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Baptist Children's Homes BREAKS GROUND ON NEW MINISTRY



Members of the Tucker family join with Michael Blackwell, center, president of Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina, to break ground on a new ministry center focused on outreach. (BR photo by K. Allan Blume)

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

The Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) broke ground June 27 for a new building that will expand the organization's outreach to children and families. Located on the Mills Home campus in Thomasville, The Bob and Carolyn Tucker Greater Vision Ministry Center is the result of a \$1-million gift from Bob and Carolyn Tucker of Concord, longtime North Carolina Baptists, BCH supporters and founders of the nation's largest independent shoe retailer, Shoe Show, Inc.

"The Tucker family has a rich history of showing their commitment to giving back out of their great success by finding substantial ways to engage and impact the community," said Michael C. Blackwell, BCH president/CEO. "We are both grateful and humbled by their incredible gift which will allow Baptist Children's Homes to provide new and meaningful family services through this center."

Blackwell explained that the goal is to utilize the center as an outreach hub to the surrounding area and ultimately to families

across North Carolina. "This is a natural progression of what BCH has been doing since it was established 130 years ago," Blackwell said. "This new program allows us to enhance our reach into the community by offering resources and educational programs to edify and strengthen families."

Although BCH has not fully developed the new center's strategy, Blackwell said it will be a method of outreach that will begin in the Triad and eventually spread to all 100 counties of the state. It will provide food and health care for children.

He said many will come to the center because they are physically hungry and emotionally starved. But many are also spiritually depraved. "This center is going to minister to all of those needs," he added. The eternal salvation of every person is paramount in the center's ministry.

"The Tucker Center will set new standards for service and ministry," Blackwell said. "[It] will reflect the entrepreneurial spirit of both the Baptist Children's Homes and the Tucker family ... We will demonstrate that there is a better way to a better life, and we will show through the Tucker Center ... how to

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N.C. Baptists aid West Va. with flood relief efforts

By EMILY ROJAS | BSC Communications

When the Cherry River started to rise in Richwood, W.Va., Rena Gee knew it was time to call her grandson for help.

When he arrived at her house, the water in Gee's yard was knee deep and getting higher by the minute. Her grandson carried her to his vehicle, and together, they fled the rising water to safety.

It was the beginning of epic flooding in the small town.

Since June 24, North Carolina Baptist Men, also known as Baptists on Mission (NCBM), has been ministering in several towns and communities in Nicholas County, W.Va. Torrential storms dumped up to 10 inches of rain in a 12-hour period in late June, causing massive flooding to many parts of the Mountaineer State.

"The water just came up so fast," Gee remembered.

"I have never before seen anything like it. In hardly no time, it knocked down my chain-link fence and was into my house."

In light of the flooding in the area, NCBM has been working alongside other relief organizations to distribute food, assess and repair damaged homes, and provide chaplaincy services in Nicholas County. As NCBM volunteers help the flood victims put their lives back in order, they are also sharing the love of Christ.

"The needs here are so great," said Bill Fogarty, site commander for the efforts in West Virginia. "We know that the God of all comfort, as scripture describes, will



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Stewardship of democracy

On the second Tuesday of November, I plan to step up to the electronic ballot table in my voting precinct and cast my vote for president of the United States.

I will do so prayerfully. I will do so carefully. I will do so gladly. I may do so sadly. But, Lord willing, I will do so. This has been my pattern during the years of my adult life and I see no reason to change.

Unlike billions of people on this globe who long to have freedom of expression and opportunity to influence government – and billions more who lived across the millennia – I am privileged to live in the land of the free. For now.

Most of us who will vote on Nov. 8 did not choose to live in America; our citizenship is a right of birth.

We have a God-given and constitutionally-granted opportunity to help shape the destiny of our nation by selecting its top official, as well as numerous other elected leaders who will also be on the ballot. In some election cycles, I've been on the winning side. In others, I've been on the losing side. But whether winning or losing, I have sought to make my voice heard.

No one is more keenly aware than I of the dire straits in which we find ourselves in the 21st century, 2000 years since the death, burial and resurrection of our wonderful Savior and Lord.

Gone are the days when our leaders governed by Judeo-Christian principles shaped by a biblical worldview. Gone is the time when we had a cultural consensus on matters of good and evil, of right and wrong, of moral and immoral. Gone are the days when elected officials at every level of government truly believed that one day we will all stand before the Great Lawgiver and be judged by the Book ... or by the books (Revelation 20:12-15).

I find it interesting that one of the mightiest periods of miracles in scripture occurred during one of the darkest times in Israel's history. The kingdom was divided.

The northern kingdom of Israel had followed the leadership of its first king, Jeroboam I, into consistent idolatry.

Its gods were two golden calves. Its shrines were at Bethel and in Dan. Its

priesthood was composed of the basest of people. The darkness only intensified when Ahab became king and brought his wicked queen to the capital city of Samaria.

First Kings 16 contains an amazing passage: *"Then as if following the sin of Jeroboam son of Nebat were a trivial matter, [Ahab] married Jezebel ... and proceeded to serve Baal and worship him. He set up an altar for Baal in the temple of Baal that he had built in Samaria. Ahab also made an Asherah pole. Ahab did more to provoke the LORD God of Israel than all the kings of Israel who were before him"* (verses 31-33).

In this dark setting, the Lord still had a people. Obadiah hid 100 prophets of the Lord, providing shelter and provisions when Jezebel was slaughtering the Lord's prophets (1 Kings 18). The Lord revealed to Elijah that He had a remnant of 7,000 who had not bowed the knee to Baal (1 Kings 19).

And, of course, there were thousands who proclaimed *"The Lord, He is God"* atop Mount Carmel when the Lord answered by fire (1 Kings 19).

Here is an intriguing fact. It was in this setting that the Lord instructed Elijah to anoint two kings and a prophet – Hazael as future king of Aram, Jehu as future king of Israel and Elisha as Elijah's successor.

Though the anointings were to take place immediately, ascension to the throne for the two kings did not unfold for many years. And, when it happened, Elijah was long gone.

Elisha wept as he prophesied of all the evil Hazael would do to the people of God (2 Kings 8:11-12) when he became the Aramean king.

Though Jehu became God's instrument to execute the judgment of God upon Jezebel, the descendants of Ahab and the worshippers of Baal, he did not turn away from the idolatrous sins of his predecessor, Jeroboam I (2 Kings 10:28-31).

We hear a lot in the current election cycle about what a Christ-follower should do as the sprint to the White House begins. Some say a true follower of Jesus shouldn't vote.

Others advocate for a "lesser of two

evils" approach. Still others hope a viable third party candidate will suddenly emerge. And, as always, some are already ardently committed to their party of choice, irrespective of who the nominee will be.

I suggest another option – let's approach the election with the "greater good" in mind.

Why not ask the Lord to guide you to cast your ballot for the greater good for the nation?

For the greater good for our Christian liberties. For the greater good for our children and their children and their children's children. But, most importantly, for the greater good for God's will and purposes for our nation and for us

as His people.

Why would Elijah anoint wicked Hazael as king of Aram, who would later afflict God's own people? Because God directed him to. Why would Elijah anoint Jehu, who would carry spiritual reform so far and no farther? Because God directed him to.

Regardless of who sat on the throne then – or who sits in the seat of power now – God is still in control. His will and purposes will not be thwarted by mere mortals.

God has blessed us to live in this golden age of democratic governance. The franchise is more than a mere right. It is a responsibility. It is a stewardship of trust, a stewardship that billions of earth's inhabitants would love to have.

Do I as a Christ-follower have a right



FRANK PAGE
Guest Column

Why not ask the Lord to guide you to cast your ballot for the greater good for the nation? For the greater good for our Christian liberties. For the greater good for our children ...

not to vote? Each of us must do what we feel led by God's Spirit to do. But, we are neither unspiritual nor unscriptural if we choose to cast our ballot, bathed in prayer, and exercised with the earnest desire that God's ultimate and unfailing purposes be fulfilled, whether for redemption of our sin-sickened society or for the rightful judgment of a nation that forgets God.

At the end of the day, we confess with those gone before that we are merely strangers and pilgrims on the earth, for our citizenship is in heaven. Our hope rests not in political parties, powerful personalities or prestigious positions.

Our hope is in God.

As we approach the ballot box in our individual voting precincts this November, let each of us render unto God the loyal obedience He is due.

But let us also render unto Caesar the elective influence God has graciously granted to us at this strategic juncture in history.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Frank S. Page is president of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee. This article first appeared in the Summer Preview of SBC LIFE, journal of the Executive Committee.) **BR**

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Disciple-making – God’s greater plan for His children

Disciple-making is something that each one of us has been called to do in our everyday lives. God provides us with opportunities to be His witnesses wherever we are each day. He matures and transforms us into His likeness so we can lead others to the one who changed us.

I hold fast to the belief that God will equip Christ-followers for ministry wherever He places them – He makes no mistakes. I am also certain of the fact that a person does not need to be a pastor or a missionary in order to be used greatly by God. In fact, when we are first introduced to some of Jesus’ apostles in the Bible, men whom Jesus used to spread His Good News throughout the earth, they were on a fishing boat. Regardless of our earthly vocation, God has a greater plan for all of us to become disciple-makers.

Just next month, our state convention will be holding an event that is designed to help Christians grow in exactly that way. One Day West is an event that is dedicated to teaching our Baptist leaders how to become engaged in leading other

Christ-followers to become disciple-makers. The goal of this training event is to support church leaders in their efforts to create a disciple-making culture that will impact lostness in our state.

The event is scheduled for Sat., Aug. 20 at Western Avenue Baptist Church in Statesville, and each conference will include numerous equipping sessions covering a variety of local church ministries.

Cris Alley, who serves the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina as the strategy coordinator for the Triangle region, will address the overarching theme that our best life is a life that is lived God’s way. Modern-day disciple-making is all about heeding God’s call to listen to Him, becoming increasingly aware of the current state of lostness in our area. So many in North Carolina do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. God has chosen to strategically place these people on our path in life so that we might point them toward Him.

I am so thankful for the wonderful God we serve and for the spiritual gifts He has given to His people. May we all be encouraged to seek out the lost and help them become mature followers of Christ.

