

**BILLY GRAHAM EXHIBIT OPENS
AT N.C. MUSEUM**

Page 20



**BANNERTOWN'S 'OLD SANCTUARY'
DESTROYED BY FIRE**

Page 17

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) officers and their families pray during the BSC annual meeting Nov. 3. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

Cooperation is a word that describes the process of working with others toward a common end. It indicates the way people partner to achieve a specific goal, and the 2015 Baptist State Convention (BSC) annual meeting Nov. 2-3 in Greensboro provided a tangible display of local churches gathering in cooperative ministry.

A total of 1,518 messengers, plus 234 guests, rallied around this year's theme,

"Echo: Reproducing Gospel Life in Others."

The theme was taken from 2 Timothy 2:2 that describes how disciple-making is a recurring process that is passed from one person to another and continues for generations: *"what you have heard from me ... entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."*

Messengers approved a \$29.5 million budget for 2016, representing a \$500,000 rise over the current fiscal year.

For the past 10 years, N.C. Baptists

have increased by a half-percent each year the amount of money allocated from their budget that goes to missions and ministries through the Cooperative Program. The 2016 budget includes a 3 percent increase, moving the total allotment from 37 to 40 percent (\$11.8 million).

"There have been hours invested in prayer and preparation spent looking through the lens of how our Cooperative Program dollars can be used effectively to impact lostness through disciple-making in North Carolina and throughout the

world," said Tony Honeycutt, chairman of the Budget Special Committee, according to a BSC press release.

After presenting the budget for approval, Perry Brindley, president of the Board of Directors, opened the floor for discussion.

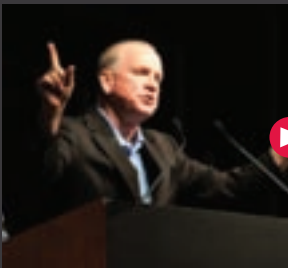
Rodney Baker, pastor of Coats Baptist Church, asked Brindley to make a suggestion to the Executive Committee (EC) to set aside \$1 million in BSC reserve funds "to facilitate returning [International

[See Gospel page 12](#)



**Speaker spurs
ministers' wives
to prioritize JOY**

Page 6



**Pastors'
Conference urges
dependence on
God's Word**

Page 4



**Lee Pigg calls
messengers to
'make disciples'**

Page 7

CP's strengths and weaknesses

What is the most effective way to support missionaries? Is it the method often called “faith-based support” of individual missionaries, or is it the Southern Baptist way of support through the Cooperative Program (CP) and special offerings like the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO) and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering for North American Missions?

To be fair, there are strengths in each method, and there are weaknesses. I strongly favor the cooperative way of giving, but I believe we can improve the way it works, beginning with the local church.

Prior to launching CP as the primary, unified plan of mission support in 1925, organizations and individuals appealed directly to Baptist churches to raise support for their cause. The CP page on the Southern Baptist Convention's website, *SBC.net/CP*, identifies the problems churches and ministries had with the direct-appeal method, or the “societal approach to missions.” It resulted in “severe financial deficits, competition among entities, overlapping pledge campaigns, and frequent emergency appeals which greatly hampered the expanding ministry opportunities God was giving Southern Baptists,” the site explains.

In response to some recent editorials I wrote about CP, a faithful reader of the *Biblical Recorder* raised some legitimate questions through email correspondence with me. He offered some good insight about CP that warrants further discussion.

The reader wishes to remain anonymous, but I will describe him. George (not his real name) has a 39-year background as a member of Baptist churches, and joined a Southern Baptist church more than four years ago. He and his wife recently retired from decades of international missions through independent mission agencies. The couple continues to be involved in overseas mission trips through their church and other partners.

George is now active in a N.C. Baptist church that has a strong record of CP giving. His church shows videos and distributes information to the membership regularly that explains the broad mission and ministry support of CP. In very complimentary terms, he described his pastor as one who supports CP and consistently educates the congregation on its value to

kingdom ministry.

He described his church as “an awesome mission-minded church,” that takes teams to a specific country where they are “engaged with a specific people group and specific missionaries on a long-term basis.”

The tone of his email was clearly not negative or caustic. He wants CP to become more effective. So he offered some thoughts for consideration.



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

George said, “Your article was very informative, especially as to how well the [Baptist State Convention of North Carolina] is doing in its many and varied ministries. I don't want to devalue the CP or even sound negative, but ... despite the many advantages that have been mentioned about the CP's financing approach for missionaries, I believe it lacks one

important ingredient.

“Since my personal experience as a church member has been mostly in non-SBC churches, the biggest difference I ‘feel’ is the lack of church members’ personal relationship with individual missionaries.”

If missions is going to be the heartbeat of a local church, George believes the church members should finance individual missionaries. He adds, “If you ... visit churches that do faith missions well, you [will] see the energy expressed as individual missionaries ... give personal reports and reconnect with the people that support them in that church.” When there is a strain on the church budget and cuts are considered, church members attach names and faces to the dollars under consideration and are reluctant to reduce mission support of people they know.

Since every Baptist church is autonomous, each has the right to organize missions as they deem most appropriate. “The SBC has been very successful with missions for a very long time,” he added. “My wife and I have experienced its fruit on the foreign mission field while serving with other organizations.”

George proposes that international missionaries provide more “personal stories, relationships and testimonies with the local churches [as] a continuing way to have missions be on members’ hearts all the time.”

He also suggests Southern Baptists should “... consider replacing percentages and ratios with missionary faces when

LMCO, Advent

Sun., Nov. 29 is a big day in at least two ways. First, it is the beginning of the week of prayer for the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO). Pray! Ask God what amount He wants you to give to this year's very important offering. Second, it the first day of Advent — a time of personal preparation and worship in celebration of the first coming of Christ. Learn how your family can use Advent as a time of praying for missionaries and seeking God's direction for your family's gift to LMCO. Visit BRnow.org/advent.

talking about increasing or supporting missions. I believe this would add a new enthusiasm for church members as we face these challenging times. I am suggesting this change for the IMB not the state CP. I agree totally in the partnership and structure of supporting statewide ministries.”

There is a natural connection to state and local ministries because they can be easily seen, felt and understood, he said. In other words, the people and ministries in the state are close enough to be personal. For example, we are locally involved in disaster relief, church planting, church revitalization and the work of organizations like the Baptist Children's Homes. So, we relate to this work and respond quickly when needs are known.

But international missions is another story, George said. The distance can disconnect churches from missionaries. “That is why I think replacing percentages/ratios with faces will enhance personal understanding and involvement. We don't have an easy way to build relation-

ships with missionaries ... Churches give and pray for the CP, but don't have a way to connect individual missionaries with that giving and praying.”

Is George right? Is there adequate, ongoing conversation or communication with our missionaries? If not, what needs to change?

This is not the first time this conversation has been on the table. I invite our readers to reactivate this discussion. What is your opinion on the effectiveness of the CP strategy? More important, how can CP and special mission offerings be more effective in reaching those who do not know Christ?

From my experience, churches that send out their own members to international missions have a much higher rate of support for CP and LMCO. Church members know the missionaries personally, they communicate regularly and are more involved with each other. So, George's point is “well taken.” But most Southern Baptist churches do not have one of their own on the international mission field.

It is important to know that most international missionaries deeply desire personal involvement with stateside churches. Missionaries that I know are men and women who really want to have quality relationships with churches and the people in them. They are thankful that they do not have to expend their energies in return visits to the states to raise support. But they do not wish to be disconnected from people who support them.

So, let's talk about it. What can we do to increase support for CP and LMCO? What is your church doing? **BR**

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What can we do to increase support ...?

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A time to reflect on Christ's blessings

As we make our plans for Thanksgiving this year – whether we are visiting family far away or hosting others in our own homes, we must not forget to spend time reflecting on what the Lord has done for us in the past year. This could be a discipleship moment when you lead the younger family members to think about which blessings from God are most important to us. This is your opportunity to help them realize that the most precious gifts in life are the most basic and fundamental ones such as health, family and employment, just to name a few. They must be taught that God is the source of *every good and perfect gift we possess*.

I am grateful for health. But before that, I am grateful to the One who has blessed me with life and given it ultimate purpose and meaning. What good is a long life if I do not have the blessed hope that comes with knowing Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

I am grateful for my family. But is the love within my family not just a reflection of the Father's love for us? I praise the Lord that He has abundantly blessed me with such a wonderful and loving family. But still, even more,

I praise Him for having loved me first. I am humbled when I think of the unfailing love that He so freely bestowed on me when I least deserved it.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

I urge you to take this time of thanksgiving to fix your eyes even more on Jesus – I pray that this will be a special time of joy for you and your loved ones as you reflect on the deep love of our Savior. Perhaps you can ask the Lord to kindle in your spirit an attitude of constant gratitude to Him throughout the year – as the old hymn, “Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing” says, “Tune my heart to sing Thy grace.”

I pray that during this season, you will be encouraged to spend time not only in prayers of thanksgiving to God, but also to share the good news of His salvation with others. I pray that as you come to know the spirit of the Father even more, that your heart will be filled

anew with zeal to tell those you meet about the One who has given you the ultimate reason to give thanks.

“Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name” – Psalm 100:4. **BR**

8 reasons older people struggle with change

I hear it all the time – something like, “The older people in our church just don’t like change. They’re aggravating.”

As a pastor at heart and an older person (age 54), I understand both the frustration of the pastor and the reticence of the older person.

I hope the following thoughts will help us minister better to older folks facing change:

1. They’re people, and most people eventually don’t like change.

Change might seem the norm to young people today, but even young people eventually grow older – and then long for days gone by. It happens, even when



CHUCK LAWLESS
Guest Column

you’re sure it won’t. Trust me.

2. Sometimes they legitimately long for something to stay the same.

The older I get, the more I understand this reality. Careers end. Friends die.

Children move away. Spouses pass away. Memories fade.

When everything else is changing, the one place an older person can cry for normalcy is the church.

What seems like obstinacy might simply be a cry for pastoral understanding.

3. They’ve seen pastors and programs come and go.

When pastors change every 3-4 years, and each pastor brings a new program that doesn’t last, I understand why long-termers might question change.

Their knowledge of a church’s history naturally makes them skeptical of the latest change.

4. They’ve seen change not work out.

TAR HEEL VOICES

Keep preaching Jesus

The article in Tar Heel Voices in the Sept. 12, 2015, issue [of the *Biblical Recorder*] “R.I.P. sin?” stabbed my heart. I recall from my youth the short ditty “Sin is sin, tobacco and gin.”

There was at least one other generation that had put sin out of mind. When John the Baptist came doing God’s will, he would shout, “*Repent ye: for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand!*” (Matthew 3:2). To whom was he preaching? The Jews of that generation had put sin out of mind, out of discussion and out of public awareness. How could they? They had the Ten Commandments. They had the scrolls of Isaiah, Jeremiah and the minor prophets. But the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians were bent on pleasing themselves. They did that by holding themselves in highest esteem. They made sure others did likewise. They compared themselves with themselves and not with the scriptures.

No doubt there were other reasons they would not trouble themselves to go and hear John, but send others to observe and belittle his preaching. “Who told you to preach? Where did you get your authority? Who [supports] your baptism?” He kept on preaching and baptizing.

Pastors, preachers and evangelists must keep on preaching “Repent (change your mind, your attitude and your life)! Live the life of faith in Jesus! Jesus is the way even if you do not feel you are in the wrong way! He is The Way, The Truth and The Life!”

**Don Wagner, retired Baptist pastor
McLeansville**

CORRECTION

In a photo caption that appeared in the Nov. 7 edition of the *Biblical Recorder*, Allen Pounders was listed as the pastor of Newbridge Baptist Church in Asheville. Pounders is the church administrator. Clark Henderson is the church’s pastor.

Spirit of giving is a heart in tune with God’s love

One of the most-often quoted and best-known verses in the entire world is John 3:16. I remember witnessing to a young man years ago who stated that this was the only Bible verse he knew. He had seen it so many times on signs at sporting events that he actually looked it up. That was a great launching point to share the gospel with him. It truly is one of the greatest verses in all of God’s Word.

One of the things I love about the verse is its message that God is the great Giver. It begins by saying, “*For God so loved the world that He gave...*”

Our God demonstrated to us that giving is a great way to express love.

For the believer, giving is a great spiritual discipline that expresses the very heart of God. Our giving should also express our heart. The Week of Prayer for International Missions is designed to remind us of the urgency of giving. The Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO), which is promoted during the week of prayer, Nov. 29-Dec. 6, is certainly an opportunity for us to express our heart of concern for billions of people who have yet to hear the gospel.

When I was a child, I remember watching my family as they opened presents. It was a joyful time, but I thought there was something odd about my father’s actions. He would get a few gifts, as we all did, but he never wanted to open them. In fact, he was most pleased by watching his children open their gifts. At the time, I thought this was a very unusual reaction. However, as I became a father and later a grandfather, I began to understand why my father acted that way. He simply loved to give and watch the recipient open the gift. It is a great way to express one’s heart of love.

