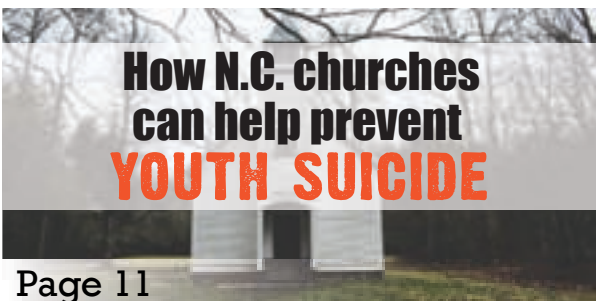




**AMONG WOLVES:
Q&A with Dhati Lewis**

Page 7



**How N.C. churches
can help prevent
YOUTH SUICIDE**

Page 11

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

MAY 20, 2017 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 183 NO.10 • **BRnow.org**



FAMILY OPENS HOME TO BCH FOSTER CARE MINISTRY

Amanda and Jeremy Parton, with their daughters four-year-old Kimsey and 10-year-old Ellie, have opened their home to become a Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) foster family. BCH is on track to have 30 foster care homes across North Carolina by the end of 2017 – with hopes for continued expansion in the years ahead. (BCH photo)

By **JIM EDMINSON** | BCH Communications

Amanda and Jeremy Parton, with their daughters four-year-old Kimsey and 10-year-old Ellie, are a Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina's (BCH) foster care family.

Currently, they have one foster child living with them.

"Being a part of an organization that aligns with our Christian faith is so

important," Jeremy Parton says. "It was a blessing joining the BCH family."

BCH is building a statewide network of foster care families. The immediate goal is to have 30 BCH foster care homes by the end of 2017.

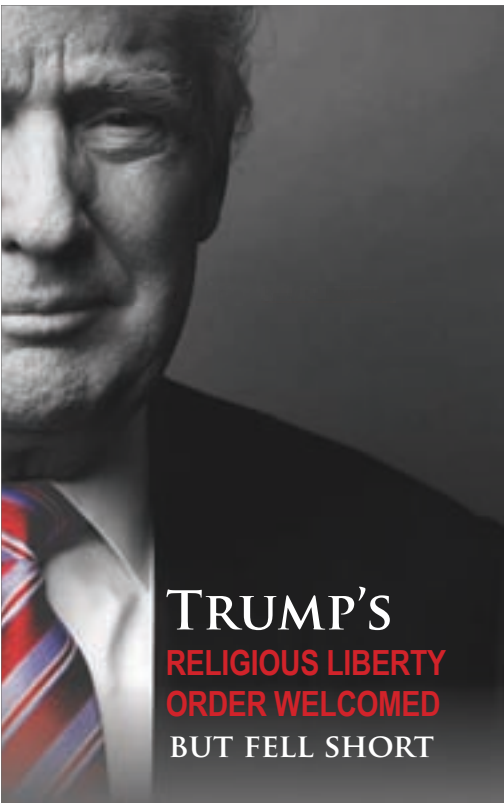
"We are passionate about this ministry," BCH western area foster home supervisor Bob McCleary says. "It is our intention to grow the foster family care ministry, but it is important to recruit families that have the best chance of be-

ing successful. And then we spend a lot of time working to make the best match – putting the right child with the right family."

Amanda Parton says meeting the challenges they face as foster parents is easier with the support of BCH's foster care case managers.

"I can pick up the phone and call any time with a question or just have someone serve as a sounding board," she

See Family page 10



TRUMP'S RELIGIOUS LIBERTY ORDER WELCOMED BUT FELL SHORT

By **TOM STRODE** | Baptist Press

Religious liberty advocates commended President Donald Trump's new executive order to protect faith beliefs and practice, but some said it fell short of what is needed.

Trump's order – issued May 4 on National Day of Prayer in a ceremony at the White House Rose Garden – says:

- The administration's policy will be to enforce vigorously the "robust protections for religious freedom" in federal law.

See Liberty page 16



WALTER STRICKLAND

SEBTS' Strickland to be 1st VP nominee

By **DAVID ROACH** | Baptist Press

Walter Strickland, a leader of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's (SEBTS) Kingdom Diversity Initiative, will be nominated for first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), former SBC President James Merritt announced May 9.

Strickland has been special adviser to the president for diversity at Southeastern since 2013.

He also teaches theology at SEBTS and since 2015 has operated a consulting service to assist churches and other organizations with

diversity-related issues. Southeastern's Kingdom Diversity Initiative seeks to increase the seminary's ethnic minority and female enrollment and equip students for multicultural ministry.

"As our nation and our convention become more diverse, it is imperative that our leadership reflect the diversity that marks the Kingdom of God and heaven itself," Merritt, pastor of Cross Pointe Church in Duluth, Ga., said according to a news release. "Beyond that we need people in leadership that reflect the best of Southern Baptists theologically, spiritually and personally."

"Walter Strickland meets both of these needs perfectly and I am

See Strickland page 8

In Baptist life, a special place for associations

As Baptist people who are passionate about missions, we have learned that our churches can accomplish more by cooperating and working together than we can by working alone. A good example of this cooperation is how churches can work together within the fellowship of their local Baptist association. The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) calendar has listed May 21-28 as Baptist Association Week, and I would like to share with you why I am convinced that Baptist associations are important.

Though some individuals may not consider local Baptist associations as important as the SBC or state conventions, I believe Baptist associations are at the “front line,” so to speak with member churches. They are geographically close by, and the associational missionary can have more face-to-face contact with the churches than the state or national conventions do. Association leaders have the potential to develop strong relationships with pastors and people in their member churches. Through visionary leadership, they can help their pastors recognize the opportunities and need for doing missions and ministry in communities and cities around them. It is through associations

that a group or network of churches in a geographical area can rally together and make a difference in impacting lostness around them by combining manpower and resources from member churches to do evangelism, disciple-making, church planting and community ministry. They can also help strengthen and revitalize dying churches around them.

Before the existence of the SBC or state conventions, there were Baptist associations. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) that we enjoy today was birthed by churches within associations in North Carolina who decided to unite their efforts for kingdom advance. They envisioned that in cooperating together, they could achieve more in evangelizing the lost, discipling the saved and starting churches. Among those early churches in this state are Shiloh Baptist Church and Sandy Creek Baptist Church, both of which are still part of our N.C. Baptist family today. What a legacy these churches have!

After groups of churches formed associations, state conventions followed. In 1830, the BSC was established in Greenville, and only 15 years later, members from our convention joined with others in Augusta, Ga., to form



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer



what is today the SBC. Before my role as our convention's executive director-treasurer, I served as executive director of missions (DOM) for the Gaston Baptist Association in Gastonia.

During that time, I became aware that some larger churches preferred to function alone rather than cooperate with an association. My encouragement to them, both during my role as DOM and in the present, would be to join with the missionary efforts of other churches in their Baptist association – to give more than they expect to receive. Though larger churches may accomplish more alone than smaller churches, if they combine their efforts with others, they can make a greater contribution than any individual church.

Every church needs to work in cooperation with others if they want to achieve maximum results in God's kingdom advancement. In Southern Baptist life, we are blessed to have churches, associations, state conventions and a national convention. We pool our resources and combine our efforts in order to be most effective in fulfilling the Great Commission. **BR**

21 ways to be a part of VBS

Vacation Bible School (VBS) is a significant way your church can open the door to the surrounding community. You may think VBS is for only for children and not for you, but VBS is most successful when the church embraces it as a total church ministry.

Here are ways you can help in sharing the work of VBS.

1. Pray before VBS for the leaders, children and their families.
2. Pray for good weather and good health for teachers and their families.
3. Pray for receptive hearts for the children who may be hearing the gospel for the first time.
4. Distribute flyers and posters in your neighborhood and invite your neighbors with children.
5. Transport children to VBS.
6. Offer to drive the church van to pick up children whose parents may be working.
7. Help fund VBS through a special offering or gift.
8. Donate children's snacks or sponsor a special treat for the teachers' lounge. This is a great ministry for a Sunday School class or small group.
9. If your church orders VBS t-shirts, manage the order and distribution of shirts.
10. Cut out materials for leaders.
11. Shop for VBS supplies.

12. Help with decorating classrooms or the worship center.
13. Be a greeter/escort for VBS guests who need to find classrooms.
14. Collect and maintain VBS attendance records.
15. Be a department runner, helping teachers with last-minute supplies or copies.
16. Help plan or clean up after a teacher training event or parent night.
17. Invite unchurched families to Sunday School or a small group meeting.
18. Add your name to the substitute teacher list.
19. Pray for children who make professions of faith.
20. Pray for the families

who need to hear the message of Christ and those from your church who will make this happen.

21. Pray for the Holy Spirit to continue His work in the life of your church and children's ministry when VBS is over.

Think VBS is not for you? Will you prayerfully think again?

God has a place for you in this wonderful ministry. Just pick one and get started!

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Cheryl Markland is senior consultant for childhood evangelism and discipleship at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact her at cmarkland@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5645. Visit lifeway.com for VBS materials.) **BR**



CHERYL MARKLAND
Guest Column



Galactic Starveyors is the main LifeWay Christian Resources Vacation Bible School theme this year.

Submissions for Tar Heel Voices

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

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Immigration may beat a century-old record

As of 2015, the United States had set one record in immigration, and it may be on pace to break another one.

According to the most recent data from Pew Research, the United States is now home to over 43.2 million international immigrants. That is more than any other time in the country's history. It also makes the United States the largest recipient of immigrants by a wide margin.

However, according to Pew, the U.S. is tracking toward another milestone, one that has not been topped since 1890. This number is called "immigrant share," and it is the percentage of the population that is foreign-born. In other words, our total population is looking more and more diverse.

It may be hard to see the distinction between these two numbers (total population and immigrant share), but they make a big difference in terms of culture.

The number of immigrants has been increasing for a while now, but so has the total population of the country. This means that the foreign-born population did not necessarily make up an increasing piece of the pie. However, that has also shifted, and immigration is outpacing domestic population

growth.

In 1890, 14.8 percent of our country was foreign-born. This period marked the first great wave of immigration to America. Around the turn of the last century, from the late 1800s to the early 1900s, our country experienced a massive population and industrialization boom.

That is when our first round of great American cities were built.

Large amounts of immigration poured in from Europe. This was back when Ellis Island was a thing, and the Statue of Liberty was that symbol that America would not turn away those looking for a better life. At our most foreign-born point (1890), there were 9.2 million immigrants in the US.

However, along the way, sentiments toward immigration shifted, two world wars happened and people became very nationalistic. This shut the door to many of the immigrants that were building the country.

In 1965, the Hart-Cellar Act shifted the country's stance on immigration and once again it began to increase. Since this time (for the most part), the country has seen rising immigration from all over the world.

The number of immigrants since 1965 has quadrupled. Today, foreign-born immigrants make up 13.4 percent of the U.S. population.

We are closing in on that 1890 percentage, and that is important thing the church to realize.

It is one thing for the number of immigrants to increase as our domestic population increases. This would result in more immigrants but no real change in the "feel" of our cities. However, as the overall share of immigrants increases compared to the total population, our cities will become more international.

For a church that is called to spread the gospel in their city, this matters. With the foreign-born share increasing, it will be harder and harder for churches to overlook a growing population segment. It will also be harder and harder for churches to do business as usual. You can check out the May 3 Pew research article at pewresearch.org/fact-tank, and consider how your church will spread the gospel to these growing ethnic populations.

How can your church start a church for them?

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Keelan Cook leads the Peoples Next Door project and is a senior church consultant with the Union Baptist Association in Houston, Texas. This article first appeared at blog.keelancook.com. Used with permission.) **BR**

What is the prosperity gospel?

Recently U.S. Postal Service inspectors and Internal Revenue Service criminal investigators raided the offices of Benny Hinn, the infamous faith healer and "health and wealth" preacher. Here is what should know about Hinn and the prosperity gospel movement.

What is the prosperity gospel?

The prosperity gospel (also known as the "health and wealth gospel" or by its most popular brand, the "Word of Faith" movement) is a perversion of the gospel of Jesus that claims that God rewards increases in faith with increases in health and/or wealth.

Stephen Hunt explains: "In the forefront is the doctrine of the assurance of 'divine' physical health and prosperity through faith. In short, this means that 'health and wealth' are the automatic divine right of all Bible-believing Christians and may be procreated by faith as part of the package of salvation, since the Atonement of Christ includes not just the removal of sin, but also the removal of sickness and poverty."



