

1 million Syrian refugee children gripped by bloodshed, upheaval



Page 9

CALVARY TO CUT TIES WITH BOY SCOUTS



Page 4

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

SEPTEMBER 14, 2013 • News Journal of North Carolina Baptists • VOLUME 179 NO. 19 • **BR**now.org



A volunteer learns how to install drywall during March 15-16 training at Southport Baptist Church in Southport. The North Carolina Missions Offering, which is emphasized this month, helps fund N.C. Baptist Men relief efforts in the state and beyond. (BSC photo by Mike Creswell)

Thousands of volunteers rebuild lives

NCMO helps make it happen

By **MIKE CRESWELL** | BSC Communications

Hurricane Irene hit North Carolina's coast two years ago – old news for most people. But mention “Irene” to Carroll and Cheryl Voliva and they still cringe.

Their home in Bayboro, a city east of New Bern, was destroyed by the flood that resulted when Irene stalled over Pamlico Sound. Locals say the flooding and destruction from Irene were worse than from all the other hurricanes that have hit the coast over the past 100 years.

For example, of some 60 homes on Goose Creek Island, all but four were flooded.

“Our house was totally demolished in Hurricane

[See Volunteers page 6](#)

Students awaken to prayer's potential at inaugural SPAN

By **DON GRAHAM** | International Mission Board

For Ashley Allen, a 33-year-old women's missions and ministry director with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, going was all about the numbers.

Allen was among 15 students who graduated from the inaugural class of the School of Prayer for All Nations (SPAN), July 29-Aug. 2, at the International Mission Board's missionary training facility near Richmond, Va. The class represented a wide cross section of Southern Baptist life, drawing various Baptist lead-

ers, laypeople, pastors and even former missionaries from states as far as Indiana and Texas.

“Over the last several years, the Lord has really burdened my heart for all these big numbers – 258 million lost people in the U.S., 6 billion lost people in the world,” Allen said, adding that there are an estimated 5.8 million lost people in North Carolina alone.

“We sometimes forget that each number is attached to a soul – people who are eternally separated from God, who, if they died today would be going to hell.”

[See SPAN page 5](#)



Ashley Allen, right, women's missions and ministry director with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, intercedes for the lost during one of the many prayer times that made up IMB's School of Prayer for All Nations (SPAN), July 29-Aug. 2, near Richmond, Va. (IMB photo)

Caraway offers first coed children's camp

By **BUDDY OVERMAN** | BSC Communications

This summer, for the first time in its 50-year history, Camp Caraway opened its camp experience to girls through Camp Caraway for Children, a weeklong Christian children's camp for boys and girls.

Camp Caraway, located near Asheboro, has a long and distinguished history as a fun, Christ-centered, mission focused summer camp for boys. Since 1963, more than 65,000 boys have enjoyed a summer week at Caraway learning about missions and what it means to be a Christ-follower.

Mark Moore, Caraway summer camp director, was one of those boys. As a pastor's son, Moore spent at least one week most summers during his childhood at Caraway. His experience as a young camper was influential in his call to vocational ministry. "Growing up at camp was one of the few places where I could truly be myself," Moore said. "It was exciting to live a fun life and be a Christ-follower at the same time."

Camp Caraway for Boys began as a Royal Ambassador camp, but all boys are welcome and do not have to be active in a particular church to attend.

The weeklong camp is offered during four weeks throughout the summer. Campers engage in daily Bible study with a camp pastor, learn from missionaries and participate in numerous activities including team building games, swimming in the lake or pool, zip line and paintball. The camp experience is designed to show boys that the Christian life is exciting.



Camp Caraway has added a week in its summer schedule for a coed camp for boys and girls. (Contributed photo)

"We use fun, first of all, to share the love of Jesus, to develop healthy relationships, to share the importance of missions and to create lasting, teachable moments," Moore said.

Now both girls and boys, who have completed grades 1-6, will have that same opportunity through Camp Caraway for Children.

"There are great reasons to do single gender camping," Moore said. "But if you look at the trends in ministry, most churches are strictly doing coed camps because that is what is typically done in public schools

and Sunday School. There is a great trend toward coed camping."

Moore said the coed camp was well received and is a step in the right direction for future coed camps. The children's camp is designed around the same programming as the camp for boys, the only difference being the addition of girls and female leaders.

"We are allowing girls the opportunity to come experience things at Caraway that at one point only boys could do during the summer," Moore said. "That opens up a new avenue for us to minister."

In addition to the four camps for boys and one coed children's camp, Caraway offered three father-son camps and one angel tree camp for boys who have a parent in prison. As the summer months come to a close, Caraway has hosted a total of more than 700 children.

The goal, Moore said, is for each camp to point children to a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

"We want to reach boys and girls where they are," he said. "Camp is one of the places where they can be themselves."

"We want to put them in a non-threatening environment away from home, away from church, away from school, where they can be themselves, where they can have fun and where they can have an opportunity for God to speak to them."

Next summer Camp Caraway for Children will be held July 28-Aug. 1, 2014. For more information about the coed children's camp, visit www.campcaraway.org/children. For more information about Camp Caraway, visit www.campcaraway.org. **BR**

Drawing near

James Burns, in his classic work, *The Laws of Revival*, points to a declining spiritual fervor and authenticity that always precedes a spiritual awakening. He comments, "We find preceding each revival, a spiritual desert."

This spiritual desert is the result of individual Christians who have departed from their walk with Christ in such a way that they find themselves in a wasteland of moral and spiritual decline.

Because they have slowly become more like the world and less in love with Christ, believers discover that there is little or no spiritual power available to accomplish God's work. The result, if this condition is left unresolved, is spiritual famine in God's house and in their land.

Are you praying and working diligently in service to God but have not dealt with your sin?

Today, confess and repent of any known sin in your life.

As you repent, God will forgive, cleanse and draw near to you (see James 4:8). As you experience His forgiveness, cleansing and nearness, you will see fresh power appear in your prayers and service to God.



DR. CHRIS SCHOFIELD

Revelation 2:4-5 - "Nevertheless I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works."

Prayer Points

- Pray for a cleansed heart and a pure life as you give your sin to the Lord.
- Pray for an unwavering devotion to return and walk in obedience to Jesus, your first love.

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

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BR's tax-exempt status stays intact after IRS audit

BR staff

The *Biblical Recorder* has received a letter from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) that calls for no change to its tax-exempt status.

The *Recorder* made headlines in May for being targeted by the IRS alongside two other North Carolina organizations – Samaritan's Purse and The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA).

The three organizations appeared in stories on the websites of Fox News, Baptist Press and other media outlets after the IRS admitted to targeting conservative political groups. Franklin Graham quickly released a letter accusing the IRS of also targeting religious groups. He pointed out that Samaritan's Purse, located in Boone, and BGEA, based in Charlotte, were targeted around the time of the 2012 presidential election.

"I do not believe that the IRS audit of our two organizations last year is a coincidence – or justifiable," Graham wrote. "... I believe that someone in the Administration was targeting and attempting to

intimidate us. This is morally wrong and unethical – indeed some would call it 'un-American.'"

In the letter, Graham contended Samaritan's Purse and BGEA were singled out for the stand he and his father Billy Graham have taken on traditional marriage and for encouraging evangelicals to "vote for biblical values." Last year, the BGEA also ran full-page ads statewide voicing support for the marriage amendment in N.C. that defined marriage only between a man and a woman.

In September 2012, both Samaritan's Purse and BGEA received notification that the IRS would review forms they filed in 2010.

An IRS agent arrived in October to conduct a review of both groups. They were later approved with no change to their tax-exempt status.

In March of this year, the *Biblical Recorder* received a notice for IRS forms they filed in 2010. K. Allan Blume, editor of the *Recorder*, admitted he was "curious" about the reasoning behind the audit.

The *Biblical Recorder's* coverage of

North Carolina's marriage amendment vote drew criticism from advocates of same-sex marriage. The *Recorder's* article on Chick-fil-A President Dan Cathy, who affirmed his support of traditional family values, went viral online. The mainstream media's coverage of Cathy's comments eventually resulted in former Ark. Gov. Mike Huckabee calling for a Chick-fil-A Appreciation Day.

The IRS agent later explained to Blume that the audit on the *Biblical Recorder* related to funding the publication receives from the Cooperative Program or what the IRS called "unrelated business income."

"Once the agent understood the Southern Baptist way of giving and supporting mission causes, there seemed to be no serious concerns," Blume said.

Blume added, "The IRS agent was courteous and professional throughout the audit. We did not experience any form of intimidation by the agent. As expected, he had some suggestions about procedures, but affirmed that our records were in good condition."

The IRS agent completed his work with Blume and the *Recorder's* attorney on May 9. Blume received a letter of approval in August.

"I'm glad we can close this chapter of our history," he said after receiving the letter.

When the books were shut, the audit cost the *Recorder* more than \$15,000 in legal fees. While the IRS did not require the publication to hire legal counsel, Blume said it was necessary in order to navigate the process.

"Considering the intimidating climate that the current administration has fostered against Christian organizations, we felt it was essential to have legal counsel to guide us through the process," Blume said. "Our attorney specializes in non-profits and proved to be extremely valuable to us."

