.

... church buildings, church projects, and church possessions can be eaten up by moth, rust, and fire, but the church remains.

When I stood to preach, a neighbor was watching from across the street, and more than once people strolled by walking a dog or getting a little exercise. And before me was assembled people who appeared to be expecting a barbecue or a game of badminton; they were in assorted lawn furniture and on blankets and huddled under trees; they were wearing sunglasses; some had dressed for church, others for a morning on the lawn.

But, they were all there.

I had settled on the only thing that made sense to me that morning. I preached from Acts 8 on the Diaspora and how God uses means we wouldn't invite into our lives to accomplish His goal of dislodging people from their complacency in order to focus them on the Great Commission. And, because God is good and perfect, we know that a great persecution was exactly what the church in Jerusalem needed at the time.

I told them it led me to conclude that

out on the street right now is not something that just happened ... it is what God willed to happen ... it is what God knows is the BEST thing to happen.

We prayed at the end. All of us. With one voice. I could hear whispers of requests, and muffled "amens" of agreement; for my part, I contributed to the sound of weeping. It was a symphony of emotion lifted up and presented to God as a confident offering of thanks for His presence and purpose. It was ... inspiring ... comforting ... and assuring.

I lifted my head from prayer and looked out at this gathering of God's people on my front lawn. Later, I pondered how we had gathered without media, music, schedules, organization, or a building. I wish I could say we had nobly gathered to defy the evil that burns schools and displaces churches, or that we had courageously gathered to honor the Lord Whose worship cannot be held hostage by the impulses of wicked people. But, I can't.

After nearly 30 years, it remains and gathers in yards and parks as we look for a new place to meet. We have taken offerings in refrigerator crisper trays, because our offering plates burned; we have played music around a table because our music stands were lost; we bring sunscreen to worship because we have no roof. And yet, we gather.

We gather with a large spirit and inexplicable smile while we talk a little longer. We gather and we pray more thankfully, sing more thoughtfully. We gather and we anticipate more, because God has once again made Himself the architect of our future.

I suppose if someone would have told me a month ago the next best step for Fellowship Baptist Church would be to have all its "necessities" destroyed by fire and be without a building to meet in for several weeks or a month or more, I think I would have had one response: "Seriously?"

Yes. Seriously.

D S A L M



E X E T E
O N E

I love the Bible. And not just for its spiritual value. That is a given, of course. We are enjoined to consume the words of the Lord. It is food for the believer. Matthew 4:4 says, “But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,” and 1 Peter 2:2 says, “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.” And the Bible is essential reading for knowing what we can about God and His salvation: 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.”

But I love the mechanics of the Bible as well — the way the words and ideas fit and are expressed, and the use of figures of speech. Read aloud and with expression these words from the Epistle of Jude regarding those who pose as believers and yet are working against God: “... clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots; Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.” That is not only truth, but it is truth expressed beautifully.

I love that when you work with Psalms, you don’t come at the text the same way you would with Romans or Acts. The strophes and stanzas of the Proverbs and Psalms, even though presented with English words and syntax, are almost a different language.

I am supposing we all know that a psalm is a song. There are songs scattered throughout the Bible, but we have 150 songs gathered together into one book, or scroll, if you lived in biblical times. Among the Jews and the early church they were sung or recited much the same way we would use a hymnbook or a prayer book — although not many Baptists in the West use a prayer book. In fact, some prayer books used in liturgical churches recite all the Psalms in a little over a month. You don’t have to use a formal

THE BACKSTORY

By Keith Bassham

First in a series of studies of Psalm 51

prayer book fortunately, because they are numbered. You could use the book of Psalms as a standalone. Read five a day, and you get through them all in a month. And at any rate, if you flipped through any standard Christian hymnbook, you would find the Psalms contributed significantly to the work there.

The Psalms are generally attributed to David, the second king of Israel, and he wrote a good number of them, but not all of them. David was a renaissance man — a warrior, a philosopher, a poet, a musician, a king. He was a man who had risen from a fairly low place to a very high place. He had God's favor, and God's ear. His Psalms are often prayers, sometimes complaints, many times praise. But occasionally, you read a Psalm like the 51st. It is one of a group called the Penitential Psalms. These (Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143) are Psalms of confession, and repentance, and brokenness, and cries for mercy and forgiveness. Another of the Penitentials, Psalm 32, sounds much like Psalm 51, but it does not share the same kind of detail.

You get the idea sometimes that many of the Psalms have stories behind them. For instance, Psalm 23, the Psalm of the Good Shepherd, must have something in the background of the composer. You can see how a man who had been leading sheep, who knew their needs, who understood the relationship between the shepherd and sheep, could be inspired to write, "The Lord is my shepherd." Some of David's Psalms are based on specific events in his life. You can hear the trouble in David's voice in Psalm 3: 3: "Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me. Many there be which say of my soul, There is no help for him in God." Most Bible students think this was written about the time of the rebellion of Absalom, David's son. David spent so much time in similar situations, it would only be natural he would express himself in a song.

Many Psalms have big picture stories in the background. There is a lament for a persecution, a sickness, a calamity, and in those Psalms there is the idea that God is the protector of the weak and the helpless. He is a defender of the oppressed, and He will not leave his people in their tragic circumstances

... "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil." That kind of thing.

But the Penitential Psalms have a different kind of story in the background. Here it is not, "O God protect us, defend us, avenge us, deliver us..." Here there is moral failure, covenant failure, sin. There may be a cry for deliverance, but before that, and at the heart of the Psalm, there is a prayer for forgiveness.

And that is what you must understand

about Psalm 51. This Penitential Psalm has a story. Probably the biggest back story in the book of Psalms.

And that story is given to us briefly in the inscription: "To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had gone in to Bathsheba." Ordinarily, I don't spend much time reading or teaching on the inscriptions in the Psalms. They were likely not there at the time of the actual Psalm's composition, but added later

A sin takes on new and real terror when there seems to be a chance that it is going to be found out.

Mark Twain, in "The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg"



King David Handing the Letter to Uriah Painting by Pieter Lastman, 1611

to give context. But here, the inscription is significant. And here is why.

King David is like a sports hero in an almanac whose record is marked forever with an asterisk, because of some anomaly or misstep. David's asterisk is recorded in 1 Kings 5:5: "David did that which was right in the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite." And the "matter of Uriah the Hittite" is related to us in 2 Samuel 11 and the first part of chapter 12. Ordinarily, I would paraphrase a longer passage and retell the story in my own words, but the Bible is both explicit and elegant, and so I reproduce the passage here:

And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth to battle, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem.

And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman was very beautiful to look upon.

And David sent and enquired after the woman. And one said, Is not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite?

And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house.

And the woman conceived, and sent and told David, and said, I am with child.

And David sent to Joab, saying, Send me Uriah the Hittite. And Joab sent Uriah to David.

And when Uriah was come unto him, David demanded of him how Joab did, and how the people did, and how the war prospered.

And David said to Uriah, Go down to thy house, and wash thy feet. And Uriah departed out of the king's house, and there followed him a mess of meat from the king.

But Uriah slept at the door of the king's house with all the servants of his lord, and went not down to his house.

And when they had told David, saying, Uriah went not down unto his house, David said unto Uriah, Camest thou not from thy journey? why then didst thou not go down unto thine house?

And Uriah said unto David, The ark, and Israel, and Judah, abide in tents; and my lord Joab, and the servants of my lord, are encamped in the open fields; shall I then go into mine house, to eat and to drink, and to lie with my wife? as thou livest, and as thy soul liveth, I will not do this thing.

