

TRUE AND DIANA HAWKINS  
MISSIONARIES TO BRAZIL

THE "DOG'S HEAD"

In the upper left-hand corner of Brazil is an area called the "Dog's Head". It is the county of Saint Gabriel of the Rapids, the size of the state of Nevada, (68,238 square miles). It is home to 27 different people groups and is located in the Northern part of the state of Amazonas (more than twice the size of Texas). Amazonas has more than 60 distinct languages and people groups, and is still generally an untouched and unsettled wilderness. In Saint Gabriel County, one narrow muddy road (BR-307) runs north out of the city of Saint Gabriel to Cucuí, a lone military outpost on the triple border of Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela. The great Rio Negro River meanders through the area and many smaller rivers feed into it.



It flows on down until it merges with the mighty Amazon River, almost 900 miles below at Manaus. These rivers are the "roads" of the region, and can be extremely hazardous, due to many violent rapids, narrow channels and massive island-sized rocks. On April 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022, a giant whirlpool swallowed the boat of missionaries Marcilio and Delza. They miraculously survived.

In 1934, William and Herthel Ross left their home in Nebraska and went to Brazil as missionaries with Amazon Mission. They began their ministry just below the city of Saint Gabriel, about 650 miles upriver from Manaus, the capital of the state of Amazonas. Also having joined Amazon Mission, Joe and Elaine Hawkins arrived in Brazil in 1957. They began working with them in their school and clinic, and in the river ministry evangelizing the communities along the Rio Negro and tributaries of the "Dog's Head". Indigenous churches were established in the towns and villages.

Having to make an emergency move to Manaus, the Hawkins family joined Cecil and Sandra Henderson in establishing the Bible Baptist Institute of Amazonas in 1973. Students came from those interior churches built along the Rio Negro, and from many other remote areas and villages of Amazonas and neighboring states. They created an 1,800-hour Bible course to prepare those students for the work God had called them to. Thus began the project to prepare pastors, missionaries and church workers.



There are now 275 graduates from IBBA-Manaus, and in 2024 there were 26 students enrolled in three different courses. The main goal is still to train the students and encourage them to return back to the interior to their people (II Timothy 2:2). Seeing the necessity of reaching and training even more people living in the deep interior areas and on the Indian reservations, the Bible Institute Program was launched in the mid 1980's to establish institutes in those remote areas. Now men and women are being trained on their own reservation and in their own native language. Several of these institutes operate in Saint

Gabriel County: Inyenga Opakawa (Living Word) Bible Baptist Institute in the city, under Luiz Pedro; Berea (Berean) BBI, at Maçarico on the Içana River (105 miles above the city); BBI at Nazaré, on the Cubate River (130 miles above); Palavra da Vida (Word of Life) BBI, northwest at Macedonia on the Ayari River (330 miles upriver); and the newest at Corini/Ipadu, on the Rio Negro (50 miles north). We continue facing much opposition to finish establishing the Deus é Fiel (God is Faithful) BBI at Cumati, on the Xié River (140 miles north). These institutes are strategically located to train students from different areas and tribes; to strengthen existing churches and evangelize the many unreached people groups scattered throughout Brazil, Colombia and Venezuela. Many of the graduates speak 3 or 4 languages, have access to other tribes due to having relatives among them, and freedom to come and go. This is a much more effective way to reach these tribes than attempting to establish works by a "Kariua" (outsider). No doubt, things are done differently on different fields, but Biblical principles applied to missionary effort on every continent will always produce Biblical results.



Examples of missionary activity in the New Testament teach us how to apply those principles, and through the leadership of the Holy Spirit, we will see the Gospel spread to "the regions beyond" (I Corinthians 10:16). The rest depends on hard work, a good disposition, and much sacrifice. I'll mention a few of our indigenous missionary families and their wives who labor faithfully: Alberto and Cassia; Valmir and Rose; Daniel and Albertina; Thiago and Ana; Marcílio and Delza. I am proud to stand with them and I, along with you, faithful supporter, assist them in their ministries to reach and teach. They are in constant danger of river pirates, drug cartels, rebel guerilla forces, violent rapids, and when they make initial "contacts" with unreached people groups. They sacrifice to buy fuel (USD \$5.70 per gal) for their mission trips; lack proper equipment; have little personal financial support; suffer from sheer exhaustion of days of river travel; have health and tropical disease issues; even resistance from government agencies. Despite their challenges, they continue on. To me, they are our modern "heroes of the faith"!

ELAINE HAWKINS OBITUARY

Liela Elaine Hawkins, 94, passed into glory on Thursday, January 2, 2025 in Lansing, Kansas. Elaine was born in Los Angeles, California on September 24<sup>th</sup> 1930. She was married to John J. Hawkins on June 7, 1954, until he passed on March 11, 2011.



