

STUDENTS CHALLENGED TO
KNOW GOD & MAKE HIM KNOWN



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BAPTIST YOUTH
SEND MILLIONTH
MEAL TO HAITI

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AUGUST 30, 2014 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 180 NO. 18 • **BRnow.org**

About every three days North Carolina Baptists launch a new church in the state. Church planting is one of the ways to strategically reach an estimated 5.8 million lost people in N.C. with the gospel of Jesus Christ. An essential ingredient for this outreach is the annual North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO).

September is the focal month for North Carolina Baptists to give to the NCMO, a special offering that supports mission and ministry initiatives including Baptists on Mission (BOM) – also known as N.C. Baptist Men – church planting, mission camps, associational projects and mobilization ministry projects.

Brian Davis, associate executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), said, “I hope North Carolina Baptists recognize that the NCMO is not an optional offering, but an essential source of support for church planting in our state. While the vast majority of church planting funds come from the Cooperative Program, and a smaller portion comes from the North American Mission Board, the NCMO provides the additional funds necessary to help church planters impact lostness through disciple-making in our state.”

North Carolina Baptists help start more than 100 new churches each year, two-thirds of them reaching many new language and culture groups. NCMO provides about a third (28 percent) of the church planting team’s budget each year. More than 4,500 people made decisions to follow Christ in these new churches last year.

In 2013, there were more than 117 churches planted in North Carolina. Between 2008 and 2013 the BSC has helped start more than 715 new churches. The convention’s team of church planting consultants provides training, coaching and additional support to church planters like Joshua Gilliam.

Gilliam is missionary pastor of La Mision in Concord, a church plant started in 2011 under Crosspointe Baptist Church in Concord.

Through the support of Pastor Leon Hawks of Crosspointe and others, Gilliam launched core groups and they meet at the facilities of Kerr United Methodist

NCMO: GIVING SO THAT OTHERS MAY SERVE

By **MICHAEL MCEWEN** | BR Content Editor

North Carolina
MISSIONS
Offering

See NCMO page 5

(NCMO promotional material)

Naghmeh Abedini: We pray to see God move

By **MICHAEL MCEWEN** | BR Content Editor

In January, Saeed Abedini faced deteriorating medical conditions while detained in one of the deadliest prisons in Iran, Rajai Shahr Prison. Jordan Sekulow, executive director of the American Center for Law and Justice (ACLIJ), warned that while the political prisoner ward should be safer for Abedini than the murderer ward, authorities have placed two violent criminals in the political ward who “consistently threaten any semblance of peace.”

Since Saeed’s transfer, the threats have not ceased. With the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in early June, the ACLIJ reported that Saeed had received death threats from ISIS terrorists in the same prison.

Saeed told family members that he is being held in the same ward as members of ISIS – the Sunni extremist group that has murdered Christians and other religious minorities in its conquest of Iraq and Syria.

Naghmeh Abedini – Saeed’s wife – and their children have not been allowed to speak with Saeed since he was arrested but have communicated through his

See Abedini page 6



Naghmeh Abedini has requested believers to join together to pray for her husband, Saeed, as well as the persecuted church. There are several North Carolina locations to join in prayer. (BP photo)

Revival is like judgment day

Do we really want to see genuine revival come to America and the world? Are we desperately hungry for a great spiritual awakening today?

J. Edwin Orr is likely the greatest scholar, teacher and proponent of spiritual awakening in the past century. I sat spellbound at the feet of this great man in Spilman Auditorium at Ridgecrest Conference Center in 1987. It turned out to be his last message. The next morning he died from heart disease.

From this final sermon I still remember his powerful words, “Revival is like judgment day.”

When revival comes, conviction exposes all that we have been ashamed to admit. Our pride, our greed, our lust, our fears, our secret sin – everything that identifies the ‘real me’ stares us in the face as though the dreaded day of judgment has arrived.

Indeed it has. The masks are stripped off. The game of religious charades is over. Pretentious habits that were designed to build religious admiration from my peers are gone. Revival is like judgment day because in the experience of real revival, raw honesty wins and sincere confession flows like a mighty river.

Students of the world’s great revivals have reminded us that North America has not seen a great revival movement in more than 100 years.

Fires of localized revivals showed up in the early 1970s through the “Jesus Movement” when large numbers of “hippies” came to Christ. Theirs was a radical transformation out of the drug culture. They were welcomed by some churches and shunned or completely rejected by other Christian groups.

At the same time a spontaneous movement began in 1970 in the 10 a.m. chapel service at Asbury College in Wilmore, Ky. Without planning or warning, all heaven broke loose. The typical chapel service was scheduled for 50 minutes.

This one lasted 185 hours non-stop. It continued intermittently for months. From a human perspective it was an unplanned, unled display of fervor on a smaller scale than the Great Awakenings of 1740 and 1800.

The protracted gathering was characterized by brokenness, repentance and confession. Its impact was so profound that many students were motivated to travel to other colleges and seminaries to tell the story of revival.

News spread in newspapers, on television and by word of mouth. Social

media was not available at that time. Strangers flocked to Wilmore to worship with the students. Asbury officials dismissed classes. Within a few days revival broke out at the seminary across the street from the college.



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

For less than a year, it spread like small brush fires across the United States and into a few foreign countries. Because of the many who came to Christ or called into ministry, some say its impact is still felt today.

If you are not familiar with the Asbury story, read Robert Coleman’s description of the revival in his book, *One Divine Moment*.

The need for a great spiritual awakening in 2014 is more than obvious. An American culture once saturated with Christian influence is spiritually empty.

Biblical values are not respected by the large number of secularists who dominate the worlds of politics, business, entertainment and media. Churches and Christian leaders have drifted from biblical orthodoxy, embracing popular opinions at the expense of eternal truth.

Internationally, evil aggressively taunts us, daring us to engage in battle. Like Goliath in scripture, the threats are larger than life. Fear, war, disease and financial collapse are not artificial threats.

So, what is our motivation for wanting a revival? Maybe we want a culture that is less stressful, more comfortable and less challenging. Maybe we want to go back to the good ol’ days when everyone attended our churches for the same reason they joined the country club.

I don’t believe God has any interest in our comfort.

He has not given us a gospel of prosperity and popularity. Historically, great revivals have never broken out in the context of prosperity. They have flourished most through times of persecution.

The reign of lukewarmness in our churches is a deterrent to the Holy Spirit’s movement. When He shows up among God’s people in scripture, it is usually demonstrated by fire and radically changed lives.

Calls for revival typically take us to 2 Chronicles 7:14. That’s a great prescription for revival.

But here is one we may not have considered. “*Do all things without murmuring and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*” Philippians 2:14-15.

Ours is certainly a crooked and perverse generation. Does this generation



see models of God’s holy character when they look at us? Are we shining as lights of truth in this dark world? Or do lost people see Christians who gripe, complain and argue about everything just as they do?

Ronnie Floyd, president of the Southern Baptist Convention, launched his first presidential press conference in June with a call for the kind of prayer that leads to spiritual awakening.

He said, “A great awakening is a season in time when unprecedented numbers of people come to Christ in a region or all over the country. It has been over 100 years since the last great move of God in our land. We need another Great Awakening. We must pray for it daily.”

Another step in Floyd’s passionate plea was launched in August with the call, “Join the Movement.” His website (ronniefloyd.com/join-the-movement) includes this invitation, “Would you please JOIN THE MOVEMENT to pray with thousands of others for spiritual awakening in America? This is serious and we need your participation.”

There is another movement of prayer you should know about. Chris Schofield, director of the office of prayer for the Baptist State Convention of N.C. is leading a 30-day emphasis on prayer for the month of October. Learn more and sign up for your “Greater things prayer prompts” on the convention’s annual

meeting website (ncannualmeeting.org/pray).

Also, plan to attend one of the prayer conferences this office sponsors.

When revival comes, it will be about God’s glory, not our comfort.

A spiritual awakening will produce humble believers who are grateful for the powerful grace of God in the forgiveness of sin.

Respond to Floyd’s call to pray. Participate in Schofield’s 30 days of prayer. Turn your deacon meetings and committee meetings into prayer meetings. Transform your church’s Wednesday prayer meetings into a powerful ‘house of prayer’ gathering. Pray for spiritual awakening in your personal devotional or quiet time. We must do something! **BR**

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LifeWay explores sale of 14.5-acre Nashville property

By SHAWN HENDRICKS | Baptist Press

LifeWay Christian Resources is exploring opportunities to better utilize its downtown Nashville corporate offices, which could mean the sale of some – or all – of the 14.5-acre property, Thom Rainer said in a letter to the organization's staff.

LifeWay is working with a consulting firm to study the advantages and disadvantages of a possible sale, said Rainer, LifeWay's president and CEO. About 1,100 of LifeWay's employees work in the downtown corporate offices. The organization also oversees 186 stores and 4,300 employees in 29 states.

Acknowledging that LifeWay has been located in the Music City for more than 120 years, Rainer cited demand for property in the downtown area and fewer employees now working at its corporate offices as reasons for studying a possible sale.

"... It would be poor stewardship for the organization not to explore the possibilities this situation could present for our ministry," Rainer, said in the Aug. 1 letter.

LifeWay, he said, could sell only a portion of its property. Or, it could sell all of its downtown campus and move outside

the city, either into existing facilities or begin new construction. Rainer described the possibility of moving outside of middle Tennessee as "remote."

"... My preference is that we stay in downtown Nashville," Rainer said.

He noted the study is in its "very beginning stages."

