



BIBLICAL RECORDER

NEWS JOURNAL OF NORTH CAROLINA BAPTISTS VOL. 176, NO. 24 NOVEMBER 20, 2010 WWW.BIBLICALRECORDER.ORG



BR photo by Norman Jameson

SMILING FACES — More than 250 Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina staff members and children brought smiles to messengers and visitors of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting Nov. 8. The BCH report preceded its 125th anniversary celebration Nov. 11 (see story, page 15, and more photos online). For coverage of the annual meeting, see inside and online.

Durham couple preps for Slovakia

By Don Graham
Baptist Press

Excuses were flowing through Jason Palmer's mind as quickly as the rain dripping through his tent: I won't make enough money. I don't know enough theology. I don't want to live overseas. My parents will be upset. I can't learn a new language.

It was 1996, and Palmer, then a high school freshman, had come to Nicaragua with his youth group to raise a building for a poor, rural church near Managua. But instead of working, he'd spent the afternoon stuck inside a leaky tent, reading his Bible, while the team waited out a tropical storm parked off of Nicaragua's coast.

It was Palmer's first mission trip, first airplane ride and first time outside the United States. That afternoon was also the first time he understood God's purpose for his life.

"As I was reading, I just remember hearing this small voice inside of me saying, 'You're going to be doing this for the rest of your life. You're going to go out and tell others around the world about Me,'" Palmer said.

"I'll be honest, it scared me."

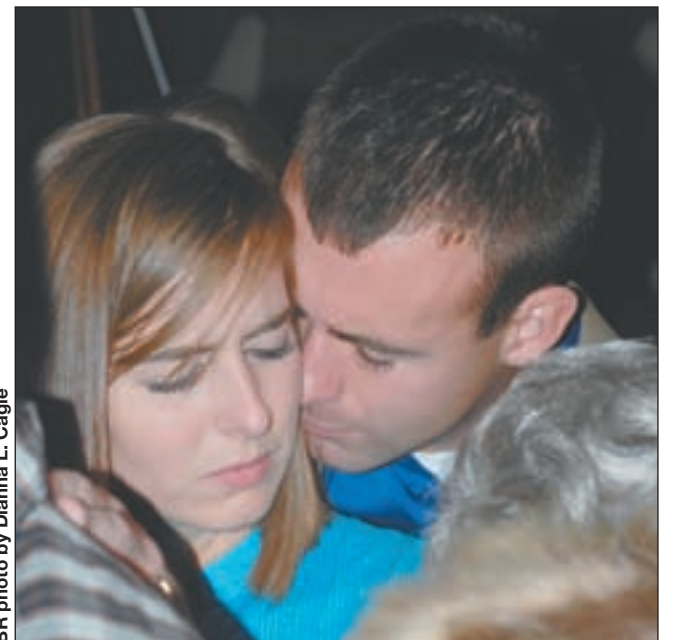
Little did he know that after wrestling with that call for the next 14 years, Palmer, 29, and his wife Charity, 24, eventually would find themselves among a group of 57 new missionaries appointed by International Mission Board (IMB) trustees Nov. 10.

The Palmers and others relayed their missions calling during an appointment service that evening at Calvary Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

"I'm glad I listened to that voice and that it was persistent that long because I wonder how many other people hear that voice and just keep denying it," said Palmer, youth minister of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham. "It's like this internal battle inside of my head; I've got my doubts and my fears and then I know what God has said to be true. I know I have to be obedient."

Charity and Jason couldn't resist the call anymore. "If we were to stay here any longer we would be

(See Durham Page 11)



BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle

PRAYING — Charity and Jason Palmer share a moment during a time of dedication at Calvary Baptist Church's International Mission Board commissioning service Nov. 10 in Winston-Salem. The Palmers, who currently live in Durham, will be serving in Slovakia.

With less, reach more

NC Baptists plan shorter meeting, adopt smaller budget

BR staff/BSC Communications

North Carolina Baptists meeting Nov. 8-10 in Greensboro decided they no longer want to take three days to conduct their annual business and approved two-day meetings for the future. They also adopted a budget six percent smaller than in 2010, re-elected their officers, passed motions that reopen controversial discussions related to alcohol and doctrinal positions, and passed resolutions affirming the Cooperative Program and the work of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force.

During his address Nov. 8, Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr., also stated his support for moving the Convention to a 50-50 split of Cooperative Program receipts from churches with the Southern Baptist Convention. (See story, page 5.) The 2011 budget inches CP sharing with the SBC up half a percentage point to 35 percent. It is the sixth consecutive such increase, despite declining gifts pushing the 2011 budget down to the size of the 1999 budget.

Some 1,746 messengers passed two motions and three resolutions. One motion, presented by Phil Addison, pastor of Stony Point Baptist Church, asked the Board of Directors to adopt the Baptist Faith & Message 2000 as the doctrinal statement of the BSC.

A motion by Tim Rogers, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Indian Trail, asked for a study on the



BSC photo by K Brown

ANOTHER YEAR — Each of the Baptist State Convention officers were re-elected to second terms without opposition. From left: CJ Bordeaux, second vice president and pastor of Gorman Baptist Church, Durham; Beth and Mark Harris, first vice president and pastor of First Baptist Church, Charlotte; and Tanya and Ed Yount, pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church, Conover.

tist Church in Indian Trail, asked for a study on the use of alcohol, especially in relation to funding church plants, people in leadership and hiring of personnel. (See full motion story, page 3.)

Two resolutions, published in the Oct. 23 *Biblical Recorder* and available online, thanked the host city and embraced the Cooperative Program as Baptists' primary missions funding channel.

The Cooperative Program resolution, also offered by Tim Rogers, acknowledged the "value of concerted, cooperative ministries of our churches to reach the peoples of our state, the nation and the world"

(See With less Page 10)

Missional discipleship essential to Great Commission

By Melissa Lilley
and Norman Jameson
BSC Communications/BR

Dennis Pethers was drawn to faith by reading the copy of *Mere Christianity* his boss gave him. He was embarrassed to be reading a Christian book, but did it out of obligation to his boss.

Pethers, now founder of Viz-a-Viz Ministries in the United Kingdom and International Director of More to Life, was one of six panelists in a question and answer session about “missional discipleship” Nov. 8 in conjunction with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual meeting.

“Missional discipleship is not a new way of recruiting people for church. Missional discipleship is living out the reality that the Son of God came to seek and to save the lost,” Pethers said.

For someone who had never in his life thought about God in a country where only four to seven percent of people attend church, believing in God was not easy. Pethers eventually came to receive Jesus as Savior and better understands why so many people want nothing to do with God or the church.

“We don’t present a credible Christ,” he said. “We often present the completely wrong message.” Too often Christianity and the gospel become a set of rules or a recruitment campaign.

Alvin Reid, professor of evangelism and student ministry at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, began the discussion by fleshing out the term “missional discipleship.”

“Missional is an adjective,” he said. “It is taking the posture of a missionary and living the life of a missionary.” Missional discipleship will not happen when believers see the church as a building they go to. Believers must get



BR photo by Norman Jameson

DISCUSSION — Winfield Bevins, left, pastor of Church of the Outer Banks, and Dennis Pethers, founder of Viz-a-Viz, served on a missional discipleship panel Nov. 8 in Greensboro before the start of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting.

out into the world, investing in peoples’ lives and always being mindful of opportunities to share the gospel.

Reid said disciples must “confront the idols of our time” among which he numbered consumerism and sexuality.

Reid also said “there is a crisis of manliness in our culture.” The church has been “neutered” Reid said, and it values “virtues that are feminine” such as compassion, mercy, love and kindness. Not many are championing qualities more typically associated with maleness, such as risk, wisdom, boldness and discipline.

The answer may not be explicitly spiritual, he said. Christians need to get a clue what’s happening in the culture and be able to theologically, spiritually and biblically confront those idols.

Nate Akin, Southeastern’s student development liaison to the churches, put it this way: “Missionaries create disciples, they don’t create converts. The gospel creates disciples.” Akin said the church should be the primary means of accom-

plishing the Great Commission and thus of making disciples. “Discipleship takes place best in community,” he said.

One reason missional discipleship is not part of the lifestyle of more believers is because families do not take responsibility. “Discipleship begins at home,” said Winfield Bevins, founding pastor of Church of the Outer Banks.

“We have privatized Christianity in North

America; we need to walk together.”

Brian Upshaw, BSC church ministry team leader, can relate. He shared during the panel that although he grew up in a Christian home, he was raised in an “attractional, programmatic church” that viewed attendance as the platform for making disciples. Now, Upshaw is trying to do things differently. He is leading his family to reach out to their neighbors and to begin a Bible study in their neighborhood, all in an effort to share Christ and make disciples.

Missional discipleship is not without challenges, one of the most prevalent being lots of church programs. While programs do not need to be tossed out and can be platforms for evangelism and discipleship, “programs can replace personal responsibility for discipleship,” Bevins said.

Bevins also said churches often silo evangelism and discipleship and fail to

realize the cost of either. Whether time, money or inconvenience, “real discipleship will cost us something,” he said.

Missional discipleship begins with leadership. “We have to start in the mirror,” Reid said.

“An air of humility from leaders would go a long way,” said Sean Cordell, pastor for preaching and mercy ministries at Treasuring Christ Church in Raleigh.

Cordell said believers must speak the truth in every opportunity they get. “You must gospel with your mouth every day,” he said. “When people see a beautiful Jesus, then they will want to be like Him.”

Discipleship also requires humility. Believers must never come to the point where they see themselves as having any sense of entitlement. “We are only entitled to hell,” Reid said. “Everything else is grace.”

Upshaw is being intentional about sharing the gospel in his neighborhood, providing a “safe place” in his home where neighbors can “ask some pretty scary questions about God.”

“I may be planting a church in my neighborhood. I don’t know. But I am planting the gospel in my neighborhood,” Shaw said.

Pethers said “membership” will not be the way churches measure their success in the future. “If we started a Baptist movement now, like we did centuries ago, our measurement would not be about members ... it would be something more meaningful, deeper. In missional discipleship are we even about wanting to recruit more members or are we about wanting to make more disciples?”

NCBAM reaches across state

By Dianna L. Cagle
BR Assistant Managing Editor

North Carolina Baptist’s ministry to an aging population was just introduced at last year’s annual meeting but has already begun making a difference in a number of communities and in individual’s lives.

“We do not build retirement homes but we sure do help people in need,” said Michael Blackwell, North Carolina Baptist Aging Ministry’s president.

In the report for NCBAM, given Nov. 9 at the annual meeting of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, Blackwell called himself a doting grandfather and updated messengers about the safe arrival of his “children” early that morning (see story page 9).

The “children” are from Baptist Children’s Home (BCH) who had come to Koury Convention Center the first night of the meeting for its presentation. Blackwell also runs BCH.

For many aging men and women, they are “sometimes just a little too proud to ask for help,” Blackwell said.

Through NCBAM, someone had help getting a glass eye, houses were cleaned, dishes were washed, etc.

Blackwell said NCBAM was in 63 associations and 60 churches across North Carolina.

Around 600 helpers have been sent out through NCBAM to serve the elderly; 21 grants have been given to churches or associations to help with NCBAM ministries; and 16 training sessions were held.

A World War II veteran has been alone for 32 years since his wife died from cancer in Alamance County. Because of NCBAM, he now has access to Meals on Wheels.

Blackwell said this man has no church affiliation.

“You and I as North Carolina Baptists could provide God’s face,” he said.

The pamphlet provides “help for the journey to show how you can get involved” with seniors in the local community.

“Too many aging adults today are falling through the cracks,” Blackwell said.

In his closing comments, Blackwell offered some advice:


- Be well
- Stay strong
- Know your numbers (blood pressure, cholesterol)
- Wear sunscreen
- Take vitamins

Blackwell encouraged people to be aware of the needs around them.

“Friends that is NCBAM in the flesh,” he said.

Volunteers and staff members distributed “Passport: Help for the journey,” a handout to give ideas to help senior citizens for each month of the year.






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Motions: Convention to study alcohol, doctrinal statement

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Motions approved by messengers to the Baptist State Convention (BSC) Nov. 9 call for studies on North Carolina Baptists' position on alcohol and on adopting the Baptist Faith and Message 2000 as the statement of doctrinal parameters for the Convention.

Tim Rogers, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Indian Trail, introduced the motion on alcohol because of concerns that failure to address the issue specifically was implying approval of moderate social drinking, when he believes abstinence is the only appropriate stance for a Christian.

Mark Creech, a member of Carter's Chapel Baptist Church in Selma and executive director of the Christian Action League in North Carolina, supported the motion, saying he is disturbed about the "loose and even irresponsible way" the church approaches the issue of beverage alcohol use.

"We have a whole new group coming up that don't have a strong biblical position on alcohol use," Creech said from his booth in the exhibit hall later. "They advocate moderation rather than abstinence."

Creech said he's seeing "slippage in the Baptist ranks" concerning their attitudes toward social drinking. "We need to draw a line," he said.

Yet in his comments supporting the motion, Creech said the motion "would do nothing to violate a person's personal convictions on alcohol use" but rather would develop a policy that "requires Convention leadership and various ministries set the highest example."

Rogers' goal is a policy that employs, releases funds for church planting, and nominates only persons serving on the board of the BSC, or any agency or



Creech



BR photos by Dianna L. Cagle

READING — Tim Rogers, pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church in Indian Trail, looks at his notes Nov. 9 before talking about his motion before the Baptist State Convention annual messengers.

institution, who personally do not use and publicly advocate total abstinence from the social use of beverage alcohol.

Rogers was prompted to present the motion by photographs of non-BSC church planters with alcohol, and statements by a prominent North Carolina Baptist pastor that he would consume alcohol if "not drinking" would be a stumbling block to winning a person to Christ. To argue that there is any situation where not drinking "would hurt the cause of the gospel" is a false argument, said Rogers, who found encouragement from other pastors to present the motion, but none that would help him place it before the Convention. Rogers said after he presented his motion, "I was concerned that if we continued down the road we would end up affirming the social use of beverage alcohol."

While a motion against beverage alcohol was approved at the 2006 Southern Baptist Convention meet-

ing in Greensboro, it did not pass without opposition and Rogers was dismayed at the picture offered to the public that had Baptist pastors arguing against abstinence. He says his motion does not address a church's position, but "merely directs a policy to be implemented that states to the world, the Southern Baptists that make up the North Carolina Baptist State Convention oppose the moderate use of beverage alcohol and we will not employ anyone that advances its use."

