

LIBERTY BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN ANALYSIS OF THE EVANGELISTIC IMPACT OF  
THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

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## DEDICATION

To Jo, my wife for life, and a gift from God.

## ABSTRACT

### AN ANALYSIS OF THE EVANGELISTIC IMPACT OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

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A review of current literature demonstrates that very little material is available to describe the mission and effectiveness of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. Research reflects that for the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, BBFI was a formidable movement among Fundamentalists in its independent Baptist doctrinal position and its evangelistic zeal. It was also determined that the BBFI has struggled to maintain its growth patterns and should reassess its original purpose and identity though it still appears to be the largest expression of Fundamentalism in America. Both historical and empirical research methods are used.

Abstract length: 95 words.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Baptist Bible Fellowship International is the heir apparent and a direct descendant of the Revivalism and Fundamentalist movement of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. It has been instrumental in advancing the American evangelical stream through dispensational premillennialism<sup>1</sup> in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. How has the BBFI done it? It was through missions, evangelism, Bible colleges, church planting, and national political involvement.<sup>2</sup>

Within the BBFI, the term “evangelistic” means, “a zealous enthusiasm for winning people to Jesus Christ.”<sup>3</sup> Evangelistic methods involve presenting the gospel of Jesus Christ to everyone until all have heard and received its truth. Perhaps, the best slogan used by a BBFI pastor was the one Jerry Falwell used for his Saturation Evangelism, “Using every available means, at every available time, to reach every available person.”<sup>4</sup>

This project will introduce the philosophy of ministry and missions of the BBFI, the largest of the independent, fundamental Baptist groups (Table 1) from 1950 to the present. The evidence will be presented in the research and explained for each generation.

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<sup>1</sup> Thomas Ice et al., “A History of Dispensationalism,” in *What on Earth is a Dispensation?*, (Springfield, MO: Tribune Publishers, 1994), 20.

<sup>2</sup> Duke Westover, “Moral Majority,” in *Wow, What a Ride*, (Springfield, MO: 21st Century Press, 2010), 62f.

<sup>3</sup> Keith Bassham, interview by phone, June 15, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Elmer L. Towns, *Worktext for 21st Century Tools and Techniques*, (unpublished, n.d.), 53



There is also a need to present the strengths and weaknesses of such a unique movement to student pastors and church planters today. The BBFI was highly successful in the last half of the 20th Century, but it has declined as many of its constituents have failed to face changes in American culture.

From the early days of the movement, graduates have gone out from BBFI colleges to plant churches around the world. They are documented in the Baptist Bible Tribune. Their stories will boost the vision and the morale of church planters today. There is a new breed of church planting pastor in the BBFI and to their benefit there should be a well documented book to show them their roots and give encouragement to build on those roots with new strategies. It is planned that this paper is the beginning of such a project.

Table 1 – Various Independent Baptist Groups

<b>Independent Baptist Groups</b>	<b>Office</b>	<b>Founded</b>	<b>Pastors/Churches</b>
Fundamental Baptist Fellowship	Virginia	1920	429
World Baptist Fellowship	Texas	1928	852
General Association of Regular Baptists	Illinois	1932	1,532
Baptist Bible Fellowship International	Missouri	1950	4,352
Southwide Baptist Fellowship	Georgia	1956	1,334
Independent Baptist Fellowship Int'l	Texas	1984	539
Ind. Bapt. Fellowship of North America	Pennsylvania	1991	110
<i>Source: A Profile of Independent Baptist Pastors and Churches<sup>5</sup></i>			

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<sup>5</sup> Mike Randall, *A Profile of Independent Baptist Pastors and Churches*, (Springfield, MO: Baptist Bible College, 1993), 2.

Since 1950, global church planting has been an ongoing enterprise of the BBFI. The Fellowship is not a church, but rather a parachurch organization with the sole purpose of helping local churches do together what they could not do alone. The great commission of Christ is to the church, and the Fellowship makes it possible for its supporting churches to have a cooperative impact on the world.

In 2007, author Albert Wardin, Jr. wrote about the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, “Its growth has been due to a number of factors, including the evangelistic fervor of its pastors, its church planting, the growth of the Baptist Bible College, its extensive bus ministry, and its ability to grow large Sunday schools, some of the largest in the nation.”<sup>6</sup>

In 1968, Dr. Elmer Towns put the BBF on the map with his book, *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools and What Makes Them Grow*. In his introduction he states:

Six of the Sunday Schools among the ten largest are listed in the yearbook of The Baptist Bible Fellowship, Springfield, Missouri. Only one of the ten largest Sunday Schools is from a Southern Baptist Church. May we conclude that the Baptist Bible Fellowship has better laws for Sunday School growth, or that perhaps the laws for Sunday School growth as expressed by the Southern Baptist Convention are not as effective as once believed? Maybe the youthful enthusiasm of the Baptist Bible Fellowship produces more dedication and hard work than the older, more formal Southern Baptist Denomination. The Baptist Bible Fellowship does seem to be more effective in building larger Sunday Schools.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Albert W. Wardin, Jr., *The Twelve Baptist Tribes in the USA* (Atlanta, GA: Baptist History and Heritage Society, 2007), 69.

<sup>7</sup> Elmer L. Towns, *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools And What Makes Them Grow*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968), 12

Towns also included in his introduction this comment from one of the founding fathers of the BBFI and a megachurch pastor:

An interesting prediction was made by Dr. John Rawlings, minister of Landmark Baptist Temple, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Vice President of Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Missouri. He feels that in the next ten years the Baptist Bible Fellowship will have between twenty-five and fifty churches averaging over three thousand in Sunday School. Today, there are only seven Sunday Schools that average high in attendance and five of these Sunday Schools are listed in the Baptist Bible Fellowship yearbook. If the Baptist Bible Fellowship works as hard in the next ten years as it has in the past ten years it probably will prove Rawlings correct.<sup>8</sup>

In 1987, noted Southern Baptist historian Leon McBeth wrote, “The BBF movement split off from J. Frank Norris in 1950, set up headquarters at Springfield, Missouri, and over the years developed a full range of denominational ministries. By 1983 it reported 3,164 affiliated churches, making it apparently the largest of the Baptist fundamentalist groups. Of these churches, about 2,500 are said to be ‘firm,’ while others support portions of the BBF work; many hold dual or even multiple affiliations with other Fundamentalist bodies.”<sup>9</sup>

The Fellowship began with 142 churches, most of which were small with only four of them with over 500 in attendance in Sunday school. But its numbers soon expanded. By 1958, the BBFI had 600 churches with an estimated membership of 220,000. Although many of its churches continue to be small, at the same time the Fellowship has included some of the largest Baptist congregations in the nation, such as Akron Baptist Temple in Akron, Ohio; Landmark Baptist Temple in Cincinnati, Ohio; and Thomas Road Baptist Church in Lynchburg, Virginia. In 1991, it was reported that five of the 30 largest Sunday schools in the country were in churches related in some way to the BBFI. The migration of Southerners also helped to provide ready mission fields.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, (Nashville: Broadman, 1987), 763

<sup>10</sup> Wardin, 69f

## Church Planting and Church Growth

The BBFI showed remarkable success in the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, building great churches in America. In 1968, the year Towns' book was published the largest of those churches was Akron Baptist Temple in Akron, Ohio which claimed more than 17,000 members and more than 6,000 in attendance each Sunday.<sup>11</sup>

In 1954, the Baptist Bible Tribune reporting on Temple Baptist Church in Detroit, Michigan, gave "attendance figures for April as 4,667; 4,674; 5,718; and 4,876. The church's unparalleled growth and the Tribune's emphasis on it, as well as the progress of High St. Baptist Church, Springfield, Lochland (Landmark) Baptist in Cincinnati, Akron Baptist Temple and others, reveals the importance of numbers to the early Fellowship.<sup>12</sup>

Today, the largest church listed in the Fellowship directory<sup>13</sup> is Thomas Road Baptist Church<sup>14</sup> founded by Jerry Falwell and a small group of people in 1956. It still maintains an affiliation with BBFI as well as membership in the SBC. Thomas Road exceeds 10,000 in attendance and has more than 30,000 members. Jonathan Falwell became the senior pastor after the death of his father in May of 2007, and the church has seen continual growth.

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 12

<sup>12</sup> Billy Vick Bartlett, James O. Combs, Robert J. Terry and Elmer Towns, *The Roots and Origins of Baptist Fundamentalism*, ed., James O. Combs (Springfield, MO: John the Baptist Press, 1984), 99.

<sup>13</sup> The BBFI Contact Directory is a compilation of information regarding churches, pastors, and missionaries who give and/or receive support through the World Missionary Service Center of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. It is designed to foster communication among those entities and to enable them to contact one another more efficiently. It is no more than a list of self-declared Baptist churches and ministries associated with the BBFI by virtue of a support relationship.

<sup>14</sup> BBFI Mission Office, *BBFI Contact Directory 2009-2010*, (Springfield, MO: BBFI Missions, 2009), 272.

## **Summary**

The exponential growth of the Baptist Bible Fellowship can only be explained by the hand of God moving on men He had prepared preachers and missionaries to take the gospel everywhere on Earth. Every pastor in the ranks was made to feel equal with the others, irrespective of the size of his ministry, but he was also motivated to reach more people and build a bigger local church. The older men trained and exhorted the younger men to find a place that needed a good Bible preaching church and get to work on building one. The primary method was soul winning through any method that worked within biblical parameters in that place. In other chapters, the anointed methods will be described and evaluated by their effectiveness.

Challenges presented in churches, in youth camps, and to enrolled college students gleaned missionary candidates who would prepare themselves to live cross-culturally in other nations. They stepped up to surrender their lives for foreign service to God. When those missionaries would travel from church to church to raise their support, they would instill a vision and a passion among the people to give and pray for those families going overseas with the same gospel preached in their own churches. The BBF became a large family of Christ followers interested in each other and in the world.

## **Purpose of Study**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effectiveness of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, the largest of the independent Baptist groups. More specifically, it will expose the evangelistic fervor and effective methods of growth used by BBFI

churches in their outreach ministries. Another more practical purpose for the study is to encourage and challenge the men who now lead BBFI churches to stand on the shoulders of their forefathers, and do greater works with better training than those before them.

As part of the hypothesis, included in the analysis is the practical question: "Why did the BBFI grow so dynamically in its first 25 years then begin a 35 year decline, and what can be done to cause it to grow again?" There are many opinions among leaders past and present to be presented in the research. Discussions seem never-ending when pastors and missionaries gather in the real world or the virtual world of "cyber fellowship."<sup>15</sup> High on the list of topics is the condition of the Fellowship with all of its variables.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following key terms used throughout are:

ABBC—Atlantic Baptist Bible College in Chester, Virginia an approved college for missionary candidate training to the BBFI that recently merged with Piedmont Baptist College and Graduate School in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

Baptist Bible Tribune—the official publication of the BBFI with offices located in Springfield, Missouri. <http://www.tribune.org/>

BBC—Baptist Bible College, owned and operated by the BBFI and has its campus in Springfield, Missouri. It is the original college of the Fellowship. <http://www.gobbc.edu/>

Boston—Boston Baptist College, owned and operated by the BBFI. Was founded in New York and later moved its campus to Boston, Massachusetts. <http://www.boston.edu/>

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<sup>15</sup> John Arnold, "Making Prayer The Core Feature Of The Evangelical Church," (D.Min. diss., Liberty Theological Seminary, 2008), 1

BBF—Baptist Bible Fellowship is a fellowship of pastors operating two colleges, a magazine, and a Missions Office located in Springfield, Missouri. It was founded in 1950.

BBFI—in 1975 the BBF approved a change to add International to its name representing its worldwide mission to reach the lost. <http://www.bbfi.org/>

BBFI Churches—Churches who actively support BBFI mission endeavors and/or schools but are not members of the BBFI because there is no church membership.

BBFI Pastors—Pastors who lead their churches to actively support the BBFI in its missions endeavors and/or schools. They pastor churches of like faith, and are listed in the BBFI directory.

BUA—Baptist University of America first located in Atlanta, Georgia later moved to Orlando, Florida. When the college closed in the 1990's, records and the library were transferred to Baptist Bible College in Springfield.

Fundamentalist—Subscriber to the fundamental doctrines of scripture as published in *The Fundamentals* in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century to contend for the faith.

KJVO—King James Version Only denotes those who would reject the usage of any other Bible translation. Extremists of this view will not fellowship with those who do not agree.

LBU—Louisiana Baptist University and Seminary is located in Shreveport, Louisiana. It is an approved college for missionary training but is not owned or operated by the BBFI. <http://www.lbu.edu/>

Local Church—A visible, local, autonomous, New Testament assembly committed to the Lordship of Christ and His work on earth.

Missionary—one who is sent by a local church primarily to people groups in all nations for the purpose of evangelization and church planting.

NCPO—National Church Planting Office based in Springfield, Missouri. The Office exists to recruit and educate Baptist ministers for existing and newly formed Baptist churches throughout the United States.

PBC—Pacific Baptist College located in Pomona, California is an approved college for training missionary candidates for the BBFI. <http://www.pacificbaptist.edu/>

PCBBC—Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College was located in San Dimas, California. School closed in 1998.

WFBMF—World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship is the parent movement of the BBF once headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas.

WBF—World Baptist Fellowship, newer, shorter name of the WFBMF, presently located in Arlington, Texas on the campus of Arlington Baptist College.  
<http://www.wbfi.net/>

### **Statement of Scriptural Basis**

When Christ began His public ministry, He found and called men to be evangelists or as He phrased it, “fishers of men” in Matthew 4:19 (NKJV). Since they were already fishermen, it was a metaphor they could grasp. He took their career skills and trained them to do His work—that of bringing people into the kingdom of God. Later, at the end of His earthly ministry He would add another dimension to their lives—that of being shepherds over the churches they would plant with the people they had *caught* for Christ.

The story is found in John 21. They had returned to their trade of fishing but were unsuccessful and caught nothing. When Jesus appeared on the shore things suddenly changed—He made them successful. Then, after gathering them to a good breakfast, He introduced this new facet to their calling. He conjoined *fishers of men* (evangelists) with *shepherds of men* (pastors) to build His church. The metaphor is reinforced as the old apostle and former professional fisherman, Simon Peter, instructs in I Peter 5:2-4 (NKJV), “Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.”

As a result, the New Testament church employs evangelism and discipleship to advance growth. *To evangelize and disciple people boldly in every place on earth*



becomes the prime directive for the church in Matthew 28:19-20 (NKJV), “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”

From the first day of its founding the Baptist Bible Fellowship embraced the previous passage and philosophy for its mission in the world. Hence, the BBFI excels in sending missionaries worldwide and planting churches wherever they go. Believing the church was God’s idea and that He will bless His churches above other kinds of mission projects, the missionary model BBFI uses is that of a *church planter*. They could not talk of evangelistic impact without presenting the local church and its authorization to reach the uttermost part of the earth through missionaries. In fact, the work of planting churches in the United States is labeled, *home missions* in the BBFI.

Having been commissioned by our Lord Jesus Christ to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), it is the dedicated response of the churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International to engage in an ever-enlarging, world-wide ministry.

In order to maintain the autonomy of the local church, and at the same time to utilize the benefits of mutual endeavors in spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth, it is needful to formulate certain policies.

Therefore, these policies are formulated from the findings of Scriptural instructions, much prayerful consideration, and many fruitful years of experience; and are adopted as an agreement between the churches, the pastors, and the missionaries.<sup>16</sup>

Since 1950, global church planting has been an ongoing enterprise of the BBFI. The Fellowship is not a church but rather a parachurch organization with the sole purpose of helping local churches do together what they could not do alone. The great commission of Christ is to the church, and the Fellowship makes it possible for its

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<sup>16</sup> BBFI Mission Office, *Missions Policies of the Baptist Bible Fellowship*, [http://bbfi.org/missions/policies/2009SEP\\_BBFI\\_Mission\\_Policies.pdf](http://bbfi.org/missions/policies/2009SEP_BBFI_Mission_Policies.pdf), [accessed February 16, 2010]

supporting churches to have a cooperative impact on the world.

### **Statement of Limitations**

This thesis is limited by its focus on the Baptist Bible Fellowship International and would not apply to every movement of evangelical churches. The analysis will not be a portrait of all Bible-believing denominations. This is not an attempt to produce an exhaustive explanation of evangelism or its various methods. It will focus only on the conservative side of the evangelical movement in independent Fundamentalist churches.

### **Statement of Methodology**

#### **Historical Research**

The essential characteristics of the Fellowship from its beginnings and in past years will be determined by historical research. The first, second and third versions of the constitution and bylaws, articles of faith, and editions of the Baptist Bible Tribune will be primary sources. Minutes of Fellowship meetings will also be used as needed. These will be supplemented by other available documents and personal interviews.

#### **Empirical Research**

The primary tool for determining the current culture of the BBFI was a questionnaire distributed and collected from past and present Fellowship leaders and officers. The survey was emailed to them privately and their permission to quote from their writings was returned with their completed survey forms.

## **Review of the Literature**

Not much can be found about the life and times of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International on the shelves of libraries and book outlets. There are some small self-published works about the beginnings of the Fellowship, which usually include short bios on the early leaders and their boldness to bring about a new fellowship. There are some more serious books which contain short sections regarding the BBFI written by outsiders looking in at the BBFI and quoting from a few insiders who took the trouble to write. It is truly time for someone to write a serious book and this project may be the first step.

## **Summary of Chapters**

### **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

This first chapter introduces the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the subject of the project, and the hypothesis around which the research was centered. It also addresses the validity and significance of the study, background information, and role of the dissertation. The scope of the project, research method, definition of terms, as well as biblical and theological models are included.

### **Chapter 2 – Beginnings**

The second chapter deals with a context of the times surrounding the beginning of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. It provides a biographical sketch of the key personalities in the new movement that influenced the founding and personality of the Fellowship. The leading personality in the parent movement is included and given particular attention

because it was primarily from him that the founders of the new fellowship inherited their practical theology. Evangelism and church planting paved the way for sudden growth of the new movement. One particular example is presented as the largest church in BBF history.

### **Chapter 3 - Expansions**

This third chapter will elaborate on the alterations made in the philosophy and organization of the fellowship as second generation pastors moved into leadership roles. Founders of the BBF began to pass from the scene and their loss was keenly felt. Evangelism, foreign and domestic, continued to have prominence. During this period the BBF changed its identity by embracing a new structure that altered it from a fellowship of pastors to a fellowship of state fellowships. New policies were introduced that affected missionaries and limited college students in their studies. BBC peaked and began to decline as did the whole fellowship.

### **Chapter 4 - Adjustments**

This fourth chapter reveals new leadership introduced from the third generation of pastors. Mission policy was enlarged to accommodate new methods to reach cultures in third world countries. Team missions became a reality during this period. Philosophical issues divided pastors to the right and the left of past fellowship thinking and a major split resulted. Its effects are discussed. An official branch of the BBFI was created to promote and support church planting in the USA. New policies were adopted that allow more freedom for new church plants to function in the Fellowship.

**Chapter 5 – Conclusion**

The final chapter summarizes the research, evaluates the current condition of the Fellowship in light of the research, suggests possible adjustments, and concludes the project.

**Chapter 6 - Bibliography**

The bibliography identifies books, religious and theological journal articles, and dissertation materials read or consulted in the course of this research.

**Chapter 7 - Appendices**

The appendices include material compiled in the course of this study that should provide further explanation and documentation.

## Chapter 2 BEGINNINGS

### 1950-1975: First Generation of Leadership

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International was a product of the Fundamentalist Movement in America during the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. From J. Frank Norris, “leader of Southern Baptist Fundamentalism,”<sup>1</sup> to those who founded the BBFI, the faith and passion for the Fundamentals remained the same. Their priorities were evangelism and training, and their basis was the Bible.

Speaking of early Fundamentalist leaders, Leon McBeth writes, “In 1923 at Kansas City... they formed the Baptist Bible Union, clearly separating from Northern Baptists... Their major leaders included W. B. Riley, A. C. Dixon, J. Frank Norris, and T. T. Shields.”<sup>2</sup> “The Bible Union adopted the New Hampshire confession, with the premillennial revision of the article on eschatology.”<sup>3</sup>

### **America’s Original Megachurch Located in Texas**

J. Frank Norris became pastor of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth in 1909 and during his 43 years there the church became the original megachurch. David Stokes writes, “In fact, people around the country were hearing and reading about ‘the largest fundamentalist flock in America, the 10,000 strong congregation of Reverend J. Frank Norris’ First Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.’”<sup>4</sup>

McBeth explains the rise and fall of the Baptist Bible Union then covers the path

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<sup>1</sup> H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1987), 757.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., 756.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 757.

<sup>4</sup> David R. Stokes, *The Pastor of America’s First Megachurch and the Texas Murder Trial of the Decade in the 1920’s*. (Minneapolis, MN: Bascom Hill, 2010), 3.

Norris took after the BBU dissolved to create a unique fellowship primarily in the south.

When the Baptist Bible Union collapsed, Norris along with C. P. Stealey, formed the Premillennial Baptist Missionary Fellowship in Fort Worth. A few years later that body was chartered under a slightly different name, and in 1950 the name was changed to World Baptist Fellowship most of its early churches were in Texas because Norris was there. The dramatic personality of Norris, along with his powerful preaching and sensational methods, attracted widespread attention, especially through the pages of his paper, "The Fundamentalist." In 1939 he founded at his church a Bible Baptist Seminary, later restructured as Arlington Baptist College, Arlington, Texas. The WBF formed its own mission agencies and by 1982 reported 80 missionary families at work in 24 nations. By that time, it had about 1,250 affiliated churches.<sup>5</sup>

### **Baptist Bible Fellowship Begins**

The BBF was founded May 24, of 1950 in Fort Worth, Texas. Preachers, who were trained by J. Frank Norris on his staff and in his Bible institute, had had enough of his autocratic leadership in the WFBMF. They gathered in a large conference room in the nearby Texas Hotel and determined to start a new college, a new mission program, and a new paper all under the new banner of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. It would be centered in Springfield, Missouri. They pledged themselves to the Great Commission of Christ purposefully identifying the BBF as a mission and training organization.

Former Tribune Editor James Combs, an institute student at the time, was in the meeting and gave this eye witness report:

The World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship, which developed during the 1930s and was promoted nationwide in Norris's weekly paper, "The Fundamentalist," now had a school where independent Baptist philosophy and methodology would be instilled into the impressionable hearts and minds of a bright generation of potential pastors, missionaries and evangelists.

Norris was pastoring "two great churches" with a combined membership of over 20,000. G. Beauchamp Vick, who had worked with Norris in the 1920s, had become "general superintendent," and, in effect, resident pastor of the Temple Baptist Church and a choice in 1936, eventually being recognized as one of "two

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<sup>5</sup> McBeth, 762f.

pastors” in the late 1940s when it moved up above the 3,000 mark in Sunday School, topping 4,000 on big days.

In the spring of 1950 the 72-year-old patriarch launched on a course that would exacerbate a rift that may have started earlier, as many godly men wondered at the unusual tactics Norris now employed, not against the modernists or the compromising Southern Baptists, but against other independent Baptists whose doctrine and mission paralleled that of the Fellowship.

A meeting was held on Wednesday, May 24, 1950, with over 100 pastors and students at the Texas Hotel to discuss just the founding of a new school in Springfield to be known as the Baptist Bible College, but during a post-luncheon meeting, there arose a tide of sentiment for a brand-new movement too powerful to assuage. Wendell Zimmerman moved that a new Baptist Bible Fellowship be founded. Fred Donnelson, missionary to China, announced, “Let missions be our strong right arm.” Noel Smith moved that a new paper be designated the Baptist Bible Tribune. W. E. Dowell was elected president of the Fellowship. The Baptist Bible College was to be a reality in Springfield, Missouri, with G. B. Vick as its president.<sup>6</sup>

### **Leading Founders of the Baptist Bible Fellowship**

George Beauchamp Vick was born in Russellville, Kentucky, the son of a lawyer politician. When young Beauchamp was a year old, his father quit politics and entered Louisville Seminary as a student-pastor. As a young child, Vick assisted his ailing father on pastoral visits, and the experience undoubtedly influenced his later emphasis on the visitation program as the key to church growth.

Vick’s first paid position was the superintendency of the young people’s department at J. Frank Norris’ First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas. Under Vick’s dynamic leadership, the department averaged nearly a thousand per Sunday and annually led First Baptist in additions.

In 1929, Vick “hit the sawdust trail” as the advanceman--song leader for Evangelists Wade House and Mordecai Ham. In 1936, Ham held a revival at the Temple

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<sup>6</sup> James O. Combs, *Roots and Origins of Baptist Fundamentalism*, (Springfield, MO: Baptist Bible Tribune, 1984), 89ff.



Baptist Church in Detroit where Norris was attempting a dual pastorate. Due to the thirteen hundred-mile distance involved, Norris was unable to conserve the results achieved during his visits; and Vick was induced to assume the role of General Superintendent, which due to Norris' protracted absences was tantamount to the pastorate. He became co-pastor in 1948 and sole pastor in 1950.

For nearly forty years Vick led the Temple Baptist Church to the pinnacle of influence among fundamentalists. During that period, he also became President of the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship, President of the Bible Baptist Seminary, President of Baptist Bible College, primary founder and titular head of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, leading figure in the Fundamental Baptist Congresses, and the spiritual diplomat who most successfully bridged the gaps between the sundry fundamentalist islands.<sup>7</sup>

W. E. "Bill" Dowell was born in Redbank, Texas, July 8, 1912. He was the youngest of ten children reared on a farm by his preacher father. When he was only a few days old, his mother knelt by his bed, thanked God for her son and prayed that God would call him to preach. God answered that prayer and the younger Dowell began his ministry in Merkel, Texas under the leadership of his older brother, Ernest Dowell. Both Dowells were admirers of J. Frank Norris and attended his Bible Conferences.

Perhaps the most exciting and certainly some of the most productive years of Dowell's life began in 1941 when he became pastor of the High Street Baptist Church in Springfield, Missouri. He served there twenty-two years, and the attendance increased from a few hundred members to 2700. It was during this strong pastorate that he served

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<sup>7</sup> BBFI Network, "Founders," <http://bbfi.org/founders/vick/> (accessed February 21, 2010).

as president of the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship (1947-1950), became involved in the “break,” and was the first president of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. He was instrumental in locating property for the new college and made High Street’s facilities available to Baptist Bible College during its opening days. Dowell’s position as president and, subsequently, moderator during “the break” made him Vick’s most valuable ally. For nearly twenty years, until the college could build larger facilities, graduation week was held at High Street Baptist Church.

In 1963, Dowell resigned High Street Baptist Church to become pastor of the Jacksonville Baptist Temple in Jacksonville, Florida. In 1968, he accepted the position of executive vice-president of Baptist Bible College, so his stay at Jacksonville was comparatively short compared to his tenure at High Street. Dowell served in that capacity until the death of Vick in 1975, at which time he was installed as president, and held that position until 1983.<sup>8</sup>

In 1974, Bill Dowell became pastor of Baptist Temple while serving at BBC. He retired from the church in 1988 as Pastor Emeritus. After the death of Dr. G. B. Vick in November, 1975, Dr. Dowell became President of Baptist Bible College and served for nine years. From 1984 until his death in 2002, he served as Chancellor of BBC and in his honor the Trustees of the school named the field house (largest building on campus) after him. Dr. Dowell died May 2, 2002.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> David W. Hardy, “A Comparison of the Formative And Continuing Essential Characteristics of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International with a Proposal for Shaping Strategic Vision” (DMin diss., Dallas Seminary, 1994), 68f

<sup>9</sup> BBFI Network, “Founders,” [http:// bbfi.org/founders/dowell/](http://bbfi.org/founders/dowell/), (accessed February 21, 2010).

Another notable person in the formation of this fellowship, Noel Smith was born in Greenvale, Tennessee on August 7, 1900. His parents moved to Murfreesboro, Tennessee while he was a young child, and he lived there until he was seventeen. His education was limited to what he received in the Murfreesboro public schools. After the death of his mother, he became a railway express agent in Nashville and then moved to Chattanooga. Although Smith was saved at age fifteen, he always looked back to his experience at Billy Sunday's Tabernacle in 1918, while in Chattanooga, as the time of his surrender to God's will. He referred to this time in his life as being "converted" though already saved.<sup>10</sup>

Since he had no formal theological training, Noel Smith disciplined himself to learn all he could by reading. He also began holding meetings every opportunity he had. He had a measure of success, and in 1930 he resigned his job and was ordained to the ministry by the Second Baptist Church of Clarksville, Tennessee. In 1932, Smith baptized Mattie Linda Stuart who later became his wife. Three years later, Charles Stuart Smith was born.