"I assure you absolutely no decisions have been made, other than our commitment to use all the resources the Lord has provided us to make the maximum impact on churches and the kingdom, now and in the future," he said.

In the letter, Rainer addressed changes in the publishing industry and why more of LifeWay's employees now work outside of Nashville than at its corporate offices.

"Our needs have changed," he said. "We no longer print and package our resources on the first floor of the Operations Building and then put them on a conveyor belt running under Broadway to the U.S. Post Office."

"That post office building is now an art center, our printing is done all over the country, our assembly and shipping is centered in new facilities in Lebanon, [Tenn.], and [the Operations Building] sits mostly empty. We have been unable to even lease the space."

While LifeWay leases unused office space in its Frost Building along with the adjacent parking lot, Rainer said, hundreds of offices on its campus remain vacant. LifeWay spokesman Marty King estimated nearly one third of the facility is vacant or leased.

King declined to speculate about the value of the property. *The Tennessean* estimated the value at "more than \$80 million."

Rainer said, "We have a lot of history here, and a lot invested in our property... But, times change. The needs of our customers change. So, LifeWay changes."

It could take several months or longer before a recommendation is made to LifeWay's trustees, Rainer noted.

"But, we might decide not to do anything at this time," he said. "There are so many factors to consider, we simply don't know what the final outcome will be or even what some of the alternatives might be." **BR**



LifeWay Christian Resources is exploring opportunities to better utilize its downtown Nashville corporate offices, which could mean the sale of some – or all – of the 14.5-acre property. *The Tennessean* estimated the property value at "more than \$80 million." (LifeWay photo)

SEBTS professors, student appointed ERLC research fellows

SEBTS Communications

The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) of the Southern Baptist Convention named seven Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) faculty members and one student as fellows for the new Research Institute.

Daniel Akin, Bruce Ashford, Nathan Finn, Daniel Heimbach, David Jones, Mark Liederbach, Devin Maddox and Walter Strickland will "assist the ERLC in its mission by producing a variety of materials to equip Southern Baptists and churches to engage ethical and cultural issues of the day."

Russell Moore, president of the ERLC, said, "The aim of the Research Institute is to be a catalyst to connect the agenda of the gospel to the complex questions of the day – and to do so at the highest levels of academic scholarship for the good of local congregations."

"I am thrilled to get to work together with an exceptionally gifted band of scholars and leaders as we seek to be a persuasive, prophetic witness engaging the academy and equipping the church," Moore emphasized.

David Jones, associate professor of Christian ethics at SEBTS, said, "Being named an ERLC research fellow in Christian ethics is both a blessing and a stewardship."

"It's a blessing in that you get a chance to work with some of the best

moral minds in the country on the cutting edge ethical issues of our day," he explained. "It's a stewardship in that you are responsible for giving counsel to denominational and evangelical leaders on the most pressing moral problems in the culture. I am honored and thankful for the opportunity to serve the church in this way."

Nathan Finn, associate professor of historical theology and Baptist studies, added, "I am honored to join with several of my colleagues in working with the ERLC's relaunched Research Institute."

"Russell Moore and his team are doing such a fine job helping Southern Baptists to engage our culture with both conviction and civility. I'm thankful for this chance to partner with the ERLC in this strategic ministry."

There are varying levels of fellows for the institute – senior research, research, associate research and research fellows in Christian ethics.

Akin is listed as a senior research fellow while Liederbach, Jones and Heimbach are research fellows in Christian ethics. Ashford is a research fellow and Strickland is an associate research fellow along with SEBTS doctoral student Maddox, who also works for B&H Publishing.

Former ERLC leader Richard Land is also a senior research fellow. He is president of the Southern Evangelical Seminary in Charlotte.

Visit <http://erlc.com/institute>. **BR**



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Psalm 63:1

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Moldova, Dublin FBC partnership yields teenage visitor

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

When Dublin First Baptist Church signed up for an international partnership in January 2013, they did not expect it would include a teenage girl from Moldova spending her summer with them. But Tabitha Mesina left her small, southern Moldova village of Vadul Lui Isac in June for nine weeks of ministry in Dublin, N.C.

The 18-year-old is a talented, rising high school senior who speaks French, English, Italian, Romanian and Russian. She wants to serve God in missions.

"I want to do what God wants me to do," Mesina said. "Before I came here, I asked God to show me how He wants to use me. Every sermon that I hear is about missions ... about going and telling people about God. It is like a confirmation that I should do missions."

Cameron McGill, pastor of the Dublin church, said, "There are amazing similarities between Tabitha's home church in Moldova and Dublin First Baptist. Both are in small towns, both have a lot of young people, and in both cases the churches are a big part of their communities."

Mesina met Cameron and Tiffany McGill last November when they visited her church. Her pastor, Andre Ciobanu, visited Dublin last year.

"Bringing a teenager to America for the summer is not something we thought we would have done," McGill said. "We spent a week in their village, and we really connected with Tabitha and her family. They are a very devout family - her dad is a deacon, mom sings in the choir, her brother and sister are active in the church. They are the epitome of a church family."

Mission teams are strongly advised against inviting Moldovan nationals to come to America. Many nationals live in deep poverty and believe life in America is glamorous. "But much of what they have in the village, to me, is far more precious," McGill said. "I preached a sermon in the village and said, 'if you ever get what you think is valuable, you may discover it is not worth what you

thought.' I illustrated it by explaining that a racing dog's career is over if he ever catches the rabbit, because he will realize that what he was chasing wasn't worth it."

But they invited Mesina to work with the youth in Dublin for the summer. When her parents agreed, they began a five-month process of praying, completing online forms and waiting for a response from the United States Embassy.

"It is difficult to come from Moldova to here," Mesina said. The embassy is reluctant to grant visas since there is a strong attraction for Moldovans to stay in the states.

"We pretty much felt like it was a long shot," McGill said.

She was assigned an interview at the embassy in the capital city of Chisinau on May 14.

"I was very nervous," Mesina said. "There are two people who do the interviews at the embassy. There is a lady and a man. I was praying that I could talk to the lady, because I thought it would be easier to talk to her. I heard that most of the people who talk to the lady usually got [approved for] the visa, but those who talked to the man did not really get a positive answer. So, I prayed God would send me to the lady, but He didn't. He sent me to the man."

She explained to the agent that her church has a partnership with the church in North Carolina, that a team from Dublin visited their church in November, and that a team will be coming again for Christmas this year.

"He listened to me, and he asked me what I am going to do in North Carolina," Mesina explained. "I showed him the invitation I have from pastor Cameron. My pastor wrote a letter to the embassy to say that I am a member of the church, and he will guarantee that I will come back to Moldova after the summer."

The American agent listened and responded. "I will give you the visa. I am a believer, too, and I trust you to do exactly what you said."

Mesina was surprised. "I was praying before I had the interview, that if it was God's plan for me to come to Dublin, He will make it happen."



TABITHA MESINA

Her summer experience was not limited to Dublin. Mesina worked at the church's youth camp in the N.C. mountains, sang in many services, shared her testimony in several events and participated in the church's New York partnership for a week.

McGill said Baptist leaders in New York were "amazed at how Tabitha reached out to people in N.Y. She's pretty quiet around us, but if there is somebody of another language or they look like they are not fitting in, that's who she gravi-

tates toward."

Her favorite part of the trip was working with children in Vacation Bible School events in Brooklyn and Queens. Mesina confessed that she was taken aback by some of the extroverted expressions of people in N.Y., especially in the subway and the open displays of homosexuality.

"That was the first time that I saw that. In our country you don't see that. So that was not a nice experience," she said. "In my country you are not really free to express whatever you think. Some things are forbidden."

Mesina loves her homeland, but is open to serving in another country. "I am happy that I was born in Moldova. That country, my family and my church helped me to be the person I am today. God has put many amazing things in my life. But, I would like to go to another country if that is what God wants me to do."

McGill is pleased that his church got involved with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's office of Great Commission partnerships. "I want to encourage pastors to not be scared of missions," he said. "It's not going to hurt your church - it's going to strengthen your church, and it's going to strengthen your walk with the Lord." **BR**

Is your worship precious?

I recently had opportunity to worship in another country - one that does not have the freedom that we currently enjoy.

Every time I have been blessed to lead worship or participate in worship in these closed countries, I am amazed at the passion and fervor of their times of worship.

After returning from such a trip in 2009, our missions team was leading worship in our U.S. church that Sunday morning.

The mother of one of our teenage team members commented on how good worship was that morning. He quickly corrected her, pointing out that worship is not precious among our people like it is in countries where it is forbidden. He perceived a real difference in the environment and passion of worship in the U.S.

I am afraid we take our times of cor-

porate worship for granted - just going through the motions of worship.

Jesus talked about going through the motions of worship without any heart in Matthew 15:8-9:

*These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.
They worship me in vain;
their teachings are but rules taught
by men*

Do you enter times of corporate worship overflowing from a lifestyle of personal worship, ready to join with fellow believers to meet with God? Do you come expecting

an encounter with the Almighty?

This week, let us resolve to make worship a precious jewel in our lives.

(EDITOR'S NOTE - Kenny Lamm is a consultant for worship and music with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact him at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5638, or klamm@ncbaptist.org. Visit his blog at renewingworshipnc.org.)



KENNY LAMM

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NCMO

Continued from page 1

Church. La Mision does this to better reach the communities in that area. After approximately 10 months, the church noticed the need to minister to the children at their location.

“In partnership with the congregation of Kerr UMC we began a children’s ministry with the assistance of Roger Gadd, a proven children’s minister,” Gilliam said. “During the children’s time we began to meet with the parents in a Spanish Language Bible study.”

