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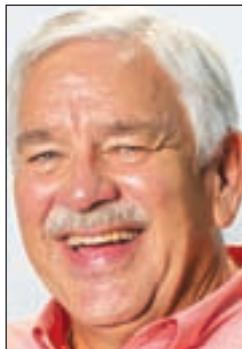
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NAMB launches evangelism group

By MIKE EBERT | NAMB

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) is launching an evangelism and leadership group that will promote evangelism among Southern Baptist churches, provide evangelistic resources and equip pastors to help their congregations become more evangelistically active. Jim Law, who currently serves as executive pastor at First Baptist Church Woodstock, Ga., will serve as executive director of the new group.

“Everything we do at NAMB is focused on sharing the hope of the gospel,” said NAMB president Kevin Ezell. “This group will serve every church and every pastor that wants to become more mobilized and more evangelistically effective.”



JIM LAW

As executive director, Law will provide day-to-day leadership for the group. In his nearly 28 years at FBC Woodstock, Law, serving under lead pastor Johnny Hunt, helped make the church one of the top evangelistic churches in North America. With more than 6,000 in weekly worship attendance, Woodstock is also a leader in international missions and church planting in North America.

“All evangelism goes back to the local church,” Law said.

“What’s important to the pastor will be important to his congregation. I want to help make

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OAKHURST:

Replanted church grows through cooperation

By SETH BROWN | BR Content Editor

Four years ago Oakhurst Baptist Church was prepared to close its doors.

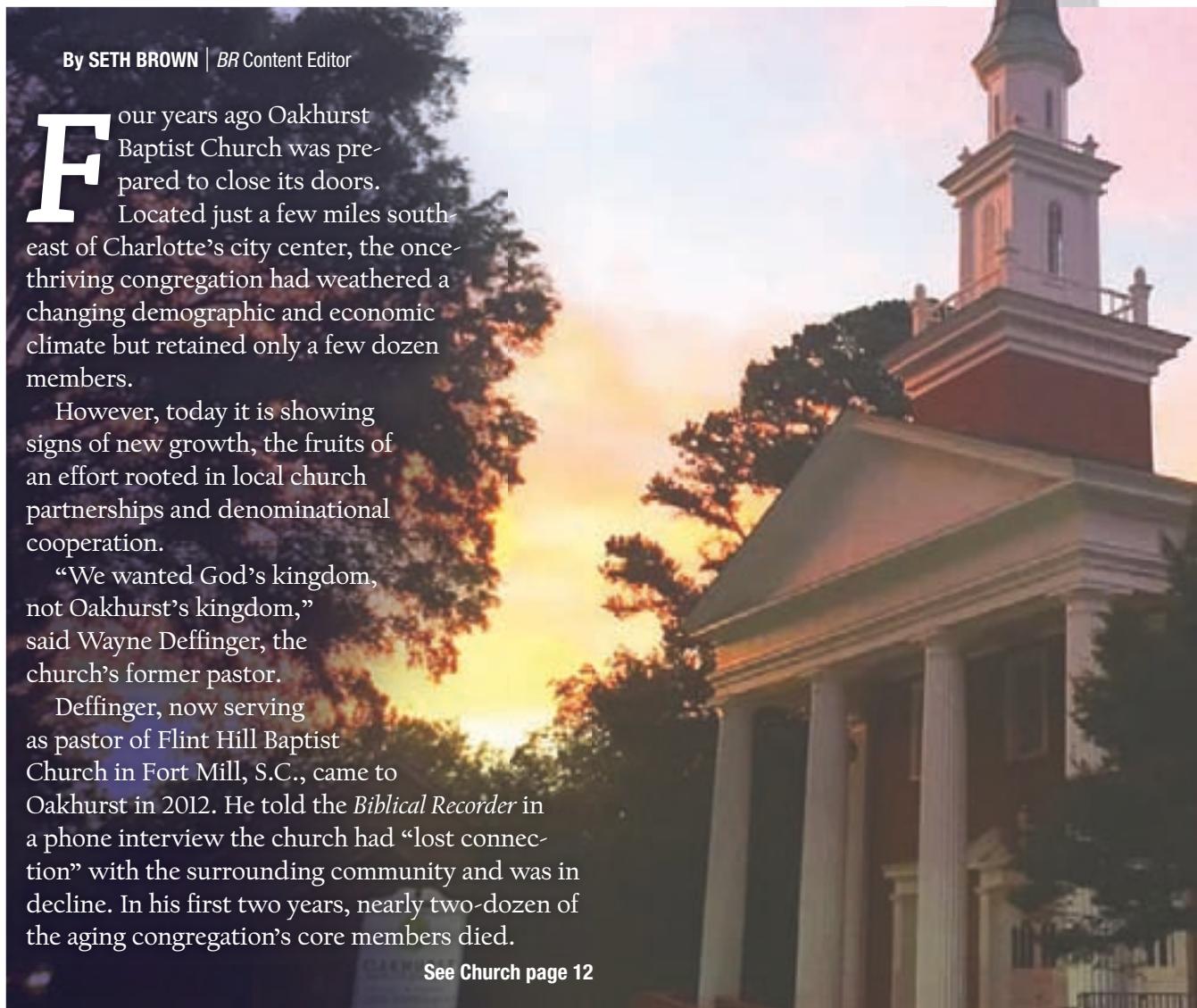
Located just a few miles southeast of Charlotte’s city center, the once-thriving congregation had weathered a changing demographic and economic climate but retained only a few dozen members.

However, today it is showing signs of new growth, the fruits of an effort rooted in local church partnerships and denominational cooperation.

“We wanted God’s kingdom, not Oakhurst’s kingdom,” said Wayne Deffinger, the church’s former pastor.

Deffinger, now serving as pastor of Flint Hill Baptist Church in Fort Mill, S.C., came to Oakhurst in 2012. He told the *Biblical Recorder* in a phone interview the church had “lost connection” with the surrounding community and was in decline. In his first two years, nearly two-dozen of the aging congregation’s core members died.

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Multiethnic worship caps Charlottesville demonstrations

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

Evangelical pastors in Charlottesville, Va., say a community interracial worship service appeared to be the largest local gathering during what media described as a weekend of peaceful but tense demonstrations in the city.

One year after a white supremacist rally in Charlottesville turned violent and left three people dead, an attempted repeat in Washington of the Unite the Right rally Aug. 12 drew fewer than 40 white nationalists and was dwarfed by counter protestors, according to media reports.

Amid the weekend events, Southern Baptist Convention

(SBC) President J.D. Greear released a statement along with SBC First Vice President A.B. Vines and Second Vice President Felix Cabrera declaring “the spirit of racism is antithetical to the gospel.”

“It has been one year since white supremacists marched through Charlottesville, Va.,” the three SBC officers said Aug. 11. “We say now, as we said then, that the spirit of racism is antithetical to the gospel. The church, God’s ‘Plan A’ for rescuing the world, should stand as a place of refuge for people of every color united in one body, reflecting the diversity of our communities and proclaiming the

See Worship page 16

Are you communicating?

Look at the receipt from your recent visit to a grocery store, restaurant, home improvement center or similar business. Near the bottom, you'll probably see an invitation to take a survey by phone or online. The management wants to know if the company is doing a good job.

I often accept their invitation – not to complain about a bad experience, but also to offer positive comments and suggestions. If they are open to improving their products and services, I am willing to help.

The survey asks a customer to evaluate the company's products. Was the food good, if not, what was wrong with it? Did you find the groceries or items you were looking for? Did you visit our website?

They also want to know if employees were helpful, available and friendly. A new survey question asks, "Did any employees make eye contact with you? Did they smile?" A coffee shop's survey asks, "Did the barista attempt to get to know you?"



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

These are very insightful questions. Company executives are waking up to the high value of connecting and personally communicating with the customer. Selling a product or service is not enough to earn your loyalty. People value the kind of communication that is warm and personal. It makes a difference! Church leaders would benefit from the lessons these surveys teach. After all, communication is what we do. Our calling as followers of Jesus Christ is the communication of a message that is both verbal and non-verbal.

The last assignment our Lord gave us is, "... you shall be witnesses..." (Acts 1:8, NKJV) and "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them ..." (Matthew 28:19-20, NKJV).

Preaching, teaching and singing are methods of communication. Greeting a guest or fellow church member is an act of personal communication.

Websites are supposed to communicate the church's character, personality and purpose.

An email, letter or phone call communicates a message.

What are we communicating? Sadly, guests that attend our services may hear confusing messages from us. They struggle to translate our "insider" language and the meaningless phrases we use in public communication that look like "fillers," instead of genuine concern.

Insider language is often exposed in the directions we give. "If you are a guest, our pastor would like to meet you outside the office door." The careless assumption is that everyone knows where the "office door" is located. Actually, they don't. They need someone who will communicate with them clearly, warmly and relationally. Bad communication turns away good guests. It also frustrates some of the members.

In my last pastorate, we occasionally recruited outsiders to visit the church as "mystery guests" who provided written reports detailing their observations. We learned we were doing well in some areas, and we needed to improve our communication in other areas. This was a very helpful resource for our leadership team.

A church website is a great tool to reach those who do not attend your church. However, we often make the same mistake of using language and styles that do not look welcoming or appealing to the outsider.

It is well worth the investment of time to build, revitalize and maintain your website. What is your church website communicating? Have you asked anyone to critique it?

I visit at least 30 church websites every week. I'm amazed at the obvious information that is not included in even the sharpest looking sites. Many do not include their address or it is tucked away in a hidden location. It should not be difficult for a web visitor to learn about the pastor and staff, yet only a name is posted on many church sites – no photo, no bio, no contact info.

This does not communicate personal warmth. One site I visited recently simply gave the pastor's first name – that's all!

For the sake of the gospel and God's glory, invite a "survey" of your church's ministry. You might be surprised by the valuable lessons you discover. **BR**

Called to communicate: Women serving 'in seats of influence'

Just as Jesus affirmed first-century women, calling them to confess Him as Lord and tell the good news of the gospel, He continues to call women in the 21st century to communicate His story to the world.

Many women communicators today are answering that call, serving in denominational "seats of influence," a term Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President J.D. Greear used in his post-election press conference during the SBC in Dallas.

From a national agency to a children's home; from a state paper to a seminary campus – four women – Carol Pipes, LifeWay Christian Resources; Stella Prather, Arkansas Baptist Children's Homes and Family Ministries (ABCHomes); Jennifer Rash, *The Alabama Baptist*; and Amy Whitfield, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary – are representative of other women serving in key roles as Southern Baptist strategic communications leaders.

For about three quarters of a century collectively, these four women have made their mark on Southern Baptist communications, living out their divine com-

munications callings as they craft messages, make decisions, lead staffs, plan strategically, develop budgets, mentor colleagues, manage crises and more.

Strengthening the denomination

In today's technological world where every person with a laptop computer or smartphone is, in effect, a communicator, strategic denominational communications takes on an even greater urgency.

