

SBC name change: what might happen?

Iowa pastor Dave Miller shares some insight on the challenges of the SBC name change committee and predicts the possibilities of a change. **Page 16**

Mark your calendar!

Learn more about upcoming Baptist State Convention events through “Year-at-a-Glance.” Events planned should help your church and its ministries. **Pages 10-11**

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

FEBRUARY 18, 2012 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 178 NO. 4 • **BRnow.org**

‘A CRAZY LEAP’ South African couple follows call to U.S.

By Sara Shelton

NORWICH, Conn. (BP) – No one understands doing whatever it takes to reach people for Christ better than Shaun Pillay. Born and raised in South Africa, he and his wife, Deshni, arrived in the United States in 2007 as newlyweds. Having sold their possessions to finance their move, they brought only two pieces of luggage, a Bible, their wedding album and a resolve to follow God’s call wherever it led them.

“It was a jump, a crazy leap,” Pillay explains. “Everything was so different here but Jesus remained the same and He saw us through. Every morning when we woke up we knew that this is where God wanted us to be.”

Shaun and Deshni Pillay are among five North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionaries featured as part of the annual Week of Prayer for North American Missions, March 4-11, 2012, and Annie

Armstrong Easter Offering® (AAEO). The offering helps fund Pillay and other missionaries like him who are serving for Southern Baptists in North America. With a goal of \$70 million, this year’s AAEO theme is “Whatever It Takes.”

Pillay was called to missions at a missions conference in Birmingham, England. “I remember one speaker saying, ‘We need you to come to Europe and America. Our churches are dying,’” Pillay said. He was surprised when he heard of the need for missionaries in the United States. Even more surprising was the fact that he knew God was calling him to be one of them.

“I never thought of it to be honest,” Pillay said. “We hear of all that God is doing in Africa and other places like that, but it’s sad to see what’s going on in places like Europe and America with regards to church. When I

heard about the need, I just felt God telling me, ‘Shaun, you go.’ And I said, ‘Yes, Lord, I will go wherever you send.’”

God sent Pillay and his wife to the small town of Norwich, Conn., a far cry from the home they’d known in South Africa. With a population of 40,000, the city is full of history and diversity. Once marked by money and influence, it is now equally marked by economic struggle, homelessness and drug use.

“We looked at the homeless population, the drug problems in Norwich and just knew there needed to be a light in the city,” Pillay says.

“We had compassion as Jesus did, looking on the multitudes and seeing them just waiting like sheep without a shepherd.”

Since their arrival, this has been the goal of Shaun and Deshni: to lead and love the people of the community just



New Orleans pastor to get SBC leader nomination

By GARY D. MYERS | Baptist Press

Fred Luter, pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, will be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) by David E. Crosby, pastor of First Baptist Church in New Orleans.

“Fred has been among Southern

Baptists for more than 20 years as a pastor. He has taken a church that was at death’s door to the largest worshipping congregation in the state of Louisiana among Southern Baptists,” Crosby said.

“He has been a great evangelist

and has baptized thousands of people through these years of ministry.”

Luter, the SBC’s current first vice president, told his congregation Jan. 29 he is willing to be nominated for president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Crosby cited Luter’s diligence and determination as a pastor, Bible expositor, evangelist and spiritual leader as characteristics that qualify him to lead Southern Baptists.

Luter’s family life – his love for his wife Elizabeth, and his two children, Kimberly and Fred “Chip” III – is a

Q & A with Fred Luter
See page 6



FRED LUTER

See Crazy leap page 4

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NAMB missionary Shaun Pillay, right, pastor of Cornerstone International Church in Norwich, Conn., prays with Tim Cable, a new believer and member of Cornerstone. Pillay and his wife Deshni, above right, came to the United States from South Africa. (Photo by Peter Field Peck)

N.C. churches share Lottie Moon offering updates

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

Although the focus on missions giving is beginning to turn toward North America with the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, many North Carolina Baptist churches are sharing their 2011 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering results.

While each church has their own approach – year-round giving, fundraisers or a big push in December – the focus on helping the gospel reach the ends of the earth remains the same. The offering supports the work of nearly 5,000 IMB (International Mission Board) missionaries overseas. The national goal for the 2011 Lottie Moon offering is \$175 million.

Top-giving contenders

Last year, 18 of North Carolina's Baptist churches ranked in the Top 200 for the 2010 Lottie Moon Christmas Offering.

Some of those top-giving churches shared their results for the 2011 offering. Those reports included: Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, \$504,855; Parkwood Baptist Church, Gastonia, \$289,986.06; Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Boone, \$235,798.26; Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte, \$132,200; Green Street Baptist Church,

High Point, \$121,300; First Baptist Church, Cary, \$115,314.83; Hendersonville Baptist Church, Hendersonville, \$108,000; First Baptist Church, Durham, \$107,974.70; and First Baptist Church, Charlotte, \$100,000.

One year's support

Other churches around the state also shared their offering results and their passion for international missions.

In early December Scott Davis, pastor of Pitts Baptist Church in Concord, presented an IMB (International Mission Board) chart to the congregation. The chart showed that the average dollar amount it takes to support one IMB missionary family each year is about \$48,000.

Davis encouraged the congregation to keep that amount in mind as they gave their 2011 offering. Because of economic challenges in the community, Davis said the church decided to keep their goal at \$35,000, which was the goal for 2010. But he encouraged them to give above the \$39,497 raised the year before.

"We've had missionaries ready to go, but they [couldn't] because of a lack of

funds," Davis told his congregation that averages around 720 in worship each week. "These are not the days to be drawing back. The needs of the world have never been greater."

At press time, the church had raised \$49,572.85, which is more than enough to support one family.

'The best plan'

Brushy Fork Baptist Church in North Vilas – that averages about 130 people in worship – shattered their goal of \$4,000 by raising \$8,500 for international missions. The past two years the church has given an average of \$1,500.

Pastor Toby Oliver credits the results partly to "heavily publicizing" the offering. They also invited an IMB couple, serving in Hungary, to share about their overseas work.

"We saw the impact that [the offering] makes across the world and what we can

do to spread the gospel," said Oliver, a bi-vocational pastor who also works in insurance. He became the church's pastor in August of 2011. "I believe the Southern Baptist Convention has the best plan to give to missions," he said.



TOBY OLIVER

Godwin Heights Baptist Church in Lumberton – another similarly sized congregation of about 160 people – gave \$10,300, which is \$300 over their goal.

Center Road Baptist Church of Bladenboro – a church of about 100 people – beat their goal of \$6,300 by giving \$9,903.

The cost of ministry

It's this support that helps ministry efforts around the globe. Every penny given to the offering is used to support IMB missionaries.

For example, one Southern Baptist worker in a European city, shared how the offering supports his work at a refugee center that feeds people both physically and spiritually. About 500 refugees visit the center each week.

According to IMB figures, rent for the center is \$1,840 per month. A bag of groceries provided to refugees is \$7. Each hot meal costs less than a \$1. A complete Bible in the local language is a little more than \$16. The Lottie Moon offering helps make all of this possible.

For more examples go to imb.org/main/give/lmw/. To learn more about the offering, go to imb.org/offering.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Laura Moore, editorial aide for the Biblical Recorder, and figures from imb.org contributed to this story.) **BR**

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Call 2 Ministry targets next generation

At Anderson University in Anderson, S.C., March 2-3, the Call 2 Ministry conference will provide vocational guidance and inspiration to next generation of spiritual leaders. The event is open to high school, college or seminary students gearing up for a Christian-related vocation. Students will be able to meet with experienced ministry leaders, including missionaries and Anderson University faculty members. Speakers also include Jeff Iorg, Kerry Jackson and Foster Christy. Registration is \$40 and can be done online at call2ministry.com. Call (888) 765-4487.

College students learn leadership

March 30-April 1, college students are welcome to Camp Caraway in Sophia for the Spring Leadership Conference, "Strength in Leadership." Hosted by the North Carolina Baptist Student Ministry, it will be focused on leadership development. Students will participate in praise and worship, breakout sessions, hands-on experiences and fellowship. Matt Orth, ministry director at Crossroads Worldwide, will be the speaker.

Contact Rick Trexler at the Baptist State Convention for more information: (919) 395-5102, ext. 5560, or rtrexler@ncbaptist.org. Visit ncbaptist.org.

Red Bags offer churches way to help seniors

The North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry is looking for churches, individuals and groups to help get Red Bags into the community.

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ized location to store medicine. The bags are insulated so temperature-sensitive medicine can be transported to doctor appointments or the hospital. Included is a "My Med List" chart to allow patients to keep a list of medicines being used.

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Call (877) 506-2226 for more information.

Campers host 'old time' camp meeting

North Carolina Campers on Mission is holding "The Old Time Camp Meeting" with evangelist Jonathan Lotz, grandson of Billy Graham, April 20-21 at 7 p.m. nightly. Join N.C. Campers on Mission at Denton Farm Park in Denton. Registration is required.

Visit nccampersonmission.org or request a form from Denton Farm Park at (336) 859-2755.

NCBM to host men's outdoor weekend

Men's Outdoor Weekend, May 18-19, will be a time of worship and fellowship around the campfire at Camp Caraway in Sophia. Men will also learn about effective men's ministry in church as well as opportunities to learn archery, fishing, shooting, gun safety and more. Space is limited to 130 participants, and the event cost of \$74 is due April 27.

Register at baptistsonmission.org. Contact Mark Abernathy for more information at mabernathy@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5607.

Nominations still needed

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Committee on Nominations has extended its deadline for recommendations until April 19. There are still Board of Director vacancies in these regions: Region 2: three vacancies; Region 3: three vacancies; Region 4: seven vacancies (includes three unexpired terms); Region 5: one vacancy (includes one unexpired term); Region 6: three vacancies (includes one unexpired term); Region 7: three

vacancies; Region 8: three vacancies; Region 9: four vacancies; Region 10: two vacancies. Other vacancies: seven slots (including one unexpired term) for the Committee on Convention Meetings; three vacancies on the Committee on Resolutions and Memorials; and four vacancies on the Historical Committee.

Visit recommend.ncbaptist.org. Contact Cynthia King at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5501, or cking@ncbaptist.org.

CHURCH NEWS



Deep Creek Baptist Church, Wadesboro

Members of Deep Creek Baptist Church in Wadesboro cut wood to help build a house for a family who lost their home in a tragic fire Oct. 27, 2011, in Patrick, S.C. The fire claimed the life of Cliff Light, 28, who died while trying to rescue his family. Deep Creek continues to work alongside St. John Free Will Baptist in Patrick, S.C., to rebuild a home for the family, using trees from the property of St. John's church.

AROUND THE STATE

Staff changes

JEREMY PACKARD has been called to Temple Baptist Church, Raleigh, as their minister of students. This is Packard's first church staff position.

Eastside Baptist Church, Shelby, has called **JESSICA MELTON** as children's minister. Melton has previously served as children's minister for another church from Greater Cleveland Baptist Association.

BOB COATS has been called to Carolina Pines Baptist Church, Raleigh, as pastor. Coats has served several other churches, and most recently served at Fuquay-Varina Baptist Church in Fuquay Varina.

License

Bethlehem Baptist Church, Jacksonville, licensed **GREG HEATH** to preach the gospel. He is currently a fifth-grade teacher.

Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Please send information at least two months in advance of any item you want to submit for opportunity corner or immediately following an event. Send to dianna@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

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Easter's coming: Time to prepare for Annie Armstrong offering

By **MIKE CRESWELL** | BSC Communications

Easter is getting closer, so it's time to prepare for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions.

North Carolina Baptists will join with Southern Baptists across the United States in contributing to this offering. It provides major funding to the North American Mission Board (NAMB), whose approximately 5,000 missionaries serve across the U.S. and Canada.

For promotion materials, visit anniearmstrong.com and download videos, clipart and other resources. These materials are also distributed by Woman's Missionary Union. The theme for the offering this year is "Whatever It Takes," based on the account in Mark 2:1-5 of how a sick man's friends broke through a roof so they could lower him down to be healed by Jesus.

Crazy leap Continued from page 1

as Christ does. They started Cornerstone International Church in an effort to give the "sheep" in the community of Norwich a place to gather and grow in Christ. And it has been from the moment they opened the doors.

David Holland arrived at Cornerstone International Church as a carpet cleaner, hired to help spruce up the building before the church's launch on Easter 2007. Notoriously known as a drug dealer and in trouble with the law in Norwich, David was worn and searching when he arrived to work at Cornerstone that day. Never one to pass up an opportunity to build a relationship, Shaun stayed with David as he worked and spent the afternoon talking and sharing with him, ultimately inviting him to Cornerstone's launch that Sunday.

"David was in the congregation that Easter Sunday when we launched our church," recalls Pillay. "As we were wrapping up, he came forward and accepted Jesus Christ. It was a huge moment in his life and the life of our church."

Just last year Holland became the first deacon at Cornerstone International Church and is working alongside Pillay to reach the city of Norwich for the name of Christ. "God put Shaun right there in my life," Holland says, "and he's seen me through so much. He's a good man, a man of God. And everybody I introduce him to just falls in love with him and his passion for the people and the city of Norwich."

Holland's transformation has not only been a testimony to the power of God but also the influence of Pillay in the city.

NAMB leaders are saying Baptists must adopt a "whatever it takes" approach to both missions involvement and support, in order to make a significant impact on our continent's lostness.

