



**SBC DECLINE: IS  
IT REALLY AS BAD  
AS IT SOUNDS?**  
page 2



**PASTORS PLAN TO  
REPEAT ROLES AS  
BSC FIRST, SECOND  
VICE PRESIDENTS**  
page 4



# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## Proposed bylaw amendments address ‘serious misconduct’

By **CHAD AUSTIN** | Baptist State Convention

**T**he Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s (BSC) executive committee unanimously approved proposed changes to the convention’s bylaws that would create a formal process by which individuals could be removed from positions of leadership for behavior that would disqualify them for service.

The committee voted to approve the proposed changes during a regularly scheduled meeting held July 11 at the BSC offices in Cary. The proposed changes will now go before the BSC’s full board of directors for consideration at the board’s September meeting. Following any action by the board, the measure would then go before messengers attending the BSC annual meeting in November for final action and approval.

• Budget proposal seeks ‘balance’ between NC, SBC ..... **page 3**

The proposed amendments specify that certain individuals serving in leadership positions with the convention may be removed from office for “serious misconduct damaging to the people, mission, or ministry of the Convention.”

The changes would apply to members of the state convention’s board of directors, non-board members appointed to board committees, convention committee members, convention officers, and members of the Fruitland Baptist Bible College board of directors.

The proposed bylaw amendments also authorize the state convention’s board of directors to adopt and implement a separate policy that would outline the steps for addressing and acting upon allegations of misconduct. The accompanying policy would include guidelines related to how complaints, investigations, hearings, appeals and dismissals are handled.

**See Bylaw page 3**

## WHAT’S INSIDE

Milton Hollifield: Coming soon: ‘Who’s Your One?’ tour ..	2
Twitter bans hateful posts based on religion .....	4
Trade war could disrupt Bible supply .....	5
Annual meeting to emphasize ‘God’s Great Work’ .....	6
2019 NCMO emphasis: ‘Known By Love’ .....	7
Nationwide ‘Who’s Your One?’ tour to kick off in N.C. ....	8
N.C. Baptist Pastors’ Conference focuses on being ‘One’ .....	8
Strickland: Diverse churches result in healthier body of believers .....	12



## N.C. ministries combine foster, adoption efforts

Michael C. Blackwell, president/CEO of Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina (BCH), from left to right, speaks to a joint meeting of BCH and Christian Adoption Services (CAS) with Keith Henry, BCH chief operating officer; Jerry Jordan, chairman of BCH’s board of trustees; Joyce Ford, president of CAS’ board of directors; Laura Nichols-Virgilio, CAS executive director; and Kevin Qualls, CAS president. The two organizations made a partnership official July 15 at BCH’s Mills Home campus in Thomasville. (BCH photo)

By **BLAKE RAGSDALE** | Baptist Children’s Homes Communications

**B**aptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina (BCH) and Christian Adoption Services (CAS) have agreed to partner together to offer comprehensive foster care and adoption services to families throughout the state.

“This is an exciting day for us and the children and families we serve,” says BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell. “CAS is doing phenomenal work to place children with families standing ready to embrace them. BCH brings to the partnership a wealth of resources through our family foster care program as well as our cottage home care for children.

“Without question, the clear winner of this alliance between BCH and CAS is the children and families of North Carolina.”

BCH’s family foster care program, where the non-profit works to train and license couples, is rapidly expanding throughout North Carolina. CAS, who has permanently placed more than 2,000 children with families, is able to facilitate the adoption process.

“Coming together with BCH in the areas of adoption and foster care means more boys and girls, who come from desperate circumstances, will receive the caring homes they deserve,” says Kevin Qualls, CAS President.

The two nonprofits made their partnership official July 15 at a special celebration at BCH’s Mills Home campus in Thomasville. Staff and board members from both organizations were in attendance as respective leadership signed the Memorandum of Understanding.

David Powell, Pastor at Salem Baptist Church in Dobson and BCH trustee, opened the celebration in prayer. He and his wife, Lindsey, are foster parents.

“God, may we be moved and compelled to do whatever it takes,” Powell prayed. “Bless these efforts, dear God, for Your glory and for the good of those who need a home, and need a family.”

Qualls addressed the group and talked about his North Carolina Baptist roots. He served for 22 years in church ministry, in both North and South Carolina. He was the Next Generations Pastor at First Baptist Church in Charlotte for four years before joining CAS in March 2016.

“As CAS began pursuing the idea of providing foster services, we kept running into roadblocks. We shelved the idea about a year ago,” Qualls shared. “I said, ‘Lord, we’re going to trust You and Your divine time.’”

Because of his Baptist connections, Qualls was aware of Baptist Children’s Homes. He, Blackwell and Keith Henry, BCH Chief Operating Officer, connected with

**See Efforts page 5**



## Coming soon: ‘Who’s Your One?’ tour

During this year’s Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Birmingham, Ala., former SBC President Johnny Hunt shared a statistic that caught my attention.

Hunt said that if just 10 percent of SBC church attenders would pray for and lead one person to Christ in the next year, Southern Baptists would see the highest number of baptisms in the history of our convention.

Hunt, who currently serves as senior vice president of evangelism and leadership with the North American Mission Board (NAMB), shared the statistic during NAMB’s presentation and report to messengers in Birmingham to highlight the importance of the current “Who’s Your One?” evangelism initiative across the SBC.

In Birmingham, Hunt also announced plans for a nationwide “Who’s Your One?” tour, where he and other SBC leaders will hold events in local churches

across the country to encourage and equip them in evangelism.

These events will include an inspirational rally on Sunday evening featuring a message from Hunt, followed by a time of training and equipping in sharing the gospel on Monday morning.



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

The tour will include stops in at least 20 cities starting next month and running until May 2020. I’m excited that the tour will start right here in North Carolina at Temple Baptist Church in Fayetteville on Aug. 11-12. Sunday’s rally is free and open to the public and begins at 6 p.m. Monday’s training begins at 8 a.m., and it is also free, but registration is required.

You may register online by visiting [whosyourone.com](http://whosyourone.com) and clicking on the tour link at the top of the page.

I hope you will make plans to attend this first stop on the “Who’s Your One?” tour.

Temple Baptist’s pastor, Kelly Bullard, not only emphasizes personal evangelism,

he also models it before his congregation. Earlier this year, shortly after the “Who’s Your One?” initiative was announced, Bullard preached an evangelistic sermon series built around “Who’s Your One?”

In the midst of preaching through that series, Bullard saw a man who had been attending his church since Easter of last year come to faith in Christ.

Although Bullard had been praying for and meeting with this man since they first met, he says he prayed more earnestly for him during the evangelistic sermon series. On Easter Sunday of this year, Bullard had the privilege of baptizing the man and his wife as followers of Jesus Christ. To God be the glory!

Bullard’s story epitomizes what “Who’s Your One?” is all about. It’s about followers of Christ loving one other person enough to be intentional about praying for them, spending time with them, engaging in gospel conversations with them and inviting them to trust Christ as Savior.



Many stories like Pastor Bullard’s can be repeated if you will take the challenge to select that particular individual God wants you to invest in and engage them with the gospel.

Immediately, following their new spiritual birth in Christ, begin to disciple them by helping them understand the importance of following Christ in believer’s baptism.

*“I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance”* – Luke 15:7 (NKJV). **BR**



## SBC decline: Is it really as bad as it sounds?

If you only read the headlines that appear in the media, you would conclude the sky is falling on American Christianity. That is not true. Glenn Stanton has summarized several legitimate studies of religion in America to give us a hopeful assessment in his new book *The Myth of the Dying Church*. Here are some of the facts not being reported.

The percentage of Americans who are evangelical has grown by 5 million since 2007. Evangelicals could be defined as those who believe the Bible is inspired and true and emphasize a “born again” experience.

Where are the losses in church attendance mainly occurring? Liberal mainline churches lost 5 million members over the same time period.

