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**NYC coat
distribution
allows gospel
witness in city**

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Stories from the Southern Baptist Convention are also recounted, like the International Mission Board's decision

The year was loaded with news about important cultural events that Christians everywhere should consider. The Supreme Court decided June 26 that same-sex marriage is a 14th Amendment right, prompting a number of legal cases where Christian beliefs were put on trial. News broke through a series of undercover videos that Planned Parenthood has been profiting

Our readers chose many of the stories listed in our yearly review by sharing them on social media or viewing them at *brnow.org*. See pages 5-11. **BR**

2015 editorials in review

This first edition of the *Biblical Recorder* for 2016 looks back at the news highlights of 2015. It was an eventful year, especially with the Supreme Court's decision to impose homosexual marriage on Americans, in what four dissenting justices called a "threat to American democracy."

These justices said, "Those who founded our country would not recognize the majority's conception of the judicial role. ... The Court's accumulation of power does not occur in a vacuum. It comes at the expense of the people. And they know it."

That is a very significant statement that should concern us deeply. It is one that every voter must consider as we elect a new president of the United States in 2016.

That president will choose the next members of the court if any current jus-

tics leave the court by death or resignation.



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

Newspapers write the first draft of history. Because we learn some of our greatest lessons from history, it is important to stay informed so we will be prepared to shape the next chapter of history.

I want to offer a brief review of the editorial commentaries I wrote in 2015.

In the first edition of the *BR* last year, my editorial was titled, "Will the *Biblical Recorder* be here in five years?" I raised a serious question that pastors and church leaders in North Carolina should consider. Congregations need pastors who take the initiative to tell their church members about the ministry of the *Recorder* and the value it brings to every congregation. Your flock is facing the onslaught of wolves every day. They need help. They

need news from a Christian worldview.

Throughout the year some pastors responded to my plea by starting group subscription plans for church members or expanding the plan they have in place. I hope more will give their members the news they need to survive the spiritual and cultural challenges of the 21st century.

The most read editorial of the year was one I wrote in late January last year. I asked, "Where did your donations go?" North Carolina's Secretary of State publishes a list each year that shows precisely where your dollars go when you respond to solicitors with a donation. The solicitations come by phone, email or "snail mail," and they are usually for very worthy causes. But you may be surprised how much never reaches the organization you intend to support. If you missed that revealing information, you need to read the editorial.

In other editorials I responded to

concerns about religious liberty, the Boy Scouts of America, untrustworthy media, Cooperative Program concerns and missions.

The second most read editorial of the year is "Has Dachau come to us?" After my visit to the Dachau concentration camp in Germany, I shared my reflections on the unspeakable atrocities that Hitler and his Socialist Party imposed on innocent people. This editorial was re-published by other news outlets more than any other commentary I wrote during the year.

Your *Biblical Recorder* staff welcomes your opinion and ideas for editorials. If you would like to see a subject addressed by the editor or another writer, please share your thoughts with us. Let us know how we can serve you.

I hope you enjoy a happy New Year, and I pray that you will experience God's power, grace and blessing in abundance in 2016. **BR**

TAR HEEL VOICES

Thankful for Southern Baptists support

Hello from Africa!

In these momentous days of International Mission Board (IMB) life, I have often thought of our long-term relationship. After growing up in North Carolina, my wife, Charlotte, and I were appointed as Southern Baptist missionaries through IMB Dec. 7, 1982. (Charlotte is a [preacher's kid], and has lived in Alabama, Florida, and N.C.)

Since that time we have had the privilege of serving the Lord through the IMB in Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Botswana, South Africa, and now Senegal. We have planted churches, disciplined new believers, trained leaders, helped with human needs projects, and in more recent days tried to multiply ourselves among our personnel through strategy administration.

As we see people asking questions about the decision to offer early retirement to IMB personnel, and as we have worked through the process ourselves, we have again been so thankful for the amazing ways Southern Baptists have organized to support and send missionaries through the Cooperative Program and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Truly, we can be seen as "faith missionaries" since

half of our support comes from that once a year offering. Yet, with technology available today, people can give anytime to the IMB on their website: imb.org.

We are thankful for the Lord's provision during our 33 years overseas. (I actually have 35 years, since I was a journeyman from 76-78.) And He has provided the extra needed in these last years through property sales and reserve investments.

However, the IMB can only send as many missionaries as Southern Baptists are willing to support. And thus, the current situation. No longer does the giving rate support 5,600 missionaries as we had 10 or so years ago, nor even 4,800 as we have had this year. No, the force overseas must be reduced to around 4,000. And as Southern Baptists we must ask ourselves, "Is this acceptable while thousands of people groups still have no access to the gospel?"

[In this] giving season, we challenge you to dare to ask God what you should set aside as a gift to Him for the work of declaring His Name among the nations.

What gift is worthy of the King of Kings? He is truly worthy of our all. Thank you for helping us serve the Lord through these years overseas. As we step into

our life as retired IMB missionaries, we look forward to continuing to support the great calling of Southern Baptists from Jesus in Matthew 28:19-20. We have loved being "your" missionaries. And lest you think we're something special, remember that in Luke 17:10, Jesus reminds us to say, "We are servants and have only done our duty."

Tim and Charlotte Cearley
Retiring SBC/IMB missionaries
subsaharanafricanpeoples.imb.org

Submissions for Tar Heel Voices

Please send no more than 300 words, along with contact information, to editor@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185. Only one letter from the same writer will be published in a 90-day period. All submissions will be edited by *Recorder* style guidelines. Have questions? Call (919) 847-2127.

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Resolve to pray for God to move in 2016

With the old year behind us and the New Year just beginning, we have entered into a season where many individuals are starting to implement their New Year's resolutions.

There's something about new beginnings that seems to strike a chord with all of us.

We often feel so eager to start over and so keen to move forward to make a fresh start. Those of us who wish to make a fresh start might want to do so



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

in order to live life with more intentionality, to grow in a particular area of our life or to correct a poor habit that we've developed in the past.

It's only by the grace of God that we can receive forgiveness and have a fresh beginning in our walk with Him. The blood of Christ cleanses us from past, present and future sin.

As we begin the New Year, leaders of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and various state conventions are celebrating a special prayer emphasis in January titled, "In All Things Pray."

The goal of this emphasis is to call, equip and encourage followers of Christ to a renewed life of prayer to impact a lost world so that many individuals around the world would come to know Christ.

Prayer is vital to the spiritual awakening that is so desperately needed in our world today.

That's why the practice of fervent prayer is listed first among our core values as we seek to make disciples and assist North Carolina Baptist churches in their divinely appointed mission. To help encourage and equip you in your prayer life, a number of resources have been developed by our national and state SBC leaders.

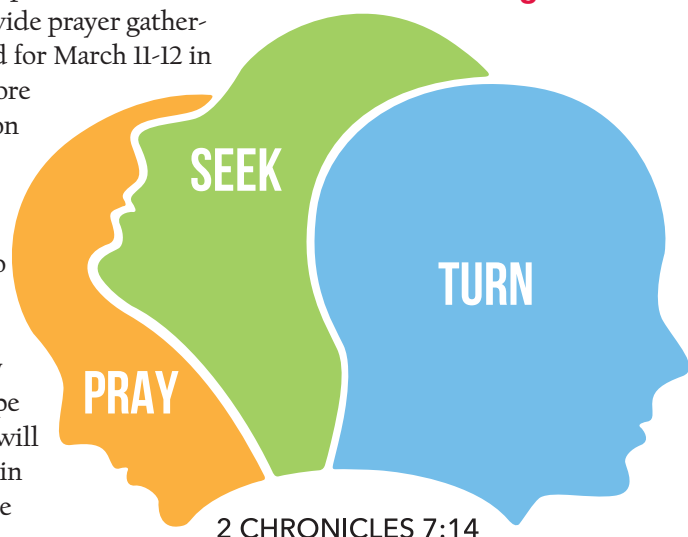
You can learn more about the "In All Things Pray" emphasis by visiting sbc.net/inallthingspray. There you will find a number of resources for individual and corporate prayer.

You will also find a number of resources from Chris Schofield, who heads the office of prayer for evangelization and spiritual awakening here at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, at ncbaptist.org/prayer.

Also, make plans now to attend the annual statewide prayer gathering scheduled for March 11-12 in Charlotte. More information on that event is available at ncbaptist.org/stateprayer. So as we look ahead to all that 2016 may bring, my hope is that as we will join together in prayer and see God move in our state, in our nation and in our world.

