



BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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LOVE THAT LASTS Marriage takes work, PASTORS MAY STRUGGLE more than most

Jim Henry will never forget the time his wife made an appointment to see him.

Henry, who was pastor of Two Rivers Baptist Church in Nashville, Tenn. at the time, said he thought his wife, Jeanette, was playing a joke on him at first.

"Mrs. Henry, is there anything ... I can help you with?" he asked her playfully.

Jeanette looked him straight in the eye and said, "You've got time for everybody else, and

See Marriage page 8-9

By SHAWN HENDRICKS
& K. ALLAN BLUME
BR Managing Editor
& *BR* Editor

(CreationSwap photo)

Lights for Life event honors victims, offers forgiveness

BR staff

A service of healing, repentance and forgiveness was held Jan. 22 for people of all denominations to mark the 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade, which legalized abortion on demand across the nation.

Around 200 people, representing more than 20 churches, attended the third annual Lights for Life service at First Presbyterian Church in Hendersonville. The event featured a variety of testimonies, and it offered a time for those who were involved in an abortion to seek forgiveness.

A table at the front of the auditorium held more than 560 candles, each one representing 100,000 abortions. The total number of candles represented 56 million abortions that have taken place since the Roe decision.

The service was co-sponsored by the Henderson County Ministerial Association, Open Arms Crisis Pregnancy Center and area churches.

The event was an opportunity for people of many

different denominations to unite on the controversial issue, said Sam Gibbs, with the Carolina Baptist Association in Hendersonville.

There are certain things different denominations disagree on, but the abortion issue brings them together, said Gibbs after the service.

"We can't speak for the whole country, but we can for Henderson County," Gibbs said. "And we can save lives and are saving lives [through education and awareness]."

"We as Christians must unite and begin to speak [about] how wrong ... killing babies is," added Becky Garrett, director of women's ministry at Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville.

"I personally have a beautiful, precious adopted boy. Thank God he [wasn't aborted]."

Between 35 and 40 percent of all women in the United States will have had an abortion by the time they reach the age of 45, said Carolyn Poteet, vice chairman

See Lights page 4



Participants in Lights for Life light candles at First Presbyterian Church in Hendersonville. The third annual event on Jan. 22 recognized the 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade. More than 56 million abortions have taken place since the Supreme Court decision. (Contributed photo)

Sandy Branch committed to serving community

BSC Communications

Sandy Branch Baptist Church in Bear Creek may not be the largest congregation in the state, but this group of believers in Chatham County is committed to making a difference for the Kingdom in their rural community.

"The mission field is right here; we have to go to it," said Marc Sanders, Sandy Branch pastor. "There's no reason why even this small church can't be doing something to impact the community."

Sanders is leading the congregation of 110 people to shift the focus from self to serving others, and to being more aware of the opportunities God provides to share the gospel. One way they are seeking to make a difference is through serving their local schools.

"We have a lot of teachers in our church, and my wife is a teacher. The need has always been there," he said.

Sandy Branch began by giving Chatham Central High School teachers a welcome packet after the summer break and offering to help alleviate some of their work with extra-curricular activities.

The church started providing what principal Mitchell Stensland called "we appreciate you" activities, such as sponsoring pre-game meals for home football games and providing a meal for graduating seniors before their baccalaureate service.

They also host 5th Quarter, which is held at the church after each home football game.

"Marc realized the amount of time teachers were putting in holding events after football games to give the students a place to go. ... He offered to have his church sponsor those activities to alleviate the school staff from doing those kinds of duties," Stensland said.

"The teachers were volunteering their time in addition to everything else they do." At times the 5th Quarter events draw nearly half the student body of Chatham Central. Stensland shared that the partnership his school enjoys with Sandy Branch is part of his overall goal to see the entire community engaged in the life of the school.

"It's important for the students to see that the community supports the school, and it is important for the adults to be involved in the lives of the children. What Sandy Branch

does is part of the puzzle, a critical part, that makes up a successful school," he said.

More recently, Sandy Branch began an effort to help reduce hunger, as about half of the students in Chatham County receive lunch free or at a reduced price.

Sandy Branch started a feeding program at two schools and assists with a program at a third school. They help feed about 45 children each week by sending backpacks of food home with the children on Friday afternoons. The Sandy Branch youth group helps prepare the food bags each week, and Sanders said church members donated food, as well as their time, to help with the

feeding programs.

"Serving in our community has pushed us to do missions elsewhere," Sanders said.

Sandy Branch adopted a school in the coalfields region of Kentucky, and last year during Easter delivered about 1,000 shoeboxes (similar to Operation Christmas Child).

The church has also prepared care packages for teachers, provided school supplies and helped provide a new computer program for the school.

During Christmas, Sandy Branch adopted children from the school and provided gifts for students in need.

"Our children are an unreached people group," Sanders said. "More and more we see the need to reach children with the gospel."

Sandy Branch is also partnering with other churches to make a difference. In 2012, they assisted a new church plant in Asheboro with their Vacation Bible School. Area churches are also joining them in their outreach to the school in Kentucky.

This year, Sandy Branch is hoping to expand its shoebox ministry with the help of other churches and is partnering with First Baptist Church in Coeburn, Va., to provide prom dresses for young ladies in the coalfields region of Virginia.

"A little can go a long way," Sanders said. "All we have to do is look to see where we can serve."

To find out more about helping with the shoebox or other ministries, call (919) 837-5331. Visit sandybranch-church.org. **BR**



MARC SANDERS

**"Serving in our community has pushed us to do missions elsewhere."
— Marc Sanders**

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OPPORTUNITY CORNER

Youth choirs join in song

Campbell Divinity School in Buies Creek will host the Segue Youth Choir Concert on Feb. 16 at 6:30 p.m. in Butler Chapel. Snyder Memorial Baptist Church in Fayetteville is co-sponsoring the free concert. The choirs include First Baptist Church in Southern Pines as the featured choir; First Baptist Church in Cary; New Hope Baptist Church in Raleigh; Wilkesboro Baptist Church in Wilkesboro; First Baptist Church in Smithfield; First Baptist Church in Wilson; and Snyder Memorial. Contact Sara Barefoot at sarab@snydermbc.com.

Financial seminars scheduled in state

This month join other pastors, church staff members and lay leaders at the Ministerial Tax Issues & Compensation Planning for Church Employees seminar. Seminar leaders are Don McLeod of GuideStone Financial Resources and Johnny Ross of the Baptist State Convention of N.C. The event will cover what is new in 2013, establishing compensation policies, best practices, and more. Different locations for the event are:

- **Feb. 18** – Buncombe Association in Asheville;
- **Feb. 19** – First Baptist Church in Hildebran;

● **Feb. 19** – Cabarrus Association in Concord;

● **Feb. 20** – Pilot-Mountain Association in Winston-Salem;

● **Feb. 21** – Trinity Baptist Church in Raleigh; and

● **Feb. 21** – Adamsville Baptist Church in Goldsboro.

Contact Betty Pleasant for the schedule and to make reservations by Feb. 11 at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5595, or bpleasant@ncbaptist.org. Visit ncbaptist.org.

Women's Missions Day at ACC tournament

Women's Missions Day at the ACC Women's Basketball Tournament will be March 9 at the Greensboro coliseum. Bring your women's group for the event, which will include Fan Fest, faith and career presentations, lunch and the ACC tournament semifinals.

Register for \$14 per person by Feb. 27. Visit wmunc.org for more information and a registration form.

Summits focus on worship issues

The Baptist State Convention of N.C. is offering three Worship Summits that focus on leading corporate worship.

Topics covered include worship styles, how culture should impact worship, biblical basis of worship and

more. Kenny Lamm will lead the summits, which are part of Worship Leader Boot Camp events. Events are March 9 at Hephzibah Baptist Church in Wendell; Aug. 24 in the Charlotte region; Oct. 26 in eastern N.C.

The cost is \$12; or \$5 without lunch. Contact Lamm at klamm@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5638.

To register and learn more, visit worshipsummit.org.

Revival conference set for Triangle

Life Action Ministries will be holding a Thirst Conference March 10-13 at First Baptist Church in Cary.

The conference begins Sunday during the church's regularly scheduled worship times in the morning and evening. It continues Monday through Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. Life Action travels across the country sharing God's revival truths with churches.

Thirst Conference will include teaching, family seminars, music, children and youth programs. The focus of the event is practically living out biblical values in today's society.

It is free and open to the public. Contact First Baptist Cary with questions at (919) 467-6356 or visit caryfbc.org.

Event for students focuses on 'How the Bible Informs All of Life'

High school students are welcome March 21 at the College at Southeastern in Wake Forest for its third annual conference titled Truth and College: How the Bible Informs All of Life. From 9 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. students will learn about how the Bible and the mission of God touch every aspect of Life. The cost is \$10 per student including registration, a T-shirt, book and lunch. Sign up at sebs.edu/truthandcollege. For assistance, contact (919) 761-2283.

Children/youth tutoring

March 28-30, join Mt. Zion Baptist Association at its office in Burlington for a Literacy: Tutoring Children and Youth (TCY) workshop led by Kathy Boyd. Participants will earn a TCY North American Mission Board certification through LoveLoud and learn how to jump start an outreach ministry for children and youth.

Workshop times are 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday-Friday and 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday. Register with Mt. Zion Association by March 18; the fee is \$30 including the text book and Saturday's breakfast and lunch. Contact Kathy Boyd and Mt. Zion at (336) 226-0249 or mtzionmission@gmail.com.