Motion for BF&M

Phil Addison, pastor of Stony Point Baptist Church in Stony Point and a member of the BSC board of directors, asked messengers to "direct the Board of Directors to study and come with recommendations concerning the adoption of the Baptist Faith and message 2000 as the doctrinal statement for the North Carolina Baptist State Convention."

Addison said it is time to adopt "doctrinal parameters" that will be beneficial to church planting, discipleship and church health.

"Many issues we face in the Convention would not have been issues years ago if we'd have had doctrinal parameters," Addison said.

"Somehow we've never decided we're Southern Baptist" and will work with the Baptist Faith and Message, he said.

"It's time we get this mess behind us," he said, without detailing the "mess" to which he referred.

Adopting any creedal statement has long been anathema to Baptists until the "conservative resurgence" in Southern Baptist life prompted a restatement of "Baptist beliefs."

No statement is binding on any autonomous church, although the arguments that result in discussion about such statements have caused significant controversy wherever it has been introduced.



Addison

Skype bridges gap in Greensboro

By Melissa Lilley
BSC Communications

The International Mission Board report Nov. 9 came as a personal testimony from missionaries seeking to live out the Great Commission in a South Asian country void of almost any gospel witness.

Thanks to a live Skype connection, James and Sharon* shared with messengers about how God called them to minister in Nepal as church planters once James graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest. They then returned stateside for a few years and are now back in South Asia, this time in a different country to focus on unreached people groups.

The state where James and Sharon live has a population of 70 million. One percent is Christian. Out of 54,000 villages and towns, 8,000 have a Christian presence and that presence may only be one believer. "It's a very, very dark place," James said. Yet, the couple feels "honored to have been sent out."

James and Sharon spoke about the importance of the Great Commission not just to their calling to South Asia but to their teaching in their country. "We go out and we encourage and work alongside brothers and sisters to help make new disciples," James said.

James said they often use storytelling as a means to share the gospel, and a story they like to tell is of the woman who poured perfume on Jesus' feet and then wiped His feet with her hair. It is an example of an extravagant love and devotion to Jesus. "That love is the basis of discipleship," James said. "Being a disciple is being obedient to what we know-no matter how much it is."

Sharon thanked North Carolina Baptists for supporting international missions. "This is from our heart," she said. "We are so thankful for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering and the Cooperative Program. That's what makes living here easier for us. The offerings your churches give, we do not take that for granted."

*Names changed for security reasons

Baptist hospital, foundation maintain excellence tradition

By Melissa Lilley
BSC Communications

North Carolina Baptist Hospital (NCBH) has come a long way since 1923 when it was established as an 88-bed facility. The hospital now owns and/or operates facilities in other counties in the state and is a 1,000-plus bed hospital system.

Although health care faces unprecedented change, "in the midst of that some things remain the same," said Paul Mullen during the Hospital's report Nov. 10 at the Baptist State Convention's annual meeting. Mullen is NCBH's church and community relations director.

NCBH continues seeking to provide exceptional service that is faith-centered and offering "compassionate care to every patient" that is focused on sharing God's love.

Baptist Hospital and Wake Forest University Health Sciences comprise Wake Forest University Baptist Medical Center. Mullen described the Medical Center as one of "tremendous vitality, world-class services and an ever expanding campus." The Medical Center continues to be recognized as one of "America's Best Hospitals."

The Cooperative Program helps make the hospital's ministry possible and as a result "people with no faith or shattered faith are finding hope," Mullen said.

Mullen also brought an update on its partnership with Bangalore Baptist Hospital in India. NCBH made the first financial contribution to Project BELIEVE, an effort to help fight against cancer in Bangalore.

About 7,000 cancer cases are diagnosed each year in Bangalore, and most do not have access to any type of medical treatment.

Mullen shared that God has answered the prayers for help in India, as this month Bangalore Baptist Hospital treated its first patient in the new radiology/oncology department.

The North Carolina Baptist Foundation also brought a report Nov. 10 via a video greeting from Convention and Foundation employees. This year the Foundation celebrates 90 years of "generating an increased awareness of Christian estate stewardship principles as a means of financially undergirding churches, institutions, and mission endeavors on a permanent basis."

The Foundation is the oldest Baptist foundation in America and now manages more than \$128 million in assets. Clay Warf, executive director of the foundation, encouraged North Carolina Baptists to take advantage of opportunities to give to Kingdom causes through estate planning. The Foundation assists individuals in maintaining careful stewardship of resources in order to ensure their legacy will be one of continued support for Christian ministries.

The Foundation also works with North Carolina Baptists in setting up charitable endowments and preparing a will. A church loan program is available to help churches as they seek to increase their ministry efforts through renovations or expansions.

Warf challenged North Carolina Baptists to commit a tithe of their estate to Kingdom work. "The size of the gift is not important," he said. "What is important is the commitment to the tithe."

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Church News



Contributed photo

► **Tabor City Baptist Church**, Tabor City, celebrated World Day of Prayer for Baptist women Nov. 1. Pastor Bruce Schmidt and wife, Martha, invited women to their home for a Kenyan lunch. The Schmidts are former International Mission Board missionaries to Kenya and Uganda. Called "In Step with the Spirit," the women focused on seven areas around the world. Martha Schmidt, left, and Cynthia Inman, the church's Woman's Missionary Union director, wash the hands — Kenyan style — of the women participating. The Schmidts celebrate their one-year anniversary at the church Nov. 21. See more photos at www.biblicalrecorder.org; click on "Photo Gallery."



Contributed photo

► Around 160 Girls in Action and Children in Action came to the **South Fork Baptist Association's** annual banquet Oct. 20. Thirty volunteers helped with "Anchors Aweigh — A Cruise to India" at **Mt. Ruhama Baptist Church**, Maiden. The Woman's Missionary Union Mozelle Elmore circle prepared the formal cruise ship style buffet. Participants went to the Taj Mahal and Himalayas and learned about Indian culture, food, sacred animals and clothing. Above, Nandu and Emma share about their culture. After the tour they had group cruise photos, activities on the deck (crafts) and a visit to the souvenir shop.



Obituary

STEPHEN WALKER DAVENPORT, 83, of Asheboro, died Sept. 12.

A Navy veteran of WWII and graduate of Mercer University and Southeastern Seminary, Davenport, was a missionary to Argentina for 26 years before founding and pastoring the Spanish Mission for Randolph Baptist Association. He was a member of Balfour Baptist Church, Asheboro.

He is survived by his wife, Bonnie Pearce Davenport; daughters Kathryn Cole of Fayetteville, Shelia Hedgecock of Graham, Shirley Davenport of Raleigh, and Patricia Knight of Taylors, S.C.; son, John Davenport of Spartanburg, S.C.; sisters, Grace Penton of Waverly Hall, Ga., Frances Baker of Fayetteville, Ga., and Jane McGuire of Columbus, Ga.; 13 grandchildren; and 5 great-grandchildren.

Memorials to International Mission Board, c/o Balfour Baptist Church, 1644 North Fayetteville Street, Asheboro, NC 27203 or Hospice of Randolph, P.O. Box 9, Asheboro, NC 27204-0009.



Staff changes

PHILIP BROWN has been called as student minister at Piney Grove Baptist Church, Swansboro.

Longview Baptist Church, Raleigh, has called **RANDY MCKINNEY** as pastor. He was pastor of The Memorial Baptist Church, Greenville.

DEBBIE MILLER has been called as the children's activities director of Wakefield Central Baptist Church, Zebulon.

First Baptist Church, Boone, has called **KEVIN WILSON** as associate pastor of youth, children, and young families. He was associate pastor at Flat Rock Baptist Church, Mt. Airy.

To submit items:

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to print significant news from the churches. Either e-mail digital photos or photo prints.

Submissions to: dianna@biblicalrecorder.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 27619.



Opportunity Corner

Embrace plans girls ministry

Embrace, the women's ministry at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, plans to launch Girls Embrace Ministry (GEM) in 2011.

Seventh through twelfth grade girls, their moms and their church leaders will gather at Great Wolf Lodge in Concord Jan. 28-29, 2011, for a weekend of worship, fun, encouragement and teaching.

This event includes lodging, water

park pass, Friday dinner, Saturday breakfast and program.

This event is \$110 per person. Pre-registration and payment is required at the time of registration. Registration fees are non-refundable, but are transferable. Six girls/leaders are placed in every room. Contact Ashley Allen at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5559, or aallen@ncbaptist.org.

Ministers of music get chance to retool

Most ministers of music were well trained to lead music and worship ministries in the traditional church.

Today, with changing worship environments, many churches desire to move to a blended or more contemporary form of worship as a way to be more relevant to their specific communities. Sometimes our training doesn't adequately prepare us for transitioning a church in its worship styles, nor give us the tools to lead that style with excellence.

The Minister of Music Retooling Retreat Jan. 21-22, 2011, is an event at Ridgecrest Conference Center that will equip leaders in the theology, theory and practice of newer forms of worship.

A worship team and band will be present for demonstrations and modeling.

Topics on theology, leadership, songs, formats and mechanics of worship as well as the practice of corporate worship will be offered.

Cost (includes overnight accommodation at Ridgecrest's new hotel, Mountain Laurel; three meals; and conference materials): single occupancy, \$125; double occupancy, \$87; commuter (includes everything except lodging), \$62.

Contact Sherry Thompson at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5634, or sthompson@ncbaptist.org.

Visit www.renewingworshipNC.org for more information about this and other events.

Newest NIV version of Bible now online

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (BP) — The newest update to the New International Version (NIV) Bible is now online, and scholars, pastors and everyday Christians are debating the changes to what has been the most popular modern English translation.

The NIV was first released in 1978 before being revised in 1984, and in September 2009 Biblica, Zondervan and the Committee on Bible Translation announced that another revised NIV was in the works. It won't be available in print until 2011 but can be read online at BibleGateway.com.

The revision is being closely watched because Zondervan's most recent major revision, the TNIV, was controversial due to gender-neutral language.

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Hollifield supports 50/50 CP split with SBC

By Norman Jameson

BR Editor

North Carolina Baptists' top administrator declared his support of moving the state convention to a 50-50 split of Cooperative Program funds with the Southern Baptist Convention "over a protracted period" in his address to messengers Nov. 8.

At the same time, Milton A. Hollifield Jr., executive director-treasure of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) said it could not be done without increased giving from North Carolina Baptist churches.

"It is imperative that we all understand that a move to increase the SBC portion must be accompanied by an increase in CP support by our churches," Hollifield said.

This will mark the sixth year of the past eight that CP gifts from churches have been lower than the previous year. Messengers adopted a 2011 budget the size of the 1999 budget. Yet in 2011, for the sixth consecutive year, the SBC allocation of CP gifts has been increased one-half percent. "If our churches do not increase their support of the Cooperative Program we can't reach the goal without deep cuts in church planting and partnership ministries that I'm convinced God is calling us to do ... ministries that the churches of this state voted to establish and support," he said.

Hollifield said he is willing continually to examine the budget and that the budgeting process is not in his hands alone. He also said he "will not recommend that we sacrifice ministries that I am convinced God is calling us to do through this state convention."

He pointed out that if churches had maintained their CP giving percentage of 1995, \$15 million more would have been available for missions throughout the state and world annually.



BSC photo by K Brown

GIVING — Milton Hollifield challenges North Carolina Baptists Nov. 8 to raise their offerings to missions.

While Hollifield affirmed each church's autonomy to determine how it will invest mission dollars, including avenues other than the Cooperative Program, he said, "If a congregation wants to have a strong voice in how a convention uses the dollars, they need to be strong givers."

His call to dramatically alter the division of Cooperative Program gifts between the Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention is evidence that he is "deeply committed to strengthening the partnership between the Baptist State Convention and the Southern Baptist Convention."

Hollifield's declaration comes after a year of vocal pushing for such a division by supporters of the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force study and report. During a panel at last year's annual session, pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, and GCR task force member Al Gilbert called a 50-50 division "a good start."

Hollifield said lower gifts in churches and from churches "is just a symptom of a larger problem of

church health. When this problem is solved then stewardship will naturally be addressed with our people."

In his annual address, Hollifield said 2010 has been a year both of "difficulty and challenge" and a year of "great celebration." He said challenges included the economy, which has negatively affected all but a "few churches," and a growing diversity that includes "many newcomers (who) bring religious practices that many North Carolina Baptists are not prepared to address." He encouraged his audience not to be distracted by difficulties "or we'll miss the great and mighty things God is accomplishing through His church."

For Hollifield such evidence includes planting 98 churches in 2009; financially sponsoring five ethnic church plants in New York City with a gift of \$50,000; and 20 percent growth in baptisms.

As people push the Baptist State Convention toward a closer identity with the Southern Baptist Convention, Hollifield drew distinctions between the work of each organization. Each has "different and distinct assignments ... but we partner with the SBC to accomplish some things that require joint efforts," he said. Lamenting too many Christian's moral failures, Hollifield committed to "pray, share, and to personally seek to disciple and mentor" more persons in 2011. If others would make such a commitment but are unsure how to do it, he urged them to call the Baptist State Convention and staff would come help.

He said he is "disturbed at the infighting that continues to paralyze the ministries of so many churches." Such conflict leaves people "wounded and discouraged."

"I do not know about you," Hollifield said, "but I am committing before you this evening to work to bring peace, and healing, and unity without uniformity to this convention in the hopes that this convention might indeed be a model for the churches."

President Yount calls NC Baptists to life of prayer

By Melissa Lilley

BSC Communications

There may be many causes blamed when a failure occurs — promotion, lack of funds, the vision just wasn't there, etc.

Or, maybe it's because people tried to make something happen out of their own strength instead of relying on power from God. "All of our blessings as a denomination and as a state convention are prayer blessings, and all of our failures are prayer failures," said Ed Yount during the president's address Nov. 9 at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual meeting.

Yount spoke from Acts 4:31-33 and called on North Carolina Baptists to return to a life devoted to prayer. The scene in this text is one where God pours out His Holy Spirit and His followers are able to boldly proclaim the gospel. The text notes that the whole place where the disciples gathered was actually shaken. Great movements of God such as this never happen "because they are planned by men and put on a calendar. They cannot be worked up. They must be prayed down," Yount said.

