



# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## BSC ANNOUNCES 2017 Annual Meeting theme

By **CHAD AUSTIN** | BSC Communications

**“Return to Me”** is the theme for the 2017 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) Annual Meeting, which will include a special emphasis on prayer for revival and spiritual awakening.

The annual meeting is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 6-7, at the Joseph H. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. The concluding Tuesday evening session will be devoted to a time of prayer and worship, titled “Broken Before the Throne: A Prayer Gathering.”

This year’s theme is based on Zechariah 1:3, the latter portion of which says, *“Return to Me” says the Lord of hosts, ‘and I will return to you,’ says the Lord of hosts”* (NKJV).

“Returning to the Lord starts with prayer,” said Chip Hannah, pastor of Peace Baptist Church in Whiteville and chairman of the BSC Committee on Conven-

tion Meetings, which gives prayerful consideration to developing each year’s annual meeting theme and works with convention staff to plan the event schedule. “From day one, our committee came together in one heartbeat around this idea of ‘Return to Me.’

“The focus on returning to God goes hand-in-hand with prayer, and the first step in returning to God is through prayer. The overwhelming majority of our committee were all in one accord that this is the direction we needed to go.”

The “Broken Before the Throne” prayer gathering will be held Nov. 7 beginning at 6:30 p.m., and will include worship, testimonies and times of focused prayer around calls to repent, return, restore and refresh.

N.C. Baptists are also invited to join in a 30-day prayer emphasis throughout October in the month leading up to annual meeting. Chris Schofield, direc-

tor of the BSC Office of Prayer for Revival and Spiritual Awakening, is developing a devotional prayer guide to correspond with the October prayer emphasis that will be available by early fall.

Schofield is also calling on N.C. Baptists and messengers to the annual meeting to devote Sunday, Nov. 5, as a day of fasting and prayer.

Hannah encouraged all N.C. Baptists to attend the annual meeting and seek the Lord in prayer leading up to the event.

“Returning to God through prayer is the first step to impact lostness and for discipleship to take place,” Hannah said. “Prayer is what gives us power, and it ultimately affects every aspect of our spiritual lives.

“It’s our prayer that as many messengers and guests from all across the state will attend this year’s annual

**See Theme page 3**



# Jesus: a friend of sinners

For seven years in a row, the *Biblical Recorder* has published news in the month of June with the same basic headline. Each story reported the Southern Baptist Convention's (SBC) Annual Church Profile statistics from the previous year, and they read something like this, "Number of Baptist churches up, baptisms decline."

The number of SBC churches has increased for 18 consecutive years, yet baptisms have declined for at least eight of the last 12 years. Last year's reported baptisms are the lowest since 1947 – that's 70 years ago!

As we reported last month, Southern Baptist churches baptized 280,773 people in 2016, a 4.89 percent decline from the 295,212 reported in 2015. The ratio of baptisms to total members is one baptism for every 54 members.

The number of churches cooperating with the SBC grew by 479 to 47,272, a 1 percent increase over 2015.

Thom S. Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, said, "It's clear that evangelism and discipleship are waning. I don't believe it is due to the lack of opportunities, though. Instead, there is a lack of engagement."

Rainer said while most churchgoers believe it's their personal responsibility to share their faith, most never do.

I want to address that subject, but first, let's put a few additional pieces of information on the table.

In June 2009, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) named a Great Commission Task Force. Then NAMB president Geoff Hammond said, "NAMB is called and is in the unique position to mobilize this convention in a Great Commission Resurgence."

In September 2013, we reported that NAMB convened a national Pastors' Task Force on Evangelistic Impact & Declining Baptisms "to address the continued decrease in baptisms among Southern Baptist churches."

At this year's SBC meeting in Phoenix, NAMB President Kevin Ezell presented a motion from the floor of the convention that asked SBC President Steve Gaines to name a "soul-winning task force." In his closing remarks to the messengers, Gaines said the task force would "study how Southern Baptists can be more effective in personal soul-winning and also evangelistic preaching."

Each of these three groups has been loaded with strong leaders who are passionate about fulfilling the Great Commission. The reports of the 2009 and 2013 groups were commendable. But, we need

to ask if studies like these are working for us.

I don't oppose these steps, and I have no intention to be critical of efforts to examine our decline in baptisms. Neither do I want to be perceived as one who is critical of the men who lead us. I'm on the team! We need to do something, and I appreciate these gestures in the right direction.

I will pray for the each of the excellent leaders named to the 2017 task force. I sincerely hope they will reach some conclusions that make a difference in Baptist church members, our churches, associations, state conventions, the SBC and the ends of the earth.

Ezell told the Phoenix convention that the SBC needs a "Gospel Conversation Resurgence" if declining baptism numbers are to turn around. He proceeded to explain the strategy of the Three Circles Life Conversation Guide that is being effectively used to share the gospel with many unreached people.

I agree with Ezell. We need more gospel conversations. God has used different tools in each generation to share the same gospel message for almost 2,000 years. Recent generations have appreciated the effectiveness of the Four Spiritual Laws, Steps to Peace with God, Evangelism Explosion, CWT, FAITH and hundreds of other successful methods to introduce our friends to Christ. I'm overwhelmingly grateful for the passion and vision of those who developed each of these evangelism tools. Personally, I used many of these strategies to equip others in the churches I served. I used them to share the gospel and lead many to Christ.

In the past decade we heard a lot of conversation about "being missional." The focus of the missional movement was to correct the unbiblical idea that evangelism is the pastor's job.

Every believer is a missionary. Every Christian is a witness. Every Christ follower is called to evangelize. Many Baptists have been in the rut of believing that the church building is the center of evangelism, and that the pastor and ministerial staff should carry the load of gospel responsibility.

Conversations about being missional lifted many out of that rut. That vision has transformed a large number of churches and retooled their vision for sharing the gospel. But we're still not getting the job done.

Although I do not have a "silver bullet" that will resolve our baptism decline, there is a phrase in the Bible that has convicted me recently, and I would like

to ask you to consider its impact on your personal evangelism strategy.

Two parallel verses in the gospels tell us that as Jesus described the condition of that generation of people, He exposed their criticisms against His methods. In Luke 7:34, Jesus said, "*The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!'*"

Apparently, some criticized Jesus because he was, "*a friend of tax collectors and sinners.*" He welcomed tax collectors and sinners into the inner circle of His 12 disciples. One of them, Matthew, was a tax collector. Peter was certainly no saint.

Jesus approached Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, and the woman at the well who lived an immoral life. He was friendly to bad people! His strongest opponents were not sinners, but religious people.

That convicts me. Are sinners in my world open to friendship with me? Do they believe I am their friend?

The reputation of Christians is not very good in our world. Non-Christians don't normally consider us their friend. Among some, we are known for being against everything the sinner favors. They may consider us their enemy. So, unless we are intentional to demonstrate Christ-like love to them, they will not be open to friendships. And friendships are an excellent foundation for gospel conversations.

I understand some may object to being a friend of sinners. We've rigidly held to 2 Corinthians 6:17, "*Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.*"

We don't want to embrace the world's values. It would be wrong to live a



## PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW

IS EVERY LEADER IN YOUR CHURCH GETTING  
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worldly lifestyle. But can we be a friend of sinners? Are we willing to go to Zacchaeus' house for dinner? Do unchurched people in my circles consider me their friend or their enemy?

Maybe our fast-food culture has given us a desire for evangelism strategies that produce quick results. However, it takes time to build genuine friendships with those who do not know Jesus. It will require even more time to disciple them so they can become a reproducing disciple. That's the biblical model.

Ezell's call for gospel conversations is on target. Baptists need to be comfortable with relationships that open the door for sharing the Good News of eternal life through Jesus Christ. The prerequisite to those conversations is friendships.

When religious people begin to criticize our relationships with the lost, we will know that we have become a friend of sinners. **BR**

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# ‘Better together’: The priority starts with participation

The 2017 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting has come and gone. This family gathering has become for us a highlight every year.

With all our differences, when we gather as a convention, we see again the ways God uses us together, in our country and around the world.

The reports from each entity remind us how blessed we are to have such gifted leaders stewarding these organizations, what a privilege it is to cooperate with so many people (those we know and the thousands we don't) in Great Commission work, and how the Lord has used us over the past year. And, we share and hear reports outside the meeting hall about what the Lord is doing in the local contexts where we and our friends serve.

We leave again this year believing we are, as one of our friends says, “better together.”

We are not suggesting everything is easy when we are together. This year, we both had pointed conversations with friends. And we saw our friends struggle during some challenging moments as the resolution on the dangers of white supremacy (and specifically the alt-right) was not presented to the convention by the resolutions committee, and then a motion to reconsider from the floor failed.

No doubt, those moments caused some confusion, hurt, indignation and short-term anger. We talked to enough people to know that some form of these emotions were experienced by a large number of the participants. This happened among those who were in favor of passing the original resolution, and those who were not.

It generated deep emotional responses by those who were in attendance at the SBC meeting and by those who were not there but followed the livestream. Tensions were high at dinner (June 13) and throughout the rest of the evening. These same tensions were being projected by many on social media from around the country.

There is no simple answer to some questions: What happened? How did this get so complicated so quickly? It would be worth it for someone to reflect and consider those things.

At his blog, Ed Stetzer provided some initial thoughts on Wednesday morning before the passing of Resolution 10 that afternoon. But, that's not our purpose here.

Our purpose is to acknowledge what happened when we worked with one another. The process tested us to be sure. Yet, we ultimately did the right thing. And, it really did take everyone working in cooperation to get there.

On social media, we saw people raise important questions about priorities and values. Some even wondered just how far the SBC really has come in rejecting racism in its every form, or if we truly value these issues as much as some other ones. These are fair questions, and we should continue to engage this conversation.

But allow us to provide some friendly push back for those of you who were not there, yet questioned priorities of a committee who did not present a resolution you thought should have been presented and questioned the priorities of messengers who did not affirm a vote that you thought they should have passed.

One thing this year's annual meeting taught us is that when it comes to Southern Baptists who care about the decisions and statements of our deliberative body, the priority starts with participation.

We aren't saying that people who were not there should not speak into the events of the convention. In fact, we believe they made crucial contributions to this conversation. We are saying, however, that people who were not there cannot contribute to the final decisions we made and the actions we took.

Another friend quipped Wednesday evening, “a ballot is more powerful than a tweet.” And, she is right. Only by participating in the process can we pursue the right actions together.

This time it took all of us to get it right – all of us. Steve Gaines led us well, both in his direction and through his emphatic call to action from the platform. The parliamentarians did their job to give procedural advice.

The Resolutions Committee and the Committee on Order of Business worked together for all the messengers to reconsider a revised resolution. The president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, Russell Moore, helped to prepare the final resolution “On the Anti-Gospel of Alt-Right White Supremacy.” Messengers spoke with conviction from the floor and worked behind the scenes to seek a way forward, and then, we all voted.

Resolution 10 passed at 2:45 p.m. on Wednesday afternoon because of the work of everyone.

The power of presence and engagement has rarely been felt as clearly as it was Tuesday night, June 13. It is fair to say the resolution would not have passed unless everyone contributed.

We experienced 24 difficult hours, and that could lead some to question if there is even a point in trying. The answer is yes.