Luter receives Carver Medal

Baptist Press

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Fred Luter has been awarded the Carver Medal of Simpson College. The Iowa school hailed Luter as exemplifying the commitment and service of the late agricultural scientist, inventor and Christian, George Washington Carver.

John Byrd, president of the private United Methodist Church-related college in Indianola, recognized Luter as courageous and committed to faith in Christ in the face of challenging obstacles.

"I believe George Washington Carver would have recognized some of his own experiences in the life of Rev. Fred Luter," Byrd said.


Byrd recognized Luter's achievements as the first African American elected as SBC president but also as pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans. The college created the Carver Medal in 2008 to annually honor individuals who have distinguished themselves through service, leadership, conviction and a dedication to humanitarian issues, while advancing the fields of science, education, the arts or religion. **BR**


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Lights

Continued from page 1

with the board for Open Arms. “That number just blew me away,” said Poteet, who also is on staff at First Presbyterian Church in Hendersonville.

“You think how many women are sitting in the church pew who ... are carrying this guilt and shame and feel like they’re not worthy of God’s love.”

“We know grandparents who said OK [for a loved one to] have an abortion who are grieving,” she said. “There are a lot of men who suffer silently about this and carry that guilt and shame all of their lives.”

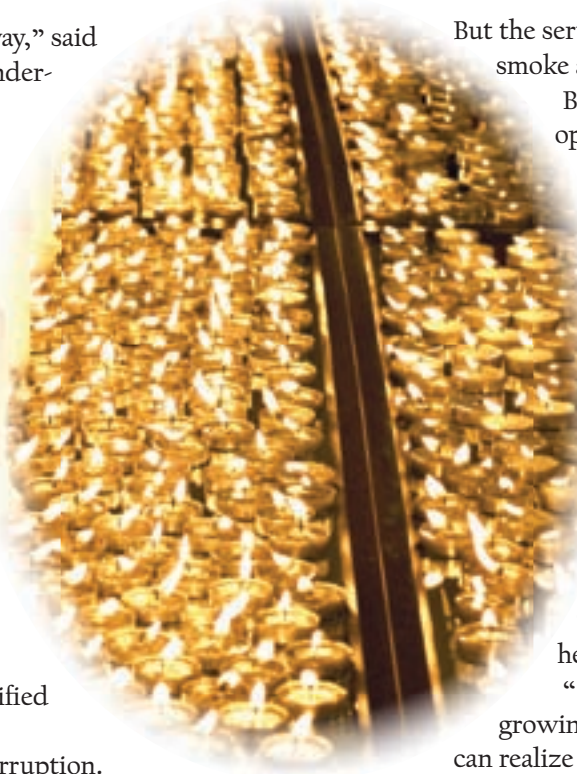
During the service, everyone was invited to write down a sin they had committed on a piece a paper. All of the paper was collected in a metal garbage can and later burned.

‘The scent of abortion rising’

One portion of the service was not planned. A few of the 560 candles unexpectedly melted down and started to catch the table on fire.

An elder used a small fire extinguisher to put out the flame. This caused a plume of smoke to trigger the fire alarm that notified the local fire department.

Those in attendance later chuckled as they recalled the interruption.



But the service continued forward as planned, with a few references to smoke added to the overall message.

Bill Campbell, pastor of First Presbyterian Church, seized the opportunity with his message.

“He said, ‘The smoke and the smells that we have right now are like the scent of abortion rising into God’s nostrils,’” Poteet said.

“All these lights have been extinguished, and think about all of the children’s lives [who] have been snuffed out. It was just a powerful image.

“God used it in an amazing way.”

Those involved with the service hope other similar events will be held annually in churches around the country. This service is the first step in helping set people free of the guilt and shame of abortion, said Joyce Wright, director of Open Arms Crisis Pregnancy Center.

“America has been so desensitized about abortion and ‘it’s really not a baby,’” she said. “It really is a baby, and God’s heart is bleeding over this.

“[This event is] not about Hendersonville. It’s about this thing growing and being bigger and spreading all over the country so we can realize the mistakes we’ve made.” **BR**

AROUND THE STATE

Obituaries

JAMES ERNEST WEST, 89, died Dec. 16, 2012

He served in the U.S. Army during World War II in North Africa and Italy and graduated from Wake Forest College (now University) and Southeastern Seminary. He also received additional training in pastoral care at Baptist Hospital in Winston-Salem and Dorothea Dix Hospital in Raleigh.

West’s call to ministry began in 1951. He pastored churches in Virginia and North Carolina: Forestville Baptist, Wake Forest; Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, Raleigh and Calvary Baptist Church, Durham, where he served from 1970-1988 and was pastor emeritus. After retiring, West was interim pastor at churches in Durham: Lakewood, Plainview, Leesville Road and Homestead.

He is survived by his wife, Esther Magdaline Phillips; two sons, Samuel James and Joseph Mark; and three grandsons.

Memorials to the Rev. James E. West Memorial Scholarship Fund, 1204 Lynn Rd., Durham, NC 27703.

HOWARD G. BARNES, 90, died Jan. 5, 2013, at Caldwell Hospice and Palliative Care – Lenoir.

He was a United States World War II veteran stationed in Italy.

A graduate of Gardner Webb Junior College and Fruitland Bible School, Barnes had 51 years in pastoral service, including Calvary Baptist Church, Mars Hill; Southside Baptist Church, Morganton; Phaniels Baptist Church, Rowan

County; and he retired after 20 years at Baton Baptist Church.

He is survived by his wife of 64 years, Marline Hodges Barnes; son, Terry M. Barnes of Lenoir; daughter, Sherry Sipe of Granite Falls; one brother, Harold B. Barnes of Florida; four grandchildren; and one great-grandchild.

Memorials to: N.C. Baptist Men’s Disaster Relief, c/o First Baptist Church of Hudson, 345 Main St., Hudson, NC 28638, or to First Baptist Church of Hudson, 345 Main St., Hudson, NC 28638.

NORMAN LEE SIMPSON, 77, died Jan. 11, 2013, in Smithfield.

An ordained minister, Simpson has pastored Sandy Bottom Missionary Baptist Church, Sandy Bottom, and most recently had served as interim pastor at a number of churches in Johnston County. He is survived by his wife, Doris Simpson; five children, Frances Phoebus, Bryan Simpson, Linda Ashouri, Brenda Simpson, and Dawn Simpson; nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren. Memorials to: Big Sky Fellowship, P.O. Box 9786, Helena, MT 59604.

VIRGIL HOLLOWAY, 82, died Jan. 22, 2013.

He served in the U.S. Air Force.

He was a member of the Haywood Baptist Association, past president of the Pisgah Camp Meeting Association, and director of missions for the Tuckaseegee Baptist Association. He served as pastor and teacher for more than 50 years at many area churches including, West End Baptist, Community Baptist, Holly Mount Baptist, Yadkin Baptist, Pleasant Balsam Baptist, Pole Creek Baptist, Hyland Heights, Grandview Baptist, Maranatha Baptist, and Beulah Baptist. He is survived by his wife of 28 years, Valerie Holloway; three daughters, Ann Plemmons, Donna McCracken and Audria Hempel, all of Candler; two stepdaughters, Patsy Plemmons of Surfside Beach, S.C. and Peggy Messer, of Waynesville; two stepsons, Tommy Eavenson of Canton and Scotty Eavenson of Waynesville; two brothers, Lee Holloway of Georgia and Jerry Holloway of Mississippi; many grandchildren; and great-grandchildren.

Memorials to: Calvary Road Baptist Church Building Fund, 77 Sutton Loop, Waynesville NC 28786.

Staff changes

Farrington Road Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, has called **JASON HUGHES** as pastor. Hughes was associate pastor of youth activities at Farrington Road Baptist.

MICHAEL LEWELLYN has been called as pastor to Cedar Branch Baptist Church, Jamesville. Lewellyn was an associate pastor for West Side Baptist Church, Greenwood, S.C.

Bible Missionary Baptist Church, Wilson, has called **MICHAEL JOHNSON** as minister of music. Johnson previously served Kenly United Methodist Church, Kenly.

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Upcoming events to equip, encourage girls, women

By MELISSA LILLEY | BCS Communications

About 10 years ago Erin Davis was asked to lead a girls' Bible study about true identity and beauty. Even as a youth pastor's wife, Davis was initially unsure about how to lead the study because she, too, once struggled with identity and an eating disorder.

As Davis led the girls in Bible study they learned together and were reminded that their identity is found in Jesus Christ.

"God just lit it on fire from there. I've been speaking on it ever since," she said. "God gives us assurance after assurance that He loves us. My passion is equipping women of all ages to really see the depths of God's truth."

Davis is the featured speaker for the upcoming Mother.Daughter Retreat and GEM Retreat, sponsored by Embrace Women's Missions and Ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Both events will be held March 22-

23, with the Mother.Daughter Retreat at Caraway Conference Center and the GEM Retreat at Camp Caraway.

Davis, founder of Graffiti Ministries, will speak to both groups about the importance of studying God's Word.

