

North Carolina baptisms surge 20% in 2009

Elevation baptizes 1,932

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Baptisms in Southern Baptist churches increased two percent in 2009 after four years of decline. Among North Carolina Baptist churches, baptisms leaped 20 percent to 26,584 and surpassed 26,000 for the first time in seven years.

Don McCutcheon, Baptist State Convention executive leader for evangelization since July 2006, credits the increase to God's moving people toward the harvest.

As the staff member who keeps closest tabs on evidence of North Carolina Baptists evangelizing and discipling, McCutcheon says the increase is due to "the blessing of our God upon His people evidenced by a heightened awareness and concern by pastors, churches and associational missionaries for those in our state who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ."

"Pastors are praying toward the Kingdom," said McCutcheon, 60. "They are praying for the lost. They have a heart for the Great Commission, and are leading their churches to be the same."

"People are becoming aware of the great harvest God is bringing to us. There are people all over the world coming to North Carolina to study in our insti-



BR photo by Norman Jameson

RISING NUMBERS — Don McCutcheon, Baptist State Convention executive leader for evangelization, talks about the increase in baptisms in North Carolina.

tutions and also who choose to live here. And we have a great opportunity to witness and share and help them come to know Christ."

McCutcheon, who held a similar position with Florida Baptists, also credits the "driving vision" of BSC Executive Director-treasurer Milton A. Hollifield

Jr., with elevating evangelism in the consciousness of North Carolina churches.

Baptisms matter in an evaluation of evangelical effectiveness, he said, because they indicate obedience. "Baptism is the first opportunity after conversion for a new believer to be obedient to the Lordship of Christ," McCutcheon said. "They also are an indicator that churches are truly about the Great Commission."

McCutcheon called baptisms "the only quantifiable parameter in the Great Commission."

McCutcheon does not separate evangelism and disciple making, but says they are two sides of the same coin and "one cannot exist without the other."

"Making disciples is the most joyful hard work in the Christian life," he said, expressing regret at the difficulty of getting modern Christians to share their faith. "You can actually get Christians to tithe before you can get them to go witness."

As fervently as he's worked and prayed to help North Carolina churches turn their baptisms upward, McCutcheon admits he did not expect the change in direction to "come this quickly."

The numbers

In 2009 those churches that reported their statistics on the ACP noted 26,584 baptisms. That number includes the 1,932 baptized by Elevation Church in Matthews, and the 1,519 churches that reported no baptisms at all.

(See North Carolina baptisms Page 5)

Raleigh church members help at World Cup

By Charles Braddix
Baptist Press

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — While the world focused on 32 national teams competing for the prestigious FIFA World Cup trophy, activities of high significance were taking place behind the scenes.

Christian volunteers from around the world have ventured to South Africa to work with local ministries and churches, tapping into World Cup fever.

Hundreds of volunteers with ministries such as the IMB's International World Changers and Athletes in Action arrived in South Africa to conduct soccer camps, holiday Bible clubs and specialized sports ministries. The workers have traveled from the United States, Canada, Brazil, France, Liberia and Ethiopia, among other nations.

In addition, churches affiliated with Baptist conventions in North Carolina and Virginia joined South African Baptist churches and International Mission Board missionaries to strengthen and expand local ministries.

IMB missionaries themselves organized evangelistic initiatives, match and film showings in church facilities, and church planting efforts.

The fruit of their labor is evident. In Cape Town alone, where North Carolina Baptist volunteers from Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh served alongside IMB missionaries, local Baptist



BP photo by Jacob Alexander

GOAL — Evan Musten, a volunteer from Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh, stirs his team to sing louder at the Life Champs Day Camp in Nyanga township, Cape Town. Musten was a coach during the camp, held in conjunction with the World Cup competition in South Africa.

seminary students and a nearby Baptist church, 287 youth and children in three Life Champs Day Camps professed faith in Jesus Christ.

IMB missionary Bonnie Dough-tie, evangelism team strategy leader in Cape Town, said, "It's been a huge impact, and now our work is to disciple (the youth and children) and point them in the direction they need to go." While volunteers and missionaries see the World Cup as a platform and opportunity for sharing the gospel, the

message they share is that life not only goes on after the World Cup, but that there is more to life than sports.

"Yes, sports can transform your life, but what about life after sport?" Sylvester Harris asked eager young South African athletes at a soccer clinic in Johannesburg.

"Most professional soccer players are finished at the age of 30. Remember, sports is temporary," said Harris, a member of an Athletes in Action team from Liberia.

Related stories

- Church ventures to 'unseen' settlements
 - Hugs help kids understand they're no mistake
- See stories, page 6-7.

His team leader, George Blackstock, told Baptist Press, "Though sports teaches many good life skills that are key to leading a successful life, many young men only see the glamour and money that sports can bring. They don't realize that they must prepare themselves for life after sports."

Providing a safe haven for children on school holidays has been a key emphasis for those ministering during the month-long World Cup tournament in South Africa, where children can be at risk for crime, drugs and human trafficking.

During activities organized by mission volunteers, local churches and missionaries, children learned about the day-to-day dangers they face and how to stay clear of them.

"It's important for the church to have an image in the community of being a place where their children will be safe," said IMB missionary Jeff Holder, who serves in the coastal town of George. "It's a testimony in this community of a caring church."

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Braddix is a writer with the IMB.)

N.C. couple to manage N.Y. mission house

By Melissa Lilley
BSC Communications

When Lynette Lawrence got a text message from her husband during a vision trip in New York City she thought his excitement would translate into leading mission teams to the city. She wasn't expecting her family to be that team.

In March Barry Lawrence joined a group of North Carolina pastors and Baptist State Convention (BSC) staff on a two-day visit to New York City to further develop the BSC partnership with Metropolitan New York Baptist Association (MNYBA).

Barry had not been to New York before, although after a trip to Philadelphia last year he felt the lostness of cities and wanted to lead a mission team from Antioch Baptist Church in Goldston back to the northeast.

"Missions has always been a thread in our life," Barry said.

After 15 years in textiles Barry quit his job in Sanford and moved the family to Wake Forest to attend Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, then became pastor of Antioch.

But during those two days in New York "God stirred that fire within me even more to reach out to the nations," Barry said.

When he learned the couple managing the David Dean House in Brooklyn would soon be leaving, "Something in my heart just lept," Barry said. "The Holy Spirit was just pounding on me."

The David Dean House houses up to 50 short-term volunteers who come to serve in New York City.

Throughout the vision trip God was at work in Barry's heart. A "defining moment" came when Barry and the group met a pastor from Ghana serving in the Bronx. The pastor recently purchased a three-story building, a former casket factory built in 1926, to use as a means to reach out to immigrants from Africa.



RELOCATION — The Lawrence family, above, recently made the move to New York to manage The David Dean House where mission teams can stay while serving there.



Can't you see it?

"Can't you see it?" the pastor kept asking the group. Standing there on the first floor, with water seeping in from all the rain that day, all Barry saw was a building in desperate need of repair.

The pastor described where the congregation would sit and how a choir would look standing up there and praising God.

"Through his faithfulness and passion, I could then see it," Barry said.

In the pouring rain, the team joined the pastor on the roof and prayed for the congregation and the city. As Barry looked out over the city and saw all the apartments "just a shout" from where he stood, he thought about all the nonbelievers represented in those homes.

God was working in the hearts of his family and in just two weeks he returned with Lynette and their two daughters, ages 9 and 14. Lynette saw there would be challenges in New York, such as learning the subway system and how to make routine errands. She worried about failure and not being able to guide her children through the transition. Unlike Barry, who grew up in a military family and moved often, Lynette was not used to the city life.

Yet, even in New York, "the Lord spoke to me about not settling," Lynette

said. Staying in North Carolina would be the easy thing. But she knew the Lord was calling them to New York and she was ready.

Barry began working in New York May 27, just two months after the vision trip.

His family joined him June 17, all except Micah, who is living this summer with family in North Carolina before starting at Barton College in August.

Their house is still on the market, but they have sold most of their furniture and car and are now working to make their new 900-square-foot apartment feel like home.

Barry and Lynette are M.O.S.T. (missions on short-term) missionaries with the North American Mission Board (NAMB). They receive some funding from NAMB but will also be respon-

sible for raising missions support.

The Lawrences have already hosted five mission teams at the David Dean House.

They build relationships with the teams and work alongside them.

They are also working to build relationships with New York business owners and to take advantage of opportunities God gives to share the gospel.

Their passion is to grow the kingdom of God, and their excitement for seeing the Lord's work accomplished is the driving force behind their new journey in New York City.

For more information about missions in New York City and the David Dean House, e-mail daviddeanhouse@gmail.com or visit www.mnyba.org.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Lilley is a researcher and writer for the Baptist State Convention.)

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Volunteers still meeting human need in Haiti

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Human need in Haiti continues to overwhelm logistical response, but a steady stream of North Carolina Baptist teams are ministering to the sick and building shelters for internally displaced Haitians.

