



John Peeples,
IBFI Mission Director

One of the most important aspects of our Christian life is that of passing on our faith to the next generation. With all of the other aspects of missionary church planting that require time and resources, we must not neglect evangelizing little children. Melissa Houston is a Missionary to the children, and God is using her ministry both on the mission field and also through her Children's Ministry Training Seminars. Please pray for her ministry, and that God will open doors for her very helpful seminars.

MELISSA HOUSTON

MISSIONARY TO THE RIO GRANDE VALLEY, TX, AND MEXICO

Dear Praying Friends,

The busiest season of the year has come to a close around here. Summer was full of Vacation Bible School (VBS) preparations, junior camp, VBS week, teen ladies' meetings, and a double baby shower!

Several church members helped with the VBS decorations starting the month before. We met at the church once or twice a week most weeks. Our underwater décor looked amazing and fit the theme of "Ocean Commotion" perfectly. During junior camp week, I went up to camp every day to check on our campers. They had a fun time playing team games, swimming, and enjoying cold treats during their free time. They heard some excellent preaching this year about making wrong choices and right choices with Bible examples.

When VBS week rolled around, we had the great pleasure of having a group from Worth Baptist Church helping us this year! I had the extra pleasure of having my mom be a part of that group! She came a couple of days early and helped with the final decorating. The Worth team arrived very late Sunday night, but were ready Monday morning to pass out a few hundred more invitations in the neighborhood near the church. I'm happy to announce that this year we had record numbers in attendance! Our highest night was just over 130. We also had 10 children put their faith in Jesus! We are rejoicing for each soul won! We usually have 1 or 2 souls saved, but this year we changed the format a bit. Instead of giving an invitation to ask questions about Jesus and heaven after the individual class lessons, we had a gospel presentation during the closing ceremony, and then the invitation to speak to teachers about the gospel. No one was afraid of missing out on snacks, crafts, or games that way, so several people had the opportunity to speak with the teachers about Jesus. We will definitely be continuing with the new format in coming years!

The teen girls had a bowling activity at the end of July. It was many of their first times bowling. We then returned to the church to begin a series on dating. It is highly based on a sermon I heard in Bible college by Dr. Jim Schettler. Please continue to pray for our teen girls. They face so many challenges and temptations in this world. Please also pray God would send a family to work with our teens, and help in the ministry here.



Thank you all for your faithful prayers for me, and the ministry here. May God richly bless you all!

Please enjoy the pictures of our decorating and Vacation Bible School.

In Christ,
Melissa Houston



INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

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The Searchlight

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022 VOLUME 39 ISSUE 3

OCTOBER SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING RECAP
OCTOBER 11-13, 2022

*"pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest,
that He would send forth labourers" Luke 10:2*

FAITH BAPTIST CHURCH, CANTON, MICHIGAN



IBFI Mission Agency
Helping independent Baptist churches get their missionaries to the field

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- Central America
- South America
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Our Biannual Week of
CONCENTRATED STUDY AT NBBS
TOPIC THIS SEMESTER: Revitalizing a Church
12 Areas of Focus • 7 Lecturers • 14 Sessions

Conducted November 1-4, 2022
Tuesday-Friday - 8:00 AM-12 NOON

A One Week Break from Regular Class Sessions in a 17-Week Semester, to Address Vital Issues in the Ministry

The Searchlight

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IBFI Board of Directors: Pastor Eric Crawford, Dr. Raymond Barber, Mission Director John Peeples, NBBS President Jonathan Stewart, Pastor Barry Bedwell, Pastor Mark Brown, Pastor Chad Fitts, Pastor Matthew Gage, Pastor Tyler Gillit, Pastor David Grice, Pastor David Pugh, Pastor Kenneth Ralph, Pastor Claude Sutton, Pastor Heath Van Zandt, and Pastor Charles Wetherbee

TRIBUTE TO THE WORD OF GOD



*Dr. Raymond W. Barber,
IBFI President Emeritus*

A The Bible is *accurate* in its assessments and absolute in its authority.

B The Bible is *binding* in its precepts and *beautiful* in its pronouncements.

C The Bible is *confrontational* in its style and *comforting* in its security.

D The Bible is *direct* in its approach and *demanding* in its acceptance.

E The Bible is *edifying* in its message and *educational* in its method.

F The Bible is *faithful* in its resolve and *fruitful* in its results.

G The Bible is *great* in its power and *good* in its purpose.

