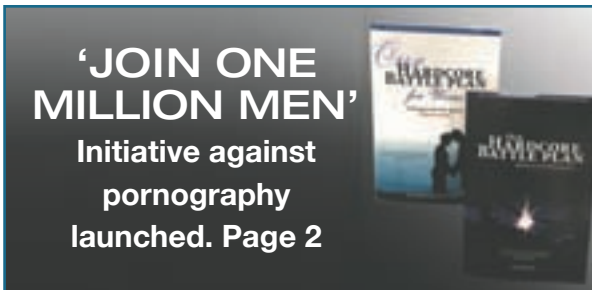


Neal Eller  
shares  
author's plan  
on discipleship.  
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'JOIN ONE  
MILLION MEN'  
Initiative against  
pornography  
launched. Page 2

# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

JULY 6, 2013 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 179 NO. 14 • **BR**now.org

## 'Our world has changed' Court ruling leaves Baptist leaders disappointed, resolute

By **TOM STRODE** | Baptist Press

**T**he U.S. Supreme Court has delivered a historic ruling in favor of same-sex marriage, but it stopped short of redefining marriage nationwide.

In one of two rulings regarding gay marriage, the high court struck down June 26 a federal law defining marriage as only between a man and a woman.

In a breakthrough for homosexual couples, the court said in a 5-4 decision the Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) violated "equal protection" under the Constitution by refusing to recognize gay marriages. The opinion means same-sex couples will have access to employee, Social Security, tax and other benefits previously limited to heterosexual couples.

In the other case about gay marriage, the justices appeared to provide a limited victory for same-sex marriage advocates. The court's 5-4 ruling on a procedural question apparently will have the effect of allowing to stand a federal judge's invalidation of a California amendment that limited marriage to heterosexual couples.

In its opinions, however, the Supreme Court did not legalize same-sex marriage throughout the country or rule that states cannot limit marriage to a man and a woman.

See Ruling page 6



(SXC photo)

## Women's conference to encourage spiritual legacy

By **MELISSA LILLEY** | BSC Communications

**E**sther Burroughs was 17 years old when a church camp speaker shared something with her that changed Burroughs' life.

"She said, 'Esther, God has something for you to do. And it's something that no one else can do.' I had never felt what I felt coming from this woman's heart. There was so much joy in her teaching about Christ; she radiated," Burroughs said. "She specifically looked into my eyes and spoke to my heart."

That set in motion a lifetime of friendship and mentoring between Burroughs and the woman. Burroughs, 76, is one of

the featured speakers for the "Leaving a Legacy" women's prayer and evangelism conference hosted by Embrace Women's Missions and Ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC). The Sept. 6-7 conference will be held at Ridgecrest Conference Center and will focus on Psalm 78:4, which encourages believers to tell of God's great work from one generation to the next.

"I came from a generation when older women imparted wisdom to younger women," Burroughs said.

"It wasn't a program; they just did it. They modeled it. My passion is to call women my age to stand up and pour into younger women. We have life

experience, and they want to know how to get there."

Burroughs, who serves and directs Esther Burroughs Ministries, previously served the Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) in missions and evangelism. She has also served as campus minister at Samford University.

Ashley Allen, Embrace director, shared that throughout her life, especially in college, God provided women to come alongside her and show her what it means to be devoted to leaving a legacy and investing in others.

"Women need to realize, and often

See Legacy page 4



Esther Burroughs will be a speaker for "Leaving a Legacy" women's prayer and evangelism conference in September. (Esther Burroughs Ministries photo)



# Anti-pornography initiative launched at SBC

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

**A**n initiative seeking commitments from 1 million men to live pornography-free lives was launched at the SBC annual meeting June 11-12 in Houston.

Named “Join One Million Men,” the initiative calls Christian men to commit to sexual purity and, specifically, to protect themselves and their families from the devastation caused by pornography. The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) jointly sponsored the initiative along with Jay Dennis, pastor of First Baptist Church at the Mall in Lakeland, Fla.

“Internet pornography is the perfect trap because it hooks men and then men don’t know what to do,” Dennis told Baptist Press. “Even if they’re wanting out of it, they don’t know what to do, because if they tell anybody, there’s jeopardy.”

“I am hoping that this will be the launch, the discussion-starter for pastors to go back and start having some hard discussions with their men,” Dennis said.

The Join One Million Men website ([join1millionmen.org](http://join1millionmen.org)) includes a place for men to register their porn-free commitments as well as a place for women to register their commitments to pray for the purity of men in their lives.

Resources from the WMU’s New Hope Publishing also are available at the site, including Dennis’s book *Our Hardcore Battle Plan: Joining in the War against Pornography*; the companion volume for wives, *Our Hardcore Battle Plan for Wives: Winning in the War against Pornography* by Dennis and Cathy Dyer; and a mobile app for men that delivers daily scriptures to their mobile devices to help in the fight against sexual sin.

The seeds of the initiative were planted in 2010 when Dennis compiled a notebook of material to help churches deal with pornography – material that brought revival to families in his church when he had preached a sermon series confronting sexual sin two years earlier. Dennis showed the notebook to Richard Land, then-president of the ERLC, and Land said the material was exactly what he had been praying for.

Land said WMU was the only organization in Southern Baptist life “that [had] the mechanism and the communication apparatus” to launch a convention-wide anti-pornography initiative, Dennis recounted. So Land contacted WMU Executive Director-Treasurer Wanda Lee, and she agreed to support Join One Million Men.



Among the advocates of the initiative is Kevin Conrad, a member of First Baptist Church at the Mall. He helped staff the Join One Million Men booth in the SBC exhibit hall and shared with others his testimony of deliverance from pornography through the power of God’s Word.

“I just simply went to the Word and bathed myself in the truth of God’s Word that I can’t be effective for Him if I’m tied down by the bondage of the lust of my heart,” Conrad said, adding that accountability from his wife and others was a key part of his repentance.

Various Southern Baptist leaders endorsed Join One Million Men during the SBC annual meeting and auxiliary events:

- Russell Moore, the ERLC’s new president, said the anti-pornography initiative confronts a “crisis in our culture and also in the churches when it comes to pornography.”

Viewing pornography is “an act of immorality with a digital prostitute,”

and “persistent, unrepentant pornography” viewing can be biblical grounds for divorce, according to the standard of Matthew 5:32, Moore said. But he stressed the need for grace and reconciliation in a marriage if the spouse viewing pornography repents.

Moore hopes that Join One Million Men will lead to reconciliation in many marriages.

“Because pornography is so sensitive and shameful and embarrassing, often people are reluctant to talk about it except in very abstract terms,” Moore said. “And a pornography culture thrives in darkness and in hiddenness. So if it isn’t addressed, those enslaved to it will

simply hide, and their consciences will be further damaged.”

- Land called Join One Million Men “a Godsend” during the ERLC’s report to the convention and expressed hope that every Southern Baptist church would use the resources produced by Dennis and New Hope. Land also spent time in the Join One Million Men booth talking to people individually about pornography.

“I believe that the devil has figured out that the greatest weapon in his arsenal to destroy families and to destroy lives in 21st-century America is hardcore Internet pornography,” Land told messengers. “And it’s time that we quit playing like ostriches with our heads in the sand and we understood it and we put on the whole armor of God to defend ourselves against the fiery darts of the evil one.”

- The WMU report to the SBC annual meeting focused on Join One Million Men, noting that it is a component of the WMU’s larger three-year campaign against human exploitation.

WMU President Debby Akerman said 56 percent of divorces involve “one party having an obsessive interest in pornographic websites” and that more than \$3,000 is spent each second on pornography.

“The church must be vigilant in the fight against pornography, demonstrating the power of God to redeem those who have been trapped in its grip,” Akerman said.

Though it may seem strange that a women’s mission organization is addressing pornography, Lee said sexual sin must be addressed before Southern Baptists can become optimally effective in

reaching the world for Christ.

“If not WMU, then who? Who will [address pornography]?” Lee said. “For you see, [the apostle] Paul challenges us in Ephesians 4:1 to ‘walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.’”

God “will join us in the campaign to bring all men and

women, boys and girls into an awareness of the seriousness of this issue and the knowledge of God’s love for all that He desires as we try to live a pure and worthy life of devotion to Him,” Lee said. “Missions will not happen if we are not pure and holy before the Lord.”

- In a Pastors’ Conference sermon, Matt Carter, pastor of Austin Stone Com-

munity Church in Austin, Texas, challenged pastors to love their wives and families.

In order to fulfill the 1 Timothy 3:2 requirement that a pastor be a “one-woman man,” Carter recommended that ministers never travel alone, have protective software on their computers and phones and give their wives access to their email, phones, social media and financial records.

Dennis estimated that as many as 2,000 people visited the Join One Million Men booth during the Pastors’ Conference and SBC annual meeting. Many pastors told of the pain pornography has caused in their congregations and expressed support for the initiative.

“I pray that this time next year, when we get to Baltimore, we will have known that the majority of pastors in this convention have at least started the discussion with their churches,” Dennis said.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – David Roach is a writer in Shelbyville, Ky.) **BR**

## GRADUATES

### Campbell Divinity School

**Master of Divinity** – John Alford, Sanford; David Anderson, Benson; Nola Boezeman, Apex; Catherine Campbell, Ernul; Jessica Cruz, New Bern; Faith Dickens, Fayetteville; Charles Fiore, Kernersville; David Gaddy, Burlington; Amy Gallaher, Budapest, Hungary; Kevin Gregory, Sanford; Brittany Jackson, Clayton; Caitlin Jones, Raleigh; Jonathan Lee, Fuquay-Varina; Amy McClure, Clyde; Sarah McCoy, Raleigh; Brian Miller, Richfield; Kimberly Miller, Richfield; Lawrence Powers, Greenville; Micah Royal, Fayetteville; Joshua Summerlin, Dunn; Allison Tucker, Wilmington; Michael Tyndall, Roseboro; April Viverette, Fayetteville; Chris Walk, Coats; Deborah Wall, Smithfield; and Tyler Ward, St. Pauls.

**Master of Arts in Christian Education** – Judson Cook, Raleigh; Miriam Dobbins, Hillsborough; David Little, Clayton; Luci Prazeres, Robbins.

**Master of Arts in Christian Ministries** – Carla Babb, Holly Springs.

### Luther Rice Seminary

**Doctor of Ministry** – Stan Welch, Asheville.

**Master of Divinity** – Marilyn Graham, Fayetteville.

**Master of Arts in Apologetics** – Patricia Matthews, Rose Hill.

**Master of Arts in Biblical Counseling** – Erich Benthe, Burlington.

**Master of Arts in Christian Studies** – Van Lawing, Black Mountain.

**“Because pornography is so sensitive and shameful and embarrassing, often people are reluctant to talk about it except in very abstract terms. And a pornography culture thrives in darkness ...”**  
– Russell Moore





## NCMO materials to arrive in July

**A** new approach to help churches promote the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO), without having to order new materials, will begin this year.

Churches that ordered NCMO materials in either 2012 or 2011 will receive similar orders of 2013 materials from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC). The materials will arrive in July.

The free packets include posters, videos, bulletin inserts and other materials to help missions leaders promote the offering within their churches. Churches can easily order additional materials as needed. Also, additional NCMO materials, such as a 30-day prayer guide, can be downloaded from the NCMO website at <http://www.ncbaptist.org/>.

The theme for NCMO this year is “Compelled by Christ: Proclaiming release, relief and redemption,” based on Luke 4:18. The NCMO is the BSC’s second major funding program for missions – following the Cooperative Program – with a goal this year of \$2.1 million.

