



CP emphasis challenge met by
N.C. Baptist pastors. Page 5



Former NFL player
shares about
'Game Plan,'
working with Joe
Gibbs. Page 6

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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2012

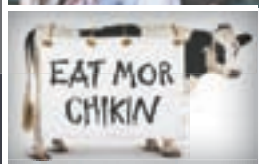
A GLANCE BACK AT STORIES OF THE YEAR



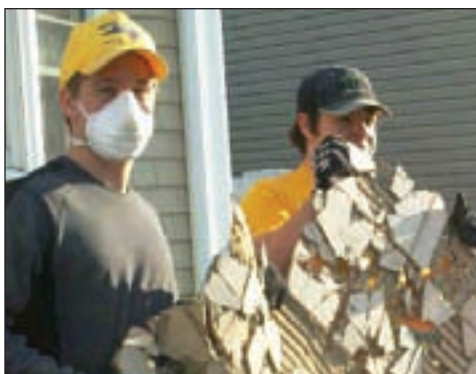
As 2012 came to a somber close – one that included a deadly hurricane, a divisive presidential election and a horrific elementary school shooting – many might conclude it was a difficult year.

But for North Carolina Baptists, – and others throughout the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) – it also was a year of church planting, strong missions giving, outreach and signs of hope for the future. The *Biblical Recorder* has compiled a list of some of the more notable headlines of 2012. We hope it will provide a good look at one memorable year.

See 2012 pages 7-9



N.C. college students use break to help hurricane survivors



College students from North Carolina spent part of their Christmas break helping Hurricane Sandy survivors. (Contributed photo)

Baptist Press/*Biblical Recorder*

North Carolina Baptist collegians – and other students from around the country – sacrificed part of their winter breaks making homes livable again for residents who spent the holidays in dwellings damaged by Hurricane Sandy.

Nearly 50 students worked alongside N.C. Baptist Men's Disaster Relief Ministry in New Jersey the week before Christmas. The students, which were broken up into six teams, received a day

of training before beginning efforts at their relief sites on the 17th. Most spent the week cleaning out debris and mud from damaged houses.

"They are doing a fantastic job," said Sharon Chilton-Moser, the project leader for N.C. Baptist Men. "They could be at home asleep – that's what college students do. ... [But] they're doing [the work] without complaint."

Chilton-Moser said she hopes to see more students answer the call to start a "pattern of service" with a desire to help those in need. "We're investing in future

relief," Chilton-Moser said. "I wanted to plant some seeds in some hearts ... a lifetime calling."

Nearby in New York, about 325 students are working with Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) efforts through Jan. 22 on Staten Island and in other affected areas. At least 27 groups of students will gut homes, haul debris and minister while living in a tent village at Staten Island's Zion Lutheran Church.

"I love helping people," Florida collegian Patricia Lally said, "and telling

See College page 15

AROUND THE STATE

Obituary

JOE ROLAND DENSON, 80, died Dec. 17.

He attended Wake Forest College where he studied religion and sociology. After college, he went into the U.S. Army where he advanced to the rank of 1st Lieutenant.

When he left the Army, he worked several jobs before going into the ministry full time.

He was minister of education and deacon at Wilmont Baptist Church. He attended Wilmont his entire life until he was called to minister at Southview Baptist Church, Charlotte, in 1977 where he served for 35 years. His first Sunday at

Southview he had 19 members present, and membership grew to a high of 185 during his years there.

During his time at Southview, he started a daycare. He was known as “Preacher Joe” or “Pastor Joe.”

He served on the Board of Directors for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the Executive Commit-

tee. He received the Homer G. Lindsey Lifetime of Ministry Award through First Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla.

He is survived by his wife, Edith; son, Joe Denson Jr.; daughter, Debbie Denson Campbell; three grandchildren; and a sister, Pat Melchor.

Memorials to: Wounded Warriors, Hospice or the charity of your choice.

RECOMMENDATION TO THE BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION’S 2013 COMMITTEE ON NOMINATIONS

Thank you for taking the time to prepare this recommendation. Your input and investment of time in the recommendation of NC Baptists for places of service and leadership is essential for the ongoing missions, ministries and evangelistic endeavors of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Recommendations may be sent to Committee on Nominations, PO Box 1107, Cary, NC 27512–1107 or completed online at recommend.ncbaptist.org or faxed to (919) 460-7507. **Deadline: January 31, 2013.** *(Please Print, form may be photocopied.)*

Believing that the following person is committed to Jesus Christ, is a person of integrity, is active in the church and has proven leadership ability,
I recommend _____
(Dr./Mr./Mrs./Miss/Rev.) First Preferred Middle Initial Last

Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____ E-mail _____

Business Phone () _____ Home Phone () _____ Cell Phone () _____
Approximate age _____ Gender: Male _____ Female _____

Check the *ONE* (Board of Directors, Agency, Institution, Convention Committee) *you believe this person can best serve:*

_____ BSCNC Board of Directors	_____ NC Baptist Foundation	_____ Biblical Recorder
_____ NC Baptist Hospital	_____ Baptist Children’s Homes of NC	_____ Committee on Convention Meetings
_____ Committee on Resolutions and Memorials		_____ Historical Committee

☐ Please check if the person you are recommending can be considered for additional areas of service

Nominee’s church _____ Church’s City _____
Church membership total _____

Region in which church is located _____ Association _____
List past and present positions held in the local church: _____
Give statement as to the past and present support of this person to this church and to North Carolina Baptists: _____

Denominational service (to be completed for a pastor or a layperson). List associational and/or Convention boards, committees, etc. served on and offices held: _____

Is the individual a lay person? _____ If so, list occupation _____

Is the individual an ordained minister? _____ If so, list previous churches/ministries: _____

Brief Resume: _____

Please attach a separate sheet for additional information you feel would be helpful to this Committee.
Please understand that this recommendation DOES NOT assure that the person you are recommending will be nominated by the Committee on Nominations and/or elected by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina; however, your recommendation will be given serious consideration.

Name of person making Recommendation: _____
Home number: () _____ Cell number: () _____
Email: _____
Church: _____ Association: _____
Signature: _____ Date: _____

Jan. 31 deadline for BSC nominations

North Carolina Baptists still have time to submit recommendations of people to serve on the Baptist State Convention’s (BSC) Board of Directors, the boards of the convention’s agencies and institutions, and convention committees.

The convention’s Committee on Nominations seeks diversity among the recommendations that will represent churches of various sizes, various professional and educational backgrounds, ethnic and racial diversity, geographical areas, different age groups, and lay persons as well as ministers.

Input from N.C. Baptists regarding nominations of individuals to serve is essential for the ongoing missions, ministries and evangelistic endeavors of the Baptist State Convention of N.C.

BSC bylaws require the following of the Committee on Nominations:

- Recommend to the convention nominees from both small and large churches (under/over 400 members)
- Limit churches to no more than six individuals from a single church serving on all convention boards and committees combined
- Limit BSC Board of Director membership so that no more than one member from a church may serve on the Board at a time

An individual may only serve on a single committee or a single board at one time, whereas in the past individuals could serve in more than one place at one time. Therefore, it is essential for N.C. Baptists to recommend more individuals to serve on the Board of Directors and convention committees.

Nominations are due Jan. 31, 2013. To make a nomination, visit recommend.ncbaptist.org. For questions related to the recommendation process, contact Cynthia King at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5501, or cking@ncbaptist.org.

BRnow.org

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FOR THE LATEST N.C.
BAPTIST NEWS
AND INFORMATION

Deadline: January 31, 2013
(Recommendations received after the January 31 deadline will be considered the following year.)

AROUND THE STATE

Retirement

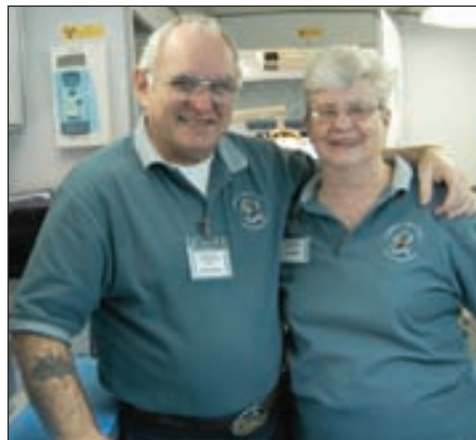
Doug and Edith Robbins are retiring from being volunteer bus driver and hostess with the Medical/Dental Bus Ministry of the North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM). The Robbins have served this ministry for the past 12 years.

The couple began volunteering in 2000, which was about the time the ministry purchased a second bus.

"We were always amazed at how Doug seemed able to fix any mechanical road block that Satan could put up to slow the work down," said Frank Jones, a dentist.

The Robbins, who lived in Newport, traveled three hours to get to Cary to pick up the bus for ministry.

"This couple has made lifelong friends at churches throughout N.C. as they worked with laypeople and dental pro-



fessionals at hundreds of dental clinics," said Joanne Honeycutt, who coordinates the ministry for NCBM. The couple has traveled the state volunteering, which included 10 days each September with the Mountain State Fair in Fletcher.

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. All submissions will be subjected to *Biblical Recorder* styles and guidelines and will be edited. Send to dianna@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

Staff changes

Bethel Baptist Church, Statesville, has called **THOMAS YOUNG** as pastor. This is Young's first church staff position.

ALEX KENNEDY has been called to Carmel Baptist Church, Matthews, as senior pastor. Kennedy was senior pastor of Kingsland Baptist Church, Katy, Texas.

Carthage First Baptist Church has called **RAYMOND CAMPBELL** as pastor.

DREW HUNSLEY has been called as youth and children's pastor for Highland Park Baptist Church, Mount Airy. Hunsley served as youth and children's pastor for Oakland Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va.

WMU-NC adds director of development

After a visioning process the Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) added a director of development to its staff.