Gaylon Moss, who coordinates disaster response for North Carolina Baptist Men, said that through July 3, 295 volunteers have seen 23,497 patients at various clinics and hospitals, have served more than 25,000 meals, built 229 temporary shelters and have witnessed 334 persons trusting Christ as savior.

"We've been quite pleased with response from folks," said Moss. N.C. Baptist Men plans to continue relief efforts in Haiti through August of 2011, concentrating on medical teams and construction both of temporary shelters and helping churches rebuild.

Church reconstruction employs local Haitian labor, using materials bought with contributions to N.C. Baptist Men. Volunteers who wish can be involved with church construction.

Moss recognizes the desolation still laying over the country as news reports detail relief efforts stymied by local politics, decimated infrastructure and conflicts over property ownership.

The positive news coming back with North Carolina volunteers focuses on individual victories, as volunteers distribute baby clothes, nurse the sick and injured back to health or build a shelter that a joyful family moves into that had been living under a piece of tin.

"Most volunteers come away impressed with the Haitians' attitudes and their willingness to help in such a terrible time," Moss said.

Raw material for the temporary shelters is supplied by Samaritan's Purse and consists of four poles to form a 15 by 15 foot room, a tin roof and durable tarp to wrap the poles. Inside there are two large shelves that can be used as beds or for storage.

A recent team installed rain gutters on the shelters by which the occupants can collect clean rain water.

Moss said the local mayor and church leadership pick the families that are to receive the temporary

shelters. North Carolina volunteers are not put in that position.

After six months of sending volunteers a schedule has been established for efficiency. Getting into Port au Prince is still a hassle, but Baptist Men has an onsite coordinator and housing for volunteers to make the logistics as smooth as possible. Scott and Janet Daughtry coordinate volunteer efforts onsite.

Teams leave each week on Sunday and return the following Saturday. Cost is \$1,100 per person, which covers airline ticket, accident insurance, food, housing and transportation in country.

Volunteers must fill out an individual profile at www.ncmissions.org. Payment is made to Baptist Men which makes the travel arrangements.

Individuals can join other teams. Moss said ideal team size to accommodate in country logistics is 6-8 each for construction and for medical volunteers. There is flexibility according to need.

Volunteers leave either from Charlotte or Raleigh. They should check with their doctors about necessary immunizations.

Camp Angel Tree offers children of prisoners safe haven, fun

By Dianna L. Cagle
BR Assistant Managing Editor

For many, going to camp is a rite of passage.

But for children who have a parent in prison, Camp Angel Tree offers a safe place with other children with incarcerated parents.

"The walls come down and they start to trust," said Ashley Groce, one of the assistant directors at Camp Mundo Vista in Sophia. "I love watching the staff; you get to see their hearts being broken."

Groce, who is serving her fifth sum-

mer at the camp, said investing in the girls' lives makes a difference.

More than 80 girls and 70 boys were on site June 27-30 at Mundo and at Camp Caraway across the road.

These camps, which are for 9-12-year-olds who have completed first through third grade, are sponsored by Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) and North Carolina Baptist Men in partnership with Prison Fellowship.

Many volunteers make the camps possible, said Tammy Tate, Mundo's program director. Volunteers sponsor children as well as provide transportation to and from camp.

Yates Baptist Association has been transporting children from cities within the association to and from camp. John Saunders, director of missions of Yates Baptist Association, said his church — Yates Baptist Church in Durham — has coordinated with the families the last three years.

"It is rewarding because you see the difference it has in the children's lives," Saunders said.

"The staffs at the camps are real good with the kids. I think it is a mission opportunity to help these kids go to camp and to have a different kind of experience in their life and to see the impact that the camp has on their lives."

One of the young men Saunders met before the children left did not want to go, but "when we went to pick him up he didn't want to leave," he said.

While campers pay for part of their cost, Tate said WMU-NC has money in its budget to help offset the cost, which averages \$175 per camper. This money takes care of personnel, food, lodging and money for the canteen.



CARING — Amy Saunders, a member of Yates Baptist Church, is on staff at Camp Mundo Vista this summer. Above, Saunders poses with some of the campers she worked with in 2009 for Camp Angel Tree. She is the daughter of John Saunders, director of missions for Yates Baptist Association.

A special part for Tate, not just with Camp Angel Tree, is seeing the same kids come back again.

"It's really cool to see them come back year after year excited to see what they've learned," she said.

One of the favorite times for Scarlet Welborn is the extended swimming time.

"I love swimming with the campers because they latch on," said Welborn, who is the other assistant director. "It's just awesome to see them grow."

Welborn said she also enjoys seeing the older children show the younger campers about camp. Volunteers are needed to transport the children to camp as well as to provide sponsorships. Each camp can host up to 120 children.

At WMU-NC, contact Cara Lynn Vogel at (866) 210-8602, ext. 205, or cvo-gel@wmunc.org. At N.C. Baptist Men,

contact Kecia Morgan at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5613, or kmorgan@ncbaptist.org.

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Staff changes

TERRY HOWARD has been called as pastor of Amis Chapel Baptist Church, Oxford, where he has been serving as interim pastor.

Calvary Baptist Church, Shelby, called **TONY SISK** as pastor. He was pastor of Grandview Baptist Church, Waynesville.

BOB JOHNSON has been called as pastor of Mars Hill Baptist Church, Colerain. He was pastor at Jackson Baptist Church, Jackson.

Tabernacle Baptist Church, Raleigh, has called **ESTHER PARKER** as minister to children. She was a member at First Baptist Church, Raleigh.

JOHN BAKER has been called as pastor of Green Hill Baptist Church, Rutherfordton. He was pastor of West Marion Baptist Church, Marion.

Around the state

First Baptist Church, Mt. Pleasant, has called **DAROLD "TOM" FLEMING** as senior pastor. He was pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, McAllen, Texas.

LARRY ALLEN has been called as pastor of Paul's Crossing Baptist Church, Richfield. He was senior pastor of Victory Baptist Church, Sea Grove.

Bethel Baptist Church, Pleasant Hill, has called **JEFF LANE** as pastor.

CHARLES JOHNSON has been called as pastor at Samaria Baptist Church, Raleigh, where he has been interim pastor since August 2009. He was pastor of Temple Baptist Church, Raleigh.

NAMB photo by John Swain



SPREADING — Highly effective churches are utilizing attractional evangelistic events such as block parties to draw lost people so they can hear the gospel.

Research reveals value of event evangelism

NAMB Communications

FORT WORTH, Texas (BP) — Block parties, festivals and other evangelistic events are essential ingredients for effective churches, according to a study by the Scarborough Center for Baptist Church Planting at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in conjunction with the North American Mission Board.

"Our findings suggest that many of our nation's most effective evangelistic churches are utilizing attractional evangelistic events," said Jerry Pipes, team leader for mass evangelism at NAMB.

Researchers started by polling 3,200 Southern Baptist churches last year as part of the Evangelistic Event Research Project.

What the study revealed

Several common denominators emerged among highly effective churches:

- They sponsor attractional evangelistic events, do several of them annually, do them especially well and get excellent results.

- Two-thirds of highly effective churches sponsor both evangelistic events and an active personal evangelism program.

- Significantly more highly effective churches sponsor evangelistic events than lesser effective churches.

- They sponsor significantly more evangelistic events and do significantly better preparation and follow-up for evangelistic events than lesser effective churches.

churches.

— They sponsor more holiday-related, revival-like and sports and recreation evangelistic events than any other types (in that order). More than half sponsor revival-like evangelistic events.

"We define evangelistic events as special events, which intentionally draw lost people through relationships and attraction, clearly present the gospel and provide an invitation to respond," Pipes said.

The report comes at a time when, in some quarters, the value of attractional methods has been questioned for reaching communities with the gospel.

"A lot of churches have pursued a missional approach to evangelism and church growth to the neglect of attractional evangelistic events that will draw people in," Pipes said.

"It's like asking a pilot flying over the Pacific Ocean whether he wants his right wing or his left wing. The answer is you need both wings — both missional methodologies and an attractional model."

Ed Stetzer, president of LifeWay Research, said when churches are committed to conducting evangelistic events, it creates a more evangelistically motivated congregation.

"Events help get people mobilized, and mobilized people reach out to their friends," Stetzer said.

"In research we conducted for our book 'Comeback Churches,' we found that doing evangelistic outreach events was a key part of many churches' revitalization."

Send news about your church

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to print significant news from the churches.

Accuracy and timeliness are enhanced if you send the information to the *Biblical Recorder* as soon as it is available. Please make sure to either e-mail digital photos or send prints (photos printed on paper will not be accepted). Church staff changes, obituaries of pastors and state Baptist leaders, announcements of upcoming events (with statewide interest) all will be considered. Send photos of your mission projects or trips, note burnings, etc., as well.

For e-mail submissions, send announcements and digital pictures as an attachment to dianna@biblicalrecorder.org. Or, send paper copy to *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 27619.