"The greatest need in our nation, in our denomination, in our state convention and in our local churches is for the people of God to put aside the sins that so easily beset us, to repent and forgive one another, and to gather together before Holy God on our knees in humility and prayer."

In 1950 the population in America was about 151 million and the Southern Baptist Convention included 27,788 churches. Just two years ago, 44,848 churches made up the SBC. Now, in 2010, the population is about 310 million. While the population has doubled and more than 17,000 churches have been started, Southern Baptists baptized almost 34,000 less in 2008 than in 1950. In 1972, 140,000 young adults were baptized and in 2008 that number decreased to 75,000.

"Who can look at a report like that and deny that this is not a clarion call to prayer?" Yount said.

Yount gave three reasons why, based on Acts 4, God's people are not living lives of prayer and therefore not fully living into the purpose He created them to fulfill.

First, God's people do not encounter God because they do not recognize His presence. As more and more adopt the perspective of a secular humanist, they in essence dethrone God, deify man and "the result is a spiritual vacuum in the hearts of millions of people who are turning to idol worship and false religion," Yount said.

When believers pray they start to encounter the holy and living God. The Greek word for prayer used in Acts 4 means to beg, or to long for. When prayer like that happens, when people put aside personal agendas and long to experience God's presence through prayer, "something is going to happen," Yount said.

Power comes through prayer. In Acts 4 the disciples did not pray and ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit, but because they sought God's presence He responded in a remarkable way and gave them His Holy Spirit. This scene in Acts comes during a time of intense persecution for Jesus' followers. Yet, they prayed for power to be able to endure and to be faithful witnesses of all they learned from Jesus.

When believers pray for God's power they are acknowledging they cannot do anything in their own strength. This means believers surrender to God's lordship and His sovereignty. When God is in control, nothing can thwart His plan or purpose, not even the gates of hell, as noted in Matthew 16. "Regardless of the circumstances, we belong to a cause that will not and cannot fail," Yount said.

Yount reminded messengers that they are not in control of the ministry God has called them to or even the church they serve. "The church does not belong to you or me. It does not belong to the leaders or members. It belongs to Jesus," Yount said. "You didn't die for the church — Jesus died for the church."

Not only do believers encounter God and embrace His power through prayer, but they also expand the Kingdom by realizing His purposes. "That's our marching order," Yount said of God's command to expand His Kingdom.

Acts 4 describes the disciples as "giving witness" to the resurrection. Considering Jesus died on a cross to save sinners, "how can we do anything less than give witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ to a lost and dying world?" Yount asked.

More than 3.5 billion of the world's population has never had adequate opportunity to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ. According to the statistics, more than 150,000 people die every day in the world. "The sad fact is that most of them perish in a Christ-less grave, and the average Christian just doesn't care," Yount said.

Taking the gospel to the nations seems an impossible task, and it is apart from God's power. "The Bible says all things are possible with God. It all begins with a return to the priority of prayer," Yount said. "Genuine prayer before Holy God leads to passionate hearts and soul winning churches."

"The fields are white unto harvest. It is time for us as North Carolina Baptists to expand the Kingdom by realizing His purpose and the purpose is to give witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ," Yount said.

Yount concluded his message by sharing an illustration used by evangelist Gypsy Smith. Smith said those wanting to see spiritual awakening must draw a circle around themselves and then cry out to God to bring revival to everything in that circle.

"That's where it has to start," Yount said. "It has to start today with me. It has to start today with you. It has to start with all of us."

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Pastor's conference speakers

Ezell urges pastors not to isolate themselves

By Norman Jameson
BR Editor

Kevin Ezell, new president of the North American Mission Board, urged pastors not to isolate or insulate themselves from the pains of people, no matter how large or small their church.

Preaching at the annual pastors' conference, held this year for the first time at the same site as the annual Convention sessions, Ezell said the grief that Christians at Ephesus in Acts 20 declared at the Apostle Paul's leaving them demonstrated he was intimately involved in their lives.

Kevin Ezell, elected Sept. 14 by a split vote of trustees, was transparent and personable as he reminded pastors "most will not be judged by how we arrived but by how we depart."

Even though pastors sometimes "pour your life into people and sometimes they respond and sometimes nothing happens" and even though "sometimes you invest and invest and invest and there is nothing there ... we never get to the point where we insulate ourselves from the cares of people."

Paul told his disciples they were all going to Jerusalem and even though he warned them "it's going to get ugly" that didn't change their perspective. Too often that is unlike the response of American Christians, he said. "We have become so spoiled."

The only unanimous vote Ezell ever has received was the 7-0 call to his first church, he said. "We have a comfort zone and we like it and we typically stay in it."

Ezell and his wife have six children, including three adopted from three

different nations. Orphanage officials warned Ezell to be careful when he took his newly adopted 11-year-old to the hotel because J.M. had never felt hot water. The orphanage had none.

Of course, after Ezell demonstrated the controls for J.M.'s first hot water shower, the boy stayed in there for 45 minutes and declared it "wonderful."

"Most 11-year-olds in America want an iPod, he just wants warm water," Ezell said.

Most of us forget where we've come from."

For weeks J.M. woke Ezell with the promise that "I will be a good son for you today."

"If only every believer would wake up and go to bed every night with the same intent as we bow our knees to pray and say 'God, I will be a good son for you, I will be a good daughter for you and will do my best to please you every day and night.'"

Ezell asked pastors to consider what people will remember when they look at their ministries. He said he has done many funerals during his ministry and it is easier to personalize the funeral of a deceased whom he knows. He needs more input from a distant family.

So he asks some questions to be able to relate the personality of the deceased. When one family member said of his mother, "She was the meanest woman I know," Ezell said, "That's not going to work."

"It is amazing how people can live 80 years and their life is summarized in just a few seconds," he said. "Take a stop watch and time the things you really value. What difference will it make that you were really here?"

Call to personal holiness

A late substitute for Johnny Hunt who was trying to trim his schedule, frequent pastor's conference speaker Don Wilton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C., called pastors to personal holiness.

Preaching from Galatians 5 Wilton spoke frankly and said, "Young pastors aren't lining up to stand beside us because of our conduct."

He lamented the conduct of pastors that makes secular headlines and tells the world they do not believe what they have preached. "We can meet until the cows come home," he said, "but unless we ask God to take hold of our hearts and change us from inside out ... you will not be able to do the things that you imagine you can do."

He said legalism has "crept into the ranks of our Southern Baptist denomination" and that "we have become a denomination of boasters and braggers and preachers who stand up in self-aggrandizement."

From this chapter Wilton said for those who claim to love Christ, there will be revealing sin, releasing love, and reflecting results.

"Fewer and fewer people want to come to church because they watch the behavior of our people," Wilton said. They see the sexual sin, the worship sin and the character sin.

He said just the previous day another pastor in his hometown fell to sexual sin. "Is there someone here today committing adultery?" he asked as he peered with piercing eyes over the crowd. "Are you that man?"

While God says such sinners will not inherit the Kingdom, Wilton says

Baptists have "become powder puffs in the pulpit because we don't believe it."

Instead of preaching and living with boldness, Wilton said, "We have another convention and write another ding dong resolution about the Great Commission."

"One reason so many people don't want to come hear people like you and me is because we behave like dipsticks," he said. "We've cultivated a people who come not to hear what God wants them to hear but what they want to hear."

He emphasized that only a pastor's personal holiness, of the kind that asks, "Lord what is it that You would say to me," and "Father how can we lead those young people," will inspire and lead others to new life.

"The role of evangelism is not complete until the evangelized become evangelists," he said. "We have to understand that the fundamental responsibility of the evangelist is to be holy because God is holy."

Pastor's Conference officers

Lee Pigg Jr. was elected as pastor's conference president-elect, which means he will take the helm in 2012. He is pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe.

Scott Faw was elected vice president and Dale Robertson was elected treasurer for the 19th time.

This year's president-elect Bobby Blanton, assumes the role of president for 2011's conference. Blanton is president of the Board of Directors for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and pastor of Lake Norman Baptist Church in Huntersville.

Find it Here 2011 introduced to messengers

By Melissa Lilley
BSC Communications

After spending a year focusing on evangelism, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) moves on to focus on discipleship.

Find it Here, a three-year statewide evangelism emphasis, kicked off its second year Nov. 9 at the BSC annual meeting.

Evangelism is the first step, but the command of Jesus Christ to every believer is to make disciples — not just converts.

In light of that command, the Find it Here 2011: Embracing Christ emphasis is discipleship.

Lynn Sasser, executive leader for congregational services, read the theme verse of John 15:8 and explained that a disciple is one who "abides in Christ and does the things that Jesus did."

The Find it Here presentation featured video interviews with pastors about the importance of discipleship. Leon Hawks, pastor of Crosspointe Church in Concord, said the first step in making disciples is to "be a disciple yourself. You cannot expect your church to do what you aren't doing."

Sean Cordell, pastor of Treasuring Christ Church in Raleigh, said discipleship encompasses all that Jesus commanded His followers to do. Cordell shared that for a long time he "equated discipleship with knowing and being able to tell other people."

However, telling other people often came in the classroom setting in the

form of teaching and he neglected other discipleship contexts such as the home. Cordell is now intent on making his home a place where his family is disciplined.

Sasser explained that Find it Here 2011 does not dismiss measuring sticks such as baptism numbers, but seeks to expand the scorecard when it comes to evaluating church effectiveness.

The expanded scorecard must include whether or not churches are leading people to life transformation through a discipleship journey.

Ultimate success is to "see people following Christ and living on mission," Sasser said.

Chuck Register, executive leader for church planting and missions development, led messengers in a time of commitment. Register asked messengers willing to commit to intentional discipleship in 2011 to turn in a response card signifying this commitment.

Churches can also sign up or get resources at www.finditherenc.org.

Don McCutcheon, executive leader for evangelization, shared testimonials from the first year's emphasis on evangelism.

McCutcheon reported about Woodlawn Baptist Church in Conover, where 26 people made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ and six were baptized Easter Sunday.

Hephzibah Baptist Church in Wendell baptized 11 people Easter Sunday and saw its second highest attendance ever.

For six months leading up to Easter

GC office hopes churches work together

Pastors serving on the frontlines need help from North Carolina Baptists.

"We are plan A and there is no plan B," said Mike Sowers, senior consultant in the Baptist State Convention's (BSC) Office of Great Commission Partnerships (GCP).

Sowers shared an update Nov. 9 with BSC messengers to the annual meeting.

There are 6.2 billion people in the world without a personal relationship with Christ. North Carolina measures 5.6 million lost.

Sowers credited each person with the problem. The GCP office works with Metro New York Baptist Association (MNYBA), Boston, Toronto, and starting in 2011, Moldova. N.C. Baptist leaders trekked to New York earlier this year to begin to cast a vision for the partnership between BSC and MNYBA.

More than 400 volunteers have gone to help existing ministries and to develop technological resources. Proceeds from the sale of Ethnicity, a book published in New York, will go towards church planting in New York. The book profiles 82 of New York's most unreached people groups. In North America, there are 258 million lost people.

Sowers said that in Boston there are 4.5 million residents and less than 2.5 percent know Jesus as Savior. North Carolina plans to strengthen its ability to train, send and support missionaries here and in each of its partnership areas. Focusing on metro Toronto narrows the partnership with Canada quite considerably. But Sowers said this will allow workers to focus on a target area.

To help churches, Sowers said the office is developing global impact networks. "For many small churches they can't do this alone," Sowers said.

Another key is "equipping our young leaders," he said. "The eternity of 6.2 billion people is at stake."

Sunday Hephzibah members committed to increasing their efforts to be intentionally evangelistic and during that time 26 people were baptized.

Register also previewed the next and final Find it Here emphasis: Expanding the Kingdom.

The 2011 annual meeting will launch an intentional focus on missions and taking the gospel to unreached people groups of the world that have never had an opportunity to hear the gospel.

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Doing jobs important for family members

By Dianna L. Cagle
BR Assistant Managing Editor

Living in a glass house, pastors face a lot of pressure.

“It’s absolutely essential if we are to do well, to finish well, to have a healthy marriage,” said Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest.

Akin, who has been married 32 years, said his wedding day has been the second best day in his life — second to his salvation experience at 18.

“(It’s) important to have lady who will wrap (her arms around you),” Akin said Nov. 8 during the annual Pastor’s Conference. “(It) makes a huge difference when those difficult times come.”

Pastors face demands on their time from their family and their church.

Using Col. 3:18-21, Akin stressed the importance of the job descriptions given in scripture.

Husbands, wives, children and fathers each have job descriptions.

Yielding her will, a wife honors Christ by submitting to her husband, Akin said. This submission does not mean inferiority in any way.

Husbands are commanded to love their wives. Akin pointed out that the command to husbands involves two imperatives, indicating a continuous action.

“The love he is talking about there is a decision, a volitional act of your will,” Akin said. “You love her even when she’s not lovely.”

Akin told the pastors to look at the cross and “see how He loved you.

“He, in amazing grace, loved you.”

The love here, Akin said, is one of sacrifice.

The imperatives also included a warning against husbands being harsh or bitter toward their wives.

“Bitterness is a cancer to the soul,” Akin said. “Bitterness will eat up a man of God.”

Nothing exists in ministry that is more dangerous than bitterness, Akin said.

“It eats you up,” he said, but doesn’t bother the

other person. “Bitterness is a cancer of the soul.”

Colossians also tells children to obey their parents “in everything,” he said.

“I believe we are to obey comprehensively not absolutely,” in that children and pastors should not to do anything illegal, immoral, unethical or unbiblical.

“We’re not CEOs or autocrats,” Akin said. “We’re shepherds.”

But Akin said if children have to choose between their parents and God, parents should lose.

Colossians also shares an imperative for fathers to encourage their children.

“We as men are called to lead our houses,” Akin said. “They do listen to what you say and they care what you think about them.”

Fathers should build their children up.

At the end of Akin’s sermon, he turned to talk of the Great Commission Task Force report.

“At its soul is getting of the gospel to the nations,” Akin said.

Pastors are the key to a resurgence of the Great Commission.