The years 1946-1947 brought with them events that would precipitate a change in Smith's direction for future ministry. Smith, a Southern Baptist at that time, was at odds with Louis D. Newton, president of the Convention, over Newton's comments that Communists and Baptists have the same views on religious freedom. Dr. Newton was one of the advisors of *The Protestant*, which stated, among other things, that "Communism is the child of Christendom." After the Convention re-elected Newton, Smith decided he could no longer participate. This severance with the Convention would

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<sup>10</sup> Norma Gillming, *The Best of Noel Smith*, (unpublished, 1985), 11.

be the first step in bringing about his association with J. Frank Norris.

Through various preaching engagements, Smith came in contact with Norris and other pastors associated with the movement. In the winter of 1947, he accepted a position at Bible Baptist Seminary, but resigned the following May and moved to Nashville. This move was short-lived, for in July, Norris persuaded him to return to Fort Worth as editor of his paper, “The Fundamentalist” and as a professor in the seminary. He held this position until just before the break in 1950. After the break, Smith became editor of the new Fellowship paper and taught in the College. He held these positions until his death in January, 1974.<sup>11</sup>

Fred Donnelson was a native of the state of Iowa, born in a small town called Missouri Valley. It was at a revival meeting conducted by the famous Billy Sunday that, at the age of 12, he gave his heart to the Lord Jesus. After graduating from high school, he served two years in the coast artillery division of the army during World War I. In 1928 he received his Bachelor of Arts degree from Wheaton College; he also graduated from the Northern Baptist Seminary. Sixteen years as a “missionary to China” unfolded as years of success and sacrifice. Thousands of lives were touched by his ministry during times of peace and war. As a Japanese prisoner of war with his family for nearly two years during World War II, he displayed a characteristic which demonstrated that he never expected of others a price any greater than he himself was willing to pay.

During the eighteen years in which he served as Director of Missions of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and professor of missions in the Baptist Bible College, he became affectionately and respectfully known as “Mr. Missions.” After his death in 1974, his wife, Effie, would use that title for a book that details his life and ministry.<sup>12</sup>

John W. Rawlings was born in Cave City, Arkansas, on January 29, 1914. His

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<sup>11</sup> Hardy, 56

<sup>12</sup> BBFI Network. “Founders.” <http://bbfi.org/founders/donnelson/> (accessed February 21, 2010)

mother, like Hannah praying for Samuel, asked God for a male child to be used in His service. God honored both requests giving her a male child and calling him to preach at twenty years of age, just two years after he was saved. Rawlings married Orelia Mobley, his childhood sweetheart, when he was eighteen. He later attended Norris' Bible Institute, Bible Baptist Seminary, and became the first man to finish the full course. He recalls being classmates with missionary John Birch, Oscar Wells, and others.

Rawlings' pastoral career began at Central Baptist Church in Tyler, Texas, where he served from 1940-1951. Early on, he became a traveler, preaching whenever and wherever God provided an opportunity. He was particularly active in East Texas and became the recognized leader among the pastors of that area. It was during this pastorate that the "break" with Norris took place. In addition to rallying the pastors in East Texas, Rawlings was serving as president of the alumni association and was a trustee of Norris' school. He held three strategic positions that would prove as valuable to the new Fellowship as they were fatal to the old.

Although Rawlings was present at the Texas Hotel and took part in all the formative meetings of the new Fellowship, his greatest contribution may have been one that was less dramatic, but vital for the survival of the new school. As previously mentioned, Rawlings was a traveler, and now he would travel even more, giving every spare moment to the promotion of the school. Youth camps, fellowship meetings, coffee shops, any place he could assemble two or three preachers, Rawlings was there. The result was a number of undecided pastors confirming their allegiance to the new Fellowship.

In 1952, Rawlings became pastor of the Landmark Baptist Temple of Cincinnati,

Ohio. Beginning with only 900 members, he led the church to an average attendance of just under 4000 in 1969 with high days of 6000.<sup>13</sup> The Landmark Hour broadcast was heard on 100 radio stations.<sup>14</sup> Rawlings retired from the pastorate of Landmark in 1994 and spent 18 months in Lynchburg, Virginia, as a consultant to Jerry Falwell and helped start the *National Liberty Journal*. Then he settled in Florence, Kentucky where he now leads The Rawlings Foundation at age 97. In 2000 at Baptist Bible College, Jerry Falwell presented “Dr. John” with a plaque naming him “Mr. Baptist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.”<sup>15</sup>

Wendell Zimmerman was one of the founders of the Fellowship. He presented the original motion at the Texas hotel meeting in 1950 that brought into existence the Baptist Bible Fellowship and has held several offices in both the Fellowship and College. One of his most significant offices was that of successor to Noel Smith, the first Baptist Bible Tribune editor. He held that position from 1974 to 1982.

Zimmerman was born April 29, 1916, in Altus, Oklahoma. As a nine-year-old lad, he accepted Christ. At the age of seventeen, his mother’s prayers that he would become a preacher were answered. He surrendered to God’s call and preached his first sermon at the First Baptist Church of Springdale, Arkansas. He attended Moody Bible Institute and the University of Arkansas. His first pastorate began in his teens when he accepted a call to the First Baptist Church in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. In 1938 he married Virginia Whitehead and they became the parents of five children. He founded and pastored several churches, one of which is the Kansas City Baptist Temple. He served in Kansas City for

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<sup>13</sup> Hardy, 62

<sup>14</sup> George W. Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America* (Greenville, SC: Bob Jones University Press, 1972), 219.

<sup>15</sup> Appendix G includes a photo of Falwell and Rawlings on this occasion.

25 years, building the Temple into one of the largest churches in the heart of America.

Today it remains the largest Baptist church in that city.

On March 28, 1992, Zimmerman was invited to speak at the Sun Coast Baptist Church where he was Pastor Emeritus. He was sitting on the platform thumbing through his Bible when, perhaps, he heard a voice that no one else could hear. He experienced a sudden heart attack and slipped into the presence of the Saviour he had faithfully served for some fifty years.<sup>16</sup>

### **The Influence of J. Frank Norris on the new Fellowship**

Though the BBF made a departure from the man Norris became, they all agreed that his strengths were superior even if his manners could be unbearable. For instance, to a man they agreed his preaching was the best they had heard. One outspoken founder of the new fellowship was John Rawlings who spoke of Norris for the special edition photo magazine, "Our Baptist Heritage."

My assessment of J. Frank Norris is based on my personal knowledge of him that began when I was 12 years of age through his paper, *The Searchlight*. I read his sermons and heard him through his radio broadcasts as a youth. I enrolled in his seminary in the late 1930s and was associated with him throughout the 1940s until the break came in 1950. I consider him the greatest preacher of the 20th century, without a doubt and from all aspects of consideration.

He was a great editor. He was a great pastor with a dual ministry at the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, and the Temple Baptist Church of Detroit, Michigan. As an evangelist, he was unexcelled by any I knew of at that time. His meetings were a great success wherever he preached. I also thought of him as a Bible scholar with a good grasp of doctrine and prophecy. He also knew history quite well.

I knew other great men of his time like W. B. Riley, Harry Ironsides (sic), T. T. Shields, George W. Truett, Mordecai Ham and others of lesser stature. He stood head and shoulders above all of them. As a pulpiteer, he had no equal.

Still, of all his accomplishments, in my judgment, his greatest work was the birthing of independent Baptists as a movement that continues today through the World Baptist Fellowship, the Baptist Bible Fellowship International and the Independent Baptist Fellowship International, who all have roots in his ministry. He shared a vision of world missions greater than his personal accomplishments. I have not allowed this assessment to be colored by my personal feelings resulting

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<sup>16</sup> Hardy, 62f

from the split in 1950, where he attacked my ministry in Tyler, Texas, through various means. All of us are indebted to him in spite of our fight back then.<sup>17</sup>

In Mike Randall's biography of him, G. B. Vick is quoted, saying:

J. Frank Norris made a tremendous contribution to American Fundamentalism. He preached the pure gospel. He was a master at handling a crowd, too. If things came up — I've seen him speaking where the opposition was strong — he could sway a crowd. You can't understand it, but he was able to cope with any situation that came up. Mr. Norris made a tremendous contribution to the work at Temple Baptist Church, too. I don't know of any other man in the world in that generation or now that could have built the Temple Baptist Church and gotten the attention of the fifth largest city in the country as he did. The Lord blessed the church tremendously. When we started working together at Temple, we were averaging 700. The Lord blessed so that before "the break," we were running over 3,000. He not only made a great contribution; he helped many a preacher who was contemporaneous with him—especially the young preachers. But he also left in his wake many a broken-hearted preacher and many a preacher who left the ministry.<sup>18</sup>

As it turned out, Vick was the last to agree to the new fellowship though he had announced his support for a new college in Springfield. He seemed to believe that he could work with Norris after all he had done it for many years. Vick was a brilliant administrator and a gifted diplomat. He had proved it and would continue to prove it for the rest of his life. In the biography, *G. B. Vick, His Life and Legacy*, he described the reason for "the break" from Norris:

J. Frank Norris and I had gotten along well for many, many years together. It was a wonder to many of our friends, because Mr. Norris hadn't had people who stayed a long time with him.

In 1948, when he asked me to become president of the school, I didn't want to do that. I said, "I'm not a school man." Actually, he was anxious to get out from under the responsibility. He had high blood pressure. The doctor insisted

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<sup>17</sup> John W. Rawlings, "J. Frank Norris had no equal as a pulpiteer" in "Our Baptist Heritage," ed. Mike Randall (Springfield, MO: Baptist Bible Tribune, 2000), 42

<sup>18</sup> Mike Randall, *G. B. Vick, His Life and Legacy*. (Springfield, MO: Midwest Book Services, 1998) 54f.



that he turn it over to somebody. The school was in the red. I guess he couldn't get anyone else, and he hoped I would get them out of the financial jam. I told him it would mean our break if I took it. He said, "No, it won't." I said, "Yes, it will. If I take responsibility, I'm going to have the authority."

The main issue that led to "the break" was the changing of the bylaws that governed the Bible Baptist Seminary. The new bylaws never had been approved by the trustees of the school. I'd never seen them. The directors of the World Baptist Fellowship had never seen them. They hadn't been voted on by the pastors. Mr. Norris just put them in on his own and the new bylaws gave him veto power.

On Tuesday of our Fellowship meeting (May 23, 1950), the showdown came. He spoke for about an hour and I spoke for about an hour and a half. I had pretty well the whole thing documented.

A preacher from Florida got up and suggested that they appoint a committee to investigate the new bylaws. Norris said, "This is my church, and no committee's going to do a thing about it." After a couple of test votes, our men decided they wanted to hold a meeting to organize. There were other issues, but the bylaws change was the main one.<sup>19</sup>

### **Why Would Men Of God Break Fellowship With Each Other?**

Norris had been the mentor for all those preachers who would leave and lead the new fellowship. Working in his megachurch had taught them many things not the least of which was how to build a great church and many of them accomplished it in their own pastorates with their own methods. They had all been drawn to Norris by his effectiveness and success but they were now ready to go their own way and follow God's leadership in their own works. Their conflict was much like the issue that separated Paul and Barnabas in Acts 15:36-41 (NKJV) where scripture states,

"Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, 'Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, *and see* how they are doing.' Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 55

and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”

Many Bible readers are taken aback by this passage because they cannot see the profit in such behavior of two anointed preachers in the early church. But point of fact is, there were now two ministry teams out in the field harvesting in two fruitful directions.

What happened with Paul and Barnabas was now a reality for Norris and Vick. Each man was anointed by the Holy Spirit but their gifts and skills for leadership were determined to go in different directions. To be honest, the break was painful for both men but it was their destiny. The old pastor would die and go to meet his Lord within twenty-seven months, while the younger pastor would dynamically lead his church, a new college, and a new fellowship for more the next twenty-five years. We in ministry can take heart because with our differences, we are still usable to God in evangelizing the lost and discipling them to reach others. It is not our perfection but His that brings grace to the sinner’s heart.

Ken Sande speaks of this kind of conflict in his book, *The Peacemaker*:

Conflict is not necessarily bad, however. In fact, the Bible teaches that some differences are natural and beneficial. Since God has created us as unique individuals, human beings will often have different opinions, convictions, desires, perspectives, and priorities. Many of these differences are not inherently right or wrong; they are simply the result of God-given diversity and personal preferences (see 1 Cor. 12:21-31). When handled properly, disagreements in these areas can stimulate productive dialogue, encourage creativity, promote helpful change, and generally make life more interesting.

Therefore, although we should seek unity in our relationships, we should not demand uniformity (see Eph. 4:1-13). Instead of avoiding all conflicts or demanding that others always agree with us, we should rejoice in the diversity of God’s creation and learn to accept and work with people who simply see things differently than we do (see Romans. 15:7; cf. 14:1-13).<sup>20</sup>

Vick led Temple Baptist Church in Detroit for 40 years (15 as superintendant, 25 as pastor) and in that time, “The total number of additions from 1936 through 1975 was

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<sup>20</sup> Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2004), 30.

50,101. At least two thirds of those added to the church came by profession of faith and baptism, making the number of people who accepted Christ and walked the aisle for baptism to be conservatively estimated at 33,568 souls."<sup>21</sup> It also became a great mission giving church. He led and built the Baptist Bible College of Springfield, Missouri, for the first twenty-five years of its history. During his administration, the school became the largest of its kind in the world and graduated over 4,500 students. Many of these graduates now hold positions of great spiritual influence throughout the world."<sup>22</sup> Norris had grown the church to 3,000 with his expertise in preaching, broadcasting, and publishing but Vick's gift for administration and unique approach of regularly having top notch guest preachers at Temple would keep the pulpit hot and results were tremendous.

According to Eli Harju, a former member at Temple Baptist and well known professor at Baptist Bible College as well as Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College in California for a combined 47 years, "It was like Acts 5:42 (KJV), 'And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.' It was not unusual to see 40 to 50 people saved each week and come forward in the services." Author: "What were the top methods used at Temple when you were there?" Harju: "1) Monday night visitation, the reports after the visits were exciting. 2) Guest preachers on Sundays. 3) Pledges to talk to someone about Jesus that week. 4) Grads would tell what they would do after graduation."<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Randall, 22

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 11

<sup>23</sup> Eli Harju, interview by phone, August 24, 2009

### **Baptist Bible College Graduates Started Churches**

Billy Bartlett explained, “The paramount issue when the BBF men broke camp in Fort Worth was the feasibility of launching a Bible school in three short months. They felt a school was a primary plank in the formulation of the new movement. It would be the feeder that would cause the organization to grow.”<sup>24</sup> Beginning with its first commencement in 1951, it was routine at Baptist Bible College for graduates to walk across the platform and announce their plans for the future. It was common for pastoral students to announce they were going to some town or city to start a church, and for mission graduates to announce the country or field where they planned to go as missionaries.<sup>25</sup>

In those days, BBC was a place where students received practical training to start churches, and build them into soul winning stations with regular revival meetings on the schedule to keep the church fervently on the lookout for prospects to win to Christ. Personal evangelism courses were taught where students memorized hundreds of scripture verses to be used in witnessing to lost people the student would meet. College chapel services were kept “hot” with powerful preachers and missionaries preaching after evangelistic music. It was intentional and it was effective.<sup>26</sup>

Much like a military academy, students were affected by the vision and passion of leaders who were dedicated to reach the world for Christ. When graduates left BBC, they went out with excellent training to plant and grow churches, and with a quality education

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<sup>24</sup> Bartlett, 100f

<sup>25</sup> Eli Harju, interview. Harju taught in two BBFI colleges for more than 40 years.

<sup>26</sup> Elmer Towns, class notes, January 10-15, 2010.

that kept them on solid spiritual ground for ministry. The Fellowship grew as the churches bloomed and the products of the college came back each year in May to share their stories, their sermons, and their successes.

### **Missions and Expansion**

It was a given that all BBF churches believed in soul winning and building their churches through Sunday School growth. In addition, every BBF church was led to believe in and financially support missions around the globe. The passage in Acts 1:8 (KJV) was often quoted and preached, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” Acts 1:8 was used with the emphasis that evangelism started first at home, then moved outward until the whole world heard the gospel. It was intended to be a simultaneous outreach to include home and foreign missions in the ministry and budget of the churches.

Founding Editor, Noel Smith, wrote in the Baptist Bible Tribune:

There is no mystery about the progress of this Fellowship. In the first place, this Fellowship at the very outset deliberately determined that the missionary enterprise would be the center of its work. Missions would not be used as bait to get money. Missions would not be used for window dressing. Missions would be basic and central ... with this Fellowship, missions is the thing. And when you make missions “the thing” you automatically solve a lot of the basic problems inherent in the effort of autonomous churches to successfully work together.<sup>27</sup>

Dr. Fred Donnelson stood in that first meeting in Fort Worth with the suggestion that the strong right arm of the Baptist Bible Fellowship would be world missions. Mr.

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<sup>27</sup> Noel Smith, “Let’s Thank Our God and Push on,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, November 20, 1959, 4.

Donnelson had served previously as a missionary in China for the World Fundamental Baptist Missionary Fellowship. When the Japanese conquered China before Pearl Harbor, they placed him with his wife and daughter in a Japanese concentration camp.<sup>28</sup> He knew the suffering and the challenges of being a missionary in a foreign land, but he believed it was the greatest calling any Christian could have. He served the BBF as mission director from 1951 until 1968, when he retired. His passion was presented in every class. He taught on missions at BBC and his proclamation to make “Missions the strong right arm of the Fellowship” still echoes through the halls of most BBF churches today.

The Mission Policy<sup>29</sup> of the Fellowship centers on church planting and requires male missionary candidates to be ordained and commissioned by a local church. The thought behind it is, if churches are planted and blessed they will last beyond the missionary’s service on the field. Ideally, a missionary will train national preachers until they are ready to be pastors, then help them start churches to pastor. This plan of missions is referred to as planting *indigenous*, or native, churches. Experience has taught us that governments can change, and Americans can be expelled leaving their work behind. Property can be nationalized and the value lost, but trained national pastors and churches can remain and grow.

The world mission program of the BBFI under F. S. Donnelson, former missionary in China, also expanded. The Fellowship, gaining all the missionaries of the WBF, began with 19 missionaries in four fields. By 1956, excluding the Chinese field that closed, the Fellowship had 90 missionaries on 13 fields, primarily in the Far East, the Indian subcontinent, and Latin America. It also had two fields among Indians in the USA. By 1995, the number of missionaries had

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<sup>28</sup> Mrs. Fred S. Donnelson, *They Called Him Mr. Missions*. (Springfield, MO: Fellowship Publications, 1974), 13.

<sup>29</sup> See Appendix B for the current Mission Policy, updated September, 2009.

risen to 806 on 95 fields with contributions of over \$24 million. In 2004, it reported 819 missionaries and an income for foreign missions of \$36 million.<sup>30</sup>

The BBFI has a very modest administrative staff. In 1991, it was reported that its Mission Office had a staff of less than 25. Missionaries must raise their support in deputation from the churches and not receive it from the Mission Office.<sup>31</sup>

### **Missionary Support Trends**

In his survey of Independent Baptist churches, Mike Randall reveals, “Missions giving and the support of missionaries is growing among the churches. The most popular program for raising missionary giving is the faith promise missionary offering. The BBFI has been, is and may be expected to continue to be heavily involved in church planting.”<sup>32</sup>

Table 2 – Method of Raising Missions Funds\*

<b>Method</b>	<b>Percentage of the Survey</b>
Percentage of General Fund	27.0
Faith Promise Offerings	84.5
Mission Conference	29.2
Fifth Sunday Offering	01.2
Yearly Offerings	09.1
Special Offerings	33.0
*May indicate multiple answers. <sup>33</sup>	

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<sup>30</sup> Wardin, 69

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 70

<sup>32</sup> Randall, 23

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 29

### **Faith Promise Mission Offerings**

Though the Baptist Bible Fellowship never has had an official policy for raising mission offerings, the most prevalent in BBFI churches has been Faith Promise since its introduction by Clifford Clark, pastor of Tulsa Baptist Temple, in January, 1959.<sup>34</sup>

One chief proponent of Faith Promise giving is Carl Boonstra, former pastor in Denver and retired Mission Director of the Fellowship. He is still actively preaching Missions Conferences in churches across America and overseas. Boonstra describes himself as a Dutchman who never wastes a nickel, but he is generous in his praise of what Faith Promise can do for a church in its mission giving.

For example, in 1969, Dr. Boonstra led a mission conference in Colorado at the Emmanuel Baptist Church in the suburbs of Colorado Springs. The church was giving 10% of its general offerings (tithes) to a mission fund to partially support three Conservative Baptist missionaries. The previous year that amount had been \$11,000. After a few services in the conference, Boonstra preached, “Think What We Can Do Together,” while using a large chalkboard to show that faithfully giving a weekly amount could add up to a large annual amount. The total Faith Promise of that small church for the next year was \$33,000 and it was all received. In addition the regular offerings of the church grew to a new record high. There was a great spirit of excitement in that church and Faith Promise became the way mission offerings were given for the remaining years this author served as pastor there.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Interview with Rudy Johnson, April 3, 2010. Missionary Johnson attended the mission conference in Tulsa where Clark made the first presentation to about 20 pastors.

<sup>35</sup> Interview with Carl Boonstra, August 27, 2009.



The concept of Faith Promise offerings for missions was originated with Oswald J. Smith, pastor of The Peoples Church in Toronto. In his own words he described his plan of raising mission offerings.

It is a promise made by you to God, and to God alone. If you are unable to pay it, all you have to do is to tell God. Give Him your excuse and if He accepts it, you are free. You do not have to pay it. That, I say, is a Faith Promise Offering. That is the kind of an offering I preach and teach and take everywhere I go. I want to be Scriptural in all I do. I have gone to many a church that has been opposed to a pledge offering, but as soon as I have explained the nature of a Faith Promise Offering, all opposition has disappeared, and those who have been most antagonistic to a pledge of any kind, have been perfectly willing to accept the plan of a Faith Promise Offering, and God has accomplished wonders.<sup>36</sup>

Not all BBFI churches migrated to Faith Promise Offerings. Some had plans in place that worked very well for them. For instance, the annual Christmas Mission Offering during the last ten weeks of each year was used to emphasize missions and raise special offerings to support the missionary budget for the coming year. Some of the larger Fellowship churches were successful in raising millions of dollars with that plan. Many of the major mission projects such as missionary homes, church buildings, land acquisitions, Bible colleges, and youth camps were underwritten by churches such as Temple Baptist Church in Detroit. While G. B. Vick was pastor, Temple did not provide monthly support to missionaries, but was a great help with large ticket items.<sup>37</sup>

### **The Mighty Pen**

The front page of the Baptist Bible Tribune, July 6, 1975, honored its founder with a large picture and this caption, “Dr. Noel Smith— His pen was mightier than the

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<sup>36</sup> Oswald J. Smith, *A Faith Promise Offering*, (Toronto: The Peoples Church), 1f

<sup>37</sup> Bob Baird, interview by phone, November 9, 2009.

sword. His writings created the climate in which the Baptist Bible Fellowship grew.”

Part of that climate was spreading the good news about planting churches and introducing those that chose to align with the BBF in the early days.<sup>38</sup> There was also news about the families of missionaries and the places in which they chose to serve.<sup>39</sup> In concert with those events, the propagation of that good news was the work of the Baptist Bible Tribune under founding editor, Noel Smith. His influence within and without the Fellowship was a remarkable story in itself.

At the outset of hostilities in 1950, Smith was in neither camp, but when Norris threw propriety to the winds, Smith quit his job the Sunday prior to the vituperation of the Fellowship meeting. When this new movement was launched, Smith was thrust into the role of spokesman-protector to counter the outpourings of the *FUNDAMENTALIST*. In the course of time his role broadened to include the teaching and positionalizing of the new Fellowship in the areas of doctrine, ethics, and the nuances of ecclesiastical separation. Whether goring the Southern Baptist Convention, communist sympathizers, the Catholic Church, Billy Graham, Norman Vincent Peale, or Martin Luther King, Noel Smith's terse, colloquial prose stirred the reader, put a ramrod up his back, and made him want to emulate the kind of character weekly lauded in Smith's periodical pulpit.<sup>40</sup>

Many periodicals of his day respected his editorial skills and often quoted him as the official spokesman for the young upstart Baptist movement. His delightful Tennessee speaking style and his witty writing style brought him to the forefront of the fellowship because as he often said, “Everyone reads the Tribune.”<sup>41</sup> He was so practical that he added wisdom to the reader’s thinking and so pointed that he was rarely misunderstood. His greatest compliment was to call a man a “gentleman.”

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<sup>38</sup> R. O. Woodworth, “In Odessa They Tip the Hat to Her Majesty,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, June 25, 1954, 1.

<sup>39</sup> Noel Smith, “Too (sic) More Fellowship Missionary Families Sail,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, June 25, 1954, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Bartlett, 98

<sup>41</sup> This slogan was printed in every Tribune Noel Smith edited.

Smith was trustworthy with important information, and he was brilliant with character observations. So-called Christian practitioners didn't have a chance with him unless they were genuine. He often warned his readers of glitter that wasn't gold. Then on the other hand, he heaped praise on penniless preachers who were doing the right thing without possessing all the things their families might need. He urged support for missionaries and new church planters while behind the scenes he provided money for struggling college students anonymously. He saw to it that people got the Tribune even if the cost came out of his pocket.

### **The Anointed Methods in BBF Churches**

As research for this project began in the summer of 2009, a simple survey was emailed to BBFI pastors to ascertain a list of assorted methods that had been used in fellowship churches in the past 60 years. The list grew to 99 unique methods. It was surprising to see the variety and it proved that some real creativity was used in developing some of the ideas. The survey just asked a simple question: *What different methods have you seen used in BBF churches to grow the attendance?* The complete list of 99 methods provided is found in Appendix F.

Dr. Elmer Towns is fond of phrases that describe a truth and make it easy to remember. One in particular is "anointed methods." He declares, "Methods are the application of principles to culture."<sup>42</sup> "Every decade and every generation has an anointed method."<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Elmer L. Towns, *Worktext for 21st Century Tools and Techniques*, (unpublished, n.d.), 44

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 53.

Though certainly not exclusive to the BBF, the following methods proved to be anointed in the foundation and success of the BBF churches. These are the four that rose to the top of the list in the BBF:

- 1) Revival meetings that reach the lost and backslidden, and led to church planting in numerous cities and towns.
- 2) Sunday Schools that used the Bible as the textbook rather than quarterly booklets.<sup>44</sup> It was a common practice to use the “people count” in Sunday school to measure the growth of the church.
- 3) Busses were used by many churches to bring in children, teens, and adults to Sunday morning classes and church services.
- 4) Radio and/or television programs were found to be a great enhancement to growth, drawing people from large areas to attend the church.

In the first generation of the BBF (1950-1975), the methods most commonly adopted were those which preachers had seen used by First Baptist in Fort Worth and Temple Baptist in Detroit. They were tried and tested under the leadership of Norris and Vick at their respective churches. Joining them as well were Bill Dowell in Springfield, John Rawlings in Cincinnati, Harold Henniger in Canton, Jerry Falwell in Lynchburg, and Dallas Billington (whose Akron Baptist Temple grew to 6,000) during the 50s and 60s. Those were the churches that made the list in Towns’ book about the 10 largest Sunday Schools.

Elmer Towns advised preachers in 1968:

If you desire to build a large Sunday School, you might begin your ministry by working for an experienced pastor who is already building a large

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<sup>44</sup> Dallas Billington, *God is Real*, (New York, NY: David McKay Company, 1962), 217

Sunday School. Spend three or four years in the “school of experience,” studying the organization and the man who makes it grow. During year (sic) internship you will learn administration, self-discipline and technique. But the greatest lesson will be *vision*. The ability to think big is not learned in Bible College or Seminary. We learn vision by seeing the work of God through the eyes of a man of God.<sup>45</sup>

### **Church Growth Methods used by First Generation BBF Pastors**

Greg Smith, Director of Library Services at Baptist Bible College and at Liberty University, wrote an essay entitled, “Revivalism in the Baptist Bible Fellowship, 1959-1960; A Burkean Analysis.”<sup>46</sup> In it he offers this portrait of the place of “revivalism” in the BBF during its first generation:

By 1960, the leaders of the BBF claimed to speak for “1,100 churches composed of one million Americans.”<sup>47</sup> The movement’s exponential growth over its first ten years—it had begun with just 120 churches<sup>48</sup>—was primarily attributable to the fact that its founders believed strongly in using revival meetings to build churches. In 1950 one of those founders stated, “Nearly every one of the preachers of the Baptist Bible Fellowship is a mass revivalist. All of our churches are the products of mass revivals.”<sup>49</sup>

Keith Bassham, a magazine editor who has observed the BBF from within for several decades, confirms this interpretation of the movement’s early history: “The presence of so many pastors who were equally in their element in revivalist mode is logical once you consider that the fundamentalist movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is theologically and sociologically related more to the frontier revival movements than any of the other religious traditions.”<sup>50</sup>

As noted above, the BBF’s first decade was one of remarkable growth. By the late 1970s several of the movement’s key founders had passed the scene and

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<sup>45</sup> Elmer L. Towns, *The Ten Largest Sunday Schools And What Makes Them Grow*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1968), 7.

