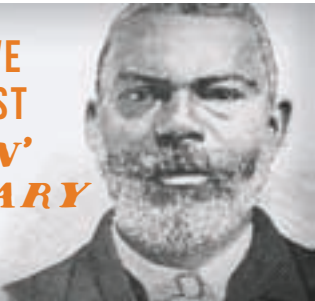


FORMER SLAVE
BECOMES FIRST
'MODERN'
MISSIONARY



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SHEPHERD'S
FLOCK BREAKS
GROUND FOR
FIRST BUILDING



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RECORDER

JULY 14, 2018 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 184 NO. 14 • [BRnow.org](#)

First seminary chairwoman saw ‘God’s open door’

By **SETH BROWN** | *BR* Content Editor

Becky Gardner believed she would grow up to be a schoolteacher in West Tennessee. But now, as superintendent of an award-winning Christian school in Central Illinois and the first-ever chairwoman of a Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) seminary’s board of trustees, she believes she is right where God wants her to be.

“I have the philosophy that if God opens the door, I need to walk through,” she told the *Biblical Recorder* in a phone interview.

Gardner was recently elected to chair the board of trustees at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest, N.C. The vote was unanimous. She is the first female to hold the chief trustee position at a Southern Baptist seminary, according to SEBTS.

Since she joined the board in 2010, Gardner has previously served as trustee secretary and chair of the campus planning committee.

“Throughout my life, I have tried to be obedient in whatever opportunities God provides,” she said.

Gardner said fellow SEBTS trustees and administration officials have made her feel at home, not “forgotten or second-thought.”

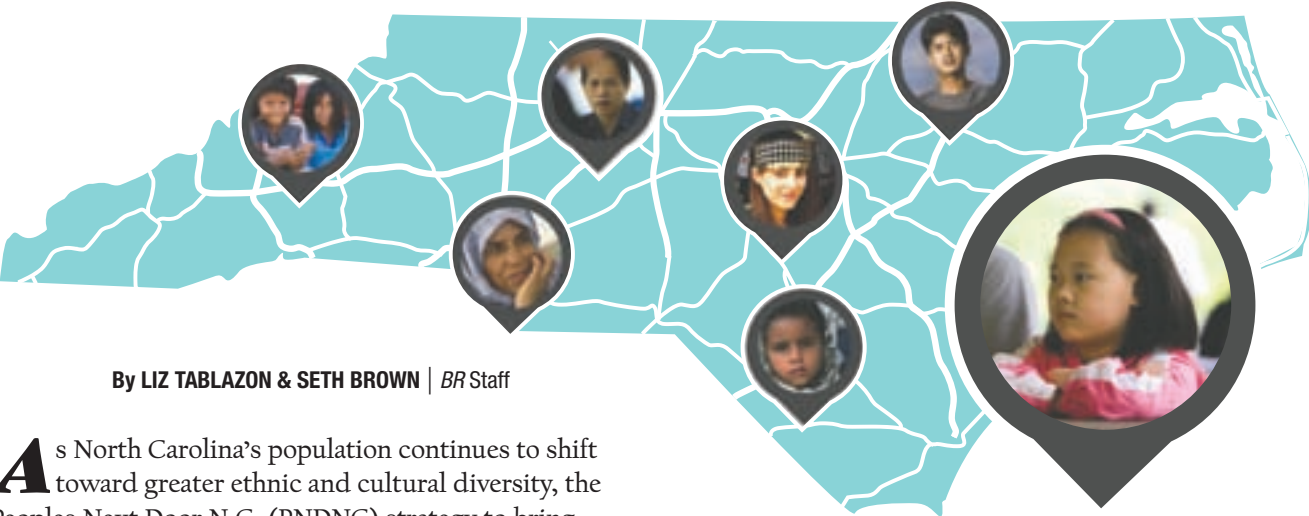
“I never felt like I was just a check in the box,” she said.



BECKY GARDNER

[See Seminary page 12](#)

N.C. MAPPING INITIATIVE going strong amid demographic changes



By **LIZ TABLAZON & SETH BROWN** | *BR* Staff

As North Carolina’s population continues to shift toward greater ethnic and cultural diversity, the Peoples Next Door N.C. (PNDNC) strategy to bring the gospel to unreached people groups across the state hasn’t changed.

That is because “we already had the mentality that we’re equipping people to go to these individuals,” said Zac Lyons, senior consultant for Great Commission partnerships of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

“The responsibility of crossing the barriers, whether it’s linguistic or cultural, is on the believer, not on the person that’s in the harvest,” Lyons said in an interview with the *Biblical Recorder*.

Unreached people groups are ethnic or cultural communities with little or no Christian presence, according to the International Mission Board. In seeking to equip churches to discover, engage and disciple unreached people groups, PNDNC takes into consideration expected demographic growth in the generations following immigrant parents and grandparents.

As migration increases worldwide, the U.S. has undergone significant population changes in recent years due to natural factors, such as fertility and mortality

rates. Beginning in 2016, there has been an absolute decline in the white, non-Hispanic population for the first time since the census began 1790, according to a report by the Brookings Institution.

In fact, white children born after 2007 are the nation’s first minority white generation. North Carolina is among the top 10 states experiencing the greatest declines in the white population under 10 years old. Since 2016 other populations in the U.S. have increased by 4.7 million due to natural factors.

A recent study by Baylor University revealed the percentage of multiracial congregations in the U.S. has nearly doubled, although those churches still lack as much diversity as their surrounding neighborhoods.

The increase in American cultural and ethnic diversity, coupled with the PNDNC strategy to share the Good News with unchurched communities among immigrant populations, means calls for ethnic unity and cross-cultural evangelism are happening simultaneously in Southern Baptist life.

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Baptist Foundation changes slogan, refocuses

By **LIZ TABLAZON** | *BR* Staff Writer

The North Carolina Baptist Foundation (NCBF) rolled out changes to its logo and slogan this past spring, executive director Clay Warf told the *Biblical Recorder* in an interview June 14.

NCBF is an agency of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina that manages trust assets and offers other financial services to North Carolina Baptist churches and individuals.

In an effort to present a more straightforward vision,

the Foundation chose to change its slogan from “Serving Those Whose Stewardship Lasts Forever” to “Fostering Generosity ... Facilitating Growth,” Warf told the *Recorder*.

The new slogan resulted from a set of suggestions by NCBF staff after Warf asked them to think of “other mottos that would really catch the gist of what we’re doing, that would be in more contemporary terms.”

NCBF has also been combining its functions with those of its subsidiary ministry, North Carolina Baptist

[See Slogan page 7](#)

Evangelism, discipleship go hand-in-hand

For several years, we as Southern Baptists have been asking how we can reverse the downward trend of baptisms within our convention. There are no easy answers, and we obviously need to pray and seek a fresh movement of God's Spirit. We must also commit ourselves to personal evangelism and take advantage of opportunities to engage people in gospel conversations and make a clear call for them to trust Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

As we wrestle with these issues, I am in agreement with what my friend and North American Mission Board (NAMB) President Kevin Ezell told messengers attending this year's Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Dallas, Texas, just a few weeks ago.

"Southern Baptist Convention, we do have an evangelism issue that we need to address," Ezell said. "But I am confident that the problem in evangelism is symptomatic of an even deeper problem that we have when it comes to discipleship – to make disciples that make disciples that make disciples."

Ezell's remarks were part of a report from a disciple-making task force appointed by NAMB and LifeWay

Christian Resources. A separate task force on evangelism appointed by former SBC President Steve Gaines also reported its findings to messengers. Taken together, these two reports show the importance of the link between evangelism and discipleship. They also provide some practical suggestions and recommendations that may be helpful to you and your church.

The disciple-making task force recommended that churches increase efforts around Bible engagement, examine the connection between salvation decisions and involvement in a group, and examine the number of groups that multiply on a regular basis.

The task force also cited a LifeWay study that found that the top spiritual discipline for a believer to participate in is Bible engagement, adding that those who do so give more, serve more and evangelize more.

