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**'BLUE COLLAR MISSIONS'**  
PROMOTED AT GO CONFERENCE

# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## AFTER 'JONAH EXPERIENCE,' CHURCH PLANTER ENGAGES NEW ORLEANS AREA



Send North America: New Orleans church planter Ryan Rice, right, prays with Life Church New Orleans worship leader Michael Phelps. The Rices are North American Mission Board 2016 Week of Prayer missionaries. The goal for the 2016 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is \$70 million. To learn more about the Week of Prayer, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and how your church can be mobilized to push back lostness in North America, visit [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com). (NAMB photo by James Bates)

By **JIM BURTON** | NAMB

**R**yan Rice once despised the church. Then he found love.

Growing up in greater New Orleans, an aunt read the Bible to him. Rice found the stories about Jesus fascinating.

"I was the kid who raised his hand to answer every Bible question," Rice said of his early exposure to Sunday School and Vacation Bible School.

When he turned 8 years old, his mother married a man who was an abuser and drug user. As a child just discovering the Bible, he learned about the dark side of life, and he asked a big question for a child, "Where is God?"

In middle school, his mother dragged him to church. "I remember sitting there



and thinking, 'This is the worst thing ever. I hate church. I hate the people here.' That was coming from a lot of hurt," Rice said.

That hurt remained as he grew to become a popular and handsome athlete who was the high school student council president. On the outside, Rice appeared to have his life together.

"From every aspect of my life, I was

empty on the inside," Rice said. "I was just broken."

Then he met Seane' Smooth and her father, Andrew Honore.

On the first day of his freshman year at Dillard University in New Orleans, he saw Smooth and knew she was special. Smooth began praying for him.

Rice met Honore when he visited Smooth's home in nearby Slidell and attended church with her family. Honore led his future son-in-law to Christ during Rice's sophomore year.

"I knew a couple of months after I came to faith in Christ that God was calling me to preach," Rice said. "I didn't know what that meant. I had no clue. What does it mean to be called?"

See Jonah page 11

## LifeWay trustees OK headquarters construction

By **CAROL PIPES** | Baptist Press

**T**rustees of LifeWay Christian Resources authorized the purchase of land and construction of a new corporate headquarters in downtown Nashville during their Feb. 1-2 meeting.

"This property is not just a location – it's a new community in which we can invest ourselves for the future," president and CEO Thom S. Rainer told trustees.

The property is five blocks north of LifeWay's current headquarters with frontage on Interstate 40/65. LifeWay administration will continue its due diligence on the 2.7 acres of land in Capitol View, a new mixed-use development site in Nashville's central business district. Rainer told trustees the Capitol View development would be a great location for employees and provide convenient access to hotels, restaurants and meeting space for LifeWay visitors and conference attendees.

The authorization included a recommendation to enter into a contract with Gresham, Smith and Partners for the design of the facility and "to execute other contracts and documents as necessary for LifeWay to complete the new campus."

"We are designing a building that will reflect LifeWay's culture both now and

See LifeWay page 7

## SHOULD PASTORS ENDORSE POLITICAL CANDIDATES

## FROM THE PULPIT?



# Charlotte ordinance bad for everyone

Last March the Charlotte City Council considered a highly controversial “non-discrimination” ordinance that would allow transgender persons to use either men’s or women’s restrooms, along with other special protection for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people. After strong grass roots opposition, the ordinance that most expected to pass was defeated in a 6-5 vote.

Charlotte’s newly elected mayor, Jennifer Roberts, promised to make the ordinance a top priority for 2016. Now the City Council plans to place the ordinance back on their agenda for approval.

On Feb. 8, the council was scheduled to have a private dinner meeting to discuss the proposed ordinance. [The *Biblical Recorder* print deadline was prior to this meeting.] The mayor intends to call for a vote without the voice of the citizens. It may be on the agenda for a Feb. 22 council meeting.

Citizens should contact their elected representatives and make their voices known. This is a bad, unnecessary ordinance that the council should defeat a second time. Area residents should take immediate action to hold city leaders accountable.

Has anyone asked the council to identify at least one example where an offense requires such an ordinance? Other than the necessary exclusiveness of the labels “Men” and “Women” on bathroom doors, we are not aware of an offense.

N.C. Rep. Dan Bishop (R) represents Mecklenburg County and vows to fight the LGBT ordinance. He said, “A small group of far-out progressives should not presume to decide for us all that a cross-dresser’s liberty to express his gender non-conformity trumps the right of women and girls to peace of mind in the intimate setting of a public bathroom or shower.”

Opponents of the ordinance held a rally at First Baptist Church in Charlotte on Feb. 6. Among the speakers were Aaron and Melissa Klein, owners of Sweet Cakes by Melissa in Gresham, Ore. The couple declined to bake a cake for a lesbian wedding, sparking a campaign of intimidation against them, led by LGBT groups.

On July 2, 2015, Oregon Labor Commissioner Brad Avakian ordered the Kleins to pay \$135,000 in emotional damages to the lesbian couple they declined to serve. I spoke with Aaron Klein after the couple shared their story at the Feb. 6 rally. He said Melissa opened the bake shop because she wants to use the “ar-

tistic talent given to her by God. ... God gives us the ability to do things and we want to honor God with those abilities.”



**K. ALLAN BLUME**  
Editor

The business was very successful for the five years it was open. Then one day, “A gal came in and she asked for a wedding cake,” Klein recalled. “I asked her for the bride and groom’s names for the contact form we fill out for wedding cakes, and she informed me it was two brides. At that point, – and this is the huge offense that the state of Oregon has touted as being so horrible – I said, ‘I’m really sorry. We don’t do same-sex wedding cakes.’”

The woman walked out of the bakery. That was the end of it, until a lawsuit was filed against the Kleins. The state of Oregon believes Aaron Klein’s words deserve a \$135,000 fine for damage to the woman he declined to serve.

“That is not discrimination based on sexual orientation,” he explained. “The same woman came into the bakery a year-and-a-half prior and ordered a wedding cake for a different event. We sold her the exact thing she was seeking out for a different event.”

Klein insists he did not discriminate against her. He was expressing his First Amendment right to practice his faith without government intervention.

He said, “As Christians we don’t want to make anybody else sad. We don’t want to hurt somebody. That’s the last thing we want to do. We want to live our lives for the Lord and speak truth. They portray it as [though we intended] to hurt somebody.”

The First Amendment allows Americans the privilege to live out their faith, Klein explained. “The Supreme Court seems to think so,” he said. “The recent Hobby Lobby case allowed that closely held businesses get to live out the same faith that individuals have the right to live.”

Opposing the Charlotte ordinance, Klein believes it will affect business owners, suppliers, employees and the general public in very negative ways. “It’s going to put Christians out of the marketplace,” he added. He should know. That is exactly what happened to his small business.

In their case, there was massive backlash – not so much from the LGBT group in Portland, but from groups around the country. “They were just very relentless,” said Klein. “They will try to starve a business if they can because it’s just something they do. They don’t want to be told that what they are doing is wrong, even though we never said what they are doing is wrong, but that’s how they took

it. They demanded that we cease doing business.”

For months his phone was ringing off the hook and almost every call was filled with vulgar language. Every vendor associated with Sweet Cakes by Melissa was harassed until they agreed to cease all business with them.

Oregon laws do not protect against hate speech and harassment. “Once the law is on their side, they will use it and wield it as a weapon to destroy anybody who simply disagrees.”

“As Christians, we need to be motivated to get more involved in the political process – not so much for people like me who have already been forced to pay \$135,000 – but for those who will not be able to stand up under the pressure,” Klein insisted. “What about the next guy? We need to stand up for those who won’t be able to survive the harassment campaigns of the LGBT movement in the future.”

Klein also highlighted the problem of the abortion industry. With 58 million babies aborted since 1973, he said we should ask, “Is that a settled issue, or do we need to fight against that? We have some worthy fights in front of us as Christians. We need to stand up and honor God. We need to stand for those who can’t stand for themselves.”

The Kleins’ case is now in the Oregon State Appellate Court. It could go to the Oregon Supreme Court and potentially to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Did they pay the fine? Yes. Although they did not intend to pay while the case is in the appeal process, they were forced to pay the full \$135,000. They appealed to

stay the fine until the case is decided, but all appeals were denied.

Klein explained that the state had no “compelling reason” to make them pay the fine. But because the state said they had the money, they were forced to pay the full penalty. “We simply want to live out our faith and they seem to think that is an offense to them,” he said.

The citizens of Charlotte should heed Klein’s appeal and tell their elected leaders to reject the proposed ordinance.

Tami Fitzgerald, executive director of the North Carolina Values Coalition said, “It is absurd for the City of Charlotte to put women and children in harm’s way by allowing sexual predators free access to women’s bathrooms. There should be no men in women’s bathrooms! If Christians don’t rise up and stop Charlotte’s discriminatory bathroom ordinance that doesn’t even contain an exemption for churches or schools, it could come to every city in North Carolina. This is what happens when only 8 percent of the voters show up for a municipal election – radicals who support the LGBT agenda are elected to force these types of policies on a city full of churches.”

The LGBT movement shows a strong prejudice against Christians. If you do not agree with them, you should be destroyed, in their opinion. They practice relentless intolerance. While they label Christians “hate groups,” they are masters of hatred in practice. In the end, their hatred will be their undoing. Pray for them.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – For more information about Charlotte’s ordinance visit [dontdoitcharlotte.com](http://dontdoitcharlotte.com).) **BR**

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# IN FOCUS

A WORD FROM OUR LEADER

## In all things, a time for prayer

I firmly believe that the practice of consistent fervent prayer is required if we are to see God move in our state, nation and world.

In 1 Thessalonians 5:17, we are commanded to pray without ceasing. Have you ever spent time meditating on the meaning of this verse?

Does it mean that we are to spend our every waking moment in prayer and supplication?

Does it mean that we are to live our lives forgoing all other activities to devote ourselves completely to prayer?

To the contrary, I believe that Paul's reference to prayer addressed an attitude – an attitude that causes us to position our hearts and our minds toward God at all times. Paul did not mean that we were to remain on our knees in the posture of prayer all throughout our day, but we can keep our Heavenly Father in mind in all circumstances.

It is possible to recognize the goodness of God in every situation and pause to reflect on Him.

In Matthew 18:20, Jesus promised that when two or three are gathered in His name, He is there also.

James 5:16 states that the prayer of a righteous man (person) is powerful and avails much.

In commenting about the prayer life of Jesus, George Adam Smith said that for Jesus “going forth from the place of prayer was little more than gathering the spoils of victory.”

Our prayers are not in vain. Our Heavenly Father hears every one of them and answers according to His wisdom and His plan. Psalm 25:14 states that the secret (counsel) of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant (plan).

Do you make it a daily consistent practice to go into the throne room of God with an open Bible as well as an open heart? If you sit at His feet in an attitude

of humility and praise, if you meditate on His written Word and wait for Him to direct your prayers, you will sense His presence.