<sup>46</sup> Gregory A. Smith, “Revivalism in the Baptist Bible Fellowship, 1959-60: A Burkean Analysis” (unpublished essay, 2008), 1.

<sup>47</sup> William F. Askew, “Conference at Jacksonville Urges Inquiry,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, March 11, 1960, 5.

<sup>48</sup> Robert J. Terrey, “Baptist Bible Fellowship,” *Encyclopedia of Religion in the South*, ed. Samuel S. Hill (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1984), 84

<sup>49</sup> “The First Spadeful,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, July 28, 1950, 4.

<sup>50</sup> Keith Bassham, e-mail message to Greg Smith, January 31, 2008.

the era of rapid expansion had come to an end. The Tribune served as connective tissue for the BBF; its themes—including revival—gave voice to the collective aspirations of pastors, missionaries, evangelists, and other leaders.<sup>51</sup>

### **The Largest BBF Church in the World**

It is not unusual today to hear of churches having 10,000; 20,000; and even 35,000 in attendance at their services on a weekend. But 40 years ago it was unheard of when Bob Hughes and his family went to the mission field and under God's direction and with His help made it happen. Here is just a short summary of the story taken from the Christian Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio which is housed in the Baptist Temple there.

Robert Earl Hughes was born August 8, 1932 on a farm in Center, Texas, to Theron and Thelma Hughes. At the age of 17 Bob joined the Air Force and was stationed at Clark Air Force Base in Manila, Philippine Islands—a decision that would change his life. God burdened his heart to reach the Philippines with the gospel, so after his discharge he entered Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri for training. While in school he met and married Helen Johnston in 1954 and then graduated in 1955.

Through the influence of Fred Donnelson, the Hughes family was challenged to reach Cebu city—a busy college town steeped in Catholicism. In 1957 they met in a rented building and soon began Bible Baptist Church. The ministry grew rapidly as a result of Bob's creative ideas -- a radio broadcast called "What The Bible Says," a television ministry and extension classes were held throughout the surrounding area. Because of their strong evangelistic outreach, by 1975 20,000 people were attending the overall ministry.

Even though he died in the prime of his life, Bob's God-sized vision continues today. Next Sunday, March 25, 2007, Bible Baptist Church in Cebu will celebrate its 50th anniversary with a goal of 50,000 souls saved in three months and 50,000 people in attendance for the month. Bob Hughes' life prayer was that God would do such a great work that people would one day say, "That's not Bob Hughes work, it had to be of God!"<sup>52 53</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> This notion is expressed in the following statement, which appeared in each issue published in 1959-60: "The churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship being autonomous bodies[,] The Tribune does not presume to be their official organ. They have no official organ. What The Tribune does is to publish what it believes to be in the interest of the common cause and to accept complete responsibility therefor."

<sup>52</sup> Christian Hall of Fame, "Robert Earl Hughes," Canton Baptist Temple, <http://christianhof.org/indexflash.html> [Accessed: March 30, 2010].

### **Sustaining Church Growth with the Help of the Fellowship**

Church growth on the scale experienced by the Fellowship could not have happened as widely as it did without the support services and challenging testimonials from the Mission Office, the Tribune, and the College. Pastors needed to keep the worldwide vision before their people about souls saved and churches started on foreign fields. When needed they got it from three Fellowship agencies who were there to provide information and confirmation for sermons, newsletters, and Sunday School lessons.

No doubt, the first generation of the Baptist Bible Fellowship paid a price to get the new Fellowship started. Their intense desire to plant churches in every city and town to reach people for Christ drove them to accomplish great things for God. Whether they realized it or not, they were destined to accomplish much for the cause of Christ.

Billy Bartlett phrased it this way in his 1975 book, *The Beginnings*:

It would be a mistake to assume that because the Baptist Bible Fellowship has enjoyed greater longevity than its separatist Baptist precursors, it has conquered the inherent fundamentalist schismatic propensity. Pragmatically, the movement has been acclaimed by its adherents as an unquestioned success, a fact which its leaders see as a vindication by God of their previous actions. For instance, the offerings have grown from \$107,168.25 in 1950, to more than \$6,300,000 in 1974. The mission representation has increased from 17 to more than 430 in the same period. The Baptist Bible College has grown from 107 students to a matriculation of 2,392 in the 1974-1975 school year, and the fellowship now boasts 2,384 member churches compared with approximately 150 at its inception.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> The induction was timed so Bob Hughes was added to the Christian Hall of Fame the week before his church in Cebu celebrated its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

<sup>54</sup> Bartlett, Billy Vick, *The Beginnings A Pictorial History of the Baptist Bible Fellowship* (Springfield, MO: Baptist Bible College, 1975), 100.

Concerning the responsibility that was attached to the fellowship and its leaders to stay on track, Bartlett quotes Vick: “We are taking these kids for three of the most informative years of their lives, and we owe them our best. We owe them the most qualified faculty available. I doubt if we could hire a man today unless he possessed a bachelor's degree from an accredited institution and was willing to work toward a master's. Nevertheless, we know the dangers, we're aware of history; and we are not going to sacrifice our convictions on anybody's academic altar.”<sup>55</sup>

It is common knowledge, that Baptist Bible College produced church planters from its first graduating class and still does today with each graduation. BBC would become the largest Bible College in the world within 25 years. BBF Missions would have such an impact that it would become the largest effort among independent Baptist groups and even rival the much older Southern Baptist Convention with the percentage of churches in ratio to its missionary force. As it grew, the BBF would recruit pastors who sought fellowship without ecclesiastical control over them. That is why this writer came to the BBF and many others have found a home in it.

Finally, Bartlett sources a thought to end this chapter about the first generation of the BBF, “The Fellowship must stay responsive to the grassroots without developing a centralized, convention-like bureaucracy. The Fellowship institutions, particularly the College, must successfully pass their leadership on to the next generation without a harmful political power struggle. Such a struggle could well upset the precarious balance of dynamics so necessary to the successful operation of a fundamentalist movement.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., 101

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.



One of Dr. Vick's favorite passages to quote in a sermon was 2 Timothy 2:2 (NKJV), "And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also." It remains to be seen if that will happen. So far, each generation has had its own definition of that instruction.

## Chapter 3 EXPANSIONS

### 1975-2000: Second Generation of Leadership

The First Generation of the new independent Baptist movement produced the founders and early leaders of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. For the first 25 years of the BBF, the founders made certain that historic Baptist faith and practice were the bedrock of the Fellowship and its mission. They presided over the Fellowship and its agencies with grace, wisdom, and ethical behavior. They were above reproach. They installed important features in the bylaws that provided standing for each pastor who chose to participate in the Fellowship.

- In 1950, the BBF was proclaimed a “fellowship for Bible believing Baptist churches.”<sup>1</sup>
- In 1960, the fellowship amended that feature to become a “fellowship of pastors.”<sup>2</sup>
- In 1975, the BBF was modified to become, in essence, a fellowship of state fellowships.<sup>3</sup>
- In 2003, the six executive officers were elevated to authority similar to a board of elders.<sup>4</sup>

Unlike many denominations, the Fellowship is operated by leadership and

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<sup>1</sup> Original BBF Constitution, (unpublished, 1950), 1

<sup>2</sup> Amended BBF Constitution, (unpublished, 1960), 1

<sup>3</sup> Amended BBF Constitution, (unpublished, 1975), 1

<sup>4</sup> Amended BBF Constitution, (unpublished, 2003), 1

direction provided by pastors. It is common knowledge that none of the attempts to improve the BBFI by expanding its organizational structure halted the decline in the number of churches affiliated with BBFI, or the number of students enrolled at Baptist Bible College.

### **Changes Affecting the BBFI in the Second Generation**

The research will endeavor to identify and discuss changes and their antecedent causes made within the BBF during the second generation. To accomplish this, former leaders and officers participated in a survey of their experiences in the early years, and the transition from the founders to the next generation. Their insight will be shared and their advice will be proposed for a better future of their beloved BBFI. In their comments, there are several notable issues brought to the forefront. Among them are:

- Failure to train and transfer leadership to the next generation.
- Failure to transition from an enlightenment, rationalistic, modernity worldview to a post modern worldview.
- Inability of BBC to transition from a vocational model to academically trained clergy.

### **How the Research Was Obtained**

As part of the research necessary to produce this project, the author interviewed more than sixty former leaders and officers of the BBFI to get their thoughts on the issues and the solutions. Rather than try to include those who were inexperienced in trying to lead the fellowship, it seemed more productive to involve those who had served in leadership.

First, 60 interview forms<sup>5</sup> were sent to men who had served in positions of leadership for the BBFI in one or more of its agencies. Some were pastors who served as presidents, vice presidents, or recording officers, such as secretaries and treasurers of the BBF over its lifespan. Several of them are now retired and up in years. Others are approaching retirement, while some are still very active in some part of the fellowship. Each has given permission to be quoted.

Second, thirty-six (36) responded to the interview form and gave clear answers to the questions. Twenty-four (24) did not respond for their own reasons. After all, they are leaders of ministries and make decisions everyday on their priorities. It would have been desirable to hear from all, but the percentage who participated is very encouraging and set a high standard.

Third, each of the respondents gave permission to be quoted in the thesis and any writings this writer will produce to defend or publish the hypothesis. The support by involvement in this project is gladly received and greatly appreciated.

Fourth, how to use the replies gave room for creativity:

- The dates of involvement were supplied so the survey instrument can identify the generation in which they served in the BBF.
- The background of each leader was supplied so the survey instrument can identify them by their positions and experiences.
- Their writings were requested, so those, if any, are acknowledged.
- The classical SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) gave respondents the openings to express their views on what the BBF faces today.

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<sup>5</sup> See Appendix G

- The additional question about what would improve the BBFI today gives the open door to express themselves when it comes to finding solutions for what ails the Fellowship presently.
- Rating the issues that have confronted the BBFI over the years gives us numerical statistics which can be averaged and percentiles provided for readers to consider. The issues used are commonly known to most pastors and missionaries, but would certainly have been experienced by leaders and office holders in the 6 decades of the Fellowship.
- Finally, the offer was made for additional comments. Not all respondents used this section, but those who did revealed real concerns and strong convictions about the future of the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

### **Those Who Participated in the Research**

#### **Verle S. Ackerman, Florida**

Roles: Pastor, State Treasurer, State Chairman, National Director, BBFI Treasurer, and BBFI President.

#### **Ken Adrian, Arizona**

Roles: Pastor, VP of Missions, Treasurer, BBC Trustee, Mission Committee, State Representative.

#### **Tim Adrian, Kansas**

Roles: Pastor, BBC Trustee (Chairman); Arizona BBF President; BBF Missions Committee.

#### **John Arnold, Pennsylvania**

Roles: Pastor, State Representative and BBC Alumni VP.

#### **Bob Baird, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, VP of Missions, and Mission Director.

#### **M. Jack Baskin, Georgia**

Roles: Pastor, Missionary, Assistant Director of Missions, Executive VP of PCBBC, President of BUA, President of ABBC, VP of Missions,

**Keith Bassham, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, Secretary of OKBBF, Assistant Editor of Baptist Bible Tribune, Editor of the Baptist Bible Tribune.

**Greg Baxter, Oklahoma**

Roles: Pastor, Missionary, US Army Chaplain, VP of Oklahoma BBF.

**Dennis L. Carlson, New Mexico**

Roles: Pastor, State Representative.

**H. Frank Collins, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, State President, Asst to President of BBC.

**Ed Courtney, Texas**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman, Mission Committee, State Representative, PCBBC Director.

**Parker Dailey, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, BBFI President, National Director, VP, Trustee, VP of BBC, Executive Director of BBC Graduate School.

**Jim Edge, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, Mission Committee, State Representative, Trustee at Boston Baptist College, VP at Boston Baptist College, President of BBC.

**Gary D. Fuller, Nebraska**

Roles: Pastor, National Director, State Chairman.

**Wally Gilbert, Ohio**

Roles: Pastor, National Director for Ohio.

**Keith Gillming, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, VP of Education, MO State Chairman.

**Jack A. Henry, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor; State Representative for Texas, Executive Vice President at Boston Baptist College.

**Rob Hoffman, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman for Iowa and Tennessee, VP of Education, BBC VP.

**Herb Hubbard, Georgia**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman, BBC Trustee (Chairman), VP of Evangelism and Church Planting.

**Bruce M. Humbert, Illinois**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman, Missions Committee, BBC Trustee, VP of Evangelism and Church Planting.

**Rudy Johnson, Peru**

Roles: Missionary to Peru, and Assistant Mission Director.

**Terry Kizer, Texas**

Roles: Pastor, Secretary for TXBBF, Mission Committee, Trustee at Boston Baptist College.

**Jon Konnerup, Missouri**

Roles: Missionary, Associate Mission Director, Mission Director

**Marc Leverett, Colorado**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman for Alabama and Colorado.

**David Melton, Massachusetts**

Roles: Pastor, President of Boston Baptist College.

**William T. Monroe, South Carolina**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman, State Representative, BBC Trustee, VP of Missions, BBFI President.

**K. B. Murray, Kansas**

Roles: Pastor, Missions Committee, BBFI Secretary.

**Michael Randall, Missouri**

Roles: Pastor, VP of BBC, President of BBC, Editor of Baptist Bible Tribune.

**Tim Shafer, Massachusetts**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman and State Representative for Pennsylvania.

**David A. Shaffer, Ohio**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman for Wyoming, Oklahoma, and Kansas; BBFI Secretary, Treasurer, and VP of Evangelism and Church Planting.

**Linzy Slayden, Oklahoma**

Roles: Pastor, State Representative for Oklahoma, Chairman of BBC Trustees, VP of Missions.

**Lon Stewart, Arizona**

Roles: Pastor, Missionary, National Director, Mission Committee, VP of Education.

**John S. Waldrip, California**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman and Representative for California.

**Neal Weaver, Louisiana**

Roles: Pastor, President of LBU.

**John W. Williams, Jr, Texas**

Roles: Pastor, Missions Committee, National Director, VP of PCBBC.

**Bob Woosley, Philippines**

Roles: Pastor, State Chairman, State Representative, Missionary.

**Table 3 –Survey Respondents by highest office held in the BBFI.**

<p>Fellowship Presidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Verle Ackerman</li> <li>• Parker Dailey</li> <li>• William Monroe</li> </ul> <p>Fellowship Vice Presidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ken Adrian</li> <li>• Jack Baskin</li> <li>• Keith Gillming</li> <li>• Rob Hoffman</li> <li>• Herb Hubbard</li> <li>• Bruce Humbert</li> <li>• David Shaffer</li> <li>• Linzy Slayden</li> <li>• Lon Stewart</li> </ul> <p>Fellowship Secretary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• K. B. Murray</li> </ul> <p>Mission Directors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bob Baird</li> <li>• Jon Konnerup</li> </ul> <p>Missionaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Greg Baxter, US Army Chaplain</li> <li>• Rudy Johnson, South America</li> <li>• Bob Woosley, East Asia</li> </ul>	<p>Tribune Editor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keith Bassham</li> </ul> <p>College Presidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jim Edge (BBC)</li> <li>• David Melton (Boston)</li> <li>• Mike Randall (BBC)</li> <li>• Neal Weaver (LBU)</li> </ul> <p>College Trustees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tim Adrian (BBC Chairman)</li> <li>• Frank Collins (BBC)</li> <li>• Terry Kizer (Boston)</li> </ul> <p>National Directors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• John Arnold</li> <li>• Dennis Carlson</li> <li>• Ed Courtney</li> <li>• Gary Fuller</li> <li>• Wally Gilbert</li> <li>• Jack Henry</li> <li>• Marc Leverett</li> <li>• Tim Shafer</li> <li>• John Waldrip</li> <li>• John Williams</li> </ul>
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### Realities Based On the Research

The first result based on the research involves a set of choices given to respondents asking about divisive issues endured by the Fellowship. The survey instrument asked the cross section of leaders and officers how they would perceive four familiar issues and grade them. Then they were asked to identify other issues they felt were divisive and rank them (Table 3).

Table 4 – Ranking Divisive Issues in the BBFI\*

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Rank*</b>
• Ruckmanism	70.0%
• Legalism	41.2%
• Calvinism	37.2%
• Landmarkism	34.4%
• Dispensationalism	33.8%
*Survey of BBFI leaders and officers, 2009	

### Definitions of the Issues

- **Ruckmanism:** Teachings of Peter Ruckman, who holds to the perfection of the King James Version of the Bible and its superiority over Greek and Hebrew texts.
- **Legalism** – A form of lifestyle control used by leaders to keep followers in line with their teachings and traditions. Jesus referred to the legalists of His day (Pharisees) as, “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.” Mark 7:5-7 (KJV)
- **Calvinism:** Teachings of John Calvin emphasizing sovereign grace. Reformed Theology, primary dogma of Presbyterian churches and others.
- **Landmarkism:** Teachings of J. R. Graves holding the local Baptist church as the authoritative New Testament church not accepting the baptism of other faiths.
- **Dispensationalism:** Teachings of John Darby on the ways in which God worked through the ages with His people. Accused of inventing the doctrine of the Rapture.

### **What the Research Reveals about Strengths in the Fellowship**

First, the survey asks for the strengths of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Without exception, each participant positively appreciates what the BBF is good at doing. Here are some examples:

**Verle Ackerman** saw the strength of the Fellowship in its meetings. He explains: Strengths – We had Fellowship meetings that challenged you to build churches, train your young people, and send them to Christian colleges in preparation for ministry in music, missions, youth leaders and pastoring. Because of the Holy Spirit led challenges and a desire to win the world to Christ, we filled our colleges with our choice young people. We left every meeting with an overwhelming desire to win the world.

**John Arnold** immediately expounded the strength in church planting. John is a part of the NCPO candidate schools where new church planters go through orientation: Strengths - Church planting was taken for granted. —That is just what we do. As soon as young churches were able, they were to support missionaries. Also, many years ago the state fellowships encouraged the young churches to be an important part of the overall purpose.

**Greg Baxter** put the emphasis on the relationship pastors/ missionaries build toward reaching the world with the gospel: Strengths - Pastors/ missionaries had the sense that we have a divine mission to perform, regardless of the cost or obstacles encountered. We practice soul winning, church planting, & church planting missions around the world.

**Jack A. Henry** focused his remarks on Missions as he answered: Strengths - Mission centeredness – Home & Foreign Missions. Concentration on the mission of missions has been instrumental in helping both the Pastors and the colleges concentrate their efforts, solve problems, and promote fellowship.

**Rudy Johnson**, missionary since 1958, remembered what it was like in the beginning of the BBFI: Strengths - The Founders were real leaders. All went in the same direction. They were unified in a common cause. Most churches were smaller. Evangelism and discipleship were taught as the two most powerful words in the English language Acts 14:2.

**William T. Monroe**, Its “high view of Scripture.” Its strong doctrinal emphasis—especially on the local church and Baptist distinctives, personal soul-

winning and foreign missions distinctives, personal soul-winning and foreign missions.

These men of seasoned experience agree on the main strengths of the BBFI as a commitment to the authority of scripture, the importance of world missions, a focus on evangelism and church planting, the importance of a fellowship of pastors without outside control, and the anointing of the founders to begin such a Fellowship.

### **Major Transitions of 1975**

The evidence indicates that the tipping point for the BBFI occurred in 1975 when two major changes took place in the Fellowship that altered the landscape and re-organized the BBFI.

First, the structure of the Fellowship was modified from a fellowship of pastors to a fellowship of state fellowships. It was promoted as *getting back to the grassroots*, but in fact, it separated the pastors into state entities with representatives who spoke for them. Pastors were no longer on an equal platform in the Fellowship.<sup>6</sup> Unless a pastor was elected to national office he could not have a direct voice in the Fellowship. Only by experiencing refusal at the subcommittee level, as well as the full committee of Directors, could a pastor escalate his grievance to the floor of the Fellowship. Then he must gain recognition by the chairman.

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<sup>6</sup> The details of the 1975 decision meant the BBF was modified to become, in essence, a fellowship of state fellowships. In that way each state elects or appoints a state representative to the BBFI meetings and speaks or votes for his state. States with many churches had 1 vote in the Committee of Directors and states that had 1 church had 1 vote. Texas had more than 400 churches at that time and was given just 1 vote. In the old structure there had been 9 Directors covering 9 Districts with approximately the same number of churches in each and Texas had 2 votes.

Second, perhaps a greater change occurred with the deaths of several founders. The counsel of leadership in the BBF was altered with the passing of Noel Smith in January 14, 1974 and Fred Donnelson almost a month later, February 9, 1974. The greatest loss, however, may have been with the death of G. B. Vick on September 29, 1975. His was the greatest influence on the Fellowship and as is often said, "Everything rises and falls on Leadership."

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International is not the first organization to lose a great leader. History is replete with stories of movements that floundered after losing the person who inspired them.

Max Weber (1978) raised this precise question with respect to charismatic authority in the form of organizations (such as religious sects) that are born and grow up around the passion and character of a powerful leader. The "routinization of charisma," as Weber called it, represents an organization's attempt to preserve its singular aspects beyond the involvement of its founding member(s). This is why the problem of succession is so vexing for relatively new organizations (e.g., "What do we do now that our leader is gone?").<sup>7</sup>

Weber also described the uniqueness of organizations in the way they are formed and fulfilled. The Fellowship can identify with this description by looking back on the loss of Dr. Vick.

All organizations are founded through special instances of informal communication because formal structure cannot spontaneously come into existence (see Barnard, 1938/1968). Further, many organizations develop through the inspirational guidance of a person or a small group. Preserving or institutionalizing inspiration is an enormous and paradoxical challenge, particularly for organizations that define themselves in contrast to the "mainstream." The problem of succession can be exceptionally trying when the

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<sup>7</sup> George Cheney, "Democracy in the Workplace: Theory and Practice from the Perspective of Communication," *Journal of Applied Communication*, vol. 23 (1995), <http://www.uwcc.wisc.edu/info/democ.html> [accessed March 25, 2010]

founders are those perceived to be the embodiment of special values or the holders of particular knowledge.<sup>8</sup>

Though perhaps not obvious to many, the effect of those two changes has played out for 35 years in the rank and file of supporting pastors. Although pastors and missionaries are accustomed to it, the BBFI has become a political movement. Depending on the oversight of the Fellowship president, a number of helpful or harmful things can become rule and practice in the BBFI. In simple terms, that is politics.

In a paradoxical move, missionaries lost their right to vote in the 1975 changeover while the BBF added International to its name to emphasize missions.

In 2003, the structure was expanded to add another vice president for church planting and evangelism. It upgraded and renamed the six nationally elected officers to be executive officers<sup>9</sup> with a higher level of executive authority, much like a board of elders. In addition, they became self-propagating between elections. When an executive officer would step down leaving an unfulfilled term, the remaining executive officers then appoint a replacement or shuffle themselves upward and add a new man to the group until the next election. The old system of succession to higher office by another officer was replaced by this new form. Now, if the office of President is vacated, the remaining executive committee could choose a qualified pastor that was not an elected officer. Such action would require ratification by the Committee of State Representatives, now renamed National Directors, though they are not elected nationally.

The BBFI has been shrinking while its committees have been growing. The bottom line on all these structural variations is that recruiting and training preachers is not

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Amended BBF Constitution, (unpublished, 2003), 1

keeping up with the rate of attrition. What could be the problem? What could be the solution? The founders did it well. Why can't the BBFI do it well, today? With all the growth and success the BBF experienced in its first 25 years, there have been antagonists who have come on the scene in the succeeding 35 years to adversely affect the Fellowship and they have had limited success."

### **Embedding the Educational Policy**

In 1979, the influence of cult leader Peter Ruckman on a minority of pastors was used to impose a radical position in the Education Philosophy of the BBFI in an Annual Meeting in Bangor, Maine. Ruckman is listed in the Fellowship directory<sup>10</sup>, but does not attend meetings. For years he was the choice of preachers in the upper Midwest as a camp and conference speaker. A graduate of Bob Jones University, Ruckman remains a pastor and teacher at his church, Bible Baptist Church located in Pensacola, Florida. His controversial and divisive claims about the King James Version of the Bible are exposed in his sermons and books.

Harold Rawlings in his well researched book, *Trial by Fire*, describes Ruckman to his readers:

The leading modern-day proponent of the KJVO position is Peter S. Ruckman, a Pensacola Bible teacher and author. Like Fuller, Ruckman came under the spell of J.J. Ray early in his ministry. Ruckman's first book, *The Bible "Babel"* (1964), became the springboard that catapulted him to a KJVO leadership role, a position he revels in to this day. Excelling in *ad hominem* arguments, Ruckman spares no blunt adjectives in denigrating his opponents. Many in the movement attempt to distance themselves from Ruckman because of his

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<sup>10</sup> The BBFI Contact Directory contains the names of pastors and churches who: 1) Agree with the BBFI 20 Articles of Faith. 2) Support at least one Fellowship ministry: missionary, college, National Church Planting Office, Mission Office, or Tribune. 3) Explicitly declare in their legal documents and/or faith statements that they are Baptist in doctrine and practice. 4) Want to be included in the Contact Directory.

uninhibited *modus operandi*; still, they echo his words and mimic his style in many other ways without giving credit where credit is due. Ruckman has created an intensely loyal following among the more radical fundamentalist element in the U.S. A colorful personality, known more for sensationalism than accuracy, he has led his followers astray on a number of different issues, some of which are detailed in his book, *Handbook of Manuscript Evidence*.<sup>11</sup>

In that 1979 Bangor meeting, BBFI pastors who were in agreement with Ruckman insisted that the Fellowship prevent its colleges from using any other version of the scriptures than the King James. With all the imagination and intimidation they could muster, they placed themselves in committee meetings and subcommittee meetings to channel the decision. After lengthy discussions, the statement inserted in the Education Philosophy seemed innocent enough, “We believe that the King James Version of the Bible is God’s Word preserved for the English-speaking people.”<sup>12</sup> However, as the years passed, the definition of “preserved” took on a new meaning. The argument now is the King James is *exclusively* the word of God. That issue is the most divisive the Fellowship has faced.

Once again, Harold Rawlings speaks to this issue:

Most KJVO followers will reason something like this: "The Bible is the inspired Word of God. God has preserved his Word for English-speaking people, therefore the King James 1611 Bible I hold in my hand is the inspired Word of God, the only Bible that can be so designated in this age." Curiously, many KJVO adherents often talk of their loyalty to the 1611 KJV, when a good number of them have never seen a 1611 King James Bible. Revised a number of times, primarily in 1616, 1629, 1638, 1762, and 1769, hundreds of changes were made, sometimes affecting the meaning of a verse or sentence.<sup>13</sup>

It became known in BBFI circles as the *Bangor Resolution*. Later after learning

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<sup>11</sup> Harold Rawlings, *Trial by Fire*, (Florence, KY: Rawlings Foundation), 181

<sup>12</sup> BBFI Minutes, Springfield, MO, 26 September 1979.

<sup>13</sup> Rawlings, 184

that the sentence about the KJV was a pet phrase of Ruckman, many who were involved in the passing of the policy regretted it. In other Baptist groups, the BBFI became known as the “KJV Only” fellowship.

### **1987 Targeting a Supporting Pastor**

In contrast to accepting the false doctrine of Peter Ruckman, eight years later came a resolution against Jerry Falwell, a graduate of BBC and a supporting pastor. In September, 1987, Falwell, a BBFI pastor and host of a previous Annual meeting in Lynchburg, Virginia, was castigated on the floor of the BBFI Annual meeting in New Castle, Delaware, when a vote was taken to censure him for his involvement with The PTL Television Network and the Jim Bakker scandal. The authority to censure a supporting pastor had never existed in the Fellowship, but in a moment of politically motivated frenzy, it was done.

Of course, Falwell continued to love the friends he had in the Fellowship and to support BBC, his alma mater, as well as support BBFI missionaries through the Mission Office in Springfield. It was not in his nature to hold a grudge or retaliate. He kept Thomas Road Baptist Church listed in the BBFI Directory as a sign of his support. From the day he finished at BBC in 1956 and returned home to Lynchburg until he died on May 15, 2007, he spoke fondly of the BBF founders and regarded them as his heroes. He often attended class reunions and meetings at BBC. As an accredited university, Liberty always accepted BBC students to complete their studies because Chancellor Falwell made a provision for them.

When Jerry Falwell died, every newspaper and television network in the world



carried the story and his photograph on its front page. Now consider the paradox of having Peter Ruckman and Jerry Falwell in the same Directory year after year as supporting pastors. What an enigma. It remains one of the saddest memories in BBF history that Ruckman was honored and Falwell was badgered.