At the end of the day the Southern Baptist Convention made what some have argued is their strongest repudiation of racism to date. Across the nation people heard us affirm the *imago Dei* and the worth of every human being. This week showed us again we are at our best when we are cooperating, not just with our resources but also with our hearts and our votes. That's no small thing.

We will likely have difficult conversations again one day, but our collective striving is worth the effort. “Better together” is not just a catchphrase. It is a reality.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Keith Whitfield is assistant professor of theology and vice president for academic administration at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Micah Fries is senior pastor of Brainerd Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn., and he blogs at MicahFries.com.) BR



MICAH FRIES



KEITH WHITFIELD

Guest Column



## Theme

Continued from page 1

meeting and prayer gathering in Greensboro. We pray that this prayer gathering will start a move of God that attendees will take back to their local churches that will have an overwhelming effect in their communities and beyond.”

The annual meeting will also include ministry reports, business sessions, breakout sessions, exhibits and resources for churches, pastors and church members.

All sessions of the annual meeting are open to messengers from N.C. Baptist

churches, as well as guests. On-site registration is required for messengers from churches who will be voting during business sessions.

Additional details about the annual meeting, including the event schedule, hotel and travel information, is available at [ncannualmeeting.org](http://ncannualmeeting.org).

The website will be updated with additional information such as breakout session descriptions, potential resolutions and business items, and more leading up to the event. BR

## CORRECTION

The *Biblical Recorder* reported in its July 1 issue that the Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) was hosting a July retreat for ministers' wives. The event at Caraway Conference

Center was actually hosted by the North Carolina Baptist Minister's Wives. The item ran in the Opportunity Corner section. We regret the error and apologize for any confusion.

## Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Send information immediately following an event, or for opportunity corner, send at least two months in advance to [dianna@BRnow.org](mailto:dianna@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512; (919) 847-2127.



# Pastor eyes run for Congress with divine ‘burden’

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

**M**ark Harris, a pastor and past president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, has drawn media focus for his decision to resign his pastorate as he considers a second run for Congress.

*The Charlotte Observer*, local television stations and Charlotte’s largest talk radio station are among the media outlets to report on Harris’ June 11 resignation from a 12-year pastorate at First Baptist Church in Charlotte, which averages 700-800 in Sunday morning worship.

Harris told Baptist Press his decision stemmed from a sense of calling to politics and his awareness of “a distinct need” for pastors “not just to take a position on the sideline” of American public life, “but to get engaged.”

In addition, he believed First Baptist “needs a senior pastor that does not have the distraction of a campaign.”

Harris, a member of the 2016 Southern Baptist Convention Resolutions Committee, has not formally announced his candidacy but is “looking toward that decision,” he said. First Baptist is considering how to manage the pastoral transition, with the possibility of Harris’ continuing to fill the pulpit through December. While Harris still senses a call to ministry, he said “it is an important calling” when God leads a pastor to utilize his giftedness for ministry and his “empowerment of the Holy Spirit ... to shape public policy.”

“There continues to be a tremendous need [in politics] for voices that are going to stand on righteousness, that recognize where we are moving as a nation,” Harris said, noting “the culture seems to become more and more infected with a liberal point of view.”

If Harris becomes a candidate in the Republican primary for North Carolina’s 9th U.S. Congressional District, it

would be his second run for the seat. He lost to incumbent Robert Pittenger last year by 133 votes out of approximately 26,000 cast in the GOP primary.

Harris finished third in the 2012 primary for one of North Carolina’s U.S. Senate seats. After the 2016 defeat, “I prayed for God to take this burden away from me” to run for public office, Harris said. He even asked his church staff to pray along the same lines.

“I was crying out and asking God, ‘Lord, please just take away my passion,’” Harris said. Yet “that passion and that sense of call would not go away but frankly even intensified.”

Circumstances seemed to be part of God’s leading toward another run in the 9th District, Harris said, when multiple factors in the political world suggested he might be able to win new voters in 2018.

When “seeking God’s will,” Harris said, “I’ve always asked Him to open doors that no man can shut and to close doors that no man can open.”

With cultural engagement, Harris said, pastors must be like the Old Testament “sons of Issachar,” who “understood the times and knew what Israel should do,” according to 1 Chronicles 12:32.

“It’s important to be able to recognize the times, recognize the circumstances as you pray and ask Him to open doors,” Harris said.

As other pastors consider whether God is calling them to run for public office, Harris urged them not to immediately rule out the possibility as a spiritual step down but to seek the Lord’s will for their lives.

While ministry “is indeed a high calling,” Harris said, “... we do need to be careful about what we qualify as high, higher and highest when it comes to the will of God and the call of God on a person’s life.” **BR**



Mark Harris is resigning as pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte while he considers another campaign for North Carolina’s 9th U.S. Congressional District. (BR file photo)

## Leading change in worship

**M**any churches have determined that God is leading them to make changes in their church’s corporate worship. Most of the time, those changes involve an adjustment in style of worship or the music that is used to move their services to connect better with today’s times.

Change is often very difficult, especially when you are confronting people’s personal preferences and entrenched traditions.

I often see major conflict in churches when leaders make missteps in the transition process. Some of the components of healthy worship transition are prayer (before, during and after), having a loving heart, casting a clear vision and striving toward the goal without shrinking back.

Much can be said about each of those areas, but today I want to address two contrasting approaches to leading change in worship – demolition versus deconstruction.

In a demolition approach, one destroys the current structure completely to erect the new, preferred structure. For instance, if your vision for modernizing worship looks identical to the church plant that has a band and vocal team, advanced lighting, no choir, no organ, and so on, then it would seem reasonable in the demolition approach to disband the choir, renovate the stage

area and produce a worship event like the one you saw at the other church.

In deconstruction, one takes apart an existing structure carefully, while preserving those components that can serve well in the desired future. For instance, a church may have a strong choir.

Rather than eliminating the choir, a deconstruction approach asks, “How can the choir be repurposed to fit into the vision God has given us for the future?” Decon-

struction carefully considers each existing structure to see if it can fit in the future vision, realizing it may not fit the template you have seen.

Deconstruction is a more loving way of worship renewal and values the callings placed on individuals’ lives. As you realign your church’s worship, determine the gifting God has placed in your church, catch the vision for the future and see how the parts of the body God has orchestrated can be used to achieve His purposes.

If your church is seeking transition in worship, I would love to talk with you in more detail. For more on healthy worship transitions, visit [klamm.us/transitions1](http://klamm.us/transitions1).

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Kenny Lamm is a consultant for worship and music with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5638, or [klamm@ncbaptist.org](mailto:klamm@ncbaptist.org). Visit his blog at [renewingworshipnc.org](http://renewingworshipnc.org).)



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# UNC student uses 'wish' for eternal impact

By LIZ TABLAZON | BR Staff Writer

**M**adeline Ray and her family were supposed to take a trip to Australia in 2011. That's when the Make-A-Wish Foundation initially granted her wish, more than three years after Ray first suffered a hemorrhagic stroke in the fifth grade.

Another stroke just months before the vacation postponed it for the next year. Still, four more strokes caused by an arteriovenous malformation, a tangled mass of blood vessels and arteries in her brain, put off granting Ray's wish until her health became stable.

Last December, Ray finally received her wish – but instead of a check for Australia, Make-A-Wish Eastern North Carolina mailed a \$5,000 check on her behalf to the International Mission Board (IMB) in Richmond, Va.

Ray, now a 21-year-old student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, lost complete use of her left arm and hand after the second stroke in 2011. The stroke caused permanent side effects of fatigue and neuropathic, or synthetic, pain.

It also led her to clearly grasp the gospel.

"I had to rely on everybody to do everything for me," she said. "God made the analogy of how my sin has paralyzed my life and separated me from Him, and no matter how hard I try to cover it up or make it better, I can't."

Ray recalled being so weak she couldn't take baths by herself and needed



Madeline Ray, left, strides away from a visit to the International Mission Board in March. She and her parents met with International Mission Board representatives after her wish was granted. (IMB photos)

her mother to bathe her. "Once I really saw how holy God was and how unrighteous I was, and my need for that holy God, I started to see my need for Jesus and that I needed to have a relationship with Him," Ray said, "like I had to have a relationship with my mom in order to allow her to bathe me."

"Another aspect of it was having to be vulnerable and to allow my mom to see me. I was a teenager and didn't want my mom bathing me. But in the same way, I had to be vulnerable in front of God to tell Him these areas I was weak in."

In the summer of 2014, Ray developed a passion for taking the gospel to unreached people groups after attending a Student Life camp, where IMB president David Platt spoke. It was around the same time she had the opportunity to reassess her wish after having it on hold for a few years.

She knew then God had changed her

desire for her wish and wanted to use it to make an eternal impact. Ray first heard about the IMB through her home church, Bethlehem Baptist Church in Youngsville, N.C., and became familiar with the organization when her brother went on a mission trip to Africa through the IMB. She hoped to go on her own mission trip, but Make-A-Wish's restrictions and her health conditions did not allow for it.

Over the next year, Ray brainstormed creative ways to use her wish for missions, like holding a concert to raise awareness about unreached people groups. She wanted to see the result of whatever her wish would accomplish. However, she didn't hear back from one artist, and another's schedule didn't work out.

Ray's 21st birthday neared, and her wish would soon expire.

During the school year, Ray attends the Chapel Hill campus of The Summit Church.

She remembered hearing J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church, say something one Sunday about "how we won't always see the outcome of what we plant here."

"Immediately I thought, 'I need to make a donation to IMB,'" she said. "I may not see whatever happens, what they

do with the money, or the people that are reached with it, but in heaven I will."

## A wish granted

The Make-A-Wish Foundation sent Ray's donation and a letter she wrote to Platt in December 2016. This March, Ray and her parents met Platt and other IMB employees during a visit to the offices in Virginia.

After sharing Ray's letter during a chapel service, Platt prayed for "a Madeline-like perspective, even in the midst of challenges in front of us, help us to keep our eyes fixed on that which matters most eternally."

During the visit, Ray was asked if she wanted to direct her gift to any particular area. She had Asia on her heart.

"They started telling me about this one particular unreached people group [in East Asia]. ... Some of the funds had just recently run out for that group around the same time my donation came in."

God also granted Ray's old desire to see the outcome of her wish.

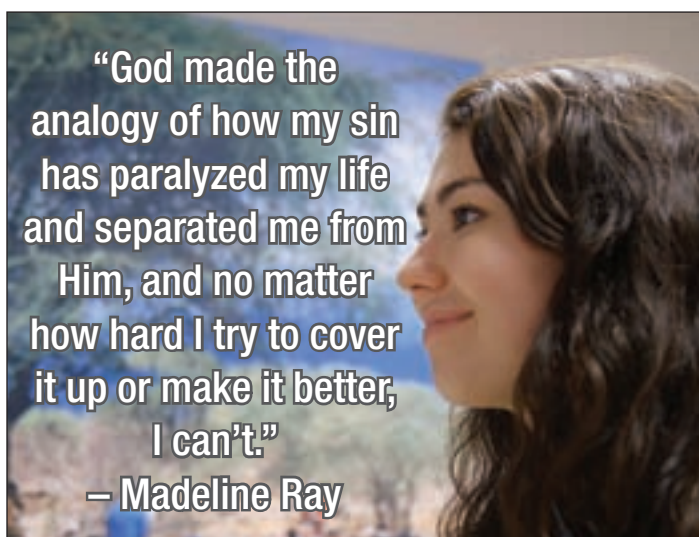
"They also got me in contact with the two missionaries that are living over there, so I've actually FaceTimed with them," she said. "That was really cool to hear about how they're working over there. ... I never really thought I would talk to the missionaries that are doing the work."

