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BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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BAPTISTS RESPOND TO SUPREME COURT NOMINATION



Baptist Press

Religious liberty and pro-life advocates warmly welcomed President Trump's nomination of Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court as the Senate prepares for what is expected to be a hard-fought confirmation battle.

Trump announced his selection of Gorsuch, 49, a federal appeals court

judge, during prime-time television Jan. 31 to fill the seat created by the death of Associate Justice Antonin Scalia last February.

In Gorsuch, Trump nominated a judge who – like Scalia – has a philosophy and record of interpreting the Constitution and laws based on its original meaning and their text, respectively.

A judge for the last 10 years on the

10th Circuit Court of Appeals in Denver, Gorsuch agreed with others on the court that the Obama administration's abortion/contraception mandate violated the free exercise of religion rights of Hobby Lobby and Little Sisters of the Poor among other religious groups.

Although he apparently has not ruled on abortion rights, Gorsuch wrote a 2006 book "The Future of Assisted

Suicide and Euthanasia" before becoming a judge, arguing against legalization of the end-of-life practices. Based on his judicial philosophy, however, Gorsuch has pledged to apply the law rather than his beliefs.

Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore called Gorsuch "an exceptional choice."

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Panelists address Trump's immigration policies

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

Four hours after President Donald Trump signed an executive order to temporarily close the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program, five Christian leaders took the stage Jan. 27 at the Evangelicals for Life conference in Washington, D.C., to discuss how churches and individuals can respond to the complex issues surrounding refugee and immigrant ministry.

"The 81 percent of evangelicals that elected Donald Trump now carry the moral and biblical responsibility to advocate for the 'least of these,'" said Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, who read from the Sermon on the Mount at Trump's Jan. 20 inauguration ceremony.

The president's order shuttered the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program for 120 days, suspended immigration from seven Muslim-majority countries – Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen – for 90 days and blocked immigration from Syria indefinitely. The order also decreased the potential number of refugees admitted to the U.S. in 2017 by more than half, from the previously declared 110,000 to 50,000.

Trump's executive order is meant to allow federal agencies time to review immigration and refugee admission policies and procedures. It requires periodic reports and recommendations for additional security measures.

Jenny Yang, vice president of advocacy and policy at

See Immigration page 9



Panelists discuss immigration and refugee ministry at the 2017 Evangelicals for Life conference in Washington, D.C. (Rocket Republic photo by Josh Shank)

Kinlaw: Board service was ‘tremendous experience’

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

The outgoing president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s (BSC) board of directors, Brian Kinlaw, admitted, “When I began my service on the board, I had no clue about the scope of the work that is done by our convention in the state and globally. I grew up attending a Baptist church, I went to a Baptist college and graduated from a Baptist seminary, but I still had no understanding of the scope of the work that is carried out in and through our state convention.”

After serving four years on the BSC’s board of directors, two of those years as an officer, he calls it a “tremendous experience.”

The inside view of BSC’s ministries gave Kinlaw a perspective he had not previously known. “It was one of the great privileges of my life and ministry to not only serve on the board, but to serve as the vice president and president of the board and to serve on the Executive Committee,” he said.

Born in the small town of St. Pauls, Kinlaw is now the pastor of Southview Baptist Church in Hope Mills, just a few miles north of his hometown.

He grew up attending Great Marsh Baptist Church in St. Pauls and accepted Christ as his Savior at the age of 12. After graduating as the class valedictorian of St. Pauls High School, Kinlaw headed to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, planning to pursue a career in medicine. “Somewhere in my sophomore year, God began to do a work in my heart that made me realize the medical field was not what I wanted to spend my life doing,” he said.

“In a matter of a few weeks I had three separate conversations with three different people who had no idea that I had spoken to the others – my brother, my best friend and my pastor. Each of them said they always thought I would end up in ministry.” The three did not know that Kinlaw was in the middle of an inward struggle to find God’s plan for his life.

God used their comments to confirm

a new direction. He changed his major from pre-med to religion, finished his sophomore year at Wilmington, and transferred to Campbell University. Kinlaw later continued his education at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, earning master of divinity and doctor of ministry degrees. While a seminary student, Kinlaw served as a student pastor at Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Vander, then became the pastor of Pleasant Union Christian Church in Lillington, which he described as “a conservative, non-denominational church.” He became the pastor of Southview Baptist Church in 2002. Kinlaw is a team player. “I enjoy collaborating,” he said. “In most cases, a gathering of the right people can come up with better decisions and choices and can have greater wisdom than any one of us can alone.”

When a fellow pastor, Chris Dickerson, asked if he could nominate Kinlaw to serve on the BSC’s board of directors, he considered it could be a “neat opportunity to learn more and to be part of something bigger than my little world and what was happening in the church where I pastor.”

The lessons turned out to be much broader. “It’s helped me to grow in my own walk with Christ and my own leadership abilities within the local church,” said Kinlaw. “I grew as a leader from the observation of godly leadership in our convention and interacting with the convention staff and other pastors and leaders.”

He discovered that “Kingdom work is being accomplished for the glory of God in small towns and in big cities across our state – in mega churches, in small churches and in everything in between. I’ve been able to see and hear the stories of what God is doing across our state,” he reflected. “I’ve been able to meet and interact with amazing men and women: pastors, lay people, associational missionaries who genuinely want to see the kingdom of God advanced and who give their lives to do that.”

Kinlaw’s view of BSC’s leadership grew, also. “I discovered that our con-



Brian Kinlaw calls his time serving the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina a “tremendous experience.” (File photo)

vention is led by a person that I believe to be a man of tremendous vision, integrity and prayer in Milton Hollifield.

“Also, he has assembled a very talented team of men and women who serve North Carolina Baptists and the Kingdom well for the glory of God.”

The convention’s primary strategy of “impacting lostness through disciple-making” proved to reshape some of Kinlaw’s ministry vision.

“It’s challenged me to think through how we can develop a culture of disciple-making within our body of believers. I think that is where the focus needs to be for the health and growth of the church,” he said. “I believe the convention has become crystal clear on the strategy to impact lostness through disciple-making. ... All departments of the convention are collaborating to see the strategy carried out for the glory of God. There is a very clear focus on what the convention is seeking to accomplish.”

Another part of BSC’s vision is “absolutely crucial” according to Kinlaw. He said the focus on church revitalization demonstrates that the leadership has “acknowledged the growing number of churches that are in decline or have plateaued, and they are taking steps to provide support and leadership to those churches.

“While I believe church planting is still a crucial aspect of what our convention supports, this renewed emphasis of helping these established churches reclaim a fresh vision for kingdom impact in their communities is one of the highlights of the last few years.”

Some significant structural and procedural changes were made to the board of directors during Kinlaw’s presidency. “We did our best to try to overhaul the board of directors’ meetings to better align our work with the strategy of the convention.”

The board’s leadership and the convention staff worked together to develop a new format that would better enable the work of the board to strengthen and support the mission and strategy of the convention. Kinlaw said it was a necessary adjustment and would “take years to see that fleshed out and matured.”

His prayer is that North Carolina Baptists will have a “fresh awakening to the glory of God that would inspire us to reflect Him to our world and to make disciples,” he said. “I believe when we see God for who He is, and when we live out the passion for His glory, then we will have a burden for those who do not yet know Him.”

Kinlaw said his service on the board increased his burden for many needs.

“Churches across our state have to take an honest look at themselves and face the realities of plateau or decline in growth. I believe the work of the Kingdom is too crucial, and the brokenness of the world around us is too great for churches to simply seek to survive.”

For those who are considering service on the BSC’s board, Kinlaw offers some advice: “Serving on the board is both a tremendous privilege and great responsibility. It enables you to have a front seat to what God is doing through North Carolina Baptists both in our state and across the globe. ... You get to work with some of the most wonderful people who love Jesus and call North Carolina home. I would strongly encourage ministers and laymen to prayerfully consider serving on the board.” **BR**

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(919) 847-2127
Fax (919) 467-6180
B3now.org

K. Allan Blume, Editor/President
editor@brnow.org

Seth Brown, Content Editor
seth@brnow.org

Dianna L. Cagle, Production Editor
dianna@brnow.org

Alison McKinney
Business and
Advertising Manager
(919) 459-5691
alison@brnow.org

Laura Crowther
Editorial Aide

Liz Tablazon
Circulation Manager
(919) 459-5693
liz@brnow.org

Kelly Hunter
Graphic Designer

Board of Directors: Lee Pigg, chair; Nate Jones, vice chair; Angela Brady, secretary; David Clary, treasurer; Kevin Atchley; Kelli Benfield; Christina Brown; Frankie Gordon; Lisa Harris; Gerald Hodges; Tony Honeycutt; Todd Houston; Dan Meyer; Jim Pennington Jr.; Michael Smith; Marilyn Thurman; Aaron Wallace; Tammy Weeks; Keith Whittfield and Ed Yount

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Revitalization: God's call to churches

As we move further into 2017, church health and revitalization is of critical importance. Studies released from the North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention indicate that there is a great need for spiritual revitalization within most of our Southern Baptist churches across this nation.

I know the same is true for many Baptist churches in North Carolina. The reality is that less than 18 percent of N.C. Baptist churches are healthy and growing. This means that more than 80 percent of our churches are plateaued, declining or dying. As your convention staff, we have taken notice of this, and I am pleased to remind you that in the past year, we began moving forward within our own convention to provide assistance for churches that need help. Lynn Sasser and Brian Upshaw from our Evangelism and Discipleship group have assembled and trained a group of specialists that have knowledge, experience and expertise in leading churches to become spiritually healthy and vibrant again. These specialists are working with individual churches who have requested this assistance from your state convention.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

We continue to expand the reach of the revitalization work that we do. In March we will participate in an event called "Leading Change in the Church," which is based on the book, *Who Moved My Pulpit?* by Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources.

One poignant fact we cannot ignore from *Who Moved My Pulpit?* is that 90 percent of our churches are losing ground in their neighborhoods and communities.

My friends, that means that we can reach 90 percent more of the people in our communities if our congregations will be open to the idea of change in our churches – if we ask God to change our hearts, give us guidance and breathe life into our local church bodies once again.