### **1988 Concerned Pastors Forum at BBC**

In May, 1988, another major show of division was brought to the platform at Baptist Bible College during graduation week. A number of men with issues regarding BBC persuaded the Fellowship president to allow them to state their grievances before the pastors. They each wore big yellow buttons labeled “Concerned Pastors Forum.” It appeared that the organizers had gathered every disgruntled pastor they could find to sign a document they presented to the Fellowship. It was the kind of thing no sensible pastor would allow in his church, but it was allowed based on a provision in the bylaws of the BBFI which states “Any pastor shall have the inalienable right to appeal to the National Fellowship.”<sup>14</sup> Accusations abounded against BBC’s administration, faculty, and bookstore for promoting or allowing Bible versions other than KJV. Demands were made to remove any such promotion and promoter. Various preachers were given the platform to complain and accuse. Members of the audience stood to refute and rebuke the speakers. It became a shouting match. When the forum was concluded, all had their say, they left without a decision being made and nothing changed.

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<sup>14</sup> BBFI Handbook, 8

### **Splitting the Fellowship**

For the first time in its history, the Baptist Bible Fellowship suffered a split that took hundreds of pastors and churches away to form a new college and a new group. Through the leadership of Sam Davison (BBFI President, 1994-1998), the Fellowship experienced legalistic attacks for control of its agencies in Springfield including the Mission Office, The Tribune, and especially Baptist Bible College. Though the college was by state law under the autonomous control of its Trustees, the Davison administration demanded changes in the college and its policies by attempting to control BBC's President, Leland Kennedy. Kennedy and the Trustees refused to be managed by the Fellowship President, so to put more pressure on them, letters from Davison were written and published by first-class mail to every pastor in the Fellowship directory to excoriate Kennedy and the Trustees. Ironically, Davison had served as chairman of the Trustees before his election as Fellowship President and had agreed to the policies he now demanded should be changed.

After the end of his four-year presidency, Davison soon became president of a Bible college in Oklahoma that started with assets from Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College, a BBFI approved school in San Dimas, California. "In September 1998 during Opening Days, the college was renamed Heartland Baptist Bible College. During the months that followed, the college reorganized, changed its emphasis from a regional to a national focus, and established an accountability link with a group of pastors, missionaries, and evangelists known as the Friends of Heartland."<sup>15</sup> The new college would not be a fellowship school as was its predecessor, apparently Davison preferred to

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<sup>15</sup> Heartland Baptist Bible College, "History," <http://heartlandbaptist.edu/318382.ihtml> [accessed: December 12, 2009].

keep control and name his own board members. Many of his supporters started a fellowship they called the Global Independent Baptist Fellowship.<sup>16</sup>

Within two years, Davison sent a letter to BBFI pastors proclaiming a break from the Fellowship for the college and many pastors under his leadership. “The administration and directors of Heartland Baptist Bible College (HBBC) announce that as of November 14, 2000, we no longer desire the status of a BBFI approved school and request to be removed from the list of approved schools.”<sup>17</sup> The letter was read first to the GIBF in session in Cleveland, Ohio.

President Davison read a letter approved by the Executive Committee and Board of Directors which stated that Heartland no longer desires the status of a BBFI approved school and requests to be removed from the list of approved schools. A copy of the letter with attached signatures was mailed to the entire BBFI mailing list.<sup>18</sup>

In the letter, accusations and innuendos were made against the BBFI, as well as disclaimers used to defend his actions and those of the Friends of Heartland.

It should also be understood that there are a growing number of independent, fundamental Baptist pastors who are very much interested in HBBC, but who are hesitant to get behind the school because of a drift in direction of the BBFI. It cannot be denied there is a drift with regard to issues of ecclesiastical separation, personal separation, music, the King James Version, and the whole philosophy of evangelism and ministry and it is evident that there is a *directional conflict*.<sup>19</sup>

It seemed important to them to find fault with the BBFI and BBC leadership to justify their actions and plans. Dr. Neil T. Anderson is founder and president of Freedom

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<sup>16</sup> Global Independent Baptist Fellowship, <http://gibf.org/> [accessed: March 22, 2010].

<sup>17</sup> Sam Davison to Fellow Pastors, November 14, 2000.

<sup>18</sup> Russell Tyree, *Happenings*, Global Baptist Times, [http://gibf.org/bapt\\_times/0101.pdf](http://gibf.org/bapt_times/0101.pdf) [accessed: March 22, 2010].

<sup>19</sup> Davison

in Christ Ministries. He has 20 years experience as a pastor and has written several best-selling books. He says:

Some task oriented leaders adopt an authoritarian style of leadership, yet continue to add numbers to their membership. I hesitate to say they continue to grow, because, although the numbers are growing, the people are not growing. These leaders attract people who are willing to let others think for them. It seems to absolve them of their responsibility if others tell them what to do. I'm always amazed at how many people are like that. Such is the birth of cults.<sup>20</sup>

### **What the Research Reveals about Weaknesses in the Fellowship**

Next, the survey asked what the weaknesses of the Baptist Bible Fellowship are.

Without exception each participant gave direct answers to what the BBFI is poor at doing. Here are examples of the responses:

**Tim Adrian**, current Chairman of the Trustees at BBC: Historically, a discounted attitude towards education. Presently, a great cause to rally around. Are we going to be evangelistic at all costs? Or are we going to insist on "BBF purity?" Can we work together on the basis of Doctrinal agreement or will we insist that we are philosophically mirrored? Will we let our preferences and pastor acquaintances emotionally guide our decisions or will we allow those that can see the bigger picture lead us.

**Dennis L. Carlson**, As social changes took place, the BBF failed to accept and adopt any of those changes. And it appears that when the founders passed on, there were not leaders who had the strengths of the founders who could step forward and lead. As a whole, it seems that few churches were tolerant of changing methods, especially in the area of music.

**Parker Dailey**, 1) Founders failed to mentor successors. 2) Education was downplayed. 3) Cursed with the inability to work together. 4) Haven't put together a method of operation.

**Keith Gillming**, Our independent nature breeds our inability to work together.

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<sup>20</sup> Neil T. Anderson And Charles Mylander, *Setting Your Church Free*. Ventura, CA: Regal, 1994), 100.

**John W. Williams, Jr.,** Legalism and intolerance on the part of so many Pastors, of anyone that has a different opinion, approach, methodology, translation or philosophy of ministry than theirs. I also think there has been a failure on the part of BBFI Leaders in the past to embrace inevitable change and train those younger men who would have been able to "carry their mantle," had they been challenged, given the opportunity, and encouraged to take roles of leadership.

The straightforward wisdom of these men offers insights to the reader of what holds back the Fellowship at times in needed areas. One pastor summed it up in these four points: "1) Failure to recognize the importance of education for preachers. 2) Lack of preparing leaders to fill the gaps left by founders as they passed from the scene. 3) Narrow mindedness and the divisions caused by it. 4) Lack of teamwork among pastors to achieve a greater good."<sup>21</sup>

In the next chapter, the research will focus on what has been done to reverse some downward trends and address the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In the year 2000, the torch was symbolically passed in Fort Worth during the celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Texas Hotel meeting. An amendment to the BBFI doctrinal statement was made in 2002 and, in 2003, the Fellowship was restructured to add another level of authority.

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<sup>21</sup> Greg Baxter, phone call to author, March 26, 2010.

## Chapter 4

### ADJUSTMENTS

In the book, *Hudson Taylor's Spiritual Secret*, there is a remarkable story of how he was converted to Christ and became one whom God greatly used. From nothing, he founded the China Inland Mission, which at his death included 205 mission stations with more than 800 missionaries and 125,000 Chinese Christians.<sup>1</sup>

What was his secret?

The simple, profound secret of drawing for every need upon “the fathomless wealth of Christ.” Where did Taylor learn this type of prayer life? The secret came from his sister, Amelia. He was converted, in part, through her persistent, prevailing prayers. She committed to give herself in prayer until he gave himself to Christ. The day she made her commitment, she wrote these words in her diary: “The promises of the Bible are very real, and prayer is in a sober fact transacting business with God, whether on one's behalf or on behalf of those for whom one seeks blessing.” Transacting business with God became the model for Hudson's dynamic life of bold faith and prayer.<sup>2</sup>

Hudson Taylor's secret is what men and women of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International need to have spiritually and practically. The Fellowship must get back to transacting business with God to help churches plant churches and to back them up with resources to help them grow. Leaders must lead with a deeper prayer life and more time invested getting their agenda from God. The power of God is greatly needed on all the churches and pastors in the BBFI. The work of God is not like any other work on Earth, it is His. The world needs more men to come from God's presence in prayer to the work.

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<sup>1</sup> David Earley, *Prayer: The Timeless Secret of High-Impact Leaders*. (Uhrichsville, OH: Barbour, 2008), 111f

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

One of Hudson Taylor's better known thoughts is, "God's work, done God's way, will never lack God's supply." It is profound and effective.

It is the responsibility of this organization to stand with and in support of local churches throughout the world. The Fellowship is a needed tool in the Lord's hand because it gives pastors and people the opportunity to do together what could not be done alone. When asked, 'What do you think would improve the BBFI now?' Former VP of Missions, Jack Baskin, answered, "Go back to the things that made us what we are and rebuild."<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand, the Fellowship is not a government over the churches. God forbid. And, the Fellowship is not a denomination where jobs are plentiful and a bureaucracy is doling out funds to people in ministry. No, the Baptist Bible Fellowship was founded and remains, as Keith Bassham describes it with, "leanness of organization, respect for the independence and autonomy of the local assembly, adherence to conservative doctrinal views, and missionary zeal."<sup>4</sup>

Further, the Fellowship must focus on these areas:

- 1) Educating students in theology and philosophy, as well as methodology, to prepare for ministry.
- 2) Preparing, approving, and providing for missionaries to serve where their churches send them.
- 3) Publishing high quality magazines on paper and online to enhance the work of the churches and the missionaries who serve.

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<sup>3</sup> Jack Baskin, e-mail message to author, November 3, 2009, as part of the survey of BBFI leaders.

<sup>4</sup> Keith Bassham, e-mail message to author, December 12, 2009, as part of the survey of BBFI leaders.

The BBF does not send missionaries or plant churches. Churches do that. The assaults on the unity of the Fellowship described in the previous chapter are simply indications that the Fellowship was used or driven to do the wrong thing.

### **The Fellowship is a venerable movement**

For its age, the Baptist Bible Fellowship International is a durable Baptist organization. It began as a breakaway group determined to give itself to global outreach through church planting on an international scale. There was no plan to send missionaries who were not church planters. Their focus eliminated missions for other purposes such as medical, educational, farming, or other. The belief was to plant churches, then the churches can add those ministries on the local scene as they see fit and have the resources to do so. They had complete confidence that God could and would bless His churches, no matter where they were planted.

That objective may seem too subtle for the average Baptist to comprehend, but it was the BBF “church model” that solidified the mission philosophy to approve church planters exclusively. That model was influenced by J. R. Graves who “led in the Landmark movement from its beginning in 1851 and sought to make its ideology dominant in Southern Baptist life.”<sup>5</sup> His teachings on the local church<sup>6</sup> affected the Southern Baptist Convention as much as any scholar and some of the Graves influence trickled down through J. Frank Norris to the BBF founders. There were founders who did

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<sup>5</sup> Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, James Robinson Graves, [http://www.sbhla.org/bio\\_graves.htm](http://www.sbhla.org/bio_graves.htm) (accessed 12/4/2009).

<sup>6</sup> Graves held to the position that the local church was the only kind of church in the New Testament and he rejected the universal church belief as unbiblical. A number of terms were used to describe his ecclesiology such as “Baptist Bride” and “Landmarkism” from his best known book, *Old Landmarkism, What Is It?*



not see the church as Graves did, so they conducted their ministries without embracing the Landmark position. It was common knowledge in the early days of the Fellowship that leading pastors in America: Dallas Billington, Harold Henniger, and Wendell Zimmerman were not “Landmarkers.” They did not require Baptist baptism to become members, and they did not require communicants to be church members. The founders of the Fellowship were unified in their mission and their methods and did not let those personal differences and dogma break them apart.

The founders of the BBF believed that Christ died for the church (Eph. 5:25), as well as the individual, and it was a distinct element of BBF thinking. The founders were convinced that the methods used in the book of Acts would work just as well today. Personal contact and witnessing was taught to members in BBF churches and the churches grew as the methods worked. Greg Baxter, retired Army chaplain, now pastor wrote, “Pastors/missionaries had the sense that we have a divine mission to perform regardless of the cost or obstacles encountered. We practice soul winning, church planting, & church planting missions around the world.”<sup>7</sup>

### **A Major Decision for the Young Fellowship**

Within 10 years after the Texas Hotel meeting, issues among BBF pastors came to a confrontation over the definition of a Baptist church. So it was a healthy experience to clear the air and decide how the BBF would be made up as a fraternal group. Keith Bassham writes of that 1960 Fellowship meeting in Oklahoma City and its meaning to the future of the Fellowship:

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<sup>7</sup> Greg Baxter, e-mail message to author, December 15, 2009, as part of the survey of BBFI leaders.

In 1959 Wendell Zimmerman was thought to be a natural in the upcoming national election for BBFI (sic) president. Kansas City Baptist Temple and Zimmerman were responsible for much of the missionary work present in Mexico at the time. Zimmerman had plead (sic) with tears at the historic 1950 meeting when G. B. Vick seemed reluctant to split with Norris. Without Vick the movement would have had little or no chance but he was moved by Zimmerman's emotional urging and agreed to go with the others who wanted to begin a new fellowship. I've always believed the Zimmerman factor at Ft. Worth has been understated.<sup>8</sup>

In the framework of a 10 year-old Baptist movement that would soon rise to prominence, the influence of Zimmerman among the founders is seen. Bassham's examination of the importance of the 1960 decision continues.

A Zimmerman candidacy was a hot potato in 1959 though. He and his church accepted non-Baptist baptism under certain conditions. This rendered him "disqualified" in some quarters of our Fellowship. Some wanted to make sure he was not elected so in the 1959 Detroit meeting an effort was made to codify in the constitution an exclusivist position on baptism.<sup>9</sup>

For the next year, negotiations behind the scenes forged a decision that will define the Fellowship for the future or at least 50 more years. The sermon by incoming president, Art Wilson, presented all the biblical and practical reasons why a fellowship cannot violate the autonomy of a local church.<sup>10</sup> It was a classic moment in BBF history:

After the (1960) national meeting in Oklahoma City one year later, (Noel) Smith's front page (Tribune) headline read, "We Will Remain A Fellowship." I take that to imply that while a majority of other preachers were, in principle, going to continue to hold to a Baptist-baptism-is-the-only-valid-baptism position, they also believed an imposition of that position upon other churches and preachers in the Fellowship would amount to denominationalism. Also,

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<sup>8</sup> Keith Bassham, e-mail message to author, March 24, 2010: Mike Randall, "The Fellowship climbed a difficult hill in 1960," The Baptist Preacher, Jan-Feb 1997.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Mike Randall, adapted from The Baptist Preacher, Jan-Feb, 1997, <http://bbfi.org/philosophy.htm>.

Zimmerman's doctrinal position did not prevent his becoming a BBC trustee and eventually the Tribune editor.<sup>11</sup>

In 1997, Editor Mike Randall ran the story (37 years later) for the benefit of the newer generation of Fellowship pastors and personnel. He used these headings over the article: “Denominational-type control was rejected” and “Local church sovereignty was the key issue.”<sup>12</sup> It was good news for the BBF family. It meant the Fellowship refused to overrule the churches in their doctrine or practice. It also meant the Fellowship would not implode for trying such a tactic on Independent Fundamentalist churches. Ironically, those who believed in Landmarkism had raised the issue, *Should a church that does not practice Landmarkism participate in the BBF?* While at the same time, their doctrine stands strongly against ecclesiastical control over a local church by an outside group such as the Fellowship.

The research verifies that what the BBFI needs to accomplish involves the kind of treatment shown above from pastors in a unifying mode. There are numerous issues that must be faced, especially in the choppy waves of current American culture. One of the officers who responded to the survey was David Shaffer, VP of Church Planting, when asked, “What do you think would improve the BBFI now?” He wrote: “We have the ability to look beyond our differences in church practices and work together to further the cause of Christ for home missions and church planting. We have to pool our resources to further missions across the world.”<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Bassham.

<sup>12</sup> Mike Randall, “The Fellowship climbed a difficult hill in 1960,” *The Baptist Preacher*, Jan-Feb 1997

<sup>13</sup> David Shaffer, e-mail message to author, October 31, 2009 as part of the survey of BBFI leaders.

### **Bangor Resolution Removed**

One of the important innovations in the 2003 amendments to the bylaws was the removal of the Education Policy from the BBFI Constitution. The KJVO issue was lodged there and it particularly affected Fellowship colleges because churches are not under BBFI rule. It also pressured the Tribune and the Mission Office in their English language productions, though the Fellowship had not voted to make it official for them.

President Monroe presented the amendment to the Committee of Directors and later to the Fellowship in business session, with the point that a policy does not belong in the corporate constitution. The move did not rescind the policy, but simply placed it under the purview of the Education subcommittee in the Committee of National Directors. Once removed, it was replaced with a new policy that does not mention a required version of the Bible.<sup>14</sup>

### **Mending Fences**

Another issue that should be resolved is the offense (Mat. 5:23-24) against Jerry Falwell and his family. In her recent book under the timeline of her husband's life, Mrs. Falwell includes his 1956 graduation from Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, along with the founding of Thomas Road Baptist Church shortly thereafter.<sup>15</sup> Anyone in the BBFI who knew Jerry was aware he was proud to be a BBC alumnus. He participated

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<sup>14</sup> BBFI Education Policy updated February 15, 2010. See Appendix C.

<sup>15</sup> Macel Falwell, *Jerry Falwell, His Life and Legacy* (New York, NY: Howard Books, 2008), v.

in BBF national meetings and even hosted one in 1984. He attended BBC graduations many times.

But later in her book, Mrs. Falwell writes of an incident that was well known to the Falwell family and early church members. Several families had left a local BBF church to seek another. "The Baptist Bible Fellowship International, composed of the leaders of 4,000 Baptist churches, felt that we thirty-five people who had left had done so in overt rebellion.<sup>16</sup> By agreeing to lead us, Jerry became associated with a rebellious faction and became bad by association. The Fellowship issued Jerry the following ultimatum."

If you do not leave Lynchburg immediately, you will be cut off from the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. You will not be welcome to preach in our churches or attend our Fellowship meetings. We will not accept students from your church nor will our students be allowed to assist you in your ministry.<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. Falwell continues to tell of her husband's reaction, "Jerry felt abandoned, cut off, and alone. The Lord said, 'Stay in Lynchburg.' The Baptist Bible Fellowship said, 'Get out or else...' As he wrestled with the dilemma, the Lord made one thing clear: *You belong to Me and to Me alone.*"

It should be made clear that the BBFI does not have the authority to tell a church or a pastor what to do.<sup>18</sup> It was the voice of one man exercising a threat when he had no authority to speak for the Fellowship. It is fairly obvious that the BBFI could not hold Jerry Falwell back. He followed God's lead, not the lead of other men, and we are all the

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<sup>16</sup> Full details of the story are written in Mrs. Falwell's book, this is a short adaptation. The author's point is that the BBF had no right to give orders to Falwell. The man who made the threat is now in Heaven and knows better.

<sup>17</sup> Macel Falwell, 39.

<sup>18</sup> BBFI Handbook, Article IX, 13.

better for it. He was fond of announcing, “They can't vote me in and they can't vote me out.”<sup>19</sup>

The incident in 1987, regarding a resolution passed narrowly by the BBFI directed at Jerry Falwell still needs a reversal. It should be done in a national meeting as a matter of record and a courtesy to his family. If the Fellowship wants to recover from its losses and experience the blessings it once had, then it needs to make things right with a brother who was a faithful supporter in the spirit of John 13:34-35 (NKJV), “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.” As Paul reclaimed Mark in 2 Tim. 4:11, it is good for God’s men to acknowledge when they have been wrong and make it right. The theme of scripture is redemption, not revenge.

### **BBFI Can Grow Again**

Dr. Bob Baird, retired Mission Director and former pastor, says he is “convinced it is the best thing going. We can overcome the weaknesses. By planting churches, increasing enrollment at BBC, emphasizing missions, we can come back.” Throughout the life and times of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, its greatest strength and best results have come from the mission program and the missionaries themselves. In 60 years, only 5 men have served at Mission Director.

Fred Donnelson was a BBF founder and the first Mission Director of the Fellowship. He served from 1951 until 1968, when he retired. As a former missionary, who had endured great

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<sup>19</sup> Duke Westover, interview by phone, April 23, 2010. Westover worked with Falwell for over 38 years.

hardships in China. Dr. Donnelson was very motivated about missions ,while at the same time very conservative in his approach to what missionaries needed and how they should live. The earliest policies were formulated by him and the missions field committee. He did not think it wise for missionaries to own their homes in a foreign land because governments can nationalize assets and property overnight which leaves the missionary with nothing. It had happened to him and during the 17 years of his service as the director it happened to others. Dr. Donnelson's work was honored by his installation into the Christian Hall of Fame at Canton, Ohio.<sup>20</sup>

Jack Bridges was a mission-minded pastor who was asked by Dr. Donnelson to become his assistant director as he grew closer to retirement. Bridges succeeded Donnelson in 1968 and served 5 years as director. Under Bridges, a missionary candidate school was installed that allowed orientation, screening, and policy training. He left the office to become pastor of a church in Houston where he formed another mission office that offered only a clearinghouse for funds, rather than a full service program. He was loved by the missionaries.

Carl Boonstra was chosen by the committee to be the third Mission Director. He was a pastor with a strong bond with many missionaries and visited some of them on their fields. As one of the National Directors, this author was involved in the process. Once the opening was announced, more than 50 missionaries sent letters to the committee endorsing Boonstra. He took office at the end of 1973 and served until 1987, when he retired. Under his leadership, the missionary candidate school was improved and a summer retreat for veterans was opened. Even in retirement, Boonstra continues to travel and speak in mission conferences and on foreign fields. He has helped churches increase their mission offerings by millions of dollars.

Bob Baird became Mission Director in 1986 and served 20 years. He had served as a missionary and a pastor, as well as the VP of Missions for the Fellowship. Under his leadership,

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<sup>20</sup> Christian Hall of Fame, Canton Baptist Temple, <http://christianhof.org/indexflash.html> [Accessed: March 30, 2010].

the new Mission Office was built on the campus of Baptist Bible College and the latest in information technology was installed to serve the missionaries and churches of the BBFI. Income has increased by millions and the number of adult missionaries and personnel had grown to 1,000. Before Baird was a preacher he was in business ,so his business skills were a great benefit to the Fellowship during his directorship.

Jon Konnerup served as an associate to Dr. Baird and succeeded him to the office of Mission Director in 2005. Jon was born to missionary parents in Ethiopia and when he reached college age, he enrolled at Liberty University to study communications. He and his wife, Pam, served in Kenya as missionaries before coming to Springfield to serve in the mission office. The missions program has experienced a tremendous boost in communication skills, with additional media resources in house. Jon is the youngest Mission Director to serve the Fellowship and has already traveled the world getting acquainted with national pastors, their people, and their countries.

Dr. Konnerup provided data on world missions through the BBFI for this project. At the end of September of 2009, the BBFI Mission Office released these reports.

Table 5 – BBFI Missionary Personnel

**Missionary Personnel From September 1976 - September 2009**

Years	Approved	Resigned	Deceased
33	1,246	828	70
Nearly 6,000 churches started through the years on 124 approved fields with 835 active missionaries on 97 open fields at year's end, 2009. <sup>21</sup>			

<sup>21</sup> Jon Konnerup, e-mail message to author, October 5, 2009



These reports were presented in public at the February 2010 meeting in Savannah, Georgia, and they brought preachers to their feet with a chorus of “Amen’s.” These three tables provide a sign of excellence in the field of missions.

Table 6 – BBFI Missions Receipts<sup>22</sup>

<b>Decades of Giving to BBFI Missions</b>	
1950-1959	\$3,694,290.54
1960-1969	\$17,174,191.44
1970-1979	\$65,383,216.32
1980-1989	\$153,367,895.88
1990-1999	\$249,640,333.90
2000-2009	\$385,497,522.80

The most important statistic in the reports is that of souls won to Christ. Below are those figures totaled from all fields where the Fellowship works in the world, today. God is greatly blessing the evangelism and church planting efforts of BBF missionaries. The evangelistic impact of the BBFI is still reaching the uttermost parts of the Earth.

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<sup>22</sup> Jon Konnerup, e-mail message to author, March 18, 2010

Table 7 – Missionary Report for 12 Months<sup>23</sup>

September 2008 – September 2009	
Professions of Faith .....	115,044
Baptisms .....	21,967
Leaders in Training .....	10,323
New Mission Churches .....	2,638
New Churches .....	924
Average Attendance .....	284,760

### **Baptist Bible College Prepares People to Make an Impact**

The only item on the agenda for the men and women who met in the Texas Hotel in Fort Worth was to start a Bible college in Springfield, Missouri. It had been discussed by leadership and had even met with Dr. Norris' approval. There was also a plan to start a school in Detroit, but it had not occurred to anyone to start a new fellowship with a new mission program and a newspaper. Those were developments in response to the storm cloud that gathered over the WFBMF meeting they were attending that week.

Of the various agreements made in that ballroom that May 24, 1950 afternoon, the college would be the most expensive project they would attempt. It would require a campus, several paid employees, and of course, students. The plan was to hold classes at High Street Baptist Church where Bill Dowell was the pastor. It was a large church with

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<sup>23</sup> Jon Konnerup, e-mail message to author, March 17, 2010

big facilities and could easily facilitate the college until its campus was ready. Dr. Dowell was also the president of the WFBMF when he walked into the Texas hotel and president of the BBF when he walked out of that meeting. His standing among Fundamental Baptists undergirded the legitimacy of the college. His reputation gave value to Baptist Bible College and showed that it was an important new project in the city of Springfield. His Sunday School reached 3,000 and his radio program had a large listening audience. In the 1950's, he became a pioneer of telecasting Sunday church services. It is fitting that his name is attached to the largest building on the BBC campus, the "W. E. Dowell Field House." As a young BBC student, Jerry Falwell taught a Sunday school class at High Street and was impacted by the big vision of Bill Dowell.

Baptist Bible College was late in joining the Bible college movement, but would prove quickly to be a great success.<sup>24</sup> Dr. Combs describes the Bible college movement:

Bible colleges started back in the late part of the 19th century when A. B. Simpson started in 1882 what is now known as Nyack College. Moody followed in 1887 with Moody Bible Institute, and Torrey in 1907 with Bible Institute of Los Angeles. From this humble beginning, the Bible college movement has exploded until today there are over 600 Bible colleges and institutes in the land, of which approximately one-hundred are Baptist.<sup>25</sup>

Dr. Combs is a scholar and his knowledge of the Bible college movement is helpful to this project. In fact, he is also an historian who faithfully researches and presents background that would otherwise be lost. He continues,

The 19th century closes with a country coming of age and Baptists being swept into denominational structures such as the Northern and Southern Baptist Conventions. The schools, though professing orthodoxy, were strongly influenced by the European scholarship of rationalism, skepticism, and evolution. It was this

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<sup>24</sup> Within 20 years BBC would have over 2,400 students and claim the title of largest Bible college in the world.

<sup>25</sup> James O. Combs, *Roots And Origins Of Baptist Fundamentalism*, (Springfield, MO: John the Baptist Press, 1984), 51.

backdrop of liberalism which gradually captured the institutions of higher education and the seminaries which were producing men for the Baptist pulpits, which bred the fundamentalist movement of the 20th century.<sup>26</sup>

Because BBC is a Fellowship owned school, it has been the center of controversy more than any other entity in the Baptist Bible Fellowship. The great value of students and their potential are of concern to pastors and parents that invest money in the school. What is taught there is a precious gift because it will affect the future of the student, as well as the Fellowship and the future of the churches or mission fields where the students will serve. In times past when students would get upset about something at school, they would contact their parents or their pastors and that would start an investigation. Since the beginning, the administration has had to deal with unhappy parents and pastors. BBC can be a burden to bear, but it has more than 10,000 alumni and has made a big impact around the world for evangelism and church planting. A list of pastors who have graduated from BBC would include a who's who among Baptist clergymen. Those factors make Baptist Bible College a high priority with the Fellowship.

