

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

AUGUST 15, 2015 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 181 NO. 17 • **BRnow.org**

KATRINA: 10 YEARS LATER

THE GULFPORT STORY

By K. ALLAN BLUME & SETH BROWN | BR staff

Shortly after 10 a.m. on a hot Sunday in August 2005, residents of the Mississippi Gulf Coast heard the familiar tone of the National Weather Service's radio warning.

"Devastating damage expected," the report said. Early the next morning, Aug. 29, Katrina made landfall as a category three hur-

ricane.

"The devastation along the Gulf Coast from Hurricane Katrina was staggering," said David Johnson, assistant administrator for the National Weather Service.

"The physical destruction and personal suffering surmounted that of any U.S. weather disaster in recent history. The loss of life and extraordinary damage made Katrina the costliest hurricane in U.S. history and one of the five deadliest hurricanes to ever strike the U.S."

"The storm changed my entire philosophy of ministry."
— Chuck Register

Katrina wrecked homes, cars, businesses and churches. But for Chuck Register, executive leader of church planting and missions partnerships for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), it affected more than material possessions.

"The storm changed my entire philosophy of ministry," he said.

See Katrina page 10

HUGE DISASTER A 'DEFINING MOMENT'

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

Richard Brunson will tell you every disaster is different.

The executive director of North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM; also known as Baptists on Mission) remembers Hurricane Katrina as a "defining moment" for NCBM.

"It was amazing that that many people would give up so much time ... and there were people who made 20-30 trips who drove every time," he said. "They were

taking people with them. It was just amazing ... even our on-site coordinators. Some of them quit jobs and went down there and worked."

Before the hurricane even hit land, more than 80 volunteers along with a convoy of supplies gathered in Meridian, Miss., to wait until it was clear to approach the hard-hit areas.

Within a week, N.C. volunteers were serving in at least three cities in Mississippi and a town in Alabama. They started with feeding, laundry, water puri-

fication and mudout units. Thousands of volunteers poured in from N.C. and from other states.

"Because we got there early the town, the citizens, the mayor ... trusted us a lot," said Brunson, who added NCBM was asked to coordinate efforts in Gulfport, Miss. "It was one of those defining moments," he said. "And I think the Lord allowed us to be at a place where there was great need with some really great volunteers who were on-site coordinators."

Katrina was the United State's costliest natural disaster (\$108 billion) and was among the five deadliest hurricanes with at least 1,833 people dying in the hurricane and the subsequent flooding.

NCBM was given the use of an old armory, which with the addition of several bunk trailers allowed the organization to host 300 people on site. Local schools and churches offered more housing for the influx of volunteers.

"That was a great opportunity for a

See Disaster page 12

Wanted: trustworthy media

Large news media sources, including the primary television networks, have seen their ratings and credibility decline significantly in recent years. No doubt, they have been in bed with deceptive forces and pushing a leftist agenda for a long time, and the public has not been completely ignorant.

But when mainline media outlets began defending the obvious horrors of Planned Parenthood's most recently exposed atrocities, that was the last straw. They surrendered their only remaining strand of honest journalism.

We should not be surprised. In a fallen world, deception of this magnitude is inevitable apart from the transforming grace of God through Jesus Christ. Most in the mainstream media reject God and His Son.

Jesus warned his followers to watch for increased deception in the last days. In Matthew 24:4-5 and Mark 13:5-6, our Savior said this is precisely what would happen. He warned, "Watch out that no one deceives you." Deception is the primary tool in the arsenal of Satan. He is the ultimate master of lies and deception. Jesus called him the "father of lies."

Deception began in the Garden of Eden when the serpent deceived Eve. He lied to her. Not only did she buy into the lie, but she spread the deception, convincing Adam to embrace the lie, also.

The apostle Paul gave a farewell message to the church at Ephesus in Acts 20:28-30, warning that "savage wolves" would come in the church fellowship and use deception to lure believers away from the truth.

Through lack of discernment, gullibility, spiritual immaturity and listening to the wrong voices, Christians are being drawn away from truth by a secular media that has no respect for truth.

Circus entrepreneur P.T. Barnum is attributed with the saying, "There's a sucker born every minute." Yes, and we are all suckers because we are all sinners. There is something in the sinful fabric

of every human being that draws us to deception like iron to a magnet.

Some are deceived by financial Ponzi schemes; some are defrauded by emails that promise millions of dollars if you will only send a \$2,000 check or cash transfer. A banker once said I would be surprised how many members of our church came to the bank to prepare a check to send overseas in response to an email from someone in Africa whom they've never met.

But many more people are deceived by politicians who promise things they will never deliver and the media who perpetuate the same fraud.

Followers of Jesus Christ are warned, "Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

Even news outlets that use the Christian label should be viewed cautiously. During the Chick-fil-A controversy of 2012, a Christian media organization got the story about Dan Cathy all wrong. They were using a major secular newspaper as the source of their story. I contacted the editor and explained the truth about Cathy's comments. The editor made it clear to me that he was not interested in the source of the interview. He wanted to publish the hype that the secular newspaper had printed. Deception sells more newspapers than truth.

The depravity of network news only serves to increase my passion for the survival of Christian media like the *Biblical Recorder*.

It is very difficult for Baptist state papers like the *Recorder* to survive in the current climate. But I really believe we have a vital role in serving churches by keeping church members and leaders informed. There is a lot of news and information available, but no source is customized to inform our North Carolina

audience as well as the *Biblical Recorder*.

May I share how we can help you? Would you like to be confident that your church members and attendees are getting accurate news? Here is what you can do to help your congregation. Tell them that we exist!

One pastor said he occasionally asks those in the worship service to take out their smartphone and download an app that he recommends for their spiritual growth. That's a great idea! So ask your church to download the free *Biblical Recorder* app. That gives them 24 hour access to *BRnow.org* where they will find truthful news and valuable information to increase their mission vision. I believe they will be stronger, more faithful disciples who make disciples.

Our website is currently averaging between 20,000 to 25,000 unique visitors every day – with a peak greater than 40,000 daily in the last two weeks. So, a lot of people depend on us now, but I'm convinced that the majority of North Carolina Baptists still do not know we exist.

Help us spread the word. Please consider placing a printed announcement in the church bulletin or worship guide. Download professional slides from *BRnow.org/PromoteBR* and use them on the screens in your services.

Start a church group subscription plan for the printed edition of the *Recorder*. There's a good chance that more than 30 percent of your congregation still prefers the print edition!

If they want both, we give a free digital edition (PDF format) to any subscrib-

er who pays for the printed edition.

For those with email, encourage them to subscribe to the *BRweekly*, a free weekly e-newsletter that briefly highlights each week's news. It arrives in your email inbox every Wednesday morning.

Here's a word of warning! Don't assume that reading our website content is giving you everything you want to know. It is not. The truth: there is material in the printed edition that is not found online, like staff changes, event announcements, obituaries, Baptist convention staff features and other items. Also, there is online material that is not in print. And, there is uniqueness in the *BRweekly*. So get all three! It's very economical.

Visit our website, *BRnow.org*, today. Click on the "Subscribe" tab for more information on how to subscribe. Click on "Resources" to learn about the e-newsletter (*BRweekly*), the free downloadable app and the digital edition. Or use these quick-access keys:

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A final word: We hope you enjoy the stories in this print edition that look back at the impact of Hurricane Katrina. Ten years ago this month, this devastating storm taught us many lessons and significantly shaped the disaster relief ministry of North Carolina Baptist Men. Read and share these stories with your Bible study group.

Thank you for reading and supporting the *Biblical Recorder*, *BRnow.org* and the *BRweekly*. We are honored to be on your team, and we're pleased to serve you. **BR**

"Even news outlets that use the Christian label should be viewed cautiously."

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.

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

(ISSN 0279-8182)

News Journal of the Baptist State Convention
of North Carolina
Founded 1833 by Thomas Meredith

Volume 181 No. 17
(919) 847-2127
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• Individual subscriptions, \$15.99 (one year); \$27.99 (two years); \$39.99 (three years)
• Bulk Plan (10+) \$11.50
• Family Plan, \$12.50
• Club Plan, \$13.50
• Single copies, .60 cents each
Payable in advance. N.C. sales tax is included. Digital rates: \$5.99 (one year); \$10.99 (two years); \$15.99 (three years).

Publication

Published biweekly on Saturdays by *Biblical Recorder* Inc., 205 Convention Drive, Cary, NC 27511, as authorized by the Baptist State Convention in annual session at Winston-Salem, November 21-23, 1939.

Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, NC 27676.

Postmaster

Send address changes to *Biblical Recorder* Inc., P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185.

Building faith-filled families

One of the greatest joys in my life is to see a child grow in their understanding of the things of God and come to express a genuine growing faith in Jesus Christ.

The Bible is clear that Jesus loved children. During His earthly ministry, Jesus often called little children to Himself.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

In fact, He rebuked the disciples when they tried to prevent them from coming to Him. Our Lord even said that we must become as little children in order to enter Kingdom of God.

Those of us who are parents and grandparents have the great privilege and awesome responsibility to shape and influence the next generation. This is a primary responsibility that we must not expect or depend on anyone else to do for us. Although Christian parents have the responsibility to nurture and develop their child's faith in the home, most feel inadequate or ill-equipped to accomplish this mission. Additionally, many are deceived by the forces of spiritual darkness and made to believe they cannot fulfill this responsibility.

When we talk about creating a disciple-making culture within our churches and homes, your convention staff recognizes the need to educate, equip and encourage families to be disciple-makers in the home. Church leaders need to work with parents and grandparents in reaching their children for Christ and help them mature spiritually. Just as we provide guidance with our children's intellectual, physical and social development, it is even more important that we give priority to their spiritual growth.

To help pastors and parents in this endeavor, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) and our Church & Family Connect ministry are providing the Building Faith-Filled Families conference. This one-day, hands-on workshop is designed for pastors, church staff and lay leaders to help the church partner with parents and families to equip them to make disciples in the home.

This event will be offered in two different locations on consecutive days. Make plans now to attend the Building Faith-Filled Families event in Raleigh on Thursday, Sept. 24 or in Wilmington on Friday, Sept. 25. The format and content of the workshop will be the same on both days.

Mark Smith, family pastor at Lakeview Baptist Church in Hickory and author of two books on the family, will join several of the BSC's evangelism and discipleship consultants to address issues related to marriage, parenting, spiritual life and more. Additional details and registration information for this event may be found online by visiting ncbaptist.org/cfc2015.

You are also encouraged to like us on Facebook ([facebook.com/ncbaptist](https://www.facebook.com/ncbaptist)) and follow us on Twitter (twitter.com/ncbaptist). Through these channels, our Communications Team shares encouraging verses, practical tips and helpful resources to assist parents and families in their disciple-making efforts. We are also sharing resources that will be helpful and beneficial to families by using the hashtag [#disciplemakingathome](https://twitter.com/ncbaptist).

When you consider the rapidly declining spiritual environment within our present culture, surely you understand it is of eternal importance that you adopt an intentional laser focus on the business of making disciples who follow Christ in your home.

"... so the next generation ... will put their trust in God ... and keep His commands." – Psalm 78:6-7 **BR**

Facing legal action, churches have a 'spirit of power'

In the Aug. 1 edition of the *Biblical Recorder*, I wrote a column about how churches should respond to the June 26 Supreme Court same-sex marriage decision. I called attention to the negative statement in 2 Timothy 1:7. Paul, writing to young Timothy, proclaimed, "*For God has not given us a spirit of fear.*" After identifying what God has not provided, Paul identifies three things that God has provided.

The first gift from God Paul identified for Timothy is, "*a spirit of power.*"

Regardless of the actions of the Court, the church still has a great deal of power in determining how its ministers and members engage in disciple-making through missions and ministry. The ultimate governing documents of the church, the scriptures, are not perceived as such by the government.

But the government recognizes that non-profit entities – including churches – have the power to establish their own policies.

Sadly, many churches do not utilize this power as they have few policies, poor policies or no policies at all.

I am currently leading seminars across the state, meeting with church and associational leaders, to help them understand the power they have in creating wedding policies and facility-use policies. In these seminars I explain the distinctions between the various governing documents that churches may develop, beginning with articles of incorporation and moving downward in legal authority through constitution, bylaws and day-to-day policies.

Many pastors are concerned their policies do not carry sufficient legal authority. Some church leaders have been led to believe that wedding policies belong in bylaws or other documents.

It's important to remember that bylaws provide a framework for the church's major decisions – such as annual decisions or matters that only take place occasionally. For example, the bylaws should address how church committees are elected, but the details of how these committees conduct their day-to-day activities are better placed in policies.

