

## Church planting in North Carolina

N.C. Baptists have helped start 556 churches in the past six years. In 2011, the Baptist State Convention helped start 89 churches. Research has shown that new churches reach more people than established ones. [Page 6](#)



# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## BSC leader gives marriage vote challenge

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

As the May 8 vote on a proposed marriage amendment approaches, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's executive director-treasurer reminded Baptists of their opportunity to help determine whether marriage will be defined as the union between a man and a woman in the state's constitution.

Milton A. Hollifield Jr. spoke on the issue during Culture Reach, the Convention's evangelism conference Feb. 27 at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem. (See story, page 9. See guest column, page 12.) "Pastors, I hope that you would use the time always – but especially in these days – to preach and teach your people what the Word of God teaches about marriage and the value and importance of the marriage relationship between a man and woman and their children," he said.

### Register to vote

Hollifield urged pastors and church leaders to encourage members to make sure they are registered to vote. The deadline to register in N.C. is Friday, April 13.

According to the N.C. Center for Voter Education at [ncvoterred.com/register](#), those who miss the deadline still have an opportunity to vote during early voting. "It will not matter [that]... we believe this or we believe that," Hollifield said. "What will determine what happens about this vote will be if your people go to the polls and vote. I pray that this marriage amendment will pass."

In 2010 a study from the Pew Research Center reported that 39 percent of Americans believe marriage is becoming "obsolete." "The local church must step up and lead the way," Hollifield said. "We must teach our people in our churches about God's design for marriage and family." **BR**



Josh Lenon preaches at Red Door Church, a one-year-old church plant that operates out of The Underground, a state-of-the-art club and concert venue in Cincinnati. The church runs about 100 each weekend. Lenon and his wife, Tiffany, inset below, are 2012 Week of Prayer missionaries. They receive help from the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. (Photo by Dale Stroud)

It's just about dusk at Heritage Glen apartments in the Cincinnati, Ohio, suburb of Fairfield. As the sun drops from sight, the lower light begins to mask some of the harsher realities of this low-income apartment complex—including the dilapidated tennis court that's populated with random cracks and missing a net, the overgrown grass, and the worn exterior paint job. A handful of volunteers from the Red Door, a Southern Baptist church plant in Cincinnati eagerly play with, laugh with and generally corral neighborhood kids. What better way to kick off the church's plans than by doing what's at the heart of what the church is all about?

The apartment complex is only about 25 miles from the posh community of Indian Hill, where Cincinnati's elite—like famous astronaut Neil Armstrong—live. Yet Heritage Glen seems like a thousand miles away.

But, more to the point for church planter Joshua Lenon, it's even further away from heaven. For the past two years Cincinnati's Red Door Church, started by church planter Joshua Lenon in 2010, has pointed people in the Heritage Glen apartments to Jesus by trying to close that distance.

Josh and Tiffany Lenon are among five North American Mission Board mission-

aries featured as part of the annual Week of Prayer for North American Missions, March 4-11, 2012, and Annie Armstrong Easter Offering. The offering supports Lenon and others like him who serve on behalf of Southern Baptists throughout North America. With a goal of \$70 million, this year's offering theme is "Whatever It Takes."

"We can provide just a glimpse of heaven on earth," said Lenon. "We can paint a picture of God's future for these people."

Today that means throwing a block party for neighborhood families—complete with pizza, popcorn, cotton candy and a great family-friendly movie. In the past it has meant everything from redoing the complex's playground—including buying equipment and doing the landscaping—to providing Thanksgiving meals for its residents for the past two years.

And much of that ministry is thanks to the faithful gifts of Southern Baptists. "Flat out, we wouldn't be able to do

what we're doing without the support of the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and the North American Mission Board," Lenon says. "We wouldn't have the funds to do that."

### The Lord's Prayer reimagined

The church's passionate commitment to bringing heaven to earth isn't just a trendy church planting strategy; instead it's borne out of a deeply held conviction about the Bible's most famous prayer—the Lord's Prayer, found in Matthew 6.

Lenon came to this realization in the midst of a particularly tough time in his life. Discouraged and saddened by a bad experience on staff at a large church in a neighboring state, 30-year-old Lenon and his wife, Tiffany, left the ministry and began a time of deep soul-searching.

"The Lord's Prayer became really significant for me," Lenon says. "I thought if Jesus said to

pray about this then it is probably what I should be about. I prayed it repeatedly. I thought about it constantly. For me, it

[See Church planter page 4](#)





# Networks enable churches to partner toward Kingdom growth

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Asst. Managing Editor

In 2010 Todd Brady met a church planter from Canada in the exhibit hall of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) annual meeting.

Brady, who is lead pastor of The River Church in Fayetteville, said that meeting began a relationship that took 15 of his church members to Toronto last summer. Now, Brady is leading a Global Impact Network of seven North Carolina Baptist churches to help promote the efforts of this church plant in Canada.

The pastor Brady met that year at the Convention's annual meeting was Scott Rourke of Rendezvous Church in Toronto, Canada. After sending members of The River Church on a summer mission trip in 2011, Brady returned with other pastors as part of a vision trip in September of that year.

"For the longest time churches have been doing their own thing," Brady said. "I see an incredible trend where churches are starting to come together."

Rendezvous Church, the plant that is partnered with several churches in the Fayetteville area, hopes to plant 10 churches in Canada over the next few years. The goal is for the network to help Rendezvous make that a reality.

The Global Impact Networks help connect a church planter or an area/people group to churches in North Carolina.

The network "enables a smaller



church that might not be able to send a large group" to partner with other churches to help in a mighty way by providing teams to help with community outreach, training, and other ministries, Brady said.

Global Impact Networks emerged as part of the strategy of BSC's Office of Great Commission Partnerships.

Four of the seven N.C. Baptist churches committed to this network are going on a vision trip to Toronto in April to seek out ways they can partner to expand and enrich local church plants.

"We can do more together than by ourselves," Brady said. "God just put it all together."

Potentially, all seven churches could send people on two to three mission trips this summer.

"Our church planting catalysts who make it possible" are North American Mission Board (NAMB) missionaries, said Mike Sowers, senior consultant for the Office of Great Commission Partnerships. The planters work with the Convention and these budding networks to build their outreach capacity.

Funding for these NAMB church planters comes through the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and giving through the Cooperative Program.

When Kevin Ezell, NAMB's president, announced a focus on church planting, NAMB launched Send North America, targeting church planters in bigger cities. NAMB cut jobs, reorganized and diverted funding from other areas of ministry to church planting.

Sowers is excited about the networks that are forming to help churches in Toronto, Boston and New York, areas of emphasis for the Convention's Office of Great Commission Partnerships as well as for NAMB's Send North America efforts.

Sowers said the network concept birthed out of the partnership with Toronto. The Office of Great Commission Partnerships is working to build similar networks for New York and Boston as well. Right now, North Carolina has four networks formed and two more in process. The first step is to get "boots on the ground" participating in vision trips to help form connections with church planters, Sowers said. "Our work is focusing on those networks ... steering people toward a long-term focus."

Partners can provide training and

leadership resources as well as teams to help facilitate reaching communities.

Last summer The River Church taught a soccer clinic and held a Vacation Bible School in Toronto. Rourke started an after school program "because the kids wanted to come back," Brady said.

That program led to an adult Bible study because the children were asking their parents questions about the Bible that they couldn't answer.

Brady is excited that the "next generation type of guys are starting to get a heart" for church planting and seeking to save the lost.

The goal for all the church plants is for them to become multiplying churches.

"That's the only way we'll be able to even make a dent in any of these cities," Sowers said. "We like to give to something. We like to go to something."

In the giving and the going it is important to remember not to forget prayer, Sowers said.

Churches who might not be able to send money or people can pray for these church plants. "When a good mission network gets involved, it pushes the church planting process six months or so ahead of where they should be on their own," Sowers said. "I'm real grateful for the new vision. I really believe we're all working together for the same end with the same strategy." **BR**

## N.C. Baptist Men respond to tornado damage from March 2

BR Staff/Baptist Press

Following the tornadoes that struck several states March 2, – including North Carolina – N.C. Baptist Men's Disaster Relief Ministry responded to damage in the central and western part of the state and in Kentucky.

On March 2, tornadoes claimed the lives of at least 39 people in multiple states. There were 21 deaths reported in Kentucky, 13 in Indiana, three in Ohio and one in both Alabama and Georgia. In some areas of the country, entire communities were wiped away.

N.C. Baptist Men sent a team leader March 4 to assess damage in Kentucky and assist the Kentucky Baptist Convention with relief efforts. Relief workers assisted in an area bordering Martin and Johnson counties. About 40 to 50 homes were reported damaged in that area.

Volunteers helped clear debris and placed tarps on damaged roofs.

Efforts in Kentucky have been ongoing since the disaster, and future

volunteer work and needs in the area are being determined, said Gaylon Moss, who directs disaster relief and volunteerism for N.C. Baptist Men.

Six of Kentucky's 21 victims were killed in hard-hit West Liberty, a town of 3,500 about two and a half hours south-east of Louisville. First Baptist Church in West Liberty was practically destroyed, as was the home of pastor David Cook. However, Cook and his family survived. With the help of disaster relief volunteers, the family moved into the parsonage at nearby New Hope Baptist Church.

In addition to efforts in Kentucky, N.C. teams worked in the Charlotte area and in Cherokee County, where teams helped with about 30 projects. In the area, about 10 homes were heavily damaged and five were destroyed. Working alongside volunteers from First Baptist Church in Murphy, Baptist Men provided 2,500 meals. About 150 volunteers assisted with the effort.

Contact Gaylon Moss at [gmoss@ncbaptist.org](mailto:gmoss@ncbaptist.org) or at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5605. **BR**

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



## AROUND THE STATE

### Obituaries

**WILLIAM GERALD GARRIS**, 76, of Mt. Olive/Dudley, died Feb. 2 at Wake Medical Center in Raleigh.

A Vietnam veteran, he served in the U.S. Air Force for 23-1/2 years, attaining the rank of Senior Master Sergeant. He was a member of the First Baptist Church, Mount Olive. While Garriss was a pastor he led Union Baptist Church near Kinston, and Poplar Grove Baptist Church in Sampson County. He was also a chaplain with the N.C. Prison System for numerous years.

Survivors include his son, Tony Garriss of Goldsboro; daughters Angela Hughston of Faison, Rose Beasley of Mount Olive and Sallie Fiore of Garner; sister Ruby Lee Garriss of Deep Run; and seven grandchildren. Memorials may be made to the charity of one's choice.

**CHARLES EDWARD RUTT SR.**, 70, died Jan. 13.

A U.S. Navy veteran, Rutt was pastor of churches in South and North Carolina, including Rose of Sharon Baptist and North Durham Baptist, both in Durham.

He is survived by his wife, Linda Brantley Rutt; three sons, Charles Edward "Les" Rutt Jr. of Leland, Timothy Wade Rutt and John Richard Rutt, both of Durham; two grandchildren; three sisters, Grace Rutt Steinbrecher of Holliston, Ma., Anna M. "Amy" Rutt Yeatts of Mechanicsburg, Pa., and Kathleen Rutt Neuman of York, Pa.; and two brothers, John Mark Rutt Jr. of Harrisburg, Pa., and William Albert Rutt of Bonita Springs, Fla.