"We grieve the fact that we had to spend so much money in a defensive posture against a federal government whose job is to protect and defend us," he said. "Sadly, this is happening too frequently to average Americans." **BR**

October literacy conference offers training

BSC Communications

About 32 million adults in the United States have low literacy skills – a struggle that doesn't just go away.

Seventy-four percent of children who have trouble reading in third grade are still poor readers as high school freshmen. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) literacy missions ministry seeks to help reverse these trends by showing the love of Jesus Christ in a practical way through ESL workshops and training events. About 65 churches and associations, and nearly 2,000 students, participated in literacy missions ministries this year.

"When my husband and I came to live in North Carolina after serving as International Mission Board missionaries to Brazil for 16 years, I was at a loss as to how I would answer my missionary calling. God soon provided the answer," said Barbara Martin, BSC literacy missions consultant.

"Our church teaches English as a Second Language to people from countries around the world, many of whom have never even heard the name of Jesus. These internationals would normally never set foot inside a church,



but because we are helping them meet their need to speak English, they come," she said. "They also come to know who Jesus is, and some of them accept Him as their Lord and Savior."

Martin is helping coordinate the annual literacy missions conference, which will be held Oct. 18-19 at Caraway Conference Center and includes a variety of workshops and breakout sessions. This year's theme is "Know Love, Show Love," based on 1 John 4:11. Doris Edwards, author of *Beyond our Borders*, will lead a three-hour workshop on English as a Foreign Language. Kathy Boyd, literacy missions leader for Mt. Zion Baptist Association, will lead a three-hour workshop on how to tutor at-risk children and youth. Literacy missions associate Glenda Reece will lead several breakout sessions such as pronunciation, Business English, the Lipson Method, using Bible stories to teach English, and 12 conversational "musts." Lisa Wohlrab, acting director of the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Raleigh-Durham area, will lead a session on teaching citizenship.

Other breakout session topics include refugee ministry, literacy missions on a budget, understanding the Hispanic culture, adult reading and writing, and tutoring youth and children. Continuing Education Credits are often available for public school teachers who attend the conference.

For more information, call (800) 395-5102, ext. 5629, or email mluoni@ncbaptist.org. The conference begins at 3:30 p.m. Friday, Oct. 18.

For more information and to register, visit www.ncbaptist.org/literacymissions. **BR**

Mars Hill College changes name

Mars Hill Office of Communications

Mars Hill University officially changed its name Aug. 15. In its 157-year history, this is the second time the institution has changed its name.

Mars Hill was established in 1856 by a small group of Baptist families in Madison County as French Broad Baptist Institute. Two years later, the trustees chose the name Mars Hill, for the site in Athens, Greece, named in Acts 17, where the Apostle Paul so persuasively used logic in his defense of the Christian faith.

According to President Dan Lunsford, the move to university status is one that has been contemplated and discussed by the administration and the current Board of Trustees for about a decade. Recently, the college's expansion, both in terms of enrollment and variety of offerings, has increased, setting the stage for the move to university status.

"We believe that changing the designation from college to university is one that positions the institution to be recognized for what we really are," Lunsford said. "The name university denotes a greater variety of offerings, and it indicates the opportunity to obtain undergraduate and graduate education in selected fields as part of the Mars Hill experience."

Beginning in summer 2011, Mars Hill added a master of education degree. The next program set for implementation is a master of public administration, and other graduate degrees are currently being explored for implementation in the future. Mars Hill also opened another site for classes in Asheville. **BR**

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Calvary Baptist to cut ties with Scouts

BR staff

After nearly 60 years of sponsoring a Boy Scout troop, Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem has decided to end its relationship with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). Pastor Rob Peters made the announcement to the church Aug. 25.

The church will discontinue its sponsorship effective Dec. 31, 2013. The announcement comes after the BSA voted in May to adopt new membership guidelines that allow youth who are openly homosexual into its organization.

"After prayer, conversation and deliberation the church has decided that it will end its relationship with the Boy Scouts of America," Peters said in a video posted on the church's website. Peters said the BSA's controversial decision "directly challenges the moral standards of churches across the United States who sponsor Scout troops."

The church will remain committed to providing a "smooth transition" for Scouts who have decided to continue in the organization, Peters said.

"We are currently assisting those in the Eagle Scout process to achieve their award in this current calendar year," Peters said.

"We are assisting those who wish to stay with the (BSA) to find another pack or troop."

"We are grateful for a Scouting program positively impacting so many young people in our church and community," he said.

"... We will continue to invest in starting a relationship with a similar kind of national outdoor, character development program, such as the one currently being launched called On My Honor."

The church is launching an interim strategy to help transition Scouts into the new program that was started by parents and Scoutmasters earlier this year.

According to the On My Honor website, the vision of the organization is "to be the premier national character development organization for young men which produces godly and responsible husbands, fathers, and citizens."

"... We look forward to continuing our

boys character development program under a new name and new charter," Peters said.

"Our desire is to support and strengthen young people through our affiliation with a traditional values-based program."

For more information about On My Honor, go to <http://www.onmyhonor.net/>. For more information about joining or becoming a leader, contact Calvary Baptist Church at (336) 765-5542, or go to <http://www.calvarynow.com/scouts>.

The church's website includes the following question and answer section related to the BSA's decision to change its membership standards:

Q: What has changed in Calvary Baptist Church's (CBC) relationship to BSA?

A: The BSA national leadership changed their membership standards to allow openly homosexual members to participate in Boy Scout troops. These changes become effective Jan. 1, 2014. The BSA national leadership addressed the issue of homosexuality among Scouts and viewed this as exclusively a behavioral issue rather than both a moral and behavioral issue.

The BSA changed the overall direction of their organization. The Scouting program chartered by Calvary has not changed. In other words, they moved, the local troop did not.

Q: How will CBC respond to the BSA change in membership requirements?

A: Before finalizing a decision, the church leadership, deacons, and Scouting leaders carefully reviewed the needs of those in the program and their families, questions concerning participating in a new organization, and legal matters impacting these decisions. That decision has been made and is explained in the information statement released by Calvary Baptist Church.

See Scouts page 7

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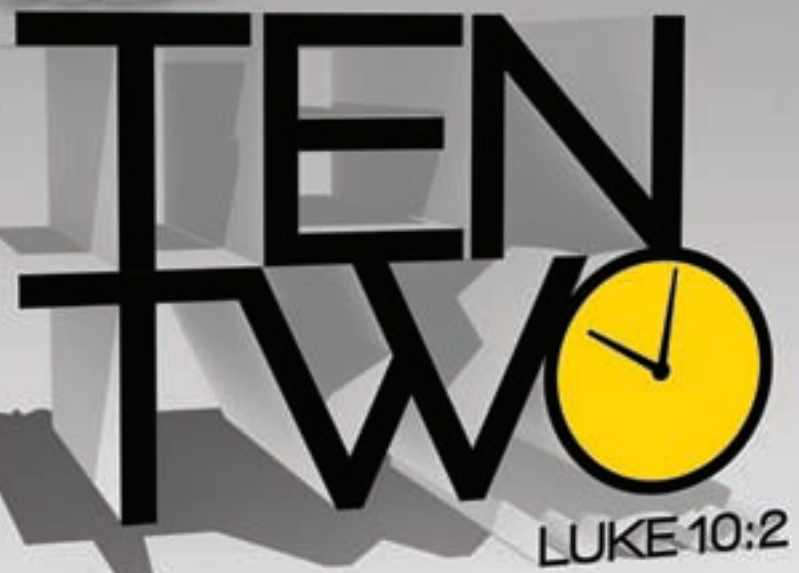
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namb.net/TenTwo

SPAN

Continued from page 1

Marty Sampson,* an associate pastor in Auburn, Ala., said he was drawn to SPAN out of deep, personal conviction that Southern Baptists have forgotten the importance of prayer. (He asked not to use his real name because he often travels to areas of the world that can be hostile to Christianity.)

“Most people don’t know how to pray for the fulfillment of the Great Commission because they don’t even know how to pray for themselves,” Sampson said. “I’m convinced the church lags behind in spreading the Gospel because we are depending on ourselves, our strategies and our plans as opposed to the power of God in response to intercessory prayer.”

“I’ve been on a personal journey in my spiritual life of learning to be dependent on Him. And the key to that is absolute surrender. Everything about my life, everything that I value, I’m going to put on the altar so that nothing takes precedence over God.”

What is SPAN?

SPAN began in 2012 when IMB President Tom Elliff called on Southern Baptist churches to recognize prayer’s indispensable role in the Great Commission and to redouble their efforts to bathe the

denomination’s international missions efforts in a “blast furnace” of prayer for the nations. Elliff said a “school of prayer” was needed to help fan the flames, and this summer that vision became reality as SPAN held its first training session.

The school is led by Gordon Fort, IMB senior vice president of prayer mobilization and training, who said its purpose is to teach students to walk closer with God, pray more fervently for spiritual awakening, intercede for missionaries and the nations and mobilize others to join in prayer.