The 2012 Annie Armstrong offering goal is \$70 million, which will be used for missionary support, church planting and evangelism.

These offering funds and those provided by churches through the Cooperative Program account for the majority of NAMB funding.

Southern Baptists already start more than 100 new churches each month across North America, which is more than any other church group is doing. Yet, thousands of additional churches are needed to reach the estimated 259 million people across the United States and Canada who have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

Weeks after Holland's salvation, the two ran into a group of policemen who knew Holland as the drug dealer and troublemaker he was before his conversion to Christianity. They hadn't seen him in months and Holland took the opportunity to explain his absence from the legal system as the direct result of his newfound presence in Christ.

"The men were obviously moved," Pillay recalls. "They said, 'I wish all the drug dealers in the city would come to know your Jesus if this is the result.' They knew for sure that David was a changed man."

For Pillay, this exchange was just a small step in changing not just one life, but also the entire city of Norwich. Though the work is slow, he recognizes that every conversation, every seed planted is a victory in the name of Christ and looks forward to more stories like Holland's in the years to come.

The Pillays have set up "proclamation points" around the city – locations where they can share the gospel and study the Bible with Norwich residents. Shaun's most recent Bible study meets in a local barbershop owned by a former drug dealer. One by one, Jesus is transforming the city of Norwich.

"Whatever it takes to reach these people, whether it's leaving our homeland or going to a place where we don't know anybody," Pillay said. "Whatever it takes to share the love of Jesus Christ, that is what we're here to do."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Sara Shelton is a writer for the North American Mission Board. Visit anniearmstrong.com or BRnow.org for more resources about the offering.) **BR**

NAMB recently launched the "Send North America" strategy, seeking to mobilize congregations and church planters across the continent in an all-out push to start more churches.

Missionaries will focus efforts on major urban areas such as New York City, where millions have no knowledge of the gospel.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has committed to partner in several areas, including New York. More than 700 volunteers served there during 2011 through the Convention's Office of Great Commission Partnerships.

North Carolina Baptists can use materials from the Annie Armstrong website to lead entire congregations to support this offering.

One good approach is to lead families to observe the Week of Prayer for North American Missions March 4-11.

Baptists can learn about missionaries they're supporting as these missions servants struggle to reach people for Christ and start new churches in challenging places like Toronto, Canada; Norwich, Connecticut; and Clovis, New Mexico.

Young people can learn how they, too, can help start churches by serving in one of NAMB's programs, such as the

semester missionary program or the US/C2 program.

NAMB works with more than 3,000 Southern Baptist chaplains, including military chaplains, among others. NAMB also operates many other ministries, such as lay renewal, Christian apologetics ministry, sports evangelism, resort missions and disaster relief.

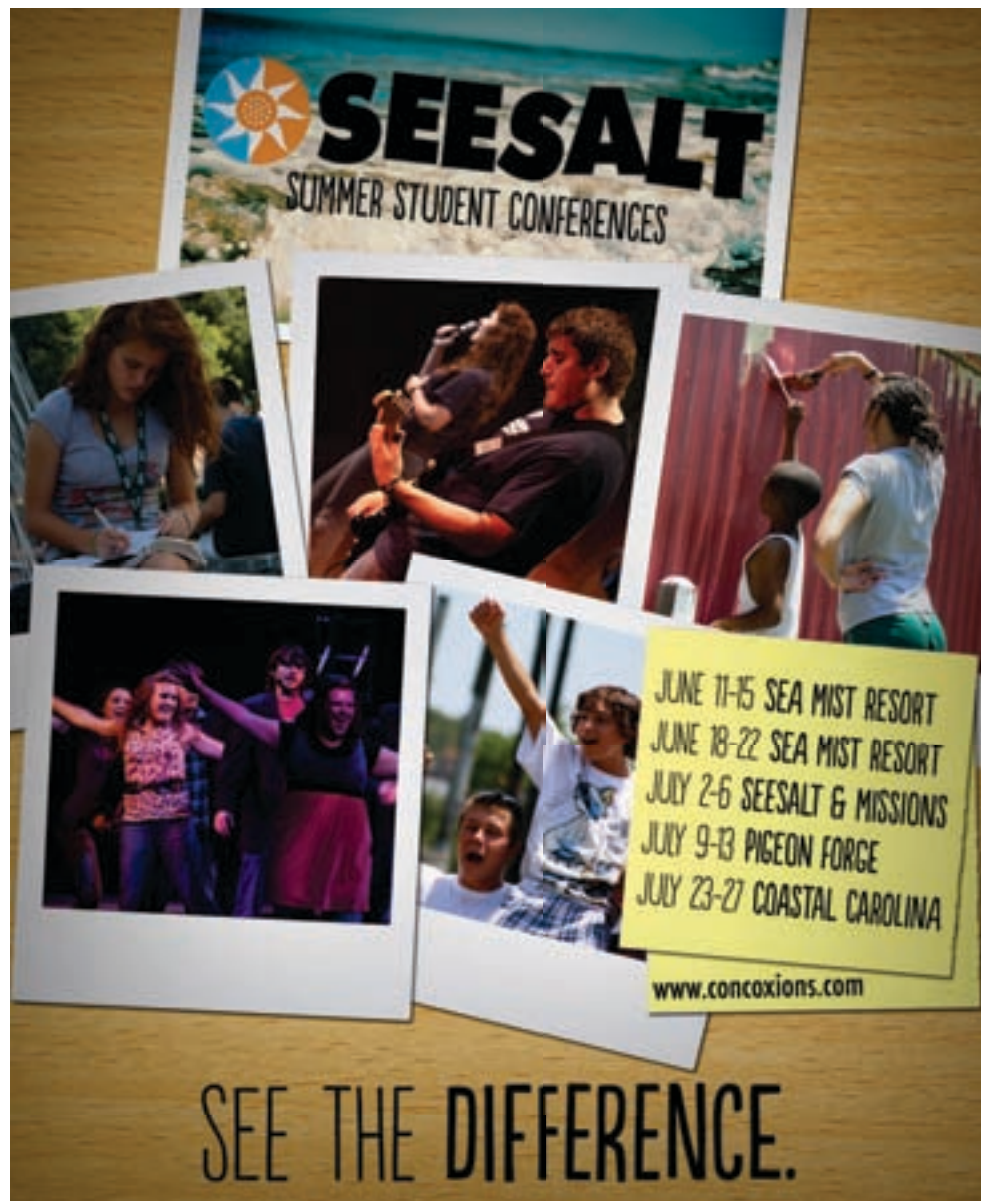
This strategic offering was named for Annie Armstrong (1850-1938) because of her ministry of encouraging missions support.

A native of Baltimore, Md., Armstrong helped organize the Woman's Home Mission Society in Maryland. She later helped organize the national Woman's Missionary Union and served as its first corresponding secretary.

She took that "corresponding" part of her title seriously.

In 1893 she sent out nearly 18,000 letters that she wrote by hand or by typewriter as she rallied Baptists to get behind missions with their pocketbooks and their prayers.

Annie Armstrong's "whatever it takes" approach to missions remains a great example of what Baptists can achieve when they embrace missions with a similar commitment. **BR**



N.C. Baptists 'ramp up' efforts to help wheelchair bound

BR Staff

For many Americans who are confined to a wheelchair, simply leaving their homes can be a daunting task. Without a wheelchair ramp it can be nearly impossible.

North Carolina Baptist church groups and other volunteer teams will have an opportunity April 28 to help those with this need.

For the first time N.C. Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) will join forces with Operation Inasmuch and N.C. Baptist Men to promote a one-day event, called Rampin' Up! The effort focuses on volunteers building wheelchair ramps for homes throughout the state.

"This is an example of Baptists at their very best ... when they work together," said Sandy Gregory, director of NCBAM. "There are many seniors trapped in their

homes because they cannot get down one or two steps."

For years N.C. Baptist Men have built wheelchair ramps around the state, but keeping up with the demand hasn't been easy.

"I average one or two requests a week for ramps," said Gaylon Moss, who directs disaster relief efforts and volunteerism for N.C. Baptist Men.

"It's a great way for North Carolina Baptist churches to impact others for Christ by providing a legitimate need."

Right now NCBAM, has a list of 50 people who have requested wheelchair ramps. Coordinators with Rampin' Up!, however, encourage groups to find other individuals in their community who need a wheelchair ramp.

Volunteers needed

Moss and Gregory, along with other event coordinators, hope to see more than 300 ramps built during the one-day event. Right now there are about 20 teams signed up.

Coordinators encourage groups to hold fundraising events to raise money for needed supplies. Building one ramp can run between \$1,000 and \$1,500. One decking board is about \$8.

Suggestions for fundraising include: bake sales, car washes and youth service auctions that feature babysitting, house cleaning, yard work, or groups can host a special dinner event. Other ideas include holding a 5k fun run and walk or other special tournament events that involve

"There are many seniors trapped in their homes because they cannot get down one or two steps."

— Sandy Gregory

games such as bowling. Those who sign up online before April 1 will have an opportunity to win one of four \$750 awards for ramp supplies. Those who sign up by March 1 will have two opportunities to win. The drawing will be held April 2.

How to get involved

To find out more information about how a church group or ministry can get involved with Rampin' Up! go to rampinup.org or ncoperationinasmuch.org. Call NCBAM at (877) 506-2226. For more information about NCBAM and the services and opportunities they offer for individuals 65 years old and up call or go to ncbam.org. **BR**

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Luter shares vision for SBC if elected

By KAREN L. WILLOUGHBY | Baptist Press

Two weeks into a church-wide 21-day session of prayer and fasting, Fred Luter came to the conclusion that God wanted him to allow his nomination for the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) presidency.

After 30 years as a follower of Jesus Christ and 25 years as pastor of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans, Luter said he became convinced that God had brought him to such a juncture in his Christian life.

"I wanted to make sure this was not something I was doing out of the flesh, something I was doing out just of popularity, notoriety," Luter said. "I wanted it to be of God. I prayed about it, and my wife – her relationship with God is just one I truly admire and respect – was praying for me, and others in the church. "It was last Friday, [Jan. 27] the week before the fast was ended. My wife and I were talking and I said, 'Baby, I think God wants me to do this,' and the only thing she asked me was, 'Are you sure?' It was really clear to me this is what God was leading me to do."

Baptist Press (BP) spoke with Luter about his reasons for allowing his name to be placed in nomination, about his leadership of Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, and about his thoughts on the Southern Baptist Convention. The following questions and answers are adapted from the interview.

Q: Did any special word from the Lord confirm this?

A: A passage of Scripture that my wife shared with me from Isaiah 66 and verse 2 really spoke to me about this situation. 'Has not my hand made all these things, and so they came into being?' declares the LORD. 'This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at my word.' And I said 'wow.' And she said, 'That's you, sir; that's you, Fred.' That's the one. She gave me that from the Lord and when I read it I said, 'Wow, that's a blessing.'

Q: If you are elected, what do you envision as your key emphases or key messages to Southern Baptists? What do you see as the greatest challenge to the SBC in the short-term?

A: This convention has been one of the top conventions in the world as far as our primary mission of evangelism and discipleship. My goal and vision is that we would get back to being that convention we're known for. Through the years we've kind of gone off-track with some things and that has allowed us to not make evangelism and discipleship our main focus. My prayer is just that we get going back in the right direction,



Fred Luter, aboard a helicopter after Hurricane Katrina, points to the flood-ravaged Franklin Avenue Baptist Church in New Orleans where he is pastor. (File photo by Norm Miller)

depending on God to help us fulfill the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. That's what He's called us to do and that's what I hope to lead this convention to do during my time as our president.

Q: Even with just your nomination, what message do you hope it sends to the SBC and to the nation?

A: The thing I hope it sends to the SBC is that if you're faithful to God and faithful to God's Word, that God will be faithful to you. That's what's happened here. I'm from the Lower Ninth Ward, and Mom and Dad were divorced when I was a kid. But through the 30-some years I've been a believer and the 25 years I've been a pastor, I have been faithful to God, faithful to the Word of God, and faithful to my wife.

I just believe God has allowed this [nomination] to happen for such a time as this. It is nothing I was looking for. It was not on my bucket list, so to speak, but I think God ordained this because of the fact that what we're dealing with right now through the convention is trying to make the convention diverse.

I think this will speak not only to our convention but to our country and throughout the world that this convention is serious about reaching all people.

Q: Since news broke at last year's meeting that you would consider allowing your nomination as SBC president, what comments by fellow SBC leaders and by friends have been most significant or most encouraging to you?

A: They've been saying, 'Fred, it's time. Many of them feel God has just raised me up for this time to speak not only a message of the Word of God to our convention, but to the folk who are not part of our convention about the direction this convention wants to go as far as reaching all peoples. I think this will say to a lot of young preachers across America who are Asian, African American, Hispanic that hey, this convention is not just saying this. They're putting

their money to their mouth. This convention is truly open to all people.

Q: Describe the rise in awareness of you by SBC leaders. How did it come to pass that you preached the annual sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention in 2001 when it was last in New Orleans?