Since 1972, the liberal churches have declined from 32 percent of America’s population to 12 percent. The rise of the “nones” has come almost exclusively from those who are leaving those denominations.

Stanton has reported that the only evangelical denomination that is reporting a loss is our Southern Baptist

Convention. Why are our numbers declining when the rest of evangelicalism is growing?

I believe a clue to this transition comes from another factor Stanton documents: the rise of the number of evangelicals who now attend “non-denominational” churches. One out of five evangelicals attend what they believe to be a non-denominational church. They are still evangelicals, but they have left denominational nametags behind.

I believe the growth of non-denominational churches is one of the factors influencing our numerical decline. Here are some things to consider about this new trend.

Many of the non-denominational churches are baptistic. They practice believer’s baptism. They believe in the full inspiration of the Bible. Doctrinally, Southern Baptists find themselves at home quickly in these churches.

Some of our people may think they are attending non-denominational churches when they are actually attending SBC churches. Most of my children attend churches affiliated with the SBC that do not have Baptist

in the name. Some of our strongest churches and leaders use mission or values-oriented names, rather than traditional or descriptive names.

They are strong churches that actively participate in Southern Baptist missions and ministries, but do not emphasize their ties to the SBC. Their goal is to attract people who may not attend a Baptist church because of what they feel is the baggage attached to that name. When pollsters like those used in Stanton’s book contact them, they may identify as non-denominational.

Let me throw out one more possible factor in our numerical decline. Some of it may be due to the fact that fewer SBC churches are taking the time to fill out the Annual Church Profile. This report is the only way we have of knowing how many people attend our churches, how many we are baptizing and so on. To be honest with you, the report is long, and takes valuable time to fill out. It is concerned with many programs that were more a part of our past than our present.

We have around 800 churches in North Carolina who give to Southern Baptist causes through our state convention, yet did not fill out the Annual Church Profile.

**See SBC page 5**



**STEVE SCOGGINS**  
Guest Column

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# Budget proposal seeks ‘balance’ between NC, SBC

By **CHAD AUSTIN** | Baptist State Convention

**T**he Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s (BSC) executive committee unanimously approved a \$30.5 million budget proposal for 2020 that includes an increased allocation to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) through the Cooperative Program (CP).

The committee approved the budget proposal with no changes based on the recommendation of the convention’s Budget Special Committee. The action came during the executive committee’s regularly scheduled meeting held Thursday, July 11, at the BSC offices in Cary.

The budget recommendation will now go to the BSC’s full board of directors for consideration at its September meeting before being presented to messengers at the 2019 BSC annual meeting in Greensboro this November.

While the 2020 budget proposal is \$500,000 less than 2019, budget committee chairman Rick Speas described the proposal as “reasonable and faith challenging.”

The proposal calls for a 0.5 percent increase in the allocation to the SBC, which, if approved, would mark the 14th consecutive year that the BSC has raised its support of SBC missions and ministry causes. The increase would bring the state convention’s SBC allocation up to 42 percent of the total budget.

In spite of the overall budget reduction, Speas said the budget committee took a “balanced approach” in trying to allocate funds among state convention ministries, institutions and agencies, Fruitland Baptist Bible College and the SBC.

“Every (state convention) ministry area has shared in

the absorption of the decreased overall budget,” Speas said.

Speas said budget committee members met with representatives from the convention’s institutions and agencies in May to discuss and consider their budget requests. Those organizations included the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina, N.C. Baptist Hospital, the N.C. Baptist Foundation and the *Biblical Recorder*.

“We don’t want to cripple anybody,” Speas said. “That’s why we talked to them on the front end. We’re not asking institutions to do something that we are not doing ourselves – tightening our belts.”

## 2020 challenge budget

The executive committee also voted to approve a 2020 “challenge budget” that would allocate receipts in excess of \$30.5 million to be split among the SBC, institutions and agencies, and state convention ministry groups.

If the 2020 budget is met, 50 percent of receipts above \$30.5 million would go to the SBC, 25 percent would be split among institutions and agencies, and 25 percent would go to state convention ministry groups.

## NCMO goal

The executive committee also voted to set the goal for the 2020 North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO) at \$2.1 million, which remains unchanged from 2019.

NCMO supports a variety of missions and ministries including disaster relief and the 18 different ministries of Baptists on Mission, church planting, mission camps, missions mobilization efforts and missions projects in local Baptist associations. Allocations from the offering to these ministries would also remain unchanged in

2020 with 41 percent going to Baptists on Mission, 28 percent to church planting, 15 percent to mission camps, 10 percent to associational projects and 6 percent to mobilization ministry projects.

## Financial update

Beverly Volz, the BSC’s director of accounting, shared a financial update with committee members. State convention CP receipts totaled more than \$13.9 million through the end of June, which is about 10 percent behind budget but nearly 4 percent higher than the same period as last year.

Additionally, Volz said receipts for special missions are trending at or above last year’s giving totals for the same time period. Through the end of June, N.C. Baptists had given nearly \$10.7 million for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, more than \$5.1 million for the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering and more than \$517,000 to NCMO in 2019.

## Other business

In other business, board President Clay Smith announced that executive committee members Noah Crowe, Tracy Smith and Keith Stephenson have been named to Fruitland Baptist Bible College’s nominating committee, and Crowe will serve as the committee chair. Smith has since resigned as board president. (See related story below.)

## Next meeting

The next meeting of the executive committee is scheduled for Tues., Sept. 24, which will take place in conjunction with the regularly scheduled September meeting of the BSC’s full board of directors. **B**

# Bylaw

Continued from page 1

A proposed policy that would accompany the bylaw changes was presented to the executive committee, but it was not acted upon because its adoption is contingent upon final approval of any proposed bylaw changes.

If the bylaw changes are approved, the BSC’s board of directors would consider the accompanying policy at a later date, which would likely be the board’s regularly scheduled meeting in January 2020.

Currently, the state convention’s bylaws only set forth objective criteria by which a board member’s service may be terminated.

Those standards include failing to meet attendance requirements, moving outside of the region from which they were nominated to serve, or moving out of state.

The proposed bylaw changes and accompanying policy would give convention officials a formal process to deal with other matters as they arise.

“The bylaw and policy have both been written from the perspective that the protection of the Convention is more important than the protection of any individual in a conven-

tion position,” Don Goforth, chair of the convention’s Articles and Bylaws Special Committee, wrote in a memo to executive committee members.

“The policy identifies the objective reasons and speaks to the subjective reasons for removing an individual from a convention position,” Goforth wrote. He added that the policy “seeks to provide consistency to the process for removal.”

The Articles and Bylaws Special Committee developed the proposed bylaw amendments and policy in consultation with convention officials and legal counsel at the direction of the BSC’s executive committee.

In January of this year, the BSC’s board of directors approved a motion made by Curtis Williams of Brown Creek Baptist Church in Wadesboro, N.C., for the executive committee to develop a policy that would allow for the removal of a board member for actions that would disqualify them from serving on the board.

The executive committee referred the matter to the Articles and Bylaws Special Committee during the meeting in March.

During an update to the executive committee and full board in May, Goforth said his committee had developed a “working draft” of the bylaw amendments and accompanying policy that not only included board members but also other individuals in positions of convention leadership.

The proposed bylaw amendments that Goforth’s committee presented and the executive committee approved noted that the overarching goal of the change is “to provide an environment that protects and promotes the Christian witness of the cooperating churches and their members.”

BSC Associate Executive Director-Treasurer Brian Davis said convention officials have had to address misconduct issues with some convention board members and committee members in the past.

“Thankfully anytime that’s happened, they have voluntarily resigned,” Davis said.

“But had any of them not voluntarily resigned, we didn’t have a process to deal with that.

“Approval of this (measure) would give us that process.” **B**

# N.C.’s Clay Smith announced as Johnson Ferry candidate

Christian Index and Biblical Recorder staff

**T**he search team for Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Marietta, Ga., announced July 14 that North Carolina pastor Clay Smith will preach in view of a call on Aug. 4 to occupy the pulpit previously filled by former Southern Baptist Convention President Bryant Wright.

