



SOUTHERN BAPTISTS DEPLOY TO LOUISIANA

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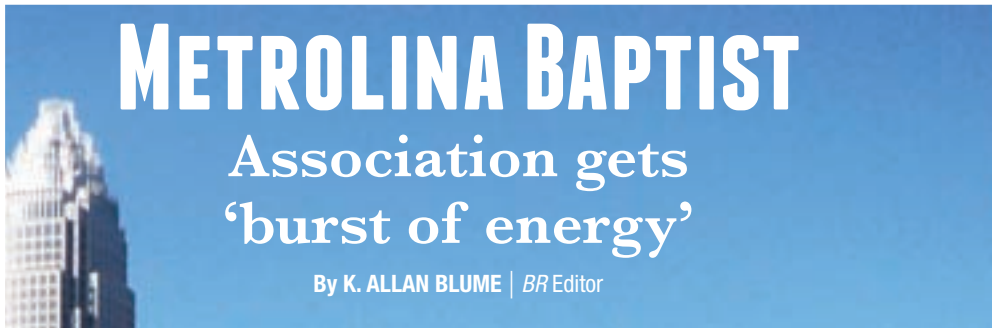


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Tar Heel community comes 'Together As One'

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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METROLINA BAPTIST Association gets 'burst of energy'

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor



STANLY, MONTGOMERY associations see fruit of partnership

By LIZ TABLAZON | BR staff writer

Bob Lowman, director of missions for the Metrolina Baptist Association (MBA), said the closing of one of Charlotte's historic churches, while disappointing, turned out to infuse a "fresh burst of energy and a renewed vision of what we're supposed to be about as an association."

Green Memorial Baptist Church was established in 1939 in the growing Plaza neighborhood with 217 members out of Ninth Avenue Baptist Church. The church grew into an effective congregation and built facilities that were consistent with the prestige of its community.

But for almost 20 years the church has seen a steady decline in attendance and giving. Attempts at revitalization have not been productive. "They had a young pastor who did his best for seven years to work with the church and reach the community, but nothing seemed to take," Lowman said. The church leaned on Lowman's counsel as they considered options and prayed about their future.

Then in January of 2015 Lowman said the church leaders asked for another meeting saying, "We're not sure how much longer we can keep going." The

facility's main boiler failed so there was no heat in the sanctuary. It was not feasible to repair or replace the unit.

"So they started talking about their direction," Lowman continued. "A legacy church plant was considered but the church wanted to just give the Metrolina Baptist Association the property and let the churches decide how to use it."

At the same time, MBA had been discussing the idea of selling their 14,000 square feet office building in downtown Charlotte for several years, but they were unsure where they would relocate.

Lowman said, "Looking at a map in my office we asked, 'What would be the most central location for a new MBA office?' More than once I said, 'If anything ever happened to Green Memorial, that would be an ideal location for us.' A few years later that possibility became reality."

Green Memorial already had written in their bylaws to give the property to

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Montgomery was not in financial shape to hire a new full-time missionary.

"It was clear for them the last couple [missionaries] could only stay as long as the funding was there," Bilbo said. "When the bank balance got low, it was time to retire, or it was time to move on. They needed a model that was sustainable."

Stanly Baptist Association in Albemarle, N.C., has been living out what it means to "love your neighbor" over the past three years. When Montgomery Baptist Association, 22.5 miles away in Troy, N.C., found themselves examining two different options for their future, Stanly helped them realize a third.

Low funds led Montgomery leaders to examine the feasibility of continuing as an association. They wondered if it was better to break apart and have churches join other associations. Hal Bilbo, associational missionary of Stanly, described Montgomery as being trapped in a cycle of having only enough funds to maintain a missionary for short amounts of time.

Bilbo said technology has allowed for

See Fruit page 9

Local associations have a future

Denominational structures have been regularly challenged, even hammered, in recent decades. Generations past have enjoyed the favor and security of cooperative ministry through associations and conventions in Baptist life. But, younger generations have virtually no loyalty to religious institutions and often fail to see their value.

After more than 300 years of very effective ministry in North America, most local associations are fighting for their survival. In our calling to serve you, your *Biblical Recorder* staff is addressing the challenge of associational ministry.

This edition of the *Biblical Recorder* points to some examples of effective ministry in the Metrolina Baptist Association and in the partnership between the Montgomery and Stanly associations – all in North Carolina. Coming editions will tell the story of other associations in our state.

Associations have great value. Like the local church, they are subject to conflicts, disagreements and other human limitations. But they exist because there is a basic need for fellowship. Call it what you like – networks, associations, conventions, connections, organization or structure. Ministry cannot be effective in isolation. We need each other, not only for fellowship, but for a partnership that maximizes the multi-leveled skill sets of believers from different congregations.

Over the years I've heard many church leaders look at their local association and ask, "What's in it for me and my church?" That's not only the wrong question, it exposes the wrong motivation for missions, also.

There are many benefits that return to a local church from the ministries of an association of churches. But churches do not contribute to their local association in order to get something back, any more than we give to international missions in order to get something in return.

We give to international missions and North American missions because the

working partnership is far more effective than anything we can accomplish on our own. It is a matter of effectiveness and efficiency in obeying the Great Commission. Cooperation allows more churches to reach more people and to do more ministry than we could ever imagine doing alone.



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

The association operates with similar advantages, but the focus should be primarily on local outreach and the coordination of local church partnerships beyond the immediate community. There are advantages drawn from the fellowship or networking that happens in a local association. Pastors connect with other pastors, staff connect with other staff and lay

leaders connect with other lay leaders. Additional benefits are seen through local training events and neighborhood impact projects.

Pastors are the key to cooperation within associations. As one who pastored churches for more than 35 years, I understand the many ways pastors view the ministry of associations. I understand that pastors want to be part of an association that has a clear, missional focus.

But I also understand that effective pastors never stop learning. So perhaps we can benefit from a recent blog post by Chuck Lawless titled "Four Reasons Pastors Don't Trust Each Other ... and Five Ways to Address It." He is dean and vice-president of graduate studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. He knows and understands pastors, and he is passionate about helping godly men be better pastors. Although his intent was not to address Baptist associations, I believe Lawless' comments ultimately address a root cause of the challenges in associational ministry.

Lawless said:

1. Pastors are often competitive.
2. Much church growth comes from "swapping sheep."
3. We struggle trusting people in general.
4. We've been burned in the past.

(Read his full comments at *ChuckLawless.com*.)

Let's be honest and add a fifth observation. Pastors can be jealous. On the positive side, some of that may come from the protective nature of a shepherd. But there is something wrong when we feel justified to criticize other pastors or churches. There is a tendency to battle with the success of other churches through the lens of obstacles we endure in the church where we serve. In the end, we're uncomfortable associating with "those churches."

Joel Rainey posted his very insightful comments on the value of associations on the SBCVoices blog, Aug. 8, 2013. The blog is titled, "The Future of the Baptist Association." He is lead pastor at Covenant Church in Shepherdstown, W.Va., and a former director of the Mid-Atlantic Baptist Network.

He states, "The only entity that has a purely [b]iblical warrant for its existence is the local church, and the legitimacy of all others is tied to how well they can serve the church as she accomplishes her mission."

Then Rainey addresses "six things associations must overcome to survive and thrive in the 21st century." The list includes:

1. An unclear purpose
2. A hyper-centralized mission
3. Ecclesiastical socialism
4. "Scorecard" confusion
5. Closed systems that prohibit meaningful cultural engagement
6. A focus on "Survival."

Read Rainey's full explanation at *SBCVoices.com*.

We hope the articles in this edition of the *Recorder* will help you weigh the value of associational partnerships.

BR content editor Seth Brown spoke with Dougald McLaurin Jr., president of the North Carolina Baptist Associations Conference. Read his insightful comments on page 9.

Coming editions of the *Recorder* will include other stories about ministry in associations. I hope you will share your stories with us, also. Let's talk about how we can be more effective in fulfilling the Great Commission in North Carolina and beyond. **BR**

Olympic results in Rio



An emotional Simone Manuel looks up at teammates after she tied for gold in the women's 100-meter freestyle swim. Manuel is the first black woman to medal in an individual swimming event. Manuel was among many Olympic medal recipients for the United States. The U.S. team brought home 121 medals – 46 gold, 37 silver and 38 bronze. Great Britain received 67 medals and China won 70. The next highest medal recipient was Russia with 56. Swimming topped the medal count with 33, followed closely by track and field with 32. The *Biblical Recorder* posted several stories online (*BRnow.org*) about Christian Olympic athletes along with stories about witnessing teams in Rio. (Screen capture from *NBCOlympics.com*)

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Patterned offers disciple-making resource

We recognize that we are each called to share God's Word with others and make disciples of them as Jesus did with His 12 disciples. He taught them how to engage people, reaching out to the lost in love and cultivating relationships with them. It is through acts of love that disciples are made pointing them to the One who loves them most.

Because you want to make disciples as Jesus has commanded, I am excited to introduce a new resource to you. *Patterned* is a 10-week devotional resource for pastors and lay people with a special focus on disciple-making. This book is a combined effort of different teams at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, and much prayer and effort has gone into creating this resource that will equip those who read and use it to engage the lost and disciple Christ-followers.

Patterned was written by North Carolina Baptist pastors, missionaries, lay leaders, ministers and seminary professors. The book includes 10 weeks of lessons written by these leaders – each week's devotion was written by a different author, and five lessons comprise each week's curriculum.

While the topics of each devotion vary, all maintain a central focus on disciple-making. The lesson material includes praying for the lost, defining evangelism and discipleship, studying the Bible, telling one's story, engaging in gospel conversations, living in biblical community, reaching unreached people groups and living as sent people, among others.

This material is versatile in that it can be used as a devotional with small groups, and it can also be used by pastors and congregations. When the resource is used in this way, it can bring pastors and congregations together in a way that I believe glorifies God immensely. I am deeply grateful for pastors who demonstrate in lifestyle how to love and disciple those around us. Many of them can be encouraged to continue in their disciple-making

efforts through the use of this resource. It is wonderful to observe how some pastors live as examples of God's love and grace, faithfully preach His Word and encourage us to make disciples.

I encourage you to order this helpful resource that points us to Christ and provides a means to disciple others. Each North Carolina Baptist church can receive 15



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

IN FOCUS
A WORD FROM OUR LEADER



free copies (excluding shipping) of *Patterned* and a DVD with videos for its own use, and each North Carolina Baptist association can order five copies free of charge (excluding shipping). Additionally, the entire resource including the workbook and videos are available for download on the website. Order forms, downloads and more information are available at PatternedNC.org.