A: It happened as a result of our baptism record. We started growing as a church and as a result leading our association in baptisms, and from there our Louisiana Baptist Convention (LBC). Wayne Jenkins [LBC evangelism director]

called one year in the early 1990s. I didn't know him when he called, but I will never forget it. He said Franklin Avenue was first in the state in baptisms and he'd like me to come up and receive an award at the evangelism conference, 'and I'd like you to preach,' he said. After that, Wayne would give my name to different ones and before you know it I would be preaching at different evangelism conferences and state conventions across the country.

Q: Did you always sense God had such things in store for you, or did all this 'just happen'?

A: I think all of this just kind of happened. I had no idea. I'd never pastored before, never preached before. I've been faithful to God, faithful to the Word of God, faithful to my wife, faithful to my church and I believe God rewards faithfulness. Why me out of all the thousands and thousands of preachers in this city and state

and nation? I just believe it's not because I've accomplished so much; I just believe it's because of the faithfulness of God, and that He has honored me because of my faithfulness.

Q: How did you learn to be faithful? How did you become faithful?

A: When God saved me He drastically saved me. When I got saved and gave my life to the Lord, it was such an impact on my life that I wanted to share this with everybody I knew. That's how I started doing street ministry in the Lower Ninth Ward. I wanted all my partners and friends to get saved and to know the Jesus that I knew and how, if God could change my life, God could change their life, and because I was out there on the street corners, out there in front of people, I knew I had to do more than just talk the talk. I had to walk the walk.

I would have to be faithful. When you're in the 'hood, people know when you're fake. Then when I came to the church, I said, 'God, if You can do this in my life, I figure You can do this in the life of this church.' That's why I wasn't really concerned when they told me the history of the church: dying, on its last leg. I said, 'If God could resurrect my life, He could resurrect the life of this church.' So I went there just being faithful to God, faithful to preaching and teaching and living His Word.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Karen L. Willoughby is managing editor of the Baptist Message, news-journal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, and a correspondent for Baptist Press.) **BP**

**"... because I was out there on the street ..., out there in front of people, I knew I had to do more than just talk the talk."
– Fred Luter**

Haiti relief: 2 years of care, thousands of changed lives

By **HOLLY MCCRAE** | Baptist Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti – Smiling through her tears, Madam Maris thanks and kisses the Southern Baptist volunteers as they hand her the keys to her new home.

For nearly two years, the 70-year-old Haitian woman has lived in a tent. She lost her husband, two nephews, her arm and her home in the Jan. 12 earthquake that rocked Haiti in 2010. Now, she and her niece have a chance to start over.

Theirs is one of many new beginnings Southern Baptists have helped provide since the 7.0-magnitude quake, which killed 230,000 people and left millions more injured, homeless or both. To date, Southern Baptists have given more than \$11 million in aid. Many have volunteered their time and skills to help Haitians recover.

At first, Southern Baptist aid workers focused on the most pressing needs – medical care, food and basic shelter – that would serve as a witness to the love of Christ. But they also sought more long-term solutions to help Haitians break the cycle of dependency that keeps them mired in extreme poverty.

Since the quake destroyed or damaged millions of houses, the vast need



While Southern Baptist volunteers set up an outdoor medical clinic to help earthquake survivors in Port-au-Prince with ongoing needs, a Haitian believer, left, leads waiting patients in a time of worship. In the two years since a 7.0-magnitude earthquake hit Haiti, Southern Baptist disaster relief efforts have helped thousands of Haitians rebuild their lives.

for housing captured the attention of Southern Baptist relief planners. They developed a project called “Rebuild Haiti,” a joint effort involving Haitians and Southern Baptists.

By the time the housing project ends this spring, Rebuild Haiti will have constructed about 2,800 houses in 30

communities. IMB (International Mission Board), Baptist Global Response, the Southern Baptist Disaster Relief Network and Florida Baptist Convention all have contributed to the effort.

N.C. Baptists

North Carolina Baptists also have

partnered with Florida Baptists and local Haitians to build 46 homes and 800 temporary shelters.

They also helped provide medical care for 130,000 patients.

Even today, volunteer medical teams continue to see 800 to 1,000 patients a week. There also are efforts underway for North Carolina Baptists to help build a clinic north of Port-Au-Prince. They hope to complete the clinic by the end of the year.

“That was our bigger thrust,” said Gaylon Moss, who directs N.C. Baptist Men’s disaster relief ministry.

“We’re looking at a long-term partnership with Haiti that will transition into different phases,” he added, “but we’re looking for a long-term presence in Haiti.”

For those interested in signing up for future medical projects in Haiti, go to baptistsonmission.org or contact N.C. Baptist Men at (800) 395-5102.

‘A cooperative effort’

Through ongoing Southern Baptist relief efforts, an estimated 16,800 Haitians are now in stable homes. Many of these were built on original foundations,

See Haiti relief page 12

Fred Luter Continued from page 1

model for Southern Baptist ministers, Crosby said.

The fact that Luter is African American would make his election a historic moment for Southern Baptists, Crosby said.

“Our election of Fred Luter as the first African American president of the SBC will send a great, hopeful, powerful message to our city, our culture, our convention and our country,” Crosby said in an interview. “For many, it will make them rethink who Southern Baptists are, and it will help us reach the new diversity that we find in our cities.

“For Southern Baptists to elect Fred Luter heralds a new era of inclusion – of working together in our diversity,” Crosby continued. “It is a statement that people of all ethnic groups make up the Southern Baptist Convention and are honored.”

Luter, who often calls himself a “street preacher from the Lower Ninth Ward,” has made a significant mark on Southern Baptist life. A popular preacher at conferences and seminaries across the country, Luter became the first African American to preach the keynote sermon at the Southern Baptist Convention in 2001. At last year’s annual meeting in Phoenix, Luter became the first African American to serve as the convention’s first vice president.

Known for boldness in proclaiming the Bible, Luter is a native New Orleanian who became pastor of Franklin Avenue in 1986 at a time when the church was fading as its surrounding neighborhoods were in transition. Under his leadership the church was given fresh life.

Membership grew to around 5,000 and each Sunday the church draws nearly 7,000 worshippers.

Deeply involved in Southern Baptist life, Luter has served in leadership roles on the local, state and national level. The New Orleans Baptist Association (NOBA) and the Louisiana Baptist Convention have tapped him for numerous leadership positions, and he served as a member of the committee that worked on the revision of the Baptist Faith and Message 2000.

“Fred Luter’s support of our local association is stellar,” Crosby said. “We could not do what we do without him or Franklin Avenue Baptist Church.”

Crosby commended Luter for his pastoral leadership following Hurricane Katrina. Franklin Avenue’s building was inundated with water and most of the church’s members were displaced, but Luter’s commitment to the congregation never wavered.

“Fred returned to New Orleans to continue his ministry even though I am confident he could have moved on to other places and pulpits,” Crosby said.

“But his heart was drawn here and he demonstrated the faithfulness of a pastor who cares for his flock.

“He met with his people who had evacuated to other places and he wanted to start meeting with his congregation here in New Orleans, but the building took on seven feet of water. There was no part of the facility that was able to be used,” Crosby said.

Crosby offered space at First Baptist. Franklin Avenue met there for worship at 7:30 a.m. every Sunday for nearly two and a half years. During that time, the

two congregations grew close and began to participate in ministry together. The churches joined together for men’s ministry, the women’s Bible studies and Vacation Bible School. Though Franklin Avenue moved back to its restored facility in April 2008, the two pastors and their congregations remain close.

“We are still doing some of those things together,” Crosby said. The men’s and women’s groups from both churches still gather for prayer, fellowship and Bible study. Franklin Avenue also is involved in First Baptist’s efforts to reach the Songhai people in Accra, Ghana.

“Fred and I have grown to love each other. I have a great respect for him as a man of God and expositor of the Word of God to his people,” Crosby said. “I think Fred Luter is a great example of evangelism, family life, pastoral care and leadership and we need him now.”

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary President Chuck Kelley, a longtime co-laborer with Luter in New Orleans, affirmed Crosby’s nomination of Luter.

“Slice off any aspect of a pastor’s work, and Fred Luter does it well,” Kelley said. “Look at him as a leader, and his work in the aftermath of Katrina is the stuff of legend. Check his calendar and you will find him active at every level of SBC life, including the grunt work of committee meetings no one even knows he attends. Invite him to preach and everyone will remember him and want him back. He is as Southern Baptist as Southern Baptist gets.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Gary D. Myers is director of public relations at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.) ■■

Komen reverses course, says Planned Parenthood still eligible

By **TOM STRODE** | Baptist Press

Susan G. Komen for the Cure revised a policy Feb. 3 that it had recently used in deciding to stop funding for Planned Parenthood, leaving the impression it had reversed itself on future grants to the country's No. 1 abortion provider.

The statement issued by the world's leading breast cancer organization did not guarantee Planned Parenthood affiliates would continue to receive funds, however, only that they would remain eligible for such grants.

Komen's action – after three days of a deluge of Planned Parenthood-fueled criticism – was received by many pro-life advocates as a distressing setback following so closely on the Jan. 31 report that the breast cancer charity would no longer give money to one of the abortion rights movement's leading organizations.

One thing seemed certain after days of widespread news coverage of Komen's original action and the reaction – many more pro-lifers now know the breast cancer foundation has given to Planned Parenthood and may continue to do so.

As a result, pro-life advocates' donations to Komen and participation in its popular five-kilometer fundraising runs/walks that draw more than 1.6 million participants each year likely will decline.

Southern Baptist leaders who had applauded Komen's defunding of Planned Parenthood expressed their disappointment at the latest development.

"I am extremely disappointed that the Susan G. Komen Foundation would cave to the political pressure of the radical pro-choice movement," said Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. "It shows that underneath it all they share the culture of death mentality of the pro-choice movement. Pro-life Americans, now the majority in the country, will have to take that fact into account as they choose how to allocate their charitable contributions."

Thom Rainer, president of LifeWay Christian Resources, had said Feb. 1 the Southern Baptist entity might reconsider its relationship with Komen in light of the charity's defunding of Planned Parenthood. In December, LifeWay pulled from Walmart and other stores copies of a special pink-covered Bible that partially benefited the cancer charity after learning of its connection with Planned Parenthood.

"I am deeply disappointed with today's announcement from Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation if it means a reversal of Komen's decision to stop funding Planned Parenthood," Rainer said in a written statement Feb. 3. "I renew my strong encouragement of Komen's leadership to end that relationship permanently, and restate LifeWay's commitment to not be involved, even indirectly, with Planned Parenthood."

Komen's latest announcement – which came from its board of directors and Chief Executive Officer Nancy Brinker – said the charity was "distressed at the presumption that the changes made to our funding criteria were done for political reasons or to specifically penalize Planned Parenthood. They were not."

Komen decided to abstain from future funding of Planned Parenthood affiliates because of its new policy that bans grants to organizations under government

investigation, a Komen spokeswoman had said in a Jan. 31 report by the Associated Press. A House of Representatives committee began an investigation of Planned Parenthood in September.

In its Feb. 3 statement, Komen said it would amend the criteria "to make clear that disqualifying investigations must be criminal and conclusive in nature and not political."

"We will continue to fund existing grants, including those of Planned Parenthood, and preserve their eligibility to apply for future grants, while maintaining the ability of our affiliates to make funding decisions that meet the needs of their communities," according to the Komen statement. Komen also apologized to the public for "recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives."

A Komen board member told The Washington Post the new statement does not mean Planned Parenthood definitely will receive money in the future.

Cecile Richards, president of Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA), portrayed Komen's announcement as a return to the previous relationship.

"In recent weeks, the treasured relationship between the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation and Planned Parenthood has been challenged, and we are now heartened that we can continue to work in partnership toward our shared commitment to breast health for the most underserved women," Richards said in a written release. "We are enormously grateful that the Komen Foundation has clarified its grantmaking criteria, and we look forward to continuing our partnership with Komen partners, leaders and volunteers."

Komen affiliates gave about \$680,000 to PPFA centers



last year, AP reported Jan. 31. An analysis last year by the pro-life American Life League found 18 among Komen's affiliates, numbering about 120, had given PPFA centers grants totaling nearly \$630,000 in the 2009-10 fiscal year.

Government funding of Planned Parenthood dwarfs Komen's giving. PPFA and its affiliates received \$487.4 million in government grants, contracts and reimbursements alone in 2009-10, the most recent year for which statistics are available.

Money for PPFA and its affiliates helps support an organization that performed 329,445 abortions in 2010. That was more than one-fourth of the lethal procedures in the United States for the year.

In defending its grants to PPFA affiliates, Komen had said the funds were not for abortions but for breast screenings and breast health education. Planned Parenthood, however, does not offer mammograms, a further reason reportedly used by Brinker to defend Komen's defunding decision. Komen has said grants to PPFA may pay for mammograms at other sites.

Pro-life leaders decried Planned Parenthood's tactics in fomenting an uprising against a private charity.

Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life and a breast cancer survivor, called the campaign "an ugly and disgraceful shakedown that highlights Planned Parenthood's willingness to pursue a scorched-earth strategy to force compliance with their pro-abortion agenda."

"It is unfortunate that donors to [Komen] are now confused about their association with the nation's largest abortion provider," Yoest said in a written statement.

Life Decisions International (LDI) publishes a boycott list of organizations that give to Planned Parenthood and seeks to persuade them to stop those donations. That list includes Komen. ■■

California court strikes down Prop 8

By **MICHAEL FOUST** | Baptist Press

SAN FRANCISCO – A federal appeals court Feb. 8 struck down California's Proposition 8, handing gay groups a big win while avoiding the larger question of whether the U.S. Constitution guarantees gays nationwide the right to "marry."