In my role with the Executive Committee, I have the opportunity to travel extensively. I like to tell people that I am the luckiest man in the Southern Baptist Convention because I have a front row seat to see what is happening. As we give, we provide the means for ministry and missions to take place in powerful ways.

Do you love people? Do you love the lost? Do you love those who have not yet heard? God does, and we should as well. One of the greatest ways to express our love is by giving as Jesus did. Let us give of our resources, our time and our prayers. Let us be great givers like God is.

I encourage you to do your part to make this year’s offering the greatest by far. I ask you to join me and my family in a recommitment to being givers. What better way to be an example to others than through a sacrificial offering to the LMCO? Let’s make sure we give more than ever before so that the gospel can go further than ever before.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Frank S. Page is president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee.) **BR**



FRANK PAGE
Guest Column

Pastors' Conference urges dependence on God's Word

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

On a Sunday evening, when most pastors were finishing up their weekly preaching duties, the 2015 N.C. Pastors' Conference was only beginning. Koury Convention Center in Greensboro was the setting for the Nov. 1-2 gathering that took its theme from Isaiah 55:10-11: "It Shall Not Return Void."

Longtime pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh, David Horner preached the first message of the event from 2 Corinthians 4:1-7, encouraging fellow pastors to be "immersed in the scriptures," to be overwhelmed by God's glory and to "prevail in prayer."

Horner was followed by Alvin Reid, who holds the Bailey Smith Chair of Evangelism and serves as professor of evangelism and student ministry at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS). Reid's research emphasis has been the Jesus Movement of the early 1970s, and he offered three observations about the nature of such movements.

First, he said a Jesus movement is a movement of the Holy Spirit. "Jesus said 'you will receive power,' but He didn't say you will receive glory," said Reid, decrying attempts by some pastors to manufacture revival without dependence on God.

Reid also said a Jesus movement is about Jesus, noting the obvious simplicity of such a statement. In a reference to the ministry of the apostles and early church in Acts, Reid emphasized, "Sometimes they did miracles; they always preached Jesus. Sometimes people were healed; they always preached Jesus. Sometimes people were delivered; they always preached Jesus. Paul always preached Jesus. The early church always preached Jesus."

Reid finished by saying a Jesus movement is about the mission of God. "The mission has not changed," Reid said, referring to Acts 28:31. "The gospel goes forth unhindered, and we are still spreading that gospel."

Proclaiming the Bible

SEBTS president Danny Akin preached from Ephesians 4:1-16, offering 10 guidelines for 21st century churches. Among his points was a strong admonition to teach church members biblical doctrine.

Referring to an increasingly anti-Christian American



Officers for 2016 Pastors' Conference include, from left: Dale Robertson, secretary/treasurer; Timmy D. Blair Sr., 2017 president; and Chip Hannah, vice president. The office of president is elected two years in advance. Cameron McGill will serve as the 2016 president. Below, Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, preaches from Ephesians. (BR photos by Dianna L. Cagle)



culture, he said, "It is no longer a luxury to know what you believe; it is an absolute necessity."

Gary Jennings, pastor emeritus at East Taylorsville Baptist Church in Taylorsville, said there are three things that pastors need to know: (1) know you're born again, (2) know you're called by God into ministry and (3) know you're where you need to be and stay there until God moves you. He went on to preach from Matthew 4:18-22, saying, "We must be very careful to do those things that he's commanded us to do, and work – blood, sweat and tears – long hours, hard work, because that's what it's going to take to win a lost world to Jesus."

"All scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for



Johnny Hunt, pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., said a Christian's life may not be easy but believers have access to hope. (BSC photo by K Brown)

teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness," reads 2 Timothy 3:16. It's a well-known passage among preachers, and it's one of the verses that framed the message by Richard Davis Phillips, senior minister of Second Presbyterian Church in Greenville, S.C.

In the verses that precede 2 Timothy 3:16, Paul warns Timothy about false teachers among his congregation. Phillips extended that same warning to pastors today, calling upon the persevering power of the Bible. "Instead of something new and innovative and worldly we find Paul recommending to Timothy that resource that he has had all along – the word of God – because it is sufficient for times like these."

Phillips said "the Word" is sufficient because of what it is and what it does. "Here we have the very revelation of God," said Phillips. "The fundamental endeavor on which we are banking," he added, "is the power of God to go forth through the teaching and preaching and witnessing of the word of God for the life and work of the church."

Loving the scriptures

D.A. Carson, research professor at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Ill., called pastors to consider Psalm 1 in three readings.

The first reading focused on the content of the Psalm, outlining each verse. Carson then explained the importance of meditating on God's Word in the second reading, saying, "What we need more than anything is to think God's thoughts after Him." He emphasized careful attention to the life of the mind and its influence on integrity, "You're not what you think you are, but what you think, you are."

Carson concluded by turning his focus fully to godly character. Passages like Psalm 1 that put forward absolute statements about good and evil may feel overwhelming to some Christians, because they feel the burden of their moral incompetence. Yet, the Bible also includes narrative stories about men and women that express sincere godliness mixed with deeply flawed morals. Carson encouraged Christians to look to Christ's cross for resolution to the daily tension between righteousness and sin, quoting from famous hymnist John Newton: "I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I want to be, I am not what I hope to be in

See Word page 13



David Horner, left, and Alvin Reid, right, were among the preachers at the 2015 Pastors' Conference. (BR photos by Dianna L. Cagle)

Executive Committee approves new staff, team positions

By EMILY ROJAS | BSC Communications

The Executive Committee of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, met Nov. 2 in conjunction with the convention's Annual Meeting. During this meeting the committee approved a proposal to form a new team to meet the growing need for church revitalization across North Carolina, as well as other staff reassignments.

The newly-formed Church Health and Revitalization Team comes as a result of the convention staff's research into the continued decline in church health. Between 2007 and 2012, only 27 percent of churches cooperating with the Southern Baptist Convention experienced growth. In addition, more than 3,500 churches across all denominational lines close their doors every year.

Milton A. Hollifield Jr., the convention's executive director-treasurer, stressed a need for churches to not only grow, but to become outwardly focused – to become a force for missions and disciple-making both locally and abroad.

However, turning a church's focus outward isn't that simple. For a church to become outwardly focused, it must first work on solving its own internal issues,

said Lynn Sasser, the executive leader of the evangelism and discipleship group, who explained the proposal to the committee.

Hollifield announced the establishment of the new team and the new strategy for church revitalization to messengers attending this year's Annual Meeting during his executive director-treasurer's report on Nov. 3.

In his report to messengers, Hollifield shared that Brian Upshaw, the current leader of the Disciple-making Team, has been selected to lead the church health and revitalization team.

Under Upshaw's leadership, the new team will seek out contract workers to engage churches in revitalization efforts. The new strategy will focus on the development of each participating church's leadership, then the church's internal ministry, and finally, the church's external mission.

Because the team will consist mostly of contract workers, Upshaw and Patti Cardwell, the team leader assistant, will be the team's only full-time employees.

"I hope that [the team] is going to be like a breath of fresh air [to our churches]," Hollifield said.

The committee also voted during the

meeting to reclassify a current staff position to reach North Carolina's growing Hispanic population.

The newly developed Hispanic strategy coordinator position will be assigned to the strategic focus team. Antonio Santos, the current leader of the Church Strengthening Team, will fill this position.

Brian Davis, the convention's associate executive director-treasurer, said that the creation of Santos' new position is a necessary step in reaching the growing numbers of lost Hispanic people groups in the state.

"We're always trying to evaluate how to best position our staff to fulfill our strategy to impact lostness through disciple-making," Davis said.

"There is a need to help coordinate efforts not only in the population centers, but beyond."

Statistics show that by 2025, the Hispanic population in the state is estimated to increase by 1 million. Santos will join the convention's other strategy coordinators in assisting church and associational leaders in the eight population centers where the 100 most concentrated pockets of lostness are found. However, Santos will also work with church and associa-

tion leaders in the rural areas across the state based on the growth of Hispanic people groups in these areas as well.

Siler City, for example, has a population that is 50 percent Hispanic, but the city itself is outside of the strategic focus team's population centers.

These centers represent pockets of lostness within the state where the convention has put ongoing, strategic disciple-making efforts in place. Santos will lead a coordinated effort to make disciples specifically in areas where there is a high Hispanic population.

Neal Eller, currently the stewardship consultant on the church strengthening team, will take responsibility as team leader.

Eller will continue to provide consultation regarding stewardship in his new role as team leader.

For more information about church revitalization contact Brian Upshaw at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5632, or bupshaw@ncbaptist.org. For more information about engaging Hispanic people groups contact Antonio Santos at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5642, or asantos@ncbaptist.org.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Emily Rojas is a part-time writer for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.) **BR**

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Speaker spurs ministers' wives to prioritize JOY

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

Putting Jesus first, others second and yourself last places everything in proper order, said Janet Sauls.

"You last does not mean that you have to be a doormat and that you have to be taken advantage of," said Sauls, who was the speaker for the North Carolina Baptist Ministers Wives (NCBMW) annual meeting Nov. 2. "You have to take care of you. No one is going to do that for you."

Meeting at Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, around 90 ladies came for fellowship and worship. Renea Henderson led the music.

Sauls, a member of Shiloh Baptist Church in Garner, along with her husband Rodger, are marriage enrichment facilitators with 2 Become 1 Ministries. While not a pastor's wife, Sauls' father was a minister.

"The role of a pastor's wife is different for every one of you ladies," Sauls said. "It can be awesome but it can be less than awesome over time."

The people in our lives can bring happiness but that true J-O-Y – Jesus first, others second and you last – "is what comes through Jesus," she said. "He's the only One who can give us ... true joy. He's always faithful."

Sauls touched on the loneliness of ministry, urging the ladies to make Jesus a priority.

She said that personal relationship with Christ should come first. Husbands should be next in line and then children, if there are any. Church should be next.

"I honestly believe that Satan is trying to attack ... pastors and their wives more than anybody else," she said. "Satan really tries to destroy our families."

No matter the challenges you face, Sauls said, "you are the child of the King. He equips you to do what you really need to be doing."

Women should focus on the mental, physical, emotional and spiritual.



Janet Sauls, of 2 Become 1 Ministries in Clayton, spoke about the struggles of ministers' wives and encouraged the ladies to keep their priorities in order.

"We are real people," Sauls said. "Pray when you are lonely; pray when you feel depressed; pray when doubt sets in your heart and your faith feels weak. You need to get in your prayer closet."

She urged them to have individual prayer time, but also to make time to pray with their spouse and children.

Business

Harriett Lovett, secretary/treasurer, of NCBMW, shared notes from the July retreat. She said there were more new attendees this year (7) than last year (2).

There were 47 at the July retreat; she encouraged more women to be a part next summer.

The group had \$291.35 in scholarship money available for retreats before the meeting. An offering during the Nov. 2 meeting raised \$323.84 to add to that amount. Before the meeting the group had a balance of \$9,617.01.

Henderson, who is serving as the 2016 retreat chair, shared the dates for next year's retreat: July 11-13. The theme, "Repurposed," is based on 2 Corinthians 12:9-10 and will be held at Caraway Conference Center near Asheboro.

Officers

Outgoing president, Lisa Miller an-



Officers for 2015-2016 include Amy Harmon, seated from left, president elect 2016-2017; Ginnie Varnam, president; and Renea Henderson, 2016 retreat chair; and standing, from left: Betty Smith, publicity chairperson and eastern representative; Harriett Lovett, secretary/treasurer; Peggy Mooney, vice president; Diane Smith, central #1 representative; Dakota Spurling, western #2 representative; and Cheryl Reeves, western #1 representative. (BR photos by Dianna L. Cagle)

nounced the officers for the coming year: President: Ginnie Varnam; vice president: Peggy Mooney; president elect 2016-17: Amy Harmon; secretary/treasurer: Harriett Lovett; publicity chairperson: Betty Smith; 2016 retreat chair: Renea Henderson; 2016 retreat assist: Vickie Parker; Julie Pierce and Carole Barnhardt. Regional representatives are: Betty Smith, eastern;

Diane Smith, central #1; Gina Powell, central #2; Cheryl Reeves, western #1; and Dakota Spurling, western #2.

One winner at each table was given the centerpiece highlighting the fruits of the spirit. There were also two Bibles given away. The *Biblical Recorder* gave a Bible to the woman who had been married the

See JOY page 13



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Blair's 'preach the Word' sermon resonates at meeting

By SETH BROWN | BR Content Editor

In his characteristic vigorous cadence, Timmy Blair Sr. delivered a memorable president's address at the 2015 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual meeting in Greensboro. Blair serves as senior pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier and BSC president.

He preached from 2 Timothy 4:1-6, which includes a charge by the Apostle Paul – “*Preach the Word!*” – to his pastoral protégé, Timothy. The title of Blair's sermon complemented the annual meeting's theme: “A call to echo the gospel.”

