



Marriage amendment

Mark Creech shares facts about the N.C. Marriage Protection Amendment. **Page 12**
Be sure to sign up for the *BR* e-newsletter to get the latest news, reaction to May 8 vote.

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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EASTER UPDATE: PASTORS SHARE WHY THEY'RE 'BEYOND EXCITED'

BR staff

North Carolina Baptist pastors continue to share testimonies of what God did – and is doing – in their congregation on Easter Sunday and in the days to follow.

All across the state churches baptized new believers on Easter, saw professions of faith, and many reported record attendance.

While some reports are circulating about churches baptizing 80 to 100 people during their Easter services, some smaller congregations have reported baptisms for the first time in more than a year.

High attendance, decisions for Christ and baptisms on Easter are not uncommon, but some pastors are crediting their church's success to the Baptist State Convention of N.C. (BSC) and their intentional Easter evangelism emphasis.

For the past three Easters, in conjunction with the Convention's Find It Here: Expanding the Kingdom focus, pastors and church leaders have been encouraged to lead their congregations to do the following:

- Pray for non-believers (family

See Easter page 11

N.C. Baptists declare 'Glory to God!' DURING ANNUAL MISSIONS EVENT



Dandee King, right, and Shirley Smith make sure participants in the North Carolina Baptist Men's Missions Conference get a lunch and drink. Both are members of West Albemarle Baptist Church. Food preparation is a big component of Baptist Men's disaster relief efforts. See photo gallery at *BRnow.org*. (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

By **SHAWN HENDRICKS** | BR Managing Editor

Angie Yelverton still remembers the child that died in front of her eyes during a volunteer mission trip to Haiti last year.

Yelverton, of Northside Baptist Church in Wilmington, N.C., could barely speak as she shared before a crowd of about 1,200 Baptists, about the father who carried his daughter to a clinic right before the girl died of malnutrition and malaria as Yelverton watched helplessly. Yelverton had never been on a mission trip outside the United States before that trip.

The experience she said, "changed [my] life."

"Today I'm looking at you through different eyes," Yelverton said during the 37th Annual North Carolina Baptist Missions Conference – presented by N.C. Baptist Men – April 13-14 at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte.

"My church is going back in August, and I'm going with them," she said. "We're all ordinary, but God can use us to do extraordinary things. Not everyone can serve everywhere, but someone can serve somewhere."

See Conference page 4

Chuck Colson dies



Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship and part of the Watergate scandal, died April 21. See story, page 7. Also check *BRnow.org* for a tribute and other information.

NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER



Many North Carolina Baptists plan to gather for prayer May 3. Recognized as the National Day of Prayer, Baptists will join with others that day to pray for the country and its leaders.

"One Nation Under God" is the theme for the 61st annual observance.

Organizers are using Psalm 33:12 – "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" – as its theme verse. Organized events will be held in thousands of public venues including in North Carolina. David Jeremiah, founder of Turning Point Ministries and senior pastor of

Shadow Community Church in El Cajon, Calif., will be the 2012 honorary chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. He will give the keynote address in Washington, D.C.

Visit nationaldayofprayer.org. **BR**

Mother's Day Offering, prayer help family through 'scary time'

North Carolina Baptist Hospital

Matt and Jennifer Keever, members of Mt. Herman Baptist Church in Taylorsville, know the impact of the North Carolina Baptist Hospital's Mother's Day Offering first hand.

Eight days after the Keever's daughter, Raeghan, was born she was admitted to Baptist Hospital for heart surgery.

"It was such a scary time in our lives," Jennifer said.

"Seeing Raeghan on a ventilator, we could hardly believe it was happening," Matt added.

Facing a potential nightmare, they held onto hope that God would spare their child's life.

Through prayer and the staff at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, Raeghan began to recover. Today, she is a healthy 1-year-old.

However, in the midst of the Keever's gratitude, they were nearly overwhelmed by frightening waves of medical bills.

"We both work, but the bills were coming in leaps and bounds," Jennifer said. "We trusted that God wouldn't let us sink, but it was very hard and easy to forget. The worry and stress were there every day."

The Keever's "fell between the cracks of assistance and had nowhere to turn," said Paul Mullen, director of church and community relations at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center.

"They were under enormous pressure, with too much to qualify for Medicaid or charity care, but not enough to pay the balance of Raeghan's hospital bill," he said. "They are wonderful parents with great faith. They give to their church to help others, but now they needed help."

"I was privileged to write them a letter saying, 'Your daughter's hospital bill has been paid by compassionate and mission-minded North Carolina Baptists in the name of Jesus Christ and His love.'"

Through tears of joy Jennifer said, "When we received that letter, all we could do was cry and thank God. This was God's hand at work seeing us through the trials."

"This reminded us that God is in every situation," Matt replied.

Jennifer added, "The Mother's Day Offering had a great impact on our family. To see God at work, taking care of us, really touched our lives."

"We thank North Carolina Baptists with all our hearts."

There are many more families whose lives can be changed by the Offering.



Jennifer Keever is thankful for N.C. Baptists and the Mother's Day Offering. Because of the offering the hospital bills for her daughter Raeghan have been paid in full. (NCBH photo)

"We plan to give and bring Jesus to the lives of others," Jennifer said.

"It's a wonderful way to put faith into action."

The Mother's Day Offering is an "awesome opportunity" to be a part of what God is doing, said Paul Schronce, pastor of the church where the Keever's are members.

"God is working, and He is using North Carolina Baptists to change hearts and lives."

Schronce confirmed that some who are helped by the Mother's Day Offering don't even know God.

"When they learn that North Carolina Baptists care about them, and Jesus cares about them, it opens the door for them to say, 'God is real, and He does love me,'" he said. "Our gifts change the lives of people who are in need, and maybe even their eternity."

Mullen added, "We are very grateful on behalf of hundreds of hurting patients and families."

"Our gifts, as North Carolina Baptists, draw them closer to Christ in life-changing gratitude. Please pray for God to be at work through the Mother's Day Offering. Please give generously and be a messenger of His love."

The Keever's story can be seen at mothersdayoffering.org.

Mother's Day Offering materials were mailed to every N.C. Baptist church. They can be obtained by calling (336) 716-3027 or email pmmullen@wakehealth.edu.

(EDITOR'S NOTE - Milton A. Hollifield Jr., the executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, shares his view on this offering on page 12.) **BR**

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CHURCH NEWS



Flat Rock Baptist Church, Hamptonville

“Opal Mauldin Day” was celebrated April 15 by Flat Rock Baptist Church, Hamptonville. Pastor Joey Tomlin, right, interviews Mauldin, 91. She has been the church’s financial record keeper for more than 45 years and has also served in hospitality ministries, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and the choir.



Chowan University

Christian comedian Renea Henderson, right, as Bertie the Bag Lady, entertained her audience of senior adults at this year’s SeniorFEST 2012 at Chowan University. Around 320 visitors took part in the event, which highlights healthy lifestyles, Christian living and senior living.

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

Gardner-Webb offers pastor’s school

Registration is open for the 2012 Pastors’ School, a three-day educational retreat for pastors and students of ministry and theology, May 28-30 at Gardner-Webb University (GWU).

Registration is \$60 for participants, \$30 for additional church staff or spouses, and \$15 for students. The cost of meals is \$30.

Lodging in campus apartments is available for \$60 per night. For more information about the Pastors’ School, visit gardner-webb.edu/pastors-school or call John Bridges at (704) 406-3008.

Hispanic Young Adult Conference

“Second Chance” is the name of this year’s Hispanic Young Adult Conference, June 1-3, at Caswell Conference Center, Oak Island. Singles and married couples from ages 18 to 35 are welcome.

Visit ncbaptist.org/hyac12 for more information and to register. Contact Guillermo Soriano: gsoriano@ncbaptist.org; (800) 395-5102, ext. 5564.

Retreats for those with special needs

Happiness Retreats at Caraway Conference Center, retreats for youth and adults with special needs, will open for registration May 4 through June 15. Cost varies: two to a room is \$175/ person, three to a room is \$170/person, and four to a room is \$165/person. One adult sponsor must come with every three or fewer campers. Retreat dates are: July 20-22, 22-24, 25-27 and 27-29.

Contact Donnie Wiltshire: (800) 395-5102, ext. 5630, or dwiltshire@ncbaptist.org. Visit specialministries.ncbaptist.org.

Embracing NYC 2012

N.C. women have the opportunity to serve together in New York City with Embrace Women’s Ministry Sept. 13-16. Embracing NYC 2012 will cost \$500 including airfare, missionary insurance, lodging and ministry expenses. Applications are due by May 4. Contact Ashley Allen, Director of Embrace, at aallen@ncbaptist.org, (800) 395-5102, ext. 5559. Visit embracenc.org.

AROUND THE STATE

Obituaries

DAVID H. BEST, 57, of Fayetteville, died Feb. 3 in the Carrol S. Roberson Hospice Center.

Best was the associate pastor at First Baptist Church, Fayetteville.

He also served churches in Belmont, Charlotte, Kernersville and Thomasville.

He received a bachelor’s degree from Gardner-Webb University and a master’s from Southeastern Seminary.

He is survived by his wife, Jane B. Best; son, J.D. Best of Niwot, Colo.; daughter, Rachel Best of Charlotte; parents, Herman and Margaret Best of Shelby; mother-in-law, Carolyn Brogdon of Sumter, S.C., and sister, Jane Ann Best of Morganton.

Memorials to: First Baptist Church Memorial Fund, 201 Anderson St., Fayetteville, NC 28301; and/or Operation Inasmuch at 531 Hillsboro St., Fayetteville, NC 28301.

REXFORD R. CAMPBELL, 93, of Winston-Salem, died Feb. 9 at the Kate B. Reynolds Hospice Home.