If you or your church would like more information about One Day West, please visit onedaync.com or contact Lauren McCall at lmccall@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5628. **BR**

IN FOCUS
A WORD FROM OUR LEADER

1 DAY
EQUIPPING LEADERS
TO MAKE DISCIPLES

When: Aug. 20, 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Where: Western Avenue Baptist Church, Statesville

What: equipping sessions in Sunday School and small groups, children’s and youth ministry, worship and music ministry, women’s ministry, evangelism, special needs ministry, pastoral leadership and more.

Cost: \$15 early bird by Aug. 5; \$20 by Aug. 17; \$30 at door Aug. 20.

Visit: onedaync.com

N.C. Pastors’ Conference to celebrate God, country

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

The theme for the 2016 North Carolina Baptist Pastors’ Conference is “Worth Fighting For,” according to conference president Cameron McGill. Speakers will address a patriotic theme.

“The emphasis is that our nation is worth fighting for,” McGill said. The Sunday night service will honor those who have served or are presently serving in the United States armed forces.

Bobby Welch, retired pastor of First Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, Fla., and a former president of the Southern Baptist Convention, will preach an evangelistic message and share his personal story in the opening session. He will underscore that “souls are worth fighting for,” according to McGill.

Welch, who served in the Vietnam War, was injured in combat and believed dead.

A medic saw signs of life and revived him. The Bronze Star and Purple Heart recipient’s experience was a major turning point in his life and played a significant role in his call to preach.

“We want to thank the military personnel for their brave service – whether they are currently serving or have served in the past,” McGill said.

“Ultimately we want to thank the One who gave His life to rescue and redeem us from sin.”

The Sunday service includes a testimo-



ny from Tom Martin, a Vietnam veteran who was shot down in combat and left for dead.

McGill, who serves as pastor of Dublin First Baptist Church and The Lake Church said the three-fold purpose of this year’s conference is first to offer an event that is “encouraging to N.C. pastors at a time when we certainly need to be encouraged to keep the faith. Second, it is a time to honor those that have served us.

“Thirdly, we plan to give an evangelistic challenge to those patriots who have never had a personal relationship with Jesus.”

Music in the Sunday evening service will be led by the Mighty Echoes, an African-American group, and by the praise team from Dublin First Baptist and The Lake Church.

Monday’s services will focus on other areas “worth fighting for, including the

family, the Word of God, our denomination – what it means to be a N.C. Baptist – and the challenges we face in our state,” McGill added.

Preachers include C.J. Bordeaux, retired pastor and now director of missions for the Pee Dee Baptist Association; Mark Harris, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte; and Tom Wagoner, lead pastor of Central Baptist Church in Dunn.

Two father-and-son teams will share on the program: Timmy and Brandon Blair, and Hampton and Ethan Drum. Timmy Blair is senior pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier and the current president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Hampton Drum is senior pastor of Langston Baptist Church in Conway, S.C. The pastors’ sons, Brandon and Ethan, will share from their recent experiences in the military.

“Never has there been a time in our nation’s history where the people of God needed to stand up, stand firm and stand together, and realize all that is worth fighting for,” McGill said.

He said pastors fight for many things, “but maybe we have lost sight

of what we should be fighting for. We need to fight for those souls who are lost in sin.

“We’re not just supposed to be salt that stings, but salt that preserves, also. Not just light that identifies the sin, but light that illuminates the Savior. This is where the theme stemmed from in my heart. I think God has put the right people together for this conference.

“I think we are in most tumultuous days as a nation, but as the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, we’re in some of the most fruitful days and days of greatest harmony,” he said.

“As a convention we seem to be heading in the same direction together and our prayer is that it is in the right direction.”

The pastor’s conference will be held Nov. 13-14 in Greensboro’s Koury Convention Center, two days after Veterans Day on Nov. 11. **BR**

Hall-of-Famer Pat Williams talks character, *Extreme Winning*

Pat Williams is a basketball hall-of-famer, currently serving as co-founder and senior vice president of the National Basketball Association's (NBA) Orlando Magic. Williams spent seven years playing professional baseball as a minor league catcher with the Philadelphia Phillies, and later worked in the front office. He also served seven years in the United States Army.

Williams has been an integral part of the NBA, including bringing the league to Orlando. In 2012 he received the John W. Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award from the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

Williams and his wife, Ruth, are the parents of 19 children, including 14 adopted from four nations.

He is one of America's top motivational speakers and the author of 100 books, including his most recent title highlighting the secrets to peak performers, called *Extreme Winning*.



they can apply some of these principles of their own life. The foreword was written by my friend, the San Francisco Giants' manager, Bruce Bochy, an extreme winner.

Q: Your expertise has been in basketball and baseball for many years. Can you give us examples from the book?

A: In basketball, we write a lot about Michael Jordan and Kobe Bryant, and baseball – Derek Jeter. Those three come to mind.

When you look at these and others, it starts with a dream. There is a chapter on dreams. Somewhere in their life a dream hit them that carries to this day. We do a chapter on preparation, focus and setting goals – characteristics that all of us can implement in our lives.

Q: Pat, your faith in God is so important. I know that is key to all of your writing.

A: Well, I think that's the centerpiece, Roman. What you discover is you come face-to-face with the reality that there is a God who loves us – loves each one of us – and has a plan and purpose for life. I think that's really the beginning of life.

Faith gives us a center of balance in life – gives us an awareness that we're not alone down here. When we come to know Jesus in a personal way, and we accept him, we experience the whole package. We know we're forgiven. We have a sense of peace in our hearts. I think we can really attack life. Knowing God's on our side and He cares – that was the key point, the turning point in my life.

Q: What are some key characteristics about winners that separates them from the average person?

A: Passion, enthusiasm, energy and hard work – it's pretty basic stuff, Roman. The extreme winners just care more; they're hungrier, they hustle more. They



Pat Williams is the co-founder and senior vice president for the National Basketball Association's Orlando Magic.

Q: Your new book, *Extreme Winning*, is number 100 – quite an accomplishment! I still have your book *Making Magic* from the mid-90s.

A: Yes that was one of the early books I wrote. It just continues; ideas come, that's been going on now for over 40 years. There are still more books in the pipeline!

Q: I love the title of your new book. The importance of competing and winning in life seems to have been lost to this generation.

A: Life is competition, Roman. When you think about it, everything in America is about competition. We're competing to get into college; we're competing for jobs; we're competing for girlfriends or boyfriends. Of course the sports world is built around competition. People today need to understand that nothing's going to be handed to them. You have to stick your nose in there every day and compete hard. That's when things pay off in this society.

Q: What was your motivation for writing this book?

A: I've been in sports for well over 50 years. In that period of time, I have been involved in professional baseball and professional basketball. I have been able to observe and watch very closely these incredible athletes. There are so many I have such high regard for. What I've noticed is they are consumed by winning. I like to call it extreme winning. As I studied them closer over the decades, I came away convinced that all winners have 12 specific qualities. They're all to the extreme level.

Q: How is the book broken down in sharing the different character traits?

A: We take each of those 12 traits and expand them, share some personal stories and then some challenges. We want people to come away encouraged that

may have extreme individual skills, but it doesn't come together for them unless they can do it as a team – teamwork – and that's true of all of us. That's kind of the premise of the book.

Q: These are life skills and character traits that we should be teaching the next generation. They need it desperately. Why do you think so many of our schools have moved away from life training and life skills?

A: Roman, that's a good question. We need it. I have observed that many of those basic character qualities like honesty, integrity, responsibility and hard work are not being taught at home. School teachers, coaches and youth workers, in many cases, are having to teach character – principles that once were taught at home.

I think this is a big issue in our country that needs to be addressed. Hopefully we can make some progress in the years ahead.

Visit PatWilliams.com and follow him on Twitter: @OrlandoMagicPat.

Extreme Winning is available at Amazon.com.
(EDITOR'S NOTE – Roman Gabriel III is an evangelist and motivational speaker. Visit the Faith Family Sports website: fspn.net. Hear his Sold Out Sports Talk Radio program on American Family Radio in 200 cities nationally or streaming live at afr.net. Visit his website: soldouttv.com; Facebook: Roman Gabriel III; connect on Twitter: @romangabriel3rd. Contact at (910) 431-6483 or email: soldoutrg3@gmail.com.) **BR**

Replica of Noah's Ark opens to public

Kentucky Today

Thousands of supporters and media descended on the rural town of Williamstown, Ky., for the ribbon cutting of a life-sized replica of Noah's Ark. The Ark Encounter theme park opened to the public July 7.

"I believe this is going to be one of the greatest Christian outreaches of this era in history," said Ken Ham, president of Answers in Genesis, during a press conference July 5.

Answers in Genesis also operates the Creation Museum in nearby Petersburg.

Based on dimensions given to Noah in the Bible, the ark stands at a staggering 510 feet long, 85 feet wide and 51 feet high – believed to be the largest timber frame structure on the planet.

The life-sized ark is the centerpiece of the Ark Encounter theme park, which also features a petting zoo, restaurant and zip lines. Inside the ark, three decks are packed with exhibits. **BR**

Preparing the way for Jesus through a Hungarian school

By EMILY ROJAS | BSC Communications

When László Petrő was growing up in Hungary, the government kept an eye on churchgoers. Under communist rule, the country kept track of which children attended church. Bible studies were prohibited and rarely mentioned.

As a result, it was only in 2012 when Petrő, then the principal of a school in Nagyhalász, came into contact with people of faith for the first time. That year, Hungary had passed a law allocating care for some of its poorer schools to nonprofits in the nation.

Hungarian Baptist Aid was one such nonprofit, and Petrő's school, one of Hungary's poorest, fell under its jurisdiction. In 2014, N.C. Baptist Men/Baptists on Mission (NCBM), a partner of Hungarian Baptist Aid, came to lead an English Bible camp at Petrő's school.

NCBM, funded almost entirely by the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO), receives 41 percent of the funds from the offering.

In addition to the project in Hungary, NCBM also conducts mission work in six other countries, sharing the gospel in these nations and providing holistic ser-



vices, such as health care and renovations.

When Petrő was first presented with the idea of having an English Bible camp hosted at his school, he said that the camp's religious nature deterred him. But then, he saw the way that the North Carolina teachers treated the students. They encouraged the students, he said. They were positive and did not scold the children, treating all of them – both the Hungarian students and the marginalized Roma students – with kindness.