I have discovered that when a church has a need for revitalization, the membership usually finds it quite difficult to realize and admit that which has become a reality. When

a church turns inward, the members focus more upon themselves and their own needs – which in reality are often wants. Because of this, I urge you to attend this event on March 7 and evaluate the condition of your church.



Will you begin praying for church revitalization to happen in our state? Pray that the hearts of local church leaders will be moved to see how revitalization can significantly impact their church and in turn enable them to make an eternal impact in their community.

If you and I hope to make a spiritual difference in communities within our church field, we must experience internal change before we will see external results. Revitalization is about making our churches healthy, but also remember that a healthy church is one with a focus on the needs of people outside the walls of our church buildings. Many people around us need to know Christ as Savior. If we have spiritually healthy churches, we can reach them more effectively. Let us pray and work toward church revitalization, and also pray that we will be united in our vision and efforts to reach the lost in our state.

"For the Son of man has come to seek and to save that which was lost" – Luke 19:10. **BR**

CHARTING A NEW COURSE

Eleven historically black colleges or universities (HBCU) contribute to the landscape of higher education in North Carolina. Roughly 31,000 students call those 11 campuses "home" for four years of their lives.

Wearing their dreams on their sleeves, these students relocate to Charlotte, Salisbury, Raleigh, Durham, Greensboro, Fayetteville, Elizabeth City or Winston-Salem to broaden their horizons and receive an excellent education.

Throughout recent history, however, most of them never encounter a North Carolina Baptist church.

"Many students have a religious background, having grown up in church, but in some cases having not heard the gospel of Jesus Christ," said Darrick Smith, collegiate partnerships consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Vision Church in Raleigh refuses to allow this to continue.

Pastor Jerome Gay is a graduate of St. Augustine University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He understands the culture unique to HBCU campuses, and he has a vision for seeing those students reached with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This vision led his church to be-

come the first predominately African American N.C. Baptist church to engage an HBCU.

Thanks to the expertise of Smith, two leaders from Vision Church – Sandy Roberts and Tecoby Hines – are now actively sowing the gospel through strategic relationships at Shaw University and St. Augustine University.



JONATHAN YARBORO

Two universities with rich and robust histories, devoid of gospel engagement via N.C. Baptists, now rank among another historic first as Pastor Gay mobilized his church to take a risk for the sake of the Kingdom.

With no model for predominantly African-American churches to follow, Vision Church has boldly declared by their actions that students on these campuses are worth the effort it takes to chart a new course.

Please pray for Gay, Roberts and Hines as they lead Vision Church to continue reaching college students. And pray for Smith as he assists churches all over N.C. in reaching the other seven HBCUs.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Jonathan Yarboro is collegiate partnerships team leader for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at jjarboro@ncbaptist.org or (828) 406-3202.)

Thom Rainer leading change

BSC Communications

Thom Rainer is the president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources. He is passionate about church health and disciple-making. He previously served at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. Rainer has written several books, including *Who Moved My Pulpit?*, which provided the inspiration behind "Leading Change in the Church," where he will serve as the keynote speaker. It will be March 7 at Calvary Baptist Church West Campus in Advance. He and more than two dozen church leaders will lead a day of equipping for those who want to see their church changed for God's glory.

Rainer recently took some time to answer questions in advance of the event.

Q: Why do we need a conference on leading change?

A: With nine out of 10 churches losing ground in their community, there is an absolute necessity for change in many churches today. There are few things harder in ministry than leading an established church through change.

Q: What are some typical failures of pastors who want to lead change?

A: There needs to be a sense of urgency that will create a desire for change among the members. If not, complacency sets in, and people don't realize

the need for change. When this happens, change never occurs.

Complacency of the members is not the only issue. Complacency of the staff can also hinder a pastor's ability to lead change in a church. A pastor who is leading change must have the buy-in from the staff and key lay leaders to be effective.

Q: What keeps church members from embracing change?

A: The two main hindrances to embracing change are fear of taking the next step and sentimentality toward traditions. Change often means leaving one's comfort zone. That can cause fear in church members, leading them to refuse change. Sentimentality often takes the form of sacred cows in churches. These sacred cows become more important to church members than changing.

Q: In your book, you talk about building a coalition. Why is this step important, and why do many leaders overlook it?

A: You begin to find out who is on board with the coalition. They can be incredibly instrumental in moving others forward. An eager coalition is important because you want your key leaders on board so that congregants have faith that the change is needed, is right and is necessary.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Visit leadingchange.church. Registration includes lunch and is \$10 per person or \$50 for your church staff.) **BR**

BSC expands discipleship strategy, celebrates record year in giving

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications & BR staff

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) will expand its focus of engaging high concentrations of non-Christians across North Carolina in 2017 as part of the convention's "impacting lostness through disciple-making" strategy. These high concentrations of non-Christians are referred to as "pockets of lostness."

Speaking to members of the convention's Board of Directors at the group's first meeting of the year, BSC Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr. said staff will be working with associations, congregations, pastors and church leaders in the coming year to develop local partnerships and strategies designed to reach and disciple unbelievers located in 250 identified pockets of lostness across the state.

Hollifield's report to the board reflects an expansion of the convention's strategy adopted in 2013 that initially focused on 100 concentrated pockets of lostness in and around eight large population centers. The next 150 pockets expand into the rural communities of the state.

Prior to Hollifield's address, Michael Sowers, BSC strategy coordinator for the Triad, gave board members an overview of the process used to engage a pocket of lostness.

"We have to work together," he said. "We have to work together with our associations, we have to work together as churches and we have to work together as people all throughout the spectrum of our churches coming together, developing a strategy so that we can impact lostness through disciple-making."

Sowers explained that pockets of lostness are geographic regions ranging from a half-mile to 2 miles in radius where up to 70 percent of the population do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. In the eight population centers, pockets are often marked by high degrees of ethnic and cultural diversity.

Following Sowers' presentation, board members divided into smaller groups with each of the convention's eight strategy coordinators to learn more about pockets of lostness in areas where they live and how they can lead the effort to impact lostness.

"As we identify population segments that need to be reached in all of our pockets of lostness, we are asking God to raise up leaders who are called to reach them and build strong disciples," Hollifield said. "The strategy is working."

Hollifield reminded board members of the convention's vision statement: "To become the strongest force in the history of this convention for reaching people with the message of the gospel."

Hollifield described the vision as "bold" and "audacious," but also attainable through humble dependence upon the Lord.

"What we do in kingdom advancement, we do it for Him because we love Christ, and we want to please Him," Hollifield said. "In 2017, will you as a group commit to becoming a board of directors that is filled with disciples who are making disciples?"

Board elects new officers

In other business, the board elected new officers for 2017. Marc Francis, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham, was elected as president for 2017.

Francis served as the board's vice president in 2016 and was nominated for the post by Mike Motley, pastor of Trading Ford Baptist Church in Salisbury.

"Thank you for your confidence," Francis said to members of the board following his election. "I really believe we're at a turning point for building on the foundation we have and going forward into where God is leading us. I'm very excited to be a part of this."

John Mark Harrison, pastor of Apex Baptist Church, was elected vice president. Harrison had served as chairman of the Evangelism and Discipleship Com-



Marc Francis, left, pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham, was elected as president for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Board of Directors. John Mark Harrison, right, pastor of Apex Baptist Church, was elected vice president. (BR photo by K. Allan Blume)

mittee and on the Executive Committee. He chaired the Board of Directors Meetings Evaluation Task Force that recommended changes to the board's meeting schedule. Harrison was nominated by Jeff Isenhour, pastor of Arran Lake Baptist Church in Fayetteville.

Ginger Brown was re-elected as secretary.

All three officers ran unopposed.

Board members also elected four new members to the Executive Committee and approved nominations of individuals to serve on the convention's Committee on Nominations and the board's Business

Services Special Committee. Various committees of the board also met and elected their respective chairmen for the coming year.

Four individuals were elected to serve as at-large members of the Executive Committee: Ken Jones, retired minister who is currently serving as interim pastor of Middle Cross Baptist Church in Crouse; Michael Owens, pastor of Gate City Baptist Church in Jamestown; David Spray,

pastor of Pisgah Forest Baptist Church; and Melanie Wallace, a member of Hepzibah Baptist Church in Wendell.

At-large members serve one-year terms on the Executive Committee, which conducts regular convention business on behalf of the board between the three annual meetings of the full Board of Directors.

Board members also approved five nominations to the convention's Committee on Nominations. Recommendations for service on the Committee on Nominations are presented to the board by the

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Mosque case prompts IMB policy tweak

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

Ongoing discussion of a federal court case concerning religious liberty for Muslims has prompted the resignation of an International Mission Board (IMB) trustee and a revision of the IMB's process for submitting friend of the court briefs.

Dean Haun, pastor of First Baptist Church in Morristown, Tenn., resigned from the IMB trustee board in November based on his conviction the IMB should not have joined a friend of the court brief last May supporting the Islamic Society of Basking Ridge, N.J., (ISBR) in its religious discrimination lawsuit against a local planning board. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) also joined the brief.

Tennessee's *Baptist and Reflector* newsjournal reported Haun's resignation Jan. 23, and at least four other Baptist state papers published the report. Amid continuing discussion, IMB President David Platt released a statement to Baptist Press (BP) noting, "As a result of discussions among IMB trustees and staff over recent months, we have revised our processes for our legal department filing any future amicus briefs. IMB leaders are committed in the days ahead to speak only into situations that are directly tied to our mission."

Clyde Meador, retired executive advisor to Platt, told BP the IMB joined the ISBR amicus brief in an effort "to support the USA's foundational principle of religious freedom" and "to support Baptist partners and others around the world who seek permission to construct church buildings."

In December, U.S. district judge Michael Shipp ruled

the Planning Board of Bernards Township, N.J., violated federal law when it required the ISBR to include more than twice as much parking in its site plan for a proposed mosque as it required for local Christian and Jewish houses of worship.

In his ruling, Shipp acknowledged the friend of the court brief joined by the IMB and ERLC, stating it "supports" the ISBR's arguments that unlawful religious discrimination occurred.