And David said to Uriah, Tarry here to day also, and to morrow I will let thee depart. So Uriah abode in Jerusalem that day, and the morrow.

And when David had called him, he did eat and drink before him; and he made him drunk: and at even he went out to lie on his bed with the servants of his lord, but went not down to his house.

And it came to pass in the morning, that David wrote a letter to Joab, and sent it by the hand of Uriah.

And he wrote in the letter, saying, Set ye Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle, and retire ye from him, that he may be smitten, and die.

And it came to pass, when Joab observed the city, that he assigned Uriah unto a place where he knew that valiant men were.

And the men of the city went out, and fought with Joab: and there fell some of the people of the servants of David; and Uriah the Hittite died also.

Then Joab sent and told David all the things concerning the war;

And charged the messenger, saying, When thou hast made an end of telling the matters of the war unto the king,

And if so be that the king's wrath arise, and he say unto thee, Wherefore approached ye so nigh unto the city when ye did fight? knew ye not that they would shoot from the wall?

Who smote Abimelech the son of Jerubesheth? did not a woman cast a piece of a millstone upon him from the wall, that he died in Thebez? why went ye nigh the wall? then say thou, Thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

So the messenger went, and came and shewed David all that Joab had sent him for.



Nathan advises King David Painting by Matthias Scheits, 1672

**Few love to hear the
sins they love to act.**

William Shakespeare, in *Pericles,
Prince of Tyre*, Act 1 Scene 1

And the messenger said unto David, Surely the men prevailed against us, and came out unto us into the field, and we were upon them even unto the entering of the gate.

And the shooters shot from off the wall upon thy servants; and some of the king's servants be dead, and thy servant Uriah the Hittite is dead also.

Then David said unto the messenger, Thus shalt thou say unto Joab, Let not this thing displease thee, for the sword devoureth one as well as another: make thy battle more strong against the city, and overthrow it: and encourage thou him.

And when the wife of Uriah heard that Uriah her husband was dead, she mourned for her husband.

And when the mourning was past, David sent and fetched her to his house, and she became his wife, and bare him a son. But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord.

Chapter 12 continues ...

And the Lord sent Nathan unto David. And he came unto him, and said unto him, There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor.

The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds:

But the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter.

And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock and of his own herd, to dress for the wayfaring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him.

And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man; and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die:

And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man. Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul;

And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy master's wives into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.

Wherefore hast thou despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon.

Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast despised me, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife.

Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes, and give them unto thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun.

For thou didst it secretly: but I will do this thing before all Israel, and before the sun.

And David said unto Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord.

This last phrase reminds me of the Gospel passage that tells how Simon Peter wept bitterly at his realization that he betrayed Jesus. Something like that realization has occurred here with Nathan's accusation.

Let me make a few observations, and then we can work through some questions.

1 All humans, even the best of them, and even the most converted of the children of God, are also children of Adam. All have sinned. We don't all sin the same, and we do not sin as much after we become the children of God, but we do sin.

2 God is omniscient. Hebrews 4:12: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."

3 When we do blow it with God, it is better that we deal with Him first. And quickly. Without excuses. Without argument. And the only appeal that carries weight with him is a cry for mercy. That is the key to understanding and applying Psalm 51.

Some things to think about:

When you are caught, I mean really caught, what is your first impulse? What do you eventually do? Do you accept the blame and the guilt, or do you try to put it off on someone or something else?

Why is it important that David ask for mercy and not justice? What would pure justice entail for David?

Bathsheba is a part of the story, of course, but the event is referred to as "the matter of Uriah the Hittite" What are we to make of that?

The prophet Nathan is called by God to bring a hard truth to the king. Today we talk of "speaking truth to power," referring to the responsibility of bringing gospel values to the marketplace and challenging our leaders when necessary. While we are not prophets in the sense of Nathan, what is our responsibility to bring the truth to bear on our own situations, and how can we do that?

When I come to the Lord after I've blown it, I've only one argument to make.

It's not the argument of the difficulty of the environment that I am in. It's not the argument of the difficult people that I'm near. It's not the argument of good intentions that were thwarted in some way.

I come to the Lord with only one appeal; his mercy. I've no other

defense. I've no other standing. I've no other hope. I can't escape the reality of my biggest problem; me! So I appeal to the one thing in my life that's sure and will never fail. I appeal to the one thing that guaranteed not only my acceptance with God, but the hope of new beginnings and fresh starts. I appeal on the basis of the greatest gift I ever have or ever will

be given.

I leave the courtroom of my own defense, I come out of hiding and I admit who I am. But I'm not afraid, because I've been personally and eternally blessed. **Because of what Jesus has done, God looks on me with mercy. It's my only appeal, it's the source of my hope, it's my life.** Mercy, mercy me!

Paul David Tripp, in *Whiter Than Snow: Meditations on Sin and Mercy*

Jerry & Mindy Kinman | **Guatemala**

Thirty minutes before my ladies Bible study was about to begin, Jenny, one of our MANNA feeding center moms, asked me, "Can I talk to you?" "Sure," I replied, "what's up?" She explained to me that her husband was out of work and they were really struggling financially. Her husband, who is unsaved and has never come to church, had asked her to request prayer for them. I could have just prayed for her and gone on with my day, but I knew this was just the opportunity I had been waiting for. "It's during those hard times in life," I explained, "that we need a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. He wants to be your rock." Jenny, who has always been sweet but reserved, cried in my arms and then prayed to accept Jesus as her personal Savior. Praise the Lord for that awesome opportunity!

Rena Thompson | **Germany**

Sometimes when we pray for something over and over, we get discouraged when we see no sign of a response; however, this time I was encouraged right away. Every week Linda and I pray over the phone for each of the church kids and for any other concerns we may have. One day in particular, we prayed for my former landlady, Pina, as I had heard she was having some difficulties. During our prayer time, Pina left a message on my answering machine to which I responded! Later, she came by for a visit and wants to keep in touch. Please remember to pray for Pina.

Later that day, I received another call changing the venue of a barbeque to which I had been invited. The new hostess, Petra, was the single mother of one of our church boys for whom we had prayed. He had not attended church in quite some time. At the cookout, I got to know both of them better. She had been sick for a long time, but they are hopeful they will be able to attend church more regularly now.

Ken Board | **Japan**

One day after church, I asked Mr. Mimura the same question I had been asking him for the last year and a half — "Mr. Mimura, will you believe in Jesus Christ?" Until now his answer had always been, "No, I don't fully understand yet," or, "No, I'm not ready yet." To be honest, I expected the same reply this time, so I was surprised when he answered with a simple "Yes." In fact, I was so surprised that I repeated the question. His reply was the same, "Yes." With overflowing joy I listened as he called upon the name of the Lord and asked God to forgive his sins and save his soul. As soon as I heard the "Amen," these 70-year-old legs jumped higher than they had jumped in a long time, and I began shouting, "Yatta! Yatta! Yatta!" (Yes! Yes! Yes!) as he and his friend laughed at me. Pray for more people in Japan like Mr. Mimura to believe in Jesus Christ.

Sam & Megan Beard | **South Korea**

On the final night of youth camp, Erica's hand barely crept up shoulder high in response to the invitation for salvation. Standing next to her on the front row, Megan asked, "Would you like to go talk?" Erica was in tears by the time they found a private place to talk and pray, as she was overwhelmed with the understanding that, because of her sin, she was separated from God. Despite Megan's probing about a previous experience where she had "prayed a prayer," Erica was adamant that, "Before I didn't understand — I just believed with my head. Now I know I need to believe it with my heart...I need to be saved!"

