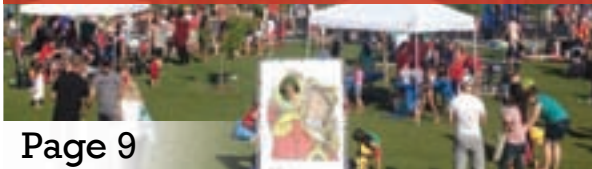


POPULATION GROWTH FUELS CHURCH PLANTING NEED IN CALGARY



Page 9



Page 4

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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BSC Board celebrates increase in giving, NEW SCHOLARSHIP FUND SET

By **K. ALLAN BLUME** | *BR* Editor

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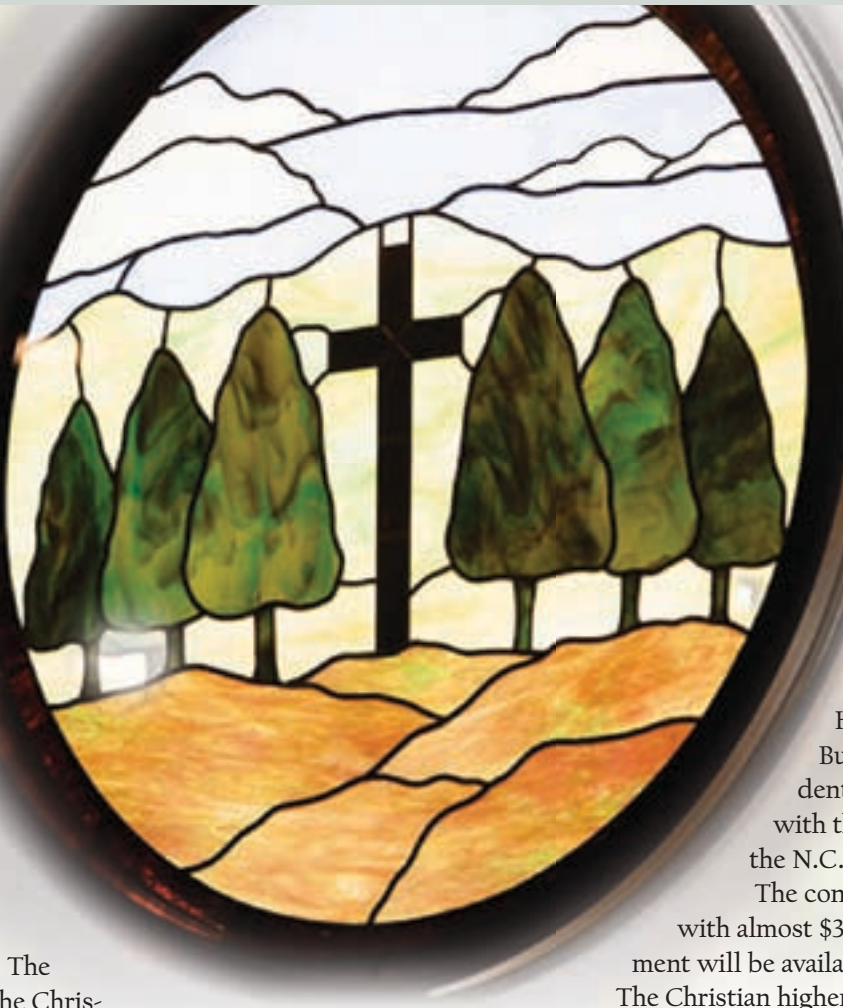
CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) board of directors took action on several items and heard reports on Cooperative Program (CP) giving and the convention's disciple-making strategy in the board's May 19-20 meeting.

During their regularly scheduled, two-day meeting at the Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro, board members voted unanimously to sell the Battle House, the former Baptist campus ministry property at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, to Carolina Christian Study Center for \$1.55 million. (See below for full story.)

New scholarship fund

They also voted unanimously to transfer administration and oversight of the annual N.C. Baptist college scholarship program from the BSC to the North Carolina Baptist Foundation (NCBF). The vote was the result of a motion recommended by the Christian Higher Education Special Committee.



Scholarships for undergraduate and graduate students from cooperating N.C. Baptist churches who attend one of the five affiliated educational institutions will be funded through an endowment established by NCBF, rather than through CP funds received through the BSC.

The foundation's board has already established the endowment by reclassifying funds that were previously designated for student loans so they can be used to fund scholarship. The student loan fund has been underutilized for many years, which led the foundation to take action to legally reclassify the fund, said Clay Warf, executive director of NCBF.

"Thanks to the efforts of the late Tom Dimmock, a foundation board member, we have been successful in converting the Luther H. Butler Student Loan Fund to the Luther H. Butler Scholarship Fund for N.C. Baptist students," Warf said. "We are delighted to join forces with the Baptist State Convention in administering the N.C. Baptist scholarship program."

The conversion enables the new endowment to begin with almost \$3 million. Investment income from the endowment will be available for scholarships beginning in 2016. The Christian higher education special committee also asked the

See Board page 11

Board votes to sell Battle House at UNC-Chapel Hill

By **CHAD AUSTIN** | BSC Communications

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) board of directors voted unanimously to sell the Battle House, the former Baptist campus ministry property at the University of North Carolina (UNC) at Chapel Hill, to Carolina Christian Study Center (CCSC) for \$1.55 million.

The sale means the historic property that served as a base for Baptist Student Union (BSU) ministry at UNC-Chapel Hill for 50 years will continue to provide a Christian witness and serve the university community.

The vote came May 20 based on a recommendation

by the BSC's business services special committee during their full board meeting at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro.

Proceeds from the sale will be placed into a special account that will be used exclusively for furthering the collegiate partnerships ministry. The BSC will receive an initial down payment of 10 percent of the purchase price, which equals \$155,000. The balance of the purchase price will be paid to the convention over a five-year period. Terms of the purchase agreement stipulate that the Battle House must be used for Christian ministry purposes.

See Battle page 10



The Battle House at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, through Carolina Christian Study Center will continue to provide a Christian witness. (*BR* photo by K. Allan Blume)

Farewell Boy Scouts of America

Robert Gates, president of the Boy Scouts of America (BSA), told attendees at the BSA annual meeting in Atlanta on May 21, the Scouts should voluntarily end its ban on gay adult leaders before a court forces them to do so. The former Central Intelligence Agency director and U.S. secretary of defense said he is not asking the national board to change the leadership policy immediately.

No one is surprised.

Two years ago BSA witnessed the exodus of thousands of scouts and the cancellation of many local groups with the announcement that gay scouts are accepted into the organization. Leaving church troops in a moral quandary, the policy change resulted in the launch of Trail Life USA, a Christian-based alternative to the Scouts. Trail Life USA's website brands the organization as a "Christian adventure, character and leadership program for young men."

A 2013 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) resolution said opening the group's membership to homosexual youth was "merely the first step toward future approval of homosexual adult leaders in the Scouts." The resolution was on target.

At the time, Southern Baptist leaders echoed the resolution's prediction the Scouts would eventually drop their ban on gay leaders, according to a Baptist Press report. Among the leaders voicing that opinion were Steve Lemke of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary,

Russell Moore of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and Roger S. Oldham of the SBC Executive Committee (EC).

"We grieve that the Scouts have planted the seed of their eventual destruction," Oldham, EC vice president for convention communications and relations, said at the time. "It won't happen overnight, but the course has been set."

Oldham was correct.

Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said in his May 27 blog, "The Boy Scouts were doomed the moment the national leadership decided to preserve the organization at the cost of the values and ideals

that gave it birth."

Mohler added, "Even as he took office last year, Gates indicated that he was not satisfied with the compromise the BSA national board adopted in 2013. After insisting, just six months earlier, that the Scouts would not change their policy excluding openly-gay scouts and scouting leaders – a policy national leaders acknowledged was expected by the vast majority of scout parents – the national board crumbled under external pressure, largely from activist organizations and major corporations."

But Gates' argument is based on the self-preservation of BSA as a national organization. "He made no moral argument at all," Mohler said. "[Gates] did not celebrate the new policy he proposed on moral grounds, nor did he lament the loss of the older policy on moral grounds.

There were no moral elements in his argument."

The fatal flaw in the argument makes the very existence of the Boy Scouts ever more vulnerable, Mohler concludes. Absent the Bible-based morals of previous generations, Americans are building a society that has no need of the Boy Scouts. The organization is systematically dismantling the moral fiber of its existence, while constructing a new organization that has no moral purpose. The new structure leaves scouting in "yet another unsustainable compromise."

Of course, all of this is evolving in the context of massive bullying campaigns and pressure from self-appointed officers of political correctness.

Someone needs to ask Gates, "When you finish retooling the Scouts, who will need the organization, and what will be its purpose?"

The Scouts have not merely drifted from the strength of their founding morality, they deliberately set their sails toward the pirates who will rob them of their moral cargo.

Samuel James, communications specialist for ERLC said Gates is clearly appealing to the "wrong side of history argument." In the Canon and Culture blog, James said, "Gates is warning his fellow Scouts that standing athwart culture in this issue is just too high a price; for the sake of the survival of the BSA, the old ways should be scrapped and the 'world as it is' be embraced."

Preserving the Scouts from "legal or political headwinds isn't a sufficient motivation," James added. "The problem with Gates's plea isn't that he's wrong

about what would face the Scouts if they held on to their policy (he's probably right, actually), it's that Gates is calling for an (massive) ethical transformation with an explicitly non-ethical reason. Imagine if a politician plead for the cessation of human trafficking on the grounds that traffickers just face too many risks and too much scrutiny from international governments. Not only is such an argument ridiculous, it is morally repugnant."

Mohler said, "As a former Boy Scout, I lament the inevitable loss of scouting, knowing full well how much good the scouting movement has done in the lives of countless boys and men."

I also lament the demise of BSA, but not as one who was a Boy Scout as a child. First, as a pastor of churches that hosted Scout troops, I am saddened that BSA has forced churches to distance themselves from the organization. Church leaders were unnecessarily strapped with a divisive, unwelcomed controversy. BSA walked away from the contest scoreless.

Second, I grieve for my father who became an active scout leader after I went to college, and was awarded some very high honors from the organization. He loved BSA. He invested years of time and energy in the lives of young men who were in search of character. He was deeply dedicated to the organization's moral goals and to the boys who learned biblical values through scouting. I am sure if he was alive today, he would grieve, also.

Farewell Boy Scouts of America. You lost. America lost something when you caved. Nobody won. **BR**



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

Pray for SBC annual meeting

The Southern Baptist Convention meets June 15-17 in Columbus, Ohio.

Pray for these leaders by name:

- Ronnie Floyd, SBC president
- Frank Page, CEO, Executive Committee
- David Platt, president, International Mission Board
- Kevin Ezell, president, North American Mission Board
- O.S. Hawkins, president, GuideStone Financial Resources
- Thom Rainer, president, LifeWay Christian Resources
- Wanda Lee, executive director, Woman's Missionary Union
- Russell Moore, president, Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission
- Daniel Akin, president, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Jason Allen, president, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Jeff Iorg, president, Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary
- Chuck Kelly, president, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- Albert Mohler, president, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary
- Paige Patterson, president, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary



If you want to keep tabs on the Southern Baptist Convention, visit sbcannualmeeting.net and BRnow.org for information about how to watch a live stream of sessions as well as the latest news from the meeting. There will be tweets from [@biblicalrecord](https://twitter.com/biblicalrecord) and [@BRnow](https://twitter.com/BRnow). If you are going to be a messenger from your North Carolina church, please let the *Biblical Recorder* know (editor@BRnow.org) and keep us informed of your feedback before, during and after the meeting. The preferred social media hashtag for this year's event is **#sbc2015**. See more coverage on page 12.