More than half the offering will be used for the 14 ministries of North Caroli-

na Baptist Men. These ministries include: disaster relief, medical/dental ministry, mission camps at Red Springs and Shelby, volunteer mobilization, prison ministry and much more. NCMO is the main funding source for Baptist Men.

Volunteer teams were sent to Oklahoma after tornadoes destroyed towns there earlier this year. Since Hurricane Sandy hit New Jersey and New York last October, N.C. Baptist men and women have prepared more than 600,000 meals and completed hundreds of recovery projects to help storm victims.

NCMO also provides about a third of the budget used by the BSC’s Church Planting Team to plant new churches. In 2012 that ministry helped plant 101 new churches across the state, including many churches for a variety of ethnic groups.

In 2012, new churches that receive convention support made more than 111,000 evangelistic contacts and registered 3,036 professions of faith. Total weekly worship attendance in these churches averaged 5,848.

For more NCMO information, call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5547, or go to [www.ncmissionsoffering.org](http://www.ncmissionsoffering.org). **BR**

## Cedarville calls White as president

Baptist Press

**C**edarville University in Ohio has called as its 10th president Thomas White, a graduate and former staff member of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Before accepting his new role, White was vice president for student services and communications at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas.

White assumed the post July 1, replacing William E. Brown who has transitioned to Cedarville’s chancellor, the school’s board

of trustees has announced. Cedarville is endorsed by the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio, one of 42 state/regional conventions within the Southern Baptist Convention.

Before joining Southwestern, White was the interim vice president for student services at Southeastern.

White holds a Ph.D. in systematic theology, an M.Div. in pastoral track and languages from Southeastern, a B.A. in English and an associate’s degree from Anderson University in Indiana.

White and his wife, Joy, have two young children, Rachel and Samuel. **BR**



THOMAS WHITE

## CHURCH NEWS



### Providence Baptist Church, Holly Ridge

“God’s people are busy people,” is a popular saying of Bessie Ruth Wallace, who was Woman’s Missionary Union (WMU) director and president of Baptist Women at Providence Baptist Church for 50 years. The church honored Wallace June 2 for her years of service. Known as “Mrs. Wallace” to most, she has led Providence members to pray, give and go on mission. Her husband, Bill, died in 2006. He was a U.S. Marine who used his deployments in the Pacific Rim as a means to share the gospel and support mission work overseas. Mrs. M.E. “Gene” Gibson, 94, was also at the service. She helped launch WMU at Providence in the 1950s before Wallace took over in 1962. Although Wallace stepped down in 2012, her legacy is appreciated, said Preston Wells, Providence’s pastor. Under Wallace’s leadership WMU women sent Bibles, literature, food items and financial resources to local and international sites as well as served door to door in the Holly Ridge community. Debby Akerman, National WMU president, and Tana Hartsell, North Carolina WMU president, were present as well. The special recognition also coincided with the church’s and national WMU’s 125th anniversary. (Contributed photo)

## OPPORTUNITY CORNER

### ‘Building Bridges’ offers training for church librarians

Church librarians – experienced or brand new – are invited to a conference that would help equip them for ministry.

With the theme “Building Bridges,” the Aug. 2-4 event seeks to deepen the understanding of church library ministry, enhance skills, create personal skill development strategies, and develop networks and relationships with other librarians.

The conference will be held at Ridgecrest Conference Center.

The program fee is \$65 per person; for commuters, a one-day fee is \$35, or the

entire event would be \$90.

There are two options for accommodation: Mountain Laurel, which costs \$79/room/night, or Rhododendron, which costs \$74/room/night; both have a maximum occupancy of four people in a room. The meal package costs \$64 per person, which includes six meals: Friday’s dinner through Sunday’s lunch.

To make reservations, call (800) 588-7222 or register online at <http://ridgecrestconferencecenter.org/event/equipping-churchlibrariansforministry>.



## AROUND THE STATE

### Anniversary

**ROAN MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH**, Bakersville, is celebrating its 200th anniversary Aug. 25.

Located on Sandy Branch Road, Roan Mountain is the oldest church of any denomination in Mitchell County. Earliest records indicate that the church joined the French Broad Association under the leadership of Elder Stephen Morgan in

1813. The first building they had was a small log structure. As the church grew the membership built two other buildings. The building enjoyed today was constructed in the early 1950’s with a fellowship hall and classrooms added in the early 1980’s. It is currently part of the Mitchell Baptist Association. Pastor C. Timothy Fowler would like to invite people to come to the Aug. 25 anniversary service at 10 a.m. There will be a fellowship meal after the service.

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### NCBM at work in North Carolina too

Along with teams in Oklahoma, New York, New Jersey and Hungary, North Carolina Baptist Men has volunteers working in Stanly, Franklin and Forsyth counties after recent storms caused damage. Volunteers are also still serving in Pamlico County with Hurricane Irene recovery efforts. Send checks to NCBM Disaster Relief, P.O. Box 1107, Cary, NC 27512. Please specify which disaster you'd like to direct your funds. Visit [www.baptistsonmission.org/Giving/Disaster-Relief](http://www.baptistsonmission.org/Giving/Disaster-Relief). (NCBM photo)

# SEBTS to launch Spurgeon Center

SEBTS Communications

**T**he Charles H. Spurgeon Center for Pastoral Leadership and Preaching, which is expected to launch this fall, will be a means by which Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary equips Great Commission-minded pastors to preach God's Word and lead healthy churches.

Charles "Chuck" Lawless, dean of graduate studies and professor of evangelism and missions at Southeastern, will assume the directorship of the Spurgeon Center, which will be run out of his office.

"I envision the center promoting practical leadership training for local church pastors," Lawless said. "We want to help church planters as well as pastors who are working to revitalize a church."

This center has a board of advisors composed of Edgar Aponte, director of Hispanic leadership development at Southeastern; Dennis Kim, senior pastor of Global Mission Church, Silver Spring, Md.; Johnny Hunt, senior pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Ga.; Sam Rainer, senior pastor of Stevens Street Baptist Church, Cookeville, Tenn.; and A.B. Vines, senior pastor of New Seasons Church, Spring Valley, Calif.

The board will help guide the center in assisting pastors in excelling within their daily ministries. Alongside of growing healthy churches and revitalizing dying churches, the center plans to encourage and resource church planters. It also will seek to build strategic partnerships with other Southern Baptist Convention entities, such as LifeWay and the North American Mission Board, that also work with pastoral leaders.

"I am excited about the blessing this center will be to the churches," said Daniel Akin, president of Southeastern. "We will attempt to serve pastors in fulfilling this noble work given to them by King Jesus."

A primary goal of the center is to help churches become Great Commission churches. Lawless said, "We're partnering with local churches to make them more effective in areas such as leadership so that the gospel can penetrate local communities and ultimately extend to all nations."

Lawless emphasized that the center "wants to provide the best advice and necessary tools for pastors of local churches."

"Because of the world we live in today," Lawless said, "we have to offer multiple media. I would like to bring individuals to campus as well as send our faculty to those local churches. Alongside of these traditional avenues, I think we also have to be ready to provide training online."

The center plans to utilize the experience of Akin, Tony Merida, pastor of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, and Jim Shaddix, pastor for teaching and training at The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, Ala., to assist the center in helping equip churches.

"God calls and raises up pastors to feed, lead, protect and reproduce sheep," Akin said.

"Those under-shepherds who labor for the glory of the Great Shepherd need to be equipped and well trained for the weighty assignment that has been laid upon them."

"And we want to equip and train ministers well through the Spurgeon Center at Southeastern." **BR**

## Embrace Continued from page 1

they don't, that their lives have impact and they can impact other lives," said Allen, who will be one of the featured speakers. "Scripture is clear that we are to leave a godly legacy. We're called to leave a legacy of faith."

"There were so many women who faithfully invested in me and taught me the things of God – how to pray, study Scripture and rely upon the Lord in both good and bad times," she added. "Some had a college education and some did not; but they were faithful. They impacted my life greatly, and have in turn impacted those I minister to."

Merrie Johnson, BSC student evangelism consultant, will join Burroughs and Allen as one of the featured speakers. Johnson has worked with youth for 27 years and leads the summer Youth Weeks at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell. Youth Weeks draws nearly 7,000 middle and high school students each year. Breakout sessions during the Embrace event will focus on topics such as prayer, spiritual mothering, evangelism from the home, the heritage of truth, and



MERRIE JOHNSON

helping children avoid the pitfalls of life. A complete list of topics and speakers is available at [www.ncbaptist.org/wpec](http://www.ncbaptist.org/wpec).

Pam Blume, member of the conference planning team and wife of Biblical Recorder editor Allan Blume, will lead a session on recording a spiritual legacy. Blume will teach women practical ways to record their spiritual legacy, such as tying it in with their family tree.

Years ago when Blume helped her son with a fifth grade project related to their family tree, they learned not only about their heritage, but about the spiritual leaders in their family who had gone before them.

From then on, recording their spiritual legacy became a "lifelong thing for us," Blume said.

Blume encouraged women to attend the conference for an opportunity to learn from and be inspired by women of influence, such as Burroughs.

"When you think of legacy, you think Esther Burroughs," Blume said. "She is such an encouragement to women in any stage of life."

Blume challenged women to be intentional in reaching out to others, from their children to their peers to other

women, and begin influencing them for Christ.

"You have your own sphere of influence," she said. "God has you here for a purpose, and He wants to use you."

The conference begins at 2 p.m. Friday, Sept. 6, with early bird breakout sessions at 3 p.m. and 4:15 p.m. To register, call Ridgecrest at (800) 588-7222.

For more information, call (800) 395-5102 ext. 5561, email [embracenc@ncbaptist.org](mailto:embracenc@ncbaptist.org) or visit [www.ncbaptist.org/wpec](http://www.ncbaptist.org/wpec); click "Registration" to register online. **BR**



**"You have your own sphere of influence. God has you here for a purpose, and He wants to use you."**  
– Pam Blume



# N.C. graduates stand for prayer

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | BR Managing Editor

Pastor Marc Sanders sounds like a proud parent when he discusses the stand a group of North Carolina high school seniors – some of whom attend the church he leads – took during their graduation ceremonies in June.

In response to Chatham County school officials removing prayer from the commencement programs of Chatham Central and Jordan-Matthews high schools, seniors from both schools rose to their feet during their ceremonies and recited the Lord's Prayer.

"We're very proud of our students," said Sanders, pastor of Sandy Branch Baptist Church in Bear Creek. "It went over very well in the crowd. People were standing and applauding."

The public stand that the students took at the two high schools is reminiscent of the one a South Carolina high school valedictorian, Roy Costner IV, took earlier that month.

During the ceremony he ripped up his

pre-approved commencement speech and recited the Lord's Prayer.

The event quickly went viral on YouTube. (See related guest column on page 11.)

"That definitely inspired us," said Cayley Oldham, one of the graduates from Chatham Central and a member of Sandy Branch Baptist Church.

"We want[ed] to do this, not just our valedictorian. ... We all wanted to do something."

Days before graduation, four students at Jordan-Matthews High School requested during a Chatham County Board of Education meeting that prayer be removed from commencement ceremonies. A national group, Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF), also



Marc Sanders, seen here at a previous Baptist State Convention annual meeting, has some students from his church who took a stand during their graduation ceremony in June. Sanders, who pastors Sandy Branch Baptist Church in Bear Creek, urges believers to stay informed and become more involved in local politics in order to protect their rights. (File photo)

sent a cease and desist order to the Chatham County School superintendent, threatening to sue if the schools didn't remove prayer from their graduation programs.

The schools responded by replacing prayer with a moment of silence and reflection.

"My phone blew up once this news got out," Sanders said.

"It just made me mad," Oldham said. "It's our freedom of speech and ... if no one stands up and fights it [then] prayer is going to be banned everywhere."

