

MISSIONS NEWS

In plain sight and in great need, God loves the homeless and will save them if we have the compassion to give them the Gospel. Scott and Darla Griffin are making a difference with Homeless No More Ministries. Please pray for them and if you are able, support their ministry financially.

Bro. John Peeples
Psalm 16:11

³⁴Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: ³⁵For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: ³⁶Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Matthew 25:35-36

SCOTT AND DARLA GRIFFIN HOMELESS NO MORE MINISTRIES

SUMMER REPORT

GREAT IS THY FAITHFULNESS

The Lord has been faithful to Homeless No More Baptist Church. He has been faithful by meeting the physical needs of the homeless, every week our people are clothed properly for the summer. Every week 160 plates of food was served after the church services. Hundreds of gallons of gasoline were used to provide transportation to the church, to the food banks and medical needs.

The Lord has been faithful by meeting the spiritual needs of our homeless. The rent money for the church has faithfully appeared every month and the AC keeps on working. The Lord has directed the

footsteps of many people to the church. This summer we have witnessed 37 souls believe the gospel and called upon the LORD for salvation, 10 of them were baptized at the northside church. We have also witnessed at our eastside church 15 saved at the park. Between both locations 60 people come every week to hear God's Word preached and taught. We have witnessed many changed lives. Yes without a doubt God has been faithful unto us.

Until then, God bless

Scott and Darla Griffin



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WALTON EUGENE "GENE" STOKES

November 27, 1943 — July 11, 2025

Walton Eugene "Gene" Stokes went home to Heaven peacefully from his earthly home in Fortson, Georgia, on July 11, surrounded by the family he loved so dearly. He was 81 years old.

Born on November 27, 1943, in Pensacola, Florida, Bro. Gene dedicated his life to serving the Lord. He married Faye Nall on August 5, 1965. Later, they moved to Texas where he attended and graduated from Arlington Baptist Seminary. In 1975, he moved to Century, Florida, where a year later he planted

Faith Bible Baptist Church.

In 2008, Bro. Gene and Mrs. Faye relocated to Fortson, Georgia, to be near their children and grandchildren. They joined Maranatha Baptist Church in Columbus, where Bro. Gene found great joy and fellowship as a member of the Senior Saints Sunday School class.

One of Bro. Gene's greatest joys was seeing several men, including his son Cliff and son-in-law Mark, surrender their lives to preach the gospel under his ministry. He was incredibly proud of his "preacher boys," and he continued to encourage and support them long after they left his church. Their ongoing ministries stand as a living testimony to his influence and faithfulness.

Bro. Gene had a deep love and admiration for Christian missionaries, and he regarded them as royalty. He believed the whole world should hear about Jesus and personally supported several missionaries with faithful monthly offerings.

He is survived by his beloved wife of nearly 60 years, Faye Nall Stokes of Fortson, GA; daughter Tracy Brown (Mark) of Clarksville, TN; son Cliff Stokes (Beth) of Fortson, GA; eight grandchildren: Jessica Newman (Zach), Troy Brown (Brittany), Kelli Farmer (Josh), BriAnn, Hayden, Nate, Levi, and Ellie Grace Stokes; and eleven great-grandchildren. He is also survived by his sister Clara Jean Stewart, brother Calvin Stokes, and many loving in-laws, nieces, nephews, and extended family.

He was preceded in death by his infant son, Paul Howard Stokes in 1980; his parents, Clifford and Lulean Stokes; his sister Beverly Saucier; his brother JW Stokes; and several cherished in-laws and other relatives.

Bro. Gene spent his life telling everyone—family, friends, and even strangers—about the redeeming love of Jesus Christ. In his final days, though very weak, when asked how he knew he was going to Heaven, he raised his hand triumphantly and hollered out joyfully, "I'm redeemed!" That was his message to the world: God loves you, and He gave His Son Jesus to redeem you. Bro. Gene wanted everyone to know that salvation is found not in what we do, but in the finished work of Jesus on the cross. His prayer would be that you too would be able to shout, "I'm redeemed!" If you would like to know more about how you, too, can be redeemed,

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

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The Searchlight

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MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR!



