



BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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BAPTISTS SERVE BANGKOK'S 'Little Lahore'



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

“I don’t want to go back,” Naomi* said, her voice thick with emotion. The middle-aged woman wiped away tears with the tail of her headscarf as she recounted how a Muslim group beat her husband near death over an alleged blasphemy charge.

Naomi’s youngest two sons, ages 17 and 12, sat quietly on the concrete floor. They chimed in occasionally to help their mother when certain English phrases eluded her. Floor fans churned the steamy air in a small apartment near Bangkok’s city center as Naomi told *Biblical Recorder* staff about the events that forced her family to flee Pakistan.

The sum of their belongings lined the walls of the cash-only, one-room residence. The family lives in hiding from the Thai government, so conventional housing options are off limits.

Naomi’s circumstances are typical among Pakistani Christian asylum seekers in Thailand. Forced

out of their homes by violent persecution and pressed into hiding by harsh penalties for undocumented immigrants in Thailand, asylum seekers wait in the shadows, hoping to find solace in the United Nations’ refugee resettlement program.

Naomi narrated a recent telephone conversation with her oldest son, 21, who was arrested and deported to Pakistan earlier this year with his father, Naomi’s husband.

“Mama, how long will we hurt?” he asked. “Trust in Jesus,” she said between sobs. “Just pray.”

Hearing the unheard

Six years ago, Calvary Baptist Church in Bangkok became aware of the growing refugee crisis in their city, and with the help of volunteer teams from the United States, they are providing critical aid and compassionate care.

Calvary’s senior pastor, Martin Chappell, and his wife, Carrie, are former career missionaries with the International Mission Board (IMB). They accepted a voluntary retirement incentive offered by the IMB

last year as part of a staff reduction to counteract budget deficits but decided to remain on staff at Calvary.

“The refugee ministry started because God brought refugees to our church and we heard their story,” said Carrie. “It began with Sri Lankan refugees, but it built up steam very quickly.”

News reports say more than 11,000 Pakistani asylum seekers have fled to Thailand. Many of these people arrive from Lahore, Pakistan’s second largest city. The region is home to some of the country’s largest Christian populations.

One of the church’s early initiatives was a clothing drive. The Chappells said they were overwhelmed when, after only advertising the outreach by word-of-mouth, hundreds of asylum seekers arrived. The large crowd even drew the attention of local police and immigration enforcement. So, they began to regroup and talk about new ministry and outreach strategies, which led to their current visitation schedule

See Serve page 16

Asian-Americans called to be ‘All In’

By **K. ALLAN BLUME** | *BR* Editor

Twenty-two Asian languages and dialects are spoken in worship and Bible study in North Carolina every day. More than 130 Asian churches, missions and ministries cooperate with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), according to Sammy Joo. A native of South Korea, Joo serves as BSC’s Senior Consultant for Asian Ministries.

More than 80 Asian-American church leaders across the state gathered for the third annual WORD Conference for Asian-American church leaders July 7-8 at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro. Organizers said attendees came from 16 churches and identified at least nine specific people groups in attendance: Hmong, Montagnard, Korean, Japanese, Burmese, Lahu, Laotian, Vietnamese and Filipino.



Using the theme “All In,” the focus of the conference was “to equip and network Asian-American leaders for Christ,” Joo said. He wants them to understand their importance in proclaiming the gospel and developing a disciple-making culture in their communities.

See Called page 5

FAITH&FANDOM

N.C. PASTOR HELPS GEEK CULTURE FIND GOD

Pages 8-9

Senior adults: hidden treasures have growing needs

According to the U. S. Census Bureau projections, the elderly population will more than double between now and the year 2050 in the United States. By that year, as many as one in five Americans could be senior adults. They cite two primary factors – longer life spans and aging baby boomers.

Growth in this group is expected to explode primarily between 2010 and 2030, the time when baby boomers reach 65 years of age. By 2030, older adults will account for roughly 20 percent of the U.S. population.

Those who are age 85 and over are the most rapidly growing age group among the elderly.

Between 1960 and 1994, their numbers rose 274 percent. By contrast, the elderly population in general rose 100 percent, and the entire U.S. population grew only 45 percent.

This basic information should get the attention of gospel-focused, Bible

believing churches. Considering the large number of aging Americans, are we overlooking one of the greatest ministry opportunities in history? Are we sensitive to the needs of this growing segment of the population?



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

How is your church ministering to senior adults? How is your church involving older adults in the calling of the church? Senior adults are often the hidden treasure of the church. And some churches clearly prove they understand the great value of these seasoned servants, but many do not.

Some churches are responding to needs among the elderly. But most of our emphasis is on widow/widower care/ministry and fellowship events for seniors. Some churches operate nursing homes and other very effective ministries. All of these are necessary. They are very important expressions of biblical values.

However, many struggles of the elderly

are not on the agendas of our church planning and strategy meetings. Those problems include hunger, medical care, handicaps, depression, loneliness, low income, homelessness, absence of fellowship and deteriorating living conditions.

Many seniors do not know Christ and are open to seeing the love of God through Christian relationships. They respond positively to genuine compassion.

I am thankful that GuideStone has a targeted ministry that provides additional income for elderly pastors or their widows.

Mission:Dignity is an incredible ministry that lives out biblical principles to some very special seniors. Baptists should give wholehearted support to Mission:Dignity (MissionDignity.org).

I am thankful the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina expanded its ministry beyond children with the launch of North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) eight years ago. They are serving seniors and local churches through outstanding ministry to the growing number of American senior adults. N.C. Baptists are wise to use NCBAM's resources in our churches (NCBAM.org).

But there is a big hole in senior adult ministry that a *Biblical Recorder* story calls to the attention of Baptists.

Sadly, very few, if any, churches have an intentional ministry to grandparents who have returned to the role of being a parent again.

Please read guest writer Denise George's article, "Growing number of grandparents become parents again," on pages 6-7 of this issue. Have we noticed the increasing number of grandparents

who were forced to assume a parenting role again? They are now raising their grandchildren because of a crisis in their child's life.

George exposes the problem and offers resources for churches that are willing to confront the needs of the 98,676 grandparents in North Carolina who are rearing their grandchildren.

Maybe you have not met them yet, but they live in your community. And they need a lot of help shaping the lives of the children Jesus loves.

Refugee series

Seth Brown, content editor for the *Biblical Recorder*, recently returned from a mission trip to Asia. He was invited to join a team from Corinth Baptist Church in Elizabeth City, N.C. Through the church's long-term partnership with Calvary Baptist Church in Bangkok, Thailand, the team ministered to Pakistani refugees, organized a Vacation Bible School, taught GED classes and encouraged missionaries on the international field. Corinth has witnessed the plight of asylum seekers in Thailand for years, and served them well, alongside Calvary's refugee ministry team. This year, however, they were compelled to bring a reporter along with the team so more Baptists could know the stories of Pakistani Christians fleeing violence.

The first of a three-part series on the refugee ministry appears on the front page of this edition. Watch for more articles in the series, plus feature stories on specific aspects of the healthy partnership between Corinth in North Carolina and Calvary in Bangkok. **BR**

10 reasons Southern Baptists should consider a global CP

The Cooperative Program (CP) is the institutional lifeblood of Southern Baptist missions and ministries. The unified giving plan started in 1925 as a solution to the perpetual, but floundering, fundraising campaigns of Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) and state convention entities.

The CP continues to be a powerful sorting mechanism that ensures local church missions offerings enable Baptist entities to fulfill their purpose: help churches saturate the globe with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And yet, I wonder if the CP has one arm tied behind its back. Is our missions mobilizing apparatus operating at its fullest potential?

The SBC has been a domestic corporation since it was founded in 1845, meaning only churches in the United States and its territories may participate, according to Article II of the SBC Constitution. Churches outside the U.S. are free to make financial contributions to entities or conventions – and some do – but they are barred from joining the SBC.

To state the case more directly, the SBC is currently receiving money from some international churches that are giving through conventions, such as the

Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention, but does not allow them to send messengers to the SBC annual meeting.

We're denying non-American churches the ability to link arms with us in our global missions effort, even if they hold Southern Baptist doctrinal distinctives; even if they contribute financially through an existing state or regional convention; even if they are born from International Mission Board (IMB) efforts or led by North American Mission Board field personnel.

Is it time to embrace our Baptist brothers and sisters around the world?

Can we imagine a future where our cooperative effort extends to the farthest reaches of the globe? Will we continue

to work toward a vibrant and diverse convention of churches, no matter their nationality?

Here are 10 reasons why I think we should consider creating pathways for global churches to partner with us through the CP.

1) We believe cooperation is biblical. Southern Baptists have long held two distinct yet complementary New Testament beliefs about local churches: each one is autonomous and cooperative.



SETH BROWN
Guest Column

See CP page 9

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Impacting college campuses with the gospel

It is that time of year again – young people around the state are preparing to go back to school, getting ready to begin a new season of growth and learning in their lives. As this time approaches, I want you to pray for a specific group of university and college students: those about to enter college.

For many, starting college can be a scary time with numerous challenges, new temptations and increased personal decisions to make. For all, it is a time of growth. Here at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, our Collegiate Partnerships Team is daily hard at work to make a spiritual impact on the approximately 150 universities, colleges and community colleges in our state. A goal of our Collegiate Partnerships Team is to have no campus left in our state without a reproducing gospel presence. Currently, we are assisting with ministry on 48 different campuses in North Carolina, but we have many more to reach. Are you willing to challenge your church congregation to learn how you can impact the lives of students attending a community college or a university not too far from you?



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

In our efforts to reach every campus and to create a reproducing gospel presence on each of them, the Collegiate Partnerships Team is working with local churches to help equip them to reach college students. North Carolina Baptists, you must recognize that the colleges and universities around you truly are a mission field. In addition to the large number of American students attending these schools, there are also many international students who left family and friends in order to live here and receive a college education. If you will invest some time in these students by offering friendship and hospitality, inviting them to your home and church, you will see several accept Christ as Savior.