Noting the difficulty young Timothy experienced in his church, Blair explained, “Paul is writing to Timothy and saying to him, ‘Yes, it's hard. Yes, it's difficult. Yes, there are discouraging times. But Timothy, it is also a great time. Timothy, like no other time before, you must stand and preach the word of God.’”

Blair highlighted four aspects of the passage. First, he called attention to Paul's charge, saying, “The preacher must never preach to tickle the ears or to please man. He is to cut it straight. He is to let it fall where it may. ... We're living in a time today when preachers must stand up and speak up.”

He said preaching carries the idea of a king's messenger, who is to be heard, heeded and unhindered. “We don't need your philosophy. We don't need your psychology. We don't need your human education,”



Timmy Blair advises pastors to “cut it straight” when they preach to their congregations. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

added Blair. “We need men of God who will stand and up and square their shoulders every Sunday and preach the unsearchable riches of the Word of God.”

Second, Blair talked about the content of the passage, explaining the verbs following Paul's charge: reprove, rebuke and exhort. He said, “Sin must be confronted in our day before sinners will be convicted.

“On June the 26th – on a Friday night – the United States Supreme Court ruled that marriage was no longer between a man and a woman. And that night, they lit up the White House in the rainbow colors, literally slap-

ping the face of every born-again, Bible-believing child of God.” Blair recounted what he did the next day, “I looked at what God said about marriage, at whether or not it had changed. And I want you to know that I found the same thing on Saturday that was in there on Thursday.”

Blair continued, “The Word of God must never be compromised,” speaking to the danger of false doctrine. “And yet, ladies and gentlemen, this very night there are churches and denominations that have departed from biblical truth. They have literally thrown the authority of the Bible out their stained-glass windows.”

A word of caution came in the third point: “Be watchful in all things. It is a call for the man of God to be alert.” Blair remembered a time in his own ministry when he turned away a prospective church member due to prior knowledge that this man intended on causing division in the church.

The last point of the sermon was a call to evangelize. “It's not either-or, it's both,” Blair said, refuting a false dichotomy between evangelism and discipleship.

“With evangelism you bring [people] in the front door [of the church] and with discipleship you shut the back door.”

The message came to a close as Blair dramatized Paul's heartfelt cry to Timothy – “Preach the Word!” – in an engineered reverberation that left convention messengers with an unforgettable moment and a conviction that audibly resonated with Baptists across the state. ■

Lee Pigg calls messengers to ‘make disciples’

By K. ALLAN BLUME | BR Editor

Preaching the annual convention sermon at Greensboro's Koury Convention Center, Lee Pigg called fellow North Carolina Baptists to obey Jesus' command to make disciples. “We've been focusing for a long time as Baptists on making converts instead of making disciples,” he said in the Nov. 3 closing session. “A convert in my definition is someone who simply does not want to go to hell. But a disciple is someone who is willing to follow Christ.”

Pigg has served as the senior pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe for 13 years.

The biblical text of the sermon, Matthew 4:18-20, tells how Jesus called Peter and Andrew from their life of fishing to follow Him and become “fishers of men.”

To illustrate the importance of calling people to follow Christ, Pigg recalled the

“Million More in '54” campaign.

The Sunday School Board of Southern Baptist Convention set a goal to win one million people to Christ in 1954. He said it was the greatest Sunday School campaign ever launched.

“The results were staggering,” Pigg said. “Over 600,000 people gave their lives to Christ that year. What would we do if 600,000 new believers came to our churches in the next year?”

Baptist leaders asked that question after the success of the 1954 campaign. The responsibility for following-up the wave of new believers was delegated to Sunday School. Pigg said leaders based their plan on Flake's formula, a popular growth strategy. They enlarged the organization, provided more space, enlisted more workers and went after the people.

Sunday School leaders assumed these new believers would become mature followers of Christ simply by getting involved in Sunday School.

“If we are not careful, we will focus

more on building our churches than making disciples in His kingdom,” said Pigg. “So pastors let me relieve you of a tremendous burden that many of you in this room are probably carrying on your shoulders. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 16 that it is His job to build the church, not yours.” Our assignment according to Matthew 28 is to make disciples, Pigg added.

He believes we are not doing very well since fewer people are attending church now and 90 percent of churches are plateaued or declining.

“Many times we spend more time on our mission statement than we do making disciples,” he said. Pigg spent some time researching church mission statements. He read a 72-word mission statement of one church. Another church has a simple, two-word mission statement: “Make disciples.” While it is simple, the decision to be a disciple of Jesus Christ and make disciples for Christ is “one that will require sacrifice and commitment,” he said.

The sermon pointed to four statements about disciple-making. First, making disciples begins with an invitation. Pigg pointed out that relationships begin with an invitation – an invitation to dinner or coffee, an invitation to church or a movie, or an invitation to one's home.

In Matthew 11:29 “Jesus invites us

to come to Him,” Pigg said. He invites us into a discipling relationship. Many converts never become disciples. “A convert sees conversion as the end while a disciple sees it as the beginning [of a relationship].”

Second, he said “Making disciples needs some clarification.”

He told the story of a man who said he disagreed with a sermon Pigg preached that challenged the whole church to be disciples. The man said, “I don't believe all of us Christians have to be disciples.” The man's statement was a complete shock to the preacher.

“Even though we are believers, we must never forget that we are first and foremost followers of the Lord Jesus Christ,” he said. Jesus said “follow me,” which means, “Go where I go; do what I'm doing; watch what I do and you do the same thing.”

The third statement of the sermon said, “Making disciples brings about transformation.” The lives of disciples are changed lives.

Pigg asked a young couple for permission to tell their story of transformation. Brent and Wendy were unmarried, but living together. They came to church several Sundays, and then they walked the aisle and gave their lives to Christ, he explained. Pigg did not confront them

See Pigg page 13

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Annual meeting spotlights church health, Hispanic outreach

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

“The local church is the key for us as a convention of churches to be able to impact lostness through disciple making,” said Milton Hollifield Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC). “Growing healthy, outwardly focused, disciple-making churches throughout North Carolina is necessary to seeing this strategic mission accomplished.” Hollifield spelled out this vision in his address to the messengers at the BSC annual meeting as part of the report by the board of directors in Greensboro Nov. 3.

“Most churches have good people in them that love Jesus and love God’s word, and they’re committed to missions at home and around the world, but those churches are still not healthy. They are not multiplying, and worse, they don’t even know it,” Hollifield said, quoting a recent study by LifeWay Research.

His words of warning came before the announcement of a new initiative of the BSC to help weak and dying local churches become healthy and vibrant. Hollifield received approval Nov. 2 by the executive committee to create a ministry team titled “Church Health and Revitalization Team.”

Brian Upshaw, who currently heads

the BSC disciple-making team, will lead the new initiative, providing “coaching and consulting to pastors and churches for the purpose of healthy missional growth.” The goal is for Upshaw to be assisted by contract consultants across the state that will be chosen based on church leadership expertise and experience.

Priorities of the team include disciple making, church health, church planting and mobilization. The process for helping plateaued or declining churches will focus on three areas of development: the man, ministry and mission.

Hispanic outreach

Hollifield also gave an update on the convention’s five-year strategy that began in 2013 for impacting lostness through disciple making as it relates to a strategic focus on population centers in North Carolina.

The Strategic Focus Team targets population centers across the state, but



Milton A. Hollifield Jr. outlines the strategic mission of the Baptist State Convention Nov. 3 during the BSC annual meeting. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

Hollifield emphasized the fact that rural areas are not ignored. “In addition to our staff,” he said, “we will bring on additional contractors in order to expand these efforts next year and beyond.”

Some rural counties in the state are predicted to receive large influxes of Hispanic people in the coming years. To prepare for this demographic change, the executive committee also voted during its meeting to reclassify a current staff position to reach North Carolina’s growing Hispanic population, according to a BSC press release. The newly developed Hispanic strategy coordinator position will be assigned to the Strategic Focus

Team. Antonio Santos, the current leader of the Church Strengthening Team, will fill this position.

Brian Davis, the convention’s associate executive director-treasurer, said that the creation of Santos’ new position is a necessary step in reaching the growing numbers of lost Hispanic people groups in the state.

“We’re always trying to evaluate how to best position our staff to fulfill our strategy to impact lostness through disciple-making,” Davis said.

“There is a need to help coordinate efforts not only in the population centers, but beyond.”

Two resolutions came before the Committee on Resolutions that messengers approved during the Tuesday afternoon general session, including a resolution on impacting lostness among immigrants, proposed by Jarrod Scott, senior pastor of Green Pines Baptist Church in Knightdale.

The resolution proposed “that local churches should seek to encourage distinctly biblical responses to the realities of immigration.” Scott also engaged in discussion from the floor of the convention, saying, “The call here is not to necessarily look at [immigration] just as every American might look at it, but to look at this as Christ has asked us to look at it.” **BR**

BREAKOUT SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



In “Making Disciples in Rural North Carolina,” Jeff Sundell (@iitimothy22) taught participants that “busyness is one of our biggest sins in America, in rural or urban settings,” according to @ncbaptist on Twitter. He also encouraged believers to take responsibility for their neighborhoods knowing Jesus. Mike Puckett (@Mike_Puckett) attended the session and said Sundell’s teaching was simple and an engaging vision for ministry. Puckett is executive director and campus leader for Baptist Campus Ministry of the High Country, a collegiate network attempting to start disciple-making movements on among 83,000 students on 14 campuses in the N.C. High Country.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina had staff members in several breakout sessions during the BSC annual meeting Nov. 3. Using its Twitter handle @ncbaptist, a staff member quoted Tim Ahlen (@timahlen): “Don’t let anyone ever come to you and tell you ‘you’re no longer relevant to the Kingdom.’” Ahlen was teaching a breakout session called “Church Revitalization Through Multiplication.” Other tweets included “We can’t expect people to change into what we want them to look like before they meet Jesus,” a quote from Jonathan Yarboro (@jonathanyarboro) who was teaching “When Adolescence Gets Old” with Tom Knight. Another tweet quoted Yarboro, team leader/strategist for the BSC collegiate partnerships team: “Millennials will give more time and money than any other generation when they believe in the cause.” Knight is BSC’s contextualist consultant for collegiate partnerships.



Meredith Snoddy (@MeredithSnoddy), communications and women’s ministry director for Green Street Baptist Church in High Point led “Beyond One-on-One: Discipling Through Women’s Ministry” during breakouts. A tweet from @ncbaptist (the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina) attributed Snoddy as saying: “We’ve segregated our church by age – we’ve got to get back to having that multi-generational stuff.”

Blume: Do N.C. Baptists want to keep their newspaper?

By **SETH BROWN** | *BR* Content Editor

The road ahead for printed newspapers is rough. Baptist state papers across the southeastern U.S. are cutting back, folding into other organizations or closing their doors, said Allan Blume, editor and president of the *Biblical Recorder* (*BR*).

Blume gave a special report to messengers of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina at the annual meeting Nov. 2-3 in Greensboro. In that report he sketched a dim picture for many printed news publications, but he painted a stroke of bright hope for North Carolina Baptists.

“Every state surrounding North Carolina has reduced their publication format in the past two years!” he said. “The *Biblical Recorder* has not yet cut back.”

Blume went on, “We continue to look for ways to grow the *Biblical Recorder* because we believe North Carolina Baptists need a strong news source so our people will be informed and passionate about reaching our state, our nation and the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

Serving local churches is at the center of Blume’s vision for the *BR*. “We want to help your church face our rapidly changing culture and adapt our ministries to the opportunities all around us,” he said. “We want to bring encouragement to your church family as they see the open doors of ministry surrounding them.”

If the news journal of North Carolina Baptists is to continue on its mission unabated, then church members and leaders must decide it has value for their local church ministries, said Blume. He asked messengers of the convention, “Would you say that we do not need the Baptist Children’s Homes to reach out to abandoned children?” relying on state and federal governments alone to care for orphans.

“Would you say we do not need N.C. Baptist Men to do disaster relief work?” he continued. “Let FEMA and the Red Cross do it? Absolutely not!”

Blume also quizzed about Fruitland Baptist Bible College, the College at Southeastern and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, asking if it would be better to let secular universities train Baptist leaders.

“So, would you say, ‘We do not need the *Biblical Recorder*. Let the secular media inform the people in our pews?’” Blume added. “I certainly hope not!”

If people see no value in the paper, then the *BR* will approach its final days sooner or later, according to Blume. “I believe the *Biblical Recorder* is valuable to the people and churches of North Carolina,” he said. “We are your news agency, with a Christian worldview. We want to encourage and motivate the people in your church to serve God with a whole heart.”

A video was included in the presentation with endorsements from Baptist leaders across the state:

- “The direction of the *Biblical Recorder*, the content of the *Biblical Recorder* has been radically, radically changed in recent years,” said Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary. “I see it now as very valuable resource for North Carolina Baptists.”

- Greg Mathis, pastor of Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville, explained, “Here at Mud Creek we actually provide [the *BR*] for all of our staff, for all of our deacons and for all of our Sunday School teachers.”