Opportunity Corner

Mission Celebrations set in August

In August, N.C. Baptist Men will host a series of Mission Celebrations across the state.

These celebrations will highlight the mission work Baptists are doing in our state, our nation, and around the world. Featured will be worship, testimony, mission video, and a prayer time for missions. Celebrations begin at 6 p.m. with a meal with a program to follow.

- Mon., Aug. 16 — Region 5, Calvary Baptist, McLeansville (register by Aug. 9)

- Mon., Aug. 16 — Region 7, Wilkesboro Baptist, Wilkesboro (register by Aug. 9)

- Tues., Aug. 17 — Region 3, First Baptist, Shallotte (register by Aug. 10)

- Tues., Aug. 17 — Region 4, Gorman Baptist, Durham (register by Aug. 10)

- Mon., Aug. 23 — Region 8, Elizabeth Baptist, Shelby (register by Aug. 16)

- Mon., Aug. 23 — Region 10, Cowee Baptist, Franklin (register by Aug. 16)

- Tues., Aug. 24 — Region 1, Hertford Baptist, Hertford (register by Aug. 17)

- Tues., Aug. 24 — Region 9, First Baptist, Hendersonville (register by Aug. 17)

- Thurs., Aug. 26 — Region 2, First Baptist, New Bern (register by Aug. 19)

- Thurs., Aug. 26 — Region 6, Hopewell Baptist, Monroe (register by Aug. 19)

A meal is provided for the NC Mission Celebrations at no charge, but reservations are necessary to ensure an accurate meal count.

The cut off date for reserving a meal for any of these rallies is one week prior to the event.

Please contact Kecia Morgan at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5613, or kmorgan@ncbaptist.org.

Hispanic youth plan for 'Maximum Velocity'

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has scheduled its Hispanic youth retreat — "Maximum Velocity" — for Sept. 3-6 at Caswell Retreat Center on Oak Island.

Based on Ps. 145:2 the retreat is for 12-18 year olds.

Before July 21, the cost is \$130 per person. The cost rises \$10 after July 21.

Cost includes lodging, T-shirt, and meals.

Each church group needs one counselor (at least 21 years old) for every eight campers.

Contact Guillermo Soriano, evangelization group, at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5564, or gsoriano@ncbaptist.org.



Basics of a gospel presentation

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) prints materials to help people share their faith. This is from "Evangelism Crash Course."

God's purpose

God is a spiritual being who is both holy and loving. He loves everyone and desires a personal, spiritual relationship with each individual. John 3:16

Our problem

We are born into this world without a personal relationship with God because we are sinners. Our sin carries the penalty of spiritual separation from God, both in this life and throughout eternity, unless we are rescued. Romans 3:23; 6:23.

God's provision

Because God loves us, He provides a way to forgive our sin and bring us into a personal relationship with Him. Jesus died for us and was later resurrected from the dead. Romans 5:8; 4:25.

Our response

We must individually accept His forgiveness and establish a covenant relationship with Him through faith in what God has done through Jesus Christ. Romans 10:9-10, 13; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12

Contact (800) 395-5102, ext. 5563, to obtain copies of this pamphlet or visit, click "Resources" and "Promotional art."

North Carolina baptisms surge in 2009

(Continued from Page 1)

Eighteen churches reported 100 or more baptisms, and 44 churches reported 50-99. Two hundred sixty-two reported one baptism. McCutcheon said 1,242 churches reported 1-5 baptisms and 2,761 reported 0-5 baptisms. On average, North Carolina Baptist churches baptized six persons each.

IECS Strategy

Beyond simply tracking what North Carolina Baptist churches are doing evangelistically, McCutcheon is actively trying to infect them with an evangelism virus. Through his own research and experience, and that of others, he has developed the Intentionally Evangelistic Church Strategy (IECS) and has been leading churches in that system for several years.

McCutcheon defines IECS as “an attempt to assist pastors and churches in their own context and personalities to obey the Great Commission and faithfully evangelize their communities in a way that is effective for them.”

During three 8-hour days of instruction, participants basically learn to find the evangelistic possibilities in every aspect of their church’s life. It incorporates five components from Acts 2:41-47 that are the anchors for teaching:

evangelistic leadership, evangelistic prayer, event evangelism, assimilation and personal evangelism.

“If evangelism is not in the pastor’s heart, it won’t go,” McCutcheon said.

His assimilation emphasis often surprises people, he said. But attention to assimilating can close the revolving door and lead to stronger discipleship.

Event evangelism includes weekly worship. “You don’t have to change what you’re doing, just change the priority of evangelization,” McCutcheon said. “If you’re worshipping God and a person doesn’t know God, you’re having a wonderful experience but leaving them out. We use words they don’t understand. We use forms they’re completely unaccustomed to. Make your worship understandable and inviting.”

Like any good preacher, McCutcheon has an outline featuring “P” words for teaching evangelism. He said you need passion, and if you don’t have it, pray for it, asking God to help you love the world as He does.

Prepare by learning scripture and praying. Participate in witnessing and while practice doesn’t make perfect, it “makes permanent,” he said. Persevere and praise God for whatever He does.

Because some people are discouraged from witnessing if their experience doesn’t result in someone praying to

receive Christ, McCutcheon loves the phrase he learned from retired Florida pastor Bobby Welch, to “Teach your people to fall in love with fishing, not just in catching fish.”

For churches that don’t like “cold calling” on prospects, McCutcheon advises that “ministry in an area opens doors like you wouldn’t believe.” One of the blessings of disaster relief ministry is how it opens doors for evangelism among those who have been served.

Difficult days

Just six months after McCutcheon came to North Carolina, his wife Kathy was diagnosed with a life-threatening illness. No sooner was that conquered than cancer was discovered. While these have been some of his most difficult personal years, they have been among the most fruitful in terms of ministry, he said.

He and Kathy treat each day as a gift and “live in the present” he said. He has cancelled virtually all outside engagements, and Marty Dupree will lead the IECS training the rest of the year.

The first IECS training in Spanish was conducted this year, with two scheduled in Vietnamese. As equippers are trained, IECS will be offered in local associations by request, and eventually for an individual church.



IECS training will be offered at the following times and places:

Sign up for any at www.ncbaptist.org or call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5557.

August 31-Sept. 2
Carolina Association
Ebenezer Baptist Church
Hendersonville, NC

September 21-23
New River Association
New River Baptist Church
Jacksonville, NC

October 5-7
Three Forks Association
Mount Vernon Baptist Church
Boone, NC

October 26-28
South Yadkin Association
First Baptist Church
Mooresville, NC

Baptisms rise when strategies implemented

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

North Carolina Baptist churches committed to more effective evangelistic efforts in their communities are finding help through the Intentionally Evangelistic Churches Strategy (IECS) created by Don McCutcheon, executive leader for evangelization at the Baptist State Convention.

Pastors and church staff who have participated in IECS conferences recommend the experience to others. Universally, they say two of the strategy’s strengths are that it forces participants to evaluate their church’s current efforts and it offers a wealth of ideas from which to draw, without presenting cookie cutter solutions.

Aaron Wallace, administrator and interim pastor at Hephzibah Baptist Church in Wendell, was an early adapter and participated in one of the first strategy conferences.



Wallace

“It was fantastic,” he said.

Leaders exposed participants to many ideas from other churches, and “made you spend time at the end applying what you heard and coming up with a strategy for your church.”

“They asked, ‘What is your intention for what you learned?’”

Wallace, chairman of the Baptist State Convention’s board of directors evangelization committee, said the most helpful element of the strategy for his church was assimilation. Staff realized they had “gobs of people” who were under watch care but who had not been moved along the path to full membership.

Hephzibah restructured its process and found more effective ways to utilize Sunday School leaders and deacons in assimilation. “That was huge,” he said. “We’re much more streamlined now.”

IECS also covers evangelistic outreach events and Hephzibah is both doing more of them, and making sure each is “truly evangelistic,” Wallace said. The church serves a holiday meal to the community and is preparing back-to-school backpacks laden with classroom essentials.

Several came to Christ through a “free yard sale” the church sponsored, which drew 800 to the campus. Clients were given \$100 in “funny money” to shop

a gymnasium filled with clothes and practical goods donated by church and community members. Seventy church members circulated among the clients during the day, gathering contact information and sharing Christ.

Earlier, the church likely would not have been so diligent about securing information for follow up, Wallace said.

When McCutcheon asked participants what their baptism record was the previous two years, Wallace said Hephzibah staff was “shocked” to realize they had baptized just eight and 12.

From the moment they finished the strategy sessions, they began to implement changes that have resulted in increases to 24 baptisms the following year, then 31 and 39 so far in 2010.

“I recommend IECS without question,” Wallace said. “I think every church should go through it, if for no other reason than to evaluate the effectiveness of what they’re presently doing.”