Our Collegiate Partnerships Team wants to challenge you and teach your congregation how to reach these college students for the Lord. To help you with this task, the Collegiate Partnerships Team is conducting a free workshop next month to familiarize churches with the first steps of engaging a college campus with the gospel. The “Reaching College Students” workshop is scheduled for Sept. 16 in Chapel



Hill and will include hands-on training to give participants the skills and experience they will need to begin engaging the colleges, universities or community colleges that are in their own backyard. Learn more about this event at reachingcollegestudents.org.

I give praise to the Lord for what we are achieving together for the advancement of the gospel on college campuses. Will you pray for college students in our state? Please pray not only for the Collegiate Partnerships Team and the ministry of the churches but also for the students who are heading to campus this fall. Pray that the Lord will send us more partners to help reach those who might not otherwise have the opportunity to know Him. Respond to God’s invitation for your involvement in this available missions opportunity.

“Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” – Matthew 9:38. **BR**

Strickland named SEBTS associate VP of Kingdom Diversity Initiatives

By LAUREN PRATT | SEBTS Communications

Walter Strickland was promoted to associate vice president of Kingdom Diversity Initiatives at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) on Aug. 1. Strickland was formerly the special advisor to the president for diversity.

“Having served our school with distinction as a key administrative leader, I am thrilled to appoint him as associate vice president for Kingdom Diversity Initiatives,” said Danny Akin, president of SEBTS.

“God continues to bless Southeastern with a godly and gifted team of faculty and staff. These are exciting days for this Great Commission seminary.”

Kingdom Diversity Initiatives (KDI) began in 2013 as an effort to increase the diversity of underrepresented races, both male and female, among the SEBTS faculty, staff and student population.

Through KDI, SEBTS hopes for both this number and the female student population to be at 20 percent and 35 percent, respectively, by 2022.

Student enrollment was at 18.1 percent for minorities and 26.4 percent for women for the 2016-2017 academic year.

In March, the Kingdom Diversity Missions Initiative (KDMI) was launched in the effort to mobilize a greater number of minority students to fulfill the Great Commission through international minis-

try. KDMI was launched with the desire to bridge the gap of minorities that are unrepresented on mission fields. KDMI offers short-term trips to help students gain experience in overseas mission work and to better understand their role for international ministry.

“I’m eternally grateful for the opportunity to serve the Kingdom at Southeastern. The structural change in my role will



WALTER STRICKLAND

propel the Kingdom Diversity Initiative into greater effectiveness as we strive to reach our goals.”

Strickland also moved from an instructor of theology to assistant professor of systematic theology at SEBTS. In June, he received his doctorate degree from the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. Strickland has also received his master of theology and master of divinity from SEBTS.

Strickland was elected first vice president of the Southern Baptist Convention in June.

“He will serve our president Steve Gaines and our people with grace and wisdom,” said Akin. “Southeastern has been blessed and continues to be blessed by Dr. Strickland’s service as a teacher and administrator.”

Strickland and his wife, Stephanie, have two daughters, Kendra and Kaiya, and one daughter, Hope, who is in heaven. He and his family live in Wake Forest, and attend Imago Dei Church in Raleigh.

Visit kingdomdiversity.sebts.edu. **BR**

Seminary adds full-time counseling professor

By LAUREN PRATT | SEBTS Communications

Kristin Kellen, who has been a part-time assistant professor of biblical counseling, was appointed to a full-time teaching position with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) on Aug. 1.

Kellen received her M.A. in biblical counseling and doctor of philosophy degree in applied theology and biblical counseling from SEBTS in 2015.

“Kristin Kellen is a gifted and gracious biblical counselor that makes the excellent biblical counseling department at SEBTS even stronger,” said SEBTS President Danny Akin. “Her winsome personality makes her a magnet that draws students both to her classes and the coffee shop to learn from this talented lady. One of our own PhD graduates, she is a welcomed addition to our faculty.”

Starting at SEBTS as a student, Kellen is amazed that she has the opportunity to work alongside those that taught her years ago.



KRISTIN KELLEN

“I believe wholeheartedly that this is what God was preparing me for when He brought me to SEBTS a decade ago,” said Kellen. “I’m also honored to be able to teach alongside those who have spent that last decade pouring into my life.”

Keith Whitfield, dean of graduate studies, expressed his excitement of Kellen’s appointment to full-time faculty and the expertise she brings to the biblical counseling programs at SEBTS.

“We are excited to have Dr. Kristin Kellen join Southeastern’s faculty full-time,”

said Whitfield. “She will make a significant contribution to our counseling programs. She is a gifted counselor with biblical and theological depth.”

Kellen, her husband Josh and their one-year-old son David, live in Kittrell, N.C., where they love working on house renovation projects as well as spending time in the mountains.

They attend New Life Baptist Church in Henderson, where they both serve in youth ministry. **BR**

Submissions for Tar Heel Voices

Please send no more than 300 words, along with contact information, to editor@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185. Only one letter from the same writer will be published in a 90-day period. All submissions will be edited by *Recorder* style guidelines. Have questions? Call (919) 847-2127. For church news, staff changes, etc., send submissions to dianna@BRnow.org.

New village offers hope to abandoned children

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

When we have eyes to see, we realize every child deserves a chance.

In the South African city of Johannesburg, up to 50 babies are abandoned each month on the streets, in garbage cans, rivers, fields and landfills.

Through a partnership with a ministry called the Door of Hope, Baptists on Mission (also known as North Carolina Baptist Men; NCBM) has helped rescue as many of these children as possible. Since 1999, the Door of Hope has rescued more than 1,500 infants.

Now the partnership is expanding to include a village where children who are not adopted through the Door of Hope can grow up in a safe and loving Christian environment.

On a farm just outside of Johannesburg, the Door of Hope Village is taking shape.

Over the next several years, volunteers, including many North Carolina Baptists, will be constructing cottages that will house up to six rescued children and house parents at the village.

The Door of Hope Village will be a place where children can live free from the chaos and pain they would normally experience. The village will be a place where love is on display and encounters with Jesus are a reality.

“The No. 1 priority is for a child to be adopted into a forever family,” says Paul Langston, NCBM missions mobilization consultant.

“The village is for the children who aren’t chosen for adoption. Without the Door of Hope Village, there’s no place for the children who aren’t adopted to go.”

Langston oversees the ministry partnership between NCBM and the Door of Hope. Part of his role includes coordinating and facilitating the logistics for missions teams from North Carolina to serve at the Door of Hope Village and other places around the world.

In February of this year, a team from North Carolina was one of the first to begin work at the site where the Door of Hope Village is taking shape. Since then, four other teams from North Carolina have traveled to Johannesburg to work at the village.

In May, a team began making the concrete blocks that will form the walls and structure of the first cottage for house parents and orphans.

Making the bricks is a time-intensive process, Langston said. The concrete is poured into a mold where it must sit for

about a day or two. Then it must be left to cure for about a month.

Langston plans to lead a team to the village in November that should see the completion of the first cottage at the village.

The long-term vision is for the village to include about 70 cottages, as well as a school and a child development center. Children living at the village will be able to receive an education and learn various life skills and occupational trades. Plus, they’ll be brought up in a nurturing Christian environment by their house parents.

Ministry partnerships like the one between NCBM and Door of Hope are possible thanks to the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO). This offering is typically received in September, and it supports a variety of ministries including disaster relief, church planting and missions mobilization projects with various ministry partners in North America and around the world.

The theme for this year’s offering is “Eyes to See,” based upon John 4:35.

“NCMO gifts are making an eternal impact on lives that were literally discarded,” Langston said.

As a former pastor and director of missions, Langston said he has seen firsthand how God has used missions to revitalize churches and their members.

“I’ve seen God use missions involvement to bring new life and renewal to local churches,” Langston said. “Having an external focus is critical for a local church to be the church that God intends it to be.”

N.C. Baptists can support the NCMO by praying, giving and going. Langston encourages those who feel called to go on a short-term missions trip to trust that God will use them, even if they don’t know how.

“Trust that God will use you and your gifts, whatever they are,” Langston says. “You may not even know how God will use you until you are there, but you can rest assured that He will.”

Emergency Chaplains Training Events

Aug. 19: Mental Health First Aid

Sept. 22-23: Group Crisis Intervention (ICISF)

Oct. 13-14: Assisting Individuals in Crisis (ICISF)

See our website for more information:
Echap.org/training



“Without the Door of Hope Village, there’s no place for the children who aren’t adopted to go,” said Paul Langston, missions mobilization consultant for North Carolina Baptists on Mission. (BSC photo)

Langston said there will be plenty of opportunities to serve in Johannesburg with the Door of Hope Village in the future, and many diverse skills will be needed. And the work and ministry being done there is a picture of what Christ has done for us, Langston says.

“You’re taking a child who had no hope because they had literally been dis-

carded, and you’re giving them hope and a brand new life,” Langston said. “That’s a metaphor for what Jesus Christ does for us.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Watch a video about the Door of Hope Village by visiting vimeo.com/channels/ncmo. To learn more about the North Carolina Missions Offering, visit ncmissionsoffering.org.) **BR**

LAURA REESE

WEST AFRICA

Laura Reese is one of many Southern Baptist missionaries that North Carolina Baptists support in West Africa. When she goes out to witness, witch doctors cast spells against the new believers and try to destroy their faith.

If you served in West Africa, wouldn't you want thousands of Christians praying for you and those new believers? Thousands in North Carolina will indeed pray for Laura Reese on Aug. 27. Please join them!

Download the files for **52 Sundays** now at www.ncbaptist.org/52sundays — and lead your entire church to pray every Sunday for your missionaries!

Called

Continued from page 1

“You are the future of the U.S. immigrant,” Joo said to conference participants.

The 17 million Asian-Americans now living in the United States make up 5.6 percent of the nation’s population. North Carolina is the third fastest growing state for these people groups where 300,000 now reside.

The non-Anglo population of the country is expected to grow to 57 percent in the next 40 years, and Asians will be a significant segment of that majority, Joo explained.

Asian-Americans are the bridge between cultures. “You can move back and forth between American and Asian cultures easily,” he said to the audience.

Much like Peter and Paul proclaimed the gospel in different cultural contexts, God can use second generation Asians to spread the gospel in America and in other nations.

Although Asians are a minority in the U.S., they are a majority in the world, representing 60 percent of the world’s population.

“You are the new missions force to unreached people groups. ... God is doing something great among Asian-Americans here.”