Certainly, providing an overview of their assignment and expectations is appropriate, but the details of how a committee completes specific tasks are better placed in a policy. The same is true for pastors; bylaws should identify how they're called and broad references to responsibilities, but how they conduct day-to-day ministry is better addressed in personnel policies.

Some churches have mistakenly placed day-to-day responsibilities for ministers, committees and other church ministries in bylaws. Now is a good time to review all governing documents and move content to appropriate locations – specifically as it relates to marriage.

Neglecting to review the congregation's governing documents is never a problem, until there's a problem.

The matter of same-sex weddings and facility-use reveals potential problems for many churches since their policies are outdated or simply do not exist. Al-

low me to explain why addressing marriage matters within the policies is preferable, beginning with the legal aspects and moving to the practical.

Church leaders are concerned with how weddings are conducted, how the church's facilities are used for weddings and how their ministers engage in the ministry of weddings. By updating existing policies, or developing new ones for each of these matters, it's easy to link the policies. For example, a facility-use policy – which should focus on all the potential uses of a facility, not just weddings – can refer to the wedding policy for those wishing to reserve church facilities for weddings.

However, problems arise when policies are scattered throughout a congregation's governing documents.

If wedding matters are placed partly in the bylaws and partly in a policy manual, then those portions located in the bylaws will bear more legal authority in the event of a legal challenge. Potential conflicts can be avoided when these guidelines are all placed in well-worded and consistently implemented policies.

However, some may feel that potential conflict is the very reason that wedding matters should all be placed in the bylaws; due to the increased legal authority of the bylaws. It's at this point that we move to the practical advantages of utilizing policies to address matters related to weddings.

First, day-to-day policies provide churches the ability to update content more quickly and easily. Bylaws, constitutions and articles of incorporation are much more difficult to update – and they should be, as each of these documents outline a congregation's major decision-making processes.

However, the issue of marriage will continue to develop as our society continues to grapple with issues of sexuality. For example, prior to the passage of the marriage amendment to the constitution of North Carolina in 2012, some churches updated their marriage and facility-use policies to address same-sex marriage. But at that time, the concern was limited; few were considering about transgender matters. As a result, these churches now have a blind spot in their policies in light of the ever-changing landscape of sexuality.

Second, ministers need a clear and concise document they can place into the hands of any couple that speaks with them regarding marriage. A wedding policy provides a single document that outlines the church's positions. All the couple needs is the wedding policy, they really do not need the full constitution and bylaws. Again, a policy that is clearly worded and consistently followed provides sufficient legal authority when approached by individuals or groups inquiring about weddings and/or the use of church facilities.

Clarity is of utmost importance. In the next installment I will address the content that should be included in church wedding and facility-use policies.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Brian K. Davis is associate executive director-treasurer at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.) **BR**



BRIAN K. DAVIS
Guest Column

WMU-NC to memorialize Fannie Heck 100 years after death

By IRMA DUKE | WMU-NC

Fannie E. S. Heck, founding president of Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) and second president of national WMU, serving alongside executive secretary Annie Armstrong, will be memorialized on August 25, commemorating the 100th anniversary of her death.

Just prior to Heck's death in 1915, *The Charlotte Observer* called the Raleigh native "one of the best known women of the South in religious work."

Millions of WMU members have served in domestic and overseas missions since the organization's beginning. WMU has raised millions of dollars for Southern Baptist mission offerings.

During difficult times, the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) and Home Mission Board (now North American Mission Board) leadership pled with WMU to encourage women to increase their giving and praying for missionaries so that they would not have to come home from the field, according to Catherine B. Allen's book, *A Century to Celebrate*.

She led the same kind of support for state missions.

"Our mission to our state is not only that of the ideal Christian citizen," she explains.

"Plant a church in North Carolina and you open a fountain that shall soon send

out springs of blessings to the ends of the earth."

Today's Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina offering bears her name.

Heck was 24 years old when she became founding president of WMU-NC. Some six years later, she became president of the national WMU.

Heck was also the founding president of The Woman's Club of Raleigh. An historical marker stands at her home on Blount Street in downtown Raleigh and there is a fountain at Meredith College (formerly known as Baptist Female University). Heck was asked to serve as the first "Lady Principal" of Baptist Female



University, but declined saying she was devoted to missions.

For years, she wrote a column for the *Biblical Recorder*, in addition to preparing ongoing newsletters with prayer concerns for Southern Baptist missionaries. Her poetry and words of wisdom have lived long past her.

She once said on behalf of young people, "if you cannot leave your footprints on the sands of time, write your Master's name on the granite of eternity."

The special service, which is open to the public, is scheduled Aug. 25 at 10 a.m. at Historic Oakwood Cemetery in Raleigh.

For additional information, contact the WMU-NC office at (919) 882-2344 or (866) 210-8602. **BR**

Houston sued over attempted grab of church land

Baptist Press

Two African-American churches in Houston have filed a lawsuit in response to what they say is an illegal city attempt to seize their property for an urban renewal project.

"When we moved into this area, it was considered the highest crime-rate area in the city of Houston," Latter Day Deliverance Revival Church Pastor Roy Lee Kossie said according to a news release from Liberty Institute, the Christian legal organization representing Latter Day and nearby Christian Fellowship Missionary Baptist Church.

"People shot first and asked questions later. But we love this community. This is where the Lord called us and this is where we want to stay. We aren't giving up without a fight."

Tory Gunsolley, president and CEO of the Houston Housing Authority, told the *Houston Chronicle* the city wants land owned by the churches as part of a redevelopment effort to include a library and 63-unit housing project.

The housing project would replace an

apartment complex that had to be demolished because of damage sustained from Hurricane Ike in 2008.

The demolished complex could not be rehabilitated, Gunsolley said, because of limitations associated with its proximity to Interstate 10.

The city tried to buy property from both churches before initiating an attempt to seize a portion of Latter Day's property through eminent domain laws. Houston has not begun the eminent domain process on the parcel owned by Christian Fellowship, Gunsolley said.

"We are trying to build decent, safe, affordable, but modern housing," Gunsolley told the *Chronicle*.

Christian Fellowship Pastor Quinton Smith claims on a video posted online by Liberty Institute that a city representative threatened to acquire the church's property through eminent domain laws if the congregation did not sell it. Eminent domain laws allow a government to require the sale of private property for public use.

The lawsuit states that seizure of the churches' property would violate their

religious freedom. Forced sale of the disputed properties "would limit Latter Day's growth and its congregants' ability to worship and minister to the community," according to the suit.

City redevelopment of Christian Fellowship's property would "fully displace" it "from its only property in the community."

The Liberty Institute release claims the churches have helped transform Houston's impoverished Fifth Ward "into a safer place."

The lawsuit asks a court to prevent the city from claiming the churches' property and to require the city to reimburse the churches for attorneys' fees and court costs. **BR**



Mount Airy Baptist Church

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For more information: Contact Burnt Swamp Baptist Association
at 910.521.6850 or visit ncbaptist.org/watchandpray.



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COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

All resolutions should be submitted in writing for consideration by the committee no later than **September 11, 2015.**

Send by mail to Committee on Memorials/Resolutions

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

Send by email to Norma Jean Johnson

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worshipleader

Boot Camp offers training for worship leaders

By **CHAD AUSTIN** | BSC Communications

Do you seek healthy worship transformation for your church?

Do you want to see biblical worship that engages people to become active worshippers rather than passive spectators? Do you seek to create an environment in worship that helps people connect with God each week?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, then make plans to attend Worship Leader Boot Camp training event, scheduled for Friday and Saturday, Aug. 28-29 at the Ridgecrest Baptist Conference Center in Black Mountain.

The two-day workshop offers a total package of training and foundation for worship renewal in the local church. The training is designed for all worship leaders involved in local church ministry, including pastors, singers, band members and technicians.

“Churches around the world are struggling with what style of worship is appropriate for their setting,” said Kenny Lamm, senior consultant for worship and music with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC).

“Worship Leader Boot Camp provides a grounding in musical and theological issues that will provide tools for worship renewal that is focused on moving a church from a group of spectators to a

body of active participants in worship.”

Lamm served as a worship leader for 23 years prior to joining BSC, and he will lead the workshop along with the N.C. Baptist Renewing Worship band. Lamm continues to serve as a guest worship leader and frequently works with worship leaders and churches across the state, nation and world related to worship renewal.

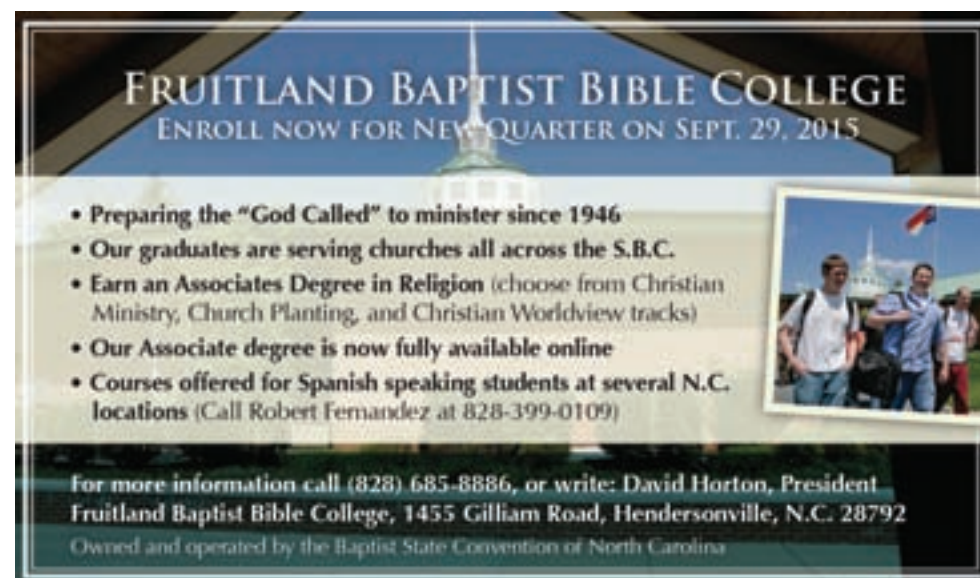
“No worship renewal is possible apart from God’s Spirit, and our time will be filled with worship, prayer and dependence upon God,” Lamm said.

Worship Leader Boot Camp will provide attendees with hands-on theological and practical training that addresses topics such as the biblical basis of worship, worship leadership, missional and cultural issues related to worship, and more. In addition, attendees will gain practical resources related to the planning and flow of a worship service, such as selecting songs for a service, putting together a set list, best practices for rehearsal and how to biblically evaluate and improve your worship service and leadership.

Registration for the two-day conference is \$30 per person. Total cost for the two-day conference ranges from \$112.50 to \$162, depending on lodging and meal plan options. For more information and to register, visit worshipRIDGECREST.org. **BR**



KENNY LAMM



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Life on mission celebrated at conference in Nashville

BR staff

A sold-out crowd of more than 13,600 from all 50 states and four Canadian provinces flooded into Nashville's Bridgestone Arena to celebrate the call of Jesus and the response of life on mission at the 2015 Send North America Conference Aug. 3-4.

North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell and International Mission Board President David Platt welcomed the assembly and challenged attendees to serve wherever God calls them.

"This is where I want to call 13,000 plus people in this arena, from the beginning [of the conference], to put a blank check of our lives on the table for God – no strings attached," Platt said.

Ezell noted, "We need pastors, students, men and women to rise up. We want this to be more than a conference you attend, we want it to be a life-altering experience."

The mission entity leaders were joined on the platform by Southern Baptist Convention president Ronnie Floyd, Tennessee Baptist Convention executive director Randy Davis and others who helped lead prayer.

Opening session keynote speaker J.D. Greear told attendees they have a call to leverage their talents and lives for the Great Commission.

"True growth only comes through scattering and gain only comes by losing," said Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, N.C. "It's counterintuitive, but it's true. Jesus' promises about the

greatness of the church were always tied to sending. He always focused on leaders being raised up and sent out, not an audience being gathered in and counted."

Illusionist and host Harris III opened the gathering by taking the stage with a seemingly empty white box representing a life lived on mission. He described the contents of the box as a "mystery" before, piece by piece, removing items that signified unique lives lived

on mission, explaining, "You don't have a mystery to solve. You have a ministry to serve."