Six BBF pastors have served as the presidents of BBC during its first 60 years. The first was G. B. Vick, who led in the founding of the college and faithfully presided over the school for 25 years until his death in 1975. From the beginning to the end of his presidency, Vick led with vision, integrity, and passion. Because of his ministry at Temple Baptist Church in Detroit, he was recognized as one of America's leading churchmen. He once told this author that he had built 22 buildings in his ministry and

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

they were all debt free. In fact, he had just raised pledges in May of that year to pay off the last building he built.<sup>27</sup> It was so like Dr. Vick to take care of business before he left.

In 1975, Dr. Bill Dowell became the second president of Baptist Bible College after the death of Dr. Vick. They had founded the school together with Vick's leadership and Dowell's presence. Dowell had served as executive vice president of the college and as Vick's right hand at the school. It was a natural ascendancy and Bill Dowell's integrity was a great strength to BBC. He loved the students and could be seen everywhere, including all the ballgames and all the concerts. He was a big man with a big voice and a great friend to preachers. During his seven years as president, he began to suffer with bad health which finally led to his retirement to become the first Chancellor of Baptist Bible College.

Dr. A. V. Henderson became the third president of Baptist Bible College in 1982, after serving as the successor to Dr. Vick at Temple Baptist Church in Detroit. He inherited a declining enrollment and thought it best to get out into the churches where he could raise awareness and support for Baptist Bible College. Henderson was one of the best preachers the BBFI had ever heard. He was well studied, to the point, and best of all, a minimalist on time. He was sought after for conferences, church services, and national Fellowship meetings. This author became a trustee during Henderson's administration at his request. Unfortunately, while he was out preaching to help the school, the business management of the college suffered a crisis. Once it was determined to be larger than expected, Dr. Henderson voluntarily resigned to the trustees and the president of the

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<sup>27</sup> G. B. Vick, conversation with author in the November 5, 1974 at Temple Baptist Church in Detroit.

Fellowship, Dr. Leland Kennedy.

Dr. Kennedy was chosen to become the fourth president of Baptist Bible College. He entered the office in 1986, with a declining enrollment and a questionable financial condition. As a trustee, this author watched first hand as Dr. Kennedy rallied the BBFI together to solve the financial crisis and work on the enrollment. It was an amazing display of leadership, cost- cutting, and fundraising. God used him to save the college. After a long illness, Mrs. Kennedy passed away, and that, plus the very difficult work of bringing the college back to a firm footing, led him to retire and become the Chancellor.

In 2002, Dr. Mike Randall became the fifth BBC President, after having served earlier as Vice President, then Tribune Editor. As did his predecessors, he inherited a declining enrollment and resultant financial losses. Randall was uniquely qualified for college leadership. He was the most educated with a Master's degree from TCU. He served in many offices and had researched the history and philosophy of the BBFI. He had even taught at BBC under Dr. Vick's administration. He retired in 2008.

As a successor to Randall, Jim Edge was chosen as the sixth President of BBC. He grew up in Springfield and graduated from Baptist Bible College. He founded and pastored Heritage Park Baptist Church in the Boston area. Edge also served as Executive Vice President of what is now Boston Baptist College<sup>28</sup>. After more than 25 years in New England, the Edge family moved back to Springfield. Jim offered his services to BBC and proved to be someone Dr. Randall needed as an assistant. When Randall retired, the

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<sup>28</sup> The BBFI started a new college in New York after Dr. Vick's death. It was later moved to Boston as Baptist Bible College East. In recent years, it was renamed Boston Baptist College and has the web site, [www.Boston.edu](http://www.Boston.edu). David Melton, a BBC graduate with a Master's from Harvard Divinity School is the president.

trustees interviewed candidates and ultimately chose Jim Edge to be President. The steady decline in the enrollment at BBC brought unique challenges to the new president. Over a 35 year period and 5 successive presidents, the enrollment has declined from 2400 to 560, which includes the graduate school.<sup>29</sup>

### **Tribune makes an International Impact**

One great advantage that came with the new Baptist Bible Fellowship in 1950 was an experienced and skilled editor, Noel Smith. It was he who wanted to start a newspaper for the new Fellowship and call it the Baptist Bible Tribune. He was available because he saw “the break” coming and gave his notice in advance. He made the move to Missouri and setup shop to publish the first Tribune announcing the new Fellowship, June 23, 1950.

In January, 1974, Noel Smith was the first of the Fellowship founders to die. His successor at the Tribune was Wendell Zimmerman, who remained a pastor in Jacksonville, Florida and moved the Tribune there. Rather than try to compete with the editorials Dr. Smith would write weekly, Dr. Zimmerman would publish sermons by BBF pastors and gather news reports from around the states and mission fields to put in the paper. The new editor was well known for his preaching, not his writing, but he was willing to take on the challenge because the Fellowship needed the Tribune to get the story out of what God was doing through BBF churches and missionaries. He worked hard, but in a few years it became too much for him, so he gave it back to the Directors to find a new editor.

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<sup>29</sup> Tim Adrian, interview by phone, April 13, 2010. Adrian is chairman of the Trustees at BBC.

James O. Combs took the Tribune in 1983 and made it a publishing house. The original Tribune became stronger with a trained editor and Dr. Combs added other products. The Baptist Preacher, a newsprint magazine which specialized in material that interested preachers was printed bi-monthly. Preachers were invited to write or send sermon material and ideas. Fellowship challenges were discussed in the Preacher rather than the Tribune, which of course was also read by laymen. Combs added book publishing to get authors from the Fellowship in print. Jim Combs was also a specialist in biblical prophecy, so as he edited the Tribune and published other titles, he preached in churches and schools on prophetic themes. He was energetic, innovative, and industrious. He even took the initiative to start the seminary at Louisiana Baptist University in Shreveport, where he continues to serve as provost. Dr. Combs left the Tribune in 1995 at the invitation of Jerry Falwell to start the National Liberty Journal.

In 1995, Mike Randall moved from the Vice President's office at BBC to become the fourth editor of the Tribune. Under his leadership, the Tribune improved as it made the technical leap to computer publishing. It had moved a few years before into new offices in the Mission Office, so it was centrally located on the BBC campus. When something happened the Tribune made sure that Fellowship people were able to read about it. The number of copies printed grew to 36,500,<sup>30</sup> on average. The transition from a tabloid size to a magazine size improved the readership and when color was added, it took on a professional format. The Tribune was able to secure the domain name, Tribune.Org, in 1996, and added an online version of the magazine while the worldwide web was still a new phenomenon to most Americans.

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<sup>30</sup> Mike Randall, email to author, January 20, 2010.



Keith Bassham, associate editor, moved to the editor's office in 2002 when Mike Randall became BBC President. The Tribune and the College along with the Mission Office enjoyed a new cooperative relationship.<sup>31</sup> Bassham is skilled, especially in leadership and communication. The Tribune is the center of information in the BBF and amazingly keeps pace with a small staff of high quality people. Readers now enjoy the best writers affiliated with the Fellowship, and the full color Tribune magazine is not only attractive, but filled with items of interest. It is no longer a throw away, but something to keep in the reading rack to enjoy.

The editor describes his role, "In 1995, I joined the staff of the Baptist Bible Tribune, and in 2002, I was appointed editor of the Tribune. In that capacity, I am the lead reporter on BBFI news and events, and I frequently counsel other BBFI leaders and officers."<sup>32</sup> One can pick up a copy of the Baptist Bible Tribune and learn of what God is doing in places familiar and places foreign. The evangelistic impact of the BBF is presented in colorful and readable articles.

### **Involving the Internet**

In 1995, the BBFI Network became a reality.<sup>33</sup> Based on what is now called online social networking, BBFI people quickly adapted to email groups, web sites, and blogs. It was not an official function of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, but was provided to

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<sup>31</sup> Bob Baird, conversation with author, July, 1996. Baird was Mission Director at the time.

<sup>32</sup> Keith Bassham, e-mail to author, December 15, 2009 as part of the survey of BBFI leaders.

<sup>33</sup> A joint effort was made by the Baptist Bible Tribune and the BBFI Missions Office on August 18, 1995 to publish <http://bbfi.org>, with the help of a private contractor. The author was involved. Today, multiple web sites present the various ministries of the BBFI including <http://bbfmissions.com>.

anyone in the Fellowship without charge by a private contractor. Through the years donations from users helped to offset costs.<sup>34</sup>

The research will present interviews solicited from leaders past and present through the BBFI Network. Much of the motivation for this project came from participating in the BBFI Network to keep pace with the state of the Fellowship around the world. There are stories to be shared of how the social networking has kept people bonded in prayer and purpose though they are thousands of miles apart.

In 1998, an article was published in the Tribune about the use of the Internet by missionaries and how it benefitted them. Men and women spoke of discouragement until they connected with others online. Some people mentioned being able to shop for clothes, shoes, and household items online. A few told of acquiring school books, curriculum, and supplies for home schooling. But the most common blessing was the saving of money on phone calls and faxes by using e-mail and online messaging services. The article raised awareness among global missionaries and pastors in America toward the use of technology to better communicate worldwide.<sup>35</sup>

### **Focusing on the Future**

Based on the research, proposals will be offered in the next chapter to suggest long-term solutions for the Fellowship, in light of Phil. 3:13-14 (KJV), “Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are

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<sup>34</sup> Donations are cleared by the BBFI Mission Office and forwarded to the provider.

<sup>35</sup> Billy Hamm, “Missionaries on the Internet,” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, August, 1998, 16f

behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.”

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION

Baptist Bible Fellowship International has provided a legacy for those who wish to follow it. The Founders set the example for others. Each of them performed the work of the ministry within his calling, his spiritual gifts, and his skill set. They built a solid foundation on which pastors and missionaries could work together. Then, they led the Fellowship to the top of the list of Independent Baptist church organizations.

Great churches were the backbone of the early Fellowship, providing vision, methods, and support for other pastors to use. Principles were derived from scripture and the articles of faith were based on a tried and proven model in The New Hampshire Baptist Confession of 1833.<sup>1</sup> The Great Commission delivered by Christ in the gospels was the motivating power for the Fellowship as it structured its mission program and its curriculum in colleges. The BBF was founded with the capacity to grow its own pastors and missionaries, as well as the ability to recruit and involve others who want to be part of the Fellowship. Baptists were welcomed who desired to maintain their independence and to be encouraged to preach the fundamentals of the faith. That was the first generation from 1950-1975.

The research has shown that it takes a delicate balance of Baptist beliefs and practices to empower a fellowship such as the BBFI. There must be a simple structure with incentives to participate, and there must be an open forum for participating pastors

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<sup>1</sup> This Confession was drawn up by the Rev. John Newton Brown, D. D., of New Hampshire (b. 1803, d. 1868), about 1833, and has been adopted by the New Hampshire Convention, and widely accepted by Baptists, especially in the Northern and Western States, as a clear and concise statement of their faith, in harmony with the doctrines of older confessions, but expressed in milder form. The text is taken from the Baptist Church Manual, published by the American Baptist Publication Society, Philadelphia. [http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/nh\\_conf.htm](http://www.spurgeon.org/~phil/creeds/nh_conf.htm) [accessed April 18, 2010].

to be heard. There can be no ecclesiastical authority in the Fellowship to prompt abuse of the churches or the missionaries they send. The BBFI is and must remain an historic Baptist organization that gives its supporters a way to do together what they cannot do alone.

The second generation of leaders was trained by the Founders, first by example and second by admonition, to keep the balance harmonious between the work of the Fellowship and the autonomy of the local churches. If that balance is strained, the Fellowship will suffer, including the missionaries, the colleges, and the church planters. Such situations have occurred as discussed in Chapter 3 and the outcome violated the spirit of Psalm 133:1 (NKJV), “Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is* for brethren to dwell together in unity!”

Based on the research, it is recommended that the Fellowship elect men to office who remember they are servants of God, as well as servants of the Fellowship. The Servant-Leader is the biblical model, but has not always been the example set by some officers in the past. That is especially the case when the officeholder emerges from an election with expectations that everyone must do his bidding.

There were some very good leaders in the second generation who used their opportunities to better the growth and outreach of the Fellowship as discussed in Chapter 4. They were willing to deal with divisive issues as well as lead the BBFI into a stronger position to plant more churches and be more innovative in reaching third world countries. The number of mission fields increased as did the number of adult missionaries. The twenty-five years spanned by the second generation (1975-2000) lacked the prominence

of the Founders, but groundwork was laid to improve the Fellowship into the third generation (2000-present).

Now, in the third generation, young pastors are taking a new look at church planting and church growth. What is biblical and what is traditional are not the same to them. Following the training at Liberty University and the lead of others in the evangelical community, new church planters are emerging in places where traditional churches are dying. They are also going to cities and fields heretofore considered too difficult. It is heartening to see a new wave of evangelism and church growth around the world. To accommodate them, the BBFI changed its policy that a church listed in the Contact Directory no longer must have Baptist in its name, as long as its official documents verify that it is a Baptist church.<sup>2</sup>

The research now indicates the evangelistic impact of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International is on the upswing again. It is hoped that pastors of the BBFI will carefully choose leaders who have no personal agenda, but rather a vision for the future that will benefit the churches and help them grow. A plan should be formulated that considers all elements of the Great Commission in the spirit of revival. That is how the BBF started and is the way it should return to effectiveness. It is important to draw ideas from the research for opportunities that lay before the Fellowship in this generation.

So, what are the best opportunities for the BBFI? From the research data, here are five examples from leaders in the Fellowship concerning growth and expansion in the near future:

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<sup>2</sup> BBFI Minutes, May, 2008.

**Michael Randall**, The BBFI's greatest opportunities are rooted in the incredible needs of our American society and the world. Opportunity also exists with advancement in technology and especially communication. The ability to harness this technology can create opportunity that none have heretofore imagined. Changes in American demographics has brought the mission field to us and the BBFI can take advantage of this opportunity, if a missionary mindset can be developed for ministry in local churches here in our country.

**Linzy Slayden**, VP of Missions, pointed to priorities like Global networking to send and take the gospel around the world; Local church planting and building; young people with a vision to reach the world with the gospel.

**Terry Kizer**, NCPO<sup>3</sup> has been a breath of fresh air. The state of Texas has helped two missionaries get a jump start on deputation by presenting them at the state meeting. And, it would be a great help if pastors could agree on the essentials of fellowship.

**John S. Waldrip**, a Los Angeles pastor, suggests starting Bible colleges and churches in major cities in the USA and around the world rather than suburban and rural ministry.

**Keith Bassham**, BBFI is by definition an “anti-” and sub-cultural movement. I think that BBFI people (as all remnant people will) historically tend to do their best work when they perceive they are in an underdog position or under threat. Currently, politics and culture are running against conservative and traditional Christianity, and this should provide a good base for future growth.

### **Recommendations for Future Growth to the BBFI**

**Item 1:** The BBFI should dedicate its agenda to recruiting and supporting church planters in the United States. Since that is the chief responsibility of the NCPO, the Subcommittee for Evangelism & Home Missions under the leadership of the Vice President of Evangelism & Home Missions should empower the Director of Evangelism & Home

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<sup>3</sup> The National Church Planting Office is a non-profit corporation based in Springfield, Missouri. The Organization exists to recruit and educate new Baptist ministers for existing and newly formed Baptist churches throughout the United States. The Organization also facilitates the process of obtaining loans for new churches and existing churches looking to rebuild. <http://www.bbfincpo.com/> See Appendix E.

Missions to present a bona fide strategy to the Fellowship as a top priority to plant new churches in all 50 states in the next 5 years. Then, a longer term strategy needs to be presented to plant 1,000 churches in the US in this decade. It won't be enough but it will be a good start.

### **An Expert Opinion**

In Ed Stetzer's book, *Planting Missional Churches*, he compares the population to the number of evangelical churches in America. His conclusions are astounding and it should be a must read for any church or pastor that is planning to plant a church in the near future. For instance, it is not uncommon to hear people say there are more than enough churches today, but Stetzer proves just the opposite to be true. The statistics are staggering. There are not enough evangelical churches in any US city. In fact, the truth is that 120 million unbelievers live in the United States and that makes it the third largest mission field in the Western Hemisphere.<sup>4</sup> It is not easy to face such a reality considering our American history.

Another truth presented by Stetzer is that in 1900, there were 28 churches for every 10,000 people in America. Today, that coverage has dropped to 17 churches for every 10,000<sup>5</sup> in this once, "Christian nation." That is a great loss to American culture. It's no wonder we are besieged by troubles in our country, our culture is polluted with pagan influences from the top down. America is in great need of evangelization and this

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<sup>4</sup> Ed Stetzer, *Planting Missional Churches*, (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman, 2006) , 37ff

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



book is proof that evangelical churches are needed more today than ever before. In fact they are the solution to our cultural and spiritual problems.

**Item 2:** The BBFI should dedicate its agenda to strengthening its colleges in Springfield and Boston with a united front of support. Young people in BBFI churches are a true treasure to their families and their churches. The BBFI needs to help them prepare for a life of service and the Fellowship needs to make the colleges as up-to-date as possible in every educational way. Neither college should be just a simple training institution, but they need to become excellent in theology and philosophy as well. Some of the divisive issues to affect our Fellowship in the past 35 years were the result of poor training in philosophy and theology. The translation issue, the control issue, and the crippling financial issues can be traced back to a lack of knowledge that comes from an excellent education.

Someday, BBC's graduate school should be so advanced as to offer accredited doctoral programs. This is no longer the world in which the BBF and BBC were founded. The Fellowship must accept change in the colleges that prepare students to do greater works than we have done in our generation. Fellowship colleges are blessed to have accreditation, but it should not be a struggle to keep it. It should be an advantage fully taken for the benefit of the future ministry of graduates who go out to serve the Lord. If the commitment to excellence is lost, so is the future of the Baptist Bible Fellowship.

Recently, a letter to supporters from Baptist Bible College was posted that included some pertinent facts. Here are some clips from the letter:

- Consider the thought that your investment will be multiplied many times over in the lives of our students.
- Many will leave from these halls and over the next 50 years of their lives win thousands to faith in Christ, establish churches, and train Christian leaders.
- Did you know that in 2009, BBC graduates serving as BBFI missionaries led over 85,000 (people) to Christ, and established over 600 churches?
- At BBC we seek to be good stewards of the resources that God sends our way.
- Our greatest resources are the students you send to us to prepare for the ministry.
- We are constantly reviewing our work with them, and making improvements to better their education.
- We take our responsibility to their parents and pastors very seriously.<sup>6</sup>

Those are the thoughts that supporters want to hear. They build confidence in the institution. One of the goals for Fellowship officers should be to navigate the business of the BBFI around divisive issues and steer for a victorious future for all involved in the colleges.

**Item 3:** The BBFI should dedicate its agenda to strengthening the global mission program to fulfill its potential as the best among Baptists. For 60 years Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries have excelled in taking the Gospel to the unreached people groups on every inhabited continent. They have had excellent staff and leadership from

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<sup>6</sup> Rob Hoffman, letter to author, March 15, 2010.

the first day to manage the business of reaching the world. As transportation carriers and communication systems have improved, the mission office and missionaries have taken full advantage of them to go to the uttermost parts of the earth. What used to take weeks on ships can now be done in hours on airplanes. And, what used to cost dearly in long-distance charges is now enjoyed at no charge by way of computers and digital telecommunications from any place in the world. God has always provided the tools for each generation to reach its world for Christ. We are living in a day when it can be done easier than ever before in history.

The Fellowship should dedicate itself to substantially support the missionaries approved by the process. When the BBF first started, primitive methods were used because today's tools were not available. Policies need to be updated to remove archaic language and unnecessary restrictions.

**Item 4:** Baptist Bible Fellowship International should consider returning to a structure more like it was before 1975. It would return the Fellowship to a fellowship of pastors and a level platform. It would have the President and other officers for two year terms, and 12 national directors for three year terms, all elected by the national fellowship in business session at the May meeting in Springfield. Pastors and missionaries must be present to vote in elections and other business. Two terms would be the limit in each office. This change would provide the Fellowship the opportunity to choose the best from around the states.

**Item 5:** The BBFI should consider strengthening its foreign church planting efforts through the Mission Office by partnering with World Help for emergency purposes. World Help is a nonprofit, nondenominational Christian organization that is uniquely qualified and strategically positioned to meet the spiritual and physical needs of hurting people around the world. World Help exists to fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment through partnering, training, helping and serving, especially in unreached areas of the world.<sup>7</sup> Vernon Brewer is the founder and president of World Help and former student at Baptist Bible College in Springfield, Missouri, though he later became the first graduate of Liberty University.

In 2006, Jerry Falwell wrote, “Vernon Brewer was the first graduate of Liberty University and served here for many years as Vice President of Student Affairs. For the past 15 years, he has served as President of World Help, an international relief missions ministry headquartered here in the Lynchburg area. Vernon is one of the leading missionary statesmen of our times. In almost every major international crisis, he is the first to respond with both the gospel and significant relief efforts. We are proud of Vernon. He is one of our finest alumni.”<sup>8</sup>

### **Threats That Face the Fellowship**

The research showed concern over **Threats** that face the BBFI. Here are six examples from men of varying generations and experiences:

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<sup>7</sup> Purpose statement of World Help, Forest, VA.

<sup>8</sup> Vernon Brewer, *Why? Answers To Weather The Storms Of Life* (Forest, VA: World Help, 2006), 188.

**Gary D. Fuller:** There has been a kind of pendulum swing between the BBFI becoming denominational and hyper independence. Also, we have been perceived to be too progressive in style and too political in nature, which has hampered our growth efforts among many independents.

**K. B. Murray:** The fracturing from within our ranks over personalities and preferences, becoming enamored with personalities instead of guided by divine principles, becoming ashamed of our Baptist heritage and identity and building personal kingdoms to the glory of self instead of the Savior.

**Ken Adrian:** Pastors becoming issue concerned rather than keeping focused on our main bigger picture.

**Bob Baird:** Multiple schools started splintering. Enrollment at BBC started declining. Lack of leadership at the same level as the founding leadership. Structure moved from 9 to 45.

**David Melton:** Our independence has at times made us like a tide pool that is too isolated to be healthy... our under-emphasis on education has often left us “satisfied” with perceptions and half-answers that have at times been our undoing.

**Tim Shafer:** The greatest threat has been allowing those with spurious doctrines (Ruckman) and legalistic exclusionary tendencies to have a platform of influence.

The BBFI needs excellent leadership. The Fellowship should develop good habits used by wise pastors in their churches... steer away from public forums for divisive issues. Each of the threats above is real, but when addressed wisely they can be resolved.

Leaders of the Fellowship are trusted to keep the BBFI united and going in the right direction. When the Fellowship becomes more trouble than it is worth, pastors begin to look for better places to invest their time and resources.

### Presidential Perspectives

Three former BBFI Presidents participated in the research, so their experience at the pinnacle of leadership can be helpful in this area. When asked about how the Fellowship embraced its opportunities, they responded.

**Verle S. Ackerman** (presided 1981-1984): Our greatest opportunities came as we partnered together as leaders and built some of history's greatest churches that impressed that generation that it could be accomplished. The result being missionaries went around the world doing the same and our churches filled our Christian Colleges.

**Parker Dailey** (presided 1969-1972 and 1990-1994): 1) First 25 years stood in the gap. 2) Building a mission work based on local churches.

**William Monroe** (presided 2002-2006): The BBF could have been the Biblically balanced Independent Baptist group with broad appeal to the masses of Americans. To do so, it needed to avoid the legalism of the Sword of the Lord, Hyles and hyper-independents on the right but also avoid the denominationalism of the SBC and the worldliness of evangelicalism on the left. The movement split in the 1990's and has really been fractured since. We seem to be a movement without a sense of identity—not fitting in well with fundamentalists or evangelicals.

Based on the responses of those leaders from three different periods in BBFI history, when the Fellowship focused on church planting, missions, and training, it grew and remained in harmony. For example, Dailey presided over a “Fellowship of pastors” in his first three (1 year) terms, 1970-1972. In his second set of (2 year) terms, (1990-1994 the BBFI was a “Fellowship of state fellowships.” This author served as Treasurer during Dailey's second administration. The BBF was a more politically divisive group than in its first generation.

When Ackerman served three (1 year) terms, the inertia of the first 25 years was still the norm and the effect of the Bangor Resolution had not been fully realized. Since he was an original BBF founder, he was not easily persuaded to the changes introduced by extremists. He remains positive about the Fellowship but admits to being on the sidelines due to his age.

When Monroe took office in 2002, the Fellowship was at a low point in morale and unity. It had undergone several changes. 1) The split of 2000 had wounded the Fellowship. 2) Baptist Bible College had declined for 25 years and was used as the scapegoat for the split. 3) The articles of faith were amended by a divided vote. It was not an easy time to become President.

### **Retired Pastor's Perspective**

One involved pastor who led several churches, a Fellowship college, and a regional fellowship before retiring from the pastorate, presented this profile from his experience in the early days of the BBF.

**John W. Williams, Jr:** In the 50's and 60's and to some degree the 70's the BBF churches made up most of the largest, fastest growing churches in the nation and were building some of the same on several foreign fields. They were poised to replicate that success, but due to the things mentioned above, they insisted on "majoring on minors," in many cases alienating the best men and churches, those best suited to lead the movement through the transition so necessary to survival. Great men, and potentially great men, have not and will not be inclined to spend their time, effort and money engaged in a petty, self-centered, intolerant, stagnant environment, when there are other groups or fellowships that welcome their idealism, innovation and desire to build ministries that are relevant in this culture and can reach this and the next generation.

### **Research Indicates the Fellowship can Improve**

Finally, the research offered respondents a good opportunity to speak on how the BBFI could **Improve**. Below are suggestions from pastors and missionaries whose ages range from late 40's to middle 80's. They are men of reputation in the Baptist Bible Fellowship and their influence is widespread.

**M. Jack Baskin**, Go back to the things that made us what we are and rebuild.

**H. Frank Collins**, Strong leadership & cooperation.

**Ed Courtney**, A return to the idea of working together for the goal of building churches and evangelizing the world in spite of personal differences.

**Rob Hoffman**, A fresh filling of the Holy Spirit leading to a renewed vision, a refreshed purpose and a rekindled unity – requires repentance for poor lifestyles, gossip and sectarianism.

**Jon Konnerup**, Focus, concentrate on the things that unite us.

**David A. Shaffer**, We have the ability to look beyond our differences in church practices and work together to further the cause of Christ for home missions and church planting. We have the ability to pool our resources to further missions across the world.

**Lon Stewart**, A real study of our beginning and its leaders.

### **Additional Comments**

The research instrument provided additional space for **Comments**. Not everyone took advantage of it, but it is revealing to read what those who took the opportunity had to share. Here are six of them:



**Jim Edge:** It is a great organization. I get to work with the future generation and we have great hope for the ministry.

**Wally Gilbert,** I love the Fellowship, and have been frustrated with the power struggles and in-fighting. But for me, it is a family.

**Herb Hubbard,** I love the BBFI. I pray that God will use leaders to move us through some troubled waters to do what we do best!

**Marc Leverett,** We are too focused on “the glory days.” Cultural waves come and go. We should be sure that our own spiritual houses and our own churches are in order and get off the depression fit that we don’t boast the largest congregations in the world anymore. My thinking is that the best examples of true Christianity and the most universally effective ministry comes from average churches rather than the super churches. We should emphasize, teach and train real pastors to serve in real churches, not make everyone feel like failures because they do not have Joel Osteen’s numbers.

**Neal Weaver,** I believe it is possible for us to regain our former momentum. I know that here at LBU we have turned out some fine young men that have the right doctrine and the right attitude. I believe there are many young men in our fellowship that have great potential. They may do things a little different, but we were different from our fathers’ generation. We of course need to guide them, but we need to also embrace them and give them a greater leadership role. They are our future.

**Bob Woosley,** I do not regret investing my life in this movement. However, I fear the young leadership has little concept of what made us what we are. I am too old to lead and still want to stand up and say something about the lack of leadership or wrong-headed leadership.

### **Closing Comments**

Embracing the call of God to pastor after years of college and internships produced a need to become part of a group for accountability, encouragement, and challenge. The Baptist Bible Fellowship International became that fraternity and remains so after many years. A remarkable privilege included was a personal friendship with the

founders of the BBF and the opportunity to serve alongside them until their passing. To be one of nine Directors of the BBF in 1975 meant the title of honorary pallbearer at the funeral of G. B. Vick. It was truly an honor.

The research for this project was refreshing, not because it was surprising, but because it was revealing. It has been eye-opening to hear the views of leading pastors on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the Fellowship. Their additional comments and suggestions toward improving the BBFI were equally enlightening.

The thinking, right or wrong, was that so much research is numerical and without a voice, it seemed when talking about the Baptist Bible Fellowship with men who have been part of it for their years of ministry, they should be heard. The way they express themselves is not just personal, it is important to them. Though BBFI men agree on the same articles of faith, each of them is a unique and gifted preacher. So the decision was made and now it is done. The reader has the privilege to read direct answers to open-ended questions.