“Go therefore and make disciples ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always ...” Matthew 28: 19-20, NKJV. **BR**

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

TAR HEEL VOICES

Golden Rule should be standard

The letter writer from Jacksonville (Tar Heel Voices, Aug. 13) disagrees with Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission president Russell Moore and International Mission Board president David Platt because they submitted a friend-of-the-court brief supporting Muslims who want to build a mosque. The writer would also find himself in disagreement with none other than George W. Truett.

Dr. Truett's presidential address to the Baptist World Alliance meeting in Atlanta in July 1939 was entitled "The Baptist Message and Mission for the World Today."

He cited the Baptist insistence that religious liberty "is the God-given and infeasible right of every human being," and then added: "And Baptists make this contention, not only for themselves, but as well, for all others – for Protestants of all denominations, for Romanists, for

Jews, for Quakers, for Turks, for Pagans, for all men everywhere." The language may be archaic, but the sentiment is pure Baptist.

It's also Christian. I memorized the Golden Rule this way: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you." Not as they actually do unto me, but as I wish they would do unto me. We should treat Muslims in America the same way we would want to be treated in a Muslim-dominated country. The letter writer argues, and it's true enough, that they may not actually treat us that way; but how they treat us is not the standard. The standard is the Golden Rule.

Let's rejoice in the liberty granted to each person by God, let's be kind to one another, and let's support those Muslims who want to build their mosque.

Ed Beddingfield
Buies Creek

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Executive Committee approves increased 2017 budget

By **CHAD AUSTIN** | BSC Communications

The Executive Committee of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) approved a proposed 2017 budget totaling \$30.375 million, which includes an overall budget increase as well as increase in support of national and international missions efforts through the Cooperative Program of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC).

Citing an “upward trend” in giving from churches, the 2017 budget proposal reflects an \$875,000 increase from the current 2016 budget and increases the percentage of funds allocated to the SBC by 0.5 percent, moving from 40 percent to 40.5 percent.

The Executive Committee unanimously approved the proposed budget with no changes during a meeting held Aug. 11 at the BSC offices in Cary.

The proposed budget will now be presented to members of the full BSC Board of Directors for discussion and approval at the next regularly scheduled board meeting in September.

Messengers from N.C. Baptist churches will approve a final budget at this year’s BSC Annual Meeting, which is scheduled for Nov. 14-15 at the Joseph S. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro.

“The convention strategy of ‘impacting lostness through disciple-making’ served as the foundation of the development of the 2017 budget,” said Tony Honeycutt, chair of the BSC Budget Committee.

In presenting the proposed 2017 budget, Honeycutt noted that the convention exceeded its 2015 budget and is projected to exceed the current 2016 budget of \$29.5 million.

Beverly Volz, director of accounting services, told the committee that as of July 31, the convention had received approximately \$16.5 million in Cooperative Program giving

from churches. While that figure is about 3 percent behind budget pace for the year, Volz said those figures reflect overall church giving trends which tend to slow during the summer and pick back up in the fall.

An examination of recent church giving trends led budget committee members to propose the increases to the overall 2017 budget and the percentage allocation for the SBC, Honeycutt said.

If approved by the Board of Directors and messengers at the Annual Meeting, this would mark the second consecutive year that the overall budget has increased and the 11th consecutive year that the state convention has increased its allocation percentage to the SBC.

“We thank God for all the churches that are giving to the Cooperative Program,” Honeycutt said. “This upward trend that we are experiencing allows us to continue to increase the percentage that we’re giving to the SBC.

“It also allows us to fund some requested items by convention staff to assist in carrying out what their ministries are.”

If approved, the 2017 budget would provide additional funding for various BSC ministries, including the new Church Health and Revitalization team that was formed at the end of 2016, as well as a statewide Hispanic strategy coordinator with the Strategic Focus Team. The budget also recommends a 2.5 percent cost-of-living increase for convention staff.

All BSC institutions and agencies, as well as Fruitland Baptist Bible College, would also see increased funding allocations under the proposed budget.

The budget also reflects a slight increase in funds for convention and board operations to account for fee increases associated with the Affordable Care Act.

The GuideStone protection benefit for church staff was decreased slightly to reflect a decrease in the cost

of providing those benefits to N.C. Baptist church staff members. The proposed budget also eliminates \$150,000 previously designated for the N.C. Baptist Scholarship Program since oversight of scholarship program was transferred to the N.C. Baptist Foundation earlier this year.

Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, expressed his support for the proposed budget and thanked Honeycutt and the budget committee members for their work. Hollifield also praised the generosity of North Carolina Baptists and their financial support of Great Commission missions and ministry efforts in North Carolina, across the country and around the world.

“We’re seeing growth in our budget, and I really believe that some of this growth that we’re seeing coming in through Cooperative Program contributions is because churches see that we are contributing more to the national and international missions efforts that go on to support the SBC budget,” Hollifield said.

The Budget Committee also recommended that the goal for the 2017 North Carolina Missions Offering remain at \$2.1 million.

In other business, John Butler, BSC executive leader for business services, reported that the BSC reassigned its lease with Cullowhee Baptist Church for the former Baptist campus ministry building at Western Carolina University to the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina (BCH).

The campus ministry building was constructed by the BSC in the 1960s, but the property was leased by the BSC from Cullowhee Baptist Church. The BCH plans to use the facility for a new ministry to college students who had previously been in the foster care system and to assist churches in the area in ministering to these students. **BR**

Christian club wins free speech fight at N.C. State

By **MOLLY HULSEY** | World News Service

In 2015, North Carolina State University reintroduced the renovated Talley Student Union as a place to share ideas and advocate for campus clubs. But administrators welcomed some beliefs more than others, according to campus ministry Grace Christian Life. The group sued, and finally convinced the school to alter its free speech policy.

In September 2015, Todd Valentine, an N.C. State senior, and Thommy Saunders, a Grace staff member, visited the student union without a permit – as Grace members have for 20 years. They initiated conversations with students about faith and invited them to Grace events. But the student center’s associate director, TJ Willis, ordered the club to register for a permit each time members planned to “solicit” their beliefs.

Valentine and Saunders halted their work for the day, but administrators continued to debate their case for months.

According to court documents, Willis warned Associate Vice Provost Mike Giancola via email about Saunders “solic-

iting” around the student union.

Ann Pearce, director of the interfaith Chaplain’s Cooperative Ministry (CCM) of which Grace was a member, also reprimanded the group for speaking without a permit and invoking spontaneous religious discussions – with a permit or without.

According to Grace, the club registered for a speech permit in January and set up an information table in the student union. Clubs advertising everything from UNICEF to Latin dancing distribute literature and strike up conversations in the facility, but a Student Involvement employee ordered Grace members to stand quietly behind their display and speak only to students who approached them. School employees issued the same directive to group members on several other occasions.

In the following weeks, Grace members watched as clubs rallied passersby, marketers hawked jobs, and one student distributed political literature – sometimes in clear view of Willis.

“It’s Talley; you don’t need a permit to talk to people,” asserted one student,

when a Grace member asked him if he had registered or not, according to the court documents.

In April, Grace Christian Life sued Willis, Giancola, Chancellor Randy Woodson, and another administrator. In a statement, Woodson said the lawsuit was “without merit,” superfluous on a campus where “free speech is alive and well.”

Grace President Hannalee Alrutz told *The Daily Signal* the right to free speech was worth challenging the school for.

“The policy kills our speech,” she said. “It puts a lot of fear in us so that when we desire to talk to somebody on campus, like a fellow student, there is always, in the back of our mind, a worry that we may be stopped or punished because the policy allows for that.”

On June 11, a district court issued a preliminary injunction against the speech policy, ruling it encroached on Grace’s free speech rights. After that ruling, the school agreed to settle the case.

According to N.C. State spokesman Fred Hartman, the school decided to change the policy in early July to avoid

future legal fees and misplaced resources.

“As part of this decision, the university has revised and clarified its solicitation policy to better align with our intent and application of the procedure,” Hartman said. “Students, student groups, and their sponsored guests will no longer be required to reserve space in order to conduct non-commercial solicitation.”

On July 19, attorneys representing Grace withdrew the lawsuit.

“Students of any religious, political, or ideological persuasion should be able to freely and peacefully speak with their fellow students about their views without interference from university officials who may prefer one view over another,” said attorney Tyson Langhofer, senior counsel with Alliance Defending Freedom. “N.C. State did the right thing in revising its policy to reflect this instead of continuing to defend its previous policy, which was not constitutionally defensible.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Molly Hulsey writes for *WORLD News Service*, a division of *WORLD Magazine*, worldmag.com based in Asheville. Used by permission.) **BR**

Tar Heel community comes ‘Together As One’

By **CHRYSTA CARROLL** | Special to the *Recorder*

With images of diversity and segregation permeating mainstream media, any evidence of racial unity is a welcome breath of fresh air, and at least some Bladen County residents are inhaling deeply after Aug. 7.

A “Together As One” event was planned by John Morrison, pastor of Clark’s Chapel AME Zion Church – a predominantly black church – and Devon Varnum, senior pastor of Tar Heel Baptist Church – whose congregation is mostly white – for the purpose of bringing together a diverse group of believers to fellowship and worship together and to begin to unite for a common goal.

“There are supposedly 19,000 unreached people in Bladen County,” said Varnum prior to the Aug. 7 event. “Part of the reason we’re doing this is, if we’re going to reach that number, we have to work together. What Bladen County needs is the gospel.”

A covered dish fellowship meal began at 4:30 p.m., followed by a worship service. Clark’s Chapel Choir started things off, followed by a sermon from Varnum on the commonalities to all believers. Tar Heel Baptist’s choir then sang, followed by Morrison’s sermon and a time of

prayer. “Rev. Morrison called me to say that he felt led to preach on Ephesians 4, which was the same passage that I felt led to preach on. In fact, I’ll tell you how unified God had us – that night, we had on the same sport coat and hadn’t planned it,” laughed Varnum.

The focus for the day, rather than being on the evident diversity, was on the fact that believers have much more in common with one another than they have differences.

“It was amazing,” said Varnum. “People showed up in droves – we had at least 200, which is as many as our church can hold – from at least 10 different churches of different ethnic backgrounds. God really moved.”

While the services were going on, children played on bounce houses outside with apparent disregard for their disparities.

“I’ve never been in a service where there was so much unity,” said Varnum, who previously expressed a hope that a diverse group united in worshipping one God would as closely mirror heaven as was possible on earth.

Around \$1,000 was collected for an offering that will be distributed to Plain View Primary and Tar Heel Middle School.