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God is a perfect Father

Father's Day is a time to celebrate and honor noble fathers and the godly father figures in our lives. As Father's Day approaches, many of us are thinking about the huge impact that these men have left on us. While our culture dictates that wealth and prestige determine one's success, the impact and influence of godly fathers goes far beyond this temporary life.

Men of God who are following Christ, love, nurture and help to spiritually develop their children and others who look up to them. Use this Father's Day to celebrate the fathers in your life, showing them love and gratitude for all they have done for you.

On this Father's Day weekend, plan to pay those special individuals a visit, make the time to call them or send them a message thanking them for investing in you.

God gives us a picture in Luke 15 of what a perfect father is like.

This touching story that we often refer to as "the prodigal son" actually displays the heart of our heavenly Father. The central truth of three stories in this same chapter: the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son, is that God loves sinners!

Jesus told of a self-centered young man who forsook his father to experience the ways of the world. In his rebellion, he spent all of his inheritance on wild living and vain pursuits. Eventually, because he was financially destitute, emotionally broken and physically starved, he returned to his father's estate. His best hope was that his father might allow him to live there as a hired servant. However, upon his arrival, before this prodigal could even communicate his request, the father ran to him and embraced him, forgiving him for all his wrongdoings.

The sad reality is that some individuals have a father who sinned against them through some form of abuse

and have become disillusioned when they hear references about God being our father. Please know that this God of heaven is a perfect father who loved you so much that He allowed His only son to die on a cross in order that your sin could be forgiven. This father desires to give you eternal life, walk with you daily and allow you to spend eternity in heaven with him. Your perfect heavenly father will never disappoint you.

Maybe you are a father who lives with guilt because you have failed God and failed your family. Don't despair!

Look to the heavenly father in repentance and believe that through His grace your sin can be forgiven and your failures can be overcome. God is able and willing to transform you into a new person in Him. God can even empower and enable you to love and forgive others who have wronged you. He is the only perfect father.

"But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him." – Luke 15:20 (NKJV) **BR**



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Looming senior adult revolution to impact nation

Baptist Press

Something is happening that you may not have noticed. If you have noticed it, you may not fully appreciate its significance. It will affect you. It will affect your church. It will affect the whole nation.

What's happening is a senior adult revolution. Some call it the graying of America, but that is too gentle a term for what lies ahead. It is more like a '60s remix. The 1960s were the most turbulent, revolutionary years in modern American history. Every aspect of U.S. culture was affected, including the church. Now picture the '60s reimagined and reinvented: profound changes in American life driven by grandparents rather than college students, by retirement living and health care rather than drugs and rock 'n' roll.

The unprecedented generation

Here is the revolution in a nutshell: According to Ken Dychtwald in the *The Age Wave*, "two-thirds of all the men and women who have lived beyond the age of 65 in the entire history of the world are alive today." Ponder that for a few moments. Dychtwald goes on to note that life expectancy for Americans doubled in the relatively brief history of our nation, creating for the first time "a mass society of healthy, active elders."

Not since the days of Noah has God given a generation extended life, good health and adequate resources. Today the fastest-growing segment of the senior adult population is the 85-and-up group. The birthdays you celebrate now are practice for the birthdays you will celebrate for many years to come.

The ripple effect

The simple fact of senior adults living longer sets in motion many ripples. Older adults will be an important influence in our churches for a significantly longer time than was true in the past. They will not only be present, they will be active. They will not only be active, they will be vocal. This is one reason why attitudes toward worship style have become so complex.

In most congregations, a strategic plan for the future that does not incorporate the needs, values and gifts of senior adults is incomplete.

Older adults will make attention to pastoral care essential for healthy churches. A growing number of senior adults will move from independent living to assisted living to life in a skilled nursing unit. How will the church minister to them as they make these very important transitions? How will the church incorporate their presence in a retirement community as a launching pad for evangelism and ministry to other residents of that community?

Senior adults will affect the lifestyles and decisions of younger adults. A growing number of church members will have the care of one or more senior parents as a priority. Imagine the questions and issues faced by Baby Boomers who will retire and still have responsibility for the care of aging parents.

This will affect how families spend their time, their money and their emotional energy. A church's attitude toward, and provisions for, senior adults will be noticed in a way not unlike how parents look carefully at programs for their children.

A Great Commission army

This senior adult revolution is more than a medical advance. As the number of unevangelized and unchurched in our nation grows, God is raising up a Great Commission army. He intends for senior adults to form the critical mass necessary for the gospel to penetrate the world. Their opinions will shape direction. Their willingness to give will affect fiscal stability. Their engagement with the mission will be crucial for mobilizing congregations. God intends for senior adults to step up to missions engagement and not step aside for younger adults to do all the work.

The current generation of young adults is often called the Millennials. I call them the Lost Generation. They are the largest generation in American history, bigger even than the Baby Boomers.

They are also the most unevangelized generation in American history. So many of them have no religious

background; they are also called "nones" for responding to surveys about religious background and beliefs with "none of the above." However, connections with senior adults are possible. Millennials made Tony Bennett, popular in the 1960s, more popular than at any other time of his career. Their interest in the classic hymns of the faith has spurred every major Christian artist today to record at least one album of hymns. They have a deep respect for authenticity and consistency. We are unlikely to reach the Millennials without the witness of the seniors.

How can senior adults make a difference?

- **Write cards and notes to people.** Children and their parents are a good place to start. Personal mail is so rare these days that handwritten cards and notes become treasures.

- **Be a mentor to younger adults.** Get to know the ones around you. Ask about their lives. Listen to them. Pray for them. When they face issues you faced, tell them how you managed. Be a grandparent outside your family.

- **Seek Kingdom advance above personal satisfaction.** You lived much of your life deferring dreams and desires for the sake of your family. Be willing to do the same when your church wants to try something new.

- **Encourage, encourage, encourage.** So few people have a constant encourager in their lives.

Speak as often of Jesus as you do your grandkids. If you will keep Jesus on your mind, He will find a way out of your mouth.

- **Give one last gift to Jesus through your estate.** Honor Him in your death as you sought to do in your life, making your last act on earth a gift to your church or a Christian ministry.

Not since the days of Noah has God done for a generation of people what He is doing for this generation of senior adults. Celebrate your extended life, health and resources as His gift for His purposes. Use these additional years for His glory.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Chuck Kelley is president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. This article first appeared in the Baptist Courier at baptistcourier.com, newsjournal of the South Carolina Baptist Convention.) **BR**



CHUCK KELLEY
Guest Column

Mission:Dignity buoys retired pastors, widows

By ROY HAYHURST | Baptist Press

Virginia Pangle summed up what Mission:Dignity means to a pastor's widow like herself.

"I don't have to worry about being cold, hungry or going without my medicine," she said.

Mission:Dignity, a ministry of GuideStone Financial Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention, ensures that Pangle along with nearly 2,000 other retired Southern Baptist pastors, their spouses or widows are able to have a sense of financial dignity in retirement.

The ministry, fully supported by gifts from individuals, Sunday School classes and churches, provides monthly grants to retired Southern Baptist workers in critical financial need. The neediest couples can receive up to \$600 each month in assistance.

Mission:Dignity Sunday, held the fourth Sunday of every June on the Southern Baptist Convention's calendar, is set aside for churches to make a special offering for support of the ministry. Sixty percent of Mission:Dignity recipients are widows; one out of every four recipients is a pastor's widow age 85 or older.

Mission:Dignity receives no Cooperative Program funding.

"GuideStone was founded to serve those who gave sacrificially to spread the Word of God," GuideStone president O.S. Hawkins said.

"The very DNA of GuideStone, part of the fabric that our founder, William Lunsford, laid for us, is to care for pastors and their widows in old age. We're privileged to carry on this ministry through Mission:Dignity."

To help churches mark Mission:Dignity Sunday, GuideStone has created videos, bulletin inserts, posters, a PowerPoint slide and even sermons for use on June 28 or any Sunday. Materials are undated so churches can use the materials at a time convenient to their schedule.

Virginia Pangle said before she received help through Mission:Dignity she had to worry about being cold, hungry or going without medicine.

Churches can order materials now through June 22 for delivery in time for Mission:Dignity at MDSunday.org. Additionally, churches can request information by calling 888-98-GUIDE (888-984-8433).

John Ambra, Mission:Dignity director, said Mission:Dignity offers the opportunity for churches to live out, as noted in the book of James, care for widows in their distress.

"Some of our participants tell us that Mission:Dignity is the difference between having food, or not, having medication, or not, or having to choose between heat or eating," Ambra said.

"To come alongside these dear soldiers of the cross and serve them and, in many cases, their surviving widows is a deep blessing.

"Additionally, we're encouraging pastors and members of Southern Baptist churches to refer retired pastors or their widows who are in critical financial need to Mission:Dignity. We ask pastors to think about their pastoral predecessor or for church members to remember the pastor who helped lead them to the Lord; [the apostle] Paul reminds us that those who work in preaching and teaching are worthy of double honor.

"It is our deep calling and blessing to ensure those workers live out their declining years in dignity and honor."

For more information on Mission:Dignity, go to MissionDignitySBC.org.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – June 28 is Mission:Dignity Sunday in the Southern Baptist Convention). **BR**

'Black Hawk Down' ranger graduates from Southeastern

By ALI DIXON | SEBTS Communications

Jeff Struecker, lead pastor of Calvary Baptist Church in Columbus, Ga., and former ranger and retired chaplain for the United States Army, graduated this spring from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) with a doctor of philosophy in Christian leadership.

Struecker was one of the heroes of the Battle of Mogadishu in Somalia in 1993 – portrayed by the film *Black Hawk Down*. He was decorated for bravery above and beyond the call of duty for any ranger, special operations warrior, or soldier that resulted in saved lives. He retired from the Army after 22 years of service and received several awards, commendations and decorations throughout his career.

Struecker was drawn to SEBTS because of President Daniel Akin's passion for the gospel and desire to train spiritual

warriors to go to dangerous places.

"I am convinced that Jesus' church is desperate for great leadership today," Struecker said. "I'm equally convinced that [Southern Baptist] seminaries do a great job of educating people to be effective theologians, preachers and church historians, but I think more emphasis should be placed on leadership at the same time."

"Jeff's skills as a leader have been on full display in his superb work in our Ph.D. in Leadership program," Akin said. "It is an honor to have him as one of our graduates. As he excelled as an Army ranger, he has continued to excel as a pastor and a student at Southeastern."

Struecker views Christ as the ultimate leader. "The study of God is the study of leadership," Struecker said. "In order

for Jesus' church to confront sin and spread the gospel to the ends of the earth it will require men and women who are courageous leaders with a bold vision for God's glory. God alone can make a man or woman into the leader the church needs them to be."

Larry Purcell, associate professor of leadership and discipleship and associate dean of ministry studies, also shares a passion for leadership. "I was honored when he came to me and asked that I be his major professor," Purcell said. "We both share the experience of the military and combat."

At Purcell's request, Struecker shared his testimony from Mogadishu in class. He stated that after washing away the blood of comrades he went back into the "kill-zone" numerous times.