JOE CARTER
Guest Column

What makes the prosperity gospel a false gospel?

David W. Jones, professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, outlines five errors of prosperity gospel teaching:

1. The Abrahamic covenant is a means to material entitlement.
2. Jesus' atonement extends to the "sin" of material poverty.
3. Christians give in order to gain material compensation from God.
4. Faith is a self-generated spiritual force that leads to prosperity.
5. Prayer is a tool to force God to grant prosperity.

"In light of scripture, the prosperity gospel is fundamentally flawed," Jones says. "At bottom, it is a false gospel because of its faulty view of the relationship between God and man. Simply put, if the prosperity gospel is true, grace is obsolete, God is irrelevant, and man is the measure of all things. Whether they're talking about the Abrahamic covenant, the atonement, giving, faith or prayer, prosperity teachers turn the relationship between God and man into a quid pro quo transaction."

Where did the prosperity gospel come from?

The prosperity gospel originated as an offshoot of Pentecostalism in post-World War II America. While it started in local congregations and in tent revivals, the movement gained a larger following through the use of radio and television, and became firmly entrenched in the 1980s with the rise of "televangelism."

While not all prosperity gospel preachers are Pentecostal or charismatic (and most charismatic and Pentecostal Christians are not associated with the prosperity gospel), the movement is still largely connected to revivalist and charismatic

churches. This has made it easier for the movement to gain traction in Africa, South America and other areas of the world where Pentecostalism is rapidly expanding.

Who preaches the prosperity gospel?

The man who could be considered the father of modern prosperity gospel teaching is Oral Roberts. The faith-healing evangelist became so influential that he started his own school, Oral Roberts University (ORU). At the height of his influence, Roberts oversaw a ministry that brought in \$110 million in annual revenue.

Kenneth Copeland, a student at ORU who served as a pilot and chauffeur for Oral Roberts, also became one of the most notorious (and wealthiest) of prosperity preachers. These men paved the way for the televangelists who became famous in the 1980s, including Jim and Tammy Faye Bakker, Benny Hinn, Pat Robertson and Robert Tilton.

Today, some of the best-known prosperity teachers are Creflo Dollar, T.D. Jakes, Guillermo Maldonado, Joel Osteen and Paula White.

How can we identify a prosperity gospel preacher?

In a 2014 sermon, John Piper outlined six keys to detecting the prosperity gospel:

1. The absence of a serious doctrine of the biblical necessity and normalcy of suffering, the absence of a doctrine of suffering.
2. The absence of a clear and prominent doctrine of self-denial is a tip off that something is amiss.
3. The absence of serious exposition of scripture.
4. The absence of dealing with tensions in scripture.
5. Church leaders who have exorbitant lifestyles.
6. A prominence of self and a marginalization of the greatness of God.

Who in America is attracted to the prosperity gospel?

In 2015, YouGov surveyed 1,000 American adults who describe themselves as either "born again" or as an evangelical Christian, and asked their views about particular preachers and whether wealth is a sign of God's favor.

On the question, "Do you believe that prayer can make you wealthier?" 15 percent of whites, 42 percent of blacks and 25 percent of Hispanics answered yes.

On the question, "Is wealth a sign of God's favor?" nine percent of white, 34 percent of blacks and 24 percent of Hispanics said "definitely" or "probably."

When it comes to black prosperity gospel preachers, black evangelicals were much more likely than either Hispanic or white evangelicals to have a "very favorable" or "somewhat favorable" opinion.

Seventy percent of blacks had a favorable

See Prosperity page 6

Sunday booze bill said to ‘disrespect churches’

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

North Carolina’s Christian Action League (CAL) is calling pastors and church leaders to sign a letter of opposition to a bill that would allow cities and counties to roll back prohibitions against Sunday alcohol sales from noon to 10 a.m.

The public policy organization’s executive director, Mark Creech, said the so-called “Brunch Bill” represents “tacit disrespect for churches.”

“Churches spend significant ministry resources helping people pick up the pieces of their lives ruined by alcohol use and abuse,” he continued. “Don’t churches deserve respect for this indispensable service? ... This kind of legislation works against the positive role of religion in our society.”

Senate Bill 155, which is currently before the Committee on Finance, also includes provisions for retail-

ers governed by the state’s Alcoholic Beverage Control Commission (commonly called ABC stores) to host free liquor tastings sponsored by distilleries.

Creech said in a blog post on the CAL website that allowing ABC stores to host special tasting events would transform their role from alcohol regulation to state-sanctioned promotion.

The North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association (NCRLA) has launched a digital campaign in support of the bill through an online petition, website and social media hashtags. In a tweet May 9, the NCRLA said the campaign had garnered nearly 3,000 signatures in its #FreeTheMimosa effort.

Lynn Minges, the group’s president and chief executive, told WRAL that meeting consumer demand could increase economic activity and lead to “tax revenue for state and local government as well as jobs for people who make a living in this industry.”

“I really can’t imagine why anyone is against it,” she said.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) sent a letter to Southern Baptist pastors across the state on May 10, encouraging church leaders to contact their legislators about the Brunch Bill.

The letter was signed by Earl Roach, chair of the Christian Life & Public Affairs Committee, and Brian Davis, BSC associate executive director-treasurer.

The document notes the relaxed Sunday sales regulations, along with a provision of the bill that expands the number of bottles of alcohol from one to five that distilleries may sell directly to customers taking facility tours.

“Alcohol may already be obtained easily across this state, and there is no compelling reason to expand its availability, whether in restaurants on Sundays or at distilleries during any other time of the week,” convention leaders said. **BR**

Summit focuses on Christian persecution

By **TOM STRODE** | Baptist Press

Hundreds of church leaders from around the world gathered in solidarity at an inaugural summit in Washington, D.C., to speak up in defense of persecuted Christians.

Persecution – including imprisonment, rape, torture and execution – of Christians and other religious adherents continues to mount globally, according to research by various organizations.

The repression and punishment of followers of Christ specifically brought together about 600 Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox leaders and persecution victims from more than 130 countries for the first World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians May 10-13.

The summit included addresses during its plenary sessions from Vice President Mike Pence and Billy Graham Evangelistic Association President and evangelist Franklin Graham, as well as at least two Southern Baptists – former convention president Jack Graham and Sen. James Lankford, R-Okla.

Christians in many countries face persecution “on an unprecedented scale,” Graham said May 10.

“Today, the Christian faith is under attack in almost every part of the globe.”

Both Graham and Pence described the

persecution by such Islamic extremist groups as the Islamic State, also known as ISIS, as genocide of Christians.

Southern Baptist public policy specialist Travis Wussow attended the summit and said of Pence’s speech, “We were deeply encouraged by the vice president’s comments that international religious freedom is ‘an American foreign policy priority.’”

“Vice President Pence is undoubtedly deeply concerned about the plight of our brothers and sisters in Christ around the world, and his presence at the event was significant and meaningful,” said Wussow, vice president for public policy of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. “The event provided an opportunity for us to see many of our allies around the world and continue to drive forward on many of the projects we’re working on.”

Frank S. Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said, “It was truly refreshing to hear a new emphasis on protecting the rights of all persons to be able to fully and honestly live out their faith.”

Already in 2017, three organizations have documented the increase in persecution of Christians and others: the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom, Pew Research Center and Open Doors. **BR**

GET THE CALL RIGHT

I was fortunate enough to play college baseball, and like most athletes, I never wanted it to end.

In my final game, I was the starting pitcher against a team that had beaten us earlier in the season. I pitched well, going nine and one-third innings, and we won 4-3 in extra innings.

But there was a crazy twist.

Even though we won, the pitch calls between myself and our catcher were off almost every inning. Late in the game, I figured out what happened.

In the second inning, our backup catcher entered the game after our starter was injured. But he and I never talked about the pitch signals. I assumed nothing had changed. But the new catcher was thinking one thing, and I was thinking another.

It wasn’t until later that I realized I wasn’t throwing the pitches he was calling. I had been off every single pitch!

Sports are not always perfectly analogous to real life, but in this case, it works.

It’s easy to miscommunicate in sports and still win, but if you do this as a pastor, eventually you’ll fail.

Our ministry play-calling shouldn’t come from people or books or traditions or seminary. And it certainly shouldn’t come from the church you read about in a magazine.

If what we do doesn’t come from the Holy Spirit, then we are way off base.

As pastors, we can get good marks if we do what people expect, meet the budget and fill the seats. But that

doesn’t necessarily mean it was God’s will or that it had anything to do with God.

Pastoral ministry can be extremely challenging. When we get tired, hurt, disappointed or overwhelmed, we may start thinking, doing or saying things that lead us down a wrong path.

The more pain we experience, the cloudier the right path becomes.

When we are tempted to take the wrong path, we look elsewhere for answers. That’s why our ideas, dreams and plans should come from God.

Hearing from God requires relationship, dependency, prayer, study and wise counsel.

That’s a lot of work, but that’s the work of God.

Pastors, let’s stop listening to so many people, reading so many things about other churches and truly listen to the Word and the heart of God.

That’s how you get the call right.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Eddie Thompson is a pastoral ministries consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at ethompson@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5644.)



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AAIM event brings awareness to caregivers

By CAROL LAYTON | NCBAM Communications

When the church prayed, helped and assisted one couple with taking care of parents, “they shined a light on our routine that was unbelievably bright,” said Allan Blume.

Blume, *Biblical Recorder* editor/president, served as keynote speaker for the third annual Aging Adults Innovating Ministry (AAIM) Roundup May 2 in Thomasville. AAIM, an outreach of North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM), is a network of ministers and lay leaders who plan the annual roundup and the fall regional gatherings in order to strengthen and equip aging adult ministries.

Titled “The Family of God,” this year’s AAIM Roundup focused on the special needs of caregivers and the role of the church in supporting them. Following four early-bird sessions, the agenda included two caregiving-focused addresses, special music and opportunities to visit with select vendors and a “parade of churches.” Exhibiting churches shared innovative ways they are helping frail aging adults and their caregivers.

Blume, who has also pastored three North Carolina Baptist churches, focused on why churches should support aging adults and their caregivers.

Beginning with the demographic and cultural shifts occurring as the aging population booms, Blume suggested it is time for the church to intentionally adjust to these shifts and realize the immense value of senior adults as well as ways to help those in need.

Using Jesus’ first sermon, Blume explained why this intentional focus should take place. “We have not been given a hard assignment. We are told we have been made to be salt and light. Now it’s up to us to invade the darkness.”

Blume detailed how Baptists have been at the forefront of defending religious liberties as well as great influencers of politics, families, law and art.

“As we have been salt and light in other ways, let’s be on the front line of ministry to aging adults. People are asking, ‘Where is God?’ God has promised that the way he puts His presence in the world is through the New Testament church.”

Blume also shared his personal experiences with caregiving as he and his wife,



Allan Blume, *Biblical Recorder* editor/president, shares his experience giving care to his wife’s parents with the Aging Adults Innovating Ministry (AAIM) Roundup May 2. AAIM is an outreach of the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry. (NCBAM photo)

Pam, cared for her parents. “A lot of people made a big difference for us. Our church family saw our need and helped.”

The closing address was given by Beth Harris. A minister’s wife for 28 years, Harris has also served on the boards of Salem Pregnancy Support Center and the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Harris has also walked the caregiver’s journey. Her closing address was a moving recollection of her years of struggle, triumph and sanctification as a caregiver. Her husband, Mark, is the pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte.

Throughout her address, Harris wove a thread of the three gifts she experi-

enced during her caregiving years: the grace-filled gift of laughter, the necessary gift of truth and the greatest gift of love. Harris eloquently shared her experiences to encourage other caregivers in the invaluable work they are doing.

Harris also gave a soul cry to the church to be aware of the stresses and challenges experienced by caregivers. “I want churches to know that caregivers are at places where they don’t think they can go on one more day. They desperately need respite. They need to be encouraged by God’s truth that He will not forget their labors of love. They need to be told, ‘I see God working in you; I see God glorified in you.’”

See AAIM page 15

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Prosperity Continued from page 3

opinion of T.D. Jakes compared to 10 percent for whites and 24 percent for Hispanics. (Most whites and Hispanics answered “not sure” – 71 percent and 64 percent, compared to 15 percent for blacks.)

The results were much lower for Creflo Dollar: 28 percent of black evangelicals held a favorable view, compared to three percent for whites and eight percent for Hispanics. (Most whites and Hispanics answered “not sure” – 72 percent and 78 percent, compared to 26 percent for blacks.)