Memorials to Hock Family Pavilion (Hospice), 4023 N. Roxboro Road, Durham, NC 27704, or to North Durham Baptist Church, 6036 Guess Road, Durham, NC 27712.

**JAMES HAROLD CRAIG**, 82, died Jan. 1 at Duke University Hospital.

A graduate of Mars Hill College, Lenoir-Rhyne College and New Orleans Baptist Seminary, Craig was minister of music and education at Temple Baptist Church, Durham, and minister of music at Lowes Grove Baptist Church, Durham.

He is survived by his sister, Mildred Craig Underdown of Lenoir.

Memorials to Craig Endowed Scholarship Fund, North Carolina Baptist Foundation, Inc. 201 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511-4257

### Staff changes

**HEATHER HIESERMAN HOVEY** has been called to Temple Baptist Church, Durham, as minister to children and families.

University Baptist Church, Chapel Hill, has called **THOMAS BRIDGES** as their university student ministry coordinator. Bridges is also a teacher.

**CALEB BALDWIN** has been called as associate pastor-youth/college/career at Grove Park Baptist Church, Burlington. Currently a graduate student at Southeastern Seminary, Baldwin previously was student minister at Midwood Baptist Church, Charlotte, and a band intern at Camp Caswell, Oak Island.

## OPPORTUNITY CORNER

### Senior adult opportunities

Coastal Senior Adult Retreats are quickly approaching. Retreat weeks for the Spring are April 16-18, 23-25, 30-May 2, May 7-9, 14-16 at N.C. Baptist Assembly, Fort Caswell. These retreats offer a relaxed time for fellowship, reflection and inspiration. There are ample opportunities for leisure activities or visits to nearby attractions. Then, Conferences By the Sea are May 21-25 and Aug. 20-24. This year's conference theme is "Experiencing Worship" with guest speaker Ed Kilbourne. The cost is \$268 per person.

To register for a Coastal Retreat or Conference by the Sea, contact the N.C. Baptist Assembly at (910) 278-9501.

### Youth leader training opportunity

Student Ministry Lab is an opportunity for youth leaders and student ministers to train with each other, receive new ideas, and get encouragement. April 21 at First Baptist Church in Garner or Aug. 25 at Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe, there will be speakers, presentations, fellowship times and more. Cost is \$15 per person or a group rate of \$45 for groups of 5. Visit [BeDoTell.com](http://BeDoTell.com) to register. Contact Sandra Crute for more information at [scrute@ncbaptist.org](mailto:scrute@ncbaptist.org); (800) 395-5102, ext. 5566.

### Seek renewal at prayer conference

April 27-28, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina offers "Renew: A Northeastern North Carolina Prayer and Spiritual Life Summit" at Corinth Baptist Church in Elizabeth City. The conference is free, and registration is at the door.

Hear from speakers Rick Astle, Richard Blackaby, John Franklin, and Chris Schofield.

Visit [prayNC.org](http://prayNC.org) or contact David Turner at Corinth Baptist: [dturner@corinthbaptist.com](mailto:dturner@corinthbaptist.com); (252) 335-7287.

### Statewide childhood ministry conference

Childhood ministry professionals and volunteer directors, sharpen your ministries by coming to the Childhood Minister's Round Table with specialist, Jan Marler, April 27 at Pleasant Garden Baptist Church in Greensboro. Entitled "How to Build a Fire Truck," the event continues April 28, when other volunteers are welcome.

Break-out sessions will help ministers build vision and teach practical skills. The event is free, and registration is online at [ncbaptist.org/firetruck](http://ncbaptist.org/firetruck). Contact Jan Marler for more information at [jmarler@ncbaptist.org](mailto:jmarler@ncbaptist.org); (919) 810-1466. Registration ends April 22.

### Deaf interpreter training

For all who are interested in becoming a deaf interpreter, come to the training program May 4-6 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia. The Interpreter Training Program is part of the annual Together In Christ Deaf conference. Ten hours of intensive training helps equip church interpreters to be more effective. Certificates are provided to those completing the training sessions. Visit [specialministries.ncbaptist.org](http://specialministries.ncbaptist.org) for more information and to register by April 23. Contact Donnie Wiltshire at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5630; [dwiltshire@ncbaptist.org](mailto:dwiltshire@ncbaptist.org).

## Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Please send information immediately following an event, or for opportunity corner, send at least two months in advance. All submissions will be subjected to *Biblical Recorder* styles and guidelines and will be edited. Send to [dianna@BRnow.org](mailto:dianna@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

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# Church planter

Continued from page 1

was hitting the reset button. I knew this was going to be a critically important thing for me—to wrap my mind around this prayer.”

Late one night, as he pondered the prayer, he came across a life-altering realization—the Christian life wasn’t just about getting people into heaven—it was also about bringing heaven to earth.

Tears started to flow. Months of frustration boiled over. “If that prayer moves from heaven to earth, it means I have a very specific mission for my life: to spend my life bringing heaven to earth,” Lenon says.

## A church is born

Realizing this was the kind of truth that should incubate in community, Lenon called up some friends near Cincinnati, where he was from, to see if anyone would want to study the truth together. To his surprise, many did.

Thirty-five people showed up for a whiteboard session to discuss what it would be like if they spent their lives bringing heaven to earth. And what if they did it—together?

Even after the group started meeting monthly, Lenon wasn’t ready to call what was forming a “church.” But God soon made the word unavoidable. Josh and his wife, Tiffany, moved back to Cincinnati with no money, no jobs, and the conviction that God wanted them to spend their lives “bringing heaven to earth.”

For the next year, Lenon and the others who were joining him (his core team) made plans to start a church in suburban Cincinnati. Lenon named the new church the Red Door, which had



Josh Lenon, left, paints a jungle gym at an apartment complex in Fairfield, Ohio. Lenon’s church plant, Red Door Church, adopted the low-income apartment complex, which has been the site for block and birthday parties for residents. (Photo by Dale Stroud)

a creative double meaning. In cultures around the world red doors represent places of refuge and safety. Lenon says the tradition goes all the way back to the Exodus, where the Israelites painted the doors of their homes with the blood of an unblemished lamb. Everyone behind that door was safe.

“Hundreds of years later, Jesus painted a red door over the cosmos and says ‘all who enter through me are safe,’” Lenon says. “We tell Red Door people that whether it’s your office cubicle or your daughter’s soccer game, or it’s your work party, or it’s your neighborhood, you should be the place that people know as a place of home and welcome and safety and restoration.”

Now, a year and a half after the church officially launched in September of 2010,

worship attendance is starting to climb past 100 on Sunday mornings—many of whom are re-connecting with church for the first time or after years of being away. Five people have been baptized in the past year.

The help of other Southern Baptists—both locally and around North America—has been crucial to what God

has done through the Red Door. A strong partnership with a local Southern Baptist association and nearby Lakota Hills Baptist Church in West Chester Township has provided a breath of fresh air for the church. Lenon compares the newfound partnership with Lakota Hills to an orphan finding a parent.

“You feel very, very alone without a strong partner church,” Lenon says. “With Lakota Hills coming alongside of us, it’s like finding parents. All of a sudden you find out that someone cares for you and loves you. They help take care of needs that you don’t even know exist and aren’t planning for.”

Just a year and a half into the life of the Red Door, Lenon has already started to plan for future church plants with a similar vision of bringing heaven to earth.

“In five years we’d like to have two churches,” Lenon says. “Not a satellite, but another pastor leading a community of people like the Red Door, sharing resources and sharing a vision.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Tobin Perry is a writer for the North American Mission Board. To view a video about Josh Lenon and other Week of Prayer missionaries, visit [anniearmstrong.com](http://anniearmstrong.com).) **BR**

## GPS has new team leader

ALPHARETTA, Ga. (BP) – God’s Plan for Sharing (GPS), the North American Mission Board’s (NAMB) national evangelism initiative, has a new team leader, Ken Ellis.

“Ken is a strong leader and I am excited about this new role for him,” said Kevin Ezell, the mission board’s president. “NAMB’s commitment to GPS has never been stronger. In fact, our 2013 Find It Here New Testament distribution will put an additional \$2.5 million in resources behind the GPS effort.”

Ellis, a NAMB staff member for 13 years, has served with GPS since its inception. He replaces Thomas Hammond who is leaving NAMB to become vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee’s Convention Advancement office.

“I’m excited about the future of GPS,” Ellis said. “We had a great Across North

America. [It] was wonderfully received by our partners, and we are looking forward to Reaching Across North America this year.”

Ellis noted that state conventions, associations and churches have embraced GPS, yet he hopes for even greater participation in the future.

“It was always our hope and desire that churches would not see GPS as just another event, but as a tool to use biblical principles to reach people with the gospel.” Ellis also will head up NAMB’s Crossover New Orleans efforts prior to the SBC in June.

Launched with pilot projects in 2009, GPS will culminate with Celebrating Across North America in 2020.

He and his wife, Penny, have three daughters, Imani, Nailah and Aisha, and a son, Emmanuel. They are members of Peace Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga. **BR**

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# Former N.C. pastor urges churches to ‘Love Loud’

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Assistant Managing Editor

**W**hen Al Gilbert left Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem in 2011, “love” was one of the reasons.

As executive director of Love Loud, the evangelism arm of the North American Mission Board (NAMB), Gilbert said he and his team are working toward some simple steps to help Southern Baptist churches improve their ministry.

“We’re still in much of a learner mode,” Gilbert said, noting that they are collecting stories through May 1 of successful ministries across the nation.

Gilbert brought ideas from his church’s Love Winston-Salem ministry and is combining that with examples of other successful ministries. NAMB is looking at churches of all sizes and ethnicities, attempting to find a way to replicate successful ministries elsewhere.

“We recognize that mobilization is a process,” Gilbert said.

“I think there are three components – awakening, growing, and strategic alignment – when a church is meeting community needs while sharing Christ. The point is to meet needs and share Christ simultaneously” by offering a blanket to a homeless person or smoke detectors for an older or poor community.

Gilbert said ministry could come in different forms: English as a Second Lan-

guage classes, tutoring, sports ministry, medical/dental clinics, food banks, job training, etc.

Love Loud was one of the emphases for the Week of Prayer for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering.

The Week of Prayer also highlighted the work of five missionaries, as well as Send North America and efforts to equip the next generation.



AL GILBERT

“There seems to be a movement ... especially in the next generation reminding us the church has withdrawn from meeting human needs,” Gilbert said.

Even though NAMB will be encouraging churches to host events/ministries to reach their communities, the hope is that church members will see the event as just one step in the process.

“When you look at scripture, God is God of widow, orphan and poor,” Gilbert said.

“Where do we find people in the community that have those kind of needs?”

He encourages existing churches to look outside their walls to meet needs and challenges expanding churches to look at the Send North America cities:

• **Northeast** – New York, Washington, Baltimore, Boston, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh

• **Midwest** – Chicago, Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis, Cleveland, Cincinnati, Columbus, Indianapolis, Detroit

• **West** – Los Angeles, San Francisco/Palo Alto, Seattle, Portland, San Diego, Las Vegas, Salt Lake City, Phoenix, Denver

• **South** – Atlanta, Miami, New Orleans

• **Canada** – Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal

Churches can come alongside church planters in these cities to help them have a broader reach into their community.