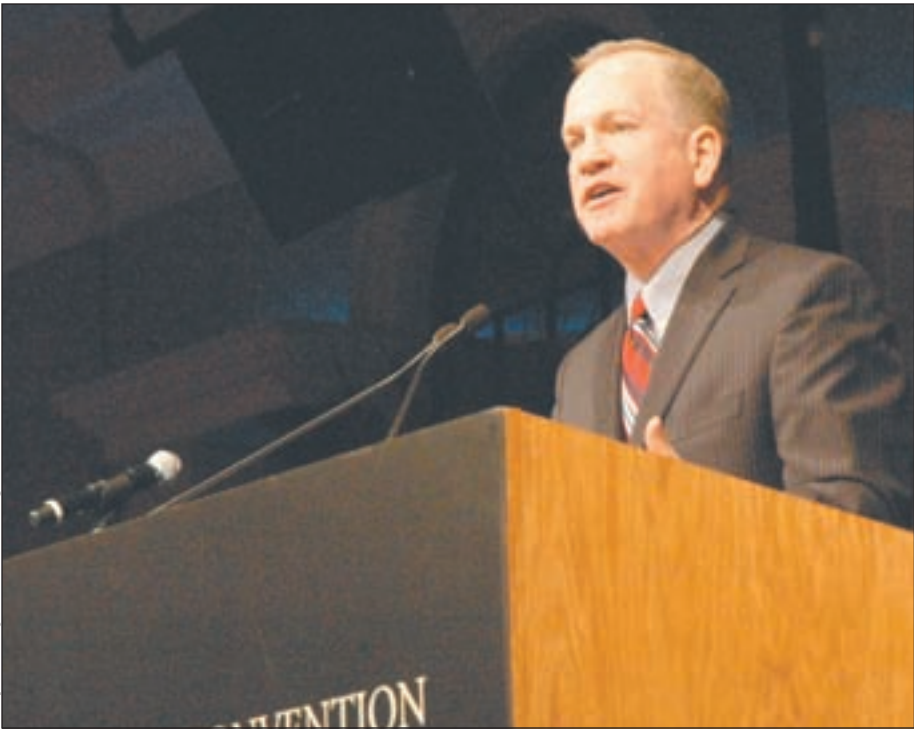
“It’s all on you,” Akin said. “I’m passing the baton.”

The back of the report contains challenges. One section was on families. Akin shared seven of the nine challenges with pastors.

1. Emphasize biblical gender roles with fathers taking the lead for spiritual warfare of their families.

- 2. Build gospel-saturated homes.
- 3. Develop strategies for sharing the gospel.
- 4. Adopt a different unreached people group; pray for a month.
- 5. Adopt a different church plant a month or year, praying and supporting.
- 6. Spend family vacation participating in a mission trip.
- 7. Consider setting up a missions savings account for child or grandchild.

To learn more about the family as well as other challenges from the Great Commission Task Force report visit www.prayer4gcr.com/reports/.



PREACHING — Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, delivers a sermon about pastors and their families as part of the annual Pastor’s Conference. The conference is held before the Baptist State Convention’s annual meeting. This was the first year it was held in the same venue.

How valuable is your soul?

By Melissa Lilley
BSC Communications

Whether the economy is up or down, people still find ways to spend a lot of money on unusual items. Two years ago the most expensive shirt ever made sold for \$46,000. In Hong Kong, a six-karat diamond went for \$7.9 million.

People spend so much money on stuff because they don’t see it as just stuff — they see it as a means of acquiring value. When that happens, people are looking for joy in something that is temporary and will ultimately never satisfy. They are, in essence, selling their soul for a life far less superior than what God intended when He created them.

“The most precious thing we possess is our soul,” said Stephen Rummage Nov. 7 to the group gathered at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro for the Pastor’s Conference. Yet, “people sell their souls” every day.

With every passing second, three people in the world die without knowing Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Savior. “What do we feel?” Rummage asked. “Where is the burden for us to tell the gospel?”

Rummage spoke from Mark 8:31-38. “I want to be a personal soul winner,” he said. “I want to be a pulpit soul winner. If you haven’t preached the gospel, you haven’t preached a Christian sermon.”

Jesus gave His life to redeem sinful souls. “It was the only price that could be paid,” Rummage said. “Jesus took every step to Calvary because that was the only price that could be paid for your soul.”

Rummage said one reason people do

not share the gospel with nonbelievers is because they think that, despite what the Bible says about Jesus being the only way to God, nonbelievers will still be OK when they die and won’t really go to hell. “The lost won’t be OK. Jesus is the only way,” Rummage said.

The only response to a love as amazing as the love Jesus has shown to His children is total surrender. As Mark 8:34 says, believers must deny themselves and follow Christ. To deny self means to not just give up something, but “to say no to you as the dominating force in your life,” Rummage said. Jesus Christ must be the dominating force, and believers must be willing to die for Jesus and to follow Him.

“The only way to come to Jesus is to come with complete surrender,” Rummage said. “If you want to save your life, let it go so you can receive life.”

People will not receive the gospel and Jesus as Savior if they do not understand they need to be saved, and so believers must share the entire gospel and share about a Savior who changes lives. “We have so cheapened the gospel that a lost world is not even interested in it,” Rummage said. “Real salvation is worth having.”

Jesus Christ calls His followers to be soul-winners because He values every soul. From excuses to calling it religion, people play games with their soul all the time.

As bad as that is, what’s worse, what’s “criminal” as Rummage said, is when the church and when believers play games with a person’s soul. And when believers do not share the gospel with lost people, that’s exactly what they are doing.

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Theme emphasizes discipleship

By Dianna L. Cagle

BR Assistant Managing Editor

Building on the evangelism emphasis of last year, this year's e3.2 theme at the Baptist State Convention (BSC) focuses on discipleship — encountering God, embracing Christ, expanding the kingdom.

Four speakers shared about the discipleship emphasis:

Bruce Frank, pastor of Biltmore Baptist Church, Arden.

People want honest, authentic encounters, Frank said. His move from a tropical climate to the mountains around Asheville exposed him to new challenges.

While he admits he'd like to stay some mornings in his toasty bed, "I get up 'cause I've got kids that need breakfast," he said. "I get up because I have responsibilities."

Too often pastors and even lay people get comfortable.

"We've got to get out of that warm spot," he said. "God's got great plans for you."

People who are different are not the enemy. "They are our mission field," Frank said. "When I read my Bible these are the people (Jesus) died for."

Only the grace of God has saved Frank from the same fate.

Bruce Martin, pastor of Village Baptist Church, Fayetteville.

People being engulfed by storm cried out to Jesus in the boat.

"The gates of hell are as wide open as they've every been in history," Martin said. "A torrent of filth has been spewed. Evil has a freedom in America that it has never had before."

What do we do?

Martin wondered if Jesus is taking a nap "waiting for His people to cry out."

Ryan Pack, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hendersonville.

Seeing the banners displaying the words of the BSC's theme "should energize us."

What would it mean for people in the community to embrace Christ? "I get all excited," Pack said.

But how is it going to happen? Better programming? Better worship? Neither.

But Pack said to turn to Eph. 3:20-21 and focus on who is able.

"We may not be able to pull off certain things," Pack said, "but we serve the One who is able."

The phrase, "now to him who is able," comforts Pack.

"I am convicted by that first phrase," he said.

"Friends so often we strut around like we are able. God will not move until we turn our ability over to Him and off of our shoulders."

Whatever the grandest scheme you can concoct for ministry is "rubbish compared to what God wants to do."

People should base "every ounce of ministry on His ability."

God's power should be flowing out of His people.

"It's not about my ability as a pastor to pull things off," Pack said, "not because we're trained enough (or) good enough but because of God's grace."

Mike Cummings, director of missions of Burnt Swamp Baptist Association.

Discipling believers is a challenging undertaking.

"The concept has to be bought into by the churches," said Cummings, who pointed out that with more than 16 million members, Southern Baptists don't know where around 60 percent of its members are on a given Sunday.

"It's not an encouraging picture at all when you look at our denomination," Cummings said about the lack of nourishment of a steady diet of God's word and fellowship with believers.

A main problem is the assumptions or presuppositions made about believers

Cummings fears that North Carolina Baptists may "not have as regenerate church membership as we think we have."

Some leaders are discipling people who don't have a certainty about being saved.

Cummings said looking at church roles "may be the best way to know who to win for the gospel."

America has become too accommodating, Cummings said, highlighting welcoming other

religions.

Believers don't stress that Jesus provides the only way to heaven.

"Making disciples is a challenge," he said. "It's a challenge to keep clarity."

The undertaking is tremendous but necessary.

Marcus Redding, pastor of Hull's Grove Baptist Church, Vale.

In Matthew when Jesus talks about the original Great Commission, readers miss out on the part that says "Jesus came and spake unto them," Redding said.

But pastors too fail to read all of the Great Commission.

"It's King Jesus who has commanded us to make disciples," Redding said. "Pastor, who are you discipling?"

Pointing to the Convention leadership on the platform behind him, Redding pleaded with messengers not to follow these men but to instead follow Christ.

"We've been given our blueprints by our King," said Redding, who said he learns lessons on a daily basis.

He also pointed out that the Convention has materials available to help churches with discipleship. It is the 2011 focus of Find It Here (see page 6).



BSC photo by K Brown

NAMING — Gerald Hodges, incoming chairman of the Biblical Recorder's board of trustees shares the names of the search committee for the new editor. Hodges is pastor of Westwood Baptist Church in Roxboro.

Recorder report names editor search committee

Incoming board chair Gerald Hodges named a five-member committee that will be responsible for finding a new editor during the *Biblical Recorder's* report to messengers Nov. 9.

Hodges, pastor of Westwood Baptist Church in Roxboro, quoting from the book *Rescuing Ambition* by Dave Harvey, said the ambition that pleases God is focused on God, and is confident that "even in falling short of His goals we still stand in His redeeming grace."

"As an agency we have as our aim and ambition that this publication will glorify God, build up the churches and edify our king," Hodges said.

Although the *Biblical Recorder* has been a part of North Carolina Baptist life for 177 years Hodges admitted he has been among those who at one time thought it irrelevant. It was "too far down the pile on my desk, too moderate, too dated in format," he said.

"I was wrong," he said. "The *Recorder* is an important source of information" and he wants to see that perception changed.

The *Biblical Recorder* board "understands where we are as a Convention and understands where we're headed," he said.

Hodges asked for "prayerful support as we seek to build God's Kingdom through the *Biblical Recorder*."

He commended those who remain on staff after the resignation of Editor Norman Jameson Oct. 21. Assistant Managing Editor Dianna Cagle, Office Manager Alison Zogby and Circulation Manager Amie Moore are "absolutely committed to serving North Carolina Baptists and absolutely committed to working out God's call in their lives as they work at the *Recorder*," he said.

Hodges said the search committee will consist of himself, incoming director Jo Andrews, a member of Lawndale Baptist Church in Greensboro; and board members Robert Hefner, a staff member at Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville; Richard Hicks, interim pastor at East Lumberton Baptist Church, and Don Warren, a member of Parkwood Baptist Church in Gastonia.

"We're completely aware that it's difficult," Hodges said. "But we are absolutely confident of God's sovereign hand in and over these circumstances."

In a phone conversation Nov. 15, Hodges said the hope is for the search committee to meet in early December "before the holidays get cranked up." At that time they will formalize a job description as well as a timeline for having a new editor in place.

Jameson will continue as editor through Dec. 31. Nominations will be accepted at *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, NC 29619-8808. Attn: Search Committee. Phone calls to Hodges' office at (336) 599-1982; e-mail: wwbc@esinc.net with subject: *Biblical Recorder* Search Committee.

Emergency surgery

Jameson, who had surgery Nov. 10, is at his home in Raleigh recovering. His severe abdominal pain was caused from adhesions and scar tissue built up where his appendix was removed 30 years ago. Doctors operated later that day.



BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle

PRAYING — Baptist State Convention of North Carolina leaders surround two Moldovan leaders, center. The newly formed Office of Great Commission Partnerships is working with Moldova to train frontline missionaries. Mike Sowers, right, formerly of N.C. Baptist Men, is taking on the role of senior consultant. See page 6.

Hunt challenges messengers to give God control

By Melissa Lilley
BSC Communications

Johnny Hunt did not shy away from hard truths in his sermon to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual messengers.

Hunt, an N.C. native, former Southern Baptist Convention president, and pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., addressed messengers Nov. 9.

Hunt's presence at the meeting was a visible reminder that God's grace is great enough to sustain believers during trials.

A recent Baptist Press headline read "Hunt recounts bout with emptiness." The article explained how Hunt, experienced a season of physical, emotional and spiritual dryness. An incredibly busy routine eventually caught up with Hunt and left him "leading on empty."

From the start he called on North Carolina Baptists to examine their hearts and consider whether or not they truly trust God with their lives. Speaking from James 4:13-17, Hunt pointed out that James charges the people with failing to come to God and involving Him in their plans. When the Lord is not "in the mix," something bad hap-

pens whether believers intend for it to happen or not — they become practical atheists. They start planning without seeking God's guidance and wisdom, thinking they can do it all on their own.

The hands of God must be all over the life of a believer. Hunt said he has learned that each day he must "surrender anew to the Lord" and "acknowledge that my life and my future are in the hands of God."

The text from James talks about people who have already made out a business plan. Hunt said the merchants, while not faulted for planning, are at fault for omitting God from their plans. "We are to allow space for Him to step in and interrupt or alter our plans," Hunt said. "God has never shown me A to Z."

James rebuked the people because they wanted too much control. "Woven into our heart's fabric is the desire to have full charge," Hunt said. "This passage views ourselves as the final authority over our lives and then living as if this were true."

Hunt spoke to the pastors gathered in Greensboro, saying he believed the sovereign Lord has a specific place for each of them to serve. In order for pastors to know what God has in store for them they must pray and determine

to follow His leading instead of setting out on their own with no regard for His guidance.

Hunt illustrated the necessity of trusting God by reading verse after verse that speaks to the brevity and uncertainty of life. James 4:14 reminds believers that nothing is certain, not even tomorrow. "Life slips through our fingers," Hunt said. "If you're going to do something for the Kingdom you better do it now."

Hunt pleaded with the crowd to consider if they are doing what they know God has called them to do — no matter the consequence. He told how he recently suffered a 24-hour illness but still wanted to preach Sunday morning. Not because he felt like he should, but because God had so burdened his heart with a message that he had to preach. "Have you had the burden of God lately?" Hunt asked.

Believers ought to live with an "if the Lord wills" attitude instead of an attitude that reflects boasting and ar-

rogance. This type of right thinking will help Christians stay focused on taking their instruction from God and not anyone else. Hunt bluntly stated that it is not the deacons or the laity who "pull my string."