However, black evangelicals also held more favorable opinions of prosperity preachers who were not black. They were more likely to have a “very” or “somewhat” favorable view of: Joel Osteen (51 percent, compared to 22 percent for whites and 39 percent for Hispanics), Pat Robertson (41 percent, compared to 17 percent for whites and 14 percent for Hispanics), Benny Hinn (23 percent, compared to four percent for whites and 12 percent for Hispanics), and Kenneth Copeland (34 percent, compared to eight percent for whites and 12 percent for Hispanics).

Additionally, one in four black and Hispanic evangelicals believe it is acceptable for religious leaders to become wealthy through their religious work compared to one in seven white evangelicals.

Where can I find resources on addressing the prosperity gospel? You can download a free copy of *Prosperity: Seeking the True Gospel*, and find articles and videos by The Gospel Coalition, 9Marks, Desiring God and other ministries at thegospelcoalition.org/pages/prosperity.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Joe Carter is an editor for The Gospel Coalition and communications specialist for the Southern Baptist Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission. This article first appeared at thegospelcoalition.org. Used by permission.) **BR**

Offering restores hope for one family

Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center

Laura Clark was a happy, healthy working mother of two daughters. A former athlete and wife to a busy police detective, life was good, until the day she had to struggle to carry her baby up the front porch steps. With her heart rate soaring over 220 beats a minute, a high-speed ambulance ride to Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center saved her life. After a week in intensive care, she was diagnosed with monomorphic ventricular tachycardia, a potentially deadly heart condition also known as MVT.

“The doctors told me I have what’s causing young athletes to drop dead on playing fields,” she said. “They couldn’t say why I didn’t die. But I knew: God saved me!”

Seven months later, another emergency treatment was easier to deal with medically ... but not financially. It was a new year, and the family was hit with another high insurance deductible. The Clarks were used to the stressful family life of a first responder, but the skyrocketing medical bills – and escalating worries over money – took a toll.

“It was a hard time,” Clark said. “My husband was working a lot of off-duty, a lot of nights and every weekend. We never saw him. It was so depressing. It felt like a never-ending battle to pay all those bills. We felt hopeless.”

But their hope was restored when their bill was paid by the Mother’s Day Offering.

“It was like the biggest burden was lifted from



The Mother’s Day Offering gave the Clark family hope after helping them with Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center bills.

our heads. It was unbelievable, I cried for two days,” she said. “My husband didn’t have to work so much. My girls and I see him again. It was like God saying, ‘You’ve been through so much, here.’ We feel so blessed.”

The Mother’s Day Offering changed Laura Clark’s life.

“For so many years, you see the video in church and think, ‘Oh, it’s another Mother’s Day Offering.’ You give and don’t think anything of it,” she said. “But when you’re the one who receives, it opens your eyes and you realize this is the best offering ever. It’s so local and such a blessing – I can’t thank everyone who gives enough.”

Since 1924 North Carolina Baptists have given to the Mother’s Day Offering to “extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ, especially to the needy.”

Visit mothersdayoffering.org. **BR**

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Lead pastor says unity, not uniformity, key in church growth

BSC Communications

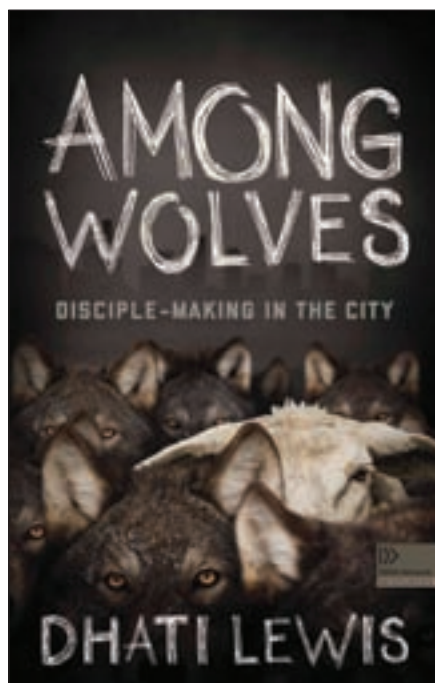
Dhati Lewis serves as lead pastor of Blueprint Church in Atlanta and is passionate about church planting and discipleship. His new book, *Among Wolves: Disciple-Making in the City*, explores making disciples in an urban context. Lewis recently took time to answer some questions about his book. Lewis also served as a keynote speaker at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's 2016 Disciple-Making Conference. Watch a video of his message by visiting vimeo.com/157756793.

Q: Why is learning the stories of people and communities around us important for disciple-making?

A: The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any sword (Hebrews 4:12). This means that it is relevant for our lives today. It is relevant for our neighbors and communities. But if we don't know the stories of those around us, we can easily make the mistake of answering questions people are not asking. If we don't know our city, if we don't know our context, we cannot provide holistic answers for the questions our neighbors are struggling to answer. Once we understand the problems and relevant questions, we can answer more appropriately.

Secondly, if we don't know the stories of our neighbors, we will not contextualize the gospel effectively. Contextualizing well means that we communicate in a way that the receiver can understand without compromising the integrity of the content. If you don't know who your receivers are, you won't be able to contextualize appropriately and risk compromising good communication of gospel truths. I have a good friend who always reminds me, we must seek to understand before seeking to be understood. This principle is critical for holistic, healthy disciple-making.

Q: You define disciple-making as our capacity to lovingly transmit and embody the life of Jesus through the life of His followers. How does this definition speak to the needs of the urban context where we can't assume that biblical knowledge and Christian worldview are prevalent?



A: I believe that authenticity is the apologetic of our day. People are hungry for something real. They want to know truth that transforms the mundane, truth that goes beyond Sunday – they want a gospel for their everyday life. Think about it this way. In a car, you've got the park, reverse and drive labels on the gears. We know that when you put the car in "D" it goes forward, and when you put it in "R" it goes backward, but the average person doesn't really know how the engine works.

The same can be true about the gospel. We may understand justification (the one-time event when the Lord justifies your soul by purchasing your debt), but we don't know what scripture means in sanctification (the process of growing to look more and more like Jesus every day). We can talk about being saved by grace, but our lives don't reflect that. Oftentimes, as Christians, we think we can transmit truth without also embodying that truth.

But we must be the type of person we wish to see reproduced. The truth we proclaim must match the truths we live – or else, how can we be trusted?

When we look at Christ, we see the type of people God wants us to be. And when people look at us, they should see Christ embodied in our actions. If we want to reproduce disciples who look like Christ, we must ourselves learn how to embody Christ in our everyday lives.

Q: Why is individualism such a threat to effective disciple-making?

A: I often tell our church family that if it takes a village to raise a child, it takes a church to raise a Christian. Jesus Christ was the only person to ever walk the earth who had the fullness of God dwelling within Him. He has all the gifts of the Spirit.

For believers today, if we want to see a full expression of God, where do we go? We have to go to the church. For it is only within the church, the body of Christ, that the manifold wisdom of God is made known (Ephesians 3:10).

I don't have all the gifts of the Spirit – but I have some. And you don't have all the gifts of the Spirit – but you have some. And when we come together as the church, we better display the fullness of our God. If we make disciple-making an individualistic effort, we will likely reproduce lopsided mini-me's. But if the goal is to reproduce disciples who look like Christ, then we must disciple them through our corporate family, our church.

Q: In efforts to mobilize churches for disciple-making, why should they resist uniformity? What are the benefits?

A: Imagine if every player on a football team had the same strategy. If every player tried to throw the ball, who would block? If every player tried to block, who would run?

Every player on the team has the same goal, but they use different position strategies to accomplish that goal



Dhati Lewis, seen here at the 2016 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Disciple-Making Conference, shares his passion for church planting and discipleship. (BSC screenshot)

together. The team has unity, not uniformity. This idea is clear to us in sports, but for some reason it is difficult to grasp within the church. When we try to assimilate every member of our church to a single strategy, we end up with uniformity.

Uniformity kills true diversity in the body because it reinforces parroting, inauthenticity and outward conformity. God has gifted us each with unique gifts intended for the common good. We need to have unity around a common goal and mission while allowing freedom in diverse gifts and strategies to be used to accomplish the goal. When this is done well, members flourish because they have the opportunity to use their God-given gifts.

Together, we make up the body of Christ. Together, we best reflect who He is. And in unity, as each of us use our unique gifts, the Holy Spirit empowers us to "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love" (Ephesians 4:15-16).

Q: What do you hope people will take away after reading your book?

A: My prayer is that after reading *Among Wolves*, people would have tools to explore their unique vision from burden.

That they would be able to wrestle to discover how their story intertwines with God's, their church's and their community's story. And that after wrestling with this, they would be able to walk in the footsteps of Jesus toward establishing a family and unleashing disciple makers to labor for the harvest. The harvest is plentiful – it's the laborers who are lacking. I pray that God uses this book to raise up more laborers for the harvest who are equipped to make disciples who make disciples who make disciples. **BR**

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Strickland

Continued from page 1

excited about nominating him for the position of first vice president at our upcoming annual meeting in Phoenix.”

During Strickland’s tenure as a diversity adviser at the seminary, non-Anglo students have increased from 10 percent of the student body to 16 percent, according to Merritt’s release. During that time, the number of African American students has doubled and the number of Hispanic students has tripled, Merritt said.

Southeastern’s 2017 report to the Association of Theological Schools (ATS) indicates 96 black students were enrolled in the fall of 2016 along with 109 Hispanic students and dozens from other non-Anglo ethnic groups. Total fall enrollment was 2,146, according to the ATS report.

Merritt said Strickland also has worked to “strengthen partnerships with diverse churches and ministries,” facilitate campus conversations on racial and cultural issues and launch a program to offer financial assistance to minority students for mission trips.

Strickland is a member of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, N.C., which told Baptist Press it gave \$88,234 in Great Commission Giving for 2016. That total amounts to 9.8 percent of Imago Dei’s undesignated receipts, according to the church.

For 2016, the church reported \$33,204 which it deemed “Cooperative Program” (CP) giving. That figure includes some \$30,000 given directly to the SBC Executive Committee for distribution according to the CP Allocation Budget distribution formula and approximately \$3,000 given through the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Data provided by the EC and North Carolina’s *Biblical Recorder* newsjournal confirmed the church’s report.

Great Commission Giving is a category of giving established by SBC action in 2011 that encompasses giving through CP, Southern Baptists’ unified program of funding state- and SBC-level ministries, as well as direct gifts to SBC entities, associational giving and giving to state convention ministries.

Merritt said Strickland “desires to see unity in Christ proliferate throughout the SBC and be a driving focus of our cooperative work together. He sincerely believes that we are better together and wants to see younger generations honor older generations of Southern Baptists who have given us so much. He believes that biblical diversity comes as we all celebrate our unity together in Christ by loving, honoring, blessing and encouraging one another in our unique roles and contributions.”

Strickland holds master of theology and master of divinity degrees from Southeastern and a bachelor of arts from Cedarville University in Ohio. He is scheduled to graduate this spring with his doctor of philosophy degree from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland.

Author of the forthcoming book *The Story of Black Christianity* from Lexham Press, Strickland has coauthored, edited and contributed to numerous other volumes. He has served on staff at two North Carolina churches.

He and his wife Stephanie have two children and a third who was stillborn. **BR**

Other candidates

Nominees have been announced for Southern Baptist Convention offices as well as for the Pastor’s Conference, including Walter Strickland of North Carolina for first vice president of the SBC. His story starts on page 1 and continues on the left of this page.

Below you will find a few other candidates for various offices with some basic information about each. The last print issue of the *Biblical Recorder* (May 6) included another Pastor’s Conference officer but that candidate withdrew his name. Stories about each candidate can be found online at *BRnow.org*.

Jose Abella

• **Office:** SBC second vice president

• **Current role:** Abella is pastor of Providence Road Church in Miami.

• **Work history:** He was a second vice president of the Florida Baptist Convention. Prior to his current pastorate, Abella served on church staffs in North Carolina and Florida. Before that he worked six years as a licensed general contractor.

• **Family:** He and his wife, Nira, have six children ranging in age from 9 to 20.



John Yeats

• **Office:** SBC recording secretary

• **Current role:** He is Missouri Baptist Convention executive director.

• **Work history:** Yeats was director of communications/public policy for the Louisiana Baptist Convention, editor of state Baptist papers in Oklahoma and Indiana and pastor of churches in six states.

• **Family:** Yeats and his wife, Sharon, have three sons and nine grandchildren.