The evangelism task force recommended that churches conduct annual witness training events and adopt a goal for baptisms. The task force also recommended pastors to model personal evangelism and present public gospel invitations of various kinds, calling unbelievers to repent and believe.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer



Additionally, the task force called on all Southern Baptists to "renew with great urgency the priority of evangelizing the next generations."

As we have worked with churches, associations and other ministry partners here in North Carolina in recent years as part of our "impacting lostness through disciple-making" strategy, one of the things we have tried to emphasize is that disciple-making must involve both evangelism and discipleship. You can't have one without the other.

I have often said that evangelism is the first step in making disciples, but it is not the only step.

We must continue to walk alongside new believers, nurture them in their faith by helping them encounter God through His Word, and encourage them to do the same with others. That's what making disciples is all about.

"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing ..." Psalm 126:6. **BR**

Humility & hope for the SBC

Recently the Holy Spirit has been drawing me back to Matthew 16:13-20 again and again. After Peter confesses Jesus to be the Messiah, Jesus responds, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it" (Matthew 16:17-18 CSB).

This is a promise that we in the SBC need to claim, and it is one that will produce in us a spirit of humility and hope. On one hand, Jesus' promise should lead us to humility. In this same passage, Jesus calls Peter "Satan" when he attempts to correct Jesus on His path to the cross (Matthew 16:23). Yes, Jesus promises that He will build His church, but He never shies away from chastising His people when they oppose His methods. God will accomplish His purposes. That is as guaranteed as Jesus' resurrection.

But what is not clear is whether He'll use us to accomplish those purposes. We would not be the first people God had set aside. The Jews of Jesus' day assumed God would never set them aside. But Jesus warned them, "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people producing its fruit" (Matthew 21:43).

He gives the same warning to us: the grace of God is overwhelming and overflowing, but we must never take it for granted.

God is stirring in the SBC. He has exposed a startling amount of sin in our midst. He has shaken many of our foundations. I actually think that's good news because whom the Lord loves, He chastens. He is inviting us, I believe, into an era of unprecedented effectiveness for the Great Commission, if we repent.

Which leads to the other aspect of Jesus' promise: hope. The hope of the church (or the SBC) is not in the quality of our leaders. We are not God's "last best hope on earth."

The grace of God is our best hope, and when a preacher falls, praise God, the promise remains. Even when everything

around us crumbles, His promise of grace remains.

In one of my favorite stories from the gospels, a Canaanite woman comes to Jesus asking for healing for her daughter, who is being tormented by a demon. Jesus' initial response is harsh: "It isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to

the dogs" (Matthew 15:26). But the woman is unflinching, because she knew He wasn't speaking to her gender or her race; he was speaking to her unworthiness. So she responds with desperate faith in his grace: "Yes, Lord ... yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table" (Matthew 15:27).

In other words, the grace of God is so rich and so abundant that it flows off of the table so that even those with no more worthiness than dogs can eat until they are satisfied. Jesus said this Canaanite

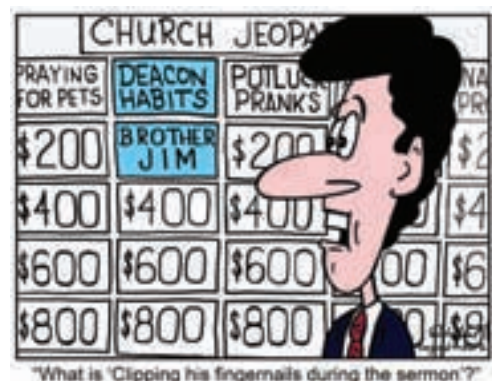
woman had faith like none in Israel. And she is our example. We can never hope too much in the grace of God, never lean too fully into it. Would we rather be dogs feasting on the crumbs off God's table or "heroes" asking God to reward us for our greatness? I'll take the path of the dog every single time.

William Carey once said that the future is always as bright as the promises of God. When I think of the future of the SBC, I believe that the Holy Spirit has

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J.D. GREEAR
Guest Column



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N.C. lawmakers urge release of Pastor Andrew Brunson

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

Forty-eight of 50 North Carolina senators signed a senatorial statement urging the Turkish government to release Pastor Andrew Brunson. A Presbyterian minister from Black Mountain, N.C., Brunson has been imprisoned by Turkey since Oct. 7, 2016.

He was arrested and wrongly associated with a group that Turkish authorities say was responsible for a coup attempt against Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan in July 2016. Brunson is a missionary who lives in Turkey.

The 62-page indictment also charges Brunson, who had served openly as a Christian pastor in Turkey for the past 23 years, with committing an act of terrorism by spreading the Christian faith in the majority-Muslim country, according to the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom, who “strongly condemns” the charges.

Brunson denies all charges. “I’ve never done anything against Turkey,” Brunson said in his trial. “I love Turkey. I’ve been praying for Turkey for 25 years. I want the truth to come out.”

The U.S. Department of State says there is “no credible evidence” to convict Brunson of a crime against Turkey.

The N.C. House unanimously approved a resolution June 12 calling for Brunson to “be released from prison immediately.” The senatorial statement is nearly identical in its content, but Senate rules do not allow for resolutions.

Mark Creech, executive director of the Christian Action League, lobbied House and Senate members to sign the respective declarations. In addition to speaking directly with most of them, Creech said he targeted some legislators by email, explaining that Brunson is a victim of hostage diplomacy.

“Turkey wants a Muslim cleric in the United States that it claims played a role in the [2016] coup attempt,” wrote Creech. “In other words, extradite the

Muslim cleric, and we’ll give you back the Christian preacher.”

The case against Brunson is fundamentally about religious liberty in the world according to Creech.

“The accusation against him claims he is ‘dividing and separating [Turkey], by means of Christianization,’ and that his ministry is considered ‘an agent of unconventional warfare’ beneath the ‘mask of an evangelical church pastor.’ This is no different than when the Emperor Nero claimed Christians burned Rome,” said Creech.

Rep. Bert Jones (R-Rockingham) said Brunson reported to the police for what he thought was a routine meeting to renew his visa. He was immediately taken into custody and denied the right to an attorney. Jones said the indictment released later, based on secret evidence and hearsay, falsely accuses Brunson of membership in an armed terror organization. If convicted, the 50-year-old pastor faces 35 years in prison.

According to the House resolution, 66 members of the U.S. Senate and 154 members of the U.S. House of Representatives signed letters to the president of Turkey asking for Brunson’s release.

In May, U.S. Senator Thom Tillis (North Carolina) helped secure a provision in the 2019 National Defense Authorization Act that would prohibit Turkey from receiving any F-35 aircraft from the United States while it continues to mistreat U.S. citizens and Turkish residents.

“Sen. Tillis has been passionate about this issue. He became interested in anything related to Turkey back when a number of us went to Turkey with him several years ago. The Turkey we experienced and the Turkey of today are two different things,” Rep. Chuck McGrady (R-Henderson) told the House when he introduced the resolution.

Jones said Tillis attended Brunson’s

latest hearing in Turkey, spending about 12 hours in the Turkish court. Tillis said the only thing Brunson is guilty of is “being a Christian and trying to bring a Christian message to those who want to hear it.”

Sens. Chuck Edwards (R-Buncombe) and Terry Van Duyn (D-Buncombe), who represent Brunson’s home county, introduced the senatorial statement on the Senate floor.

Edwards told Senate members he was making a plea to “all North Carolinians – and to all this senatorial statement may ultimately reach – to pray for the family of Pastor Brunson and to reach out to comfort them by whatever means possible.”

“I can only imagine the fear, the anxiety and the sorrow they must now be experiencing given the current uncertainty of their beloved. Let us please work to let them know that they are not alone,” Edwards added.

Addressing the Senate, Paul Newton (R-Cabarrus) read 1 Corinthians 12:26, “*If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one*

part is honored, every part rejoices with it.”

“Far too often, the right we as Americans have to practice and express our religious beliefs, openly and freely, is taken for granted,” Newton said. “Pastor Brunson’s imprisonment is a harrowing example of the religious persecution that continues to persist around the world.

“Pastor Brunson himself has written, ‘Let it be clear, I am in prison, not for anything that I have done wrong, but because of who I am – a Christian pastor. I desperately miss my wife and children. Yet, I believe this to be true – it is an honor to suffer for Jesus Christ as many have before me. My deepest thanks to all those around the world who are standing with me and praying for me.’”