The disciples didn’t ask the Lord to teach them how to heal people, cast out demons or feed 5,000, Fort said. “The only thing they asked Him was to teach them how to pray. In this spiritual discipline of prayer, I believe there are things that can be taught.”

Things like spiritual warfare, how to listen to God while praying, the role of fasting in prayer, how to pray Scripture and how to pray for the nations – just some of the subjects SPAN students cover.

Just studying the meaning of some of the Greek and Hebrew words for prayer made an impact on Scotty Tipper, a deacon at his church in south Georgia.

“The thing that hit me the hardest was that one of the words for prayer means ‘to cry out desperately, lament,’” he said. “Why don’t we pray that way all the time? To cry out for the missionaries? That God’s presence would be on them as the Holy Spirit leads them, that they would have a fruitful ministry, and that people would come into His kingdom.”

SPAN classes are designed to be intimate, no larger than 21 students.

Sessions run monthly; registration for the five-day experience is \$250 per person or \$450 per couple, which covers lodging, meals and conference materials. Students must complete homework before attending, including enlisting at least five prayer intercessors who will commit to pray for them before, during and after their time at the school.

Immersive experience

But SPAN isn’t focused on lectures and notes. Students spend as much time living out what they’ve learned as they do in class.

Large blocks of time are carved out of each day’s schedule for prayer.

While some is done alone, students are also assigned to small groups of three called “prayer triplets.” These groups are given daily prayer assignments, often praying over something that was just taught in class.

One evening, students were asked to pray through the night, signing up for 20-minute shifts to provide real-time prayer support for missionaries working in other time zones around the world.

“Everything has been interactive,” Allen said. “It hasn’t been like, ‘From 8 to 5 we’re going to fill you with a whole bunch of information, you’re going to

take a whole bunch of notes, and then good luck with that when you go back home.’ It’s been, ‘We’re going to teach you how to do this and then you’re going to go do it.’ And that’s the best way to learn because each one of us can walk out of here at the end of this week saying, ‘I can teach people in my church how to do this.’”

Allen also was quick to point out that SPAN isn’t the “R” word.

“It’s not a retreat,” she said. “This is serious kingdom business that we’ve been engaged in. A lot of people might say, ‘C’mon, they’re just praying!’ [How serious could it be?] But we’ve been constantly on our faces before the Father interceding for the lost and for missionaries around the world.”

Housing the school at IMB’s International Learning Center also comes with the added benefit of proximity to dozens of missionaries. The chance to regularly connect and pray with them during the week left a deep impression on Tipper, who says missionaries are his heroes.

“I met a family that’s got three children, all probably under 5 years old, and they’re going to the Horn of Africa,” he says. “They can’t tell me where they are going, but they’re giving it all up, ALL of the American dream – a house, car, money in the bank – all of that we say we have to have, they’ve given it up in obedience to Jesus saying, ‘Here am I Lord, send me.’”

To learn more about SPAN or to register for an upcoming session, visit imb.org/span. Questions can be emailed to SPAN@imb.org.

*Name changed

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Don Graham is an IMB senior writer.) **BR**

FBC East Flat Rock increases CP gifts, retires debt

By BUDDY OVERMAN | BSC Communications

When Brent Thomas became pastor of First Baptist Church (FBC) East Flat Rock in June he inherited a situation every pastor desires – a debt-free congregation.

“We burned the [mortgage] note my third or fourth Sunday as pastor. It’s an awesome situation that I walked into,” he said.

Thomas credits the previous pastor and the congregation’s generosity for their debt-free status, which will allow the church to expand ministry efforts in the community and abroad.

“There’s a freedom of being able to do exactly what God has called you to do without the worry of this debt hanging over your head,” he said. “It frees up a lot of possibilities with what you can do in regards to ministry.”

Three years ago FBC East Flat Rock, just a few miles south of Hendersonville, was burdened with nearly \$400,000 in debt. But the church committed to retire the debt by setting aside \$46,000 a year in the annual budget toward debt repayment, and through a fundraising campaign.

In addition, the church made a commitment to give 10 percent of the funds

See FBC page 11

Volunteers

Continued from page 1

Irene,” said Carroll Voliva. Both Carroll and his wife have health problems; rebuilding by themselves was not possible. “We didn’t get any help from FEMA and we didn’t know what we would do,” he said.

But some time after the storm hit, they talked to North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM), who have sent thousands of volunteers to help coastal residents like the Volivas recover. Soon the volunteers were working on a new house for Carroll and Cheryl. This month, the Volvias will move into their new house, built by NCBM volunteers, who will hand over the keys but no bill or mortgage.

If past patterns hold, there will be weeping for joy by both the homeowners and the volunteers on that day.

Multiply that joy by 76: That’s how many houses NCBM has rebuilt along the coast over the past two years. For the first three months or so after Irene, volunteers shoveled mud and cleared debris. By the fourth month, they began rebuilding, said Gerald Williams, a site coordinator for NCBM in Bayboro.

NCBM receives operating funds from the North Carolina Missions Offering taken up by North Carolina Baptist churches across the state; more than half of this year’s total offering will go to the organization. September is a time of emphasis for the offering and the ministries it funds. This year’s offering goal is \$2.1 million.

Disaster relief is the best-known and most visible of the 14 ministries the offering supports. “Disaster relief is important because it gives us a chance to meet the people one on one and share the gospel message with them,” Williams said. “Many of the people we have worked with in Pamlico County have church homes. Some do not, and we try to witness to them. Our crews always pray with the people that we help. Most of them we

“Disaster relief is important because it gives us a chance to meet the people one on one and share the gospel message with them.”

— Gerald Williams

Gerald Williams served as the North Carolina Baptist Men “blue hat” site coordinator for Bayboro, east of New Bern. N.C. Baptist Men has been helping rebuild. (BSC photo by K Brown)

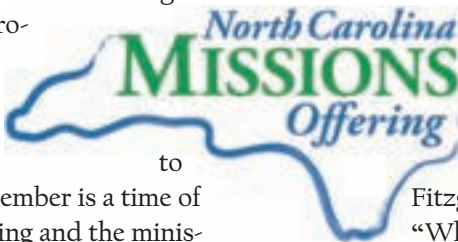
give a Bible to at the end of the job with the signatures of those who have worked on the home.”

He praised the partnership with Bayboro Baptist Church, which contributed their education building to house and feed volunteers.

“N.C. Baptist Men have made a huge impact on our community,” said Scott Fitzgerald, Bayboro pastor.

“When you drive around and see all of the yellow shirts, there is a sense of, wow, look at all those volunteers.”

“We had over 5,024 volunteers spend the night at our church over the last year, working on the disaster relief, and in that time all people know the yellow shirts are associated with N.C. Baptist Men. And we have heard it, time and time again, the appreciation from the people in the community as to the volunteers being here and what it has meant for this community,” Fitzgerald added.



AROUND THE STATE

Obituary

WILLIAM L. “BILL” CULBERTSON, 90, of Kernersville died May 14. He served in the U.S. Army during World War II and graduated with a bachelor’s degree from Furman University. He attended Southwestern Seminary.

He was a minister who led churches in Texas, South Carolina and North Carolina, including Boulevard Baptist Church, Raleigh, and First Baptist Church, Marshville, where he retired from full-time ministry in 1991.

After retirement he taught at Montgomery County Community College in Troy and pastored at Eldorado Baptist Church, Eldorado.

He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Frances L. Culbertson; daughter, Ann Flynn of Kernersville; son, Billy Culbertson Jr. of Colorado; sister, Ellen Sullivan of Mississippi; brothers, Grady Culbertson of South Carolina, and Bobby Culbertson of Florida; and four grandchildren.

Memorials to the Alzheimer’s Association, 3800 Shamrock Drive, Charlotte, NC 28215-3220; designate for research purposes.

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NC Baptist State Convention Annual Meeting, Nov. 11-12, Greensboro

Scouts

Continued from page 4

CBC, as the charter sponsor of Pack, Troop, and Crew 942, will no longer be affiliated with BSA due to the higher commitment to Scriptural teaching as accepted in traditional Christian values.

This moral standard is essential to uphold in policy as the Bible teaches that homosexuality is both a moral and behavioral issue.

CBC will end its charter and sponsorship with BSA on December 31, 2013.

Q: How will Calvary Baptist Church transition away from BSA?

A: The ending date of Dec. 31, 2013, will give a number of Scouts the opportunity to complete merit badges and Eagle Scout projects. Our Scouting leadership will assist boys in transitioning to other Scout troops. The church leadership and CBC Scout leaders are aligning with a newly formed group called "On My Honor," a national outdoor character development program for boys.

A national meeting will be held in Nashville, Tenn., in early September, and key leaders from the Scouting program and the church will attend and return with recommendations.

CBC and Scout leaders are preparing a transitional program to assist those who desire to stay with CBC's outdoor program for boys (camping, fishing, leadership training, etc.).

Q: What will the new character development program for boys include?

A: It will include similar components as Pack, Troop, and Crew BSA programs.

Boys who are members, as well as those who are not members, of CBC are welcome to join the new organization. Many activities of the current Scouting program will be available without the modified membership standards of BSA.

Q: Where can I find more information?

