

# BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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## BCH BROTHERS LEAVE THEIR WORRIES BEHIND

By **BLAKE RAGSDALE** | BCH Communications

**K**athy and Craig could never predict when the phone might ring. Inevitably, a call would come. On the other end of the line was their grandsons' father, a single dad who not only struggled to care for his boys, Jonathan and Thomas, but struggled to care for himself.

"He would get on drugs and drink alcohol and not have a job. He couldn't feed them," Kathy said. "He would call us and get us to come get the boys."

The boys' mother, who had left years earlier and moved to a different state, was no longer in the family's lives. Craig and Kathy were the only people their son-in-law could turn to in times of crisis. Each time the boys' father reached out to them, they knew Jonathan and Thomas needed them right away. But the final time Kathy and Craig received a call the situation was dire.

"The last time it was worse," said Kathy. "I had to go get both boys that night."

The couple discovered that their grandsons, along with their father, were living on the street. "We were sleeping under bridges," 13-year-old Jonathan reveals. "Sometimes we ate; sometimes we didn't. It was like that."

For their grandsons' well-being, Kathy and Craig became Jonathan and Thomas' legal custodians. While the decision to take the boys into their home immediately gave them the care they needed, the elderly couple found out quickly that providing for them long term would be impossible.

"I knew they deeply loved them and wanted to take care of them," says Ken Gibson, the family's pastor at Long Shoals Baptist Church in Lincolnton, "but I knew financially and health-wise they wouldn't be able to."

Their pastor made a phone call of his own to Michael C. Blackwell, president of Baptist Children's Homes

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## NAMB trustees approve Send Relief, IMB aid

By **MIKE EBERT** | NAMB

**T**rustees of the North American Mission Board (NAMB) have approved the establishment of Send Relief – a new compassion ministry to offer Southern Baptists opportunities to meet physical needs and serve underprivileged communities.

NAMB President Kevin Ezell, commenting on the Send Relief initiative, noted shortly after trustees closed their meeting in Salt Lake City, "Imagine 40,000

Southern Baptist churches engaged to meet needs in their communities and across North America. Send Relief will give churches hands-on opportunities to alleviate suffering and transform lives."

Send Relief will launch in 2016 and include compassion ministries to combat hunger, poverty, serve children through foster care and adoption, combat human trafficking, minister to migrants through international learning centers and meet inner-city needs with construction and medical teams.

NAMB's disaster relief team will be part of Send Relief and continue to have its own director. The mission board will continue to serve as coordinator of national disaster relief responses.

### David Melber named VP

NAMB trustees also approved David Melber as vice president of Send Relief.

Melber comes to NAMB after 12 years as president and CEO of Crossings camp outreach in Kentucky and a lifetime of

**See NAMB page 12**



"We believe Send Relief is a way to help thousands of churches take their first missions step" into ministry combining compassion and evangelism, North American Mission Board President Kevin Ezell told trustees Oct. 7. (NAMB photo by John Swain)



# Let's talk about CP

Most Baptists have an opinion about the Cooperative Program (CP), and most of us are convinced that our opinion is the correct one. For decades we have discussed its value, what percentage (or amount) churches should give and where the money should go.

The conversation has grown a little strained recently when we talk about the ratio of CP giving through state conventions and how much of the money should go to the international mission field.

It's easier to talk about it than it is to apply the basic principles of cooperation in a balanced strategy in our congregations, state conventions and national entities. Again, the abundance of opinions tends to complicate the matter. Add to the equation the fact that some speak to the issue before they have all of the facts in hand.

In his book, *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal*, David Dockery said, "The Cooperative Program is a cooperative partnership whereby churches across the Southern Baptist Convention combine gifts, given to and through state conventions and passed on to the national convention, for the purpose of supporting missions, education, benevolence efforts and other ministries. These gifts are employed to send and support missionaries, equip pastors and church leaders, enable educational entities, and address benevolent, social, ethical and moral issues. The Cooperative Program is the glue that pulls together 44,000 Southern Baptist congregations for the purpose of advancing the [g]ospel around the world."

Following this definition of CP, Dockery's next paragraph presses for the unity that Jesus prayed for in John 17. How appropriate! CP is a unity thing! It is a partnership; an act of cooperation; a team effort. He said Jesus prayed that His followers will experience a spiritual unity that exemplifies the oneness of the Father and the Son.

"We must work, pray, give and go – and do so together in the spirit of Christian unity," said Dockery. CP is designed to build a platform for workable unity in our calling.

Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) president Ronnie Floyd joined the conversation recently with his column, "Where's the money?" He said, "Each of our churches must evaluate continually what we are doing to partner with our Southern Baptist Convention in reaching the world for Christ. We do this through our gifts through the Cooperative Program. How much a church gives through

the Cooperative Program is a church's decision. Each church is autonomous, and we honor their decision.

"However, since we are Southern Baptist churches, we also believe in the value of partnership. I believe each church can do more to fund the vision of reaching the world for Christ. What we give through the Cooperative Program is important."



**K. ALLAN BLUME**  
Editor

Floyd added, "If we devalue the Cooperative Program, then we undermine the financial engine that impacts our work together statewide, nationally and internationally."

That raises a question. How would we devalue CP? I can think of a dozen ways this might happen. We might trivialize the power of CP by approving a token gift through our annual church budget. We might devalue CP by putting the focus on ourselves and lose the vision of CP's potential. Or we might elevate only one CP ministry partner and minimize others.

As a pastor for 34 years, I admit my prejudice. I believe strongly in CP. Most of the churches I served gave at least 10 percent to missions through CP, and they gave very generously above that to many special offerings that supported state missions, national missions and international missions.

I believe in the value of CP in the ministries of the states. In the interest of full disclosure, the *Biblical Recorder* receives CP dollars in support of our ministry to the churches. However, I fully supported CP before I began serving as editor of the *Recorder*.

I suspect that many Baptists do not know the breadth of Baptist ministries in their state. They may have no idea how much value our state convention staff adds to the ministry of churches, pastors, staff, Bible teachers, secretaries, youth, children, volunteers, treasurers, committees, missionaries and musicians.

State convention staff are not desk huggers. By necessity, there are some who serve us administratively from the confines of a computer and office desk. However, most of them give face-to-face time and generous amounts of telephone time to share from the wealth of their experience or to point us to others who have earned trophies from the "school of hard knocks."

I am not in a position to address what is happening in other states, but I know first-hand what God is doing in North Carolina. The Baptist Children's Homes of N.C. is the best and largest ministry of its kind in the nation. They now have a five-year track record of success with

a new ministry that serves senior adults through the North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry or NCBAM.

The dozens of ministries of N.C. Baptist Men make it the largest of its kind across the SBC. They set the pace for disaster relief in North America. Fruitland Baptist Bible College continues to make a powerful impact on church leadership in the Southeast with overwhelming numbers of pastors and staff serving the churches of N.C. and S.C.

Baptist conference centers like Caswell, Caraway and Truett are reaching children, teenagers and adults in powerful ways all year long. The church planting and church revitalization ministries in our state are second to none in the SBC. We support a retooled campus ministry that is making great strides in impacting college and university students. Smaller amounts of CP dollars assist in the work of the Baptist Foundation, Baptist Hospital and the *Biblical Recorder*.

All of these ministries are worthy of CP support. Weighing the valuable investment they make in Kingdom work, we really can't afford to minimize their assignment in the Great Commission. We cannot underestimate the men and women who lead these ministries and serve us with their unique ministry skills or pretend we can grow in ministry without them.

There are important mission tasks and ministry functions that state conventions do that are not fulfilled by the any other SBC entity.

Floyd's column raises a valid question, where's the money that is needed to support ALL of the ministries that Southern

Baptists are passionate about? He said the money is in the pockets of God's people and in the pockets of the churches. It's that simple. This is not a time to cut ministry budgets. It's time to step up and fund Great Commission ministries.

We cannot with integrity call for state conventions to move CP gifts to a 50-50 ratio without also calling Southern Baptist churches to budget 10 percent of the church's undesignated receipts for CP. Churches must get on the team. Unity is valuable in the advance of Christ's Kingdom.

There was a time when the desired standard for each church was 10 percent. No requirement is placed on autonomous churches, but the hope is that the desire to work together for the sake of the Great Commission will be stronger than the temptation to sustain an inwardly focused local church ministry.

I believe CP giving makes a profound statement about the value of teamwork. The team player is not making a statement about individuality. The team player unselfishly looks at God's big picture.

Goals are reached when we set high standards. We need to aim for our best – generosity is the standard of our Lord. Let's not aim below it.

At the 2015 annual meeting in Greensboro, messengers will vote on a 2016 CP budget. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) has increased CP allocations that are sent to the Southern Baptist Convention by one-half percent each of the past 10 years. This year the increase is a strong three percent jump.

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# Tribute to a faithful pastor, professor and president

**D**uring the September meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's Board of Directors, we had the privilege of honoring and recognizing my friend and colleague Jerry Wallace for his many years of service to both Campbell University and North Carolina Baptists.

Over the summer, Wallace retired after 45 years at Campbell, the last 12 of which he served as the university's president. I am grateful that we had the privilege as a board to recognize, celebrate and thank him for his dedication to and outstanding leadership of Campbell University.

In the many roles that Wallace has held at Campbell – professor, administrator, dean, provost and president among them – one role has undergirded them all. Wallace still considers himself a Baptist pastor at heart. His wife Betty shares that sentiment. “He is a preacher first. Always will be,” she says. “That is the essence of who he is.”

Wallace served as pastor of Elizabethtown Baptist Church from 1960 to 1975. In 1970, while continuing to pastor, Wallace began teaching part time at Campbell as an adjunct professor of sociology.

As he transitioned from the pastorate to the classroom and later into administration, Wallace always taught, led and served with a pastor's heart.

Wallace recognized the important connection between academic pursuits and the spiritual formation and development of students. He has given his life to both ministry and education, and Wallace believes the two are not to be separated.

The link between academic training and ministry is clearly seen in Wallace's efforts to establish Campbell's school of medicine. From the very beginning, Wallace had a vision that the medical school at Campbell would produce more doctors and medical professionals for the mission field and missionary endeavors than any other school in the nation.

Throughout his tenure at Campbell, Wallace has valued the historic relationship between the universities and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

The ongoing relationship that the state convention presently has with the affiliated N.C. Baptist educational institutions is due, in large part, to the efforts of Wallace.

He has been a trusted voice in the establishment of this new relationship with the convention and the universities.

For as long as I have known him, Wallace has always personified what I think it means to be a Christian southern gentleman. I agree with the sentiment expressed to him on behalf of the convention's Christian



**MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.**  
BSC executive  
director-treasurer



Recently retired Campbell University president, Jerry Wallace, left, talks with Milton A. Hollifield Jr., Baptist State Convention of North Carolina executive director-treasurer, right, and Campbell's president, J. Bradley Creed. (BSC photo by K Brown)

Higher Education Special Committee during a reception in his honor. “Your passion for providing a strong Christian worldview to students of all disciplines has set you apart as a minister of the gospel, educator and statesman.”