"Quality communication is paramount in today's world as we seek to cut through the noise and connect with those inside and outside of our denomination," said Pipes, LifeWay's director of corporate communications. "Effective communication is key to strengthening partnerships, connecting mission to ministry, building life-changing relationships and inviting people into a transformational faith journey."

Southern Baptist polity and cooperation make effective communication a non-negotiable, said Rash, editor elect for *The Alabama Baptist*.

"With Southern Baptist polity of local church autonomy merged with cooperative efforts to partner in large-scale efforts added to the mix, effective communication is truly the only way to survive long term," she added.

"Effective communication cuts down on confusion, keeps the members appropriately informed in a timely manner and allows for enhanced opportunities

to resource the members toward our ultimate goals as Southern Baptists – to share the gospel of Jesus Christ; to love the Lord with all our heart, mind, soul and strength; and to love our neighbors as ourselves."

Inspired by biblical women

All along the way, today's women communications leaders find inspiration

through the women who come to life on the pages of the New Testament: Martha, Mary Magdalene and the Samaritan woman.

Martha's "bold proclamation" of Jesus as Messiah "profoundly affected" Whitfield, director of communications at Southeastern Seminary. "While Martha is often most known for her interaction

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MARGARET COLSON
Guest Column

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IN FOCUS

A WORD FROM OUR LEADER

Do you have 'Open Hands'?

Scripture continually reminds us of the grace that God has demonstrated to us. One such verse is Psalm 145:16, which encourages us to offer praise to God for all the ways He takes care of His creation. The verse reads, “*You open Your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing*” (NKJV).



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Allow these words to remind us that God has opened His hands to us so we may open our hands to others. Do you have open hands to show and share the love of Jesus Christ with others? “Open Hands” is the theme of this year’s North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO), which is based upon this passage.

September is the month in which the NCMO is highlighted in many N.C. Baptist churches.

As you give an offering designated for NCMO, you support vital ministries and mission efforts that impact our state, nation and world for Christ.

Your donation also helps others understand the importance of becoming personally involved in doing things that help hurting people.

The ministries that the NCMO supports include N.C. Baptist Men (NCBM), also known as Baptists on Mission. Disaster relief is just one of the 18 different ministries of NCBM that is supported by the NCMO.

Thanks to your generous support, when hurricanes struck Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico last year, N.C. Baptist disaster relief volunteers responded with open hands to help people rebuild their lives.

Through the efforts and witness of these volunteers, numerous victims of the hurricanes and other natural disasters have come into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

The NCMO also goes a long way toward impacting lostness by helping establish new churches across North Carolina. In 2017, our team of church planting consultants worked with approximately 100 new churches that are reaching out with open hands into their respective communities and seeing people who speak a language other than English come to faith.

NCMO not only provides critical support to vital ministries, it also provides opportunities for North Carolina Baptists to get personally involved in missions on the local, state, national and international level.

This special offering funds two mission training camps operated by NCBM in Shelby and Red Springs that offer church groups the opportunity to learn how to do disaster relief and become engaged in local missions projects. Through several national and international partnerships, more and more N.C. Baptists are participating in short-term mission trips across the United States and around the world.

NCMO also helps support a variety of outreach and missions activities right here in North Carolina through partnerships with our local Baptist associations.

I thank you in advance for your generous and faithful support of this offering that is helping to impact lostness and create a culture of disciple-making in our state and beyond.

If you have never given a special offering to support missions through the NCMO, I invite you to honor a friend or relative this September by giving an NCMO gift named in their honor.

Visit ncmissionoffering.org. **BR**

Smyrna: The poor church that was rich

Second in a series

The year was A.D. 155 and he was told to curse God and live. The alternative was to be burned at the stake. His name was Polycarp and his response was, “Eighty and six years I have served Him and He has done me no wrong; how then can I blaspheme my king who has saved me?”



LEE PIGG
Guest Column

You probably know the rest of the story. Polycarp proved faithful to God, and it cost him his life, but did you know that he was the bishop of Smyrna and many would say that he is the angel in Revelation 2:8-11?

Smyrna is known as the poor church that was rich, and its story can be compressed into a single word: tribulation. Their challenge

was to be faithful. Jesus says to them that He knows what they have been through and reminds them that He is the first and the last, and with Him they are rich.

I believe we can be encouraged by these words as well, even when things are difficult.

A relationship with God is personal so we must take a personal look at our faithfulness. Jesus is having a personal conversation with John when He says, “I know.” Don’t ever forget that Jesus knows what we are going through, and His answer is that He is the first and the last. The people of Smyrna faced being tested, thrown into prison and even death, but were promised the crown of life for their faithfulness.

My encouragement to you is to remain faithful because, in the end, it will be of great worth.

The people of Smyrna are also challenged to have a permanent faithfulness – faithful to the very end, through temptations, trials and tribulations.

Racial unity: Can we move on?

I’m often asked by well-meaning Christians, “Why do we have to keep talking about race?” And the best answer I can give is this: the Bible keeps talking about race.

Jesus offered the gospel as something for “all nations” or “all ethnicities” (Matthew 28:19). Luke details how, at Pentecost, people were present from “every nation under heaven” (Acts 2:5). This means the good news, made possible because of the death, burial and resurrection of a dark-skinned Middle-Eastern man, is a gospel for every kind of person, everywhere.

Jesus is calling together a multi-ethnic people who will one day gather around his throne: “*And they sang a new song, saying, ‘Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation, and you have made them a kingdom and priests to our God, and they shall reign on the earth’* (Revelation 5:9-10).

“... After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude



They are told not to fear what they are about to face but to take courage because it is only temporary. The promise is beautiful.

Listen carefully: “*The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.*” Aren’t you glad that death holds no power over us because of Jesus the Christ?

The best part of the Smyrna story is that their faith will be perfected. What we hope for in this life, we will one day see in full. This church was poor by the world’s standards, but Jesus said they were rich.

They had a personal faith and that faith was permanent, to the very end, even when facing prison and death. Jesus says that’s the kind of faith that is rewarded with the crown of life.

Imagine with me standing before the one who died for us knowing that we have been faithful. Just like Polycarp, not afraid of the wild beast or the flames, and hearing these words, “Well done my good and faithful servant.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – This article is part of a series on the theme of the 2018 North Carolina Pastor’s Conference, “7 Churches of Revelation.” This year’s event will occur Nov. 4-5 in conjunction with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s annual meeting. Visit ncpastorsconference.org for more information. Lee Pigg is senior pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe and outgoing BSC president. Each column in the series will be written by a different N.C. leader and refer to one of the seven churches in Revelation.) **BR**

that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands” (Revelation 7:9).

The presence of “every ... nation,” “from all tribes and peoples and languages” around His throne,



DAN DARLING
Guest Column

reflects God’s delight in diversity. He is the one who created, from Adam, the variety of tongues and tribes and nations. He is the one who is calling and building a new people in Christ. He is the one who, in Jesus, creates “one, new man” (Ephesians 2:15).

This is where we are heading. And when we pray, “*Your kingdom come,*” this is what we are asking for – to be fully realized by our King’s return, and to be experienced in our lives and by our behavior as fully as possible as we wait for the King’s return. This is not a liberal or conservative ideal but a reflection of the fullest expression of humanity and of the heart of Christ.

See Unity page 7

Labor Day: Owen Cooper's faith inspired array of ventures

By TIM TUNE | Baptist Press

On Labor Day, Americans will celebrate U.S. workers who have built and shaped the nation and influenced the world.

One of the most successful entrepreneurs of the 20th century in Mississippi was also one of Southern Baptists' most influential laymen. The late Owen Cooper, who died Nov. 8, 1986, worked tirelessly in both arenas.

The year before Cooper's death, the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board named him Layman of the Century. He was the second of only two laypeople ever elected president of the Southern Baptist Convention, serving two terms, 1972-1974. Many who knew him say his commitment to Christ and Christ-like ministry inspired his vision for bold endeavors.

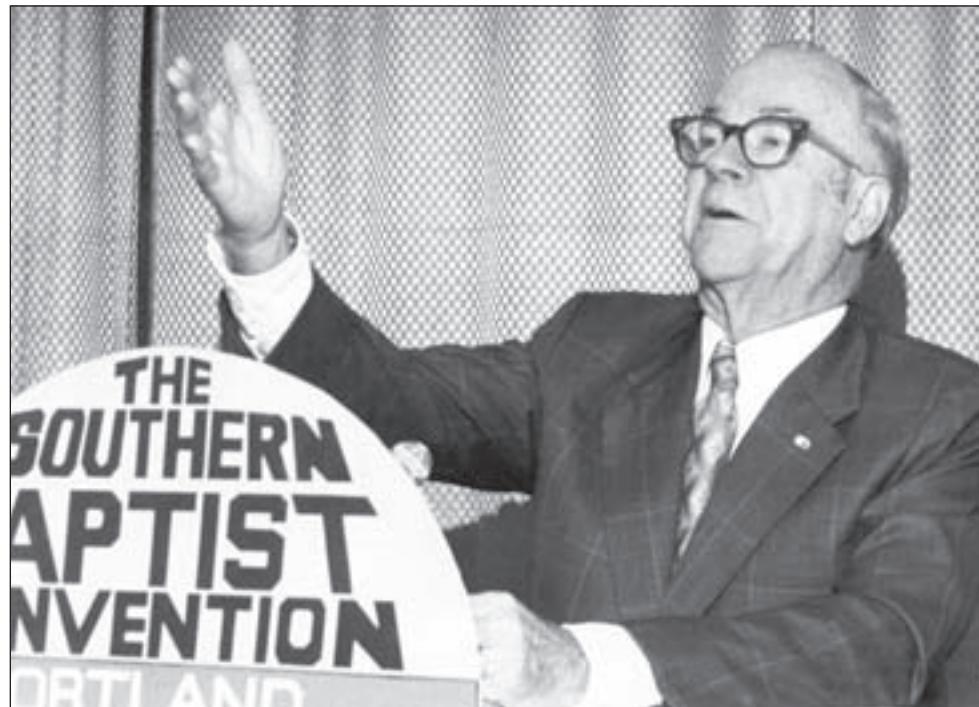
His passionate interests drove him into many arenas to leverage his farm-boy upbringing as well as a master's-level education in economics and political science from the University of Mississippi in 1936 and a law degree from Mississippi College's School of Law (then Jackson School of Law) in 1938. His business acumen and political knowledge, as well as his speaking and persuasion skills, would all come into play frequently over the years.

"Mr. Cooper had an amazing ability to envision and then inspire masses of fellow citizens to implement a simple, elegant solution to a huge need and problem," writes Jo [sic] G. Prichard III, Cooper's longtime executive assistant at Mississippi Chemical Corporation (now Mississippi Chemical Co.). Prichard, author of *Making Things Grow: The Story of Mississippi Chemical Corporation* (1998), provided his reflections to Baptist Press.

