

SBC Annual Meeting — The *Biblical Recorder* went to press before the SBC annual meeting in New Orleans June 19-20. Check out our website (BRnow.org) to read the latest stories. Follow @biblicalrecord on Twitter.

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BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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AS OLYMPICS GET CLOSER Baptist leaders prepare for ministry

By AVA THOMAS | Baptist Press

At times, when Doug Shaw stands on the hill just outside Olympic Park in London, he can barely hear himself think.

Construction buzzes and roars in preparation for the Summer Olympic Games, which start July 27. The work's been going strong for years.

Shaw can relate. He hasn't stopped in ages either.

As Olympics volunteer coordinator for Southern Baptists, he's been in motion for months preparing Baptists to meet the tens of thousands of internationals coming to the United Kingdom this summer.

"We are praying that many people from all over the world who

may not have an opportunity to hear or respond to the gospel without being persecuted by their neighbors might have that opportunity while they're here in London," Shaw said.

David Pile said he has the same hope.

"I and others are hopeful that there will be lots of local events

[See Olympics page 13](#)

Bryant Wright reflects on SBC presidency

By G. GERALD HARRIS | Baptist Press

Bryant Wright has traveled more than 100,000 miles to 16 states and to 10 countries on three continents since his election as president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in June 2010.

Wright, pastor of Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., had nearly 100 speaking engagements during his two-year presidency. Wright's successor was elected during the June 19-20 SBC annual meeting in New Orleans. (Because of the print deadline, the *Biblical Recorder* could not print SBC results in this issue, but look for the latest details on our website: BRnow.org.)

Wright was interviewed about his experiences as SBC president by Gerald Harris, editor of *The Christian Index*, newsjournal of the Georgia Baptist Convention.

Q: You have talked much during your presidency about Southern Baptists returning to their first love. How do you think it would look if we were to achieve that goal?

A: Obviously, it would be a hard thing to measure, but basically it comes back to every Christian. I think it will mean that the church is going to look different from the

[See Wright page 7](#)

Modest gain marks 2011 Lottie Moon offering, N.C. missionaries thankful

By DON GRAHAM | Baptist Press

"Exremely grateful." That's what IMB President Tom Elliff is saying about Southern Baptists' gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, which reached \$146.8 million last year — the fourth highest total in the offering's 123-year history.

"I'm extremely grateful for Southern Baptists' faithful giving and praying to undergird the thousands of missionaries they've sent from their churches, through IMB, to the farthest corners of the earth," said Elliff.

"And all for a single, eternal purpose — making disciples in the name of Jesus."

Though short of the \$175 million goal, the 2011 offering is a \$1.1 million increase — nearly 1 percent — over the \$145.6 million Southern Baptists gave in 2010.

The largest Lottie Moon offering in history was given in 2007, totaling \$150.4 million, shortly before the 2008

[See Lottie page 16](#)



SBC President Bryant Wright encourages representatives from 30 churches at the Embrace equipping conference in March. (BP photo)

CHURCH NEWS



Relationship Church, Fuquay-Varina

Pastor Tim Epling, right, prepares to baptize one of the eight people being baptized May 6 at Relationship Church, Fuquay-Varina. The church meets at the Stars Theater and Arts Center on East Vance Street. (BSC photo by Mike Cresswell)



Revo Church, Winston-Salem

Nathan Cline, right, pastor of Revo Church, Winston-Salem, introduces Antonio Slappy before Paul Davidson, missions pastor, baptizes Slappy in an inflatable pool. The church, which meets in a children's museum, had a cheering squad for the May 20 service where five people were baptized. The squad had shirts with individual letters spelling out Life Change and yelled and shook noisemakers. After the service, which was held in Winston Square Park, the congregation gathered for lunch and fellowship. (BSC photo by Mike Cresswell)

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

All-State Youth Choir to tour N.C.

July 18-22, hear the North Carolina Baptist All-State Youth Choir perform at one of many locations across the state. The choir includes auditioned youth in grades 9-12 who are active in Baptist music ministries. The concerts are free for the public and will be held July 18 in Greensboro, July 19 in Brevard, July 20 in Morganton, July 21 in Rutherfordton, and July 22 in Lincolnton and Winston-Salem. Visit renewingworshipNC.org; click "events." Or, contact Sherry Thompson at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5634.

N.C. Baptist Men offer leadership training

A five-hour training conference designed for Baptist Men's directors, men's ministry directors, pastors, or anyone who works with men in the church will be Sept. 7-8 at Shelby Mission Camp, Shelby. It will also include training for Royal Ambassador and Challengers leaders. The cost is \$30 including lodging and meals. Register with N.C. Baptist Men. Visit ncmissions.org; call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5607 for more information.

Learn how to Embrace SEA

Embrace Southeast Asian Peoples Step 1 USA Training, is Sept. 17-19 at Old Town Baptist Church, Winston-Salem. The event will train people in mission strategy, task force building, research and praying, witnessing methods and field training focused on SEA people groups. The deadline for registering is Sept. 10, and the cost is \$25; includes fees, materials and three meals. For more information, contact SEAPconnecting@imb.org. Visit IMB.org; click on events.

Worship leaders to receive training

Sept. 21-22 join worship leaders and ministers for Worship Leader Boot Camp: Special Edition at First Baptist Church, Brevard. Participants receive a 140-page worship leader handbook and a \$10 LifeWay Worship download card. The cost is \$25 including lunch; \$30 after Sept. 7. Register at renewingworshipNC.org or visit ncbaptist.org. Contact Kenny Lamm for more information at klamm@ncbaptist.org; (800) 395-5102, ext. 5638.

Coastal retreats for seniors

Senior Adults, come to the Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell for one of many Coastal Retreat weeks. The 3-day retreats are a time to relax, have fellowship, reflection and inspiration. The cost is \$127, and fall dates are Sept. 10-12, 17-19, 24-26, and Oct. 1-3, 8-10, 15-17. To register, contact the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at (910) 278-9501. Visit fortcaswell.com.

Men's Weekend focuses on missions

Oct. 5-6, join men for a men's ministry mission camp weekend at Red Springs Mission Camp near Lumberton. Activities include restoring homes, a worship rally, devotional times, and fellowship. The cost is \$20 including lodging and meals, and the deadline is Sept. 28. Contact Mark Abernathy with questions at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5607, or mabernathy@ncbaptist.org. Visit ncmissions.org.

LifeWay training for reaching young adults

On Oct. 6 at Crosspointe Baptist Church, Concord, will host Edify. Led by Linda Osborne of LifeWay's young adult ministry, Edify is a day of train-

ing for church leaders working with young adults. The event will look at new research from LifeWay including the "four markers" young adults are looking for: connection, responsibility, depth and community. The cost is \$25. Visit ncbaptist.org/edify to register; contact Phil Stone at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5643, or pstone@ncbaptist.org.

N.C. Acteens to retreat in S.C.

Acteen leaders, bring your students to the annual Carolina Girls event for North and South Carolina Acteens, teen girls and leaders. Come attend conferences, mission projects and worship at Ocean View Baptist Church, Myrtle Beach, S.C., on Oct. 19-21. Early registration for \$35 ends Sept. 19; \$45 after. Lodging expenses are separate. To register, visit wmunc.org or contact Julie Keith at jkeith@wmunc.org.

Senior adults to have prayer retreat

Seniors adults are welcome to a time for spiritual awakening at Connecting for Life, a Senior Adult Prayer Retreat, on Oct. 22-24 at LifeWay's Ridgecrest Conference Center, Black Mountain.

Speakers include Henry and Marilyn Blackaby, Mark Harris and Don Wilton. Register with Ridgecrest at (800) 588-7222. Rates include lodging, meals and free resources. Prices vary from \$115 to \$230 based on room preferences. Visit praync.org for more information or contact Betsy Roland: (800) 395-5102, ext. 5513.

Senior adults fall retreat at Caraway

"Tell Me the Old Old Story" is the theme for the senior adult Fall Festival of

Fellowship Oct. 22-25 at Caraway Conference Center, Sophia. George Fields will lead worship. Special guests include musicians Steve and Ruth Smith and storyteller Connie Regan-Blake. Rodney Stilwell will lead Bible study. Cost is \$225 (includes lodging and meals). Register before July 1 for discount. Contact Caraway at (336) 629-2374 or rffreeman@caraway.org to register.

NCBAM plans ministry to ministers

The North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) is currently developing plans for a new outreach to North Carolina Baptist ministers 65 and older – retired or still serving. Discussion forums and initial brainstorming meetings are scheduled for July 24, 26 and 31 at Baptist Children's Homes campuses.

Pastors, directors of missions, or any other persons interested in contributing to this discussion are welcomed to attend.

● **Tuesday, July 24, 2-4 p.m.** – Kennedy Home, 2557 Cedar Dell Lane, Kinston, NC 28504

● **Thursday, July 26, 2-4 p.m.** – Mills Home, NCBAM Administrative Building, 201-A Idol St., Thomasville, NC 27360

● **Tuesday, July 31, 2-4 p.m.** – Broyhill Home, 111 Sneed Drive, Clyde, NC 28721

Please contact NCBAM at (877) 506-2226 if you would like to help develop ideas for this new outreach. **BR**

Peachtree Memorial celebrates 175 years

By DWIGHT OTWELL | Special from *The Cherokee Scout*

Ten charter members, including two Cherokee Indians, started a church in Peachtree in 1837. The church, now located on N.C. 141 in Murphy, celebrated its 175th anniversary June 10.

The first church building was made of hewn logs and it would become known as Peachtree Memorial Baptist Church.

The church probably was called Peachtree Baptist Church in those days, said Chester Jones, who has been pastor of the growing congregation since 2000.

"It is quite a thrill," Jones said of being part of a church with such a long history. "We have held onto the dream of the charter members – keeping the dream and message alive."

"I have seen a lot of change," said Jim Hendrix, a church member since 1950. "Communications have improved. Hard benches have been replaced by [comfortable] pews."

From as early as 1817, Humpfrey Posey and Evan Jones, forerunners of the Baptist missionary movement, walked the valleys of what would be known as the Peachtree community.

They shared the gospel with Native Americans and white settlers, Jones said.

Fred Lunsford, director of missions for the Truett Baptist Association for 26 years until he retired in 1990 at age 65, said the church was organized about the time of the Indian removal and Trail of Tears to Oklahoma.

At that time, there was a group of Christians at



Cheryl Arrowood and Shirley Voyles join other members of Peachtree Memorial Baptist Church in preparation for the church's 175th anniversary celebration at the congregation's newest building in Peachtree June 10. (Photos by Scott Wallace/swallace@cherokeescout.com)

Peachtree, part of the Valley Town Mission operated by the Cherokee Indians. That was the first church west of Balsam Gap.

After removal of the Cherokee, there is no history of Valley Town Mission, Lunsford said. Some of the members of that church became part of Peachtree Baptist.

A church history compiled by Cheryl Arrowood and the historical committee states that Peachtree Memorial is the second-oldest church in the Truett Baptist Association.

The congregation was formed from Valley River Baptist Church.

Jones said some believe Peachtree Baptist to be the

**"We have held onto the dream of the charter members – keeping the dream and message alive."
– Chester Jones, pastor**

oldest church in the county, while some think Valley River Baptist Church in Andrews is the oldest.

"Some believe Peachtree [Baptist] was once called Valley River [Baptist] before it was known as Peachtree," Jones said.