A dozen breakout sessions at three venues presented participants with topics on living out missions in everyday life. Panelist Danae Herndon, who ministers in her Colorado Springs neighborhood, said, "(My husband and I) decided we don't want to wait to be on mission for someone to fund us. We promised God that we would be on mission today. So we started praying, 'God, whose life can we breathe into? Who can we be in relationship with? Who can we impact?' And it always went back to our local community."

Video interviews, including one with Tyson Foods CEO Donnie Smith, were presented at main sessions in the Bridgestone Arena. Smith said, "People don't mind Christians living Christian lives in the workplace. They hate hypocrites." He said faithfulness is key to maintaining an effective witness in the corporate world.

Monday evening's keynote speaker, Louie Giglio, told attendees they were celebrating the gospel – and a name.

"The gospel is not that sin made us bad," said Giglio, pastor of Atlanta's Passion City Church. "It is worse than that. Sin made us dead. But Jesus stepped into our dilemma. He did not leave His throne to make us good people. He came to make us not dead."

Giglio said the resurrection of Christ and the coming of the Holy Spirit set in motion the plan of God, outlined in the Book of Acts, setting in motion a church that would send its people.

"Sin leads to 'in.' It always turns the focus on me," Giglio said. "The first two letters of gospel are g-o. The Spirit says go. It takes the propulsion of the Spirit to overcome the inward pull of the flesh. It is all about the name of Jesus. That is what God has given us to celebrate – His name."



J.D. Greear, pastor of Summit Church in Raleigh, was the keynote speaker for the opening session of the 2015 Send North America Conference. "Jesus' promises about the greatness of the church were always tied to sending. He always focused on leaders being raised up and sent out, not an audience being gathered in and counted," Greear said. (IMB photo by Paul W. Lee)

Jeb Bush, Marco Rubio address Southern Baptists

By TOM STRODE | Baptist Press

Southern Baptists heard from two presidential candidates and considered how the gospel of Jesus applies to politics in back-to-back events Aug. 4-5 in Nashville.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush and Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida – both bidding for the Republican Party (GOP) presidential nomination – answered questions Aug. 4 before more than 13,600 people gathered for the Send North America Conference. Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), interviewed the candidates at the conference, which was jointly sponsored by the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board.

The interviews of Bush and Rubio came a day before the ERLC's 2015 National Conference on applying the gospel to politics.

The Aug. 5 event focused on how evangelical Christians should engage in the public square in a way that is formed by and faithful to the gospel.

In the Aug. 4 question-and-answer sessions at the Send Conference, Moore asked the GOP candidates about such issues as religious liberty in the United States, the use of military force overseas to defend Christians and other religious adherents against Islamic extremists, the torture of detained enemy combatants, abortion, racial discrimination and over-coming public incivility.

Speaking in person at the conference, Bush promised to defund Planned Parenthood if elected to the White House. His comment came after the release of five undercover videos over the previous three weeks that showed Planned Parenthood officials discussing the sale of organs from aborted children for research.

The organization received \$528 million in government grants, contracts and re-



Russell Moore, right, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, interviews Jeb Bush, candidate for president and former governor of Florida. Moore also interviewed Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida in a pre-recorded video. The video and the live interview were held Aug. 4 during the Send North America Conference in Nashville prior to the ERLC's Gospel & Politics event Aug. 6. (NAMB photos by John Swain)

imbursements in its most recent financial year.

Bush went on to say, "If you took dollar for dollar, though, I'm not sure we need half a billion dollars for women's health issues." That comment drew strong rebukes from Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and others. Later, Bush said in a statement released through his campaign website he misspoke.

"There are countless community health centers, rural clinics and other women's health organizations that need to be fully funded," he said. "They provide critical services to all, but particularly low-income women who don't have the access they need."

"I was referring to the hard-to-fathom \$500 million in federal funding that goes to Planned Parenthood – an organiza-

tion that was callously participating in the unthinkable practice of selling fetal organs. Democrats and Republicans agree we absolutely must defund them and redirect those funds to other women's health organizations."

Speaking in a pre-recorded video, Rubio told Moore some abortion rights advocates are extremists.

"People that stand for the idea that you should be able to abort a child at any stage in the pregnancy – they're the extremists," Rubio said. "People who believe that a young child, a minor, should be able to get an abortion easier than a tattoo – they're the extremists. And I think it's important for us to point out those examples of extremism because every life we save, whether it's by changing hearts or changing laws, is an important step forward in progress."



Caleb Platt and Kevin Ezell fist bump as they introduce Platt's dad, David, as the keynote speaker for the closing session of the Send North America Conference in Nashville. Platt, president of the International Mission Board and Ezell, president of the North American Mission Board, have moved the entities to explore greater cooperation. The boards co-sponsored the two-day event.

Leading candidates from each major party were invited to the forum at the Send Conference, according to the ERLC. Each Republican candidate to poll at 10 percent or higher in the Real Clear Politics national average at some point between May 1 and a month before the Send Conference was invited, the ERLC reported.

According to the Real Clear Politics website, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul and Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker both reached 10 percent during that time period along with Bush and Rubio.

Clinton also was invited, but she declined, Moore said, adding he looks forward to having conversations with candidates in both parties. ■

Send Conference measured by next steps

By JOE CONWAY | NAMB

As thousands of 2015 Send North America Conference attendees returned to their everyday lives, leaders of the event said the real long term impact will be measured in the next steps participants take to live out their faith daily.

"This is not about a conference," North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell told attendees at the close of the gathering Aug. 4. "It's about God starting a movement. This is something we are committed to for the rest of our lives."

As the two-day event drew to a close, the 13,607 participants were encouraged to find their place in the everyday mission of God, and commit to next steps.

Registered nurse Madison Roaton decided to tag

along for a visit to Nashville when she heard her friends discussing a road trip. She had never heard of the Send Conference. But after the first day she was ready to explore her next steps in missions.

"I've been involved in medical missions with my church," said Roaton of New Albany, Miss. She traveled to Ecuador earlier this year and Greece last year on mission. The idea of a life on mission resonated with her. "This has me thinking about connecting what I do with my mission."

Others were encouraged by reminders that they are part of a network – a family – as they serve on the mission field.

Bob Lowman, executive director of the Metrolina Baptist Association, said, "Earlier this year when I heard about the conference, I really felt strongly that

we should take a group from our association to be part of that experience. I remembered some very significant missions conferences when I was early in my college years that impacted my life on mission.

"We were challenged to live sent," said Lowman, "to live out the Great Commission in new and loving ways. The invitation at the end of the conference was different and significant – the call was not for those who sensed God's specific call for career missions service to respond, but the call was for all of us ... to know that we all needed to be obedient to the mission Jesus has for us day by day, from where we live to the ends of the earth."

"I came because of the camaraderie of all the church planters," said Gabe Dodd. Dodd, a church planter in Dahlonega, Ga., who launched The Branch Church last

Life

Continued from page 6

In Tuesday's opening session, Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, shared characteristics of the ordinary people in the Book of Acts who helped launch the church.

"They had a faith that produced obedience," Pitman said. "They trusted God and did what God said. They clearly heard Jesus speak and simply did what He said. To see God move you have to have faith that leads to obedience."

Super Bowl winning coach Tony Dungy shared by video how life on mission principles came to him at an early age.

"My number one influence in life started with my parents," Dungy said. "What my mom instilled was driven home my rookie year with the Pittsburgh Steelers by Donnie Shell, the first Christian athlete I encountered who lived his faith. He showed me how to live – you can't separate your faith. Success is uncommon, but significance is even more uncommon. Being able to point people to Christ means more than winning a Super Bowl."

Dungy noted that to live a life on mission people need only to start where they are.

"Start at home first, work second," Dungy said. "Look at areas where I can direct my children first. Then at work – do people see Christ in my life? My hope would be that we would do what Jesus asked us to – be salt and light in the world."

Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore addressed a Christian's responsibility as a citizen of the kingdom of God. Moore later moderated a presidential candidate forum with former Florida



Leaders pray on stage as Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, leads a prayer time during the Send North America Conference. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

Gov. Jeb Bush and Florida Sen. Marco Rubio. (See story, page 7.)

"We are going to send until the whole world hears," said Ezell, concluding the final session of the 2015 Send North America Conference. "This is not about a conference. This is about a movement. We are going to send and motivate people to send."

Ezell and Platt shared the stage Tuesday evening, much as they had at key moments throughout the two-day missions gathering.

"It is pure joy to think about the pastors and churches represented in this

room," Platt said. "It is amazing to say we want to do this together. Let's trust the good hand of God to do this."

Platt was the final keynote speaker for the event. Ezell introduced Platt for the final address by bringing Platt's 9-year-old son, Caleb, on stage.

"David Platt is one of the best friends I have," Ezell said. "We love each other. This is Caleb Platt."

Ezell recounted how, at their first meeting, "Caleb asked me – are you a Christian? I said yes, and I said I am very thankful you asked. We are trying to motivate and mobilize all these people to ask the same question that you asked me. I'm glad that you have a mom and dad who taught you that. Making disciples starts at home – no one knows that better than David Platt."

Caleb recited Romans 10:9-11, and said family worship time at the Platt house is followed by family wrestle time. He embraced his dad as the elder Platt took the stage.

Speaking from Nehemiah 1-2, Platt shared several things God would say to those gathered.

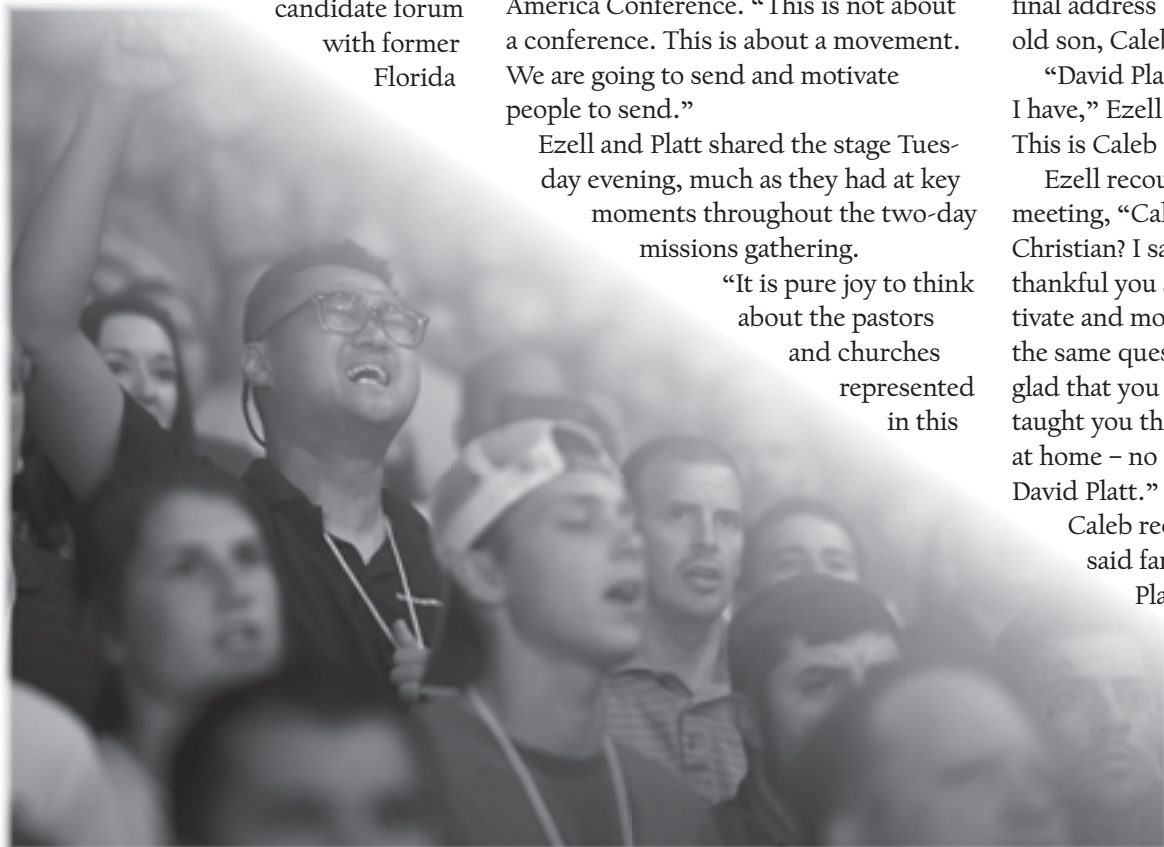
"God is telling us to open our eyes and see a world [like Nehemiah did] in great need," Platt said. In the scripture passage, Nehemiah is weeping. The remnant is in trouble.