Can Christians vote for a Mormon? (continued)

"increasingly important" for Christians "to clarify" the differences between orthodox, historical Christianity and Mormonism.

Mohler said he hopes Christian voters will think with deep theological concern and receive guidance from their pastors to help them make sound decisions.

Said Gilbert, "This is an educational moment for evangelicals, and it could turn out to be a healthy thing for the church if they can learn to think more carefully about how to agree with a person's policies while disagreeing with his theological beliefs."

Moore said the Bible includes multiple stories of how God uses non-believers for His good. Among them is Persian King Cyrus, who allowed the Jews to return to Israel following their captivity.

The question Christians should ask, Moore said, is: "Between these two people -- President Obama and Gov. Romney -- who is going to do the best for the common good and in protecting the United States of America and all the other questions that we've got to keep in mind."

Moore added, "We are going to have to give up -- on both sides -- the idea of president as religious mascot."

An Obama-Romney campaign, Moore said, is a "good thing for American evangelicals."

"It enables us to simultaneously honor the king," he said, alluding to 1 Peter 2:17, "and to boldly proclaim the Gospel -- in a way that we see happening all through the Book of Acts. We are able to love and pray for President Obama while we disagree with him on life and religious liberty and marriage and some really important things. ...

"And if a President Romney is elected, we're the people who ought to be able to say, 'We respect and honor this man as president. We're able to ... serve with this man as president, and we're the people who are willing to -- if we're invited into the Oval Office -- say, 'President Romney, here's where we agree with you; here's what we like about what you're doing. And we sincerely want to plead with you to believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ.'"

Closing out the discussion, Mohler reminded attendees: "Above all we have a Gospel responsibility, that we are first and foremost citizens of the heavenly Kingdom and our concern is that others will become a part of the Kingdom through the proclamation of the Gospel."

Compiled by Michael Foust, associate editor of Baptist Press, with reporting by Craig Sanders of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. © Copyright 2012 Baptist Press

HISTORY

BAPTIST

MARY WEBB — The overcomer

The name Mary Webb is almost unknown among Baptists. However, this tiny little woman, confined to a wheelchair, probably did more than any other woman to arouse the Baptist denomination and make them the most missionary-minded group in modern history.

Mary Webb was born in 1779 in Boston, MA. When she was about five, she contracted an unknown and usually deadly disease. The doctors were certain she would not survive. Miraculously she recovered; however, her illness left her hopelessly crippled. Sadly, Mary's father died when she was 13, leaving the family in a dire financial state. It was at this time that a neighbor, Thomas Baldwin, pastor of Second Baptist Church, took a special interest in the Webb family, especially little Mary.

As a result of Pastor Baldwin's compassion, Mary began attending Second Baptist and after several discussions with Pastor Baldwin and a careful study of the Scriptures, Mary, at the age of 19, made a public confession of her faith and was baptized. Pastor Baldwin was an ardent supporter of home and foreign missions, and Mary caught her pastor's vision, and after reading a missionary sermon she approached him with a plan she believed would aid the missionary cause.

In the 18th and early 19th century, it was almost unheard of for women to take an active part in church affairs. Thankfully, Pastor Baldwin was a man of vision, and he not only listened to Mary's plan, he encouraged her to proceed with her dream. Mary Webb may have been crippled, but she possessed a brilliant mind and the determination to implement her dream. She convinced 13 women to join her, and in 1800 they organized the Women's Foreign Missionary Society.

Initially, the society's goal was to contribute funds for the distribution of Bibles and gospel literature. However, Mary Webb and her ladies, seeing the enormous need of

Boston's neglected poor and discarded women and children, were determined to minister to their needs. Acting upon their faith, they employed a missionary to visit and to minister to Boston's poor. Mary Webb and her ladies assisted in establishing in 1803 the Female Cent Society and the Children's Cent Society in 1811. The objective of these societies was for each member to contribute one cent a week to missions.

In 1811 Mary Webb assisted in founding the Corban Society that raised money to help educate worthy but poor young ministers. In 1812 they established the Fragment Society that collected clothing and bedding for needy children. The society also provided a day care for the children of working mothers. In 1818 Mary Webb led in the founding of a

female refuge to help rescue women who were enslaved by alcohol and immorality. In 1825 she established a free school for girls whose parents were too poor to pay for their education.

Perhaps you are thinking with all these extra activities Mary Webb would have little or no time for her local church, but the opposite is true. Only sickness could prevent her from occupying her place on Sunday. In 1816

Second Baptist established a Sunday school, and Mary Webb was chosen and served for many years as a superintendent. Almost everyone living in Boston was familiar with Mary Webb. She and her wheelchair were a familiar sight on the streets of Boston as she visited the sick, the dying, and the poor bringing food, clothing, compassion, and hope. But perhaps her greatest contribution was the impact she and her ladies had upon Baptist women. Through Mary Webb's influence, hundreds of female societies sprung up all over America. These ladies looked to Mary Webb for advice and counsel in duplicating her work in Boston. Mary could not travel, but she wrote thousands of letters of encouragement and counsel. Mary Webb faithfully served her master for over 50 years and in 1861, at the age of 82, she escaped her frail and broken body.



by Thomas Ray





Nothing new

Urban ministry is no contemporary phenomenon. From the first century through the Middle Ages, during and following The Industrial Revolution right into modern times, urban congregations have engaged in great exploits for God.

The City Temple of London was founded in 1640 by Dr. Thomas Goodwin, chaplain to Oliver Cromwell. Still in existence, it must be one of the oldest urban churches in the world.

Following this ecclesiastical bus down history's highway, first in the right lane of Orthodoxy, then drifting to the left lane, then over the double yellow line of Biblical authority into dangerous oncoming Theological Modernism makes for an informative journey. Its doctrine was never more sound, its spiritual temperature never more warm, its pulpit never stronger than when Joseph Parker, the dramatic contemporary of Charles Spurgeon, held forth from this urban sacred desk.

The similarity of issues and challenges faced by an urban church 150 years ago with those of present day is striking. Zero in on pulpiteer Parker. Listen to the description of the period immediately preceding Parker's arrival: "... for two years the church remained shepherdless ... a period of severe testing of loyalty ... considerable anxiety for the office bearers ... outer circle of church adherence quickly fell away ... resignations of influential church members increased alarmingly through migration to the outlying suburbs. The latter, fast-growing tendency represented a serious menace to the various existences of all the city churches."

On the Lord's Day, September 19, 1869, Joseph Parker, 40, came to City Temple. Here are some paragraphs from that first sermon:

"I have ventured to look at London itself, that great and immeasurable 'centre without a circumference;' I have ventured to look on young men, on strangers, on poor forlorn castaways that would be glad to hear a word of divine hope.

I have thought of all these. And what if God should give me somewhat of result out of these? He would, if it so pleased Him.

"We must dream. If we fall back entirely on facts, we shall never be facts ourselves. We must dream and hope, and try and determine, and work as if everything depended on us, and then get away as if we were nothing and had not done anything."

The need to relocate was apparent several years before Parker arrived. With his arrival, the need pressed in. A strong element in the congregation believed that the only right move was to the suburbs. Parker would have none of it. He declared, "We are in the Great City and here we will set up a standard for truth, liberty, and progress as these terms are understood in Jesus Christ." He led the congregation against a move-out mentality, against the obstruction of some of the trustees, and against the popular notion from "expert advisors" that "It would be impossible to find another appropriate site within the city of London."