H.B. Charles Jr.

• **Office:** Pastor’s Conference president

• **Current role:** He has been pastor of Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., since 2008.

• **Work history:** Previously, Charles pastored Mt. Sinai Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles for nearly 18 years, succeeding his father H.B. Charles Sr.

• **Family:** Charles and his wife, Crystal, have three children.



Visit sbcannualmeeting.net.

2017 SBC: Committee nominees announced

Baptist Press

Nominees to serve on the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, the four denominational boards – International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, LifeWay Christian Resources and GuideStone Financial Resources, – the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, the six seminaries and the Committee on Order of Business have been selected by the 2017 SBC Committee on Nominations. Nominees will serve if elected by the messengers to the annual meeting of the SBC, June 13-14 in Phoenix.

• **Executive Committee (82 members):** 27 nominations considered – 16 new members, 11 renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2021 replacing members ineligible for re-election are Bradley K. “Brad” Kolman, layperson and member of Calvary Baptist Church, Delta, Colo., replacing Michael W. “Mike” Routt, Colorado Springs, Colo.; Ann H. Watts, church accompanist, Heatherwood Baptist Church, Newnan, Ga., replacing Wayne Robertson, Valdosta, Ga.; Sharon K. Carty, layperson and member of Emmanuel Baptist Church, Carlinville, Ill., replacing Charles W. Boling, Marion, Ill.; Adron Robinson, pastor, Hillcrest Baptist Church, Country Club Hills, Ill., replacing Wilma J. Booth, Elgin, Ill.; and Mark R. Elliott, director of missions and member of LifeSpring Church, Bellevue, Neb., replacing Timothy A. “Tim” Ohls, Wichita, Kan. Also nominated for terms to expire in 2021 are Jimmie Rose Strahan, layperson and member of First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Miss., replacing William E. “Eddie” Kinchen, Jackson, Miss.; Monte L. Shinkle, pastor, Concord Baptist Church, Jefferson City, Mo., replacing Jeff L. Paul, Kansas City, Mo.; Marcus D. Hayes, campus pastor, Biltmore Church, Arden, N.C., replacing Bryan “Scott” Davis, Concord, N.C.; Pamela H. “Pam” Reed, layperson and member of Calvary Church, Winston-Salem, N.C., replacing Jeffrey B. “Jeff” Watson, Clemmons, N.C.; and James E. “Jim” Collier, pastor, Kirby Woods Baptist Church, Memphis, Tenn., replacing Danny S. Sinquefield, Bartlett, Tenn. Nominated for term to expire in 2020 is Mark Stinson, pastor, Trinity Baptist Church, Cambridge, Ohio, replacing Jeremy D. Westbrook, Marysville, Ohio, who resigned. Nominated for term to expire in 2019 is Aaron D. Burgner, pastor, Summer Grove Baptist Church, Shreveport, La., replacing Eddie W. DeHondt, Shreveport, La., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are Benjamin F. “Ben” Kelley Jr., Montgomery, Ala.; Timothy D. “Tim” Maynard, Jacksonville, Fla.; Frank Kovaleski, Carmel, Ind.; Michael E. “Mike” Pope, Somerset, Ky.; Mark H. Ballard, North Bennington, Vt.; Richard R. Wilburn, Tupper Lake, N.Y.; Michael L. “Mike” Scifres, Eufaula, Okla.; Tony L. Crisp, Riceville, Tenn.; Michael L. “Mike” Lawson, Sherman, Texas; Phillip Herring, Norfolk, Va., and Robert E. “Bob” Stennett, Scott Depot, W.Va. Pending approval to a change in SBC Bylaw 18 to expand representation on the Executive Committee from four states and regions currently without representation, the following nominees will serve staggered initial terms from their respective areas: Joshua D. Bonner, pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Rapid City, S.D., new member from the Dakotas, term to expire in 2020; Guy L. Fredrick, bivocational pastor, Mapledale Baptist Church, Sheboygan, Wis., new member from Minnesota-Wisconsin, term to expire in 2019; and, for terms to expire in 2018, Todd Stiles, lead pastor, First Family Church, Ankeny, Iowa, new member from Iowa; and D. Paul Jones, pastor, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Billings, Mont., new member from Montana.

• **GuideStone Financial Resources (45 trustees):** 10 nominations considered – seven new trustees, three renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2021 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election are Fred Lodge, pastor, First Baptist Church, Blairsville, Ga., replacing G. Bryant Wright Jr., Marietta, Ga.; David Cox Sr., layperson and member of Temple of Faith Church, Detroit, Mich., replacing James W. “Jim” Hixson, Lansing, Mich.; John P. Wenberg, layperson and member of Garden Baptist Church, Overland, Mo., replacing Gerald R. Davidson, Arnold, Mo.; B. Lee Black, retired president, New Mexico Baptist Foundation and member of Hoffmantown Baptist Church, Albuquerque, N.M., replacing Kirk R. Hudson, Albuquerque, N.M.; Gerald Saffo, pastor, United Faith Community Church, Reynoldsburg, Ohio, replacing Ronald E. “Ron” Brown, Newton Falls, Ohio; Brian D. King Sr., pastor, Ezekiel Baptist Church, Philadelphia, Pa., replacing William R. “Bill” Dunning, Allison Park, Pa.; and David M. Hannah, layperson and member of Good Shepherd Baptist Church, Scott Depot, W.Va., replacing Shadd G. Kennedy, Cross Lanes, W.Va. Nominated for second terms are C. Darren Gaddis, Ocala, Fla.; J. Wesley Noss, Frankfort, Ky., and Jack M. Stancil, Raleigh, N.C.

• **International Mission Board (78 trustees):** 20 nominations considered – 10 new trustees, 10 renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2021 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election are Joel A. Bundick, pastor, Community of Grace Church, Centennial, Colo., replacing Rick L. Lewis, Arvada, Colo.; Kirra Kelly, layperson and member of Family Church, West Palm Beach, Fla., replacing David F. Uth, Orlando, Fla.; Nathan H. Gunter, pastor, First Southern Baptist Church, Lansing, Kan., replacing Sandra E. “Sandie” Anderson, Manhattan, Kan.; Trent Snyder, associate pastor of missions and

evangelism, Porter Memorial Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., replacing Charlie W. Davis, Louisville, Ky.; Will Gatling, associate pastor of missions, Bay Leaf Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., replacing Jeffrey A. “Jeff” Long, Gastonia, N.C.; Keith Evans, pastor, Pathway Church, Gresham, Ore., replacing Audrey L. Smith, Lone, Wash.; and Jim P. Crockett, layperson and member of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville, Tenn., replacing Scott C. Harris, Brentwood, Tenn. Nominated for terms to expire in 2019 are Brian Zunigha, campus minister, University of Oklahoma and member of Redeemer Baptist Church, Riverside, Calif., replacing Kristen K. White, Riverside, Calif., who resigned; Jordan Easley, pastor, Englewood Baptist Church, Jackson, Tenn., replacing H. Dean Haun, Morristown, Tenn., who resigned; Gary M. Mathena, resident adjunct professor, Liberty University and member of First Baptist Church, Roanoke, Va., replacing Kay Norred, Harrisonburg, Va., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are J. Allen Hill, Clarkston, Ga.; Sheila K. Satterthwaite, Maryville, Ill.; E. Gibbie McMillan, Kentwood, La.; Karen A. Villalpando, Sterling Heights, Mich.; F. Matthew “Matt” Taylor, Lebanon, Mo.; D. Hance Dilbeck, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Nancy J. Patrick, Harrisburg, Pa.; David B. Miller, Waynesboro, Tenn.; Geronimo M. Disla, Grand Prairie, Texas, and Kenny R. “Ken” McLemore, Hampton, Va.

• **North American Mission Board (54 trustees):** 14 nominations considered – 10 new trustees, 4 renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2021 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election include Brian Bowman, pastor, Valley Life Church, Phoenix, replacing William L. “Billy” Van Camp Jr., Queen Creek, Ariz.; Ron L. Crow, pastor, First Baptist Church, Diamond, Mo., replacing Brent L. Campbell, Troy, Mo.; Chelsi N. Hilmes, layperson and member of New City Church, Long Island City, N.Y., replacing Natalie White, Buffalo, N.Y.; Rick L. Frie, pastor, First Baptist Church, Jenks, Okla., replacing William “Blake” Gideon, Edmond, Okla.; Randy D. Bradley, director of missions and member of Locust Hill Baptist Church, Travelers Rest, S.C., replacing Cleatus J. Blackmon Jr., Greer, S.C.; Harry L. Smith, layperson and member of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn., replacing David D. Green, Greeneville, Tenn.; Kenneth W. Priest, director of convention strategies, Southern Baptists of Texas Convention and member of Prestonwood Baptist Church, Plano, Texas, replacing Heath C. Peloquin, Flower Mound, Texas; and Clark Reynolds, layperson and member of First Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, replacing Mark J. Dyer, Plano, Texas. Nominated for a term to expire in 2020 is Roy Henry, pastor, Faith Baptist Church, Battle Creek, Mich., replacing David E. Washington Jr., Canton, Mich., who resigned. Nominated for a term to expire in 2019 is Eric L. Brown, business administrator, Central Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Ark., replacing Jeff Crawford, Springdale, Ark., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are William G. “Bill” Ingram, Aurora, Colo.; Daniel W. “Danny” deArmas, Orlando, Fla.; Paula M. Cordray, Pittsburgh, Pa., and Betty Jo “BJ” Bateman, Greenville, S.C.

• **LifeWay Christian Resources (53 trustees):** 12 nominations considered – five new trustees, seven renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2021 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election are Michelle D. Branch, layperson and member of Imago Dei Church, Raleigh, N.C., replacing David H. Horner, Raleigh, N.C.; Jennifer Landrith, layperson and member of First Baptist Church, Cleveland, Tenn., replacing Joseph A. “Alan” Hayes, Mt. Juliet, Tenn.; Matthew E. “Matt” Crawford, pastor, First Baptist Church, Sebring, Fla., replacing James A. Wells, LaGrange, Fla., who resigned; Ron A. Edmondson, pastor, Immanuel Baptist Church, Lexington, Ky., replacing Timothy D. Turner, Lexington, Ky., who resigned; and Greg L. Kannady, layperson and member of First Baptist Church, Kingfisher, Okla., replacing Christopher “Blake” Lindley, Norman, Okla., who declined to serve a second term. Nominated for second terms are Charles E. Green, Grand Junction, Colo.; Paul R. Baxter, LaGrange, Ga.; Wayne C. Morgan, Covington, Ga.; D. Weldon Aultman, Indianola, Miss.; Darron L. Edwards, Sr., Kansas City, Mo.; Jerry C. White, Chesnee, S.C., and A. Kenneth Carlton Jr., Virginia Beach, Va.

• **Southern Seminary (43 trustees):** 11 nominations considered – 5 new trustees, 6 renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2022 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election are Jeff D. Breeding, pastor, Midtown Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark., replacing Schanon D. Caudle, Van Buren, Ark.; Bobby T. Hancock, layperson and member of Bellevue Baptist Church, Cordova, Tenn., replacing J. Michael “Mike” King, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Sally M. Ramsay, layperson and member of Champion Forest Baptist Church, Houston, Texas, replacing Joseph M. “Mike” Mericle, Austin, Texas; Bryan T. Myers, pastor, First Baptist Church, Fairbanks, Alaska, replacing Pusey A. Losch, Richfield, Pa.; and H. B. Charles Jr., pastor, Shiloh Metropolitan Baptist Church, Jacksonville, Fla., replacing Randall B. “Randy” Kuhn, Panama City, Fla., who declined to serve a second term. Nominated for second terms are Nick Floyd, Fayetteville, Ark.; Alfred M. “Merril” Smoak Jr., Livermore, Calif.; Elizabeth H. “Ellie” Coursey, Henderson, Ky.; Scott Pruitt, Broken Arrow, Okla.; Stanley L. Craig, Louisville, Ky., and Patricia A. Skelton, Shelbyville, Ky.

