



Other Births

Our church soulwinning program continues to bear fruit. Our youth are learning how to lead others to Christ and go out almost every week to witness and pass out tracts. We have seen many come to Christ through these efforts, and we rejoice in many new births into the family of God!



We also had another little one born into our family! On October 9th, our eldest daughter Jessica and her husband Luis, and their daughter Luisa, happily announced the birth of Alejandro Enrique. Mrs. Tammy and our teen daughter Jeannette were able to fly to Texas to attend to Jessica and the baby and assist their family during her recovery. We praise the Lord for his safe delivery. He is so precious!

Vacation Bible School



VBS had to be scheduled during the week of our American Thanksgiving Day, so we had extra blessings to be thankful for. This was our first VBS at our new location, and it was a very blessed week. Sixty-nine children and youth attended this year (all of them new faces). There were 33 professions of faith! We continue to reach out to the families in our new neighborhood. Please pray for fruit that remains.

Youth Conference 2025



We had a great time at the youth conference in Chimaltenango this year! Several of our youth went for the first time (some of whom had never gone out of town away from their parents), so for them it was a big step. We filled our 12-passenger van, and God filled our cups to overflowing! Some said God changed their outlook on life, and some are making plans to attend Seminary in January - to prepare their lives for service to the Lord. Their decisions thrill my heart! Please continue to pray for our Youth Department and the work here.

We greatly appreciate your continued support as we serve the Lord in Guatemala.

*With our hands to the plow,
Daniel Coates Family*



Cell: 011-502-3071-3719 Home Vonage: 817-230-4936

IBFI Mailing Address: P.O. Box 151259, Fort Worth, Texas 76108

Sending Church: Lighthouse Baptist Church, 410 NE 27th Street, Grand Prairie, TX 76108 972.264.5422

INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

PO Box 151259
Ft. Worth, TX 76108

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INDEPENDENT BAPTIST FELLOWSHIP INTERNATIONAL

The Searchlight
MARCH/APRIL 2026 VOLUME 42 ISSUE 5

42nd IBFI Annual May Fellowship Meeting
Monday Evening-Wednesday Evening • May 18-20, 2026

"AND THEY WENT FORTH, AND PREACHED EVERY WHERE, THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM." MARK 16:20 | At the Worth Baptist Church (4900 Campus Drive, Ft. Worth, TX)

Starts *Monday Night at 5:30* with *BBQ Banquet* & *Guest Preacher Mike Norris*

TUESDAY 9 AM - NOON NBBS Graduation	 Pastor Tony Roa Rockwall BC Rockwall, TX	 Pastor Barry Bedwell Faith BC Canton, OH	 Pastor David Webb Walker Springs Rd BC, Jackson, AL	 Dr. Mike Norris Franklin Rd BC Murfreesboro, TN	 Evangelist Jonathan Stewart Victory Baptist Church, Weatherford, TX
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WEDNESDAY 9 AM - NOON 7:00 PM Evening Service at Worth Baptist Church	 Bro. Mark Brown Gateway BC Clarksville, TN	 Bro. Noah Williams Lighthouse BC Grand Prairie, TX	 Pastor David Grice Lighthouse BC Grand Prairie, TX	General Assembly NBBS Update Special Offering Business Session Elections	 Missionary Darian Coker Mexico Pastor Tyler Gillis Worth BC Ft. Worth, TX
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CO-LABORERS TOGETHER WITH GOD

"they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them" Mark 16:20

MISSION AGENCY
Assisting Churches in the Caretaking of Missionaries

SEARCHLIGHT Newsletter

IBFI CHURCHES & PREACHERS

\$50,000 OFFERING GOAL

IBFI Mission Agency
Helping Independent Baptist Churches
Get Their Missionaries to the Field

Individual Church Sent Missionaries Supported by Many Churches

N. America
C. America
S. America
Europe
Africa

For Specific Nations: www.ibfi.us • EMAIL: missionoffice@ibfi.us

NBBS - Specializing in Foundation-Building for the Ministry - Acts 20:27!

An object lesson indeed!