As you think about fulfilling your New Year's resolutions, I would like to encourage you to make a commitment to start afresh in your prayer life – to set aside a special time each day to go to the Lord in prayer.

"If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land" – 2 Chronicles 7:14 (NKJV). **BR**



IN ALL THINGS PRAY

MY FAMILY • MY COMMUNITY • MY CHURCH • MY COUNTRY • MY WORLD

**It's only by the grace
of God that we can
receive forgiveness ...**



Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Danny Akin celebrates with one of the graduates during the processional into Binkley Chapel before graduation Dec. 11. (SEBTS photo)

Akin to grads: Be dangerous for Christ

By HARPER MCKAY | SEBTS

In his charge to graduates, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Danny Akin encouraged them to give their whole lives to Christ because of the grace Christ has provided.

Southeastern Seminary awarded 184 undergraduate and graduate degrees during its fall graduation ceremony on Dec. 11.

"Because of this amazing grace that truly is a sweet sound, we give," said Akin, who spoke from 2 Corinthians 8:9 during his message. "So here is my very simple four-fold challenge: We will go where others will not go because He came. We will do what others will not do because of what He did. We will serve where others will not serve because of how He has served us. And we will give what others will not give because look at what He has given to you and to me."

Akin quoted martyred missionary, Jim Elliot: "Oh that God would make us dangerous."

"And by the way, I have prayed that prayer for all of you," Akin said as he turned to graduates seated on the front rows. "I have prayed that God would make you dangerous."

Among the fall graduating class were Trevin Wax, managing editor of The Gospel Project curriculum at LifeWay Christian Resources, and David Rogers, former missionary to Spain and current high school Spanish teacher.

Wax graduated with a doctor of philosophy in applied theology. Through The Gospel Project, Wax creates Christ-centered Bible curriculum for all ages. He plans to use his doctorate to continue to equip the church and train younger generations of believers.

"I plan to serve the church as long as the Lord gives me the opportunity," Wax said. "Through a combination of past and future ministries, I want to equip the church with theologically sound resources while also teaching and building up the next generation of teachers and scholars."

Southeastern Provost Bruce Ashford served as major professor for Wax during his time at the seminary. "It has been a joy to supervise Trevin's work in Southeastern's Ph.D. program," Ashford said. "He is extraordinarily bright, hard-working and theologically perceptive."

Christianity Today recently named Wax as one of 33 millennials leading the next generation of evangelicals. He writes daily for Kingdom People, a blog hosted by The Gospel Coalition.

David Rogers, son of Adrian Rogers, spent 18 years with the International Mission Board as a missionary to Spain. Now living in Memphis, Tenn., Rogers is a high-school Spanish teacher in an inner-city public school. He also serves on the leadership team at The Pursuit Church, an intentionally multi-ethnic, multi-cultural church plant in Memphis.

Rogers entered the Ph.D. program at Southeastern through a special partnership with the seminary and the IMB.

"David Rogers is an exemplary Southeastern graduate in every way," Ashford said. "Before starting the Ph.D. program at Southeastern, he served faithfully with the International Mission Board for years. During the Ph.D. program, in addition to his full-time research and studies, he also served Love Worth Finding Ministries, which is the broadcasting and resource ministry founded by his father."

Rogers plans to use his degree from Southeastern to write on missiology, culture and theology and to teach people to fulfill the Great Commission in both the classroom and the local church.

Two staff members of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) also finished degrees at the Dec. 11 ceremony. Antonio Santos, BSC's Hispanic strategy consultant, finished a doctorate of education, and Sammy Joo, consultant with BSC's collegiate partnership team, completed a doctor of ministry degree. **BR**

Coats for the City gives gospel witness in NYC

By EMILY ROJAS | BSC Communications

The day after terrorists executed an attack in Paris, North Carolina Baptists partnered with New York Baptists to hand out coats in primarily Muslim communities in New York City.

Coats for the City, the name of the distribution event, had been planned long before the Nov. 13 terrorist attacks, but the timing could not have been better for Christians to show their Muslim neighbors an act of love.

That day thousands of people lined the streets of New York City with the hope of receiving a free coat to keep them warm during the city's winter months. What they did not expect was to also receive a message about the Good News of the gospel in the process.

Doug Huttleston, pastor of Panther Creek Baptist Church in Asheboro, said many of the Muslim men he met on the trip wondered why the group was ministering to Muslims in light of the attacks the day before.

"I told them, 'Isa al-Masih (the Arabic name for Jesus the Messiah) tells us that we need to love our neighbor,' so that's why we're here," Huttleston said.

The Coats for the City team handed out coats at 14 different distribution sites.

They had received upwards of 7,000 coats from churches in North Carolina and New York to hand out – more than double the amount they received last year.

The group also had copies of the New Testament in various languages on hand to give to those who were willing to take one.

"Even if there's that one conversation that happens where somebody either

"Even if there's that one conversation that happens where somebody either comes to Christ or is interested, it's worth it."
– Lauren McCall

comes to Christ or is interested, it's worth it," said Lauren McCall, ministry assistant at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), who participated in the coat distribution.

Some in the group continued ministering to people they met in New York after the trip had ended.

Abby Edwards, a BSC ministry assistant, connected on social media with Raashid*, a Muslim storeowner who offered the team his storefront as a coat distribution site.

"There are avenues to still share (the gospel) even from afar," Edwards said. "Sometimes I think we go and do missions and think we're not going to be able to communicate past that point, but we really can."

Huttleston also had the opportunity to continue a relationship with someone he met in New York. Aamir*, a Muslim man with whom Huttleston had shared the

gospel, came to know Jesus as his Lord and Savior shortly after the trip. The two text about scripture frequently and have weekly, gospel-centered phone conversations.

Huttleston hopes this discipling relationship will have an echo effect – that Aamir, having experienced God's love, will go and share it with others.



Volunteers help people pick out coats and pray with them during Coats for the City in November. More than 7,000 coats from individuals and churches in North Carolina and New York were distributed Nov. 14 at 14 locations around New York City. (Metropolitan New York Baptist Association photo by Kristi Cabe)

"I want [Aamir] to be able to be safe and share the gospel and see people's hearts turned," Huttleston said.

"I'm just praying that God will use him to talk to people that will never talk to me. They'd never talk to an American, but they'll talk to a Bengali who used to be Muslim."

* Names changed **BR**

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PERSONALITIES

Billy Graham honored in N.C. museum exhibit

The day before native North Carolinian Billy Graham turned 97, the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh opened a 5,000-square-foot exhibit honoring the life of the famed Baptist evangelist. The free, privately funded exhibit opened Nov. 6 and will be on display through July 10, 2016. Graham's life story is featured in "North Carolina's Favorite Son: Billy Graham and his Remarkable Journey of Faith." The exhibit's title is drawn from the 2013 resolution passed by the N.C. General Assembly naming Billy Graham "North Carolina's Favorite Son."



Rit Varriale, Elizabeth Church prioritize Christian flag

Rit Varriale, pastor of Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby, launched a movement to elevate the Christian above the American flag when flown together. The statement provoked a viral response that landed Varriale on local and national television. Flag etiquette requires the American flag to be prioritized above any other flag. The church installed their first ever flagpole and raised the two flags in a special patriotic ceremony after the morning worship service on Sunday, July 5. As a statement of biblical values, the Christian flag flew in the higher position.

Franklin Graham announces 2016 Decision Tour

Franklin Graham announced April 14 that he would be traveling to all 50 states in 2016 to conduct prayer rallies. Called the Decision America Tour, the president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan's Purse said the only hope for the United States is "Almighty God and His Son Jesus Christ." While not endorsing any political candidates specifically, Graham is encouraging Christians not only to vote but to run for office.



Jacumin appointed NAMB's N.C. ambassador

In an effort to thank every pastor and church in North Carolina for their sacrificial support of the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) asked Marty Jacumin to serve as the entity's pastoral ambassador to the state. He is the pastor of Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh. NAMB named pastors from each state convention in the South to serve in ambassador roles in an effort to promote a unity of purpose with the Southern Baptist Convention.



Ronnie Floyd calls for revival in SBC

Ronnie Floyd, pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas for 28 years, began his second year as president of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2015. Floyd has focused on calling the convention to pray for spiritual awakening and for advancing the gospel globally, while also championing the Cooperative Program, Southern Baptists' unified method of funding missions and ministries internationally and in North America. This was demonstrated when he led Cross Church to give \$1 million to the Cooperative Program. Floyd also spoke avidly on behalf of racial reconciliation.

