



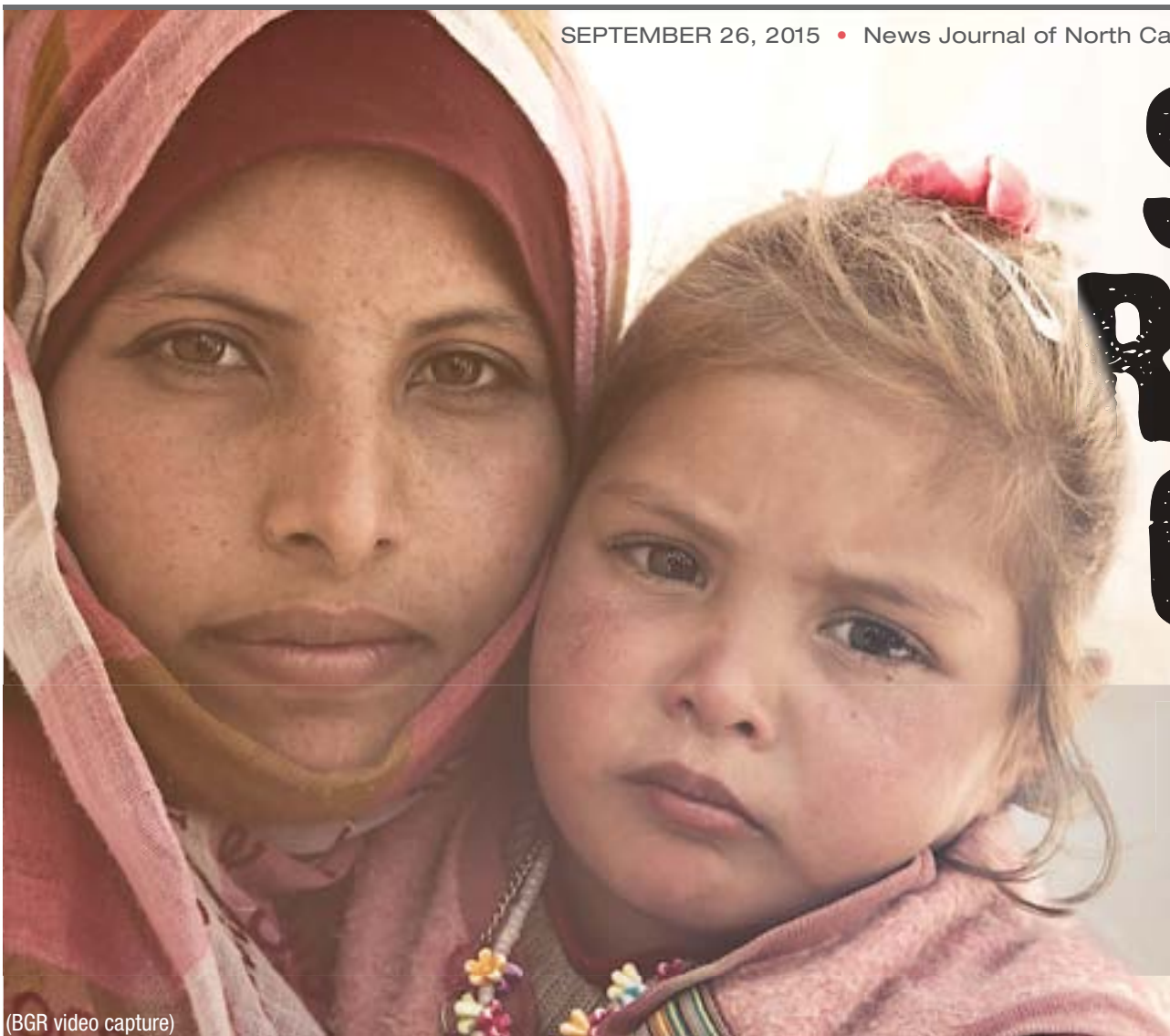
**IMB ANNOUNCES VOLUNTARY
RETIREMENT INCENTIVE DETAILS**



**ANNUAL CHURCH PROFILE:
'NUMBERS MATTER'**

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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(BGR video capture)

SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS:

**'Broken lives,
open hearts'**

By **NICOLE LEE** | Baptist Press

The discovery of an abandoned refrigeration truck full of corpses on an Austrian highway on Aug. 27 and the body of a 3-year-old toddler washed up on the shores of Turkey on Sept. 2 have epitomized the tragic circumstances faced by masses of humanity trying to escape conditions in their home countries and find refuge in Europe.

With more than 350,000 refugees crossing into Europe in the first eight months of 2015, this human migration is believed by many to be the greatest in Europe since World War II. But International Mission Board (IMB) workers in the Middle East and Europe say this crisis is an unprecedented opportunity for hope.

Acts 17:26-27 says God “made from one man every nation of mankind to live on

all the face of the earth, having determined their appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him though He is not far from each one of us,” said Franklin Lewis,* a theological consultant in Eurasia.

Lewis explained, “This scripture gives us hope that the tragic events we see unfolding before us also reflect God’s sovereign hand in bringing the people displaced into contact with the gospel, that they might come to know Him. In that sense, this crisis is not only tragic, it is also an amazing opportunity for people to come to know Christ.”

This is the reality followers of Christ are witnessing as hundreds of thousands of refugees make their way through towns, countryside and train stations in Europe, where Christian laypeople and volunteers offer water, food, clothing and conversation.

Many refugees are hearing the gospel for the first time.

“God is working through war and suffering to move peoples into places where they can encounter Christ,” said James Keath,* an IMB strategy leader in the Middle East.

During the last year, followers of Christ have seen people from seven different Syrian people groups, including Sunni, Orthodox and Shiite, come to faith, begin to meet as house groups and even reproduce groups in their refugee communities.

“Syria is the humanitarian catastrophe of our day, but it is also one of the greatest opportunities of our day for gospel advance among some of the least reached peoples on earth,” Keath said. “In every country around Syria and now throughout Europe, we have the ability to openly engage Syrians like never before. And those working among refugees

are finding not just broken lives but open hearts.”

In some places refugees pass through, like Serbia and Macedonia, churches are helping to distribute water, food and clothes, but the contact in those places is usually brief. Most refugees don’t want to be detained until they get to a better destination – perhaps Germany, Austria or Sweden – somewhere that is more economically sound and generous to refugees.

IMB worker Wayne Vinton* described one encounter in Macedonia. “We met some refugees on bicycles and spoke with them briefly and offered some water, as they were thirsty,” he said.

“We discussed some options of providing water along the road, but now that the border guards are watching for them, many are trying to cross at places

See Refugee page 5

Has Dachau come to us?

In mid-September I visited some of our International Mission Board missionaries in Kiev, Ukraine, and served with a mission team in Chisinau, Moldova.

On the return trip to the states, our team from Lake Norman Baptist Church in Huntersville spent one night in Dachau, Germany, near the Munich airport.

A tour of the Dachau Nazi concentration camp proved to be a very sobering experience. An excellent museum occupies several large buildings on the site. It is complete with audio tour guides, or visitors can take the self-guided tour, viewing hundreds of photos and artifacts from this dark period in human history. There is abundant content to read throughout the tour.

If you plan to visit Dachau, take your time in the museum. Absorb the surreal, shocking truth of some of the greatest evidence of man's complete depravity. No one can survive the tour with the trite conclusion that man is "basically good," as some frequently repeat. The sin nature of all mankind is on display at Dachau.

Dachau was the first Nazi concentration camp built by the National Socialist Workers Party (Nazi Party). It served as a model for the other labor camps and extermination camps.

According to the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, Nazi Germany established about 20,000 camps, imprisoning and/or exterminating millions of victims. At least 2.7 million Jews were murdered. Tens of thousands of Roma, Poles and Soviet prisoners of war were killed also.

At least 3.5 million Germans spent time in a concentration camp. The Germans executed 77,000 of their own who expressed resistance or disagreement with any element of the Nazi Party. The government did not tolerate any opposing viewpoints.

The Dachau camp was built in March 1933 for political prisoners. In its 12 years of existence, more than 200,000 people from the whole of Europe were incarcerated there. More than 43,000 died in the camp. At the current entrance of the camp, a plaque reads, "Dachau – the significance of this name will never be erased from German history. It stands for all concentration camps which the Nazis established in their territory."

The living conditions were sub-human: indescribable torture, untreated disease, extreme starvation, human experiments and emotional terror tactics. The camp was designed to hold 6,000 prisoners. When it was liberated by the United States military on April 29, 1945,

it was overfilled with 32,000 prisoners. One sign explains, "The final months were characterized by catastrophic overfilling of the camp" in an effort to relocate prisoners from other camps.

"The prisoners were exposed to the limitless tyranny of the SS guards. Control and terror dominated everyday life in the camp." [SS stands for "*Schutzstaffel*," German for "Protective Echelon."]

According to a display near the entrance the purpose of the present memorial site is to "testify to the crimes of National Socialism, [and provide] places for remembering the suffer-

ing of the victims, and act as places of learning for future generations ... so that knowledge about the historical events is kept alive in the minds of the population and passed on."

Displays explain how prisoners were forced to assemble "on the roll call ground" every morning and evening for roll call. In all weather conditions, they were forced to stand at attention motionless for about an hour. Sometimes even the dead had to be dragged to the roll call ground to be counted. If the number of prisoners did not match the official head count, torture could last for many hours. Some of the sick and weak often collapsed during roll call.

A large memorial sign in an open yard says in four different languages, "May the example of those who were exterminated here between 1933-1945 because they resisted Nazism help to unite the living for the defense of peace and freedom and in respect for their fellow man."

At the end of the tour, one of our group asked, "How could this happen?"

I am not an expert on the Nazi holocaust, but I have three personal observations.

First, the German people were looking to the government to provide for their needs, which is something only God can do. Liberalism had a firm grip on the Christian church in Germany so Christians were not encouraged to practice *sola scriptura*, the Latin phrase for the Protestant Reformation's appeal "by scripture alone." Apart from complete confidence in Holy Scripture, mankind searches for other gods to meet their needs. Hitler and his socialist party filled the vacuum in the German people's hearts.