The camp's structure was much like that of a Vacation Bible School – the students went from station to station, learning about different aspects of the English language, American culture and the Bible along the way.

“Every day there's a Bible study class



László Petrő was first deterred from having an English Bible camp at his school in Hungary but North Carolina Baptists changed his mind. He saw how this group from America was treating his students and his teachers. “This week changed not only me, but many of us,” he said. (BSC screen capture)

in which they learn the gospel, but then all the other five classes can weave the gospel into the games they play and the lessons they teach,” said Alicia Jones, on-site coordinator for the Roma Project, full-time missionary to the Roma people and teacher at the camp.

The students who participated in the camp were very intelligent – they were 100 of the school's brightest students, selected by the principal.

However, they had no knowledge of anything in the Bible. Neither did the chaperones – public school teachers who supervised the students and sat in on the sessions.

“This work is very important because the door is wide open right now for us to share the gospel in schools in Hungary ... it's important for us to come and offer these camps to them while we have that opportunity,” Jones said.

Their work reaped a harvest. At the end of the weeklong camp, the students performed what they had learned for their parents at an assembly. The students sang Christmas songs and quoted Bible verses in English, and at the end of the night, an altar call was given.

“I watched in amazement as the

principal (Petrő) and his wife, teachers of the school, workers from the cafeteria, and parents together with their children flooded to the front of the gymnasium in response,” Jones said. “More than 150 stood together, praying to receive Christ and afterwards began crying, dancing and celebrating their newfound faith.”

“This week changed not only me, but many of us,” Petrő said. He and his colleagues, who once did not know the Lord, now live their lives to show the love of Jesus to others. They carry out projects to fix the houses of families who cannot do it themselves, they give out meals to those in need, and they sponsor children in other countries.

Although much has already changed at Petrő's school, he still looks forward to how God will continue to transform his life – his family is preparing to be baptized, and he would like to plant a church in the future. “All these things are plans, and I trust the Lord that He will make these a reality,” he said.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Visit vimeo.com/channels/ncmo to watch a video about the Hungarian principal's testimony and see more videos about how NCMO is helping prepare the way for Jesus.) **BR**

Court strikes down abortion provider regulations

Baptist Press

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down June 27 a state legislature's effort to hold abortion providers responsible for the protection of women who use their services.

In a 5-3 opinion, the high court ruled portions of a Texas law that regulate abortion doctors and clinics constitute an “undue burden” on a woman's right to abort her child and are therefore unconstitutional. The high court's reversal

of the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans invalidated a requirement an abortion clinic must meet the health and safety standards of other walk-in surgical centers. It also nullified a section mandating an abortion doctor must have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital in case a woman needs emergency admission. The decision leaves uncertain the future of similar abortion provider regulations in nearly half of the states.

Pro-life advocates expressed deep disappointment with the opinion. **BR**

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The Mighty Echoes

Youth Praise Bands

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Mosque-building satirical rumor exposed as lie

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

A rumor promulgated by satirical news-like websites and blogs that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and at least one cooperating state convention are building Islamic mosques is being exposed as a lie.

The self-proclaimed “Christian apocalyptic ... news satire and parody site” The End Times wrote perhaps the first posting of the false report as early as May 28 when it claimed the SBC had launched a “Mosques Across America” campaign “to build mosques all across the nation in order to help foster religious tolerance and a general sense of niceness towards all.”

As the satire gained momentum, The End Times in a June 16 follow-up proclaimed that “Saddleback pastor Rick Warren, who recently changed his name to Muhammad Hussein Warren in order to help advance the Chrislamic cause and promote his new book, The Purpose-Driven Mosque, had nothing but praise for the new SBC mosque-building initiative.”

The satirical posts were reposted as fact and subsequently generated questions to the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee offices, who are clarifying that the posts are indeed lies.

“The Southern Baptist Convention promotes planting and building soul-winning Baptist churches that proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ as the one and only means of salvation,” SBC Executive Committee President and CEO Frank Page said in a press statement.

“Neither the Convention nor any of its entities promotes building houses of worship for any other religious group.”

The satirical posts were likely a parody based on the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission’s (ERLC) and the International Mission Board’s decision to sign an amicus brief in support of the religious liberty rights of a Muslim community to build a mosque in Bernards Township, N.J., Page said.

“This controversy stems from a satirical website that falsely characterized an

amicus (friend of the court) brief filed by the Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission as an endorsement of building mosques,” Page said.

“Concerned that infringement of the rights of one will affect the rights of all, ERLC President Russell Moore responded to a messenger’s question at the SBC annual meeting that the ERLC brief seeks to defend the right of all religious groups to construct their own houses of worship, saying that when the religious liberty of one group is assaulted, the religious liberty of all is threatened.”

One North Carolina church notified the *Biblical Recorder* that the alleged mosque-building efforts prompted them to discontinue their partnership with the SBC and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

The trumped-up story also generated queries to the *Baptist and Reflector*, the newsjournal of the Tennessee Baptist Convention, where Executive Director Randy Davis responded in a June 23 editorial.

“Neither the Southern Baptist Convention nor the Tennessee Baptist Convention has ever built a mosque, and will never build a mosque,” Davis wrote. “However, let me emphatically state that my prayer is that the gospel of Jesus Christ would sweep through the Muslim community in Tennessee and around the world and empty every mosque because those dear people have had an encounter with the Living God. Would it be that every mosque would become a house of worship lifting up the name of Isa – Jesus in Arabic.

“Brothers and sisters, if Southern Baptists are to be guilty of giving Muslims anything, may we be guilty of freely and frequently giving them the sin-forgiving, life-saving, soul-awakening hope found exclusively in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ.” **BR**

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Hispanic pastors raise concerns over Donald Trump advisory board

By LIZ TABLAZON | BR Staff Writer

The Hispanic Baptist Pastors Alliance released a statement June 23 expressing concern over the agreement of faith leaders to join Donald Trump’s Evangelical Advisory Board. The statement came as a response to Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, naming 25 individuals to advise him on religion and politics June 21.

Trump’s executive advisory board includes at least eight Southern Baptists, including Ronnie Floyd, immediate past president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC); David Jeremiah, pastor of Shadow Mountain Community Church, El Cajon, Calif.; and James MacDonald, pastor of Harvest Bible Church in Chicago, Ill. The Trump campaign released the list following an invitation-only meeting with about 1,000 evangelical pastors and leaders in New York, N.Y.

The Hispanic Baptist Pastors Alliance expressed concern for Trump’s questionable character and harsh language toward the Hispanic community, but more so for Southern Baptist pastors joining with faith leaders the council called “false teachers.” The statement specifically named Kenneth Copeland and Paula White, two televangelists identified with preaching a prosperity gospel.

“They have deceived many in our

Hispanic communities,” the council stated in the response. “In our churches, we have received many who have been victims of their fairy tales and false promises. ... By being part of a board with people like Copeland and White we send the wrong message to our churches and to our society, as if they are ‘evangelicals’ as we are.”

Former SBC presidents Jimmy Draper and Jerry Vines also released an open letter calling Southern Baptists to “be unified in faith and conduct.” Prompted by controversy over the attendance of Southern Baptists at the June 21 meeting with Trump and the willingness of some to serve as advisors, they wrote, “Let us not use our ‘liberty’ to attack and denigrate fellow believers who exercise their ‘liberty’ in a different way.”

Draper, who served as SBC president 1982-1984, and Vines, who served 1989-1990, said serving on the advisory board is not an endorsement by any of the pastors but an opportunity for faith leaders to provide godly counsel to a presidential nominee.

According to the Trump campaign, members of the advisory board will convene on a regular basis and be responsible for leading a larger Faith and Cultural Advisory Committee that has yet to be announced. **BR**

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Ministry Continued from page 1

achieve that better way and that better life.”

He said Shoe Show’s hallmarks of integrity and imagination will be reflected in the center’s work.

“This Tucker Center is going to be a holistic ministry of body, mind and spirit. Yes, word will spread of the success of the culture of excellence BCH now embodies.”

Speaking for the family at the groundbreaking, Carolyn Tucker said the family has two simple guidelines for their gifts. The first is drawn from Mark 12:29-31 where Jesus explained the greatest commandment is to “love God with all of your heart and to love your neighbor as yourself.”

She explained that the family’s second giving guideline is based on the “last will and testament of Jesus” in Matthew 28:18-20, which is to “go and make disciples.”

“Those guidelines are simple,” she concluded, “love God, love your neighbor and go make disciples.”

“Baptist Children’s Homes fulfills all of those. I’ve come to trust that they are very faithful stewards of your gifts.”

In a surprise announcement at the close of the ceremony, Bob Tucker said, “Between now and the dedication [of the building], I will match everything you give up to half-a-million dollars.”

Blackwell sees the Greater Vision Center as a means for strengthening existing partnerships as well as establishing new ones.

“This is an invitation for organizations, businesses, churches and others to join us in this new endeavor,” Blackwell said. “We desire for Greater Vision to unite

people who possess a passion for using their expertise and resources to shape our community.”

The Tucker donation not only paves the way for the resource center, but it is also making renovations possible at two other facilities located at the Mills Home campus. Funds are being used to convert a dormant facility into an office building for BCH’s Programs and Services Department, which manages the daily operations of the nonprofit’s statewide services.

Blackwell said the restorations will allow that department’s current office building, which was a former residential cottage, to be reopened for serving children. “This gives us the capacity to care for even more children,” he said.

BCH started in Thomasville in 1885 as an orphanage but has evolved to include ministries to the whole family. It is one of the largest child care organizations in the southeast operating in 20 communities throughout the state.

They provide residential homes to North Carolina children who come from a variety of challenging circumstances ranging from family dysfunction to abuse, neglect and abandonment. BCH also offers services for adults with developmental disabilities, senior adults and single mothers.

Restorations for the new office building have already begun. Construction on the resource center is scheduled to begin later this summer.