Creech hopes the House resolution and senatorial statement will aid in securing Brunson’s release, but admits it is “impossible” to know the ultimate value of such actions.

“But we have to try,” he added. “These are official declarations from North Carolina’s governing bodies insisting that an innocent North Carolinian be released. Who knows in what way God may use them to set our Christian brother free.” **BR**

‘Dean of evangelical missiology’ dies at 94

Biblical Recorder

Well-known evangelical missiologist David Hesselgrave died May 21 at age 94. He left a legacy of influential scholarship in the field of missions, even being deemed the “dean of evangelical missiology” by Ed Stetzer, executive director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College.

He was co-founder of the Evangelical Missiology Society and architect of the missions program at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, authoring multiple books on cross-cultural missions that are often used in seminary and divinity school classrooms. “You can’t speak to an evangelical missiologist who hasn’t been influenced – in my case, shaped – by Hesselgrave’s thinking,” Stetzer said in a video tribute. He held a doctorate in rhetoric and public address with an emphasis in cross-cultural communication,



DAVID HESSELGRAVE

a master’s in speech, and a bachelor’s in philosophy from the University of Minnesota. Southern Baptist Convention

President J.D. Greear said Hesselgrave “outlined the shape of mission for my generation.”

“He taught us that God really had given us the nations as our inheritance and showed us how to go after them,” Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C., said in comments to Baptist Press. “My own understanding of mission was profoundly shaped by him, and our sending and

missions training today includes many of the contributions Dr. Hesselgrave made to missiology.”

Hesselgrave’s “life and work burned brightly while on earth, and he continues to cast a long shadow of legacy even after his death,” wrote Greg Mathias, assistant professor of global studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, in a July 5 International Mission Board article. “I count it an honor to stand on his shoulders as a Christian brother, missiologist and servant in God’s Kingdom.”

Prior to his long tenure as professor in multiple schools, Hesselgrave served as a missionary to Japan for 12 years after World War II. He is survived by his wife, Gertrude, and three children. **BR**

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Pro-immigrant ad supported by ERLC shared by thousands

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

Thousands have viewed and shared an open letter signed by Southern Baptist ethicist Russell Moore and a related video endorsing just and fair immigration following a full-page ad in *The New York Times*.

Moore, a longtime supporter of the just treatment of immigrants, is among eight faith leaders included in 65 initial and ethnically diverse signatories of the letter, “Immigrants and Immigration Strengthen Us,” authored by the Washington-based National Immigration Forum, (NIF) published in *The Times* on Independence Day and posted online the previous day.

Christians above all others should understand the importance of fair and just immigration, Moore told Baptist Press (BP) July 6, noting that immigrants have contributed much to the U.S.

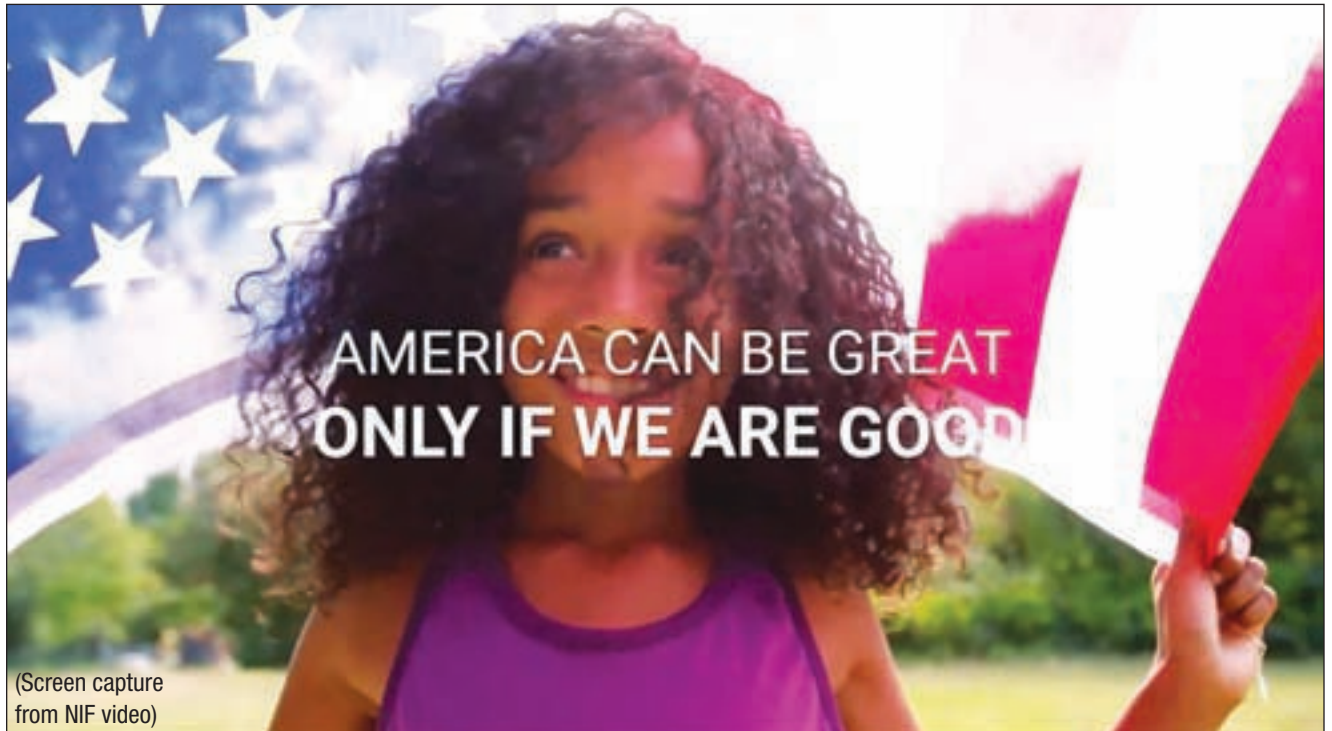
“We were, after all, sojourners in Egypt and are, right now, pilgrims in a strange land headed toward our ultimate home,” Moore emailed BP. “Baptist churches all around the country are at the forefront of ministry to our immigrant neighbors and, more than that, the vitality of the gospel is perhaps most clearly seen right now in what God is doing in churches made up of immigrant believers.”

The Times published the ad in the Washington-area edition, and an online video and ad invited readers and viewers to sign the letter. NIF communications director Cathleen Farrell told BP thousands have shared the letter and video, but could not specify how many had signed the letter as of July 6.

“The video has been viewed and shared by thousands,” Farrell said. “The sign-on letter shows the broad swath of support for immigrants and immigration and a recognition of the contributions immigrants make to our country, and the engagement on social media is a reflection of the welcome from the general public for their immigrant brothers and sisters.”

The letter’s opening statement reads, “Immigrants and immigration strengthen these United States, as they have since our founding.

“How we treat immigrants, refugees and their fami-



lies reflects our commitment to the values that define us as Americans.”

Family worth, the nation’s wide-reaching reputation as a land of opportunity and hope, human dignity and religious freedoms are promoted in the letter, which encourages constructive conversation on immigration among the nation’s leaders. “We call on America’s leaders once again to encourage citizenship for those who are eligible and want to pledge full allegiance to our country,” the letter reads, “and to allow all of us, American by birth or American by choice, to reach our fullest potential.”

Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, and Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference, are among the faith leaders listed as initial signatories, as are Scott Arbeiter, president of World Relief; Shirley Hoogstra, president of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities; Hyepin Im, president and CEO of Faith and Community Empowerment; Jo Anne Lyon, ambassador and general superintendent emerita of The

“We call on America’s leaders once again to encourage citizenship for those who are eligible and want to pledge full allegiance to our country and to allow all of us ... to reach our fullest potential.”
– immigration letter

Wesleyan Church; and Joe S. Vásquez, chairman of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops’ Committee on Migration. Joining faith representatives among signatories are business, law enforcement and security leaders. The full statement can be viewed at immigrationforum.org.