Second, the people were not informed. An uninformed electorate is the ideal breeding ground for tyrants. One ingredient in the shortage of information was a very weak press. The German news media supported Hitler. Some of that was forced survival, but the truth



The main gate to the Nazi Concentration Camp at Dachau reads "Work makes you free." The slogan, like the National Socialist Party's other promises, was completely deceptive. (BR photo by K. Allan Blume)

remains, the press did not challenge the Socialist Party. In fact, they published many articles that falsely described the conditions in the concentration camps as favorable. The conditions in the camps worsened considerably with the support of the press.

Third, the leaders lied. Hitler promised the people one thing and did the opposite. He was elected to office on lies and his party operated by false propaganda. Truth was completely abandoned. They made up the rules as they moved along, and all of the rules were for their personal benefit. The people lost their freedom.

Given the oppressive environment, few Germans stood courageously for truth. But there was a man who stood tall. Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a German Lutheran pastor and theologian who courageously opposed Nazi tyranny. He paid the ultimate price for his convictions. He

was executed April 9, 1945, a mere 20 days before the defeat of Hitler's National Socialist Workers Party.

I've been reflecting on the connections between the culture that created Dachau and the America I live in. The parallels are disturbing. Space will not allow a full discussion, but I want to raise some questions. When will our government leaders open their eyes to the holocaust of abortion? The lies of Planned Parenthood have been sufficiently exposed.

Blind government leaders are not honest. They need to come clean with the truth. Dachau has come to us.

What voices are you believing and following? The first Psalm warns us, do not follow the voices of the wicked! Given the severe, left-wing bias of most American media outlets, we may be listening to the same kind of media voices that supported Hitler's regime. Media should tell people the truth, not regurgitate the bylines of political parties.

The Bible warns us in 2 Timothy 3:13, "*But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived.*" Therefore we must be discerning people and pray this prayer for each other, "*And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ*" (Philippians 1:9-10). **BR**

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Encourage pastors who serve you

Pastors play a significant role in lives of their congregations and their communities. Serving as an under-shepherd to God's flock in the local church is a calling that brings with it great rewards, but also many challenges. All things considered, I think the stress and pressure many pastors operate under today make it one of the most difficult vocations in our culture.

Proclaiming God's Word, sharing the love of Christ and ministering to people in Jesus' name is a wonderful privilege and an awesome responsibility. Many of the responsibilities that make a minister's calling so rewarding, are the very same things that also present the greatest challenges.

As pastors seek to love and shepherd God's flock faithfully, they can never feel that their work is done. It is a 24/7 responsibility because there always seems to be one more program to be planned, one more person to call, one more visit to make or a little more time that could be spent in sermon and Bible teaching preparation. Pastors gladly do it all ultimately because of their love and commitment to Jesus Christ.

October is designated as pastor appreciation month. This provides you with a great opportunity to encourage and affirm those who serve and encourage you and your family throughout the year in your church. There are many different

ways that your church family can honor and express appreciation to the pastors and staff at your church.

I still treasure fond memories that were made many years ago when I was pastor of First Baptist Church in Stanley, N.C. Those good people would plan creative ways to design a pastor appreciation Sunday. Sunday School classes and other groups would work together in determining how they could best express their love and support for

their pastors. Sometimes, special guests would be invited to drop in for this time of celebration.

One of the great things that you can do for your pastor is to pray for him on a regular basis and let him know that you do.

This is a great source of encouragement. It means much to me when I receive cards or emails from individuals or groups in churches telling me how they

pray for me and the work of this convention.

When one of your pastors preaches a message that God uses to encourage or challenge you, let him know. When you or a member of your family are the recipients of his time, words of encouragement, or admonition and prayer support, tell him how much his words or actions helped.

Proverbs 25:11 reminds us that *"a word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pitchers of silver."* Even gestures that may seem simple or small can go a long way toward encouraging your pastors. Remember

that pastors and their families have the same spiritual, physical and emotional needs as everyone else.

I am thankful for the many wonderful and godly pastors and staff members who serve the churches of our state convention. Let's be sure to let them know how much we honor and appreciate them, not just in October, but all throughout the year. Get busy now and lead your church to plan a great and memorable pastor appreciation Sunday.

"How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" – Romans 10:15b (KJV) **BR**



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

Make church policies clear, complementary, loving

Following the June 26 action of the U.S. Supreme Court regarding same-sex marriage, I developed a training seminar that I have conducted across the state with church and associational leaders. The framework for the conversation comes from 2 Timothy 1:7, *"For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind"* (KJV).

Working through this important verse of scripture, I have written multiple columns for the *Biblical Recorder* about the power the church has to establish its own policies for weddings and the use of facilities. This is the last article to address the matter of policies. I offer several cautions as congregations begin the process of reviewing, revising, and as necessary, drafting wedding and facility-use policies.

First, policies should be clearly focused. Some churches are trying to address too many issues in a single policy, and as a result, the policy is difficult to understand and implement. For example, a wedding policy should focus on the wedding regardless of where it might take place in the church's facilities. Some churches have weddings in the sanctuary, chapel, fellowship hall and even outside at other structures on the property.

Keep the focus of the wedding policy on the wedding; don't try to address all of the details regarding the facilities being used. A separate facility-use policy may be necessary. The wedding policy should refer to the facility-use policy, but not repeat it.

In addition, some churches are placing statements in their wedding policies about employment matters. I've seen wedding policies that outline how minis-

ters will be disciplined, even terminated, for participating in weddings in violation of the wedding policy. Matters regarding employment should be placed in the appropriate personnel policy, not elsewhere. Does the couple seeking marriage

need to know how the church might discipline, even terminate a minister? Of course not, so make sure that policies are clear in their focus.

Second, policies should be complementary, not contradictory. As noted above, a good wedding policy will focus on the wedding and refer couples to the facility-use policy to address questions related to how the church expects facilities to be utilized in the wedding.

In this way the two policies complement each other. But make sure that a facility-use policy doesn't make it impossible to actually conduct the wedding.

Some churches limit the use of the facilities to church members only, but also have a wedding policy that allows non-members to be married; contradictions between policies can create problems. This is a good time to review all policies, not only those concerning weddings and use of facilities, to determine if contradictions exist. Then take steps to address those contradictions before a problem arises.

Third, as I stated in the first installment of this series on the power enjoyed by the church to establish policies, make sure that policies do not contradict bylaws.

Remember, the policies are legally binding and sufficient for guiding and protecting the church. However, any disagreement between policies and bylaws will be decided by what's stated in the



BRIAN K. DAVIS
Guest Column

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f t v

Helping the hungry: A picture of the Savior

There is nothing quite as bleak as a city street the morning after Mardi Gras. The steam of the morning humidity rises silently over asphalt, riddled with forgotten doubloons, broken bottles, littered cigarettes, used condoms, clotted blood and mangled vomit. For the partygoers who embrace the hedonism of the night before, dawn brings little besides a queasy stomach, a pounding hangover and a throbbing conscience.

For most Americans, this isn't a strange sight. Even for those of us who would pride ourselves on our conservative recreation, an instant connection between our appetite and satisfaction seems normal. We live in a culture of craving.

Perhaps that is why many Americans, even Christians, seem confused or embarrassed when the conversation turns to hunger and extreme poverty. Perhaps we are less able to articulate what the gospel says about those in desperate need of bread and water because we cannot imagine living in any other society than one with dollar menus and all-you-can-eat buffets.

We may be in our own bed with our spouses the night of Mardi Gras, but that doesn't mean we aren't unwittingly conforming to the spirit of the culture.

In our Western global culture, food is assumed. Disconnected from the agrarian and subsistence context that nearly every culture in history would have taken for granted, we more or less assume that the dinner on our tables just appeared there. That would have been a wild fantasy for the Israelite culture which our Lord knew. Bread wasn't a matter of buying gluten free or not; it was the basic engine of economic survival. Without a daily glean of wheat, death was certain.

This is the kind of reality that still exists for many people around the world. If we as Christians don't feel the weight of our Lord's command to show compassion and mercy to those who need us, perhaps it is because we have unintentionally absorbed the consumerism of our culture.

Writing to Timothy, the apostle Paul did not flatly condemn all wealth or tell rich Christians to renounce everything they had. Rather, he commanded that they put their trust not on their wealth but on God. How do they do that? By being ready and eager to give to the poor and those in need (1 Timothy 6:17-19).

By seeing their wealth not as something to which they alone are entitled but as something given to them ultimately by Christ, to be used for good works, Christians stand apart from the appetite-driven values of the world and display a picture of the Savior who left the throne of heaven and became poor for our sake.

The church can take on the tyranny of the appetites not simply by pointing out what in our cultural milieu is inconsistent with the gospel, but by presenting a positive alternative, a counterculture in which the transitory nature of momentary self-satisfaction is transcended by a seeking first of the kingdom of God.

This isn't easy. It's the act of crucifying the flesh with its passions and desires (Galatians 5:24). The temporary hunger we experience by resisting, through the Spirit, our immediate desires for more and more can cause us, like Jesus in the wilderness, to turn away from momentary satisfaction and toward the more permanent things of the kingdom.

The cooperative initiative of Global Hunger Relief (GHR)



RUSSELL MOORE
Guest Column

Refugee

Continued from page 1

away from the main border crossing, hoping to be undetected.”

Many refugees have been stuck in Budapest, where they await transport to another European Union (EU) country. IMB workers are joining forces with Hungarian relief workers to be the hands and feet of Jesus. The majority of the refugees are from Syria, where 4 million have fled the horrors of ISIS terrorists and the effects of four years of civil war.

IMB worker Jennifer Freedman* spoke with a man in Budapest who explained what they are running from.

“Da’esh [ISIS] was in our village ... and they hit me, and they gave me 30 lashes on my back,” the man said. “My son – he saw a beheading. We had to leave. That’s not life, that’s not living. I want a better life for my kids than Da’esh, I want my kids to go to school, to be educated. So we left.”

His family’s 1,800-mile journey was long and arduous, taking almost two months, and their hoped-for destination is Sweden. They plan to take a taxi to Vienna, since they have been thwarted at the Budapest train station while EU officials grapple with the biggest humanitarian crisis the EU has faced as a unified body.

“The situation here is chaotic,” said Trey Shaw, an IMB church planter in Budapest.

“The numbers coming in are by far more than Budapest can handle. The non-profits are trying to do what they can, but there is more work than workers.”

Shaw’s church plant, Agora, is helping refugees at Budapest’s Keleti train station, collecting clothes and partnering with two nonprofit organizations to minister where they are able.

Hungary has reportedly seen 50,000 new arrivals in the last month. Unsure of what to do with the influx of people, the country is looking to the rest of Europe to help with the crisis.