"When was the last time you wept over people in need?" Platt asked, noting it's dangerous to become cold and calloused when overwhelmed by a world in need. He said the world's needs are not only physical, but eternal, spiritual needs: people are going to hell without ever hearing the good news of how they can be saved.

"This cannot be tolerable to us," Platt said. "God help us to weep for them."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Story compiled from reports by Joe Conway and Ann Harman. Joe Conway writes for the North American Mission Board. Anne Harman is a writer and editor for the International Mission Board. For complete coverage of the Send North America Conference visit namb.net/send2015.) ■■

With more than 13,600 participants, the Send North America Conference sold out its host site, the Bridgestone Arena, in Nashville for its two-day event Aug. 4-5. The North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board partnered to bring about the focus on serving where God calls. (IMB photo by Paul Lee)



ERLC event addresses gospel, politics

By TOM STRODE | Baptist Press

Political engagement by evangelical Christians calls for a witness shaped by the gospel of Jesus, Southern Baptists were told at a conference Aug. 5 in Nashville.

Speakers at “The Gospel and Politics” – the second national conference sponsored by the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) – sought to help the more than 630 registrants think about how to approach politics in a changing culture a year before the next presidential election. The conference came a day after interviews of two Republican presidential candidates – Sen. Marco Rubio and former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush – by ERLC President Russell Moore at the Send North America Conference, an event sponsored also in Nashville by Southern Baptist missions entities.

The gospel calls for a different tone than has been demonstrated sometimes in the past by evangelicals, some speakers said.

“I say this respectfully, the era of perceived, white, angry evangelicalism is officially over,” said Samuel Rodriguez, president of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference. Impacting culture now “requires a multi-ethnic, kingdom culture canopy that reconciles truth with love,” he said during a panel discussion.

A shift to a more gracious approach in political engagement does not equal a shift in convictions, said Jim Daly, president of Focus on the Family, on the same panel.

“When I would meet with homosexuals or gay activ-



Russell Moore, president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, speaks during the ERLC's “The Gospel and Politics” Aug. 5 event in Nashville. (Photo by Alli Rader)

ists, what some Christian leadership accused me of was losing my principles,” he told attendees. “They had no clue what was going on in the meetings.”

Seeds were being planted for gospel witness, Daly said. “And to have somebody rail against you because you’re doing the gospel, there’s something not healthy about that, everybody. We don’t give up our principles to have a nice, kind, gentle tone.”

In the same discussion, Moore said, “If we’re following Jesus, we ought to be receiving criticism in stereo all

the time.” The gospel accounts in the Bible show some people didn’t like it when Jesus called for repentance, and others didn’t like it when he offered mercy at the end of that call, Moore said.

“If you’re going to follow Christ, you can’t do that by saying, ‘Okay, what’s my tribe, and how do I make sure that I am safely with my tribe all the time?’ Instead, you’re on mission with Christ,” he said, “which means you’re talking with people that disagree with you and doing so with conviction, but you’re also seeing that person as someone that you ultimately want to see reconciled to God.”

The church – the community created by the gospel – plays an important role in evangelical political engagement, speakers said.

Christians “speak from consciences shaped by scripture,” Moore told the audience. “We must see a community that is being formed as a sign – a sign that is shaping and forming consciences.

“If we are going to go forward in the 21st Century, we must understand that sort of community is of paramount importance in our mission,” he said.

“The worshiping, sending community carries with it a distinctiveness that gives us everything we have to say to the outside world.”

James K.A. Smith, author and philosophy professor at Calvin College, said during another panel discussion, “We worship a King. That’s a political category. [T]he church in its worship is actually where we learn to be citizens of the city of God.

“It’s really, really important that Christian worship

See ERLC page 15



Katrina

Continued from page 1

Weathering the storm

Register was in his sixth year as senior pastor of First Baptist Church (FBC) in Gulfport, Miss., when Katrina struck. “We awakened on Sunday morning to discover [Katrina] had bloomed to a category five storm.”

FBC held an abbreviated worship service that morning as a “full evacuation order” went out. Only about 50 people, a fraction of the congregation, attended.

Wind gusts sailed past 100 miles per hour, according to reports. The wind was only half the danger for Gulfport residents. Those closest to the beach faced the greater threat of a storm surge.

“The elevation of FBC is 19 feet, and we sustained water the equivalent of a 32-foot storm surge,” Register said. The storm devastated four of the church’s seven buildings, and the remaining three structures were unusable. Eighty-five families in the congregation lost everything, he added.

Brian Upshaw was senior associate pastor at FBC. His main responsibilities were the administration, discipleship and education ministries. Today he is the disciple-making team leader for BSC.

After the brief Aug. 28 Sunday service, Upshaw made the church facility “as secure as we could make it,” he said. He packed up the church’s computer server, and along with his family, evacuated to Georgia to stay with his wife’s family.

“The next day Chuck called and told me the facility was gone,” Upshaw said. “Chuck saw it on TV. I had not seen it yet, but about 30 minutes later I saw it on the news. A news anchor was standing in front of what was left of our facility. That was my first sight of it.”

Wednesday Upshaw drove back to Gulfport with a load of supplies including generators and fuel. As daylight broke Thursday, the recovery began. With the church directory in hand the staff began mapping the county and went to the homes of church members. “Those early days were very hectic and crazy, trying to determine what was going on,” he added.

Insurance companies had to be contacted – for his family and for the church. Working without water and electricity, repairs faced him at every turn. Disaster relief organizations were not able to respond for at least five days. But as the weekend arrived, NCBM and other relief agencies were figuring out how to get into Gulfport.

FBC began to implement a series of contingency plans, said Register, “for how we would do church without a facility.” Providentially, at a retreat the previous April, church staff speculated on the question, “How would we do church if we didn’t have a facility?”

The April retreat was “the hand of God

on us,” Upshaw said. “We did what we thought was an intellectual exercise on doing church without a facility. But much of the plan we were able to implement the first five days was a direct result of having those conversations in April. There is no way we could have predicted Katrina, but just the exercise of the staff working through a problem was really beneficial to us.”

The first Sunday after the storm, they joined with two other Gulfport churches for worship. FBC, Crosspoint Church – a church plant from FBC – and First Presbyterian Church met in Crosspoint’s facility. Gulfport High School allowed FBC to use its facilities to worship for the following three years.

In the early days the FBC ministers met at Register’s house. “We would divvy up the city in sectors and assign those to a different staff member,” he said. “My wife would have cooked supper for us on the camp stove outside. We would have supper, pray together and the next morning we would take care of those sectors of the city.” They repeated the process daily.

“We did our disciple-making through home cell groups throughout the week,” he explained. “For the next 18 months our days were consumed with pastoral care ... trying to help people put their lives back together in that environment.”

“The body of Christ worked together better than at any moment in my 55-year history,” Register said.

“I had several meetings with North American Mission Board personnel and disaster relief teams,” Register said, “to help them understand the need.”

“The story of North Carolina Baptist Men is the story of our recovery as a city,” Upshaw added. “But the first responder I met was from Henderson Hills Baptist Church in Edmond, Okla. They sent some people down on their own. One of their pastors had seen us on the news and said, ‘I need to go.’ They came by themselves and partnered with us, and that became a critical church partnership over the next few months.

“Obviously the organized relief work and the mammoth undertaking that North Carolina Baptist Men did for Gulfport – I can’t say enough about ... those volunteers who really poured into us and ministered to us,” he emphasized.

NCBM were the first feeding unit to arrive. They began what would become a two-and-a-half year ministry on the Gulf Coast that included more than 40,000 volunteers and more than 700 rebuilt homes.

Upshaw confessed he learned a lot about ministry fatigue. “The months went on, caring for our own church families’ needs, serving the community, dealing



From left, Chuck Register, Richard Brunson and Milton A. Hollifield Jr. talk during a weekend of events celebrating N.C. Baptist work in Gulfport, Miss. (BR file photo)

with church administrative issues, trying to find a place to worship, dealing with the nuts and bolts of trying to get an office going, organizing small groups – it’s incredible to think of all that goes into that.”

Many of the church’s senior adults were displaced.

“They lived in places they thought were safe and secure, but they lost everything. I’m talking about seniors in their 80s having to start over,” he said.

No one in the church was killed from the direct action of the storm, but some died from related circumstances – many of them can be attributed to the trauma of Katrina, he added. The church held 26 funerals in the 12 months after Katrina.

Upshaw praised Register’s leadership that kept the focus on the priorities. “I can’t say enough about Chuck’s leadership,” Upshaw said. The preaching of the Word of God every Sunday, ... keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus in the midst of circumstances; trying to provide as much stability in church life as he could so that people whose lives were falling apart had something that was stable.”

Recovery and regrowth

Before Hurricane Katrina, worship attendance at FBC ranged from 750-800, according to Register. After the storm, the numbers sank to approximately 400.

More than 41,000 residents left the Gulfport-Biloxi area in the period between July 2005 and January 2006, according to a report by the Brookings Institution. Many never returned.

“The wave of migration out of Gulfport began with young adults,” said Register, because they were the first ones released from jobs. “Then our senior adults began to leave town,” he added. Needing to rebuild their homes, many senior adults decided to relocate near their families in other parts of the state or country.

After three years without a permanent facility, the church moved into a 58,000 square-foot building on more than 30 acres of land, according to Register. To make

that transition, the church pooled resources from multiple channels.

In what Register describes as providential, the insurance committee of the church had reviewed its policies a year before the storm, adding a million dollars to the flood insurance plan.

Register also led the church in a capital campaign to raise money for the new facility. “Our folks really had a sense of stewardship, a sense of commitment to the Father and His Kingdom,” he said. “I was very pleased with the way they responded to the Capital Stewardship Campaign at the same time they were trying to rebuild businesses that had been lost, rebuild homes that had been lost, deal with their own set of life crises. ... The Father was honored in that.”

Change in ministry priorities

As Register reflected on the effects the storm had on his ministry, he said, “My history had been pastoring churches that had grown significantly, had been recognized by the Billy Graham School at [The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary] for their growth ... so my ministry had become number-centric.” He had also been a professor of evangelism at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary. Register described his ministry outlook: “We had to be larger this Sunday than we were Sunday a year ago.”

“What the storm helped me to understand was that for a lot of my ministry I had not been focusing on truly making disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. I was focused on one half of the Great Commission – the evangelistic side of the coin – but had not focused on the disciple-making side of the coin.”

Discipleship became a priority. “If it’s not life-on-life transformation taking place,” said Register, “we’re missing this thing called disciple-making.” The people in his congregation who were significantly involved in discipleship groups “really rose to the occasion following the storm in ministering to fellow believers, and in provid-



Hurricane Katrina left the Hyatt in New Orleans a mass of shattered glass and soaked furnishings. The hotel, adjacent to the Super Dome, has housed messengers to Southern Baptist Convention annual meetings over the years. (File photo by Charley Varley/Sipa Press)

ing leadership to the body of Christ.”

This prompted a significant shift in ministry philosophy for Register. “So many things that I thought were critical in ministry pre-storm,” he said, “seemed to be really insignificant post-storm.”

He developed “very little tolerance” for self-serving ministry. Register wanted to see outward focused ministry – among both clergy and congregation – that was directed toward “impacting our culture with the gospel.”

A sense of urgency dominated him. Register said, “The storm taught me that whatever you’re going to do for God’s glory and for the kingdom, you better do it now because you don’t know what tomorrow is going to hold.”

Lessons learned

Upshaw learned some valuable lessons from the experience. One is that lay leadership is very valuable in church ministry.

The mobilization of people begins with “empowering the people at the closest level to the situation,” he said. “Trust people that are closest to the situation to make the call ... those volunteers, the lineman

from the power company or those disaster relief volunteers on the site – those are the people that made a difference by making good decisions based on the circumstances they were in.”

Although he already valued the church’s leaders, he said, “I grew in appreciation for the men and women in the church who have an expertise in a certain area – like insurance – and gave that expertise to the church,” he said. “Because of their wisdom we had a good inventory of church property,” and FBC had the insurance coverage they needed to rebuild.

However, the greatest lesson God taught him was “God is faithful. We know that. He proved that to us.” He shared the words of the popular Matt Redman song, “Blessed be your name,” that says, “You give and take away, my heart will choose to say, blessed be Your name.”

“Every time I hear that song I think of Katrina. Because we were placed in a situation where we had to choose to praise the Lord for who He is and not for our circumstances. God is sovereign even in tragedy, we know He has not abandoned us, and He is still worthy of our worship.” **BR**

Experiencing Katrina in mind, heart

A middle-aged woman attended worship at our church a few Sundays ago. She came in early and sat up front on the center aisle. I greeted her and introduced myself.