Smith currently serves as senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Matthews, N.C., where he has served since August 2014. He resigned from his role as president of the Board of Directors of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) July 16. Board Vice President Melanie Wallace, a member of Hephzibah Baptist Church in Wendell, N.C., stepped into the role of president.

“Thank you all for the role[s] you play to help our convention of churches focus on the Great Commission and reaching the nations



CLAY SMITH

See Smith page 12



# Pastors plan to repeat roles as BSC first, second vice presidents

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Assistant Editor

**B**oth the first and second vice presidents for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) plan to be nominated for second terms.

Ed Yount, senior pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church in Conover and a former BSC president, plans to re-nominate Micheal Pardue, pastor of First Baptist Church Icard in Connelly Springs, for a second term as first vice president at the annual meeting in November.

“It is a privilege to nominate Micheal Pardue for a second term as first vice president of our convention,” said Yount in email comments to the *Biblical Recorder*. “Micheal is a proven leader, a young man of great vision and promise, and will continue to be a welcomed addition to our convention officers. I want to thank our convention for electing him last year and ask that we allow him to continue to serve.”



MICHEAL PARDUE

Pardue has pastored FBC Icard since 2013. In 2018, the church gave more than \$23,000 to the Cooperative Program and \$1,803 to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions, according to BSC financial records. FBC Icard recorded 13 baptisms the same year.

He previously served as pastor of High Shoal Baptist Church in Mooresboro for five years and in student ministry in other churches in North Carolina. He has a bachelor's degree from Gardner-Webb University and a master's degree from North Greenville University. He finished a doctor of education degree from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest in 2012 and is currently pursuing a second doctorate at Southeastern.

“Serving as first vice president has been a joy,” Pardue said in an email to the *Recorder*. “I have had the opportunity to work with N.C. Baptists across the state, and I believe our state convention is strong and we are well positioned to reach our state with the gospel.”

Pardue said his service as first vice president “has affirmed in my heart the vision statement of our convention that ‘By God’s grace, we will become the strongest force in the history of this convention for reaching people with the message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ We can be that strongest force for reaching people if we continue to pursue the fulfillment of the Great Commission.”

He previously served as vice president of the N.C. Pastors’ Conference in 2011 and later as president in 2015. In 2010, Pardue was elected to a four-year term on the BSC board of directors where he became chairman of the communications committee in 2013. That position includes membership on the board’s executive committee.

Pardue and his wife, Rachel, have seven children. Four of those children are adopted.

While Matthew Ledbetter has changed churches recently, he still plans to be renominated as second vice president.

That nomination will come from Jason Miller, pastor at Dutch Cove Baptist Church in Canton.

“Matt loves Jesus, the preaching of the Word of God and the mission of the local church,” Miller said. “His heart beats with the rhythm of the Great Commission.”

Part of Miller’s enthusiasm to support Ledbetter comes from his strong small church background.

“Matt has served as a pastor of smaller churches his entire 20 years in gospel ministry,” said Miller in email comments to the *Recorder*. “Whether it’s in the mountains of Western North Carolina, or now as the new pastor of Creekville Baptist Church in the northeastern part of our great state, Matt has led these churches to understand that a small church doesn’t mean a small ministry.”

Ledbetter, who ran unopposed last year, is pastor of Creekville Baptist in Conway.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed serving the churches of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and have enjoyed serving with my two fellow officers as well,” Ledbetter said in a telephone interview with the *Recorder*. “I would count it an honor to be re-elected to serve

the churches of North Carolina once again.”

Ledbetter has served on the BSC executive committee and board of directors, including time on the Church Planting and Missions Partnerships Committee.



MATT LEDBETTER

His previous mission trip experiences in Mexico and Honduras have shaped his commitment to planting churches in western N.C. as well as in Honduras.

“Under His leadership, Matt has led 15 short-term mission trips to Honduras and Mexico, recently resulting in two new churches in Mexico,” said Miller, who also emphasized that churches under Ledbetter’s leadership increase gifts to the

Cooperative Program.

“Matt supports the Cooperative Program because he knows that together we can accomplish more for the glory of Jesus Christ. And there is no place with greater potential to see that great moving of God, than through the churches of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.”

Miller said Ledbetter takes his role as second vice president seriously and has crisscrossed the state numerous times to share that commitment and enthusiasm for cooperation with others.

He previously served on staff at Lighthouse Baptist Church in Sylva, N.C., Crabtree Baptist Church in Clyde, N.C., Hamburg Baptist Church in Glenville and Rose of Sharon Baptist Church in Doerun, Ga.

Ledbetter is a graduate of Fruitland Baptist Bible College and Liberty University. He and his wife of 23 years, Lana, have one daughter, Danyelle.

Pardue and Ledbetter are the first announced candidates for these offices. A previous *Recorder* story indicated that Steve Scoggins, the current BSC president and senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Hendersonville, would be running for re-election as well. Nominations will be made during the annual meeting.

Visit [ncannualmeeting.org](http://ncannualmeeting.org). **BR**

## Twitter bans hateful posts based on religion

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

**T**weets that dehumanize a person because of that person’s religion are no longer allowed on Twitter, the company announced July 9.

“Our primary focus is on addressing the risks of offline harm, and research shows that dehumanizing language increases that risk,” Twitter wrote on its company blog. “As a result, after months of conversations and feedback from the public, external experts and our own

teams, we’re expanding our rules against hateful conduct to include language that dehumanizes others on the basis of religion.”

The rule change is based on comments from more than 8,000 individuals in more than 30 countries who responded to Twitter’s request for customer ideas and perspectives in 2018, the company said. The change in the hateful conduct policy is aimed at public safety and is effective immediately.

“You may not promote violence

against or directly attack or threaten other people on the basis of race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, religious affiliation, age, disability or serious disease,” reads the company’s amended hateful conduct policy.

Posts found in violation of the policy will be removed, Twitter said. Additional penalties may include relegating

an account to read-only mode for varying lengths of time, limiting the tweet’s visibility, hiding the tweet behind a message warning the public of its content, withholding the tweet or account in a particular country or permanently suspending an account.

Individuals may report perceived violations here: [help.twitter.com/forms/abusiveuser](https://help.twitter.com/forms/abusiveuser). **BR**

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# Efforts

Continued from page 1

one another. That connection led to BCH referring families who were interested in adoption to CAS. The same held true when CAS received calls from families interested in fostering; they were referred to BCH.

“A wonderful relationship had begun,” Qualls said.

After numerous meetings and times of prayer between Qualls and Henry, it became clear that the time was right for forming an official partnership.

“As we move forward, BCH and CAS are walking together hand in hand in service of our Lord and to children and families,” Henry shared.

“Up to now, each of us has provided a valuable piece of the continuum of care along a pathway filled with children looking for families and families looking for children.

“Today, those paths are seamlessly connected working closely to eliminate the obstacles and to smooth that path for these children and families.”

The collaboration between the two nonprofits goes beyond supporting North Carolina children and families. Their efforts are also about providing quality placement options to the state’s child welfare system that is removing chil-

dren from families at an alarming rate.

In North Carolina, there are now 3,000 more children in foster care than in 2011.

“There are numerous reasons why the numbers of children being removed are rising. A major factor is parental substance abuse which involves the growing opioid crisis across our state and nation,” Henry explained. “These addictions by parents and guardians often result in the abuse and neglect of their children. For the children’s safety, the state is forced to take custody.”

In 2018 alone, 16,796 children were removed from their homes by NC Departments of Social Services. As a result, there are too many children in the system and not enough quality placement options.

“The state’s child welfare system is doing the best it can, but its resources are stretched too thin,” Qualls shared. “Identifying not only new options, but the best options, will help the state and ultimately benefit the children long term.

“This is why both CAS and BCH see our partnership as imperative and an integral part of providing that solution.”