In May 1874, the new edifice, in a prime location in the heart of London, was open to the public. A point of no little controversy was the city's gift to the church of its new pulpit, bearing the inscription, "The Gift of the Corporation of London, AN.DOM. 1874." The old building had had no musical instrument. The new building had an organ installed. This set more tongues wagging.

Parker said it was in his heart to "make the pulpit of the City Temple a terror to evil doers, a tower of strength to all who are honest and pure, and a light to all who are asking the way to truth and the love of God."

The Daily Telegraph said early in 1903, "Less than one person in ten goes to church or chapel." Parker packed the 2,500-seat City Temple consistently. With lionessque appearance and demeanor he roared application of biblical truth, addressing personal salvation, urban

issues, and international challenges.

During Parker's 30 years of service at City Temple he addressed the deceiving appearance of an urban congregation. "A stranger coming in the City Temple looks around and thinks there is no need for him to give assistance to such a prosperous looking place. He forgets that every other man is looking around and thinking exactly the same thing! This of course means that the well-filled church and the well-to-do look of the congregation are against us. A man comes to me and says: 'Send us 20 pounds for our mission.' When I reply that funds are not as plentiful with us as he seems to imagine, he looks astonished, and casting an eye around the place he says: 'Look at your people.' 'All right, my dear fellow,' I reply, 'but you forget how many of them are here today and gone tomorrow. These fleeting visitants who throng our services encourage us mightily by their presence, but there is a little something else needed to keep things going.'"

Albert Clare comments in his record of the congregation, "At the City Temple it can never be for any minister merely a question of 'carrying on.' To achieve success or even to maintain his position effectively a minister must be temperamentally adventurous and forward moving. To stand still spells retrogression."

Decline due to shifting demographics, finding doctrinally sound leadership, facing the stay or move question, dealing with financial instability related to urban disengagement and transiency, challenging social and political issues of the day; City Temple has seen it all. There is nothing new under the sun.

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



Our turn to bless you



by Mark Milioni | President | Baptist Bible College

If you are like me, there have been those times in life when you were in such a place that you absolutely needed God to do something. Going through the death of a loved one, facing a crisis in our church, dealing with cancer, having children serving in a very dangerous war zone, and learning to lead a college — these things really seem to grab my heart. Most of my life I have been a little proud to turn things over to God, but once in a while God reminds me how much I need Him.

These past few months I have learned fresh and new that God is very alive and active in our lives. Day after day, there seemed to be a time when God tugged on my heart and I found myself running to Him and to passage after passage in His Word. I am a little ashamed to say I did not run to God because I wanted to, I ran to God because I had to. Time after time, I needed that peace, that sense of God's presence.

Over the next few weeks we are going to spend some time learning to pray at Baptist Bible College. We have been so blessed by you — our friends, our supporters — that we want to bless you. It's our turn. We would like to pray for you, for your churches, and for the needs on your heart. Please allow us the privilege of seeking God on your behalf. Our students and staff will be spending time in chapel, after classes, and even some evenings in prayer for you.

Prayer is hard work and sometimes a little confusing. I remember reading about someone who prayed about their New Year's resolution, "Dear Lord, could you please help me with my resolution this year? This year I want to have a fat bank account and a thin body, not like last year when you got them backwards."

Over 350 times the Bible uses the word pray and prayer. It must be pretty important. All of the major stories, events, and miracles in scripture involve prayer. Throughout history there have been key individuals that affected the world, revivals that changed lives, and miracles that have happened because of prayer.

It is our hope, our deep desire, and yes, our prayer, that we would become a college that believes in, practices, loves, and can't wait to pray — that we would get excited to pray, that everyday prayer would be the most important part of our lives. It is my hope that we would experience God do awesome, incredible miracles in our midst. I believe we have yet to experience what God wants to do in our college, our churches, and our homes.

Please let us know how we can pray for you. We will be contacting our supporters by mail, you can email us at president@gobbcc.edu, or even call my office at 417-268-6001.

Boston questions



by David Melton | President | Boston Baptist College

I talk about Boston Baptist College to anyone who will listen — and I almost always get great questions about what God is doing here. It is a great part of my job to get to tell people — pastors, parents, young men and women deciding on college — about the college family I work with. In case I haven't bumped into you lately, or we ran out of time, I'll go ahead and ask some questions myself. And answer them.

So...how are things in Boston? How are things ... really?

Baseball? Not good. Let's move on.

Weather? Oh baby, it's New England. Yeah, January and February are coming, but how does days in the 70s and nights in the 50s sound? We've been blessed with rain, things are green, crops are good. New England sweet corn will be on the farm stands by the time you read this and apple picking season means pies. Thank you, Jesus.

Campus? Full of students ... higher percentage of freshman than in almost a decade ... there is a lot of energy! This is such a great place to be. Lots of smiles.

Accents? Almost one in five of our students this year are from greater Boston! (How's that for a place where a generation ago our Fellowship of churches barely had a footprint?) That means good listening is a must, though! Blend in a nice representation from Texas, some Carolinas, Virginia, Rhode Island is its own language, Maine is ... well (Hi, Kelsey). Sprinkle in with all that some New Jersey and New York — and then some awesome international students from Africa and Asia. Oh yes, and the "perfect" English of Missouri, Michigan, and Ohio (Oh, pa-leez! They don't even know how to spell "Wooster.") We can entertain ourselves around here just asking people to say "water."

Best Alumni Accent? Bob Butler. Hands down.

Next study trip? Greece and Turkey in March 2013.

Football? We only talk NFL and Super Bowl jokes aren't funny.

Staff? We have a half dozen new people on our team and they are amazing! I counted up the church leadership experience in the instructional faculty of one of our freshmen. He will have over 100 years of full-time ministry experience in his five classes! That's just who we are.

Gas prices? Not any better than you have.

Hardest names to pronounce? Sorry, but Mannasee Ngedasayo gets that. Great guy.

Hardest workers? Drake, Matt, Clayton, Josh ... too many to mention them all.