She promptly told me her Katrina story. She lived for years in the Lakeview neighborhood of New Orleans. The flood destroyed her home. She permanently relocated to a small town in central Louisiana. A faith community there reached out to her, and she now attends every Sunday. She came to our church during a visit to New Orleans because she wanted to thank God for the journey of faith the flood had caused her to travel.

A week earlier, a couple I had not seen before slipped into a pew. They had evacuated in Hurricane Katrina, they said, and were only now, nearly 10 years later, returning permanently to our city.

Week by week – almost day by day – without prompting or questioning, I hear the Katrina stories. I told my own story the other day in response to the query of a stranger. The evacuation on the contraflow, the destruction of my daughters’ homes, the church facility as a relief center, our deployment of 21,000 volunteers, building 91 homes in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, gutting more than a thousand flooded homes – these are components of my own narrative.

A Baptist denominational executive from Texas said he was surprised and delighted to see the diversity in the membership of First Baptist New Orleans after a visit to our church.

We are black and white, Asian and Latino, and all over the economic scale as a church. This diversity is in part the legacy of Hurricane Katrina.



DAVID CROSBY
Guest Column

The devastation of Hurricane Katrina forced an outward focus for our church. The flood washed us out of our building and into our community. Clean-up and rebuilding programs, educational ministries, feeding initiatives, medical missions and rehabilitation efforts involved hundreds of our members. I found myself working in Tremé, Bywater, Mid-City, the Ninth Ward, Gentilly, East New Orleans, Chalmette, Lakeview and virtually all over the flooded footprint of our city.

All the doors in the city were standing ajar after the flood. There was little point in locking up. Everything was ruined. Driving down the streets, one would see the debris line drawn by the floodwaters on every structure along with the gaping doors and windows on practically every house.

Those open doors were to me a vivid symbol of the new openness we all experienced in the crisis. Post-Katrina outreach connected our congregation with the wide range of people outside the doors of our church. As trust and friendships developed, a greater diversity of people gathered inside the building.

A permanent change occurred in the spirit and character of First Baptist New Orleans. Efforts to reach out to our neighbors continue to this day. Authentic faith goes to the need and is not constrained by race or social standing.

See Crosby page 20



First Baptist Church in New Orleans was among the Baptist churches in New Orleans moving forward with a yearning to help people heal from Hurricane Katrina’s trauma. (BP file photo by David Crosby)

Disaster

Continued from page 1

really strong Christian witness and for God to get the glory for compassion, for service and for volunteers investing their time and money and resources,” he said.

NCBM maintained three on-site coordinators (couples) in the early days of Katrina.

Brunson said those coordinators made “huge sacrifices” to be there.

One of the coordinators lost a brother and a grandchild; another lost a son.

“They did it out of joy and out of love,” he said.

Early on, NCBM sent a medical/dental bus to assess the health of evacuees who had been brought to Raleigh. A medical/dental team also worked with evacuees in Charlotte.

The unit based in Meridian moved on to Lafayette, La., on Sept. 26, when Hurricane Rita struck the Gulf Coast, not even a month after Hurricane Katrina left a wide path of devastation.

Initially food, water and building supplies had to be hauled in from out of state.

NCBM purchased two tanker units to carry around 5,000 gallons of water.

Each night a driver would take a tanker to a military base in

Pensacola, Fla., fill up with water and bring it back to Gulfport to assist with food preparation, showers, laundry and to give to residents.

“Some of our equipment that we still use we purchased there out of necessity” for Katrina, Brunson said.

Within two-and-a-half years around 30,000 volunteers from all 50 states and six countries had helped with Katrina recovery efforts.

The yellow shirts and hats Baptist disaster relief workers wear attracted thanks from people on the street. Physically and spiritually, volunteers made an impact.

“If you had on a yellow shirt, people would thank [you],” he said. “People paid for meals at restaurants.”

Unique situation

“There was something about Katrina,” Brunson said. “It was on the news so much. There were a lot of heart-breaking stories.”

Volunteers would make the trip down to the Gulf Coast and come back telling stories of what they had seen. Then, they would return with other volunteers.

The partnership in Gulfport lasted for several years. NCBM helped with more than 700 houses in the Gulfport area.

In 2008, NCBM finished its commitment in the Gulfport area.



The first wave of North Carolina Baptist volunteers set up in Meridian, Miss., where they began serving hot meals to Hurricane Katrina survivors Aug. 31. (BR file photo)

Ceremonies were held Jan. 12-13, 2008, to commemorate N.C. Baptists and their efforts.

A Jan. 19, 2008, *Biblical Recorder* story quoted Brunson from an event held at the armory where thousands of volunteers were based during recovery efforts:

“Thank you for making us from North Carolina feel like your brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, your sons and daughters.”

Volunteers were recognized at Gulfport’s First Baptist Church (FBC) where Chuck Register was pastor. Register is now the executive leader of church planting and missions partnerships for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC). (See story, page 1.)

Another service was hosted by the city of Gulfport, also held at FBC. The Gulfport City Council proclaimed Jan. 13 as “North Carolina Baptist Men Appreciation Day.” Mississippi Gov. Haley Barbour announced a similar decree.

“Our lives are richer and will never be the same,” Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, said at the time.

N.C. expansion

The situation caused NCBM to jumpstart its child care ministry as well as expand its feeding capacity.

Sleeper units were new to NCBM for Katrina. Since then, they have been used at other disaster sites.

“We learned a lot about being there long term,” including the importance of on-site coordinators, Brunson said. “If you can provide housing, meals, logistics you can make it possible for a lot more people to get involved in missions.”

NCBM’s two mission camps – Red Springs and Shelby – came directly out

of what the organization learned through Katrina.

In fact, Red Springs Mission Camp was the recipient of the kitchen used at the armory in Gulfport as well as beds, mattresses, folding chairs and many of the tools bought or donated during the Katrina recovery efforts. “Every disaster is different,” Brunson said. NCBM leaders realized they could recreate some of the logistics at the camps to offer ongoing opportunities for volunteers.

“We realized these people who are driving from North Carolina have big hearts and have all kinds of skills and are making a difference in people’s lives,” he said.

“If we can get them to continue ... let’s provide opportunities any time they want to go to impact people physically and spiritually.”

Brunson wishes NCBM could respond to every disaster but knows that is impossible.

NCBM offers training opportunities in the spring for various regions so people can get certified for various ministries.

Another long-term partnership continues in New Jersey with Hurricane Sandy recovery efforts.

“Sandy wasn’t on the news nearly as much as Katrina,” he said. There is an ongoing need for volunteers there as well as at other sites. Brunson credits Katrina with NCBM’s willingness to commit to more long-term projects like Sandy.

NCBM receives funding through the North Carolina Missions Offering (ncmissionsoffering.org), which also supports church planting, associational projects, mission camps and mobilization ministry projects, or directly to the organization at baptistsonmission.org. **BR**

September 18-19, 2015

Making Disciples
who
MAKE DISCIPLES

Speaker: Ashley Allen
Ashley has served as the senior consultant for Embrace Women's Missions and Ministries since August of 2009

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C.

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Equip Panel: Conviction, kindness key to gay marriage response

By KEITH COLLIER | Southern Baptist TEXAN/Baptist Press

In the wake of the Supreme Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage, Christians and churches must respond by speaking with confidence, conviction and kindness while also creating biblical community, speakers at the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty's (ERLC) inaugural Equip gathering, said.

"We have been called to be a people of both truth and grace, of both conviction and kindness, in a world that is often fearful and angry," ERLC President Russell Moore said during his opening message, based on 2 Timothy 2:22-26, July 29, in Austin, Texas.

Moore acknowledged Christians often associate kindness with weakness or cowering to the culture, but sitting back silently while the world celebrates perversion of God's design for sexuality is "not an option," he said.

"If we capitulate or if we are silent about what the scripture teaches about marriage and sexuality, we are not just avoiding a social issue or a moral issue – we are avoiding a gospel issue," Moore said.

"The church now has the opportunity to articulate a distinctively Christian witness to marriage and sexuality."

Moore went on to say the church must learn to teach a biblical theology of marriage and singleness while recognizing that every member of the church is involved in the issue.

"We need the entire body of Christ together in the articulation, not only in what to avoid – *flee youthful passions* – but also what to pursue – love, peace, righteousness – and embodying that within our own congregations," Moore said.

Paul's admonishment to Timothy to "patiently endure evil" means Christians must be confident in their convictions but speak truth "with a Christian accent," he said.

"People don't change their minds because of a pile of arguments ... [or] because we humiliate them," Moore said. "People have hearts changed when they encounter the risen Christ, who calls them by name."

Moore concluded his message by calling churches to reach "refugees from the sexual revolution," those who have followed after lustful passions and found their promises empty and damaging. Those who are best able to reach these hurting individuals will be those who are confident in the truth and gracious in their offer of the gospel.

The three-hour event, titled "The Gospel & Same-Sex Marriage," featured pastors and formerly gay Christians and addressed how churches and Christians should respond to the issue. The event, which was hosted by The Austin Stone Community Church and funded by a grant from the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention, was simulcast live to homes and churches across the country.

A common theme throughout the evening was that churches needed to cultivate gospel community, which involves intentional life-on-life relationships.

Mike Goeke shared his testimony of separating from his wife to pursue a homosexual lifestyle before repenting and returning to his marriage.

Goeke, whose story could help reach those struggling with same-sex attraction in the church, warned

that the solution is not in programs or special ministries but simply "for the church to be the church."

Goeke, now associate pastor of First Baptist Church in San Francisco, said the primary reason many who are saved by Christ out of homosexuality often return to the lifestyle is because of loneliness. Several speakers noted the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community thrives on networks of close, personal relationships.

Churches, then, must model biblical community.



MIKE GOEKE

"When a gay person walks away from their entire world, when they walk away from their sexual identity and possibly their whole identity, when they walk away from their community to pursue Jesus, they often find no one in the church to walk alongside them," Goeke said.

"Shiny, well-scrubbed, secret-bearing Christianity will never foster anything except more secrets. We need to pull community out of a list of programs and graft it into the DNA of our church."

Healing community, Goeke said, is messy and inconvenient, but it is also life changing for every member in the church.

Rosaria Butterfield, a former English professor at Syracuse University who abandoned her life as a lesbian and gay activist when she converted to Christ, echoed Goeke's plea for churches to display gospel community. Her own testimony includes a pastor and his wife who befriended her and welcomed her into their lives as they demonstrated and discussed the gospel with her.

Butterfield, author of *The Secret Thoughts of an Unlikely Convert*, stressed that just like every person who repents and believes in Christ, those coming out of homosexuality are exchanging their old identity for a new identity in Christ, yet this transition is not simple.

Jackie Hill Perry, who also was a lesbian before coming to Christ, explained the gospel creates community, saving individuals into communities of people called local churches.

For this reason, she encouraged Christians who struggle with same-sex attraction to pursue friendships in the church.

"How can we be a family to these people whom we are calling to repentance?"

– Matt Carter

"If God has said and created people with roles that will equip us and mature us," Perry said, "then those of us who are struggling can't decide, 'I'm going to grow apart from the way God taught me to grow.' We have to go to a local body because that's where these roles are expressed."

"We need people to help us, and I know it's scary, but fear is a great place to trust God."



Former lesbian and gay activist Rosaria Butterfield shares her testimony of how Christ saved her. Butterfield was one of the speakers at the ERLC's Equip Austin event, July 29. (Photo by Gary Ledbetter)

At the same time, Perry challenged churches to get beyond conferences and programs on the topic and to simply be the body of Christ.

"Most of us may not be able to empathize or understand the struggle with a specific sin such as homo-



JACKIE HILL PERRY

sexuality, but I believe that all people can empathize with sin as a whole," Perry said.

"I think that's even more crucial to why the church should actually exemplify community. The thing about the gay community is that it actually is a community – you feel safe, you feel listened to, you feel heard, you feel understood."

"So I think it's a problem when those who are unbelievers feel way more safe in a room full of unregenerates than they do people whom God knows."

Matt Carter, pastor of preaching at The Austin Stone, noted in a panel discussion at the end of the evening that it's often easy for churches to stand for truth but more difficult for them to offer grace.

He seeks in his preaching to "unashamedly preach the gospel in a loving way," and by God's grace, they have seen people drawn to Jesus as a result. Carter encourages his church members to "look at people in this community the same way you would anybody that needs the love of Christ."