Hendersonville

First Baptist Church, Hendersonville experienced an even more dramatic increase following their staff participation in IECS. Pastor Ryan Pack said IECS is a good strategy because he left every session with practical ideas to implement at his church that emphasize baptisms and prioritize evangelism.

Baptisms at First Baptist increased from 16 in 2008 to 78 in 2009, Pack said. They included outdoor baptisms at a lake and in a horse trough in front of the church’s new student center where community people driving around the church saw the activity. (See videos at www.fbchnc.org/videos.)

Hendersonville elevated the importance of baptism in church life, said Pack, pastor since June 2008. “We made baptism public. People in the community ... saw it happening. Students not connected with our church were able to see baptism for the first time and see it in a different setting.”

Their weekly outreach strategy has become “Splash Night” and members see it as a great opportunity to share the gospel and to connect with other people in the community.

They’ve become “really intentional in follow up

after events,” Pack said. Like Hephzibah, they’ve also become very intentional in their assimilation process with prospects and new members.

Hendersonville’s “Discover First” orientation starts with dinner and includes a complete gospel presentation, reinforcing the conviction “that those who consider joining have accepted Christ,” Pack said.

Their orientation includes a workbook and teaching on evangelism, to equip new members to share the gospel.

Attending IECS requires a three-day commitment, a length of time that may keep some from considering it. But Pack said, “There is no commitment too big for us to do a better job with the Great Commission.”

“The way they teach it, the time flies,” he said. “You’d never know you’re sitting in a workshop. It’s so practical and they give you time with your staff and the people you bring from your church to come up with ideas you can apply in your ministry setting.”

“Every single session you walked out of you carried ideas you can apply immediately.”

City of Hope

Hendersonville is a large church, but Pack said IECS is taught in a way that “any church from 10 to 10,000” would benefit.

Michael Moore, pastor of both City of Hope in Shelby, and Webb First Baptist in Ellenboro, said strategies he learned at IECS have helped increase baptisms at both churches.

“We absolutely enjoyed” the training event, Moore said. He and the three church members who accompanied him learned to make baptism a big event in their church, and to have those who are being baptized invite friends and family to the event. Attendance doubles on days where there is a baptism, he said.

City of Hope is a three-year-old church with 60-80 attending and it baptized 39 people last year. Webb First Baptist baptized a similar number.

“We make baptism something people will always remember,” Moore said, including decorating with streamers and special lighting.

Church members visit both prospects and new members on Monday and Wednesday.

Moore is a church planter and said the IECS strategy “really did help us.”

He thinks “everybody ought to go to that workshop” and said the three men he took with him from his church “absolutely loved it.”



Pack



BP photos by Martha Richards

Church ventures to 'unseen' settlements

REACHING — The poverty of the Newlands East settlement just outside Durban compels Hope Restoration Baptist Church to help ease the hunger and pain by providing food and blankets.

By Evelyn Adamson
Baptist Press

Thick mud clings to the shoes of pastor Xolani (Ko-lan-ee) Klaas and his church members as they walk through an informal settlement far from the World Cup venues in South Africa.

There are few visitors to the informal settlements, and the residents are wary of strangers. Most are members of the Zulu people group, and a large percentage are hiding from their families in the villages. Originally they came to the city to find a job or go to school but were forced into the shantytowns when their money ran out.

"They do not want to be found," one of the church members says in visiting the Durban-area Newlands East settlement with Klaas. The residents refuse to return to their families empty-handed, and the only place they can live is in the informal settlements.

The needs are overwhelming in these settlements, but Klaas and other Zulu Christians are seeking to make a difference in the lives of the people in these "unseen" areas.

In the mud, Klaas and his team slip as they walk up and down the hills past tiny shacks constructed of scrap metal, tarps and cloth inadequately providing shelter for entire families from the cool, wet weather.

Yet amid the struggle of everyday life, the smiling faces of residents conversing with one another reveal a measure of joy and happiness in their community.

Efforts in evangelism in the informal settlements can be compared to how Jesus did ministry, Klaas notes, because the needs of the people are so immediate.

"People, if they are hungry, will not listen because their primary needs have not been met," the pastor says.

Some of the people know there is a God, Klaas says, but "they (do not) know that one can make a decision to follow Christ, to commit your life to Christ."

The residents in Newlands East struggle to find food, water and other necessities. Klaas' church, Hope Restoration Baptist Church, has started taking food and blanket packets to individuals in the settle-



GIVING — South African pastor Xolani Klaas gives a blanket to a 92-year-old woman in an impoverished Durban-area settlement. Klaas is leading Hope Restoration Baptist Church to help ease pain and hunger in order to share the gospel.

ment and talking with them about coming to church.

A 92-year-old woman receives a blanket, and her eyes shine with gratitude and amazement as she unwraps it and rubs the soft, thick material between her fingers.

After giving her the blanket, Klaas prays for her, that she would have strength, healing and wisdom. He emphasizes that all providence and glory go to God and encourages her and her family to attend the Hope Restoration's service on Sunday morning.

Leaving the house, the team notices tiny wires strewn across the ground and suspended in the surrounding bushes, looking much like spider webs. A closer examination reveals the wires carry electricity to several shacks, but they pose a danger because children who have no shoes can be electrocuted if they step on the exposed wires.

In the settlement, the smells of decomposing

trash, outhouses and sludge thicken the air, making it difficult to breathe at times.

Plastic bags, bottles and rotten food litter the ground.

Residents dodge in and out of their shacks, curious about the visitors but also hesitant, knowing that it is easier for many people walking past to ignore the poverty in the settlements.

But Klaas is confident in the task he has undertaken, saying, "This is right. I have to follow God's plan for my life."

He's also confident God is at work. "The same thing that happened in the Book of Acts, that is happening in South Africa right now," he declares.

"There's so much of a revival. You go everywhere, Christians are standing up. They are ... evangelizing. They can't keep quiet, talking about Christ."

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By Evelyn
Baptist Press

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BR photo by Evelyn Adamson

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Hugs help kids understand they're no mistake

By **Adamson**
Press

When people think of a mistake, it's usually a regrettable decision or action. Few people, however, think of a child as a mistake.

At a Holiday Bible Club while school was out of session in South Africa during World Cup games, youth pastor Tyronne Eilenberg of Pinetown Baptist Church in Durban realized that some of the children had never been told the words "I love you." Some had been told by their parents they were a mistake from the moment they were born.

The club was coming to an end, the children played and the sound of their laughter grew louder, as their parents had left them responsive to the love of God as they struggled to understand why they were ever born.

At the close of the final day, Eilenberg offered the simplest expression of love — a hug.

Eilenberg affirmed the children by telling them how much God loved them.

At first many of the children were shy when asked if they wanted a hug, but when Eilenberg asked them to bow their heads and close their eyes, child after child came to the front of the room. The love entailed in a simple hug. The difference a simple hug made was seen on the beaming faces of the children as they walked away from the encounter.

Eilenberg then pointed the children to Jesus and His love for them.

As the children's heads still bowed and eyes closed, Eilenberg prayed for the children who wanted prayer to raise their hands where they were seated. Hand after hand was raised in testimony to the love of God that many of them had lived unloved.

During a sermon the Sunday morning after the Holiday Bible Club, Eilenberg told of one young boy who was kicking and screaming and it bounced over a wall.

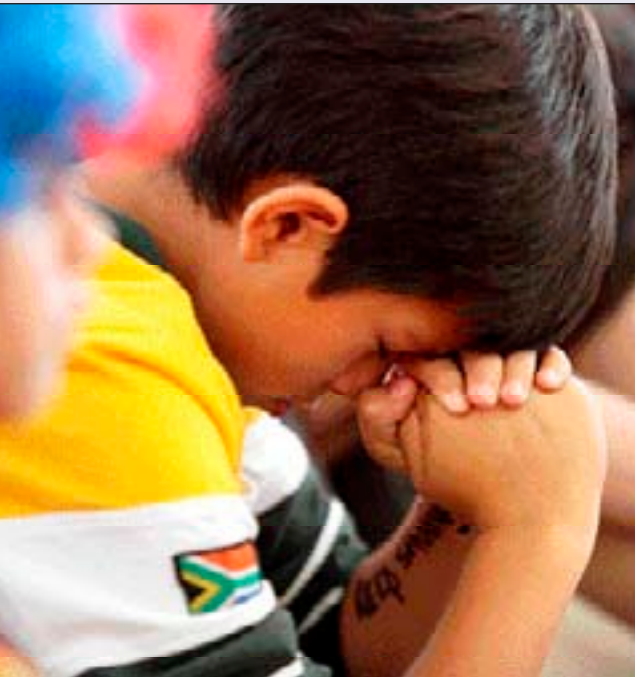
Eilenberg jokingly told the child to go get the ball, and the child's response was to look at his feet and say, "Please don't touch my feet."

Eilenberg's passion is to have hurting children continue to come to Pinetown Baptist where they can begin to know how loved and cherished they are to God and to the people of the church.

