

BR BIBLICAL RECORDER

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North Carolina Baptists LEAD THE WAY IN MISSIONS GIVING

Milton A. Hollifield Jr., above, and David Platt, below, shared some positive news about North Carolina Baptists and their giving. Hollifield is executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Platt serves as the president of the International Mission Board. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

Biblical Recorder & Baptist State Convention staff

North Carolina Baptists gave more than \$32 million dollars to Southern Baptist missions and ministries in the last fiscal year, leading the 42 state conventions in cooperative giving through both the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (more than \$14.6 million) and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (more than \$6 million).

Messengers to the 2016 Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) annual meeting voted to approve a budget that increases the percentage of Cooperative Program funds forwarded to the Southern Baptist Convention for the 2017 fiscal year to 40.5 percent (or \$11,417,637), representing a half-percent increase over last year's allotment. The total budget for 2017 comes to \$30,375,000, which is up nearly 3 percent over 2016.

Milton A. Hollifield Jr., BSC executive director-treasurer, celebrated the sacrificial giving of North Carolina Baptists in his annual report.

"Financial gifts from North Carolina Baptist churches enabled us to forward the largest contributions from North Carolina Baptists to Southern Baptist causes in our history! ... To God be the glory! It is our hope that this level of support for North Carolina Baptist churches will continue to grow in the coming years as North Carolina Baptists continue to embrace the importance of cooperative giving," said Hollifield.

Rising to the occasion

The positive financial report came after a year marked by the devastation of Hurricane Matthew and the International Mission Board's implementation of austerity measures to counteract deficit spending in previous years.

Messengers approved a goal of \$2.1 million for the 2017 North Carolina Missions

Offering, which supports Southern Baptist disaster relief, and collected a special offering of \$6,473.96 for Hurricane Matthew relief and recovery.

Mike Sprayberry, director of North Carolina Emergency Management, expressed appreciation to North Carolina Baptists for their partnership in disaster relief and recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Matthew.

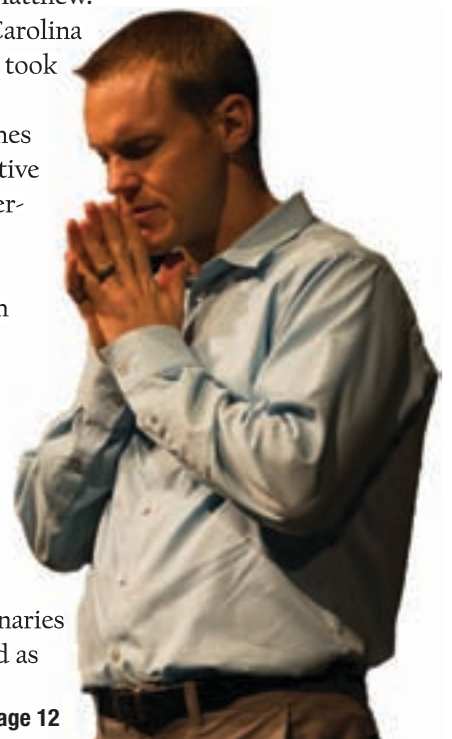
David Platt, IMB president, thanked North Carolina Baptists for giving and supporting the IMB as it took steps to balance the budget.

"Thank you for the way you lead your churches and the way you personally give to the Cooperative Program and to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering," Platt said.

"Thank you specifically for the way you have given over the last year as we've walked through some challenging days in the IMB.

"It's in light of your giving that I'm happy to announce to you tonight that after years of spending millions more dollars than we have received, the IMB just last week approved a balanced budget for 2017, and I'm pleased to announced to you that ... next year we'll not only have a balanced budget but we will increase the number of Southern Baptist missionaries spreading the gospel around the world," he said as the crowd applauded.

See Giving page 12



IMB reset is working

Getting Baptists to agree on mission priorities is like the proverbial task of making sausage. Everyone wants their favorite ingredients in the mix and we don't necessarily want to know what's in it. We hope everyone will find it agreeable when the work is done.

Such is the case with international missions. Each church has unique preferences for the way they want to do missions, the country that they want to serve and the specific ministry organization(s) they select for mission engagement. That is the nature of local church autonomy.

Among Southern Baptist churches the dominant organization of choice is the International Mission Board (IMB).

One year ago this month Southern Baptists faced a tall mountain, wondering

if it could be scaled. Budget deficits exceeding \$200 million forced our beloved IMB to ask missionaries to consider the option of stepping down from their positions.

When the final numbers were tallied, more than 1,100 valuable members of our international mission team no longer had a job at IMB. The overseas mission force lost 983 team members. The stateside staff trimmed another 149 people from the payroll.

Drastic monetary shortages required radical cuts in personnel, and most Baptists understood. But we still grieved over the reduction of our international missionary presence. We evaluated our giving and recognized that the dollars flowing from the people in our churches to the people serving overseas was not what it should be. Gratefully,



K. ALLAN BLUME
Editor

About Lottie Moon

- **Name:** Charlotte Diggs Moon
- **Birthday:** Dec. 12, 1840
- Attended Albemarle Female Institute, female counterpart to the University of Virginia
- One of first women in South to receive a master's degree
- Taught school in Kentucky, Georgia and Virginia
- Sister, Edmonia Moon, was appointed to Tengchow, China, in 1872, a year before Lottie
- Served 39 years as a missionary, mostly teaching at a girls' school
- She mostly served in Tengchow and P'ingtu.
- The smell of her cookies drew people to her house
- She was 32 years old when she left for China
- She had turned down a marriage proposal and left her job, home and family to follow God's lead
- Her letters home detailed the hunger for truth among the Chinese and the struggle of so few missionaries taking the gospel to the 472 million Chinese in her day
- She challenged Southern Baptists to go to China or give
- By 1888, Southern Baptist women had organized and collected 43,315 to send workers needed in China
- In 1918, Woman's Missionary Union named the annual Christmas offering for international missions for Lottie Moon



**PEOPLE
NEED TO
KNOW**



many Baptist churches responded with generous gifts to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions (LMCO).

We commend churches and individuals that modeled generous giving to international missions last year through this annual offering.

On page 14 of this issue of the *Biblical Recorder*, we published a chart that identifies churches in North Carolina that led the way through their generous support of missions through the LMCO. The column on the right side of the page lists the 50 churches in the state with largest offerings.

The left column identifies the per capita giving of the top 50 churches in N.C. This measuring rod allows churches of every size to be recognized for their extraordinary support of spreading the gospel through LMCO.

It is especially noteworthy that five churches are in the top ten of both lists. This is exceptional. The churches are Parkwood, Gastonia; Mount Vernon, Boone; Idlewild, Matthews; First, Cary; and First, Durham.

A total of 23 churches showed up in

the top 50 of both lists. Again, this is unusual and highly commendable.

Every individual and every church that gave to LMCO is important. Without the participation of all Southern Baptist churches last year's all-time record offering of \$165.8 would not be possible.

As we enter the week of prayer for this year's LMCO, I am praying that Baptists around the world will ask God to use us to impact the world with the gospel of Jesus Christ through the most generous, sacrificial gift we have ever invested in international missions.

Your *Biblical Recorder* staff has provided an outline of the missionaries you can pray for during this important week (see page 15). We hope you receive a week of prayer brochure from your church to guide you through your daily prayers. The IMB website also provides resources for the week of prayer. Please use these resources.

As David Platt recently reported, IMB is now operating with a balanced budget. Next year's budget, combined with another generous LMCO, will keep our international mission agency working in the black. This is an important part of our testimony to a lost world.

This editorial is like Lottie Moon – it's short. But if these few words can have only a tiny fraction of the impact of this woman's life on eternity, God will be glorified. Let's give generously. **BR**

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Making the gospel resound this Christmas season

This Christmas season, you have the wonderful opportunity to be part of an offering that is near and dear to my heart. Every Christmas season, the International Mission Board (IMB) holds the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (LMCO) in memory of Lottie Moon, a missionary to China.

Lottie Moon spent almost 40 years sharing the gospel with and showing God's love to people in China. Until her death on Christmas Eve in 1912, she encouraged Southern Baptists to make a greater commitment to making an impact for God's Kingdom. Now, the offering that bears her name helps support more than 3,650 missionaries who are serving in countries around the world through the IMB.

This year, the annual offering's goal is \$155 million. One hundred percent of the funds received from this offering go directly to support these missionaries.

David Platt, IMB president, announced at our 2016 Annual Meeting in November that the trustees of the IMB were able to approve a balanced budget for 2017 for the first time in a number of years because of generous giving from churches across this nation and in North

Carolina. This increase in giving also means that additional personnel will be appointed to the field in 2017. Platt especially expressed his appreciation for North Carolina Baptists' generosity in 2015.



MILTON A. HOLLIFIELD JR.
BSC executive
director-treasurer

I also want to express my appreciation for those North Carolina Baptists who sacrificially gave to the LMCO in 2015. The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina gave \$14,645,892, which is more than any other state convention in the Southern Baptist Convention. So far in 2016, North Carolina Baptists have given 9.73 percent more than in the same time period in 2015.

Another way North Carolina Baptists can support IMB missionaries is by participating in the week of prayer during Dec. 4-11. I praise the Lord that we as Southern Baptists have the opportunity to unite in prayer for these servants of God during this time.

Please join me during this special week – those who have answered God's call to serve as missionaries encounter daily trials and joys that are unique to the work that they do. Let us all be sure to unite together to pray for them and for the work that they do for God's Kingdom.



Additional information on the week of prayer may be found at imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering-week-prayer. (See pages 14-16.)

The need to spread the gospel throughout the earth is great – although we have made great progress in advancing the gospel, there is still much work to be done. Today, 6.3 billion people on earth are not Christian, and approximately 1.7 billion people still have no access to the gospel of Jesus Christ. While the task is great, I am confident that North Carolina Baptists are up to the challenge.

Together, we can work to fulfill God's Great Commission mandate to "go ... and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19).

For more information about the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, visit imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering.

"You have ... heard about this hope in the message of truth, the gospel that has come to you. It is bearing fruit and growing all over the world, just as it has among you since the day you heard it." – Colossians 1:5-6 **BR**

What is ethnocentrism?

I recently listened to a podcast that highlighted the ethnic tension that has increasingly been at the fore of our pluralistic culture in America. It specifically looked at how the growing population of Somali refugees in St. Cloud, Minn., has unsettled many of its local citizens. Some of their concerns regarding this influx of refugees are understandable. But many of their concerns seemed to be rooted in a fear of what's different and a desire to maintain their cultural status quo. This kind of situation isn't unique to St. Cloud. Such a response to the encroachment of others' cultures is a common reaction among all people.

Human beings tend to look apprehensively upon foreign cultures because they perceive their own culture as both right and normative. The word for this is ethnocentrism – the belief that your own group or culture is superior to others.

• Ethnocentrism displayed

We display ethnocentrism in a variety of ways. In some cases, our ethnocentric

attitudes display themselves in relatively harmless ways. For example, we may see an Indian family eating a meal with their hands and think, "They aren't eating the right way." That thought is ethnocentric because it assumes that the way we eat food in America – with forks and knives – is the definitive way to properly eat food.

In assuming that our own cultural practices are right, we end up equating what is different to what is wrong. The end result in this scenario is: "Indians eat food the wrong way."

We also display ethnocentrism in more serious ways. Racism, for example, is a clear and serious manifestation of ethnocentric thought. It claims the people and culture of one ethnic group are superior to those of another. The desire to keep one's neighborhood as ethnically homogenous as possible is also

a manifestation of ethnocentrism, for it betrays an underlying suspicion toward people and cultures that are different than one's own.



CLINTON WEST

• Ethnocentrism exploded

The Bible opposes the notion of ethnocentrism. It does not allow us to look negatively upon people who are different than us. We find a clear example of this in the story of Peter and Cornelius in Acts 10. Peter was a Jew. Cornelius was Gentile (non-Jewish). And in those days, there existed a deep-seated animosity between Jews and Gentiles. The two groups comprised a bitter rivalry! Jews would never associate with Gentiles because they perceived them as unclean. In other words, the Jewish people remained very ethnocentric – they believed their own people and culture were superior to Gentiles.

In this passage, we see how God remarkably intervened to strip Peter of his superiority complex. God gave Peter a vision indicating that he was not pleased with the animosity that Jewish Christians were harboring toward other races.