As with all human organizations, the BBFI has problems. Some issues are long-standing and need to be cured. Some are new and generational, so they need to be understood before the cure is prescribed. It is hoped that this project will be helpful in that regard. It is the intent of the author to expand the project into a book to provide understanding, information, and motivation to readers concerning the Baptist Bible Fellowship International.

This project has been a “labor of love” because of the years of involvement as a pastor, an elected officer, and a pastoral counselor to missionaries. There is a need within

the Baptist Bible Fellowship International to return to the values that made it effective. Plus, there is an expanding world population that needs redemption in Christ.

For insiders and outsiders, veterans and recruits of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, let this be our prayer: May the BBFI once again have the power of God and the evangelistic impact that it once had. People need the Lord.

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## APPENDIX A – STRUCTURE

### **Baptist Bible Fellowship International Constitution and By-Laws**

Revised September, 2009

#### ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be The Baptist Bible Fellowship International, (a duly incorporated body in the State of Missouri, USA).

#### ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of this Fellowship shall be: to obey in letter and spirit the commissions given by our Lord in Matthew 28:18-20, “And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”

#### ARTICLE III – AFFILIATION

Affiliation with the Baptist Bible Fellowship International is open to any Baptist pastor of a supporting Baptist church believing in and adhering to the Word of God, on the basis of the Articles of Faith appended hereto. A supporting Baptist church is one that financially supports our missions or colleges.

#### ARTICLE IV – MEETINGS

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International shall meet annually, beginning on the fourth Monday of September, for the transaction of business. The place of this meeting shall be fixed by the Executive Committee and ratified by the National Directors. Other meetings may be called by the President as the need arises, 30 days advance notification of such business sessions to be published in the Baptist Bible Tribune. Missionaries may be approved at any National Fellowship meeting. Any Fellowship pastor may attend any meeting of a committee, agency, or subsidiary of the Fellowship. Any pastor shall have the inalienable right to appeal to the National Fellowship.

#### ARTICLE V - VOTING RIGHTS

Each church shall have one vote. Recognizing that this is a fellowship of pastors, this vote shall be cast by the pastor, or in his absence, by his authorized alternate.

#### ARTICLE VI – OFFICERS

Section 1. Any elected officer of this Fellowship shall be a pastor of a supporting church.

Section 2. The officers of the Fellowship shall be pastors serving as President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and National Directors, one from each state elected by State Fellowships, who shall represent the highest executive authority.

Section 2a. The President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected biennially. These officers constitute the Executive Committee. The National Directors will serve as the nominating committee and will present nominations at the National Fellowship in May. The ballot shall be approved in the May business meeting and made available to any pastor in attendance and qualified according to Article III (“Affiliation”) of these bylaws. Voting pastors will identify themselves on the ballot and voting will begin immediately upon distribution of the ballots. Qualified pastors not in attendance may obtain a ballot from the BBFI Mission Office. Those ballots must be submitted to the BBFI Mission Office before July 1st of the year of the election. The Executive Committee shall oversee the counting of the ballots and release the results within one week after the votes are tallied. If a run-off election is necessary, it shall be held at the National Meeting with qualified voters participating. No officer can succeed himself by election to the same office for more than one term. In the event of a vacancy in the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee shall appoint a qualified candidate, to be ratified by the National Directors, to fulfill the unexpired term.

Section 2b. A National Director shall be elected by each State Fellowship. The Executive Committee shall make recommendations to the National Directors for the positions of Director of Missions, Director of Education, Director of Evangelism & Home Missions, Editor of the Baptist Bible Tribune, and the General Manager of Publications. The National Directors shall appoint individuals to these positions, and such appointments are to be ratified by the Fellowship. The President of each Fellowship College must be ratified following appointment by that college’s Board of Trustees. The National Directors shall be divided into necessary committees for the development of policies and procedures as they relate to individual subcommittees responsibilities and oversight.

1. National Missions Directors. The First Vice-President presides over the National Missions Directors. The National Missions Directors are responsible for all aspects of the BBFI missions program.

a. The National Missions Directors shall be responsible for developing, drafting, publishing, and revising the BBFI Missions Policy. The BBFI Missions Policy must be approved by the National Directors. All BBFI missions work must conform to the published BBFI Missions Policy. The National Missions Directors shall arbitrate any issues that cannot be resolved to the satisfaction of both missions Field Representatives and missionaries or candidates.

b. The Executive Committee shall recommend candidates for the Director of Missions, a full-time, paid employee of the BBFI, to the National Directors. The National Directors shall appoint the Director of Missions, who must be ratified by the Fellowship at a National Meeting. The Director of Missions shall report directly to the National Missions Directors.

c. The National Mission Directors and the Director of Missions, with input from the Missionaries, shall nominate the Mission Field Representatives for their election by all National Directors. The Mission Field Representatives will serve for a period of three years, and the election shall be conducted so that one-third of the group shall be elected annually. Details of the election, organization, and operation of mission field representatives shall be included in the Missions Policy. The Director of Missions shall be Chairman of the Mission Field representatives.

2. National Directors responsible for Education. The Second Vice-President presides over the Education Committee. The Education Committee is responsible for all aspects of the BBFI education program.

a. The Education Committee shall be responsible for developing, drafting, publishing, and revising the BBFI Education Policy. The BBFI Education Policy must be approved by the National Directors.

b. The Education Committee shall oversee the appointment of presidents and trustees of all BBFI Colleges. All BBFI colleges must comply with published BBFI Education Policy.

c. The Executive Committee shall recommend candidates to the National Directors for the Education Director, a full-time, paid employee of the BBFI. The National Directors shall appoint the Education Director, who must be ratified by the Fellowship at a National Meeting. The Education Director shall report directly to the Education Committee.

3. National Directors responsible for Evangelism and Home Missions. The Third Vice-President presides over the Evangelism and Home Missions Committee. The Evangelism and Home Missions Committee is responsible for all aspects of BBFI work in evangelism and missions within the United States.

a. The Evangelism and Home Missions Committee shall be responsible for developing, drafting, publishing, and revising the BBFI Home Missions Policy. The BBFI Home Missions Policy must be approved by the National Directors.

b. The Executive Committee shall recommend candidates to the National Directors for the Evangelism Director, a full-time, paid employee of the BBFI. The National Directors shall appoint the Evangelism Director, who must be ratified by the Fellowship at a National Meeting. The Evangelism Director shall report directly to the Evangelism and Home Missions Committee.

4. The Chairman of the Missions Committee, the Education Committee, and the Committee of Evangelism & Home Missions, at the Chairman's request, will appoint two (2) approved furlough missionaries to serve on his committee in an advisory capacity.

Section 3. The President shall preside at all business meetings of the Fellowship and shall act for the Fellowship according to delegated power given him by the Fellowship. He and the First Vice-President shall be considered ex-officio members of all committees, agencies, and subsidiaries of the Fellowship. The First Vice-President shall act for the President on all necessary occasions and shall assist him whenever possible. The Secretary shall keep all records and minutes on behalf of the Fellowship. The Treasurer shall keep a record and shall provide the Executive Committee and National Directors with an annual audit. All funds received by the

Treasurer shall be disbursed as designated by the donor, or if undesignated, as instructed by the Executive Committee. It shall be the responsibility of the Executive Committee to maintain the integrity of all accounts. The National Directors shall be at the call of the President. The President and the First Vice-President of the Fellowship shall serve as Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the National Directors. The President, Vice-Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer, and National Directors shall meet twice a year and report to the Fellowship annually.

Section 4. All appointed administrators of Fellowship agencies mentioned in Section 2b shall serve for an indefinite term. Their successors shall be appointed by the National Directors. An annual audit of all receipts and disbursements of Fellowship agencies shall be made available to the National Directors. These administrators are charged to maintain persons in employ whose belief and behavior are consistent with our Articles of Faith.

Section 5. No person shall hold at one time more than one elective or appointive office set forth by this Constitution. This shall include officers of Fellowship- owned and approved colleges, such as President, Vice-President(s), Trustees, or any other officer of the colleges.

Section 6. National Directors shall be elected to serve a three-year term. Election shall be conducted so that one-third of the group shall be elected annually. No National Director, or alternate Director, shall represent a state in which he does not actively fellowship. Each Director shall be certified to the BBFI by authorization from his State Fellowship.

Section 7. All College Trustees shall be elected to serve a three-year term. Election shall be conducted so that one-third of the group shall be elected annually.

Section 8. If for any reason a National Director is unable to serve his unexpired term, it shall be immediately filled by the State Fellowship.

Section 9. The Executive Committee shall appoint an Editorial Board of Review for the Baptist Bible Tribune to serve for a term of three years, and such appointment is to be ratified by the National Directors.

## **ARTICLE VII - SUBSIDIARIES AND PROPERTIES**

Section 1. The subsidiaries of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International shall operate independently of and yet in cooperation with each other. Each shall operate under duly designated authority from the Fellowship, but within the framework of this Constitution.

Section 2. All properties of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, including all foreign properties that may be acquired by it later, shall be legally registered in the name of and duly owned by the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, to conform to all legal requirements of the locality in which they are situated. The Secretary is responsible for keeping record of all properties owned by the BBFI and its subsidiaries.

## **ARTICLE VIII – CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS**

This Constitution shall supersede any other document pertaining to any branch or institution of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, and no document pertaining to any institution or branch of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International shall set forth any rights, privileges or



powers that are in conflict with those set forth in this Constitution and By-Laws. This Constitution and By-Laws may be amended at the annual meeting of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International by a two-thirds vote of those present and voting, providing the proposed amendment has been read at a previous National Meeting.

#### **ARTICLE IX - RELATIONSHIP TO CHURCHES**

All New Testament Churches are autonomous and self-governing; therefore, no article in this Constitution or By-Laws shall ever be interpreted in any way as to infringe upon or jeopardize the absolute sovereignty of any local church. The property rights, the missionary policies, and the practical procedures for autonomous, self-governing churches shall never be endangered in any way by the Baptist Bible Fellowship International, its agencies or subsidiaries.

#### **ARTICLE X - ARTICLES OF FAITH**

**(See below)**

APPENDIX B – MISSIONS  
Policies and Program

MISSIONS POLICIES OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP  
Includes policies approved through September 2009

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## INTRODUCTION

Having been commissioned by our Lord Jesus Christ to "go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15), it is the dedicated response of the churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International to engage in an ever-enlarging, world-wide ministry.

In order to maintain the autonomy of the local church, and at the same time to utilize the benefits of mutual endeavors in spreading the Gospel to the ends of the earth, it is needful to formulate certain policies.

Therefore, these policies are formulated from the findings of Scriptural instructions, much prayerful consideration, and many fruitful years of experience; and are adopted as an agreement between the churches, the pastors, and the missionaries.

## ARTICLE I MISSIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Missions Field Committee, in cooperation with the Director of Missions, has the responsibility of the mission work of the Fellowship.
2. The Missions Field Committee is composed of pastors of the Fellowship appointed by the Board of Directors for three-year terms, such appointments being arranged so as to relieve one-third of the members each year. This committee shall include not more than seven (7) missionaries on approved furlough. These shall be appointed by the Director of Missions based on the geographical area in which the missionary serves. **These shall serve in an advisory capacity.**
3. In addition to ex-officio members, the membership of the Missions Field Committee will be determined by the number of fields where approved missionaries are serving or will serve, one member to be appointed as representative of each approved field. The president of Baptist Bible College, or his appointee, shall be a member of the Committee.
4. The Missions Field Committee will meet at national fellowship meetings and at the call of its chairman; its meetings being devoted to prayerful consideration of problems on the mission fields, examination of candidates, consideration of new fields, and otherwise functioning to accomplish an orderly and ever-enlarging, world- wide ministry.
5. Emergency Committee--In case of emergencies requiring immediate action, the Director of Missions may call together the assistant directors, pastor of the sending church, the Missions Field Committee member representing the particular field, and

four other members of the Missions Field Committee to determine the action which should be taken. The expense for such emergency meeting will be paid by the Fellowship.

6. Any pastor accepting a position on the Missions Field Committee must conform to the doctrinal and moral qualifications required of the missionaries.
7. Individual members should be faithful in attendance at committee meetings, interesting themselves in the overall world ministry of the Fellowship especially in the respective fields under their supervision, taking an active part in the lives and ministry of their missionaries, assisting and advising them in their work.
8. In the event a member of the Missions Field Committee fails to fulfill these responsibilities he may be replaced by the Directors.

## ARTICLE II DIRECTOR OF MISSIONS

1. The Director of Missions shall administer the mission work of the Fellowship in cooperation with the Missions Field Committee. His duties shall include:
  - a. He is chairman of the Missions Field Committee.
  - b. He shall implement the decisions and directives of the Missions Field Committee.
  - c. He is to supervise and maintain the Mission Office.
  - d. He is to assist and encourage the missionaries in every way possible.
  - e. He is to promote the work among the churches.
  - f. He is responsible to see that these policies are fulfilled.
  - g. He will serve as the coordinator of the Mission Departments for all full membership and approved schools.
  - h. He shall be responsible to the Fellowship for the continued teaching of the mission philosophies and policies of the BBFI in all full membership and approved schools.
2. The Director of Missions shall present to the Directors and to the Fellowship an annual report of the missionary endeavors of the Fellowship.
3. Assistants to the Director of Missions may be ratified by the Fellowship Directors as the need arises.

## ARTICLE III MISSION OFFICE

1. The Mission Office shall function as a service center for contributions received for approved Fellowship missions projects; the accumulated contributions being forwarded to the missionaries at the end of each month, together with a list of donors and amounts given. The contributing church receives acknowledgment letters and receipts from both the Mission Office and missionaries. Nothing is deducted for Mission Office expense; the missionary receives all contributions designated to him, 100 cents on the dollar.
2. The Mission Office is financed by individual designated gifts from churches, missionaries, individuals, and auxiliary services.
3. The Mission Office is to faithfully handle the mission funds of the churches in a business-like manner to continually maintain their confidence. The Treasurer is to be bonded as determined by the Directors. A strict annual audit is to be provided each year by a qualified and registered accounting firm. Monthly financial reports are to be submitted to the Missions Field Committee and Directors, and the books of the Mission Office are always to be open for examination.

#### ARTICLE IV APPROVAL OF MISSIONARIES

The Missions Field Committee prayerfully and thoroughly considers the applications of missionary candidates presented to it by the Director of Missions. The committee does not approve the candidates, but rather recommends to the Fellowship in regular session those it deems qualified. The Fellowship then considers the recommendations of the committee, hears the testimony of the candidates, makes such inquiries as it desires and acts upon approval of the candidates.

1. Personal Qualifications
  - a. Each candidate must:
    - i. Give evidence of being a born-again believer.
    - ii. Give evidence of a missionary call.
    - iii. Be a member of a Fellowship-affiliated Baptist Church.
  - b. Candidates shall not be considered who have been divorced and have two living mates.
  - c. Candidates shall not be considered who use tobacco or liquors; or who practice dancing, gambling or theater attendance; or who engage in any other un-Christian conduct.
2. Application Procedure

- a. Candidate is to submit to the Mission Director a written request for application as a Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionary. Necessary forms for application will then be provided by the Mission Office.
  - b. Candidate is to complete and return to the Mission Director the following items 90 days preceding the National Fellowship meeting where approval will be sought:
    - i. Completed application.
    - ii. Personal testimony of salvation, missionary call, and previous Christian service.
    - iii. Statement of acceptance of Baptist Bible Fellowship International Articles of Faith.
    - iv. Copy of ordination certificate.
    - v. Medical report on each member of the family.
    - vi. Letter of recommendation from a Fellowship-affiliated Baptist Church of which candidate is a member.
    - vii. Verification of sending church's action to send them forth.
1. The sending church shall commission the missionary/missionaries extending them authority to establish mission churches and assume a pastoral relationship with the mission churches.
  2. In case of loss of sending church endorsement, a missionary shall seek to obtain endorsement of another sending church which shall be subject to review by the Missions Field Representative.
3. Education of Applicants
- a. Applicants are required:
    - i. To be high school graduates or equivalent.
    - ii. To be college graduates with at least 18 credit hours of mission courses from a full membership and/or approved school. College graduates with a minimum of 18 credit hours of mission courses from another training institution may be accepted by the Mission Office during the application process and the Mission Field Committee at the time of approval.
    - iii. To have at least one year of acceptable experience in the pastorate or some other form of Christian service acceptable to the Mission Committee.

iv. A two-year supervised part-time exception may be acceptable to the Mission Field Committee.

- b. The Mission Office shall administrate a measure of understanding and acceptance of the missions philosophy of the BBFI through the application process with the Mission Office and through the annual Candidate School. Additional formal/informal training may be required.
- c. Five years' experience as a pastor and pastor's wife within the Baptist Bible Fellowship may be considered the equivalent of the educational and internship requirements for approval as Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries. Waivers of the educational and internship requirements based on special experience of other kinds may be recommended by the Fellowship Directors in individual cases.

#### 4. Missionary Wives

- a. The Fellowship primarily sends married couples to the mission field, deeming this both Scriptural and advisable. Because it majors in the preaching of the Gospel and the establishment of churches, the Fellowship promotes the ministry of men in the leadership of its missionary enterprise.
- b. This does not mean that the Fellowship depreciates the importance of women in this ministry, but rather requires that the missionary wife be capable of a ministry with women, young people and children. She is expected to learn the language and have an active part in the ministry of her husband; remembering, however, her first responsibility is to her home and family.
- c. Because of her ministry and the adjustment problems on the field, a wife must fulfill the educational qualifications.

#### 5. Single Missionaries

- a. Single missionaries will be subject to personal and educational qualifications per Baptist Bible Fellowship mission policy.
- b. While the Fellowship majors in couples, it does not close the door to highly qualified single persons. In view of the obvious problems in this respect, the Fellowship requires that any single women candidates be 27 years of age before departure for the field and that any single men candidates be 25 years of age before departure for the field; that they must promise to devote at least one full



term to their ministry; and that they must further promise not to begin courtship, whether with a national of the field, another missionary, or anyone else. Any divergence from this rule must be brought to the attention of the Missions Field Committee immediately.

- c. The Missions Field Committee must approve any change in the above policy.
  - d. No more than five percent of the missionary personnel of the Fellowship may be unmarried.
  - e. A single woman will be required to work with an approved missionary couple.
  - f. Single men will pursue a church-planting ministry.
  - g. Single men will be subject to Baptist Bible Fellowship International mission policy. The maximum age of a candidate at the time of application is 35 years. In special cases the Missions Field Committee may consider extending this age limit.
6. Age – Applicants over the age of 50 years will require a recommendation from the Mission Director to the Missions Field Committee.
  7. Health – Candidates for approval are required to submit a medical examination report from a clinic selected by the Mission Director.
  8. Applications from other groups – In case of applications received from candidates who have not been associated with the Fellowship, such applicants are required: (1) to become members of a Fellowship-affiliated church; (2) to take specified resident training in the Missions Course of a full membership and/or approved school; and (3) to otherwise satisfy the Missions Field Committee and Fellowship as to their qualifications.
  9. Nationals – This is a missionary enterprise, and applications of nationals of other countries to be missionaries of the Fellowship will not be considered. The Fellowship has scores of national preachers on its various mission fields, each of which is encouraged to build responsible, self-supporting churches. The missionaries in charge of such a ministry should, by Scriptural instruction in consecration and tithing, develop such churches to support their ministry, and take responsibility for their churches.

## ARTICLE V DEPUTATION

Upon approval by the Fellowship, a missionary begins deputation work among the churches. He and his family are not supported by a board, but rather by churches. He visits the individual churches, seeking prayer and financial support to cover his needs.

## ARTICLE VI TERMS OF SERVICE

### 1. First Term Missionaries

A missionary, upon approval, shall raise as quickly as possible sufficient monthly support of his basic living needs for approximately two years. Upon arrival on his foreign field of missionary service, he will enroll in and complete language study in a qualified language school. This is generally a one-year course.

During language study the missionary and his family must set the example of Christian duty by being in regular and faithful attendance in a local national church.

He will endeavor to put to use his language learning by speaking with nationals in church, shops, and homes at every available opportunity.

The first-term missionary should feel a sense of responsibility by getting involved in a local national church and thereby assisting missionaries and nationals whenever possible, in teaching, preaching, visitation, etc., during this first year.

During the second year the missionary is to continue perfecting his communication, also continue getting accustomed to the people, culture and customs. He should work very closely with other missionaries and nationals. He should be able and willing to watch over another missionary's work while that missionary is home on furlough.

After two years of foreign intern service the missionary may return to the States to raise additional work support funds and money for equipment needs.

If there is a legitimate reason for a first-term missionary returning from the field sooner or remaining longer, written permission must be received by the Mission Director.

### 2. The length of regular missionary services

The recommended term of service on the field is four years followed by a year of furlough. It is recommended that the first month of the year's furlough be used as a rest period and time of obtaining physicals. Any deviation from this schedule shall necessitate the approval of the Mission Director, the sending pastor, and/or the Missions Field Committee before coming home or leaving the field. Prior to departing to or from the field, the Mission Director must be notified.

### 3. Furlough Policy

- a. Missionary must get approval from the Sending Pastor and notify the Mission Director or an Associate Director in writing, including dates of departure and return, before any travel from or to their field.
- b. The compensation plan (Article VII, section 1) is established based on a US norm. That US amount is adjusted for each unique field situation. When the missionary returns to the US for furlough, their personal compensation amount will revert to US norm.
- c. Furlough time will be determined by the following:
  - i. 1 year on the field – up to 3 months' furlough.
  - ii. 2 years on the field – up to 6 months' furlough.
  - iii. 3 years on the field – up to 9 months' furlough.
  - iv. 4 years on the field – up to 12 months' furlough.
- d. The maximum furlough time is 12 months. Any extension of furlough time must be approved by the sending pastor and Mission Director.
- e. Special circumstances such as children's schooling, medical problems, etc., will be considered when applying for extension.
- f. Short Trips: Expenses for non-work related trips such as weddings, funerals, graduations, etc., must come from family support. Expenses for work related trips such as missions conferences, ministry events, etc., come out of ministry support funds. The missionary will retain field compensation status during short trips to the US.
- g. The length of time for a short trip will be determined by the Mission Director, sending pastor, and missionary. Thirty days should be the maximum limit unless special circumstances are involved.
- h. If the missionary has sufficient funds for round trip tickets to his respective field, per missions policy, the furlough fund may be used for work related trips if needed.
- i. Pastors inviting missionaries home for conferences should inform the Mission Director.

#### 4. Furlough Policy Enforcement

- a. Policies and Guidelines should be followed by everyone.
- b. Any missionary abusing the Furlough Policy will meet with the Missions Field Committee.

### ARTICLE VII MISSIONARY SUPPORT

In the matter of the support of its missionaries, the responsibility of the Fellowship is as follows:

1. Personal Support – The personal support amount will be determined by a compensation plan developed by the Missions Office which uses a budgetary system to validate the amount needed to be raised.
2. Personal Support, as its name implies, includes food, clothes, housing costs, medical costs (except monthly medical program deduction - see Article VII, section 6 below) and other personal expenses.
3. The rent and maintenance of the home of the missionary, including utilities, is considered by the IRS to be a personal expense which can be paid from ministry funds.
4. Ministry Support – Ministry Expenses include such items as car expenses, travel in interest of the work, language school tuition, printing and postage, expenses of starting new works, and other expenses pertaining to the work, and come from ministry support.
5. Missionaries are encouraged to provide for their retirement in accordance with the Missionary Retirement policy (Article VIII, Section 7). Contributions can come from ministry support funds, but are considered by the IRS to be a taxable benefit.
6. The required Medical program coverage (and other plans recommended by the Fellowship) is a ministry expense, but is also considered by the IRS to be a taxable benefit. All other insurance comes from personal support.
7. K-12 Schooling Expenses – Because cost of education for missionary children is a major expense on many fields, missionaries are urged to raise support for this purpose, and must show these expenses as a separate line item on their quarterly reports. This is also considered by the IRS to be a taxable benefit.

8. College Expenses – Missionaries are urged to raise support for this purpose up to the amount permitted by policy. They must show these expenses as a separate line item on their quarterly reports. This is also considered by the IRS to be a taxable benefit.

## ARTICLE VIII FUNDS

1. Furlough Fund – The Mission Office maintains a furlough fund for missionaries to distant fields by reserving ten percent of their regular income for transportation expenses to and from the fields. Adjustments may be made for first term missionaries and/or for those on nearby fields.
2. Hospitalization and Disability – The Fellowship does maintain hospitalization and disability programs for the missionaries. Every missionary's participation is required.
3. Social Security - Missionaries are required by law to pay Social Security, if they have not obtained exemption from the IRS.
4. Car Loan Fund - A loan fund has been established in the Mission Office, subject to the following conditions:
  - a. Loans are granted to missionaries on the field as money is available in the fund.
  - b. Maximum loan is \$4,000.
  - c. Missionaries must have cash on hand to pay the balance of car price.
5. Mission Church Funds – Revolving fund payments are to be returned to the Revolving Fund for inclusion in the annual budget offering.
6. Home Maintenance Fund
  - a. Payments received from missionaries living in Fellowship homes shall be placed in a Home Repair Fund maintained by the Mission Office.
  - b. This fund will be used to reimburse missionaries for major repairs, taxes and insurance payments on Fellowship-owned homes.
  - c. Requests for funds must be approved by the Mission Office before repairs are made.

- d. Any other use of surplus funds accumulated in this fund shall be by approval of the Missions Field Committee.
7. **Missionary Retirement Plan** – The retirement plan is for Baptist Bible Fellowship missionaries who have been approved by the Fellowship. To qualify, the missionary must have been approved and active for three (3) years as a Baptist Bible Fellowship missionary. The missionary may enroll in the retirement program beginning his fourth year of active service as a Fellowship missionary. The amount the missionary may invest for retirement is tied to the amount which the IRS allows for an IRA. There is no need to vote every time this changes because it is tied to government regulations. The missionary may do with his retirement funds as he deems right providing an investment is made. The idea of a retirement plan is in event the Lord does not return before retirement age, the missionary will have some funds to retire with. The Baptist Bible Fellowship will not be responsible for taxes that are payable on retirement funds.

## ARTICLE IX ANNUAL BUDGET OFFERING

1. Each year the Fellowship receives an offering (now known as Missionary Projects Offering) to provide for missionary homes, mission church land and buildings, and general items of operating the Fellowship missionary enterprise.
2. The budget is prepared by the Missions Field Committee and presented to the Fellowship for approval.
3. Items not under the jurisdiction of the Missions Field Committee (i.e., the Tribune, College and operational fund) may be submitted to the Fellowship Directors.
4. **Homes for Missionaries** – The Fellowship may provide a home on the field for a missionary family upon proper request from the missionary. Funds are to be provided through the annual Missionary Projects Offering.
5. **Purchasing a private residence on the mission field.**  
Some countries do not allow foreigners to own private residences. In countries which permit BBFI missionaries to privately own real estate, the Fellowship will permit such ownership subject to the following conditions:

(Missionaries, in purchasing a residence, must always be sensitive to the viewpoints of their supporting churches and avoid anything that could be considered an excessive living condition. They must strive to live on a level which is compatible

with the local living standards but should never live at a level that would hinder the family's stability and safety.)

- a. Personal investment on the foreign field must relate only to a home, an apartment or lease/purchase home. The purchase shall be used exclusively as a personal residence on the field. All risks involved with the purchase of a personal residence shall be assumed exclusively by the missionary.
- b. The missionary shall sign a release and indemnify BBFI. The statement shall release and hold BBFI harmless from any liability regarding the home. In addition, a written acknowledgment shall be provided assuming the risk associated with the purchase of a home with personal funds in a foreign country.
- c. Notification of the intention to purchase a home with pertinent facts shall be made in writing to the sending pastor. The written notification of the missionary's intent and the sending pastor's approval shall be provided to the Mission Office.
- d. A missionary-owned private residence shall not be titled in the BBFI name. Such residence shall not have any relationship or attachment to a local church on the mission field; shall not be titled in a national resident's name; or be registered as property of the local BBF association on that specific field. Title must be in the missionary's personal name or the sending church's name. Where this is not possible, private home ownership shall not be an available option.
- e. In regard to issues related to IRS regulations concerning the prohibition of exempt funds being used for direct personal benefit, the Mission Office states in the strongest terms that missionaries should not solicit tax exempt funds from churches and other 501(c)(3) organizations to purchase their personal property. Ministry funds may not be used for purchase of a private residence. A personally owned home must be purchased with personal funds, which may include the Missionary's standard housing allowance as shown on their Personal Compensation Worksheet.
- f. Any down payment must come from personal funds or other personal assets. The monthly mortgage payments can be made from the monthly housing allowances of a missionary's ministry expense. The allowable housing allowance shall not exceed the amount of the standard housing allowance on the missionary's personal compensation worksheet. Anything above that may only

come from the missionary's personal funds (should the mortgage payments be higher than the standard housing allowance).