The seeds for Mississippi Chemical were planted 75 years ago in 1943 as World War II was winding down. Mississippi agricultural researchers were studying ammonia as a source of nitrogen to improve crop yields. Cooper was then executive director of the Mississippi Farm Bureau Federation, which represented 250,000 farmers and rural families.

By March 1947, the research had proven ammonia's effectiveness as a fertilizer. But as demand for the product exploded, short supply made it expensive. That's when Cooper laid out his vision to create Mississippi Chemical, his best-known business enterprise.

As Farm Bureau executive director – and a Christian concerned about the food supply in post-war America – Cooper challenged farmers across the South to buy stock in a new co-op enterprise that



Owen Cooper, the last layman elected as president of the Southern Baptist Convention, led the 1973 sessions of the SBC annual meeting in Portland, Ore. (BP file photo)

would build the world's first farmer-owned ammonia-nitrogen fertilizer plant.

Farmers, Mississippi banks and a loan from the federal government provided \$4.25 million for the plant, which was built in Yazoo City, Cooper's hometown, 50 miles north of Jackson, now with a population of 11,000.

The first bags of fertilizer were produced March 16, 1951.

Over the next decade, the company built three similar plants in the United States and on the South American island of Trinidad.

In the 1960s – with support from other American fertilizer producers and the U.S. Agency for International Development – Cooper helped farmers in India build their own plants.

Cooper's interests in India also included missions, where the Indian government limited permanent visas available to missionaries. Cooper suggested the Foreign Mission Board (now International Mission Board) hire Indian nationals to help.

When he learned it was against board policy to hire nationals, Cooper created Universal Concern to hire Indian Baptist preachers to go into unreached areas to start churches. The effort was so successful the mission board revised its policy and merged Universal Concern into its ministries.

Another of Cooper's interests in India was Serampore College, founded by British Baptist missionary William Carey in 1818, which will celebrate its 200th anniversary this fall. Cooper's interest is linked to Hattiesburg, Miss.-based William Carey University (formerly William Carey College).

"Mr. Cooper was supportive of William Carey University because ... we

are named after Carey, the 'father of the modern missionary movement,'" Tommy King, president of the Baptist-affiliated institution, said in email comments to Baptist Press.

Cooper's wife Elizabeth, who died in 1999, served on Carey's board. The university's Owen and Elizabeth Cooper Institute of Missions is named in honor of the couple.

Carey is buried in a cemetery near Serampore, King said. "When Mr. Cooper was there years ago, he discovered that William Carey's grave was in a deplorable condition and disrepair. And it was being flooded every time the river overflowed."

King said Cooper came back to America and "raised money to renovate and repair the cemetery and build a levee to protect it from the river. So that's the kind of thing he did. He just saw needs and took steps to meet those needs."

Cooper also took steps to meet the pressing social needs he saw in his hometown of Yazoo City during the racially turbulent 1960s and '70s.

His daughter Nancy Gilbert, 78, of

Madison, Miss., recounted that after a year of study in Europe as a Baylor University junior, "my view of the world greatly increased" beyond the racial inequality she had known as a child growing up in Yazoo City.

When she returned home from college in the early 1960s, Gilbert said, she and her parents had "a very rough" experience aligning their views on racial equality. Eventually, she said, "there was mutual stimulation ... let's put it that way. And Daddy ... began to get involved in the social justice arena."

His involvement included:

- Promoting tolerance and cooperation between blacks and whites.
- Helping organize the Mississippi Religious Liberty Council that spoke out against attacks on churches and synagogues.

- Partnering with the NAACP to form an organization to run the largest Head Start program in the South.

- Recruiting and hiring Louise Dean, Mississippi Chemical's first black professional, to work on his personal staff.

- Advocating the peaceful desegregation of the workplace, public facilities, colleges and public schools.

Cooper's efforts in race relations were recognized by national media on Jan. 7, 1970, when public schools in Yazoo City were peacefully integrated.

But involvement in civil rights came at a cost to Cooper, who wanted to run for Mississippi governor, Prichard writes.

"He would have been a formidable candidate and would have been a great governor," Prichard writes, but Cooper sensed that his civil rights efforts "doomed any possibility of his running for governor in the Deep South of the 1960s and '70s."

Still, Prichard notes, in his business and faith initiatives, "he always seemed to insist: 'We can do this ourselves. Let's roll up our sleeves and get to work.'"

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Tim Tune is a writer based in Fort Worth, Texas.) **BR**

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Michael Blackwell, center, celebrated 35 years as executive director of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina in July. Last year, surgery slowed him for a short time, but he quickly returned to work and the BCH introduced a five-year strategic plan this year – “20/20: A Clear Vision.” (BCH photo)

Blackwell celebrated for 35 years of ‘bold’ leadership

Biblical Recorder

The Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) honored Michael Blackwell as he passed a 35-year milestone July 1 as executive director of the historic ministry. In a blog post last month, BCH highlighted Blackwell's “bold choices” over the years to expand the ministry's reach, even while facing personal difficulties.

“There's no doubt that my 35th anniversary was one of the most arduous milestones to reach,” he was quoted as saying.

Blackwell, 76, suffers from a spinal condition that causes chronic discomfort through his back, legs and feet. After undergoing surgery for the condition last year, Blackwell was soon back in the office working as hard as ever, the blog post said.

The commemoration recounted ways that the scope of BCH's ministry has grown since Blackwell's arrival in 1983.

The BCH not only provides foster care for children in the state, but also operates

homes for people with developmental disabilities, a program for aging adults, support for working families and single mothers, a college ministry and oversight for an orphanage in Guatemala.

This year a new five-year strategic plan was implemented: “20/20: A Clear Vision.”

“What became ‘clear’ to us ... is that we cannot stand still even in the midst of the success that has been achieved,” Blackwell said, according to the blog post.

“The plan will propel growth in multiple aspects of ministry empowering us to impact even more lives.

“If there is a void to be filled, if there is a need to be met, then I want us to be bold enough in our conviction of spirit and our faith in the providence of God to step to the forefront,” he continued. “When we take hold of an opportunity to share the hope of Jesus Christ and see lives repaired and restored, then we are fulfilling our mandate. That is the heartbeat of Baptist Children's Homes.”

Read the full article at bchblog.org. **BR**

Case against Army chaplain called ‘anti-religious’

By **DIANA CHANDLER** | Baptist Press

A U.S. Army investigator ignored key evidence in saying a Southern Baptist chaplain was derelict in his duties for rescheduling a marriage retreat to accommodate a lesbian couple, the chaplain's attorney said.

Army Chaplain Jerry Scott Squires refused to conduct a Strong Bonds marriage retreat because a lesbian officer planned to attend, the investigating officer identified as Major Ford said at the close of an extended investigation.

Squires is endorsed by the Southern Baptist North American Mission Board (NAMB), which does not affirm same-sex marriage. Following Army protocol that requires him to adhere to the tenets of his endorsing agency, Squires rescheduled the retreat to allow a non-Southern Baptist chaplain to facilitate the event.

The lesbian couple registered to attend the retreat on its rescheduled date, but cancelled for unspecified reasons, Squires' attorneys said.

Squires “performed his duties with professionalism and honor according to the expectations of his endorsing agency and Department of Defense regulations,” Squires' attorney Mike Berry said. “Any attempt to characterize his actions otherwise is the result of blatant anti-religious hostility.”

A decorated major with more than 25 years of service, Squires faces court martial and confinement in a military prison if the investigator's recommendation is accepted, said Berry, First Liberty Insti-

tute deputy general counsel and director of military affairs.

The Army “is threatening to punish one of its chaplains because he followed the rules,” Berry said in an Aug. 6 press release in response to the investigator's report.

“The Army, or Congress, must hold Major General (Kurt) Sonntag accountable for allowing this aggressive anti-religious hostility against its military chaplains to occur under his command.”

Sonntag is commanding general of the U.S. Army Special Operations Center of Excellence, which initiated the retreat. The “dereliction of duty” recommendation follows Ford's second investigation of the complaint filed Feb. 6.

After an initial finding that Squires unlawfully discriminated against the couple, Ford was ordered April 28 to reopen his investigation, according to an Army memorandum First Liberty links to at its website.

NAMB executive director of chaplaincy Doug Carver, a former Army chief of chaplains, has defended Squires.

“The relationship between endorsed military chaplains and their ecclesiastical authority is sacrosanct and protected by the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution,” Carver told BP after Ford's initial findings.

“In a technical sense, military chaplains are ‘on loan’ to the Armed Forces from their respective faith groups who, in turn, expect the military to be faithful stewards of our pastors in uniform.”

Squires has “our full support and prayers,” Carver said. **BR**

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's Denominational Relations Office, the Center for Great Commission Studies, the Center for Preaching and Pastoral Leadership, the EQUIP Office, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are offering a free N.C. Associational Missionary Leadership Event on Sept. 20-21. Southeastern faculty will facilitate discussion centered on helping N.C. associational missionaries best strategize to serve the church and advance the gospel

among a generation of leaders who may misunderstand their value and importance.

Key topics include vision for associational ministry, discipleship and leadership development, church revitalization, theological education and preaching. This event will take place at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. RSVP at <https://www.eventbrite.com/nc-associational-missionary-leadership-event-tickets-43354684027>. Contact Chris Allen at callen@sebts.edu.

COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

All resolutions should be submitted in writing for consideration by the committee no later than **Sept. 6, 2018.**

Send by mail to Committee on Memorials/Resolutions

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

Send by email to Penny Cozadd

Business Services, Executive Leaders Assistant
pcozadd@ncbaptist.org

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NAMB

Continued from page 1

evangelism the top priority and help pastors lead their people in that direction.”

A vice president of evangelism and leadership will be presented to NAMB trustees for a vote on Oct. 2 at their regularly scheduled fall meeting.

The group will include a national evangelism team made up of local pastors throughout North America who will promote and champion the cause of evangelism. These pastors, while still leading their churches, will speak on behalf of NAMB and help create resources that pastors and churches can utilize.

NAMB has had a partnership with the Timothy-Barnabas ministry for several years, allowing it to expand into new regions of North America and offering scholarships to pastors who otherwise could not afford to attend. In June, Timothy-Barnabas founder Johnny Hunt shared with NAMB trustees that he was giving the ministry fully to NAMB.

In the area of leadership, the new NAMB group will offer expanded equipping events including Timothy-Barnabas one- or two-day labs focusing on a particular area of pastoral leadership, possibly regional evangelism trainings, Timothy-Barnabas retreats for pastors and their wives, and the Timothy-Barnabas Institute, a new, two-year mentoring opportunity for pastors directed by NAMB's national director of young leaders, Jon Akin.

Law hopes NAMB's new effort in evangelism will especially succeed in connecting with younger pastors in the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

“Some of the sharpest leaders we have are our young leaders,” Law said. “They are our future. We need to

start investing in them more and give them seats around the table. That is one of my priorities. We won't have a denomination tomorrow if we don't develop these young leaders. We need their enthusiasm in the SBC.”