The outcome by the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals was not a huge surprise, as the three-judge panel seemed inclined during oral arguments to overturn Prop 8, which defines marriage as between one man and one woman and was passed at the ballot in 2008. But it was a landmark decision and marked the first time an appeals court in the U.S. has ruled that same-sex couples in a state have a right to "marry." The ruling will be appealed and could end up before the U.S. Supreme Court. The 2-1 decision affirmed a 2010 lower court ruling by Judge Vaughn Walker, now retired.

"Proposition 8 serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians in California, and to officially reclassify their relationships and families as inferior to those of opposite-sex couples," Judge Stephen Reinhardt wrote for the majority. "... By using their initiative power to target a minority group and withdraw a right that is possessed, without a legitimate reason for doing

so, the People of California violated the Equal Protection Clause."

But the ruling was not the home run gay groups had hoped it would be, and its impact could be limited to California, meaning it might not affect the 28 other states with constitutional amendments defining marriage in the traditional sense. Reinhardt – a nominee of President Carter – called the decision "narrow" and said it was not answering the broader question of whether states ever can define marriage as between a man and a woman.

Already, supporters of proposed constitutional marriage amendments in North Carolina and Minnesota are using the ruling as evidence that their states need to adopt such an amendment. North Carolinians will vote on an amendment in May, Minnesotans in November.

"The proposed amendment protects North Carolina from being in the same position as California by not granting any legal recognition of same-sex relationships, which could be overturned by an equal protection argument," Tami Fitzgerald, chairwoman of Vote for Marriage NC (VoteforMarriageNC.com), said in a statement. "Every day that goes by is another day when a judge can decide to substitute his values for those of North Carolinians. We need the marriage protection amendment to prevent that." ■■

‘Scriptures Come to Life’ during 20/20 conference

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Assistant Managing Editor

More than 900 people attended the 20/20 Collegiate Conference with the theme “The Scriptures Come to Life” Feb. 3-4 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest.

Each of the main speakers – Danny Akin, D.A. Carson, Tullian Tchividjian and Tony Merida – spoke in Binkley Chapel about the importance of the Bible, its authority and how to integrate it into life.

“[The Bible is] true whether you encounter it or not,” said Akin, Southeastern’s president, to the students Feb. 3.

“It’s true whether you believe it or not.”

He shared how Christ reacted to and interacted with scripture. Referring to Matthew 5, Akin said Christ believed that all scripture pointed to Him, and He

believed that all scripture was perfect.

“If there ever comes a time in your life that you become convinced this book is full of errors,” Akin said, “realize two things: You’re saying Jesus was wrong. You’re saying you know better than Jesus.”

Following Akin, D.A. Carson shared “something strange” he learned in his almost 40 years of teaching the Bible: that while his students didn’t learn most of what he taught them, they did remember what excited him.

“Feed your soul so that you will always be excited about the gospel,” said Carson, research professor of New Testament at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., and author.

Referring to Luke 10 where Jesus is confronted by a man seeking the answer



Danny Akin, from left, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary; Tony Merida, lead pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh and associate professor of preaching at Southeastern; Bruce Ashford, dean of The College at Southeastern; Tullian Tchividjian, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; and Andy Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Durham, participate in a panel Feb. 4. (SEBTS photos)

to how he could inherit eternal life, he said “it is deeply disturbing [the expert in the law] really thinks he can achieve [eternal life] all by himself.”

Carson went on to share the story of the Good Samaritan. Looking beyond



D.A. CARSON

Luke 10, Jesus is the greatest Good Samaritan, said Carson, emphasizing the importance of looking at the scripture in context of the verses around it and the entire Bible.

Jesus clearly “expects His followers to behave as He Himself does. For though we are saved by grace alone through faith alone, if it’s real grace and real faith, they’re never alone,” Carson said. “Where there’s real grace and real faith, there is real change.”

Some of the main plenary speakers joined with Andy Davis, pastor of First Baptist Church in Durham, on Feb. 4 to

“If there ever comes a time in your life that you become convinced this book is full of errors, realize two things: You’re saying Jesus was wrong. You’re saying you know better than Jesus.”

– Danny Akin

begin the second day of the conference and answer questions about scripture, its truth and application to daily lives.

“The Christian life begins by the Word of God,” Davis said. “We have to continue to take in God’s Word ... to sustain us. We’ve got to be feeding on God’s Word every day.”

Tullian Tchividjian, pastor of Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., and a visiting professor of theology at Reformed Theological Seminary, followed the panel session. Tchividjian is convinced most people read the Bible “wrongly.”

“It is possible to read the Bible, study the Bible, memorize portions of the Bible and miss the whole point. In other words it is entirely possible to read the stories and miss the Story ... miss Jesus.”

So many treat the Bible as if it is a self-help book or a “divine fortune cookie,” Tchividjian said.

“God becomes a supporting actor in our story instead of the other way around,” he said.

“Many pulpits across the land preach the Christian not the Christ.

“I don’t know how we got to the point that the Christian is the focus of the Christian faith.”

Tony Merida, lead pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh and associate profes-

sor of preaching at Southeastern, closed out the two-day event, offering four challenges on proclaiming the Bible:

- Proclaim Christ from the storyline of scriptures.
- Proclaim Christ as a five-tool minister of the Word – a steward, herald, prophet, theologian and sage.
- Proclaim Christ to mature people in Him.
- Proclaim Christ by His mighty power.

Merida recommended the Bible as the best book on how to preach and teach the Bible.

He challenged participants to “make the hero of the Bible the hero of every message.”

Merida said he admired Paul because he was “so wrapped up in the person of Jesus.”

If they wanted to kill Paul, Paul would say “so what, I’ll be with God,” Merida said.

If they decided to let Him live, then Paul dedicated his life to Christ. In the face of torture, Paul looked forward to the reward he would receive.

“We operate under someone else’s authority,” Merida said.

“We’re not giving advice. We are giving news: the tomb is empty; the throne is occupied. As long as you are proclaiming Christ you will never run out of material.” **BR**



TONY MERIDA

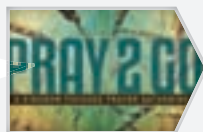


Material provided by the
Baptist State Convention
of North Carolina

PRACTICE FERVENT PRAYER

1

"Prayer is the
key indicator of the
passion of a redeemed
heart to worship God and
work for His harvest." Milton
A. Hollifield Jr., executive
director-treasurer



Pray2Go ncbaptist.org/pray2go

A statewide kingdom-focused prayer gathering featuring Mel Blackaby, senior pastor, First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Ga.; Roy Fish, professor emeritus, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary; Gary Frost,

president, Concerts of Prayer, First Baptist Church, Montgomerie Creek Baptist Church, He

2

PROMOTE EVANGELISM AND DISCIPLE-MAKING



Embrace Women's Ministry embracenc.org

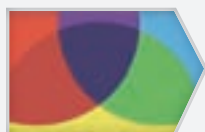
"Worthy of the Calling" is the theme for the 2012 leadership training events. These events are for women called into leadership roles in their local churches and associations for ministry in evangelism, discipleship, missions involvement and leadership. Highlights include local mission projects and a special prayer time for Central Asian peoples. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5559 • aallen@ncbaptist.org

April 20-21: Woodlawn Baptist Church, Conover with guest speaker Alicia Wong, assistant professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
October 26-27: Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary with guest speaker Bobbye Rankin, former IMB (International Mission Board) missionary and wife of Jerry Rankin, former IMB president

"A disciple is
one who abides in Christ
and does the things that Jesus did. So
we must worship God, we must be involved
in His evangelistic mission, and we must come
together in community to nurture our faith
and worship God more." Lynn Sasser,
executive leader, congregational
services

3

STRENGTHEN EXISTING CHURCHES



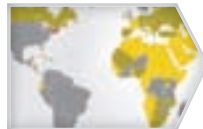
Looking at your church in 3-D ncbaptist.org/3D

A healthy church is a called-out, covenant community of Christ-followers who are creating a disciple-making culture in which lives are changed by the power of God. Learn how your church can be strengthened through a Christ-centered process that will help you discover where you are and where God is leading your church, develop a strategy to get there, and resource you to deliver that strategy. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5632 • bupshaw@ncbaptist.org

March 20: First Baptist Church, Rocky Mount **April 19:** Hopewell Baptist Church, Monroe
September 13: Southside Baptist Church, Greensboro **October 4:** First Baptist Church, Swannanoa

4

PLANT NEW MULTIPLICATION CHURCHES



Vision Trips ncbaptist.org/gcp

April 16-18, 24-25, August 23-24: Some communities in the Greater Toronto Area have no evangelical witness. Only three percent of people in New York City and less than 2.5 percent in Boston know Jesus Christ as Savior. These cities

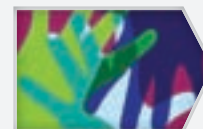
need churches to help plant churches that will in turn plant churches. Sign up for a vision trip and come see for yourself how church planting can help push back spiritual darkness. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5536 • ecompton@ncbaptist.org

REACH NORTH CAROLINA'S INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

5

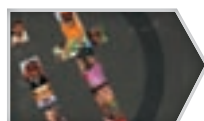
More and more people from all over the world continue to move to North Carolina. More than 230 languages are spoken in North Carolina. Tens of thousands of Asians have settled in the state. The BSCNC helps start churches for people from the international community.

For example, since 2004, the Convention has helped start about 24 Asian Indian churches, seven Chinese churches, three Cambodian churches, three Japanese churches and 11 Filipino churches. The nations need to hear the gospel, and God has brought the nations to this state.



6

EMBRACE UNREACHED AND UNENGAGED PEOPLE GROUPS



Find it Here: Expanding the Kingdom finditherenc.org

Six billion people in the world, 258 million people in North America and 5.6 million people in North Carolina are lost and will not spend eternity in heaven with Jesus Christ. Throughout the world are 3,800 unengaged, unreached people groups. This year's Find it Here emphasis is about missions mobilization and getting the gospel to those who need to hear it. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5571 • findithere@ncbaptist.org

"The world was
waiting for the
message of the
family of faith.
Baptists to plant
churches to reach
the world."

ENGAGE YOUNG LEADERS

7



Baptist Campus Ministry baptiststudent.org

The 48 full time, part time and volunteer Baptist campus ministers, as well as the more than 2,000 students involved in BCM, need your prayers and support as they seek to grow in Christ and impact their campus with the gospel. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5560 • rtrexler@ncbaptist.org

"Family Portraits" International Student Conference
April 13-15 at the NC Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell

Day of Prayer for Collegiate Ministry
Wednesday, October 24



Bring a young leader to annual meeting! ncbaptist.org/am2012

Invite a young leader to attend the annual meeting with you and members from your church. Please note the location change for the 2012 annual meeting. The 2012 annual meeting will be held **November 12-13** at the Greensboro Coliseum Special Events Center. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5501 • clinton@ncbaptist.org

YEAR-AT-A-GLANCE



Renew ncbaptist.org/renew

A Northeastern North Carolina Prayer and Spiritual Life Summit **April 27-28:** Corinth Baptist Church, Elizabeth City
(800) 395-5102 ext. 5513 • broland@ncbaptist.org

ayer, Long Island City, N.Y.; and Jay Wolf, senior pastor, First
nery, Ala. **March 6-7:** Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute and Mud
ndersonville. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5513 • broland@ncbaptist.org



IECS ncbaptist.org/iecs

Is your church doing everything possible to be intentionally evangelistic so that people have the opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel? The Intentionally Evangelistic Church Strategy can help your church become more effective in evangelism by focusing on evangelistic leadership, evangelistic prayer, assimilation, personal evangelism, and event evangelism.
(800) 395-5102 ext. 5557 • kbennett@ncbaptist.org

"IECS is not the latest thing that pastors often hope for in a silver bullet, but it encourages us to develop a holistic plan and strategy to coordinate our often disjointed and disconnected efforts in evangelism and ministry."

Jerry Cloninger, senior pastor,
Tabernacle Baptist
Church, Raleigh



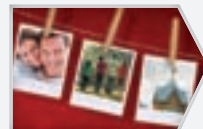
Culture Reach ncbaptist.org/culturereach

During its opening weekend, "Courageous" – a film about what it means to be a godly father – was the top-grossing box office new film and also hit the number one spot in DVD sales nationwide. Alex Kendrick, main actor, will speak **February 27** in Winston-Salem about popular culture, media and evangelism during the statewide evangelism conference. (800) 395-5102 ext. 5563 • jpackard@ncbaptist.org



Church Renewal Journey ncbaptist.org/crj

Your church can schedule a church renewal weekend anytime during the year. The weekend is a process of awakening, equipping, commissioning, empowering and sending church members into a lifestyle of ministry and evangelism.
(800) 395-5102 ext. 5569 • bfoey@ncbaptist.org



Marriage & Family ncbaptist.org/family

Strengthen your church by strengthening the families in your church. Come learn biblical, practical principles about parenting, marriage and ministry.
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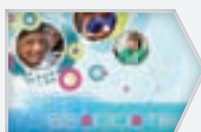
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Midwestern seminary president resigns

By ALLEN PALMER | *The Pathway*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) – The trustees of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Feb. 10 accepted the resignation of seminary president R. Philip Roberts effective Feb. 29 during a called meeting at an airport hotel and named as acting president Robin Hadaway, associate professor of missions at the seminary.