At the same time, Carter said, he has been asking himself and his church, "How can we be a family to these people whom we are calling to repentance? We're calling these folks out of the only family they may have, and how

can we be a real, genuine, authentic, biblical community for them?"

Butterfield said she appreciates this approach, and added, "We are calling people to lose a community, and of all people, Christians ought to be able to step into loneliness."

ERLC plans to post sessions from the Equip event on its website, erlc.com, in the coming weeks.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Keith Collier is managing editor of the Southern Baptist TEXAN.)



MATT CARTER

Planned Parenthood fight to defund ‘far from over’

By **TOM STRODE** | Baptist Press

The legislative effort to defund Planned Parenthood failed Aug. 3 in the U.S. Senate, but pro-life advocates said they will not give up.

The Senate voted 53-46 to bring to the floor a bill to eliminate federal funds for the Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) and its affiliates. While a majority of senators favored consideration of the proposal, the attempt to invoke cloture, as it is known, fell short of the 60 votes needed to begin debate on the legislation and establish a path to its passage.

The failure to move the bill, S. 1881, to the floor came in spite of the release during the previous three weeks of videos revealing Planned Parenthood’s trade in baby body parts. The four undercover videos show PPFA officials discussing the sale of organs from aborted children for research.

A fifth video was released Aug. 4.

Pro-life leaders expressed their dismay, as well as their devotion to continuing the defunding campaign.

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), said he is disappointed the Senate “did not show the moral leadership to stop funding this violence. Now Senators are on record as for or against, and the debate goes on.”

“We will not rest until the fundamental protections of right to life and liberty apply to all, regardless of age, income, or stage of development,” said Moore, who endorsed the Senate bill in a July 30 letter to leaders of both houses.

Rep. Diane Black, R.-Tenn., who has introduced a defunding bill in the House of Representatives, said the Senate vote “was a triumph of politics over principle and deceit over truth.”

“The fight to defund Planned Parenthood is far from over,” said Black, whose legislation would place a one-year moratorium on funds for PPFA while Congress investigates the organization. “We will not give up and we will not stand down.”

Sen. Joni Ernst, R.-Iowa, sponsor of the rejected Senate defunding bill, said she will continue to urge the Department of Health and Human Services to cooperate with investigations of Planned Parenthood. “I remain committed to getting these answers because protecting our most vulnerable is an important measure of any society,” she said.

The roll-call vote demonstrated the Democratic Party’s continued commitment to Planned Parenthood and other

abortion rights organizations. Only two Democrats – Sens. Joe Donnelly of Indiana and Joe Manchin of West Virginia – voted to bring the bill to the floor.

Sen. Mark Kirk of Illinois was the lone Republican to oppose advancing the legislation. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell also voted “nay” but only in order to be able to bring the bill up again as required by Senate rules. Sen. Lindsey Graham, R.-S.C., would have added another vote for cloture, but he missed the roll call to be in New Hampshire for a GOP presidential candidate forum.

On Aug. 4, a Planned Parenthood executive criticized the defunding attempts as “political games.”

Dawn Laguens, PPFA’s executive vice president, said on CNN, “What we’re seeing here are attacks on people’s ability to get health care.

“We’re seeing attacks that are intended, in their end analysis, to get rid of safe, legal abortion in this country and destroy Planned Parenthood, who stands up for the reproductive health rights and freedom of women and all people in this country.”

Foes of the defunding effort have defended the need for Planned Parenthood’s services – and the need for federal funding of the organization – to women, especially those with lower incomes. They also have criticized the videos as fraudulent.

Ernst’s bill makes clear it would maintain federal funding for women’s health at the same level but would transfer money no longer available for Planned Parenthood to other eligible service providers. Black has described as “a lie” the contention by PPFA that defunding it would result in a crisis for low-income women.

The videos, produced by the Center for Medical Progress (CMP), show conversations between PPFA officials and individuals portraying representatives of a human biologics firm. On the videos, recorded secretly by a hidden camera, Planned Parenthood executives are shown discussing their ability to provide parts of aborted fetuses for research and their willingness to manipulate the abortion procedure to preserve organs for sale and use.

While CMP releases edited videos of the conversations, it also releases what it describes as full footage of the interactions between PPFA officials and those recording the conversations.

In related news, Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana announced Aug. 3 his administration had canceled its Medicaid agreement with Planned Parenthood. **BP**

NEWS BRIEFS

Bombs at two New Mexico churches halt services
(Baptist Press) Small bombs exploded within minutes of each other Aug. 2 at two Las Cruces, N.M., churches – including a Southern Baptist congregation – cancelling Sunday morning services and necessitating evacuations at other churches across the city.
No one was hurt in the explosions that caused minimal damage at Calvary Baptist Church, 1800 S. Locust St., and Holy Cross Catholic Church, 1327 N. Miranda St., The Associated Press (AP) reported. New Mexico state police described the bombs as improvised explosive devices, IEDs, designed to cause harm.
About 50 worshippers had already gathered for the 8:30 a.m. traditional service at Calvary Baptist Church when the bomb exploded at 8:20 a.m. in a mailbox attached to the building, Scott Rodgers, pastor of core groups, told Baptist Press. Worshippers remained calm as police arrived and evacuated Calvary Baptist, ushering individuals to the church’s south parking lot, Rodgers said. He preached the Sunday morning service in the parking lot, as youth arts pastor Gregg Higgins led music. But the 9:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. services were cancelled, as police blocked adjacent streets while investigating the crime.
Mass had already convened at Holy Cross Catholic Church when a bomb exploded in a plastic trash can outside a church window around 8:40 a.m., AP reported, as 200 were preparing for communion. The bomb damaged a glass entryway, and parishioners exited a separate door.
Several churches in Las Cruces ended or cancelled Sunday services after the explosions, *Albuquerque Journal News* reported.

Satanist statue prompts Michigan Baptist response
(Baptist Press) Michigan Baptists will not waver in their efforts to spread the gospel throughout their state, even after The Satanic Temple (TST) has unveiled a bronze, 9-foot-tall statue of Baphomet in Detroit, says Tim Patterson, a Baptist leader in the state. “People have been worshipping Satan since Satan fell from heaven,” Patterson, executive director for the Baptist State Convention of Michigan, said. “That is nothing new at all. I think what is new about it is the public way it is being portrayed in the media.”
Nearly 700 people gathered July 25 in a Detroit warehouse around midnight for the unveiling of the Baphomet monument, which TST unsuccessfully tried to erect beside a 10 Commandments monument in Oklahoma two years ago.
According to The Christian Post, TST spokesperson Lucien Greaves said people received an e-ticket revealing the secret location of the event only after signing a contract, giving their souls to the devil. According to Time magazine, TST also overestimated the popularity of the event, telling possible attendees that it would be “the largest public satanic ceremony in history.”

New rules protect military from predatory loans
(Baptist Press) The Obama administration has issued new rules strengthening protections for military service members against predatory lending, a problem Southern Baptists increasingly are addressing.
The final regulations, announced July 21 by President Obama, closed loopholes in the Military Lending Act, a 2007 law designed to keep predatory lenders from targeting and abusing United States service members and their families. Households that take out payday loans are about twice as likely as others to include a member of the military, the White House reported, citing a Pew Charitable Trusts study.
Commonly referred to as payday lending, the predatory practice often draws poor people in particular into a debt trap by charging excessive, and often misleading, interest rates. Though an interest rate may be portrayed by a lender as 15 percent, for instance, it actually is only for a two-week period until a person’s next payday. The annual interest rate typically is about 400 percent, making it difficult for the borrower to repay the loan. It requires years for some people to pay off their loans. Southern Baptists addressed the predatory loan industry in a resolution adopted by messengers during their 2014 annual meeting. The resolution denounced predatory payday lending, called for the adoption of just government policies to end the practice and urged churches to provide training in financial stewardship.
In mid-May, the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission helped launch the Faith for Just Lending Coalition.
The diverse alliance – which includes Baptists, other evangelical Christians, Roman Catholics and mainline Protestants – is seeking to increase awareness of predatory lending and to motivate individuals, lenders, churches and the government to help bring an end to the practice.

Full stories available online at BRnow.org.

ERLC

Continued from page 9

ends with sending. The whole point of the people of God being gathered together is precisely” to be restored and sent out, he said.

Speakers and panelists offered advice to pastors regarding political engagement.

J.D. Greear, lead pastor of The Summit Church in the Raleigh/Durham, N.C., area, listed four myths younger pastors in particular must avoid.

“Secondary political ideals are matters of first importance,” Greear cited as the first myth.

He tells his church, “I might be wrong on my position about global warming, but I am not wrong about the gospel. And I do not want my opinion on the first thing to get in the way of my preaching about the second thing.”

The other myths to be avoided, he said, are:

- “Christian truth does not apply to politics.
- “There is never a time to take a controversial political stand.
- “We see everything clearly.”



Speakers addressed political engagement Aug. 5 at “The Gospel and Politics” -- the second national conference sponsored by the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission. Pictured are (left to right) moderator Phillip Bethancourt, Jim Daly, Samuel Rodriguez and Russell Moore. (Photo by Alli Rader)

Regarding when to address issues from the pulpit, panelist D.A. Horton said, “Anytime the common good of humanity is under attack and human flourishing is being oppressed, then I believe that’s a red flag that we need to be addressing” from God’s Word.

Horton is a church planter who serves as national coordinator for urban student missions at the North American Mission Board.

On the same panel, Jimmy Scroggins told pastors, “We’re not going to be able to speak to every single issue with the same force.”

Scroggins is lead pastor of the Family Church in West Palm Beach, Fla.

David Platt, president of the International Mission Board, applied the gospel to the human trafficking crisis.

Acknowledging there are no easy answers and no simple solutions to the

epidemic, Platt said, “Fighting slavery begins with believing in the gospel.”

Jesus “is the pursuing Savior, and as men and women who are identified with Him we need to pursue the enslaved,” said Platt, who added traffickers and pornography users also need the gospel.

Among other speaking at the conference were Ross Douthat, columnist for the *The New York Times*; author Rod Dreher; Erick Erickson, editor of *RedState.com*; Michael Gerson, columnist for *The Washington Post* and former White House speech writer; Jennifer Marshall, vice president at the Heritage Foundation; and Karen Swallow Prior, author and English professor at Liberty University.

The ERLC’s inaugural national conference, held in October 2014, applied the gospel to homosexuality and marriage.

Videos of the conference, which was held at Nashville’s Music City Center, will be available in the days ahead at erlc.com/videos.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Tom Strobe is Washington bureau chief for Baptist Press, the Southern Baptist Convention’s news service.) **BR**

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Continued from page 7

year, came with his sending church, First Baptist Church, Alpharetta, Ga.

“I came because of the church planting mentality, and the desire to advance the gospel in America. It just helped me know that I am not alone. Being able to worship with my brothers and sisters who are doing everything we can to advance the gospel was exhilarating,” Dodd said.

Vance Pitman, pastor of Hope Church in Las Vegas, reminded the audience Tuesday morning that ordinary people in the book of Acts witnessed God do extraordinary things through godly obedience.

“If you were picking teams, you would not have picked them,” Pitman said of the early church. “They were former prostitutes. They were cheating tax collectors. They were salty former fishermen. They had no creativity. They had no strategy. They had no education. They had no formal training. They had no seminary degrees, and none of them had preached sermons. They weren’t professional ministers. They had no influence. They had no relevance. They had no money. They had no power. They had no facilities.

“Within 40 years [after Pentecost], the gospel had reached every part of the known world,” Pitman said. “What if within 40 years of this moment, there were no unreached peoples left?”

Other Send Conference attendees pitched in, too. Nearly 600 volunteers served in every capacity at the four host venues required for the two-day event.

Anita Fore, a senior tax manager in Abingdon, Va., decided to attend the conference after seeing an ad for the event. She had no idea there would be volunteer opportunities, but she did not want to attend without being part of the prayer team.

“I knew I had to be on that team, even if it meant I might not hear anything at the conference,” said Fore, who arrived on Aug. 3 and joined in praying over the entire arena. Fore and the rest of the intercessory teams took three-hour shifts throughout the conference to pray.

On Tuesday, International Mission Board President David Platt challenged attendees to make disciples.

“One of the things I’m most excited about in partnering with the North American Mission Board is the potential it represents,” Platt said. “The stronger churches are in North America, the better our missionaries will be around the world.”

The final session of the conference opened with a video overview of Global Hunger Relief, the Southern Baptist Con-

vention’s primary mercy ministry funding avenue. The video, available for church use, features Ezell, Platt and Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission President Russell Moore.