With school officials across the country continuing to tighten restrictions on public prayer, Sanders said most schools aren't equipped to stand up to lawsuits and threats from watchdog groups like FFRF.

"They don't have money to spend on court cases, and so they'll just bow to the pressure," he said.

"... Everybody is afraid of getting sued. ... Now [churches and religious organizations] have that added fear of the IRS and losing your tax-exempt status."

It is time for believers to "wake up" and become more informed of their rights as American citizens, Sanders said.

"If it can happen in Chatham County, the rest of the state is fair game," he added.

"The biggest thing is ... most people don't know their rights."

Last fall, West Marion Elementary School officials in McDowell County removed references of God from a first-grade student's poem that she had written for a Veteran's Day school program. According to media reports, the girl wrote the poem to honor her two grandfathers who served in the military.

"He prayed to God for peace," the girl wrote in the poem. "He prayed to God for strength." Many complained the school had broken the girl's First Amendment rights by editing God out of the poem.

Despite these and other obstacles, Sanders challenges believers to not be intimidated, to stay informed and become more involved.

"The history of the church says the church is at its best when it's persecuted," Sanders said.

"I think the problem is that a majority of our people in our pews are fast asleep and don't see this coming for what it is. We never saw it coming in Chatham County.

"... Our churches need to be more involved in the public schools," Sanders added.

"You can get in there and do things, but you have to be willing to try." **BR**

## Sowing seeds in line at Starbucks

Over the last four years of serving through Embrace Women's Missions and Ministries, I have had the incredible privilege of helping women understand that He desires to use them to make disciples and see His Great Commission fulfilled. Last year I was "re-reminded" on a mission trip to New York City that this happens in our everyday, ordinary moments.

My friends and I were a bit surprised that the barista at the busy Starbucks in Grand Central Station remembered seeing us the day before on a crowded subway train as we traveled from Queens to Times Square. As we waited for our order, I looked down and saw the Creation to Christ story that had been inked on my left hand and arm the day before following a "Henna Party" we hosted for Southeast Asian ladies in Jackson Heights, Queens.

My friend, Kelli, and I began to share the gospel with the barista while our other friend, Shirley, was praying off to the side of the counter.

During our discussion, no one approached the counter to order coffee or interrupt us. The lady didn't pray to receive Christ that afternoon, but in an everyday encounter and conversation, we were able to tell her about Jesus.



ASHLEY ALLEN

Often the enemy dupes us into thinking we have to have a predetermined plan or outline in order to share Christ. What a false thought! Scripture shows us through Jesus and the woman at the well (John 4); Paul and the conversion of Lydia at Philippi (Acts 16); and Peter and the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8) that the opportunities to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ take place as we live our everyday lives and interact with others.

*(EDITOR'S NOTE – Ashley Allen is director of Embrace Women's Missions and Ministries for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. For more information you can reach her at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5559. Read her blog at [www.worthyofthecalling.com](http://www.worthyofthecalling.com).)*

**Embrace**   
NC Baptist Women's Missions & Ministries

## Pochek to be nominated at Pastor's Conference as vice president

David Pierce, pastor of Belhaven Missionary Baptist in Belhaven, will nominate Robert Pochek as vice-president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) Pastor's Conference during the 2013 conference in November.

Pochek and his wife Susan have been married 24 years. They have two children, David, 22, and Jessica, 18. He is a native of Fairview Heights, Ill., where he grew up attending Gateway Baptist Church. He answered the call to vocational ministry at the age of 16.

Pochek has been the senior pastor of

Raleigh Road Baptist Church in Wilson since July 2009. He has served in ministry positions in Missouri and Illinois during his 19 years of ministry.

Pochek holds a bachelor's degree in religious studies from Hannibal-LaGrange University in Hannibal, Mo., as well as a master of divinity degree and a doctor of philosophy degree from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky.

In June 2000 he served on the Committee on Committees at the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, Fla. **BR**



ROB POCHKE

# Ruling Continued from page 1

Southern Baptist leaders expressed remorse at the high court's opinions, especially in the DOMA case. (See editor's column on p. 13 for more opinions from North Carolina Baptists).

Ethicist Russell D. Moore described the DOMA ruling as "far-reaching, with massive implications for family life and religious liberty."

"The grounding of this decision in equal protection and human dignity means this is not simply a procedural matter of federalism. This is a new legal reality," said Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

Appearing on CNN June 27, R. Albert Mohler Jr. said many dates in American history stand out as red letter days and "this is one of those days."

"I think even as there are many people celebrating this, we recognize this is a major cultural divide over something as basic as marriage," said Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. "It is, I think, something that will be very, very devastating for our country over the long term because what it means is the inevitable marginalization of marriage and the subversion of the most essential institution for human existence."

Executive Committee President Frank Page called the DOMA decision in a written statement "a wrong decision with far-reaching moral and religious liberty implications. With one stroke of the pen, this Court has redefined the universal, historical, and biblical ideal of marriage as a monogamous relationship between one man and one woman."

In contrast, same-sex marriage advocates were ecstatic at the developments.

Kevin Cathcart, executive director of Lambda Legal, described it as a "thrilling day."

"[O]nce again, our world has changed," he wrote on his blog. "We are two steps closer to the goal of full equality for [lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender] Americans."

President Obama applauded the court's DOMA ruling.

In a statement, Obama said he had directed Attorney General Eric Holder "to work with other members of my Cabinet to review all relevant federal statutes to ensure this decision, including its implications for Federal benefits and obligations, is implemented swiftly and smoothly."

On CNN, Mohler said he believes marriage "is a pre-political institution that God gave to all His human creatures and that it always has been and always must be the union of a man and a woman. To radically transform the institution

of marriage is to change the definition of what it means for humans to exist together in community."

In his statement, Moore told Southern Baptists and other Christians, "Same-sex marriage is headed for your community. This is no time for fear or outrage or politicizing. It's a time for forgiven sinners, like us, to do what the people of Christ have always done. It's time for us to point beyond our family values and our culture wars to the cross of Christ as we say: 'Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.' And that's good news."

In the DOMA ruling, the Supreme Court affirmed lower court decisions that struck down only Section 3 of the law passed by Congress and signed by President Clinton in 1996. Section 3 defines marriage as a heterosexual union for purposes of such matters as federal benefits and bars the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

DOMA "violates basic due process and equal protection principles" applied to the federal government, Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote in the majority opinion.

Kennedy seemed to indicate DOMA was "motivated by an improper animus or purpose." It deviates from the tradition of the federal government recognizing state definitions of marriage and provides evidence of disapproving of a class of citizens, he said.

"The avowed purpose and practical effect of [DOMA] are to impose a disadvantage, a separate status, and so a stigma upon all who enter into same-sex marriages made lawful by the unquestioned authority of the States," Kennedy wrote.

No states had legalized same-sex marriage when DOMA was enacted in 1996, but 12 states and the District of Columbia now have done so.

DOMA's purpose is to treat gay marriages recognized by states as "second-class marriages for purposes of federal law," Kennedy said.

The law is unconstitutional because "no legitimate purpose overcomes the purpose and effect to disparage and to injure those whom the State, by its marriage laws, sought to protect in personhood and dignity," he wrote.

Joining Kennedy in the majority were the four associate justices considered

the most liberal on the court: Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer, Sonia Sotomayor and Elena Kagan.

In his dissent, Associate Justice Antonin Scalia said he is certain the majority's accusations that Congress and Clinton acted maliciously toward same-sex couples are false. "To hurl such accusations so casually demeans this institution," he said.

"[T]o defend traditional marriage is not to condemn, demean, or humiliate those who would prefer other arrangements, any more than to defend the Constitution of the United States is to condemn, demean, or humiliate other constitutions," Scalia wrote.

Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justices Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito also dissented.

In its other same-sex marriage decision, the high court did not rule on the constitutionality of a California amendment known as Proposition 8. Instead, it ruled Prop 8's supporters – who appealed

a lower court ruling after the governor and attorney general refused to do so – did not have standing, or the legal right, to make such an appeal. The justices sent the case back to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco and ordered it to dismiss the appeal.

In the majority opinion, Roberts

said the Supreme Court declined to break precedent in the case. "We have never before upheld the standing of a private party to defend the constitutionality of a state statute when state officials have chosen not to," he wrote.

The ruling made for an unusual mixture of conservative and liberal justices on each side. Joining Roberts in the

majority were Scalia, Ginsburg, Breyer and Kagan. Dissenting were Kennedy, Thomas, Alito and Sotomayor.

The high court's action left a federal judge's opinion striking down Prop 8 in effect. California Gov. Jerry Brown announced later Wednesday he had directed the Department of Public Health to "advise the state's counties that they must begin issuing marriage licenses" to same-sex couples throughout the state when the Ninth Circuit rules in response to the Supreme Court's order.

Alliance Defending Freedom, which helped defend Prop 8, contended, however, the amendment is still the "law of the land in California."

California voters approved Proposition 8 as an amendment to the state constitution in 2008 after the state Supreme Court had legalized gay marriage earlier in the year. The Ninth Circuit, however, affirmed a federal judge's decision striking down the amendment.

Defenders of the biblical, traditional definition of marriage expressed some relief that the Supreme Court limited the reach of its decisions.

The justices "could have gone much further and struck down the marriage amendments which are in 30 states," Family Research Council President Tony Perkins said in the same CNN interview with Mohler. "They did not do that. This only applies to California, and how it's going to be implemented we don't yet know as we are still combing through the opinion."

The 12 states that have legalized same-sex marriage are Connecticut, Delaware, Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Washington and Vermont.

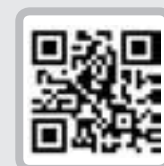
The DOMA decision is *U.S. v. Windsor*. The Prop 8 opinion is *Hollingsworth v. Perry*.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Tom Strode is Washington bureau chief for Baptist Press. With reporting by Erin Roach, assistant editor of Baptist Press.) **BR**

**"This is no time for fear or outrage or politicizing. It's a time for forgiven sinners, like us, to do what the people of Christ have always done. It's time for us to point ... to the cross ..."**  
– Russell D. Moore

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# GuideStone advocates passage of Church Health Plan Act

By ROY HAYHURST | Baptist Press

(EDITOR'S NOTE – The following article from GuideStone Financial Resources sets forth the Southern Baptist entity's support for the Church Health Plan Act of 2013 as a corrective measure for disadvantages church health plans face under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act, or Obamacare, enacted in 2010.)

For 95 years, GuideStone has provided financial and health benefits to pastors, ministers and employees of church and church-related organizations such as universities, seminaries, hospitals and other ministry-focused organizations. When added up across all denominations, more than 1 million pastors and others serving those organizations receive health care coverage through church health plans like those made available by GuideStone.

Those pastors, ministers and employees, as well as their families, were disregarded and put at a disadvantage when the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act was enacted in 2010. Beginning in 2014, premium tax credits will be made available to eligible individuals who purchase their health coverage from commercial health care exchanges, but those credits will not be available to pastors and others who get their health care coverage from church health plans.

The Church Health Plan Act, S.B. 1164, introduced in the Senate, will provide fairness for church health plans that cover ministers and others serving churches and ministry organizations. GuideStone strongly supports the efforts of the bill's sponsors, Sen. Mark Pryor,

D.-Ark., and Sen. Christopher Coons, D.-Del., and urges both Democratic and Republican senators alike to ensure its swift passage.

Recognizing the economic realities facing Washington, the bill does not add to the cost of health care reform's overall tab. It simply ensures that a benefit promised to millions of Americans is available to pastors and other church staff members. GuideStone believes pastors should not have to choose between tax credits available to other Americans and proven health care plans designed with the unique needs of ministers and other church employees in mind.