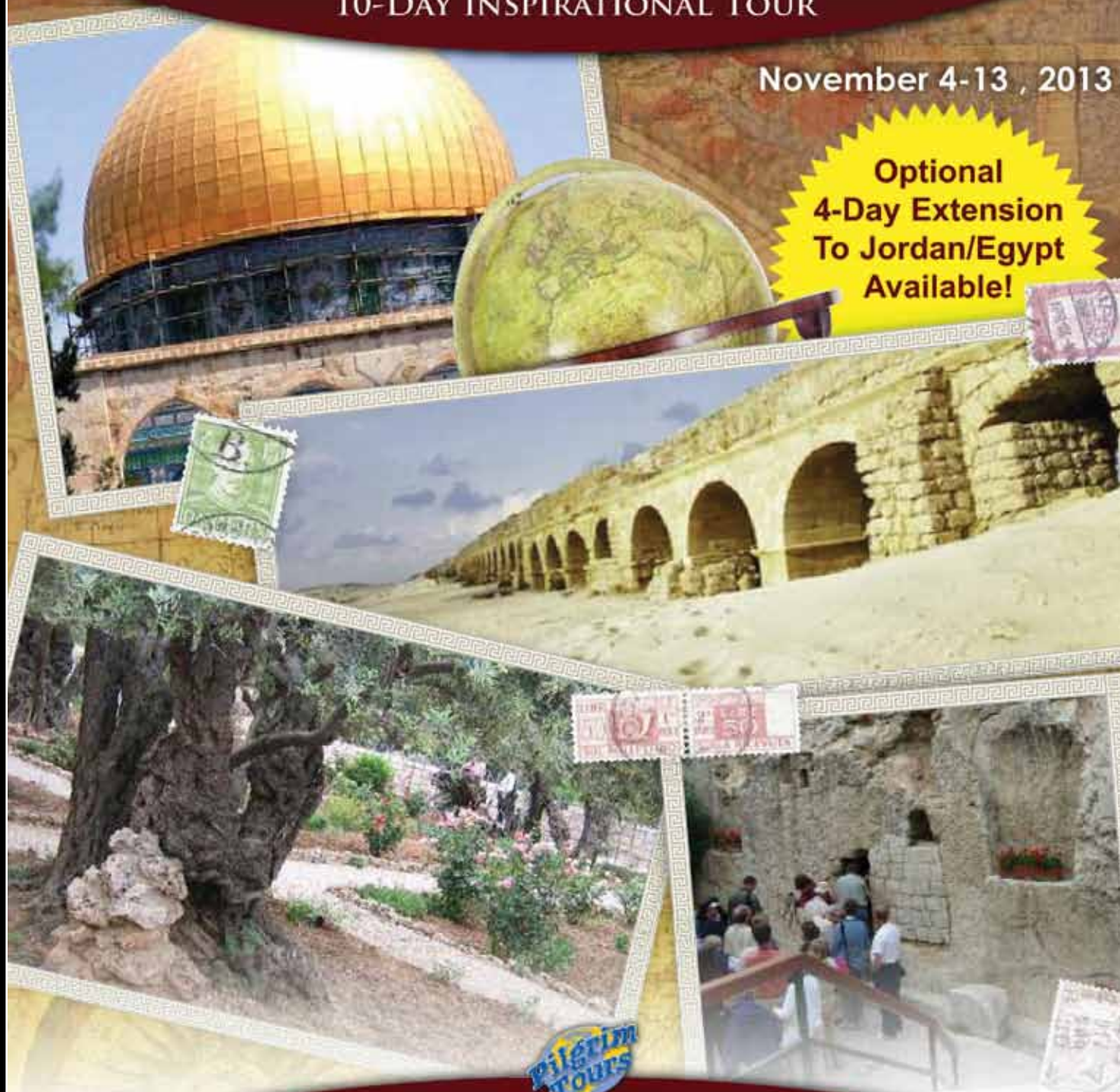
Biggest surprise for the BBFI? How about "Devoted for Life," our new drama recognizing the bicentennial of American foreign missions.

Reasons to be more excited than ever about our Boston Baptist College family? See above.

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SPRINGFIELD, MO

Spanish-speaking pastors gather for conference

A conference for Spanish-speaking pastors themed "Edificando para el Futuro" or "Building for the Future" was hosted by the BBFI Mission Office August 12-15 with nearly 50 people (including some lay leaders) in attendance. Pastor Russell Johnson from International Bible Baptist Church in Miami was the main speaker with breakout sessions from Jim and Sharon Smith from the BBFI Mission Office. Pastors attended from New Jersey, Florida, Tennessee, Ohio, and Texas.

"Pastor Johnson's sessions were instructional, inspirational, and enlightening. It turned out to be a great time of encouragement, discussion, and vision casting, and the fellowship was sweet. A highlight of the conference was a Uruguayan cookout at the home of Esteban and Emily Alvarez," says Smith. "We at the Mission Office are working and hoping for a growing partnership with the Latino ministries across the U.S.A."



NIXA, MO

Wienekes celebrate 70th anniversary

Clell and Josephine Wieneke celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary September 1 at Victory Baptist Church in Nixa, MO. The couple married August 29, 1942, in Lancaster, MO. They are blessed with



six children, 11 grandchildren, and 17 great-grandchildren.

The Wienekes attended Baptist Bible College and pastored churches in Kansas, Iowa, and Missouri before retiring in 1988. They continued serving the Lord with New Testament Church Planting and traveled the country helping build church buildings. They are currently faithful members of South Campbell Avenue Baptist Church in Springfield, MO, and reside in Clever, MO.

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GLADSTONE, OR

Tri-City Baptist Temple mission team assists pastor, church for greater involvement

By Crystal Cooper
Missionary Coordinator
Tri-City Baptist Temple

Three years ago, a small group of church family met to discuss how we could better support our missionaries. We heard from them through prayer letters and furlough visits. With the leadership of a mission-minded pastor, we were grounded in the principles of Faith Promise giving. However, we felt something more was needed to let our missionaries know how important they are to us. From this meeting was born the Tri-City Baptist Temple Mission Team.

Among the charter members of the group are former BBFI missionary to Jamaica Ann Bonneau and her daughter Nancy Drummond. With them, they brought the perspective of the missionary. One of the things we learned was how few cards a missionary may receive from their supporting churches. With this in mind, the team decided the first task to undertake



Pastor Ken and JoAnn McCormick

would be to meet monthly and send birthday and anniversary cards to our missionaries able to receive correspondence safely.

Since that first meeting, the group has continually grown and gradually expanded its activities. Now, a quilting group meets weekly to create quilts for our missionaries and help with sewing needs within the church's ministries. One member that meets with them whittles letter openers and presents them to visiting missionaries. Another member of our team creates wonderful welcome baskets for our visiting missionaries. It has also been our privilege to assist Pastor Ken McCormick in planning and assisting with our annual mission conference.

God has called together the members of our group, each with unique talents and gifts. What we have in common is a heart for lost souls, a desire to encourage and be a blessing to our missionaries, and a wish to encourage our church family to become more involved in missions.

TOLEDO, OH

Bartlett retires from pulpit

Billy V. Bartlett, chose August 5 as his official retirement date when he would step out of the full-time pastoral ministry at Wyldewood Baptist Church (formerly Toledo Baptist Temple). Bartlett closes out nearly 50 years of ministry, including two decades as a professor and administrator at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, and 26 years as pastor of the Toledo congregation.

In appreciation for his service, the church gave several gifts to Bartlett and his wife Gloria, including a 2012 Jeep Grand Cherokee. Succeeding Pastor Bartlett is his son Brett who has co-pastored with his father the past five years.



The retiring pastor expects to continue to serve as a lay teacher of a Bible class and is available for meetings and pulpit supply. He may be contacted at (419)787-7871 or by mail at P.O. Box 707, Lambertville, MI 48144.

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PANAMA

Don and Sheryl Rooks take their ministry to Panama

By Jim Childress,
BBFI missionary to Panama

Don and Sheryl Rooks conducted a two-week ministry in Panama the beginning of August 2012. They visited several churches and spoke at our annual pastor-missionary retreat. Pre-retreat time focused on missionaries Dan and Cricket Young and two of their churches. After the retreat they focused on my wife and me and held a seminar at our church.

Our retreat complex was in the mountains close to the Costa Rican border. For three days, the Rooks ministered to 32 ministry team members.

We had classes four hours each morning and held evening sessions after supper. Sessions served to stretch the ministry team. After lunch on Thursday, we returned to a life of interactive ministry, reinforced with a thirst for integrity and a pursuit of a ministry that pleases God.

After the retreat, the Rooks were in our church for a seminar with Friday evening and Saturday afternoon sessions. On Sunday, the Rooks presented the value of forgiveness and demonstrated that forgiveness is a misunderstood subject in applied Christianity. About 90 percent of our adults attending Sunday morning returned for the evening service to hear "the rest of the story."