Casting a vision is the first step for churches to see the potential they have to reach outside their walls. Gilbert believes this step is important for helping a church focus on its purpose, as well as seeing a deeper commitment when a church body is unified.

After that, mobilization is key. Gilbert said churches should contact congregations with successful ministry models and start preparations for beginning their own ministry.

For instance, a church could look at the Graffiti Church in New York and develop a plan for starting a similar church in Miami. Graffiti Church not only shares Jesus Christ but also meets human needs.

Gilbert compares his Love Loud team to air traffic control, actively guiding churches to connect with ministry models that they can replicate or start in another area.

“I think a lot of people back off of helping because they think they are wasting time or money,” Gilbert said.

What Love Loud is doing is trying to let churches know what other opportunities are out there and how to start those ministries locally as well as other places.

“It sure would be good so that you

have an idea of who is doing what,” he said.

Messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention in New Orleans in June will likely hear more about this movement, and Gilbert highlighted July 22, a day to set aside as Love Loud Sunday. He encouraged churches to forego services to take ministry into surrounding neighborhoods.

## Transitions

Since leaving Calvary, Gilbert and his wife, Karen or “KK,” have made several transitions.

Not only did Gilbert change jobs, but he and his wife sold their home and moved in with her parents in Georgia. KK’s mother died in the latter part of 2011, and the couple continues to help her father.

They left nine of their 11 grandchildren in North Carolina. They have also been looking for a church home.

The couple has started going to Northside Church in Roswell, Ga., a congregation that is going through a restart.

It is an older church that has made a commitment to transition to growth, a move that Gilbert hopes other churches will imitate through Love Loud and help from a local association, state convention and the Southern Baptist Convention.

“I have said transition is a big word,” Gilbert said. “To leave pastoring and sell a house ... make a move, has been challenging.”

His transition to NAMB “has been great,” Gilbert said, praising his new team. “Even though I’ve been here about five months, there’s still a lot I don’t know.”

To learn more about this new effort, visit [namb.net](http://namb.net) or request more information at [loveloud@namb.net](mailto:loveloud@namb.net). **BR**

## New committee members announced during Executive Committee meeting

The Executive Committee of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina met March 2 at Hollifield Leadership Center, Conover. In addition to committee and budget reports, Board of Directors President Michael Barrett announced appointments he had made to two committees. Debra Spalin, Hephzibah Baptist Church, Wendell; and Bruce Cannon, Galeed Baptist Church, Bladenboro, are

new members of the Articles and Bylaws Committee. Perry Brindley, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Canton; and Dwain Bouldin, Carmel Baptist Church, Matthews, have been newly appointed to the Budget Committee.

The next Executive Committee meeting is scheduled for April 12 at the Baptist State Convention building in Cary. For a full story go to [brnow.org](http://brnow.org). **BR**

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## CBF to revisit policy on hiring gays

Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) leadership may revisit the organization’s policy on hiring homosexuals after they replace retiring Executive Coordinator Daniel Vestal and the organization finishes its re-visioning process.

CBF Moderator Colleen Burroughs has suggested that revisiting the policy could become a priority. On April 19-21 a conference on Sexuality and Covenant – co-sponsored by Mercer University and CBF – will be held at First Baptist Church in Decatur, Ga.

In an official statement March 8, Vestal defended CBF’s 12-year ban on hiring homosexuals.

“My own conviction is that the foundation of a Christian sexual ethic is faithfulness in marriage between a man

and a woman and celibacy in singleness,” said Vestal, who plans to retire in June after more than 15 years at the helm.

Vestal was also clear to point out that he does not speak for the Fellowship. The next executive coordinator search committee is slated to meet in April.

When CBF’s Coordinating Council meets April 15 they will be looking at revisions to the 2012 Task Force Report submitted Feb. 23.

The task force, which was appointed in 2010, was given the responsibility of charting the organization’s course for the next two decades.

The task force’s final report will be made available no later than 30 days prior to the organization’s general assembly June 20-23 in Fort Worth, Texas. **BR**



# Prayer, training help equip planters for Kingdom impact

By **BUDDY OVERMAN** | BSC Communications

**S**ince the North American Mission Board (NAMB) was formed in 1997, Southern Baptists have planted more than 20,000 churches in North America, averaging more than 1,500 new starts each year. With an emphasis on planting culturally and ethnically diverse churches that emphasize evangelism and multiplication, Southern Baptists are planting more North American churches than any other denomination.

Year after year North Carolina has been among the leaders in church planting. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) has helped start 556 churches in the past six years.

In 2011, the BSC helped start 89 churches. North Carolina counts a church plant when her core team begins worship. The BSC currently funds 138 church plants in the two-year funding cycle. The North American Mission Board only recognizes church plants once they are assigned a Southern Baptist Convention identification number, an assignment made when the plant makes her first contribution to the Cooperative Program.

Only 60 of the new 89 church plants were assigned a Southern Baptist Convention identification number in 2011. The remaining 29 will begin Cooperative Program contributions this year.

Yet, with more than 4,300 BSC churches some people question the need to plant more churches in North Carolina.

Mark Gray, BSC church planting team leader, said that although many wonderful things are happening in established churches, some churches are experiencing decline and are not effectively reaching their communities.

Statistics repeatedly demonstrate that new church plants are the most effective tool to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

"New church plants reach people for the Lord at three times the rate of existing churches," he said.

For that reason, Gray believes church planting will play a critical role in the effort to reach the 5.6 million people in North Carolina who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. With so much at stake, the BSC church planting team works hard to ensure that every church planter is trained and equipped.

"We know that when we invest in church planters on the front end to help them understand the principles to be an effective church planter we will have a much better impact on the lost in North Carolina," Gray said.



Church plants reach people at a faster rate than existing churches. N.C. Baptists helped start 89 churches in 2011. While N.C. has more than 4,300 Southern Baptist churches, some may question the need to start more, and others aren't effectively reaching their own communities. (BSC photos)



The investment in church planters begins with a rigorous assessment process designed to help confirm a potential planter's call to church planting.

The assessment also gives the church planting team an opportunity to determine if a candidate has a passion for, and a history of, leading people to faith in Jesus Christ.

"We are looking for someone who really has a passion to reach the lost," Gray said. "It's one thing to talk about reaching the lost; it's another thing to actually reach the lost."

After the initial assessment, many planters who complete church planting training are eligible to receive BSC funding to help with the new church plant. In 2011, 198 people, representing 23 language groups, completed the comprehensive, four-day training.

During the training, church planters learn how to target specific people groups, disciple new converts and organize a core team. They are also encouraged to begin thinking about how their church can help start another church.

"Our goal is not to plant a church, our goal is to plant a church that plants churches," Gray said.

The most important factor before

rate is determined by the viability of the congregation after four years.

Gray points to the dedication and years of experience among the BSC church planting team as one reason for the success.

Another reason is prayer. The BSC church planting team has 187 prayer partners statewide who pray regularly for the specific needs and strategic initiatives of church planters.

"The effectiveness being experienced in new church plants is largely due to the power of prayer and our faithful prayer partners across the state," Gray said. "We are humbled and grateful for the support and prayers of North Carolina Baptists as we seek to reach the 5.6 million lost and unchurched in our state."

In 2011, among the 138 churches in the funding cycle, 2,651 people made professions of faith and the average worship attendance was 7,981.

While in the funding cycle, churches set aside two percent of undesignated funds for church planting, at least five percent to the Cooperative Program and at least three percent to an association or church planting network. Last year, these churches gave more than \$203,000 through the Cooperative Program and about \$108,000 to associational missions.

Gray is excited to see church planters embrace the importance of giving to Southern Baptist missions.

But more than anything he looks forward to seeing how God continues to provide North Carolina with church planters who are committed to planting churches that reach people for Jesus Christ.

"I am really excited about the continued growth and passion for evangelism among church planters," he said. "I love seeing people saved."

For more information on how your congregation can become directly involved in church planting please visit [ncbaptist.org/churchplanting](http://ncbaptist.org/churchplanting). **B**

**"We know that when we invest in church planters on the front end ... we will have a much better impact on the lost in North Carolina."**  
— Mark Gray

launching is to gather a solid group of leaders. "One of the challenges of church planting is a guy who conducts his public launch too quickly before his planting core is disciplined and matured enough to take the lead and run with it," Gray said. "We do not encourage them to launch quickly."

The hard work and resources Gray and his team have poured into equipping church planters has led to an 88.5 percent success rate of affiliated church plants during the past four years. The success

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# Medical professionals seek to preach and heal

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

**R**ichard Marx remembers treating patients at a medical clinic held under a sheet in the slums of some remote village somewhere in North Africa.

The sun bore down on them while children begged for water and needed care. For Marx, a physician and veteran medical missions volunteer from Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, it was a tough environment to hold a clinic.

A few days later, a local believer followed up with a woman who visited the clinic. The woman suffered from chronic breathing trouble and mentioned she noticed something different about the volunteers, whom she said seemed more interested in her than payment.

"They touched me," the woman said. That day she accepted Jesus Christ as her Savior.

Marx shared this story during the Medical Mission One Day conference March 3 at Calvary Baptist Church. The event was co-sponsored by IMB (International Mission Board) and its Southern Baptist partner BGR (Baptist Global Response).

About 35 to 40 medical professionals from around the area gathered during the event to learn how their medical skills can open up opportunities to share the gospel in some of the toughest places in the world.

"When you return you will be a changed person," Marx said. "Like most of those who have been on a medical mission trip you will be anxious to go back to the field again. You will be hooked."

If handled well, medical missions can be one of the most powerful frontline weapons for reaching people with the gospel. IMB staff were quick to point out the need for more medical volunteers.

"There is the idea that IMB doesn't do medical missions anymore," said Scott Holste, IMB's associate vice president of global strategy. "It's a widespread myth."

"The truth is we actually have more medical potential today serving with us in more countries than ever before, ever in our history."

Medical missions is biblical, it is

Southern Baptist and it is strategic, he added.

"[Jesus] proclaimed the good news and demonstrated the gospel, healed the sick," Holste said.

"Jesus is asking disciples to do the same."

For Southern Baptists, medical missions goes back to the beginning of the Southern Baptist Convention in 1845. Holste read reports from pioneers of Southern Baptist medical missions that were written in the days when chloroform and "other drugs" were used to perform surgery.

Today, younger generations continue to look for opportunities to meet both physical and spiritual needs.

"We have a rich heritage to share with [younger generations]," Holste said.

Through the years, however, there has been an "unfortunate divorce" with many organizations on the issue of "the proclamation of the gospel and demonstration of the gospel."

"With some [agencies] there is the thought that proclaiming the gospel in the midst of demonstrating the gospel somehow taints that demonstration, that act of goodness," Holste said.

"I think that is unfortunate."

Medical missions has become a strategic tool in gaining access to difficult and hard-to-reach places.

At one time, most governments allowed missionaries in any part of the world, Holste said. Today, most have a closed-door policy to missionary work.

That's where medical missions can help break down cultural barriers and gain access to areas most missionaries are unable to openly travel.

According to IMB research, about a billion people worldwide – most who live in these difficult areas – have inadequate access to food and are undernourished. Over a billion people lack access to safe drinking water.

More than 8 million children die each year under the age of 5, primarily from preventable disease. Three million die from Malaria each year.