One thing they do know, Jones said, is "it is one of the oldest churches in the county."

The church, which has moved to various locations in the past, dedicated its present facility in June of 2009.

"Through the years, Peachtree Memorial has been a strong supporter of missions and a strong supporter of me during the 26 years I served," Lunsford said. "It is what I call a foundation for the mission endeavor in the area."

During the 175th anniversary celebration, collages of historical photographs were on display as well as pictures of artifacts found in archeological digs along the Hiwassee River in the vicinity of the mission church.

"Not every day do you get a church that has been around for 175 years," said Mitchell Shields, who is director of missions for the Truett Baptist Association.

"That church has had a tremendous impact on our community for 175 years." **BR**

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AROUND THE STATE

Staff changes

Oakland Baptist Church, Monroe, has called **DAVID ELSEY** as lead pastor. Elsey previously served Neuse Community Church, Clayton.

ALEX BRACEY has been called as minister of youth and children to Calvary Baptist Church, Mount Airy. Bracey was associate minister to youth at First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem.

Cornerstone Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, has called **CHAD COOKE** as associate pastor of youth and children and **TIM MARTIN** as associate pastor of young adults and preaching. Cooke and Martin were both co-pastors of Redemption Evangelical Fellowship in Fort Worth, Texas.

JOHN GRESHAM has been called to First Baptist Church, Kinston, as associate pastor. Gresham is a Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary master of divinity student.

Huggins Memorial Baptist Church, Harker's Island, has called **DAVID ADAMS** as pastor. Adams was pastor of Galilee Baptist Church, Jacksonville.

BRIAN MILLER has been called to Richfield Baptist Church, Richfield, as pastor. Miller served Attapulgus Baptist Church, Attapulgus, Ga.

Retirement

DONALD WALLACE, former senior pastor of Mount Beulah Baptist Church in Wadesboro, has retired to Chesterfield, S.C. with his wife, Mary. Before serving Mount Beulah Baptist, Wallace served Dillon Second Baptist Church, Dillon, S.C.

Wallace also bi-vocationally served several churches in S.C.'s Chesterfield Baptist Association including Cross Branch Baptist Church, Brocks Mill Baptist Church and Pleasant Hill Baptist Church. Wallace will be available for supply and interim work in the future: (843) 623-2485.

Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Send to dianna@BRnow.org; (919) 847-2127.

At Friendly Avenue, ‘Our mission is missions’

By **MIKE CRESSWELL** | BSC Communications

“Our mission is missions,” Pat Cronin says. He’s referring to Friendly Avenue Baptist Church, the 1,300-member congregation in Greensboro, where he has led as pastor for 17 years.

Walk through the building complex and you’ll see mission trip photos and mementos lining the halls; there’s a big photo display of the Burmese congregation that meets in their building.

The design is intentional, Cronin said: “We’re creating a culture of missions. How important that is. Missions is woven into our church’s historical fabric.”

“If you’re not in the mission business, what are you in?” he asks.

Commitment to missions, as in the Great Commission at the end of Matthew 28, is basic to the church and to his calling as pastor, he says.

“How could we not cooperate on that? Otherwise, you become an isolationist. Our people know, deep down in their faith journey, that the ministry is out there beyond the church walls,” he says.

“I’ve always felt that, as a pastor, God hasn’t chosen me to go into full-time missions, but I’m on the front lines to lead my people, to win them to Christ and disciple them. A part of that discipleship is supporting missions and those missionaries who will go,” he says, “and missions support is very much a part of who we are.”

“Loving God is obeying God. He asks us to go into the world. The majority of us don’t go into the uttermost parts of the world physically, but when there are others to go in their commitment to Jesus Christ, we must be willing to support and underwrite them,” he adds.

Commitment to missions and commitment to cooperation are the two main foundations to his support for the Cooperative Program, the unified budget system of the Baptist State Convention that allows churches across the state to support both state ministries and also those across the nation with the Southern

Baptist Convention. This year Friendly Avenue is contributing 10 percent of their total receipts through the Cooperative Program.

“The Cooperative Program is the premier program for giving and going, as far as I’m concerned,” Cronin says.

He recalls how the pastor of a large, non-denominational church did a careful study into the missions support systems of many groups and concluded that the Cooperative Program of Southern Baptists was the best missions support system in the country. Though Cronin acknowledges no system is perfect, he says the Cooperative Program works much better than the independent approach.

He recalls attending an independent Bible college years ago, where he saw independent missionaries come back to solicit funds from churches: “I remember when there was trouble at the helm, the person influencing people giving to those missionaries, there was trouble in the support of those missionaries.”

“The Cooperative Program comes down to good, wholesome stewardship. That’s why we cooperate,” he says. “There are so many offerings, you can’t always do everything, but I think there are some things you must always do, and that is the Cooperative Program and missions giving.”

Maintaining commitment to Cooperative Program support means lay members, especially finance workers, have to be constantly informed on what their giving accomplishes, he said.

He praised the church’s Woman’s Missionary Union for their missions support through the years.

He singled out the late Sarah Parker, with her husband, Friendly Avenue pastor emeritus A.L. Parker, long-time members and strong advocates for missions support.

“She just loved the Lord and believed that the Cooperative Program and all the ministries it supports were vitally important to the Kingdom of God. It was part of her, the fiber of who she was. She

didn’t say, ‘Oh, we gotta do this.’ She celebrated it,” he says.

Friendly Avenue maintains a residence for missionaries who spend time in the area on stateside assignments, which assures members rub shoulders with missionaries they support and pray for. Members Ronald and Eveyln Hill, retired after long careers as Southern Baptist missionaries in Thailand, have also provided a constant missions leavening effect on the congregation. The Hills have played key roles in the church’s support for the congregation of Karen people from Myanmar (Burma). Bryan Presson, who served as a missionary for 19 years in Thailand, leads the church’s ministry to the Karen.

Taking members on mission trips is one of the most effective ways to teach missions and missions support, Cronin says. He has led members on a mission trip 16 of the 17 years he has served at Friendly Avenue.

In recent years teams have served in Romania, Ukraine, Argentina, Ecuador, Cuba and Thailand.

“We just got back from India,” he says. He taught church planters there; meanwhile, Friendly Avenue’s children raised enough money to dig two water wells in Bihar state, among India’s poorest. “When our kids saw the pictures they clapped and celebrated. That’s what Christianity is all about: Christ incarnating Himself through us. When you do that, it all comes down to stewardship. In Christianity, I think we have to ask ourselves, what have we done for Christ lately?”

N.C. Baptist missions and ministries in India and Cuba are coordinated by N.C. Baptist Men, whose main funding source is the N.C. Missions Offering, also supported by Friendly Avenue. Closer to home, church members are involved in dozens of local ministries, such as prison and hospital ministries, Habitat for Humanity, and several ministries to the needy. Friendly Avenue is called to support missions locally and across the state, nation and world, he said. **BR**



Pat Cronin, pastor of Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro, has encouraged his church to support the Cooperative Program, “the premier program for giving and going, as far as I’m concerned,” Cronin said. This year, the church will give 10 percent of its total receipts to CP. (BSC photo by Mike Cresswell)

Deadline extended for the 2012 SBC Church Compensation Survey

By **BROCK ANDRESON** | GuideStone

Ministers and employees of Southern Baptist churches are encouraged to make a difference for churches in their community by taking the biennial 2012 SBC Church Compensation Survey at GuideStone.org/CompensationSurvey. The deadline for completion of the survey has been extended to June 30.

Each completed survey benefits participating churches by providing an accurate baseline of compensation among similar-sized churches in their state convention. Customized reports allow administrators, personnel/

finance committees and minister search teams to better determine adequate compensation for ministers and staff. That can be essential information for thousands of churches, which makes the survey worth the few minutes it takes to complete (a survey can be completed in five to eight minutes on average).

As of May 21, 2012, more than 12,000 surveys had been completed with the highest number of completed surveys coming from North Carolina and Alabama. As many as 17,000 surveys have been completed in the past, and that number could be reached again through the assistance of the June 30 deadline extension.

As usual, survey participants need to have access to information regarding their salary, benefits, their church’s estimated weekly worship or Bible study attendance, resident membership and annual budget. All information is kept confidential and no data from individual responses will be released. The compensation survey is provided through the joint efforts of Baptist state conventions, LifeWay Christian Resources and GuideStone Financial Resources. A printed version may be obtained by contacting GuideStone at 1-888-984-8433 between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m. CST Monday-Friday or by calling the state convention office. **BR**

Drinking water project transforms spiritually, physically

By **BUDDY OVERMAN** | BSC Communications

Through help from North Carolina Baptists, Biju Thomas is on a mission to bring spiritual and physical change to Bihar, India.

"I believe it is the birthright of every person in Bihar to hear the gospel at least once in their lifetime," said the founder and president of Transformation India Movement (TIM), which is partnering with North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM).

Sharing Jesus with everyone in Bihar is no small task. The population exceeds 100 million people and less than 0.5 percent claim Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. The majority of the people live among Bihar's 45,000 rural villages. Poor roads often make access to the villages difficult and most villages lack basic necessities such as clean water.

Instead, villagers often have no choice but to drink water from contaminated rivers, ponds or open wells, leading to a high rate of water-borne disease in Bihar.

Yet, Thomas is determined to fulfill his mission through a holistic ministry that begins with something as simple as giving people clean water in the name of Jesus Christ. Through its clean drinking water project, TIM provides water wells to



Because of N.C. Baptists, Transformation India Movement (TIM) is able to reach Indians for Christ through its wells. Providing clean drinking water opens doors for TIM to share Christ but also to hold events and train people to better their circumstances. (TIM photo)

villages in need throughout Bihar. Most of the funding for the project is provided through TIM's NCBM partnership.

The partnership began in 2007 after Richard Brunson, NCBM executive director-treasurer, witnessed firsthand TIM's ministry and the conditions in Bihar. "I was really blown away by what they were doing and the need in Bihar," he said.

Shortly after Brunson's first visit, NCBM furnished TIM with a truck and portable well drilling rig and began

raising donations to help fund additional wells. Since 2007, the partnership has installed more than 950 wells.

Additional funding is provided for the training and long-term support of indigenous church planters, sewing training for women, literacy training and sponsorships for children in need. These ministries support TIM's holistic approach to reaching Bihar for Jesus Christ. The goal for the partnership is to plant a church in every village.

Wells are a crucial first step in that process. "If somebody were trying to stir up trouble and say that Christians should be run out of town you would have a tough time finding people in those villages with clean water that would feel that way," Brunson said. "Their attitude is different because they have seen that Christians care about them."

A change in attitude toward Christians has allowed Thomas and his team of church planters to proclaim the gospel like never before.

Each well has a permanent inscription in Hindi that proclaims Jesus as the giver of living water. In most cases, that well is the only Christian witness in a village.

The well is a powerful witness that is breaking down barriers to the gospel, Thomas said. "The clean water well project has become an evangelistic tool to take the gospel to many villages that were previously closed to the gospel," he said.

In 2009, TIM began to build on this goodwill by conducting evangelistic rallies in numerous villages on Christmas day. The rallies included dramas, singing and the proclamation of God's Word. In the days prior to the rallies, teams of church planters and volunteers went door-to-door in the villages handing out

Bibles, sharing the gospel and inviting villagers to attend a rally.