Thank you, Dr. Wallace, for your many years of service to North Carolina Baptists and for your faithfulness as a pastor, professor and university president.

“And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry” – 1 Timothy 1:12 (NKJV). **BR**

## How churches can avoid three ‘dangerous assumptions’

**M**any church leaders began to ask questions after the June 26 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court to make same-sex marriage a constitutionally protected right. While it remains to be seen how these issues will affect churches in the long term, the immediate need is for churches to establish appropriate policies clarifying their position on marriage and their expectations regarding the use of facilities. These topics and more have been addressed in previous *Biblical Recorder* columns and blog posts on the Christian Life and Public Affairs Special Committee website ([blog.ncbaptist.org/clpa](http://blog.ncbaptist.org/clpa)). I hope you will revisit those articles as your congregation approaches these matters.

In this final article, I focus on the final phrase of 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). Our Lord has given us a sound mind that, when informed and shaped by scripture, can help us respond appropriately to current challenges regarding sexuality.

As noted in previous articles, the immediate need for many churches is the establishment of policies.

Churches are discouraged from making bylaw amendments but encouraged to strive to keep these matters within policies documents. There is, however, a long-term issue that may require amendments to a church's bylaws or constitution, depending how the church is organized.



**BRIAN K. DAVIS**  
Guest Column

Many churches cooperating with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) have membership statements that provide four avenues for individuals to become members of the congregation. The first avenue is through profession of faith resulting in baptism by immersion. Many churches have beautiful statements regarding the expect-

tation that new converts confess sin, repent from sin and give evidence of a life transformed by the gospel.

Others include statements expressing sentiments in scripture regarding putting to death the old life and being clothed in righteousness. Again, these are beautiful statements that churches take seriously.

The problem is the remaining three avenues into church membership. While reviewing a church's avenues for membership, I often find the phrase, “or by

See Churches page 13

## Submissions

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

## CLARIFICATION

A story in the Oct. 10 issue of the *Biblical Recorder* reported on the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) Board of Directors meeting in September. The story should have said the proposed budget eliminated the allocation for the matching GuideStone retirement benefit for pastors and other church employees

and that the budget maintains the allocation for protection benefits for pastors and other church employees participating in the Church Retirement Program through GuideStone.

The story had originally only included information relating to pastors. The clarification comes from the BSC.

## How do we respond like Jesus to racial crises?

By **BRIAN S. DAVIS** | Guest Column

**I**s there anything proactive Christians can do in response to cultural crises involving racial issues? What I mean by “cultural crisis” is the tornado of racially charged events that have been happening in our country, events that have taken racial issues from other places and brought them, in God's providence, to everyone's attention: Mike Brown in Ferguson, Eric Garner in New York City, Walter Scott in South Carolina and Freddy Gray in Baltimore.

I want to start by saying something

that's obvious, but it still needs to be said: All African-Americans are not the same, and many African-Americans are very hurt.

That said, there is a variety of viewpoints even among the black community, and they disagree how to feel. It has been my experience, though, that the majority have been hurting, especially in the past year.

So, what should the church do? What can the church do?

I want to look at a passage of scripture that I think helps us as we consider these

See Racial page 7



# 2015 N.C. Legislature scores high for conservatives

Christian Action League

**N**orth Carolina lawmakers ended the 2015 legislative session lasting more than eight months shortly after 4 a.m. Sept. 30. It was the longest session in at least a decade. A budget stalemate, extended negotiations on Medicaid reform and economic recruitment incentives were the primary reasons for the delay. The General Assembly normally completes its work by early summer.

It's been a good year for conservative efforts. In fact, during my 16-year tenure as a registered lobbyist in the North Carolina General Assembly we have never had a year with so many advances.

Some of the bigger wins included new laws to protect the unborn, defend religious liberty and provide greater opportunities for a private education. The following bills were passed:

● **House Bill (HB) 297** – End Marketing/Sale Unborn Children Body Parts prohibits the use of taxpayer money going to groups like Planned Parenthood that perform abortions, as well as outlawing the sale of baby body parts garnered from an abortion.

● **HB 465** – Women and Children's Protection Act of 2015 extends the wait time for an abortion from 24 to 72 hours, ensuring women are provided ample time to consider all of the alternatives to ending the life of her unborn child.

● **Senate Bill (SB) 2** – Magistrates Recusal for Civil Ceremonies allows magistrates and registers of deeds that hold a sincere religious objection to same-sex marriage to opt-out of the performance of civil ceremonies. Before the passage of this legislation, these public officials were facing termination and even criminal prosecution for refusing to violate their consciences.

Significant increased funding for State Opportunity Scholarships and Special Education Scholarships were included as a part of this year's budget. **HB 97** – 2015 Appropriations Act makes it easier for disabled children and those of lower income families to attend a non-public school. It provides public funds for parents to choose the right educational set-

ting for their children. The State Opportunity Scholarships program originally passed in 2013, but had also been under the cloud of litigation. This year the State Supreme Court ruled the program was constitutional, ending the legal challenge to the scholarships.

● **HB 229** – Church Tax Exemption/Driving Privileges closes loopholes in the tax laws allowing church property to be taxed when in construction and unoccupied. The measure specifically exempts church buildings under construction and the land on which they are being built from local property taxes if the structure is intended to be wholly and exclusively used by its owner for religious purposes upon completion. The legislation also added a provision for a limited driving privilege authorizing a person with a revoked driver's license to drive to church for worship services.

● **HB 774** – Restoring Proper Justice Act removes the obstacles that have produced a nine year de facto moratorium on the death penalty. The new law jump-starts the death penalty in an effort to restore proper justice.

● **HB 792** – Privacy/Protection from Revenge Postings makes the egregious practice of revenge porn illegal. Revenge porn is the nonconsensual disclosure of explicit images for no legitimate purpose that causes immediate, devastating and in many cases irreversible harm to a person's life.

● **HB 290** – Prohibit Powdered Alcohol passed the House. The measure, however, was later rolled into another bill and passed via HB 909 – ABC Omnibus Legislation. "Palcohol," also called "powdered alcohol," is an alcohol product made available in a pouch that looks and works much like Kool-Aid. It becomes an alcoholic beverage with the addition of water.

● **HB 540** – Billy Graham/National Statuary Hall will result in a statue of Billy Graham posthumously being placed inside the U.S. Capitol Building in Washington, D.C. The statue will replace the current one of former Gov. Charles B. Aycock.

● **A House Resolution, HR 944** – Rev. Billy Graham for Postage Stamp petitions

the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee of the United States Postal Service and the Postmaster General of the United States to issue a commemorative stamp honoring the evangelist.

Some of the bills that were beaten back this year were victories almost as significant as the year's advances. The bad legislation beaten back included gambling initiatives, two alcohol measures, the legalization of medicinal marijuana and grandparents' rights legislation that would have superseded parental rights.

Two measures were filed that would have legalized sweepstakes gambling. **HB 922** – Video Sweepstakes Regulation and Taxing would have made sweepstakes gaming lawful by licensing, taxing and regulating it. The other, **HB 938** – Comprehensive Gaming Reform would have taken a broader approach by establishing a nine member gaming commission to oversee the state lottery, charitable and for-profit bingo, as well as legalize, license and tax sweepstakes. Neither bill was taken up.

The Senate's version of the state's

budget provided for an expansion of lottery advertising by 50 percent and initiated "E-Instant Games," which are essentially online scratch-off tickets. The proposal was rejected in the final draft of the state budget, **HB 97** – 2015 Appropriations Act.

● **HB 78** – Enact Medical Cannabis Act would have permitted the sale and possession of marijuana for medical use to patients who qualified. It would have directed the Department of Agriculture to establish a marijuana supply

system regulated by rules from the N.C. Medical Care Commission. And, it would have protected persons from criminal, civil, or professional licensure penalties for authorized use of the drug as a medicine.

Marijuana is not medicine and so-called medical marijuana is the first step to the legalization of recreational marijuana.

● **HB 413** – Expand Grandparents Visitation Rights would have provided for an expansion of grandparents' visitation rights under existing family law.

See Legislature page 16



**MARK CREECH**  
Guest Column

## Southeastern Alumni & Friends Luncheon at the NC Baptist Convention

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary alumni and friends are invited to gather for lunch during the North Carolina Baptist Convention annual meeting and enjoy fellowship. Dr. Danny Akin will be the keynote speaker at this event. There are a limited number of seats available, so please make plans early to attend.

**Monday, November 2, 2015**  
12:00pm – 1:30pm

Sheraton Greensboro Hotel, Blue Ashe Room

\$10 per person

Register online at [iamgoi.ng/ncbc](http://iamgoi.ng/ncbc) or email Michelle at [mard@sebt.edu](mailto:mard@sebt.edu) for more information.



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# SEBTS board elects Whitfield as VP for academic administration

By CASSITY POTTER | SEBTS Communications

**S**outheastern Baptist Theological Seminary's (SEBTS) board of trustees named Keith Whitfield as the new vice president for academic administration at its biannual meeting on Oct. 12.

Whitfield joined the Southeastern faculty in 2012 as an assistant professor of theology and was soon named the associate dean of the College at Southeastern.

Since 2014, he has served as the associate vice president of institutional effec-

tiveness and faculty communications.

The vice president for academic administration position is a new addition to the leadership of SEBTS.

In his new role, Whitfield will assist the provost and deans in the management and implementation of academic matters. The position also oversees institutional effectiveness, the registrar's office and library services.

Provost Bruce Ashford is happy to welcome Whitfield into his new position. "Through his previous role as associate vice president for institutional effec-

tiveness, Dr. Whitfield has come to be known as a thoughtful and exceptionally competent administrator," Ashford said. "Through his continuing role as a faculty member, we have also come to know him as a caring teacher and proficient scholar. All of those qualities combine to make him the perfect person to fill this new and significant role."

"Keith Whitfield is a godly man devoted to Christ and His Church," said President Danny Akin.

"He is without question the perfect person for this job and will be a welcomed addition to our leadership team."

Whitfield received his bachelor of science from Clemson University and earned his master of divinity in biblical and theological studies and master of theology degrees from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Ky. He received his doctor of philosophy degree in theological studies from SEBTS in 2013. Whitfield previously served as a teaching fellow and a member of the dean's cabinet at New College Franklin in Franklin, Tenn., and led Waverly Baptist Church in Waverly, Va., for five years as senior pastor. He is currently a lay elder

at Imago Dei Church in Raleigh and serves on the board of directors for the *Biblical Recorder*.

In addition, during their fall meeting SEBTS trustees:

- Approved curriculum changes to the master of divinity degree.

- Approved the creation of new student aid accounts, including the Jeannie Elliff Student Aid Fund, Robert W. Kester Student Aid Fund, Herring Student Aid Fund and McGill Memorial Student Aid Fund.