In addition to providing health care, medical volunteers have opportunities to work alongside missionaries and lo-



Medical professionals treat a young boy during a medical mission clinic. Medical skills can open up opportunities to share the gospel in some of the toughest places in the world. Healthcare professionals gathered March 3 in Winston-Salem for a one-day conference. (IMB photo)

cal believers to help make disciples and empower the church or start one.

Of the more than 11,500 people groups, 6,628 of these are unreached with less than 2 percent who are evangelical. And 3,501 of these groups are unengaged – no evangelical church, no evangelical agency, no one trying to start a church, no known evangelical presence.

"It's a command," said Jason, a medical missionary in an area of the world

with restricted access. "We need to do it."

"As healthcare professionals, our comfort zone is caring for people, but if we neglect preaching the gospel ... I believe we get a little out of balance."

For more information on specific projects and to learn more about how you can become involved in medical projects overseas, go to [gobgr.org](http://gobgr.org) and click on "Health Care Connections" or call them at (866) 974-5623. **BR**

## Lottie Moon film aims for theaters, DVD

By KELLY SHROUT | Baptist Press

**C**harlotte "Lottie" Moon left a privileged life in Virginia in the late 1800s to follow God's call to war-torn China – and spent the rest of her life there.

"Lottie's life and message needs to reach a new generation," said Erich Bridges, screenwriter and a producer for "Heart of a Rebel," a feature-length film in development about Moon, who spent 40 years in China teaching young girls and sharing the gospel. "There are many young people today who are searching for purpose greater than themselves," said

Bridges, a longtime global correspondent for the IMB (International Mission Board).

The namesake of Southern Baptists' annual Christmas offering for international missions, Moon was among the first single women appointed by what was then the Foreign Mission Board (now IMB). This year marks the centennial of Moon's death on Dec. 24, 1912. Bridges began writing the film script about three years ago with Chris Haas, a New York-based writer and actor.

Last year they expanded the film team to include marketing specialist Chris Forbes, veteran film production manager Payton Dunham and Keith Swezey, president of Erin's Hope Foundation, which has helped fund start-up work on the project. (A concept trailer is available at [lottiemoonfilm.com](http://lottiemoonfilm.com).)

"Heart of a Rebel" will be produced by Lottie Moon Film, LLC, an independent production company, and funded entirely by private investors. **BR**

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# Tsunami survivors in Japan grateful for SBC relief

## – One year later –

By **SUSIE RAIN** | Baptist Press

**W**hen Nobuko Tanno closes her eyes, she sees tsunami waves rushing in and destroying her village along Japan's northeastern coastline. She sees cars floating and houses coming off foundations. She hears the roar of the water and desperate cries for help.

Her normally stoic face contorts a little with the flood of memories and she quickly opens her eyes. Remembering that fateful day one year ago, March 11, 2011, is still hard.

She fixes her gaze on the odd-shaped frame on the white wall in her refurbished home. It immediately brings a smile and a contented sigh escapes.

By her reaction, you'd expect the framed object to be a peaceful painting, but it's just a section of the drywall where Southern Baptist Disaster Relief teams signed their names and wrote Bible verses as words of encouragement.

For Tanno, however, it's a priceless masterpiece, a reminder that there is hope for the future.

"After the tsunami, my husband and I tried to clean up. By ourselves, we couldn't do much. It was overwhelming," Tanno recounts.

The entire first floor was damaged and piled high with debris lodged in toxic mud. "Then, the yellow shirts [Southern Baptist workers] came to my door. They treated my house like it was their own.

"Their attitude was 'thank you for letting us serve you.' I was really surprised at their servant heart," Tanno says of the five different teams from California, Washington, Oregon, Missouri and Canada who worked on her home throughout the year. "Thank you. Thank you for what you did for my family."

Tanno points to a verse from Jeremiah 33 on the wall. "That is my favorite. It was the first one," she says. "I don't understand all of it but I am learning."

Mickie Lee from Clovis Hills Community Church, Fresno, Calif., smiles when her friend mentions Scripture.

Lee, who came with two different disaster relief teams and stayed on to serve as an interpreter, remembers when Tanno was skeptical. Lee says Tanno is not yet a believer but is studying the Bible a team gave her, starting with the verses on her wall so she can understand what makes these "yellow shirts" so different from other volunteers.

Southern Baptist teams, known in this part of Japan by their yellow attire, responded to the world's first triple disaster – a 9.0-magnitude earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis – within days.

They have kept a steady presence ever since by working through the Tohoku Care ministry of the International Mission Board. Teams from 15 states have done everything from mudding out houses and rebuilding to hearing survivor stories and hosting banana split parties. Others have made their impact from afar.

A group of Girls in Action from Georgia made rag dolls so teams could hand out toys to children who lost all of their belongings. Women in Louisiana made 4,000 Christmas stockings for IMB missionaries and Southern Baptist disaster relief teams from the States to hand out to the tsunami survivors as a way to share the Christmas story.



Savannah Bracewell, from New Hope Baptist Church in Fayetteville, Ga., serves tea to tsunami survivors after a clown show by Baptist volunteers. The 16-year-old traveled to Japan on her first international mission trip to minister to survivors of the March 2011 tragedy. (BP photo)

Survivor Ryouichi Usuzawa says the Tohoku Care volunteers are different in that they meet more than just physical needs, but also emotional and spiritual needs. They often do this simply by "listening" to survivors, like Usuzawa, recount their harrowing escape from death or playing games to help them forget the nightmares.

Like more than 323,000 other Japanese, Usuzawa was forced to move to temporary housing when her home was destroyed last March.

Any flat piece of land was used to set up the pre-fab houses. Many villages and families were split up, forcing most survivors to deal with grief and depression on their own. Usuzawa's new community is among the largest, with 2,164 households.

"After we all moved to temporary housing, we just stared at the floor. We had so much grief. It was such a pathetic situation that my heart broke.

Then, the volunteers came and listened," Usuzawa says. He looks back at a new green building and adds, "The reason this community building was set up was so people could come together and share their suffering – encourage one another."

Through the Japan Disaster Response fund, Southern Baptists provided three community buildings in different locations along the coast.

Arkansas Baptists paid for decks to go up around the buildings, providing more gathering space for outreach events, and a team from Tennessee did the construction work. Usuzawa says the buildings provide a place for the next phase of Japan's healing – "heart care" – to begin.



"I see this building every day and it's a signal to me that Southern Baptists in America are telling us to 'hang in there' – that they care about us," she says.

Reagan Andrews, left, a first-grader and member of Gateway Fellowship in Gilbert, Ariz., plays at a park. With help, Reagan raised more than \$900 for disaster relief to aid Japanese earthquake and tsunami survivors. When Reagan was not even a day old, she had a stroke putting her at risk for permanent brain damage. Today, she is so healthy she is not under a specialist's care. (Photo by Charlie Leight/Genesis Photos)

### Heart care

IMB emeritus missionaries Gerald and Brenda Burch stress that the willingness of Southern Baptists to unselfishly give their money, time and prayers have survivors and fellow Japanese volunteers taking notice.

Missionaries say Tohoku in northeast Japan has been closed to the gospel for hundreds of years. Less than 1 percent claim to be evangelical Christians in the areas hardest hit by the tsunami.

"The steady flow of Southern Baptists since the tsunami has opened doors," Gerald says.

"Before it was hard to talk to anyone. Now, when they open the doors of their small temporary houses and see our faces and yellow vests, the countenance on their faces changes.

"They are glad to see us. They invite us in for tea."

One Japanese homeowner reflected this change right before the eyes of two Hawaii Baptist disaster relief workers, Leonard Higa of First Baptist Church in Pearl City, and David Blair of Lahaina Baptist Church, who partnered with Samaritan's Purse through Tohoku Care in refurbishing the downstairs of the home.

Higa, a 70-year-old carpenter, speaks Japanese and at every opportunity, tried to engage the homeowner in conversation. "She was standoffish," Higa says, remembering the first few days. "I knew she wasn't interested in my message, so David and I worked hard to plant seeds by caring for her physical needs. We knew the Holy Spirit would grow these seeds and God would send someone behind us to follow up."

As he and Blair cut boards, they teased the other volunteers and joked back and forth. The laughter carried throughout the house and up the stairs to where the homeowner sat. Soon the joyful noises drew her downstairs. She listened from behind a corner.

When lunchtime arrived, she quietly brought in pumpkin soup for the workers covered in sawdust. They thanked her profusely but she shrugged it off and went back upstairs.

The friendly banter kept drawing her back, though.

She eventually joined in the conversations and spent days sharing meals and her own story of survival and grief. At one point, she admitted that she wished she were an American so she could be joyful like them.

"We aren't happy because we are Americans," Higa responded. "We are joyful because we have Jesus in our hearts. You can have the same."

The homeowner looked at Higa for a second then nodded her head, indicating she was ready to welcome that same joy into her heart.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Susie Rain is an International Mission Board writer based in Asia. For more stories on Japan's "Road to Recovery" and how Southern Baptists are helping, visit [asiastories.com](http://asiastories.com).) **BR**



# Crowd challenged to ‘wake up,’ reach culture for Christ

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

**W**hile movies, television shows and the Internet continue to be among the most influential factors in our culture today, Christians are falling short in using them to spread the gospel, contends Alex Kendrick, actor, filmmaker and associate pastor at Sherwood Baptist Church, Albany, Ga.

“We’ve got to wake up to the fact that the same old, same old doesn’t necessarily reach an ever-changing culture,” said Kendrick, who has helped Sherwood Films make “Flywheel,” “Facing the Giants,” “Fireproof” and “Courageous.”

Kendrick was among a variety of speakers that included father-son duo Rusty Martin Sr. and Jr. of Garner – both in the movie “Courageous” – at Culture Reach, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s evangelism conference held Feb. 27 at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem. The one-day event drew a crowd of more than 800 pastors, church leaders and others from around the state.

Christians must unify and strive toward reaching their culture for Christ, Kendrick said.

As North Carolina faces an opportunity to define marriage between a man and a woman on May 8, Kendrick warned of liberal agendas that continue to work against biblical views of marriage, the family, schools and nearly every facet of society.

“We need to be involved in our government, the courts, country, entertainment, education,” he said.

“What are we doing to unify the body of Christ? We have to come together ... We have the gospel, we need unity.”

## A nation in trouble

“Folks we are losing the battle for our culture,” said Alex McFarland, who speaks nationally on apologetics and is a guest contributor on Fox News.

“I’m not doom and gloom,” he said. “I’m not a pessimist ... but the kids and the grandkids are going to be living in a dark world if we don’t get on our knees and pray for heaven to come down.”

“Aside from the fact we’re losing the culture, our neighbors are dying and going to hell.”

McFarland, who has debated numerous personalities on the popular news channel, challenged the crowd to prepare to defend their faith – but to do it in a loving, Christ-like way.

“Apologetics is not a license to be abrasive,” he said. “We use good arguments, but we are never to be argumentative.”



Alex Kendrick leads a prayer during Culture Reach Feb. 27 in Winston-Salem. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina hosted the one-day state evangelism conference. Kendrick is a writer, actor and producer for Sherwood Pictures. See photo gallery at [BRnow.org](http://BRnow.org). (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

The world has changed. In 1900, more than 80 percent of the Christian population in the world was in Europe and North America, said Alvin Reid, an associate dean and professor at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Today, it’s less than half of that number.