Recently, I heard Amy Boone, the new executive director-treasurer of Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina and former missionary with the International Missions Board tell about answered prayer. Amy said she and her husband, Mike, saw God perform numerous miraculous

works on their birthdays when they lived in Africa because thousands of Southern Baptist people were praying for them.

Do you want to learn more about power in prayer? In March, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina will be hosting a statewide prayer gathering called “Awaken – Watch and Pray.”

This two-day gathering will feature John Franklin of John Franklin Ministries; Mark Harris, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte; Richard Owen Roberts, president of International Awakening Ministries; and Chris Schofield, director of the BSC Office of Prayer.

*“Praying always with all prayers... being watchful... with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints”* – Ephesians 6:18.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – To learn more about “Awaken: Watch and Pray,” a North Carolina State Prayer Gathering, please visit [ncbaptist.org/stateprayer](http://ncbaptist.org/stateprayer) or contact Betsy Roland at [broland@ncbaptist.org](mailto:broland@ncbaptist.org) or (800) 395-5102 ext. 5513.) **BR**



**MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.**  
BSC executive  
director-treasurer

# Awaken

Watch & Pray

## Bridging the generation gap

In 16 years of ministry I've noticed that nearly every church, every pastor and every church member has dealt with the issue of the generation gap. To solve this problem in our local churches we have to simply do one thing, “love our neighbor as ourselves.”

I've come to the conclusion that the generation gap isn't really about church styles or church music, but rather it's about a lack of love. The young like things fast, loud and technologically advanced, while many of the older like things a little slower and more predictable. But in the end those aren't the real issues. The real problem is how we love those different from us!

I loved my grandparents deeply, but we were as different as night and day. For some reason I never really had any problems bridging the generation gap with my grandparents. Do you want to know why? It was because I loved them with all my heart!

Imagine how compelling and God-honoring a local church could be if the youth learn from their elders and the elders intentionally invest in the younger generation.

As a preacher I get tired of hearing the same arguments over and over again. Those arguments usually take on one of the following two forms.

The older say, “Those young people are going to destroy the church with all their new ideas, upbeat music and casual attire.” Second, the younger say, “Those older folks are going to let this church die because they don't want to change anything.”

If you read the two complaints closely, you'll notice the issue is more about identifying who the problem is and less about trying to understand and love those that are different from us. This problem is something that can and will quickly go

away if we just love each other the way Jesus commands us.

Our churches will not suddenly start reaching the world for Christ just because generational preferences are met.

Just because a local church does or does not cater to everyone's personal preferences is not the reason Christ came to die. Jesus' death on the cross was for the salvation of souls, not for the preserving of traditions.

Let me be crystal clear. I believe there is nothing wrong with traditions, and there is nothing wrong with change. The problems arise when our obedience or lack of obedience

is directly linked to certain aspects of “church life” and not to Christ Himself.

Those who struggle with bridging the generation gap are usually blinded by the belief that their preferences are right and any other preference is wrong. We must pray and not be deceived into this kind of thinking. Rather, we must learn to hold to Christ alone and learn to do it together. We have to get to the point where we all love those much younger than us, those much older than us and those who are very different from us. If we only love and support those who are just like us, we aren't really a “church body.” The enemy would love to divert us and our church's focus away from Christ and to non-essential issues. I plead with you today to remember that Christ came for people, died for people, arose for people and will return for people, and not for our generational preferences.

The problem of bridging the generation gap can be eliminated, but it must start with each of us loving those who are different from us. Remember, heaven will not be filled with everyone who is just like you!

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Jeremy Mahaffey is senior pastor of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Vale.) **BR**



**JEREMY MAHAFFEY**  
Guest Column



## Submissions for Tar Heel Voices

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

Have story ideas? Send to [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org). We rely on readers to help us cover more than 4,000 North Carolina Baptist churches. Thank you!



# N.C. Baptists increase giving, offer help for retiring IMB missionaries

BR staff &

CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

**N**orth Carolina Baptist churches gave more than \$29 million to missions through the Cooperative Program (CP) in 2015, which reflected an increase of nearly 1 percent over gifts received in 2014.

Giving totals exceeded the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) 2015 operating budget of \$29 million by more than \$68,000. That marked the first time since 2006 that the BSC met or exceeded its CP budget.

The \$68,605.85 excess was distributed as such: one-third to the CP of the Southern Baptist Convention, one-third to the BSC church planting team and one-third divided between Fruitland Baptist Bible College, the *Biblical Recorder* and the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina.

Including the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and N.C. Missions Offering, North Carolina Baptists gave more than \$50 million to missions causes in 2015.

## \$500K opportunity for retiring IMB missionaries

The BSC Executive Committee (EC) approved a recommendation Jan. 26 to set up a \$500,000 reserve fund to utilize International Mission Board (IMB) retirees returning to North Carolina. Executive Director-Treasurer Milton Hollifield Jr. said, "This reserve will provide additional funding for strategic efforts to impact lostness through disciple-making ... as we seek to capitalize on the expertise of IMB missionaries who are returning to the United States."

IMB leaders announced a plan in August 2015 to reduce personnel expenses in an effort to balance the entity's budget. The agency had been liquidating global properties to make up for its substantial budget shortfalls in recent years.

The so-called organizational reset included a voluntary retirement incentive for personnel that met certain tenure and age requirements. The deadline for employees to decide whether or not to accept the incentive was Dec. 11, 2015.

Missionaries who accepted the voluntary retirement incentive and are relocating to North Carolina will be considered for positions as contract workers for the BSC if they desire to continue in vocational ministry among international people groups.

Potential jobs will focus on strategic efforts facilitated by the five BSC ministry teams: church planting, strategic focus, Great Commission partnerships, church revitalization and disciple-making.

"This generous gift from the Baptist



Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) Executive Director-Treasurer Milton Hollifield Jr., seen here at a 2015 BSC board meeting, said, "I give thanks to God that North Carolina Baptists rallied behind our mission board and rallied behind these returning missionaries at a most critical time." (BR file photo)

State Convention of North Carolina will go a long way toward meaningfully redeploying retired IMB missionaries as they transition to a new season of ministry in which they are engaging lostness throughout North Carolina," said IMB president David Platt.

"I praise God for the generosity of North Carolina Baptists and for their support of the IMB during these days. I am confident that God will use these designated funds to fuel disciple making and church planting throughout North Carolina to the glory of His name for years to come."

Hollifield said there are many international "unengaged and unreached people groups" in North Carolina. IMB missionaries have the skills and experience to reach internationals in the state with the gospel, creating the potential for some to return to their global homelands as followers of Jesus Christ.

According to Caleb Bridges\*, BSC people group engagement catalyst, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated in 2014 that 755,741 people or 7.6 percent of the state's total population is foreign born. In Durham, Mecklenburg, Orange, Wake and Duplin counties those estimates increase dramatically, up to 13.9 percent. The report says 1,083,892 North Carolinians speak a language other than English in the home.

North Carolina has been one of the fastest-growing states through in-migration in recent years. In-migration is a term researchers use to indicate an immigrant moved from another state after moving from their home country. From 2000 to 2013 the immigrant population grew 69.1 percent.

"That is astronomical growth," Bridges said.

The trend is expected to increase in the next 10 years. A majority of the immigrants are not refugees but instead

have moved for better vocational opportunities.

"Some of these missionaries know the language," Hollifield said.

"They know the culture; they know how to reach these people and will be a great benefit to us. ... We need their help in reaching the 154 nations of the world that are represented right here in North Carolina."

Frank S. Page, president and chief executive officer of the SBC Executive Committee, said, "I am deeply encouraged to hear of this serious turnaround in North Carolina's CP giving. I appreciate the stable, strong leadership of Milton Hollifield in leading my home state! God bless the churches of North Carolina who are catching a new vision of reaching the nations for Christ."

## Newly elected EC officers and at-large members

The board also elected new officers and at-large members to the EC.

Brian Kinlaw, lead pastor of South View Baptist Church in Hope Mills, was elected board president. Kinlaw served as the vice president of the board in 2015.

Marc Francis, lead pastor of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham, was elected vice president.

Ginger Brown, executive assistant for administration and convention relations at BSC, was re-elected as the board secretary.

Board members also elected four at-large members to the executive committee. They are Ken Jones, pastor of Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church in Lincolnton; Michael Owens, pastor of Gate City

Baptist Church in Jamestown; Debbie Smith of Dudley Shoals Baptist Church in Granite Falls; and David Spray, senior pastor of Pisgah Forest Baptist Church in Pisgah Forest.

BSC President Timmy Blair Sr., pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier, also appointed six individuals to the convention's Committee on Nominations. They are Charles Brust of Cedar Grove Baptist Church in Lumberton; Ken Hucks of Sardis Baptist Church in Indian Trail; David Jones of Baptist Home Baptist Church in North Wilkesboro; Jonas Perez of Faith Baptist Church in Faith; Joseph Phan of Vietnamese Baptist Church in Greensboro; and Beth Wooten of Beulaville Baptist Church in Beulaville. Blair also announced that Noah Crowe, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Robbinsville, will serve as the committee chairman. All new committee members will serve a three-year term.

At the meeting, board members also met with their respective committees for the first time, and each committee elected a chairperson for 2016. Committee chairs not only oversee the work of their respective committees, but they also serve on the convention's Executive Committee.

Committee chairs 2016 are Gordon Benton of First Baptist Church Weaver-ville (Christian Higher Education); Kelly Bullard of Temple Baptist Church in Fayetteville (Church Planting & Missions Partnerships); LeRoy Burke of Zion Hill Baptist Church in Lumberton (Business Services); David Duarte of Daystar en Español Church in Greensboro (Communications); Bob Garbett of New Hope Baptist Church in Beulaville (Christian Life & Public Affairs); John Mark Harrison of Apex Baptist Church (Evangelism & Discipleship); and Boyce Porter of Geneva Baptist Church in Camden (Christian Social Services).

The next Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for May 17-18 at Caraway. **BR**



BRIAN KINLAW







David Platt encourages GO Conference attendees to consider unique ways to live missionally in international contexts through business ventures. (SEBTS photo)

## Ageism and Christian worship

In recent years, there has been a move to segregate our congregations by age.

You see it fleshed out in the Sunday morning services when we send the children to one worship experience, the youth to another, those that prefer modern music to one, and those that prefer traditional music to yet another.

Ageism is negatively impacting many of our churches. Paul Clark Jr., a friend of mine who serves with the Tennessee Baptist Convention, describes it this way:

“Granted, like other misguided exercises, ageism may have been adapted to suit perceived cultural context, but also like other truncations of Christian practice, its implementation has served to severely divide the church at its most needful point of unity, Christian worship.

Recognizing there are multiple justifications for slicing up a church body into separate worshiping venues, and not questioning that many motives of such dividing may be logical, and in fact almost always pragmatic in nature, I must, nevertheless, point to biblical teaching.”