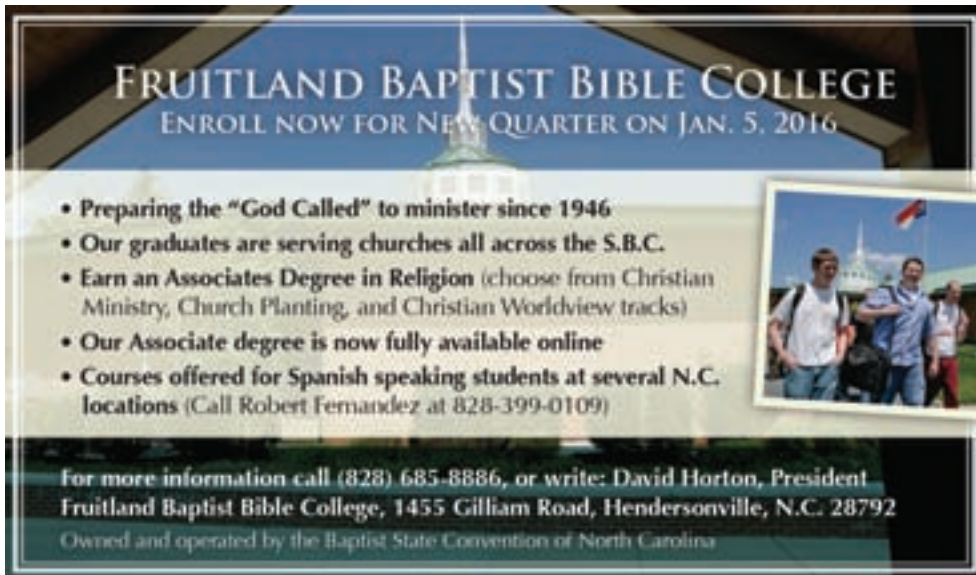
- Approved the closeout of the 2011-2014 strategic plan.

- Approved the 2016-2017 strategic goals as follows: enhance critical thinking through writing, reflect kingdom diversity and orient the institution to address the needs of non-traditional students.

- Voted to begin the process of updating the campus facilities master plan.

After five years of enrollment increases, SEBTS reached another record high in 2015 at nearly 3,500 students.

The school has also seen increases in diversity, with more than 15 percent of its student population identifying as Black or Hispanic. **BR**



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# ‘Moral revolution’ not over, says Mohler

Pop-music icon Prince opened his 1987 album, *Sign O’ the Times*, by using his soulful whine to describe the effects of the sexual revolution on the homosexual community. “In France, a skinny man died of a big disease with a little name,” he sang, clearly referring to the devastation of AIDS. “Mournful, desolate and sadly accepting,” is how *Rolling Stone* described the song’s tone.

Prince isn’t the only one who’s pondered the decades-long sexual revolution with gloomy ambivalence. Many Christians have taken it as a sad fact as well, only their acquiescence has not been limited to the devastating effects of the revolution, but its morality too.

Intent on dispelling the fog of moral uncertainty among Christians today, R. Albert Mohler Jr. has written a new book titled *We Cannot Be Silent*. “Christians must look each other in the eye,” he says, “and remind one another of what is now required of us – to speak the truth, to live the truth, and to bear witness to the truth.”

The book’s subtitle, “Speaking truth to a culture redefining sex, marriage & the very meaning of right and wrong,” signals this is not meant to be a mere tactical move in a political skirmish, but a heartfelt rally for Christians to engage American culture on all fronts. Mohler believes the cultural upheaval left unchecked will undo the foundational structures of society as we know it.

## Is this another evangelical rant?

Despite some alarming statements, Mohler achieves a quality of voice that lacks the desperate harshness that’s often found in conservative clarion calls.

Mohler musters his fellow evangelicals with a compelling argument for the value and urgency of the Christian moral tradition while holding a tone that indicates an awareness that outsiders are listening. He uses more than half the volume’s pages to outline the cultural progression in America from the onset of secularization to the end of marriage itself, touching on heterosexual, homosexual and transgender issues along the way.

His analysis of the trajectory of the gay rights revolution – the “gay agenda” – is not the work of a conservative reactionary, nor is it paranoid revisionist history. It’s a provocative but fair statement of the facts.

Proponents of the gay rights revolution should have few qualms with Mohler’s presentation of the facts because he quotes their own leaders and

writers. Plenty will oppose his conclusions, but there should be no question about what has happened in America over the last few decades.

He also confesses that traditional marriage supporters have demonstrated a good deal of hypocrisy. “Conservative Christians far too quickly

accuse the proponents of same-sex marriage of being the enemies of marriage, believing that marriage was in great shape before same-sex couples starting clamoring for legal recognition of the unions,” says Mohler. “This is intellectual dishonesty, and the record must be set straight. The previous damage to marriage can be traced to the intellectual,

sexual, legal and therapeutic subversion of marriage by heterosexuals.” Mohler cites the acceptance of cohabitation and no-fault divorce by many American Christians as two of the primary threats.

## Who’s the book for?

For those bewildered by the Supreme Court’s decision June 26, Mohler competently answers the question, “How in the world did we get here?” He writes, “It is profoundly true that the sexual revolution did not begin with same-sex marriage.”

“The sexual revolution began when a significant number of people in modern society decided to liberate themselves from the inherited sexual morality that had been derived from Christianity and informed the cultural consensus throughout human history.” The times are changing, says Mohler, but they didn’t start yesterday.

Those most likely to bristle at Mohler’s ideas about how to alter the forward march of the moral revolution are theologically liberal Christians that advocate same-sex marriage. They also happen to be the group that has been “central to the gay revolution,” according to Linda Hirschman, author of *Victory: The Triumphant Gay Revolution*. Mohler notes that fact as part of Hirschman and others’ self-admitted strategy for advancing the “gay rights agenda.”

It’s this crowd that will find much to chew on in the final four chapters of the book, where Mohler makes a robust, biblical case for gender, sexuality and marriage.

The leverage of his argument depends on his conservative theology, but not in the way that some may expect.

Mohler articulates an important nuance at the most crucial point – a distinction that’s often overlooked by culture warriors on both sides – when he says evangelicals should not be fooled into thinking heterosexuality or traditional marriage brings redemption. Converting homosexuals into heterosexuals is not the end-game, Mohler argues. “Every single human being – whether heterosexual or homosexual – is a sinner in need of the redemption that can only come through Christ,” he said.

The volume might also be of some use to non-Christians that wonder what all the fuss is about, for the one who’s asking, “Why don’t evangelicals ever shut up about other people’s marriage and sexuality?” Mohler makes it clear on page one: “The revolution that has transformed most of Western Europe and much of North America is a revolution more subtle and more dangerous than revolutions faced in previous generations. This is a revolution of ideas – one that is transforming the entire moral structure of meaning and life that human beings have recognized for millennia.”

“Dangerous” may seem like an overstatement to some. After all, how does same-sex marriage or transgenderism harm traditional marriage supporters? The legalization of same-sex marriage by way of Supreme Court decree has created

a “conflict of liberties,” says Mohler, religious freedom versus erotic liberty, and the latter “now marginalizes, subverts and neutralizes” the former.

Once again, Mohler is not fear-mongering a conservative uprising; he is raising legitimate concerns, and the

American judicial system has proved them to be valid. Just ask Washington florist Barronelle Stutzman, former Atlanta Fire Chief Kelvin Cochran or Rowan County, Ky., clerk Kim Davis.

The widespread effects of this revo-



lution also make the book a potential resource for anyone who shares Mohler’s concerns. He warns that “extremely specific and difficult questions will arrive at the doorstep of every congregation.” That explains why the final chapter is entirely devoted to “hard questions” about the intricacies of the cultural debate over sexual morality.

Though it’s not a significant detriment to the book, a potential weakness is its awkward release date in light of recent events. Apparently the bulk of the content was written before the nationwide legalization of same-sex marriage June 26, but the release date is Oct. 27.

A “special addition” is included that addresses the high court’s decision and its implications, but it is not listed as one of the official chapters; instead, it’s added as “A Word to the Reader.” One gets the sense that the overall argument could have been reinforced by taking the time to provide a thorough integration of the momentous decision as a key feature of the book, since Mohler admits he knew the decision was on the horizon.

Nearly three decades ago, Prince’s chart-topping lyrics – not to mention his own gender ambiguity – predicted a cultural wave that few could have imagined. Ideas that once seemed like the makings of a traditional, nuclear family – “Sign o’ the times mess with your mind. Hurry before it’s too late. Let’s fall in love, get married, have a baby. We’ll call him Nate, if it’s a boy” – now take on a whole new meaning. One question remains: can evangelicals afford to be silent? The costs are too high, says Mohler.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Seth Brown is content editor for the Biblical Recorder.) **BR**

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# Racial

Continued from page 3

difficult questions. In 1 Peter 3:8, Peter writes to his elect exiles in the church, and I think he has words for us, too. The passage reads: *“Finally, all of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, a tender heart, and a humble mind.”*

## Unity of mind

I’ve heard it said, “the gospel creates ethics.” I think that’s right, but I haven’t heard many people talking that way about racially charged issues. Forgive me for these generalizations, but I’m using them because they are generally true. It seems white people feel like black people always play the race card, and black people feel like white people never acknowledge racism.

This has been perplexing, and it has revealed a divided hermeneutic in our churches.

How is it that Christians in the same church, looking at the same event and the same Bible are coming to entirely different conclusions? These landing-places seem to be ethnically divided.

By and large, black people in churches feel differently than white people in churches. How is it that our ethnicity is shaping our ethics rather than our Bible or our gospel? Why do we disagree across ethnic lines?

I don’t have an answer for that. I just think it’s something worth considering. It’s strange at best, especially when we look at a text that tells us to have *“unity of mind.”*

If nothing else, we should be laboring for like-mindedness. Racial injustice is a huge, devastating part of our country’s history, and it affects life today. But the Word of God and the gospel still apply because there are things that the church ought to feel together. There are things that the church ought to oppose together; there are things we ought to support and assert together.

And I’m not trying to put a finger on exactly the correct conclusions but rather

to emphasize the “togetherness” of those conclusions. And I think pastors have a responsibility to lead in this effort.

Many white people have had the freedom to pretend like racial injustice is a non-category.

Black people haven’t. And both of those mindsets are in our churches. And we want them to be unified.

Listen to Paul in 1 Corinthians 1:10: *“I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.”* Listen also to Philippians 4:2: *“I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord.”*

Brothers, it’s good to entreat and to help people in our churches agree in the Lord. I know that’s easier said than done, but leading our churches toward like-mindedness and unity is crucial. We certainly won’t agree on everything, but we must try to be in agreement with the mind of Christ.

## Sympathy

A necessary companion to *“unity of mind”* is something that’s generally lacking in these situations: *“sympathy.”* One of the most hurtful things for me, especially in the Mike Brown and Eric Garner situations, was the general lack of sympathy and pastoral concern.

I received so many phone calls from my black brothers and sisters in Christ who are in churches led by white leaders about how hurt they were because these issues were not addressed. They didn’t get talked to about the situation; they didn’t get pursued in their hurt.

Pastor, if you didn’t publicly address your church concerning the racial events in our country, I think that is pastorally irresponsible. Why? Because God’s providence has made this an “everybody”

issue. He has taken things from random corners we’d never know anything about and he has stuffed it in our faces over and over again.

Pastors, there are few responses to hurting more painful than silence.