Principals from both schools, as well as numerous other county leaders, were



Pastor Devon Varnum, right, hugs Pastor John Morrison following “Together As One” event Aug. 7. Varnum’s Tar Heel Baptist Church and Morrison’s Clark’s Chapel AME Zion Church held a joint service for the community to talk about unity. (Tar Heel Baptist Church photo)

present for the event. Morrison and Varnum presented checks to each school in the following days and plan to discuss potential future plans.

“Our hope is that this is the beginning of something,” said Varnum. “My prayer is that revival would come to our churches and communities, and we would

start to see the effects of people joining together, reaching out to help win people to Jesus Christ together.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – This article was originally published at bladenjournal.com. Used with permission. Chrysta Carroll can be reached by calling 910-862-4163 or emailing ccarroll@civitasmedia.com.) **B3**

N.C. pastor re-elected in Vietnamese fellowship

By **KAREN L. WILLOUGHBY** | Baptist Press

In an apparent effort to better fulfill its purpose, the Vietnamese Baptist Fellowship of North America at its annual meeting moved to nearly double its budget.

It is \$56,000 this year; messengers voted to make it \$100,000 for 2017.

“We had much discussion about this,” said Paul Cao, vice president of the Southern Baptist ethnic fellowship that was started in 1984. Cao also is pastor of

Vietnamese Baptist Church in High Point, N.C.

In addition to Vietnamese Baptist churches’ support of the Cooperative Program, their local association and state convention – “We are very faithful with these,” Cao noted – the 157 Vietnamese churches that cooperate with the Southern Baptist Convention gave \$63,000 to the fellowship last year, \$9,000 over budget.

The Fellowship’s leaders have been discussing the need to have at least a

part-time executive director to help carry out the mission of the group, Cao noted.

The Fellowship exists to encourage, strengthen and promote cooperation and unity among Vietnamese Baptist churches in the United States and to expand God’s Kingdom work in the U.S. and throughout the world, Cao said.

“Now we have to convince [cooperating churches] to each want to give a little more so we can take this next step,” he noted. The Fellowship plans to host four regional meetings in 2017 – in the West, Midwest, South and East Coast – to build on relationships forged by shared experience in a war-torn country as well as their faith in Jesus and their vision for doing God’s work where He has placed them, Cao said.

“Our saying is, ‘Together we can serve more effectively,’” Cao said. “With these

regional meetings we want to encourage our churches and missions.”

Re-elected to a second term as president was Lanh Phan, pastor of Agape Baptist Church in Seattle.

Cao was re-elected to a second term as vice president. Hue Kieu, pastor of Faith and Hope Church in San Jose, Calif., was elected secretary.

Chuong Vo, pastor of Vietnamese Baptist Church in Memphis, Tenn., was elected treasurer.

The Vietnamese Baptist Fellowship of North America met June 30-July 3 at the Seattle Airport Marriott. In all, 724 adults registered from churches in 20 states, plus Vietnam, Canada and South Korea. In addition, 102 youngsters and 167 youth had their own programs using the Vacation Bible School curriculum “Armor of God.”

The totals included 25 pastors’ families from Vietnam and a Vietnamese couple serving as missionaries in South Korea.

Five Vietnamese churches were started in North America within the last year, Cao reported. The Renaissance Charlotte Suites Hotel in Charlotte, N.C., was selected for the June 29-July 2, 2017, annual meeting. **B3**

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9/11 prayer outreach spotlights ‘critical’ year

By DIANA CHANDLER | Baptist Press

On the 15th anniversary of the deadliest terrorist attack in U.S. history, Southern Baptists are being urged to join hundreds of thousands of Christians from many denominations and ethnicities in praying for a Christian awakening in the nation.

The Sept. 11 Cry Out America prayer outreach of the Awakening America Alliance and Center for Spiritual Renewal, an 8-year-old cooperative initiative encompassing more than 150,000 churches, ministries and para-churches in North America, is increasingly popular this year as more Christians recognize the nation’s deep spiritual need, Awakening America executive director Kay Horner told Baptist Press.

“I think that the nation is beginning to wake up and recognize the desperation that we are going to have to have for God to hear from heaven and heal our land. There’s just this increasing recognition that we’re desperate for God,” Horner said. “This is also such a critical year with the election and all of the security issues, the need for racial reconciliation. We anticipate a much larger increase in



the churches involved, because of it being on a Sunday.”

Immediate past Southern Baptist Convention President Ronnie Floyd is among leaders issuing a 9/11 prayer call this year. Most recently, Floyd issued the call during a July 17 sermon and in an Aug. 5 blog, asking churches to devote at least 11 minutes and up to an hour to

prayer in Sept. 11 worship services.

“With great conviction, I want to ask each pastor and church in America to allocate the day to praying for our nation,” Floyd said of 9/11.

“The churches of America need to pray for our country in our worship services. Not

just mention it, not just pray, but pray extraordinarily.”

The stakes are especially high this year, Floyd blogged.

“Prayer brings the walls down! Prayer crosses over the perceived barriers of ethnicity, race and generations, bringing down the walls that divide us. Let the walls fall down!” Floyd wrote. “Our sinful choices have built these walls, but Jesus’ work on the cross has brought them all down.”

He asked churches to decide for themselves how much time to give to prayer

on the anniversary, encouraging between 11 minutes and an hour of prayer.

Horner expressed pleasure at Floyd’s emphasis on 9/11 prayer, part of the Cry Out America movement that began in 2008 on the steps of courthouses in the nation’s 3,143 counties and has spread to include schools, churches, and para-church and marketplace ministries, with a presence in all 50 states.

“We like to use the terminology of Christ awakening, because you can have spiritual awakening through a number of things. But we really are encouraging people to pray for a Christ awakening and for revival in the nation,” Horner said. “Cry Out America has always involved people from different denominations and races and cultures and government, education.

“It’s been a unified effort. It’s much

like the fall version of National Day of Prayer, that people put aside their tribes, their logos and their egos and they come together to just seek God.”

Horner included a link to Floyd’s sermon in a letter to 150,000 pastors encouraging participation in the emphasis.

Among those receiving the letter were the 40,000 pastors in the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference led by Samuel Rodriguez, who has broad appeal as one of *Time* magazine’s “100 Most Influential People in The World” in 2013, and Awakening America cabinet member Mark Dance, associate vice president, LifeWay Pastors at LifeWay Christian Resources, Nashville, Tenn.

Free Sept. 11 prayer resources and promotional materials are available at awakeningamerica.us/cry-out-america-resources/. **BR**

SHARING THE GOSPEL: ACTS 2 vs. ACTS 17

Our culture may be changing rapidly, but the gospel has not changed. It still has the power to transform lives as we share it and engage the culture.

In his book *The Rise of the Nones*, James Emery White makes us aware that the fastest growing religious group in North America is a category called the “nones.” These are individuals who have no religious preference or commitment to any religion.

The “nones” make up over 30 percent of the U.S. population.

Many of our evangelism methods over the past several decades involve

“gospel presentations” rather than “gospel conversations.” The difference between the two is illustrated by Peter in Acts 2 and Paul in Acts 17.

When Peter preached at Pentecost in Acts 2, his audience consisted of “devout Jews from every nation.” Peter’s sermon emphasized Jesus’ life, death and resurrection and resulted in 3,000 souls saved by the power of the Holy Spirit.

These devout Jews already believed in God, and they already believed a Messiah was coming. They only needed a little spiritual bump to come to Christ. Similarly, most people who lived in North Carolina in the 1970s and 1980s had at least some knowledge of the Bible even if they didn’t go to church.

In Acts 17, however, Paul used a different approach. As he spoke to philosophers at Mars Hill in Athens, Paul started with creation, explained the grand narrative of scripture, and showed how Christ’s life, death and resurrection fit into the larger framework of the Bible.

Because many people today have no religious preference or no real knowledge of the Bible, the culture that Paul addressed in Acts 17 is much like the culture we find ourselves in today.

We often need to explain the big picture of the Bible to help people understand who Jesus is, the reason why He came and our need for a



MARTY DUPREE

Savior.

Evangelism tools like *The Story* (ViewTheStory.com) and the *3 Circles: Life Conversation Guide* (LifeOnMissionBook.com) are geared toward conversational evangelism in an Acts 17 culture.

Additionally, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has produced a helpful resource related to sharing the gospel in today’s culture titled *SHARE: Engaging in Gospel Conversations to Make Disciples*. Visit ncbaptist.org/share to download a free copy or call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5648, to request one by mail.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Marty Dupree is the adult evangelism and discipleship consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at (800) 395-5102 ext. 5565, or mdupree@ncbaptist.org.)

Elliff, Meador to teach at SEBTS

By HARPER MCKAY | SEBTS

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) gains two visiting professors, Tom Elliff, former president of the International Mission Board (IMB) and the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and Clyde Meador, retired missionary and executive advisor to the IMB president.

Elliff served as a pastor for 42 years in Arkansas, Texas, Colorado and Oklahoma before he and his late wife Jeannie became IMB missionaries in Zimbabwe. He also served the IMB as the senior vice president for spiritual nurture and church relations from 2005-2009 and then as president from 2011-2014. Elliff has been president of the SBC Pastor’s Conference and held two terms as president of the SBC.

Elliff will assist with master’s and doctoral level courses as the visiting professor of prayer and pastoral ministry at SEBTS. He will have a particular focus on courses related to spiritual disciplines and pastoral leadership.

“Tom Elliff is one of the godliest

men I know,” said Chuck Lawless, dean of graduate studies and professor of evangelism and missions. “I turn to him every time I need prayer, and I want our students learning from such a man.”

Meador will be the visiting professor of missions leadership and will assist with master’s level course lectures, graduate classes and doctoral missions classes. Meador served the IMB for 41 years, most recently as the executive advisor to the president. He and his wife Elaine began their IMB career in 1974 as missionaries to Indonesia. Meador filled multiple roles with the IMB, including executive vice president and interim president.

“Dr. Meador will be recognized as one of the strongest and steadiest leaders in recent SBC history. He is known for his strong pastoral leadership during his time on the mission field and his wise administrative leadership during his time as executive vice president of the IMB,” said Bruce Ashford, provost. “This is the type of man we want standing in front of our students, shaping their hearts and minds.” **BR**

Youth weeks emphasize living on mission

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

God's mission is all encompassing.

It involves everyone and everything. It happens every day and everywhere.

Students from all across North Carolina learned about those truths and how they apply to their lives all summer long during the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) summer youth weeks held at the N.C. Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell located on Oak Island. This year's theme was "Every One, Every Thing, Every Day, Every Where: Living on Mission" based on 1 Peter 2:9.