Germany has begun accepting refugees who arrive there without having already been registered at their point of arrival in the EU, so many of the refugees in Hungary are already making their way to Germany. Austria has welcomed thousands of refugees as well, but European nations are reportedly threatening to close their borders because they are overwhelmed by the large numbers of refugees.

Wesley Selway,* a teacher in Germany, said his small city near Cologne is one of many that have been asked to create a place to house 150 refugees while they are

processed into the country. City officials transformed a local gym into a refugee center, and Selway and his wife Miranda* are among those allowed inside to help with new arrivals. More than 800,000 are expected to arrive in the country by the end of 2015, and though Germany can meet their immediate physical needs, the refugees need something more.

“They need relationships – people to talk to them, engage them. As the relationship builds, they’re more receptive to spiritual conversations,” Selway said. “God is bringing them here, and there’s an opening there for them to be engaged with the gospel.”

Pray

- Pray for IMB workers and national Christians as they are ministering to refugees.
- Pray for physical strength and stamina and for more churches to take the responsibility to love the refugees and introduce them to Christ.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of the refugees that they will be willing to listen and open to learning about Jesus.
- Pray for EU governments as they try to determine how to accommodate the influx of refugees.
- Pray specifically for German city officials near Cologne who are trying to help but are overworked. Pray for supernatural strength, and pray they will see the power of the gospel and experience it in their lives as churches display God’s character.

Other ways to help

To help buy language workbooks, clothing and evangelical materials, people can give to the “German cluster relief work.” Donations can be mailed to: International Mission Board, Attn: Finance/Global Hunger Relief – German cluster relief work, P.O. Box 6767, Richmond, VA 23230.

Gifts can also be given online at gobgr.org/donate. In the notes section of the form enter “German cluster relief work.”

Oct. 11 is Global Hunger Sunday, a campaign led by Global Hunger Relief (GHR). GHR is an initiative of Southern Baptists formerly known as the World Hunger Fund. GHR-funded projects combat hunger in North America and around the world in a variety of ways, including disaster relief, addressing chronic hunger, eliminating urban food deserts and helping sex trafficking victims.

GHR-funded projects also catalyze long-term change in conditions of human suffering and extreme poverty that cause chronic hunger. Such projects may involve job training and vocational education, livestock and seeds, farm improvement, clean water, home reconstruction, medical care and hygiene education.

The Southern Baptist relief initiative is one of the most effective channels for donating toward the global hunger crisis. While most humanitarian organizations keep 30-70 percent of donations for administrative overhead costs, GHR is able to devote 100 percent of donated resources directly to meeting hunger needs.

*Names changed. **B3**

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Annual Church Profile: ‘Numbers matter’

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

Americans detest filling out forms. Many groan at the thought of scribbling names, addresses and zip codes across tiny blank lines on boring black-and-white pages. The grumbling swells each year between Jan. 1 and April 15; that’s when U.S. income tax forms – the most despised of all – must be submitted. What’s worse, those tedious stacks of paperwork require math as well. It’s all too much for the average person. So many people dislike the process of filling out tax forms that for-profit filing services like H&R Block and TurboTax have become household names.

Part of the distaste Americans feel for rote documentation comes from the idea that their hard work is then mailed off to faceless government agencies that mindlessly process the documents. All personhood is extracted and the information is distilled into systematic categories for the sake of government revenue. It feels meaningless to many people.

There is evidence that some Southern Baptists consider a yearly statistical report submitted to the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) called the Annual Church Profile (ACP) to be as unappealing as their yearly federal income tax form. Ed Stetzer, executive director of LifeWay Research, said in a 2012 Baptist Press report that the previous year’s ACP participation rate was the “lowest ever recorded.”

Numbers have risen since 2011, and Southern Baptists retain a high response rate compared to other denominations, according to Scott McConnell, vice president of LifeWay Research. However, McConnell told SBC Life “the greatest challenge the ACP faces is keeping the response rate as high as possible each year.” Nearly 10,000 SBC congregations (approximately 20 percent) opted not to participate in the 2014 ACP.

“The percentage of North Carolina Baptist churches completing the ACP has been in steady decline for several years,” said Brian Davis, Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) associate executive director-treasurer, in a 2014 *Biblical Recorder* column. “There is not a single

explanation for ‘why’ this may be the case, but the overarching reason appears to be churches simply do not understand why completing the reports and sharing the data is important.”

Overcoming ACP objections

One obstacle for church participation in the yearly profile could be – like federal paperwork – the perception that it is meaningless.

“Numbers don’t matter,” many Baptists say. Yet, according to a blog post by J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, “numbers represent lives, and each life matters.” Tracking atten-



J.D. GREEAR

dance, giving and baptisms is biblical, and it allows churches to care for their members, according to Greear.

That type of mutual care is not only possible for individuals inside a church, but also possible for

cooperating churches with the help of the ACP at the local, state and national levels. “The most basic product of the ACP is an annual list of who we are as a group of churches who voluntarily cooperate with each other,” said Stetzer.

“I recall in the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, local associations and state conventions, with the support of national entities, were able to check on every Southern Baptist church in the affected areas. The value of our cooperation was never more evident than when we saw independent churches with no one coming to their aid.”

Another objection leveled at the ACP is an alleged misuse of the data. Stetzer views the data positively, citing “statistical measures and benchmarks” as a benefit of the yearly report. “Facts are our friends,” he said, “and they help us hold ourselves accountable.”

It allows for more accurate evaluation of church ministries. “Local churches are often so busy with seeking to establish new missionary and ministry efforts,” said Davis, “they do not often take time



to do the difficult work of evaluating the effectiveness of current missionary and ministry efforts.”

William Thornton, a Baptist blogger and Georgia pastor, took another perspective after the dip in ACP participation four years ago. He said in a blog post one of the reasons pastors refuse to lead their churches to submit their information is that “ACP data from individual churches is sometimes used as a club.

“Did not baptize anyone? Wham! Did not give much through the Cooperative Program? Wham! Did not participate in the Annie Armstrong and Lottie Moon offerings? Wham, bam! Those running for state or national SBC office, or nominated for SBC entity positions can be sure their ACP will be scrutinized.”

Thornton’s concern for SBC entity position candidates is not entirely unfounded. Frank S. Page, president of the SBC Executive Committee, told SBC Life, “As president of the Southern Baptist Convention, the ACP helped me in making appointments to various committees.

“I said at the beginning of my tenure as president there were several criteria I would use for appointments,” Page continued. “One was, were they soul-winners? Well, the ACP helped me know. ... Are you a Cooperative Program champion? Well, if they were, I saw it. If they weren’t, I saw it.”

Greear said that scrutinizing a ministry based on numerical data isn’t biblical, though he supports record keeping. “There is a potentially disastrous illusion in such numbers,” he said. “Attendance, decisions and baptism do not equal the discipleship that ends in eternal life.”

Stetzer said, “I am aware some pastors question why they should share their church’s information with the convention. But, I am also aware that what we measure points to what we value. If we want SBC churches to grow, want new SBC churches to be added, want more individuals to be involved in Bible study and missions, and want churches to cooperate in Great Commission giving, we should be willing to measure our progress.”

In essence Stetzer values the health of the convention as a whole over the organizational aspirations of individual pastors. Page agrees. The simple act of submitting the ACP demonstrates coop-

eration with a broader group, Page told SBC Life. “It helps churches understand who they are as a family of Baptists. ... It gives a lot of validity and affirmation of a local ministry to say we are part of a broader group and here are some statistics about that group.”

Submitting the form

Still another obstacle some churches may try to overcome to fill out the ACP is a notion that it is a long, tedious process. Russell Schwab, BSC system administrator, offered tips for navigating the ACP process. “Churches that are willing to fill out their yearly church profile can go to nc.sbcworkspace.com,” he said. To access the online form (Ask NED), churches will need a username and password that can be received by contacting their respective local association office or by emailing Schwab at rschwab@ncbaptist.org.

There is a printed version of the ACP as well. It too can be received – and potential questions can be addressed – by contacting the local association or Schwab. He said about the process, “Churches should try to reach out to the associational clerk or secretary first in trying to get ACP questions answered.” Then, if technical questions arise, or if more help is needed, contact him directly.

Each association has their own deadline for reporting, he said, but Nov. 15 is the deadline for submitting the ACP at the state level. After churches have completed the ACP, Schwab added, “the data is shared with the local association office, the [BSC], and with [Lifeway Christian Resources] ... for reporting purposes. This allows each entity to report statistical data at their level.”

The reported data is important, according to Davis. He said, “your state convention staff depends on this information. The data mined from the ACP is necessary for our research and our strategic planning. This information is essential for convention staff as we fulfill the convention’s mission of assisting the churches in their divinely appointed mission. Convention staff may be able to follow-up for specific details to ensure that there are not unnecessary duplications in effort, and, where needed, additional resources can be invested in underserved areas. With more than 4,300 churches in the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, it is a great task to keep up with all that God is accomplishing through the churches of the convention.”

Churches that overcome each objection to the cooperative efforts of the yearly profile, and submit their information, can view up to seven years of statistical data at churchpop.ncbaptist.org. **BR**



“If we want SBC churches to grow, want new SBC churches to be added, want more individuals to be involved in Bible study and missions, and want churches to cooperate in Great Commission giving, we should be willing to measure our progress.”
– Ed Stetzer

Fruitland announces scholarship, dedicates new facilities

FBBC Communications

Fruitland Baptist Bible College (FBBC), Hendersonville, recently announced the establishment of the H.E. Wyatt Scholarship Fund, designed to provide financial assistance to students preparing for ministry. Weldon Wyatt gave a donation Sept. 1 of \$100,000



H.E. WYATT

in memory of his father H.E. Wyatt who was a 1955 graduate of Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute. The 1955 yearbook describes H.E. Wyatt in the following manner:

“Brother Wyatt has missed fewer classes than any man that has been here for a long time. He is a good thinker and has a logical mind. He has keen insight into the truth and preaches well. He was a traveling salesman a good while before entering the ministry and learned in this field how to approach and get along with folks.”