Ray currently studies human development and family studies and is working toward a minor in Spanish for the Health Professions, with the goal of becoming a child life specialist. She hopes to work with children and their families in hospital settings, normalizing the environment as much as possible. Ray volunteers at a hospital on weekends, on the same floors where she learned how to walk again.

Ray continues to live with side effects from the strokes. Sometimes she struggles with determining whether a headache is just another headache requiring rest, or if it could turn into a stroke. She had to give up playing the violin when her left arm failed to fully recover, but she said God has revealed to her new passions. "It was a process of learning that I will be fully restored one day. It may not be on earth, but it will be in heaven. Having that hope for the future is what doesn't drag me down." **BR**

"God made the analogy of how my sin has paralyzed my life and separated me from Him, and no matter how hard I try to cover it up or make it better, I can't."

— Madeline Ray



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# Church planter urges prayer for Russia

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

**“T**here are a good number of Russians whose religion is their country,” said Adam Knight\*, a church planter with the Southern Baptist Convention’s (SBC) International Mission Board. That nationalistic devotion led to the persecution of many Christians during Russia’s communist era, he added. It had a chilling effect on evangelism that still lingers in the church.

Knight is asking American Christians to pray for their Russian brothers and sisters to boldly take risks for the gospel, because that’s “exactly what Jesus calls us to do.”

Knight and his family were commissioned as missionaries for a second term as part of the “Sending Celebration” June 13 during the 2017 SBC annual meeting in Phoenix, Ariz.

They’ve spent the past three years in various cities across Russia, including Moscow.

Knight told the *Biblical Recorder* his ministry strategy is to “be creative with how we go about meeting people but be really simple and straightforward in how we disciple them.”

He rejects “flashy methodologies” in favor of “word-based obedience through evangelism and Bible study.”

Knight describes Russians as “wonderful people ... kind and loving and compassionate,” despite the frigid demeanor often attributed to them.

“The picture that’s painted in the news of Russia is not necessarily the same as what you encounter when you meet actual Russians,” he said.

The country and its leaders have featured prominently in American news since the beginning of the 2016 U.S. presidential election campaigns, entangling public opinion of Russia in partisan politics.

When asked if Russians give as much attention to America as Americans do to Russia, Knight said, “America features prominently in Russian thought, politics and conversation.

“They understand that what America does has an affect on them, so they’re paying close attention to what America is doing and what’s going on in the political system, economically and [so on] because they want to know how it’s going to affect their lives.”

When politics comes up in conversation, Knight takes the opportunity to encourage people to place their trust in God, not public officials.

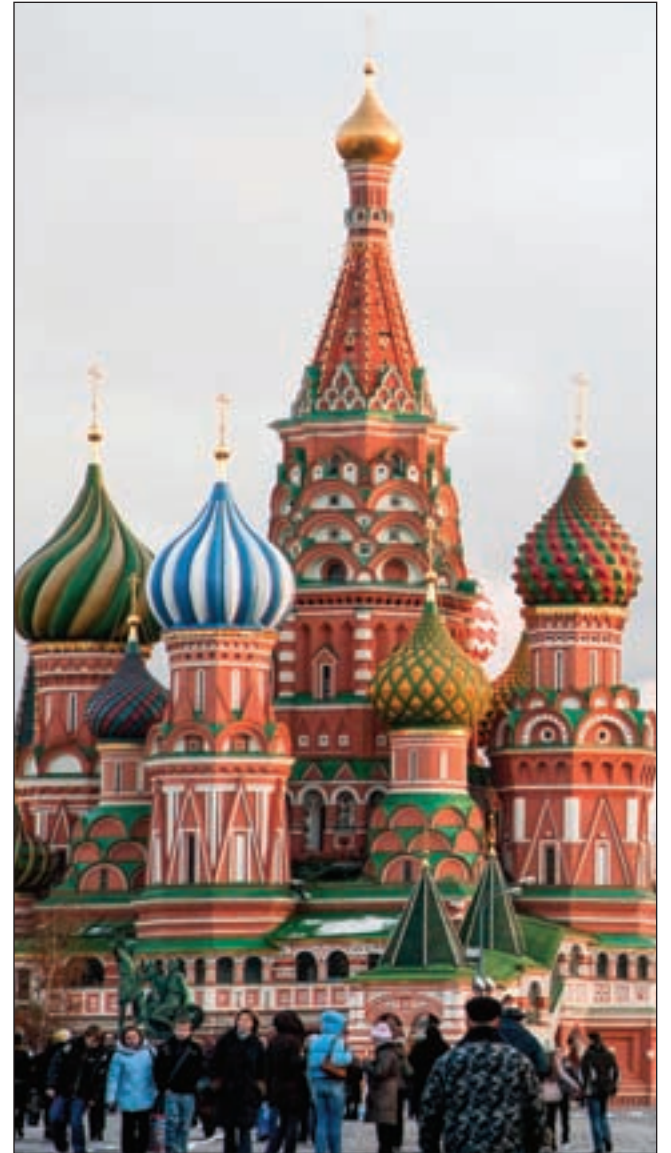
“Politicians are going to fail us,” he said. “What they’re placing their hope in needs to be a sure foundation.”

Knight urged U.S. churches to pray for Russian Christians in three ways:

- Pray for Russian Christians to be boldly committed to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ.
- Pray for Russian Christians to be trained to preach the Word, and to do it well, so they would grow in their faith.
- Pray for unity among Russian Christians, so they will be united in Christ with one another and with Christians around the world, giving up preferences in order to further the Kingdom.

Visit [imb.org](http://imb.org) for more information about missions.

\*Name changed **BR**



Saint Basil's Cathedral in Moscow, Russia. (IMB photo)

# Hobby Lobby to forfeit Bible artifacts, pay \$3M fine

By **DIANA CHANDLER** | Baptist Press

**H**obby Lobby Stores will forfeit thousands of improperly acquired ancient biblical artifacts and pay a \$3 million fine in a civil settlement the Department of Justice (DOJ) announced July 5.

The settlement closed a federal investigation of the store’s 2010 purchase and subsequent importation of more than 5,500 artifacts from dealers who did not disclose the items’ Iraqi origin. Hobby Lobby paid \$1.6 million for the artifacts, including Assyrian and Babylonian cuneiform tablets, bricks and clay bullae used in ancient writings and seals.

Hobby Lobby faces no criminal liability, but in a corporate statement president Steve Green admitted to “regrettable mistakes” and “imprudently” relying on certain dealers and shippers. Hobby Lobby’s inexperience in acquiring such artifacts was a contributing factor in the ordeal, he said.

“We should have exercised more oversight and carefully questioned how the acquisitions were handled,” Green said in a July 5 statement at [newsroom.hobbylobby.com](http://newsroom.hobbylobby.com). “The Company was new to the world of acquiring these items and did not fully appreciate the complexities

of the acquisitions process. This resulted in some regrettable mistakes. The Company imprudently relied on dealers and shippers who, in hindsight, did not understand the correct way to document and ship these items.”

Hobby Lobby must also institute new policies and procedures to ensure such mistakes do not reoccur, the DOJ said.

None of the forfeited artifacts were included in the massive Green Collection at the Museum of the Bible scheduled to open in November in Washington, D.C., the museum told Baptist Press July 6.

“The Museum of the Bible was not a party to either the investigation or the settlement. None of the artifacts identified in the settlement are part of the Museum’s collection, nor have they ever been,” the museum said in an emailed statement. “We remain on track to open in November and look forward to sharing our exhibits and displays with the public.”

The museum adheres to the current Association of Art Museum Directors’ standards on the Acquisition of Archaeological Material and Ancient Art, as well as guidelines set forth by the American Alliance of Museums, according to the email.

In the July 5 federal Claim for Relief,

acting U.S. Attorney Bridget M. Rohde said Hobby Lobby encountered several “red flags” that should have alerted the corporation to inherent improprieties in the acquisitions included in the investigation and settlement.

“In October 2010, an expert on cultural property law retained by Hobby Lobby warned the company that the acquisition of cultural property likely from Iraq, including cuneiform tablets and cylinder seals, carries a risk that such objects may have been looted from archaeological sites in Iraq,” Rohde wrote in her July 5 claim. “The expert also advised Hobby Lobby to review its collection of antiquities for any objects of Iraqi origin and to verify that their country of origin was properly declared at the time of importation into the United States.

“The expert warned Hobby Lobby that an improper declaration of country of origin for cultural property could lead to seizure and forfeiture of the artifacts by CBP (U.S. Customs and Border Protection),” Rohde said.

In other developments Rohde described as “red flags,” Hobby Lobby received “conflicting information” on where the artifacts had been stored before their inspection in the United Arab Emirates, the artifacts were displayed

improperly when Green and a consultant inspected them, Hobby Lobby never met nor communicated with the purported owner of the artifacts, and Hobby Lobby sent payments to seven personal bank accounts in names other than that of the purported owner.

Hobby Lobby has cooperated fully with the investigation and is pleased to settle the dispute, Green said.

Hobby Lobby “has been an active participant with the government’s investigation and supports its efforts to protect the world’s ancient heritage,” Green said. “At no time did Hobby Lobby ever purchase items from dealers in Iraq or from anyone who indicated that they acquired items from that country. Hobby Lobby condemns such conduct and has always acted with the intent to protect ancient items ... .”

Green began collecting rare Bibles and other artifacts in 2009 and has presented the items in a traveling exhibit aimed at revealing the Bible’s accuracy. Credited as recently as 2012 with holding the largest personal collection of rare biblical artifacts in the world, the Green family purchased the site of the Museum of the Bible for \$50 million. The 430,000-square-foot structure is just three blocks from the nation’s Capitol. **BR**



# EC receives CP report, frames building sale process

By DAVID ROACH & ART TOALSTON | Baptist Press

The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee (EC) heard a report June 12 that “escrowing, withholding [and] reducing” gifts through the Cooperative Program (CP) is “not as widespread” as thought in February when the EC’s CP Committee created a special committee to study the issue.

The EC also voted to ask the SBC for authorization to sell the SBC Building in Nashville if a favorable offer is made. The committee additionally adopted a resolution of appreciation for SBC registration secretary Jim Wells, who completed 15 years of service and did not attend this year’s SBC annual meeting due to an ongoing battle with cancer. He died June 17.

## CP report

The ad hoc Cooperative Program Study Committee – formed in February based on reports of churches’ escrowing or withholding CP funds over concerns related to SBC entities – said a “cooperative spirit” that “underlies the Southern Baptist Convention” has yielded healing and a renewal of cooperation in the convention, according to a verbal report by

CP Committee chairman Rolland Slade.