JEFF STRUECKER

"He seemed fearless," Purcell said. "This opened the door to many Army rangers hearing the gospel and coming to salvation after the fire fight."

Struecker holds a master of divinity degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky and undergraduate degrees from Troy University in Troy, Alabama.

He was born in Fort Dodge, Iowa and he enlisted in the United States Army as an infantryman when he was 18. His combat experience includes the invasion of Panama, Operation Desert Storm, The Battle of Mogadishu and more than a dozen combat tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. Struecker has been awarded medals for valor in combat and many others for his service in the U.S. Army.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Ali Dixon writes for the communications department of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. BR staff added to this story.) **BR**

Nathan Finn joins Union University as dean

By TIM ELLSWORTH | Union Univ. Communications

Union University has named Nathan Finn of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) as dean of the university's School of Theology and Missions.

Finn, director of the Center for Spiritual Formation and Evangelical Spirituality and associate professor of historical theology and spiritual formation at SEBTS, has taught at the seminary and held a variety of positions there since 2006.

"Nathan is a great teacher, an excellent scholar, a strong churchman, a devoted husband and father and a faithful follower of Christ," Union President Samuel W.

"Dub" Oliver said. "We are excited that he is joining us at Union and look forward to his leadership and service as we seek to advance our mission and vision."

"I love how [Union] wed[s] faithful Christian scholarship with an emphasis on practical ministry and a burden for the salvation of the lost."

— Nathan Finn

Finn will take over the position previously held by Greg Thornbury, who left Union in 2013 to become president of

The King's College in New York.

James Patterson has been the school's acting dean since then. Finn said he is thankful for Union's storied history and ongoing influence in Baptist life and the

wider evangelical world.

"I could not be more excited to be joining the Union family," Finn said. "I was shaped profoundly by my own edu-



UNION UNIVERSITY



cation at a Baptist liberal arts college. I look forward to being a part of a comprehensive university where every discipline is engaged from the perspective of the Christian worldview."

The faculty in Union's School of Theology and Missions is one of the strongest theological faculties in the nation, he added.

"I have been friends with many of them for years and have been greatly influenced by their teaching and writing in my own ministry," Finn said.

"I love how they wed faithful Christian scholarship with an emphasis on practical ministry and a burden for the salvation of the lost. I'm grateful for the chance to lead the School of Theology and Missions as we educate a rising generation of pastors, church staff, missionaries and other Christian leaders for the glory of God and the advance of his kingdom."

Danny Akin, president at SEBTS, called Finn "one of the finest church historians I have ever known" and "a wonderful churchman."

"His departure from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary is a huge loss for us and a tremendous gain for Union University," Akin said.

"I can only give my blessing to this move because in my heart I know it is good for the Kingdom work of Christ. I believe Nathan will excel at his new assignment, and he goes with my love, prayers and full support."

Finn completed his bachelor's degree from Brewton-Parker College and his master of divinity and doctor of philosophy from SEBTS. In addition to his role at SEBTS, Finn serves as an adjunct professor at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., where he teaches seminars and supervises doctoral

students in biblical spirituality.

A prolific writer and editor, Finn is co-author, along with Anthony Chute and Michael Haykin, of *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement*, which B&H Academic will release in August. This textbook offers a comprehensive narrative introduction to the Baptist tradition.

Finn edited *Help to Zion's Travellers* by Robert Hall Sr. and co-edited *Domestic Slavery: The Correspondence of Richard Fuller and Francis Wayland* and *Ministry by His Grace and for His Glory: Essays in Honor of Thomas J. Nettles*.

He has written dozens of book chapters, scholarly essays, popular articles and book reviews.

In addition to his teaching and writing ministry, Finn is an ordained Southern Baptist minister who previously served in ministry positions in several Southern Baptist churches in Georgia and North Carolina. He is an elder and member at First Baptist Church in Durham, N.C.

"Nathan Finn is a Bible man, a gospel man and a church man," Union Provost C. Ben Mitchell said.

"His passion for students, for his

discipline, for the church and for the worldwide spread of the gospel of the risen Christ will be infectious."

George Guthrie, Union's Benjamin W. Perry Professor of Bible, said he is grateful for Finn's appointment.

"Nathan loves the church, understands the academic context as a crucible for Christian discipleship and integrates a warm-hearted faith with rigorous scholarship," Guthrie said.

"The fact that he is one of our very best Baptist historians in the field today can help keep us rock-solidly grounded in our heritage while giving us crystal-clear perspective on our current challenges in the broader Baptist and evangelical life."

Finn and his wife Leah have been married since 2001. They have four children: Georgia, Baxter, Eleanor and Fuller. He will begin at Union July 1.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Tim Ellsworth is associate vice president for Union University communications.) **BR**

Are you reflecting Jesus?

Ephesians 5:1 says, "Be imitators of God as dear children."

A church growth expert recently posed this question – Does your church reflect your community? Practically speaking, this excellent question needs to be asked by most churches.

However, I believe that today Christians need to ask a more pressing question. Do we as believers and as a church reflect Jesus to our community?

If Jesus is not being reflected in our world, then our priorities are certainly out of place. The vital spiritual life of Christ is what communities need to see and experience. That is where we have gotten in trouble. We often are more concerned about how we appear to others rather than simply allowing Jesus to live through us.

We also are often consumed with the activities and actions related to our ministry plans, programs, fellowships and efforts. We work and we strive and are satisfied with what we can accomplish through our own efforts and expertise.

Ephesians 5:1 is a wake-up call to become more concerned about who we reflect rather than what we reflect.

An "imitator" of God is someone who

actually "mimics" the life and character of God. The force of this text is that this imitator is to "become," or "spring into being." It does not just happen, but takes place through the saving and sanctifying work of Christ's Spirit. It is therefore not just an outward

expression of God, but an outward expression driven by genuine and true character and is the product of God's Holy Spirit.

In order for this "mimicking" of God to take place, His Spirit must not only be present in and with us, but flowing freely through our lives and ministries. When believers

and churches focus all their energy and efforts on the doing and telling of the gospel, communities see a false image of Christ – one that is limited by what man can accomplish. I believe it's time for believers and churches to give due attention to the being of the gospel, so our world can see the real Jesus.

Who are you mimicking?

(EDITOR'S NOTE – *Chris Schofield is director of the Office of Prayer for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. For more information you can reach him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5514, or cschofield@ncbaptist.org.*)



DR. CHRIS SCHOFIELD

Brewton-Parker College names Echols president

By **PETER LUMPKINS** | BPC Communications

After a unanimous decision, chairman of the board of trustees for Brewton-Parker College (BPC), Ray Sullivan, notified the public May 19 that Steven Echols will become the seventeenth president of BPC.

“We are blessed to have Dr. Steve Echols leading Brewton-Parker College. He is a proven leader who not only understands and embraces Brewton-Parker’s mission, but also understands and embraces Georgia Baptists’ historical legacy.” Additionally, Sullivan indicated Echols’ obvious passion for seeing students transformed by the gospel. “The trustees look with anticipation to a bright future for Brewton-Parker under the capable leadership of Dr. Echols.”

The special trustee meeting was requested by the Presidential Search Committee which has been actively seeking a candidate for president since February 2015. Before the meeting began, chairperson for the search team, Lynda Yawn, appeared confident that the entire trustee body would find that Echols, presently serving as President of Tennessee Temple University in Chattanooga, Tennessee, ought to be the next president of BPC.

“We feel a strong support for him based on our prayerful approach to the entire process,” said Yawn. “Dr. Echols has shared that he feels God’s call to Brewton-Parker and is excited about the future of the college.”

The trustee body voted unanimously to extend the presidential invitation to Echols. He is no stranger to higher education in Southern Baptist life. Having earned an undergraduate degree from Mercer University, he also earned both master of divinity and a doctor of

philosophy degrees from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS).

Additionally, Echols earned a doctor of ministry degree in leadership from Beeson Divinity School in Birmingham, Ala., and completed all course work for the doctor of educational ministry degree from NOBTS.

Since January 2012, Echols has served as president of Tennessee Temple University (TTU) in Chattanooga, Tenn. where, upon becoming president, immediately

led the trustees to adopt the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as the doctrinal statement of TTU, a statement all faculty members were required to sign.

Due in large part to Echols’ convictional allegiance to Southern Baptists’ theological heritage, TTU was affirmed in a unanimous resolution of support at the Tennessee Baptist Convention in the fall of 2013.

Prior to serving as president of TTU, Echols was associate regional dean for the Alabama/Georgia NOBTS Extension Center System while simultaneously serving as professor of leadership in the Nelson L. Price Chair of Leadership.

In addition, before moving to north Georgia as dean and professor of leadership at the NOBTS extension, Echols served on the main seminary campus as director and then associate dean of the professional doctoral programs & associate professor of leadership. During this time the number of students in the two doctoral degree programs more than doubled, becoming the largest in the Southern Baptist Convention.

Trustees, denominational executives, professors, and Georgia pastors together stated their unqualified support for Echols as BPC’s new president.

Echols’ duties and responsibilities as president are effective immediately. **BR**



STEVEN ECHOLS

SOUTHERN BAPTIST BRIEFS

IMB missionary dies in Malawi

(IMB) International Mission Board (IMB) missionary Susan Sanson, 67, died of malaria in Zomba, Malawi, on May 18.

She developed a sudden onset of malaria on May 17 and began treatment. However, early the next morning her husband Billy woke to find her unresponsive. He rushed her to the hospital, but she passed away as medical staff were examining her.

“This was sudden, tragic and quite unexpected,” said Kevin Rodgers, an IMB strategy leader in Africa and a friend of the Sansons. “Susan was a unique, godly, precious child of the King, and while I know she is in His presence in perfect peace and joy, there is still a great burden of sadness that we will all have to work through in the days to come.”

The Sansons, who do not have children, moved to Malawi as IMB missionaries in 2000. Susan Sanson was involved in reaching out to, discipling and counseling university students, and also worked in Baptist churches in Zomba. Billy Sanson is a chaplain and university minister at Chancellor College in Zomba. Born in New York and raised in Ohio, Susan Sanson spent time as a young adult in Manhattan as a model and fashion magazine editor. She met Billy Sanson at the New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, where he was a doctoral student. The couple married in 1992.

Proctor retires from Alaska convention

(Baptist Press) Michael Procter is retiring effective May 2016 after more than five years as executive director/treasurer of the Alaska Baptist Convention and as executive director of the Alaska Baptist Foundation, he announced May 4.

He has held the posts since January 2011 and has served in Southern Baptist ministry for 45 years, 30 of them in Alaska. Procter will turn 66 in 2016, as well as celebrate his 40th wedding anniversary to his wife Rebecca.

Mohler receives Meese religious liberty award

(SBTS Communications) For his “significant efforts in publicly promoting and defending religious liberty,” R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, received the 2015 Edwin Meese III Originalism and Religious Liberty Award from the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), May 15.

“This award is presented to those who clearly demonstrate through their lives and callings a profound understanding and commitment to defending the original meaning of the United States Constitution and our liberty,” said Alan Sears, ADF’s president, CEO and general counsel.

The award description said: “Alliance Defending Freedom honors Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr. for his significant efforts in publicly promoting and defending religious liberty and a principled jurisprudence through the active advancement of constitutional originalism. Dr. R. Albert Mohler Jr.’s tireless efforts embody the enduring commitment to justice that is the hallmark of the American spirit, as personified by the Honorable Edwin Meese III, in whose name this award is given.”