- Michael Smith, pastor of Fruitland Baptist Church in Hendersonville, said, “An informed Baptist is a good Baptist. ... We feel like the *Biblical Recorder* is a tremendous investment.”

- Pastor Rit Varriale from Elizabeth Baptist Church in Shelby, expressed his thanks to the paper, saying, “As we support the *Recorder*, we support the biblical mandate to go to our Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the uttermost parts of the world with the relevancy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” View video online at BRnow.org.

Blume told messengers about the various ways to receive news from the *BR*: printed edition, digital edition, website (which averages 20,000-30,000 unique visitors daily), weekly e-newsletter, mobile application (available in the Apple App Store and Google Play) and social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter.

Blume appealed to church leaders to consider subscribing church members and staff through reduced-price group plans for both the printed and digital editions. He also stressed the importance and convenience of the *BR*weekly e-newsletter: “Every N.C. Baptist with an email address should be receiving this.” **BR**

BR prize winners

The *Biblical Recorder's* (*BR*) drawing at its booth during the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting awarded prizes to pastors, church staff and laity from all across North Carolina.

The *BR* gave a silver Apple iPad mini2 with wifi and 32 gb to Renee Gregory of Statesville.

John McCray of Sparta First Baptist Church won the black Amazon Fire HD 8, 8" HD display with wifi and 8 gb. Nine dual square power banks (4,000 mAh) with the *BR* logo on it were awarded to: Jimmy Finch of Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Boone; Bill Hare of North Kannapolis Baptist Church in Kannapolis; John Kirby of Abbott's Creek Baptist Church in High Point; Dennis McDonald of Providence Baptist Church in Roxboro; Jason Miller of Dutch Cove Baptist Church in Canton; Jarrod Scott of Green Pines Baptist Church in Knightdale; Dennis Shaw of Yadkin Baptist Association in Yadkinville; Traci Stephens of Piney Grove Baptist Church in Williamston; and Jason Tate of Piney Grove Baptist Church in Williamston.

LifeWay Christian Resources donated a number of Bibles and books for giveaways:

- Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) Study Bible (Purple Leather Touch-Indexed) was given to Hernildo T. Concka of La Voz de la Esperanza in Charlotte.

- HCSB Super Giant Print Reference Bible (Classic Mahogany Leather Touch) was given to Nancy Porter of Geneva Baptist Church in Camden.

- HCSB Super Giant Print Reference Bible (Brown/Tan Leather Touch) was given to Larry Burns of Mulberry Baptist Church in Gastonia.

- HCSB Compact Ultrathin Bible (Purple Leather Touch) was given to Rick Cockerham of Calvary Baptist Church in Salisbury.

- HCSB Compact Ultrathin Bible (Classic Mahogany Leather Touch) was given to Doug Nalley of Plainview Baptist Church in Durham.

- HCSB Compact Ultrathin Bible (Brown/Chocolate Leather Touch) was given to Joel Jackson of Dublin First Baptist Church.

- *A Godward Life* by John Piper was chosen by Lee Cook of Sharon Baptist Church in Reidsville.

- *Expository Apologetics* by Voddie Baucham Jr. was chosen by Joshua Scruggs of Bethlehem Baptist Church in Jacksonville.

- *As the Sun Has Risen* by C.S. Lewis was chosen by Chris Autry, who attends First Baptist Church in Aberdeen.

See Winners page 12

BREAKOUT SESSION HIGHLIGHTS



The Summit Church's Derick DeLain (@Derrick_DeLain), who serves as the Blue Ridge campus associate pastor, led “Making Disciples Through Small Groups.” DeLain was quoted by @ncbaptist as saying, “We serve others because of the way Christ served us.”



Clay Smith (@claysmith79), senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Matthews, taught “The Pulpit and Disciple-making” during the breakout session times at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) annual meeting. The BSC (@ncbaptist) was tweeting from some of the sessions. One of the staff members tweeted that @claysmith29 said, “Jesus never talked about discipling that didn't also involve winning others to faith in Christ.” (*BR* photos by Emily Blake)

N.C. Baptists minister through various agencies

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

Three entities shared reports Nov. 3 during the morning session of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) annual meeting. The convention has a rotating schedule for agencies and institutions of the BSC. For the 2015 meeting, the *Biblical Recorder* had a longer report time (see story page 9) and the N.C. Baptist Foundation (NCBF), N.C. Baptist Hospital and the joint Baptist Children's Homes of N.C. (BCH)/N.C. Baptist Aging Ministry (NCBAM) had a shorter time limit.

NCBF

Clay Warf, NCBF executive director, said the organization is celebrating its 95th birthday in November.

It all started in 1920 when someone left \$1,000 to support the NCBH. The person didn't want the gift spent but invested over time to help the hospital in perpetuity.

NCBF was the first Baptist Foundation; now there are more than 30 foundations associations with conventions. Warf said NCBF's purpose remains "undergirding Baptist churches, institutions and missions endeavors on a permanent basis."

It wasn't until 1962 that the first full-time employee was hired. By then, that \$1,000 investment had grown to \$250,000. When the second director was hired in 1972, assets had grown to exceed \$2.5 million; when he retired in 1997, that total was \$70 million.

Today, NCBF manages 2,264 charitable accounts. More than half are permanent endowments – 1,387 permanent endowments benefiting 541 different ministries on a permanent basis "from now until the Lord returns," Warf said. Ministries that the money helps include the BSC along with some of the BSC's agencies, churches and various Christian social and medical ministries.

NCBF provides a \$200 monthly stipend to more than 50 retired pastors or spouses "who have serious need" as well as one-time gifts to help pay for specific needs like a roof or medical costs. The foundation provides Christian estate planning and endowment document preparation at no cost. He announced the establishment of the N.C. Baptist Scholars program in 2016. The goal is to provide meaningful scholarships to students, Warf said. "You can see there is much to celebrate," he said.

At the end of 2014, NCBF managed \$152.6 million. During its first 94 years, NCBF distributed \$115.8 million to charities and ministries and \$47.8 million in charitable trusts which will eventually roll over to support those same charities and ministries.

"The Lord continues to bless this ministry," Warf said, encouraging leaders to tell church members about the foundation and how NCBF might help them plan for the future.

NCBH

Leland Kerr, FaithHealthNC liaison for Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, highlighted the beginnings of North Carolina Baptist Hospital more than 90 years ago. Today, Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center is ranked in the top 50 hospitals nationally in several critical areas, Kerr said.

FaithHealthNC was started three years ago as a partnership between churches, hospitals and community resources. He focused on a Winston-Salem church that has started a transportation ministry to take people to the doctor, the pharmacy and other appointments. That church launched a free clinic that offers services



Clay Warf, executive director for the North Carolina Baptist Foundation, shares his report to messengers to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina Nov. 2-3. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

monthly. Kerr said the church wants to expand it to open weekly.

"They continue to reach out to the most vulnerable in the community with the love of Jesus Christ," he said. The goal is to connect Baptist associations, churches and chaplains to better serve the community.

He announced a partnership with the General Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, the largest African-American convention in the state.

"We're also grateful for the Cooperative Program, support of FaithHealthNC and CareNet Counseling," Kerr said. "Through your giving, we can say no client is turned away because of lack of resources."

Through the Mother's Day Offering each year, N.C. Baptists "continue to touch lives with hope ... as [people] face daunting medical bills."

"Together we're making a difference in people's health and in their lives as we continue to find new ways to extend the healing ministry of Jesus Christ especially to the needy," he said.

BCH/NCBAM

Michael Blackwell presented a report covering both BCH and NCBAM. BCH celebrated its 130th birthday Nov. 11, and NCBAM has existed for six years.

In 2014, both agencies reached 15,690 people.

"That is an incredible, verifiable number of lives touched," Blackwell said, highlighting 100 decisions for Christ. Two boys who made that decision were featured in the 2015 BCH Thanksgiving Offering materials.

Jonathan and Thomas, brothers who came to BCH in June 2014, both think BCH is "a good place to be," Jonathan said. Both boys are looking forward to being baptized. Their grandmother told messengers, "I just can't begin to tell you how God has blessed our family and blessed these boys. We just thank God for (BCH)."

Blackwell introduced J. Billy Graham, who received some help from NCBAM.

Just over a year ago, Graham lost his wife.

"We were there with Billy when his beautiful wife ... began her descent into the darkness of Alzheimer's," Blackwell said.

Graham, who was married for 62 years, found out about NCBAM through his association. NCBAM offers help to retired pastors, directors of mission and missionaries. Graham said with NCBAM's help he was able to choose the best care for his wife. NCBF also met with Graham to revise his will, name power of attorney and pre-plan funeral arrangements.

Last year, NCBAM helped 7,572 clients. "We will continue our ministry of hope and health and healing," Blackwell, who is in his 33rd year as president, said. "We will never turn a child away who has suffered trauma or neglect. We will not turn our backs on the frail elderly. Stand with us North Carolina Baptists." **BR**

Great Commission

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor

North Carolina Baptists contribute significantly to the Send North America cities they partner with through the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) Office of Great Commission Partnerships.

"By far, North Carolina is our most prolific partner," said John Ramirez, associate executive director for Metropolitan New York Baptist Association (MNYBA).

Ramirez was among several partnership representatives from New York (Ramirez, Kevin Cabe and Steve Allen), Boston (David Butler), Toronto (Dave Strobel and Andrew Lamme), Baltimore (Ron Larson and Marcus Redding) and South Asia (Chase Tozer*) who spoke at a Nov. 3 breakfast sponsored by the Office of Great Commission Partnerships before the start of the second day of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's (BSC) annual meeting.

"We also want to see our established churches flourish," Ramirez said, emphasizing care for church plants also. Ramirez expressed a need for youth ministers and leaders to facilitate Disciple Now weekends and trainings for leaders.

One of those church planters was Cabe, who spent the first 26 years of his life in North Carolina.



KEVIN CABE

Cabe said he learned about opportunities in New York by reading the *Biblical Recorder*. He has been featured in previous BR stories for his church planting efforts.

Now Cabe is the partnership coordinator for MNYBA. With a population of 22 million, Cabe said there remains much work.

One of the churches has baptized more than 1,000 people. It targets Chinese restaurant workers.

"It's incredible to see what God is doing among that people group," said Cabe, who said MNYBA wants to strengthen established churches and offer ways to help those churches and new plants as well.

They have 24 planters signed on for a pilot program. MNYBA is offering accounting services, legal advice, website design and more to help these churches.

"We believe that New York City is such a strategic place," he said. "We believe God is bringing the people to our doorsteps."

Allen, the North American Mission Board's (NAMB) Send New York coordinator, says the priority is to plant churches. They are working with 65 church planters in various stages.

With 290 neighborhoods and several counties where there is still not access to the gospel, Allen requested partners to pray four days a week for five minutes a day for one neighborhood.

"The work that you do does count for the Kingdom," Allen said. "Don't ever, ever, ever take for granted the potential that is sitting in your pews."

Messengers to the annual meeting and across North Carolina donated around 7,000 coats for Coats for the City, an outreach ministry in New York to meet a physical need for churches across the city.

God meant it for good

Larson spent 34 years as a pastor until two years ago

on Partnerships offer N.C. Baptists many opportunities

when he became the Send city coordinator for Baltimore.

“I went into a city where we needed desperately to beat the devil back to hell,” Larson said. “I was astounded as I walked the streets and realized that people have no clue that Jesus Christ can redeem their lives.”

It was that lostness that broke Larson’s heart and caused him to leave his church plant that had grown to seven sites.

Two years ago, the largest Southern Baptist church in Baltimore had 150 people on Sunday morning, Larson stressed that only 2.2 percent of the population in that area claims to be evangelical.

This spring, Larson said most N.C. Baptists probably know there were riots that broke out in his city.

“What the devil meant for harm, God meant for good,” Larson stressed. “What we have seen is an explosion of not only new church plants,” but baptisms, especially this summer.

One of the people who came to Baltimore was from North Carolina. Marcus Redding, former pastor of Hull’s Grove Baptist Church in Vale, thanked Steve Hardy, who heads the Office of Great Commission Partnerships, and Chuck Register, BSC executive leader for church planting and mission partnerships, for their friendship and mentoring.

It was Redding’s friendship with a woman in his N.C. congregation who spent 50 years in Baltimore that inspired his move.

“That relationship helped me to see the brokenness of that city and the need of that city,” Redding said.

He and his wife moved to Baltimore two months ago. He is coaching and training planters.

“All of us know the Great Commission,” he said. “We all know we need to reach the world.”

Need is staggering’ in Boston

After a 1985 trip with his wife, Butler said “Boston just got in our soul.”

While they didn’t move until about a year ago, Butler said he always thought “maybe someday God might allow us to serve in Boston.”

With 5.8 million people in greater Boston and 14.6 million around the Baptist Convention of New England, there are only 357 Southern Baptist churches.

“The need is staggering,” he said.

Netcast Church, which is led by Matt Chewning, a pastor with N.C. ties, averages 600 on Sundays. During a recent service, 27 people were baptized.

Partners have been a huge part of Boston’s surge of churches. Ten years ago 95 percent of church plants failed. Today, 85-90 percent of plants are sustaining themselves after five years.