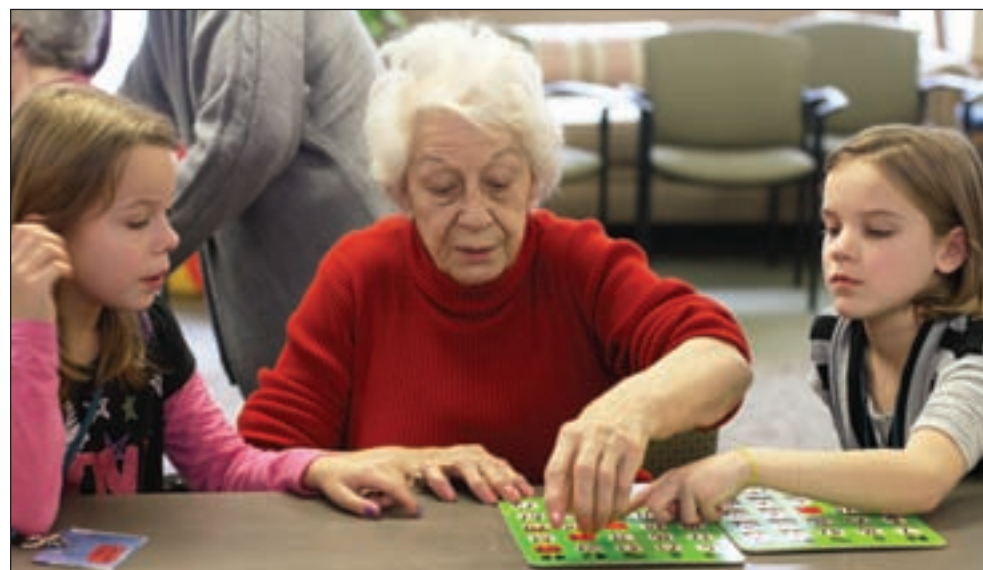
"We can always go to the Word for any of our questions about ourselves and the world around us," she said.

Davis founded Graffiti Ministries to help teenage girls struggling in the areas of identity, self-esteem and true beauty. She will also help participants understand that identity is not based on what others think about them or being part of the crowd.

"We can trace it all the way back to the Garden of Eden. [Satan] is really saying to Eve that who she is isn't good enough. We are all vulnerable to insecurity."

GEM (Girls Embrace Ministry) began in 2011 to help girls in grades 7-12 realize their worth in Jesus Christ and His desire to shape and mold them for His Kingdom purposes.

GEM equips girls and their adult lead-



Girls help a Cross Road Retirement Community resident play a game during the 2012 GEM retreat. First through fourth grade girls and their mothers served together cleaning inside and outside the facility as well as spending time with residents. (BSC file photo by Alexandra King)

ers for ministry in evangelism, discipleship and missions.

The GEM and Mother.Daughter events will both focus on 1 Peter 3:3-4. The Mother.Daughter retreat, for girls in grades 1-6, also seeks to help teach girls and their mothers how to live a life that is devoted to the Lord and His purposes.

"If you want to invest in your girls, this event would benefit you tremendously. The earlier you start investing, the better your relationship will be," Davis said. "Parents are the biggest influence on their kids' spiritual beliefs. They are listening to you."

Both events feature various break out sessions from leaders such as Marlana Branning, who will soon complete her master's degree in women's studies from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. As part of her course study, Branning served with Embrace director Ashley Allen through an internship and helped with the GEM kick off events. "The women are so hungry to have vibrant ministries, but they don't have the resources. That's where Ashley comes in," Branning said. "I'm thankful for her ministry."

Branning is preparing to begin a full time position as a girls ministry director, a role she has prayed about since taking her first women's studies class in college.

"I fell in love with the idea of working with women, and knowing that's what we're called to do in scripture," she said.

"I'm big on relational ministry. That's what sticks with you; that's what will always be there," she said.

Leadership training

Also upcoming for Embrace is the April 11-12 LifeWay You Lead/Embrace Leadership Training in Greensboro. Embrace is partnering with LifeWay Christian Resources to offer a two-day training for women called into leadership roles in

local churches and associations for ministry in evangelism, discipleship, missions involvement and leadership.

Training topics include women's ministry basics, engaging younger women in ministry, ministering to women in crisis, spiritual disciplines for leaders, mentoring, pursuing godliness and a lifestyle of prayer.

Along with Allen, the keynote speakers include Rhonda Kelley, professor of women's ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary; and Chris Adams, senior women's ministry specialist at LifeWay.

"The main focus is women's ministry in the local church," Adams said. "We want women to know how to reach and disciple women for Christ."

For 18 years Adams has served with LifeWay in women's ministry. Prior to joining the LifeWay staff she served in women's ministry in the local church and the Lord increased her desire to work with women.

Adams said the training event helps provide women with practical ministry tools.

"We want to equip women to do ministry 24 hours a day, and to not just come to the church and do ministry," she said.

Adams encouraged women to bring resources to the training that they have found useful in their own ministry, as women will have opportunity to learn from one another and share resources.

"When you see life change, you can't believe you get to be part of ministry where the Kingdom is being impacted," she said. "You see that God's truth really works in the lives of women. It's an incredible place to be."

For more information about these events and other Embrace opportunities, visit www.embracenc.org, email embracenc@ncbaptist.org or call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5561. **B3**

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Evangelists encouraged to embrace the call, seek vision

By **BUDDY OVERMAN** | BCS Communications

Nations and individuals experience irrecoverable moments, or times when decisions lead to eternal consequences, Frank Page told those gathered in January for the annual North Carolina Vocational Evangelists Conference at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia.

"I believe our nation is at that moment now. God help us," said Page, president and chief executive officer of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee. "I believe that men and women, boys and girls, come to irrecoverable moments. None of us can guarantee that we'll have another chance to get it right."

The evangelization department with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) sponsored the two-day conference Jan. 10-11. Page encouraged attendees to be attentive to opportunities to witness to those around them.

"As an evangelist, as a pastor, as a preacher, as ministers of the gospel, it is incumbent upon us to preach the gospel and to share the gospel because none of us know when we are sharing with some-



FRANK PAGE

one who desperately needs that word at that moment for that reason to make a decision at that time," he said.

The event also featured plenary sessions, comedy routines, and times of prayer and worship. In addition to Page, plenary speakers included Michael Sowers, BSC senior consultant for Great Commission Partnerships; Alvin Reid, associate dean of proclamation studies and evangelism professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Alex McFarland, director of the Center for Christian Worldview and Apologetics at North Greenville University; and Albert Long,



"When you are in churches be very careful not to just criticize teenagers but also encourage them," said Alvin Reid to vocational evangelists in January. (BSC photos by Buddy Overman)

evangelist and motivational speaker.

Vocational evangelists must recognize that their calling to share the gospel is a divine calling, Page said.

And when life is difficult, only the true call of God will sustain and encourage them to remain in ministry. He reminded evangelists to be faithful to what God has called them to do because much is at stake.

"If God called you where you are, then you better rest in that," Page said. "You better have clarity of call. You need to understand when God called you and what God called you to do. The call must not go unheeded. We are in desperate days."

Long encouraged those in attendance to live intentionally, with a focus on the gospel, and to lean on God's power every day. He added "Religion without reality breeds rebellion." McFarland, author of *The 10 Most Common Objections to Christianity*, said followers of Christ should live their life with the belief that "you and Jesus will sit down and hit the playback button."

Fresh vision

Reid challenged evangelists to stay true to their calling and to be initiators of revival among God's people. Revival in

its purest form always begins with God's people and not with the lost.

"Revival is something God does to the church that overflows in the harvest of souls. It is the people of God coming alive to God for the mission of God," he said. "You don't seek revival for what God will do; you seek revival for a fresh vision from God."

Instead of seeking a fresh vision from God, Reid said believers often desire a return to the norms and practices of previous decades.

He encouraged the audience to seek a fresh vision from God that will impact lostness in this generation.

"Thank God for the past, remember the past and the work of God, but move forward," he said. "I believe Christianity is advancing a movement of God and not maintaining the institution of God."

"If you go back and read the sermons of the great awakenings they did not preach three steps to revival. They preached the gospel," Reid said. "Don't preach a cross-less gospel. Don't preach a gospel without substitutionary atonement. In the middle of our faith is a bloody cross and a beautiful glorious resurrection."

Reid said another characteristic com-

mon among the great revivals of the past is that young people were always the catalyst. Despite growing numbers of young people leaving the church in recent decades, Reid is encouraged by the hunger of today's younger generation for spiritual truth.

"If they are learning trigonometry in high school they can learn theology in church. They want it," he said.

The key to reaching the younger generation is to teach them the depths of God's Word, Reid said. Be honest and truthful with them, love them unconditionally and give them grace to live out their faith.

"When you are in churches be very careful not to just criticize teenagers but also encourage them," he said. "Young people need encouragement, they need a vision and they need permission to live for God."

Elected officers at this year's event include: Royce Williams, president; Keith Kimball, vice president; Cindy Johnson, secretary/treasurer; and Randall Floyd, website/management.

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(EDITOR'S NOTE – The N.C. Vocational Evangelist's Fellowship and Biblical Recorder staff contributed to this story.) **BR**



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Sportsmen for Christ reaches local ‘rednecks’

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

Joe Williams, 57, hadn’t visited the woods in years. For the lifelong fisherman and hunter, being disabled and unable to navigate rugged terrain on foot has been frustrating – even depressing.

Williams, who lives in Sophia, N.C., was diagnosed with Myotonic Muscular Dystrophy as a young boy. But the debilitating symptoms didn’t begin until around 2005. The former mechanic now relies heavily on his wheelchair and walker to get around, and he spends most winter days inside.