Two-time SBC pres. nominee Winfred Moore dies

(Baptist Press) Winfred Moore, a Texas pastor and two-time moderate nominee for the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) presidency, died May 8 in Amarillo, Texas. He was 95.

Pastor of First Baptist Church in Amarillo from 1959-89, Moore was defeated in SBC presidential elections in 1985 by Charles Stanley and 1986 by Adrian Rogers during conservatives’ battle to gain control of SBC entity trustee boards. Before pastoring in Amarillo, Moore served congregations in Mississippi, Alabama and Texas. Following his retirement from the pastorate in 1989, he taught religion at Baylor University.

Will Hall to lead Louisiana’s Baptist newsjournal

(Baptist Message) By unanimous vote, trustees of the *Baptist Message*, newsjournal of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, elected Will Hall as editor of the state newspaper and digital media outlet.

David Hankins, executive director of the Louisiana Baptist Convention, also named Hall director of the office of public affairs for the state convention. Hall most recently was executive editor and director of operations for the Christian Examiner, which launched October 2014. He previously served 10 years as vice president for news services with the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.

Hall retired as a naval aviator in 1998 and holds a bachelor’s degree from the United States Naval Academy; master’s degrees from George Washington University and Harvard University; and a doctorate from Vanderbilt University.

He and his wife Catherine have three sons.

Full stories available online at BRnow.org.

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WHY I STILL BELIEVE IN THE COOPERATIVE PROGRAM

[RELIABLE]

by Dr. Leo A. Endel
Executive-Director
Minnesota-Wisconsin Baptist Convention

I learned a valuable lesson one Sunday night in 1975 at the Clark Field Baptist Church in Angeles City, Philippines. We collected a special offering for a non-denominational missionary family who had lost the funding support of one of their key U.S. churches. They didn't have enough money to stay in the Philippines nor to fly home to raise more support. In the days afterward I asked questions about why we had never taken up an emergency offering for one of our Southern Baptist missionaries.

Every week Southern Baptist churches choose to set aside a percentage of their general offerings to support missions through the Cooperative Program. This channel of missionary funding fuels Acts 1:8 missions through state conventions and SBC missions causes, including six seminaries, the North American Mission Board, the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission and the International Mission Board.

Forty-five thousand churches keep a steady stream of funding that is predictable and efficient. A church of 20 or a church of 20,000 regular attendees can easily and proportionately participate in Great Commission giving that has a world impact. A young boy or girl can give a nickel, and it touches the world. Churches, state conventions and national entities can make strategic missions plans based on regular, predictable giving rather than relying on sporadic or emotionally laden pleas for money.

The apostle Paul, in his great missionary offering for the Jerusalem saints, (see Acts 24:17; Romans 15:25-28; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8-9) challenged the church to give weekly toward the missionary cause, "On the first day of the week, each of you is to set something aside and save in keeping with how he prospers, so that no collections will need to be made when I come" (1 Corinthians 16:2).

Paul's biblical, weekly, proportional missionary giving method is a foundational strength of the Cooperative Program.



COOPERATIVE PROGRAM
How North Carolina Baptists Support Missions

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NCBAM takes AAIM at senior adults' God-given talents

By CAROL LAYTON | NCBAM Communications

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) hosted the inaugural Aging Adults Innovating Ministry (AAIM) event on May 7 in Thomasville. AAIM is a network of church staff and lay leaders with the ongoing mission to promote, equip and strengthen aging adult (senior adult) ministries across the state.

Dubbed the "AAIM Roundup," the conference provided a fast-paced day of information and inspiration to more than 70 senior adult leaders. Michael C. Blackwell, president of Baptist Children's Homes and NCBAM founder, said, "It was a great kick-off for the AAIM network. AAIM will be an innovative and much-needed resource for aging adult ministries in North Carolina."

AAIM leaders were announced at the event. Stan Heiser, associate senior pastor at Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church, will serve as chair; Norma Melton of Buncombe Baptist Association will serve as vice-chair; Barbara Blood, senior adult leader at First Baptist Church Mt. Airy, will serve as secretary.

Regional team leaders include Glenn Davenport, chaplain for Cleveland Regional Medical Center and Shelby Police Department (west region); Christa Warise, minister of senior adults at College Park Baptist Winston-Salem (central region); and Phyllis Crane, senior adult minister at First Baptist Church in Clayton (east region). Three keynote speakers presented on "Vision, Value, and Varoom" in aging adult ministry. Sandy Gregory, director of NCBAM, led the day sharing his vision for the church to take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities of the "age wave."

Stan Heiser believes churches will miss the boat if they don't tap into the passion and potential of aging adults. "Baby boomers, who have always changed the world, will continue to do

so as they change the way our culture relates to them. They will not do 'old' like previous generations. They want to be involved in long-range planning; they want to continue to grow and use their God-given talents."

Blackwell closed the program with a call to action for aging adult leaders to take advantage of the unprecedented opportunities for outreach and evangelism that the coming age wave will provide. His marching orders: "Take with you a gritty spirit of persistence. Know that God has His hand on your shoulder and will speak to you as you serve."

Two community representatives spoke on the importance of bringing health and safety information to aging adults. Linda Hunt from Novant Health encouraged leaders to connect with partners who can inform their senior groups about topics such as healthy living, safe driving, financial security and how to dialogue about aging issues with their children.

Kelly Ransdell with the National Fire Protection Association discussed partnering with local officials in safety programs such as fall and fire-prevention, smoke alarm installation trainings, pill take-backs and NCBAM's Red Bag program – a tool for medication management.

A panel discussion was facilitated by AAIM coordinator Jim Edminson. The four panelists were: Sharon Chilton Moser (volunteer opportunities with Baptist Men), Jack Causey (Christian spirituality), Gail Engle (fitness programs for seniors), and Dennis Streets (social service community partnerships).

Christa Warise led hymn singing with Randy Stewart on keyboard. Kristin Boyle sang and provided entertainment on her acoustic guitar. Another statewide roundup is slated for May 5, 2016, in Thomasville.

Regional leaders will hold AAIM gatherings as follows: Central region, Sept. 15 in Thomasville; East region, Sept. 15 in Clayton; and West region, Sept. 22 in Asheville. **BR**



AAIM
Aging Adults Innovating Ministry

Lecrae's *Unashamed* to be published by B&H

Baptist Press

Grammy Award winning hip-hop artist Lecrae has signed a book deal with B&H Publishing Group of LifeWay Christian Resources.

Releasing in May 2016, the book will be titled *Unashamed* and will discuss details of his difficult past, including childhood abuse, struggles with drugs

and alcoholism, bouts of depression and a suicide attempt.

The book will tell Lecrae's story of staying faithful in a world that is increasingly faithless. "I want to be honest about where I've come from and what I've learned along the way," Lecrae said. "I want to influence culture, to help catalyze and inspire, and help other people find understanding." **BR**



Celebrating an 800-year legacy of democracy and liberty

By **LIBBY DONALDSON** | Baptist Press

June 15 marks the 800th anniversary of King John's seal on the Magna Carta, one of the most significant documents in the history of democracy.

While only three of the Magna Carta's original clauses are still a part of British law, this canon was foundational in shaping today's human rights and personal freedoms, including the freedom to practice religion.

In the U.S., it paved the way for multiple governing documents, including the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. For instance, the Fifth Amendment – “Nor shall any persons be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law” – sounds much like the Magna Carta's 39th clause.

In 13th-century England, King John wasn't the most popular ruler. His frivolous spending and lack of concern for his people led to heavy taxation. Upset by his selfish monarchical style, unsatisfied barons demanded something be done. Along with several bishops, they drafted 63 clauses that helped rein in King John, claiming all free men – even the monarch – were subject to the law. In 1215, at Runnymede, England, King John placed his seal of approval on the document that has forever shaped the relationship between governing powers and free men in democratic societies.

Translated from its original Latin, the Magna Carta (Great Charter) states, “No free man shall be seized or imprisoned, or stripped of his rights or possessions, or outlawed or exiled, or deprived of his standing in any other way, nor will we proceed with force against him, or send others to do so, except by the lawful judgment of his equals or by the law of the land. To no one will we sell, to no one deny or delay right or justice.” Applied, it meant every free man had the right to a trial by a jury of his peers.

Rebecca Jones, a high school history teacher in North Carolina, says that while Americans may not hear about the Magna Carta as much as the U.S. Constitution or the Bill of Rights, it is just as valuable.

“The Magna Carta is one of those old, dusty documents that my students are always really frustrated that they have to learn about because ‘it doesn't apply to me,’” Jones said. “However, I think that we have to understand that this document is just as important to the foundation of the American political system as our own documents are.

“Those ideas of limiting that power of the king would in turn influence the writing of America's own founding government. It was also one of the first times in European history that we see a limit on absolute monarchy, something that wouldn't happen in France until the revolution in 1789 or in Russia until 1918,” Jones said. “It's very important for me to show my students the progression of representative government throughout world history, and eventually to how it would influence our own.”

Mark Durfee agrees. The U.S. history teacher in Texas says the Magna Carta was the “foundational

influence” that led to the English Bill of Rights of 1689. In North America, it largely impacted the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1619, the Mayflower Compact in 1620, the Fundamental Orders of Connecticut in 1639 – “the first written constitution in English Colonial America” – the Declaration of Independence in 1776 and the Articles of Confederation in 1777. This all led up to the drafting, signing and ratification of the U.S. Constitution in 1787 and 1788 and the Bill of Rights in 1789 and 1791.

Anniversary celebrations in the United States occurred as early as November 2014. The Library of Congress hosted a copy of the Magna Carta for 10 weeks, along with other documents that depicted “how a number of the most basic principles of the U.S. Constitution – consent of the governed, the right to a trial by jury, the right to due process of law, freedom from unlawful imprisonment and limited government under the law – can be traced to Magna Carta,” according to the Library of Congress website.

The American Bar Association will be hosting 600 to 800 U.S. lawyers to commemorate the anniversary at the monument the ABA erected at Runnymede in 1957. Queen Elizabeth II also will make her way to the location where the Magna Carta was born.

The British Library exhibition “Magna Carta: Law, Liberty, Legacy” is open to the public through Sept. 1 and showcases two of the four existing original copies of the document from King John's reign.

Worth praying about

- Pray for global, national and local government leaders as they make decisions about rights and freedoms.
- Ask God to bring freedom to those who are oppressed by their own governments.
- Thank God for reigning with both justice and grace.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Libby Donaldson is a writer for the London Bureau of Baptist Press.) **BP**



The British Library brought together the four existing original Magna Carta manuscripts from King John's reign for the first time during a three-day “unification event” earlier this year. Photo by Clare Kendall for British Library

CALVARY CALGARY

Population growth fuels church planting need in Calgary

By **TOBIN PERRY** | NAMB

Pastors beware. Go on a mission trip to Calgary, and you may be there for life. That's what happened to Brett Myers, who had been pastoring Corinth Baptist Church in Westminster, S.C., for two and a half years, when he arrived on a mission trip in the summer of 2012.

"I was just broken by the need in the city," Myers said.

To Myers' surprise, the need for new churches in the city was more tangible than he had thought.