The amicus brief argued the Planning Board violated the federal Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which protects religious institutions from discrimination in zoning laws.

A friend of the court brief – referenced in legal terminology with the Latin phrase "amicus curiae" brief – allows a person or organization which is not a party to a case to interject legal arguments reflecting concern over precedent the Court's decision may establish.

Haun resignation

Haun, a former Tennessee Baptist Convention (TBC) president, told BP resigning from the IMB trustees "was one of the most heart-wrenching decisions that I've ever had to make in my ministry because I feel like I've been a faithful Southern Baptist all my life."

First Baptist Morristown took up its normal Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions in December, Haun said, out of a desire to continue to support IMB missionaries. The congregation is escrowing funds it would have given through the Cooperative Program, the *Baptist and Reflector* reported, and "praying about their long-term response" to the action of the IMB

and ERLC. But First Baptist continues to support TBC ministries.

Haun cited two reasons for his resignation: (1) The amicus brief "at least borders on" an "unholy alliance" with followers of a religion that denies both the deity and the atonement of Jesus; and (2) Joining the brief does not comport with the IMB's stated "mission and purpose."

Scripture forbids "unholy alliances" in 2 Corinthians 6:14-15, Haun said, arguing the brief supports Muslims in their effort to construct a house of false worship.

"I don't think the IMB advocates the same doctrine as the Muslims," Haun said. "But I do think that Paul warns us about making these unholy alliances. And I think that's where we're scripturally on the edge."

Regarding the IMB's mission and purpose, Haun said, "I understand the religious liberty aspect of the entire argument. But I do not understand why the International Mission Board, with our mission to reach the world for Christ, would have to jump into the fray of a mosque being built in New Jersey."

While Haun was still an IMB trustee, he contacted Platt with this concerns and the amicus brief was addressed at a confidential "trustee forum" in August, the *Baptist and Reflector* reported.

Religious liberty

Meador, who retired from the IMB in May, said in written comments the amicus brief "speaks to a matter closely related to International Mission Board work around the world. In a great many countries, especially

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Mosque

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but not exclusively Muslim-majority countries, Baptist churches with whom missionaries work find it very difficult if not impossible to receive permission to build church buildings.”

The IMB’s worldwide Baptist partners “emphasize the basic principle of religious freedom” in “seeking to obtain building permits,” Meador said. While religious freedom in the U.S. does “not necessarily” persuade other nations to grant similar freedom, “contrary action by the USA would be quite persuasive.”

“Should it be clear that the USA does not uphold its principle of religious freedom when applied to the building of mosques, an excuse is readily available to any Muslim or other opposing country to deny the building of church buildings,” Meador said.

The Baptist Faith and Message (BF&M), Article XVII, affirms, “Church and state should be separate. The state owes to every church protection and full freedom in the pursuit of its spiritual ends. In providing for such freedom no ecclesiastical group or denomination should be favored by the state more than others ... The state has no right to impose penalties for religious opinions of any kind. The state has no right to impose taxes for the support of any form of religion. A free church in a free state is the Christian ideal, and this implies the right of free and unhindered access to God on the part of all men, and the right to form and propagate opinions in the sphere of religion without interference by the civil power.”

The preamble to the BF&M notes “Baptists cherish and defend religious liberty.”

IMB’s mission

A statement on the IMB’s website notes “IMB’s specific interest in the brief arises out of the belief that all peoples of the world have the right to religious liberty.... The IMB is responsible for carrying out its ministry consistent with the entirety of the Baptist Faith and Message, not only the portions related to sharing the gospel.”

Platt cited the BF&M in his statement to BP and noted, “We continue to affirm that everyone should be able to freely worship according to their religious convictions.”

Platt continued, “At the same time, our primary purpose as an organization is ‘to partner with churches to empower limitless missionary teams who are evangelizing, discipling, planting and multiplying healthy churches, and training leaders among unreached peoples and places for the glory of God.’”

Out of a commitment to “speak only into situations that are directly tied to our mission,” IMB leaders have “revised” their process for filing amicus briefs, Platt

noted. He also expressed gratitude for Haun’s trustee service.

Meador told BP he did not know the former or current IMB protocol for joining amicus briefs. The IMB’s legal department was not available to explain its protocol before BP’s publication deadline. The ERLC told BP in an email it “did not ask anyone to sign on” to the brief.

The ISBR amicus brief states it was filed by attorneys with the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty, the New York City firm of Reich and Paolella and the Center for Islam and Religious Freedom. No attorneys paid with Cooperative Program (CP) funds are listed as having prepared the brief.

Following Shipp’s December ruling and earlier satirical news stories claiming Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) dollars were being used to construct mosques, SBC Executive Committee President Frank S. Page noted CP funds have never been requested “for the construction of any non-Christian house of worship; nor would we agree to such a request.” **BR**

Boy Scouts’ transgender policy ‘sad,’ ‘predicted’

Baptist Press

The Boy Scouts’ decision to include girls who identify as boys in their programs is a tragic but predictable step, said conservative Christian leaders.

“Tragically, the Boy Scouts seem to be continuing their trajectory toward embracing the moral priori-

ties of the Sexual Revolution,” said Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. The Boy Scouts of America announced Jan. 30 it would accept transgender members, no longer basing eligibility for its programs on a child’s birth certificate but on the gender identity designated in applying for acceptance. **BR**

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Respond

Continued from page 1

"I heartily support President Trump's excellent appointment," said Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), in a written statement. "[Gorsuch] is a brilliant and articulate defender of Constitutional originalism in the mold of the man he will replace: Justice Antonin Scalia. His career is one that exemplifies the very best of intellectually robust conservatism, judicial restraint and faithfulness to the Constitution.

"I look forward to Judge Gorsuch's voice on the Court for decades to come and pray that he will be an articulate and stalwart advocate for religious liberty and human dignity at all its stages," Moore said. "Along with Baptists and other believers around the country, I urge the Senate to confirm Judge Gorsuch without delay."

In addition, more than 50 Southern Baptist and other evangelical leaders have endorsed the confirmation of Gorsuch in a letter sponsored by the ERLC.

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) entity released the letter Feb. 1, a day after President Trump announced his nomination of Gorsuch.

The letter's signers included the current SBC president and some former

ones, as well as heads of some of the convention's entities and seminaries. Also signing, among others, were pastors, university presidents and evangelical institutional leaders.

The ERLC sent the letter to the Senate Judiciary Committee, which will hold hearings as part of the confirmation process.

In their letter, the signers said they believe Gorsuch's judicial philosophy meets the thresholds of their "core social principles."

Those precepts include in the Supreme Court's purview "the protection of the unborn, the strengthening of religious liberty and a dedication to human flourishing – which we believe can only be accomplished by a biblical definition of marriage and family."

"As evangelical leaders, we support President Trump's nomination and pray for a quick confirmation process," they wrote, urging the Senate to "work diligently to confirm his appointment without obstruction."

Among the letter's signers in addition to Moore were: SBC President Steve Gaines; former convention presidents Ronnie Floyd, Jack Graham, Johnny Hunt and Frank S. Page (now SBC Execu-

tive Committee president and CEO); SBC seminary presidents Daniel Akin of Southeastern, Jason Allen of Midwestern, Jeff Iorg of Gateway, R. Albert Mohler Jr. of Southern and Paige Patterson (also a former convention president) of Southwestern; and SBC entity heads O.S. Hawkins of GuideStone Financial Resources and Thom Rainer of LifeWay Christian Resources.

Also signing were several pastors, denominational and organizational heads, university and seminary presidents and former U.S. Congressman Frank Wolf.

Gorsuch's confirmation to the high court seemingly will be a battle, based on the response of Senate Democratic leadership to his nomination.

Sen. Charles Schumer, the Senate minority leader, said he has "very serious doubts about Judge Gorsuch's ability" to be independent and non-ideological, "preserve our democracy, protect fundamental rights" and stand up to Trump.

Sen. Ben Sasse, R.-Neb., cited the Senate's confirmation of Gorsuch to the 10th Circuit without opposition and defended his record as distinguished and "rooted in respect for the law."

"Senator Schumer is about to tell Americans that Judge Gorsuch kicks puppies and heckles piano recitals. That's hogwash," Sasse said.

In announcing Gorsuch's nomination from the White House, Trump said the judge's qualifications "are beyond dispute" and urged Republican and Democratic senators to come together for the country's good.

Republicans have only a 51-49 majority in the Senate, with 60 votes needed to stop a Democrat filibuster or another parliamentary maneuver for Gorsuch's nomination to move forward. The division over Gorsuch was obvious in comments from both sides of the legal and cultural divide. Jay Sekulow, chief counsel of the American Center for Law and Justice, described Gorsuch as "a remarkably qualified nominee with a conservative judicial philosophy and a commitment to uphold the rule of law and the Constitution.

"He is decidedly pro-life and understands what it means to protect the constitutional freedoms afforded to all Americans."

Michael Farris, new president of Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), said the organization "does not take a position on the merits of Supreme Court nominees," but it is "hopeful that Judge Gorsuch will continue to interpret the Constitution faithfully and according to the intent of the founders."

Carol Tobias, president of the National Right to Life Committee, said, "All too often, our efforts to protect unborn children and other vulnerable humans have been overridden by judges who believe they have a right to impose their own policy preferences.

"We are heartened that Judge Gorsuch appears to share Justice Scalia's view that federal judges are constrained to enforce the text and original intent of constitutional provisions, and on all other matters should defer to democratically elected lawmakers."

Liberal organizations, however, called for the Senate to reject Gorsuch.

Ilyse Hogue, the president of NARAL Pro-choice America, called the nominee "a direct threat to *Roe v. Wade* [the 1973 decision that legalized abortion] and the promise it holds for women's equality."

Chad Griffin, president of the Human Rights Campaign, the country's largest political organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender rights, said Gorsuch has an "anti-equality record" that makes him "unfit to sit on the nation's highest court.

"We cannot afford a justice who will roll back our rights, or who will be a rubber stamp for Donald Trump's unconstitutional actions."