Starting with a small group of 10, the group has blossomed to 120 through the church’s three services.

Recently, La Mision had a backpack drive to meet the needs of local residents. With the help of churches from six different denominations, Gilliam said, “We fed 400 people and gave out 290 backpacks.”

“This was an event where we saw that even though we are from different denominations, backgrounds and styles of worship, as the body of Christ we can meet people with the gospel message.”

La Mision has witnessed Christ at work over the last 20 months. Sixty-four individuals have professed faith in Jesus and 21 were baptized.

Davis said that the NCMO also helps

North Carolina Baptists engage lostness in some of the most impoverished communities in the state.

Davis added, “Your generous gifts to the NCMO provide resources that help volunteers working at Red Springs address sub-standard housing, hunger and meet many other needs in the surrounding communities.”

Larry and Teresa Osborne lead Red Springs Mission Camp in Red Springs. They perform numerous tasks such as large and small maintenance of the camp, community outreach and daily preparation of meals.

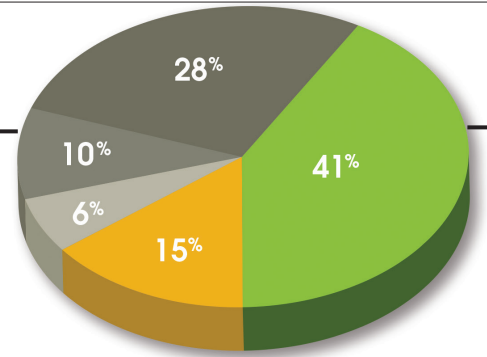
“We cook anywhere from three to four meals a day, and that’s where Teresa comes in. We try to make them feel at home when they come,” said Larry Osborne.

The camp’s volunteers “do more than simply repair leaking roofs and distribute food, they are sharing the Living Water and the Bread of Life with those they serve,” Davis said.

Several groups of ladies come every year to spend a few days baking cakes, pies and cookies to take to nursing homes, hospital waiting rooms and local fire and police departments.

Red Springs and Shelby Mission Camp

2014 GOAL \$2.1 million



■ North Carolina Baptist Men	\$ 856,720
■ Church Planting	\$ 596,000
■ Mission Camps	\$ 313,080
■ Associational Projects	\$ 210,000
■ Mobilization Ministry Projects	\$ 124,200

in Shelby are directed by BOM. Fifteen percent of the 2014 NCMO is allocated to these two camps. Volunteers at these camps engage in a number of mission projects in the surrounding communities and counties.

The Osbornes’ ministry expands far beyond the three square miles of Red Springs. They also serve Bladen, Cumberland, Hoke, Robeson and Scotland counties.

“It’s a huge area to cover,” Osborne said. “Our hearts are the people we serve. We want to build relationships with the people we are ministering to.”

He tells the project teams to take a one-day project and turn them into three-day projects so they can get to know the individuals they’re helping.

Osborne expressed his deep gratitude for being a part of the work N.C. Baptists are doing through NCMO.

His wife added, “I always urge people to come and see what we’re doing. ... We try to accommodate churches that want to work with children or want to work with women’s ministry or other ministries. People may have a hard time seeing how their gifts impact communities, but we see it every day.”

The 2014 theme for NCMO is “Choose Now.”

The largest portion of the offering’s

\$2.1 million goal supports BOM. The second largest sum supports church planting. Every dollar given to the offering impacts lostness in the state.

Richard Brunson, executive director of Baptists on Mission, noted that all of the ministries, partnerships and projects of BOM get their budget from NCMO.

Every year, one of BOM’s primary ministries is disaster relief. After disasters hit particular areas, disaster relief volunteers provide organization, equipment and strategy for affected individuals and families to help rebuild their lives and homes.

Brunson said, “Every week, hundreds of men, women and students are using their hands to share Christ with a lost and hurting world. ... [NCMO] is a vital offering for everything from mission camps to mission partnerships, from disaster relief to medical missions, from agriculture to aviation, from places of hurting to places of healing and hope. The NCMO enables thousands of N.C. Baptists to be missionaries for Christ.”

To learn more about NCMO, visit ncmissionsoffering.org. Learn more about North Carolina church planting, visit ncbaptist.org/churchplanting; and to schedule a visit or learn more about Red Springs Mission Camp, go to facebook.com/RedSprings or call (910) 843-7700. **BR**



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Cutting-edge ideas mark event for collegiate leaders

The Collegiate Partnerships Team of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) is holding a new conference for both seasoned and emerging collegiate leaders. Jonathan Yarboro, Western Region Consultant for Collegiate Partnerships said, “We came up with something N.C. Baptists have never seen before. Over a 24-hour timeframe, we are going to have seven collegiate ministry practitioners – all of whom use different models of ministry and don’t necessarily agree with each other – present their big idea for ministry in a mere 15 minutes.”

After the presentations the microphone will be handed to the audience to ask hard, probing questions. Yarboro described Converge365 as “a fast-paced, unfiltered event built around cutting-edge ideas for collegiate ministry.” There will be no music and no preaching. It is designed to be “a consortium of leaders from every collegiate context imaginable sharpening and challenging each other, all for the sake of engaging collegiate communities more effectively.”

The shift in collegiate strategy for N.C. Baptists has been a reversal of ownership and support. For decades, the BSC employed professional campus ministers at select schools across the state and asked the local churches to support the ministry of the BSC.

In the new strategy, local churches are engaged in contextualized ministry utilizing multiple models, while the BSC supports the work of the churches.

“The bumps in the transition are largely due to a lack of training,” Yarboro said. “Churches aren’t aware of alternative collegiate ministry models and just haven’t done it before. Converge365 is about changing that.”

The conference features many leaders including Brian Frye, National Collegiate Strategist for NAMB; Stephen Wagoner, lead pastor of Church of the Triad in Greensboro; Kelton Hinton, director of missions, Johnston Baptist Association; Gene Parr, Morehead State University in Kentucky; Joy Turner, Baptist University of Oklahoma; Josh Hyde, lead pastor of Campus Church at Western Carolina in Sylva; Reggie Hunt, pastor of Cornerstone Summit in Boone and Appalachian State University football chaplain; Frank White, BSC staff; Rick Hughes, BSC staff; Faith Beam, Campbell University; and Seth Norris, pastor of Perkinsville Baptist Church in Boone.

The event is set for Sept. 26-27 at N.C. Central University. The cost is \$50. Teams who register three persons will receive a fourth registration free. The conference will be limited to the first 180 people who register. Register at ncbaptist.org/converge or call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5536. **BR**

N.C. pastor to serve in Dubai

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

Jon and Pam Estes are leaving Jackson Park Baptist Church in Kannapolis for a unique international ministry assignment. For the last seven-and-a-half years he has served as pastor of the Jackson Park congregation.

On Sept. 1 they are moving to the United Arab Emirates where he will become the pastor of Emirates Baptist Church International in Dubai.

“Dubai is a city known for its opulence and beauty, but is also filled with lostness,” Estes said.

Most of Dubai’s 2.1 million people are not from the city – 85 percent are expatriates.

“When we visited the city and the church, we discovered that God was answering our prayer of reaching the nations.”

He has participated in 39 domestic and international mission trips in 35 years of ministry.

Pastoring churches in Greensboro, Roxboro, El Paso, Texas, Johnstown, Pa., and Nigeria has been fulfilling according to Estes.

Leading LifeWay’s FAITH Sunday School Evangelism clinics for eight years was also a joyful time in his ministry.

“We have always wanted to reach the nations for Christ, but never understood how God was going to do this, or if He would,” Estes said.



JON ESTES

“I have made contact with different international ministries and nothing ever opened.

Earlier this year, I sent my resume in response to an ad for a pastor. It was in a geographical area I knew little about, and never thought about it being a place to serve.

“My first thoughts about United Arab Emirates were that I would not be reaching the nations. I was wrong.

“United Arab Emirates, specifically Dubai, is said to have 95 percent of the world’s nations within its borders.”

Estes is confident that God has called him and his wife to serve in Dubai.

“Each church I have pastored has brought me joy.

... As this new path on our journey began to present itself, I knew God had so much more for me to experience, and I knew it would be different. ... We know that He will continue to change us, and that He wants us to experience Him in greater and deeper ways.”

Jon and Pam Estes are leaving two married sons and six grandchildren.

He is a graduate of Dallas Baptist University and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. In addition to Jackson Park, he served as pastor of Highview Baptist Church in Roxboro and Rocky Knoll Baptist Church in Greensboro.

His father, Robert Estes, was also a Baptist pastor in the state. **BR**

NEWS IN BRIEF

Bibles are back in Navy lodges

(RNS) In June, the U.S. Navy ordered housekeepers at thousands of Navy-owned guest lodges near U.S. and international bases to remove the Bibles and any other “religious materials” from their rooms. Scriptures would remain available on request. But public outcry, prompted this week by a social media alert from the American Family Association and protests by the Chaplain Alliance for Religious Liberty, led the brass to reverse course Aug. 15. Full story online at BRnow.org.

Farm owners fined declining lesbian wedding

(RNS) Christian farm owners, Cynthia and Robert Gifford, in upstate New York declined a lesbian couple’s request to hold a wedding ceremony on their property, Liberty Ridge Farm, have been fined \$10,000 and ordered to pay the women \$1,500 each. When Jennifer McCarthy and Melisa Erwin, a same-sex couple from Newark, N.J., requested to use the facility for their 2012 wedding, Cynthia Gifford offered the farm for a reception, but not for the wedding ceremony. The farm case represents the most recent legal challenge to private businesses that provide services for weddings but refuse service to same-sex couples. Pennsylvania started allowing same-sex marriage in May after a federal judge struck down a ban on gay marriage in the state constitution. Full story online at BRnow.org.