“The cold makes me shake so bad that I can’t stand up,” said Williams, a member of Glenola Baptist Church in Archdale. “I can’t walk very far ... about 50 yards is as far as I could walk.”

But Williams returned to the woods this past December.

On Dec. 15, his church partnered with local businesses, the church’s women’s ministry and local hunters to provide an outreach to disabled hunters.

Willie Duvall and Tim Steen, pastor of Glenola, both were inspired by Williams’ condition and desired to hold an event

that would help get him back in a deer stand.

The event is part of a ministry called Sportsmen for Christ. The church started it a few months ago for those interested in hunting and fishing.

Williams was among nine other

disabled hunters – nearly all of them in wheelchairs – who participated in the hunt. About 95 percent of the day’s expenses – which included breakfast provided by a local Bojangles’ restaurant – were donated by the community, Duvall said.

“[The church] ended up with only \$300 or \$400 invested in the whole hunt,” he said.

Hydraulic lifts and a group of hunting guides helped Williams and other hunters get into deer stands about 20 feet off the ground. With a .270-caliber rifle that was provided, Williams ended the day with two deer. The entire group finished the hunt with six deer. It’s an experience Williams said he won’t forget anytime soon.

“The guys that went with me ... were super,” he said. “They ... did whatever they had to to get me out there. They helped me get the rifle up, so I could shoot it and held it for me.”

“Oh heavens, it was like going for the first time again,” he added. “After seven years of not being able to go, it was just like the first time all over again.”

“Until you see one of these people who are not able to hunt, and they kill their first deer,” Duvall later added. “Just seeing the look on their face. [It] not only changes their life but it will change your life.”

Most of the hunters left with deer meat from the day’s hunt. Leftover meat was given to the church’s food pantry for those in need. Every hunter received a gift bag that included a Bible.

Duvall shared about one hunter who began reading the Bible while someone drove him home that evening. The hunter asked if he could have a ride to church the next morning.

“Whether we killed any deer or not, that made the whole day worth it,” Duvall said.

Duvall hopes the church’s Sportsmen for Christ ministry will impact others in the days to come. The group meets twice a month at the church and invites guest speakers to share tips and information about hunting, fishing and related topics. Duvall said they plan to make the handicap hunt an annual event, and host other outdoor activities throughout the year. This month the group plans to

host a squirrel hunt, which will focus more on younger hunters. They also plan to hold a fishing event.

“On my way to church on Sundays when I cross the lake, I always see 10 or 15 boats out there fishing on Sunday morning,” Duvall said. “Those are the people we are trying to reach. Even if we just touch one person ... it’s worth it.”

It’s about reaching people where they are at, Steen said. “We’ve got a bunch of rednecks around here,” the pastor added. “I don’t mean that in a negative way, [but] you’ve got to do something that they’re interested in. You’ve just got to adapt to them. It’s not going to reach everybody, but this is one group of people that we can reach by doing this.”

“Whether it’s hunting deer, squirrel or turkey or fishing, whatever ... I believe God would be into that.” **BR**



Glenola Baptist Church in Archdale organized a special hunt for a group of disabled hunters. (Contributed photo)



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Marriage

Continued from page 1

now you're going to take time for me."

"The church was growing, and I thought I was doing a pretty good job at home," Henry said. "And I realized I wasn't."

Henry, who today is pastor emeritus of First Baptist Church Orlando after 28 years of service there, said that was his "kum-ba-ya" moment when he realized he needed to adjust his routine.

After 53 years of marriage, three grown children, five grandsons and one great grandson, Henry said that was a defining moment in his ministry. It stirred him to do a better job of balancing his schedule, not over committing himself to ministry, and carving out more "family appointment" time.

"Nobody taught me ... these things," said Henry, who pointed out that most young pastors aren't properly equipped to juggle family and ministry. "I was not taught anything like this at seminary."

And today's pastors are paying a heavy price – with divorce or leaving the ministry.

Now on an advisory committee with Care For Pastors, an organization that ministers to church leaders, Henry said 1,600 pastors are leaving the ministry every month.

And one of the main reasons is linked to marriage trouble. Every year more and more pastors are getting divorced, and church



It wasn't until Jim Henry's wife, Jeanette, made an appointment with him early in his ministry that he realized the mistake of placing ministry above family. (BP photo courtesy of First Baptist Orlando)

leaders – like Henry and others in North Carolina – are looking for ways to curb the trend.

Matt Chewning, a church planter in Boston, admits the first two years of giving birth to Netcast Church weren't easy on him and his wife, Beth, and their four children.

"It really was difficult on my wife and me," said Chewning, who got his start as an intern at 1.21 Church in Winston-Salem.

"There is a real enemy who is trying to attack your family. If the enemy can un-unite the husband and wife, that trickles into the church, and there will be disunity in the church."

Finding the balance meant saying "no" more often to the demands of ministry and saying "yes" to his family.

"Number one, it says to my wife, 'You are more important to me than our church,'" he said.

"'I'm not going to cheat on you with the church God has given us.' If I don't do certain things, I'm not hindering God's

ability to build this church. "Jesus is going to build this church."

Too many pastors transfer their loyalty from their families to their church once they begin their ministry, added Eddie Thompson, senior consultant for marriage and family ministry at the Baptist State Convention of N.C. Thompson counsels with pastors and their families and leads a variety of marriage conferences throughout the year.

"They don't mean to [transfer loyalty], but it's just the nature of the job," he said.

"This really hurts them in the long run."

The sooner pastors learn their families are a critical part of their ministry, the better off the ministry becomes, said Thompson. Pastors often become isolated from their families and friendships over time.

"Even though they are around a lot of people ... many pastors feel isolated," Thompson said. "Ask most women, 'Does your husband have a close friend? No. He doesn't.'"

"When somebody feels isolated this really opens up the doors strongly to temptation."

In addition to infidelity, pornography is a growing "plague" and "cancer" in the lives of many pastors, and it wreaks havoc on their families and their ministries.

"This is the number one call I get from staff members from across the state," Thompson said.

"Some are trapped in a world of pornography and don't like it one ounce. The access to pornography is just too easy."

Thompson cited a poll done

by Focus on the Family a few years ago that surveyed 2,000 pastors. The study asked them if they had viewed pornography in the last 20 days. Sixty-seven percent responded with "yes."

Pastors and church leaders must realize they are an "easy target," Thompson said. "You have the biggest target on your back than anybody."

Facebook creates another temptation for people – including pastors – to engage in inappropriate relationships and extramarital affairs. A study involving 600 divorce attorneys revealed that two thirds of divorces in the United States are linked to the social networking site.

"We see Facebook really as [having] an intensely negative effect on the family right now," Thompson said.

"This has really opened the door for pastors, just as much as everybody else."

Couples must establish boundaries with Facebook and other social networking sites. And congregations must also learn to be sensitive to the fact that pastors, and their families, deal with the same temptations and struggles everyone else encounters.

"Many of these pastors and wives are hurting deeply, but they never tell anybody," Thompson said. "They're so afraid, and they're so ashamed, that they can't make progress on their own. They just continue to exist in a marriage, in a family relationship that's not very good."

Thompson challenges pastors and their wives not to settle for "less of the marriage that God intended [them] to have." He said pastors and their wives can schedule an appointment for free counseling anytime. There also are convention-sponsored marriage conferences available throughout the year.



"There is a real enemy who is trying to attack your family. If your enemy can un-unite the husband and wife, that trickles into the church ..."
– Matt Chewning, church planter

Books

- *Leading on Empty: Refilling Your Tank and Renewing Your Passion* by Wayne Cordeiro
- *Dangerous Calling: Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry* by Paul David Tripp
- *Sacred Marriage* by Gary Thomas
- *Love and Respect* by Emerson Eggerichs
- *Visionary Marriage* by Rob and Amy Reinow

Marriage events

- **The Pastor's Juggling Act: A Pastor and Wife Getaway**, Ridgecrest Conference Center, Black Mountain, June 6-8

Also Oct. 24-26 at Fort Caswell on Oak Island

For more information contact Eddie Thompson at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5644. Thompson can also plan events for your church.

- **Festival of Marriage**, LifeWay Ridgecrest Conference Center, Black Mountain, Oct. 11-13. For more information call (800) 588-7222.

“Even though they are around a lot of people ... many pastors feel isolated. Ask most women, ‘Does your husband have a close friend? No. He doesn’t.’

– Eddie Thompson, Baptist State Convention senior consultant for marriage and family



But in order to get the help they need, pastors must overcome their fears and reach out for help.

While pastors face their own troubles, they usually have a church full of laymen, church staff and leaders struggling to hold their marriages together.

Scott and Holly Ladner, who have been married for 12 years, were one of those couples.

Today they co-teach a Sunday School class at Apex Baptist Church in Apex for young married couples. But during their first few years of marriage the couple, who now have a 6-year-old daughter, went through a “dark time.” They shared how for months they didn’t even kiss.

“What was amazing was that no-

body knew what was going on,” Holly said.

“There was not any infidelity. There was not any addiction. We were just fighting like cats and dogs.”

“We would go to church on Sunday morning, and we were great,” she said.

“We would smile. We were participating in Sunday School. To this day, we will have people tell us, ‘Are you kidding me? We had no idea.’ We were really wearing the mask well.”

But the couple sought counseling. They also started attending LifeWay’s Festival of Marriage at Ridgecrest.