Gorsuch, in his remarks after Trump introduced him and his wife Louise, said putting on robes doesn't make judges "any smarter," but it does provide a reminder of what is expected of them: "Impartiality and independence, collegiality and courage."

The role of judges is "to apply, not alter the work of the people's representatives," Gorsuch said. "A judge who likes every outcome he reaches is very likely a bad judge, stretching for results he prefers rather than those the law demands."

If confirmed, Gorsuch – who is Episcopalian – would be the only Protestant on the court. The other eight justices are either Jewish or Roman Catholic. **B3**



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Evangelicals for Life speakers promote ‘womb to tomb’ dignity

Russell Moore prays with other Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) staff during the March for Life Jan. 27. The ERLC was joined by Focus on the Family and others to host Evangelicals for Life, a two-day conference on pro-life issues, including immigration and babies, in conjunction with the annual march in Washington, D.C. (Rocket Republic photo by Josh Shank)

By **TOM STRODE** | Baptist Press

The sanctity and dignity of human life require Christians to care not only for the unborn but for all people at all stages of life, speakers said on the final two days of the Evangelicals for Life conference in Washington.

The phrase “the womb to the tomb” was heard during several addresses to describe the extent of the sanctity of human life and to call for protection and compassionate care from evangelical Christians.

Evangelicals for Life (EFL) – the second annual event co-hosted by the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and Focus on the Family – addressed such issues as adoption and foster care, ministry to refugees and immigrants, caring for the sick and dying, public policies to protect life and diversity in the church.

The Jan. 26-28 conference – held in conjunction with the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. – broke midday Jan. 27 for attendees to join what turned out to be possibly hundreds of thousands of others on the National Mall for a rally and the march to Capitol Hill.

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, told conference participants God “created a world in which human flourishing was His intention,” but today there are “across so many fronts so many assaults” on human life and dignity.

“We are missing the fact that a consistent pro-life ethic requires us to see that anything that diminishes life as the Creator intended it [for His] creatures is an assault upon God’s glory and God’s sovereignty and God’s will,” Mohler said.



Vice President Mike Pence became the first vice president to speak at the annual March for Life in Washington Jan. 27. If pro-lifers show compassion and gentleness, “I believe that we will continue to win the hearts and minds of the rising generation,” he said. (Screen capture from Fox News)

Christians’ responsibility “to be the defenders of life cannot be localized in the buildings of government but has to be taken into every local church and every Christian heart, translated not only into right thought but right action,” he said.

Seattle pastor Eugene Cho told EFL attendees evangelicals should support the sanctity of life “from womb to tomb, not just our lives but their lives, not just American lives but Syrian lives, not just Christian ... lives but Muslim minority refugee lives.”

Christians should seek justice for all human beings because it “reflects the very character of God,” Cho said. “We need to be awakened to the injustices in our world.”

In the conference’s final address, poet Jackie Hill Perry said Christians should repent as the first step in developing a heart for seeing beauty in diversity. They need to repent of pride and fear, she said.

“We have sinned against people when we have spoken to them, judged them, looked upon them, thought about them or treated them in a dishonorable way because of the color of their skin, the language that they speak or the culture they embody,” Hill Perry told attendees. “And these sins against people are first and foremost sins against God.”

She warned Christians against seeing their “race or culture as the standard.”

“We must turn from this pride and see that Christ is the standard of goodness and beauty; we are not,” Hill Perry said.

She urged conference participants to invite people from different ethnic groups into their hearts.

“Do you have an affection for every tribe, tongue and nation? Or is the work of diversity only a duty? It was in God’s will to invite every tribe, tongue and nation into His love, and I beg you to make it a part of yours,” Hill Perry said.

Other conference speakers addressed a variety of issues during the event.

John Stonestreet, president of the Colson Center for Christian Worldview, said civility demonstrates respect for the dignity of those on the opposite side of issues.

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Immigration Continued from page 1

World Relief, explained what the new policy means for the refugee resettlement agency, which relies on partnerships with local churches:

“At World Relief about 70 percent of the cases we resettle are family reunification cases. So, for the next four months we’re not going to see a single refugee family reunited.”

Yang said the organization has “significant concerns” about the executive order, since it denies protection to “some of the most vulnerable people in the world.”

She described the previous refugee vetting process as “the strictest, most stringent program ever,” and encouraged the federal government to reinstate the program as soon as possible with any extra measures deemed necessary.

“In the past 30 years,” said Yang, “we’ve resettled three million refugees and not a single refugee has been convicted on the charge of domestic terrorism – not a single one.”

She also outlined the complex screening process that occurs before asylum seekers are referred to World Relief for resettlement, at which point the organization pairs refugees with churches to aid in assimilation. The process requires a face-to-face interview with the Department of Homeland Security, the collection of biographical and biometric data and a database check across all 17 agencies of the U.S. Intelligence Community, among other steps.

Yang said the refugee admission process has been a success and discouraged Christians from pitting compassion and security against one another. “We can do both at the same time,” she pleaded.

Bryant Wright, former president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., also took part in the panel discussion.

“It makes my heart ache,” Wright said, “I under-



Panelists discuss challenges and realistic expectations in adoption and foster care: (from left) moderator Trillia Newbell, director of community outreach for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; Glenn Packiam, lead pastor of New Life Downtown in Colorado Springs, Colo.; Tony Merida, pastor for preaching and vision at Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, N.C.; Kevin Smith, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Maryland/Delaware; and Todd Wagner, founding pastor of Watermark Community Church in Dallas, Texas. (Rocket Republic photo by Josh Shank)

stand what President Trump is doing. He is fulfilling a promise. He’s building on the fear people have of Islamic terrorism – and that’s a real thing.”

But, he continued, “These people are double victims now. They’re victims where they are living, through no fault of their own. And now the United States – that has really prided itself on being a nation of immigrants and refugees – is closing the door when they’re in such a desperate situation. It really breaks your heart.”

Wright said if the window of opportunity closes for Christians to minister to refugees here in the U.S., then churches must go to the Middle East “to minister to Syrian refugees on-site.”

Despite Trump’s aggressive rhetoric on illegal immigration and growing anxiety in the Latino community, Rodriguez said he was “cautiously optimistic” about the future of the immigration program under the current administration.

Rodriguez also said the president’s transition team promised a number of concessions in previous talks:

“This is what we received explicitly, and I know we’re on the record here: There will be no deportation force. Families will not be separated. And President [Barack] Obama’s DACA [Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals] will be revoked but immediately replaced. The

[See Immigration page 11](#)

Faith inside the White House: An interview with Michael Wear

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

Michael Wear spoke as one of the panelists at the Evangelicals for Life Conference Jan. 26-28 in Washington, D.C. He formerly worked as a White House staffer in the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships under Barack Obama’s administration. He also directed faith outreach for Obama’s 2012 re-election bid and recently released a book entitled, *Reclaiming Hope: Lessons Learned in the Obama White House about the Future of Faith in America*.

Wear sat down for an interview with the *Biblical Recorder* during the conference, offering a glimpse into the daily life of a young public servant in the halls of power. He also talks about how his Christian faith intersected with his work in the Obama administration.

Q: You were one of the youngest White House staffers ever. How old were you when you started, and how did you end up there?

A: I was 20 years old. I was at George Washington University, here in Washington, D.C., and I met [then presidential candidate] Barack Obama in the lobby of a hotel. I was supposed to be leading a group to a political convention in February of 2007, and I had the wrong date. So, I showed

up to the hotel and nothing was going on. It was like a ghost town.

It was my first political convention, and I thought I’d open a door and the convention would be there. I finally gave up and asked someone – the receptionist. She said, “O, honey! It’s not for a couple days.” I walked out dejected and embarrassed.

Barack Obama happened to be walking in for a meeting. I met some of his staff and stayed in touch with them.

He hadn’t held public office for too long – unlike Hillary Clinton, who had three decades of her and her husband’s staffers to staff a campaign. Barack Obama’s campaign was in talent acquisition mode, so it made it possible for me to get a position.

Q: Was it intimidating, working in the White House at that age?

A: No. For a lot of people, when they get a job at the White House, it’s because they’ve worked their entire lives trying to strategize and figure out a way to get there. For us [referring to himself and another young staffer], we worked for a guy named Barack Obama who was facing Hillary Clinton and polling in the single digits. A year later, we were in the White House.

I guess there was some intimidation. You walk in the Oval Office, and of course it’s intimidating. But, as for the whole experience of working at the White House, it was more like, “Wow! We

[See Wear page 12](#)



SEBTS welcomes new director of Hispanic leadership development

By HARPER MCKAY | SEBTS

Miguel Echevarria has joined Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) as the new director of Hispanic leadership development and assistant professor of New Testament and Greek.

As part of the Global Theological Initiatives (GTI) team, Echevarria will further develop partnerships in Latin America where SEBTS invests in the theological education of leaders and works to encourage more Hispanics in America to pursue an education on campus at SEBTS. “Miguel Echevarria is a welcomed addition to the team at Southeastern,” said SEBTS President Danny Akin. “We are devoted to expanding our programs among Hispanics, and I believe he is the right man for this time to make it happen. Losing Edgar Aponte to the International Mission Board was heartbreaking. Adding Miguel has begun a heart healing process!”

A Miami native born to Cuban parents, Echevarria grew up speaking Spanish as his first language. He has

previously served in higher education at the University of Mobile in Alabama.

“Dr. Echevarria possesses an incredible combination of academic and practical experience and knowledge that will enable us to move our Hispanic Leadership Development Initiative to new heights and possibilities,” said John Ewart, associate vice president of GTI.

“I am anticipating exponential growth as he reaches out to serve the Hispanic community here in the U.S. as well as multiple new international partners,” Ewart added. “We are looking forward to moving creatively and aggressively forward with the highest levels of training specifically designed for the Spanish speaking church and believer.”

Echevarria holds a bachelor’s degree from Bellarmine University in Louisville, Ky., a master of theology from Dallas Theological Seminary and a doctoral degree in New Testament from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, also in Louisville.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Harper McKay is the news and information specialist for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.) **BR**



Miguel Echevarria is the new director of Hispanic leadership development for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. Echevarria also joins the seminary as an assistant professor of New Testament and Greek. (SEBTS photo)

Expands Continued from page 4

BSC president and two vice presidents. Elected members of the Committee on Nominations serve three-year terms. The Committee on Nominations is a standing committee of the convention with the primary responsibility of nominating individuals to serve on the Board of Directors, other BSC committees and as trustees and directors of agencies and institutions of the convention.