The committee was not yet prepared to quantify its assessment of CP-related actions by churches, said Slade, pastor of Meridian Baptist Church in El Cajon, Calif.

The limited number of churches that have withheld, escrowed or reduced gifts through CP have cited “various reasons – not just one entity or individual or personality.”

The 13-member study committee will issue a final report at the September EC meeting in Nashville, Slade said. That report will include data on the number of churches that have escrowed, reduced and withheld CP funds, Slade said. That data will be drawn from a survey of state Baptist convention executive directors as well as data compiled by the EC staff on contacts from individuals and churches.

Slade said in an interview the EC staff received a “frenzy” of “calls, emails [and] letters” related to CP earlier this year, “but that has tapered off over time as we all began to pray” and communicate. “We’re at a healing.”

The study committee was created less than a week after it was reported that Dallas-area Prestonwood Baptist Church would escrow CP funds over “various

significant positions taken by the leadership of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.”

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) released an extended statement in March “seeking unity in the Southern Baptist Convention,” and Prestonwood announced in April following an internal study that it would resume giving through CP.

Some Southern Baptists had also expressed concern over participation by the ERLC and the International Mission Board in a friend-of-the-court brief supporting a New Jersey Islamic society in a religious liberty lawsuit.

## SBC Building recommendation

A process for the sale of the SBC Building was approved by the Executive Committee for recommendation to messengers at the annual meeting in Phoenix.

No sale is being negotiated for the downtown Nashville facility, EC President Frank S. Page said in a Q&A for the current edition of *SBC LIFE*, but a process is needed in the event of an offer that merits action.

The recommendation to messengers authorized the Executive Committee “to continue studying the advisability of a sale of the SBC Building, and to sell the property upon such terms and conditions, and at such a time, if any, as the Executive Committee may hereafter approve.”

Should a sale ever occur, the recommendation states that proceeds, after such costs as the current feasibility study, would be distributed according to agreed-upon percentages based on those in place when the building opened in the mid-1980s:

- The EC would have a 56 percent share, including the original interests of the former Education Commission and Stewardship Commission which were closed as part of the 1990s Covenant for a New Century SBC reorganization.

- The Council of Seminary Presidents would have a 26 percent share, encompassing the original interests of the former Historical Commission, which also was closed in the SBC reorganization, and Seminary Extension. The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives is now operated by the seminary presidents’ council.

- The ERLC would have a 14 percent share, reflecting the original interest of the former Christian Life Commission.

- The Southern Baptist Foundation would have a 4 percent share.

The discussion of a possible sale stems from the sale of the former LifeWay Christian Resources campus across the

street in November 2015 amid a building boom in Nashville. The 14.5-acre property sold for a reported \$125 million. The SBC Building sits on just over three-fourths of an acre.

Page, in the Q&A, noted, “The bottom line of all of this is stewardship. If we were ever to sell the building, we would want to assure that we receive an amount that would allow us to not only relocate to a less expensive location, but also to subsidize a part of the Executive Committee ministry so we could lower our Cooperative Program allocation once again.

“We would love to be able to send more money to reach the lost and engage all unreached people groups for Christ.”

## Wells resolution

The resolution of appreciation for Wells noted his “transformative servant leadership” and “humble, yet principled leadership style.”

Wells, who will “draw his service [as registration secretary] to a close” with the Phoenix annual meeting according to the resolution, has “served eight Southern Baptist Convention presidents, providing guidance and leadership to hundreds of presidentially-appointed SBC Credentials Committee members and Tellers of the Convention, as well as hundreds of volunteers enlisted, in consultation with each year’s local arrangements committee, to serve in the registration area.”

Wells’ ministry spanned five decades and included service as a Missouri Baptist Convention staff member, a director of missions, pastor of nine Missouri churches and an EC member, the resolution stated.

The EC “pledge[d] to intercede for Jim Wells as he faces his cancer with courage and faith, for his wife Judy as she ministers to him during this time of illness, and for the two of them as they prepare themselves for a time of temporal separation until That Day when the Lord will make all things new.”

In addition to recommending that messengers to the SBC annual meeting adopt the resolution, the EC appointed Wells’ chief assistant Don Currence of Missouri as acting registration secretary and named SBC recording secretary John Yeats to perform the recording secretary’s “platform duties.”

## EC’s 100th anniversary

The 100th anniversary of the Executive Committee’s founding occasioned comments by Page, who noted it was created in a unanimous vote during the six-day

See EC page 11

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Stone Financial Resources President O.S. Hawkins reports that “the year of Mission” is GuideStone’s 2017 theme during a report June 13 on the first day of the two-day Southern Baptist Convention at the Phoenix Convention Center. Hawkins said GuideStone’s investment funds have been recognized for high performance in the market. (BP photo by Marc Ira Hooks)

of 425 similar funds and the Lipper average in the five-year period. The fund’s performance is in the top 10 of its category.

or funds for the best performance in the industry. The fund’s performance is in the top 10 of its category. The fund’s performance is in the top 10 of its category.

vestment team has done in that category. The fund’s performance is in the top 10 of its category. The fund’s performance is in the top 10 of its category.

2018 to provide pastoral care through their widows in the community.

centennial ministry encouraging sharing in the community.

rs and their

widows receive assistance through the ministry, which receives no Cooperative Program funding.

“God has raised up Southern Baptists to help us raise over \$100 million for Mission:Dignity,” Hawkins reported.

Churches that wish to learn more about Mission:Dignity can request materials for use in churchwide emphasis by visiting [MDSunday.org](http://MDSunday.org). Mission:Dignity Sunday is the fourth Sunday of June on the SBC calendar but materials created for Mission:Dignity emphases are undated, allowing churches to use them throughout the year.

Hawkins also recognized three churches – Lenexa Baptist Church in Lenexa, Kan.; First Baptist Church in Douglas, Ga.; and Bedias Baptist Church in Bedias, Texas, for their support of Mission:Dignity.

Additionally, Hawkins noted the newest book in the Code series he has authored, *The Christmas Code*, a 25-day devotional available for less than \$1 per copy with bulk pricing that will also benefit Mission:Dignity.

Hawkins has penned four Code books – *The Joshua Code*, *The Jesus Code*, *The James Code* and *The Daniel Code*. In addition to *The Christmas Code*, *The Believer’s Code* debuts this fall. All author proceeds and royalties benefit Mission:Dignity. By early next year, more than 1 million copies will be in print.

GuideStone will mark its centennial anniversary during the 2018 Southern Baptist Convention meeting in Dallas on June 12–13. **BR**

## religious liberty law

for the same reason. Under the law, counties in which magistrates have filed recusals must make other officials available to perform duties. The plaintiffs argued the state law penalized them because it forced taxpayers to cover magistrates’ travel expenses. The plaintiffs could ask for a full 4th Circuit review, hoping to get a final decision, or appeal directly to the U.S. Supreme Court. Sen. Phil Berger, who authored the legislation, cheered the court’s ruling: “Once again, a federal court has rejected the idea of exercising one’s First Amendment religious freedoms somehow at the expense of others’ rights.” **BR**

# ‘God has shown us favor,’ Rainer reports

By LISA CANNON GREEN | LifeWay

The newly released Christian Standard Bible (CSB) gives Southern Baptists an unparalleled opportunity to uphold the fidelity of God’s Word, reported Thom S. Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, to messengers at the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting.

“We, the Southern Baptist Convention, will be the stewards of this translation,” Rainer said during his report on June 14.

“God has shown us favor.”

Faithful stewardship of God’s Word has been critical in Southern Baptist history, Rainer noted as he introduced the inaugural Christian Standard Bible Award.

He congratulated its first recipient, R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., since 1993.

“At a critical time in the conservative resurgence, a leader was put there to turn that seminary around, back to the fidelity and the inerrancy of scripture,” Rainer said.

“This award recognizes a person who has devoted his life and his ministry to the defense and the inerrancy of the Bible.”

Mohler, who said he is deeply honored by the award, reminded messengers of the importance of Bible translations.

Some Christians have been executed for translating the Bible into everyday languages, he said.

“I’m thankful for the heritage in which this translation stands,” Mohler said. “We should never take it for granted.”

The CSB, released in March, is a revision of the Holman Christian Standard Bible that incorporates advances in biblical scholarship since the original translation.

Southern Baptist scholars Tom Schreiner and David Allen led the multid denominational revision and oversight committee, which also sought input from Bible scholars, pastors and readers.

Each committee member was “guided by a deep love and reverence for the Word of God and its full authority, inerrancy and sufficiency,” said a video shown as part of LifeWay’s presentation to the SBC.

The translation team emphasized both precision to the original languages and clarity for modern readers, said Trevin Wax, Bible and reference publisher for LifeWay’s B&H Publishing Group.

“We don’t believe we have to choose between a literal translation and a readable translation,” Wax told the SBC messengers.

“And as a denomination we have the opportunity now to steward a translation of the original manuscripts that is both precise and clear.”

An accurate and readable translation is important because discipleship doesn’t happen apart from scripture, said Eric Geiger, vice president of LifeWay.

A study conducted by LifeWay Research shows Bible engagement is the top predictor of spiritual growth, and it also influences other spiritual disciplines, he said.

Geiger used an oversized balance scale to illustrate the effect of Bible reading.



Thom Rainer, president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources, an entity of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in Nashville, Tenn., presents the LifeWay report June 14 during the last session of the two-day SBC annual meeting at the Phoenix Convention Center. (BP photo by Adam Covington)

Blocks representing prayer, evangelism, serving and giving weighed down one side of the scale. “Sometimes we are discouraged that these spiritual disciplines are low,” he said.

Then he placed a block labeled “Bible engagement” on the empty side of the scale, and the four spiritual disciplines rose.

“As we throw ourselves into the Word of God, it causes every other spiritual discipline to go up,” he said. “That is why we are so excited to steward the CSB, for the Southern Baptist Convention and ultimately for the church.”

While the CSB was the focus of LifeWay’s presentation, Rainer also noted in his report that *Forbes* magazine named LifeWay one of America’s best midsize employers for 2017.

The honor, based primarily on employees’ recommendations of their employer, reflects the commitment and fidelity of LifeWay employees, he said.

During his report, Rainer highlighted two new resources from LifeWay – the popular *She Reads Truth Bible* and *Technicolor*, a book by Mark Hearn, pastor of First Baptist Church, Duluth, Ga.

*Technicolor* tells the story of how First Duluth transformed from a monolithic Anglo-American congregation to a cross-cultural community with members from 37 different countries.

Rainer also gave an update on the construction of LifeWay’s new corporate headquarters.

LifeWay sold its current site in downtown Nashville in late 2015 and will move in November to a more efficient facility in nearby Capitol View, a mixed-use urban development.

“LifeWay is the longest tenured ongoing organization in downtown Nashville other than the government itself. We’re delighted that we will remain in downtown Nashville as one of the city’s largest employers,” Rainer said.

“LifeWay continues to serve the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention with thousands of resources and ministries.” **BR**



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# God ‘was never early and never late’ for pastor

By JUDY A. BATES | GuideStone Financial Services

**A** father’s love will shape a man’s life – even if it doesn’t come from his own dad. Just ask Elvis Durrill.

Elvis was born in 1933 in the midst of the Great Depression. One of nine children born to Otha Earl and Minnie Durrill, his young life on the farm was hard and filled with manual labor. His father was not a religious man, but taught his children not to lie, steal or cheat. It was from his mother that Elvis learned of God’s loving care.