GuideStone is encouraging pastors and other concerned individuals to contact their senators and urge them to join as co-sponsors and work together for the sake of pastors and others in ministry.

The Church Health Plan Act enables pastors and others who receive their coverage through church health plans to access the same premium tax credits provided to participants in secular health plans. "For many months GuideStone has been advocating on multiple avenues related to health care reform, and we continue to do so," said O.S. Hawkins, president of GuideStone. "Now, Congress stands poised to provide fair treatment for church health care plans. If Congress fails to act, they will be disadvantaging church plans as compared to commercial, secular plans."

Church health plans have a robust legacy of providing health care benefits to pastors and others employed by ministry organizations. Church health plans offer many unique features, among them portability, which allows ministers to take their coverage with them as they move

to different places of service.

Many who share conservative political values have been outspoken about the need to repeal the health care reform law. While that remains an ultimate goal for many, the Church Health Plan Act will help level the playing field immediately, while repeal efforts continue over the coming years.

"This is a matter that deserves prompt attention," Hawkins said. "Failure by Congress to act is an unthinkable affront to the vital and historic role of church health plans and, as a practical matter, places a disproportionate financial burden on many pastors and others in ministry who have relatively low household incomes. This is wholly unwarranted. Church health plans have been consistently competitive with private insurers and have existed in their current form for years and years. They have met the needs of their constituents in a manner that reflects their core convictions."

If Congress chooses not to act, church health plans will find themselves in an untenable and unfair position within the health care marketplace. GuideStone is diligently preparing for the full effect of the implementation of President Obama's health care reform in 2014 and will be there to serve its participants as has been the case for so many years. However, GuideStone joins with other church health plans in urging enactment of the Church Health Plan Act so church health plans will be allowed to continue and compete as health care reform unfolds in future years.

Visit [www.FairnessForPastors.org](http://www.FairnessForPastors.org).

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Roy Hayhurst is senior manager of editorial services at GuideStone Financial Resources.) **BR**

## Southern Baptists weigh in on Exodus closing

By ERIN ROACH | Baptist Press

Southern Baptist leaders are sharing their thoughts after Exodus International, a decades-old ministry of helping people overcome homosexual behavior, announced June 19 it is closing down. The organization's president, Alan Chambers, also issued a public apology to people who have been hurt by the ministry.

"Exodus International is the prodigal's older brother, trying to impose its will on God's promises, and make judgments on who's worthy of His Kingdom. God is calling us to be the Father – to welcome everyone, to love unhindered," said Chambers in his written statement, alluding also to the development of a new ministry to "reduce fear."

Russell D. Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said the folding of Exodus International "doesn't mean the folding of an evangelical sexual ethic, though it does mean a move away from a therapeutic model of sexual sanctification."

"Evangelical Christianity increasingly addresses sexual issues more in line with the older Christian tradition of sin and

temptation and triumph than with the language of therapy," Moore told Baptist Press. "We can't have a utopian view of overcoming temptation of any sort."

Jesus never promises any Christian freedom from temptation, Moore said, but He does promise the power of the Spirit to fight against the pull to temptation, whatever the temptation may be.

"Increasingly churches are addressing persons with same-sex attractions the same way they address everyone else: in terms of the gospel and a lifelong call to take up one's cross and follow Christ," Moore said. "This means the Christian grappling with same-sex attractions needs to hear that the gospel addresses him or her, and that this person needs the whole body of Christ, in community, not just an accountability group of those who are defined by the same temptations."

R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, said it became clear last year – when Chambers suggested that people can persist in homosexual behavior and still receive the salvation that Jesus offers – that Chambers and Exodus International

See Exodus page 16

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# Bible Drill in N.C. inspires South African couple

Special to the Recorder

**B**usy weekends are nothing new for most parents. When Thomas and Elizabeth Gibbs of Midland heard the weekend their South African guests would be staying with them, they tried to decide what to do. With Elizabeth tied up with a Bible Drill competition and Thomas scheduled to coach a soccer game, they wondered, “Should we try to trade days with someone else?”

“It was God’s timing that we should meet and that we should [go] to the Bible Drill,” said Thomas, pastor of First Baptist Church in Midland.

The Gibbs were participating in a partnership between Cabarrus Baptist Association and the Baptist Union of South Africa. The partnership was established primarily to provide assistance to the churches and pastors of the Northwest Province Baptist Association, which contains 30 churches scattered over a sparsely populated area about the size of Texas and is part of the Baptist Union of South Africa.

That weekend the Gibbs hosted Pastor Moeng Segoai (also known as Kenneth) and his wife, Tshupetso (also known as Rebecca), from Kimberley, South Africa. The couple is also part of the partnership. Kenneth is pastor of Phutanang Baptist Church. While in North Carolina, Kenneth preached and shared about their ministries in Africa.

Thomas still doesn’t know how his family’s name got on the list to host the Segoais but he said God was at work. After a heart stent procedure in December, Thomas had gone for a follow-up appointment. He stopped at a restaurant where he ran into the pastor in charge of coordinating housing for the South Africans. He thanked Thomas for being willing to host a couple. Thomas didn’t say anything, but wondered what was happening since he had never signed any list. An email came a couple of weeks later letting Thomas know when his family would be hosting the South African couple.

Besides not signing up and having health issues, Thomas said they don’t have a lot of room in their home. The Gibbs have five children, ages 13 to 21, all living at home in their 1,500-square-foot home. There are three bedrooms and an office that also serves as a bedroom.

“Never try to second guess what God is trying to do,” Thomas said. “He works in His own way and in His own timing.”

When Thomas went to pick up the Segoais April 20, his soccer game had been cancelled due to rain. Instead of going

to the soccer game, he took the couple to Parkwood Baptist Church in Concord, where the regional Bible Drill was taking place.

After observing the children and youth taking part in the event, Kenneth and Rebecca asked where they could learn more about Bible Drill, a program that teaches the importance of studying and memorizing scripture.

Elizabeth Gibbs, who has been part of Bible Drill for around 15 years at various levels, shared how to use the materials they had with the Segoais. Deborah Robson, consultant with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, provided some supplies as well.

The Segoais were excited about having a tool they could use to help young people in South Africa learn scripture.

“If we had come at any other time, we might not have seen [the] Bible Drill,” said Kenneth. “We may have been sick or just been too tired to have watched, but God planned it this way. We were looking for something to use to teach the young people in South Africa.”

## Bible Drill provides deeper understanding

While FBC Midland didn’t have a lot of participants in Bible drill this year – one youth and four children – Thomas said Bible Drill offers a deeper level of Bible understanding.

“It’s vitally important to memorize God’s Word but also

to apply it,” Thomas said. “They use a variety of techniques to help them learn,” which include music CDs and other resources.

Elizabeth has seen Bible Drill make a difference in her own home. All five of the Gibbs’ children have participated in the program at some point. She sometimes hears her children remind each other of scripture they learned during Bible Drill events.

“I know that God’s Word says it will never come back void,” she said. “It impacts people’s lives.”

Thomas pointed out that Americans take for granted resources that are available.

Many can walk into LifeWay Christian Store or order various materials online. Something Americans might use once, the Segoais and other South Africans will be able to use numerous times.

“They just see us as having so much because they have very little,” Elizabeth said.

The Gibbs bought extra suitcases for the Segoais to carry back Bible Drill supplies.



Elizabeth, left, and Kenneth and Rebecca Segoai with Cabarrus



Youth and high school Bible Drill participants gather for a group photo after the state Bible Drill finals at Abbott’s Creek Missionary Baptist Church

## 2013 state winners

### Youth Bible Drill

1st Place: Taylor Jacobs, Mt. Elim Baptist Church, Red Springs  
2nd Place: Daniel Cooke, University Hills Baptist Church, Charlotte, and Destiny Demery, Mt. Airy Baptist Church, Pembroke

### High School Bible Drill

1st Place: Laura Abernathy, Wilkies Grove Baptist Church, Hickory  
2nd Place: Kali Strickland, Mt. Airy Baptist Church, Pembroke  
3rd Place: Katie Beasley, Coats Baptist Church, Coats

### Youth Speaker’s Tournament

1st Place: Audra Daniel, Burkemont Baptist Church, Morganton  
2nd Place: Mark Locklear, Island Grove Baptist Church, Pembroke  
3rd Place: Sydney Bryant, Abbott’s Creek Missionary Baptist Church, High Point, and Madison Swift, Parkwood Baptist Church, Concord

The top scorer in each division went on to compete nationally in June.

## What is Bible Drill?

**B**ible Drill, a program that teaches the importance of studying and memorizing scripture, is for children, youth and high school students in grades 4-12.

The program is built on three age groups – children (grades 4-6), youth (grades 7-9) and high school (grades 10-12). The Youth Speaker’s Tournament consists of high school age students, (grades 10-12) who present a prepared speech.

Children learn 75 Bible verses over three years; the number increases as they get older. Youth learn 30 verses a year. The high school group not only learns 30 verses a year but they also learn key passages. As they get older, the youth and high school participants

delve more into biblical doctrine, which is built off the Baptist Faith & Message.

This year in Bible Drill, there were 576 registered participants who represented 720 N.C. Baptist churches. The competitions begin at the church level, then move to associational and regional levels. Only youth, high school and speaker’s competitors move on to the state level. There were 18 youth drillers, 10 high school drillers and seven speakers that participated in the state finals May 11 at Abbott’s Creek Missionary Baptist Church, High Point.

The first-place winners for the youth, high school and speaker’s tournament competed in the national competition in

Duluth, Ga., June 20. Thomas was placed in the top three. Robson, a consultant with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, said the program is doing well.

“The amount of scripture learned, not only in the hearts, makes them the top winner,” Robson said. “... This is what sets Bible Drill apart from other Bible programs.”

**BIBLE**  
Baptist State Convention





Thomas Gibbs, right, were able to provide Bible Drill supplies, including Bibles, to cca Segoai of South Africa. The Segoais were in North Carolina as part of a partner-Baptist Association. (Contributed photo)

The Segoais left with two boxes of Bibles and full suitcases of Bible Drill materials.

Thomas said his church and another congregation took up love offerings for the Segoais. Those funds will go toward helping complete a church building.

Kenneth said he “felt doubly blessed” by the generosity of the churches.

For more information about N.C. Bible Drill, visit [NCBibleDrill.org](http://NCBibleDrill.org). Contact Deborah Robson at [drobson@ncbaptist.org](mailto:drobson@ncbaptist.org) or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5652. **B3**



in High Point. (Contributed photo)

**“Never try to second guess what God is trying to do. He works in His own way and in His own timing.”**  
— Thomas Gibbs

though none of them Deborah Robson, Baptist State Convention they represented the

capture each driller their minds, but their



**“The amount of scripture each driller learned, not only in their minds, but their hearts, makes them the top winner.”**  
— Deborah Robson

# Transformed by missions, students become ‘gospel-global’ citizens

By **BUDDY OVERMAN** | BSC Communications

**D**uring his three years in college, Austin Tallant has participated in mission trips to Haiti, Cuba and New York City.

“There is nothing in this world better than going on a mission trip and experiencing God in a different way,” said Tallant, a rising senior at Chowan University in Murfreesboro. “I can’t get enough of that.”

When Tallant, from Phoenix, Ariz., heard about Chowan’s annual international mission trip in May he quickly volunteered. For Tallant, mission trips are a natural outlet to serve others.

“I’ve had so many opportunities in my life; I just have to go,” he said. “It wouldn’t be right for me not to go.”

Tallant was one of 15 students and staff from Chowan to participate in the recent mission trip to Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, where they ministered among more than 200,000 street children who call the city home.

Orphaned or abandoned, and as young as five years old, the children come to the city in search of money, food and shelter.