In too many of these situations, there has been an astonishing lack of sympathy. We are called by God to suffer with those who suffer. We’re called to enter into

another’s situation, to understand it, feel it, share it. I don’t mean the pastor goes to them and tells them not to hurt; I mean the pastor goes to them and learns how to hurt with them.

Perhaps you don’t have anything to say about it? That’s fine. But one of the main things you can teach is what it looks like to be slow to speak and quick to listen.

During these months, have you listened to the black people in your churches? Have you had conversations with them? Have you said to them, “Tell me. How are you feeling?” Did you gather them up and actually talk to them?

Diversity without sympathy is how you get assimilation. Diversity with sympathy is the key to unity. The former says “Be here, be with us – but we don’t really care how you’re doing; just be like us.” The latter says something much different: “Come here; affect us.”

## Brotherly love from a tender heart

In some ways, I don’t understand what all the confusion is about regarding how to respond to racial differences. Brotherly love is intended to be simple. We are to love each other like family – because we are family.

There are not merely black people in your church; there are black brothers and sisters in your church. They’re your family. In Christ, we become the very family of God. And in Christ, our family-of-God-ness is greater than, more intimate, more permanent than our ethnic identities.

We are co-heirs with one another, members of one another. This is important because racial issues specifically tend to separate and divide. And how you love your black fellow members can either confront that lie, trying to conquer it with gospel, or it can spread the lie so that it will try to rip apart what God has made one.

Are you a brother or a sister to those

who are hurting? Do you have a tender heart? Are you moved? Do you care? Are you affected by people being hurt? Do you care what they are going through? Are you irritated when someone talks about racial injustice? When you hear “systemic racism” do you get mad? I understand how you could feel accused, but I don’t think that’s the aim.

There’s a reason people are talking about how black lives matter, and it’s not because all white people hate black lives. Do you care why people say things like that, why they feel like their lives are less valuable? Is there compassion for them? When your brothers and sisters share about their experience in this country, or in your church, is your heart pricked for them? Is it tender?

A simple, loving conversation goes an incredibly long way, and especially so to shape the heart.

## A humble mind

We’re talking about love here – basic, bottom-floor Christianity. Sure, the field that we’re currently playing on is comprised of racial challenges, but the playbook of love is the same.

Consider how Paul links our humility to Christ: *“If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”*

In other words, Paul is saying, “Be like the Lord Jesus!”

Pastors, you have to lead in that. You have to lead in emulating the one who was not in our situation, but love compelled him to come. He suffered like us; he suffered with us. There are few encouragements more prized than the fact that we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect was tempted as we are.

So, in a lot of ways, I’m simply asking pastors to love the people God has given them like Jesus. Love them like Jesus.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Brian Davis is a former member of Imago Dei Church in Raleigh, and is currently one of the pastors for Risen Christ Fellowship in Philadelphia, Penn. You can find him on Twitter at @theservantfella. Visit the church’s website at rcfphilly.com. This article first appeared at 9Marks.org.) **BR**



**BRIAN S. DAVIS**  
Guest Column



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# N.C. Baptists respond to flood

NCBM/Baptists on Mission

**W**hen flood waters started coming in their garage, Debbie and Larry Gonzalez grabbed a sump pump off the shelf and tried to keep the murky mess out of the interior of their Carolina Shores house.

The couple is among the thousands facing difficult days following historic flooding that damaged businesses, houses and automobiles in southeastern North Carolina and South Carolina.

North Carolina Baptist Men (also known as Baptists on Mission) are in the process of tearing out wet drywall, soggy insulation and kitchen cabinets with severe mildew damage in the Gonzalez's house.

"I just don't know what we would do without all these amazing men and women helping us," Debbie said as she watched through tears the water-damaged material being removed from her house. "These guys and gals are great."

"We had never heard about NCBM until now. A neighbor told me to go the town, and they had a list of resources for help. I called Bill Martin and he came by the same day. He told us what they were going to do and that work would begin this week. And here they are,"

The couple, former residents of Long Island, N.Y., moved to North Carolina three years ago. They do not have flood insurance. "We were told this is not a flood area, and we wouldn't need the insurance," she said.



A group of North Carolina Baptists prepare a meal in Johnsonville, S.C., one of the sites where N.C. Baptists Men (or Baptists on Mission) are helping with flood recovery efforts. (NCBM photo)

Debbie is unable to help with the tear-out because of five herniated discs in her back. Larry's right arm is immobilized in a sling following rotator cuff surgery just two weeks before the flooding.

"What we didn't realize while we were in the garage was that water was pouring in the back of the house. A fireman knocked on the front door and when we opened the door more water rushed in. He told us to quickly evacuate. We ran around the house looking for ways to save some things, and then we left."

"We couldn't take my car because the water was already too high so we drove Larry's pickup truck. When we left we couldn't tell where the road was because it was flooded. We managed to get out of our subdivision and go to a friend's house," Debbie said. "We didn't realize

how bad the damage is until we saw all this mold. Larry and I have a friend who is going to let us stay at her house."

Members of First Baptist Church in Rocky Mount were among the volunteers helping the couple.

Other N.C. Baptists are currently working in three South Carolina towns: Longs, Socastee and Johnsonville. A Brunswick County, N.C., site closed Oct. 12 but Baptists on Mission has pledged to help wherever needed.

The Johnsonville site is a feeding unit.

Other units on site are safety, chaplaincy and medical reserve corps.

Visit [baptistsonmission.org](http://baptistsonmission.org) to donate or to volunteer.

Other Southern Baptist Disaster Relief (SBD) volunteers are from Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi and Oklahoma. College students are joining in during fall break.

Volunteers can sign up through NCBM or through the North American Mission Board which coordinates and manages Southern Baptist responses to major disasters through partnerships with 42 state Baptist conventions, most of which have their own state disaster relief ministries.

Southern Baptists have 65,000 trained volunteers – including chaplains – and 1,550 mobile units for feeding, chain-saw, mud-out, command, communication, child care, shower, laundry, water purification, repair/rebuild and power generation. SBD is one of the three largest mobilizers of trained disaster relief volunteers in the United States, along with the American Red Cross and The Salvation Army.

Updates on the latest SBD response are available at [namb.net/dr/atlantic-coast-floods](http://namb.net/dr/atlantic-coast-floods). **BR**

## OPPORTUNITY CORNER

### Granite Falls church hosts adoption, orphan awareness fundraiser

Dudley Shoals Baptist Church in Granite Falls is hosting an Adoption & Orphan Care Awareness & Fundraiser Event Nov. 14.

A family fun fair with inflatables, games, food, etc., begins at 3 p.m. and ends at 5 p.m. There will be a vendor area with information on adoption and local vendors will give a portion of their sales towards the fundraiser. There will be raffle tickets to win gift baskets. A worship service begins at 6 p.m. with Brody Holloway of Snowbird Wilderness Outfitters

### Wake Forest church seeks people to buy trees for troops

Wake Forest Baptist Church in Wake Forest is working again this year with the 82nd Airborne Division in Fort Bragg to provide a Christmas tree to families many of whom have a deployed spouse. The cost of a Christmas tree is a major expenditure.

Last year, 90 trees were distributed. A tax-deductible gift of \$55 provides a Frazer Fir from the youth group's tree

in Andrews, N.C., serving as the guest speaker. Child care will be provided for those in kindergarten and younger. There is no cost to attend the event.

Money raised is for No Longer Orphans ([nolongerorphans.org](http://nolongerorphans.org)), an orphanage in India run by Andy and Susan Lepper. There are currently 47 boys at the orphanage.

The church is looking for sponsors as well as donated items for gift baskets. Contact Leslie at (828) 572-8353 or [bumge-wife@gmail.com](mailto:bumge-wife@gmail.com).

lot to an enlisted family. The deadline is Nov. 25.

Any profits go towards the youth group. Last year's mission was to flood ravaged Defuniak Springs, Fla., to aid in the rebuilding process.

Contact Wake Forest Baptist Church, Attn: Trees Angels for NC Troops, 118 E South Ave., Wake Forest, NC 27587. Call (919) 556-5141 or [uuc8956@embarqmail.com](mailto:uuc8956@embarqmail.com).

NC Baptists have come together with Baptist Children's Homes to ensure brothers Jonathan and Thomas are safe and loved. Give to the ANNUAL OFFERING and show God's love to children and families.

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# BCH

Continued from page 1

(BCH). Within two days of Gibson's phone call, Kathy and Craig's grandsons arrived at BCH's Mills Home campus in Thomasville where they now live.

"Their coming to BCH has been a blessing to me and my husband," Kathy says.

"They're my boys now, and I'm going to do what's best for them even though I can't have them with us all the time."

At Mills Home, the boys stay in close contact with their grandparents and see them often.

At first it was not easy transitioning from their grandparents' home to live in the residential cottages with BCH's houseparents and other children in care.

"I felt kind of mad because I didn't want to leave my maw-maw and paw-paw," said nine-year-old Thomas.

"When I got here I knew it would be a good place where we could still call our maw-maw and paw-paw and family members."

The move has eased the grandparents' concerns, and the brothers no longer have to worry about whether they will have a safe place to sleep or food to eat. "We are fed really well," Jonathan said.

"We also have authority figures. We call them houseparents, but I think of

them as my mom and dad."

"That relationship we have with the children is the most important thing," said houseparent Samantha Snipes. "That and making them feel loved."

Samantha and her husband, Shawn, work together to care for the children. They are one of several married couples serving as houseparents. "We get to minister to them and show them God's love," said Shawn. "They have a warm bed to sleep in and a roof over their head – they don't have to sleep under a bridge."

"Jonathan has told us several times how thankful he is to have food every day."

The support of North Carolina Baptists plays a pivotal part in providing nutritious meals and all the necessities required to give BCH residents the care they need.

"It's just amazing to see the churches and Baptist Children's Homes coming together to further the gospel, to change lives and give hope to all these children," houseparent Russ McLamb said. "Through the gospel and the Baptist churches working with us, we're able to provide that."

McLamb's wife, Teresa, agrees. "We are coming together as one, as one whole,



to support these two young men and lead them hopefully into an awesome adulthood."

Jonathan and Thomas are thriving because of the support they have from BCH, their grandparents, North Carolina Baptists and a number of volunteers and friends. With the worries of the past behind them, the boys are able to focus on their goals.

"I'm going to go through college, get me a car, get me a job and get me an apartment," Jonathan shares. "And then I'm going to try to start working at Baptist Children's Homes."

Watch the annual offering video featuring Jonathan and Thomas at [bchfamily.org/offering](http://bchfamily.org/offering). Resources are also available on the website. This year's offering goal is \$1.5 million. The week of prayer is Nov. 15-22. Use the guide at right to pray. This year's theme verse is Ecclesiastes 4:9, "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil." **BR**

## Week of Prayer

The Week of Prayer is scheduled Nov. 15-22.