Despite being initially confused about the meaning of the vision, Peter followed God's command and ended up in the house of Cornelius, alongside a slew of other Gentiles! It was then and there that Peter's ethnocentrism began to crumble.

After Cornelius explained the series of events that led them to that gathering, Peter made a breakthrough discovery: "Truly I understand that God shows no partial-

ity, but in every nation anyone who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10:34-35).

Don't miss the magnitude of this shift! God sovereignly worked in Peter's life to dismantle any notion that Jews are somehow superior to Gentiles. In fact, the story reveals God's desire for Gentiles to be included in His Kingdom plan. That was a paradigm shift for the early Jewish Christians!

God, in his love, actually desires to gather people from every tribe, tongue and nation into his Kingdom. It is a cosmic plan to unite people of all ethnicities together in Christ.

• Ethnocentrism rejected

When dealing with the realities of living in a pluralistic culture, we must bear in mind God's heart for all ethnic groups. Biblically, we are not permitted to remain ethnocentric in our attitude toward those who are unlike us.

Rather than disdaining the encroachment of other cultures in your city or neighborhood, consider it an opportunity to extend the love of Christ across cultural boundaries. In our American culture that has been fractured and marred by racism and ethnic tension, such cross-cultural love from the body of Christ can be a powerful testimony to the gospel.

(EDITOR'S NOTE – This article was first published by Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary's Center for Great Commission Studies on its website, thecgcs.org. Used by permission. Clinton West is a Raleigh native and graduate of Appalachian State University and Southeastern.) **BR**

Submissions for Tar Heel Voices

Please send no more than 300 words, along with contact information, to editor@BRnow.org or *Biblical Recorder*, P.O. Box 1185, Cary, NC 27512-1185. Only one letter from the same writer will be published in a 90-day period. Have questions? Call (919) 847-2127.

CORRECTION

In the Nov. 19 edition of the *Biblical Recorder*, a statement was mistakenly attributed to Danny Akin, president of Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in a story titled, "Baptists Respond to Election Results." The paragraph beginning, "Above all we must not let politics dominate our agenda," should have been a continuation of J.D. Greear's comments, which immediately preceded Akin's remarks. We apologize.

N.C. Pastor's Conference celebrates God and country

By **SETH BROWN** | BR Content Editor

As Cameron McGill, pastor of Dublin First Baptist Church and president of the 2016 North Carolina Pastor's Conference (NCPC), welcomed attendees to the Nov. 13-14 gathering at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro, N.C., he said, "Our soldiers and our Savior have much in common, and we honor them both tonight."

McGill struck a chord in his opening words that resonated throughout the conference, a two-tone tribute to God and the United States of America.

The event's theme – "Worth Fighting For" – featured messages and testimonies tinged with patriotic pride and biblical zeal from North Carolina pastors, lay people and military veterans.

Mark Harris, senior pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte, sent out a call to action for the American public, the American pew and American policy makers. In his sermon, Harris said the recent electoral win by president-elect Donald Trump was the result of God's people praying fervently in a spirit of desperation, and he implored them to continue.

"I have seen more in the last six months ... a nation that was becoming desperate, and a nation that was being called to its knees, and a nation that began to pray in prayer meetings like I have

not seen spring up in many, many, many years.

"I truly believe with all of my heart that it's because people are beginning to recognize the desperation that we're facing. I mean, let's be honest about it ... neither one of [the 2016 U.S. presidential candidates] were our first choice."

Harris said he spent the final six weeks leading up to the election visiting ministry leaders in key states across the country.



MARK HARRIS

"As I saw pastors coming together in all of those swing states, I began to recognize that here are men of God who are recognizing that this is a desperate situation. This is a desperate time, and we must cry out to Almighty God, and they were doing it.

"Don't you and I ever make the mistake of thinking that what happened over the course of this past week has anything

to do with our strength, our numbers or our power. It has to do with the power and the work of Almighty God. And it's Him that we must trust."

Harris continued, "It's very clear that the question of the American public that must be asked is, 'Why are you in perpetual backsliding?' The question for the American pew is, 'Why are you just sitting there?' You need to come in brokenness and prayer before almighty God. We're beginning to see that happen, and

See Country page 9



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Hollifield: Reach the overlooked, avoided

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

Reaching out to individuals from different backgrounds isn't an option to be considered. Instead, it's a command to be obeyed.

Milton A. Hollifield Jr., executive director-treasurer of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC), said reaching out to those people who are overlooked or avoided is key to seeing others come to faith in Christ and grow as disciples.

Hollifield's remarks came during his address to messengers at the 186th BSC Annual Meeting at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro on Tuesday, Nov. 15. The theme of the meeting was "Impact: Compelling the Lost to Come to Life."

Preaching from the event's theme verse of Luke 14:23, Hollifield said the servant in this parable issued a strong command to his servant – *"Go into the highways and hedges and compel them to come in that my house might be filled."*

"In this story, the master of the house is burdened about people who are far away from the presence of the master, so he says to his servant, 'Compel them come,'" Hollifield said. In applying the passage to present day, Hollifield said Christians should reach out to those in society who have been overlooked or avoided. The overlooked may include individuals who regularly attend or are members of churches, but they do not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

"We need to look specifically within the church, to make certain that we do not overlook any person in our midst who has not yet come to genuine faith in Christ," Hollifield said.

Reaching out to the avoided means engaging individuals who may have different cultural, ethnic or religious backgrounds than our own.

"We must get down to the hard work of taking the gospel to each and every resident of North Carolina regardless of their ethnicity, their cultural or religious background or even their sexual orientation," Hollifield said.

And Hollifield said those opportunities to take the gospel to others are abounding in North Carolina.

Hollifield said convention research has revealed that more than 65 percent of North Carolina's population are lost. Moreover, the convention has identified at least 150 different people groups from around the world currently living in the state, a number which continues to grow.

Further research has identified 250 concentrated pockets of lostness across the state. Of those, Hollifield said 100 pockets of lostness are found in eight population centers across the state, with the remaining 150 located in smaller cities, towns and communities.

"Because of that reality, no church has an excuse for failing to engage lostness, for lost people live almost everywhere in this state," Hollifield said.

Hollifield said that when he considers the changing population of North Carolina and the fact that the majority of the state's population do not know Christ, he is reminded of 2 Peter 3:9 which says that God desires that all people come to repentance and faith.

That's why Hollifield said he is passionate about helping others understand the state convention's strategy of "impacting lostness through disciple-making."

"Disciple-making is that beautiful umbrella term



Milton Hollifield Jr. gives his address to messengers at the 186th BSC Annual Meeting at the Koury Convention Center in Greensboro. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

under which our evangelistic efforts and our discipleship efforts are brought together in order to keep both focused on the ultimate goal – disciples that make disciples that make disciples," Hollifield said.

Hollifield said disciples who have made a willful decision to follow Christ will be transformed by the gospel.

"The gospel transforms us completely and thoroughly," he said. "It is impossible to submit one's life to Jesus and remain as you were."

Being transformed by the gospel means being on mission to reach others for Christ – even those who come from different backgrounds, Hollifield said.

"Jesus has commanded us to go after those who

See Hollifield page 9

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Baptists on Mission ‘prepare the way’

By CHAD AUSTIN | BSC Communications

Long term rebuilding and disaster recovery efforts for those impacted by Hurricane Matthew in eastern North Carolina will take two to three years or more, but N.C. Baptist Men, also known as Baptists on Mission (NCBM), will be there for the long haul to serve, minister and offer hope in Jesus’ name.

“Life won’t be back to normal for many people for a long time,” Richard Brunson, executive director of NCBM, said in his report to messengers at the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s Annual Meeting on Nov. 15 in Greensboro. Brunson’s report also touched on several of the 17 different ministries of NCBM, which is an auxiliary of the Baptist state convention.

While Brunson said no one predicted the devastation that Hurricane Matthew would bring when it hit North Carolina in early October, he said NCBM volunteers were on hand in the immediate aftermath of the storm providing hot meals, clean water, chaplains, showers, laundry services and childcare. Brunson said at one point following the storm, volunteers at six mobile kitchens served meals in six different locations throughout the region.

Following the initial response, chainsaw, mud-out and tear-out teams began the process of helping people put their lives back together. That work is ongoing, Brunson said. “There’s no better way to get to know someone and minister to them than to go into their home and help them with mud-out and tear-out and help them rebuild their homes and their lives,” he said.

Prior to Annual Meeting, Robert Simons, president of NCBM, said more than 60 individuals had responded to the gospel through the disaster relief efforts.

On the opening night of Annual Meeting, Mike Sprayberry, director of North Carolina Division of Emergency Management, spoke to messengers and expressed appreciation to the many N.C. Baptist volunteers who have served during the Hurricane Matthew relief efforts.

“I can’t really overestimate how much we value your partnership,” Sprayberry said. “We could not do our job successfully without the North Carolina Baptist men and women.”

Brunson also thanked the Hurricane Matthew volunteers, as well as all N.C. Baptists for praying for, giving to and going with Baptists on Mission, whose goal is to help churches involve their members in missions.

Brunson noted that each year numerous medical professionals volunteer their time and expertise on board NCBM’s two medical/dental buses and the new health screening bus. The patients served by these ministries not only receive care for their physical needs, they also receive spiritual care, resulting in many decisions for Christ, Brunson said.

Brunson’s report also highlighted NCBM’s numerous international mission’s partnerships. Through these partnerships, NCBM sends teams of people to places like Armenia, Cuba, Guatemala, Honduras, Hungary, Kenya, Romania, South Africa and Ukraine each year, Brunson said.

Andie Faircloth, an NCBM volunteer who recently returned from her first international missions trip to Honduras, shared her experience with messengers. During the trip, the team helped a missionary family build a house and held a weeklong Vacation Bible School for children. The team was comprised of 15 individuals of various ages, backgrounds and abilities, but God brought them together for a common purpose.



Richard Brunson, executive director of Baptists on Mission, shares what North Carolina Baptists have been doing in response to Hurricane Matthew as well as other ministries within the organization. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

“There is simply no good explanation of how we came together except that it was God’s divine will,” Faircloth said. “He used us to prepare the way for His work in Honduras.”

“Prepare the way” is the theme for the 2016 North Carolina Missions Offering (NCMO), which supports the 17 different ministers of Baptists on Mission. The theme was derived from Luke 10:1 in which Jesus sends out 70 individuals in pairs to minister and serve in the places He was about to go.

Citing the example of Peter and John healing the lame man outside the temple gate in Acts 3, Brunson said preparing the way for Jesus is marked by four characteristics: seeing people around you; being sensitive to the Holy Spirit; ministering with the gifts and abilities you have; and speaking and acting in humility and love.

“Do we really see hurting people, and do we really love them?” Brunson asked. “Are we sensitive to the Holy Spirit?”

“In short, are we willing to prepare the way for Jesus?”

To learn more about N.C. Baptist Men/Baptists on Mission, visit baptistsonmission.org. To learn more about the North Carolina Missions Offering, visit ncmissionsoffering.org. **BR**

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Platt to N.C. Baptists: Missions involves sacrifice

By SETH BROWN | BR Content Editor

“We’re fooling ourselves if we think we can live our lives and lead our churches to go and reach the lost in the highways and hedges and continue with business as usual,” said David Platt, president of the International Mission Board, as he delivered the flagship sermon of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s annual meeting Nov. 15 in Greensboro, N.C.

As he taught on multiple themes from 1 Corinthians 15, Platt addressed a central concern for Christians. “Compelling the lost to come to life is costly,” he said. “It involves sacrifice.”

A single question framed the sermon: Why must Christians go into dangerous places for the spread of the gospel?

Platt answered with three points. First, he said death is coming.

“None of us in this room is guaranteed tomorrow, so let us not waste today,” said Platt.

“We don’t invest our lives in temporary trinkets. We invest our lives in eternal treasure. We don’t spend our lives on fleeting pleasures and foolish pursuits. We spend our lives on what’s going to matter forever.”

Platt shifted his attention to non-Christians as he continued, “They’re not guaranteed tomorrow either. ... What

lies ahead in eternity for those who don’t know Christ?”

Briefly touching on a notorious debate about the nature of hell, Platt repeated a common question about whether the Bible’s wording on the doctrine is metaphorical.