BSC officers recommend six individuals to serve on the Committee on Nominations each year.

The 2017 recommendations for the Committee on Nominations were Ben Curfman, minister at Barberville Baptist Church in Waynesville in the Haywood Association; Michael Davis, minister at Woodlawn Baptist Church in Charlotte in the Metrolina Association; Mark Golden, minister at Calvary Road Baptist Church in Waynesville in the Haywood Association; David Helms, layperson at Galatia Baptist Church in Seaboard in the West Chowan Association; and James Keku, layperson at Immanuel Baptist Church in Greensboro in the Piedmont Association. The board authorized the Executive Committee to approve a sixth appointee.

The board also approved two new nominations to the board’s Business Services Special Committee: Harvey Brown Sr. and Walter Mills, both of First Baptist Church of Charlotte in the Metrolina Baptist Association.

Each board member also serves one of six board committees, which met and elected new chairmen for 2017: David Duarte, pastor of Daystar Church in Greensboro (Communications Committee); Lawrence Clapp, pastor of South Elm Street Baptist Church in Greensboro (Church Planting and Missions Partnerships Committee); Mike Moore, a retired pastor and director of missions who is now a member of Kure Beach Baptist Church (Business Services Special Committee); Boyce Porter, pastor of Geneva Baptist Church in Camden (Christian Social Services Special Committee); Earl Roach, pastor of Hopkins Chapel Baptist Church in Zebulon (Christian Life and Public Affairs Special Committee); and Ed Rose, pastor of Central Baptist Church in Wendell (Evangelism and Discipleship Committee).

Each committee chair serves on the board’s Executive Committee.

Record year in missions giving

Hollifield also provided a financial report for 2016. Although Cooperative Program (CP) receipts were slightly below budget for 2016, the BSC finished the year in the black while sending more to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) missions and ministry causes than any year in the history of the convention.

Cooperative Program giving from N.C. Baptist churches totaled slightly less than \$28.8 million in 2016, which was approximately 2.4 percent (\$720,000) less than the annual \$29.5 million budget.

When compared with 2015, total receipts for 2016 were less than 1 percent behind 2015, when giving slightly exceeded the \$29 million budget. Receipts for 2015 totaled \$29.07 million.

Despite the 2016 budget shortfall, the convention finished the year with a surplus of about \$200,000 by holding the line on expenses and sent a record \$30.5 million to the SBC for missions through the CP and special missions offerings.

“It is encouraging that we still managed to send more through the Cooperative Program and through our special missions offerings to Southern Baptist causes than in any year in the history of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina,” said Hollifield. “That helps us to impact lostness in North Carolina, North America and around the world.”

In 2016, 40 percent of the BSC budget was allocated for CP, which totaled more than \$11.5 million. N.C. Baptists also gave more than \$6 million to the annual Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions and nearly \$13 million to the annual Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions during the 2016 calendar year.

Through the first nine months of 2016, CP giving was on pace to meet or potentially exceed the \$29.5 million budget until Hurricane Matthew struck eastern North Carolina in early October.

The aftermath of the storm resulted in an uptick in designated giving to disaster relief efforts, including those coordinated by N.C. Baptist Men, also known as Baptists on Mission.

Beverly Volz, BSC’s director of accounting services, said more than \$1.8 million in designated gifts was given for Hurricane Matthew relief efforts through convention ministries.

Hollifield praised the generosity of all North Carolinians.

“Hurricane Matthew had a significant effect on receipts from many churches because compassionate N.C. Baptists and others poured out their hearts financially and designated millions of dollars for that great need to help individuals, businesses, families and churches devastated by the flooding and wind damage,” Hollifield said. “We praise God for that compassion of North Carolina people who would be willing to give to help hurting people.”

“I never cease to be amazed at the spirit of people from North Carolina.”

Brian Davis, BSC associate executive director-treasure, reported that giving to the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO) totaled more than \$1.88 million in 2016.

The NCMO supports the 17 different ministries of Baptists on Mission, which includes disaster relief, as well as church planting, missions mobilization projects and associational missions projects.

Missions mobilization consultant Paul Langston said that through Hurricane Matthew relief and recovery efforts coordinated through Baptists on Mission, individuals have logged more than 18,100 volunteer days, provided 455,000 meals and completed 1,400 recovery jobs. Those efforts have resulted in 64 new professions of faith in Christ, Langston said.

Hollifield said missions giving through the Cooperative Program is off to a strong start in 2017, adding that he and convention leaders are hopeful this will be a year of growth.

The BSC’s budget for 2017 that messengers approved at the 2016 annual meeting is \$30.375 million with a 40.5 percent CP allocation to SBC missions and ministry efforts.

The next board meeting is scheduled for May 22-23 at the N.C. Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell. **BR**



Immigration Continued from page 9

replacement will probably be a short-term DACA ... that will give Congress enough time to write up a piece of legislation that will inevitably become a bill with the president's signature."

Travis Wussow, vice president for public policy and general counsel for the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), moderated the panel discussion, which was scheduled on the event program prior to news about immigration and refugee policy changes. Panelists also included Stephanie Hammond, policy advisor for global conflicts and natural disasters for World Vision, and Matthew Soerens, U.S. director of church mobilization for World Relief.

Each of the panelists encouraged Christians to engage the political process on behalf of refugees and immigrants.

Hammond suggested going to town hall events to express opinions from a Christian worldview about caring for the vulnerable.

Soerens added that Christians should spend time listening to what God's Word says about caring for sojourners and to the personal stories of refugees and immigrants.

Southern Baptists passed a resolution called "On Refugee Ministry" during the 2016 annual meeting which states, "That we affirm that refugees are people loved by God, made in His image, and that Christian love should be extended to them as special objects of God's mercy in a world that has displaced them from their homelands." The document also expresses support for immigration security measures.

The 2017 Evangelicals for Life conference was co-sponsored by the ERLC and Focus on the Family. The title of the panel discussion was "Ministering to refugees and immigrants: Hard questions, complex answers, and loving our neighbors." **BR**

Speakers Continued from page 8

"Civility has nothing to do with reciprocity. In other words, we're not civil to people because they're civil to us," he said.

Also, Stonestreet said, "Civility is not a strategy. We're not civil because it works. Civility is an expectation of anyone living out of the grand story of redemption" in scripture, he said. "We do it because it's right. We do it whether it works or not."

A panel discussion on ministry to refugees and immigrants came only a few hours after President Trump signed an executive order halting the refugee resettlement program for 120 days and blocking refugees from war-torn Syria indefinitely.

Bryant Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., and past president of the Southern Baptist Convention, said Johnson Ferry now is responsible for nine Muslim refugee families from Syria and one Christian family from Iran.

"It has been a rich blessing to Johnson Ferry," he said, adding the church has a different role than the government. "We're to share the love of Christ with all of our fellow man."

The ministry has given the church "the opportunity to witness in a rich way," he said, adding of his church's involvement with refugees, "We get our guidance from the Word of God, not from talk radio, not from different

political winds that are blowing."

On the conference's first night, Jan. 26, Matt Chandler, lead pastor for teaching of The Village Church in the Dallas area, urged churches to not miss the opportunity they have as the nations come to them.

"The church must not buy into the fearful rhetoric around refugees, but be willing to welcome, to help, to come alongside and to serve," he said.

Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, shared about being a foster child and now doing foster care with his family.

"Everybody needs love and acceptance," he said. "It is such a beautiful thing to do. ... You look for a

field white unto harvest. You don't have to go very far. Is it easy? No, but God has not called you to easiness."

A Jan. 28 panel addressed the need to foster human dignity among the sick and dying.

C. Ben Mitchell, a bioethicist and provost at Union University in Jackson, Tenn., said the church has a long history of helping people die well, but now has "outsourced death. We don't do a very good job of caring for the dying.

"We've convinced ourselves that we are in the land of the living on the way to dying. And in reality, the Christian worldview teaches us we are in the land of the dying on the way to the land of the living." **BR**

SBC messenger, child registration opens

Baptist Press

Registration opened Feb. 1 for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) 2017 Annual Meeting June 13-14 at the Phoenix Convention Center, 100 N. 3rd St. in Phoenix, Ariz.

Registration will be available around the clock at *SBCAnnualMeeting.net* for messengers and guests.

Through online messenger registration at the *SBC AnnualMeeting.net* tab, each messenger will receive an eight-digit registration code to present at the annual meeting's Express Registration lane in Phoenix. The code will be entered into a computer at the SBC registration area and a nametag will be printed. The appropriate church-authorized representative must complete all online messenger registrations.

Each cooperating church that contributes to convention causes during the preceding fiscal year of the annual meeting qualifies for two messengers. Additionally, the convention will recognize up to 10 additional messengers from a cooperating church under one of the following options:

- One additional messenger for each full percent of the church's undesignated receipts which the church contributed during the fiscal year preceding through the Cooperative Program, and/or through the convention's Executive Committee for convention causes, and/or to any convention entity.
- One additional messenger for each \$6,000 the church contributes in the preceding year through the normative combination of the Cooperative Program, designated gifts through the Executive Committee for convention causes or to any SBC entity.

"Pray for Such a Time as This" is this year's theme, based on Esther 4:14 and Luke 11:1. The meeting will not only cover business, Gaines has said, but will also provide spiritual edification.

Hotel registration has been available since October and continues through May 17.

Child, youth registration

Registration also opened Feb. 1 for preschool child care, Giant Cow Children's Ministries and Youth on Mission in conjunction with the annual meeting.

Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) child care volunteers will care for preschoolers, Giant Cow Chil-

dren's Ministries will lead the 5- to 12-year-olds and Woman's Missionary Union (WMU) will guide the Youth on Mission curricula and activities.

All activities for children and youth will be housed at the Phoenix Convention Center, the annual meeting site. Youth who have completed grades 7-12 will begin their days at the convention center with worship before going into the community for hands-on mission projects.