Ezell said Law's love for the local church and knowledge of all levels of SBC life will be “huge assets” in this role.

“Jim is an outstanding leader who has served in a key role in one of North America's top churches. I could not be more thrilled to have him in this role. He will bring a daily single-mindedness and drive that will keep this new team moving forward and laser-focused on the task of helping pastors and churches share Jesus.”

Law will start in his new role with NAMB on Oct. 1. Prior to serving at First Baptist Woodstock he was minister of music and administration at Westside Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Fla., and he served other churches prior to that in bivocational roles.

Law served as a trustee for Shorter University in Rome, Ga., and as a trustee for Guidestone Financial Services of the SBC. He also was on the Georgia Baptist Convention's (Now Georgia Baptist Mission Board) nominating committee, has served in multiple roles in the Noonday Baptist Association, located in Northwest Metro Atlanta, and assisted Hunt while he served as president of the Southern Baptist Convention after being elected in 2008 and 2009.

Law and his wife Kathy have been married 43 years and have two sons and three granddaughters.

(EDITOR'S NOTE - Mike Ebert serves as executive director of public relations at the North American Mission Board.) **BR**

‘A powerful tool’: 2018 SBC Annual available online

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

The 2018 Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Annual has been posted online, with hard copies available for order.

The Annual is a comprehensive collection of reports, budgets and proceedings from the June 12-13 SBC annual meeting in Dallas as well as a compilation of historical data and reports from convention entities.

Among the data available in this year's Annual:

- The North American Mission Board reported 691 new church plants in 2017 (p. 201).

- In 2016, International Mission Board personnel, in conjunction with their national partners, reported 1,623,419 gospel presentations around the world and 87,287 new believers among “people groups and urban centers where IMB continues to have direct strategic work, influence, and involvement” (p. 161).

- Southern Baptists baptized 254,000 people in 2017 (p. 201).

- The six SBC seminaries enrolled a total of 22,028 students in the 2016-17 academic year (p. 202).

“The Annual is a powerful tool the SBC needs for historically recording our corporate identity,” said SBC Recording Secretary John Yeats, who is responsible for reviewing the Annual.

The online Annual is available at sbc.net/annuals/, along with digital copies of all previous SBC Annuals dating back to the convention's founding in 1845.

Free hard copies of the 2018 Annual can be obtained, while supplies last, by emailing annual@sbnet.net. **BR**

Our church is doing a lot!

Each year, we help minister to more than 32,000 children, families and individuals all over the state by funding the ministries of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina.

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The missions and ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are made possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Office.

Bolick lives testimony of brokenness, restoration

BSC Communications

Betsy Bolick serves at Perkinsville Baptist Church in Boone as the minister to women. She is also the founder and director of Small Enough Ministries. Betsy is passionate about reaching all women with the gospel of Jesus Christ, and she desires to make disciples for the Kingdom of God while fulfilling the mission Christ has called her to.

Betsy will be the special testimony speaker at the 2018 N.C. Baptist Women's Retreat on Oct. 26-27 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia. She recently took some time to answer the following questions about her testimony, her walk with God and what she'll share at the retreat.

Q: Tell us about yourself.

A: My name is Betsy Bolick and I am blessed to live in the beautiful mountains of North Carolina. I was born and raised in Boone, and I am so thankful that God called me back home to serve Him in ministry two years ago. I enjoy spending time with my family, and I take every opportunity I have to spoil my nieces and nephew. If I am not with my family, I love spending time with friends,

watching N.C. State baseball or football, or reading a good book with a great cup of coffee.

Q: In addition to serving Perkinsville Baptist Church in Boone, you also lead your own ministry. Can you tell us a bit about your ministry?

A: When I was younger I used to write in my journal that I was never going to be pretty enough, tall enough or normal enough to be loved or used by God. For decades I fought my disability and begged God for a new body and a new life. (Bolick was born with sacral agenesis, which causes abnormal fetal spine development.)

He answered my prayer by giving me a new heart. My body is still broken, but my life has been restored. It is my greatest joy to share my journey with Jesus to a lost and broken world. I am blessed to travel and share the hope of the gospel in the midst of hopelessness.

Along with sharing my testimony, my passion is to disciple and mentor the next generation. My passion is to teach women about the power of God's restoration and redemption through the hope of His gospel, creating purpose in their pain and hope in their darkest situations.

Small Enough Ministries desires that every woman be discipled, mentored and challenged to use her story for the glory of God and the salvation of many.

Q: As you share your testimony with the women who will attend the retreat, what do you hope they will take away?

A: I often beg God for my sufferings to cease, desiring an easy life. Yet, God calls us to be like His Son Jesus and to suffer well for His kingdom work and eternal purpose. My hope is that women will leave encouraged to suffer well but also understand what eternal work God is doing through their sufferings.

Our pain has a purpose here and for eternity. Paul writes in his letter to the Corinthians about the sufferings they are enduring. He writes, "*We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For this light and momentary affliction carries an eternal weight of glory that far outweighs them all*" (2 Corinthians 4:16-17). My prayer is that women will see their afflictions here on earth as light and momentary.

Yet, most importantly, that their suffering carries an eternal weight of glory. My prayer is that they will see that God is at work in their sufferings for His glory and their good. He uses the most horrific and painful situations for His eternal work and our eternal good.



Q: How does being the "holy, chosen, beloved child of God" impact your everyday life?

A: For a girl that felt rejected, broken, lonely and abnormal, this truth is life changing. Through His great mercy He chose to impart His love upon a sinner like me. I did nothing to deserve it, yet He calls me His beloved. I am overwhelmed by the great love of God. This truth has changed the trajectory of my life and the trajectory of each and every moment. My desire is to honor Him with my life and to live a life of holiness as He is holy. Each day I fall short but seek to look through the lens of this truth in every avenue of life. Whether I am walking through sorrow, suffering or joy, knowing I am His gives me peace, comfort and hope.

Visit embracenc.org/womensretreat18. **BR**

Unity Continued from page 3

Of course, between Jesus' first coming and His second, the real-world reality of God's work in the world and in the church is often messy and hard and uneven. It has always been so.

The early church struggled with race. Paul was forced to address this reality to congregations struggling to unify Jewish believers and Gentile converts. They were seeing the Spirit of God bring people from a variety of nations and cultures. One of the churches Paul planted, in Ephesus, was situated in a busy metropolis and attracted merchants from around the Roman Empire.

Paul says this ingathering of people was a feature, not a bug, of the gospel: "*For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near*" (Ephesians 2:14-17).

Paul was speaking here about Jews and Gentiles – a racial division that was very entrenched, very antagonistic, historically very complex and as seemingly intractable as anything we struggle with and labor under the burden of today. Yet Paul dares to say that in the gospel of Christ, the dividing wall of hostility has been broken down; and therefore within the people of Christ, the walls must always be kept down.

Racial unity is not incidental to gospel witness but a feature of the gospel's work.

We are "one new man" – or one race – and yet we delight in our diversity. The gospel overcomes suspicion and pride – those barriers to fellowship and love and unity – yet it refuses to erase our racial identities.

God delights in a people made up of the beautiful, diverse peoples He created in His image and called "good."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This article was adapted from chapter in Dan Darling's new book, *The Dignity Revolution: Reclaiming God's Rich Vision for Humanity*. Used by permission.) **BR**

N.C. pastor plans to start Kenyan orphanage

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

Because of a trip to East Africa eight years ago and a life of twists and turns, Wesley Wallis believes God has equipped his family to start an orphanage in Kenya.

“God has prepared me,” said the pastor of Walstone Memorial Baptist Church in Fayetteville. “God has prepared my wife.”

Wallis told the *Biblical Recorder* his previous roles – as a chaplain for Raleigh Rescue Mission, correctional officer in multiple prisons and pastor in Freewill Baptist and Southern Baptist churches – have made him ready for orphan care.

His wife of 21 years feels the same. She grew up in a large family in rural Tennessee.

“They washed clothes by hand,” he said. “They had goats and chickens and a garden.”

It wasn’t until college that Cindy ate food from a can.

In his early 20s, Wallis lived near the North Carolina coast, in what he called the “beach life.” He had a surfing accident while riding hurricane force winds that left him with a deep gash in his leg. An infection led to gangrene, and doctors recommended amputation.

Wallis argued with the nurse, doctor and God. He refused to believe he would lose the leg. He prayed, “Lord, from this point on, with or without a foot, I will go anywhere anytime regardless of pay or danger.”

Shortly after his foot healed, his father told him about a Freewill Baptist church looking for a pastor. Wallis said it was in a fishing community not far from the coast – “in the middle of nowhere.”

Wallis wrote a note with his name and number on a receipt and left it pinned to the church’s door. He preached the following Sunday, and the 16 people in attendance voted him in as pastor at \$100 per week.

It wasn’t much money, but Wallis remembered his promise to God and resigned the following week from his prison job. Less than two years later, the church was averaging 160 people weekly in worship attendance.

Wallis eventually landed in Alabama as a divorce recovery counselor and then made his way back to North Carolina as principal of a Christian school.

Later, he and his wife became house parents for Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina. It was his first introduction to Southern Baptists.

Then, when he became an ordained Southern Baptist pastor, he was called to a church near the coast – Sea Level Missionary Baptist Church in Sealevel. When Hurricane Isabel struck in September 2003, he received a large-scale introduction to Southern Baptists, in the form of Baptists on Mission, also known as N.C. Baptist Men (NCBM).

“I was told, ‘Tomorrow you’re going to have a caravan of yellow hats. Just get out of the way,’” said Wallis.

In November 2003, he represented his church on stage at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s annual meeting, where an offering was taken to help the church rebuild.

Visit to Kenya

Wallis, 50, has been at Walstone Baptist for 12 years. Eight years ago, Wallis visited an orphanage in Kenya at the invitation of a pastor he had met who was visiting the Fayetteville area.

“I cried and cried and cried” after watching a video of the 12 orphans they had, Wallis said.



The Wallis family, above, including their dog, Liberty, are scheduled to leave for Africa after Thanksgiving to minister to children, right, in Kenya, some of whom are living on the street. (Contributed photos)

Wallis received permission from Walstone to travel for three weeks. The first week, Wallis said, he felt peace about raising funds for an orphanage. But over the next week, he began to have concerns.

The third week, Wallis said, “I didn’t know what to do. Going over there and starting an orphanage was the last thing on my mind.”

A gospel illusionist, Wallis performed shows while in Kenya at orphanages. After one event, Wallis stopped for coffee when he saw a girl who pierced his heart.

Dressed in a tattered, filthy T-shirt down to her knees, this girl was obviously malnourished. Wallis bought her a drink and fries and asked about her parents. Her parents had died of AIDS, and she was obviously not under anyone’s care.

“Show me where you sleep,” he said to her. They walked behind a building and “there was a bush with a hole dug out ... just enough for her body. She climbed in the hole. She laid down and ate her fries with her eyes closed.”

He picked her up and started back to the orphanage but was told that there are 20,000 orphans in this area.