As he made plans for his church's next mission trip to the city the following year, he told Pastor Bo Neal, who leads the local Calgary church with whom Myers had been partnering, about his family's growing call to church planting. Neal then told Myers that the manager of a nearby homeowners association had come to him recently to ask him to start a new church in her new community.

"So now, for three weeks, we've been praying God would send us a church planter," Neal told Myers.

After much prayer and a visit to the city a few months later, Myers and his family arrived in the spring of 2014 and began making plans to start Southwinds Church Mahogany.

But with only one Canadian National Baptist Convention (CNBC) church for every 53,627 people in the city, Calgary needs more than just one new church. And the churches that are in the city are small. According to Bob Shelton, the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Send North America: Calgary city missionary, the 27 CNBC churches in Calgary have a total of 1,850 people in them.

"It's tough to wrap your mind around the differences in ministry in a city where so many people have such little exposure to the gospel," said Myers, who is currently a NAMB church planting apprentice in Calgary.

"In South Carolina – not to say there's not a need for more churches there or anything like that – but when you talk to someone they have some kind of basis for

understanding of the gospel. Here, a lot of times, there's not."

Calgary and Edmonton, both NAMB Send North America cities, are the two largest cities in the Canadian province of Alberta. Calgary has more than 1.2 million people. According to the Calgary Herald in 2012, the city had the highest population growth in Canada over the previous 10 years. Much of that growth has come from an expanding oil and gas industry.

Housing is popping up throughout the city.

Myers notes that the community where he is planting, named Mahogany, currently has about 3,000 residents but will include more than 40,000 residents by the time it's done.

Because they are typically built to be self-contained, with all the shopping, educational and cultural needs met within the community itself, many of these communities will include opportunities for new churches to be started.

Shelton believes the biggest limiting factor in pushing back lostness in Calgary isn't the responsiveness of the residents but the lack of church planters in the city. The city needs church planters who will come to the city and stay.

"Particularly when people come here from the states, it is hard slugging here,"

Shelton said. "The ground is hard here spiritually, but it's also very cold here. There are several months of the year when it is brutally cold.

"You have to be a hearty soul to 'weather' the weather. You also have to persevere here because it takes times to build those relationships. It takes time to build trust. You've got to stay here long enough to share the gospel and see some of the fruit of your labor."

To help bring more laborers to the Calgary harvest fields, Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem, N.C., has agreed to become the lead partner for Send North America: Calgary.

As a lead partner, Calvary Baptist is making plans to send a church planter to the city, supporting church planters who are already there, mobilizing its congregation to serve existing planters with mission teams and networking among other churches to get more resources and people to Calgary. Last year the church sent two interns to help church plants in the city. This year they hope to send as many as five.

The church is actively recruiting a church planter who might come to Winston-Salem for three to six months to gather a core team to plant in Calgary.

Mark Gilbert, a lay leader at the

church who leads the efforts with Calgary, noted that Calvary Baptist has nearly twice as many people in its worship services as in all the CNBC churches in Calgary each weekend.

"The people are super-friendly, super-engaging, but their frame of reference of Christianity is lost," said Gilbert. "Some of the planters will tell you that kids come to their community events where they talk about the Bible, and they'll have kids who have never heard of Jesus and never seen a Bible."

Myers says for his church plant and other planters in the city to have a spiritual impact on the level of lostness among them, they need the support of others. In addition to the need of resources and prayers from Southern Baptists, he pointed to a significant need of volunteer teams in the summer to conduct camps and other outreach efforts.

Those efforts, Myers says, will go toward planting multiple churches in the Calgary area.

"God has told us in the Great Commission, He has told us in Acts 1:8, to go and make disciples," Myers said. "Our vision is to plant new churches in new communities all around this city."

Learn more about Send North America: Calgary at namb.net/Calgary. **BN**



One of the many ways to help plant a church involves engaging with the community, which includes hosting events to reach the church's neighbors.

Americans prefer ‘pro-choice’ label

By **DAVID GIBSON** | Religion News Service

Despite Americans’ shifting opinions on a range of moral and ethical issues, abortion foes have been encouraged by numbers showing that opposition to abortion rights appeared to have resisted serious slippage, and was even gaining traction.

But a Gallup poll released May 29 shows that may be changing: 50 percent of all Americans now identify as “pro-choice,” the first statistically significant lead over the “pro-life” label, which came in at 44 percent, since 2008.

The data suggest this could signal an end to the seesaw battle that has characterized opinions on abortion over the past few years.

“The pro-choice view is not as prevalent among Americans as it was in the mid-1990s, but the momentum for the pro-life position that began when Barack Obama took office has yielded to a pro-choice rebound,” Gallup’s Lydia Saad wrote in an analysis of the figures, which

Battle Continued from page 1

Additional provisions designate that ownership of the property would revert back to BSC in the event that CCSC dissolves. Should the center ever choose to sell the Battle House, BSC must be given the first opportunity to repurchase the property.

Additionally, BSC will have the authority to appoint a representative to CCSC’s board of directors.

BSC Executive Director-Treasurer Milton Hollifield said the center “is committed to engaging the academic community with the gospel,” and complements the convention’s approach to collegiate ministry.

“We’re excited to see this as a great complement to our new strategy for collegiate ministry that focuses on assisting churches to impact lostness among one of the largest unreached people groups in North Carolina, which is college students,” Hollifield said.

Hollifield said CCSC will be modeled after the L’Abri communities, founded by the late Christian theologian, philosopher and apologist Francis Schaeffer and his wife, Edith, in Switzerland in the 1950s. L’Abri communities still exist in many places around the world and serve as a place where individuals can gather to ask questions and seek answers about the claims of Christianity and the impact it should have on one’s life.

Named for former UNC-Chapel Hill president Kemp P. Battle, the Battle House was originally purchased by BSC

are from a survey conducted in early May.

“That rebound has essentially restored views to where they were in 2008; today’s views are also similar to those found in 2001,” she said.

A Vox poll taken earlier this year also found that more Americans identified as “pro-choice” (32 percent) rather than “pro-life” (26 percent).

But it also found that 39 percent – a plurality – reject the labels, with 21 percent identifying as neither and 18 percent identifying as both.

Results from a May 26 Gallup survey on Americans’ shifting attitudes on a range of hot-button issues showed a uniformly leftward march since 2001, especially on gay and lesbian acceptance.

But those who viewed abortion as “morally acceptable” increased only 3 percent over that period, to 45 percent. An equal number said it was morally wrong.

Gallup noted in its analysis that it does not define the “pro-choice” and “pro-life” terms for respondents. **BR**

in 1964 for \$102,500. The property, which is adjacent to the university’s main campus and located in the historic district of Chapel Hill, has undergone significant renovations and improvements while serving as a base for Baptist campus ministry at the university for 50 years.

CCSC first approached BSC leadership about purchasing the Battle House in early 2014, several months after the convention implemented its new approach to collegiate ministry.

The BSC board of directors has previously voted to sell or transfer ownerships of other campus ministry properties owned by the convention.

Properties at East Carolina University and UNC-Asheville were both sold during the past year, and the property at UNC-Pembroke was transferred to the Burnt Swamp Baptist Association.

Hollifield praised the work of the business services special committee, the convention’s board and BSC leadership for their work over the past year in determining the best use of the Battle House property.

Hollifield added that he is thankful and encouraged that CCSC will continue to use the Battle House as place for ministry.

“Some of our former Baptist students at UNC-Chapel Hill who had been active in our BSU work felt this would be a great and very beneficial ministry for that campus,” Hollifield said.

Visit ncstudycenter.org. **BR**

NATION BRIEFS

Graham targets Supreme Court justices online

(Religion News Service) Evangelist Franklin Graham, president of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and Samaritan’s Purse, has taken to Facebook to plead for prayers on behalf of each U.S. Supreme Court justices as they prepare to rule on gay marriage. Recognizing same-sex marriage as a constitutional right “would be a wicked, wicked thing,” said Graham, son of the iconic preacher Billy Graham. “The only hope we have is prayer.”

“Imagine tens and tens and tens of thousands of Americans praying for God to hear their prayers and to change the hearts of these justices. God just might do that.”

So far, Graham has posted prayers for seven of the justices on his Facebook page, which has 1.4 million “likes.” He plans to do two more in the coming days, covering all nine justices, both those who may rule for and those who are against same-sex marriage. The Supreme Court is expected to decide before the end of June. Many court observers believe the court is poised, if not to declare the constitutionality of gay marriage, then at least to require states to recognize gay marriages established in states where it is legal.

Jindal signs executive order for religious liberty

(Baptist Message) Hours after a religious freedom bill was struck down in committee May 20, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal quickly signed an executive order that afternoon which appeared to capture the intent and much of the language of the Louisiana Marriage and Conscience Act.

“[T]he state should not be able to take adverse action against a person for their belief in traditional marriage,” read a statement issued from the governor’s office. “That’s why I’m issuing an Executive Order this evening to prevent the state from discriminating against people, charities and family-owned businesses with deeply held religious beliefs that marriage is between one man and one woman.”

The executive order means the 20 agencies that fall under the executive branch, including the Department of Revenue, Insurance, Transportation and Development and Health and Hospitals, must abide by the rules set forth in it. The bill (HB 707) was designed to block the government from pulling licenses, tax benefits, and the like from a company because of the owner’s view of same-sex marriage. The sponsor of the legislation, State Rep. Mike Johnson, R-Bossier City, said Jindal’s executive order reflects parts of an amended version of his bill.

Duggar series pulled, Josh resigns FRC

(Baptist Press) TLC has pulled the hit series “19 Kids and Counting” in response to media reports alleging Josh Duggar, the 27-year-old son of Jim Bob and Michelle Duggar, sexually molested five underage girls when he was a teen.

Duggar, now married with three children of his own, also resigned his position as a lobbyist with the Family Research Council (FRC) family values group. In a May 21 *People.com* story posted on the family’s blog, he apologized for the sin after allegations surfaced. “Twelve years ago, as a young teenager, I acted inexcusably, for which I am extremely sorry and deeply regret. I hurt others, including my family and close friends,” Josh said in the blogpost. “I confessed this to my parents, who took several steps to help me address the situation.”

His parents reported the incident to police 12 years ago, but no charges were ever filed, the *Washington Post* reported.

Gates: Boy Scouts should allow gay leaders

(Baptist Press) The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) should end its ban on gay adult leaders, BSA President Robert Gates said May 21, lending credence to the concern expressed in a 2013 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) resolution that opening the group’s membership to homosexual youth was “merely the first step toward future approval of homosexual adult leaders in the Scouts.”

A policy allowing gay Scout leaders “was a matter of time,” said Ernest Easley, who was chairman of the SBC Executive Committee (EC) in 2013. “Back when they changed their thinking regarding the boys themselves, I knew that within a year or so they would reverse their stand with the leadership. And frankly, I think it was the plan to begin with: Start with the kids. We get that done. Then we come back later with the adults.”

Gates, a former CIA director and U.S. secretary of defense, told attendees of the BSA annual meeting in Atlanta he is not asking the national board to change the leadership policy immediately. But he said the Scouts must voluntarily accept gay leaders before a court forces them to do so. “Between internal challenges and potential legal conflicts, the BSA finds itself in an unsustainable position,” Gates said.

Full stories available online at BRnow.org.

Board Continued from page 1

BSC executive committee to consider making additional contributions to the scholarship endowment from some existing reserve funds managed by the convention. The executive committee will consider that request at a future meeting.