“Southern Baptists immediately respond to crisis like an earthquake in Nepal,” said Moore in a later panel discussion with Ezell. “The heart of Southern Baptists is to serve. They are the first in and last out in disasters, and as they are doing that they are sharing the gospel.”

During the two days of the Send Conference, more than 30 breakout sessions, some with thousands in attendance, challenged participants to consider practical next steps coming out of the experience. Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd led a Sending Church panel with church planter pastors Pitman, J.D. Greear of Summit Church, Alex Himaya of *theChurch.at*, and Bryant Wright of Johnson Ferry Church.

“We tell our people we have a mandate,” Himaya said. “We are a sent church. It is not an option. We teach people to abide in Christ. Their priority must be to make disciples. It is not a strategy – it is essential for a healthy church.”

Attendee Josh Mars, a member of Peine Ridge Church’s Credence Campus in Troy, Mo., left with a renewed vision for reaching those around him.

“This week has really convicted me of the opportunities God has given me, and my church to engage the community around us. Just seeing that God has opened up a lot of doors and opportunities that we don’t always walk through.”

Mars’ next steps include his present training to be an elder at his church, and praying through the possibility of being a church planter. “There are a lot of practical next steps like better engaging my neighbors and setting an example to people in my small group and encouraging others to live their lives on mission,” Mars said.

Gabe Dodd, like so many others in the gathering, was encouraged by the sheer volume of believers in one place worshipping as one.

“Even though I am the only Southern Baptist church plant in my town, and only one of two or three Southern Baptist churches in the town, being able to worship with 13,000 people is super encouraging,” Dodd said.

“The biggest practical takeaway is really the kingdom focus from this week and identifying what the kingdom is. If Jesus says, ‘Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,’ what does that mean here? That has been the most impactful takeaway for me.”



Anita Fore, right, a senior tax manager from Abingdon, Va., and Barbara Alvarado of Nashville, a member of Donelson Baptist Church, pray over the breakout room that will host J.D. Greear and a session on his new book *Gaining by Losing* at the 2015 Send North America Conference in Nashville. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

More than 1,100 participants had already responded by Wednesday, primarily through the Send Conference app,

requesting information or assistance for next steps in a life on mission.

Beginning Aug. 10, a set of life on mission next steps resources will be available, including a six-week Bible study by church planter Matt Rogers with corresponding videos, blog posts and other items released on a weekly basis. Visit sendnetwork.com/lifeonmission for more details.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Joe Conway writes for the North American Mission Board. NAMB writers K. Faith Morgan and Meredith Yackel, as well

as BR staff contributed to this story. View video highlights from the conference and complete coverage of the event at namb.net/send2015.) **BR**

DISCIPLE YOUR FAMILY TO DREAM BIG

As summer winds down we turn our attention to a new school year. For parents, this means a return to the routine of homework, after school activities and lots of miles spent carpooling. It is easy to jump back into the routine and forget the big picture. Becoming absorbed in the role of program director and traffic coordinator can lead parents to spend more time talking than listening.

With good intentions we get our kids focused on the tasks at hand instead of hearing them and helping them grasp the wonderful future for which God is preparing them.

So, how can we disciple our kids to look beyond today and focus on the things God has for them? Here is a strategy for helping your kids develop a God-sized vision for their lives:



BRIAN UPSHAW

special needs kids, or helping in a nursing home.

Adjust

Once you hear all the dreams, read Ephesians 3:20-21 together, which speaks of God’s ability to immeasurably more than we can ask or think. Ask your family to consider which of their dreams are God-sized. Challenge your kids to understand that God can do much more than we can imagine.

Pray

Pray and ask God to be glorified and help you to dream the dreams He has for you as individuals and a family for His glory.

We worship a God who can do more than we can ask or even imagine according to His power and for His glory! This exercise can help you

Dream

Have them write down five things they want to do in their lifetime.

Share

Gather your family together and take turns sharing one dream each at a time around the circle until you hear all five from everyone. Not all the dreams will be super-spiritual. They may include things like playing in a rock band and traveling the world. But you may also see things included like going on mission trips, serving

learn much more about your family and their dreams. It will help you channel those dreams toward godliness and give your kids a God-sized vision for walking as His disciples!

I want my kids to have faith in a big God who can empower them to do magnificent things as they seek to obey and glorify Him.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Brian Upshaw is the disciple-making team leader at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5632 or bupshaw@ncbaptist.org.)

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

My 8 event encourages evangelism

The Baptist State Convention is hosting an evangelism conference called My 8 Event at Adaville Baptist Church in Spindale. Join popular student speaker and author Ed Newton and the BeDoTell Band Sept. 13 at 6:30 p.m. to see how we can reach this generation for Jesus by understanding both the heart and how-to of living out our faith. A love offering will be collected. For more information, contact the Youth Evangelism & Discipleship Office at youth.disciplemaking@ncbaptist.org or (800) 395-5102, ext. 5566.

Learn to tell 'The Story'

The Story is an evangelism strategy that connects the dots through the Bible, and paints an easily understood picture that reveals why this world is a mess, and how it will all be fixed. The Baptist State

Convention is hosting regional conferences to train Christians to use The Story effectively in Burlington on Sept. 14 and Hendersonville on Oct. 26. Each conference is from 9:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. and includes lunch and conference materials including The Story Guide Leader Kit. This kit contains The Story Guide Primer Edition (Workbook), Leader Notes (Booklet), helpful The Story Resources such as DVD Media Disc (Presentation/Videos), The Story Bible and access code to TheStoryTraining.com. The total cost is \$20 per church leader. Additional guests from your church are welcome to attend for \$10 per person. For more information or to register visit ncbaptist.org/index.php?id=947.

Training for youth ministry

Youth ministry training is being offered Sept. 12 by the Baptist State Con-

vention of North Carolina at Cowee Baptist Church in Franklin and Sept. 22 at Tyson's Creek Baptist Church in Bear Creek. The training will last from 9 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Topics addressed include: the five purposes of the church, mentoring, enlisting and keeping volunteers, how to plan a mission trip, risk management in youth ministry and more. Training also includes presentation of ministry helps, speakers addressing issues of spiritual growth and renewal and fellowship and sharing of ideas. Cost includes lunch and training materials. The earlybird pricing is \$25 per person or special group rate of \$100 per group of five, ends Aug. 28 for Sept. 12 training and Sept. 8 for Sept. 22 training. Regular pricing is \$35 per person or special group rate of \$140.

Contact (800) 395-5102, ext. 5566, or Youth.Disciplemaking@ncbaptist.org.

N.C. campers plan fall rally

The North Carolina Campers On Mission (NCCOM) fall rally will be held Sept. 24-27 at Denton Farm Park, 1072 Cranford Road, Denton, N.C. 27239.

COM is a national fellowship of Christian campers of all evangelical denominations who want to share their faith and

love of Jesus Christ while camping and/or participating in mission activities.

The rally informs participants about its organization, allows people to meet other Christian campers and hear mission reports about projects. Members use their recreational vehicles to spread the gospel.

Visit nccampersonmission.org or call Shirley Thompson at (336) 274-9622.

Union associations offers strategy event

The Intentionally Evangelistic Church Strategy seeks to assist, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, pastors, staff members, students and laity in developing a personalized, contextualized, effective and intentional evangelism strategy for the local church and the individual Christian's life. Pastors are encouraged to have lay leaders to attend the seminar with them Oct. 20-22 at Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe. Subjects discussed are: evangelistic leadership and direction, evangelistic prayer, assimilation/discipleship, event evangelism and personal evangelism.

Cost of \$50 covers all materials and lunches. To register contact Kim Nicholson at (704) 753-1084 or kim@whatasavior.com.

CHURCH NEWS



Berryhill Baptist Church, Charlotte

Pastor Alan Beard of Berryhill Baptist Church, Charlotte, recognized Mary Payne for 62 years of perfect attendance in Sunday School. That's 3,263 days. During the July 19 service Beard said that in his 38 years of ministry, he had never met a member with that kind of record. The pastor congratulated Payne for her faithfulness to the Lord and the church. (Contributed photo)

BR hires Tablazon as circulation, social media manager

BR staff

The *Biblical Recorder* welcomed Liz Tablazon as circulation and social media manager in late July. She previously served as editorial aide in 2013. Tablazon earned her bachelor's degree in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill in May 2015. There, she worked in house management and the box office at PlayMakers Repertory Company.

Born in the Philippines, her family moved to the U.S. in 1999. Church planting was part of her upbringing as her family served two churches in Union, N.J., and Winston-Salem, N.C. Throughout the years Tablazon assisted with child care, church communications and worship-leading responsibilities. She is currently a member of Triad Journey Church in Winston-Salem.

Tablazon manages all of the *Recorder's* circulation data and works with subscribers of the print and digital editions to ensure accurate delivery of information. Tablazon also manages the *Recorder's* expanding social media efforts, developing unique strategies to effectively engage readers through various online platforms.

She replaces Erin Gandy in this role.

Gandy resigned from her position as circulation manager after serving two years on staff. She is engaged to be married in early Fall to Capt. Jeremiah Stache, instructor of civil engineering at the United States Military Academy in West Point, N.Y. Gandy will move to New York after the wedding. She has enjoyed working at the *Recorder*. "I know this job was an answer to many prayers in God's perfect timing. I have enjoyed the relationships formed here and at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina." **BR**



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August 23

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

August 30

Return to the task

Focal passage: Acts 13:1-3, 44-52

Can you imagine a basketball team playing a championship game without unity of purpose and mission? Perhaps the star player is focused on getting his stats to look good or a support player is determined to make a three-pointer, cementing himself in everyone's memory. Regardless of motivations, it's not difficult to imagine that such a team would probably be ineffective. Without unity built around a common purpose, distraction and failures abound.

In Acts we find the church experiences a unity around a common mission and purpose that is noteworthy. The church at Antioch understood their mission was not to build the best social club in the region or to ensure that everyone was as comfortable as they could be. On the contrary, their mission, the Great Commission, was to spread the gospel and make disciples.

It should come as no surprise then that they did not hesitate when the Holy Spirit called on them to send Paul and Barnabas out to spread the gospel. They

understood their mission and knew what it would take to advance. Are we committed to the advance of the kingdom, even when it means sending out our best and brightest to be missionaries and church planters? Or are we more committed to building our own particular brand of Christianity?

Notice that it is God who leads the church at Antioch to send out Paul and Barnabas and yet they face rejection. The passage shows us vividly that the work of evangelism and mission is not without difficulty and rejection. Yet we find the power to persevere knowing He is sovereign and He will save! In the very same passage, we see the joy that flows from sinners coming to Christ. The joy of harvest is the reward of remaining united in our mission through rejection. We should not fear sending out our best and brightest. Likewise, we shouldn't fear or retreat when we face rejection. Rather we should trust in God's purpose to establish His Kingdom and in His sovereignty to accomplish it.



MANNY PRIETO
Lay Pastor, Imago Dei
Church, Raleigh

Hospitality: How ordinary people can live on mission

Focal passage: Luke 14:12-24

What is the best meal you've ever had? Think past the menu and think of a specific occasion. Our best meal may or may not line up with the best food we've ever tasted. In fact, when I think about my favorite meals, the food is secondary. I think first of the people and the occasions. Meals mean more than the food that is served. Meals are shared experiences with others, opportunities to build and deepen relationships, and for the believer, meals are a mission field.

As we meditate on the parable of the Great Banquet, we are confronted with the reality that our greatest meal is yet to come. For those of us who are in Christ, our greatest meal will be at the Wedding Feast of the Lamb, when we, the Church, the sanctified Bride of Christ, will finally behold our King and Savior. I can hardly

begin to wrap my mind around that coming feast, yet it is the sure reality of all who are in Christ.

At the same time, looking forward to that great feast should remind us that the work here is not yet complete. There are many who have not yet heard of this coming feast. As the church, we have received our command from the our gracious host: we are to bring many to the feast, those who are far off and in darkness.

Brothers and sisters, are we thinking Christianly about our dinner tables and our meals? Are we practicing hospitality with a missional mindset? All of us must recognize that at one time we were far off, unworthy guests of such a great feast. Yet we were brought in, as unlovely as we were, and we have been given seats at the King's table. This should result in a distinctively Christian hospitality. May we use our dinner tables and feasts as vessels of good news to invite others to the King's coming feast! I pray we would open our homes to many as a picture of the King who has opened his table to the lost.