However, it was the pretty blond girl sitting a few pews ahead of him that had drawn him to church one day. By the time the preacher finished the sermon, Elvis forgot about the girl because God had gotten ahold of his heart. He made a profession of faith and 12-year-old Elvis ran home to tell his mom about his salvation experience.

His excitement was short-lived. As Elvis burst through the door shouting about his decision, he heard his dad in the backroom laughing at him. I told you he was simple-minded,” Elvis remembers his dad saying to his mom.

The joy in his heart was immediately doused and it would be many years before Elvis would be open to God’s tug on his heart.

A year later, Elvis found himself living on the streets after his dad decided it was time for him to move out. The family of a classmate took him in after several months of his being on his own, and he worked on their farm in return for food and shelter.

Elvis remembers the terrible hunger of those months, but more than that, he remembers the devastating loneliness he felt being separated from his family.

“I felt so abandoned by my family, but what I didn’t understand then was that God had not left me,” Elvis recalled.

When Elvis got word that he was drafted into the military, he was relieved that he would have steady work and regular meals – and what he considered a built-in family.

It was one of his military buddies who finally talked him into returning to church, which helped to heal the ridicule of the past.

Just before his 24th birthday, Elvis married Donnis. They began their own family, adding two children to the household through the years.

Elvis was a very different father than his own had

been – sharing the love of his heavenly Father with Michael and Malinda.

Elvis didn’t have much contact with his dad, but when his dad’s Alzheimer’s disease had nearly run its course, he went back home to help care for him the final six months of his life. An empty shell was all that remained of the father Elvis had known.

“My dad was a hard man,” Elvis noted sadly. “I don’t believe he ever made a profession of faith. I hope he did but don’t think that was the case.”

Elvis finally heeded God’s call to the pastorate in his early 40s.

“I didn’t believe God could use an uneducated man like me,” he said. “I ran like Jonah and came up with every excuse in the book as to why God had the wrong man. But, as usual, God knew best.”

Through the years, Elvis and Donnis came up against hard times, but God always provided. “He was never early and never late,” Elvis recalled.

He remembers the time he gave the last of their money at church one night to help another local family. On the way home, Donnis cried because they didn’t have anything left for groceries – not even potatoes. But the next day, a local man left a 20-pound sack of potatoes on their front porch saying he just felt moved to do so.

“God always supplied our needs exactly on time,” Elvis remembered.

After 36 years of service, Elvis resigned from the pastorate to devote himself to caring for Donnis. First, heart problems, then an episode of cancer meant round-the-clock care for the last six years of her life.

“When she died, the loneliness of my childhood returned. But God’s grace and mercy kept me going. My children, grandchildren and many wonderful friends fill my life now,” Elvis said.

Only months after his wife’s passing, his twin brother also died. Later that year, his son had a stroke requiring intensive care for several months. On the heels of all the family health issues, Elvis found his savings depleted.

“I had just placed a package of hot dogs in the refrigerator when I read an article in the state paper about Mission:Dignity: ‘Three Hot Dogs for Three Long Weeks.’ As I thought about the article, the hot dogs and recent medical bills, I immediately reflected on the fourth chapter of Philippians,” Elvis wrote on his first application.

*“And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”*

That’s when he decided to apply for help from



Elvis Durrill, who tends to his garden in Texas, shares how Mission:Dignity is just one more way God has shown there is a Father who loves him. (GuideStone Financial Services photo)

Mission:Dignity. Approved in short order, Elvis is grateful for God’s timing in helping him see the need to reach out to others about his situation.

“I cannot put into words what is in my heart. You have helped me through a very difficult time. Mission:Dignity, God bless you!”

Mission:Dignity Sunday was June 25. But churches can recognize the day any time. It’s a day to remember and honor retired ministers, workers and their widows living on low retirement incomes. It’s also a time to give generously to help the nearly 1,800 individuals and couples assisted by the ministry.

About \$7 million is distributed annually, with most of the funding coming from the direct gifts of individuals, Sunday school classes and churches. One hundred percent of gifts provides well-deserved monthly grants with nothing used for operating expenses.

“The greatest blessing comes from knowing God is not through with me here on earth,” Elvis added. I’m 83 years old and He has not put me on the shelf. There is no end to the opportunities to serve.”

Visit [MDSunday.org](http://MDSunday.org).

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Judy Bates is senior manager in the Mission:Dignity ministry of GuideStone.) **BR**

## Mission:Dignity ‘has eased my pain,’ widow says

By JUDY A. BATES | GuideStone Financial Services

**D**oris Jackson’s hands moved quickly over the piano keys as she played the traditional version of “Amazing Grace.”

As she wrapped up the song, Doris glanced over her shoulder with a mischievous grin to ask if we wanted to hear her “version.”

A quick nod of our heads meant we were soon listening to a jazzy variation of the classic hymn.

Born in the parsonage provided by the church her daddy pastored, Doris said,

“God has been a part of our lives, all of our lives.”

Growing up in west Texas, young Doris spent time in the cotton fields. She did well in school, and when she graduated, the school asked Doris to come back and help with her younger classmates.

Ministry was a common thread throughout her life – her father and grandfather were both ministers as were several extended family members. So it felt right to marry a man with his own long, family heritage of ministry.

When William Jackson Jr. saw Doris,

he knew he had to meet her. He paid a kid 10 cents to carry a note asking her for their first date.

That was the beginning of a life-long love story. Doris and William married in 1961.

The call to become a pastor came 10 years later, and he preached his first sermon in 1972 in Anson, Texas.

Like many preachers in those days, William’s pay was pretty small. To help make ends meet, he started his own auto body shop business.

He was a hardworking man who

**See Widow page 15**



To Doris Jackson, Mission:Dignity means life. “There have been times I would not have made it without you, but God’s loving heart and tender hands led you my way,” she said. (GuideStone photo)



## SOUTHERN BAPTIST BRIEFS

### SEBTS, NAMB host women's leadership event

(SEBTS) Transition was the topic of the 2017 Women's Leadership Breakfast, in which Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and the North American Mission Board partnered together to host more than 92 women on June 14. The event was held in conjunction with the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in Phoenix. Denise O'Donoghue, outgoing director of women's life and assistant professor of ministry to women at SEBTS, introduced LifeWay Christian Resources' Kelly King as the guest speaker. King was appointed last fall as the women's ministry specialist for Lifeway Women. She was formerly the women's missions and ministries specialist for the Baptist General Convention in Oklahoma. She shared with women that morning about many life experiences that led her through times of transition and dependence on the Lord.

### NAAF expands SBC footprint for 4,000 churches

(Baptist Press) The 4,000-church strong National African American Fellowship (NAAF) announced new partnership initiatives at its June 12 business meeting to increase black church participation and leadership in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Partnership initiatives with Southern Baptist mission boards, intended to strengthen churches while advancing the Great Commission, are at various stages of development, NAAF Executive Director Dennis Mitchell said during his annual report. Initiatives with non-SBC but like-minded ministries valuable in the African American community are also underway, Mitchell said. In partnership with both the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board, NAAF is developing the "contextualized and comprehensive" Great Commission Mission Strategy, Mitchell said, tailored to the unique needs of membership churches. NAAF will preview a pilot of the program with six churches at LifeWay Christian Resources' 2017 Black Church Leadership and Family Conference July 17-21.

### More Hispanic churches urged to mobilize

(Florida Baptist Witness) AVANCE 2017 drew Hispanic Southern Baptists from across the nation on June 12 prior to the Southern Baptist Convention annual meeting to encourage more Hispanic congregations and their pastors to mobilize for missions. Edgar Aponte, International Mission Board (IMB) vice president for mobilization, encouraged those in attendance to fill up the ranks of missionaries and churches going out and sharing the gospel. In the part of the evening called Cara-a-Cara, or One-on-One in English, IMB's Jason Carlisle interviewed LifeWay's Ariel Irizarry about discipleship. And the North American Mission Board's Ramon Osorio interviewed pastor Jose Abella about reaching Hispanics.

### SBCAL group to study DOM title change

(Baptist Press) A 12-member study group is expected to recommend in 2018 a new title, credentialing process and expectations of effectiveness for Southern Baptist directors of missions (DOMs). The Southern Baptist Conference of Associational Leaders (SBCAL) appointed the group at its conference held June 11-12 in advance of the 2017 Southern Baptist Convention Annual Meeting in Phoenix. The team is charged with submitting a report at the SBCAL 2018 meeting in Dallas. The changes are needed as the SBCAL works to better serve missional leadership needs across the SBC, SBCAL Executive Director Ray Gentry told Baptist Press. The SBCAL has never had a process of credentialing for DOMs, Gentry said, pointing out the common practice of business associations in particular to have credentialing processes. A cross-section of respected Southern Baptist leaders named to the study team is intended to encourage widespread use and approval of any recommendations the SBCAL adopts from the study group, Gentry said.

### WMU celebrates 20 years of CWJC

(WMU) Linda Cooper, president of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), and Sandy Wisdom-Martin, WMU's executive director, highlighted 20 years of ministry through Christian Women's Job Corps (CWJC) during their report to the Southern Baptist Convention. "Twenty years ago, WMU began a dream that has grown into a nationally recognized program for helping women in poverty become equipped for life and employment in a Christian context," Cooper said June 14 in Phoenix. "[CWJC] is about courageous women fighting for their families and their futures," Cooper said. "It is about godly people sacrificing themselves to make a difference in someone's life."

Since CWJC started in 1997, 40,000 women have been touched through the program in nearly 200 sites and, collectively, 160,000 volunteers have served 200,000,000 hours in the ministry, Cooper reported. Visit [wmu.com/jobcorps](http://wmu.com/jobcorps).

Full stories available online at [BRnow.org](http://BRnow.org).

## EC Continued from page 7

SBC annual meeting in New Orleans in 1917. Such occurrences, he noted, are "miraculous" in Baptist life.

The action followed arguments during the 1916 annual meeting in Hot Springs, Ark., "about the need for an executive-type committee. ... There was a large group of people who wanted to consolidate all the entities into one large body to control and promote everything as one entity. There were many who didn't agree with that."

A year-long study produced the recommendation for the Executive Committee's creation, said Page, the sixth leader of the entity, which was created with a key assignment:

"To act for the convention during the interim of its meetings on matters not otherwise provided for in its plans of work."

Page referred EC members to a Baptist Press (BP) story June 8 by BP chief national correspondent David Roach on the EC's 100-year service, typically in behind-the-scenes fashion, in advancing the convention's work.

The EC's 100th anniversary will be marked by:

- an updated edition of the Albert McClellan book *The Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention* incorporating updated material by Augie Boto, the EC's executive vice president, and Roger S. Oldham, vice president for convention communications and relations.

- a special edition of *SBC LIFE*, the journal of the Executive Committee, marking its first 100 years.

- a "low-key" birthday party/anniversary celebration, as Page phrased it, during the EC's September meeting in Nashville.