Abedini Continued from page 1

family in Iran, who are permitted to visit him.

Those family members said Saeed has been told through other prisoners that the ISIS inmates intend to murder him because of his Christian faith.

Naghmeh has invited Christians to join her by participating in prayer vigils across the world on Sept. 26 – the anniversary of Saeed’s imprisonment.

In a promotional video for the vigil, Naghmeh said, “I am doing a prayer vigil on this day to remember pastor Saeed and others who are in prison for Christ, but also as a chance to come together as the Body of Christ and to see the move of God as we pray together.”

Saeed Abedini is a U.S. citizen of Iranian descent, and he was sentenced in early 2013 to eight years in prison for his involvement in Iran’s house church

movement. Saeed used to live in Iran and was a leader of house churches before moving to America in 2005. He was arrested approximately two years ago while on a trip to build an orphanage in the city of Rasht.

Though the Iranian constitution officially recognizes Christianity as a minority religion, Christian converts from Islam have suffered brutal persecution at the hands of Muslim authorities.

Saeed previously expressed that he received great encouragement from knowing that his chains have united the body of Christ in prayer. To join others in praying for him and the persecuted church, go to beheardproject.com/prayer-vigil/saeed.

To register your vigil and receive information on coordinating a vigil, email globalvigil2014@gmail.com. **BR**

Students challenged to know God, make Him known

By C. WALTER OVERMAN | BSC Communications

Every summer, nearly 7,000 youth from across North Carolina attend one of seven summer youth weeks at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell, sponsored by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC).

This year, more than 400 of those students committed their lives to vocational ministry.

“We had 10 to 15 students the first few years I was here respond to God’s call on their lives for vocational ministry,” said Merrie Johnson, BSC youth evangelism and discipleship consultant. “Every year that number just grows and grows. To me, that is just huge.”

Johnson, who has directed youth weeks for 14 summers, said challenging youth to commit to vocational ministry is not an emphasis at youth weeks, but each week students are given the opportunity to respond to that calling if they feel led.

“These kids are responding to the call to be preachers, music ministers, youth ministers. God is working on their hearts,” Johnson said.

She said the primary focus of youth weeks is to challenge students to glorify God with their lives regardless of their career aspirations.

“We want them to understand that God wants a relationship with them that would change the world; that our purpose is to know God and make him known,” Johnson said. “Whether you’re going to be a teacher, lawyer, musician, you are called to give Him glory with your life and use your talents to further the Kingdom.”



Members of the BeDoTell team, from left, Kyle Crouthamel, Hayden Cork, Jeremy Robertson, Henry Felden and Jonathan Waggett, are part of the “Tag: You’re It” theme for Youth Weeks this summer at the North Carolina Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell. This summer’s youth contributed to packing the millionth meal for Haiti. See related story pages 8-9. See photo gallery online at BRnow.org/Photo-Gallery. (BSC photos by Mike Creswell)

Johnson added that many of the youth, in addition to those making commitments to vocational ministry, are growing in their faith as they incorporate what they learn at camp into their daily lives when they return home.

“We are seeing spiritual growth in these students as they learn what it means to live for Christ,” she said. “A lot of students commit to going back home to start prayer groups and evangelistic rallies at school. They are just coming up

BE·DO·TELL

with things God is placing on their hearts to do.”

Youth weeks provide youth opportunities to grow in their faith through times of personal and small group Bible study, supplemented with times of worship that include contemporary Christian music and world-class Christian speakers.

This year’s youth weeks theme was “Tag: You’re It,” based on Joshua 1:9. Each week, students learned how to pray for their lost friends and relatives, how to share and defend their faith and were challenged to be witnesses for Christ every day.

“Anytime you share your faith, it’s a win,” said Adrian Despres, who served as the camp speaker one week this summer.

Despres encouraged the students to remain committed to witnessing even when the fruit of their labor is unseen and to share and defend their faith with Christ-like attitudes. “Most people don’t come to faith the first time they hear the gospel. Just keep sharing it,” he said.

“Share it with kindness and love, that’s how we treat people who do not believe the Bible and Jesus Christ.”

Justin Crouse, youth pastor at Richmond Hill Baptist Church in Booneville, said youth weeks’ mission component and emphasis on spiritual growth has a tremendous impact on students.

“I like youth weeks because it gets the students away from the world’s influence and gets them focused on the Lord,” he said. “When that happens, God can move

in amazing ways, and He has done that this week.”

Crouse, who has been coming to youth weeks for as long as he can remember, said the spiritual change in student’s lives keeps

him coming back.

“Youth weeks is my highlight of the year,” he said. “I wouldn’t trade it for anything.”

A total of 6,573 youth attended youth weeks this summer, representing 264 churches. During the summer, 487 youth made first-time professions of faith in Christ and 3,267 rededicated their lives to Christ. The camps are for rising seventh graders to high school seniors.

Visit www.bedotell.com. **BR**

“Whether you’re going to be a teacher, lawyer, musician, you are called to give Him glory ...”
— Merrie Johnson



Students assemble for worship during Youth Weeks at Fort Caswell.

BEcome a Christian | DO Discipleship | TELL Others About Jesus

BE·DO·TELL



Cup overflows

Baptist youth send millionth meal to Haiti

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

Baptist youth participating in the 2014 Baptist State Convention's summer youth program at Caswell met a major milestone regarding efforts to provide meals in Haiti.

During the closing hours of July 30, participants of Youth Week 7, the last week of summer camp, packaged the one-millionth meal.

This was the fourth summer youth attending the summer camp sessions have packed the meals; they packed 300,000 meals this summer alone. The four-year total came to 1,000,225 meals.

A total of 6,573 young people – more than 1,000 youth and leaders most weeks – attended seven one-week sessions this year during the summer, part of the BeDoTell ministry led by Baptist State Convention of North Carolina staffer, Merrie Johnson.

Campers came from 264 churches.

The summer youth weeks have long been one of the convention's most successful ministries offering blended Bible-based discipleship teaching, personal quiet times, innovative worship/celebration times and contemporary Christian music along with sports, beach activities and other recreation unique to the N.C. Baptist Assembly at

Fort Caswell on Oak Island.

Of the 6,573 attending, 487 professed faith in Christ for the first time and 3,267 rededicated their lives to Christ.

Young people cheered and balloons rained down during the closing Wednesday night worship session of the final week when Johnson told them about the millionth meal.

Buying the food to fill 300,000 packets called for \$75,000 to be raised over the summer through offerings received during the camps, plus several more thousand to ship it to Haiti and pay import fees and other costs, and the total amount raised over the summer came to \$86,066.66.

"Pretty cool to see how much impact it has had," said Russell McBride, a BeDoTell staff member. McBride recently graduated from the University of Tennessee and

is studying at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

In each packing room large posters headed with "Millionth Meal Summer" were autographed by thousands of Baptist youth who helped pack the meals.

Periodically youth leader Doug Bryant of Providence Baptist Church in Hickory, signaled his youth for quiet as they gathered round a box of food they just packed and prayed for those who would receive it.

Along with the printed word, "Hope," each box carried the handwritten words, "Jezi renmen ou" (Jesus loves you) and "priye pou ou" (praying for you).

As Change This World staffers counted off the boxes that afternoon, excitement grew among the packers. "Just 30 boxes to go," one announced. As the final packet and box were packed, Johnson gathered her summer staff around to pose for photos and then to have a prayer. She asked for God to let the Haitians know that, "... yes, You will provide for their physical needs, but also for their spiritual needs."

Johnson said it was four years ago that she began looking for a way to involve youth in some kind of ministry that would both meet physical needs and help the gospel be proclaimed.

Then at a missions conference she heard about a ministry called Change This World, headquartered in Altamonte Springs, Fla., near Orlando, which is based around packing food on location. She talked with the ministry's representatives, telling them, "The only way we'll do it is if God will be honored and the gospel would be presented as well."

Two weeks later, they called her to say an opportunity in Haiti had just been found: the House of Abraham, an



Doug Bryant, left, youth leader with Providence Baptist Church in Hickory, leads his youth team in prayer over meal bags they prepared.



Students form an assembly line, far left, to package meals to go to Jacmel, Haiti, and, above, sign their name to a banner to celebrate this summer's surpassing of the millionth meal to feed starving and malnourished people in Haiti. Center, Ken and Lisa Jones have been bringing youth from Trindale Baptist Church in Trinity for 16 years now to the Youth Weeks held at N.C. Baptist Assembly at Fort Caswell. Ken Jones is associate pastor at Trindale. See photo gallery at BRnow.org/Photo-Gallery. (BSC photos by Mike Creswell)



The BeDoTell team prays over the final box of meals bound for Haiti. This summer, youth filled more than 300,000 packs of food. The four-year total came to 1,000,225 meals.

orphanage in Jacmel, Haiti, a city about three hours from Port-au-Prince. The food will be distributed among 300 orphanages and schools in and around Jacmel.

Change This World staffer Andrew Neal said the organization stresses they do not just distribute food, but want to use food as a way to bring hope and the gospel to

people. He said they work with groups across the country to collect funds, buy food and get it shipped to Haiti, Honduras or Burundi – their three partner countries.

“Food changes everything. It changes opportunities,” Neal said. “Parents who have never sent their kids to school will send them if food is provided,” he said.

Each food packet contains rice, soy, dried vegetables and vitamins, said Cogan Blackmon, a Change This World summer intern from Anderson, Ind.