H The Bible is *high* in its royalty and *holy* in its reasoning.

I The Bible is *inspired* in its doctrine and *infinite* in its duration.

J The Bible is *joyful* in its music and *just* in its mandates.

K The Bible is *keen* in its calculation and *kosher* in its content.

L The Bible is *loud* in its accent and *lovely* in its arrangement.

M The Bible is *magnificent* in its beauty and *marvelous* in its bounty.

N The Bible is *noble* in its claims and *numinous* in its character.

O The Bible is *opulent* in its value and *optimum* in its victory.

P The Bible is *powerful* in its testimony and *proficient* in its teaching.

Q The Bible is *questionless* in its veracity and *qualitative* in its veneration.

R The Bible is *rational* in its judgment and *righteous* in its jurisdiction.

S The Bible is *sacred* in its authorship and *satisfying* in its application.

T The Bible is *transcendent* in its glory and *timeless* in its government.

U The Bible is *universal* in its scope and *unique* in its sanctions.

V The Bible is *vibrant* in its animation and *victorious* in its accomplishments.

W The Bible is *wise* in its alignment and *worthy* in its appraisal.

Y The Bible is *yeomanly* in its acumen and *youthful* in its actions.

Z The Bible is *zealous* in its vision and *zestful* in its vibrancy.

The Fall IBFI Meeting in Canton, Michigan, was in every respect outstanding. From the first note of music until the final benediction the blessings of the Lord were evident. Bro. Bedwell and his people covered every base in preparing for what became one of the most blessed meetings in our thirty-nine year history. The music warmed our hearts and the preaching challenged our souls. The offering goal of \$40,000 was not only met but was exceeded by several thousand dollars. When people are happy, they give, and our IBFI pastors are happy. To God be the glory—He did it all!



Eric Crawford, IBFI President

What a great meeting we had in Canton, Michigan! The Faith Baptist Church and its Pastor, Berry Bedwell, did an outstanding job of hosting the meeting. The music, meals, and fellowship were fantastic. I want to thank them

on behalf of the IBFI for their hard work and sacrifice for the benefit of the preachers.

I was amazed at the support for Norris Bible Baptist Seminary. Our offering goal was \$40,000, and within just eight or nine minutes, \$44,700 had been raised from churches and individuals. Praise the Lord for His continued grace upon the seminary! The difference we have seen in the seminary, mission agency, and fellowship meetings over the past eight years has been such a blessing and encouragement. I want to thank everyone, and all the churches who participated. You are the reason we have a school and you are the reason our seminary is affordable. Amen!

During the fall meeting, I was reminded of the importance of having a time of fellowship as a pastor. I need to be preached to, and I need to hear from the Lord. Yes, I can go online and hear some of the greatest preachers, but as we learned during lockdown, hearing a message in person is so superior to listening or watching online. To gather together and preach to each other is conducive for the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts. It is not just the preaching that impacted me, but the fellowship of pastors. It is the eating out, the fellowshiping together, and being able to talk to someone who understands the joys and burdens of the ministry that is so uplifting.

The fellowship and preaching in Canton, Michigan will impact the ministry the Lord has given me by lightening the load, and through the wonderful encouragement that I received. I hope you will decide to come in May, to Fort Worth, and fellowship once again!

*“when the fulness of the time was come,
God sent forth his Son” Galatians 4:4*



BRIGHTLY COLORED FOLIAGE, BEAUTIFUL NEW CHURCH FACILITY, GREAT HOSTS, WARM FELLOWSHIP, INSIGHTFUL PREACHING, EXCEPTIONAL OFFERING, & NAMESAKE APPLES!



Jonathan J. Stewart, NBBS President

The semi-annual IBFI Fall Fellowship Meeting was all the headline above says, and yes, even more!

Many flew from different parts of the nation, and others drove in from significant distances, such as myself and Bro. Charles Wetherbee. By so doing, we were able to visit a couple of churches on the Sunday before the meeting. If I am driving a significant distance, I like to take advantage of it and leave Friday or Saturday, so I can share with pastors and possible students about NBBS.



By early October, there had not been any real and lasting cold weather in the parts along our way to the fellowship meeting, but Michigan, the state of our destination, had had enough of whatever is needed, for us to be taken back, in a good way, by the beauty of the trees in their various colors – not just red, orange, yellow and brown, but also differing shades of green in the mix of assorted pine trees. Monday night, after Bro. Wetherbee and I got settled into our hotel room in Canton, we enjoyed a great, as advertised, “Detroit Style Pizza” at a nearby restaurant.