Money, food and shelter are in short supply in Ethiopia, where the average income per citizen is \$125 per year. When children arrive in Addis Ababa they often have little choice but to live on the streets where they beg and sometimes steal to survive.

Yet, despite their circumstances, they have a contagious zeal for life, Tallant said.

“These kids are so loving; it’s remarkable to see,” he said. “If we could just have their exuberance and their love throughout our lives, imagine how much better the world would be.”

## Transform 122

The Ethiopia trip was part of Transform 122, a collegiate missions initiative sponsored by North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM) and Baptist Campus Ministry that seeks to help involve college students in global missions opportunities. Transform 122 is based on Romans 12:2.

“We want college students to grow a passion for missions, to see a vision of helping others,” said Tom Beam, NCBM student missions mobilization consultant. “The way to do that is to involve them in missions in our local area, in our country and all around the world.”

Through Transform 122, the Chowan team worked with Onesimus Ministries, a Christ-centered organization that provides tutoring, social work, character building and spiritual ministry to street children. The organization’s goal is to place the children in Christian foster homes, or to reconnect them with family when possible. The Chowan students ministered daily at a drop-in center operated by Onesimus. Every day children at the center receive clothing, showers, food and participate in activities such as Bible stories, music, art and soccer clinics.

“It’s a complex problem,” said Mari

Wiles, Chowan campus minister. “They have the largest number of documented street children of anywhere in the world. There’s a myth in the rural areas that if one can make it to the city they can find wealth and prosperity.”

Wiles said the children’s stories were heart-breaking because in many cases their plight was caused by adults who acted irresponsibly.

“One child said he traveled 500 miles under a bus. When he got there no one was there to help him so he started begging and stealing to survive,” Wiles said. “Children shouldn’t have to survive on their own.”

## Gospel-global citizens

Each year Wiles coordinates three or four mission trips for Chowan students, including an international trip. She said the trips stress the importance of God’s people being engaged globally.

“God is global and the needs of God’s people are global. One thing we talk a lot about is that maybe the call of God and the cries of the world sound the same,” she said.

“There’s nothing like leaving home to help you become a gospel-global citizen, and that’s one of the beauties of the trip.”

Wiles said the student’s experience transformed their understanding of success. Unlike American culture, which pushes status as the measure of success, she said the students learned that real status in the eyes of God is humble service.

“Maybe we couldn’t solve the whole issue of street children, but it was making a difference in the individual lives and that matters,” Wiles said. “Our students also got to see that they can be a part of the solutions to the world and not be apathetic, and that it’s OK when your heart breaks for the cause of Christ because that kind of break makes us stronger, not weaker.”

During the trip the team saw 20 children trust Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior – the highlight of the trip.

For more information about Transform 122, contact Tom Beam at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5626, [tbeam@ncbaptist.org](mailto:tbeam@ncbaptist.org), or visit [www.baptistsonmission.org/Projects/Collegiate](http://www.baptistsonmission.org/Projects/Collegiate). **B3**



Chowan University students work on a puzzle with Ethiopian children and leaders. The students were part of Transform 122, a collegiate missions initiative to help facilitate global mission opportunities. (Contributed photo)



# What is a relationship-driven model?

In adopting a new strategy for impacting lostness through disciple-making, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) has clearly signaled a departure from business as usual. Nowhere is this more evident than in the use of a relationship-driven consultation model.

A relationship-driven consultation model is exactly what it sounds like. The focus is on getting to know people and understanding the local context where ministry takes place every day rather than delivering a particular product, process or event. The difference is explained in Proverbs 18:13 (NKJV), “He who answers a matter before he hears it, it is folly and shame to him.” Another way to put it might be, if one answers a question before he fully understands the situation, one is likely to give an incomplete answer.

The goal of the relationship-driven consultant is to listen carefully so he or she will clearly understand the needs being expressed. Consultants listen for additional issues and concerns of Baptists in each local setting. Understanding and appreciating the work already underway locally is a critical factor for the relationship-driven consultant. The benefit of this approach is that the consultant is positioned to work more effectively in a long-term relationship with the association, pastor and congregation. Respecting the autonomy of each ministry, they find a course of action that fits their setting for the goal of impacting lostness.

A relationship-driven model fits well into the new BSC strategy. Our new strategy focuses on reaching people in eight population centers across the state, as these eight areas represent the most concentrated areas of lostness in North Carolina. Beginning January 2014, I will serve as team leader for a new Strategic Focus Team

that will lead the work in these eight population areas, with a strategy coordinator serving in each of the eight areas.

These coordinators will most effectively serve N.C. Baptists through a relationship-driven model. One way they will seek to do this is through a “generalist” approach rather than a “specialist” approach. Serving as “generalists,” our strategy coordinators will work with church and association leaders to identify needs in their areas related to impacting lostness. Once needs are identified, the strategy coordinator will then help connect leaders with convention staff and consultants serving in the “specialist” role.

The consultant who serves as a specialist brings a depth of knowledge to a relatively narrow topic. For example, a strategy coordinator may connect local leadership with a consultant whose area of specialty is children’s ministry or youth ministry.

This is not to say that the strategy coordinators do not have areas of interest or expertise, but in regards to their work assisting local churches develop strategies for impacting lostness, they will serve as generalists. As our strategy coordinators serve as generalists they will be better able to discern church needs and build rapport with leaders over an extended period of time.

An example I like to share to help illustrate the generalist and specialist role is that of a family doctor. You may think of the generalist as the family physician who is responsible for the ongoing, long-term medical care of an individual. If an individual has specific health needs, the family doctor will refer the person to another physician, perhaps a cardiologist or neurologist. Yet, the family practitioner still walks through the process with individuals and helps them to make sense of the situation and all the options available to them.

Besides a particular focus on relationships, the generalist strives to maintain a working knowledge of available resources across many disciplines that can be useful to local ministries. By building a relationship early on, the generalist is better positioned to work as a partner.



**RUSS CONLEY**  
Guest Column



This partnership will allow for the development of a plan for moving forward in selecting and applying the best combination of resources.

The generalist can play a valuable role in helping sort through and focus on the best mix of resources for a specific situation. In some situations, more than one generalist may be engaged in working to see lostness impacted in a given area. What is most important is the valuable relationship that guides and drives the efforts.

Our strategy coordinators and convention staff will work to develop essential relationships necessary to impact lostness, make disciples, strengthen churches and plant churches. A well-executed, relationship-driven model benefits churches and associations. It provides a greater impact through highly customized solutions and deeper relationships. This model also offers a more comprehensive knowledge base for effective consultations. It allows for more efficient application of resources for a greater Kingdom return on investment. It also helps strengthen churches to impact lostness by making disciples who make disciples.

Finally, the relationship-driven model will more effectively lead to the fulfillment of the convention’s mission, “to assist churches in their divinely appointed mission” and the fulfillment of the convention’s vision to, “become the strongest force in the history of this Convention for reaching people with the message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Russ Conley is a consultant for church health at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. You can reach him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5651, or at rconley@ncbaptist.org.) **BR**

## Why bother with the SBC?

Baptist Press

I spent three days in Houston this month at the Southern Baptist Pastors’ Conference and Southern Baptist Convention. The SBC is always a great time of year, as I get to reconnect with old friends and hear about what God has for our future.

I’m often asked, “Why even bother with something like the SBC? Aren’t the days of denominations over? Can’t we be just as effective on our own? Why deal with all the red tape, bureaucracy, and the sometimes crazy people who claim to speak in the SBC’s name?” Cooperating with the SBC offers a fair number of challenges: We are not a perfect people by a long shot. For many, the easiest solution seems to be to sever ties and just do your own thing and not deal with the baggage.

Yet, cooperating together for the mission of God, however challenging, is biblical, expedient and personally beneficial.

Recently I read Tim Keller’s book *Center Church* in which he discusses the interplay between movements and institutions. He points out something that is easy to ignore, that both need each other. It’s easy to see how institutions without movements (and, by “movement,” I mean that sense of shared excitement, led by charismatic leaders with a compelling vision) quickly die. What we often forget, however, is that movements without institutions lack both staying power and the teeth to accomplish their agenda.

For example, we at the Summit Church are involved in several church planting networks. Many of them are genuine movements, led by charismatic visionaries who compel a lot of enthusiasm and engender a lot of support. Yet very few of them churn out more than

100 new church planters a year (and that’s being generous).

In contrast, last year SBC seminaries graduated nearly 2,000 students. Even if you wanted to eliminate half of those (as under-qualified or not headed into pastoral ministry), that still leaves 1,000 qualified graduates every year.

Together, as Southern Baptists, we have nearly 5,000 missionaries serving overseas, in almost every nation in the world. Because of our cooperation, they have the training structures, care structures and a multi-million-dollar budget to support them.

We have gospel-centered, culturally-savvy presence in Washington (though housed in Nashville) called the ERLC (Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission), led now by my friend Russell D.



**J.D. GREEAR**  
Guest Column

Moore, that speaks out on issues of truth and justice in our culture. These are just a few of the things for us to be excited about in our partnership with other Baptist churches.

So yes, it is easier for us to be involved in a movement without the messiness of institutions, but it is not nearly as effective.

In the end, our final allegiance is not to the SBC, but to Christ. The SBC is not what we live and die for. And what various members of the SBC say is not always representative of how we, as a local church body, feel. But we’re glad to stand together with like-minded brothers and sisters in unity, dreaming collectively about the shared future that God has promised His church.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – J.D. Greear, in addition to serving as lead pastor of Summit Church in Durham, N.C., is the author of several books and resources. This article is reprinted from his blog, [www.jdgreear.com](http://www.jdgreear.com).) **BR**



## *ThePlan* reveals ‘measurable discipleship’

In *ThePlan: Measurable Discipleship*, Steve R. Clark identifies the current reality of disciple-making in today’s church along with the frustration and even guilt pastors feel for failing in their obedience to the Great Commission.

Clark, pastor of New Life Authentic Christian Community in Conover, N.C., acknowledges the following: leaders have available a multitude of methods, programs and styles; believers mature at different levels; it’s easy to measure baptisms, numbers of people in classes, classes offered, but they have very little to do with making disciples. In short, “each may measure some results but fails to identify disciples,” resulting in “church members left in the dark about what it means to be a disciple and are given no hint as to what it means to make a disciple.”

Two haunting questions drove Clark to study scripture and the life of Jesus in

order to develop a plan that accurately measures a disciple who makes disciples, and a strategy that implements a process to obtain the desired results.

The questions include: What does it mean to make disciples? And, how are disciples made?

Clark gives great clarity to the understanding, application and implementation of *ThePlan*. For example, “discipleship is one believer living with and teaching another believer how to teach other believers in the Kingdom of God.”

Another example would be, “the Kingdom life is a life that is lived under the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit.”

*ThePlan* is never completely revealed until chapter 10.

It is tempting to skip immediately to

chapter 10, but in doing so you will miss what the Holy Spirit may have to say to you personally in the other chapters.

### **ThePlan revealed**

Clark opens chapter 10 with what he calls “the two actions the church needs

to embrace if it is to continue in His Word: comprehension and compliance.”

The first action, comprehension, asks the church to consider what it means to make disciples.

The second action, compliance, involves the church taking a closer look at how disciples are made.

This is followed by an assumption the majority of

churches have about disciple-making:

“It is clear that the church does not make disciples because it has no way to

measure disciples, no way to define the actions that designate a believer as a disciple, and no way to celebrate a person becoming a disciple. Yet rather than solving this perplexing issue of obedience to the Lord’s command, we just assume that as long as a person is baptized and participating in church, he is a disciple of Christ.”

*ThePlan* explains that disciples are disciplined, disciples make disciples, disciples are disciplined, disciples are ministers, and disciples are participants.