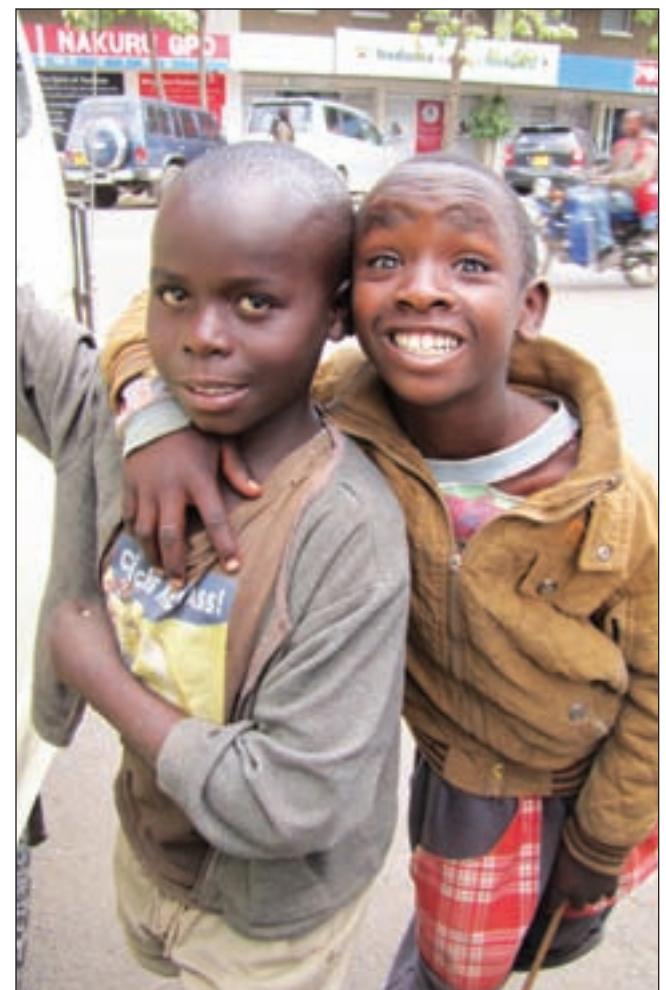
Wallis was told, “Put her back where you found her.”

He suggested adopting her because he felt like he couldn’t leave her, but no American adoptions were allowed.

“I just can’t leave her there,” he said. The response he heard was, “You have no choice, Pastor Wallis.”

The man also said Wallis would take pictures, but likely return to the U.S. and forget what he saw.

When Wallis was asked to return on another trip, he told the orphanage leader, “Next time I come, it will be



to come help, not just put Band-Aids on.”

Returning home, Wallis was broken. “I fasted for 21 days” before sitting down to talk with his wife.

Wallis contacted the International Mission Board (IMB) for help. He was told the IMB does not build orphanages, and that he could consider launching a

See Family page 10



Students participate in a game during Youth Weeks at Fort Caswell. This summer, participants packed the 2 millionth meal to distribute in Haiti. (BSC photos)

Campers pack 2 millionth meal for Haiti

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

Nine years ago, Merrie Johnson sat in the corner of Hatch Auditorium at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell praying that God would show her how she could incorporate a missions component to summer Youth Weeks.

Johnson, senior consultant for youth evangelism and discipleship with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, had already been directing summer youth weeks for a number of years, but she felt that middle and high school students attending camp each summer on the shores of Oak Island could have an impact in another part of the world.

Through a series of events that only God could orchestrate, Johnson connected with a missionary and through a ministry partnership, campers began packing meals that have now been sent to Haiti for the past eight summers.

In 2018, Johnson, her staff and attendees at summer youth weeks surpassed a major milestone since the ministry began in 2011 – the packaging of the 2 millionth meal that will be delivered to Haiti later this year.

Johnson says the results have been more than she could have imagined, but not more than she knew God could accomplish.

“I said from the beginning if this is what God wants to do, it will all work out,” Johnson said.

Working with Fenel Bruna, a native Haitian missionary, meals packed during youth weeks are delivered to Jacmel, Haiti, and distributed to children living at the House of Abraham, an orphan care ministry that Bruna helps operate. The ministry has now expanded into three nearby villages, local hospitals and two local Haitian schools.

The meals are not only helping address physical hunger. As each meal is distributed, the gospel is shared.

And during a recent trip to Haiti, Johnson got to see and experience firsthand how God is moving and doing more than she could imagine when campers first started packing and sending meals.

“A principal at one of the schools told me, ‘We have seen a rise in the test scores over these years that we believe are a direct result of the nourishment the students are receiving that is helping them pay attention and learn more,’” Johnson said. “She said, ‘This will make Haiti a stronger nation.’” **BR**

Youth ‘Re-imagine’ parables of Jesus

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

Middle and high school students from across North Carolina took a fresh look at some of the most well-known teachings of Jesus throughout the summer as part of summer Youth Weeks held at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell.

“Re-imagine” was the theme of youth weeks, which drew nearly 6,500 teenagers from more than 270 churches to the North Carolina coast over the course of seven weeks in June, July and August.

The theme verse was Psalm 78:1-2, “My people, hear my teaching; listen to the words of my mouth. I will open my mouth with a parable; I will utter hidden things, things from old” (NIV).

“Most of the students have heard these parables that Jesus told,” said Merrie Johnson, senior consultant for youth evangelism and discipleship with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), who coordinates youth weeks for the state convention each year.

“We’ve just tried to help the students dig into them a little deeper.”

Campers explored biblical themes like repentance and salvation from the parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin and the lost son from Luke 15:1-8; forgiveness from the parable of the ungrateful servant in Matthew 18:21-35; loving and serving others from the parable of the good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37;

and sharing the gospel from the parable of the sower in Luke 8:1-5. Each week featured a different camp pastor, who unpacked the biblical, historical and cultural background of the passages and provided points of application through daily preaching during morning and evening services.

Those principles were reinforced with the campers through worship, personal and small group devotions, and other related activities.

“In all of these parables, (Jesus) is teaching about the coming kingdom of God, and He’s given people this beautiful picture of what His Kingdom is going to look like,” Trevor Atwood, lead pastor at Boro City Church in Murfreesboro, Tenn., told campers during one of his messages at Youth Weeks.

“Jesus tells stories to get people to re-imagine their idea of the Kingdom of God.”

Over the course of the summer, more than 360 youth made a first-time decision to trust Christ as Savior, and nearly 900 more rededicated their lives to Him. Additionally, 15 answered a call to vo-

luntary service. Johnson said she saw God move in other ways, as well.

“God moved mightily all summer and in ways that weren’t necessarily reflected in the number of decisions that were made here at camp,” Johnson said. “The change has been much deeper.”

One area where Johnson said she saw God working in the lives of students was related to the concept of biblical forgiveness.

“We spent a whole day emphasizing forgiveness, and that was perhaps the most moving aspect of the summer,” Johnson said.

“Students have realized how unforgiveness keeps them from experiencing life with God and life with family and friends to the fullest.

“That’s been a moving thing to see and represents change at a deeper level than we’ve seen in the past.”

Campers also surpassed a major milestone in the on-site missions component of Youth Weeks.

This year marked the eighth summer that campers have been packing meals that are delivered to Haiti, and 2018 marked the packaging of the 2 millionth meal. With each meal that is distributed in Haiti, the gospel is also presented.

Campers also gave more than \$75,000 collectively to the youth weeks’ missions offering that covers the costs of delivering and distributing the meals in Haiti.

“Go, God!” Johnson said. “We’re not planning to stop.” **BR**



AROUND THE STATE

Obituaries

TERESA MARTIN BROWN, 69, died Aug. 19.

She was married to Joe B. Brown, former longtime pastor of Hickory Grove Baptist Church in Charlotte, N.C. They served at Hickory Grove for 26 years, before his retirement in 2011.

Brown was a graduate of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tenn., and Morehead State University in Morehead, Ky., with additional coursework at The Southern Seminary. She was a public and private school teacher, precept teacher and church and conference speaker and teacher.

She was an author and previously served as second vice president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (1999-2000) and president of the Southern Baptist Convention Ministers'



TERESA BROWN

Wives Conference (2001). She was chairman of the board for NarroWay Productions, a professional Christian theater in Fort Mill, S.C.

She is survived by her husband, three children and six grandchildren.

BENJAMIN SHAW GAULT JR., 81, of Roxboro, died Aug. 15.

He served eight years in the U.S. Air Force during the Korean War. Gault pastored four churches and was a member of Clement Baptist Church where he was pastor emeritus. He was a former director of missions for three associations, and he served on various committees for the Southern Baptist Convention and Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

He is survived by his wife, Dorothy Mae Barbrey Gault; two children, Benjamin "Benny" Gault III and Debra Gault Massengill; brother, C. Emory Gault; four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Memorials to: Baptist Children's Homes of N.C., P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27361.

Submissions

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

Family Continued from page 8

nonprofit ministry. The conversation led to the creation of Helping Orphans Thrift Stores to raise funds for the mission.

What started as one thrift store has grown to six locations with 35 employees in Hope Mills, Carthage, Fayetteville, Spring Lake and Red Springs.

Plans for Kenya

Wallis wants 100 acres to be used for an orphanage, church, school, garden and other resources, with a goal of 300-400 workers. While the couple has four children, two of the children are adults and will be staying in the U.S.

Their oldest son is in the U.S. Army, and their oldest daughter will continue to manage one of the thrift stores. The Wallises will take their two youngest to Kenya with them when they move after Thanksgiving. Their youngest daughter has been diagnosed with autism, but Wallis said she is high functioning and eager to make the trek overseas.

"When you come to Africa to start an orphanage, you can't leave until you die," Wallis was told.

His family plans to stay at least two years before returning stateside for fund-

raising and visiting family. But the goal is to live there long-term.

Running a nonprofit has been a learning experience for Wallis, but now that things are stable, the hope is for four of the stores to support the remaining two, with profits from those stores going straight to Kenya.

Wallis went to Kenya this month to find a short-term housing arrangement for their arrival in November.

Elim Ministries International, Inc., is the name of Wallis' organization, which operates three ministries: Helping Orphans Thrift Stores, Orphans of Kenya Project and Kids Helping Kenya Kids.

"We've already got people saying they are going to come help," he said.

Walstone has been supportive of his efforts.

"My church has been the best, to allow me to build thrift stores," Wallis said. "Our goal is to provide physical education and [for the] spiritual needs of the orphans of Kenya."

He prays his family is there to help every step of the way.

Email info@ookp.org for more information or visit ookp.org. **BR**

U.S. warns of new sanctions against Turkey over jailed pastor

Biblical Recorder

The White House is prepared to increase pressure on Turkey to release a North Carolina pastor who has been jailed for alleged espionage since 2016.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin warned of tougher economic sanctions on top officials if they do not free Andrew Brunson, according to *The Wall Street Journal*.

Brunson was allowed to live under house arrest last month due to health concerns.