Here are a few passages that reflect a multi-generational approach to doing church:

- “Do not rebuke an older man but

*encourage him as you would a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters, in all purity*” – 1

Timothy 5:1-3.

- “Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity” – 1 Timothy 4:12.

- “One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts” – Psalm 145:4.

- Perhaps the most convincing passage is in Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17:

*“... that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”*

To see all generations worshipping together shows that Jesus’ grace can confound the views of this world that would divide by age and preference.

Sure, it’s great to have children’s worship and youth worship times that are geared especially for those age groups, but consider offering those experiences at times that will not conflict with a single multi-generational, multi-ethnic worship experience.

Visit [klamm.ws/Unified](http://klamm.ws/Unified) Worship.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – *Kenny Lamm is a consultant for worship and music with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5638, or [klamm@ncbaptist.org](mailto:klamm@ncbaptist.org). Visit his blog at [renewingworshipnc.org](http://renewingworshipnc.org).)*



KENNY LAMM

# ‘Blue collar missions’ promoted at GO Conference

By SETH BROWN | BR Content Editor

“To the ends of the earth” was the theme of this year’s GO Conference, held at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest. The event focused on international missions, but each of the talks addressed the topic in unique ways.

One strategy for doing missions came up repeatedly throughout the Jan. 29-30 conference, harnessing so-called “regular jobs” in order to share the gospel of Jesus Christ across the globe.

David Platt, president of the International Mission Board, encouraged attendees to consider the limitless, unique ways to live missionally in an international context through business ventures.

“Could it be that God is calling us,” Platt said, “not just to leave jobs for the spread of the gospel, but to leverage jobs for the spread of the gospel?”

One missionary took a creative approach to financially supporting his evangelistic endeavors. He began buying old, rare rugs made in a specific North African region, Platt said. The missionary arranged for local craftsmen to repair and restore the carpets, making them well-suited for resale.

The rugs go for a premium online to “people in New York lofts,” he said. It has become not only financially profitable for the missionary, but the business interactions generate relationship-build-

ing opportunities with local villagers that probably wouldn’t occur otherwise.

Platt said emphatically, “What if God has designed the globalization of the marketplace for the spread of His gospel among the nations?”

During a breakout session titled “Blue Collar Missionary: Missions and the Workplace,” Benjamin Quinn shared a handful of stories that illustrate the importance and biblical foundation of understanding one’s vocation as a missional effort. Quinn, who serves SEBTS as assistant professor of theology and history of ideas, recalled a conversation with his brother that demonstrated the need for all Christians to engage their workplaces with minds set on ministry.

Quinn’s brother, Brandon, was vice principal of the high school where the two siblings grew up. Out of curiosity, Quinn asked Brandon about his daily routine in the administrative role. So, Brandon told him of a recent interaction with a student named Cory\*.

Cory had been in and out of trouble for quite some time, and his offenses were frequently related to the possession of illegal drugs on school property. One day Cory was sent to the vice principal’s office for yet another disciplinary issue, and Brandon began to ask a series of questions to better understand the student’s situation.

“Why do we continue to find you with drugs?” he said, along with a few other probing questions.

See GO page 16

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# Growing Hispanic population signals greater pro-life support

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

**T**he idea that growing minority populations in the U.S. will lead to a decrease in traditional Judeo-Christian values is misguided, according to Samuel Rodriguez, president/CEO of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. Speaking at the inaugural Evangelicals for Life Conference Jan. 21-22 in Washington, D.C., he said, “Latinos are staunchly pro-life. We are a pro-life community.”

The title of the TED-style presentation was “Pro Vida: Why Hispanic Evangelicals are Distinctly Pro-Life.”

Recent demographic studies show that America is on its way to becoming a majority non-white population. The Pew Research Center projects ethnic minorities will outnumber White populations as early as 2055. The growing number of Hispanic Americans will be one of the primary factors in that demographic shift, increasing by 28 percent over the next four decades.

Rodriguez said 54 percent of Hispanic millennials – “the emerging generation” – believed abortion should be illegal in most or all cases, according to a 2015 Pew study. More than 25 percent of Hispanics considered abortion to be the critical issue that determines how they vote.

“It was the largest percentage of all ethnicities, including white evangelicals,” he said.

“I want to see the Hispanic-American community emerge as the proverbial firewall [against abortion],” said Rodriguez. “And I want this community to be the most pro-life community on the planet in the name of Jesus Christ. That is my passion.”

There are five reasons why he believes Hispanic evangelicals care about pro-life values:

- Hispanic evangelicals believe all people, even unborn children, are made in the image of God – the imago Dei.
- Hispanic evangelicals understand the pro-life issue as primarily spiritual, not political.
- Given that nearly all Hispanics are either Catholic



Samuel Rodriguez, president/CEO of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, speaks to participants of Evangelicals for Life Conference in January. (ERLC photo)

or evangelical, even the most liberal sectors of Latino culture are generally pro-life.

- Hispanics see abortion as a civil rights issue, since abortion clinics most often target Hispanic and African-American communities. It is minority populations that are most threatened by the abortion industry.

- There is a “biblical imperative” ingrained in the gospel that is both “vertical and horizontal.” It’s the “nexus of the cross” that leads us to love both God and pursue justice for others.

Rodriguez acknowledged that liberal politicians sometimes appeal to Hispanics because of their views on U.S. immigration. He pleaded with fellow Hispanics to avoid the mistake of disconnecting pro-life values that inform immigration policies from pro-life values that inform abortion activism.

“How can you be supporting a candidate who is in favor of immigration,” he said, “but likewise they’re in favor of seeing the destruction of our little daughters and sons in the womb? That’s just intellectually incoherent. We must be above all pro-life and everything else will follow. ... whatever we’re advocating for, it shouldn’t trump life. We must begin with life!” **BR**

## Appeals court weighs Rowan County officials’ prayers

By **DANIEL JAMES DEVINE** | World News Service

**T**he elected members of the Rowan County, N.C., Board of Commissioners have been regularly praying in Jesus’ name at meetings since at least 2007. But some county residents aren’t happy.

On Jan. 27, the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals heard arguments in a case challenging the constitutionality of the Rowan County Commissioners’ Christian prayers. If the county loses, it could mean that commissioners will have to stop leading prayers during meetings and instead invite community members to offer prayers.

The case arose after a few county residents complained about the Christian prayers they had heard while attending board meetings, which are open to the public. According to a legal complaint from three residents, all of the board members had offered at least one “sectarian” prayer in recent years, often invoking the name of Jesus.

“We can’t be defeated, we can’t be destroyed, and

we won’t be denied, because of our salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ,” prayed one board member in 2009, according to the complaint.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the ACLU of North Carolina Legal Foundation, which are representing the three plaintiffs, claim that 97 percent of the board’s meetings since November 2007 have opened with “sectarian prayer.”

The U.S. Supreme Court weighed in on the issue in the 2014 case of *Town of Greece v. Galloway*, where the justices ruled 5-4 that sectarian prayers at board meetings were constitutional as long as adherents of any faith were allowed to volunteer to pray. In that case, town officials had invited clergy members to offer prayers on their behalf.

The county already lost its case once, last May, when a federal judge ruled the commissioners’ prayers were “unconstitutionally coercive.”

If the county loses before the circuit court, it will likely appeal the case, *Lund v. Rowan County*, to the U.S. Supreme Court. **BR**

## CMP activists indicted by grand jury

By **DAVID ROACH** | Baptist Press

**T**he Houston grand jury charged with investigating Planned Parenthood in conjunction with undercover videos produced by the pro-life Center for Medical Progress (CMP) has said the abortion provider broke no laws and instead has indicted CMP journalists on two felony counts.

In response to the indictments, a spokeswoman for Texas Right to Life said the grand jury process “reeks of something amiss.” She said the case illustrates “a pattern” in the Harris County district attorney’s office of failing to issue indictments in “abortion-related” cases despite significant evidence that abortionists have committed crimes.

CMP founder David Daleiden and his colleague Sandra Merritt were both indicted on felony charges of tampering with a government record, Harris County district attorney Devon Anderson announced Jan. 25. *The New York Times* speculated the charges may stem from making and presenting fake identification resembling California driver’s licenses in conjunction with the CMP’s investigation of Planned Parenthood’s Houston affiliate. If convicted, the journalists each could face up to 20 years in prison, according to the Houston Chronicle.

Daleiden also was indicted on a misdemeanor charge related to purchasing human organs.

Recently, Daleiden told Russell Moore, president of Southern Baptists’ Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, CMP’s undercover investigation of Planned Parenthood’s apparent sale of body parts from aborted babies was not unethical.

Asked by Moore at the Evangelicals For Life conference in Washington whether he was “making morality relative here by using lying and deception,” Daleiden responded, “I think that undercover work is fundamentally different from lying because the purpose of undercover work is to serve the truth and to bring the truth to greater clarity and to communicate the truth more strongly.”

District attorney Anderson, a Republican, said in announcing the indictments, “As I stated at the outset of this investigation, we must go where the evidence leads us. All the evidence uncovered in the course of this investigation was presented to the grand jury. I respect their decision on this difficult case,” the *Chronicle* reported.

Anderson said the grand jury’s investigation, which lasted more than two months, was “lengthy and thorough” and involved her office, the Houston police and the Texas Rangers, the *Times* reported.

Melissa Conway of Texas Right to Life and other pro-life activists expressed concern that one of the prosecutors in the Harris County district attorney’s office, Lauren Reeder, has served on the board of directors for Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast since 2013 – a fact confirmed by Reeder’s LinkedIn page.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott and Texas attorney general Ken Paxton both said the state’s investigation of Planned Parenthood will continue, according to CNN. **BR**



# LifeWay

Continued from page 1

for the future,” Rainer said. “It will be a building conducive to collaboration, innovation and fun.”

During a Feb. 4 news conference, Nashville Mayor Megan Barry joined Rainer to announce LifeWay’s decision to remain downtown. She said, “I know LifeWay had many options, and we are excited they have chosen to remain a part of the fabric of Nashville.”

About 1,100 LifeWay employees are based in the downtown offices and will move into the new building. Rainer estimated the completion of the new building could be as early as November 2017.

During his report to trustees, Rainer talked about the many changes that have occurred at LifeWay over the last 10 years. “We have faced headwinds again and again. But God has worked through these times. It is amazing to see what God has done through LifeWay.

“We are here for such a time as this,” Rainer continued. “And it’s time to move forward.”

In other business, LifeWay trustees:

- Elected new board officers. They are: Kent Dacus, vice president for enrollment and student services at California Baptist University, as chairman; Bruce Moseley, pastor of Zion Baptist Church in Mobile, Ala., as vice chairman; and Darron Edwards, senior pastor of United Believers Community Church in Kansas City, Mo., as recording secretary.