“Is that language literal, like literal fire and sulfur, or are those just symbols?” he asked before continuing. “Well, let’s assume for a moment that maybe they’re symbols. I’m not saying they are, but what if they were? What are they symbols for – a winter retreat, summer vacation? ... These are not symbols for a nice place to be. ... The whole point of a symbols is to express in words that which cannot be expressed in words – a terrifying place to be!”

The second point in Platt’s sermon emphasized the importance of Jesus’ bodily resurrection.

Drawing directly from the passage, he said, “If Jesus didn’t rise from the dead, brother or sister, you’ve staked your entire life for eternity on the decomposed corpse of a Jewish carpenter from 2,000 years ago. ...

“Biblical Christianity is not a nice, decent, cozy Christian spin on the American dream as we wait for heaven. Biblical Christianity is about laying down your life and your rights for the spread of the gospel. It’s about embracing suffering. It’s about going to hard places, needy



“Biblical Christianity is about laying down your life and your rights for the spread of the gospel,” said David Platt, International Mission Board president, to messengers to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. “It’s about embracing suffering. It’s about going to hard places, needy places – dangerous, difficult places.” (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

places – dangerous, difficult places. It’s about forsaking possessions and pleasures. It’s about sacrificing comforts. It’s about taking risks in faith, and all of that only makes sense if Christianity is true.”

Concluding with the third point, Platt called attention to the trajectory of history as it moves toward Christ’s ultimate reign.

“Here is the beauty: Every time you or I go to somebody in the community around us, proclaim this gospel and people bow the knee to King Jesus, His kingdom is coming. ...

“We know where all history is headed. It’s headed toward the day when every nation, tribe, tongue and people

will gather around the throne of our King and give Him glory. We want our lives, our ministries, to count. So let’s live to see more people bowed around the throne on that day.”

In Platt’s introductory remarks to the message, he thanked the messengers for the generosity of their churches. North Carolina Baptists gave more than \$14.6 million to international missions through the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for 2016, leading the 42 state conventions in missions giving.

“Thank you for the way you lead your churches and the way you personally give to the Cooperative Program and to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering,” Platt said.

“Thank you specifically for the way you have given over the last year as we’ve walked through some challenging days in the IMB.

“It’s in light of your giving that I’m happy to announce to you tonight that after years of spending millions more dollars than we have received, the IMB just last week approved a balanced budget for 2017, and I’m pleased to announced to you that ... next year we’ll not only have a balanced budget but we will increase the number of Southern Baptist missionaries spreading the gospel around the world,” he said as the crowd applauded.

“Thank you for clapping,” Platt said, “but I’m the one clapping for you.” ■

Dorothy Patterson: ‘God is working’ among N.C. women

By DIANNA L. CAGLE | BR Production Editor



“Iwant you to have the time to invest in the lives of all your women,” said Dorothy Patterson, referring to church members. “They need your influence. They need your encouragement. They need your love.”

Patterson was addressing the North Carolina Baptist Minister’s Wives Nov. 14 at “Woman2Woman: The Importance of Spiritual Mentoring” prior to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina annual meeting in Greensboro.

Patterson is a professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary (SWBTS) in Fort Worth, Texas, and wife of the school’s president, Paige Patterson. The couple served at Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary at Wake Forest for 11 years during the 1990s and early 2000s.

Based on Titus 2:3-5, Dorothy Patterson said there was much “meat [that] Paul has for us in this passage.” She stressed the importance of sound doctrine.

“We’ve got so much floating around here with the dress of doctrine on it that is absolutely devastating, not only to individuals, but to the church of the living God,” she said. “You must study it, not just to teach it, but it’s also important for you to study for your own personal enrichment.”

She also encouraged ladies to have a personal library, building resources to help them further study the Bible.

When the verses refer to older women, Patterson said the original Greek points to a more spiritually mature person, not necessarily an old woman.

“If you’re young, don’t think you have to wait until you reach a certain age to mentor or to teach,” she said.

God wants a high level of character among His followers, Patterson said, maintaining reverence in behavior. “If you’re going to be training these young women, you must have a lifestyle that is fit for church living,” she said. “It doesn’t mean that you have to be in your Sunday best. It doesn’t mean that you have to be completely unfrazzled. It means you are acting in a Christ-like way in every response.”

She urged them to stay away from alcohol.

“God is working among the women of this great state,” said Patterson. That means “loving our husband [and children] even when it is difficult to love them.”

She talked about the importance of maintaining a sense of humor through all life has to offer.

One of the ministries at SWBTS is to give 75 women each semester a complete outfit along with accessories from a local department store. Each woman is paired with a mentor to help them pick something appropriate.

She encouraged women, married and single, to have a “welcoming, comforting place for your family” and friends.

She discouraged working outside the home when possible, but if it is necessary, she asked that women try

See Patterson page 8

Dorothy Patterson, professor of theology at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas, shares with the North Carolina Minister’s Wives Nov. 14. The annual event focused on encouraging wives of ministers, providing a place of worship and prayer. She encouraged women, whether married or single, to make their home a “welcoming, comforting place for your family.” (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

Patterson

Continued from page 7

to find something with a flexible schedule so she would be free to assist her family.

Titus 2 contains a word that many women balk at: submission. Patterson said this word does not mean an action that is forced, but instead it is that the wife chooses to be obedient.

“God chose the relationships in the home as the prototype of [His] relationship to us,” she said.

“We have to choose to be obedient to the Lord.”

A wife and husband are meant to be a unit, working together, Patterson said.

Guarding the sanctity of homes remains a priority.

“We have no churches if we don’t have homes,” she said.

“We don’t have community if we don’t have homes.”

God has placed each woman in a strategic place, Patterson said.

“We see what women want,” she said. “We work with them where they are.”

Business

Harriett Lovett, secretary/treasurer and member of Pleasant Hill Baptist Church in Mount Pleasant, said the organization was just under the budget allotted for the summer retreat and were “right on track to be on budget for this event.”

“Apart from the Bible, I’ve read her *A Handbook for Minister’s Wives* more than any other book that I own,” said Ginnie Varnam, the group’s outgoing president and member of Tar Heel Baptist Church in Tar Heel, of Patterson’s book that was

included in each of the bags given to participants.

Representatives from the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s Embrace Women’s Ministry, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary’s Women’s Life, Woman’s Missionary Union of North Carolina and the *Biblical Recorder* shared about their respective ministries.

Varnam served as 2015-2016 president, and Peggy Mooney of Mount Pisgah Baptist Church in Supply served as the 2015-2016 vice president. These were approved Nov. 14:

Officers:

● 2016-2017 president: Amy Harmon, Pittsboro Baptist Church, Pittsboro.

● 2016-2017 vice president: Beverly Williams, Pine Branch Baptist Church, Spruce Pine

● 2017-2018 president elect: Megan Knight, Dublin First Baptist Church

● Secretary/treasurer: Harriet Lovett, Pleasant Hill Baptist Church, Mount Pleasant

● Publicity: Betty Smith, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Fayetteville

● 2017 retreat chair: Cindy Johnson, Old Town Baptist Church, Winston-Salem

● 2017 retreat vice chair: Dakota Spurling, Freedom Biker Church, Conover

● 2018 retreat chair: Dottie Earwood, Journey Community Church, Eastover

Regional representatives:

● Central 1: Diane Smith, Jonesboro Heights Baptist Church, Sanford

● Central 2: Barbara Murdock, Clear Creek Baptist Church, Charlotte

● Eastern: Candy McAnelly, Spring



Some of the North Carolina Minister's Wives officers include, from left: Sandy Cooper, Western 1 representative; Megan Knight, president elect for 2017-2018; Betty Smith, publicity; Diane Smith, Central 1 representative; Dakota Spurling, 2017 retreat vice chair; Amy Harmon, 2016-2017 president; Cindy Johnson, 2017 retreat chair; Harriet Lovett, secretary/treasurer; and Candy McAnelly, Eastern representative. (BR photo by Dianna L. Cagle)

Garden Baptist Church, New Bern

● Western 1: Sandy Cooper, South

Fork Baptist Church, Todd

● Western 2: vacant

WHAT IS A BIBLICAL PARTNERSHIP?

The partnerships seen in the New Testament are founded on gospel-centered relationships and are for the advancement of the Kingdom (Galatians 2:2; Colossians 1:5-6; 4:11). There are at least three components seen in these gospel-centered Kingdom partnerships – *prayer, participation and provision*. Consider incorporating these components in the development of partnerships for the spread of the gospel in strategic areas of the world.

Gospel-centered Kingdom partnerships need an *Epaphras-type prayer strategy* (Colossians 1:3-8; 4:12). Epaphras was described as the fellow “*servant of Christ*” who was instrumental in those at Colossae hearing “*the word of the truth, the gospel*” (Colossians 1:5, 7). Paul tells us that Epaphras was “*always struggling*” on behalf of the church at Colossae that they might stand fully assured in all the will of God, grow and bear much fruit (Colossians 1:6; 4:12). The picture here is that of Jacob wrestling with God in the Old Testament (Genesis 32:22-32). We need to be partners who wrestle with God in intercessory prayer on behalf of those with whom we are laboring for the spread of the gospel.

Gospel-centered Kingdom partnerships need *Epaphroditus-type participation* in the work ministry alongside their partners (Philippians 2:25-30). Paul calls Epaphroditus his brother, fellow worker and soldier (Philippians 2:25). He says that Epaphroditus

“*nearly died for the work of Christ, risking his life to complete what was lacking*” from the church at Philippi (Philippians 2:30). We need to be partners who are willing to take great risk in difficult places and among dangerous peoples for the sake of Christ.

Gospel-centered Kingdom partnerships need *Antioch-type provision* (Acts 11:27-30; 12:25). When the newly established church at Antioch learned through a prophetic word from the Spirit of an imminent famine over the whole world, they responded with great generosity. Rather than caring first for their own needs, “*everyone*” according to their own ability determined to send relief to the church in Jerusalem (Acts 11:29-30).

We need to be partners who are willing to make great sacrifice in counting the needs of others as more important than our own.

The office of Great Commission Partnerships is committed to assisting North Carolina churches in the development of these types of gospel-centered Kingdom partnerships for the spread of the gospel among the least reached and unreached peoples in North Carolina, North America and the uttermost parts of the world. Help us know how we might help you and your church.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – Zac Lyons is a consultant for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s Office of Great Commission Partnerships. Contact zlyons@ncbaptist.org or (984) 202-6037.)



ZAC LYONS

Court blocks federal plan to extend overtime protections

By SETH BROWN | BR Content Editor

A U.S. District Court judge has blocked the White House’s plan to extend overtime labor protections that were scheduled to take effect Dec. 1. In his Nov. 22 ruling, Judge Amos L. Mazzant III of the Eastern District of Texas, said President Barack Obama’s administration exceeded its authority by raising the overtime eligibility limit and including an automatic updating mechanism every three years.

Currently, salaried workers making less than \$23,660 are entitled to overtime protections. The blocked federal changes would have increased that threshold to \$47,476.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) announced earlier this year that it was updating overtime regulations of the Fair

Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to “simplify and modernize” the rules.

The president said regulations “have not kept up with our modern economy” and “millions of Americans lack the protections of overtime and even the right to minimum wage.”

The current salary threshold covers an estimated 7 percent of full-time salaried workers, according to the DOL, down from 62 percent in 1975.

“We strongly disagree with the decision by the court, which has the effect of delaying a fair day’s pay for a long day’s work for millions of hardworking Americans,” the DOL said in a statement to The Associated Press.

Many organizations had already begun the process of making necessary changes.

(EDITOR’S NOTE – A longer version of this story can be found at BRnow.org.)

Country

Continued from page 4

this is not the time to stop. This is just the time to get started.”

‘We must be salt and light’

Timmy Blair called Christians to take the gospel into the surrounding culture, rather than confining their faith to the four walls of a church facility.

“We must be willing to carry the gospel wherever we go,” said the 2016 president of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina and senior pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier. Blair emphasized that such action might come with consequences.

“Paul was willing to pay a price for the cause of the gospel,” he said. “We must be willing to say in our pulpits, ‘I am not ashamed of the gospel,’ come what may. Put the pressure on me if you will. Pass the laws if you want, but I’m here to tell you as a preacher of the gospel, ‘We are not ashamed of the gospel.’”