That first Christmas the teams shared the gospel with 13,000 villagers. The following year that number grew to 62,000 people, and the 2011 Christmas outreach was the most successful yet.

The goal for Christmas 2011 was to share the gospel with 75,000 people, but about 115,000 people were reached, most hearing the gospel for the first time.

"In many areas, the whole village was reached with the gospel," Thomas said. "People were very touched to hear the message. After the preaching, in many villages people were asking what to do next."

More than 1,500 people at the Christmas outreach responded by praying to receive Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. In addition, house churches were started in 22 villages as a result of the 2011 rallies.

All total, about 7,000 people have come to faith in Jesus Christ since the partnership began, and 1,200 villages have been reached with the gospel.

Thomas believes it's a great start toward achieving his goal.

"God is moving in Bihar like never before," he said. "People are responding to the gospel and the opportunities are wide open. I believe the seeds that have been planted will yield its fruits in due season."

In many cases, sowing seeds in Bihar is as simple as providing clean water in Jesus' name.

"We are called to meet people's needs in Jesus' name and there is not a place I can think of that is in greater need in the world than Bihar," Brunson said. "And we have a great way to do it and make a big difference in a place that over the years has seen very little of the light."

For more information about the India partnership, including information about how you can help, visit baptistsonmission.org/Projects/Outside-US/India or contact Kecia Morgan at kmorgan@ncbaptist.org. **BR**

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Major leaguer shares about challenges, inspiring young people

Baseball relief pitcher Jeremy Affeldt's journey in Major League Baseball started in 1997 as a third round pick of the Kansas City Royals. In 2007, the powerful lefthander was traded to the Colorado Rockies where he experienced his first taste of World



ROMAN GABRIEL
Sports Q & A

Series baseball, losing to the Boston Red Sox. After a short stint in 2008 with the Cincinnati Reds, he joined his current team the San Francisco Giants. Affeldt was named baseball's 2010 "Set Up Man of the Year" after posting a 1.73 ERA as a key reliever for the Giants. He was instrumental in helping them win the World Series defeating the Texas Rangers.

Affeldt is a strong advocate for ending child poverty. He writes a weekly blog about his Christian faith and his desire to stir a movement

that helps the suffering and marginalized. Affeldt's organization known as Generation Alive helps educate people about the world's social justice issues. In 2010, he was the San Francisco Giants' nominee for the Roberto Clemente Award for his advocacy work.

The heart of The Jeremy Affeldt Foundation is youth ministry and providing ministries with the funds and assets they need to accomplish their goals.

Biblical Recorder sports correspondent Roman Gabriel III recently interviewed Affeldt on his Sold Out Sports Talk show on American Family Radio.

Affeldt shares some of the lessons God has taught him on the importance of his platform and his personal and professional life.

Q: Tell us about the origins of Generation Alive.

A: We started this organization in 2005. I wanted to get into public and private schools, talk about child development skills and developing young minds in the correct way. We would then invite them to after school outreaches to share the gospel. [We'd] follow up by getting youth pastors involved and looking toward ongoing [opportunities] to disciple these students.

Q: What is your impression of this generation of young people?

A: This generation is impressionable. Generation Y is [an] awesome group of young people. We want to empower them in some way to understand that



San Francisco Giant pitcher Jeremy Affeldt writes a weekly blog about his faith. He uses his sport as a platform not only to talk about his Christianity but child poverty as well. (S.F. Giants photo)

they have tremendous ability to make a difference in the world. Influencing these kids is a passion of mine. We have more young people in the world today than any other time. And using sports and my success is important.

I'm not sure I could have the same influence without the opportunity I have in sports. As an athlete I've been a part of a lot of success in my career – nine years in the big leagues, two World Series appearances, one World Series championship, and "Set Up Man of the Year." I want to do a lot more with what I have been given.

Q: It sounds like you're not satisfied with just being an athlete or ... "today's role model."

A: I have had a lot of success and failure, but it all means absolutely nothing if I don't do what I am supposed to do with those things. I do not think sitting at home, telling my kids and my wife, "look at me and look how good I am" [is it.] ... If that's all I'm here for then that's such a shallow life. I want to do a lot more with what I have been given.

Q: A lot of people think that success comes overnight. Your career has not been easy, four years in the minor leagues and a lot of physical setbacks. It was a long wait for success.

A: It was [an] awesome spiritual journey when I started in Kansas City. ... I was a power pitcher, left-handed pitcher, power arm. I could see I could be a top starter.

But I had these weird injuries: oblique tear, tore my groin tendon from the bone, and a lot of finger problems. I had never been hurt before I came to the majors. I was grieving all the injuries, trying to get my career going, but God [wanted] to show me something through the pain and failure.

But he spared my arm. It was never that, which I was thankful for, even during the bad years. I can remember being like David ... and screaming, frustrated ... asking God not to forget about me. ... But [also] practicing the other end of David's prayer of thanking God for being so faithful.

Q: What lesson did you take from that situation early in your career that helps you today?

A: I learned so much in my pain and frustration, and I learned so much, staying close to [God]. I was mad, not fulfilling my talent, but that's where my heart was truly open ... that's where the truth is exposed about us.

God poured his love on me. Just remember that when everything is going good we have a tendency not to [feel like we] need God.

He knew the success he wanted to give me down the road, but I didn't. What I went through early in my career kept me on track, and has kept me humble now during my success. And I want to use being a World Series champion and my career successes. I just want to use this platform to promote the love of God.

Q: Where can people go to find out more about Generation Alive and your blog?

A: You can find my blog at *generationalive.org*, and on Facebook and Twitter. I am also on both Facebook and Twitter personally and do a lot of positive quotes throughout the day, along with positive articles [that] I think would be good for people to read. My weekly blog gives my thoughts and views regarding sports and Christianity.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Roman Gabriel III is president of Sold Out Ministries. He hosts Sold Out Sports Talk Saturday nights 8 p.m. EST on American Family Radio. You can follow up on Twitter @soldout41 or Facebook at sold out.) **BR**

41%, a record low: Pro-choice view slides in Gallup polling

By TOM STRODE | Baptist Press

Americans who consider themselves pro-choice on abortion are at a record low, according to a new Gallup public opinion poll.

Forty-one percent of Americans identify themselves as pro-choice – marking a drop of 6 percent since July and the lowest percentage since Gallup began asking the public in 1995 to self-identify as pro-choice or pro-life. The Gallup organization reported the dramatic downturn for pro-choice advocates May 23.

The same survey showed 50 percent of Americans identify themselves as pro-life, one point less than the record high, which was set in May 2009. The previous low of 42 percent for pro-choicers also came in the 2009 poll.

Pro-life leaders expressed no amazement at the trend – which was demonstrated among Republicans, Democrats and independents.

"This is not just an American phenomenon," said C. Ben Mitchell, professor of moral philosophy at Union University in Tennessee. "Now that imaging technolo-

gies offer us a clearer picture of what's happening in the womb, it is increasingly difficult to dehumanize the unborn person in a mother's body.

"Even in our fallen, fragile world, human life in all its stages gives testimony to the image of God," said Mitchell, a longtime consultant with Southern Baptists' Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the Susan B. Anthony List pro-life organization, said in a written statement, "It comes as no surprise that more Americans are shedding the 'pro-choice' label

as they come to terms with what is really meant by this hollow branding.

"The big [lie that] 'abortion liberates' ... and those who promulgate it are becoming unmasked," Dannenfelser said.

In the breakdown by political identification, the poll showed:

- Independents identifying as pro-choice dropped since May 2011 from 51 to 41 percent, while those labeling themselves as pro-life increased from 41 to 47 percent.

- Republicans pro-choicers fell in the

See Poll page 10

MISSION POSSIBLE: Worship Renewal

For some, worship is equated with a strong compassion for God, expressing our love for Him every moment of the day. For others, the word brings up memories of conflict in the church after experiencing “worship wars” over the type of music used in the service, or the use of guitars, or the disuse of the organ, or the way the pastor dresses. Ironically, worship should be the most unifying activity of the church, yet we have allowed personal preferences and marketing strategies to profane it.

The need for worship renewal in churches is tremendous. Large numbers of Baptists attend church every week; yet, if you were to question those church attendees about their time of corporate worship, a large number would tragically admit that they never really experienced God in worship. Too often, worship planners throw together the order of service with little thought or direction, not really seeking God’s input. Churches are comfortable staying in a routine of doing things the same way without ever asking questions to determine if the worship we encounter each week is helping our people connect with God – and if it is speaking to today’s culture. How do we grow a church of worshippers and not an audience of spectators? How do our churches create an environment conducive to worship?

Once we begin to ask the right questions and seek God’s guidance in our times of worship, we can begin to see transformation in our times of corporate worship.



EDITOR’S NOTE – Kenny Lamm is worship and senior music consultant with the Baptist State Convention’s Congregational Services. For resources, contact Lamm at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5637, or klamm@ncbaptist.org. Visit his blog at www.RenewingWorshipNC.org.



Wright Continued from page 1

world. Our big problem now is that the church looks so much like the world in terms of materialism, heathenism, obsession with “workaholicism” and busyness. We just have so little distinctiveness in our spirit, our character and our priorities.

We need to be more Christ-like in our character and spirit so we will be attractive to those who are lost.

Q: You had said that changing the name of the convention would position us to maximize our effectiveness in reaching North America for Christ. Why did you think it would make us more effective?

A: I felt like it would help us outside the South and Southwest not to have such a regional name. It’s a barrier. For example, how would we feel if someone from Boston came to the South and said they were going to start a church for the Yankee Baptist Convention?

It probably wouldn’t be a huge draw to southerners in Birmingham. It is just a barrier to reaching people for Christ.

As we got into the study, it quickly became evident at how incredibly difficult it would be to legally change the name. With the autonomy of the local church, the autonomy of the state conventions

and the authority of the entities guided by their boards, we could vote overwhelmingly to change the legal name, but we couldn’t force that upon anyone because of the autonomy issue. ...

Q: Did the racial connotation of “Southern” in our name motivate you to want to change the name? After all, the Northern and Southern Baptist Conventions came about as a result of the slavery issue.

A: I did not realize how much the word “Southern” and its association with the Confederacy presented an obstacle to African Americans in our convention.

I just had not realized how significant a hurdle that was for them.

We had two African-American pastors on our committee and they were very helpful to us.

They have been very courageous to be Southern Baptist pastors. They have not done the popular thing in regard to their peers.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – In the full version of the story, Wright addresses challenges of his presidency, young leaders within the SBC, the North American Mission Board the future of the denomination. For the full version of this story, visit BRnow.org.) **BR**

Mission:Dignity Sunday honors SBC ministers, widows

By JUDY BATES | GuideStone Financial

Ten dollars a month. That’s all Gordon and Alice Burks had left over from his salary after paying rent of \$65 for their little place in Home Gardens, Calif. The small church Gordon had agreed to pastor couldn’t pay them more than \$75 a month, but he followed the Lord’s calling in spite of the hardships it might entail. Ten dollars went a lot farther in the 1950s than it does today, but it still wasn’t much to buy groceries and pay other bills.

The Burks’ story is not unlike that of

almost 2,000 retired Southern Baptist ministers and their widows in financial need. June 24 is Mission:Dignity Sunday across the Southern Baptist Convention. Like the Burks, many of those who depend on Mission:Dignity served small, rural churches with meager salaries and little, if any, retirement contributions. Today, they struggle to pay for food, utilities and medications.