Cindy Finley says it is "my desire to honor all our donors, whether their offering would be categorized by the world as a 'large sum' or a 'widow's mite.' Jesus honored the woman who gave two small copper coins because she 'put in everything she had.'"

"She demonstrated her confidence in God's provision. This is the type of woman I want to be, and I want to encourage other women to be as well."

Finley holds degrees from University of N.C. Chapel Hill and N.C. State University and has worked as a stay-at-home mom, motivational speaker and teacher, and fundraiser.

Finley's husband, Bill, is pastor of Inwood Baptist Church in Raleigh. They have seven children.

The director of development will

'God' ousted from poem in McDowell Co.

Christian Action League

One McDowell County first grader's poem has caused a religious freedom stir across the state. School Superintendent Gerri Martin said the decision to edit God from the six-year-old's Veteran's Day poem was a result of administrators' need to uphold the school district's "responsibility of separation of church and state from the Establishment Clause."

The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) asked school officials in a Nov. 30 letter to ensure that this type of censorship does not happen again. Visit <http://christianactionleague.org/news/god-ousted-from-childs-poem-in-mcdowell-county>. **BR**

direct the overall fundraising efforts, secure contributions for the current year and develop future gifts for the continuation of WMU-NC's missions and ministries.

The creation of this contract position came as a recommendation of the financial development work group to the Executive Board during its visioning process that began in January 2012. A search committee, appointed by Board President Tana Hartsell, included Shane Nixon, chair and senior pastor of First Baptist Church Mocksville; Bill Overby, director of develop-

ment/trustor services of the N.C. Baptist Foundation; Wayne Wike, director of development at Wingate University; Kimberly Overton, former WMU Executive Board member and chief resource prosecutor with the N.C. Conference of District Attorneys; and Cindy Averette, counsel to the N.C. House and Senate Finance Committees.

Finley can be contacted at cfinley@wmunc.org or (919) 882-2344, ext. 208. **BR**



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Unbelief the world's third-largest 'religion'

By **KIMBERLY WINSTON** | Religion News Service

A new report on global religious identity shows that while Christians and Muslims make up the two largest groups, those with no religious affiliation – including atheists and agnostics – are now the third-largest “religious” group in the world.

The study, released Dec. 18 by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life, found that more than eight in 10 (84 percent) of the world's 7 billion people adheres to some form of religion.

Christians make up the largest group, with 2.2 billion adherents, or 32 percent worldwide, followed by Muslims, with 1.6 billion adherents, or 23 percent worldwide.

Close behind are the “nones” – those who say they have no religious affiliation or say they do not believe in God – at 1.1 billion, or 16 percent. That means that about the same number of people who identify as Catholics worldwide say they have no religion.

“One out of six people does not have a religious identity,” said Conrad Hackett, a primary researcher and demographer on the study.

“But it is also striking that the over-

whelming majority of the world does have some type of religious identity. So I think people will be surprised by either way of looking at it.”

The next largest groups, the report finds, are Hindus (1 billion people, or 15 percent), Buddhists (500 million people, or 7 percent) and Jews (14 million people, or 0.2 percent). More than 400 million people – 6 percent – practice folk traditions from African, Chinese, Native American or Australian aboriginal cultures.

An additional 58 million people – slightly less than 1 percent of the global population – belong to “other” religions, such as the Baha'i faith, Jainism, Sikhism, Shintoism, Taoism, Tenrikyo, Wicca and Zoroastrianism.

In addition to the numbers of adherents, the study also looks at where they live. Christians are the most evenly distributed, while Jews are fairly evenly divided between North America and the Middle East. The United States has the highest number of Christians of any nation, at more than 243 million, or 78 percent of the total U.S. population.

Meanwhile, the majority of the world's religiously unaffiliated – 76 percent – live in the Asia-Pacific region, with 700 mil-

lion in China alone, where religion was stifled during the Cultural Revolution.

The report found nearly 51 million religiously unaffiliated Americans, or about 16.4 percent of the U.S. population. That number is smaller than the 19 percent of Americans Pew reported earlier this year. Researchers attribute this discrepancy to the fact that their 2012 report was based on information from adults only, and the newest report includes the religious adherence of children, which tends to be higher than that of adults.

And while the number of the religiously unaffiliated is high, researchers are careful to point out that they are by no means homogeneous.

Surveys considered in this report show that 7 percent of unaffiliated Chinese report a belief in God or some other high power, while that number among the unaffiliated French is 30 percent, and among Americans it climbs to 68 percent. In China, 44 percent of unaffiliated adults say they have worshiped at a graveside or tomb in the past year.

The report covers 230 countries and is drawn from more than 2,500 censuses, surveys and population records accrued through 2010. It marks the first attempt to pin down a global religious landscape

using such records, Hackett said.

Other findings include:

- About three-quarters (73 percent) of the world's people live in countries where their religion is in the majority, mostly Christians and Hindus.

- The religiously unaffiliated are in the majority in six nations: China, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hong Kong, Japan and North Korea.

- The unaffiliated, Buddhists and Jews have the highest median age (34, 34 and 36 respectively) while Muslims, Hindus and Christians have the lowest (23, 26 and 30 respectively). Median age is a predictor of how religious groups will grow, as those with a younger age have more women of child-bearing age.

Ryan Cragun, a religion sociologist at the University of Tampa who studies the nonreligious, said the numbers on the unaffiliated are not surprising. But he cautions that surveys that rely on secondary data, such as censuses, and self-reporting often over calculates some groups, such as Christians. “The real question is whether or not the nonreligious are outpacing the religious when it comes to growth,” he said.

A more in-depth report on the religiously unaffiliated is planned. **BR**

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Survey: Pastors value Cooperative Program

By CAROL PIPES | Baptist Press

Southern Baptist pastors have high opinions of the convention's Cooperative Program (CP), according to a study conducted by LifeWay Research.

The survey of 1,066 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) pastors found 81 percent agree the Cooperative Program fuels an aggressive global enterprise of reaching the unreached people groups around the world. Similarly, 80 percent say the Cooperative Program provides partnership opportunities for local, state and national missions.

The study also indicates that pastors' support for the Cooperative Program does have its limits. One in five pastors (19 percent) say the strategies of the SBC entities that receive Cooperative Program dollars are not moving in the appropriate direction and that SBC entities are not using their contributions effectively.

However, the majority (55 percent) agrees the SBC entities supported by the Cooperative Program are moving in an appropriate direction. And 52 percent say the entities are using their contributions effectively.

Seventy-three percent of pastors say

the Cooperative Program supports the ministries and missions valued by their churches.

"As pastors question every dollar they spend, it is not surprising that some are wanting evidence they are being good stewards with their mission dollars," said Scott McConnell, director of LifeWay Research. This study shows pastors believe the efforts supported by the Cooperative Program matter. However, "some do not overlook the need for further ministry improvement in the efforts of the SBC entities supported by the Cooperative Program."

CP allocations

Southern Baptist pastors also indicated how closely they agree with the current allocation of national Cooperative Program funds. The median responses for the entities – International Mission Board (IMB), North American Mission Board (NAMB), six SBC seminaries, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and SBC operating budget – were all within 0.3 percent of the current

allocations, which pastors were shown as they answered.

About one in five pastors entered amounts exactly matching current percentage allocations. A majority listed higher percentages for NAMB and at least half listed lower percentages for IMB, SBC seminaries and SBC operating budget.

"Pastors' opinions on CP allocations are remarkably similar," McConnell said. "Even when comparing mean percentages, which can be swayed by those wanting large changes, the responses have not changed significantly from a survey of pastors completed in early 2008 for the Executive Committee."

"Both the earlier survey and this study show mean percentages within 1 percent of the current allocations for IMB, ERLC and the SBC operating budget," McConnell said. "Another similarity is both surveys show preferences for a slightly higher allocation for NAMB and lower allocation for SBC seminaries."

Nearly 70 percent agreed with the statement, "The SBC allocation budget places a high priority on penetrating lostness both locally and worldwide."

Ministry priorities

Pastors also were asked to indicate the priority their church places on 12 missions and ministry efforts funded by the Cooperative Program. The majority of

pastors indicate "sending and supporting overseas missionaries to reach unreached people groups around the world" is the highest priority.

Almost 70 percent of pastors rate it essential or a high priority, and it is the only ministry effort that less than 10 percent of pastors rate a low priority or not a priority.

Following is the percentage of SBC pastors who rated each CP-funded mission and ministry as essential or high priority:

- Sending and supporting overseas missionaries – 68 percent
 - Engaging in local ministry projects for evangelism – 65 percent
 - Developing and implementing an evangelism strategy for penetrating lostness in North America – 59 percent
 - Improving the vitality and health of existing churches – 59 percent
 - Educating and training future pastors, missionaries, church planters and other denominational leaders – 57 percent
 - Reaching ethnically and culturally diverse people – 51 percent
 - Promoting an ongoing program of missions education for all ages – 48 percent
 - Engaging in direct international missions – 45 percent
 - Conducting an ongoing program of leadership development – 45 percent
 - Intentional church planting in cities and towns across North America – 44 percent
 - Intentional church planting in large urban centers – 43 percent
 - Providing a Christian perspective and response about social, ethical and public policy issues – 37 percent
- "International missions is clearly a rallying point for the Cooperative Program, yet pastors also place a high priority on evangelism efforts in North America," McConnell said.

See Cooperative page 16



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Former NFL player shares ‘Game Plan for Life’

Renaldo Wynn has spent much of his life in the spotlight. He was a standout athlete, and was a defensive end at Notre Dame, where he played for legendary Irish head coach Lou Holtz.

As a first-round NFL pick in 1997, Wynn, who ended up playing in the NFL for 11 years, was an impact player for the Washington Redskins and the New York Giants. His final stint in Washington united him with the legendary three-time Super Bowl champion head coach Joe Gibbs. Now Wynn works with Joe Gibbs Racing as director of Inner City and Prison Ministries of Game Plan for Life, the ministry arm of Joe Gibbs Racing. Wynn talks about his passion for ministry to youth and family through his work with Joe Gibbs Racing.