This year, more than 6,500 middle and high school students representing 277 churches attended one of the seven youth week camps held from June 13 to Aug. 6 at Caswell.

Each week of camp featured powerful worship, messages focused on the camp theme and a hands-on missions experience. Youth weeks also included intentional discipleship that emphasized the importance of consistently spending time in God's Word through daily quiet times and church and small group devotions.

Campers also enjoyed drama, skits, games and recreational activities, all at

a beautiful oceanfront setting near the southeastern tip of North Carolina. But youth weeks are designed to be a lot more than just a summer getaway with fun in the sun.

"Camp is not just about them coming to the beach and playing," said Merrie Johnson, the BSC's youth evangelism and discipleship consultant who has coordinated summer camps at Caswell for 15 years. "Youth weeks are designed to give students an opportunity to listen to God speak to them and understand what it means to have a real and vibrant relationship with Christ."

Throughout the summer, Johnson, along with camp staffers, youth leaders and chaperones from the churches in attendance, saw God move in the lives of the youth who attended. Johnson said that over the course of the seven youth weeks, 297 attendees made a first-time decision for Christ, 948 rededicated their lives to Him and 334 more answered a call to vocational ministry.

"I think the biggest thing I've learned is that I find my identity in Christ, and I need to put my trust in Him because He's going to be there every step of the way," said Gracelyn Williams, a first-time camp attendee from Penn Memorial Baptist Church in Reidsville. "I would

love to come back next year because it's a really great place to learn more about the gospel."

Afshin Ziafat, lead pastor of Providence Church in Frisco, Texas, served as the worship service proclaimer during one of the seven youth weeks. During his series of messages throughout the week, Ziafat shared with campers how the youth weeks' theme relates to the themes of creation, fall, redemption and restoration that form the grand narrative of the Bible. Ziafat emphasized that being a committed follower of Christ means living a life on mission for God.

"When you get the gospel, repent and become a follower (of Jesus), you immediately become a missionary," Ziafat said during one of his messages. "You cannot divorce your being saved to your being sent on this mission. Every one of us is called to be on this mission."

Matt Coble, a high school student from Monroe who was attending youth weeks for the fifth consecutive summer, said Ziafat's messages helped him understand how everything that happens in life is a part of God's plan and purposes. Coble said this year's camp has challenged him to live out his faith more at home, at school and in his community.

"Every year, God speaks to me in a different way and leads me in a different direction than He did the year before," Coble said of his youth week experiences. "This year, God is teaching me that everything has a purpose for His glory. Even though it doesn't look like it sometimes, it's going to be for His glory and not always what we want. I'm looking forward to sharing about Him with everyone I come in contact with."

Youth weeks also gave attendees a chance to participate in a hands-on mission project while at Caswell. Each week, campers spent time each day packing meals that will be delivered to Haiti. Through an ongoing partnership with Change This World – a faith-based hunger relief organization that recently merged with a similar organization and is now known as Feeding Children Everywhere – meals packed at Caswell will be distributed to an orphanage and surrounding community in Jacmel, Haiti.

This past summer, campers packed 250,000 meals that will be delivered to Haiti later this year. Campers also gave more than \$67,000 in offerings throughout youth weeks, which will be used to help pay for the delivery and distribu-



A youth weeks group prays over packaged meals. This summer, youth packed 250,000 meals that will be delivered to Haiti. (BeDoTell photo)

tion of the meals in Haiti. This summer marked the sixth year that campers had packed meals for Haiti, bringing the total number of meals packed and delivered to 1.5 million. With each meal that is delivered, the gospel is also shared.

"I think this is an awesome thing campers get to do because they get to be involved in missions while they are here," said Sam Stone, who has served as a youth weeks staff member for two years. "Since our theme is being on mission, this really helps to focus in on the theme."

"We try to stress, however, that living on mission doesn't mean you have to get on a plane and fly somewhere to share the gospel. Living on mission is sharing the gospel every day and living the gospel in every single moment of your life. Living on mission can be done every single day."

This year, to help equip students to live on mission, Johnson expanded the training she offers for youth pastors and leaders at camp by making some sessions available to campers. The new "Youth Ministry University" gave adults and students alike the opportunity to attend classes and training sessions on topics such as how to study the Bible, world religions and starting a student-led ministry at their school.

"We wanted to conduct leadership training for adults and students but without requiring them to attend a separate event," Johnson said.

Justin Baucom, a youth pastor at Roanoke Baptist Church in Monroe, said he witnessed God at work in the lives of his students during their week at Caswell. He said many are understanding what it means to live on mission and the importance of it.

"We want to help them understand that being a Christian is not just on Sunday, and it's not just on Wednesday night," Baucom said.

"It's every day. The gospel is not just for you to hear once. The gospel is something we should hear all the time. It should be a daily reminder of what we've been called to do and how we should live." **BR**



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Energy

Continued from page 1

MBA if the church ever ceased to exist. The church voted to affirm that. The last Sunday in April 2015 the church held their last service. The property was legally transferred to MBA by June 1.

Renovations began immediately to convert the 24,000 square foot church facility into the newly titled Great Commission Center (GCC), launching a series of new ministries, church plants and vision.

The association's 30 year-old downtown building was sold this past April for more than \$2.7 million. In May, MBA moved to the old Green Memorial property with resources in hand to renovate the buildings and invest in church revitalization projects, church planting, training and new outreach ministries. "We're trying to be deliberate and wise in the use of those resources and ... do the kind of ministry God's called us to do here," said Lowman.

At the busy intersection of The Plaza and Central Avenue just east of downtown Charlotte, the GCC includes the church's educational space, a gymnasium, sanctuary and a house across the street.

The gym is already being used for a sports outreach. Last fall, Asian church planter Ben Bautista asked to use the gym for a basketball clinic to reach children and their families. The intent was to target the city's growing Asian population.

Now every Monday some 20 to 30 children attend the clinic. But they are not all Asian. African American, Hispanic and Anglo children along with their parents are coming. A church planter teaches basketball skills, they have a Bible study and they pray together. Bautista's goal is for the Monday night attendees to become a church plant in the GCC.

Fruitland Baptist Bible College has a weekly class for Hispanics in the GCC.

Lowman said MBA is partnering with Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary to offer classes through the seminary's EQUIP Network. It begins this fall with Lowman teaching Biblical Interpretation.

In partnership with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), Ralph Garay leads a group they call the School of International Leaders for Church Multiplication. One Saturday each month a group of 77 ethnic pastors and leaders gather in the GCC to hear Garay teach pastoral ministries, church leadership, missions, disciple-making and Biblical theology. He is an Asian church planting consultant with BSC.

Garay said the first year of training emphasizes the foundations of ministry, and the second year will focus on practi-



These Montagnard believers from Vietnam are faithful to attend the School of International Leaders one Saturday each month in the Metrolina Baptist Association's Great Commission Center. Ralph Garay teaches these future leaders to pray for one another to glorify God by making disciples based on their SHAPE (Spiritual Gifts, Heart, Abilities, Personality and Experiences). (BSC and Great Commission Center photos)

cal ministry. "At the end of the second year we want to see if they have started sharing the gospel, making disciples, forming small groups and starting a new congregation somewhere."

He encourages them to start a school of multiplication among their own language groups. Attendees represent 28 language groups from 21 Charlotte area churches. They come from Vietnam, Burma, Nepal, the Philippines, Eritrea, Laos, Thailand and Korea.

The GCC is also a meeting place for four congregations every Sunday. A Montagnard group meets at 8:30 am. A Filipino congregation gathers at 10:30. An established Korean church that lost their previous meeting location worships at 2 p.m. and a new Korean church plant meets at 4:30.

"Our plan is to make this place a home for 10 or 12 ethnic churches," Lowman said. "Every Sunday we have 31 languages spoken in the 140 churches and church plants that are part of the Metrolina Association, in addition to English."

Another use for the GCC is to provide housing for mission teams and volunteers who come to serve in the area, Lowman added. Former Sunday School classrooms are being turned into bedrooms. One room will become a pastor's retreat room.

Another large room will accommodate a team of about 20 volunteers with adjoining shower facilities. The house across the street can be converted to a



missionary residence or a place of refuge for pastors.

"The sky is the limit with the space we have," he said.

Lowman said associational ministry is challenging, but the teamwork reminds Baptists that we are not "individual contractors who are doing our own thing. There's a vision here to join together to serve the city and the area where God has planted us. So, I'm very hopeful for the future here. At the same time, there are still challenges and we're not always sure what's going to happen next.

He cited the growing number of churches like Green Memorial that are reaching that critical point of asking, "Can we keep going? What are we going to do with this facility? Can we merge with another church?"

Associational leaders like Lowman have the opportunity to walk with those congregations to encourage them toward biblical, loving, great commission-centered results that will help them look to the future, be missional in their vision and help them make the right decisions, he said.

After 10 years of service at MBA, Low-

man said he believes relationships are the key to effective associational ministry. "How actively and how closely can we be related to one another as pastors and leaders? The stronger those relationships are, the stronger the work of the association will be."

He strongly states his case for the centrality of the local church. "Jesus said He would build His church. That's one thing we've gotta keep clear. Jesus did not say He would build His association or convention. "But in terms of connectedness, availability and the ability to serve churches, the local association is the closest Baptist entity to that local church," Lowman added. "If we as associational leaders are serious about connecting with our churches and staying connected with our churches, we can be the kind of resource, partner and friend that our pastors need."

North Carolina Missions Offering

Ten percent of gifts to the North Carolina Missions Offering is returned to local associations. For MBA that amount is almost \$10,000. The funds have been used to support neighborhood mission workers, summer workers and specific mission projects. "We're really thankful for our churches that give to the state missions offering so that those blessings can come back to us, and we're thankful for North Carolina Baptists and the way we are blessed through that joint missions giving effort." **BR**

Despite challenges, local associations adapt, endure

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

A “rope of sand with strength of steel” is the imagery James L. Sullivan used in his 1974 book to describe the tie that binds Baptist churches together. The metaphor captures the heart of voluntary cooperation – a longstanding Southern Baptist distinctive, said Lester Evans, team leader of associational partnerships for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Despite the unique challenges threatening to dissolve the bonds of 78 local associations across the state, Evans said, the enduring practice of cooperation among autonomous congregations continues.

Dougald McLaurin Jr., president of the North Carolina Baptist Associations Conference (NCBA) and associational missionary for the Tar River Baptist Association, agreed. “Churches that really want to make a difference, they’re going to find ways to work together,” he said.

The willingness to cooperate is the greatest resource of North Carolina Baptists, said Evans and McLaurin, but the obstacles are significant.