“The only reason[s] Holly and I are still married is number one, Jesus Christ,” said Scott, who is a deacon in the church. “Number two, the ... Festival of Mar-

riage. It has saved our marriage, besides Jesus. And that’s no joke.”

Attending the annual marriage conference continues to be a part of their “an annual check-up.”

The Ladners hope their story inspires others to know that they aren’t alone and that marriage is worth the fight.

Holly said marriage is a journey, one that can be revealed and studied throughout scripture.

“The whole Bible is about marriage,” Holly said. “It’s about how much Christ loves His

bride ... this picture of us being the bride of Christ. It’s been beautiful the way the Lord has taught me through His Word about marriage. It is all about Him.” **BR**



Scott and Holly Ladner credit Jesus and their annual Festival of Marriage event attendance with saving their marriage. (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

Ministering to pastors becomes pastor's dream

By **BOB BURCHETTE** | Special to the Recorder

Darryl Love had a dream. He wanted to do something to help pastors in distress.

"I've had a passion to minister to pastors for about 15 years," said Love, 48.

Love, pastor of Crossover Community Church in High Point, wanted a place of respite for pastors and their spouses. It would be a place of tranquility, one where pastors would find encouragement and renewal.

"The dropout rate among pastors in all denominations is at an all-time high. We need to be there for them," Love said.

"Pastors are on call 24-7, and it's their families that pay the price. Pastors devote their lives to ministering to others but seldom do they have anyone minister to them."

Love's wife, Rhonda, shared her husband's dream. She first suggested that the big yellow house, a former bed and breakfast on Archdale Road, might be "just the place" for their shared dream.

Their dream grew bigger when they noticed a "for sale" sign on the lawn of that big house in October 2010.

Could this be an answer to their prayers for a place where they could establish Healing Place Ministries?

The two-story, foursquare home, with its wrap-around porch, was built at the turn of the 20th century when that style was popular. The place was filled with "warmness," Love said after inspecting the house.

The first time they inquired about the house "They wanted \$800,000 for the place, and there was no way we could afford to buy it," he said. The

Bouldin family had lived there for many years but the house had been sold at least a couple of times before the Loves became interested in buying it.

The Bouldin House seemed to be the impossible dream. However, the Loves refused to quit dreaming.

"We really believe a place of retreat for pastors is needed. We wanted to be instruments of that help. Pastors are there to help other people but there needs to be someone to help pastors when they have challenges.

"It might be a challenge that they created or something that was caused by others. But they still need a place for refreshing and sometimes restoration," Love said.

Darryl and Rhonda never lost interest in the 100-year-old house, with its sprawling 3 1/2 acres of land with tower-



Darryl and Rhonda Love, inset, have created Healing Place Ministries, a two-story home with a wrap-around porch to provide a place for pastors to retreat with their wives. (Contributed photos)

ing shade trees mixed with apple, peach, pear, plum, fig and nectarine trees.

Four months after the Loves first were unable to buy the house, what had appeared to be impossible became possible, Love said. The mortgage went into

default, and the day that the house went back on the market just happened to be the same day the Loves inquired about the house the second time. This

time they negotiated a purchase price – as they said – "was astronomically below" the earlier sale price.

A board of directors for Healing Place Ministries was formed and a non-profit (501c3) status was established. The Loves were then able to begin their new ministry in the roomy 4,500 square feet of floor space. Two weeks later they sold their upscale house that had been on the market for two years.

By July 2011, the Loves were ready to begin their ministry of – as they call it – "refreshing, refueling and restoring pastors to life long ministry." He also continues his duties at his church.

Several pastors and former pastors have since sought out the place for "renewal." The pastors traditionally stay three to five days and receive counseling, encouragement and have quiet time.

Located on the first floor of the house is a library of ministry materials available to guests.

Included in the retreat experience are assessments of pastors made through use of materials from the Gallup group to help them determine their spiritual strengths.

Through this assessment "we have been finding pastors spending more time on things they are less passionate and gifted for, rather than on what they are best fit for," Love said, "When I took this assessment, I felt like somebody gave me my life back. I knew then how to better spend my time.

"It is our desire at Healing Place to be a ministry partner to all who shepherd God's people. When we began this

journey we realized that the cost of most facilities would hinder pastors from taking a retreat," Love said. They have set a recommended price of \$125 per night, with scholarships available to those who can't pay the full price or even pay at all.

Pastors are finding restoration and refreshment at the ministry, and all have had positive things to say about their experience at Healing Place Ministries. One of the favorite places for pastors' tranquility has been sitting on that big front porch. "One pastor said he felt like that the porch was anointed," Love said.

Visit blessthepastor.com.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Bob Burchette, a retired writer/editor at the News & Record in Greensboro, can be reached at bburchette@triad.rr.com.) **BR**

**"The dropout rate among pastors ... is at an all-time high."
– Darryl Love**

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Students impacted by serving Hurricane Sandy victims

By BUDDY OVERMAN | BCS Communications

Although Mollie Jones hasn't decided on a career just yet, she knows she wants to devote her life to helping others and she isn't wasting any time.

Jones, a sophomore at Appalachian State University, was one of 42 college students from several North Carolina universities who volunteered to serve one week in New Jersey during Christmas break with North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM) disaster relief ministry.

The students divided into six teams and spent the week removing molded walls, flooring, insulation and ruined appliances from homes that were flooded when Hurricane Sandy made landfall last October. "I keep hearing the adults say it's such a sacrifice for us to be here, but I don't see it as a sacrifice," Jones said. "I would do this all the time if I could."

Jones responded to a call for volunteers from Gaylon Moss, NCBM volunteerism coordinator, who asked Baptist Campus Ministry (BCM) ministers to organize student volunteers to help with recovery efforts in New York and New Jersey between the fall and spring semesters.



More than 40 students from several North Carolina universities used part of their Christmas break to serve in recovery efforts for people in the path of Hurricane Sandy. (Contributed photo)

"There is a great need for volunteers to assist us in our efforts to help the people who are hurting in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy," Moss said. "The students who volunteered were a tremendous asset to what we are doing in the area and we pray that more students will volunteer in the future."

"We are making plans to assist the victims of Hurricane Sandy in that area for the next 12 months," Moss said. "We will need additional skilled and unskilled volunteers to help us finish the work."

Rewarding experience

When Jones heard about the opportunity to serve with NCBM she quickly volunteered and recruited five of her fellow students to join her. The students departed for New Jersey within hours of their final exams with one goal in mind – to help people in Jesus' name.

"We have four weeks off for Christmas and I wanted to use that time not just lounging around but doing something good," Jones said. "A lot of the people here are confused about why we are doing this and we get to tell them that it's because we love Jesus, and Jesus loves them and so do we."

Most of the homes in the neighborhood where the students worked were flooded and have been condemned until the proper repairs can be made. Jones said that without the help of volunteers many residents would be displaced for a long time.

"The need is great," she said.

The work was hard, but rewarding,

and Jones is planning to volunteer again during spring break.

"The people here have been really appreciative," said Dan McClintock, Baptist campus minister at UNC-Charlotte. "It's good for the students to hear that kind of affirmation and positive reinforcement from people who really appreciate what we are doing."

McClintock has led students on several disaster relief trips in the past, but said this trip was different.

"We've never completely gutted a house like we have this one," he said. "It's been more extensive this time for sure."

Elijah Jesalva, a freshman at UNC-Charlotte, was glad he volunteered because the trip gave him a fresh perspective on life.

"Seeing the need that people have here gives you a greater appreciation for what you have," he said. "God can bless us and give us good things, but ultimately it is God's and He can take it away, too."

"I think [disaster relief] is something that everyone should do at least once," he said. "God gives each of us a calling and different gifts and abilities. It doesn't matter if you're young or old; all can help."

McClintock agreed. "I always tell students that being involved in missions is one of the best things they can do," he said. "They really want to serve the Lord and are doing it with a lot of enthusiasm. It's been a great thing."

For more information about how you can volunteer with NCBM relief efforts in New York and New Jersey, visit baptistsonmission.org/sandy or contact Gaylon Moss at (800) 395-5102 ext. 5605, or gmoss@ncbaptist.org. **BR**

Ethnic congregations up 66% for Southern Baptists

By TOBIN PERRY | Baptist Press

The number of non-Anglo congregations in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) has jumped by more than 66 percent since 1998, according to the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Center for Missional Research.

Just over 10,000 congregations (10,049) of 50,768 congregations in the convention identified themselves by an ethnicity other than Anglo in 2011, the most recent year for which detailed data on ethnicity is available from LifeWay Christian Resources' Annual Church Profile database.

In 1998, non-Anglo congregations totaled 6,044.

"We are grateful to God for this diversity," said Ken Weathersby, NAMB's presidential ambassador for ethnic church relations. "It is saying that the Southern Baptist Convention is no longer monolithic. The Southern Baptist Convention is very diversified. It is open to all peoples – regardless of ethnicity and race."

Despite the SBC's growing diversity, there are still a variety of ethnic groups in North America with no Southern Baptist presence among them.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Full story available at BRnow.org.) **BR**

‘Awaken’ conference to focus on spiritual revival

Several years ago the Barna Group conducted a research study to help determine some of the challenges that evangelicals experience regarding their spiritual growth.

One of the findings especially caught my attention: Of those surveyed, four out of five born again Christians believed that spiritual maturity is “trying hard to follow the rules.”

The implication of this finding is that many people have lost sight of the gospel truth. Being a Christ follower is not about following rules, but is all about trusting in Jesus for forgiveness of sin and living in a growing relationship with Him.