ROMAN GABRIEL
Sports Q & A

Q: What are some ways you are able to influence young people?

A: I didn't realize the impact that I could have on young people's lives as a professional athlete until I gave my life to Jesus Christ.

The most important thing that God has given me through my professional football career has been the opportunity to share my testimony and influence other people's lives. ... I have been able to speak to kids [who] listen to my advice because of my sports background. It's an awesome thing to ... have that kind of platform ... and more importantly to use that platform to the glory of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Q: What is it like working with Super Bowl champion and Sprint Cup owner Joe Gibbs, and Joe Gibbs Racing in Charlotte, N.C.?

A: I had the opportunity to be blessed and to play for coach. Playing for coach Gibbs with the Redskins will be something that I cherish for the rest of my life.

Now I have an opportunity to work for him outside football, and [see] him on a personal level day to day. I will say this, we all know he was a great coach. [But] he's even a better person, and he's so humble. And it doesn't matter who [he's] talking to.

We have over 450 employees at Joe Gibbs Racing. Whether it's the man at the bottom of the totem pole or at the top, he treats everybody the same. You

know, we're actually a ministry that just happens to race cars. Coach is all about God first. He's all about having that influence.

Q: Tell us a little bit more about Game Plan for Life, the ministry side of Joe Gibbs Racing.

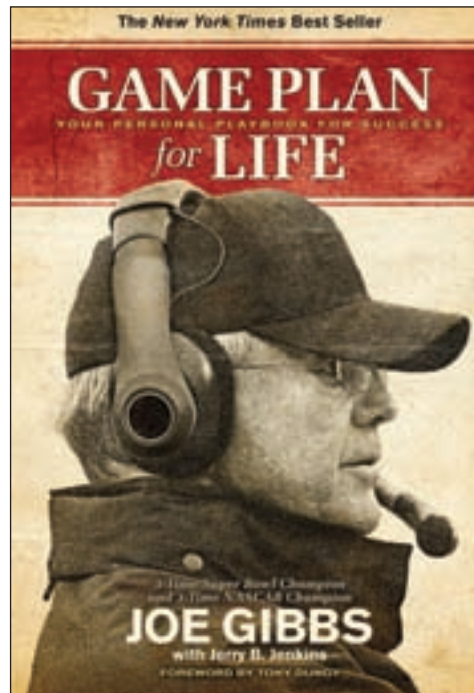
A: We have two full-time chaplains, and Bob Dyer is our head chaplain. We have 16 different Bible study groups that are available here at Joe Gibbs Racing. We have a dig-a-little-deeper Bible study that's made available on Wednesdays. [Gibbs] came out with the book *Game Plan for Life* about three years ago, and it was a New York Times Bestseller. Coach [Gibbs] had the opportunity to make that book come to life. I've had the opportunity to work here with my former Redskins teammate Derrick Crawford. We go out with the Game Plan for Life program on the road at least twice a month. We either call on churches or parachurch ministries, or [churches] call us to come out to their area to put on a "Game Plan for Life" event.

Q: What can men expect to get out of one of these Game Plan for Life events?

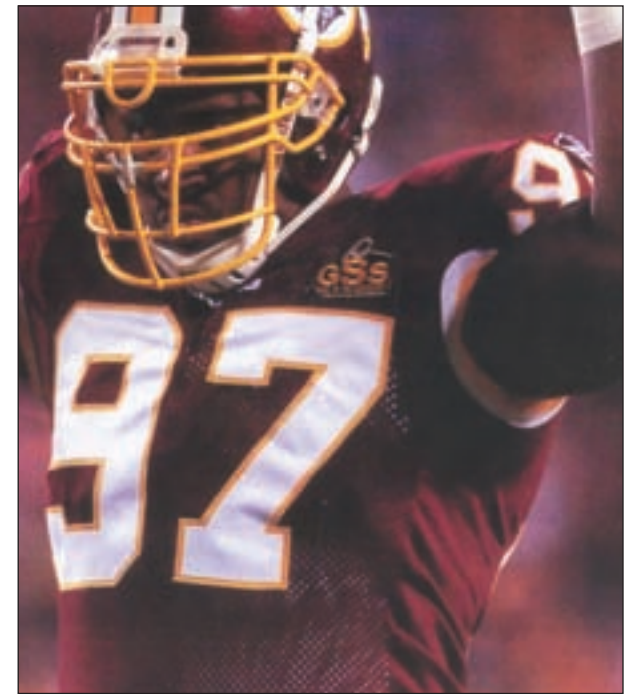
A: Getting men off the sidelines and into the game, and start discipling other men. When I talk about men, I'm talking about non-believers, men [who] would never come into church but will to hear about football and NASCAR from a Christian's perspective. We talk to men about: God, purpose, health, money and career, struggles, and relationships and family. In this atmosphere men's lives can be impacted, creating an atmosphere for men to be successful and relevant, where men want to disciple other men.

Q: Tell our readers how they can get involved with Game Plan for Life.

A: Please go to our website at www.gameplanforlife.com. Just contact us by phone or email on the website, and Derek and I can talk to you about how we can bring a Game Plan for Life event to your city, church, parachurch ministry, or church men's group. We want to partner with your leaders about bringing this special event to you. On Dec. 14 Coach started a weekly online chalk talk on our Game Plan for Life website. Coach Gibbs



Renaldo Wynn, right, works with youth and families through Game Plan for Life, the ministry arm of Joe Gibbs Racing. Wynn played for Coach Gibbs as a Washington Redskin and now directs Game Plan for Life's inner city and prison ministries. (Contributed photos)



is very transparent. [He shares] about his life and his faith and principles of life that have allowed for his success on and off the field. So make sure you tune in on the site. Also [go] on our website – no strings attached – [ask] for a free Bible and we'll get that to you.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Roman Gabriel III is president of Sold Out Ministries. He hosts Sold Out Sports on Saturday nights 8 p.m. EST on American Family Radio, and is an evangelist and motivational speaker. Contact him at (910) 431-6483 or email soldoutrg3@gmail.com. His website is www.soldouttv.com.) **BR**

UNIFIED WORSHIP

Breaking Down the Barriers of Age and Ethnicity

Many churches feel a solution for worship conflict is to provide differing styles of worship – an option that meets most people's personal preferences. Tullian Tchividjian, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, writes in his book, *Unfashionable*, that building the church on stylistic preferences or age appeal may be contrary to the gospel. Is our effort to reach many through offering a variety of options in worship actually being counterproductive to the message of the gospel? Consider Dr. Tchividjian's words:

Most churches would agree that racial or economic segregation runs contrary to the very nature of the gospel ... But there's another, perhaps more subtle, type of segregation that many churches today have actually adopted and embraced. Following the lead of the advertising world, many churches are targeting specific age groups to the exclusion of others, ... offering a "traditional service" for the tribe who prefers old music and a "contemporary service" for the tribe who prefers new music. I understand

the good intentions behind some of these efforts but something as seemingly harmless as this evidences a fundamental failure to comprehend the heart of the gospel. When we offer, for instance, a contemporary worship service for the younger people and a traditional worship service for the older people, we are not only feeding tribalism (which is a toxic form of racism) but we are saying that the gospel can't successfully bring these two different groups together ... Building the church on age appeal (whether old or young) or stylistic preferences is as contrary to the reconciling effect of the gospel as building it on class, race, or gender distinctions ... One of the prime evidences of God's power to our segregated world is a congregation which transcends cultural barriers, including age.

EDITOR'S NOTE – Kenny Lamm is a Worship & Ministry Team consultant. For more information you can reach him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5638, or klamm@ncbaptist.org. Visit his blog at www.RenewingWorshipNC.org.



Kenny Lamm

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2012

STORIES OF THE YEAR

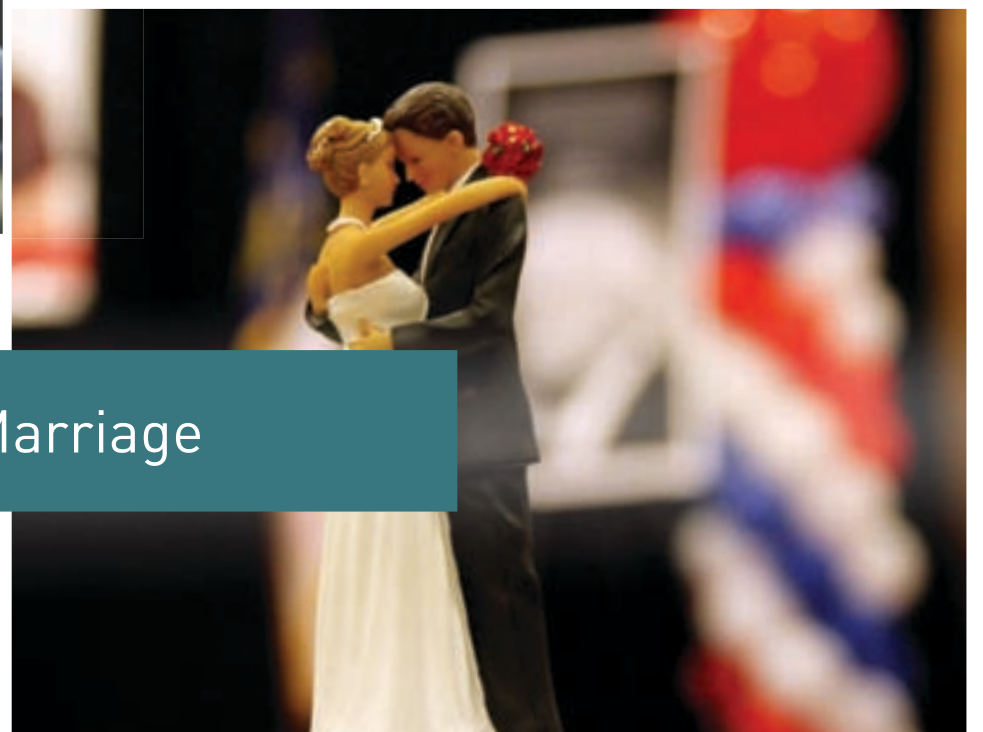
1 The election of Fred Luter



Though it was merely a formality when the official vote was taken, the election of Fred Luter as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in June was no less historic. He be-

came the SBC's first African American president. "[It is] one of the most significant events in SBC history since the convention's founding in 1845," said Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. "It makes a statement as to who we have become and what we hope to be in the future," added Akin, who nominated the pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans as first vice president of the convention in 2011 during the annual meeting in Phoenix, Ariz. "I long for the day when the church on earth looks like the church in heaven. The election of Fred, one of the finest and most godly men I know, will move us further down that road."