Together, BCH and CAS have almost 175 years of experience in providing compassionate services to bring help and

hope to vulnerable children. BCH was established in 1885 and oversees a variety of ministries for children, families and adults throughout North Carolina as well as orphans in Guatemala. The nonprofit’s administrative offices are located in Thomasville at its oldest campus. CAS is headquartered in Matthews and has assisted in the adoption process for thousands of children since 1979.

“This partnership is about God’s timing,” Blackwell said. “That means, when the door opens we walk through it. God is in this. It is, without a doubt, His timing, and we celebrate the lives that will be indelibly changed through the partnership, and friendship that has been forged between Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina and Christian Adoption Services.” **BR**

## Trade war could disrupt Bible supply

By GRACE THORNTON | Baptist Press

Americans could see a disruption in the nation’s Bible supply if President Donald Trump enforces tariffs on printed materials from China, according to Christian publishers.

The 25 percent tariff on books – part of a long list of tariffs proposed by President Trump as tensions with China escalated in recent months – would effectively be a “Bible Tax,” according to Mark Schoenwald, president of HarperCollins Christian Publishing, which owns both Thomas Nelson and Zondervan.

Trump put the book tariffs on hold in late June when he resumed talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping. But observers say the reprieve is tenuous – the countries’ differences that started the trade war haven’t changed.

The Bible printing process is highly specialized, as pages are printed on “unusually thin paper” and have

complex features and illustrations, Schoenwald wrote in public comments submitted to U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer. No U.S. printer has the machines or skilled staff to print Bibles at that volume anymore – those processes have been unique to China for decades, and it would be too costly and risky for U.S. companies to try to fill the gap.

The Bible continues to be the best-selling book in the U.S.

Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said the tariff would make the ministry of Southern Baptist publisher LifeWay Christian Resources “infeasible” and would harm seminaries, ministries and missions organizations who couldn’t get the Bibles or other printed materials they need.

“The Bible is often the starting point for Christians to share the gospel with others,” Moore wrote in his comments to Lighthizer’s office. **BR**



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## SBC

Continued from page 2

How many baptisms took place in those churches? Are we underreporting our attendance and membership because we lack the data?

What can we do in response to these trends?

1) We should make it simpler to report the major facts about a church each year: number of baptisms, attendance and more. I would recommend a post card sized Annual Church Profile. If more churches reported data, we would have a better grasp on the facts.

2) We need to help people understand the value of giving to Southern Baptist missions and ministries. An evangelical church will want to give money to missions. When a church gives to missions, they try to find causes they agree with. The Mormons send out many missionaries, but I will not support them because I strongly disagree with their teaching. If your financial support goes through

Southern Baptist channels, you can know the doctrinal bedrock underneath that mission work will include a strong belief in the Bible and an accurate witness to the gospel.

3) We need to do a better job in communicating what we are doing through the lifeline of Southern Baptist missions – the Cooperative Program (CP). The CP gives every church a way to impact the world. It involves every church in a balanced set of ministries that go from reaching the nations, reaching our state, helping make people’s lives better through benevolent causes and training future leaders.

I will attempt to explain the great work being done by the Cooperative Program in a future article.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Steve Scoggins is senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Hendersonville and president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.) **BR**

# — GOD'S — GREAT — WORK —

## ANNUAL MEETING TO EMPHASIZE 'GOD'S GREAT WORK'

by Chad Austin, BSC Communications

“God’s Great Work” is the theme for the 2019 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual meeting and will focus on the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

This year’s event is scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 11-12 at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. Following are some selected highlights of this year’s meeting and why you should make plans to attend.

Learn more about this year’s annual meeting and reserve a room at the host hotel at a special convention rate by visiting [ncannualmeeting.org](http://ncannualmeeting.org).

### Church planting celebration

A special church planting celebration service will be held Monday evening. This service will highlight the need for new churches to be planted in North Carolina, how new church plants are engaging others with the gospel and making disciples, and how your congregation can be a part of what God is doing through church plants in our state.

### President’s address

BSC President Steve Scoggins, pastor of First Baptist Church of Hendersonville, will deliver the annual president’s address Monday evening in conjunction with the church planting celebration.

Scoggins plans to preach from Nehemiah 6:3 and will highlight the significance of the Great Commission and the Great Commandment.

### 'Who's Your One?'

Ronnie Floyd, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention’s (SBC) executive committee, will preach during a

special service on Tuesday evening related to the ‘Who’s Your One?’ evangelistic initiative taking place across the SBC.

### EDT address

Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, will deliver his annual address and report to messengers on Tuesday morning. Hollifield’s stated vision for the BSC is “by God’s grace, we will become the strongest force in the history of this convention for reaching people with the message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

## MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND

**What:** BSC annual meeting

**When:** Nov. 11-12, 2019

**Where:** Koury Convention Center, Greensboro, N.C.

**Info:** [ncannualmeeting.org](http://ncannualmeeting.org)

### Strategy update

Messengers will hear an update on progress that has been made toward the BSC’s strategy of “impacting lostness through disciple-making” that was implemented in 2014.

### Budget and business

Messengers will adopt a Cooperative Program budget for 2020, elect convention officers and conduct other convention business.

### ERLC panel and breakout sessions

Representatives from the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission of the

Southern Baptist Convention will conduct a panel related to sexual abuse prevention in local churches.

A number of other breakout sessions featuring convention staff members and ministry leaders will also be held throughout the meeting.

A complete list of breakout session titles and descriptions will be posted online at [ncannualmeeting.org](http://ncannualmeeting.org) by the early fall.

### Pastors' Conference

Come to the annual meeting early and attend the 2019 N.C. Baptist Pastors’ Conference, scheduled for Sunday and Monday, Nov. 10-11, at the Koury Convention Center.

The theme of this year’s pastors’ conference is “One” and will explore what it would look like if the church were truly to become one in Christ.

This year’s speakers include: Mike Cummings, pastor of Deep Branch Baptist Church in Pembroke, N.C.; J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham; James Fisher, pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church in Greensboro, N.C.; speaker and author Daniel Ritchie; Mike Stone, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist church in Blackshear, Ga.; Alvin Summers, pastor of First Baptist Church of Indian Trail’s East Campus; and J.J. Washington, campus pastor of Woodstock Church at Austell, Ga.

Learn more at [ncpastorsconference.org](http://ncpastorsconference.org).

### Pray for 30 Days

N.C. Baptists are invited to join in a special 30-day prayer emphasis during the month of October leading up to the annual meeting.

A prayer guide featuring daily scripture readings, devotionals and prayer prompts

will be available by early fall.

Individuals may also sign up to receive prayer prompts through text messages and devotional emails each day in October. The prayer guide and more information will be available at [prayfor30days.org](http://prayfor30days.org).

## CONNECT NOW

## VIDEOS

There are a plethora of inspirational and training videos available to you for download through our Vimeo site.

[vimeo.com/ncbaptist](http://vimeo.com/ncbaptist)

## PODCAST

We are striving to become a better resource for you. Our new N.C. Baptist podcast will host various trainings we offer throughout the year. Find us by searching iTunes for N.C. Baptist or visit [ncbaptist.podbean.com](http://ncbaptist.podbean.com).

[ncbaptist.podbean.com](http://ncbaptist.podbean.com)

## RESOURCES

Access tons of FREE resources and information specifically catered to your needs by signing up for our mass emails. Go to [ncbaptist.org/signup](http://ncbaptist.org/signup) and fill out the form to tell us what you would like to receive.

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# 2019 NCMO EMPHASIS: 'KNOWN BY LOVE'

[ncmissionsoffering.org](http://ncmissionsoffering.org)

“Known by Love” is the theme of this year’s North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO). The theme is based on John 13:35, which says, “*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another*” (HCSB).