“We didn’t have a refrigerator or a stove,” Alice Burks said. “We cooked on a little hot plate. Then, finally, one of the members gave us a stove. It didn’t have any handles on it. We turned it off and on with our pliers. But it cooked.”

Though times were hard and money scarce, Gordon and Alice never complained. Through more than 40 years Alice worked alongside Gordon as he pastored churches in California, Okla-

homa and Texas. She fondly remembers Gordon’s love of preaching: “He really loved to preach. At one of the churches that he pastored, they said, ‘Gordon, if you don’t quit preaching so hard you’re going to drop dead in the pulpit.’ He said, ‘I don’t know of a better place to drop dead than preaching God’s word.’ He was always studying and reading and praying.”

After Gordon’s death in 1993, Alice started receiving \$75 a month from the Mission:Dignity ministry. Through the years, as the program changed, the assistance amounts increased, and now she receives \$400 each month.

“I feel especially blessed that I have been privileged to receive the Mission:Dignity grant,” she said. “It helped me pay for my first hearing aid and also to get my teeth. Receiving this money has helped me to not be a burden on anyone.”

Mission:Dignity receives no Coopera-

tive Program gifts. Most support comes from the generous gifts of individual churches, Sunday school classes and individuals; 100 percent of contributions given to Mission:Dignity goes to help those in need, with nothing deducted for administrative expenses. One out of every four recipients is a pastor’s widow age 85 or older. Qualified recipients are eligible to receive grants of \$200 to \$530 each month.

“GuideStone was founded on the idea of serving those who gave sacrificially to spread the Word of God,” said O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone Financial Resources. “It’s easy to look at GuideStone and see a broad-based financial services organization, serving more than 200,000 people worldwide. While that is an important part of the ministry, the DNA of GuideStone rests with dear soldiers of the cross who served out at the crossroads, ministering, many times in anonymity.”

Visiting MissionDignitySBC.org or call (888) 98-GUIDE (1-888-984-8433). **BR**

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Protect your church's children against sexual abuse

By **DAVID ROACH** | Baptist Press

He looked like the ideal youth minister – recommended by a friend of the pastor, personable, and leading a thriving ministry to teens at Wayside Baptist Church in Miami.

But looks were deceiving.

For months, he had been sexually abusing boys during sleepovers at his home. When the offense came to light, the church had its very existence jeopardized by a \$6 million civil judgment in favor of the victims. Eventually the case was settled for an undisclosed amount, and Wayside determined to do everything it could to protect children in the future.

“Now we do criminal background checks on anyone who is volunteering, and they put glass in all the doors [of children’s and youth classrooms],” said Carrel Youmans, a longtime member at Wayside who taught youth when the abuse occurred in the 1970s.

Wayside is not an isolated case, said Patrick Moreland, vice president of marketing at Church Mutual Insurance Company. Church Mutual averages four to five reports of child sexual abuse each week from its approximately 100,000 clients, the vast majority of which are churches. That includes roughly 9,000 Southern Baptist congregations.

Every church needs to have policies in place to protect its children, Moreland told SBC LIFE, journal of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Executive Committee.

“It is common for a congregation to think, ‘It can’t happen here. We’re small and everyone knows everyone,’” Moreland said. “That is not sound thinking when it comes to child sexual abuse. Most abusers are known to the child and trusted by the congregation. Child sexual abuse occurs in churches of all sizes and denominations and in all parts of the country – urban and rural.”

Reporting suspected abuse

If abuse is ever suspected, Moreland urges churches to contact the proper government reporting agency immediately and to suspend the alleged offender (with pay for employees until the situation is resolved).

They also should contact their attorney and insurance company.

Representatives of the church, accompanied by a reporting agency official, should meet with the child’s parents and, in their presence with their permission, the child.

“Reassure the child that he or she has done nothing wrong and that it was right to report the incident,” Moreland said.

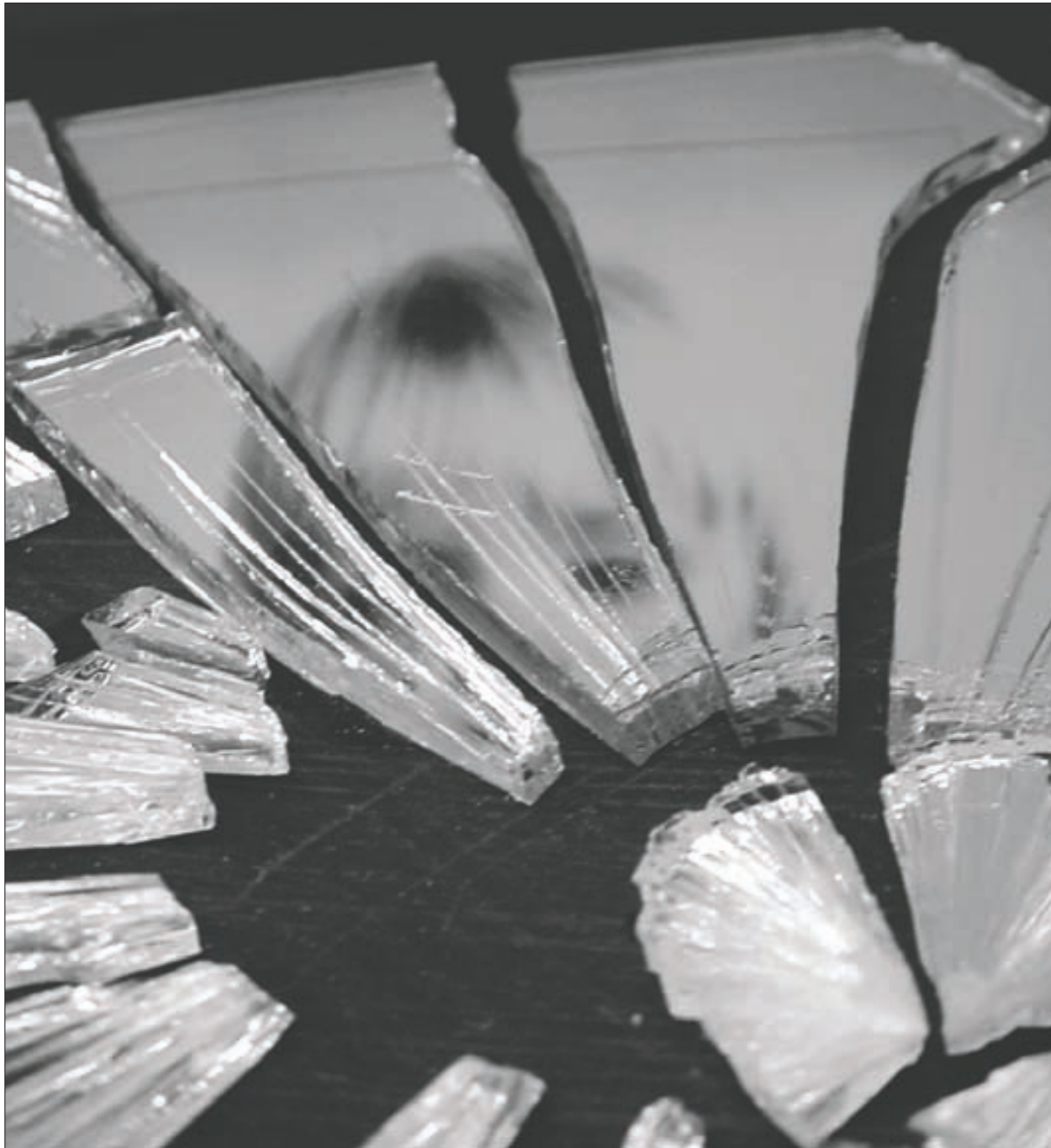
“Allow the child to speak freely. Do not coach responses from them and do not become defensive. You want the truth and you want to protect the child’s wellbeing.”

Abuse prevention policies

Among the policies Church Mutual recommends to prevent child sexual abuse:

- Have all potential children’s and youth workers (employees and volunteers) complete an application form. Look for irregularities. Ask for and check references. Conduct interviews.

- Perform background screening on all employees and volunteers who will have access to children. The



Abuse can leave shattered pieces for all involved. Churches can take steps to prevent child abuse. Criminal background checks reassures parents and church leaders that their children are safe. (Stock.xchng photo above is by Katherine Evans; BP photos at right)

screenings should be national in scope since it is common for offenders to move from state to state. The Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender public website can be accessed through the SBC website at *SBC.net* at *sbc.net/localchurches/ministryhelp.asp*.

- Never allow anyone to be involved in children’s or youth ministry who has not been active in the church for at least six months.

- Implement and enforce a two-adult rule. Never allow one adult to be alone with a minor. The two adults should not be spouses.

- Install windows in classrooms and keep doors open. Have a hall monitor circulate through the building during children’s and youth activities.

“Most incidents of child sexual abuse can be prevented by following these simple steps,” Moreland said. “The primary facilitators of child sexual abuse are failure to screen



and supervise those who will be in contact with your youth and children.” For Wayside, which averages 800-900 each week in worship, prevention stems from “good people with good training, and ... good policies to back that up,” said Leigh Byers, director of preschool and children’s ministries at the church for the past decade.

See Abuse page 11

nightmare

LifeWay reports background checks on rise

By ERIN FRESHWATER | Baptist Press

More than 25,000 background checks conducted by churches or organizations on prospective workers in the past three years have turned up more than 1,600 felony offenses, with the number of organizations conducting background checks having risen 27 percent in the past year, according to LifeWay Christian Resources of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Since launching *LifeWay.com/background-checks* in 2008, more than 1,656 different churches or organizations have conducted 25,470 background checks. Of those, more than 45 percent (11,656) returned a criminal hit. A “hit” is any kind of incident, ranging from minor traffic violations to felony convictions, explained Jennie Taylor, marketing coordinator in LifeWay’s direct marketing department.

Excluding traffic and non-traffic infractions (jay-walking, noise pollution, etc.,) more than 20 percent (5,107 searches) returned records with misdemeanor or felony results. More than 1,600 of those 5,107 searches returned felony offenses.

In 2008, LifeWay Christian Resources endorsed *backgroundchecks.com* to offer background screenings for churches and religious organizations at discounted prices.

Through LifeWay’s OneSource program – encompassing products and services for churches and religious organizations that LifeWay has endorsed – all churches and religious organizations can receive discounts on background screenings for their camp counselors, bus drivers, staff, volunteers and others.

“Churches are realizing that this is something they need to be doing,” Taylor said. “With the OneSource program we’ve made it more affordable.”

Backgroundchecks.com works with customers based on their specific needs and will

consult with churches one-on-one to help select the best screening process for their particular situation, Taylor said.

“We’ve had tremendous feedback from churches and individuals who have used this service,” she said. “Already we’ve seen more than a 27 percent increase in participation this year over last year. That just goes to show how important this service is to churches.”

Churches can conduct due diligence, Taylor said, by utilizing *backgroundchecks.com* as a step in their security and safety policy. With a database of over 400 million criminal records, *backgroundchecks.com* has an extensive collection of public record sources, delivering reports in a concise and user-friendly format.

Fairview Baptist Church in Columbus, Miss., started using *backgroundchecks.com* in 2010.