Founded in 1982, NIF describes itself as an advocate for the value of immigrants and immigration, aimed at promoting “responsible ... immigration policies” and “addressing ... economic and national security needs while honoring the ideals of our founding fathers.” **BP**

Mapping Continued from page 1

PNDNC trains individuals to share the gospel across cultural boundaries, even within a single people group.

Lyons described three categories that exist within many immigrant communities: a culturally religious core, a fringe population and the majority population. This pattern does not fit every people group but can be observed in most, Lyons said.

The core segment is the most religiously and culturally non-assimilated, he explained.

“They are mostly likely to have been older when they immigrated, most likely to very highly identify with the context in which they came from ... and the cultural pressures that keep them from changing and choosing to follow Jesus.”

Lyons said the fringe population embraces many “American values.”

“A lot of times, they’re existing in both worlds,” he said. “They’re existing in the majority world around them, but they’re also relating back to ... their own background. ... They’re asking questions that their culture doesn’t typically allow them to ask, because they’re being exposed to more things that they haven’t been before.”

The PNDNC manual identified the majority population within a people group as ranging “from non-English speaking to semi-bilingual and are fairly tied to the cultural and religious norms of their group.

“However, there are some small changes taking place within their worldview.”

Lyons said all three subgroups are often found in one, multigenerational home.

“It makes it incredibly complex in terms of how you would engage them. All that’s required, though, is to train laypeople to become adaptable missionaries. ... It’s a missional mindset rather than trying to create a place that’s comfortable for every generation.”

In the process of multiplying disciples, the new believer from any generation then receives the responsibility to cross barriers to take the gospel to the others, Lyons explained, pointing back to Jesus’ model in Luke 10.

“Jesus says to stay with the home that receives you. ... If someone receives the messenger and the message of the gospel, and then they’re also receiv-

ing the mission themselves, we need to empower them to reach the rest of the community.”

Lyons emphasized the importance of meeting and discipling people groups in their own cultural contexts. The PNDNC manual notes that going to the unreached is about reproducing believers, not “Americanizing” communities.

Since 2016, teams from local congregations have launched disciple-making strategies in 25 of the top 80 unreached people groups in North Carolina – the top 10 of which are in eight population centers.

There are currently 154 known unreached people groups in the state.

For more information visit ncbaptist.org. Visit the PNDNC Facebook page or follow them on Twitter: [@pndnc](https://twitter.com/pndnc). **BP**

Southern Baptist resigns as EPA chief

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

Scott Pruitt, former Oklahoma Attorney General and former trustee at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (SBTS), resigned his position as head of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) July 5 after months of ethical allegations, according to news reports.

Pruitt, a member of First Baptist Church in Broken Arrow, Okla., was nominated by then-president-elect Donald Trump to lead the agency in late 2016. Some critics opposed Pruitt's confirmation for his positions on climate change, but he received support from many Southern Baptist leaders, including SBTS President Albert Mohler; Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission; Anthony Jordan, former executive director of the Baptist General Convention of Oklahoma;

and Sen. James Lankford (R-Okla.). News reports said allegations against Pruitt include mismanagement of the EPA office by overspending on travel and security, asking office staff to complete personal errands and using his position to solicit personal favors. The accusations have prompted more than a dozen probes by federal investigators, such as the agency's Office of Inspector General and the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, which is led by fellow conservative U.S. Rep. Trey Gowdy (S.C.). Nick Garland, pastor of FBC Broken Arrow, defended Pruitt in statements to Baptist Press, calling the allegations personal attacks from political adversaries. Pruitt is at least the second person with Southern Baptist ties to resign from Trump's cabinet, Baptist Press reported. Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price resigned in 2017 amid allegations he misused taxpayer funds. **BR**

Representing church, ADF lawyers file suit against city of Monroe

Alliance Defending Freedom

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys filed a federal lawsuit June 4 on behalf of a church against the city of Monroe, N.C. The city recently enacted an unconstitutional zoning code that bars At the Cross Fellowship Baptist Church from holding worship services in its newly rented and renovated premises.

The new regulations prohibit the church from hosting worship services, even though another church had occu-

piated space in the same building in the past, and the new code permits libraries, museums, and other nonprofit use of the same space.

In related news, the U.S. Department of Justice announced June 12 its new "Place to Worship Initiative," which will focus on "protecting the ability of houses of worship and other religious institutions to build, expand, buy, or rent facilities – as provided by the land use provisions of the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act." **BR**

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COURT BRIEFS

High Court annuls ruling against florist

(Baptist Press) The U.S. Supreme Court provided a promising directive June 25 in the ongoing effort by business owners to practice their faith convictions. The justices issued an order that annulled a lower-court ruling against Washington state florist Barronelle Stutzman, a Southern Baptist who declined to design flowers for a same-sex wedding. The order also instructed the Washington Supreme Court to reconsider its previous decision in light of the justices' June 4 opinion in favor of a Colorado cake artist who refused to design and decorate a cake in celebration of the wedding of two men.

The Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) and other religious organizations filed a friend-of-the-court brief last August in support of Stutzman's appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The brief argued the high court should accept the case to reaffirm that the practice of faith "does not end when a religious believer leaves her home or place of worship."

ERLC President Russell Moore introduced Stutzman at the 2015 SBC Annual Meeting during the entity's report, and she received a standing ovation from messengers. The case is *Arlene's Flowers v. Washington*.

Supporters: Ruling to help Christian teachers

(Baptist Press) Christians and other teachers in public schools, as well as the school-choice movement, stand to benefit from the U.S. Supreme Court's decision June 27 that public-sector unions may not require fees from nonmembers, supporters of the ruling say.

In a 5-4 opinion, the high court ruled against such mandates by government and public-sector unions and overturned a 41-year-old Supreme Court decision in the process. The justices decided such a requirement on workers who refuse to join the union is a violation of free-speech protections in the First Amendment.

The ruling offers important implications for Christians and other teachers with faith convictions, according to the Christian Educators Association International (CEAI). The high court's opinion came in *Janus v. American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees*.

Court affirms pregnancy center's speech rights

(Baptist Press) The U.S. Supreme Court delivered a key free-speech victory for pro-life pregnancy centers June 26 by a 5-4 vote. The high court reversed a lower court decision regarding a California law that, in part, essentially requires pregnancy care centers to promote abortion services. The justices ruled the pregnancy centers that challenged the measure would likely succeed in their assertion it violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and returned the case to a federal court for reconsideration in light of their opinion.

The two-part law in question – California's 2015 Reproductive FACT Act – requires licensed pregnancy centers to post a notice for or otherwise inform clients in writing of the state's free or low-cost access to abortion and other family planning services. The law also mandates unlicensed centers to provide a notice they are not licensed medically and do not have a licensed medical professional.

Free-speech and pro-life advocates applauded the high court's decision. In January, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission joined in a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of the pregnancy centers. The brief contended the California law unconstitutionally discriminates on the basis of viewpoint. The case is *NIFLA v. Becerra*.

Rowan County case fails to make court's docket

(Alliance Defending Freedom) The U.S. Supreme Court declined June 28 to take up *Rowan County v. Lund*, a North Carolina case that gave the high court the opportunity to uphold its previous rulings pertaining to prayer before public meetings and to clear up conflicting rulings on legislator-led prayer in lower courts.

Alliance Defending Freedom attorneys were co-counsel in the case and were also the attorneys behind the 2014 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Town of Greece v. Galloway* that upheld prayer at public meetings, which both a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 4th Circuit in the Rowan County case and a recent decision by the 6th Circuit in a different case cited as critical precedent for their decisions in favor of legislator-led prayer policies.

The full 4th Circuit, however, later reversed the 4th Circuit panel's decision, creating a split between the circuits.

As noted in the county's petition filed with the Supreme Court, the full 6th Circuit found that the Supreme Court's analysis in *Town of Greece* supports legislator-led prayers, rejecting 2017 conclusions by the 4th Circuit.

Full stories available online at BRnow.org.



Shepherd's Flock breaks ground for first building

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

Seven years ago, Larry and Kathy Martin joined 30 other Baptists in Sanford, North Carolina to plant Shepherd's Flock Baptist Church. Growing to 120 members today, the church broke ground June 23 on its first building.