- g. All foreign and US taxes, any insurance and any administration related to the missionary owned private residence must be paid for from personal funds.
  - h. Costs for upkeep and repairs to a missionary owned private residence may only come from personal funds and the approved housing allowance.
  - i. The missionary family shall use the house only as their private residence and should not allow their focus to drift from their purpose of being on the field as a BBFI missionary to that of the business of ownership of real property.
  - j. Acquisition should not conflict at any time or in any way with the Holy Spirit's guidance to the place of service.
  - k. Any purchase of a private residence on the foreign field prior to completing four years of service in that country is strongly discouraged by the Mission Office.
  - l. The missionary owning a private residence internationally shall assume full responsibility for all details in its disposal and shall not obligate the BBFI (or any missionary) in any way.
  - m. The missionary is discouraged from soliciting churches regarding help with repairs or losses incurred in their privately owned residence.
  - n. Care shall be taken to insure that all matters are handled ethically for the sake of testimony to nationals and fellow missionaries.
6. Living in BBFI owned homes through the Missionary Projects Offering.
- a. Home is owned by the BBFI.
    - i. A BBFI-owned home shall never be titled in an individual missionary's name unless there is no other legal way to take title in the name of the BBFI or local BBF association and then only with the prior written approval of the Mission Office in advance of the purchase and/or construction. These homes shall never be titled in a foreign church's name or a national's name.



- ii. All funds used for a BBFI-owned home shall not be reclaimable by the missionary.
  - iii. All current policies and guidelines apply including required documentation and a Quitclaim deed.
  - iv. Current Maintenance Fund policies and procedures set forth shall apply with Option II. (Additional funds to supplement the maintenance fund may be raised by the missionary upon approval of the Mission Office with the understanding it is not reclaimable from the Mission Office or ministry funds.)
- b. BBFI-Owned Homes Currently Occupied By Missionaries:
- i. Home is owned by the BBFI, paragraphs 2 through 4 hereafter shall apply.
  - ii. All documents to be signed to this effect and files updated (i.e. Quitclaim Deed).
  - iii. All current policies and guidelines apply.
  - iv. For BBFI-owned homes occupied by missionaries approved prior to January 1, 1997, the following such paragraphs shall apply:
    - 1) Following BBFI approved retirement for those approved prior to January 1, 1971:
      - a. If the missionary raised funds through the Missionary Projects Offering (or previous programs) for a BBFI-owned home and purchased or built prior to 1971, the sum of up to \$30,000 from the proceeds of the sale of the home will be given to the missionary by the Mission Office, when the funds are available after the expenses of the sale are settled.
      - b. All taxes on these funds provided under subparagraph A (1) above shall be paid from the personal funds of the missionary in accordance with IRS regulation. A form 1099 shall be issued to the missionary for those funds.

- 2) Following BBFI approved retirement for those approved after January 1, 1971 and prior to January 1, 1997:
  - a. Any personal funds invested in or used toward the purchase, repair or improvements of the BBFI-owned home shall be documented (i.e., bank records, receipts, etc.) and received by the Mission Office no later than March 31, 2010.
  - b. All such documented personal funds specified in (1) above and approved by the Mission Office, plus or minus its percentage of the value gained or lost after the home is sold and the proceeds are received by the Mission Office shall be paid to the missionary.
  - c. All taxes on the funds given shall be paid by the missionary from personal funds according to IRS regulation. A form 1099 shall be issued to the missionary.
- 3) Resignation in good standing after December 31, 2009 and missionary's approval date is prior to January 1, 1997:
  - a. If documented personal funds have been used in the home and approved by the Fellowship, only the approved amount may be considered for reimbursement to the missionary. Consideration will be based upon the current value and/or sale of the property. The value of the property is to be determined by an appraiser/appraisal process acceptable by the Mission Office. All such documentation shall be received by the Mission Office no later than March 31, 2010, in order to be considered for such reimbursement.
  - b. The payment of such approved funds may not be made until the sale proceeds of the home have been received by the Mission Office. Should the funds not be available within six months after their resignation, the Mission Office will set up a payment plan in agreement with the missionary to pay their approved personal amount invested in the home within four years.
  - c. All taxes on the funds given must be paid from the personal funds of the missionary according to IRS regulation. A form 1099 shall be issued to the missionary.

- 4) For those living in a compound with multiple BBFI-owned homes: each missionary and home shall be dealt with on a separate or individual basis in accordance with these policies.
  - 5) Missionary's approval after January 1, 1997: Due to current retirement policy, no reimbursement of home funds to missionaries living in a BBFI-owned home shall be made. Any personal funds used in a BBFI-owned home shall be approved in advance by the Mission Office and it is understood none of these funds shall be reimbursed to the missionary.
- v. Moving From BBFI-Owned Home to a Privately-Owned Home on the Mission Field:
- 1) In the event the missionary elects to move from the BBFI-owned home to purchase a private residence under Option I, the procedures specified above shall apply.
  - 2) In the event the missionary desires to purchase the BBFI-owned home, and the Mission Office agrees to sell, the price is to be determined by the Mission Office, with input from the missionary and assistance of a local appraiser.
    - a. The missionary shall be responsible to personally obtain all financing in order to purchase the home.
    - b. If the missionary has any documented and approved funds in the home, such amount shall be deducted from the total price to be paid to BBFI.
- vi. Procedures For Missionaries Living In A BBFI-Owned Home Who Desire To Retire (In Accordance With BBFI Retirement Policy) In That Home In That Country:
- 1) The missionary may purchase the home from the BBFI with personally obtained financing. Any documented and approved personal funds (see II, B, 4 b) in the home shall be taken into account in the final purchase price.
  - 2) If the retiring missionary elects not to purchase the BBFI-owned home, the missionary and spouse may live in that home until their death, but

the home shall remain in the ownership of the BBFI and shall not become part of the missionary's estate. All heirs shall have no claim to such property. (Maintenance fee will be required.)

- 3) If a surviving spouse elects to remain in the BBFI-owned home, they shall choose #1 or #2 above.

vii. Procedures For Those In The Missionary Projects Offering Who Have Raised Or Received Funds Toward A BBFI-Owned Home Who Have Not Yet Built Or Bought A BBFI-Owned Home:

- 1) The missionary shall continue as originally planned and shall follow Option II.
- 2) If the missionary elects not to follow the original MPO plan all funds received after January 1, 2003, into their Home Project Fund shall be returned to the church or churches who gave the funds. The supporting churches may elect and indicate in writing to the Mission Office that such funds may otherwise be given toward ministry support.
- 3) All funds given before January 1, 2003 shall not be returned as such funds were given for a BBFI-owned home and must be used toward that end.
- 4) If funds are currently being raised through the MPO (and held in the Mission Office) and the missionary elects to opt out of the MPO and purchase a private residence:
  - a. The project shall be removed from the MPO.
  - b. Any churches which have given funds to the project and such funds remain deposited with the Mission Office, the church shall be notified and given the opportunity to re-designate the funds thereafter to another MPO project or have the funds returned.

viii. Procedures for Those Who Received a Down-payment From the BBFI (Either by a Loan or Through Funds Raised in the MPO) But Carry a Mortgage in Their Country:

- 1) The missionary will have the option to purchase the BBFI-owned home or continue with it as a BBFI owned home and following the BBFI owned home policies. A decision to purchase the home must be submitted in writing to the Mission Office by March 31, 2010.
- 2) If the missionary decides to make this home a personal home, a payment plan will be agreed upon between the missionary and the Mission Office in writing. The missionary will reimburse the funds given through the Mission Office and/or the Missionary Projects Offering toward the home from personal funds. The acceptable payment plan will begin no later than January 1, 2011 (or before if so desired by the missionary).
- 3) If no plan is agreed upon by January 1, 2011 the option to purchase becomes null and void and it is understood the home belongs to the BBFI.

**NOTE:** A sub-committee of Field Reps shall be established to assist with administration of this policy.

**NOTE:** As in all other cases, any funds disbursed to missionaries under the homes policies will be done so in compliance with applicable federal and state laws of the USA.

7. Mission Church Funds – The Fellowship may grant funds to Mission Churches on the field for the purchase of land and buildings. The procedure is:
  - a. On request of the missionary, the Mission Office will provide a church fund application.
  - b. Completed application is to be returned to the Mission Director. Sketches and specifications of the proposed building program must be included, as such information will aid in promotion of the offering for building projects.
  - c. Recommendation is made by the Missions Field Committee to the Fellowship.
  - d. Funds are to be provided through the annual budget offering.
  - e. Funds shall be secured by proper revolving fund agreements.

- f. Copies of legal documents properly registering the land must be sent to the Mission Director before funds for the building are disbursed.
  - g. Cost of securing and registering proper documents may be included in the church fund.
  - h. Revolving fund payments are to be returned to the Fund for inclusion in the next annual budget offering.
  - i. Monthly payments are to be made in US currency. The missionary serves as agent for the church and Fellowship.
  - j. Church funds shall be granted interest free.
  - k. Funds not used for the project as designated must be returned.
8. Limitations of Church Funds
- a. Repayment of church funds up to \$15,000 shall be considered under Section 5, according to church ability to replace rather than at a true amortization rate.
  - b. Church funds of more than \$15,000 will be considered under Section 5 of this Article, but only with strict fulfillment of all procedures, outlines and agreements to replace at standard amortization rates, or at least one-half of one percent a month.

## ARTICLE X MISCELLANEOUS POLICIES

1. Missionary Report
- a. The missionary is to submit to the Missions Office a quarterly financial/work report in compliance with guidelines set up by the Missions Office.
  - b. Non-Reporting Policy
    - i. Quarterly reports are due:
      - 1. First Quarter financial report deadline is April 30
      - 2. Second quarter financial report deadline is July 31
      - 3. Third quarter financial report deadline is October 31

#### 4. Fourth quarter financial report deadline is January 31

- ii. First missed deadline - after 10 days email or phone call from associate director giving until the end of the month for the report to be received in the Missions Office and reminded of the rest of the process. The sending pastor is also contacted for informational purposes.
- iii. Miss the second deadline, missionary contacted again, sending pastor called and their help requested to receive the report in the office within additional 15 days, and asked to give the missionary notice that they will not receive their next month's ministry funds until the report is received and reviewed. If the report is received after the 23rd of the month, ministry funds may not be received until the next monthly deposit.
- iv. Miss the last deadline:
  - 1. The missionary will be notified that their work funds will not be deposited until the report is received and reviewed in the office,
  - 2. Their sending pastor notified by the Missions Office,
  - 3. Ongoing failure to report may result in the missionary being required to meet with the disciplinary committee at their personal expense, and possible removal of BBFI approval.
- v. Exceptions:
  - 1. Certain catastrophic emergencies may affect the missionary's ability to complete the report, such as:
    - a. Debilitating medical problem
    - b. Natural disasters
    - c. Acts of terror
  - 2. In case of an exception outlined above, approval for a report filed after the due date must be obtained from an Associate Missions Director in writing as soon as possible.

## 2. Adoption of Children

- a. The Missions Director must be notified in writing by the missionary along with a letter of recommendation for the adoption by the sending pastor before beginning the application process for adoption of a child.
  - b. Medical coverage will begin according to the BBFI medical plan policies upon written notification of adoption completion and copies of legal documents.
  - c. Ministry funds may not be used for the adoption expenses.
- 3. Indebtedness
  - a. Personal Debt
    - i. The missionary shall incur no debts on the mission field.
    - ii. He shall incur no debt to a national.
    - iii. Personal investments should be made in the United States from personal income or may be made in a private residence on the mission field from personal funds.
  - b. Equipment Debt: Equipment must be paid for before departure for the field.
  - c. Fellowship Debt: A missionary shall incur no indebtedness in the name of The Baptist Bible Fellowship International without the express approval of the Missions Field Committee. Violation of this rule will subject the missionary to immediate discipline.
  - d. No credit cards of any nature are to be issued in the name of the Fellowship. Moreover, the use of personal credit cards to finance the work of the missionary is often problematic and is therefore discouraged.
- 4. Secular Employment – In view of the purpose of the Fellowship to provide adequately for their financial needs, our missionaries are not permitted to engage in secular work or receive remuneration from regular outside activities. The missionaries, rather, strengthen any financial weakness through appeals to the pastors and churches, securing assistance in this need from their sending pastor, supporting pastors, and/or representatives on the Missions Field Committee.
- 5. Establishment of Indigenous Churches – The Fellowship holds that the type of ministry it pursues at home shall be duplicated on the mission field, namely: spirit-filled Gospel preaching, accompanied by personal work, visitation, the building of



large Sunday schools with the goal of establishing great independent responsible churches.

Fellowship missionaries believe and practice the indigenous system, the establishment of self-governing, self-supporting, and self-extending churches. It holds that there is a distinction between the ministry of a pastor and a missionary; that the pastor of a national church on the mission field should be a national supported by and with the tithes and offerings from the national church.

6. Airplanes - Recognizing the value of airplanes in certain fields, yet also recognizing the dangers involved, the Fellowship requires approval by the Missions Field Committee before the purchase and use of an airplane.

Missionaries requesting permission to purchase an airplane are required to submit their request to the Missions Committee six (6) months prior to a decision by the Committee. The request should include the qualifications of the Missionary as to flying ability, mechanical ability and who shall be responsible for maintenance on the aircraft. The request should include photostatic copies of Pilot ratings, A & P ratings, and Instrument ratings. The Missions Committee should carefully consider these qualifications prior to making their decision.

7. Field Organizations

- a. Missionaries meeting together for spiritual or social purposes have our enthusiastic encouragement.
- b. When necessary a branch of the Fellowship may be formed (for example, Japan Baptist Bible Fellowship) to hold property, satisfy governmental requirements, or promote the work common to the missionaries, but such Fellowships are not to exercise any authority over an individual missionary, his works, or his ministry.
- c. When required by a government, a field representative will be appointed by the Missions Field Committee. Due consideration will be given to recommendations of the missionaries. Leadership and authority of a field representative is limited to the affairs with the governments involved.

8. Resignation or Termination

- a. A resignation is effective when received by the Missions Director. Supporting pastors shall be notified in a timely manner.
  - b. At the discretion of the Missions Director, in the event of a resignation under favorable terms, the missionary support can continue to be processed for up to two months.
  - c. In the event of termination, there is no obligation for continuance of support to be processed.
  - d. Upon resignation or termination of a missionary and all obligations have been settled, remaining funds will be reallocated at the discretion of the Missions Office, and when possible, with the input of the sending pastor. If possible, the funds will be reallocated to a similar ministry/project.
- 9. Travel – All families must travel to and from the field together unless written permission is granted by the Mission Director.
- 10. Retreats – All missionaries on furlough and newly approved missionaries before going to the field are required to attend the annual missionary retreat.
- 11. Retirement
  - a. Requesting Retirement Status – In order for a missionary with BBFI Approved Status to retire from active service, a written request for retired status by the missionary and a letter of approval from the missionary's Sending Pastor must be received by the Missions Director and be approved by both the Missions Director and the Missions Field Committee.
  - b. Qualifying for Retirement Status - To be approved for Retired Status a missionary must qualify in the following areas:
    - i. The missionary must be of age that the US Social Security Administration requires for receiving full retirement benefits (that age is 65 or older, according to when the missionary was born). This age requirement is for head of household (the wife may be younger or older).
    - ii. The missionary must have served as a BBFI Approved Career Missionary for at least 25 years with at least the last 6 years being consecutive years of service (of which 48 months must be served on the field) prior to retirement.

At least 18 of the 25 years must have been spent actually present on their field of service.

- c. **Mandatory Retirement** – There is no maximum age for mandatory retirement as long as the missionary can fulfill his/her missionary responsibilities on the field. However, should it become evident to the Missions Director that, due to health concerns or related issues, the missionary is no longer able to continue effective missionary service, after consulting with the missionary and sending pastor, he may request the missionary to return to the U.S. and retire. This decision of the Missions Director, as well as the process of requesting the missionary to retire, will be done with direct consultation and involvement of the missionary's Sending Pastor. If the missionary refuses, the Missions Director and sending pastor's request for him/her to retire, the missionary may request a meeting to present his/her situation to the Missions Field Committee whereupon the decision of the Missions Field Committee will be binding. In an extreme circumstance should the Missions Director and Sending Pastor not agree, the Missions Director may require the missionary to come before the Missions Field Committee.
- d. **Benefits of Retirement Status.**
  - i. When a missionary is granted retirement status, he/she is still eligible for the regular services provided by the Missions Office. However, the Missions Office will not continue to process contributions for missionaries retiring after December 31, 2021. This decision was based on the fact that 25 years previous, September 1996, the Fellowship voted to allow the missionaries to increase the amount taken from their work support to a more reasonable amount and has increased in following years to the point today.
  - ii. When a missionary is granted retirement status he/she (or couple) may remain on the BBFI medical program (with Medicare being primary provider). The retired missionary must pay the medical program's monthly payment. Failure to pay the monthly payments will result in loss of the program's coverage.
- e. **Other Considerations** – Because of the benefit of Medicare and other types of assistance in the United States, it is strongly recommended that retired missionaries reside in the U.S. If a missionary resides outside the U.S., he/she will lose some benefits of the Missions Office services. This loss of benefits includes but is not limited to:

- i. BBFI Medical Program will only provide supplemental coverage (missionary will be responsible for the first 80% of any medical expense that Medicare would have covered).
- ii. Emergency Evac and medical help associated with the Evac company will not be available. (This service may be available if advance notice of overseas address is given to the Missions Office and the additional premium is paid by retired missionary).
- iii. The Missions Office will not be responsible to transfer funds outside the United States of America.
- iv. The Missions Office will not be responsible to provide funds or means to return to the U.S. from a foreign country.

12. TEAM Missionary (Total Exposure Associate Missionary)

- a. Applicant must be born-again, an active member of a BBF affiliated church (A BBF affiliated church is one which supports at least one BBFI missionary).
- b. Applicant will be required to provide a written recommendation from their pastor.
- c. Applicant must be at least 20 years of age.
- d. Applicant must have completed one year of college.
- e. There is a possibility for completion of some academic courses while on the field in preparation for career missionary service with the BBFI.
- f. Applicant must agree to work with an approved BBFI missionary. A work agreement between the host missionary and the applicant will be crafted as part of the application process.
- g. Applicant must commit to a term of at least one year and not more than three years on the field per terms of the agreement with their host missionary. Any extension must be approved by the host missionary, sending pastor and the Missions Office at least three months prior to the end of their agreed term of service.
- h. Return to the US for any purpose must be approved by the sending pastor and the Missions Office.

- i. TEAM missionary must raise their own financial support under authorization of their sending pastor.
  - j. TEAM missionary must participate in a Missions Office approved medical insurance plan or program. Support must be raised to cover this expense and will be deducted by the Missions Office.
  - k. TEAM missionary must attend the scheduled TEAM candidate school during the calendar year of recognition.
  - l. The TEAM missionary must submit to the authority of their sending church in all disciplinary matters. They must also submit to the authority of the host missionary on the field.
  - m. There will be no dating during the period of residency on the foreign field.
  - n. The TEAM missionary shall not incur additional debt during the period of residency on the foreign field.
  - o. The TEAM missionary must be willing to give active assistance to the host missionary in his church planting ministry as outlined in their work agreement.
  - p. Formal recognition as a TEAM missionary will take place at a BBFI National Fellowship Meeting. The sending pastor must attend in order to give a personal recommendation before the Missions Field Committee.
  - q. TEAM missions service may be accepted as fulfilling the internship requirements for career BBFI missionary service.
  - r. TEAM may be used to fulfill the internship requirements for career missionary service in a Restricted Access Nation (RAN) if this service is also completed for a minimum of one year with a BBFI missionary in an open access country that is culturally close to the RAN. The approval of the sending pastor, the Missions Office, and the RAN missionary is required. The minimum service in the RAN is three months.
13. USLG (United States Language Groups) – USLG missionaries are veteran BBF missionaries who have served on a foreign field, are fluent in the specific foreign language of that field, and have returned to the United States to plant churches

among the same language group they ministered to on the foreign mission field. Policies for these missionaries include the following:

- a. The BBFI missionary must have served a minimum of eight years in the native homeland of his language group, be familiar with the culture, and be fluent in their language.
- b. The missionary must meet all current missions policy requirements and agrees to abide by all missions policies of the Baptist Bible Fellowship International.
- c. The health of the missionary must be good enough to minister effectively in an aggressive ministry. The USLG program is not a soft retirement ministry.
- d. USLG missionaries may not hold secular employment while receiving funds from supporting churches.
- e. The BBFI missionary must submit a written recommendation from their sending pastor to be considered for a change of field to USLG status.
- f. They must submit to the Mission Office a completed application along with a written document that outlines the need of this proposed ministry. This document should detail facts including but not limited to, the location, number of people of said language group and all current ministries in this location of where they wish to minister, and their plan to establish indigenous Baptist churches. They must have a plan to train potential national leadership since the goal is to establish an indigenous church with a national pastor.
- g. During the change of field process to USLG, the missionary and his sending pastor must meet with the Mission Field Committee at a scheduled BBF National Fellowship meeting.
- h. Missionary must submit the same quarterly reports as foreign Church-planting Missionaries.
- i. A detailed progress report on this ministry must be submitted every two years to the Mission Field Representatives to be reviewed at the September National Fellowship Meeting.
- j. After eight years, the USLG missionary and sending pastor will, at the BBF National Fellowship meeting, meet with the Mission Field Committee and if an

indigenous pastor has not been trained to lead the church, the sending pastor and the Mission Field Committee may recommend a ministry change.

- k. Missionary must resign as a Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionary if he chooses to become the pastor once the church becomes indigenous.
14. SMORS (Skilled Missionaries Offering Relief Services) – SMORS allows veteran, trained, and experienced church-planting BBFI Career missionaries to offer short-term oversight of a furloughed missionary's ministry. SMORS missionaries must be active Baptist Bible Fellowship International missionaries at the time of changing status to SMORS.
- a. Missionary must submit a written request stating reason for change and a completed application for change to the SMORS status.
  - b. The missionaries sending pastor shall submit a written letter of recommendation for such status change.
  - c. Must give testimony before the Mission Field Representatives for approval of status change at a National Fellowship Meeting.
  - d. A SMORS missionary agrees to abide by all mission policies of the BBFI.
  - e. Must continue to submit BBF quarterly reports.
  - f. A minimum of six months each calendar year must be spent on the mission field unless otherwise approved by the Associate Mission Director in charge of SMORS.
  - g. SMORS missionaries are to provide relief ministry for BBF missionaries only.
  - h. The SMORS missionary must understand he is there to maintain the work of the missionary they are offering relief for.
  - i. Must keep a current itinerary with the Associate Mission Director in charge of SMORS and communicate with the Mission Office of their travel plans.
  - j. Must post and maintain an itinerary calendar on the BBFI website thus allowing missionaries to contact them for possible service.

- k. A written report must be submitted every two years to the sending pastor and Associate Director in charge of SMORS to be reviewed by the Mission Field Representatives at the September National Fellowship Meeting.
  - l. The SMORS missionary is responsible for their own travel and personal expenses to the field and back. An agreement may be set up with the furloughed missionary as to housing arrangements, travel in the country and any financial considerations. Any agreements shall be in writing, signed by both parties and a copy sent to Associate Director in charge of SMORS.
  - m. The furloughed missionary may be asked to complete an evaluation form of the work accomplished by the SMORS missionary.
  - n. Should the SMORS missionary be unable to fulfill the ministry needs or the stipulations of time on the field, they will be asked to meet with the Missionary Field Representatives committee. At which time they may be asked to retire (if they meet such requirements under BBFI policy) or resign.
15. LiTE (Limited Time Experience) volunteers – The BBFI Mission Office regularly receives requests for information about opportunities to serve for a limited time on the mission field. In order to facilitate these requests and keep BBFI affiliated people connected to BBFI missions, we have initiated the Limited Time Experience (LiTE) Missions program
- a. The BBFI Mission Office will maintain a list of LiTE volunteers and their skills and availability on the office website, along with a list of projects submitted by missionaries.
  - b. The Mission Office will provide LiTE missions volunteer training in conjunction with (or similar to) the TEAM candidate school. Emphasis will be placed on (but not limited to) the cross cultural implications of ministry and a proper understanding of missions and missionary work. The training, using curriculum developed under the leadership of the BBFI Mission Office, will help minimize potential problems.
  - c. Additional training times and locations may be scheduled based upon need as determined by the Mission Office.



- d. Upon completion of the training, these individuals will be “LiTE Certified Volunteers” and recognized at national BBFI meetings. Their attendance at the meetings would not be mandatory.
  - e. Volunteers who wish to complete the training must be a member in good standing of a BBFI affiliated church which agrees to serve as their sending church. They must complete an application process and pay a fee (to be determined by the Mission Office) to cover training and materials.
  - f. A work agreement must be in place between the BBFI missionary and the LiTE volunteer which must be approved and on file with the Mission Office. The missionary is the authority for the LiTE volunteer on the field.
  - g. “LiTE Certified” volunteers are not eligible for all services provided by the BBFI Mission Office to BBFI missionaries. The Mission Office may be able to process funds for BBFI ministry projects (not personal support) and send it on to the sending church of the volunteer for disbursement. The church would be responsible for any reporting required by the IRS.
  - h. “LiTE Certified” volunteers will be required to provide proof of appropriate medical coverage as determined by the BBFI Mission Office.
16. STEP (Support Team Endorsement Program) – STEP allows qualified people, that are seeking to use their skills, opportunities to do so on the mission field. As the name implies, they serve in a support role. This role is determined by the missionary with whom they work.
- a. STEP missionaries meet the same personal and educational requirements as church planting missionaries.
  - b. STEP missionaries receive the services of the Mission Office but do not participate in the BBFI self-funded medical or disability plan.
  - c. STEP missionaries are required to complete the monthly financial and quarterly progress reports like church planting missionaries.
  - d. STEP missionaries require an invitation from a missionary on each field where they serve.

- e. Upon return of completed application to the Mission Office, the Director of Missions will make recommendation for endorsement by the Mission Field Representatives.

## ARTICLE XI DISCIPLINE

1. When necessary, the Missions Field Committee may call any missionary or missionaries home for the purpose of solving a problem. If for any reason the Missions Field Committee, or the emergency committee, deems it necessary to bring a missionary home to answer charges, both the accused and the accuser (or representatives of the same, should groups be involved) will be returned to appear before the Missions Field Committee. Transportation expenses incurred may be paid by the Fellowship. In case of dismissal by the Fellowship, accumulated Furlough Funds will be applied to transportation costs.
2. A Committee of Investigation may be appointed by our Director of Missions when problems arise or resignations occur. Such Committee, upon proper investigation and action, would therefore inform all supporting pastors of the facts involved. This Committee would be composed of:
  - a. One Veteran Missionary
  - b. One Missions Committeeman
  - c. The Missionary's Field Representative
  - d. The Assistant to the Director of Missions
  - e. The Missionary's Sending Pastor
3. Moral Failure
  - a. Any missionary approved by the Baptist Bible Fellowship International is required to meet certain moral requirements. Moral failure shall disqualify them for service with the Baptist Bible Fellowship International. Sexual immorality shall be defined as: adultery, fornication, incest, sexual molestation, lesbian/homosexual activity or the use of pornography. Moral failure in these areas disqualifies the missionary from any further service with the Baptist Bible Fellowship International.

- b. The missionary/ies shall be confronted with the allegations. This should be done privately by the person who becomes aware of the potential offense. If the allegations are confirmed, the sending pastor and the Mission Office are to be notified immediately.
- c. If the offense is confirmed and admitted, the offense must be dealt with within the family first. The spouse must be informed. Support for the family of the offender and the offender should be demonstrated. Every effort should be made to salvage the family.
- d. If the offense is not admitted, a procedure will be determined on a case by case basis. A Committee of Investigation may be appointed by the Director of Missions when unresolved moral problems arise. This Committee, upon proper investigation and action, would do their best to resolve the question at hand. This Committee would be composed of:
  - i. One Veteran Missionary
  - ii. One Missions Committeeman
  - iii. The Missionary's Field Representative
  - iv. An assistant Director of Missions
  - v. The Missionary's Sending Pastor
- e. If and when the offence has been verified the missionary must resign immediately. Monthly financial support will cease to be handled immediately.
- f. Re-instatement **MAY BE** possible in certain cases within the following guidelines.
  - i. After a period of five years since the offense which caused their dismissal.
  - ii. After a lengthy amount of counseling to be determined by the sending pastor and Mission Director. A positive, unequivocal report must be received from the counselor.
  - iii. After a prolonged period of faithful service in a BBFI affiliated church which demonstrates there have been no further occurrences of the offense which caused the dismissal and a solid recommendation from the church's pastor.