Pre-registration is required and is available online at *sbcanualmeeting.net* under the "children/youth" tab, with a deadline of May 5 for most programs, or whenever the space limitation of 120 children is reached. Registration will not be taken on site.

SBDR child care volunteers will offer child care for newborns through 5-year-olds June 11-14, encompassing the SBC Pastors' Conference June 11-12 and the annual meeting. The cost is \$25 per child for the Pastors' Conference and an additional \$25 per child for the annual meeting. There is also a \$10 non-refundable registration fee per child.

Lunch for preschoolers will be available for \$6 per day June 12-14. Parents should pay all related fees upon registration to insure their child's participation. The SBC will verify registrations with an emailed confirmation packet, including a parent's handbook.

Every lesson and game for preschoolers will focus on the theme, "Dreamer Boy - Joseph," and will teach students about Joseph, Jacob's son.

"Sea Cows' Deep Sea Adventures: Finding Truth in the Water" is the theme for this year's Giant Cow ministry events, including high-energy worship, impactful object lessons, scripture memorization, games and other activities. WMU will provide missions education as part of the curriculum.

Giant Cow Ministries will be offered for staggered fees; \$65 for June 11-14, \$55 for June 12-14, \$45 for June 13-14, and \$25 for each individual day. The registration deadline is May 30 or until available spaces are sold.

Registration is open at *sbcanualmeeting.net* or *thegiantcow.com/sbc-2017-pre*.

Youth on Mission will engage students in hands-on missions projects June 13-14 for \$55 per youth, plus a nonrefundable registration fee of \$10 per youth. The program is open to those who will have completed grades 7-12 by May or June. Lunch and snacks will be provided both days. **BR**

AROUND THE STATE

Obituaries

ROGER AUBIGNE WHITE, 87, of Roseboro, died Dec. 22, 2016.

White was raised on a farm outside Salemburg and enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 1950. He served four years at the Lackland Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas, before returning to Salemburg and marrying his high school sweetheart, Inex Holland. They had six children. He began full-time ministry at White Oak Baptist Church, Clinton in 1961 and served as pastor in 12 other area churches for the next five decades. He also worked

as a guidance counselor, elementary school principal and storyteller. After his first wife died, White remarried in 1986. Mildred Pahl was a former Campbell College (now university) classmate.

He was involved with New South River Baptist Association, Campbell University Board of Min-



ROGER WHITE

isters, Sampson County Gospel Sing and the Lions Club.

He is survived by his wife, Mildred White; daughters, Emily Thornton, Bonnie Parker, Mary Allen and Ruth Godwin; 10 grandchildren; two sisters, Sue Rogers and Carrie Norton.

Staff changes

JOSEPH MOORE has been appointed as special assistant to the president for academic enhancement at Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs. Moore is an assistant professor of history and chair of the department of social sciences.

Cross Memorial Baptist Church, Marion, has called **RYAN BENNETT** as pastor. Bennett previously served as lead pastor and church planter at Grace Pointe Church, Lexington. Bennett is also currently serving on the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina committee on convention planning.

MIKE WILLIAMS has been called as youth and college pastor at Arlington Church, Charlotte. Williams previously served as the youth pastor at Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte.

See Around the State page 13

Wear

Continued from page 9

have this incredible opportunity that's fleeting. We know it has an expiration date. So, how can we make the best of it?"

You know you have four or eight years to serve this country with everything you have.

Once that time is done, you can take all the vacation you want, you can sleep all you want. But for this period – that's why people work 16-hour days, because they know with each passing day you have less time to get done what you want to get done.

Q: To many Americans the White House is a caricature, a mythical castle of incomprehensible power occupied by either a hero or villain, depending on the results of the latest election cycle. Give us a peek behind the curtain. What is it like to work there day-in and day-out?

A: The vast majority of the time, it's not like television: it's not like "Scandal," it's not "House of Cards," and it's not "The West Wing." People aren't that funny. People aren't that creatively malicious.

In Republican and Democratic administrations – I've met enough George W. Bush White House staffers and now some Donald Trump folks – these are just exceptionally bright people who are trying to serve their country in the best way they know how.

There are times, in the middle of a political crisis, when things get ratcheted up, and it becomes a political environment – because it's a political office. But the vast majority of the time, it's folks having really boring conversations about really important things.

If people had the ability to follow staffers throughout the full scale and duration of their time in the White House, they'd be proud.

The country is being served well and being served with great passion by the vast majority of its public servants.

Q: You were one of the panelists at Evangelicals for Life – a large, evangelical, pro-life conference. You also worked in President Barack Obama's administration, arguably the most liberal U.S. president to date. You even directed faith outreach for his 2012 campaign. For many evangelicals, it's unthinkable that someone could be a conservative Christian and a Democrat at the same time. How do you respond to that?

A: I was asked recently, "Was it uncomfortable working in a Democratic administration?" My response was, "I'm a Christian. Of course it was."

But if what is behind that question is the assumption that if I had been working in a Republican administration that I'd be completely comfortable, then I think they're misunderstanding politics – how it works, what's involved.

Christians don't have the luxury of getting their political views from a political platform. We answer to a higher source. In addition, I was somewhat protected in the White House. I wasn't in the communications shop. I was in the White House Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships. My job was to resource the faith community to serve those in need and to make sure that people of faith were represented in policy discussions and outreach.

So, my job was to be honest with people of faith and to be honest with the administration about how people of faith were feeling.

Now, of course that's a diverse faith community. Christians have all sorts of views on torture, the environment and immigration. My job was to help communicate all those views.

The last thing I'd say is that I became a Christian at about 15 years old after reading Romans. My views on civil rights, poverty and immigration reform were all motivated by my Christian faith. While they aren't perfectly represented by the Democratic party, the Democratic party has definitely been more comfortable on those kinds of issues than the Republican party, especially the Republican party of today.

I was always very clear on the issues where I disagreed with the Democratic party. What we need now – more than anything, when it comes to politics – are faithful Christians who are happy to call themselves Democrats that are willing to speak within that structure on behalf of pro-life views.

What we need more than anything are faithful Christians, happy to call themselves Republicans, who are willing to speak within the Republican party for a compassionate view toward immigrants. And that's how this polarization will be stemmed.

We have the highest number of political independents we've ever had in this country – Gallup just came out with new numbers, it might be 43 percent.

These are all people who have completely checked out of the two-party system. So basically, all you have left in each political party are people who believe every jot and tittle of the party platform. Then, we wonder why our parties are so extreme.

Everyone who disagrees with a party on anything has withdrawn from the process because they're too morally precious to be a part. The point of a party is not to sign your conscience over. The point of a party is to be investing and pouring your views into shaping that party.

Our country would be a lot better off if we would recognize that and view our parties as things to be shaped, as opposed to things that are shaping us.

Q: Do you believe religion will play a greater or lesser role in future national elections?

A: America is still a profoundly religious country. So, for all the conversation leading up to the 2016 election about the end of Christian America, evangelicals still account for 26 percent of the electorate.

Seventy-plus percent of Americans believe in God.

Yes, we need to be aware of some of the trends, but those micro-trends don't negate the fact that we're still one of the most religious countries in the Western World. Religion isn't going anywhere.

What I'm concerned about is that we're seeing, on both sides of the aisle, a containment of basic theological concepts as simply having private relevance in the personal sphere and not having anything to say about what our public life should look like. That undermines our witness to the public.

We're not Christians because our mommy and papa were. We're not just Christians because it gives us a great little community to hang out with. We're Christians because we believe it's true. And it's not just true for us, but it's true for everybody.

When we are willing to let our theology follow politicians instead of the other way around, we're heading into some dangerous places.

My hope for the faith-based office in the Trump administration is that it continues to focus on serving the vulnerable. It's primarily an office that's about resourcing the non-profit community.

If the tools of the faith-based office are used simply to prop up religious leaders who agree with the current administration on everything, it's going to be destructive to religion in this country. I don't think the faith-based office will be able to survive that. **BR**

OPPORTUNITY CORNER



GuideStone Financial Resources is hosting a free 2017 Ministerial Tax Seminar Feb. 21 at Sandhills Baptist Association in Carthage.

GuideStone representative Davis Blount will discuss tax updates and what to expect in 2017, health reimbursement accounts, Department of Labor overtime

rules, Affordable Care Act, the church retirement plan and top financial topics for churches. Davis will also be available for 30-minute individual appointments that day.

Contact Tom Lampkin or Jane Cowan with the Sandhills Baptist Association at (910) 947-2238.



The Western North Carolina Prayer Gathering on March 7-8 will be at Fruitland Baptist Bible College in Hendersonville. The free conference will feature David Gallamore, Sam Gibbs, Mike Smith

and Chris Schofield. Night sessions will be at Ebenezer Baptist Church. Register at the door.

A love offering will be received. Visit ncbaptist.org/calltome.



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is hosting Scorecard, a one-day event to answer important questions regarding youth and children's ministry within the church. Participants will learn how to develop a strategic ministry plan with checkpoints that will help measure spiritual growth in children and youth. Scorecard also includes specific ways churches can partner with parents to dis-

ciple their children at home. Cost is \$25 per person and includes lunch. A special group rate of \$100 for five leaders is also available.

Seminars will be hosted March 11 at First Baptist Church in Garner; March 18 at Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe; and March 25 at Bear Creek Baptist Church in Bakersville. Visit ncbaptist.org/scorecard.



Rich Fork Baptist Church in Thomasville will host Spring Fling on March 18 for persons with developmental disabilities. The event will begin with registration at 9:30 a.m. and will conclude by 1:30 p.m. Participants will experience music and worship, fun and games, crafts

and sports and will have the Happiness Retreat band providing the music. All participants must be at least 10 years old and one parent or sponsor must accompany every five or fewer participants. Registration is \$5 and covers lunch. Visit ncbaptist.org/springfling.



Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina is hosting Girls in Action Day on March 11 from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. This year's theme is "Sow, Grow, Go" and is at Camp Mundo Vista. The day is designed for girls who have completed grades 1st-

6th. The day will be filled with opportunities to experience missions, learn about missions and interact with missionaries. Cost is \$20 per person.