Because of the food partnership, One of the two summer interns with Change This Word was Murphy Johnson, Merrie Johnson’s son.

Murphy has worked with the summer program for years. He said he concentrated on tracking the numbers of packets and filling the shipping containers.

Often the kids at Caswell at first were less than happy about taking an hour from their week to pack food parcels, Murphy said. But as they learned more about the program through video and talking to staffers like him, their attitudes changed.

“By the end it’s cool to see them with a smile on their face and knowing they’ve done something bigger than themselves,” he said. And the work has not gotten tiresome for him, he said.

That’s partly because he was able to visit Jacmel, Haiti, and see the food packed at Caswell actually given to hungry kids.

During one prayer time, he saw one of the Haitian kids lift his plate of food up to the sky as he gave thanks.

“I’d see kids eat four bites and say they were taking the rest to their mom because she hasn’t eaten in a week. It’s humbling to see how much Americans take for granted,” he said. **BR**

How Brantly survived Ebola: medical care and prayer

By LIZ SZABO | USA Today/Religion News Service

An American doctor treated for Ebola, Kent Brantly, was discharged from Atlanta's Emory University Hospital Aug. 21. Another American aid worker, Nancy Writebol, was discharged Aug. 19.

"God saved my life," said Brantly, looking gaunt, at a press conference Aug. 21, at which the room applauded his appearance. He thanked his medical team and the millions of people around the world praying for his recovery. "Please do not stop praying for the people of West Africa."

Bruce Ribner, medical director of the hospital's infectious disease unit, said Brantly will go to an undisclosed location with his wife and children after the press conference.

Brantly and Writebol, a volunteer with SIM USA, were flown to Emory from West Africa in early August and were treated in the hospital's specialized unit.

Ribner said the hospital performed extensive blood and urine tests on both patients and consulted with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) before deciding the two missionaries were ready to be released. Neither poses any risk to the public, he said. Five doctors and 21 nurses cared for Brantly and Writebol during their stay.

In his statement, Brantly said his family arrived in Liberia last November and he saw his first Ebola patient in June. "We took every precaution to protect ourselves from this dreaded disease," Brantly said.

On July 23, just a few days after sending his family home, however, Brantly said he woke up feeling sick, and soon learned that he was infected.

Writebol chose not to make a statement. However, Brantly related that, as she left her isolation unit, she said, "To God be the glory."

Ribner said he hopes what he and his colleagues learned about treating Ebola can help save other patients in Africa.

While in Liberia, Brantly received a blood transfusion from an Ebola survivor. Both Brantly and Writebol received doses of an experimental drug, called Zmapp, which includes man-made antibodies against Ebola.

Although Zmapp has shown promise in animals, it has not yet been tested in humans. Experts have said it's not possible to conclude that Zmapp cured their disease, although getting good supportive care at Emory, one of the world's best hospitals, likely improved their chances of survival.

"If the question is, 'Did Zmapp do this?' The answer is that we just don't



Dr. Kent Brantly was serving as medical director for the Samaritan's Purse Ebola Consolidated Case Management Center in Monrovia when he tested positive for Ebola. (Samaritan's Purse photo)

know," says Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease. "People who are in much less sophisticated medical care conditions in West Africa are recovering 50 percent of the time."

Without a carefully designed trial – involving a comparison group that doesn't receive the drug – doctors can't make conclusions about how a treatment works. About half of Ebola patients in the current outbreak are surviving without the experimental drug. But a Spanish priest who received Zmapp died, Fauci says.

Three Liberian health workers also received Zmapp. The drug's manufacturer, Mapp Bio-pharmaceutical of San Diego, has said there is no more of the drug left.

According to CNN, two blood tests done over a two-day period had to come back negative for Ebola before Brantly could be discharged. David Writebol, Nancy's husband, was released from quarantine earlier this week. Doctors had

observed him for three weeks, monitoring him for signs of fever. Ebola can have an incubation period of up to 21 days.

People generally aren't considered contagious unless they have symptoms of Ebola, such as fever.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has sent at least 50 staff to West Africa to help contain the epidemic.

"We must re-commit to doing all we can to increase their chances of survival and to stop the spread of Ebola," said CDC director Thomas Frieden in a statement.

"This outbreak is unprecedented, and it's likely to get worse before it gets better. We must respond in unprecedented way to stop the outbreak as soon as possible."

In concluding his statement, Brantly

said he is "glad for any attention my sickness has attracted to the plight of West Africa in the midst of this epidemic. Please continue to pray for Liberia and the people of West Africa, and encourage those in positions of leadership and influ-

ence to do everything possible to bring this Ebola outbreak to an end.

Samaritan's Purse, the Christian humanitarian organization for which Brantly works, released this statement from its president, Franklin Graham, Aug. 21:

"Today I join all of our Samaritan's Purse team around the world in giving thanks to God as we celebrate Dr. Kent Brantly's recovery from Ebola and release from the hospital. Over the past few weeks, I have marveled at Dr. Brantly's courageous spirit as he has fought this horrible virus with the help of the highly competent and caring staff at Emory University Hospital.

"His faithfulness to God and compassion for the people of Africa have been an example to us all.

"I know that Dr. Brantly and his wonderful family would ask that you please remember and pray for those in Africa battling, treating and suffering from Ebola. Those who have given up the comforts of home to serve the suffering and the less fortunate are in many ways just beginning this battle.

"We have more than 350 staff in Liberia, and others will soon be joining them, so please pray for those who have served with Dr. Brantly – along with the other doctors, aid workers and organizations that are at this very moment desperately trying to stop Ebola from taking any more lives." **BR**

"Over the past few weeks, I have marveled at Dr. Brantly's courageous spirit as he as fought this horrible virus ... His faithfulness to God and compassion for the people of Africa have been an example to us all."

– Franklin Graham

Rejection of natural law will lead to loss of Constitution

Hamilton Strategies Media

Few were surprised when a panel of the 4th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals upheld a lower court's decision striking down Virginia's voter-approved prohibition against same-sex marriage. After all, the court's decision continues a trend courts across America have been following: overturning voter-backed legislation upholding natural law in favor of recognizing the "right" of gay couples to marry.

Alex McFarland points out that our nation's Constitution is based on a recognition of natural law, and the rejection of that law will inevitably lead to the loss of our Constitution.

Author of 16 books, McFarland is the director for Christian worldview and apologetics at the Christian Worldview Center of North Greenville University in Greenville, S.C.

"What's particularly worrisome about the pathway to the legalization of same-sex marriage is that the only way to travel down this path is to abolish the belief in natural law," McFarland said.

"As any student of our nation's history

understands, our entire system of government is based on the understanding that natural law exists and that it governs our liberties.

"Our own Declaration of Independence directly cites natural law as the basis for declaring independence from Great Britain – 'When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them....' The rejection of natural law leads neither to liberty nor to equality, but rather to anarchy. And this will lead to the end of the U.S. Constitution and the end of our democratic republic."

McFarland further said that only within the framework of a Judeo-Christian culture that recognizes natural law do individuals have the freedom to be gay.

"A society that recognizes natural law, as our Judeo-Christian society has long done, is a society that also maximizes liberty for individuals," he continued. "Within this framework, if someone

wishes to practice homosexuality, go ahead. But don't tear down the framework that gives you the freedom to be gay. Those who embrace homosexuality should be actively advocating for a Judeo-Christian culture that recognizes natural law. Because the two options if they don't are the iron fist of Statism or the iron fist of Sharia. And both of these options mean not only the death of freedom but, literally, the death of any individuals who disagree with the state."

Virginia's attorney general Mark Her-ring made it clear early on that he would not defend the state's law supporting natural marriage.

Attorney General Roy Cooper of North Carolina, which also falls under the jurisdiction of the 4th Circuit Court, also said that he would not defend his state's voter-approved ban on same-sex marriage, saying, "It is time to stop making arguments we will lose."

Earlier this year, U.S. attorney general, Eric Holder, advised state attorneys general that they are not required to defend any state prohibitions against same-sex marriage, despite the fact that attorneys general are, by definition, the primary law-enforcement officers of their respective governments.

McFarland said, "This is what's so frightening about the events now unfolding: elected officials are essentially changing the laws of their states that have been legitimately passed through due process. ... And while homosexual individuals are now rejoicing because the fiats are in their favor, if we as a nation continue to reject the rule of law, natural law and our Constitution, then there will come a day

when the fiats will be in no one's favor. Unfortunately when that day comes, we'll have no Constitution to stand on to defend our liberties as we've allowed it to be trampled beyond the point of recovery."

McFarland is also organizer of the annual Truth for a New Generation apologetics conference. "Life and Liberty: Given by God" will be the theme of this year's conference, which will be held Sept. 5-6 at First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C.

The conference will teach that America was founded on Judeo-Christian principles and will also help equip attendees with the facts they need to fight for our liberties, along with the understanding that the Source of our life and freedoms is God and nothing else.

Confirmed speakers include radio host and Fox News contributor Todd Starnes, renowned pediatric neurosurgeon and nationally known speaker Dr. Ben Carson, and Eric Metaxas, author of the New York Time Bestseller Bonhoeffer: Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy. Also headlining the conference will be Joni Eareckson Tada, Tim Wildmon, Josh McDowell, David Barton and more.

Tickets to the conference are available for \$69.95. Attendees can also register for a special "Evening with Ben Carson," for \$50, a "VIP Lunch with Todd Starnes" for \$50, or both for just \$80.