“People have come along and breathed life into” our church planters, Butler said.

Among the nations

Dave Strobel moved his family just outside Toronto about four months ago from Southern California.

The former youth pastor started a church just over a month ago. With 20 core people, the first service attracted 80 people. Members had canvassed the neighborhood with 5,000 flyers.

“I was thinking just one person,” said Strobel, but four families have continued coming. “We’re excited about those four families because they’re all broken.”



Participants of the Office of Great Commission Partnerships breakfast surround Marcus Redding, center, to pray for him and his work in Baltimore. Redding was a pastor at Hull’s Grove Baptist Church in Vale. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

The area they are trying to reach is about 750,000 people with 49 percent identifying as first-generation immigrants. As a suburban community, there are a lot of young families, which is what The Journey Church is trying to reach.

Canadians are “a funny bunch,” said Andrew Lamme, church planting catalyst for Send Toronto. “We want to look like and pretend like we’re American but heaven forbid, don’t ever call us American.”

Lamme said there are 34 N.C. churches partnering with churches in and around Toronto. With 60 churches in the greater Toronto area, 40 of those congregations are five years and younger.

“We don’t have churches of hundreds and thousands,” Lamme said. “We have churches one person or one family at a time. You’re helping us move the gospel farther ahead, the Kingdom farther ahead.”

Lamme stressed the need for partners to come alongside these church planters. He thanked N.C. Baptists and requested prayer.

“Be praying for the lostness and brokenness in North America,” Lamme said. “There are too many people dying that have never had the opportunity to hear about Jesus.”

Southeast Asia

Chase Tozer* spent the last 10 years on the other side of the world. He grew up on a hog farm outside a small town in Missouri.

Being in Southeast Asia, Tozer has seen God doing “some amazing things” in an area where much less than two percent of the population know Christ.

“Every year 12.6 million are marching towards hell,” Tozer said. “That’s a hard reality to work in.”

When Tozer was trying to learn the language and establish churches, his language teacher expressed a desire to plant churches too.

“From that day forward we dedicated our lives to teaching nationals to plant churches,” he said.

“These days we’re not just seeing a movement of God, we’re seeing movements multiply in various places across [that region].

“We’re standing on the shoulders of guys like William Carey that started that prayer movement 200 years ago and worked seven years for one convert.”

In one state in India, seven out of 10 people are accepting Jesus the first time they hear about Him, Tozer said. “It’s the Lord’s timing more than anything else,” he said.

One of the churches these nationals have planted is in Charlotte.

“We’re seeing the task remain the same – God calling all of us to join Him in that Great Commission as it’s multiplying around the world,” he said.

Tozer and his family had to move back to the United States a couple of years ago after his son hit his head and developed epilepsy.

He urged the attendees to “keep in mind the task is constant; God is calling us. He’s calling you and your church.”

He asked for prayers for the International Mission Board in the changes that are happening with recent request for volunteers to come back and find other employment.

Nations are coming

With 154 distinct people groups living in the eight urban centers in North Carolina, Register said the BSC is starting the Peoples Next Door NC initiative.

“We want to help facilitate your church in engaging them here in the state but in the partner areas,” he said. “We want you to help you go back to their homeland ... reaching them for the cause of Christ.”

Register led the group to gather around each of the partner representatives to close in prayer.

The Office of Great Commission Partnerships also used its booth in the exhibit hall during the BSC annual meeting to have a drawing for ball caps from some of the partner areas as well as a few partial and one full scholarship to a North American partner city. There was also a partial scholarship to Southeast Asia.

Kelli Creswell, MNYBA church planting administrator, also attended the breakfast.

*Name changed. **BR**

Gospel

Continued from page 1

Mission Board] missionaries as church planters or church revitalizers.”

David Platt, IMB president, announced a plan on Aug. 27 to draw down 600-800 IMB staff and missionaries as part of a financial overhaul of the organization. One component of that plan includes a voluntary retirement incentive for older missionaries that meet specific criteria. It is likely that some missionaries accepting the retirement offer will relocate from the international mission field to North Carolina.

The convention’s financial policy states that a particular reserve account, overseen by the EC, is required to maintain an amount that ranges from 10-20 percent of the budget.

The account currently holds slightly more than \$4 million, about \$1 million more than the required minimum. Baker wants EC members to allocate that overage to help returning missionaries become involved in ministry across the state.

“Their assistance to reach the people groups among us in North Carolina would be greatly beneficial,” said Baker.

Brindley acknowledged the request, but protocol required no action by the EC or convention messengers at that time.

Building healthy churches & reaching nations

In a move that advances the convention’s mission strategy – “Impacting lostness through disciple-making” – Milton Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer announced a new initiative to help weak and dying local churches become healthy and vibrant. Hollifield received approval Nov. 2 by the EC to create a ministry team titled “Church Health and Revitalization Team.”

“The local church is the key for us as a convention of churches to be able to impact lostness through disciple-making,” said Hollifield.

“Growing healthy, outwardly focused, disciple-making churches throughout North Carolina is necessary to seeing this strategic mission accomplished.”

Chuck Register, BSC executive leader for Church Planting and Missions Partnerships, announced an initiative to aid churches as they try to reach people with the gospel in the 154 distinct people groups now living in the state. Peoples Next Door N.C. provides resources at peoplesnextdoornc.org on how to discover, engage and share Christ with internationals living in U.S. communities.

“God in His sovereignty has brought the world to our doorstep,” said Register.

“He has given us the opportunity to reach some of the most unreached peoples of the world and to reach them right here in our cities, in our towns and in our neighborhoods. We can reach them here, and as we reach them here, we can watch the gospel flow through them back to their homelands.”

Messengers passed two resolutions. One addressed ministry among immigrants, stating, “that local churches should seek to encourage distinctly biblical responses to the realities of immigration, framing our individual and corporate responses to the immigrants among us as a matter of Christian discipleship that should be informed, first and foremost, by the principles of scripture.”

Jarrold Scott, pastor of Green Pines Baptist Church in Knightdale and author of the “Resolution on impacting lostness among immigrants,” addressed messengers from the floor of the convention, saying, “the call here is not to necessarily look at [immigration] just as every American might look at this, but to look at this like Christ has asked us to look at it.”

The BSC Executive Committee voted during their Nov. 2 meeting to reclassify a current staff position to reach the state’s rising Hispanic population. Antonio Santos, current leader of the Church Strengthening Team, will fill the Hispanic strategy coordinator position, which will be assigned to the Strategic Focus Team.

About 176 messengers and visitors witnessed a glimpse of eternity at the Heavenly Banquet on Nov. 3. People of Vietnamese, Chinese, Filipino, Hispanic and other cultures and ethnicities gathered to celebrate diversity and disciple-making among all people groups.

A band from Christ Community Fellowship Church, a Congolese congregation that meets at Open Door Church in Raleigh, led a time of worship through music. They sang in both English and French.

Ken Tan, consultant for leadership development, said he tries to invite a speaker of a different nationality every year. On this ninth year of the banquet, Ed Tablazon, pastor of Triad Journey Church, a Filipino-international congregation in Winston-Salem, shared the message.

He encouraged the attendees to multiply disciples of all peoples through relationships with Christ and with others, being transformed in maturing faith and reproducing one’s self in new disciples.

“Disciple-making, before it is a task, is a call to a relationship with Christ,” Tablazon said.

He explained that discipleship is rooted in following Jesus, not a program,

pointing to Matthew 4:19, “*And he said to them, ‘Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.’*”

Effective cooperation

Each of the three current convention officers were reelected to their positions for the following year.

Timmy Blair Sr., pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier, will continue to serve as president for 2016; Cameron McGill, pastor of Dublin First Baptist Church, will serve as first vice-president; and Joel Stephens, pastor of Westfield Baptist Church, will serve as second vice-president.

Three motions were approved by messengers.

Two of them increased attendance requirements for board and committee members. A third motion extended the ability for the Committee on Convention Meetings to request a speaker for the annual meeting from one year in advance to two.

Another resolution passed by messengers expressed appreciation for the late Hal Younts, who restored and maintained the 1802 Sandy Creek Baptist Church Meeting House, a vital piece of Baptist history.

The BSC Historical Committee led a tour of Sandy Creek Baptist Church during the two-day annual meeting. Nathan Morton, chairman of the historical committee, said the committee is more active than ever.

“True history seeks to record, preserve and state the events, personalities and the facts of the past to the same degree and in the same light in which they occurred,” he said.

The committee has:

- begun the application process with the state of North Carolina to place historical markers commemorating key



Messengers to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s annual meeting Nov. 2-3 re-elected Joel Stephens, left, Timmy Blair, center, and Cameron McGill to their respective offices. (BSC photo by K Brown)

events, places and personalities relating to N.C. Baptists.

- begun to take more active role of the Baptist collection held at Wake Forest University.

- launched pilot program of an online tool to assist all N.C. Baptists in recording, preserving and writing their own local church histories.

- begun what it hopes to be annual tours of the Sandy Creek Baptist Church, which has historical significance for Southern Baptists and North Carolinians.

Morton announced Calvary Baptist Church in Mount Airy as this year’s historical writing award recipient for its book, *To God Be the Glory: the Centennial History of Calvary Baptist Church 1913-2013*.

Lee Pigg, pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe, preached the convention sermon, calling fellow North Carolina Baptists to obey Jesus’ command to make disciples. “We’ve been focusing for a long time as Baptists on making converts instead of making disciples,” he said in the closing session. “A convert in my definition is someone who simply does not want to go to hell. But a disciple is someone who is willing to follow Christ.”

The 2016 annual meeting is scheduled for Nov. 14-15. David Platt is scheduled as next year’s convention speaker.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Dianna L. Cagle, BR Production Editor, and Liz Tablazon, BR Circulation and Social Media manager, contributed to this story.) **BR**

Winners

Continued from page 9

- *Reframe-From the God We’ve Made ... To God With Us* by Brian Hardin was chosen by Renee Gregory.

- *Onward* by Russell Moore was chosen by Josh Korth of Green Pines Baptist Church in Knightdale.

- *The Biggest Story* by Kevin DeYoung was chosen by Rodney Clemmons of Red Hill Baptist Church in Polkton.

- *Faith on Trial* by Pamela Binnings Ewen was chosen by Brenda Gaskins of Bunn Baptist Church. Two Bibles were given away at the North Caro-

lina Ministers’ Wives meeting Nov. 2. A Holman Christian Standard Bible (HCSB) Super Giant Print Reference Bible (Pink Leather Touch) was given to the woman who had been married the longest. Lila Murdock has been married to Paul, the interim pastor at Grandview Baptist Church in Waynesville, for 57 years.

An HCSB Compact Ultrathin Bible (Pink Leather Touch) was given to Ginnie Varnam, whose husband, Devon, is senior pastor of Tar Heel Baptist Church in Tar Heel. Varnam was the youngest wife in attendance. **BR**

Pigg

Continued from page 7

about their relationship of living together. He “decided to leave the conviction up to the Holy Spirit.”

A few weeks later the couple told the pastor they needed to be baptized, so they were baptized. Soon after that they told Pigg they needed to be married, and he performed their wedding. “Their lives were transformed by God,” not by men, he said.

The kind of change the couple experienced is explained in Romans 12:2, “*do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed ...*” Pigg said, “Transformation takes place by the renewing of our mind by the Holy Spirit of God.”

He said the key to a changed life is submission. “To be transformed we must submit to the authority of Christ and do as He has said to do to make disciples.”

The fourth point states, “Making disciples results in multiplication.”

Pigg said, “A convert supposedly gets saved; they go to church; they struggle to try to do the right thing; they never develop relationship with Christ; they never have much fruit in their life. That is why 95 percent of the people in our churches never lead another person to Christ, ... and they don’t tithe either. I think there is very little difference in a convert and a lost person.”

Referring to the theme verse of the meeting, 2 Timothy 2:2, he illustrated the multiplication principle that Paul taught Timothy. “If you win 1,000 people to Christ every day, it will take 16,427 years to lead everyone in the world to Christ,” Pigg said.

However if you only lead one person to Christ every year and disciple that person, and the next year each of you win one person to Christ and disciple them, and continue the multiplication process, you will win the whole world to Christ in 32 years.

His closing challenge posed several questions: “Will you make disciples? Will you follow Christ and be a



Lee Pigg, senior pastor of Hopewell Baptist Church in Monroe, delivers the convention sermon Nov. 3 during the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting. (BSC photo by K Brown)

disciple? Will you be transformed? Will you keep His commandments and make disciples?”