• **Southwestern Seminary (40 trustees):** Eight nominations considered – four new trustees, four renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2022 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election include Leon A. Stamm, layperson and member of Temple Baptist Church, Ruston, La., replacing Steven M. James, Lake Charles, La.; J. Kie Bowman, pastor, Hyde Park Baptist Church, Austin, Texas, replacing Lash T. Banks, Murphy, Texas; Charles

W. Hott, layperson and member of Forestburg Baptist Church, Forestburg, Texas, replacing Gary W. Loveless, Houston, Texas; and John C. Horn, church planting team leader, State Convention of Baptists in Indiana and member of City View Church, Avon, Ind., replacing Kerry N. Jones, Muncie, Ind., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are Jeff W. Crook, Flowery Branch, Ga.; N. Todd Houston, Southport, N.C.; Cornelious C. “Connie” Hancock, Springboro, Ohio, and Don Whorton, Dallas, Texas.

• **New Orleans Seminary (40 trustees):** Seven nominations considered – one new trustee, six renominations. Nominated for a term to expire in 2022 is Mark W. Warnock, pastor, Family Church, West Palm Beach, Fla., replacing George H. Kemp, Jacksonville, Fla., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are Larry D. White, Conway, Ark.; Daniel Shieh, Washington, D.C.; R. Bryant Barnes Jr., Columbia, Miss.; David G. Brittain, Rio Rancho, N.M.; George B. Bannister Sr., Niles, Ohio, and Michael E. “Mike” Shaw, Pelham, Ala.

• **Southeastern Seminary (30 trustees):** Eight nominations considered – 3 new trustees, 5 renominations. Nominated for a term to expire in 2022 is Ryan A. Martin, missions pastor, University Baptist Church, Fayetteville, Ark., replacing R.E. Clark, Gravette, Ark., who resigned. Nominated for a term to expire in 2020 is Howard Y. Li, pastor, Trust in God Baptist Church, New York, N.Y., replacing William Todd Jones, Silver Spring, Md., who resigned. Nominated for a term to expire in 2019 is Sam F. Wheat, minister of education and outreach, Emmanuel Baptist Church, Ruston, La., replacing Richard G. Butterworth, Overgaard, Ariz., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are Gregory T. Pouncey, Mobile, Ala.; Alan W. McAlister, Clovis, N.M.; Thomas S. Mach, Xenia, Ohio; Charles H. Cranford, Charlotte, N.C., and James R. Marston Jr., Lynchburg, Va.

• **Midwestern Seminary (35 trustees):** Nine nominations considered – four new trustees, five renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2022 are David C. Shanks, layperson and member of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas, replacing K. Wayne Lee, Euless, Texas, who resigned; and Jacob McMillian, pastor, Journey Baptist Church, St. Joseph, Mo., replacing William H. “Hosea” Bilyeu, Springfield, Mo., who declined to serve a second term. Nominated for a term to expire in 2021 is Chad McDonald, pastor, Lenexa Baptist Church, Lenexa, Kan., replacing Margaret N. Opara, Wichita, Kan., who resigned. Nominated with a term to expire in 2020 is Clyde D. Meador, retired vice president, International Mission Board and member of Staples Mill Road Baptist Church, Glen Allen, Va., replacing William “Bill” Bowyer, Raleigh, N.C., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are Ben O. Character, Oxford, Ala.; Brandon Shields, Indianapolis, Ind.; Randall H. Tompkins, Alexandria, La.; Larry W. Sheppard, Broken Arrow, Okla., and Bryan C. Pain, Duncan, Okla.

• **Gateway Seminary (39 trustees):** Nine nominations considered – five new trustees, four renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2022 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election are Thomas M. “Tom” Toone, layperson and member of East Shore Baptist Church, Harrisburg, Pa., replacing Steven R. Sheldon, Peach Bottom, Pa.; Charles H. “Chuck” Morton, layperson and member of First Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C., replacing Stuart L. Smith, Spartanburg, S.C.; Walter A. Price, retired pastor and member of Fellowship in the Pass Church, Beaumont, Calif., replacing Jeff Evans, Rancho Cucamonga, Calif.; and Kevin M. Carrothers, director of missions and member of First Baptist Church, Rochester, Ill., replacing D. Chet Cantrell, Fairview Heights, who declined to serve a second term. Nominated for a term to expire in 2018 is R. Rex “Peck” Lindsay, retired executive director of the Kansas-Nebraska Convention of Southern Baptists and member of Covenant Baptist Church, Topeka, Kan., replacing Cody Busby, Mulvane, Kan., who resigned. Nominated for second terms are Ronnie H. Deal, Greenwood, Ark.; Roberto R. Santos, Taylor, Mich.; M. Dale Griffin, Shawnee, Okla., and Robert Evans, San Francisco, Calif.

• **Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (34 trustees):** Nine nominations considered – five new trustees, four renominations. Nominees with terms to expire in 2021 replacing trustees ineligible for re-election are A.B. Vines, pastor, New Seasons Church, Spring Valley, Calif., replacing Dennis M. Schmierer, Fresno, Calif.; Janeé England, retired secretary, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, Nev., replacing James L. Reamer, North Las Vegas, Nev.; Tony L. Beam, vice president, North Greenville University and member of Northwood Baptist Church, Greer, S.C., replacing Lee Bright, Roebuck, S.C.; Jonathan R. Whitehead, layperson and member of Abundant Life Baptist Church, Lee’s Summit, Mo., replacing Reed E. Johnston III, Waynesboro, Va.; and Jimmy D. Patterson, pastor, First Baptist Church, Newnan, Ga., replacing Timothy D. Jones, Columbus, Ga., who declined to serve a second term. Nominated for second terms are William R. “Bill” Morgan, Prattville, Ala.; B. Todd Howard, Pine Bluff, Ark.; Allen L. “Al” Simmons, Wheat Ridge, Colo., and Ron D. Harvey, Pompano Beach, Fla.

• **Committee on Order of Business (7 members):** two nominations considered – 2 new members. Nominees with terms to expire in 2020 replacing members ineligible for re-election are Tony Munoz, pastor, Iglesia Bautista Latina, Effingham, Ill., replacing Andrew C. Hebert, Hobbs, N.M.; and Tim Moore, layperson and member of Northside Baptist Church, Elizabethtown, Ky., replacing Rod D. Martin, Niceville, Fla. Nominated to serve as chairman of the Committee on Order of Business is Grant C. Ethridge, Hampton, Va. **BR**

Adopting, fostering podcast breaks myths, shares insights

By JOSIE BINGHAM | NAMB

Lynette Ezell and Tera Melber shared many joys, frustrations, challenges and triumphs over the last 15 years as their families have journeyed through the process of adopting children. Now, they are sharing that experience and knowledge with others as they host the North American Mission Board's "Adopting and Fostering Home" podcast.

The two friends use the podcast as a platform to encourage and equip God's people and the church to battle for the hearts and lives of children at risk.

"We believe that if the Church is going to champion the cause of foster care and adoption, the church has to be prepared for what that means on a daily basis," Melber says.

Melber and Ezell would know. They have watched their daughters and sons process and make sense of birth stories and unanswered questions.

"As they work through their beginnings and the implications of their stories, there have been times when I have really understood Romans 12:15," says Melber. "Paul writes, 'Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep.' Adoption is beautiful yet complex. Through our parenting journeys, we have experienced some of the highest highs and the lowest lows."

The "Adopting and Fostering Home" podcast walks with singles, couples, parents, empty nesters and those curious

about foster care and adoption through the beginnings, myths and lessons of the calling with candor.

"We have a wide age range in our house," Melber says. "So, in one day's time, I could be talking to our oldest children about adult things, or helping the younger ones with Algebra and Latin homework and teaching our 15-year-old how to drive. And all of this would likely occur after a room meeting for our fifth grader."

But it's not the juggling multiple schedules that makes their families unique. "Add to that, on any given day, we could receive a letter from a birth mom in the mail, have an unkind comment made to our child due to the color of their skin or discuss a future of returning to their homeland," says Melber. "You know, typical stuff."

Because the adopting and fostering life can get extraordinarily messy, Ezell embraces the power of transparency in adopting and fostering.

"I believe we dig deep and bring transparency to the table," Ezell says of the podcast, but also of her adoptive home. "Adoption isn't all cute babies and colorful families. It's a lifelong call to tough parenting with no-strings-attached love."

The podcast is designed to motivate the church and to surround adoptive and foster families with love and support.

"We don't want adoptive and foster families to feel isolated or alone in this calling," says Ezell. "It's a tactic the en-



Lynette Ezell, left, and Tera Melber host the "Adopting and Fostering Home" podcast from the North American Mission Board. Ezell and Melber share stories from their family experience with adoption and foster care and provide advice to help fellow believers who are on the same journey. The podcast is available on iTunes or by visiting namb.net/podcasts. (North American Mission Board photo)

emy uses to defeat us. We want to battle that with hope, encouragement and truth from God's Word."

Those who listen to the "Adopting and Fostering Home" podcast have heard Ezell and Melber discuss some of the most difficult challenges they've faced over the last decade and a half – things like not understanding the system or the inability to erase all children's past pains.

Both Melber, whose husband, David is vice president of Send Relief at NAMB, and Ezell, whose husband, Kevin, is NAMB's president, share how opening their hearts, homes and lives to adoption

has changed the fabric of their families and church families.

"Kevin, and I are seeing our children wrap their arms around this calling as well," Ezell says. "Our oldest daughter and her husband have adopted domestically, and our second oldest and her husband are about to receive their first foster placement. Our family is close, and we support one another as the Lord leads each of us."

To listen to the "Adopting and Fostering Home" podcast and to follow their stories, visit namb.net/podcasts/the-adopting-and-fostering-home. **BR**

Family Continued from page 1

says. "The support is great and the training provided makes us better able to face whatever may come. The training covers many things – things you may never realize you need until something happens – and then you're prepared."

McCleary says his job consists of recruiting foster care families, placing a child in the best home to meet that child's needs, and supporting and training foster parents. "We can do everything the way it needs to be done, but if we fail to support our foster care families, then it can all be lost. Nothing can kill the passion of dedicated foster parents more than lack of support."

The Partons say they were raised in Baptist churches where they learned about BCH. They were thrilled when they learned BCH was recruiting foster care families.

"From day one, we had confidence in this ministry," Jeremy Parton says.

"To know God was leading us to become foster parents and then to learn we could serve through BCH, it was God's hand."

McCleary says serving children and families through foster family care homes is a way BCH can even better meet the needs of children. He says some children thrive in a setting like Broyhill Home. Other children are

served best by living with a foster care family like the Partons. BCH offers both options.

"A smaller foster care home environment with parents, and maybe siblings, can be the perfect setting. Our focus is always what's best for the child," McCleary says.

The Partons both work outside of their home. Jeremy directs Haywood Pathways Center – a nonprofit that serves the homeless, and Amanda is a department chair at South College in Asheville. Their lives are hectic, but both agree that being foster parents helps create balance and reminds them what is important day to day.

"I see homeless people everyday who did not have the support of a Christian home when they were children," Jeremy Parton says.

"The children who come through BCH are 'homeless' and need a family – whether they need a home for a short time or a longer time, whether it's at a place like Broyhill Home or in a foster family home like ours. What we do now for children will make their lives better as they grow into adults."

Amanda agrees. "We want to give a child hope – for now and for the future. We share our home and strive to show them what a relationship with God looks like."

McCleary stresses the importance of a foster family being focused on mission. "It is not a way to make extra money. BCH's foster homes must have adequate income to financially support their family without relying on the

foster care payment. Foster care payments only reimburse for room, board and supervision."

Children entering foster care range in age from infancy to age 21. The situations they come from can be very diverse. What they all share is a need for a place to call home, a place to belong and people who will love and nurture them.

A foster family home provides 24-hour, seven-days-a-week care for between one and five children. Families are required to have family foster licensure which includes, but is not limited to:

- Applicants must meet the minimum age requirement of 21 years old. There is no upper age limit.
- Applicants must have stable income and a home in a North Carolina community within 100 miles of one of the following BCH locations: Kennedy Home in Kinston, Mills Home in Thomasville, or Broyhill Home in Clyde.
- Applicants must complete an application, have a mutual home assessment and a criminal background check.
- Applicants and family members must meet minimum physical and mental health requirements.
- Applicants must complete 30 hours of pre-service training through BCH.