“Our mission is to tell others about Jesus Christ,” said Aubrey Adair, volunteer security team chairman at Fairview. “We have a lot of young people and children, and we want to provide a safe environment for them and for other worshippers. For any worker who will be working with children 17 years and younger and for our security volunteers, we ask them to submit to a background check.

“This is not a foolproof process, but it’s a stronger method than doing nothing at all,” Adair said, adding that the church also uses the service for its Vacation Bible School.

“We have a lot of young people and children, and we want to provide a safe environment for them and for other worshippers.”
– Aubrey Adair

“They helped us set the program up and they gave us some great information,” he said. “We were facing a generational change at church with a lot of younger families coming in – this level of safety and precaution really appealed to them.”

Country Oaks Baptist Church in Elk Grove, Calif., used *backgroundchecks.com* in their process of interviewing pastoral candidates.

“We were able to get an overall view of our new pastor candidate,” said Arnold Dallas, a deacon at Country Oaks. “[*Backgroundchecks.com*] verified his degrees from college and seminary and had everything electronic, so we could print everything out and could talk by phone whenever we had questions.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE — Erin Freshwater is a writer in Nashville, Tenn. For more information, visit *LifeWay.com/backgroundchecks* or call 1-800-464-2799. For additional resources to help churches prevent the devastating effects of sexual abuse and other moral failures by staff members or volunteers, visit *www.sbc.net/localchurches/ministryhelp.asp* and *http://sbcLife.net/pdf/ProtectingOurChildren.pdf*. Statistics reported in this article are not derived from a representative sample but reflect clients who purchased background check services through LifeWay without regard to organizational type, denomination, region, demographic makeup or other factors.) **BR**



A former social worker’s perspective

By JANICE LAROY | BP Guest Column

thoughts occur to me that should help Southern Baptists address this critical issue.

The reality

First, we must recognize that the problem is real – not just “out there,” but even in our churches.

I faced this reality one day at the probation office when, much to my surprise, a man who had just received felony probation for sexual abuse of a minor walked in – and he was from my own church! He had been a schoolteacher and very active in the life of the church. Even with all my years of experience, my initial reaction was to not believe this was really true, but it was. Not only did the terms of his probation state

he could no longer teach, but it was made clear to him that he could never again have any role at church or in the community involving work with children.

I wish this were the only case I had encountered involving members of evangelical churches, but it wasn’t.

The trust factor

Children are taught to trust their parents, other family members, their teachers, ministers, those in authority over them. Children are abused most often by people they know, people they trust, not usually by some stranger in a dark trench coat.

There are various terms used to describe individuals who sexually abuse children, such as child molester, predator

and perpetrator. Each term represents the image of an individual who attempts to exploit someone else for personal gain using deception to carry out his or her purposes. And these predators use the victims’ trust to gain access to their bodies.

The Bible says children are a gift from God. We are responsible to protect them from being treated as mere possessions to be controlled by the whims of the persons they have been taught to trust.

No discrimination

Studies clearly show that child molesters are from all walks of life – there are no ethnic, economic, religious, educational or gender barriers. Both men and women

See Perspective page 11

Having been a Child Protective Services (CPS) worker and later an adult probation officer with a specialized sex offender caseload, I can assure you that child abuse in the form of sexual molestation is very real. I conducted hundreds of investigations and interviews with victims, child molesters and numerous mental health counselors over the course of 10 years. And yes, such child abuse actually exists in our churches – which should not come as a surprise because our churches are made up of fallen human beings who live in a fallen world.

As I reflect on my experiences in Texas with CPS and as a probation officer, several

N.C. couple in Brazil sees prayerwalking open doors to gospel

By EMILY PEARSON | Baptist Press

During their daily walks, Rob and Phyllis Hefner have been mugged, physically assaulted and narrowly escaped an attempted kidnapping. During a robbery, a woman held a knitting needle to Phyllis' throat.

The Hefners, who walk 20 or more miles five or six days each week, serve as International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries in Fortaleza, Brazil, a city of 3 million people.

The couple, who are in their 50s, begin walking after breakfast and end about 2 p.m. Monday through Thursday.

They walk until 7 p.m. on Friday. When they don't have other commitments, they walk all day Saturday as well.

As they walk, they pray for Fortaleza.

For the Hefners, it is literally the first step toward reaching people for Christ.

They are among a multitude of Baptists worldwide who engage in prayerwalking.

The Hefners' routine began shortly after the Charlotte, N.C., natives moved to Brazil in 1991. During their walks they began seeking God's direction for their ministry. Even before that – back when they were appointed as missionaries in 1985 – they prayed regularly as they walked for exercise.

"We didn't call it [prayerwalking] back then," Phyllis remembers, "but as we were called to missions, we began walking and praying for God's leadership. After that, we just kept walking farther and farther – and just kept praying."

In Fortaleza, the Hefners' 20-mile journeys sometimes begin with a strategy; sometimes the duo simply depend on God's direction.

Four specific prayer points are part of each walk. First, they pray that God will show them the area He wants them to focus on. Secondly, they ask Him to tear down the walls of lostness in the hearts of the people.

They then pray to establish relationships to prepare the way for the gospel.

Finally they ask God to connect them with those who need to hear about Him.



International Mission Board missionaries Phyllis and Rob Hefner prayerwalk 20 or more miles a day across Fortaleza, Brazil, five or six days a week. Their prayerwalking ministry began shortly after they moved to this city of 3 million in 1991 as they sought God's direction for their work. (IMB photo)

The journeys are not without their perils, and often the Hefners' walks lead them into areas of the city where even the police hesitate to visit. Phyllis says she used to pray for protection but now asks for boldness when they enter places where it is likely they will be targeted.

"If we become afraid to prayerwalk and get out in these areas, then there would be so many miraculous things that would not happen," Phyllis says.

"You get to meet the people. You get to see the needs. You physically get to see what you're praying for," she continues.

"If I'm in my house, God hears my prayers, and I think I know what I'm praying for.... But if I'm in the house, I would never get to meet the people that I meet."

The Hefners take advantage of prayerwalking opportunities to stop and talk to people on the street – from beggars to shopkeepers and restaurant workers. They don't give out money. Phyllis carries a bag of protein bars to hand out to the hungry. It allows her to befriend people who approach her. She then asks how she might pray for them and follows up with them on her next visit to the area.

While prayerwalking takes up a good chunk of their day, it isn't all the Hefners do.

Rob works as a church planter and as a professor of



In many communities across South America, International Mission Board missionaries and their local Baptist partners prayerwalk as a way to open doors for sharing the gospel. Here, Venezuelan Baptists and IMB missionaries prayerwalk together through a neighborhood in Caracas, Venezuela. (IMB photo by Rebecca Springer)

church planting at a local seminary. In teaching prayerwalking as a mission strategy, he has seen 85 student teams begin ministries in areas where he and his wife have walked. The ministries range from church planting to working with the homeless and providing crutches to people with missing legs.

In the future, the Hefners plan to extend their ministry by driving to different starting points and taking new routes.

"Please pray for direction, health, protection and boldness as we continue to discover new prayer routes," Phyllis says. "Please pray that we might be light and salt to those with whom we come into contact, so that they might come to know Jesus as their personal Savior."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Emily Pearson is an International Mission Board (IMB) writer living in the Americas.) **BR**

Poll Continued from page 6

last year from 28 to 22 percent, while pro-lifers grew from 68 to 72 percent.

- Democrats identifying as pro-choice decreased in the last 12 months from 68 to 58 percent, while those considering themselves pro-life increased from 27 to 34 percent. While the survey demonstrated a noteworthy shift in Americans' self-identification as pro-life or pro-choice, it showed little change on the questions of the morality and legality of abortion, Gallup reported. The survey found:

- 51 percent say abortion is "morally wrong," the same as in May 2011, and 38 percent say it is "morally acceptable," one point less than last year.

- 52 percent say abortion should be legal "only under [certain] circumstances," a two-point increase in the last

year, while 25 percent say it should be legal "under any circumstances" and 20 percent say it should be illegal "in all circumstances."

The last two results both reflect a two-point decline since last May.

Charmaine Yoest, president of Americans United for Life, said the latest poll "is only the tip of the iceberg. In fact, a growing number of Americans are uneasy with the unfettered, under-regulated and unsavory abortion industry as it exists today."

Regarding the change in pro-choice and pro-life identification in the last year, Gallup did not offer a reason for the development but pointed to the focus on abortion in several news items, including: the congressional attempt to defund and

its investigation of Planned Parenthood, the country's No. 1 abortion provider; the reversal by cancer charity Susan G. Komen of its decision to halt grants to Planned Parenthood; and the Obama administration's contraceptive/abortion mandate. That mandate requires health plans to cover contraceptives – including ones that can cause abortions of tiny embryos – and sterilizations as preventive services without cost to employees.

Dannenfeler cited the effort to require taxpayers to fund abortions as a key reason for the public's move away from the pro-choice position, noting, "Those who would have us continue to fund abortion with our tax dollars are arguing in direct opposition to public opinion."

"President Obama, his allies in

Congress and the abortion lobby have radically overstepped their bounds, causing Americans to turn away quickly," Dannenfeler said.

It would seem the use of ultrasounds to show images of unborn children continues to have an impact on opinions about abortion as well. After public opinion peaked in favor of the pro-life side in 2009 at 51 percent to 42 percent, the gap shrunk the next two years. In 2011, pro-life Americans were at 49 percent and pro-choicers at 45 percent.

Gallup conducted the poll of 1,024 adults by telephone May 3-6.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Tom Strode is the Washington bureau chief for Baptist Press. Baptist Press editor Art Toalston contributed to this article.) **BR**

Perspective

Continued from page 9

are abusers, and both girls and boys are victims. Child molestation is an equal opportunity destroyer. Given the opportunity, it will destroy children and families from all walks of life.

Repeat offenders

From my own interviews with perpetrators, victims and mental health counselors, it is undeniable that many perpetrators have multiple victims and abuse them multiple times.

It is clear that when given the opportunity, a significant percentage of those – Christians as well as non-Christians – with a past record of sexual abuse will repeat that offense.

A person who has used his or her position of trust to sexually abuse a child simply should not be allowed to remain in that position of trust.

Accordingly, we must hold the actual “perpetrator” responsible for the behavior he or she has chosen. This is not denying the sincerity of a person’s genuine repen-

tance or withholding forgiveness – perpetrators can and should be forgiven. But they should never be allowed to work with children again in any capacity. That is part of the consequences for their actions. Their lives can still be useful and productive but their activities must be steered to other areas of their giftedness, particularly as it applies to work in the church.

Cooperate within the system

Sometimes the various government agencies are scorned and demonized, but I worked alongside many fine and dedicated social workers and probation officers. I personally prayed over my jobs and specific cases throughout those years asking for discernment to make good casework decisions for families, but in particular for the innocent children. I knew plenty of other workers who shared my faith and my commitment to families and children.

Consistently, the Department of Human Services’ goal was to either keep families together or restore

families whenever possible. Even with the best expertise, sometimes professionals are not able to protect children.

The authorities do not expect church staff or other laypeople to have perfect discernment. However, you should follow your state’s laws in reporting child abuse. Greater still, you should go beyond man’s law and follow God’s law in how we are to treat one another.

The scripture tells us to be wise as serpents. We dare not fool ourselves into thinking that child molestation would never happen in my home, in my child’s school, in my church or in my community.