“[The United States] is the fourth-largest lost nation in the world,” Reid said. “We are an international mission field.”

## Younger generations

Reid linked part of the problem with a failure to reach younger generations for Christ.

“We have the largest group of teenagers in the history of America right now,” he said. “And yet Southern Baptists reach about half as many teenagers today as we did in the early 70s.”

For those who have a desire to reach younger generations for Christ, Reid summed up the solution in one word.

“Try!”

Young people need to be seen as the church of “now,” instead of tomorrow. Too many of them are being marginalized and underestimated, he said. During his message, Reid interviewed a group of teenagers from Calvary Baptist Church who have started a ministry to help stop human trafficking. Their ministry is at [saveoursisterstoday.com](http://saveoursisterstoday.com).

“This is just a ninth grade Sunday School class in a Baptist church,” said

Reid, noting that students are hungry to learn and make an impact for Christ. “If [teenagers] can learn trigonometry in the high school, they can learn theology in the church.”

Too many churches, however, are too focused on their youth having fun, eating pizza and keeping them safe, said Merrie Johnson, senior consultant for youth ministry with the Baptist State Convention. Not enough churches are focusing on teaching them about Jesus.

According to a Gallup study, 88 percent of students drop out of church by the time they graduate from college. Half of them will leave church and never come back.

Only one out of 10 has a living vibrant relationship with God, Johnson reported.

“Nine don’t,” she said. “We’ve got to be passionately persistent and follow after them. Students need someone to commit to them long enough to outlast all of their push away protective techniques.”

“They will do what we expect,” she said. “If we expect them to graduate and go off to college and party for a while, guess what? They will. If we expect them to catch on to the fact that they are missionaries to a lost culture, [they will].”

## Meeting the ‘deep’ need

Problems in many of today’s churches also can be traced to watered-down

preaching said, Don Wilton, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Spartanburg.

“I believe that every message preached ought to be an evangelistic message,” he said.

“Any preaching that is void of Jesus Christ and Him crucified is not Christian preaching.”

“I submit to you that many a sermon delivered in many of our Southern Baptist churches today could be preached in a Jewish synagogue and wouldn’t offend a rabbi.”

Chuck Register, executive leader of missions development for the Baptist State Convention, challenged pastors to preach an evangelistic message and baptize new believers on Easter, which is part of the 2012 Find It Here: Expanding the Kingdom emphasis.

Evangelism should be a part of everything the church does, Register said.

“There are millions of people, billions of people on planet earth that are screaming for North Carolina Baptists to [share the gospel with them],” he said. “They do not want us simply to build a shelter. They do not want us simply to serve a hot plate when we arrive.”

“When we arrive they really want us to meet the deepest, darkest need of their life. It is the need for the Lord Jesus Christ.”

For more information about Find It Here, go to [finditherenc.org](http://finditherenc.org) or call (800) 395-5102. **BR**





## Marriage amendment

### Updates and Resources

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has a collection of articles and information on the marriage amendment. 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](mailto:bdavis@ncbaptist.org).

## Websites

- **Christian Action League** – [christianactionleague.org](http://christianactionleague.org)
- **Christian Life and Public Affairs** – [blog.ncbaptist.org/clpa](http://blog.ncbaptist.org/clpa)
- **Vote For Marriage NC** – [voteformarriagenc.com](http://voteformarriagenc.com)
- **North Carolina Family Policy Council** – [ncfamily.org](http://ncfamily.org)
- **The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission** – [erlc.com](http://erlc.com)
- **Family Research Council** – [frc.org](http://frc.org)

Do you have items, sites, or other information to share? Email [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org).

## CHURCH NEWS



### Bear Creek Baptist Church, Bakersville

On Feb. 26 around 500 concerned citizens of different faith traditions from Mitchell, Avery, and Yancey counties gathered at Bear Creek Baptist Church, Bakersville, for "An Evening of Salt and Light: A Christian Citizenship Conference." Guest speakers included Mark Creech, executive director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina, and Richard Land, president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. The event discussed the marriage amendment. N.C. voters go to the polls May 8 to vote on the amendment which, if approved, will define marriage as between one man and one woman.

# Re-release focuses on what women can do in the church

*The Role of Women in the Church*

by Charles C. Ryrie (B&H Academic, October 2011)

Originally released in 1958, Charles Ryrie's book, *The Role of Women in the Church*, was re-released in its second edition by B&H Academic (2011). The book is written from a complementarian perspective and, using careful exegesis of scripture coupled with historical record, investigates the role and function women should have in the church. Complementarians believe scripture gives precedence for men and women being equal in their standing in Christ, yet different in their function within the church. Egalitarians believe men and women are also equal in their standing in Christ, as well as equal in their church role, meaning any role or office a man can assume a woman can also.

Ryrie, an acclaimed theologian and former professor and dean at Dallas Theological Seminary, guides the reader through an understanding of the status of women in ancient Greece and Rome, as well as Judaism. He also examines the way women ministered to Jesus and the way Jesus ministered to women. He notes that Jesus taught women and He received their public testimony, which was different than the way women were treated in ancient culture.

But, Ryrie observes, "what is not said about women is as important as what is said." He points out that women were not among the Twelve disciples, nor were they among the 72 men Jesus sent out in Luke 10:1-17. He also notes that women were not present at the Lord's Supper. Ryrie concludes, "it is evident that all these significant facts put together are proof that the activities of women were different from those which our Lord assigned to men." Jesus did not view differences in spiritual privileges between the genders; but certainly differences exist in spiritual activities between men and women. Ryrie continues to prove his thesis using the Pauline epistles and writings of the early church fathers.

Ryrie concludes his work by writing that "in the inspired writings we have the mind of God concerning the full development of women." He fleshes out this

statement by explaining, "... this will mean full worth as a creation of God, subordination and honor in the home [and] silence and helpfulness in the church according to the teaching and pattern of the New Testament."

Ryrie's book was first released in 1958, prior to the wave of feminism that swept across the United States in the 1960s and 70's.



ASHLEY ALLEN  
Book Review

As Ryrie uses historical records of early church fathers in his study of women's roles, one can see this has always been an issue for the church. But, when one examines God's Word, it is evident that from Creation, God had different roles for men and women. There is an order given in how God created mankind – Adam was created first and Eve came from one of his ribs. The Apostle Paul reiterates the importance of creation order in his first letter to the church at Corinth (1 Corinthians 11:3-16) and in his letter to Timothy (1 Timothy 2:9-14) in speaking of order within the church.

However, the Apostle Paul also notes throughout his letters that women played a significant role in the early church. Women still play a significant role in our churches today.

Often the women are the backbone of prayer support for pastors, church staff, church members, visitors and missionaries. Additionally, women are many times the force behind the scenes giving attention and care to people that enable the church to be the Body of Christ.

Women are also the teachers of children and youth, as well as teachers of each other. The influence of women in our churches today is still as vast and significant as it was in the early church.

While scripture is clear that women should not exercise authority over a man (1 Timothy 2:12), women still play pivotal roles in the church.

In his letter to Titus, who was a church planter at

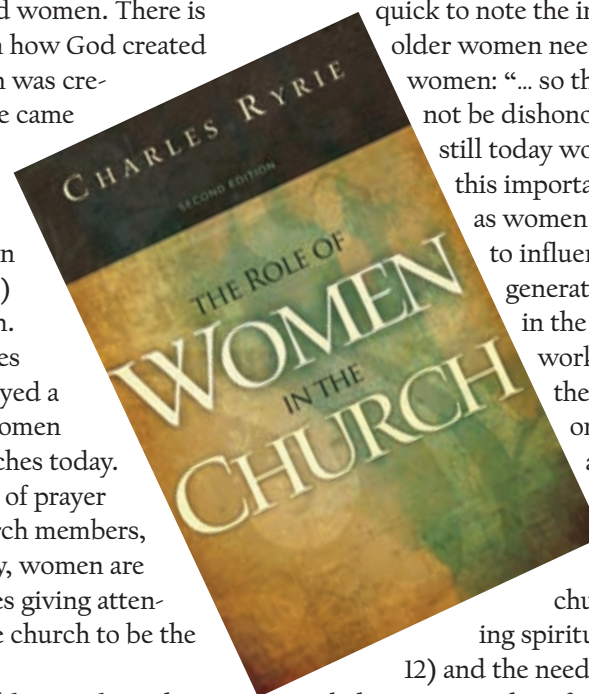
Crete, the Apostle Paul wrote to Titus to have the older women teach the younger women (Titus 2:3-5).

Interestingly, in the same second chapter of Titus, Paul gave instructions for the older men to teach the younger men. Paul recognized that women have connections with one another and those connections are important for the Kingdom of God. Within the Cretean culture there were people teaching inaccuracies for "sordid gain" (Titus 1:11) and the believers at that church were claiming to know God, "but by their deeds they deny Him" (Titus 1:16). Yet, it is within this context that Paul admonishes Titus to have the older women teach the younger women in areas ranging from the home, relationships and their walk with Christ. Paul is

quick to note the importance of why the older women needed to teach the younger women: "... so that the word of God will not be dishonored" (Titus 2:5). Even still today women can take part in this important and significant role as women are used by the Lord to influence and teach another generation who has influence in the home, society and the workplace. All too often in the church today we focus on what women cannot do as opposed to the biblical role of what women can do. Much like Paul's admonishment to the church at Corinth regarding spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) and the need and importance for each

believer to use the gifts God has given, men and women within our churches today need to recognize and rejoice that we have equal standing in Christ, and God desires to use us in His Kingdom – significantly, albeit differently, for each gender.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Ashley Allen is director of Embrace, the women's ministry at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.) **BR**





# Anatomy of a name change

**W**hen the invitation of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Bryant Wright came [for me] to serve on a task force dedicated to deliberating the possibility of changing the name of the SBC, I was thankful for the invitation and excited to serve with other men and women who care about the SBC.

[Our recommendation] now stands approved for consideration this summer at the annual meeting of the SBC.

Since the announcement of this new descriptor in our name came out, there have been many opinions about whether or not this is actually a good move for the SBC. I have heard from a significant number of Southern Baptists who love the new concept, many who are not in favor of it, and even more who are fairly ambivalent about the entire matter.

However, I have heard a bit of confusion as to what this exactly means for the SBC and how this name was chosen by the task force. While I obviously do not speak for the task force, I do believe the choice we made was good and helpful for the future of the SBC. I would like to make an attempt at clarifying how and why we arrived at the conclusion we did.

The task force convened on two occasions, but we were tasked with a fair amount of work apart from our face-to-face meetings. There were a number of issues that must be addressed. Was there a benefit to a new descriptor for the SBC? If so, what should it be? How would it affect Southern Baptist life? What legal ramifications would be involved? Would there be a cost in terms of reputation and influence? What were the financial costs associated with such a change? These and other matters weighed on our minds as we progressed through our proceedings.

We requested opinions from across SBC life, specifically from the Executive Directors of each of the state conventions. The responses we received were quite varied. A significant number of people (both at the grassroots level and those in positions of denominational influence) believed that some sort of name change would be beneficial to them and their Great Commission work.