Gathering under an unusually large pecan tree on a hot Saturday afternoon, almost 100 people met for the combined celebration of the church's annual Vacation Bible School kickoff and a groundbreaking service for the 6,000 square feet, brick facade building on 10 acres of land. The new building will seat 208 for worship services and provide classroom space.

Pastor Larry Martin said the church met in two different locations since its launch and baptized 65 new believers.

Some came through outreach like the meal ministry that provides 300 meals weekly for needy families in the community.

He pointed to one man in the crowd who accepted a bottle of water that church members handed out in a K-Mart parking lot last year. Now the man is an active member.

The church also has a radio ministry two evenings weekly and rebroadcasts Sunday services on Charter Cable 16 and Sanford television channel 46.1.

"About four years ago, a generous couple who lives in the community sold us the land for \$46,000 with the stipulation that a church facility will be built on it," Martin said.

"It's valued at \$120,000."

The church paid off the land and raised \$300,000 for

the new building – about half of the anticipated construction costs.

"The Lord's been in it every step of the way," Martin added.

"We've had a lot of struggles, but this day makes it worth every bit of it. We just want to win some people to Jesus and we want to minister to people who are suffering and need help. That's what we're about."

Martin explained to the crowd that most groundbreaking services involve the pastor and a few leaders who use a shovel to turn over a small amount of dirt.

"But, this will involve everybody – two rows of people pulling two ropes connected to a plow, guided by three men," he said.

"The main thing we want to do here is give God the glory, because what you see being done, He's done it."

Eric Davidson, director of missions for the Sandy Creek Baptist Association, said the Shepherd's Flock groundbreaking is part of the association's 17-year strategy.

"Our goal is to plant 42 churches by 2035," he said. "In the first 17 years of Sandy Creek Association, 42 churches were planted, so we're encouraging our churches to plant 2 or 3 churches every year for the next 17 years."

Founded in 1758, Sandy Creek is the oldest Baptist association in the Southern Baptist Convention. It once engulfed more than six states and extended its boundaries from the Atlantic Ocean to the Mississippi River. Today it covers Lee and Chatham counties.

"This area of Lee County is a very established community with a lot of history. Many people who grew up here still live in the community," said Davidson.

"This is predominantly a rural, agricultural-driven people.



"The Lord's been in it every step of the way. This day makes it worth every bit of it. We just want to win some people to Jesus and we want to minister to people who are suffering and need help. That's what we're about."
– Larry

"Growth is coming to the community especially along the U.S. Highway 1 corridor. Shepherd's Flock wants to reach people that other churches are not reaching."

Above, ground breaking ceremony. Left, Gary Martin and Larry Martin pull the plow during the groundbreaking ceremony. Right, Pastor Larry Martin speaking to the crowd during the ceremony. Photo by Allan Blume.



Pastor Larry Martin addresses members and guests June 23 at the groundbreaking ceremony for Shepherd's Flock Baptist Church in Sanford. At the ceremony, members of the church, including Larry Bullard, Woodrow Thomas and Bill Wilson, start the plow as members pull the rope together (below). Martin shared that he has seen God in every step of the process – from providing the land at a low cost to the church raising more than half the money toward expected construction costs for the new building, which is expected to be completed before Christmas. (BR photos by K. Lume)



ay. We've had a lot of struggles, but this is what we want to win some people to Jesus ..."
Martin

The church plans to move into the new building before Christmas.

Visit shepherds-flock.org. **BR**

Donors ditch SWBTS over Patterson dismissal

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

A group of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) donors released a letter June 29 announcing their decision to halt financial support for the school as a result of former president Paige Patterson's termination.

The seven-page document, apparently drafted by oil industry executive Gary Loveless and cosigned by 25 other alleged donors, expressed "utter disdain" for the actions of the trustee board's executive committee and Chairman Kevin Ueckert. "Please know that until the serious wrongs against Dr. and Mrs. Patterson are righted, we will be unable to continue our financial support of the seminary," the letter stated.

Future gifts could total "well in excess of tens of millions of dollars," donors said.

Patterson came under fire earlier this year for past advice he gave to a woman about domestic violence and for making comments about a teenage girl's physical attractiveness in a sermon.

The seminary's board decided May 23 to move Pat-

erson into an honorary role as president *emeritus*, which included compensation and a lifetime housing arrangement on campus.

The board's executive committee met again May 30 and removed him from leadership at the seminary entirely, citing new information about his mishandling of two sexual assault allegations. A committee member said Patterson also acted inappropriately in response to the board's investigation of the school's financial condition.

The donor letter called the committee's action "illegal" and a "complete miscarriage of justice." The document also disputed the sexual assault allegations, citing previously unreleased and graphic details about one of the female student's activities. It is unclear how donors obtained this information. Loveless did not respond to requests for comment by publication time.

The letter's signers urged the board to reconsider Patterson's *emeritus* status by launching an investigative committee comprised of 10 individuals selected from among trustees or those "officially associated" with the seminary: five chosen by the board and five by donors. **BR**

Slogan Continued from page 1

Financial Services, coming under the umbrella, "North Carolina Baptist Foundation Services."

"This rebranding is not for the purpose of just giving us a new look, but an effort to give a visual of what the Foundation has become by God's grace and leadership over the past 20 years," Warf said.

Although the Foundation has not officially changed its name, identifying with N.C. Baptist Financial Services better communicates all that it offers, from estate planning to church loans – most of which can be provided at no cost, said Warf.

The Foundation only charges fees once it begins to manage clients' money. There is no charge for consultations, estate planning assistance or church speaking engagements and workshops.

"You give CP [Cooperative Program] gifts, you support this ministry, so why not use it?" Warf said.

"We're told that in the U.S., probably 60 to 65 percent of adults do not have a last will and testament, which means, if they die, they die intestate, and that puts their estate in the hands of the court rather than in the hands of their family. You'll never do anything charitable unless you have a will.

"We encourage people to have a will, let your family know what your desires are, be responsible for all the blessings that you have as a Christian steward, whether it's a little bit or a lot."

Warf often encourages North Carolina Baptists to start endowments, which eventually provide income to ministries of their choice, and are easily attainable.

At the Foundation, individuals can start a cumulative endowment with \$100 and begin paying charities once the endowment reaches \$1,000. The gifts are 100 percent tax deductible.

"It amazes me that people tithe, and they die and never leave anything for the church. It's easy to put in your will," Warf said.

Organizations that NCBF clients often choose to support include the International Mission Board, North American Mission Board, Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, Baptist colleges and seminaries, and local churches.

The Foundation is careful to ensure there are no in-



vestments in companies with any connection to alcohol, pornography, gambling or abortion.

"Sometimes companies buy companies that buy companies, and you have to be vigilant about those kinds of things.

"That's our intent, is to have nothing invested in things that we consider detrimental to the cause of Christ."

NCBF also offers church fund management agreements. They work with churches that might have funds they're not ready to spend or have no plans of spending soon, such as scholarships, building funds or cemetery upkeep funds.

"They choose the fund, however aggressive they want it to be, and we manage the money until they're ready for it."

Another common resource congregations use is a church loan, offered by N.C. Baptist Financial Services. Warf said the Foundation takes great care and caution in approving loans and require a process similar to what is necessary when taking out a bank loan.

"We've never had one in default, we've never had one even behind. So sometimes we have to deny a loan ... we don't say no indefinitely, we just say 'not at this time, that would not be a healthy thing for you to do.'"

Warf hopes the subtle changes and renewed emphasis on financial services raises North Carolina Baptists' awareness of the value of planning ahead. He said the Foundation hasn't set any numerical goals "because our job is to plant seeds and encourage faithful stewardship, and partner with people to make happen what they want to happen ... in a cost-wise way."

The updates come as NCBF prepares for its 100th anniversary in 2020.

Visit ncbaptistfoundation.org. **BR**

Former slave becomes first ‘modern’ missionary

By LESLEY HILDRETH | IMB

One of the most significant figures in the history of Christian missions is a freed Georgia slave named George Liele. Even though William Carey may be called the father of the modern missionary movement, George Liele left America and planted the gospel in Jamaica a full 10 years before Carey left England.