“The most pressing challenge that our associations face is having a clear and focused vision of their purpose,” said Evans. Some of that springs from a lack of associational leadership. Nearly 20 percent of North Carolina’s local associations have vacant or temporary leadership positions, often called directors of mission or associational missionaries. That number is down from 32 percent in recent years.

In addition, some churches don’t feel the need to participate in the cooperative ministries of a local association, said Evans and McLaurin. Competition among pastors sometimes leads to a “lone ranger” approach to ministry. Furthermore, the increasing convenience of travel and communication technology allows people to feel connected to other ministries or churches outside a specific geographic location. Long-distance availability can diminish the desire for fellowship through a local association.

Fewer participating churches in a local association usually leads to decreased funding, amplifying other problems and making it ever more difficult to secure permanent staff positions.

Shifting demographic trends in some areas of the state are forcing local churches – and their cooperative ministries – to rethink outreach strategies. How well an association adapts to new circumstances also factors into its overall health. “If we’re content to do associational work the way we did it last year, or yesterday,”

McLaurin said, “we’re going to become irrelevant very quickly.”

Despite growing difficulty, Evans is optimistic about the future of North Carolina’s Baptist associations. He believes cooperation naturally occurs in the life of each believer and the corporate life of each congregation.

“It is part of the DNA of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer,” Evans said. “You can’t fulfill the Great Commission by yourself, so there’s this driving force in you to link arms with other believers. When you do that, churches get formed.”

“That same DNA is in the corporate body. So, churches have this DNA to link with other churches because they can’t fulfill the Great Commission alone.”

It’s for this reason Evans said associations will endure. He continued, “If every association disappeared today, that DNA would drive churches. They’re going to network together.”

Evans admitted that future partnerships may look different in name or function – such as networks, alliances and so on – but he emphasized, “They’re not going away.”

In times of need, some associations have undergone radical changes in order to continue – and sometimes expand – their ministry. For example, the Stanly and Montgomery associations are now sharing staff and resources to become more efficient. (See story on page 1.) The South Roanoke association totally revitalized and

refocused their ministry strategy after nearly closing the doors due to financial struggles. The Metrolina association sold their property after being deeded a former church building. The facilities and funds are now used to host and support a wide variety of ethnic churches and ministries. (See story on page 1.)

McLaurin encourages large and small membership churches to remember the abiding purpose of cooperative ministry. “I really do think the associations have a strong role in helping the smaller membership rural churches, and any other church that’s willing to embrace the cooperative program principle,” he said. “If you’re too big for an association, I think you’ve lost sight of helping your sister churches.”

Evans added, “It’s the one entity that’s closest to the local church at ground level, in terms of knowing what their needs are, what resources are available and connecting them together so they can help strengthen each other.”

“That’s where association happens. It’s churches helping churches to become healthy enough to reach their communities and reproduce disciples.” **BR**

Fruit Continued from page 1

greater networking. “You don’t have to be physically present somewhere to assist folks. Back in the day, county-by-county, that was as much territory as most folks could network. Today, not so.”

Personnel and property consume most of a small association’s budget, leaving little for ministry and missions. When associations are able to collaborate on some of these responsibilities, they can devote more time to reshaping their purpose and refocusing their resources toward supporting churches.

Stanly and Montgomery operate as separate associations within a multi-staff organization, with joint leadership regularly meeting to coordinate strategies and plan for events. Stanly’s ability to share the task of promoting events makes it possible for the smaller association, Montgomery, to host gatherings – a resource they were not able to offer in previous years. Both locations offer events like deacon training and prayer conferences. For example, a two-day event featuring the same guest speakers may take place at Stanly on Monday night and Montgomery on Tuesday. While they remain financially autonomous and receive monthly contributions from their respective churches, the two also share the cost of quarterly meetings when appropriate.

“That allows us to really do more and to have high quality conference leaders. The relationships that are built through these things, we’ve found, are very helpful for both associations,” Bilbo said.

Growing together

Thanks to their partnership, Stanly and Montgomery have been able to expand their staff. Each association now has an administrative assistant, and earlier this year, Montgomery called Rick Miller as a second missionary.

Miller, who previously served in Japan for 18 years, began his ministry with Montgomery on April 1. Although he focuses on and devotes more time to Montgomery and Bilbo concentrates primarily on Stanly, they assist each other with ministry development and implementation for both associations. They meet once a week to plan, strategize and pray together.

“I have the freedom to provide pastoral care to the 23 MBA [Montgomery] churches and their pastors and richly benefit from the experience and wisdom of a seasoned associational missionary who is willing to mentor and provide direction, strategic insight and encouragement,” said Miller.

“We’re wired differently, have different gifts, we can provide different support for churches and pastors. ... We can provide a whole lot more to both associations,” Bilbo said. “[Stanly] sees this as being a good neighbor. When you’re good to your neighbors, the whole neighborhood benefits. Stanly benefited as well.”

The future of associational networking

Through his work with Stanly and Montgomery, Bilbo has seen the fruit of partnering together. Since 2013, he has started the Network of Collaborating Associations to help other associations navigate the process of cooperating with each other while maintaining their unique identities.

“What I’m seeing is that weaker associations were just closing out,” he said.

“They would merge, and in losing identity and historic standing, with some existing from the 1880s, we lose a lot of autonomy because strategies in each county might need to be a little different.”

The Network takes advantage of missionaries’ unique areas of passion, experience and expertise, which they may not be utilizing to their full potential in their respective associations. Individuals’ specialized skills can more effectively address the various challenges churches face.

Bilbo works with former associational missionaries Keith Dixon and Rick Astle on helping associations recognize the value of the Network. Astle said he is confident that if missionaries take intentional steps toward partnering with other associations, “we will move closer toward unity, be more effective in His glorious work and demonstrate to the world that God sent His son.”

Astle, Bilbo and Dixon see the alliance as much more than a survival plan but a tool that is shaping the new face of associations. **BR**

Proposed bill limits referrals to Baptist Children's Homes

BR staff

“Friends, please take a few minutes to read and act,” Blake Ragsdale recently wrote on his Facebook page. “This [Family First Act] piece of legislation troubles me because of the impact it could have on children who have no choice but to be placed in a caring living environment apart from their families.”

Ragsdale, director of communications for Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH), provided a link to the BCH website (bchfamily.org) to educate people about this pending legislation.

Under the proposed Family First Act, funding for placing boys and girls in residential care organizations like BCH would essentially be eliminated.

“Every child's situation is unique and each child needs every option available so they can be referred to the place best equipped to care for him or her,” Ragsdale explained. “Senators will likely vote in September. Ask your friends to help and please pray for the hurting children in North Carolina and around the nation. They come first!”

What is the Family First Act?

A proposed federal bill known as the Family Prevention Services Act (H.R. 5456) would end the funding that statewide Departments of Social Services (DSS) utilize for placing boys and girls in BCH's care.

Also known as the Family First Act, the bill in its current form would essentially eliminate BCH and other residential child care organizations as options for long-term placements of children. The bill would redirect federal funding to make foster care as the overwhelming long-term solution for children needing placement. While foster care is the right solution for some boys and girls, it is not the answer for all children.

“There are no positives and many negatives to the proposed Family First Act,” said BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell in a *Charity & Children* story. “Any legislation seeking to inhibit children from accessing the exceptional care Baptist Children's Homes and other residential organizations provide is extremely troubling.”

BCH regularly serves large sibling groups providing them with a caring home that allows them to be together. From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, BCH has served 80 sibling groups. Often times, foster homes are not equipped to care for large groups of children meaning brothers and sisters are split among different foster families.

Boys and girls are referred to BCH

through multiple means. Some are placed privately by family members or guardians. Others are referred by DSS who often take custody of children from extreme situations, such as abuse and neglect, and bring them into BCH's care immediately.

“It's imperative to remove a child from such heartbreaking circumstances as quickly as possible,” Blackwell said. “Whenever DSS contacts us, day or night, we are able to work together to bring the child in almost instantly. The well-being of children is dependent on a strong partnership between DSS and BCH.”

BCH chief operating officer Keith Henry, who oversees the day-to-day operations of the nonprofit's programs and services, sees more cons than pros with the bill's direction.

“Anything reasonable that can be done to prevent a negative impact on a child is a good thing, and we need to seek those solutions,” Henry explained. “What we cannot do is introduce measures that prevent a child from receiving the type of care that best suits his or her particular needs.”

If the bill passes, DSS choices for children become limited. DSS could still refer boys and girls to BCH, but only for a maximum of two weeks. Long-term placements would no longer be an option. The average length of stay for a child at BCH is nine months. Many stay until they graduate high school and some beyond.

“Every situation is unique, and the specific care one child needs is different than the needs of another,” Henry said in a *Charity & Children* story. “DSS must have every option available to them. Legislation that forces them to make decisions based on money instead of a child's best interest is wrong.”

DSS placements comprise 88 percent of BCH's current population. From 2013 to 2015, DSS referrals for BCH's residential services have increased by 48 percent.

“With the rise in DSS referrals, it's not logical to remove group home care as a solution,” Henry said. “In fact, the numbers state the opposite.”

Under the Family First Act, the overwhelming option for DSS would be foster home placements.

“There are situations where a foster family is the right solution, and there are times when it's not,” Henry said. “We have seen many situations where a child has been forced to move from home to home because the foster family was not equipped to meet the extreme need of that child.”

BCH uses the CARE model (Children and Residential Experiences) in its group

Contact your senator

The Honorable Richard Burr
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-3154

The Honorable Thom Tillis
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
Phone: (202) 224-6342

homes. Henry said the model gives house parents and social work staff members the knowledge and structure needed to help children overcome the trauma they have endured.

“Because of the training our house parents and social works receive, BCH has been able to provide children from failed foster care placements with successful, long-term care,” Henry said.

One of the other advantages to BCH is that it can accept siblings. There are currently 33 sibling groups at BCH across the state. In foster care, many times foster families are unable to accept multiple children resulting in the brothers and sisters being split apart.

“To me, this is one of the most important options BCH provides,” Henry explained.

The passage of the Family First Act could happen quickly as the Senate will reconvene in early September after its

summer recess. Henry and Blackwell are urging everyone to immediately send letters and emails to North Carolina Senators expressing their concerns.

“Urge our Senators to revisit this legislation and delay action until it is amended to provide every option necessary for all children to receive the best possible care,” Blackwell said.