NCMO supports a number of vital ministries and missions efforts that impact our state, nation and world in five main focus areas. They include:

- **Baptists on Mission/N.C. Baptist Men**  
Baptists on Mission/N.C. Baptist Men (NCBM) helps churches involve their members in missions and ministry in Jesus’ name. NCBM has 18 different ministries, which include disaster relief, medical missions and more.
- **Church planting**  
The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina works with churches, associations and church-planting networks to facilitate the launch of new churches.  
Church planting consultants provide training, coaching and additional support to church
- planters, equipping them to reach their communities for Christ.
- **Mission camps**  
Two mission camps located in Red Springs and Shelby help churches get involved in missions. The camps host churches, youth groups and others to coordinate short-term mission projects in the local community.
- **Missions mobilization**  
Through a variety of national and international missions partnerships, NCMO helps mobilize men, women and students to use their God-given gifts, talents and abilities by serving in a number of short-term projects.
- **Associational projects**  
Each year, a portion of the NCMO’s receipts are distributed to the state’s 77 Baptist associations from which they came. Associations use these funds in a variety of missions and ministry projects in their communities.  
NCMO is typically emphasized in September. This year’s offering goal is \$2.1 million. For more information about NCMO, or to download or request promotional materials, visit [ncmissionsoffering.org](http://ncmissionsoffering.org).

## Renewing Worship Expo Aug. 2-3, 2019

Advance, N.C.  
[renewingworshipexpo.com](http://renewingworshipexpo.com)

## Strengthen the Church Conference Aug. 13, 2019

Durham, N.C.  
[strengthenthechurch.org](http://strengthenthechurch.org)

## MinistrySafe Church Safety Workshop Sept. 20 or 21, 2019

Pleasant Garden, N.C.  
[ncbaptist.org/ministrysafe](http://ncbaptist.org/ministrysafe)

## Spiritual Leadership Equipping Track Oct. 3-4, 2019

Cary, N.C.  
[ncbaptist.org/leadership](http://ncbaptist.org/leadership)

## N.C. Baptist Women’s Retreat Oct. 25-26, 2019

Sophia, N.C.  
[ncbaptist.org/abide](http://ncbaptist.org/abide)

## N.C. Baptist Pastors’ Conference Nov. 10-11, 2019

Greensboro, N.C.  
[ncpastorsconference.org](http://ncpastorsconference.org)

## N.C. Baptist Annual Meeting Nov. 11-12, 2019

Greensboro, N.C.  
[ncannualmeeting.org](http://ncannualmeeting.org)

UPCOMING EVENTS



### Strengthen the Church

Be equipped and inspired to embrace multicultural ministry and learn how your church can reach people from other cultures at the first ever Strengthen the Church Conference, scheduled for Tuesday, Aug. 13 at Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham.

Mark Hearn, pastor of First Baptist Church of Duluth, Ga., and Walter Strickland, assistant professor of theology and associate vice president for Kingdom Diversity at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, will serve as the keynote speakers.

Hearn is the author of the book *Technicolor: Inspiring Your Church to Embrace Multicultural Ministry* which chronicles First Baptist Duluth’s journey from mono- to multicultural ministry.

The conference will also include worship, a variety of breakout sessions, “living example” testimonies and more. Registration is \$15 per person and includes lunch.

[strengthenthechurch.org](http://strengthenthechurch.org)



### MinistrySafe Church Safety Workshop

It’s everyone’s responsibility to create an environment and culture of safety and security in churches, organizations and ministries that minister to children and youth.

This training will provide the tools to implement a safety system that protects children from sexual abuse in church and ministry environments.

This one-day conference is being offered on two consecutive days in order to accommodate as many attendees as possible.

Attendees may choose to attend on Friday, Sept. 20 or Saturday, Sept. 21.

You do not have to attend both days.

The event will be held at Pleasant Garden Baptist Church in Pleasant Garden, which is located near Greensboro. Registration is \$10 per person and is open to pastors, church staff, ministry volunteers and others.

Topics covered will include common misconceptions about sexual abuse and abusers, abuser characteristics, reporting responsibilities, screening processes, background checks, and more.

[ncbaptist.org/ministrysafe](http://ncbaptist.org/ministrysafe)



### NC Baptist Women’s Retreat

Jesus tells His followers to abide in Him, which has the idea that Jesus wants believers to rest in Him. Yet what does it look like to abide in Him in a world where we are on the go with deadlines to meet, families to care for and many other things to do?

“Abide” is the theme for the 2019 N.C. Baptist Women’s Retreat, scheduled for Oct. 25-26 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia, N.C. The event is sponsored by the Embrace Women’s Evangelism and Discipleship Ministry of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Betsy Bolick, founder and director of Small Enough Ministries and college minister at Perkinsville Baptist Church, will serve as this year’s keynote speaker.

The event also features several breakout sessions that will be led by a variety of women’s ministry leaders. Worship will be led by Meg Barnes of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh.

[ncbaptist.org/abide](http://ncbaptist.org/abide)



# Nationwide ‘Who’s Your One?’ tour to kick off in N.C.

BSC Communications

**N**orth Carolina will be the first stop on a nationwide “Who’s Your One?” tour sponsored by the North American Mission Board (NAMB) designed to equip and encourage churches in their evangelistic efforts.

Temple Baptist Church in Fayetteville, N.C., will host the first event on Sunday and Monday, Aug. 11-12, which will feature Johnny Hunt, NAMB’s senior vice president of evangelism and leadership, as the keynote speaker.

The event will feature a rally at 6 p.m. Sunday followed by an evangelism workshop beginning at 8 a.m. Monday. Sunday’s rally is free and open to the public. Monday’s workshop is also free but registration is required. Training sessions will cover topics such as cultivating your heart for evangelism, practical ways to start gospel conversations, creating a culture of evangelism in your church, and utilizing small groups for evangelism.

During the NAMB report at the 2019 Southern Baptist



Convention (SBC) annual meeting in Birmingham, Ala., Hunt said he wishes “every pastor, every staff person and their spouses and your key lay leaders would join us” during the “Who’s Your One?” tour.

Hunt will speak during the Sunday evening rally and also participate in the workshop training on Monday. Ministry leaders scheduled to appear with Hunt for the training workshop in Fayetteville include Jimmy Scroggins, pastor of Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla.; Catherine Renfro, marketing consultant

with NAMB; Allan Taylor, director of Sunday School and church education ministries at LifeWay Christian Resources; and Tim Dowdy, senior pastor of Eagle’s Landing First Baptist Church in McDonough, Ga. Singer and songwriter Charles Billingsley is scheduled to lead worship.

The “Who’s Your One?” tour will include stops in at least 20 cities from August 2019 until May 2020. The tour is designed to underscore the importance of the “Who’s Your One?” evangelism initiative that encourages every Southern Baptist to intentionally build a relationship with one person and pray for them, share the gospel with them and invite them to place their faith in Christ. The tour also includes a second scheduled stop in North Carolina on March 8-9, 2020, at First Baptist Church of Indian Trail near Charlotte.

More information about the “Who’s Your One?” initiative and tour is available at [whosyourone.com](http://whosyourone.com).

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Information from Baptist Press and the North American Mission Board was used in this report.) **BR**

## N.C. Pastors’ Conference focuses on ‘One’

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Assistant Editor

**T**his year’s North Carolina Baptist Pastors’ Conference Nov. 10-11 highlights unity.

The two-day event, scheduled prior to the Nov. 11-12 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting in Greensboro, has chosen “One” as its theme.

“It doesn’t seem that we are all one,” said Chip Hannah, president of this year’s conference and senior pastor of Peace Baptist Church in Whiteville. “There are so many things that divide us” – including theological and racial differences.

The number of baptisms are down, Hannah said, and while Southern Baptists are planting churches, other congregations are closing their doors.

“Until we become one in Christ, we are not going to reach anyone,” he said in an interview with the *Biblical Recorder*.

Hannah said his aim in choosing speakers remains to offer varying backgrounds and opinions but within the realm of Southern Baptists. Choosing a racially diverse lineup was part of that plan.

Speakers for this year’s event include three white pastors, three black pastors and a Native American.

“We are at one of the greatest times for change ... when better than right now,” Hannah stressed. “We can do this if we become one.”