Elaine served alongside her husband as a missionary to Brazil for 54 years. In 1957, they arrived in South America where they ministered along the Amazon and Rio Negro Rivers and in the city of Manaus. They ministered in churches, as well as, at the Bible Institute they founded. She helped to establish ministry outposts within various native Indian tribes. Elaine was known as a nurse, teacher, co-worker, and friend to thousands of Brazilians whose lives she touched. Her greatest joy was seeing people come to God and to see them grow in their faith. She was an unselfish woman with a pioneer spirit and a call from God.

Her legacy is great including IBFI missionaries True and Diana Hawkins, John and Neila Yelle, and Jeremy and Jonia Bennett; WBF missionaries Tim and Betty Hawkins, Pastor John and Rebecca Hawkins, Robert and Melinda Crawford, Pastor Joe and Esther Martin, 18 grandchildren and 12 great grandchildren.

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# The Searchlight

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*For of him, and through him, and to him,  
are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.*  
Romans 11:36

## A Great Opening Day Rally and Start to Our 82<sup>nd</sup> Semester!



Still Training Timothy's & Titus  
II Timothy 2:2 • Titus 1:9

Join Us for the IBFI Spring Fellowship and NBBS Graduation - May 19-21, 2025!

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I heard Him call  
"Come, follow,"  
that was all.  
Earth's joys grew dim  
My soul went after Him  
I rose and followed,  
that was all.

Henry Wardsworth  
Longfellow

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48 Courses

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The Searchlight

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## ATTACKS ON THE DEITY OF CHRIST

*Dr. Raymond Barber  
IBFI President Emeritus*

*(Excerpt from the book by Raymond W. Barber: What the Bible Teaches)*

**Any attack upon the Bible, the Word of God, is an attack upon the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.** In John, chapter 14 and verse 9, Jesus said, “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father.” Jesus said, “I and my Father are one” (10:30).

When the liberals attack the inspiration of the Scriptures, they attack the deity of Jesus Christ.

When the atheists attack the existence of God, they attack the deity of Jesus Christ.

When the skeptics attack the miracles in the Bible, they attack the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

When the infidels attack the birth of Jesus, they attack the deity of the Lord.

### Denying the Faith

I heard an outstanding man of God and pastor of long standing say not long ago that he could count on one hand the seminaries in the United States that are still true to the inspired Word of God.

We’re living in an hour when the professors are fighting in the classroom against the deity of the Lord Jesus. As I stated earlier, **any attack against the Bible, any attack against the creation, any attack against inspiration, and any attack against miracles is an attack directly against the Lord Jesus Christ.** Preachers in the pulpits are doing the same thing.

The name Bob Ingersoll will register with some of you. Bob Ingersoll was one of the most infamous infidels this country has ever known. He made it his business to go up and down the length and breadth of this nation denouncing the Bible, denouncing the inspiration, denouncing the virgin birth, and denouncing the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One day someone asked him after he had quit doing that, “Why, Mr. Ingersoll, have you quit going across the country denouncing the Bible and denouncing the Faith and denouncing Christ?” And his answer was, “The divinity professors in the classrooms and the preachers in the pulpits are doing a fine job without my help. I no longer need to denounce the Faith.”

The danger of denouncing the Faith is the fact that it is coming from a so-called scholasticism – the so-called intellectuals of our day.

If some bum who just jumped off a railroad car would come up to you and say, “I don’t believe God exists,” that wouldn’t disturb you.

If some long-haired hippie trying to find his way would come to you and say, “Christ was not the Son of God,” that wouldn’t disturb you.

But when a man of the cloth, when a man in high divinal circles stands in the pulpit or in a classroom and denies the inspiration of the Bible, denies the virgin birth of Christ and denies the deity of

the Lord, that should cause you concern. And that’s what is happening all over the world. It is difficult to choose a college in our day where you can trust the theology department or the department of religion.

**God help us to come back to the hour when we make our stand for the blessed old Book, the Book that men have lived by and died by.** This is our creed. This is our only and final rule of authority, and this is the blessed Book of God, and it tells us about the blessed Christ of God.

(continued next issue)

## A GREAT OPENING DAY



*Eric Crawford  
IBFI President*

**Opening Day Rally** of the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary **was such an encouragement.** Worth Baptist Church hosted the meeting, and two alumni preached. Both Bro. Tony Roa and Bro. Zack Doty did an excellent job bringing messages that focused on the Savior. It is a blessing to see our graduates engaged in ministry and actively ministering in churches, bringing many to Jesus Christ. **Our investment as pastors and churches in the seminary was on display as these men testified about the impact Norris has had on them, and is having in their current ministries.** It was a good reminder that NBBS is a great investment of our time and resources.