BCH leaders encouraged *Biblical Recorder* readers to:

- Pray the bill in its current form is stopped and amended.
- Contact your N.C. senators. See box above.
- Share with your friends and encourage them to pray and make contact with our senators.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – A supporter letter to send to your senator is available for download at bchfamily.org. For more information, contact BCH's Keith Henry at 336-474-1215 or at khenry@bchfamily.org.) **BR**

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SEPTEMBER 19
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Senior Pastor
Franklin Avenue Baptist
New Orleans, LA



SEPTEMBER 20
Dr. Don Wilton
Senior Pastor
First Baptist Church
Spartanburg, SC



Business owner uses technology to give back to God

By EMILY BLAKE | Special to the Recorder

Scott Moore, co-founder of Trident Technology Solutions, was attending a weekly Bible study with several local business owners when he began to feel convicted to give more of his business back to God. He was already tithing personally, but at that time Trident was strictly a for-profit business.

Moore decided that needed to change.

After the discussion at his Bible study, Moore felt compelled to stop profiting financially when working with Christian organizations. “I spoke with my business partner, Tad Kuvik, and was surprised at how readily he accepted the idea,” said Moore.

“I was happy with the idea as soon as I heard it,” Kuvik said. “Churches and ministries do so much to help people without asking anything in return. I think serving the church is one of the best ways to give back to the community.”

On April 1, 2013, Trident, a full-service information technology company in Wake Forest, reached out to their current Christian nonprofit clients and reduced their pricing immediately. From that point Trident has only charged Christian organizations for the market cost of their products and services. They make no financial profits from these relationships.

Conviction came again a few years later as Moore was listening to his pastor, Jimmy Carroll at Journey Church, one Sunday morning. Moore decided he wanted to do more. On top of eliminating profits from their current Christian clients, Trident was going to specifically seek out opportunities to serve Christian nonprofits despite the fact that those business relationships would not directly benefit the company’s finances.

“In 2015 we decided to bring on a new sales executive, Robert Thomas, and have him spend a portion of his time focusing on assisting Christian organizations with their technology requirements allowing them to spend more time and money growing God’s Kingdom,” said Moore.

Thomas, who had recently graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) in Wake Forest, led Trident to look not only at saving churches’ money, but also to guide them to make information technology (IT) decisions that are gospel-focused.

“My job is to be an evangelist for Trident,” said Thomas. “I oversee our efforts to give back to churches and Christian organizations. As a guy who grew up in Christian ministry, I think it’s pretty cool that I get to stand with a foot in both circles. I get to hang out with church leaders and help them think

theologically about technology, and I also get to work with businesses to help them find the best solution available to meet their needs.”

Some of Trident’s recent clients have included Richland Creek Community Church, Wake Forest; North Wake Church, Wake Forest; SEBTS; Truett McConnell University, Cleveland, Ga.; Celebration Church, Raleigh, and Welch College, Nashville, Tenn.

“Trident is an invaluable partner,” said Wayne Jenks, SEBTS director of information technologies. “They have assisted us in choosing the appropriate technology for our institution.”

Q: How can churches and ministries benefit from a belief-based perspective on technology?

A: Making IT decisions can feel like a mundane aspect of business administration – outside of the realm of ministry. Often churches base their decisions on budget or trends alone.

“God reigns over all parts of the world,” said Thomas. “If Christ is truly the Redeemer of culture, then we should be seeking to infiltrate Christian thinking into everything we do. Shouldn’t we let our theology drive even the way we make decisions regarding technology in our organizations?”

Trident has provided churches with check-in computers, projection screens, public Wi-Fi, Internet security and more.

Moore explained that, “Many churches leverage the expertise of their members in specific areas, but they may not have a full understanding of technology and communications as a whole. Because of this, we often see a hodge-podge of manufacturers and solutions that often increase the complexity and reduce the



Scott Moore, left, and Rob Thomas of Trident Technology Solutions are excited about providing discounts to churches and other Christian nonprofits. (Contributed photos)

performance of their network or communications infrastructure. Trident has the expertise on staff and desire to help Christian organizations with their overall technology plan – again freeing up both time and resources for them to focus on Kingdom growth.”

“It has been so cool to watch the company evolve,” said Kuvik. “It started as four guys working from their houses, and now we own two buildings. We’re in a position where we can really give back and benefit the Christian community.”

“Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary has partnered with Trident since 2008 on a variety of different projects,” said Ryan Hutchinson, SEBTS executive vice president for operations. “It is great to work with a company that understands and supports our mission, since we both have the goal of seeing Christ’s Kingdom advance.”

Q: Is there anything wrong with profiting from Christians?

A: Moore knows eliminating profits from Christian organizations is not something that every company can or even should do. He readily admits there is nothing mandated in the Bible that prohibits Christians from doing profitable business together. It is a personal conviction, and he has seen God honor his obedience.

“It’s an exercise in faith,” he says. “I believe when God calls you to do something, he will also provide a way to accomplish it.” **BR**

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NCMO emphasis approaches, preparing the way for Jesus

By EMILY ROJAS | BSC Communications

Every year in September, churches all across the state celebrate and emphasize the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO).

NCMO is an annual offering that supports the ministries of N.C. Baptist Men (NCBM), also known as Baptists on Mission, church planting, mission camps, associational projects and mobilization ministry projects.

This year, the offering's theme is "Prepare the Way," based on Luke 10:1, which says, "*The Lord ... sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go.*"

Supporting NCMO allows individuals and churches to impact lostness around the world by preparing the way for Jesus through the various ministries that NCMO supports. The 2016 goal for the offering is \$2.1 million.

"Your investment in NCMO enables us to do as Jesus instructed," said Richard Brunson, NCBM executive director. "By caring for the physical needs of people, we prepare the way for Jesus to meet their spiritual needs as well."

NCMO supports ministry efforts both at home and abroad. Abroad, the offering supports mission partnerships in places

such as Armenia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Kenya, Romania and Cuba.

In Cuba alone, NCBM has been in partnership with the Eastern Baptist Convention on the island nation for more than 12 years. Baptist churches from North Carolina have sent volunteer groups to Cuba to lead projects and disciple-making efforts among the Cuban people.

Within the next year, work will begin on a new seminary in Santa Clara, one of the least-reached areas of Cuba.

At home, NCMO supports the many ministries of NCBM, church planting, mission camps, mobilization ministry projects and work through the Baptist associations.

One of NCBM's newest endeavors is the health-screening ministry, which serves uninsured and underserved populations throughout North Carolina by conducting screenings for cholesterol, high blood pressure, diabetes, depression and heart disease. This ministry is housed on a mobile wellness unit, which was added to NCBM's fleet of medical and dental mobile units in 2015.

Crystal Horton, who coordinates the health-screening ministry, said the goal of this ministry is to identify potential health issues and offer referral appoint-



ments from local health clinicians, all while sharing the love of Christ.

NCMO also makes strides in pushing back lostness through church planting efforts. Twenty-eight percent of NCMO funds are allocated to planting churches throughout North Carolina. In 2015 alone, church planting consultants worked with 105 new churches – 83 new church plants and 22 new affiliate churches – thanks to these funds.

Church planting efforts also focus on North Carolina's growing international population.

In North Carolina, there are 5.8 million lost people and more than 300 languages spoken within the state. This means that many lost people do not have the opportunity to hear the gospel preached in their native language.

With the state's growing Hispanic population in particular, there is a great need to plant more Hispanic churches. Currently, it's estimated that more than 1 million Hispanics reside in North Carolina.

"New Hispanic churches need to be

– 2016 –
goal
\$2.1 MILLION

planted in every town and city across the state," said William Ortega, Hispanic church planting consultant with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. "We can meet the need of starting more Hispanic churches in North Carolina with your gifts to the NCMO."

Although the NCMO emphasis occurs in September, offerings are received year-round. There are a number of free NCMO resources that pastors may use to promote NCMO in their churches available online at ncmissionsoffering.org/resources.

Contributions to NCMO work throughout the year to impact lostness and prepare the way for Jesus.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – For more information about the NCMO and the ministries it supports, or to make a contribution, visit ncmissionsoffering.org.) **BR**

FREE



DID YOU KNOW?

If you joined a North Carolina Baptist church in the past two years and came from a non-Baptist background, you are eligible for a free one-year subscription to the *Biblical Recorder*.

Many who join your church do not know who Baptists are, what we believe and how we cooperate for missions. Maybe they have no church background or they came to your church from a non-Baptist church. The best way to inform them is to give them a full year of regular news and information through the *Biblical Recorder*. It's free! Contact our circulation manager, Liz Tablazon, today, and she will help you get started: (919) 459-5693 or liz@bnow.org.

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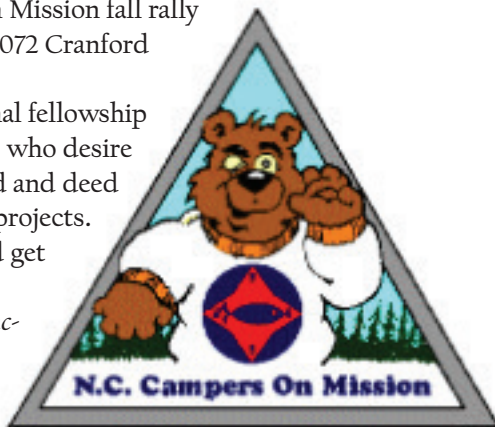
OPPORTUNITY CORNER

The annual North Carolina Campers on Mission fall rally will be Sept. 22-25 at Denton Farm Park, 1072 Cranford Road, Denton, NC 27239.

Campers on Mission (COM) is a national fellowship of Christian campers of all denominations who desire to share their faith in Jesus Christ by word and deed as they participate in a variety of mission projects. Come to the rally to learn about COM and get excited about using your RV for missions.

The registration form can be found at nc-campersonmission.org.

Call Shirley Thompson at (336) 274-9622 if you have any questions.



The Baptist State Convention of N.C. is sponsoring a Literacy Missions Conference – Sharing His Light – on Oct. 21-22 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia. The conference will equip volunteers to

do quality instruction while connecting people to Christ. Cost varies from \$30-105 depending on lodging or commuting options. Visit ncbaptist.org/literacymissionsconf.



The Baptist State Convention of N.C. is hosting a Hispanic Pastors and Wives Retreat. Participants will experience spiritual renewal, marriage enrichment, ministry networking, strategic training and planning toward the edification of

God's Kingdom. Dates available include Oct. 21-22 at Caswell Conference Center on Oak Island and Oct 28-29 at La Quinta Inns & Suites in Conover. Cost is \$25 per adult, \$20 per child and includes food and lodging. Visit ncbaptist.org/hpwr.



The 2016 North Carolina Baptist Secretaries Association's annual conference – An Ornament for Christ – will be Nov. 7-9 at Ft. Caswell.

The conference, which is based on 1 Peter 3:4, will include fellowship time, a banquet and door prizes.