Russell Moore represents SBC in public square

In his third year as president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) Russell Moore has maintained a high-profile representation of Southern Baptists. During his time with ERLC, he has had five meetings with President Barack Obama. Moore writes prolifically on issues such as racial reconciliation, terrorism, abortion, adoption and a personal objection to displaying the Confederate battle flag. He released his book "Onward" Aug. 1st to help Christians articulate how the gospel informs every aspect of life, including politics and culture.



2015SBC

Prayer for awakening/revival a highlight for the year

Big changes for IMB, LifeWay and NAMB involve personnel shifts, money changing hands, much prayer



2015 Send Conference celebrates life on mission

A sold-out crowd of more than 13,500 from all 50 states and four Canadian provinces flooded into Nashville's Bridgestone Arena to celebrate life on mission at the 2015 Send North America Conference Aug. 3-4. It was the largest gathering of Southern Baptists since 1996 when 13,706 messengers gathered for the annual meeting in New Orleans, La.

North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell and International Mission Board President David Platt welcomed the assembly and challenged attendees to serve wherever God calls them.

IMB announces reset, personnel reduction

International Mission Board (IMB) leaders announced an organizational restructuring plan Aug. 27. that will reduce personnel expenses and balance their budget. IMB's 2014 fiscal goals fell \$21 million short. Deficits totaled more than \$210 million in the last six years. The plan includes two personnel reduction phases. The first phase included a voluntary retirement incentive for qualifying employees through the end of 2015. The second phase will involve a voluntary resignation incentive for all employees along with a possible reduction of IMB personnel in 2016. IMB leaders said "It is expected that the 600-800 people who step aside from the IMB in the next six months will not be stepping 'onto the sidelines of mission,' but instead will be moving into a new phase of involvement in mission." To remedy budget shortfalls, previous IMB leadership enacted a plan to slowly reduce the number of missionaries to 4,200. The number currently stands at 4,800.

NAMB announces new image, gives \$4 million to IMB

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) introduced a new logo in September and presented messaging that reflects its goal to mobilize more churches and individuals to missional action in the effort to push back lostness and plant more churches in North America.

"Every Life On Mission" and "Every Church On Mission" are two phrases NAMB will use prominently to encourage individuals and churches to become more actively and personally involved in missional activity. Ezell said the move to a new look demonstrates NAMB's emphasis on serving churches and pastors, and the continued streamlining of strategy. Every energy and all attention will be focused on fulfilling its mission as effectively as possible by the generosity of Southern Baptists through the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

Trustees of NAMB approved the establishment of Send Relief – a new compassion ministry to offer Southern Baptists opportunities to meet physical needs and serve underprivileged communities. NAMB's disaster relief team will be part of Send Relief and continue to have its own director. The mission board will continue to serve as coordinator of national disaster

relief responses. Also during their Oct. 7 meeting, NAMB's trustees approved a \$4 million budget reduction so the entity can send funds to assist IMB missionaries.

SBC messengers pray as one

Columbus, Ohio, hosted 5,406 messengers for the annual meeting of the 2015 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), June 15-17. Thousands of messengers knelt in prayer and raised their hands to heaven July 16 as they prayed for revival in the church and a great awakening across the United States. In the months leading up to the meeting, SBC president Ronnie Floyd called on Southern Baptists to pray for revival in America. The plea culminated in Columbus with an entire session devoted to prayer for the next Great Awakening in America and to reach the world for Christ. For more than 2.5 hours, Floyd and other leaders from across the SBC led in a time of guided worship and prayer.

Lifeway restructure & relocation

LifeWay Christian Resources President and CEO Thom S. Rainer outlined for LifeWay's trustees a vision for the entity's future that includes an organizational restructuring, leadership changes and a probable relocation.

He announced the combining of two divisions – Church Resources and B&H Publishing – into LifeWay Resources Division led by current vice president Eric Geiger. Trustees approved two vice presidents. Selma Wilson, former vice president of B&H, was approved as vice president of a new organizational development division that will focus on LifeWay's people strategies, culture development and change management. Cossy Pachares was elected as vice president of LifeWay's retail division. Pachares fills the role vacated by Tim Vineyard who retired in January.

Trustees approved the sale of LifeWay's 14.5 acre downtown Nashville property. A Nov. 24 announcement reported that the sale was completed.

Younger Southern Baptists more involved

Southern Baptists appear to be defying the prevalent notion that young adults are abandoning the American church, according to a February Baptist Press story. Attendance by younger generations reached a 10-year high at the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) 2014 meeting in Baltimore, according to an annual survey of attendees. The survey, conducted by the SBC Executive Committee (EC), showed nearly one-fourth (24.68 percent) of attendees were younger than age 40. That surpassed by more than 4 percentage points the previous best for the age group, recorded in 2013.

The 2014 survey also showed 10-year highs for SBC attendees who are under 45 (33.44 percent, a gain of more than 3 percent over the previous high in 2013) and under 35 (15.93 percent, again an increase of more than 3 percent over the earlier high, which came in 2012).



REVIVAL

Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, called for Baptists to pray for a Great Awakening.



2015BSC

One of the top themes for 2015 was making disciples

North Carolina leaders used the annual meeting, along with other events, to highlight the need for believers to make disciples.



ECHO: Reproducing gospel life in others – Just over 1,500 messengers to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual meeting in November approved a \$29.5 million budget for 2016. This budget includes a 3 percent increase to the Cooperative Program (CP), moving the total allotment from 37 to 40 percent (\$11.8 million).

For the past 10 years, N.C. Baptists had increased the money allocated to CP by a half-percent each year. Convention leaders announced a new church health and revitalization team as well as Peoples Next Door N.C. to help churches discover, engage and share Christ with internationals living in their communities. They also moved one of their staff members into a strategy coordinator position to address the rising Hispanic population in the state. The Pastors' Conference prior to the annual meeting focused on dependence on God's Word as did President Timmy Blair's sermon during the meeting. Lee Pigg, senior pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe, delivered the convention sermon. "If we are not careful, we will focus more on building our churches than making disciples in His Kingdom," he cautioned.

"Jesus said in Matthew chapter 16 that it is His job to build the church, not yours," Pigg highlighted the need for leaders to make disciples within their church and beyond. Milton A. Hollifield Jr. also said making disciples was important. "The local church is the key for us as a convention of churches to be able to impact lostness through disciple-making," he said.

In an effort to **impact lostness** across the state, N.C. Baptists have been **mapping** the eight largest population centers – Asheville, Hickory, Triad, Triangle, Fayetteville, Charlotte-Metro, Greenville, and Wilmington. "The mapping project is an opportunity for us to find out how much the world has moved to North Carolina, where they live, and begin to accept responsibility that the Great Commission has always started in Jerusalem and Judea," said Steve Hardy, a BSC contract worker in the church planting and missions partnerships group. The research is revealing unreached people groups (UPG) and points of interest – any kind of ethnic establishment, such as a fabric shop, a local business, a grocery store, a mosque or an apartment complex – where ministry can be planned to reach the UPG. A People Groups Discovery and Engagement Workshop offered in the spring helped attendees learn how to conduct research on PeopleGroups.info and engage individuals through culturally appropriate questions.

Numbers compiled from Annual Church Profile reports revealed more than a 10 percent drop in **baptism numbers** from 2013 to 2014 for N.C. Baptist churches. The total number of believers baptized in 2014 is 18,111. That number is down from the

20,324 reported the previous year. The top 10 churches account for 19.8 percent of all N.C. baptisms with a total of 3,585.

While not exclusive to 2015, the BSC's One Story conference in February and a training event in May highlighted **discipleship**. "We have undoubtedly gained momentum in the areas of disciple-making and church strengthening over the last year," Milton A. Hollifield Jr. said at May's board meeting. "We are leading the way in an important conversation that is about more than growing the institution of the church, but about the people of the church growing to become disciples who will share the gospel with others and make disciples."

In April the **Baptists on Mission** (or North Carolina Baptist Men) hosted its annual meeting. The theme focused on **brokenness and healing**. "[Jesus] meets their momentary need, and the next day, they come looking for more," said David Nasser, senior vice president for spiritual development at Liberty University. "That's when they run into the undeniable, loving, honest gospel." Nasser, along with two other plenary speakers, urged about 1,400 participants to reflect on the grace God has shown them despite their own brokenness, and then to consider how they might reach out to others with the gospel.