Roberts, an 11-year president, was facing questions about misuse of seminary resources and verbal abuse of seminary staff. Other trustee meetings in years past had revolved around those same questions.

The resignation was announced in the afternoon by means of a three-paragraph press release. A morning trustee vote to express lack of confidence in the board's executive committee failed, and at some point in the overall meeting there was a transfer of the chairmanship from Wayne Lee of Southlake, Texas, to Kevin Shrum of Madison, Tenn., who emerged as the sole trustee spokesman for the day's events and the interim board chair until April. Shrum wound up taking a few questions from the media in mid-afternoon. In answering one inquiry, Shrum said Lee resigned as chairman.

"He felt like he had done what he needed to do," Shrum said. "He's still on the board."

Trustees met early in the morning, with the door of the Ambassador Meeting Room at the Embassy Suites Hotel left open, and after about half an hour Roberts was seen leaving the room.

Roberts then greeted a representative of Baptist Press before walking down the hall to another room with staff and faculty.

After saying a quick hello there, according to someone present in the room, he left that room and headed toward the front desk area.

By that time trustees were fully engaged in executive session and had closed the door, and Roberts was not to be found.

The resignation was announced in the afternoon by means of a press release. Part of the statement was worded to explain that a meeting to consider the performance of the president was "suspended," and that before that meeting, Roberts tendered his resignation. The rest of the meeting time in the morning and afternoon was spent in executive session. The press release made no mention of a severance package.

Shrum said that Hadaway, as acting president, will serve through the April board meeting, when the board's execu-

tive committee will be recommending the process that the seminary will use to move forward in a search for a new president.

Hadaway, who is an associate professor of missions, has been with Midwestern for eight and a half years.

He previously served as IMB (International Mission Board) regional leader for eastern South America, supervising

more than 300 missionaries in Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay.

Missouri Baptist Convention Executive Director John Yeats signaled his level of spiritual concern after the news of Roberts' resignation became public.

"We just need to be in prayer for the institution, for the faculty, and for the students, for Dr. Hadaway, for Dr. Roberts and his family, and for all the seminary families,"

Yeats said.

Roberts was elected as Midwestern's fourth president in January 2001 and began serving that February. Among facility projects during his time were the purchase of the Koehn-Myers building, construction of housing facilities and renovation of many of Midwestern's existing buildings.

The seminary is currently building a

1,000-seat chapel complex.

Roberts came to Kansas City after serving seven years with the North American Mission Board (NAMB), where he served as vice president for the Strategic Cities Strategies Group.

He also was director of NAMB's Interfaith Evangelism Department and vice president for urban evangelism and church planting.

In the early 1990s he was professor of missions and evangelism at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, and co-directed the Lewis Drummond Center for Great Commission Studies.

Roberts has written several books from an apologetics perspective, most notably on Mormonism, and is known in Europe for his pulpit work in international churches in England, Germany and Belgium. His Ph.D. is from the Free University of Amsterdam, and he also conducted post-graduate research at Oxford University.

Among the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) leaders who came to Kansas City for the Feb. 10 meeting was Bryant Wright, SBC president. He left the meeting room before Shrum released the official statement and had no comment.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Allen Palmeri is associate editor of *The Pathway*, newsjournal of the Missouri Baptist Convention.) **BR**



R. PHILIP ROBERTS

Haiti relief Continued from page 7

keeping families who owned land from relocating and losing their property. These projects also revived local businesses and put Haitians back to work.

"Almost all the labor was done by Haitians," said retired missionary Carter Davis, who has worked with relief efforts in Haiti since the earthquake.

"This provided income for many and stimulated the local economy by purchasing the materials from local stores."

"It was a cooperative effort," agreed Jeff Palmer, Baptist Global Response. "Haitian Baptists and [other] Haitian workers actually built more of the houses than the volunteer teams. But the teams were good for coming down and interacting, sharing their faith, as well as just giving encouragement to the local people that 'Hey, somebody cares, and they're coming from the outside to help us rebuild our homes.'"

Using local materials ensures Haitians can continue to build and expand these houses after Southern Baptists leave, Palmer noted.

"We've tried to break the cycle of dependency and entitlement by saying to the people who are the recipients of this goodwill and aid [that] they've got the same abilities and capabilities," he said. "The work will go on, but the Haitians will be the ones to complete it."

Southern Baptist workers encouraged Haitian Baptist churches to take the lead in identifying aid recipients. Since resources were limited, these churches began

focusing on people who had the greatest needs.

"What we found over and over was they were choosing orphans," Palmer said. "They were choosing a lot of those we would have given priority to. We saw a real transition from dependency to more Kingdom values."

"There was a great support to provide first for the widows and mothers with children," Davis added. "There was a tendency by some to provide only for the church members, but as time went on, I saw more and more [desire to] provide for others [in need] in the communities. This is the concept we stressed to the pastors and churches – to recognize that Jesus cared for everyone and we need to follow His example."

Davis recalled the generosity of one Haitian church in a town not even directly affected by the earthquake. Many of the church members had already taken in displaced relatives from Port-au-Prince, but the church wanted to do more.

"The [congregation] asked if we could assist by providing funds for the church to construct houses on land that the church owned and would give to [quake survivors]," Davis said. "We constructed 50 houses on this land."

Helped in other ways

Although housing was one of biggest needs after the quake, Southern Baptists helped in many other ways as well.

Missionaries and volunteers donated supplies – such as benches, desks and chalkboards – to seven struggling schools. They also rebuilt damaged buildings, repaired roofs and installed bathrooms so thousands of children could return to school.

Women's groups across the U.S. sewed clothes for orphans while churches and other Baptist organizations provided food and medicine for needy children. Missionaries and volunteers even started a mini-farm and gardens to help some orphanages become self-supporting.

Despite all that has been accomplished, Haiti still faces years of recovery.

"For many people, things are improving and they are moving ahead with their lives," said Delores York, an International Mission Board missionary in Haiti. "For thousands of others who are still in tents or make-do shelters, help has not arrived. There is still a problem of unemployment and survival on a day-to-day basis. Cholera comes in waves, along with malaria, typhoid, TB and many other diseases."

Even though many Haitians remain in need, York and other workers believe the generosity of Southern Baptists will continue to encourage Haitians as they rebuild their lives and communities.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Holly McCrae is an international correspondent with Baptist Global Response. Biblical Recorder staff contributed to this story.) **BR**

Poll: Many pastors feel lonely, but privileged in role

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

Though almost all pastors feel privileged to be in ministry, a majority also experience loneliness and discouragement.

That is the finding of a new survey by LifeWay Research of 1,000 American Protestant pastors.

A full 98 percent agree with the statement, “I feel privileged to be a pastor,” with 93 percent strongly agreeing. Only about 0.5 percent of pastors disagree with the statement. Yet more than half (55 percent) also agree with the statement, “I find that it is easy to get discouraged,” and 55 percent say being in pastoral ministry makes them feel lonely at times.

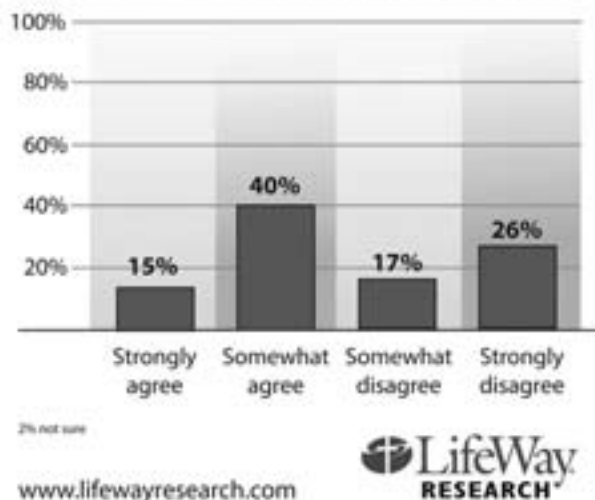
“Many oft-quoted statistics speak of miserable and unhappy pastors, but that’s not what we see when we actually ask them,” explained Ed Stetzer, vice president of research and ministry development at LifeWay Christian Resources. “There is discouragement and loneliness, but when 98 percent agree it is a privilege to be a pastor, we also know there is a great honor to being a pastor.”

Pastors 65 and older are the least discouraged age bracket. While 30 percent of those 65 and older strongly disagree that it is easy to get discouraged in ministry, only 19 percent ages 55-64 strongly disagree along with 13 percent ages 45-54 and 11 percent ages 18-44.

Pastors 65 and older are also most likely to strongly disagree (39 percent) with the statement, “Pastoral ministry makes me feel lonely at times.” Twenty-nine percent of those ages 55-64 strongly disagree, as well as 21 percent ages 45-54 and 19 percent ages 18-44.

Ironically, pastors of larger churches are lonelier. Of

Among Protestant pastors “Pastoral ministry makes me feel lonely at times.”



those in congregations with an average attendance of 250 or more, 17 percent strongly disagree that pastoral ministry makes them feel lonely at times. By comparison, 32 percent with churches of 0-49 and 27 percent with churches of 100-249 strongly disagree.

“Pastors feel privileged, but clearly the reality of constant service can take its toll,” Stetzer said. “There is discouragement and loneliness in ministry. It appears that the larger the church the more present the loneliness.”

The survey had good news for the families of ministers: Nearly eight in 10 pastors (79 percent) disagree

with the statement, “Being in ministry has had a negative effect on my family.” A majority (58 percent) strongly disagree. Twenty percent somewhat disagree, 15 percent somewhat agree and 4 percent strongly agree.

“This statistic has to be one of the biggest surprises,” said Stetzer, who has also served as a pastor. “Pastoring can be stressful on a family, but contrary to some hyped statistics, most do not believe that being a pastor has hurt their family.

“Pastoring is difficult, and family life is a fishbowl, but overstating the challenge and dangers of pastoring can discourage pastors and create an expectation of family disruption – leading to that very problem,” he said.

Pastors in the South (63 percent) are more likely to strongly disagree that ministry has had a negative effect on their families than their counterparts in the Northeast (51 percent) or Midwest (54 percent).

The study found that 18 percent of pastors have more than 10 close friends in their congregation. Sixteen percent have six to 10, 38 percent have three to five, 10 percent have two and 4 percent have one. Twelve percent of pastors have no close friends in their congregation.

“Relationships matter and it appears that pastors value those friendships – particularly as they get older,” Stetzer said. “Older pastors – and I would add, younger pastors with wisdom – have developed more close friendships within their church and are less likely to be discouraged or lonely. This combination mirrors workplace studies that have shown that more friendships at work correspond with higher satisfaction with a person’s job and life.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – David Roach is a pastor and writer in Shelbyville, Ky.) ■

Israel inaugurates ‘Gospel Trail’ to follow Jesus’ steps

By MICHELLE CHABIN | Religion News Service

GALILEE, Israel – Perched on Tel Kinrot, a hill above the Sea of Galilee, Winston Mah turned his face toward the warm sun and took in the tranquil view before him.

To his right, the Christian pilgrim from San Diego saw banana groves at the edge of the calm fresh-water lake; to his left, on the opposite hill, rose the majestic Mount of Beatitudes at Tabga, where, according to Christian tradition, Jesus delivered his Sermon on the Mount.

“This is a unique experience,” Mah said, gazing at a lone fisherman on the water’s edge.

“This is the view Jesus must have seen, the path he might have walked, the water he walked on. It’s a privilege to walk in His footsteps.”

It’s one thing to read about biblical sites while seated in a church pew back home, Mah said. But “it’s another thing entirely to be in the actual place, just

as it’s described in the Bible,” he said. Mah and his church group were among the first hikers on the newly inaugurated Gospel Trail, 39 miles of integrated paths leading from Mount Precipice on the southern outskirts of Nazareth to the site of ancient Capernaum on the shores of the Sea of Galilee.

Developed by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism and the Jewish National Fund, the project has the enthusiastic support of local Christian leaders, whose flocks

depend on the tourist trade.

“It is our hope that this trail will bring many more Christian pilgrims to the Galilee, where Jesus lived and had his ministry,” said

Bishop Boutros Muallem, the Melkite archbishop emeritus of Galilee, who attended the trail’s festive opening aboard a boat on the Sea of Galilee.

Roughly 150,000 Christian Arabs live in Israel, the vast majority of them in the Galilee region, in the north of the country. As elsewhere in the Middle

East, many Holy Land Christians have emigrated in search of economic stability and peace.

Now that the political situation is relatively quiet, and a record number of tourists are flooding into Israel and the Palestinian-ruled territories, local Christians are benefiting and emigration is slowing, according to government statistics.

Leading a group of journalists down a section of the trail on horseback, Tourism Minister Stas Misezhnikov said the Gospel Trail “represents a major means for maximizing the tourist potential” of the Sea of Galilee region.

The Gospel Trail isn’t the first Christian-oriented hiking/cycling trail in the region. The 40-mile Jesus Trail begins in the city of Nazareth, the home of Mary and Joseph, and ends at the Sea of Galilee. Though the trails overlap in many areas, the Jesus Trail winds its way through more Christian, Muslim and Jewish population centers and already has an infrastructure.