For more information or to register for the event, visit TruthforaNewGeneration.com.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Alex McFarland is a speaker, writer and advocate for Christian apologetics who lives in North Carolina.) **BR**



ALEX MCFARLAND
Guest Column

Student Ministry Lab
2014 Youth Leader Training

October 4, 2014 - First Baptist Church, Summerfield

Whether you are a youth minister, youth worker, or a church that needs to build a more solid youth ministry, **Student Ministry Lab** is for you!

Many of us are asked to serve in youth ministry, yet we have no idea how to plan a year in advance so that the ministry is balanced in all areas of spiritual formation.

Training includes presentation of ministry helps, speakers addressing issues of spiritual growth and renewal, breakout sessions and fellowship and sharing of ideas.

Topics Include: the five purposes of the church, mentoring, enlisting and keeping volunteers, how to plan a mission trip, risk management in youth ministry, and more.

Earlybird Pricing: \$25 per person or special group rate of \$100 per group of 5, through September 22. Includes lunch & materials.

Regular Pricing: \$35 per person or special group rate of \$140 per group of 5. Includes lunch & materials.

Register: Visit us at www.BeDoTell.com or call the Youth Evangelism & Discipleship Office at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5566.



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

Robin Williams & pain relief

The media is abuzz with the news that acclaimed actor and comedian, Robin Williams, has died from suicide. Many are glorifying the man for a career that caused so many to laugh and think more deeply about how we view life. Because of this, they are at a loss for why someone with so much humor could have battled such deep depression that he would take his own life. Over the next few days, weeks, possibly even months, there will be plenty of psychologists on the news describing all kinds of signs, symptoms and related causes for this, but here we will postulate about only one – hopelessness.

Many think they know the real Mr. Williams, but they don't. As an audience we have seen him in many roles – acting as someone we can identify with.



WILLIAM HARDWICK
Guest Column

There have been interviews in which he opens up a little, but no one opens up completely, especially not in front of the whole world. In the minds of many who reach the point of depression there is a secret world they shrink back into in public, but especially in private. There is an emptiness and lonely presence that they feel, a feeling that cannot be explained simply by words unless you have been there.

As far as we know Williams had knowledge of the God of Holy Scripture, but never placed his trust in Christ alone for his salvation. He was a man who lived with a worldview that did not have a place of eternal hope. And in this life he also reached a point where all the worries, fears, anxieties and troubles caved in on him and swallowed

See Pain page 16

Impacting lostness among bikers at Sturgis

On July 31, I began a journey; some might call it the journey of a lifetime. I joined a group of 11 other bikers that, over the next nine days, would travel over 4,000 miles as we rode our motorcycles to the 74th Annual Black Hills Motor Classic, aka Sturgis. Our group would be joining other volunteers from across the Southern Baptist Convention to work with the Dakota Baptist Convention (DBC) in that convention's annual evangelism effort among the bikers attending the rally.

Attendance at this year's rally was estimated at just over 400,000, which is slightly less than recent years. However, next year's estimated attendance for the 75th anniversary of the Sturgis rally is projected to approach one million. I hope that you will begin praying now for the effort that will take place at next year's rally.

Our group consisted of convention staff, associational staff and church members from a variety of North Carolina churches.

After riding three and one half days to the rally, we worked for three days and returned to North Carolina in just three days. The final day involved riding 16 hours through heavy fog, light rain, hot sun, with the day ending with heavy rain and downpours.

However, all of that was well worth the effort as we watched God work among the bikers in an amazing way. The approach used by the DBC is very simple and has remained virtually unchanged for the last nine years. The DBC purchases a new Harley Davidson to give away in a drawing; this year the bike was a 2014 Road King. To



BRIAN DAVIS
Guest column



Brian Davis, front row on left, traveled with a group of North Carolina Baptist state, association and church leaders to minister during the 74th Annual Black Hills Motor Classic in Sturgis, S.D. They worked with Dakota Baptist Convention to share the gospel with bikers who had registered to win a motorcycle, a 2014 Road King from Harley Davidson. (Contributed photos)

register to win the bike requires three minutes of a person's time in order that a volunteer may share the story of how Jesus Christ has changed their life. Only after the volunteer has shared their story may an individual register to win the motorcycle.

Amazingly, thousands of bikers gave volunteers the three minutes required, and as a result 513 souls were added to the Kingdom this year. Throughout the nine-year history of this outreach, more than 6,000 bikers have become followers of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The DBC is not the only Christian group engaged in ministry at Sturgis. One group was seen providing free oil changes – and sharing the gospel while the bikers waited.

Another group provided free bike washes, followed by the opportunity to have a picture made with your clean bike – and the gospel is shared as bikers wait. A local church provided free breakfast, and free parking while the bikers are enjoying the meal – and the gospel

See Sturgis page 16

A tribute to my father: Milton A. Hollifield Sr.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree: he shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon ... They shall still bring forth fruit in old age ...
Psalm 92:12,14

Even though I knew I would eventually have to face the passing of my earthly father, it came unexpectedly. When my oldest sister phoned my home in Cary on the morning of July 16 to tell me that Daddy had died, it was hard to accept the fact that he was gone.

He had lived most of his 88 years in Western North Carolina, serving God, enjoying his family and ministering to people.

As a native of Spruce Pine in Mitchell County, Dad was fortunate to have grandparents and parents who possessed a deep faith in God and were active in the work of His church. When Dad was 6 years old, his grandfather, a mountain lay preacher, placed his hands on my father's

head and asked God to someday "make a preacher out of this boy."

Mom and Dad had a lifelong love relationship. They married in 1945, while still in their teens. Dad answered the call to preach in 1947, and he accepted his first pastorate in 1948. Milton A. Hollifield Sr. continued to be a caring and dedicated Free Will Baptist minister for more than 60 years; he pastored four churches in McDowell, Haywood and Buncombe counties, and another in Wayne, Mich. Dad also challenged himself to make a minimum of 25 pastoral visits each week. God blessed his work, and every church he

led experienced exponential growth.

In addition to his work as a pastor, Dad served as an evangelist, preached in four countries, supervised five building programs and led numerous revivals in 18 states. He also took time to mentor younger pastors, and about 20 preachers

and missionaries answered God's call under his ministry.

My father was active in several committees and boards of the National Association of Free Will Baptists. He also organized and was a promotional representative for the Free Will Baptist Blue Ridge Association, and he served 12 years on both the national Board of Retirement and North Carolina's Board of Care.

He was elected state moderator for Free Will Baptists and served two years on the national Executive Committee.

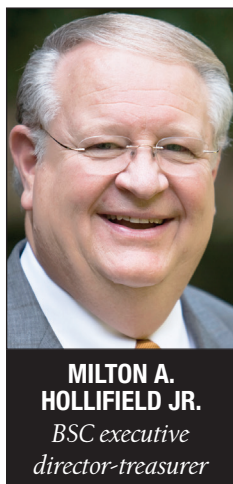
He also served as a charter member of the Board of Directors of the Swannanoa Valley Medical Center.

"Preacher Hollifield," as he was affectionately called, remained active until the end of his life in serving churches through preaching, conducting funerals and doing ministry in hospitals, nursing

homes and visiting the homebound. In reflecting over his life and the achievements of his ministry, he would often say, "Why me, Lord?" because he knew that all the things he celebrated happened because God chose to work through him. To God be the glory!

Dad left a great legacy as a follower of Christ, a man who loved his family, and someone who demonstrated his care for others daily.

My life was influenced in many ways by my father, but I would like to mention just four things that I consistently observed in him: daily fellowship with God, a strong work ethic, a practice of giving to others in need and a focus on Kingdom advancement rather than minor denominational differences. Although we miss him, we remain confident that he is in the presence of the Lord and that we will see him again. **BR**



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive director-treasurer



OPPORTUNITY CORNER

BCH hosts 55th annual Western Area event

Baptist Children's Homes is hosting its 55th Annual Western Area Conference on Sept. 4 at 4 p.m. at Broyhill Home in Clyde. Join the celebration and enjoy free barbecue, gospel singing and fun for the whole family. Call to reserve your meals at (828) 627-9254. Visit bchfamily.org/involved/wac.

'Friends of Children' workdays planned

Is your church looking for a local, one-day missions opportunity that offers something for all ages? Baptist Children's Homes (BCH) is hosting its Saturday "Friends of Children" workdays (FOC) at its statewide locations in the fall. A free lunch is served, and tours are available.

All types of projects are available. Individuals are asked to prayer walk the campuses and pray for the children and staff throughout the day. This is an excellent opportunity to introduce others to the exciting work going on at Baptist Children's Homes.

FOC workdays are scheduled for:

- Sept. 6 at Camp Duncan for girls in Aberdeen
- Sept. 13 at Cameron Boys Camp in Cameron, the Kennedy Home in Kinston, and Oak Ranch in Broadway
- Sept. 20 at Odum Home in Pembroke

Visit bchfamily.org/involved/friends to register and for more information.

Church planting workshop in Charlotte

Part of the Send North America strategy of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) is to equip churches to plant churches. To help accomplish this, NAMB has partnered with the training network, Dynamic Church Planting International, to offer the "Churches Planting Churches" training. This is a biblically-based, practical resource. The training will be held Sept. 8-10 at Mint Hill Baptist Church in Charlotte. The schedule on Monday and Tuesday will be 8:30 am-4:30 and Wednesday 8:30 am-noon.

This event is a workshop for planting new churches, not a conference.

Visit sendnetwork.com/cpct to learn more and to register. Cost is \$30 per person. Scholarships are available with the Metrolina Baptist Association for a limited number of participants. Neighboring associations and churches from the metro area are welcome.