During his ministry, Wyatt was the pastor of several churches in South Carolina and made a lasting impact on all those he met. The younger Wyatt, owner



Jimmy R. Jacumin, former North Carolina senator, addresses a group gathered at Fruitland Baptist Bible College to dedicate the family apartments named for Jacumin's late wife, Nancy Nell Jacumin. (BSC photo by Mike Creswell)

of Sage Valley Golf Club in Graniteville, S.C., stated that his father “pastored a small church when he came to Fruitland and received a scholarship that made his education possible. In memory of my father, I want to offer a scholarship that will allow other students to experience Fruitland.”

David Horton, FBBC president, and Jason Speier, director of institutional advancement, received the gift on behalf of the college and affirmed a “cycle of generosity that allows one who has been blessed to be a blessing to others.”

The first recipients of scholarship will be named in the fall quarter, which is anticipated to hold record enrollment for

the school. With continued growth in enrollment at FBBC there was a need for more campus living accommodations for married students.

Former state Sen. Jimmy Ray Jacumin, his son Marty and daughter Mitzi gifted the college with funds to purchase building materials for a four-unit apartment complex in memory of their wife and mother, Nancy Nell Jacumin, who passed away unexpectedly June 9, 2014.

Since Nancy Nell Jacumin spent her life teaching in N.C. public schools, working as a literacy instructor with Red Cross and a Sunday School teacher, her family believed it was appropriate to honor her at a place of higher learning. Jacumin worked diligently in various Christian ministries such as the Women's Auxiliary of Gideons International and the Waldensian Trail of Faith, both in

Valdese. She loved sharing her faith in Jesus Christ everywhere she went.

Construction on the apartments began in December 2014 with the help of many volunteers that provided labor and expertise. Because of the vast array of volunteers, the apartments are available for incoming students at the start of the fall 2015 quarter. A dedication and ribbon cutting for the new family apartments was held Sept. 14. “We are extremely grateful for the generosity of the Jacumin family and thank them for choosing to honor Nancy in such a significant way,” Horton said. “Nancy loved her family and loved helping others. It is our prayer that the families that live in the new Nancy Nell Jacumin Apartments will grow in their love of Christ and family as they study to minister to others. We would also like to thank all the many volunteers that have worked tirelessly to make this vision a reality.”

FBBC is a ministry of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Approximately one half of the school's operating cost is provided through gifts from the Cooperative Program, which enables students to have a rate of tuition that is significantly less than a community college. Approximately 20-25 percent of the Baptist pastors in N.C. and S.C. have attended FBBC and many graduates serve as missionaries around the world.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Story compiled from press releases by Seth Brown, BR Content Editor.) **BR**

Steady obedience

“And I will dwell in the house of the Lord, forever.” (Psalm 23:6)

Irecently attended the funeral of a 97-year-old believer who faithfully served Christ her whole Christian life. She played the piano at her church for almost three decades. She was faithful to her daily walk with Christ, having devotions and sharing her faith with family, neighbors and friends. The last Sunday before her passing, she was worshipping in God's house.

In her later years, every afternoon, she could be found in her chair beside the living room picture window with her Bible and devotionals. She prayed faithfully for family and friends and invested in the lives of the younger members of her family.

Testimony after testimony of her Christ-like character was shared from the pulpit and in the fellowship hall the day of her funeral. Aunt Ann had walked with God, and everyone around her

knew it – she was “steady.”

David's reference in Psalm 23:6 speaks of his desire to live (dwell) in the continual presence and nearness of God. The term “dwell” refers to a consistent practice and presence – one that is unhindered and one that is unbroken. Although David at times failed miserably and sinned, his heart was

always seeking a life of steady obedience and fellowship with God. That's why God described David as “a man who was after My own heart, and willing to do all My will” (see Acts 13:22).

“Steady obedience” must happen if we are going to “pass the baton” of our faith from one generation to another generation, making disciples that make disciples.

Are you steady?

(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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Our Vision “By God’s grace, we will become the strongest force in the history of this Convention for reaching people with the message of the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Annual Meeting to emphasize disciple-making

by Chad Austin



ECHO
REPRODUCING GOSPEL LIFE IN OTHERS

Messengers and attendees at the 2015 Annual Meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) will be encouraged and challenged to “echo” the love and message of Jesus to others during this year’s meeting.

“Echo: Reproducing Gospel Life in Others” is the theme for this year’s annual meeting, scheduled for Monday and Tuesday, Nov. 2-3 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. The theme is based on 2 Timothy 2:2 which describes the disciple-making process and how it is passed on from generation to generation.

In the theme verse, the Apostle Paul admonishes his young apprentice Timothy to take the truths of God that he had learned from Paul and teach those truths to others who would, in turn, teach them to others, as well. The passage reveals a pattern for disciple-making that involves investing one’s life in others so that the gospel and its application to life is continually reproduced in subsequent generations.

This year’s theme aligns with the BSC’s strategy of impacting lostness through disciple-making and was selected by members of the BSC Committee on Convention Meetings after much prayer and deliberation.

“The theme of the 2015 Annual Meeting has been derived with the desire for all churches within the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina to ‘echo’ the very words of Paul,” said Josh Phillips,

chair of the Committee on Convention Meetings. “The BSCNC has become very intentional in its approach to disciple-making. The theme of these year’s Annual meeting is intended to promote and support the direction that our great convention is heading.”

The annual meeting will be a time to recognize and celebrate all that God is doing in and through North Carolina Baptists to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Attendees will hear reports of how disciples are being made across the state, across the country and around the world through a variety of different ministries. The meeting will also include messages from God’s Word, worship through music, personal testimonies, prayer, theme interpretations and a number of breakout sessions.

Timmy Blair Sr., BSC president and pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier, will deliver the annual president’s address sermon on Monday evening. Lee Pigg, senior pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe, will deliver the convention sermon Tuesday night.

Messengers will also hear an update from BSC Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr. during the Tuesday morning session.

In addition, representatives from a variety of BSC ministries, as well as other ministries and organizations, will be on hand in the exhibit halls to answer questions, network and explore ministry partnership opportunities.

Throughout the entire schedule of annual meeting activities, attendees will be equipped and encouraged to make disciples in the everyday rhythms and routines of daily life. Several breakout sessions conducted by convention staff members, pastors, denominational leaders, lay leaders and others will provide biblical and practical ideas about how to “echo” the gospel and reproduce gospel life in others based on the example of Jesus and the words of Paul.

Breakout sessions will cover topics that include evangelism, church renewal, church revitalization, missions, prayer, small groups, women’s ministry and more.

More information about this year’s annual meeting is available online at ncannualmeeting.org. Visit the website to make room reservations and check out the complete annual meeting schedule. Make plans now to attend this year’s annual meeting in Greensboro to learn how God can use you to be an “echo” for His name and reproduce gospel life in others.

ncannualmeeting.org

Connect *now*

ANNUAL MEETING

Everything you need to know including schedule, speakers, breakouts and resources for prayer.



 ncannualmeeting.org

MOBILE APP

Search “NC Baptist” through iTunes or Google Play and find the NC Baptist app to download for free. It has been updated with the 2015 Annual Meeting information, and as Nov. 2-3 gets closer, more information will be added.

 “NC Baptist” in app store

TWITTER

Follow @ncbaptist for up-to-date event and ministry information.



 twitter.com/ncbaptist

FACEBOOK


We are putting out tons of great resources on facebook this year. Go “like” our page today!



 facebook.com/ncbaptist



Prayer Emphasis

 prayfor30days.org

Join with other North Carolina Baptists in a 30-day prayer emphasis for spiritual awakening during the month of October.

A number of free resources are available at prayfor30days.org to assist you and your church as you seek the Lord and ask Him to stir hearts and bring revival to our nation. Free resources include a devotional prayer guide, prayer prompts, text messages and a series of short videos based on several passages of scripture.

The prayer guide includes a daily devotional and related prayer prompts. Churches should have received a copy of the prayer guide in the mail earlier this month. The devotional is also available as a free download at prayfor30days.org.

New this year are a series of brief videos available at the website in which an N.C. Baptist leader walks through a passage of scripture that corresponds

with a section of the devotional. Each video also includes questions for further study and reflection.

Once again, North Carolina Baptists can also sign up to receive daily prayer prompts for the month of October via email and text messaging. Text the word “Echo” to 313131 to receive prayer prompts as text messages, or sign up at prayfor30days.org to receive prayer prompts by email.



Free Devotional Download in English & Spanish:
prayfor30days.org

Watch & Pray:
Southeast N.C. Prayer Gathering

October 2-3

 ncbaptist.org/watchandpray

Prayerwalk: Charlotte

October 3

 ncbaptist.org/praycharlotte

Statewide Sunday School Training

October 10

 ncbaptist.org/sundayschool

Literacy Missions Conference

October 16-17

 ncbaptist.org/literacymissionsconf

We Still Do: A Pastor & Wife Getaway

October 22-24

 ncbaptist.org/westilldo

N.C. Baptist Women’s Retreat

October 23-24

 ncbaptist.org/womensretreat15

N.C. Annual Meeting

November 2-3

 ncannualmeeting.org

 ncbaptist.org



2015 Events



Coats for the City

Donate a winter coat at this year’s annual meeting, and help share the gospel with thousands of residents of New York City.

Coats for the City, a partnership between the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) and the Metropolitan New York Baptist Association (MNYBA), distributes coats and Bibles to needy individuals and families in New York City each year.

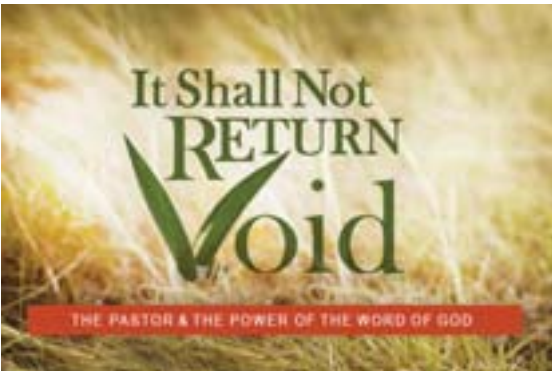
New or gently used coats may be donated during the annual meeting Nov. 2-3 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. The annual meeting is the last chance to donate coats before they

are distributed in New York on Saturday, Nov. 14.

Visit the Coats for the City booth in the Guilford Ballroom to drop off your coats. A \$2 donation is requested (but not required) for each coat to help cover the cost of evangelism materials that will be distributed with the coats. Individual and large donations will be accepted.

Learn more at

 ncbaptist.org/coats



Pastors’ Conference

The N.C. Baptist Pastors’ Conference is scheduled Nov. 1-2 at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. The event is free, and registration is not required.