The board's vote also included a measure that makes financial need a factor in allocating scholarship funds. Gordon Benton, chairman of the Christian Higher Education Special Committee, said making the scholarship a competitive, needs-based award was an important consideration for the committee.

Benton said that while the changes may mean that fewer total scholarships will be awarded, the scholarships that are awarded will be for a higher dollar amount.

Funds allocated for scholarships through the convention's CP budget have decreased each year since 2009 as the overall convention budget has also decreased, Benton noted.

Those decreases led convention and foundation leaders to appoint a special higher education subcommittee in January to explore options for changing the way scholarships are funded and administered.

Officials said funding the scholarships through the foundation's endowment instead of the BSC budget means more funds will be available for scholarships. The number and amount of scholarships awarded are expected to grow as the endowment increases. Individuals, churches and businesses can also make contributions to the scholarship endowment.

Applicants should check NCBF's website (ncbaptistfoundation.org) this fall for instructions and deadlines. Applications should be submitted in the fall of 2015. Students will be notified of scholarship decisions in the spring of 2016, prior to their college enrollment in the fall of 2016. Scholarships will be awarded to full-time, undergraduate and graduate students attending one of the five affiliated Baptist institutions in North Carolina. They include: Campbell University, Chowan University, Gardner-Webb University, Mars Hill University and Wingate University. In addition, students attending Meredith College will be eligible for scholarships in compliance with the original terms of the Luther H. Butler Student Loan Fund.

Miscellaneous actions

In other actions the board approved a motion to allow the convention to transfer \$68,479 to a contingency reserve fund. The funds to be transferred represent 20 percent of a \$342,494 surplus in the 2014 operations budget.

Another motion was approved to change the dates for the 2017 annual meeting from Nov. 13-14, 2017 to Nov. 6-7, 2017. Convention bylaws stipulate that the BSC annual meeting will begin on the first Monday following the second Sunday in November; however, a scheduling conflict with the host facility necessitated the change.

Giving trends show increase

Beverly Volz, director of accounting services, reported to the board that through April 30, funds received through CP giving totaled approximately \$9.39 million, which is up more than 5 percent over the same time period last year. Additionally, giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions



Milton Hollifield, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina executive director-treasurer, speaks during the dedication of Hollifield Hall at Caraway Conference Center. (BSC photo by K Brown)

and the North Carolina Missions Offerings are also up over the same time period last year.

Based on giving trends, Tony Honeycutt, chair of the Budget Special Committee, said the committee is considering a proposal that would increase the BSC's 2016 CP budget by \$500,000. If approved, that will be the first budget increase since 2009 and will bring the budget up from \$29 million this year to \$29.5 million next year.

Honeycutt also said the committee is considering increasing BSC's budget allocation to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) by three percent. The increase will bring N.C. Baptists' total contribution to the SBC from 37 percent up to 40 percent, providing about \$1 million more for CP missions support.

The committee will present its budget proposal to the BSC's executive committee in July before it is presented to the full board in September. The final budget recommendation will be discussed and voted on by the messengers during the annual meeting in Greensboro, Nov. 2-3, 2015.

During the executive director-treasurer's report, Milton Hollifield said N.C. Baptists are making "significant progress" in Kingdom advancement through the convention's disciple-making strategy to impact lostness in the state.

Citing high attendance figures at the One Story disciple-making conference in February and the May 2 One Day training event, Hollifield said more pastors are asking the question, "How do I lead my people to make disciples?"

"We have undoubtedly gained momentum in the areas of disciple-making and church strengthening over the last year," Hollifield said.

"We are leading the way in an important conversation that is about more than growing the institution of the church, but about the people of the church growing to become disciples who will share the gospel with others and make disciples."

Hollifield Hall dedicated

The meeting was the first to be held in Hollifield Hall, Caraway's newest facility. Named in honor of the late Wyndolyn Royster Hollifield, who was a generous supporter of Baptist causes throughout her life, Hollifield Hall was officially dedicated on May 19.

The 7,000-square-foot, \$1.3 million facility features auditorium and meeting space that accommodates up to 300 guests.

Hollifield said the new facility will support the strategy of impacting lostness through disciple-making, adding that numerous individuals who have attended an event at Caraway have come to faith in Christ or answered a call to ministry.

"We are here today to dedicate this facility to God's glory," Hollifield said. "We celebrate what God has done in the past, what He is doing in the present and what He is going to do in the future in this facility."

Warf recalled how Wyndolyn Hollifield and her husband gave generously to Baptist causes throughout their lives. She was a longtime member of First Baptist Church in Winston-Salem and served on the board of directors for Gardner-Webb University from 1992-95.

"Wyndolyn and her husband, Hughy, were models in Christian stewardship," Warf said. "They lived simply, but they gave abundantly."

Hollifield Hall features state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment and can be configured in theater-style seating or classroom-style seating. Each year, Caraway welcomes more than 21,000 guests to its facility near Asheboro for conferences and retreats.

The Hollifields provided generous gifts to North Carolina Baptist institutions and agencies over the years. One of those gifts established the Hollifield Leadership Center on Lake Hickory near Conover in 2000.

BSC sold Hollifield Leadership Center to the North Carolina Boy's Academy, a division of Teen Challenge, in late 2013. Proceeds from the sale helped fund the construction of Hollifield Hall.

Additional infrastructure upgrades were also made to accommodate the new building and to prepare for future facilities at Caraway.

The facility is the third building project in the past three years. Plans are already underway to expand Caraway even more.

Don Warren, chairman of Caraway's New Beginnings Capital Campaign, said fundraising is ongoing for the next two facilities at Caraway – a new multipurpose recreation building and a new housing unit. The new stand-alone housing unit will include between 16 and 24 hotel-style guest bedrooms.

The recreation building and housing unit represent the only two remaining goals from the original list of 25 objectives that were part of Caraway's capital campaign when it commenced, Warren said.

"You will never receive a greater return on investment than an investment in Caraway," Warren said. "Our prayer of dedication is that all of the activities that take place here will point everyone to the cross."

The addition of Hollifield Hall and the new facilities that are planned aren't just about expanding Caraway's facilities and capacity to serve more guests, said Caraway's director, Jimmy Huffman.

"It's not just about bricks and mortar," Huffman said. "It's about changed lives."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Compiled by Seth Brown, Biblical Recorder content editor.) **BR**



CLAY WARF

SBC to equip women, exhibit missions; Traylor named speaker

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

The 2015 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting will feature for the first time the Women's Leadership Breakfast sponsored by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS). The meeting is scheduled for June 17, 7-8:15 a.m. in the Harrison Room of the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Columbus, Ohio. The purpose is to equip women for godly leadership.

Panelists will discuss a range of topics related to women in leadership, such as leadership development for ministry wives, theological education and navigating the secular workplace, among others.

The panelists include moderator Lizette Beard, project manager at LifeWay Research; Denise O'Donoghue, director of Women's Life at SEBTS; Elicia Horton, wife of D.A. Horton, National Coordinator of Urban Student Missions at NAMB; Kathy Litton, national director of Ministry to Pastors' Wives at NAMB; and Selma Wilson, vice president of organizational development at LifeWay Christian Resources.

"We are seeking to bring women of the SBC together," said Amy Whitfield, director of communications at SEBTS, "and host a conversation that focuses on the importance of equipping women for leadership wherever they are going. We're fortunate to have women among our churches and entities who are stewarding this gift well and modeling how to wisely develop and use it for the kingdom in any season of life. This provides an opportunity to hear them share their knowledge and help think through this important topic."

Register online at sebts.edu.

Missions partnership on display

The Cooperative Program (CP) exhibit at the annual meeting will reflect the CP's partnership with the North American and International mission boards, said Ashley Clayton, SBC Executive Committee (EC) vice president for Cooperative Program and Stewardship.

The exhibit will feature a diverse group of speakers including SBC leaders, missionaries, church planters and pastors focused on topics and issues relevant and timely to SBC life, but the schedule will be designed to alleviate competition with programming in the main convention hall.

Building on the success of previous annual meeting exhibits, the CP platform area will look more like a television studio than a formal stage. Interviews and panel discussions will be live-streamed and most presentations will be captured as video for posting on national and state convention websites following the annual meeting.



Messengers and their families visit the Skybridge exhibit at the Baltimore Convention Center during the 2014 Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting. (BP file photo)

The exhibit will present components of the Great Commission Advance, an initiative to increase missions involvement among individuals and churches, which EC president Frank Page will address during his report June 17.

A complete schedule of CP exhibit interviews will be available on the SBC Annual Meeting app, as well as in the daily program. The app is available for Apple and Android mobile devices.

Traylor named as conference speaker

Ted Traylor, pastor of Olive Baptist Church in Pensacola, Fla., has been named as one of the speakers for the 2015 SBC Pastors' Conference, according to the event's website. He has served as the pastor of Olive Baptist Church for 25 years, and also as the president

of the 2004 Pastors' Conference, first vice-president of the SBC in 2000 and president of the Florida Baptist Convention in 1995.

Traylor replaces Ben Carson as one of the conference speakers. Carson withdrew from the list of speakers after his invitation stirred controversy among Southern Baptists due to his political attachments as a 2016 Republican presidential candidate and his theological convictions as a Seventh Day Adventist.

Traylor is scheduled to speak during the June 14 evening session.

Visit sbpc.net. **BR**



TED TRAYLOR



Southern Baptist Convention information

If you want to keep tabs on the Southern Baptist Convention, visit sbcanualmeeting.net and BRnow.org for information about how to watch a live stream of sessions as well as the latest news from the meeting. There will be tweets from [@biblicalrecorder](https://twitter.com/biblicalrecorder) and [@BRnow](https://twitter.com/BRnow). If you are going to be a messenger from your North Carolina church, please let the *Biblical Recorder* know (editor@BRnow.org) and keep us informed of your feedback before, during and after the meeting. The preferred social media hashtag for this year's event is [#sbc2015](https://twitter.com/sbc2015).

**Where else
will N.C.
Baptists be
during
the SBC
June 15-17?**

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary alumni lunch

Where: Hyatt Regency Ballroom,
Level 3, on Wednesday from
noon until 2 p.m.
Who: Danny Akin, D.A. Horton,
Chuck Quarles & Ed Stetzer
Cost: \$15 per person

B21 panel

Where: Greater Columbus Con-
vention Center, Terrace Ballroom
5 on Tuesday during annual
meeting lunch break
Who: Danny Akin, H.B. Charles
Jr., Al Mohler, Russell Moore,
David Platt.
Cost: \$15 per person

SEND North America lunch

Where: Greater Columbus Con-
vention Center, Batelle Grand
Ballroom, level 3
Who: Kevin Ezell and David Platt
When: Monday at noon
Cost: Free

Historic floods draw Baptist relief efforts

By JONI HANNIGAN | NAMB/Baptist Press

Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC) disaster relief leaders had “boots on the ground” in Houston May 28 following a month of historic rains and tornadoes across Texas and Oklahoma that led to deadly flooding over Memorial Day weekend with at least 15 dead and hundreds evacuated.

While images of separated families in raging waters, floating cars, submerged intersections and uprooted caskets caught the nation’s attention and caused an outpouring of concern, Fritz Wilson, executive director for Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBD) at the North American Mission Board (NAMB), said it is each individual’s unique situation that becomes the focus of a volunteer’s effort.

Every team sent out by SBD – the largest network of trained disaster relief volunteers in the United States – brings “help, healing and hope” to those affected by natural events, Wilson said.