Breakout sessions will be offered on topics involved with spiritual enrich-

ment, professional development and personal effectiveness. Speakers include Beth Greer and Melodie Griffin, both of Lexington, S.C. The cost of the conference ranges from \$160-\$290, depending on lodging options.

Register by Sept. 30 with a \$50 deposit. Visit ncbaptistsecretaries.net or email ncbaptistsecretaries@gmail.com.

AROUND THE STATE

Obituaries

TIMOTHY RICHARD ROBERSON, 52, of Hayesville, died Aug. 14 at Murphy Medical Center.

A native of Cherokee, he was the director of Truett Baptist Camp.

He is survived by his wife, Sharon Chastain Roberson; parents, Richard Roberson and Doris Stiles Roberson; daughter, Adrian Queen of Murphy; one brother, Kevin of Pine Mountain, Ga.; and two grandchildren.

Memorials to: Truett Baptist Camp, 346 Truett Baptist Camp Road, Hayesville, NC 28904.

PHILLIP KIRK HAWKINS, 45, of Hudson died July 21.

He had served as a police officer for 10 years in Lenoir and Valdese and was most recently the senior minister at New Life Baptist Church, Lenoir.

He is survived by his wife, Nicci Story Hawkins; one son, Phillip Michael Hawkins; one daughter, Emily Beth Hawkins; two brothers, Gerald Hawkins of Bethlehem and Earl Hawkins of High Point; and one sister, Jeanne Smart of Lenoir.

Memorials to: New Life Baptist Church Building Fund, 2111 Walt Arney Road, Lenoir, NC 28645.

ROBERT KEITH LOVE, 79, of Pilot Mountain died June 30.

Ordained in 1970, Love was a supply pastor of Indian Grove Baptist Church, Mount Airy; pastor of Albion Baptist Church, Mount Airy (six years); pastor of Second Baptist Church, Cherryville (26 years); and pastor of Woodville Baptist Church, Mount Airy (13 years). He had been serving at Woodland Baptist Church, Mount Airy, recently. The Surry Baptist Association newsletter said Love led an 18-year-old to Christ the day before he died.

He is survived by his wife of 58 years, Volenda Cook Love; two daughters, Cynthia Starr of Gastonia and Nancy Wilson of Bessemer City; two sons, Greg Love of Kingman, Ariz., and Terry Love of Cherryville; eight grandchildren; five great-grandchildren; and two sisters, Geraldine

Inman of Mount Airy and Alice Goins of Westfield.

Memorials to: Woodville Baptist Church Cemetery Fund, c/o Mrs. Zelda Collins, 1591 Tom's Creek Church Road, Pilot Mountain, NC 27041; the Joan and Howard Woltz Hospice Home, 945 Zephyr Road, Dobson, NC 27017, or Gideons International P.O. Box 1032, Mt. Airy, NC 27030.

Staff change

DAVID MACEACHERN has been called as pastor to Grace Baptist Church, Gastonia. For the last 20 years, he served as senior pastor at Bat Cave Baptist Church, Hendersonville.

Retirement

WAYNE GREENE will retire Aug. 28 from Cameron Baptist Church, Cameron, where he served as pastor for 13 years. Greene also served at Westover Baptist Church and Rock Hill Baptist Church, both in Virginia. Greene is available for pulpit supply and revivals. Contact him at (919) 783-5403.

KEN JONES has retired after 9.5 years of serving Lincoln Avenue Baptist Church, Lincolnton, as senior pastor. He also served as senior pastor at Macedonia Baptist Church, Lincolnton; Rawlinson Road Baptist Church, Rock Hill, S.C.; Welcome Home Baptist Church, North Wilkesboro; and Gulf Gate Baptist Church, Sarasota, Fla. He is currently serving his second four-year term as a member of the Board of Directors of the Baptist State Convention of N.C. and his second term on the Executive Committee. Jones and his wife, Margie, live in Lincolnton and spend time in Southport. He is available for interim or pulpit supply as well as leading mission teams. He can be contacted at (704) 400-7487.



KEN JONES

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Submissions

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

The *Recorder* relies on readers to help us stay informed. Check with your church/association to see if someone is designated to relay your important news.

September 4

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

September 11

One Great Creator

Focal passages: Psalm 33:6-9, 13-15; Colossians 1:15-17

When I pulled that ceramic candy bowl out of the moving box, I recognized it immediately.

You see, I had decorated the dish over 15 years ago but I still remembered how crooked my strokes had been and how my attempt at a red apple ended up looking more like a rotten tomato. That bowl was my creation, however unimpressive it might be.

Human creativity is a gift from God and a way we reflect His image.

Our often feeble attempt at creativity reminds us of the magnificence of God's creation. God did not fashion you or me at a paint-your-own pottery bonanza.

He made everything from nothing. The heavens and the earth were created "*by the word of the Lord*" and "*by the breath of His mouth*" (Psalm 33:6).

Can you fathom it? God spoke, and the world came into existence.

But that isn't all.

God didn't just create this world and move on to other projects. In the same way I know my pottery because I painted

it, God knows each of us intimately because He is the one who made us. He has fashioned our hearts, and He understands us to the very depth of our being.

It can be tempting to think of only God the Father as our Creator, yet the Bible is clear that Jesus was instrumental in creation. As the uncreated One, "*all things have been created through Him and for Him*" (Colossians 1:16). All things hold together precisely because Jesus ensures that they endure.

If you were to see my candy dish today, you would probably smile and say something nice about my effort.

At least she tried, you might think. And yet, when we stop our busy lives long enough to mediate on the miracle of creation, we have no other option but to worship and "*tremble before the Lord*" (Psalm 33:8).

The One who formed us out of nothing and knows us intimately is the same one who took our sin upon Himself at Calvary.

Our response can only be to "*stand in awe of Him*" (Psalm 33:8).

Focal passage: Isaiah 43:1-7

For U.S. Marine Jason Thomas, Sept. 11, 2001, began just like any other morning as he dropped off his daughter at her grandmother's house. He was completely unaware of the disaster occurring just miles away at the World Trade Center.

In those hours after the towers collapsed, however, James Thomas became a hero. He heard the tragic news, donned his uniform, turned his car toward the terror and joined the rescue effort. Thomas saved the lives of at least two officers that day.

On this 15th anniversary of 9/11, we honor the heroism of Jason Thomas.

We also understand with gratefulness that this Marine was doing exactly what he had been trained to do. He was living out his purpose as a Marine, saving lives and defending the United States.

Because of our identity as Christians, we too have a specific purpose. We may not wear a uniform, but we have been

created for a reason. God reminds the people of Israel of this purpose in Isaiah 43:1-7.

As Christians, we can celebrate that these same promises are true for us as well.

We were made to be in relationship with God. In Isaiah 43:1, he says, "*I have called you by your name; you are Mine.*" God desires intimacy with us, and we belong to Him.

What's more, God longs for us to enjoy His love, declaring, "*you are precious in My sight and honored, and I love you*" (Isaiah 43:4). God doesn't just want an army of robots. He loves us and wants us to love Him in return.

But our purpose doesn't stop there. God's great love compels us to action. We are intended to bring God glory, honoring Him in the way we live our lives and use our resources.

Marines like Jason Thomas have a purpose. They are trained to defend and protect the United States. As Christians, God has created us for something far greater.

We will find our greatest joy and contentment in life when we choose to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.



EMILY ANTHONY
Member, Imago Dei Church, Raleigh

September 4

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

September 11

A Living Hope

Focal passage: 1 Peter 1:3-9

Whenever you build some kind of structure, you must make sure you first get the foundation right. Failure to do so will ensure disaster, particularly when severe storms and powerful winds blow against the structure.

The early believers to whom Peter is writing – the dispersion or “the scattered ones” – may well have felt like they had “both feet firmly planted in the air,” due to the persecutions and tribulations they were facing.

Peter begins his letter by reminding them of the sure foundation of their faith, one that should demonstrate, even in the midst of the challenges they were facing, “a living hope.”

This hope about which Peter reminded them did not originate with them, nor was it dependent on them.

God Himself, by His grace and mercy, through the death of His Son, Jesus Christ, brought this salvation to them. Further, it was the resurrection of Jesus from the dead that was the foundation of this “living hope.” And, it was by God's

power that they were being guarded until the last day.

These believers who were under fire had received this salvation through faith in Christ and were continuing to walk it out by faith in Him. This salvation that came through faith in Christ resulted in a “living hope” that would accomplish two realities.

First, it would result in unshakable joy in their lives, even in the midst of the most challenging of circumstances. Second, their faith that had been refined and proved to be genuine through trials would result in praise and glory to God.

Is the hope you have in your life determined by the circumstances in which you find yourself? If so, when difficulties come pouring into your life, and pour in they will, others will see a “dead wish” (i.e. “I wish things were different”) rather than a living hope. May others see a “living hope” demonstrated in our lives as we walk by faith in our resurrected and living Lord.



RANDY MANN
Lead Pastor,
Central Baptist Church,
Henderson

Focal passage: 1 Peter 1:13-25

As I am writing this lesson, the Olympic Games are going on in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. As you watch these Olympic athletes compete, one word that should come to mind is “pursuit.” There is a clear goal and an intense focus and pursuit of that goal – namely a gold medal. Those athletes know they must stay focused and give their all at all times. Distraction means disaster. Half-hearted efforts mean definite defeat.

As Christians, we are called to pursue holiness – to be holy, even as God, our Father, is holy. We will not, however, drift toward holiness any more than a car that is left in neutral will roll uphill. Furthermore, while we are pursuing holiness, our enemy is seeking to squeeze us into the world's mold – that lifestyle that Peter describes as the “*passions of [our] former ignorance.*”

Now that we are children of God, our lives should no longer look like they once

Be Holy

did, but rather should look more and more like our Father. In other words, our conduct should match our confession. Though we will never achieve sinless perfection here on earth, we are nevertheless to pursue looking more and more like our Father.

Our God has not only commanded that we be holy, as He is, but has also provided the only means by which that can happen. He, by His grace and mercy, has ransomed us at a great price – the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son. Therefore, the overwhelming response of our lives should be pursuing holiness and living in fear (reverential awe) before the One who is both the righteous Judge and also the gracious justifier of our souls.

One of the key ways this transformation of life and growth in holiness will manifest itself is by the way we love one another.

As God changes our hearts to look more like His, we will love as He has loved us. Are you pursuing holiness, through God's power, living with a reverential fear before Him? That is why He purchased us at so great a price. Therefore, be holy!

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Association

Three Forks Baptist Association located in Watauga County, NC, is seeking a **full-time Director of Missions** with experience in association or missions work. Please visit 3forksassoc.org or call 828-264-4482 for more details.