Underneath the above string lines for the setting up of the forms for the slab, is 12 feet of compacted fill dirt, wherein will be 62 piers which are 20 feet deep.

Update on Our Building Program • Pictures Inside!

The Searchlight
A publication and ministry of the Independent Baptist Fellowship International
PO Box 151259 | Ft. Worth, TX 76108 | Phone: 817.367.3422 | Email: ibfi@ibfi.us | Website: ibfi.us

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



Bro. John Peebles
Psalm 16:11

In 2000, Daniel and Tammy Coates became IBFI missionaries to Guatemala. I will never forget my trip to see them and their work. It was filled with winding mountain roads with tropical vegetation through numerous towns and villages filled with indigenous people groups dressed in ethnic colors. Beautiful mountains were decorated with smoking volcanoes. God reserves special blessings here on Earth for those who go, and the eternal rewards are much more impressive. God is still calling, "Look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest, and he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal". Have you heard? Will you go? Will you give? Will you pray?

DANIEL AND TAMMY COATES MISSIONARIES TO GUATEMALA



New Members



We were blessed to baptize new members. Three from the same family: Victor 13, Carlos 12, and Madeline 10 (pictured at the left) and a young adult... Pablo. These were the last members baptized at our old building. After 15 years meeting there, we learned that the owner was going to divide up the property. We had 30 days to find a new place to meet. At our last service there, we had a testimony time, sharing memories and thanking God for all the ways He had blessed us at that location, hundreds saved and dozens baptized... We will miss the place, but the CHURCH keeps going forward!

New Building



We are excited about moving the church into a nicer, more spacious building in La Esperanza. This property is actually much better suited for us. During the first service at our new location, a young woman visited and listened intently to the message. She trusted in Jesus that day, making her the first person to be saved in our new building! We do believe God has a lot of great things planned for the work of the Lord in this place. Change is hard, but God blesses our trust in Him.

Medical Team



We rejoice in all that the Lord has done once again through the Medical Mission outreach team made up primarily of the good folks at Heritage Baptist Church in Haslet, Texas. During their week with us in July, 1,149 people were ministered to and 244 folks made professions of faith in Jesus!



Great National Celebration

We enjoyed celebrating Guatemala's Independence Day on September 15th. One of our church families taught us all how to make "paches," the traditional food that is prepared for many celebrations here. We had special services to thank God for His goodness. We love our people and the country of Guatemala, and rejoiced in Guatemala's 204th birthday. *Continued.*

BUILDING MOMENTUM!



David Grice
IBFI Vice President

Nehemiah is such a great book on leadership. One of the greatest lessons in Nehemiah is the power of momentum when it comes to the building process. The people faced hatred, mocking, fear of attack, and all sorts of treachery. That did not stop them.

Nehemiah 4:6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof; for the people had a mind to work.

Winning and losing often comes down to mindset. Nehemiah recognized this, and encouraged the people through his words and his actions.

Nehemiah 2:18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

When the "bad guys" came around, Nehemiah did not waste time on them.

Nehemiah 6:3-4 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you? Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

Prayer - Nehemiah prayed from beginning to end of the building program.

Prioritization - Nehemiah kept the main thing the main thing.

Promotion - Nehemiah continually motivated the people.

Protection - Nehemiah did whatever was needed to protect the people and the progress of the work.

All of these worked together to keep the momentum going for the finishing of the work.

The same is true for just about any big project. It is certainly true when it comes to the seminary building. While we are not facing the same challenges as Nehemiah, as we work with building inspectors, contractors, and more, the Nehemiah example is great to follow to keep our momentum.

We are so thankful for all the work that has been accomplished to get the project to this stage. It is going to be super-exciting to see where we are by the May Fellowship. Make plans to be there!