To find out more about becoming a foster family, contact BCH's Bob McCleary at (828) 593-9648 or email him at bmcclary@bchfamily.org. Visit bchfostercare.org for more information. **BR**

Helpful resources

North Carolina County Suicide Hotlines: (Most are available 24/7)

- Ahoskie (serving Bertie, Gates, Hertford and Northampton Counties) Hotline: (252) 332-4442
- Alamance-Caswell: Hotline: (336) 513-4444
- Carteret County: Hotline: (252) 247-3023
- Chapel Hill (serving Orange, Person and Chatham areas) Hotline: (800) 233-6834
- Charlotte (serving Mecklenburg County and surrounding areas) Hotline: (704) 377-0602
- Clyde: Hotline: (800) 367-7287
- Cumberland County: Hotline: (910) 485-4134
- Durham County: Hotline: (800) 510-9132
- Elkin (serving Iredell, Surry and Yadkin Counties) Hotline: 1 (888) 235-4673
- Greensboro: Hotline: (4 p.m. – Midnight) (336) 387-6161
- Halifax County: Hotline: (252) 537-2909
- Johnston County: Teen Line: (919) 934-6162
- Manteo (Outer Banks) Hotline: (252) 473-3366
- Pitt County: Hotline: (252) 758-1976
- Raleigh (serving Durham, Chapel Hill and Raleigh) Hotline: (919) 231-4525 or (800) 844-7410; Teen Talk line: (919) 231-3626
- Randolph County: Hotline: (336) 629-0313
- Salisbury: Hotline: (704) 633-3616
- Sanford: Hotline: (919) 774-4520
- Statesville: (704) 872-7638
- Mooresville: (704) 664-4357
- Wayne County: Hotline: (919) 735-4357
- Wilmington (serving Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender Counties) Hotline: (910) 392-7408 or (800) 672-2903
- Wilson Crisis Center: (252) 237-5156; Teen help line: (252) 243-6444
- Winston-Salem: Hotline: (336) 722-5153; Kidsline: (336) 723-KIDS; Teen line: (336) 723-8336.

State and National Suicide Prevention Resources:

- Suicide Prevention Resource Center of North Carolina: Phone: (919) 356-2488
- HopeLine North Carolina: hopeline-nc.org; (919) 231-4525 or (877) 235-4525
- Mental Health America of Central Carolinas: mhacentralcarolinas.org/suicide_prevention.cfm; (704) 365-3454
- North Carolina Public Health: Suicide resources: injuryfreenc.ncdhhs.gov/prevention-Resources/Suicide.htm; (800) 273-8255.
- North Carolina Suicide Prevention Plan: sprc.org/sites/default/files/2015-NC-SuicidePreventionPlan-2015-0505-FINAL.pdf
- NAMI North Carolina: naminc.org; (800) 451-9682
- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: suicidepreventionlifeline.org; (800) 273-8255
- American Academy of Pediatrics: healthy-children.org/English/health-issues/conditions/emotional-problems/Pages/Help-Stop-Teen-Suicide.aspx

To better understand and prevent cyber bullying, see these websites:

- stopbullying.gov/cyberbullying/what-is-it/
- stopcyberbullying.org/what_is_cyberbullying_exactly.html
- cyberbullyhelp.com

How N.C. churches can help prevent youth suicide

High school students in North Carolina are attempting suicide at an increasing and alarming rate, especially girls between ages 10 to 14. In 2016, one in every 10 N.C. high school students attempted suicide. The number of completed youth suicides in the state has doubled since 2010. Forty-six young people died by suicide in 2015, compared to 23 in 2010. Suicide is now the third leading cause of death in N.C. for youth 10-14 years old, and the second leading cause of death in young people 15 years and older.

Nationwide, teenage boys are three times more likely to complete suicide as girls. Teen girls, however, attempt suicide at twice the rate as males.

Why are young people killing themselves?

Most youth and young adult suicides involve anxiety; drug or alcohol related problems; behavioral and relationship struggles; mood disorders; sexual or physical abuse; bipolar disorder (manic depression); physical illness; feelings of failure, loss, helplessness, hopelessness, guilt, worthlessness; getting into trouble; problems in life; loneliness; making bad grades on tests; arguments; breaking up with a friend/love interest; a recent abortion; and confusion about sexual identity. Other reasons for adolescent attempted or completed suicide are:

- **Depression** – It's a main risk factor of suicide. According to a North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics study, almost one in four middle school students, 27 percent of high school students and 33 percent of young adults (aged 18-25) reported experiencing depression that interfered with normal activities for at least two weeks. High stress and pressure can trigger depression, as well as lack of community and family support. In the United States, depression increased among girls from about 13 percent in 2005 to about 17 percent in 2014. Some studies show that 20 percent of today's teens experience depression at some point before they reach adulthood.

- **Divorce** – One study found that children, especially boys, with divorced parents are at an increased risk of suicidal thoughts. When children grow up in a fractured home, they are more susceptible to mental, physical, educational and social problems. In America today, about 40 to 50 percent of married couples divorce. North Carolina is one state that requires couples to live separately for one year before they can get a divorce.

- **Bullying and Cyber Bullying** – Increasingly, bullying and cyber bullying are causing young people to take their own life. Bullies are using online forums to terrorize their classmates without fear of punishment. Across the U.S., more than one-third of teens admit they have been cyber bullied or know someone who has. Cyber bullying is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or targeted by another child, preteen or teen using electronic technology.

This type of bullying is especially difficult for teens because:

- It can happen 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- Messages and images can be posted anonymously and distributed quickly and widely;
- Messages and images cannot be easily deleted after posting.



DENISE GEORGE
Guest Column

Some suicide warning signs

Every day in our nation, 5,240 young people (grades 7-12) attempt suicide. Eight out of ten people considering suicide give signs of their intentions. People who threaten or talk about suicide, or call suicide crisis centers are 30 times more likely to kill themselves.

Take action when a person:

- endures bullying or cyber-bullying
- expresses suicidal thoughts
- shows increased irritability, loss of concentration or motivation
- withdraws from family and friends
- experiences a drop in grades
- is unable to sleep or eat
- loses interest in personal appearance and favorite activities
- shows signs of depression
- abuses alcohol or drugs
- is involved in abusive dating relationships
- frequently runs away or is arrested
- loses family members or experiences problems with parents
- becomes (unplanned) pregnant
- shows impulsive, aggressive behavior; frequent expressions of rage

How can N.C. churches help?

While some suicides are impossible to prevent, most are believed to be preventable. The church can be instrumental in its efforts to help prevent teen suicide.

Here are some suggestions:

- Take opportunities to preach and teach (from the pulpit, and in Bible study classes) on the value of God-created life, the effects of cyber bullying and the tragedy of teen suicide.
- Build strong children and youth programs that create safe and welcoming environments for the church's young people to meet, talk, learn and fellowship. Encourage your youth to talk about cyber bullying. Pray with and for your young people.
- Invite Christian professionals to speak to your congregation, offering classes to build healthy family relationships and seminars dealing with depression, cyber bullying, teen suicide and other issues.
- Require pastors of children/youth to take mental health first aid training through an organization like the National Alliance on Mental Illness North Carolina. Teach them to know what's happening among their young people; to recognize the signs of cyber bullying, depression and potential teen suicide; and to respond appropriately.
- Create a network and updated list of trusted mental-health professionals/resources for immediate referral. (See sidebar.)

If, in spite of your efforts, teen suicide occurs within your congregation, take action immediately:

- Minister to grieving family and church members, showing them the love of Christ. Be a patient presence, praying with those affected. Refer them to Christian grief counselors and others for help.
- Bring together church and community members. Invite

professionals to speak, addressing the suicide and its cause. Mourn the loss. Hold a remembrance service. Be available to help family members arrange funeral/burial arrangements.

- Watch for signs of "copy-cat" or "clustered" suicides. Teen suicide can often trigger tendencies that cause others to imitate the tragic act.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Denise George, author of 30 books, is co-author of the new Penguin Random House book: *The Lost Eleven: The Forgotten Story of Black American Soldiers Brutally Massacred in World War II. She is married to Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University.*) **BR**

Responding to potential suicide

If someone mentions or shows signs of suicide:

- Do not leave the person alone.
- Remove firearms, medications and other objects that could be used in a suicide attempt.
- Call the police or the U.S. National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at (800) 273-TALK (8255).
- Take him or her to an emergency room or seek help from a mental health professional.

Montreat College's faith statement defended

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

A North Carolina college long associated with evangelist Billy Graham has sparked controversy by instituting a requirement that faculty affirm a pro-life ethic and a traditional definition of marriage.

In January, Montreat College's trustees adopted a faculty handbook, including a "community life covenant" that requires faculty, among other obligations, to:

- "Uphold the God-given worth of every human being, from conception to death, as unique image-bearers of God;" and
- "Affirm chastity among the unmarried and the sanctity of marriage between one man and one woman."

Montreat, which has a 70-year relationship with Graham, planned to announce the new handbook publicly when it took effect July 1, college spokesman Adam Caress told Baptist Press (BP).

Faculty and staff – who until now have not been required to affirm a covenant or statement of faith – were informed of the new requirement during a two-and-a-half-year deliberative process, and someone leaked a copy of the document to media outlets, Caress said. Since early April, about a dozen news and op-ed articles have noted objections to the requirement of affirming the sanctity of life and traditional marriage.

Montreat resident Ina Jones Hughs wrote in an April 23 op-ed for the *Asheville Citizen-Times*, "What Montreat College has just done is alarming and disgusting: demanding its faculty and administration sign a pledge which, among other things, treats LGBT Christians as outside the fold and their relationships as spiritually unworthy; stands opposed to women's reproduction choices; and declares theirs a literal interpretation of the Bible."



Montreat (N.C.) College has drawn criticism in about a dozen media articles since early April over a requirement that faculty affirm the sanctity of life and traditional marriage. (Montreat College photo)

An April 29 *Charlotte Observer* news article quoted a Montreat English professor who stated she and eight other faculty members were leaving the school because of the covenant.

Caress told BP "just two faculty members – one of our 39 full-time faculty and one of our 142 adjunct faculty – have informed the college that the core documents included in the faculty handbook are a primary factor in their decision not to return to the college next year."

The Observer also noted allegations that the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) attempted to influence Montreat's actions with a \$100,000 gift to the college's scholarship fund. Both the college and the BGEA denied the association had any role in writing the covenant or pressing for a requirement that faculty sign it.

A BGEA spokesman said "many gifts" have been received by Montreat from the Graham family and the BGEA over the years.

In the past, the Montreat trustee board has included

Billy Graham's late wife Ruth, his son Franklin Graham and his grandson Will Graham, according to *The Observer*.

Billy and Ruth Graham were married in the college's chapel in 1943.

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary President Daniel Akin told BP the Wake Forest, N.C., seminary, like Montreat, is "proudly confessional, affirming no less than four confessions of faith" as well as "a covenant of conduct affirmed by all who teach here and who are students here."

"We want our constituency and the world to know where we stand and what we believe," Akin said in written comments.

"For those who do not agree with our confession we affirm that they have every right to their beliefs and we will gladly defend their right to hold them. However, they will need to find a place to teach elsewhere. Academic freedom and free speech are not compromised by this conviction or position. No one has to agree with us. No one is compelled to teach at or attend our school either."

The other five Southern Baptist Convention seminaries likewise require professors to sign statements of faith, including the Baptist Faith and Message.

Among other requirement of Montreat's "community life covenant," faculty and staff must "embrace ethnic and racial diversity as part of God's design for humanity" and "give faithful witness to the gospel."

Montreat College was founded in 1916 and operated for 60 years by an association affiliated with the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), according to *The Observer*. More than a decade ago, the college became non-denominational.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – David Roach is chief national correspondent for Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention's news service.) **BR**

Fred Powell, behind-the-scenes stalwart, dies at 86

By ART TOALSTON | Baptist Press

Frederick "Fred" Earl Powell III, a behind-the-scenes leader during the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Conservative Resurgence, died April 24 in Johnson County, Kan., where he was in hospice care. He was 86.

Powell became the top aide to Charles Stanley shortly after the Atlanta pastor was elected as SBC president in 1984, serving under Stanley as he presided over the two most-attended SBC annual meetings in history – 1995 in Dallas with 45,519 messengers and 1996 in Atlanta with 40,987 messengers, both pivotal battles between theological conservatives and moderates.

Powell also was a three-time chairman of the SBC Committee on Order of Business, which leads in planning and scheduling prior to and during each year's annual meeting.

He led the committee for the 1992 convention in Indianapolis, 1993 in Houston and 1994 in Orlando, Fla.

Powell was pastor of Pisgah Baptist Church in Excelsior Springs, Mo., when he became involved in efforts to remove a Baptist college professor who was quoted in the *Kansas City Star* as saying he did not believe in a personal devil, *The Pathway* recounted in a 2004 article about Powell.