"You've got one focus," he said. "We've got to mobilize our people to reach the nations."

Hunt said believers defy, deny, disobey or delight in God's will. "If we know we're supposed to take the gospel to the nations and we don't, we're sinning," he said.

"Maybe the greatest offense against the Great Commission is not what we're doing that we need to stop doing, but what we're not doing that we need to start doing."

Hedonism keeps many believers from doing what they know they need to do for the cause of Christ. "We love pleasure too much," Hunt said. "Beach houses, hobbies; we've got so much tied up there there's little left over for the Kingdom of God."

'Bionic men and women' make up N.C. Baptist Men

By Dianna L. Cagle
BR Assistant Managing Editor

North Carolina Baptist Men (NCBM) volunteers respond. When disaster strikes, they pack up and move out.

In 2010 Baptist Men have already covered 14 different disasters and performed 800 disaster recovery jobs involving 10,000 volunteer days.

"These are bionic men and women," shared a woman who was helped through one of the NCBM mission camps — Red Springs and Shelby. Her house had been condemned, but through the work of volunteers, she can now feel safe. "We want to take compassion out into a hurting world," said Larry Duncan, coordinator for Red Springs.

With five large disaster relief feeding units, North Carolina Baptist Men can feed up to 70,000 people in a day. In the annual report to messengers of the Baptist State Convention Nov. 9, NCBM Executive Director Richard Brunson thanked messengers "for praying, giving and going." The North Carolina Mission Offering is split between NCBM, church planting, mission work camps, mobilization ministry projects and associational projects. "Every Christian is called, gifted and sent," Brunson said.

He said God "delights in taking ordinary people and using them as only God can do."

Some highlights:

Through Aviation Missions, more than 300 medical mercy flights have been provided.

Two 40-foot medical/dental buses have allowed 1,500 dentists, hygienists and nurses to volunteer.

Almost 1,300 students participated in Deep Impact Student Missions.

Brunson also talked about some of NCBM's 15 different partnerships. More than 600 volunteers have worked in Vermont and Pennsylvania this year, and around 345 have gone to the Rocky Mountain region. The Hawaii-Pacific Partnership is requesting help renovating its version of Caswell, N.C.'s retreat center. Since North Carolina Baptist Men have been partnering with Armenia, the number of churches and baptized believers have more than doubled.

About 250 volunteers worked in Honduras and 100 went to work with partnership in Cuba.

In Haiti, 50,000 people have been treated by medical teams since the Jan. 12 earthquake. Through its partnership with Samaritan's Purse, 500 shelters have been built. More than 500 volunteers have gone already this year.

Before the 2004 tsunami churches in Sri Lanka were few and could expect persecution. Now, because of the work of volunteers, hundreds have come to know Christ. In Kenya, volunteer teams can construct four houses in a short mission trip. In one of the most unreached people of the world and the poorest state in India, Baptist Men are working in Bihar, India, to help villages have access to clean water. In the last four years 500 wells have been built. Churches or groups can adopt a village and provide a well, medical clinic, Bibles, hymnals, and church planters working with villages.

"God is doing amazing things in Bihar," Brunson said.

In 2011, Baptist Men start a new partnership in Guatemala. Volunteers are needed to build a leadership training center.

"Thank you for allowing us to help you be a missionary," said Brunson.



BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle

SMILING — Around 250 children and staff from Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina stream into the meeting hall at Koury Convention Center in Greensboro for the Baptist State Convention annual meeting Nov. 8.

Children light up first night of annual meeting

By Dianna L. Cagle
BR Assistant Managing Editor

More than 250 children and staff from Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) impressed messengers at the Baptist State Convention annual meeting with a colorful presentation about "growing hope."

Their presentation Nov. 8 started with a video thanking North Carolina Baptists "for keeping the love story alive."

Baptists rose to their feet and applauded as children and adults streamed into the meeting room from the back and front. Dressed in varying shades of green, children and staff entered the meeting room carrying flowers and butterflies.

A young lady began singing and everyone joined in the chorus.

"I would like to thank Dr. Blackwell and all North Carolina Baptists for plenty of food and my own bedroom," said a 15-year-old young man who lives at Broyhill. He came to BCH at age 12 weighing 32 pounds. He had never been in school.

Paulina, who was featured Oct. 23 in a BCH article in the *Biblical Recorder*, talked of her abusive father. "At BCH, I have a refuge where I am safe and loved," she said.

Michelle, 10, shared that she was

failing school before she came to live at the BCH. Now, she's on the honor roll.

Jim Dyer, who was placed at Kennedy Home at age 8 and left at age 16 shared that "Kennedy Home will always be my earthly home." He told messengers, "You made an eternal difference in my life."

Ed Yount, Baptist State Convention president, introduced the BCH presentation, highlighting the "helping hurting children, healing broken families" theme. Yount introduced Michael Blackwell, BCH president since 1983.

Blackwell met Dyer, the Thanksgiving offering poster child in 1955, the first week he was at BCH. He held up the youngest resident, Alex, who lives at Care House with his mother.

"We have been around for a long time," said Blackwell, referring to BCH's 125-year anniversary which will be celebrated Thursday in Thomasville. He called the Thanksgiving offering the "umbilical cord of support."

Blackwell predicted another tough financial year next year and encouraged churches to pray and receive an offering to support BCH's ministries in 18 North Carolina communities.

About 6,200 cloth squares painted and sewn with messages of hope from individuals and churches were sewn into three tapestries and lined the walls of the meeting hall and exhibit hall.

WEEK OF PRAYER Nov. 28-Dec.5

90-year-old sparks breakthrough among deaf Czechs

By Don Graham
Baptist Press

(EDITOR'S NOTE — The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering supplements Cooperative Program giving to support more than 5,000 Southern Baptist missionaries as they share the gospel overseas. This year's offering goal is \$175 million. The 2010 Week of Prayer for International Missions is Nov. 28-Dec. 5. To find resources about the offering, go to imb.org/offering.)

PRAGUE, Czech Republic — Never underestimate the difference one person can make.

Mark and Vesta Sauter came to the Czech Republic to start churches among the nation's deaf. But the Indiana- and Texas-born missionaries weren't having much success until God brought them an unlikely volunteer — 90-year-old Lillian Beard.

Beard, from Fort Worth, Texas, was a pioneer for deaf work among Southern Baptists and a lifelong mentor to Vesta. The women shared a common bond; as hearing children of deaf parents, both learned to sign as their first language.

Serving through the International Mission Board, the Sauters spent three years telling deaf Czechs about Jesus. They'd made deaf friends, dined in deaf homes, spoken at deaf gatherings, even taught in deaf schools. But they hadn't seen a single deaf person come to Christ. Nearly 50,000 deaf live in the Czech Republic. When the Sauters first arrived in 1996, there were no deaf churches and few, if any, deaf Christians. Worse, the country's hearing

congregations weren't doing much to change that.

"The church can be one of the most oppressive and disheartening experiences for deaf people," Vesta says.

"None of them has an open door. Even if a deaf person said, 'I'm going to get into that church, I'm going to find a way,' they would be ostracized or sidelined."

The Sauters shared their struggles with Beard, who told them she was no longer content to simply pray for their ministry; she wanted to come to the Czech Republic to help. Beard's friends thought the 90-year-old was crazy.

"I can die there just as easily as I can here," she told them. "Serving Him is all I want to do."

Though she loved Beard dearly, Vesta wasn't keen on the idea. "I was very apprehensive; she's 90, in a wheelchair and doesn't know Czech sign language. I thought, 'What am I going to do with her?'" Vesta says.

But Beard was determined. Reluctantly agreeing to the visit, the Sauters used their connections to arrange a luncheon where Beard would be a guest speaker. What they didn't know was how deeply Beard's story would touch Anna Smolkova, a particularly hard-hearted deaf Czech woman.

Smolkova is the matriarch of a large deaf family (more than 60 members) that is well-connected within the country's deaf circles. Vesta knew Smolkova's conversion could catalyze the efforts to plant the Czech Republic's first deaf church, but Smolkova had been resistant — even hostile — to the gospel.



GOING — Lillian Beard tells the tale of the mission trip she took at age 90 to help missionaries Mark and Vesta Sauter share Jesus with the deaf of the Czech Republic. Friends thought she was crazy, but Beard's witness facilitated a church-planting breakthrough.

"I want to make (it) very clear to you that I don't want anyone in my family to know about Jesus or God," Vesta recalls Smolkova warning her.

But Smolkova had never met Lillian Beard.

The Prague deaf club was packed the day she spoke because people were so intrigued that a 90-year-old American would cross the Atlantic just to talk to them.

Beard shared her life story — a hearing person immersed in a deaf world.

Orphaned and then adopted by deaf parents, she became a skilled interpreter for the deaf, helping found the Texas Society of the Deaf, the National Registry of Interpreters and the Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf. But Beard's accomplishments weren't what impressed Smolkova.

"I didn't believe this woman was 90. I was amazed at how beautiful she was, how she radiated. Something touched me inside about her," Smolkova says.

"I had a very hard heart — an atheist. I really didn't know or believe anything about God. (The Gospel) was so foreign, so new, like nothing I'd ever heard about. Something began knocking at my heart and wouldn't release me."

Taken with Beard's testimony, Smolkova peppered her with questions after the luncheon, kneeling at Beard's wheelchair so their eyes met.

"What is it? Why are you so beautiful? Why do you radiate?" Smolkova remembers asking. "And she signed to me, 'It's the love of Jesus.' That struck a chord in my heart and a conviction, and I couldn't run from it."

With Vesta's guidance, Smolkova asked Christ into her life that day. The change was dramatic.

Today, 10 years after Beard's visit, Smolkova continues to share Christ among deaf Czechs and speaks fondly of her American friend who led her to Jesus. Beard remained an active advocate for the deaf and for her Savior until her death in June 2010. She was 101. God has since broadened the scope of the Sauters' work — they now lead the International Mission Board's global efforts to reach the deaf around the world.

With less, reach more

NC Baptists plan shorter meeting, adopt smaller budget

(Continued from Page 1)

and a resolve to "embrace the Cooperative Program model as the most accountable, effective and compelling method for fulfilling the Great Commission of our Lord Jesus Christ."

A resolution rejected by the Resolutions Committee, but approved by messengers who had to vote by two-thirds majority to suspend the rules to hear it, thanked the Great Commission Resurgence Task Force for its work. The resolution was offered by Brent Hobbs, pastor of Severn Baptist Church.

Of the 1,746 messengers, 599 were pastors, 243 were church staff, 199 were spouses and 703 were laity. Visitors totaled 182 bringing the total in attendance to 1,928, 127 fewer than last year and just 27 more than the number that attended the 1952 meeting.

Shrinking budget

This will mark the sixth year of the past eight that CP gifts from churches have been lower than the previous year. Messengers adopted a 2011 budget of \$32.7 million, which is six percent lower than last year and the size of the 1999 budget. Yet in 2011, for the sixth consecutive year, the SBC allocation of CP gifts has been increased one-half percent.

In the North Carolina budget, 44.2 percent of gifts fund North Carolina board directed ministries and 20.8 percent support North Carolina's institutions and agencies. The rest, 35 percent, is sent to the Southern Baptist Convention for national and international missions and education.

Hollifield said in his address that he wants to move toward a 50-50 split "over a protracted period" as North Carolina Baptist churches step up their giving.

The only budget opposition voiced was to the reduction in funds to the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina. Budget Chairman Steve Hardy explained that budget recipients' income is tied to percentages and a decrease in anticipated income results in fewer dollars, even though the percentage of the budget remains the same.



BSC photo by K Brown

GRADUATING — Students received certificates recognizing their master's degrees from the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Cali, Colombia, at the BSC annual meeting Nov. 9. Because Fruitland Baptist Bible Institute's director of Hispanic theological education Aldo Barcelo has been working with the seminary, Fruitland was asked to participate in the awards presentation.

Re-elected

All officers who served this year were re-elected with no other nominations from the floor. Ed Yount, pastor of Woodlawn Baptist Church in Conover, maintains his presidency. Mark Harris, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte, stays on as first vice president, and C.J. Bordeaux, pastor of Gorman Baptist Church in Durham, is second vice president.

Committee news

In other committee reports, the Historical Commit-

tee recognized Roger Bullard, member of First Baptist Church in Wilson, as winner of the 2010 History Writing Contest.

Bullard won for his "The Life and times of First Baptist Church Wilson, 1860-2010."

Messengers approved the Committee on Nominations report brought by chair Perry Brindley with no discussion.

The full list of persons to serve on the BSC board and as trustees of institutions and agencies has been printed in the *Biblical Recorder*.

The next annual meeting will be Nov. 7-8, 2011.



BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle

CARING — Ruby Fulbright shares about Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina Nov. 11 in a report to messengers of the Baptist State Convention annual meeting.

WMU 'very best friend in missions'

By Dianna L. Cagle

BR Assistant Managing Editor

When 10-year-old Nancy got a new neighbor she asked her Girls in Action (GA) leader if she could bring her new friend.

Through contact with GA, little Megan became a Christian.

"I have other friends who don't know Jesus," Megan said. "Can I ask them to GA?"

GA is just one way the Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina (WMU-NC) teaches about missions, supports missions, and gets involved in missions.

"Our desire is to work together, with you," said Ruby Fulbright, executive director.

WMU-NC is made up of preschoolers, children, youth and adults, "not just little old, gray-haired ladies," Fulbright said.

Volunteers and staff spent October packaging Lottie Moon Christmas Offering packets for churches who need materials.

Fulbright spoke of the consistent, fervent prayer warriors within WMU-NC.

"We are involved with our hands, with our feet and with our voice," she said.

She mentioned specific ministries, including WMU sponsored mission trips — Lebanon, New York, Raleigh, Alaska and Hawaii — and women's build for Habitat for Humanity.

Over the years WMU has cared about hunger, literacy, AIDS, child advocacy and poverty. Fulbright went on the first poverty training where she was homeless for 30 hours, sleeping on a picnic table.

This fall the focus turned to human exploitation.

North Carolina ranks No. 4 in the exploitation of human beings especially sex trafficking, said Fulbright.

"We must put action to our belief that we and all the world belong to God," she said.

In 2009, WMU-NC grew by 9,000 members. On Jan. 8, 2011, the organization celebrates 125 years of missions and ministry.