ALUMNI NEWS



Heath Hogue
Alumni President

In Matthew 7:18-20, we read that men are known by their fruits. We will all produce something, good or bad. It all depends on what is providing the nutrients to the tree, or plant. If we are rooted and planted in Christ, we will produce because we must produce good fruit. The same analogy that Christ used about bearing fruit can be applied to other areas as well. An example being our own seminary, the Norris Bible Baptist Seminary. We can talk about all the excitement of the new building. We can read the *Searchlight*, give to the fellowship, and even come to the meetings in May and October, but if you want to know about the Seminary, then look at its fruit! Look at the alumni. We have many graduates who are pastoring and ministering all over the state of Texas, and across the United States. We have alumni in several countries building churches and training Christians. We have older alumni that have been at it for many years to younger alumni who are just starting out. The alumni will show what a school really is. NBBS will be known for its fruit. To all the alumni from the seminary, let us say thank you for being fruitful. Keep up the good work and endure to the end. If you have anything going on at your church or ministry, like a building program or new position please share with me at norrisalumni@gmail.com and I will see if I can get it into the next *Searchlight*.

Update in Pictures of New Facility!



A DRAMATIC ONGOING OBJECT LESSON OF BUILDING A LIFE, A MINISTRY, AND A CHURCH ON THE "SAYINGS OF CHRIST"



Jonathan J. Stewart
NBBS President

Our 42nd class of graduates are yet another group of "co-laborers together with God" and are about to be officially added to the mix of the faithful NBBS-NBBS alumni! In view of the early stages of our building program, the words of Christ in Matthew 7:24-27 should be in a vivid way more impressionable to this year's graduates than previous ones:

"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, **I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock**; and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: **for it was founded upon a rock.**" *Of course in view here is not just the sayings of Christ, but even the Rock Himself— Christ, whose sayings are also therefore as such— Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30-31 Psalm 18:2, 31, 46, 28:1, etc. with Matthew 16:15-18, and I Corinthians 10:1-4, etc.*

This year's graduates, as well as the student body at-large, **have seen one of our major themes at the seminary come to life in a one-of-a-kind way:** "You only have one chance to lay a foundation." It is more obvious to them regardless of what their previous exposure might have been or will be in the future. Concurrent with their schooling, has been the ongoing construction project of our new facility - up to this point the foundation - and what a foundation!

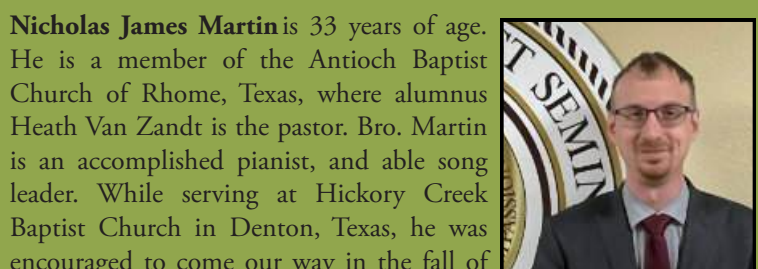
The initial work of our engineer was that of taking core samples of the soil several feet down, to analyze the nature of the soil upon which our new facility will sit. We of course have many documents evidencing all the work he has gone to, including elevations, drainage, removing the dirt down to 12 feet in depth, returning it with the rocks screened out, and dirt then wetted and compacted layer by layer via a bulldozer. After testing the dirt several times throughout the process, the inspector whom the city required we secure the services of, **informed us that the contractor had done a very good job.** Then came the select fill dirt that was put atop it with a moisture barrier polyurethane sheet that also had to pass inspection. It too was wetted and compacted in four 6-inch layers (for a depth of 24 inches), to assure that we have the basis to a very well engineered building that our very capable architect has designed. A post-tension slab sitting atop 62 piers is yet to come.

The student body of 2025-2026 should indeed have an increased appreciation for the emphasis upon their foundational training, notably because of what they have seen on the new property, and also because of calling attention to it in the classroom and chapel via lesson and sermon (i.e., via "the bulldozer of review"). Also through what they are being taught and how they are being taught (in keeping with thorough expositional, doctrinal and practical courses of study) and the experience they are receiving by way of their ministry opportunities in their churches.