“The creation of the Greater Vision Ministry Center is historic for Baptist Children’s Homes,” Blackwell said, “It is an opportunity to take our organizational



Carolyn Tucker, above, and Bob Tucker, left, both shared about the family’s involvement with the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina during a June 27 ground breaking for The Bob and Carolyn Tucker Greater Vision Ministry Center located at the Thomasville campus. The center is focused on reaching those in need in the community. (BR photos by K. Allan Blume)

vision of ‘sharing hope...changing lives’ to the next level – a greater level.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Some information from a press release by J. Blake Ragsdale, director of communications for the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina, was used in this article.) **BR**

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First female parliamentarian applauds SBC teamwork

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

It's unlikely that many baseball players have ever read Section 7.01 of the Major League Baseball official rulebook, which says "a runner acquires the right to an unoccupied base when he touches it before he is out." Yet, it's the first rule young batters learn after connecting with a pitch – run! Players eagerly comply with the guideline as they sprint to first base, not because they enjoy thumbing through pages of tedious regulations, but because they love to play the game.

Amy Whitfield, the Southern Baptist Convention's first female parliamentarian, beams with the same genuine excitement when she talks about participating in the denomination's yearly business meeting. Many Southern Baptists balk at the routine lineup of motions, resolutions and points of order, but Whitfield enjoys the play-by-play action.

She loves to see messengers representing churches across the nation work together to make decisions about the cooperative ministry of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

"That is my favorite thing about how our deliberative body works," Whitfield said. "It demonstrates a level of fairness ... and the ability to get things done."

Joining the team

Whitfield currently serves as the director of communications for Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C., and has formerly worked at LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville, Tenn., and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky. She is a member of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh.

The two-term SBC president for 2015-16, Ronnie Floyd, recruited Whitfield to be an assistant parliamentarian for the annual meeting, which took place June 14-15 in St. Louis, Mo.

She remembers watching SBC president Frank Page and chief parliamentarian Barry McCarty on stage at the 2008 SBC annual meeting as they put Robert's Rules of Order into play, moderating one of the largest deliberative bodies in the world. "It would be so fun to do that," Whitfield said at the time. "I never in a million years thought I'd get a chance to participate."

McCarty said Floyd initiated the conversation about calling up a diverse group of younger Baptists to assist McCarty in his work as chief parliamentarian.

Whitfield said it was "kind of a surprise" when Floyd asked her about joining the lineup, which included Craig Culbreth, lead catalyst for mission and



ministry with the Florida Baptist Convention; Adam Greenway, dean of the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Ministry at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary; and John Sullivan, former executive director of the Florida Baptist Convention.

"They were an absolutely magnificent team," said McCarty. "They were essential."

Parliamentary training

Whitfield developed skills in parliamentary procedure as a politics major at Converse College in Spartanburg, S.C., where she took part in model international diplomacy competitions, debating top-tier schools like Harvard University and other Ivy League institutions. She held leadership positions in the diplomatic simulation program, vice-chairing a committee and serving as the Assistant Secretary General, which required her to moderate the general assembly.

There were no parliamentarians in the debates to answer procedural questions

about the finer points of Robert's Rules, she said. Participants had to cover all the bases. "I didn't learn parliamentary procedure to be a parliamentarian," said Whitfield. "I learned parliamentary procedure to participate in meetings."

By the time she observed her first SBC annual meeting, she was no rookie. Her in-depth experience gave her a unique perspective. "It all made sense to me," she said.

Whitfield is currently pursuing certification in both of the parliamentary accrediting entities recognized by the SBC, the American Institute of Parliamen-

Asian fellowship elects N.C. pastor

Baptist Press

Representatives from eight Asian nationalities have formed a national fellowship to expand their involvement in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

The fellowship – to be known as A2CP2 for Asian-American Church Plant-

Above, Amy Whitfield, far right, listens carefully during a business session of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC). Whitfield worked closely with fellow assistant parliamentarians and Barry McCarty, center, chief parliamentarian, to help SBC business run smoothly. At left, Whitfield is recognized by Kathie Litton, national director of ministry to pastor's wives for the North American Mission Board, during the women's breakfast hosted June 15 by Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. (BR photos by Dianna L. Cagle)

tarians and the National Association of Parliamentarians.

Working together

She is honored to be the first female parliamentarian, and many of her fellow Baptists made a point to congratulate her at the 2016 annual meeting.

"I appreciated the encouragement," said Whitfield. "It meant a lot."

She said her favorite part of being assistant parliamentarian was simply contributing to the team.

Whitfield recalled a particular example, when Steven Rummage, chair of the 2016 SBC Resolutions Committee, asked her for advice about his upcoming presentation. "We just sat for about 15 minutes and worked," she said. "I never felt different from the rest. I felt like a part of the team."

She emphasized that teamwork is the "end goal for females participating in [SBC life] ... that we're all hands on deck – all working together." **BR**

ing/Cooperative Program – met June 12 meeting in conjunction with the SBC's annual meeting in St. Louis.

Ted Lam of Oklahoma was elected president of the new A2CP2 fellowship, with Pao Ly of Morganton, N.C., elected as vice president and Felix Sermon, general secretary of National Asian-American Fellowship, as chaplain. **BR**

Crossover St. Louis sees increase in faith decisions

By JOE CONWAY | Baptist Press

Southern Baptist volunteers took advantage of the preparations made in advance of Crossover St. Louis and saw those efforts result in 556 St. Louis residents placing their faith in Christ for salvation.

As the host city for the annual meeting of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), the St. Louis Baptist Association and executive director Jim Breeden helped create environments where people were receptive to gospel conversations.

The number of salvation decisions during Crossover Saturday June 11 marks an increase for the first time in three years. That is a trend organizers hope to see continue in Phoenix, host for the SBC annual meeting in 2017. The registered number of Crossover St. Louis volunteers was 3,984.

Those volunteers participated in 8,379 gospel conversations where an invitation for a decision was extended. Crossover events were sponsored by more than 85 host churches and events.

North American Mission Board (NAMB) executive director of evangelism Joel Southerland serves as coordinator for the mission board's Crossover responsibilities. Southerland said he was humbled by the experience of seeing so many volunteers engaged in gospel conversations.

"Crossover St. Louis was fantastic," Southerland said. "It brought churches together and many did an evangelistic event for the first time. We had more decisions in this Crossover than in the past three years – over 200 more than last year. It's a testament to the hard work of the churches and pastors."

Southern Baptists have sponsored a week-long evangelistic emphasis in the host city of the Southern Baptist Convention since 1989. The events are sponsored by the local Southern Baptist association and the North American Mission Board.

Crossover Saturday also coincided with the launch of Send Relief, a compassion ministry initiative of NAMB aimed at helping churches deepen their connections with the local community. First Baptist Ferguson, Mo., hosted the debut of Send Relief. The event included the use of a mobile dental clinic and a mobile medical clinic.

The units are available for churches to use for their own Send Relief events.

Southerland has already been in planning sessions for Crossover Phoenix. He expects another successful experience for volunteers and the Southern Baptist family in Phoenix. In addition to the traditional Crossover outreach activities, Harvest America will bring a new dynamic to Crossover Phoenix with the element of a city-wide crusade. "Next year Crossover Phoenix with Harvest will be historic," Southerland said. "We have the opportunity to make a major impact for Christ in a major city. Working together we could see more than 5,000 come to faith in Christ with many more from the simulcasts going on around the nation and world. It will be something Southern Baptists will be talking about for a long time to come. Every pastor should put June 10, 2017, on his calendar and make plans to be there."

By any measure – city population, metro area or regional influence – Phoenix is a major North American city. One reason Phoenix is the sixth largest city in the United States is that it has become the go-to destination for retirees and high-tech entrepreneurs.

Harvest America is assisting churches with evangelistic events and will partner with Crossover Phoenix with an opportunity to capture the momentum from Crossover in a single, culminating crusade. It will enhance the

traditional Crossover element with a focused, concluding activity. Visit namb.net/evangelism/crossover.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Joe Conway serves as marketing content coordinator for the North American Mission Board. Tobin Perry, a NAMB writer, contributed to this report.) **BR**



Multi-ethnic report

Frank S. Page, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee, receives the Multi-Ethnic Advisory Council Report June 14 from Timmy Chavis, pastor of Bear Swamp Baptist Church in Pembroke, N.C., during the annual meeting of the SBC in St. Louis. For complete SBC coverage, visit BRnow.org. (BP photo by Matt Miller)

'Evangelism dilemma' draws focus of Replicate panel

Baptist Press

The lack of evangelism among Southern Baptists is at its heart a discipleship issue according to panelists at the Replicate Ministries breakfast.

"I think the challenge we have in our convention and our churches is that we have seen discipleship and evangelism as pitted against each other," said Robby Gallaty, president of Replicate Ministries, during the June 14 gathering at the Southern Baptist Convention's annual meeting in St. Louis. Gallaty moderated the panel that included David Platt, president of the International Mission Board; Steve Gaines, senior pastor of Bellevue Baptist Church near Memphis; J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church, Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; and Johnny

Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga.

Gallaty's questions centered on the decline of baptisms and church attendance in the SBC and how evangelism and discipleship factor into those numbers. He summarized, "The evangelism dilemma in our convention is really a disciple-making dilemma if we understand true disciple-making."

Platt noted, "The obvious take away is we need to personally share the gospel and make disciples. If we're not doing that in our own lives then we're fooling ourselves in this whole conversation about leadership."

Replicate Ministries exists to equip, educate and empower the local church to make disciples through biblical methods for training and replicating disciples.

Visit replicateministries.org. **BR**

Flood Continued from page 1

comfort them in ways that we can't, but we try to be His hands and feet."

Already, NCBM has received 150 recovery job requests, and Gee's house is one of them. After Gee and her grandson evacuated, the NCBM disaster relief volunteers cleared her yard of the debris when floodwaters receded. Then, they turned their attention to the inside of Gee's house, beginning the heartbreaking process of throwing out everything damaged by the floodwaters.

A washing machine and dryer, refrigerator and freezer, kitchen cabinets, bathroom fixtures, furniture, carpets, hardwood flooring and plaster walls were piled high in front of Gee's house. West Virginia National Guard troops had begun making pickups of Gee's trashed belongings and hauling them to the town dump.

Richard Brunson, executive director of NCBM, said volunteers are still needed for the ongoing relief efforts in West Virginia.

"We need a lot of volunteers to help with the recovery jobs requests," Brunson said. "There are many



North Carolina Baptists prepare to tackle flood recovery efforts in West Virginia. Volunteers are needed for the more than 150 jobs that have already been requested. (Contributed photo)

hurting people in West Virginia who need our prayers and our help."