The percentage of Christians among Asian-American people groups is much higher than their homelands, Joo said.

“For example, in the U.S. 30 percent of Japanese-Americans are Christians, yet less than one percent of Japanese in Japan are Christians. ...

“God is leading a lot of Asian people

to Christ right here [in the U.S.]”

Religious conversion is more common among second generation Asian-Americans. Within the second generation, 40 percent have a religion different from one in which they were raised.

“Second generations are open, they are seeking, they are hungry to know what is inside you,” Joo told conference attendees.

“We need leaders among Asians,” he said. “With different cultural expectations, we often have disunity among churches for non-biblical reasons. This is a hindrance to raising up leaders in churches.”

Christians from all backgrounds have disagreements and divisions, but Joo called Asian-Americans to follow Paul’s plea in the letter to the church at Corinth: “*Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment*” (1 Corinthians 1:10).

“There are language barriers between generations; there are different cultural expectations,” Joo said.

“First generation pastors often promote cultural traditions – there are many reasons why we divide. ...”

Highlighting the conference theme, “All In,” Joo said, “We want to grow personally, but we want to grow together also. ... If we are All In personally, we will be All In together.”

Leaders were challenged to embrace Jesus’ instructions in Luke 9:23, “*If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*”



Above, circles were formed during the WORD Conference July 7-8 at Caraway Conference Center to discuss church vision and strategy. More than 80 Asian-American church leaders attended the event from 16 churches, representing nine specific people groups: Hmong, Montagnard, Korean, Japanese, Burmese, Lahu, Laotian, Vietnamese and Filipino.



At left, Paul Kim, Asian-American Relations consultant for the Executive Committee of the Southern Baptist Convention and pastor emeritus of Antioch Baptist Church in Cambridge, Mass., addresses the conference. (Contributed photos)

“Taking up your cross, you actually risk your whole life. ... Follow Christ alone – nothing else, not money or fame.”

Joo cited a Pew Research report that shows the median household income of second generation Asian-Americans is higher than the salary of their first generation parents and higher than the typical American household income for all age categories except those above 65.

“Congratulations, you are making more money than your parents and you are making more money than the average American worker.” Joo said they are fulfilling their parents’ dreams, many of whom came to the country as refugees, but they must be careful.

Reading from 1 Timothy 6:9-11, he cautioned them to avoid an unhealthy dependence on money, “*But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which*

plunge men into ruin and destruction. ... But flee from these things ... and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, perseverance and gentleness.”

“Second generation, your job is not to make more money than your parents,” he said.

“Your job is to pursue godliness.”

He challenged Asian-American leaders to live sacrificially for Christ and, “give all you have to Christ.”

For more information visit the BSC site ncbaptist.org/Asian or the SBC site asianbaptists.org. Connect with others on the N.C. Asian American Ministries Facebook page, and tune in to the “NC Asian American Ministries” podcast.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Sammy Joo is a graduate of Handong Global University in Pohang, South Korea, The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He served churches in South Korea and multi-ethnic congregations in the United States as a worship leader, youth pastor and college pastor. Since joining the convention staff in 2007, Joo has served in international student ministry. He began his new role as the Asian ministries consultant this year. Contact him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5562, or sjoo@ncbaptist.org.) **BR**



Exploring God’s Word was part of the two-day WORD Conference.

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Growing number of grandparents become parents again

By DENISE GEORGE | Special to the Recorder

In North Carolina, 98,676 grandparents are primary caregivers for their grandchildren (under age 18) in their homes.

“There is a rising tide of grandparents assuming the role of parents in North Carolina,” states Cheryl Markland, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s senior consultant of childhood evangelism and discipleship.

“Their unique needs for dealing with children being raised in an Internet age is rarely addressed in our churches. In order to fulfill the command to make disciples, churches need to come alongside grandparents with offers of help and hope.”

“The drug abuse of a child’s parents is the number one reason why grandparents are raising grandchildren in North Carolina,” said Sandy Gregory, director of the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM).

The opioid epidemic is raging in the state and is forcing many ill-equipped grandparents to become their grandchildren’s primary caregivers.

This unexpected arrangement can cause tremendous challenges for older adults. In order to help meet the basic needs of North Carolina’s grandparents (focusing on adults 65 and older), Gregory teaches a class on Grandparents Raising Grandchildren, as part of the NCBAM ministry.

“Very few North Carolina churches have programs that focus on these grandparents. It is a great opportunity for the church to step forward, help people and share the love of Christ,” Gregory says.

A growing problem

The problem is increasing, not only in North Carolina, but across the entire United States. Grandparents may or may not qualify for federal or state assistance.

Recognizing the crisis, in May, the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging Chairman, Susan Collins (R-Maine), and Ranking Member Bob Casey (D.Pa.) introduced the Supporting Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Act to create a federal task force charged with supporting grandparents raising grandchildren nationwide, providing critical direction to better coordinate federal programs that would help provide support.

Parenting grandchildren is a tough job that can cause financial, physical, emotional, medical, relational and legal difficulties for older adults in their “empty nest” years.

How the church can help

Church leadership and members of the congregation can be a huge support, help and encouragement to this special, and often overlooked, church group.

- Ask professionals in your congregation to help grandparents work through the maze of medical and legal paperwork they may face as they become primary caregivers for grandchildren.

- Help with finances if child-related needs overwhelm grandparents struggling to survive on a fixed income.

- Set up child care arrangements in the church and/or after-school (if only for two or three hours) to give grandparents a much-needed break.

- Search out church, community and federal programs that can offer help and support.

- Help in practical ways: babysitting, delivering



A growing number of grandparents are raising their grandchildren. Churches can be a part of ministering to those families.

meals, transporting to doctor/counseling appointments, selecting and buying school supplies, etc.

- Stay in close touch with grandparent caregivers, pray for and with them, get them involved in church programs that will help, support and encourage them and their grandchildren.

- Provide seminars, guest speakers and resources that will address some of the many problems they face.

Provide child care in the church during these events.

- Start a grandparent support group that meets on a regular schedule and brings together grandparents rearing grandchildren.

- Hold events or recommend church/community programs that bring grandparents and grandchildren together in fun and meaningful activities.

Jeff Kohns, associate director for operations at Caraway Conference Center and Camp in Sophia, N.C., directs an annual event called Grand Camp for all grandparents and grandchildren.

“The focus of Caraway’s annual summer Grand Camp event is to give opportunities for grandparents to build and strengthen relationships with their grandchildren and to create a legacy,” he said.

“It also seeks to build good relationships so that grandparents can have more of a positive influence on their grandchildren.”

The camp event offers fully-planned and staffed programs.

Some grandparents who attend are raising their grandchildren, but the majority are grandparents who want to spend quality time together.

See page 7 for additional information about this story, along with resources to help.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Denise George, author of 31 books, is co-author of the new Penguin Random House book: *The Lost Eleven: The Forgotten Story of Black American Soldiers Brutally Massacred in World War II*. She is married to Timothy George, founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, Samford University.) **BR**

Hardships often caused when grandparents take responsibility for grandchildren

- **Financial difficulties:** The estimated cost of raising a child from birth through age 17 is \$233,610, not including pregnancy or college-related expenses (Department of Agriculture).
- **Change of lifestyle:** Parenting grandchildren can be unexpected and can interrupt daily schedules, routines and retirement plans/dreams.
- **Age-related health problems:** A grandparent may suffer poor health, chronic illnesses or disabilities that limit the strength and mobility needed to rear a child.
- **Stress and exhaustion:** Caring for a child 24/7 and year-round is stressful, as well as physically and emotionally demanding and exhausting, especially for older grandparents.
- **Complicated medication situations:** A traumatized or grief-stricken child may need specific medical help, medications and counseling. The child may have behavioral problems that are difficult for an older adult to manage.
- **Complicated legal situations:** Legal arrangements might include adoption, guardianship, foster parent status and/or caregiver’s authorization. Adopting a grandchild can be financially-challenging and energy-draining, as well as emotionally difficult.

If your church would like resources or assistance to begin a ministry to grandparents who have become parents, contact Cheryl Markland at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5645, or cmarkland@ncbaptist.org. Sandy Gregory can be reached at (800) 476-3669 or scgregory@bchfamily.org.

Helpful resources

- **NCBAM:** North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry provides help and resources for aging adults 65+ years. The call center connects aging adults with servant volunteers in 4,300 North Carolina churches and communities. For more information, see: ncbam.org/about-us.html#about_ncbam or call (877) 506-2226 (Monday through Friday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.)
- For information on programs that can provide support, resources, and assistance to “grandfamilies,” see: grandfamilies.org/Portals/0/State%20Fact%20Sheets/Grandfamilies-Fact-Sheet-North-Carolina.pdf.
- To learn more about the Caraway “Grand Camp” event for all grandparents and grandchildren, see: caraway.org/grandcamp, or call (336) 629-2374. The next Grand Camp is scheduled for Sun., June 24, 2018.



By the numbers

In North Carolina, of the 98,676 grandparents who are rearing grandchildren:

- 62,875 (63.7%) are under age 60.
- 57,331 (58.1%) are in the workforce.
- 24,570 (24.9%) live in poverty.
- 27,298 (27.7%) have a disability.
- 30,491 (30.9%) are unmarried.

In the United States, almost three million grandparents are raising their grandchildren. The top reasons grandparents are becoming primary caretakers for their grandchildren are drug addiction, domestic violence and family breakdown. Other reasons include neglect, mental illness, child abuse, abandonment, imprisonment and death of a parent.

Drug abuse in North Carolina

Drug abuse is skyrocketing in North Carolina. Wilmington ranks number one as America’s worst city for opioid abuse. One out of every three opioid prescriptions in the state are abused. In 2015, 738 North Carolinians died from prescription opioid abuse. The state has also seen a tremendous increase in heroin deaths, one person dying each day from heroin abuse in 2015.

Children whose parents abuse drugs, often experience neglect, abuse and serious trauma that can lead to a lifetime of injury, depression and other mental health issues.

It’s very simple!

- **Someone joined your church from a non-Baptist background.**
- They’re not familiar with Baptist life – how we work together in missions, how we train seminary students, how we plant churches, how we reach students, how we equip leaders.
- The *Biblical Recorder* can help.
- A **free 1-year subscription** is available to each new church member who came to Christ or joined a N.C. Baptist church in the past two years.