Ephesians 4:4 is the theme verse for the conference: “There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call.” The pastors have been encouraged to pray about the theme and search the scriptures to talk about unity within the body of believers.

“How do we get past our differences to become one in Christ?” Hannah said.

For Hannah, the Pastors’ Conference has long been a source of encouragement.

“I so look forward to it,” he said. “I don’t know how most preachers feel, but I know when I go and I hear all this great preaching, it just gets me fired up. It excites me.”

But the conference is not just for pastors. Hannah said other church leaders and laypeople come to hear great preaching and music as well as to be encouraged.

Hannah said he hopes this conference will challenge believers to “think beyond ourselves.”

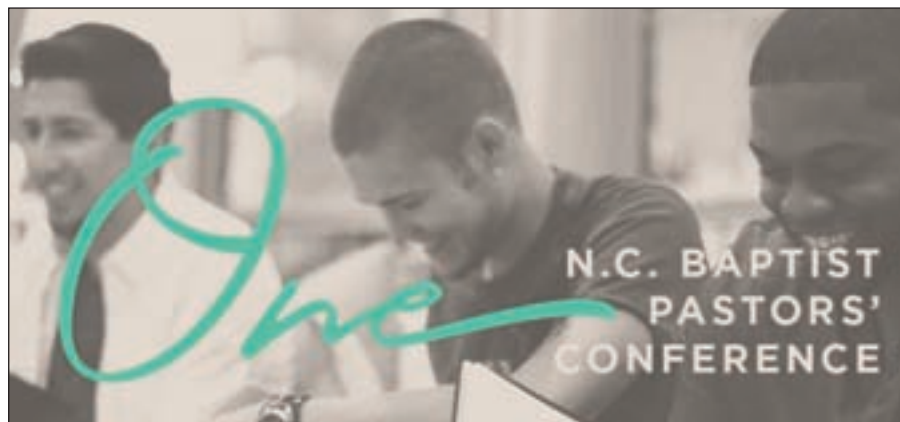
“I want our pastors and our church people to become great thinkers,” he said.

Speakers include J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham and Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president; J.J. Washington, campus pastor of First Baptist Church Woodstock in Austell, Ga.; Daniel Ritchie, a speaker and author living in Huntersville; Mike Stone, senior pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Blackshear, Ga., and chairman of the SBC Executive Committee; Mike Cummings, pastor of Deep Branch Baptist Church in Pembroke; Alvin Summers, senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Indian Trail in Marshville, N.C.; and James Fisher, pastor of St. Paul Baptist Church in Greensboro.

Music will be led by Matthew Slemp, minister of music at First Baptist Church of Indian Trail.

The first 500 individuals to register will receive a bundle of free books and resources provided by conference sponsors.

Visit [ncannualmeeting.org/event-pastors-conference](http://ncannualmeeting.org/event-pastors-conference). **BR**



## OPPORTUNITY CORNER

Woman’s Missionary Union of North Carolina is hosting a retreat at Fort Caswell Oct. 4-5. “Celebrate Missions” will be the theme, with general sessions led by Phyllis Elvington, Bert Yates, Renea Henderson, Cindy Johnson and Crosswalk. Early registration is \$95, which includes lodging, meals and program fees. After Aug. 1, this fee increases to \$105. Conference check-in begins at 3 p.m. Oct. 4 and events conclude at 4 p.m. Oct. 5. Questions can be directed to Margaret Harding at [mharding@wmunc.org](mailto:mharding@wmunc.org). Register at [wmunc.wufoo.com/forms/2019-carolina-women](http://wmunc.wufoo.com/forms/2019-carolina-women).

Aug. 12-15 Baptists on Mission will host a series of Regional Mission Rallies across the state. These rallies (10 of them) will highlight the variety of opportunities N.C. Baptists have to be involved in missions across our state, in our nation and around the world. Featured will be worship, testimony, mission video and a prayer time for missions. These rallies are for everyone interested in missions. A meal is provided at no charge, but reservations are necessary to ensure an accurate meal count. The cutoff date for reserving a meal for each rally is one week prior to the event. For locations, dates and to register, go to [baptistsonmission.org/events/region-rallies](http://baptistsonmission.org/events/region-rallies). You can also register by phone by calling (919) 459-5596. The meal will begin at 5:45 p.m., followed by the program from 6:50 p.m.-8:30 p.m. If you are unable to attend the meal, you are welcome to attend the program itself.



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina consultants and other experienced leaders will lead age-graded breakout sessions, as well as a special session for pastors, around the themes of teaching, caring and sharing in Inside-Out Sunday School. These free sessions will help equip and encourage attendees to convey a love for Christ that is centered on the gospel. Sessions are held from 8:30 a.m.-noon and attendees may choose to attend Aug. 17 at Supply Baptist Church or Sept. 28 at Pole Creek Baptist Church, Candler. Visit [ncbaptist.org/event-inside-out](http://ncbaptist.org/event-inside-out) to register.



## AROUND THE STATE

### Obituaries

**WILLIAM PAUL RIGGS SR.**, 90, of Mt. Airy, died July 7.

He served in the United States Air Force (1948-1952) with the rank of staff sergeant.

Riggs graduated from Gardner-Webb Junior College (1954) and received his bachelor's degree from Limestone College in Gaffney, S.C. (1956). He received his of master of divinity degree from Southeastern Seminary (1961).

He served as associate pastor at Double Springs Baptist Church, Shelby, and senior pastor at Green River Baptist Church, Rutherfordton; Guilford Baptist Church, Greensboro; First Baptist Church, King; Bethany Baptist Church, Winston-Salem; First Baptist Church, Kings Mountain; Oaklawn Baptist Church, Winston-Salem; and First Baptist Church, Mocksville. He was chaplain at Brookridge Retirement Home in Winston-Salem (July 1993-April 1999). He also held interim pastorates in the Winston-Salem, King, Kernersville and Yadkinville communities from 1993 until his retirement in 2008. Among his numerous commitments, he served on the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's General

Board, Board of Associates for Gardner-Webb University, and with the Pilot Mountain Baptist Association.

He is survived by his wife of 67 years, Loudene Wright Riggs; three daughters, Cynthia Leigh "Cindy" Riggs Coone of Asheville, Nancy Lynne Riggs Minor of North Myrtle Beach, S.C., Helen LuAnne Riggs Branson of Asheville; one son, William Paul "Billy" Riggs Jr. of North Myrtle Beach; six grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren;

Memorials to: Alzheimer's Association, 225 North Michigan Ave, Floor 17, Chicago, IL 60601, or to the charity of the donor's choice.

**JAMES EVAN HORTON**, 67, died July 6.

A graduate of Louisburg College, N.C. State University and Southeastern Seminary, Horton earned a doctor of ministry degree from Trinity College of the Bible and Theological Seminary.

He was a member of Pine Ridge Baptist Church, Zebulon, where he was serving as pastor. During his 35 years of ministry in Southern Baptist churches, he had pastored churches in Nash, Granville, Wilkes, Forsyth, Franklin and Chowan counties, including Rocky Hock Baptist Church, Edenton, where he served as

pastor from May 2004-December 2018.

He is survived by his wife of 45 years, Gloria Bartholomew Horton; son, Eric J. Horton of Wendell; daughter, Jessica H. Thompson of Apex; two grandchildren; sisters, Louise Barbour of Princeton, and Evelyn Smith of Burlington; and brother, Charles Horton of S.C.

Memorials to: Pine Ridge Baptist Church, General Fund, 874 Pine Ridge Rd., Zebulon, NC 27597.

**MELBA ELIZABETH "BETH" WARD**, 61, died July 1.

She worked as the Hertford County librarian and worked at the Baptist State Convention in North Carolina (BSC). When the BSC partnered with New York Baptists to form a convention, Ward moved to work there until 2006 when she returned to Winton, N.C., to care for her father in his later years.