We cannot live the Christian life on our own; we must rely on the grace of our Lord as He molds us and equips us to do the good works He has prepared for us.

I often realize this truth as I spend time in prayer. As I devote time to prayer and enjoy fellowship with God, He reveals to me His wondrous love and

mercies, and I am once again reminded of the greatness of my Savior and my dependence on Him.

Prayer is a key component in our spiritual growth. Prayer is so important to the life of a believer because it is during these times of intimate fellowship that God supplies us with His power and speaks directly to our hearts.

Last year *The Huffington Post* published an article entitled, “Why people who pray are healthier than those who don’t.” The article begins with information about how people who pray have lower stress levels and a more positive outlook

on life.

Yet, the article says little about the spiritual implications of prayer. Prayer is so much more than, as the article describes, “a physiological mechanism.”

For those who know Jesus Christ, prayer is the sacred act that binds our hearts to God and radically transforms our lives

See ‘Awaken’ page 13



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Talking about ‘love’ and ‘equality’

In his second inaugural address President Obama spoke about love. He said that our nation’s journey for equality “is not complete until our gay brothers and sisters are treated like anyone else under the law – for if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well.”

Ah, equality and love, who could possibly be against these? Certainly only haters, bigots and religious extremists would oppose or stifle their advancement in the cause for gay marriage.

Yet, it’s highly doubtful that even homosexual activists really believe what they so vigorously applauded in the president’s speech – the belief that “if we are truly created equal, then surely the love we commit to one another must be equal as well.”

Really? Then why aren’t the president and the LGBT community also vigorously fighting for marriage rights for the polygamist who claims his love for more than one woman is equal to all other loves? Why aren’t they fighting for the incestuous woman who claims her love is misunderstood and that her romance with her brother is a love worthy of marriage? What about the man who loves someone underage – a child? If we should believe that all love is equal, then why can’t we accept his contentions or even that of the child’s that their love is consensual – just as real and deserving of equal respect to that of any other?

Certainly, the most common answer to these questions is that all of these other relationships are unhealthy

and harmful. But so is the homosexual lifestyle and the evidence to this end is voluminous. Some of the health perils include increases in AIDS and STDs, hepatitis, colon and rectal cancer. Lesbian women are at much greater risks for cervical cancers, bacterial vaginosis, and the list goes on.

Nevertheless, nothing serves the argument better than to make the simplest of comparisons.

Think of it, if everyone were faithfully committed to natural marriage, the end result would be a dramatic reduction in the welfare rolls, the crime rate, the number of abortions, and the instances of child abuse. But if everyone were committed faithfully to same-sex marriage, it would ultimately mean the end of the human race. Granted, all relationships would never become homosexual, but the illustration is only meant to clearly show that all “love” is not “equal” – all love is not equally beneficial to society.

The point is that love is not the primary reason the government sanctions the institution of marriage anyway. No marriage license application asks the candidates if they “love” each other. As far as the government is concerned, it’s singing right along with Tina Turner, “What’s Love Got to Do with It?” Government’s vested interest has always been about the positive contribution marriage makes to the culture, the stability it provides for both men and women, the value it brings to child-rearing, and the superior way all these dynamics work together to supply a citizenry that is emotionally,



MARK CREECH
Guest Column

Come to worship as

SOMEONE YOU AREN'T?

I was at a church recently and noticed a poster advertising their alternative worship service with a slogan, “Come as you are.” I immediately began to wonder if that meant that the other service they offered was Come as someone you aren’t. Now I know that is not the intent, but I couldn’t help but reflect on the fact that so often our churches and our worship services communicate pretty clearly the idea, Come as someone you aren’t.

In our churches, we often place the gospel on a shelf too high for the average person to reach, and we place all kinds of barriers to getting there. We often expect people to dress up for church (which has no theological basis) to be accepted. People have to look, smell, talk and act a certain way to be accepted. We often communicate that people need to clean up their lives before they can be a part of our fellowship. The early church had some of the same issues (Acts 15). Many believed that you had to be circumcised or you could not be saved. (v.1) If we place human-imposed obstacles in

the way of people coming to Christ, we are working against God (v.10). Indeed, we should not make it difficult for unbelievers to turn to God (v.19). The church should be irresistible to the unbeliever—a place where they can find purpose and meaning in life through an encounter with God.

How about our worship services? Are they accessible to the non-church crowd? Do we use language that is unique to church people without giving explanation? Do we use only archaic forms of music that sound foreign to their ear and understanding? There is an incredible hunger for God today. We have the answer for that hunger in Jesus Christ. Why can we not make the church irresistible to our communities?

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.

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“Marriage has never simply been about satisfying the emotions of two people ... it’s ... been about the greater good of mankind.”

physically, and spiritually strong enough to sustain its civilization.

Moreover, the president’s referencing the Declaration of Independence as a premise for the argument in favor of gay marriage was most erroneous. To contend that God, who is the author of “unalienable rights,” approves of same-sex relationships, flies in the face of truth that is “self-evident,” the larger body of religious history, as well as God’s design of the human body.

Is this to say the “love” homosexuals share is not real? Absolutely not! Nonetheless, it is meant to contend that not only is every love not equal, but sometimes what we say is “love” can be an inverted or perverted form of love that is detrimental. Adultery is wrong! Incest is wrong! Pedophilia is wrong! Polygamy is wrong! And yes, homosexuality is wrong! No matter how much one contends that it is love and that it feels right – it’s still morally wrong and injurious!

Marriage has never simply been about satisfying the emotions of two people. Instead, it’s conventionally been about the greater good of mankind. The value of same-sex relationships cannot accurately be said to have

See Talking page 13

Where is the wisdom?

There is a famine of wisdom in the land. One can find very little evidence that wisdom is a desired commodity in the twenty-first century. The culture, the halls of education, the houses of government, the homes, the world of entertainment, and even churches seem to have pressed wisdom into obscurity.

We have knowledge, but wisdom is not gained by increasing knowledge, and the two are certainly not synonymous.

The present culture is obscenely rich with knowledge. We know more than any generation in history.

It is estimated that about a half million books are printed every day, and about 2,000 pages are added to man's scientific knowledge every minute. It is estimated that the world's store of knowledge doubles every 6 months.

We have more knowledge than we can get our arms around. We can't buy a computer hard drive large enough to store all we know. Having enough knowledge is not our problem.

Where can wisdom be found in our world? Certainly not in Washington. Forty years ago the Supreme Court abandoned wisdom in legalizing abortion. In recent years the landslide of foolish legislation and executive orders far outweigh the few wise actions coming from politicians. We are swimming in foolish debt. We defend the "right" of citizens

to violate basic moral code. More laws are rooted in greed, arrogance and human lust than those founded on the solid rock of wisdom.

The abundance of foolishness seems to be equal to the measure of spiritual darkness. That should not surprise us since

God says He is the only source of wisdom. If we do not get wisdom from Him, we don't have it.

The Bible – that's the book that MSNBC News commentator Lawrence O'Donnell said absolutely no one believes any more – says, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments. His praise endures forever"* Psalm 111:10.

Job said, *"With Him are wisdom and strength, He has counsel and understanding"* Job 12:13.

Solomon wrote the book of Proverbs for this purpose: *"To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity ..."* Proverbs 1:2-3. Wouldn't you say this is something we desperately need?

Foolishness is not confined to the "secular" and those in darkness. Christians have seen our share of it in the mirror. How many times have we who are believers shamefully admitted that something we did was foolish? We only wish we could relive those moments and apply wisdom.

If you have held a place of leadership

in a local church, you've seen foolish decisions by the pastor, church staff, deacons or committees. There have been foolish actions by those who believe they own the church and scheme behind the scenes to get their way.

The blind nature of pride prevents us from seeing our own foolish behavior.

I would like to suggest at least three steps we can take to stop the famine of wisdom.

First, acknowledge the source of wisdom. A certain amount of "good sense" comes from experience, but God is the absolute source of all wisdom. *"For the LORD gives wisdom; from His mouth come knowledge and understanding"* Proverbs 2:6, NKJ.

No measure of experience will produce wisdom. A high IQ is not to be equated with wisdom. No amount of education will guarantee the acquisition of wisdom. It comes from God.

Second, actively work to acquire wisdom. Addressing believers, James writes, *"But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him"* James 1:5, NASB. Before we say the wrong word; before we make the wrong decision, ask God for wisdom.

The growth of wisdom in our lives requires the removal of anything that

"The growth of wisdom in our lives requires the removal of anything that resists wisdom, namely pride."

resists wisdom, namely pride. I've never met a proud person who was wise or a wise person who was prideful. Sin is foolish in any form. And, sin will keep us from asking God for wisdom. A strong dose of humility, followed by repentance must introduce the process of asking.

Third, deliberately exercise wisdom. Apply it to the functions and activities you have control over. *"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show by good conduct that his works are done in the meekness of wisdom"* James 3:13, NKJ.

Conduct that is meek and wise must be intentionally cultivated. The epidemic "blame game," the rampant disrespect for life and the blatant rejection of God's standards reveal a shortage of wisdom, deficiency of character and the absence of teachability.

Maybe we who are believers can ask God for wisdom and show the rest of the country how it works. **BR**



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

Talking

Continued from page 12

matching worth as that of one man and one woman committed to each other for life. And the reason the standard in America has long been in favor of traditional marriage is because no other relationship can demonstrate that it truly is in the best interest of advancing the public good.