The theme is “It Shall Not Return Void” from Isaiah 55:11. Be encouraged by biblical teachers as they share from God’s Word.

This year’s speakers are: Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS); D.A. Carson of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School; David Horner, pastor of Providence

Baptist Church in Raleigh; Gary Jennings of East Taylorsville Baptist Church; Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church of Woodstock, Ga.; Greg Lawson, professor at SEBTS and pastor of Union Chapel Baptist Church in Zebulon; Richard Davis Phillips, senior minister of Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, S.C.; and Alvin Reid, professor of evangelism and student ministry at SEBTS.

Learn more at

 ncannualmeeting.org/pastors



Annual Meeting Breakout Sessions

Get equipped to make disciples and reproduce gospel life in others through a number of breakout sessions scheduled for the annual meeting in Greensboro. Convention staff, denominational leaders, pastors, church leaders, seminary professors and others will lead sessions that explore topics such as church revitalization, collegiate ministry, evangelism, missions, prayer, women’s ministry and more.

A sampling of breakout session titles include: biblical prayers for challenging times; disciple-making pastors roundtable;

discipling through women’s ministry; making disciples through small groups; SHARE the gospel in changing culture; plus many more.

Breakout sessions are scheduled for Tuesday, Nov. 3 from 3:15-4 p.m. and 4:15-5 p.m. at the Koury Convention Center. All sessions are free to attend, and registration is not required.

Learn more at

 ncannualmeeting.org/breakouts

Johnston County church plant aims to reach sportsmen

By MIKE CRESWELL | BSC Communications

Tell Josh Williamson he pastors a redneck church and you won't hurt his feelings.

He'll most likely grin and agree with you.

But he's very serious when he explains The Refuge JoCo, a church in Johnston County where Williamson serves as pastor, is reaching people for Christ who could not be reached by traditional churches.

The sign out front promises a "different place to worship." For now that is two units in a rural office park north of Benson, where the corporate neighbors are a roofing company, cable TV company and a firm that makes custom four-wheelers.

Enter Refuge's modest set of rooms and you'll see three mounted deer head trophies and stuffed fish on the meeting room walls. "What about the duck decoys?" you may ask. Those are offering plates that double as table decorations.

The "JoCo" that is part of the church name is shorthand for Johnston County, but also used to tag local culture, accent and outlook.

The dress code could be called "relaxed sportsman." Williamson wears a camouflage shirt, shorts and flip-flops as he leads a Sunday night service, a recently added service to their normal Thursday night meeting schedule.

Williamson explains that, when he talks about area residents who hunt and fish, he's not talking about people pursuing hobbies.

"This area is known for its country folks and their hunting and fishing," Williamson says. "That's just a way of life here, as natural as you can get. But it's not just for fun. This is how people provide food for their family."

A lot of the more traditional churches seem to have white-collar, business-type members who work in offices, he said. "But it just seems we don't have a place. Folks like us have been overlooked or left out," Williamson explained.

As a test, in 2013 he and seven other like-minded people began holding Bible studies, appropriately enough, in a local archery shop. Soon about 40 people were attending each week and they outgrew the shop. So they moved into the office park and Refuge was off and running.

They do not have a baptistery, but baptize new believers in a nearby pond.

Refuge members focus on all outdoor

activities, especially hunting and fishing, as outreach channels. Members are part of a local softball/baseball ministry that gives Williamson another venue to preach at least twice a month.

But sports-oriented does not mean old-fashioned. Williamson posts videos of his sermons and Bible studies online, where they attract upwards of 800 viewers each week.

He has even heard from people in other states who love the idea of sharing the gospel through a sports emphasis. Williamson has talked with the pastor of a church in Montana focused on people who love the outdoors and said, "They're about 10 years ahead of where we hope to go. He has helped a lot with ministries that worked or failed."

Williamson moved to Johnston County in 1996 so he could attend Campbell University. He loved the area so much he and his family stayed on after he earned a bachelor's degree in religion and Christian ministry. He and his wife Joy, a Johnston County native, have three children.

Networking and partnering are important to Williamson.

"That's the reason we have chosen to be part of the Johnston Baptist

Association, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) and to support the Southern Baptist Convention's two mission boards – the North American Mission Board and the International Mission Board," he said, highlighting the ministries Refuge supports through its Cooperative Program (CP) giving or directly through the Johnston Association.

"We're big supporters of these, because we believe that we can do so much more together than we can by ourselves. Anybody can be a lone wolf, but if you don't have a support group, you're not going to be nearly as effective," Williamson said.

Williamson is getting start-up support from the BSC Church Planting Team, which is in line with his approach to churches.

North Carolina Baptists support new churches like Refuge through their



Josh Williamson leads Refuge JoCo, a church plant in Johnston County. (BSC photo by Mike Creswell)

financial support of missions through CP and the annual North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO).

Each year, 28 percent of funds given to the NCMO directly support the establishment of new congregations throughout North Carolina.

"Our biggest focus is Christian discipleship. We don't want to build just one

big church. We want to have disciplined followers of Christ who will be ready and able to go out and help start new churches," Williamson said.

Williamson thinks there are lots of sports-minded, rural folks like his way beyond Johnston County – across North Carolina and beyond. He wants to reach every one of them. **BR**

"This area is known for its country folks and their hunting and fishing. ... Folks like us have been overlooked or left out."
– Josh Williamson

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Adult Ministry Specialist
LifeWay, Nashville

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NCBaptist.org/SundaySchool

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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.

For one nurse, carnival ministry is personal

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

Many people find it hard to believe that Dori Deddo is a third-generation carnival worker.

Deddo literally grew up in the carnival. That's how her parents and grandparents made their living. For a while, Dori did too, before becoming a registered nurse.

Now the western North Carolina native uses her nursing skills to minister and serve the carnival workers whose lifestyle she understands so well. When they learn she worked the carnival just like them, they're usually at a loss for words.

"When I tell them, they're just in shock," Deddo says. "They think, 'You're just a nurse that's been raised up in this wonderful family,' but I wasn't. I was one of them."

Deddo is one of thousands of health care professionals who volunteer their time on board the mobile medical and dental buses that provide free and much-needed care to underprivileged patients across the state each year. The mobile medical and dental ministry is one of many ministries made possible through financial gifts contributed each year to



Dori Deddo, left, and Dr. Ray Dunkelberg work together during the North Carolina Mountain State Fair in Fletcher. (BSC photo by K Brown)

the North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO).

In 2014, more than 4,600 patients received free medical or dental care through the ministry. In addition to physical care, patients receive spiritual care, as well. Many other volunteers, including pastors, counselors, chaplains and lay leaders, serve alongside the medical professionals on board the buses, sharing the message of hope found in Jesus Christ with the patients.

"To be able to give back is the whole reason I'm here," Deddo says. "To show Jesus' love."

Deddo has volunteered for several years on board the medical bus during the N.C. Mountain State Fair in Fletcher, located near her home in Pisgah Forest. Several of North Carolina's Baptist associations organize outreach efforts during fairs and carnivals that come to their regions each summer and fall. Baptist associations also receive a portion of NCMO contributions

each year, which go to support local missions activities like the fair ministries.

Often associations will coordinate the use of the medical and dental buses while the fair is in town. Use of the medical and dental buses is coordinated through N.C. Baptist Men, also known as Baptists on Mission.

For Deddo, this ministry is personal. She describes the carnival lifestyle as a big homeless population that is a gypsy-like caravan that goes from town to

town. The hours are long and hard. Fair workers often can't afford health insurance, and most carnival companies don't provide it. She relates to the workers because she's been in their shoes.

"This ministry is important for me because I was actually raised on the carnival," Deddo said.

"I want to be able to give back and show some of the carnival workers that they could have a better life and maybe go and do more, and in turn serve others as well.

"I never dreamed that I would be standing here today on this medical bus providing care to some people that are in need."

Deddo said she is thankful for the individuals and churches that give to the NCMO and make this type of ministry possible.

"When you support the NCMO, you have an impact in ways you never could have imagined," Deddo said. "This ministry changes lives.

"Jesus tells us to go out and love people. That's what we're doing."

(EDITOR'S NOTE - To see a video of Deddo's story, along with other NCMO ministries, visit youtube.com/BRnowvideo. To learn more about NCMO, visit ncmissionsoffering.org.) **BR**

2015 BAPTIST STATE CONVENTION OF NORTH CAROLINA PASTORS' CONFERENCE



GARY JENNINGS



RICHARD D. PHILLIPS

It Shall Not
RETURN
Void



DANNY AKIN



J. GREG LAWSON



DAVID HORNER



ALVIN REID



JOYFUL SOUND
FROM NORTH GREENVILLE UNIVERSITY



JOHNNY HUNT



D. A. CARSON

THE PASTOR AND THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

November 1-2 | Koury Convention Center | Greensboro | www.ncbaptists.org/pastors

BSC Committee on Nominations report

The Committee on Nominations is charged with the task of receiving and reviewing the numerous recommendations provided by N.C. Baptists for service on the Board of Directors and committees of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), as well as the boards of the institutions and agencies of the BSC. The committee begins its work with the recommendations sent by N.C. Baptists and only when exhausted, or in the event too few recommendations have been received for a specific place of service, the committee seeks to find candidates who meet the qualifications for service as outlined in the BSC bylaws.

The full report from the Committee on Nominations can be found on the BSC’s Annual Meeting website (ncannualmeeting.org), in this edition of the *Biblical Recorder*, on BRnow.org and in the Book of Reports provided to each messenger who completes their registration at the Annual Meeting.

On behalf of the committee members listed below, I want to thank each N.C. Baptist that completed and submitted a recommendation. It is not too early to begin thinking about those individuals whom you wish to recommend for consideration by the 2016 Committee on Nominations. Please continue to submit your recommendations. Your input is essential to the committee’s work and the ongoing effectiveness of the missions and ministries of the BSC.

Reginald Bakr, chair

2015 Committee on Nominations Members

Reginald Bakr, Browns Summit; Joe Cappar, Jacksonville; Noah Crowe, Robbinsville; Shelton Daniel, Rocky Mount; Ellen Day, Greensboro; Steve Frazier, Waynesville; Ken Gilbert, Cary; Becky Glynn, Pilot Mountain; Marvin Green, Rutherfordton; Ronald Hester, Bladenboro; Richard Odom, Stokesdale; Jonathan Rebsamen, Charlotte; Steve Roy, Clayton; Marc Sanders, Bear Creek; Steve Schultz, Candler; Shannon Scott, Raleigh; Hak Ung, Creedmoor; and Eddie Yount III, Taylorsville.