"In 1977, I brought a doctrinal integrity resolution against William Jewell College to the Missouri Baptist Convention that was meeting in Kansas City," Powell recounted to *The Pathway*.

"We lost by 12 votes."

Powell and Larry Lewis [a St. Louis pastor who later became president of the SBC's then-Home Mission Board] "brought it before the 1978 meeting in St. Louis. That was the year that we passed a resolution stating that the Bible is without error scientifically, theologically, philosophically and historically."

Powell said he was subsequently

contacted by Paige Patterson, one of the leaders of the fledgling conservative movement, who asked if he would help lead the effort in Missouri to reclaim the SBC. Patterson at the time was president of Criswell College in Dallas and now is president of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth.

Powell, a New Jersey native, was led to the Lord at age 11 by a deacon – several Sundays before Pearl Harbor – at Clinton Hill Baptist Church in Newark.

After moving to Wisconsin and Minnesota with a hardware store company, he became a franchisee in 1967 with several Coast-to-Coast Hardware Stores in Missouri – while also becoming a bivocational pastor.

Powell served 10 years as pastor of Pisgah Baptist Church, which was founded in 1849 by Robert James, the father of Jesse and Frank James, before joining Charles Stanley as senior associate pastor



FRED POWELL

at First Baptist Church in Atlanta in 1984.

He later became executive assistant to the president of Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Kansas City, Mo., from 1995-2001.

During his ministry, Powell also served as senior associate pastor at First Baptist Church in Moore, Okla., and president of Communicator Ministries, Inc., and editor of its journal, *The Communicator*. He authored *A Biblical Deacon Ministry for Your Church* and led conferences in deacon ministries.

In addition to the SBC Committee on Order of Business, Powell also was a member of the Committee on Nominations in 1983 and secretary/treasurer of the Pastors' Conference in 1984. Internationally, he served as director of development for Emanuel Baptist Seminary in Oradea, Romania, from 1991-1998.

He is survived by his second wife, Shirley, and seven children; 27 grandchildren; and numerous great-grandchildren. Memorials to: the Clay/Platte Baptist Association in Kearney, Mo. **BR**

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

PREPARE FOR RETIREMENT SEMINAR

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is hosting a Retirement Seminar, June 6 from 6:30-8:30 p.m. at First Baptist Church of Whitnel, Lenoir. Developing a compensation package for pastors and church staff can seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Consultant Davis Blount will help participants and churches develop a compensation plan that adequately provides for the needs of those who serve. The seminar is designed

for pastors, ministers, financial administrators, treasurers, church committees and other interested lay leaders. Topics will include: church/employer tax updates, health reimbursement accounts, Department of Labor overtime rules, Affordable Care Act, compensation planning, the church retirement plan and other financial topics for churches. The seminar is free of charge. Visit ncbaptist.org/westernretirementseminar.



Embrace Round Tables, a women's ministry round table to discuss strategy for creating a disciple-making culture in local churches' women's ministries, is being sponsored by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina in June and July. The event is geared toward women's ministry leaders, and participants will talk about assessing women's ministries corporately and lives individually while carrying out Jesus' command to make disciples.

One of the goals for the meeting is

to leave with ideas for next steps that can help further develop a strategy and implementation.

Meetings will be held:

- June 17, Baptist building, Cary;
- June 24, The River Community Church, Fayetteville;
- July 15, Metrolina Baptist Association, Charlotte; and
- July 16, Antioch Baptist Church, Waynesville.

The event is free. Visit ncbaptist.org/roundtables.



Mission:Dignity Sunday is June 25. Through Mission:Dignity, Southern Baptists are providing much needed monthly assistance to 1,800 aged pastors and widows with \$7 million distributed annually. All Mission:Dignity gifts are used to as-

sist those in need. Order free brochures, posters and a DVD. Visit missiondignity.org/requestmaterials.aspx or missiondignity.org/Promotions/MissionDignity-Sunday.

Free downloadable materials are available.

W.O.R.D. CONFERENCE
Worship. Outreach. Resource. Discipleship.



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is sponsoring the W.O.R.D. Conference July 7-8 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia. The theme is "All in" and participants will learn what it takes to become an effective second-generation Asian-American leader who can work with first-generation leaders to make an impact on reaching the lost through disciple-making. The confer-

ence will be a time to learn from practitioners and peers in the areas of worship, outreach, resources and discipleship in the Asian-American context. Cost is \$80 for a double occupancy room or \$92 for a single occupancy room and includes Friday night lodging, three meals, snacks and all conference materials. Register by June 16 to receive \$20 off registration. Visit ncbaptist.org/word.

AROUND THE STATE

Staff changes

Badin Baptist Church, Badin, has called **B.J. BOWERS** as pastor. This is his first pastorate.

VIRGIL HINSON has been called as associate pastor at Badin Baptist Church, Badin. This is his first job in the ministry.

Red Cross Baptist Church, Oakboro, has called **JESSE HERRING** as pastor. Herring previously served as youth pastor at United Love Baptist Church, Midland.

STEVEN WADE, associate professor of pastoral theology field ministry coordinator for Southeastern Seminary, has been called to Faith Baptist Church, Youngsville, as lead pastor. Wade previously served as senior pastor of Poplar Spring Baptist Church, Bunn.

Poplar Spring Baptist Church, Bunn, called **MATTHEW JAMES** as lead pastor. James had been serving as a church pastor and interim worship leader.

JAY HUDDLESTON has been called as senior pastor of First Baptist Church, New Port Richey, Fla. He previously served First Baptist Church, Cary, as senior pastor.

Wakefield Central Baptist Church, Zebulon, has called **JOEL STEPHENS**, as senior pastor. Stephens, who also is first vice president for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, was previously senior pastor of Westfield Baptist Church, Westfield.

Retirement

ERVEL JONES retired from New Hope Baptist Church, Statesville, after over seven years as pastor and 48 years in the

ministry. A graduate of Fruitland Baptist Bible College, Jones began pastoring at Fairbrook Baptist Church, Hickory, and also pastored Macedonia Baptist Church, Taylorsville; Midway Baptist Church, West Jefferson; Rocky Hill Baptist Church, Statesville; and Cochran Street Baptist Church, Statesville.

Jones and his wife, Jan, live in Statesville. He is available for interim work and pulpit supply. Contact him at (704) 880-3031.

GENE DAGGERHART retired April 29 from Chimney Rock Baptist Church, Lake Lure, after 11 years as pastor. Daggerhart earned a master's of divinity from Southern Seminary.

He pastored First Baptist Church, Vaucluse, S.C.; Sullivan's Island Baptist Church, S.C.; West End Baptist Church, Gaffney, S.C.; and Ross Grove Baptist Church, Shelby. Daggerhart and his wife, Sherri, live in Gaffney, S.C. He is available for pulpit supply. Contact him at (864) 488-3397.

JOHN H. WALKER recently retired after more than 16 years of serving as minister of music at First Baptist Church, Spindale. He was a chaplain's assistant in the U.S. Army and later received a bachelor's of arts in music and education from the University of North Texas. While in school, Walker directed music at First Baptist Church, Gainesville, Texas, then directed music at First Baptist Church, Waxahachie, Texas. He served as minister of music at First Baptist Church, Little Rock, Ark.; minister of music and youth at First Baptist Church, El Paso, Texas; minister of music at First Baptist Church, Long Beach, Calif.; First Baptist Church, Anaheim, Calif.; and First Baptist Church, Norwalk, Calif. Walker also taught vocal music in the Anaheim Union High School District for more than 30 years. He resides in Tustin, Calif.

CHURCH NEWS

Turrentine Baptist Church, Mocksville

An ingathering for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (AAEO) at Turrentine Baptist Church, Mocksville, collected \$1,760 on Easter Sunday. Church members were given special "Jesus Bags" for their offering prior to the April 16. They put their coins, dollars and checks in these bags. AAEO funds support North American Mission Board missionaries. Joe Long, left, chairman of the deacons, holds the basket with all the "Jesus Bags." The church also held a Walk in the Park, which also benefited AAEO. There was \$1,025 collected at that event. The pastor is Fred Carlton. (Contributed photo)



May 28

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

June 4

Life on Mission

Focal Passage: 1 Corinthians 9:19-27

Many of you know the feeling – the sweaty palms, your heart beats just a little faster, you’re not sure exactly how or where to begin, you’re nervous because you expect rejection. No, I’m not thinking of the first time you asked a girl on a date. I’m thinking about those moments just before sharing the gospel. Even as a pastor, I often experience nervousness right before sharing the gospel. But nerves don’t negate the mission.

Paul shared his experience in 1 Corinthians 9 about personalizing the mission by contextualizing the gospel to his audience. Being on mission is an everyday challenge to anticipate opportunities for sharing the gospel.

A number of years ago I remember a family that was leaving church. A young girl stopped me and said she wanted to be saved. I shared the gospel with her and spoke with about her why she wanted to trust Jesus. Then I asked her, “If you could trust Jesus today or wait a

week, what would you do?” She thought about it and said, “I’d like to wait.” (I ask that question with children to sense their urgency, a clue the Holy Spirit is working.)

But when she and her mom got to their car, she turned around and told her mom that she didn’t want to wait. They came back to find me, and she placed her faith in Jesus. Living on mission sometimes requires more than just readiness.

Another example is a friend I met for lunch. He was curious about faith, but hung up about evolution. We met for lunch. He had good questions, and I tried to give him good answers. But he didn’t trust Jesus that day. My arguments could not overcome his doubts. However, just a year ago, he came to faith in Jesus. Why?

His neighbors built a relationship with him and showed him love. Living on mission means we must always be ready, must consistently show love and must faithfully share the Good News of Jesus Christ.

When we do, God is faithful to fulfill His mission through us.

**CHRIS HEFNER**

Pastor,
Wilkesboro Baptist
Church

Love Like Christ

Focal passage: John 15:9-17

In the “Farewell Discourse” (John 13:31-17:26), Jesus gives some final instructions to His disciples on the eve of His execution.

In John 15:9-17, our Savior commands us: “*Love one another*” (John 15:17). As disciples of Jesus, we should love others just as He loves us. Of course, in order to love others like Jesus loves us, we have to experience His saving love through faith. Once God’s love has filled our hearts, we are able to love others from the overflow of His love. After all, because we are friends (John 15:13-14) with Jesus, His love for us is demonstrated by His willingness to lay down His life so that we may have eternal life.

Likewise, as His friends we are called to follow Him with loving obedience. The Bible also says, “*But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us*” (Ro-

mans 5:8). Due to God’s unconditional love toward us, we can show love to others – whether they deserve it or not.

The 2000 film, “Pay It Forward,” tells the story of a troubled boy named Trevor who develops a plan to make the world a better place by helping others. Instead of paying one person back when he receives help, Trevor starts a movement of “paying it forward” by finding opportunities to help three new people.

The idea of “paying it forward” directly follows the logic of Jesus’ commandment to love others. Christ first loved us and while we can love Him and remain in His love, we must pass His love on to others. Later in his life, John the Apostle said, “*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth*” (1 John 3:18). What about you?

Do you love others? If we are really Jesus’ friends who remain in His love, we will forgive others and show kindness and compassion to those in need.

**DAVID CROWTHER**

Pastor,
Mount Olive Baptist
Church, Pittsboro

**In order to love others like Jesus loves us,
we have to experience His saving love through faith.**

May 28

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

June 4

What Do We Do Now?

Focal passage: Matthew 28:16-20

“Disciple-making? It’s not that difficult. Here are a few practical tips. First, become omniscient. By being ‘all-knowing,’ you can easily identify where a Christian is on his journey toward spiritual maturity. Next, master predestination so you can map out an efficient path for him. Of course, his own ‘free moral agency’ might give you trouble, but if he’ll devote himself to you body, soul and spirit, your difficulties should be few. Then, become omnipresent. If you’re with him every moment of every day, you can help him sort through his various experiences. In fact, the best plan would be to beam him directly to heaven, into an environment perfectly suited for spiritual growth. Oh, and don’t forget to lay in an infinite supply of love, patience, time and energy.”

Chris Adsit wrote these words in the introduction of his book, *Personal Dis-*

ciplomaking, making the point that helping believers mature in their faith is impossible without God.

This is why, in our focal passage, before Jesus ascends to the Father, He gives clear instructions (Matthew 28:16-20). First, Jesus assures them that all authority has been given to Him. Second, He commissions the disciples to make disciples. Third, He promises to be with them always.