Conversion and early ministry

George Liele came to Christ in 1773, at the age of 23, and was baptized by his white pastor, Matthew Moore. Some time after Liele’s conversion, his owner, Henry Sharp, who was a Baptist deacon, gave Liele his freedom so he could pursue God’s call. Liele preached for two years in the slave quarters of plantations surrounding Savannah and into South Carolina after his conversion.

Because of his faithfulness and powerful preaching of the Word, many surrendered their lives to Christ. George Liele was ordained on May 20, 1775, becoming the first ordained African American Baptist preacher in America. After his ordination, he planted the first African American Baptist Church in North America, a church still in existence today.

An open door to preach in Jamaica

In 1778, Henry Sharp was killed in the Revolutionary War. After his death, Sharp’s heirs took steps to re-enslave Liele. As a result of their actions, Liele was thrown in jail. Eventually, he was able to produce proper documentation concerning his freedom and was set free. Soon after his release, Moses Kirkland, a colonel of the British army, befriended

Liele and helped him leave the country.

Kirkland helped pay for Liele’s trip to Jamaica, and after two years Liele paid this debt and obtained a certificate of freedom for himself and his family. George and his wife Hannah and their four children left Savannah and landed in Kingston, Jamaica, in 1782.

When Liele landed in Jamaica it was a British colony. There, Liele found land and a people who needed a missionary. Slaves were brought from Africa to Jamaica to work on the sugar plantations. These men and women had no real knowledge of Jesus Christ and the gospel. Liele planted a church and held a baptism service every three months. These baptisms were public events in which professing converts were baptized in a nearby ocean or river.

The growth of an integrated ministry

The work of the church and the public baptisms caused persecution.

Eventually, Liele was charged with preaching sedition and was thrown into prison. He was later acquitted of these charges. Despite facing these hostilities, during the eight years of preaching, he was able to baptize 500 people and establish a strong church.

Not only did Liele’s ministry lead to a spiritual impact on the island, but his work also made a social difference for the Jamaican slaves. By July 31, 1838, slavery was eradicated in Jamaica.

In 1814, there were only about 8,000 Baptists in Jamaica. This number included slaves, freedmen and some whites. However, as a result of Liele’s ministry, by 1832 there were more than 20,000 believers.

Author David Shannon summed up

Liele’s life of ministry this way: “The Christianity practiced by Liele was not limited to one nation, colony or ethnic group but was a faith found and spread through interaction with colonists and national leaders in the Americas and England. In turn, this broad vision of Christianity shaped and spread a variety of Christian experience that became widespread and influential in black, white and integrated congregations in Georgia, South Carolina, Jamaica, Nova Scotia, Sierra Leone and beyond.”

Training and sending out missionaries beyond Jamaica

Not only was Liele an effective missionary and evangelist, he was known for encouraging his converts to go preach the gospel to the lost. As a result of his leadership, they went to Savannah, Nova Scotia and Sierra Leone.

Adoniram Judson is often cited as the first Baptist missionary from the United States. But, in fact, this designation belongs to George Liele. His story is an important part of missionary history and



George Liele was spreading the gospel 10 years before William Carey left England for India. (IMB illustration)

is worthy of emulation.

George Liele died in 1828. He may have begun life as a slave, but he lived as a free man in Christ. He left a rich legacy of thousands who were transformed by the good news of Jesus.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Lesley Hildreth is the director of women’s discipleship for The Summit Church in Durham, North Carolina. Lesley and her family served for eight years with the IMB in western Europe and Central Asia. This article first appeared on the International Mission Board’s website. Reprinted from Baptist Press, baptistpress.com, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.) **BR**



Missionaries live with a deep love and compassion for those who are still far from God. They are burdened for those who are lost, those who are like sheep without a shepherd (Matthew 9:36). Missionaries exist by the words of Jesus when He said, “I have other sheep that are not of this fold” (John 10:16).

They are driven by the fact that there are people out there who are not yet brothers and sisters in Christ, simply because they have not yet been given an opportunity to hear and respond to the gospel (Romans 10:14-15).

So, if a missionary showed up in your city, they would ask these simple questions.

• Who lives around me?

A missionary would want to discover who the people were who lived in that city. They would want to know the number of people, their commonalities, their diversity, their languages, their cultures, their joys, hopes, fears and struggles.

• Who goes to my church and the other churches around me?

A missionary would want to understand who of the people living in his city were fellow brothers and sisters in Christ. They would want to know the number of believers, the health of their churches and the reach of their ministries.

• Who is left?

A missionary would take the number of people who live in the city, deduct the number of believers who are apart of churches in that city and devote their lives to those who are left.

They would go to the unreached neighborhoods and communities, minister the good news of Jesus, and start gospel communities for those who are left.

What would our city look like if we saw ourselves as the ones Jesus sent to seek and save the lost in our own communities? We need to think and act more like missionaries in our own cities, towns, neighborhoods and communities.



ZAC LYONS

EDITOR’S NOTE – Zac Lyons is a senior consultant for Great Commission partnerships with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact (984) 202-6037, or zlyons@ncbaptist.org.

BIBLE LAND

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OPPORTUNITY CORNER

North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) is sponsoring *The Heart of the Caregiver* workshop Sept. 26. Mary Tutterow, author of *The Heart of the Caregiver*, will share her testimony and the proven process of transforming your life from overwhelmed to overjoyed. Caregivers, senior adult ministers, lay leaders or anyone wishing to spiritually support caregivers will benefit from this 90-minute workshop. A \$10 registration fee includes book, coffee and light snacks. The workshop will take place from 10:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m. at the NCBAM



office at 201 Idol St. in Thomasville. Seating is limited. Register at ncbam.org/events.

AROUND THE STATE

Staff changes

First Baptist Church, Pinehurst, has called **CHARLES “CHUCK” VICKERS** as senior pastor. He attended Piedmont International University for his undergraduate degree and married Jennifer Bailey shortly after she graduated from Piedmont. He earned a master of divinity degree from Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va. The couple comes from Danville, Va., where he served since 2004. They have four children.

GREG LUNDBERG has been called as minister of music and senior adults at First Baptist Church, Southern Pines. Ordained in 1985, Lundberg previously served at Kirkwood Baptist Church, Kirkwood, Mo., for 12 years as associate pastor of music and worship. Lundberg earned a bachelor of arts degree from Judson College, a master of church music degree from Southern Seminary and a doctorate in worship studies from the Institute for Worship Studies in Jacksonville, Fla. He and his wife, Polly, are the parents of two married daughters and have one grandchild.

CHURCH NEWS



Pineview Baptist Church, Goldsboro

Twice a year Pineview Baptist Church, Goldsboro, serves a lunch to WAGES Belfast Head Start Center near the church. Texas Roadhouse helped with salad, rolls, gift bags of peanuts and a coupon for a free appetizer for each teacher. Pastor Mike Willard spoke about blooming where God has planted. The church provides baskets for the staff for several holidays throughout the year. (Contributed photo)

Hope

Continued from page 2

great days ahead. If we believe Christ's promises, heed the voice of the Holy Spirit, turn from our sin and cast ourselves upon the mercy of His grace, the gates of hell will not stand a chance.

God is not done with the SBC. There are still more than 6,000 unreached people groups in our world. I believe God wants to bless us for their sake. With the unchanging Word as our foundation, soul-winning as our focus, and the Holy Spirit as our guide, we can once again

“expect great things of God and attempt great things for God.” He desires to be merciful to us and bless us and cause His face to shine upon us – not for our sake but so His way may be known (Psalm 67).

(EDITOR'S NOTE – J.D. Greear is president of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, N.C. This column was adapted from his jdgrear.com website. Reprinted from Baptist Press, baptistpress.com, news service of the Southern Baptist Convention.) **BR**

Our church is doing a lot!



This was Fruitland's December 2017 graduating class. Fruitland is also training Hispanic church leaders through its Spanish language track at the main campus, as well as satellite campuses in Charlotte, Sylva, Statesboro and Wilmington.

See why leading North Carolina pastors have chosen the Cooperative Program as their main missions support method. Visit www.ncbaptist.org/cp.