2 Marriage



On May 8, many N.C. Baptists celebrated the passage of a marriage amendment to the state's constitution that defines marriage as being between one man and one woman. In doing so, N.C. became the 30th state to define marriage in its constitution as being between a man and a woman. But the issue is far from settled. In November three states – Maine, Maryland and Washington state – voted to legalize "gay marriage," bringing the total number of states where same-sex marriage is recognized to nine. The United States Supreme Court also announced that it plans to take up two cases involving the issue. Before being re-elected to a second term, President Barack Obama became the first president to publically support same-sex marriage. While many N.C. Baptists are pleased with their state's stand on marriage, it could be overturned in the coming months if marriage is redefined nationwide.

3 Church planting



N.C. Baptists are leading a variety of church planting partnerships throughout North America and abroad. Through its Office of Great Commission Partnerships, the Baptist State Convention of N.C. (BSC) has focused its attention on leading Baptists across the state in partnerships in New York, Boston, Toronto and Moldova. In late

October, a group of N.C. pastors traveled to Moldova on a vision trip to look for ways their congregation can partner with Baptist leaders in the country to plant more churches. In July, about 90 N.C. Baptists attended the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Send North America Conference at First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga. More than 2,200 church leaders and pastors attended the event. Attendance nearly tripled initial expectations by bringing both young and older generations together to learn how they can plant more churches. This year, NAMB will follow up with conferences focused on church growth and revitalization. A conference will be held April 25 at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Raleigh. For more information online go to http://www.namb.net/revitalization/North_Carolina.

2012

STORIES OF THE YEAR

4

Giving



NAMB recognized N.C. Baptists in June at the SBC's annual meeting in New Orleans for being the top state in giving to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. In 2011, N.C. Baptists raised \$5.6 million for the offering. That amount was just over Alabama's offering of \$5 million. N.C. Baptists were also on top with \$12.6 million in gifts to the Lottie

Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO) that year. The Dec. 22 issue of the *Biblical Recorder* reported that the SBC's International Mission Board released a list showing that 17 N.C. Baptist churches were among the top 200 giving churches to the 2011 LMCO. Between the months of March 2011 and February 2012, those churches gave a total of \$2.4 million to the offering. And for the eighth year, in an effort to increase its support for SBC ministries, the Baptist State Convention of N.C.'s Cooperative Program budget for 2013 includes a one-half percent increase of the allocation that will go to the SBC. The increase will bring the SBC allocation to 36 percent.

The issue of Calvinism or soteriology (the study of the doctrine of salvation) made headlines this summer when a group of Southern Baptist leaders signed a statement affirming what they call the "traditional Southern Baptist" view of salvation, which draws a distinction from "New Calvinism." The document entitled "A Statement of the Traditional Southern Baptists Understanding of God's Plan of Salvation" includes a list of signatures, some of whom are seminary presidents, state executive directors and former SBC presidents. Immediately following the release of the document, Southern Baptists took to the blogosphere to voice their thoughts on the issue. Some N.C. Baptists also wrote related letters and guest columns that were published in the *Biblical Recorder*. During the SBC's annual meeting in New Orleans, leaders encouraged messengers to avoid divisive rhetoric and remain united for the cause of the Great Commission. Executive Committee President Frank Page also formed a committee to look for ways that both sides can come together on the issue. The committee has met twice and plans to meet again. Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, is among those serving on the committee.



5

Calvinism

Chick-fil-A



6

Chick-fil-A

The fast-food chain Chick-fil-A found itself in the middle of a media storm after their company's president Dan Cathy shared his traditional views on family and marriage in an interview with the *Biblical Recorder*. The *Biblical Recorder* published a story on the interview in its July 7 issue. The story was later re-posted on Baptist Press' website, which recently declared the story to be the site's most read article of 2012. In the days to follow numerous mainstream news agencies focused on Cathy's statement of support for traditional family values. Some ran headlines suggesting Chick-fil-A and its president were

"anti-gay." As support and criticism grew for the fast-food chain, former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee announced Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day, which was held on Aug. 1. In the wake of some city leaders threatening to keep Chick-fil-A from opening new restaurants in their area, the company drew thousands of supporters that day across the country in support of its stand for traditional family values. This fall Chick-fil-A made headlines again when news reports suggested the company had backed off its stand by agreeing not to contribute to what critics called "anti-gay" organizations, such as Focus on the Family. Cathy later released a statement noting Chick-fil-A's support for organizations that promote biblical family values remains the same.

As a divisive election approached, Baptists throughout the state and around the country spearheaded a variety of prayer and fasting events that called for spiritual awakening in the country. On Sept. 2, just before the Democratic National Convention (DNC) held its meeting in Charlotte, about 9,000 people who represented more than 100 churches gathered for a city-wide worship event called Charlotte 714. Those who attended prayed, worshipped and were encouraged by a variety of speakers on the issue of spiritual awakening. Life Action Ministries promoted the event and continues to lead a prayer movement, called OneCry. That week the Metrolina Baptist Association and area churches, along with N.C. Baptist Men's Disaster Relief ministry, led a variety of outreach efforts geared toward those visiting the city for the DNC. In October, leading up to its annual meeting in November, the Baptist State Convention of N.C. challenged Baptists in the state to participate in 30 days of prayer and fasting that focused on spiritual awakening. The theme of this year's meeting was "Awaken."

7

Prayer, spiritual awakening



8

Disaster relief

more than 100 lives and caused widespread destruction from flooding, high tides and winds that reached around 80 mph. Thousands of homes were without electricity for weeks. During their Christmas break about 50 students worked with N.C. Baptist Men to help with relief efforts.

In July, the *Biblical Recorder* published a series of stories highlighting some of the ways N.C. Baptists are putting more focus on discipleship. The issue included a story on Chuck Campbell and how he is leading the Transylvania Baptist Association in Pisgah Forest to help church leaders define and teach discipleship. Other stories included how discipleship and mentoring changed Jim Gillespie's life after he became a Christian. Today, Gillespie is pastor of men's ministry at Richland Creek

Community Church in Wake Forest. The *Biblical Recorder* followed up with related stories in later issues that focused on discipleship and outreach groups geared toward neighbors. The Baptist State Convention continues to lead an effort called 3D, which challenges churches to make discipleship a part of their congregation's culture.

9

Discipleship



10

Great Commission Baptists



The SBC adopted Great Commission Baptists as an "unofficial descriptor" in June during its annual meeting in New Orleans. In 2011, Bryant Wright, president of the SBC

and pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., selected a committee to study the possibility of changing the Southern Baptist Convention's name. Some of the reasons behind forming the committee focused around the idea that the name had become outdated and too regional, too divisive and not reflective of today's convention. After much discussion, the committee proposed an unofficial descriptor in February that could be used by congregations that felt more comfortable with using Great Commission Baptists. Though the final vote was closer than many had predicted, messengers approved the descriptor and appeared to move past an old debate – at least for now. **BR**

N.C. Baptist stays vigilant for troubled Nigeria

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

Dreams have played prominently in Adeniyi Ojutiku's life. Before coming to the United States, he had a dream that would dictate a vision for salvation and discipleship of the lost in his Nigerian homeland riddled with religious strife.

The year was 1986. Ojutiku clearly remembers the early hours of Feb. 18 in Lagos when he was confronted with his sins and the question of eternal destiny.

"In the dream, I was reminded of the passage of Scripture in which Christ emphatically stated, 'I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh to the Father, except by me,'" said Ojutiku, who has been a member of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh for 20 years. "The dream led me to seek to know more about Christ's salvation. I was later united with a local church in Badagry, Nigeria, and baptized by immersion upon my profession of faith in Jesus Christ."

Living for Christ became challenging for the husband, father of three and senior veterinary officer for the Nigerian Federal Ministry of Agriculture in Lagos, where he was in charge of planning policy for Nigeria's livestock industry.

"I was getting a lot of pressure from my boss to be fraudulent with ... some of the data. And I saw how they were spending the money; it was really not spent correctly," Ojutiku recounted. "We were made to report something else. So I just did not want to be ... under that pressure of having to be corrupt."

Ojutiku's newfound dream of living for the Lord led him in 1987 to the U.S. in search of "the American dream," first as a student at Tuskegee University in Alabama and later at North Carolina State University where he earned an M.S. degree in life sciences, accompanying the doctor of veterinary medicine and master's in agricultural economics he already held from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

Ojutiku describes America as "the freest nation on earth and a land of opportunity for those who are willing to work hard and play by the rules."

"I came here and I knew that I could not go back right away to Nigeria because I just did not want to defraud my faith," Ojutiku said. "Most of my colleagues who stayed behind, they became multi-millionaires. They have a lot of money and houses, but I'm satisfied with where I am today, even without all that."