Visit wmunc.wufoo.com/forms/2017-ga-day/.

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry is planning its third annual Aging Adults Innovating Ministry (AAIM) Spring Roundup May 2 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. at Rich Fork Baptist Church in Thomas-



ville. AAIM events provide information and encouragement to senior adult leaders. In addition to great music, fellowship and food, this year's roundup will provide information and inspiration around the theme "The Family of God." Allan Blume and Beth Harris will speak - focusing on the role of the church in supporting caregivers and the special needs of family caregivers. Call (877) 506-2226 for more information.



Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) is sponsoring the second annual Ride to Clyde motorcycle charity ride May 10-13. The route will begin on Oak Island at the N.C. Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell and end at the Broyhill Children's Home in Clyde.

The route will take riders along North Carolina's scenic backroads with stops to interact with children in three unique

BCH ministries. Registration is \$120 for individuals or \$150 for couples and includes three nights lodging and six meals.

Participants are challenged to join in the fundraising effort for BCH by seeking pledges for miles ridden or straight donations totaling \$100 or more. Estimated distance for the ride is 460 miles. Visit ncbaptist.org/ridetoclyde.

AROUND THE STATE cont.

Dobson First Baptist Church, Dobson, has called **TANNER HUDSON** as youth pastor. Hudson was previously a missionary at Adventures in Missions.

LUKE LONG has been called to Lea Bethel Baptist Church, Prospect Hill, as youth and children's minister. Long previously served as a student ministry intern at Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem.

Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, has called **GINA M. BROCK** as associate pastor. Brock previously served as minister of Christian education at Immanuel Baptist Church, Paducah, Ky.

GREG WOOD has been called to Arlington Church, Charlotte, as part-time director of missions. Wood previously served as a missionary with the International Mission Board.

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.

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

February 19

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

February 26

Practicing Joy

Focal passage: Philippians 4:4-9

Think for a moment about a favorite recipe that yields the best dish each time. Your family loves it, you love to eat it and it is delicious!

Our passage this week is like a recipe. This recipe yields plenty of servings of joy and it starts with the instruction, “*Rejoice in the Lord always.*”

That instruction is just a bit harder than “preheat the oven to 350 degrees,” but it is the first step. We add a generous portion of graciousness, take out any worry, then add praying, seasoned with thanksgiving.

We ask God what we need for the recipe, then throw in a dash of being true, pure, honorable, lovely, commendable, morally excellent and a measure of praise! Now, that is a spice cabinet of great value!

The good news too, is that not only does this recipe yield joy, but peace too! This is a recipe we should want to use all the time.

So, what stops us? Our lesson suggests that one obstacle to practicing joy is that we lose focus.

As we keep our focus on Christ, joy

and peace flood our hearts and minds.

My Mom’s diagnosis of Alzheimer’s disease has given all of us who love her the opportunity to practice joy – no one more than my dad! He is her full-time caregiver and does it each day out of love and his focus staying on Christ. It is the love of Christ that allows him to rejoice as he serves her unselfishly and enables him to be gracious in the face of Alzheimer’s related behaviors. He also knows the value of prayer.

He is thankful when I remind him that I am praying for him every day as he serves my mom and lives out his covenant of marriage.

Paul reminds believers that it is through the practice of letting “*your requests be made known to God*” that we receive the “*peace of God, which surpasses all understanding*” and he “*will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus*” (v. 7).

Whatever challenge you face today, be encouraged that you have a recipe that will enable you to practice joy!



SHERRA STILL
Member,
University Hills Baptist
Church, Charlotte

Focal passage: Philippians 4:10-20

Paul acknowledged in the book of Philippians that serving is often done in a partnership with others (1:5; 4:15) and there is joy for all involved. Both the giver and the receiver benefit from the act of giving.

Our lesson writer challenges us to join God in His work of giving for the benefit of others. One of the privileges of being a church member is we are often presented with numerous opportunities to give. There are ministries that need time, talents and financial resources.

As we look at each opportunity, it is helpful to consider Paul’s words regarding how much it meant to him to see believers giving to the glory of God.

Our pastor recently preached a sermon on giving that was so full of joy and warmth that a 92-year-old woman in the church commented, “I have heard many sermons on giving, and that was the best one I have ever heard!”

Although there were three fine points to the sermon, along with appropriate illustrations, I don’t think that is what brought the woman to encourage the pastor. I think it was the joy that was evident in the pastor as he shared from Exodus 35 that we should give together, give freely and give obediently.

He reminded us that giving isn’t something we have to do, but that we get to do.

We set the example for our children when we say, “we get to give our offering today,” rather than, “we have to give our offering today.”

Do we find ourselves giving, but with fingers having to be pried open from a tightly closed fist? Or, are we freely giving with hands open wide?

As you consider the lesson, take a moment to list all the ways you can readily remember how you have benefitted from the giving of others.

Then, make a list of the ways you can quickly think of how you are freely giving to others.

If you observe that one list is rather short, prayerfully consider how God is leading you to give with joy.

February 19

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

February 26

Faith Through Trials

Focal Passage: Ruth 1:6-18

My dad spent the last year of his life in nursing home care.

It is not where he would have chosen to be. It was the choice of necessity. Yet, he didn’t complain and made the best of the life before him. It would, and it did, end one day.

Elimelech and Naomi’s home had been Bethlehem. It had been their ancestral home for many generations. It was the birthplace of their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and under normal circumstances, Bethlehem would have remained their home for life. However, circumstances dictated change.

The famine in Bethlehem forced them to consider other options, and they chose the land of Moab where they expected to live “*for a while*” (Ruth 1:1b).

Now for many Hebrews a journey and stay in Moab would have been more like purgatory than paradise, but they gave it their best shot. Unfortunately, Elimelech died, and some years later, sons Mahlon and Chilion also died.

Those left in Moab were the women, Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.

Naomi, whose name means “pleasant,” became very unpleasant. She understandably became bitter (v. 14) because of her devastating losses.

The focal passage describes Naomi’s decision to go back home. She had rightly concluded there was nothing to keep her in the alien land of Moab. The famine in Bethlehem had passed, and in Bethlehem there was some family left on her husband’s side. Furthermore, Orpah and Ruth were still young enough to find new husbands in the land of Moab.

An interesting twist in the story happens when Naomi, who is experiencing a crisis of faith, agrees to let Ruth accompany her on this journey. Ruth, the Moabite, taught to worship a pagan god, now chose not only Naomi but Naomi’s God and whatever future Naomi’s God would provide (v. 18).

Crisis can make us bitter or better. It can devastate us, or increase our faith and devotion. My dad’s faith grew, I believe, because of how he handled his own Moab.



WAYNE PROCTOR
Pastor, Eure
Baptist Church, Eure

Focal Passages: Ruth 3:8-13; 4:13-17

Love anyone? The rituals of love and mating can be both unique and unusual.

The Puritans did not believe in lavish diamond rings – too extravagant and worldly. Therefore, a young bride-to-be would receive a thimble from her fiancé. The thimble would be used for sewing items needed for the house or for a wedding dress, and when all those duties were completed, she could have the thimble tip cut off, leaving her a very practical wedding band.

Around the same period of history, the Welsh exchanged “love spoons” as a sign of romantic intent. The young man would labor many hours crafting his spoon, offering to his female crush a most magnificent utensil that was sure to warm her affections.

Ancient Israel also had some interesting and unusual mating customs. Like the Puritans and Welsh, they were very practical. Levirate marriage was a means

Redeemed and Secure

of providing children for the family when the original husband had died childless.

A brother, or another family member, could marry the childless widow and procreate (father) a child for the deceased brother or kinsman. We see this custom authorized and practiced in Genesis 38, Deuteronomy 25 and in the book of Ruth.

Naomi, upon her return to Bethlehem, had concluded that the kinsman Boaz, if he could be convinced of Ruth’s potential as a mate, would be the perfect choice. Not only could Boaz provide her and Ruth financial stability, he could provide them with a son to continue their family line. What mother doesn’t want to be a grandmother?

Well, Ruth indeed warmed Boaz’s feet and his heart. He was overjoyed that the attractive Ruth had chosen him over the many other younger potential suitors. However, there was a slight catch. Another man, who was closer kin to Elimelech, had first dibs on Ruth. But once he realized a marriage to Ruth would cost him inheritance-wise, he “*removed his sandal*” (4:8) and gave the prized first rights to Boaz.

Boaz became Ruth and Naomi’s redeemer.

‘Gray divorce’ named among senior adult challenges

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

Increasing rates of divorce and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) among some populations over 50 could raise challenges for pastors ministering to senior adults in the coming years.

In December, England’s chief medical officer Sally Davies reported a 38 percent increase in STIs among Britons ages 50-70, *The Telegraph* reported. Meanwhile, U.S. researchers at Bowling Green State University say the divorce rate for Americans 50 and older has doubled since 1990 even though the overall divorce rate remained essentially unchanged.

Kenneth Long, pastor of First Baptist Church in Sun City, Ariz. – a retirement community with a minimum age of 55 – told Baptist Press (BP) the “biggest challenge” in his ministry field among both professing Christians and nonbelievers is “senior adults’ living together without being married.”

Senior adult cohabitation seems to occur “because of loneliness and financial needs,” Long said. “One [partner] or the other has retirement [funding] they might lose if they remarried. So they’re choosing to [cohabitate] for financial reasons rather than getting married for spiritual reasons.”

Davies’ 2016 chief medical officer report on public health noted that in the United Kingdom, there were 15,726 new STI diagnoses in 2014 among adults ages 50-70 compared with 11,366 in 2010.

Rising divorce rates lead to older adults’ “re-partnering and potentially having sex with new partners,” Davies’ report stated according to *The Telegraph*. Some likely engage in unprotected sexual activity because they believe pregnancy is not a risk.

Although “society’s prevailing view still considers that older people are not particularly sexually active,” the report stated, the rise in STIs likely is fueled by “changing social and behavioral patterns” among those who reached adulthood in the 1960s.