Pigg said he considered closing the sermon with a “guilt trip,” but he knew that would not produce lasting results. So, he highlighted Jesus’ last words, “Go and make disciples.” Pigg concluded, “If that doesn’t motivate us, nothing will.” ■



Bill Barker, right, director of Appalachian Regional Ministry (ARM), presents Milton A. Hollifield Jr., Baptist State Convention of North Carolina executive director-treasurer, with a lithograph titled “Hope” by Mitchell Tolle of Berea, Ky., commemorating the partnership between North Carolina and ARM, which is a ministry of the North American Mission Board (NAMB). Since ARM began in 1999, more than 75,000 professions of faith have been made. In 2012, ARM started Christmas backpacks. With N.C. Baptists help, Barker said almost 60,000 have been delivered. Barker also offered greetings from NAMB president Kevin Ezell. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

JOY

Continued from page 6

longest. Lila Murdock has been married to Paul, the interim pastor at Grandview Baptist Church in Waynesville, for 57 years.

Another Bible was given to Ginnie Varnam, whose husband, Devon, is senior pastor of Tar Heel Baptist Church in Tar Heel. Varnam was the youngest wife in attendance. LifeWay Christian Resources made the Bible available to the *Biblical Recorder* for giveaways during the Baptist State Convention’s (BSC) annual meeting. There were more prizes given away at the booth in the exhibit hall. A complete list is on page 9.

Next year’s annual meeting will be held in Greensboro on the morning of Nov. 14, 2016, which is the first day of the BSC’s annual meeting.

Dorothy Patterson, professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, is the scheduled speaker.

She is the wife of Paige Patterson, who serves as SWBTS president. Funds from the BSC Embrace Women’s Ministries and Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary will help defray the cost of the event.

For more photos visit BRnow.org/Photo-Gallery. ■



D.A. Carson, above, and Gary Jennings, below, were among the featured pastors during the 2015 Pastors’ Conference. (BSC photos by K Brown)

Word

Continued from page 4

another world; but still I am not what I once used to be, and by the grace of God I am what I am.”

Greg Lawson, pastor of Union Chapel Baptist Church in Zebulon and SEBTS professor of Christian education, preached from Ecclesiastes 12:9-14. Two points shaped Lawson’s message: (1) fear God and keep his commandments, and (2) judgment is coming.

“We’re not to fear anyone nor anything except Almighty God,” said Lawson. “Those who have not learned a proper fear of God are tormented by a thousand lesser fears,” he added, saying it was a foundational statement in his life and ministry.

Lawson also explained two judgments from the scriptures, the judgment of all people and a judgment of Christian works referenced in 1 Corinthians 3:12-15. “Is it your kingdom come or is it God’s Kingdom come?” he asked, calling ministers to lay a ministerial foundation that is glorifying to God.

Johnny Hunt, 25-year pastor of First Baptist Church in Woodstock, Ga., concluded the pastors’ conference with a message from Psalm 119:81-88 titled “Wineskin in Smoke.”

Explaining what the psalmist means by “*I have become like a wineskin in the smoke*,” Hunt said the Christian soul often feels fragile and brittle like a leather satchel that’s been dried by hot, smoky drafts. The Christian life is full of trouble, Hunt said, but it is not without hope. “Never question in the dark what you’ve learned in the light,” he added, quoting the popular 19th century Baptist preacher C.H. Spurgeon. “Questioning, but not without answers” and “trusting, but not without truth” are two other ways Hunt describes the psalmist in the passage. “Keep remembering,” he said, “God is faithful, and His word is faithful.”

To view highlights from conference sermons, go to vimeo.com/ncbaptist. See more photos at BRnow.org/Photo-Gallery. Next year’s pastors’ conference president Cameron McGill extended a welcome to all veterans to attend the 2016 N.C. Pastors’ Conference Sunday evening session, where military service men and women will be honored. Chip Hannah was elected as vice president, and Dale Robertson as secretary-treasurer. Presidents are elected two years in advance. Timmy Blair Sr. will serve as the 2017 president. ■



35 new IMB missionaries appointed

By TESS RIVERS | International Mission Board

Joseph Somkhith* understands the plight of today's 60 million refugees. He once lived as one. Somkhith was 10 years old when he and his brother fled Laos after a communist takeover in the mid-1970s. The two boys crossed the Mekong River into Thailand, facing what Somkhith described as "insecurity and violence" along the way. Nearly a year later, Somkhith's family was reunited in a refugee camp in Thailand.

"My family separated from each other for the sake of saving our lives," Somkhith recalled. "Living in the camp was comparable to a zoo, but soon we had the opportunity to go to America ... the land of liberty and freedom."

Somkhith and his wife Rebecca* were two of 35 candidates appointed missionaries by International Mission Board (IMB) trustees Nov. 8 during a service at First Baptist Church of New Orleans. The new missionaries join IMB workers around the world serving in global cities and hard places such as jungles, deserts and war-zones.

Preaching from Revelation 5:1-14, IMB President David Platt challenged the congregation to be willing to go wherever and whenever God wants them to go because the sovereignty and grace of God demand it.

"As a Christian, you have surrendered the right to determine the direction of your life," he said. "You can't be a disciple of Jesus if you don't renounce everything."

While Platt acknowledged this level of commitment might cause some people to fear, he reminded the congregation, "Don't forget who you are saying this to. You're saying this to the God who loves you. He knows so much better than you what is best for your life."

Somkhith realized these truths as a young teen, shortly after he and his family resettled as refugees in the United States.

"When I read the Bible story of Joseph, I felt God speak to my heart," Somkhith said. "Joseph's story



Above, Jake and Dodie Glover worship along with other appointees at the International Mission Board (IMB) missionary service held Nov. 8 at First Baptist Church in New Orleans. At right, in the moments leading up to the appointment service, IMB President David Platt, kneeling, spends time in prayer with IMB's newest missionaries. (IMB photos by Thomas Graham)

related to mine ... I felt alone, frightened and abandoned (escaping Laos)."

But he realized God, whom he hadn't known at the time, had protected him along the way. "I could have been killed on the road but somehow was saved," he said. "I could have been thrown into the Mekong River while on a canoe, but arrived at the camp safely. I could be one of those who was kidnapped and sold into slavery."

This new understanding of God's sovereignty and grace led Somkhith to put his faith in Jesus and, years later, to commit to taking the gospel to people living in hard places. The decision to "go" is the natural response for any believer – like Somkhith – who fully understands the glory of God, Platt said.

"People who really believe God is glorious, will give their lives to make Him known," Platt said. "God's purpose is not just to save you. God's purpose is to send you."

Because past missionaries also followed God's call to hard places, Rebecca Somkhith stood alongside her husband, a visible testimony to the power of God to change lives through generations.



Rebecca's grandmother, a widow with five children, heard the gospel in her village in Laos from American missionaries, turned from the animal sacrifices required by her religion and gave her life to Christ. She also led her children to faith in Jesus, who led their children, including Rebecca, to follow Him.

"Because of this woman, every one of her descendants thus far is a child of God," Rebecca said. "I have never met a braver woman than my grandma."

Her grandmother's bravery encouraged Rebecca to seek God for her own life. And now she plans to work among an unreached people and declare His glory among the nations.

Platt said, "Unreached are people who have not yet been reached by the gospel. Apart from Christ they have no hope.

"More than 2.8 billion people find themselves in that position."

Rebecca noted, "I know this is the right time.

"We are called to leave the comfort of our country to go to the land of the lost, just as our brother and sister missionaries brought the good news to us long ago."

*Names changed. ■■

Leaders honored, budget approved

International Mission Board

International Mission Board (IMB) trustees recognized four key leaders who represent IMB's global engagement with the gospel and unanimously approved the organization's 2016 budget designed to enable IMB's mission to make disciples and multiply churches among unreached people and places. The business was conducted during trustees' quarterly business meeting Nov. 5-6.

During a time of special recognition Thursday evening, trustees honored the service of retiring leaders Terry and Vicki Lassiter; Tim and Charlotte Cearley; Tom and Janet Williams; and David and Judy Steverson. IMB President David Platt and his wife Heather led the recognition of the personnel, who have accepted IMB's voluntary retirement incentive.

The voluntary retirement incentive is the first phase of a financial plan, which involves reducing IMB staff and personnel by at least 600 people, in response to revenue shortfalls. The goal of the plan, IMB leaders shared, is to offer as generous a voluntary retirement incentive as possible, while honoring years of service and providing a smooth transition for the personnel.

The number of personnel accepting the retirement incentive is still not final, Platt said, because decisions are still being confirmed, and also because leadership is committed to "zealously safeguard" the integrity of the process. Nov. 2 marked a milestone when eligible personnel indicated whether or not they wish to receive or reject the incentive.

The Nov. 2 decision is not official until personnel sign an agreement the first week of December – and that decision can still be rescinded up to Dec. 11.

In January 2016, the second phase – a "hand-raising opportunity" – provides the opportunity for all personnel and staff to pray about whether the Lord is leading them to a new place of involvement in missions outside the IMB.

'Partnership of trust'

Also during the meeting, trustees approved the 2016 budget as presented.

The 2016 budget proposes expenditures of \$278,755,000, which is \$22,580,000 higher than the projected receipts of \$256,175,000. The projected deficit will be covered from reserves and is almost entirely ex-

plained by one-time costs associated with the voluntary retirement incentive.

Four key factors were presented with the budget:

- Lottie Moon giving projections for 2015-16 were based on a historical projection of the past four years' gifts rather than equal to the offering's "stretch" goal.

- The impact of the voluntary retirement incentive on the budget is based on the assumption that at least 600 people will accept the retirement incentive, which results in a cost savings in 2016 of \$38.6 million. However, the one-time costs associated with the incentive are projected at \$23.1 million, resulting in a net savings in 2016 of \$15.5 million.

- Global engagement expenses will decrease by \$7.5 million, but the per capita spending will increase by 10 percent per field personnel.

- Proceeds from property sales have not been factored into the 2016 budget. Any property sale receipts are planned to replenish and stabilize IMB's reserves.

IMB trustees will reconvene Feb. 22-23, 2016, in Richmond, Va.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – Julie McGowan, an editor and writer for IMB wrote the full story that is available at BRnow.org.) ■■

‘Shadow’ missionaries disciple young leaders in Philippines

By PAIGE TURNER | International Mission Board

When someone shouted, “Your uncle is coming,” everyone in the Philippine village knew the code meant “run and hide.” Neighbors disappeared into small concrete homes until International Mission Board (IMB) missionaries Dave and Ivette Daggett had come and gone.

A few, however, including 13-year-old Berlyn Familiaran, stuck around to hear what the foreigners had to say.

The curious teenager planned only to sit in and listen during the Saturday Bible studies, nothing more. But even that angered her parents and the host of other family members living in her poor community.

That’s because they are among an unreached Filipino people group considered predominantly Catholic, but, as Dave explained, steeped in idol worship and animism, insular and fearful of anything new that threatens religious traditions.

“We felt like that was such a difficult

community, if we could ever see anything prosper there, surely it would prosper anywhere in the city. So we just kept going back,” he said.

Berlyn kept going back, too. Something about this husband and wife team from Florida was different. Berlyn couldn’t believe they had learned her language and wanted to teach her worship songs in her language.

These foreigners knew about the drugs and violence in her community and about her dad, who was in and out of jail. Yet they encouraged her, Berlyn said, and they kept praying for her family.

Berlyn was baptized just a little more than a year after meeting the Daggetts.

“The joy was really in my heart. I can feel the presence of the Lord, even when we have problems in our family,” she said. “I want to be the testimony to my community.”

As Berlyn continued sharing the gospel with her family and inviting them to Bible studies with the Daggetts, the walls of resistance crumbled. Before they knew it, Dave, Ivette and Berlyn were starting a



Thess Olave, far left, International Mission Board missionaries Ivette Daggett, left, and Dave Daggett, center, and Rodel Manalo, right, fellowship over a meal in the Philippines. Thess and Rodel are the couple’s main partners and leaders within the Deaf churches they work with. (IMB photo)

church. “Some of the parents have come to Christ and been baptized, but most don’t take the leadership challenge,” Dave said. “It’s the younger ones who have stepped up in leadership. They share the gospel with their friends and are going with us to evangelize in other areas.”

Eleven years ago when he and Ivette hosted a Vacation Bible School and met Berlyn, Dave had no idea that God would so powerfully use the teenager who said she came to VBS only for free snacks.

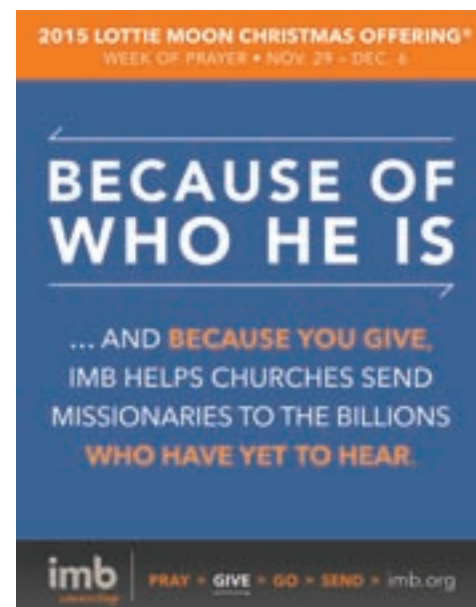
Or that other children and teenagers from her family would trust in Jesus, become leaders in the village church, help start a church in another village and help disciple young leaders in that church, which they’re praying will start a third-generation church.