With his wife, Elizabeth, Ojutiku has co-founded Lift up Now, a nonprofit, grassroots-style foundation in Nigeria to solve political, economic and social challenges such as poverty, hunger, disease, war, religious extremism and terrorism. He works with a small core

group in the U.S., managing a team of what he estimated as 2,500 volunteers in Nigeria, Africa's most populous and oil-rich nation. The workers are mainly Christian youth leaders available for mobilization as needed.

Ojutiku described Lift Up Now as "an organization to refocus the people to their original purpose of creation and encourage them to aspire to that purpose."

"Our goal is to work with the people in restoring their individual self-dignity and worth through improved work ethics as well as personal efforts at sustainable wealth creation," Ojutiku said, "rather than continued reliance on dehumanizing welfare and 'hand-outs.'"

Acknowledging that Sub-Saharan Africa continues to benefit from many years of global Christian outreach, Ojutiku said "the fundamental cause of the people's sufferings stems from the malevolent political structures inadvertently bequeathed to the nations by the colonial masters (post-independence), as well as the extremely corrupt and inept leadership who stepped into the colonial masters' shoes and maintained these structures."

Lift Up Now maintains an extensive catalogue of Islamist jihadist attacks on Nigerian Christians by a group called Boko Haram and has encouraged Congress to classify it as a "foreign" terrorist organization.

Ojutiku also serves as an itinerant preacher to the Nigerian diaspora in the U.S., preaching in guest pulpits in North Carolina and New Jersey, mobilizing pastors in the U.S. and mentoring Nigerian youth during visits to Nigeria.

"I have opportunity when I go to Nigeria [at] different churches in Nigeria and just share with them the Word of God," he said, "encourage them, exhort them."

He speaks English, the African dialects of Yoruba, Ibo and Hausa, and limited French.

"Despite years of living in the USA, I still make some efforts at maintaining my language ability in Hausa," Ojutiku said. "This language skill helps to facilitate my communication with the victims of Boko Haram, Islamist jihadists."



Adeniyi Ojutiku co-founded Lift Up Now to help deliver Africa from various political, economic and social problems, beginning in Nigeria. He refined his vision for the group after reading two books by Bryant Myers, "Walking with the Poor" and "Working with the Poor." Ojutiku has made several trips to his homeland of Nigeria to organize and strengthen efforts.

Ojutiku and his wife, Elizabeth, have led Sunday School classes for international members at Providence. He initially was referred to the church by a professor while he was studying at Auburn University.

He works full-time as a chemistry and forensic science teacher with the Durham Public School System and part-time as an associate professor of health education with the University of Phoenix.

He also is chief executive officer of Agriboard Industries Limited, Nigeria, seeking sustainable solutions to the country's agriculture, housing and renewable energy sectors.

Ojutiku grew up in the Anglican and Methodist faiths. His grandfather was an ordained pastor and his father a lay reader in the Church of England, but Ojutiku said he personally was a "nominal" Christian in his youth.

He was baptized by sprinkling at age 6 and experienced the Anglican rites of passage as a student at a parochial school, he said, but

lamented that he did not have a transformed heart. His 94-year-old father, Vincent Adenreti Oludayo Ojutiku, still lives in Lagos and has retired as a state government accountant.

"The actual living for Christ ... and relying on the power of the Holy Spirit and all that, was not [a personal reality]," Ojutiku recounted. "We were just trying to be good. We did not have a firm foundation in the teaching, in the Word of God, that makes us know ... that salvation is by grace and that we rely on the power of the Holy Spirit to live the Christian faith.... That was not something that was well articulated."

It was not until he had a personal encounter with God in his 1986 dream that Ojutiku began to live for the Lord.

"I will consider my greatest achievement to be the protection of my Christian testimony," he said, "through a life evidenced by the continuing work of God's grace in the area of personal integrity, humility, growing faith, raising a Godly family and an endless desire to see God glorified."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Diana Chandler is Baptist Press' staff writer.) **BR**

Atheist group sues IRS over churches endorsing politics

World News Service

After 1,586 pastors purposely broke the law Oct. 7 by endorsing political candidates from the pulpit, an atheist group has taken the bait and sued the Internal Revenue Service Nov. 14 for not taking action against these pastors' churches.

Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) started Pulpit Freedom Sunday in 2008

to challenge the 1954 Johnson Amendment that prohibits tax-exempt churches from making political endorsements. ADF hoped the IRS would take action so that a lawsuit could be filed that would repeal the law.

"It's outrageous for pastors and churches to be threatened or punished by the government for applying biblical teachings to all areas of life, including candidates and elections," ADF legal

counsel Erik Stanley told Focus on the Family's Citizen Link last month. He added that the purpose of the October event was "to make sure that the pastor, and not the IRS, decides what is said from the pulpit."

But the IRS has not taken action against the churches or pastors, so the Wisconsin-based Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF) filed a lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Madison arguing that

the IRS is not enforcing the federal tax code.

The FFRF claims that churches and other religious organizations have become more involved in political campaigns, adding that they are "blatantly and deliberately flaunting the electioneering restrictions." The lawsuit also cites full-page ads run in *The New York Times* and other newspapers by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. **BR**

‘Provision for vision’ Church planter finds creative ways to share gospel

By MELISSA LILLEY | BSC Communications

While growing up in Nigeria, Wole Ajala enjoyed spending time with his father and grandfather as they honed their woodworking skills. Sometimes he watched; other times he helped.

Ajala's grandfather was a carpenter and a cocoa farmer. With some wood and a few tools, Ajala's father could make just about anything a church needed, from pews and pulpits to offering plates.

Woodworking was always part of Ajala's life. "I never knew the Lord was providing it as a ministry for me to reach out," he said.

Ajala moved to the United States about 10 years ago to attend seminary and eventually plant Beautiful Gate Baptist Church, a multi-ethnic church in Greensboro to reach African-Americans and French-speaking African immigrants and refugees. He still has his grandfather's 1936 foot-pedal scroll saw.

In 2006, Ajala started the "Make and Donate Toy Clinic," an effort to use woodworking as a way to help children and teenagers combine mathematics with art and imagination.

"It's amazing what we've been blessed with, just with our hands. God gave us



Wole Ajala talks about an offering plate he made for Beautiful Gate Baptist Church in Greensboro, the church he pastors. The native Nigerian hosted woodworking camps at the church last summer to share skills he learned from his father and grandfather. (BSC photo by Melissa Lilley)

hands to be creative," he said.

Ajala is a physicist by training, and recently earned his middle and high school mathematics teaching license. He is currently a substitute mathematics teacher and hopes to begin teaching full time. Ajala enjoys helping children and teenagers understand concepts such as friction and Newton's Law of Motion, all by using their hands to create something unique.

He teaches younger children how to

assemble and paint toys from recycled wood, and teaches older youth how to use some of the woodworking tools. He also teaches children how to transfer their designs for toys from a computer to the wood.

Last summer, Beautiful Gate Baptist Church in Greensboro hosted day camps for children and youth to come learn about the woodworking ministry.

Throughout the year Ajala sponsors a workshop the second Saturday of every month at the Piedmont Baptist Association office.

He also hosts monthly workshops at the Greensboro cultural center. "We encourage children to do more than one toy project," Ajala said.

"They take one home, and then donate one. We encourage the kids to give back to the community." Every year "Make and Donate" gives about 5,000 wooden toys to children in need.

The first toys Ajala started making were small cars that he carried in his pocket when he went with members of his church for door-to-door evangelism visits. He wanted to have something to share with the children he met throughout Greensboro.

Evangelism is the real reason Ajala started the woodworking and toy ministry. He wanted to have opportunities to meet children, to meet their families, to build relationships, and to share Jesus Christ.

"Through these ministries, God has opened so many doors for us to reach out to the kids. If we can reach the kids, we can reach the parents," he said.

"It's a discipleship opportunity, and an opportunity to show them the love of Jesus Christ. Our goal is to use our talents and skills to serve the community. It's not about growing our church, but growing the Kingdom."

Ajala is praying for a school bus to be donated so he can turn the ministry into a mobile workshop.

He is also preparing to help church planters in Toronto learn how to use a toy ministry as a means of evangelism and community outreach.

Ajala recently went to Toronto on a vision trip to learn more about the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) partnership in Toronto.

While in Toronto, Ajala met African

refugees, as well as two French-speaking church planters. Ajala is fluent in French.

Ajala's goal is to teach the church planters skills they can reproduce, and to help plant a church in Toronto. "I will help build up the ministry, and then hand it over to the local church. We believe in training the trainer," he said.

Advancing the gospel

Evangelism is the reason behind everything Ajala does. When God called him to stay in the United States after seminary and to plant a church in Greensboro, he knew he must obey.

"When He says go, you have to go. There's no excuse before God. With every excuse Moses gave, God was reassuring him that He was the one who created him. With every vision, God has given provision. There's nothing called accident in the lives of God's children," Ajala said.

Ajala received church planter training from the BSC, as well as funding. Beautiful Gate Baptist Church meets at the Piedmont Association office, but Ajala is praying the church can rent a building downtown to hold worship services and be closer to where church members live. Every Sunday, Ajala drives downtown to pick up a number of people for Sunday services, many of whom are homeless and neglected.

He is trying to help these people get back on their feet by teaching them skills, such as lawn care, so they can start earning an income again. Some of the homeless people he works with have just been

released from prison.

Ajala seeks to help people learn skills to improve their quality of life. He is working on a biodiesel project that he hopes will help people living overseas in poor countries.

With help from the Piedmont Association, U.S. Department of Agriculture and North Carolina A&T University, he has also started a community garden ministry to help feed the hungry in Greensboro. Church members and volunteers help plant in the garden, and then the food is freely distributed to those in need. Ajala also hopes to share special gardening and irrigation techniques with poor people living overseas. "To penetrate lostness in our community, we must do whatever it takes. There's no limit to what we can do to advance the gospel," he said.