As part of the BSC **collegiate partnerships**, research revealed that more than 120 (out of 148) schools had no gospel presence on their campuses. The BSC is focusing on the top 20 campuses where a strategic focus needs to be. Around 70 percent of all college students in the state are on community college campuses. Collegiate partnerships wants to help local churches reach all of the campuses for Christ.

For the May BSC board meeting, directors and guests celebrated the Hollifield Hall dedication at **Caraway Conference Center**. Named for Wyndolyn Royster Hollifield, the auditorium cost \$1.3 million and is in front of Caraway's main lodging and administration facility. There was also the completion in 2014 of two housing buildings (named the Jim and Nancy Neil Jacumin Retreat Lodges), a classroom building and a multi-purpose building in the Awesome Children's Outdoor Recreation and Nature Study section, and in 2011, the completion of a pastor retreat. These additions are part of the New Beginnings capital campaign.

Fruitland Baptist Bible College dedicated its new family apartments in September. The four-unit building complex was built in memory of Nancy Nell Jacumin, who died in 2014. The school also announced the establishment of the H.E. Wyatt Scholarship Fund, designed to provide financial assistance to students preparing for ministry.



CULTURAL ISSUES



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Tax exemption debated

Tax exemption for religious institutions came under public scrutiny in 2015, in large part due to a *TIME* Magazine editorial, written by Mark Oppenheimer. Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, hosted Oppenheimer on his podcast, *Thinking in Public*. Oppenheimer's main concern is the burden that tax exempt institutions place – by not paying property taxes – on nearby middle and lower class residents. Mohler questioned the rights of government to lay claim on Christian institutions via financial obligations.

Court rules against religious groups in contraception case

The Tenth Circuit Court of Appeals ruled July 14 that religious employers must comply with federally mandated employee health coverage – which includes all FDA-approved contraceptive services – because the mandate does not present a substantial burden to religious exercise or violate First Amendment rights. The case was subsequently appealed and now awaits a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court.

Churches encouraged to tighten policies, avoid lawsuits

Christiana Holcomb, litigation counsel for the Alliance Defending Freedom, said churches that do not have specific and clear policies leave “gray areas that can be exploited. The rapidly changing culture in America is placing an increasing amount of scrutiny on church policies, especially policies about membership, employment and facility use. Brian Davis said courts might become involved any time a member is denied a specific right – such as the denial of congregational voting privileges in church discipline – especially if the process deviates from a church's written procedures.

MARRIAGE & SEXUALITY

U.S. Supreme Court legalizes same-sex marriage nationwide

Supreme Court justices ruled in a 5-4 decision June 26 that same-sex marriage is a 14th Amendment right, effectively legalizing the practice in all 50 states. The ruling sparked a series of discrimination lawsuits against business owners and civil magistrates who oppose same-sex marriage for sincerely held religious beliefs.

Atlanta fire chief dismissed over pro-family book

Kelvin Cochran, Atlanta Fire Chief, was terminated in January for writing a book that claims homosexual behavior is immoral. A city investigation revealed no discriminatory wrongdoing in Cochran's public service role but the mayor said his “actions and decision-making undermine his ability.” Cochran has filed a lawsuit against Atlanta saying his speech is protected under the First Amendment.

Charlotte City Council votes down LGBT ordinance

In a contentious meeting on March 2, the Charlotte City Council voted down a proposed city ordinance that would establish sexual orientation, gender identity and gender expression as legally protected categories. Opponents of the measure said it would place undue burden on privately owned businesses, exposing them to lawsuits and infringing upon their First Amendment rights.

Houston voters defeat controversial equal rights ordinance

An 18-month legal battle that included appeals and two Texas Supreme Court decisions ended with Houston residents voting against a measure called Proposition 1 that would have required businesses and public areas to permit individuals to use the restroom of the gender with which they identify.





HUMAN RIGHTS DISASTERS

Racism discussed nationally

“The cross and the Confederate battle flag cannot coexist, without one setting the other on fire,” said Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, at a first annual summit, held March 26-27 in Nashville, Tenn. Trip Lee, hip-hop artist and author, said, “You cannot love others if you dismiss or ignore their experience.” Joel Kurz, pastor of The Garden Church in Baltimore, Md., led cleanup teams after violent protests erupted in April. Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old African-American, died April 19 of injuries sustained while in police custody. Coming after a string of high profile African-American deaths allegedly at the hands of law enforcement, Gray’s fate sparked outrage in Baltimore, which is known for its hostility between residents and law enforcement. Walter Strickland, special advisor to the president for diversity at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, said, “It’s time for God’s people to gather together and mend what Christ died to heal.” He addressed a crowd Jan. 22 at a community dialogue hosted jointly by SEBTS and The Town of Wake Forest.

Abedini’s imprisonment continues

American pastor Saeed Abedini remains in an Iranian prison, where he was detained for his Christian faith in 2012. In early 2015 Abedini witnessed six of his fellow prisoners being beaten and taken away for execution. Evangelicals petitioned the U.S. government to leverage a deal with Iran over nuclear proliferation to secure the release of Abedini and other American prisoners, but the detainees were left out of the agreement. Abedini’s wife suspended her highly publicized advocacy for his release in November due to marital difficulties, citing “physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse” by her husband.

Syrian refugee crisis sparks controversy

The Obama administration announced in September that U.S. refugee resettlement agencies would be accepting 10,000 refugees from Syria in 2016, due to the humanitarian crisis created by civil war in the country. A November terror attack in Paris, France turned the policy into a controversy when many began to oppose the resettlement of Syrians to the U.S. on account of potential terrorism on U.S. soil. Others, such as Russell Moore, president of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission, and Nathan Lino, president of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, took a more balanced approach that promoted mercy ministry toward incoming refugees while considering national security.

Terrorism on the rise

Dylan Roof, a 21-year-old white male, entered Emanuel AME Church in Charleston, S.C., during a prayer service, killing nine African-American Christians. Islamic terrorists organized a widespread attack Nov. 14 at more than a half-dozen locations across Paris, using automatic weapons and homemade bombs to kill nearly 150 and wound many more. A shooter, 57-year-old Robert Lewis Dear, attacked a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, Colo., Nov. 27, taking the lives of three people and injuring nine others. Nearly 20 people were killed at a medical service facility in San Bernardino, Calif., Dec. 3 when two Islamic State supporters opened fire at a Christmas party.

Natural disasters strike

A 7.8-magnitude earthquake rocked Nepal April 25, followed by another quake nearly as powerful just over two weeks later. Thousands of Nepali residents were killed and thousands more displaced. Southern Baptist relief teams responded immediately, providing medical and recovery aid. Hurricane Joaquin struck the coast of South Carolina in October, prompting disaster relief teams from across the nation to join rebuilding efforts. More than 2,500 North Carolina Baptist Men utilized their skills and hard work to aid flood victims. 2015 also marked the ten year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the costliest disaster in U.S. history. The hurricane left its mark on the Gulf Coast and taught Baptist relief teams lessons they’ll never forget.

SANCTITY OF LIFE

Planned Parenthood makes headlines for selling aborted fetal parts

Videos were released in mid-2015 that showed Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) representatives and personnel discussing the harvesting and sale of aborted fetal parts. A medical watchdog group, Center for Medical Progress, filmed the interactions covertly. Videos also included graphic images of PPFA staff examining dismembered fetuses.

North Carolina passes 72-hour abortion wait period

North Carolina legislators approved a bill June 3 in a 32-16 vote that extends the state’s abortion waiting period to 72 hours, joining four other states that have passed similar legislation. The bill also requires medical professionals to inform a woman before she obtains an abortion that alternatives exist.