Child abuse is a tragic reality – but we can take steps to dramatically reduce the number of incidents and the shattered lives that result, and we have the responsibility to do the best we can to that end.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Janice LaRoy is an office and editorial assistant in the SBC Executive Committee’s office of convention relations. This article first appeared in SBC LIFE, journal of the Executive Committee.) **BR**

Abuse

Continued from page 8

Today anyone seeking to work with children in the congregation must fill out volunteer forms, including a confidential questionnaire, a background check permission form and an affidavit of good moral character. Volunteers also are required to provide references, and Wayside follows the six-month rule.

Though hardly any potential workers have been turned away, some have declined to go through the application process, Byers said. She added that domestic violence and sex crimes would disqualify a member from working with children.

“If someone is a potential abuser, they’re not looking for the hardest place to accomplish their goal,” Byers said. “They’re probably looking for a place that’s a little easier. So we try to put some things in place that would make somebody think twice before they would necessarily say, ‘This is easy. I don’t have to work too hard to get access.’”

Prevention at small churches

Child abuse prevention is not just for large churches, noted Jonathan Ruth, minister of music and children at Springdale Baptist Church in West Columbia, S.C., which averages approximately 230 in worship.

Before his church instituted mandatory background checks for all children’s

workers, one parent asked if volunteers were screened. Ruth said no, and the parent withdrew her children from an after-school program.

“I’m not saying that’s why they left, but she seemed concerned that our volunteers were not checked,” Ruth said. “And if it’s going to be a hindrance to a parent to bring their child to a church where volunteers are not background checked, I think it’s worth it to make sure you have those assurances in place for parents.”

In addition to background screening, Springdale has an unwritten policy of always having two adults in a room where there are children. The congregation is in the process of developing official, written policies, Ruth said.

“I think every church needs to have protection in place for their children so that there’s not going to be abuse taking place,” he said.

With proper screening and an attitude of transparency though, churches stand a better chance of never having an incident to report, according to Byers.

Church members should be “watching and helping each other,” she said. No one should ever think, “There’s somebody watching the kids ... let’s not worry about it,” she added. “There needs to be working together.”

For additional information about preventing child sexual abuse, visit www.sbc.net and click on the “Sex Abuse Prevention” tab on the left side of the page in the “Resources For” box.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – David Roach is pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Shelbyville, Ky. This article first appeared in SBC LIFE, journal of the SBC Executive Committee.) **BR**

GuideStone Funds garners top fi360 ranking

DALLAS (BP) – GuideStone Funds ranked No. 1 out of 223 mutual fund families for the quarter ending March 31, 2012, according to fi360’s Fund Family Fiduciary Rankings. These rankings are updated quarterly and this is the first time GuideStone Funds has achieved the top ranking by fi360 but follows 2011, when the Funds consistently finished in the top 10 spots.

The ranking comes on the heels of the March announcement that GuideStone

Funds ranked No. 1 out of 182 funds, receiving industry ranking firm Lipper’s 2012 Best Overall Small Fund Group award, one of the nation’s premier financial industry honors, presented to mutual fund families with up to \$40 billion in assets.

“Our investment structure is built for the long-term,” said Rodric E. Cummins, senior vice president and chief investment officer for GuideStone Capital Management.

DIVINITY SCHOOL GRADUATES

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Master of Christian Education: Stacey Roy Jones, Pikeville; and Michael T. Williams, St. Pauls.

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Doctor of Ministry: Wayne Reese Blanchett, Dover; Gregory Wayne Burriss, Siler City; Charles Michael Coppock,

Princeton; Colin McKenzie Shaw, Pinehurst; and Keith Nicholas Vaughn, Wake Forest.

Gardner-Webb School of Divinity

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The Rise of Individualism

The term “individualism” has a variety of nuances. For purposes of this work, the term is used to refer to the value, protection, and promotion of the rights and beliefs of the individual. That’s a good thing. Each individual should be valued in a society.

Yet, when we talk about protecting the individual, a valid question is raised, namely: “From what does the individual need to be protected?”

In answering this question, we begin to understand the dominant philosophy that drives our modern sense of justice in the West.

Our civil philosophy and sense of justice demand that the rights and beliefs of the individual must be protected against the rights and beliefs of the majority. Now, from one perspective this is very logical and necessary for a just society.

If you don’t give some type of protection to the individual or minority group, then the majority will simply outvote them and nullify any influence a dissenting individual or minority group might have in society.

Yet, from another perspective, the unchecked promotion of individual rights can be incredibly damaging to a society because the majority opinion is intentionally suppressed in order to let the minority opinion be expressed.

Such a promotion of individualism first manifests itself in the expectation that the larger society should adapt for the individual, but the individual is not expected to adapt to the larger society.

A second and even more disastrous manifestation is a complete cultural shift of morals and responsibilities in which the values and opinions of the minority are forced upon the majority by the courts. When this happens on a regular basis over the course of centuries, not only does the majority opinion become subservient to the individual/minority opinion in the courtroom, the majority opinion actually loses its influence over the larger society.

This is what has happened in the United States, and this is what is destroying our nation. Our unchecked

promotion of individual rights has evolved into an expression of irresponsible individualism.

Considering the fact that the U.S. was formed during the Enlightenment Period, it should come as no surprise that our nation embodies the philosophies and pursuits of that era.

Yet, it also embodies the inherent dangers of the Enlightenment Period, namely, an overemphasis on the individual. It’s absolutely essential to understand that one of the principal goals of many contemporary secularists is the empowerment of the minority opinion and the subjugation of the majority opinion.

This goal isn’t rooted in some national or global conspiracy theory. Rather, the goal of protecting and promoting the individual/minority opinion is rooted in the naïve belief that protecting the minority opinion from the majority opinion is the true expression of democratic justice. Our blind commitment to irresponsible individualism works like this —

since defending the individual/minority opinion was clearly the right decision at some points in our history (e.g. the abolition of slavery, women’s rights, the Civil Rights movement), then it must be the right decision all the time (e.g. financial aid for illegal aliens, the promotion of the LGBT agenda, supporting polygamous marriage, the promotion of Islam in the West, etc.).

Ironically, this approach to individual rights is incredibly narrow-minded and anti-intellectual even though it is embraced by many who perceive themselves as intellectuals.

A recent example of the thoughtless pursuit of irresponsible individualism is depicted in the legal action being taken by the polygamists portrayed in the TV show, “Sister Wives.” Their attorney, Jonathan Turley, states on his blog dated July 13, 2011: “We are not demanding the recognition of polygamous marriage. We are only challenging the right of the state to prosecute people for their private relations ... In that sense, the challenge is designed to benefit not just polygamists but all citizens who wish to live their lives according to

their own values — even if those values run counter to those of the majority in the state.”

Did you catch the last section of the quote? In the name of justice and freedom, the courts are being used to suppress the values of the majority. This has been going on for decades, but hardly anyone challenges it because we have been taught that this is how a democracy works. Under the current system of thought, it’s an injustice to offend an individual or minority group, in this case polygamists, but it’s proper to promote values and opinions that “run counter to those of the majority” regardless of how many people are offended. That’s not a democracy. That’s irresponsible individualism.

Ironically, irresponsible individualism is the greater injustice because it offends the majority of a nation’s citizens. You see, irresponsible individualism doesn’t dominate our society because it’s synonymous with justice. It dominates our society because the majority have failed to stand up for their beliefs. For over a century now, many of our leading thinkers, politicians, and judges have been aggressive in their protection and promotion of the beliefs and values of the minority opinion while at the same time vehemently opposing the beliefs and values of the majority of our citizens. This is the reason, not in part but in whole, that America has changed so quickly with respect to its beliefs and values. What else would you expect when our leaders deliberately work against the beliefs and values of the majority of our people?

The next time you hear people say they’re frustrated because they don’t know why our nation has changed so much, set them straight. Tell them why we’ve changed. Tell them it’s the result of leaders who have convinced the majority that they must, in the name of democracy and justice, submit their beliefs and values to the minority opinion, but be sure to tell them that’s an illogical lie. It’s the lie of irresponsible individualism.

(EDITOR’S NOTE: This is an excerpt from Rit Varriale’s book, *Reformation in Responsibility: A New Ethic for a New Era*. The Biblical Recorder published a story about Varriale and his book in the June 9 issue. Varriale is pastor of Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby.) **BR**



RIT VARRIALE
Guest Column

Bivocational ministry is important to the Kingdom

God often calls His followers to serve Him in challenging and sacrificial ways for the sake of His name. I think about the many commissioning services I have been privileged to attend for individuals and families preparing to serve our Lord throughout this country and around the world. God called them to leave behind a familiar, comfortable lifestyle in order to share the gospel with people who have never heard.

I know that God has called many of you to make financial sacrifices so you could participate in a short-term mission trip.

When God calls us to a certain task for His Kingdom, we must be obedient. I want to express my appreciation for a group of people who, although not serving in a different state or country, make tremendous sacrifices in order to be

obedient to God: North Carolina bivocational pastors.

Your Baptist State Convention includes about 1,400 churches served by a bivocational pastor. When I use the term “bivocational,” I am referring to pastors who rely on additional income from a source other than the church they pastor. Essentially, these shepherds must work at least two jobs in order to support themselves and their family.

The number of bivocational pastors and church staff is increasing, in part because of the current economic situation, rise in cost of living, and decrease in tithing and financial giving.

Bivocational pastors usually serve smaller churches or new church plants.

Our state convention, and the Southern Baptist Convention, relies on support from small churches (usually defined as a church with 125 people or less in Sunday School). About 80 percent of SBC churches are small churches. I am so grateful to God for the small churches that faithfully serve God.

If not for bivocational pastors and church staff, many churches would be without adequate leadership. However, serving as a bivocational pastor is not easy. Studies indicate that these pastors work many hours each week, as they have to prepare sermons, visit in hospitals, minister to bereaved families and perform other acts of ministry related to their church, along with the required work at their additional job.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Bivocational pastors and staff may feel a sense of isolation from other pastors and they sometimes struggle to balance work and family life. These pastors sacrifice personal time in order to serve.

Lester Evans is our Convention consultant who serves in the area of associational partnerships, as well as bivocational ministry. Lester does a wonderful job working with our bivocational pastors.

Next month our bivocational ministry will host a two-day bivocational ministries conference at Caraway Conference Center.

Please pray for God to strengthen our bivocational pastors and bivocational church staff members, and also pray for their families. Ask God to empower them in a mighty way for His Kingdom and for His glory.

“And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.” Colossians 3:23 **BR**

The family, the church and the government

God has ordained three institutions: the family, the church and the government.

It seems strange that the church is free to talk about the church, and the church is free to talk about the family, but the church is told to keep silent on matters of government.

How has such a distorted view come to prominence? Has not God established all three? Is God silent about the purpose and design of any one of these divinely created institutions?

To be sure, politics can be a dirty battlefield. Many have been hurt and relationships within churches have been damaged. But that is not an acceptable excuse for Christians to abandon all political involvement.

To abandon dirty arenas is to give victory to the forces of evil. Jesus neither taught nor modeled a strategy of “giving up” to sin’s curse. Christians must be involved at every level of government. We cannot be salt and light if we are not touching corruption and penetrating

darkness (Matt. 5:13-14).

Scripture teaches, “When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan” (Proverbs 29:2, NKJ). Are the citizens of our nation rejoicing or groaning?

Righteous people need to be in places of authority!