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The missions and ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are made possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Offering.

We are helping train men and women for church service through Fruitland Baptist Bible College in Hendersonville. More than 800 N.C. Baptist churches are led by Fruitland graduates!

Our church has a part in missions, far and wide, through our Cooperative Program. It's a channel of blessings!



July 22

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

July 29

Pray

Plan

Focal passage: Nehemiah 1:1-11

Pour out your heart to God in prayer. It was a dreary winter day, and as my friend walked out of a local store, he noticed a man trembling in the cold.

The man was dressed in a worn coat and held out a mug. My friend approached the man and compassionately tossed a few quarters into his cup.

Just like my friend, you and I encounter people with desperate needs every day. And at times, it can be challenging to discern how best to help to those who are hurting.

Nehemiah, the cupbearer to the king of Persia, was used by God to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. His life also serves an example to us as we strive to minister to others in a way that honors God.

Like Nehemiah, we must first become aware of the needs around us. When visited by a messenger from Judah, Nehemiah asked for an update and learned that the people in Jerusalem were “*in great trouble and disgrace*” (Nehemiah 1:3). The wall surrounding the city had been demolished.

Like Nehemiah, after we become aware of a need, we must respond by ac-

knowledging God and confessing our sin.

After learning of the trouble in Jerusalem, Nehemiah “*sat down and wept*” (Nehemiah 1:4).

He also confessed his own sin as well as the sins and corruption that had resulted in the exile of the Jewish people.

Like Nehemiah, we must to look to God for guidance before taking steps of action. Before doing anything, Nehemiah asked that the Lord would be attentive. He prayed, “*Give your servant success today, and have compassion on him*” (Nehemiah 1:11).

When my friend tossed his coins into the man’s cup, hot coffee splashed onto his face.

The man wasn’t begging for assistance; he was merely sipping a warm drink and waiting for his ride.

Just like my friend, it can be easy for us to help out of good intentions without ever stopping to seek God.

Instead of rushing to serve, let’s be a people who prepare our hearts first, by seeking God’s guidance through confession and prayer.

Focal passage: Nehemiah 2:1-8; 17-18

Serving God requires intentionality. It’s summertime, and many of us are either returning from or planning for a vacation. Depending on your destination, you may have booked plane tickets or changed the oil in your car, but I’m guessing each of you packed a suitcase.

I would classify myself as an over packer. I begin early, and in my humble opinion, you can never be too prepared. My husband, on the other hand, prefers to work under pressure. He believes it’s much more effective to pack everything at once on the night before you leave. Although some might disagree, there isn’t one right way to pack.

And yet, you’ll only be prepared for your trip if you’re intentional about the things you bring. Likewise, although there is not one right method for serving God, we must be careful to plan intentionally while prayerfully relying on His guidance.

When Nehemiah learned of the

desperate situation in Jerusalem, he acknowledged his dependence on God and acted on every opportunity. While fulfilling his daily responsibilities, King Artaxerxes asked Nehemiah, “*why are you sad?*” (Nehemiah 2:2).

Nehemiah prayerfully and carefully explained the plight of the Jewish people. Nehemiah also actively planned the work to which he had been called, asking the king to send him to Judah so he might rebuild the wall. He even requested official letters for both protection on his journey and provision for the rebuilding process.

Additionally, Nehemiah did not attempt to complete the task alone. He enlisted the help of his fellow exiles, saying, “*Come, let’s rebuild Jerusalem’s wall, so that we will no longer be a disgrace*” (Nehemiah 2:17).

God is calling each of us to serve Him, and we must follow Nehemiah’s example by acknowledging our dependence on God, actively planning for the work, and calling others to serve alongside us.

When I pack for the beach but forget my sunscreen, the resulting sunburn keeps me from truly enjoying my trip. When we attempt to serve God without acting intentionally, we often forfeit the opportunity to glorify God as He works in and through us for His good pleasure.



EMILY KISTLER
Member,
Parkwood Baptist
Church, Gastonia

July 22

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

July 29

Deposed

Restored

Focal passages: 2 Samuel 15:10-16, 24-30

The book of 2 Samuel describes David’s many victories against foreign enemies. Yet, it is apparent that the enemies within, himself and his family, proved to be his toughest challenge.

One of David’s sons, Absalom, was previously exiled from the king’s palace because he struck down another of David’s sons in vengeance (2 Samuel 13:39).

After a few years, Absalom managed to persuade the king that he should be welcomed back into the king’s palace, and David welcomed back his son with a kiss (14:33).

Absalom was very cunning in the way he manipulated others to regain his position of influence. He then used that position to gain a following among Israel’s people by promoting himself as superior to King David.

His entitlement and selfish ambition led him to defy God’s plan, attack his father and overestimate his own abilities.

I can only try to imagine the feeling of betrayal David would have felt as he fled from his son’s takeover plot. After many

battles against other kings and armies, his greatest battles were always the ones against his apparent allies.

In these times, opposition becomes an opportunity for true friends to demonstrate their loyalty.

More than that, God is able to show himself faithful and true against the backdrop of disloyal companions.

God also demonstrates his presence to us in the midst of upheaval like a solid rock to stand upon when it seems the world is crashing down. As David fled from Jerusalem, he separated himself from the ark of God, which was to remain behind.

David trusted that the promises and power of the Lord would keep him secure as he ventured out to face life-threatening risks.

His humble response to this challenge is reflected in Psalm 131:1: “*My heart is not proud, Lord, my eyes are not haughty; I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.*”

Focal passages: 2 Samuel 19:1-15

Trust once lost can be difficult to regain. As I have grown up watching sports, it is heartbreaking to learn about an athlete who cheated in order to win.

All the victories and championships are tarnished by the realization that they were not truly deserved.

Many times, this sort of discovery ends their athletic career, destroys their public credibility and ruins future opportunities.

Regaining confidence is the theme of this passage, which teaches us that God’s leaders must take advantage of opportunities to increase the trust others place in them.

David’s army won a major victory for him that effectively restored him to his throne over the entire nation.

However, in the course of battle, his son Absalom was killed which greatly upset David.

The rest of David’s men returned to

the city defeated, not because they lost the battle, but because they were following their king in mourning the rebel Absalom’s death.

This may sound extreme, but David’s actions here were driven by emotion, and they had a negative impact on the divided nation and his soldiers in particular. They needed to rally around their rightful king who survived betrayal, but it seemed like he was ungrateful to them for their heroic sacrifice.

Putting emotions aside, David resumed his royal duties and demonstrated that people can be united by trusting in God and in His leaders.

The king reconnected with all the tribes of Israel and made his best effort to reconcile ongoing conflicts.

He regained the trust of the people and continued to serve God’s people as their chosen leader.

Any leader today must also walk the same line of personal feelings and leadership responsibilities.

Even when facing disappointments and struggles, leaders have to remain committed to the God’s plan and acting according to his instructions.



LOGAN SIDES
Local Missions Director,
Calvary Baptist Church,
Winston-Salem



National Campers on Mission

The National Campers on Mission (NCOM) rally June 19-21 recognized two North Carolina couples. The event, which was hosted in Perry, Ga., honored John and Barbara Arnett, left, members of Denver Baptist Church with the 2017 NCOM lifetime achievement award. Dean and Reta Miller, right, members of Jonathan Valley Baptist Church, Waynesville, were awarded the 2017 national camper of the year award. (Contributed photos)

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Denominational

Seeking **part-time Director of Missions** for the Tennessee River Baptist Association, Bryson City, NC. Please send résumé to PO Box 1503, Bryson City, NC 28713, or call (828) 269-2847.

Pastor

Maple Springs Baptist Church, Seagrove, NC, is seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. We are a conservative, evangelistic and mission-minded Southern Baptist church. Applicants should be strong leaders with good pastoral skills and strong preaching/teaching abilities. Send résumé and sermon links to PO Box 357, Seagrove, NC 27341, or to gomaple@centurylink.net. Deadline August 21.