"We have more that we're planning to do if they don't release him quickly," Mnuchin said Aug. 16 during a cabinet meeting with President Donald Trump, *The Journal* reported.

President Trump criticized Turkey on social media later that day.

"Turkey has taken advantage of the United States for many years," he wrote on Twitter. "They are now holding our wonderful Christian Pastor, who I must now ask to represent our Country as a great patriot hostage."

"We will pay nothing for the release

of an innocent man, but we are cutting back on Turkey!"

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has resisted pressure from the U.S. thus far. The country's economy has suffered as a result, according to news reports.

Forty-eight of 50 North Carolina senators signed a senatorial statement in July urging Turkey to release the Presbyterian missionary, according to a previous report by the *Biblical Recorder*.

The N.C. House unanimously approved a resolution in June that called for Brunson "to be released from prison immediately."

N.C. Rep. Bert Jones (R-Rockingham) said Brunson had reported to the police for what he thought was a routine meeting to renew his visa. He was immediately taken into custody and denied the right to an attorney.

Jones said the indictment released later, based on secret evidence and hearsay, falsely accuses Brunson of membership in an armed terror organization.

If convicted, the 50-year-old minister faces 35 years in prison. **BR**

Camp Meeting/ Pastors Conference

Featuring Preachers

- Dr. Jeff LaBorg, Sr. Pastor of Fairview Baptist Church, Knoxville, TN
- Dr. Mike Whitson, Sr. Pastor of First Baptist Church Indian Trail, Indian Trail, NC

Camp Meeting

- September 24: 7 pm—Dr. Jeff LaBorg
8 pm—Dr. Mike Whitson
- September 25: 7 pm—Dr. Mike Whitson
8 pm—Dr. Jeff LaBorg
- September 26: 7 pm—Dr. Jeff LaBorg

Pastors Conference

- September 24, 10-11:30 am
Dr. Whitson—"How to Have a Lasting Ministry" with lunch following
- September 25, 10-11:30 am
Dr. LaBorg—"Israel and the End Times" with lunch following

September
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2018



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Women Continued from page 2

with Jesus about following her sister's example of 'choosing the good part,' I am most moved that she went on to become the only woman documented in scripture to confess Christ as Messiah in John 11," she said.

"In her greatest moment of grief after losing her brother, she showed tremendous faith in a bold proclamation."

Having also worked for LifeWay Christian Resources and The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Whitfield, co-author of a recently published book, *SBC FAQs: A Ready Reference*, acknowledges that there are times when she is the only woman in the room for a meeting or event.

"But I have been fortunate to be encouraged and affirmed in my participation," she said, just as Jesus encouraged and affirmed women in His days on earth.

Rash is inspired by Jesus' resurrec-

tion, she said. "I love the passage in John where the resurrected Jesus called on Mary Magdalene to go and communicate His resurrection message. It provides clarity for me that Jesus saw women just as capable as men to share the gospel. As far as we can tell, Jesus did not look around for a man first but purposefully picked Mary Magdalene to be the initial person to get the privilege of sharing His important message."

Another woman to share Jesus' message was an anonymous, despised woman, known in scripture as the Samaritan woman. After meeting Jesus, the Samaritan woman went back into town to tell the people, including men, about her encounter with Jesus in John 4.

"Many ... believed in Him because of the woman's testimony," said Prather, ABCHomes director of communications. "The Lord used her story to make a difference. I believe He, too, can use the

stories and communication I am privileged to tell," said Prather, who worked previously for *Arkansas Baptist News*.

Committed to the call

Although every ministry opportunity comes with its share of challenges, women serving as denominational communications leaders find their greatest fulfillment in living out their callings faithfully, they shared.

Sometimes that commitment to the call might include the unexpected. "I still remember a mentor, a boss who took out the trash. It wasn't that person's job, but it needed to be done," Prather said.

Both large and small tasks are a part of the mix of serving in a Christian context, believes Whitfield. "Be willing to accept small tasks as part of the team and to accept big tasks as a way to expand your gifts," she said.

Through the years, Rash has learned, "If you are truly sensing God's calling, then stay focused on Him and the work He has for you to do.

"It isn't always easy, but I am driven by the opportunity and challenge to help believers in Christ learn from each other - to sharpen each other, as scripture says - while also sharing calmly and clearly so we can attempt to be the best versions of the people God made us to be," Rash said. Grateful that she has "truly felt support, love and empowerment through most of my career and faith journey," Rash finds fulfillment as she helps "resource and empower the staff of *The Alabama Baptist*."

Pipes, too, is grateful for those who serve alongside her in Christian communications, saying, "My colleagues at LifeWay inspire me to bring my best every day."

Prather and Rash learned the importance of such mutual support, encouragement and sharpening soon after college graduation, when the two met on the mission field. Rash served with the International Mission Board in a communications-related role and Prather served with the Home Mission Board (now known as the North American Mission Board) in college student and resort ministry.

After her mission work, Prather landed an opportunity in public relations with the Florida Baptist Convention. Her passion for storytelling, honed during that first denominational experience, has only intensified through the years.

"I tell people all the time that I have the best job in Arkansas because I have the privilege of telling the story of how Arkansas Baptists are making a difference in the lives of children and families in crisis," said Prather, the mother of two boys.

"We work for the King of kings.

Our communication in telling His story should be of utmost importance."

Whitfield, who admits that "work-life balance is always a challenge," echoes Prather's passion for storytelling.

"I love getting to tell stories of people on mission. Our school's mission is to equip students to serve the church and fulfill the Great Commission. When I tell the story of our institution and the stories of our students, I get to share one small part of what God is doing in the world.

"Everything we do points to one great story," she said, "so it is vital that our messages are honest and compelling."

Years ago, when Pipes served the summer before college graduation with World Changers, a ministry that provides missions experiences for students, she first sensed God calling her to serve Him through communications.

"I realized I loved writing for and about the Church. I especially love sharing stories of how God is working in and through the lives of His people," she said.

Today, her commitment to that calling directs her.

"My hope is every word I speak, every sentence I publish

would honor God, stand for truth and help build Christ's church," she said.

"What an honorable task we have to be communicators for our convention."

(EDITOR'S NOTE - Margaret Colson is executive director of the Baptist Communicators Association and executive secretary for the Association of State Baptist Publications. This article was originally published by Arkansas Baptist News.) **BR**



CAROL PIPES



STELLA PRATHER



JENNIFER RASH



AMY WHITFIELD



It's been said that doctors often make the worst patients. Perhaps they know too much about the medical field, they deny they're sick or it's hard for them to admit they need help.

In a similar way, pastors can be really good at helping others, but they may not be so good at helping themselves.

Pastors undergoing stress and conflict often avoid asking for help. They may deny the reality of conflict or allow pride to get in the way.

Many believe, "If I do nothing it will just go away." They couldn't be more mistaken. They're just stacking up unresolved conflict.

Eventually this way of handling conflict gives way to reality, and the entire stack collapses. They may be asked to resign, but they're still not likely to admit what really happened. In their mind, there's no one to blame but the church.

After dealing with hundreds of pastors in this situation, I believe they would be more willing to deal with conflict if they knew how. Conflict doesn't simply go away just because a pastor is doing God's work. Conflict is part of God's work!

How can such gifted, godly lead-

ers make serious errors in judgment regarding conflict?

Pastors are tempted to follow the world's pattern for problem solving by denying conflict exists, overlooking it or reacting in anger.

They usually only get serious about it when people start leaving the church, the deacons begin holding secret meetings or the budget starts to suffer. Then they call for help.

Pastors often say they waited about three years too late to ask for help. At that point, barring a miracle, there's nothing anyone can do to help.

Andy Stanley once wrote something that has stuck with me: "Direction, not intention, determines your destination."

So, if you are dealing with conflict in your ministry - everyone does - be honest enough to see where this is taking you before it's too late. Reach out to someone. Pick up a book on biblical peacemaking.

Call your local director of missions. Find help.

If you don't, eventually it will be too late.



EDDIE THOMPSON

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

Church Continued from page 1

Bob Lowman, executive director of the Metrolina Baptist Association, said a significant number of area churches are in “serious decline,” meaning worship attendance has decreased more than 50 percent in the last 10 years.

Deffinger began to help Oakhurst explore its options, hoping to find a solution that could revive a vibrant ministry. The church considered putting its building up for sale and looking for a more affordable meeting space, becoming a campus of a larger church or merging with another ministry.

An area pastor connected church leaders with David Russell. At the time, Russell was an elder at Capitol Hill Baptist Church in Washington, D.C. He was searching for a church revitalization opportunity.

“We didn’t want to see churches become coffee shops and condos in neighborhoods that are now booming with population growth,” Russell said.



DAVID RUSSELL

Capitol Hill underwent a long-term revitalization in the 1990s under the leadership of pastor Mark Dever, and that story inspired Russell to invest in a declining church, rather than plant a new congregation.

“It gave me a picture of the power behind helping revive an old, historic gospel witness,” he said.

Russell and Oakhurst’s church leaders began a series of meetings in 2014. They eventually decided to “replant” the church – a term used to describe the process of restarting a church while keeping significant aspects of the ministry, such as the name or location.

The replanting process often includes bringing in a number of new church members and leaders from a “sending” church or churches to unite with legacy members of the existing church. A handful of people, including one staff member from Capitol Hill, moved from Washington, D.C., to join the ministry at Oakhurst.

In consultation with Oakhurst’s deacons and Russell, Deffinger decided to bow out of the process and pursue other ministry opportunities.

Russell called it a “powerful example of humility that helped moved things forward.”

Lowman said the whole transition was “one of the most positive experiences, in terms of things going smoothly, that I have seen.”



Worship at Oakhurst Baptist Church in Charlotte is no longer a picture of a declining church. The church was “replanted” in 2015 and has been growing ever since. (Contributed photos)

A neighboring Charlotte congregation, Carmel Baptist Church, provided financial support and “sweat equity” for the replant, Russell said. They sent teams to help make needed repairs and upgrades to Oakhurst’s facility.

“The revitalization of Oakhurst has been a joy to be a part of,” said Carmel’s senior pastor, Alex Kennedy.

“The gospel is bearing fruit in that part of Charlotte because of the willingness of brothers and sisters in Christ to partner together. We are hopeful to see this replicated again and again in the Queen City.”

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina also provided financial support to aid the replanting effort. Pastors at both Capitol Hill and Carmel have mentored and stayed in regular contact with Russell.

Russell told Oakhurst’s leaders at the time, “If this church has had a good witness – it’s been faithful to the gospel and has a good reputation in the community – we don’t see any need to rebrand the church or shut it down and start something new.”

Oakhurst welcomed new leadership and expressed their support for the replant, Russell said. Their biggest concern, however, was whether they would continue to feel welcomed after the transition.

“Our response to that was, ‘We’re Christians. We don’t want to run you out of your church. If you want to remain here, we want you here,’” Russell said.