August 23

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

August 30

Jesus Defeats Satan

Focal Passage: Revelation 12:1-17

Unstoppable. Unconquerable. Invincible. Impregnable. Do these words enter your mind today as you think about the Kingdom of God?

It may look as though God's Kingdom is losing ground. The so-called Islamic State and other enemies of the gospel are mercilessly killing our brothers and sisters in numbers greater than ever. In our country, the ethics of God's Kingdom are becoming a stigma. Christians are increasingly seen as a hindrance to progress. It's easy to think Satan is winning.

Yet, remember how God has carried out his plan throughout history. This isn't the first time it *appeared* unlikely that God's Kingdom plans would triumph.

It appeared Satan hindered God's plan in the beginning when he successfully led Adam and Eve to sin, bringing corruption to God's good creation. Yet, God had redemption planned through the seed of woman who would crush the serpent's head. Throughout the Old Testament Satan fought to prevent the coming of that Son.

Satan corrupted the world to the point of total destruction, but God preserved

Noah. Athaliah killed the sons of Judah's lineage, but God preserved Joash. Judah was threatened by the Babylonians, but God promised through Isaiah that His plans would be fulfilled through the miraculous virgin birth of Immanuel. When it looked like every Jew would be exterminated under the reign of Ahasuerus, God raised up Esther to preserve His people and His plan.

When the promised seed was finally born in Bethlehem, Herod decreed all children his age to be killed, but God gave Mary and Joseph escape in Egypt. Satan still didn't give up. He tempted Jesus to sin – unsuccessfully. He roused people to brutally kill the Messiah, but he failed to understand that the death of Jesus would be the crushing of his own head.

The blood of the lamb has defeated Satan. Still today he inflicts suffering upon the people of God, but God has a proven record of turning suffering into triumph. Trust in our victorious Savior, and watch God carry out His perfect plan even if it costs us our lives.



MICHAEL WILKES
Pastor, New Life Baptist
Church, Henderson

Focal Passage: Revelation 21:1-7

Spoiler alert! – It's what a true friend should say before giving details important to the ending of a movie you haven't seen or book you haven't read.

Most of us don't want to know the ending ahead of time. Of course, there are always those who read the last chapter first – the same ones who feel they must try to figure out what their gifts are before it's time to open them.

You don't need a spoiler alert before you read about the perfect new heaven and new earth in the presence of Jesus with no more pain, sorrow, suffering or death. In these final chapters of our Bible, God tells us how our struggle with sin and Satan will end if we trust in Jesus. Because our struggles are real and sometimes extremely difficult, we need this glimpse of the end.

A boxer who doesn't think he can defeat his opponent almost certainly will not.

The Final Act

He must be prepared for the fight and be convinced that he has what it takes to win. God knows this about our nature because He created us. Though your adversary is a much bigger and stronger opponent that you, God has given you all the equipment you need for the battle.

"Though your adversary is much bigger and stronger ... God has given you all ... you need."

In Christ, He gives you the armor of God to stand against the devil. He empowers you with His Spirit, and He consistently reminds you in Scripture that our foe has already been defeated.

We must remember that the end has already been written. Victory over Satan is not just possible, it is guaranteed if we trust in Christ. As many preachers have said, "We are not just fighting *for* victory. We are fighting *from* victory!"

This view of the end reminds us – as we incur wounds amid the conflict of our life – "*that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us*" (Romans 8:18). That is, of course, if we keep fighting and keep trusting in Jesus.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Second Baptist Church of Fayetteville, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor**. We are looking for someone who is led by God and willing to guide our church into the future with growth and a vision for ministry and mission opportunities. The preferred candidate must be biblically grounded, energetic, compassionate, and a caring servant willing to teach, lead and grow God's people. Seminary and pastoral experience is required and a master's degree is preferred. Primary duties will include Sunday morning service, Sunday and Wednesday evening Bible study, visiting the sick, shut-ins and ministering to the needs of the congregation as well as other duties. We are a small, conservative, Bible-based Southern Baptist congregation located downtown in an ever-changing inner city environment. Interested applicants may submit a resume with references and a sample DVD sermon to the Pastor Search Committee, Second Baptist Church, 522 Person Street, Fayetteville NC 28301. Resumes must be submitted by August 30, 2015.

Due to the retirement of our Pastor of 12 years, Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church is seeking a **Pastor**. Established in 1853, we continue to grow spiritually and in number as well, with many new converts annually. God has truly blessed us. We have a broad age spectrum with active mission groups, an annual food give away and an annual free fair to reach out to the community and the unchurched. We are seeking a Bible-believing Pastor to serve God with us at Mt. Pleasant, "where the Spirit is sweet." Send resume's to: Pulpit Committee Mt. Pleasant Baptist Church, 397 Mount Pleasant Church Road, Forest City, NC 28043.

Cumberland Baptist Church located in Fayetteville, NC, is seeking a **full-time senior pastor**. We are a conservative congregation with approximately 125 in attendance weekly. Qualified applicants should be caring, loving, biblically grounded and led by the Holy Spirit. Applicants should also possess a masters of divinity with five years experience. Please send resume and personal testimony to Pastor Search Team, 4957 Cumberland Road, Fayetteville, NC 28306, or send via email to pastorsearch@cumberlandbaptist.com.

Spring Branch Baptist Church, a rural conservative Southern Baptist church of Dunn, NC, is seeking a **full-time pastor**. We are seeking someone energetic and compassionate for the youngest to the oldest in our congregation and be mission minded. You must serve our church and community through prayer, worship, fellowship and discipleship. Primary duties include Sunday morning services and evening Bible study, Wednesday evening prayer service, visit the sick and shut-ins. Must have a seminary degree. Send resumes to Pastor Search Committee, Spring Branch Baptist Church, 2391 N. Spring Branch Road, Dunn, NC 28334, or email to sbbc@intrstar.net.

Lakeside Baptist Church, North Myrtle Beach, SC, is seeking a compassionate **full-time Pastor** who is led by the Holy Spirit to help grow our church and minister to the changing needs of our congregation and community. We are praying for a Pastor who is enthusiastic about helping us grow spiritually and numerically. A pastor who will provide spiritual leadership and who is faithful to biblical principles. Resumes should be sent to Pastor Search Committee, Lakeside Baptist Church, 615 11th Ave. N, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29597.

Denominational

Catawba River Baptist Association, in Morganton, NC, will be accepting resumes for **Director of Missions** through September 30th. For more information see CRBA website, www.crbanc.org. Please send resume and cover letter to: DOM Search Committee, CRBA, 1812 US Hwy 70 East, Morganton, NC 28655.

Illinois Baptist Children's Home seeks an **Executive Director** to replace current Director's retirement the end of 2016. Applications are to be received by January 2016 to fill the position by October 2016. Go to www.bchfs.com/employment.html for details.

Church Staff

Mount Carmel Baptist Church in Asheville, NC, is seeking a **full-time Music and Worship Pastor**. This person will oversee music ministry and lead blended worship. We are a biblically-conservative Southern Baptist Church. Please forward resumes to rhackett@mountcarmelonline.org.

Full-time Children's Minister Position available at Bethlehem Baptist Church, Taylorsville, NC. Please submit resume to: pastor@bethlehembaptistnc.org or 7500 NC Hwy. 127, Taylorsville, NC 28681.

Dobson First Baptist Church, Dobson, NC, is currently seeking a **Youth Minister**. Position is full-time; salaried non-exempt. If you are interested, please send resume by email to cory-honeycutt@gmail.com. Must receive by Aug. 31st. Detailed job description is posted on church Facebook page (Dfb Church).

Southside Baptist Church, Elm City, NC, is seeking a **part-time Worship Leader/Choir Director**. Individual must love the Lord and be passionate about serving Him through music. Responsibilities include teaching and directing adult choir, choosing music for all services, working with pianist, Praise Team and children's choir. Worship services are a blend of traditional and contemporary music. Call 252.446.8579 or email resume to: sbc@sbcsc.org.

Mount Carmel Baptist Church, Asheville, NC (www.mountcarmelonline.org), is seeking a **Youth Pastor**. Responsibilities include: spiritual development of our youth, ministering to youth & their families, developing outreach opportunities & assisting overall spiritual growth of the church. The position is full-time but part-time may be considered. We are a biblically conservative Southern Baptist church. Send resumes to rhackett@mountcarmelonline.org.

Hillmon Grove Baptist Church, Cameron, NC, is seeking a **full-time Youth Pastor** to promote the spiritual, social and emotional growth of students grades 7-12. Primary duties are to lead and plan a comprehensive youth ministry to include Bible teaching, missions projects, recreation/fellowship and related activities. Annual salary range \$35K-\$40K. Ministerial degree preferred. Send resume to hgbsecretary@gmail.com or Search Committee, 384 Hillmon Grove Road, Cameron, NC 28326.

Catawba Valley Baptist Church of Maiden, NC, is seeking a **Choir Director/Minister of Music**. This is a part-time paid position. A degree in music or extensive choir director experience is required. Mail resumes to 3390 Shepherd Rd., Maiden, NC 28650, or email it to catawbabaptist@bellsouth.net.

Part-Time Church Accompanist - Stallings Memorial Baptist Church, Salisbury. Perform and accompany on keyboards (digital keyboard, piano, and/or organ) in Sunday morning worship services and Wednesday evening choir rehearsals. Additional services/rehearsals required for special church seasons of the year. Salary is commensurate with experience. Contact 704-636-2056 to apply.

FIRST MISSIONARY BAPTIST CHURCH, CONCORD, NC, ISO A **YOUTH MINISTER OF MUSIC & ARTS**. Searching for paid-staff member. Should be a mature Christian to work with current Minister of Music & Youth/Young Adult Pastor to carry out the mission, vision and core values of FMBC. Primary focus will be to prepare youth from pre-school to high school for worship services. Candidate will plan, prepare and perform, and must have excellent communication and administrative skills. Must be self-motivated, dependable, reliable, honest and a team player. Approximately 12-15 hours a week. Compensation will be based on qualifications, education and experience. Interested individuals should email resume to Ms. LaSonia Hunter at youthmusicnarts@fmbc-concord.org. No phone calls, fax or postal mail.

First Baptist Church, Reidsville, NC, seeks **Worship Leader/Minister of Music**. Position may be part time or full time. Primary responsibilities are planning worship service, Adult Choir, Praise Team, Drama Team, Children's Choirs. Applicants should submit letter of interest and resume to MCollins@BBandT.com or mail to First Baptist Church, 409 South Main Street, Reidsville, NC 27320, Attn. Mark Collins.

Seeking **full-time Music/Youth or Music/Children leader** for a congregation with a blended worship style and a growing group of young people. Double Springs Baptist Church, Shelby. Resumes to billfryar@carolina.rr.com.

Miscellaneous

Warlick's Baptist Church is looking to **purchase a 15-passenger bus**; if you have one for sale please contact us at 828-397-6298.

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Crosby

Continued from page 11

Most importantly, Hurricane Katrina presented us with the opportunity to partner with pastor Fred Luter and Franklin Avenue Baptist Church, a large and predominantly black congregation. Our two congregations shared education space, offices and the worship center for nearly three years. We joined forces to do men's ministry, women's ministry, health ministries, prayer groups, summer camps and fellowships of all kinds.

Our congregations learned to love each other deeply, and that bond of love remains strong a decade later. I was delighted to nominate Pastor Luter to be the first black president of the Southern Baptist Convention. His candidacy was unopposed. The election occurred here in New Orleans on June 19, 2012. It was a moment of celebration for our churches and our convention that we will never forget.

Talking about race is not easy. Listening is even more difficult. Hurricane Katrina has given our city an unusual opportunity to set aside any prejudice and listen to the stories of others. We discover, if we listen, that our stories are similar, that we have the same dreams and we hold in common many concerns and priorities.

We rode the buses. We evacuated in helicopters. We got stuck on the contra-flow. We were downtown in a vertical evacuation. We were at Baptist Hospital and the Superdome. We manned the boats and rescued the drowning and buried the dead.

Simon was an old man when Hurricane Katrina thundered down upon us. He sat on the interstate for hours and scarcely moved. He called his nephew and said he had lived a good, long life and he was going to return home. He drowned in Lakeview the next day. I miss him still.

We did not drown or die. We are Katrina survivors. We know what it takes to put your life and community back together. Our memories are not all pleasant, but they are powerful. And they continue to shape the people that we are and will become.

We have not gotten over the great flood. We are still going through it in mind and heart.

We live today in the light of what we learned about the transitory nature of things and the supreme value of one another.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – David E. Crosby is pastor of First Baptist New Orleans.) **B3**

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