While no one believed this to be a “fix” for the decrease in baptisms or lack of evangelistic fervor, many did believe this would be a helpful step toward that end. ... Once we determined that we possessed sufficient evidence to allow us to move forward in our study, we began to research the legal options and ramifications of some sort of a name change. This involved a multitude of questions and answers that would need to be addressed concurrently. We studied the history of name change proposals and discovered this issue had been at the forefront of Southern Baptist consciousness throughout our history. Starting with George Hillyer of Georgia in 1903, Southern Baptists have dealt with this issue over and over again.

As we began to consider the legal options, we quickly learned it would be nearly impossible (and not necessarily beneficial) to change the name of the SBC. ...

Across the nation, we understood there is great equity and name recognition with the Southern Baptist Convention's name. SBC Disaster relief efforts in New Orleans and New York City in recent years have only helped to solidify this reality. Our unity in theological

conviction on critical aspects of biblical fidelity has proven to be of great worth in many places in our nation and around the world.

When the SBC was founded in 1845 in Augusta, Ga., it was organized under a charter issued by the legislature of the state of Georgia. Southern Baptists were granted some legal exemptions that have proven to be extremely valuable to us. Should we have chosen to recommend a legal name change, we would face a possible change to our charter that would potentially require that our updated charter be under the jurisdiction of current Georgia non-profit statute. This would place the SBC in the vulnerable position of forfeiting our current legal status. Moreover, current non-profit statutes require that a non-profit organization operate under the administration of a Board of Directors, as ultimate authority. This poses a problem, as the SBC officially only exists two days each year. Our messengers, not a Board of Directors, are the ultimate decision making body of the convention. Southern Baptist polity would have been compromised and radically reoriented our life together by placing ultimate authority in the hands of a board of directors. How would such a board be selected? How could they function within our polity? These problematic questions stymied our ability to change the legal name of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Serious financial implications confronted us. As we began to contemplate the potential financial costs of everything from the legal professionals required to assist in this process to the modification of logos, the cost estimates became counterproductive and insurmountable. We literally could not calculate the enormous financial cost to a legal name change.

Another option was that of a Doing Business As (DBA) recognition. From a legal perspective, this option forces some binding, legal obligations on local churches, organizations and/or entities affiliated with the SBC that would cause widespread (and unnecessary) problems. The task force also rejected this option.

Southern Baptists have long held various monikers for our cooperative work. These have been used in publications, websites, etc. Until now, we have never considered selecting any of these descriptors as an official descriptor of the work of our convention. Selecting a formal descriptor/moniker for our identity and work preserves our legal status and allows us to honor those who live in areas where “Southern Baptist” continues to maintain a position of goodwill and brand equity. It honors those who love the SBC because of our doctrine and missions, but who may find our name to be a hindrance from time to time. It communicates to them that we care about them and value them as partners in the gospel. A significant number of

our ethnic partners pled for a name change, and this action demonstrates our love and appreciation for them as we desire to join them in their struggle with others in their traditions who do not understand and/or appreciate Southern Baptists.

To our church planters and other church leaders in non-traditional SBC areas, it highlights our love and thankfulness for them. This option is voluntary and allows every church and/or entity in the SBC to utilize the new moniker (or not) depending on the approval of their leadership, congregation and trustees.

Why “Great Commission Baptists”? Obviously we had to eliminate names that were utilized by other organizations and names that struck at our polity (such as International Baptists, Global Baptist, etc. as the SBC simply does not exist outside of the USA). Great Commission Baptists continued to rise to the top. While some in SBC life seemed concerned (or excited) that we would consider a more “contemporary” name, I was of the opinion that any option be what I called a “legacy name.” In other words, it must be a name that would stand the test of time. Changing the name to something that sounded good today, but would lose potency and effectiveness over time had little appeal to me.

From my perspective, Great Commission Baptists was a great choice ... clearly explaining our desire to unite around the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Task Force came to the unanimous recommendation that Great Commission Baptists captures who we have historically aspired to be and propels us forward to a bright Great Commission focused future.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Micah Fries is pastor of Frederick Boulevard Baptist Church, St. Joseph, Mo. This column first appeared on his blog [micahfries.com](http://micahfries.com).) **BR**



**MICAH FRIES**  
Guest Column





# What will the marriage amendment do?

**O**n May 8, the voters will decide whether this provision should be added to the State Constitution:

*“Marriage between one man and one woman is the only domestic legal union that shall be valid or recognized in this State. This Section does not prohibit a private party from entering into contracts with another private party; nor does this section prohibit courts from adjudicating the rights of private parties pursuant to such contracts.”*

This marriage amendment would recognize only domestic legal unions between one man and one woman. Domestic partnerships or civil unions, whether opposite-sex or same-sex, would not be valid or recognized here. The amendment would prohibit the government from creating “same-sex marriage”

The meaning of “legal union” as a judicially recognized status is concrete and clear in the context of family relationships. In federal law, “‘marriage’ means only a legal union between one man and one woman as husband and wife...” 1 U.S.C. §7 (2005). This definition of marriage in federal law is consistent with the long-standing definition: marriage is the “[l]egal union of one man and one woman as husband and wife” *Black’s Law Dictionary* 876 (5th ed. 1979). The word “domestic” was added to the words “legal union” to clarify that other legal arrangements, such as business partnerships, would not be affected by this amendment.

Any benefits extended by government to a person based on a domestic legal union other than marriage would be prohibited. But the government could still extend employment benefits that impact or benefit non-married domestic households. The extension of such benefits, however, could not be predicated only upon the status of a domestic relationship other than marriage. For example, a city could still allow an employee to pick one other person of his or her choice to be the beneficiary for health insurance.

The second sentence of the amendment makes clear that the amendment would not prohibit private companies from entering into private contracts based on relationships chosen by the company. Private employers, for example, could continue to offer domestic partnership or civil union benefits to an employee’s same-sex or opposite-sex partner. The amendment would prohibit the government from forcing a company to provide such benefit.

During the debate I was amazed at the baseless claims made by opponents. Several continue to be repeated by the media. Let’s set the record straight:

## 1. The amendment will not adversely

## ly affect North Carolina’s economy.

A 2011 report by the American Legislative Exchange Council ranked states by economic performance between 1999 and 2009 and by economic outlook. Eight of



**PAUL “SKIP” STAM**  
N.C. House  
Majority Leader

the top 10 economically performing states have marriage amendments. None have legalized same-sex marriage, civil unions or domestic partnerships. Nine of the 10 states forecasted to have the poorest economic growth have legalized same-sex marriage, civil unions and/or domestic partnerships.

**2. The amendment will not affect the enforcement of domestic violence laws.** Opponents would have you think the amendment obliterates our domestic violence law. The cases they use as authority are Ohio appellate cases later overturned by the Ohio Supreme Court, which found the domestic violence statutes consistent with the state’s marriage amendment. In Kansas the outcome

was the same. Marriage amendments have had no effect on the enforcement of domestic violence statutes. Thirty other states have marriage amendments. In all 30 states domestic violence laws continue to be enforced. I have read and reread our domestic violence statutes. I am unable to even comprehend the logic of this objection.

## 3. Legally recognizing only heterosexual marriage isn’t discrimination against homosexuals wanting to marry.

Marriage between a man and a woman has existed in virtually every known society. It has served the purpose of channeling procreative sexual activity into an institution, which will provide a stable environment for children produced from the sexual union of the partners in marriage.

Recognizing that heterosexual marriage has provided the best environment for the rearing of future citizens, North Carolina has regulated marriage for at least 340 years. Same-sex marriage is an entirely different relationship with a completely different purpose. Expanding the marital institution to other relationships which serve completely different purposes ultimately undermines the in-

stitution which has proven to be the best and safest environment for children.

## 4. The amendment will not nullify medical powers of attorney (MPOAs), wills and trusts if the parties are homosexual partners.

Under G.S. 32A-18 “any competent person who is not engaged in providing health care to the principal for remuneration, and who is 18 years of age or older, may act as a health care agent.” The relationship between the patient and the designated agent does not matter. The intent of the testator and trustor is the “gold standard” in N.C. for interpreting wills and trusts. The amendment does not change the intent of the testator in either type of these instruments. The amendment explicitly states that it will not affect the rights of parties to enter into private contractual agreements.

## 5. The marriage amendment will not determine the custody and visitation rights of unmarried parents unless their behavior affects the child.

Courts have based custody and

See Stam page 16

# Cherishing our families

**I**n less than two months North Carolina voters will decide whether or not a definition of marriage is written into the state constitution that defines marriage as the union between one man and one woman. If you or your church would like more information about the marriage amendment you can visit [blog.ncbaptist.org/clpa](http://blog.ncbaptist.org/clpa).

I do pray for this amendment to pass, but it will take more than pastors and church members saying “I support this amendment.”

The success or failure of this vote will be determined by the number of people who actually take the time to drive to the polls and cast their vote as a North Carolina citizen. I beg you to exercise your right and responsibility to vote.

However, I do not believe that passing this amendment will solve the problem of broken, hurting marriages and families. This is tremendously important, but there is more to do.

Many marriages and families in this country are in desperate need of healing. A recent article in *The New York Times* reported that more than half of births to American women under age 30 are

outside the union of marriage. In 2010, a study from the Pew Research Center reported that 39 percent of Americans believed marriage is becoming obsolete.

As marriages are strengthened, so are families. In order for that to happen, the local church must step up and lead the way. We must teach about God’s design for marriage and family, and we must model Christ-centered marriages.

We must be willing to come alongside those who are struggling in their marriage and help them experience the grace and power that comes through Jesus Christ.

God created marriage between a man and woman.

According to Ephesians 5:31-32, a Christ-centered marriage can serve as an earthly picture, or representation, of the unity and love that exists between God and His church – between those who know Him as Savior and Lord. A Christian marriage helps point us back to the love of our heavenly Father.

Since God created marriage we know that marriage is good and is intended for our good and His glory. Therefore we must cherish marriage and seek to honor God in our marriage.

Accomplishing this is not easy, as it requires commitment and intentionality. If we do not make marriage and family a priority, these relationships will fall to the wayside before we know it.

I want to point you to an excellent resource to help strengthen your family.

Eddie Thompson, our Convention staff member who serves in marriage and family ministry, leads various marriage conferences and parenting conferences.

During these conferences Eddie will help you understand God’s design for marriage and for the family, and how you can get back on track in these areas of your life.

In a few months he is also leading a pastor/spouse retreat. More information about these events is available at [ncbaptist.org/family](http://ncbaptist.org/family).

Your marriage and your family are worth your time and investment. You can leave a legacy of faithfulness and love for God that will impact generations to come.

It’s time to plead for the Holy Spirit to work in our marriages and it’s time to obey Him so that Christ-controlled relationships in our home bring much honor and glory to our God.

“...choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve.....But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” – Joshua 24:15 **BR**



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



# We can reach North America

**N**orth America needs Jesus! The North American Mission Board (NAMB) says 259 million people in the United States and Canada do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And most of them do not live in close proximity to a church. So, how will they hear?

What is the best way to reach the lost on our continent with the gospel? The scripture presents God's plan that people will reach people. Disciples will make disciples.

Indulge me for a moment as I remind us of the ratio of churches to people.

- There is one Southern Baptist congregation for every 2,277 people in our state of North Carolina.

- There is one Southern Baptist congregation for every 6,828 people in North America.

- In New England the church-to-people ratio is one in 37,788.