To learn more about "Make and Donate" email beautifulgatebc@att.net. To learn more about BSC church planting efforts visit ncbaptist.org/churchplanting. **B**

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Individuals, churches, SBC entities should pray 'like never before'

Baptist Press

For some time, God has been burdening my heart about prayer and spiritual awakening. I talked about this a great deal when I was president of the Southern Baptist Convention (2006-08). I saw then what was happening in our nation, in our churches and in our convention. That deep sense of need for revival in our land has only gotten stronger over these past six years.

As we go into 2013, God has laid on my heart the need to emphasize prayer and spiritual awakening like never before. Therefore, I will be talking about this throughout the coming year.

I am asking all Southern Baptists to join me in a year of emphasis on prayer like none we've ever seen before.

I ask individuals to be seriously involved in "throughout the day" earnest prayer. I am not talking about morning or evening prayers but prayers which last throughout the day. Through Baptist Press and other means we will be helping people know how they might do so. Our friends at LifeWay Christian Resources are providing a number of prayer materials to assist individuals in learning how to pray more earnestly, more effectively and more powerfully.

I am calling on churches to host prayer events, to host solemn assemblies, to host 40 days of prayer and fasting events. I am asking pastors to join me in this deep burden of prayer.

I am asking for our entities to emphasize prayer in every way they can. I know Dr. Tom Elliff of the International Mission Board (IMB) has already established a new school of prayer at the IMB. Our other entity leaders have a heart for prayer as well. I ask each of them to join me in this call unto our Lord.

Scripture is clear about the need to pray. Almost everyone knows the words to 2 Chronicles 7:14: "And My



FRANK PAGE
Guest Column



people who are called by My name humble themselves, pray and seek My face, and turn from their evil ways, then I will hear from heaven, forgive their sin, and heal their land."

Most of us also know the words of our Lord in Revelation 2:4 where He spoke to the church of Ephesus and said, "You have forsaken your first love." We need to remember those words for I believe we are in the same situation.

We desperately need to return to our first love. What is that? Did not the Lord tell us that we are to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength?

The words of the Lord in Revelation 2 continue by telling us what to do. Simply put, it is remember, repent and do the first works. We need to remember the heights from which we have fallen.

Do you remember what it was like when you were first saved? Many of us felt like we could touch the face of God with our hand. Remember the excitement and the passion in those days! We need to repent of our sin, of our prayerlessness, of our shallow Christianity. We need to do what He has called us to do. We need to be in love with Him once more, to spend time in His Word every day, to talk to Him throughout the day, all day long.

Throughout the year, we will be sharing weekly devotionals on my new blog site, issuing weekly calls for prayer and sharing specific prayer concerns.

Please join me in a year-long emphasis for calling to our Lord for His mercy, for His guidance and for His forgiveness.

(EDITOR'S NOTE - Frank Page is president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee. To learn more about the SBC Call to Prayer, visit www.namb.net/sbccallto-prayer.) **BR**

Praying through the 52 Sundays

For many people the New Year is a time for a fresh start - a time to resolve to do things differently than the year before. Although we usually begin the New Year with great expectations we often, after a short time, find ourselves already behind in our commitments and resolutions.

This year I want to encourage you to resolve to do something that is not only practical and doable, but is very much a necessary and critical component to the life of God's followers. I want to encourage you to pray for missions and ministry efforts here in North Carolina and around the world. Last year churches across North Carolina prayed for many months that God's work during our annual meeting would be a catalyst for spiritual renewal. We prayed for spiritual awakening and for God to lead us toward repentance and personal holiness. God was faithful to answer our prayers during the

2012 annual meeting in Greensboro. I hope this will be a spark used of God to ignite the fires of revival that will spread through churches all across this state and nation.

I remind you that we must continue to be fervent in prayer. One way you can do this is by committing this year to pray every Sunday - all 52 Sundays - for ministries and missions that are helping advance the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Our staff at the Baptist State Convention developed a prayer guide to help you pray every Sunday for missionaries serving overseas, across North America and throughout our state.

You can use this devotional prayer guide during your personal quiet time, or you may choose to use this prayer guide during a time of family devotion. Pastors, this is also a great resource for you to use Sunday mornings with your congregation.

Your church should have received in the mail a copy of this prayer guide. You can order additional copies by visiting www.ncbaptist.org/cp or emailing cp@ncbaptist.org. On the website you will also find available for download PowerPoint slides that accompany the prayer guide.

Every individual you read about in this wonderful devotional tool is supported through your gifts to the Cooperative Program. The Cooperative Program is how we as North Carolina Baptists, and Southern Baptists, work together to support ministry and missions.

I believe in the Cooperative Program because it allows local churches to work together. I believe far more is accomplished for our Lord's Kingdom when we serve together rather than when we try to do it on our own.

As you read about these pastors, church planters and missionaries, please pray for God to work mightily and to transform hearts and lives.

Ask God to show you how He may be leading you to support these missions efforts.

I pray that as you commit to praying on Sundays you would be reminded of our God's goodness and incredible power. He is at work among us, and He calls us to be on mission for Him.

"Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving." Colossians 4:2 **BR**



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

TAR HEEL VOICES

Connecticut shooting raises questions

An unspeakable tragedy struck Dec. 14 in Connecticut. Just after students were finished pledging allegiance, a crazed gunman took from them their fundamental right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. This community is statistically one of the safest, but that did not prevent one of the worst acts of violence.

Having six children myself, all of which were sitting with us [at the table], my heart was immediately broken.

Many have and will continue to ask how God allows such things to happen? However, it was not God, but a sinful man ... whose mind was long corrupted by a fallen world.

In the moment when my heart was broken by this news, a question arose - one that enveloped my mind as I went to sleep Dec. 14 and has constantly greeted me since: What is to prevent this from happening to my children? I have children in two public schools. Three

of my children are the same age as many of the children killed. I cannot imagine how those parents feel nor how my fellow clergymen in that community will begin to comfort their congregations. The more I read about this tragedy, the more it seems that there were many measures in place to provide security. Sometimes, when evil overtakes someone, tragedy is unavoidable.

As a parent, I have to know that everything is being done to protect my children, their teachers and the administrators. I hope school boards have already met to determine how we prevent this. This tragedy shows us that we, as a community, have to do whatever it takes to be prepared. There are no reasonable people opposed to keeping our children safe. If evil attempts to visit our schools, my prayer is that we are ready to repel it.

Michéal S. Pardue
Pastor, High Shoal Baptist Church, Mooresboro

Analysis: Survey shows CP legacy, challenges

By **ROGER S. OLDHAM** | Baptist Press

Southern Baptists are putting their Cooperative Program (CP) treasure where their missional heart is, according to the most recent CP survey conducted by LifeWay Research.

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) was created to elicit, combine and direct the energies of Baptists “for the propagation of the [g]ospel,” as noted in the SBC’s 1845 charter. The convention’s formal purpose, meanwhile, is the “promotion of Christian missions at home and abroad,” according to its constitution.

And the convention has embraced a missional vision to “present the [g]ospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world and to make disciples of all the nations,” stemming from messengers’ approval of the final report Great Commission Task Force of the Southern Baptist Convention in 2010.

To help accomplish these goals, the convention adopted a program of cooperative giving we today call the Cooperative Program (CP).

A comprehensive vision

The Cooperative Program is the means by which Southern Baptists work together to provide financial support for the missions and ministries in their respective states, across the nation and around the world. For 87 years, the Cooperative Program has provided Southern Baptists a cooperative means to fulfill a missional vision of building what Frank Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, calls “A Strong Home Base with an Aggressive Global Vision!”

In cooperation with CP-funded state convention ministries and the SBC ministries of the North American Mission Board, the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission and the six SBC seminaries, local churches seek to establish a strong home base. In partnership with the CP-funded SBC International Mission Board and state convention overseas partnerships, local churches champion an aggressive global vision.

A look to the past

State conventions, many of which existed prior to the founding of the SBC, already were engaged in vibrant ministries such as colleges, hospitals, orphanages and a host of missions societies.

Formation of the SBC provided new opportunities to engage in an aggressive vision of missions and evangelism. It also created new challenges. These new SBC ministries drew their support from the same churches that provided funds for state ministries. Soon, representatives from all of these ministries flooded the churches with financial appeals.

The outcome of this “direct-appeal” approach was less than ideal. More visible ministries received larger offerings while other important ministries suffered in want. Support for all ministries was unpredictable from one year to the next. As the number of ministries increased, available resources to support them was diluted. In some instances, the cost of raising funds reached as high as 50 percent of the amount raised. Church and ministry leaders were frustrated with the time, effort and money it took to generate a never-sufficient financial base. The convention needed to “elicit, combine, and direct” its financial resources fairly and dependably.

A biblical model

Facing desperate circumstances, the SBC acted to address its continuing financial challenges. In 1923, the convention commissioned the “Committee on Future Program” to come up with a solution.

The committee wanted a plan that was biblical – one that would incorporate both storehouse tithing and special offerings; rational – one that would address all essentials of ministry in proper proportion; and dependable – one that would provide consistent, equitable support for the ministries Baptists deemed essential in their respective states and in the Southern Baptist Convention.

The committee sought to develop an overarching strategy that would produce consistent, long-lasting results. It wanted a program of giving that encouraged regular contributions by churches. It aimed for convention-wide coordination and proportionate distribution.

Two years later, when Southern Baptists gathered in Memphis, Tenn., for their annual meeting, the committee introduced a plan they believed would be coordinated and fruitful. Their proposal utilized the biblical ideals of obedient giving, on a regular basis, in proportion to one’s blessing from God (1 Corinthians 16:2). They called

it the “Co-Operative Program of Southern Baptists.”