- Discussed and approved responses to two motions referred to LifeWay by the Southern Baptist Convention during last summer’s meeting. The responses will be reported to the 2016 convention in St. Louis, Mo., June 14-15.



Artists rendering shows LifeWay Christian Resources’ proposed new building in Nashville’s central business district.

- Recognized eight trustees who are ending their board service in June. They are: Terry Braswell, Lithia Springs, Ga.; Jeanne Davis, Brentwood, Tenn.; Johnny Dickerson, Mansfield, Texas; Kathleen Todd, Brunswick, Maine; Craig Carlisle, Rainbow City, Ala.; Michael Inouye, Kaunakakai, Hawaii; John Hardin, Washington, D.C.; and Jesse Messer, Asheville, N.C. The trustees had a special time of prayer for the family of Messer, who passed away Monday morning.

- Heard reports from each of the organization’s vice presidents regarding progress and plans for ministry advance.

- Received a “clean audit” report from LifeWay’s outside auditor Ernst & Young.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Carol Pipes is manager of editorial services at LifeWay Christian Resources.) **B3**

## Broncos, Panthers discuss faith, sportsmanship

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | Baptist Press

While underinflated footballs didn’t dominate Super Bowl headlines this year, the National Football League (NFL) still had its share of unsportsmanlike conduct calls, concussions and doping allegations this season. But rules do matter, and those who don’t follow them must pay the consequences, players say.

Team members from the Denver Broncos and Carolina Panthers weighed in on the importance of sportsmanship and their Christian faith during Opening Night of Super Bowl 50 with the media at SAP Center in San Jose, Calif., Feb. 1.

Is sportsmanship becoming a thing of the past in the NFL as teams continue to clamor for an edge to get to the Super Bowl?

“I don’t think [sportsmanship] is going extinct in the NFL,” noted Brandon Marshall, linebacker for the Broncos, responding to a Baptist Press question. With the number one defense, the Broncos are a hard-hitting team that more often than not seems to find a way to keep teams out of the end zone. But playing by the rules and being an example on and off the field, Marshall said, should remain the priority.

He seeks to prioritize his life by faith, family and football. “I thank God everyday for where I’m at ... for

See Faith page 9

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# SHOULD PASTORS ENDORSE POLITICAL CANDIDATES

## FROM THE PULPIT?

BR staff

**T**he principle known as “separation of church and state” enjoys regular attention in American political discourse. The phrase has been in the public square since 1802, when Thomas Jefferson enshrined the phrase in a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association, Conn., praising the U.S. Constitution’s First Amendment restrictions on the federal government. The historic amendment blocks government authorities from making any law that establishes a state approved religion or impedes the free exercise of religion by any citizen.

Although the constitutional constraints technically apply to the government, it is common for Americans to understand the separation of church and state as a double-edged sword.

Thus, governmental institutions should not meddle in the establishment or exercise of religion, and religious institutions should not meddle in the establishment or exercise of governmental affairs.

The idea is so pervasive that 87 percent of Protestant church leaders said they believe pastors should not endorse candidates for public office from the pulpit, according to a 2012 survey conducted by LifeWay Research. Only 44 percent said they have personally endorsed can-

didates for public office, even outside their official church role.

Protestant pastors, by and large, seem to agree that church and state should keep a healthy distance. That consensus may be deteriorating, though, at least in terms of public perception.

Rafael Cruz, ordained minister and father of U.S. presidential hopeful Sen. Ted Cruz, said in a recent radio interview with Breitbart News Daily, “Christians have been lied to and have believed the lies, have been drinking the Kool-Aid for too long with things like so-called separation of church and state, which of course is neither in the Constitution nor in the [Declaration of Independence].”

He added, “too many pastors across America for too long have been hiding behind the pulpit because of fear, fear of losing their tax exemption.”

Rit Varriale, pastor of Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby, seems to agree with Cruz’s sentiment. He contended in a recent guest column for the *Biblical Recorder* that modern political ideologies should not be imposed on the Bible.

Varriale made his case in response to a post by Chris Hefner, senior pastor of Wilkesboro Baptist Church, who

said preaching the gospel and planting churches must take precedence over political action, referring to the example set by the Apostle Paul and other early Christian missionaries.

“Applying the modern notion of separation of church and state to the early church, and subsequently interpreting the Bible as if the apostles approached politics as we do, is a mistake,” said Varriale. “In the apostles’ world, there was no separation of religion and state.”

He believes pastors should lead with love, but they should not be afraid to mix religion and politics in their preaching.

If the past is any indication, the topic of separation of church and state will remain prominent in public dialogue for the foreseeable future, especially as it relates to politics in the pulpit.

The *Biblical Recorder* wants our readers to know what North Carolina Baptist pastors think about the issues. So, we asked a few to give us their response to this question: Do you intend to endorse any political candidates in your preaching or some other ministry platform? Why or why not?

Here are their answers:

### Joel Stephens, pastor, Westfield Baptist Church, Westfield

I do not endorse any political candidates in any official pastoral capacity.

Pastors hold a sacred trust from the Lord. We are called to “preach the Word” and “rightly divide the Word of Truth.” No pastor can fulfill this God-given responsibility while side-stepping the ethical issues that face modern society. Our mission is to “make disciples,” which includes “teaching [believers] to observe all the things [Jesus] commanded.”



In the realm of political action, this means teaching believers the biblical, timeless principles expressed in the scripture and assisting them in applying those timeless principles to the issues we face today. Believers should not shrink from, but rather engage these issues with tenacious, yet loving conviction in the marketplace as well as in the voting booth.

But pastors must beware of the temptation to use the platform of the pastorate to cast our influence into areas that are not within the bounds of our responsibility. Officially endorsing a political candidate crosses that boundary, in my opinion.

A Spirit-filled, biblically-disciplined believer should not have to be told who to vote for. Certainly, pastors can and should give their congregation the tools to make that decision: an explanation of the issues, a biblical response to those issues and resources that explain where each candidate stands on those issues. At that point, in my view, a pastor that has done so has “equipped the saints” for their civic duty. Those believers are then responsible for what they do with this knowledge – “To whom much is given, much is required.”

This can be a thin line upon which pastors are called to dance at times. My dance step goes like this: “As your pastor, my job is to equip you to cast your vote in a way that would please King Jesus. I will not tell you who to vote for by name. But, it is your Christian responsibility to vote for the candidate that most closely affirms the teachings of King Jesus. However, if you’d like my personal opinion, ask me in private. I’ll be glad to tell you who I plan to vote for and why.”

### Jake Thornhill, senior pastor, Life Community Church, Jamestown

I have endorsed political candidates in times past and will do so again as the Lord leads. We’ve created a culture that says the pulpit is not for politics, but we fail to understand the issues we’re dealing with today are not political but Biblical issues.

The Bible is very clear about such issues as debt, money management, abortion, homosexuality and same-sex marriage. I believe separation of church and state was never intended to keep the church out of the government but to keep the government out of the church.

I strongly believe we have the responsibility to educate our people concerning the issues of our day and endorse those who embrace Biblical values and morals. Adrian Rogers once said, “It is inconceivable that God would ordain government and then ask His people to stay out of it.”

These are dark and difficult days and we are to expose the darkness with our voice and our vote.



### Michael Waters, pastor, Parkwood Baptist Church, Concord

I believe the separation of church and state was intended to restrict the government’s rule and keep their power out of the church. Yet, that does not mean the church should not or cannot influence the conscience of the state.

The direct question of endorsement, however, is more complex. As a pastor, I should never back down from an issue which the Bible addresses. I should teach my congregation to discern biblically. If I teach them how to discern, then I don’t have to “endorse” a specific candidate.

When our hearts are aligned with God’s word and God’s values, we will in turn support a candidate that reflects the bigger picture and needs of our country. As a Christian and an American citizen, I have a right to express my concern when I think the country continues to deviate from its founding principles.

At our church we have formed a cultural impact team that is lay-led and designed to bring awareness and educate folks on the issues our nation faces.

My first allegiance is to the Kingdom of God, my second is to my country. Paul’s Roman citizenship was important to him and helped him in some cases (Acts 22:22-23:11), but Paul also reminded the church at Philippi that our citizenship is in heaven (Philippians 3:20). I tell my folks often to think and discern by looking through the lens of scripture. Vote the values that God supports, but don’t expect an elephant or a donkey to fix the problems we face. Our only hope is trusting in the “Lamb.”





# Our Lottie Moon story

The *Biblical Recorder* is sharing some of the stories about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering from churches across the state. The money raised goes to support the International Mission Board (IMB) and its missionaries around the globe.

**Northside Baptist Church**, Burlington

Pastor Dale Steele said, “We are a small church of missions-minded people, many are my age or beyond. I am 82. The church averages 35 in attendance on Sunday morning.” Northside’s Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) in the past seven years hovered around \$2,000 each year. This year the congregation agreed to match the total amount of the LMCO from the church’s savings account.

Keeping a goal of \$2,000 the church members gave \$4,000 on the first Sunday of the offering. “We finished with \$5,795 which we matched with another \$5,795 and sent an offering of \$11,590,” Steele said. “The Lord both challenges and rewards graciously all who trust Him, love Him and love the challenge of missions, ‘to pray, to go, and to give.’ Thank you for allowing us to thank God for His grace and love.”

**Temple Baptist Church**, Fayetteville

Temple’s 2014 LMCO goal was \$15,000. In 2015 the church increased the goal to \$20,000. Pastor Kelly Bullard said although Trinity gathers the offering during December, they also budget a percentage of the year’s receipts for the international missions offering. The December LMCO offering was \$21,757.34, surpassing the goal. They added \$14,613.68 from the percentage of regular offering receipts throughout the year. The total amount Trinity sent to IMB for the LMCO is \$36,371.02.

Bullard said in July the church commissioned one of their own families to serve in Bulgaria through IMB. That was a major factor in the increased offering, he said. “The Lord really used this family to put a face to missions for our church. Temple has always been a giving church, but when you become a sending church it really changes the church’s perspective on missions and giving.”

One Sunday in December the church arranged a live Skype call with the couple in their new field assignment. Bullard added, “As their sending church we desire to support their ministry in every way possible, and we believe the best way we can do that is through our prayers and by giving sacrificially to the LMCO. It really makes a difference when you have a personal connection to a missionary family.”

**Dublin First Baptist Church** and **The Lake Church**, White Lake

The mission strategy at Dublin FBC and the second campus at the Lake Church is “Here, There and Everywhere,” based on Acts 1:8. Although the church has been strongly involved in mission work in New York and Moldova, the Lottie Moon offering has not increased, “For the past decade we hovered around the \$5,000 per year mark in LMCO gifts,” said pastor Cameron McGill. “However, this year God moved in a great way upon the hearts of our people.”

It began when they partnered with Temple Baptist in Fayetteville to commission the Williams\* family as IMB missionaries to Bulgaria.

“This commissioning service was a powerful time of reflection and a turning point in the life of our church,” McGill said.