New Grace Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC, prayerfully seeks **Bivocational Pastor** to lead small, traditional congregation. We are mission minded, desiring growth and to serve our community. Applicants should be gifted in preaching, teaching, pastoral care and discipleship. Send résumés to: Pastor Search Committee, 12325 Old Creedmoor Rd., Raleigh, NC 27613, or to ngbcpastorsearch@gmail.com.

Due to the retirement of a beloved, long-term pastor, Cherokee Avenue Baptist in Gaffney, SC, seeks a **full-time pastor**. We are a congregation led Southern Baptist church. We seek a caring leader who will proclaim the Truth with fervency and depth; an energetic proclaimer who will help us thrive in our faith and impact our community into the future. We look for an individual with at least a master's degree from a Southern Baptist seminary and at least three years of experience in a pastoral position. Please submit résumés to: cabcpastorsearch@gmail.com.

White Level Baptist Church, Louisburg, NC, is searching for a **full-time Pastor** for a growing rural church. We would like someone energetic and full of the love of Christ. Someone who is eager to serve the church and serve the community. Someone who is eager to lead the body in reaching the community and discipleship. This is a full-time position that will require office time and/or field time Monday-Friday. Services are Sunday morning and Wednesday night. If interested please email your résumé to wlbchurchinfo@gmail.com. Thanks and God bless.

Cedar Creek Baptist Church, Fayetteville, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time Pastor**. We are a conservative, Southern Baptist church with average attendance of 175-worship; 125-Sunday School. A minimum 5 years experience as a Pastor/Sr. Pastor required; seminary graduate; we prefer someone 35-45 years old, with a family. Send résumés to: Linda Prevatte, 3716 Cedar Hill Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28312.

Zoar Baptist Church, Shelby, NC, is currently seeking a **full-time pastor** who God is calling to serve our church and community. We are a traditional, conservative Southern Baptist, family, community and mission-oriented church that was established in 1837. We have traditional Sunday School and blended worship services with average attendance of 90-100. The pastor will lead three services each week (Sunday morning, Sunday evening and Wednesday evening). He will work alongside a minister of music, and minister of children and minister of youth. Our pastor will be a man of the highest Godly character with God-guided leadership and vision. He will be biblically balanced and we prefer a minimum of five years pastoral experience with a seminary degree from an accredited SBC seminary. After prayerful consideration, please submit résumés including details of your salvation experience and calling by God to be a pastor and two audio files of recent sermons to: Pastor Search Committee, Zoar Baptist Church, 1740 S. Lafayette St., Shelby, NC 28152. Résumés should be received by July 31, 2018.

Church Staff

First Baptist Church, Gaffney, SC, is searching for a **Minister of Worship**. Candidate should have experience leading both traditional and contemporary worship services. Job description can be found on the church website, www.fbcgaffney.org. Résumés can be mailed to Worship Search Committee, c/o First Baptist Church, 200 N. Limestone St., Gaffney, SC 29340, or email to office@fbcgaffney.org with subject line Worship Search Committee.

Worship Leader. White Level Baptist Church, Louisburg, NC, is looking for an eager individual with a love and passion for Christ and praising His name through song. Looking to blend traditional hymns and contemporary hits for a diverse worship service. Must be able to hold Wednesday evening rehearsals with choir members, lead and organize music for Sunday morning services, and coordinate with choir and musicians for music specials to be conducted during worship service. Approx. 3 hrs per week will be required onsite each week with exception of special events during Christmas and revival. We are 45 mins from Wake Forest. Please email your résumés to wlbchurchinfo@gmail.com.

Meherrin Baptist Church, Murfreesboro, NC, is seeking a **part-time administrative assistant** (20 hours per week). Please send all inquiries to jcdc@gmail.com.

Miscellaneous

Cash Paid for Libraries. Baker Book House buys religious used books. Contact: quotes@bakerbookhouse.com or call 866-241-6733.

Share the Biblical Recorder – FREE. Order three months free. Contact liz@BRnow.org.

Placing a classified ad in the *Biblical Recorder*

Choose one of three avenues:

- Send e-mail to: alison@BRnow.org.
- Purchase ads at BRnow.org/Advertise.
- Send a Fax to (919) 467-6180.

For more information, call the office at (919) 459-5691.

Cost for Baptist churches/organizations is \$1.25 per word, number and stand-alone initial (\$1.45 for commercial and non-Baptist entities) with a minimum charge of \$35. Classifieds also are carried online.

Visit **BRnow.org**

Seminary

Continued from page 1

“They really do value each one of the trustees and the perspectives they bring.”

Gardner’s experience at Peoria Christian School, where she has worked for more than 25 years, seems to fit well with the mission and vision of SEBTS.

Peoria Christian, which educates more than 600 students from preschool through 12th grade, says its goal is to “produce academically skilled students who are equipped with a biblical worldview and who will impact the world for Christ.”

It has been named a National Blue Ribbon School by the U.S. Department of Education twice in the last 10 years for high test score performance. Gardner has been superintendent for six years. Prior to that, she was principal and an elementary teacher.

“I have really enjoyed seeing God at work in the missions opportunities [at SEBTS] and through their strong academics – really encouraging their student body and professors to seek God and be on mission wherever He leads them,” she said. “It’s a blessing to be a part of that.”

When asked for her advice to young women who aspire to denominational leadership, Gardner said, “they don’t need to put themselves or God in a box.”

“What we have comes from Him,” she said. “I encourage them to prayerfully look

for opportunities and not be afraid to step into those opportunities. ... My life verse is Proverbs 3:5-6, *‘Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.’* ... We don’t know where God is going to give us opportunities, and many times we don’t know the impact we have.”

She also highlighted the importance of being “a lifelong learner” and serving others rather than “seeking some big, great, glorious title.” Gardner said she hopes current discussions about women in Southern Baptist life will avoid quarrels over “men versus women.”

She asked, “How can we serve in the places God has called each one of us ... in our local churches, in our communities?” and called all Southern Baptists – men and women – to champion the Great Commission.

“We need to come back to what God has commanded us to do as believers,” Gardner said. “Let’s rally around that.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Becky Gardner and her husband, Joe, are members of Woodland Baptist Church in Peoria, Ill. He is director of missions for the Metro Peoria Baptist Association and a consultant for the Illinois Baptist State Association. They have three children and five grandchildren.) **BR**

‘Christmas in July’ underway at LifeWay stores

By AARON WILSON | LifeWay Christian Resources

As much of the U.S. was weathering another heat wave this summer, LifeWay Christian Store employees were busy putting up Christmas decorations. The reason for the yuletide displays is the “Christmas in July” service projects offered through LifeWay.

Each week in July, guests can visit any LifeWay store to build care packages for different mission or service-focused groups or organizations:

- **July 1-7** – military servicemen and women;
- **July 9-14** – local homeless ministries;
- **July 16-21** – disaster relief; and
- **July 23-28** – North American missionaries.

LifeWay will provide hand sanitizer, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, sanitizing wipes and other supplies for guests to create care packages.

Guests can write encouraging notes while younger children can draw pictures to send with the packages.

As guests celebrate Christmas in July at LifeWay stores, they’ll notice the festive trees aren’t just for decoration.

The trees also hold Operation Christmas Child ornaments that provide an opportunity for guests to bless children around the world.

“We’ve partnered with Samaritan’s Purse for a unique opportunity,” said Nathan Magness, LifeWay’s marketing strategist.

“During the month of July, customers can purchase a \$6 ornament – the proceeds of which will provide a Bible and *The Greatest Journey* to a child in need.”

The Greatest Journey is a follow-up discipleship course for children who have received a shoebox through Operation Christmas Child.

Check your local store for how you can participate in these special projects. **BR**

APOLOGETICS CONFERENCE

Sunday July 22
2 pm to 6 pm
Colonial Baptist Church
Cary, NC

PLENARY SPEAKERS



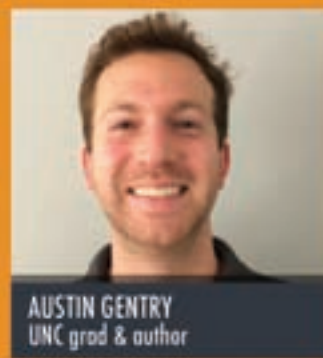
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