"Woman's Missionary Union of North Carolina can be your very best friend when it comes to missions," Fulbright said. "Call on us. We're here to help."

Durham couple preps for Slovakia

(Continued from Page 1)

disobedient," Jason said. "That's not what being a Christian is."

Charity said it was in college when the fire started to burn for missions. She served in Louisiana with Katrina relief efforts. Her sophomore year she spent in Spain studying. It was there that Charity saw the need for Christ.

Jason plans to leave his position in December before the couple goes to the IMB training center in Richmond. By the end of March, they should be in Slovakia, where Jason proposed to Charity.

The couple started the application process last year and because she did not want to disrupt the school year, Charity did not go back to the school where she teaches this fall.

In Bible times, people had to step into the water before the waters parted.

"The safest place is in God's will," Jason said, but that also involves a lot of unknowns. "It's not easy."

The couple will celebrate their second anniversary in December.

Looking at Durham County, there are 100 churches, Jason said, but Slovakia's considered unreached because less than two percent of the population is evangelical.

There are only six evangelistic churches there; three of which are Baptist. All are dying.

"There's a huge need overseas," he said. "It's really hard, hard soil."

While there Jason will be working as a church planter while Charity spends time with college girls they've already met through previous mission trips. There are eight universities with around 70,000 students in their vicinity.

Jason and Charity have seen other friends start the process but not make it through.

"The further we got in the process the more thankful we are for Southern Baptists," said Jason, who's also thankful for his church.

The application process is grueling and exciting.

"You've only got the grace of God and that's it," Jason said. "It's a humbling thing."

To find out more about Jason and Charity, visit www.jandcpalmer.blogspot.com.

The Palmers will soon leave their North Carolina home to share the gospel and start churches in Slovakia, a Central European country of 5.8 million people. The IMB's Global Research Department estimates that less than 2 percent of its population is evangelical Christian. Other missionaries appointed that evening have North Carolina ties as well, including two couples from Calvary. But security issues require their anonymity.

For Charity's parents Franklin and Elizabeth Lawson of Sandy Ridge Baptist Church in Hickory, it's hard to see them go, "but we wouldn't stand in the way of them going to share the gospel," Elizabeth Lawson said.

Jason's mother Rose Ann Palmer of Ridgecrest Baptist Church in Durham, remembers his mission trip to Nicaragua and how he came back changed. Palmer and her husband Donnie have tried to emphasize missions by taking family missions trips together.

More appointments

In September, an appointment service was held at Bell Shoals Baptist Church in Brandon, Fla. Hickory native Allison McClure was appointed along

with her husband, David Brian McClure. The McClures will be serving as apprentice evangelism/church planters among European peoples. Russell Wayne II and Jennifer Elizabeth Ford were also appointed to serve among European peoples. Russell was the associate pastor of Somerset Baptist Church in Roxboro. At this Sept. 15 service, there were also four Code 3 couples and one single unit with N.C. connections that cannot be identified for security reasons.



President's address

Clyde Meador, interim IMB president, addressed the new missionaries at the appointment service, noting that they came from a myriad of personal and professional backgrounds but had now been united for a common purpose. Daniel Seagram flew Seahawk helicopters for the Navy. Other former occupations include engineer, nurse, mailman, graphic designer, kindergarten teacher, fireman and computer programmer.

"From before the day you were born, this has been His purpose, this is His plan," Meador said. "You have been set aside, you have been consecrated. Not simply by the International Mission Board, but by the Lord God Almighty, the God of the universe. He is the one who has called you. And your task is to be a prophet to the nations. And the nations need to hear what you have to say."

Meador spoke about the urgent need for missionaries, emphasizing the 6,600-plus unevangelized people groups around the world — as many as 1.5 billion people — most of whom have little or no access to the gospel.

"You go to destroy false beliefs. You go to destroy false idols. You go to destroy hopelessness," Meador said.

Comparing the new missionaries to the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah, Meador also warned them that their work wouldn't be easy.

"I recently read again ... through the entire Book of Jeremiah, and I cannot remember a moment when his task was easy. It was always difficult. Was he successful? He was obedient. He was faithful. That was God's call on his life. That's God's call on your life," Meador said.

Like new missionary Jason Palmer, Meador challenged those in the audience to consider the excuses they may be using to fight God's call to take the gospel overseas in person.

"How about the rest of you here tonight?" Meador asked. "What are your reasons for saying, 'Not me.'"

"Jeremiah's reason ... was that he was 'but a youth.' ... Your reasons might be different. ... But God's response to those reasons is simply, 'Don't tell Me about it. I don't want to hear that.' The point is not your qualifications. The point is His enabling. The

point is His strength, which matches your weakness."

The IMB will honor seven of the new missionaries at a commissioning service Nov. 16 at Oklahoma Baptist University in Shawnee. The commissioning is being held in observance of the university's 100th anniversary and in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Oklahoma Baptist Convention.

The IMB's next missionary appointment service is scheduled for March 16 at First Baptist Church in Dallas.

Trustees

In a Nov. 10 trustee meeting in Greensboro, trustees adopted a 2011 budget of \$308.5 million, \$9.1 million less than 2010's budget. While many missionary positions remain unfilled, IMB trustees appointed 57 new missionaries.

"We are still sending new personnel, contrary to rumors that we sometimes hear," said Meador, noting that the missionary force has been reduced solely by sending fewer replacement personnel when there are retirements, resignations or completed terms. "We look forward to a day when financial support reaches the point when we can increase the number of new personnel being sent to the field each year," Meador said.

Trustees also heard reports of spiritual victories led by Southern Baptist missionaries and Baptist partners on the field.

In 2009, IMB missionaries reported 360,876 baptisms, 29,237 new churches and 96 newly engaged people groups.

These new numbers, Meador noted, usher in a more focused approach to reporting the IMB's missionary work. The organization's annual report is now separated into two reports, with the numbers cited by Meador reflecting work by IMB missionaries and those with whom they directly relate.

Trustees also received a report from 133 overseas Baptist conventions that listed 136,422 baptisms and 2,151 new churches. This report could show some overlap with the IMB report.

For the third consecutive year, IMB trustees adopted a decreased budget from the previous year's budget.

Though the IMB pulled \$7.5 million from its reserves to balance the budget last year, the trustee finance committee was committed to not repeating that move.

According to IMB officials, the mission board is sending about 30 percent fewer long-term personnel than would be sent if there were no financial constraints. The IMB still anticipates sending 300 new long-term personnel and 200 to 250 new short-term personnel in 2011.

As Cooperative Program dollars continue to slip, trustees focused on ways they also could cut costs in the stateside budget, which accounts for a little less than 15 percent of the overall budget, Fowler said. The IMB recently offered qualifying staff members in Richmond, Va., a voluntary retirement incentive to take effect by the end of 2010.

In other business, trustees heard a report of \$2,063,474.46 released for hunger and general relief projects, including funds used by Baptist Global Response, a relief and development organization that partners with the IMB.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Graham is a writer for the International Mission Board. BR Assistant Managing Editor Dianna L. Cagle contributed to this report.)

Recorder helps keep us accountable

By Jim Grieme
Guest Column

It is a vast understatement to say I am conservative. Through God's grace, I have placed my complete faith in the inerrancy of Scripture, God's sovereignty, His Trinitarian nature and the appropriateness of teaching the Bible the way it was written; through the exegesis of the words and ideas of the biblical writers.

Because I define myself by these terms, I realize some rather sharp lines have been drawn in the proverbial sand of our sandbox. Not everyone will appreciate my thoughts and ideas.

What this also means is that there are times I am less than appreciative of the opinion of others; especially when their opinion runs contrary to mine. I have a sinful tendency to always consider thoughts which run contrary to mine as being wrong, inconsiderate of the obvious facts, and in some of my worst moods, personally offensive. Sadly, the hubris demonstrated by my self-centered thoughts has extended even to my interpretation of scripture. Simply put, even when I am in complete alignment with scriptural truth, it does not make me a better person, nor does it allow me to exercise intolerance of others.

As a pastor of a "rural" church, I am not as plugged in to the events of our state convention as I have been in the past. Since I read the *Biblical Recorder*, it did not take great insight for me to realize that Norman Jameson's thoughts were most likely unappreciated by the state leadership. I actually read of Norman's resignation in the *Raleigh News & Observer* in its "Triangle & State" section. While I did not see the humor in someone's resignation from their job, it was almost ludicrously funny when the reporter wrote there was, "criticism that he was not marching in lockstep with the conservative direction (of the state's convention)." Talk about understatements.

I have not known Norman Jameson personally for very long. When I met him I was impressed with his intelligence and his concern for people. He also exuded professionalism

about his job and responsibilities. I was also very familiar with his writing; his perception of events and ideas were rather different from mine, but his thoughts were well expressed and his ideas were presented logically. While our conclusions regarding the events and ideas floating around the state and convention were dissimilar, I appreciated his mind and his analysis.

I do not believe we should ever compromise God's commands, nor do I think we should tolerate heresy or apostasy within our churches. The *Biblical Recorder*, however, is not a church, it is a newspaper. Its function is to cover the events of interest to those who are part of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

The opinions expressed in the paper have certainly never been apostasy or heresy, but they have been critical of decisions made and actions taken. Many times the *Recorder* has shed unwelcome light on the activities of the leadership in the state. Even though our Lord has redeemed those whom He has saved, we still possess a fallen, weak nature that must be constantly held to accountability. If there is only "one" voice speaking within this state, how then is it possible to experience true accountability?

I am truly saddened that Norman will be leaving the *Biblical Recorder*. The *Recorder* is a newspaper. As such, in our culture it should be as "free" as possible which means there must be room for more than one opinion and one "party line."

Unless we constantly avail ourselves to the possibility we could be wrong in our actions and ideas, will we not become captives of our own arrogance? Would we not, in essence, be denying one of the purposes God put us together — to be accountable to each other?

Perhaps we have forgotten Solomon's realization in Ecclesiastes 5: "God is in heaven and you are on earth, so let your words be few." The fewness of our words demonstrates our humility before the Lord. Let us not confuse our position here on this earth with the Lord's.

(EDITOR'S NOTE — Grieme is pastor of Watkin's Chapel Baptist Church in Middlesex.)



Tar Heel Voices

Why embrace others?

I read with interest the article about "Campbell building bridges to world religions" (Oct. 23). It told about 13 faith groups gathering around tables, eating culturally sensitive food and sharing fellowship (brotherhood, kinship, solidarity) and understanding (agreement, concord, harmony). The article indicated there were representatives there from synagogues (Jews), mosques (Muslims), temples (eastern religions, Buddhist, Hindus, etc.) and churches (Christians?).

Why do we want to embrace as equals other religions who are so diametrically opposed to Jesus?

All of these other religions reject Jesus as Lord, God in the flesh, Son of God, only Savior. They persecute Christians and kill those who would convert from their faith to Christianity.

Shame on you for reducing the name of Jesus down to the false gods represented in those other religions. Remember, Phil. 2:11, every tongue should confess (agree fully) that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Also remember this, 2 John 1:9-11, "He that abideth not in the doctrine of Christ hath not God — those who reject this doctrine are not to be received into our house, neither bid him Godspeed — to do so makes one a partaker of his evil deeds. We are to share the gospel of Jesus — show the love of Jesus but not compromise the message of Jesus.

Roy Kilby, Canton

(EDITOR'S NOTE — What better way to show the love of Jesus than to break bread together? Also note the event did not "embrace as equals other religions" but enabled individuals for whom Christ died to embrace each other.)

BR Board member resigns

It has been my pleasure to be a member of the *Biblical Recorder* board of directors since 2008. During the past several years, under the leadership of Norman Jameson, the *Recorder* has been updated in appearance, with a new logo and design, has covered North Carolina Baptists with fairness and accuracy and is in sound financial shape. In addition, this has been accomplished with one-half of the staff of former years.

Therefore I was sadly disappointed when the board accepted the resignation of Norman Jameson, which was prompted by threats being made to the financial health of the *Recorder*. Some of those who wanted to accept the resignation belong to churches that do not even subscribe to the *Recorder*.

This resignation was offered because of pressure from a few who do not want any diversity in our congregations.

Freedom of the press as we know it, died Oct. 21. This was because of an editorial with which some disagreed and because the "WMU" and the "CBF" were included in the paper from time to time. Also a letter asked that he resign or a motion would be made at the convention to defund the *Recorder*.

To print only opinions with which we all agree does not teach us or encourage us to learn or to think about an issue in a different way. The *Recorder* has not been and is not now a "liberal" paper. Where will an editor be found whom everyone always agrees with on every issue? Or a minister for that matter?

It is with sorrow that I have submitted my resignation from the board. I have been a Baptist all my life. However, now I feel that all are not welcome in our tent. My church has much diversity, and we all learn and grow together. Our state convention is no longer that way as we must pass a "test" of opinion to see if we are worthy. Like the ancient Israelite, I must move my tent to another place. I will continue to be a Baptist but will continue to seek a place where I can learn and grow.

I wish the *Recorder* and the Board well.

Pat Faulkner, Marion

Thank God for you

There are times in our life when memories stand out brightly, and for me and our church messengers, this seems to be one of those times. As I look back over the past few days with the N.C. Pastor's Conference Sunday and Monday (Nov. 7-8), and then the (Baptist State Convention of North Carolina) meetings Monday evening through Wednesday (Nov. 8-10), I rejoice over how Christ was so honored and exalted. In all that we do, our main goal in life should always be to follow Christ. In this year's N.C. Pastor's Conference and Convention, I believe we truly honored Him.

I just want to take this time to thank the leaders of the N.C. Pastor's Conference, Executive Director-Treasurer Milton Hollifield Jr., the staff of the BSC, Rev. Ed Yount and other officers, the *Biblical Recorder* staff, and all of the many volunteers who labored so faithfully to our Lord Jesus Christ to make this year's convention so special.

My prayers are that all of us may stay focused on Christ, and I believe we will continue to fulfill our calling from God to accomplish the great work of the Kingdom of God. May God continue to bless you in fulfilling His calling.

Rev. Jim Kilby

Lawndale Baptist Church, Lawndale

Send your letters to editor@biblicalrecorder.org.

What Will You Remember?

By Milton A. Hollifield Jr.