In chapter 11, “The Celebration,” Clark explains the steps needed to implement *ThePlan*.

The reader will find an explanation of the process, the discipleship card given to new converts and those desiring to become a disciple.

In the concluding chapter, Clark paints the following picture: “Imagine a

**See *ThePlan* page 12**



NEAL E. ELLER JR.  
Book Review

## Valedictorian goes rogue, recites Lord’s Prayer

Roy B. Costner IV garnered national attention when he ripped up his pre-approved valedictorian speech, enacted his first amendment right, and began reciting the Lord’s Prayer at his graduation ceremony. An unsuspecting school district got just what they were trying to avoid, and the astonished crowd erupted into applause. His actions spread like a wildfire across a nation once founded upon God and Biblical principles.

The prayer was Costner’s response to the South Carolina Pickens County School District’s decision to abandon student-led invocations at board meetings, which eventually trickled down to axing prayers at any school gatherings. Under advisement from attorneys, the district backed down and cowered under pressure from the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and the Freedom from Religion Foundation (FFRF). The Board’s 3-2 decision went against the heart-felt values of this conservative community.



GINNY DENT BRANT  
Guest Column

Costner began his message by respectfully acknowledging those in attendance and mentioning his pre-approved speech. “So we are going to get rid of that one and use a different one,” he said. After tearing up that speech, he pulled an alternate one from the shirtsleeve under his robe, and deviated from what was approved. He graciously thanked the many people who, “Helped to carve and mold us into the young adults we are today.” He honored his own parents by saying, “I’m so glad both of my parents led me to the Lord at a young age.”

Then he continued with, “I think most of you will understand when I say, ‘Our Father, who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name ... .’” As he prayed, the crowd began to cheer with some joining him. But that cheering escalated to a roar and thunderous clapping with some rising to their feet. Then Costner continued with his



Former Clemson football chaplain and currently the national director of Spiritual 2-A-Days, Tony Eubanks, left, spoke at Roy B. Costner IV’s baccalaureate service. Eubanks posted on Costner’s Facebook page, “When I grow up, I want to be like Roy.” (Contributed photo)

prepared speech that included accolades for his graduating classmates.

Was he nervous? “Yes,” admits Costner. “I did not know what the outcome would be.” But he was willing to take a stand for what He believed.

His address has gone viral on YouTube with currently more than 1 million views.

Costner took the stand many adults have failed to take. Many leaders in our country simply retreat in fear when atheist groups threaten to sue rather than standing in faith and exerting their own first amendment right. The Bible says in Isaiah 11:6, “And a child shall lead them,” but in this case, it was a student. As a result of Costner’s bold actions, many have been encouraged to stand themselves.

Although a school district spokesperson said, “Costner will not be penalized for his actions,” the FFRF co-president intends on holding the school district responsible. Though many school district employees

may support what Costner did, they are confined by the time, energy and resources that a legal battle would consume if they took a stand.

Costner said he as no regrets. He stated, “I want this to glorify God. I hope this will inspire others to stand up for God in our nation.” Costner was interviewed on *Fox & Friends* after his famous graduation speech. On the show he said, “I don’t understand why we can’t pray at my graduation when ‘Under God’ is in our pledge and our Constitution.” That’s a good question considering we’ve been doing this for over 200 years. In his eyes, “We have freedom of religion, not freedom from religion.”

Costner’s stand reminded me of a movie that was released in September 2012 called “Last Ounce of Courage” – a must see film for all Christians today. The movie is about a small-town mayor and his grandson who are motivated to stand against the ACLU and bring the celebration of Christmas back to their town. Many viewers reported people standing up and clapping at the end of the film, just as the audience did when Costner prayed.

Costner was told his speech had to be approved and he could not pray or make any reference to God. That’s tough for a student whose life is centered on his faith.

After consulting with his father, who is a minister at a local church, he knew his father was behind him. His father advised him, “Don’t do it for politics, do it for God.”

Young Costner spent much time in Bible study and prayer. He asked God, “What should I do?” He felt led to recite the Lord’s Prayer since it would resonate with all denominations.

According to revival historian, J. Edwin Orr, “Young people in student-led prayer cells have been at the forefront in almost every awakening.” Our country is desperately in need of a revival. Maybe our youth will be the ones to ignite the sparks and fan the flames.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Ginny Dent Brant is an author, speaker, counselor and soloist. She is editor-at-large for Sonoma Christian Home Magazine. Visit [www.ginnybrant.com](http://www.ginnybrant.com).) **BR**



# The simple – and only – solution to decreasing baptism numbers

**W**hile attending the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) annual meeting in Houston, I heard much lamenting about the fact that baptisms in the SBC are at their lowest levels since 1948. While at the meeting, I also was clearly reminded of the reason for such low baptisms and the only way to increase them.

Let me share three encounters that clearly show the problem, and then share the only solution. Cindy works in the FedEx office located in the convention center, where the SBC held its annual meeting. I asked Cindy, "With the 5,000 plus Baptists here this week, has anyone talked to you about Jesus?" She said "No." As it turned out, Cindy was saved 6 years ago after attempting suicide. Her life is totally changed. This was evident by the sincere smile on her face.

One of the great concerns expressed repeatedly at the annual meeting has been the sad fact that SBC baptisms are embarrassingly low. Yet in two days, no one has spoken to Cindy about The Lord. I know most people have not had a reason to go the FedEx office, but I'm sure many have.

George works in maintenance at the convention center. When I asked George if any of the thousands of Baptists at the annual meeting had asked him if he knew Jesus, he said, "No." Even though he walked around the exhibit hall among thousands of Baptists, many of whom were preachers, he said not one person had asked him about his salvation.

I also talked with five employees in a coffee shop onsite. This coffee shop at the convention center

was one of the busiest I have ever seen. Often there were 25 to 35 people standing in line. On Wednesday evening as the meeting was ending, I stopped to get a cup of coffee. When I got to the counter, there was no one behind me. So I asked them, "With all these thousands of Baptists here this week, has anyone shared with you about Jesus? They said, "No." I then asked if I could share what Jesus had done for me.



**DENNIS NUNN**  
Guest Column

They readily agreed and all five listened intently as I shared my story. As I got close to the end, people had once again begun to line up. I said, "You have customers waiting, I will come back." All five said, "No, we want to hear the rest!"

Chuck Kelley, president of New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, has accurately described the SBC as a "harvest-oriented denomination in an unseeded world." Here is the problem: few Baptists are spreading the seed of the gospel as we should.

The only solution to seeing more baptisms is for each of us, every believer, every Baptist, to be intentional about talking about Jesus to everyone we can. Our attitude cannot be, "I will witness if I get an opportunity." Our attitude must be, "I am going to make an opportunity!"

If we don't care enough to tell our friends, our families, our neighbors, our classmates and our co-workers about Jesus, who will? Today, share with everyone you can the story of how Jesus Christ changed your life. Share how He will change theirs if they want Him! We can turn our baptism numbers around. This is the only way to do it.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Dennis Nunn is founder and president of Every Believer a Witness Ministries in Dallas, Ga.) **BR**

# Reflections from 2013 SBC meeting

**I** recently had the blessing of attending the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) meeting in Houston, Texas. I always look forward to this time each year when Southern Baptists are encouraged through wonderful ministry reports, testimonies of God at work and powerful sermons from God's Word.

This year 5,103 messengers gathered in Houston for the annual meeting. North Carolina Baptists, I thought of you often during this meeting. During an International Mission Board hosted breakfast, North Carolina Baptists were recognized for leading the SBC in support of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. The churches of this state convention led all state conventions in gifts to this offering in 2012.

You were also recognized during an event hosted by the North American Mission Board, as the churches of this state convention are also leading all state conventions in gifts to the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions. I affirm your faithful, sacrificial giving. I know many of your churches still struggle financially because of our nation's continued economic challenges. Yet, you have stayed the course and remained committed to missions support because of your passion to see the gospel advanced throughout this nation and world.

In addition to these special offerings, the Cooperative Program is the heart and soul of financial support that fuels the many missions and ministries of the SBC. As president of the Fellowship of State Executive Directors, I have the privilege of serving on the Cooperative Program Advisory Council. This council, which was established by SBC Executive Committee President and CEO Frank Page and the Fellowship of State Executive Directors, met in Houston to explore new strategies for Cooperative Program promotion.

I am thankful for the leadership of Frank Page and his desire to see increased support for the Cooperative Program across the SBC. The Executive Committee's report during the SBC featured testimonies of individuals whose ministries are supported through the Cooperative Program. I appreciate Frank Page inviting Keith and Page Wieser, collegiate church planters in the Midwest, to share with Convention messengers. This couple has started a collegiate church plant on two different college campuses. As we look to move forward in North Carolina with new localized, contextualized models of collegiate ministry, collegiate church planting is certainly a model we will value and seek to use as appropriate.

I am also thankful for Dr. Fred Luter's continued leadership. What a joy to see messengers stand in celebration and support of Rev. Luter when he was re-elected to a second term as our SBC president. He is a godly man who models a life of humble obedience to the Great Commission. Rev. Luter will bring the Convention sermon during our state convention's annual meeting Nov. 11-12 in Greensboro. More information about our annual meeting is available at [www.ncannualmeeting.org](http://www.ncannualmeeting.org).

I am excited about the wonderful things our God is doing through churches of the SBC. I pray that our meeting theme of "Revive Us" will truly become reality as churches across our nation join together in unity to impact lostness for the glory of Jesus Christ. **BR**



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

## Submissions for Tar Heel Voices

Please send no more than 300 words, along with contact information, to [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185. Only one letter from the same writer will be published in a 90-day period. Have questions? Call (919) 847-2127. Like the *Biblical Recorder* fan page on facebook and follow us on Twitter: [#biblicalrecord](https://twitter.com/biblicalrecord).

## ThePlan

Continued from page 11

church ... where families and individuals practice true discipleship.

Imagine what it would be like if, instead of having to come up with the next great program, disciples were coming to the church with ministry after ministry the Lord was leading them to accomplish.

Imagine what it would be like if discipline came from the congregation rather than the staff.

Imagine people not falling through the cracks or leaving the church without notice.

Imagine the leadership of the church just maintaining the environment of discipleship instead of creating an institution."

For those desiring to create a disciple-making culture that transforms lives by the power

of God, I highly recommend you and your leadership read and discuss this book.

I believe pairing this book with *Simple Church* by Thom Rainer and Eric Geiger would make an excellent start to this journey.

Clark holds a bachelor's of business administration degree from Marshall University and a master of divinity degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

He and his wife, Connie, live in Hickory.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Neal E. Eller Jr. is team leader for church health at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. You can reach him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5636, or at [neller@ncbaptist.org](mailto:neller@ncbaptist.org).) **BR**





# Reactions to the Supreme Court

**T**here is a lot of disappointment among Bible-believing people across America as a result of the Supreme Court's decision on the national Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) law and on California's Proposition 8. Both measures have been under constant attack by those who want to redefine the moral standards of the country, leaving behind the biblical values that made us strong.

Some Christian leaders are not seeing this as a devastating decision, as bad as it is. Some are not so optimistic. With little personal comment, I want to give you a series of statements from some of these leaders. Maybe their comments will help us gain perspective on the past and focus for the future.

**Tony Perkins**, president of the Family Research Council, said, "While we are disappointed in the Supreme Court's decision to strike down part of [DOMA], the court today [June 26] did not impose the sweeping nationwide redefinition of natural marriage that was sought. Time is not on the side of those seeking to create same-sex 'marriage.'"

"As the American people are given time to experience the actual consequences of redefining marriage, the public debate and opposition to the redefinition of natural marriage will undoubtedly intensify.