The EC opted for a September commemoration rather than one in Phoenix, "with so much going on" during the June 13-14 SBC annual meeting.

"The Executive Committee does not exist for and of itself," Page said.

"We are a coordinating, supporting, encouraging body. ... We exist to see the other entities of the Southern Baptist Convention do their very best work encouraging our churches to work with SBC missions and ministries."

In other actions, the EC:

- recognized 10 members ending their terms of service: Michael W. (Mike) Routt, Colorado, 2009-2017; Wayne Robertson, Georgia, 2007-2017; Charles W. Boling, Illinois, 2007-2017; Wilma J. Booth, Illinois, 2009-2017; Timothy A. (Tim) Ohls, Kansas-Nebraska, 2009-2017; William E. (Eddie) Kinchen, Mississippi, 2009-2017; Jeff L. Paul, Missouri, 2009-2017; Bryan (Scott)

Davis, North Carolina, 2009-2017; Jeffrey B. (Jeff) Watson, North Carolina, 2009-2017; and Danny S. Sinquefield, Tennessee, 2009-2017.

- heard a report from SBC President Steve Gaines, who spoke on the theme of the annual meeting – "Pray! For such a time as this," drawn from Luke 11:1 and Esther 4:14.

"I believe with all my heart that the next few years will set the course for America for a long, long time," Gaines said, voicing concern that his grandchildren may have to live "in a country that is so anti-Jesus that they're having to watch every move they make. I want to see them worship in a country that is embracing Jesus again.

"If God set us on fire, if we really got fresh fire, fresh wind in our hearts ... God can use us again," Gaines said.

In a time of prayer, Gaines interceded, "Lord, we look at our nation and we see so much sin, we see so much that is against Your Word and Your will. People are in so much bondage.

"They need to be set free, dear God. ... Help us to share Your gospel; help us to be about our Father's business; help us to seek first the Kingdom of God; help us to follow You, Jesus, and be fishers of men, make disciples, baptize disciples and teach disciples."

- selected Salt Lake City as the site for the 2025 SBC annual meeting. Southern Baptists met there for the first time in 1998. Next year's annual meeting will be in Dallas.

- reelected both Stephen Rummage, pastor of Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Fla., to a second one-year term as chairman and Shane Hall, pastor of First Southern Baptist Church in Oklahoma City, as vice chairman.

Stacy Bramlett, a member of First Baptist Church in Collierville, Tenn., was elected as secretary, succeeding Becky Illingworth who had served the maximum two one-year terms.

- presented a resolution of appreciation to Mark Edlund, who will retire in July as executive director/treasurer of the Colorado Baptist General Convention after 16 years of service.

The resolution was adopted during the EC's February meeting in Nashville.

- received for review the 2017-2018 SBC Comprehensive Budget, which includes statements of income and operating budget summaries for all SBC entities.

- heard a report that EC officers have reviewed Page's job performance and granted him a 3 percent pay raise that includes a cost of living adjustment and an increase based on merit. **BR**



# ‘Chaplain of Bourbon Street’ dies at 89

Baptist Press

**F**amed New Orleans evangelist Bob Harrington, known by many as “the Chaplain of Bourbon Street,” passed away of kidney failure on July 4 in Stigler, Okla., where he had lived the last seven years with family. He was 89.

Harrington became a well-known evangelist during the 1960s and 1970s following his conversion to Christianity at age 30 in his hometown of Sweet Water, Ala. He was a popular guest on national television shows including Phil Donahue, Merv Griffin and The Tonight Show due to his one-liners and unconventional religious wit. In the 1970’s, Bob met famed atheist Madalyn Murray O’Hair. The two could not be more polar opposite people. “Yes, many may say Madalyn knows the [s]criptures better than I do, but I know the author,” said Harrington. The unlikely duo toured 38 cities debating the existence of God.

Harrington’s eight-day crusades, first held in tents and later high school stadiums and convention centers, produced thousands of converts.

In 1960, after only a few years of preaching throughout the South on flatbed trailers and in tents, Harrington moved to New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS) with his wife Joyce, and daughters, Rhonda and Mitzi.

During his time in seminary, Harrington served as assistant pastor of First Baptist Church of New Orleans with J.D. Grey and continued his ministry as an itinerant evangelist.

In a chapel service, NOBTS President Leo Edleman said, “Wherever there is a pocket of sin, there is a mission field, and the nearest Christian to it is a missionary.” According to Harrington, “the nearest pocket of sin was Bourbon Street.”

Harrington immediately began a street ministry armed with a microphone and a Bible. Several months later deacons at First Baptist New Orleans loaned him enough money for a few months’ rent to open a chapel on Bourbon Street in the heart of the French Quarter. Harrington began witnessing and preaching in the bars and strip clubs of Bourbon Street.

And in 1962, Mayor Victor Schiro proclaimed him “The Chaplain of Bourbon Street.”

Harrington’s street ministry message was bold and simple. “God loves you just as you are. He knows you are a sinner and wants to save you. Don’t figure it out. Faith it out!”

In 1968, Bob held a revival at Castle Hills Baptist Church in San Antonio, Texas. During the revival, the owners of a burlesque club attended an evening service and became Christians. Guy and Evelyn Linton immediately closed the club and posted a sign, “Closed forever. See you in church.”

## Books and albums

Before long his unorthodox story reached Doubleday Printing. *The Chaplain of Bourbon Street*, written by Harrington with Walter Wagner, was published in 1969. Harrington went on to publish seven more books and released more than 30 record albums.

The sermon album “Laughter, Truth and Music” was released in 1965 and Harrington was presented with a gold album for more than \$1 million in sales worldwide. Later he received a second gold album for “Chaplain of Bourbon Street,” a recording of his first television show.

His legacy includes invigorating the Christian community with his signature slogan, “It’s fun being saved.”

## Grace of God

The “devil threw me a pass, and I caught it and ran for defeat,” the contrite minister had said of his years out of the ministry.

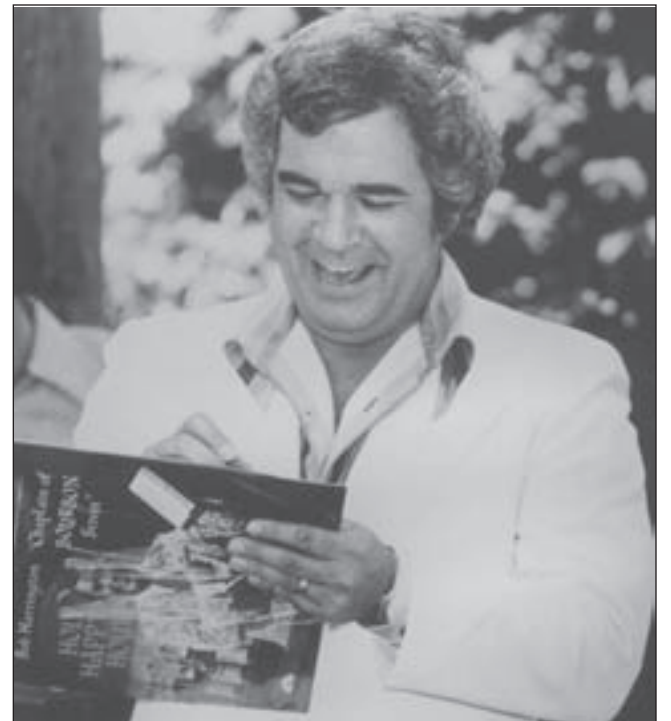
In the 2000 November issue of *SBC LIFE*, Harrington shared about his past struggles in the article entitled, “Chastened Chaplain: A forthright account of failure and renewal.” In the article, he referred to the “pass” that Satan threw the evangelist during the height of his success as “pride, arrogance, self-centeredness and stubbornness.”

His first marriage ended as well as his ministry on Bourbon Street in 1977. He married again and moved to Florida, but later divorced. During the 1980s and 1990s, Harrington was a popular motivational speaker primarily with car dealerships and real estate companies.

One evening in 1995 in his hotel room, he was robbed and nearly beaten to death.

Harrington had said it was during that time “the phone rang and it was Rex Humbarb (long-time pastor of the Cathedral of Tomorrow in Akron, Ohio, where Harrington had preached many times), my old friend. He said it was time for me to come back to the Lord and I did.”

After divorce and bankruptcy, Harrington recalled being at the bottom, which he said “is right where God can use you!” Harrington began a restoration period and moved back to New Orleans.



Bob Harrington signs an autograph for a fan. Known as “the Chaplain of Bourbon Street,” Harrington spent his last years in Oklahoma near one of his daughters. (BR file photo)

In 1998, Bob married Rebecca Harris Birdwell and moved to Mansfield, Texas, where he continued preaching. Rebecca died of a heart attack in 2010.

That same year, Bob moved to be near his younger daughter, Mitzi Woodson, and her husband Steve in Stigler, Okla. He faithfully attended the First Baptist Church in Stigler.

Harrington said many times, “I want my tombstone to read: ‘Born the first time – September 2, 1927 in Cox Heath, Ala. Born again – April 15, 1958. Died – He didn’t. Transferred to heaven.’”

Harrington is survived by two daughters: Rhonda Harrington Kelley of New Orleans and Mitzi Harrington Ramsey Woodson of Stigler, Okla.; four grandsons; and two great grandchildren.

Instead of flowers, the family asked people to consider encouraging a seminary evangelism student with a scholarship through the Bob Harrington Evangelism Scholarship Fund, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, 3939 Gentilly Boulevard, New Orleans, LA 70126.

To share your personal connection with Bob and for more information, please contact family through the Bob Harrington, Chaplain of Bourbon Street Facebook page.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Gary D. Myers, director of public relations for New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and Mitzi Harrington Ramsey Woodson provided this article.) **BR**

# Charles W. Draper, beloved scholar-teacher, dies at 70

By **ANDREW J.W. SMITH** | SBTS

**C**harles W. Draper, a professor of Boyce College and chair of the school’s department of biblical studies, died from a heart attack June 25. He was 70.

“Professor Charlie Draper was a cherished member of the Boyce College and Southern Seminary faculty, and he will be greatly missed,” said R. Albert Mohler Jr., president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Boyce College. “He has taught an entire generation of students, and he was known in the class-

room for his passion for the Bible and his love for students,” Mohler said. “Time after time, I would hear from Boyce students about the influence of Dr. Draper on their lives. His personal investment in them and in their ministries is a timeless gift.

“Charlie Draper was always an encourager to me, to students and to all his colleagues on the faculty. To know him was to know his joy in Christ.”

For more than 50 years, Draper taught the Bible in numerous contexts – pastoring churches from Florida to Hawaii for more than 20 years, speaking in five

different countries and teaching at the college level. He was also the general editor of the bestselling Bible reference book, *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary*.

Draper was a founding professor of Boyce College in 1998, when the school relaunched as the fully accredited James P. Boyce College of the Bible, replacing the non-degree-granting Boyce Bible School. From that time, Draper served as associate professor of biblical studies before becoming chair of the department of biblical studies in 2013.

“Only those who knew Dr. Draper as a professor or colleague can fully grasp the

magnitude of his nearly two decades of service at Boyce College,” said Matthew Hall, the current dean of Boyce College.