BSC Executive Director-Treasurer

Something I love about God's Word is that this precious book includes testimony from ordinary people. Stories of people just like you and me fill the pages of scripture, and so I can often relate to the men and women in the Bible. In my own life I find I can identify with some of their struggles and concerns.

For example, even though the disciples walked with Jesus, learned from Him and saw Him perform miracles, they sometimes forgot His teachings. If we are honest, I wonder how many of us also forget what Jesus has taught us, and what His death



on the cross and resurrection really mean for those who trust in Him?

We see repeatedly throughout the Gospels Jesus explaining to His followers about how He would be crucified and raised to life. Yet, in Luke 24, we find the women at the tomb wondering where Jesus' body had been taken. John's Gospel tells us that even when Peter and John came to the empty tomb on that resurrection morning they did not understand Jesus had risen from the grave. They failed to remember that Jesus had told them this would happen.

During the Passover meal in the upper room before Jesus is crucified, Jesus tells His disciples to remember Him. In John 15:19-21, Jesus says to remember His teaching about a servant not being greater than his master. Jesus promises in John 14:26 that the Holy Spirit will remind the disciples of everything He taught them. In Acts 11, Peter says he remembered Jesus' promise that baptism would come by the Holy Spirit.

Remembering is important. The entire Bible tells the story of how God remembers His children. Genesis 9:15 says God remembered His covenant with Noah and His promise to never again flood the earth.

In Exodus God remembers His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and He delivers His people from Egypt. Even when the people complained in the wilderness, God remembers them and provides for them.

If remembering is so important, why do we forget? Why do we forget the wonderful grace and mercy and glory of our Savior? I think one reason is because we get so busy with life we do not stop nearly often enough to give God thanks.

If we are intentional about every single day thanking God for salvation and the many other blessings He gives, remembering His goodness during the tough times is easier.

Remembering His teaching, faithfulness and love will just become part of who we are. When God gives good gifts we won't complain because we think we deserve more — we will remember God has already done more for us in Jesus Christ than we could ever deserve or imagine.

What will you remember this Thanksgiving?

"When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches. Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice." Psalm 63:6-7

Gourmet ice

My wife is the best cook this side of Taillevent in Paris, yet the best thing she's been feeding me this week is ice chips.

At 2 a.m. Wednesday of the Baptist State Convention I woke with horrible abdominal pain and 20 hours later had emergency surgery at Wesley Long Hospital in Greensboro. Turns out my intestines got crossways with scar tissue from my appendectomy 30 years earlier.

That's what you call a long brewing feud.

The hardest part of such surgery is getting your body to function normally again. Six inches of staples and stitches is one thing, but inside all the organs that were jerked, tugged and pulled outside my abdominal cavity tend to show their resentment by falling asleep.

And they have to be woken. Slowly. So instead of the biscuits and gravy I longed for, instead of the chateaubriand of which my wife is capable, I get ice chips. And they are delicious.

I've fallen into circumstances beyond my control. It is laughable to say that, because there are no circumstances within my control. Realize it or not, that is true for you too, despite temporary changes you might be able to manipulate.

After my resignation as editor of the Biblical Recorder, some friends said, "I guess God has a different plan for your life." My response is that God has the same plan for my life that He has always had, it's just being revealed to me in a manner I did not anticipate.

My week's plan was to attend the 180th annual session of the Baptist State Convention, work through the weekend to finish the Recorder reporting of the event, and then attend my granddaughter Larkin's dedication at Green Street Baptist in High Point. Instead I'm trying to stay upright, crunching ice chips because that's apparently all my stomach can handle right now.

And they are delicious.

Friends have been so gracious to offer prayers and practical helps. One of my best pastor friends called after my resignation to say, "I have no insights, no wisdom to offer. I'm just calling." Ultimately, that's what we need from a friend, to be at the other end of the line.

After surgery people called and wrote to offer prayers, which are appreciated. God knows my condition and sent "the gift of pain" as Philip Yancey and Paul Brand call it in their book by that name, to alert me that something was badly wrong inside my abdomen.

I'm sure God's intention is to heal me. Perhaps your prayers could be to urge Him to do what He would do ... quickly.

Many, many people have lost jobs in this recession. The plans they laid for work, retirement, education, helping their children, travel, recreation, and ministry have been altered because the track they were on suddenly detached from the roadbed.

Churches that intended to build, to start an international partnership, to add a staff member or keep the ones they had, to increase mission giving through the Cooperative Program suddenly find themselves unable to carry out their dream.

We planned for chateaubriand and are eating ice chips instead.

These are not times that test our faith, as much as they are times that prove our faith. And no matter our plans, when we have faith and a friend on the line in the midst of altered plans, the ice chips can be delicious.

— NWJ



Motions could detract from NC Baptist mission focus

North Carolina Baptists in Greensboro for their 180th annual meeting participated in good preaching, music, worship and prayer times and saw highlighted the work North Carolina Baptists accomplish cooperatively.

The fewest number of N.C. Baptists since 1952 came to participate in their cooperative work. The decline of the annual meeting as a focal point of interest and community for N.C. Baptists is a phenomenon with far reaching implications.

Don Wilton, pastor of First Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C., preached at the pastor's conference and said one of the reasons people do not flock to hear our message is simply because they see our actions do not reflect that message. His and other convention sermons lifted Jesus, called us to holiness, prayer, piety, family priorities, mutual love and an embrace of the lost around us. Those are qualities North Carolina Baptists embrace and are the reasons that most convention participants could go home rejoicing that Jesus was lifted.

But the annual meeting is also to conduct the business of N.C. Baptists' cooperative enterprise and in business sessions, two motions brought from the floor and approved by messengers for study threaten to embroil the Convention in unnecessary controversies that can only bog down the missions enterprise with issues from the past.

Specifically those motions threaten to move the Baptist State Convention backwards. (See story, page 3.)

Tim Rogers' motion to establish an alcohol policy for North Carolina Baptist leadership is simply unnecessary and extra-biblical. It asks the Convention to take a stand on one side of an issue over which sincere Christians the world over disagree.

Baptists are certainly known for our stances against things. We don't smoke, drink, dance or chew and we don't go out with girls who do. Yet, early Baptists in Kentucky sometimes paid their preachers in bourbon, and the smoking area outside the convention center was occupied by several sincere Baptists as the discussion on alcohol was initiated inside.

Young abstaining pastors who I talked with do not support beverage alcohol use but recognized that making it an issue for N.C. Baptists is divisive and extra-biblical. How much of this move is cultural?

One of our most prominent, rock solid, Bible preaching, abstaining pastors, who came here from another state, told me he cannot preach what the Bible actually says about alcohol because he would be run out of his church. You can argue wine dilution and bad water 2,000 years ago all you want, but I simply point you to John 2 and Jesus' first miracle.

He turned water into wine so the wedding feast could continue without embarrassment; and it was the best wine and the miracle "revealed His glory" (v. 11).

Now, do not hear me saying that alcohol consumption is a good thing or that you should have champagne fountains in your parlor or beer at your youth meetings.

Don't be ridiculous. I am saying that, like it or not, Christians read the Bible for what it says and do not abstain, for whatever reason. To ask the Convention to codify a cultural preference is not helpful and has the opposite effect of unity and purity than is intended.

The same is true of Phil Addison's motion to adopt the Baptist Faith and Message as the official parameter of faith for North Carolina Baptists.

For 180 years the official parameter of faith for North Carolina Baptists has been the Bible, and the Baptist commitment to soul competency sees the Bible as wide enough, high enough, broad enough and specific enough to encom-

pass a diverse people to work together in missions, with the "essentials" in common.

During decades of turmoil in Southern Baptist life, "the Bible" was the issue.

Then, once "the issue" was settled we thought we had to revise just what it was we thought the Bible was saying. And the Baptist Faith and Message became the issue. Missionaries had to sign it, or come home. They thought they were going to teach the Bible as priests, who were soul competent. But they were told unless they believed the Bible as laid out in this document, they really were not suited.

Is this the kind of discussion and turmoil we want to bring into the Baptist State Convention, which can only lead to employees and church planters and then program speakers having to sign an extra-biblical document of "faith?" Why is the Bible not sufficient for us any longer?

Maybe the answer is because of the continuing push to lose a North Carolina identity and merge it with being "Southern Baptist."

Rogers' alcohol motion talked about Southern Baptists in North Carolina; Addison said it's time to identify as Southern Baptists.

In his address Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr. said he supports movement toward a 50-50 split of Cooperative Program funds with the Southern Baptist Convention, but maintains his commitment to North Carolina Baptist Convention ministries.

He tried to encourage greater giving by raising an expectation that increased gifts will result in a greater percentage of those gifts being used in national and international ministries of the SBC. There is certainly a drumbeat by Great Commission Resurgence supporters who say giving is down because not enough Cooperative Program money leaves the state.

I disagree with that analysis but Hollifield's statement indicates support.

North Carolina leaders will have to ascertain in the near future if a position that reduces the prominence of state ministry in favor of national and international ministry is actually more attractive to those in the state who give.



Norman Jameson

Volume 176 No. 24

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Subscriptions

Individual subscriptions, \$15.99; Clubs, \$13.79; Every Home Plan, \$12.49; Church News Service, \$11.50; Bulk (10+) \$11.50; single copies, 60 cents each. Payable in advance. North Carolina sales tax is included.

Publication

Published biweekly on Saturdays by Biblical Recorder Inc., 232 W. Millbrook Road, Raleigh, N.C. 27609, as authorized by the Baptist State Convention in annual session at Winston-Salem, Nov. 21-23, 1939. Periodicals postage paid at Raleigh, N.C. 27676.

Postmaster: Send address changes to Biblical Recorder Inc., P.O. Box 18808, Raleigh, N.C. 27619-8808.


(ISSN 0279-8182)
Journal of the Baptist
State Convention
of North Carolina
Founded 1833 by
Thomas Meredith

Lesson for November 28**Formations****Lesson for December 5****Heirs According to the Promise****Focal Passage: Gal. 3:23-29**

The day of my swimming test had finally arrived. For almost an entire week of Boy Scout camp I had been relegated to the Red swimming area, the portion of the lake reserved for “beginner” swimmers. Now I had my sights on the Blue area of the lake, the deep water where only “advanced” swimmers could tread. With the swimming instructions I had received over the course of the week racing through my mind, I plunged into the murky water.

Lowering my head and gritting my teeth, I swam until I could barely feel my arms. A few minutes later, I emerged from the lake a Blue swimmer. I can still remember how hard and fast my heart was beating, not from exhaustion, but from euphoria. I had done it. Now I was finally free to swim with my friends, most of whom were “advanced” swimmers already. I felt a celebration was only appropriate, so upon receiving my Blue swimmer credentials I leapt with carefree abandon into the water ... of the Red area. Free or not, I wanted to stay where my feet could touch the bottom.

Perhaps in no epistle is Paul’s anger and disappointment as evident as it is in his letter to the Galatians. Why? Simply put, the Galatian congregations have somehow managed to sneak back into the Red area. Though Paul has proclaimed Christ’s grace and freedom to these believers, they’ve once again sought refuge in the law. Paul explains

that, up until the time of Christ, the law served to “imprison” and “guard” (Gal. 23:3). Now Christ provides freedom. Why on earth would a person return to imprisonment instead of embracing freedom? As frightening as it sounds, many of us know exactly why someone would do that.

The notion of “freedom” may seem appealing, but it’s a dangerous idea. Remember that even when the Hebrews were released from slavery in Egypt, they pondered returning to captivity (Num. 14:3-4). Many felt there was greater safety in bondage than in daily reliance on God. Likewise, humans have a proclivity to retreat into legalism. After all, legalism is more well-defined, and we feel much safer when we know the rules. Perhaps it was this way of thinking that fueled some of Jesus’ poignant words in Matthew 5. Jesus taught that both adultery and murder were more than “acts”; instead, they were matters of the heart. In short, Jesus instructs his listeners to eschew legalism, not because legalism makes following Christ seem too hard, but because legalism makes following Christ seem too easy. Being a disciple of Jesus entails more than following a checklist.

Christians must vigilantly guard themselves from legalism. Like the Galatians, if given half a chance we’ll head for the shallow water



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In the Fullness of Time**Focal Passages: Gal. 4:1-7; Matt. 1:1-17**

I recently received a birthday card from my in-laws. It was signed “Love Mom and Papa.”

Though I’m not related by blood, my in-laws like to remind me from time to time that I’m part of their family, and each time they do, I feel special.

Consequently, I’ve embraced my role in the family with gusto.

I have sung the praises of their favorite burger joint, cast evil glances at their rival high school, worked a little on the farm, and even developed a taste for boiled peanuts.

When they are anxious, I fret.

When they celebrate, I laugh.

When they speak of ancestors and family connections, I listen.

I want to know more about their story, because along the way, I’ve adopted that story as my own.

When we read the genealogy of Jesus, it’s important to remember that we aren’t just trudging through a list of faceless names, even though many of them may not be familiar to us.

As my wife reminded me recently, we are actually reading a list of stories, and the author of Matthew presumes we know something about this who’s who of Israelite history.

A childless Abraham becomes the father of a nation.

A duplicitous Jacob becomes the namesake of God’s people. A giant-slaying David rises to power, and yet falters by sinning with the “wife of Uriah.”

For obvious reasons, perhaps my favorite name in the list is Ruth. Though not an Israelite herself, she too adopted the story of an in-law, and thus secured her place in the most famous genealogy of all time.

When Paul tells the Galatians that they are children of God, Paul references the unfolding drama that led to Christ’s birth (Gal. 4:4). History pointed in the direction of Jesus, and when the “fullness of time” came, believers were adopted into God’s family.

Now we as believers adopt God’s story as our story. By reading Matthew 1, we are not just rehashing Christ’s genealogy; we’re delving into our own. Just as each individual in Matthew’s litany of ancestors played a role in the story of Jesus, we too are invited to participate in what God is doing here on earth. How do we participate? We must embrace our role in God’s family. We learn to like the things God likes, do the things God does, care the way God cares, and love the way God loves.

My in-laws sent me a card to remind me I was a part of the family. Likewise, God sent his Son as a resounding message that humans no longer have to be outsiders. Because of Christ, we’ve been taking in and embraced as one of the Father’s own.

Lesson for November 28**Bible Studies for Life****Lesson for December 5****Life Worth Sharing****Focal Passages: Romans 1:14-17; 9:1-3; 10:1, 14-15; 15:17-20**

After accepting Christ as my Savior, years passed before I shared my faith with anyone except my children.