Individuals may sign up to volunteer, make a donation and receive updates on the relief efforts through a

special portal on NCBM's website available at baptistson-mission.org/wvflood.

Gaylon Moss, who serves as NCBM's disaster relief director, said funds received through the annual North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO) make disaster relief efforts like those currently underway in West Virginia possible.

"There's no way we can be prepared for disaster response without training and acquiring equipment and resources for when the time comes," Moss said. "The NCMO helps us to be prepared through the resources it provides us."

As for Gee, she is safe, staying with her daughter in a nearby community.

"I cannot begin to thank these wonderful [NCBM volunteers] for everything they have done so far," Gee said. "They are a real blessing to us."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – NCBM contributed reporting to this article. Visit vimeo.com/channels/ncmo to watch a video on NCBM's relief efforts in West Virginia.) **BR**

WMU highlights missional discipleship, honors Wanda Lee

By JULIE WALTERS | Woman's Missionary Union

Wanda S. Lee, executive director of national Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), thanked Southern Baptists for partnering through missions education to equip the next generation of missionaries, an endeavor she described as more critical than ever before in an increasingly postmodern world.

Lee noted to messengers June 15 at the SBC annual meeting: "It is our desire to partner with every Southern Baptist church in discipling preschoolers, children, youth and adults by engaging them in meaningful missions involvement right in their own communities or on the other side of the world; to support those who go to the nations for a lifetime with our praying and giving; and to accept the mandate of the Great Commission in whatever way God calls us."

Lee reported that Linda Cooper of Bowling Green, Ky., was re-elected to a second term as president of national WMU and Tana Hartsell of Concord, N.C., was re-elected to a second term as recording secretary during the WMU Missions Celebration and Annual Meeting June 13 in St. Louis. Earlier in the convention, Lee was honored for her 16-plus years as WMU executive director, having announced her intention to retire upon the election of a successor.



TANA HARTSELL

Messengers approved a resolution of appreciation for Lee, who was elected as WMU's seventh executive director in January 2000, expressing "sincere and profound gratitude to God for the extraordinary life, ministry, and contributions" of Lee and her husband Larry.

The resolution also noted that Lee led WMU in:

- Organizing 80 short-term mission trips encompassing more than 750 volunteers in underserved countries and in major cities around the world.

- Expanding hands-on missions ministries such as the Baptist Nursing Fellowship, WorldCrafts, Christian Women's Jobs Corps and Project Help.

- Expanding WMU's New Hope Publishers, with more than 100 new titles in the last four years and being named Publisher of the Year in the Golden Scroll Book Awards in 2015 and 2009.

Lee is the only one in WMU's history who also served as national president, an office she held 1996–2000. Lee served as president of Georgia WMU from 1993–1996.

In addition, Lee, a nurse by training, and her husband served as missionaries with the International Mission Board (IMB) from 1979–1981 in St. Vincent, Windward Islands. The WMU held its annual meeting with a theme of "By All Means" June 12–13 featuring missionaries from IMB and North American Mission Board as well as Jeff Iorg, president of Gateway Seminary of the Southern Baptist Convention (formerly known as Golden Gate Theological Seminary).

Mindy Jamison of Friendship Baptist Center in Des Moines, Iowa, was presented the Dellanna West O'Brien Award for Women's Leadership Development.

On June 11 approximately 150 Southern Baptist leaders gathered in St. Louis to honor Lee.

"I believe Wanda Lee has exhibited that great trio of imperatives from our Lord," said Frank Page, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention's Executive Committee.

"I believe she has done what is right, what is just. She is merciful, and many of you are the recipients of her mercy and ministry in your own life.

She is a strategist, an organizational genius, yet is always humble and gives credit to those around her. I am honored to call her my friend, and I thank God for her." Several WMU leaders and past presidents shared about their work with Lee over the years. WMU executive board members presented her with a bracelet and charms representing her WMU contributions and a painting.

Kevin Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, thanked Lee for her leadership and presented a check for \$15,000 to the Wanda Lee Joy Fund in her honor. Marilyn Graves, president of Baptist Nursing Fellowship, presented Lee with a donation of \$500 to the Joy Fund. These along with other donations, including \$15,000 from IMB, bring the total given to this fund over the past six months to more than \$62,000. The Wanda Lee Joy Fund benefits a solid financial foundation for the operational expenses of national WMU. For more information about the Wanda Lee Joy Fund or to give online, visit wmufoundation.com.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Baptist Press senior editor Art Toalston contributed to this report. Excerpts from other articles were also used.) **BR**

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So. Baptists honor Pearl Harbor survivor

Baptist Press

World War II veteran Bill McAnany, one of 2,000 living survivors of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, was introduced to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) as messengers honored America and recognized military veterans June 14 at the SBC's annual meeting in St. Louis.

Calling it an "awesome privilege," SBC President Ronnie Floyd observed that a memory of WWII disappears from American culture every three minutes as those who fought in the global conflict pass into eternity. "We must take every opportunity to honor our veterans of the greatest generation while they are still among us," Floyd said.

This December, the United States will commemorate the 75th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor by the Japanese navy, Floyd noted. Recalling that the attack killed 2,403 Americans and wounded 1,178 others, he recounted McAnany's story – that he joined the Navy in 1938 and was assigned to the USS Solace, a 400-bed hospital ship that was present at Pearl Harbor for the fateful events of Dec. 7, 1941.

Providing emergency medical care to the injured and dying and recovering bodies from the oil-stained waters of Pearl Harbor changed McAnany's view on life forever, Floyd said.

Quoting McAnany, of Wood River, Ill., Floyd said, "You quickly realize that life is a gift not meant to be wasted." **BR**

TIE DYE OR JUST DIE

I think most pastors have mental flashbacks from time to time about something that happened at a church they once served. It either makes them wince or smile. I had one of these flashbacks recently. During the summer, in my first pastorate, the children's leaders and I decided to take the children on a day trip to a nearby mountain to swim and hike. Little did I know what would happen before we left would either make or break the trip – and probably my future leadership there.

I had no idea at the time, but our volunteer children's leader stayed up late the previous night tie-dyeing purple T-shirts for everyone. She thought this would be a good way for us to keep up with one another. It was a great idea ... until she handed me one.

Without even thinking, I said, "Uh, 'I'm not going to wear this.' I was thinking I'm the pastor, exempt from such a silly thing. Obviously angry, she turned to the crowd in the parking lot and said, "Attention everybody! Pastor Eddie isn't going to wear his T-shirt like the rest of us."

All eyes turned toward me. I nearly melted. Funny how your brain quickly takes all this in and makes snap judgments. It doesn't have to make sense, you just speak without time to think.

Suddenly I had some much needed clarity, "This is not about a T-shirt, I thought. It's about how well I can fit into my new environment and get along with others. And am I willing to

follow someone else's leadership, even a volunteer's?"

The truth was I wasn't leading the trip; she was. My leadership had to



EDDIE THOMPSON

accept her leadership in this moment, and I had to humble myself. If I didn't do this I was going to be forever known as the pastor who couldn't get along with the church (by the way, this is the No. 1 reason pastors are terminated – personality clashes with leaders in the church), and believe me, they never forget it. So

I went inside and changed into the purple shirt. At the end of the day, nobody got lost and we had a great time.

Later I thought, "What was the big deal? It was just a shirt." But it wasn't just a shirt, it was a lesson in defensiveness and not reacting well when put on the spot. I learned something that day about myself. When caught off guard I tend to react poorly until I think about it later. Funny thing is, I loved that shirt, and wore it hundreds of times until I wore the dye off! But every time I did I had a flash back of that parking lot scene. Now I know I almost blew my future leadership over something so insignificant. It taught me that I better learn how to handle small issues because soon there would be much larger ones.

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much" Luke 16:10.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Eddie Thompson is a pastoral ministries consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at ethompson@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5644.)

Hawkins spotlights GuideStone uniqueness

Baptist Press

GuideStone President O.S. Hawkins relayed the entity's 98th report to messengers June 14 at the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Citing GuideStone's upcoming centennial in 2018, which will be celebrated with messengers convening in Dallas, Hawkins noted GuideStone's uniqueness among the convention's boards.

"Most all of the entities in Southern Baptist life focus on the message of the gospel," Hawkins said.

"We're the only entity in Southern Baptist life that has a primary focus on the messenger of the gospel."

Other highlights:

- In May, the Supreme Court ruled against the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and its contraceptive mandate, vacating lower court decisions, and requiring the government to come up with another plan to protect the religious liberty of ministries.

The mandate would have required some ministries served by GuideStone to provide abortion-causing drugs and devices to women in their health plans or face crippling fines.



O.S. HAWKINS

- While emphasizing GuideStone does not expect its medical rate increases to be as high as some medical insurers in state health care exchanges are expecting, Hawkins emphasized churches, regardless of their health plan provider, should be prepared for higher rates in 2017 as a result of the continued impact of the Affordable Care Act.

- Hawkins emphasized markets continue their volatility, and may for the foreseeable future.

- Citing GuideStone's partnership with Brotherhood Mutual Insurance Company, Hawkins indicated that 99 percent of property & casualty business, which renews annually, is retained by GuideStone and almost 70 percent of proposals GuideStone responds to turns into sales.

- Hawkins reported that last year, 7,156 churches celebrated Mission:Dignity Sunday; this year, that number is expected to be more than 8,200 churches.

This ministry that provides financial assistance to retired ministers and their widows in financial need.

To learn more or to request information, visit guidestone.org or missiondignity.org. **BR**

Discover your mission. Go change the world.

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in Wake Forest
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The College at
Southeastern



BAPTIST BRIEFS

Scott McConnell to lead LifeWay Research

(Baptist Press) Scott McConnell has been named executive director of LifeWay Research, a Nashville-based evangelical firm specializing in surveys about faith in culture and matters affecting the church.

McConnell, 45, succeeds Ed Stetzer, who joined Wheaton College's faculty July 1 as The Billy Graham Distinguished Endowed Chair for Church, Mission, and Evangelism in addition to serving as executive director of the Billy Graham Center for Evangelism at the Chicago-area college.

He has been a researcher for LifeWay Christian Resources for nearly 20 years, generating in-depth insights into the needs, views and opinions of church leaders, laity and the unchurched.