“We are there to walk with them through cleaning and when they are beginning to try and get a handle on things so they can rebuild,” Wilson said. “Our folks are trained in how to provide not only physical needs, but also provide emotional and spiritual care in a disaster setting.”

Volunteers ready

In Houston, Scottie Stice, director of Disaster Relief Ministries for the SBTC, said leaders are busy assessing needs

AROUND THE STATE

Staff change

Oakhurst Baptist Church, Asheboro, has called **KEITH HUDSON** as pastor. Previously Hudson served at Riverview Baptist Church, Washington.

Anniversary

MOUNT OLIVET BAPTIST CHURCH, Franklinton, celebrated its 150th year anniversary April 26.

Former pastor Roy Cantrell (1957-60) was guest speaker. His wife, Linda, formed a youth choir during those years, and that former choir brought part of the music for the anniversary, along with other groups and solos. A history of the church was read and a “Through the Years” video was shown. Members and guests enjoyed a catered lunch following the service. Carl E. Hunter has been pastor of Mount Olivet for 24 years.



James King, left, Richard Brown and David Matlock, disaster relief volunteers with the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma, remove floorboards and sheetrock from one of many flooded homes throughout the state. Oklahoma and Texas have been deluged with record rainfall in recent weeks, resulting in historic flooding. (Photo courtesy Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma Disaster Relief)

after storms over the Memorial Day weekend dumped six to 11 inches of rain.

“We want to see exactly which neighborhoods are under water and where they are in the city so that we can formulate our response,” Stice said, noting volunteers must wait until waters recede before they can begin to help.

Houston’s mayor on May 26 said there were at least 4,000 homes and businesses affected by floodwaters. More water was expected.

Texas Baptist Men also has volunteers on the ground in Houston assessing the situation and working with churches, said Terry Henderson, the organization’s director. He anticipates the Houston response will be long and protracted.

Massive flooding in Oklahoma

Sam Porter, state director of disaster relief for the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma (BGCO), said this has been an unusual and record year in many

ways for the state. A record 25-30 small tornadoes spotted across Oklahoma were followed by two major tornadoes in Moore, Okla., in March, and then a massive amount of rain in May. “We had been praying for the drought to break – we now have snorkels up,” he said.

In the past 10 days, Porter said the same system that overwhelmed Texas also impacted Oklahoma. With a command center set up at First Baptist Church in Norman, Okla., Porter said volunteers are spreading out to meet tremendous needs with homes flooded in 38 of the state’s 77 counties.

With only two mud-out trailers to help, Porter said his greatest challenge has been to think about how to approach the situation. “This thing is getting to biblical proportions,” Porter said. “We are having floods everywhere. There are not enough mud-out guys across the Southern Baptist Convention to handle this.”

So he prayed, and by May 24, came up with a plan to hold training sessions in order to multiply the laborers – by inviting leaders and volunteers from other faith-based groups and residents. The training is being held regionally across the state by expertly-trained recovery instructors and there is no charge for those who want to attend, Porter said.

He also brought BGCO leaders on board to film a 30-minute instructional video to post on its website with steps on how to remove water and “wet stuff” and “kill the mold” in order to salvage a home. “I’m trying to think God-sized here,” Porter said.

At NAMB, Wilson said he has heard from many Southern Baptists who wondered how they could help. In addition to urging prayer, NAMB sent out a semi-truck loaded down with supplies specifically needed for mud-out operations.

“Coordinating this response through our disaster response center for the body of Christ is really what makes the ministry to the one family, through the team happen,” he said.

Dozens of facemasks, shovels, rakes, wheelbarrows, water, disposable suits and other equipment left NAMB headquarters early May 28.

In addition to mud-out operations in Norman, a mobile feeding unit began feeding 2,500 a day May 23. Another unit in Poteau is producing 750 hot meals a day. Other volunteers are working across the state in Atoka, the Tulsa area, Waurika, Lawton and Elk City.

At the end of the day, it’s the recent memory of 21 people who accepted Christ in the middle of their flooded or tornado-torn homes that keeps Porter going.

“We do this because we love God,” he said. “We do disaster relief to earn the right to share the gospel.”

Baptists across Texas

With “very strange” weather patterns across the Texas plains in May, Stice said its SBTC disaster relief ministry teams have been hard at work primarily in North Texas already – before the most recent severe thunderstorms hit.

When a wall of water forced rivers in Wimberly to rise to nearly 40 feet – 20 feet over what historians call the 500 year flood mark – Stice said he began to focus energy on asking volunteers to do whatever they could.

Flash floods there destroyed more than 350 homes and left up to 1,000 homeless, news reports have said.

“We were in 11 different places in May,” he said. SBTC disaster relief ministry teams are equipped for various operations including feeding, recovery with chainsaw, mud-out and blue tarp duties, communications, chaplains assessment, shower and laundry operations, water purification and more.

Stice said there is also an SBTC clean up and recovery crew working at the campus of Jacksonville College in Texas, and a mud-out team working at the home of a widow in Arlington.

Stice said he is appreciative of “closely coordinated, good relationships” in Texas between Southern Baptists and volunteer organizations like American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.

“It’s just heartbreaking, and we pray for the victims and the volunteers and churches as they volunteer for the ministry,” he said.

Visit namb.net/disaster-relief-donations.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Joni B. Hannigan, a freelance writer based in Houston, writes for the North American Mission Board.) **BR**

Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest.

Please send information immediately following an event, or for opportunity corner, send at least two months in advance.

All submissions will be subjected to *Biblical Recorder* styles and guidelines and will be edited for style and length. Include cost and contact information in your email or correspondence.

Send to dianna@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

Have story ideas? Send to editor@BRnow.org.

June 14

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

June 21

Be Confident in God's Power

Focal passage: Joshua 3:7-17

Imagine Joshua's predicament: What if God had called you, as the brand new leader of a large multitude, to lead the entire congregation to the edge of the river with the expectation that the waters would part and you would all be able to cross? How would you muster the courage to even take the first step toward the water?

Often, we tend to think of our leadership roles as our accomplishment. "My skill got me this position, and it's my reputation on the line!" Yet Joshua's crossing of the Jordan paints a strikingly different picture of leadership for us.

Why was Joshua so seemingly fearless in commanding Israel to march through the Jordan? If he had been relying on his own ability to lead them across, he would have been better off commanding them to figure out a way to make kayaks out of sand! Joshua was aware of the meaning and purpose of his leadership; His leadership was not for his own name's sake, but for the glory of God.

In much the same way, we need

to continually be reminded that our leadership, whatever its form or context, is not meant to bring us glory. It's meant to put on display the wonder and majesty of our King! When faced with adversity and trials, does your leadership reflect that your hope and trust are rooted in what Christ has done and is doing? Or do you despair at the thought of your name being maligned – or worse – forgotten?

Leadership is not easy. It's not often comfortable or glamorous, despite appearances. With responsibility comes pressure and stress. Why not rest on the infinite strength of the Almighty?

Joshua lead with confidence in the power of God, having seen His mighty works in the wilderness. We too can lead with confidence in God's strength and character. We have His promises, and we have seen His mighty works. What mightier work than His decisive defeat of sin and death by His own death and resurrection?



MANNY PRIETO
Lay Pastor, Imago Dei
Church, Raleigh

Focal passage: Joshua 6:1-5, 12-16, 20

It's often difficult to persevere when our task seems far from completion. Discouragement and frustration can easily set in and suddenly, giving up

seems far more appealing than the path of obedience. What's our response in the midst of what feels like fruitless labor? Are we quick to forget God's plans and forego obedience? Or are our lives marked by perseverance in following God's commands?

Consider the scenario: God had commanded Joshua to march around the city, only to then return to camp without having conquered Jericho, day after day. Consider how they had seen God part the Jordan at the first step they took into its waters. The same God who displayed His might so decisively at the Jordan now seemed to be commanding them to do warm-up exercises.

As leaders we like to see results, but sometimes the lesson that God is teach-

ing is one of patient perseverance and resolute trust in Him. We might imagine one of the Israelites wondering, "Why do we have to keep marching in circles waiting for the seventh day? Why can't God just act now?"

Without a doubt, God is capable of bringing about the victory now. He is powerful enough to bring about the end result right at this moment. But what then becomes of our being made into the image of Christ? Is it not through faithful obedience that we learn to wait on the Lord instead of seeing Him as our cosmic wish-granter?

We may not know God's plan for the specific situation we are facing. We might pray and obey for years and not see "victory." Yet we know with certainty God's ultimate plan to display His glory and conform us to the image of Christ. We who are in Christ are completely free to obey God and trust Him fully in every circumstance because we have full assurance of His ultimate and decisive victory!

As you lead others, help them to see what a faithful and powerful God it is that requires our obedience!

June 14

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

June 21

Walking in the Light

Focal Passage: 1 John 1:5-2:6

Imagine a co-worker strolling into an important meeting 15 minutes late. As he enters the room, he apologizes, "I'm so sorry for being late, but I had a rough commute this morning. First, I got a flat tire on I-85. Then, I pulled over, and as I stepped out of the car to put on my spare, I stumbled into the lane of oncoming traffic and was hit by a Mack truck. It was terribly painful, but I did my best to quickly get up, change my tire and get here."

This would, of course, be the worst excuse in the history of late-for-work excuses. You cannot finish changing a tire, or come to work, or do anything like you once did if you truly encounter a Mack truck. You are going to be different – to say the least!

Likewise, how could a person claim to encounter Jesus Christ, yet be the same as he was before? John says Christians ought to "walk in the light" (1:7). Walking in the light is more of a litmus test than a checklist. If you don't live differently since supposedly encountering Jesus, then maybe you

came really close but the collision was avoided. When we truly encounter Jesus our former life is wrecked.

Walking in the light describes your new lifestyle that gives evidence of your trust in Jesus by growing in holiness through joyful obedience to the scriptures. Because none of us will walk perfectly (1:8, 10), our lives must involve confessing our sin. We cannot attain holy perfection, but we can walk in a holy direction. We follow Jesus, and when we stumble in sin, we confess and He cleanses us from unrighteousness.

Walking in the light can be daunting because it means we are exposed. Yet, we should not fear such exposure. We should rejoice in it because the work of Christ is visible and magnified through us. People will see Jesus as we grow in holiness. They will see Jesus as we fail and are forgiven. And they need to see Jesus because the gospel of His forgiveness is not only for our sins, but also for those of the whole world (2:2).



MICHAEL WILKES
Pastor, New Life Baptist
Church, Henderson

Focal Passage: 1 John 2:15-27

Christians are a different breed, because God made us new creatures when we were born again. We have new desires, yet we are still vulnerable to the same temptations that gripped Adam and Eve. In this passage, John alerts the church to traps set by Satan to entangle us.

A Scottish preacher once told a story about a farmer who captured a young eagle. He put a restraint on it so it couldn't fly, and then let it roam in the barnyard. Before long the eagle began to act like the chickens, scratching and pecking at the ground.

This bird that once soared high seemed satisfied to live the barnyard life of a lowly hen.

After many months a shepherd from the mountains visited. Seeing the eagle, he said to the farmer, "What a shame to keep that bird hobbled here in your barnyard! Why don't you let it go?" The farmer became convinced

to cut off the restraint, but strangely the eagle continued to wander around, scratching and pecking. Eventually, the shepherd picked it up and set it on a high wall. For the first time in months, the eagle saw the grand expanse of blue sky and the glowing sun. Then it spread its wings and with a leap soared off, going higher and higher. At last it was acting like an eagle again.