“Sheila Williams\* said to our congregation, ‘We are going. ... But how long we will stay is up to God and the faithfulness of God’s people.’ We committed that Sunday morning to get serious this year about the Lottie Moon offering and international missions.”

The connection to the Williams family coupled with the “heartbreaking stories of so many of our missionaries coming home prematurely,” led the people at both campuses to dig deep and give sacrificially. The churches gave more in 2015 than the last seven years combined. The total of their offering is \$34,685. \*Name changed

**First Baptist Church**, Cary

Jay Huddleston, pastor of First Baptist in Cary, reported this year’s total LMCO gifts are \$154,246, an increase of almost \$50,000 above the 2014 total gifts of \$105,882.47. He said the church has always been a strong missions-giving church.

“We communicated to the church the IMB shortage which was reported in September and the immediate impact this would have on our missionary personnel of losing 700+ missionaries,” Huddleston said.

“Our people sacrificed and reached much deeper this year in an attempt to make up the difference. I believe the feeling throughout the congregation was that if everyone in all of our Southern Baptist churches will sacrifice and cooperate together, then we can make up the difference.”

## Faith Continued from page 7

blessing me with these abilities,” he said. “I’m thankful for Him because He blessed me with this. I feel like I’m anointed to do this. That’s why I play the game, also for my family.”

Jared Allen, a defensive end with the Carolina Panthers, said athletes must keep their excitement and desire to win at a level consistent with the rules. Allen sat out the NFC Championship game against the Cardinals because of a foot injury, but played in the Super Bowl on Feb. 7.

A key to success, Allen said, is for players to accept that football and life are not about them.

“For me I think you have to realize that this isn’t about me,” he said. “Obviously God has blessed me with a tremendous talent and I have the ability to play this great game so I just try to keep that in perspective.... There is somebody else guiding this ship and God’s got a plan, and I’m kind of along for the ride.”

While football can be a violent sport and one that requires intensity, players have to rein in their emotions, Allen said.

“Me personally I never go out there to hurt anybody,” he said. “Does it happen? Yes, it happens sometimes but obviously you want to play as hard as you can within the rules.... You got to think about your team.”

DeMarcus Ware, defensive end for the

Broncos, said, “Consequences do matter.”

“You gotta play smart in between the lines and [know] how to be a smart player,” he said. Echoing Allen’s advice, Ware urges young players to stay aggressive but keep their teammates in mind. “You’re playing a brutal sport. But know that you can do things to hurt the team.”

J.J. Jansen, long snapper for the Panthers, described football as a “beautiful game” because you immediately get impacted by consequences.

“In life sometimes you don’t experience the consequences until days, weeks, months later. Maybe even years later, maybe never,” Jansen said. “Football is really cool because if you jump off sides there is an immediate consequence to your team. I think one other really cool thing about the game of football is that it’s 11 on 11. So one man’s mistake is an opportunity to bring down the whole team.”

The Denver Broncos defeated the Carolina Panthers 24-10 in Super Bowl 50. There are more stories, photos and videos about players on [BRnow.org/Resources/Super-Bowl](http://BRnow.org/Resources/Super-Bowl). Visit the site to get all the links to these items and to find out more about Roman Gabriel III’s coverage of the event with his team from FSN Sports Network ([fspn.net](http://fspn.net)), the faith, family and sports network. Interviews featured in the *Biblical Recorder* will be carried on FSN as well. **BR**

## CHURCH NEWS



**First Baptist Church, Stanleyville**

Strong thunderstorms producing straight-line winds in excess of 90 miles-per-hour resulted in downed trees, power lines and damaged structures in Davidson County on Feb. 3. North Carolina Baptist Men (also known as Baptists on Mission) responded quickly to the Thomasville area with teams of chain saw-trained volunteers and helpers to assist the clean-up. Among the men and women volunteers was a group of seven people from First Baptist Church in Stanleyville. They cleared downed trees and brush from the yard of a disabled elderly couple while other volunteers did similar work at several nearby sites. Larry Agee, who is retired from R.J. Reynolds, works to cut a downed tree. He enjoys getting “a real blessing from helping people through the ministry of NCBM.” To find out how you can get involved in this area or other relief projects, visit [baptistsonmission.org](http://baptistsonmission.org).



# 2016 SBC Pastors' Conference: 'Live this!'

By **BONNIE PRITCHETT** | Southern Baptist *TEXAN*

**J**ohn Meador believes some pastors – and subsequently their congregations – have departed from the 2 Timothy 4:5-6 mandate, developing a “come and see” method for sharing the gospel instead of “go and tell.”

Meador, the president of the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Pastors' Conference, said speakers at the June conference will dissect the New Testament obligation and exhort pastors to lead by example.

The pastors' conference, with the theme 'Live this!,' will meet June 12-13 at the America's Center in St. Louis, Mo., prior to the SBC annual meeting.

“The main thing is for that text to be burned on their heart,” Meador, pastor of First Baptist Church in Euless, Texas, said in a telephone interview with the *TEXAN*.

“That's the New Testament mandate. I want everyone to be able to share.”

In 2 Timothy 4:5-6, the verse says, “*But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.*” Pastors and churches have spent the last three decades moving away from a

direct gospel conversation with the lost, Meador noted.

While many theories for the shift have been proffered, he suspects Christians began to believe people didn't want to talk about spiritual things and drifted from personal engagement with others about the gospel.

Meador said the situation is so dire in that some Christian parents do not even know how to share the gospel with their own children. But as pastors set the example of sharing the gospel in their personal lives their congregations will follow suit.

The speakers for the event, Meador noted, come from ministries and churches of all sizes from across the nation. Meador has organized the pastors' conference as a mix of single speakers and a breakout session created to facilitate discussion among pastors of similar-sized churches. Six of the 11 pastors invited have confirmed they will preach at the conference.

James McDonald, pastor of Harvest Bible Chapel in Chicago, will preach June 12 on “But you, be sober in all things, endure hardship...,” drawing from his own experience in overcoming difficulties.

June 13 will highlight “... *do the work of an evangelist* ...” with speakers David Platt,

president Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board, and Byron McWilliams, pastor First Baptist Church in Odessa, Texas.

Jack Graham, pastor Prestonwood Baptist Church in Plano, Texas, and Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research, will address “... *fulfill your ministry* ...” on Monday afternoon.

Stetzer will unveil LifeWay's latest research studying the question of what drives the most evangelistic churches.

Following Graham and Stetzer, the conference will break into smaller groups based on church size to give pastors an opportunity to discuss with panelists and their peers methods for enhancing evangelistic efforts in their communities.

Monday evening Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla., will address verse 6, “*For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come.*” Meador asked Scroggins, the pastor of a multi-generational and multi-ethnic congregation, to talk about “*passing the baton*” of evangelism to the next generation of pastors.

Meador is hoping to draw Millennial pastors to the conference to exhort them to press on.

Social media will be used regularly to



provide information and updates about the conference, which can be found on Twitter at @SBCPastorsConf, Facebook at facebook.com/SBCPastorsConference, and Instagram at SBCPASTORSCONF. The conference website, [www.sbcpc.net](http://www.sbcpc.net), should be accessible by mid-February.

Meador has worked closely with SBC President Ronnie Floyd to ensure the pastors' conference and annual meeting share a unified message.

He encourages pastors and church members to arrive early to participate in Crossover St. Louis on June 11, a citywide evangelism effort organized by the North American Mission Board and Missouri Baptist Convention.

The Southern Baptist Convention is June 14-15 following the Pastors' Conference. Make plans now to attend. Visit [sbcanualmeeting.net](http://sbcanualmeeting.net).

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Bonnie Pritchett is a correspondent for the Southern Baptist *TEXAN* at [texanonline.net](http://texanonline.net), [newsjournal.org](http://newsjournal.org) of the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention.) **BR**

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The resources and accounts of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are made possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Mission Offering.



# Jonah

Continued from page 1

## A Jonah experience

After college, Rice and Smooth married, and he began a career in insurance. They were living in Baton Rouge – just 90 miles north of New Orleans. Through prayer, he understood God to be directing him to serve in the children’s ministry at church.

“The ministry had been praying for more guys to serve with the children,” Rice said.

The pastor began discipling him, which furthered his understanding of God’s call in his life. “It started with me being obedient to serve in my church,” he said.

But as Rice sensed a call to plant a church in his Algiers childhood neighborhood on New Orleans’s west bank, he still battled God. “I can totally relate to Jonah,” Rice said. “I had this call, even desire, but I didn’t want to go. It was a reluctant kind of thing.”

Rice didn’t go to the Tarshish of old. Instead, He went to Michigan to interview with a church needing a children’s pastor. During the interview a pastor randomly asked him this question, “When are you going to church plant?”

Then Rice knew that he had to go home to his Nineveh.

“God has given us the green light of the gospel to go to a place that is without hope and in need of hope. I’m sold. I said yes,” Rice said. “One day I had no desire to move to New Orleans or Algiers. Then one day I did.”

## Life Church New Orleans

The Rices soon found themselves in post-Katrina Algiers with no place to live. An apartment complex owned by a Christian company invited them to live and minister there. At the first outreach event, they gave away 110 book bags with school supplies.

“The people we connected with were so hungry for something more,” Rice said. “They were hungry for truth.”

Rice found that the people in his community were at the same place he had been as a teenager. “People were a lot like me when I was in the churchy world,” Rice said. “They know things about God and call themselves spiritual.”

After months of cultivation, Life Church New Orleans launched in September 2014. By January, weekly services began. Most attendees are people they met prayerwalking in Algiers. An Easter outreach also connected them to scores of prospects – many of whom had some type of experience with church but had never made a profession of faith in Christ. The Easter outreach hit another nerve with Algiers residents.

“Anything that is free and is the church blows people away,” Rice said. Already, they are seeing some dramatic



Ryan and Seane' Rice are leading a church plant in New Orleans with their children Ryan Jr., 6, Brayden, 4 and Reagen, 2. The Rices are North American Mission Board 2016 Week of Prayer Missionaries. (NAMB photo by James Bates)



Church planter Ryan Rice first began his ministry by serving with children in Baton Rouge. Now he serves families and kids in his own childhood neighborhood of Algiers. (NAMB photo by Mark Sandlin)

events. Rice met a military couple with two kids at the Easter outreach. She was raised Southern Baptist; he was an animist. One night during Bible study, the wife said, “I’m not a Christian. This is the first time that I’m realizing that I’m not born again.”

Rice led her to Christ, and the husband soon made the same decision.

“That whole next generation is going to be different because their parents are following Jesus,” Rice said.

Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge wanted to find a way to be engaged in New Orleans. As soon as they met the Rices, they knew that the couple was right for the job.

“After our meeting with Ryan we immediately said,

‘That’s the guy,’” said Istrouma missions pastor Dwayne Pitre. “We chose to support Ryan because we believe in what God is doing through him. He has a strong faith, knows his calling, preaches God’s Word, he is outreach oriented, has a positive solution-seeking attitude and is passionate about ministering to people in New Orleans. He is evangelizing, baptizing and making disciples. People matter to him.”