Isn’t that simple? Send us your list. Contact our circulation manager, Liz, at (919) 459-5693 or Liz@BRnow.org.

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FAITH&FANDOM

N.C. pastor helps geek culture find God

Definition: Fandom refers to a subculture of like-minded individuals that spend a significant amount of time on one particular subject, such as Batman or Dr. Who. It could refer to an individual, a show or a genre. A fandom could also include a hobby, like certain crafts or cars.

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

With the blockbusters “Wonder Woman,” “Spider-Man: Homecoming” and “Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2” topping box offices this summer, there’s no question of the popularity of mythic stories of good versus evil.

Hector Miray, a Lumberton, N.C., pastor, uses his love of Batman and Dr. Who (his personal fandom) to reach the geek culture at conventions geared toward fans of superheroes, comic books, anime, video games and more. “I feel like our entertainment – what we connect with – says a lot about who we are,” Miray told participants of a session at Raleigh Supercon in July. “What you’re entertained by kind of reflects your heart, to some extent.”

Miray, who serves as the Lumberton campus pastor of Vertical Church, is the co-author of four books of devotionals using video games, comics, TV shows and other forms of entertainment to relay biblical truths. His first book, *Faith & Fandom: Finding God in Sci-Fi, Superheroes & Video Games*, was written after he attended Heroes Convention in Charlotte for three years and saw little Christian presence. The book was released in 2014 and has been followed by three more books in the series. That first book resulted in a job writing scripts for an online network called ClevverMovies. A producer at Clevver read Miray’s first book and hired him to write for “Fanboy Faceoff,” a show pitting characters against one another (ex. Batman vs. Captain America or Quicksilver vs. The Flash). “I was the nerd behind the curtain,” Miray joked.

Writing scripts provided the means to support Miray’s presence in exhibit halls at various conventions for the second and third year of touring the shows. No one had

to buy anything at his booth, but being in the exhibit hall opened conversations he would not have been able to have.

LOVE OF COMICS

Miray found Christ at age 12 and discovered comic books as a youth.

“There’s usually something within our entertainment that connects with us ... characters [or] stories,” he said. “There are things in [it] that you connect with, that speak to you. That’s why you watch them. That’s why you read them. I believe personally that what we involve ourselves in can kind of help shape us, or it can be something that helps guide us in where we are going in life.”

Miray’s youth pastor introduced him to Children’s Bible Ministries (CBM), a national ministry working with children and youth. In N.C., CBM (childrensbibleministries.net) runs Camp Grace in Fairmont and New Life Camp in Raleigh. He attended Carolina Bible College in Fayetteville before finishing his bachelor’s degree online at Master’s International in Indiana. He started working full time at Camp Grace his sophomore year and was there nine years directing teen outreach and discipleship programs. He even taught Bible classes in public schools. He also worked with the University of North Carolina – Pembroke for more than 11 years reaching college students. He started a campus church with Vertical Church and the No Campus Left movement with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina before moving to the main church campus in Lumberton. This summer, the church went through five weeks of a blockbuster sermon series, which Miray helped develop.

They started Father’s Day with “The Fast and the Furious” and included Wonder Woman, “Captain America,” “The Princess Bride” and “Back to the Future.”



Miray serves on CBM’s board.

His wife, Danielle, works as a respiratory therapist and director of clinical education for Robeson Community College. The couple has three girls, ages four to seven.

SEARCHING FOR TRUTH

Looking at Deuteronomy 4:29 and Proverbs 8:17, Miray said people who are searching for truth will find it.

“I don’t ever think [there] should [be] a point where you feel like you have to keep a part of what you’re passionate about separate or hidden from the spiritual,” Miray said. “For me, I think there are a lot of lessons, a lot of truths, that we can learn in the entertainment that we see.”

He encourages fans to be part of a church too because he believes being part of a healthy body of believers “is essential to growth” and extends their family.

At conventions, he either does a full chapel service with a geek theme or just hosts a discussion, like at the Raleigh Supercon. He usually has a booth that has art, T-shirts and books. Having the booth allows him to talk to people about their fandoms and hopefully steer them closer to God.

In his books, he writes about some controversial things. He has devotionals that use “Deadpool,” “Breaking Bad” and “Grand Theft Auto.”

“There’s never going to be anything that’s going to fit completely to standards of holiness or standards of righteousness that is in this world on its own,” he said. Even in the Bible, there are many stories of violence.

“I’d rather look for the good in the broken to help draw back to that,” Miray said.

Miray encourages fans to find things in their entertainment that are encouraging. Look for truth, beauty, etc., but also be cautious that our entertainment might also lead to division. He references Romans 14 about being a stumbling block.

“We live in a world where if we’re going to ignore everything that disagrees with where we stand and believe, we’re going to ignore the whole world,” he said. “If it causes you to stumble, you need to step back and be cautious. I don’t ever want to feel like I need to hide anything I’m doing.”

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HECTOR MIRAY MEETS FAVORITE DR. WHO CHARACTER RIVER SONG, A.K.A. ALEX KINGSTON.

"I'D RATHER LOOK FOR THE GOOD IN THE BROKEN ..." — HECTOR MIRAY

Instead, Miray would rather discuss why he watches something. "Sometimes I'm wrong," he admits. "In all reality, we are all struggling. We're all trying to connect with each other."

Miray's plan includes attending 28 conventions this year to spread seeds of the gospel among as many fans as possible.

It was common for Jesus to share stories to relay His messages. The Bible is full of stories and proverbs to illustrate points of a message.

"I think that if you go into the stories and the fandoms that you are involved in looking for spiritual connection, I think you'll find it," said Miray, but people shouldn't force those ideas on a story.

In the "Matrix" stories, Miray said the authors wrote the movies to be a biblical allegory. With Superman, Miray said there are many similarities between the Man of Steel and the Messiah.

In a Batman comic, *The Chalice*, when Batman finds the holy grail, another character deciphers a message from God in the binary code of the cup. Miray used clips at the Raleigh Supercon from Dr. Who, Guardians of the Galaxy, Firefly and Star Wars to relate story after story that had spiritual elements in them.

Before Raleigh's Supercon, Miray had spent the week teaching at a science-fiction inspired Bible camp.

As part of one of the lessons, he shared a clip from Guardians of the Galaxy to 9- and 10-year olds and related it to when John said that there was no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends. The children knew who the character Groot was, but the idea of Jesus and His sacrifice was not as well known.

"If you seek God, you will find Him," Miray repeated. "Don't be afraid or ashamed to let your fandoms be a gateway to that."

Even Joss Whedon, a devout atheist known for "Buffy the Vampire Slayer" and most recently "The Avengers" and "The Avengers: Age of Ultron," recognizes people of faith need a connection. It was actually Whedon's short-lived "Firefly" TV show that was canceled during its first season that inspired Miray's foray into writing his first devotions, which led to his first book.

"The entertainment that is made is a reflection of people's hearts," Miray said. "There are recurring themes of truth and faith that occur through almost every fandom."

"I really feel like whatever's good in me has come from pursuing God. When I'm left on my own, I make terrible life choices. I don't want to be that." **BR**

Hector Miray, a pastor in Lumberton, N.C., leads a session to help find God in the geek culture at the recent Raleigh Supercon.

CP Continued from page 1

Those biblical truths apply in both Charleston and Chiang Mai.

2) The CP is effective. Our unified plan of giving, along with the entities supported by it, is often called the most effective missions mobilizing force in the world. Why should U.S. borders restrict our ability to expand the cooperative effort?

3) The CP could benefit from international people and resources. International congregations have biblical gifts, talents and resources just like American churches. It shouldn't matter if Baptists come from Frankfurt or Franklin. Their voices, votes and contributions would be invaluable.

4) The CP could highlight the value of smaller global churches. When international churches come to mind, the image that follows is often that of a poor congregation meeting under a mangrove tree. We recoil at the idea of accepting their money. But the size of a congregation's CP gift doesn't diminish its value; it increases (2 Corinthians 8:1-15). Can you imagine the joy a small international congregation would feel knowing their gifts were amplified through the CP for the sake of global missions?

5) The CP is built for unity amid difference. Today's cultural, generational and theological differences among Southern Baptists have been on display recently. Yet, nearly all SBC churches from Seattle to Sarasota continue to happily cooperate with one another through the CP for the sake of the gospel. That's what it was built for. The CP could flourish with a global network of churches.

6) A global CP could accelerate international missions. Pioneer Baptist churches, often aided by our missionaries overseas, must create from scratch their own networks and conventions. Why force them to reinvent the wheel of cooperative ministry? Let's enable those groups to plug into our existing infrastructure and enjoy the missions resources, theological education and diverse fellowship enjoyed by our American churches.

7) Next generation Baptists think globally. Do we want to get younger Baptists excited and involved? Make a way for them to partner with local churches around the world to see the gospel go to all nations. In fact, nearly every young Baptist I've spoken to about this subject mistakenly thought the SBC was already open to global churches. They obviously want to be involved in a world-wide cooperative effort.

8) The CP needs an expanded vision. In the first 50

years of its existence (1925-'75), the CP grew by leaps and bounds. The number of cooperating conventions more than doubled from 16 to 33, but growth has almost completely stalled for nearly 30 years. We've added only two state or regional conventions since 1989, bringing the total to 42.

9) A global CP is doable. Is it feasible for every international Baptist church to partner with the SBC? No way. There are security risks, logistical challenges and a thousand other obstacles. But administrative concerns should be secondary to our first principles and a commitment to see the gospel go forward. It will take hard work, but we can do it. Many international Baptist conventions could integrate almost immediately and operate much like our state conventions. Associations in other areas of the globe would take longer to develop. Online or representative voting could enable them to participate in the SBC annual meeting.

10) A global CP is already here. Our conventions are becoming increasingly internationalized, because the nations are coming to us, and by God's grace, we're sharing the gospel and planting churches among them. There are Southern Baptist churches all over America that hold services in various languages and embrace international cultures, yet they already give through our state conventions and send messengers to the annual meeting. We're already becoming a culturally global convention of churches right here in the U.S. Let's embrace our brothers and sisters around the world, and steward the coming changes well.