Pastor

Blackman's Grove Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor** to faithfully preach and teach the Word of God and lead our congregation. We are a mission minded Southern Baptist church located in rural Johnston County near Four Oaks, NC. We will be accepting resumes until November 30, 2016. Please send resumes to: Blackman's Grove Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, 5980 Strickland's Crossroads Rd., Four Oaks, NC 27524.

Pastor. David Memorial Baptist Church is prayerfully seeking a Pastor. We are a conservative church aligned with SBC. We invite anyone interested; please send completed resume with references to: David Memorial Baptist Church, 2533 Country Club Road, Lincolnton, NC 28092, or email to: dmbchurch@gmail.com. Resumes will be received until 10/01/16.

Burgaw Baptist Church in Burgaw, NC, is seeking a **senior pastor** to shepherd our congregation and preach the inerrant Word of God. We are SBC affiliated and prefer college and seminary education with a minimum of 8 years of senior pastoral experience. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 40, Burgaw, NC 28425, or email to pastor4burgawbaptist@gmail.com.

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Buckhorn Baptist Church located in rural Como, North Carolina, is a multigenerational congregation seeking a **pastor** with a minimum of 5 years pastoral experience and graduate of a seminary, divinity school, or Bible college. We're searching for a pastor who is passionate about working with all areas/ages of the congregation along with our local community to grow our church. Buckhorn Baptist Church is a Bible based worship, believing the Bible was true yesterday, true today and true always. Congregation focuses on reaching local community, home and missions. Resume deadline October 20, 2016. Include statement of faith, personal testimony and audio or visual of recent sermon. Mail to: Buckhorn Baptist Church Pastor Search Team, c/o Pam Carr, 448 Buckhorn Church Road, Como, NC 27818.

First Baptist Church, located in downtown Tallahassee, Florida, is seeking God's guidance for a **full-time Senior Pastor**. We are a Bible focused congregation that desires a dynamic preacher/teacher who can preach the gospel of Jesus Christ, possesses a deep and personal prayer life, has a strong focus on evangelism and can pastor a diverse congregation. Candidates should have a minimum of a masters of divinity and a doctorate is preferred. For more information on our church, please refer to www.fbctlh.org/pastorsearch. Interested candidates or referrals should submit a cover letter and resume to pastorsearch@fbctlh.org or to the Pastor Search Committee, First Baptist Church, P.O. Box 710, Tallahassee, FL 32302. Review of resumes and cover letters will begin September 2, 2016.

First Baptist Church of Wadesboro, NC (SBC Affiliated) is seeking a **Full-Time Pastor**. Our goal is to reach people for Christ through Prayer, Worship and Missions. We are seeking an energetic Pastor to lead us as we share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Submit resume to FBC Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 423, Wadesboro, NC 28170. Visit fbcwadesboro.org.

Church Staff

FBC Highland, NC, seeks **part-time Director of Music**, salary DOE. Musical training and experience required. Resumes and references may be sent to Search Committee, FBC Highlands, PO Box 101, Highlands, NC 28741, or email info@fbchighland.org; 828-526-0745.

Friendship Baptist Church, Hudson, NC, is seeking a motivated and energetic, **FT Youth/Children Minister**. This individual will lead our youth in community outreach, utilizing faith-based evangelism to empower students, parents, and volunteers. Some education and/or experience preferred. Email resumes to: resumes@friendshipbaptisthudson.org.

Student Pastor (Full Time), Pole Creek Baptist Church Candler, NC. Bachelor's degree preferred. If interested please submit resume by email to ben@polecreek.org; www.polecreek.org.

Pilot Baptist Church, NC 39 Hwy S, Zebulon, NC, is seeking three part-time positions, **Musical Director, Youth Director** and **Children/Education Director**. Resumes and references may be sent to Search Committee, PBC, 8103 NC 39 Hwy S, Zebulon, NC 27597, or faxed to 919-269-8317 (call 919-269-8366 before faxing). For more info about PBC, see our website: www.pilotbaptist.com.

Lawndale Baptist Church, Greensboro, NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Students**. The successful candidate will have a minimum of a master's degree in religious or Christian ministries and have ministry experience in a local church setting. The primary area of responsibility will be with middle and high school students. Full benefits package included. If interested, please send resume, cover letter and references to jthomas@lawnalebaptist.org or employment@lawndalebaptist.org.

Trinity Baptist Church, Trinity, NC, seeks **Part-time Worship Leader/Music Director**. This individual would be responsible for planning and leading worship services, conducting adult choir rehearsals, leading children's choir, as well as oversee the overall music ministry of the church. Related experience helpful. Applicants should send letter of interest, resume and references to bbenfi6193@aol.com, Attention Personnel Ministry by September 30, 2016.

ORGANIST. First UMC, Myrtle Beach, SC. Part-time position includes weekly rehearsals & services. Degree in piano/organ performance or equivalent training/experience together with demonstrated technical abilities. Salary dependent upon education/experience. Interested parties, contact Ron Carpenter, Church Administrator at 843-448-7164 or rcarpenter@fumcmb.org.

BRnow.org

Calvary Baptist Church in McLeansville, N.C., is seeking a **full-time Student Minister**. This individual will be responsible to disciple middle and high school students and provide oversight in all student ministries in the church and community. You can learn more about our church at calvarymcleansville.com. If interested, please send resumes to office@calvarymcleansville.com.

Denomination

Woman's Missionary Union of NC seeks a **Camp Mundo Vista Year-Round Program/Summer Camp Director**. Must have a passion for camp ministry and willing to work with all ages. Skills required; strong written and oral communication, ability to motivate and network, budget management, staff supervision, technology proficiency. Advanced degree preferred. Send resume with cover letter: judyjohn@bellsouth.net or mail to Judy Pettigrew, WMU NC, PO Box 18309, Raleigh, NC 27619-8309. Deadline: September 30, 2016.

Miscellaneous

NCBAM needs servant volunteers who like to mow, trim, rake, and bless others. Help aging adults enjoy quality life in their own backyards. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

For Sale: Christian themed magazine. Owner retiring. Nets \$47K, Part-time, No experience necessary. Clients established; Will train. \$24,900.00. Please call 828-633-6382.

Bluegrass/Southern Gospel Music Strings of Victory is a well established regional Gospel Group. Old standards, original songs. Authentic, acoustic style. Our latest CD, The Price of Freedom is a tribute to veterans with a Gospel message. Worship service, festival or event. Stringsofvictory.com. Contact Jeff: 704-213-9091; jeff@stringsofvictory.com.

Fancy Finds upscale resale store opens August 19-20 at Mills Home, 201-E Idol Street, Thomasville, NC 27360. The store offers vintage and repurposed furniture and home decor. Proceeds benefit Baptist Children's Homes. More information: www.fancyfinds.org; 704-909-8223.

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COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

All resolutions should be submitted in writing for consideration by the committee no later than **Sept. 8, 2016.**

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

Placing a classified ad in the Biblical Recorder

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Southern Baptists deploy kitchens to south Louisiana

By JOE CONWAY | Baptist Press

The death toll in south Louisiana's unprecedented flooding has risen to 13, and at least 40,000 homes have been damaged or destroyed. In response, Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBDR) is deploying volunteers, equipment and resources to the affected area, including four kitchens in Baton Rouge, Hammond, Lafayette and Walker.

The American Red Cross has requested four kitchens which each have capacity of 10,000 meals per day. All four SBDR teams deploying have twice that capacity. Additional support is expected given the scope of the disaster and the long-term nature of the relief work to be accomplished.

"The spring floods in Louisiana this year affected 10,000 homes, and the response duration was 80-90 days," said David Melber, vice president for Send Relief at the North American Mission Board (NAMB). "Currently we are estimating as many 50,000 affected homes and a much longer response."

The four kitchens will be staffed by SBDR volunteers from Louisiana, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. Alabama SBDR, like many states, is preparing for the response and will be sending volunteers and at least one shower unit.

North Carolina Baptist Men (also known as Baptists on Mission) is sending three teams with more planned for the coming weeks.

"We have multiple states getting mobilized at this point," Melber said. "The four key meal preparation areas will be located at Baptist churches, including Istrouma Baptist Church in Baton Rouge, Woodlawn Park Baptist Church in Hammond, [The] Bayou Church in Lafayette and Walker Baptist Church in Walker. Additionally, we have 16 other Baptist churches set up as defined worksites."

First Baptist Church in Livingston

will host the Incident Command Center. Louisiana Baptist Convention state SBDR director Gibbie McMillan is directing the state's response. Arkansas SBDR is providing an Incident Command team to help coordinate relief efforts.

"Eddie Blackmon from NAMB's SBDR team is already at the American Red Cross headquarters in Baton Rouge," said Mickey Caison, executive director for SBDR at NAMB. "There were reports of 280 road closures and some rescues still occurring yesterday. This is going to be a long-term response, and the water has yet to recede."

Caison said some south Louisiana residents have compared the magnitude and scope of the devastation to Hurricane Katrina. He said he expects the long-term nature of the rebuild to take years.

"We are, of course, still serving in West Virginia, and there are 5,000 homes to restore there," Caison said. "This is a marathon, not a sprint. The amount and type of responses we have already experienced this year have been taxing on disaster relief funds. People have been generous, but we will need a tremendous amount of support to address the recovery in south Louisiana."

"Almost immediately starting tomorrow, we will be bringing our Emergency Response Vehicles (ERV), our ERVs, will start going into neighborhoods and distributing food and will continue that for a long time," Craig Cooper told Lake Charles' KPLC TV on Aug. 17. Cooper is coordinating the American Red Cross response in Baton Rouge.

"One of our partners is the Southern Baptists," Cooper said. "If you remember, after Katrina, Ike and other disasters, the Southern Baptists are contracted to set up these massive mobile kitchens. They are four or five semi-trucks, and they pop up like a kid's Transformer toy and produce the food that will feed a very large crowd."

Melber and Caison were in Louisiana last week for a site visit as SBDR volun-



Southern Baptist Disaster Relief volunteer Ron Monson loads supplies that will aid flood survivors in Louisiana onto a truck at the North American Mission Board warehouse. Some south Louisiana residents have compared the magnitude and scope of the flood devastation to Hurricane Katrina. Rebuild is expected to take years. Monson is a member of First Baptist Church in Cumming, Ga. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

teers begin the task of assessment. The four kitchens are expected to be operational by Aug. 18.

Those wishing to donate to disaster relief can visit baptistsonmission.org/louisianaflood. NAMB coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major

disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state Disaster Relief ministries.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Joe Conway writes for the North American Mission Board. BR staff contributed to this report.) **BR**

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