- **Sunday.** Pray for North Carolina children and families.
- **Monday.** Pray for the hundreds of children and families BCH serves each year through its 19 statewide locations.
- **Tuesday.** Pray for the dedicated houseparents, residential care givers, chiefs and social workers who give of themselves around the clock to care for our boys and girls.
- **Wednesday.** Pray for the Good Shepherd Children's Home, BCH's new orphanage in Xela, Guatemala.
- **Thursday.** Pray for those who live at BCH's nine statewide homes for developmentally disabled adults.
- **Friday.** Pray that you will be sensitive to hurting children in your community.
- **Saturday.** Pray for BCH president/CEO Michael C. Blackwell as he leads the ministry.
- **Sunday.** Pray that BCH's residents will come to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

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# Domestic violence: Why pastors can't ignore it

By DAVID ROACH | SBC Life

**W**hen Mark Bagwell started Golden Corner Church in Walhalla, S.C., 22 years ago, he was shocked by the prevalence of domestic violence among the people he sought to reach.

“A huge number of the people I was counseling, within just a short time of even the first meeting, I would start discovering that they had been abused,” Bagwell, now Golden Corner’s care pastor, told SBC LIFE. That reality “broke my heart and started bringing about a great passion” to confront the problem.

Consistent with Golden Corner’s vision of “loving God, loving people,” Bagwell educated himself about ministering to domestic violence victims. Today, along with other area ministers, he works in conjunction with a local women’s shelter to help abuse victims. He was quoted last year as an advocate for battered women in a Pulitzer Prize-winning series of articles on domestic violence by Charleston, South Carolina’s *Post and Courier*.

Bagwell is among a growing coalition of Southern Baptists encouraging pastors to place more emphasis on combatting domestic abuse.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that more than one in three women (35.6 percent) and one in four men (28.5 percent) have “experienced rape, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner in their lifetime.” Yet 42 percent of U.S. Protestant pastors “rarely” or “never” address domestic violence in their churches, according to a 2014 LifeWay Research study. Another 22 percent speak to the issue only about once per year. Among pastors who address domestic violence, 75 percent believe it is not a problem in their churches.

## Does scripture condone abuse?

The *Post and Courier*’s series claimed part of the Palmetto state’s domestic violence problem “is rooted in the culture of South Carolina, where men have long dominated the halls of power, setting an agenda that clings to tradition and conservative Christian tenets about the subservient role of women.”

Commentators in an April 23 Baptist Press article took issue with the implication that traditional Christian beliefs contribute to domestic violence, and Bagwell identified a possible reason for the paper’s confusion.

While Bagwell has never heard a Christian leader suggest domestic violence is acceptable or that men should dominate women, he said abused women have told him their husbands misuse biblical commands regarding a wife’s submission to justify their abuse.

Bagwell, 52, suspects such misuse of scripture is a residual effect of men in previous generations “inside and outside the church who felt like their role [in marriage] was a domineering role.” Though such men generally did not condone violence, many believed they had a right “to discipline their wife verbally tremendously.”

John R. Rice, an independent Baptist writer and evangelist, may have expressed something of the sentiment Bagwell referenced – though Rice also affirmed a husband’s

responsibility to provide for and protect his wife. In his 1941 book *Bobbed Hair, Bossy Wives and Women Preachers*, Rice wrote, “God expects women to feel their duty to obey their husbands, good or bad, saved or unsaved. Nowhere in the Bible is a wife’s duty to her husband conditioned on the kind of character he has or the way he treats her.”

Despite errors of the past and misleading media accounts today, sociologists have noted a marked degree of happiness among families that strive to follow the biblical pattern of male servant leadership at home. A 1999 study by sociologists Bradford Wilcox and John Bartkowski identified what they labeled “the evangelical paradox”: Evangelical husbands and wives “act in ways that parallel or are in fact more progressive than other Americans” in their sharing of household duties and cooperative decision-making processes.

The only two differences between evangelical couples and other American married people, Wilcox and Bartkowski wrote, are “(1) that evangelicals are more likely to report that husbands take the ‘lead in spiritual matters,’ ... and (2) that evangelical men and women are more likely to report higher levels of marital satisfaction.” There is “no evidence that evangelical men are more likely to abuse their wives physically.”

## Dos and don’ts for pastors

Consistent with biblical teaching on marriage, Bagwell offered several dos and don’ts for pastors regarding domestic violence. When both partners in an abusive relationship come to a minister seeking help, it’s best to pray for the couple, affirm their desire to break the cycle of violence and send them to a trained professional, Bagwell said – unless the pastor has training himself in handling domestic abuse.

“I’ve heard of too many situations where a pastor is trying his best to give biblical, sound counseling to someone,” Bagwell said. “But if that abuser is sitting in the same room with the one he or she abuses ... they’re going to dominate, even if it’s subtly,” and possibly seek to intimidate the abused spouse later.

Pastors should always have another person present – preferably a woman – when counseling an abused wife, Bagwell said. He urged pastors to do all they can to assure abused women of God’s love. The staff of South Texas Children’s Home Ministries (STCHM), a ministry partner of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, compiled for SBC LIFE a list of actions pastors can take to help both abused spouses and abusers. STCHM is part of the Baptist Coalition for Children and Families, a national advocacy group founded by Baptist-affiliated children’s homes across the nation:

- Provide literature on domestic abuse to church leaders and victims. Literature for victims should be placed in the women’s restrooms, where abused wives can take it without husbands seeing.
- Educate church leaders about signs of domestic abuse such as obvious physical bruising, a spouse who stays quiet in social circles, name calling and humiliation by one spouse, and a sense

of control by one spouse over who the other sees and talks to. In some states, child protective services will provide free training on recognizing signs of domestic violence.

- Provide or refer abused persons to professional Christian counseling.
- Offer Bible studies on dealing with anger, low self-esteem, marital difficulties and parenting challenges.
- Make church members aware of community resources related to domestic violence.

Law enforcement authorities should be called regarding spousal abuse “when the problem is clearly outside the scope of the pastor to reasonably handle the interactions taking place,” said Darin Griffiths, an STCHM marriage and family therapist. Churches should, he added, develop support networks for people at risk of becoming abusers so their actions do not escalate to criminal offenses. All instances of suspected child abuse should be reported to law enforcement immediately.

## ‘A spiritual warfare’

Another important aspect of ministering amid domestic violence is addressing it from the pulpit, said Joanna Berry, STCHM vice president of family and international ministries. “When clergy and church leaders are silent on the topic of domestic abuse, this can be interpreted as an attitude of indifference to family violence,” Berry said. “Victims may be encouraged to adopt the same attitude toward their own suffering,” leading to thoughts that “being hit is no big deal, and it’s not really worth mentioning.”

One pastor who takes seriously the charge to address domestic violence is Fernando Hernandez of “It’s a Challenge,” a congregation in Brownwood, Texas, that cooperates with the Southern Baptists of Texas Convention. After growing up in a violent home, Hernandez fell into a life of drugs and violence as a teenager. He began living with his future wife at age 17 and did not break the cycle of violence until he committed his life to Christ several years later.

Hernandez started It’s a Challenge in 1991 as a ministry to troubled families and established it as a church last year. Ministering for 25 years among families plagued by domestic violence has helped him identify common factors that contribute to spousal abuse.

A desire for vengeance after feeling humiliated, pent-up anger regarding a mother’s infidelity, and observing a violent father all increase a man’s chances of abusing his wife, Hernandez told SBC LIFE. Many abusers “carry so much hate that they’re like walking time bombs,” Hernandez said. “... They’re blind to what they’re about to do because the Bible says hate puts darkness over them.”

Some abusers have medical or psychological problems and need pastors to connect them with healthcare professionals, Hernandez said. But many times the problem is spiritual. In such instances, a pastor should fast and pray about the root cause of a man’s violent behavior, he said. Whether help comes through medical care, counseling, church ministries or supernatural intervention, Hernandez said ultimate deliverance from violent behavior is a gift of God. “This is a spiritual warfare,” Hernandez said.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – David Roach is chief national correspondent for Baptist Press and is a member of First Baptist Church in Hendersonville, Tenn. This story was originally published in the summer 2015 SBC LIFE.) **BR**





# Floyd floats IMB/NAMB merger idea, among others

**M**erging the International Mission Board (IMB) and North American Mission Board (NAMB) is a key question Southern Baptists must address if a much-prayed-for spiritual awakening comes to their network of churches, according to Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Ronnie Floyd.

He raised the question during his address at a symposium on “The SBC & the 21st Century: Reflection, Renewal & Recommitment” Sept. 28-29 at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (MBTS) in Kansas City, Mo.

“Spiritual renewal leads to strategic reinvention,” Floyd said in an address titled “Kindling Afresh the Gift of God: Spiritual Renewal, Strategic Reinvention and the Southern Baptist Convention.”

“Structure and systems flow from the work of God; they do not create the work of God,” said Floyd, senior pastor of Cross Church in northwest Arkansas who was among the symposium’s seven featured speakers. The event, which MBTS President Jason Allen said will take place on a triennial basis, featured Floyd, Frank S. Page, Paige Patterson, Albert Mohler Jr., David S. Dockery and Thom Rainer.

“I do not speak as one who does not understand our history nor as one who is a newcomer asking questions that are not truly relevant,” Floyd said, citing numerous ways he has been involved in Southern Baptist life since the late 1980s, including chairman of the SBC Executive Committee, president of the Pastors’ Conference and, most recently, chairman of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force.

“Yet, I have always been one who has never been afraid to challenge us in what we are doing, why we are doing it, and even the way we may still be doing it,” Floyd said, noting how it’s unnecessary to “demonize” anyone asking genuine questions.

## Challenging questions

Floyd set forth several “challenging questions” that Southern Baptists will face “as we kindle afresh the gift of God and experience moments of renewal.”

“I will propose more questions than my opinion, even though I do have a view on probably most of them,” Floyd said. “Most of these questions people have heard already, but some may never have made it to a public arena,” he continued. “I believe it would be negligent of me in dealing with my assigned topic if I chose not to share some of these important questions for this generation of Baptists to consider.

“Do we exist to preserve our present brand, structure and systems, or do

we exist to advance the gospel together regionally, statewide, nationally and internationally?” he asked.

The SBC, founded in 1845, could drift into a focus on structures, budgets and competing projects “rather than keeping our focus on our mission to reach the world,” Floyd said.

“For the sake of gospel advancement, should the International Mission Board and North American Mission Board become one mission board, the Global Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention?”

One reason why a single mission board has never been created, Floyd said, stems from the specific roles of IMB and NAMB. But he pondered whether the dual roles are needed “within the global culture we experience daily and with the reality that ethnicities live everywhere across the world. ... [W]ith an undeniable global mindset in America today, is this still the right strategy?”

The future of the SBC’s two mission boards, Floyd said, will involve a decision on how best to “fast-forward the mission of our churches” to advance the gospel among the ethnicities of the world.

“Do state conventions and associations have a future in Southern Baptist life?” is another foundational question Floyd offered. There is a need for “boots on the ground” to help churches fulfill their mission, he said, suggesting that state conventions and local Baptist associations will have relevance by optimizing their mission to “serve our churches in reaching their God-assigned responsibility of going, baptizing and making disciples of all the nations.”

State conventions, associations and SBC entities, he added, “must find a way to cease duplication and triplication locally, statewide and nationally.”