TOP WEB & SOCIAL MEDIA



MOST VIEWED

1. Skip ‘Fifty Shades,’ critics urge*
Posted February 6 by Diana Chandler, Baptist Press

2. IMB personnel face hard decisions*
Posted October 6 by K. Allan Blume, BR Editor

3. Charlotte pastor Phillip Davis dies while cleaning gun
Posted August 30 by Dianna L. Cagle, BR Production Editor

4. Seattle coach ponders wins, losses for Christ
Posted January 31 by Shawn Hendricks, Baptist Press

5. Winston-Salem church cancels Easter services*
Posted March 27 by Calvary Baptist Church

6. Jonathan Edwards’ works available free via Yale Divinity
Posted February 4 by Jonathan Merritt, Religion News Service

7. Ergun Caner steps down as Brewton-Parker president
Posted January 20 by Brewton-Parker College

8. Baptists respond to Supreme Court ruling for same-sex marriage*
Posted June 26 by Art Toalston, Baptist Press

9. Carson to withdraw as Pastor’s Conf. speaker*
Posted April 24 by David Roach, Baptist Press

10. Lax policies leave churches open to lawsuits
Posted June 11 by Seth Brown, BR Content Editor



MOST SHARED

1. Moore: U.S. should not exclude Christians in genocide label
Posted November 18 by Tom Strode, Baptist Press

2. Book Review: ‘Moral revolution’ not over, says Mohler
Posted October 15 by Seth Brown, BR Content Editor

3. Gospel Project goes chronological this fall
Posted May 1 by Aaron Earls, LifeWay Christian Resources

4. Why theology matters
Posted October 16 by Matt Capps, Baptist Press

5. Gallaty: We must replicate disciples
Posted February 24 by K. Allan Blume, BR Editor

WEB FACTS

The left column lists the top 10 most viewed news articles posted on BRnow.org in 2015. The five stories marked with an asterisk were also among the most viewed posts on the Biblical Recorder’s Facebook page, facebook.com/biblicalrecorder. Last year a total of 6.9 million visitors depended on BRnow.org for news and information with a biblical worldview. The right column lists the five most shared posts on social media. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter @biblicalrecord.

Two opinion pieces were among the top viewed posts on our website:

Warren, Moore made good decision
Posted January 13 by Marie Schumacher, Shelby, N.C.

Where did your donation go?
Posted January 27 by K. Allan Blume, BR Editor

MEMORIALS & LOOKING AHEAD

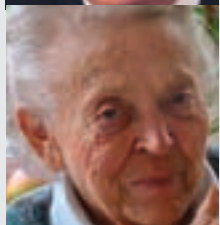


In memoriam

Kenneth Ridings, 78, the longtime Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute (now College) professor and then president, died March 5.



Retired Baptist pastor Coy C. Privette, 82, died March 23. Privette was a Republican candidate for governor of N.C. in 1976. He served four terms in the N.C. House, from 1985 to 1992.



Elisabeth Elliot Gren, missionary, missionary widow and widely influential author and speaker, died June 15. She was 88.



James Dunn, executive director of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs from 1981-99, died July 4. He was 83.



Jeannie Elliff, 69, wife of former International Mission Board (IMB) President Tom Elliff, died July 20 following a long struggle with cancer.



Danny Lotz, son-in-law of Baptist evangelist Billy Graham, died Aug. 19. Gov. Pat McCrory honored Lotz with The Order of The Long Leaf Pine in early 2015. The award recognizes outstanding North Carolinians who have a proven record of lifetime service to the state.



Missionary doctor Wana Ann Gibson Fort, 91, died Aug. 31 in Baton Rouge, La. Fort and her husband, the late Milton "Giles" Fort Jr., served with the then-called Foreign Mission Board as pioneer missionary doctors at Sanyati Baptist Hospital in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). At this hospital, Fort and her husband helped launch a spiritual awakening through medical missions.



Phillip M. Davis, founder and senior pastor of Nations Ford Community Church in Charlotte, died Aug. 29 while he was cleaning his pistol when it accidentally fired into his chest. He was a former vice president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.



The former pastor and town mayor, John Bunn, died June 25. He was the chairman of the department of religion and philosophy and professor of religious studies at Campbell University (1960-'75) and president of the General Board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (1983-'87).

This is not a complete list but is a synopsis of some of the people who had influence in North Carolina and beyond who died in 2015.

Planning ahead for 2016

Along with items in opportunity corner (page 13), here is a list of some upcoming dates important for North Carolina Baptists:

- **Sanctity of Human Life Sunday**, Jan. 17.
 - **Evangelicals for Life**, Jan. 21-22 in Washington, D.C. Visit evangelicals.life.
 - **Jacksonville Pastors' Conference**, Jan. 28-31, First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla. Visit jaxpastorsconference.com.
 - **GO conference**, Jan. 29-30 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. Visit go.sebts.edu.
 - **Annie Armstrong Easter Offering Week of Prayer**, March 6-13. Visit anniearmstrong.com.
 - **Awaken: Watch & Pray** statewide prayer conference, March 11-12 at First Baptist Church in Charlotte. Visit ncbaptist.org/stateprayer.
 - **One Day East**, April 9 at Temple Baptist Church in New Bern. Visit onedaync.com.
 - **Cooperative Program Sunday**, April 10.
 - **Together for the Gospel (T4G)**, a biennial conference for pastors, April 12-14 at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. We are Protestant: The Reformation at 500 is this year's theme. Visit t4g.org.
 - **N.C. Baptists Missions Conference**, April 15-16 at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte. Visit baptistsonmission.org.
 - **Secret Church**, April 29 at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte or online. Visit radical.net/secret-church. (See story, page 15.)
 - **Operation Inasmuch/Rampin' Up**, April 30 or May 7 Visit baptistsonmission.org/Missions/North-Carolina/Operation-Inasmuch or rampinup.org.
 - **Crossover**, June 11 in St. Louis.
 - **Pastors' Conference**, June 12-13 in St. Louis.
 - **Southern Baptist Convention**, June 14-15 in St. Louis. Visit sbcannualmeeting.net.
 - **Mission Dignity Sunday**, June 26.
 - **One Day West**, Aug. 20 at Western Avenue Baptist Church in Statesville. Visit onedaync.com.
 - **North Carolina Missions Offering**, September.
 - **9Marks at Southeastern**, Sept. 30-Oct. 1. Visit 9marksse.org. Topic: Discipleship.
 - **Global Hunger Sunday**, Oct. 9.
 - **Disaster Relief Appreciation Day**, Nov. 6.
 - **North Carolina Pastors' Conference**, Nov. 13-14 in Greensboro.
 - **Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina Week of Prayer**, Nov. 13-20. Visit bchfamily.org.
 - **Baptist State Convention annual meeting**, Nov. 14-15 in Greensboro.
 - **Lottie Moon Christmas Offering Week of Prayer**, Dec. 4-11. Visit imb.org/lottimoonth.
- Continue to watch the Biblical Recorder print issue for more important meetings and training opportunities.



Christian leaders discuss response to refugees & Muslims

By TOM STRODE | Baptist Press

Christians are missing out on chances to share Christ amid the fearful, hostile discourse on refugees and Muslims currently prevalent, a Southern Baptist religious freedom advocate said at a Capitol Hill discussion.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), said Dec. 9, “[T]here are many opportunities for people to visibly show the love of Christ that are being evaporated due to fear.”

As a Christian who completely disagrees with Islam, “my response to my Muslim neighbors cannot be one of fear and loathing,” Moore told an audience of nearly 100 people in the U.S. Capitol Visitors Center. “My response to my nonviolent, law-abiding Muslim neighbor needs to be a loving witness to the grace and faith that comes in Jesus Christ, not in a message that communicates: ‘Because you’re not yet in Christ, you are therefore my enemy to be kept away.’”

Moore’s comments came during Capitol Conversations, a periodic Washington, D.C., panel discussion sponsored by the ERLC. The conversation – “The Syrian Refugee Crisis: A Christian Response” – followed two held in the previous five months, one on same-sex marriage and



ERLC President Russell Moore (second from right) comments on the Syrian refugee crisis while fellow panelists (from left) Afshin Ziafat, Jenny Yang, Knox Thames and moderator Matthew Hawkins listen during a panel discussion in Washington, D.C. (ERLC photo by Jason Thacker)

religious liberty and the other on Planned Parenthood and the sanctity of human life. The latest panel discussion came only two days after Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump proposed a temporary ban on the entry of Muslims into the United States. Evangelist Franklin Graham seconded Trump’s idea in a Dec. 9 Facebook post, reiterating a recommendation he made in July.

During the ERLC’s Capitol Conversations, a former Muslim who is now a Southern Baptist pastor said Christians harm their witness in this country when they call for such actions.

Christians – whose message is “that life is short and we’re to live for the eternal” – applaud missionaries who risk their lives to take the gospel overseas, but “when the mission field is coming to us, then all of a sudden we’re saying, ‘No.

Get out. We want protection,’” Afshin Ziafat said.

A Christian’s goal “should not be to by all means extend my life but ... by all means to spend my life being an ambassador for Christ and seeing the gospel go out,” said Ziafat, lead pastor of Providence Church in Frisco, Texas.

Amid the refugee crisis from war-torn Syria and in the wake of terrorist attacks in Paris and San Bernardino, Calif., Christians “cannot be the people who are so fearful of evil that we lose human compassion” and we cannot be “driven by fear in ways that cause us to try to avoid any possibility of risk,” Moore said. Also, he said, Christians cannot “sentimentalize ourselves into people who do not understand evil and the capacity of evil

in the world.”