And for these reasons, the president's inaugural remarks supporting gay mar-

riage demonstrate a woeful ignorance of his ability to explain or even talk about the true nature of "love" or "equality."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Mark Creech is executive director of the Christian Action League. He acknowledges with appreciation that he has drawn some of his conclusions throughout this article with help from "Correct, Not Politically Correct: How Same-Sex Marriage Hurts Everyone" by Frank Turek.) **BR**

'Awaken'

Continued from page 12

so that our lives reflect God's Kingdom purposes.

Please continue praying for personal spiritual renewal, as well as spiritual awakening for our state, nation and world. Many churches across the state committed to praying last year for spiritual awakening, especially in the days leading up to our convention's annual meeting. God honored our prayers, but we must not see that meeting as an end. It was a new beginning. If our heart's desire is to see God transform lives for His glory, then we must continue to remain steadfast in our prayers for spiritual awakening.

This year's statewide prayer conference is an excellent opportunity for you to be equipped and encouraged in your personal prayer commitment. The March 15-16 "Awaken" conference will be held at Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem and feature speakers such as Darryl Craft, R. Logan Carson, John Franklin, Hugh Morrison and Bryon Paulus.

More information about this conference is available at www.praync.org or by emailing broland@ncbaptist.org.

"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God." Philippians 4:6 **BR**

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February 10

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

February 17

The Character of Leadership

Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 3:1-15

I had the wonderful privilege to serve at First Baptist Indian Trail several years ago as a college and single adult pastor. One of the most valuable lessons I learned at Indian Trail was that a lot of people want to lead, but very few are willing to make the necessary sacrifices to set themselves apart to lead. Because First Baptist Indian Trail is a great church genuinely making a difference in that area, it attracts a lot of guys who want to be in ministry. Sometimes those guys lack the qualification to lead, and I've watched Pastor Mike Whitson help those men evaluate their qualifications according to scripture.

Sometimes those men were very appreciative of Preacher Mike's counsel and other times they were too prideful to see their deficiencies.

For the men who would listen, they went on to have faithful ministries. For those who were less teachable I'm sure they are still struggling today.

Perhaps you know someone interested in church leadership.

Maybe there is a person in your Sunday School class or small group that

has thought about going into ministry or wanting to serve as a pastor or deacon. Where can they go to find out if they are qualified to lead? A great starting point is 1 Timothy 3:1-13. In his letter to Timothy, the Apostle Paul gives a list of qualifications that are necessary to serve as a pastor or deacon. The list was not meant to be exhaustive, but the qualifications that Paul gives are certainly essential.

Maybe you know a church looking to hire a pastor.

Unfortunately, in today's culture, many believers do not know what to look for in a pastor. They assume if he has a theological education or is a good communicator he meets God's standard to lead. Although those things are important, the church would do well to utilize all of 1 Timothy 3:1-7 as a non-negotiable standard for selecting a pastor.

Twenty years ago this summer, I was one of those men Preacher Mike counseled about going into ministry. I pray I was one that listened well.



BARTLEY WOOTEN
Senior pastor, Beulaville Baptist Church, Beulaville

Focal Passage: 1 Timothy 4:7-10; Titus 3:1-9

I love setting New Year's resolutions. This year I tried something new. Someone once said, "You know how to achieve your goals – by setting them low enough." One of my New Year's resolutions this year was to take a multivitamin each day. My wife told me she was proud of me for setting that goal. She went on to say that I normally set goals like run an Ironman or race in Baja 1000 – goals that unless God intervened I would never achieve. Besides, getting in shape is overrated. It is like shuffling the chairs on the Titanic – no matter where you put them on the ship it's still going to go down. Seriously,

I think staying physically healthy is extremely important, but I don't think it is as important as staying spiritually healthy – not that they are mutually exclusive. A person should strive for both, physical fitness and godliness. However, when you examine the scriptures, the Apostle

The Practice of Godliness

Paul puts the greater value on training in godliness. He writes, "... Rather train yourself for godliness, for while bodily training is of some value, godliness is of value in every way, as it holds promise for the present life and also for the life to come" (1 Timothy 4:7-8, ESV).

What are some of the benefits of a godly life? Some of the benefits include a deeper love relationship with God, a life that produces more spiritual fruit (John 15:5), greater rewards in heaven (1 Corinthians 3:10-15), and a life that is filled with contentment (Philippians 4:10-13).

Practicing godliness means you invest your time in eternal matters. Years ago I read a book by Christopher Adsit called, *Personal Disciple-making*.

In the first part of the book he shared a quote that has significantly impacted my life.

He writes, "God, the Word of God, and the souls of men ... According to the Bible, these are the only things that will last eternally. To the extent that you are involved in these three things, you are involved in eternity."

If you want to make a difference for eternity, make practicing godliness your first priority.

February 10

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

February 17

Let the Verdict Be Read!

Focal Passages: Amos 8:11-12; 9:8-15

At this point in the Book of Amos "the long summer" of God's patience had come to an end. There was no harvest of repentance from Israel, only silence. Ironically, Israel had become so hardened by their sin that their consciences had been easily appeased by empty ritual. In other words, God's people still saw themselves as devoutly religious while at the same time trampling and killing the needy – people who are close to God's own heart.

Amos stands and declares that because of their hypocrisy, destruction would rush in over Israel like flooding from the Nile. What a horrible picture! But the people had continually rejected God's Word and ignored His warnings. In fact, the Israelites had actually attempted to manipulate God with their sacrifices. At this point judgment was inescapable.

Yet there is pause, because God declares that He will not utterly destroy the house of Jacob (Amos 9:8). And, again we are reminded that God had committed Himself to bless His people and eventual-

ly the world through the family of David (2 Samuel 7:15-16). This promise sees its fulfillment in Jesus Christ – who is from the line of David and is the eternal King of Kings (Matthew 1:1, Hebrews 1:1-5).

As Christians we can look back at this Old Testament passage and see its fulfillment in Jesus Christ whose reign is inaugurated in His resurrection, or to use the words of Amos, "when David's fallen tent is raised" (9:11). Moreover, 9:12 points us to see that when Jesus is raised, the nations become included in God's blessings, in fulfillment of the promise to Abraham (Gen. 12:3).

For now we wait for the consummation of His kingdom where we experience abundant blessings much like those described in Amos 9:13-15. But for those who do not turn from their sin, there waits an eternal judgment (Revelation 20:11-15). As the "summer ends" proclaim the Good News because the harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.



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

Focal Passages: Jonah 1:1-4, 7-12; 2:1-4

Most likely you know the story of Jonah from Sunday School. The first few chapters describe Jonah's call from God to go and cry out against the great and evil city of Nineveh. Instead of obeying God's call, Jonah traveled downward in the opposite direction of Nineveh toward Tarshish and away from the presence of God.

While Jonah was on a ship full of pagan sailors headed for Tarshish, God hurled a great wind at the sea.

The storm was so strong that the boat was close to breaking apart. The pagans called out to their gods and begged Jonah to call out to his God with the hope that He would save them from death.

It is revealed that Jonah's disobedience had brought about this judgment of God in the form of a storm. Finally, the pagan sailors hurled Jonah into the sea and

Pursuing Those Called to Tell

the storm stopped. While this story is already amazing it also points to something even more magnificent, namely, the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we read this story through the lens of Jesus we see that the saving of pagans through the sacrifice of Jonah points to the salvation of all nations through the death of Christ (1 John 2:2). Moreover, Jonah's rescue from death points to the resurrection of Christ from the dead (Matthew 12:40). In a certain sense, Jesus is like Jonah in that He hurled himself into the storm of God's wrath so that we could be brought in to safety.

Oftentimes we read this story and apply it to ourselves through the perspective of Jonah. But, I believe that we are more like the pagan soldiers. It's only because of Jesus that we are saved from the judgment of God.

Unlike Jonah, Jesus was the perfect sacrifice. It was you and I who needed to be hurled into the storm. But Jesus offered Himself on our behalf. So let us, like the pagans in the story, offer sacrifices of praise for what God has done for us in Jesus Christ.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

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.

Pastor

Full-Time Senior Pastor. Blackwelder Park Baptist Church in Kannapolis, NC, is searching for a senior pastor who possesses strong leadership skills and who can lead the congregation in our work for the Lord. We currently have 6 employees on staff; our pastor would be able to lead day-to-day operations of the church and guide the congregation in the vision of our church. Candidate would be of a Southern Baptist background and practice traditions of the Southern Baptist church. Please email resume to hpbpcpersonnel@gmail.com or mail to 2204 Summit Ave., Kannapolis, NC 28081. Resumes will be accepted until February 28, 2013.

Senior Pastor. The First Baptist Church of Clinton, NC, is seeking a senior pastor who is a gifted teacher enabling persons to learn and understand the Bible and providing pastoral care to our congregation and community. Clinton, a community of 8,500, serves as the county seat of Sampson County. FBC provides open giving opportunities to the SBC and the CBF as well as a church-defined mission program. FBC currently holds one worship service using both traditional and blended worship styles. The congregation includes 470 members with an average attendance of 250 for Sunday morning worship service. Throughout the week, the church provides mission and music activities as well as Bible study for all age groups. The church provides support for local Hispanic and Haitian congregations along with selected global ministries. In addition to the senior pastor, the ministerial staff has historically included a full-time associate minister, a part-time associate minister, and a part-time director. The staff also includes a full-time office support position and a part-time church caretaker. Candidates should hold a master of divinity degree or higher academic preparation and have at least six years of ministerial experience. Inquiries, resumes or nominations may be sent to the Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, 408 College Street, Clinton, NC 28328, or emailed to fbchurchclinton@yahoo.com. Please submit materials no later than April 5, 2013. For additional information concerning the First Baptist Church, please visit our website at www.clintonfirstbaptist.org.