2026 Graduates



Garrett Lee Gayoso is 31 years of age. He is married to Lauren and they have four children. He is the Assistant Pastor at Bible Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Texas, where David Pugh is the pastor. In keeping with his various assistant pastor involvements, is his service in the music program. Garrett has been a very good student, a very positive presence at NBBS, and an inspiration to the other students in his hunger to know the Word of God. He came to us in the fall of 2025 needing one more year of schooling to **complete his Bachelor's Degree with a Bible Major.** The Bible Baptist Church has been very supportive of his endeavors to finish his degree. Bro. Garrett has plans to become the pastor of a church as the Lord leads.

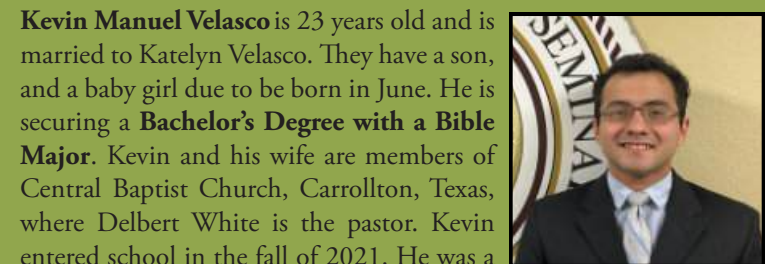


Nicholas James Martin is 33 years of age. He is a member of the Antioch Baptist Church of Rhome, Texas, where alumnus Heath Van Zandt is the pastor. Bro. Martin is an accomplished pianist, and able song leader. While serving at Hickory Creek Baptist Church in Denton, Texas, he was encouraged to come our way in the fall of 2022 by Pastor Raymond Castro. Somewhat recently, Nicholas went to help alumnus Heath Van Zandt in his efforts to keep moving Antioch Baptist Church forward (a fairly recent church plant). He is a very capable young man in many ways, beyond his church involvements. He has been relied upon in numerous ways in the watch care of the dorm - not only its physical upkeep, but also in being a spiritual "big brother" to younger dorm students, and younger students in general, at the school. He is graduating with a **Bachelor's Degree with a Bible Major.**



Byron K. Osborn is 47 years of age. He is married to Ashley, and they have three sons. Byron was called into he ministry while actively serving in the First Baptist Church of Cottondale, Paradise, Texas, where Charles Pugh is the pastor. He was a house builder by profession at the time. Accordingly, his carpentry skills have been a great blessing to the seminary, and to various church planting-church revitalizing projects by alumni. Never more so than when we were moving the seminary out of our 30-year long facility. Putting the vast majority of our belongings into storage via his large truck and applicable equipment, and by way of his family's hands on help, he was a major part of the team those two weeks in early August of 2023, as we were starting a school year while also moving! Later he did some very needed major remodeling work on the dormitory house. He and his wife are classic examples of older students being almost as faculty to many of the student body. Ashley and their son Cole are also students at NBBS. Both are pursuing a bachelor's degree. In the somewhat recent past, Byron and his family relocated to Santa Fe Baptist Church, Weatherford, Texas, where Tony Thomas is the pastor. While serving there, they have gained further ministerial experience. Bro. Osborn looks forward to entering the pastorate in the

near future as the Lord leads. He will be receiving a **Bachelor's Degree with a Bible Major.** His wife Ashley, and his son Cole, are both also pursuing a bachelor's degree from NBBS.



Kevin Manuel Velasco is 23 years old and is married to Katelyn Velasco. They have a son, and a baby girl due to be born in June. He is securing a **Bachelor's Degree with a Bible Major.** Kevin and his wife are members of Central Baptist Church, Carrollton, Texas, where Delbert White is the pastor. Kevin entered school in the fall of 2021. He was a very sincere young man and beholden to God as he seriously weighed the significance of what it meant to enter school to become a preacher. He came the first week to make sure he was ready to make the commitment, and he is now graduating! He has been a very upstanding young student and faithful in attendance with very good academics. In the fall of 2022, a young lady enrolled in NBBS that further showed him that God was at work in his life. As is often the case at NBBS, students meet their life partner at school, who also is preparing for the service of the Lord. Kevin and Katelyn have been a great testimony to the membership of Central Park Baptist Church where Kevin is on staff. Kevin, besides his teaching and preaching has become a good song leader and singer. Kevin plans to remain at Central Park Baptist Church until the Lord leads him more definitely to pursue his next ministerial endeavor. He is well on his way to becoming a quality pastor or missionary. His wife Katelyn is continuing her pursuit of a bachelor's degree at NBBS.