Blair continued, “We must not only say it in our pulpit. We must be willing to also say it in our home, at our work, around the break room. Wherever it is, we must be salt and light. ... Last week, 81 percent of evangelicals stood up and said, ‘We’re not ashamed of the gospel,’ and they did so going into those booths with the gospel principles of the Bible in their heart. And they voted – not for a candidate. They voted for a platform.”

Blair shared stage time with his son, Brandon, as they preached tag-team sermons to highlight the importance of family. Another father-son duo, Hampton and Ethan Drum, also took turns preaching as part of the conference.

Ethan Drum said the local church was the primary institution “worth fighting for.” Ephesians 1:3-14 means the people of God are “... compelled to have supreme

allegiance to [God] and His family, the church,” Drum urged.

Vietnam veteran Bobby Welch encouraged churches to recover an evangelistic fervor that has tangible results.

“Everything has a scoreboard,” said Welch, who is a former two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention and retired pastor of First Baptist Church in Daytona Beach, Fla. “There is a measuring rod for everything,” he added.

Welch discouraged the use of church discipleship or membership classes before baptizing new converts.

“Nobody sends people through a class to see if they’re really saved,” he said. “You don’t get saved because you go through a class and copy your mother’s answers.”

Referring to the popular biblical narrative of Philip baptizing an Ethiopian eunuch in Acts 8, Welch said, “You don’t know what happened to that Ethiopian eunuch. He may have become a Presbyterian. He may have become a Muslim. You don’t know what happened to him after he left there, but you know this – he got saved and he got baptized.

“Baptism is not a guarantee that a person is saved, but it is a definite indication that they’re headed in the right direction,” he said. “You get baptized because you intend to do better and live for Jesus.”

Tom Wagoner, lead pastor of Central Baptist Church in Dunn, called churches to remember the power of God in the lives of His people.

“If God can raise a man from the dead,” said Wagner, “He can raise a dead church up.”

In a short testimonial, Tom Martin shared his experience as a scout pilot in the Vietnam War. He said with God’s

puses to 45 campuses in the past three years.

- In the past 12 months, N.C. Baptist church plants across the state have reported 6,100 professions of faith.

- N.C. Baptists sent more than \$11.4 million from Cooperative Program receipts to support the overall ministries of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 2016.

- N.C. Baptists led all 42 state contentions in giving to both the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (more than \$14.6 million) and the Annie Armstrong Easter Offering (more than \$6 million) in support of international and national missions.

- Collectively, N.C. Baptist churches gave more than \$32 million to SBC causes in its last fiscal year. **BR**



Three officers for the North Carolina Pastor's Conference were elected Nov. 14 for the 2018 meeting: from left, Chris Griggs, vice president; Matt Capps, president; and Jonathan Blaylock, secretary-treasurer. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

help he survived being shot down in enemy territory. The crash left Martin with burns over a significant portion of his body. Former Navy Seal Kevin Holland also told a harrowing story of survival after being shot in the chest while executing a covert operation deep in the hills of Northern Iraq. Each of the testimonies highlighted God’s redemption despite the great physical and emotional pain brought on by war, military conflict and personal failure.

C.J. Bordeaux, director of missions for the Pee Dee Baptist Association, shared the story of how God sustained him after losing his wife in 1981. He encouraged

attendees to lean on the family of God. “I hope you never lose a wife or a child, but can I tell you something?” Bordeaux said. “Your church is important.”

Three officers for the 2018 NCPC were elected by acclamation: Matt Capps, senior pastor of Fairview Baptist Church in Apex, president; Chris Griggs, lead pastor of Denver Baptist Church in Denver, vice-president; and Jonathan Blaylock, pastor of West Canton Baptist Church in Canton, secretary-treasurer.

The 2017 NCPC will be held Nov. 5-6 at the Koury Convention Center prior to the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina’s annual meeting. **BR**

Hollifield

Continued from page 5

are difficult to reach, and we are to be persistent in our obedience.” Hollifield said.

“In this story, the master did not even tell the servant that the invitees would come. He just told him to go.”

Noteworthy...

Following are other highlights from Hollifield’s executive director-treasurer’s report.

- As of Nov. 9, N.C. Baptist Men reported 11,500 volunteer days, 450,000 meals served in conjunction with the American Red Cross and 536 completed jobs in response to Hurricane Matthew.

- Since adopting a new approach to collegiate ministry, Hollifield said gospel engagement has grown from nine cam-



Baptists serve firefighters in western North Carolina

North Carolina Baptist Men, also known as Baptists on Mission, are providing more than 6,000 meals per day to a total of 1,600 firefighters battling wildfires at two locations in western North Carolina. Four times per day, N.C. Baptist volunteers are serving meals to 1,000 firefighters at Lake Lure and 600 firefighters in Franklin. (BSC photo by K Brown)

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

Conference to highlight connection between evangelism, discipleship

by Chad Austin



DISCIPLE-MAKING CONFERENCE

A life that's been changed by Christ should lead one to be a disciple who makes disciples.

Making disciples is what the Great Commission is all about, and North Carolina Baptists will have the opportunity to gain biblical and practical insights from some of the country's leading disciple-making practitioners at the upcoming N.C. Baptist Disciple-Making Conference early next year.

The 2017 Disciple-Making Conference is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 27 at Center Grove Baptist Church in Clemmons. The daylong conference is free to attend, but preregistration is required.

A lunch option is available for \$7 per person. Event details and registration information can be found online at disciplenc.org. The event is being sponsored by the Evangelism and Discipleship Group of the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC).

The conference will include main sessions led by pastors Micah Fries, D.A. Horton and Ed Newton, plus a series of practical equipping sessions.

The event also includes a special track for women that will be led by Tabatha Frost, whose husband Brian serves as pastor of Providence Baptist Church in Raleigh. The main sessions and the equipping sessions will focus on the two pillars of disciple-making – evangelism and discipleship.

"Our goal is to help attendees understand that evangelism is absolutely essential for disciple-making," said Lynn Sasser, executive

leader of the BSC's Evangelism and Discipleship Group. "Individuals must hear and understand the gospel in order to decide to follow Jesus. Then they must be discipled so that they can share the gospel with others and become a disciple who makes more disciples.

WHEN

Monday, Feb. 27, 2017

WHERE

Center Grove Baptist Church, Clemmons, N.C.

COST

Conference is free; Lunch is available for \$7

"We want to help people understand how evangelism and discipleship go hand-in-hand under the umbrella of disciple-making."

The theme for the conference is Luke 19:10 which says, "*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*"

Sasser said this verse could be considered the life's mission statement of Jesus. Each of the main speakers will focus on a particular aspect of the theme verse and how it relates to disciple-making.

Sasser said each of the main session speakers currently serve as pastors in different ministry contexts, and have all demonstrated effectiveness in personal disciple-making and equipping others to be disciple-makers.

Fries currently serves as senior pastor of

Brainerd Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tenn.

Prior to accepting the call to pastor Brainerd Baptist, Fries served as vice president of LifeWay Research, a pastor in Missouri and an international church planter in West Africa.

Horton serves as pastor of Reach Fellowship, a church plant in Long Beach, Calif. He is also the chief evangelist for the Urban Youth Workers Institute. Prior to his current roles, Horton served as an urban church planter and pastor in Kansas City, Mo., and a coordinator of urban student ministries with the North American Mission Board.

Newton serves as lead pastor of Community Bible Church in San Antonio. Newton has been a speaker at the BSC's summer youth weeks at Fort Caswell, and he has a unique ability to connect with individuals of various ages. As a communicator, Newton seeks to inspire others to be passionate and dedicated followers of Christ.

Sasser said attendees will be offered a free copy of *Patterned*, the disciple-making resource developed by N.C. Baptist leaders and released by the Baptist state convention this past summer.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to attend equipping sessions on how to use the *Patterned* resource effectively. More information on *Patterned* is available at patternedNC.org.

disciplenc.org

Connect *now*

ANNUAL MEETING

All the videos presented and all the sermons preached are now available on our Vimeo.



 vimeo.com/ncbaptist

RESOURCES

Tons of **FREE** resources are available on our ncbaptist.org website and through @ncbaptist on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Login or follow us and get connected to all.

 ncbaptist.org/resources

TWITTER

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



 twitter.com/ncbaptist

FACEBOOK

We are putting out tons of great resources on Facebook this year. Go "like" our page today!



 facebook.com/ncbaptist



'Impact' video resources now available

 vimeo.com/ncbaptist

Sermons and testimonial videos from this year's Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) Annual Meeting are now available on the N.C. Baptist Vimeo page. Search for the 2016 Annual Meeting channel at vimeo.com/ncbaptist.

There you will find sermons by outgoing BSC president Timmy Blair Sr., BSC Executive Director-Treasurer Milton A. Hollifield Jr., and International Mission Board President David Platt and more.

The theme of this year's Annual Meeting was "Impact: Compelling the Lost to Come to Life" and was held Nov. 14-15 in Greensboro.

Blair, pastor of Piney Grove Chapel Baptist Church in Angier, challenged attendees to reach beyond the walls of the church to impact their communities for Christ in his president's address to the convention. Blair preached a sermon titled "The Cries from the Ditches of Life" from Luke 10:25-36.

In his executive director-treasurer's report, Hollifield preached from the Annual Meeting's theme verse of Luke 14:23 and focused on encouraging attendees to reach out individuals who have been overlooked or avoided with the good news of the gospel.

Platt delivered this year's convention sermon and shared three reasons why believers and churches must take the gospel to difficult and dangerous places around the world. In his sermon, Platt focused on the life of the apostle Paul from 1 Corinthians 15.

Other videos that were shared during Annual Meeting are also available, which include testimonies of how different individuals and churches are making an impact in their communities for Christ with the gospel.

Empowering You to Become a Better You

Dec. 2-3, Caraway

 ncbaptist.org/empoweringyou

Vocational Evangelist Retreat

Jan. 12-13, Caraway

 ncbaptist.org/ver

Leadership Greatness

Jan. 19-20, Cary

 ncbaptist.org/leadershiptevent1

Disiple-making Conference

Feb. 27, Greensboro

 disciplenc.org

Awaken: Statewide Prayer Conference

March 10-11, Eden

ncbaptist.org/awaken

Missions Conference

March 17-18, Winston-Salem

 baptistsonmission.org

Leadworship Workshop with Paul Baloche

March 31-April 1, Winston-Salem

 ncbaptist.org/leadworship

 ncbaptist.org



2016/2017 Events

52 Sundays

The "52 Sundays" resource is designed to help you and your church pray consistently for missionaries supported through the Cooperative Program throughout the year.

The resource also serves as a reminder of how your Cooperative Program giving is at work around the world.

A different missionary is spotlighted every Sunday. Each week also includes a devotional and prayer guide to help you pray specifically and intentionally for those who have answered God's call

to serve Him around the world. Each month will also feature one missionary who is a North Carolina native.

The "52 Sundays" resource includes PowerPoint slides, bulletin inserts and devotionals.

Visit ncbaptist.org/cpresources to download your free copy today and commit to praying for missionaries each and every Sunday throughout 2017.

Learn more at

 ncbaptist.org/cpresources

Awaken Prayer Conference

The "Awaken: Rend Your Heart" prayer conference will be held March 10-11, 2017, at Osborne Baptist Church in Eden. This statewide conference, hosted by the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina's Office of Prayer, will be a time of praying for revival, spiritual awakening and impacting lostness.

Conference speakers include Gordon Fort of the International Mission Board; Steve Griffith, pastor of Osborne Baptist Church; Mel Blackaby, pastor of First Baptist Church, Jonesboro, Ga.;

K. Marshall Williams Sr., pastor of Nazarene Baptist Church in Philadelphia; and Chris Schofield, director of the Office of Prayer.

This conference is open to everyone and is free. Participants may register at the door, and a love offering will be received during the sessions.

For more information about the conference, visit ncbaptist.org/awaken.

Learn more at

 ncbaptist.org/awaken

Board recommendations sought

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) is accepting recommendations for individuals to be nominated to serve on the BSC Board of Directors, to boards of the convention's agencies and institutions and to various committees.

To make a recommendation, visit ncbaptist.org/recommend. At the site, you may view all vacant positions and will find more information related to the nomination process.

The convention desires to involve as many people as possible in various leadership positions from a variety of geographic

locations, church sizes and ethnic backgrounds.

Recommendations for individuals in 2017 must be made by Jan. 31.