As a vision of going into local primary schools to minister to the children while encouraging them to come to church.

Describing this vision as in the beginning stages, Eilenberg said he will continue training youth leaders at Pinetown to extend the love of Christ to the children throughout its Durban community.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Adamson is an intern writer for the Baptist State Convention's global communication team on assignment in South Africa covering the events, matches and news related to the World Cup.)



— At Pinetown Baptist Church in the Durban area, a youth pastor participates in a Holiday Club that helped children understand the love of God during their World Cup holiday in South Africa.

Hulls Grove ministers to skaters, bikers

By **Melissa Lilley**
BSC Communications

After exiting I-40 the drive to Vale, N.C., is anything but direct. One turn follows another on one country road after another.

The scenery, though, is breathtaking. Mountains in all their splendor loom over every curve of the highway.

An occasional country store breaks the color of open pastures and green fields.

Vale seems a quaint, peaceful little town; an unlikely candidate to claim a church that hosts ministries for motorcycle riders and skateboarders.

Pastor Marcus Redding and Hulls Grove Baptist Church in Vale have learned they don't always pick the people they serve.

Sometimes God brings opportunities along and it's up to the church to be faithful and respond, even when the task is unexpected and outside the boundaries of what is familiar and comfortable.

Hulls Grove started The Way Skate Ministry about four years ago.

"I thought it was crazy," Redding said.

"I didn't realize skateboarding was back. We're out in the country. I thought, 'no one is going to skate here.'"

The skate ministry began as a Bible study in Seth Barkley's backyard. Seth, a skateboarder himself and member of Hulls Grove, started doing a Bible study with a few teenagers who enjoyed skateboarding. Seth and his dad built a half pipe ramp in the backyard and the group of teenagers at the Barkley home started increasing week after week.

Hulls Grove saw how Barkley ministered to teenagers and the congregation was ready when asked to help him do even more.

The church funded the building of portable skateboard ramps and started The Way Skate Ministry, which now meets in a 5,000 square-foot building. On Tuesday nights middle school students come out to skate and hear a Bible study.

On Thursday nights students high school age and older get to skate.

"The youth are used to being rejected at school," said Bobby Farmer, pastor of evangelism and missions at Hulls Grove. Farmer is providing oversight to the skate ministry as Barkley is now serving the Lord on the international mission field.

"They try different things not because they are against God, but to push the envelope, to see if people will really get to know them and love them. They just want to be accepted."

Most of the youth who come to skate are local. Some are involved in church and others are not. Farmer said some of the students are agnostics or atheists.



CULTURE — Part of Hulls Grove Baptist Church's outreach brings young people who love to skateboard together in a safe environment. Many businesses and parks do not allow skateboarding on their property. The church offers a building with ramps for skating to occur.

Regardless of where they come from or where they are now, the skate ministry seeks to share the gospel and the love of Jesus Christ.

Farmer has watched as youth go from questioning God and the Bible to trusting Him as personal Lord and Savior.

Hulls Grove uses skateboarding as a way to extend ministry beyond their community. Church members travel across the state, as well as to South Carolina, Kentucky, Indiana and Canada, with the portable ramps, especially during the summer months, participating in block parties and special events.

"The Lord is letting us have interaction with the lost community," Redding said.

Although The Way Skate Ministry was totally different from any kind of ministry Hulls Grove had ever done before, Redding said the congregation was onboard and supportive from the get-go.

When another unique opportunity came along more recently the church was ready to get behind it.

Greg Spurling is pastoring Freedom Biker Church in Hickory.

Spurling served four years as minister of education at Hulls Grove before taking the lead at Freedom last August. The congregation meets in a warehouse building off I-40.

Freedom Biker Church began with Spurling and six other people from Hulls Grove. Now as many as 50 have come on a Sunday to worship with Freedom Biker Church. The congregation represents a wide range of ages.

Two years ago Spurling was invited on a mission trip to Canada. He joined others who decided to ride their bikes to Canada. While on that trip teammates asked him to consider starting a biker church. "I kept telling them no. For about a year I kept telling them no," Spurling said. "God changed my heart."

At Freedom, "we try to be as transparent as possible," Spurling said.

"Our focus is building relationships. At some point in their lives they have been to a church and haven't been received well." Not at Freedom Biker Church. All are welcome to come, as they are, to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

For more information about Freedom Biker Church of Hickory visit www.freedombikerchurchhickory.com.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Lilley is a writer and researcher for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.)

"The youth are used to being rejected at school. They try different things not because they are against God, but to push the envelope, to see if people will really get to know them and love them. They just want to be accepted."
— Bobby Farmer, Hulls Grove



Unique ministry

Does your church have a unique ministry you'd like to share with other North Carolina Baptists? Or do you have photos to share from mission trips, outreach efforts or special church events?

Contact Dianna Cagle at (919) 847-2127 or dianna@biblicalrecorder.org.

Coming to your church Monday morning ...

He cleans the church's carpet regularly, but he's never been invited to worship there. She delivers the church mail daily, but she doesn't know Jesus. The family spent hours there during Aunt Tip's funeral, but none of them go to church.

Yes, guests attend your church for worship services, but additional dozens — even hundreds — walk in on weekdays each year. They come in for directions, weddings, benevolence or after-game fellowships. They attend scouts, daycare, support groups. There's the exterminator, repairman, roofer, delivery person ... and God brings them inside your building. Will they meet Jesus there?

Intentionally impact each person who walks in your church doors.

- Let your walls talk. Stroll through your church entryways and offices, carefully observing as if it's your first time there. What can a stranger learn about your church and God? Attractively display current newsletters, brochures, witnessing tracts and invitations for visitors to take. Replace negative or outdated signage. Carefully read each poster to assure outsiders can understand it. Play Christian music. Use art to point to the One you worship.

- Salute! Warmly welcome each person who walks in the door. Learn their names. If they need directions, mark a

map. When offering benevolence, give it joyfully. Give the postal carrier an icy soda on a hot day. Invite every individual to come for Sunday worship. Promise to pray for them. Use small gift bags to prepare welcome packets with a church brochure, newsletter, CD, upcoming events and a few candies. Then watch for opportunities to share them.

- Assign timely ambassadors. Friendly church members can assist with expected guests, such as weddings or community meetings. They can set a positive atmosphere, help with directions or needs, and show God's love. Serve lunch to construction workers. If the town festival is outside the church doors, serve cold lemonade and welcome people to use restroom facilities.

The church's purpose is to share God with the lost world. Seize the opportunity to impact those who come into your building. If a toilet overflows in your church next Monday, will the plumber receive more than just a check for his services?

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders, making the most of every opportunity" (Colossians 4:5).

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Davis is the author of "Fresh Ideas," "Fresh Ideas for Women's Ministry" and "Deacon Wives" [B&H Publishing] and the wife of the Indiana Baptist State Convention executive director. Learn more at www.keeponshining.com.)

GUEST COLUMN



Diana Davis

Countering the 'jerks among us'

RICHMOND, Va. (BP) — I almost got flattened by crazy drivers the other day — not once but twice.

The first near-miss occurred in the parking lot of a burger joint, where I dodged an SUV barreling toward the exit. Less than an hour later, at a gas station, I was walking toward my car when a pickup truck speeding through the station missed me by about a foot. Before I could recover from the shock of the moment and think about reacting, the pickup was gone.

You have your own nightmare stories about bad drivers, I'm sure.

My larger point is this: Many folks no longer seem to care enough about others to observe the basic rules and courtesies that separate civil society from anarchy. From highways to law and order, from politics to media slugfests, from on-line flammers to breaking in line at the supermarket, examples are endless. And they range from the mundane to the deadly.

In Chicago, 54 people were shot — count 'em, 54 — over a single weekend in June. Ten of the victims died.

Some of the shootings were gang-related, but others reportedly were caused by minor arguments or somebody "disrespecting" somebody.

Perhaps the saddest manifestation of the antisocial disease that now permeates our culture is not rudeness or violence, but the indifference that leads so many neighbors to ignore each other's existence. Is this the "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" Thomas Jefferson had in mind when he wrote about our God-given rights in the Declaration of Independence? I don't think so.

It isn't just a matter of the cultural coarseness and "incivility" many have decried. The center cannot hold in a society where people don't even pretend to care about each other.

Sooner or later, things fall apart.

Heading into what promises to be another summer of discontent and division, 72 percent of Americans "think that poor behavior has gotten worse in recent years," according to a national poll conducted in April. Solid majorities of the adults responding to the poll were turned off by what they see and hear in public, in government and politics, on the roads, in schools, in Hollywood, on television, in sports, on the Web.

"We, as a people, pay a price for the jerks among us,"

writes Roger Simon of Politico, a multimedia news outlet. "Nearly half of all Americans say they are 'tuning out' of government and politics, 46 percent are tuning out of opinion pieces and editorials in the media and 38 percent are tuning out of news coverage and reporting."