BRnow.org



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.

Ocean View Baptist Church, Myrtle Beach, SC, seeks experienced **Full-Time Senior Pastor** with minimum of 5 years experience. We desire a gifted teacher that can impart spiritual truth in a broad spectrum of services ranging from very contemporary to traditional. Our church emphasizes discipleship and missions. Seminary degree is required but not administrative skills. Send resume to Ocean View Baptist Church, Search Committee, 7300 North King Highway, Myrtle Beach, SC 29572. Resume deadline March 1, 2013.

Church Staff

Associate Pastor. Gate City Baptist Church in Jamestown, NC, is searching for an associate pastor whose primary responsibilities would involve discipleship and outreach. Please submit resumes via email to info@gatecitybaptist.org.

Hopewell Baptist Church of Morganton, North Carolina, is seeking God's man to serve as a **Full-Time Youth (grader's 6-12)/Associate Pastor**. The individual will be responsible for evaluating, supervising, planning, implementing and leading a Christ-centered youth ministry. Experience with youth is required and an ordained minister is preferred. Please send resumes to Hopewell Baptist Church, 1112 Hopewell Road Morganton, NC 28655: Attention Youth/Associate Pastor Search Committee.

First Baptist Church, Concord, seeks **Part-time Music Director** with a heart for the Lord. The position has potential of becoming full time. Must lead by example and have strong interpersonal and administrative skills. Responsible for planning and implementing blended style music program, including children's choirs, adult choir, hand bell choir, men's and women's ensembles. Bachelor's degree or higher, minimum of three years' experience with proficiency in piano/vocal skills. For more details, visit fbconcord.org. Send resume to FBC Concord, ATTN: Music Director Search Committee, PO Box 643, Concord, NC 28026, or jhannigan@fbconcord.org.

First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Kentucky, is seeking **Associate Pastor for Students & Families** to provide dynamic leadership. Accredited seminary degree optimum. Send resume to familyministrysearch@gmail.com.

Wilkesboro Baptist Church is searching for a **Minister to Children**. The vacant position is part time with responsibilities for all children's ministries. The minister to children is primarily responsible to the church for designing a ministry to enhance the spiritual growth of children; babies through 6th grade, their families, and their leaders. Annual compensation is \$27,500 not to exceed 30 hours per week. The qualifications for the Minister to Children's position are: 1. A personal relationship with Jesus Christ; 2. A love for interacting with children and their families; 3. Seminary degree desired; 4. College degree in elementary education or equivalent acceptable; 5. Continued theological education required; 6. Strong work ethic; 7. Excellent leadership, organization, communication, and teaching skills. Qualified applicants may e-mail a resume to childrenfirst@wilkesborobaptist.org or mail to: Chairperson of the Minister of Children Search Committee, Wilkesboro Baptist Church, PO Box 61, Wilkesboro, NC 28697. Resumes will be accepted through February 19, 2013. More detailed information about this position is available on the Wilkesboro Baptist Church web page: www.wilkesborobaptist.org. Click the link: Ministry Position Opportunity.

Temple Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC, seeks **part-time Minister of Preschool & Children**. Responsibilities include development and promotion of comprehensive program of religious education birth through sixth grade. Approximately 20 hours per week, no benefits and reports to the Senior Pastor. Send letter of interest, resume and Statement of Faith to: Chairperson, Search Committee Children's Minister, Temple Baptist Church, 1417 Clifton Street, Raleigh, NC 27604, or info@templeraaleigh.org.

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.

Part-Time Music Director. Godwin Heights Baptist Church. Send resume to: Chairperson Personnel Committee, Godwin Heights Baptist Church, 704 Godwin Avenue, Lumberton, NC 28358.

First Baptist Church of Salisbury, Salisbury, NC, is seeking a **part-time Director of Children's Ministries**. This individual will be member of a multi-staff church and will be responsible for planning, coordinating and evaluating a comprehensive children's ministry that will focus on 4 to 12 year old children. College and/or seminary graduates preferred. Please send resume along with references to First Baptist Church of Salisbury, 223 N. Fulton St., Salisbury, NC 28144, or kenneth@fbcsalisbury.org.

CrossPoint Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC, is seeking a regular **Part-Time Worship Leader** (10-15 hours per week) to plan and conduct worship services on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings. The candidate would work closely with a praise team, choir, musicians, and staff and has a salary range of \$15K-\$20K. Applicants should submit their resume to the Church Administrator @ chuck52@hotmail.com. Deadline for resumes is February 15, 2013.

Miscellaneous

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After football, 'second' life begins for former player

Chris Sanders knows all about competing in athletics at the highest level. As a standout three-year starter at wide receiver at The Ohio State University, and a member of the track and field team from 1992 to 1994, Sanders set the school record in the indoor long jump, a record that still stands today.

He was named the "Ohio State Athlete of the Year," across all sports in 1994. The Houston Oilers (who later became the Tennessee Titans) selected him in the third round of the 1995 NFL Draft.

There, he played for seven years. In 1999, Sanders and the Titans made it all the way to Super Bowl XXXIV, losing to the Kurt Warner-led St. Louis Rams in one of the closest, most memorable games in Super Bowl history. Since his retirement from the NFL, Chris Sanders continues to use his platform as a Christian, husband, father, track and football coach at Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville. In an interview, Sanders talked about life after football and mentoring the next generation of student athletes.



ROMAN GABRIEL
Sports Q & A

Super Bowl updates

Roman Gabriel will be in New Orleans for the big game. Look for updates at *BRnow.org*.

realize that Jesus is our foundation. Jesus is my foundation regardless [of] what's going on in my life. I can stand. That's what guys have to come to understand in the NFL. If you have a vision to play football ... you can have that vision taken away from you. And then what do you do? But if you have a vision to serve God, if you have a vision to seek His face, if you have a vision to do what He's called you to do, that vision never stops.

Q: Being an Ohio State guy, you must be pumped up about new head coach Urban Meyer, who helped turn the Buckeye football program around. They were undefeated this year and finished third in the national rankings.

A: Urban (Meyer) has done a great job. I actually went to a game this year. He's got the Buckeyes fired up, disciplined, and hungry. ... Coach Meyer has found a way to get these guys to come back and win. He teaches his kids to never give up. Even though the situation looks crazy, they found ways to pull games out.

Q: What is so important about focusing on character development in addition to football ability?

A: You have to go back to the coaches, especially those coaches that have a vision. Not to just build a football player only. Then you're doing a disservice to that person. ... But if you have a vision for that student athlete to be a great man, a great father, a great leader, a great motivator, and a great student that understands his craft, then at the next level, the NFL [is] just second nature. And if he's ready, and he's ready for that moment, he will be successful in that moment.

Q: This year you have been traveling to military bases to speak. Tell us what you're doing with the Wounded Warrior Project.

A: We really encourage the troops

that are going through some tough things to seek help. ... We talk about the correlation between the NFL football player who gets hurt, or has to retire, and being a soldier coming back hurt from a war. ... And now they're not in the army anymore. I just go there and tell my personal story. And [I] use my life to really encourage these young men and young ladies. It's been an honor and a blessing to really do that.

Q: How does it make you feel having the opportunity to encourage these men and women?

A: It makes me happy. ... I get the opportunity to go in there and thank them for what they did and encourage them [and tell them] that they're not forgotten. They go to war, and they come back home and hear the clapping at the airport. But what

happens after that clapping is over? Do people really care? I take the time to show them that Chris Sanders and the Sanders family really cares. It is truly a privilege.

... I really appreciate the opportunity to travel to these bases and do this for some of our soldiers.

Q: Chris, you're so passionate about Jesus and the gospel. Tell our readers and others why a relationship with Jesus is so important.

A: Before I got saved I had no destiny, no purpose. I was just living life, just out there. ... One thing I love about Jesus is He busted up in my life and shook my foundation. And [He] made me have a total dependence on him. Yes, we all mess up. We all come up short. But, the one thing I love about Jesus, is the grace He gives [in] my life. I love him, and I adore him. He adores me and He loves me. It is great knowing [that] I played football at the highest level, the NFL. But if I played without Jesus, it would have meant nothing. The NFL stands for "Not For Long." But with Jesus, He's everlasting!

(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**

Q: What is it about coaching student athletes that inspires you?

A: The reason why I love to coach is that I'm not building a football player. I am building a young man, with my words and my encouragement. I'm teaching them how to be men and building a foundation into their lives. One thing I tell my players I coach is [that] football is going to end at some point, but your destiny is going to continue. That's the reason I love to coach. You get to speak truth in these kids' lives and show them how they can become great like God created them to be.

Q: Many pro athletes retire, and they're remembered only for what they accomplished in a relatively short time. How has God done an even greater work in your second life beyond the NFL?

A: When football [is] over and retirement happens, that life starts. Some NFL players retire and think that it's all about looking at the sunset and blue skies. It can be rough retiring. You have to deal with beating down depression, self-image issues ... and all the stuff that comes along with being finished as an athlete. The good part is that we

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