## Financing the work

Floyd noted that Southern Baptists’ Cooperative Program (CP) for missions and ministry support in each state and across the nation and world was founded 90 years ago. “I don’t think our forefathers would fear churches asking serious questions about our financial future and the gospel work we do together,” he said. “If they had not asked the question ... there would be no Cooperative Program today.”

To strengthen CP, Floyd called for “a renewal in teaching biblical stewardship to our people, calling them boldly to 10 percent giving through their church”; for churches “to give more sacrificially than ever before through our Cooperative Program annually, beginning as soon as possible”; and for state conventions to



Spiritual awakening will cause “strategic reinvention” in the Southern Baptist Convention, SBC President Ronnie Floyd notes at a symposium on “The SBC & the 21st Century: Reflection, Renewal & Recommitment.” (Photo by Liz Stack)

“consider going 50-50 [in budgeting for their state and the SBC] by the end of the year 2020 or even before.”

“If we did these specific things simultaneously ... we would see a mission explosion statewide, nationally and internationally,” Floyd said. “What God has given to us biblically and missionally we must refuse to lose financially.”

“Is there anything new we need to create for today and for the future that will help our churches in their mission of going, baptizing and making disciples of all the nations?”

Baptists must not be thwarted by “How much will it cost?” but focus on “Who will it reach?” Floyd said.

“What if we had a compassion arm in our convention that brings all we do presently and all we could do in the future into one entity?” he asked in reference to disaster relief, hunger relief and other Southern Baptist initiatives. “If done effectively, it may have the capacity long-term to pay for itself sufficiently. Why? Because Baptists are supporting some of this now through what we are doing already, and they are helping pay for it through others that are non-Baptist ministries. Additionally, it would place our powerful gospel message into this Christless culture that is usually open to appreciating ministries of compassion.”

## Obstacles to overcome

Allen said significant challenges face the SBC, including: Will we grow more unified around shared convictions and mission or will we fragment over secondary concerns and tertiary doctrinal differences? Will we see generational transition as an opportunity to seize or a change to resist? Will we be able to maintain a distinct Baptist identity while we engage and partner with the broader evangelical community?

Discovering one’s identity or an entity’s identity in present times is difficult due to ever-increasing pluralism, said Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville,

Ky. However, he noted, it is a task that Southern Baptists must undertake, especially on the theological front.

With modernity and liberal theology influencing the identities of Christian denominations throughout the 20th century, Mohler said Southern Baptists remained “at ease in Zion” or comfortable within their denominational bubble. However, this changed in the 1970s.

In the 1970s, the question of identity became unavoidable, Mohler said. “There is no way that one can speak of the future of the Southern Baptist Convention ... without the identity question being front and center.”

With the passing of nominal Christianity and faltering tribal identities of other Christian groups, Mohler said Southern Baptists realized that what was left was a group of believers who understood the costliness of adherence to faith in Jesus Christ.

Looking toward the future, Mohler noted 10 questions Southern Baptists must address as they seek to understand their theological identity. Among them: “Will Southern Baptists embrace an identity that is more theological than tribal?” and “Will today’s generation summon and maintain the courage to minister Christ in a context of constant conflict and confrontation?”

His final question originated from Jesus’ question to His disciples in Luke 18: “When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?”

Mohler focused that question on the SBC. “Understanding that Jesus asked that question of His disciples means that surely He must be asking it of us,” he said. “Our responsibility, though in one sense for the church universal through the ages, is a responsibility for our denomination and our churches at this time. ... May the Lord find us faithful.”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Compiled by Seth Brown, content editor for the Biblical Recorder from reports by Art Toalston, Baptist Press, and T. Patrick Hudson, Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary Communications.) **BR**



# NAMB

Continued from page 1

ministry service. Under Melber's leadership, attendance at Crossings Ministries has grown from 1,800 in 2003 to a record 13,000 this year.

Campers have given more than \$1.3 million to missions offerings in that time. Crossings is funded in part through Cooperative Program gifts from Kentucky Baptists.

Melber's heart for compassion ministry was shaped in his childhood.

"From early on my parents were big on volunteering and service work," he said. "Then I gained more skills in business, in seminary and at camps seeing what students could do if they were presented with tangible needs."

Paul Chitwood, executive director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention, said Melber's ministry in Kentucky has prepared him well for a larger platform at NAMB.

"God has used David in miraculous ways to transform Crossings Ministries into one of the most successful Christian camp ministries in the world," Chitwood said.

Under Melber's leadership, Chitwood said, Crossings launched a successful children's ministry as well as a worldwide missions strategy that is helping campers and churches share Christ among the nations.

"I believe the skills and experiences David has sharpened as president of Crossings have prepared him for the opportunity God is setting before him with NAMB," Chitwood said.

"Send Relief is going to be an ideal way for us as Southern Baptists to meet a real need – not only for the physical side but to proclaim the gospel, see people come to Christ and help be part of the church planting effort," Melber said.

## Aid to IMB missionaries

Trustees approved a \$4 million budget reduction to assist IMB missionaries during NAMB's 2015-16 fiscal year. Ezell requested the action in response to the IMB's announced reduction in personnel of up to 15 percent in order to address ongoing revenue shortfalls.

"Needless to say, I was overwhelmed when I heard that the trustees of the North American Mission Board approved a \$4 million budget reduction in order to send those funds to the International Mission Board," said IMB President David Platt in an email to the *Biblical Recorder* on Oct. 13.

"This extremely generous gift will go a long way in helping the IMB get to a healthy financial place in the present so that we can move forward into a future marked by more missionaries sent, more disciples made and more churches

planted among unreached peoples than ever before."

"This is a kingdom vote," declared NAMB trustee chairman Chuck Herring, senior pastor of Collierville First Baptist Church near Memphis, after NAMB trustees unanimously passed the resolution. Next, the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) Executive Committee must approve the proposed assistance before NAMB can transfer funds to IMB.

## In other business:

- Trustees received a report showing that revenue for 2014-15 was 1.15 percent higher than the previous year and revenue exceeded spending for the year.

- Trustees authorized several other position and structure changes in addition to Melber's in Send Relief. Carlos Ferrer will serve as executive vice president; Kim Robinson will serve as vice president of marketing and ministry support; and Clark Logan will serve as chief financial officer. All three men have been promoted from other roles at NAMB.

- Gary Frost shared with trustees that he has resigned from his role as vice president of NAMB's Midwest Region to move to the role of national facilitator for prayer and compassion initiatives with Mission America.

Ezell, in his address to trustees, included a brief look back at his first five years at the entity. Among the sharpest contrasts: In 2010 NAMB's annual summer meeting had 300 attendees and NAMB paid them to attend; in 2015, the Send North America Conference in Nashville drew more than 13,000 attendees and all but a few paid their own way.

Ezell also pointed to downsizing that has allowed more resources to go to the field, better counting and tracking of Southern Baptist church plants and a tripling of resources NAMB sends to Canada.

"You are changing lives," Ezell told trustees. As examples he mentioned a church plant in Detroit that recently had 250 at a preview service. Another in Augusta, Maine, is now averaging more than 700 a week in worship attendance.

"There are church planters all over North America who, because of your leadership, are being taken care of better than they ever have."

Ezell closed by thanking trustees for their affirmation of Send Relief and shared his excitement about its potential.

"People are very excited about compassion ministry," Ezell said.

"We believe Send Relief is a way to help thousands of churches take their first missions step."

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



David Melber, left, who will lead the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) new Send Relief initiative, visits with NAMB vice president of marketing and ministry support Kim Robinson and NAMB executive vice president Carlos Ferrer, right, during the Oct. 7 meeting of NAMB's trustees. (NAMB photo by John Swain)

## A VERMONT VEHICLE TAG TELLS 'THE STORY'

On a September evening at restaurant in Fuquay I noticed a car pull into the lot with a Vermont tag. The tag piqued my interest because I lived in New England four years.

A family exited the car and sat next to my family and me at the restaurant's picnic tables. As we were leaving I mentioned to them that I noticed their Vermont tag and asked them if they had just moved to the area. They said yes, and we began a wonderful conversation.

Lisa happened to be from France. I said a few words in French, to everyone's amusement, so she responded in French, which created a fun interaction. Lisa and her husband, Greg, were from Pennsylvania, along with their teenagers, Shauna and Max.

After an amusing conversation, developing a connection about our life stories and how we ended up in the Raleigh area, I asked them if they had any church background. Greg laughingly said they were holiday Catholics, and we all chuckled.

Lisa said her daughter was searching. So I asked Shauna about her search and what she was doing. She said that she had visited a Buddhist temple. I asked Shauna what she thought about it. She wasn't sure, but she thought it was interesting

and different. I told the family I had something they might find interesting, showing them the *ViewTheStory.com* app on my phone.

The family of four leaned in to my visual explanation of the creation, fall, rescue and restoration. They said it was very interesting.

I then asked Shauna if she minded sharing her email, so I could send her the app. I also told her about videos that offer a deeper explanation of God's redemptive plan. She quickly said yes so I sent her the app and the *LifeOnMissionBook.com/3Circles* app. We concluded by talking about area churches they might visit.

The Story app is a great tool to share with people. It has multiple options such as a quick overview, a longer story and a video. You can also measure how many people are looking at the app that you have posted on social media, like Facebook or Twitter. Within a few days of downloading it and posting on my Facebook timeline, it had gone to five countries. Let's use these great tools to share the gospel.

Download *ViewTheStory.com* now!

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



MARTY DUPREE



# Churches

Continued from page 3

baptism” followed by “or by transfer of letter” concluding with “or by statement.”

It’s easy to assume “or” equals “and.” Meaning, many believe anyone seeking to enter a church’s membership by baptism, transfer of letter or statement has given evidence of a life transformed by the gospel. That is a dangerous assumption.

As a result, the number of unregenerate members in our churches has grown because of such thinking. It’s time to stop making assumptions and employ the sound mind that God has granted each of us to engage in disciple-making with an intentionality that has been lacking in recent years.

The problem entails not only how individuals join the church, but what happens once they become members. Does your congregation have an intentional plan to disciple each member of the church?

Certainly we give attention to discipling new members, but all too often we assume current members are

growing as disciples. Too many church leaders assume discipleship is taking place in Sunday School, small groups or within families at home. We even assume discipleship is taking place through the pulpit ministry. Again, it’s time to stop making such assumptions and to intentionally develop strategies and employ models of discipleship that engage each and every member of the congregation.

Consider this example: A young boy or girl grows up in the congregation, professes faith in Christ, participates in all of the ministries and programs of the church, graduates high school and goes away to college. Upon graduation he or she returns home, but with very different views of sexuality than before. How does the church respond?

For the church that is intentionally engaging each and every member of the congregation in a discipleship process, providing numerous opportunities for members to be discipled and facilitating relationships for one-on-one

discipleship to occur, this scenario should result in this young college graduate re-entering a discipleship effort where other disciples help them discover where the gaps are in their understanding of sexuality.

Many young people have not been sufficiently discipled to understand biblical expectations for sexuality, much less understanding how to apply these truths to each and every relationship in life. God has created them for more than what they’re currently experiencing.