The expectation Jesus has for making disciples is clear. Jesus said, “*go*,” which meant you should go about life with a mission mindset. Once individuals are saved, they should be baptized as a way to express their new faith in Christ. And, we should teach them the truths of scripture and how to live in a way that pleases God.

None of this can be done apart from the presence and power of God. The next time you begin to invest in someone else for the gospel, don’t do it in your own strength. Rely on the “One” who commissioned you!

**BARTLEY WOOTEN**

Pastor, Beulaville
Baptist Church

The Path

Focal Passage: Psalm 1:1-6

As a child, one of my favorite places to play was near the creek that flowed through the pasture at my parent’s farm. Who can blame me? On a hot, humid summer’s day in Alabama; the creek and its wonderful shade trees were a real treat. In Psalm 1, readers are encouraged to avoid the wicked and not to take their advice. Instead we are to take our delight “*in the LORD’s instructions*” (Psalm 1:2).

Meditating on God’s Word will allow us to experience His blessings more fully. Spending time focusing on God’s Word will allow our relationship to grow “*like a tree planted beside streams of water*” (Psalm 1:3). A tree’s roots will seek out water and nutrients wherever it is planted. It is the same for us, in order to grow in our faith we must spend time in the scriptures.

The second portion of Psalm 1 warns

us of a difference between the wicked and the righteous: “*For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous*” (Psalm 1:6). The wicked simply blow away.

Those are comforting words when we look and see so much wickedness and sin around us! It is nice to know that in God’s economy, righteousness wins. In this world where the wicked seem to be gaining power and prestige, God is still taking notice of the righteous and the things they do. Two years ago, I walked the pasture to see the creek scene of my childhood expeditions. To my disappointment the trees had thinned out and the creek had run dry due to multiple years of drought conditions. It is the same way with our relationship with God. If we don’t spend time meditating on His Word then our relationship grows dry. Spending time with the Lord and drinking the water of His Word, will bring rain to the dry creek bed of our souls and allow our relationship to be well nourished.

**EMILY CARTER**

Member,
University Hills Baptist
Church, Charlotte

AAIM

Continued from page 5

Uplifting music was woven throughout the event. Randy Stewart, pastor of Mills Home Baptist Church in Thomasville, played keyboard during registration and the lunch hour and also accompanied soloist Roberta Edwards. Dennis Streets, executive director of Chatham County Council on Aging, brought the Council's 30-member Choral Group who kicked off the event with spirited hymns.

The Parade of Churches included displays from the following: Woodlawn Baptist Church in Conover (Care Team Ministry and Resources), First Baptist Church Mount Airy (Friends Helping Seniors), Centenary United Methodist Church in Winston-Salem (Adult Day Respite) and Central Baptist Church in Kannapolis (Grief Share and The White Rose Ministry).

AAIM Roundup vendors included the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP), Powerful Tools for Caregivers, Baptists on Mission, Palliative and Hospice Care, Healthy Living, LifeSpan Respite, FaithHealth, Caraway Conference Center and Camp, nc4A, Transitions LifeCare, LifeWay Christian Store and NCBAM.

Four early-bird sessions were held at 9 a.m. to allow those in closer proximity to Thomasville to experience more of the event. Beth Harris offered "Managing the Long Goodbye: Caregiving through the stages of Alzheimer's disease." Chris Schofield, director of the Office of Prayer for Evangelization and Spiritual Awakening at the Baptist State Convention offered "Kingdom Prayer and Senior Adults." Carolyn Hill, retired nurs-

ing home administrator and senior adult retreat leader offered "Caregiver Support from the Church - when dementia is a diagnosis." NCBAM's regional directors Martha McDowell (north central) and Debra Kuykendall (central west) offered "Help for the Journey: how NCBAM can help."

The Roundup was hosted by Rich Fork Baptist Church in Thomasville. More than 150 senior adult ministers, lay leaders and church members were in attendance. Phyllis Crane, senior adult minister at First Baptist Church in Clayton, valued the mix of spiritual encouragement and community resources. "The statewide resources were very helpful. It's great to have something tangible as well as spiritual to take back to the seniors in my church."

Charles McKinney, minister of senior adults at First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, says he is already looking forward to next year's conference. "The AAIM Roundup was informing, inspiring and educational, all in one. The vendors provided needed resources for those looking for direction in second half ministries. The location and speakers were phenomenal."

AAIM Chair Stan Heiser, associate pastor at Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church in Charlotte, served as master of ceremonies.

Michael Blackwell, president/CEO of Baptist Children's Homes and founder of NCBAM greeted attendees and introduced the keynote speaker.

Members of the AAIM Leadership Board are: Heiser, Co-Chair, Norma Melton; secretary, Barbara Blood;



Beth Harris, a pastor's wife, wove a thread of the three gifts she experienced during her caregiving years: the grace-filled gift of laughter, the necessary gift of truth and the greatest gift of love. Harris eloquently shared her experiences to encourage other caregivers in the invaluable work they are doing. (NCBAM photo)

Eastern area leaders Phil and Phyllis Crane; Central area leader Christa Warise; and Western area leader Glenn Davenport.

Regional AAIM events are planned for this Fall. Eastern area: First Baptist Church Rocky Mount, Sept. 25, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Central area: NCBAM, Oct. 17, 10 a.m.-1 p.m. Western area: Buncombe Baptist Association, Oct. 19, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. For more information, call NCBAM at (877) 506-2226. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Buckhorn Baptist Church located in rural Como, North Carolina, is a multigenerational congregation seeking a **pastor** with a minimum of five years pastoral experience and graduate of a seminary, divinity school or Bible college. We're searching for a pastor who is passionate about working with all areas/ages of the congregation along with our local community to grow our church. Buckhorn Baptist Church is Bible-based worship, believing the Bible was true yesterday, true today and true always. Congregation focuses on reaching local community, home and missions. Resume deadline June 30, 2017. Include statement of faith, personal testimony and audio or visual of recent sermon. Mail to: Buckhorn Baptist Church Pastor Search Team, c/o Pam Carr, 448 Buckhorn Church Road, Como, NC 27818.

Corinth Baptist Church at 991 Corinth Church Road, Salemburg, NC, is actively seeking a **Bivocational Pastor**. All resumes should be sent to David Naylor, 4712 Honeycutt Road, Salemburg, NC 28385, or email to naylor168@gmail.com. We will receive resumes until June 26, 2017.

First Baptist Church of Erwin, NC, is accepting resumes for a **full-time pastor**. You can learn more about us at www.fbcwin.com. If you feel God is leading you to become part of our ministry, please send a resume to church@fbcwin.org or PO Box 608, Erwin, NC 28339.

Church Staff

Antioch Baptist Church (ABC), Waynesville, NC, is seeking a **part-time Church Administrator**. Detailed information posted on website: <http://www.antiochwnc.org/open-positions/>. Resumes should be mailed to ABC Personnel Committee Chairperson, 542 Iron Duff Rd., Waynesville, NC 28785.

Kelleytown Baptist in Hartsville, SC, is seeking a **full-time Student Minister**. Hartsville is a great place to live and raise a family. It is home to a fortune 500 company, Coker College, and the Governor's School for Science and Math. This ministry position will serve alongside the pastoral leadership team and other leaders to effectively lead a Kingdom mind-set church. The primary purpose of this position will be to develop a comprehensive student ministry for middle and high school students. The Student Minister must be a professing Christian who is an ordained Southern Baptist minister and active member of a Southern Baptist church. Our ideal candidate is someone who has earned a seminary degree from a Southern Baptist seminary or a like-minded divinity school. Other skill sets desired is someone who is a self-starter, good organizational skills, relational, growth-minded and passionate about discipling young people. Please send resume to rod@kelleytownbc.com or to 2609 Kelleytown Road, Hartsville, SC 29550.

Zoar Baptist Church of Shelby, NC, is seeking **PT Worship Leader/Minister of Music**. Blended worship; avg attendance 100-125. Choir, organ/piano, congregational worship tracks. For full job description/details, contact Alex Carroll. Send resume to Zoar Baptist Church, Attn. Alex Carroll, 1740 S. Lafayette Street, Shelby, NC 28152, or arcarroll92@gmail.com.

New Hope Baptist Church, Wilson, NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Family Ministries and Music**. This will oversee a comprehensive ministry to families that include children and youth and also be responsible for worship and music ministries. Bible college or seminary degree preferred. Other qualifications will be considered. This position requires someone who is an equipper and enjoys seeing others grow spiritually and in leadership abilities. Send resumes to nhmbc@myglnc.com attention search committee or mail to New Hope Baptist Church, 5142 NC Highway 58 N., Wilson, NC 27896. Job description may be viewed at www.nhmbc.net.

Miscellaneous

Forest Hills Baptist Church, Wilson - **selling 1998 MCI 47 passenger 102D3**, Bathroom, 60 Series Engine, Automatic, Very good interior and exterior condition, \$35,000 negotiable. Jimmy - 252-289-5509 or Rick - 252-245-4518.

NCBAM needs servant volunteers who like to mow, trim, rake, and bless others. Help aging adults enjoy quality life in their own backyards. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

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Liberty

Continued from page 1

• The Department of Treasury, which includes the Internal Revenue Service, will not penalize a person, house of worship or other religious organization for speaking “about moral or political issues from a religious perspective,” thereby providing relief from a six-decade-old law known as the Johnson Amendment.

• The secretaries of three federal departments will consider revising rules to protect the freedom of conscience of religious objectors to the abortion/contraception mandate imposed by the Obama administration.

The executive order does not include protections for faith-based and other federal contractors who have established their employment practices on a biblical sexual ethic. Nor does it protect individuals and institutions from being penalized by the federal government for acting in support of their belief that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

Those types of protections were reportedly included in a draft executive order leaked to some news media in February.

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said, “After years of open hostility toward religious institutions and conscience from the previous administration, this executive order is a welcome change in direction toward people of faith from the White House. Not only that, but many federal agencies are working already to ensure that the executive and administrative violations of religious freedom from the Obama administration are being rolled back.

“The symbolism of mentioning the Little Sisters of the Poor and similar groups [in the order] is also impor-

tant and welcome,” Moore said in written comments for Baptist Press. “No one should conclude, of course, that this executive order solves the wide array of challenges we face on the religious freedom front. Much, much more must be done – especially in terms of congressional legislation – to ensure that American citizens are able to serve their communities without violating their religious convictions.”

Frank S. Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, said he was deeply grateful to Trump for keeping his word.

“He promised me that there would be a strong push for religious freedom protection,” Page told BP in a written statement. “It is important for people to be able to express themselves according to their faith. It’s also extremely heartening to see that he wants to honor the conscience of believers who have serious moral concerns about participating in non-Christian activities.”

Michael Farris, president of Alliance Defending Freedom, said Trump’s executive order “provides hope ... that he will move fully toward fulfilling his promise to protect religious freedom for countless Americans. Regrettably, this executive order leaves that promise as yet unfulfilled.

“[T]hough we appreciate the spirit of today’s gesture, vague instructions to federal agencies simply [leave] them wiggle room to ignore that gesture, regardless of the spirit in which it was intended,” Farris said in a written statement. “We strongly encourage the president to see his campaign promise through to completion and to ensure that all Americans – no matter where they live or what their occupation is – enjoy the freedom to peacefully live and work consistent with their convictions without fear of government punishment.”

Ryan Anderson, a senior research fellow who special-

izes in marriage and religious liberty for the Heritage Foundation, described the order as “woefully inadequate,” saying it “does not address the major threats to religious liberty in the United States today.”

“The Trump administration still has time to take meaningful action to reverse those trends, so that all Americans may seek out and serve God and their neighbors according to their own convictions, not the government’s,” Anderson said.

Becket, which represents religious organizations that objected to the abortion/contraception mandate despite the threat of huge fines, applauded the order.

“President Trump deserves credit for his order, and now the agencies and government lawyers need to follow through to finally give up this futile crusade,” said Mark Rienzi, Becket senior counsel.

Trump’s signing of the executive order coincided with a commemoration of National Day of Prayer. Former SBC President Jack Graham was among the religious leaders who prayed and stood behind Trump while he spoke and signed the order.

The Johnson Amendment, named after then-Senator and future President Lyndon Johnson of Texas, altered the federal tax code in 1954 to bar 501(c)(3) organizations “from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office.”

Some supporters of repealing the Johnson Amendment believe pastors and churches – and not the federal government – should be the ones to decide what they say from the pulpit regarding elections while also believing pastors and churches should not make endorsements. Announcing support for a political candidate could harm the gospel outreach and ministry of the church, they say. **BR**

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