“His teaching ministry shaped an entire generation of alumni who are now spread out across the globe. And he was a kind and generous friend and mentor to virtually every member of our faculty, shaping so much of what makes Boyce College exceptional. We grieve the loss of a teacher, a colleague and a friend.”

Before joining the faculty at Boyce College, Draper was assistant professor of religion at North Greenville College

**See Draper page 16**



## OPPORTUNITY CORNER

Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) and South Carolina's WMU are hosting Carolina Women Oct. 6-7 at Fort Caswell.

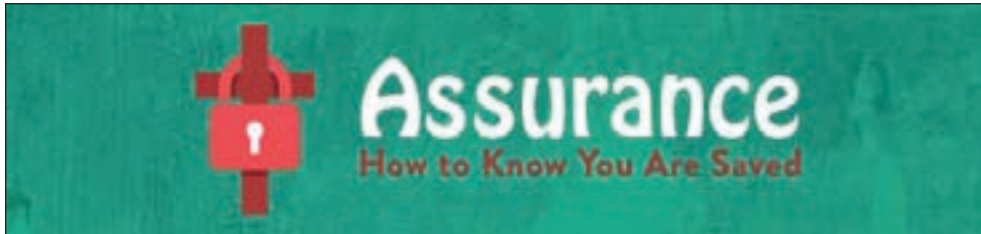
The weekend will include music and worship, breakout sessions, missionary speakers, a mission project, food, fun, fellowship and more.

Speakers include Phyllis Foy, Sandy Wisdom-Martin, Renea Henderson, Kimberly Sowell, Ashley Adams and

CrossWalk drama team.

Cost is \$90 per person before Aug. 1 or \$100 per person after Aug. 1 and includes one night lodging and three meals.

Visit [wmunc.org/carolinawomen2017](http://wmunc.org/carolinawomen2017).



BeDoTell is hosting a Fall Youth Retreat at Fort Caswell with the theme "Assurance: How to Know You Are Saved."

Students will gain a greater understanding of salvation and discover the life change that it brings. The retreat will feature a guest speaker with worship led

by the BeDoTell team and will include small group sessions, recreation and church group devotions. Dates for the retreat are Oct. 20-22 or Nov. 10-12. Cost is \$151 per person and includes accommodations, four meals and retreat materials. Visit [leaders.bedotell.com/fallretreat17](http://leaders.bedotell.com/fallretreat17).



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is hosting "Anchored" 2017 Women's Retreat Oct. 27-28 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia. The theme, based on Psalm 1:3, reminds women that God desires their lives anchored to Him so when storms come they are firmly planted in Him and His promises.

Women will learn how to study scripture with Katie Orr, attend breakout sessions with Esther Burroughs and be led in worship by Kimberly Merida. Cost begins at \$140 per person before Sept. 8 or \$165 per person by Oct. 6 and includes three meals, lodging and program materials. Visit [ncbaptist.org/anchored](http://ncbaptist.org/anchored).

## AROUND THE STATE

### Staff changes

Rock Creek Baptist Church, Nashville, has called **TRAVIS CROCKER** as pastor. Crocker previously served as associate pastor at Cherry Point Baptist Church, Havelock, for four years.

**RICHARD RORRER** has been called as pastor to Old Lea Bethel Baptist Church, Leasburg, where he had been serving as interim pastor. This is his first pastorate.

Faith Baptist Church, Indian Trail, has called **DONNIE CRUMP JR.** as pastor. Crump previously served as associate pastor at Howie Baptist Church, Waxhaw, for 16 years.

**DAVID DUNCAN** has been called as pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Durham. Duncan previously served as senior pastor at Creech Memorial Baptist Church, Ahoskie.

First Baptist Church, Wadesboro, has called **TOM KAKADELIS** as pastor. Kakadelis previously served at New Charlotte Church, Matthews, as associate pastor of pastoral care for more than two years.

**BILL COOPER** has been called as pastor at Sandy Grove Baptist Church, Bladenboro. Cooper previously served as pastor at Calvary Baptist Church, Carthage, for six years.

Gardner-Webb University (GWU) has hired **SARAH A. CURRIE** as vice president for student development and **MISCHIA A. TAYLOR** as dean for the Godbold School of Business. Currie has worked at GWU for 10 years. She previously served as dean of students, director of retention and student success, Bulldog club director and assistant women's soccer coach. Taylor has served as instructor of marketing and director of admissions for the graduate school of business.

See Around the State page 16

## CHURCH NEWS



### Lewis Fork Baptist Church, Purlear

Lewis Fork Baptist Church in Purlear, N.C., celebrated its 225th anniversary with a special service Sun., June 4 (see above). Everyone in attendance was given a free book with church history and a small cooler filled with memorabilia and church information. The service included hymns written in the 17th and 18th centuries, a reading of the church's history and a sermon by current pastor Dwayne Andrews. Pioneer Baptist preachers Andrew Baker and George McNeil were instrumental in establishing Lewis Fork Baptist Church in 1792, but McNeil is considered the church's first minister. Baker was the pastor of Brier Creek Baptist Church, Lewis Fork's mother church, located at Mulberry Fields, which is now Wilkesboro. (Contributed photos)



### Baltimore Baptist Church, Fairmont

On May 7, Baltimore Baptist Church, Fairmont, held a dedication service for its new worship center. Along with the new worship area, the 8,400-square-foot building has a choir rehearsal room, nursery and preschool rooms, church office, pastor's study and kitchen. Guest speakers were Michael K. Moore, left, former director of missions (DOM) of Robeson Baptist Association, and Randall Jones, right, pastor emeritus of Langston Baptist Church, Conway, S.C., with prayer offered by Alan Taylor, current Robeson DOM. Pastor Tim Tyner, center, gives credit to the church congregation and especially the church's Baptist Men for their sacrificial giving of time and labor in helping to complete this building under budget. (Contributed photo)

## Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Please send information immediately following an event, or for opportunity corner, send at least two months in advance. Include cost and contact information in your email or correspondence. Send to [dianna@BRnow.org](mailto:dianna@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.



July 23

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

July 30

## A Fresh Start

**Focal passage: John 18:15-18, 25-27; 21:15-19**

If Peter slept at all after Jesus was crucified, he must have woken to find a burden of grief so heavy that he could scarcely rise. I can't imagine how tight the knot in his throat must have felt knowing that he had denied his Lord. What guilt must have flooded his conscience when that rooster crowed on Thursday night?

As horrible as the moments of denial must have been for Peter, there was a greater joy when Jesus forgave Peter.

In the presence of the 11 other disciples, Jesus asked Peter if he loved Him more than *"these."* Peter exclaimed his love for Jesus to which Jesus charged him, *"Feed my lambs."*

Jesus repeated His question a second time, and Peter responded once again in the affirmative. Jesus said, *"Tend my sheep."* A final time Jesus asked Peter the same question. Peter once again pled his love for his Lord and Jesus replied, *"Feed my sheep."*

Three times Peter denied Jesus and three times Peter declared his love for Jesus. It was through his actions that Peter denied Jesus, and it was through his actions that he showed his love for Jesus.

By receiving Jesus' forgiveness, Peter was restored.

We all need a fresh start in life at times. There will be moments in life when we will realize that we haven't acted like disciples and we can only be restored by confessing our sins and letting Jesus wash them away (1 John 1:9).

One day when I was a sophomore in college I sat all alone in an empty apartment in Charleston, S.C. Several years earlier I had surrendered my life to ministry and even preached while I was in high school, but in college I made choices that took me far from God.

I desperately wanted to get back on the tracks that I had been traveling on before my massive derailment. I concluded that God was done with me. I even wondered if I had ever been saved. However, I came to a striking realization – although through my actions I had denied Jesus, Jesus hadn't denied me. It was through this experience that God reaffirmed his grace and his calling on my life. Even *"if we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot disown Himself"* (2 Timothy 2:13).



**DAVID CROWTHER**  
Pastor,  
Mount Olive Baptist  
Church, Pittsboro

**Focal passage: Exodus 3:11-12; 4:10-17**

Once attended a school that was great at many things, but football was not one of them. We did not win many games, and it was often painful to even think about an upcoming game. When a no-name school plays a big school with a great football program you don't expect things to end well.

Moses must have felt even greater inadequacy when God spoke to him as he was herding sheep on the backside of the desert. God appeared in a burning bush and ordered Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand the release of Egypt's workforce (Exodus 3:10). Naturally, Moses was not inclined to boss around the most powerful man on earth. Moses objected to God's plan three times.

First, Moses argued that he wasn't the right person for the job – *"But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh?'"* Moses thought he wasn't important or skilled enough to be used in such a special way. However, the Lord promised Moses that He would go with him

(Exodus 3:12). Second, Moses objected that he didn't have the power or authority to accomplish the task to which God had called him (Exodus 4:1). God asked Moses what was in his hand (Exodus 4:2). God took Moses' staff and turned it into a serpent. Thus, Moses learned that he would receive power from God to accomplish his mission.

Finally, Moses claimed that he wasn't persuasive or a good speaker (Exodus 4:10). God had an answer for that too – because He made Moses' mouth, God could certainly fill it with the right words.

When we read the story of Moses' calling we should remember that regardless of our shortcomings, God can use us. God has given us work to do, and Jesus has already assured us that He will go with us (Matthew 28:20).

I believe in the adage, "God doesn't call the qualified, God qualifies the called." When you feel incompetent to speak God's truth, remember who made your mouth. When you feel unable to do God's work, remember who made your hands. When you feel unable to go where God is sending you, remember who made your feet. And, when you don't think you have the resources, God is asking you, "What's in your hand?"

July 23

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

July 30

## His Love

**Focal Passage: Psalm 136:1-5, 10-15, 23-26**

In her autobiography, *The Hiding Place*, Corrie ten Boom tells a story of her sister Betsie encouraging her to be thankful in all circumstances.

Corrie tells her that there is no way she will ever be thankful for the fleas that are in their concentration camp barracks.

Night after night Corrie and Betsie were able to lead Bible studies that were translated into different languages by the other women in their group.

Why?

They were able to share God's love because their captors were afraid to enter the flea-infested building.

The things that Corrie hated so, Betsie saw as a blessing.

It was one more way that God showed that His love goes beyond our comprehension. His love provided not for their initial need, but for the eternal salvation of others.

At the beginning of each verse in Psalm 136 there is a truth about God that is fol-

lowed by the statement *"His love endures forever."*

Whether it is in creation, in conquest or in compassion, over and over again we see that God's love for us is everlasting.

Twenty-six times the Psalmist reminds Israel that God's love has seen them through the best and worst of times: through slavery in Egypt, the Exodus and into the Promised Land.

Let us be strengthened by the verses from Romans 8:35, 37-39: *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ... No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us."*

*"For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord."*



**EMILY CARTER**  
Member,  
University Hills Baptist  
Church, Charlotte

**Focal Passage: Psalm 146:1-10**

Recently I attended a memorial service where the pastor began his sermon by sharing that we all had one thing in common with the deceased. At some point in our lives we will face death. The author who penned Psalm 146 shared this perspective, but wanted to live life to the fullest by expressing his praise of God Almighty.

We can praise God because He is worthy of it. He deserves our praise.