Moore acknowledged some of the public discussions are prudential ones about how government should vet refugees to maintain security while doing so with compassion. Some conversations, however, “are much darker and come from a very different place,” he said.

The recent conversation about banning Muslims “is something that ought to cause the hair on the back of the neck of every Christian and every American to stand, because this is not only an assault on human dignity and human conscience; it’s also an assault on basic religious freedoms ...,” he said. “[I]f we don’t stand up for those who are unpopular at the moment, we certainly will see those very same impulses being turned against others in the fullness of time.”

See Response page 16

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Do we still tremble at the Name?

When I was in college, a worship song was released with the worshiper telling God her lips quivered to speak His name. I remember some believed the song was “too much” – it was over the top and, really, did the worshiper’s lips literally quiver to speak the name of Jesus?

Recently I have thought more about the words of this simple praise song and have come to appreciate the lyrics. When I speak to Jesus, about Him, or teach in His Name, do I have the same reverence the writer of these lyrics was talking about, or do I treat the Name of the Lord casually?

I fear we live in a culture – both inside and outside our church circles – where there is a lack of respect toward the name of the Lord. Instead of revering God as holy and righteous, Jesus has been referred to as a “bestie,” “home-boy” or any other slang term for friend.

While Jesus is indeed our friend, He is still God. The writers of the Old Testament so revered God’s Name they refrained from spelling out His Name

with all the letters. Our modern translation of “Yahweh” (LORD) was actually recorded in the original Hebrew as “YHWH.”

God’s name is so important one of the Ten Commandments He gave

Moses included, “*You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain*” (Exodus 20:7). We should reverence God’s Name not only because He is God, but also because we reverence Him for Who He is.

As you think about your speech, how you teach God’s Word, and how you pray, evaluate whether or not it is in a manner that regards and fears God’s name as holy. Do you still tremble at the Name above all names and the Name at which one day every knee will bow?

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Ashley Allen is consultant for Embrace Women’s Ministry for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. For more information you can reach her at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5559. Read her blog at www.worthyofthecalling.com.)



ASHLEY ALLEN

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The missions and ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are made possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Offering.

OPPORTUNITY CORNER



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) offers “Lead Like Jesus” Jan. 14-15 at the convention building in Cary. Led by Jay Vineyard, the Jan. 14 training is for leaders who are interested.

The cost is \$50 for materials and lunch. A facilitators training (by invitation only) will be Jan. 15.

Learn how to have more significant influence in your home, workplace, church or community by joining this

one-day leadership encounter where you will learn how to lead like the greatest leader of all time, Jesus. This is the first in a series of tracks available at the convention office in 2016. Others will be: April 21 – emotionally healthy; Aug. 4 – building powerful ministry teams; and Oct. 6 – conflict resolution.

Contact Ken Tan at ktan@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5641. Register at ncbaptist.org/leadershiptevent1.



The North Carolina Baptist Singers and Orchestra is made up of worship leaders from N.C. Baptist churches across the state. Striving for choral and musical excellence, the choir and orchestra present sacred music that is representative of many styles.

There will be four concerts in 2016

which will all start at 6:45 p.m.: Jan. 25 at Rocky Hock Baptist Church, Edenton; March 7 at Unity Baptist Church, Gastonia; April 4 at Friendly Avenue Baptist Church, Greensboro; and May 2 at First Baptist Church, Wallace. Contact Daniela Sanchez at dsanchez@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5563.



In February 2016, North Carolina Baptist Men (or Baptists on Mission) will host a series of regional mission rallies.

These rallies (one in each region) will highlight the variety of opportunities N.C. Baptists have to be involved in missions. These rallies are for men, women and youth interested in missions. A main focus of these rallies will be the N.C. Missions Offering (NCMO) and ministries that are supported by the NCMO.

A meal is provided at no charge, but reservations are necessary.

Each event starts at 6 p.m. and ends around 8:30 p.m.

The cut off date for reserving a meal for each celebration is one week prior to the event.

● **Region 1** – Feb. 16 at Rocky Hock Baptist Church, Edenton.

● **Region 2** – Feb. 8 at First Baptist Church, Kinston.

● **Region 3** – Feb. 9 at Hyde Park Baptist Church, Lumberton.

● **Region 4** – Feb. 9 at Faith Baptist Church, Youngsville.

● **Region 5** – Feb. 18 at Oaklawn Baptist Church, Winston-Salem.

● **Region 6** – Feb. 8 at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Charlotte.

● **Region 7** – Feb. 18 at Millers Creek Baptist Church, Millers Creek.

● **Region 8** – Feb. 15 at First Baptist Church, Hildebran.

● **Region 9** – Feb. 16 at First Baptist Church, Swannanoa.

● **Region 10** – Feb. 15 at First Baptist Church, Murphy.

Visit baptistsonmission.org/events/region-rallies to register.

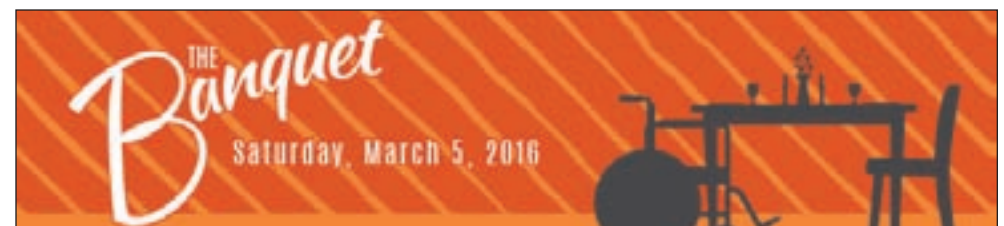
REVEAL

2016 DISCIPLE-MAKING CONFERENCE

Reveal, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's 2016 discipleship conference, will take place Feb. 29 at Lawndale Baptist Church in Greensboro. Speakers include Chuck Lawless, Dhathi Lewis, Bruce Frank, Jerry McCorkle and Lori Frank. Disciple-making is both

gospel-centered and people-focused. Registration is required, but the conference is free to attend.

The cost for lunch is \$7 per meal and requires registration. Contact Patti Cardwell at pcardwell@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5635.



Jesus teaches us to “set the table” for all who will come. Children with special needs are sometimes excluded from the table because churches aren't equipped to serve them well. The Banquet conference, held March 5 from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m., offers training to teachers and leaders of ministry to children with special needs so that all feel welcome and experience the truth and love of Jesus at church. Training will be offered for inclusive,

self-contained and reverse mainstreamed classes for children with physical impairments, emotional, social and sensory issues and learning delays. Choose one of two locations either at Quest Fellowship Church in Garner, or Peninsula Baptist Church in Mooresville. For more information contact Cheryl Markland at cmarkland@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5645. Register at www.ncbaptist.org/banquet.



Embrace Women's Missions and Ministries will offer ministry wives a day of equipping, encouragement and engagement focusing on unique aspects of ministry life. The March 5 event, held at Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem from 9 a.m.-3 p.m., will include interactive sessions to problem solve collaboratively with other wives about

ministry life, and there will be opportunities to develop much needed relationships. The registration fee is \$25 and includes a light breakfast, lunch and all program materials. Childcare is not available. Registration deadline: Feb. 26; cost is \$25. Contact Ashley Allen at aallen@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5559. Visit ncbaptist.org/ministrywives16.

Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Please send information immediately following an event, or for opportunity corner, send at least two months in advance. Include cost and contact information in your email or correspondence.

Send to dianna@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

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January 10

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

January 17

Used in God's Service

Focal passage: 1 Corinthians 12:12-16, 21-22; 1 Peter 4:9-11

We have all heard of the economic law labeled the Pareto Principle. According to Vilfredo Pareto, for many events, roughly 80 percent of the effects come from 20 percent of the causes. This principle has been applied to the fields of business, science, software and even criminology. In church life, it is usually said that 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work.

In other words, 80 percent of the congregation remains passive when it comes to living on mission for God.

While it may not be true of all congregations, I think it is safe to say that large portions of the body of Christ do treat church like consumers. For the 80 percent, as theologian David Wells has reminded us, the church is a place to come and receive religious services and goods. If their needs are not met, they begin church shopping.

However, in 1 Corinthians 12, the apostle Paul is clear, the body does not consist of one member but of many. And

the apostle Peter is even more explicit, "... *As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace*" (1 Peter 4:10). This is how God designed the church. And God calls each and every individual to serve the body with the gifts they have been granted.