- In Canada the ratio soars to one church for every 123,971 people.

The bottom line: if we are going to reach people, we must plant new churches. The essential role of the local church should be obvious.

If we do not plant churches in communities where there are so few churches, there is little chance people will hear the

gospel and respond in faith.

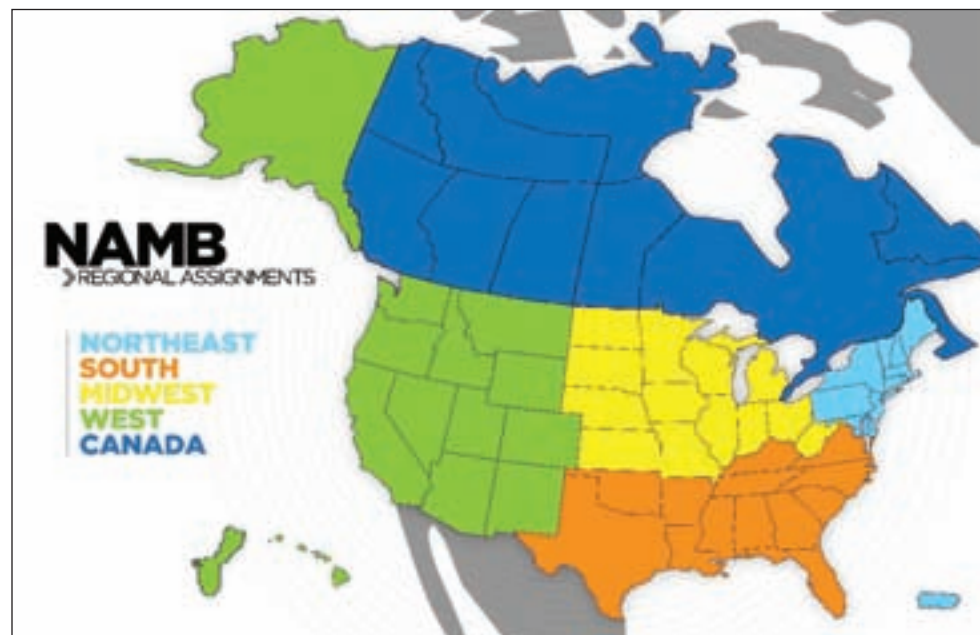
NAMB's website says "... churches are desperately needed to reach our continent with the gospel."

If we are looking at our own community we might assume that there are plenty of churches in North America. But our personal world is probably not characteristic of North America. The staggering shortage of churches demands our response.

What can we do? Existing churches in every state must engage a strategy to demonstrate Christ's love to the unreached of our continent. Every church can do something.

According to sources at NAMB, fewer than 4 percent of SBC churches are engaged in church planting as a primary sponsor – accepting responsibility for direct financial support in partnership with other churches. NAMB's goal is to see a 10 percent increase.

Churches beyond the South are hungry for a partner in the South. By adopting a church in another part of North America, we can provide them with



NAMB has geographically divided its assignment into five regions. Encourage your church to pray for missionaries in each region, with special emphasis on those areas where very few churches exist. To learn more, visit the NAMB website at [namb.net](http://namb.net).

financial support, develop long-term partnerships with them, and send short-term mission teams that focus on specific projects such as VBS, block parties, construction and renovation needs.

Let's find ways to do all of that. But don't overlook a very immediate opportunity. Give to the Annie Armstrong

Easter Offering for North American Missions.

Every Baptist can participate. It's simple. It gets so much done. It's efficient. It confronts real needs. It funds real missions. It supports church planters and more.

Whatever it takes – let's do it! **BR**



**K. ALLAN BLUME**  
Editor

## Submissions for Tar Heel Voices

Please send no more than 300 words, along with contact information, to [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185.

Letters can be anonymous but only with approval by the editor. Each submission will be subject to style, length and clarity adjustments. Only one letter from the same writer will be published in a 90-day period.

## TAR HEEL VOICES

# Pastors should take a stand

I want to commend Erik Stanley for his inspirational and informative article in the Feb. 18 edition, urging churches to do what any Christian and church should do concerning the state marriage amendment. It is refreshing to see people taking a stand for the Bible's mandate of morality in marriage. I also want to respond to the letter in the March 3 edition, Tar Heel Voices: "Asking for trouble," by Dudley B. Stallings. He stated that, "pastors who preach and promote the marriage amendment will cause problems for the pastors that do and may very well split churches." He is right that anyone can have their opinion about the marriage

amendment, but if their opinion is not in line with the teachings of the Bible, their opinion is wrong.

The New Testament Christian martyrs, such as Steven, the Apostle Paul, Apostle John, Apostle Peter, John Bunion in the Bedford Jail, etc., were not afraid to speak out about the moral issues and standards of their day. Why should pastors and Christian leaders do any less? If it causes problems and trouble for pastors to stand up for the truth of the Bible, so be it. The rewards are out of this world! And if churches split over moral issues that the Bible clearly, plainly teaches are wrong and sinful, then they ought

to split. It is very easy to talk Christianity, but it is different to walk as a Christian. Jesus Christ, God's Son and Savior of the world, has the last word about the marriage relationship and human morality. "And he answered and said unto them, have you not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause (marriage) shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they two shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." *Matt. 19:4-6*

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March 25

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

April 1

## I Thank You

**Focal Passage: Psalm 107:1-9, 33-38, 43**

In this last of four lessons on the heart of worship, let's examine gratitude as a habit of every believer. Simply defined, worship is expressing love to God. Having a thankful attitude toward God expresses love to Him.

Even those without a Christian worldview express gratitude. Upon conducting an Internet search for "reasons to be thankful," 10 answers were suggested: Mother Earth, volunteers, freedom, work, public transportation, fresh food, family, friends, well-being, and happiness. Focusing on the creation instead of the Creator, these reasons miss the Giver of all things. Psalm 107 reminds believers that God has shown His goodness to us and that thanksgiving is a natural and essential element of worship. The psalmist instructs the reader, especially the redeemed, to give thanks. Those from every corner of the globe are to give thanks. Four times the psalmist proclaims we are to give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and for His wonderful deeds for men. We are to praise Him even in the midst of calamity, rebellion,

darkness and sorrow. He is with us. One should notice that praise is a prerequisite for being delivered.

We have so much to be thankful for both now and in the age to come – beyond what we can imagine or find words to describe. For the believer, we know that not half has been told of what God has in store for us in eternity. Francis Schaeffer once said, "The beginning of man's rebellion against God was, and is, the lack of a thankful heart." We have so much that sometimes we cannot see the great value of all God has given us. That is ingratitude.

Take note; be aware. Take inventory; count your blessings. Take action; act out your appreciation. Look for reasons to praise the Lord. Be thankful to Him. Show others your love for Him as you take action and serve others today.

"And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful." Colossians 3:15



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

## Jesus Died for Our Sins

**Focal Passage: Matthew 26:26-29, 36-39; 27:45-46, 50-54**

On Good Friday we remember the sacrifice that Jesus Christ made on the cross to die for our sins. His death was not solely the result of a plot by Jewish leaders. His death was intentional, purposeful and in God's plan. Through His substitutionary death on the cross, He made provision for the redemption of man from sin. Why did Jesus choose to die? Because man is sinful and in need of a Savior. We sin by worshiping ourselves and the world God has made. We neglect God as if we were the rulers of our own lives. Without the forgiveness of sin that

Jesus' death offers, we stand condemned by God and are under His wrath awaiting the final judgment to come.

Jesus did not come to change God's mind, but rather He came precisely to express God's mind which was to reconcile man to Himself. Jesus' sacrifice is given

by God Himself. In Jesus, God satisfied His own just requirements by taking the sentence and punishment for our sin upon Himself.

For us to understand the meaning of the cross we have to ask how we are affected by Jesus' sacrifice on Good Friday. How are we made different? The cross convicts us as sinners. We were each there as He was crucified. The cross exposes what kind of people we are – those in need of a Savior. The cross exposes our sin. The cross enables us to live as forgiven sinners. We owed a debt we could not pay; He paid it all for us on the cross. We are forgiven debtors.

The cross means the death of sinners. When He died for us as sinners, we were put to death with Him. We are made new in Christ.

The cross changes our relationship with other people. As we have been forgiven by God, we too are to forgive others. We are to share with them how they can receive His forgiveness too.

With these reminders about Jesus' death for us, how would you explain the necessity of Jesus' death to a nonbeliever? Tell others about Him today.

March 25

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

April 1

## Christianity 101: Accept Others

**Focal Passage: Luke 4:31-37; 5:12-16**

Every day at lunch, he sat by the window at a table by himself. He watched the other students playing outside. He was different. She rode the bus every morning and afternoon to work. Only when it was crowded would anyone sit down next to her. She longingly looked from face to face – seeking just a smile or nod. She was different. The old couple felt the looks as they carefully counted out their pennies for the rolls and coffee they were purchasing.

They were different. The young boy was mentally challenged and the others made fun of him and left him out. The young lady's face was disfigured from an automobile accident. The older couple had little money after years of hard work with no retirement plan.

If we look around us, we can see people who are different, needy and hurting. If we understand that Jesus died for these people, we can develop the ability to see them as He does.

The gospel is about salvation of a person's soul, the mission of Christ's Kingdom is to reach, teach, win and mature people in the gospel.

Christ did this by showing compassion and care with those He came in contact.

I remember John. He was homeless, dirty, and had some mental challenges. He wandered in our church one Sunday seeking food.

The people began to reach out and provide for him. I'll never forget the Wednesday night that with tears falling down his cheeks, he prayed and received Christ. The people accepted him as their Christian brother.

I got the call – John had died early one morning along the train tracks.

His homeless friends found him, and because he had been telling them about our church, they called us. I was privileged to preach his funeral.

Over 200 homeless and drug addicts were there. I was able to share the Good News of Jesus because we had cared for John as Jesus would.

We honor Jesus when we share the Good News of salvation while we seek to meet hurting people's needs.



**THOMAS MARSHALL**  
Pastor, New Hope  
Baptist Church,  
Laurinburg

## Christianity 102: Live to Benefit Others

**Focal Passage: Luke 6:27-38, 41-42, 46-48**

It is natural for a person to focus on "me." We never have to teach children to hoard – we teach them to share. A grandmother shared about taking her three grandchildren to the Dollar Store to buy Christmas gifts for each other and their mom and dad. They were so excited. When they got into the store, the one young child looked up and said, "What am I buying for me?"

We have all watched as a small child tries to claim all the toys in a room as "mine." The movie "Finding Nemo" has ruined my beach trips – all I can hear the seagulls saying is "Mine, mine, mine."

Jesus patterned and taught that we are to live contrary to our nature – we are to be unselfish. Children learn the acrostic JOY – Jesus first, others second, and yourself last.

In fact, Jesus gave the second greatest commandment to love others like we love

ourselves. God knows our bent to "me first," so He challenges us to treat others in this same way.

One time I was at a building getting ready to go inside with a co-worker. As was my custom, I stopped and held the door for him. He turned and said to me, "Why in the world do you always do that?"

Then, he said something I have never forgotten. He sarcastically said, "What would the world be like if everybody did that?" I have often thought along these lines – "What would the world be like if we all put others first?" I believe it would be a pretty nice place.