Praise is powerful. Praise defeats discouragement. Praise focuses our thoughts on God.

Praise prepares us to receive what God has for us. Praise changes our perspective on life.

The Psalmist understood all of this and sought to warn us that it is not mortal men who save; neither can the things of this earth that we work so hard to attain.

## His Faithfulness

It is God who is our help and our hope. He is the one that holds the power to create and change our circumstances. He is able to make something from nothing.

He is the one who lifts up the head of the down-trodden. The Lord produces the miracles and takes care of the needy. God is faithful to remain true to Himself. He will not go against His character. God reigns now and forevermore.

If you want to live life well then become a person of praise. Praise the Lord for who He is. You can simply pray Psalm 146 back to the Lord if you are having a hard time thinking of something for which to praise Him.

Praise God for a time when He has helped you through a difficult time or given you hope (v. 5). Praise Him for His creation (v. 6). Praise Him for a time He upheld your cause or set you free from bondage (v. 7). Praise the Lord for a time when He has watched over the weak (v. 9).

As Christ's followers we have much for which to praise the Lord!



# Widow

Continued from page 10

believed in education and civic responsibility, and having two jobs didn't keep him from civic activities in the community.

Through the years, William served on the local school board and in various other civic organizations. He was one of the founding members of the local Meals on Wheels, for which they honored him in 2014. And he served as a volunteer fireman and policeman.

It was his ministry that had the biggest impact on the community, though. William felt that the youth who came through the church's doors should not go away without being fed both physically and spiritually. For him, these were closely related in reaching their hearts for God. William had a heartbeat for everyone in their community, Doris noted.

"He was a teaching pastor who couldn't tell black or white," she said. "He loved all people."

William also mentored and encouraged the local youth, spending time at baseball games and other recreational activities. He preached God's Word and encouraged hard work and education to them – believing those to be the keys to progress.



Doris said William insisted their own five children all attend college. To demonstrate that education was important at any age, William returned to school and earned a bachelor's in theology at 59, then finished his master's in theology two years later.

Doris also pursued education. Feeling a call to care for God's people, she earned a degree in nursing and worked in the local nursing home for many years. She now volunteers there since her retirement in 2006. Many of the residents call her to walk alongside them through doctors' appointments and therapy sessions.

After 42 years in the ministry, 35 years of which were

spent at Greater Zion Baptist Church in Sweetwater, Texas, William died following a battle with cancer. Doris soldiered on after his loss, but found herself unable to keep up with the financial pressures and reduced income.

Explaining that her financial situation had her against the wall, Doris saw hope when the application from Mission:Dignity arrived. She said, "There have been times I would not have made it without you, but God's loving heart and tender hands led you my way."

"Mission:Dignity means life," she said. "It has eased my pain and filled in spiritually, physically and financially."

As for the piano, Doris laughed and said her father traded two pigs for it when she was a child. All of her siblings learned to play and she kept on doing so at the churches where she and William served. Today, she shares her musical talent at the nursing home where she volunteers, and it's one more thread tying her to a life of ministry.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Judy Bates is senior manager in the Mission:Dignity ministry of GuideStone.) **BR**

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### Pastor

First Baptist Church in New Tazewell, Tennessee, is seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. Master's degree and experience preferred. Please send resume with sermon CD or DVD to FBC, Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 248, New Tazewell, Tennessee 37824. Resumes accepted through September 8, 2017.

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Hudson, NC, is seeking a **Senior Pastor**. We are a conservative Southern Baptist, mission-minded church who supports the Cooperative Program and has a full-time multiple staff. An average of 300 attend our blended-style worship service on Sunday morning. Our preference would be a graduate of a Southern Baptist seminary or divinity school. Resumes may be submitted to Mount Zion Baptist Church, 1787 Cahah Mountain Road, Hudson, NC 28638. Attention Pastor Search Committee. Deadline to receive resumes is August 15, 2017.

Mt. Olive Baptist Church, Cowpens, SC, is seeking a **full-time Southern Baptist Pastor**. Send resume to Mt. Olive Baptist Church, 250 Mt. Olive Road, Cowpens, SC 29330, or [mtolive@bellsouth.net](mailto:mtolive@bellsouth.net).

### Church Staff

First Baptist Church, Hudson, NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Discipleship and Administration**. Candidates should demonstrate a proven ability to oversee the processes of assimilating and equipping Christians to effective discipleship. Seminary degree required. Send resume by July 31 to Search Committee, 345 Main Street, Hudson, NC 28638, or [resume@hudsonfirst.org](mailto:resume@hudsonfirst.org).

Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC, is seeking a **Minister to Children and Their Families**. Responsibilities include oversight of the Child Development Center. Mail or deliver resumes by August 15 to Pritchard Memorial Baptist Church, 1117 South Boulevard, Charlotte, NC 28203 (ATTN: Search Committee); or [bobbymorrow@pritchardmemorial.com](mailto:bobbymorrow@pritchardmemorial.com).

Oak Grove Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time Worship Leader**. Please send resume to Oak Grove Baptist Church, 39 Robinson Road, Clyde, NC 28721, or email to [baptistchurchoakgrove@yahoo.com](mailto:baptistchurchoakgrove@yahoo.com).

Scotland Neck First Baptist Church has two positions available: **Part-time MINISTER OF MUSIC**. Music degree desired. Duties: choosing and preparing church music, directing adult choir on Tues. night and Sunday morning, occasional special music. **Part-time CHURCH ACCOMPANIST** accompany congregational hymns, choir anthems, and solos. Tuesday nights, Sunday morning services, Occasional special services. E-mail resumes to: [snbaptist@embarqmail.com](mailto:snbaptist@embarqmail.com) or call 252-826-3911.

Lower Creek Baptist Church seeks dynamic, on-fire-for-God, **full-time Director of Music and Media**. Direct, organize, implement comprehensive church music program. Serve as worship leader. Develop, evaluate all technology and media to effectively communicate church mission and vision. Maintain church web presence. Send resume to [lcblovesmusic@gmail.com](mailto:lcblovesmusic@gmail.com) or Search Committee, PO Box 306, Lenoir, NC 28645.

Green Street Baptist Church is seeking a **full-time Business Administrator**. Prior experience as a Church Administrator is preferred. Send resumes to [kristi@greenstreet.org](mailto:kristi@greenstreet.org) or 303 N. Rotary Dr., High Point, NC 27262.

Jersey Baptist Church, Lexington, seeks **part-time Music Minister** to lead music for contemporary and traditional worship services. Duties include initiating, planning and coordinating music ministry; collaborating with the pastor and music/worship committee. Ability to exhibit and promote mature Christian values, and discipleship is required. Submit resume to [jerseybaptiststaff@gmail.com](mailto:jerseybaptiststaff@gmail.com).

Samaria Baptist Church in Middlesex, NC, is seeking a **part-time Family Ministry Director**. Family Ministry degree or related experience desired with a minimum of 1-3 years. Please send resumes to [ggflashgordon@aol.com](mailto:ggflashgordon@aol.com).

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

### Miscellaneous

**NCBAM is hosting a special training, "Living Next Door to Dementia—How Can Churches Help?"** by dementia advocate, consultant and trainer Mary Donnelly. September 21, Thomasville, \$10 includes lunch. Register online at [ncbam.org/events](http://ncbam.org/events) or call 877.506.2226.

**Share the Biblical Recorder – FREE.** Order three months free. Contact [liz@BRnow.org](mailto:liz@BRnow.org).

**Do you have staff changes at your church or association?** Or special news you would like to share (significant church or church staff anniversaries or a mission effort to reach your community)? Let the *Biblical Recorder* know by calling (919) 847-2127 or email [editor@BRnow.org](mailto:editor@BRnow.org).

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# Draper

Continued from page 12

in Tigerville, S.C., and adjunct professor at several institutions, including New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary (NOBTS).

Mohler also emphasized the personal influence and friendship of Draper and his family.



CHARLES DRAPER

“Charlie and [his wife] Retta Draper have been such an example of devoted marriage,” Mohler said. “We will be praying especially for Retta and the Draper family. Our hearts are grieving with them, even as we share their

confidence in Christ.

“Mary and I have treasured Charlie and Retta as dear friends. Given Charlie’s background and family in SBC leadership, they understood some of the challenges we faced.

“I am so deeply thankful for Charlie’s devotion to Christ, his love for the church and his commitment to our work together.”

Draper was born in Jacksonville,

Texas, on May 25, 1947. His older brother, Jimmy, was a major figure in the conservative resurgence of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in the 1980s and 1990s, serving as SBC president from 1982-1983 and then as president of LifeWay Christian Resources from 1991-2006. Charles Draper was ordained as a minister in Warren, Ark., in 1964, and took his first pastorate at age 17.

He completed a bachelor’s degree at Baylor University in 1968.

Draper then went on to earn a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (1971), a doctor of ministry degree from Luther Rice Seminary in Atlanta, Ga. (1981), and a doctor of philosophy from NOBTS (2000).

For his Ph.D. dissertation, Draper collected and organized manuscripts of the Gospel of John in order to build a critical apparatus of the original text of John’s Gospel.

Draper leaves behind his wife of 48 years, Retta, who is also a long-time employee of Southern Seminary; his children, Shelly Hardin and David Draper; and his six grandchildren. He was a member of the East campus of Highview Baptist Church in Louisville, Ky. **BR**

## Noah’s ark celebrated 1st anniversary July 7

Kentucky Today

In its first year, a modern-day Noah’s ark has drawn more than a million visitors into northern Kentucky to look at the life-size replica of the biblical boat. The Ark Encounter theme park celebrated its first anniversary July 7.

“We’ve had an excellent first year

attendance,” said Mark Loy, spokesman for Answers in Genesis, the company that built the 510-foot ark only a few miles from its sister attraction, the Creation Museum, which just turned 10 years old.

The ark has three decks of exhibits in more than 120,000 square feet. The theme park also includes zip lines, live entertainment, restaurant and shopping. **BR**

## AROUND THE STATE (cont.)

**DAVID COX** has been called as minister of youth and instructional technology at Florence Baptist Church, Forest City. He previously served as a missionary with the International Mission Board in North India.

### Retirement

**DAVID MARKS** retired June 11 from First Baptist Church, Pinehurst, after serving as pastor for 15 years. Marks received a master of divinity from Southeastern Seminary, then served as minister of youth at Aberdeen First Baptist Church and as a chaplain with the N.C. Department of Public Safety. He then became the founding pastor of FBC Pinehurst in 2002. He and his wife, Debbie, live in Aberdeen.

**MIKE BRANSCOME** will retire in August from Aberdeen First Baptist Church after 18 years of serving as pastor. A graduate of Gardner-Webb University and Southwestern Seminary, Branscome served as pastor of Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Mount Airy; Berry’s Grove Baptist Church, Timberlake; Robinhood Road Baptist Church, Winston-Salem; Swift Creek Baptist Church, Raleigh; and Hilliard Memorial Baptist Church, High Point.

He and his wife, Linda, also served as missionaries with the International Mission Board for three years. The couple lives in Pinehurst.

Branscome is available for pulpit supply and interim work. Contact him at (910) 603-8119 or [mwbranscome@gmail.com](mailto:mwbranscome@gmail.com).

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