The Committee on Nominations report follows the BSC bylaws directive to “nominate persons for election by the Convention to the committees listed in Article I.C.I (b) – (d) of these bylaws, such other committees as may be assigned to it, the chair of such Convention committees, the boards of trustees and directors of all institutions and agencies of the Convention, the Board, and such other nominations as may be delegated to the committee by the Convention.”

Among other considerations for nominees, the bylaws state “It is desirable that at least twenty-five percent (25%) of members nominated to all committees of the Convention, the Board, the boards of trustees and directors of the Convention’s institutions and agencies shall come from churches with a membership under four hundred (400).” This is indicated in the Committee’s report by (O) for 400 and over and by (U) for under 400 in church membership.

The bylaws further direct that, “The Committee on Nominations shall include in its report at a minimum the name, church, home town, association, occupation, and sex of each nominee, the name of the committee or board on which the nominee is to serve together with such summary information as will make clear to this Convention the diversity and breadth of representation provided by the slates of nominees.”

BSC Board of Directors

Region 1 – No vacancies

Region 2 – Dean Harrell, Williamston Memorial (O), Williamston, South Roanoke, minister, male; Lana Hathaway, Bogue Banks (U), Pine Knoll Shores, Atlantic, lay person, female; and Marion P. Sykes Jr., Cherry Point (O), Havelock, Atlantic, lay person, male

Region 3 – J.R. Hopson, LaGrange Park (O), Fayetteville, New South River, minister, male; and Christopher Webb, (2017 unexpired term of Chris Carroll), Mt. Elim (U), Pembroke, Burnt Swamp, minister, male

Region 4 –Scott Allmon, Fall Creek (U), Bennett, Sandy Creek, minister, male; Sandy Baird, (2017 unexpired term of Don Cashwell), Moon’s Chapel (U), Bear Creek, Sandy Creek, lay person, female; David Richardson, Creedmoor First (O), Stem, Flat River, minister, male; and Nhiem Tran, Mount Vernon (O), Wake Forest, Raleigh, minister, male

Region 5 – No vacancies

Region 6 – Charles Brackett, Pitts (O), Mt. Pleasant, Cabarrus, lay person, male; George Hunnicutt, Mill Creek (U), Indian Trail, Union, minister, male; Michael Madaris, Highland (O), New London, Stanly, minister, male; Karen Walters, Roberdel (U), Rockingham, Pee Dee, lay person, female; and Curtis Williams, Brown Creek (U), Wadesboro, Anson, minister, male

Region 7 – Billy Blakley, Salem (O), Mt. Airy, Surry, minister, male; Ron Greene, (2016 unexpired term of Byron Greene), Oak Grove (U), Newland, Avery, minister, male; and Polly Heafner, Crossnore First (O), Crossnore, Avery, lay person, female

Region 8 – Christopher Hensley, Drury Dobbins (U), Ellenboro, Sandy Run, minister, male; and Edward Rogers, Bethel (U), Bostic, Sandy Run, minister, male

Region 9 – Christopher Morgan, Bolens Creek (U), Burnsville, Yancey, minister, male

Region 10 – Matthew Ledbetter, (2018 unexpired term of Joshua Blythe), Lighthouse (U), Waynesville, Tuckaseegee, minister, male

Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina

Carl Anderson, Lea Bethel (U), Leasburg, Beulah, lay person, male; Lenuel Chamberlain, Bethel (U), Yadkinville, Yadkin, lay person, male; Jim Dyer, Christ (O), Wake Forest, N.C. Miscellaneous, minister, male; Abe Elmore, Westfield (U), Dunn, Little River, lay person, male; Marcia Heckman, Crosspointe (U), Concord, Cabarrus, lay person, female; Ronnie Holman, Baton (U), Granite Falls, Caldwell, lay person, male; Gail King, Reidsville First (O), Reidsville, Dan Valley, lay person, female; Wendy Peters, Calvary (O), Winston-Salem, Pilot Mountain, lay person, female; and Stephen Shreve, Pleasant Garden (O), Pleasant Garden, Piedmont, lay person, male

Biblical Recorder

David Clary, Lake Norman (O), Cornelius, Metrolina, lay person, male; Frankie Gordon, Corinth (O), Elizabeth City, Chowan, lay person, male; Lisa Harris, Life Community (O), Greensboro, Piedmont, lay person, female; Todd Houston, Beach Road (O), Southport, Brunswick, minister, male; Marilyn Thurman, Pole Creek (O), Candler, Buncombe, lay person, female; and Keith Whitfield, (2018 unexpired term of Julian Mills), Imago Dei Church (U), Wake Forest, N.C. Miscellaneous, minister, male

North Carolina Baptist Foundation

David Ashcraft, Bethlehem (O), Raleigh, Raleigh, lay person, male; Harold Brown, Lake Norman (O), Cornelius, Metrolina, minister, male; Bobbie Furr, Trinity (O), Raleigh, Raleigh, lay person, female; Rodney Hicks, Ridgecrest (O), Durham, Yates, minister, male; Robert Howard, (2016 unexpired term of Tom Dimmock), Southport (O), Southport, Brunswick, lay person, male; and Coy Jeans Jr., Garden Creek (U), Old Fort, Blue Ridge, minister, male

North Carolina Baptist Hospital

No vacancies

Committee on Convention Meetings

Timothy Carpenter, Sardis (O), Indian Trail, Union, minister, male; Leonardo Guerrero, Fuquay-Varina Hispanic Mission (U), Fuquay-Varina, Raleigh, minister, male; David Huffines, Rocky Knoll (O), Climax, Piedmont, minister, male; John Rosal, Hispanic Mission of FBC Tarboro (U), Greenville, South Roanoke, minister, male; Simon Touprong, Vietnamese New Hope Baptist Church (U), Raleigh, Raleigh, minister, male; Ruth Warner, Saint Paul (U), Greensboro, Piedmont, lay person, female; and Brenda Hicks, chair, Beulah (U), Supply, Brunswick, lay person, female

Historical Committee

Ronnie Chaney, Union Grove (O), Asheboro, Randolph, minister, male; Curt Dean, Lawndale (O), Greensboro, Piedmont, minister, male; Ralph Justice Jr., Mount Vernon (O), Raleigh, Raleigh, lay person, male; Howard McNeill, Maple Springs (U), Seagrove, Randolph, minister, male; and Donald Wright, chair, Cary First (O), Apex, Raleigh, lay person, male

Committee on Resolutions and Memorials

Jonathan Blaylock, West Canton (O), Canton, Haywood, minister, male; Calvin Bobo, Andrews First (O), Andrews, Truett, minister, male; Kristopher Estep, Barberville (O), Waynesville, Haywood, minister, male; and Phillips McRae, Chair, Troy First (U), Troy, Montgomery, minister, male **BR**

AROUND THE STATE

Staff changes

The Wilmington Baptist Association has called **ROY SMITH** as its director of missions. Previously Smith served the Bridge Network of Churches in Virginia as associational missionary. Smith will start Nov. 1.

WILLIAM MATTHEWS has been called by Immanuel Baptist Church, Clinton, as minister to youth and children. Previously Matthews served as youth minister and associate pastor at Dawson Baptist Church, Enfield.

Submissions

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

Mohler, Oppenheimer debate costs of tax exemption

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

“Now’s the time to end tax exemptions for religious institutions,” read a *Time* Magazine headline on June 28, two days after the U.S. Supreme Court decided same-sex marriage was a constitutional right. Mark Oppenheimer, *New York Times* columnist and reporter for *The Atlantic*, authored the controversial piece. His hard-hitting opinion confirmed the fears of many evangelicals – that growing support for same-sex marriage in America would fuel antagonism toward religious freedom. Oppenheimer’s argument, despite the timely headline, focused primarily on economic factors, not same-sex marriage or religious freedom. The high court’s widely anticipated decision was simply “an opportunity to make a point that I’ve long thought deeply about,” said Oppenheimer.

Albert Mohler, president of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Ky., and host of *Thinking in Public*, a podcast dedicated to conversations about theological and cultural issues, interviewed Oppenheimer Sept. 14 to discuss his opinion in greater detail.

Their conversation covered many topics, including American secularization, the social decline of religious institutions and Pope Francis. The topic of interest, however, resurfaced throughout the interview: tax exemption for religious institutions.

Oppenheimer’s main concern is the burden that tax exempt institutions place – by not paying property taxes – on nearby middle and lower class residents, forcing them to pay higher rates. Oppenheimer said, “Every time you tinker with the tax code and give a break to one person or one body somebody else has to take up the slack, somebody else has to pay.”

He used Yale University in New Haven, Conn., as an example. It’s a wealthy, private, non-profit institution with an enormous amount of valuable property, according to Oppenheimer. He said the municipal revenue that is withheld from New Haven due to Yale’s property tax exemption hurts the city financially. He also said, “It jacks up the taxes on poor and middle class people.”

What are the options?

Oppenheimer claimed his view does not undercut religious freedom, but upholds it. “Because I care about the independence of religion in America,” he said, “I think it has to be safeguarded at

all costs. I think that asking for special treatment from the IRS [Internal Revenue Service] – asking for an exemption – is actually a bad idea for religious freedom because it opens up the door for the IRS to come in and investigate whether or not you actually are a religion.”

There are two options, he said. The IRS can periodically check financial records and evaluate worship services to verify the legitimacy of a religious institution. Or, they can operate “hands-off” and open the door to fraudulent claims of religious tax exemption. Neither Oppenheimer nor Mohler favored the first option. The latter option is typically how the IRS approaches the verification of religious institutions. Oppenheimer believes the practice undermines “respect for religion.”

Political satirist John Oliver, who hosts an HBO network comedy show called “Last Week Tonight,” recently illustrated Oppenheimer’s point. Oliver exposed the IRS’s lax approach to verifying religious institutions by registering a parody church called “Our Lady of Perpetual Exemption” and publicly mocking the process on his show.

“The one thing worse than either of those two alternatives,” Mohler responded to Oppenheimer, “is where we’d be left if your argument were to prevail, because that leaves us with the government taxing religious organizations ... that actually puts the church in the position of paying for the state and subsidizing the state’s interest.”