She volunteered with the Hertford County Relay for Life and The Roanoke-Chowan Chapter of Christian Women's Job Corps in Ahoskie. Ward was a member of Winton Baptist Church, where she served as a Sunday School teacher and as music director until her health declined.

She is survived by her brother, William Bartlett Ward Winton; and two sisters, Mary Etta Flowers of Murfrees-

boro and Teena W. DeSimone of Southern Shores.

Memorials: Transitions LifeCare, 250 Hospice Circle, Raleigh, NC 27607; or to The Roanoke-Chowan Chapter of Christian Women's Job Corps, P.O. Box 344, Ahoskie, NC 27910; or to a charity of one's choice.

**JD HARROD**, 85, died June 22 in Wilmington while in hospice care.

A graduate of Georgetown (formerly Baptist) College in Kentucky, Harrod received two degrees from Southern Seminary: master of divinity in 1961 and doctor of ministry in 1984.

He pastored two small churches while in seminary in Kentucky and led two small churches in South Carolina as interim pastor along with pastoring a S.C. church before he and his wife, Donice were appointed to the International Mission Board (then Foreign Mission Board) in 1966.

The Harrods served in Brazil (1966-June 1974). They spent their time in two different cities. He worked with city ministries in one area and a radio ministry in another., building a recording studio and creating materials to share with people further inland. She helped

See Around page 11



# LOOKING

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August 4

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

August 11

## Act with Courage

**Focal passage: 2 Chronicles 15:1-9**

**P**astoral ministry can be really hard. In fact, there are all kinds of situations that church members, pastors and others face that would be humanly impossible to deal with if God were not supplying that strength and courage that only He can give. Those times demand that you recognize and depend on God's strength and walk in a courage that only He can give.

The more dangerous times, however, are when things seem to be going smoothly.

In those times, it is easy to become complacent, or self-confident, rather than continuing to walk in faith and obedience. It is not a courage based on your own strength, but on God's strength and faithfulness.

Asa had walked faithfully with God. Chapter 14 shows his willingness to go beyond all that the previous kings had done in removing idolatry and trusting God to provide for and protect His people.

God had blessed that faithfulness, as He promised in Deuteronomy 28-29.

Now God sent the prophet Azariah (only mentioned here in the scripture) to King Asa to challenge him not to become complacent or over-confident, but rather to go on walking in obedience and in the courage that comes from knowing God is sovereign and in control.

Asa would heed the word of the Lord through the prophet. He walked in God-given courage and went to even greater lengths to lead the nation away from anything that was not pleasing to God, removing any remaining idols and repairing the altar of God.

This lesson is not just important for pastors and leaders. It is important for all followers of Jesus. God, in Christ, has overcome even our greatest enemies – sin and death. His Spirit now lives within us to empower us and give us the power and courage to walk in faith and obedience to Him. Whether in good times or challenging times, our need is the same – to walk in dependence on, and courage from, our great and powerful and faithful God.



**RANDY MANN**  
Pastor, Central Baptist  
Church, Henderson

**Focal passage: 2 Chronicles 15:10-19**

**W**hat do you think about when you hear the word worship? For some, that word brings to mind a particular kind of music. For many, the word worship brings up the idea of a corporate gathering that includes music, money and preaching.

In many cases, a discussion of worship begins with pointing back to the definition of the old English word meaning to give worth or value to something. While that background can be helpful, it is inadequate. For one thing, we cannot give value to God.

His worth is unlimited and incalculable. For another thing, the authenticity of our worship is not determined as much by the value we claim to see in God, but rather the response of our lives in complete surrender and obedience to the One who has ultimate worth. While Asa called the people of Israel to covenant renewal and to a corporate gathering of

worshipping God, Asa's true worship of God was illustrated in all he did outside that gathering as well. His commitment to tearing down places of pagan worship and destroying pagan idols, even those tied to his own family, demonstrated that God had ultimate value to Asa and first place in all his life.

Our worship together as the people of God should be a gathered expression of the worship illustrated by our lives every day. I believe this is what Paul had in mind when he commanded the believers in Rome to "*present [their] bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God, which is [our] reasonable act of worship*" (Romans 12:1b). Our most clear act of worship is complete surrender and obedience to the One we claim has ultimate worth and first place in our lives. That doesn't just happen on Sunday. Our words and actions at work should be our response to the worthiness of God. Our willingness to share Christ with those we meet must show that God's worthiness is of far greater value than our comfort.

What does your daily worship – illustrated through surrender and obedience – say about your view of His worth?

August 4

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

August 11

## Enduring

**Focal Passage: 2 Timothy 3:12-17; 4:1-8**

**I**f we will listen, there are Christians all around the world who can give us insights into an enduring faith. For some Chinese pastors, the seminary of imprisonment is required before one can pastor a congregation. For Christians in Muslim nations, conversion means at least being abandoned and shamed by one's family – possibly martyred.

While Western Christianity has not faced such open hostility, contemporary morals have shifted so as to be in direct opposition to clear biblical preaching.

In the latter part of his second letter to Timothy, Paul defended the authority of scripture, reminded Timothy of the opposition he was sure to face and commended him to preach the word. Paul's admonitions are just as true today.

Those of us preaching and teaching the word will give an account before its Author as to the veracity and consistency of our preaching and teaching with the Word of God.

Earlier this year, I preached a series of sermons on the gospel and human

sexuality. Some in our community heard about the series and before I even preached a sermon, they condemned it through social media. This experience reminded me that God's Word has never been popular.

There will always be people to discount and dismiss the Bible.

Biblical ethics will always run counter to self-centered morality.

In that sense, the experience of Paul and Timothy under Roman cultural mores are little different than the experience of gospel preachers in today's America. But we must not fail or falter.

For we will not answer to the culture. And we will not ultimately answer to our churches. But we will answer to the One who wrote the Bible.

And He is looking for preachers and teachers who endure angst, anger and persecution to communicate the truth of the gospel.



**CHRIS HEFNER**  
Pastor,  
Wilkesboro Baptist  
Church

**Focal Passage: Titus 1:1-5; 10-16**

**D**uring my ministry I've heard many errors stated by church members and attenders: I'd like to be baptized so I can go to heaven; I grew up in church so I know I'm a Christian; God made me this way, so how I feel about myself must be OK; suicide is the unforgivable sin; if I just have faith and pray enough, then God will give me my dreams; I don't believe God will let those who have never heard the gospel go to hell.

Look at the statements closely. They, along with many others I could've mentioned, are false claims built upon false teaching that is all too prevalent in today's churches.

In Paul's pastoral epistles, he charged Timothy and Titus to know biblical doctrine and to teach it well because of the theological errors that abounded then and continue today. But if we teach the

## Living with Opposition

Bible as God's inerrant truth, then we can expect opposition. We can expect to find theological error taught by former pastors, Sunday School teachers, traveling preachers, student camp pastors and television evangelists.

I'm not saying that everyone you listen to preaches error or that every error you might hear is a distortion of the gospel that requires immediate and direct correction. But I am saying that a healthy diet of sound doctrine will confront false beliefs and may even instigate theological conflict in the classes you teach and the churches where you preach.

Gospel preaching and orthodox theology are not always popular. Paul, Timothy and Titus faced opposition; we will also. That is why we must be students of the Word, interpreting the Bible correctly and faithfully exhorting those around us with the truth.

When we face deceivers and opposition by those who are in theological error we "*must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught,*" and "*give instruction in sound doctrine*" and "*rebuke those who contradict it*" (Titus 1:9).

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### Ministers' wives gather for retreat

The North Carolina Baptist Ministers' Wives had its annual retreat July 8-10 at the Caraway Conference Center and Camp. With the theme "The Journey" 70 ministers' wives and daughters attended. Diane Nix of Louisiana was the speaker with music provided by Ginnie Varnam, a minister's wife from Kenly Missionary Baptist Church in Kenly. Mini-seminars were hosted by a few of the ladies and "rest" time was offered. The ladies nominated officers to consider before the group's annual meeting in November prior to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting in Greensboro. The group set July 13-15, 2020, as the dates for next year's retreat. Visit [ncbminwives.wixsite.com/ncbmw](http://ncbminwives.wixsite.com/ncbmw). (Contributed photo)

## Around

Continued from page 9

churches with their music and taught music in a seminary. She also helped with Woman's Missionary Union (WMU), later becoming the president of the WMU of North Carolina (1995-'99).