A: For more information, please contact one of the following leaders: Scouts – Truett Williams at twilliams@calvarynow.com; Guy Wentink at guy.wentink@wellsfargo.com; George Burns at George@anchorfinancial.org; Cubs – Sheri King at sking@calvarynow.com; or Bobby Keegan at cltkeegan@earthlink.net. Or, go to <http://www.calvarynow.com/scouts>. **BR**

Military chaplain guidelines address same-sex unions

By MIKE EBERT | Baptist Press

The North American Mission Board (NAMB) has issued new guidelines for Southern Baptist military chaplains in light of the U.S. military's recognition of same-sex marriage. The guidelines reiterate Southern Baptist doctrine and the expectation that SBC chaplains will not participate in or attend wedding ceremonies for gay members of the military.

"Our chaplains want to uphold the authority and relevancy of Scripture while continuing to serve in a very diverse setting," said Doug Carver, the retired Army major general who leads NAMB's chaplaincy efforts. "We believe these updated guidelines will help them do that while still sharing the love and the hope of Christ with everyone."

The updated guidelines are being issued in response to the military's repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" and the U.S. Supreme Court's abolishment of the Defense of Marriage Act. The U.S. military requires all chaplains to be endorsed by a recognized denomination. NAMB serves as the endorsing entity on behalf of Southern Baptists.

The updated guidelines address four specific areas – doctrine, pastoral care, restrictions and pluralism.

"We are confident that our chaplains are already conducting their ministries with sound doctrine and in accordance to Baptist Faith and Message 2000," Carver said.

"These guidelines simply provide clarification on specific issues and give our chaplains the freedom and protection for their ministry. We are also obligated to communicate to U.S. military officials about the expectations we have for our chaplains."

NAMB President Kevin Ezell expressed support for SBC military chaplains and emphasized the need for Southern Baptists to remember them in prayer.

"For many members of our military – especially those deployed around the globe – our chaplains are the only pastors they have. That's why it is so important that they uphold sound doctrine while showing everyone the love and forgiveness Jesus offers. We all need to be committed to praying for them in these challenging days."

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Mike Ebert is a writer for the North American Mission Board.) **BR**

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Toronto: Rendezvous Church seeks to ‘spark’ change

By MELISSA LILLEY | BSC Communications

Among midtown’s affluent, professional class most lack any actual physical needs, unlike Toronto’s Parkdale neighborhood just eight miles south with a high concentration of poverty and violence.

To the north and east of Parkdale is Scarborough, one of Canada’s most diverse communities, with about 57 percent of residents born outside the country.

Three unique areas with different challenges, needs and much spiritual darkness – which is why Scott Rourk is starting churches in each of them. In the past year, 22 North Carolina Baptist churches have partnered with Toronto church planters, like Rourk. More partners are needed in the Greater Toronto Area, which is less than five percent evangelical and home to more than 5.5 million people.

After four years in Canada, Rourk planted Oasis Church and is now seeking to plant 10 churches in 10 years across Toronto. Rourk grew up in a suburb of Atlanta, Ga., and has planted churches in Belarus and New York. “Soon the whole world will be urban centers. The cities matter to God,” he said. “I came here because of who God has here. You have to love the city; you can’t just survive in the city. Our hope is to transform the city through the gospel message.”

Rendezvous Church in midtown, which meets on the University of Toronto campus, was the first of 10 Rendezvous churches that Rourk is praying will be planted across the city. The Parkdale and Scarborough churches also launched this year.

Love the city

Building up to a church plant Rourk invests in communities, forms relationships and earns the trust of residents. For about three years now Rourk has invested in Parkdale, even helping start a soccer league that meets twice a week.

Rendezvous Church hosted a soccer/Vacation Bible School camp this summer at a public school in Parkdale, as well as a SparkGood camp. Weeklong SparkGood camps were also held in midtown and Scarborough.

“We help kids spark a good idea, and then we help them go and do it,” Rourk said. “We help them think about one risk they could take that would make their community a better place.”

Other Rendezvous summer outreach efforts included prayer walking, block parties, street festivals and a bike repair clinic in midtown where volunteers repaired



Scott Rourk, left, talks with a woman who lives near Rendezvous Church, a church plant in Toronto. (Contributed photos)



A volunteer works with girls to make salvation bracelets, a craft project that allows workers to share how to come to faith in Christ.

more than 700 bikes. “We try to create those moments, experiences and environments that will bring Christians and non-Christians together,” Rourk said. “That’s not just going to happen on a Sunday morning.”

Servant evangelism, such as picking up trash, is also important to Rendezvous Church because people need to know the church cares about their city.

“Our overarching goal is to better the city of Toronto. We came to seek the peace and prosperity of the city,” Rourk said. “People here love to serve, and they care about their city. We are sharing Jesus’ love in practical ways, and they find out why we are doing what we do. It’s totally relational.”

Rendezvous is also reaching out through canned food drives, packing and distributing hygiene bags through Un2Others Ministries, and coffee house evangelism.

Toronto culture

Rourk was invited to a public school with a rather unusual request – explain to students the meaning of Christmas and Easter.

“People don’t have a Christian foundation. They are so distant even from knowing why they celebrate their holidays. We have to go all the way back to creation,” he said.

Rourk described Canada as a mosaic of cultures, with people bringing their customs and religion with them. More than half of Toronto’s population was born outside Canada and more than 30 percent of Toronto residents speak a language at home other than English or French. Half of all immigrants have lived in Toronto less than 15 years.

“You have to earn your right to share the gospel,” Rourk said. “Worldviews don’t change overnight. Religion is so intertwined with culture that it really is God having to change their life.”

Kate Croft served as a summer intern with Rendezvous Church. She said ministry in Toronto requires patience and willingness to listen and respect. “You have to be willing to listen. ... That wall of pride prevents so much from coming in,” she said.

Croft, 22, attends college in Colorado but is from Oakville, about 30 minutes south of Toronto. The past two summers she served in community outreach in Oakville and this summer was determined not to come “home.” But she was obedient to go where God called and is planning to return to Toronto to serve after college. “Part of being a Christian is to listen to God, and He’s probably pushing you out of your comfort zone,” she said. “This summer I have learned how to put myself aside and serve others. I have learned how to love others by how God loves me.”

Partnerships are valuable

Rendezvous Church depends on support from interns like Croft, as well as church planters. Sath Arulvarathan and his wife Charmaine are moving into the Parkdale area to help lead the new Parkdale church plant.

“We feel called to establish ourselves in Toronto. Parkdale is the most diverse area I’ve seen,” Sath said.

He asked specifically for prayers against spiritual warfare. “Church planting can be draining and lonely. We’re all under constant spiritual warfare. Please pray Ephesians 5, that we may put on God’s full armor.”

Rendezvous also depends on long-term church partnerships.

“If you just come one time, you’ll never see the fruit of your labor,” Rourk said. “If you can commit with us four or five years, you’ll see a church planted.”

Three churches from Rowan and Cabarrus associations served together for a week this summer and worked alongside Rourk and Rendezvous volunteers. The trip came together after Ken Clark, pastor of Enon Baptist Church in Salisbury, participated in a Toronto vision tour last year with the Office of Great Commission Partnerships of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. “You don’t have to go across the world to impact the world; the world has come to Toronto,” Clark said.

To learn how to involve your church in a Toronto partnership, visit www.ncbaptist.org/gcp. **BR**

1 million Syrian refugee children gripped by upheaval

By CHARLES BRADDIX | Baptist Press

“I am staying,” a Baptist pastor in Syria said. “They tell me to travel, to leave, to emigrate, but I tell them I am staying.”

He is one of several pastors who serve in Baptist churches throughout Syria caught up in civil war.

“I am staying for the church, to keep the message of Jesus as a light for the lost and frightened,” the pastor said. “I am staying because the harvest is plentiful. I am staying to serve the needy.”

The pastor, weeping, quoted the prophet Jeremiah, “‘Oh that my head was water and my eyes were pools of water, that I may cry for the dead of my people.’ “Even though we are living in difficult times, let us not stop being faithful to our Lord.”

Every day the numbers rise as Syria’s crisis rages out of control and spills across borders into neighboring countries. There are now more than 2 million refugees, 5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 100,000 dead. “This is an unparalleled challenge,” said Don Alan*, a senior missions strategist for the Middle East. “It is destabilizing the whole region.”

Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq and

Egypt struggle to cope with the escalating Syrian refugee situation. Within Syria, civilians are caught between armed rebels and government troops.

Over a period of three days in mid-August, 30,000 Syrians crossed the border into northern Iraq, overwhelming refugee camps. Drinking water and sanitation immediately became critical needs.

Typically 6,000 Syrians a day flee their nation, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The influx into Iraq nearly doubled that figure.

Hundreds of civilians were killed, meanwhile, and thousands wounded as a result of a chemical weapons attack on the suburbs of Damascus. Both sides in the conflict accuse the other of this violation of international law. Most of the world’s superpowers, however, suspect the Syrian government as the perpetrator and are considering punitive action.

A regional risk assessment consultant who advises Christian organizations said, “Analysts seem to believe that if such action does occur it will be a limited strike on Syrian government targets.”