The simple truth of the matter is that Christ came to seek and save the lost so that the saved would serve one another and seek the lost. In fact, it is very clear from the New Testament that by the fruit of ones life, others can observe the genuineness of their salvation. Church consumers attend church to have their needs met.

True members of the church have been served to deeply by Christ, that their needs are abundantly met, and that flows over into their desire to meet others needs. The church body is just that, a body. And a body needs all of its parts functioning in order to be healthy. The question is, if you have been saved, are you being a good steward of God's gracious gifts?



MATT CAPPS
Pastor, Fairview
Baptist Church, Apex

Focal passage: Psalm 8:1-8

Genesis 1:26-31 informs us that God intimately created humans in His likeness. According to Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary professor John Hammett, creation in the image of God is the basis for human dignity and that killing a human or to even curse one is an affront to and an attack upon the living God.

This is certainly true of babies, the weakest and most vulnerable among us. Indeed, all human beings are lovingly knitted together in their mother's womb by God (Psalm 139). According to Psalm 8:5-8, humanity is set apart and crowned with authority over the earth and its creatures. What causes us to think we can use our God-given authority to usurp God and slaughter the helpless babies made in His image?

We should be thankful and tremble over the fact that God is mindful of all humans. The sovereign God of the uni-

verse has His loving eyes on every single one of us and always has even when we were "unformed substance." God values and deeply cares for even the weakest among us.

As our culture sacrifices infants on the altar of personal convenience we must stand and declare, as Russell Moore of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission reminds us, "The image of God cannot be bartered away, at the abortion clinic counter or anywhere else."

Let's pray and work for an end to the injustice of abortion. Let's pray and work for better solutions for women in crisis. But let's pray for doctors like this as well. Even more, let's move beyond standing outside abortion clinics with hateful picket signs, let us lovingly plead, "We will adopt these children, or we'll stand beside you and help you raise those children."

We must remember *Roe v. Wade* does not hold eternal jurisprudence in the Kingdom of God. With convictional kindness, we need to speak clearly of the judgment to come. But we also need to proclaim that the blood of Christ can provide mercy for those who repent.

January 10

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

January 17

Approaching the King

Focal passage: Matthew 6:5-18

In my household the Christmas season is a joy for many reasons, one of which is our daughter's annual Nutcracker ballet recital.

Last year Eden, wearing her prized tutu, played the part of a butterfly in the classic Christmas ballet.

I, along with all the other dads, acted like it was all cute and fun, as I fought to hide the golf-ball sized lump in my throat.

Then at the end of the show we all erupted with applause because we were so proud of all the work the little ones had put in for this performance.

When I saw Eden after the show I gave her flowers and told her how proud I was of her performance. I told her she made a beautiful butterfly and that her act was spot-on.

I affirmed her because the whole point of the recital was to communicate a story through acting and performing for the audience.

This type of acting is not deceptive acting, but artistic acting. And as an audience we showed our appreciation by giving approval through applause. When

it comes to ballet, movies or screenplays, acting is an artistic expression.

However, in contrast, when it comes to approaching God in prayer, Jesus warns us against acting and performing. Though a real temptation, the goal of praying is not the applause of an audience or even of God.

Instead Jesus calls us to pray in honest, humble dependence on Him. Therefore we must be careful when praying in public that we are not praying with our hearts focused on what others think of our prayers. We must not pray to impress others (Matthew 6:5-6).

We also are not praying to impress God (Matthew 6:7-8). Therefore, we do not need pray in King James English as if He's going to give applause for the type or amount of words we use.

Instead, we speak honestly and humbly to God our Father who loves us and knows what we need even before we ask (6:8). We go to Him not to impress Him, but because our hearts need to be with Him.

Focal passage: Matthew 5:17-22, 43-45

Can Jesus transform a serial killer? Is the gospel powerful enough to redeem someone like Osama Bin Laden or Adolf Hitler?

According to Jesus, you and I better hope so!

Jesus sat on the mountain delivering the greatest sermon ever preached and proclaimed that He didn't come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17). He followed those breathtaking words with what must have felt like a backbreaking standard saying, "*For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and the Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew

5:20). Exceed the Scribes and Pharisees? How is that possible?

What did Jesus mean? What kind of righteousness exceeded that of these spiritual leaders, moral purists and biblical experts? As Christ exposit the correct interpretation of the law throughout the rest of the sermon it becomes obvious that His demand was not for



CLINT DARST
Pastor, Freedom
Church, Lincoln

Carrying His Values

more of the same kind of righteousness that the Scribes and Pharisees had, but instead was a categorically different kind of righteousness. The meaning becomes clear when His exposition of the sixth commandment moves from the external act of murder to the internal emotion of anger in our hearts (Matthew 5:22).

The righteousness required to enter the kingdom of heaven was not an external righteousness, but an internal righteousness. To enter His kingdom, you must have a righteous heart; you must be more than a rule-keeper; you need a righteousness that is fundamentally different from human morality.

Enter the good news of the gospel!

Christ didn't come to abolish the sixth commandment, but to fulfill it. For while we were enemies of God, He died for us (Romans 5:8, 10)! He valued our life so much that He gave His.

As those who have been given a new heart and new identity, we don't just avoid murder we value all human life. Through the gospel of Christ we are those whose angry (murderous) hearts have been transformed such that now we love and pray even for our enemies (Matthew 5:44).

Secret Church announces April Charlotte event

By EMILY BLAKE | BR Editorial Aide

Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C., plans to host the next Secret Church gathering April 29 at 6:30 p.m.

Secret Church was brought to life by International Mission Board President David Platt after he witnessed the passion for biblical learning by underground churches in countries where Christianity is persecuted. In previous years Secret Church, now hosted by Platt's resource ministry called Radical, has reached an audience of more than 60,000 in the United States and many international countries.

It represents a version of the "house churches" that exist in countries where Christians have limited

biblical resources or opportunities to gather and learn. The participants meet for an intense time of Bible study, lasting more than six hours, including a time of prayer for Christian brothers and sisters across the globe who are facing persecution and for those who still have not heard the gospel. Platt describes it as a "drink from the fire hydrant of God's Word ... digest later."

Clint Pressley, senior pastor of Hickory Grove, said, "Secret Church has become a bellwether for us of robust theology fueling missional intent. Our people look forward to it every year. To have David lead Secret Church at Hickory Grove is a real gift."

This year the event will address the multiplicity of religions that exist in the world, all claiming to hold the truth (or at least some truth) about who people are,

how people got here, what people are doing and where they are going. Billions of people believe in Christianity, while others embrace Islam. Some are Hindu and others are Buddhist. Still others are atheist, or at the very least agnostic.

Secret Church will explore the claims of Christ in the gospel and consider how these claims inform the way we understand religions and cults in the world and impact the way Christians live when surrounded by varied believers with diverse belief systems.

Tickets for the live gathering of Secret Church at Hickory Grove (main campus) will be available at 10 a.m., Jan. 11, on the Secret Church website. Registration is open for localized simulcast events.

Visit radical.net/secret-church/live-gathering. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Senior Pastor. First Baptist Church, Clemmons, NC, is prayerfully seeking the senior pastor that God is preparing to lead our church. CFBC is a giving and mission-minded congregation that is dually aligned with the SBC and CBF, and worships in a blended format. We are centrally located in a diverse and growing community. We expect the pastor will have a master's degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school with some years of experience as a congregational minister. Interested candidates are invited to visit our website, cfbctoday.org, and send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 279, Clemmons, NC 27012, or email to: pastorsearchcfbc@gmail.com. Resumes will be accepted until February 28, 2016.

Winton Baptist Church is seeking a **pastor** for an 80-100 member congregation who is comfortable with a blend of traditional and contemporary services. Being involved in our youth ministries is important. Southern Baptist Convention affiliated. Send resume and sample DVD by Jan. 31 to Winton Baptist Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 415, Winton, NC 27986.

West End Baptist Church, Rock Hill, SC, is searching for a **Senior Pastor** of Southern Baptist Doctorial beliefs, who has received God's calling to be a Minister, Teacher and Administrator. Requirements include at least five (5) years of Pastoral experience in a blended contemporary church and have a minimum of a Master's of Divinity Degree. Email resumes to kathyrames@comporium.net or mail by January 31, 2016, to: West End Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 36038, Rock Hill, SC 29732.