- iv. After satisfaction that any other problems discovered in the investigation which confirmed the dismissal have also been rectified.
- v. The fact that all these steps have been met **DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY** mean reinstatement will occur. The determination must be on a case by case basis.

## ARTICLE XII ORDER FOR GRIEVANCES

Any pastor or missionary who feels that he has not been properly represented in any situation pertaining to the mission work of the Fellowship may present a written grievance (or appear in person with same) in the following specified order:

1. To the Director of Missions
2. To the field representative on the Missions Field Committee
3. To the Missions Field Committee
4. To a joint meeting of the Directors in charge of Missions and Missions Field Committee presided over by the First Vice-President
5. To the Fellowship

## ARTICLE XIII AMENDMENTS

These policies may be amended at the annual meeting of the Directors in charge of Missions.

## APPENDIX C – COLLEGES

## Baptist Bible Fellowship International

## Education Policy

Approved February 15, 2010

PREAMBLE: Baptist Bible Fellowship International Higher Education exists to educate prospective pastors, missionaries and others who will serve to fulfill the Great Commission through building autonomous, self-supporting Baptist churches.

The Second Vice President presides over the Education Committee and is responsible for the general oversight of the BBFI Education Policy as it pertains to the Affiliated and Partnered schools.

The Education Committee is responsible for the approval of Trustees nominated by the Presidents and Trustees of the affiliated institutions. They are also responsible for the development, drafting, publishing and revising of the BBFI Education Policy. Institutions seeking approval of the BBFI will make application through the Education Committee.

1. Those desiring to become Partner institutions must make a written request to the President of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, International.

2. Requirements for approval of Partner institutions:

a. Doctrinal agreement with the Articles of Faith of the BBFI.

b. Missions curriculum must be approved by BBFI.

c. At least three representatives from the Executive and Education Committees will visit the institution at the expense of the institution to determine the eligibility and compliance of the institution.

d. The Bible faculty must include professors who are members of BBFI churches.

e. Partner schools are to give a report including copies of their annual audit to the Education Committee twice each year.

3. Privileges of being a Partner institution:

a. Allowed to receive money through the Mission Office.

b. Mission graduates will be recognized by the Fellowship as meeting the educational requirements to become candidates for approval as BBFI missionaries.

#### 4. Requirements for approval of Affiliated Institutions:

Affiliated schools occupy a unique relationship with the Baptist Bible Fellowship, Int. therefore the following requirements must be met in order for an institution to obtain Affiliated status:

a. Doctrinal agreement with the Articles of Faith of the BBFI.

b. Missions curriculum must be approved by BBFI.

c. President, administrative officers, and full time Professors are required to be members of churches who financially support one of the three entities of the BBFI.

d. The Trustees must be BBFI pastors or missionaries, or in the case of laymen be members of churches in Fellowship with the BBFI, with compliance within one year.

e. At least three representatives from the Executive and Education Committees will visit the institution at the expense of the institution to determine the eligibility and compliance of the institution.

f. The BBFI Vice President for Education will be considered an ex-officio non-voting member of the school's Board of Trustees, under the institution's guidelines.

g. Affiliated schools must provide a status report including annual audit performed by Certified Public Accountant twice per year to the Education Committee.

#### 5. Privileges of being an Affiliated Institution:

a. Allowed to receive money through the Mission Office.

b. Mission graduates will be recognized by the Fellowship as meeting the educational requirements to become candidates for approval as BBFI missionaries.

c. Unique relationship with the Baptist Bible Fellowship, Intl. including recognition and promotion in Tribune and various Fellowship Meetings.

BBFI Institutions of Higher Education  
Exhibit these Four Common Characteristics

1. *Doctrinal Distinctive*: The Trustees, Administration and Faculty must believe the BBFI Articles of Faith. The Faculty must incorporate the Articles of Faith into their curriculum under the supervision of the academic administration.
  2. *Ministry Focus*: Institutions must demonstrate a commitment to ministry in Baptist churches through their mission/purpose statement, goals and curriculum. Every course of study, whether in theology or any other discipline, should be geared to the vision of winning souls and building churches. Christian education in the BBFI will explicitly highlight the necessity and centrality of local church life in the process of biblical discipleship.
  3. *Operational Integrity*: Educational Institutions that function within the life of the BBFI must maintain the highest levels of institutional integrity. Christian character and biblical application will permeate all levels of operation and will be the minimum standard in all interactions.
    - a. Financial Integrity: They must show financial independence with an annual audit conducted by a certified financial firm and made available to the Executive and Education Committees.
    - b. Professional and Moral Integrity: Biblical ethical procedures must be followed in all business and personnel practices. All policies and procedures are to be made available for review by the Education Committee.
  4. *Academic Credibility*: To meet the challenge of a worldwide ministry BBFI colleges and universities must position themselves to meet the growing expectations of institutions of higher education.
    - a. BBFI Affiliated Institutions are members of regional and or national accrediting agencies who are recognized members of the United States Department of Education, and will comply with the standards set forth by these agencies. Approved programs of all accredited Institutions must satisfy BBFI mission curriculum requirements for missionary candidates.
    - b. Partner Institutions will likewise comply with the BBFI Mission approved Foreign Mission requirements.
- Violation of any of these four common characteristics will result in an immediate review of the institution's status, by the Education Committee, as a BBFI Institution of Higher Education and may result in probation or loss of status.*

## **APPENDIX D – DOCTRINE**

### **ARTICLES OF FAITH OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL**

Revised September, 2002

A Bible Baptist is one who believes in a supernatural Bible, which tells of a supernatural Christ, Who had a supernatural birth, Who spoke supernatural words, Who performed supernatural miracles, Who lived a supernatural life, Who died a supernatural death, Who rose in supernatural power, Who ascended in supernatural splendor, Who intercedes as a supernatural priest and Who will one day return in supernatural glory to establish a supernatural kingdom on the earth.

#### **I. Of The Scriptures**

We believe that the Holy Bible was written by men supernaturally inspired; that it has truth without any admixture of error for its matter; and therefore is, and shall remain to the end of the age, the only complete and final revelation of the will of God to man; the true center of Christian union and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and opinions should be tried.

1. By "The Holy Bible" we mean that collection of sixty-six books, from Genesis to Revelation, which, as originally written does not only contain and convey the Word of God, but IS the very Word of God.
2. By "inspiration" we mean that the books of the Bible were written by holy men of old, as they were moved by the Holy Spirit, in such a definite way that their writings were supernaturally and verbally inspired and free from error, as no other writings have ever been or ever will be inspired.

II Tim. 3:16-17; II Peter. 1:19-21; Acts 1:16; Acts 28:25; Psalms 119:105, 130, 160; Luke 24:25-27; John 17:17; Luke 24:44-45; Psalms 119:89; Prov. 30:5-6; Rom. 3:4; I Peter 1:23; Rev. 22:19; John 12:48; Isa. 8:20; Eph. 6:17; Rom. 15:4; Luke 16:31; Psalms 19:7-11; John 5:45-47; John 5:39

#### **II. Of The True God**

We believe that there is one, and only one, living and true God, an infinite, intelligent Spirit, the maker and supreme ruler of heaven and earth; inexpressibly glorious in holiness and worthy of all possible honor, confidence and love; that in the unity of the Godhead there are three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, equal in every divine perfection, and executing distinct but harmonious offices in the great work of redemption.



Ex. 20:2-3; Gen 17:1; I Cor. 8:6; Eph. 4:6; John 4:24; Psa. 147:5; Psa. 83:18; Psa. 90:2; Jer. 10:10; Ex. 15:11; Rev. 4:11; I Tim 1:17; Rom. 11:33; Mark 12:30; Matt. 28:19; John 15:26; I Cor. 12:4-6; I John 5:7; John 10:30; John 17:5; I Cor. 2:10-11; Phil 2:5-6; Eph. 2:18; II Cor. 13:14

### **III. Of The Holy Spirit**

We believe that the Holy Spirit is a divine person; equal with God the Father and God the Son and of the same nature; that He was active in the creation; that in His relation to the unbelieving world He restrains the evil one until God's purpose is fulfilled; that He convicts of sin, of judgment and of righteousness; that He bears witness to the Truth of the Gospel in preaching and testimony; that He is the agent in the New Birth; that He seals, endues, guides, teaches, witnesses, sanctifies and helps the believer.

John 14:16-17; Matt. 28:19; Heb. 9:14; John 14:26; Luke 1:35; Gen. 1:1-3; II Thess. 2:7; John 16:8-11; John 15:26-27; Acts 5:30-32; John 3:5-6; Eph. 1:13-14; Matt. 3:11; Mark 1:8; Luke 3:16; John 1:33; Acts 11:16; Luke 24:49; John 16:13; Rom. 8:14; Rom. 8:16; II Thess. 2:13; I Peter 1:2; Rom. 8:26-27

### **IV. Of The Devil, Or Satan**

We believe that Satan was once holy, and enjoyed heavenly honors; but through pride and ambition to be as the Almighty, fell and drew after him a host of angels; that he is now the malignant prince of the power of the air, and the unholy god of this world. We hold him to be man's great tempter, the enemy of God and His Christ, the accuser of the saints, the author of all false religions, the chief power back of the present apostasy; the lord of the antichrist, and the author of all the powers of darkness - destined however to final defeat at the hands of God's own Son, and to the judgment of an eternal justice in hell, a place prepared for him and his angels.

Isa. 14:12-15; Ezek. 28:14-17; Rev. 12:9; Jude 6; II Peter 2:4; Eph. 2:2; John 14:30; I Thess. 3:5; Matt. 4:1-3; I Peter 5:8; I John 3:8; Matt. 13:39; Luke 22:3-4; Rev. 12:10; II Cor. 11:13-15; Mark 13:21-22; I John 4:3; II John 7; I John 2:22; Rev. 13:13-14; II Thess. 2:8-11; Rev. 19:11, 16, 20; Rev. 12:7-9; Rev. 20:1-3, 10; Matt. 25:41.

### **V. Of The Creation**

We believe in the Genesis account of creation and that it is to be accepted literally, and not allegorically or figuratively; that man was created directly in God's own image and after His own likeness; that man's creation was not a matter of evolution or evolutionary change of species, or development through interminable periods of time from lower to higher forms; that all animal and vegetable life was made directly and God's established law was that they should bring forth only "after their kind." Since God created mankind into genders distinctly male and female, we believe that the only legitimate marriage is

that between a man and a woman. He has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of marriage. We believe that any form of homosexuality, lesbianism, bisexuality, bestiality, incest, fornication, adultery and pornography are sinful perversions of God's gift of sex. We believe that God rejects any attempt to alter one's gender by surgery or appearance.

Gen. 3:1-6, 24; Rom. 5:12, 19; Rom. 3:10-19; Eph. 2:1, 3; Rom. 1:18; Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom. 1:20, 28, 32; Gal. 3:22.

## **VI. Of The Fall Of Man**

We believe that man was created in innocence under the law of his Maker, but by voluntary transgression fell from his sinless and happy state, in consequence of which all mankind are now sinners, not by constraint, but of choice; and therefore under just condemnation without defense or excuse.

Gen. 3:1-6, 24; Rom. 5:12, 19; Rom. 3:10-19; Eph. 2:1, 3; Rom. 1:18; Ezek. 18:19-20; Rom. 1:20, 28, 32; Gal. 3:22.

## **VII. Of The Virgin Birth**

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten of the Holy Ghost in a miraculous manner; born of Mary, a virgin, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of a woman, and that He is both the Son of God, and God, the Son.

Gen 3:15; Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 1:35; Mark 1:1; John 1:14; Psalms 2:7; Gal. 4:4; I John 5:20; I Cor. 15:47

## **VIII. Of The Atonement For Sin**

We believe that the salvation of sinners is wholly of grace; through the mediatorial offices of the Son of God, Who by appointment of the Father, freely took upon Him our nature, yet without sin, honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and by His death made a full and vicarious atonement for our sins; that His atonement consisted not in setting us an example by His death as a martyr, but was the voluntary substitution of Himself in the sinner's place, the Just dying for the unjust, Christ, the Lord, bearing our sins in His own body on the tree; that, having risen from the dead, He is now enthroned in heaven and uniting in His wonderful person the tenderest sympathies with divine perfection, He is in every way qualified to be a suitable, a compassionate and an all sufficient Savior.

Eph. 2:8; Acts 15:11; Rom. 3:24; John 3:16; Matt. 18:11; Phil. 2:7; Heb. 2:14; Isa. 53:4-7; Rom. 3:25; I John 4:10; I Cor. 15:3; II Cor. 5:21; John 10:18; Phil. 2:8; Gal. 1:4; I Pet. 2:24; I Pet. 3:18; Isa. 53:11; Heb. 12:2; I Cor. 15:20; Isa. 53:12; Heb. 9:12-15; Heb. 7:25; I John 2:2.

## **IX. Of Grace In The New Creation**

We believe that in order to be saved, sinners must be born again; that the new birth is a new creation in Christ Jesus; that it is instantaneous and not a process; that in the new birth the one dead in trespasses and in sins is made a partaker of the divine nature and receives eternal life, the free gift of God; that the new creation is brought about in a manner above our comprehension, not by culture, not by character, nor by the will of man, but wholly and solely by the power of the Holy Spirit in connection with divine truth, so as to secure our voluntary obedience to the gospel; that its proper evidence appears in the holy fruits of repentance and faith and newness of life.

John 3:3; II Cor. 5:17; Luke 5:27; I John 5:1; John 3:6-7; Acts 2:41; II Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1; II Cor. 5:19; Col. 2:13; John 1:12-13; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 5:9.

### **X. Of The Freeness Of Salvation**

We believe in God's electing grace; that the blessings of salvation are made free to all by the gospel; that it is the immediate duty of all to accept them by a cordial, penitent and obedient faith; and nothing prevents the salvation of the greatest sinner on earth but his own inherent depravity and voluntary rejection of the gospel; which rejection involves him in an aggravated condemnation.

I Thess. 1:4; Col. 3:12; I Pet. 1:2; Titus 1:1; Rom. 8:29-30; Matt. 11:28; Isa. 55:1; Rev. 22:17; Rom. 10:13; John 6:37; Isa. 55:6; Acts 2:38; Isa. 55:7; John 3:15-16; I Tim. 1:15; I Cor. 15:10; Eph. 2:4-5; John 5:40; John 3:18; John 3:36

### **XI. Of Justification**

We believe that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is Justification; that Justification includes the pardon of sin, and the gift of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done; but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood, His righteousness is imputed unto us.

Acts 13:39; Isa. 53:11, Zech. 13:1; Rom. 8:1; Rom. 5:1, 9; Titus 3:5-7; Rom. 1:17; Hab. 2:4; Gal. 3:11; Rom. 4:1-8; Heb. 10:38.

### **XII. Of Repentance And Faith**

We believe that Repentance and Faith are solemn obligations, and also inseparable graces, wrought in our souls by the quickening Spirit of God; thereby, being deeply convicted of our guilt, danger and helplessness, and of the way of salvation by Christ, we turn to God with unfeigned contrition, confession and supplication for mercy; at the same time heartily receiving the Lord Jesus Christ and openly confessing Him as our only and all-sufficient Savior.

Acts 20:21; Mark 1:15; Acts 2:37-38; Luke 18:13; Rom. 10:13; Psalms 51:1-4; Psalms 51:7; Isa. 55:6-7; Luke 12:8; Rom. 10:9-11

### **XIII. Of The Church**

We believe that a Baptist church is a congregation of baptized believers associated by a covenant of faith and fellowship of the Gospel, said church being understood to be the citadel and propagator of the divine and eternal grace; observing the ordinances of Christ; governed by His laws; exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word; that its officers of ordination are pastors or elders whose qualifications, claims, and duties are clearly defined in the scriptures.

We believe that men and women are spiritually equal in position before God but that God has ordained distinct and separate spiritual functions of men and women in the home and in the church. The husband is to be the leader of the home and men are to hold the leadership positions (pastors and deacons) in the church. Accordingly, only men are eligible of licensure and ordination for pastor by the church.

We believe the true mission of the church is found in the Great Commission: first, to make individual disciples; second, to build up the church; third, to teach and instruct as He has commanded. We do not believe in the reversal of this order; we hold that the local church has the absolute right of self government, free from the interference of any hierarchy of individuals or organizations; and that the one and only superintendent is Christ through the Holy Spirit; that it is scriptural for true churches to cooperate with each other in contending for the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel; that every church is the sole and only judge of the measure and method of its cooperation; on all matters of membership, of policy, of government, of discipline, of benevolence, the will of the local church is final.

Acts 2:41-42; 1 Cor. 11:2; Eph. 1:22-23; Eph. 4:11; I Cor. 12:4, 8-11; Acts 14:23; Acts 6:5-6; Acts 15:23; Acts 20:17-28; I Tim. 3:1-13; Matt. 28:19-20; Col. 1:18; Eph. 5:23-24; I Peter 1:4; Acts 15:22, Jude 3, 4; II Cor. 8:23-24, I Cor. 16:1; Mal. 3:10; Lev. 27:32; I Cor. 16:2; I Cor. 6:1-3, I Cor. 5:11-13

### **XIV. Of Baptism And The Lord's Supper**

We believe that Christian baptism is the immersion in water of a believer, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, with the authority of the local church, to show forth in a solemn and beautiful emblem our faith in the crucified, buried and risen Savior, with its effect in our death to sin and resurrection to a new life; that it is prerequisite to the privileges of a church relation and to the Lord's supper, in which the members of the church, by the sacred use of bread and the fruit of the vine are to commemorate together the dying love of Christ; preceded always by solemn self-examination.

Acts 8:36-39; Matt. 3:6; John 3:23; Rom. 6:4-5; Matt. 3:16; Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3-5; Col. 2:12; Acts 2:41-42; Matt. 28:19-20; I Cor. 11:23-28

### **XV. Of The Perseverance Of The Saints**

We believe that such only are real believers as endure unto the end; that their persevering attachment to Christ is the grand mark which distinguishes them from superficial professors; that a special Providence watches over their welfare; and that they are kept by the power of God through faith unto eternal salvation.

John 8:31-32; Col. 1:21-23; I John 2:19; Matt. 13:19-21; Rom. 8:28; Psal. 121:3; Heb. 1:14; I Peter. 1:5; Phil. 1:6; John 10:28-29; Rom. 8:35-3

#### **XVI. Of The Righteous And The Wicked**

We believe that there is a radical and essential difference between the righteous and the wicked; that such only as through faith are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, are truly righteous in His esteem; while all such as continue in impenitence and unbelief are in His sight wicked, and under the curse, and this distinction holds among men both in and after death, in the everlasting felicity of the saved and the everlasting conscious suffering of the lost.

Mal. 3:18; Gen. 18:23; Rom. 6:17-18; Prov. 11:31; I Peter 1:18; Rom. 1:17; I Cor. 15:22; Acts 10:34-25; I John 2:29; Rom. 6:16; I John 5:19; Gal. 3:10; Rom. 7:6; Rom. 6:23; Prov. 14:32; Luke 16:25; Matt. 25:34,41; John 8:21, Luke 9:26; John 12:25, Matt. 7:13-14

#### **XVII. Of Civil Government**

We believe that civil government is of divine appointment, for the interests and good order of human society; that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored and obeyed; except only in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ; who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the kings of the earth.

Rom. 13:7; II Sam. 23:3; Ex. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:1-14; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18; Matt. 10:28; Matt. 23:10; Phil. 2:10-11; Psal. 72:11, I Peter 2:17.

#### **XVIII. Of The Resurrection And Return Of Christ And Related Events**

We believe in and accept the sacred Scriptures upon these subjects at their face and full value. Of the Resurrection, we believe that Christ rose bodily "The third day according to the Scriptures"; that He ascended "to the right hand of the throne of God"; that He alone is our "merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God"; "that this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven," bodily, personally, and visibly; that the "dead in Christ shall rise first"; that the living saints "shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump"; "that the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David"; and that "Christ shall reign a thousand years in righteousness until He hath put all enemies under His feet."

Matt. 28:6-7; Acts 24:39; John 20:27; 1 Cor. 15:4; Mark 16:6; Luke 24:2-7; Acts 1:9, 11; Luke 24:51; Mark 16:19; Rev. 3:21; Heb. 8:1; Heb. 12:2; Heb. 8:6; I Tim. 2:5; I John 2:1; Heb. 2:17; Heb. 5:9-10; John 14:3; I Thess. 4:16; Matt. 24:27, 42; Heb. 9:28; I Cor. 15:42-44, 51-53; I Thess. 4:17; Phil. 3:20-21; Luke 1:32; I Cor. 15:25; Isa. 11:4-5; Psalms 72:8; Rev. 20:1-4; Rev. 20:6

### **XIX. Of Missions**

The command to give the gospel to the world is clear and unmistakable and this Commission was given to the churches.

Matthew 28:18-20, "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you and, lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

Mark 16:15, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature."

John 20:21, "As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

Acts 1:8, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Romans 10:13-15, "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

### **XX. Of The Grace Of Giving**

Scriptural giving is one of the fundamentals of the Faith.

2 Corinthians 8:7, "Therefore, as ye abound in every thing, in faith, and utterance, and knowledge, and in all diligence, and in your love to us, see that ye abound in this grace also."

We are commanded to bring our gifts into the storehouse (common treasury of the church) upon the first day of the week.

1 Corinthians 16:2, "Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."

Under Grace we give, and do not pay, the tithe - "Abraham GAVE the tenth of the spoils," - Hebrews 7:2,4 - and this was four hundred years before the law, and is confirmed in the new Testament; Jesus said concerning the tithe, "these ought ye to have done", Matthew 23:23.

We are commanded to bring the tithe into the common treasury of the church.

Leviticus 27:30, "The tithe ... is the Lord's."

Malachi 3:10, "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."

In the New Testament it was the common treasury of the church.

Acts 4:34,35,37, "And brought the prices of the things that were sold and laid them down at the apostles' feet ... Having land, sold it, and brought the money, and laid it AT THE APOSTLES' FEET."

## APPENDIX E

## NATIONAL CHURCH PLANTING PURPOSE STATEMENT

The National Church Planting Office (the Organization) is a non-profit corporation based in Springfield, Missouri. The Organization exists to recruit and educate new Baptist ministers for existing and newly formed Baptist churches throughout the United States. The Organization also facilitates the process of obtaining loans for new churches and existing churches looking to rebuild. This is accomplished through loaning the churches monies obtained from the Organization's line-of-credit, cash, or consulting with outside lenders on the church's behalf.



APPENDIX F – METHODS  
Church Growth and Anointed Methods

**99 Successful Methods Used In BBFI Churches (Provided By Pastors)**

3 on 3 Basketball Tournaments Abundant Life Advertised Sermon Series AWANA Program Bible Clubs Bible College Bible Studies Blind Ministry Bus Workers Visiting Homes Business with a Mission Car Shows Champs Missions Journeys Church Mission Trips Church Planting City Wide Meetings Civic Clubs Cold-Call Visits Community Events (Family Films in the Park) Community Meals Concerts Couples Retreats Cursing Evangelism Deaf Ministry Debates Discussions Door to Door Visitation Dramas Evangelism Explosion Evangelistic Campaigns	Event Evangelism Every Believer a Witness Faith Evangelism Faith Promise Missions Conf Friend Day Friendship Evangelism GO Evangelism Good News Clubs Gospel Concerts Gospel Tracts Antique Bible/Book Exhibitions Host a Fall Festival Interviews Junior Camps Kids Rodeo Kids Storms Ladies Retreats Lectures Lifestyle Evangelism MANNA Events Medical Missions Men's Retreats Muslim Outreach Neighborhood Bible Time Newcomers Old Fashioned Day One on One Parade Floats Park Ministry Pastoral Calls Personal Contact Prayer Walks Preaching Services Pre-Baptism Class Pre-Membership	Class Printed Material Prophecy Conferences Radio Evangelism Radio Stations Relational (friends) Revival Campaigns Rock the Rez Concerts Round-up Day Saloon Evangelism Share Jesus without Fear Small Groups SMITE Sports Evangelism Street Evangelism Street Meetings Street Preaching Summer Camps Sunday Meals Sunday School Teachers Visits Television Evangelism Tent Revivals TIME Mission Trps Trunk or Treat Vacation Bible Schl Village Meetings Visitor Follow-Up Web Evangelism Winter Camps Wordless Dramas Youth Camps Youth Mission Trips Youth Rallies
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## Appendix G – ILLUSTRATIONS

### 1975 Baptist Bible Fellowship Officers



**This was the last Board of District Directors.**

**State Directors replaced them in 1976.**

Standing (L-R): (5) Harold Henniger, (2) James Reber, (7) Howard Ingram, (3) Billy Hamm, (4) Bob Henson, (9) Jewell Smith, (8) Curtis Goldman, (1) J. C. Joiner.

Seated: (L-R): Gary Wilson, Secretary; Alvis Edmonson, Vice President; John Rawlings, President; Carl Boonstra, Mission Director; Inset, David Cavin, Treasurer

(#) = District, see Map next page.

**US Map of BBF Districts, 1960-1975**



**May, 2000 at Baptist Bible College, Dr. John Rawlings named  
“Mr. Baptist of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century”  
by Dr. Jerry Falwell and Liberty University  
Behind them is the BBC Choir**

## APPENDIX I - RESEARCH TOOL

## INTERVIEW FORM

My DMIN Thesis on the Baptist Bible Fellowship International  
Questions for those who have served in Leadership in the BBFI

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your service to the BBFI. Your participation in this research will help me give a clearer picture in my thesis. If you need more space please expand the line spacing on this form.  
What year did you become active in the BBFI? \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your service role(s) in the BBFI: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your leadership role(s) in the BBFI: \_\_\_\_\_

Please list your writings I can use in research: \_\_\_\_\_

Please give your personal views on the following questions about the BBFI:

1. What have been the BBFI's greatest strengths?
2. What have been the BBFI's greatest weaknesses?
3. What have been the BBFI's greatest opportunities?
4. What have been the BBFI's greatest threats?
5. What do you think would improve the BBFI now?
6. What effect do you think these issues have had on the BBFI?
 

Calvinism	(none) 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 (too much)
Dispensationalism	(none) 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 (too much)
Landmarkism	(none) 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 (too much)
Ruckmanism	(none) 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 (too much)
Other: _____	(none) 0 – 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 (too much)
7. What other comments would you care to make about the BBFI?

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(to authorize use of your answers in my thesis and subsequent writings)

## Curriculum Vitae

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### Education

- Baptist Bible College West, B.A. in Theology, 1990
- Evangelical Theological Seminary, M.S. in Clinical Pastoral Counseling, 1992
- Louisiana Baptist University, Ph.D. in Psychology and Counseling, 1995
- Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, D.Min. in Leadership, 2010

### Additional Studies

- University of Texas at Arlington, 1961
- Arlington Baptist College, 1960-1963

### Honors

- Doctor of Divinity, Baptist Bible College West, Denver, Colorado, 1984
- Honorary Alumnus, Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Missouri, 1993
- Inductee, Texas Gospel Music Hall of Fame, 2001

### Pastoral Service

- Ordination, Bethel Baptist Church, Midland, Texas, February 23, 1968
- Emmanuel Baptist Church, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1969–1976
- First Baptist Church of Hollywood, California; 1977–1979
- Mountain States Baptist Church, Thornton, Colorado; 1979–present

### Additional Service

- Teacher / Counselor to BBFI Missionary Candidates, 1980-2006
- Pastoral Counselor to missionaries and pastors, 1975–present
- Founder / Producer of BBFI Network, 1995-present
- Founder of the Spiritual Summer Summit, 1994-present
- Co-Founder of Moral Majority, Colorado, 1982
- Teacher at Baptist Bible College West, Denver, Colorado, 1980-1987
- Debated Malcolm Boyd, Gay Rights Leader, KCOP TV 13, Hollywood, 1978
- Teacher at Pacific Coast Baptist Bible College, San Dimas, California, 1977-1979
- Emmanuel Baptist Church Program, KKTV 11, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1972-1976
- County Chaplain & Deputy Sheriff, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 1972-1976
- TV announcer for Wills Family Inspirational Time, Hal Smith Productions, 1966-1968
- Lead Singer, Bob Wills & The Inspirationalists, Fort Worth, Texas, 1963-1967

### Professional Affiliations

- Baptist Bible Fellowship International, Treasurer / Director
- Western Baptist Bible Fellowship, President
- California Baptist Bible Fellowship, President
- Colorado Baptist Bible Fellowship, President
- Baptist Bible College, Springfield, Missouri, Trustee

- Baptist Bible College West, Denver, Colorado, Vice President / Trustee
- American Association of Christian Counselors, Member
- Colorado Association of Christian Counselors, Founding President
- Grace Fellowship International, Chairman, Board of Directors

#### **Additional Training / Certification**

- Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis, Certified Training, Denver, Colorado, 1972
- Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, Certified Training, Denver, Colorado, 1995
- Certified Executive Life Coach, 2005

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