After meeting with Don and Sheryl, I have some personal observations to make. I was taught that the real purpose of the church facility is to be a hospital for Christian casualties in the invisible war that often includes hand-to-hand combat with Satan and/or his demonic forces. The Rooks invest much time treating battle-scarred soldiers of the cross. Their goals include seeing casualties regain a sense of restoration, renew self confidence, and realize a return to a healthy spiritual "battle-ready" status. But there is a problem: Some soldiers have lost their "battle-ready" status and do not realize it. The Rooks are therefore driven to include "preventive medicine" as a part of their ministry. You know, an ounce of prevention is worth more than a pound of cure. They are in total agreement

with Warren Wiersbe who wrote "Methods are many, principles are few; methods always change, principles never do."

It is evident that God prepared the Rooks for their present calling. They have 30 years of experience in ministry and both have degrees



Don and Sheryl Rooks (second and third from left) with seminar attendees in Panama

in psychology and religious studies. After being in counseling ministry part time for 13 years, they took a giant step to full-time ministry status in February 2002. There have been a significant number of victories over the years, but Don and Sheryl are bound by ethics not to share the fruits of their efforts.

The Rooks are loving channels for communicating the grace of God. They connect with people by sharing their past personal struggles. As a result of their own history, the Rooks guide wounded servants to a place of renewed victory. The Youngs and the Childresses willingly give testimony as to how they benefited greatly from the Rooks's labor of love. They have been key figures in aiding many ministry families. One pastor's wife

said, "My story is one of grace and of God using the Rooks to pursue me." Warren Wiersbe says, "Ministry takes place when divine resources meet human needs through loving channels, to the glory of God." That describes what Don and Sheryl do and why they do it.

The visit is now history. To say our ministry team and our churches were moved would be a great understatement. Their honesty to share their souls and love people caused our church to embrace them without hesitation. When I presented making them a part of our missionary family, there was unanimous approval. God has used this dedicated couple for His glory in Panama, and that influence will have ripple effects for a long time to come. I am sure of it. They have returned to the U.S., but they left footprints on my heart, our church philosophy, and our national fellowship. May God bless them richly!

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ST. LOUIS, MO

Lighthouse Baptist, Keith Gillming hosts Next Step Up 2012

Lighthouse Baptist Church and Pastor Keith Gillming hosted the Next Step Up church growth conference August 27-28. Pastors from nine states attended the regional meeting as well as lay staff from all over the local area. John Hammett, professor of systematic theology at Southeastern



Keith Gillming

Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, NC, was the primary guest speaker.

The two-day conference also included speakers and leaders for breakout sessions to minister to attendees with professional development. The meeting has been an annual feature of Lighthouse's ministry since 2008. Gillming says, "The purpose of Next Step Up is to help pastors and their staffs honestly evaluate their church ministries so that they

might make changes to have a healthy and growing church."

Gillming also announced the Next Step Up 2013 conference will take place August 26-27, 2013, with guest speaker Jonathan Leeman, director of 9Marks Ministries in the Washington, D.C. area, and author of *The Church and the Surprising Offense of God's Love*. Those interested should contact Lighthouse Baptist Church of St. Louis, MO.

SPRINGFIELD, MO

Mission Office hosts group of missionary candidates

Fifty-one missionary candidates attended the BBFI Mission Office's concentrated, missionary training during its annual Missionary Candidate School in July. Candidates attend this training for one week the year of their approval, and complete the training during a second week the following year. The first week covers topics that will assist them during their deputation. The second week addresses issues that will benefit them as they prepare for departure to their fields.



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FORT WORTH, TX

Fort Worth church sends a team to Belize

Northwest Baptist Church of Fort Worth, TX, sent a team of 15 to the country of Belize to connect with missionaries Dan and Vicki Weaver July 21-28. Pastor Philip Hickman, his wife Carrie, and the rest of the team arrived in Belize with a two-fold purpose: "First, our goal was to help with several construction projects that were underway at the Weaver's ministry compound located in the Valley of Peace. Our second objective was to carry out ministry activities for Sunday and Thursday services."

Each day of our trip began and ended with a 9-mile, 45-minute drive into and out of the Valley of Peace over a challenging dirt road. While in the village we had the opportunity to assist in the completion of a concrete support wall for one of the buildings as well as pouring a concrete slab and two sidewalks on the property. Several of the ladies on our team spent three days oiling and polishing large wooden beams that will ultimately serve as railing in Valley Baptist's new open-air sanctuary. Other ladies spent the week teaching Belizean women how to crochet, which they learned very quickly.

Another blessing of the trip was the opportunity to serve in the worship services in two local churches. On Sunday morning, the team attended Uriah Baptist Church in Roaring Creek, hosted by Pastor Marcos. Charme Cone and Kimberly Scroggins did a wonderful job teaching and engaging the children while Floyd Davidson, former BBFI missionary to Belize, taught the adult Sunday school. Melissa Clifton ministered through special music and Pastor Hickman brought the morning message.

On Sunday evening, the team served at

Valley Baptist Church in the Valley of Peace hosted by Dan Weaver and Pastor Ismael. Special music was provided by Darla and Kimberly Scroggins and Pastor Hickman brought the evening message, this time with

Pastor Ismael serving as an interpreter for the mostly Spanish-speaking crowd.

On Thursday evening we had the privilege of leading several facets of their mid-week service. Josh Clifton spoke to over 50 teens, Kimberly Scroggins gave a great lesson to the kids, and Lewis Paulk, Mark Cone, and Steve and Kelly Martin kept them busy during game time.

The people we met in Belize were so welcoming and gracious and it was a joy to be able to work alongside them. Dan and Vicki are wonderful jewels within the BBFI. Not only are they humble and gracious hosts, but more importantly, their hearts are in the Valley of Peace and with the Belizean people. It is obvious in everything they are doing and in each conversation we had with them. Supporting their work in Belize is a great investment in eternity.



Top: The team from Northwest Baptist.
Bottom: Dan and Vicki Weaver (left) with Philip and Carrie Hickman.

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PADUCAH, KY

New regulations force vendor to find good use for “banned” wireless microphones

Under current FCC rules handed down in 2009-2010, no one in the private sector is allowed to use wireless microphones that operate in the 700 MHz band. All users of 700 MHz Band wireless microphones (and similar devices) — including theaters, churches, schools, conference centers, theme parks, and musicians — should have retuned or replaced, if necessary, their equipment by now. Wireless Microphones that operate outside of the 700 MHz Band are not affected.

When the rules went into effect in 2010, Troubadour Solutions and proprietor Scott Weaver still had 20 units of the popular microphones in stock, but he was unable to find a suitable use

or market because of the rules. Two years after the ban, with the help of his pastor, Richard Beck of Highland Baptist Church in Paducah, he offered to give the equipment to BBFI

missionary Greg Lyons of the Philippines, who gladly accepted it.

The “banned” microphones use frequencies now being used by public safety entities (such as police, fire, and emergency services) and by commercial providers of wireless services (such as wireless broadband services), and continued use can cause interference. Wired microphones are not affected in any way by the rules, but continued use of the wireless microphones covered by the rules could result in fines and penalties.

Weaver is glad the microphones will still find their way into God’s work, and he recommends other vendors and churches follow his example by making their 700 MHz equipment available to missionaries outside the U.S.



From left: Richard Beck, Greg Lyons, and Scott Weaver.