Mark Regnerus, a University of Texas sociologist, told BP U.S. rates of some STIs “are increasing among older folks, sometimes quite dramatically.” Still, the raw number of older adults with STIs is relatively small. “And always the baseline rates and frequencies are much lower than [with] younger people.”

A more significant trend among older Americans, Regnerus said, is a “major comparative uptick” in so-called “gray divorce.”

“I think there are a combination of things that created” the rise in divorce among older Americans, Regnerus said in an email. There is “more wealth among this era of senior citizens (or at least people over 50) than in earlier generations, yet with social scripts that: (1) raise expectations for long-term marital satisfaction (2) and have made divorce more accepted socially (and religiously).

“Also,” he added, “corrosive effects of social media [aid] in fostering discontent as well as building social

support for decisions people have made to leave.”

A 2013 research paper by Bowling Green State professors Susan Brown and I-Fen Lin noted a “gray divorce revolution” in America. Brown is co-director of the university’s National Center for Family & Marriage Research.

Between 1990 and 2010, the divorce rate for Americans 50-64 increased from 6.9 to 13.1 divorced persons per 1,000 married persons, Brown and Lin wrote. The increase for those 65 and older was 1.8 to 4.8.

In 1990, fewer than 1 in 10 divorced people were over 50, Brown and Lin wrote. Today more than 1 in 4 divorcees are over 50. If the divorce rate holds, more than 828,000 Americans over 50 will be divorced by 2030. In 2010, the number was reported to be about 643,000.

While “the causes underlying the rapid rise in divorce among middle-aged and older adults are difficult if not impossible to establish,” Brown and Lin wrote, the “primary factor” likely is the increasing number of remarriages among older adults, which statistically are more likely to end in divorce.

Brown told BP current data suggests the gray divorce rate is “essentially unchanged” from 2010.

Long, the Arizona pastor, said the solution to older adults’ struggles with marriage and sexuality is the same as the solution for younger adults.

“One man and one woman for life is God’s ideal situation,” Long said. “And that’s what I continue to preach and advise.” **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Association

Dan Valley Baptist Association seeks the man God has to serve as **Director of Missions**. Applicants should have minimum of 10 years ministry experience including some as pastor. We prefer candidates have master’s degree from accredited seminary/Bible college. Position requires administrative and shepherding skills, strong biblical foundation and passion for Jesus Christ, ability to lead others in obedience to God’s word and an encourager of faith and practice. Require background/credit check for chosen applicant. Submit resumes before March 15, 2017, to Dan Valley Baptist, DOM Search Committee, PO Box 583, Reidsville, NC 27323, or cdvdomsearch@gmail.com.

Pastor

First Baptist Church in King, North Carolina, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. Must have a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ, Bible teaching, strong administrative skills, someone who can shepherd our youth and young adult program, have good communication skills, must be self-motivated and can motivate church staff. Please send resumes to: fbkpastorsearch@gmail.com. Pay compatible with experience and ability.

Church Staff

Cornerstone Baptist Church seeks **FT director of Music Ministry**. Blended worship style which includes choir and praise team. Knowledge and utilization of audio/visual. Email harvbags@hotmail.com or mail resumes to 8947 Albemarle Rd., Charlotte, NC 28227.

First Baptist Church, Spruce Pine, NC, is prayerfully seeking a candidate to serve as **full-time minister of music and education**. This person must be a born again child of God, demonstrate Christian character, be called to head music ministry and provide testimony of faith. A bachelor’s degree in music and education from a Baptist seminary is preferred. Responsibilities included teaching and directing a full music program. Worship services are a blend of traditional and contemporary music. Please submit resume to First Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 125 Tappan St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777, or email to doctorrock1@yahoo.com.

Hopewell Baptist Church, Monroe, NC, seeks an **Associate Pastor of Discipleship** to oversee the discipleship ministries of a large conservative church and supervision of several staff members. Candidate should have a master’s degree or higher and experience in these areas. Resumes accepted until 2-28-17; Kim@whatasavior.com.

White Level Baptist Church, Louisburg, NC, is in search of an **Associate Pastor/Youth Minister** to serve our youth and our body. You must be ordained and we prefer that it not be the first youth group that you have led. This is a part-time position with plenty of opportunity to deliver Sunday morning sermons when Pastor is absent or on occasional special event Sunday mornings but most importantly a huge opportunity to impact youth at a critical point in their lives. Please email resume to sjjgharrison@gmail.com.

Mount Olive Baptist Church, Pittsboro, NC, is seeking a **part-time Music Minister**. We are a conservative church with an average attendance of 150 located in Alamance County. Looking for someone to plan and lead blended worship. Please send resume to 5043 Mt. Olive Church Rd., Pittsboro, NC 27312 or ministrysearch15@gmail.com.

Miscellaneous

For Sale: Chancel furniture and 43 pews of various lengths. Light finish solid oak with light blue padding. Available for immediate pickup. \$7,000 (negotiable) for entire lot. Contact Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Olin, NC, office between 9 am-1 pm Monday-Thursday 704-876-4025 or email pastordavid.mtvernon@gmail.com.

Coffee Shop Contents For Sale. Baptist Pastor selling entire contents of Coffee Shop located in Fremont, NC. Includes La Cimbali espresso machine, tables, chairs, counters etc. \$8,250. If interested please call, 919-273-5358.

Senior adult leaders from around the state will meet in Thomasville on May 2 for the 3rd annual AAIM roundup! Call NCBAM at 877.506.2226 to learn more about AAIM (Aging Adults Innovating Ministry).

MOVED? Don’t forget to change your address with the *Biblical Recorder*. Contact Liz Tablazon at (919) 459-5693 or liz@BRnow.org.

Do you have staff changes at your church or association? Or special news you would like to share (significant church or church staff anniversaries or a mission effort to reach your community)? Let the *Biblical Recorder* know by calling (919) 847-2127 or email editor@BRnow.org.

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For more information, call the office at (919) 459-5691.

Cost for Baptist churches/organizations is \$1.20 per word, number and stand-alone initial (\$1.42 for commercial and non-Baptist entities) with a minimum charge of \$35. Classifieds also are carried online.

GO Conference encourages pursuit of the Great Commission

By HARPER MCKAY | SEBTS

Whether you are an international missionary, church planter, business professional or teacher, your life should be spent fulfilling the Great Commission. This was a resounding theme during the ninth annual GO Conference at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS).

More than 550 students and guests gathered Jan. 27-28 to be challenged to go into all the world and fulfill the Great Commission. Main speakers included Danny Akin, president of SEBTS, Tony Merida, SEBTS associate professor of preaching and pastor for preaching and vision at Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, and Matt Carter, pastor for preaching and vision at The Austin Stone Community Church in Austin, Texas.

Akin started off the conference by telling the story of martyred missionary Jim Elliot. After sharing Elliot's famous quote, "Oh that God would make us dangerous."

Akin said, "Have you ever prayed that prayer? Might it be that when the demons see you coming they might tremble because they see the hand of God on your life."

Explaining the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20, Merida said, "These words are actually some of the most important words in all of scripture. This last command is our first priority."

Merida went on to encourage everyone to take part in God's mission. "Jesus can use the G.E.D. or the Ph.D.," he said. "The question is not, 'Do you have the education?' The question is, 'Are you available?' Is your heart captivated by this King?"

Carter charged students to not only see the need to take the gospel around the world and to lost neighbors but to be part of meeting that need. He encouraged them to obey the command of Christ in the Great Commission through the power of the Holy Spirit.

"You have the power in you right now to do powerful things with Christ for the kingdom of God," Carter said. "You are just as equipped and just as called."

The GO Conference included breakout sessions addressing the topics of using passions and gifts for the gospel, sharing the gospel without fear, weaving the gospel into stories and dealing with the unexpected as a missionary.

Students also heard from ministry leaders in the U.S. and former international missionaries about ministry



Walter Strickland, left, instructor of theology at The College at Southeastern (C@SE) in Wake Forest, leads a panel called "Working for the Kingdom: Using Your Passions, Gifts, and Dreams for the Gospel" during the Go Conference at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Joining him are, from right: LaToya King, director of operations for Jobs for Life; Greg Mathias, C@SE professor of global studies; Ashok Nachnani, director of Data Center Software Solutions; and Chip Hardy, professor of Old Testament at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. (SEBTS photo)

opportunities and what life is like in a cross-cultural setting.

On Friday night, students had the opportunity to see the new "Insanity of God" movie followed by a question-and-answer session with Scott Hildreth, director of the Center for Great Commission Studies, and Chuck Lawless, dean of

graduate studies at SEBTS.

The conference wrapped up on Saturday night with a special concert by well-known recording artists Shane and Shane.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Harper McKay is the news and information specialist for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.) **BR**

MIGHTY MEN OF VALOR







Evangelist Neal Hatfield • Dr. Bobby Welch • Calvary Reflections Blue Grass Band





**March 11, 2017
10:00 AM - 3:30 PM**

UPLANDS REACH CONFERENCE CENTER
2395 Old North Carolina 16 • Millers Creek • NC

Don't Miss This Great Opportunity!

An all day event for boys and men of all ages, full of a 500-yard shooting range, an AR shooting range, archery tag, trout fishing, 3-on-3 flag football tournament, Trophies of Grace mount display, hog-on-the-rack lunch, challenging messages presented by Dr. Bobby Welch and Evangelist Neal Hatfield, and much more.

ONLY \$35 PRE-REGISTRATION FEE, \$50 AT GATE
Download your registration form at www.UplandsReach.org
336-667-7177 • P.O. Box 830 • Millers Creek • NC • 28651



AWAKEN

A NORTH CAROLINA PRAYER GATHERING

Osborne Baptist Church
326 E. Stadium Drive, Eden, NC
MARCH 10-11, 2017



GORDON FORT
IMB
Richmond, Virginia



STEVE GRIFFITH
Osborne Baptist Church, Eden



J. CHRIS SCHOFIELD
BSCNC, Cary



K. MARSHALL WILLIAMS SR.
Nazarene Baptist Church, Philadelphia



MEL BLACKABY
First Baptist Church Jonesboro, Georgia

CONFERENCE IS FREE!
FIND MORE INFORMATION AT **PRAYNC.ORG**