I would eagerly have shared a book, a recipe, or an idea. Why was I tongue-tied about sharing my faith — my most valuable possession?

Jesus commanded us to “Go, and make disciples of all nations” (Matt. 28:19-20). Research reveals that Jesus’ command to go is more accurately translated as the present participle going. Jesus virtually said, “While going, make disciples.”

The enemy had convinced me that verbalizing my faith was not necessary — that living a good life was sufficient. Then one day the Holy Spirit reminded me that since I accepted Christ, no one ever said, “I have observed your life; therefore Jesus died for my sins.”

Still I hesitated to witness verbally. Suppose I offended people? Suppose they asked questions I couldn’t answer?

To my knowledge, I’ve not yet offended anyone; and when I’m asked a question I can’t answer, I smile and say, “I don’t know the answer to that. Can I research it and get back in touch with you?” If their question is a “smoke

screen,” such as, “Did Adam have a belly button?” I laugh and answer, “I don’t know, but one thing I do know — once I was spiritually blind, and now I can see,” and I continue sharing my faith.

Why didn’t my life inform people that I was a Christian? Because lives can’t talk; only lips can speak. Of course, my life should verify my speech, (walk the talk), but witnessing is a matter of show and tell. Many non-believers live good lives and know about Christ, but knowing about Christ is far different from knowing Him.

I experienced new joy in Christ the day I chose Romans 1:16 for my signature Scripture: “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is God’s power for salvation to everyone who believes.” Where I once saw vacationers on the beach, fans at the game, and shoppers in the mall, I now see lost people as our Lord did — like sheep without a shepherd.

Jesus came to earth on a rescue mission “to seek and to save the lost” (Lk. 19:10). He urges us to join Him. Witnessing is simply sharing Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit and leaving the results to God.



Catherine Painter
Raleigh
speaker, author

Value What God Values**Focal Passage: Isaiah 61:1-11**

Luke 4:16-21 records that Jesus went to the synagogue on the Sabbath. Jewish custom was to enlist a reader for the day.

Jesus stood, and was handed the scroll of Isaiah. He chose to read chapter 61:1-3.

We can imagine that as Jesus read, He internalized the needs of those He read about: naked people with no one clothing them; hungry, with no one feeding them; sick, and no one visiting them; imprisoned — most of them for debt — and no one delivering them; ill beggars at the gates of the wealthy, but no one caring; widows with two half-farthings separating them from destitution; laborers waiting all day to be hired, but left unwanted.

Throughout the gospels Jesus acted with compassion (with suffering) while dealing with needy people. He felt and shared their suffering (Matt. 9:36-38). Therefore, we can interpret all need as His need. Every hungry baby is a hungry Christ child; every weary traveler is Jesus, walking miles to preach and minister. Anyone experiencing need has Christ with him;

therefore, whoever provides food or drink to the suffering is serving the needy Christ.

St. Francis of Assisi was such a person. Legend says that one day while riding his steed, he came upon a beggar who was also a leper, shivering in the cold. On impulse, St. Francis got down from his horse, embraced the beggar, and wrapped his coat around him. That night St. Francis dreamed that he died. In heaven he saw Jesus sitting on His throne, wearing the coat.

Jesus said, “I assure you: Whatever you did for one of the least of these, you did for me” (Matt. 25:40). But here ends only half of our lesson. Jesus also prayed for you and me when he said to the Father, “As You have sent me into the world, even so have I sent them” (Jn. 17:18).

To serve Jesus, we don’t need to leave home. We can simply value the things God values. Often this means thinking small. I can’t provide funds for a college dorm, but I can offer water to the thirsty. I can’t pay a needy person’s rent, but I can offer sympathy and provide listening ears.

The Bible promises, “Cast your bread upon the waters, for after many days you will find it again” (Eccles. 11:1 NIV).

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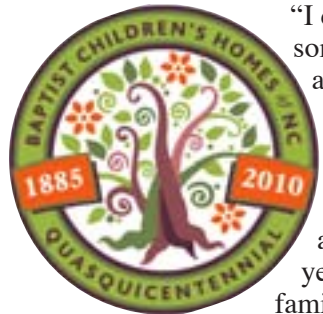
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Children's Homes celebrates milestone

By J. Blake Ragsdale
BCH Communications

The arrival of nine-year-old Mary Presson at the Thomasville Baptist Orphanage on November 11, 1885, marked the official beginning of what is known today as the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH).

Exactly 125 years later, current and former BCH residents, staff members, North Carolina Baptists and friends gathered in Thomasville to celebrate the ministry's "Quasquicentennial" anniversary.



"I don't use the word 'awesome' very often, but this is an awesome day," said Michael C. Blackwell, BCH's longest-tenured president at almost 28 years. "It's a glorious celebration and a fitting conclusion to 125 years of helping children and families in North Carolina."

Multiple events marked the day at Mills Home, named for BCH founder John Haymes Mills. The first was a luncheon program that included the opening of a time capsule buried during BCH's Centennial celebration in 1985. Among the items included in the capsule were a letter from then United States president Ronald Reagan, a copy of the BCH Centennial history book, a wooden craft made by a child in care, and a letter written to BCH staff, residents and friends by Blackwell, who also presided over the agency's Centennial celebration.

Afterwards, the sanctuary at Mills Home Baptist Church overflowed with nearly 700 guests for an anniversary worship service led by BCH alumnus Milton Bliss and Quasquicentennial director Jim Edminson.

Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr. addressed the congregation during the service affirming North Carolina Baptists' dedication to the BCH ministry as well as Blackwell's leadership.

"The ministry of the Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina is the heart of God in action," Hollifield proclaimed. "We affirm that after 125 years, the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina continues to be committed to this partnership."

In his remarks, Hollifield included a special message for the children in BCH's care. "North Carolina Baptists want you to know that God loves you. We want you to grow into that wonderful and joyous person that you were meant to be."

Blackwell preached from 1 Corinthians 13.



"These three remain: faith and hope, but the greatest of these is love," he said.

"In all the things I have learned in my 28 years here, the greatest of all of them is the gift of love. I can, if my eyes are open, see this kind of unconditional love exhibited every day at Baptist Children's Homes."

"I have felt it today. I felt it on Monday (Nov. 8) at the Koury Convention Center during BCH's presentation. (See story, page 9.)

"And what this year has done for me more than



GROWING HOPE — Above, Baptist Children's Home (BCH) residents Kourri and Candace admire the colorful tapestry squares with Children's Homes staffer Carol Bagwell. Baptists and friends from across the state created more than 6,200 tapestry squares for BCH's 125th anniversary. At left, BCH president Michael C. Blackwell and Quasquicentennial director Jim Edminson unveil the "Child of Hope" statue, the centerpiece of the Heritage Walk and Garden.

anything else is that it has increased my capacity to love. That, for me, is a great gift."

The final event was the dedication of the Heritage Walk and Garden, a monument in front of the campus church built by bricks inscribed with inspirational messages from BCH staff, alumni and friends. The centerpiece is a bronze statue of a girl affectionately referred to as the "Child of Hope," her arms raised skyward in victory.

"Reaching this historic milestone is a victory for North Carolina Baptists, our many friends who have

helped sustain this ministry and the children and families we humbly serve," Blackwell said. "But the ultimate victory belongs to God who has always been at the heart and center of every life that has been changed and restored throughout these 125 years."



CHATTING — Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr., visits with luncheon guests including BCH alumni Roberta Brunck, Jennifer Shore, and LaShanda Cosby.



Classified Advertisements

Pastor

Pastor. Wake Union Baptist Church, Wake Forest, NC, is seeking a pastor to serve our small traditional church with new vision and mission-minded leadership. We are striving to reach out in relevance with Christ's love. Will consider full-time or bivocational candidates. Send resume to: Jeffri Wier, 1676 Fern Hollow Dr., Franklinton, NC 27525, or email pandjwier@msn.com.

Growing Hispanic Baptist church is seeking **Pastor** to provide services in the Hampton Road area. Send resume to PO Box 64849 Virginia Beach, Va 23467-4849 or email to rjapia67@yahoo.com.

Millers Creek Baptist Church, Millers Creek, NC, is seeking full-time **Senior Pastor**. Experience is required and master's degree from accredited seminary or divinity school is preferred. Send resume to Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 559, Millers Creek, NC 28651. Resumes accepted through December 1, 2010.

Denominational

Beulah Baptist Association seeks an **Executive Director (DOM)** to provide leadership for the purpose of uniting churches for kingdom growth. The association consists of 36 churches and missions located in Person, Caswell, and Orange counties. Our association works in cooperation with the BSCNC and the SBC. Candidates must demonstrate a calling of God to full-time ministry with a background of ministry in SBC churches. Godly character, healthy family relationships, excellent interpersonal skills, strong leadership skills, a heart for evangelistic missions and ministry involvement, and appropriate educational preparation are desired. Send resumes to searchcommittee@beulahassociation.com. Deadline Dec. 3, 2010.

Church Staff

Full Time Minister to Families and Youth. Looking for an energetic person to become our family-life/youth minister a God led family life/ youth minister is needed to develop a vital ministry serving the families of our congregation and community. Requirements: *A Bachelor's Degree from a recognized theological seminary. *Must be biblically sound in the Faith and Word of God. *Must be able to partner with the senior minister in the Great Commission to make disciples of Christ. *Needs to be innovative and creative *Must be able to connect to youth and young adults Salary: will be based on experience and education Please submit a resume including the following: • Personal contact information • Statement of faith or philosophy of ministry • 3 personal references (one may be a pastoral reference) Resumes may be emailed or mailed to: Brookwood Baptist Church, 903 Henderson Drive, Jacksonville, NC 28540-7421.

Barnardsville Baptist Church in Barnardsville, NC, just north of Asheville, is seeking a **part-time Youth Pastor**. Responsibilities included leading Sunday night and Wednesday night Bible study, overseeing the youth Sunday School program for 6th through 12th grade. Send resume and cover letter to Barnardsville Baptist Church, PO Box 28, Barnardsville, NC, 28709 or to jchooper@tds.net.

Fuquay-Varina Baptist WEECare is a preschool program and outreach ministry of Fuquay-Varina Baptist Church. WEECare has a current enrollment of approximately 120 children and admits children ages 2 through school-age. We are currently seeking a **Director for our Weekday Early Education Program** who will be responsible for all aspects of the program, ensuring the provision of care, education and development for each child enrolled to his/her greatest potential through a developmentally appropriate, holistic curriculum. For more regarding this position and instructions on how to apply, visit the WEECare page located under the "Ministries" tab at www.fvbaptist.org.

Polkville Baptist Church, located in the southern foothills of North Carolina, is seeking to fill a **full-time position for minister of worship and discipleship**. We are a purpose driven church in a rural community averaging 250 during Sunday morning worship. Interested persons should have a degree in music with additional studies in Christian education. For a full job description, visit our website at www.polkvillebaptist.com. Please send resumes to: Polkville Baptist Church, Attn: Personnel Committee, PO Box 245 Polkville, NC 28136.

Music Director/Music Worship leader. Elizabeth-town Baptist Church is looking for an energetic and innovative music director/music worship leader — one who will motivate and encourage church members to use their gifts in the music ministry. The position will begin as a part-time position but does definitely have the possibility of becoming full-time. If you have a desire to use your Christian leadership skills and creativity, we have a place for you. Email responses to sbridgers@ec.rr.com or mail resumes to Music Director Search Team, PO Box 1712, Elizabethtown, NC 28337.

Miscellaneous

We are attempting to secure **pictures of all ministers** serving Watkins Chapel Baptist Church, Middlesex, NC. We are missing the following pictures: E.W. (Tom) Freeman, J.N. Stancil, Billie Godwin, Leon Addleton, S. Ellis Taff, Wayne Hyatt and Walter Wood. If you have pictures please contact Charles Creech, (919) 269-8877, 11875 NC Highway 29, Zebulon, NC 27597-7223.

BALDWIN GRAND PIANO. Model L, 6'3", excellent condition. Appraised at \$20,876. For more info or a photo, email strivett@nc.rr.com.

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BCH dedicates girls wilderness camp

Camp Duncan fulfills dream

By Blake Ragsdale
BCH Communications

Nearly 500 guests who have shared the dream of a wilderness camp for girls, based on the Cameron Boys Camp model, helped to dedicate Camp Duncan for girls in Aberdeen Oct. 30.

"Ladies and gentlemen ... dreams do come true," Baptist Children's Homes of North Carolina (BCH) President Michael C. Blackwell announced to the crowd.

Several attempts through the years to create a girls camp fell short. But when the late Haskell and Gay Duncan made their expansive residential property in Aberdeen available to BCH, they provided the ideal location. Now, during BCH's 125th anniversary and 30 years after the opening of Cameron Boys Camp, Camp Duncan for girls has arrived.

"This is God's timing," Blackwell proclaimed. "When God opens the door you have to be ready to move through it. That is what has happened with Camp Duncan."

Through the help of North Carolina Baptist Men, contractor Chuck Scott, and hundreds of volunteer laborers, BCH has repurposed the Duncan's residential land and its existing facilities for the camp.

"There has been so much support ...



GUIDING — Arwen Hays, a counselor at Camp Duncan, gives a tour of the girls' campsite to guests attending the dedication. Girls will live at the campsite with Arwen and other female counselors as part of the therapeutic camping program.

so many churches involved in building Camp Duncan," said Camp Duncan Director Paul Daley, a 30-year veteran of BCH, most of which he spent directing Cameron Boys Camp. "You are part of building a spiritual heritage. It's all about Jesus and what He's wanted us to do."

Since early 2009, more than 2,000 volunteers have worked to transform the property.

"The volunteer efforts and numerous

donations have been vital," Blackwell said. "Without the overwhelming generosity of North Carolina Baptists and so many others there would be no Camp Duncan."

Camp Duncan will serve school-aged girls. The children will live outside year round in a highly-structured, wilderness environment. Three female staff members called chiefs have been hired to serve as the counselors to the initial group of 10 girls. The goal is to help

girls and their families overcome the challenges and obstacles in their lives and reunify the household.

Like all of BCH's programs, Camp Duncan is Christ-centered. A very special place on the property is the outdoor chapel where the girls will worship

"This has been one of the most remarkable years ever at BCH," Blackwell said, "And the dedication of Camp Duncan is one of the events that has made it even more remarkable."

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