In my previous editorial (June 9), I stated, “The 126 days from July 4 through Nov. 6 afford us a window of time to address the spiritual needs of the United States of America in an unprecedented way.” I called on pastors to use this time to speak boldly and biblically on the issues that are destroying governments and societies.

There are some things we can encourage Christians to do.

First, register and vote. The American system of government revolves around free elections. The influence of the people cannot be known without our involvement in the voting process.

Daniel Webster was a leading statesman in the time prior to the Civil War,

and twice served as Secretary of State. He said, “Impress upon children the truth that the exercise of the elective franchise is a social duty of as solemn a nature as man can be called to perform; that a man may not innocently trifle with his vote; that every elector is a trustee as well for others as himself and that every measure he supports has an important bearing on the interests of others as well as on his own.”

Second, educate yourself. It is not difficult to do your homework on issues and personalities.

The material is easily available on the Internet or by contacting appropriate organizations. Be careful to deal with the truth. Politics is a breeding ground for huge doses of deceit. The one who spreads false information will eventually be exposed and discredited. Stand on principle and get your facts straight.

Noah Webster (not related to Daniel as far as history shows) gave us this

statement, “In selecting men for office, let principle be your guide. Regard not the particular sect or denomination of the candidate – look to his character. ... When a citizen gives his suffrage to a man of known immorality he abuses his trust; he sacrifices not only his own interest, but that of his neighbor, he betrays the interest of his country.”

Third, involve yourself in the process. It is important to communicate with elected officials. Let them know your concerns and

views. Participate in a political party. Volunteer to work for a candidate. Find your level of ability and get involved with issues that are compatible with the Christian worldview.

Apathy never forges moral progress. Moral progress moves on the tracks of personal involvement.

Now is the time to preach on the Biblical principles of God’s plan for the family, the church and the government. **BR**

“We cannot be salt and light if we are not touching corruption and penetrating darkness.”

Olympics Continued from page 1

and lots of community engagement and we’ll be able to share and shine the love of Jesus with a bunch of people that we otherwise wouldn’t have come in contact with,” said Pile, Olympic and Paralympic Church Engagement Coordinator for the London Baptist Association.

Shaw is expecting the help of about 400 Baptist volunteers from the States,

and Pile is expecting the participation of hundreds of churches in England.

Volunteers will help with festivals, face painting, handing out water and a range of other things. Some will assist churches in hosting big-screen events in parks, and sports teams will help with basketball and baseball events in neighborhoods around local churches.

All of these efforts fall under the banner of More Than Gold, a joint effort of Christian churches of many denominations worldwide. More Than Gold helps Christians collaborate for ministry during major international sporting events such as the Olympics or the World Cup.

And its most famous ministry – pin trading – will be in full force during the 2012 games. “Pin trading is the biggest of the unofficial Olympic sports,” Shaw said, noting that thousands participate in the hobby.

As part of More Than Gold, volunteers trade a More Than Gold pin that shares the gospel message, he said. The pin is a good conversation piece and helps start gospel conversations in the area surrounding the Olympic Park, where blatant evangelism is not allowed, Shaw said. “During the Olympics, you won’t be able to do literature distribution or any kind of obvious evangelism within a mile of any of the venues in London or anywhere else in the UK. These areas are closed off to direct evangelism,” he said. But pin trading is a traditional part of the Olympics atmosphere and, Shaw said, “There’s nothing wrong with talking with people.”

Pile said many local Baptists are also participating with a “big silent Christian witness” during the Games, serving as official Olympic volunteers, or Games Makers. These volunteers serve as chaplains,

drivers and part of the field set-up crew and in a range of other roles.

“They would have had to apply two or three years ago for these kinds of roles, but they will put them in direct contact with athletes and other people involved in the Games,” Pile said.

A number of Christian families in the UK also participate in another of More Than Gold’s major ministries – the athlete homestay program, Shaw said.

“More Than Gold is the official Olympic manager of the program. It allows athletes’ families to have a place to come and stay during the Olympics,” he said. Many athletes don’t find out until the last minute that they have qualified for the games, Shaw explained, and “many families come from places where a week in London would be prohibitively expensive even in normal times.”

Shaw asks for Christians to pray that volunteers at the Olympics would be able to “share Christ effectively and in a meaningful way – a low-key way would be the best way to start. Pray also that volunteers coming here will have wisdom and guidance from the Holy Spirit.”

For more information on Olympic ministries, prayer requests and opportunities for service at the 2012 games, visit morethangold.org.uk.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Ava Thomas is a writer/editor for the International Mission Board based in Europe.) **BR**

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July 1

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

July 8

Free

Focal Passage: John 16:5-15

When my mother graduated from high school the class sang “You’ll Never Walk Alone.” Although the song was a hit it never mentioned who would walk with us. Thankfully Jesus has identified our Comforter. Lost people may say that they would follow Jesus if they could see Him, but true believers know that they are temples of the Holy Spirit Who lives within them. In fact, the greatest counsel we receive from the Holy Spirit comes through the assurance of our salvation: “The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God” (Romans 8:16).

Lack of conviction concerning the things of God is one of the clearest evidences that a person is not in Christ. A person may say all the right things and attempt to work in Jesus’ name, yet be devoid of conviction regarding his own sin, lack of righteousness, and coming judgment.

A fellow layman once told my father that there are only two kinds of people who don’t make mistakes: one is in the cemetery and the other is sitting in the

corner doing nothing. While this analysis is true regarding outward sins of commission, it doesn’t speak to sins of the heart and mind or sins of omission. The Holy Spirit convicts us not only of sin (what we need to stop doing), but also of righteousness (the things we need to do to bear spiritual fruit). Although we anticipate Judgment Day, we are warned to approach the day with fear and trembling because each one will be “recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Corinthians 5:10).

The Holy Spirit has been blamed for an abundance of heresy and disobedience. However, Jesus reminds us that the Spirit is not self-glorifying but always pointing us to Christ. Some spiritual claims are like a cheap compass. It appears to point north but a comparison with true north shows the compass to be faulty. May we base our ministries on the interworking of the Word of God and the witness of the Holy Spirit.



TROY RUST
Senior pastor,
Somerset Baptist Church,
Roxboro

Focal Passages: Romans 7:20-8:9

My wife and I once made reservations for a luxurious hotel where everything should have been ready on arrival. Unfortunately, we discovered that our understanding of arrival didn’t match that of the hotel. We thought we were ready to receive our room keys when they told us we were ready to wait while they found us a room. The same can be said for any Christian who thinks he has arrived spiritually. Such a person mistakenly believes that the only thing he lacks is checking in to heaven, but there will always be struggles as long as we are in this flesh. Paul explained to the church

at Rome that even a committed Christian will face the warfare between fallen flesh and a redeemed soul.

Many of our churches sing “Victory in Jesus,” but I wonder how often we consider what has been defeated in Christ? Paul tells us that through the finished work of Christ the Holy Spirit has deliv-

ered us from our spiritual deadness and any further futile attempts to get to God through our works.

Even honorable endeavors like keeping the Law fail because they are attempted in the flesh. Because we have been redeemed we can now walk by the Spirit and avoid the sinful deeds of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). However, we must guard ourselves against quenching the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19) or we will slide back into fleshly living.

What’s wrong with the average church business meeting? It has become a stage for unbelievable carnality. Where are the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)? When we choose to walk in the flesh we cannot dismiss it based on personality, family tree, etc.

Paul pulls no punches when he tells us that a carnal mind is hostile toward God, cannot submit to God, and cannot please God.

In other words, when we operate in the flesh we act like lost people! May we say with Paul, “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me” (Galatians 2:20a). May our living match our baptismal profession of new life in Christ (Romans 6:1-7).

July 1

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

July 8

The Decision Dare

Focal Passages: Joshua 23:1-24:33

I remember reading about a young man who was talking to his girlfriend on the phone. She had asked him if he really truly loved her. He replied to her that he did with his whole being. She asked if he was coming over Saturday? He told her he would climb the highest mountain, swim the deepest sea, battle the fiercest beast, and break down the toughest barrier to be with her. Yes, he would be there Saturday – if it didn’t rain.

We laugh, yet often we can see ourselves as this young man. We make commitments, but discover that they are shallow.

We do this with other people and it’s wrong. But we also do this with God, and that is worse.

Each and every day we are faced with many choices. A recent TV ad says we are faced with 35,000 choices each day – from getting up each morning to what we will eat, or the clothes we will wear, and then the choices at work, school and in our homes. Some of these choices are minor and do not have any major consequences.

Others impact our lives for years to come.

One choice that makes a major impact is what one does with Jesus Christ.

This not only affects today, but all eternity. In these lessons of being daring in leadership, faith, accountability, loyalty and decisions, this one is vital. We must seek to dare to decide for Christ.

First, this entails a person making a decision to accept the free gift of salvation and forgiveness offered by God. When one does this they demonstrate courage in taking a stand for Jesus.

However, it does not end with that one decision. That is the start of the daily decisions that one must make to follow Jesus as He guides us in this life and eternity.

Because it is easy to make a shallow commitment like the young man at the start of this article, we must daily count the cost as Joshua challenges in Joshua 24:15c (HCSB) – “As for me and my family we will worship Yahweh.”



THOMAS MARSHALL
Pastor, New Hope
Baptist Church,
Laurinburg

Focal Passages: Judges 1:1-3:6

We all remember the pictures and coverage of 9/11 in our country. That day symbolized the crisis that our country is facing in the world arena today. How have we gotten from being the country that others admired and looked to, to one that has become the target of hate and distrust? How is it that other religions condemn Christianity because of us? Are we moving into that cycle that Israel faced?

This unit on “People in Crisis” could (should) be a massive wake-up call to Christians and the Church in America today. Just because we live in the “Age of Grace” does not negate God’s dealing with people. The Book of Judges can be relegated to the dark halls of history, pertaining to days long ago, or it can speak loudly to us today.

Judges is a book of cycles. Actually, the same cycle repeated over and over.

Truth or Consequences

The nation of Israel, under God’s favor, became strong and enjoyed peace and prosperity. Enjoying the blessing, they began to take God for granted. They took credit for it. They soon looked at other cultures as having it so good, and brought their beliefs into the land of Palestine. God loved them too much to let them continue on this path. So, He began to judge and discipline them. In small ways at first, increasing in intensity to get their attention. Since they continued on their path, ignoring God, He eventually allowed their enemies to defeat them and oppress them. They looked more to others than to God, so He allowed others to rule over them.

In time this oppression drove them back to God, and in His infinite love and compassion, He would send a deliverer to rescue them. And then they would begin to enjoy peace and prosperity.

Judges is a book of cycles. The nation of Israel, under God’s favor enjoyed peace and prosperity – and they began to take God for granted. As we look at our churches and our country today – should we take a lesson from this book and turn back before it is too late?

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Association

The Robeson Baptist Association is seeking resumes for the position of **Director of Missions**. The association consists of 69 churches with varying needs and opportunities. There are at least two international people groups that need the association's assistance. The person chosen for this position should be a mission strategist with a heart for people and a passion for evangelism and discipleship. Resumes may be mailed to DOM Search Committee, 2110 E Seventh St., Lumberton, NC 28358. The deadline for receiving resumes is July 1, 2012.