He urged Christian workers in the region to be diligent, increasing their situational awareness, paying close attention to how they may be perceived by



A Muslim boy with a war-scarred face, now a refugee in Jordan, is among the 1 million children who have left Syria to escape the two-year-long civil war. (IMB photo)

the local population and national governments. The consultant said the possibility of punitive military action against Syria increases the risk.

“The whole region in the Middle East is suffering under oppression,” the Syrian pastor lamented. “Everything is under threat – our choices, lives and future. There is great pain and depression.”

Valerie Amos, United Nations under-secretary general for humanitarian affairs and emergency relief coordinator, said, “We are not only watching the destruction of a country but also of its people.” Half of Syria’s 2 million refugees are children; three-fourths of them are under the age of 11. Many are undocumented and easily fall prey to exploitation. They dis-

play symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and experience elevated levels of depression.

“What is at stake is nothing less than the survival and well-being of a generation of innocents,” UNHCR High Commissioner Antonio Guterres said. “The youth of Syria are losing their homes, their family members and their future. Even after they have crossed a border to safety, they are traumatized, depressed and in need of a reason for hope.”

Jeff Palmer, executive director of Baptist Global Response (BGR), said BGR and its partners have provided more than \$750,000 in relief goods for those suffering in the crisis.

Assistance comes in the form of emergency food packets, hygiene kits, materials to construct basic shelters and small amounts of medicine. “It is a small amount compared to the ongoing need,” Palmer said, “but we have been able to direct what we have to some key areas and through some key partners.”

*Name changed for security reasons.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Charles Braddix is a writer for the International Mission Board based in Europe. For more information about Baptist Global Response’s Syrian relief efforts, go to <http://www.baptistglobalresponse.com/projects/view/>.) **BR**

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SBC ethicists: Criteria for ‘just war’ not met

By GREGORY TOMLIN | Baptist Press

The use of chemical weapons against civilians is a human tragedy with moral urgency, but the United States should not intervene in Syria because the conditions for a “just war” have not been met, according to two Southern Baptist ethicists.

Russell D. Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission, said in an article on Religion News Service (RNS) Sept. 3 that the regime of Syrian President Bashar al Assad is “lawless and tyrannical,” and the first principle of just war – a just cause – has been met.

“That said, there are other principles missing here, both to justify action morally and to justify it prudentially,” Moore stated.

Daniel Heimbach, senior professor of Christian ethics at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, offered a slightly different take on Syria, stating that the United States lacks a basis for intervening “in the internal affairs of a distinctly sovereign and separate state.”

“I see here no legitimately interpreted just cause sufficient to justify the United States going to war with Syria merely be-

cause parties in a civil war are doing bad things to each other,” Heimbach said in comments provided to Baptist Press.

“No one is attacking or threatening to attack the United States or any ally of the United States. In fact, should the U.S. go to war with Syria it will vastly increase the risk of Syrian attack on U.S. allies in the region,” said Heimbach, who was instrumental in developing President George H.W. Bush’s just war ethic for the 1991 Gulf War when he served as deputy executive secretary of the Domestic Policy Council.

Heimbach noted, “The meaning and interpretation of a just cause for war (in a just war ethic) requires the nation being attacked (Syria) to have done, or to be doing, or to be moving toward doing some terrible wrong toward the attacking nation (United States) – not merely doing something bad within their own borders against their own people.”

The Christian just war ethic referenced by Heimbach dates to the days of the fourth-century bishop Augustine of Hippo. Faced with barbarian invasions, Augustine developed criteria for the participation of Christians in warfare.

The theory was developed through the early 20th century and now includes



DANIEL HEIMBACH

the ideas that wars must have a just cause; be declared by a lawful authority as a response to an imminent threat; be a last resort; be prosecuted according to principles of proportionality and non-combatant immunity; and have a reasonable probability of success.

“I do not see, from President Obama, a reasonable opportunity to prevail,” Moore said in the RNS article compiled by culture writer Jonathan Merritt, “or even a definition of what prevailing would mean.

“Regime change is not the point of this action, and even if it were, we don’t yet know who the good guys are,” Moore said. “Replacing one set of terrorists with another does not bring about justice or peace.

“I agree with the President on the moral urgency of Syria,” Moore said, “and I morally reject the crypto-isolationist voices that tell us, in every era, to tend to ‘America First’ and leave defenseless people around the world on their

own. In this case, though, the administration is demonstrating neither an imminent threat to national security nor a feasible means to alleviate the very real human rights crisis in Syria.”

The debate over a military strike on Syria stems from a gas attack when an estimated 1,400 civilians died Aug. 21 in a rebel-held area. President Obama said in a White House press briefing that military intelligence had linked the Assad regime to the attack.

“This attack is an assault on human dignity. It also presents a serious danger to our national security,” Obama said in comments on Aug. 31. “It risks making a mockery of the global prohibition on the use of chemical weapons. It endangers our friends and our partners along Syria’s borders, including Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Lebanon and Iraq. It could lead to escalating use of chemical weapons or their proliferation to terrorist groups who would do our people harm.”

Moore and Heimbach both acknowledge that the Obama administration is in a deep hole in the court of world opinion. Both, however, say military action to improve the reputation of the president or to prove something about the United States is the wrong course. **BR**

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FBC

Continued from page 5

collected through the fundraising campaign to missions – eight percent to the Cooperative Program and two percent to the local association.

“I’ve never heard of anything like this before,” Thomas said. “We give percentages from the annual budget to the Convention and local association, but in addition to that, the congregation tithed on the money they raised through the building program.”

In three years the church raised more than \$240,000 through the fundraising campaign and paid the remainder of the debt through its annual budget. In the process, East Flat Rock also tripled its annual gifts to the Cooperative Program.

Thomas believes the ability to retire debt and simultaneously increase financial support for missions illustrates God’s faithfulness.

“God honors those who give back. He

blesses us individually and I believe He blesses us as a congregation,” he said.

Cooperation for the Kingdom

Thomas said the church’s gifts to state and local missions reflect their desire to glorify God through stewardship and through cooperation with other believers to advance God’s Kingdom.

“Our folks are incredibly loving and generous, but their greatest qualities are their passion for Jesus and their willingness to do their part in furthering the gospel,” he said.

Churches often encourage individuals to tithe, but Thomas said churches can do better when it comes to planned giving and good stewardship.

“We talk about tithing individually, but we as a church need to give back through our budgets,” Thomas said.

“The Cooperative Program is a great way

we can do that and connect with other churches to further the gospel.”

In 2011, Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee President and CEO Frank Page urged all Southern Baptist churches to accept the 1% Challenge, an initiative that encourages churches to increase their giving to the Cooperative Program by 1 percentage point of their budgets. On the state level, an additional \$6 million would be raised annually if every North Carolina Baptist church increased their Cooperative Program giving by 1 percent.

Thomas believes every church can participate in the 1% Challenge, regardless of size or financial need. In some cases, churches may need to shift funds from in-

ward focused ministries to help support missions abroad.

“I think the problem with many churches is an inward mentality that says ‘we are the Church; this is who we exist for.’ But the Cooperative Program helps us understand that it takes all of us working together.”

Thomas encourages church leaders to inform their congregations about the Cooperative Program and prayerfully consider how they can increase their annual support.

“The Cooperative Program enhances ministry and furthers God’s Kingdom,” he said. “That’s the key – furthering His Kingdom and not our own.”

To learn more about the Cooperative Program visit www.ncbaptist.org/cp. **B**



I Am a Church Member paints hopeful picture

I Am a Church Member
by Thom S. Rainer
(B&H Publishing, 2013)

It seems there have been few, if any, recent studies that have reached positive conclusions on the overall health of churches. By and large they have painted a bleak outlook on the direction of God’s chosen vessel of the Great Commission. Thom Rainer paints a different picture of what might be in *I Am a Church Member*.

Working from the obvious premise that overall church health is a byproduct of the health of its members, the president and CEO of LifeWay Christian Resources presents six commitments that church members must make if they are to function as biblically focused church members. These are not simple doctrinal affirmations or even the written statements provided at the end of each chapter. For most they would require a deep and lasting change of heart and mind. They constitute a change in belief and action.

Rainer’s first pledge is: **I will be a functioning church member.** For Rainer, biblical church members “give abundantly and serve without hesitation.”

These two commitments come from the idea that church members have the love of Christ dwelling within them and it guides their life. It is a natural reaction to the knowledge that as members of a church we are part of a body. We are

brought together to function as one in Christ, even with our distinct gifts and characteristics.

The second pledge is: **I will be a unifying church member.** No church can claim vitality without unity.

Church members must put to death gossip and other negative talk. These have no benefit for the mission of the believer. These are replaced with forgiveness. Forgiveness breeds unity. Rainer writes, “church unity is torn

apart when members refuse to forgive, when any member is too prideful to grant forgiveness.”

The third pledge is: **I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires.** I often tell folks in my church that God does not really care what they think. He definitely does not care about the preferences of their pastor. Much of the disputes and upheaval in the local church

begins with the phrase “I want” or “I think.” These are a poor substitute for “thus says the Lord.” Rainer encourages us to take on the roll of a servant, making our minds and attitude that of Christ’s. In the end, church is not about us, and all about Him.