Campers on Mission plans September rally

The fall Campers on Mission (COM) rally will be held Sept. 11-14 at Denton Farm Park, Denton. COM is a fellowship of Christian campers who enjoy getting together at rallies for worship, fun, food and fellowship. The main purpose of COM is to share the love of Jesus by word and deed while serving on mission projects such as construction projects, fairs, festivals, etc.

Come to the rally where mission reports are given and plans are made for future projects and get excited about using your RV for missions.

Bring your yarn and a frame for hat making on Friday morning. Saturday night there will be an auction to raise money for the National Rally in 2015. Please remember to bring many items to donate. Registration, pricing and menu information can be found on page 8 of the Fall 2014 newsletter on the website nccampersonmission.org.

Conference aims at helping families

North Carolina Baptists are hosting a conference Sept. 19-20 designed to help busy families increase their focus on building faith in Christ. On Friday pastors and church leaders will join the families to help equip them to grow in spiritual development. Saturday will focus on the importance of parents disciplining their children, and there will be breakout sessions by age for the children. The Friday session, which is aimed at pastors as well as other church and lay leaders, costs \$20 per person/\$25 per couple and is scheduled for 9 a.m.-3 p.m. On Saturday, which is aimed at everyone including parents, caregivers and grandparents, the cost is \$15 per person/\$20 per couple and is also scheduled for 9 a.m.-3 p.m. The conference will be located at Lakeview Baptist Church in Hickory. For more information or for registration visit ncbaptist.org/cfc2014.

AROUND THE STATE

Obituaries

CHARLES LANIER, 86, of Newland died May 7 at Johnson City Medical Center.

As an ordained minister he pastored churches throughout North and South Carolina. He also served in the North Carolina school system as a teacher and acting principal for more than 10 years. In 1982 he began his service as director of missions for the Avery Baptist Association, retiring in 1992. He has been a member of the Lions Club, North Carolina Educational Association, the American Red Cross, and he was a Mason.



CHARLES LANIER

He is survived by his wife, Delores Lanier; children, Janice Carswell of Morganton, Chuck Lanier of Huntersville, Gwendolyn Stowers of Concord, Angela Turner of Hickory; nine grandchildren; eight great-grandchildren.

Memorials to: Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, P.O. Box 1889, Wake Forest, NC 27588, or to the Mountain States Hospice, 10 Med Tech Parkway, Suite 100, Johnson City, TN 37604.

DOROTHY B. CARROLL, 85, of Youngsville died Aug. 1 at Transitions LifeCare Hospice House in Raleigh.

She and her late husband, Edwin Carroll, were partners in ministry for 43 years. He served seven Eastern and Central N.C. Baptist churches.

She is survived by her daughter, Esther Austin of Wake Forest; sons, Jim Nicholson of Raleigh and Mike Nicholson of Pittsboro; sisters, Arlene Powell and Faye Hatch both of Mt. Olive, Christine Tijiginelis of Fayetteville and Jean Hobbs of Raleigh; six grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

Memorials to Harris Chapel Baptist Church, 2960 Tarboro Road, Youngsville, NC 27596, or to the Baptist Children's Home of N.C., P.O. Box 338, Thomasville, NC 27360, or to the American Bible Society, 1865 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10023.

Anniversary

MARS HILL BAPTIST CHURCH, Colerain, plans to celebrate its 160th anniversary. The worship celebration is scheduled Sept. 28 at 10:30 a.m. with music, reading of church history and a message by former pastor of Mars Hill,

Dan Morton. Dinner will be served on the grounds with a pig pickin' and games for the children. Local gospel singer Sue Tripp of Bethany Baptist and bluegrass singer Nancy Joyner of Republican Baptist will provide entertainment. There is a 160th anniversary commemorative throw available for \$50. It includes pictures of the current and former church buildings. Pastor Mike Willard has more information at (252) 325-4081 or marshallbaptistnc@gmail.com.

Staff change

ALTON "AL" WATKINS has been called as senior pastor at Faith Baptist Church, Bolivia. Previously Watkins has pastored Freedom Baptist Church, Wilmington; Ogden Baptist Church, Wilmington and as interim pastor at Plymouth Church, Raleigh.



ALTON WATKINS



Campers on Mission honored

D.C. and Shirley H. Thompson, members of N.C. Campers On Mission (NCCOM) are the recipients of both the state and national 2013 Campers of the Year awards. The state award, seen here, was presented April 26 at the NCCOM spring rally in Denton. The national award was announced in June in Glorieta, N.M. The Thompsons were not in New Mexico for the June rally but will be presented the award Sept. 13 at the fall rally. The Thompsons are members of First Baptist Church, Greensboro.

Visit **BRnow.org**

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Submissions

Send church news, staff changes, etc., to dianna@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

September 7

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

September 14

Connected in Christ

Focal Passage: Ephesians 2:17-22

A cornerstone is not just any part of a building. It is the stone that holds the whole structure together. The apostle Paul makes this point in relation to Christ in Ephesians 2. Christ is not just a facet of the church. He is not just one block that is next to another stone of worship music or a brick of preschool ministry. He is the “chief cornerstone” on which the church was built (v. 20).

Many of us tend to view church like we do other organizations or clubs. We approach it with a “me-centered” mentality. What can the church do for me? What can my church give me? If I tithe regularly (or more than the person who sits in the pew next to me), doesn’t that mean that I have more of a say in the color of the carpet or the lights on the stage? Since I volunteer my time with the student ministry, should I not be given a gold-level status as a church member?

Our passage in Ephesians 2:17-22 brings us back to the beautiful simplicity of the gospel. Just like the church in Ephesus, we have to be reminded that it

is nothing that we have done – and nothing that we can ever do, pay for, serve, make – that will earn us an entry or advantage in the body of Christ. Membership in the church is a privilege that is only made possible through Jesus Christ. It is centered around Him and what He has done.

In the verse preceding our passage (v. 16), Paul describes how we have reconciliation with God the Father – through the cross of Christ. It is only through Jesus that we have access to God (v. 18). Jesus made peace with God through the cross so that all who place their faith in Christ are no longer estranged, but instead are welcomed into the family of God (v. 19).

According to John MacArthur, the cornerstone is vital because it sets the foundation and squares the building. Just as a capstone unites two intersecting walls, Christ connects and joins us together in Him. Have you set your foundation and squared your building on something other than the chief cornerstone?

Focal Passage: Ephesians 4:1-6

This week, the apostle Paul transitions into applied ministry and describes how believers are connected in unity. In Ephesians 4, Paul gives us practical ways of how we can remain functionally united. Because we all know that staying unified takes work – especially when sinners are dealing with other sinners!

First, Paul counsels the church to humbly accept one another. He urges them to be patient and bear with one another in love (v. 2). Next, he charges the church to strive for unity in the Spirit. How are they to do this? By allowing the peace of Christ to rule in their hearts (Colossians 3:15). He then expresses the “oneness” of God in verses four through six: one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God.

Do not miss how Paul incorporates the Trinity in His depiction of unity. He mentions the Holy Spirit, the Lord Jesus



HILARY RATCHFORD
Writer, Southeastern
Seminary student

Christ and God the Father. All three persons of the Godhead unified in the unfolding of His perfect, divine will.

Our bodies are made of many cells. Positionally, the cells within our bodies are united because they are all within one body. Yet, functionally, they can sometimes be at odds. Allergies, disease and inflammation can result because the cells within one body do not cooperate together. Instead, they attack one another, which eventually destroys the whole body.

Think of the magnificence displayed when those cells within your body work together; when they unite to fight off an infectious illness or bind up a wound. Back away from the microscope and view this in light of the body of Christ. King David said in Psalm 133:1, “*How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity.*” Jesus said of future believers, “*May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that You sent Me and have loved them even as You have loved Me*” (John 17:23).

Our “oneness” within the body of Christ reflects the glory of our Triune God. How can you pursue unity with other believers this week?

September 7

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

September 14

Who is Jesus?

Focal Passage: Hebrews 1:1-4

“Is that your final answer?” Few questions struck fear into the heart of game show contestants as that question from the wildly popular “Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?” On the show, contestants work their way toward winning \$1 million by correctly answering a series of questions in a multiple choice format. Once the contestant settled in on their answer, the host would ask, “Is that your final answer?” The question became so ingrained culturally, that TV Land included it in their 2006 show “The 100 Greatest TV Quotes and Catch Phrases” special.

In the book of Hebrews we discover that God has answered that same question with a resounding “YES.” Jesus is God’s final answer. Hebrews is one of the most helpful books in the New Testament at helping us understand how all of the Old Testament ultimately points us to Jesus. Even in the opening verses of the book, that theme is clear and unmistakable.

The first two verses of Hebrews chapter one tells us that God, in the past, has spoken in various ways. He has used

prophets, dreams, visions, intercessors and even creation itself to speak of His glory. But now the anonymous writer says, in these last days, He has spoken to us by His Son. Indeed, we are in the “last days” because God has given us His final answer.

The writer tells us about God’s Son (v. 3-4). He says He is the exact representation of God’s being. Do you want to know what God is like? Look at Jesus. He tells us that Jesus sustains all things by His powerful Word. Why does the earth stay in orbit around the sun? Because the Son tells it to. He tells us the Son provided purification for our sins and then sat down at the right hand of God. He sat down, because His work was done. It was completed. Jesus is the ultimate revelation of God. Everything else in the Bible has been pointing forward to the day when God would speak clearly and finally. He did so in Jesus. Jesus truly is God’s final answer for us. But He did not win \$1 million, He won the salvation of everyone who would believe in Him.