Rice returned to a different Algiers than the one he knew as a child. Crime has gone up since Hurricane Katrina as many new people have moved in from New Orleans.

He also sees some extreme socio-economic disparity. He points to Appaloosa Street, a main Algiers thoroughfare, where on one side of the street the median household income is an estimated \$80,000. The other side is at or below the poverty level.

Rice is new to Southern Baptist life, and he has quickly grown to appreciate the financial support he’s receiving—particularly through the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

“Because of people giving, we’ve been able to be supported, make sure our kids are supported, and be sure that we can go forth and do the work that God wants us to do without hindrances,” Rice said.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – The goal for the 2016 Annie Armstrong Easter Offering is \$70 million. To learn more about the Week of Prayer, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and how your church can be mobilized to push back lostness in North America, visit [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com).) **BR**

# Abedini praises wife, denies ‘much’ of abuse claim

Baptist Press

**S**aeed Abedini denied “much” of what his wife Naghmeh Abedini has alleged of spousal abuse and a pornography addiction in his first statements about their marriage since his release from an Iranian prison, but he praised his wife for advocating for his freedom.

“Much of what I have read in Naghmeh’s [Facebook] posts and subsequent

media reports is not true,” he said in a Jan. 30 statement to his hometown newspaper, the *Idaho Statesman*.

Saeed Abedini released the statement days after his wife filed for legal separation in Ada County, Idaho, writing on Facebook that she wanted to guard against Abedini taking the children, 9-year-old Rebekka and 7-year-old Jacob, from Idaho while the couple works to heal their marriage.

She filed the case against the 35-year-old pastor as he returned to Boise Jan. 27 from the Billy Graham Training Center at The Cove in Asheville, N.C., his first stop in the U.S. on Jan. 21 from Iran, where he had been unjustly imprisoned three-and-a-half years because of his Christian faith.

Abedini pleaded guilty to domestic abuse in 2007, the *Statesman* wrote in a Jan. 30 article, but the case was not listed on the Ada County Magistrate Court

online repository. In 2007, he received a 90-day suspended sentence and a one-year probation, the *Statesman* wrote.

At least some of Naghmeh Abedini’s accusations are untrue, her husband wrote, but stopped short of revealing which of the allegations are untrue. He still loves his wife and expressed a desire for God to heal their marriage.

There was no indication where Saeed is staying while in Idaho. **BR**



## OPPORTUNITY CORNER



This year's theme for the Mission Days at Camp Mundo Vista is "Hats off to missions!"

Two children's days are planned for April 9 and Oct. 15. The Girls in Action Day will be April 16. They will be held from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Camp Mundo Vista near Asheboro.

Participants will have the opportunity to visit with missionaries, do crafts,

recreation, learn about missions and lots of other fun things.

Cost is \$20 per person with lunch and supplies included.

Registration will close one week before dates of event.

Please send at least one and no more than two adults with every five children.

Online registration at [campmundovista.com](http://campmundovista.com).



Camp Cale inhabits 100 acres on the Perquimans River. It provides age graded summer camps for youth and children complete with adventure activities and Bible study.

Early bird registration by April 16 is \$290 for Kids Weeks, \$300 for Teen Weeks and \$275 for Teen Mission Week. A \$75 non-refundable deposit is required per camper.

Visit [campcale.com/summer-camp.html](http://campcale.com/summer-camp.html) for

more information.

● **Kids overnight camp (Completed 2nd-6th grades):** \$300, June 12-17, June 19-24, July 17-22

● **Teen/Youth overnight camp (Completed 7th-12th grades):** \$325, June 26-July 1, July 10-15

● **Teen Mission Week (Groups Only):** \$300, July 3-8

● **Home School Camps:** \$225, June 1-4; \$250, June 6-10



Camp Caraway's camp "Saddle Up" focuses on the power of prayer. Each day is fun, biblical, prayer-centered with teaching, skits, devotions and activities. We invite campers to bring western wear with them to use during themed games and programs.

● **Caraway for Boys:** \$285, June 27-July 1; July 11-15; July 18-22

● **Mother-Son Camp:** \$75, July 7-8

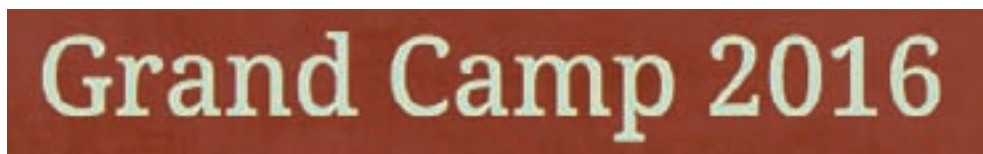
● **Father-Daughter Camp:** \$75, July 5-6

● **Camp Caraway for Children:** \$285, June 20-14

● **One Night Father-Son Camp:** \$75, April 22-23 and June 17-18

● **Two Night Father-Son Camp:** \$130, July 22-24 and Oct. 21-23

Register for one of their camp programs at [carawaysummerfun.org](http://carawaysummerfun.org).



Camp Caraway is now taking reservations for the 2016 Grand Camp June 26-28. The theme is "Treasure Quest!" This camp is a great chance for grandparents and grandchildren to spend extra time together.

This camp is fully planned where you can participate in every activity or just watch your grandchildren enjoy themselves. For more information on this camp, call (336) 629-2374 or visit [caraway.org/#!grandcamp/clrb2](http://caraway.org/#!grandcamp/clrb2).



The theme for Camp Mundo Vista this summer is "Run the race!" Each week campers will have the opportunity to participate in mission projects. Download the registration form or register online at [campmundovista.com](http://campmundovista.com). You can also find other information on this website that you might want as a leader or parent. There are several dates and prices available for different age ranges listed below:

● **Girls Camp (grades 3-6),** cost \$230: June 20-24, June 27-July 1, July 18-22, July 25-29

● **Teen Girls (grades 7-12):** \$230, June 20-24, July 18-22

● **Mini Camp for women (ages 18 and up):** \$135, June 11-13

● **Girls Mini Camp (grades 2-6):** \$135, June 15-17, July 11-13, August 1-3

● **Teen Girls Mini Camp (grades 7-12):** \$135, June 15-17, July 11-13

● **Mother/Daughter Mini Camp,** \$225 for one daughter and \$260 for two daughters, June 15-17 (grades 1-6), July 13-15 (grades 1-6), August 1-3 (grades 1-6), August 1-3 (grades 7-12)



Deep Impact Kids Missions Weeks and Weekends are pre-packaged mission experiences sponsored by N.C. Baptist On Mission that provides elementary age students and their leaders/parents with the opportunity to share the love of God with people in N.C. (Red Springs and Shelby). Weekends are for children 1st-5th grade and week-long experiences are for 4th-5th grade children and leaders/parents. Sixth grade can participate if they are in the church's children's program.

Children and adults will participate in a variety of mission opportunities including hands on projects, worship, games and fellowship. Morning devotions and

worship each evening will help children reflect on their lives and commit themselves to serving others in Christ's name. Included in the cost per person is: lodging, meals, program, materials/supplies, T-shirt and insurance.

● **Red Springs Camp Weekend:** \$75, May 13-15

● **Shelby Camp Week:** \$150, July 11-25

● **Red Springs Camp Week:** \$150, July 18-22

● **Shelby Camp Weekend:** \$75, Sept. 23-25

For more information about Deep Impact Kids contact Dollie Noa at [dikidsnc@ncbaptist.org](mailto:dikidsnc@ncbaptist.org). To register visit [baptistsonmission.org/Camps/DI-Kids](http://baptistsonmission.org/Camps/DI-Kids).



Join us for one of the Summer Youth Weeks at the N.C. Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell. A youth camp at the beach that includes powerful worship, quality proclaimers, a hands-on missions experience, intentional discipleship for students and youth ministry training for adults. Each week also includes daily quiet times, church and small group devotions, sports, drama, improv, games and more. \$62 program fee plus lodging and meals. Please contact Caswell

at (910) 278-9501 for pricing. The program fee includes a t-shirt, camp materials and a BDT CD. To register or get more information visit [leaders.bedotell.com/index.php?id=87](http://leaders.bedotell.com/index.php?id=87).

● **June 13-18** – Trevor Atwood

● **June 20-25** – Acton Bowen

● **June 27-July 2** – Tony Merida

● **July 11-16** – Eddie Briery

● **July 18-23** – Afshin Ziafat

● **July 25-30** – Wes Hamilton

● **August 1-6** – Mike Satterfield

### World Missions Week features Big Daddy Weave, Chad Poe

World Missions Week is being hosted by North Carolina Baptists on Mission July 4-9. It's for those interested in learning about exciting opportunities for involvement in state, national and international missions. Worship, small group time and mission moments are but a small part of the week.

Big Daddy Weave will be leading worship each evening. Chad Poe will be the pastor for the week.

Inspirational and informative studies will be provided for all age groups starting with pre-school. For more information visit [baptistsonmission.org/camps/world-missions-week](http://baptistsonmission.org/camps/world-missions-week).

**See page 15**



## AROUND THE STATE

## Obituary

**DAVID C. HAYES**, 48, died Jan. 26.

He served as senior pastor at different churches during his ministry including, Valley Creek Baptist, Leonard, Texas; First Baptist Gowenville, Landrum, S.C.; West Monroe Baptist, Monroe, N.C.; and was serving as executive pastor at Hopewell Baptist Church, Monroe, at the time of his death.

He is survived by his parents, Joe F. and Eleanor Hayes, of Travelers Rest, S.C.; his wife of 24 years, Debbie Farmer Hayes; daughter, Grace Hayes; son, Titus Hayes, both of the home; brothers, Joe F. Hayes Jr. and Thomas Hayes from Travelers Rest; sisters, Nancy Holcombe of Taylors, S.C., and Katina Riley of Travelers Rest.

Memorials to: Hopewell Baptist Church Building Fund, 420 Hopewell Church Rd., Monroe, NC 28110.

**HAROLD A. "HAPPY" SHIRLEY**, 87, died Jan. 23.

A graduate of Samford University in Birmingham, Ala., and Southern Seminary, where he received a master's of divinity degree, Shirley served more than 50 years in six southern states as a Baptist minister. In North Carolina, he led Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem

(1968-1977). His longest service was at Newkirk Baptist Church, Rock Hill, S.C., a church he helped start. He was a member of Oakland Baptist Church, Rock Hill.

He is survived by his children, Jan Shirley Rierson of Riverview, Fla.; John Shirley of Gulfport, Fla.; two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorials to: Doctors Without Borders, Habitat For Humanity or the church of your choice.