Churches financing government ventures is the central concern for Mohler, and it’s why he believes tax exemption “is very important to preserving religious liberty.” Mohler also said the financial burden would lead to the closure of many Christian schools and churches that are already financially strained. He admitted wealthy institutions would probably survive, but not with the same financial freedom.

Oppenheimer responded by saying the poorest institutions – like “the typical, storefront Pentecostal church in a heavily Latino or Black neighborhood” – do not have any significant tax liabilities and therefore would not feel the effects of revoking their tax exempt status. Many of these churches, he continued, are not

in danger of paying unaffordable taxes because they rent facilities – so they wouldn’t have property taxes – and they consist of poor members who do not file income taxes.

“The people who would be hit hardest,” Oppenheimer said, would be declining churches in downtown areas, “the old mainline congregations that are sitting on hundreds of millions of dollars of square footage.”

“So yes,” Oppenheimer admitted, “there are going to be losers in this.”

Revoking tax exemptions in the name of religious freedom

Oppenheimer included a moral component in his argument, citing religious reasons why tax exempt statuses should be revoked. “If we are going to be serious religious people,” he said, “we truly in our hearts want to know how much of the tax burden we are offloading onto the poor and middle class in order to pay for these tax loopholes.”

Oppenheimer asked, “Wouldn’t it be admirable ... if some of your sociologists said, ‘You know, how much are we inflicting in higher taxes on other people because of the exemptions we’re taking?’”

“I think that’s a fair question from a public policy perspective,” Mohler admitted, “and I don’t fear that question.”

Oppenheimer continued, “You could build in questions about, ‘Well, how much does our work give back to the public in non-tangible or hard to quantify ways?’ and as far as I can tell nobody cares. Nobody wants to do that work.”

Mohler challenged listeners to undertake such a study. Neither Mohler nor Oppenheimer noted the study conducted by a University of Pennsylvania professor that valued the intangible benefits of several Philadelphia church ministries in the millions of dollars per church. The study was referenced in a July story in the *Biblical Recorder*.

Oppenheimer then approached the issue from a slightly different angle. “Can I ask you a New Testament question?” he said. “So, I would have thought – and this could show my ignorance of your tradition – that ‘render unto Caesar what is Caesar’s’ would be proof-text number one for Christians not asking for tax exemptions.”

“Well, it is proof text number one,” Mohler responded, “for why Christians

as citizens should not ask for tax exemptions.” He added, “The question is whether Caesar has the right to lay claim upon a spiritual institution ... Remember, what Jesus said was twofold: ‘Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar’s, and unto God that which is God’s.’”

Surveying the legal landscape

Another topic addressed in the interview was the legal landscape regarding tax exemptions. Mohler asked what Oppenheimer thought about the potential danger in which conservative, evangelical institutions find themselves. Oppenheimer downplayed the issue by saying, “There are a total of zero politicians in Congress or at the state level who have called for anything like what I’ve proposed.” Oppenheimer doesn’t believe his initial article garnered much attention from legal experts.

Mohler agreed, “There are many other issues that will come long before any politician has the political will to call for [ending tax exemption] and pay the political price for that kind of major renovation to the tax code.”

Oppenheimer expressed disappointment that evangelicals did not seem willing to consider potential courses of action should the issue take hold legally. The question Oppenheimer wanted to ask, by his own admission, was “What would the world look like if religious institutions couldn’t afford the buildings that they have. What would it look like if all of the sudden it became cheaper to rent apartments, or have church at home, or gather in fields and meadows if you’re in a nice climate.”

He continued, “I don’t believe that if all of the sudden the tax liability of churches went up 4 or 5 percent ... or if donations went down by 10 percent ... I don’t believe they’d go away. I think they’d adapt.”

Mohler agreed that Christian history bears witness: adaptability is “amazingly pervasive” among Christian churches. “You’re talking to Southern Baptists here. We can adapt to just about anything, because we began with very little. The reason why Baptists – and Methodists, for that matter – grew so much on the American frontier is because we didn’t have to have permission, we didn’t have to have an externally granted authority. We didn’t even have to have a building. So, we can do that again if we have to.”

However, Mohler expressed reservation. Adapting to a new legal and financial climate where religious institutions did not receive tax exemptions would not come “without some horrifying losses,” Mohler said, “... and that would be my main concern.” **BR**



AL MOHLER

“If we are going to be serious religious people, we truly in our hearts want to know how much of the tax burden we are offloading onto the poor and middle class in order to pay for these tax loopholes.”
– Mark Oppenheimer

October 4

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

October 11

God's Promise of Victory

Focal passage: Romans 8:28-39

I want to give you five reasons why Romans 8:28 is so important to me. First, whenever I try to take charge of my life I always mess it up. I realize nowhere in scripture does God affirm or accept reckless or sinful living, but I am so grateful He can still take my poor and inadequate decisions and use them for my good and His glory.

Second, life can be extremely difficult at times.

When I think about my two sons who struggle to learn, and there is seemingly nothing I can do further to correct their problem, my heart breaks. Their circumstance forces me to cry out before the Lord and say, "God, I am fully claiming Your promise that all things work for the good who love You and are called according to Your purposes."

Third, I can wake up every morning with a sense of expectation that everything that comes into my life that day can make me more like Christ and less like sin.

Scripture is clear; God is at work conforming us into the image of His Son

(8:29). Sometimes, it is hard for us to believe God is interested in using the small things in life to sanctify us, but He does.

The Bible says, "*And we know that in all things [that includes big and small] God works for the good of those who love him.*"

Fourth, NFL quarterback Tim Tebow was released from the Philadelphia Eagles last month. For several years now I have been living vicariously through Tim Tebow. I know he is not the only Christian playing professional football, but when he was cut by the Eagles I was extremely disappointed. However, because of the Bible, I know God will work it out for His glory – I just hope it involves more football for Tebow.

Finally, Romans 8:28 is important to me because it makes life exciting and meaningful.

So many people view life as random acts but when you read scripture you realize we are playing a part in God's magnificent providential plan. Can there be anything more important?



BARTLEY WOOTEN
Pastor, Beulaville
Baptist Church

God's Promise of a New Home

Focal passage: Revelation 21:1-8

What do you think you will love about the new earth and new heaven? Allow me to make one suggestion. It will be a place where God will dwell with His people (Revelation 21:3).

When I was a kid I use to love getting off the bus at my grandmother's house. There was something about her home that always made me happy. Maybe it was because she made my favorite sandwich or gave me some of her famous sweet tea.

I'm not really sure, but I know I enjoyed visiting because my grandmother was there. After she passed, the home stayed in our family for some time.

During the years before my parents sold it, I would stop by and walk through it on occasion.

In fact, my wife and I lived in it for a short time.

Out of all the times I stayed there after

my grandmother passed it never felt like it did when I was a child. Now, reflecting back, I realize why it did not feel the same.

It was because my grandmother was no longer present. I've learned over the years that it is not the walls of a home that make a place special; it is the people that live in it that truly make it meaningful.

When I think about the new heaven and new earth, I am sure it will be an unbelievable place to live. Streets of gold, walls adorned with every kind of jewel, gates of pearl, no need for the sun or the moon and no threat of danger or sin. I'm certain we will be blown away with its beauty.

However, I don't think those things will make our heavenly home truly meaningful. I think it will be our ability to enjoy the very presence of God for all eternity.

Just think, each day will be filled with getting to know God better and learning more about Him. As an added bonus for me, because my grandmother was a believer, I get to share that heavenly experience with her.

October 4

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

October 11

A Fresh Start

Focal passages: Genesis 8:15-22; 9:1,11-16

It's heartbreaking to read about the Syrian refugees that are fleeing their country for a fresh start. So many men, women and children have lost their lives or given up their livelihood in hopes of a better future.

They are selling everything they own in order to buy tickets to get to a country where they may have a new life. Sadly, some are basing their hope on a geographic location, which we know will never truly satisfy.

In this week's passage, we read about the fresh start that God gives mankind after the flood.

After the waters recede, God commands Noah and his family to exit the ark and repopulate the earth. He gives them the same mandate as Adam and Eve – be fruitful, multiply and fill the earth.

Noah obediently goes out from the ark with his family, every bird, animal and creeping thing in an orderly fashion; just as God created in an intentional order in Genesis 1.

After exiting the ark, Noah built a new altar to God and worshipped Him with burnt offerings.

His response is one of gratefulness and recognition for God's deliverance of him and his family. (Farther along in Genesis, we notice that Abraham responds similarly in recognition of the Lord's faithfulness and provision).

God is pleased by Noah's offering and promises to never again destroy the earth with a flood. He establishes His covenant with Noah, his descendants, and all of creation – the first covenant recorded in the Bible – and gives the rainbow as a sign of His gracious new promise.

Thankfully, our God continues to be merciful. He has given us a new and everlasting covenant through the shed blood of His Son.

This new covenant, based on repentance and faith in Christ, is the fresh start that the Syrian refugees (and the world) so desperately need to know about; the good news that God offers *all* people regardless of circumstances or nationality. New life is found in a covenantal relationship with Jesus Christ that is offered freely by grace through faith.



HILARY RATCHFORD
Member, Hickory
Grove Baptist Church,
Charlotte

Focal passages: Genesis 11:1-9

Our passage this week hones in on Genesis 11 and the tower of Babel, so named because it was there that "*the Lord confused the language of all the earth*" (v. 9). Our wider context

includes chapter 10 as well where we learn that Noah and his family were indeed obedient to God's command to multiply. Just like Genesis 1 gives us an overall picture of creation and Genesis 2 focuses specifically on the creation of mankind, Genesis 10 gives us the genealogy of the descendants of Noah while Genesis 11 explains how they came to dwell in specific places with different languages.

In Genesis 11 we find that Noah's descendants are united by a sinful purpose. They have congregated together to build a tower in direct disobedience to God's command to fill the earth. They are trying to make a name for themselves while believing the same lie as Adam and Eve – that fulfillment can be found outside of God.

Scattered!

While they are building, verse five tells us that "*the Lord came down*" to review the construction of the tower. The verbiage used further emphasizes the futile efforts of the "*children of man.*"

God holds them accountable for their disobedience. As judgment, He scatters the rebellious people through confusion by giving them different languages. They in turn abandon their project and instead fulfill God's purpose of spreading out across the earth. God reverses Babel in Acts 2 by bringing the nations together for the pouring out of His Spirit at Pentecost.