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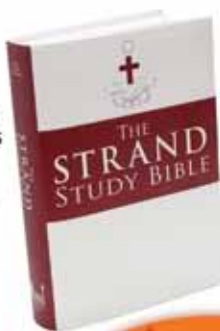
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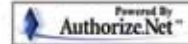
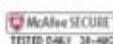
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BOLIVAR, MO

Berean Baptist celebrates Lingo's ministry and retirement

Berean Baptist Church in Bolivar, MO, held a day of appreciation for David and Barbara Lingo August 26 to celebrate nearly 18 years of ministry with the church and to mark David's retirement from the church's pulpit.

The day included special services with congratulatory videos from missionaries who had been sent from the church, including a live webchat with missionaries Allen and Michelle Ketel in Siberia, and special music and testimonies by those in the congregation. The sermon that morning was



David and Barbara Lingo

preached by the Lingos' son-in-law, Dave Perry, who focused not only on thanking the Lingos, but thanking God because their "faith is being proclaimed throughout the whole world" (Romans 1:8). More than 30 guests who had been a part of David and Barbara's ministry at Berean also surprised the couple with their attendance.

The Lingos never thought God's plan for them would include David being a pastor of a church in the United States. They were BBFI missionaries to Colombia and Chile for 20 years, and returned with their three daughters on furlough in 1991 to help their oldest during her first year at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO. However, BBC President Leland Kennedy asked them to teach missions at BBC during their year furlough. Halfway through that year, Kennedy asked them to consider staying full time as mission professors at the college. "We believed we could have a greater impact for world missions by teaching missions to countless students at BBC. So after much prayer, we accepted the job and resigned as BBFI missionaries," says Lingo.

A few years later, in 1995, Berean Baptist Church asked David to become their interim pastor. Soon, the position became permanent, partly because of his mission-based philosophy. He said, "My philosophy of ministry has always

been to equip the saints for the work of the ministry, and this church allowed me to do that in a very unique way. We were able to have students from BBC training to be in ministry come to Berean and put what they were learning into

practice — including training three mission intern couples who are now on their fields of service and numerous others serving around the United States. I have been greatly blessed to be used of God in this great church!"

And the membership believes the blessing has gone both ways. One member says, "David's been an excellent pastor, and our family has received a great deal of blessing from him and his family. And as for Barbara, I've never had a pastor's wife that has been so busy so often and so much of the time. I thank Barbara for all of her work and effort. And I thank David for

his preaching and leadership in this church. We love you!"

But Lingo's tenure at Berean Baptist Church has also expanded his missionary ministry, with the church sending seven missionary families and supporting 35 missionary families overall. Pastor Lingo has also served as field representative for several countries for the BBFI. However, David and Barbara's mission influence doesn't stop there. Their daughter and son-in-law, Scott and Kristi Hudgins along with their children (third and fourth generation missionaries), serve in Bogota, Colombia, and during the Lingo's service to Baptist Bible College (1991-2011) they helped train approximately 80 current BBFI missionaries.

Though Lingo will no longer be the pastor at Berean, he and his wife do not see this as a retirement from ministry, only as a transition — hoping to help teach and minister in Bible institutes and churches on the mission field and in the United States. As for the church, Berean Baptist Church has begun the process of searching for their next pastor. Applicants can send a resume to crosswalk@bbcbolivar.com or Berean Baptist Church, c/o Pulpit Committee, 4450 Scenic Ave., Bolivar, MO 65613.

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OWASSO, OK
ESTIL PHELPS

Estil Roy Phelps passed from earth to glory August 11, 2012, at the age of 80. Born September 12, 1931, in Evansville, IN, he was born again in March 1941 and was called to preach in March 1946. In 1951, Estil married his college sweetheart, Elfrieda (Fritz) Frey, at Newton, KS.

Estil served in the ministry from 1947-2008 as a student, pastor, educator, and evangelist. He began his college education at Kansas City Bible College, then to Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO, where he graduated in 1952. He continued his education, eventually earning a Ph.D. in Bible and Bible History in 1985. He was a field evangelist for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry 1981-1996, and later served with Crown Baptist Ministries, which he and Fritz founded in 1989 and served as director until his death. In 1999, he and Ron Leversee founded Desert Baptist Bible College, Gilbert, AZ, where he served as executive vice president as well as teaching Bible and speech.

Estil is survived by his wife Fritz, three sons, and their families. A memorial service was held August 18, 2012, at Baptist Tabernacle, Collinsville, OK, with Gary Cate officiating.

TULSA, OK
CLIFFORD CLARK

Clifford Eugene Clark Sr., 88, joined the Lord in glory August 25, 2012. Born January 5, 1924, he attended a one-room country school through the 8th grade and graduated from South High

School in Denver. He served in the Army Air Corp during WWII, and entered the ministry in 1942. He founded Fellowship Baptist Church in Garden City, KS, in 1947, and in 1950 he was called to the pulpit of Tulsa Baptist Temple, which became the base for his ministry for the next 35 years. Under his leadership, the church gained worldwide attention for its missionary emphasis. Pastor Clark introduced Faith Promise giving to hundreds of churches in and out of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, wrote books and pamphlets geared to promote missions, helped plant numerous churches in northeastern Oklahoma, and preached in more than 40 nations. From Tulsa Baptist Temple, well over 150 people entered some form of Christian vocational ministry through those years.

He is survived by his wife Geneva, four children, nine grandchildren, and 19 great-grandchildren. A memorial service was held at Tulsa Baptist Temple

RUSTON, WV
ELIZABETH (MRS. JOE) SEACRIST

Elizabeth Agnes Deitz Seacrist, 77, left this life August 23, 2012. Mrs. Seacrist was born January 22, 1935, in Mt. Lookout, WV. She was preceded in death by her husband, BBFI pastor Joe Seacrist, who was pastor of Bible Baptist Church at Lawton, OK, for 35 years and of Friendship Baptist Church in West Virginia.

She is survived by a son and daughter, three grandchildren, and one great-grandchild. Services were held August 26, 2012, at Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, Mt. Lookout, WV.

STUART, FL
DAN HOLLAND

Daniel K. Holland, 56, pastor of Community Baptist Church in Stuart, FL, entered glory August 14, 2012. Born in Youngstown, OH, Dan graduated from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, MO,

in 1978, was ordained in 1980 in Savannah, GA, and was serving as senior pastor of Community Baptist Church and Community Christian Academy in Stuart, FL, where he had been the past 21 years.

He was an avid runner, and had completed six marathons and numerous other running events. While running near his home three weeks before his death, Dan unexpectedly suffered a collapse and a coma lasting three weeks.

He is survived by his wife of 38 years, Debby, his mother, two children, and two grandchildren. Services were held August 17, 2012, at Grace Place in Stuart, FL. The service, officiated by Dan's brother Ed Holland and brother-in-law David Stokes, was attended by more than 900 and was streamed worldwide.

TULSA, OK
CHARLES WATIE SMITH

Charles Watie Smith, long-time BBFI pastor in Tulsa, OK, departed for heaven August 25, 2012. Born May 18, 1930, Pastor Smith was 82 years old. He pastored Bethel Baptist Church

in west Tulsa 43 years. He is survived by his wife Adean, two children, and two grandchildren.

Services were held August 29, 2012, at Southwest Baptist Church in Tulsa.

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The Christian and Citizenship

An excerpt from an address given by *Tribune* Founder Noel Smith at a meeting of the Fundamental Baptist Congress of North America and subsequently published in *The Biblical Faith of Baptists: Book IV*, Regular Baptist Press, 1971.