Rainer’s fourth exhortation is: **I will pray for my church leaders.** I have worked in churches where I was the only minister. There have been other times when I worked with a team of folks serving together. However, in both situations I have still found plenty of time to be lonely. Serving as God’s under-



shepherd requires long hours, precious time away from family, and carrying the burdens (often alone) of many of the people in your care. Pastors need prayer. Rainer encourages his readers to pray for pastors and their families, pray for their protection, and pray for their mental and physical health. I do not know how often I have been to the breaking point only to find someone praying for me. Just the knowledge that they have taken my name before our Heavenly Father has reenergized my outlook.

Part of being a biblical church member is leading others to do the same. Rainer considers this with his fifth pledge: **I will lead my family to be healthy church members.** The family and the church are really inseparable. Therefore, we must pray together, worship together, and fall deeply in love with Christ together.

Rainer writes, “as I grow more deeply in love with my church, I will do all I can in God’s power to bring my family with me. We will pray for our church leaders together, we will worship together. And we will serve together.”

In many ways the sixth pledge serves to tie the others together: **I will treasure church membership as a gift.** So often we treat church membership as something we are entitled to because of our goodness or lineage. However, being a member of the church of the living God is a wonderful and marvelous gift – a gift that demands a response. Rainer writes, “when we receive a gift with true appreciation, we naturally want to respond to the Giver. We, therefore, see service to God as a natural outflow of the joy of our salvation and the consequent joy of our church membership. We consider it a privilege to serve the King, so we look for those opportunities at the church where we serve.”

I have served six Baptist churches in various ministry capacities since I was 17 years old. They each have had different struggles. They have each had struggles common to all churches. After reading *I Am a Church Member*, I have concluded that the struggles of each congregation were tied up to a commitment problem in one or more of these areas that Rainer lays out before us. If we are to love and treasure the church of the Living God in a similar fashion to Christ – He gave Himself for her – we must all make the commitment: **I Am a Church Member.**

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Micheal Pardue is pastor of First Baptist Icard in Connelly Springs.) **B**



MICHEAL PARDUE
Book Review

A few tips for prospective pastors

Baptist Press

It's a wonder to me why some seminary hasn't come up with a specialized advanced degree in "Search Committee Negotiating." No doubt they would be flooded with applications from pastors wishing to master that mysterious discipline and more than a few laypeople wishing to learn what's going on here.

From what follows, you might conclude that I see myself as an expert on pastor search groups. Believe me, I don't. In fact, anyone who does is suspect in my book.

They're all different, these small teams of church members assigned to "go find our next preacher and bring him back alive." They subscribe to a thousand different philosophies and generally will plot their modus operandi according to the will of their strongest member or the say-so of their chairman.

Moreover, I am well aware that not all pastors are as forthcoming with committees as they should be.

In both cases, they reason that "If I were to tell the whole truth, no one would want to [come to this church] [employ me]."

In a half-century of ministry, I dealt with somewhere around 100 search committees. So, while I'm no expert, I'm not without a certain amount of experience on these pastor-hunter teams.

So, here are a few thoughts on how many search committees function.

1) The committee will begin their work with a strange blend of humility and confidence.

Six months into their search, after a thousand phone calls, hundreds of letters and emails, dozens of dead-ends, and all kinds of fruitless detours, the humility will still be there – stronger than ever, even – but the

confidence will have been replaced by fatigue and frustration.

This is a dangerous time for a committee; fatigue can cause many an error of judgment. This is when the church needs to double and triple its prayer for them. The problem, of course, is that by now the church is tired of waiting, tired of special prayer meetings for the committee without seeing results, and tired of being tired.



JOE MCKEEVER
Guest Column

The committee which began their work with such high hopes and fresh energy now just wants to get it over. Pray for them. They may end up grabbing the next guy just to "get 'er done."

2) While most committees I've dealt with at length have been the cream of the crop, churches do not always select their most spiritually sensitive people. Sometimes it's the most outspoken ones.

Pastors go into these things thinking they are dealing with the sharpest and godliest people in the church when they sit in a room with a search committee. A wise prospective pastor quickly figures out which is which.

Sometimes, they learn the hard way – and too late! – that the chairman was chosen because he lobbied for the position, bullied the others into submission, or intends to hand-pick a pastor whom he can control. When the preacher investigates a little, he may find that one or two families make up the entire committee. None of this is good.

There are clues available as to the quality of the committee's makeup if the pastor will pay attention. Notice how they relate to one another and who does most of the talking. Notice the promises and guarantees they're willing to make to get a pastor. (Keep in mind that the more mature a committee, the less likely they are to

promise the moon and to guarantee anything. They see themselves as servants of the congregation, not rulers.) Get agreements in writing and ask for them to be signed by every conceivable officer of the church.

3) You sometimes get the impression the committee wants to get this job over with as soon as possible. Not good for them and definitely not good for you. Take your time, pastor, and encourage them to do likewise. When a search committee invited me to meet them for lunch at a cafeteria and invited me right off the bat to become their pastor, I had no difficulty declining. These folks were simply interested in bringing in a warm body, it appeared, and I was handy. What was their hurry? I wondered, and never found out.

I counsel search committees against falling in love too quickly. If they do – they return from their first visit swimmy-headed, certain they have found the pastor of their dreams – they shut down the process too quickly. Like any lover captivated by another person, they do not want to hear anything negative, and will want to get the other to the altar before he/she changes their mind. Not good at all. The stories I could tell you!

4) They may ask some hard questions, taking pride in that great list of questions. Often, however, the members cannot tell whether the answer was excellent, flawed or awful so long as it was given with style and grace.

Every pastor in our denomination gets asked certain questions by search committees. Currently, it's something like, "So, pastor ... (ahem) ... tell us your position on Calvinism." A generation ago, it was: "What do you believe about the inerrancy of Scriptures?" A generation before that, committees wanted to know your eschatology. Before that, it was creation/evolution.

"Ah, yes. I'm glad you asked that question. The issue of Calvinism and Arminianism has been plaguing our

See McKeever page 15

Thankful for North Carolina Baptist associations

Our state convention was founded in 1830 because North Carolina Baptists believed that more could be accomplished for God's Kingdom by working together. Churches believed in the value of cooperation – a principle that we as Southern Baptists still very much believe in today.

Not only did churches come together back in 1830, but 14 Baptist associations also united and established this Convention. We have grown from 14 Baptist associations to 78 associations that help involve churches in ministry and missions locally, nationally and throughout the world.

Associations play a significant role in the life and work of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. We value and need the wisdom and influence of directors of missions/associational mis-

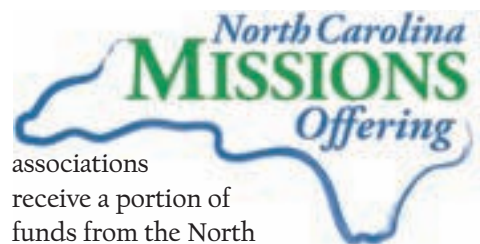
sionaries and association staff members, as these individuals best know their communities, their churches and the context in which they serve. I am grateful for the godly associational leaders in North Carolina who invest their lives into seeing people across our state grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ and become engaged in missions.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Throughout the year associational leaders are involved in many training and equipping opportunities. This year a number of directors of missions and associational missionaries have given their time to participate in Great Commission Initiative training. Through this training they are learning much about developing strategies for evangelizing and discipling the unchurched and unreached people groups in their local communities.

Every year North Carolina Baptist



associations receive a portion of funds from the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO) for local mission projects that help engage their congregations in missions. From feeding ministries to renovating houses for people in need, Baptist associations are doing wonderful ministry because of your contributions to NCMO. The associations plan and host events such as mission rallies and disaster relief training. At the present, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is partnering with two associations on a pilot project to identify unreached people groups in their area with the hope that this project will be expanded all across the state and contribute to the planting of many new congregations.

Over the past several months I have

traveled across the state meeting with associational missionaries about the Convention's new five-year strategy. I am encouraged by the strong support from almost all directors of missions regarding the new strategy. As we look toward 2014, I am optimistic and excited about the ways state convention staff will serve and support local association leadership and church leaders in the development and implementation of strategies to impact lostness through disciple-making.

Your Convention staff is prepared to serve your association as you seek to fulfill the Great Commission through an Acts 1:8 model for missions. Lester Evans in the Associational Partnerships Office is eager to assist at your request.

Thank you, North Carolina Baptist associations, for your dedication to advancing God's Kingdom. It is a joy to work in partnership with you.

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ ... striving side by side for the faith of the gospel." Philippians 1:27 **BR**

Vision vs. ideas

When I met with the *Biblical Recorder's* Editor Search Committee for my first candidate interview in March 2011, one on the committee asked me this question, "What is your vision for the *Biblical Recorder*?" I quickly responded, "I don't have one."

That reply might seem to be a killer for the discussion. It certainly produced curious stares from the committee. But I added, "I don't believe God gives someone a vision for a ministry without first giving him the assignment. I have a lot of ideas about the *Biblical Recorder's* future, but unless God gives me the assignment to lead the *Biblical Recorder*, I do not expect to have a vision." I proceeded to share my ideas for leading the *Recorder*.