In the coming months, the government hopes tour operators will provide itineraries and transportation to and from various sites, and that

local business owners will provide accommodations and bathrooms. In the meantime, visitors need to make their own arrangements or request special arrangements from a tour operator.

Both trails capitalize on the beauty of the Galilee region.

One of the only truly green places in Israel, the hills are dotted with towns and villages, cows, sheep and olive trees. Proficient hikers can make the entire journey in about four days.

The Gospel Trail includes the Arbel Cliffs, which served as the backdrop of many ancient battles; the ancient ruins of Beit Saida (Bethsaida), a biblical-era fishing village and the birthplace of the disciples Peter, Andrew and Philip; Capernaum, the starting point of Jesus’ ministry in Galilee; and Kfar Kana (Cana), where Jesus healed the nobleman’s son.

Also along the route: Migdal/Magdala, identified in the Gospels as the home of Mary Magdalene; and the Mount of Beatitudes, where a picturesque church, surrounded by greenery and special areas for prayer, overlooks the sites related to Jesus’ ministry. The late Pope John Paul II held a large Mass on a nearby knoll in 2000. ■

“This is the view Jesus might have seen ... It’s a privilege to walk in His footsteps.”
– Winston Mah

Pastor: CP an old idea that still works well

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

The road out to Holly Springs Baptist Church in Franklin winds through rolling hills that rule the scenery across Macon County. A newer and larger sanctuary sits alongside the smaller, original building.

More than 600 members gather here weekly for services led by Pastor Ed Trull or “Pastor Trull,” as he prefers to be called.

Despite the scenery, Pastor Trull is quick to point out that they are not really isolated.

“The world shows up – folks come here from all over the world,” he said.

Though the church was organized in 1914, its hip new website indicates Holly Springs is keeping up with the times.

Pastor Trull has led his congregation to reach out to new people moving into subdivisions that have been carved into the surrounding pastures and farmland during the past decade, part of Macon County’s rapid growth that leaders there talk about.

But Pastor Trull equally wants his members focused on reaching the world – the one that lies beyond these hills.

That missions vision explains why Holly Springs has consistently averaged giving about 10 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program (CP) in recent years.

Pastor Trull sees CP as the answer to how Baptists could work together on missions causes.

“When Southern Baptists were formed in 1845, we did a lot of good things, but we didn’t know how to support them very well. For about 60 years we struggled with that in a lot of ways,” he said.

Pastor Trull described a time when local churches were flooded with representatives of orphanages, mission boards and other Baptist entities, because there



In recent years Pastor Ed Trull has led Holly Springs Baptist Church in Franklin to give about 10 percent of its undesignated receipts through the Cooperative Program. (BSC photo by Mike Creswell)

was no centralized system to help enable churches to conveniently support many causes.

It was Baptist forefathers, “those guys who are heroes in Southern Baptist Convention life,” who in 1925 developed a better way for Baptists to support multiple ministries, he said.

“God gave us a vision for a way to work together and pool our resources to not only reach the next-door neighbor but our neighbors on the other side of the world,” he said.

The Cooperative Program also enabled churches to fund supporting ministries, such as schools and seminaries ... “everything it takes to support that vision to reach the world with the gospel,” he said.

“I’m thankful we have the Cooperative Program as the avenue we use to get to the world with the gospel,” he said.

Through their Cooperative Program giving, Holly Springs members support a wide range of ministries across North Carolina that includes: starting 125 new churches in 2010, the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina, Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute, a youth program that reached more than 7,000 young people last year, evangelism and church growth ministry, prayer ministry, music ministry, women’s ministry, partnership missions and provides other pastor and church staff support.

The Cooperative Program helps the North American Mission Board (NAMB) with about 5,000 missionaries at work on evangelism and church planting across the U.S. and Canada.

It also supports nearly 5,000 IMB (International Mission Board) missionaries who seek to share the gospel among unreached and unengaged people groups around the globe.

This support includes six Southern Baptist seminaries that equip more than 13,000 students for church leadership and missionary service.

Those schools include Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest.

Other ministries receive CP support as well. ■



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Writer goes too far in being ‘all things to all people’

By **RICKY BROWDER** | Guest Column

First of all let me say that I normally do not respond to articles in newspapers, especially those of “religious” origin, so I hesitate to respond to this one. Having said that, there are some things that cause me great concern within this column entitled “SBC [Southern Baptist Convention] needs greater focus on revitalizing dying churches.”

I totally agree that the majority of existing churches are either plateaued or declining; all the research supports that statement. It goes without saying that this should cause consternation within the SBC movement. As autonomous bodies of believers our churches are not subject to “rules” passed down from the denominational hierarchy.

It was with great care and wisdom that the founders of the SBC made this clear to all of its member churches. The cooperation that we share as churches allows us to pool our resources for the greater good of the Kingdom. A great example of this is our mission work and missionaries.

I believe we are taking the right ap-

proach to church revitalization by making resources, people and suggestions available for member churches to use. It’s up to the churches to choose to take advantage of these resources.

We must understand that there is NO one shoe fits all worship style that should be forced upon churches. The demographics of the regions across this great state will not allow for that kind of thinking. Perhaps that may be contributing to the problem?

The problem is far greater than the worship style we may use within a given church. It is my belief that the problem can be identified in the

statement found in the article, “We must be driven together to be all things to all people.” First Corinthians 9:22 was referenced as support for this statement. First of all, Paul was not a chameleon who changed his message and methods with each new situation.

Nor was Paul a compromiser who adjusted his message to please his audience. He was an ambassador, not a politician!

To keep this verse in context, you must go back at least to verse 19.

What a paradox: free from all men, yet the servant of all men. Because he was free, Paul was able to serve others and to set aside his own rights for their sake. He was a servant of God with a servant’s heart for God, not an ecumenical pawn!

We are not to be all things to all people. In fact, in Matthew 5, the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus speaks of the importance of the Christian influence. Verse 13: “Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt

have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.”

Whether we like it or not, there is conflict between us and the world. Why? Because we are different from the world, and we have different attitudes.

I am mighty afraid that we have been purposely driven to be so seeker friendly that many churches (or should I say pastors) have forgotten that preaching the Word of God is abrasive to some.

We are reminded of this in Hebrews 4:12: “For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of

the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Verse 13 even goes on to say that “all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him.”

People do not want to hear that kind of preaching because it exposes sin in their lives.

In no way am I suggesting that every time a person is at church they should be brow beat, absolutely not; but neither should they get a gentle massage with a feather duster every time either.

Perhaps a better suggestion to our seminaries would be to have their students spend a little more time researching and studying the sermons of preachers like Vance Havner, D.L. Moody, Charles Spurgeon, and Jonathan Edwards just to name a few.

Another suggestion would be tell these young preachers to stop trying to be like some of the modern day ministers and encourage them to spend more time on their knees asking God to make them the preacher/pastor He wants them to be.

Call it modern, post-modern or whatever, but if repackaging the gospel involves compromising the Word of God, I’m dead set against it. I have great concern that many of these “new churches” in 15 to 20 years will turn out to be a flash in the pan that could not sustain the emotionalism on which they were founded.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Ricky Browder is children, prayer and discipleship pastor at Rocky Hock Baptist Church in Edenton.) **BR**

“Whether we like it or not, there is conflict between [Christians] and the world. Why? Because we are different from the world, and we have different attitudes.”



RICKY BROWDER
Guest Column

Churches can, should openly support marriage

A guest column by Brian Davis (“Is there room for churches in marriage debate? Yes,” published in the Feb. 4 edition and online) on the issue of churches and the state marriage amendment in North Carolina correctly stated that churches can and should speak to the biblical basis for marriage but incorrectly stated that churches should not take an active role in urging the passage of the amendment. The law is clear that churches can (and indeed should) zealously advocate in favor of the amendment.

As a lawyer for the Alliance Defense Fund who specializes in representing churches and pastors on these issues, I can assure you that the law allows for churches to actively support the marriage amendment.

For example, churches may encourage their members to vote for a state marriage amendment. Churches may even expend their resources to support a state marriage amendment. Pastors may leverage their influence or their position in the church to support the state marriage amendment if they so choose. Church facilities may also be used to support the marriage amendment.

The law on this point is very clear: Under the Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3), churches are only prohibited from expending more than an “insubstantial”

part of their overall budget and activities on matters such as the promotion of marriage amendments on the ballot. This legal standard has been interpreted by two separate federal courts to mean that a church cannot expend more than 5 to 15 percent of its overall budget and activities on supporting or opposing legislation.

Churches usually never come anywhere close to this threshold and no church has ever lost its tax exempt status for excessive lobbying.

After all, how much does it cost for a pastor to stand in his pulpit and preach

a sermon encouraging his people to support the marriage amendment? How much does it cost for a pastor to urge his people to vote on this most defining issue of our time? Any church can support the marriage amendment without fearing that they are running afoul of IRS restrictions. This is one area of the law where no pastor should fear the IRS.

But it is not enough to simply acknowledge that churches are legally allowed to support the marriage amendment. Every church in North Carolina should

stand to support the amendment, and every pastor should encourage his congregants to vote to protect marriage on May 8.

Churches must lead the charge on this issue as they led the charge in the past on the great moral issues of history such as independence, slavery, women’s suffrage, ending child labor, and civil rights.

Churches and pastors have always been at the forefront of the great moral issues confronting our culture.

They have never been afraid to stand for righteousness and to urge morality in culture. And today should be no different.

Churches in North Carolina have a tremendous opportunity to lead the charge

to protect marriage. Churches in other states have not been as fortunate. There is nothing legally preventing churches and pastors from standing together to support and protect marriage in North Carolina.

The only question is, will you?

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Erik Stanley is senior legal counsel with the Alliance Defense Fund [www.telladf.org], a legal alliance employing a unique combination of strategy, training, funding, and litigation to protect and preserve religious liberty, the sanctity of life, marriage, and the family.) **BR**



ERIK STANLEY
Guest Column

“Churches must lead the charge on this issue as they led the charge in the past on the great moral issues of history ...”

The SBC name change proposal: What will happen?

By **DAVE MILLER** | Guest Column

The SBC [Southern Baptist Convention] world was shaken pretty dramatically last September when our president, Bryant Wright, appointed a task force to study the feasibility of changing the name of the SBC. As someone who lives outside the South, I've favored such a thing for a long time, so I welcomed this blue ribbon panel to study the issue.

They were tasked with answering four questions:

1. Is there value in considering a name change? 2. If so, what would be a good name to suggest? 3. What would be the potential legal ramifications of a name change? 4. What would be the potential financial implications?

I have no doubt that this very capable team will adequately explore the last two questions. These are not the kind of people who will ignore legal and financial issues. But I also expect that if there is a desire to change the name, these folks will also find a way to make it happen.

Is there a value in considering a name change? I've written extensively on my belief that there is. Others have said that there is not. I think that if Bryant Wright and the others did not see that there was some real value to the idea, they would not have undertaken the effort.

That leaves the second question – finding a good name. That has always been a sticking point for me. As much as I rue the regional focus of our current name, I've never been able to find one

that is better. It would have made sense 30 years ago to use the name Cooperative Baptist Convention, but that was taken by a certain left-leaning splinter group. That one's gone. There aren't a lot of great names left out there. So are the names National Baptist and American Baptist.

Suggestions such as "International Baptist Convention" or "World-wide Baptist Convention" sound great but they actually violate Baptist polity. Baptist work in other countries is not overseen by the SBC, but is affiliated with it. Our effect extends to the ends of the earth but our organization and authority stops at the borders here.

I sure hope they don't come up with something silly like GuideStone or

LifeWay. Nothing against those organizations, but I don't want us using some name like that.

Maybe the committee will come up with something. I hope so.

What is going to happen?

So, now I will put on my prophet's cap and try to figure out what is going to happen. Unless they delay, the report of the Task Force is due at the Feb. 20 Executive Committee meeting. The Executive Committee will act on the proposal, then it will be reported to the SBC Annual Meeting [in June in New Orleans], if the Executive Committee approves it. That is not a done deal, many on that committee were upset by the proposal and the way it was presented.

I'm going to take a stab at what I think is likely to be the proposal of the task force. I have no inside information, nor am I often good at predictions. But here's what I think will happen.

1) The Task Force will bring a recommendation to change the name of the Convention.

2) They have already said that they are not going to remove the name Baptist as some were concerned they would do. We will be a Baptist Convention or Baptist Fellowship.

3) The greatest likelihood is that the name will be something like Great Commission Baptists, focusing not on our region or geography, but on our mission.

4) The recommendation will likely be a "dba" arrangement. We will legally remain the Southern Baptist Convention, but will be doing business as "Great Commission Baptists." This will avoid the legal issue of changing the charter and allay some of the financial concerns.

5) The proposal will narrowly pass the Executive Committee – by the hair on my chinny-chin-chin. Several of those guys were torqued about the way the proposal was made, so there may be some resistance. But opposing a blue ribbon group like this will be hard and eventually the proposal will pass.

6) The Convention in New Orleans will NOT be poorly attended, and the debate on this proposal will be incredibly lively.

7) I suspect that there may be a full-court press as there was for the GCR. As a GCR supporter, I was bothered by the

pressure put on at the Pastor's Conference and at the convention itself. If something is of God it does not need human manipulation. I hope that Bryant Wright will just make the proposal, make the case and eschew the pressure tactics that the GCR guys used.