IBFI Mission Agency

Helping Independent Baptist Churches
Get Their Missionaries to the Field

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The Searchlight

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FROM THE PEN OF THE PRESIDENT • NEWS & EVENTS • SCHOOL, MISSIONS & ALUMNI NEWS

A GREAT TIME OF FELLOWSHIP



*Eric Crawford
IBFI President*

What a blessing it was to attend the fall meeting of the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary at Grace Tabernacle Independent Baptist Church. **Pastor Wiggins and the church family were exceptional hosts.** The preaching was Spirit-filled, the fellowship was sweet, and the food was fantastic. It was a meeting that reminded us once again of the unity and purpose God has given our fellowship.

Bro. Wiggins took the pastorate of GTIBC about a year and a half ago, and it is evident that the Lord is using him in a wonderful way. After the church was so negatively impacted by the COVID pandemic, God has brought renewed strength and fresh momentum. Attendance is growing, activities and meetings are being planned, and new ministries are being launched. I am looking forward to hearing many more great reports about the work in the days ahead. *"This is the LORD's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes"* (Psalm 118:23).

The new building project also continues to move forward. The dirt work is about to wrap up, and rough-in plumbing will soon begin. Several other trades are preparing to get started as we move toward pouring the slab shortly after the first of the year. God is good! He continues to open doors with subcontractors, and the cost of materials has remained level. We ask that you continue to pray as we move forward with this great and needed project.

Our school remains blessed to meet at Worth Baptist Church, under the leadership of Pastor Tyler Gillit. They have been such gracious hosts during this season of transition, and their kindness has allowed the ministry of Norris Bible Baptist Seminary to continue unhindered. Yet, **we are eagerly anticipating the day when we will step into our own building—our own home—and continue training preachers and servants of God for generations to come.** *"Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it"* (Psalm 127:1).

Thank you for praying, supporting, and standing with us. Please continue to lift this project before the Lord.

He has been faithful every step of the way, and we trust Him completely as we press forward.

Pray.



ALUMNI NEWS

*Heath Hogue
Alumni President*

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." – Colossians 3:16

What a wonderful time we had at the IBFI Fall meeting. Bro & Mrs. Wiggins and the folks at Grace Tabernacle Independent Baptist Church **did such a wonderful job of making everyone feel welcome.**

The meal on Monday night was exceptional and I want to thank those who made it a success.



Tuesday morning of the attending alumni.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the May Fellowship and graduation, which will sneak up quickly, so start planning on being there now.

METROPLEX AREA IBFI MEETINGS

November 20, 2025
Worth Baptist Church
Fort Worth, Texas
Pastor Tyler Gillit

December 11, 2025
Victory Baptist Church
Crowley, Texas
Pastor Bill Keisling

NBBS OPENING DAY RALLY

January 13, 2026
Student Orientation begins at 8:00 am.

The Opening Day Rally will begin at 9:30 am.
A lunch will be provided afterwards.



*Jonathan J. Stewart
NBBS President*

ANOTHER YEAR OF INVESTING IN ETERNITY!

Another year comes to an end, which in fact was another great investment of time, resources and energy in eternity in the cause of Christ via the seminary by our supporting churches, friends, faculty and administration. **It has indeed been, by the grace of God a very impactful school year yet again!**

Our potential 2026 graduates have one semester to go. They have a continual inspirational example set before them in our newest alumni, as well as active alumni reach backing to 1985 by way of two of our first year of graduates, Leslie Priday, missionary to Honduras and John O'Malley, who is the president of the Worldwide New Testament Baptist Missions, and has stayed involved with the school through the years! Of course, **numerous other alumni could be cited** from among the prior ranks who are setting forth our theme verse II Timothy 2:2. For example, Michael Wiggins, a 2001 graduate, who is the pastor of the Grace Tabernacle Independent Baptist Church of Mobile, Alabama, that recently hosted this year's annual fall IBFI meeting. Bro. Wiggins in the recent past not only has served on the faculty of NBBS while filling the role of an associate pastor at Heritage Baptist Church, Haslet, Texas, but in 2021 also added a bachelor's degree from NBBS to his three-year NBBI diploma. Having been an evangelist, and the pastor of two other churches, **he has been a great steward of his education at Norris.** Since returning back to singularly being a preacher-training seminary in 2014, we have an additional prolific line of men on deputation, on the mission field, serving as pastors, starting churches, serving on church staffs as assistant pastors or youth directors, or similar. Many of whom which are **accompanied by their wives who were also trained alongside of them at NBBS.**