But let's be honest. Too often, the "jerks among us" ... are us. I'm preaching to myself, but you are welcome to join me at the altar of confession if you feel so inclined.

If Christians succumb to the culture, if we hurl (or murmur) insults and disdain rather than loving the unlovable and practicing kindness to strangers, what distinguishes us from anyone else? We have become useless for God's work, even destructive to it. Scripture calls us not to be conformed to the world but transformed by God's Spirit.

"It is clear that America needs a spiritual awakening. Our country is awash in all kinds of lostness, including mean-spiritedness in conduct and speech," wrote former Southern Baptist Convention President Johnny Hunt last year. "The fruit of the Spirit works in the life of the believer to create, among other things, long-suffering, gentleness and self-control. The word long-suffering is more than mere patience; it is a long-fused patience with people. The Apostle Paul urged us, as believers in Jesus Christ, to let our speech 'always be with grace, seasoned with salt' (Colossians 4:6)...."

"(N)ever underestimate the power and influence of one voice. When we exercise civility in our public and private rhetoric, we bring glory to our Lord, enhance our credibility as men and women whose lives have been transformed by God's grace and create opportunities to share the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ with our lost and dying world."

An effective missionary deeply studies the culture he wants to reach and searches for ways to communicate Christ within it.

Eventually, however, he challenges that culture to transform itself through the power of the gospel.

In our culture, one of the most countercultural things you can do is to yield the right of way, whether on the roads or in relationships. A soft answer to wrath is down-right subversive. Turning the other cheek? It's as revolutionary as it was in Jesus' day — and just as powerful to change minds and hearts.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Bridges is global correspondent for the International Mission Board.)

GUEST COLUMN



Erich Bridges

Reflections from Orlando

By Milton A. Hollifield Jr.

BSC Executive Director-Treasurer

It has been about a month now since the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) met in Orlando. I, like many of you, have spent time reflecting on the meeting. One of the things that always excites me about the SBC is the Crossover event held prior to the meeting. This year about 1,200 volunteers poured into Orlando to participate in this

evangelism outreach, and as a result, 1,505 people received Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Reports of lives changed with the gospel — nothing should delight us more than that.

This year recorded the highest SBC

attendance since the 2006 meeting in Greensboro. About 11,070 messengers attended this year, up from last year's 8,790. Included in this year's messenger count were many more younger pastors and leaders than in recent years. One younger pastor is Eric Moffett of First Baptist Church in Sparkman, Ark. Moffett, who is only 26 years old, was named the new SBC second vice president.

Some people say it's the younger generation that needs to step up and do more to support the Cooperative Program. Eric is proof that we should not be so quick to stereotype younger pastors. Eric is a supporter of the Cooperative Program, so much so that First Baptist received the M.E. Dodd Award for significant achievement in Cooperative Program missions support.

The Cooperative Program was a much talked about topic during the SBC. The Cooperative Program is getting more attention here lately than it has in a long time. I believe, as I told our Board of Directors not long ago, that the Cooperative Program is the centerpiece for how we do missions. I agree with my friend Dr. John Sullivan in Florida who calls the Cooperative Program "God given and mission driven."

I hope that as a result of what took place in Orlando more churches will discuss the importance of the Cooperative Program and the vital role it plays as we seek to fulfill the Great Commission. The report from the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force helped us all start thinking more about what must change in order to get the gospel to those who have never heard. I pray that their report will challenge each of us to consider what must change in our own hearts in order for us to be most effective as ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

SBC messengers clearly showed their support of the GCR Task Force recommendations. This means we are entering a new beginning as the SBC. Time will tell how committed we really are to fulfilling the Great Commission. I pray we will prove faithful to sharing the gospel and to supporting the Cooperative Program. The future of the SBC is dependent upon a fresh movement of the Holy Spirit in revival. Please join me in praying for God to do a mighty work in our hearts.

"And we are his witnesses of these things; and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him." Acts 5:32

REACT: Tar Heel Voices is your forum

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- Name may be withheld only for sufficient reason.
- Letters must be signed and include an address and phone number.

- Only one letter from a writer will be published in a 90-day period.

E-mail: editor@biblicalrecorder.org, or
Mail: Editor, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 27619



Ready for RAGBRAI

Two years ago I spent a week riding my bicycle across Iowa in the oldest, largest and longest such annual tour in the world. This year the 38th annual RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa) starts July 25 and I will be riding it with my youngest son, Austin, Phil McNeil from First Baptist Church in High Point and a pastor friend from Gunnison, Colo., who is an Iowa native.

We'll be riding with 10,000 others of our close biking buddies, nearly 500 miles over seven days. We'll stay in towns like Algona, Storm Lake, Charles City, Waterloo and Clear Lake with populations of a couple thousand people. We'll pass through four or five towns each day with populations from 100 to 1,000. Imagine the economic buzz created by a swarm of 10,000 hungry, thirsty riders.

Citizens — who vie for their towns to be on the annually changing route — lay out long banquet tables of pork chop sandwiches, pies, watermelon, sweet corn (fresh picked peaches and cream corn, the best ever) and assorted unusual specialties like frozen grapes. In one 2008 town high school cheerleaders greeted riders with strings of beads.

We camp at night in back yards, on football fields and in city parks and every overnight town squeezes the turnip tighter with special live music and more carnival atmosphere and vendors. Locals drive in to eat a pork chop and ear of corn and to inhale the exuberant color and absorb the energy crackling from the invasion of strangers from every state in the union.

Several other states are now sponsoring long rides across their terrain. North Carolina has such a ride, called Mountains to the Sea that I hope to do next year.

But so far, those rides are about one-tenth the size of RAGBRAI, which has to limit participation through a lottery for the sheer logistical challenges of it. If you're a part of a team, you increase your chances because if any member is selected, the whole team gets in. We are riding as Team Tusan Takk, which is Norwegian for "thank you."

Yes, I grew up in a Scandinavian part of the country.

Iowa Telecom provides a mobile computer trailer with internet connection at the midpoint town each day, so I'm going to try to post daily from RAGBRAI to our online site at www.biblicalrecorder.org. I know I'm on vacation but it's just too great an experience to keep to myself.

After my first experience with it in 2008 I wrote a card for my first grandson, Caleb, to post on his bulletin board. It said to prepare to ride RAGBRAI with Papa in 2021, when he's 14. Hey, we all need goals. — NWJ



Garland labels clergy misconduct abuse of power

Dianna Garland speaks with the fervency of an evangelist who knows that if someone walks out the door unmoved by her message, it will be an opportunity likely lost forever.

Garland, dean of Baylor University's School of Social Work, is author of a groundbreaking study on clergy sexual misconduct in the church. "Don't call it an affair," she says, when a person in the emotionally powerful position of clergy seduces a woman who trusted him as a spiritual advisor.

An "affair" implies a mutually agreeable — although illicit — liaison between two people of similar social standing, she said during a breakout session at the national Cooperative Baptist Fellowship meeting in Charlotte in June. Such an act involving a clergyman and a church member is raw, blatant, sinful, disgusting abuse of power.

Garland's study (read more at www.baylor.edu/clergysexualmisconduct) found that more than three percent of adult women who attend religious services at least once a month have been victims of clergy sexual abuse. That means in a typical church with 400 in attendance seven women have been approached with unwanted sexual advances by a member of the clergy.

This report was released last year and the *Biblical Recorder* carried it. But when you sit in the front row and see Garland's gritted teeth and pained expressions when talking about the people behind the numbers, you feel it at another level. And, you understand at another level why moral authority is draining from the Church like helium from last week's birthday balloons.

Garland says clergy sexual misconduct is abuse of power because it is a violation of trust. A "sanctuary" by definition is a safe place. Despite humble protestations to the contrary, clergy do carry the weight of greater personal expectations as men of God, being closer to God, representing God and speaking His voice to those who follow.

It is a powerful position, especially in the eyes of those who find themselves in need of assurance, insight and counsel.

"When we think we are safe we let our guard down," Garland said. When a selfish clergyman steps into that vulnerable space to take advantage of a woman in sorrow, or who is seeking counseling or advice, that is abuse of power.

Garland and Baylor's study, funded by the Ford Foundation, surveyed 3,559 respondents in 17 Christian and Jewish denominational bodies. She found statistical consistency in abuse across the board. The one anomaly that surfaced — which she had never published until speaking at this meeting — was that the incidence of clergy abuse appeared to be three times as frequent in black congregations. She

didn't publish that information for fear it would become the focal point in coverage of her findings, or that other congregations and denominations would excuse themselves by comparison.

She offered as possible explanation that black churches typically have smaller staffs who have heavier loads; a higher proportion of members are female and there are fewer eligible men in the church.

The study has been "the hardest thing I've ever done," said Garland. "It was heart breaking." She personally interviewed 83 victims who were "so desperately glad someone wanted to hear their story."