West Edgecombe Baptist Church of Rocky Mount, North Carolina, who is a member of the North Roanoke Baptist Association is prayerfully seeking candidates for a **full-time Senior Pastor**. The applicants will possess a strong calling to the pastoral ministry, a degree from an accredited seminary institution and have a minimum of 5 years experience as a congregational minister. Qualified applicants may submit resumes to: WEBC, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 13841 NC 43 HWY, Rocky Mount, NC 27801.

Ebenezer Baptist Church of Hillsborough, NC, is seeking candidates for a **full-time senior pastor**. We are a Southern Baptist church affiliated with the Yates Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Southern Baptist Convention. Qualified candidates must be ordained by a Southern Baptist church of good standing and led by the Holy Spirit in interpreting and preaching God's Holy Word. We prefer that candidates have a seminary degree and 5 years of pastoral experience or an equivalent combination of relevant education and/or experience. Resumes with three references can be emailed to pastorsearch@ebcconnect.org or mailed to Ebenezer Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Team, 1210 Pleasant Green Road, Hillsborough, NC 27278. Resumes will be accepted through February 5, 2016.

Calvary Baptist Church, Ware Shoals, SC, is prayerfully seeking resumes for a **full-time pastor** who adheres to the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message. We are a rural Southern Baptist church that is spirit-filled and mission-minded. Seminary degree and pastoral experienced preferred. Resumes may be mailed to: CBC, PO Box 420, Ware Shoals, SC 29692, or by email: cbpcsc29692@gmail.com. Resumes will be accepted until February 29, 2016.

Church Staff

Millers Creek Baptist Church, a conservative SBC church, near Wilkesboro, NC, is prayerfully seeking God's man to serve as **Worship Pastor**. The full-time position is focused on leading the church in worship through choral, praise team, audio/visual/lighting ministries and includes various pastoral roles of visitation and outreach. Experience and a music degree from a college/seminary is preferred, but not required. Send cover letter and resume to Millers Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 559, Millers Creek, NC 28651, or by email to shannon.critcher@millerscreekbaptist.org. Resumes will be received through January 15.

Full-Time Minister of Music/Discipleship/Education needed for blended worship services for a progressive and growing church affiliated with SBC in Western North Carolina. A masters of music, or equivalent experience, is required. Duties will include planning, developing and implementing the music program, as well as, discipleship/educational/ministry needs as directed by the church. Knowledge of current computer technology is required. Submit resumes to: Newfound Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, PO Box 6, Leicester, NC 28748, or reply electronically to tomseals@att.net. A complete job description is posted on our website at www.newfoundbaptist.com >Ministries>Music.

Miscellaneous

NCBAM encourages you to reach out to a **frail-aging adult** this winter with a card, phone call or friendly visit. Call 877.506.2226 for a copy of Passport - monthly tips for providing "help for the journey" to aging adults.

Do you have staff changes at your church or association? Let the BR know by calling (919) 847-2127 or email editor@BRnow.org.

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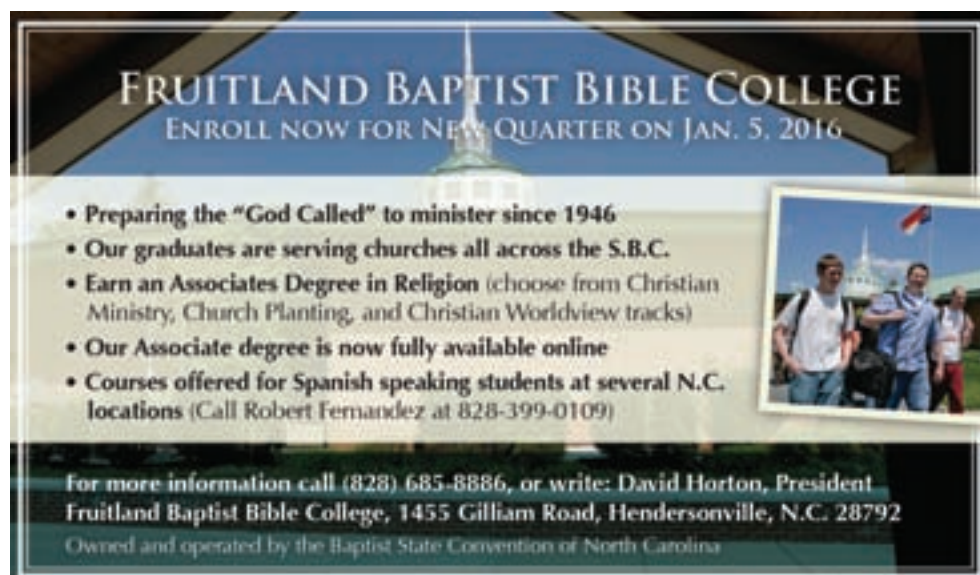
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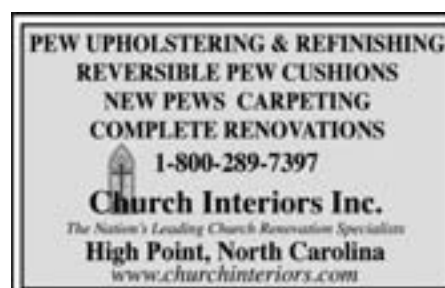
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Response Continued from page 12

The global refugee problem is greatest in the Middle Eastern country of Syria, where more than 7.6 million people are internally displaced in the face of a civil war of nearly five years and an invasion by the Islamic State terrorist group. More than 4 million Syrians are registered refugees in other countries, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Many of these are Muslims, but some are Christians or other minority religious adherents.

The Obama administration has announced it will increase the annual refugee resettlement ceiling from 70,000 in recent years to 85,000 in 2016.

In the 12-step resettlement process, 18 months to two years is the time required before the U.S. government places a refugee with an agency, said Jenny Yang, vice president of advocacy and policy for World Relief, an evangelical organization that is one of nine refugee resettlement entities working with the State Department.

While the United States resettles more refugees than any other country, less than one-half of one percent of the world's refugees are resettled in America, Yang told the audience. Most of the Syrian and Iraqi refugees World Relief has resettled in this country are women and children.

Only two percent of the refugees arriving from that region are military-aged men, she said.

World Relief, which introduces each refugee family to a local church, wants "to empower churches to welcome these refugees into their communities," Yang said. "In many of our offices, it's actually been Southern Baptist churches that have been the most open and welcoming to the refugees" received by her agency, she said.

The rhetoric currently being used regarding Muslims has "real ramifications" on refugees, Yang told the audience. Many of those settled in this country in recent months by World Relief refuse to leave their houses because they fear they will be returned to Syria, she explained.

Knox Thames, the State Department's special adviser for religious minorities in the Middle East and South/Central Asia, said the rhetoric in America "does play in other places" in the world.

He cited a recent meeting with Pakistani Christians, who told him terrorists in their country view Christians as "basically Americans."

"And so if they want to hit America, they go blow up a church," Thames said. "And if we're pouring fuel into this fire of extremist talk, ... the bad guys will go

and hit Christian churches, and I've seen it time and time again. This stuff doesn't stay here."

In the current climate, Muslims are "expecting you to ostracize them," Ziafat said. "So when you reach out to love them ... it will blow them away."

He "wouldn't go so far as to say Islam is a religion of peace," because Islam includes teachings on "a physical kind of jihad," he said. Ziafat cautioned American Christians, however, "the chances are very unlikely" the Muslim neighbor across the street is a jihadist.

In a first-person written commentary, Joseph Rose, who has ministered to Syrian refugees as a Christian worker in the Middle East, urged the church to welcome those fleeing their violent land.

"We must not waste this opportunity to reach out to a suffering people and to share with them the Good News of Jesus Christ," Rose said.

"Let us not allow fear to cripple us or to repress the Great Commission mandate we have been given to make Jesus followers of all peoples."

In his Facebook post, Graham said Muslim immigration to America "should be stopped until we can properly vet them or until the war with Islam is over."

Two Southern Baptist Republican

"We must not waste this opportunity to reach out to suffering people and to share with them the Good News of Jesus Christ."

— Joseph Rose

presidential candidates expressed their disagreement with Trump.

Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas said he would not support a ban on Muslims.

"I think we need to focus on radical Islamic terrorism, on the specific threat," he said in a Dec. 10 interview with the Heritage Foundation.

Former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee said in a statement reported by ABC News, "A ban on Muslims is impossible to enforce because Islamic terrorists will tell whatever lie they can to enter this country to kill more Americans. And it's simply unconstitutional to ban people on the basis of religion."

Their responses illustrate the conclusion of a 2011 resolution that acknowledged disagreement among Southern Baptists and other Christians on how to establish a "just and humane" policy on immigration. **BR**

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