“We’re just doing what we believe is the heart of God. Somehow you sense His heart and when you go that direction, He just provides in supernatural ways,” Dave said.

Equipping local believers for ministry was always the plan, so Dave and Ivette disciple those who step up, despite their youth. They even disciple Deaf youth and adults, and God has used them to start several Deaf churches.

Working primarily with leaders who are young and energetic could easily become a tiring task for a couple in their 60s. Yet for the Daggetts, it’s like getting their “second wind.”

Financial gifts through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions and Cooperative Program help make it possible for the Daggetts to serve in the Philippines and host weekly training sessions and Bible studies that



equip youth to lead their churches and to train others to lead.

“Berlyn, you want to come up now?” Dave said as he handed over the microphone so she could lead worship during a Saturday evening training session with leaders from her church and the second-

generation church.

That’s how it usually goes for these self-proclaimed “shadow missionaries” who push forward their young Filipino leaders.

“If we want to reach Filipinos, what better way than with other Filipinos? We

can’t do it all,” Dave said.

Serving with the Daggetts in ministries such as medical and dental clinics, anti-smoking and dental hygiene seminars, and True Love Waits seminars is a perfect opportunity for “on-the-job training,” as Berlyn likes to call it.

“Berlyn, what’s your favorite story

See Leaders page 16

A SIMPLE QUESTION

One of the privileges of my assignment to serve North Carolina Baptists is the honor to preach in many churches across our great state. On one such occasion recently, I had the double honor of joining the pastor and his wife for lunch after the service at a local restaurant.

After our server took our order, the pastor told her that we would be praying for our meal and asked if we could pray for her. The server’s eyes began to water as she explained that her newlywed husband was struggling with alcoholism.

We listened and promised to pray for her and her husband. My friend continued to talk to her about faith and a relationship with Jesus. After sharing with her briefly, the server asked if she could bring one of her friends over for prayer.

It was next, when our server stopped a third member of the wait staff, that I realized this was not an uncommon practice for the pastor and his wife. The third server looked at the wife and said, “I know her, she prays for me every time she comes in here.”

These three employees were so delighted to have customers praying

for them and share with them the hope of Jesus Christ.

So, here are the things I learned from my friends:

1. Treat people like you want to be treated. My friends saw these servers as fellow human beings and loved them as neighbors by asking and listening.
2. Pray and ask your servers if you can pray for them.
3. Share the hope of Jesus Christ.



BRIAN UPSHAW

Once the door was opened, my friend was able to encourage the server to seek a relationship with Jesus Christ.

4. Be a regular customer. My friend’s wife was recognized as an ambassador for Christ because of her consistent witness at this restaurant over time.

In less than three minutes, in the hustle of a Sunday lunch crowd, my friends were able to encourage these servers and demonstrate a life of consistent love for neighbor. It all began with a simple question: “May we pray for you?”

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Brian Upshaw is the church health and revitalization team leader at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Contact (800) 395-5102, ext. 5632, or bupshaw@ncbaptist.org.)



Jon Jon Ray “June” Familaran (yellow shirt) and his wife Berlyn (white shirt) and other participants of the youth leadership team from Dagatan Keystone Christian Church in the Philippines gather for a time of worship before preparing for the next day’s True Love Waits event. (IMB photo)

Leaders Continued from page 15

from the Bible?” Dave asked once while traveling with her and several of her cousins to an outreach event.

The story of God saving Adam and Eve, she told him.

“OK, you will tell the story today in front of these people,” Berlyn recalled Dave’s response.

“He’s always telling us, ‘Don’t forget the two Ps.’ Passion and practice. Always be passionate and always practice [sharing testimony and Bible stories] so people will be amazed that the Lord is working in your life.”

Passion to see the gospel change lives is what drives this couple who rarely seem to take a breather as they go from one training, outreach event or discipleship meeting to the next.

“We rarely travel alone,” Dave said as he headed out the door and Filipinos squished into the back of his car so they could help lead a True Love Waits seminar.

The Daggetts didn’t expect children and teenagers like Berlyn to be the catalysts in helping move ministry from zero to church multiplication, but they’ve learned to embrace every opportunity God gives.

“It’s a surprise a minute,” Dave said. “This can only happen because of God.”

Find resources for churches at imb.org/offering to learn more about and promote the Lottie Moon offering.

Related video available at vimeo.com/139497069.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Paige Turner is a writer living in South-east Asia.) **BR**

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(The numbers above are taken from the 2014 Annual Statistical Report, a summary of Southern Baptist work overseas in 2013. For up-to-date statistics, go to public.imb.org/globalresearch.)

Bannertown's 'old sanctuary' destroyed

By SETH BROWN | BR Content Editor

Bannertown Baptist Church in Mt. Airy lost one of its facilities Nov. 8 after a fire ripped through their “old sanctuary.” No one was injured in the blaze. The cause of the fire is still under investigation, but no foul play is suspected, according to news reports.

The old sanctuary was previously home to the church’s youth ministry program and a number of Sunday School classrooms. Another building on the property, the “new sanctuary,” received smoke damage but was untouched by the fire, said the church’s website.

Local news reported that Bannertown’s youth were meeting outdoors when the youth minister’s wife smelled smoke and called authorities. Other church members were meeting on campus when the fire occurred, said the church’s website, but everyone evacuated safely.

“We were blessed that people were here, because if that fire had burned 10 more minutes before the fire department was called, then they probably wouldn’t have saved the new church,” a Bannertown deacon, Sam Holder, told reporters. “It was a blessing we were here, but another blessing no one was hurt. I think it worked out the best it could.”



A view through the front door of Bannertown Baptist Church's old sanctuary shows where the roof collapsed after a fire. (Bannertown Facebook photo)

Monetary gifts may be mailed to: Bannertown Baptist Church, Attn: Building Fund, 1834 Westfield Road, Mount Airy, NC 27030. **BR**



Sandy Creek History Tour

For the first time, messengers to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) had an opportunity Nov. 2 to tour the site of Sandy Creek Primitive Baptist Church and the beginning of the church planting movement in North Carolina and beyond. The BSC Historical Committee planned and facilitated the event. They arranged for participants to be transported from the annual meeting site in Greensboro to Sandy Creek Baptist Church in Liberty and back. Organized in 1755 by Elder Shubal Stearns, Daniel Marshall and 14 others, the church planted church after church. By 1829 there were more than 1,000 churches that had begun via Sandy Creek. The church maintains this building along with the cemetery where Stearns was buried. The newer church building for Sandy Creek has reminders of the church’s past. (Photo by Jeff Mayfield)

Change Continued from page 3

We’ve all seen that happen, of course – but older folks have often seen it happen many times. In fact, sometimes they’ve been there multiple times to clean up the mess when a poorly handled change leads to disruption and division.

5. No one has helped them understand the “why” behind changes.

You may disagree with me, but I’m convinced that many older folks are willing to accept change as long as they understand the reasons behind the change.

They’ve been around long enough to know that we should be able to explain and defend our reasoning in a logical and loving way. If we can’t – or won’t – do that, why should they accept the change?

6. They’ve seen change that they believe really has

led to compromise. Growing up, they never dreamed that drums would be in the church, women would wear pants to church or the Bible would be anything different than the King James Version.

We may not agree with what they believe is “right,” but sometimes their fear of change comes from a genuine, heartfelt desire to avoid seeming compromise.

7. They’ve watched some pastors lead poorly through change.

They’ve been there when pastors “ran over” faithful church members to implement change.

They’ve seen others ignore the loving advice of church leaders. When you’ve seen enough leaders harm the church through poor leadership, any change produces anxiety.

8. Change often means loss.

To move in one direction usually means moving away from another direction. Adopting a new program requires giving up an old one.

For older folks who are sometimes already facing loss, loss in church – their place of security – is even more difficult.

When I think about these honest reasons, I can minister better to folks struggling with change. What other honest reasons would you add to this list?

(*EDITOR’S NOTE – Chuck Lawless currently serves as professor of evangelism and missions, dean of graduate studies at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and as president of The Lawless Group, a consulting group for church leaders. This post first appeared at chucklawless.com.*) **BR**

Submissions

The *Biblical Recorder* is pleased to publish staff changes, church news and events with a statewide interest. Please send information immediately following an event, or for opportunity corner, send at least two months in advance. Include cost and contact information in your email or correspondence. All submissions will be subjected to *Biblical Recorder* styles and guidelines and will be edited. Send to dianna@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512. Call (919) 847-2127.

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AROUND THE STATE

Obituary

RICHARD DAVIS SMITH SR. died Oct. 29. He was a Wake Forest College (now university) and Southeastern Seminary graduate. He served in the U.S. Navy at the end of World War II. He was pastor of Spring Branch Baptist Church in Sampson County, Round Hill Baptist Church in Rutherford County, and in 1961 he began serving at the Baptist State Convention in the Sunday School department. He moved to church building and planning department and business manager before retiring in 1991. He was interim pastor of several churches and pastor of Carolina Pines Baptist Church, Raleigh. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, Jean Paylor Smith, his two children, Richard Davis Smith Jr. of Brevard and Beckie Smith Leone of Greensboro; two grandchildren; four step-grandchildren.

Memorials to: Forest Hills Baptist Church in Raleigh or Raleigh Rescue Mission.

Staff changes

JERRY LACEFIELD has been called as pastor by Oak Forest Baptist Church, Fletcher. Previously Lacefield served for 14 years as a pastor in Booneville, Ky.

Yancey Baptist Association has called **JOSEPH MILLER** as director of missions. He was serving as pastor at Hankins Baptist Church, Marion.

Retirement

ROY HELMS, pastor of Corinth Baptist Church, Monroe, has announced his retirement after 31 years of full-time ministry to churches in North Carolina and South Carolina. He will continue to reside in Monroe and will be available for pulpit supply, interim pastorates, and revivals after Jan. 1, 2016. Contact (704) 254-5589 or preacherhelms@aol.com.

November 29 BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE December 6

When Opposition Strikes

Focal passage: Acts 4:23-31

Some time ago, *The Daily Bread* shared comments from 20th century evangelist Paul Rader concerning the Christians who were martyred in the early church. They wrote, “In ancient Rome, crowds by the tens of thousands would gather in the Colosseum to watch as Christians were torn apart by wild animals.” Paul Rader, commenting on his visit to this famous landmark, said, “I stood uncovered to the heavens above, where He sits for whom they gladly died, and asked myself, ‘Would I, could I, die for Him tonight to get this gospel to the ends of the earth?’”

“I prayed most fervently in that Roman arena for the spirit of a martyr,” Rader continued, “and for the working of the Holy Spirit in my heart, as He worked in Paul’s heart when He brought him on his handcuffed way to Rome.” Those early Christians “lived on the threshold of heaven, within a heartbeat of home, no possessions to hold them back.”



BARTLEY WOOTEN
Pastor, Beulaville Baptist Church

Rader’s words serve as both inspiration and prayer for us to stand bold in the face of persecution. Have you ever thought how you would respond if you were threatened for sharing your faith?

I believe this week’s lesson can give us much needed help in answering that question. Prior to our focal verses the disciples Peter and John were warned not to speak the good news of the risen Christ or they would face severe punishment. When they returned to their friends they shared what happened to them and they all began to seek God in prayer.

Instead of praying for God to deliver them from future suffering, they asked the Lord for continued strength to speak the word boldly (Acts 4:29). I believe their prayers serve as a catalyst for us not to back down when suffering comes, but to fully trust in God’s sovereign hand. I believe Rader had it right – just like those early Christians – the temporary suffering in this world cannot compare to the eternal reward of being found faithful before our King. Will you stand up for Christ?

Adopted into God’s Family

Focal passage: 1 John 3:1-10

I will always remember the moment that Laura and I received Solomon into our care. We were in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Our driver came and picked us up from the guest house and drove us through the city into the hills and up to a gated house full of orphaned children. Laura and I stood outside the gate while one of the agency case workers went inside, and after a few moments, our agency worker opened the gate and walked out into the street and handed us our son.

We turned and got back into the van and got situated. As the van pulled off Solomon started screaming and crying frantically. This little child had no clue what was going on. We were pulling baby Solomon away from everything he had ever known. But after a few minutes, he reached his little arms around Laura’s neck and tightened his grip and held on for dear life.

It was moving to see Solomon hold



MATT CAPPS
Pastor, Fairview Baptist Church, Apex

onto Laura, but what really mattered, was Laura holding onto Solomon. Laura and I knew where we were going. We also knew that he was our son.

Solomon came to understand this reality as time went on.

Since that moment, I have never been able to read passages like 1 John 3:1-10 the same: “*See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.*”

As J.I. Packer once said in his classic book, *Knowing God*: “If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God’s child, and having God as his Father.”

As we live the Christian life, we must realize that years may transpire before the believer who is adopted by God may know that he is adopted, have a deep sense of feeling of it. We live in the comfort and hope of our loving Father’s arms. And as we grow, that reality shapes us more and more as we head towards eternity.