Our ultimate destination, the new facilities of the Faith Baptist Church, of Canton, Michigan, was also striking. It is a very attractive building outside and inside. Its blend of various architectural features is done in such a way, so as to be classic and yet modern. The inside of the 30,000 square foot structure was equally warm and inviting, but also stately in a way that complimented the desire to worship the Lord as you flowed into the sanctuary.

The church people were more than accommodating, and helped to provide special music in the form of solos, an ensemble, a choir, and an instrumental which included a hammered dulcimer. The church came across as being more than happy to host the meeting. The breakfast foods, and the two lunches were very well presented and very delicious. The BBQ lunch on Tuesday, showed great BBQ exists way up north as well!

The fellowship was characterized by a large element of NBBS alumni, long-standing supporting pastors, and area preachers. Twice, a large group of us went out to eat after the services and enjoyed our time together.

The preaching was everything you would have hoped it would be. Dr. Barber preached a sermon very fitting as the Chancellor of NBBS, President Emeritus of the IBFI, and as someone we have looked to for many years as a chief standard bearer. IBFI President Bro. Eric Crawford, brought a very insightful message on John 3:16, making much use of the whole chapter in which it is found. Alumni and “guest” preachers all “rung the bell,” and Bro. Jerry Siler finished it off, Thursday morning, as only he can. On top of all of this, we shot past our needed offering goal of \$40,000.00 rather quickly, with the knowledge, we could have easily pressed for more and hit \$50,000.00, after we hit almost \$45,000.00! Because so many gave so generously and so quickly, it was not necessary for those who in the past have stepped up to give even more when it was needed.



However, what topped off everything for me was getting two sacks of Jonathan Apples. I have not had any decent ones since I was a teenager. The few times I have found them in Texas, they have lost their crispness and zing in making their way here from the North. Pastor Bedwell bought me a sack, as did alumni Heath and Caryssa Van Zandt, and their two children, Salem and Silas. The apples were every bit as tart, and yet sweet, as I remembered. I ate them on the way home, and after I got home my wife made me a great pie with the few I had left!

Thank you, Pastor Barry Bedwell and Faith Baptist Church, Canton, Michigan!

While the fellowship meeting was under way, a very blessed semester at the seminary carried on with a couple of substitute teachers filling in for the faculty who made the trip to Michigan. Some faculty who teach on Friday, flew back Thursday evening so they could teach their classes. We are grateful for our faculty, and secretary staff, who are so committed, genial and dependable. They love the students and are of great help to me.

*“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem...
there came wise men from the east” (Matthew 2:1)*



SERVING GOD IS SWEET



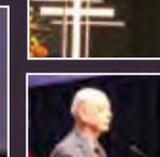
*Kenneth Ralph,
Alumni President*

As a pastor who lives 600 miles away from the DFW Metroplex, I have come to fully appreciate the October fellowship meetings. Faith Baptist Church, under

the leadership of Pastor Berry Bedwell did a superb job hosting this year’s Fall Fellowship Meeting in Canton, Michigan. As I recount the memories of time spent there, I am overwhelmed and flooded with things I enjoyed. I could take time to write about the hospitality of the church and staff, the messages that were preached, the special music, the meals that were eaten (Bro. Bedwell cooked a wonderful BBQ meal), and the places we were able to visit, but none of these compare to the fellowship we had among the alumni and others affiliated with our fellowship.

The excitement from the student body about learning the Bible from Genesis to Revelation, the high enrollment, the friendships being forged, and current leadership of our school is in part to the Alumni and their willingness to be engaged in the school where they were trained. They are excited especially with financial support, as we do all we can to keep the focus on Christ and the cost for students affordable.

We laughed, we cried, and we gawked at the leaves changing colors but more than that we bonded. If you are just loosely affiliated with NBBS, may I encourage you to get more involved. There has never been a better time to “Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” The fields are ripe, the unity is obvious, the direction is on point, and the Lord’s hand is evident.



UPCOMING EVENTS

IBF METROPLEX MEETINGS

December 8, 2022 – Worth Baptist Church
Fort Worth, TX – Host Pastor – Tyler Gillit

NBBS OPENING DAY RALLY

Tuesday, January 17 • 9:30 AM-Noon
Preaching • Singing • Lunch

40TH ANNUAL IBFI MEETING

May 22-25, 2023

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