A simple plan

The CP design is remarkably simple:

- Churches pray over and approve their annual budgets based on anticipated tithes and offerings from their members.
- Cooperating churches prayerfully commit to give a percentage of their undesignated receipts through the CP.
- That percentage is sent to the state convention on a monthly basis and becomes the basis of the state convention’s ministry budget.
- Each cooperating state convention prayerfully commits to send a portion of its CP contributions to the SBC for distribution to the convention’s missions and ministries.
- The SBC determines an appropriate allocation for each of its approved ministries, following a model of prayerful reflection and messenger approval.

The original plan called for states to deduct the costs of promoting the CP, with a goal of forwarding 50 percent of the remainder to the SBC for its missions and ministries. As the 2010 Great Commission Task Force report showed, this goal continues to resonate with Southern Baptists.

A generation of success

During that first year, cooperating churches contributed an average of nearly 11 percent of their undesignated contributions to this new, integrated plan for supporting convention missions and ministries. This level of response continued for more than 60 years: From 1925 through 1989, cooperating churches continued to forward an average of 10 percent of their undesignated gifts through the Cooperative Program.

During this same 60-year period, the SBC portion of the CP forwarded from the states fluctuated between a low of 26 percent during the Great Depression to a high of 39 percent in 1989. Following a slow decline through the 1990s, the percentage forwarded by the states began rising steadily in 2002 and now stands again at nearly 39 percent. At this level of support from the churches through their respective state conventions, the SBC was able to enlist, empower and equip the largest evangelical missions force in the world – full-time field personnel fulfilling their ministry goals

without the distraction of needing to raise their own support. The convention also built a consortium of low-cost theological education unrivaled in Christian history.

Changing times

The SBC was not immune from the societal and demographic changes traced by Princeton sociologist Robert Wuthnow in his twin books, *The Restructuring of American Religion* (1988) and *The Struggle for America’s Soul* (1989). In the almost 25 years since his groundbreaking works, commitment to denominational structures has only gotten weaker. As the new LifeWay Research survey shows (see page 5), Southern Baptist pastors who are 55 and older are more likely to support the Cooperative Program, believing the CP supports missions and ministries their churches value. They also are more likely to think convention entities use CP contributions effectively and to place a higher value on the ministries the CP supports.

Younger pastors (ages 18–44) are less likely to believe the convention’s entities use their CP contributions effectively and are less willing to agree that the CP supports SBC ministries and missions their churches value. It is also interesting that, according to the survey, younger pastors are less likely to say improving the vitality and health of existing churches and developing an evangelism strategy for North America are essential.

Few of today’s Southern Baptists were alive when the failed system called “societal giving” held sway. Most are unaware of the devastating failure of the Seventy-Five Million Campaign during the opening decades of the 20th century. Promising great success with more than \$92 million pledged, the capital fund program only generated \$58 million, plunging the convention’s entities into massive debt and threatening their very existence.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Roger S. Oldham is vice president for convention communications and relations with the SBC Executive Committee and executive editor of its journal, *SBC LIFE*, where this article first appeared. Portions of this essay are adapted drawn from “Forged by Faith ... One Sacred Effort,” based in concept on the book by Chad Owen Brand and David E. Hankins titled *One Sacred Effort: The Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists*. See fuller analysis online at BRnow.org.) **BR**

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January 13

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

January 20

Habakkuk: A Message of Faith

Focal Passages: Habakkuk 1:1-3, 5-6, 13; 2:1, 4-6; 3:2, 17-19b

Sometimes, life has a way of challenging our faith. Whether it is personal circumstances or a terrible tragedy, our faith can become fragile if we do not keep our hearts and minds focused on the trustworthiness of God.

The Prophet Habakkuk reminds us of this truth. He lived in a time of international crisis when Judah was corrupt and injustice ran rampant. In distress, Habakkuk questioned God about the state of affairs in his country (Hab. 1:1-3). After God's response (Hab. 1:5-6; 2:4-6), we learn that difficult circumstances may cause our faith to be stretched, but we must trust God with the outcome and remain faithful.

It is no surprise to those who know me that I am a Tim Tebow fan. Tebow, a quarterback for the New York Jets has two BCS titles while at Florida, a Heisman Trophy, plus an unbelievable season with the Denver Broncos last year. Most importantly, Tebow is a devout follower of Jesus Christ.

After last year's season with the Broncos, Tebow was traded to the New York Jets to play backup quarterback behind

Mark Sanchez. The idea was Tebow would supplement what Sanchez was doing by developing an offensive wildcat package that would be inserted throughout the game.

At the time of this writing, it has not worked. What is worse, Tebow's football career is now in jeopardy, in my opinion, because of poor decision making from the Jets organization. Some might think that I am a crazy football fan. Not really. I am more interested in the platform God has given Tebow. You see, a lot of people don't like Tebow because he is outspoken about his relationship with Jesus Christ. Others question his quarterback skills. It seems at every turn Tebow's future is uncertain in the NFL. However, what I find inspiring about Tebow is, like Habakkuk, he continues to place his hope in God no matter the situation (Hab. 3:17-19).

Tebow was once asked about his future in the NFL as a quarterback. He responded, "I don't know what the future holds, but I know who holds my future."



BARTLEY WOOTEN
Senior pastor, Beulaville Baptist Church, Beulaville

Obadiah: A Message of God's Justice

Focal Passages: Obadiah 1-4, 10-15, 17-18, 21

Every person has an ultimate authority source in his or her life. An authority source is someone or something whereby we yield our thoughts and actions and allow it to influence our decision making. It might be a parent, teacher or boss. It may be someone in history or it may be you.

Hopefully, if we are wise and humble, our ultimate authority source will be God and His Word. Such was not the case for the Edomites, Israel's perennial enemy. For years, the Edomites lived a life of pride and arrogance that fueled an attitude of self-confidence and indifference toward those who have been victimized. They had become their own authority, and it led them to a life of wickedness.

We can see this same attitude creeping into our own nation.

God has blessed America, but we have taken it for granted. We have become great in our own eyes and believe we are

invaluable to God's providential plan. It is also apparent that other nations do not see us in the same light as they did in the past.

About 10 years ago, I had the privilege to travel to the Middle East for 21 days.

We visited six different countries and explored dozens of ancient sites. I assumed because I was an American that people would want to speak with me and inquire about life in the United States. I soon realized that much of the Middle East did not see America as a great country.

Certainly, a large part of their attitude toward America came from Islamic influence, but, many saw America as an arrogant nation that had lost its Christian influence.

How do you see America? Are we becoming more prideful and less dependent on God? Patriotism is good and right, but has our attitude as a nation become an affront to God?

If so, how do we respond as Christians?

One thing is for certain. If we do not repent and humble ourselves as a nation we can expect the same outcome as Edom – a future that I do not care to experience.

January 13

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

January 20

Unseal the Indictment!

Focal Passages: Amos 1:1-2; 2:6-8; 3:6-8, 13-15

The book of Amos opens with the prophet delivering a series of oracles proclaiming that no one can escape the consequences of their actions – not Israel (2:6-6:16) or Israel's neighbors (1:2-2:5). In these first chapters we see a brutally honest portrait of universal justice coming from the omniscient and all-powerful God of the universe. Amos 4 is crystal clear; God is the sovereign King over all creation.

When the prophet unseals God's indictment against the guilty, one might expect to see judgment visiting the foreign pagan nations. But Amos, as Professor Heath Thomas argues, looks past the whitewash to expose the decay of God's people underneath. Contrary to all external appearances God's people were guilty and "ripe" for God's judgment. Amos proclaims that God's people cannot do anything right (3:10).

But the good news is that God comes to Israel with both judgment for sin and

promises of restoration. Prof. Thomas says God's judgment is not to irradiate but to reconcile. In a very real sense Israel's salvation is found through their judgment. As we look back from this side of the cross we read Amos and see very clearly that the judgment and restoration of God's people anticipates the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. Jesus fully consumed the judgment of God for our sin so that we could be restored back to God. The demand for righteousness was fulfilled in Jesus who did everything right! Because of Jesus' imputed righteousness Christians stand not under God's wrath, but in the safe shadow of Jesus' cross. The universal justice of God that we experience in Amos 1-4 is still a haunting reality today, and salvific escape is found only in Jesus Christ (Gal. 3:13-14; Rom. 3:9-31). Unless there is true repentance, no one can escape the judgment of God.



MATT CAPPS
Associate pastor for adult ministries, Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem

Value All Human Life

Focal Passages: Genesis 1:26-27; Exodus 1:15-17; Psalm 139:13-16; Mark 10:13-16

Orthodox, protestant, evangelical, conservative Christians must value human life, from conception until death. Genesis 1:26-31 informs us that God intimately created humans in His likeness, male and female. We see that humanity is set apart and crowned with authority over the earth and its creatures, a position of honor and responsibility. Theologian John Hammett rightly argues that 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.

The utterly depraved and unimaginably horrible actions of the gunman in Newtown, Conn., are close as I write this study.

The emotions are raw and fresh as our

country weeps over the unjust slaying of the 20 beautiful children, and the 6 brave adults who lost their lives that day. For we know that all human beings are, as Psalm 139 describes, knitted together in their mother's womb.

The God of the universe has His loving eyes on every single one of us and always has even when we were "unformed substance," to use modern language "an embryo." But we also understand that we live in an entirely broken world.

In horrible events like these we are brought to the precipice of life and forced to look down at our hopeless plight because of sin.

As Christians we run to the cross, where the truly innocent God-man gave his life in our place, for our sin, to make all things new.

And while death is a perpetual reminder of our fragile humanity, we have a greater and eternal hope. That one day Christ will return.

And in that day He will wipe away every tear from our eyes, and death shall be no more (Revelation 21).

College

Continued from page 1

them about Jesus.” Lally, a student from Baptist College of Florida in Graceville, was part of an early-arriving group of students who built living quarters for subsequent groups and began mud-out efforts with Alabama disaster relief volunteers.