To help a young person wrestling with these truths requires patience, love and clear teaching from God’s Word. Our disciple-making must not be focused merely on sexuality, but neither can our efforts shy away from sexuality. Our efforts to make disciples and grow disciples must be intentional throughout the entire congregation.

I continue to grow in my relationship with Christ and thank God for those that continue to disciple me. Issues that I struggled with 20 years ago are no longer an issue for me, but those have been replaced with new struggles.

I am told by those that are my senior, that another group of struggles await me as I grow older; so I depend on those who are older and wiser to help prepare me for what’s to come. In every stage of life we need someone to disciple us, and we need to be discipling others.

Please do not hesitate to contact your BSC staff as you seek help in developing strategies and employing new models and methods in your congregation’s disciple-making efforts.

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

## CP

Continued from page 2

This is possible because state ministries have been trimmed as sacrificially as possible without completely collapsing important ministries.

The BSC staff and volunteer leaders are to be commended for their hard work on the 2016 budget. They are leading us with passion for the Great Commission. N.C. Baptists should pass the budget and move ahead to call our church members and attenders to give obediently to the ministry of the local church. Then pastors

and church leaders must call their churches to step up CP giving. Everybody wins when generous, obedient giving is our standard practice.

I pray that N.C. Baptists will be a model of cooperation, generosity, unity and passion for reaching the lost in the mission field called “my neighborhood,” in the mission field called “North Carolina,” the mission field called “North America” and the mission field called “the nations.” **BR**

# BR VISIT our BOOTH

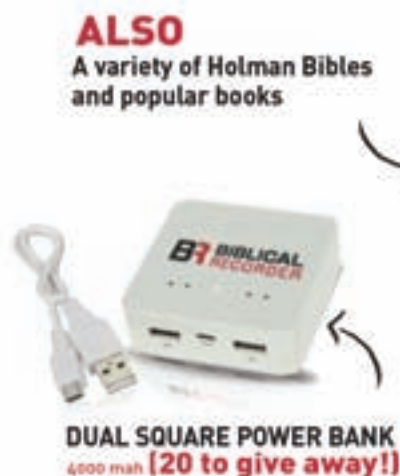
register for **one of these prizes** at the BSC annual meeting, November 2-3 in Greensboro.



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**Additional drawings will be held for LifeWay products**

Grand drawing for prizes will be held at 5 p.m. Tuesday, November 3. Employees of the Biblical Recorder and the Baptist State Convention are not eligible to win.



November 1
BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE
November 8

Stand Courageously
Live Humbly

Focal passages: Daniel 3:13-18, 26-28

Would you be willing to give up your life for the gospel?

Not long ago I was in a meeting and the speaker shared a story about a Christian family in the Middle East. Evidently, the so-called Islamic State (ISIS) had come into their community and was going house-to-house seeking Christians. When they determined this particular family was Christian they marked their house and gave them three options. First, they could recant their faith in Jesus Christ and turn to Islam. Second, they could pay an extremely large amount of money, which they did not possess. Or, third, they could be put to death.

When the family would not recant their faith, ISIS took their young son and impaled him on a post.

As the mother attempted to run toward her son they grabbed her and dismembered her arms. All the while the father was forced to watch while hanging on a cross.

When I think about this unbelievable

tragedy my heart goes out to the many believers all over the world who are standing courageously in the midst of death and persecution. Christian families like this are modern day examples of individuals we find in the Bible. Men like Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego in Daniel 3:8-30 stood in the face of death and remained true to God. They had a choice: worship a golden image or be cast into a fiery furnace.

I love their response to the pagan king. They said, “*we have no need to answer you in this matter. If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand O king. But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up*” (Daniel 3:16-18). I hope as we read and hear about the great heroes of the faith we will be encouraged to stand firm in the face of persecution. Life is too short and eternity too long to do otherwise.

Focal passages: Daniel 4:28-35

Maybe the Lord is trying to teach me something. I have the privilege of writing this commentary on how pride leads to downfall, and how God honors humility. I also have the wonderful opportunity to preach on the subject of humility at a revival service in the near future.

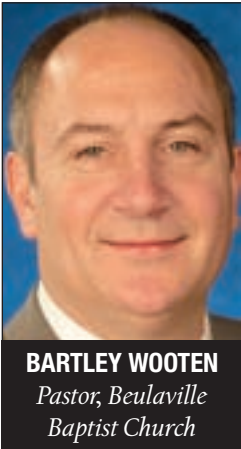
The truth is I have very little opportunity for pride; my wife may say differently. Seriously, whenever I think I might be close to getting it all together, the Lord has a way of helping me see that apart from Him I can do nothing. The same was true in Nebuchadnezzar’s life. As we see in this week’s lesson, Nebuchadnezzar’s pride forced God’s judgment upon him. Thankfully, after his judgment, Nebuchadnezzar humbled himself and God restored his kingdom (Daniel 4:34-37).

A particular pastor had prepared all week to deliver a message as a guest

speaker at a church. He had worked very hard on the sermon and was feeling perhaps a little too confident about his work. As he and his wife were getting into the car to drive over to the church that got into a disagreement which led to an argument. Long story short, they did not speak to each other for the entire drive, which took over an hour.

When they arrived at the church, he did not attempt to reconcile. As he began to preach he knew what needed to take place before he could go any further. There, before the whole congregation, the pastor explained what happened before they arrived and he asked his wife to forgive him. From that point on he had complete freedom to preach his sermon. However, what was so humorous was that after the service no one commented on how good his sermon was. Instead, they all spoke about how much his confession meant to them.

He said he should have forgone all the sermon preparation and just had the argument. Although he was kidding, it’s true that God has a way of making sure we remain humble.



BARTLEY WOOTEN  
Pastor, Beulaville Baptist Church

November 1
EXPLORE THE BIBLE
November 8

A New Name
Where Wickedness Rules

Focal passage: Genesis 17:1-8, 15-22

My husband and I enjoy reading through the Psalms together in the mornings. I was blessed when we read Psalm 105 recently, particularly in light of our study of Abraham.

Verses eight through 10 read, “*He [the Lord our God] remembers His covenant forever, the word that He commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that He made with Abraham, His sworn promise to Isaac, which He confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.*”

The psalmist reiterates our lesson summary this week – God is capable of fulfilling His covenant promises.

In Genesis 17, the Lord appears to Abram, who is 99, and gives him a new name. God declares his name as Abraham for he will be the father of a multitude of nations.

El Shaddai – God Almighty – renews His promise that through Abraham all the families of the earth will be blessed (Genesis 12:3). As a sign of His covenant, God commands Abraham to have every male in his household circumcised (vv. 9-14).

In the next verses, Abraham casts doubt on God’s ability to deliver on

His promise of a son. In fact, scripture records that Abraham “*fell on his face and laughed*” at God’s declaration that Sarah (changed from Sarai) will bear a son at the age of 99.

In his finite mind, Abraham offers what seems like a more reasonable alternative: Ishmael as the heir.

Yet God purposefully called Himself El Shaddai when he appeared to Abraham to declare His almighty power. He contradicts Abraham and insists that Sarah will indeed bear a son within the next year that will be the heir to God’s covenant.

His name will be Isaac, fittingly, because Abraham laughed when he learned that he and Sarah would bear a child in their old age. As we have witnessed through the narrative of Abraham, nothing is impossible with God.

God brings life. He is Creator and Sustainer. He is Almighty and capable of fulfilling all of His promises. What a beautiful picture of His promise fulfilled in the generations that are listed in Psalm 105.

Focal passage: Genesis 18:20-25; 19:12-16

Our context in scripture this week includes disturbing indications of the wickedness of mankind, the depth of our depravity. The Lord describes the sin of Sodom and Gomorrah as “very grave” and deserving of destruction (Genesis 18:20).

Clearly, these cities had a “bad rep.” Still it is so easy for me, in my own deceitfulness, to point to the evil that lurked in Sodom and Gomorrah and not confess my own wickedness.

Maybe there is a city in the world that you point to as being overtly immoral or possibly even a specific person. In our conceit, we thank God we are not like the “Sodom and Gomorrah” [person, location and so on]. We overlook the truth that apart from Christ, wickedness rules in our own hearts as well.

It is true God does not allow disobedience and rebellion against Him to continue unrestrained.

But it is equally true that He rescues

by grace alone. In our focal passage this week, man’s sin does demand God’s judgment.

God reveals His plan to destroy Sodom and Gomorrah to Abraham. Because of the intimate relationship they share, Abraham humbly comes to the Lord and appeals to His justice – surely, He would not sweep away the righteous with the wicked (Genesis 18:23).

At the end of their conversation, God reveals to Abraham that there are not even ten righteous people found in those cities (v. 32).

Therefore, God will destroy them. Yet in His grace, God mercifully rescues Abraham’s nephew, Lot, and his family from the impending judgment. Genesis 19:16 says, “*The Lord being merciful to him [Lot], and they brought him out and set him outside the city.*”

Being consistent with His character, God extends grace even in the midst of judgment. Let us not be blatantly disobedient to God nor let us be self-righteous in our comparison with others (see the parable in Luke 18:9-14). “*For there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified by His grace as a gift through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus...*” (Romans 3:22-24).



HILARY RATCHFORD  
Member, Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte



## CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

### Pastor

**Senior Pastor.** First Baptist Church, Gastonia, NC, is seeking a senior pastor to lead the congregation in a new chapter in our history. FBCG enjoys a 140-year tradition of moderate Baptist life (affiliated with CBF), a broad mission emphasis and is poised to use the campus and facilities for greater service to the community. The senior pastor will possess strong preaching skills and have excellent skills in relationship building; and be an inspired leader in guiding and directing the church spiritually and administratively. The pastor will possess a strong calling to the pastoral ministry, a degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school, and have some years of experience as a congregational minister. Interested candidates are invited to visit the website, [fbcgastonia.org](http://fbcgastonia.org), and send resumes to Pastor Search Committee Co-Chair Donnie Cann at [Cann1@aol.com](mailto:Cann1@aol.com), or Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 6298, Gastonia, NC 28056. Resumes will be accepted until December 1, 2015.

Tabor City Baptist Church, located in Columbus County, North Carolina, is prayerfully seeking a **full-time pastor**; one who is called by God to lead this SBC church. Applicants must have minimum five years ministerial experience. A seminary degree is preferred. We desire a visionary pastor, led by the Holy Spirit, committed to the preaching and teaching of God's Word. Tabor City Baptist has an active membership of approximately two hundred with a building/sanctuary capacity of four hundred fifty plus. Send resumes and references to Pastor Search Committee, Tabor City Baptist Church, PO Box 126, Tabor City, North Carolina 28463, or via e-mail to [taborcitypastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:taborcitypastorsearch@gmail.com). The deadline for application is November 16, 2015.

Red Cross Baptist Church seeking **full-time Pastor**. Small rural church, prayerfully searching for a minister to lead all ages, advance the church forward in spirit, service, and number. Email resume: [pharvell@bbumail.com](mailto:pharvell@bbumail.com) or mail Pastor Search Committee, Red Cross Baptist Church, 112 W. Red Cross Rd., Oakboro, NC 28129.