A final note

What I'm suggesting here is neither simple nor easy. There are real obstacles that stand in the way of a functional and God-glorifying global convention of churches. I solicited feedback on a draft of this article from SBC leaders whom I respect deeply. Some had objections, many of them missiological in nature, and those concerns deserve the most careful attention. I've wrestled with these ideas, and I won't pretend as if this proposal is perfect. Even still, I offer these 10 thoughts to promote discussion about the CP, because it is needed. Given the high-caliber thinkers and leaders currently at home in the SBC, I have every reason to believe that with God's help we can chart a path forward in a globalized world that utilizes, energizes and modernizes the incredible tool we've inherited called the Cooperative Program. **BR**

Court signals religious freedom victory for artist

By **DIANA CHANDLER** | Baptist Press

A self-employed evangelical Christian photographer can reject job requests based on her religious beliefs against same-sex marriage, a Wisconsin county court and government officials have agreed.

Judge Richard Niess of the Dane County Circuit Court agreed Aug. 1 to sign an order within coming weeks signifying that city and state public accommodation laws do not apply to photographer and blogger Amy Lynn Lawson, the sole owner of Amy Lynn Photography Studio in Madison, the *Wisconsin State Journal* reported. Lawson works on commission and does not have a physical storefront.

The ruling has no bearing on similar religious liberty cases of two other business owners represented by Lawson's attorneys, Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), as those businesses are based outside Wisconsin.

Lawson filed suit against the City of Madison and the

Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development in March after a customer complained about a statement on Lawson's website refusing to photograph same-sex weddings, according to ADF. Such ceremonies counter Lawson's religious belief that marriage is between one man and one woman, Lawson said on her site. Photographing them, she noted, would infringe upon her right to control her individual artistic expression.

While Lawson was never sued nor charged with a crime, she feared the ramifications of the city and state laws, dropped the statement from her website and began refusing all wedding photography requests, ADF said in a description of the case on its website.

The case is still listed as open on the Dane County Circuit Court website, and will not be officially closed until Niess signs an order that city and state attorneys are currently drafting to specify that Lawson is exempt from the statutes. **BR**

Thousands attend church-sponsored festival in Rocky Mount

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

Evangelism was a central focus of the ninth annual Community For Unity Festival in Rocky Mount on July 29, attended by an estimated 3,000 people.

Started by Shelton Daniel, senior pastor of Greater Joy Baptist Church in the city, the festival has become a popular event each year.

“Every parking space is taken! You’ll have to go find a place on one of the side streets,” a parking attendant told visitors arriving at Boone Street Park to attend the festival.

This year, more than a dozen local churches took part, several of them affiliated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), as is Greater Joy.

Many local businesses and government agencies took part and provided free food, games, music, job counseling, crime prevention information and health checks on blood pressure, diabetes and other conditions – all offered in scores of tents, stands and tables.

North Carolina Baptists on Mission volunteers (also known as Baptist Men) provided free dental care to 20 patients through their mobile, bus-mounted clinic parked at the edge of the park.

Local church members could be seen praying with people at several tables. Michael Cloer, pastor of Englewood Baptist Church in the city, prayed with a man after talking with him in front of the church’s tables where about 100 members helped serve free food, cotton candy and popcorn. Members also handed out packets of evangelistic materials.

“We’re just trying to show the love of Jesus in a tangible way,” said Cloer, sporting a red promotional T-shirt publicizing the festival. “It was the first year we’ve been invited, and we were so eager to take part,” he added.

“This year we tried to get all area churches to take part so we can better evangelize this vast number of people who come to the festival,” said festival coordinator Shelton Daniel. “We’re also trying to take an approach of doing some good evangelizing this year and really trying to collaborate with the churches,” he added.

“We have invited more local businesses to take part and this is our largest year by far,” said Daniel, who organized a similar festival event for 11 years in Halifax County before he moved to Rocky Mount to start Greater Joy Baptist Church with support from North Carolina Baptists through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Offering.

Greater Joy has since had to move to a larger building, now holding two Sunday

morning services. Daniel has also started several other local churches, including a rapidly growing one in Roanoke Rapids. He estimates he preaches to more than 1,200 people every Sunday now.

Greater Joy took over the building vacated by Word Tabernacle Church, who moved into a much larger facility at the edge of the city to better accommodate its 2,000-plus members. Word Tabernacle has helped sponsor the annual festival for several years.

“We believe in the collaboration of churches,” said James Gailliard, senior pastor of Word Tabernacle, also affiliated with the BSC. “We believe there are so many people in Rocky Mount who don’t know the Lord, unless our churches come together and collectively work on getting to them, I don’t think we can effectively reach them,” he said.

“No one church can get to them all. We need different preaching styles, different worship styles,” Gailliard added.

As Word Tabernacle began cooperating with other Rocky Mount churches, Gailliard said they focused on “foundational doctrines we care about the most: the only way to God is through Jesus, salvation by grace alone and the inerrancy of scripture. All that secondary stuff we don’t get involved with, because we feel that people need Jesus.”

He acknowledged that he has been criticized for saying it, but said, “I still feel that in Rocky Mount, Satan still has the largest church, and we have to do something about. It’s clear in scripture that when the world sees you together, there will be confidence that God sent Jesus, so this unity is necessary.”

For several years, Greater Joy and Word Tabernacle churches have helped sponsor Bible-focused classes, led by the BSC’s Fruitland Baptist Bible College in Rocky Mount. This year, a Fruitland class on biblical counseling was held in Word Tabernacle Church in cooperation with the state convention and North Roanoke Baptist Association. **BR**



Michael Cloer, from left, senior pastor of Englewood Baptist Church; Shelton Daniel, senior pastor of Greater Joy Baptist Church; James Gailliard, senior pastor of Word Tabernacle Church; and Richard Gurganus, senior pastor, Church on the Rise, with three campuses in Rocky Mount and Nashville, were part of the recent Community for Unity event in Rocky Mount.



Each year the Community For Unity event draws together churches and businesses in Rocky Mount to help their community. (BSC photos by Mike Creswell)

Prideful Distractions

*“Do not love the world... the pride of life
... is not of the Father”
(1 John 2:15-16, NKJV).*

Chuck Colson found out the hard way what surrendering to temptation and the sin of the pride of life can do to someone. Colson graduated from Brown University’s law school, served as a Marine captain, had a successful law practice and became the youngest administrative assistant in the U.S. Senate. Eventually, he was appointed special counsel to President Richard Nixon.

Known as Nixon’s “hatchet-man,” Colson was a prideful, hard-nosed, tough, I-can-do-it-myself kind of leader. Despite all his accomplishments, Colson later testified that he felt empty inside. He eventually left Washington and returned to his private law firm just prior to the disclosure of the Watergate scandal.

Colson came to Christ just before being incarcerated for seven months on Watergate-related charges. Colson’s prison experience was life changing.

After his release, Colson set his heart on serving Christ and founded a non-profit ministry called Prison Fellowship. He spent the rest of his life developing his prison ministry and teaching on the Christian life and worldview.

Colson discovered the pride of life leads a person to self-destruct. He also learned that only Christ can deliver someone from the pride of life and give them true peace and purpose.

In the text above, the term “pride

of life” refers to the act of trusting in one’s own power and intelligence, thus ignoring the wisdom and laws of God. At the heart of the term is extreme arrogance and false hope in worldly wisdom and strength.

If there ever was a day that the Church was guilty of this sin, it is today. We are often quick to boast about our large churches, numerous congregations, baptism or decision numbers and our great accomplishments. We must admit the truth – we have forsaken the wisdom and power of God through our staunch dependence on pragmatism.

We have worshipped the god of self – building our own kingdoms and lifting up Christian celebrities to almost rock-star status – all the while forsaking God’s standards of success.

Moreover, we are guilty of depending on church programs and even political and social systems to change our culture. We demonstrate our independence of God by our prayerlessness. Most certainly, God is not pleased, and we must repent now!

The pride of life is not from the Father, and it is time to humble ourselves before our Holy God. It does not start with someone else. It begins with me. Are you preoccupied with prideful distractions?

(EDITOR’S NOTE – *Chris Schofield is director of the Office of Prayer for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. For more information you can reach him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5514, or cschofield@ncbaptist.org.*)



CHRIS SCHOFIELD

Betsy Bolick: small enough for a big God

By LIZ TABLAZON | BR Staff Writer

As a young girl growing up in Boone, N.C., Betsy Bolick often wrote in her journal about not being “normal enough, pretty enough, tall enough or funny enough.”

Today she leads a nonprofit organization named Small Enough Ministries (*besmallenough.org*). Now an adult, Bolick seeks to tell others what she has learned: “The Lord told me, ‘I have made you small enough for the purpose that I have for you – so that I can be big.’”

Bolick was born with sacral agenesis, which causes abnormal fetal spine development. She is missing calf muscles and three parts of her lower sacrum, has no feeling in her feet and, growing up, had no control of her bladder. She wore diapers until she was 13. Pain and fatigue continue to be part of her daily life.

Bolick realized she was different when she was six years old, she told the *Biblical Recorder* in an interview. She recalled walking around in a K-mart, wearing shorts, when another little girl approached her and asked, “What’s wrong with you?”

“I remember thinking, ‘Well nothing’s wrong with me. I’m my dad’s little princess. I’m perfect,’” she said. “I remember going home and looking at my twin’s legs and thinking, ‘Those don’t look like mine.’”

So she began to hide. She stopped wearing shorts. Bolick started to believe she was unworthy of affection, a burden she carried in secret. Bolick grew up in a Christian home and was raised by parents devoted to the Lord. She knew the Bible but said she “couldn’t reconcile the God of the Bible with the God of my life.”

“I was always the one in the hospital, and I was always the one having surgeries,” she said. “I couldn’t get past Genesis 1. If we’re created in His image and it’s very good, then why isn’t there anything good about me? I really started to believe this lie that God hated me.

“The words of the world became what I believed about myself: that I was ugly, that I was deformed, that I was broken.”

Bitterness took root and grew in her heart, and Bolick’s perception of herself turned into her reality. After being teased for wearing diapers one day in middle school, she went home and cried, “Lord, do You even see me?”