He attended Mars Hill College and graduated from Wake Forest College in 1942.

He graduated from Southern Seminary in Louisville, Ky., in 1948 before returning to Ashe County to become pastor of First Baptist Church, West Jefferson, from 1948 until 1972.

During this time he was active in denominational work and served on the Boards of Trustees for Wake Forest

University and the N.C. Baptist Hospital. From 1972 until his retirement in 1983, he served on the staff of the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Lucille Campbell; a daughter, Geri Parrott of Boone; a son, William Campbell of Winston-Salem; five grandchildren; two great-grandchildren; and one brother, Dewey Campbell of West Jefferson.

Staff changes

JEFF WEBSTER has been called as pastor to English Road Baptist Church, High Point. Webster was on staff with Pleasant Garden Baptist Church, Pleasant Garden.

First Baptist Church of Alamance, Burlington, has called **JOE HICKS** as pastor. Hicks served Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Liberty, for more than 30 years.

CHRIS THOMPSON has been called to South River Baptist Church, Statesville, as senior pastor. Thompson was an associate pastor at First Baptist Church, Charlotte.

West Point Baptist Church, Rutherfordton, has called **CHRIS ALFORD** as minister of education. Alford has served as an associate pastor in North Carolina.

DENNIS NEALY has been called as contemporary worship pastor at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Greensboro. Nealy previously served with Central Community Church in the Greensboro area.

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.

Because we are a statewide newspaper, events included are usually beyond the local church level.

All submissions will be subjected to *Biblical Recorder* styles and guidelines and will be edited. Send to dianna@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

Conference Continued from page 1

Yelverton's story was one of many that were told at the conference with the theme "Glory to God!" The crowd learned how men, women and students could get involved through N.C. Baptist Men efforts in a variety of places, such as India, the Appalachian coalfields, Honduras, Ukraine and more. Some other ministries going on across the state include Operation Inasmuch and a project to build wheelchair ramps through Rampin' Up! For more information, go to baptistsonmission.org/Home.

Throughout the conference, guest speakers shared messages about glorifying God through better relating to the culture, being more than simply 'religious,' and what it means to really reach a city for Christ.

'A Google world'

Holding up his smart phone, Leonard Sweet, author, speaker and founder/president of Spirit Venture Ministries, challenged the crowd to explore new ways to share the story of Jesus Christ.

"I was born in a Gutenberg world ... when this was the Bible," He said while holding up a thick Bible with the other hand. "Now I'm in a Google world where this is the Bible," said Sweet, referring to his smart phone. I call it a TGIF world, not 'Thank God It's Friday,' ... [but] Twit-

ter, Google, iPhone, Facebook. This is as much the Bible as this. In fact, I've got 26 Bibles in [my phone], so if you asked me to swear on a stack of Bibles I can do it."

A Christian's lot in life is missions, Sweet said. While generations over the age of 50 focus on sharing words and verses from the Bible, Sweet contended that younger generations respond more to stories. Each year companies spend billions of dollars to sell their products through stories, he said. "It's not tell me the verses of Jesus," he said. "Tell me the stories."

More than 'religious activity'

And the culture is hungry for seeing the story of Christ being told and lived out in our day-to-day lives, said Henry Blackaby, author of *Experiencing God* and founder/president emeritus of Blackaby Ministries. "Would it not be tragic if the only thing they see in your life is faithful, religious activity," said Blackaby to the crowd. "It is not adequate."

Talents and abilities will only take you so far, he said, challenging the crowd to be more available to God.

"You may say, 'Well I'm just an ordi-

nary person,'" Blackaby said. "I don't see how my talents and abilities can make a difference in my nation."

"The world will not be changed because of what we are doing for God," he added. "The world will be changed by what they see God doing when we are with Him, strategically in our world at this time."

Reaching the city

Later that afternoon, David Nasser, author, speaker and lead pastor at Christ City Church in Birmingham, Ala., spoke to the crowd about what reaching "the world" or "the whole city" for Christ really means. "Anybody really want to start a church for the whole city?" Nasser asked the crowd. "It's going to look really different."

While most Christians would answer "yes," Nasser explained how starting a ministry geared for an "entire city" is going to present challenges that might make most people in the pews feel uncomfortable. "Really want to be a part of a church where it looks like Revelation 5?" said Nasser, who was born in Iran. "That means black people, white people,

in-between people all in the same pew."

"Everybody is like ... 'We want that,'" he said. "But then you start connecting the dots even more. The banker is going to be sitting here, and the homeless guy is going to be sitting right next to him."

"Anybody want to baptize 10,000 people?" Nasser then asked.

"Not a bunch of white soccer moms and their kids named Brody and Britney," he said. "It's going to look like this: The guy who is super skinny, his veins are showing ... he's probably on heroin. And when he comes off that water, you're going to be looking in the front row and you're going to go, 'Wow, there's needle marks. That guy might have AIDS. My daughter is next. I wonder if you can get AIDS being in the same water.'"

Nasser asked the crowd again if they were ready to address the issues that are going to come with a church that is actually for the entire city. He acknowledged that not every church is called to that type of ministry. But all churches are called to be on mission. "Mission isn't the arm of the church," he said. "Mission is a function of a church."

"Jesus said, 'you're going to be my church,'" he said. "You're going to be on mission. You're going to have trouble in mission. Jesus said, 'But take heart I have overcome the world.'" **BR**

Year after April 16 tornadoes, N.C. Baptists reflect on lives impacted

By **SHAWN HENDRICKS** | *BR* Managing Editor

Memories of the April 16 tornadoes that swept through North Carolina – claiming 24 lives – one year ago still remain clear for those impacted, including the thousands of volunteers who pitched in to help.

Testimonies from that disaster were shared during the 37th annual N.C. Baptist Missions Conference, with the theme "Glory to God," April 13-14 at Hickory Grove Church in Charlotte. The conference spotlights the many missions efforts carried out around the state and across the globe – by both men and women – through the Convention's N.C. Baptist Men's ministry.

"It's been a very busy year ... for disaster relief," Richard Brunson, executive director-treasurer for N.C. Baptist Men, told a crowd of about 1,200 people that gathered during the two-day event.

In 2011, N.C. Baptist Men's Disaster Relief Ministry responded to 19 different disasters – two of the biggest for that year included Hurricane Irene and the April 16 tornadoes.

Brunson reported that during just those two disasters, N.C. Baptist volunteers provided more than 278,000 meals and completed more than 3,300 related recovery and rebuild projects.

Volunteers have helped people pick up the pieces of their lives – both physically and spiritually.

"Many people have come to know Christ because of [these relief efforts]," Brunson said. "I can't think of a one of them where God didn't do as Ephesians 3:20 says

'more than we could hope for, more than we could imagine.'

"[Disaster relief is] just one of many things that God's doing," he added. "It's not what we are doing, it's what God is doing."

Shortly after the storms that hit the state last April, disaster relief volunteers sprang into action – mobilizing churches, providing meals, clearing debris and putting blue tarps on damaged roofs. According to reports, more than 6,000 homes in the state were damaged by the storm.

This past December, four newly constructed homes in Bertie and Hertford Counties were dedicated and presented to families whose houses were destroyed. In Bertie County, alone, 12 people lost their lives.

During the conference, Mark Gaskins, pastor of Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church in Sanford, shared how lives were also impacted in Lee County – where two people were killed and about 400 structures were either damaged or destroyed.

"The face of Sanford in Lee County was changed forever," Gaskins told the crowd. "It was devastating."

Gaskins shared how the following day, Palm Sunday, two individuals from N.C. Baptist Men's Disaster Relief Ministry approached him.

"I can't describe what I felt when I saw that they



Richard Brunson, executive director-treasurer for N.C. Baptist Men, reports that volunteers stepped up to fill needs after the 2011 tornadoes. (BSC photo by Mike Creswell)

were dressed in yellow," Gaskins said.

"Jesus had shown up all week long in yellow shirts and work clothes as the men and women of disaster relief ... coordinated a host of volunteers from all over our state and some from other states."

"People just showing up early in the morning [asking], 'What can we do to help?'" he added.

"In the aftermath of this tragedy in our city and our county, North Carolina Baptists ... truly embodied the presence of Christ ... in a most remarkable way, and God was glorified."

During the conference, Brunson and others explained how all of this is possible through gifts to the North

Carolina Missions Offering. For more information contact them at (919) 467-5100 ext. 5599.

Training still available

For those interested in disaster relief training, there are still slots available for a variety of skill levels. These trainings will be held May 18-19 and June 1-2. Costs vary depending on training.

To find out more information about locations and times, call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5599. To find out more specifics about the training visit baptistsonmission.org.

Click "training," then "training opportunities" and choose "Disaster relief." Email mmountz@ncbaptist.org. **BR**

Operation Inasmuch – April 28, May 5 – is opportunity to evangelize

By **BUDDY OVERMAN** | BSC Communications

Sharing the gospel in modern America is not as acceptable to the unchurched population as it was just two generations ago, said David Crocker, executive-director and founder of Operation Inasmuch (OIAM).

Since that time, the broader culture has turned against the church and embraced secularism. Crocker said the culture shift of the last half century has taken a toll on the church's efforts to impact lostness.

"The openness to hear the gospel is less than ever," he said. "And the willingness to share the gospel is less than ever because we are afraid of being rejected."

During a break out session April 14 at the N.C. Baptist Missions Conference at Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, Crocker explained how Operation Inasmuch is an effective evangelistic tool that helps break down barriers between the culture and the church.