As a Christian citizen of the United States I not only have privileges, I have obligations. I have the obligation to take as active and intelligent and practical a part in government as any other citizen. I have the obligation, constitutional and moral, to get “mixed up” in politics. I have the obligation to get out where there is cursing and drinking and gambling and do my duty as a citizen. Seventy-five percent of the corruption in this country today is due to the practical indifference of lazy, cowardly, flabby, “built-up” saints who don’t want to risk soiling their soft white hands by getting into politics and taking a practical stand for what is decent and right. Half of them don’t even vote. They say they are waiting for the Lord to come and “clean up the mess.” They conveniently forget that the Lord taught that they should be busy while He was away, and when He came. And if we shouldn’t be busy about our citizenship, upon which depends the very foundation of civilization and the future of our children and grandchildren, what should we be busy about?

...

Christian citizenship is involved in the basic national issue confronting us today. That issue is this: Can there be any happiness without liberty, any liberty without self-government, any self-government without constitutionalism, any constitutionalism without morality, and any of these without stability and order?

...

This issue must be faced, debated, and resolved by men and women of good will, intelligence, reason, intellectual capacity and integrity, a genuine love for their country, and a deep concern for the kind of America their children and grandchildren are to grow up in.

And on this basic and decisive issue, if Christian citizens do not exercise in every practical way their privileges and obligations of citizenship, then they should be decent enough to keep their mouths shut about the religious, moral, and political depravity and degeneracy that surrounds them.

Christian citizens should be both thinkers and doers. This country was founded and constitutionally established by men who were both thinkers and doers. To think without doing is worthless, and to act without first thinking is to make the condition worse.

Christians have a habit of going from one extreme to another in exercising their privileges and obligations of citizenship. Either they want the country reformed from top to bottom in a week, or they want to leave the whole mess for the Lord “to clean up when He comes.”

Civil government is not that simple. In the first place, civil government was not established by God for Christians exclusively. God loves men and women who are not Christians. God loves heathens. He loves pagans. God established civil government in the interest of the human race.

Therefore Christians should not take the position that we should have none but a Christian government. I wouldn’t want to live under a government by preachers. In the first place, half of them would hang the other half before sundown — for the glory of God. And I suspect I would be on the hanging end. The best Christian on earth may know nothing about the philosophy of civil government. In government Christians have failed about as often as non-Christians.

Benjamin Franklin wasn’t a Christian. Thomas Jefferson wasn’t a Christian. Willam Howard Taft was a Unitarian. Mr. Taft wasn’t one of our great Presidents. William Jennings Bryan said that he went into office by a majority and went out with universal consent. But Mr. Taft was an able Secretary of War, a wise administrator, and he was one of the great Chief Justices.

William Howard Taft was an American. He believed in and loved his country. He was a man of principle. He believed that the alternative to constitutionalism was exactly what we have today — anarchy.

I will vote for such men of character and patriotism, whether they are Christians or not.

And why? Because many professing Christians are not good Americans. And a good American is not necessarily a Christian — as I wish he were. You can be a devout Christian and know nothing about law and medicine and government.

I am saying that under the governments of the United States and Canada, Christian citizens have the constitutional privilege to participate in civil government in every practical way. I am saying that they not only have the constitutional privilege, they have the constitutional and moral obligation to do so.

But I am saying, at the same time, that Christians have the obligation to be intelligent participants. They have the obligation to be versed in the philosophy of civil government. They have the obligation to understand and appreciate the distinction between civil government and Christianity.

But again, such knowledge and intelligence is completely worthless unless the Christian citizen gets into the main stream of the life of his country and plays a practical part in government. This means, again, that the Christian citizen has got to get out in the mud and dirt, in an atmosphere of cursing and gambling and drunkenness, and do battle with the forces that are destroying the very foundations of the institution of civil government. I don’t mind smelling like the Devil’s crowd if I get the smell by fighting them. I had rather have that smell on me than the smell of a theological beauty shop.



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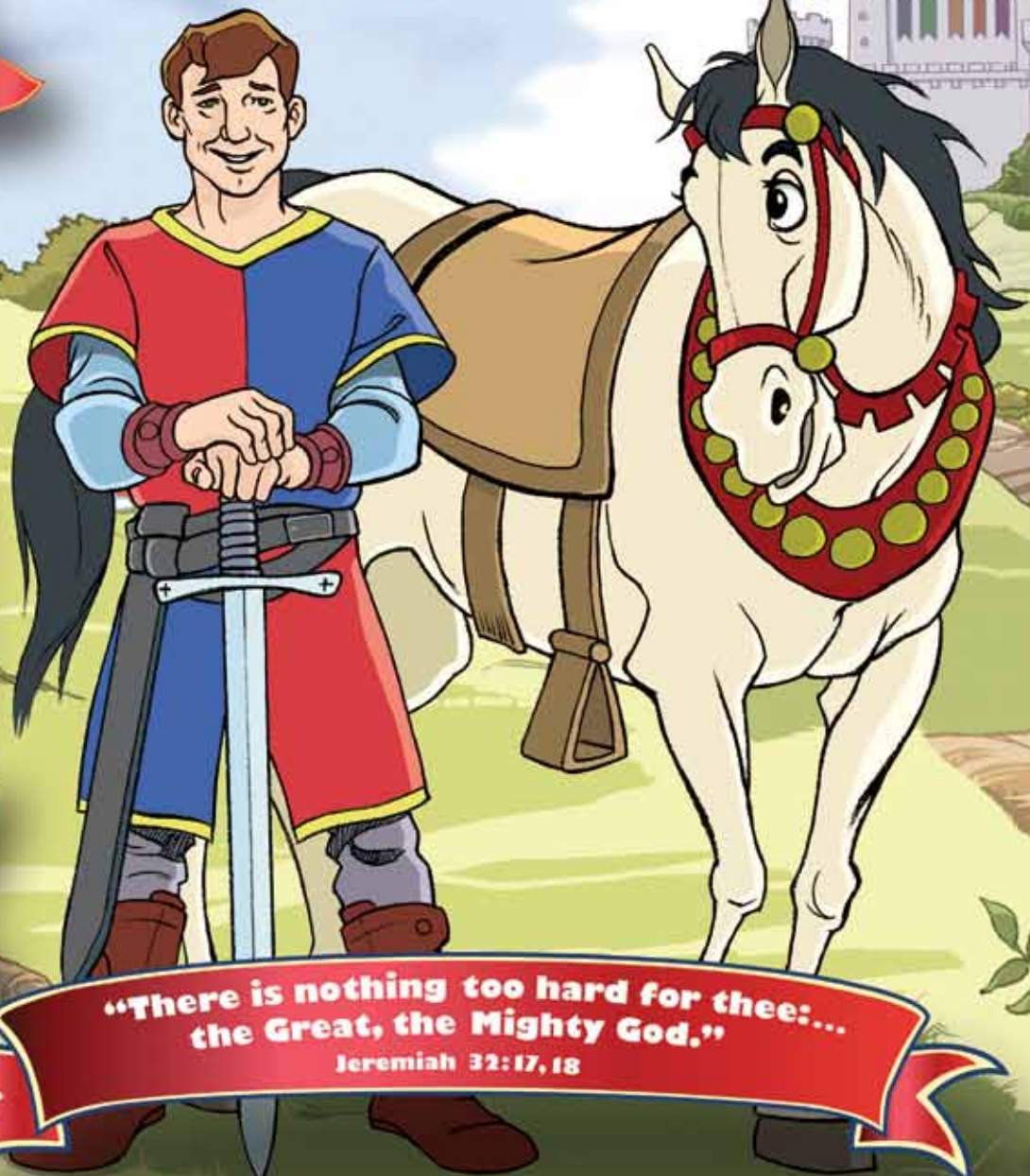




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