November 29 EXPLORE THE BIBLE December 6

God Provides

Focal passage: Genesis 24:1-17

How fitting that we are in the midst of a season that is designated for giving thanks when we close this series on the story of Abraham. We have much to be thankful for in how God has provided so abundantly in our lives and in the lives of those who have gone before us in faith.

How He has provided for the needs of His people in a way that is consistent with His eternal plan. We see this displayed in the beautiful (and romantic) unfolding of how He brings Rebekah to Isaac in Genesis 24. First, there is an assignment given by Abraham to a trusted servant: “*the oldest of the household, who had charge of all that he had*” (v. 2). He tells his servant to return to his homeland and find a wife for Isaac. He desires for his son to have a bride from his kindred, and not from the daughters of the Canaanites (vv. 3-4). Abraham confidently declares that God will direct his servant to the



HILARY RATCHFORD
Member, Hickory Grove Baptist Church, Charlotte

right woman. The servant is obedient to his master’s directions and makes the long journey back to the land of Abraham’s relatives. Upon his arrival, he prays and asks God to bring the one whom He has appointed for Isaac. As a sign, the servant asks for a woman who will not only provide water for him to drink, but also for his camels as well. By this, he will know that the Lord has shown steadfast love to Abraham (v. 14).

Scripture records that “*before he had finished speaking,*” Rebekah appears (v. 15). God answered the servant’s prayer immediately with her arrival at the well. Although Rebekah was described as “*very attractive in appearance,*” the servant observes her first to test her character before he reveals his assignment. Later in the chapter, we witness the servant sharing the story of God’s provision to Rebekah and her family as well as to Isaac, giving God the glory for His providence. How will you testify to the faithful provision of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob?

The Way Prepared

Focal passage: Matthew 3:1-12

Growing up, I played football in any and every way possible, including the popular Madden video game franchise. I remember the excitement that would build in my heart every year as the late August release date inched closer. However, it was four months away from Christmas! Oh the agony of waiting! But the wait exploded into joy as I received the long-awaited gift on Christmas morning. If a few months felt like forever to a little boy waiting for his favorite game, imagine what four centuries felt like to the people of God during the Intertestamental period of silence.

Imagine the longing to hear God speak through one of His prophets. Then imagine the joy when people realized that John the Baptist’s preaching in the Judean wilderness was the fulfillment of God’s 700 year-old promise in Isaiah 40:2.

God was speaking with His people again – and now through the promised



CLINT DARST
Pastor, Freedom Church, Lincolnton

forerunner, Elijah (Malachi 4:5) – the one making way for the King.

Yet God’s message at first glance does not seem to be a gift. His message is that the reign of Messiah is near, therefore people should turn from their sin and trust in the coming King.

Christ Himself would begin His ministry by preaching the same message (Matthew 4:17).

Repentance comes as an unexpected announcement – especially to the most religious (Matthew 3:7-10). But repentance is God’s gift: the call to reject our enslavement to self and submit to the merciful reign of God. It is the call to be transformed by the King Himself such that we display His beauty and experience His joy. This should characterize the lifestyle of those who belong to the King.

We are unworthy to lace His sandals, yet He is willing to wash not only our feet, but also our hearts with His very blood. Such grace and kindness leads us to live a lifestyle of repentance and faith (Romans 2:4).

Jacumin to serve as NAMB ambassador to North Carolina

By TOBIN PERRY | North American Mission Board

In an effort to thank every pastor and every church in North Carolina for their sacrificial support of the Cooperative Program and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering, the North American Mission Board (NAMB) has asked Pastor Marty Jacumin to serve as the entity's pastoral ambassador to the state.

Jacumin will continue to serve as the senior pastor of Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh, where he has served since 2007. Before that he also served on the church's

staff from 1998 to 2004. Throughout his time at Bay Leaf, the church has made missions a clear priority. He says in recent years the church has transitioned to becoming more of a missions-sending church.

NAMB has asked pastors from each state convention in the South to serve in ambassador roles in an effort to promote a unity of purpose with the Southern Baptist Convention. Besides expressing gratitude on behalf of NAMB leadership, these pastors will become a contact within the state for pastors who have questions. They will also help explain the Send North America strategy.

"First and foremost, I want to thank North Carolina Baptists for what they are doing with Cooperative Program giving and their Annie Armstrong Easter Offering® giving," Jacumin said. "I want to use any bit of influence I have to thank North Carolina Baptists for what they're doing."

He also says he expects to connect N.C. Baptists with NAMB team members who can help them in their efforts to push back lostness in North America.

To contact Jacumin, email him directly at mjacumin@me.com. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Balfour Baptist Church of Asheboro, NC, is seeking candidates for a **full-time senior pastor**. We are a Southern Baptist church connected to the Randolph Baptist Association and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Doctrinally, our church subscribes to the 1963 Baptist Faith and Message. Asheboro is located in central NC, and our church is in a growing community with very diverse ethnic backgrounds. We prefer that candidates have a seminary degree or higher level of education. We also prefer that candidates have at least 5 years of pastoral experience or more in a Southern Baptist church. Resumes with letters of reference can be mailed to Balfour Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, 1642 North Fayetteville St., Asheboro, NC 27203, or can be e-mailed to pastorsearch@balfourchurch.com. We will accept resumes from December 1-December 31, 2015.

Manteo Baptist Church is seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor** for congregation of 150 with blended worship format. As an affiliate of Southern Baptist Convention of N.C. and the Chowan Association, we are accepting resumes from those who hold a seminary degree with at least 5 years pastoral experience. Resume and a sample DVD may be sent by December 31, 2015, to Manteo Baptist Church, Attn. Pastor Search Committee, P.O. Box 670, Manteo, NC 27954, or via e-mail to mbc2015psc@gmail.com.

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

First Baptist Church, Fayetteville, NC, seeks a **full-time senior pastor** to lead our congregation spiritually and administratively; to work collaboratively with all groups in the church and community; and to guide revitalization of our ministries and missions as a downtown church. We affirm both women and men in leadership roles, are affiliated with CBF and SBC, and prefer blended and traditional worship styles. A master's degree from an accredited seminary or divinity school and relevant experience are required. Submit cover letter and resume to psc@fbcfay.com or FBC Pastor Search Committee c/o Steven Lawrence, P.O. Drawer 2737, Fayetteville, NC 28302. Deadline: December 15.

Yadkin Baptist Church in the northern foothills of North Carolina is seeking a **full-time pastor**. This position requires a college degree and Southern Baptist seminary/divinity school degree. This position also requires more than 5 years of pastoral experience with the following ministry priorities. We are seeking a gifted teacher who is an effective communicator of well-prepared sermons, a skilled caregiver and counselor, a person of vision, and one who emphasizes evangelism and the importance of lifestyle witnessing. Resumes may be submitted to Yadkin Baptist Church, Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 37, Patterson, NC 28661, or email to dtownsend@caldwellbaptist.org. Resumes must be submitted by December 15, 2015.

Church Staff

Eastside Baptist Church, Shelby, NC (Southern Baptist/1963 Faith & Message) seeks **full-time Minister of Music and Education**. Responsible for all music programs as well as training and education. Job description/requirements: www.eastsidebaptistshelby.org. Send letter of interest and resume attention: Personal Committee, 1165 Wyke Rd. Shelby, NC 28150, or officeebc@carolina.rr.com.

Bethany Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, NC, is seeking a **part-time Minister of Music** to plan, direct, and coordinate worship for both contemporary and traditional services. See website for more details: www.bethany.ws (3-5 years experience is desired).

Three Forks Baptist Church, Taylorsville N.C., seeking an **Associate Pastor/Youth Pastor**. Mail resumes to attention of Personnel Committee, TFBC, 4685 Three Forks Church Road, Taylorsville, N.C. 28681, or e-mail carsonmoseley123@netzero.net.

Mud Creek Baptist Church in Hendersonville, NC, is searching for a **full-time Children's Minister**. For detailed job specifications and information on how to apply for this position, please visit www.mudcreekchurch.org/jobopportunities.

Bethel Baptist Church is looking for a **part-time worship leader** who will be able to lead a blended worship service. You can view our website, bbnc.net, to find out more about us or email questions to info@bbnc.net. Interested applicants should email their resumes to info@bbnc.net too.

Mountain View Baptist Church of Hamp-tonville, NC, is seeking a **part-time Director of Children's Ministries** (for grades 1-6). Responsibilities include coordinating a Wednesday evening discipleship program, quarterly children events and summer day camp. This position also serves as staff liaison to our Preschool Ministry. Please send resume to mvbc@yadtel.net.

Arlington Baptist Church, Rocky Mount, NC, is seeking a **part-time church organist** to play organ for Sunday morning, Sunday & Wednesday evening, Wednesday rehearsal and special events. E-mail resume to chris@abcsbc.com.

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

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

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

Miscellaneous

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

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Abedini suspends public life, cites marriage woes

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

Naghmeh Abedini said recently in emails to her supporters that she would be suspending public advocacy for her husband, American pastor Saeed Abedini who has been wrongfully held in an Iranian prison since Sept. 2012.

In the announcement she identified marital difficulties as part of her decision, citing “physical, emotional, psychological and sexual abuse (through Saeed’s addiction to pornography),” according to a report by *Christianity Today*.

The pressure of traveling the U.S., generating support for her husband, coupled with the trouble that existed within their marriage, has created a need for her to step back from the public spotlight, said the report.

She has met with President Barack Obama and appeared before the United Nations as part of her campaign for the release of her husband. “It is very serious stuff and I cannot live a lie anymore,” said Abedini. “So, I have decided to take a break from everything and seek the Lord on how to move forward.”

She has recently cancelled some speaking engagements and plans to stay off social media for the coming months.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina released a statement, expressing sympathy and continued support for the Abedinis: “Naghmeh Abedini was a keynote speaker at the N.C. Baptist women’s retreat on Oct. 24. During her talk, she shared comments that included, but was not limited to, the impact of her husband’s imprisonment on her and her family. Just as we prayed for Naghmeh before and during the event, we continue to pray for her and ask others to do the same. She is a person of deep faith, and we support her in what she believes the Lord has called her to do.” **BR**

Billy Graham exhibit opens at N.C. museum

By **K. ALLAN BLUME** | BR Editor

The day before Billy Graham turned 97, the North Carolina Museum of History in Raleigh opened a 5,000-square-foot exhibit honoring the life of the famed Baptist evangelist. The free, privately funded exhibit opened Nov. 6 and will be on view through July 10, 2016.

Graham’s life story is featured in “North Carolina’s Favorite Son: Billy Graham and his Remarkable Journey of Faith.” The exhibit’s title is drawn from the 2013 resolution passed by the N.C. General Assembly honoring the life of Graham’s wife, Ruth Bell Graham, and naming Billy Graham “North Carolina’s Favorite Son.”

“Billy Graham, a native son of North Carolina, is known for his positive impact in our state and around the world,” said Ken Howard, Director of the N.C. Museum of History. “The museum is proud to present his life story in this major exhibition in partnership with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA),” headquartered in Charlotte.

Visitors to the museum can retrace Graham’s steps through personal memorabilia, interactive displays and compelling multimedia that help bring his story to life. They will discover how a Charlotte dairy farmer’s son became a worldwide preacher of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Glimpses of his family life and his leadership in the battle against segregation are part of the exhibit.

Highlights include a look at each of Graham’s 12 North Carolina crusades and other major evangelistic events such as Los Angeles, 1949; London, 1954; New York City, 1957 and South Africa, 1973. His influence among U.S. presidents and other world leaders are reviewed.

“My father was born, raised and lived in this state and he’s proud to be a North Carolinian,” said Franklin Graham, president and CEO of both BGEA and Samari-



tan’s Purse in Boone. “He is the son of a dairyman that God took and used around the world to touch many lives. He gives God glory for everything that was accomplished through his life, and that’s what you’ll see in this exhibit.”

Tom Phillips, vice president of BGEA and executive director of the Billy Graham Library, told representatives of the media the day before the exhibit opened, “Mr. Graham preached the gospel in his lifetime, personally, to more people than anyone in history – 215 million people

in 185 countries. Hundreds of millions more have seen or heard his message for Jesus Christ through television, radio and other means.”

Highlighting Graham’s role in N.C. Phillips added, “You can’t separate the man from the message ... this a major part of the spiritual life of our state.”

In one section of the exhibit Graham is quoted saying, “I am a member of the human race; I am a world citizen. I have a responsibility to my fellow humans – whatever their religion, and I am convinced that only Christ can meet the deepest needs of our world and our hearts.”

Phillips recalled that three days after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attack, in a memorial service at the Washington National Cathedral, Billy Graham comforted the nation saying “My prayer today is that we will feel the loving arms of God wrapped around us and we will know in our hearts that He will never forsake us as we put our trust in Him.”

The N.C. Museum of History is located at 5 E. Edenton Street in downtown Raleigh. It is open Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and on Sunday from noon to 5 p.m.

Church groups are invited to visit. For information or special group arrangements call (919) 807-7900 or visit ncmuseumofhistory.org. **BR**

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