Operation Inasmuch is a missions effort that encourages churches to minister to those in need in their communities through hands-on, practical efforts such as construction projects, landscaping, painting, block parties and prayer walk-



David Crocker leads an Operation Inasmuch breakout session during the N.C. Baptist Men's Missions Conference April 14. (BSC photo by Buddy Overman)

ing. This year, the initiative also will be teaming up with North Carolina's Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) and its Rampin' Up! effort to build wheelchair ramps for homes around the state.

North Carolina Baptists will have the opportunity to participate in Operation Inasmuch April 28 and May 5.

The compassion-based ministry provides services to the community with no strings attached. Connecting with the community in this way builds bridges between the church and a skeptical culture, and provides Christians a platform from which they can share the love of Christ through word and deed.

"When you serve people first you show them that you care and you earn the right to share with them," Crocker said.

Crocker pointed out that the model for Operation Inasmuch is based upon the holistic ministry of Jesus, who routinely combined good news with good deeds. But he added that some churches have not taken full advantage of the opportunity to share the gospel while serving their neighbors in practical ways.

"There are a lot of churches that are doing Operation Inasmuch and they may not be realizing the full evangelistic potential of that one-day event," Crocker said.

Crocker shared a few practical suggestions that will help churches make Operation Inasmuch as evangelistic as possible.

One approach is to make sure team leaders consistently reinforce to volun-

teers the motivation behind Operation Inasmuch. Leaders can also help prepare volunteers to share their faith while they serve in the community.

Another way churches can emphasize evangelism is to hand out printed materials such as postcards and Bibles. The postcards are an easy way to tell people why the volunteers are serving as the hands and feet of Jesus. Bibles also are given to families and individuals who receive help with home repair projects.

Crocker's final suggestion calls for leaders to identify evangelistically gifted volunteers and intentionally move them to multiple projects throughout the community during the day.

He believes when churches use these additional methods they will make a big difference in their communities. "When we put good news and good deeds together it creates good will in the community," Crocker said. "Most of our communities could use some of that."

For more information about how you or your church can participate in Operation Inasmuch, visit ncoperationinasmuch.org.

To learn more about national OIAM, visit operationinasmuch.org. **B3**



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'Black Hawk Down' soldier shares story, enrolled at Southeastern

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

Jeff Struecker has escaped death on more than one occasion and watched many fellow soldiers die in combat during his 22 years of service with the United States Army. The movie "Black Hawk Down" featured his service in Mogadishu, Somalia, in 1993. With a uniform full of medals, and hair-raising story after story, Struecker said one of the most "unsettling" moments of his life wasn't on the battlefield.

It was in seminary more than a decade ago while he studied to become an Army chaplain.

Struecker, who spoke April 16 at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's annual spring banquet at Faith Baptist Church in Youngsville, shared how his professor at the time, Daniel Akin, had him doubting whether he was cut out to be a chaplain. Both Akin, now president of Southeastern, and Struecker were at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville at the time.

"I was so disgruntled and so upset that I went to Dr. Akin's office," Struecker told the crowd at Faith Baptist Church in Youngsville.

"I was wrestling with 'maybe I don't have it in me to preach the gospel,'" said Struecker, who said his paper was "bleeding red ink."

His early experiences in seminary left Struecker with a respect for Akin and the Word of God. Struecker went on to get his master of divinity degree at Southeastern and served his final 10 years in the military as an Army chaplain before retiring from the military in January 2011. He is associate pastor of ministry development at Calvary Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga. He also is enrolled in Southeastern, pursuing a doctorate degree in Christian leadership.

Struecker's respect for Akin's leadership helped "seal the deal" in his decision to enroll at Southeastern.

"Dr. Akin said to the student body,

"I want to warn your parents and your grandparents don't send them to Southeastern Seminary and think they're going to go home and be good boys and girls and pastor a nice little country church.'" Struecker recalled Akin saying. "I want to encourage them to go to some of the most difficult and some of the most dangerous mission fields in the world."

Struecker shared how his faith kept him focused and grounded emotionally during some of his more scary moments in combat.

"There were moments I was convinced that I was going to die in the next city block," he said of his 18-hour gun battle in the streets of Mogadishu. "But it didn't concern me because my eternity was settled ... I didn't worry when the bullets were flying."

It was Struecker's confidence that also earned him many opportunities to share the gospel with "hard-headed Rangers" while both a Ranger, himself, and later as a chaplain.

"I could literally look men in the eyes and say, 'I know exactly what you are going through because I've been there myself, and let me tell you who will get you through it,'" he said.

"God had given me the unique opportunity to see scores of Rangers bow their knee and turn their life over to Jesus Christ because they realized they needed something greater than themselves."

During his final years with multiple tours in Afghanistan and Iraq as an Army chaplain, Struecker said his military career continued to take a toll on his marriage to wife, Dawn, and as a father of five children. It was that toll that led Struecker



Jeff Struecker recounts stories from his time in the U.S. Army during a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary banquet. (BR photo by Shawn Hendricks)

er to leave the military. Now he begins a new battle here in the U.S.

The need in this country for Christian leaders with character and courage couldn't be more dire, Struecker said.

According to the American Religious Identification Survey conducted in

2009, virtually every denomination is in decline. The study showed that, with the exception of the Roman Catholic Church, the largest single preference for religion that the average American will give is "no religion."

"As a nation, we are heading full steam in the same direction as Europe is today," he said. "Europe is in a spiritual crisis, and it is because of weak preaching and weak pastors."

Struecker told the crowd that if he was "the enemy" he would attack pastors. "The way I would undermine the men that are in the pulpit is I would start to erode away their confidence," he said.

And with their confidence would go their courage, Struecker said. And as their courage goes, he added, so goes their conviction and ultimately their character.

"Pretty soon everyone that shows up to listen to the pulpit decides 'I don't need what they're offering because it's not going to make a difference in my life.'"

"We need pastors, ministers, missionaries, men and women who love the gospel and are willing to do whatever it takes and suffer personally, financially in every means to advance the gospel [who] endure suffering like a good soldier." **BR**

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Founder's Day nears

Founder's Day will be May 8. The festivities begin at the chapel at 10 a.m. Guest speakers include: Brian Davis and Bob Pitman. Lunch will be provided. Pitman will also be preaching during the regular chapel service May 9.

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Chuck Colson, founder of Prison Fellowship, dies



From press reports

Prison Fellowship Ministries founder Charles W. “Chuck” Colson died April 21 due to complications resulting from a brain hemorrhage.

Colson, 80, was hospitalized March 30 after his speech became slurred during a conference. Other reports indicated Colson was dizzy as well. Doctors performed surgery March 31.

It was thought in the subsequent days after his surgery that his health was improving, but a

statement April 18 from Jim Liske, CEO of Prison Fellowship Ministries, said Colson’s health had seriously deteriorated.

Colson was a member of First Baptist Church in Naples, Fla.

Colson was most known for his part in the Watergate scandal during Richard Nixon’s presidency.

He was special counsel to Nixon from 1969-1973 and became known as Nixon’s “hatchet man.”

His conversion to Christianity before his

seven-month prison sentence was ridiculed in major newspapers. He went on to form Prison Fellowship, a nonprofit organization “to seek the transformation of prisoners and their reconciliation to God, family, and community through the power and truth of Jesus Christ.”

Donations can be made to the Charles Colson Legacy Fund at prisonfellowship.org, or call (800) 206-9764 (M-F 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. EST).

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Check BRnow.org for more information and insights about Colson and his ministry.) **BR**

Board of Visitors, Trustees visit Southeastern campus

By SEBTS staff

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest hosted the Board of Visitors and Trustees on its campus April 15-17.

From Sunday evening to Tuesday afternoon, the Southeastern Board of Visitors and Trustees discussed several matters taking place at the College at Southeastern and Southeastern Seminary since their last visit in the fall.

Daniel Akin, Southeastern’s president said in his address that the Lord has grown the school to roughly over 2,850 students and he expects the enrollment to hit the 3,000 in the next few semesters.

Akin said the Lord has been faithful to Southeastern, and in turn, they should seek to remain faithful to Him.

During the business session, the Board of Trustees elected Todd Borger as associate professor of Old Testament and Hebrew.

Borger received his B.M. from the University of Redlands, his master of divinity from Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary, and his doctorate degree from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He has been teaching at Southeastern since 2009.

On April 17 James Merritt, pastor of Cross Pointe Church in Duluth, Ga., addressed the students, faculty, staff and Boards with the command, “When problems come into your life, don’t look for a place to run; find a place to stand and that place is on the risen Christ.”

The chapel recognized several families



James Merritt, pastor of Cross Pointe Church in Duluth, Ga., encouraged Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary students, faculty and guests to take a stand “on the risen Christ.” Merritt was speaking in chapel April 17 during the Board of Visitors and Trustees meeting on campus. (SEBTS photo)

“Being in God’s will is not always the safest, but it is the best place to be.”

– Danny Akin

and individuals who are being commissioned to the foreign mission field in the fall.

Drawing from Acts 4, Merritt challenged these families and individuals to stand tall, stand tough and stand true in the gospel wherever the Lord takes them.

Merritt asked, “Do you wonder why

the gospel is being preached in the 21st century? It is because of the fervency of the early disciples and the faithfulness of our Lord.”

Akin, closing the chapel, asked for all missionaries to gather so that the Boards of Visitors and Trustees, as well as other students, could pray over them.

“I thank God for these who answered his call, and I pray that he would fulfill completely his perfect will in their lives,” Akin said.

“Being in God’s will is not always the safest, but it is the best place to be. The Lord is so good and may you be faithful in the mission field you have been placed until the day he calls you home.” **BR**

N.C. pastor leads search for MBTS president

By ALLEN PALMERI | *The Pathway*

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (BP) – Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary’s trustees have established a seven-member presidential search committee and solidified their commitment to two leaders serving in an interim capacity.