I believe there is a big difference between a God-given vision and good ideas.

Everyone has ideas about the direc-

tion of their church, denomination or a specific ministry. There is no shortage of ideas. But vision is very different.

When God began preparing Moses to lead the Hebrew people out of 400 years of Egyptian slavery, he did not give Moses His specific vision until he was willing to accept the assignment. There is no doubt that Moses had "ideas." One of his ideas resulted in the murder of an Egyptian, forcing him to flee the country. Not a good idea!



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

Herding animals on the back side of Midian was not in Moses' playbook. The man who was raised in Egyptian royalty, became a penniless fugitive.

Forty years later, after God finished training the future leader, He got Moses' attention through a burning bush. The reluctant leader had no further ideas of his own. Frankly, he was unsure of God's plan for deliverance. But when he finally yielded to God's call, Moses received

the fulness of God's plan. At that point it became his unstoppable vision.

He gripped the vision, and the vision gripped him. God instructed Moses to go inform the elders of Israel that God sent him to deliver the Hebrew people. He did not call for a vote. He simply gave them the vision he had received from God. The rest is history.

When the deliverance from Egypt was complete, the people had "ideas" about how Moses could do his job. As frustrating as it was, he stayed with the vision God gave him.

In the process scripture points out that Moses disobeyed God and the people disobeyed God, rebelling against the leader He gave to the people.

The New Testament letter of Hebrews distinctly condemns the disobedience of the Hebrew people in the wilderness (Hebrews 3:15). Their unbelief was connected to their unwillingness to follow the leadership of Moses. God was not interested in their ideas.

I am not so naive to believe that every

leader's vision is to be blindly followed. In some cases, I am convinced that leaders have not asked God for His direction for a specific church or ministry. Some are trying to live out a vision of their own design. Their folly should be obvious. If not, one day it will be.

But, most pastors have been prepared by God for their assignment and have prayerfully embraced God's vision for the people they lead.

Most are genuine servants, hard-working and deeply committed to the truth of scripture. They endure unjust criticism and unrealistic expectations. They live sacrificially, they love the people they lead and have a strong desire to glorify God.

Let God bless your life through the vision He has given your leaders. Heed the warning of Hebrews 3:8-9.

Next month is Pastor Appreciation Month. I encourage you to pray for your pastor and find ways to encourage him. If you have other church staff, please bless them, also. **BR**

In Whose Name will you pray?

Have you ever considered the name in which you pray? While this question might entertain a theology class, it is now the subject of a landmark case before the United States Supreme Court called *Town of Greece v. Galloway*. On Nov. 6, 2013, the United States Supreme Court will hear arguments whether local clergy and others have the liberty to pray according to the convictions and teachings of their faith when delivering invocations before town board meetings. If you as a pastor are asked to give the invocation before any town function, this case will impact you as the outcome may pit your religious beliefs on how to pray squarely against efforts to create a state mandate on how to pray.

Since the First Continental Congress, our national legislature has opened up congressional sessions with prayer. The United States Supreme Court observed this long-standing tradition in *Marsh v. Chambers* where the Court first took up the issue of legislative prayer. In *Marsh*, the Court noted "The opening of sessions of legislative and other deliberative public bodies with prayer is deeply embedded in the history and tradition of this country."

The Court pointed out that "the Continental Congress, beginning in 1774, adopted the traditional procedure of opening its sessions with a prayer offered by a paid chaplain" and that "the First Congress, as one of its early items of business, adopted the policy of selecting a chaplain to open each session with prayer."



JOEL OSTER
Guest Column

The Court concluded, "Clearly the men who wrote the First Amendment Religion Clause did not view paid legislative chaplains and opening prayers as a violation of that Amendment, for the practice of opening sessions with prayer has continued without interruption ever since that early session of Congress." And if there were any doubts as to the importance of this long-standing practice, the Court put those to rest in stating, "In light of the unambiguous and unbroken history of more than 200 years, there can be no doubt that the practice of opening legislative sessions with prayer has become part of the fabric of our society."

But groups like Americans United for Separation of Church and State, who filed the lawsuit to stop the prayer practice in Greece, New York, were not content to leave this ruling unchallenged.

Rather than mounting a direct attack on the Supreme Court's opinion in *Marsh*, it is seeking to undermine the practice of legislative prayer by challenging how and to whom those prayers are given. They complained that the volunteers chose to give too many prayers in Jesus name, and suggested that the Town has an obligation to limit or censor the way people pray.

We have represented the Town of Greece from the very beginning of this case, and will continue to defend them before the U.S. Supreme Court. It is critical to religious liberty in this country that pastors be able to pray according to their own conscience, and not according to a governmental mandate on prayer.

So on Nov. 6, 2013, the highest court in America will take up this issue.

This case will impact your town and state. It is highly likely that your local governmental bodies open their sessions with prayer, consistent with the founding father's practice. And you might be asked to give the invocation to bring solemnity to the proceedings. The question will become – in whose name will you pray?

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This column by Joel Oster, senior legal counsel for Alliance Defense Fund, first appeared at speakup-movement.org.) **BR**

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

(ISSN 0279-8182)

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

Volume 179 No. 19
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Subscriptions

- Individual subscriptions, \$15.99 (one year); \$27.99 (two years); \$39.99 (three years)
- Bulk Plan (10+) \$11.50
- Family Plan, \$12.50
- Club Plan, \$13.50
- Single copies, .60 cents each.

Payable in advance. North Carolina sales tax is included.

Publication

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

Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, NC 27676.

Postmaster

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

September 22

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

September 29

The Pressure of Words

Focal Passage: James 3:1-18

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Who are we kidding? Why teach children such a universal lie? We’ve all faced situations where we tried to deny the destructive power of words, but we still walked away with pain and scars. With disproportionate power like a horse’s bit or ship’s rudder, the tongue can deliver love or hatred, unity or division, peace or war. No wonder James compared the tongue to a fire! On June 30, 19 members of the Granite Mountain Hotshots from the Prescott (Arizona) Fire Department died in the midst of an insurmountable wildfire. While our hearts go out to families impacted by the destruction of physical flames, we rarely think of the devastation of the tongue. How many lives have been destroyed by the wildfire of the tongue? For how much verbal destruction are you and I personally responsible?

I first heard the term “two-faced” when I was a child. I learned that although people don’t have two faces they sometimes pretend to love people when

they don’t. James reminds us that praising the Lord on Sunday doesn’t mean you rightly represent Him on Monday. If we walk by the flesh we will try to convince others of Christ’s Lordship over our lives while simultaneously pursuing the lordship of self. John warned, “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen” (1 John 4:20).

When I took voice lessons in college, I learned the value of vocal line. Vocal line means that whether one is singing at the bottom, middle or top of his range his tone quality must be the same. When we face the difficult, ordinary or high times in life, are we displaying a consistent faith? James warns us of the two enemies of spiritual consistency: jealousy and selfish ambition. These enemies will produce disorder and evil, but consistent love produces true wisdom, righteousness and peace. Which fruits are on your tree?



TROY RUST
Writer, Hurdle Mills

Focal Passage: James 4:1-10

In our modern consumer culture people often search for churches based on a predetermined shopping list that doesn’t necessarily prioritize the characteristics of a true New Testament church. If they don’t get what they want at one location, they shop for another. If the new destination disappoints, the search will resume. The hidden deception in this approach lies in the assumption that church is about what people want, not what God demands.

James noted that quarrels and conflicts among God’s people come from pleasures that wage war against them.

These illicit pleasures hijack the believer’s prayer life, turning it from sweet fellowship with God to a recitation of self-love. When love for God is no longer our supreme motivation, the church becomes an outpost of worldliness covered in religious veneer. Desire and envy (James 4:2) don’t always come in a seedy pack-

age. The grace of God provides our only escape from carnality’s trap. The same God who saved us by grace continually leads us by grace.

As the hymn states, His graces is greater than all our sin. Consequently, we are able to fulfill scriptures commands – submit to God, resist the devil, draw near to God (James 4:7-8) – where we couldn’t when we were lost. Before the new birth we were children of wrath who served the devil (Ephesians 2:1-3) and were unable to come to Jesus (John 6:44). As new creations we are called to demonstrate the heart of repentance that goes with salvation. James called his readers to reestablish clean hands and a pure heart (Psalm 24:3-4) and to be broken over their sin.

Speaking on ministerial integrity, the evangelist Bailey Smith once said, “I’ve never seen a humble man fall.” While we are tempted to bow to the demands of the world and seeks its praises, God promised to exalt people who humble themselves before Him. Though some conflict in life is unavoidable, let us pray that God will deliver us from conflicts of our own making.

September 22

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

September 29

Salvation Offered

Focal Passage: John 3:1-16

I recently had the privilege of meeting a new co-worker who has just left the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. We have had conversations that have given me insight and knowledge about her religious background. Now, as I try to witness to her and talk through many issues with her, I found the lesson this week to be a great guide in how to direct our conversations.