All recommendations received after that date will be considered for the following year. For more information, please contact Cynthia King at (800) 395-5102, ext. 5501 or cking@ncbaptist.org.

Learn more at

 ncbaptist.org/recommend



Giving

Continued from page 1

“Thank you for clapping,” Platt said, “but I’m the one clapping for you.”

Messengers also approved a motion to designate any undesignated Cooperative Program receipts in excess of \$30.375 million so that one-third goes to church planting, one-third to the Southern Baptist Convention and one-third to be divided equally among the Baptist Children’s Homes of North Carolina, the *Biblical Recorder* and Fruitland Baptist Bible College.

Making an impact

The annual event, which took place Nov. 14-15 in Greensboro, N.C., drew 1,538 messengers and 320 visitors. Its theme was taken from Luke 14:23, called “Impact: Compelling the lost to come to life.” Frank Page, president and chief executive officer of the SBC’s Executive Committee, also brought a word to the messengers during this session. Page challenged those in attendance to turn their hearts toward collaborative missions and ministry, explaining that it is the only way to give all Southern Baptists a voice. “Cooperative, collaborative ministry gives everybody a spot at the table and a place to do ministry,” he said, acknowledging the fact that the Southern Baptist Convention has grown increasingly diverse, which only furthers the need for unification within the convention.

Page encouraged messengers to embrace a spirit of unity but not for the sake of unification itself. “We must understand always the why of what we do,” Page said. “It is because of the lordship of Jesus Christ.”

Three separate times during the sessions of the annual meeting, Chris Schofield shared from Joel 2. “Revival doesn’t start with my brother or sister, does it?” asked Schofield, director of BSC’s office of prayer. “It starts with me.”

One video related the story of how a local association uses a block party trailer to reach communities in its area. Another shared the story of a former lesbian who found a “real family” with brothers and sisters in a local church. Schofield led messengers in prayer that God would awaken His people to the reality of His judgment.

“Most people are bored in our Baptist churches,” said J.D. Greear, pastor of The Summit Church in Durham, during one of the theme interpretation times. “They are tired of always sitting around.”

Greear stressed that the church should not be a “country club for Christians” but instead “a hospital for sinners.”

“Many of us have demonstrated we care more about our tradition than the salvation of our grandchildren,” Greear said. Church leaders need to help their

people turn outward, he continued, “empowering people to carry the gospel outside of the church.”

Schofield mentioned a couple of times that the church has a desperate need for God. “We’re losing this culture of people to paganism,” he said. “The world is saying to your church, to us, ‘Where is your god?’”

Schofield also urged unity. “Never in recent history has there been a desperate need for the church to be revived than today,” he said. “Revival has got to start through the restoration of the spiritual life of God’s people through the power of God’s Holy Spirit. We need the Lord today. We need Him like we’ve never needed Him before. If we’re ever going to impact lostness in this culture, the church must be restored through revival and awakening.”

Schofield said His people need to be hard at work in the Great Commission.

“There’s apathy and complacency, and churches aren’t concerned about what concerns the heart of God,” he said. “We must weep over the spiritual famine that is in the land.”

Remembering the past, looking to the future

Messengers approved a resolution of appreciation to Wake Forest University’s Z. Smith Reynolds Library for maintaining the largest collection of historical documents related to the work and ministry of North Carolina Baptist churches. The resolution acknowledges the library’s effort to digitize thousands of documents, making them available to researchers online. Special recognition was given to the library’s director of special collections and archives, Tanya Zanish-Belcher, and a copy of the resolution will be presented to both the university’s president and the dean of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library.

When convention president Timmy Blair opened the floor for miscellaneous business, Nicholas M. Muteti, senior pastor of Forestville Baptist Church in Wake Forest, asked that the convention consider creating a better strategy to bring about diversity within the convention and the SBC. “For the last 19 years, I’ve been attending this convention, and every year I look around and don’t see enough work done for the diversity of the local church,” Muteti said, expressing a desire for a new strategy for reaching minorities across the state. Muteti’s sentiments will be shared with the BSC’s board of directors.

Convention business

Cameron McGill, pastor of Dublin First Baptist Church was elected as BSC president. Mark Harris, a messenger from First Baptist Church Charlotte, nominated McGill. He ran unopposed.

Joel Stephens, pastor of Westfield Baptist Church, was elected first vice-president. Stephens ran unopposed and was nominated by Rick Speas, messenger from Old Town Baptist Church in Winston-Salem.

J.D. Grant, pastor of Scotts Creek Baptist Church in Sylva, was elected second vice-president. Grant outpolled David Ethridge, minister to young adults at Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Raleigh. In the vote, 654 ballots were cast and Grant received 61.2 percent of the vote (400 votes), Ethridge received 37 percent of the vote (244 votes) and 10 ballots did not go to either

candidate due to improper casting. Grant was nominated by Perry Brindley, messenger from Pole Creek Baptist Church in Candler. Shannon Scott, messenger from Mount Vernon Baptist Church in Raleigh, nominated Ethridge.

Messengers approved four motions that amend portions of the convention’s bylaws. The approved changes provide greater flexibility in scheduling Board of Directors’ meetings; eliminate limitations on employees, trustees and directors of

affiliated educational institutions from serving as members of committees and boards for the convention and related entities; clarify the roles of members elected to the Committee on Convention Meetings; and address sections of the bylaws to provide consistency, clarity and correction where needed.

The 2017 BSC annual meeting is scheduled for Nov. 6-7 in Greensboro, and will include a special prayer service as the convention sermon. **BR**



Officers for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina were elected Nov. 15 at the annual meeting. From left: Joel Stephens, first vice president and pastor of Westfield Baptist Church; Cameron McGill, president and pastor of Dublin First Baptist Church; and J.D. Grant, second vice president and pastor of Scotts Creek Baptist Church in Sylva. (BR photo by Steve Cooke)

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Restroom law likely safe despite N.C. election saga

By DAVID ROACH | Baptist Press

Regardless of who emerges victorious in North Carolina's still undecided governor's race, some of the state's Baptists believe a controversial law limiting transgender restroom access will remain in force.

Incumbent Gov. Pat McCrory, a Republican who has defended the law known as House Bill 2 (HB2), trails Attorney General Roy Cooper, a Democrat and staunch House Bill 2 (HB2) critic, by some 5,000 votes with more than 58,000 provisional ballots to be adjudicated and potentially counted, the *Raleigh News & Observer* reported.

A smaller number of absentee ballots also remain uncounted, and about 90,000 votes in Durham County are being challenged by McCrory, who claims there was "malfeasance" in tabulating them. The governor additionally claims "irregularities" around the state, according to the *News & Observer*.

The election results are scheduled to be certified Nov. 29, *The Washington Post* reported (after the *Biblical Recorder* has already printed this issue). But legal challenges and recounts could stretch into December, according to the *News & Observer*.

HB2 is a statewide anti discrimination law which does not include sexual orientation or gender identity among legally protected classes. The law also requires individuals in state buildings to use restrooms that correspond with the sex listed on their birth certificates.

The election's outcome "should not affect [HB2] at

all," said Mark Harris, pastor of First Baptist Church in Charlotte who has run for both the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives as a Republican.

Lt. Gov. Dan Forest, a vocal HB2 supporter, was reelected by a 52-45 margin, and the legislature that drafted and passed HB2 retained a veto-proof Republican majority.

The legislature's composition makes any repeal of HB2 unlikely, Harris said. If a Cooper administration refused to defend the law against legal challenges – which Cooper has already done as attorney general – the legislature could hire its own legal counsel.

"Some in the media would love to say" a McCrory loss would be "due to HB2," Harris, told Baptist Press (BP). However, "the evidence proves" that such a claim is inaccurate.

"If you look at the results of the election," Harris said, "HB2 probably did more to help turn out conservatives and Christians and help put them over the finish line than hurt anybody in this election."

McCrory may have lost up to 30,000 votes because of a toll road he supported in the northern Charlotte area, Harris said, noting that region played a significant role in the governor's struggle to win reelection.

Mecklenberg county commissioner Jim Puckett, who represents the area in question, told the *Charlotte Observer* that "compared to tolls, HB2 is a non-issue in north Mecklenberg."

Paul Stam, speaker pro tempore of the North Carolina House of Representatives, told BP election results appear to confirm public support of HB2.

"Seventy-one House Republicans voted for HB2," Stam, a member of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee from 2005-09, said in an email. "Two of them lost reelection. But they were replaced by two other Republicans, in one case a pastor from Sanford [N.C.]."

"No senator who voted for HB2 was defeated, notwithstanding millions of dollars spent to defeat them," Stam said. "Republicans increased their supermajority in the assembly by one. The outcome of the election for governor will matter. But no matter who wins that election, HB2 will not be eviscerated if the Baptists of North Carolina speak up."

Still, the pro-transgender rights organizations Human Rights Campaign (HRC) and Equality North Carolina said HB2 "cost McCrory his reelection" and "dragged down several state candidates."

"We are confident that once the results are certified, Roy Cooper's victory will be confirmed," HRC President Chad Griffin and Equality North Carolina executive director Chris Sgro said in a statement. "By electing Roy Cooper their next governor, North Carolinians have sent a powerful message across their state and this country that the days of anti-[lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer] politicians targeting our community for political gain are over."

A federal trial over the legality of HB2 was slated to begin this month but has been postponed until at least late summer as both sides await a U.S. Supreme Court ruling concerning transgender restroom access in Virginia, the *Greensboro News & Record* reported. ■■

Bay Leaf Baptist brings Christmas joy to seminary families

By HARPER MCKAY | SEBTS

For the 23rd year in a row, Bay Leaf Baptist Church in Raleigh helped Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary (SEBTS) students bring Christmas presents home to their families. On Nov. 12, Bay Leaf volunteers greeted students with cheers and applause as they eagerly entered the gymnasium to find presents for their children among tables stacked high with toys.

The Bay Leaf Toy Chest is an annual event where the church offers new toys to students for a fraction the actual cost, enabling them to purchase Christmas presents that they might not have been able to otherwise. It is Bay Leaf's way of being a blessing to students who are preparing to serve the Lord.

"It's just a great way for a church that's in close proximity to a school to show the love of Christ to students, many of whom have left good jobs, have left careers and now perhaps work part time," said Marty Jacumin, Bay Leaf's senior pastor. "We live in an area that is not cheap. It's just another way for us to be a blessing to people."

Jacumin is a two-time graduate of SEBTS with a master of divinity and a doctor of philosophy from the school. He currently serves SEBTS as chairman of

the Board of Trustees and as an adjunct professor.

"I love serving there any way I can, and I love the emphasis of the school," said Jacumin. "That's part of why we do the Toy Chest. We just feel like we have an opportunity to partner, in a small way, with people that just like us are called to take the gospel to the nations."

The Bay Leaf Toy Chest is open to students from SEBTS and The College at Southeastern who take at least six credit hours per semester and to full time advanced degree students. Toys offered include gifts for preschool, elementary and youth ages and are priced at 10 percent or less than retail prices.

Families can spend up to \$7 per child or purchase a total of four items for each child. The event also includes more expensive raffle items that are sold at \$10. In addition, families can purchase up to one bicycle for \$10 while they last. The Toy Chest also includes lightly used items that are additional purchases for only 25 cents each.

Each year, Bay Leaf members donate money to the Toy Chest, and a committee purchases items to sell. Sarah Bryant who is the chair of the committee enjoys being able to help families out in this way.

"We know what a big deal Christmas is for kids and parents," she said. "It is

a way for us to utilize our resources and gifts to help others. Volunteers from the church assemble toys, set up the gymnasium for the event, provide coffee and breakfast and assist students as they shop. Jacumin said all generations turn out to help with the event each year.

Peggy Brooks, a member of Bay Leaf and Toy Chest volunteer, enjoys helping students who are studying for ministry. "We know they sacrifice so much to go to seminary and prepare for serving the Lord, and what's better than that," she said. "This is just one little way that we can give back to them."

Lee James, another Bay Leaf member and Toy Chest volunteer, helps to assemble bicycles and assist students in loading toys into their vehicles after shopping.

"I think it's a great way to help out the seminary students," he said. "They're making a lot of sacrifices in order to proclaim Christ, and I think it's the best thing we can do to try to help them out as much as possible."

SEBTS students were overwhelmed by the generosity of Bay Leaf and appreciative to be able to provide things for their children that they did not expect.