**Titus 1:9**



Also, we continue to see progress on the new building. We are **currently waiting on dirt excavation bids and the hiring of one of these dirt contractors,** then we will start moving dirt. Amen!

**I want to thank Worth Baptist Church for their continued support and for housing the seminary during this transition.**



## GOD’S ABUNDANT PROVISIONS FOR NBBS!

*Jonathan J. Stewart  
NBBS President*

### Opening Day Rally!

In the Opening Day Rally, we started our 82nd semester with a special focus on recent alumni who are already making a mark for the cause of Christ. Some preached, some gave testimonies, and one was especially honored.

### Grateful to and for Our Secretaries through the Years

This alumnus who was singled out, though she served as a secretary for only some 2 1/2 years, stood in the gap! **Her skillset, work ethic, love for the Lord and the seminary, fit the need “of the hour.”** Her workload was especially varied and demanding. **Her name is Melissa Roa.** We publicly honored her with a keepsake necklace, a love offering and words of appreciation. The gift of the necklace has become a traditional gift for our outgoing secretaries – beginning with Charlotte Wyler, continuing with Candy Frizzell, and now



Melissa. Each is necklace is characterized with a pendant that illustrates the individual role they played.

Melissa, an NBBS graduate (2021), and wife of alumnus Tony Roa (pastor of the Rockwall BC, Rockwall, Texas, and an NBBS faculty member), who together helped the founding of the Antioch Baptist Church Planters ministry, served as the IBFI and NBBS secretary during a time of transition. She came on board officially in a part time role March 2022, assisting IBFI and NBBS secretary Candy Frizzell.

Prior to Melissa becoming a secretary for us, she had done much typesetting of various teaching resources for the seminary of authors such as Louis Entzminger, J. Frank Norris, and Raymond Barber. She also has done much school related typesetting of notes for myself and others.

In the fall of 2022, when Candy Frizzell resigned as our IBFI and NBBS secretary, because of her and her husband Danny moving to Oklahoma to be closer to family, Melissa took over the IBFI and NBBS secretary positions and in assisting with the production of the Searchlight newsletter.

It was also during this time, that NBBS transitioned from its location since 1993, to Worth Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Texas, now our temporary home while our new campus is being developed. **Accordingly Melissa was the “secretarial bridge” along with IBFI missions secretary Shirley Peeples, that transitioned the fellowship operations from one setting to another.** While we were moving out, we were also starting the new school year. We suddenly

had to move out of a building we had been in for 30 years. We had to hold off on getting started with moving because it appeared we were going to conduct school in it yet again that fall! We had thought we would have the summer to do so, but the sale of the property was delayed when the buyer had to get a secondary loan due to the rise in interest rates. Thank you Melissa for “being there” through it all!

Recent NBBS graduate (2023), **Aubrey Marquardt**, had come on board in August of 2023 to share the load with Melissa as the IBFI secretary. Through the the help of my wife, some faculty members, Bro. & Mrs. Peeples, and several students and alumni, we filled up five storage units, made use of some space in the dorm for items that needed a more conducive climate-sensitive setting, and took up some space in my garage and office at home. We moved necessities into two office spaces at Worth Baptist Church – one for the secretaries and one for myself. Bro. Peeples and his wife, in the meantime, have an office set up in their home.



This past fall, Melissa, for logistic reasons (in relation to her husband Tony recently accepting the pastorate of the Rockwall Baptist Church, Rockwall, Texas, and their children attending Heritage Baptist Academy in Haslet, while they reside in Burleson), accepted a position at Heritage Baptist Academy, of the Heritage Baptist Church, Haslet, Texas. It allows her to take her children to school, work at the academy, and be there to take them home in the afternoon, or on to Rockwall on Wednesdays for the evening church service.

An expression from Melissa in card form: “Dear IBFI and NBBS, I just wanted to say thank you so much for the generous gift that was given to me at the Opening Day Rally. It was my pleasure to serve the school and the fellowship for the short time that I did. I thank God for the people I have met and the things I have learned since coming to school, and I hope to stay connected through the years! Melissa Roa.”

### An Another Alumnus Steps Up!

Aubrey, also an NBBS alumnus, began serving as both the IBFI and NBBS secretary in August 2024, and actually formats the Searchlight newsletter in house. She brings her own insight into ministry and has been **yet again another obvious timely provision from God** for us as a fellowship and school.