**WILLIAM L. "BILL" SELF** died Jan. 9, one day shy of his 84th birthday.

A North Carolina native, Self graduated from Stetson University and served as a part-time pastor of a church in Florida. He felt called into full-time ministry at age 13 and began speaking in churches. He received a bachelor of divinity from Southeastern Seminary in 1957. He also received a doctor of theology degree from Candler School of theology at Emory University.

He became the first full-time pastor of Edgemont Baptist Church, Rocky



HAROLD SHIRLEY

Mount (1957-1960), during which time the church earned "Church of they Year" from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC). He also served as vice president of the BSC. He led Wieuca Road Baptist Church, Atlanta (1964-1990). He was pastor emeritus for Johns Creek Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Ga., formerly known as First Baptist Church Chamblee, where he served as pastor from 1991-2012. In 1977 he preached the annual sermon — the showcase event — at the Southern Baptist Convention in Kansas City, Mo. He was elected president of the Georgia Baptist Convention, president of the Georgia Baptist Pastors' Conference, and chair of the Georgia Baptist Executive Committee. On the national level, he served as president of the Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention and second vice president of the SBC. While Self was Southern Baptist much of his ministry, he helped create the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship in 1991. Self taught at Mercer University's McAfee School of Theology in 2015.

He is survived by his wife, Carolyn Shealy Self; his children, Lee and Bryan Self; sister, Susan Walton; and two grandsons.

Memorials to: William L. Self Lecture Series of the McAfee School of Theology.

**WILLIAM T. MILLS**, 89, of Apex, died Jan. 2 at his home in Apex.

A graduate of Green Hope High School, Wake Forest College, and Southwestern Seminary, Mills was a World War II veteran of the U.S. Navy.

He was senior pastor for more than 55 years for the following churches in North Carolina: Cumberland Union Baptist Church near Fuquay; New Hill Baptist Church; Temple Baptist Church, Raleigh; and Highland Baptist Church, Hickory.

He also pastored Little City Baptist Church, Little City, Okla., and Fieldale Baptist Church, Fieldale, Va., and served as interim pastor for around 18 years after his retirement.

He was on the board of trustees at Golden Gate Seminary and Campbell University. In 1995 he served as chaplain for the North Carolina House of Representatives.

He is survived by his wife of 68 years, Dorothy M. Mills; daughters, Dottie Stam and Sandra Sheldon; sons, David Mills and Richard Mills; sister, Margaret Travis; six grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren.

Memorials to the Generations Campaign at Apex Baptist Church, 110 S. Salem Street, Apex, NC 27502, or Faith Baptist Church, 249 Holden Road, Youngsville, NC 27596.

## Staff changes

Union Baptist Association has called **ERIC COOK** as their new director of missions. Cook previously served as the senior pastor at Midway Baptist Church, Wingate.

**BRUCE CANON** has been called as pastor of Bear Creek Baptist Church, Bakersville. He begins in April. Prior to his new position, Canon served as director of missions at the Bladen Baptist Association for almost 27 years.

## Retirement

**BARRY NEALY** has retired from his position as director of missions at Three Forks Baptist Association.

Nealy grew up in South Louisiana in the home of an unchurched family. He came to Christ at age 12, and surrendered to a call of God for pastoral service at age 15. He graduated from Louisiana College and holds a master of divinity from Southwestern Seminary and a doctor of ministry from Southeastern Seminary. Ordained Jan. 2, 1966, Barry celebrates 50 years of ministry as he retires. Barry and his wife Donna married in 1969 while Barry was attending Southwestern. Together they have served at four churches in Louisiana, one in Texas and one in Brazil with the International Mission Board (IMB). Their time serving in associational ministry totals to 28 years in Greensboro and Boone.

All together Nealy, below right, has had a role in starting nearly 50 churches. Donna, left, has served as pastor's wife, song leader, taught in churches and other settings, served as a hostess, led community-wide Christmas outreaches and served 6 years as a trustee of the IMB. Donna and Barry have a daughter, Joelle, and a son, Dennis, who is married to Sarah. They all live and work in Greensboro. Nealy will be available for revivals, interim and pulpit supply. Contact (828) 406-6774 or [wbnealy@gmail.com](mailto:wnealy@gmail.com).



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[NCBaptist.org/EmbraceNYC](http://NCBaptist.org/EmbraceNYC)



February 21

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

February 28

## Distinct in My Reactions

**Focal passage: Matthew 5:33-42**

**T**he natural mode of our hearts is expressed well in the Latin phrase *lex talionis*, which means “the law of retaliation.” When someone crosses us or makes demands on us our initial reaction is to respond in the same way. Why not? This is the way we’ve heard that the world works. Right? Retaliation is sinfully seductive and bitterly sweet.

However, as Christians we operate by the laws of a different world, the Kingdom of God. This is why in Matthew 5:38-42 Jesus says, “*you have heard it said... but I tell you.*” What does he tell us? Jesus demands that when someone insults us, we should not respond in a way that escalates violence. Instead, we should respond in love towards our attacker, in a way that prevents further attacks or stops the progression of violence.

Moreover, when someone takes your possessions, Jesus calls us to respond in the way of love, namely, to go the extra mile, to give freely to those in need. In many cases, those who pursue our possessions have an actual need they are trying to meet.

Doesn’t Jesus call us to give to those who are truly in need?

Now, we can split hairs on this passage and develop numerous scenarios where helping can hurt. Or we can think of many modifiers to these words in order to show how these things may or may not play out. But I think that misses the point of the passage.

In fact, the initial response of counting the costs to respond this way shows that retaliation is our natural desire.

However, Jesus calls us to think differently. Moreover, His Spirit enables us to respond differently.

In an unnatural way – better yet, a supernatural way – our need for retaliation and personal justice is not bound by the “pay out” on this earth.

If our self-esteem is found in our stance before God, we can lovingly stand in the face of sinful insults. If our treasure is found in the inheritance we have as children of God, we are not devastated when our earthly belongings are taken. This is the power of the gospel.



**MATT CAPPS**  
Pastor, Fairview  
Baptist Church, Apex

**Focal passage: Matthew 5:43-48**

**T**he election season is a good time to gauge fears of our fellow citizens. Politicians are experts at exposing and exploiting the suspicions of our culture. Right now, many people fear Middle Easterners because they merely resemble their religious extremist neighbors. Some candidates have proposed that we respond to entire people groups with fear by shutting them out.

However, Jesus calls us not to respond in fear, but in faith. To open our hearts to those who are different that we are. Even to our enemies:

“*Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you*” (Matthew 5:44).

It is easy to love those who are like us, but what reward is there in that? Is God not sovereign over all things? Does He not allow His sun to rise on the evil and on the good? Does He not send rain on the just and on the unjust?

We know from scripture that God hates those who are resolutely and un-

repentantly wicked. Those who do, and intend to do harm against us will face the judgment of God. In most cases, even those who resemble the enemy do not intend harm. Without reservation, we are called to reflect the grace that we so commonly enjoy.

Doesn’t God show grace and care for all of His creatures? Absolutely. Therefore Jesus’ disciples are called to imitate God and love both neighbor and enemy. I recently heard International Mission Board President David Platt say that “Only an Americanized Christianity would prioritize security over the proclamation of the gospel.” We must remember the power of Satan is limited by the prerogative of God. When we face the enemy, and the perceived enemy, our initial response should be love: pray for them; love them; open your hearts to them.

The power of the gospel dissolves fear and empowers us to act in faith. Perhaps the most poignant way to apply this text is to remind us of Christ’s command to love your neighbor as yourself. In other words, love others with the same amount of energy and tenacity that you would for your own well-being. How would you want to be treated?

February 21

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

February 28

## What’s the Sign?

**Focal passage: Matthew 12:38-42**

**A**ll too often we go to God in prayer asking that He would move in a specific way in order to prove His commitment to our good. We may dress it up to make ourselves look more pious in the moment, but behind our prayers often what we are saying to God is, “Speak to me by answering this prayer in the way that I am asking. Show me a sign to prove you are with me and able to help me.”

Then we go looking for signs or feelings to see if God is answering our prayer.

In Matthew 12:38, the Pharisees approach Jesus similarly, saying, “*Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you.*”

They do not cover it up with pious language, they just simply admit, “we want a sign.” I am always astonished at this request. A sign? Really?

Jesus had already healed a leper (8:1-4), the Centurion’s paralyzed son (8:5-13), Peter’s mother-in-law, everyone from the city who had demons or were sick (8:14-17), two demoniacs from the Gadarenes, (8:28-34), another paralytic (9:1-8), a

woman who had severe bleeding (9:18-26), a dead girl (9:18-26), two men born blind (9:27-31), a mute man (9:32-34) and the man with a withered hand (12:9-14).

What more could they need? What more could we need?

When we pray prayers that ask God to prove His love or commitment to us, we are acting more like this group of scribes and Pharisees than we are faithful followers of King Jesus.

Jesus answers them (and us) by saying there is only one sign needed for a person to know the love and power of God, and that is an empty tomb in the Middle East. Jesus is the truer Jonah who was swallowed by a more sinister grave only to return from the depths three days later.

So may we keep making bold requests to God in prayer, but let us do so because the only sign we need to believe in His good and sovereign rule over our lives has already happened – His tomb is still empty.



**CLINT DARST**  
Pastor, Freedom  
Church, Lincolnton

**Focal passage: Matthew 13:1-13**

**E**very year around this time people make New Year’s resolutions to read their Bible more.

Yet, every year many people will give up on their Bible reading plans yet again.

Why is this? Why do we find it so difficult to read our Bibles like we ought?

While some of us are merely undisciplined, I believe that is not the main reason why our Bibles lay unopened on our coffee tables most days.

I believe the main reason we do not read the scriptures like we should is because we have a motivation problem.

We forget the privilege of being able to understand the powerful treasure contained in between the leather covers of our Bibles.

In Isaiah 55:11, God makes a wonderful promise about His Word saying that it “*shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*”

In Matthew 13, Jesus uses the parable

## Access granted

of the sower and the seeds to illustrate a similar point.

Jesus shows His disciples that though there are different responses to the Word of God, we can rest assured God’s Word works.

As the great prince of preachers, Charles Spurgeon, once said, “the same sun that melts wax hardens the clay.”

This reality sparks a great question in the disciples causing them to ask, “*Why do you speak to them in parables?*” Jesus responds by saying that it has been given to them to know the secrets of the Kingdom (v. 11) and that they will continue to gain more and more understanding of the great mysteries of God (v. 12), while those who have not entered the kingdom will not be able to comprehend the unsearchable riches of His teaching.

Brother or sister, when you repented of your sin and trusted in Christ and received the Spirit of God, you were given the ability to open your Bibles and read and enjoy the inexhaustible glories of the secrets of the Kingdom?

Go open the treasure chest lying on your coffee table and enjoy the riches therein!



## OPPORTUNITY CORNER cont. from page 12

Deep Impact Missions Weeks are pre-packaged week long mission experiences sponsored by North Carolina Baptists on Mission that provides middle (must have completed 6th grade) and high school students and their leaders with the opportunity to share the love of God with thousands of people throughout North Carolina and around the world.