"We are so thankful for the Toy Chest because we would not be able to do Christmas without it," said Jennifer

McCracken who is pursuing a master's degree in Christian education and biblical counseling. "Money is tight this time of year, and our daughter was so thrilled on Christmas morning last year when she saw all the toys we were able to get from the Toy Chest."

Brad Holloway, who is pursuing a master of divinity in Christian ministry, has been to the Toy Chest for the past three years. He and his wife have been able to use the example of the Toy Chest to share the message of Christ with others.

"It has opened doors for us to share the gospel with our lost family members and friends," he said. "They can't believe a church that doesn't know us would be so giving to us."

The Holloway family has also been able to teach their children from the example of Bay Leaf.

"It has helped us provide good gifts to our kids that we would have otherwise not been able to give, and in so doing we always relate it to the gift God gave us in Christ," he said.

The Bay Leaf Toy Chest provides toys for around 350 children from Southeastern families each year.

Since the Toy Chest began, Bay Leaf has donated all proceeds to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering to support international missions. ■■

Giving to Lottie Moon Christmas Offering

Giving to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering survives as part of most Southern Baptist Convention churches each December. The Week of Prayer (Dec. 4-11) this year focuses on the theme “Because of Who He Is.” Each day highlights a different International Mission Board (IMB) missionary. The goal is \$155 million.

Charlotte “Lottie” Digges Moon was born in 1840 in Virginia. She became a Christian as a college student. She attended Albemarle Female Institute, the female counterpart to the University of Virginia. While she stayed close to home during the Civil War, she later was a school teacher in Kentucky, Georgia and Virginia. She left for China at age

32 after turning down a marriage proposal. She served in China for 39 years. In 1918, the Woman’s Missionary Union named the offering after her.

The charts below track giving in two different ways. The chart on the left lists churches in order of per capita giving and includes the total gift from the church.

The chart on the right shows the top gifts from North Carolina churches that were given through the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina. Gifts directly sent to the IMB are not included in this amount.

Figures are based on giving received and recorded by the International Mission Board between March 1, 2015, and Feb. 29, 2016.



Top N.C. LMCO gifts 2015 (Per Capita amount)

NC	Per Capita	Total	Church	Location
1	\$818.18	\$9,000.00	Little River Baptist Fellowship	Zebulon
2	\$699.89	\$32,195.00	Saron Baptist Church	Ellerbe
3	\$663.93	\$190,547.79	Idlewild Baptist Church	Matthews
4	\$391.86	\$518,343.84	Parkwood Baptist Church	Gastonia
5	\$334.53	\$212,763.01	Mount Vernon Baptist Church	Boone
6	\$300.00	\$3,000.00	Epoch Greensboro Baptist Church	Lexington
7	\$278.86	\$146,399.78	First Baptist Church	Durham
8	\$274.08	\$8,222.50	South Laurinburg Baptist Church	Laurinburg
9	\$260.94	\$153,695.39	First Baptist Church	Cary
10	\$258.11	\$11,615.00	Northside Baptist Church	Burlington
11	\$249.75	\$17,482.60	Askewville Baptist Church	Windsor
12	\$249.45	\$44,400.25	Bogue Banks Baptist Church	Atlantic Beach
13	\$246.93	\$30,619.00	Beverly Hills Baptist Church	Rockingham
14	\$238.46	\$35,769.74	Merrimon Avenue Baptist Church	Asheville
15	\$220.65	\$52,515.50	Westwood Baptist Church	Roxboro
16	\$213.83	\$116,111.54	Denver Baptist Church	Denver
17	\$213.18	\$49,031.63	Central Baptist Church	Henderson
18	\$209.80	\$43,427.87	Newfound Baptist Church	Leicester
19	\$208.27	\$133,295.51	Parkwood Baptist Church	Concord
20	\$207.11	\$12,841.00	Elm Grove Baptist Church	Nashville
21	\$205.83	\$7,410.00	Green Valley Baptist Church	Waynesville
22	\$199.63	\$76,457.37	First Baptist Church	Hickory
23	\$196.39	\$132,561.64	Pitts Baptist Church	Concord
24	\$191.73	\$10,545.00	Bethany Baptist Church	Colerain
25	\$187.16	\$102,000.00	Christ Baptist Church	Raleigh
26	\$186.04	\$103,065.91	First Baptist Church	Charlotte
27	\$184.36	\$7,005.59	Little Rock Creek Baptist Church	Bakersville
28	\$179.69	\$7,547.00	McLean Road Baptist Church	Charlotte
29	\$179.64	\$192,217.70	Green Street Baptist Church	High Point
30	\$175.31	\$72,922.66	Old Town Baptist Church	Winston-Salem
31	\$169.04	\$88,744.30	Cross Road Baptist Church	Asheboro
32	\$168.27	\$19,014.00	Ridgeway Baptist Church	Candler
33	\$167.84	\$65,792.65	Sunset Avenue Baptist Church	Rocky Mount
34	\$166.67	\$1,500.00	Lakewood Baptist Church	Black Mountain
35	\$165.31	\$24,796.59	Center View Baptist Church	Maiden
36	\$162.65	\$30,578.84	Whitnel First Baptist Church	Lenoir
37	\$162.61	\$61,791.29	Cool Springs Baptist Church	Sanford
38	\$158.71	\$507,240.00	Calvary Baptist Church	Winston-Salem
39	\$158.07	\$134,361.32	Bay Leaf Baptist Church	Raleigh
40	\$157.63	\$28,845.97	Arlington Baptist Church	Rocky Mount
41	\$157.48	\$13,385.50	Sandy Springs First Baptist Church	Rutherfordton
42	\$156.19	\$16,712.00	Mount Pisgah Baptist Church	North Wilkesboro
43	\$153.79	\$32,450.47	Fairview Baptist Church	Apex
44	\$150.79	\$10,555.00	Mount Lebanon Baptist Church	Asheboro
45	\$150.38	\$3,910.00	Ephesus Baptist Church	Chapel Hill
46	\$149.76	\$5,241.50	Lily Branch Baptist Church	Bakersville
47	\$147.57	\$41,023.53	Williamston Memorial Baptist Church	Williamston
48	\$146.33	\$36,583.50	Wakefield Central Baptist Church	Zebulon
49	\$145.38	\$11,630.00	Cedar Branch Baptist Church	Jamesville
50	\$144.37	\$15,159.30	West Point Baptist Church	Kannapolis

Top N.C. LMCO gifts 2015 (Total amount)

NC	Per Capita	Total	Church	Location
1	\$391.86	\$518,343.84	Parkwood Baptist Church	Gastonia
2	\$158.71	\$507,240.00	Calvary Baptist Church	Winston-Salem
3	\$86.68	\$307,976.94	Hickory Grove Baptist Church	Charlotte
4	\$334.53	\$212,763.01	Mount Vernon Baptist Church	Boone
5	\$179.64	\$192,217.70	Green Street Baptist Church	High Point
6	\$663.93	\$190,547.79	Idlewild Baptist Church	Matthews
7	\$260.94	\$153,695.39	First Baptist Church	Cary
8	\$116.26	\$150,444.87	First Baptist Church	Hendersonville
9	\$278.86	\$146,399.78	First Baptist Church	Durham
10	\$110.21	\$137,757.25	Lawndale Baptist Church	Greensboro
11	\$158.07	\$134,361.32	Bay Leaf Baptist Church	Raleigh
12	\$208.27	\$133,295.51	Parkwood Baptist Church	Concord
13	\$196.39	\$132,561.64	Pitts Baptist Church	Concord
14	\$120.97	\$121,215.60	Village Baptist Church	Fayetteville
15	\$213.83	\$116,111.54	Denver Baptist Church	Denver
16	\$111.03	\$113,693.41	Englewood Baptist Church	Rocky Mount
17	\$186.04	\$103,065.91	First Baptist Church	Charlotte
18	\$187.16	\$102,000.00	Christ Baptist Church	Raleigh
19	\$0.00	\$89,354.53	Grey Stone Baptist Church	Durham
20	\$169.04	\$88,744.30	Cross Road Baptist Church	Asheboro
21	\$79.57	\$83,786.00	Western Avenue Baptist Church	Statesville
22	\$69.58	\$81,057.26	Pleasant Garden Baptist Church	Pleasant Garden
23	\$31.89	\$76,543.80	Carmel Baptist Church	Matthews
24	\$199.63	\$76,457.37	First Baptist Church	Hickory
25	\$138.24	\$74,509.36	Cape Carteret Baptist Church	Cape Carteret
26	\$175.31	\$72,922.66	Old Town Baptist Church	Winston-Salem
27	\$167.84	\$65,792.65	Sunset Avenue Baptist Church	Rocky Mount
28	\$162.61	\$61,791.29	Cool Springs Baptist Church	Sanford
29	\$19.18	\$60,657.65	First Baptist Church	Indian Trail
30	\$0.00	\$56,990.29	Providence Baptist Church	Raleigh
31	\$49.41	\$56,134.83	Life Community Church	Jamestown
32	\$128.22	\$55,725.05	Friendly Avenue Baptist Church	Greensboro
33	\$122.80	\$52,806.00	Cornerstone Baptist Church	Greensboro
34	\$220.65	\$52,515.50	Westwood Baptist Church	Roxboro
35	\$42.34	\$50,390.00	Scotts Hill Baptist Church	Wilmington
36	\$213.18	\$49,031.63	Central Baptist Church	Henderson
37	\$44.10	\$48,769.65	Faith Baptist Church	Youngsville
38	\$81.87	\$47,074.37	Wake Cross Roads Baptist Church	Raleigh
39	\$93.76	\$47,067.22	Hephzibah Baptist Church	Wendell
40	\$114.87	\$46,750.11	First Baptist Church	Hudson
41	\$53.92	\$46,102.38	Salem Baptist Church	Apex
42	\$80.41	\$45,430.50	Ridgecrest Baptist Church	Durham
43	\$79.50	\$44,518.04	West Asheville Baptist Church	Asheville
44	\$249.45	\$44,400.25	Bogue Banks Baptist Church	Atlantic Beach
45	\$209.80	\$43,427.87	Newfound Baptist Church	Leicester
46	\$132.74	\$42,477.46	Troutman Baptist Church	Troutman
47	\$0.00	\$42,311.95	First Baptist Church	Matthews
48	\$109.97	\$41,240.00	Lakeview Baptist Church	Monroe
49	\$147.57	\$41,023.53	Williamston Memorial Baptist Church	Williamston
50	\$53.20	\$40,694.29	Rich Fork Baptist Church	Thomasville

Disclaimer: This information reflects 2015 giving provided by the International Mission Board and represents dollars received and recorded at the state convention or IMB from March 1, 2015, through Feb. 29, 2016.

LMCO

LOTTIE MOON CHRISTMAS OFFERING WEEK OF PRAYER 2016

DECEMBER 4-11

imb.org/lottie-moon-christmas-offering



DAY
1

Mozambique

**HARRELL
FAMILY**



DAY
2

Italy

**COPLAND
FAMILY**



DAY
3

South America

**DAVID & HANNA
HARRIS***



DAY
4

Ghana

**HAUN
FAMILY**



DAY
5

Norway

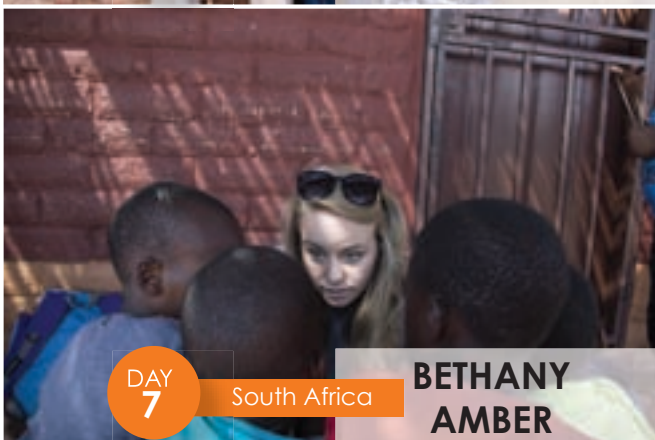
**DOVE
FAMILY**



DAY
6

South Asia

**CREGG*
FAMILY**



DAY
7

South Africa

**BETHANY
AMBER**



DAY
8

Southeast Asia

**LAYLA
MURPHY***

imb
the gospel resounds

*Names changed

Family serves unreached in Mozambique

International Mission Board

Believers traveling by boat, sharing the gospel: In the book of Acts it was the Apostle Paul on the Mediterranean. In Northern Mozambique today it is International Mission Board (IMB) missionary Brian Harrell steering his dhow through coastal waters. A national partner often joins him, and sometimes his wife Becky, and their four children, Andrew, Dillon, Janna Kate and Micah are his crewmates. The boat's name is Oromela.