“It says in Genesis 16 that when Hagar’s in the wilderness, the Lord comes and He rescues her, and she says, ‘Show You are the God who sees me.’ In Psalm 18, it says that He comes down from on high to rescue us, the cries of His people reach His ears. I was just crying out to the Lord, ‘rescue me from this,’”

she said. One morning that same year, for the first time in 13 years, Bolick woke up with a dry diaper.

“I never regularly wore diapers again after that,” she said. “I knew that God saw me and that He loved me. My bladder’s not perfect, not anywhere close, but that wasn’t my prayer. My prayer was that He would see me.”

A platform for God’s glory

Bolick’s journey to publicly sharing her testimony took a few detours. When she started college at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Va., she chose nursing as her major with hopes of helping people like herself. She knew, however, that God was calling her to ministry.

“No, I don’t want to do it,” Bolick remembered thinking. However, she couldn’t pass a single test in nursing, so she switched to psychology. Still, it wasn’t the place for her.

At the end of a speech she gave for a class, her professor approached her and said, “That was a good speech, but you don’t belong here. You belong in ministry, and I think you know that.”

She left the psychology program that very day and transferred to religion with a specialization in women’s ministry. Once she answered the call to share her story, doors started opening, and more people asked to hear it.

“For somebody that was so angry to be different, I thank the Lord every day that He’s given me this platform to say to people, ‘Let God use your pain for a purpose.’ Jesus learned obedience from what He suffered. Why would we be any different?” Bolick said. “I wouldn’t trade my story for anything.”

Bolick later earned a master’s degree in church leadership and ethics from John Brown University and is currently enrolled at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) to pursue a degree in professional counseling. Prior to studying at SEBTS, she served as the women’s ministry director at Charleston Southern University.

Denise O’Donoghue, director of biblical womanhood at Academy 31 in Raleigh, taught Bolick at SEBTS. She said Bolick’s enthusiasm for ministering to women made her stand out among students. In an email to the *Recorder*, O’Donoghue said, “She has a heart and a passion to encourage women in their walk with the Lord. I also think that one of the first things that struck me about Betsy was her total commitment to follow God to seminary, even though it meant relocating and giving up a great job to come. That can be a very scary thing for a single individual, but Betsy knew what the Lord desired of her and was obedient.”



Betsy Bolick’s Small Enough Ministries allows her to travel and speak to various groups about her story and how God has worked in her. (Contributed photo)

Bolick also serves part-time at Perkinsville Baptist Church in Boone, leading the women’s ministry and special events.

Seth Norris, pastor of Perkinsville Baptist, said she brings “an authentic joy” to the staff and church family, as well as a renewed sense of urgency for the Great Commission.

“She is a compassionate soul who would give every hour of her day away to others if she could,” he said in an email to the *Recorder*. “Betsy has a heart for the least of these because there have been many seasons in her life when she felt like the least, but fortunately, she chose to follow a Savior who is so much stronger and bigger than any of us. ... There isn’t one square inch of her ministry that isn’t influenced by her testimony.”

When she’s not working at Perkinsville, Bolick runs Small Enough Ministries, which seeks to “teach and train women of all ages about the power of God’s restoration and redemption.” She partners with Perkinsville to disciple women, mentoring and challenging them to use their stories for the glory of God and to reach people with the gospel.

“Betsy lives a life that it oriented toward the Great Commission and always challenges others to do the same,” Norris said. She and her sister host a weekly Bible study with female students at Appalachian State University. She discipled a couple of the students one-on-one, meeting together regularly and journeying through Scripture.

Small Enough also creates opportunities for Bolick to travel and speak to churches, women’s events and students. It serves as a platform for her to share her story and profess God’s work in her life, which she roots in two passages: 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 and Acts 20:24.

“When sacral agenesis gets me down, and I feel discouraged by it and the enemy is getting victory in it, I think, ‘wait a minute. This carries an eternal weight of glory that outweighs all the pain and all the brokenness that I feel,’” she said. “And when we die to self, that means that even the things that hurt us die too. ... I don’t count my life of value, and I fight that in my flesh because He gets that. It’s a ransomed life.”

Bolick’s upcoming speaking engagements include women’s ministry events in South Carolina this September. **BR**

CHURCH NEWS



Huggins Memorial Baptist Church, Harkers Island

The members of Huggins Memorial Baptist Church, Harkers Island, celebrated a note burning service June 25. From left: Bob West, Guion Hardy, David Adams, Charles Chadwich and Pete and Vera Ellington. Adams, who is the pastor of the church, preached from Psalm 37:23 with a sermon titled “The Steps of a Good Man are Ordered by the Lord.” The church paid off its land debt of \$50,000. A marker was also dedicated to the Ellingtons for their gift of paving the parking lot.

OPPORTUNITY CORNER



Chapel services at Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest are open to visitors. Speakers include seminary faculty as well as pastors and leaders from a variety of states. Chapel is held every Tuesday and Thursday at 10:30 a.m. when classes are in session, beginning Aug. 17.

Special chapel services are occasionally held on Wednesday. Services are open to the public.

Visit sebts.edu/news-and-events/chapel/default.aspx. Check the schedule for special services and for a current listing of speakers.

LifeWay Christian Resources is offering free classes at their stores this fall. The Bible Journaling Workshop will be held Tues., Aug. 22. This workshop event is designed to introduce and encourage the practice of Bible journaling as a unique way of spending time in God's Word through studying and memorizing scripture. The Apologetics Workshop will be held Tues., Sept. 19. Participants will tackle the question of belief and come to understand more about their faith, so they are better equipped to defend and share it. "What Bible Is Right for You?" workshop will be held Tues., Oct. 10. The event is designed to walk



people through the decision making process of determining what type of Bible is right for them as well as which translation. All classes will be offered twice a day, one at 10 a.m. and another at six p.m. Each will last one hour. Call your local store with questions: Burlington, Cary, Charlotte, Fayetteville, Gastonia, Greensboro, Hickory, Pineville, Raleigh, Rocky Mount, Wilmington and Winston-Salem.



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) is hosting Inside-Out Sunday School training. The training is designed to equip Sunday School leaders, church staff and pastors around making disciples in Sunday School and Bible study groups.

BSC 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. Participants will gain a new perspective on Sunday School that focuses on growing and making disciples – not just filling seats. The training is free.

Opportunities for training:

- **Aug. 26** – Mount Vernon Baptist Church, Boone;
- **Sept. 16** – Mount Olive Baptist Church, Bolivia;
- **Sept. 19** – Stanleyville Baptist Church, Winston-Salem;
- **Sept. 28** – Christ Community Church, Huntersville;
- **Oct. 9** – Greater Joy Baptist Church, Rocky Mount;
- **Oct. 12** – Corinth Baptist Church, Elizabeth City;
- **Oct. 28** – West Canton Baptist Church.

Visit ncbaptist.org/insideout.



On Aug. 26, Anderson University and the South Carolina Baptist Convention are sponsoring "The Call," a one-day conference designed to help high school and college students explore God's call on their lives. NewSpring Church interim senior pastor Clayton King and The Church at Cherrydale pastor, Matt

Rogers, will be the featured speakers at the event.

There will be a variety of workshops offered, relating to various areas of exploring the participants' life purpose and/or possible vocation. Registration is \$10 per student and includes a T-shirt and lunch. Visit callconference.org.



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is hosting a Retirement Seminar, Aug. 31 from 9 a.m.-12 p.m. at Buncombe Baptist Association in Asheville. Developing a compensation package for pastors and church staff can seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Consultant Davis Blount will help participants and churches develop a compensation plan that adequately provides for the needs of

those who serve. The seminar is designed for pastors, ministers, financial administrators, treasurers, church committees and other interested lay leaders. Topics will include: compensation planning, the church retirement plan, managing designated funds, reporting charitable giving and other financial topics for churches. The seminar is free of charge. Visit ncbaptist.org/index.php?id=2191.



The Baptist Children's Homes of N.C. is hosting the 58th annual Western Area Conference Sept. 7 at Broyhill Home in Clyde. Cottage tours, live gospel singing and a free barbecue meal will be served.

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

Submissions

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

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OPPORTUNITY CORNER



Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina is hosting its Saturday Friends of Children Workdays at its statewide locations this fall. Participants of all ages are invited to paint, plant and care for the campuses. Participants are also encouraged to prayer walk the campuses and pray for the children and staff throughout

the day. Tours are available and lunch is free. Upcoming workdays include: Sept. 9 at Mills Home in Thomasville; Sept. 16, Kennedy Home in Kinston; Sept. 23, Camp Duncan in Aberdeen; Oak Ranch in Broadway; and Sept. 30, Cameron Boys Camp, Cameron. Visit bchfamily.org/involved/friends.



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is hosting Reaching College Students, a two-hour event focused on familiarizing church leaders with the first steps of engaging a college campus with the gospel.

With an interactive learning approach, the first hour will focus on key principles necessary for adopting a campus. The second hour will allow participants

to immediately practice these steps of engagement while exploring the campus with a member of the Collegiate Partnerships Team.

There are two opportunities to attend: Sept. 16, N.C. Study Center, Chapel Hill; or Nov. 7, Koury Convention Center, Greensboro. The event is free, but participants are asked to register at reaching-collegestudents.org.



Three fall regional gatherings are planned as part of N.C. Baptist Aging Ministry's AAIM outreach (Aging Adults Innovating Ministry). AAIM events seek to strengthen ministries to aging adults. The theme for the fall gatherings will be "Come as You Are." Each event will

feature special speakers, music, regional highlights and a round-table discussion. Cost is \$10 and includes lunch. The gatherings will be held Sept. 25 in Rocky Mount, Oct. 17 in Thomasville and Oct. 19 in Asheville. Register at ncbam.org/events or call (877) 506-2226.



Fort Caswell is hosting "A Time to Harvest" several dates from September through October. The Fall Coastal Adult Retreats are three-day, two-night programs designed to bring groups of retired and semi-retired adults together for fun break-out sessions, inspiring worship,

personal growth, a relaxing change of scenery and delicious meals. There are several dates to choose from: Sept. 11-13, Sept. 18-20, Sept. 25-27, Oct. 2-4, Oct. 9-11 or Oct. 16-18. Cost is \$155 per person and includes lodging and five meals. Visit fortcaswell.com/projects/timetoharvest/.