College students have the opportunity to participate in out-of-state and international Deep Impact Mission Weeks.

Youth and leaders will participate in a variety of mission opportunities including construction, VBS/day camps, sports evangelism, servant evangelism, prayer walks and others.

Morning devotions and worship each evening will help students reflect on their lives and commit themselves to serving others in Christ's name.

For more information, visit [baptistsonmission.org/camps/deep-impact](http://baptistsonmission.org/camps/deep-impact).



Camp dates:

- **June 20- 25:** \$210, Sandhills
- **June 27-July 2:** \$210, Stokes/Forsyth
- **July 3-9:** \$310+, Caswell
- **July 11-16:** \$210, Rockingham
- **July 18-23:** \$225, Shelby
- **July 25-30:** \$225, Red Springs

**North Carolina Mini-Weeks**

- **June 16-19:** \$110, Shelby
  - **July 31-Aug. 3:** \$110, Red Springs
- Outside North Carolina:**
- **June 18-25:** \$1,625, Honduras
  - **June 26-July 2:** \$350, Philadelphia, Pa.
  - **July 9-16:** \$1,150, Nassau, Bahamas

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### Denominational

Baptist Children's Homes of NC is seeking a **Regional Director of Development** for the eastern region of the state. This director is responsible for organizing and soliciting private support in his/her specific region for BCH as well as building and maintaining strong relationships with constituents, churches and donors. This individual should be a NC Baptist with a strong history of local church involvement and requires the employee to work in a specific geographic region. A Bachelor's Degree is required. Visit [www.bchfamily.org/careers](http://www.bchfamily.org/careers) to apply.

### Pastor

Riegelwood Baptist Church in Riegelwood, NC, is seeking a **pastor** to lead our congregation of 300 plus members. The candidate should possess excellent skills in preaching and communication and strive to be the shepherd of our flock. Master of divinity preferred. Send resumes to [rbcpastorsearchcom@gmail.com](mailto:rbcpastorsearchcom@gmail.com) no later than February 28, 2016.

Macon Baptist Church in Macon, North Carolina, is seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. We are a small, conservative congregation rooted in the inerrancy of scripture and a member of SBC. Candidates should have a minimum of 5 years pastoral experience. Applicants should submit a resume and a statement of faith to [mbcnewpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:mbcnewpastorsearch@gmail.com). Deadline 3/31/16.

**SENIOR PASTOR:** FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH, HARTSVILLE, SC. Thriving community with Coker College and Governor's School nearby. REQUIREMENTS: MASTERS and 5 YEARS experience AS SENIOR PASTOR or 7 YEARS AS AN ASSOCIATE. SEND RESUME and DVD to: FBC PSC, 104 E. Home Ave., Hartsville, SC 29550.

Goshen Baptist Church in Spotsylvania, VA, is seeking a **Senior Pastor/Lead Elder**. He must have a passion for the church and the advancement of God's Kingdom. Candidate is a graduate from a SBC seminary and adheres to the 2000 BF&M. Goshen is an incorporated church, elder lead governance, and affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention and the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. Send Curriculum Vitae to [goshenpsc@gmail.com](mailto:goshenpsc@gmail.com). Deadline for receiving resumes is March 4, 2016.

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

### Church Staff

Southside Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC, is prayerfully seeking mature, experienced **part-time Student Ministry Leader** to introduce Middle and High School Students to Christ, disciple and train them how to serve Christ with their lives. Southside is a conservative-minded church and partners with SBC, NCBSC and PBA. To apply, forward resume, statement of faith and cover letter to Southside Baptist Church, 1001 Greenhaven Dr., Greensboro, NC 27406; Attn. Search Committee.

First Baptist Church of Maggie Valley is seeking to hire a **full-time Youth and Children's Minister**. We are also seeking a **Minister of Music**. To apply for either of these positions, send resumes including references to: First Baptist Church of Maggie Valley, PO BOX 309, Maggie Valley, NC 28751, or email to: [fbc.maggi valley@bellsouth.net](mailto:fbc.maggi valley@bellsouth.net).

First Baptist Church, Rutherfordton, a 400-member congregation in the foothills of Western North Carolina, seeks a **full-time Minister for Youth and Outreach**. Ministry experience and strong relational skills are required. Master's degree from an ATS/SACS accredited seminary or divinity school preferred. This church values traditional worship, affiliates with CBF and SBC, and affirms women in ministry. Submit resumes by March 15, 2016, to Personnel Committee, PO Box 839, Rutherfordton, NC 28139, or [office@firstbaptistrutherfordton.com](mailto:office@firstbaptistrutherfordton.com).

Samaria Baptist Church, Raleigh, seeks **part-time Music Minister**, to play piano/organ for Sunday morning music, Wednesday night rehearsal and special events. Prefer some church music experience. Send resume to: Attention HR, Samaria Baptist Church, 3621 Poole Rd., Raleigh, NC 27610, or email [gerdie@nc.rr.com](mailto:gerdie@nc.rr.com).

Spruce Pine 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 desired. Responsibilities include teaching and directing a full music program. Worship services are a blend of traditional and contemporary music. Please submit resume to First Baptist Church, 125 Tappan Street, Spruce Pine, NC 28777, or email to [doctorrock1@yahoo.com](mailto:doctorrock1@yahoo.com).

Highland Baptist Church is currently accepting resumes for a **full-time minister of music/worship leader**. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, salvation experience, and call to ministry to: Highland Baptist Church, Attn: Dr. Michael Madaris, PO Box 176, New London, NC 28127, or by email to [highland@carolina.rr.com](mailto:highland@carolina.rr.com).

Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Shelby, NC, is seeking a **full-time Youth Minister** who will demonstrate a strong commitment to Jesus Christ while developing and implementing a ministry for the youth of our church and community. Candidates who offer strong youth ministry leadership and organizational skills will be considered. A desire to include the youth and parents in the overall ministry of the church is essential. Send resume to Dr. J. Eric Davis ([Dr.JED@carolina.rr.com](mailto:Dr.JED@carolina.rr.com)) or Minister to Youth Search Team, Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, 198 Pleasant Ridge Church Road, Shelby, NC 28152. Resume must be received before February 29, 2016.

Bethlehem Baptist Church of Jacksonville, NC, is seeking a **full-time minister of music**. Located in a suburban setting two miles outside the city limits, Bethlehem is a growing conservative Southern Baptist church that includes both military and civilian members. We currently average 200 in Sunday School and 400 in our Sunday morning worship service. Applicants should hold an undergraduate degree in church music or equivalent. A master's degree is preferred. Submit resumes to: Bethlehem Baptist Church, 100 Half Moon Church Rd., Jacksonville, NC 28546. Email: [bethlehembaptistsearch@gmail.com](mailto:bethlehembaptistsearch@gmail.com).

### Miscellaneous

**Christian Publisher.** Nets \$47K, part-time. Unique themed magazine. Work from home. Retiring. \$24,900. Partial Financing Available. Excellent opportunity! Please call 828-633-2737.

**NCBAM encourages you to reach out to a frail-aging adult** this winter with a card, phone call or friendly visit. Call 1.877.506.2226 for a copy of Passport – monthly tips for providing “help for the journey” to aging adults.

**Share the Biblical Recorder – FREE.** Order a three-month free subscription. Contact Liz Tablazon at (919) 459-5693 or [liz@BRnow.org](mailto:liz@BRnow.org) to make arrangements.

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

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

### Placing a classified ad in the *Biblical Recorder*

Choose one of three avenues:

- Send e-mail to: [alison@BRnow.org](mailto:alison@BRnow.org).
- Submit the information via the *Recorder's* website at [BRnow.org](http://BRnow.org).
- Send a Fax to (919) 467-6180.

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

Continued from page 5

As Cory spoke, Brandon discovered that he didn't actually have a drug problem. Cory had used drugs, to be sure, but he did not seem to have an addiction.

Cory opened up about his family circumstances, explaining that he lived in a single-wide mobile home with his immediate and extended family. It was a crowded and poor living environment that was complicated, he said, by the drug addictions of everyone else in the home.

As it turns out, Cory's father was using him as a drug courier, since minors receive lighter judicial sentences when caught with illegal substances. He placed drugs into Cory's bag for delivery to other students, who then relayed the drugs to their parents.

Cory was caught in an unfortunate and seemingly hopeless family situation, and he needed help.

"Do you want out of this?" Brandon asked. "Show me how," Cory responded, "because right now I don't see any way out."

Quinn said his brother recounts that interaction with tears. He is compelled to do what he can as a high school vice principal to help Cory and other students.

The potential impact that Christian community leaders like Brandon can have on the lives of Cory and others is profound, but it's not always obvious that such efforts should be valued as biblical, ministry opportunities. Quinn was taken aback when his brother said, after hearing about his work as a professor at the seminary, "I don't see how what I do matters as much as what pastors, missionaries and seminary professors do."

Quinn emphatically said to the conference breakout



Benjamin Quinn leads a breakout session dedicated to helping attendees see the importance and biblical value of "blue collar missionaries." (SEBTS photo)

session crowd, "How can he say that?"

He continued, "There is something that has found its way into our church and into our Christian mindset that suggests ... the clerical collar is superior to any other collar."

Quinn acknowledged the centrality of church leadership in the community of faith, but he said centrality does not mean superiority.

"It is not as though ... what your pastors do is qualitatively more important to Jesus and His mission than economists, politicians, nurses, early childhood educators, welders and beyond," said Quinn.

He used Ephesians 4:7-16 to show that certain leadership gifts – apostles, prophets, evangelists and pastors-teachers – are given by Jesus *"to equip the saints for the work of ministry."*

Christian ministry is not limited to clergy. "Everyone who is a follower of Christ is in ministry, according to Paul," said Quinn. "I think of it as the most massive mission force in the world. ... All of us together are the missionaries of God when we put on our welding mask, when we put on our nursing scrubs and when we put on our business suit. You're suiting up for mission."

\*Name changed BR

AN evening  
WITH  
Anne

FEB 25  
7-9 PM

Binkley Chapel  
sebts.edu/conferences

S

MISSIONARIES TO PRAY FOR  
52  
SUNDAYS  
POINTS TO PONDER

Marcio Martinez  
Clayton, NC

North Carolina Church Planter

Hocutt Baptist Church

IGLESIA BAUTISTA  
FUENTE DE VIDA  
Culto Los Domingos  
1 - 3 pm

YOUR CHURCH CAN PRAY FOR OUR MISSIONARIES!

Go to <http://www.ncbaptist.org/cpresources>  
and download the PowerPoint with images like the one above.  
(Also matching bulletin inserts)

Help NC Baptists to pray every Sunday for one of their missionaries  
serving in North Carolina, North America or around the world!

Remember that your church's Cooperative Program  
giving is vital for missions support!

CP  
COOPERATIVE PROGRAM