She said victims were "hurt" by a religious leader, but they were "destroyed" by the congregation. Operating from what she called a "normalcy bias," congregants want to believe they are nice people, and their pastor is a nice person and it's normal to be nice. Such an accusation is not nice, therefore not normal and the accuser must be the one in the wrong.

Growing up we checked the chicken house every day to remove any chickens that showed a weakness or injury. If they were left in the population, the others would attack the wounded chicken until it was dead.

That's how the victims felt if they tried to bring to light the abuse they'd endured.

Several circumstances in the professional life of clergy actually make misconduct easier for intentionally abusive men or those who are not guarding their spirits carefully. They include the niceness culture; the ease of private communications and the counseling relationship.

Additionally, Garland said, "No profession in our society has less oversight than the pastor."

Do your clergy a favor and institute safeguards in your office.

- Make sure all the doors have windows;
- Limit counseling to office hours and require another staff member to be on site;
- Require the office door to be at least cracked open;
- Engage professional counselors outside the church;
- Provide referrals for mental health services;
- Confront a clergyman on inappropriate attentions you observe;
- Establish a safe reporting system in your church governance so a wounded victim can come forward and not be pecked to death by others in the henhouse.

Do the rest of the Church a favor and do not pass along an abusive clergyman to another congregation. Don't hide his abuse to make it easier for him to leave, relieving you of a sticky problem.

Shouldn't a repentant, abusive clergyman be restored to serve again in the church? As Garland said, "Of course. There are always bulletins to be folded."

EDITORIAL



Norman Jameson


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Lesson for July 25

Formations

Lesson for August 1

Walk Humbly

Focal passage: Matthew 23:1-12

Itell my congregation to call me “Don” or “Pastor Don.” When we begin Sunday morning worship services I don’t usually have a place to sit because the choir and special announcers have all the seats on the platform. I sit on a front pew, a vacant seat in the choir, or sometimes on the floor of the platform. I wear an “old fashioned suit,” instead of a robe. No phylacteries either. I try to act humble since it is a Christian virtue, but I’ll confess, I feel good when someone comes to me and says, “I’m going to call you Dr. Gordon because you have an earned doctorate and you should be recognized for it.”

Matthew 23:1-12 is an indictment on the teachers of the law and the Pharisees in Jesus’ day, but with a few word changes it could be read to ministers in any age, from any denomination.

It’s the opening prelude to an avalanche of “woes” spewed out against these hypocritical religious leaders. These leaders have adopted the role of authoritative interpreter of religious teaching which commoners must accept.

They teach about love, kindness, and humility but act out of self-interest, callousness, and pride (v. 3).

They call for great sacrifice from their constituents, but live in ease and luxury (v. 4).

They are quick to get in front of a

camera so they can cash in on the cult of celebrity. The clothes they wear and the words they speak are chosen with calculation to enhance their image and impression of super piety (v. 5).

They love sitting at the head table at banquets and in the tallest seat in the sanctuary (v. 6). When they go downtown for lunch they love it when the other customers call them “Doctor” or “Reverend” and whisper to each other about how extraordinary their leadership is (v. 7).

After this litany of embarrassing exposures, Jesus turns to his disciples and teaches them a different, more humble way to live.

Don’t let anyone call you rabbi, father or teacher. There’s only one master and you are to be like brothers. There is only one father in heaven, so don’t pretend to be God.

Only Christ is the teacher, so go by another name. What name are we to use? Servant! Whoever wants to be great will become a servant, someone willing to make the community, church, and world a better place with no thought for recognition.

Humility is not the same thing as obscurity. It’s grounded in a lifestyle of servanthood — out front or in the background — that cares more for God and others than it does for its own glory.



Don Gordon
senior pastor,
Yates Baptist
Church, Durham

Parental Favoritism

Focal passage: Genesis 25:21-34

I have three daughters and they all claim the other is the favorite child. The oldest laments that her life has been more controlled and that we were stricter with her than the others. She’s right. The second oldest claims the youngest gets off the easiest and that the oldest is always put in charge when the parents are gone. She’s right. The youngest complains that the oldest is put in charge and that the two of them gang up on her because they can. She’s right. They all claim favoritism falls on someone else. This gives me a good deal of comfort. It’s like coaches and fans complaining equally about the quality of the refereeing in the basketball game.

The story of Jacob and Esau can be interpreted many ways. For purposes of this commentary we will focus on the interplay of parental favoritism and the grand purposes of God.

The story begins with a prayer from Isaac because his wife, Rebekah, is barren.

God answers their prayers and puts two boys in her womb.

Even in the womb their movements provide ironic evidence that a long struggle between them and their offspring lies ahead: “Two nations are in

your womb and two peoples within you will be separated” (25:23).

Esau comes out of the womb first, red and hairy. He is loved by his father Isaac, supposedly because he’s an outdoorsman. Jacob, clinging to the heel of Esau, comes out second. He is loved by his mother because he hangs out in the kitchen and helps around the house (v. 28).

What we have in this story is the fascinating interplay between God’s providence and human sin. Jacob, the heel, is destined to rule over Esau, the first born. His mother is going to connive and manipulate circumstances to see that Jacob comes out on top. Isaac is too oblivious to family dynamics to guide his family away from destructive conflict. Did parental favoritism cause the conflicts in the family or are the family conflicts the means through which God carries out His will? It’s a mystery that runs throughout the Bible all the way to the cross of Jesus Christ.

Having raised three wonderful daughters I can attest to the natural gravitation toward certain children because of personality similarities and common interests.

Yet, this should be a prompt to be especially mindful of spending time and showing love overtly to our children with whom our differences are greatest. Love all your children equally, but love the ones who need extra love more equally than others.

Lesson for July 25

Bible Studies for Life

Lesson for August 1

The Power of Loyalty

Focal Passages: 1 Samuel 24:20-22; 26:1-2, 7-12, 21-25

“What is desired in a man is loyalty...” (Pro. 19:22a, RSV). Loyalty — now there’s a word you don’t hear used a lot these days. In our fast-paced, ever-changing world, it almost sounds like a word from days gone by, doesn’t it? Oh, there’s loyalty in the realm of sports, where fans proudly wear their team’s colors. And some die-hard fans even paint their faces or bodies to show where their loyalties lie!

But the loyalty David showed to Saul demonstrates a different level of commitment.

Twice in these passages David spared Saul’s life — even though Saul was relentlessly pursuing David in order to kill him.

After refusing to take Saul’s life in a cave in the Desert of En Gedi, David was grief-stricken for even cutting off a corner of Saul’s robe. He said, “The Lord forbid that I should do such a thing to my master, the Lord’s anointed, or lift my hand against him; for he is the anointed of the Lord” (24:6 NIV).

And again David refused to take the life of King Saul when he and Abishai entered Saul’s camp and found Saul and his army asleep and completely vulnerable to attack.

When Abishai challenged David to kill Saul, David replied, “Don’t destroy him. Who can lay a hand on the Lord’s anointed and be guiltless” (26:9 NIV)?

In all of this, David demonstrated loyalty first of all to God — by refusing to kill one whom God had anointed as king. Secondly, David showed loyalty to Saul — respecting Saul’s position as God’s chosen king.

Where did David find this level of loyalty? In his love for God and in his desire to be obedient to God’s word, David wrote, “I will sing of loyalty and justice; to thee, O Lord, I will sing. I will give heed to the way that is blameless” (Ps. 101:1-2a RSV).

If we are to experience the power and blessings of loyalty that David did, we, too, need to base our loyalty on our love for God and obedience to His word.

Stop and take inventory of your own life. How loyal are you in the following areas?

- Loyalty to God (Ex. 20:3)
- Loyalty to spouse (Ex. 20:14)
- Loyalty to friends (Prov. 17:17)
- Loyalty to the kingdom of God (Matt. 6:33)
- Loyalty to your job (Col. 3:23)

“The Lord rewards every man for his righteousness and faithfulness” (26:23, NIV). God rewarded David for his loyalty and faithfulness — and He will reward you, too.



Phyllis Elvington
speaker, author,
member of
Tabor City
Baptist Church

Respect God’s Holiness

Focal Passage: 2 Samuel 6:1-15, 17

God means what He says. Period. He is holy and just and righteous in all His ways. He hasn’t changed — and He never will. He is the same holy God today that He was when He spoke the world into being.

A holy God uses holy vessels (2 Tim. 2:20-21).

The Ark of God was a rectangular golden box built to hold the Ten Commandments. It was the most sacred treasure of the nation of Israel. A jar of manna and Aaron’s rod were also housed in the Ark — which was kept in the Most Holy Place.

The Ark had been captured by the Philistines for a brief time, kept at Abinadab’s house for 20 years, and was finally being returned to Jerusalem. “David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord...” (v. 5, NIV). David’s intentions of returning the Ark back to Jerusalem were good, and in his heart — he truly meant to do something pleasing to God. David’s heart was sincere. His actions, however, were sincerely wrong.