"Oromela ... in the local dialect means 'hope,'" explains Brian. He and his family live on the water's edge here solely to reach the approximately 300,000 Makhuwa Nahara people with the gospel, whether that means venturing to unreached villages accessed best by water, or sharing gospel stories with women in their own village as they sit in a circle and make rag rugs.

The Harrells, who are IMB Week of Prayer missionaries, have served in Mozambique since 2004, when they arrived with a one-year-old child and the desire

to serve where no one else was working. "Like Paul, we didn't want to build on somebody else's work," Brian recalls. "We read job requests from all over the world. But the one that stood out to us was this stretch of coastline." Arab traders 1,000 years ago brought Islam, and the vast majority here are Muslim with no more than 200 believers in "Isa," Jesus Christ.

Tough welcome

What met them when they landed 12 years ago was deep lostness and spiritual oppression.

"As we came into the area, we went down to the Ilha de Moçambique, which is one of the ethnographic centers of our people group. You could feel a spiritual heaviness there that I had never felt before in my life," Brian said. People fear evil spirits and the practice of witchcraft has been commonplace for centuries.

"The women here fear [for] their children," Becky explains. "Babies die here all the time. Sickness, malaria, infant mortality rate is high." Women seek witchcraft during pregnancy and



Brian Harrell, right, uses a boat to traverse the coast of Mozambique, trying to reach the many unreached peoples in the country. (IMB photos)

birth. "There is ceremonial witchcraft ... to protect that life and to protect themselves from evil spirits during that time," Becky continues. For instance, Adelina, a local witch doctor, assisted villagers with divinations and spells in a grass-roofed hut beside her house.

Nevertheless, Adelina also allowed the Harrells to use her home to share Bible stories with a weekly group. But after a year of seemingly fruitless praying for Adelina, Brian and Becky were about to give up. Though Adelina listened carefully to the stories, she continued practicing witchcraft.

"We just couldn't [continue sharing the gospel] right there next to this witch doctor hut. ... What was the message that we were sending to the local community?" Brian says.

Then one day when the group was preparing to pray, Adelina suddenly rose and said: "I need you to help me to do something. I know that what I have been doing is wrong, and I want to get rid of my witchcraft." The following Sunday a group of believers gathered to sing songs, pray and dismantle the hut. They burned the gourds and all the paraphernalia she used in practicing witchcraft.

"It was incredible," Brian said. "It was an extremely intense day for her. ... This was something we had been hoping for and praying for."

"She just recently gave birth to ... her seventh child, and she says that all of her neighbors told her that this child would not live because she is no longer doing witchcraft," Becky says.

"This baby ... is still very healthy. Adelina is eagerly now sharing her testimony, boldly explaining to people what God has done in her life."

The IMB's Week of Prayer is meant to draw attention to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering for International Missions. See pages 3, 16 and 17.

Prayer requests

- The many new believers who have come to faith in recent months. Pray they would be strong in their faith despite family and community persecution and the spiritual warfare they inevitably face.

- The Holy Spirit to continue to draw Makhuwa Nahara souls to Himself and we (the Harrells) and other believers would be faithful to find those God-prepared people and give a clear gospel witness. **BR**



The Harrells chose to go where no one was working to spread the gospel. They arrived in Mozambique in 2004 with their one-year-old child. Now, the couple has four children. The entire family gets involved with reaching the lost in villages. (IMB photo)

OPPORTUNITY CORNER

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina is hosting the Vocational Evangelists Retreat Jan 12-13 at Caraway Conference Center in Sophia. The retreat is for those whose ministry vocation is focused on evangelism and sharing the gospel through preaching, teaching or in creative ways – illusions, comedy, music, drama or art.

Speakers include David Horton, Anne Graham Lotz, Kerwin Wray, Vince



Tharpe and Paul Jones. Registration is required and fee includes lodging and four meals. Cost varies depending on lodging/commuting options. Register at ncbaptist.org/ver.

The Baptist State Convention of North Carolina (BSC) is hosting a Youth Handbell Festival Feb. 17-18 at Friendly Avenue Baptist Church in Greensboro. Middle school and high school bell ringers will receive outstanding training and playing opportunities.

Music is chosen in varying difficulty levels suitable for worship.

Cost does not include lodging or meals and is \$25 per individual, \$250 per



BSC affiliated church or \$300 per non-affiliated group. Register by Jan. 27. Hotel information is available on the website. Visit ncbaptist.org/youthhandbell.

Billy Graham Crusades' Cliff Barrows dies at 93

By **DIANA CHANDLER** | Baptist Press

Clifford Burton “Cliff” Barrows, who served as music director of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association for more than 60 years, died Nov. 15 in Pineville, N.C., after a brief illness. He was 93.

The Marvin, N.C., resident had traveled the world with Billy Graham since the noted evangelist’s first crusade in 1947 in Grand Rapids, Mich., the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) reported.

Barrows’ contributions to the ministry were immeasurable, Graham said in an official statement upon the musician’s death.

“There wouldn’t be a Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in the way it is today without him. He was used of the Lord more than anyone else to keep us together with his strength, energy, devotion and love for the Lord,” Graham said. “Cliff set an example and was a role model of what a Christian ought to be. His contribution to my ministry cannot be measured in human terms.”

Barrows was known to BGEA President and CEO Franklin Graham as “Uncle Cliff.”

“Not only was he one of my father’s closest friends, but he was a friend to all of us on the team and in the family,” Franklin Graham said. “Growing up, and until the day of his death, I called him Uncle Cliff. He was very much a part of our family.”

Barrows met the patriarch Graham in 1945 while the song leader was on his honeymoon.

The two men soon formed the first team of what would become known as BGEA. Barrows was director of music

programming – and later television and radio programming – for Billy Graham Crusades and hosted the weekly Hour of Decision radio program heard internationally for more than 60 years.

“Sometimes he could just step up and preach a lot better sermon than me because God gave him the gift – not only of organization and music, but also of preaching and teaching,” Billy Graham said of Barrows. “We have a little conference center near my home where I would go to hear him when he was there and he certainly was a powerful speaker.”

Barrows is fondly remembered by many.

LifeWay Worship Resources Director Mike Harland called Barrows “the Father of every one of us who aspire to lead the church in singing the song of faith.”

“Whatever the job of leading congregational singing is, that’s what Cliff Barrows did. And whoever that leader is supposed to be, that’s what he was to the rest of us,” Harland told Baptist Press.

“And whatever the relationship between preacher and song leader can be, that’s what we all saw in his relationship with Dr. Billy Graham.”

Frank S. Page, president and CEO of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee, expressed deep sadness at Barrows’ passing.

“He was a dear friend for many years,” Page said. “When I was considering going to Taylors (First Baptist Church, Taylors, S.C.) as pastor, he called me and asked me to visit. We sang a chorus together, and he shared scripture with me.

“He was a man without guile and a man in whom the Holy Spirit found a welcome place,” Page said. “He will be deeply missed by millions and remem-



CLIFF BARROWS



Cliff Barrows and George Beverly Shea sang “How Great Thou Art” at the 1980 Indianapolis, Ind., Billy Graham Crusade. (BGEA photo)

bered as a man who served our Lord and his friend Billy Graham with absolute selflessness and joy.”

Barrows was inducted into the Nashville Gospel Music Hall of Fame in April 1988, the Religious Broadcasting Hall of Fame in February 1996 and the inaugural class of the Conference of Southern Baptist Evangelists’ “Hall of Faith” in 2008.

Jerry Johnson, president and CEO of National Religious Broadcasters (NRB) said Barrows reminded him of joy.

“He spoke with joy, sang with joy, and led God’s people to sing with joy at the Billy Graham crusades,” Johnson said. “Cliff was an NRB man all the way and we will miss him until we see him again in the glory.”

Barrows is the fifth member of the original Billy Graham Crusades team to die, including his first wife Billie, Grady Wilson, George Beverly Shea and Billy Graham’s wife Ruth.

He is survived by his wife, Ann, and five children from his first marriage to Wilma Irene “Billie” Newell Barrows, who died in 1994, and their spouses; namely Chris and Bonnie Thomas, Bob Barrows, David and Betty Ruth Seera, Clifford “Bud” Barrows, and Bill and Teri Barrows. He is also survived by Ann Barrows’ children and their spouses, Tal and Teresa Prince and David and Dana Shillington, and numerous grandchildren.

A funeral service for Barrows was held Nov. 22 in Charlotte. **BR**

AROUND THE STATE

Staff changes

Oakdale Baptist Church, Spencer, has called **JEFF NORTON** as pastor. Norton previously served as associate pastor at College Park Baptist Church, Rock Hill, S.C.

KENNETH LEE DUNCAN has been called as youth and children’s pastor at Watkins Chapel Baptist Church, Zebulon. Duncan previously served as youth and children’s pastor at First Korean Baptist Church, Raleigh.

Lowe’s Grove Baptist Church, Durham, has called **WOODROW FREEZE** as senior pastor. Freeze previously served as senior pastor for five years at Grassy Creek Baptist Church, Bullock.

Ordination

CEDRIC R. BURNS was ordained to the gospel ministry Oct. 23 by Olive Chapel Baptist Church, Apex. Burns had previously been ordained by another denomination, but has been a member of Olive Chapel for four years and desires to continue his ministry as a Baptist.



CEDRIC BURNS

Retirement

STEVE PARKS retired July 24 from Sulphur Springs Baptist Church, Hiddenite, after 22 years of serving as senior pastor. Parks worked as a manager for Western Southern Life Insurance in Mount Airy until he was called into the ministry in 1983. He attended Southeastern Seminary and was called as pastor to Pleasant View Baptist Church, Mount Airy, in 1983 and served there until being called by Sulphur Springs. Parks lives in Stony Point with his wife, Sheila. He is available for pulpit supply, revivals and interim work. Contact him at (704) 880-5125.

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

December 11

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE

December 18

God's Word Fills My Heart

Focal passage: Psalm 119:9-16

Our passage this week states the key to purity is to guard our heart according to God's Word. We know our speech, behavior and attitude reflect what is in our heart. In order to have in our heart what is needed, we must store up scripture, meditate on the precepts and fix our eyes on the ways of God.

Our lesson this week quickly challenges us to personally evaluate our commitment to the Word of God. As Psalm 119:11 states, "I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." Is it the standard from which you examine how to make choices in life?

The events in Charlotte this past September hit close to home in more than one way. The shooting that sparked such controversy was in a neighborhood just a minute's walk through the woods from our church property. Two of our church members were at the site of the shooting while doing landscaping work for the neighborhood. Church family and friends live all around the location that became a national news story.

Safety became the topic of conversa-

tion for many families and even in planning church events for the next night, a Wednesday. Our family, like many of yours, had discussions about the way we should respond as Christians when hurt, suffering and even violence come to your community.

What do we say in our home about each person involved? What is the appropriate response? What do our hearts reveal when we look at these tough issues?

As our church gathered to pray that Wednesday evening with a big sign on the window that said, "Open for prayer," we individually and corporately asked ourselves these questions. We asked God to reveal what is in our hearts and to help us live well in difficult times. We confessed our sin, both as individuals and as a congregation.

Thankfully, God gives us direction and God gives us hope. Whether it is a little tension or a community-wide crisis, may we look to God's Word to keep us from sin.

Focal passage: Psalm 119:17-24

We all encounter difficult people and challenging social situations in our day-to-day lives. The psalmist in this week's passage describes "insolent, accursed ones" and feeling "scorn and contempt." (Psalm 119:21-22). He adds that we may also feel like we are a stranger or sojourner on this earth.

A sojourner has the experience of living in a social environment that is different than their usual one. For some of us, it is experienced in a work environment or a new social environment.

We can ask the Lord to help us in our time of need, even with the most difficult of people and circumstances.

Going from "Bible Belt, U.S.A." to being on the mission field in India certainly gave our family the experience of living as sojourners. We were strangers in a land full of the unfamiliar.