McConnell, who joined the staff of LifeWay Research when it was formed 10 years ago, is the author of *Multi-Site Churches: Guidance for the Movement's Next Generation* and coauthor with Rodney and Selma Wilson of *The Parent Adventure: Preparing Your Children for a Lifetime with God*.

He holds a bachelor of science in economics, marketing and strategic management from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania.



SCOTT MCCONNELL

Gardner-Webb only N.C. school with 'A' in study

(GWU) An annual study on core curriculum requirements at over 1,100 colleges and universities from all over the United States has placed Gardner-Webb University at the head of the class for the fifth year in a row. Ranked among 25 institutions throughout the nation with an "A" grade, Gardner-Webb is the only school in the Carolinas to earn an "A" distinction for general requirement standards.

The 2015-2016 "What Will They Learn? Study," conducted by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA), ranks the core curriculum of all the major public and private colleges and universities in all 50 states. The ranking places GWU in the top two percent in the nation, included with schools such as Pepperdine University (Malibu, Calif.), Baylor University (Waco, Texas), Morehouse College (Atlanta, Ga.), and the United States Air Force Academy (Colorado Springs, Colo.), among others. The ACTA study analyzes seven core subjects and rates universities accordingly. ACTA believes that composition, U.S. government/history, economics, literature, math, science, and foreign language components help students gain the knowledge and values necessary for responsible democratic citizenship. "A"-rated schools require at least six out of the seven core courses; "B" schools must offer four or five out of seven. Campbell, Chowan, Mars Hill and Wingate universities all received a "B." ACTA is an independent, non-profit organization committed to academic freedom, excellence, and accountability at America's colleges and universities. Visit goacta.org or whatwilltheylearn.com.

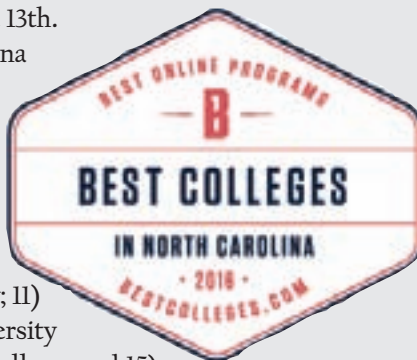
GWU, Campbell rank tops in online ranking

(GWU, CU) Campbell and Gardner-Webb universities have been recognized for exceptional web-based learning opportunities and were recently honored as a 2016 Best Online College in North Carolina by Best Colleges, based in Seattle, Wash., and Houston, Texas. Gardner-Webb ranked fourth out of the top 15 institutions of higher education in the state. Campbell ranked 13th.

Also on the list of 15 schools: 1) North Carolina State University; 2) Piedmont International University; 3) University of North Carolina at Greensboro; 5) University of North Carolina at Charlotte; 6) University of Mount Olive; 7) North Carolina Central University; 8) Winston-Salem State University; 9) Pfeiffer University; 10) Fayetteville State University; 11) North Carolina A&T State University; 12) University of North Carolina at Pembroke; 14) Montreat College; and 15) Lees-McRae College. According to BestColleges.com, schools are ranked based on their academic quality along with affordability and student experience. A school's admissions rate and graduation rate account for 60 percent of the academic quality category; the remaining 40 percent is covered by retention rate and enrollment rate. The affordability and student experience category is composed of the average net price for low-income students (40 percent), loan default rate (40 percent), and the student-to-faculty ratio (20 percent).

Visit BestColleges.com/features/best-online-colleges-in-North-Carolina.

Visit BRnow.org for more news stories and special features.



CHURCH NEWS



New Life Baptist Fellowship Church, Newton

On June 12 as part of New Life Baptist Fellowship Church's eighth anniversary, the Newton congregation dedicated its building. New Life partnered with the North Carolina Baptist Foundation to secure resources to complete major projects to the building that was given to them by a church that was closing its doors. From left: Nathan Straley; Norman Straley, building chairman; Terry Sherrill, chairman of deacons; Jeff Kautz, senior pastor; and Todd Reed, music director.



Village Baptist Church, Fayetteville

Village Baptist Church, Fayetteville honored Bruce Martin on his retirement after 25 years as the church's senior pastor and a total of 39 years in ministry. The June 26 service included tributes by Randy White, executive director of the New South River Baptist Association; C.J. Bordeaux, director of missions for Pee Dee Baptist Association; Dennis Harrell, retired pastor; Steve Hardy, leader of the Great Commission Partnerships for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC); and Allan Blume, editor of the *Biblical Recorder*. Video presentations were shared by Ronnie Floyd, an Arkansas pastor and former president of the Southern Baptist Convention; Mark Harris, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte; and Milton Hollifield, BSC executive director-treasurer. Pictured from left is Joe Roy, deacon chairman; Gene Hales, Village Christian Academy principal; Brenda Martin, wife; Bruce Martin, pastor; and Joshua Martin, son.

Iowa churches counter gender identity law

Baptist Press

Two Iowa churches say the Iowa Civil Rights Commission's interpretation of a state civil rights law could force them to open restrooms to members of the opposite sex and inhibit their ability to teach biblical truth about gender.

One of the churches, Fort Des Moines Church of Christ in Des Moines, filed a lawsuit in federal court July 4. The other, Cornerstone World Outreach in Sioux City, sent a demand letter to the Iowa Civil Rights Commission July 5 asking the Commission to amend its policy regarding churches and gender identity discrimination.

At issue is an undated brochure published by the Commission, which states

churches must "sometimes" permit locker room and restroom access based on self-perceived gender identity rather than biological sex. The brochure, titled "Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity," explains, "Iowa law provides that these [anti-discrimination] protections do not apply to religious institutions with respect to any religion-based qualifications when such qualifications are related to a bona fide religious purpose. Where qualifications are not related to a bona fide religious purpose, churches are still subject to the law's provisions. (e.g., a child care facility operated at a church or a church service open to the public)."

The brochure implies open restroom access must always be provided, the lawsuit notes. **BR**

OPPORTUNITY CORNER



The Yancey Baptist Association and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) will host the Western N.C. Prayer Summit “Times of Refreshing” July 30-31 at Cane River Baptist Church in Burnsville. Saturday’s lunch is provided.

Speakers include Joe Miller, Yancey’s

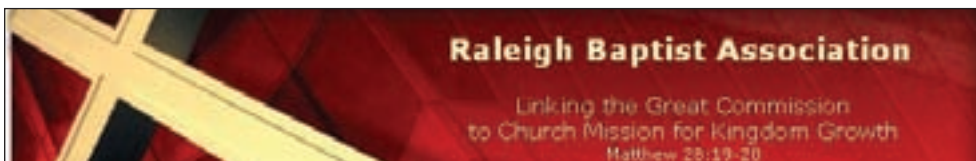
associational missionary; Chris Schofield, BSC’s director of the office of prayer; and Steve Harris, BSC’s Blue Ridge coordinator of the strategic focus team. Register at the door. This conference is free, but a love offering will be received. Visit ncbaptist.org/westernprayer.



The Military & Veterans Ministry Summit on Aug. 19 from 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Calvary Baptist Church in Advance seeks to connect churches, ministries, businesses and other organizations to provide spiritual, physical and emotional care to military personnel and their families.

Participants will learn how to identify and resource veterans in their church,

bring the marketplace and faith community together to heal our vets and start an outreach, fellowship and/or leadership lab for vets. The event is sponsored by the Military and Chaplaincy Ministry of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. The cost is \$15 per person. There is an overnight option at a local hotel. Visit ncbaptist.org/militarysummit.



The Raleigh Baptist Association will host a Training Extravaganza Aug. 20 at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh. There will be 23 conferences focusing on discipleship, evangelism, missions, leadership and administration.

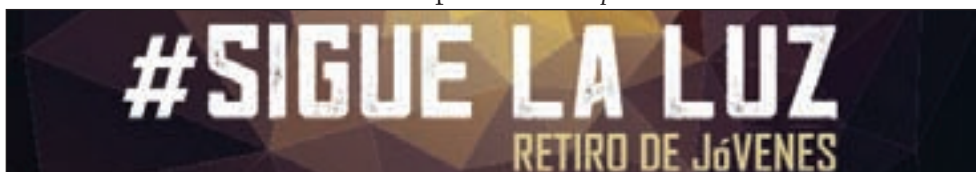
There are options for free conferences or leadership labs that range from \$10-20, with a boxed lunch. Registration is required for all leadership labs. A continental breakfast is included. Visit raleighbaptists.org.



The Future of Senior Adult Ministry workshop on Aug. 25 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Bald Mountain Baptist Church in West Jefferson is a free one-day workshop designed to help pastors and lay leaders understand how to shift senior adult ministry from fun activities to Kingdom-focused ministry.

Attendees will learn how to develop

and implement an ongoing discipling strategy among senior adults that involves being on mission, mentoring and creating a strong ministry team. Eddie Thompson, consultant for pastoral ministries with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, is among the speakers for the event. Visit ncbaptist.org/seniorleadership.



The 2016 statewide Hispanic Youth Retreat – Follow the Light – is designed to reach and disciple youth ages 12-18. The schedule Sept. 2-5 at Fort Caswell is designed to engage youth and counselors to focus on how God wants us to live daily with Him through the challenges of this world as we “Follow the Light” of Christ

as disciple multipliers for His glory. The theme is based on 1 John 1:5 – “*This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.*”

Registration is \$150 per person (before Aug. 8), and includes lodging, a T-shirt and 7 meals. Visit ncbaptist.org/hyr16.



The Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina is hosting the 57th annual Western Area Conference Sept. 8 at Broyhill Home in Clyde. Cottage tours, live gospel singing and a free barbecue meal will be

served. There will be a special program featuring children’s testimonies, special presenters and more. Make reservation by calling (828) 627-9254. Visit bchfamily.org/involved/wac.



Baptist Children’s Homes is hosting its “Friends of Children” workdays at some of its locations in September.

Participants will be able to directly impact boys and girls while seeing the ministry firsthand. All types of projects are

available, and a free lunch will be served. Workdays include Sept. 10 at Cameron Boys Home, Kennedy Home and Mills Home; Sept. 17 at Camp Duncan and Odum Home; and Sept. 24 at Oak Ranch. Visit bchfamily.org/involved/friends.