Cullom Baptist Association Warrenton, NC, seeks **Director of Missions**. Must be dedicated to serving God, passionate for God's people and committed to growth. Association consists of 37 churches. Send resumes: Cullom Baptist Association, PO Box 384, Warrenton, NC 27589 or cullombaptist@embarqmail.com. Deadline July 1, 2012.

Pastor

PASTOR. Lawrence Road Baptist Church in Hillsborough, NC, is seeking a full-time Southern Baptist pastor. Average attendance is 60. The candidate must have attended seminary or divinity school and have previous pastoral experience. Send resumes to Search Committee, PO Box 249, Hillsborough, NC 27278, or judyrlbc@ncrrbiz.com no later than July 24. References required.

South Run Baptist Church, SBC church (www.southernrun.org), Springfield, VA, seeks **Pastor** to lead vibrant, mission-oriented congregation with emphasis on families and youth in fast-paced northern Virginia. We're interested in energetic candidates with a M.Div. seminary degree and minimum 5 years pastoral experience. E-mail resume and references to pastor-search@southernrun.net by June 30, 2012.

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Zion Baptist Church (www.zionbaptistshelby.com) is seeking a **full-time pastor**. This position is being held open due to email inbox failure. All previous applicants are urged to re-apply, and new resumes are welcome. We are a moderate congregation that is dually aligned with the SBC and CBF. We seek a candidate with a minimum of 5 years pastoral experience that is also a graduate of an accredited seminary or divinity school. Qualities we desire are a servant leader, a person with strong interpersonal skills, and an inspiring preacher. Send resume to Zion Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, 525 W. Zion Church Road, Shelby, NC 28150 or email resume to jlail@yahoo.com. Resumes will be accepted through August 15, 2012.

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

Trinity Baptist Church, an SBC church in Trinity, NC, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. Seminary degree and reference required. Send resumes to bhenf6193@aol.com or Trinity Baptist Church, PO Box 9, Trinity, NC 27370 by July 1, 2012.

Church Staff

First Baptist Church of Welcome, NC, seeks **full-time Minister of Youth and Children**. College degree required. Seminary training helpful. SBC background preferred. Experience desired. Send resume to fbcpwpastor@triad.rr.com.

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

First Baptist Church of Concord is seeking an individual with a heart for the Lord to fill the position of **Part-Time Music Director**. This person must be approachable, have strong interpersonal and administrative skills and lead by example. This person also needs to possess the skills to plan and implement the overall music program, including children's choirs, adult choir, hand bell choir and men's and women's ensembles. A bachelor's degree or higher with a music background is preferred with demonstrated proficiency in piano and vocal skills. This person needs to enjoy a blended style of music in worship and have at least three years of experience. For more details, please visit fbconcord.org. Qualified candidates can submit their resume to: FBC Concord, ATTN: Music Director Search Committee, PO Box 643, Concord, NC 28026.

Lillington Baptist Church is seeking a **Youth Minister** to oversee the youth ministry for grades 7-12. The position is 20 to 25 hours per week depending on demands of job. Job description is posted at www.lillingtonbaptist.com. Resumes mailed to LBC, PO Box 670, Lillington NC 27546.

Full-time Minister of Music and Music Education for Poplar Springs Baptist Church. Seeking college graduate with music degree and three years experience as minister of music. If interested send detailed resume by June 30 to MM Search Committee, 3014 Poplar Circle, Shelby, NC 28152.

MINISTER OF MUSIC. West Main Baptist Church in Danville, Virginia, is seeking a full-time minister of music to plan, direct and coordinate church music and worship for all ages, to include various music groups, styles and the fine arts. West Main is a growing congregation of over 500 members. We are a moderate, financially stable church that is highly committed to missions. We worship in a creative traditional framework. We do not use screens or praise bands, but desire quality, live music that embraces many genres. Our minister of music will be a person of active faith with a servant spirit, called to congregational ministry, and will be expected to share in pastoral care to the congregation. Choral direction experience and keyboard (organ and piano) skills are highly preferred. Send resumes to 450 West Main Street, Danville, VA 24541 or westmainbaptist@comcast.net. Website: www.westmainbaptist.org.

Galeed Baptist Church, Bladenboro, NC, seeks **Music/Youth Minister**. Responsibilities include music program, leading choir/congregation in worship, seasonal music for special events, weekly adult choir rehearsal, communicate music selection with pastor, utilize and cultivate existing church talent, work with lay leaders in other music programs and develop music programs that utilize facilities for plays, dinner theaters, etc. Youth responsibilities include developing a working relationship with lay people to help plan events for youth grades 7-12 and be solely responsible for weekly youth devotion. Duties also include organizing youth summer mission trips, socials and outreach programs with assistance from existing youth leaders. Strong organizational and leadership skills a must. Candidate should have a BS degree in music or youth ministry or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Send resume to Craig Lennon, PO Box 1025, Bladenboro, NC 28320 or cdl@embarqmail.com.

Winfree Memorial Baptist Church is a healthy, growing congregation in Midlothian, VA, a Richmond suburb. We are looking for our first **full-time Minister for Preschool and Children** who will partner with volunteers and parents to expand this ministry. Winfree associates with the BGAV and CBF. Please send a resume to winfreechildren@gmail.com.

Miscellaneous

Christian patriotic military neckties \$7. Humor books \$5. Laughter Doeth Good Like A Medicine \$6 (1400 sold). Annette's 200 Original Italian Recipes \$12. 606-285-3051.

For Sale: 32 - 16ft solid oak pews, very good condition. Can be cut down to your size. Lewis Fork Baptist Church, Purtlear, NC. 336-838-2481.

Discounted rates for private-owned resorts at Myrtle Beach OR Pigeon Forge for summer and fall of 2012. Respond to: oasisattheocean@hotmail.com.

NCBAM needs handymen (or women!) for home maintenance projects. Help aging adults enjoy quality life in their own homes. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

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

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Cost for Baptist churches and organizations is \$1.20 per word, number and stand-alone initial (\$1.42 for commercial and non-Baptist entities) with a minimum charge of \$35. Classifieds that run in the paper also are carried online.

Lottie

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collapse of the U.S. housing market and the global economic recession.

“Southern Baptists continue to show that they have a heart for the world,” said David Steverson, IMB vice president of finance. “In an economic environment where unemployment remains high, our economy continues to drag, our stock market experiences broad swings and there is unrest in all of our financial markets, Southern Baptists continue to respond to the Great Commission through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. We are grateful for this increase of almost 1 percent, which represents the fourth largest offering in our history.”

‘Above and beyond’

When the first Lottie Moon offering was collected in 1888 (though it was not yet known by that name), the \$3,315 raised by Southern Baptist churches was enough to send three more single female missionaries to help Moon in China. The 2011 Lottie Moon offering totaled \$146,828,116.05. Today, in conjunction with the Cooperative Program, it helps support a network of nearly 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries serving around the globe, providing salaries, housing, medical care and children’s education. The cost averages about \$49,800 per year for each missionary.

“[Southern Baptists] go above and beyond to take care of their personnel. ... There is no complaining [here],” said Anthony, a newly appointed IMB missionary who grew up in Waynesville, N.C. He and his wife, April, will travel to Mozambique to work among a Muslim people group in July.

While the \$175 million goal needed to support IMB’s missionary force might seem overwhelming to some, Anthony



IMB missionaries pray over a mother and child suffering through famine in the Horn of Africa. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering enables these missionaries -- like Lottie herself 140 years ago -- to live and work at the forefront of lostness, extending Southern Baptists’ witness through their full-time ministry. (BP photo)

said, churches working together make reaching that amount a possibility.

“It seems so unattainable to the blue-collar American,” said Anthony, challenging smaller churches to partner together – even if that means raising just enough to send one missionary.

“Fifty thousand dollars is a much more manageable amount,” said Anthony, noting the average annual amount it takes to support one missionary. “We’re thinking millions, but let’s start thinking in the thousands.”

Walter* and his family – who have lived in western N.C. most of their lives – will travel to South Asia later this year. He, his wife and two children will share the love of Jesus in the slums of their assigned city among many who have had little to no access to the gospel. “There are [more than] 3,000 people groups that haven’t [been] exposed to the gospel,” he said. “There’s a lot to be done.”

According to IMB’s most recent statistical report, the Lottie Moon offering has enabled missionaries and their national partners to present the gospel to more than 2.2 million people, baptize 333,823 new believers and start 28,873 new churches.

“That tells me that Southern Baptists still see missions as a priority,” Elliff said. “It also tells me that Southern Baptists are keenly aware that there are still billions of people who desperately need to hear the gospel, and they are eager to get that message to them.”

“I think that when people look at these statistics, Southern Baptists have every reason to rejoice,” Elliff said. “And it ought to be a sign that we could certainly accomplish much, much more if more was given. We could send out more missionaries, we could partner with more nationals – there definitely would be a direct impact in terms of evangelism and church planting.”

Missions offerings represent one of the unique aspects in Southern Baptist life, said Wanda Lee, executive director/treasurer of Woman’s Missionary Union

(WMU). “As a former missionary, it was a great comfort to my husband and me knowing we could truly focus on the ministry God had called us to without concern about financially supporting our family,” she said. “As Southern Baptists, it is our collective responsibility and privilege to remember those who have committed their lives to following the Great Commission so that the gospel may be proclaimed among all people.”

“The faithfulness of Southern Baptists to give more to support international missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering as compared to last year is to be commended. WMU is grateful for churches that continue to keep missions education and involvement at the forefront and for members who understand we have been called to sacrificially give of our resources so that all may know the true source of hope and peace.”

The task remains

Elliff pointed out that 3,328 of the world’s 11,000-plus people groups are both unengaged and unreached by the gospel. An unengaged, unreached people group (UUPG) means that evangelical Christians make up less than 2 percent of the people group’s population and that there are no current evangelical church-planting efforts among them. Those 3,328 UUPGs represent more than 266 million people who may know little or nothing about Jesus.

In addition to Lottie Moon gifts, Elliff also thanked churches for their response to IMB’s Embrace challenge. Currently, 1,280 churches and Southern Baptist Convention organizations have indicated their willingness to explore a long-term commitment to evangelize a UUPG. IMB’s goal is to ensure there are no remaining UUPGs on the planet.

*Name changed

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Don Graham is IMB senior writer. Biblical Recorder staff contributed to this report.) **BR**

WMU-NC announces interim leader

The Executive Committee of Woman’s Missionary Union of North Carolina chose Robin C. Bass as its interim executive director-treasurer during a recent meeting.

The decision was made June 7. Bass, part-time minister of education and volunteer worship leader at Hermon Baptist Church in Waxhaw, will be working part time at WMU-NC as well.

“I love missions and God is continually burdening my heart for people who are lost and need someone to tell them of Jesus,” said Bass in the press release. “I believe God has uniquely prepared me for this role at this point in my life.”

A press release indicated that leaders thought Bass will work two or three days a week depending on scheduling demands.

Bass previously served on the WMU-NC Executive Board and chaired the Camp Committee. She has continued to be involved in aspects of WMU-NC and currently serves as chair of the Heck-Jones Offering Committee. She recently completed a master of divinity in Christian Ministry at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. She has her bachelor’s in zoology from N.C. State University in Raleigh and another master’s degree (business administration) from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, S.C. She and her husband, Henry, are involved in the N.C. Baptist Men’s disaster relief ministry and have been state coordinators through the North American Mission Board’s church renewal ministry. They have been married 27 years. **BR**

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