Dana Bellah previously earned a one-year Bible diploma from NBBS. Since then she has continued to attend the seminary as she was able, most semesters taking one class per semester. Anyone who knows Dana knows she delights in the things of the Lord and that the seminary is very special to her. She is a source of great encouragement to many, and the students and faculty at NBBS are no exception. She is a wife, mother, and lawyer. Her home church is the Worth Baptist Church, Ft. Worth, Texas where Tyler Gillit is her pastor. She will be securing a two-year **Associate's Degree.**



John Campbell is an army veteran of 22 years. He finished his years of service in the role of a staff sergeant. He is a member of Central Baptist Church, McKinney, Texas, where Jim Taliaferro is the pastor. John also serves as a deacon. He is 68 years old, and still going strong. Bro. Campbell is always upbeat, and fatherly to the younger student body. He was our featured preacher in chapel on a Thursday and Friday this past November for the Veterans' Day emphasis we observe as a school. He did an outstanding job of challenging our men to be good soldiers as preachers along the lines of II Timothy 2:2-5. He has a heart for missions, and hopes to do missions work in the near future. John has three adult children, a son and two daughters. His wife Marty was the church secretary at Central Baptist Church until she went home to be with the Lord in 2023. They had been married 42 years. Early in their marriage, she was a great influence in him getting saved. Subsequently, John has increasingly been a strong witness for Christ for many years. He will be graduating with a two-year **Associate's Degree.**

May our graduates, as so many of our alumni are doing - continue to build solidly upon the solid Rock of Christ, and reach many for Him!

EXCERPTS FROM A BIOGRAPHY OF RAYMOND W. BARBER BY HIS WIFE OF 74 YEARS, MARY HELEN BARBER



The Late Dr. Raymond Barber
IBFI President Emeritus

August 12, 1932 - June 25, 2025

Our Marriage

On May 20, 1951, Dr. Norris performed our marriage ceremony. He also had his personal limousine and driver waiting for us after the wedding, put us in a beautiful suite at the Blackstone Hotel for our honeymoon, and paid the bill himself.

Raymond was employed at Convair (most people called it "the bomber plant") on the day shift during the summer when there were no classes at the seminary. Every morning while it was still dark, I walked him the several blocks to the bus stop. Each afternoon, I met him at the bus stop. When classes began in the fall, he shifted his schedule to afternoons and nights. He left for work about three in the afternoon and arrived back at the dormitory about one in the morning.

Raymond's good friend was Paul Ague. Paul always encouraged Raymond to get me to go with them to a restaurant to eat heavy, greasy food at that late hour. We often walked to a nearby café and had hamburgers, french fries, chili, and milk shakes. The next morning we were hardly fit to attend our seven o'clock classes.

When Billy Graham first began his citywide crusades, he came to Will Rogers Convention Center in Fort Worth for a weeklong meeting. Dr. Norris promoted the crusade and encouraged Bible Baptist Seminary students to attend.

Raymond and two other students attended one of the night services, and, after the service, decided to go to the hotel to get Billy Graham's autograph. They waited in the lobby of the hotel until almost two o'clock, but no Billy Graham. When they finally got back to the dormitory, it was after two a.m. The curfew had long passed, and they could not get into the dorm until the next morning when the doors were unlocked.

The afternoon of that day, I walked over to put some letters on Dr. Frank Godsoe's desk. Dr. Godsoe was the dean of students at the seminary. I saw a note lying on his desk that caught my eye. The note said that Raymond Barber and the two others were to be expelled that day for not getting back to the dorm until after two o'clock in the morning.