ROB POCHEK
Senior Pastor, Raleigh
Road Baptist Church,
Wilson

Focal Passage: Hebrews 2:1-4

About 10 years ago I decided to take my family to the Dominican Republic for our summer vacation. We picked a resort with a nice area for swimming, kayaking or using boogie boards. I decided the boogie board was my best bet at enjoying a little recreation in the calm waters of the bay. I found it very easy to swim with the boogie board and so I ventured out farther and farther from the beach. Then I had a terrible realization: I had drifted about 300 yards south of where I had entered the water. I made it back, but it taught me an important lesson about the danger of drifting.

The writer of Hebrews has the very same concern. He is not concerned with swimming at the beach, but with the drift of faith. He calls on followers of Christ in Hebrews 2:1 to pay more careful attention to what they have heard in order to avoid drifting away from their faith. Notice he is concerned they are already drifting, which is

Pay Attention

why he calls on them to pay more careful attention to the truth of the gospel. They needed to put in practice what they had heard in a more intentional way, in order to avoid the drift of faith. The same is true for us. To simply hear a sermon or Sunday School lesson, but fail to put it into practice puts us at risk for drifting away.

He then reminds them that just as there were consequences for disobedience under the law, there are consequences for ignoring the great salvation provided in Christ. The writer of Hebrews does not have an understanding of salvation as a casual glance at the cross or “praying a prayer.” He understands the message of God’s grace to be life transforming and a message that demands our full attention.

He tells us that God has testified to the truth of the gospel by signs, wonders, miracles and the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We testify to the truth of the gospel by living it out with careful attention to what we have heard. Fortunately, my lack of attention on the boogie board only cost me some sore muscles. A lack of attention to the truth of the gospel has much more severe eternal consequences.

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Macedonia Baptist Church in Raleigh/Cary, NC, is seeking a **senior pastor** to provide leadership that will help us grow and spread God's message. A well-established church of approximately 200, we encourage all members to utilize their spiritual gifts in church programs and leadership roles. We offer a blended worship service, are affiliated with the SBC and CBF, and are currently involved in local and global missions. A minimum of five years of lead pastoral experience and an earned master's degree from an accredited Bible college, seminary, or divinity school are required. Please electronically submit a letter of interest and a resume that includes both a Statement of Faith and a Statement of Call to Ministry to pastorsearch@mbcnc.org.

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Ives Memorial Baptist Church in Pinebluff, NC, seeks **full-time pastor** for a small traditional Southern Baptist church affiliated with BSCNC and SBC. Seeking a pastor gifted in preaching, teaching and pastoral care to multiple generations and a passion for reaching the lost and unchurched. Seminary degree and experience preferred. Please send letters of interest, references and resumes to Pulpit Committee, PO Box 278, Pinebluff, NC 28373, or ivesmemorial@windstream.net.

Church Staff

Lakeview Baptist Church is seeking a **full-time experienced minister** to lead our vibrant **student ministry**. Submit resumes to: Search Committee, Lakeview Baptist Church, 4602 Concord Hwy., Monroe, NC 28110. Visit our website @ lakeviewfamily.org.

Calvary Baptist Church, Gastonia, NC, seeking **Part-time Worship Leader** – Must be qualified to lead congregation in blended services, lead and instruct choir & praise band rehearsals and have a personal relationship with God. If interested send resume to ccalvarybaptist@carolina.rr.com. For more info on Calvary go to www.calvarygastonia.com.

Part-time Youth Minister position at North Newton Baptist Church, Newton, N.C. Resume may be sent to nmbc316@bellsouth.net or mailed to North Newton Baptist Church, 316 W. 21st St., Newton, NC 28658. Position is 20-25 hrs week.

Calvary Baptist Church in Canton, NC. Seeking **Youth Director** position. Send resumes to 23 Phillips Street, Canton, NC 28716. Phone no. 828-648-3725; Attn: Kristen Rhinehart.

Antioch Baptist Church in Lumberton, NC, is seeking a **full-time Children's Minister** in charge of the ministry to preschoolers through sixth grade. Submit resumes to Search Committee, 5089 Old Whiteville Road, Lumberton, NC 28358, or email Kevin Davis at kevindaviscreations@gmail.com.

Mount Olivet Baptist Church of Franklinton, N.C., is seeking an **Associate Pastor**. For further information please see website: www.mtolivetchurch-franklinton.com.

Neill's Creek Baptist Church in Angier, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **part-time Director of Music**. We seek an energetic leader with a heart for worship who will assist in planning and leading music for meaningful worship services. The Director of Music will be primarily responsible for the Adult Choir but will consult with leaders of the Children's Choir, Adult Handbell Choir, and Adult Praise Team. NCBC averages 150 in Sunday morning worship attendance and is located in a growing community. Preference will be given to candidates who have previous experience in directing church choirs, congregational singing, and overseeing a church's music ministry. We are affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Baptist State Convention of NC, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship, and the Little River Baptist Association. For a copy of the job description please contact the church at 919-639-6126 or email ncbc@embarqmail.com. Resumes may be sent to Neill's Creek Baptist Church, 4200 Neill's Creek Rd., Angier, NC 27501, Attn: Music Ministry Search Committee.

Miscellaneous

Executive Director. Mercy House, a shelter for homeless families in Harrisonburg, Virginia, is seeking a seasoned executive director with a passion for the homeless. Duties include working directly with the families, grant writing, staff management, and general oversight of agency's finances, facilities and programs. For more information go to www.themercyhouse.org/openings.

Gardner-Webb University is seeking a **Director** for its new Five-Year Pastoral Degree Program, offered through the School of Divinity and Department of Religious Studies, scheduled to begin enrolling students in the Fall 2015 Semester. This is a faculty level position which may include teaching. Master's degree required. The director will oversee the program and have advising responsibility for the students enrolled. Please see the full position description at <http://gardner-webb.edu/current-openings>.

NCBAM will conduct Leadership Training at Camp Caraway's Fall Festival of Fellowship in October. Senior adult leaders will be encouraged and trained to provide effective ministry for the coming "age wave." Call 1.877.506.2226 for more information.

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For more information, call the office at (919) 459-5691.

Cost for Baptist churches/organizations is \$1.20 per word, number and stand-alone initial (\$1.42 for commercial and non-Baptist entities) with a minimum charge of \$35. Classifieds also are carried online.

COMMITTEE ON RESOLUTIONS

BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA

All resolutions should be submitted in writing for consideration by the committee no later than **September 10, 2014.**

Send by mail to Committee on Memorials/Resolutions

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

Send by email to Norma Jean Johnson

Business Services, Executive Leaders Assistant
njohnson@ncbaptist.org

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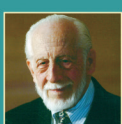
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The missions and ministries of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina are made possible by your gifts through the Cooperative Program and the North Carolina Missions Offering.

ERLC: Latest HHS rules fail again

Baptist Press

The Obama administration has issued new rules regarding its contraception mandate but appears to have failed to satisfy the concerns of religious freedom advocates, such as the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission.

A division of the Department of Health and Human Services

Pain

Continued from page 11

him. His hopelessness reached a breaking point, the point of no return. He made a decision, and it was a final one.

I do not want to be misunderstood here. Suicide victims are not only those without a personal relationship with Jesus.

Believers can be trapped into this same death spiral of hopelessness. The noise of the lies from within and without, drown out the truth that they have not only come to know but for some have even come to share with others.

The scripture teaches, *“To live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh this will mean a fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better”* (Philippians 1:21-23). To depart the struggles and battles of this world is a way to reach Christ sooner than later in their minds.

Just a few weeks ago on July 29, a 15-year old young man with a vibrant faith in Jesus Christ, Braxton Caner, also reached that point. His name was not plastered all over the mainstream news. Accolades did not pour out from presidents, pontiffs and potentates over his decision to leave this earth and enter into the arms of his Savior. While the media is highlighting suicide this week, the pain is still raw for the family and friends of this young man as well.

The message is real – suicide and depression hit all ages, all political and socio-economic strata. Some are pushed toward this decision because of outside forces that engage the inner turmoil of hopelessness from one reason to another. There are warning signs, but sometimes they are so subtle you will never see them. There is often no solution that will catch them in time.

(HHS) announced Aug. 22 the latest – and eighth – revision of the controversial regulations.

“Here we go again,” said Russell D. Moore, ERLC president. “When it comes to these contentious issues I don’t necessarily expect those who disagree with us to ask, ‘What Would Jesus Do?’ But, in this case, asking ‘What Would Jefferson Do?’ would be a good start.” **BR**

Here is the lesson: hug and kiss those you love – not just daily, but often. Remind them that you love them and that God truly does have a greater plan for them.

The rest of the text in Philippians says, “Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again” (Philippians 1:24-26).

Hope is found in Christ. Even the strong, evangelistic Christian needs the reminder of their mission here on earth. May this article help find some closure and some peace to those who have lost a loved one at their own hand.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – William Hardwick is pastor of Quankie Baptist Church in Roanoke Rapids.) **BR**

Sturgis Continued from page 12

is shared during the meal. Other groups were also engaging bikers in many other effective ways.

The value of each of these ministries was driven home during our team's first work session. A young man tentatively entered the tent, looking intently at the motorcycle.

Volunteers began to engage him in conversation only to quickly hear him say, “I’m not here to register. I only wanted to come back and say, ‘Thank you.’ I got saved through this ministry last year.”

If you are interested in volunteering in 2015 for the 75th Annual Black Hills Motorcycle Classic, visit www.sturgisbikegiveaway.com.

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

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