Christian fellowship, worship, music, recreation and good food are waiting for those who attend the Legacy: Fall Coastal Adult Retreat at Fort Caswell. Geared toward retired and semi-retired adults, these Monday through Wednesday retreats offer a mixture of large group worship, small group activities and recreation as well as free time to explore the area or

shop. The cost for the retreat is \$145-149, depending on lodging options, and includes two nights lodging, five meals and the program.

Dates available include: Sept. 12-14, Sept. 19-21, Sept. 26-28, Oct. 3-5, Oct. 10-12 and Oct. 17-19. To make reservations, call (910) 278-9501 or visit fortcaswell.com/projects/legacy2016/.



Learn ways to positively impact spiritual growth of children/youth as well as reverse the growing trend of biblical illiteracy at the Building Faith Filled Families Conference. Conferences are Sept. 15 in Matthews or Sept. 16 in Lumberton.

Participants will learn how to equip

and partner with parents in the spiritual development of their children and teenagers. This one-day conference is designed for pastors, church staff and lay leaders. Cost is \$15 per person or \$20 per married couple; the deadline to register is Sept. 8. Visit ncbaptist.org/cfc2016.

July 24

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

July 31

Make Agreements Cautiously

Focal passage: Proverbs 6:1-5; 22:7

Avoid financial obligations that could sink you.

What comes to your mind when you hear the word slavery? Some of you may think of the Israelites, forced to build bricks and work fields in obedience to Pharaoh.

Others of you may mournfully recall the men and women torn from their homes and treated as less than human during the early years of the United States.

Then again, you could be considering the more than 35 million people enslaved today, manipulated through threats and violence and often denied basic human rights.

Slavery in every form is appalling and must be condemned by followers of Jesus as we pursue justice and fight to rescue those in need. And yet, have you ever considered that this picture of slavery, of precious humans being forced to live and work in bondage, is the exact picture used in scripture to describe living in financial indebtedness? As the author of Proverbs 22:7 states, “*the borrower is a slave to the lender.*”

We live in a culture where debt is expected and at times even encouraged. To acquire what we think we need to live the life we think we deserve, we borrow and spend what we do not have. According to scripture, when we do this, we are essentially choosing to live as a slave.

True, no one will beat us with whips as arrive at work tomorrow morning, but in a very real sense when we are in debt, we become the slave to the person that lent us money. Paying back what we owe takes precedence over all other opportunities.

God calls us to flee this slavery “*like a gazelle from the hunter’s hand and like a bird from the hand of the fowler*” (Proverbs 6:5). He has intended us for freedom – freedom to live the abundant life He promises, freedom to serve Him and freedom to use the blessings He gives us to bless those around us. Oh that we would repent of our own willingness to enslave ourselves to fulfill our own selfish desires and instead trust the One who promises to provide all we need.



EMILY ANTHONY
Member, Imago Dei Church, Raleigh

Focal passage: Proverbs 6:6-11

Work isn’t always easy, but it’s necessary.

It was a hot summer day, and I had decided to splurge for ice cream. As I approached the drive thru window to pay for my treat, the young man behind the glass observed me open my wallet and contemplate my options.

Should I hand him cash or card? I quickly chose cash and passed him my \$5 bill, but he immediately voiced his disappointment. “Couldn’t you have given me the card?” he asked. “Counting change is too much work.”

After a few laughs, we struck up a conversation, and I learned my cashier was finishing high school and had grand dreams of becoming a millionaire. Subtracting pennies was not the life he wanted. Forget working – this kid had no plans for a job. He simply wanted to be rich.

As I drove away, I was irritated by the young man’s mindset.

How could he possibly become rich if he wasn’t willing to count change? And yet, the Lord gently convicted me of own selfish tendency toward laziness. I have never dreamed of becoming a millionaire, but there are definite times I would prefer to stay in my pajamas rather than head to work.

According to Proverbs 6:6-11, work is not a curse. It is an integral part of God’s good creation. Even the tiny ants along our sidewalks are examples of the necessity and value of work as they gather food and prepare dwelling places. God encourages us to work wisely, and He also reminds us that with laziness comes consequences. When we choose not to work, quite often “*poverty will come like a robber*” (Proverbs 6:11).

Work may not always be pleasant, fun or even easy, but it is something God has designed for us to do and it is often the means by which God provides for our needs.

Instead of viewing work as a terrible drudgery keeping us from enjoying life, God wants us to view work as a gift from Him and a means by which we can honor Him with our lives, even if all we are doing is counting change.

July 24

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

July 31

Delivered

Focal Passage: 1 Samuel 17:32-37, 42-50

We are enamored with the “underdog” stories. They range from the “Hare and the Tortoise” of Aesop to the Rocky series. The main storyline is of the battle between good and evil.

However, these stories are further emblazoned with the show of sheer determination overcoming insurmountable odds. We see in the stories that life is seldom fair.

It is encouraging to see that those with ingenuity, effort and heart can sometimes overcome the odds.

We all love the idea that anyone can achieve the impossible dream, or at least exceed expectations.

One of my favorite movies is “Rudy.” This is the story of a kid whose ultimate goal is to play football for Notre Dame. Rudy has to overcome the daunting obstacles of his dyslexia and physical size, but manages to win the hearts of those around him to achieve his dreams. It is like a modern David versus Goliath.

One thing that most of these “underdog” stories are missing that the

David versus Goliath account has is that the confidence of David was not in his dream, his ability, his stamina or his ingenuity.

David’s confidence was in God.

Even when Goliath taunted him in the valley, David didn’t list all of his accomplishments.

David said “*You come against me with a dagger, spear, and sword, but I come against you in the name of Yahweh of Hosts, the God of Israel’s armies – you have defied Him. Today, the Lord will hand you over to me*” (17:45-46).

God calls His followers to be faithful and stand against those who are in opposition to God and His people.

If we are trusting in anything other than God, we are doomed to fail.

He will give His people the success that He has planned when we trust, work and give Him all the glory. Our nation can be called back to God, if His people trust Him, pray, stand and make Him known. We may feel like the “underdog,” but in Him we can see the Goliaths fall.



THOMAS MARSHALL
Member, Spring Hill Baptist Church, Wagram

Focal Passage: 1 Samuel 18:1-5; 20:35-42

I read the account this week about an English publication that had a contest offering a prize for the best definition of a friend. There were thousands of answers submitted. Some spoke of one who multiplies joys and divides grief.

Another submitted that a friend was a watch that beats true for all time and never runs down. Maybe you can come up with a number of ideas of what the best definition of a friend is. Webster’s dictionary defines it as a person whom one knows well and is fond of.

Today, many of us talk about the number of friends that we have on Facebook.

I looked to see what my account said I had. It says that I have 1,365 friends. That is amazing. In fact, I have never met the vast majority of them. Many became friends because of other friends that I have.

In the lesson we are studying, David had a true friend in Jonathan. From the

time that David killed Goliath, Jonathan was ready to stand by his side. Jonathan was a warrior, and he saw a warrior’s heart in David.

He also saw one who would be true to him.

David and Jonathan developed a deep lasting friendship that went past family ties.

This week’s Family Memory Verse of 1 Samuel 18:3 says, “*Jonathan made a covenant with David because he loved him as much as himself.*”

Jonathan was willing to set aside the possibility of being the King of Israel in lieu of David becoming the king. When Saul sought to kill David, Jonathan was willing to take up for David. Later, after Jonathan met his death, David sought to find any of his kin that David could honor because of his friendship with Jonathan.

Back to the original story that we started this article with, the definition that won the prize from that English publication was that a friend was someone who comes in when the rest of the world goes out.

I think that sums it up pretty well, how about you?

Faithful

AROUND THE STATE

Obituaries

JOHN HENDRIX BOWDEN, 85, of Charlotte died May 8.

A Texas native, he was a graduate of Hardin-Simmons University in Abilene, Texas, and New Orleans Seminary.

While getting his education, he served part time as minister of music in Texas and Mississippi and served churches in Mississippi as a pastor. After moving to North Carolina, he mainly was a senior pastor. The last three churches he served were Oakhurst Baptist Church, Charlotte; Clinchfield Baptist Church, Marion, and First Baptist Church, Mount Holly, where he served for more than 15 years. Upon retiring in 1995, he served five churches as interim pastor and did supply work for 10 years until he had ill health. He had served as a senior pastor for more than 42 years. He taught part time while serving as a full-time pastor for four years at Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute (now College) for preachers teaching missions, homiletics, Christian doctrine and religious education. He began and directed men's chorus.

He served on the general board of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and the ministerial board at Gardner-Webb University, along with different positions in ministerial conferences and Baptist associations. He is survived by his wife of 61 years, Frances Haynes Bowden; daughter, Sheron Lowe of Charlotte; son, Max Bowden of Belmont; two grandsons; and two great-grandchildren.

Memorials to: John H. Bowden memorial scholar-

ship, First Baptist Church, 300 S. Main St., Mount Holly, NC 28120; Cornerstone Baptist Church, 8947 Albermarle Road, Charlotte, NC 28227, where he was a member; or to the charity of your choice.

JOHN MEREDITH SIMMS, 93, of Daleville, Va., died June 26.

A Raleigh native, Simms served in the U.S. Army in World War II, rising to the rank of captain and concluding his three and a half years of service as the assistant medical supply officer of the 8th Army in Yokohama, Japan. Before and after Army service, he was the second Herbert Worth Jackson scholar at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he graduated as the president of Phi Beta Kappa and then attended law school there. Simms engaged in a private, mostly civil, law practice in Raleigh for 18 years before going in 1968 to Norfolk Southern Railway Co. headquarters in Raleigh as vice president and general counsel.

In Raleigh, he was a member of Tabernacle Baptist Church where he was chairman of the senior deacons and a Sunday school teacher. He also served as the moderator of the Raleigh Baptist Association and was a member of the Jr. and Sr. Chambers of Commerce, the Executive Club, and trustee of Meredith College and a member of its Board of Associates. Simms moved to Virginia in 1974 when Norfolk Southern Railway was purchased by Southern Railway Company. He joined the Southern Railway law department in Washington, D.C., where he supervised personal injury litigation across the rail system. Upon the merger of South-

ern Railway and Norfolk and Western Railway, his section of the law department was located in Roanoke, Va. Simms came to Roanoke in 1983 and supervised the personal injury litigation arising from Southern Railway properties.