Bill Bowyer, pastor of Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church in Raleigh, N.C., was named as search committee chairman.

Kevin Shrum, pastor of Inglewood Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., is also a member of the search committee. As acting chairman, he began the April 16 trustee board meeting.

He and the seminary’s acting interim president, Robin Hadaway, have been in leadership since the resignations of the previous president, R. Philip Roberts, and previous chairman, Wayne Lee, were accepted on Feb. 10.

In affirmations during the April 16 meeting in Kansas City, Mo., Shrum was elected trustee chairman and Hadaway, associate professor of missions, was elected as Midwestern’s interim president.

Shrum, pastor of the Nashville church the past 17 years, was elected unopposed. Shrum said trustees intend for the search committee to recommend a presidential candidate next April for board approval.

The search team will be in regular contact with the trustees to provide updates, Shrum said.

Hadaway asked for prayer for Midwestern’s report to the Southern Baptist Convention’s June 19-20 annual meeting in New Orleans. “I think we’ll have a good report.”

See BRnow.org for the full story. **BR**

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Golfer, author shares devotionals, near-death experience

Professional golfer and instructor Meredith Kirk shares about the game she loves, death and her devotional book.

Meredith Kirk is a wife and mom of three, and is an accomplished Ladies Professional Golf Association (LPGA) golfer and certified golf instructor operating out of the golf mecca of Myrtle Beach, S.C. She is passionate about teaching golf to all levels of players, especially junior golfers. With 15 years teaching experience with top PGA and LPGA instructors, Meredith's teaching methods combine golf mechanics with a mind-body-spirit connection. She received her bachelor of arts in public relations from Coastal Carolina University and is a graduate of Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary with a degree in biblical counseling. *Biblical Recorder* sports correspondent Roman Gabriel III interviewed Kirk about her golf, her faith and how she almost lost her life



ROMAN GABRIEL
Sports Q & A

at a young age. Kirk shared how this experience helped start a new chapter in her life that has inspired her to use her passion for golf and her struggles as a platform to help others. Meredith's popular devotional book is titled *Thy Club and Thy Staff*. The book is comprised of 21

devotions that bring together the basics of good golf and the fundamentals of strong faith.

Q: As a certified LPGA professional and teacher, who do you teach at the Meredith Kirk School?

A: Beginners to advanced players [and] couples. I give playing lessons. I can work with anybody. I work with lots of juniors. I am a huge advocate for promoting the game of golf to juniors. I think it's a great investment to work with these kids coming up in the game. It teaches so much, so I spend a lot of my time with juniors.

Q: Your book – *Thy Club and Thy Staff* – is 21 daily devotionals using golf to challenge us with biblical principles and teach lessons about life. Where did you get the inspiration to write a book about golf, using the method of daily devotionals?

A: It's kind of interesting. I had two life-threatening issues happen to me during the birth of my third son. I chose to have the epidural, and the needle actually went into a vein instead of the area in my spinal column where it was supposed to go into, so it stopped my heart.

The doctor got my heart going again,



Meredith Kirk, above, loves working with junior golfers. Kirk, at right with her family, shares a little about her life in a new devotional *Thy Club and Thy Staff*. (Contributed photos)

and said I was so lucky to be alive. This is rare. It scared me so much. I don't think I have ever had so much fear flood me in all my life. After I gave birth, I couldn't believe that I survived that. Four months later I had a thyroid storm, a life threatening issue when your thyroid overproduces hormones that regulate your metabolism. [I] almost had a heart attack. This happened about four months apart. At that time I was already a Christian. I gave my life to Christ at 19. I came to a place in my faith where I started to think about death. It made me look at how I was living my life. I could not run. I could barely walk. I was 20 pounds under weight, and lost half of my hair. We live on a golf course so I started just slowly walking the course.

Q: Did you plan to write the book after your tough experience in the hospital?

A: God gave this book to me. I did not start out writing this for other people. God just spoke to me. I started journaling. It was really for me, but someone read it, and said, "This is decent stuff and other people should read this." I thought why not go for it; why not put all these journals in a book and write about it? And if it helps one person then it's worth it.

Q: Was contrasting the experience of golf and life a big part of your idea for the book?

A: Absolutely, that was one of the ideas when I was writing the book. I was going through a lot of personal health issues myself. I actually could not play golf at the time. I was having trouble with health issues like



keeping my heart rate up. I took the time to write these devotionals, when I was [going through] that. God showed me so much correlation between biblical principles and golf. He just opened up those doors for me. I thought, 'Wow,' golf teaches so much. God has shown me a lot through the game of golf, biblical principles ... opening doors to teach us. The game is about honesty and integrity. You can learn a lot about someone [by] playing five hours of golf.

Q: Over the years a lot of people have spoken about what can be learned from this very demanding sport. How has the game made you a better teacher?

A: Golf exposes peoples' personalities, their characteristics, shortcomings and strengths. By teaching kids through the game of golf and letting them go out and have fun, you also teach them a lot about biblical principles: telling truth, being honest, practicing patience, respect for other people, and learning to control your tongue.

I have some students that are real vocal when they hit a poor shot. Controlling what comes out of your mouth is so important. The Bible teaches on that.

I even wrote about it in a devotional in the book ... you have to control your tongue.

The Bible talks so much about it. That's what my book is about.

Q: How has dealing with hardship changed your perspective on life?

A: I can be a little bit stubborn at times. I am thankful for those experiences. A lot of people who turn their faith to God in crisis look at the situation later on, and say, 'Wow, I didn't like going through all that, but I learned so much. I am a much better person for it. ... I hope it doesn't just help my life but helps someone else's life as well.

Q: Is the book something anybody can read and enjoy?

A: Absolutely! When I wrote this book I wrote it in a way that anybody can relate to it. Actually, it's a basic devotional, very easy to read. Anybody can pick it up. I have actually given it to some of my middle school students. They can read through and feel comfortable with the material, straight to the point really.

For more on how you can get Meredith's devotional book *Thy Club and thy Staff*, go to her official web site at meredithkirkgolf.com.

(EDITOR'S NOTE

– Roman Gabriel III, an evangelist and motivational speaker, is president of Sold Out Ministries. He hosts Sold

Out Sports heard Saturday evenings at 8 p.m. EST on American Family Radio. Contact at (910) 431-6483 or e-mail soldoutrg3@gmail.com. Search Roman Gabriel III for his Facebook page.) **BR**





JESUS IS ENOUGH

Convention staff encouraged by great faith of Moldovan believers

By Melissa Lilley | BSC Communications

A team of N.C. Baptists encountered Moldovans with strong faith and joy that the Kingdom of God is growing there. (BSC photo by Kenny Lamm)

UNGHENI, MOLDOVA – After just a day or two, walking on piles of snow and narrow strips of ice was a welcome relief from mud.

Walking on mud that had hardened somewhat wasn't so bad because you could gingerly step on the top and squish along, slipping and sliding. Walking through the soft mud was more challenging.

Navigating through that was more like sloshing, and should anyone remain in one place for too long, the mud became like quicksand.

Sometimes the mud is even too much for the “Moldovan Mercedes-Benz” (a horse and cart, the common mode of transportation in villages) to handle.

The 11 staff members of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) who recently participated in a mission trip to Moldova became well acquainted with mud roads in Moldovan villages. For one week the team went door-to-door throughout villages in the Ungheni district, distributing food and sharing the gospel.

Each day they served in a different village and followed mud-laden pathways to meet people, often being invited into their homes. In one home an 11-year-old boy laid in bed, unable to walk. A wheelchair sat next to his bed, but it seemed a daunting task to get the boy and his wheelchair down the slippery, muddy hill.

The team met two older ladies, a mom and her daughter, living in a home consisting of only two twin-sized beds, – with barely enough room to stand in between – one cabinet and a small wooden stove on the floor, which served as a means for cooking and heating the home. The mom was bed-ridden and could not get up to go to the bathroom. For many Moldovans, a bathroom is nothing more than a hole in the ground. A table next to the bed with a pan served as her bathroom. The smell of urine drifted throughout the home.

The mission team saw similar living conditions in every village they visited.

Jimmy Huffman, director of Caraway Conference Center in Sophia, N.C., spent some time during the week going door-to-door in apartment buildings in the city area of Ungheni. In one apartment he said he saw the worst living conditions he had ever seen.

“One man living in the apartment looked like he was at the end of his rope,” Huffman said.

“When I reached out to touch him, you could tell that was the first time in a long time anyone had showed him any kind of compassion. I continue seeing that image in my mind.”

Moldova is marked by extreme poverty and is the poorest country in Eastern Europe, with agriculture serving as its main economic source.

At first glance it doesn't seem so obvious. In the Cîrpani village, homes painted blue and green (popular colors in Moldova) are nestled among sprawling, rolling hills, and the village seemed still and peaceful.

But for many Moldovans, home life is anything but peaceful. It is not uncommon for men to go to Russia or other countries to find work in order to support their family back in Moldova. Some return home, but many do not. Human trafficking is very prevalent in Moldova, and the prime years are from ages 12-19. Up to 600,000 teenagers are lured into trafficking each year.

Moldova is also a spiritually dark place, with an evangelical population of less than two percent.

Abiding joy

Despite all this, believers of Jesus Christ do live in Moldova. Although few in number, their faith is strong and their joy undeniable.

Merrie Johnson, BSC senior consultant for student

evangelism and ministry met a man, a paraplegic, living in an apartment that would be condemned in the United States. He was a Christian, and wanted the mission team to go visit a friend who was not a believer. And he wanted to go with them.

“We have more stuff than we know what to do with [in the U.S.],” she said. “They have nothing. But they have a contentment we don't have.”

The team carried him from his apartment to the car, and then up flights of steps in the next apartment building to the fifth floor.