### Your Faithfulness Matters Too!

**Once we are in our new facility,** I look forward to all our past secretaries, who are still with us, being able to see in a fresh way, the difference they have made for the cause of Christ in addition to their church service through the years. We would not be where we are today without them! The significance of their past investment alone in the student body will surpass what they could have envisioned until it is unveiled to them in Heaven – **when they see the fruit of their labors.** Our supporting churches will experience the same. If you are a member of a church that supports the NBBS, **what an investment you are making in the cause of Christ as such! One offering alone touches thousands of lives** as our graduates make their way into the field of service in which they are called. Accordingly, we both commend you and thank for your faithful support. Above all, **we treasure your prayers!** It is evident that many are holding NBBS up in prayer. The student body spirit is still great and our new students have added much to it.

## ALUMNI NEWS



*Heath Hogue  
Alumni President*

I am not a big numbers guy when it comes to hermeneutics, but we can all agree that the number 40 has real significance in God’s Word. It is often seen as a time of testing. Noah was in the ark 40 days and 40 nights, Moses’ life is seen in sets of 40 years, Nineveh was given 40 days to repent or be overthrown, and Jesus was in the wilderness 40 days after His baptism just to name a few examples. Well **2025 marks the 41st year for the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary, and I can look around and say with certainty that the seminary has passed the “test!”** When others said it would not last, or that the school would fall by the wayside, it still stands, and stands on what it has always stood on - **the Word of God,** without wavering. Exciting things lie ahead. If one looks at each of the “40s” in the Bible, following the 40 is change or renewal of some sort. Noah would repopulate the earth, Moses led the children of Israel into a new era of their history, Nineveh saw one of the greatest revivals on record and Christ began His public ministry. What is next for the seminary? New graduates, new surrendered students, new faculty members, a new building. The time of “testing” has passed; a new opportunity and new ministries lay ahead. **I hope that if you are not on board, you will get on board and be a part of this new time that is ahead of us.** If you are an alumnus of the NBBS, and do not currently support the school, I encourage you diligently pray about it and to give back a little that was invested in you. The next 40 years, 80 years, and more, if the Lord tarries His coming, will not to be a missed opportunity.

I go back to the year 1992, sitting in class on my first day, and hearing Dr. Barber talking about that first graduating class of 1984, and thinking that it was a long time ago! Now it has been 32 years since that day! I know the students think 1992, is ancient history, and most days it is! But “ancient” history can still be an example to the next generation of graduates. **Old or young (or somewhere in the middle), your ministry can be a help and encouragement to others.**

If you are a graduate of the NBBS and are currently in full-time or part-time ministry and reading this, I would love to hear from you. I would like to spotlight some of our graduates to share what the God is doing in your ministry. If you would please take just a few minutes and send me an email at [norrisalumni@gmail.com](mailto:norrisalumni@gmail.com). Include your name, the years you were at Norris, something about your testimony and the dates and places you served. Also give a word about what the seminary means to you, and I will try to get it into a future Searchlight.

This quarter, I heard from Bro. Darrian Coker, veteran missionary for 18 years in Mexico. Bro Coker is a 1998 graduate of the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary. He arrived in Mexico, in 2007, and begin assisting local churches and learning Spanish. After visiting the state of Guanajuato, God laid on his heart that this was where he wanted the Coker family. Since starting a church in a home in

2012, the church has seen souls saved, believers baptized, and has its own property with a meeting area and a bathroom. The church currently supports 16 missionaries at \$500 pesos a month each, and also has a Bible Club that meets in a small community just out of town. God is certainly working through the lives of Bro. Darrian and Mari Coker. Bro. Coker did say that **he is very thankful for his time at NBBS, where he learned how to handle the Word of God and absorb the wisdom from pastors and teachers who were influential in his spiritual life and training.** He especially said thank you to all the supporting churches of the seminary, and to those who have supported the work in Mexico. He also wanted to thank his family, his wife Mari and his daughter Damaris, along with his parents Earl and Irene Coker for the faithful heart, service, and support. Last of all, a huge thank you to his sending church, Worth Baptist Church for their support and love through the years. “All for the glory to my God,” Bro. Coker said.

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

**Faithful servant of the Lord, keep on keeping on. God has not forgotten you.**

Continue to pray for the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary and for the students, faculty, and leadership. Let us get ready for another great 40 (or more) years.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### IBFI FALL FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Monday - Wednesday  
October 13-15, 2025  
Grace Tabernacle Independent Baptist Church  
Host Pastor - Michael Wiggins

### METROPLEX AREA IBFI MEETINGS

February 20, 2025  
Countryside Baptist Church  
Mansfield, Texas

March 20, 2025  
TBD

April 17, 2025  
New Life Baptist Church  
Highland Village, Texas

May 19-21, 2025  
IBFI Spring Meeting  
Worth Baptist Church  
Fort Worth, Texas