Everyone involved in the replant went

through a new membership process and joined the church in September 2015.

The church now averages nearly 300 in Sunday worship, which includes “generational diversity” that likely would not have been present in a new church plant, Russell said.

When asked for advice to churches that are considering a replant, Russell gave three tips:

● **Be sure expectations are clearly stated by everyone involved.** “We called it purchasing peace on the front end,” Russell said, “so that once we got into the work there could be unity.”

● **Have a group of lay leaders committed to give time and energy.** “Without them,” said Russell, “it just would not have been as fruitful.”

● **Legacy members must support new leadership.** “The freedom [Oakhurst’s legacy members] gave us allowed us to feel confident to come in and make the necessary changes,” Russell said. “The existing church trusted us enough to let us lead the way.”

Both Deffinger and Lowman encouraged declining churches to work closely with local associational leaders as they weigh options for the future. Lowman added that an interim period, such as a pastoral transition, is a good time to ask trusted leaders for help evaluating a church’s condition.

“The bottom line of all this isn’t, ‘Can we survive as a church?’” Lowman said. “It is, ‘Can we be the church Jesus created us to be to reach the community around us?’” **BR**

Charlotte woman celebrates 65 years of perfect attendance

By DEE DEE VOGT | BR Editorial Aide

July 2018 marked Mary Payne’s 65th year of perfect attendance in Sunday School. She’s been a member of Berryhill Baptist Church in Charlotte since 1963.

Despite recent health-related difficulties, Payne continues to teach Sunday School, training other teachers and shepherding her class of older adults.

Her advice to younger Sunday School teachers?

“Training, training, training! If you aren’t being trained, you aren’t prepared.”

The daughter of a pastor, she remembers churches with sawdust floors and pews of wood and cement blocks. When her father preached, he counted on seeing his wife, six sons and daughter sitting nicely on the pew, Payne recalls. She often accompanied her father to prisons and alleyways ministering to those who needed to hear the gospel.

Drawing on those early days, Payne has spent 55 years ministering in all areas of Baptist life, leading Mission Friends, Girls in Action (GAs), choir and 40 years as a Woman’s Missionary Union director. But Sunday School has always been her favorite time.

“I see people coming in just for service and I think, ‘They miss out on so much,’” she said. **BR**



MARY PAYNE

Saddleback celebrates 50,000th baptism

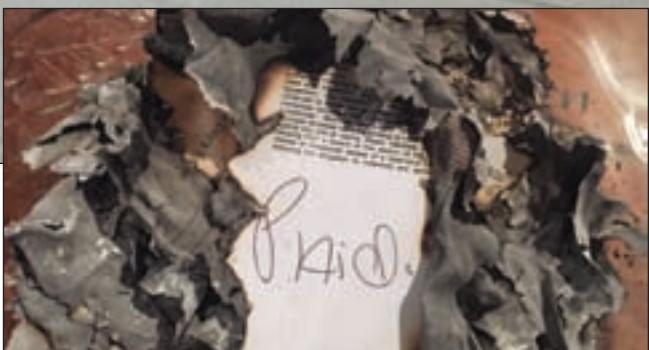
By BOB SMIETANA | Facts & Trends

Not long after Saddleback Church held its first services in 1980, Rick Warren waded in the water and baptized a handful of new believers. Nine people came forward that day to declare their newfound faith in Jesus.

On Aug. 12, the Southern Baptist church announced that 50,000 people had been baptized at the church during its 38 years of ministry. **BR**

BRadVantage

CHURCH NEWS



Trading Ford Baptist Church, Salisbury

Trading Ford Baptist Church in Salisbury, N.C., recently burned the note on a \$1.2-million building project that included a 650-seat worship center and an adjoining gymnasium. Pastor Mike Motley said the church raised approximately \$300,000 before breaking ground in 2007. Previously the church held two services in a facility that was built in 1924. "We made a choice to bring the two services together into one when we moved into the new building," Motley told the *Biblical Recorder*. "That proved to be a good choice for us. It brought our people together." He called the gym "the go-to place for large events at Trading Ford," that have included Vacation Bible Schools, fall festivals and sportsman's banquets. Early in the construction project, church members were invited to write scripture promises on the stage area with permanent markers before the carpet was installed, "so every service we are literally standing on the promises straight from God's Word," Motley said. The debt was paid off three years earlier than expected. Church members immediately launched another project – the construction of a new playground. "Our people jumped right on it," said Motley. Trading Ford was established in 1869 and has a history of healthy missions involvement including disaster relief ministry. In recent years, church teams have ministered in Ukraine, Haiti, Dominican Republic and Turkey. They also have an eight-year missions partnership in Honduras. (Contributed photos)



Center Road Baptist Church, Bladenboro

Children attending Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Center Road Baptist Church (CRBC) in Bladenboro collected an offering of more than \$900 for Odum Baptist Children's Home in Pembroke. In addition, a variety of items for the residents were collected, including arts, crafts, school supplies, room supplies and an ice cream freezer. The goal was to provide funds and supplies to help ensure a fun summer. Church members participate in local, state, national and international mission projects, basing all missions on The Great Commission. Above from left: Kathy Locklear, Odum Home director; Gloria Allen, CRBC Woman's Missionary Union director; and Mary Dowless, CRBC VBS missions project director. (Contributed photo)

Former missionary, longtime Cooperative Program leader retires

Biblical Recorder

From his experience on the international mission field, Mike Creswell knows the value of cooperating.

Creswell, who retired Aug. 20 from his role as senior consultant with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), has served the BSC since 2004.

"Mike Creswell has been a very capable professional in the work of educating Southern Baptists about the value of Cooperative Program (CP) and challenging them to support missions through CP," said Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, in a statement to the *Biblical Recorder*.

"I consider him to be one of the best in this assignment all across the [Southern Baptist Convention]."

In his various roles at the BSC, he has utilized his writing and photography skills to tell the stories of God's work through the missions and ministries supported by the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Offering.

"Although he is rather quiet, his ability to think creatively and design ways to promote CP speak volumes about that which is dear to his heart," Hollifield said.

"He has challenged us to provide our resource materials in ways that enable non-English-speaking Baptists to learn

more about the value of cooperative mission support.

"One of the most effective tools for increasing support for missions through CP that Mike was instrumental in developing is called 52 Sundays. It is a DVD that churches can use to show short clips during worship of missionaries serving

Christ in their assigned location of service."

Hollifield also shared of Creswell's leadership in helping churches affiliate with the BSC and the SBC.

"He has convinced their leaders that we can accomplish much more cooperating together than we can working as a single church unit," Hollifield said.

Prior to joining the BSC, Creswell and his wife, Christie, were missionaries in Belgium and England with the International Mission Board (IMB). He had worked as associate editor of *The Commission*, IMB's missions magazine for eight years at the headquarters in Richmond, Va.

He has traveled the world reporting on missions work. He also served the South Carolina Baptist Convention on its public relations team.

A native of S.C., he is a graduate of the University of South Carolina in Columbia, S.C., and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

The Creswells have two adult daughters; both live in South Carolina. **BR**



MIKE CRESWELL

Church planting leader retires

Biblical Recorder

Known for his leadership in church planting, Mark Gray retires from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) Aug. 31.

"He is not only an effective trainer coach, he is a practitioner of reaching people for Christ through church planting," said Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, in a statement to the *Biblical Recorder*. "Mark has always helped bring out the best in people because he takes the time to invest himself in them."

Gray, who has served as team leader for church planting for the BSC, has worked for the convention for 13 years.

Hollifield credited Gray with the growth in church planting but also devel-

oping abilities within the leaders of those church plants.

"God will provide another great person to lead this work, but the person of Mark Gray cannot be replaced," Hollifield said.

Gray has spent more than 30 years in ministry, serving as minister of youth, associate pastor and senior pastor as well as various roles in church planting.

He is a graduate of Mars Hill University (formerly college) and Asbury Theological Seminary. He is pursuing a doctorate at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake

Forest, where he also holds a master's degree.

He leads Epoch Church, a house church in Greensboro. He and his wife, Esther, have two adult children. **BR**



MARK GRAY

September 2

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

September 9

Reality Check

Focal passage: Titus 3:3-11

At my house, we have a welcome mat with a pineapple on it. This is a traditional symbol of hospitality – in the South! We use this simple piece of material to greet our guests as they enter our home.

Like a welcome mat, our lives should greet others with the gospel. In the book of Titus, Paul is instructing Titus to develop church leaders and to encourage the believers to live in harmony both with each other and non-believers.

In chapter three, Paul shows that Jesus in the gospel welcomed us (vv. 4-5), and therefore our lives must reflect the good news with good works (v. 8). Because of His goodness and love, we can then devote ourselves to showing others the same. A fruit of the gospel, then, is the proud display of good works for all to see!

Before we begin to see ourselves as a welcome mat, it's important to also see what Paul says before verse four. Paul describes the unconverted person as fool-

ish, disobedient, a slave, full of malice and envy, and hating everyone. That's the worst welcome mat ever!

However, this stands in direct contrast to the next verse. Jesus, in the gospel, is the one who saves, washes, renews and justifies us. Washed and renewed people are the type of people God can use! God welcomes us so that we can welcome others.

Does your life welcome others to God? When the gospel is at the center, we can “*devote ourselves to good works*” (v. 8) so others may see God through our lives. God's good work is the foundation for our good works.

In the end, this is the way of Jesus (Matthew 5:16). We must let our lights (lives) shine before others – with the purpose that they glorify God and receive that gospel that has appeared (Titus 3:4). With the gospel as our home, may our lives be the welcome mat that beckons others to come in and join.



TYLER FRANK
Young Adult Pastor,
Biltmore Church, Arden

Focal passage: James 2:1-10

Whether on the news, in our neighborhoods or within our families – people love to draw distinctions based on class or status. Our tendency, if we aren't careful, is to marginalize those who cannot help us, and selfishly use those who can help us achieve our agenda.

Sadly, this can also be seen in the church. Too many times we give special attention to those that can elevate us or make our ministries look better.

Rather than celebrating unity in the gospel, we divide people based on worldly standards.

James wants his readers to be complete and whole Christians (1:4). By instructing them how to live with others, he is calling them to not only be those who hear the word, but also do what it says (1:22-23). In chapter two, James in-

structs believers to hold to the true faith and love their neighbor, not showing favoritism to certain people.

By doing this, the “*royal law*” is fulfilled (v. 8).

In this lesson, we learn to tangibly demonstrate the “*royal law*” by loving our neighbor and seeing them as God sees them, not how the world sees them. This is the very heart of the passage. Since we have been welcomed in by the gospel, we must turn to others and welcome them into the family of God.

We must have the eyes of Jesus, treating everyone with dignity.

In verses 1-4, James tells the readers they must not show partiality (favoritism) to others but rather hold to the true faith of Jesus.

He then gives a specific example: two men enter the assembly and the rich person is treated like a VIP while the poor man is treated with disrespect.

