



THE OBA HEARTBEAT

The Quarterly Newsletter of Opened Bible Academy // Vol. 1 Issue 1. Winter 2015

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IMPORTANT DATES:

Spring Session Begins: 1/11/16
 Spring Applications Due: 12/30/15

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Above: Students at OBA Central Houston location busy taking a test.
 Bottom Left: Cohort 1 Student Orientation.

The Opened Bible Academy is a non-profit, donor supported Bible academy based in the greater Houston area. We are dedicated to offering exceptional biblical and theological training to anyone whom God has given the desire at absolutely no cost to the student.



ACADEMY NEWS!

The OBA team and students have been busy. Our first cohort of students are at the halfway mark and are deep into the study of the historical books of the Bible. Our second cohort that started in June of this year, is finishing up their foundational courses and are studying Basic Theology. We are excited that our third cohort started in October, and with that we added a new location in Pearland.

OBA now has 6 locations in the greater Houston area. The two newest locations, Impact Family Workshop Center in Northwest Houston and True Fellowship Baptist Church in Katy will come on board for the spring session. We are grateful to the pastors and congregations that share the vision of OBA and generously donate space on their church campuses for OBA to hold classes.

Below are the OBA locations:

- » OBA Central (City of Refuge Church in Houston)
- » OBA North (Yehoshua Missionary Baptist Church in Houston)
- » OBA South/Galveston (Fellowship Community Church in Kemah)
- » OBA Southwest/Central (Harvest Point Fellowship Church - Pearland)
- » OBA Northwest/Cypress (Impact Family Workshop Center)
- » OBA Katy (True Fellowship Baptist Church)

We've had recent discussions with church staff in the Dallas/Fort Worth area and are looking forward to solidifying these relationships in the spring of 2016.

We are expanding our faculty and staff to accommodate the growth and new locations. We also welcomed to the OBA Board Diane Davis who brings a wealth of ministry and non-profit experience.



Avis Blake-Thomas



Tina Brown

FROM OUR HEARTS TO YOURS: A MESSAGE FROM THE FOUNDERS

It is with a ceaseless sense of awe for the grace, provision and favor of our God to OBA that we write this short missive to our friends, students, staff and board members. When we started this journey over 3 years ago, it is safe to say that we have experienced 1 Corinthians 2:9 (KJV); "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

The vision for OBA was and continues to be bathed in prayer. We obediently submit to our Lord's leading, fully understanding that the vision for OBA is His, we are just the hands and feet chosen to carry out. We have learned what it looks like to live obediently to Him and are so grateful that the vision He has is always bigger and better than anything we can imagine.

As we work daily to make the OBA vision a reality, rest assured that even though it is hard work, (really hard work), it is for us a labor of love. We have been blessed beyond measure to add to our lives the students, staff and faculty of OBA, some of whom we had never met until God providentially

allowed our paths to cross. It is a labor of love first of all to our Lord and Savior. As our board member Dr. Callaway wrote: "Only when we love our Lord so much, that we love His creation and His created more than we love ourselves can laboring for Him become a labor of love . . . That we know the results of our efforts far outweigh the cost of our efforts: 1 Cor 15:58 (NIV) "Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."

Thank you for sharing the vision, believing in us and giving us the privilege to exhaust ourselves in this labor of love to our God and His people.

From our Heart to Yours,
Avis and Tina

Tina L. Brown

BOARD & STAFF UPDATES

Daymond Wilkins started with OBA as an instructor at the OBA South/Galveston location in Kemah from day one. Daymond will graduate from Dallas Theological Seminary in December with a Masters in Theology (ThM). He plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies with a Biblical Preaching Emphasis at Mid-western Baptist Theological Seminary in the fall of 2016.

We are grateful that Daymond is using his gifts with us at OBA and appreciate his sacrifice. He is not only a teacher for OBA, a student at DTS, and a full-time registered nurse-- he is also invited to preach to churches across the city and country!



Dr. Franklin Callaway is an OBA board member, instructor and pastor of Yehoshua Missionary Baptist Church, which is a host church for OBA. We want

to congratulate him on the two-year anniversary of his church plant. The church has seen God transform hearts and minds in this two year period. They



are looking forward to God's continual blessings on this assembly of believers. If you live on the North side of Houston, and are seeking a church home, stop by for a visit some Sunday morning. For more information visit their website at <http://www.yehoshuambc.com>.

THE STUDENT'S LOUNGE:

OBA Testimony from student, Melissa Smith

Melisa was the first student to apply to OBA and attends our Central Houston location at the City of Refuge Church.

A friend presented the Opened Bible Academy (OBA), to me. My goal was seminary, so I don't know that I paid attention to what she said. Weeks later during my prayer time, I asked the Lord to show me some way for me to be taught. In conversation with Avis Blake-Thomas, OBA co-founder just two days later I realized, that OBA was just what I needed. Each teacher and each class draws us in and has each student on the edge of his or her seat. When class is over we don't want to leave. I know I don't! The teachers are well versed and learned and they present the lessons with creativity never losing the scriptural basis. They make the Bible come alive.

When we began studying Theology, I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. I honestly wish this class were every day. There are so many confirmations to things that the Holy Spirit has already shown me, right there in black in white. Now I have written word to back up what I teach students on Sundays, a deeper explanation of Scripture and how we can apply it to our daily living, along with history. Others attend bible colleges and pay for this education, but there is about 65 students spread across three campuses that have been blessed to receive this education free of charge. I am a single mother, with a daughter entering her last year in high school and son returning to college. I've wanted to attend seminary



for quite some time. OBA is laying the groundwork for me to enter and successfully complete seminary. I don't know why God chose me, but he did and I am grateful to Tina Brown, Avis Blake-Thomas, Nathan Wang, London Wilson and Willie Bolden in addition to the teachers at the other campuses. OBA board members and volunteers are giving us a gift we can never repay and no one can ever take from us. It is my plan to always be involved in OBA. When I've completed my education with OBA and go on to seminary, I will continue to be involved through donations and any other way I can help. When you receive this type of gift you have the desire to pass it on to someone else.

I know that OBA will educate many people in the future and the concept of teaching God's word, transforming hearts and changing lives will spread throughout the world. 1 Corinthians 2:9, "But as it is written: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor have it entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him,' and the things which God has prepared for the Opened Bible Academy. Glory to God for the great things He has done!"

Help us to continue to offer this training to more students just like Melisa!

- » To donate online, visit: <http://www.the-oba.org> and select the "Donate" Button.
- » Or, mail a check to: The Opened Bible Academy 8524 Highway 6 North Box #436 / Houston, TX 77095.

The Opened Bible Academy is a 501(c)(3) organization and all gifts are tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

The Importance of Christian Education

America has become less Biblically literate. As a result, America has become, less orthodox, less evangelical, yet, more spiritual. This desire for spiritual understanding, leads us to believe that America has a desire to know God. We believe the way to know God is to know His Word.

The Barna Group released a study in December 2014 titled, *The State of the*

Bible: 6 Trends for 2014. In that study the following statistics related to American households is presented:

88% of households own a Bible. Each household has an average of 4.7 Bibles; yet, only 37% of Americans read the Bible once a week or more.

One of our goals at The OBA is to ensure that once students complete their studies at OBA, they have been transformed and have developed the habit of reading the Bible daily and applying what they have learned in everyday life.

For the link to the the full Barna article, contact us at info@the-oba.org.



Above: OBA Instructor Daymond Wilkins and OBA Co-Founder Tina Brown at new student orientation.