How many Christians fall into the trap of finding their contentment in the temporal and material things of this world? They are scratching and pecking instead of enjoying the benefits of the gospel. John shows us that love for the things of the world chokes out our ability to love God and enjoy His love (2:15). Beware the traps of materialism and cultural approval. Stuff and status will not truly satisfy. Beware the erroneous teaching of those who make less of Christ and more of you. It may sound uplifting, but you will only be satisfied when Jesus is supreme in your life. These things are not from God. Seek satisfaction instead with what God has provided – His Word and His indwelling Spirit.

Dangers to Avoid

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Denominational

Carolina Baptist Association in Hendersonville will be accepting resumes for **Director of Missions** from May 18-June 30. Email to cbal877@gmail.com or mail to 601 Hebron St., Hendersonville, NC 28739.

The *Biblical Recorder* has an opening for a **full-time circulation & social media manager**. The ideal candidate must be oriented to details, gifted in administration, experienced with computers, savvy with social media and possess excellent people skills. Writing skills and database experience are valuable. Please email resume to editor@brnow.org or mail to Editor, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512.

Pastor

First Baptist Church of Biscoe, N.C., is seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. We are a relatively small, but inclusive congregation from various ethnic, economic, and social backgrounds with a strong belief in the radical love and grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for all persons. A sense of community is our strength with a “love in action” attitude and a focus on local missions. We partner primarily with CBF and Montgomery County Churches in Action. Our congregation strives to use its many gifts, one of which is music, to fellowship, worship and serve. We are seeking a pastor who is preferably a divinity school graduate, has excellent skills in building relationships, and will lead us to grow spiritually as we respond to the call of Jesus. Please send resumes to: newfbcpastor@gmail.com or Pastor Search Team, Dwight Saunders, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 36, Biscoe, NC 27209. Deadline for receiving resumes is July 1, 2015.

Long Leaf Baptist Church of Wilmington, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **Full-Time Pastor** who will shepherd our congregation. Applicants should be biblically grounded, compassionate and led by the Holy Spirit. Worship service attendance is currently 200-225. We have a strong fellowship and are debt free. Seminary and pastoral experience is required and a master's degree is preferred. Please send resumes and references by mail to Long Leaf Baptist Church, 317 Shipyard Blvd., Wilmington, NC 28412, or by email to LLBCPastorSearch@ec.rr.com.

Corinth Baptist Church, located in Elizabeth City, NC, is seeking candidates for a **full-time permanent pastor**. We are an active congregation with approximately 325 attending worship weekly. Corinth is seeking a compassionate, caring servant led by the Holy Spirit. Applicants should be biblically grounded, demonstrate a commitment to God-centered biblical worship, and possess a servant's heart. To find more information on our church, including a copy of our Pastoral Job Description, please visit our website at www.corinthbaptist.com. Interested applicants should send their resumes to Corinth Baptist Church, Attn. Pastoral Search Committee, 1035 Hwy 17 South, Elizabeth City, NC 27909, or submit electronically to pastorsearch@corinthbaptist.com.

Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Alexis, N.C., a member of the South Fork Baptist Association, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor**. Five years of pastoral experience is preferred. The church is situated 20 miles west of Charlotte in southern Lincoln County. Please send resume and cover letter to Pastor Search Committee, Mt. Zion Baptist Church, P.O. Box 70 Alexis, NC 28006.

Church Staff

Associate Pastor of Worship and Music. First Baptist Church, Asheboro, North Carolina, is seeking an associate pastor of worship and music. A bachelor's degree in music, seminary a plus, and five years of experience is required. Submit resume to First Baptist Church, 133 N. Church Street, Asheboro, NC 27203, Attn. Worship Pastor Search Committee or to musicsearch@fbcasheboro.com; www.fbcasheboro.com.

Bethany Church is seeking a **part-time Minister of Music** to plan, direct and coordinate worship for both contemporary and traditional services. See website for more details: bethany.ws. 3-5 yrs experience is desired.

Memorial Baptist Church, Staunton, Va., 1,200-member church looking for a **Minister to Families**. The position is fundamentally a youth ministry position oriented toward a family supported approach to youth ministry. Will also be the staff resource person for the children's ministries and will have some pastoral team responsibilities. Salary in mid 40k range plus benefits. The interested candidate should send a resume to the Senior Pastor: revmjones1@gmail.com.

Pleasant Ridge Baptist Church, Shelby, NC, is seeking a **Youth Minister** who will demonstrate a strong commitment to Jesus Christ. We are interested in Christian candidate who will offer strong leadership and organizational skills. Please send all resumes to Dr. Eric Davis at Dr.JED@carolina.rr.com.

Parkwood Baptist Church of Concord, NC, is seeking a **full-time Minister of Children/Family**. Requirements: Called of God to lead children's ministry, a committed Southern Baptist, has a seminary degree. We are open to female candidates that are not seeking ordination. If interested email resume to info@parkwoodbaptist.com by June 30th. For more info about our church visit www.parkwoodbaptist.com.

Cashie Baptist Church in Windsor, NC, is seeking a **full-time Youth/Children's Pastor**. Interested applicants should send a resume to cashiebaptistchurch@gmail.com. Some experience and theological training is preferred. For more information on the church please check our church website: www.cashiebaptist.org.

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

Woodlawn Baptist Church, Conover, is looking for a **part-time worship leader** for their contemporary service. Resumes may be sent by June 15 to Dr. Ed Yount, Woodlawn Baptist Church, 440 7th St. Pl. SW, Conover, NC 28613.

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC – Part-time position (15-20 hrs/wk). BA in music and 3 yrs experience required. Compensation dependent upon experience and education. View job description at www.edentonbaptist.org. Submit resume to 200 S. Granville St., Edenton, NC 27932, or email to edentonbaptist@yahoo.com.

Part-Time Worship Leader needed for blended worship services for a progressive and growing church in Western North Carolina. A bachelor of music degree or the equivalent in experience is required. This position is approximately 20 hours per week which includes practices and worship services. Salary range is mid to upper \$20's. Inquiries can be made electronically to tomseals@att.net or to Newfound Baptist Church, Attn: Music Search Committee, P.O. Box 6, Leicester, NC 28748.

First Baptist Church, Wadesboro, NC, is currently seeking a **part-time/full time Minister of Music** to oversee a comprehensive music program to include all areas of music to include, Adult Choir, Youth Choir, and Handbells. Organ experience preferred, but not required. First Baptist is seeking a Minister of Music who will embrace a blended style of worship that includes traditional, contemporary and praise music. This includes all worship services, special services and any church related events where music is needed. Experience in a church setting preferred. This position will include, assisting the Pastor in planning worship services, plan, organize and promote camps, programs, etc. for the various choirs. Salary, hours and benefits negotiable. Please send resume with cover letter to: Personnel/FBC, PO Box 423, Wadesboro, NC 28170, or email to: office_fbc@windstream.net.

Lakeview Baptist Church (Monroe) is seeking a **part-time minister to senior adults**. For information please call Dr. Steve Jirgal @ 704-283-0019.

Arlington Baptist Church in Rocky Mount, NC, is seeking a **Part-time** (20-30 hours a week) **Director of Music**. The director of music would lead the congregational music, plan and conduct choir rehearsals and lead the adult choir. Work with the ministerial staff in preparation of worship services. Handle other ministerial duties as assigned. Send resumes to: pastorphillip@abcsbc.com.

New Hope Baptist Church in Denver, NC, is seeking a **part-time Youth/Children's Pastor**. Experience and theological training. Send resume to srlynn@charter.net.

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Carver: ‘withhold judgment’ on Marine’s conviction

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

Although evangelical commentators have protested the court-martial conviction of a Marine who defied an order to remove a Bible verse from her workstation, the North American Mission Board’s executive director of chaplaincy says believers should reserve judgment because there likely is “much more to this particular story than scriptures that were just in a public place.”

When news breaks of an apparent religious liberty violation like this case, “everyone is alarmed,” Douglas Carver, the former U.S. Army chief of chaplains, told Baptist Press. But usually “as you begin to dig,” there’s “more to the issue.”

Carver added, “From my perspective of 38 years in the military, I have found no more fair legal process than military justice. It’s thorough. It’s fair. It’s merciful.”

The Marine at the center of the case, Lance Corporal Monifa Sterling, has appealed her conviction to the highest military court, the Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces.

Sterling was convicted of violating a lawful order after refusing to obey a staff sergeant’s 2013 order to remove three copies of Isaiah 54:17 – “*No weapon formed against me shall prosper*” – from her computer tower, monitor and desk, the *Military Times* reported. Sterling served at the time at North Carolina’s Camp Lejeune handling complaints from Marines about their military identification cards.

Following Sterling’s refusal to remove the verses, the staff sergeant removed them herself. But Sterling

replaced them and the staff sergeant removed the replacements as well. That sequence, along with other low-level misconduct allegations, led to Sterling’s conviction and a sentence of reduction in rank to E-1 and a bad-conduct discharge.

The Navy-Marine Corps Court of Appeals upheld Sterling’s conviction in February, stating the verse display “could be interpreted as combative” and “could easily be seen as contrary to good order and discipline,” according to the *Times*. Sterling has received help in her latest appeal from the Christian legal organization Liberty Institute and former U.S. solicitor general Paul Clement, who argued the 2014 Hobby Lobby case before the Supreme Court.

Multiple generals likely have reviewed Sterling’s case by this point in the military justice process, Carver said, and believers should “withhold judgment” in the absence of full information about the conviction. “We need to pray for all those involved in this particular situation,” he said.

Sterling, a Christian of Haitian descent, argues that being forced to remove the verse violated her First Amendment right to religious expression and her protection under the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act. “If the government can order a Marine not to display a Bible verse, they could try and order her not to get a religious tattoo, or go to church on Sunday,” Liberty Institute director of military affairs Mike Berry said according to Charisma News. “Restricting a Marine’s free exercise of religion is blatantly unconstitutional.”

Evangelist Franklin Graham defended Sterling in a May 27 Facebook post, stating, “Unbelievably, she was

criminally prosecuted by the U.S. government for displaying this encouraging [s]cripture on her computer in her workspace.”

Graham added, “Can our society be at a point where a supervisor can order a young Marine to remove a Bible verse from her computer? Others are able to display secular messages without any opposition, but Sterling was targeted by her supervisor. Today there’s a tolerance in our culture for everything – except the things of God and His Word.”

One reason cited by the Navy-Marine Corps Court of Appeals for denying Sterling’s appeal was the verse’s visibility to other Marines, according to the *Times*.

“The risk that such exposure could impact the morale or discipline of the command is not slight,” the court concluded.

Carver explained that members of the military may have religious symbols in their personal workspaces, but religious expressions are not permitted which attack other faiths or are used by individuals in authority in an intimidating manner.

A bad-conduct discharge is a serious matter, Carver said, and likely indicates military officials believed a junior noncommissioned officer like Sterling “should have been a little more sensitive to the rules and regulations and the standards ... required by her rank.”

Sterling’s original case included convictions for refusing to perform duties for which she claimed medical exemption, the *Times* reported. Those charges were considered at her sentencing but are not part of her appeal.

Sterling’s attorneys said her case could set a precedent. **BR**

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