“Nothing was easy for him,” Johnson said. “But he had such a burden for his friends to know Jesus.”

Pastors in the villages share that same excitement, passion and burden for people to know Jesus.

Ashley Allen, director of Embrace Women's Missions and Ministries, shared how the pastors rejoiced when people in their village – and other villages – came to know Christ.

“There was excitement that the Kingdom of God was growing,” Allen said. “I remember walking into [an evangelistic service] the first night and being overwhelmed by the body of Christ.”

One night after the evangelistic service, the Convention staff had already boarded the van to head back to Chisinau when a local pastor came on the van, grinning from ear to ear. “Someone in our village got saved tonight,” he shouted.

To learn more about how to get involved in Moldova, contact Michael Sowers at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5654, or visit ncbaptist.org/moldova.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This is the third article in a series about the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's staff mission trip to Moldova. Visit BRnow.org for more stories. For photos and videos, visit flickr.com/ncbaptist.) **B3**

Baptists learn to ‘embrace’ unreached; N.C. church leads way

By KATE GREGORY | Baptist Press

Beyond Beverly Hills’ designer-label storefronts and gated estates are apartments and condos filled with people from diverse walks of life.

“The image is all wealthy, but once you’ve been here for six months, you understand that it’s broader than that,” said Randy Nessly, pastor of First Baptist Church in Beverly Hills.

Nessly served nine years as a missionary mobilizer for the North American Mission Board (NAMB) before becoming pastor of 40-member First Baptist in the fall of 2011.

Besides being financially diverse, Beverly Hills contains much of the ethnic diversity of neighboring Los Angeles, which has the nation’s largest immigrant population.

That’s why Nessly attended IMB’s (International Mission Board) Embrace equipping conference at Immanuel Baptist Church in Highland, Calif.

He was among approximately 115 representatives from 30 Southern Baptist churches and related organizations in California, Arizona and Nevada who attended the March 24 conference to learn more about what’s involved in embracing a people group – selecting an unengaged, unreached people group (UUPG) and committing to establish an active church-planting strategy among them.

Some of the immigrants in Beverly Hills are from people groups whose counterparts in other countries are considered among the most unevangelized in the world.

If those immigrants become Christians and travel to those other countries to share the gospel, they could make a significant impact in reaching their own people groups, said Ben Martin*, who serves among North African and Middle Eastern peoples overseas with the IMB.

He has been helping Nessly think through how local and international outreach to people groups can work together.

“You can put one arm around someone,” Martin said, “and that’s something. But if you use both arms, you are ... truly embracing them.”

Felix Juan, a deacon of First Indian Baptist Church in Phoenix, said the church has prayed for UUPGs since the launch of the Embrace initiative during the 2011 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Phoenix.

Since last June, approximately 1,200 Southern Baptist churches or entities have responded in some way to the challenge to embrace a UUPG.

“I can see churches and the mission



board working together,” Juan said. “We’re not by ourselves in this. It’s God’s people working together.”

‘Building toward something’

The big picture missions strategy of Embrace is what interested Eric White* at Green Hills Baptist Church in La Habra, Calif.

For example, he said, a church could lead a Vacation Bible School overseas, developing and training new Christians there to be the ones to lead the next VBS.

“I like the idea of building toward something,” White said, “so we wouldn’t be random or haphazard, but focused on reaching a people group with the gospel and producing self-sufficient, indigenous churches.”

Old Town Baptist Church

Leaders of the 500-member Green Hills congregation have received guidance and encouragement from Mark Harrison, missions pastor of Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C.

Old Town is a congregation of similar size that started the process of reaching a people group in Southeast Asia about two years ago.

“It’s been good for us to see that a church our size can do it, to see what it might look like several steps ahead,” White said.

Old Town is coordinating with Southern Baptist missionaries and believers from nearby or related people groups in Southeast Asia. The goal is to work together so these believers can participate in missions efforts to another people group, Harrison said.

“Each church and each people group is different,” Harrison said, “and you have to customize how you approach things according to what will work in your situation, in your church and for your people group, but there are some common factors and a unified strategy to it that makes it a natural for churches to learn together and partner with each other in some way.”

Mitch Hamilton, pastor of Mississippi Avenue Baptist Church in Aurora, Colo., encouraged Embrace churches to mentor

another congregation.

“Reach out and be available to others,” Hamilton said. “Take someone with you the next time you go [to visit your people group], teach them how, show them what you know.”

Hamilton said he was convicted to broaden his missions outlook.

“We were going places where there were already Christians, where work was already going on,” Hamilton said. “Now, instead of going 1,000 different places one time, we’re going one place 1,000 times.”

SBC President Bryant Wright, who was instrumental in launching the Embrace emphasis, encouraged churches exploring Embrace to take a mission trip overseas to “dip their toe in the water.”

“It transforms your whole outlook about ministry,” said Wright, senior pastor of the Atlanta-area Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta. People often are more active in sharing their faith with their neighbors after they return from sharing overseas, he added.

Making that Great Commission connection is what Montia Setzler, senior pastor of Magnolia Avenue Baptist Church in Riverside, Calif., hopes will happen through Embrace. The church launched its effort to embrace a people group March 25.

“This helps complete our total missions strategy,” Setzler said. “We’ve done mission trips but South Asia is the uttermost part of the earth. We’re trying to train people that Acts 1:8 doesn’t have an ‘or’ in it; it’s an ‘and,’ and that means doing all of it simultaneously,” being witnesses in the biblical paradigm of Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth.

Two young people from the church are planning to serve as journeyman missionaries in South Asia. “There would be no greater joy than serving with my church around the world,” said Thomas Allen*, who is preparing for journeyman service.

Visit call2embrace.org.

*Names changed. **B3**



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Land's comments meet with ERLC's regret, investigation

By ART TOALSTON | Baptist Press

Comments by Richard Land about the Trayvon Martin killing “have angered many and opened wounds from the past,” the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission’s (ERLC) executive committee said in a statement released April 18.

The executive committee also registered concern that Land, the ERLC’s president, had used sources from other media without proper attribution for some of his comments in his weekly radio call-in show. An ad hoc committee has been formed “to investigate the allegations of plagiarism and recommend appropriate action,” the ERLC executive committee reported in its statement.

“The [ERLC] Executive Committee is very saddened that this controversy has erupted, and is very concerned about how these events may damage the work of the ERLC in support of Southern Baptists and in furtherance of the Kingdom of our Lord,” the six-member committee said.

Land, in a statement after the executive committee released its concerns, said: “I serve at the will of the trustees. I believe fervently in the trustee system of oversight. I am under their authority. That is why I initiated the conference call that led to this statement. I look forward to continuing to work with and under the oversight of my trustees, who have been elected by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).”

Land issued an open letter of apology the evening of April 16 for comments he voiced on his “Richard Land Live!” radio broadcast March 31 about the infusion of politics into the Trayvon Martin case. Earlier on April 16, Land issued an apology for material he failed to attribute on the radio show to a *Washington Times* columnist.

The ERLC executive committee includes the commission’s three trustee officers and the chairmen of its three trustee subcommittees.

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission has 34 trustees representing churches from across the country elected by messengers at the SBC’s annual meetings.

The chairman of the ERLC executive committee is Stephen Faith of Indiana, a retired pastor and Baptist association director of missions. The executive committee statement included expressions of regret alongside reminders of the race relations work by Land and the Southern Baptist entity he has led since 1988.

The executive committee stated its regret for “any harm that may have been done to race relations within the Southern Baptist Convention.”

The ERLC executive committee, in forming the ad hoc committee, said it was doing so “to ensure no stone is left unturned.” The group acknowledged, “We understand that additional instances of this kind in connection with the Richard Land Live! program may come to light.” **BR**

Vote May 8

Associations as well as other groups have made their opinions known about this vote. Tell us the results: editor@BRnow.org.

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.

Websites

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

Do you have items, sites, or other information to share? Email editor@BRnow.org.



Easter

Continued from page 1

members, friends, neighbors and colleagues at work) by name.

- Invite non-believers to attend an Easter Sunday morning worship service.

- Preach an evangelistic sermon and extend an invitation for those attending to make a profession of faith.

- Baptize new believers on Easter Sunday or the following Sunday.

The Convention also has offered resources – such as the EvangeCube and a variety of other materials – to help churches draw a larger response from their communities.

Based on testimonies shared by pastors around the state, the push seemed to work.

“We could not ignore the stream of resources and encouragement [the BSC] kept sending us to make an evangelistic push this Easter,” reported Jason Bland, pastor of Southport Baptist Church in Southport.

“We began two months out planning Easter as a specifically evangelistic opportunity ... banners, invitation cards, posters, video promo, web graphics.”

On Easter, Southport saw 16 adults come forward during the morning service to put their trust in Jesus.

The congregation’s commitment, Bland contended, also played a large role in the services’ success.

Many members of the congregation invited friends, and the church’s RA group (Royal Ambassadors) hit the neighborhoods to hand out invitations.

“We are beyond excited to see how God has blessed the work of His people,” Bland shared.

But the key part of preparation, many pastors contended, was prayer.

“At Fairview Baptist Church in Statesville we have seen a revival of prayer like never before,” reported Scott Eanes, pas-

tor of Fairview Baptist Church.

“On Easter Sunday we baptized 16 people ranging from age 5 to 75,” he wrote.

“Our youth pastor even got to baptize his son on Easter morning.”

Five others were unable to attend Fairview’s Easter service but asked to be baptized on an upcoming Sunday.

“God has blessed and to Him goes all the glory,” Eanes added.

“Our prayer is that we will continue to see lives changed and that God would use us as His mouthpiece.”

One pastor reported that the EvangeCubes – which share the gospel through a colorful display of pictures – created excitement among some members of the congregation.