Faith, not favoritism, must be present among God's people! Loving our neighbor well is the fruit of a heart that understands the example of our Savior.

September 2

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

September 9

True Gospel

Focal passage: Galatians 1:1-10

Who doesn't love getting gifts? *Dictionary.com* defines the word gift as “something bestowed or acquired without any particular effort by the recipient or without its being earned.” When someone decides to give a gift, they don't expect the recipient to earn it – then it wouldn't really be a gift.

Paul wrote to the Galatian churches after hearing that some of them were doing just that – trying to earn something that had been freely given to them. False teachers had begun to convince them that they had to obey Jewish laws to be saved. In his letter, Paul reminds the Galatian believers that only Christ's sacrifice on the cross could make them righteous before God.

For anyone to know the truth about Jesus and turn away from it was unfathomable to Paul. He highlights the absurdity of this by saying he was “*astonished*” (Galatians 1:6). He goes on to say that any gospel other than that of Jesus' death and resurrection was a false gospel and those who preach it were cursed. While his words may sound harsh, they only high-

light the seriousness of believing we can attain salvation on our own.

Our culture esteems those who work the hardest. We measure success by what we attain from our work. And there's nothing like working hard for what you want. But when this idea seeps into our understanding of salvation, then we're in trouble.

There is no amount of praying, Bible reading, fasting or church-going that will amount to Jesus' death in our place.

Trying to earn the grace we have in Christ is legalism. We must guard ourselves from the temptation of believing works can save us.

Paul's greeting at the beginning of his letter reminds us that grace and peace are only found by resting in Christ's finished work on our behalf. This is Good News! Jesus did everything required for our righteousness. We can know true grace. We can know true peace. Salvation is a gift that is ours if we receive it.



ANTENESHIA SANDERS
Member,
The Summit Church,
Raleigh-Durham

Focal passage: Galatians 2:11-21

Working in hospitality, part of my job is giving people directions. My responsibility is simple enough. I just have to guide the person from point A to point B. No one ever asks me to make their journey as difficult as possible, adding as many unnecessary steps as I can. In fact, I'm not doing my job very well if I do. Very rarely does anyone need the scenic route to dinner.

Continuing his letter to the Galatians, Paul addresses a situation in which extra requirements were being added to salvation and Christian fellowship. Paul describes an encounter he had with another apostle, Peter. Peter had himself become influenced by false teachers, neglecting to eat with Gentiles when a certain group of Jews were around. He feared those who said salvation was obtained by obeying Jewish laws such as circumcision – laws

that the Gentiles did not keep.

But the Jewish laws did not have the power to save the Jews, and Peter knew this. Paul wastes no time rebuking Peter, letting him know in front of everyone the hypocrisy in his actions. Not only was he being a hypocrite, he was causing others under his influence to do the same.

Paul reminds Peter that all are saved by faith.

The Gentiles had received the same gift of grace as the Jews even though they did not follow the same cultural practices.

We must be careful not to add extra steps to the gospel. Any way to salvation other than faith in Jesus is a false gospel. When offering salvation to us, God does not differentiate between culture, societal status, or even behavior. There is no scenic route to salvation.

As believers, we are called to share our faith with others, but we must avoid adding to the work that Jesus has already done.

Only by faith can anyone say, “*I have been crucified with Christ; and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*” (Galatians 2:19-20).



Creedmoor pastor killed in car accident

Biblical Recorder

Marc Tilley, senior pastor of Pleasant Grove Baptist Church in Creedmoor, died in a car accident Aug. 10.

“The way he carried himself and the vision he had for the church was certainly a draw,” said David Herman, associate pastor, to WNCN. “He was a great friend and a mentor to me. And, certainly, it was a blessing to work with him each and every day.”

Tilley and his wife, Candi, were traveling home after dinner when they were rear-ended by a truck. The couple had stopped at a stop sign at the intersection of Highway 56 and West Lyon Road in Butner when the accident occurred.

Tilley died at the scene, but Candi Tilley, who was driving, was injured and taken to the hospital. She was later released.

“There’s devastation, obviously, in a tragedy like this,” Herman said. “But, for us as believers, the hope that we have [is] that we’re going to see him again.”

A memorial service was held Aug. 15 and drew more than 1,000 people, a WNCN report said.

Durham native Marcus “Marc” Randall Tilley was a graduate of North Carolina State University. While studying for his mechanical engineering degree, Tilley was called into ministry his sophomore year. He received a master of divinity degree from Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary in Cordova, Tenn. He had a doctorate from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Tilley had been with Pleasant Grove for 18 years and has served as a pastor for more than 30 years.

He is survived by Candis Kimrey Tilley, his wife of 34 years; daughter, Katie Tilley Johnson; parents, Dolphus and Nancy Tilley; brother, Dan Tilley.

Memorials to Pleasant Grove Baptist Church will be sent to the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program to be used for missions. Send to P.O. Box 745, Creedmoor, NC 27522-0745.

Charges have been filed against Clifton Alexander Smith Jr. of Henderson. He is facing several charges, including failure to decrease speed as necessary to avoid colliding with a vehicle, failure to stop for a stop light, and no operator’s license for class of vehicle driven. The district attorney’s office is considering other charges. **BR**

Again: Colorado says cake artist broke law

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

Christian cake artist Jack Phillips is in court again, defending the same religious freedom right the U.S. Supreme Court affirmed on his behalf in a previous case in June.

This time, transgender attorney Autumn Scardina filed a discrimination complaint against Phillips for refusing to bake a birthday cake celebrating Scardina’s transition from a male to female identity. Pink cake on the inside and blue frosting on the outside describes the cake Scardina requested.

The Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF) has sued the Colorado Civil Rights Commission in this latest case against Phillips, ADF said in an Aug. 15 press release. “Colorado just seems to be looking for opportunities to punish me for my faith,” Phillips said at adlegal.org after the latest case.

ADF filed its latest lawsuit on behalf of Phillips, *Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Elenis*, in the U.S. District Court for the District of Colorado. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Whiteville Grove Baptist Church, Inc., Belvidere, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **Bi-vocational Pastor** who believes the Holy Bible is the inspired Word of God and the basis for any statement of faith. Our mission being: to Proclaim His Message, Minister in His Name, and Know Christ as Lord as taught in Matthew 28:18-20. The pastor shall be considered as spiritual leader of the church. Duties include preaching at appointed worship times; administering ordinances, assisting with his counsel in temporal/spiritual welfare of the church and perform various duties pertaining to his office. For more information call 252-426-4039. Résumés accepted until October 1, 2018, or until filled. Please submit résumé to: Pastoral Search Committee c/o Brenda L. Dail, Chairperson, 271 Riverwood Drive, Hertford, NC 27944, or bdail271@gmail.com.

Alexis Baptist Church is currently seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. As a relatively conservative, rural Southern Baptist congregation, we are searching for the man of God who is called to lead our church into the future with an emphasis on teaching, evangelism and lifestyle missions. Candidates must have excellent leadership skills with at least 5-10 years of pastoral or ministry experience. Minimum educational requirements are a bachelor’s degree in theology, religion or Christian ministry or preferably a master’s degree from an accredited seminary/divinity school. A résumé along with a statement of Christian journey, including ministry calling, may be mailed to Alexis Baptist Church Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 39, Alexis, NC 28006, or sent electronically to alexispastorsearch@gmail.com. The deadline to submit application is August 31, 2018.

Cedar Creek Baptist Church, Fayetteville, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time Pastor**. We are a conservative, Southern Baptist church with average attendance of 175-worship; 125-Sunday School. A minimum 5 years’ experience as a Pastor/Sr. Pastor required; seminary graduate; we prefer someone 35-45 years old, with a family. Send résumés to: Linda Prevatte, 3716 Cedar Hill Drive, Fayetteville, NC 28312.

Church Staff

Mount Zion Baptist Church, Hudson, NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Families, Youth and Children**. We are a conservative Southern Baptist, mission-minded church who supports the Cooperative Program. An average of 300 attend our blended style worship service on Sunday morning. Our preference would be a graduate with a degree from a Southern Baptist seminary or divinity school, with at least 5 years of experience. More information at mountzionhudson.org. Résumés may be sent to Associate Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 292, Granite Falls, NC 28630, or mzbcpastorsearch@gmail.com. Deadline to receive résumés is October 1, 2018.

Oak Grove Baptist Church, Boone, NC, is seeking a **part-time secretary/treasurer** (20 hours per week). Please send all inquiries to revronhayes@gmail.com.

Miscellaneous

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Worship Continued from page 1

diversity of the kingdom. We pray for those who feel the hurt from demonstrations like the one today, and for healing and peace in our society.”

On Sunday night, a multiethnic coalition of evangelical pastors in Charlottesville convened a worship service at the city’s outdoor Sprint Pavilion, with a theme of “Better Together” and a focal Scripture of Psalm 133:1. The only requirement for individuals appearing on the worship service’s platform was that they affirmed salvation is found in Christ alone.

As worshipers silently repented of racism, “you could literally hear a pin drop in the pavilion,” said Rob Pochek, a Charlottesville pastor who helped organize the gathering.

“We exceeded our expectations,” Pochek, pastor of First Baptist Church Park Street in Charlottesville, told Baptist Press. “There were many events in our community” to mourn the one-year anniversary of the white supremacist rally. “Most of those events had dozens, and some had hundreds of people in attendance. We had well over a thousand people at the Better Together event. It was by far the largest event of the weekend.”

Some 20 churches of various ethnicities and denominations participated in the service, lamenting racism, repenting and rejoicing that Christ one day will end racial strife.

“We were acknowledging the inequities of mass incarceration, the inequities of housing” among other race-related sins, Pochek said. During the repentance portion of the service, one local pastor “mentioned some of the specific neighborhoods that had been predominantly minority neighborhoods that had been eradicated to make way for businesses of shopping.”

In addition to local church members, some passersby joined the service. Anti-Fascist demonstrators allegedly had planned to protest the gathering, Pochek said, but thunderstorms dispersed them.

Stanley Woodfolk, pastor of Evergreen Ministries in Charlottesville and an African American, told WVIR news local believers recover from painful racist events of the past “by putting emphasis on building relationships, conversing with people we don’t know personally.”

Charlottesville evangelicals plan to follow the worship service with an Aug. 15 “fellowship tables” meal, where believers



Amid the weekend events, Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President J.D. Greear released a statement along with SBC First Vice President A.B. Vines and Second Vice President Felix Cabrera declaring “the spirit of racism is antithetical to the gospel.” (BP photo by Matt Miller)

of various ethnicities will eat together and listen to one another’s stories. A community-wide fall event is in the initial planning stages.

“Generally speaking,” Pochek said, Charlottesville has “been one of those cities where 11 o’clock Sunday has been one of the most segregated hours of the

week. There are exceptions to that in our town – great exceptions. But the onus is on me as a Caucasian pastor of a fairly large church in the city ... to earn the trust of my African-American, my Hispanic-American, my Asian-American brothers and sisters in Christ who are leading other churches in this city.” **BR**

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