Remember the old adage "What goes around, comes around?" Being concerned with others often opens the door for others to show concern for us. Also, this works in the negative.

If a person is negative and critical with everyone they meet, it shouldn't surprise them that negativity and criticism is constantly shown to them. We all know people who, because of their personality, are very lonely and sad. If they had taken Jesus' teaching and the truth from Proverbs – they could have friends by being friendly.



# Florida pastor accepts asst. pastor position at FBC Atlanta

According to the *Florida Baptist Witness*, Anthony George, pastor of Aloma Church in Winter Park, Fla., announced March 4 that he has accepted the invitation of Charles Stanley at First Baptist Church in Atlanta to serve as that church's assistant pastor.

"The most difficult part of the decision was the mere prospect of saying goodbye to the church family. You

have encouraged me, supported me, and loved me for fifteen years," George told the congregation, according to Chris Monaghan, Aloma's director of communications.

Elected as the fourth pastor of Aloma Church in June of 1997, George followed the 26-year tenure of Joe Boatwright. He will officially assume his role at First Baptist

Atlanta April 22. A Mississippi native, George moved to Neptune Beach in his teens. He is a graduate of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, and Criswell College in Dallas, Texas.

Stanley has been pastor of First Atlanta for 42 years. He's also served two terms as Southern Baptist Convention president. **BR**

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### Pastor

Poplar Springs Baptist in State Road, NC, is seeking **full-time pastor**. Send resumes to [psbc@embarq.com](mailto:psbc@embarq.com) or PSBC, 193 Fellowship Way, State Road, NC 28676.

Mt. Carmel Baptist Church, a SBC in Troy, NC, is seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. Five years minimum experience is required. Seminary degree and references are required. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, Mt Carmel Baptist Church, PO Box 903, Troy, NC 27371, or e-mail [coltranes@connectnc.net](mailto:coltranes@connectnc.net).

Mount Gilead Baptist Church of Fayetteville, NC, seeks a **full-time pastor** to lead our Southern Baptist church who believes the Bible is the word of God and who follows the Baptist Faith & Message. Must be an effective leader for all areas and ages. Current active members is approx. 125. Seminary degree and references are required. Send resumes to [Mount\\_Gilead\\_Pulpit@yahoo.com](mailto:Mount_Gilead_Pulpit@yahoo.com) or mail to Search Committee/Carey, 8337 English Saddle Dr., Fayetteville, NC 28314.

Temple Baptist Church in Brevard, NC, is currently seeking a **full-time pastor**. Please send resume to be received by April 15, 2012, to: Pastor Search Team, Temple Baptist Church, 5 Temple Church Road, Brevard, NC 28712.

**Pastor** sought to serve a traditional SBC church. Average attendance is 60 - much higher in summer. Church budget is @\$125,000. Parsonage is available. Send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 242, Kure Beach, NC 28449, by March 24.

### Church Staff

**Minister of Youth and Music.** Is it you? We are seeking a vision filled and energetic person to guide and care for our youth and music ministries. This person will lead and equip our youth and music ministry teams. While the responsibilities will include everything from planning yearly calendars and budgets to coordinating camps and trips, this position could be fulfilled by someone looking to grow in ministry experience. Experience and credentials negotiable but passion for Jesus, His Church body, and the spiritually lost a MUST!! Mail resumes to: Belhaven Missionary Baptist Church, Attn: Search Team, P.O. Box 400, Belhaven, NC 27810.

First Baptist in Southern Pines, NC, a CBF church, is currently seeking a **part-time Minister of Children and Families**. Seminary degree preferred. Deadline for applications is April 13, 2012. Mail resume and cover letter to Gerald Galloway, Chair, Minister of Children and Families Search Committee, 200 E. New York Ave., Southern Pines, NC 28387, or e-mail to [searchcommittee@fbc.org](mailto:searchcommittee@fbc.org).

**Minister of Children.** First Baptist Church, Statesville, NC ([www.statesvillefbc.org](http://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](mailto:maryjane@statesvillefbc.org).

Antioch Baptist Church of Mt. Airy, NC, is seeking a **full-time Minister of Youth and Education**. Please send resumes to [antiochbaptistyp@gmail.com](mailto:antiochbaptistyp@gmail.com) or to the church at 137 Antioch Ave., Mt. Airy, NC 27030; Attention Search Committee.

### Minister of Worship and Discipleship.

Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, in Shelby NC, is seeking an energetic worship leader for our music and media ministries, as well as our growing discipleship ministry. The ideal candidate will successfully blend traditional and contemporary music styles into our DayBreak (8:30 AM) and Celebration (11:00 AM) worship services. In addition, this person would be leading our adult and children's hand bell choirs and heading up our discipleship ministry. Send résumés and inquiries to the Music Ministry Search Team, c/o Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, 198 Pleasant Ridge Church Road, Shelby, NC 28152, or to [Eric@PRBCShelby.org](mailto:Eric@PRBCShelby.org) by April 2, 2012.

Macedonia Baptist Church, Lincolnton, NC, is receiving resumes for a **full-time Minister of Children, Youth, & Discipleship**. Applicants who are graduates of a theologically conservative Bible college or seminary are preferred. You may email [pastorsetzer@yahoo.com](mailto:pastorsetzer@yahoo.com) for a complete job description. Resumes will be received until March 31, 2012. Please mail resumes to: Dr. Randy Setzer, Macedonia Baptist Church, 5286 E. Hwy. 150, Lincolnton, NC 28092.

Parkwood Baptist Church in Concord, NC, will be receiving resumes of candidates interested in a **full-time Associate Pastor** position until March 31, 2012. Experience and field related degrees in administration and discipleship are preferred. Resumes should be sent to [pastorsearch.pwb@gmail.com](mailto:pastorsearch.pwb@gmail.com).

The First Baptist Church of Shallotte has an immediate opening for a full-time **Associate Pastor, Music and Worship**. FBCS is affiliated with the Brunswick Baptist Association, the Baptist State Convention of NC, and the SBC. To learn more about FBCS and the position, visit the church website at [www.fbcshallotte.com/about-us](http://www.fbcshallotte.com/about-us). Resumes and inquiries should be sent to [fbcsmusic@atmc.net](mailto:fbcsmusic@atmc.net) or mailed to FBCS, 4486 Main Street, Shallotte, NC, 28470, Attention APMW.

### Miscellaneous

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**BEAUTIFUL CHOIR ROBES.** Maroon. Sizes for middle school; 30 robes @\$20.00 each. Call 706-549-6083 or email to [choirobes@bellsouth.net](mailto:choirobes@bellsouth.net).

**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](http://www.ncoperationinasmuch.org). Check out [www.rampinup.org](http://www.rampinup.org) for more information or call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

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

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# Stam

Continued from page 12

visitation on the “best interest of the child.” NCGS 50-13.2(2007) The sexual behavior of the party petitioning for custody or visitation is not determinative except as it affects the child.

The “*de facto* parenting doctrine” was applied in 2010 in *Boseman v. Jarrell*. The

**“There is a real threat to ... marriage.”  
— Paul “Skip” Stam**

Supreme Court refused to allow adoption to an unmarried same-sex partner but did award joint custody and visitation rights to that non-bio-

logical same-sex partner who had become a *de facto* parent to the child.

**There is a real threat to the institution of marriage.**

In several states, same-sex marriage has been imposed upon the people by courts that have engaged in tortured judicial reasoning – Massachusetts and Iowa for example. These courts have used the state constitutions to reverse the very pro-marriage policies that were in effect when the state constitution was adopted.

Now it’s happening in North Carolina. Same-sex couples in Asheville went to the courthouse for two weeks last fall seeking to obtain marriage licenses. A lawsuit was filed by the Register of Deeds of Guilford County in December challenging our state’s marriage laws and asking the Court to declare them unconstitutional because they don’t allow same-sex partners to “marry.”

This amendment will ensure that marriage between one man and one woman will be protected from result-oriented judges.

Voters will decide on May 8.

For more information please visit [VoteFORMarriageNC.com](http://VoteFORMarriageNC.com).

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Representative Paul Stam is N.C. House Majority Leader and a member of Apex Baptist Church, Apex.) **BR**

## Kirk Cameron stood strong – will other Christians do the same?

**A**re you paying attention to the response to Kirk Cameron’s recent remarks about gay marriage on Piers Morgan’s television program? Cameron did not come on the program to talk about homosexuality, and he even looked like he was trying to change the subject. But Morgan pressed him, and so Cameron answered.

When Morgan asked him about gay marriage, Cameron said, “Marriage is almost as old as dirt, and it was defined in the garden between Adam and Eve. One man, one woman for life till death do you part. So I would never attempt to try to redefine marriage. And I don’t think anyone else should either. So do I support the idea of gay marriage? No, I don’t.”

Then Morgan asked him his views on homosexuality, and Cameron responded, “I think that it’s – it’s – it’s unnatural. I think that it’s – it’s detrimental, and ultimately destructive to so many of the foundations of civilization.”

What has been instructive to watch has not been Cameron’s remarks, but the response. Cameron is a Christian, and he merely summarized the 2,000-year-old teaching of the church that homosexuality is a sin (Romans 1:26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:9-10). Nothing new here. Nothing has changed on that front.

What has changed dramatically over the last 10 years has been society’s attitudes about homosexuality. By and large, people are more and more open to homosexuality as a wholesome, morally unproblematic way of life. But this, too, should not be news to anyone.

What is instructive about this interview has been how openly vitriolic people have become to the idea of a Christian sexual ethic. It’s not just that people disagree with Cameron. No, they accuse him

of engaging in “hate” speech and of being “homophobic.” I saw one public figure accuse him of being complicit in murder. The denunciations of Cameron have been relentless. They accuse Cameron, and those who agree with him, of being intolerant. All the while, they seem to be blissfully unaware of their own malignant intolerance of Christian morality.

Are we really at a place where a Christian who is pressed for his views on a matter can no longer state those views without being tarred and feathered? I think we are. Christianity hasn’t changed, but the moral consensus of our culture has.

“Heed instruction and be wise” (Proverbs 8:33). We are only at the beginning of a process that probably will not go very well for us in the long haul. The trend lines are going against us on this one. Unless something radical changes in our society, we’ll all be found guilty of hate speech simply for holding to the ancient faith that was once-for-all delivered to the saints (Jude 1:3).

Right now, we are being censured in



**DENNY BURK**  
Guest Column

**“What has changed dramatically over the last 10 years has been society’s attitudes about homosexuality.”**

the court of public opinion for our beliefs about human sexuality. The days will come when the consequences of those beliefs will become more severe. I find myself thinking more and more about what may come and praying for the grace to persevere in faithfulness to Christ when the going gets tough (James 1:12; Revelation 21:7).

I appreciate Cameron for being so bold. He is under fire now from many, but I for one am grateful for his courage to speak the truth. It may not be very long before all of us are called on to display the same resolve.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Denny Burk is associate professor of New Testament at Boyce College, the undergraduate arm of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. This column first appeared at his website, [DennyBurk.com](http://DennyBurk.com).) **BR**



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Baptist State Convention of North Carolina

Find it Here is a statewide evangelism emphasis. Please pray about involving your church in the following activities on or before **Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012**

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2. Invite non-Christian family, friends and neighbors to Easter services
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4. Baptize new converts Easter Sunday, 2012, or the following Sunday

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