8) I hope we can have a reasoned discussion, but I suspect that this will become a festival of bloviation. "I've been a Southern Baptist all my life, and they are trying to ruin this great convention." "If we don't change the name, the lost will die and America will fall into the dustbin of history." This discussion may set an all-time record for dogmatic and blustery discussion.

9) I would not put the chances of the proposal passing at greater than about one in three. There is an institutional momentum and change comes slow. I'm not saying that opposition to the name-change is just obstructionist traditionalism. I'm just saying that the burden of proof is on the name-change proponents, and I'm not sure they will meet the burden.

10) The Phoenix convention was pretty tame. New Orleans will be an e-ticket ride. (You young whippersnappers can either Google that or ask your parents what it means.)

Those are Davenac the Magnificent's insights into the future. What do you think will happen?

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Dave Miller is senior pastor of Southern Hills Baptist Church in Sioux City, Iowa. He is also editor of SBC Voices, where this was originally posted: sbcvoices.com.) **BR**

Stay tuned for the latest updates Feb. 20 at BRnow.org.

Is your church in 3-D?

During my address to our Board of Directors last month I shared with them that I believe we as a state convention have a single, highly focused, laser-driven agenda, and that agenda is to help the churches of this Convention carry out the marching orders that Jesus gave us in the Great Commission.

I truly believe our marching orders come from the Great Commission. We must go and tell people in our communities, state, nation and throughout the world about Jesus Christ.

As we seek to be obedient and to fulfill the Great Commission we must be intentional in three areas: evangelism, discipleship and missions. We will never see the Kingdom impact our Lord's desires if we do not commit ourselves to all three of these efforts.

This is what our three-year Find it Here emphasis is all about. In my last column I encouraged you to get involved in this year's Find it Here focus on missions mobilization, and I do pray you are seeking God's direction for how your church will participate.

Last year's Find it Here emphasis was discipleship, and we want to continue providing you opportunities to build on what you did last year and to grow even more in discipleship.

This year we are inviting North Carolina Baptists to attend one of the "Looking at your church in 3-D" events (ncbaptist.org/3D). This event will help lead you and your church through a process to discover, develop and deliver.

First, you will discover where your church is and where God is leading your church. Then, you will develop a strategy

for how to get where God is leading. Finally, our staff will help equip you with resources so you can deliver, or follow through on the strategy you develop.

Our staff is dedicated to walking with your church through every step of the "3-D" process. Their desire is to partner with you, to meet you where you are, and to help your church move forward as you seek to become all God intends.

Our staff is also dedicated to helping strengthen your church so that your church can experience the tremendous

blessing of seeing God change lives as believers create a disciple-making culture.

Being a disciple of Jesus Christ means embracing Jesus' commands to follow Him and to abide in Him. Disciples are always becoming more Christ-like as they allow the power of God and His Holy Spirit to transform their heart and mind.

North Carolina Baptists, it is not enough to share the gospel and then walk away.

We must teach people the truths of God and walk alongside them as they mature in their relationship with God. We must make disciples who will in turn go throughout their community and the world making other disciples for God's glory.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples." John 15:8 **BR**



DAVE MILLER
Guest Column



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Take courage in the battle

As an 18-year-old who responded to God's call, I learned that ministry can be a series of battles. Sitting in the office of a Baptist leader in our state, I shared with my respected friend some great victories I was experiencing through the preaching of the gospel. My conversation inevitably led me to say, "There is great joy in ministry, but there are many battles in this war, also."

He quickly chided me for referring to "war" and "battles" in the same sentence with Christian ministry. Songs like "Onward Christian Soldiers" and similar references should be removed from all of our vocabulary, he firmly stated.

My shock was surely obvious in my facial expression. "What planet is he living on?" I thought. How can we gloss-over the obvious?

The Old Testament records the stories of endless battles in the history of God's people. Each one is a model of the battles every believer faces today – both personally and corporately – in the body of Christ.

Paul underscored this reality in Ephesians 6:10-12, "*Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*"

Yes, battles are real. But sometimes we fail to identify the real enemy. Make no mistake; it is Satan and his demonic schemes. The battles are not political, but moral. They are not social, but spiritual.

Pastors have a very tough job. In the process of preaching the truth and exposing the enemy, resistance may rise to the surface. People can easily misunderstand what a pastor says and side with the enemy. They may take a comment very personally, or they may be so saturated with a secular world view that they have not

properly considered the ultimate truth of God. Unnecessary battles follow.

Some issues should be clear to the believer. Unfortunately, the anti-Christian saturation of universalism, relativism, secularism and liberalism has won the hearts and minds of many Christians. Sadly, many believers do not see the threat of these forces.



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

Christians in the United States are facing unprecedented intimidation and opposition from every direction. I have never seen so many anti-Christian forces marshalled at one moment in time. But nothing in my lifetime has demonstrated a more blatant violation of both the US Constitution and basic

Bible truth than the edict from Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius – with the endorsement of the White House – to force religious organizations to violate their freedom of conscience in matters of life, health and contraception.

As part of the health care mandate, beginning next year any organization that offers health insurance to employees will be forced to cover contraception, sterilizations, and abortifacients – no matter what their objections. Outrage is growing over this mandate – as it should.

The Wall Street Journal stated: "The country is being exposed to the raw political control that is the core of the Obama health-care plan, and Americans are seeing clearly for the first time how this will violate pluralism and liberty."

Al Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, wrote a clear analysis of the issue in his blog.

In summary, he says, "The edict from President Obama to religious institutions is this – violate conscience and bend the knee to the government, or face the consequences.... the Obama Administration trampled religious liberty under the feet of the leviathan state, forcing religious employers to do what conscience will not allow. Religious organizations such as schools, colleges, and hospitals will

be required to pay for services that they believe to be immoral and disobedient to God."

Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission said, "In my opinion, a Baptist needs to take a stand on this issue. Our Baptist forefathers went to prison and died for the freedoms that we have, and now it's our responsibility in the providence of God to defend these freedoms lest they be taken away by government fiat."

The battle lines are clear. We may be battling a system of man that forces Catholics (and all of us) to pay for con-

traceptives and sterilization, forbids the use of public school facilities for church meetings, mandates the removal of the cross from government-owned property, removes prayer from all public meetings and seeks to redefine marriage contrary to the biblical model. But it is still the same battle against forces of darkness.

Pastors, we must be bold. We must be courageous. We can passionately express our convictions, and we can still be civil – which means "Christ-like" in our context. Church members, you can pray for your pastor and stand with him in this battle. Finally, "*be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might.*" **BR**

TAR HEEL VOICES

We should always be about sharing the gospel

The question should not be either/or. In the guest column ("SBC needs greater focus on revitalizing dying churches" by Paul Roberts) of the *Biblical Recorder* on January 21, the writer was discussing resources and energy being spent on church planting versus revitalization of dying churches. It should not be either/or, but it should be both/and. The matter should always be about sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ whenever, wherever, and however we can do so.

Do we have plateaued, or dying churches? Yes! Should we be planting new churches? Of course we should! What about our existing churches? Here is where we face a real challenge, but also have a great opportunity. We look at a congregation that has aged. Many of its younger members have moved on. Hope of church renewal in the congregation is dwindling. Now we face a stern challenge that none of us ever hope to face. We are posed with the following question: does this necessitate the need for the congregation to disband, and for this church that has served its community to

close its doors forever? Maybe! However, if we flip the coin, so to speak, and we see this as an opportunity, then perhaps this is not the correct course. What if the answer to the challenge for the plateaued, or dying church is in fact an opportunity to return to its original dream? Proverbs 29:18 tells us "where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he."

We live in a changing world, in changing communities, but one need remains: people need the Lord. All churches need to see this. Pastors need to have a vision and a burden for the lost, and must be brave enough to communicate this to their flock. Every Christian in every church should be committed to that growth: inward and outward. Rather than looking around in our communities and back yards and saying, "it cannot be done anymore," we should be praying, believing, training, witnessing, and stepping out in faith.

Carson D. Hilburn
Forest Acres Baptist Church,
Lumberton

**BR BIBLICAL
RECORDER**

(ISSN 0279-8182)

News Journal of the Baptist State Convention
of North Carolina
Founded 1833 by Thomas Meredith

Volume 178 No. 4
(919) 847-2127
Fax (919) 847-6939
BRnow.org

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Subscriptions

- Individual subscriptions, \$15.99
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 - Every Home Plan, \$12.49
 - Church News Service, \$11.50
 - Bulk (10+) \$11.50
 - single copies, .60 cents each
- Payable in advance. North Carolina sales tax is included.

Publication

Published biweekly on Saturdays by *Biblical Recorder* Inc., 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511, as authorized by the Baptist State Convention in annual session at Winston-Salem, November 21–23, 1939.

Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, NC 27676.

Postmaster

Send address changes to *Biblical Recorder* Inc., P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185.

February 26

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

March 4

Center of My Life

Focal Passage: Colossians 3:5-10, 14-15, 17-21, 4:5-6

What does it mean to have Jesus Christ as the “center” of your life? In these passages Paul exhorted the Christians at Colossae to have a Christ-centered character, home and witness. As you might imagine, it’s far easier said than done. Josh Hamilton is an example of a man who represents the struggle.

Josh was born in Raleigh in 1981, and he would later marry a Raleigh girl. Today, however, Josh Hamilton plays baseball for the Texas Rangers. He is recognized as one of the very best major league players. But as a young man, Josh Hamilton came very close to losing out on life. Here is part of his story. In 1999 he was the No. 1 pick in the major league draft. He was paid a \$4 million signing bonus by Tampa Bay. But it wasn’t until 2007 that Josh Hamilton made it as a starter in a major league uniform. Why? With plenty of cash and

wanting to enjoy the night-life, Josh began consuming alcohol and various drugs, including crack cocaine. Realizing he was an addict, he vowed he would get clean. Baseball had once been his life,

alcohol and drugs had become his life, and Jesus Christ would be the One who would give him a new life and set him on a path of sobriety. As a testament to his relationship with Christ, Josh Hamilton joined several other well-known professional sports athletes to share his story through video testimonials known as “I Am Second.” Josh knows that he cannot make it through life without Christ being “first” in his life. In 2009, and again recently, Josh relapsed; he ad-

mitted he had messed up. His confession was “I can’t have alcohol. I got away from my relationship with Jesus Christ.” He also has help from family and Christian friends, as well as a sponsor. For us who are Christians, that person is the Holy Spirit.

Like Josh, we can’t make it alone.



WAYNE PROCTOR
Pastor, Eure
Baptist Church

I Long for You

Focal Passages: Psalm 42:1-11; 43:1-5

living things, a relationship with the Lord is vital.

In Psalms 42-43, the psalmist passionately writes of his desperate hunger and thirst for the living God. He praises Him for his salvation. In times of prosperity and in times of want, he longs to have his relationship with the Lord flourish. The good news is that God is not hiding and wants us to fellowship, commune and dwell at his feet. Jeremiah 29:13-14a says, “You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you, declares the Lord.” Similarly, in Jeremiah 33:3 God says, “Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things ...”

Are you thirsty for God? Are you excited about your time alone with Him? Don’t let the things of this world, even the busyness of ministry, keep you from your time with Him. Our lives depend on God. Seek Him often and remember His goodness.

Have you ever been spiritually dry or felt distant from God? If so, you are not alone. Many people have wondered where God is in the midst of adverse circumstances. The good news is that He is faithful, He is present with you, and He wants to have a loving relationship with you. You are His child.

To me there is nothing like a glass of ice-cold water to quench my thirst on a hot, summer day. Do you ever thirst for God similarly? If not, what else in your life have you allowed to become His substitute? We need to drink regularly and deeply from Him.

Water is the most critical of all nutrients. Animals and humans are 60-65 percent water. Humans have survived without food for weeks, but most humans will die of dehydration after only three to five days. Water is the wellspring of life. Just as water is essential for all



JEFF MEYER
Associate pastor of
education, Bay Leaf
Baptist Church, Raleigh

February 26

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

March 4

Be Positive

Focus Passage: Deuteronomy 33:1-5; 34:1-12

In this final lesson in Deuteronomy, the focus is on the man, Moses. The lesson title is designed to encourage readers to be diligent about building a positive, godly legacy. While this is certainly something to be desired, it is important for us to remember how that really happens.

As we read scripture, we are prone to look at certain Bible characters and think, “I wish I could just be like him/her.” In fact, sermons can often lead us toward such a response. For example, in a sermon on Moses going before Pharaoh, listeners might be admonished to “be like Moses: be willing to face those who oppose God; etc.”

The difficulty with such an admonition is twofold. First, Moses was just a man with clay feet like us. He had killed an Egyptian taskmaster; he couldn’t speak well; and he would disobey God, which would prevent Him from entering

the Promised Land. Second, such an emphasis makes Moses to be the hero of the story when, in fact, there is only one hero in the story, God Himself. God chose Moses. God overcame Pharaoh. God led His people out of Egypt (though He did it by using Moses).

The point in that story is not “be like Moses” but rather “walk by faith in Moses’ God.” We see this made clear in Hebrews 11. Over and over the writer says “by faith ...”: “by faith Abel offered ...”; “by faith Noah constructed ...”; “by faith Abraham offered up ...” And to be clear, the point is not that all of these people had faith, but rather that they had faith in God.