This represents a new level of student involvement in SBDR efforts, laying a groundwork for the next generation of people involved in the critical ministry. Last year more than 300 Liberty University students worked in an SBDR response following Hurricane Irene in upstate New York.

“College students have a strong desire to be involved in these types of opportu-

nities,” said Fritz Wilson, NAMB’s SBDR executive director.

Wilson also said the college students are providing a much-needed cadre of volunteers during the holidays.

With service times lasting a week, students will fill a need left by traditional disaster relief volunteers who have spent more than a month in the area.

“Many of our regular volunteers who’ve been responding for over a month simply have used up a lot of their [vacation] time,” Wilson said.

“The college students are willing to say, ‘I can carve out this week’ during their winter breaks and still spend the

holidays with their families.”

Through student efforts, Southern Baptists also are tapping into new opportunities for church planting and other ministry in the Northeast.

Since Sandy made landfall, N.C. Baptists, alone, have provided 596,000 meals, completed 520 projects, and reported six professions of faith. All Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteers have served a total of 1.75 million meals, cleaned debris from nearly 900 homes and made 4,300-plus ministry contacts.

Volunteers have shared the gospel with some 775 people resulting in more than 80 professions of faith.

But the long-term gospel impact SBDR volunteers are having on New York will reveal itself in the weeks, months and years to come, leaders said.

“The response of these student volunteers to the Northeast not only is building our ability to respond to disaster, but it’s also building in these younger volunteers a greater understanding of mission work in North America,” NAMB President Kevin Ezell said.

Southern Baptists and others who want to donate to the disaster relief operations can contact their state conventions or contribute to NAMB’s disaster relief fund. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

FULL-TIME PASTOR. Hinshaw Street Baptist Church, of North Wilkesboro, NC, is prayerfully seeking the man God has chosen to be our pastor. We are seeking applicants with a Southern Baptist background. Mail resumes to HSBC Pastor Search, Hinshaw Street Baptist Church, PO Box 396, North Wilkesboro, NC 28659. Resumes will be accepted until January 25, 2013.

Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church in Sanford, NC, is searching for a **senior pastor** with strong leadership skills, capable of leading a pastoral staff of 4 members. JHBC is very mission minded both internationally and locally. We are a diverse/intergenerational congregation of 400+. Our focus is on building relationships and family ministry. Our church is dually aligned with CBF and SBC. We require ministry preparation credentials from an accredited university/divinity school. We offer a competitive salary and benefit package. Send all resumes to 316 W. Main St., Sanford, NC 27332, or electronically at pastorsearch@jhbc.org. Check out our website for more information about the position www.jhbc.org.

Full-Time Senior Pastor. Called man of God who believes scripture is the inerrant, spirit-inspired Word of God. Will be gifted teacher; strong communication skills, evangelism with vision for our church and personal spiritual vision. Minimum education: graduate of seminary, divinity school or Bible school; minimum five years pastoral experience. Fellowship Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 306, Hudson, NC 28638. Résumés through January 14, 2013.

Seeking **part-time Hispanic pastor** for Sunset Avenue Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, NC. Candidate must be bilingual (Spanish/English), a US citizen or have legal documentation. Responsible for preaching, discipleship, outreach, and pastoral care in our Hispanic congregation. Email resume to: bunrue@fiveoaksdesign.com with Hispanic Pastor Search Committee in subject line.

Denomination

Green River Baptist Association of 35 churches will accept resumes for **Director of Missions** until Feb. 28, 2013. Prospective candidates should hold ministry preparation credentials from an accredited college and a minimum of 5 years pastoral experience. Send resumes to: Personnel Committee Green River Baptist Association, 668 North Washington St., Rutherfordton, NC 28139.

Church Staff

Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Cherryville, NC, seeks **full-time Minister of Music and Youth**. He must be a dedicated Christian of Baptist faith having had a life-changing encounter with Jesus Christ. He must understand and be strongly supportive of the Southern Baptist Convention in principle, theology and practice. He must have musical training, be able to lead and teach music, and work with the Youth Committee to develop and guide a structured program for our youth (sixth grade through twelfth grade). Send resume to info@mtzionbaptistcherryville.com.

Cub Creek Baptist Church, Wilkesboro, NC, is seeking a **part-time or bi-vocational** (20 hr/wk) **Minister to Children/Youth** to coordinate teen/children ministries. Send resumes to Brian Sampson, Pastor, Cub Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 86, Wilkesboro, NC 28697.

FULL-TIME PRESCHOOL AND CHILDREN’S PASTOR. The First Baptist Church of Mauldin, S.C., is seeking a full-time preschool and children’s pastor. Send resumes to First Baptist Mauldin, 150 South Main Street, Mauldin, SC 29662, or email wleonard@fbcmauldin.org. For more information on the job description and profile, visit www.fbcmauldin.org.

Gospel Center Baptist Church, Supply, NC, seeks **part-time Youth Leader** to work with grades 7-12. We’re a conservative church looking to grow our youth program. We are affiliated with the SBC and BBA. Salary range \$6,800.00 to \$7,800.00. For further information call Nathan 910-612-1370 or email resumes to gospelcenter@atmc.net. Deadline 2/1/2013.

Ocean View Baptist Church, located in Kill Devil Hills, NC, is seeking a year-round **part-time youth minister** with experience. Those interested send resume to Pastor Steve Siegrist, 902 S. Virginia Dare Trail, Kill Devil Hills, NC 27948; phone: 252-202-5024.

Hillmon Grove Baptist Church, Cameron, NC, seeks **part-time Worship Leader/Music Director**. Blended worship service style with choir. Estimated 15 to 20 hours per week. Contact hgbsecretary@gmail.com or 919-499-4913.

Full-Time Youth Pastor. Swann Station Baptist Church of Sanford, NC, an SBC affiliate, is seeking an individual to serve as a full-time pastor to our youth (grades 6-12). The individual will be responsible for evaluating, supervising, planning, implementing and leading a Christ-centered youth ministry. Qualifications include a bachelor’s degree as well as some theological training. Experience with youth is required and an ordained minister is preferred. Please send resume by February 15, 2013, to Swann Station Baptist Church, ATTN: Search Committee, 7592 Hwy 87 South, Sanford, NC 27332 or email to swannstationbc@christian.net.

Macedonia Baptist Church, Raleigh/Cary, NC, seeks a **part-time** (20 hour per week) **minister of music**. For more information, visit <http://mbcnc.org/musicminister>.

Miscellaneous

NCBAM needs teams of 2-4 servant volunteers to “adopt” an aging adult and provide friendly visits 1-2 hours a week. All counties needed; training provided. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

Needed: Used folding metal chairs and tables to purchase. Please contact Sweetwater Baptist Church in North Augusta, SC, at (803) 279-2821.

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Cooperative

Continued from page 5

Statistical differences

Significant statistical differences emerged among pastors based on average weekly worship attendance and age.

Older pastors are more likely to support the Cooperative Program and place a higher value on the ministries it supports. Older pastors, 55-64 (57 percent) and 65-plus (60 percent), are more likely to indicate the entities use their Cooperative Program contributions effectively, compared to younger pastors, 18-44 (45 percent) and 45-54 (48 percent). Older pastors also are more likely than younger pastors to say the Cooperative Program supports SBC ministries and missions their church values: 65-plus (80 percent), 55-64 (77 percent), 45-54 (69 percent) and 18-44 (68 percent).

Pastors age 65 and over are the most likely to say improving the vitality and health of existing churches (41 percent) and developing an evangelism strategy for North America are essential (38 percent).

Nearly 50 percent of 65-plus pastors say planting in North America's urban centers is a high priority or essential, compared to 40 percent of pastors age 18-44.

In regard to sending and supporting

overseas missionaries, larger churches, with average attendance of 100-249 (42 percent) and 250-plus (47 percent), are more likely to say it is a high priority compared to smaller churches, 0-49 (33 percent) and 50-99 (29 percent).

When asked about engaging in direct international missions projects, differences mainly emerged according to church size. Churches with an average attendance of 0-49 (16 percent) are the most likely to select "not a priority." Churches with 250-plus attendees (53 percent) are the most likely to say it is a "high priority" while those with 0-49 attendees (17 percent) are the least likely to say so.

Church contributions through CP

LifeWay Research also asked pastors about the decision their churches made regarding contributions to the Cooperative Program in the most recent budget process. The vast majority of churches (81 percent) decided to keep their CP giving the same as last year. Nearly twice as many churches raised their contribution (11 percent) as decreased it (6 percent). Three percent said their church does not contribute to the CP.

Of the 177 churches making a change in their giving to the Cooperative Program, 41 percent increased it by less than 2 percentage points; 22 percent increased it by more than 2 percentage points. Ten percent of churches decreased their contribution by less than 2 percentage points while 26 percent decreased their contribution by more than 2 percentage points.

The final question on the survey referred to the "1% CP Challenge," an effort by the SBC Executive Committee to encourage all Southern Baptist churches to raise their Cooperative Program contributions by 1 percentage point of their church's undesignated contributions. Nearly 40 percent of pastors had not heard of the 1% CP Challenge. Another 42 percent said they have not accepted the challenge.

Only 7 percent of pastors said their church had accepted the 1% CP Challenge with another 8 percent planning to do so

in the next budget year.

Methodology: The survey of 1,066 SBC pastors was conducted April 1-May 11, 2012. Surveys were mailed to the senior pastor with the option of completing the survey online.

The mailing list was randomly drawn from a stratified list of all Southern Baptist churches (7,000 in the South and 1,000 each in the Northeast, West and Midwest).

Responses were weighted to reflect the geographic distribution and worship attendance of the churches. The sample provides 95 percent confidence that the sampling error does not exceed plus or minus 3.0 percent. Margins of error are higher in subgroups.


(EDITOR'S NOTE – Carol Pipes is editorial manager for LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention. This article first appeared in SBC LIFE, journal of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.) **BR**



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