Woman's Missionary Union of N.C. is hosting SHINE Day of Renewal Sept. 30 at Camp Mundo Vista with the theme "I Wanna Love Like That." Women are invited to come for a day of renewal, refreshment and recharging. Child care is provided. Cost is \$25 per adult and includes lunch, or \$5 per child. Visit wmunc.org/events.



The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is sponsoring Scorecard, a one-day event that will answer important questions about youth and children's ministries. Does your church have a shared vision for making disciples from infants through senior high? Are your parents equipped to be the primary disciple-makers in the home?

Participants will answer these questions and more, as they learn how to develop a strategic ministry plan with

checkpoints that will help measure spiritual growth in children and youth. Scorecard also includes specific ways the church can partner with parents to disciple their children at home.

Events will be held Tues., Oct. 3 at Spencer Baptist Church, Spindale; Thurs., Oct. 5 at Front Street Baptist Church, Statesville; and Thurs., Oct. 19 at Enon Baptist Church, Oxford. Cost is \$25 per person and includes lunch. A special group rate of \$100 for five leaders is also available. Visit ncbaptist.org/scorecard.



The Baptist State Convention (BSC) is hosting Leadership Development Equipping Track Four "Conflict Coaching and Mediation," Oct. 5-6 at the BSC chapel in Cary. The training will provide participants the tools they need in order to be an effective coach and mentor to lead-

ers, so they can achieve their God-given potential and goals. Participants will also discover the difference between coaching and mentoring.

Cost is \$95 for training facilitators and includes both days or \$25 for leadership training on Oct. 5 only.

Visit BRnow.org

August 20

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

August 27

A Passion to Share the Gospel

Focal passage: 2 Corinthians 5:11, 14-21

When someone has passion about something, you can usually identify what that passion is in a matter of moments. Walk into a neighbor's house and see what adorns their living room – are there pictures of grandchildren? Mounted deer heads? Antiques? Sports paraphernalia?

Listen to a person's conversation and hear what they talk about the most (perhaps it's golf, money, vacation, work or their faith).

We talk about and make much over the things that we love. If we are passionate about something, we'll talk about it.

Paul was a passionate man, but his passion was for the Lord Jesus Christ and to make Him known. God has given us all unique personalities, talents and gifts, but regardless, He expects us to share the gospel.

If you are not excited and passionate about sharing the gospel, I challenge you to spend more time thinking about what the gospel actually is!

First, Paul was motivated to share the gospel by the “*fear of the Lord*” (2 Corinthians 5:11). Paul wasn't saying that we should be afraid of God, but that because we have so much awe (respect) for God, we should be obedient to do what He

has asked us to do. Moreover, we respect God because of what He has done for us. After all, it is “*Christ's love that compels us*” (2 Corinthians 5:14), and “*we no longer live for ourselves*” (2 Corinthians 5:15) as Christians.

If God has done so much for us, our love for Him and our love for others should lead us to seek to persuade others to be reconciled to God.

After all, God has given us a “*ministry of reconciliation*” (2 Corinthians 5:18). To reconcile means to bring two parties together into harmony.

A while back, I had the opportunity to intervene in a family dispute. There were two members of a family who were estranged. I love both of them, and God was able to use me to say something to one that caused him to reach out to his relative. As a result, they were reconciled and are again communicating with one another.

It was joy to me to see this happen, but it's an even greater joy when we are instrumental in practicing our “*ministry of reconciliation*” (sharing the gospel) and seeing a rebellious sinner be reconciled to God.



DAVID CROWTHER
Pastor,
Mount Olive Baptist
Church, Pittsboro

Focal passage: Mark 5:1-2, 8-15, 18-20

There is something very exciting about going on a foreign mission trip. It seems adventurous and perhaps even risky.

We may be tempted to think that we are being bolder for Jesus when we share Christ in a far-away land.

From our perspective, it may seem much less exciting to walk over to the guy across the street whose dogs keep you up at night and tell him about Christ.

And, though you've got some friend or family member that needs to know Jesus, you break out in a cold sweat every time you consider talking to them about putting their faith in the Lord.

We find a similar apathy to local witnessing in Mark's

Gospel.

Mark tells us about an intense encounter between Jesus and a man who was possessed by demons.

While there are many interesting details about this encounter, we find that Jesus drove the demons from this man and that just like many contemporary believers, the man had his sights

Right Here, Right Now

set on a far-away mission field. As Jesus was departing the region, the formerly demon-possessed man wanted to go with the Lord.

However, Mark writes, “*But He [Jesus] would not let him; instead, He told him, ‘Go back home to your own people, and report to them how much the Lord has done for you and how He has had mercy on you.’ So he went out and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him, and they were all amazed*” (Mark 5:19-20).

The power of this man's testimony was in the fact that everyone had known him before.

You don't have to go far to share how Christ has changed your life.

You will find at least two advantages of sharing your testimony in your own community.

First, your testimony is more powerful if people can see that Christ has changed you or that God has brought you through difficulties in life.

Second, you already have a relationship with the people with whom you are sharing the gospel.

So while we cannot forget the mandate to do missions, keep in mind that when the disciples were standing on the Mount of Olives, Jesus told them the first place they were to be His witnesses was “*... in Jerusalem and Judea*” (Acts 1:8).

August 20

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

August 27

The Protector

Focal Passage: Psalm 141:1-10

Over the course of my life most of my prayers have been prayers of petition. I believe many of you would probably say that is true of your prayers as well. As I have grown in my faith, elements of praise, thanksgiving and confession have been added, but even still, the plea of my heart is almost always involved.

David begins his prayer with an offering of praise in Psalm 141. He desires for God to collect his prayer as if it was an offering of incense. Why? David longs to please God even in his prayers and writings.

In verse three, David beseeches God for His protection. First, David asks for protection from his own sinful ways: his mouth, heart and actions. Next, David wants God to allow him to receive instruction and correction from the righteous – much like Hebrews 12 encourages us to accept God's discipline. We all need correction at times. Third, David

wants nothing to do with wickedness. Can you say the same about yourself? Or do you enjoy the choice morsel of gossip or the inappropriate television show?

David closes this Psalm seeking God's protection and promise. David knows who has granted him success and safety and he will continue to seek that refuge from the Lord. He also knows that there are traps all around him, temptations to snare him and evil people who want to ruin him. It is the same for us today.

There is wickedness in us, otherwise known as our sinful nature and the evil of the world lurks around us too. But God is immutable. If He was our refuge in the past, then He is our refuge in the present and the future. He does not change. His character remains the same. No matter what we face, we can turn to God and obtain help for the situation.



EMILY CARTER
Member,
University Hills Baptist
Church, Charlotte

Focal Passage: Psalm 42:1-11

Psalms 42 offers a highly personal, introspective look into the author's life. His desire is for the Lord, but he wants more of God. Do you ever find yourself parched for the Lord's presence?

Because of our sinful condition, most everyone can relate to this psalm. We are limited in our understanding of God and His work, His sovereignty and His movement. God's ways are higher than ours.

I cannot tell you how many times I have been asked, “Why you?” in relation to my cancer diagnosis. My usual response is, “Why not me?” or “Better me than someone who doesn't know Jesus.”

Over the course of this journey there have been times of struggle and times where I have wondered what God was doing. I have wondered where He was.

The Longing

In times of despair, I encourage you to read the Psalms or write a list of ways God has been very present in the past. In Psalm 42:4, we are told of a time when the Psalmist remembers going to the house of the Lord with thanksgiving. In hard times it is vital to remember the good things that God has done. It is good to seek out biblical counseling when our depression goes on to long.

The Psalmist tries to strengthen his soul's position by saying, “*Why are you down cast, O my soul? Why so disturbed in me. Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God*” (Psalm 42:5 & 11).

Putting our hope in God can be challenging at times. Yet God's Word is powerful, and there are many verses that will lift you up. Here are a few of my favorites: Jeremiah 29:11, Ephesians 1:18-20, Romans 15:13, Psalm 52, Psalm 56:3.

I pray you will be encouraged by God through His Word. No matter what trial or tragedy you are facing today, remember that God is with you, and He will never leave or forsake you.

AROUND THE STATE

Obituary

DONALD RUDOLPH COLEY, 87, of Elizabethtown died July 2.

He was a retired United States Marine veteran. He served in Korea (1954-'55) and Vietnam ('68-'69). Coley was a Baptist minister for 50 years and a member of Dublin First Baptist Church. He pastored numerous

church in Bladen County and beyond.

He is survived by his wife of 70 years, Mary H. Coley; daughter: Jean C. Knutson of Morganton; two sons, Donald L. Coley of the Virgin Islands and John R. Coley of Goldsboro; six grandchildren; and 11 great grandchildren. Memorials to: Gideons International P.O. Box 1281, Bladenboro, NC 28320, or Dublin First Baptist Church Building Fund, P.O. Box 187, Dublin, NC 29332.

Staff changes

Soundside Missionary Baptist Church, Columbia, has called **STEPHEN DUNCAN** as pastor. Duncan previously served as youth pastor at French Broad Baptist Church, Hendersonville. He is also a student at Fruitland Baptist Bible College.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Association

The South Yadkin Baptist Association is now accepting resumes for **Executive Director**. Please submit cover letter and resume to: SYBA, PO Box 5249, Statesville, NC 28687, or beanes@sybaptist.org.

Pastor

Amissville Baptist Church, in Amissville Virginia, is seeking a **Senior Pastor (Lead Elder)**. He must have a passion for the church and the advancement of God's Kingdom. The congregation is seeking a pastor who adheres to the Baptist Faith and Message 2000, who believes in an elder-led church governance. ABC is affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention through the Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia. The candidate should have served as a senior pastor at least 5 years, and earned a M.Div. from a Southern Baptist seminary. Send curriculum vitae and inquiries to Pastor Search Chair, Mark Hockensmith, Muddypaw@infionline.net by September 29, 2017, which will begin the PSC's review of all resumes.

Maple Springs Baptist Church, Seagrove, NC, is seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. We are a conservative, evangelistic and mission minded Southern Baptist church. Applicants should be strong leaders with good pastoral skills and strong preaching/teaching abilities. Send resume to 6012 Maple Springs Road, PO Box 357, Seagrove, NC 27341, or to gomapple@centurylink.net. Deadline September 15.