I want desperately to leave a godly legacy for my children. I will only do this, however, by calling my kids to walk daily

by faith in our great God. I don’t want them to remember me as a man of great strength or who did great things, but as a man of great surrender to a strong God and a man who allowed God to do great things through him.



RANDY MANN
Minister of education
and evangelism, Wake
Cross Roads Baptist
Church, Raleigh

A Special Baby: Rejoice

Focal Passage: Luke 1:1-80

Jesus were already in circulation. These came from the disciples and many other eyewitnesses.

Luke in turn verified them, and proceeded to produce a summary report for a Greek named Theophilus.

Luke provides the most information for us on the events leading up to and including Jesus’ birth.

We find here God’s messenger Gabriel instructing Mary on being chosen as the one to bring God’s Son into the world. All of this was to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies.

As I pondered this section of scripture, I could not help but consider how it resembled an individual’s path to receiving Jesus as personal

Savior. We first must be presented with the truth about Jesus.

Often this will lead to sincerely questioning the information given, particularly as it applies to us. As we listen to God’s message, we must surrender to it, and when we do, it produces joy in our relationship with Jesus.

Before our first child was born, we had chosen not to know the gender. What was important in our minds was the fact that this child (for whom we had waited 11 years) was a part of us, our family. When the doctor announced, “It’s a girl!” my wife and I were overjoyed. That which we had prayed and waited for – we now saw and held.

Even greater joy comes over the entrance of God into time and space in the form of a baby – God becoming the form of a man. For centuries, the writers of the Old Testament had given us promises that the Promised One, the Messiah, would come.

And now the great historian Luke records His birth, life, death, burial and resurrection so we can know the truth.

Luke, a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul was a medical doctor, and a great example of a first-century historian. In reading Luke 1:1-4, Luke attests to the fact that many written accounts about



THOMAS MARSHALL
Pastor, New Hope
Baptist Church,
Laurinburg

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

A small traditional Southern Baptist church is seeking a **Senior Pastor** with more than five years proven experience shepharding Southern Baptist churches. An ideal candidate should have a minimum of a master of divinity degree from a SBC seminary and have proven experience ministering to all age groups. Our website is www.hollyhillbaptist.org. Please send resume to: Holly Hill Baptist Church, 2818 Edgewood Avenue, Burlington, NC 27215.

First Baptist Church, Highlands, NC, is searching for a **full-time senior pastor**. Highlands is a resort and retirement community. Located on the main street of Highlands, our church building and grounds are debt-free and well-maintained. Our congregation is mainly senior adults, but we have a desire to reach young families and youth. We are traditional in worship, but are beginning to use some contemporary music. We are a friendly, unified, and biblically based congregation. We are completing an intentional interim ministry. Send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 625, Highlands, NC 28741 or e-mail them to Carrie Coen: CR1108@aol.com.

Trinity Baptist Church, seeks a **full-time pastor** to lead our conservative Southern Baptist church that believes the Holy Bible is the inerrant Word of God. Resident membership is approximately 200. Seminary degree and references are required. Send resumes by February 29, 2012, to: Trinity Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Search Committee, 433 Southland Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28311.

SEEKING PASTOR. First Baptist Church, Williamsburg, Ky., located in a small town near a university, is actively engaged in local missions, including a food pantry, home repair ministry, care for both the very young and very old, outdoorsmen ministry, Center Shot, Upward Basketball, a quilting ministry, and distribution of necessities to the needy including coats, shoes, hygiene items and laundry detergent. FBC supports missions world wide including missions supported by Samaritan's Purse, Compassion International, SBC and CBF. The church is seeking new avenues of ministry and outreach. Candidates should have a completed master of divinity. Pastoral experience desired. Resumes may be emailed to fbcwoffice@gmail.com or mailed to First Baptist Church, 230 S. 5th Street, Williamsburg, KY 40769.

Placing a classified ad

Choose one of three avenues:

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For more information about costs and deadlines, call the BR office at (919) 459-5697.

Beth Car Baptist Church in Madison, VA, is currently accepting resumes for **full time pastor**. Five years ministry experience preferred. Graduate of accredited seminary or Bible college required. Sunday morning worship attendance averages 100 and Sunday School averages 60. For more information please visit our website at www.bethcarbaptist.com. Resumes will be accepted until March 1. Submit resumes to: Beth Car Baptist Church, PO Box 444, Madison, VA 22727, or e-mail bcpastorsearch@bethcarbaptist.com.

FBC Locust, NC, seeking a **full time senior pastor**. Must have a minimum of five years experience, able to minister to all ages, effectively lead and teach. Believes the Bible is totally true and follows the Baptist Faith & Message. Send resume to: Pastor Search Committee FBC, PO Box 159, Locust, NC 28097, or email to: cstewart80@carolina.rr.com.

Denominational

Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina is seeking an **Interim Executive Director/Treasurer** to direct the work of staff, manage budgets, assist with planning and executing events, and build relationships among Baptist churches statewide. Candidates must possess working knowledge of WMU, including a broad scope of ministry and missions; be mature in Christian faith and involved in a local church; hold a bachelor's degree (master's degree preferred); and three to five years of progressive work experience in a related field. Strong management and organizational skills are required, as are computer skills. Please send resumes to the attention of Tana Hartsell at WMU NC, PO Box 18309, Raleigh, NC 27619-8309; or email to htana@carolina.rr.com. Resumes must be received by February 20, 2012.

Church Staff

Minister of Children. First Baptist Church, Statesville, NC (www.statesvillefbc.org) is seeking a full-time minister of children. We are a dually aligned, CBF-SBC affiliated church, and have both contemporary and traditional services. The candidate should preferably be a graduate of a seminary or divinity school and have experience in children's ministry. Please forward your resume to FBC Statesville Children's Minister Search, 815 Davie Ave., Statesville, NC 28677 or to maryjane@statesvillefbc.org.

A nine hundred member CBF and SBC affiliated church in Charlotte, N.C., is seeking a **Minister to Children and their Families**. This person would oversee birth through fifth grade. We seek a creative, energetic, committed minister who will lead our children's spiritual growth and our church's numerical growth while working with our parents to provide the ministry they need. Please send resumes to Search Committee, Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church, 1117 South Blvd., Charlotte 28203 or pmbcsearch@gmail.com.

Associate Pastor. First Baptist Church of Kinston, NC, a Southern Baptist church, seeks a full-time associate pastor. The associate pastor is responsible for planning, coordinating, directing and evaluating the family and education ministries of the church with concentration on youth and children. Duties also include preaching, teaching, counseling and visiting. Candidates need an experience of Christian salvation, sense of God's calling to the ministry and definite burden for ministry with youth and children. The candidate will be a graduate of an accredited seminary, divinity school, or appropriate background from four-year university. To apply please submit a resume and cover letter by March 7, 2012, to: Search Team First Baptist Church, 2600 Rouse Rd., Kinston, NC 28504 or email: kinstonfbc@embarqmail.com.

Princeton Baptist Church seeking **P/T Music Minister** to lead choir and congregational music. Send resumes to PBC, 201 South Pearl St., Princeton, NC 27569. Attn: Music Committee or email princetonbaptist@embarqmail.com. Further questions call (919) 936-4001.

MINISTER OF YOUTH. First Baptist Church of Sanford, NC, is seeking a full-time minister of youth. FBC is affiliated with CBF and SBC with a membership of approximately 1,000 and affirms women in ministerial and church leadership positions. A master of divinity and previous experience is preferred but not required. Candidates must have strong youth leadership and communication skills and work very well with committees and church staff. Questions may be addressed to Senior Pastor, Dr. Jeff Clark at (919) 774-4220 or pjeffclark@windstream.net. Submit resume to sanfbc@windstream.net or 202 Summit Drive, Sanford, NC 27330.

Metro Atlanta Baptist church seeking **Minister of Spiritual Formation and Families**. Please send resumes attn: Mrs. Susan Lewis at 561 Veterans Memorial Hwy. SE, Mableton, GA 30126, or via email at susan@mtharmony.org.

First Baptist Hildebran is seeking a **part-time Director of Youth Ministries and Activities**. Position requires experience working with youth and 20-25 hours per week. Send resume to First Baptist Hildebran, PO Box 220, Hildebran, NC 28637 or revronarndt@embarqmail.com.

Millers Creek Baptist Church, a conservative SBC church, is seeking a **full-time Children's/Discipleship Pastor**. This position leads ministries for children from birth to sixth grade and their families plus coordinate discipleship training. MDiv. preferred but not required. Send resume to Personnel Committee, Millers Creek Baptist Church, PO Box 559, Millers Creek, NC 28651, or email: churchoffice@millerscreekbaptist.org.

Village Baptist Church has two part time openings: **Singles' Director & Music Associate**. Please send resumes to 906 S. McPherson Church Rd., Fayetteville, NC 28303, Attn: Cathy, or e-mail cathy@villagebc.org.

Riley's Creek Baptist Church: **Part-Time Music Minister** to plan and direct all music aspects of the church under supervision of the Pastor. 5+ years' experience desired. Send resumes to rcbc@rileyscreekbaptist.com or to 19845 NC Hwy 210, Rocky Point, NC 28457, Attn: John Ward, Chairman, Minister of Music Search Committee.

Miscellaneous

Marriage Protection Amendment Prayer Rally Sunday, March 18, 2pm-6pm; Ridgecrest, NC. Lunch and accommodations available; vendors welcome! Contact Sarah at 919-787-0606 or sarah@christianactionleague.org.

FREE Classical Allen Organ, full AGO pedal board plus three massive original speakers and amplifier. Also includes a 51" bench. Contact: Pat Williamson, Ocean View Baptist Church, Kill Devil Hills, 252-480-2692 e-mail; mamawilly@yahoo.com.

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Join Pastor & Mrs. Michael Cloer on their 16th Tour of Israel, June 13-23, 2012. For a color brochure call 252-937-9811, ext 230, or online at www.inglewoodbaptist.com/?p=israel.

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NCBAM needs handymen to weatherize the homes of aging adults - because it's nice not to have to choose between groceries and heat. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

NCBAM needs volunteers for the biggest ramp-raisin' marathon this state has ever seen. Sign up for Rampin' Up! - an April 28, 2012, event at www.ncoperationinasmuch.org. Check out www.rampinup.org for more information or call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

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Marriage amendment

Updates and Resources

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has a collection of articles and information on the marriage amendment that was compiled by Steve Corts, pastor of Center Grove Baptist Church in Clemmons. It is available in hard copy or electronically by contacting Brian Davis, BSC executive leader for administration and convention relations, at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5506, or bdavis@ncbaptist.org.

Websites

- **Christian Action League** – christian-actionleague.org
- **Christian Life and Public Affairs** – blog.ncbaptist.org/clpa
- **Vote For Marriage NC** – voteformarriage.nc.com
- **North Carolina Family Policy Council** – ncfamily.org
- **The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission** – erlc.com
- **Family Research Council** – frc.org

See related guest column by Erik Stanley of the Alliance Defense Fund, page 15.

Related Event

Concerned women group hosts March 31 'Stand Strong Together' conference

Concerned Women for America of North Carolina is holding a March 31 conference – Stand Strong Together – at First Baptist Church in Charlotte, from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pastors, church leaders, ministries and coalitions can be equipped and informed on public policy issues, specifically the marriage amendment. Speakers include Mark Harris, Rep. Ruth Samuelson, Mark Creech, Mary Frances Forrester, among others. The conference is free and registration ends March 10.

To receive a brochure invitation or for more information, contact Sheri Miller, the state director, at (704) 542-6984 or director@northcarolina.cwfa.org.

S. Baptists protest latest contraceptive decision

By MICHAEL FOUST | Baptist Press

WASHINGTON – President Obama Feb. 10 announced a change in the way that employees of religious organizations will receive free contraceptives that can cause abortions, but it fell far short of what is needed to protect religious liberty, say Southern Baptist leaders.

The controversy began when the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in January finalized a rule requiring private insurance plans to cover all FDA-approved contraceptives, including “emergency” ones such as Plan B and “ella” that can block implantation and kill the embryo – an action that pro-life groups and many Christians view as an early abortion. The drugs would be free for employees and be covered as part of the health care law’s goal to offer free preventive services.

The HHS rule included an exemption for most churches, but that exemption does not cover Christian colleges and schools or faith-based hospitals and social service programs. Obama said Feb. 10 that the burden on providing emergency contraceptives would fall on insurance

companies, and that the coverage still would be free.

“If a woman’s employer is a charity or a hospital that has a religious objection to providing contraceptive services as part of their health plan, the insurance company – not the hospital, not the charity – will be required to reach out and offer the woman contraceptive care free of charge without co-pays and without hassles,” Obama said.

Religious leaders, though, were not pleased, and said the same problems with religious liberty remained.

“It is an attempt to deal with a matter of religious conviction with an accounting gimmick,” Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, told Baptist Press.

O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Recourses, called it an “approach that does not address the issues at hand for Southern Baptists who oppose so-called contraceptives that can and do cause an abortion.” GuideStone provides health insurance coverage to 60,000 people, including pastors and missionaries. **B3**

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Sign up for Rampin' Up! at www.ncoperationinasmuch.org. Download complete instructions on “how to build a wheelchair ramp” at www.rampinup.org. Do you need help finding someone who needs a wheelchair ramp? NCBAM can connect you to a person in need. **Call 1-877-506-2226.**