Fortunately for us, we loved the Indian people and delighted in the new

food and fabrics of the culture. We were not without our awkward situations, however.

There was the time we entered a church service and eagerly sat on the floor as a family to participate in worship. We started observing our surroundings and realized that there were designated sections for men and women.

We had sat on the women's side, so my daughters and I tried not to giggle as my husband and sons tried to quietly slide over to the male side of the gathering.

Another experience brought fear. A man with a snake around his neck put the reptile in my face, seemingly showing off for his friends.

I promptly told him in Hindi to go away in the name of Jesus, and he did! God "rebukes the insolent," (v. 21) and He is "my delight" (v. 24).

One of the primary ways God helps us is by providing His word to keep us focused on Him. There will be times that we feel left out, opposed and theologically challenged.

The psalmist points us to "meditate on your statutes" (v. 23) and we can still "delight" (v. 24).



SHERRA STILL
Member,
University Hills Baptist
Church, Charlotte

December 11

EXPLORE THE BIBLE

December 18

Conquest

Focal passage: Joshua 6:12-25

Amazingly, Jericho still exists. It boasts a population of more than 20,000 and is geographically the lowest permanently inhabited site on earth. But there is something missing, and that is the old Jericho that tumbled down during Joshua's conquest.

According to archaeologists, the retaining wall was about 15 feet high. On top of that was a mud brick wall six feet thick and about 25 feet tall. Then outside the retaining wall was another mud brick wall about 45 feet tall. Certainly the Jericho leaders felt confident their double-walled city was impenetrable.

The biblical story of Joshua and Jericho is a story of great conquest, and a story of great faith. There is the Rahab faith story. When the spies stealthily entered the city, God ordained they befriend Rahab and her family. Rahab housed the spies and protected them from the king, ensuring them a safe exit. For her assistance, Rahab and her family's lives would be spared. They would also become a part of the fledgling Hebrew nation.

Second, there is the ark story. The "ark of the covenant" was central to their battle plan. In verse 12 we hear of the ark and priests before we hear of the trumpets and swords and soldiers.

Third, there is the obedience story. Everyone was required to do his or her part according to the plan. It was a seven-day plan, with precise instructions to follow each day. The walls came down because of the blowing of the trumpet and the shouting (v. 20), but even that was part of the master plan.

Fourth, there is the clean-up plan. No resident of Jericho, no animal of Jericho and no treasure of Jericho was allowed to live or be kept. The conquest was a complete annihilation.

We need conquests, and the Jericho conquest gives us a hopeful model. Rahab, with her checkered past, found that faith can conquer public opinion and sin. Joshua and the people experienced the joy of conquest because they put God first and trusted in each other.



WAYNE PROCTOR
Pastor, Eure
Baptist Church, Eure

Focal passage: Joshua 10:6-14

Do you believe that God is in control even when mistakes have been made and enemy forces seem to be lining up against you? Today's lesson is about a commitment Joshua kept even though he had been deceived. Without God's miracle, his commitment to the Gibeonite tribe could have cost him everything.

In chapter 9 we hear of the great deception. The clever men of Gibeon approached Joshua as an impoverished and distant people who pledged to be Joshua's servants. The compassionate Joshua trusted when he should have verified. The result was a peace treaty forged between Israel and Gibeon whereby Joshua promised protection.

Fast forward to chapter 10 and we have five Amorite kings committed to a fight against Gibeon, leaving Joshua caught between a "rock and a hard place." While many leaders would have

dishonored their commitment since there was nothing in it for themselves, Joshua honored his deal. Furthermore, and this is key, God told Joshua to not be afraid, He had already ordained victory (v. 8).

The victory God provided was miraculous on many levels. God threw the enemy into confusion (v. 10). Large hailstones killed more of the enemy than the sword (v. 11). And God caused the sun to "stand still," elongating the day so the battle could be completed (vv. 12-13).

Keeping commitments, in battle and in life, is a huge responsibility. It gets personal. Well over a decade ago my wife's mother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Her husband had made a marital commitment of caring for her in the good and the bad times. The remaining years of her life would become progressively difficult. But my wife's father took care of her and loved her to the very end.

Life is not perfect. Troubles, deceptions and unwise pledges happen. Joshua could have revoked this contract or retaliated on Gibeon. People do it all the time. They don't keep their commitments because they don't consider God to be an indispensable part of their life.

Commitment Kept

Southern Baptists win re-election to Congress

Baptist Press

All Southern Baptist members of Congress participating in the Nov. 8 election successfully defended their seats.

Three senators and 26 representatives – all members of Southern Baptist churches – won re-election. With three other senators who were not up for re-election, Southern Baptists will count at least 32 of their own in the Senate and House of Representatives when the next Congress convenes in January. Some Southern Baptists whom Baptist Press (BP) is unaware of may have been elected for the first time.

Five Southern Baptist members of the House either retired, lost in a primary or fell short in races for other offices.

Reps. Randy Neugebauer of Texas and Lynn Westmoreland of Georgia retired. Seven-term Rep. Randy Forbes of Virginia failed to regain his seat when he fell short in the Republican primary. Rep. John Fleming of Louisiana failed to qualify Nov. 8 for the run-off for a Senate seat. Rep. Marlin Stutzman of Indiana lost in the GOP primary for the Senate.

The three Southern Baptist senators who gained re-election are Sens. John Boozman of Arkansas, Roy Blunt of Missouri and James Lankford of Oklahoma.

Southern Baptists held 40 seats in Congress after the 2012 election, reaching what appears to have been the largest Southern Baptist contingent ever on Capitol Hill.

BP compiled a list of the ballot results for members of Southern Baptist churches who sought re-election to

Congress. The vote totals are from Politico's website, with The Associated Press as the source. Some races had more than two candidates on the ballot, but only the top two finishers are included in these results. A full listing of all the states with Southern Baptists running is available at BRnow.org.

Below is North Carolina's House of Representatives race. There were no Southern Baptists reported in the Senate race.

North Carolina: Rep. George Holding, R, 2nd District, seeking third term, Christ Baptist Church, Raleigh, defeated John McNeil, D, 219,342-167,299, 57-43 percent. Mark Walker, 6th District, seeking second term, Lawndale Baptist Church, Greensboro, defeated Pete Glidewell, D, 205,973-141,480, 59-41 percent. **BR**

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISEMENTS

Pastor

Hallsville Baptist Church, Beulaville, NC, is prayerfully seeking a **Pastor** to faithfully preach and teach the Word of God and lead our congregation. We are a mission-minded Southern Baptist church located in rural Duplin County. We have traditional Sunday School and worship services with average attendance of 50-80 with expectation to grow. The Pastor will lead three services each week (Sunday morning, Sundaynight and Wednesday evening). Please send resumes to: Hallsville Baptist Church, c/o Pastor search committee, 1291 Hallsville Rd., Beulaville, NC 28518.

Beulah Baptist Church in Statesville, NC, is a multi-generational congregation seeking a **full-time Senior Pastor**. We are an SBC affiliated church seeking a man filled with passion to work with all ages of our congregation and community, an evangelistic mindset to reach the lost and driven to preach God's Word. Send resume to: Senior Pastor Search Team, 1851 Old Mountain Road, Statesville, NC 28677.

Deep Springs Baptist Church, Peachland, NC, seeks a **full-time pastor**, a man of God, to lead the church in reaching the lost and reaching out to our community. We are a conservative, Southern Baptist family, and mission oriented church. The Pastor will lead three services weekly. He must be a man with God guided leadership and vision. We desire a pastor who possesses strong preaching skills and will guide the church spiritually and administratively, and is a person with a servant's heart. We affirm only men to serve as deacons in the church. The candidate must hold an accredited seminary/divinity school degree or working to complete. Submit resume information to Pastor Search Committee, 1908 Deep Springs Church Rd, Peachland, NC 28133, or electronically: deepspringschurch1@windstream.net. Resumes accepted until January 13, 2017.

West Burnsville Baptist Church is seeking God's man to lead a conservative mission-minded Southern Baptist church. We prefer an energetic **pastor** with strong preaching skills, SBC seminary trained, 5-10 years experience. We are located in beautiful Yancey County and have a membership of 476. Send resume with statement of faith, personal testimony, and audio or video of recent sermon to Pastor Search Committee, 384 Mountain View Road, Burnsville, NC 28714, or email to wanda.harding@msn.com by December 15, 2016.

First Baptist Church of Troy, NC, (SBC member) is seeking a **Full-Time Pastor** to lead the church in its mission to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We utilize our Baptist Men's Group, WMU and a growing Youth program to accomplish our mission. We request resumes to be submitted by December 31, 2016, to FBC Pastor Selection Committee, 303 S. Lineberry St., Troy, NC 27371, or by email: harrymc34@embarqmail.com.

Pastor. First Baptist Church, Denton, NC, is seeking an energetic full-time pastor to faithfully preach and teach the Word of God. We are SBC affiliated and the candidate should be seminary trained, and a minimum of 3 years' experience. We are a mission minded church located in southern Davidson County with a congregation of 65. We will be accepting resumes until December 12, 2016. Please send resumes to First Baptist Church, c/o Pastor Search Committee, PO Box 515, Denton, NC 27239.

Church Staff

Associate Pastor of Youth & Families. Full-time position. SBC & CBF affiliated church. Located in the beautiful foothills of North Carolina. Contact: Joyce S. Wall, Personnel Chair, Drexel First Baptist Church, PO Box 308, Drexel, North Carolina 28619; drexelfbc@gmail.com.

Minister of family & youth. Covenant Baptist Church in Lancaster, SC, is seeking a highly motivated and organized individual (age late 20's to early 30's) to fulfill a full-time position of Minister of Family and Youth. Must be an ordained minister with a 4-year college degree and 2-4 years of ministry experience in family and youth. Preferably a masters or MDiv degree. Send resumes to CBCLancaster@comporium.net or to Covenant Baptist Church, Search Committee, PO Box 578, Lancaster, SC 29721.

First Baptist Church, Spruce Pine, NC, is prayerfully seeking a candidate to serve as **full-time minister of music and education**. This person must be a born again child of God, demonstrate Christian character, be called to head music ministry and provide testimony of faith. A bachelor's degree in music and education from a Baptist seminary is preferred. Responsibilities include teaching and directing a full music program. Worship services area blend of traditional and contemporary music. Please submit resume to First Baptist Church, Attn: Search Committee, 125 Tappan St., Spruce Pine, NC 28777, or email to doctorrocklyahoo.com.

Pleasant Grove Baptist Church, Creedmoor, NC, is searching for a **part-time (30 hours per week) administrative assistant**. Responsibilities include general secretarial work, publishing church bulletins and newsletter, serving as receptionist, and other duties as assigned. Send cover letter and resume to office@pgbc Creedmoor.org.

Elkin Valley Baptist Church in Elkin, NC, is searching for a **full-time Associate Pastor of Creative Arts**. Responsibilities include leading worship services in a blended/contemporary music style and coordinating church media. A 4-year music degree is required. Detailed information on the position and application directions can be found on the church's website at www.evbcfamily.org.

Oxford Baptist Church, Conover, NC, is seeking a **full-time Music Ministry Director** to lead/oversee all aspects of the music ministry. The preferred candidate would have experience directing a blended music ministry including choir, orchestra, and other vocal groups. OBC adheres to the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message. Please email resumes to pastorjoel@oxfordbaptist.com or mail to Oxford Baptist Church, Attn: Senior Pastor, 5965 Springs Road, Conover, NC, 28613. All resumes should include references, statement of faith, salvation testimony, and DVD or URL of sample worship service.

Miscellaneous

10+ acres of waterfront property on the Perquimans River \$240,000.00. Camp Cale is offering this property for sale to help raise money to build needed bunkhouses. For more details call Matt Thomas at 252-264-2513 or matt@campcale.com or listing agent Ann Perry at 252-482-4785.

Church Pews for Sale. Solid oak benches with cushions and slots for song books and envelopes. 12 long (11 ft.) and 2 short (6 ft.) pews. \$500 each. Contact First Baptist Church of Sylva at fbcysylva@gmail.com or 828-586-2095.

NCBAM has partnered with **Building Better Balance** – an evidence-based screening process that identifies fall risk. To schedule a screening or to learn more, call 877.506.2226.

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- Send e-mail to: alison@BRnow.org.
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- Send a Fax to (919) 467-6180.

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

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

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