Hallsville Baptist Church, Beulaville, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **Pastor** to faithfully preach and teach the Word of God and lead our congregation. We are a mission-minded Southern Baptist church located in rural Duplin County. We have traditional Sunday School and worship services with average attendance of 50-80 with expectation to grow. The pastor will lead three services each week (Sunday morning, Sunday night and Wednesday evening). Please send resumes to: Hallsville Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, 1291 Hallsville Rd., Beulaville, NC 28518.

Seeking **full-time Sr. Pastor** for a blended style worship service Southern Baptist church. Requires a minimum education level of master of divinity from a seminary affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. Licensed and ordained as a pastor in a Southern Baptist church with a minimal of 10 years experience as a pastor (sr. or assoc.), with two years as a sr. pastor. Send cover letter and resume to: Pastor Search Comm., Burkemont Baptist Church, 4668 Burkemont Road, Morganton, NC 28655.

Church Staff

Mountain View Baptist Church of Hamp-tonville, NC, is currently seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Students**. This position is directly responsible for middle, high school and college age students – with emphasis on Sunday morning and Wednesday evening Bible Study, weekly visitation, summer youth camp and youth mission trips. If interested, please send resume to mvbc@yadtel.net.

First Baptist Church, Hickory, NC, is seeking a **full-time Minister with Students** responsible for guiding all aspects of our student ministry (grades 7-12) and growing our college ministry. Minister should be able to advance a well-established lay-involved student ministry that averages 50 active students. Minister will also serve in rotation with other FBC ministers in pastoral care and will provide leadership in outreach and evangelism. Candidates should fully support our identity statement available at www.fbc.cc, should enthusiastically embrace worship that blends traditional and contemporary music, should be committed to making biblically-grounded disciples for Jesus Christ and should have a passion for students. The person should be a graduate of an accredited university and should have a master's degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school. Previous experience in student ministry is preferred. FBC Hickory is a missional-minded church that supports the CBF and the SBC. Email resumes, cover letter, and references before September 15 to fbstudentminister2017@gmail.com.

First Baptist Church Maggie Valley of NC is seeking to hire a **Youth and Children's Director**. Must have a heart to minister to children of all ages. Resumes may be sent to PO Box 309, Maggie Valley, NC 28751, or email fbcmaggievalley@bellsouth.net.

New Covenant Fellowship Church, Graham, NC, is seeking a **Full Time Youth Pastor**. Please send resume to 1913 Rogers Road, Graham, NC 27253, or email: ncfc_1@bellsouth.net.

Grace Baptist Church of Fayetteville, NC, is seeking an **interim Minister of Worship**. This part-time position involves one weekly service that is blended. Ability to lead from a guitar is strongly preferred. Compensation includes negotiable salary + mileage. Candidates may send a cover letter, resume and references to GraceBaptistFayettevilleNC@gmail.com by August 31.

Friendship Baptist Church in Murphy is seeking a **part-time youth leader** to develop, coordinate and administer our youth program, creating fellowship activities with Bible studies. Mail resumes to: Search Committee, Friendship Baptist Church, 15 Friendship Church Road, Murphy, NC 28906.

Red Branch Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time Worship Leader**. Interested candidates may send their resume and salvation experience to: Red Branch Baptist Church, Attn: Pastor Scott McInnis, 1748 Old River Rd., Carthage, NC 28327.

Salemburg Baptist Church, Salemburg, NC, is currently seeking individuals for the following two positions: **Minister of Music** and **Pianist**. Prospective candidates must have an authentic relationship with Jesus Christ and have a love for people. Candidates will be musically competent, motivated, and have excellent communication and organization skills. Persons interested should call the church office at 910-525-4265 or send email and resume to: salemburgbc@embarqmail.com.

Severns Valley Baptist Church in Elizabethtown, Ky., is in the process of searching for a **Pastor to Senior Adults**. Those interested please send resumes to bonnie@svbc.cc.

Fairview Baptist Church, Reidsville, NC, is seeking a **part-time Music Director**. We are searching for a person who is Spirit-filled, loves the Lord Jesus, and seeks to honor God in all aspects of worship and leading. Fairview is a conservative Southern Baptist church. Send resumes to: jheathlloyd@gmail.com or to Fairview Baptist Church, 2531 Flat Rock Rd., Reidsville, NC 27320.

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

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

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

Miscellaneous

NCBAM is hosting a special training, "Mental Health First Aid for Older Adults," August 29-30, Thomasville, \$30 includes course materials and certificate. Register online at ncbam.org/events or call 877.506.2226.

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

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Serve Continued from page 1

for asylum seekers scattered across the city and in detention.

With financial help from Global Hunger Relief and Baptist Global Response, this international Baptist church has been able to purchase, organize and distribute monthly food bags and hygiene items. Calvary invites partner congregations, like Corinth Baptist Church in Elizabeth City, N.C., to join them in the outreach effort. In recent years, Corinth has sent a total of six volunteer teams to Thailand to help distribute critical resources and spend time with asylum seekers, listening to their stories about flights from affliction and the search for hope.

Those humanity-filled moments are important, asylum seekers said, because many of them rarely go out in public for fear of being reported or noticed by immigration police. The social interaction is especially enjoyable to children and teenagers. There are very few educational options available to asylum seekers, and in most cases, the peer interaction provided by classroom settings is out of reach.

Forced out

Pakistani asylum seekers typically identify as either Christian or Ahmadiyya, a sect of Islam not recognized by majority Muslim groups. Both Christians and Ahmadis often become the victims of Pakistan's notorious blasphemy laws, which carry a potential death sentence.

Multiple asylum seekers from Pakistan told the *Recorder* that even the thinnest allegations of insult against Islam can lead to mob violence. Blasphemy charges are also used to settle unrelated disputes. Reporting these injustices to police has little effect, they continued.

Law enforcement and government officials can be apathetic to such cases, and even if a dispute reaches a trial court, witnesses offering public testimony are often intimidated by threats of further violence. So, these victims choose their only apparent option: leave the country.

Thailand is a common destination for Pakistani asylum seekers because it is easy to obtain a 30-day tourist visa. Upon entry, they apply for refugee status with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and begin to pray for resettlement.

UNHCR's refugee status determination process is intended to take a few months, asylum seekers said, but many report wait times of up to six years. In nearly every case, they overstay Thailand's tourist visa and risk detainment by immigration enforcement officials. Despite being UN-registered asylum seekers, they face up to five years in prison for visa overstays of less than one year, and up to 10 years in prison for overstays of more than one year.

Thrown in

Bangkok's Immigration Detention Centre (IDC) was the focus of an undercover news report last year for its notoriously poor conditions and child imprisonment. Calvary's refugee ministry team is familiar with the plight of these detainees. Volunteers go through the arduous visitation process weekly. In order to gain access to the IDC, visitors must wait in line to file paperwork with immigration officials prior to the hour-long visitation period, including copies of a valid passport and the detainee's name, nationality and government-issued identification number.

Guards search visitors as they enter the facility to ensure no restricted items, such as cameras or recording devices, are brought into the building. The 60-foot square visitation room is divided in half by two 7-foot-tall security fences. Guards pace the empty space between the fences as visitors and detainees strain their voices over the commotion in an attempt to communicate.

In a recent visit to the IDC, *Recorder* staff noted more than a dozen women being detained for visa overstays, along with a half-dozen imprisoned children, ranging in age from infants to teenagers. Amid a small group of women carrying toddlers, a detainee held up her eight-

month old daughter, saying in broken English that she was born behind bars.

One mother expressed resigned gratitude that her teenage son was detained with her, because many families are torn apart during immigration raids and unable to reestablish contact with one another. One of the most common questions refugee ministry volunteers hear from detainees, is "will you visit my family and come back next week to tell me if they are OK?"

Detainees report overcrowding, poor nutrition and insufficient access to health care. Imprisoned men said they rotate sleeping schedules, because the group cell is too compact for each person to lie down at once. News reports about a Pakistani Christian man who died in immigration detention in late May 2017 were confirmed by sources inside the IDC. The refugee ministry team brought bags of carefully selected, nutrient-rich foods for the detainees they visited. Each volunteer spent time listening to stories told by asylum seekers, learning about their families, discovering what kind of aid they needed and praying for them.

Torn

Naomi's husband and oldest son were held in immigration detention before they were deported. She's thankful they are alive, but she knows they are now in danger. The anxiety caused by

the separation of her family exaggerates Naomi's health problems. Without access to proper medical care, high blood pressure and diabetes are a constant concern. Multiple asylum seekers told the *Recorder* that some hospitals deny service to migrants unless they hold a valid visa.

Naomi's husband and oldest son cannot go back to their hometown, she said, so they currently live in another region of Pakistan. Her husband changed his appearance to avoid detection.

Naomi longs to see her family reunited and resettled, but she has refused to willingly take her youngest sons back to Pakistan due to violence. The family was granted interviews with the French and Spanish embassies but denied entry to either nation. A fresh wave of emotion washed over her as she continued, "I sent two applications to [Donald] Trump – to American Embassy – but I got no answer."

According to Naomi, her family's UNHCR refugee status determination case has been closed, and if their current appeal is unsuccessful, she and the two boys will be deported later this year.

Donate to help fund Calvary's refugee food ministry at gobgr.org/projects/refugees.

*Name changed

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This article is the first in a three-part series covering the plight of Pakistani refugees in Thailand and the Baptists ministering to them.) **BR**

COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

All resolutions should be submitted in writing for consideration by the committee no later than **Sept 7, 2017.**

Send by mail to Committee on Memorials/Resolutions

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina
PO Box 1107, Cary, NC 27512

Send by email to Penny Cozadd

Business Services, Executive Leaders Assistant
pcozadd@ncbaptist.org

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2017 N.C. BAPTIST WOMEN'S RETREAT

HE WILL BE LIKE A TREE FIRMLY PLANTED BY
STREAMS OF WATER, WHICH YIELDS ITS FRUIT IN
ITS SEASON AND ITS LEAF DOES NOT WITHER;
AND IN WHATEVER HE DOES, HE PROSPERS.

Psalm 1:3



SPEAKER

KATIE ORR

OCTOBER 27-28, 2017

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