"What is inevitable is that the male and female relationship will continue to be uniquely important to the future of society. The reality is that society needs children, and children need a mom and a dad. We will continue to work to restore and promote a healthy marriage culture, which will maximize the chances of a child being raised by a married mother and father," Perkins concluded.

**Russell D. Moore**, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), said, "This decision is far-reaching, with massive implications for family life and religious liberty. The grounding of this decision in equal protection and human dignity means this is not simply a procedural matter of federalism. This is a new legal reality. Regardless of what happens with

marriage, the gospel doesn't need 'family values' to flourish. In fact, it often thrives when it is in sharp contrast to the cultures around it. In another sense, though, the marginalization of conjugal marriage in American culture has profound implications for our gospel witness. Marriage isn't incidental to gospel preaching.

"God designed the one-flesh union of marriage as an embedded icon of the union between Christ and His church. Marriage and sexuality, among the most powerful pulls in human existence, are designed to train humanity to recognize, in the fullness of time, what it means for Jesus to be one with His church, as a head with a body."

**Mark Harris**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte and president of the Baptist State Convention of N.C., provided this statement, "While there is great disappointment in the very divided Supreme Court decisions ... it is clear that these decisions are far from the sweeping victory for gay marriage advocates that they and the liberal media are promoting.

"Let's be clear: First, the Supreme Court upheld the right of states to determine marriage policy. Second, in no way did the Supreme Court declare a universal right to same-sex marriage. Third, the Supreme Court did not strike down Proposition 8, and said nothing against the validity of states having laws or constitutional amendments [that] protect traditional marriage between a man and a woman. In fact, such laws exist in some three dozen states!

"Further, the majority opinion of the Prop 8 case, written by Chief Justice Roberts states, 'We have no authority to decide this case on merits, and neither did the 9th Circuit,' referring to the federal appeals court that struck down Prop 8.

"What these decisions do offer, however, is a stark reminder that elections do matter! And the decisions we make on election day ultimately determine the direction of our nation's highest court!"

**Mark Creech**, executive director of the Christian Action League of N.C., said, "Today is one of the saddest days in our nation's history. We've watched the highest court in the land essentially legislate from the bench, trumping the will of the people both in California and America.

"The only redeeming aspect of the rulings are that there was nothing in them so broad sweeping as to find a constitutional right to same-sex marriage. Neither do they overturn constitutional amendments protecting marriage as one man and one woman, like the one

North Carolina approved by a 61 percent – 39 percent margin in May of last year. Still, make no mistake, these rulings were a major boost for those seeking to redefine marriage and unquestionably provide the legal foundation for them to do it.

"For too many years churches have been largely disengaged from the political process and now we are seeing the fruits of that disengagement. Our churches have failed to engage the culture with the gospel of Christ and with the truth of God's word. Rather than providing a clear moral compass, many mainline churches have acquiesced and now reflect some of the same perverted values of the world around us. ... This always spells disaster."

**Tami Fitzgerald**, executive director of the NC Values Coalition, said in a statement, "Today the Supreme Court upheld the right of states to determine marriage policy. ... We are thankful that North Carolina's marriage amendment is not immediately impacted by the ruling. Citizens in the 50 states are still free to debate, discuss and defend marriage.

"We did the right thing in passing our Marriage Amendment last year, and North Carolina has one of the strongest marriage amendments in the country."

Fitzgerald believes, "the Supreme Court got it wrong."

She added, "The Supreme Court's ruling does not impact North Carolina's marriage amendment or the 36 other states that have protected marriage as the union of one man and one woman. ... If there are any future challenges to North Carolina's marriage amendment, it is the job of our Attorney General, under the state's Constitution, to defend it."

In a *Newsmax* story, **Ralph Reed**, founder and chairman of the Faith & Freedom Coalition, said he believes the Supreme Court has "... been an activist court for decades. Right now there are four conservative votes and four liberal votes.

"Anthony Kennedy is the swing vote, and in this case he came down on the side of judicial activism. If you look at the [DOMA] ruling ... they ruled that the state, not the federal government, should be allowed to define marriage for purposes of that state's customs, laws, and traditions. They ruled the states were more powerful in making this decision than the federal government.

"And in the California marriage case where the state defined marriage as between a man and a woman and a federal district court overturned that ruling, they ruled that that decision would stand. It's really a case of jurisprudential incoherence.

"On the one hand they're saying that state law takes precedence; on the other hand they're [disallowing] a state law – not just any state law but a law in which the people

of California voted not once, but twice to keep marriage defined the way it has been defined for over 160 years in California, which is as between a man and a woman."

What should your church do? The ERLC has provided a downloadable document to help you answer that question on [erlc.org](http://erlc.org). **BR**



K. ALLAN BLUME  
Editor

**"What these decisions do offer ... is a stark reminder that elections do matter."  
– Mark Harris**

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July 14

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

July 21

## God Disciplines His People

**Focal Passages:** 2 Kings 17:7-15, 18-20

**I**dolatry happens every day. It had no place in ancient Judaism, but they repeatedly turned to it. The Northern Kingdom was conquered by the Assyrians because Israel began to revere other gods, forgetting the God who brought their people out of Egypt. They became enamored with the supposed results of worshipping the nations' gods and began to follow their pagan customs. You're probably thinking, "I'd never do that!" Is anything (material possessions, career, relationships, etc.) distracting you from the daily worship of God and stealing the passion you should have for Him? Has your church chosen something else (entertainment, numbers, popularity, etc.) over the true worship of God? Behold your idols!

Because of His grace, God is the God of second chances. He repeatedly calls us to repentance so that we might walk with Him. Just as God often warned Old Testament Israel of the judgment He would send on their disobedience, He warns New Testament Christians by the convicting work of the Holy Spirit. When

God reveals our sin we will either agree with Him and repent, or, as in this passage, stiffen our necks and go our own way. "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts" (Hebrews 3:15).

If we refuse to heed God's gracious warnings, we can expect to see judgment rolling in like a storm on the horizon. The Northern Kingdom, and later the Southern Kingdom, lost their homes, their land and much of their cultural and spiritual identity because they refused to stop committing spiritual adultery. My mother tried to lift me out of our van when I was two, but I refused and did things my way. I jumped out the door, and my head broke my fall. I still have the scar to prove that I can be determined and still wrong. Heed God's warning and avoid the scars that sin leaves behind. Remember, idolatry begins when reverence for God is hijacked by something or someone else. "You shall fear only the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 6:13a).



**TROY RUST**  
Senior pastor,  
Somerset Baptist Church,  
Roxboro

**Focal Passages:** Ezra 1:1-5; Nehemiah 8:1-6; Jeremiah 29:10-14

**D**o you really believe that God will work all things together for your good (Romans 8:28) when your current circumstances are terrible? When we walk by faith and not by sight we will sometimes stand on nothing but the promises of God. The people of Judah were told through the prophet Jeremiah that God had plans of prosperity and hope for His exiled people that would unfold in seventy years. In addition to the length of time, the people had to live those years in pagan Babylon. The people who endured captivity would observe the long stretch between divine promise and fulfillment.

Christians are now in the midst of a much longer wait for Christ's return. Will we stand on the promises of God?

As God prepared to keep His promise to the people of Judah, he used the Persians to conquer the Babylonians.

Sometimes we need to be reminded that God is sovereign over the universe and uses even unbelievers to bring about His purposes, some for judgment and others for blessing. When we hear missionaries pray for people of peace, they are asking God to lead them to helpers, often unbelievers, whom God will use to open doors for the gospel.

Imagine the joy the people of Judah must have felt when they saw foreign invaders defeating their captors and then opening the way for a new temple for God! God knows His plans for us and will fulfill them with greater beauty and joy than we could ever imagine.

After the temple and the wall had been rebuilt the people of Judah stood for hours to hear Ezra read the law. They responded with firm amens and bowed low to worship God, the same God they had previously forsaken and rejected in order to worship idols. After 70 years in idolatrous Babylon, idolatrous Judah realized they should never have forsaken the True Love found at home. Take an inventory of your blessings in the center of God's will before you step out with the gods next door!

July 14

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

July 21

## What Am I Supposed to Learn?

**Focal Passages:** Job 38:1-4; 42:1-12a

**W**hen Bud was about 10, he was invited to spend a day with a neighboring family as they visited relatives. Bud's job was to help watch over their son, Andrew, who was about 5. All was going well until Andrew wandered toward the pig pen in the woods, where there was a sow with her piglets. Bud knew this might be dangerous, but little Andrew wanted to play with the little pigs, and Bud did not stop him from climbing over the fence into the pen.

What happened next is something Bud will never forget. Mother hog jumped all over little Andrew, biting and tearing at his face. Bud screamed and ran for help; fortunately, it was not too late. Little Andrew was rushed to the hospital and survived, but bears the scar on his face to this day.

Bud was not chastened or punished by Andrew's family. There was no retribution, only compassion. It was an unfortunate accident that none of them would ever want to replay. Of all the tragic events that Bud has faced over his life,

he will never forget that he could have prevented Andrew's scar, and the family's pain.

While he knows that God has forgiven him, Bud will carry regret for that day as long as he lives. We have all heard it said that "experience is the best teacher," but experience does not benefit us unless we learn something that changes our life.

God asks the question, "Who is this who obscures My counsel with ignorant words?" He then proceeds to describe His creative activity, doing things that only He knows of, and why.

Job and his friends are necessarily humbled. For his part, Job wished to take back his words and repent in dust and ashes (42:6). Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar were more severely rebuked. God indicted them for untruthfulness and required them to offer sacrifices for their sins.

Moreover, Job was to pray for them; God would honor Job's prayer on their behalf, for Job alone was a righteous man.



**WAYNE PROCTOR**  
Pastor, Eure  
Baptist Church

**Focal Passages:** Ecclesiastes 1:1-4, 12-14; 2:1-3, 12-14, 24-26

**T**he biography of Louis Zamperini as told by Laura Hillenbrand in the book *Unbroken* is compelling. As a teen he was incorrigible, into constant mischief until he discovered a talent for running. His talent gave him national recognition as he vied to become the first four-minute miler. Although injury cut that quest short, Zamperini was able to participate in an Olympics. Then came World War II, and Zamperini joined the military, serving his country as an airman. He and his compatriots completed many successful bombing operations until their plane went down in the Pacific. Miraculously, Zamperini survived almost three months adrift at sea, only to end up in a series of Japanese concentration camps. Zamperini remained "unbroken" through it all.

Against all odds, Zamperini survived the war, and returned home a hero. Life

## Can I Find Meaning?

post-war was a struggle. Few people understood the psychological impact of post-war trauma, and Zamperini displayed all the signs. His escape was drinking and was headed toward full-blown alcoholism and losing his wife and family when out of desperation, his wife begged him to attend a Billy Graham crusade. Zamperini unwillingly consented. Reaching the altar, the man who could not be broken by the horrors of war, was broken by God's spirit. Zamperini finally found inner peace and meaning. Following his conversion, Zamperini would use the platform God had given him to speak for Christ.

The author of Ecclesiastes pens under the name Qoheleth, which means "leader of the assembly." He begins by describing man's pursuit for meaning in life as "absolute futility (1:2)." The party spirit is futile, as is finding happiness and joy by accumulating possessions (2:1-11). But writing as one becoming more enlightened, he recognizes the value of wisdom over folly, comparing it to the advantage of light over darkness (2:13). Another way to find meaning is through work, and giving God thanks for all of life (2:24-25).



## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### Pastor

Corinth Baptist Church, 1107 Cornwallis Road, Rose Hill, NC 28458, is seeking a **full-time Pastor/Teacher** to serve our congregation and community. SBC-aligned. Ideal candidate should be Kingdom focused and stand firm in the Word of God. Please send resumes to [CorinthSecretary@yahoo.com](mailto:CorinthSecretary@yahoo.com) or mail to church office at address above; Attention: Pastor Search Committee. Resumes will be accepted until July 31, 2013.

Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church in Sanford, NC, is searching for a **senior pastor** with strong leadership skills, capable of leading a pastoral staff of four members. JHBC is very mission minded both internationally and locally. We are a diverse/intergenerational congregation of 400+. Our focus is on building relationships and family ministry. Our church is dually aligned with CBF and SBC. We require ministry preparation credentials from an accredited university/divinity school. We offer a competitive salary and benefit package. Send all resumes to 316 W. Main St., Sanford, NC 27332, or electronically at [pastorsearch@jhbc.org](mailto:pastorsearch@jhbc.org). Check out our website for more information about the position [www.jhbc.org](http://www.jhbc.org).

Valdese First Baptist Church, in western North Carolina, is seeking a gifted teacher to become our new **pastor** and lead a fulltime staff of two pastoral and three administrative members. Our mission activities extend from local to international. We average 150 attendance in Sunday School and 225 in our blended worship service. Our church is aligned with both CBF and SBC. We provide space and support for a local Hispanic congregation and a 5-Star Child Development Center. For more information, visit [www.ValdeseFirstBaptist.org](http://www.ValdeseFirstBaptist.org); submit resumes by July 31.

Bethel Baptist Church in Dublin, North Carolina, seeks **full-time Pastor** to live in parsonage. We are a SBC church and member of the Bladen Baptist Association. Average attendance is 140 in Sunday School and 180 in worship service. For more information email me at [mbrisson@embarqmail.com](mailto:mbrisson@embarqmail.com) or call Bobby Roberts at 910-633-2073.

Lower Creek Baptist Church (<http://lowercreek.org>) is seeking **full-time pastor**. LCBC Southern Baptist is aligned with the SBC. We're seeking a graduate of an accredited seminary or divinity school with minimum of five years pastoral experience. Our congregation currently is approximately 150 worshipping in a blended worship style. Send resumes to LCBC Search Committee, PO Box 3300, Lenoir, NC 28645. Email [lbc3300@yahoo.com](mailto:lbc3300@yahoo.com).

Small Southern Baptist church, Taylor Memorial, located in the Sandhills area of North Carolina is seeking a **pastor**. For more information, please see our website [www.taylormemorialbaptistchurch.com](http://www.taylormemorialbaptistchurch.com).

**FULL-TIME PASTOR.** Big Island Baptist Church, Big Island, Virginia, located in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains and in sight of the historic James River, is seeking a full-time pastor. A seminary degree is required. We are associated with BGAV and have ties to both CBF and SBC, and support the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message. Our church needs a compassionate minister with effective preaching abilities, visionary and inspirational leadership, strong organizational skills, and a passion to be involved in community activities and outreach. Please submit resume by August 30, 2013, to: Big Island Baptist Church, Attn: Pastoral Search Committee, P.O. Box 348, Big Island, Virginia 24526.

### Church Staff

New Hope Baptist Church in Earl, NC is seeking a **full-time Youth and Children Minister**. Send resume to New Hope Baptist Church, Attention: Search Committee, P.O. Box 116, Earl, NC 28038, or [russandmo@aol.com](mailto:russandmo@aol.com).

Temple Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., is seeking a **full-time Family Minister** responsible for the spiritual development of children, preschool, youth and their families. Please send letter of interest and resume including Statement of Faith to: Chairperson, Family Minister Search Committee, Temple Baptist Church, 1417 Clifton Street, Raleigh, NC 27604, or [info@templeraleigh.org](mailto:info@templeraleigh.org).

The First Baptist Church of Matthews, North Carolina, is seeking a **full-time Minister to Students**. The successful candidate will have a seminary degree or a Bible college degree, a contagious enthusiasm for student ministry and have significant experience as a minister to students at a midsized or larger church. They should possess the ability to develop, communicate and implement a vision and strategic plan for student ministry within the overall vision for family ministry at First Baptist Matthews. We desire a philosophy of ministry that is God-centered, Biblically saturated, and culturally relevant. Your cover letter and resume should be sent to Frank Norwood at [fnorwood@fbcmatthews.org](mailto:fnorwood@fbcmatthews.org). Please see our website at [www.fbcmatthews.org](http://www.fbcmatthews.org). Please do not call the church or send your information by snail mail. If you feel the Lord may be leading you to such a ministry position please send a cover letter in a MS Word document as an attachment to your email.

Mountain View Baptist Church of Hamptonville, NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Students**. Our church is theologically conservative and actively involved in missions. Email resume to [mvbc@yadtel.net](mailto:mvbc@yadtel.net).

Catawba Valley Baptist Church, located in Morganton, NC, is seeking a **Minister of Music and Worship**. This position is one that involves working and leading the worship choir, praise team and instrumental ensemble. This position is part-time and could potentially lead to a full-time staff member. We are seeking a person that has a heart to serve the Lord, desire to reach people through music and one that will lead worship in a blended format. A musical background is preferred. Interested candidates should submit resumes to Music Search Committee, P.O. Box 1580, Morganton, NC 28680, or via email to [cvbcsecretary@att.net](mailto:cvbcsecretary@att.net).

Ephesus Baptist, 6767 Hillsborough St., Raleigh, is seeking a **skilled organist/pianist** for their 11 a.m. traditional service. See job description at [ephesusbaptistchurch.com](http://ephesusbaptistchurch.com) or contact Donna Thomas at 919-851-1928.

Piney Grove Baptist Church of Swansboro, NC, is seeking a **full-time Youth and Children's Minister** to develop and lead our youth ministry and to direct our children's program. We are seeking someone spiritually mature, energetic, and on fire for Jesus with related education, sound biblical theology, sufficient experience and skills, and a passion for reaching and nurturing children, teens, and their families. Resumes may be submitted to Aubrey Riggs, 3777 Freedom Way, Hubert, NC 28539, or emailed to [the4edwards@hotmail.com](mailto:the4edwards@hotmail.com).

**Full-Time Minister of Students.** We are seeking a person with a definite call to minister to students. This person should have a desire to grow in the Word of God, have a growing love for the Lord, and a passion to reach young people with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Please email resumes to [faithbaptistchurch@windstream.net](mailto:faithbaptistchurch@windstream.net) or mail to PO Box 84, Faith, NC 28041. All inquires should be received by July 12, 2013.

Flemings Chapel Baptist Church is seeking a **Part-Time Director of Ministry for Youth and Young Adults**. This position will primarily work with our students in middle and high school and minimal involvement with our college students. In addition, this position will seek to grow stronger families through our student ministries. Please send resumes by email to [pastorscott@flemingschapel.org](mailto:pastorscott@flemingschapel.org) or mail to 4430 Littlejohn Church Rd., Lenoir, NC 28645, Attention Dr. Scott Shoffner, Senior Pastor.

Mount Gilead Baptist Church, Fayetteville, NC, is seeking an individual to serve as our **part-time youth director**. Some experience working with children and youth is required. Qualified applicants please send resume and photo to Youth Director Search Committee, Mount Gilead Baptist Church, P.O. Box 26719, Fayetteville, NC 28314, or email: [pastorpierce35@yahoo.com](mailto:pastorpierce35@yahoo.com).

### Miscellaneous

**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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# Exodus

Continued from page 7

were rethinking their understanding of a Christian approach to homosexuality. “Sadly, it appears that this rethinking has resulted in something like a surrender to the cultural currents of the day,” Mohler told Baptist Press.

Chambers’ apology appeared on an episode of “Our America” with Lisa Ling on the Oprah Winfrey Network June 20, but in a speech at the Exodus Freedom conference at Concordia College in Irvine, Calif., June 19 and in a statement released earlier that day, Chambers said he must “finally own and acknowledge the hurt of others.”

“It is strange to be someone who has both been hurt by the church’s treatment of the LGBT community, and also to be someone who must apologize for being part of the very system of ignorance that perpetuated that hurt,” Chambers wrote. “Today it is as if I’ve just woken up to a greater sense of how painful it is to be a sinner in the hands of an angry church.”

Bob Stith, who served Southern Baptists as a national strategist for gender issues until funding for the position ceased last year, told Baptist Press he has no problem with making apologies and asking for forgiveness.

“I personally have known many men, women and parents who have been hurt by well-meaning words and actions by ministries, individuals and churches,” Stith, a former Exodus International board member, said. “To that extent, this apology could hopefully challenge us to be more thoughtful and Christ-like as we interact with an increasingly secular society.”

But Stith took issue with some components of Chambers’ apology, including the statement about gay parents being every bit as capable as heterosexual parents.

“While it may well be true that some same-sex couples have provided more stable and loving environments for children than some heterosexual couples, this statement seems to ignore that scripture only gives one pattern for family and nowhere can I find any justification to change that,” Stith said.

“Our standard must remain a total allegiance to scripture and not to the changing whims of culture,” Stith said. Also, when Chambers apologized for communicating that homosexual families are “less than me and mine,” Stith said it’s not a matter of whose marriage is better but what God’s standard is.

“If [God] has a standard – which I clearly believe that He does – should we not be doing all in our power to uphold that standard and to call all creation into alignment with that standard?” Stith said.

Such statements from Chambers, Stith said, conflict with Chambers’ statement that God’s standard for sexual expression is between a man and a woman in marriage, causing “unnecessary confusion.” Stith also warned that in the televised apology, Chambers appears alongside people who have been hurt by various ministries and the people are given the opportunity to vent their frustrations without the ministries being offered a response.

The Orlando-based Exodus International, with 260 member ministries worldwide, announced the decision to close after a unanimous vote by its board of directors who for a year, according to a news release, discussed and prayed about “the organization’s place in a changing culture.”

“We’re not negating the ways God used Exodus to positively affect thousands of people, but a new generation

of Christians is looking for change – and they want to be heard,” board member Tony Moore said in the news release.

Randy Thomas, executive vice president of Exodus International, told *The Tennessean* newspaper in Nashville that the group – going forward under a new name – will no longer aim to help people change from homosexual to heterosexual attractions. “Providing help for people to turn from gay to straight is something we’ve distanced ourselves from,” Thomas said. Instead, the new mission will be to help people achieve a better relationship with Jesus without judgment, he said.

Mohler, in his comments to Baptist Press, described the Exodus announcement as “a capitulation.”

“The statements from Alan Chambers and Exodus International indicate that they have lost confidence in both the Bible and the gospel of Jesus Christ,” Mohler said. “The normalization of homosexuality contradicts the Bible’s consistent condemnation of all same-sex sexuality as sin. The rejection of the hope for change for homosexuals (as for all sinners) indicates a tragic loss of confidence in the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

In that light, he added, “it is far better for the ministry to disband than to mis-

represent the Christian community and the gospel.”

The news of Exodus International’s closing makes for a sad day for the Christian church, Mohler said, because the collapse of any ministry that had once served the cause of the gospel is a tragedy. He noted that this collapse was progressive, not instantaneous.

“The greatest tragedy is that persons experiencing same-sex attractions or involved in same-sex sexuality will be further confused by the capitulation of Exodus International,” Mohler said.

Russell Moore, in his comments to Baptist Press, said, “The Christian church has always maintained that sexual expression is directed only toward the one-flesh union of male and female in marriage.

“Anything else is to be turned away from, regardless of how difficult that is. The church has also maintained that all are fallen people who can be forgiven by the blood of Christ and who can receive power to walk according to the Spirit, not according to the flesh,” Moore said.

“We shouldn’t be offering cures or quick fixes, but gospel.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Erin Roach is assistant editor of Baptist Press.) **BR**

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