The EvangeCubes were provided free of charge for congregations of less than 120 people, and at a discounted rate for larger churches, through a partnership with the Convention and the North American Mission Board.

Steve Burnett, a church planter in High Cross Baptist Cowboy Church in Louisburg, handed out several cubes a week before Easter to his congregation.

“I encouraged the people to use them and not worry about keeping them,” he shared. “I would give them new ones until we had no more.”

During their Friday Easter service, four people asked for another cube. Since the church began handing them out, five people have come forward to be baptized.

“The moment that got me was when a little girl came up to me and told me she had remembered ‘the whole story’ and she said she wanted to tell it to others.”

For more information about Find it Here, go to finditherenc.org or call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5571. **BR**

National WMU debuts trademark

WMU Communications

National Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) introduced new branding elements recently, including an updated trademark and tagline.

Since 2006, the trademark for the national missions organization incorporated the letters WMU with a larger “M” to place emphasis on “missions.” Now missions – the singular focus of WMU – is emphasized in their new tagline, Missions for Life™.

“Missions for Life sums up the purpose of WMU in a number of ways,” explained Julie Walters, communications

specialist for national WMU. “First, it communicates that WMU promotes a lifestyle that is focused on the mission of God.

“In addition, the word ‘life’ is holistic like WMU in that we offer resources for all life stages from preschool to adults that help develop confident missions disciples.

Missions is also the pathway for many to hear and learn about Jesus, the Giver of eternal life.”

The new trademark or graphic is actually an updated version of the original one adopted in 1913.

WMU’s new trademark incorporates two elements from this original version: the fish and a stylized circle or world. **BR**



Conjecture and speculation vs. fact

Recently, I came across an advertisement against the North Carolina Marriage Protection Amendment that caught my attention. It raised a host of bogus arguments against the amendment, contending that benefits *might* be taken away, emergency medical and financial decisions *might* be negatively affected, domestic violence laws *might* be hurt, it *might* hurt the economy, etc.

None of these objections, however, have any basis in fact whatsoever. It's all conjecture and speculation, which is meant to raise enough doubt to cause people to vote against the amendment.

In fact, the ad disingenuously concludes that if the marriage amendment fails everything will remain the same.

Really? If the amendment fails, is it that simple?

Here are some considerations that are neither conjecture nor speculation, but are based squarely in fact.

Because North Carolina is the only state in the southeast that has not protected marriage in its constitution, the Tar Heel state is vulnerable to a court challenge that could overturn as unconstitutional its current statutes that define marriage as being between one man and one woman.

This threat to traditional marriage in North Carolina is real!

In September of last year, same-sex couples lined up at the Buncombe County Clerk of Court's office demanding that they be given marriage licenses, setting up a potential legal challenge to the state's marriage laws. A Guilford County Court challenge filed in December of last year, which remains on appeal, argues the state's marriage laws, among other things, are unconstitutional be-

cause they don't allow same-sex couples to marry. Moreover, there is always the possibility a same-sex couple that has been married in a state where same-sex marriage is legal – and has now taken up residence in this state – could sue to have their marriage recognized here. Should the courts rule in favor of any of these scenarios, marriage would not only be altered to accommodate same-gender coupling, but it would redefine the institution for all the state's citizens.

Contrary to the understanding of many, same-sex marriage is not something that would simply exist alongside of traditional marriage; as if it were just a different expression of the same institution. No, instead there would be a completely new legal paradigm, redefining the institution for everyone in the state. The legal understanding of marriage would no longer be one man and one woman, but the union of two adults, regardless of their gender.

This redefined version of marriage as a genderless institution would be the only legally recognized definition. Such a radical change in the definition of marriage will unquestionably produce a myriad of societal conflicts that the government using its broad enforcement powers will have to resolve. In other words, citizens, businesses or religious organizations unwilling to comply with this new legal orthodoxy on marriage would find themselves outside of the law and vulnerable to the powers of the government to bring them into compliance.

If one should think this assertion is hyperbole or fear mongering, then it

should be noted this is already happening in places where same-sex marriage has become legal.

Religious groups unwilling to make their facilities available for same-sex couples have lost their state tax exemption status. Catholic Charities of Boston had to end their adoption work, deciding to abandon their longstanding religious social mission, because they were unwilling to comply with Massachusetts' law that allows gays to adopt children. Children in Massachusetts have been taught about gay marriage as early as second grade, and when parents objected, the courts ruled they had no right to prior notice nor were they allowed to opt their children out of class.

Christian innkeepers in Vermont and New Hampshire have been sued over their refusal to make their facilities available for same-sex ceremonies.

In other countries like Canada, where same-sex marriage is legal, the Alberta New Education Act requires parents of homeschoolers to refrain from teaching their children homosexuality is a sin as a part of their educational curriculum. A man in that same country who owned a printing press was fined over \$4,000 for refusing to print stationary for a gay activist organization. Pastors and priests in Canada often wonder if they can preach from Leviticus or Romans chapter one without reprisal from the government.

If same-sex marriage is ever legalized in this state, those who believe in traditional marriage will ultimately be declared the legal equivalents of bigots



MARK H. CREECH
Guest Column

“Because North Carolina is the only state in the southeast that has not protected marriage in its constitution, the Tar Heel state is vulnerable to a court challenge ...”

for acting on their deeply held religious beliefs. And not only would the law penalize and restrict traditional marriage supporters, but the power of the government would work in concert to promote this view throughout the culture.

Is this speculation? Is this conjecture? Absolutely not.

This is already happening in places where same-sex marriage is now legal. The N.C. Marriage Protection Amendment is the best hope of preventing this from happening in the state. What happens concerning this question in this state will likely set the course for the entire nation. What happens in the nation will affect the entire world.

While the opposition surmises, without any basis, as to the negative results of what might happen if the Marriage Amendment passes, the pro-amendment side warns of what unquestionably is already happening where the definition of marriage as one man and one woman has fallen. Traditional marriage in North Carolina must be vigorously protected. This is why it's critically important to Vote for the Marriage Protection Amendment on May 8.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Mark Creech is executive director of the Christian Action League.) **BR**

God's love at work through Mother's Day offering

One of the great joys I experience in serving as your executive director-treasurer is the opportunity to watch as you serve and meet needs in so many different and unique ways. I have been able to talk with you and visit in your churches and hear how God is using you to meet both physical and spiritual needs in our state and around the world.

Year after year, one of the ways North Carolina Baptists so faithfully respond to the cry for help is through the North Carolina Baptist Hospital Mother's Day Offering. This offering helps patients at the Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center pay their hospital bills. The patients and families who benefit from this offering are struggling to pay their hospital bills and often have no idea how they will be able to do so.

For example, if you visit the Mother's Day Offering website (mothersdayoffering.com) you can read the story of Logan McGirt. When Logan was diagnosed with leukemia his mom had to quit her job so she could stay home and take care of her son.

Logan's dad also missed many days of work as he tried to help care for his son.

Rhonda, Logan's mom, had this to say: “We are a hard-working family. But within the first two months, all the savings were gone. We were afraid of losing everything.”

But then, the McGirts received a letter in the mail that read, “Your son's hospital bill has been paid by compassionate and mission-minded

North Carolina Baptists in the name of Jesus Christ and His love.”

Your sacrificial giving to the Mother's Day Offering helps people like the McGirts, and so many others, find relief from financial burdens.

This year's offering theme is “God's love at work” and the theme verses are John 5:17 and 1 John 4:11. As you help meet these financial needs, you do so in the name of Jesus Christ. You become the hands of Jesus Christ, showing people His love and helping point people to our Savior.

The Mother's Day Offering website features more stories like Logan's that you can share with your church as you encourage your congregation to

support this offering. The website also includes free promotional resources such as bulletin inserts and a mission leader's guide.

You can email pmmullen@wakehealth.edu or call (336) 716-3027 to request additional materials.

Paul Mullen, who is the North Carolina Baptist Hospital director of church and community relations, does a remarkable job coordinating the Mother's Day Offering and helping share with us stories of how this offering is making a difference. I encourage you to contact Paul if you have any questions or would like more information.

Please pray about how you and your church can support this offering and help change many lives across our state.

Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another. 1 John 4:11 **BR**



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive director-treasurer

People of the Book

Opposition to the Christian faith is not new. Jesus was despised for His holy life and for His challenge to the religious status quo. They crucified Him.

Stephen was stoned because he proclaimed the exclusivity of Christ as the Savior (Acts 7:54-60).

Saul lived as a terrorist who intensely pursued the followers of Christ. The Bible describes him as one who shouted “murderous threats against the Lord’s disciples” (Acts 9:1). As we know, Saul repented of his misguided ways when encountered with the living truth of God, Jesus Himself.

Paul and Silas were beaten and imprisoned for their proclamation of Christ as the hope of lost mankind, as were many others (Acts 16).

Perhaps we should point out that most of this opposition to Christians came from misguided religious people who were caught up in the deceptions of tradition and ritual. They were well-intentioned and claimed to be spiritual, but very wrong – blind pharisees of a sort.

History’s list of enemies of the faith is

quite lengthy. Romans fed Christians to the lions, providing cheap entertainment for the public. Communism outlawed Christianity as a threat to their doctrines. Today nations like China and North Korea still persecute believers and even execute them.



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

In American culture, pharisees and non-believers work hard to oppose those who actually believe the truths of scriptures. Christians are ridiculed, fired, shut-out, and belittled. The humanist proclaims his religion as superior, and injects it into every element of secular life – including government – while shouting the “evils” of allowing Christian influences in government, entertainment, business and education.

We were told to expect this. Paul wrote to this young pastor and friend, Timothy, “Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution. But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:12-13, NKJ).