First, I had to find out if she was even interested in learning more about Christianity. She had called herself a Christian her whole religious life, but was heavily entangled in the rules of the Mormon religion. She has described it as being in a cloud and not being able to see clearly. She is definitely interested in seeing clearly now! In our scripture passage, Jesus used a statement about being born again (John 3:3) to prompt a response of interest or disinterest from Nicodemus.

Second, I needed to do my best to find out what questions my co-worker had about what it means to be saved. Nicodemus demonstrated his interest in knowing more by asking questions that led to

Jesus’ description of what it means to be born again. Thankfully, my co-worker has indicated to me that she really is interested in finding out more about a relationship with Jesus. She is open to visiting churches and asks me very direct questions about my faith.

Third, I have tried to determine what truth my co-worker did understand and what beliefs were still very confused. Jesus knew all about religious leaders who did not understand the truth, and challenged Nicodemus for not knowing it. Jesus clearly explained to Nicodemus that “whoever believes in him may have eternal life” (John 3:15).

Fourth, I hope to have the opportunity soon to determine if she is ready to believe in the simple truth of the gospel.

Once, she fully understands the truth, then she will be able to answer the question of whether or not she will believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and her Savior. Oh what a glorious day that will be!



SHERRA STILL
Writer, University Hills Baptist Church, Charlotte

Focal Passages: John 4:1-15, 25-26

If you had the power to give someone any gift you could give them, what would you choose? It is amazing to understand we have the opportunity to be a part of giving someone the gift of life, the abundant life, in Jesus Christ! Our scripture passage encourages us to be intentional about witnessing so that others may receive this gift!

Jesus had the power to communicate the message of salvation, and He had the power of choice. He chose to leave Judea, then, He made a second choice by choosing to travel through Samaria. Most Jews would have chosen to NOT travel through Samaria.

Instead, Jesus chose to be intentional to go where the gospel needed to be shared. Like Jesus, we need to do the same! As missionaries decide where God is calling them to serve on the mission field, they may choose a country, for that very reason. They are being intentional to go

where there are the most lost people in the world. In our community, we can have an intentional witness in our places of employment, schools, shopping and recreation. We can pray daily for those opportunities.

As Jesus completed His journey, we understand He was tired. How often do we get somewhere, we are worn out and the last thing we want to do is to make meaningful conversation? Yet, Jesus was willing to do just that. Jesus chose to go outside the normal comfort zone to engage a woman who needed to hear the gospel. Are you? Jesus used a basic need of thirst to explore what the Samaritan woman knew about the gospel. She had partial knowledge, but needed the truth clarified so she could respond to the gospel. If a person responds to an invitation to your church, it does not clarify their understanding of Jesus and the gospel. Being intentional about sharing the gospel is so much more than just an invitation to church. It takes getting to know someone and being intentional to create those types of places for conversations – conversations which are intentional and full of truth!

The Power to Give Life

McKeever

Continued from page 12

churches and dividing the Kingdom for hundreds of years and it's a burden to those of us on the front lines for the Lord. I was telling a friend just the other day...."

He's giving concern and stories, smiles and words, but no answer. I suggest they let him go on, then when he finishes, Mr. Chairman (or Madam Chairperson), smile sweetly and say, "Now, tell us your position on Calvinism." And wait.

Search committees need sharp people on their membership as well as training from experienced pastors and/or denominational leaders who can prepare them on what to watch for and how to tell when they're being scammed.

"Wait a minute," you say. "A pastoral candidate will try to scam you?" When a man wants the job, he may find language to convince you he believes what you believe and count on you not being sharp enough to tell what he's doing. When he does not believe the fundamentals of the faith – and knows that to admit it would mean ending this interview – he may (not always, but "may") camouflage his real views by wordiness or cleverness.

Many a committee has been taken in by a skilled wordsmith.

5) The committee will not tell all the facts about their church, although they want to know every detail about the candidate.

Members of search committees will agree among themselves that certain details about their church his-

tory reflect poorly upon them and would be better off left unspoken. They reason that those things are in the past and have nothing to do with the next pastor and his tenure.

Sometimes they are right. Often, they are wrong. The fact that this church has ousted the last five preachers in a row is most pertinent.

That a little unelected group has made life miserable for the last two pastors is something a prospective pastor needs to know. That the senior members of the congregation shot down the last attempt to hire a full-time youth minister because they resented the young people getting a large share of the church budget is valuable information.

I once asked a search committee why the sign in front of the church said nothing about the times of the Sunday services. Someone blurted out, "The previous pastor tried to put up a sign with that information, but the grounds people took it down. Said it detracted from the beauty of the campus."

In so few words, I found out who is calling the shots around that church.

Every church has its negatives. But don't look for the typical search committee to reveal any of them. You'll have to develop other sources for that.

Call the associational director of missions and also his predecessor if he is relatively new. Phone the last two pastors of this church and any former staff members you can find. And one more group: call neighboring

pastors and ask for their take on this church. (Do this by phone and not by mail or email. Anything leaving a paper trail will make them cautious. You want to hear the inflection of their voice, the pauses, everything.)

Little by little, you are forming a complete picture of this church.

Note that I'm NOT saying you should not go to a church with a troubled past, only that you should know what you're getting into before you go.

6) Finally, in many cases, the pastor search committee will want to keep functioning after the new pastor arrives.

On the surface, it looks like a plan. These people know him and have a vested interest in his doing well. The problem is other members of the church, particularly the leadership, will resent it. It will appear to them that this group does not want to give up their intimacy with the new pastor and is attempting to set themselves up as an ongoing center of influence.

New pastor, if you need a team of advisers, work with the elected church leadership to form a new group composed of representatives of the search committee and a number from the membership at large.

Then, pray it will be a long time before this church has to choose another pastor search committee or that you will have to deal with one.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Joe McKeever is a Baptist Press cartoonist and columnist, a former longtime pastor and former director of missions for the New Orleans Baptist Association.) **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Bethel Baptist Church in Dublin, North Carolina, seeks **full-time Pastor** to live in parsonage. We are an SBC church and member of the Bladen Baptist Association. Average attendance is 140 in Sunday School and 180 in worship service. For more information email me at mbrisson@embarqmail.com or call Bobby Roberts at 910-633-2073.

Church Staff

Associate Pastor of Youth Ministries. Troutman BC in Troutman, NC, is seeking a full-time Youth Minister. TBC associates with the South Yadkin Baptist Association, NCBSC, and SBC. Send resumes to Troutman Baptist Church; Attn: Youth Minister Search Team; PO Box 275; Troutman, NC 28166, or forward to troutman-baptist@bellsouth.net.

Little River Baptist Church, a conservative church in western NC, is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Youth/Family Ministry**. Additional information is available at littleriverbaptist.com.

Union Grove Baptist Church of Salemburg, NC is seeking a **full-time Associate Pastor of Youth Ministry**. We are praying for a biblically qualified, mission-minded man, with a passion for making disciples & believes the Bible to be God's inerrant Word. Send resumes & any questions to Pastor Allen West at uniongrove395@gmail.com or 395 Vander Road, Salemburg, NC 28385.

Penelope Baptist Church located in Hickory, NC, is seeking a **Minister of Music**. This position is part-time with the potential of becoming full-time. Interested candidates can mail their resume to the church: 3310 Main Ave. NW, Hickory, NC 28601, or email pastorking@penelopebaptistchurch.org.

Memorial Baptist of Maysville, NC, needs an energetic and enthusiastic person to fill a **part-time Youth Leader** position. Please email Rachel at rhsanders2011@gmail.com for a full job description.

First Baptist Church, Marshall, NC, is seeking a **part-time music director and a pianist** living in Buncombe or Madison County. The music director is a person who loves for working with the choir and congregation. Please send resumes to FBC, PO Box 484, Marshall, NC 28753, or attach resume to email churchoffice@fbcmarshall.com.

West Concord Baptist Church Concord, NC, seeks **part-time pianist/keyboardist**. Responsibilities include accompanying our praise band/choir during the Sunday morning blended (traditional/contemporary) worship service, attending Wednesday evening practices, and occasional special event practices. Compensation is commensurate with experience. Only born again, Bible believing Christians need apply. Please respond to wbc_secretary@ctc.net or kdewitt@ctc.net.

A **part-time music coordinator** is needed for Trading Ford Baptist Church in Salisbury, NC, to lead adult choir, worship bands, Sunday worship, and oversee other musical ministries. Our congregation of 250 appreciates the best of new worship music as well as the beloved hymns. Please send resumes to tradingford@carolina.rr.com.

Mountain View Baptist Church of Hamptonville, NC, is seeking a **part-time Director of Children's Ministries**. Our church is theologically conservative and actively involved in missions. E-mail resume to mvbc@yadtel.net.

Employment opportunity

Foremen to lead utility contract crews. Outdoor physical work, many positions, paid training, \$17/hr plus performance bonuses after promotion, living allowance when traveling, company truck and benefits. Must have strong leadership skills, a good driving history and be able to travel in North Carolina and nearby states. Email resume to Recruiter3@osmose.com or apply online at www.OsmoseUtilities.com. EOE M/F/D/V

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