Even humanity's best efforts cannot thwart His purposes. His will always prevails. It is His name that is uttered in the underground churches of China and in the mountains of Afghanistan despite the efforts of man to prevent it. It is the name of Christ – not any man's – that is above every name.

There will come a day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess His lordship. All of the nations, tribes, peoples and languages that have been scattered will gather again before the throne of God and attribute glory to Him alone.

Policies Continued from page 3

bylaws; bylaws trump policies when disagreement is found in these governing documents.

Fourth, do not make assumptions. Sometimes it seems obvious that everyone in the church knows a particular expectation exists for weddings or facility-use, but the hope is that the church continues to engage in ministry for many years. If that happens, people will come and go – including pastors and other church members. Make sure the language of policies, expectations and promises are clearly stated so those who come along in the years to come can understand the intention of the policy.

Here, we must make an important transition in this conversation from the spirit of power given by God to the spirit of love given by God. Even the language of the church's official policies should be seasoned with grace and motivated by love. It is possible that well-crafted policies, implemented with loving compassion, can open the doors for gospel conversations. The church is in great need to enter into such conversations with those in our communities that have chosen to enter into relationships outside of the bounds of scripture; this is true for all couples living outside of God's expectations, not just same-sex couples.

In the next column we'll turn our attention more fully to the God-given spirit of love Paul proclaimed. We'll discover how the actions of U.S. Supreme Court may be viewed as a great opportunity to engage in disciple-making in ways that we simply have not considered in the past.

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

Tour slated for Baptist 'mother church'

By LIZ TABLAZON | *Biblical Recorder*

Messengers to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) annual meeting will have a chance to visit what historians regard as the most significant landmark in North Carolina Baptist history. The Historical Committee invites participants to see the Sandy Creek Baptist Church log meeting house, which was built in 1802, on Monday, Nov. 2 at 2 p.m. The committee will offer a tour, a short lecture and a Q&A at the site at no cost.

The existing building is the third on the site and still holds the original pulpit and a few original benches. The first meeting house was built in 1762 but burned down in 1785.

The second was destroyed in a storm. Great Awakening preacher Shubal Stearns and 15 other individuals constituted themselves into what was originally Sandy Creek Separate Baptist Church in November 1755. Stearns came to the area after friends informed him of its need of evangelism. By 1758 more than 900 people were baptized. By 1771, 42 churches and 125 ministers came out of the parent church.

Don Wright, a member of the Historical Committee and First Baptist Church in Cary, said Sandy Creek became the center of the Separate Baptists in the South.

"It's from that church that Separate Baptists multiplied both of their congregations and their membership to the point that in 1771, the Baptists dominated the backcountry of Virginia, North Carolina, South

Carolina and subsequently entered Georgia, Tennessee and Kentucky as the predominant religious denomination in the South," Wright said.

Wright called Sandy Creek "the mother church of the Spirit-filled, evangelistic Baptists. Even today, Baptist theologians and Baptist leaders often describe themselves ... as being of the Sandy Creek tradition."

According to the BSC Bylaws, the Historical Committee recommends "which historic sites, including buildings, should be properly marked and preserved when these are related to Baptist history."

Wright said that marking preserved sites is no good unless people go to them. "As part of the preservation of sites, we're encouraging Baptists to visit these sites to learn about them," he said. "The more people visit and enjoy them, the easier it is to preserve that site and other sites."

Wright hopes the visit will encourage people to be excited about Baptist history. "The current Southern Baptist church at Sandy Creek is almost finished building a new sanctuary. Although it's old, it's healthy, it's glowing," he said. "The idea that just because you're old and historical means that you're dull and dead – that's not so."

The tour group will leave from the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro at 2 p.m. and will return by 5 p.m. in time for the annual meeting's scheduled events.

Contact Norma Jean Johnson in the BSC Business Services office at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5618. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Denominational

The Union Baptist Association (Monroe, North Carolina) is now accepting letters of interest and resumes, with references, for **Director of Missions**. Interested candidates should submit their material to the following email address: searchcommittee@unionbaptist.com.

Pastor

FBC of Robbins, NC, is still seeking a **senior pastor**. The position has been vacant since Dec. 31, 2014. Although the church is moving forward under the direction of a strong interim pastor and strong deacons, it needs a new pastor to lead into the future. Please send resume to robbinsfbc@gmail.com. Deadline: Nov. 1

Lake Wylie Baptist Church, Charlotte, NC, is seeking a **senior pastor** since our current pastor is retiring after serving 14 years. The congregation of 50 to 75 is looking for a pastor with at least 10 years experience who is biblically sound as found in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:6-9, preaches expository sermons, committed to missions and outreach as a means of winning the lost and the growth of the church, and flexible working with our Minister of Music/Youth and the Hispanic Church which uses our facilities. Resumes, including your personal doctrinal statement, training and education, experience, references, previous sermons either written or links to recordings can be emailed to pastorsearch@att.net.

Calvary Baptist Church, Durham, NC, is searching for the **Pastor** that God has led to guide and minister to our congregation. Preferred qualifications include a master's degree from an accredited seminary and minimum of 6 years experience as Pastor. Resumes are due by October 31. Submit to search1204@gmail.com.

Lillington Baptist Church, Lillington, NC, seeks a **full-time Pastor** to lead our church into a new chapter in our history. We are a Baptist congregation committed to Baptist distinctives, focusing on the inspirational worship of God and applying the Bible to all areas of life. Our congregation is mission-minded with a good history of cooperative and hands-on missions. We desire a Pastor who will possess strong preaching skills, be a leader in guiding and directing the church spiritually and administratively and be a person who has a servant's heart. We affirm both men and women to serve as deacons in the church. The successful candidate will possess a strong calling to the pastoral ministry, hold an accredited seminary or divinity school degree, and possess some years of experience in congregational ministry. Interested candidates are encouraged to submit resume information to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 160, Lillington, NC 27546, or electronically to pastorsearch@lillingtonbaptist.com. Resumes will be accepted until November 15, 2015.

Full-time Senior Pastor for 125-year-old, historically active, financially sound, 600 members, conservative Baptist church. Traditional and contemporary Sunday morning services. We have a commitment to the Waccamaw Baptist Association and the SC Baptist Convention. Applicant must have a minimum of 10 years pastoral experience with a preferred Southern Baptist doctorate seminary degree. Resumes will be accepted until October 31, 2015, at: First Baptist Church North Myrtle Beach, P.O. Box 3821, North Myrtle Beach, SC 29582.

Church Staff

Central Baptist Church of Oak Ridge, NC, is seeking a God called, **full-time Student Pastor**. This individual will be responsible to facilitate the Pre-K through 12th grade programs. The primary purpose of the Student Pastor is to introduce young people to Christ, to disciple them in spiritual growth to train them in serving Christ with their life. CBC affirms the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. Send resumes to searchcommittee@oakridgecbc.org by October 16.

Miscellaneous

For Sale: Christian themed magazine. Nets \$47K, Part-time, No experience necessary. Clients established; will train. \$24,900.00; Please call 828-633-2737.

NCBAM needs wheel chair ramps funded and built across the state. Supply nails, boards, or manpower. The need is great; no action too small. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

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IMB announces voluntary retirement incentive details

By ANNE HARMAN | IMB Connections

In the first phase of the International Mission Board's (IMB) plan to address revenue shortfalls, leadership announced details of a voluntary retirement incentive during town hall meetings with personnel Sept. 10.

The goal of the plan, IMB leaders shared, is to offer as generous a voluntary retirement incentive as possible, while honoring the years of service of those eligible and providing smooth transitions for personnel from their current roles.

IMB will offer the voluntary retirement incentive to all eligible staff and active career missionaries age 50 and older with five or more years of service (as of Dec. 31, 2015). For a missionary couple to be eligible for the incentive, only one spouse is required to meet the qualifications.

"Our desire in all of this is to be as generous as possible to as many people as possible," IMB President David Platt said. "Since we are asking everyone in the organization to pray and discern if the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in mission, we know that 50-year-olds, for example, are going to be doing exactly that. And if the Lord leads them to make a transition, we want to provide for them as generously as possible.

"We want this [voluntary retirement incentive] to be a picture of honor for past service in mission, as well as future service in mission," Platt said.

Transitions

Sebastian Traeger, IMB executive vice president, pre-

sented specific details of the plan, which includes a base retirement package, a bonus incentive complete with financial and medical considerations, specific provisions for smooth transition, and additional benefits beyond the scope of a standard retirement package. Personnel who voluntarily elect to accept the incentive will finalize their decisions in early December. Those with greater than 15 years of service will be given "emeritus" status to honor their years of service.

Not all missionaries will choose to transition to the U.S. Some may choose to stay on the field as volunteers, through alternative pathways or through employment options. "If you're in a scenario where you would like to stay on the field, by all means, we want to help you to do that," Traeger told missionaries, noting personnel transitioning to volunteer status would be allowed to use their housing and vehicles through the end of January 2016.

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allows Southern Baptists to take aim at the critical hunger needs around the world. Thanks to the Southern Baptist Cooperative Program, all of the funds given to GHR go directly toward meeting real hunger needs – whether chronic hunger, or hunger precipitated by disasters or urban food deserts, or hunger faced by women rescued from sex trafficking. This is a blessing from Christ that allows Southern Baptists to do real, tangible acts of mercy for the cause of the gospel.

IMB will provide a transition team to serve every person who chooses to take the incentive. Missionaries will be given a transition grant to accommodate their adjustment. Also, local churches, seminaries and state conventions have contacted IMB offering to help missionaries transitioning back to the U.S. and committing to pray for IMB during this time of transition.

The retirement incentive information was shared in two segments during the town hall meetings: first to missionary personnel, who mostly attended via electronic communication and then in person and online to staff, who are mostly based in Richmond, Va. The two meeting times allowed leadership to convey specific details that pertain to each group. The incentive originally was announced during an Aug. 27 town hall meeting when IMB leaders laid out a plan to address IMB's revenue shortfalls and complete a reset of the organization.

The full story is available online at BRnow.org. **BR**

Let's follow our Savior and empty ourselves of our rights and our appetites to live out our calling to be ambassadors of a King who promises feasts and treasure beyond any worldly imagination.

Mardi Gras may only last for a night, but Easter lasts for eternity.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Russell D. Moore is president of the Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission of the Southern Baptist Convention. Visit erlc.com.) **BR**



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