First Baptist Church, Snow Hill, NC, is seeking a **Senior Pastor**. The church is prayerfully searching for God's leader to guide and minister to our congregation. Preferred qualifications include at least 5 years of ministry experience, coursework from an accredited seminary, and a strong calling to the pastoral ministry. Send resume to [dalexander@agcarolina.com](mailto:dalexander@agcarolina.com). Deadline: Dec. 1.

Siloam Baptist Church of Ninety Six, South Carolina, is prayerfully seeking a **Senior Pastor** to lead a congregation of 175+ avg attendance. Candidate should be traditional, conservative, biblical based Pastor who preaches the inerrant word of God and adheres to Baptist Faith and Message 2000. The candidate must have a seminary degree and a minimum of 5 years Pastoral experience. Please send resume and/or CD if available to Pastor Search Committee, Siloam Baptist Church, PO Box 373, Ninety Six, SC 29666.

Oak Grove Baptist Church, Boone, NC, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention is prayerfully seeking a **Pastor**. Located in the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains of NC in the community of Appalachian State University, we are a relatively small congregation, rooted in the gospel, Spirit driven and service oriented. We are a community of believers who exist to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Oak Grove is seeking a pastor who is biblically grounded, has a commitment to God centered worship, and is a compassionate, caring servant of God with a strong belief in the love and grace of Jesus Christ our Lord. Interested applicants should email resumes to [ogbcpastorsearch@gmail.com](mailto:ogbcpastorsearch@gmail.com).

**Full-time senior pastor.** Hopewell Baptist Church is accepting resumes for a full-time pastor. Seminary degree and pastoral experience preferred. Send resume and DVD to Hopewell Search, 161 Hopewell Church Road, Seneca, S.C. 29678.

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](mailto: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.

### Denominational

Piedmont Baptist Association, in Greensboro, NC, will be accepting resumes for **Director of Missions**. We are seeking a DOM who is a seminary graduate with pastoral experience. An ideal candidate will be a leader with a vision to move our association into the future and a relationship builder. Send a resume to: DOM Search Committee, Piedmont Baptist Association, 2009 Sharpe Road, Greensboro NC 27406.

Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association in Shelby, NC, will be accepting resumes for **Associational Missionary** through October 31, 2015. Email to [nicole@gccha.org](mailto:nicole@gccha.org) or mail to Greater Cleveland County Baptist Association, Attn: Search Committee, 1175 Wyke Road, Shelby, NC 28150.

The South Yadkin Baptist Association is now accepting resumes for **Director of Missions**. Please submit cover letter and resume to: SYBA, PO Box 5249, Statesville, NC 28687, or [canthony@sybaptist.org](mailto:canthony@sybaptist.org).

### Church Staff

Highland Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC, seeks **Minister of Music**. Desired qualifications: experienced worship leader, gifted musician, keyboard skills, knowledge of Media Shout software or equivalent, ability to manage volunteer musicians, direct choirs and worship bands. Bachelor's degree in music-related field required. Highland Baptist is an SBC church with contemporary and traditional worship services. For additional information visit: [www.highlandbaptistchurch.org](http://www.highlandbaptistchurch.org). Send application letter, resume and contact information for three references by December 10, 2015, to: [personnelcommittee@highlandbaptistchurch.org](mailto:personnelcommittee@highlandbaptistchurch.org).

Polkville Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time Worship Minister** with a heart to follow God's will, being gifted in communicating and coordinating worship experiences, along with the pastor and musicians. Send resume by email to: [employment@polkvillevillebaptist.com](mailto:employment@polkvillevillebaptist.com); or by USPS to: Search Committee, Polkville Baptist Church, Post Office Box 245, Polkville, NC 28136.

**Associate Pastor of Worship and Discipleship.** First Baptist Church of Mount Olive, AL, is seeking a minister of music and education, to lead a growing congregation in blended worship, and discipleship programs. Bachelor's degree required and two to five years experience preferred. Send resumes to [Stephanie@fbcmo.org](mailto:Stephanie@fbcmo.org).

Seeking an **associate pastor/minister of students**: Dublin First Baptist Church is a conservative, evangelical, mission minded, multi-campus church located in rural southeastern NC. Job description/requirements: [www.dublinfbc.org](http://www.dublinfbc.org); submit resume: [richard.hatchell@ncfbins.com](mailto:richard.hatchell@ncfbins.com).

Mount Calvary Baptist Church is seeking a **part-time mission minded Youth Pastor**. Please email resumes to [churchinfo@mountcalvary.us](mailto:churchinfo@mountcalvary.us) or mail to PO Box 563, Walkertown, NC 27051.

Immanuel Baptist Church (Greensboro) is seeking a **part-time organist/music director**. Salary is negotiable. Please send resume and cover letter by mail to Immanuel Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, 2432 W. Gate City Blvd., Greensboro, NC 27403, or email to [pastor@ibcgso.org](mailto:pastor@ibcgso.org).

Seeking an **associate pastor/minister of music and worship**: Dublin First Baptist Church is a conservative, evangelical, mission minded, multi-campus church located in rural southeastern NC. Job description/requirements: [www.dublinfbc.org](http://www.dublinfbc.org); submit resume: [richard.hatchell@ncfbins.com](mailto:richard.hatchell@ncfbins.com).

Penelope Baptist Church in Hickory, NC, is searching for a **part-time Pastor of Youth & Children**. Email resumes to [pastorking@penelopebaptistchurch.org](mailto:pastorking@penelopebaptistchurch.org) or mail to 3310 Main Ave. NW, Hickory, NC 28601.

### Miscellaneous

**2006 Ford E350 Bus**, wheelchair lift, front & rear AC, power door opener, dual rear wheels, seats driver, 9 passengers and 4 wheelchair tie-downs (room to add extra seats) white w/ wine seats, 138K miles, excellent condition. Call (336) 655-8807.

Great gift for pastor and wife, for Anniversary, Birthday, Christmas – **a Biblical Tour of Israel** led by an experienced BSCNC pastor, May 10-20, 2016. For color brochure and information call 252-937-9811, ext 223, or email [mcloer@englewoodbaptist.com](mailto:mcloer@englewoodbaptist.com).

**NCBAM needs teams of 2-4 servant volunteers to “adopt” an aging adult** and provide friendly visits 1-2 hours a week. All counties needed; training provided. Call North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry: 877-506-2226.

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

**Share the Biblical Recorder – FREE.** Order a three-month free subscription. Contact Liz Tablazon at (919) 459-5693 or [liz@BRnow.org](mailto:liz@BRnow.org) to make arrangements.

**MOVED?** Don't forget to change your address with the *Biblical Recorder*. Contact Liz Tablazon at (919) 459-5693 or [liz@BRnow.org](mailto:liz@BRnow.org).

### Placing a classified ad in the *Biblical Recorder*

#### Choose one of three avenues:

- Send e-mail to: [alison@BRnow.org](mailto:alison@BRnow.org).
- Submit the information via the *Recorder's* website at [BRnow.org](http://BRnow.org).
- Send a Fax to (919) 467-6180.

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

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



# Legislature Continued from page 4

The bill failed in a House Judiciary Committee. If the measure had succeeded and become law, it would have undermined parental rights.

● **HB 909** – ABC Omnibus Legislation included a provision that would have allowed for spirituous liquor tasting events at ABC stores. The provision was ultimately removed from the bill. Lobbyist for spirituous liquor and the North Carolina Association of ABC Boards have been lobbying for liquor tasting events at local ABC stores since 2009. Spirituous liquor tastings at ABC stores would signal a paradigm shift from “control” of liquor sales to the “promotion” of liquor sales.

● **HB 278** – Increase Small Brewery Limits would have increased small brewery limits from 25,000 barrels annually to 100,000 without having to use a wholesaler. This legislation was never taken up. It undermines the state’s three-tier system of alcohol control, which works for temperance and shields the public from many possible unsavory industry procedures.

Unfortunately, there were also defeats. The losses seemingly pale in comparison to the successes of this session, but each loss means there is a hole in the wall – people are more vulnerable to the hazards of sin and evil. Losses included a repeal of the state’s ban on Sunday hunting with a firearm, passage of legislation to allow for the sale of liquor outside of an ABC store and the failure to pass a Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

This year, **HB 640** – Outdoor Heritage Act, repealed North Carolina’s 145 year old ban on Sunday hunting with a firearm. There were some modifications added, however, that respect churches by prohibiting Sunday hunting from the hours of 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – times

when most rural churches are meeting. The defeat of the bill was the objective, but the modifications did minimize the loss. Companion bills to allow liquor distilleries to sell a commemorative bottle of their liquor products to customers that take a tour of their facilities were introduced in both the House and Senate. **SB 24** – Liquor Sales Permitted Distilleries and **HB 107** were never taken up. But the legislation was rolled as a provision into **HB 909** – Omnibus ABC Legislation with some minor changes.

The passage of this measure precipitates the first time since the end of prohibition that liquor will be sold outside of an ABC store. It is also the first crack in the windshield of alcoholic beverage control that can ultimately spread to the privatization of liquor sales.

Two Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) bills, **HB 348** – NC Religious Freedom Restoration Act and its companion **SB 550** awaited action by the General Assembly. The bills, however, were not taken up, leaving North Carolinians vulnerable to infringements of their religious liberties. The firestorm surrounding a Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA) in Indiana seemed to quell the interest of leadership in both the House and Senate from dealing with it at this time.

The North Carolina General Assembly is scheduled to reconvene April 25, 2016. As a Christian missions endeavor that brings the message of the gospel to the public arena and a righteous influence on public policy, the Christian Action League of North Carolina, Inc. deeply appreciates your prayers and financial support.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Mark Creech is executive director of the Christian Action League of North Carolina.) **BR**

## AROUND THE STATE

### Obituary

**SHIRLEY “GIGI” HICKS ADAMS**, 80, of Spartanburg, S.C., died Sept. 28.

A North Carolina native, she graduated from Mars Hill College and Limestone College. She attended Southern Seminary and was an elementary school teacher for 20 years. She and her husband, William “Bill” C. Adams, began their ministry in 1960 at Atlantic Baptist Church, Atlantic, N.C. They later served at Jersey Baptist Church, Lexington, N.C.; Pisgah Forest Baptist Church, Brevard, N.C.; Gilead Baptist Church, Jonesville, S.C.; and Northbrook Baptist Church, Spartanburg.

They then continued their ministry at First Baptist Church, Spartanburg. She was a member of First Baptist, Spartanburg.

In addition to her husband, she is survived by her sons, C. Dan Adams of Travelers Rest, S.C., and John Mark Adams of Spartanburg; daughters, Rebecca Adams of Spartanburg, and Rachael Warner of Fresno, Calif.; five grandchildren; sister, Melba Hicks Hemmings of Winston-Salem; and a brother, Jack Hicks of Naples, Fla.

Memorials to: The Encouraging Word Ministry, c/o First Baptist Church Spartanburg, P.O. Box 2110, Spartanburg, SC 29304.

### Staff changes

**JIM DAVIDSON** has been called as music and arts educator at Ardmore Baptist Church, Winston-Salem. Previously Davidson served as minister of music at First Baptist Church, Hickory.



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