North Carolina is engaged in another chapter in this conflict now. It is a chap-

ter which calls for North Carolinians to decide if we want the proven biblical values of marriage to remain our constitutional standard or if we prefer to reject those values.

An overwhelming dose of deception has been fed to the public by those who oppose the marriage amendment. I read an example of the distortions in a local newspaper.

A Boone newspaper reported on April 15 that a retired United Church of Christ minister and vocal opponent of the amendment, was the keynote speaker at a local gathering.

The paper reported, “In opposing the constitutional amendment, [Rev. Marcia] Cham urged county Democrats not to shy away from challenging what she called ‘biblical idolatry.’ She said amendment supporters are exploiting Bible scriptures to defend the amendment the same way opponents of inter-racial marriage did years ago.”

“The only thing they’re looking at is the Bible,” Cham said. “Civil law should not be based on biblical exegesis in a country that separates church and state.”

This astounding statement exposes the thinking behind the non-biblical worldview. This quote gives two incredible statements. One very true; the other clearly false.

The true statement: “Christians are only looking at the Bible.” Christians do not apologize for standing on the Bible as our source of truth, values and practical living. We believe the Bible is exactly as David described it, “Thy word is a lamp

unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105, KJV).

We do not look for a syncretistic mix of secular values with biblical truth. We do not accept the idea that man’s opinions are equal to God’s truth. Humanism and Christianity are neither friends nor partners. It is essential that we take God’s commands seriously and commit ourselves to applying them. David wrote, “You have commanded us to keep Your

precepts diligently” (Psalm 119:4, NKJ).

“Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with

my whole heart” (Psalm 119:34, KJV). No half-hearted, casual embrace of scripture is acceptable.

David was keenly aware of the importance of following every portion of God’s commandments, “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments! Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You” (Psalm 119:10-11, NKJ).

The false statement: “Civil law should not be based on biblical exegesis in a country that separates church and state.” Basic American civics shows that the overwhelming majority of American law is extracted directly from Judeo-Christian scriptures. We believe murder, rape, adultery, stealing and lying are wrong. How did we arrive at that conclusion? We got it from the Bible.

To amputate all elements of the Bible from the laws of the United States is to behead our civilization, cutting out the heart and soul of who we are. Where are the secularists trying to take us?

They have accused us of “imposing our beliefs” on the rest of society. The facts show differently. This nation has a democratic process of allowing the people to vote. The majority will make the decision. A minority is not allowed to force their will on the majority if we stick to this process.

Up to this point, citizens of our state have been denied the right to vote on the issue of marriage.

On May 8 the democratic process of voting will be exercised. Your opinion will count only if you vote. Christians must not be silent. Our assignment is to be salt and light. Let us cast our vote for biblical values. **BR**

Submissions for Tar Heel Voices (letters to the editor)

Please send no more than 300 words, along with contact information, to 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.

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May 6

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

May 13

Building a Legacy

Focal Passage: Deuteronomy 6:1-15a

As a child, I was fascinated by ripples. The effect of throwing a rock into a pond is harmless. Conversely, a tsunami is an enormous “ripple” which leaves loss of life and devastation in its wake. Consider the ripples of a parent’s life. These ripples permanently impact their child. As a parent teaches their child how to live, and by what standards they should live, a legacy is forming. A legacy is something transmitted by or received from an ancestor, predecessor, or from the past. It is left for those behind us when we die. Scripture encourages the believer to build the priceless heritage of a godly life.

In Deuteronomy 6, Moses prompts the Israelites to forge a legacy of loving the Lord your God with all of one’s being and teaching one’s children to follow the Lord, His ways, and His statutes. Moses’ words are timeless and true for us today as well. We are to leave a godly legacy for the next generation, and the next, and so on.

Steve Farrar asserts, “In the Christian life, it’s not how you start that matters.

It’s how you finish.” Building a legacy that is worthy of emulation is challenging.

It requires tough choices and brokenness along the way. Farrar mentions that it is the rare, exceptional and teachable person who finishes strong. Is there anything in your life which may hinder you from finishing strong?

It is never too late to begin doing what’s right. Remember that your example casts a long shadow that will impact generations to come. We finish strong by fixing our eyes on Jesus.

Let’s build a legacy of following our Lord and replying on the Holy Spirit to survive life’s ambushes.

What is my legacy? What would my spouse and children say about my commitment to God? My friends? My co-workers? What would God say about my commitment to Him? Building a godly legacy for one’s children and grandchildren requires us to feast on God’s Word and to live it out daily.



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

Focal Passages: 1 Samuel 1:10-20, 27-2:1; 12:23-24

This Mother’s Day lesson centers on Hannah’s prayer for a son and how prayer and hope work together. Mothers are generally hopeful over what the future will bring in the lives of their children. Hannah would be no exception, yet she was barren. She lived in an era when raising children into adulthood was pivotal for social status, for extending one’s family line, and for supporting an agrarian economy. Hannah likely faced daily ridicule because of her barren womb. She was grieved that she had no heir to give her husband. Her sadness did eventually

give way to hope. Hannah prayed to the Lord knowing He can turn disappointment into joy. She cast all her cares upon Him. Hannah’s sadness seemed to disappear quickly (v. 18). God did bless Hannah with a son, Samuel, who became a great leader in Israel. Phillips Brooks

once said, “Pray the largest prayers. You cannot think a prayer so large that God, in answering it, will not wish you had made it larger! Pray not for crutches but for wings!”

We all face times of doubt, little hope, and sometimes misery. Joyful living is found in daily turning to and resting in the Lord. In actuality, we “control” very little in our lives. Hannah had sorrow as she thought her predicament was incapable of change. What changed? She let go. Her foundation of hope was built through her prayers to God. She built a legacy of hope for generations. At times God allows us to enter a time of disappointment so that we will recognize our need for Him. He is gracious to continue to shape us for our best and for His plans. God’s plans are always bigger than our dreams! Hannah released control over her barrenness and turned it over to God. This time, God gave Hannah her heart’s desire. Are you in a time of disappointment now? What “unchangeable” situation have you grieved over as Hannah did? Was it really unchangeable? Let’s leave a legacy of hope for the next generations by praying to God regularly.

May 6

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

May 13

Christianity 106: Learn to Pray

Focal Passage: Luke 17:11-19:27

Apart of this week’s lesson covers Jesus’ parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. It is a challenging parable to us about how do we come before God. When we pray – do we come to God with an arrogant, self-righteous attitude – or do we come with humility?

Thinking about humility, it is basically *self* vs. *God* in our lives. Let us consider this idea using the acrostic words *self* and *God*.

When we come as the Pharisee did, we come arrogantly before God. We see that the Pharisee came with a *superior* attitude.

He thanked God that he was “not like other men.” We need to see that we are all sinners before God. At our best, we are sinners saved by grace.

This Pharisee also came with an *ego-centered* attitude.

Five times he uses the word “I” while only acknowledging God once. He came to talk to God, while the whole time he was focused upon himself. When we come to pray, are we focusing upon God or are we too wrapped up in ourselves?

The Pharisee shows his *legalistic* bent by telling God how good he was because of all the things he did.

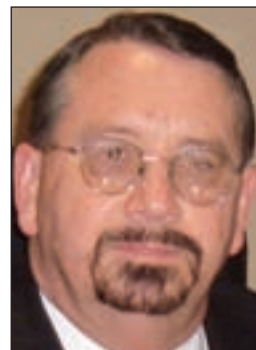
Do we try to buy God’s favor by doing things?

Do we have a list that we seek to keep because we want God to value us?

We should do good things – not to earn His favor, but because we are grateful for what He has done for us.

Finally, the Pharisee was *fault-finding*. He gives God a list of the faults of others. Do we constantly keep record of the faults of others around us? Are we keeping a scorecard to compare ourselves to others? Rather than putting others down before God, we need to be intercessors for them.

The tax collector understood GOD – *grace offers deliverance*. When we come before God, we should come because of His grace and mercy. Prayer should be focused on God. Prayer should seek His mercy on ourselves. We must come humbly before God, and then He will hear and answer our prayers.



THOMAS MARSHALL
Pastor, New Hope
Baptist Church,
Laurinburg

He Voluntarily Suffered: Be Grateful

Focal Passage: Luke 19:28-22:65

I don’t like pain! When it comes to pain I will try any way I can to avoid or alleviate it.

Even as a child I would try to slip out of the doctor’s office to keep from getting a shot. I personally do not know anyone who enjoys pain. Pain can be physical, emotional or both.

Watching the movie, “The Passion of the Christ,” and studying what He went through, I find it hard to conceive how much Jesus must have suffered leading up to His crucifixion.

On different occasions He tried to prepare the disciples for what was going to take place. And, just as we often are, they were too absorbed with their own plans to listen.

Those three hours on the cross were the climax of the suffering He endured. He understood how hideous sin really is.

He knew what an eternity in hell separated from God would entail.

Being Creator, He understood what

we are like. He also knew what we will go through in our Christian walk.

He gave us a memorial to remember the importance of His crucifixion in the Lord’s Supper.

We look back to what He has done, to our lives today, and to His return.

He knew that just like Peter we will disappoint Him, maybe not with words like Peter, but in our daily lives. The things we do or don’t do can cause great suffering and grief in our Savior.

He knew all that would happen, and still He did it for you and me.

We should be grateful that He was willing and able to suffer as He did. We need to show our gratitude with our lives.

First John 3:18 (HCSB) says: “Little children, we must not love in word or speech, but in deed and truth.”

We must come to the place where we seek to not do anything to disappoint Him.

We must stand for the truth no matter the stress, humiliation, or pain that we might endure.

Our living out our gratitude comes from our understanding of His willingness to suffer for us.