At that time, Raymond worked at a shoe store several blocks down the street. I took off running down the street to the shoe store. I told him what I had seen, and he was upset. He got a break from his job, went immediately to see Dr. Godsoe, and persuaded him not to expel him. After Raymond explained why they were so late getting back, it was forgiven, and he and the others were not dismissed from school.

Entering the Ministry

Our first ministerial jobs were working for his father at the Baptist Tabernacle making \$50 a week together. Raymond was employed as the associate pastor, and I was the church secretary. We lived in a two-room apartment about two miles from the church. We had no automobile, so we walked up and down those hills to the church almost every day.

Eventually, we bought our first automobile—a 1947 Studebaker. The car used so much oil that we carried a case of oil in the trunk. Because the front seat was so low, I had to sit on two pillows to see when I drove.

After only a few months, Raymond's father said to him, "I am going out of town for two weeks, and I want you to do all the preaching for me." Raymond said, "Dad, I can't do that. I'm not ready for such a task." His dad said, "Well, son, you will either sink or swim."

He decided to swim! Of course, he was very nervous and afraid he couldn't do it. He wrote out his message in long hand and tried to memorize it. After the first message was completed, we went to the church to practice. I pretended I was the congregation. He rehearsed his message, and, I must tell you, it was terrible! I didn't tell him how bad I thought it was, but he knew he had bombed. I dreaded Sunday morning and wondered what on earth he was going to do.

But something happened in his heart between Saturday night and Sunday morning. When it was time for him to preach, he stood up with confidence before that crowd of several hundred people and preached his heart out. It was wonderful, and Raymond Barber was off and running to become one of the best preachers in the nation. Never again did I have to be worried about his preaching. In these over 70 years, I have heard Raymond preach thousands of times, and I can say without exaggeration that I have never heard him preach a message that was not well prepared and obviously anointed of God. *To be continued in the next issue of the Searchlight.*

HOTEL INFORMATION

FORT WORTH

Holiday Inn Express & Suites
3550 SE Loop 820
Forest Hill, TX 76140
(817) 775-0357

Hampton Inn & Suites

6555 Park Brook
Forest Hill, TX 76140
(817) 551-7775

Best Western Inn & Suites

3230 Forest Hill Cir
Fort Worth, TX 76140
(817) 293-1667

BURLESON

Home2 Suites by Hilton
13233 Jake Ct
Burleson, TX 76028
(882) 255-6888

Holiday Inn Express & Suites

13250 Jake Ct
Burleson, TX 76028
(817) 426-0396

Hampton Inn & Suites

13251 Jake Ct
Burleson, TX 76028
(817) 295-2727

UPCOMING EVENTS

IBFI MAY FELLOWSHIP MEETING

Monday - Wednesday
May 18-20, 2026
Worth Baptist Church
Fort Worth, TX
Host Pastor - Tyler Gillit

MAY FELLOWSHIP ACTIVITIES

Monday evening will be the J. Frank Norris Fellowship Service. Our annual fellowship dinner, beginning at 5:30 P.M. will be held before the services which will begin at 7:00 P.M.

Tuesday afternoon there will be a **board meeting** held at 2:00 P.M. with light snacks included.

Graduation services will be Tuesday evening at 7:00 P.M. Afterwards, we will have a small reception to honor our graduates and their families.

Wednesday at noon we will have our **Annual Alumni Luncheon.** Everyone is invited, please make plans to attend.

The **Wednesday evening services** will be held at the **Worth Baptist Church in Fort Worth, TX.**

Nursery will be provided for all services.

MISSION STORE 2026

Please do not forget our **annual Mission Store.** Gift cards are always accepted, as well as new, unused items. **This is a great blessing to our IBFI missionaries,** and they are always grateful for your giving. If you have any questions, please feel free to call Shirley Peoples at the Mission Office at 817-367-3422 ext. 101.

ELECTION INFORMATION

The following board members will have served for three years and WILL NOT be eligible to serve this year:

RAYMOND CASTRO HEATH HOGUE PAUL SHEARIN

We will be voting at the General Assembly meeting on Wednesday morning at 11:00 A.M.

Please come prepared to vote and to serve because each office is important.