IBFI Fall Fellowship Meeting

This year's fall IBFI meeting turned out to be very uplifting, and the preaching was especially impactful. There was a revival-like atmosphere as desired by Bro. Wiggins. Bro. Charles Wetherbee started it off, Sunday morning and each preacher thereafter added to it. The church members were **very gracious hosts** and made us feel at home. The setting of the church facility was very inviting. It lays on a very nice plot of a well-groomed lawn. The founding pastor Bro. Donald Cox and his wife are still an active members and are rejoicing in seeing the church continuing on!



"...there came wise men from the east..." Matthew 2:1-2

Recent Week of Concentrated Study

In mid-November, we had our bi-annual Week of Concentrated Study (the theme being on Jewish Evangelism), and it was one of those events that could only be what it was if a Jewish believer conducted it. We have such a man on the faculty in missionary Philip Sawilowsky! As the founder and director of the church-based Olive Tree Ministry International, which he began in 1993, he is especially fit for the focus we had in our school wide study. Our topics were the history of Israel from Abraham to today, then the effects of amillennialism upon people's view of Israel's standing in the world today, as well as on Israel in Bible prophecy (history written beforehand). Further, the students were made more clearly aware of what the present day varied cultural situation that the Jews are dealing with in the Middle East, Europe and the USA. **All the teaching was also done in order to help the students know better how to reach out to Jewish persons with the Gospel.** Besides eating lox (smoked or salt-cured salmon with cream cheese) on bagels, as well as falafels, baklava, and other complementary food, the students were richly fed the Scriptures. They also learned of J. Frank Norris's strong support of the Jews and the State of Israel from the 1930s, until the time of his passing in 1952.

Holiday Season at NBBS

The celebration of the first coming of Christ is very much a part of NBBS this time of the year right after giving due regard to Thanksgiving, and the legacy of the Pilgrims (who were Separatists, and not Puritans as is often misstated). We sing many of the great Christmas hymns in chapel. At the annual end of the year Norris Night fellowship in early December, such singing occurs and preaching by the students on the significance of the incarnation of God in the flesh - Emmanuel! Even though Christ is no longer a baby in a manger, the life He lived, the death He died, His burial and resurrection, ascension and intercession **are only fundamentally significant because of the nature of His incarnation** (Luke 1:35; Galatians 4:3-5, etc.). He is our representative from the womb to the tomb, and now in resurrection power He ever lives to intercede for us! We further know that as the prophecies of His first coming **were fulfilled literally**, so will those of the rapture and His ultimate second coming be also.

Closing Words

All of the above of course has and will take place in the context of the every day lives of the students and faculty, and their church involvements, and happenings in the lives of alumni still involved with the school. This includes the passing into heaven of two longstanding IBFI preachers, Dr. Raymond Barber and longtime supporting pastor Bro. Gene Stokes, as well as the like departure of two students, Shaleen Stiger and Isaac Li, who were much endeared to faculty and students, and their church. We are all on our way to eternity - **may we continue to do as much as we can by the grace of God yet again in the New Year for His glory and the good of our fellow man!**

We hope by this time next year to be in, or very **close to being in our new facility** to do just that on an even greater level! The building program is well underway. The dirt work is largely finished, and piers, roughed in plumbing, and the pouring of our of foundation are straight ahead. The metal structure components that have been engineered to make up the exterior framework has even been ordered, and are not due too long after the first of the year. Thank you for doing so much to help make NBBS what it is. **Your prayerful and financial support are much appreciated!**