God had given explicit instructions for transporting the Ark from one location to another. Numbers 4:5-15 describes how that process was to be

done. God had specifically told the children of Israel that the Levites were the only ones assigned to this task. A severe warning also accompanied the moving instructions: “But they must not touch the holy things or they will die” (v. 15).

God means what He says. He doesn’t go back on His Word. He never exaggerates. And He doesn’t make mistakes.

We are the ones who have the problem. We have watered down the Word of God for so long that many Christians don’t know for sure what the Bible really says. We need to respect our holy God and we need to respect God’s Holy Word.

If we believe God’s promises, then we must also believe every command and every consequence.

A holy God expects nothing less from us than our love, respect, and complete obedience. Meditate on these Bible truths and allow them to lead you into a deeper relationship with our heavenly Father that is full of reverence, awe, respect, and love.

• “But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: ‘Be holy, because I am holy’” (1 Peter 1:15-16, NIV).

• “Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God” (2 Cor. 7:1, NIV).

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News Briefs

Gallup: Church attendance up

WASHINGTON (RNS) — A new Gallup Poll found that Americans' self-reported church attendance has increased slightly since 2008. When asked "How often do you attend church, synagogue, or mosque?" 43.1 percent of Americans in 2010 said they attended church "at least once a week" or "almost every week."

That's up from 42.8 percent in 2009 and 42.1 percent in 2008. Researchers previously believed that church attendance rises when economic times are bad. The Gallup data, however, indicates that the opposite may be happening.

"There has been well-publicized speculation about the possibility that church attendance has risen over the past two years as Americans became more despondent and worried as a result of the economic recession," Frank Newport of Gallup writes.

"However, trends ... reflect just the opposite pattern, with both church attendance and economic confidence increasing from 2008 to 2009, and now into 2010." Conservatives, non-Hispanic blacks and Republicans demonstrated the highest participation, with 55 percent of each group reporting frequent church attendance. Liberals and young adults (18 to 29) rounded out the bottom, with 27 and 35 percent respectively.

In its report, Gallup says "the small increase in attendance between 2008 and so far in 2010 is statistically significant, suggesting that there has in fact been

an uptick in religious service participation in the real world over the last 2 1/2 years."

The poll is based on more than 800,000 interviews since February 2008, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 1 percentage point.

New warning labels announced for Christian movies

ST. LOUIS (RNS) — To get to the movie section at Lifeway Christian Store in Bridgeton, Mo., customers pass by shelves of books, CDs and greeting cards. The rack of Christian DVDs isn't huge, but it's twice as big as it was a year ago and "growing all the time," said manager Francine Evans.

Some of the Christian titles these days, she said, tackle "touchy subjects" such as drugs, domestic violence or abortion.

"These are movies that deal with issues that real people deal with," Evans said. "Sometimes that's what's necessary to reach people for God. But the seals are needed. They're a good idea."

The seals Evans anticipates are part of a new system developed by the Grand Rapids, Mich.-based Dove Foundation to gauge the Christian values in films that contain sex, violence and drugs.

The launch of the new seals was part of the International Christian Retailers Show June 27-30.

To caution parents that some Christian films can also contain un-Christian behavior or situations, the Dove Foundation's new "Faith-Based" seal will carry letters indicating the offending content: "V" for violence, "D" for drugs and alcohol, "S" for sex, etc.

Fewer cases of accounting fraud reported in Bible Belt

(RNS) Companies in the Bible Belt are less likely to be sued for accounting fraud or to practice aggressive financial reporting, a study indicates.

Research by Mays Business School at Texas A&M University found that companies headquartered in counties with high levels of churchgoing tend to use religion as a self-regulating mechanism in the absence of more formal external monitoring.

The study conducted by faculty members Sean McGuire, Thomas Omer and Nathan Sharp is the first to use data from Gallup Inc. in their analysis. Gallup surveys show the top Bible Belt states where residents indicated religion is important in their daily lives are Mississippi (86 percent), Alabama (84 percent) and Tennessee (79 percent). Texas came in 13th with 72 percent.

Overall, the study found a 49 percent decrease in the odds that a firm headquartered in a "religious" county will be sued for wrongful accounting.



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FULL-TIME SENIOR PASTOR. FBC, Spruce Pine is currently accepting resumes for senior pastor. A moderate congregation of approx. 350 with 2 Sunday morning services: contemporary and traditional. Missions giving options for both BSC and CBF. Applicants should have minimum of master's degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school. Please send resume and reference to Pastor Sarch Committee, 125 Tappan St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777, Attn: Wanda Henline.

Senior Pastor: First Baptist Church of King, NC, near Winston-Salem, seeks an experienced senior pastor. Averaging 400 in worship services, we are a progressive, mainstream fellowship, friendly and loving, that empowers purpose-driven ministry regardless of gender or race. Excellent preaching skills, genuine pastoral desire and strong leadership abilities are expected. Direct inquiries to fbcpastorsearch@windstream.net or the church office, 336-983-5252.

Senior Pastor. We are a rural established church in east Davie County, NC, seeking the God selected senior pastor for our congregation. We are located 20 minutes west of Winston-Salem and 5 miles north of I-40; easy access to two international airports. A conservative SBC congregation diverse in age, occupation, and education. Average Sunday attendance is 175. Salary commensurate with Lifeway Compensation Study recommendation. Visit our website at www.greenmeadowsbc.org. Your resume will be held in strict confidence. Please submit resume by 8/15/10 to the following confidential addresses: Email: pastorsearchteam@yaddel.net or Search Committee Chairman, Green Meadows Baptist Church, 4140 Clemmons Rd., Suite #362, Clemmons, NC 27012.

The First Baptist Church of Fall Branch is seeking a **Full-Time Pastor**. Please send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, PO Box 82, Fall Branch, TN 37656. Or email address firstbaptistfb@embarqmail.com.

Center Baptist Church in Wade, NC, is seeking a **Full Time Pastor**. Application deadline is August 1. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee at 5017 Goldsboro Road, Wade, NC 28395.

Pastor. Hallsboro Baptist Church, Hallsboro, NC, is seeking a full-time pastor. We are a small, rural church with a diverse congregation. We support both CBF and SBC. Applicants should have a master's degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school. Please send resume and references to Search Committee, 3815 Sam Potts Hwy., Hallsboro, NC 28450.

Church Staff

Minister of Youth/Children. Beach Road Baptist Church in Southport, NC, is actively seeking a full time youth and children minister. Send resume to Beach Road Baptist Church, PO Box 11457, 4457 Flagship Ave., Southport, NC 28461. Attn: Search Committee, or e-mail a resume to beachroadbaptist@bizec.rr.com.

Elizabeth Baptist Church, Shelby, NC (www.elizabethchurch.org) with active membership of 400+ seeks full-time **Minister to Students**. This is a key role in the Ministerial team and includes administrative and ministerial duties. Responsible for developing and implementing a comprehensive program of youth education for grades 7-12. Master's degree and 3 years experience or bachelor's degree and 6 years experience is preferred. Send resume along with cover letter to Minister of Students Search Committee, 301 North Post Road, Shelby, NC 28152 or e-mail: info@elizabethchurch.org by August 20, 2010. Salary based on NC Public Schools Salary schedule.

First Baptist Church, Burlington, NC, is seeking a qualified **Organist** for part-time position in an established, comprehensive music program. Sunday and Wednesday schedule. Send resume to: Minister of Music, First Baptist Church, 400 S. Broad St., Burlington, NC 27215, or to www.FirstBaptistBurlington.com.

FBC, Fairmont, NC, seeks **Minister of Youth/Children**. Candidate must hold accredited degree, be sympathetic to both CBF and SBC. Send resumes to: FFBC/PSC, PO Box 663, Fairmont, NC 28340.

Minister of Youth and Education. Oakhurst Baptist Church, Asheboro, NC, is seeking a vibrant, active minister of youth and education. This person will primarily minister to the youth. This person will also lead the church in a comprehensive program of Christian education as well as assist the pastor in all areas of the pastor's work. Send resume to Oakhurst Baptist Church, 2225 S. Fayetteville St., Asheboro, NC 27205, attn: Personnel Committee.

Children and Preschool Minister. Minimum requirements: college degree (early education/seminary preferred) & 5 years experience working with preschool/elementary children in church or church related setting. Minister will oversee large child care center and afterschool program in addition to children and preschool ministries. For full job description go to: www.snydermbc.com/top_about_menu/employment.php. Send resumes to Snyder Memorial Baptist Church, ATTN: Children's Minister Search Committee, 701 Westmont Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28305.

Miscellaneous

Vacation Rentals. Summer rentals discounted at Pigeon Forge condo. Call Stacie: 865.705.3642. Also available: August weeks at Resort townhouse in Myrtle Beach. Discounts available. oasisattheocean@hotmail.com.

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The cost is \$155 per person (double occupancy). A non-refundable deposit of \$35 per person is required to register. For more information or to register call (888) 899-2374 or e-mail rskipper@caraway.org.



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