After they returned from the mission field, Harrod served as director of missions for Central Baptist Association (1974-'91) and North Roanoke Baptist Association (1991-2005).

They moved to Wilmington to retire in 2005.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Donice and three daughters: Roberta H. Lowe, and Jennifer and Sara Harrod, all of Wilmington.

Memorials to: First Baptist Church, 411 Market St., Wilmington, NC 28401.

## Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Send to [dianna@BRnow.org](mailto:dianna@BRnow.org) or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### Denominational

South Mountain Baptist Association, Vale, NC, is seeking a **part-time Associational Missionary**. The association's office is on the southwestern edge of Catawba County. There are 28 churches in our association that span Catawba, Lincoln, Cleveland, Burke counties. Submit résumé to South Mountain Baptist Association, 3639 NC 18 Hwy., Vale, NC 28168, or [smba@ncwireless.net](mailto:smba@ncwireless.net). Résumé deadline: July 31.

### Pastor

Clement Missionary Baptist Church, Autryville, NC, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. We are a conservative, mission minded, rural church with an average attendance of 105. Applicant should be licensed and ordained by a Southern Baptist church. Mail résumés to Jennifer Matthews, PSC 60 Waterwheel Ln., Godwin, NC 28344. or email to [Clementpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:Clementpastorsearch@gmail.com).

Stallings Memorial Baptist Church, Salisbury, NC, is seeking a **full-time Pastor**. Being a mission-minded Southern Baptist church, we are searching for the man God desires to lead His church into the future with an emphasis on evangelism and missions. Applicants should be SBC ordained with a seminary education and affirm the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. Send résumés to: [smbcpastorsearchcommittee@gmail.com](mailto:smbcpastorsearchcommittee@gmail.com) or PO Box 438, Rockwell, NC 28138.

First Baptist Church, Wadesboro, NC, is seeking a **part-time Interim Minister of Music** to oversee a comprehensive music program encompassing all areas of music, adult choir, youth & children's choirs. Organ and experience in a church setting preferred. Candidates should be willing to embrace a blended style of worship, including traditional, contemporary and praise music. Duties consist of all worship services, special services and any church related events where music is needed. Includes assisting the pastor in planning worship services, plan, organize and promote camps, programs, etc. for various choirs. Salary & hours negotiable. Send résumé with cover letter to: Personnel/FBC, PO Box 423, Wadesboro, NC 28170, or email to: [officefbc@windstream.net](mailto:officefbc@windstream.net).

### Church Staff

Aversboro Road Baptist Church, Garner, NC, is seeking a **Minister of Children** for a church with a strong mission and community focus. A minimum of a bachelor's degree from a four-year college or university in early childhood or elementary education, theology, child psychology or related field is required and at least five years working with children in a classroom, children's ministry or other organized setting is preferred. The initial position is intended to be part-time (20-30 hours/week), with potential to grow into full-time as the ministry expands. Please send résumés to [arbckidsmin@gmail.com](mailto:arbckidsmin@gmail.com). Job description available on [www.aversboro.church](http://www.aversboro.church).

### Miscellaneous

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# Strickland: Diverse churches result in healthier body of believers

BSC Communications

**W**alter Strickland serves as assistant professor of systematic and contextual theology and associate vice president for diversity at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. Along with itinerant preaching and speaking engagements, Strickland contributes to Canon & Culture as an associate research fellow of the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), the Gospel Project and the *Biblical Recorder*. Strickland's work has also appeared in *Christianity Today*, Baptist Press and *World Magazine*.



WALTER STRICKLAND

His first book, *Every Waking Hour: An Introduction to Work and Vocation for Christians*, was released in March 2016. He is a featured speaker for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's first "Strengthen the Church Conference," which is designed to equip and inspire church leaders to embrace and pursue multicultural ministry.

**Q:** Revelation paints a picture of heaven with people from every tribe, tongue and nation. What obstacles do churches face today in trying to reflect this vision?

**A:** Many pastors cherish the biblical vision of "every tribe, tongue and nation" seen in Revelation 5 and 7, and desire to see racial reconciliation and God-honoring diversity in our churches. Despite a prayerful desire to actualize this kingdom vision, we often find ourselves helpless to move forward with any real success. I think that in our efforts to catalyze change, we've oversimplified the problem of racial bias, and we've



sprinted toward solutions without comprehending its complexity and depth. As a result, we only look to remedy a small portion of the problem, which breeds frustration and a sense of defeat.

**Q:** How can churches be strengthened through listening to voices different from the majority culture?

**A:** Human limitations generate blind spots that cannot be denied. As a result, the question should not be, "Do I have blind spots?" but rather, "What are my blind spots?" It is dangerous, and at times can result in sinfulness, when personal blind spots are denied.

Because we "see in part," we need brothers and sisters who see God's Word and God's world from different perspectives as we seek His truth and are on His mission. Proverbs 27:17 says that, "*Iron sharpens iron*," and I am convinced that iron sharpens iron most effectively across the lines of difference and, as a result, we see better together than we can apart.

**Q:** How has your experience being a church member shaped your perspective on embracing diversity/multiculturalism?

**A:** A body of believers that worships across racial lines and expresses the "one anothers" of the New Testament paints a wonderful picture of the gospel's ability to tear down the walls. Moreover, it is a people who have heeded the call of the apostle Paul in Philippians 2:3, "*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but*

*in humility count others more significant than yourselves.*"

People in multi-ethnic churches have been able to put on Christ in a way that overcomes historical baggage, heals grudges and forces them to think on behalf of the other. This requires the forgiveness and patience that have been exemplified in Christ.

**Q:** Many churches say that they want a diverse congregation, but in reality may not want to take the necessary steps to get there. Where do we look in the scriptures for the power and wisdom to make these changes?

**A:** God's plan for a diverse people unified in Him is undeniable throughout the pages of scripture. As a result, it contributes to how scripture ought to be read. A few specific passages that bespeak God's desire for this kind of unity and diversity are Genesis 12, Ruth, Matthew 28 and Revelation 5 and 7. In addition, scripture offers directives

about how to pursue unity in Galatians 2, Ephesians 2, Philippians 2 and beyond. In the end, God's people need strength to be obedient to God's calling in His Word.

**Q:** We're looking forward to having you at the first Strengthen the Church Conference. What do you hope attendees may take away?

**A:** My prayer is that attendees will be able to understand that Christians pursue diversity because of fidelity to scripture's calling, and not because the church is playing catch-up to culture. In addition, I hope that attendees will be able to develop an eye for seeing how God describes His desire for unity in Him in scripture, and grasp how that ought to influence their teaching and preaching on a weekly basis.

Lastly, I pray that ministers (of all sorts) will gain specific insights about how to pursue diversity in their place of ministry. **BR**

## Smith Continued from page 3

for Christ," Smith wrote in a letter to the BSC Board. "I pray the decisions you make this year will reflect that endeavor."

Smith has a master of divinity degree from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS), where he is currently pursuing a doctorate. The South Carolina native served as minister of adults at Shandon Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C., from 2008 to 2014, and associate pastor at Alice Drive Baptist Church in Sumter, S.C., from 2005 to 2008.

"We firmly believe that He has led us

to this point," Smith said in a video presented to the church on Sunday, "and are so excited about all that He is doing and will continue to do at Johnson Ferry."

"We believe this is a move of God, and that our best days as a church are ahead of us," he added.

He and his wife Terrica have three children – Madison, Molly and Miller.

Wright announced his impending resignation in Nov. 2018. He will share pastoral responsibilities with Smith from Sept. 8 until early December. **BR**

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