In Virginia, Simms continued to be an active Baptist layman. For eight years, he served as a trustee of the Foreign (now International) Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was active in the formation of the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia and served on the founding Executive Committee and later as first vice president. He was also a trustee of the Baptist Banner. He was an original member and founding president of the Board of Visitors of the Southeastern Seminary.

He is survived by his wife of 71 years, Lorraine Glenn Simms; daughter, Sarah Lanier of Wake Forest, N.C.; son, John Simms Jr. of Greensboro; three grandchildren; and a great-grandson.

Memorials to: First Baptist Church of Roanoke, P.O. Box 2799, Roanoke, VA 24001, or to a charity of your choosing.

Staff changes

WALTER OVERMAN has been called as pastor of Main Street Baptist Church, Kernersville. He previously was pastor of Wood Baptist Church.

Scotts Creek Baptist Church, Sylva, has called **J.D. GRANT** as pastor. Grant was vice president for development at Fruitland Baptist Bible College (1998-2014) as well as a professor.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Yadkin Baptist Church in the northern foothills of NC is seeking a **full-time Pastor**. Five plus years of pastoral experience, college degree and Southern Baptist seminary/divinity degree required. Our ministry priorities include: a gifted teacher who is an effective communicator of well-prepared sermons, a skilled caregiver/counselor, a person of vision, one who emphasizes evangelism and the importance of lifestyle witnessing. Resumes must be submitted by September 30, 2016, to Yadkin Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 37, Patterson, NC 28661, or email: dtownsend@caldwellbaptist.org.

Chapel Hill Missionary Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a **Pastor** with a passion for shepherding & developing souls, equipping them for ministry and influencing the community for Christ. We're a small, mission-minded church in Marion, NC, seeking an ordained Southern Baptist minister that meets the scriptural requirements and will preach the Word of God as found in the Holy Bible. Prefer to have or be in the process of obtaining seminary education. Resumes to jo@whitsonrealty.com.

PASTOR. Fruitland Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a full-time Senior Pastor to shepherd our congregation. Information about our church can be found on our website, fruitlandbaptist.org. Send resumes to 150 College St., Hendersonville, NC 28792. Resumes will be received until August 30, 2016.

Seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor** for a community-minded, Christ-led church. We are interested in seeking the man God has chosen to lead us in bringing people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, developing them spiritually and equipping them for His ministry. Our church is a mission-minded church seeking to fulfill the Great Commission. A church parsonage is available for those in need. Please forward resumes to Antioch Baptist Church, 2441 Antioch Rd., Morganton, NC 28655, or Levifirstborn@yahoo.com.

Denomination

Anson Baptist Association is seeking a **Director of Missions**. Interested persons should mail a letter and resume to: Anson Baptist Association, PO Box 958, Wadesboro, NC 28170, ATTN: Rev. Teddy Lawson. We will accept resumes through August 10, 2016.

Church Staff

First Baptist Church of Oakboro seeks **part-time Director of Music**. This individual will be responsible for leading the church in the development and conducting of a comprehensive music ministry. Worship style is traditional with blended elements. Bachelor's degree is preferred. Applicants should send letter of interest, resume and references to dhuneycutt@fbcc@gmail.com.

Lawndale Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Students**. The successful candidate will have a minimum of a master's degree in religious or Christian ministries and have ministry experience in a local church setting. The primary area of responsibility will be with middle and high school students. Full benefits package included. If interested, please send resume, cover letter and references to jthomas@lawndalebaptist.org or employment@lawndalebaptist.org.

Part-time Children's Director. Harvest Baptist Church, Burlington, NC (hbcburlington.net), is seeking an experienced person to lead our children's ministry: Nursery-5th grade. Sundays, Wednesdays, VBS, & one week of local camp are main responsibilities. Submit cover letter & resume to: emoschler@gmail.com.

The East Campus of First Baptist Indian Trail (NC) is a congregation averaging roughly 400 in attendance that is seeking to expand our staff in the areas of **children and family ministry**, as well as **education**. Please send resumes or recommendations for these positions to Teresa.Mullis@fbcit.org.

Green Creek First Baptist Church, Columbus, NC, is seeking a **Full-time Student Pastor**. We are a rural church with a mixed worship service, conservative theology and approximately 200 members. Affiliated with the Polk Baptist Association, SBC, BSC of NC and align with the BF&M 2000. Position requires the ability to oversee all student ministries and lead Bible studies for Jr. High and High School age students. Some education in youth/children's ministry along with some college is preferred. Send resumes to gcfbpersonnel@yahoo.com by August 12.

Green Street Baptist Church, High Point, NC, is seeking a **full-time Student Pastor**. Seminary and at least five years ministry experience preferred. Send resume to kristi@greenstreet.org or 1701 Westchester Dr. Ste. 620, High Point NC 27262.

Miscellaneous

NCBAM needs churches to collect and distribute bags of shelf-stable groceries to aging adults in need. Call 877.506.2226 to learn how your church can address the hunger crises facing one in seven aging adults in NC.

Share the Biblical Recorder – FREE. Order a three-month free subscription. Contact Liz Tablazon at (919) 459-5693 or liz@BRnow.org to make arrangements.

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.

Placing a classified ad in the *Biblical Recorder*

Choose one of three avenues:

- Send e-mail to: alison@BRnow.org.
- Submit the information via the *Recorder's* website at BRnow.org.
- Send a Fax to (919) 467-6180.

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

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

Special feeling comes to those who bring Happiness

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

The best time of the year for Donnie Wiltshire and Judy Autry comes during the five annual Happiness Retreats.

"There is just a touch of heaven at Happiness," said Wiltshire, special ministries consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC).

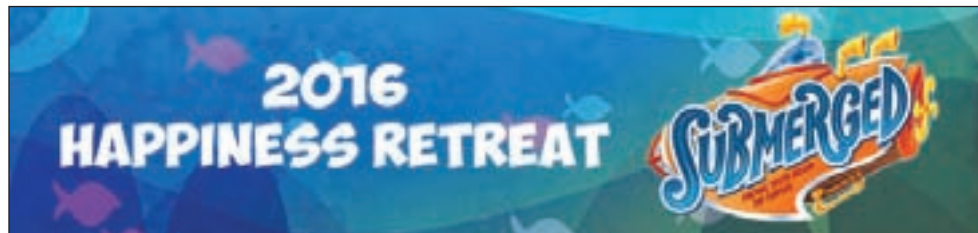
"That is because our campers bring an atmosphere that is full of love, does not judge people based on outward appearance, has a terrific child-like faith, and is just plain happy."

Autry, team leader assistant for information technology & services at the BSC, has been directing the Happiness Retreats for 17 years.

She considers the gatherings "a big family reunion."

With four more Happiness Retreats in July and August at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro, Autry said the camp for developmentally disabled people offers community for those who participate.

One Happiness Retreat already occurred at Truett Camp in Hayesville. That one is the smallest of the five events and requires about 20 volunteers. The retreats at Caraway usually involve about



40 volunteers. Some of the volunteers have been helping for more than 30 years.

At a Happiness Retreat, Autry said the participants "can be themselves. Their love for the Lord bubbles out. It's so wonderful to see folks excited about God."

Autry's brother and a nephew have experienced mild disability so Autry has "spent my life watching my parents and my sister-in-law make sure they got the best education and were accepted in the community and churches."

Her brother, who resides in heaven, "loved to pray and would pray from his heart," she said. Her whole family – her husband and even her 15-year-old grandson – has been involved with the retreat. Her son and daughter-in-law were involved until they moved to Vermont. "It is a ministry my family is very passionate about," she said.

Autry believes churches should provide a place for everyone to be able to worship as a family. She learned this in

her family as she was being raised but she also sees it in her church, First Baptist Church in Sanford. The retreat attracts family members and paid caregivers. Autry said Bible study and training is offered to family members and other caregivers at the retreats.

Happiness Retreats began in 1974 with a group of about 50 people. Today, the largest camp attracts 850 participants.

Wiltshire added that some of the attendees include group homes, many of which return year after year.

"They love the environment," he said. "It is so loving and joyful that everyone wants to return."

Autry shared about a young man who was in a car accident. He suffered a brain injury which put him in a wheelchair. He surprised everyone by standing by himself and singing.

"His mom was blown away with tears of joy," she said. "She did not know he could stand at all. His therapist had been working on it, and he wanted to surprise

all of us during worship. The congregation went wild with excitement and joy."

Calling the Happiness Retreats the "flagship" event for people with developmental disabilities, Wiltshire said the BSC typically holds an adult worker training in the area of special needs each year and a day camp event at Campbell University each spring.

"Every year I learn from our campers more about what it means to be a follower of Christ," he said. "The campers teach me great spiritual lessons even when they are not intending to do this. Happiness Retreat is one of my absolute favorite things to do."

Wiltshire, who consults with churches about special needs ministry, said a special needs night during a Campbell basketball game next season is in the planning stages.

While registration has closed for the camps, a few late registrations will be accepted.

With two persons in a room, the cost runs \$175 per person; three people in a room costs \$170 each; and four costs \$165 per person.

Visit ncbaptist.org/fileadmin/ministries/developmental-disabilities/main-page/downloads/2016/2016-requestforforms-brochure-color-information-webpage.pdf. **BR**



We'll call him Charles.

He is a student at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, located right here in North Carolina, in Wake Forest.

Charles was able to serve in a remote African village, sharing the gospel in an area that's mostly Muslim. He was overjoyed to see young men accept Christ as Savior and be baptized. This was through one of the partnership projects Southeastern has with the International Mission Board.

Southeastern is one of the six U.S. seminaries North Carolina Baptists support through their Cooperative Program. Students get great training for future ministry as pastors, missionaries and other leaders. But they pay a fraction of what most seminaries charge, because the Cooperative Program keeps fees low.

The six Southern Baptist seminaries have a total of some 18,000 students. Through their Cooperative Program giving, N. C. Baptists assure that churches will have trained pastors to call and equipped missionaries to send.

Many N. C. Baptist churches will pray for Charles and other seminary students on Sunday, July 17. To join them, go to ncbaptist.org/cpresources and download "52 Sundays."

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