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Denominational

Millers Creek Christian School seeks to hire an **assistant principal or a child care director**, ACSI certified. Millers Creek Christian School is located on the campus of Millers Creek Baptist Church. Please contact April Huffman at 336-838-2517 or ahuffman@millerscreekchristianschool.org for more information.

Pastor

SENIOR PASTOR. First Baptist Church Rutherfordton, a 400-member congregation in the foothills of Western NC, seeks a pastor. Requirements include accredited seminary education, ministry experience and strong relational skills. This church values traditional worship, affiliates with CBF and SBC, and affirms women in ministry. Submit resumes to pastorsearchfbc@yahoo.com or mail to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 839, Rutherfordton, NC 28139 by June 15.

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 or mail to Search Committee/Carey, 8337 English Saddle Dr., Fayetteville, NC 28314.

SENIOR PASTOR. Cheraw First Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a senior pastor, chosen by God, who is equipped to serve and lead as our church continues to grow in Christ. If prompted by the Holy Spirit, submit your resume to cfbsearchcommittee@gmail.com or mail to Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 337, Cheraw, SC 29520. We will be accepting resumes April 2nd through May 31st. Please visit our website at www.cherawfbc.com.



Zion Baptist Church (www.zionbaptistshelby.com) is seeking a **full-time pastor**. We are a moderate congregation that is dually aligned with the SBC and CBF. We seek a candidate with a minimum of 5 years pastoral experience that is also a graduate of an accredited seminary or divinity school. Qualities we desire are a servant leader, a person with strong interpersonal skills, and an inspiring preacher. Send resume to Zion Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, 525 W. Zion Church Road, Shelby, NC 28150, or email resume to pastorsearchcommittee@zionbaptistshelby.com. Resumes will be accepted through May 31, 2012.

Bethlehem Baptist Church, located in Clarksville, Ga., is seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. BBC is nestled among the mountains in a vibrant community and is a mission-minded church committed to proclaiming the never changing gospel to an ever changing world. With attendance averaging 400-500, we have multiple staff members and two Sunday School sessions and worship services. Poised for growth, our congregation desires a pastor to lead us in the evangelism of our local community and beyond through outreach, biblical teaching and fellowship. Our building and grounds are debt-free and well-maintained. Send resumes to: Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 448, Clarksville, GA 30523 or bbcpsc@gmail.com.

Lake Lynn Baptist Church, a growing conservative SBC church located in Fayetteville, NC, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. In the past year, the church has grown in membership and is seeking a pastor to carry it to the next level. We have three part-time leaders to include an associate pastor, children's minister, and worship arts director. We are seeking a pastor who is pursuing, or holds, a master's degree in divinity from an accredited seminary or school of divinity. Please send resume electronically to Lakelynnbaptistchurch@embarqmail.com. Resume must be received by June 30, 2012.

Advertise here.
Call (919) 459-5691

Trinity Baptist Church, an SBC church in Trinity, NC, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Seminary degree and reference required. Send resumes to bbenfi6193@aol.com or Trinity Baptist Church, PO Box 9, Trinity, NC 27370 by July 1, 2012.

Church Staff

Calvary Baptist Church of Shelby is searching for an experienced **part-time music director**. Calvary has a blended worship style and many musically talented people. Resumes with references may be mailed to the church office at 320 Old Boiling Springs Road, Shelby, 28152 or emailed to tony@visitcalvaryonline.com. Inquiries may be directed to the church office at 704-482-8302.

First Baptist Church Hickory, NC, seeks a **full-time Minister of Worship Arts** to lead the church's contemporary worship service. Strong preference will be given to candidates with advanced musical and theological training and who are skilled in guitar and/or keyboard, and audio/video technology. This person will lead the church's band and vocal team, and will work in collaboration with the senior pastor and staff to plan all aspects of contemporary worship. Other duties will include leadership in youth and children's music programs, pastoral care, and special/seasonal events. FBC is a growing congregation of approximately 1,000 resident members located in downtown Hickory, NC, offering two distinct opportunities for worship. The complete job description is available at www.fbc.cc. Send qualified résumés to FBC Hickory, Worship Arts Search, 339 2nd Avenue NW, Hickory, NC 28601 or e-mail to worshipsearch@fbc.cc.

FULL-TIME MINISTER OF MUSIC AND EDUCATION. Loris First Baptist Church, Loris, SC, is seeking a full-time associate pastor for music and education. Degree from accredited seminary required. Anyone interested may send resume to: Search Committee, LFBC, 3117 Main Street, Loris, SC 29569, or e-mail to: piver@coastal.edu.

Full-time Minister of Music and Music Education for Poplar Springs Baptist Church. Seeking college graduate with music degree and three years experience as minister of music. If interested send detailed resume to MM Search Committee, 3014 Poplar Circle, Shelby, NC 28152.

First Baptist Church, Lumberton, NC, is seeking a **full-time Minister to Children** to lead a ministry that will foster children's relationships with God and others and welcome them and their families into the life of the church. Candidates must have at least a bachelor's degree in education, human services, religion or a related field, managerial or internship experience in a church setting and give evidence of a personal call to ministry. Resumes and inquiries may be sent to First Baptist Church, Personnel Committee, PO Box 938, Lumberton, NC 28359 and must be received by May 31, 2012.

Putnam Baptist Church of Shelby, North Carolina, is searching for a **Worship Pastor**. This position requires someone who demonstrates an attitude of worship during the services as well as through his daily walk. The worship pastor will assist the leadership in making Sunday morning services a priority that give the body an opportunity to receive a message from God by participating in a time of worship through various forms of media. A major aspect of this role, though not the sole responsibilities of the position, will be preparing for and leading contemporary worship services, leading rehearsals for the praise and worship team and management of personnel. A working knowledge of sound equipment and computers is required. Requirements: Minimum education: 4 year degree; minimum of 3 years, full-time experience to apply for the worship pastor position for Putnam Baptist Church, Shelby, North Carolina; send your resume to: info@putnambaptist.org; www.putnambaptist.org.

Miscellaneous

Volunteers needed (2 to 4 weeks) this summer to teach in China, India and Taiwan. Volunteers can be college to senior adults as long as they are in good health. A love for people and a heart to tell others the good news is required. Teaching certificate is required for some schools but is not required for all programs. Please email rttteach@gmail.com for more information.

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.

NCBAM needs grab bars and other fall-prevention devices funded and installed across the state. Keep aging adults on their feet and in their homes. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

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Pastor retires after 41 years at Lewis Fork

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

George Washington was president of the United States, and the Declaration of Independence was only 16 years old when Lewis Fork Baptist Church was planted in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains near Wilkesboro, N.C. Since its founding in 1792 the church has been led by 27 pastors. Sherrill Wellborn served as the church's most recent pastor for 41 years.

The church honored Wellborn and his wife, Mary, on the occasion of his retirement on Sunday, April 15. With his usual clever wit, Wellborn told the congregation, "I've out-done Moses. He led the children of Israel out in the wilderness 40 years. I've led you 41 years."

The celebration included comments by church members and some of Wellborn's closest friends in ministry.

Greg Mathis, pastor of Mud Creek Church in Hendersonville, spoke to the congregation by pre-recorded video.

"As I have traveled the state of N.C. ... I don't know of anyone that's more of a favorite – not only to me but to many pastors – than you are Sherrill," Mathis said. "Your kind spirit, your faithful dedication, your willingness to work with other



Sherrill Wellborn shares some parting words April 15 at Lewis Fork Baptist Church. (BR photo by K. Allan Blume)

people, your steadfastness and perseverance through the years has truly been an example to all of us ... Congratulations, you have run a good race."

Ray Davis, a pastor and Baptist leader, has been a close friend of Wellborn: "He is exactly today the man I met 38 years ago. He's real, he's transparent, [he's] been an inspiration to me."

Kenneth Ridings, retired president of Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute, also delivered a greeting. By video, Ridings spoke of his respect for Wellborn saying, "I rejoice with you in your retirement ...

You have been very faithful; you have always been a good friend ... You have had a great ministry, and I want you to know how much I love you and thank God for you."

Wellborn is widely known as a revival-preaching pastor.

Pastors in several states invited him to preach as many as 17 revivals each year. While Wellborn said he looked forward to retirement, he admitted that he wants to continue preaching.

Steve Gouge, director of missions for the Brushy Mountain Baptist Association, led in a prayer of blessing for Sherrill and Mary Wellborn. He described Wellborn as a man of "vast spiritual impact."

"When any issue of importance is raised in our area, his voice is one that everyone wants to hear. He exudes the qualities of a great Christian statesman ... Sherrill's kind manner and pastor's heart has endeared him to the whole region and state. He is one of my heroes."

N.C. Baptists are familiar with Wellborn's record. He served 8 years on the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) Board of Directors, and terms on the Executive Committee, Budget Committee and Nominating Committee. He also served on Fruitland's board.

During a time when division characterized the BSC, Mathis and Mike Queen of First Baptist Church in Wilmington appointed the committee of 20 – 10 conservatives and 10 moderates – to discuss ways Baptists can cooperate. Wellborn was asked to serve as one of the 10 conservatives on the committee.

In a personal video message to Wellborn, Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, said, "You are a legend in your own right ... this long tenure is reflective not only of the great leadership that [you] have given, but it is also a testimony to the grace, the love and the support of a church family who has supported their pastor through the years."

"I appreciate all you have done ... in extending your ministry beyond your community to help the Baptist State Convention in the various ministries you have been part of. I thank you for the roles of leadership where you have served. We have looked to you, asking you to serve on committees and boards because we have recognized your ability and the way you have been able to discern God's leadership."

Wellborn and his wife still reside in Wilkesboro. He is available to fill pulpits and preach revivals. **BR**

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